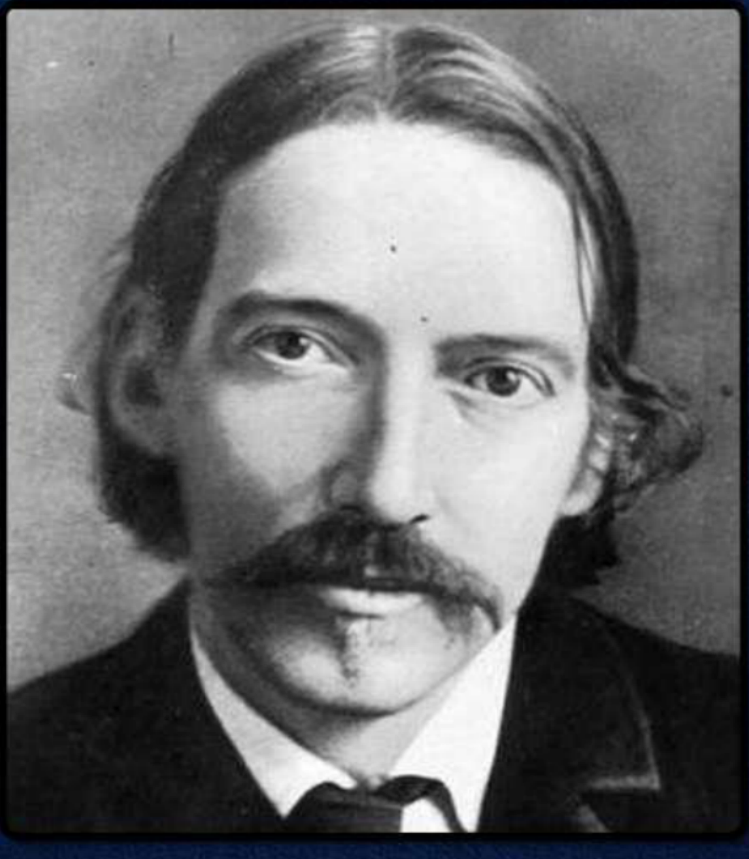
Complete Works of

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



DELPHI CLASSICS

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

(1850-1894)

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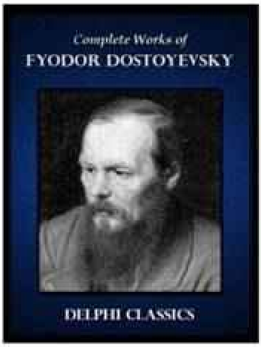
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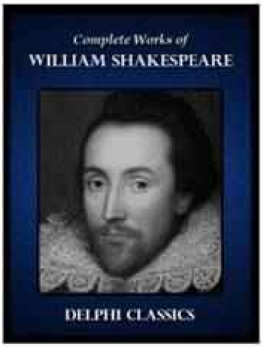
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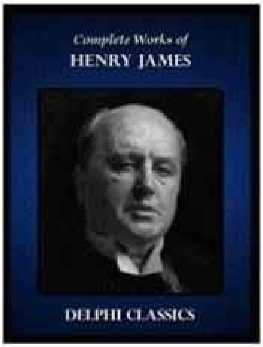
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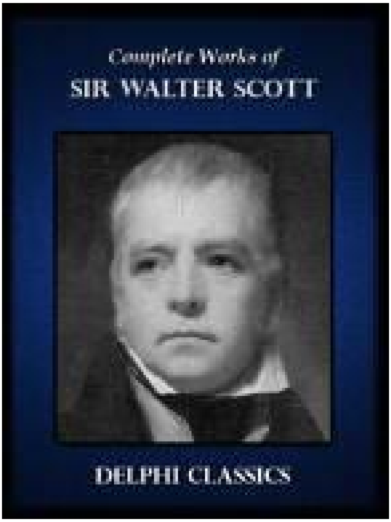
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The Novels

No. 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh, Stevenson's birthplace

TREASUREISLAND

Stevenson's most famous work was first published as a serial in the children's magazine *Young Folks* between 1881–82. A coming-of-age story, the novel is an adventure tale known for its atmosphere, character and action. The anti-hero, due to his ambiguity of his morality, Long John Silver is an unusual component in children's literature. This work is one of the most frequently dramatised of all Victorian novels and the influence of *Treasure Island* on popular perception of pirates is vast, including treasure maps with an "X", schooners, the Black Spot, tropical islands, and one-legged seamen with parrots on their shoulders.

The novel opens in a seaside village in south-west England in the mid-18th century. The narrator, Jim Hawkins, is the young son of the owners of the Admiral Benbow Inn. An old drunken seaman named Billy Bones becomes a long-term lodger at the inn, only paying for the first week of his stay. Sooner than later, the secrets he hides have life changing effects on Hawkins and his family.

YOUNG FOLKS. 117

TREASURE ISLAND;

How the novel first appeared in the serial ‘Young Folks’

To
LLOYD OSBOURNE
An American Gentleman
In accordance with whose classic taste
The following narrative has been designed
It is now, in return for numerous delightful hours
And with the kindest wishes, dedicated
By his affectionate friend
THE AUTHOR

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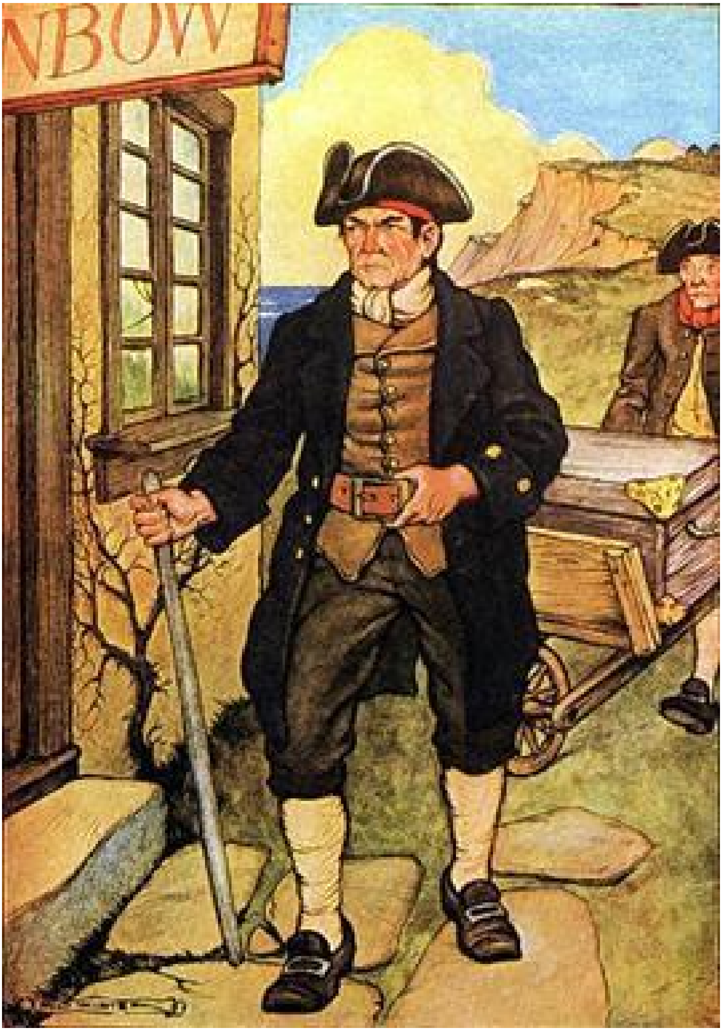
PART I
THE OLD BUCCANEER

CHAPTER I
AT THE "ADMIRAL BENBOW"

Squire Trelawney, Doctor Livesey, and the rest of these gentlemen having asked me to write down the whole particulars about Treasure Island, from the beginning to the end, keeping nothing back but the bearings of the island, and that only because there is still treasure not yet lifted, I take up my pen in the year of grace 17 — , and go back to the time when my father kept the "Admiral Benbow" Inn, and the brown old seaman, with the saber cut, first took up his lodging under our roof.

I remember him as if it were yesterday, as he came plodding to the inn door, his sea-chest following behind him in a hand-barrow; a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man; his tarry pig-tail falling over the shoulders of his soiled blue coat; his hands ragged and scarred, with black, broken nails, and the saber cut across one cheek, a dirty, livid white. I remember him looking round the cove and whistling to himself as he did so, and then breaking out in that old sea-song that he sang so often afterwards:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!"


NBOW

I remember him as if it were yesterday as he came plodding to the inn door in the high, old tottering voice that seemed to have been tuned and broken at the capstan bars. Then he rapped on the door with a bit of stick like a handspike that he carried, and when my father appeared, called roughly for a glass of rum. This, when it was brought to him, he drank slowly, like a connoisseur, lingering on the taste, and still looking about him at the cliffs and up at our signboard.

"This is a handy cove," says he, at length; "and a pleasant sittyated grog-shop. Much company, mate?"

My father told him no, very little company, the more was the pity.

"Well, then," said he, "this is the berth for me. Here you, matey," he cried to the man who trundled the barrow; "bring up alongside and help up my chest. I'll stay here a bit," he continued. "I'm a plain man; rum and bacon and eggs is what I want, and that head up there for to watch ships off. What you mought call me? You mought call me captain. Oh, I see what you're at — there"; and he threw down three or four gold pieces on the threshold. "You can tell me when I've worked through that," said he, looking as fierce as a commander.

And, indeed, bad as his clothes were, and coarsely as he spoke, he had none of the appearance of a man who sailed before the mast, but seemed like a mate or skipper, accustomed to be obeyed or to strike. The man who came with the barrow told us the mail had set him down the morning before at the "Royal George"; that he had inquired what inns there were along the coast, and hearing ours well spoken of, I suppose, and described as lonely, had chosen it from the others for his place of residence. And that was all we could learn of our guest.

He was a very silent man by custom. All day he hung round the cove, or upon the cliffs, with a brass telescope; all evening he sat in a corner of the parlor next the fire, and drank rum and water very strong. Mostly he would not speak when spoken to; only look up sudden and fierce, and blow through his nose like a fog-horn; and we and the people who came about our house soon learned to let him be. Every day, when he came back from his stroll, he would ask if any seafaring men had gone by along the road. At first we thought it was the want of company of his own kind that made him ask this question; but at last we began to see he was desirous to avoid them. When a seaman put up at the "Admiral Benbow" (as now and then some did, making by the coast road for Bristol), he would look in at him through the curtained door before he entered the parlor; and he was always sure to be as silent as a mouse when any such was present. For me, at least, there was no secret about the matter; for I was, in a way, a sharer in his alarms.

He had taken me aside one day and promised me a silver fourpenny on the first of every month if I would only keep my "weather eye open for a seafaring man with one leg," and let him know the moment he appeared. Often enough when the first of the month came round, and I applied to him for my wage, he would only blow through his nose at me, and stare me down; but before the week was out he was sure to think better of it, bring me my fourpenny piece, and repeat his orders to look out for "the seafaring man with one leg."

How that personage haunted my dreams, I need scarcely tell you. On stormy nights, when the wind shook the four corners of the house, and the surf roared along the cove and up the cliffs, I would see him in a thousand forms, and with a thousand diabolical expressions. Now the leg would be cut off at the knee, now at the hip; now he was a monstrous kind of a creature who had never had but one leg, and that in the middle of his body. To see him leap and run and pursue me over hedge and ditch, was the worst of nightmares. And altogether I paid pretty dear for my monthly fourpenny piece, in the shape of these abominable fancies.

But though I was so terrified by the idea of the seafaring man with one leg, I was far less afraid of the captain himself than anybody else who knew him. There were nights when he took a deal more rum and water than his head would carry; and then he would sometimes sit and sing his wicked, old, wild sea-songs, minding nobody; but sometimes he would call for glasses round, and force all the trembling company to listen to his stories or bear a chorus to his singing. Often I have heard the house shaking with "Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum," all the neighbors joining in for dear life, with the fear of death upon them, and each singing louder than the other to avoid remark. For in these fits he was the most overriding companion ever known; he would slap his hand on the table for silence all around; he would fly up in a passion of anger at a question, or sometimes because none was put, and so he judged the company was not following his story. Nor would he allow anyone to leave the inn till he had drunk himself sleepy and reeled off to bed.

His stories were what frightened people worst of all. Dreadful stories they were; about hanging, and walking the plank, and storms at sea, and the Dry Tortugas, and wild deeds and places on the Spanish Main. By his own account, he must have lived his life among some of the wickedest men that God ever allowed upon the sea; and the language in which he told these stories shocked our plain country people almost as much as the crimes that he described. My father was always saying the inn would be ruined, for people would soon cease coming there to be tyrannized over and put down and sent shivering to their beds; but I really believe his presence did us good. People were frightened at the time, but on looking back they rather liked it; it was a fine excitement in a quiet country life; and there was even a party of the younger men who pretended to admire him, calling him a "true sea-dog," and a "real old salt," and such like names, and saying there was the sort of man that made England terrible at sea.

In one way, indeed, he bade fair to ruin us; for he kept on staying week after week, and at last month after month, so that all the money had been long exhausted, and still my father never plucked up the heart to insist on having more. If ever he mentioned it, the captain blew through his nose so loudly that you might say he roared, and stared my poor father out of the room. I have seen him wringing his hands after such a rebuff, and I am sure the annoyance and the terror he lived in must have greatly hastened his early and unhappy death.

All the time he lived with us the captain made no change whatever in his dress but to buy some stockings from a hawker. One of the cocks of his hat having fallen down, he let it hang from that day forth, though it was a great annoyance when it blew. I remember the appearance of his coat, which he patched himself upstairs in his room, and which, before the end, was nothing but patches. He never wrote or received a letter, and he never spoke with any but the neighbors, and with these, for the most part, only when drunk on rum. The great sea-chest none of us had ever seen open.

He was only once crossed, and that was toward the end, when my poor father was far gone in a decline that took him off. Doctor Livesey came late one afternoon to see the patient, took a bit of dinner from my mother, and went into the parlor to smoke a pipe until his horse should come down from the hamlet, for we had no stabling at the old "Benbow." I followed him in, and I remember observing the contrast the neat, bright doctor, with his powder as white as snow, and his bright, black eyes and pleasant manners, made with the coltish country folk, and above all, with that filthy, heavy, bleared scarecrow of a pirate of ours, sitting far gone in rum, with his arms on the table. Suddenly he — the captain, that is — began to pipe up his eternal song:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest —

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

Drink and the devil had done for the rest —

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!"

At first I had supposed "the dead man's chest" to be that identical big box of his upstairs in the front room, and the thought had been mingled in my nightmares with that of the one-legged seafaring man. But by this time we had all long ceased to pay any particular notice to the song; it was new, that night, to nobody but Doctor Livesey, and on him I observed it did not produce an agreeable effect, for he looked up for a moment quite angrily before he went on with his talk to old

Taylor, the gardener, on a new cure for rheumatics. In the meantime the captain gradually brightened up at his own music, and at last flapped his hand upon the table before him in a way we all knew to mean — silence. The voices stopped at once, all but Doctor Livesey's; he went on as before, speaking clear and kind, and drawing briskly at his pipe between every word or two. The captain glared at him for a while, flapped his hand again, glared still harder, and at last broke out with a villainous oath: "Silence, there, between decks!"

"Were you addressing me, sir?" said the doctor; and when the ruffian had told him, with another oath, that this was so, replied, "I have only one thing to say to you, sir, that if you keep on drinking rum, the world will soon be quit of a very dirty scoundrel!"

The old fellow's fury was awful. He sprang to his feet, drew and opened a sailor's clasp-knife, and balancing it open on the palm of his hand, threatened to pin the doctor to the wall.

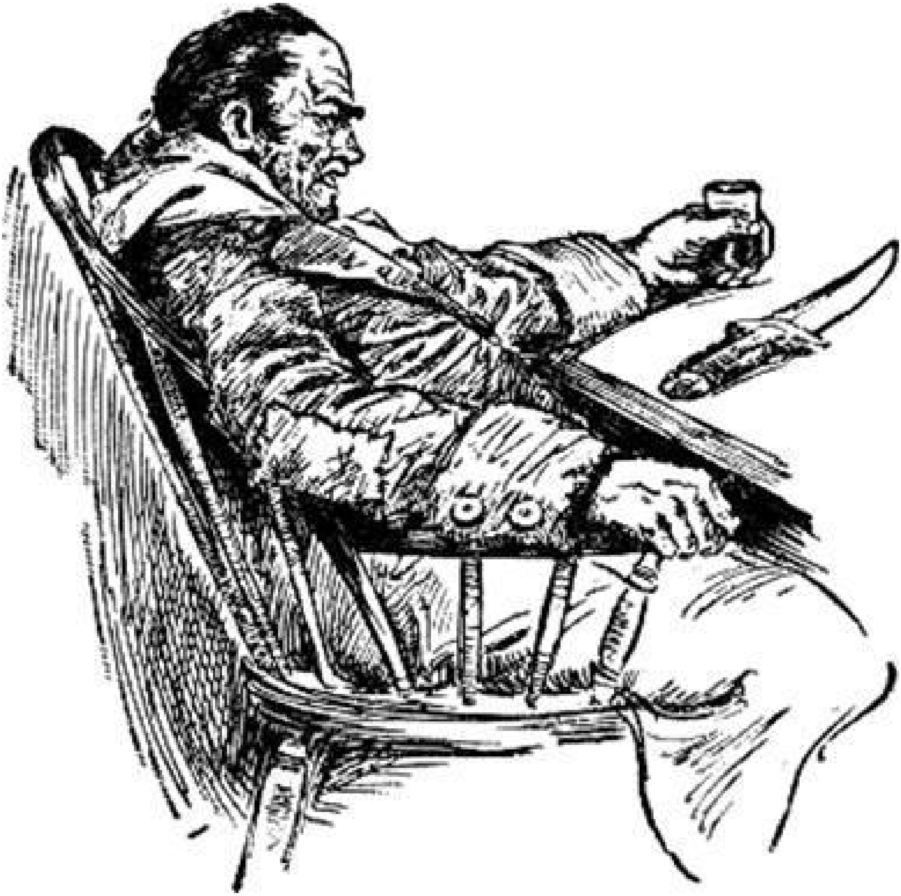
The doctor never so much as moved. He spoke to him, as before, over his shoulder, and in the same tone of voice, rather high, so that all the room might hear, but perfectly calm and steady:

"If you do not put that knife this instant into your pocket, I promise, upon my honor, you shall hang at the next assizes."

Then followed a battle of looks between them; but the captain soon knuckled under, put up his weapon, and resumed his seat, grumbling like a beaten dog.

"And now, sir," continued the doctor, "since I now know there's such a fellow in my district, you may count I'll have an eye upon you day and night. I'm not a doctor only, I'm a magistrate; and if I catch a breath of complaint against you, if it's only for a piece of incivility like to-night's, I'll take effectual means to have you hunted down and routed out of this. Let that suffice."

Soon after Doctor Livesey's horse came to the door and he rode away, but the captain held his peace that evening, and for many evenings to come.



CHAPTER II
BLACK DOG APPEARS AND DISAPPEARS

It was not very long after this that there occurred the first of the mysterious events that rid us at last of the captain, though not, as you will see, of his affairs. It was a bitter cold winter, with long, hard frosts and heavy gales; and it was plain from the first that my poor father was little likely to see the spring. He sank daily, and my mother and I had all the inn upon our hands, and were kept busy enough without paying much regard to our unpleasant guest.

It was one January morning, very early — a pinching, frosty morning — the cove all gray with hoar-frost, the ripple lapping softly on the stones, the sun still low, and only touching the hill-tops and shining far to seaward. The captain had risen earlier than usual, and set out down the beach, his cutlass swinging under the broad skirts of the old blue coat, his brass telescope under his arm, his hat tilted back upon his head. I remember his breath hanging like smoke in his wake as he strode off, and the last sound I heard of him, as he turned the big rock, was a loud snort of indignation, as though his mind was still running upon Doctor Livesey.

Well, mother was upstairs with father, and I was laying the breakfast table against the captain's return, when the parlor door opened and a man stepped in on whom I had never set my eyes before. He was a pale, tallowy creature, wanting two fingers of the left hand; and, though he wore a cutlass, he did not look much like a fighter. I had always my eyes open for seafaring men, with one leg or two, and I remember this one puzzled me. He was not sailorly, and yet he had a smack of the sea about him too.

I asked him what was for his service, and he said he would take rum, but as I was going out of the room to fetch it he sat down upon a table and motioned to me to draw near. I paused where I was, with my napkin in my hand.

"Come here, sonny," said he. "Come nearer here."

I took a step nearer.

"Is this here table for my mate Bill?" he asked, with a kind of leer.

I told him I did not know his mate Bill, and this was for a person who stayed at our house, whom we called the captain.

"Well," said he, "my mate Bill would be called the captain, as like as not. He has a cut on one cheek, and a mighty pleasant way with him, particularly in drink, has my mate Bill. We'll put it, for argument like, that your captain has a cut on one cheek — and we'll put it, if you like, that that cheek's the right one. Ah, well! I told you. Now, is my mate Bill in this here house?"

I told him he was out walking.

"Which way, sonny? Which way is he gone?"

And when I had pointed out the rock and told him how the captain was likely to return, and how soon, and answered a few other questions, "Ah," said he, "this'll be as good as drink to my mate Bill."

The expression of his face as he said these words was not at all pleasant, and I had my own reasons for thinking that the stranger was mistaken, even supposing he meant what he said. But it was no affair of mine, I thought; and, besides, it was difficult to know what to do.

The stranger kept hanging about just inside the inn door, peering round the corner like a cat waiting for a mouse. Once I stepped out myself into the road, but he immediately called me back, and, as I did not obey quick enough for his fancy, a most horrible change came over his tallowy face, and he ordered me in with an oath that made me jump. As soon as I was back again he returned to his former manner, half-fawning, half-sneering, patted me on the shoulder, told me I was a good boy, and he had taken quite a fancy to me. "I have a son of my own," said he, "as like you as two blocks, and he's all the pride of my 'art. But the great thing for boys is discipline, sonny — discipline. Now, if you had sailed along of Bill, you wouldn't have stood there to be spoke to twice — not you. That was never Bill's way, nor the way of sich as sailed with him. And here, sure enough, is my mate Bill, with a spy-glass under his arm, bless his old 'art, to be sure. You and me'll just go back into the parlor, sonny, and get behind the door, and we'll give Bill a little surprise — bless his 'art, I say again."

So saying, the stranger backed along with me into the parlor, and put me behind him into the corner, so that we were both hidden by the open door. I was very uneasy and alarmed, as you may fancy, and it rather added to my fears to observe that the stranger was certainly frightened himself. He cleared the hilt of his cutlass and loosened the blade in the sheath, and all the time we were waiting there he kept swallowing as if he felt what we used to call a lump in the throat.

At last in strode the captain, slammed the door behind him, without looking to the right or left, and marched straight across the room to where his breakfast awaited him.

"Bill," said the stranger, in a voice that I thought he had tried to make bold and big.

The captain spun round on his heel and fronted us; all the brown had gone out of his face, and even his nose was blue; he had the look of a man who sees a ghost, or the Evil One, or something worse, if anything can be; and, upon my word, I felt sorry to see him, all in a moment, turn so old and sick.

"Come, Bill, you know me; you know an old shipmate, Bill, surely," said the stranger.

The captain made a sort of gasp.

“Black Dog!” said he.

“And who else?” returned the other, getting more at his ease. “Black Dog as ever was, come for to see his old shipmate, Billy, at the ‘Admiral Benbow’ Inn. Ah, Bill, Bill, we have seen a sight of times, us two, since I lost them two talons,” holding up his mutilated hand.

“Now, look here,” said the captain; “you’ve run me down; here I am; well, then, speak up; what is it?”

“That’s you, Bill,” returned Black Dog; “you’re in the right of it, Billy. I’ll have a glass of rum from this dear child here, as I’ve took such a liking to; and we’ll sit down, if you please, and talk square, like old shipmates.”

When I returned with the rum they were already seated on either side of the captain’s breakfast table — Black Dog next to the door, and sitting sideways, so as to have one eye on his old shipmate and one, as I thought, on his retreat.

He bade me go and leave the door wide open. “None of your keyholes for me, sonny,” he said, and I left them together and retired into the bar.

For a long time, though I certainly did my best to listen, I could hear nothing but a low gabbling; but at last the voices began to grow higher, and I could pick up a word or two, mostly oaths, from the captain.

“No, no, no, no; and an end of it!” he cried once. And again, “If it comes to swinging, swing all, say I.”

Then all of a sudden there was a tremendous explosion of oaths and other noises; the chair and table went over in a lump, a clash of steel followed, and then a cry of pain, and the next instant I saw Black Dog in full flight, and the captain hotly pursuing, both with drawn cutlasses, and the former streaming blood from the left shoulder. Just at the door the captain aimed at the fugitive one last tremendous cut, which would certainly have split him to the chin had it not been intercepted by our big signboard of “Admiral Benbow.” You may see the notch on the lower side of the frame to this day.

That blow was the last of the battle. Once out upon the road, Black Dog, in spite of his wound, showed a wonderful clean pair of heels, and disappeared over the edge of the hill in half a minute. The captain, for his part, stood staring at the signboard like a bewildered man. Then he passed his hand over his eyes several times, and at last turned back into the house.

“Jim,” says he, “rum”; and as he spoke he reeled a little, and caught himself with one hand against the wall.

“Are you hurt?” cried I.

"Rum," he repeated. "I must get away from here. Rum! rum!"

I ran to fetch it, but I was quite unsteadied by all that had fallen out, and I broke one glass and fouled the tap, and while I was still getting in my own way, I heard a loud fall in the parlor, and, running in, beheld the captain lying full length upon the floor. At the same instant my mother, alarmed by the cries and fighting, came running downstairs to help me. Between us we raised his head. He was breathing very loud and hard, but his eyes were closed and his face was a horrible colour.

"Dear, deary me!" cried my mother, "what a disgrace upon the house! And your poor father sick!"

In the meantime we had no idea what to do to help the captain, nor any other thought but that he had got his death-hurt in the scuffle with the stranger. I got the rum, to be sure, and tried to put it down his throat, but his teeth were tightly shut, and his jaws as strong as iron. It was a happy relief for us when the door opened and Doctor Livesey came in, on his visit to my father.

"Oh, doctor," we cried, "what shall we do? Where is he wounded?"

"Wounded? A fiddlestick's end!" said the doctor. "No more wounded than you or I. The man has had a stroke, as I warned him. Now, Mrs. Hawkins, just you run upstairs to your husband and tell him, if possible, nothing about it. For my part, I must do my best to save this fellow's trebly worthless life; and, Jim, you get me a basin."

When I got back with the basin the doctor had already ripped up the captain's sleeve and exposed his great sinewy arm. It was tattooed in several places. "Here's luck," "A fair wind," and "Billy Bones, his fancy," were very neatly and clearly executed on the forearm; and up near the shoulder there was a sketch of a gallows and a man hanging from it — done, as I thought, with great spirit.

"Prophetic," said the doctor, touching this picture with his finger. "And now, Master Billy Bones, if that be your name, we'll have a look at the colour of your blood. Jim," he said, "are you afraid of blood?"

"No, sir," said I.

"Well, then," said he, "you hold the basin," and with that he took his lancet and opened a vein.

A great deal of blood was taken before the captain opened his eyes and looked mistily about him. First he recognized the doctor with an unmistakable frown; then his glance fell upon me, and he looked relieved. But suddenly his colour changed, and he tried to raise himself, crying:

"Where's Black Dog?"

"There is no Black Dog here," said the doctor, "except what you have on your own back. You have been drinking rum; you have had a stroke precisely as I told you; and I have just, very much against my own will, dragged you headforemost out of the grave. Now, Mr. Bones — ”

“That’s not my name,” he interrupted.

“Much I care,” returned the doctor. “It’s the name of a buccaneer of my acquaintance, and I call you by it for the sake of shortness, and what I have to say to you is this: One glass of rum won’t kill you, but if you take one you’ll take another and another, and I stake my wig if you don’t break off short, you’ll die — do you understand that? — die, and go to your own place, like the man in the Bible. Come, now, make an effort. I’ll help you to your bed for once.”

Between us, with much trouble, we managed to hoist him upstairs, and laid him on his bed, where his head fell back on the pillow, as if he were almost fainting.

“Now, mind you,” said the doctor, “I clear my conscience — the name of rum for you is death.”

And with that he went off to see my father, taking me with him by the arm.

“This is nothing,” he said, as soon as he had closed the door. “I have drawn blood enough to keep him quiet awhile; he should lie for a week where he is — that is the best thing for him and you, but another stroke would settle him.”

CHAPTER III
THE BLACK SPOT

About noon I stopped at the captain's door with some cooling drinks and medicines. He was lying very much as we had left him, only a little higher, and he seemed both weak and excited.

"Jim," he said, "you're the only one here that's worth anything; and you know I've always been good to you. Never a month but I've given you a silver fourpenny for yourself. And now you see, mate, I'm pretty low, and deserted by all; and, Jim, you'll bring me one noggin of rum, now, won't you, matey?"

"The doctor — " I began.

But he broke in, cursing the doctor in a feeble voice, but heartily. "Doctors is all swabs," he said; "and that doctor there, why, what do he know about seafaring men? I been in places hot as pitch, and mates dropping round with yellow jack, and the blessed land a-heaving like the sea with earthquakes — what do the doctor know of lands like that? — and I lived on rum, I tell you. It's been meat and drink, and man and wife, to me; and if I am not to have my rum now I'm a poor old hulk on a lee shore. My blood'll be on you, Jim, and that doctor swab," and he ran on again for a while with curses. "Look, Jim, how my fingers fidges," he continued in the pleading tone. "I can't keep 'em still, not I. I haven't had a drop this blessed day. That doctor's a fool, I tell you. If I don't have a drain o' rum, Jim, I'll have the horrors; I seen some on 'em already. I seen old Flint in the corner there, behind you; as plain as print, I seen him; and if I get the horrors, I'm a man that has lived rough, and I'll raise Cain. Your doctor hisself said one glass wouldn't hurt me. I'll give you a golden guinea for a noggin, Jim."

He was growing more and more excited, and this alarmed me, for my father, who was very low that day, needed quiet; besides, I was reassured by the doctor's words, now quoted to me, and rather offended by the offer of a bribe.

"I want none of your money," said I, "but what you owe my father. I'll get you one glass and no more."

When I brought it to him he seized it greedily and drank it out.

"Ay, ay," said he, "that's some better, sure enough. And now, matey, did that doctor say how long I was to lie here in this old berth?"

"A week at least," said I.

"Thunder!" he cried. "A week! I can't do that; they'd have the black spot on me by then. The lubbers is going about to get the wind of me this blessed moment; lubbers as couldn't keep what they got, and want to nail what is another's. Is that seamanly behavior, now, I want to know? But I'm a saving soul. I never wasted good money of mine, nor lost it neither; and I'll trick 'em again. I'm not afraid on 'em. I'll shake out another reef, matey, and daddle 'em again."

As he was thus speaking, he had risen from bed with great difficulty, holding to my shoulder with a grip that almost made me cry out, and moving his legs like so much dead weight. His words, spirited as they were in meaning, contrasted sadly with the weakness of the voice in which they were uttered. He paused when he had got into a sitting position on the edge.

"That doctor's done me," he murmured. "My ears is singing. Lay me back."

Before I could do much to help him he had fallen back again to his former place, where he lay for a while silent.

"Jim," he said, at length, "you saw that seafaring man to-day?"

"Black Dog?" I asked.

"Ah! Black Dog," said he. "*He's* a bad 'un; but there's worse that put him on. Now, if I can't get away nohow, and they tip me the black spot, mind you, it's my old sea-chest they're after; you get on a horse — you can, can't you? Well, then, you get on a horse and go to — well, yes, I will! — to that eternal doctor swab, and tell him to pipe all hands — magistrates and sich — and he'll lay 'em aboard at the 'Admiral Benbow' — all old Flint's crew, man and boy, all on 'em that's left. I was first mate, I was, old Flint's first mate, and I'm the on'y one as knows the place. He gave it me at Savannah, when he lay a-dying, like as if I was to now, you see. But you won't peach unless they get the black spot on me, or unless you see that Black Dog again, or a seafaring man with one leg, Jim — him above all."

"But what is the black spot, captain?" I asked.

"That's a summons, mate. I'll tell you if they get that. But you keep your weather-eye open, Jim, and I'll share with you equals, upon my honor."

He wandered a little longer, his voice growing weaker; but soon after I had given him his medicine, which he took like a child, with the remark, "If ever a seaman wanted drugs, it's me," he fell at last into a heavy, swoon-like sleep, in which I left him. What I should have done had all gone well I do not know. Probably I should have told the whole story to the doctor; for I was in mortal fear lest the captain should repent of his confessions and make an end of me. But as things fell out, my poor father died quite suddenly that evening, which put all other matters on one side. Our natural distress, the visits of the neighbors, the arranging of the funeral, and all the work of the inn to be carried on in the meanwhile, kept me so busy that I had scarcely time to think of the captain, far less to be afraid of him.

He got downstairs next morning, to be sure, and had his meals as usual, though he ate little, and had more, I am afraid, than his usual supply of rum, for he helped himself out of the bar, scowling and blowing through his nose, and no one dared to cross him. On the night before the funeral he was as drunk as ever; and it was shocking, in that house of mourning, to hear him singing away his ugly old sea-song; but, weak as he was, we were all in fear of death for him, and the doctor was suddenly taken up with a case many miles away, and was never near the house after my father's death. I have said the captain was weak, and indeed he seemed rather to grow weaker than to regain his strength. He clambered up and down stairs, and went from the parlor to the bar and back again, and sometimes put his nose out of doors to smell the sea, holding on to the walls as he went for support, and breathing hard and fast, like a man on a steep mountain. He never particularly addressed me, and it is my belief he had as good as forgotten his confidences; but his temper was more flighty, and, allowing for his bodily weakness, more violent than ever. He had an alarming way now when he was drunk of drawing his cutlass and laying it bare before him on the table. But, with all that, he minded people less, and seemed shut up in his own thoughts and rather wandering. Once, for instance, to our extreme wonder, he piped up to a different air, a kind of country love-song, that he must have learned in his youth before he had begun to follow the sea.

So things passed until the day after the funeral and about three o'clock of a bitter, foggy, frosty afternoon, I was standing at the door for a moment, full of sad thoughts about my father, when I saw someone drawing slowly near along the road. He was plainly blind, for he tapped before him with a stick, and wore a great green shade over his eyes and nose; and he was hunched, as if with age or weakness, and wore a huge old tattered sea-cloak with a hood that made him appear positively deformed. I never saw in my life a more dreadful-looking figure. He stopped a little from the inn and, raising his voice in an odd sing-song, addressed the air in front of him:

"Will any kind friend inform a poor blind man, who has lost the precious sight of his eyes in the gracious defense of his native country, England, and God bless King George! — where or in what part of this country he may now be?"

"You are at the 'Admiral Benbow,' Black Hill Cove, my good man," said I.

"I hear a voice," said he, "a young voice. Will you give me your hand, my kind young friend, and lead me in?"

I held out my hand, and the horrible, soft-spoken, eyeless creature gripped it in a moment like a vise. I was so much startled that I struggled to withdraw, but the blind man pulled me close up to him with a single action of his arm.

“Now, boy,” he said, “take me in to the captain.”

“Sir,” said I, “upon my word I dare not.”

“Oh,” he sneered, “that’s it! Take me in straight, or I’ll break your arm.”

He gave it, as he spoke, a wrench that made me cry out.

“Sir,” said I, “it is for yourself I mean. The captain is not what he used to be. He sits with a drawn cutlass. Another gentleman — ”

“Come, now, march,” interrupted he, and I never heard a voice so cruel, and cold, and ugly as that blind man’s. It cowed me more than the pain, and I began to obey him at once, walking straight in at the door and towards the parlor, where the sick old buccaneer was sitting, dazed with rum. The blind man clung close to me, holding me in one iron fist, and leaning almost more of his weight on me than I could carry. “Lead me straight up to him, and when I’m in view, cry out, ‘Here’s a friend for you, Bill.’ If you don’t, I’ll do this,” and with that he gave me a twitch that I thought would have made me faint. Between this and that, I was so utterly terrified by the blind beggar that I forgot my terror of the captain, and as I opened the parlor door, cried out the words he had ordered in a trembling voice.

The poor captain raised his eyes, and at one look the rum went out of him and left him staring sober. The expression of his face was not so much of terror as of mortal sickness. He made a movement to rise, but I do not believe he had enough force left in his body.

“Now, Bill, sit where you are,” said the beggar. “If I can’t see, I can hear a finger stirring. Business is business. Hold out your left hand. Boy, take his left hand by the wrist and bring it near to my right.”

We both obeyed him to the letter, and I saw him pass something from the hollow of the hand that held his stick into the palm of the captain’s, which closed upon it instantly.

“And now that’s done,” said the blind man, and at the words he suddenly left hold of me, and with incredible accuracy and nimbleness, skipped out of the parlor and into the road, where, as I stood motionless, I could hear his stick go tap-tap-tapping into the distance.

It was some time before either I or the captain seemed to gather our senses; but at length, and about the same moment, I released his wrist, which I was still holding, and he drew in his hand, and looked sharply into the palm.

“Ten o’clock!” he cried. “Six hours! We’ll do them yet!” and he sprang to his feet.

Even as he did so, he reeled, put his hand to his throat, stood swaying for a moment, and then, with a peculiar sound, fell from his whole height face foremost to the floor.

I ran to him at once, calling to my mother. But haste was all in vain. The captain had been struck dead by thundering apoplexy. It is a curious thing to understand, for I had certainly never liked the man, though of late I had begun to pity him, but as soon as I saw that he was dead I burst into a flood of tears. It was the second death I had known, and the sorrow of the first was still fresh in my heart.

CHAPTER IV
THE SEA-CHEST

I lost no time, of course, in telling my mother all that I knew, and perhaps should have told her long before, and we saw ourselves at once in a difficult and dangerous position. Some of the man's money — if he had any — was certainly due to us, but it was not likely that our captain's shipmates, above all the two specimens seen by me — Black Dog and the blind beggar — would be inclined to give up their booty in payment of the dead man's debts. The captain's order to mount at once and ride for Doctor Livesey would have left my mother alone and unprotected, which was not to be thought of. Indeed, it seemed impossible for either of us to remain much longer in the house; the fall of coals in the kitchen grate, the very ticking of the clock, filled us with alarm. The neighborhood, to our ears, seemed haunted by approaching footsteps; and what between the dead body of the captain on the parlor floor and the thought of that detestable blind beggar hovering near at hand and ready to return, there were moments when, as the saying goes, I jumped in my skin for terror. Something must speedily be resolved upon, and it occurred to us at last to go forth together and seek help in the neighboring hamlet. No sooner said than done. Bareheaded as we were, we ran out at once in the gathering evening and the frosty fog.

The hamlet lay not many hundred yards away, though out of view, on the other side of the next cove; and what greatly encouraged me, it was in an opposite direction from that whence the blind man had made his appearance, and whither he had presumably returned. We were not many minutes on the road, though we sometimes stopped to lay hold of each other and hearken. But there was no unusual sound — nothing but the low wash of the ripple and the croaking of the inmates of the wood.

It was already candle-light when we reached the hamlet, and I shall never forget how much I was cheered to see the yellow shine in doors and windows; but that, as it proved, was the best of the help we were likely to get in that quarter. For — you would have thought men would have been ashamed of themselves — no soul would consent to return with us to the “Admiral Benbow.” The more we told of our troubles, the more — man, woman, and child — they clung to the shelter of their houses. The name of Captain Flint, though it was strange to me, was well enough known to some there, and carried a great weight of terror. Some of the men who had been to field-work on the far side of the “Admiral Benbow” remembered, besides, to have seen several strangers on the road, and, taking them to be smugglers, to have bolted away; and one at least had seen a little lugger in what we called Kitt's Hole. For that matter, anyone who was a comrade of the captain's was enough to frighten them to death. And the short and the long of the matter was, that while we could get several who were willing enough to ride to Doctor Livesey's, which lay in another direction, not one would help us to defend the inn.

They say cowardice is infectious; but then argument is, on the other hand, a great emboldener; and so when each had said his say, my mother made them a speech. She would not, she declared, lose money that belonged to her fatherless boy. "If none of the rest of you dare," she said, "Jim and I dare. Back we will go, the way we came, and small thanks to you big, hulking, chicken-hearted men! We'll have that chest open, if we die for it. And I'll thank you for that bag, Mrs. Crossley, to bring back our lawful money in."

Of course I said I would go with my mother; and of course they all cried out at our foolhardiness; but even then not a man would go along with us. All they would do was to give me a loaded pistol, lest we were attacked; and to promise to have horses ready saddled, in case we were pursued on our return; while one lad was to ride forward to the doctor's in search of armed assistance.

My heart was beating fiercely when we two set forth in the cold night upon this dangerous venture. A full moon was beginning to rise and peered redly through the upper edges of the fog, and this increased our haste, for it was plain, before we came forth again, that all would be bright as day, and our departure exposed to the eyes of any watchers. We slipped along the hedges, noiseless and swift, nor did we see or hear anything to increase our terrors till, to our huge relief, the door of the "Admiral Benbow" had closed behind us.

I slipped the bolt at once, and we stood and panted for a moment in the dark, alone in the house with the dead captain's body. Then my mother got a candle in the bar, and, holding each other's hands, we advanced into the parlor. He lay as we had left him, on his back, with his eyes open, and one arm stretched out.

"Draw down the blind, Jim," whispered my mother; "they might come and watch outside. And now," said she, when I had done so, "we have to get the key off *that*; and who's to touch it, I should like to know!" and she gave a kind of sob as she said the words.

I went down on my knees at once. On the floor close to his hand there was a little round of paper, blackened on one side. I could not doubt that this was the *black spot*; and, taking it up, I found written on the other side, in a very good, clear hand, this short message, "You have till ten to-night."

"He had till ten, mother," said I; and, just as I said it, our old clock began striking. This sudden noise startled us shockingly; but the news was good, for it was only six.

“Now, Jim,” she said, “that key!”

I felt in his pockets, one after another. A few small coins, a thimble, and some thread and big needles, a piece of pig-tail tobacco bitten away at the end, his gully with the crooked handle, a pocket compass, and a tinder-box, were all that they contained, and I began to despair.

“Perhaps it’s round his neck,” suggested my mother.

Overcoming a strong repugnance, I tore open his shirt at the neck, and there, sure enough, hanging to a bit of tarry string, which I cut with his own gully, we found the key. At this triumph we were filled with hope, and hurried upstairs, without delay, to the little room where he had slept so long, and where his box had stood since the day of his arrival.

It was like any other seaman’s chest on the outside, the initial “B” burned on the top of it with a hot iron, and the corners somewhat smashed and broken as by long, rough usage.

“Give me the key,” said my mother, and though the lock was very stiff, she had turned it and thrown back the lid in a twinkling.

A strong smell of tobacco and tar arose from the interior, but nothing was to be seen on the top except a suit of very good clothes, carefully brushed and folded. They had never been worn, my mother said. Under that the miscellany began — a quadrant, a tin cannikin, several sticks of tobacco, two brace of very handsome pistols, a piece of bar silver, an old Spanish watch, and some other trinkets of little value and mostly of foreign make, a pair of compasses mounted with brass, and five or six curious West Indian shells. I have often wondered since why he should have carried about these shells with him in his wandering, guilty, and hunted life.

In the meantime we found nothing of any value but the silver and the trinkets, and neither of these were in our way. Underneath there was an old boat-cloak, whitened with sea-salt on many a harbor-bar. My mother pulled it up with impatience, and there lay before us, the last things in the chest, a bundle tied up in oilcloth, and looking like papers, and a canvas bag that gave forth, at a touch, the jingle of gold.

“I’ll show those rogues that I’m an honest woman,” said my mother. “I’ll have my dues and not a farthing over. Hold Mrs. Crossley’s bag.” And she began to count over the amount of the captain’s score from the sailor’s bag into the one that I was holding.

It was a long, difficult business, for the coins were of all countries and sizes — doubloons, and louis-d’ors, and guineas, and pieces of eight, and I know not what besides, all shaken together at random. The guineas, too, were about the scarcest, and it was with these only that my mother knew how to make her count.

When we were about halfway through, I suddenly put my hand upon her arm, for I had heard in the silent, frosty air, a sound that brought my heart into my mouth — the tap-tapping of the blind man's stick upon the frozen road. It drew nearer and nearer, while we sat holding our breath. Then it struck sharp on the inn door, and then we could hear the handle being turned, and the bolt rattling as the wretched being tried to enter; and then there was a long time of silence both within and without. At last the tapping recommenced, and to our indescribable joy and gratitude, died slowly away again until it ceased to be heard.

"Mother," said I, "take the whole and let's be going"; for I was sure the bolted door must have seemed suspicious, and would bring the whole hornet's nest about our ears; though how thankful I was that I had bolted it, none could tell who had never met that terrible blind man.

But my mother, frightened as she was, would not consent to take a fraction more than was due to her, and was obstinately unwilling to be content with less. It was not yet seven, she said, by a long way; she knew her rights and she would have them; and she was still arguing with me, when a little low whistle sounded a good way off upon the hill. That was enough, and more than enough, for both of us.

"I'll take what I have," she said, jumping to her feet.

"And I'll take this to square the count," said I, picking up the oilskin packet.

Next moment we were both groping downstairs, leaving the candle by the empty chest; and the next we had opened the door and were in full retreat. We had not started a moment too soon. The fog was rapidly dispersing; already the moon shone quite clear on the high ground on either side, and it was only in the exact bottom of the dell and round the tavern door that a thin veil still hung unbroken to conceal the first steps of our escape. Far less than halfway to the hamlet, very little beyond the bottom of the hill, we must come forth into the moonlight. Nor was this all; for the sound of several footsteps running came already to our ears, and as we looked back in their direction, a light, tossing to and fro, and still rapidly advancing, showed that one of the new-comers carried a lantern.

"My dear," said my mother, suddenly, "take the money and run on. I am going to faint."

This was certainly the end for both of us, I thought. How I cursed the cowardice of the neighbors! how I blamed my poor mother for her honesty and her greed, for her past foolhardiness and present weakness! We were just at the little bridge, by good fortune, and I helped her, tottering as she was, to the edge of the bank, where, sure enough, she gave a sigh and fell on my shoulder. I do not know how I found the strength to do it all, and I am afraid it was roughly done, but I managed to drag her down the bank and a little way under the arch. Farther I could not move her, for the bridge was too low to let me do more than crawl below it. So there we had to stay — my mother almost entirely exposed, and both of us within earshot of the inn.

CHAPTER V
THE LAST OF THE BLIND MAN

My curiosity, in a sense, was stronger than my fear; for I could not remain where I was, but crept back to the bank again, whence, sheltering my head behind a bush of broom, I might command the road before our door. I was scarcely in position ere my enemies began to arrive, seven or eight of them, running hard, their feet beating out of time along the road, and the man with the lantern some paces in front. Three men ran together, hand in hand; and I made out, even through the mist, that the middle man of this trio was the blind beggar. The next moment his voice showed me that I was right.

"Down with the door!" he cried.

"Ay, ay, sir!" answered two or three; and a rush was made upon the "Admiral Benbow," the lantern-bearer following; and then I could see them pause, and hear speeches passed in a lower key, as if they were surprised to find the door open. But the pause was brief, for the blind man again issued his commands. His voice sounded louder and higher, as if he were afire with eagerness and rage.

"In, in, in!" he shouted, and cursed them for their delay.

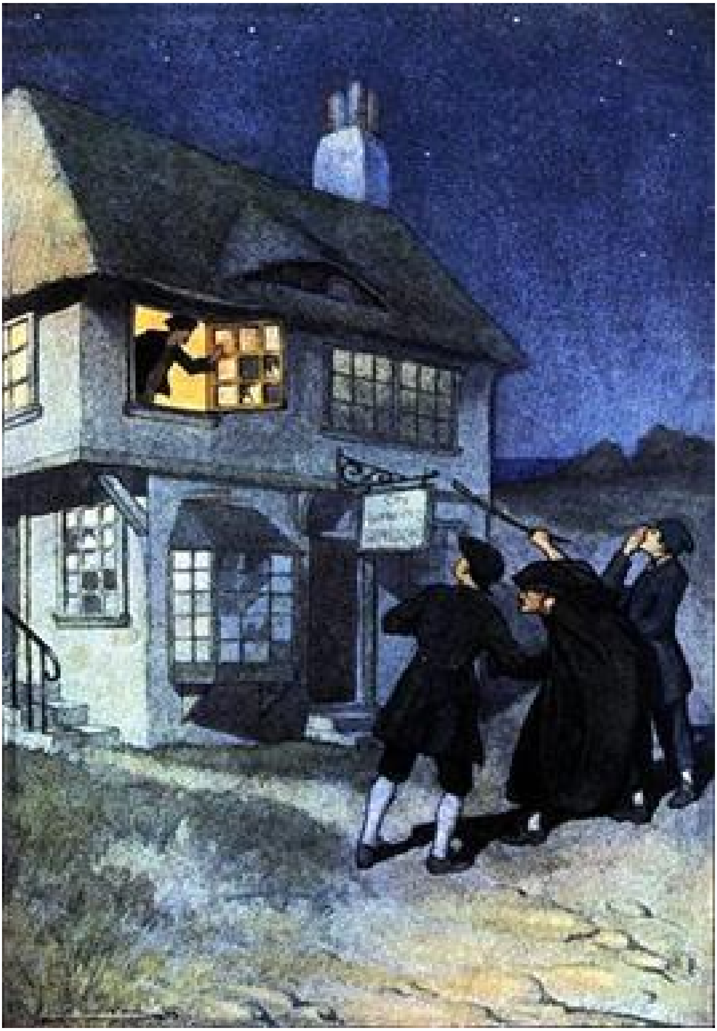
Four or five of them obeyed at once, two remaining on the road with the formidable beggar. There was a pause, then a cry of surprise, and then a voice shouting from the house:

"Bill's dead!"

But the blind man swore at them again for their delay.

"Search him, some of you shirking lubbers, and the rest of you aloft and get the chest," he cried.

I could hear their feet rattling up our old stairs, so that the house must have shook with it. Promptly afterward fresh sounds of astonishment arose; the window of the captain's room was thrown open with a slam and a jingle of broken glass, and a man leaned out into the moonlight, head and shoulders, and addressed the blind beggar on the road below him.



"Pew!" he cried, "they've been before us"

"Pew!" he cried, "they've been before us. Someone's turned the chest out alow and aloft."

"Is it there?" roared Pew.

"The money's there."

The blind man cursed the money.

"Flint's fist, I mean," he cried.

"We don't see it here, nohow," returned the man.

"Here, you below there, is it on Bill?" cried the blind man again.

At that, another fellow, probably he who had remained below to search the captain's body, came to the door of the inn. "Bill's been overhauled a'ready," said he, "nothin' left."

"It's these people of the inn — it's that boy. I wish I had put his eyes out!" cried the blind man, Pew. "They were here no time ago — they had the door bolted when I tried it. Scatter, lads, and find 'em."

"Sure enough, they left their glim here," said the fellow from the window.

"Scatter and find 'em! Rout the house out!" reiterated Pew, striking with his stick upon the road.

Then there followed a great to-do through all our old inn, heavy feet pounding to and fro, furniture all thrown over, doors kicked in, until the very rocks re-echoed, and the men came out again, one after another, on the road, and declared that we were nowhere to be found. And just then the same whistle that had alarmed my mother and myself over the dead captain's money was once more clearly audible through the night, but this time twice repeated. I had thought it to be the blind man's trumpet, so to speak, summoning his crew to the assault; but I now found that it was a signal from the hillside toward the hamlet, and, from its effect upon the buccaneers, a signal to warn them of approaching danger.

"There's Dirk again," said one. "Twice! We'll have to budge, mates."

"Budge, you skulk!" cried Pew. "Dirk was a fool and a coward from the first — you wouldn't mind him. They must be close by; they can't be far; you have your hands on it. Scatter and look for them, dogs. Oh, shiver my soul," he cried, "if I had eyes!"

This appeal seemed to produce some effect, for two of the fellows began to look here and there among the lumber, but half-heartedly, I thought, and with half an eye to their own danger all the time, while the rest stood irresolute on the road.

"You have your hands on thousands, you fools, and you hang a leg! You'd be as rich as kings if you could find it, and you know it's here, and you stand there skulking. There wasn't one of you dared face Bill, and I did it — a blind man! And I'm to lose my chance for you! I'm to be a poor, crawling beggar, sponging for rum, when I might be rolling in a coach! If you had the pluck of a weevil in a biscuit, you would catch them still."

"Hang it, Pew, we've got the doubloons!" grumbled one.

"They might have hid the blessed thing," said another. "Take the Georges, Pew, and don't stand here squalling."

Squalling was the word for it; Pew's anger rose so high at these objections; till at last, his passion completely taking the upper hand, he struck at them right and left in his blindness, and his stick sounded heavily on more than one.

These, in their turn, cursed back at the blind miscreant, threatened him in horrid terms, and tried in vain to catch the stick and wrest it from his grasp.

This quarrel was the saving of us; for while it was still raging, another sound came from the top of the hill on the side of the hamlet — the tramp of horses galloping. Almost at the same time a pistol-shot, flash, and report came from the hedge side. And that was plainly the last signal of danger, for the buccaneers turned at once and ran, separating in every direction, one seaward along the cove, one slant across the hill, and so on, so that in half a minute not a sign of them remained but Pew. Him they had deserted, whether in sheer panic or out of revenge for his ill words and blows, I know not; but there he remained behind, tapping up and down the road in a frenzy, and groping and calling for his comrades. Finally he took the wrong turn, and ran a few steps past me, towards the hamlet, crying:

"Johnny, Black Dog, Dirk," and other names, "you won't leave old Pew, mates — not old Pew?"

Just then the noise of horses topped the rise, and four or five riders came in sight in the moonlight, and swept at full gallop down the slope.

At this Pew saw his error, turned with a scream, and ran straight for the ditch, into which he rolled. But he was on his feet again in a second, and made another dash, now utterly bewildered, right under the nearest of the coming horses.

The rider tried to save him, but in vain. Down went Pew with a cry that rang high into the night, and the four hoofs trampled and spurned him and passed by. He fell on his side, then gently collapsed upon his face, and moved no more.

I leaped to my feet and hailed the riders. They were pulling up, at any rate, horrified at the accident, and I soon saw what they were. One, tailing out behind the rest, was a lad that had gone from the hamlet to Doctor Livesey's; the rest were revenue officers, whom he had met by the way, and with whom he had had the intelligence to return at once. Some news of the lugger in Kitt's Hole had found its way to Supervisor Dance, and set him forth that night in our direction, and to that circumstance my mother and I owed our preservation from death.

Pew was dead, stone dead. As for my mother, when we had carried her up to the hamlet, a little cold water and salts very soon brought her back again, and she was none the worse for her terror, though she still continued to deplore the balance of the money.

In the meantime the supervisor rode on, as fast as he could, to Kitt's Hole; but his men had to dismount and grope down the dingle, leading, and sometimes supporting, their horses, and in continual fear of ambushes; so it was no great matter for surprise that when they got down to the Hole the lugger was already under way, though still close in. He hailed her. A voice replied, telling him to keep out of the moonlight, or he would get some lead in him, and at the same time a bullet whistled close by his arm. Soon after, the lugger doubled the point and disappeared. Mr. Dance stood there, as he said, "like a fish out of water," and all he could do was to dispatch a man to B — — to warn the cutter. "And that," said he, "is just about as good as nothing. They've got off clean, and there's an end. Only," he added, "I'm glad I trod on Master Pew's corns"; for by this time he had heard my story.

I went back with him to the "Admiral Benbow," and you cannot imagine a house in such a state of smash; the very clock had been thrown down by these fellows in their furious hunt after my mother and myself; and though nothing had actually been taken away except the captain's money-bag and a little silver from the till, I could see at once that we were ruined. Mr. Dance could make nothing of the scene.

"They got the money, you say? Well, then, Hawkins, what in fortune were they after? More money, I suppose?"

"No, sir; not money, I think," replied I. "In fact, sir, I believe I have the thing in my breast-pocket; and, to tell you the truth, I should like to get it put in safety."

"To be sure, boy; quite right," said he. "I'll take it, if you like."

"I thought, perhaps, Doctor Livesey — " I began.

"Perfectly right," he interrupted, very cheerily, "perfectly right — a gentleman and a magistrate. And, now I come to think of it, I might as well ride round there myself and report to him or squire. Master Pew's dead, when all's done; not that I regret it, but he's dead, you see, and people will make it out against an officer of his Majesty's revenue, if make it out they can. Now, I'll tell you, Hawkins, if you like, I'll take you along."

I thanked him heartily for the offer, and we walked back to the hamlet where the horses were. By the time I had told mother of my purpose they were all in the saddle.

"Dogger," said Mr. Dance, "you have a good horse; take up this lad behind you."

As soon as I was mounted, holding on to Dogger's belt, the supervisor gave the word, and the party struck out at a bouncing trot on the road to Doctor Livesey's house.

CHAPTER VI
THE CAPTAIN'S PAPERS

We rode hard all the way, till we drew up before Doctor Livesey's door. The house was all dark to the front.

Mr. Dance told me to jump down and knock, and Dogger gave me a stirrup to descend by. The door was opened almost at once by the maid.

"Is Doctor Livesey in?" I asked.

"No," she said. He had come home in the afternoon, but had gone up to the Hall to dine and pass the evening with the squire.

"So there we go, boys," said Mr. Dance.

This time, as the distance was short, I did not mount, but ran with Dogger's stirrup-leather to the lodge gates, and up the long, leafless, moonlit avenue to where the white line of the Hall buildings looked on either hand on great old gardens. Here Mr. Dance dismounted and, taking me along with him, was admitted at a word into the house.

The servant led us down a matted passage, and showed us at the end into a great library, all lined with bookcases and busts upon top of them, where the squire and Doctor Livesey sat, pipe in hand, on either side of a bright fire.

I had never seen the squire so near at hand. He was a tall man, over six feet high, and broad in proportion, and he had a bluff, rough-and-ready face, all roughened and reddened and lined in his long travels. His eyebrows were very black, and moved readily, and this gave him a look of some temper, not bad, you would say, but quick and high.

"Come in, Mr. Dance," said he, very stately and condescending.

"Good evening, Dance," said the doctor, with a nod. "And good evening to you, friend Jim. What good wind brings you here?"

The supervisor stood up straight and stiff, and told his story like a lesson; and you should have seen how the two gentlemen leaned forward and looked at each other, and forgot to smoke in their surprise and interest. When they heard how my mother went back to the inn, Doctor Livesey fairly slapped his thigh, and the squire cried "Bravo!" and broke his long pipe against the grate. Long before it was done, Mr. Trelawney (that, you will remember, was the squire's name) had got up from his seat, and was striding about the room, and the doctor, as if to hear the better, had taken off his powdered wig, and sat there, looking very strange indeed with his own close-cropped, black poll.

At last Mr. Dance finished the story.

"Mr. Dance," said the squire, "you are a very noble fellow. And as for riding down that black, atrocious miscreant, I regard it as an act of virtue, sir, like stamping on a cockroach. This lad Hawkins is a trump, I perceive. Hawkins, will you ring that bell? Mr. Dance must have some ale."

"And so, Jim," said the doctor, "you have the thing that they were after, have you?"

"Here it is, sir," said I, and gave him the oilskin packet.

The doctor looked it all over, as if his fingers were itching to open it; but, instead of doing that, he put it quietly in the pocket of his coat.

"Squire," said he, "when Dance has had his ale he must, of course, be off on his Majesty's service; but I mean to keep Jim Hawkins here to sleep at my house, and, with your permission, I propose we should have up the cold pie, and let him sup."

"As you will, Livesey," said the squire; "Hawkins has earned better than cold pie."

So a big pigeon pie was brought in and put on a side-table, and I made a hearty supper, for I was as hungry as a hawk, while Mr. Dance was further complimented, and at last dismissed.

"And now, squire," said the doctor.

"And now, Livesey," said the squire, in the same breath.

"One at a time, one at a time," laughed Doctor Livesey. "You have heard of this Flint, I suppose?"

"Heard of him!" cried the squire. "Heard of him, you say! He was the blood-thirstiest buccaneer that sailed. Blackbeard was a child to Flint. The Spaniards were so prodigiously afraid of him that, I tell you, sir, I was sometimes proud he was an Englishman. I've seen his topsails with these eyes, off Trinidad, and the cowardly son of a rum-puncheon that I sailed with put back — put back, sir, into Port of Spain."

"Well, I've heard of him myself, in England," said the doctor. "But the point is, had he money?"

"Money!" cried the squire. "Have you heard the story? What were these villains after but money? What do they care for but money? For what would they risk their rascal carcasses but money?"

"That we shall soon know," replied the doctor. "But you are so confoundedly hot-headed and exclamatory that I cannot get a word in. What I want to know is this: Supposing that I have here in my pocket some clue to where Flint buried his treasure, will that treasure amount to much?"

"Amount, sir!" cried the squire. "It will amount to this: If we have the clue you talk about, I'll fit out a ship in Bristol dock, and take you and Hawkins here along, and I'll have that treasure if I search a year."

"Very well," said the doctor. "Now, then, if Jim is agreeable, we'll open the packet," and he laid it before him on the table.

The bundle was sewn together, and the doctor had to get out his instrument case and cut the stitches with his medical scissors. It contained two things — a book and a sealed paper.

"First of all we'll try the book," observed the doctor.

The squire and I were both peering over his shoulder as he opened it, for Doctor Livesey had kindly motioned me to come round from the side-table, where I had been eating, to enjoy the sport of the search. On the first page there were only some scraps of writing, such as a man with a pen in his hand might make for idleness or practice. One was the same as the tattoo mark, "Billy Bones his fancy"; then there was "Mr. W. Bones, mate," "No more rum," "Off Palm Key he got itt," and some other snatches, mostly single words and unintelligible. I could not help wondering who it was that had "got itt," and what "itt" was that he got. A knife in his back as like as not.

"Not much instruction there," said Doctor Livesey, as he passed on.

The next ten or twelve pages were filled with a curious series of entries. There was a date at one end of the line and at the other a sum of money, as in common account-books; but instead of explanatory writing, only a varying number of crosses between the two. On the 12th of June, 1745, for instance, a sum of seventy pounds had plainly become due to someone, and there was nothing but six crosses to explain the cause. In a few cases, to be sure, the name of a place would be added, as "Offe Caraccas"; or a mere entry of latitude and longitude, as "62° 172 203, 19° 22 403."

The record lasted over nearly twenty years, the amount of the separate entries growing larger as time went on, and at the end a grand total had been made out, after five or six wrong additions, and these words appended, "Bones, his pile."

"I can't make head or tail of this," said Doctor Livesey.

"The thing is as clear as noonday," cried the squire. "This is the black-hearted hound's account-book. These crosses stand for the names of ships or towns that they sank or plundered. The sums are the scoundrel's share, and where he feared an ambiguity, you see he added something clearer. 'Offe Caraccas,' now; you see, here was some unhappy vessel boarded off that coast. God help the poor souls that manned her — coral long ago."

"Right!" said the doctor. "See what it is to be a traveler. Right! And the amounts increase, you see, as he rose in rank."

There was little else in the volume but a few bearings of places noted in the blank leaves toward the end, and a table for reducing French, English, and Spanish moneys to a common value.

"Thrifty man!" cried the doctor. "He wasn't the one to be cheated."

"And now," said the squire, "for the other."

The paper had been sealed in several places with a thimble by way of seal; the very thimble, perhaps, that I had found in the captain's pocket. The doctor opened the seals with great care, and there fell out the map of an island, with latitude and longitude, soundings, names of hills and bays and inlets, and every particular that would be needed to bring a ship to a safe anchorage upon its shores. It was about nine miles long and five across, shaped, you might say, like a fat dragon standing up, and had two fine landlocked harbors, and a hill in the center part marked "The Spy-glass." There were several additions of a later date; but, above all, three crosses of red ink — two on the north part of the island, one in the southwest, and, beside this last, in the same red ink, and in a small, neat hand, very different from the captain's tottery characters, these words: "Bulk of treasure here."

Over on the back the same hand had written this further information:

"Tall tree, Spy-glass shoulder, bearing a point to the N. of N.N.E.

"SkeletonIsland E.S.E. and by E.

"Ten feet.

"The bar silver is in the north cache; you can find it by the trend of the east hummock, ten fathoms south of the black crag with the face on it.

"The arms are easy found, in the sandhill, N. point of north inlet cape, bearing E. and a quarter N.

"J. F."

That was all, but brief as it was, and, to me, incomprehensible, it filled the squire and Doctor Livesey with delight.

"Livesey," said the squire, "you will give up this wretched practice at once. To-morrow I start for Bristol. In three weeks' time — three weeks! — two weeks — ten days — we'll have the best ship, sir, and the choicest crew in England. Hawkins shall come as cabin-boy. You'll make a famous cabin-boy, Hawkins. You, Livesey, are ship's doctor; I am admiral. We'll take Redruth, Joyce, and Hunter. We'll have favorable winds, a quick passage, and not the least difficulty in finding the spot, and money to eat — to roll in — to play duck and drake with ever after."

"Trelawney," said the doctor, "I'll go with you; and I'll go bail for it, so will Jim, and be a credit to the undertaking. There's only one man I'm afraid of."

"And who's that?" cried the squire. "Name the dog, sir!"

"You," replied the doctor, "for you cannot hold your tongue. We are not the only men who know of this paper. These fellows who attacked the inn to-night — bold, desperate blades, for sure — and the rest who stayed aboard that lugger, and more, I dare say, not far off, are, one and all, through thick and thin, bound that they'll get that money. We must none of us go alone till we get to sea. Jim and I shall stick together in the meanwhile; you'll take Joyce and Hunter when you ride to Bristol, and, from first to last, not one of us must breathe a word of what we've found."

"Livesey," returned the squire, "you are always in the right of it. I'll be as silent as the grave."

PART II
THE SEA-COOK

CHAPTER VII
I GO TO BRISTOL

It was longer than the squire imagined ere we were ready for the sea, and none of our first plans — not even Doctor Livesey's, of keeping me beside him — could be carried out as we intended. The doctor had to go to London for a physician to take charge of his practice; the squire was hard at work at Bristol; and I lived on at the Hall under the charge of old Redruth, the gamekeeper, almost a prisoner, but full of sea-dreams and the most charming anticipations of strange islands and adventures. I brooded by the hour together over the map, all the details of which I well remembered. Sitting by the fire in the housekeeper's room, I approached that island, in my fancy, from every possible direction; I explored every acre of its surface; I climbed a thousand times to that tall hill they call the Spy-glass, and from the top enjoyed the most wonderful and changing prospects. Sometimes the isle was thick with savages, with whom we fought; sometimes full of dangerous animals that hunted us; but in all my fancies nothing occurred to me so strange and tragic as our actual adventures.

So the weeks passed on, till one fine day there came a letter addressed to Doctor Livesey, with this addition, "To be opened in the case of his absence, by Tom Redruth or Young Hawkins." Obeying this order, we found, or rather I found — for the gamekeeper was a poor hand at reading anything but print — the following important news:

"*Old Anchor Inn, Bristol, March 1, 17 — .*

"Dear Livesey: As I do not know whether you are at the Hall or still in London, I send this in double to both places.

"The ship is bought and fitted. She lies at anchor, ready for sea. You never imagined a sweeter schooner — a child might sail her — two hundred tons; name, *Hispaniola*.

"I got her through my old friend, Blandly, who has proved himself throughout the most surprising trump. The admirable fellow literally slaved in my interest, and so, I may say, did every one in Bristol, as soon as they got wind of the port we sailed for — treasure, I mean."

"Redruth," said I, interrupting the letter, "Doctor Livesey will not like that. The squire has been talking, after all."

"Well, who's a better right?" growled the gamekeeper. "A pretty rum go if Squire ain't to talk for Doctor Livesey, I should think."

At that I gave up all attempt at commentary, and read straight on:

"Blandly himself found the *Hispaniola*, and by the most admirable management got her for the merest trifle. There is a class of men in Bristol monstrously prejudiced against Blandly. They go the length of declaring that this honest creature would do anything for money; that the *Hispaniola* belonged to him, and that he sold to me absurdly high — the most transparent calumnies. None of them dare, however, to deny the merits of the ship.

"So far there was not a hitch. The workpeople, to be sure — riggers and what not — were most annoyingly slow, but time cured that. It was the crew that troubled me.

"I wished a round score of men — in case of natives, buccaneers, or the odious French — and I had the worry of the deuce itself to find so much as half a dozen, till the most remarkable stroke of fortune brought me the very man that I required.

"I was standing on the dock, when, by the merest accident, I fell in talk with him. I found he was an old sailor, kept a public house, knew all the seafaring men in Bristol, had lost his health ashore, and wanted a good berth as cook to get to sea again. He had hobbled down there that morning, he said, to get a smell of the salt.

"I was monstrously touched — so would you have been — and, out of pure pity, I engaged him on the spot to be ship's cook. Long John Silver he is called, and has lost a leg; but that I regarded as a recommendation, since he lost it in his country's service, under the immortal Hawke. He has no pension, Livesey. Imagine the abominable age we live in!

"Well, sir, I thought I had only found a cook, but it was a crew I had discovered. Between Silver and myself we got together in a few days a company of the toughest old salts imaginable — not pretty to look at, but fellows, by their faces, of the most indomitable spirit. I declare we could fight a frigate.

"Long John even got rid of two out of the six or seven I had already engaged. He showed me in a moment that they were just the sort of fresh-water swabs we had to fear in an adventure of importance.

"I am in the most magnificent health and spirits, eating like a bull, sleeping like a tree, yet I shall not enjoy a moment till I hear my old tarpaulins tramping round the capstan. Seaward ho! Hang the treasure! It's the glory of the sea that has turned my head. So now, Livesey, come post; do not lose an hour, if you respect me.

"Let young Hawkins go at once to see his mother, with Redruth for a guard, and then both come full speed to Bristol.

"John Trelawney.

"P.S. — I did not tell you that Blandly, who, by the way, is to send a consort after us if we don't turn up by the end of August, had found an admirable fellow for sailing-master — a stiff man, which I regret, but, in all other respects, a treasure. Long John Silver unearthed a very competent man for a mate, a man named Arrow. I have a boatswain who pipes, Livesey; so things shall go man-o'-war fashion on board the good ship *Hispaniola*.

"I forgot to tell you that Silver is a man of substance; I know of my own knowledge that he has a banker's account, which has never been overdrawn. He leaves his wife to manage the inn; and as she is a woman of colour, a pair of old bachelors like you and I may be excused for guessing that it is the wife, quite as much as the health, that sends him back to roving.

"J. T.

"P.P.S. — Hawkins may stay one night with his mother.

"J. T."

You can fancy the excitement into which that letter put me. I was half beside myself with glee, and if ever I despised a man, it was old Tom Redruth, who could do nothing but grumble and lament. Any of the under-gamekeepers would gladly have changed places with him; but such was not the squire's pleasure, and the squire's pleasure was like law among them all. Nobody but old Redruth would have dared so much as even to grumble.

The next morning he and I set out on foot for the "Admiral Benbow," and there I found my mother in good health and spirits. The captain, who had so long been a cause of so much discomfort, was gone where the wicked cease from troubling. The squire had had everything repaired, and the public rooms and the sign repainted, and had added some furniture — above all a beautiful armchair for mother in the bar. He had found her a boy as an apprentice also, so that she should not want help while I was gone.

It was on seeing that boy that I understood, for the first time, my situation. I had thought up to that moment of the adventures before me, not at all of the home that I was leaving; and now at sight of this clumsy stranger, who was to stay here in my place beside my mother, I had my first attack of tears. I am afraid I led that boy a dog's life; for as he was new to the work, I had a hundred opportunities of setting him right and putting him down, and I was not slow to profit by them.

The night passed, and the next day, after dinner, Redruth and I were afoot again and on the road. I said good-by to mother and the cove where I had lived since I was born, and the dear old "Admiral Benbow" — since he was repainted, no longer quite so dear. One of my last thoughts was of the captain, who had so often strode along the beach with his cocked hat, his saber-cut cheek, and his old brass telescope. Next moment we had turned the corner, and my home was out of sight.

The mail picked us up about dusk at the “Royal George” on the heath. I was wedged in between Redruth and a stout old gentleman, and in spite of the swift motion and the cold night air, I must have dozed a great deal from the very first, and then slept like a log up hill and down dale, through stage after stage; for when I was awakened at last, it was by a punch in the ribs, and I opened my eyes to find that we were standing still before a large building in a city street, and that the day had already broken a long time.

“Where are we?” I asked.

“Bristol,” said Tom. “Get down.”

Mr. Trelawney had taken up his residence at an inn far down the docks, to superintend the work upon the schooner. Thither we had now to walk, and our way, to my great delight, lay along the quays and beside the great multitude of ships of all sizes and rigs and nations. In one, sailors were singing at their work; in another, there were men aloft, high over my head, hanging to threads that seemed no thicker than a spider’s. Though I had lived by the shore all my life, I seemed never to have been near the sea till then. The smell of tar and salt was something new. I saw the most wonderful figureheads, that had all been far over the ocean. I saw, besides, many old sailors, with rings in their ears, and whiskers curled in ringlets, and tarry pigtails, and their swaggering, clumsy sea-walk; and if I had seen as many kings or archbishops I could not have been more delighted.

And I was going to sea myself; to sea in a schooner, with a piping boatswain, and pig-tailed singing seamen; to sea, bound for an unknown island, and to seek for buried treasure.

While I was still in this delightful dream, we came suddenly in front of a large inn, and met Squire Trelawney, all dressed out like a sea officer, in stout blue cloth, coming out of the door with a smile on his face, and a capital imitation of a sailor’s walk.

“Here you are!” he cried; “and the doctor came last night from London. Bravo! — the ship’s company complete.”

“Oh, sir,” cried I, “when do we sail?”

“Sail!” says he. “We sail to-morrow.”

CHAPTER VIII
AT THE SIGN OF THE “SPY-GLASS”

When I had done breakfasting, the squire gave me a note addressed to John Silver, at the sign of the “Spy-glass,” and told me I should easily find the place by following the line of the docks, and keeping a bright lookout for a little tavern with a large brass telescope for a sign. I set off, overjoyed at this opportunity to see some more of the ships and seamen, and picked my way among a great crowd of people and carts and bales, for the dock was now at its busiest, until I found the tavern in question.

It was a bright enough little place of entertainment. The sign was newly painted; the windows had neat red curtains; the floor was cleanly sanded. There was a street on each side, and an open door on both, which made the large, low room pretty clear to see in, in spite of clouds of tobacco smoke.

The customers were mostly seafaring men, and they talked so loudly that I hung at the door, almost afraid to enter.

As I was waiting, a man came out of a side room, and at a glance I was sure he must be Long John. His left leg was cut off close by the hip, and under the left shoulder he carried a crutch, which he managed with wonderful dexterity, hopping about upon it like a bird. He was very tall and strong, with a face as big as a ham — plain and pale, but intelligent and smiling. Indeed, he seemed in the most cheerful spirits, whistling as he moved about among the tables, with a merry word or a slap on the shoulder for the more favored of his guests.

Now, to tell you the truth, from the very first mention of Long John in Squire Trelawney’s letter, I had taken a fear in my mind that he might prove to be the very one-legged sailor whom I had watched for so long at the old “Benbow.” But one look at the man before me was enough. I had seen the captain, and Black Dog, and the blind man Pew, and I thought I knew what a buccaneer was like — a very different creature, according to me, from this clean and pleasant-tempered landlord.

I plucked up courage at once, crossed the threshold, and walked right up to the man where he stood, propped on his crutch, talking to a customer.

“Mr. Silver, sir?” I asked, holding out the note.

“Yes, my lad,” said he; “such is my name, to be sure. And who may you be?” And when he saw the squire’s letter he seemed to me to give something almost like a start.

"Oh!" said he, quite aloud, and offering his hand, "I see. You are our new cabin-boy; pleased I am to see you."

And he took my hand in his large firm grasp.

Just then one of the customers at the far side rose suddenly and made for the door. It was close by him, and he was out in the street in a moment. But his hurry had attracted my notice, and I recognized him at a glance. It was the tallow-faced man, wanting two fingers, who had come first to the "Admiral Benbow."

"Oh," I cried, "stop him! it's Black Dog!"

"I don't care two coppers who he is," cried Silver, "but he hasn't paid his score. Harry, run and catch him."

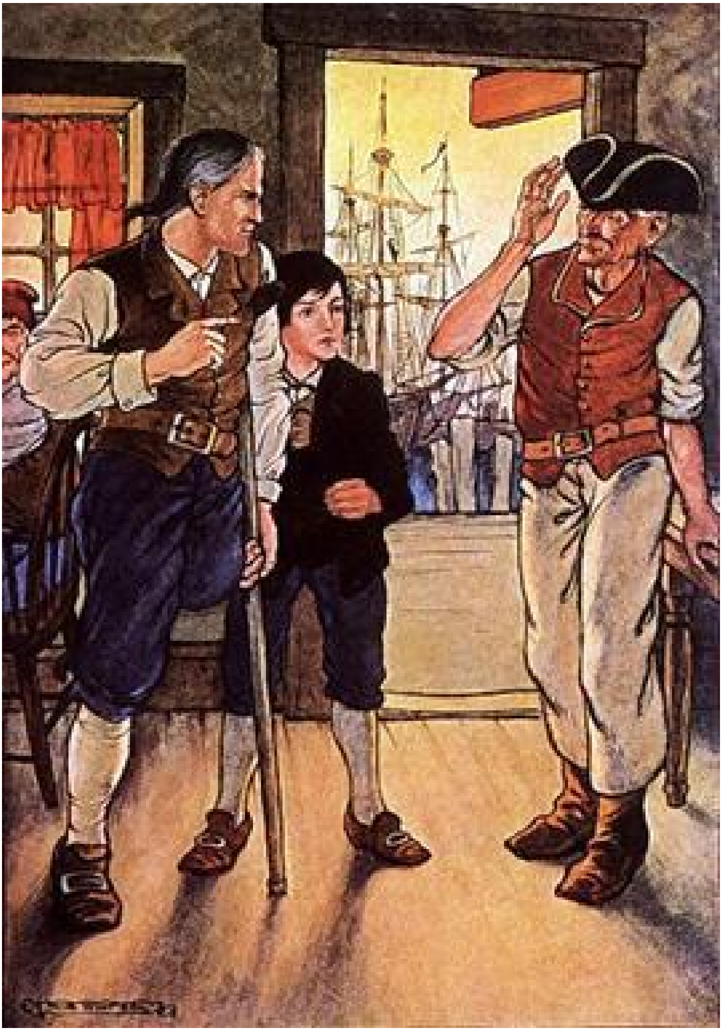
One of the others who was nearest the door leaped up and started in pursuit.

"If he were Admiral Hawke he shall pay his score," cried Silver; and then, relinquishing my hand, "Who did you say he was?" he asked. "Black what?"

"Dog, sir," said I. "Has Mr. Trelawney not told you of the buccaneers? He was one of them."

"So?" cried Silver. "In my house! Ben, run and help Harry. One of those swabs, was he? Was that you drinking with him, Morgan? Step up here."

The man whom he called Morgan — an old, gray-haired, mahogany-faced sailor — came forward pretty sheepishly, rolling his quid.



“Now, Morgan,” said Long John, very sternly, “you never clapped your eyes on that Black Dog before, did you, now?”

“Now, Morgan,” said Long John, very sternly, “you never clapped your eyes on that Black — Black Dog before, did you, now?”

“Not I, sir,” said Morgan, with a salute.

“You didn’t know his name, did you?”

“No, sir.”

“By the powers, Tom Morgan, it’s as good for you!” exclaimed the landlord. “If you had been mixed up with the like of that, you would never have put another foot in my house, you may lay to that. And what was he saying to you?”

“I don’t rightly know, sir,” answered Morgan.

“Do you call that a head on your shoulders, or a blessed dead-eye?” cried Long John. “Don’t rightly know, don’t you? Perhaps you don’t happen to rightly know who you was speaking to, perhaps? Come, now, what was he jawing — v'yages, cap'ns, ships? Pipe up! What was it?"

"We was a-talkin' of keel-hauling," answered Morgan.

"Keel-hauling, was you? and a mighty suitable thing, too, and you may lay to that. Get back to your place for a lubber, Tom."

And then, as Morgan rolled back to his seat, Silver added to me, in a confidential whisper, that was very flattering, as I thought:

"He's quite an honest man, Tom Morgan, on'y stupid. And now," he ran on again, aloud, "let's see — Black Dog? No, I don't know the name, not I. Yet I kind of think I've — yes, I've seen the swab. He used to come here with a blind beggar, he used."

"That he did, you may be sure," said I. "I knew that blind man, too. His name was Pew."

"It was!" cried Silver, now quite excited. "Pew! That were his name for certain. Ah, he looked a shark, he did! If we run down this Black Dog now, there'll be news for Cap'n Trelawney! Ben's a good runner; few seamen run better than Ben. He should run him down, hand over hand, by the powers! He talked o' keel-hauling, did he? *I'll* keel-haul him!"

All the time he was jerking out these phrases he was stumping up and down the tavern on his crutch, slapping tables with his hand, and giving such a show of excitement as would have convinced an Old Bailey judge or a Bow Street runner. My suspicions had been thoroughly reawakened on finding Black Dog at the "Spy-glass," and I watched the cook narrowly. But he was too deep, and too ready, and too clever for me, and by the time the two men had come back out of breath, and confessed that they had lost the track in a crowd, and been scolded like thieves, I would have gone bail for the innocence of Long John Silver.

"See here, now, Hawkins," said he, "here's a blessed hard thing on a man like me, now, ain't it? There's Cap'n Trelawney — what's he to think? Here I have this confounded son of a Dutchman sitting in my own house, drinking of my own rum! Here you comes and tells me of it plain; and here I let him give us all the slip before my blessed deadlights! Now, Hawkins, you do me justice with the cap'n. You're a lad, you are, but you're as smart as paint. I see that when you first came in. Now, here it is: What could I do, with this old timber I hobble on? When I was an A B master mariner I'd have come up alongside of him, hand over hand, and broached him to in a brace of old shakes, I would; and now — "

And then, all of a sudden, he stopped, and his jaw dropped as though he had remembered something.

"The score!" he burst out. "Three goes o' rum! Why, shiver my timbers, if I hadn't forgotten my score!"

And, falling on a bench, he laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. I could not help joining, and we laughed together, peal after peal, until the tavern rang again.

“Why, what a precious old sea-calf I am!” he said, at last, wiping his cheeks. “You and me should get on well, Hawkins, for I’ll take my davy I should be rated ship’s boy. But, come, now, stand by to go about. This won’t do. Dooty is dooty, messmates. I’ll put on my old cocked hat and step along of you to Cap’n Trelawney, and report this here affair. For, mind you, it’s serious, young Hawkins; and neither you nor me’s come out of it with what I should make so bold as to call credit. Nor you neither, says you; not smart — none of the pair of us smart. But dash my buttons! that was a good ‘un about my score.”

And he began to laugh again, and that so heartily, that though I did not see the joke as he did, I was again obliged to join him in his mirth.

On our little walk along the quays he made himself the most interesting companion, telling me about the different ships that we passed by, their rig, tonnage, and nationality, explaining the work that was going forward — how one was discharging, another taking in cargo, and a third making ready for sea; and every now and then telling me some little anecdote of ships or seamen, or repeating a nautical phrase till I had learned it perfectly. I began to see that here was one of the best of possible shipmates.

When we got to the inn, the squire and Doctor Livesey were seated together, finishing a quart of ale with a toast in it, before they should go aboard the schooner on a visit of inspection.

Long John told the story from first to last, with a great deal of spirit and the most perfect truth. “That was how it were, now, weren’t it, Hawkins?” he would say, now and again, and I could always bear him entirely out.

The two gentlemen regretted that Black Dog had got away, but we all agreed there was nothing to be done, and after he had been complimented, Long John took up his crutch and departed.

“All hands aboard by four this afternoon!” shouted the squire after him.

“Ay, ay, sir,” cried the cook, in the passage.

“Well, squire,” said Doctor Livesey, “I don’t put much faith in your discoveries, as a general thing, but I will say this — John Silver suits me.”

“That man’s a perfect trump,” declared the squire.

“And now,” added the doctor, “Jim may come on board with us, may he not?”

“To be sure he may,” said the squire. “Take your hat, Hawkins, and we’ll see the ship.”

CHAPTER IX
POWDER AND ARMS

The *Hispaniola* lay some way out, and we went under the figureheads and around the sterns of many other ships, and their cables sometimes grated beneath our keel, and sometimes swung above us. At last, however, we swung alongside, and were met and saluted as we stepped aboard by the mate, Mr. Arrow, a brown old sailor, with earrings in his ears and a squint. He and the squire were very thick and friendly, but I soon observed that things were not the same between Mr. Trelawney and the captain.

This last was a sharp-looking man, who seemed angry with everything on board, and was soon to tell us why, for we had hardly got down into the cabin when a sailor followed us.

"Captain Smollett, sir, axing to speak with you," said he.

"I am always at the captain's orders. Show him in," said the squire.

The captain, who was close behind his messenger, entered at once, and shut the door behind him.

"Well, Captain Smollett, what have you to say? All well, I hope; all shipshape and seaworthy?"

"Well, sir," said the captain, "better speak plain, I believe, at the risk of offense. I don't like this cruise; I don't like the men; and I don't like my officer. That's short and sweet."

"Perhaps, sir, you don't like the ship?" inquired the squire, very angry, as I could see.

"I can't speak as to that, sir, not having seen her tried," said the captain. "She seems a clever craft; more I can't say."

"Possibly, sir, you may not like your employer, either?" said the squire.

But here Doctor Livesey cut in.

"Stay a bit," said he, "stay a bit. No use of such questions as that but to produce ill-feeling. The captain has said too much or he has said too little, and I'm bound to say that I require an explanation of his words. You don't, you say, like this cruise. Now, why?"

"I was engaged, sir, on what we call sealed orders, to sail this ship for that gentleman where he should bid me," said the captain. "So far so good. But now I find that every man before the mast knows more than I do. I don't call that fair, now, do you?"

"No," said Doctor Livesey, "I don't."

"Next," said the captain, "I learn we are going after treasure — hear it from my own hands, mind you. Now, treasure is ticklish work; I don't like treasure voyages on any account; and I don't like them, above all, when they are secret, and when (begging your pardon, Mr. Trelawney) the secret has been told to the parrot."

"Silver's parrot?" asked the squire.

"It's a way of speaking," said the captain. "Blabbed, I mean. It's my belief neither of you gentlemen know what you are about; but I'll tell you my way of it — life or death, and a close run."

"That is all clear, and, I dare say, true enough," replied Doctor Livesey. "We take the risk, but we are not so ignorant as you believe us. Next, you say you don't like the crew. Are they not good seamen?"

"I don't like them, sir," returned Captain Smollett. "And I think I should have had the choosing of my own hands, if you go to that."

"Perhaps you should," replied the doctor. "My friend should, perhaps, have taken you along with him; but the slight, if there be one, was unintentional. And you don't like Mr. Arrow?"

"I don't, sir. I believe he's a good seaman, but he's too free with the crew to be a good officer. A mate should keep himself to himself — shouldn't drink with the men before the mast."

"Do you mean he drinks?" cried the squire.

"No, sir," replied the captain; "only that he's too familiar."

"Well, now, and the short and long of it, captain?" asked the doctor. "Tell us what you want."

"Well, gentlemen, are you determined to go on this cruise?"

"Like iron," answered the squire.

"Very good," said the captain. "Then, as you've heard me very patiently, saying things that I could not prove, hear me a few words more. They are putting the powder and the arms in the fore hold. Now, you have a good place under the cabin; why not put them there? — first point. Then you are bringing four of your own people with you, and they tell me some of them are to be berthed forward. Why not give them the berths here beside the cabin? — second point."

"Any more?" asked Mr. Trelawney.

"One more," said the captain. "There's been too much blabbing already."

"Far too much," agreed the doctor.

"I'll tell you what I've heard myself," continued Captain Smollett; "that you have a map of an island; that there's crosses on the map to show where treasure is; and that the island lies — " And then he named the latitude and longitude exactly.

"I never told that," cried the squire, "to a soul."

"The hands know it, sir," returned the captain.

"Livesey, that must have been you or Hawkins," cried the squire.

"It doesn't much matter who it was," replied the doctor. And I could see that neither he nor the captain paid much regard to Mr. Trelawney's protestations. Neither did I, to be sure, he was so loose a talker; yet in this case I believe he was really right, and that nobody had told the situation of the island.

"Well, gentlemen," continued the captain, "I don't know who has this map, but I make it a point it shall be kept secret even from me and Mr. Arrow. Otherwise I would ask you to let me resign."

"I see," said the doctor. "You wish us to keep this matter dark, and to make a garrison of the stern part of the ship, manned with my friend's own people, and provided with all the arms and powder on board. In other words, you fear a mutiny."

"Sir," said Captain Smollett, "with no intention to take offense, I deny your right to put words into my mouth. No captain, sir, would be justified in going to sea at all if he had ground enough to say that. As for Mr. Arrow, I believe him thoroughly honest; some of the men are the same; all may be for what I know. But I am responsible for the ship's safety and the life of every man Jack aboard of her. I see things going, as I think, not quite right; and I ask you to take certain precautions, or let me resign my berth. And that's all."

"Captain Smollett," began the doctor, with a smile, "did ever you hear the fable of the mountain and the mouse? You'll excuse me, I dare say, but you remind me of that fable. When you came in here I'll stake my wig you meant more than this."

"Doctor," said the captain, "you are smart. When I came in here I meant to get discharged. I had no thought that Mr. Trelawney would hear a word."

"No more I would," cried the squire. "Had Livesey not been here I should have seen you to the deuce. As it is, I have heard you. I will do as you desire, but I think the worse of you."

"That's as you please, sir," said the captain. "You'll find I do my duty."

And with that he took his leave.

"Trelawney," said the doctor, "contrary to all my notions, I believe you have managed to get two honest men on board with you — that man and John Silver."

"Silver, if you like," cried the squire, "but as for that intolerable humbug, I declare I think his conduct unmanly, unsailorly, and downright un-English."

"Well," said the doctor, "we shall see."

When we came on deck the men had begun already to take out the arms and powder, yo-ho-ing at their work, while the captain and Mr. Arrow stood by superintending.

The new arrangement was quite to my liking. The whole schooner had been overhauled; six berths had been made astern, out of what had been the after-part of the main hold, and this set of cabins was only joined to the galley and forecastle by a sparred passage on the port side. It had been originally meant that the captain, Mr. Arrow, Hunter, Joyce, the doctor, and the squire were to occupy these six berths. Now Redruth and I were to get two of them, and Mr. Arrow and the captain were to sleep on deck in the companion, which had been enlarged on each side till you might almost have called it a round-house. Very low it was still, of course, but there was room to swing two hammocks, and even the mate seemed pleased with the arrangement. Even he, perhaps, had been doubtful as to the crew, but that is only guess, for, as you shall hear, we had not long the benefit of his opinion.

We were all hard at work changing the powder and the berths, when the last man or two, and Long John along with them, came off in a shore-boat.

The cook came up the side like a monkey for cleverness, and, as soon as he saw what was doing, “So ho, mates!” said he, “what’s this!”

“We’re a-changing the powder, Jack,” answers one.

“Why, by the powers,” cried Long John, “if we do, we’ll miss the morning tide!”

“My orders!” said the captain, shortly. “You may go below, my man. Hands will want supper.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” answered the cook; and, touching his forelock, he disappeared at once in the direction of his galley.

“That’s a good man, captain,” said the doctor.

“Very likely, sir,” replied Captain Smollett. “Easy with that, men — easy,” he ran on, to the fellows who were shifting the powder; and then suddenly observing me examining the swivel we carried amidships, a long brass nine — ”Here, you ship’s boy,” he cried, “out o’ that! Off with you to the cook and get some work.”

And then as I was hurrying off I heard him say, quite loudly, to the doctor:

“I’ll have no favorites on my ship.”

I assure you I was quite of the squire’s way of thinking, and hated the captain deeply.

CHAPTER X
THE VOYAGE

All that night we were in a great bustle getting things stowed in their place, and boatfuls of the squire's friends, Mr. Blandly and the like, coming off to wish him a good voyage and a safe return. We never had a night at the "Admiral Benbow" when I had half the work; and I was dog-tired when, a little before dawn, the boatswain sounded his pipe, and the crew began to man the capstan bars. I might have been twice as weary, yet I would not have left the deck, all was so new and interesting to me — the brief commands, the shrill notes of the whistle, the men bustling to their places in the glimmer of the ship's lanterns.

"Now, Barbecue, tip us a stave," cried one voice.

"The old one," cried another.

"Ay, ay, mates," said Long John, who was standing by, with his crutch under his arm, and at once broke out in the air and words I knew so well:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest" —

And then the whole crew bore chorus:

"Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!"

And at the third "ho!" drove the bars before them with a will.

Even at that exciting moment it carried me back to the old "Admiral Benbow" in a second, and I seemed to hear the voice of the captain piping in the chorus. But soon the anchor was short up; soon it was hanging dripping at the bows; soon the sails began to draw, and the land and shipping to flit by on either side, and before I could lie down to snatch an hour of slumber the *Hispaniola* had begun her voyage to the Isle of Treasure.

I am not going to relate the voyage in detail. It was fairly prosperous. The ship proved to be a good ship, the crew were capable seamen, and the captain thoroughly understood his business. But before we came the length of Treasure Island, two or three things had happened which require to be known.

Mr. Arrow, first of all, turned out even worse than the captain had feared. He had no command among the men, and people did what they pleased with him. But that was by no means the worst of it; for after a day or two at sea he began to appear on deck with hazy eye, red cheeks, stuttering tongue, and other marks of drunkenness. Time after time he was ordered below in disgrace. Sometimes he fell and cut himself; sometimes he lay all day long in his little bunk at one side of the companion; sometimes for a day or two he would be almost sober and attend to his work at least passably.

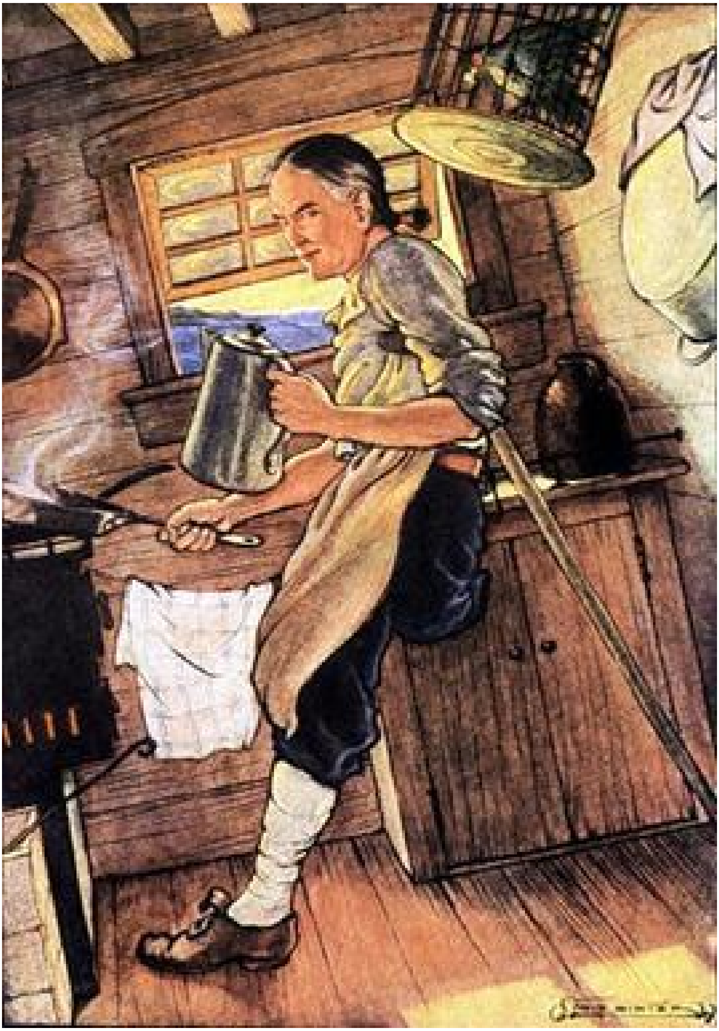
In the meantime we could never make out where he got the drink. That was the ship's mystery. Watch him as we pleased, we could do nothing to solve it, and when we asked him to his face, he would only laugh, if he were drunk, and if he were sober, deny solemnly that he ever tasted anything but water.

He was not only useless as an officer, and a bad influence among the men, but it was plain that at this rate he must soon kill himself outright, so nobody was much surprised, nor very sorry, when one dark night, with a head sea, he disappeared entirely and was seen no more.

"Overboard!" said the captain. "Well, gentlemen, that saves the trouble of putting him in irons."

But there we were, without a mate, and it was necessary, of course, to advance one of the men. The boatswain, Job Anderson, was the likeliest man aboard, and though he kept his old title, he served in a way as mate. Mr. Trelawney had followed the sea, and his knowledge made him very useful, for he often took a watch himself in easy weather. And the coxswain, Israel Hands, was a careful, wily, old, experienced seaman, who could be trusted at a pinch with almost anything.

He was a great confidant of Long John Silver, and so the mention of his name leads me on to speak of our ship's cook, Barbecue, as the men called him.



It was something to see him get on with his cooking like someone safe ashore

Aboard ship he carried his crutch by a lanyard round his neck, to have both hands as free as possible. It was something to see him wedge the foot of the crutch against a bulkhead, and, propped against it, yielding to every movement of the ship, get on with his cooking like someone safe ashore. Still more strange was it to see him in the heaviest of weather cross the deck. He had a line or two rigged up to help him across the widest spaces — Long John's earrings, they were called — and he would hand himself from one place to another, now using the crutch, now trailing it alongside by the lanyard, as quickly as another man could walk. Yet some of the men who had sailed with him before expressed their pity to see him so reduced.

"He's no common man, Barbecue," said the coxswain to me. "He had good schooling in his young days, and can speak like a book when so minded; and brave — a lion's nothing alongside of Long John! I seen him grapple four and knock their heads together — him unarmed."

All the crew respected and even obeyed him. He had a way of talking to each, and doing everybody some particular service. To me he was unweariedly kind, and always glad to see me in the galley, which he kept as clean as a new pin; the dishes hanging up burnished, and his parrot in a cage in the corner.

"Come away, Hawkins," he would say; "come and have a yarn with John. Nobody more welcome than yourself, my son. Sit you down and hear the news. Here's Cap'n Flint — I calls my parrot Cap'n Flint, after the famous buccaneer — here's Cap'n Flint predicting success to our v'yage. Wasn't you, Cap'n?"

And the parrot would say, with great rapidity: "Pieces of eight! pieces of eight! pieces of eight!" till you wondered that it was not out of breath or till John threw his handkerchief over the cage.

"Now, that bird," he would say, "is, may be, two hundred years old, Hawkins — they live forever mostly, and if anybody's seen more wickedness it must be the devil himself. She's sailed with England — the great Cap'n England, the pirate. She's been at Madagascar, and at Malabar, and Surinam, and Providence, and Portobello. She was at the fishing up of the wrecked plate ships. It's there she learned 'Pieces of eight,' and little wonder; three hundred and fifty thousand of 'em, Hawkins! She was at the boarding of the *Viceroy of the Indies* out of Goa, she was, and to look at her you would think she was a babby. But you smelt powder — didn't you, cap'n?"

"Stand by to go about," the parrot would scream.

"Ah, she's a handsome craft, she is," the cook would say, and give her sugar from his pocket, and then the bird would peck at the bars and swear straight on, passing belief for wickedness. "There," John would add, "you can't touch pitch and not be mucked, lad. Here's this poor old innocent bird of mine swearing blue fire and none the wiser, you may lay to that. She would swear the same, in a manner of speaking, before the chaplain." And John would touch his forelock with a solemn way he had, that made me think he was the best of men.

In the meantime the squire and Captain Smollett were still on pretty distant terms with one another. The squire made no bones about the matter; he despised the captain. The captain, on his part, never spoke but when he was spoken to, and then sharp and short and dry, and not a word wasted. He owned, when driven into a corner, that he seemed to have been wrong about the crew; that some of them were as brisk as he wanted to see, and all had behaved fairly well. As for the ship, he had taken a downright fancy to her. "She'll lie a point nearer the wind than a man has a right to expect of his own married wife, sir. But," he would add, "all I say is, we're not home again, and I don't like the cruise."

The squire, at this, would turn away and march up and down the deck, chin in air.

"A trifle more of that man," he would say, "and I should explode."

We had some heavy weather, which only proved the qualities of the *Hispaniola*. Every man on board seemed well content, and they must have been hard to please if they had been otherwise, for it is my belief there was never a ship's company so spoiled since Noah put to sea. Double grog was going on the least excuse; there was duff on odd days, as, for instance, if the squire heard it was any man's birthday; and always a barrel of apples standing broached in the waist, for anyone to help himself that had a fancy.

"Never knew good to come of it yet," the captain said to Doctor Livesey. "Spoil foc's'le hands, make devils. That's my belief."

But good did come of the apple barrel, as you shall hear, for if it had not been for that we should have had no note of warning and might all have perished by the hand of treachery.

This is how it came about.

We had run up the trades to get the wind of the island we were after — I am not allowed to be more plain — and now we were running down for it with a bright lookout day and night. It was about the last day of our outward voyage, by the largest computation; some time that night, or, at latest, before noon of the morrow, we should sight the Treasure Island. We were heading south-southwest, and had a steady breeze abeam and a quiet sea. The *Hispaniola* rolled steadily, dipping her bowsprit now and then with a whiff of spray. All was drawing alow and aloft; everyone was in the bravest spirits, because we were now so near an end of the first part of our adventure.

Now, just after sundown, when all my work was over and I was on my way to my berth, it occurred to me that I should like an apple. I ran on deck. The watch was all forward looking out for the island. The man at the helm was watching the luff of the sail and whistling away gently to himself, and that was the only sound excepting the swish of the sea against the bows and around the sides of the ship.

In I got bodily into the apple barrel, and found there was scarce an apple left; but, sitting down there in the dark, what with the sound of the waters and the rocking movement of the ship, I had either fallen asleep, or was on the point of doing so, when a heavy man sat down with rather a clash close by. The barrel shook as he leaned his shoulders against it, and I was just about to jump up when the man began to speak. It was Silver's voice, and, before I had heard a dozen words, I would not have shown myself for all the world, but lay there, trembling and listening, in the extreme of fear and curiosity; for from these dozen words I understood that the lives of all the honest men aboard depended upon me alone.

CHAPTER XI
WHAT I HEARD IN THE APPLE BARREL

"No, not I," said Silver. "Flint was cap'n; I was quartermaster, along of my timber leg. The same broadside I lost my leg, old Pew lost his deadlights. It was a master surgeon, him that ampytated me — out of college and all — Latin by the bucket, and what not; but he was hanged like a dog, and sun-dried like the rest, at CorsoCastle. That was Roberts' men, that was, and comed of changing names to their ships — *Royal Fortune* and so on. Now, what a ship was christened, so let her stay, I says. So it was with the *Cassandra*, as brought us all safe home from Malabar, after England took the *Viceroy of the Indies*; so it was with the old *Walrus*, Flint's old ship, as I've seen a-muck with the red blood and fit to sink with gold."

"Ah!" cried another voice, that of the youngest hand on board, and evidently full of admiration, "he was the flower of the flock, was Flint!"

"Davis was a man, too, by all accounts," said Silver. "I never sailed along of him; first with England, then with Flint, that's my story; and now here on my own account, in a manner of speaking. I laid by nine hundred safe, from England, and two thousand after Flint. That ain't bad for a man before the mast — all safe in bank. 'Tain't earning now, it's saving does it, you may lay to that. Where's all England's men now? I dunno. Where's Flint's? Why, most of 'em aboard here, and glad to get the duff — been begging before that, some of 'em. Old Pew, as had lost his sight, and might have thought shame, spends twelve hundred pounds in a year, like a lord in Parliament. Where is he now? Well, he's dead now and under hatches; but for two years before that, shiver my timbers! the man was starving. He begged, and he stole, and he cut throats, and starved at that, by the powers!"

"Well, it ain't much use, after all," said the young seaman.

"'Tain't much use for fools, you may lay to it — that, nor nothing," cried Silver. "But now, you look here; you're young, you are, but you're as smart as paint. I see that when I set my eyes on you, and I'll talk to you like a man."

You can imagine how I felt when I heard this abominable old rogue addressing another in the very same words of flattery as he had used to myself. I think, if I had been able, that I would have killed him through the barrel. Meantime he ran on, little supposing he was overheard.

"Here it is about gentlemen of fortune. They lives rough, and they risk swinging, but they eat and drink like fighting-cocks, and when a cruise is done, why it's hundreds of pounds instead of hundreds of farthings in their pockets. Now, the most goes for rum and a good fling, and to sea again in their shirts. But that's not the course I lay. I puts it all away, some here, some there, and none too much anywheres, by reason of suspicion. I'm fifty, mark you; once back from this cruise I set up gentleman in earnest. Time enough, too, says you. Ah, but I've lived easy in the meantime; never denied myself o' nothing heart desires, and slept soft and ate dainty all my days, but when at sea. And how did I begin? Before the mast, like you!"

"Well," said the other, "but all the other money's gone now, ain't it? You daren't show face in Bristol after this."

"Why, where might you suppose it was?" asked Silver, derisively.

"At Bristol, in banks and places," answered his companion.

"It were," said the cook; "it were when we weighed anchor. But my old missis has it all by now. And the 'Spy-glass' is sold, lease and good will and rigging; and the old girl's off to meet me. I would tell you where, for I trust you; but it 'ud make jealousy among the mates."

"And you can trust your missis?" asked the other.

"Gentlemen of fortune," returned the cook, "usually trust little among themselves, and right they are, you may lay to it. But I have a way with me, I have. When a mate brings a slip on his cable — one as knows me, I mean — it won't be in the same world with old John. There was some that was feared of Pew, and some that was feared of Flint; but Flint his own self was feared of me. Feared he was, and proud. They was the roughest crew afloat, was Flint's; the devil himself would have been feared to go to sea with them. Well, now, I tell you, I'm not a boasting man, and you seen yourself how easy I keep company; but when I was quartermaster, *lambs* wasn't the word for Flint's old buccaneers. Ah, you may be sure of yourself in old John's ship."

"Well, I tell you now," replied the lad, "I didn't half a quarter like the job till I had this talk with you, John, but there's my hand on it now."

"And a brave lad you were, and smart, too," answered Silver, shaking hands so heartily that all the barrel shook, "and a finer figurehead for a gentleman of fortune I never clapped my eyes on."

By this time I had begun to understand the meaning of their terms. By a "gentleman of fortune" they plainly meant neither more nor less than a common pirate, and the little scene that I had overheard was the last act in the corruption of one of the honest hands — perhaps of the last one left aboard. But on this point I was soon to be relieved, for, Silver giving a little whistle, a third man strolled up and sat down by the party.

"Dick's square," said Silver.

"Oh, I know'd Dick was square," returned the voice of the coxswain, Israel Hands. "He's no fool, is Dick." And he turned his quid and spat. "But, look here," he went on, "here's what I want to know, Barbecue — how long are we a-going to stand off and on like a blessed bumboat? I've had a'most enough o' Cap'n Smollett; he's hazed me long enough, by thunder! I want to go into that cabin, I do. I want their pickles and wines, and that."

"Israel," said Silver, "your head ain't much account, nor never was. But you're able to hear, I reckon; leastways your ears is big enough. Now, here's what I say — you'll berth forward, and you'll live hard, and you'll speak soft, and you'll keep sober, till I give the word; and you may lay to that, my son."

"Well, I don't say no, do I?" growled the coxswain. "What I say is, when? That's what I say."

"When! by the powers!" cried Silver. "Well, now, if you want to know, I'll tell you when. The last moment I can manage; and that's when. Here's a first-rate seaman, Cap'n Smollett, sails the blessed ship for us. Here's this squire and doctor with a map and such — I don't know where it is, do I? No more do you, says you. Well, then, I mean this squire and doctor shall find the stuff, and help us to get it aboard, by the powers! Then we'll see. If I was sure of you all, sons of double Dutchmen, I'd have Cap'n Smollett navigate us halfway back again before I struck."

"Why, we're all seamen aboard here, I should think," said the lad Dick.

"We're all foc's'le hands, you mean," snapped Silver. "We can steer a course, but who's to set one? That's what all you gentlemen split on, first and last. If I had my way, I'd have Cap'n Smollett work us back into the trades at least; then we'd have no blessed miscalculations and a spoonful of water a day. But I know the sort you are. I'll finish with 'em at the island, as soon's the blunt's on board, and a pity it is. But you're never happy till you're drunk. Split my sides, I've a sick heart to sail with the likes of you!"

"Easy all, Long John," cried Israel. "Who's a-crossin' of you?"

"Why, how many tall ships, think ye, now, have I seen laid aboard? and how many brisk lads drying in the sun at Execution Dock?" cried Silver; "and all for this same hurry and hurry and hurry. You hear me? I seen a thing or two at sea, I have. If you would on'y lay your course, and a p'int to windward, you would ride in carriages, you would. But not you! I know you. You'll have your mouthful of rum to-morrow, and go hang."

"Everybody know'd you was a kind of a chapling, John; but there's others as could hand and steer as well as you," said Israel. "They liked a bit o' fun, they did. They wasn't so high and dry, nohow, but took their fling, like jolly companions, everyone."

"So?" said Silver. "Well, and where are they now? Pew was that sort, and he died a beggar-man. Flint was, and he died of rum at Savannah. Ah, they was a sweet crew, they was! on'y, where are they?"

"But," asked Dick, "when we do lay 'em athwart, what are we to do with 'em, anyhow?"

"There's the man for me!" cried the cook, admiringly. "That's what I call business. Well, what would you think? Put 'em ashore like maroons? That would have been England's way. Or cut 'em down like that much pork? That would have been Flint's or Billy Bones's."

"Billy was the man for that," said Israel. "'Dead men don't bite,' says he. Well, he's dead now, hisself; he knows the long and short on it now; and if ever a rough hand come to port, it was Billy."

"Right you are," said Silver, "rough and ready. But mark you here: I'm an easy man — I'm quite the gentleman, says you; but this time it's serious. Dooty is dooty, mates. I give my vote — death. When I'm in Parlyment, and riding in my coach, I don't want none of these sea-lawyers in the cabin a-coming home, unlooked for, like the devil at prayers. Wait is what I say; but when the time comes, why let her rip!"

"John," cried the coxswain, "you're a man!"

"You'll say so, Israel, when you see," said Silver. "Only one thing I claim — I claim Trelawney. I'll wring his calf's head off his body with these hands. Dick!" he added, breaking off, "you must jump up, like a sweet lad, and get me an apple, to wet my pipe like."

You may fancy the terror I was in! I should have leaped out and run for it, if I had found the strength; but my limbs and heart alike misgave me. I heard Dick begin to rise, and then some one seemingly stopped him, and the voice of Hands exclaimed:

"Oh, stow that! Don't you get sucking of that bilge, John. Let's have a go of the rum."

"Dick," said Silver, "I trust you. I've a gauge on the keg, mind. There's the key; you fill a pannikin and bring it up."

Terrified as I was, I could not help thinking to myself that this must have been how Mr. Arrow got the strong waters that destroyed him.

Dick was gone but a little while, and during his absence Israel spoke straight on in the cook's ear. It was but a word or two that I could catch, and yet I gathered some important news; for, besides other scraps that tended to the same purpose, this whole clause was audible: "Not another man of them'll jine." Hence there were still faithful men on board.

When Dick returned, one after another of the trio took the pannikin and drank — one "To luck"; another with a "Here's to old Flint," and

Silver himself saying, in a kind of song, “Here’s to ourselves, and hold your luff, plenty of prizes and plenty of duff.”

Just then a sort of brightness fell upon me in the barrel, and, looking up, I found the moon had risen, and was silvering the mizzen-top and shining white on the luff of the foresail, and almost at the same time the voice on the lookout shouted, “Land ho!”

CHAPTER XII
COUNCIL OF WAR

There was a great rush of feet across the deck. I could hear people tumbling up from the cabin and the foc's'le; and slipping in an instant outside my barrel, I dived behind the foresail, made a double towards the stern, and came out upon the open deck in time to join Hunter and Doctor Livesey in the rush for the weather bow.

There all hands were already congregated. A belt of fog had lifted almost simultaneously with the appearance of the moon. Away to the southwest of us we saw two low hills, about a couple of miles apart, and rising behind one of them a third and higher hill, whose peak was still buried in the fog. All three seemed sharp and conical in figure.

So much I saw almost in a dream, for I had not yet recovered from my horrid fear of a minute or two before. And then I heard the voice of Captain Smollett issuing orders. The *Hispaniola* was laid a couple of points nearer the wind, and now sailed a course that would just clear the island on the east.

"And now, men," said the captain, when all was sheeted home, "has any one of you ever seen that land ahead?"

"I have, sir," said Silver. "I've watered there with a trader I was cook in."

"The anchorage is on the south, behind an islet, I fancy?" asked the captain.

"Yes, sir, SkeletonIsland they calls it. It were a main place for pirates once, and a hand we had on board knowed all their names for it. That hill to the nor'ard they calls the Foremast Hill; there are three hills in a row running south'ard — fore, main, and mizzen, sir. But the main — that's the big 'un, with the cloud on it — they usually calls the Spy-glass, by reason of a lookout they kept when they was in the anchorage cleaning; for it's there they cleaned their ships, sir, asking your pardon."

"I have a chart here," said Captain Smollett. "See if that's the place."

Long John's eyes burned in his head as he took the chart, but, by the fresh look of the paper, I knew he was doomed to disappointment. This was not the map we found in Billy Bones's chest, but an accurate copy, complete in all things — names, and heights, and soundings — with the single exception of the red crosses and the written notes. Sharp as must have been his annoyance, Silver had the strength of mind to hide it.

"Yes, sir," said he, "this is the spot, to be sure, and very prettily drawed out. Who might have done that, I wonder? The pirates were too ignorant, I reckon. Ay, here it is: 'Captain Kidd's Anchorage' — just the name my shipmate called it. There's a strong current runs along the south, and then away nor'ard up the west coast. Right you was, sir," said he, "to haul your wind and keep the weather of the island. Leastways, if such was your intention as to enter and careen, and there ain't no better place for that in these waters."

"Thank you, my man," said Captain Smollett. "I'll ask you, later on, to give us a help. You may go."

I was surprised at the coolness with which John avowed his knowledge of the island, and I own I was half-frightened when I saw him drawing nearer to myself. He did not know, to be sure, that I had overheard his council from the apple barrel, and yet I had, by this time, taken such a horror of his cruelty, duplicity, and power, that I could scarce conceal a shudder when he laid his hand upon my arm.

"Ah," said he, "this here is a sweet spot, this island — a sweet spot for a lad to get ashore on. You'll bathe, and you'll climb trees, and you'll hunt goats, you will, and you'll get aloft on them hills like a goat yourself. Why, it makes me young again. I was going to forget my timber leg, I was. It's a pleasant thing to be young, and have ten toes, and you may lay to that. When you want to go a bit of exploring, you just ask old John and he'll put up a snack for you to take along."

And clapping me in the friendliest way upon the shoulder, he hobbled off forward and went below.

Captain Smollett, the squire, and Doctor Livesey were talking together on the quarter-deck, and anxious as I was to tell them my story, I durst not interrupt them openly. While I was still casting about in my thoughts to find some probable excuse, Doctor Livesey called me to his side. He had left his pipe below, and being a slave to tobacco, had meant that I should fetch it; but as soon as I was near enough to speak and not be overheard, I broke out immediately: "Doctor, let me speak. Get the captain and squire down to the cabin, and then make some pretense to send for me. I have terrible news."

The doctor changed countenance a little, but next moment he was master of himself.

"Thank you, Jim," said he, quite loudly; "that was all I wanted to know," as if he had asked me a question.

And with that he turned on his heel and rejoined the other two. They spoke together for a little, and though none of them started, or raised his voice, or so much as whistled, it was plain enough that Doctor Livesey had communicated my request, for the next thing that I heard was the captain giving an order to Job Anderson, and all hands were piped on deck.

"My lads," said Captain Smollett, "I've a word to say to you. This land that we have sighted is the place we have been sailing to. Mr. Trelawney, being a very open-handed gentleman, as we all know, has just asked me a word or two, and as I was able to tell him that every man on board had done his duty, alow and aloft, as I never ask to see it done better, why, he and I and the doctor are going below to the cabin to drink *your* health and luck, and you'll have grog served out for you to drink *our* health and luck. I'll tell you what I think of this: I think it handsome. And if you think as I do, you'll give a good sea cheer for the gentleman that does it."

The cheer followed — that was a matter of course — but it rang out so full and hearty, that I confess I could hardly believe these same men were plotting for our blood.

"One more cheer for Cap'n Smollett!" cried Long John, when the first had subsided.

And this also was given with a will.

On the top of that the three gentlemen went below, and not long after, word was sent forward that Jim Hawkins was wanted in the cabin.

I found them all three seated around the table, a bottle of Spanish wine and some raisins before them, and the doctor smoking away, with his wig on his lap, and that, I knew, was a sign that he was agitated. The stern window was open, for it was a warm night, and you could see the moon shining behind on the ship's wake.

"Now, Hawkins," said the squire, "you have something to say. Speak up."

I did as I was bid, and, as short as I could make it, told the whole details of Silver's conversation. Nobody interrupted me till I was done, nor did anyone of the three of them make so much as a movement, but they kept their eyes upon my face from first to last.

"Jim," said Doctor Livesey, "take a seat."

And they made me sit down at a table beside them, poured me out a glass of wine, filled my hands with raisins, and all three, one after the other, and each with a bow, drank my good health, and their service to me, for my luck and courage.

"Now, captain," said the squire, "you were right and I was wrong. I own myself an ass, and I await your orders."

"No more an ass than I, sir," returned the captain. "I never heard of a crew that meant to mutiny but what showed signs before, for any man that had an eye in his head to see the mischief and take steps according. But this crew," he added, "beats me."

"Captain," said the doctor, "with your permission, that's Silver. A very remarkable man."

"He'd look remarkably well from a yardarm, sir," returned the captain. "But this is talk; this don't lead to anything. I see three or four points, and with Mr. Trelawney's permission I'll name them."

"You, sir, are the captain. It is for you to speak," said Mr. Trelawney, grandly.

"First point," began Mr. Smollett, "we must go on because we can't turn back. If I gave the word to turn about, they would rise at once. Second point, we have time before us — at least until this treasure's found. Third point, there are faithful hands. Now, sir, it's got to come to blows sooner or later, and what I propose is to take time by the forelock, as the saying is, and come to blows some fine day when they least expect it. We can count, I take it, on your own home servants, Mr. Trelawney?"

"As upon myself," declared the squire.

"Three," reckoned the captain; "ourselves make seven, counting Hawkins here. Now, about the honest hands?"

"Most likely Trelawney's own men," said the doctor; "those he picked up for himself before he lit on Silver."

"Nay," replied the squire, "Hands was one of mine."

"I did think I could have trusted Hands," added the captain.

"And to think that they're all Englishmen!" broke out the squire. "Sir, I could find it in my heart to blow the ship up."

"Well, gentlemen," said the captain, "the best that I can say is not much. We must lay to, if you please, and keep a bright lookout. It's trying on a man, I know. It would be pleasanter to come to blows. But there's no help for it till we know our men. Lay to and whistle for a wind; that's my view."

"Jim here," said the doctor, "can help us more than anyone. The men are not shy with him and Jim is a noticing lad."

"Hawkins, I put prodigious faith in you," added the squire.

I began to feel pretty desperate at this, for I felt altogether helpless; and yet, by an odd train of circumstances, it was indeed through me that safety came. In the meantime, talk as we pleased, there were only seven out of the twenty-six on whom we knew we could rely, and out of these seven one was a boy, so that the grown men on our side were six to their nineteen.

PART III
MY SHORE ADVENTURE

CHAPTER XIII
HOW MY SHORE ADVENTURE BEGAN

The appearance of the island when I came on deck next morning was altogether changed. Although the breeze had now utterly ceased, we had made a great deal of way during the night and were now lying becalmed about half a mile to the southeast of the low eastern coast. Gray-colored woods covered a large part of the surface. This even tint was indeed broken up by streaks of yellow sand-break in the lower lands and by many tall trees of the pine family, out-topping the others — some singly, some in clumps; but the general colouring was uniform and sad. The hills ran up clear above the vegetation in spires of naked rock. All were strangely shaped, and the Spy-glass, which was by three or four hundred feet the tallest on the island, was likewise the strangest in configuration, running up sheer from almost every side and then suddenly cut off at the top like a pedestal to put a statue on.

The *Hispaniola* was rolling scuppers under in the ocean swell. The booms were tearing at the blocks, the rudder was banging to and fro, and the whole ship creaking, groaning, and jumping like a manufactory. I had to cling tight to the backstay and the world turned giddily before my eyes; for though I was a good enough sailor when there was way on, this standing still and being rolled about like a bottle was a thing I never learned to stand without a qualm or so, above all in the morning, on an empty stomach.

Perhaps it was this — perhaps it was the look of the island, with its gray, melancholy woods, and wild stone spires, and the surf that we could both see and hear foaming and thundering on the steep beach — at least, although the sun shone bright and hot, and the shore birds were fishing and crying all around us, and you would have thought anyone would have been glad to get to land after being so long at sea, my heart sank, as the saying is, into my boots, and from that first look onward I hated the very thought of Treasure Island.

We had a dreary morning's work before us, for there was no sign of any wind, and the boats had to be got out and manned, and the ship warped three or four miles round the corner of the island and up the narrow passage to the haven behind Skeleton Island. I volunteered for one of the boats, where I had, of course, no business. The heat was sweltering and the men grumbled fiercely over their work. Anderson was in command of my boat, and instead of keeping the crew in order he grumbled as loud as the worst.

"Well," he said, with an oath, "it's not forever."

I thought this was a very bad sign, for, up to that day, the men had gone briskly and willingly about their business, but the very sight of the island had relaxed the cords of discipline.

All the way in, Long John stood by the steersman and conned the ship. He knew the passage like the palm of his hand; and though the man in the chains got everywhere more water than was down in the chart, John never hesitated once.

"There's a strong scour with the ebb," he said, "and this here passage has been dug out, in a manner of speaking, with a spade."

We brought up just where the anchor was in the chart, about a third of a mile from each shore, the mainland on one side and SkeletonIsland on the other. The bottom was clean sand. The plunge of our anchor sent up clouds of birds wheeling and crying over the woods, but in less than a minute they were down again, and all was once more silent.

The place was entirely landlocked, buried in woods, the trees coming right down to high-water mark, the shores mostly flat, and the hill-tops standing round at a distance in a sort of amphitheater, one here, one there. Two little rivers, or rather two swamps, emptied out into this pond, as you might call it and the foliage round that part of the shore had a kind of poisonous brightness. From the ship we could see nothing of the house or stockade, for they were quite buried among trees; and if it had not been for the chart on the companion, we might have been the first that had ever anchored there since the islands arose out of the seas.

There was not a breath of air moving, nor a sound but that of the surf booming half a mile away along the beaches and against the rocks outside. A peculiar stagnant smell hung over the anchorage — a smell of sodden leaves and rotting tree trunks. I observed the doctor sniffing and sniffing, like someone tasting a bad egg.

"I don't know about treasure," he said, "but I'll stake my wig there's fever here."

If the conduct of the men had been alarming in the boat, it became truly threatening when they had come aboard. They lay about the deck, growling together in talk. The slightest order was received with a black look, and grudgingly and carelessly obeyed. Even the honest hands must have caught the infection, for there was not one man aboard to mend another. Mutiny, it was plain, hung over us like a thundercloud.

And it was not only we of the cabin party who perceived the danger. Long John was hard at work going from group to group, spending himself in good advice, and as for example no man could have shown a better. He fairly outstripped himself in willingness and civility; he was all smiles to everyone. If an order were given, John would be on his crutch in an instant, with the cheeriest "Ay, ay, sir!" in the world; and when there was nothing else to do, he kept up one song after another, as if to conceal the discontent of the rest.

Of all the gloomy features of that gloomy afternoon, this obvious anxiety on the part of Long John appeared the worst.

We held a council in the cabin.

"Sir," said the captain, "if I risk another order, the whole ship'll come about our ears by the run. You see, sir, here it is. I get a rough answer, do I not? Well, if I speak back, pikes will be going in two shakes; if I don't, Silver will see there's something under that, and the game's up. Now, we've only one man to rely on."

"And who is that?" asked the squire.

"Silver, sir," returned the captain; "he's as anxious as you and I to smother things up. This is a tiff; he'd soon talk 'em out of it if he had the chance, and what I propose to do is to give him the chance. Let's allow the men an afternoon ashore. If they all go, why, we'll fight the ship. If they none of them go, well, then, we hold the cabin, and God defend the right. If some go, you mark my words, sir, Silver'll bring 'em aboard again as mild as lambs."

It was so decided; loaded pistols were served out to all the sure men. Hunter, Joyce, and Redruth were taken into our confidence, and received the news with less surprise and a better spirit than we had looked for, and then the captain went on deck and addressed the crew.

"My lads," said he, "we've had a hot day, and are all tired and out of sorts. A turn ashore'll hurt nobody; the boats are still in the water; you can take the gigs, and as many as please can go ashore for the afternoon. I'll fire a gun half an hour before sundown."

I believe the silly fellows must have thought they would break their shins over treasure as soon as they were landed; for they all came out of their sulks in a moment, and gave a cheer that started the echo in a far-away hill, and sent the birds once more flying and squalling round the anchorage.

The captain was too bright to be in the way. He whipped out of sight in a moment, leaving Silver to arrange the party, and I fancy it was as well he did so. Had he been on deck he could no longer so much as have pretended not to understand the situation. It was as plain as day. Silver was the captain, and a mighty rebellious crew he had of it. The honest hands — and I was soon to see it proved that there were such on board — must have been very stupid fellows. Or, rather, I suppose the truth was this, that all hands were disaffected by the example of the ringleaders — only some more, some less; and a few, being good fellows in the main, could neither be led nor driven any farther. It is one thing to be idle and skulk, and quite another to take a ship and murder a number of innocent men.

At last, however, the party was made up. Six fellows were to stay on board, and the remaining thirteen, including Silver, began to embark.

Then it was that there came into my head the first of the mad notions that contributed so much to save our lives. If six men were left by Silver, it was plain our party could not take and fight the ship; and since only six were left, it was equally plain that the cabin party had no present need of my assistance. It occurred to me at once to go ashore. In a jiffy I had slipped over the side and curled up in the foresheets of the nearest boat, and almost at the same moment she shoved off.

No one took notice of me, only the bow oar saying, “Is that you, Jim? Keep your head down.” But Silver, from the other boat, looked sharply over and called out to know if that were me; and from that moment I began to regret what I had done.

The crews raced for the beach, but the boat I was in, having some start, and being at once the lighter and the better manned, shot far ahead of her consort, and the bow had struck among the shore-side trees, and I had caught a branch and swung myself out, and plunged into the nearest thicket, while Silver and the rest were still a hundred yards behind.

“Jim, Jim!” I heard him shouting.

But you may suppose I paid no heed; jumping, ducking, and breaking through, I ran straight before my nose, till I could run no longer.

CHAPTER XIV
THE FIRST BLOW

I was so pleased at having given the slip to Long John, that I began to enjoy myself and look around me with some interest on the strange land that I was in. I had crossed a marshy tract full of willows, bulrushes, and odd, outlandish, swampy trees; and had now come out upon the skirts of an open piece of undulating, sandy country, about a mile long, dotted with a few pines, and a great number of contorted trees, not unlike the oak in growth, but pale in the foliage, like willows. On the far side of the open stood one of the hills, with two quaint, craggy peaks, shining vividly in the sun.

I now felt for the first time the joy of exploration. The isle was uninhabited; my shipmates I had left behind, and nothing lived in front of me but dumb brutes and fowls. I turned hither and thither among the trees. Here and there were flowering plants, unknown to me; here and there I saw snakes, and one raised his head from a ledge of rock and hissed at me with a noise not unlike the spinning of a top. Little did I suppose that he was a deadly enemy, and that the noise was the famous rattle.

Then I came to a long thicket of these oak-like trees — live, or evergreen, oaks, I heard afterward they should be called — which grew low along the sand like brambles, the boughs curiously twisted, the foliage compact, like thatch. The thicket stretched down from the top of one of the sandy knolls, spreading and growing taller as it went, until it reached the margin of the broad, reedy fen, through which the nearest of the little rivers soaked its way into the anchorage. The marsh was steaming in the strong sun, and the outline of the Spy-glass trembled through the haze.

All at once there began to go a sort of bustle among the bulrushes; a wild duck flew up with a quack, another followed, and soon over the whole surface of the marsh a great cloud of birds hung screaming and circling in the air. I judged at once that some of my shipmates must be drawing near along the borders of the fen. Nor was I deceived, for soon I heard the very distant and low tones of a human voice, which, as I continued to give ear, grew steadily louder and nearer.

This put me in great fear, and I crawled under cover of the nearest live-oak, and squatted there, hearkening, as silent as a mouse.

Another voice answered; and then the first voice, which I now recognized to be Silver's, once more took up the story, and ran on for a long while in a stream, only now and again interrupted by the other. By the sound they must have been talking earnestly, and almost fiercely, but no distinct word came to my hearing.

At last the speakers seemed to have paused, and perhaps to have sat down, for not only did they cease to draw any nearer, but the birds themselves began to grow more quiet, and to settle again to their places in the swamp.

And now I began to feel that I was neglecting my business; that since I had been so foolhardy as to come ashore with these desperadoes, the least I could do was to overhear them at their councils, and that my plain and obvious duty was to draw as close as I could manage, under the favorable ambush of the crouching trees.

I could tell the direction of the speakers pretty exactly, not only by the sound of their voices, but by the behavior of the few birds that still hung in alarm above the heads of the intruders.

Crawling on all-fours, I made steadily but slowly towards them, till at last, raising my head to an aperture among the leaves, I could see clear down into a little green dell beside the marsh, and closely set about with trees, where Long John Silver and another of the crew stood face to face in conversation.

The sun beat full upon them. Silver had thrown his hat beside him on the ground, and his great, smooth, blonde face, all shining with heat, was lifted to the other man's in a kind of appeal.

"Mate," he was saying, "it's because I thinks gold dust of you — gold dust, and you may lay to that! If I hadn't took to you like pitch, do you think I'd have been here a-warning of you? All's up — you can't make nor mend; it's to save your neck that I'm a-speaking, and if one of the wild 'uns knew it, where 'ud I be, Tom — now tell me, where 'ud I be?"

"Silver," said the other man — and I observed he was not only red in the face, but spoke as hoarse as a crow, and his voice shook, too, like a taut rope — "Silver," says he, "you're old, and you're honest, or has the name for it; and you've money, too, which lots of poor sailors hasn't; and you're brave, or I'm mistook. And will you tell me you'll let yourself be led away with that kind of a mess of swabs? Not you! As sure as God sees me, I'd sooner lose my hand. If I turn agin my dooty — "

And then all of a sudden he was interrupted by a noise. I had found one of the honest hands — well, here, at that same moment, came news of another. Far away out in the marsh there arose, all of a sudden, a sound like the cry of anger, then another on the back of it, and then one horrid, long-drawn scream. The rocks of the Spy-glass re-echoed it a score of times; the whole troop of marsh-birds rose again, darkening heaven with a simultaneous whir; and long after that death-yell was still ringing in my brain, silence had re-established its empire, and only the rustle of the redescending birds and the boom of the distant surges disturbed the languor of the afternoon.

Tom had leaped at the sound, like a horse at the spur; but Silver had not winked an eye. He stood where he was, resting lightly on his crutch, watching his companion like a snake about to spring.

“John!” said the sailor, stretching out his hand.

“Hands off!” cried Silver, leaping back a yard, as it seemed to me, with the speed and security of a trained gymnast.

“Hands off, if you like, John Silver,” said the other. “It’s a black conscience that can make you feared of me. But, in heaven’s name, tell me what was that?”

“That?” returned Silver, smiling away, but warier than ever, his eye a mere pin-point in his big face, but gleaming like a crumb of glass. “That? Oh, I reckon that’ll be Alan.”

And at this poor Tom flashed out like a hero.

“Alan!” he cried. “Then rest his soul for a true seaman! And as for you, John Silver, long you’ve been a mate of mine, but you’re mate of mine no more. If I die like a dog I’ll die in my dooty. You’ve killed Alan, have you? Kill me, too, if you can. But I defies you.”

And with that this brave fellow turned his back directly on the cook and set off walking for the beach. But he was not destined to go far. With a cry John seized the branch of a tree, whipped the crutch out of his armpit, and sent that uncouth missile hurling through the air. It struck poor Tom, point foremost, and with stunning violence, right between the shoulders in the middle of his back. His hands flew up, he gave a sort of gasp and fell.

Whether he was injured much or little, none could ever tell. Like enough, to judge from the sound, his back was broken on the spot. But he had no time given him to recover. Silver, agile as a monkey, even without leg or crutch, was on the top of him next moment, and had twice buried his knife up to the hilt in that defenseless body. From my place of ambush I could hear him pant aloud as he struck the blows.

I do not know what it rightly is to faint, but I do know that for the next little while the whole world swam away from before me in a whirling mist; Silver and the birds and the tall Spy-glass hilltop going round and round and topsy-turvy before my eyes, and all manner of bells ringing, and distant voices shouting in my ear.

When I came again to myself the monster had pulled himself together, his crutch under his arm, his hat upon his head. Just before him Tom lay motionless upon the sward; but the murderer minded him not a whit, cleansing his blood-stained knife the while upon a whisp of grass. Everything else was unchanged, the sun still shining mercilessly upon the steaming marsh and the tall pinnacle of the mountain, and I could scarce persuade myself that murder had actually been done and a human life cruelly cut short a moment since, before my eyes.

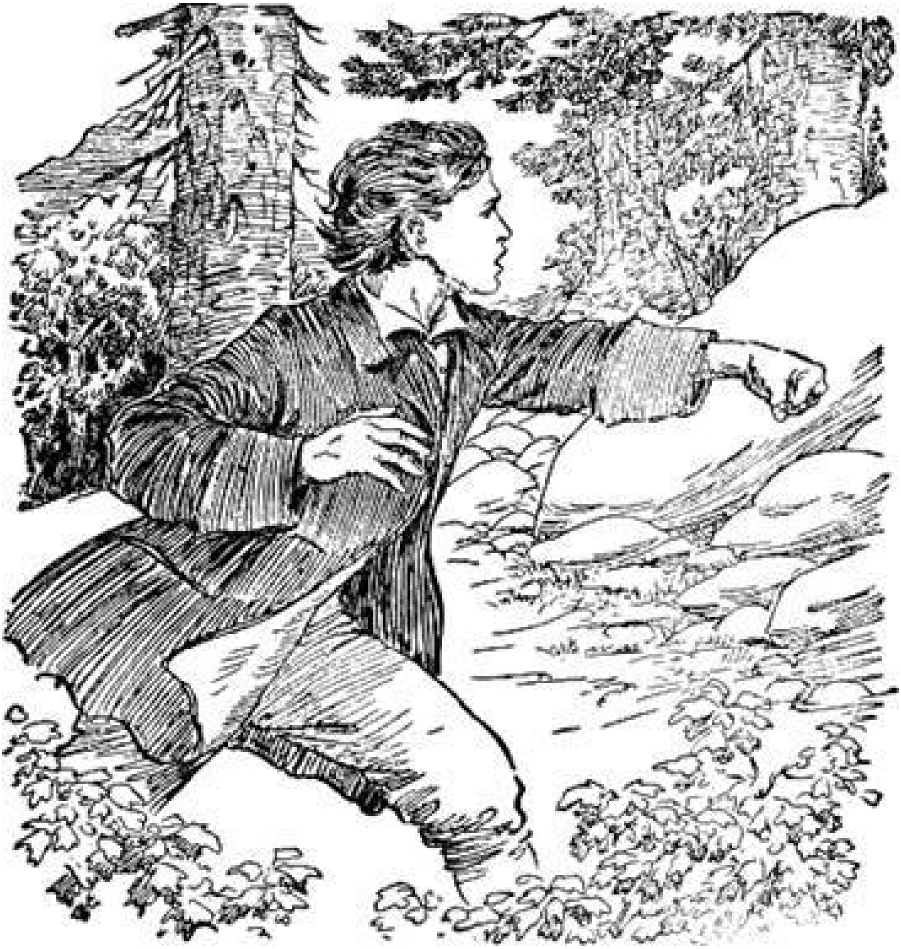
But now John put his hand into his pocket, brought out a whistle, and blew upon it several modulated blasts, that rang far across the heated air. I could not tell, of course, the meaning of the signal, but it instantly awoke my fears. More men would be coming. I might be discovered. They had already slain two of the honest people; after Tom and Alan, might not I come next?

Instantly I began to extricate myself and crawl back again, with what speed and silence I could manage, to the more open portion of the wood. As I did so I could hear hails coming and going between the old buccaneer and his comrades, and this sound of danger lent me wings. As soon as I was clear of the thicket, I ran as I never ran before, scarce minding the direction of my flight, so long as it led me from the murderers, and as I ran, fear grew and grew upon me, until it turned into a kind of frenzy.

Indeed, could anyone be more entirely lost than I? When the gun fired, how should I dare to go down to the boats among those fiends, still smoking from their crime? Would not the first of them who saw me wring my neck like a snipe's? Would not my absence itself be an evidence to them of my alarm, and therefore of my fatal knowledge? It was all over, I thought. Good-by to the *Hispaniola*, good-by to the squire, the doctor, and the captain. There was nothing left for me but death by starvation, or death by the hands of the mutineers.

All this while, as I say, I was still running, and, without taking any notice, I had drawn near to the foot of the little hill with the two peaks, and had got into a part of the island where the wild oaks grew more widely apart, and seemed more like forest trees in their bearing and dimensions. Mingled with these were a few scattered pines, some fifty, some nearer seventy, feet high. The air, too, smelled more fresh than down beside the marsh.

And here a fresh alarm brought me to a standstill with a thumping heart.



CHAPTER XV
THE MAN OF THE ISLAND

From the side of the hill, which was here steep and stony, a spout of gravel was dislodged, and fell rattling and bounding through the trees. My eyes turned instinctively in that direction, and I saw a figure leap with great rapidity behind the trunk of a pine. What it was, whether bear, or man, or monkey, I could in nowise tell. It seemed dark and shaggy; more I knew not. But the terror of this new apparition brought me to a stand.

I was now, it seemed, cut off upon both sides: behind me the murderers, before me this lurking nondescript. And immediately I began to prefer the dangers that I knew to those I knew not. Silver himself appeared less terrible in contrast with this creature of the woods, and I turned on my heel, and, looking sharply behind me over my shoulder, began to retrace my steps in the direction of the boats.

Instantly the figure reappeared, and, making a wide circuit, began to head me off. I was tired, at any rate, but had I been as fresh as when I rose, I could see it was in vain for me to contend in speed with such an adversary. From trunk to trunk the creature flitted like a deer, running man-like on two legs, but unlike any man that I had ever seen, stooping almost double as it ran. Yet a man it was! I could no longer be in doubt about that.

I began to recall what I had heard of cannibals. I was within an ace of calling for help. But the mere fact that he was a man, however wild, had somewhat reassured me, and my fear of Silver began to revive in proportion. I stood still, therefore, and cast about for some method of escape, and as I was so thinking, the recollection of my pistol flashed into my mind. As soon as I remembered I was not defenseless, courage glowed again in my heart, and I set my face resolutely for this man of the island, and walked briskly toward him.

He was concealed by this time, behind another tree-trunk, but he must have been watching me closely, for as soon as I began to move in his direction he reappeared and took a step to meet me. Then he hesitated, drew back, came forward again, and, at last, to my wonder and confusion, threw himself on his knees and held out his clasped hands in supplication.

At that I once more stopped.

“Who are you?” I asked.

“Ben Gunn,” he answered, and his voice sounded hoarse and awkward, like a rusty lock. “I’m poor Ben Gunn, I am; and I haven’t spoke with a Christian these three years.”

I could now see that he was a white man like myself, and that his features were even pleasing. His skin, wherever it was exposed, was burned by the sun; even his lips were black, and his fair eyes looked quite startling in so dark a face. Of all the beggar-men that I had seen or fancied, he was the chief for raggedness. He was clothed with tatters of old ships' canvas and old sea-cloth, and this extraordinary patchwork was all held together by a system of the most various and incongruous fastenings, brass buttons, bits of stick, and loops of tarry gaskin. About his waist he wore an old brass-buckled leather belt, which was the one thing solid in his whole accouterment.

"Three years!" I cried. "Were you shipwrecked?"

"Nay, mate," said he, "marooned."

I had heard the word and I knew it stood for a horrible kind of punishment common enough among the buccaneers, in which the offender is put ashore with a little powder and shot and left behind on some desolate and distant island.

"Marooned three years agone," he continued, "and lived on goats since then, and berries and oysters. Wherever a man is, says I, a man can do for himself. But, mate, my heart is sore for Christian diet. You mightn't happen to have a piece of cheese about you, now? No? Well, many's the long night I've dreamed of cheese — toasted, mostly — and woke up again, and here I were."

"If ever I can get aboard again," said I, "you shall have cheese by the stone."

All this time he had been feeling the stuff of my jacket, smoothing my hands, looking at my boots, and generally, in the intervals of his speech, showing a childish pleasure in the presence of a fellow-creature. But at my last words he perked up into a kind of startled slyness.

"If ever you get aboard again, says you?" he repeated. "Why, now, who's to hinder you?"

"Not you, I know," was my reply.

"And right you was," he cried. "Now you — what do you call yourself, mate?"

"Jim," I told him.

"Jim, Jim," says he, quite pleased, apparently. "Well, now, Jim, I've lived that rough as you'd be ashamed to hear of. Now, for instance, you wouldn't think I had had a pious mother — to look at me?" he asked.

"Why, no, not in particular," I answered.

"Ah, well," said he, "but I had — remarkable pious. And I was a civil, pious boy, and could rattle off my catechism that fast as you couldn't tell one word from another. And here's what it come to, Jim, and it begun with chuck-farthen on the blessed gravestones! That's what it begun with, but it went further'n that, and so my mother told me, and predicked the whole, she did, the pious woman. But it were Providence that put me here. I've thought it all out in this here lonely island and I'm back on piety. You can't catch me tasting rum so much, but just a thimbleful for luck, of course, the first chance I have. I'm bound I'll be good, and I see the way to. And, Jim" — looking all round him and lowering his voice to a whisper — "I'm rich."

I now felt sure that the poor fellow had gone crazy in his solitude, and I suppose I must have shown the feeling in my face, for he repeated the statement hotly:

"Rich! rich! I says. And I'll tell you what, I'll make a man of you, Jim. Ah, Jim, you'll bless your stars, you will, you was the first that found me!"

And at this there came suddenly a lowering shadow over his face and he tightened his grasp upon my hand and raised a forefinger threateningly before my eyes.

"Now, Jim, you tell me true; that ain't Flint's ship?" he asked.

At this I had a happy inspiration. I began to believe that I had found an ally and I answered him at once.

"It's not Flint's ship and Flint is dead, but I'll tell you true, as you ask me — there are some of Flint's hands aboard; worse luck for the rest of us."

"Not a man — with one — leg?" he gasped.

"Silver?" I asked.

"Ah, Silver!" says he, "that were his name."

"He's the cook, and the ringleader, too."

He was still holding me by the wrist, and at that he gave it quite a wring. "If you was sent by Long John," he said, "I'm as good as pork and I know it. But where was you, do you suppose?"

I had made my mind up in a moment, and by way of answer told him the whole story of our voyage and the predicament in which we found ourselves. He heard me with the keenest interest, and when I had done he patted me on the head.

"You're a good lad, Jim," he said, "and you're all in a clove hitch, ain't you? Well, you just put your trust in Ben Gunn — Ben Gunn's the man to do it. Would you think it likely, now, that your squire would prove a liberal-minded one in case of help — him being in a clove hitch, as you remark?"

I told him the squire was the most liberal of men.

"Ay, but you see," returned Ben Gunn, "I didn't mean giving me a gate to keep and a suit of livery clothes, and such; that's not my mark, Jim. What I mean is, would he be likely to come down to the toon of, say one thousand pounds out of money that's as good as a man's own already?"

"I am sure he would," said I. "As it was, all hands were to share."

"*And* a passage home?" he added, with a look of great shrewdness.

"Why," I cried, "the squire's a gentleman. And, besides, if we got rid of the others, we should want you to help work the vessel home."

"Ah," said he, "so you would." And he seemed very much relieved.

"Now, I'll tell you what," he went on. "So much I'll tell you, and no more. I were in Flint's ship when he buried the treasure; he and six along — six strong seamen. They was ashore nigh on a week, and us standing off and on in the old *Walrus*. One fine day up went the signal, and here come Flint by himself in a little boat, and his head done up in a blue scarf. The sun was getting up, and mortal white he looked about the cutwater. But, there he was, you mind, and the six all dead — dead and buried. How had he done it, not a man aboard us could make out. It was battle, murder, and sudden death, leastways — him against six. Billy Bones was the mate; Long John, he was quartermaster; and they asked him where the treasure was. 'Ah,' says he, 'you can go ashore, if you like, and stay,' he says; 'but as for the ship, she'll beat up for more, by thunder!' That's what he said.

"Well, I was in another ship three years back, and we sighted this island. 'Boys,' said I, 'here's Flint's treasure; let's land and find it.' The cap'n was displeased at that; but my messmates were all of a mind, and landed. Twelve days they looked for it, and every day they had the worse word for me, until one fine morning all hands went aboard. 'As for you, Benjamin Gunn,' says they, 'here's a musket,' they says, 'and a spade, and a pickax. You can stay here and find Flint's money for yourself,' they says.

"Well, Jim, three years have I been here, and not a bite of Christian diet from that day to this. But now, you look here; look at me. Do I look like a man before the mast? No, says you. Nor I weren't, neither, I says."

And with that he winked and pinched me hard.

"Just you mention them words to your squire, Jim," he went on. "Nor he weren't neither — that's the words. Three years he were the man of this island, light and dark, fair and rain; and sometimes he would, may be, think upon a prayer (says you), and sometimes he would, may be, think of his old mother, so be as she's alive (you'll say); but the most part of Gunn's time (this is what you'll say) — the most part of his time was took up with another matter. And then you'll give him a nip, like I do."

And he pinched me again, in the most confidential manner.

"Then," he continued, "then you'll up, and you'll say this: Gunn is a good man (you'll say), and he puts a precious sight more confidence — a precious sight, mind that — in a gen'leman born than in these gen'lemen of fortune, having been one hisself."

"Well," I said, "I don't understand one word that you've been saying. But that's neither here nor there; for how am I to get on board?"

"Ah," said he, "that's the hitch, for sure. Well, there's my boat that I made with my two hands. I keep her under the white rock. If the worst come to the worst, we might try that after dark. Hi!" he broke out, "what's that?"

For just then, although the sun had still an hour or two to run, all the echoes of the island awoke and bellowed to the thunder of a cannon.

"They have begun to fight!" I cried. "Follow me!"

And I began to run toward the anchorage, my terrors all forgotten; while, close at my side, the marooned man in his goat-skins trotted easily and lightly.

"Left, left," says he; "keep to your left hand, mate Jim! Under the trees with you! There's where I killed my first goat. They don't come down here now; they're all mastheaded on them mountings for the fear of Benjamin Gunn. Ah! and there's the cetemery" — cemetery he must have meant. "You see the mounds? I come here and prayed, nows and thens, when I thought maybe a Sunday would be about doo. It weren't quite a chapel, but it seemed more solemn like; and then, says you, Ben Gunn was shorthanded — no chapling, nor so much as a Bible and a flag, you says."

So he kept talking as I ran, neither expecting nor receiving any answer.

The cannon-shot was followed, after a considerable interval, by a volley of small arms.

Another pause, and then, not a quarter of a mile in front of me, I beheld the Union Jack flutter in the air above a wood.

PART IV
THE STOCKADE

CHAPTER XVI
NARRATIVE CONTINUED BY THE DOCTOR — HOW THE SHIP WAS ABANDONED

It was about half-past one — three bells in the sea phrase — that the two boats went ashore from the *Hispaniola*. The captain, the squire, and I were talking matters over in the cabin. Had there been a breath of wind, we should have fallen on the six mutineers who were left aboard with us, slipped our cable, and away to sea. But the wind was wanting; and, to complete our helplessness, down came Hunter with the news that Jim Hawkins had slipped into a boat and was gone ashore with the rest.

It had never occurred to us to doubt Jim Hawkins, but we were alarmed for his safety. With the men in the temper they were in, it seemed an even chance if we should see the lad again. We ran on deck. The pitch was bubbling in the seams; the nasty stench of the place turned me sick; if ever a man smelled fever and dysentery it was in that abominable anchorage. The six scoundrels were sitting grumbling under a sail in the forecastle; ashore we could see the gigs made fast, and a man sitting in each, hard by where the river runs in. One of them was whistling "Lillibullero."

Waiting was a strain, and it was decided that Hunter and I should go ashore with the jolly-boat, in quest of information.

The gigs had leaned to their right, but Hunter and I pulled straight in, in the direction of the stockade upon the chart. The two who were left guarding their boats seemed in a bustle at our appearance; "Lillibullero" stopped off, and I could see the pair discussing what they ought to do. Had they gone and told Silver, all might have turned out differently; but they had their orders, I suppose, and decided to sit quietly where they were and hark back again to "Lillibullero."

There was a slight bend in the coast, and I steered so as to put it between us. Even before we landed we had thus lost sight of the gigs; I jumped out and came as near running as I durst, with a big silk handkerchief under my hat for coolness' sake, and a brace of pistols ready primed for safety.

I had not gone a hundred yards when I came on the stockade.

This was how it was: A spring of clear water arose at the top of a knoll. Well, on the knoll, and inclosing the spring, they had clapped a stout log house, fit to hold two-score people on a pinch, and loopholed for musketry on every side. All around this they had cleared a wide space, and then the thing was completed by a paling six feet high, without door or opening, too strong to pull down without time and labor, and too open to shelter the besiegers. The people in the log house had them in every way; they stood quiet in the shelter and shot the others like partridges. All they wanted was a good watch and food; for, short of a complete surprise, they might have held the place against a regiment.

What particularly took my fancy was the spring. For, though we had a good place of it in the cabin of the *Hispaniola*, with plenty of arms and ammunition, and things to eat, and excellent wines, there had been one thing overlooked — we had no water. I was thinking this over, when there came ringing over the island the cry of a man at the point of death. I was not new to violent death — I have served his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, and got a wound myself at Fontenoy — but I know my pulse went dot and carry one. “Jim Hawkins is gone,” was my first thought.

It is something to have been an old soldier, but more still to have been a doctor. There is no time to dilly-dally in our work. And so now I made up my mind instantly, and with no time lost returned to the shore and jumped on board the jolly-boat.

By good fortune Hunter pulled a good oar. We made the water fly, and the boat was soon alongside and I aboard the schooner.

I found them all shaken, as was natural. The squire was sitting down, as white as a sheet, thinking of the harm he had led us to, the good soul! and one of the six forecastle hands was little better.

“There’s a man,” said Captain Smollett, nodding toward him, “new to this work. He came nigh-hand fainting, doctor, when he heard the cry. Another touch of the rudder and that man would join us.”

I told my plan to the captain, and between us we settled on the details of its accomplishment.

We put old Redruth in the gallery between the cabin and the forecastle, with three or four loaded muskets and a mattress for protection. Hunter brought the boat round under the stern port, and Joyce and I set to work loading her with powder, tins, muskets, bags of biscuits, kegs of pork, a cask of cognac, and my invaluable medicine chest.

In the meantime the squire and the captain stayed on deck, and the latter hailed the coxswain, who was the principal man aboard.

“Mr. Hands,” he said, “here are two of us with a brace of pistols each. If any one of you six make a signal of any description, that man's dead."

They were a good deal taken aback; and, after a little consultation, one and all tumbled down the fore companion, thinking, no doubt, to take us on the rear. But when they saw Redruth waiting for them in the sparred gallery, they went about ship at once, and a head popped out again on deck.

"Down, dog!" cried the captain.

And the head popped back again, and we heard no more for the time of these six very faint-hearted seamen.

By this time, tumbling things in as they came, we had the jolly-boat loaded as much as we dared. Joyce and I got out through the stern port, and we made for shore again, as fast as oars could take us.

This second trip fairly aroused the watchers along shore. "Lillibullero" was dropped again, and just before we lost sight of them behind the little point, one of them whipped ashore and disappeared. I had half a mind to change my plan and destroy their boats, but I feared that Silver and the others might be close at hand, and all might very well be lost by trying for too much.

We had soon touched land in the same place as before and set to work to provision the blockhouse. All three made the first journey, heavily laden, and tossed our stores over the palisade. Then, leaving Joyce to guard them — one man, to be sure, but with half a dozen muskets — Hunter and I returned to the jolly-boat, and loaded ourselves once more. So we proceeded, without pausing to take breath, till the whole cargo was bestowed, when the two servants took up their position in the blockhouse, and I, with all my power, sculled back to the *Hispaniola*.

That we should have risked a second boat load seems more daring than it really was. They had the advantage of numbers, of course, but we had the advantage of arms. Not one of the men ashore had a musket, and before they could get within range for pistol shooting, we flattered ourselves we should be able to give a good account of a half dozen at least.

The squire was waiting for me at the stern window, all his faintness gone from him. He caught the painter and made it fast, and we fell to loading the boat for our very lives. Pork, powder, and biscuit was the cargo, with only a musket and a cutlass apiece for squire and me and Redruth and the captain. The rest of the arms and powder we dropped overboard in two fathoms and a half of water, so that we could see the bright steel shining far below us in the sun on the clean, sandy bottom.

By this time the tide was beginning to ebb, and the ship was swinging round to her anchor. Voices were heard faintly halloaing in the direction of the two gigs; and though this reassured us for Joyce and Hunter, who were well to the eastward, it warned our party to be off.

Redruth retreated from his place in the gallery and dropped into the boat, which we then brought round to the ship's counter, to be handier for Captain Smollett.

"Now, men," said he, "do you hear me?"

There was no answer from the forecastle.

"It's to you, Abraham Gray — it's to you I am speaking."

Still no reply.

"Gray," resumed Mr. Smollett, a little louder, "I am leaving this ship, and I order you to follow your captain. I know you are a good man at bottom, and I dare say not one of the lot of you's as bad as he makes out. I have my watch here in my hand; I give you thirty seconds to join me in."

There was a pause.

"Come, my fine fellow," continued the captain, "don't hang so long in stays. I'm risking my life and the lives of these good gentlemen every second."

There was a sudden scuffle, a sound of blows, and out burst Abraham Gray with a knife-cut on the side of the cheek, and came running to the captain, like a dog to the whistle.

"I'm with you, sir," said he.

And the next moment he and the captain had dropped aboard of us, and we had shoved off and given way.

We were clear out of the ship, but not yet ashore in our stockade.

CHAPTER XVII
NARRATIVE CONTINUED BY THE DOCTOR — THE JOLLY-BOAT’S LAST TRIP

This fifth trip was quite different from any of the others. In the first place, the little gallipot of a boat that we were in was gravely overloaded. Five grown men, and three of them — Trelawney, Redruth, and the captain — over six feet high, was already more than she was meant to carry. Add to that the powder, pork, and the bread-bags. The gunwale was lipping astern. Several times we shipped a little water, and my breeches and the tails of my coat were all soaking wet before we had gone a hundred yards.

The captain made us trim the boat, and we got her to lie a little more evenly. All the same, we were afraid to breathe.

In the second place, the ebb was now making — a strong, rippling current running westward through the basin, and then south’ard and seaward down the straits by which we had entered in the morning. Even the ripples were a danger to our overloaded craft, but the worst of it was that we were swept out of our true course, and away from our proper landing-place behind the point. If we let the current have its way we should come ashore beside the gigs, where the pirates might appear at any moment.

“I cannot keep her head for the stockade, sir,” said I to the captain. I was steering, while he and Redruth, two fresh men, were at the oars. “The tide keeps washing her down. Could you pull a little stronger?”

“Not without swamping the boat,” said he. “You must bear up, sir, if you please — bear up until you see you’re gaining.”

I tried, and found by experiment that the tide kept sweeping us westward until I had laid her head due east, or just about right angles to the way we ought to go.

“We’ll never get ashore at this rate,” said I.

“If it’s the only course that we can lie, sir, we must even lie it,” returned the captain. “We must keep upstream. You see, sir,” he went on, “if once we dropped to leeward of the landing-place, it’s hard to say where we should get ashore, besides the chance of being boarded by the gigs; whereas, the way we go the current must slacken, and then we can dodge back along the shore.”

“The current’s less a’ready, sir,” said the man Gray, who was sitting in the foresheets; “you can ease her off a bit.”

“Thank you, my man,” said I, quite as if nothing had happened, for we had all quietly made up our minds to treat him like one of ourselves.

Suddenly the captain spoke up again, and I thought his voice was a little changed.

"The gun!" said he.

"I have thought of that," said I, for I made sure he was thinking of a bombardment of the fort. "They could never get the gun ashore, and if they did, they could never haul it through the woods."

"Look astern, doctor," replied the captain.

We had entirely forgotten the long nine; and there, to our horror, were the five rogues busy about her, getting off her jacket, as they called the stout tarpaulin cover under which she sailed. Not only that, but it flashed into my mind at the same moment that the round shot and the powder for the gun had been left behind, and a stroke with an ax would put it all into the possession of the evil ones aboard.

"Israel was Flint's gunner," said Gray, hoarsely.

At any risk, we put the boat's head direct for the landing-place. By this time we had got so far out of the run of the current that we kept steerage way even at our necessarily gentle rate of rowing, and I could keep her steady for the goal. But the worst of it was, that with the course I now held, we turned our broadside instead of our stern to the *Hispaniola*, and offered a target like a barn door.

I could hear, as well as see, that brandy-faced rascal, Israel Hands, plumping down a round shot on the deck.

"Who's the best shot?" asked the captain.

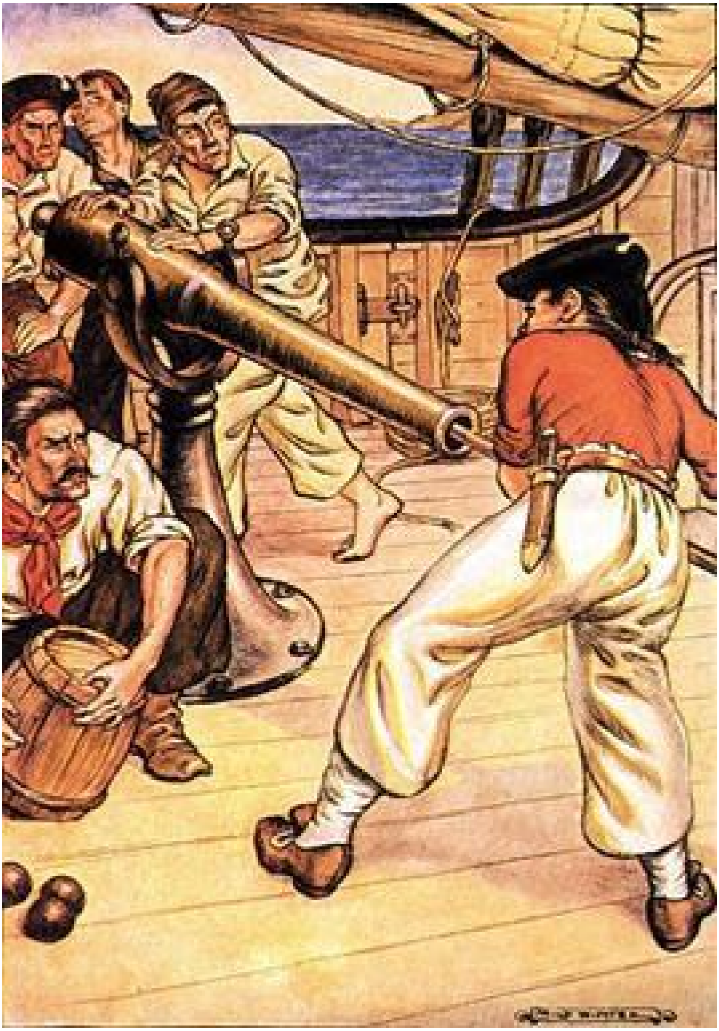
"Mr. Trelawney, out and away," said I.

"Mr. Trelawney, will you please pick me off one of those men, sir? Hands, if possible," said the captain.

Trelawney was as cold as steel. He looked to the priming of his gun.

"Now," cried the captain, "easy with that gun, sir, or you'll swamp the boat. All hands stand by to trim her when he aims."

The squire raised his gun, the rowing ceased, and we leaned over to the other side to keep the balance, and all was so nicely contrived that we did not ship a drop.



They had the gun, by this time, slewed around upon the swivel

They had the gun, by this time, slewed around upon the swivel, and Hands, who was at the muzzle, with the rammer, was, in consequence, the most exposed. However, we had no luck; for just as Trelawney fired, down he stooped, the ball whistling over him, and it was one of the other four who fell.

The cry he gave was echoed, not only by his companions on board, but by a great number of voices from the shore, and looking in that direction I saw the other pirates trooping out from among the trees and tumbling into their places in the boats.

“Here come the gigs, sir,” said I.

“Give way, then,” said the captain. “We mustn’t mind if we swamp her now. If we can’t get ashore, all’s up.”

“Only one of the gigs is being manned, sir,” I added; “the crew of the other is most likely going around by shore to cut us off."

"They'll have a hot run, sir," returned the captain. "Jack ashore, you know. It's not them I mind; it's the round shot. Carpet bowls! My lady's maid couldn't miss. Tell us, squire, when you see the match, and we'll hold water."

In the meantime we had been making headway at a good pace for a boat so overloaded, and we had shipped but little water in the process. We were now close in; thirty or forty strokes and we should beach her, for the ebb had already disclosed a narrow belt of sand below the clustering trees. The gig was no longer to be feared; the little point had already concealed it from our eyes. The ebb-tide, which had so cruelly delayed us, was now making reparation, and delaying our assailants. The one source of danger was the gun.

"If I durst," said the captain, "I'd stop and pick off another man."

But it was plain that they meant nothing should delay their shot. They had never so much as looked at their fallen comrade, though he was not dead, and I could see him trying to crawl away.

"Ready!" cried the squire.

"Hold!" cried the captain, quick as an echo.

And he and Redruth backed with a great heave that sent her astern bodily under water. The report fell in at the same instant of time. This was the first that Jim heard, the sound of the squire's shot not having reached him. When the ball passed, not one of us precisely knew, but I fancy it must have been over our heads, and that the wind of it may have contributed to our disaster.

At any rate the boat sunk by the stern, quite gently, in three feet of water, leaving the captain and myself, facing each other, on our feet. The other three took complete headers, and came up again, drenched and bubbling.

So far there was no great harm. No lives were lost, and we could wade ashore in safety. But there were all our stores at the bottom, and, to make things worse, only two guns out of five remained in a state for service. Mine I had snatched from my knees, and held over my head, by a sort of instinct. As for the captain, he had carried his over his shoulder by a bandoleer, and, like a wise man, lock uppermost. The other three had gone down with the boat. To add to our concern, we heard voices already drawing near us in the woods along the shore; and we had not only the danger of being cut off from the stockade in our half-crippled state, but the fear before us whether, if Hunter and Joyce were attacked by half a dozen, they would have the sense and conduct to stand firm. Hunter was steady, that we knew; Joyce was a doubtful case — a pleasant, polite man for a valet, and to brush one's clothes, but not entirely fitted for a man-of-war.

With all this in our minds, we waded ashore as fast as we could, leaving behind us the poor jolly-boat, and a good half of all our powder and provisions.

CHAPTER XVIII
NARRATIVE CONTINUED BY THE DOCTOR — END OF THE FIRST DAY'S FIGHTING

We made our best speed across the strip of wood that now divided us from the stockade, and at every step we took the voices of the buccaneers rang nearer. Soon we could hear their footfalls as they ran, and the cracking of the branches as they breasted across a bit of thicket.

I began to see we should have a brush for it in earnest, and looked to my priming.

"Captain," said I, "Trelawney is the dead shot. Give him your gun; his own is useless."

They exchanged guns, and Trelawney, silent and cool, as he had been since the beginning of the bustle, hung a moment on his heel to see that all was fit for service. At the same time, observing Gray to be unarmed, I handed him my cutlass. It did all our hearts good to see him spit in his hand, knit his brows, and make the blade sing through the air. It was plain from every line of his body that our new hand was worth his salt.

Forty paces farther we came to the edge of the wood and saw the stockade in front of us. We struck the inclosure about the middle of the south side, and, almost at the same time, seven mutineers — Job Anderson, the boatswain, at their head — appeared in full cry at the southwestern corner.

They paused, as if taken aback, and before they recovered, not only the squire and I, but Hunter and Joyce from the blockhouse, had time to fire.

The four shots came in rather a scattering volley, but they did the business; one of the enemy actually fell, and the rest, without hesitation, turned and plunged into the trees.

After reloading we walked down the outside of the palisade to see to the fallen enemy. He was stone dead — shot through the heart.

We began to rejoice over our good success, when just at that moment a pistol cracked in the bush, a ball whistled close past my ear and poor Tom Redruth stumbled and fell his length on the ground. Both the squire and I returned the shot, but as we had nothing to aim at, it is probable we only wasted powder. Then we reloaded and turned our attention to poor Tom.

The captain and Gray were already examining him, and I saw with half an eye that all was over.

I believe the readiness of our return volley had scattered the mutineers once more, for we were suffered without further molestation to get the poor old gamekeeper hoisted over the stockade, and carried, groaning and bleeding, into the log-house.

Poor old fellow, he had not uttered one word of surprise, complaint, fear, or even acquiescence, from the very beginning of our troubles till now, when we had laid him down in the log-house to die! He had lain like a Trojan behind his mattress in the gallery; he had followed every order silently, doggedly, and well; he was the oldest of our party by a score of years; and now, sullen, old, serviceable servant, it was he that was to die.

The squire dropped down beside him on his knees and kissed his hand, crying like a child.

“Be I going, doctor?” he asked.

“Tom, my man,” said I, “you’re going home.”

“I wish I had had a lick at them with the gun first,” he replied.

“Tom,” said the squire, “say you forgive me, won’t you?”

“Would that be respectful like, from me to you, squire?” was the answer. “Howsoever, so be it, amen!”

After a little while of silence he said he thought somebody might read a prayer. “It’s the custom, sir,” he added, apologetically. And not long after, without another word, he passed away.

In the meantime the captain, whom I had observed to be wonderfully swollen about the chest and pockets, had turned out a great many various stores — the British colours, a Bible, a coil of stoutish rope, pen, ink, the log-book, and pounds of tobacco. He had found a longish fir tree lying felled and cleared in the inclosure, and, with the help of Hunter, he had set it up at the corner of the log-house, where the trunks crossed and made an angle. Then, climbing on the roof, he had with his own hand bent and run up the colours.

This seemed mightily to relieve him. He re-entered the log-house and set about counting up the stores, as if nothing else existed. But he had an eye on Tom’s passage for all that, and as soon as all was over came forward with another flag and reverently spread it on the body.

“Don’t you take on, sir,” he said, shaking the squire’s hand. “All’s well with him; no fear for a hand that’s been shot down in his duty to captain and owner. It mayn’t be good divinity, but it’s a fact.”

Then he pulled me aside.

“Doctor Livesey,” he said, “in how many weeks do you and squire expect the consort?”

I told him it was a question, not of weeks, but of months; that if we were not back by the end of August Blandly was to send to find us, but neither sooner nor later. “You can calculate for yourself,” I said.

“Why, yes,” returned the captain, scratching his head, “and making a large allowance, sir, for all the gifts of Providence, I should say we were pretty close hauled."

"How do you mean?" I asked.

"It's a pity, sir, we lost that second load. That's what I mean," replied the captain. "As for powder and shot, we'll do. But the rations are short, very short — so short, Doctor Livesey, that we're perhaps as well without that extra mouth."

And he pointed to the dead body under the flag.

Just then, with a roar and a whistle, a round shot passed high above the roof of the log-house and plumped far beyond us in the wood.

"Oho!" said the captain. "Blaze away! You've little enough powder already, my lads."

At the second trial the aim was better and the ball descended inside the stockade, scattering a cloud of sand, but doing no further damage.

"Captain," said the squire, "the house is quite invisible from the ship. It must be the flag they are aiming at. Would it not be wiser to take it in?"

"Strike my colours!" cried the captain. "No, sir, not I," and as soon as he had said the words I think we all agreed with him. For it was not only a piece of stout, seamanly good feeling; it was good policy besides, and showed our enemies that we despised their cannonade.

All through the evening they kept thundering away. Ball after ball flew over or fell short, or kicked up the sand in the inclosure; but they had to fire so high that the shot fell dead and buried itself in the soft sand. We had no ricochet to fear; and though one popped in through the roof of the log-house and out again through the floor, we soon got used to that sort of horse-play and minded it no more than cricket.

"There is one thing good about all this," observed the captain; "the wood in front of us is likely clear. The ebb has made a good while; our stores should be uncovered. Volunteers to go and bring in pork."

Gray and Hunter were the first to come forward. Well armed, they stole out of the stockade, but it proved a useless mission. The mutineers were bolder than we fancied, or they put more trust in Israel's gunnery, for four or five of them were busy carrying off our stores and wading out with them to one of the gigs that lay close by, pulling an oar or so to hold her steady against the current. Silver was in the stern-sheets in command, and every man of them was now provided with a musket from some secret magazine of their own.

The captain sat down to his log, and here is the beginning of the entry:

"Alexander Smollett, master; David Livesey, ship's doctor; Abraham Gray, carpenter's mate; John Trelawney, owner; John Hunter and Richard Joyce, owner's servants, landsmen — being all that is left faithful of the ship's company — with stores for ten days at short rations, came ashore this day and flew British colours on the log-house in Treasure Island. Thomas Redruth, owner's servant, landsman, shot by the mutineers; James Hawkins, cabin-boy — "

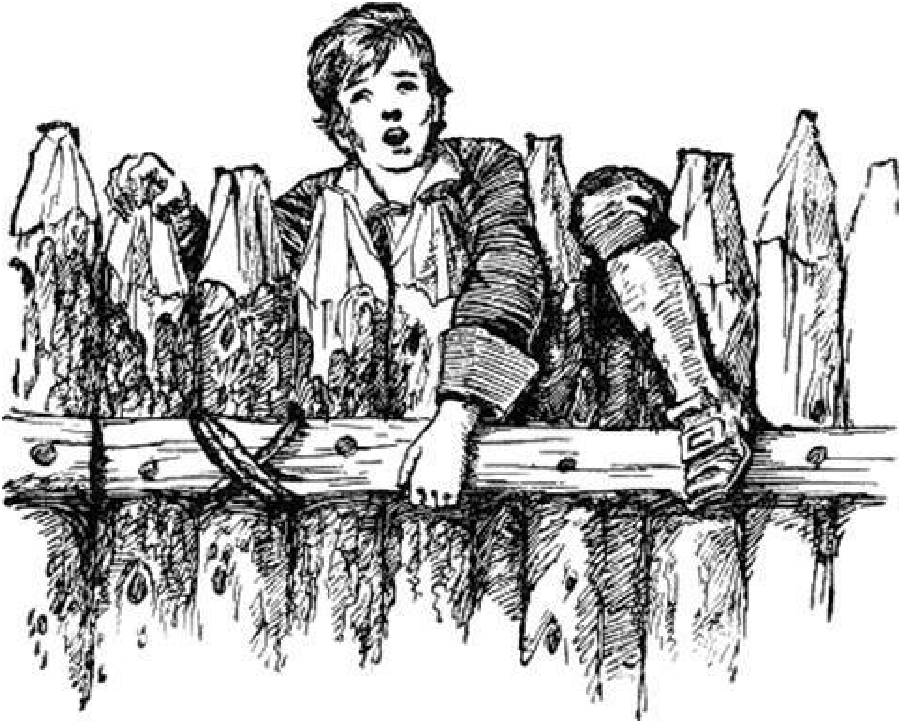
And at the same time I was wondering over poor Jim Hawkins' fate.

A hail on the land side.

"Somebody hailing us," said Hunter, who was on guard.

"Doctor! squire! captain! Hallo, Hunter, is that you?" came the cries.

And I ran to the door in time to see Jim Hawkins, safe and sound, come climbing over the stockade.



CHAPTER XIX
NARRATIVE RESUMED BY JIM HAWKINS — THE GARRISON IN THE STOCKADE

As soon as Ben Gunn saw the colours he came to a halt, stopped me by the arm and sat down.

“Now,” said he, “there’s your friends, sure enough.”

“Far more likely it’s the mutineers,” I answered.

“That!” he cried. “Why, in a place like this, where nobody puts in but gen’lemen of fortune, Silver would fly the Jolly Roger, you don’t make no doubt of that. No, that’s your friends. There’s been blows, too, and I reckon your friends has had the best of it; and here they are ashore in the old stockade, as was made years and years ago by Flint. Ah, he was the man to have a headpiece, was Flint! Barring rum, his match was never seen. He were afraid of none, not he; on’y Silver — Silver was that genteel.”

“Well,” said I, “that may be so, and so be it; all the more reason that I should hurry on and join my friends.”

“Nay, mate,” returned Ben, “not you. You’re a good boy, or I’m mistook; but you’re on’y a boy, all told. Now Ben Gunn is fly. Rum wouldn’t bring me there, where you’re going — not rum wouldn’t, till I see your born gen’leman, and gets it on his word of honor. And you won’t forget my words: ‘A precious sight’ (that’s what you’ll say), ‘a precious sight more confidence’ — and then nips him.”

And he pinched me the third time with the same air of cleverness.

“And when Ben Gunn is wanted you know where to find him, Jim. Just where you found him to-day. And him that comes is to have a white thing in his hand; and he’s to come alone. Oh! and you’ll say this: ‘Ben Gunn,’ says you, ‘has reasons of his own.’“

“Well,” said I, “I believe I understand. You have something to propose, and you wish to see the squire or the doctor, and you’re to be found where I found you. Is that all?”

“And when? says you,” he added. “Why, from about noon observation to about six bells.”

“Good,” says I, “and now may I go?”

“You won’t forget?” he inquired, anxiously. “Precious sight, and reasons of his own, says you. Reasons of his own; that’s the mainstay; as between man and man. Well, then” — still holding me — ”I reckon you can go, Jim. And, Jim, if you was to see Silver, you wouldn’t go for to sell Ben Gunn? wild horses wouldn’t draw it from you? No, says you. And if them pirates came ashore, Jim, what would you say but there'd be widders in the morning?"

Here he was interrupted by a loud report, and a cannon ball came tearing through the trees and pitched in the sand, not a hundred yards from where we two were talking. The next moment each of us had taken to our heels in a different direction.

For a good hour to come frequent reports shook the island, and balls kept crashing through the woods. I moved from hiding-place to hiding-place, always pursued, or so it seemed to me, by these terrifying missiles. But toward the end of the bombardment, though still I durst not venture in the direction of the stockade, where the balls fell oftenest, I had begun, in a manner, to pluck up my heart again; and after a long detour to the east, crept down among the shore-side trees.

The sun had just set, the sea breeze was rustling and tumbling in the woods, and ruffling the gray surface of the anchorage; the tide, too, was far out, and great tracts of sand lay uncovered; the air, after the heat of the day, chilled me through my jacket.

The *Hispaniola* still lay where she had anchored; but, sure enough, there was the Jolly Roger — the black flag of piracy — flying from her peak. Even as I looked there came another red flash and another report, that sent the echoes clattering, and one more round shot whistled through the air. It was the last of the cannonade.

I lay for some time, watching the bustle which succeeded the attack. Men were demolishing something with axes on the beach near the stockade — the poor jolly-boat, I afterwards discovered. Away, near the mouth of the river, a great fire was glowing among the trees, and between that point and the ship one of the gigs kept coming and going, the men, whom I had seen so gloomy, shouting at the oars like children. But there was a sound in their voices which suggested rum.

At length I thought I might return towards the stockade. I was pretty far down on the low, sandy spit that incloses the anchorage to the east, and is joined at half-water to Skeleton Island; and now, as I rose to my feet, I saw, some distance farther down the spit, and rising from among low bushes, an isolated rock, pretty high, and peculiarly white in colour. It occurred to me that this might be the white rock of which Ben Gunn had spoken, and that some day or other a boat might be wanted, and I should know where to look for one.

Then I skirted among the woods until I had regained the rear, or shoreward side, of the stockade, and was soon warmly welcomed by the faithful party.

I had soon told my story, and began to look about me. The log-house was made of unsquared trunks of pine — roof, walls, and floor. The latter stood in several places as much as a foot or a foot and a half above the surface of the sand. There was a porch at the door, and under this porch the little spring welled up into an artificial basin of a rather odd kind — no other than a great ship's kettle of iron, with the bottom knocked out, and sunk "to her bearings," as the captain said, among the sand.

Little had been left beside the framework of the house, but in one corner there was a stone slab laid down by way of hearth, and an old rusty iron basket to contain the fire.

The slopes of the knoll and all the inside of the stockade had been cleared of timber to build the house, and we could see by the stumps what a fine and lofty grove had been destroyed. Most of the soil had been washed away or buried in drift after the removal of the trees; only where the streamlet ran down from the kettle a thick bed of moss and some ferns and little creeping bushes were still green among the sand. Very close around the stockade — too close for defense, they said — the wood still flourished high and dense, all of fir on the land side, but toward the sea with a large admixture of live-oaks.

The cold evening breeze, of which I have spoken, whistled through every chink of the rude building, and sprinkled the floor with a continual rain of fine sand. There was sand in our eyes, sand in our teeth, sand in our suppers, sand dancing in the spring at the bottom of the kettle, for all the world like porridge beginning to boil. Our chimney was a square hole in the roof; it was but a little part of the smoke that found its way out, and the rest eddied about the house, and kept us coughing and piping the eye.

Add to this that Gray, the new man, had his face tied up in a bandage for a cut he had got in breaking away from the mutineers; and that poor old Tom Redruth, still unburied, lay along the wall, stiff and stark, under the Union Jack.

If we had been allowed to sit idle, we should all have fallen in the blues, but Captain Smollett was never the man for that. All hands were called up before him, and he divided us into watches. The doctor, and Gray, and I, for one; the squire, Hunter, and Joyce upon the other. Tired as we all were, two were sent out for firewood, two more were sent to dig a grave for Redruth, the doctor was named cook, I was put sentry at the door, and the captain himself went from one to another, keeping up our spirits and lending a hand wherever it was wanted.

From time to time the doctor came to the door for a little air and to rest his eyes, which were almost smoked out of his head, and whenever he did so, he had a word for me.

"That man Smollett," he said once, "is a better man than I am. And when I say that it means a deal, Jim."

Another time he came and was silent for a while. Then he put his head on one side, and looked at me.

“Is this Ben Gunn a man?” he asked.

“I do not know, sir,” said I. “I am not very sure whether he’s sane.”

“If there’s any doubt about the matter, he is,” returned the doctor. “A man who has been three years biting his nails on a desert island, Jim, can’t expect to appear as sane as you or me. It doesn’t lie in human nature. Was it cheese you said he had a fancy for?”

“Yes, sir, cheese,” I answered.

“Well, Jim,” says he, “just see the good that comes of being dainty in your food. You’ve seen my snuff-box, haven’t you? And you never saw me take snuff; the reason being that in my snuff-box I carry a piece of Parmesan cheese — a cheese made in Italy, very nutritious. Well, that’s for Ben Gunn!”

Before supper was eaten we buried old Tom in the sand, and stood round him for a while bare-headed in the breeze. A good deal of firewood had been got in, but not enough for the captain’s fancy, and he shook his head over it, and told us we “must get back to this to-morrow rather livelier.” Then, when we had eaten our pork, and each had a good stiff glass of brandy grog, the three chiefs got together in a corner to discuss our prospects.

It appears they were at their wits’ end what to do, the stores being so low that we must have been starved into surrender long before help came. But our best hope, it was decided, was to kill off the buccaneers until they either hauled down their flag or ran away with the *Hispaniola*. From nineteen they were already reduced to fifteen, two others were wounded, and one, at least — the man shot beside the gun — severely wounded, if he were not dead. Every time we had a crack at them, we were to take it, saving our own lives, with the extremest care. And, beside that, we had two able allies — rum and the climate.

As for the first, though we were about half a mile away, we could hear them roaring and singing late into the night; and as for the second, the doctor staked his wig, that camped where they were in the marsh, and unprovided with remedies, the half of them would be on their backs before a week.

“So,” he added, “if we are not all shot down first, they’ll be glad to be packing in the schooner. It’s always a ship, and they can get to buccaneering again, I suppose.”

“First ship that I ever lost,” said Captain Smollett.

I was dead tired, as you may fancy, and when I got to sleep, which was not till after a great deal of tossing, I slept like a log of wood.

The rest had long been up, and had already breakfasted and increased the pile of firewood by about half as much again, when I was awakened by a bustle and the sound of voices.

“Flag of truce!” I heard someone say, and then, immediately after, with a cry of surprise, “Silver himself!”

And, at that, up I jumped, and, rubbing my eyes, ran to a loophole in the wall.

CHAPTER XX
SILVER'S EMBASSY

Sure enough, there were two men just outside the stockade, one of them waving a white cloth; the other, no less a person than Silver himself, standing placidly by.

It was still quite early, and the coldest morning that I think I ever was abroad in; a chill that pierced into the marrow. The sky was bright and cloudless overhead, and the tops of the trees shone rosily in the sun. But where Silver stood with his lieutenant all was still in shadow, and they waded knee-deep in a low, white vapor that had crawled during the night out of the morass. The chill and the vapor taken together told a poor tale of the island. It was plainly a damp, feverish, unhealthy spot.

"Keep indoors, men," said the captain. "Ten to one this is a trick."

Then he hailed the buccaneer.

"Who goes? Stand, or we fire."

"Flag of truce!" cried Silver.

The captain was in the porch, keeping himself carefully out of the way of a treacherous shot, should any be intended. He turned and spoke to us.

"Doctor's watch on the lookout. Doctor Livesey, take the north side, if you please; Jim the east; Gray, west. The watch below, all hands to load muskets. Lively, men, and careful."

And then he turned again to the mutineers.

"And what do you want with your flag of truce?" he cried.

This time it was the other man who replied.

"Cap'n Silver, sir, to come on board and make terms," he shouted.

"Cap'n Silver! Don't know him. Who's he?" cried the captain. And we could hear him adding to himself: "Cap'n, is it? My heart, and here's promotion!"

Long John answered for himself.

"Me, sir. These poor lads have chosen me cap'n, after your desertion, sir" — laying a particular emphasis upon the word "desertion." "We're willing to submit, if we can come to terms, and no bones about it. All I ask is your word, Cap'n Smollett, to let me safe and sound out of this here stockade, and one minute to get out o' shot before a gun is fired."

"My man," said Captain Smollett, "I have not the slightest desire to talk to you. If you wish to talk to me, you can come, that's all. If there's any treachery, it'll be on your side, and the Lord help you."

"That's enough, cap'n," shouted Long John cheerily. "A word from you’s enough. I know a gentleman, and you may lay to that.”

We could see the man who carried the flag of truce attempting to hold Silver back. Nor was that wonderful, seeing how cavalier had been the captain’s answer. But Silver laughed at him aloud, and slapped him on the back, as if the idea of alarm had been absurd. Then he advanced to the stockade, threw over his crutch, got a leg up, and with great vigor and skill succeeded in surmounting the fence and dropping safely to the other side.

I will confess that I was far too much taken up with what was going on to be of the slightest use as sentry; indeed, I had already deserted my eastern loophole and crept up behind the captain, who had now seated himself on the threshold, with his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands, and his eyes fixed on the water as it bubbled out of the old iron kettle in the sand. He was whistling to himself, “Come, Lasses and Lads.”

Silver had terrible hard work getting up the knoll. What with the steepness of the incline, the thick tree-stumps, and the soft sand, he and his crutch were as helpless as a ship in stays. But he stuck to it like a man, in silence, and at last arrived before the captain, whom he saluted in the handsomest style. He was tricked out in his best; an immense blue coat, thick with brass buttons, hung as low as to his knees, and a fine laced hat was set on the back of his head.

“Here you are, my man,” said the captain, raising his head. “You had better sit down.”

“You ain’t a-going to let me inside, cap’n?” complained Long John. “It’s a main cold morning, to be sure, sir, to sit outside upon the sand.”

“Why, Silver,” said the captain, “if you had pleased to be an honest man you might have been sitting in your galley. It’s your own doing. You’re either my ship’s cook — and then you were treated handsome — or Cap’n Silver, a common mutineer and pirate, and then you can go hang!”

“Well, well, cap’n,” returned the sea-cook, sitting down as he was bidden on the sand, “you’ll have to give me a hand up again, that’s all. A sweet, pretty place you have of it here. Ah, there’s Jim! The top of the morning to you, Jim. Doctor, here’s my service. Why, there you all are together like a happy family, in a manner of speaking.”

“If you have anything to say, my man, better say it,” said the captain.

“Right you are, Cap’n Smollett,” replied Silver. “Dooty is dooty, to be sure. Well, now, you look here, that was a good lay of yours last night. I don’t deny it was a good lay. Some of you pretty handy with a handspike-end. And I’ll not deny neither but what some of my people was shook — maybe all was shook; maybe I was shook myself; maybe that's why I'm here for terms. But you mark me, cap'n, it won't do twice, by thunder! We'll have to do sentry-go, and ease off a point or so on the rum. Maybe you think we were all a sheet in the wind's eye. But I'll tell you I was sober; I was on'y dog tired; and if I'd awoke a second sooner I'd 'a' caught you at the act, I would. He wasn't dead when I got round to him, not he."

"Well?" says Captain Smollett, as cool as can be.

All that Silver said was a riddle to him, but you would never have guessed it from his tone. As for me, I began to have an inkling. Ben Gunn's last words came back to my mind. I began to suppose that he had paid the buccaneers a visit while they all lay drunk together round their fire, and I reckoned up with glee that we had only fourteen enemies to deal with.

"Well, here it is," said Silver. "We want that treasure, and we'll have it — that's our point! You would just as soon save your lives, I reckon; and that's yours. You have a chart, haven't you?"

"That's as may be," replied the captain.

"Oh, well, you have, I know that," returned Long John. "You needn't be so husky with a man; there ain't a particle of service in that, and you may lay to it. What I mean is, we want your chart. Now, I never meant you no harm, myself."

"That won't do with me, my man," interrupted the captain. "We know exactly what you meant to do, and we don't care; for now, you see, you can't do it."

And the captain looked at him calmly, and proceeded to fill a pipe.

"If Abe Gray — " Silver broke out.

"Avast there!" cried Mr. Smollett. "Gray told me nothing, and I asked him nothing; and what's more, I would see you and him and this whole island blown clean out of the water into blazes first. So there's my mind for you, my man, on that."

This little whiff of temper seemed to cool Silver down. He had been growing nettled before, but now he pulled himself together.

"Like enough," said he. "I would set no limits to what gentlemen might consider shipshape, or might not, as the case were. And, seein' as how you are about to take a pipe, cap'n, I'll make so free as do likewise."

And he filled a pipe and lighted it; and the two men sat silently smoking for quite a while, now looking each other in the face, now stopping their tobacco, now leaning forward to spit. It was as good as the play to see them.

"Now," resumed Silver, "here it is. You give us the chart to get the treasure by, and drop shooting poor seamen, and stoving of their heads in while asleep. You do that and we'll offer you a choice. Either you come aboard along of us, once the treasure shipped, and then I'll give you my affy-davy, upon my word of honor, to clap you somewhere safe ashore. Or, if that ain't to your fancy, some of my hands being rough, and having old scores, on account of hazing, then you can stay here, you can. We'll divide stores with you, man for man; and I'll give my affy-davy, as before, to speak the first ship I sight, and send 'em here to pick you up. Now you'll own that's talking. Handsomer you couldn't look to get, not you. And I hope" — raising his voice — "that all hands in this here blockhouse will overhaul my words, for what is spoke to one is spoke to all."

Captain Smollett rose from his seat and knocked out the ashes of his pipe in the palm of his left hand.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"Every last word, by thunder!" answered John. "Refuse that and you've seen the last of me but musket-balls."

"Very good," said the captain. "Now you'll hear me. If you'll come up one by one, unarmed, I'll engage to clap you all in irons, and to take you home to a fair trial in England. If you won't, my name is Alexander Smollett, I've flown my sovereign's colours, and I'll see you all to Davy Jones. You can't find the treasure. You can't sail the ship — there's not a man among you fit to sail the ship. You can't fight us — Gray, there, got away from five of you. Your ship's in irons, Master Silver; you're on a lee shore, and so you'll find. I stand here and tell you so, and they're the last good words you'll get from me; for, in the name of heaven, I'll put a bullet in your back when next I meet you. Tramp, my lad. Bundle out of this, please, hand over hand, and double quick."

Silver's face was a picture; his eyes started in his head with wrath. He shook the fire out of his pipe.

"Give me a hand up!" he cried.

"Not I," returned the captain.

"Who'll give me a hand up?" he roared.

Not a man among us moved. Growling the foulest imprecations, he crawled along the sand till he got hold of the porch and could hoist himself again upon his crutch. Then he spat into the spring.

"There!" he cried, "that's what I think of ye. Before an hour's out, I'll stove in your old blockhouse like a rum puncheon. Laugh, by thunder, laugh! Before an hour's out, ye'll laugh upon the other side. Them that die'll be the lucky ones."

And with a dreadful oath he stumbled off, plowed down the sand, was helped across the stockade, after four or five failures, by the man with the flag of truce, and disappeared in an instant afterward among the trees.

CHAPTER XXI
THE ATTACK

As soon as Silver disappeared, the captain, who had been closely watching him, turned toward the interior of the house, and found not a man of us at his post but Gray. It was the first time we had ever seen him angry.

"Quarters!" he roared. And then, as we slunk back to our places, "Gray," he said, "I'll put your name in the log; you've stood by your duty like a seaman. Mr. Trelawney, I'm surprised at you, sir. Doctor, I thought you had worn the king's coat! If that was how you served at Fontenoy, sir, you'd have been better in your berth."

The doctor's watch were all back at their loopholes, the rest were busy loading the spare muskets, and everyone with a red face, you may be certain, and a flea in his ear, as the saying is.

The captain looked on for a while in silence. Then he spoke.

"My lads," he said, "I've given Silver a broadside. I pitched it in red-hot on purpose; and before the hour's out, as he said, we shall be boarded. We're outnumbered, I needn't tell you that, but we fight in shelter; and, a minute ago, I should have said we fought with discipline. I've no manner of doubt that we can drub them, if you choose."

Then he went the rounds, and saw, as he said, that all was clear.

On the two short sides of the house, east and west, there were only two loopholes; on the south side where the porch was, two again; and on the north side, five. There was a round score of muskets for the seven of us; the firewood had been built into four piles — tables, you might say — one about the middle of each side, and on each of these tables some ammunition and four loaded muskets were laid ready to the hand of the defenders. In the middle, the cutlasses lay ranged.

"Toss out the fire," said the captain; "the chill is past, and we mustn't have smoke in our eyes."

The iron fire basket was carried bodily out by Mr. Trelawney, and the embers smothered among sand.

"Hawkins hasn't had his breakfast. Hawkins, help yourself, and back to your post to eat it," continued Captain Smollett. "Lively, now, my lad; you'll want it before you've done. Hunter, serve out a round of brandy to all hands."

And while this was going on the captain completed, in his own mind, the plan of the defense.

"Doctor, you will take the door," he resumed. "See and don't expose yourself; keep within, and fire through the porch. Hunter, take the east side, there. Joyce, you stand by the west, my man. Mr. Trelawney, you are the best shot — you and Gray will take this long north side, with the five loopholes; it's there the danger is. If they can get up to it, and fire in upon us through our own ports, things would begin to look dirty. Hawkins, neither you nor I are much account at the shooting; we'll stand by to load and bear a hand."

As the captain had said, the chill was past. As soon as the sun had climbed above our girdle of trees, it fell with all its force upon the clearing, and drank up the vapors at a draught. Soon the sand was baking, and the resin melting in the logs of the blockhouse. Jackets and coats were flung aside; shirts were thrown open at the neck, and rolled up to the shoulders; and we stood there, each at his post, in a fever of heat and anxiety.

An hour passed away.

"Hang them!" said the captain. "This is as dull as the doldrums. Gray, whistle for a wind."

And just at that moment came the first news of the attack.

"If you please, sir," said Joyce, "if I see anyone, am I to fire?"

"I told you so!" cried the captain.

"Thank you, sir," returned Joyce, with the same quiet civility.

Nothing followed for a time, but the remark had set us all on the alert, straining ears and eyes — the musketeers with their pieces balanced in their hands, the captain out in the middle of the blockhouse, with his mouth very tight and a frown on his face.

So some seconds passed, till suddenly Joyce whipped up his musket and fired. The report had scarcely died away ere it was repeated and repeated from without in a scattering volley, shot behind shot, like a string of geese, from every side of the inclosure. Several bullets struck the log-house, but not one entered; and, as the smoke cleared away and vanished, the stockade and the woods around it looked as quiet and empty as before. Not a bough waved, not the gleam of a musket-barrel betrayed the presence of our foes.

"Did you hit your man?" asked the captain.

"No, sir," replied Joyce. "I believe not, sir."

"Next best thing to tell the truth," muttered Captain Smollett. "Load his gun, Hawkins. How many should you say there were on your side, doctor?"

"I know precisely," said Doctor Livesey. "Three shots were fired on this side. I saw the three flashes — two close together — one farther to the west."

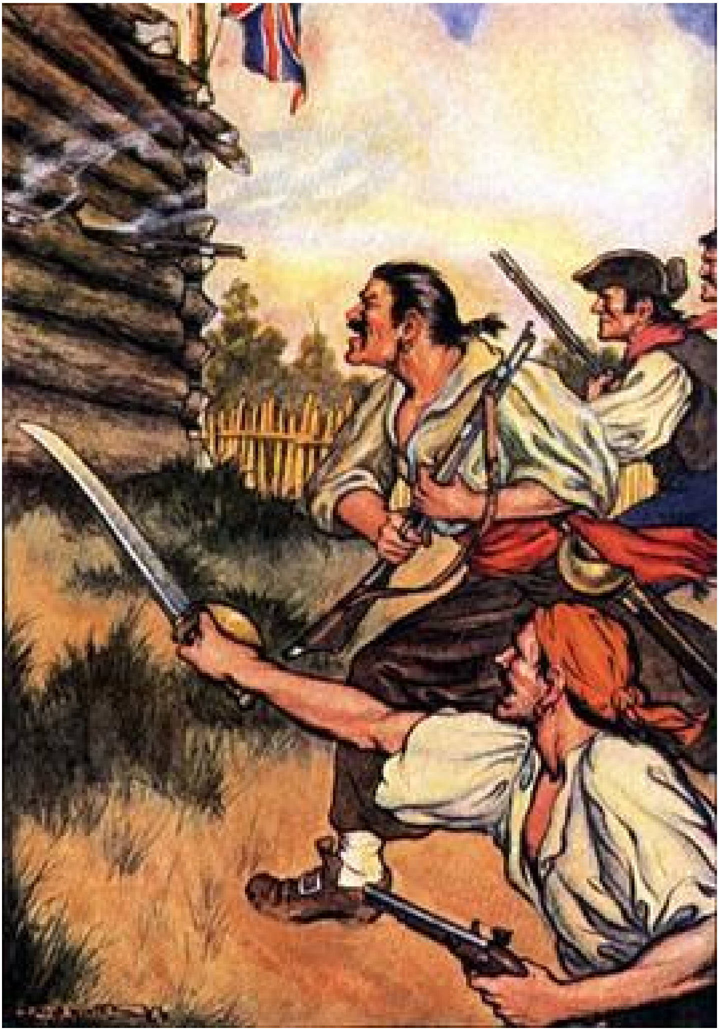
"Three!" repeated the captain. "And how many on yours, Mr. Trelawney?"

But this was not so easily answered. There had come many from the north — seven, by the squire's computation; eight or nine, according to Gray. From the east and west only a single shot had been fired. It was plain, therefore, that the attack would be developed from the north, and that on the other three sides we were only to be annoyed by a show of hostilities. But Captain Smollett made no change in his arrangements. If the mutineers succeeded in crossing the stockade, he argued, they would take possession of any unprotected loophole, and shoot us down like rats in our own stronghold.

Nor had we much time left to us for thought. Suddenly, with a loud huzza, a little cloud of pirates leaped from the woods on the north side, and ran straight on the stockade. At the same moment, the fire was once more opened from the woods, and a rifle-ball sang through the doorway, and knocked the doctor's musket into bits.

The boarders swarmed over the fence, like monkeys. Squire and Gray fired again and yet again; three men fell, one forward into the inclosure, two back on the outside. But of these, one was evidently more frightened than hurt, for he was on his feet again in a crack, and instantly disappeared among the trees.

Two had bit the dust, one had fled, four had made good their footing inside our defenses; while from the shelter of the woods seven or eight men, each evidently supplied with several muskets, kept up a hot though useless fire on the log-house.



In a moment the four pirates had swarmed up the mound and were upon us

The four who had boarded made straight before them for the building, shouting as they ran, and the men among the trees shouted back to encourage them. Several shots were fired, but such was the hurry of the marksmen, that not one appeared to have taken effect. In a moment the four pirates had swarmed up the mound and were upon us.

The head of Job Anderson, the boatswain, appeared at the middle loophole.

“At ‘em, all hands — all hands!” he roared, in a voice of thunder.

At the same moment another pirate grasped Hunter’s musket by the muzzle, wrenched it from his hands, plucked it through the loophole, and, with one stunning blow, laid the poor fellow senseless on the floor. Meanwhile a third, running unharmed all round the house, appeared suddenly in the doorway, and fell with his cutlass on the doctor.

Our position was utterly reversed. A moment since we were firing, under cover, at an exposed enemy; now it was we who lay uncovered, and could not return a blow.

The log-house was full of smoke, to which we owed our comparative safety. Cries and confusion, the flashes and reports of pistol-shots, and one loud groan, rang in my ears.

"Out, lads, out and fight 'em in the open! Cutlasses!" cried the captain.

I snatched a cutlass from the pile, and someone, at the same time snatching another, gave me a cut across the knuckles which I hardly felt. I dashed out of the door into the clear sunlight. Someone was close behind, I knew not whom. Right in front, the doctor was pursuing his assailant down the hill, and, just as my eyes fell upon him, beat down his guard, and sent him sprawling on his back, with a great slash across his face.

"Round the house, lads! round the house!" cried the captain, and even in the hurly-burly I perceived a change in his voice.

Mechanically I obeyed, turned eastward, and, with my cutlass raised, ran round the corner of the house. Next moment I was face to face with Anderson. He roared aloud, and his hanger went up above his head, flashing in the sunlight. I had not time to be afraid, but, as the blow still hung impending, leaped in a trice upon one side, and missing my footing in the soft sand, rolled headlong down the slope.

When I had first sallied from the door, the other mutineers had been already swarming up the palisade to make an end of us. One man, in a red nightcap, with his cutlass in his mouth, had even got upon the top and thrown a leg across. Well, so short had been the interval, that when I found my feet again all was in the same posture, the fellow with the red nightcap still halfway over, another still just showing his head above the top of the stockade. And yet, in this breath of time, the fight was over, and the victory ours.

Gray, following close behind me, had cut down the big boatswain ere he had time to recover from his lost blow. Another had been shot at a loophole in the very act of firing into the house, and now lay in agony, the pistol still smoking in his hand. A third, as I had seen, the doctor had disposed of at a blow. Of the four who had scaled the palisade, one only remained unaccounted for, and he, having left his cutlass on the field, was now clambering out again with the fear of death upon him.

"Fire — fire from the house!" cried the doctor. "And you, lads, back into cover."

But his words were unheeded, no shot was fired, and the last boarder made good his escape and disappeared with the rest into the wood. In three seconds nothing remained of the attacking party but the five who had fallen, four on the inside and one on the outside of the palisade.

The doctor and Gray and I ran full speed for shelter. The survivors would soon be back where they had left their muskets, and at any moment the fire might recommence.

The house was by this time somewhat cleared of smoke, and we saw at a glance the price we had paid for victory. Hunter lay beside his loophole, stunned; Joyce by his, shot through the head, never to move again; while right in the center the squire was supporting the captain, one as pale as the other.

"The captain's wounded," said Mr. Trelawney.

"Have they run?" asked Mr. Smollett.

"All that could, you may be bound," returned the doctor; "but there's five of them will never run again."

"Five!" cried the captain. "Come, that's better. Five against three leaves us four to nine. That's better odds than we had at starting. We were seven to nineteen then, or thought we were, and that's as bad to bear."

The mutineers were soon only eight in number, for the man shot by Mr. Trelawney on board the schooner died that same evening of his wound. But this was, of course, not known till after by the faithful party.

PART V
MY SEA ADVENTURE

CHAPTER XXII
HOW MY SEA ADVENTURE BEGAN

There was no return of the mutineers — not so much as another shot out of the woods. They had "got their rations for that day," as the captain put it, and we had the place to ourselves and a quiet time to overhaul the wounded and get dinner. Squire and I cooked outside, in spite of the danger, and even outside we could hardly tell what we were at, for the horror of the loud groans that reached us from the doctor's patients.

Out of the eight men who had fallen in the action only three still breathed — that one of the pirates who had been shot at the loophole, Hunter, and Captain Smollett — and of these the first two were as good as dead; the mutineer, indeed, died under the doctor's knife, and Hunter, do what we could, never recovered consciousness in this world. He lingered all day, breathing loudly like the old buccaneer at home in his apoplectic fit; but the bones of his chest had been crushed by the blow and his skull fractured in falling, and some time in the following night, without sign or sound, he went to his Maker.

As for the captain, his wounds were grievous indeed, but not dangerous. No organ was fatally injured. Anderson's ball — for it was Job that shot him first — had broken his shoulder-blade and touched the lung, not badly; the second had only torn and displaced some muscles in the calf. He was sure to recover, the doctor said, but in the meantime, and for weeks to come, he must not walk nor move his arm, nor so much as speak when he could help it.

My own accidental cut across the knuckles was a flea-bite. Doctor Livesey patched it up with plaster, and pulled my ears for me into the bargain.

After dinner the squire and the doctor sat by the captain's side awhile in consultation; and when they had talked to their heart's content, it being then a little past noon, the doctor took up his hat and pistols, girt on a cutlass, put the chart in his pocket, and with a musket over his shoulder, crossed the palisade on the north side and set off briskly through the trees.

Gray and I were sitting together at the far end of the blockhouse, to be out of earshot of our officers, consulting, and Gray took his pipe out of his mouth and fairly forgot to put it back again, so thunderstruck he was at this occurrence.

“Why, in the name of Davy Jones,” said he, “is Doctor Livesey mad?”

“Why, no,” says I. “He’s about the last of this crew for that, I take it.”

“Well, shipmate,” said Gray, “mad he may not be, but if *he’s* not, mark my words, *I* am.”

“I take it,” replied I, “the doctor has his idea, and if I am right, he’s going now to see Ben Gunn.”

I was right, as appeared later; but in the meantime, the house being stifling hot, and the little patch of sand inside the palisade ablaze with midday sun, I began to get another thought into my head which was not by any means so right. What I began to do was to envy the doctor, walking in the cool shadow of the woods, with the birds about him and the pleasant smell of the pines, while I sat grilling, with my clothes stuck to the hot resin, and so much blood about me, and so many poor dead bodies lying all around, that I took a disgust of the place that was almost as strong as fear.

All the time I was washing out the blockhouse, and then washing up the things from dinner, this disgust and envy kept growing stronger and stronger, till at last, being near a bread-bag, and no one then observing me, I took the first step toward my escapade and filled both pockets of my coat with biscuit.

I was a fool, if you like, and certainly I was going to do a foolish, over-bold act, but I was determined to do it with all the precautions in my power. These biscuits, should anything befall me, would keep me at least from starving till far on in the next day.

The next thing I laid hold of was a brace of pistols, and as I already had a powder-horn and bullets, I felt myself well supplied with arms.

As for the scheme I had in my head, it was not a bad one in itself. It was to go down the sandy spit that divides the anchorage on the east from the open sea, find the white rock I had observed last evening, and ascertain whether it was there or not that Ben Gunn had hidden his boat — a thing quite worth doing, as I still believe. But as I was certain I should not be allowed to leave the inclosure, my only plan was to take French leave and slip out when nobody was watching, and that was so bad a way of doing it as made the thing itself wrong. But I was only a boy and I had made my mind up.

Well, as things at last fell out, I found an admirable opportunity. The squire and Gray were busy helping the captain with his bandages; the coast was clear; I made a bolt for it over the stockade and into the thickest of the trees, and before my absence was observed I was out of cry of my companions.

This was my second folly, far worse than the first, as I left but two sound men to guard the house; but, like the first, it was a help toward saving all of us.

I took my way straight for the east coast of the island, for I was determined to go down the seaside of the spit to avoid all chance of observation from the anchorage. It was already late in the afternoon, although still warm and sunny. As I continued to thread the tall woods I could hear from far before me not only the continuous thunder of the surf, but a certain tossing of foliage and grinding of boughs which showed me the sea breeze set in higher than usual. Soon cool draughts of air began to reach me, and a few steps farther I came forth into the open borders of the grove and saw the sea lying blue and sunny to the horizon and the surf tumbling and tossing its foam along the beach.

I have never seen the sea quiet round Treasure Island. The sun might blaze overhead, the air be without a breath, the surface smooth and blue, but still these great rollers would be running along all the external coast, thundering and thundering by day and night, and I scarce believe there is one spot in the island where a man would be out of earshot of their noise.

I walked along beside the surf with great enjoyment, till, thinking I was now got far enough to the south, I took the cover of some thick bushes and crept warily up to the ridge of the spit.

Behind me was the sea; in front, the anchorage. The sea-breeze, as though it had the sooner blown itself out by its unusual violence, was already at an end; it had been succeeded by light, variable airs from the south and southeast, carrying great banks of fog; and the anchorage, under lee of Skeleton Island, lay still and leaden as when first we entered it. The *Hispaniola*, in that unbroken mirror, was exactly portrayed from the truck to the water-line, the Jolly Roger hanging from her peak.

Alongside lay one of the gigs, Silver in the stern-sheets — him I could always recognize — while a couple of men were leaning over the stern bulwarks, one of them with a red cap — the very rogue that I had seen some hours before stride-legs upon the palisade. Apparently they were talking and laughing, though at that distance — upward of a mile — I could of course hear no word of what was said.

All at once there began the most horrid, unearthly screaming, which at first startled me badly, though I had soon remembered the voice of Captain Flint, and even thought I could make out the bird by her bright plumage as she sat perched upon her master's wrist.

Soon after the jolly-boat shoved off and pulled for shore, and the man with the red cap and his comrade went below by the cabin companion.

Just about the same time the sun had gone down behind the Spy-glass, and as the fog was collecting rapidly, it began to grow dark in earnest. I saw I must lose no time if I were to find the boat that evening.

The white rock, visible enough above the brush, was still some eighth of a mile farther down the spit, and it took me a goodish while to get up with it, crawling, often on all-fours, among the scrub. Night had almost come when I laid my hand on its rough sides. Right below it there was an exceedingly small hollow of green turf, hidden by banks and a thick underwood about knee-deep, that grew there very plentifully; and in the center of the dell, sure enough, a little tent of goat-skins, like what the gypsies carry about with them in England.

I dropped into the hollow, lifted the side of the tent, and there was Ben Gunn's boat — homemade if ever anything was homemade — a rude, lopsided framework of tough wood, and stretched upon that a covering of goat-skin, with the hair inside. The thing was extremely small, even for me, and I can hardly imagine that it could have floated with a full-sized man. There was one thwart set as low as possible, a kind of stretcher in the bows, and a double paddle for propulsion.

I had not then seen a coracle, such as the ancient Britons made, but I have seen one since, and I can give you no fairer idea of Ben Gunn's boat than by saying it was like the first and the worst coracle ever made by man. But the great advantage of the coracle it certainly possessed, for it was exceedingly light and portable.

Well, now that I had found the boat, you would have thought I had had enough of truantry for once; but in the meantime I had taken another notion, and become so obstinately fond of it that I would have carried it out, I believe, in the teeth of Captain Smollett himself. This was to slip out under cover of the night, cut the *Hispaniola* adrift, and let her go ashore where she fancied. I had quite made up my mind that the mutineers, after their repulse of the morning, had nothing nearer their hearts than to up anchor and away to sea; this, I thought, it would be a fine thing to prevent, and now that I had seen how they left their watchman unprovided with a boat, I thought it might be done with little risk.

Down I sat to wait for darkness, and made a hearty meal of biscuit. It was a night out of ten thousand for my purpose. The fog had now buried all heaven. As the last rays of daylight dwindled and disappeared, absolute blackness settled down on Treasure Island. And when, at last, I shouldered the coracle, and groped my way stumblingly out of the hollow where I had supped, there were but two points visible on the whole anchorage.

One was the great fire on shore, by which the defeated pirates lay carousing in the swamp. The other, a mere blur of light upon the darkness, indicated the position of the anchored ship. She had swung round to the ebb — her bow was now toward me — the only lights on board were in the cabin; and what I saw was merely a reflection on the fog of the strong rays that flowed from the stern window.

The ebb had already run some time, and I had to wade through a long belt of swampy sand, where I sank several times above the ankle, before I came to the edge of the retreating water, and wading a little way in, with some strength and dexterity, set my coracle, keel downward, on the surface.

CHAPTER XXIII
THE EBB-TIDE RUNS

The coracle — as I had ample reason to know before I was done with her — was a very safe boat for a person of my height and weight, both buoyant and clever in a sea-way; but she was the most cross-grained, lopsided craft to manage. Do as you pleased, she always made more leeway than anything else, and turning round and round was the maneuver she was best at. Even Ben Gunn himself has admitted that she was "queer to handle till you knew her way."

Certainly I did not know her way. She turned in every direction but the one I was bound to go; the most part of the time we were broadside on, and I am very sure I never should have made the ship at all but for the tide. By good fortune, paddle as I pleased, the tide was still sweeping me down; and there lay the *Hispaniola* right in the fairway, hardly to be missed.

First she loomed before me like a blot of something yet blacker than darkness, then her spars and hull began to take shape, and the next moment, as it seemed (for the further I went the brisker grew the current of the ebb), I was alongside of her hawser, and had laid hold.

The hawser was as taut as a bowstring and the current so strong she pulled upon her anchor. All round the hull, in the blackness, the rippling current bubbled and chattered like a little mountain stream. One cut with my sea gully, and the *Hispaniola* would go humming down the tide.

So far so good; but it next occurred to my recollection that a taut hawser, suddenly cut, is a thing as dangerous as a kicking horse. Ten to one, if I were so foolhardy as to cut the *Hispaniola* from her anchor, I and the coracle would be knocked clean out of the water.

This brought me to a full stop, and if fortune had not again particularly favored me, I should have had to abandon my design. But the light airs which had begun blowing from the southeast and south had hauled round after nightfall into the southwest. Just while I was meditating, a puff came, caught the *Hispaniola*, and forced her up into the current; and, to my great joy, I felt the hawser slacken in my grasp, and the hand by which I held it dip for a second under water.

With that I made my mind up, took out my gully, opened it with my teeth, and cut one strand after another, till the vessel swung only by two. Then I lay quiet, waiting to sever these last when the strain should be once more lightened by a breath of wind.

All this time I had heard the sound of loud voices from the cabin; but, to say truth, my mind had been so entirely taken up with other thoughts that I had scarcely given ear. Now, however, when I had nothing else to do, I began to pay more heed.

One I recognized for the coxswain's, Israel Hands, that had been Flint's gunner in former days. The other was, of course, my friend of the red nightcap. Both men were plainly the worse of drink, and they were still drinking; for, even while I was listening, one of them, with a drunken cry, opened the stern window and threw out something, which I divined to be an empty bottle. But they were not only tipsy; it was plain that they were furiously angry. Oaths flew like hailstones, and every now and then there came forth such an explosion as I thought was sure to end in blows. But each time the quarrel passed off, and the voices grumbled lower for a while, until the next crisis came, and, in its turn, passed away without result.

On shore, I could see the glow of the great camp fire burning warmly through the shore-side trees. Someone was singing a dull, old droning sailor's song, with a droop and a quaver at the end of every verse, and seemingly no end to it at all but the patience of the singer. I had heard it on the voyage more than once, and remembered these words:

"But one man of the crew alive,
What put to sea with seventy-five."

And I thought it was a ditty rather too dolefully appropriate for a company that had met such cruel losses in the morning. But, indeed, from what I saw, all these buccaneers were as callous as the sea they sailed on.

At last the breeze came; the schooner sidled and drew nearer in the dark; I felt the hawser slacken once more, and with a good, tough effort, cut the last fibers through.

The breeze had but little action on the coracle, and I was almost instantly swept against the bows of the *Hispaniola*. At the same time the schooner began to turn upon her heel, spinning slowly, end for end, across the current.

I wrought like a fiend, for I expected every moment to be swamped; and since I found I could not push the coracle directly off, I now shoved straight astern. At length I was clear of my dangerous neighbor, and just as I gave the last impulsion, my hands came across a light cord that was trailing overboard across the stern bulwarks. Instantly I grasped it.

Why I should have done so I can hardly say. It was at first mere instinct, but once I had it in my hands and found it fast, curiosity began to get the upper hand, and I determined I should have one look through the cabin window.

I pulled in hand over hand on the cord, and, when I judged myself near enough, rose at infinite risk to about half my height, and thus commanded the roof and a slice of the interior of the cabin.

By this time the schooner and her little consort were gliding pretty swiftly through the water; indeed, we had already fetched up level with the camp fire. The ship was talking, as sailors say, loudly, treading the innumerable ripples with an incessant weltering splash; and until I got my eye above the window sill I could not comprehend why the watchmen had taken no alarm. One glance, however, was sufficient; and it was only one glance that I durst take from that unsteady skiff. It showed me Hands and his companion locked together in deadly wrestle, each with a hand upon the other's throat.

I dropped upon the thwart again, none too soon, for I was near overboard. I could see nothing for the moment but these two furious, encrimsoned faces, swaying together under the smoky lamp; and I shut my eyes to let them grow once more familiar with the darkness.

The endless ballad had come to an end at last, and the whole diminished company about the camp fire had broken into the chorus I had heard so often:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest —
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done for the rest —
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!"

I was just thinking how busy drink and the devil were at that very moment in the cabin of the *Hispaniola*, when I was surprised by a sudden lurch of the coracle. At the same moment she yawed sharply and seemed to change her course. The speed in the meantime had strangely increased.

I opened my eyes at once. All around me were little ripples, combing over with a sharp, bristling sound and slightly phosphorescent. The *Hispaniola* herself, a few yards in whose wake I was still being whirled along, seemed to stagger in her course, and I saw her spars toss a little against the blackness of the night; nay, as I looked longer, I made sure she also was wheeling to the southward.

I glanced over my shoulder and my heart jumped against my ribs. There, right behind me, was the glow of the camp fire. The current had turned at right angles, sweeping round along with it the tall schooner and the little dancing coracle; ever quickening, ever bubbling higher, ever muttering louder, it went spinning through the narrows for the open sea.

Suddenly the schooner in front of me gave a violent yaw, turning, perhaps, through twenty degrees; and almost at the same moment one shout followed another from on board. I could hear feet pounding on the companion ladder, and I knew that the two drunkards had at last been interrupted in their quarrel and awakened to a sense of their disaster.

I lay down flat in the bottom of that wretched skiff and devoutly recommended my spirit to its Maker. At the end of the straits I made sure we must fall into some bar of raging breakers, where all my troubles would be ended speedily; and though I could perhaps bear to die, I could not bear to look upon my fate as it approached.

So I must have lain for hours, continually beaten to and fro upon the billows, now and again wetted with flying sprays, and never ceasing to expect death at the next plunge. Gradually weariness grew upon me; a numbness, an occasional stupor, fell upon my mind even in the midst of my terrors, until sleep at last intervened, and in my sea-tossed coracle I lay and dreamed of home and the old "Admiral Benbow."

CHAPTER XXIV
THE CRUISE OF THE CORACLE

It was broad day when I awoke and found myself tossing at the southwest end of Treasure Island. The sun was up, but was still hid from me behind the great bulk of the Spy-glass, which on this side descended almost to the sea in formidable cliffs.

Haulbowline Head and Mizzen-mast Hill were at my elbow, the hill bare and dark, the head bound with cliffs forty or fifty feet high and fringed with great masses of fallen rock. I was scarce a quarter of a mile to seaward, and it was my first thought to paddle in and land.

That notion was soon given over. Among the fallen rocks the breakers spouted and bellowed; loud reverberations, heavy sprays flying and falling, succeeded one another from second to second; and I saw myself, if I ventured nearer, dashed to death upon the rough shore or spending my strength in vain to scale the beetling crags.

Nor was that all, for crawling together on flat tables of rock, or letting themselves drop into the sea with loud reports, I beheld huge slimy monsters — soft snails, as it were, of incredible bigness — two or three score of them together, making the rocks to echo with their barkings.

I have understood since that they were sea lions, and entirely harmless. But the look of them, added to the difficulty of the shore and the high running of the surf, was more than enough to disgust me of that landing-place. I felt willing rather to starve at sea than to confront such perils.

In the meantime I had a better chance, as I supposed, before me. North of Haulbowline Head the land runs in a long way, leaving, at low tide, a long stretch of yellow sand. To the north of that, again, there comes another cape — Cape of the Woods, as it was marked upon the chart — buried in tall green pines, which descended to the margin of the sea.

I remembered what Silver had said about the current that sets northward along the whole west coast of Treasure Island; and seeing from my position that I was already under its influence, I preferred to leave Haulbowline Head behind me, and reserve my strength for an attempt to land upon the kindlier-looking Cape of the Woods.

There was a great, smooth swell upon the sea. The wind blowing steady and gentle from the south, there was no contrariety between that and the current, and the billows rose and fell unbroken.

Had it been otherwise, I must long ago have perished; but as it was, it is surprising how easily and securely my little and light boat could ride. Often, as I still lay at the bottom, and kept no more than an eye above the gunwale, I would see a big blue summit heaving close above me; yet the coracle would but bounce a little, dance as if on springs, and subside on the other side into the trough as lightly as a bird.

I began after a little to grow very bold, and sat up to try my skill at paddling. But even a small change in the disposition of the weight will produce violent changes in the behavior of a coracle. And I had hardly moved before the boat, giving up at once her gentle, dancing movement, ran straight down a slope of water so steep that it made me giddy, and struck her nose, with a spout of spray, deep into the side of the next wave.

I was drenched and terrified, and fell instantly back into my old position, whereupon the coracle seemed to find her head again, and led me softly as before among the billows. It was plain she was not to be interfered with, and at that rate, since I could in no way influence her course, what hope had I left of reaching land?

I began to be horribly frightened, but I kept my head, for all that. First, moving with all care, I gradually bailed out the coracle with my sea cap; then getting my eye once more above the gunwale, I set myself to study how it was she managed to slip so quietly through the rollers.

I found each wave, instead of the big, smooth, glossy mountain it looks from shore, or from a vessel's deck, was for all the world like any range of hills on the dry land, full of peaks and smooth places and valleys. The coracle, left to herself, turning from side to side, threaded, so to speak, her way through these lower parts, and avoided the steep slopes and higher toppling summits of the wave.

"Well, now," thought I to myself, "it is plain I must lie where I am, and not disturb the balance; but it is plain, also, that I can put the paddle over the side, and from time to time, in smooth places, give her a shove or two towards land." No sooner thought upon than done. There I lay on my elbows, in the most trying attitude, and every now and again gave a weak stroke or two to turn her head to shore.

It was very tiring and slow work, yet I did visibly gain ground; and, as we drew near the Cape of the Woods, though I saw I must infallibly miss that point, I had still made some hundred yards of easting. I was, indeed, close in. I could see the cool, green tree-tops swaying together in the breeze, and I felt sure I should make the next promontory without fail.

It was high time, for I now began to be tortured with thirst. The glow of the sun from above, its thousand-fold reflection from the waves, the sea water that fell and dried upon me, caking my very lips with salt, combined to make my throat burn and my brain ache. The sight of the trees so near at hand had almost made me sick with longing; but the current had soon carried me past the point; and, as the next reach of sea opened out, I beheld a sight that changed the nature of my thoughts.

Right in front of me, not half a mile away, I beheld the *Hispaniola* under sail. I made sure, of course, that I should be taken, but I was so distressed for want of water, that I scarce knew whether to be glad or sorry at the thought; and, long before I had come to a conclusion, surprise had taken possession of my mind, and I could do nothing but stare and wonder.

The *Hispaniola* was under her mainsail and two jibs, and the beautiful white canvas shone in the sun like snow or silver. When I first sighted her, all her sails were drawing, she was laying a course about northwest, and I presumed the men on board were going round the island on their way back to the anchorage. Presently she began to fetch more and more to the westward, so that I thought they had sighted me and were going about in chase. At last, however, she fell right into the wind's eye, was taken dead aback, and stood there awhile helpless, with her sails shivering.

"Clumsy fellows," said I, "they must still be drunk as owls." And I thought how Captain Smollett would have set them skipping.

Meanwhile the schooner gradually fell off, and filled again upon another tack, sailed swiftly for a minute or so, and brought up once more dead in the wind's eye. Again and again was this repeated. To and fro, up and down, north, south, east, and west, the *Hispaniola* sailed by swoops and dashes, and at each repetition ended as she had begun, with idly flapping canvas. It became plain to me that nobody was steering. And, if so, where were the men? Either they were dead drunk, or had deserted her, I thought, and perhaps if I could get on board, I might return the vessel to her captain.

The current was bearing coracle and schooner southward at an equal rate. As for the latter's sailing, it was so wild and intermittent, and she hung each time so long in irons, that she certainly gained nothing, if she did not even lose. If I only dared to sit up and paddle, I made sure that I could overhaul her. The scheme had an air of adventure that inspired me, and the thought of the water breaker beside the fore companion doubled my growing courage.

Up I got, was welcomed almost instantly by another cloud of spray, but this time stuck to my purpose and set myself with all my strength and caution to paddle after the unsteered *Hispaniola*. Once I shipped a sea so heavy that I had to stop and bail, with my heart fluttering like a bird, but gradually I got into the way of the thing and guided my coracle among the waves, with only now and then a blow upon her bows and a dash of foam in my face.

I was now gaining rapidly on the schooner. I could see the brass glisten on the tiller as it banged about, and still no soul appeared upon her decks. I could not choose but suppose she was deserted. If not, the men were lying drunk below, where I might batten them down, perhaps, and do what I chose with the ship.

For some time she had been doing the worst thing possible for me — standing still. She headed nearly due south, yawing, of course, all the time. Each time she fell off her sails partly filled, and these brought her, in a moment, right to the wind again. I have said this was the worst thing possible for me; for, helpless as she looked in this situation, with the canvas crackling like cannon, and the blocks trundling and banging on the deck, she still continued to run away from me, not only with the speed of the current, but by the whole amount of her leeway, which was naturally great.

But now, at last, I had my chance. The breeze fell, for some seconds, very low, and the current gradually turning her, the *Hispaniola* revolved slowly round her center and at last presented me her stern, with the cabin window still gaping open and the lamp over the table still burning on into the day. The mainsail hung drooped like a banner. She was stock-still but for the current.

For the last little while I had even lost, but now, redoubling my efforts, I began once more to overhaul the chase.

I was not a hundred yards from her when the wind came again in a clap; she filled on the port tack and was off again, stooping and skimming like a swallow.

My first impulse was one of despair, but my second was towards joy. Round she came, till she was broadside on to me — round still till she had covered a half, and then two-thirds, and then three-quarters of the distance that separated us. I could see the waves boiling white under her forefoot. Immensely tall she looked to me from my low station in the coracle.

And then, of a sudden, I began to comprehend. I had scarce time to think — scarce time to act and save myself. I was on the summit of one swell when the schooner came stooping over the next. The bowsprit was over my head. I sprang to my feet and leaped, stamping the coracle under water. With one hand I caught the jib-boom, while my foot was lodged between the stay and the brace, and as I still clung there panting, a dull blow told me that the schooner had charged down upon and struck the coracle and that I was left without retreat on the *Hispaniola*.

CHAPTER XXV
I STRIKE THE JOLLY ROGER

I had scarce gained a position on the bowsprit when the flying jib flapped and filled upon the other tack with a report like a gun. The schooner trembled to her keel under the reverse, but next moment, the other sails still drawing, the jib flapped back again and hung idle.

This had nearly tossed me off into the sea, and now I lost no time, crawled back along the bowsprit and tumbled headforemost on the deck.

I was on the lee side of the forecastle, and the mainsail, which was still drawing, concealed from me a certain portion of the after-deck. Not a soul was to be seen. The planks, which had not been swabbed since the mutiny, bore the print of many feet; and an empty bottle, broken by the neck, tumbled to and fro like a live thing in the scuppers.

Suddenly the *Hispaniola* came right into the wind. The jibs behind me cracked aloud; the rudder slammed to; the whole ship gave a sickening heave and shudder; and at the same moment the main-boom swung inboard, the sheet groaning in the blocks, and showed me the lee after-deck.

There were the two watchmen, sure enough; Red-cap on his back, as stiff as a handspike, with his arms stretched out like those of a crucifix, and his teeth showing through his open lips; Israel Hands propped against the bulwarks, his chin on his chest, his hands lying open before him on the deck, his face as white, under its tan, as a tallow candle.

For a while the ship kept bucking and sidling like a vicious horse, the sails filling, now on one tack, now on another, and the boom swinging to and fro till the mast groaned aloud under the strain. Now and again, too, there would come a cloud of light sprays over the bulwark, and a heavy blow of the ship's bows against the swell — so much heavier weather was made of it by this great rigged ship than by my homemade, lopsided coracle, now gone to the bottom of the sea.

At every jump of the schooner, Red-cap slipped to and fro; but — what was ghastly to behold — neither his attitude nor his fixed teeth-disclosing grin was any way disturbed by this rough usage. At every jump, too, Hands appeared still more to sink into himself and settle down upon the deck, his feet sliding ever the farther out, and the whole body canting toward the stern, so that his face became, little by little, hid from me; and at last I could see nothing beyond his ear and the frayed ringlet of one whisker.

At the same time I observed, around both of them, splashes of dark blood upon the planks, and began to feel sure that they had killed each other in their drunken wrath.

While I was thus looking and wondering, in a calm moment when the ship was still, Israel Hands turned partly round, and with a low moan, writhed himself back to the position in which I had seen him first. The moan, which told of pain and deadly weakness, and the way in which his jaw hung open, went right to my heart. But when I remembered the talk I had overheard from the apple barrel, all pity left me.

I walked aft until I reached the mainmast.

“Come aboard, Mr. Hands,” I said, ironically.

He rolled his eyes round heavily, but he was too far gone to express surprise. All he could do was to utter one word, “Brandy.”

It occurred to me there was no time to lose, and dodging the boom as it once more lurched across the deck, I slipped aft and down the companion-stairs into the cabin.

It was such a scene of confusion as you can hardly fancy. All the lock-fast places had been broken open in quest of the chart. The floor was thick with mud, where the ruffians had sat down to drink or consult after wading in the marshes round their camp. The bulkheads, all painted in clear white, and beaded round with gilt, bore a pattern of dirty hands. Dozens of empty bottles clinked together in corners to the rolling of the ship. One of the doctor’s medical books lay open on the table, half of the leaves gutted out, I suppose, for pipe-lights. In the midst of all this the lamp still cast a smoky glow, obscure and brown as umber.

I went into the cellar; all the barrels were gone, and of the bottles a most surprising number had been drunk out and thrown away. Certainly, since the mutiny began, not a man of them could ever have been sober.

Foraging about I found a bottle with some brandy left, for Hands; and for myself I routed out some biscuit, some pickled fruits, a great bunch of raisins, and a piece of cheese. With these I came on deck, put down my own stock behind the rudder-head, and well out of the coxswain’s reach, went forward to the water-breaker, and had a good, deep drink of water, and then, and not until then, gave Hands the brandy.

He must have drunk a gill before he took the bottle from his mouth.

“Ay,” said he, “by thunder, but I wanted some o’ that!”

I had sat down already in my own corner and begun to eat.

“Much hurt?” I asked him.

He grunted, or, rather, I might say, he barked.

“If that doctor was aboard,” he said, “I’d be right enough in a couple of turns; but I don't have no manner of luck, you see, and that's what's the matter with me. As for that swab, he's good and dead, he is," he added, indicating the man with the red cap. "He warn't no seaman, anyhow. And where mought you have come from?"

"Well," said I, "I've come aboard to take possession of this ship, Mr. Hands, and you'll please regard me as your captain until further notice."

He looked at me sourly enough, but said nothing. Some of the colour had come back into his cheeks, though he still looked very sick and still continued to slip out and settle down as the ship banged about.

"By the by," I continued, "I can't have these colours, Mr. Hands; and by your leave I'll strike 'em. Better none than these."

And, again dodging the boom, I ran to the colour lines, hauled down their cursed black flag, and chucked it overboard.

"God save the king!" said I, waving my cap; "and there's an end to Captain Silver."

He watched me keenly and slyly, his chin all the while on his breast.

"I reckon," he said at last — "I reckon, Cap'n Hawkins, you'll kind o' want to get ashore, now. S'pose we talks."

"Why, yes," says I, "with all my heart, Mr. Hands. Say on." And I went back to my meal with a good appetite.

"This man," he began, nodding feebly at the corpse — "O'Brien were his name — a rank Irelander — this man and me got the canvas on her, meaning for to sail her back. Well, *he's* dead now, he is — as dead as bilge; and who's to sail this ship, I don't see. Without I give you a hint, you ain't that man, as far's I can tell. Now, look here, you gives me food and drink, and a old scarf or ankercher to tie my wound up, you do; and I'll tell you how to sail her; and that's about square all round, I take it."

"I'll tell you one thing," says I; "I'm not going back to Captain Kidd's anchorage. I mean to get into North Inlet, and beach her quietly there."

"To be sure you did," he cried. "Why, I ain't sich an infernal lubber, after all. I can see, can't I? I've tried my fling, I have, and I've lost, and it's you has the wind of me. North Inlet? Why, I haven't no ch'ice, not I. I'd help you sail her up to Execution Dock, by thunder! so I would."

Well, as it seemed to me, there was some sense in this. We struck our bargain on the spot. In three minutes I had the *Hispaniola* sailing easily before the wind along the coast of Treasure Island, with good hopes of turning the northern point ere noon, and beating down again as far as North Inlet before high water, when we might beach her safely, and wait till the subsiding tide permitted us to land.

Then I lashed the tiller and went below to my own chest, where I got a soft silk handkerchief of my mother's. With this, and with my aid, Hands bound up the great bleeding stab he had received in the thigh, and after he had eaten a little and had a swallow or two more of the brandy, he began to pick up visibly, sat straighter up, spoke louder and clearer, and looked in every way another man.

The breeze served us admirably. We skimmed before it like a bird, the coast of the island flashing by, and the view changing every minute. Soon we were past the high lands and bowling beside low, sandy country, sparsely dotted with dwarf pines, and soon we were beyond that again, and had turned the corner of the rocky hill that ends the island on the north.

I was greatly elated with my new command, and pleased with the bright, sunshiny weather and these different prospects of the coast. I had now plenty of water and good things to eat, and my conscience, which had smitten me hard for my desertion, was quieted by the great conquest I had made. I should, I think, have had nothing left me to desire but for the eyes of the coxswain as they followed me derisively about the deck, and the odd smile that appeared continually on his face. It was a smile that had in it something both of pain and weakness — a haggard, old man's smile; but there was, besides that, a grain of derision, a shadow of treachery, in his expression as he craftily watched, and watched, and watched me at my work.

CHAPTER XXVI
ISRAEL HANDS

The wind, serving us to a desire, now hauled into the west. We could run so much easier from the northeast corner of the island to the mouth of the North Inlet. Only, as we had no power to anchor, and dared not beach her until the tide had flowed a good deal farther, time hung on our hands. The coxswain told me how to lay the ship to; after a good many trials I succeeded, and we both sat in silence over another meal.

"Cap'n," said he, at length, with that same uncomfortable smile, "here's my old shipmate, O'Brien; s'pose you was to heave him overboard. I ain't partic'lar, as a rule, and I don't take no blame for settling his hash; but I don't reckon him ornamental, now, do you?"

"I'm not strong enough, and I don't like the job; and there he lies, for me," said I.

"This here's an unlucky ship — the *Hispaniola*, Jim," he went on, blinking. "There's a power of men been killed in this *Hispaniola* — a sight o' poor seamen dead and gone since you and me took ship to Bristol. I never seen such dirty luck, not I. There was this here O'Brien, now — he's dead, ain't he? Well, now, I'm no scholar, and you're a lad as can read and figure; and, to put it straight, do you take it as a dead man is dead for good, or do he come alive again?"

"You can kill the body, Mr. Hands, but not the spirit; you must know that already," I replied. "O'Brien, there, is in another world, and may be watching us."

"Ah!" says he. "Well, that's unfort'nate — appears as if killing parties was a waste of time. Howsomever, sperrits don't reckon for much, by what I've seen. I'll chance it with the sperrits, Jim. And now you've spoke up free, and I'll take it kind if you'd step down into that there cabin and get me a — well, a — shiver my timbers! I can't hit the name on't. Well, you get me a bottle of wine, Jim — this here brandy's too strong for my head."

Now the coxswain's hesitation seemed to be unnatural; and as for the notion of his preferring wine to brandy, I entirely disbelieved it. The whole story was a pretext. He wanted me to leave the deck — so much was plain, but with what purpose I could in no way imagine. His eyes never met mine; they kept wandering to and fro, up and down, now with a look to the sky, now with a flitting glance upon the dead O'Brien. All the time he kept smiling and putting his tongue out in the most guilty, embarrassed manner, so that a child could have told that he was bent on some deception. I was prompt with my answer, however, for I saw where my advantage lay, and that with a fellow so densely stupid I could easily conceal my suspicions to the end.

"Some wine?" I said. "Far better. Will you have white or red?"

"Well, I reckon it's about the blessed same to me, shipmate," he replied; "so it's strong, and plenty of it, what's the odds?"

"All right," I answered. "I'll bring you port, Mr. Hands. But I'll have to dig for it."

With that I scuttled down the companion with all the noise I could, slipped off my shoes, ran quietly along the sparred gallery, mounted the forecastle ladder and popped my head out of the fore companion. I knew he would not expect to see me there, yet I took every precaution possible, and certainly the worst of my suspicions proved too true.

He had risen from his position to his hands and knees, and though his leg obviously hurt him pretty sharply when he moved — for I could hear him stifle a groan — yet it was at a good, rattling rate that he trailed himself across the deck. In half a minute he had reached the port scuppers, and picked out of a coil of rope a long knife, or rather a short dirk, discolored to the hilt with blood. He looked upon it for a moment, thrusting forth his under jaw, tried the point upon his hand, and then hastily concealing it in the bosom of his jacket, trundled back again into his old place against the bulwark.

This was all that I required to know. Israel could move about; he was now armed, and if he had been at so much trouble to get rid of me, it was plain that I was meant to be the victim. What he would do afterward — whether he would try to crawl right across the island from North Inlet to the camp among the swamps, or whether he would fire Long Tom, trusting that his own comrades might come first to help him, was, of course, more than I could say.

Yet I felt sure that I could trust him in one point, since in that our interests jumped together, and that was in the disposition of the schooner. We both desired to have her stranded safe enough, in a sheltered place, and so that when the time came, she could be got off again with as little labor and danger as might be; and until that was done I considered that my life would certainly be spared.

While I was thus turning the business over in my mind I had not been idle with my body. I had stolen back to the cabin, slipped once more into my shoes and laid my hand at random on a bottle of wine, and now with this for an excuse, I made my reappearance on the deck.

Hands lay as I had left him, all fallen together in a bundle, and with his eyelids lowered as though he were too weak to bear the light. He looked up, however, at my coming, knocked the neck off the bottle like a man who had done the same thing often, and took a good swig, with his favorite toast of "Here's luck!" Then he lay quiet for a little, and then, pulling out a stick of tobacco, begged me to cut him a quid.

“Cut me a junk o’ that,” says he, “for I haven’t no knife, and hardly strength enough, so be as I had. Ah, Jim, Jim, I reckon I’ve missed stays! Cut me a quid as’ll likely be the last, lad; for I’m for my long home, and no mistake.”

“Well,” said I, “I’ll cut you some tobacco, but if I was you and thought myself so badly, I would go to my prayers, like a Christian man.”

“Why?” said he. “Now you tell me why.”

“Why?” I cried. “You were asking me just now about the dead. You’ve broken your trust; you’ve lived in sin and lies and blood; there’s a man you killed lying at your feet this moment; and you ask me why! For God’s mercy, Mr. Hands, that’s why.”

I spoke with a little heat, thinking of the bloody dirk he had hidden in his pocket, and designed, in his ill thoughts, to end me with. He, for his part, took a great draught of the wine and spoke with the most unusual solemnity.

“For thirty year,” he said, “I’ve sailed the seas and seen good and bad, better and worse, fair weather and foul, provisions running out, knives going, and what not. Well, now I tell you, I never seen good come o’ goodness yet. Him as strikes first is my fancy; dead men don’t bite; them’s my views — amen, so be it. And now, you look here,” he added, suddenly changing his tone, “we’ve had about enough of this foolery. The tide’s made good enough by now. You just take my orders, Cap’n Hawkins, and we’ll sail slap in and be done with it.”

All told, we had scarce two miles to run, but the navigation was delicate, the entrance to this northern anchorage was not only narrow and shoal, but lay east and west, so that the schooner must be nicely handled to be got in. I think I was a good, prompt subaltern, and I am very sure that Hands was an excellent pilot; for we went about and about, and dodged in, shaving the banks, with a certainty and a neatness that were a pleasure to behold.

Scarcely had we passed the head before the land closed around us. The shores of North Inlet were as thickly wooded as those of the southern anchorage, but the space was longer and narrower, and more like, what in truth it was, the estuary of a river. Right before us, at the southern end, we saw the wreck of a ship in the last stages of dilapidation. It had been a great vessel of three masts, but had lain so long exposed to the injuries of the weather that it was hung about with great webs of dripping seaweed, and on the deck of it shore bushes had taken root, and now flourished thick with flowers. It was a sad sight, but it showed us that the anchorage was calm.

“Now,” said Hands, “look there; there’s a pet bit for to beach a ship in. Fine flat sand, never a catspaw, trees all around of it, and flowers a-blowing like a garding on that old ship."

"And, once beached," I inquired, "how shall we get her off again?"

"Why, so," he replied; "you take a line ashore there on the other side at low water; take a turn about one o' them big pines; bring it back, take a turn around the capstan and lie-to for the tide. Come high water, all hands take a pull upon the line, and off she comes as sweet as natur'. And now, boy, you stand by. We're near the bit now, and she's too much way on her. Starboard a little — so — steady — starboard — larboard a little — steady — steady!"

So he issued his commands, which I breathlessly obeyed; till, all of a sudden, he cried: "Now, my hearty, luff!" And I put the helm hard up, and the *Hispaniola* swung round rapidly and ran stem on for the low wooded shore.

The excitement of these last maneuvers had somewhat interfered with the watch I had kept hitherto, sharply enough, upon the coxswain. Even then I was still so much interested, waiting for the ship to touch, that I had quite forgot the peril that hung over my head, and stood craning over the starboard bulwarks and watching the ripples spreading wide before the bows. I might have fallen without a struggle for my life, had not a sudden disquietude seized upon me and made me turn my head. Perhaps I had heard a creak or seen his shadow moving with the tail of my eye; perhaps it was an instinct like a cat's; but, sure enough, when I looked round, there was Hands, already halfway toward me, with the dirk in his right hand.

We must both have cried out aloud when our eyes met, but while mine was the shrill cry of terror, his was a roar of fury like a charging bull's. At the same instant he threw himself forward and I leaped sideways toward the bows. As I did so I let go of the tiller, which sprung sharp to leeward; and I think this saved my life, for it struck Hands across the chest, and stopped him, for the moment, dead.

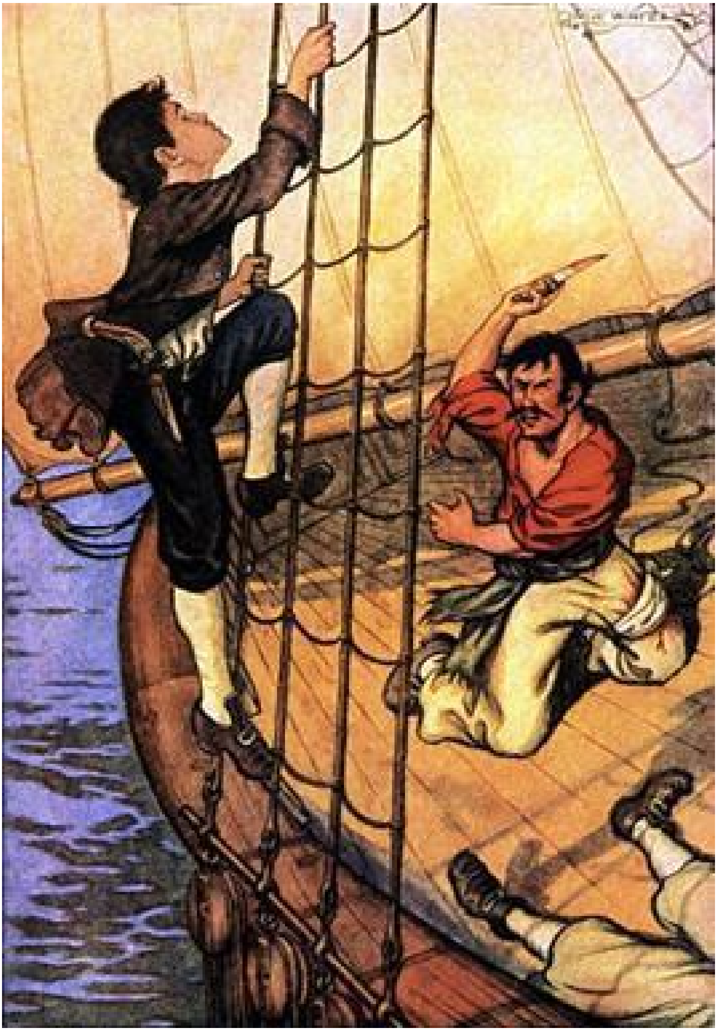
Before he could recover I was safe out of the corner where he had me trapped, with all the deck to dodge about. Just forward of the mainmast I stopped, drew a pistol from my pocket, took a cool aim, though he had already turned and was once more coming directly after me, and drew the trigger. The hammer fell, but there followed neither flash nor sound; the priming was useless with sea water. I cursed myself for my neglect. Why had not I, long before, reprimed and reloaded my only weapons? Then I should not have been as now, a mere fleeing sheep before this butcher.

Wounded as he was, it was wonderful how fast he could move, his grizzled hair tumbling over his face and his face itself as red as a red ensign with his haste and fury. I had no time to try my other pistol, nor, indeed, much inclination, for I was sure it would be useless. One thing I saw plainly: I must not simply retreat before him, or he would speedily hold me boxed into the bows, as a moment since he had so nearly boxed me in the stern. Once so caught, and nine or ten inches of the blood-stained dirk would be my last experience on this side of eternity. I placed my palms against the mainmast, which was of a goodish bigness, and waited, every nerve upon the stretch.

Seeing that I meant to dodge he also paused, and a moment or two passed in feints on his part and corresponding movements upon mine. It was such a game as I had often played at home about the rocks of Black Hill Cove; but never before, you may be sure, with such a wildly beating heart as now. Still, as I say it, it was a boy's game, and I thought I could hold my own at it against an elderly seaman with a wounded thigh. Indeed, my courage had begun to rise so high that I allowed myself a few darting thoughts on what would be the end of the affair; and while I saw certainly that I could spin it out for long, I saw no hope of any ultimate escape.

Well, while things stood thus, suddenly the *Hispaniola* struck, staggered, ground for an instant in the sand, and then, swift as a blow, canted over to the port side, till the deck stood at an angle of forty-five degrees, and about a puncheon of water splashed into the scupper holes, and lay in a pool between the deck and bulwark.

We were both of us capsized in a second, and both of us rolled, almost together, into the scuppers, the dead Red-cap, with his arms still spread out, tumbling stiffly after us. So near were we, indeed, that my head came against the coxswain's foot with a crack that made my teeth rattle. Blow and all, I was the first afoot again, for Hands had got involved with the dead body. The sudden canting of the ship had made the deck no place for running on; I had to find some new way of escape, and that upon the instant, for my foe was almost touching me. Quick as thought, I sprang into the mizzen shrouds, rattled up hand over hand, and did not draw a breath till I was seated on the crosstrees.



Quick as thought, I sprang into the mizzen shrouds

I had been saved by being prompt; the dirk had struck not half a foot below me as I pursued my upward flight; and there stood Israel Hands with his mouth open and his face upturned to mine, a perfect statue of surprise and disappointment.

Now that I had a moment to myself, I lost no time in changing the priming of my pistol, and then, having one ready for service, and to make assurance doubly sure, I proceeded to draw the load of the other, and recharge it afresh from the beginning.

My new employment struck Hands all of a heap; he began to see the dice going against him, and after an obvious hesitation, he also hauled himself heavily into the shrouds, and, with the dirk in his teeth, began slowly and painfully to mount. It cost him no end of time and groans to haul his wounded leg behind him; and I had quietly finished my arrangements before he was much more than a third of the way up. Then, with a pistol in either hand, I addressed him:

"One more step, Mr. Hands," said I, "and I'll blow your brains out! Dead men don't bite, you know," I added, with a chuckle.

He stopped instantly. I could see by the workings of his face that he was trying to think, and the process was so slow and laborious that, in my new-found security, I laughed aloud. At last, with a swallow or two, he spoke, his face still wearing the same expression of extreme perplexity. In order to speak he had to take the dagger from his mouth, but, in all else, he remained unmoved.

"Jim," says he, "I reckon we're fouled, you and me, and we'll have to sign articles. I'd have had you but for that there lurch; but I don't have no luck, not I; and I reckon I'll have to strike, which comes hard, you see, for a master mariner to a ship's younker like you, Jim."

I was drinking in his words and smiling away, as conceited as a cock upon a walk, when, all in a breath, back went his right hand over his shoulder. Something sang like an arrow through the air; I felt a blow and then a sharp pang, and there I was pinned by the shoulder to the mast. In the horrid pain and surprise of the moment — I scarce can say it was by my own volition, and I am sure it was without a conscious aim — both my pistols went off, and both escaped out of my hands. They did not fall alone; with a choked cry the coxswain loosed his grasp upon the shrouds, and plunged head first into the water.

CHAPTER XXVII
“PIECES OF EIGHT”

Owing to the cant of the vessel, the masts hung far out over the water, and from my perch on the crosstrees I had nothing below me but the surface of the bay. Hands, who was not so far up, was, in consequence, nearer to the ship, and fell between me and the bulwarks. He rose once to the surface in a lather of foam and blood, and then sank again for good. As the water settled, I could see him lying huddled together on the clean, bright sand in the shadow of the vessel’s sides. A fish or two whipped past his body. Sometimes, by the quivering of the water, he appeared to move a little, as if he were trying to rise. But he was dead enough, for all that, being both shot and drowned, and was food for fish in the very place where he had designed my slaughter.

I was no sooner certain of this than I began to feel sick, faint, and terrified. The hot blood was running over my back and chest. The dirk, where it had pinned my shoulder to the mast, seemed to burn like a hot iron; yet it was not so much these real sufferings that distressed me, for these, it seemed to me, I could bear without a murmur; it was the horror I had upon my mind of falling from the crosstree into that still, green water beside the body of the coxswain.

I clung with both hands till my nails ached, and I shut my eyes as if to cover up the peril. Gradually my mind came back again, my pulses quieted down to a more natural time, and I was once more in possession of myself.

It was my first thought to pluck forth the dirk; but either it stuck too hard or my nerve failed me, and I desisted with a violent shudder. Oddly enough, that very shudder did the business. The knife, in fact, had come the nearest in the world to missing me altogether; it held me by a mere pinch of skin, and this the shudder tore away. The blood ran down the faster, to be sure, but I was my own master again, and only tacked to the mast by my coat and shirt.

These last I broke through with a sudden jerk, and then regained the deck by the starboard shrouds. For nothing in the world would I have again ventured, shaken as I was, upon the overhanging port shrouds, from which Israel had so lately fallen.

I went below and did what I could for my wound; it pained me a good deal, and still bled freely, but it was neither deep nor dangerous, nor did it greatly gall me when I used my arm. Then I looked around me, and as the ship was now, in a sense, my own, I began to think of clearing it from its last passenger — the dead man, O’Brien.

He had pitched, as I have said, against the bulwarks, where he lay like some horrid, ungainly sort of puppet; life-size, indeed, but how different from life's colour or life's comeliness! In that position, I could easily have my way with him, and as the habit of tragical adventures had worn off almost all my terror for the dead, I took him by the waist as if he had been a sack of bran, and, with one good heave, tumbled him overboard. He went in with a sounding plunge; the red cap came off, and remained floating on the surface; and as soon as the splash subsided, I could see him and Israel lying side by side, both wavering with the tremulous movement of the water. O'Brien, though still quite a young man, was very bald. There he lay with that bald head across the knees of the man who killed him, and the quick fishes steering to and fro over both.

I was now alone upon the ship; the tide had just turned. The sun was within so few degrees of setting that already the shadow of the pines upon the western shore began to reach right across the anchorage and fall in patterns on the deck. The evening breeze had sprung up, and though it was well warded off by the hill with the two peaks upon the east, the cordage had begun to sing a little softly to itself and the idle sails to rattle to and fro.

I began to see a danger to the ship. The jibs I speedily doused and brought tumbling to the deck, but the mainsail was a harder matter. Of course, when the schooner canted over, the boom had swung outboard, and the cap of it and a foot or two of sail hung even under water. I thought this made it still more dangerous, yet the strain was so heavy that I half feared to meddle. At last I got my knife and cut the halyards. The peak dropped instantly, a great belly of loose canvas floated broad upon the water; and since, pull as I liked, I could not budge the downhaul, that was the extent of what I could accomplish. For the rest, the *Hispaniola* must trust to luck, like myself.

By this time the whole anchorage had fallen into shadow — the last rays, I remember, falling through a glade of the wood, and shining bright as jewels on the flowery mantle of the wreck. It began to be chill, the tide was rapidly fleeting seaward, the schooner settling more and more on her beam-ends.

I scrambled forward and looked over. It seemed shallow enough, and holding the cut hawser in both hands for a last security, I let myself drop softly overboard. The water scarcely reached my waist; the sand was firm and covered with ripple-marks, and I waded ashore in great spirits, leaving the *Hispaniola* on her side, with her mainsail trailing wide upon the surface of the bay. About the same time the sun went fairly down, and the breeze whistled low in the dusk among the tossing pines.

At least, and at last, I was off the sea, nor had I returned thence empty-handed. There lay the schooner, clear at last from buccaneers and ready for our own men to board and get to sea again. I had nothing nearer my fancy than to get home to the stockade and boast of my achievements. Possibly I might be blamed a bit for my truantry, but the recapture of the *Hispaniola* was a clinching answer, and I hoped that even Captain Smollett would confess I had not lost my time.

So thinking, and in famous spirits, I began to set my face homeward for the blockhouse and my companions. I remembered that the most easterly of the rivers which drain into Captain Kidd's anchorage ran from the two-peaked hill upon my left; and I bent my course in that direction that I might pass the stream while it was small. The wood was pretty open, and keeping along the lower spurs, I had soon turned the corner of that hill, and not long after waded to the mid-calf across the watercourse.

This brought me near to where I had encountered Ben Gunn, the maroon, and I walked more circumspectly, keeping an eye on every side. The dusk had come nigh hand completely, and, as I opened out the cleft between the two peaks, I became aware of a wavering glow against the sky, where, as I judged, the man of the island was cooking his supper before a roaring fire. And yet I wondered, in my heart, that he should show himself so careless. For if I could see this radiance, might it not reach the eye of Silver himself where he camped upon the shore among the marshes?

Gradually the night fell blacker; it was all I could do to guide myself even roughly toward my destination; the double hill behind me and the Spy-glass on my right hand loomed faint and fainter, the stars were few and pale, and in the low ground where I wandered I kept tripping among bushes and rolling into sandy pits.

Suddenly a kind of brightness fell about me. I looked up; a pale glimmer of moonbeams had alighted on the summit of the Spy-glass, and soon after I saw something broad and silvery moving low down behind the trees, and knew the moon had risen.

With this to help me, I passed rapidly over what remained to me of my journey; and, sometimes walking, sometimes running, impatiently drew near to the stockade. Yet, as I began to thread the grove that lies before it, I was not so thoughtless but that I slacked my pace and went a trifle warily. It would have been a poor end of my adventures to get shot down by my own party in mistake.

The moon was climbing higher and higher; its light began to fall here and there in masses through the more open districts of the wood, and right in front of me a glow of a different colour appeared among the trees. It was red and hot, and now and again it was a little darkened — as it were the embers of a bonfire smoldering.

For the life of me I could not think what it might be.

At last I came right down upon the borders of the clearing. The western end was already steeped in moon-shine; the rest, and the blockhouse itself, still lay in a black shadow, chequered with long, silvery streaks of light. On the other side of the house an immense fire had burned itself into clear embers and shed a steady, red reverberation, contrasting strongly with the mellow paleness of the moon. There was not a soul stirring, nor a sound beside the noises of the breeze.

I stopped, with much wonder in my heart, and perhaps a little terror also. It had not been our way to build great fires; we were, indeed, by the captain's orders, somewhat niggardly of firewood, and I began to fear that something had gone wrong while I was absent.

I stole round by the eastern end, keeping close in shadow, and at a convenient place, where the darkness was thickest, crossed the palisade.

To make assurance surer, I got upon my hands and knees, and crawled, without a sound, toward the corner of the house. As I drew nearer, my heart was suddenly and greatly lightened. It was not a pleasant noise in itself, and I have often complained of it at other times, but just then it was like music to hear my friends snoring together so loud and peaceful in their sleep. The sea-cry of the watch, that beautiful "All's well," never fell more reassuringly on my ear.

In the meantime there was no doubt of one thing; they kept an infamous bad watch. If it had been Silver and his lads that were now creeping in on them, not a soul would have seen daybreak. That was what it was, thought I, to have the captain wounded; and again I blamed myself sharply for leaving them in that danger with so few to mount guard.

By this time I had got to the door and stood up. All was dark within, so that I could distinguish nothing by the eye. As for sounds, there was the steady drone of the snorers, and a small occasional noise, a flickering or pecking that I could in no way account for.

With my arms before me I walked steadily in. I should lie down in my own place (I thought, with a silent chuckle) and enjoy their faces when they found me in the morning. My foot struck something yielding — it was a sleeper's leg, and he turned and groaned, but without awaking.

And then, all of a sudden, a shrill voice broke forth out of the darkness:

"Pieces of eight! pieces of eight! pieces of eight! pieces of eight! pieces of eight!" and so forth, without pause or change, like the clacking of a tiny mill.

Silver's green parrot, Captain Flint! It was she whom I had heard pecking at a piece of bark; it was she, keeping better watch than any human being, who thus announced my arrival with her wearisome refrain.

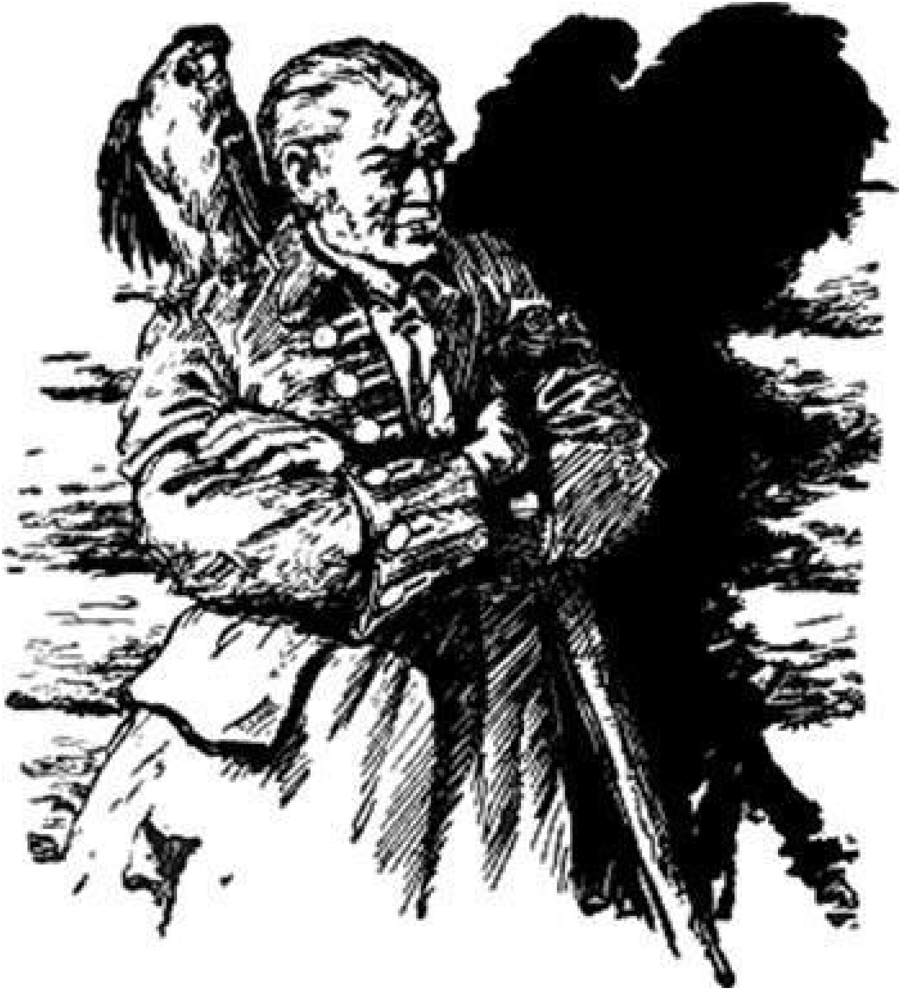
I had no time left me to recover. At the sharp clipping tone of the parrot, the sleepers awoke and sprang up, and with a mighty oath the voice of Silver cried:

“Who goes?”

I turned to run, struck violently against one person, recoiled, and ran full into the arms of a second, who, for his part, closed upon and held me tight.

“Bring a torch, Dick,” said Silver, when my capture was thus assured.

And one of the men left the log-house, and presently returned with a lighted brand.



PART VI
CAPTAIN SILVER

CHAPTER XXVIII
IN THE ENEMY’S CAMP

The red glare of the torch lighting up the interior of the blockhouse showed me the worst of my apprehensions realised. The pirates were in possession of the house and stores; there was the cask of cognac, there were the pork and bread, as before; and, what tenfold increased my horror, not a sign of any prisoner. I could only judge that all had perished, and my heart smote me sorely that I had not been there to perish with them.

There were six of the buccaneers, all told; not another man was left alive. Five of them were on their feet, flushed and swollen, suddenly called out of the first sleep of drunkenness. The sixth had only risen upon his elbow; he was deadly pale, and the blood-stained bandage round his head told that he had recently been wounded, and still more recently dressed. I remembered the man who had been shot and run back among the woods in the great attack, and doubted not that this was he.

The parrot sat, preening her plumage, on Long John’s shoulder. He himself, I thought, looked somewhat paler and more stern than I was used to. He still wore his fine broadcloth suit in which he had fulfilled his mission, but it was bitterly the worse for wear, daubed with clay and torn with sharp briers of the wood.

“So,” said he, “here’s Jim Hawkins, shiver my timbers! dropped in, like, eh? Well, come, I take that friendly.”

And thereupon he sat down across the brandy-cask, and began to fill a pipe.

“Give me the loan of a link, Dick,” said he; and then, when he had a good light, “That’ll do, my lad,” he added, “stick the glim in the wood heap; and you, gentlemen, bring yourselves to! — you needn’t stand up for Mr. Hawkins; *he’ll* excuse you, you may lay to that. And so, Jim” — stopping the tobacco — ”here you are, and quite a pleasant surprise for poor old John. I see you were smart when first I set my eyes on you, but this here gets away from me clean, it do.”

To all this, as may be well supposed, I made no answer. They had set me with my back against the wall, and I stood there, looking Silver in the face, pluckily enough, I hope, to all outward appearance, but with black despair in my heart.

Silver took a whiff or two of his pipe with great composure, and then ran on again:

"Now, you see, Jim, so be as you *are* here," says he, "I'll give you a piece of my mind. I've always liked you, I have, for a lad of spirit, and the picter of my own self when I was young and handsome. I always wanted you to jine and take your share, and die a gentleman, and now, my cock, you've got to. Cap'n Smollett's a fine seaman, as I'll own up to any day, but stiff on discipline. 'Dooty is dooty,' says he, and right he is. Just you keep clear of the cap'n. The doctor himself is gone dead again you — 'ungrateful scamp' was what he said; and the short and long of the whole story is about here: You can't go back to your own lot, for they won't have you; and, without you start a third ship's company all by yourself, which might be lonely, you'll have to jine with Cap'n Silver."

So far so good. My friends, then, were still alive, and though I partly believed the truth of Silver's statement, that the cabin party were incensed at me for my desertion, I was more relieved than distressed by what I heard.

"I don't say nothing as to your being in our hands," continued Silver, "though there you are, and you may lay to it. I'm all for argyment; I never seen good come out o' threatening. If you like the service, well, you'll jine; and if you don't, Jim, why, you're free to answer no — free and welcome, shipmate; and if fairer can be said by mortal seaman, shiver my sides!"

"Am I to answer, then?" I asked, with a very tremulous voice. Through all this sneering talk I was made to feel the threat of death that overhung me, and my cheeks burned and my heart beat painfully in my breast.

"Lad," said Silver, "no one's a-pressing of you. Take your bearings. None of us won't hurry you, mate; time goes so pleasant in your company, you see."

"Well," says I, growing a bit bolder, "if I'm to choose, I declare I have a right to know what's what, and why you're here, and where my friends are."

"Wot's wot?" repeated one of the buccaneers, in a deep growl. "Ah, he'd be a lucky one as knowed that!"

"You'll, perhaps, batten down your hatches till you're spoke to, my friend," cried Silver, truculently, to this speaker. And then, in his first gracious tones, he replied to me: "Yesterday morning, Mr. Hawkins," said he, "in the dogwatch, down came Doctor Livesey with a flag of truce. Says he: 'Cap'n Silver, you're sold out. Ship's gone!' Well, maybe we'd been taking a glass, and a song to help it round. I won't say no. Leastways, none of us had looked out. We looked out, and, by thunder! the old ship was gone. I never seen a pack o' fools look fishier; and you may lay to that, if I tells you that I looked the fishiest. 'Well,' says the doctor, 'let's bargain.' We bargained, him and I, and here we are; stores, brandy, blockhouse, the firewood you was thoughtful enough to cut, and, in a manner of speaking, the whole blessed boat, from crosstrees to keelson. As for them, they've tramped; I don't know where's they are."

He drew again quietly at his pipe.

"And lest you should take it into that head of yours," he went on, "that you was included in the treaty, here's the last word that was said: 'How many are you,' says I, 'to leave?' 'Four,' says he — 'four, and one of us wounded. As for that boy, I don't know where he is, confound him,' says he, 'nor I don't much care. We're about sick of him.' These was his words."

"Is that all?" I asked.

"Well, it's all you're to hear, my son," returned Silver.

"And now I am to choose?"

"And now you are to choose, and you may lay to that," said Silver.

"Well," said I, "I am not such a fool but I know pretty well what I have to look for. Let the worst come to the worst, it's little I care. I've seen too many die since I fell in with you. But there's a thing or two I have to tell you," I said, and by this time I was quite excited; "and the first is this: Here you are, in a bad way; ship lost, treasure lost, men lost; your whole business gone to wreck; and if you want to know who did it — it was I! I was in the apple barrel the night we sighted land, and I heard you, John, and you, Dick Johnson, and Hands, who is now at the bottom of the sea, and told every word you said before the hour was out. And as for the schooner, it was I who cut her cable, and it was I who killed the men you had aboard of her, and it was I who brought her where you'll never see her more, not one of you. The laugh's on my side; I've had the top of this business from the first; I no more fear you than I fear a fly. Kill me, if you please, or spare me. But one thing I'll say, and no more; if you spare me, bygones are bygones, and when you fellows are in court for piracy, I'll save you all I can. It is for you to choose. Kill another and do yourselves no good, or spare me and keep a witness to save you from the gallows."

I stopped, for, I tell you, I was out of breath, and, to my wonder, not a man of them moved, but all sat staring at me like as many sheep. And while they were still staring I broke out again:

"And now, Mr. Silver," I said, "I believe you're the best man here, and if things go to the worst, I'll take it kind of you to let the doctor know the way I took it."

"I'll bear it in mind," said Silver, with an accent so curious that I could not, for the life of me, decide whether he were laughing at my request or had been favorably affected by my courage.

"I'll put one to that," cried the old mahogany-faced seaman — Morgan by name — whom I had seen in Long John's public-house upon the quays of Bristol. "It was him that knowed Black Dog."

"Well, and see here," added the sea-cook, "I'll put another again to that, by thunder! for it was this same boy that faked the chart from Billy Bones. First and last we've split upon Jim Hawkins!"

"Then here goes!" said Morgan, with an oath.

And he sprang up, drawing his knife as if he had been twenty.

"Avast, there!" cried Silver. "Who are you, Tom Morgan? Maybe you thought you were captain here, perhaps. By the powers, but I'll teach you better! Cross me and you'll go where many a good man's gone before you, first and last, these thirty year back — some to the yardarm, shiver my sides! and some by the board, and all to feed the fishes. There's never a man looked me between the eyes and seen a good day a'terward, Tom Morgan, you may lay to that."

Morgan paused, but a hoarse murmur rose from the others.

"Tom's right," said one.

"I stood hazing long enough from one," added another. "I'll be hanged if I'll be hazed by you, John Silver."

"Did any of you gentlemen want to have it out with *me*?" roared Silver, bending far forward from his position on the keg, with his pipe still glowing in his right hand. "Put a name on what you're at; you ain't dumb, I reckon. Him that wants shall get it. Have I lived this many years to have a son of a rum puncheon cock his hat athwart my hawser at the latter end of it? You know the way; you're all gentlemen o' fortune, by your account. Well, I'm ready. Take a cutlass, him that dares, and I'll see the colour of his inside, crutch and all, before that pipe's empty."

Not a man stirred; not a man answered.

"That's your sort, is it?" he added, returning his pipe to his mouth. "Well, you're a gay lot to look at, any way. Not worth much to fight, you ain't. P'r'aps you can understand King George's English. I'm cap'n here by 'lection. I'm cap'n here because I'm the best man by a long sea-mile. You won't fight, as gentlemen o' fortune should; then, by thunder, you'll obey, and you may lay to it! I like that boy, now; I never seen a better boy than that. He's more a man than any pair of rats of you in this here house, and what I say is this: Let me see him that'll lay a hand on him — that's what I say, and you may lay to it."

There was a long pause after this. I stood straight up against the wall, my heart still going like a sledgehammer, but with a ray of hope now shining in my bosom. Silver leant back against the wall, his arms crossed, his pipe in the corner of his mouth, as calm as though he had been in church; yet his eye kept wandering furtively, and he kept the tail of it on his unruly followers. They, on their part, drew gradually together toward the far end of the blockhouse, and the low hiss of their whispering sounded in my ears continuously, like a stream. One after another they would look up, and the red light of the torch would fall for a second on their nervous faces; but it was not toward me, it was toward Silver that they turned their eyes.

"You seem to have a lot to say," remarked Silver, spitting far into the air. "Pipe up and let me hear it, or lay to."

"Ax your pardon, sir," returned one of the men; "you're pretty free with some of the rules, maybe you'll kindly keep an eye upon the rest. This crew's dissatisfied; this crew don't vally bullying a marlinspike; this crew has its rights like other crews, I'll make so free as that; and by your own rules I take it we can talk together. I ax your pardon, sir, acknowledging you for to be capting at this present, but I claim my right and steps outside for a council."

And with an elaborate sea-salute this fellow, a long, ill-looking, yellow-eyed man of five-and-thirty, stepped coolly toward the door and disappeared out of the house. One after another the rest followed his example, each making a salute as he passed, each adding some apology. "According to rules," said one. "Foc's'le council," said Morgan. And so with one remark or another, all marched out and left Silver and me alone with the torch.

The sea-cook instantly removed his pipe.

"Now, look you here, Jim Hawkins," he said in a steady whisper that was no more than audible, "you're within half a plank of death, and, what's a long sight worse, of torture. They're going to throw me off. But you mark, I stand by you through thick and thin. I didn't mean to; no, not till you spoke up. I was about desperate to lose that much blunt, and be hanged into the bargain. But I see you was the right sort. I says to myself: You stand by Hawkins, John, and Hawkins'll stand by you. You're his last card, and by the living thunder, John, he's yours! Back to back, says I. You save your witness and he'll save your neck!"

I began dimly to understand.

"You mean all's lost?" I asked.

"Ay, by gum, I do!" he answered. "Ship gone, neck gone — that's the size of it. Once I looked into that bay, Jim Hawkins, and seen no schooner — well, I'm tough, but I gave out. As for that lot and their council, mark me, they're outright fools and cowards. I'll save your life — if so be as I can — from them. But see here, Jim — tit for tat — you save Long John from swinging."

I was bewildered; it seemed a thing so hopeless he was asking — he, the old buccaneer, the ringleader throughout.

"What I can do, that I'll do," I said.

"It's a bargain!" cried Long John. "You speak up plucky, and by thunder, I've a chance."

He hobbled to the torch, where it stood propped among the firewood, and took a fresh light to his pipe.

"Understand me, Jim," he said, returning. "I've a head on my shoulders, I have. I'm on squire's side now. I know you've got that ship safe somewheres. How you done it I don't know, but safe it is. I guess Hands and O'Brien turned soft. I never much believed in neither of *them*. Now you mark me. I ask no questions, nor I won't let others. I know when a game's up, I do; and I know a lad that's stanch. Ah, you that's young — you and me might have done a power of good together!"

He drew some cognac from the cask into a tin cannikin.

"Will you taste, messmate?" he asked, and when I had refused, "Well, I'll take a drain myself, Jim," said he. "I need a caulker, for there's trouble on hand. And, talking o' trouble, why did that doctor give me the chart, Jim?"

My face expressed a wonder so unaffected that he saw the needlessness of further questions.

"Ah, well, he did, though," said he. "And there's something under that, no doubt — something, surely, under that, Jim — bad or good."

And he took another swallow of the brandy, shaking his great fair head like a man who looks forward to the worst.

CHAPTER XXIX
THE BLACK SPOT AGAIN

The council of the buccaneers had lasted some time, when one of them re-entered the house, and with a repetition of the same salute, which had in my eyes an ironical air, begged for a moment's loan of the torch. Silver briefly agreed, and this emissary retired again, leaving us together in the dark.

"There's a breeze coming, Jim," said Silver, who had by this time adopted quite a friendly and familiar tone.

I turned to the loophole nearest me and looked out. The embers of the great fire had so far burned themselves out, and now glowed so low and duskily, that I understood why these conspirators desired a torch. About halfway down the slope to the stockade they were collected in a group; one held the light; another was on his knees in their midst, and I saw the blade of an open knife shine in his hand with varying colours, in the moon and torchlight. The rest were all somewhat stooping, as though watching the maneuvers of this last. I could just make out that he had a book as well as a knife in his hand; and was still wondering how anything so incongruous had come in their possession, when the kneeling figure rose once more to his feet, and the whole party began to move together toward the house.

"Here they come," said I; and I returned to my former position, for it seemed beneath my dignity that they should find me watching them.

"Well, let 'em come, lad — let 'em come," said Silver, cheerily. "I've still a shot in my locker."

The door opened, and the five men, standing huddled together just inside, pushed one of their number forward. In any other circumstances it would have been comical to see his slow advance, hesitating as he set down each foot, but holding his closed right hand in front of him.

"Step up, lad," cried Silver. "I won't eat you. Hand it over, lubber. I know the rules, I do; I won't hurt a depytation."

Thus encouraged the buccaneer stepped forth more briskly, and having passed something to Silver, from hand to hand, slipped yet more smartly back again to his companions.

The sea-cook looked at what had been given him.

"The black spot! I thought so," he observed. "Where might you have got the paper? Why, hello! look here, now; this ain't lucky! You've gone and cut this out of a Bible. What fool's cut a Bible?"

"Ah, there," said Morgan, "there! Wot did I say? No good'll come o' that, I said.”

“Well, you’ve about fixed it now, among you,” continued Silver. “You’ll all swing now, I reckon. What soft-headed lubber had a Bible?”

“It was Dick,” said one.

“Dick, was it? Then Dick can get to prayers,” said Silver. “He’s seen his slice of luck, has Dick, and you may lay to that.”

But here the long man with the yellow eyes struck in.

“Belay that talk, John Silver,” he said. “This crew has tipped you the black spot in full council, as in dooty bound; just you turn it over, as in dooty bound, and see what’s wrote there. Then you can talk.”

“Thanky, George,” replied the sea-cook. “You always was brisk for business, and has the rules by heart, George, as I’m pleased to see. Well, what is it, anyway? Ah! ‘Deposed’ — that’s it, is it? Very pretty wrote, to be sure; like print, I swear. Your hand o’ write, George? Why, you was gettin’ quite a leadin’ man in this here crew. You’ll be cap’n next, I shouldn’t wonder. Just oblige me with that torch again, will you? this pipe don’t draw.”

“Come, now,” said George, “you don’t fool this crew no more. You’re a funny man, by your account; but you’re over now, and you’ll maybe step down off that barrel, and help vote.”

“I thought you said you knowed the rules,” returned Silver, contemptuously. “Leastways, if you don’t, I do; and I wait here — and I’m still your cap’n, mind — till you outs with your grievances, and I reply; in the meantime, your black spot ain’t worth a biscuit. After that we’ll see.”

“Oh,” replied George, “you don’t be under no kind of apprehension; *we’re* all square, we are. First, you’ve made a hash of this cruise — you’ll be a bold man to say no to that. Second, you let the enemy out o’ this here trap for nothing. Why did they want out? I dunno, but it’s pretty plain they wanted it. Third, you wouldn’t let us go at them upon the march. Oh, we see through you, John Silver; you want to play booty, that’s what’s wrong with you. And then, fourth, there’s this here boy.”

“Is that all?” asked Silver, quietly.

“Enough, too,” retorted George. “We’ll all swing and sun-dry for your bungling.”

“Well, now, look here, I’ll answer these four p’ints; one after another I’ll answer ‘em. I made a hash o’ this cruise, did I? Well, now, you all know what I wanted; and you all know, if that had been done, that we’d ‘a’ been aboard the *Hispaniola* this night as ever was, every man of us alive, and fit, and full of good plum-duff, and the treasure in the hold of her, by thunder! Well, who crossed me? Who forced my hand, as was the lawful cap’n? Who tipped me the black spot the day we landed, and began this dance? Ah, it’s a fine dance — I’m with you there — and looks mighty like a hornpipe in a rope's end at Execution Dock by London town, it does. But who done it? Why, it was Anderson, and Hands, and you, George Merry! And you're the last above board of that same meddling crew; and you have the Davy Jones insolence to up and stand for cap'n over me — you, that sunk the lot of us! By the powers! but this tops the stiffest yarn to nothing."

Silver paused, and I could see by the faces of George and his late comrades that these words had not been said in vain.

"That's for number one," cried the accused, wiping the sweat from his brow, for he had been talking with a vehemence that shook the house. "Why, I give you my word, I'm sick to speak to you. You've neither sense nor memory, and I leave it to fancy where your mothers was that let you come to sea. Sea! Gentlemen o' fortune! I reckon tailors is your trade."

"Go on, John," said Morgan. "Speak up to the others."

"Ah, the others!" returned John. "They're a nice lot, ain't they? You say this cruise is bungled. Ah! by gum, if you could understand how bad it's bungled, you would see! We're that near the gibbet that my neck's stiff with thinking on it. You've seen 'em, maybe, hanged in chains, birds about 'em, seamen p'inting 'em out as they go down with the tide. 'Who's that?' says one. 'That! Why, that's John Silver. I knowed him well,' says another. And you can hear the chains a-jangle as you go about and reach for the other buoy. Now, that's about where we are, every mother's son of us, thanks to him, and Hands, and Anderson, and other ruination fools of you. And if you want to know about number four, and that boy, why, shiver my timbers! isn't he a hostage? Are we a-going to waste a hostage? No, not us; he might be our last chance, and I shouldn't wonder. Kill that boy? not me, mates! And number three? Ah, well, there's a deal to say to number three. Maybe you don't count it nothing to have a real college doctor come to see you every day — you, John, with your head broke — or you, George Merry, that had the ague shakes upon you not six hours agone, and has your eyes the colour of lemon peel to this same moment on the clock? And maybe, perhaps, you didn't know there was a consort coming, either? But there is, and not so long till then; and we'll see who'll be glad to have a hostage when it comes to that. And as for number two, and why I made a bargain — well, you come crawling on your knees to me to make it — on your knees you came, you was that downhearted — and you'd have starved, too, if I hadn't — but that's a trifle! you look there — that's why!"

And he cast down upon the floor a paper that I instantly recognized — none other than the chart on yellow paper, with the three red crosses, that I had found in the oilcloth at the bottom of the captain's chest. Why the doctor had given it to him was more than I could fancy.

But if it were inexplicable to me, the appearance of the chart was incredible to the surviving mutineers. They leaped upon it like cats upon a mouse. It went from hand to hand, one tearing it from another; and by the oaths and the cries and the childish laughter with which they accompanied their examination, you would have thought, not only they were fingering the very gold, but were at sea with it, besides, in safety.

“Yes,” said one, “that’s Flint, sure enough. J. F., and a score below, with a close hitch to it, so he done ever.”

“Mighty pretty,” said George. “But how are we to get away with it, and us no ship?”

Silver suddenly sprang up, and supporting himself with a hand against the wall: “Now, I give you warning, George,” he cried. “One more word of your sauce, and I’ll call you down and fight you. How? Why, how do I know? You had ought to tell me that — you and the rest, that lost me my schooner, with your interference, burn you! But not you, you can’t; you ain’t got the invention of a cockroach. But civil you can speak, and shall, George Merry, you may lay to that.”

“That’s fair enow,” said the old man Morgan.

“Fair! I reckon so,” said the sea-cook. “You lost the ship; I found the treasure. Who’s the better man at that? And now I resign, by thunder! Elect whom you please to be your cap’n now; I’m done with it.”

“Silver!” they cried. “Barbecue forever! Barbecue for cap’n!”

“So that’s the toon, is it?” cried the cook. “George, I reckon you’ll have to wait another turn, friend, and lucky for you as I’m not a revengeful man. But that was never my way. And now, shipmates, this black spot? ‘Tain’t much good now, is it? Dick’s crossed his luck and spoiled his Bible, and that’s about all.”

“It’ll do to kiss the book on still, won’t it?” growled Dick, who was evidently uneasy at the curse he had brought upon himself.

“A Bible with a bit cut out!” returned Silver, derisively. “Not it. It don’t bind no more’n a ballad-book.”

“Don’t it, though?” cried Dick, with a sort of joy. “Well, I reckon that’s worth having, too.”

“Here, Jim — here’s a cur’osity for you,” said Silver, and he tossed me the paper.

It was a round about the size of a crown piece. One side was blank, for it had been the last leaf; the other contained a verse or two of Revelation — these words among the rest, which struck sharply home upon my mind: “Without are dogs and murderers.” The printed side had been blackened with wood ash, which already began to come off and soil my fingers; on the blank side had been written with the same material the one word “Deposed.” I have that curiosity beside me at this moment; but not a trace of writing now remains beyond a single scratch, such as a man might make with his thumb-nail.

That was the end of the night's business. Soon after, with a drink all round, we lay down to sleep, and the outside of Silver's vengeance was to put George Merry up for sentinel, and threaten him with death if he should prove unfaithful.

It was long ere I could close an eye, and heaven knows I had matter enough for thought in the man whom I had slain that afternoon, in my own most perilous position, and, above all, in the remarkable game that I saw Silver now engaged upon — keeping the mutineers together with one hand, and grasping, with the other, after every means, possible and impossible, to make his peace and save his miserable life. He himself slept peacefully, and snored aloud; yet my heart was sore for him, wicked as he was, to think on the dark perils that environed, and the shameful gibbet that awaited him.

CHAPTER XXX
ON PAROLE

I was wakened — indeed, we were all wakened, for I could see even the sentinel shake himself together from where he had fallen against the doorpost — by a clear, hearty voice hailing us from the margin of the wood:

“Blockhouse, ahoy!” it cried. “Here’s the doctor.”

And the doctor it was. Although I was glad to hear the sound, yet my gladness was not without admixture. I remembered with confusion my insubordinate and stealthy conduct; and when I saw where it had brought me — among what companions and surrounded by what dangers — I felt ashamed to look him in the face.

He must have risen in the dark, for the day had hardly come; and when I ran to a loophole and looked out, I saw him standing, like Silver once before, up to the mid-leg in creeping vapor.

“You, doctor! Top o’ the morning to you, sir!” cried Silver, broad awake and beaming with good nature in a moment. “Bright and early, to be sure; and it’s the early bird, as the saying goes, that gets the rations. George, shake up your timbers, son, and help Doctor Livesey over the ship’s side. All a-doin’ well, your patients was — all well and merry.”

So he pattered on, standing on the hilltop, with his crutch under his elbow, and one hand upon the side of the log-house — quite the old John in voice, manner, and expression.

“We’ve quite a surprise for you, too, sir,” he continued. “We’ve a little stranger here — he! he! A noo boarder and lodger, sir, and looking fit and taut as a fiddle; slep’ like a supercargo, he did, right alongside of John — stem to stem we was, all night.”

Doctor Livesey was by this time across the stockade and pretty near the cook, and I could hear the alteration in his voice as he said:

“Not Jim?”

“The very same Jim as ever was,” says Silver.

The doctor stopped outright, although he did not speak, and it was some seconds before he seemed able to move on.

“Well, well,” he said at last, “duty first and pleasure afterwards, as you might have said yourself, Silver. Let us overhaul these patients of yours.”

A moment afterwards he had entered the blockhouse, and, with one grim nod to me, proceeded with his work among the sick. He seemed under no apprehension, though he must have known that his life, among these treacherous demons, depended on a hair, and he rattled on to his patients as if he were paying an ordinary professional visit in a quiet English family. His manner, I suppose, reacted on the men, for they behaved to him as if nothing had occurred — as if he were still ship's doctor, and they still faithful hands before the mast.

"You're doing well, my friend," he said to the fellow with the bandaged head, "and if ever any person had a close shave, it was you; your head must be as hard as iron. Well, George, how goes it? You're a pretty colour, certainly; why, your liver, man, is upside down. Did you take that medicine? Did he take that medicine, men?"

"Ay, ay, sir, he took it sure enough," returned Morgan.

"Because, you see, since I am mutineers' doctor, or prison doctor, as I prefer to call it," says Doctor Livesey, in his pleasantest way, "I make it a point of honor not to lose a man for King George (God bless him!) and the gallows."

The rogues looked at each other, but swallowed the home-thrust in silence.

"Dick don't feel well, sir," said one.

"Don't he?" replied the doctor. "Well, step up here, Dick, and let me see your tongue. No, I should be surprised if he did; the man's tongue is fit to frighten the French. Another fever."

"Ah, there," said Morgan, "that comed of sp'iling Bibles."

"That comed — as you call it — of being arrant asses," retorted the doctor, "and not having sense enough to know honest air from poison, and the dry land from a vile, pestiferous slough. I think it most probable — though, of course, it's only an opinion — that you'll all have the deuce to pay before you get that malaria out of your systems. Camp in a bog, would you? Silver, I'm surprised at you. You're less of a fool than many, take you all round; but you don't appear to me to have the rudiments of a notion of the rules of health.

"Well," he added, after he had dosed them round, and they had taken his prescriptions, with really laughable humility, more like charity school-children than blood-guilty mutineers and pirates, "well, that's done for to-day. And now I should wish to have a talk with that boy, please."

And he nodded his head in my direction carelessly.

George Merry was at the door, spitting and spluttering over some bad-tasted medicine; but at the first word of the doctor's proposal he swung round with a deep flush, and cried, "No!" and swore.

Silver struck the barrel with his open hand.

"Si-lence!" he roared, and looked about him positively like a lion. "Doctor," he went on, in his usual tones, "I was thinking of that, knowing as how you had a fancy for the boy. We're all humbly grateful for your kindness, and, as you see, puts faith in you, and takes the drugs down like that much grog. And I take it I've found a way as'll suit all. Hawkins, will you give me your word of honor as a young gentleman — for a young gentleman you are, although poor born — your word of honor not to slip your cable?"

I readily gave the pledge required.

"Then, doctor," said Silver, "you just step outside o' that stockade, and once you're there, I'll bring the boy down on the inside, and I reckon you can yarn through the spars. Good-day to you, sir, and all our dooties to the squire and Cap'n Smollett."

The explosion of disapproval, which nothing but Silver's black looks had restrained, broke out immediately the doctor had left the house. Silver was roundly accused of playing double — of trying to make a separate peace for himself — of sacrificing the interests of his accomplices and victims; and, in one word, of the identical, exact thing that he was doing. It seemed to me so obvious, in this case, that I could not imagine how he was to turn their anger. But he was twice the man the rest were, and his last night's victory had given him a huge preponderance on their minds. He called them all the fools and dolts you can imagine, said it was necessary I should talk to the doctor, fluttered the chart in their faces, asked them if they could afford to break the treaty the very day they were bound a-treasure-hunting.

"No, by thunder!" he cried, "it's us must break the treaty when the time comes; and till then I'll gammon that doctor, if I have to ile his boots with brandy."

And then he bade them get the fire lit, and stalked out upon his crutch, with his hand on my shoulder, leaving them in a disarray, and silenced by his volubility rather than convinced.

"Slow, lad, slow," he said. "They might round upon us in a twinkle of an eye if we was seen to hurry."

Very deliberately, then, did we advance across the sand to where the doctor awaited us on the other side of the stockade, and as soon as we were within easy speaking distance, Silver stopped.

"You'll make a note of this here also, doctor," said he, "and the boy'll tell you how I saved his life, and were deposed for it, too, and you may lay to that. Doctor, when a man's steering as near to the wind as me — playing chuck-farthing with the last breath in his body, like — you wouldn't think it too much, mayhap, to give him one good word! You'll please bear in mind it's not my life only now — it's that boy's into the bargain; and you'll speak me fair, doctor, and give me a bit o' hope to go on, for the sake of mercy."

Silver was a changed man, once he was out there and had his back to his friends and the blockhouse; his cheeks seemed to have fallen in, his voice trembled; never was a soul more dead in earnest.

"Why, John, you're not afraid?" asked Doctor Livesey.

"Doctor, I'm no coward; no, not I — not *so* much!" and he snapped his fingers. "If I was I wouldn't say it. But I'll own up fairly, I've the shakes upon me for the gallows. You're a good man and a true; I never seen a better man! And you'll not forget what I done good, not any more than you'll forget the bad, I know. And I step aside — see here — and leave you and Jim alone. And you'll put that down for me, too, for it's a long stretch, is that!"

So saying, he stepped back a little way till he was out of earshot, and there sat down upon a tree-stump and began to whistle, spinning round now and again upon his seat so as to command a sight, sometimes of me and the doctor, and sometimes of his unruly ruffians as they went to and fro in the sand, between the fire — which they were busy rekindling — and the house, from which they brought forth pork and bread to make the breakfast.

"So, Jim," said the doctor, sadly, "here you are. As you have brewed, so shall you drink, my boy. Heaven knows I cannot find it in my heart to blame you; but this much I will say, be it kind or unkind: when Captain Smollett was well you dared not have gone off, and when he was ill, and couldn't help it by George, it was downright cowardly!"

I will own that I here began to weep. "Doctor," I said, "you might spare me. I have blamed myself enough; my life's forfeit anyway, and I should have been dead now if Silver hadn't stood for me; and, doctor, believe this, I can die — and I dare say I deserve it — but what I fear is torture. If they come to torture me — "

"Jim," the doctor interrupted, and his voice was quite changed, "Jim, I can't have this. Whip over, and we'll run for it."

"Doctor," said I, "I passed my word."

"I know, I know," he cried. "We can't help that, Jim, now. I'll take it on my shoulders, holus-bolus, blame and shame, my boy; but stay here, I cannot let you. Jump! One jump and you're out, and we'll run for it like antelopes."

"No," I replied, "you know right well you wouldn't do the thing yourself; neither you, nor squire, nor captain, and no more will I. Silver trusted me; I passed my word, and back I go. But, doctor, you did not let me finish. If they come to torture me, I might let slip a word of where the ship is; for I got the ship, part by luck and part by risking, and she lies in North Inlet, on the southern beach, and just below high water. At half-tide she must be high and dry."

"The ship!" exclaimed the doctor.

Rapidly I described to him my adventures, and he heard me out in silence.

"There's a kind of fate in this," he observed, when I had done. "Every step it's you that save our lives, and do you suppose by any chance that we are going to let you lose yours? That would be a poor return, my boy. You found out the plot; you found Ben Gunn — the best deed that ever you did, or will do, though you live to ninety. Oh, by Jupiter! and talking of Ben Gunn, why, this is the mischief in person. Silver!" he cried, "Silver! I'll give you a piece of advice," he continued, as the cook drew near again; "don't you be in any great hurry after that treasure."

"Why, sir, I do my possible, which that ain't," said Silver. "I can only, asking your pardon, save my life and the boy's by seeking for that treasure; and you may lay to that."

"Well, Silver," replied the doctor, "if that is so, I'll go one step farther; look out for squalls when you find it!"

"Sir," said Silver, "as between man and man, that's too much and too little. What you're after, why you left the blockhouse, why you've given me that there chart, I don't know, now, do I? and yet I done your bidding with my eyes shut and never a word of hope! But no, this here's too much. If you won't tell me what you mean plain out, just say so, and I'll leave the helm."

"No," said the doctor, musingly, "I've no right to say more; it's not my secret, you see, Silver, or, I give you my word, I'd tell it you. But I'll go as far with you as I dare go, and a step beyond, for I'll have my wig sorted by the captain, or I'm mistaken! And first, I'll give you a bit of hope. Silver, if we both get out alive out of this wolf-trap, I'll do my best to save you, short of perjury."

Silver's face was radiant. "You couldn't say more, I am sure, sir, not if you was my mother," he cried.

"Well, that's my first concession," added the doctor. "My second is a piece of advice. Keep the boy close beside you, and when you need help, halloo. I'm off to seek it for you, and that itself will show you if I speak at random. Good-by, Jim."

And Doctor Livesey shook hands with me through the stockade, nodded to Silver, and set off at a brisk pace into the wood.

CHAPTER XXXI
THE TREASURE-HUNT — FLINT’S POINTER

“Jim,” said Silver, when we were alone, “if I saved your life, you saved mine, and I’ll not forget it. I seen the doctor waving you to run for it — with the tail of my eye, I did — and I seen you say no, as plain as hearing. Jim, that’s one to you. This is the first glint of hope I had since the attack failed, and I owe it to you. And now, Jim, we’re to go in for this here treasure-hunting, with sealed orders, too, and I don’t like it; and you and me must stick close, back to back like, and we’ll save our necks in spite o’ fate and fortune.”

Just then a man hailed us from the fire that breakfast was ready, and we were soon seated here and there about the sand over biscuit and fried junk. They had lighted a fire fit to roast an ox; and it was now grown so hot that they could only approach it from the windward, and even there not without precaution. In the same wasteful spirit, they had cooked, I suppose, three times more than we could eat; and one of them, with an empty laugh, threw what was left into the fire, which blazed and roared again over this unusual fuel. I never in my life saw men so careless of the morrow; hand to mouth is the only word that can describe their way of doing; and what with wasted food and sleeping sentries, though they were bold enough for a brush and be done with it, I could see their entire unfitness for anything like a prolonged campaign.

Even Silver, eating away, with Captain Flint upon his shoulder, had not a word of blame for their recklessness. And this the more surprised me, for I thought he had never showed himself so cunning as he did then.

“Ay, mates,” said he, “it’s lucky you have Barbecue to think for you with this here head. I got what I wanted, I did. Sure enough, they have the ship. Where they have it, I don’t know yet; but once we hit the treasure, we’ll have to jump about and find out. And then, mates, us that has the boats, I reckon, has the upper hand.”

Thus he kept running on, with his mouth full of the hot bacon; thus he restored their hope and confidence, and, I more than suspect, repaired his own at the same time.

“As for hostage,” he continued, “that’s his last talk, I guess, with them he loves so dear. I’ve got my piece o’ news, and thanky to him for that; but it’s over and done. I’ll take him in a line when we go treasure-hunting, for we’ll keep him like so much gold, in case of accidents, you mark, and in the meantime. Once we got the ship and treasure both, and off to sea like jolly companions, why, then we’ll talk Mr. Hawkins over, we will, and we'll give him his share, to be sure, for all his kindness."

It was no wonder the men were in a good humor now. For my part, I was horribly cast down. Should the scheme he had now sketched prove feasible, Silver, already doubly a traitor, would not hesitate to adopt it. He had still a foot in either camp, and there was no doubt he would prefer wealth and freedom with the pirates to a bare escape from hanging, which was the best he had to hope on our side.

Nay, and even if things so fell out that he was forced to keep his faith with Doctor Livesey, even then what danger lay before us! What a moment that would be when the suspicions of his followers turned to certainty, and he and I should have to fight for dear life — he, a cripple, and I, a boy — against five strong and active seamen!

Add to this double apprehension the mystery that still hung over the behavior of my friends; their unexplained desertion of the stockade; their inexplicable cession of the chart; or, harder still to understand, the doctor's last warning to Silver, "Look out for squalls when you find it"; and you will readily believe how little taste I found in my breakfast, and with how uneasy a heart I set forth behind my captors on the quest for treasure.

We made a curious figure, had anyone been there to see us; all in soiled sailor clothes, and all but me armed to the teeth. Silver had two guns slung about him, one before and one behind — besides the great cutlass at his waist, and a pistol in each pocket of his square-tailed coat. To complete his strange appearance, Captain Flint sat perched upon his shoulder and gabbled odds and ends of purposeless sea-talk. I had a line about my waist, and followed obediently after the sea-cook, who held the loose end of the rope, now in his free hand, now between his powerful teeth. For all the world, I was led like a dancing bear.

The other men were variously burdened; some carrying picks and shovels — for that had been the very first necessary they brought ashore from the *Hispaniola* — others laden with pork, bread, and brandy for the midday meal. All the stores, I observed, came from our stock, and I could see the truth of Silver's words the night before. Had he not struck a bargain with the doctor, he and his mutineers, deserted by the ship, must have been driven to subsist on clear water, and the proceeds of their hunting. Water would have been little to their taste; a sailor is not usually a good shot; and, besides all that, when they were so short of eatables, it was not likely they would be very flush of powder.

Well, thus equipped, we all set out — even the fellow with the broken head, who should certainly have kept in shadow — and straggled, one after another, to the beach, where the two gigs awaited us. Even these bore trace of the drunken folly of the pirates, one in a broken thwart, and both in their muddied and unbailed condition. Both were to be carried along with us, for the sake of safety; and so, with our numbers divided between them, we set forth upon the bosom of the anchorage.

As we pulled over, there was some discussion on the chart. The red cross was, of course, far too large to be a guide; and the terms of the note on the back, as you will hear, admitted of some ambiguity. They ran, the reader may remember, thus:

“Tall tree, Spy-glass shoulder, bearing a point to the N. of N.N.E.

“SkeletonIsland E.S.E. and by E.

“Ten feet.”

A tall tree was thus the principal mark. Now, right before us, the anchorage was bounded by a plateau from two to three hundred feet high, adjoining on the north the sloping southern shoulder of the Spy-glass, and rising again toward the south into the rough, cliffy eminence called the Mizzen-mast Hill. The top of the plateau was dotted thickly with pine trees of varying height. Every here and there, one of a different species rose forty or fifty feet clear above its neighbors, and which of these was the particular “tall tree” of Captain Flint could only be decided on the spot, and by the readings of the compass.

Yet, although that was the case, every man on board the boats had picked a favorite of his own ere we were halfway over, Long John alone shrugging his shoulders and bidding them wait till they were there.

We pulled easily, by Silver’s directions, not to weary the hands prematurely; and, after quite a long passage, landed at the mouth of the second river — that which runs down a woody cleft of the Spy-glass. Thence, bending to our left, we began to ascend the slope towards the plateau.

At the first outset, heavy, miry ground and a matted, marsh vegetation greatly delayed our progress; but by little and little the hill began to steepen and become stony under foot, and the wood to change its character and to grow in a more open order. It was, indeed, a most pleasant portion of the island that we were now approaching. A heavy-scented broom and many flowering shrubs had almost taken the place of grass. Thickets of green nutmeg-trees were dotted here and there with the red columns and the broad shadow of the pines, and the first mingled their spice with the aroma of the others. The air, besides, was fresh and stirring, and this, under the sheer sunbeams, was a wonderful refreshment to our senses.

The party spread itself abroad, in a fan shape, shouting and leaping to and fro. About the center, and a good way behind the rest, Silver and I followed — I tethered by my rope, he plowing, with deep pants, among the sliding gravel. From time to time, indeed, I had to lend him a hand, or he must have missed his footing and fallen backward down the hill.

We had thus proceeded for about half a mile, and were approaching the brow of the plateau, when the man upon the farthest left began to cry aloud, as if in terror. Shout after shout came from him, and the others began to run in his direction.

"He can't 'a' found the treasure," said old Morgan, hurrying past us from the right, "for that's clean a-top."

Indeed, as we found when we also reached the spot, it was something very different. At the foot of a pretty big pine, and involved in a green creeper, which had even partly lifted some of the smaller bones, a human skeleton lay, with a few shreds of clothing, on the ground. I believe a chill struck for a moment to every heart.

"He was a seaman," said George Merry, who, bolder than the rest, had gone up close, and was examining the rags of clothing. "Leastways, this is good sea-cloth."

"Ay, ay," said Silver, "like enough; you wouldn't look to find a bishop here, I reckon. But what sort of a way is that for bones to lie? 'Tain't in natur'."

Indeed, on a second glance, it seemed impossible to fancy that the body was in a natural position. But for some disarray (the work, perhaps, of the birds that had fed upon him, or of the slow-growing creeper that had gradually enveloped his remains) the man lay perfectly straight — his feet pointing in one direction, his hands raised above his head like a diver's, pointing directly in the opposite.

"I've taken a notion into my old numskull," observed Silver. "Here's the compass; there's the tip-top p'int of SkeletonIsland, stickin' out like a tooth. Just take a bearing, will you, along the line of them bones."

It was done. The body pointed straight in the direction of the island, and the compass read duly E.S.E. by E.

"I thought so," cried the cook; "this here is a p'inter. Right up there is our line for the Pole Star and the jolly dollars. But, by thunder! if it don't make me cold inside to think of Flint. This is one of *his* jokes, and no mistake. Him and these six was alone here; he killed 'em, every man; and this one he hauled here and laid down by compass, shiver my timbers! They're long bones, and the hair's been yellow. Ay, that would be Allardyce. You mind Allardyce, Tom Morgan?"

"Ay, ay," returned Morgan, "I mind him; he owed me money, he did, and took my knife ashore with him."

"Speaking of knives," said another, "why don't we find his'n lying round? Flint warn't the man to pick a seaman's pocket; and the birds, I guess, would leave it be."

"By the powers and that's true!" cried Silver.

"There ain't a thing left here," said Merry, still feeling round among the bones; "not a copper doit nor a baccy box. It don't look nat'ral to me."

"No, by gum, it don't," agreed Silver; "not nat'ral, nor not nice, says you. Great guns, messmates, but if Flint was living this would be a hot spot for you and me! Six they were, and six are we; and bones is what they are now."

"I saw him dead with these here deadlights," said Morgan. "Billy took me in. There he laid, with penny-pieces on his eyes."

"Dead — ay, sure enough he's dead and gone below," said the fellow with the bandage; "but if ever sperrit walked it would be Flint's. Dear heart, but he died bad, did Flint!"

"Ay, that he did," observed another; "now he raged and now he hollered for the rum, and now he sang. 'Fifteen Men' were his only song, mates; and I tell you true, I never rightly liked to hear it since. It was main hot and the windy was open, and I hear that old song comin' out as clear as clear — and the death-haul on the man already."

"Come, come," said Silver, "stow this talk. He's dead, and he don't walk, that I know; leastways he won't walk by day, and you may lay to that. Care killed a cat. Fetch ahead for the doubloons."

We started, certainly, but in spite of the hot sun and the staring daylight, the pirates no longer ran separate and shouting through the wood, but kept side by side and spoke with bated breath. The terror of the dead buccaneer had fallen on their spirits.

CHAPTER XXXII
THE TREASURE-HUNT — THE VOICE AMONG THE TREES

Partly from the damping influence of this alarm, partly to rest Silver and the sick folk, the whole party sat down as soon as they had gained the brow of the ascent.

The plateau being somewhat tilted toward the west, this spot on which we had paused commanded a wide prospect on either hand. Before us, over the tree-tops, we beheld the Cape of the Woods fringed with surf; behind, we not only looked down upon the anchorage and SkeletonIsland, but saw — clear across the spit and the eastern lowlands — a great field of open sea upon the east. Sheer above us rose the Spy-glass, here dotted with single pines, there black with precipices. There was no sound but that of the distant breakers mounting from all around, and the chirp of countless insects in the brush. Not a man, not a sail upon the sea; the very largeness of the view increased the sense of solitude.

Silver, as he sat, took certain bearings with his compass.

"There are three 'tall trees,'" said he, "about in the right line from SkeletonIsland. 'Spy-glass Shoulder,' I take it, means that lower p'int there. It's child's play to find the stuff now. I've half a mind to dine first."

"I don't feel sharp," growled Morgan. "Thinkin' o' Flint — I think it were — as done me."

"Ah, well, my son, you praise your stars he's dead," said Silver.

"He was an ugly devil," cried a third pirate, with a shudder; "that blue in the face, too!"

"That was how the rum took him," added Merry. "Blue! well I reckon he was blue. That's a true word."

Ever since they had found the skeleton and got upon this train of thought, they had spoken lower and lower, and they had almost got to whispering by now, so that the sound of their talk hardly interrupted the silence of the wood. All of a sudden, out of the middle of the trees in front of us, a thin, high, trembling voice struck up the well-known air and words:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest —
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!"

I never have seen men more dreadfully affected than the pirates. The colour went from their six faces like enchantment; some leaped to their feet, some clawed hold of others; Morgan groveled on the ground.

“It’s Flint, by — — !” cried Merry.

The song had stopped as suddenly as it began — broken off, you would have said, in the middle of a note, as though someone had laid his hand upon the singer’s mouth. Coming so far through the clear, sunny atmosphere among the green tree-tops, I thought it had sounded airily and sweetly, and the effect on my companions was the stranger.

“Come,” said Silver, struggling with his ashen lips to get the word out, “that won’t do. Stand by to go about. This is a rum start, and I can’t name the voice, but it’s someone skylarking — someone that’s flesh and blood, and you may lay to that.”

His courage had come back as he spoke, and some of the colour to his face along with it. Already the others had begun to lend an ear to this encouragement, and were coming a little to themselves, when the same voice broke out again — not this time singing, but in a faint, distant hail, that echoed yet fainter among the clefts of the Spy-glass.

“Darby M’Graw,” it wailed — for that is the word that best describes the sound — ”Darby M’Graw! Darby M’Graw!” again and again and again; and then rising a little higher, and with an oath that I leave out: “Fetch aft the rum, Darby!”

The buccaneers remained rooted to the ground, their eyes starting from their heads. Long after the voice had died away they still stared in silence, dreadfully, before them.

“That fixes it!” gasped one. “Let’s go.”

“They was his last words,” moaned Morgan, “his last words above-board.”

Dick had his Bible out and was praying volubly. He had been well brought up, had Dick, before he came to sea and fell among bad companions.

Still, Silver was unconquered. I could hear his teeth rattle in his head, but he had not yet surrendered.

“Nobody in this here island ever heard of Darby,” he muttered; “not one but us that’s here.” And then, making a great effort: “Shipmates,” he cried, “I’m here to get that stuff, and I’ll not be beat by man nor devil. I never was feared of Flint in his life, and, by the powers, I’ll face him dead. There’s seven hundred thousand pound not a quarter of a mile from here. When did ever a gentleman o’ fortune show his stern to that much dollars for a boozy old seaman with a blue mug — and him dead, too?”

But there was no sign of reawakening courage in his followers; rather, indeed, of growing terror at the irreverence of his words.

“Belay there, John!” said Merry. “Don’t you cross a sperrit.”

And the rest were all too terrified to reply. They would have run away severally had they dared, but fear kept them together, and kept them close by John, as if his daring helped them. He, on his part, had pretty well fought his weakness down.

“Sperrit? Well, maybe,” he said. “But there’s one thing not clear to me. There was an echo. Now, no man ever seen a sperrit with a shadow. Well, then, what’s he doing with an echo to him, I should like to know? That ain’t in natur’, surely.”

This argument seemed weak enough to me. But you can never tell what will affect the superstitious, and, to my wonder, George Merry was greatly relieved.

“Well, that’s so,” he said. “You’ve a head upon your shoulders, John, and no mistake. ‘Bout ship, mates! This here crew is on a wrong tack, I do believe. And come to think on it, it was like Flint’s voice, I grant you, but not just so clear away like it, after all. It was liker somebody else’s voice now — it was liker — ”

“By the powers, Ben Gunn!” roared Silver.

“Ay, and so it were,” cried Morgan, springing on his knees. “Ben Gunn it were!”

“It don’t make much odds, do it, now?” asked Dick. “Ben Gunn’s not here in the body, any more’n Flint.”

But the older hands greeted this remark with scorn.

“Why, nobody minds Ben Gunn,” cried Merry; “dead or alive, nobody minds him!”

It was extraordinary how their spirits had returned, and how the natural colour had revived in their faces. Soon they were chatting together, with intervals of listening; and not long after, hearing no further sound, they shouldered the tools and set forth again, Merry walking first with Silver’s compass to keep them on the right line with SkeletonIsland. He had said the truth; dead or alive, nobody minded Ben Gunn.

Dick alone still held his Bible, and looked around him as he went, with fearful glances; but he found no sympathy, and Silver even joked him on his precautions.

“I told you,” said he, “I told you you had sp’iled your Bible. If it ain’t no good to swear by, what do you suppose a sperrit would give for it? Not that!” and he snapped his big fingers, halting a moment on his crutch.

But Dick was not to be comforted; indeed, it was soon plain to me that the lad was falling sick; hastened by heat, exhaustion, and the shock of his alarm, the fever, predicted by Doctor Livesey, was evidently growing swiftly higher.

It was fine open walking here, upon the summit; our way lay a little downhill, for, as I have said, the plateau tilted toward the west. The pines, great and small, grew wide apart; and even between the clumps of nutmeg and azalea, wide open spaces baked in the hot sunshine. Striking, as we did, pretty near northwest across the island, we drew, on the one hand, ever nearer under the shoulders of the Spy-glass, and on the other, looked ever wider over that western bay where I had once tossed and trembled in the coracle.

The first of the tall trees was reached, and by the bearing, proved the wrong one. So with the second. The third rose nearly two hundred feet into the air above a clump of underwood; a giant of a vegetable, with a red column as big as a cottage, and a wide shadow around in which a company could have maneuvered. It was conspicuous far to sea, both on the east and west, and might have been entered as a sailing mark upon the chart.

But it was not its size that now impressed my companions; it was the knowledge that seven hundred thousand pounds in gold lay somewhere buried below its spreading shadow. The thought of the money, as they drew nearer, swallowed up their previous terrors. Their eyes burned in their heads; their feet grew speedier and lighter; their whole soul was bound up in that fortune, that whole lifetime of extravagance and pleasure, that lay waiting there for each of them.

Silver hobbled, grunting, on his crutch; his nostrils stood out and quivered; he cursed like a madman when the flies settled on his hot and shiny countenance; he plucked furiously at the line that held me to him, and, from time to time, turned his eyes upon me with a deadly look. Certainly he took no pains to hide his thoughts; and certainly I read them like print. In the immediate nearness of the gold, all else had been forgotten; his promise and the doctor's warning were both things of the past; and I could not doubt that he hoped to seize upon the treasure, find and board the *Hispaniola* under cover of night, cut every honest throat about that island, and sail away as he had at first intended, laden with crimes and riches.

Shaken as I was with these alarms, it was hard for me to keep up with the rapid pace of the treasure-hunters. Now and again I stumbled, and it was then that Silver plucked so roughly at the rope and launched at me his murderous glances. Dick, who had dropped behind us, and now brought up the rear, was babbling to himself both prayers and curses, as his fever kept rising. This also added to my wretchedness, and, to crown all, I was haunted by the thought of the tragedy that had once been acted on that plateau, when that ungodly buccaneer with the blue face — he who had died at Savannah, singing and shouting for drink — had there, with his own hand, cut down his six accomplices. This grove, that was now so peaceful, must then have rung with cries, I thought; and even with the thought I could believe I heard it ringing still.

We were now at the margin of the thicket.

“Huzza, mates, altogether!” shouted Merry, and the foremost broke into a run.

And suddenly, not ten yards farther, we beheld them stop. A low cry arose. Silver doubled his pace, digging away with the foot of his crutch like one possessed, and next moment he and I had come also to a dead halt.

Before us was a great excavation, not very recent, for the sides had fallen in and grass had sprouted on the bottom. In this were the shaft of a pick broken in two and the boards of several packing cases strewn around. On one of these boards I saw branded with a hot iron, the name *Walrus* — the name of Flint’s ship.

All was clear to probation. The *cache* had been found and rifled — the seven hundred thousand pounds were gone!

CHAPTER XXXIII
THE FALL OF A CHIEFTAIN

There never was such an overturn in this world. Each of these six men was as though he had been struck. But with Silver the blow passed almost instantly. Every thought of his soul had been set full-stretch, like a racer, on that money; well, he was brought up in a single second, dead; and he kept his head, found his temper, and changed his plan before the others had had time to realise the disappointment.

"Jim," he whispered, "take that, and stand by for trouble."

And he passed me a double-barreled pistol.

At the same time he began quietly moving northward, and in a few steps had put the hollow between us two and the other five. Then he looked at me and nodded, as much as to say: "Here is a narrow corner," as, indeed, I thought it was. His looks were now quite friendly, and I was so revolted at these constant changes that I could not forbear whispering: "So you've changed sides again."

There was no time left for him to answer in. The buccaneers, with oaths and cries, began to leap, one after another, into the pit, and to dig with their fingers, throwing the boards aside as they did so. Morgan found a piece of gold. He held it up with a perfect spout of oaths. It was a two-guinea piece, and it went from hand to hand among them for a quarter of a minute.

"Two guineas!" roared Merry, shaking it at Silver. "That's your seven hundred thousand pounds, is it? You're the man for bargains, ain't you? You're him that never bungled nothing, you wooden-headed lubber!"

"Dig away, boys," said Silver, with the coolest insolence; "you'll find some pig-nuts, and I shouldn't wonder."

"Pig-nuts!" repeated Merry, in a scream. "Mates, do you hear that? I tell you now, that man there knew it all along. Look in the face of him, and you'll see it wrote there."

"Ah, Merry," remarked Silver, "standing for cap'n again? You're a pushing lad, to be sure."

But this time every one was entirely in Merry's favor. They began to scramble out of the excavation, darting furious glances behind them. One thing I observed, which looked well for us; they all got out upon the opposite side from Silver.

Well, there we stood, two on one side, five on the other, the pit between us, and nobody screwed up high enough to offer the first blow. Silver never moved; he watched them, very upright on his crutch, and looked as cool as ever I saw him. He was brave, and no mistake.

At last, Merry seemed to think a speech might help matters.

“Mates,” says he, “there’s two of them alone there; one’s the old cripple that brought us all here and blundered us down to this; the other’s that cub that I mean to have the heart of. Now, mates — ”

He was raising his arm and his voice, and plainly meant to lead a charge. But just then — crack! crack! crack! — three musket-shots flashed out of the thicket. Merry tumbled headforemost into the excavation; the man with the bandage spun round like a teetotum, and fell all his length upon his side, where he lay dead, but still twitching; and the other three turned and ran for it with all their might.

Before you could wink Long John had fired two barrels of a pistol into the struggling Merry; and as the man rolled up his eyes at him in the last agony, “George,” said he, “I reckon I settled you.”

At the same moment the doctor, Gray, and Ben Gunn joined us, with smoking muskets, from among the nutmeg-trees.

“Forward!” cried the doctor. “Double quick, my lads. We must head ‘em off the boats.”

And we set off at a great pace, sometimes plunging through the bushes to the chest.

I tell you, but Silver was anxious to keep up with us. The work that man went through, leaping on his crutch till the muscles of his chest were fit to burst, was work no sound man ever equaled; and so thinks the doctor. As it was, he was already thirty yards behind us, and on the verge of strangling, when we reached the brow of the slope.

“Doctor,” he hailed, “see there! no hurry!”

Sure enough there was no hurry. In a more open part of the plateau we could see the three survivors still running in the same direction as they had started, right for Mizzen-mast Hill. We were already between them and the boats, and so we four sat down to breathe, while Long John, mopping his face, came slowly up with us.

“Thank ye kindly, doctor,” says he. “You came in in about the nick, I guess, for me and Hawkins. And so it’s you, Ben Gunn!” he added. “Well, you’re a nice one, to be sure.”

“I’m Ben Gunn, I am,” replied the maroon, wriggling like an eel in his embarrassment. “And,” he added, after a long pause, “how do, Mr. Silver! Pretty well, I thank ye, says you.”

“Ben, Ben,” murmured Silver, “to think as you’ve done me!”

The doctor sent back Gray for one of the pickaxes deserted, in their flight, by the mutineers; and then as we proceeded leisurely downhill to where the boats were lying, related, in a few words, what had taken place. It was a story that profoundly interested Silver, and Ben Gunn, the half-idiot maroon, was the hero from beginning to end.

Ben, in his long, lonely wanderings about the island, had found the skeleton. It was he that had rifled it; he had found the treasure; he had dug it up (it was the haft of his pickax that lay broken in the excavation); he had carried it on his back, in many weary journeys, from the foot of the tall pine to a cave he had on the two-pointed hill at the northeast angle of the island, and there it had lain stored in safety since two months before the arrival of the *Hispaniola*.

When the doctor had wormed this secret from him, on the afternoon of the attack, and when, next morning, he saw the anchorage deserted, he had gone to Silver, given him the chart, which was now useless; given him the stores, for Ben Gunn's cave was well supplied with goats' meat salted by himself; given anything and everything to get a chance of moving in safety from the stockade to the two-pointed hill, there to be clear of malaria and keep a guard upon the money.

"As for you, Jim," he said, "it went against my heart, but I did what I thought best for those who had stood by their duty; and if you were not one of these, whose fault was it?"

That morning, finding that I was to be involved in the horrid disappointment he had prepared for the mutineers, he had run all the way to the cave, and, leaving squire to guard the captain, had taken Gray and the maroon, and started, making the diagonal across the island, to be at hand beside the pine. Soon, however, he saw that our party had the start of him; and Ben Gunn, being fleet of foot, had been dispatched in front to do his best alone. Then it had occurred to him to work upon the superstitions of his former shipmates; and he was so far successful that Gray and the doctor had come up and were already ambushed before the arrival of the treasure-hunters.

"Ah," said Silver, "it was fortunate for me that I had Hawkins here. You would have let old John be cut to bits, and never given it a thought, doctor."

"Not a thought," replied Doctor Livesey, cheerily.

And by this time we had reached the gigs. The doctor, with the pickax, demolished one of them, and then we all got aboard the other, and set out to go round by the sea for North Inlet.

This was a run of eight or nine miles. Silver, though he was almost killed already with fatigue, was set to an oar, like the rest of us, and we were soon skimming swiftly over a smooth sea. Soon we passed out of the straits and doubled the southeast corner of the island, round which, four days ago, we had towed the *Hispaniola*.

As we passed the two-pointed hill we could see the black mouth of Ben Gunn's cave, and a figure standing by it, leaning on a musket. It was the squire, and we waved a handkerchief and gave him three cheers, in which the voice of Silver joined as heartily as any.

Three miles farther, just inside the mouth of North Inlet, what should we meet but the *Hispaniola*, cruising by herself! The last flood had lifted her, and had there been much wind, or a strong tide current, as in the southern anchorage, we should never have found her more, or found her stranded beyond help. As it was, there was little amiss, beyond the wreck of the mainsail. Another anchor was got ready, and dropped in a fathom and a half of water. We all pulled round again to Rum Cove, the nearest point for Ben Gunn's treasure-house; and then Gray, single-handed, returned with the gig to the *Hispaniola*, where he was to pass the night on guard.

A gentle slope ran up from the beach to the entrance of the cave. At the top, the squire met us. To me he was cordial and kind, saying nothing of my escapade, either in the way of blame or praise. At Silver's polite salute he somewhat flushed.

"John Silver," he said, "you're a prodigious villain and impostor — a monstrous impostor, sir. I am told I am not to prosecute you. Well, then, I will not. But the dead men, sir, hang about your neck like millstones."

"Thank you kindly, sir," replied Long John, again saluting.

"I dare you to thank me!" cried the squire. "It is a gross dereliction of my duty. Stand back!"

And thereupon we all entered the cave. It was a large, airy place, with a little spring and a pool of clear water, overhung with ferns. The floor was sand. Before a big fire lay Captain Smollett; and in a far corner, only duskily flickered over by the blaze, I beheld great heaps of coin and quadrilaterals built of bars of gold. That was Flint's treasure that we had come so far to seek, and that had cost already the lives of seventeen men from the *Hispaniola*. How many it had cost in the amassing, what blood and sorrow, what good ships scuttled on the deep, what brave men walking the plank blindfold, what shot of cannon, what shame and lies and cruelty, perhaps no man alive could tell. Yet there were still three upon that island — Silver, and old Morgan, and Ben Gunn — who had each taken his share in these crimes, as each had hoped in vain to share in the reward.

"Come in, Jim," said the captain. "You're a good boy in your line, Jim; but I don't think you and me'll go to sea again. You're too much of the born favorite for me. Is that you, John Silver? What brings you here, man?"

"Come back to my dooty, sir," returned Silver.

"Ah!" said the captain, and that was all he said.

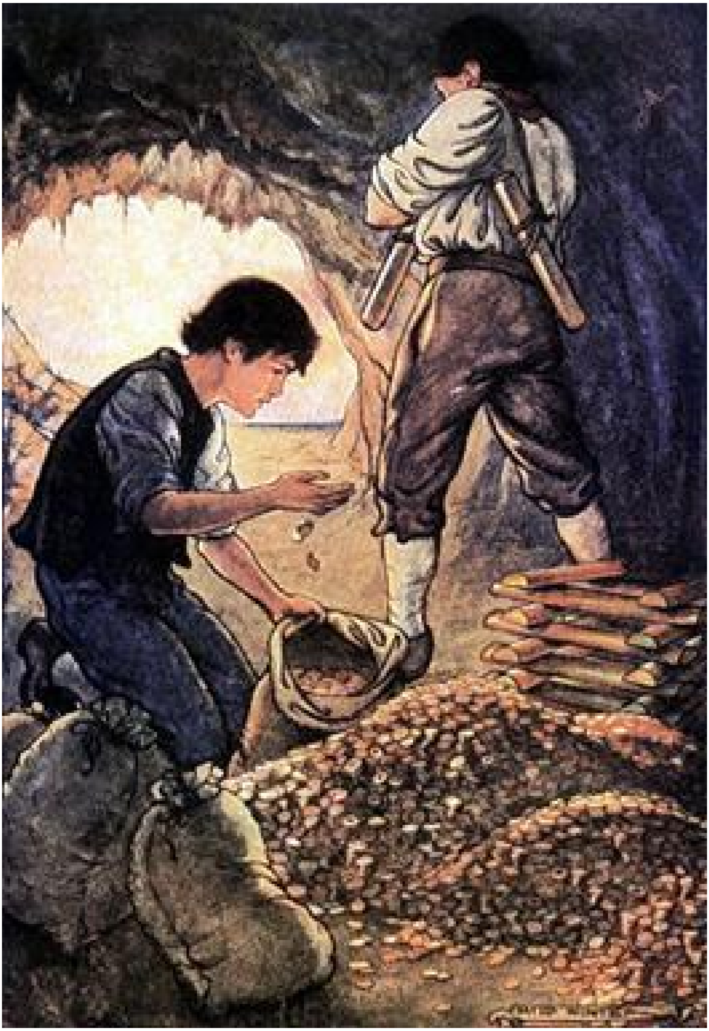
What a supper I had of it that night, with all my friends around me; and what a meal it was, with Ben Gunn's salted goat, and some delicacies and a bottle of old wine from the *Hispaniola*. Never, I am sure, were people gayer or happier. And there was Silver, sitting back almost out of the firelight, but eating heartily, prompt to spring forward when anything was wanted, even joining quietly in our laughter — the same bland, polite, obsequious seaman of the voyage out.

CHAPTER XXXIV
AND LAST

The next morning we fell early to work, for the transportation of this great mass of gold near a mile by land to the beach, and thence three miles by boat to the *Hispaniola*, was a considerable task for so small a number of workmen. The three fellows still abroad upon the island did not greatly trouble us; a single sentry on the shoulder of the hill was sufficient to insure us against any sudden onslaught, and we thought, besides, they had had more than enough of fighting.

Therefore the work was pushed on briskly. Gray and Ben Gunn came and went with the boat, while the rest during their absences piled treasure on the beach. Two of the bars, slung in a rope's end, made a good load for a grown man — one that he was glad to walk slowly with. For my part, as I was not much use at carrying, I was kept busy all day in the cave, packing the minted money into bread-bags.

It was a strange collection, like Billy Bones's hoard for the diversity of coinage, but so much larger and so much more varied that I think I never had more pleasure than in sorting them. English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Georges, and Louises, doubloons and double guineas and moidores and sequins, the pictures of all the kings of Europe for the last hundred years, strange oriental pieces stamped with what looked like wisps of string or bits of spider's web, round pieces and square pieces, and pieces bored through the middle, as if to wear them round your neck — nearly every variety of money in the world must, I think, have found a place in that collection; and for number, I am sure they were like autumn leaves, so that my back ached with stooping and my fingers with sorting them out.



Nearly every variety of money in the world must have found a place in that collection

Day after day this work went on; by every evening a fortune had been stowed aboard, but there was another fortune waiting for the morrow; and all this time we heard nothing of the three surviving mutineers.

At last — I think it was on the third night — the doctor and I were strolling on the shoulder of the hill where it overlooks the lowlands of the isle, when, from out the thick darkness below, the wind brought us a noise between shrieking and singing. It was only a snatch that reached our ears, followed by the former silence.

"Heaven forgive them," said the doctor; "'tis the mutineers!"

"All drunk, sir," struck in the voice of Silver from behind us.

Silver, I should say, was allowed his entire liberty, and, in spite of daily rebuffs, seemed to regard himself once more as quite a privileged and friendly dependent. Indeed, it was remarkable how well he bore these slights, and with what unwearying politeness he kept at trying to ingratiate himself with all. Yet, I think, none treated him better than a dog, unless it was Ben Gunn, who was still terribly afraid of his old quartermaster, or myself, who had really something to thank him for; although for that matter, I suppose, I had reason to think even worse of him than anybody else, for I had seen him meditating a fresh treachery upon the plateau. Accordingly, it was pretty gruffly that the doctor answered him.

"Drunk or raving," said he.

"Right you were, sir," replied Silver; "and precious little odds which, to you and me."

"I suppose you would hardly ask me to call you a humane man," returned the doctor, with a sneer, "and so my feelings may surprise you, Master Silver. But if I were sure they were raving — as I am morally certain one, at least, of them is down with fever — I should leave this camp, and, at whatever risk to my own carcass, take them the assistance of my skill."

"Ask your pardon, sir, you would be very wrong," quoth Silver. "You would lose your precious life, and you may lay to that. I'm on your side now, hand and glove; and I shouldn't wish for to see the party weakened, let alone yourself, seeing as I know what I owes you. But these men down there, they couldn't keep their word — no, not supposing they wished to — and what's more, they couldn't believe as you could."

"No," said the doctor. "You're the man to keep your word, we know that."

Well, that was about the last news we had of the three pirates. Only once we heard a gunshot a great way off, and supposed them to be hunting. A council was held and it was decided that we must desert them on the island — to the huge glee, I must say, of Ben Gunn, and with the strong approval of Gray. We left a good stock of powder and shot, the bulk of the salt goat, a few medicines and some other necessaries, tools, clothing, a spare sail, a fathom or two of rope, and, by the particular desire of the doctor, a handsome present of tobacco.

That was about our last doing on the island. Before that we had got the treasure stowed and had shipped enough water and the remainder of the goat meat, in case of any distress; and at last, one fine morning, we weighed anchor, which was about all that we could manage, and stood out of North Inlet, the same colours flying that the captain had flown and fought under at the palisade.

The three fellows must have been watching us closer than we thought for, as we soon had proved. For, coming through the narrows we had to lie very near the southern point, and there we saw all three of them kneeling together on a spit of sand with their arms raised in supplication. It went to all our hearts, I think, to leave them in that wretched state, but we could not risk another mutiny, and to take them home for the gibbet would have been a cruel sort of kindness. The doctor hailed them and told them of the stores we had left, and where they were to find them, but they continued to call us by name and appeal to us for God's sake to be merciful and not leave them to die in such a place.

At last, seeing the ship still bore on her course, and was now swiftly drawing out of earshot, one of them — I know not which it was — leaped to his feet with a hoarse cry, whipped his musket to his shoulder, and sent a shot whistling over Silver's head and through the mainsail.

After that we kept under cover of the bulwarks, and when next I looked out they had disappeared from the spit, and the spit itself had almost melted out of sight in the growing distance. That was, at least, the end of that; and before noon, to my inexpressible joy, the highest rock of Treasure Island had sunk into the blue round of sea.

We were so short of men that everyone on board had to bear a hand — only the captain lying on a mattress in the stern and giving his orders, for though greatly recovered he was still in want of quiet. We laid her head for the nearest port in Spanish America, for we could not risk the voyage home without fresh hands; and as it was, what with baffling winds and a couple of fresh gales, we were all worn out before we reached it.

It was just at sundown when we cast anchor in a most beautiful landlocked gulf, and were immediately surrounded by shore boats full of negroes and Mexican Indians and half-bloods, selling fruits and vegetables, and offering to dive for bits of money. The sight of so many good-humored faces (especially the blacks), the taste of the tropical fruits, and above all, the lights that began to shine in the town, made a most charming contrast to our dark and bloody sojourn on the island; and the doctor and the squire, taking me along with them, went ashore to pass the early part of the night. Here they met the captain of an English man-of-war, fell in talk with him, went on board his ship, and in short, had so agreeable a time that day was breaking when we came alongside the *Hispaniola*.

Ben Gunn was on deck alone, and as soon as we came on board he began, with wonderful contortions, to make us a confession. Silver was gone. The maroon had connived at his escape in a shore boat some hours ago, and he now assured us he had only done so to preserve our lives, which would certainly have been forfeited if "that man with the one leg had stayed aboard." But this was not all. The sea-cook had not gone empty-handed. He had cut through a bulkhead unobserved, and had removed one of the sacks of coin, worth, perhaps, three or four hundred guineas, to help him on his further wanderings.

I think we were all pleased to be so cheaply quit of him.

Well, to make a long story short, we got a few hands on board, made a good cruise home, and the *Hispaniola* reached Bristol just as Mr. Blandly was beginning to think of fitting out her consort. Five men only of those who had sailed returned with her. “Drink and the devil had done for the rest” with a vengeance, although, to be sure, we were not quite in so bad a case as that other ship they sang about:

“With one man of the crew alive,
What put to sea with seventy-five.”

All of us had an ample share of the treasure, and used it wisely or foolishly, according to our natures. Captain Smollett is now retired from the sea. Gray not only saved his money, but, being suddenly smit with the desire to rise, also studied his profession, and he is now mate and part owner of a fine full-rigged ship; married besides, and the father of a family. As for Ben Gunn, he got a thousand pounds, which he spent or lost in three weeks, or, to be more exact, in nineteen days, for he was back begging on the twentieth. Then he was given a lodge to keep, exactly as he had feared upon the island; and he still lives, a great favorite, though something of a butt with the country boys, and a notable singer in church on Sundays and saints’ days.

Of Silver we have heard no more. That formidable seafaring man with one leg has at last gone clean out of my life, but I dare say he met his old negress, and perhaps still lives in comfort with her and Captain Flint. It is to be hoped so, I suppose, for his chances of comfort in another world are very small.

The bar silver and the arms still lie, for all that I know, where Flint buried them; and certainly they shall lie there for me. Oxen and wain-ropes would not bring me back again to that accursed island, and the worst dreams that ever I have are when I hear the surf booming about its coasts, or start upright in bed, with the sharp voice of Captain Flint still ringing in my ears: “Pieces of eight! pieces of eight!”

THE END

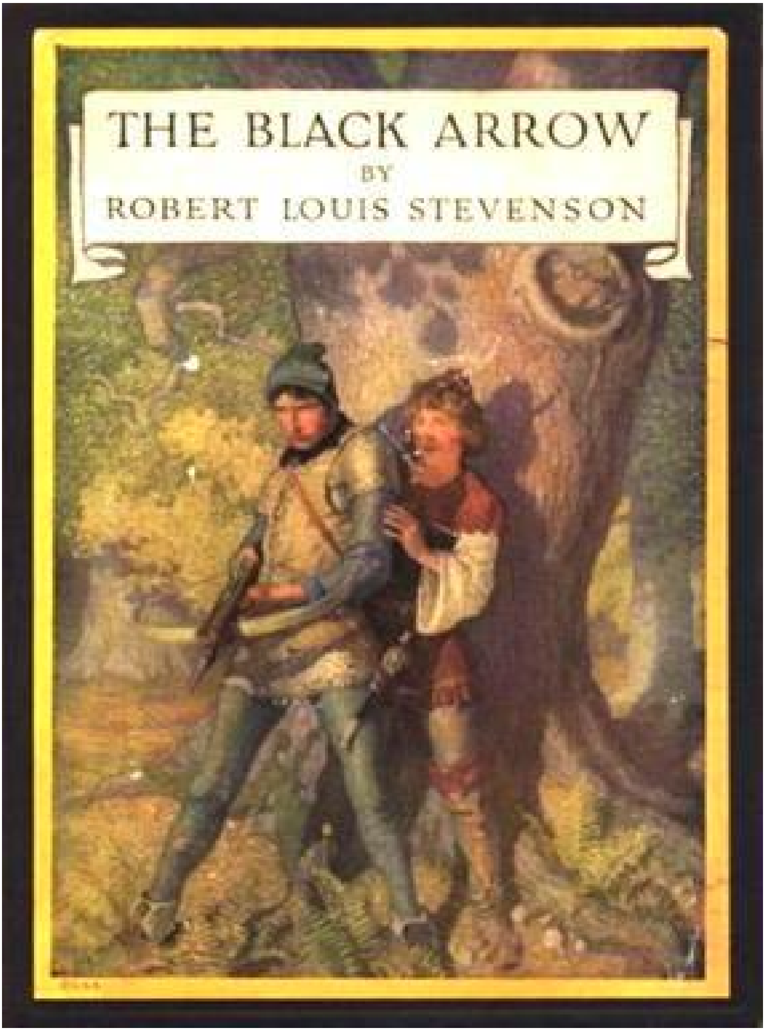
THE BLACK ARROW

A TALE OF THE TWO ROSES

Stevenson’s second novel is both an historical adventure and a romance. It first appeared as a serial in 1883 with the subtitle “A Tale of Tunstall Forest” beginning in *Young Folks*, and was printed under the pseudonymn Captain George North.

The Black Arrow tells the story of Dick Shelton during the Wars of the Roses and how he becomes a knight, rescues his lady Joanna Sedley, and obtains justice for the murder of his father, Sir Harry Shelton.

A young Stevenson



THE BLACK ARROW

BY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

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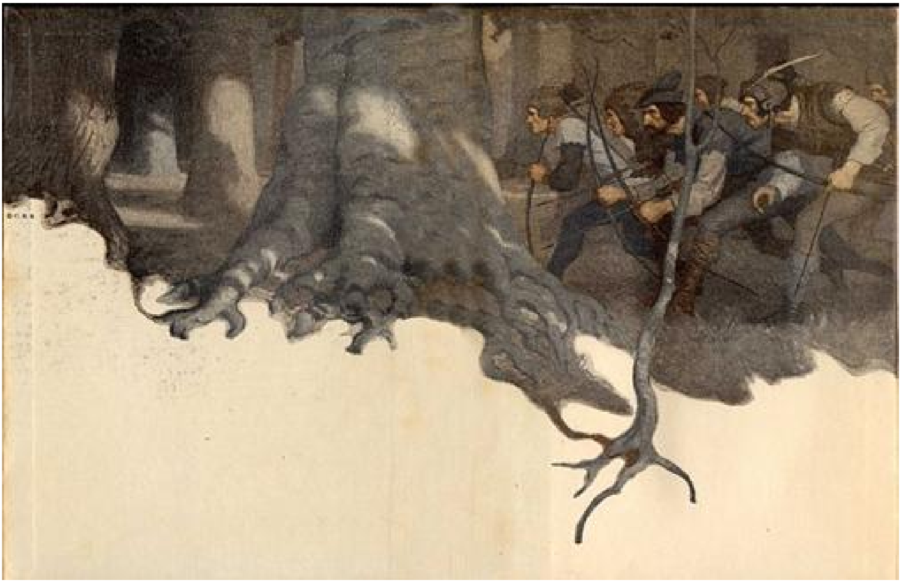


PROLOGUE

JOHN AMEND-ALL

On a certain afternoon, in the late springtime, the bell upon Tunstall Moat House was heard ringing at an unaccustomed hour. Far and near, in the forest and in the fields along the river, people began to desert their labours and hurry towards the sound; and in Tunstall hamlet a group of poor countryfolk stood wondering at the summons.

Tunstall hamlet at that period, in the reign of old King Henry VI., wore much the same appearance as it wears to-day. A score or so of houses, heavily framed with oak, stood scattered in a long green valley ascending from the river. At the foot, the road crossed a bridge, and mounting on the other side, disappeared into the fringes of the forest on its way to the Moat House, and further forth to Holywood Abbey. Half-way up the village, the church stood among yews. On every side the slopes were crowned and the view bounded by the green elms and greening oak-trees of the forest.

Hard by the bridge, there was a stone cross upon a knoll, and here the group had collected — half-a-dozen women and one tall fellow in a russet smock — discussing what the bell betided. An express had gone through the hamlet half an hour before, and drunk a pot of ale in the saddle, not daring to dismount for the hurry of his errand; but he had been ignorant himself of what was forward, and only bore sealed letters from Sir Daniel Brackley to Sir Oliver Oates, the parson, who kept the Moat House in the master's absence.

But now there was the noise of a horse; and soon, out of the edge of the wood and over the echoing bridge, there rode up young Master Richard Shelton, Sir Daniel's ward. He, at the least, would know, and they hailed him and begged him to explain. He drew bridle willingly enough — a young fellow not yet eighteen, sun-browned and grey-eyed, in a jacket of deer's leather, with a black velvet collar, a green hood upon his head, and a steel cross-bow at his back. The express, it appeared, had brought great news. A battle was impending. Sir Daniel had sent for every man that could draw a bow or carry a bill to go post-haste to Kettley, under pain of his severe displeasure; but for whom they were to fight, or of where the battle was expected, Dick knew nothing. Sir Oliver would come shortly himself, and Bennet Hatch was arming at that moment, for he it was who should lead the party.

"It is the ruin of this kind land," a woman said. "If the barons live at war, ploughfolk must eat roots."

"Nay," said Dick, "every man that follows shall have sixpence a day, and archers twelve."

"If they live," returned the woman, "that may very well be; but how if they die, my master?"

"They cannot better die than for their natural lord," said Dick.

"No natural lord of mine," said the man in the smock. "I followed the Walsinghams; so we all did down Brierly way, till two years ago, come Candlemas. And now I must side with Brackley! It was the law that did it; call ye that natural? But now, what with Sir Daniel and what with Sir Oliver — that knows more of law than honesty — I have no natural lord but poor King Harry the Sixt, God bless him! — the poor innocent that cannot tell his right hand from his left."

"Ye speak with an ill tongue, friend," answered Dick, "to miscall your good master and my lord the king in the same libel. But King Harry — praised be the saints! — has come again into his right mind, and will have all things peaceably ordained. And as for Sir Daniel, y'are very brave behind his back. But I will be no tale-bearer; and let that suffice."

"I say no harm of you, Master Richard," returned the peasant. "Y'are a lad; but when ye come to a man's inches, ye will find ye have an empty pocket. I say no more: the saints help Sir Daniel's neighbours, and the Blessed Maid protect his wards!"

"Clipsby," said Richard, "you speak what I cannot hear with honour. Sir Daniel is my good master, and my guardian."

"Come, now, will ye read me a riddle?" returned Clipsby. "On whose side is Sir Daniel?"

"I know not," said Dick, colouring a little; for his guardian had changed sides continually in the troubles of that period, and every change had brought him some increase of fortune.

"Ay," returned Clipsby, "you, nor no man. For, indeed, he is one that goes to bed Lancaster and gets up York."

Just then the bridge rang under horse-shoe iron, and the party turned and saw Bennet Hatch come galloping — a brown-faced, grizzled fellow, heavy of hand and grim of mien, armed with sword and spear, a steel salet on his head, a leather jack upon his body. He was a great man in these parts; Sir Daniel's right hand in peace and war, and at that time, by his master's interest, bailiff of the hundred.

"Clipsby," he shouted, "off to the Moat House, and send all other laggards the same gate. Bowyer will give you jack and salet. We must ride before curfew. Look to it: he that is last at the lych-gate Sir Daniel shall reward. Look to it right well! I know you for a man of naught. Nance," he added, to one of the women, "is old Appleyard up town?"

"I'll warrant you," replied the woman. "In his field, for sure."

So the group dispersed, and while Clipsby walked leisurely over the bridge, Bennet and young Shelton rode up the road together, through the village and past the church.

"Ye will see the old shrew," said Bennet. "He will waste more time grumbling and prating of Harry the Fift than would serve a man to shoe a horse. And all because he has been to the French wars!"

The house to which they were bound was the last in the village, standing alone among lilacs; and beyond it, on three sides, there was open meadow rising towards the borders of the wood.

Hatch dismounted, threw his rein over the fence, and walked down the field, Dick keeping close at his elbow, to where the old soldier was digging, knee-deep in his cabbages, and now and again, in a cracked voice, singing a snatch of song. He was all dressed in leather, only his hood and tippet were of black frieze, and tied with scarlet; his face was like a walnut-shell, both for colour and wrinkles; but his old grey eye was still clear enough, and his sight unabated. Perhaps he was deaf; perhaps he thought it unworthy of an old archer of Agincourt to pay any heed to such disturbances; but neither the surly notes of the alarm bell, nor the near approach of Bennet and the lad, appeared at all to move him; and he continued obstinately digging, and piped up, very thin and shaky:

"Now, dear lady, if thy will be,
I pray you that you will rue on me."

"Nick Appleyard," said Hatch, "Sir Oliver commends him to you, and bids that ye shall come within this hour to the Moat House, there to take command."

The old fellow looked up.

"Save you, my masters!" he said, grinning. "And where goeth Master Hatch?"

"Master Hatch is off to Kettley, with every man that we can horse," returned Bennet. "There is a fight toward, it seems, and my lord stays a reinforcement."

"Ay, verily," returned Appleyard. "And what will ye leave me to garrison withal?"

"I leave you six good men, and Sir Oliver to boot," answered Hatch.

"It'll not hold the place," said Appleyard; "the number sufficeth not. It would take two-score to make it good."

"Why, it's for that we came to you, old shrew!" replied the other. "Who else is there but you that could do aught in such a house with such a garrison?"

"Ay! when the pinch comes, ye remember the old shoe," returned Nick. "There is not a man of you can back a horse or hold a bill; and as for archery — St. Michael! if old Harry the Fift were back again, he would stand and let ye shoot at him for a farthen a shoot!"

"Nay, Nick, there's some can draw a good bow yet," said Bennet.

"Draw a good bow!" cried Appleyard. "Yes! But who'll shoot me a good shoot? It's there the eye comes in, and the head between your shoulders. Now, what might you call a long shoot, Bennet Hatch?"

"Well," said Bennet, looking about him, "it would be a long shoot from here into the forest."

"Ay, it would be a longish shoot," said the old fellow, turning to look over his shoulder; and then he put up his hand over his eyes, and stood staring.

"Why, what are you looking at?" asked Bennet, with a chuckle. "Do you see Harry the Fift?"

The veteran continued looking up the hill in silence. The sun shone broadly over the shelving meadows; a few white sheep wandered browsing; all was still but the distant jangle of the bell.

"What is it, Appleyard?" asked Dick.

"Why, the birds," said Appleyard.

And, sure enough, over the top of the forest, where it ran down in a tongue among the meadows, and ended in a pair of goodly green elms, about a bowshot from the field where they were standing, a flight of birds was skimming to and fro, in evident disorder.

"What of the birds?" said Bennet.

"Ay!" returned Appleyard, "y'are a wise man to go to war, Master Bennet. Birds are a good sentry; in forest places they be the first line of battle. Look you, now, if we lay here in camp, there might be archers skulking down to get the wind of us; and here would you be, none the wiser!"

"Why, old shrew," said Hatch, "there be no men nearer us than Sir Daniel's, at Kettley; y'are as safe as in LondonTower; and ye raise scares upon a man for a few chaffinches and sparrows!"

"Hear him!" grinned Appleyard. "How many a rogue would give his two crop ears to have a shoot at either of us? St. Michael, man! they hate us like two polecats!"

"Well, sooth it is, they hate Sir Daniel," answered Hatch, a little sobered.

"Ay, they hate Sir Daniel, and they hate every man that serves with him," said Appleyard; "and in the first order of hating, they hate Bennet Hatch and old Nicholas the bow-man. See ye here: if there was a stout fellow yonder in the wood-edge, and you and I stood fair for him — as, by St. George, we stand! — which, think ye, would he choose?"

"You, for a good wager," answered Hatch.

"My surcoat to a leather belt, it would be you!" cried the old archer. "Ye burned Grimstone, Bennet — they'll ne'er forgive you that, my master. And as for me, I'll soon be in a good place, God grant, and out of bow-shoot — ay, and cannon-shoot — of all their malices. I am an old man, and draw fast to homeward, where the bed is ready. But for you, Bennet, y'are to remain behind here at your own peril, and if ye come to my years unhanged, the old true-blue English spirit will be dead."

"Y'are the shrewishest old dolt in TunstallForest," returned Hatch, visibly ruffled by these threats. "Get ye to your arms before Sir Oliver come, and leave prating for one good while. An' ye had talked so much with Harry the Fift, his ears would ha' been richer than his pocket."

An arrow sang in the air, like a huge hornet; it struck old Appleyard between the shoulder-blades, and pierced him clean through, and he fell forward on his face among the cabbages. Hatch, with a broken cry, leapt into the air; then, stooping double, he ran for the cover of the house. And in the meanwhile Dick Shelton had dropped behind a lilac, and had his cross-bow bent and shouldered, covering the point of the forest.

Not a leaf stirred. The sheep were patiently browsing; the birds had settled. But there lay the old man, with a cloth-yard arrow standing in his back; and there were Hatch holding to the gable, and Dick crouching and ready behind the lilac bush.

"D'ye see aught?" cried Hatch.

"Not a twig stirs," said Dick.

"I think shame to leave him lying," said Bennet, coming forward once more with hesitating steps and a very pale countenance. "Keep a good eye on the wood, Master Shelton — keep a clear eye on the wood. The saints assoil us! here was a good shoot!"

Bennet raised the old archer on his knee. He was not yet dead; his face worked, and his eyes shut and opened like machinery, and he had a most horrible, ugly look of one in pain.

"Can ye hear, old Nick?" asked Hatch. "Have ye a last wish before ye wend, old brother?"

"Pluck out the shaft, and let me pass, a' Mary's name!" gasped Appleyard. "I be done with Old England. Pluck it out!"

"Master Dick," said Bennet, "come hither, and pull me a good pull upon the arrow. He would fain pass, the poor sinner."

Dick laid down his cross-bow, and pulling hard upon the arrow, drew it forth. A gush of blood followed; the old archer scrambled half upon his feet, called once upon the name of God, and then fell dead. Hatch, upon his knees among the cabbages, prayed fervently for the welfare of the passing spirit. But even as he prayed, it was plain that his mind was still divided, and he kept ever an eye upon the corner of the wood from which the shot had come. When he had done, he got to his feet again, drew off one of his mailed gauntlets, and wiped his pale face, which was all wet with terror.

"Ay," he said, "it'll be my turn next."

"Who hath done this, Bennet?" Richard asked, still holding the arrow in his hand.

"Nay, the saints know," said Hatch. "Here are a good two-score Christian souls that we have hunted out of house and holding, he and I. He has paid his shot, poor shrew, nor will it be long, mayhap, ere I pay mine. Sir Daniel driveth overhard."

"This is a strange shaft," said the lad, looking at the arrow in his hand.

"Ay, by my faith!" cried Bennet. "Black, and black-feathered. Here is an ill-favoured shaft, by my sooth! for black, they say, bodes burial. And here be words written. Wipe the blood away. What read ye?"

"'*Appulyaird fro Jon Amend-All,*'" read Shelton. "What should this betoken?"

"Nay, I like it not," returned the retainer, shaking his head. "John Amend-All! Here is a rogue's name for those that be up in the world! But why stand we here to make a mark? Take him by the knees, good Master Shelton, while I lift him by the shoulders, and let us lay him in his house. This will be a rare shog to poor Sir Oliver; he will turn paper colour; he will pray like a windmill."

They took up the old archer, and carried him between them into his house, where he had dwelt alone. And there they laid him on the floor, out of regard for the mattress and sought, as best they might, to straighten and compose his limbs.

Appleyard's house was clean and bare. There was a bed, with a blue cover, a cupboard, a great chest, a pair of joint-stools, a hinged table in the chimney-corner, and hung upon the wall the old soldier's armoury of bows and defensive armour. Hatch began to look about him curiously.

"Nick had money," he said. "He may have had three-score pounds put by. I would I could light upon't! When ye lose an old friend, Master Richard, the best consolation is to heir him. See, now, this chest. I would go a mighty wager there is a bushel of gold therein. He had a strong hand to get, and a hard hand to keep withal, had Appleyard the archer. Now may God rest his spirit! Near eighty year he was afoot and about, and ever getting; but now he's on the broad of his back, poor shrew, and no more lacketh; and if his chattels came to a good friend, he would be merrier, methinks, in heaven."

"Come, Hatch," said Dick, "respect his stone-blind eyes. Would ye rob the man before his body? Nay, he would walk!"

Hatch made several signs of the cross; but by this time his natural complexion had returned, and he was not easily to be dashed from any purpose. It would have gone hard with the chest had not the gate sounded, and presently after the door of the house opened and admitted a tall, portly, ruddy, black-eyed man of near fifty, in a surplice and black robe.

"Appleyard — " the newcomer was saying, as he entered; but he stopped dead. "Ave Maria!" he cried. "Saints be our shield! What cheer is this?"

"Cold cheer with Appleyard, sir parson," answered Hatch, with perfect cheerfulness. "Shot at his own door, and alighteth even now at purgatory gates. Ay! there, if tales be true, he shall lack neither coal nor candle."

Sir Oliver groped his way to a joint-stool, and sat down upon it, sick and white.

"This is a judgment! O, a great stroke!" he sobbed, and rattled off a leash of prayers.

Hatch meanwhile reverently doffed his salet and knelt down.

"Ay, Bennet," said the priest, somewhat recovering, "and what may this be? What enemy hath done this?"

"Here, Sir Oliver, is the arrow. See, it is written upon with words," said Dick.

"Nay," cried the priest, "this is a foul hearing! John Amend-All! A right Lollardy word. And black of hue, as for an omen! Sirs, this knave arrow likes me not. But it importeth rather to take counsel. Who should this be? Bethink you, Bennet. Of so many black ill-willers, which should he be that doth so hardily outface us? Simnel? I do much question it. The Walsinghams? Nay, they are not yet so broken; they still think to have the law over us, when times change. There was Simon Malmesbury, too. How think ye, Bennet?"

"What think ye, sir," returned Hatch, "of Ellis Duckworth?"

"Nay, Bennet, never. Nay, not he," said the priest. "There cometh never any rising, Bennet, from below — so all judicious chroniclers concord in their opinion; but rebellion travelleth ever downward from above; and when Dick, Tom, and Harry take them to their bills, look ever narrowly to see what lord is profited thereby. Now, Sir Daniel, having once more joined him to the Queen's party, is in ill odour with the Yorkist lords. Thence, Bennet, comes the blow — by what procuring, I yet seek; but therein lies the nerve of this discomfiture."

"An't please you, Sir Oliver," said Bennet, "the axles are so hot in this country that I have long been smelling fire. So did this poor sinner, Appleyard. And, by your leave, men's spirits are so foully inclined to all of us, that it needs neither York nor Lancaster to spur them on. Hear my plain thoughts: You, that are a clerk, and Sir Daniel, that sails on any wind, ye have taken many men's goods, and beaten and hanged not a few. Y'are called to count for this; in the end, I wot not how, ye have ever the uppermost at law, and ye think all patched. But give me leave, Sir Oliver: the man that ye have dispossessed and beaten is but the angrier, and some day, when the black devil is by, he will up with his bow and clout me a yard of arrow through your inwards.”

“Nay, Bennet, y’are in the wrong. Bennet, ye should be glad to be corrected,” said Sir Oliver. “Y’are a prater, Bennet, a talker, a babbler; your mouth is wider than your two ears. Mend it, Bennet, mend it.”

“Nay, I say no more. Have it as ye list,” said the retainer.

The priest now rose from the stool, and from the writing-case that hung about his neck took forth wax and a taper, and a flint and steel. With these he sealed up the chest and the cupboard with Sir Daniel’s arms, Hatch looking on disconsolate; and then the whole party proceeded, somewhat timorously, to sally from the house and get to horse.

“’Tis time we were on the road, Sir Oliver,” said Hatch, as he held the priest’s stirrup while he mounted.

“Ay; but, Bennet, things are changed,” returned the parson. “There is now no Appleyard — rest his soul! — to keep the garrison. I shall keep you, Bennet. I must have a good man to rest me on in this day of black arrows. ‘The arrow that flieth by day,’ saith the evangel; I have no mind of the context; nay, I am a sluggard priest, I am too deep in men’s affairs. Well, let us ride forth, Master Hatch. The jackmen should be at the church by now.”

So they rode forward down the road, with the wind after them, blowing the tails of the parson’s cloak; and behind them, as they went, clouds began to arise and blot out the sinking sun. They had passed three of the scattered houses that make up Tunstall hamlet, when, coming to a turn, they saw the church before them. Ten or a dozen houses clustered immediately round it; but to the back the churchyard was next the meadows. At the lych-gate, near a score of men were gathered, some in the saddle, some standing by their horses’ heads. They were variously armed and mounted; some with spears, some with bills, some with bows, and some bestriding plough-horses, still splashed with the mire of the furrow; for these were the very dregs of the country, and all the better men and the fair equipments were already with Sir Daniel in the field.

“We have not done amiss, praised be the cross of Holywood! Sir Daniel will be right well content,” observed the priest, inwardly numbering the troop.

“Who goes? Stand! if ye be true!” shouted Bennet.

A man was seen slipping through the churchyard among the yews; and at the sound of this summons he discarded all concealment, and fairly took to his heels for the forest. The men at the gate, who had been hitherto unaware of the stranger’s presence, woke and scattered. Those who had dismounted began scrambling into the saddle; the rest rode in pursuit; but they had to make the circuit of the consecrated ground, and it was plain their quarry would escape them. Hatch, roaring an oath, put his horse at the hedge, to head him off; but the beast refused, and sent his rider sprawling in the dust. And though he was up again in a moment, and had caught the bridle, the time had gone by, and the fugitive had gained too great a lead for any hope of capture.

The wisest of all had been Dick Shelton. Instead of starting in a vain pursuit, he had whipped his cross-bow from his back, bent it, and set a quarrel to the string; and now, when the others had desisted, he turned to Bennet and asked if he should shoot.

“Shoot! shoot!” cried the priest, with sanguinary violence.

“Cover him, Master Dick,” said Bennet. “Bring me him down like a ripe apple.”

The fugitive was now within but a few leaps of safety; but this last part of the meadow ran very steeply up-hill; and the man ran slower in proportion. What with the greyness of the falling night, and the uneven movements of the runner, it was no easy aim; and as Dick levelled his bow, he felt a kind of pity, and a half desire that he might miss. The quarrel sped.

The man stumbled and fell, and a great cheer arose from Hatch and the pursuers. But they were counting their corn before the harvest. The man fell lightly; he was lightly afoot again, turned and waved his cap in a bravado, and was out of sight next moment in the margin of the wood.

“And the plague go with him!” cried Bennet. “He has thieves’ heels; he can run, by St. Banbury! But you touched him, Master Shelton; he has stolen your quarrel, may he never have good I grudge him less!”

“Nay, but what made he by the church?” asked Sir Oliver. “I am shrewdly afeared there has been mischief here. Clipsby, good fellow, get ye down from your horse, and search thoroughly among the yews.”

Clipsby was gone but a little while ere he returned, carrying a paper.

“This writing was pinned to the church door,” he said, handing it to the parson. “I found naught else, sir parson.”

“Now, by the power of MotherChurch,” cried Sir Oliver, “but this runs hard on sacrilege! For the king’s good pleasure, or the lord of the manor — well! But that every run-the-hedge in a green jerkin should fasten papers to the chancel door — nay, it runs hard on sacrilege, hard; and men have burned for matters of less weight. But what have we here? The light falls apace. Good Master Richard, y’ have young eyes. Read me, I pray, this libel.”

Dick Shelton took the paper in his hand and read it aloud. It contained some lines of very rugged doggerel, hardly even rhyming, written in a gross character, and most uncouthly spelt. With the spelling somewhat bettered, this is how they ran:

“I had four blak arrows under my belt,
Four for the greefs that I have felt,
Four for the nomber of ill menne
That have opressid me now and then.
One is gone; one is wele sped;
Old Apulyaird is ded.
One is for Maister Bennet Hatch,
That burned Grimstone, walls and thatch.
One for Sir Oliver Oates,
That cut Sir Harry Shelton’s throat.
Sir Daniel, ye shull have the fourt;
We shall think it fair sport.
Ye shull each have your own part,
A blak arrow in each blak heart.
Get ye to your knees for to pray:
Ye are ded theeves, by yea and nay!

“Jon Amend-all
of the Green Wood,
And his jolly fellaweship.

“Item, we have mo arrowes and goode hempen cord for otheres of your following.”

“Now, well-a-day for charity and the Christian graces!” cried Sir Oliver, lamentably. “Sirs, this is an ill world, and groweth daily worse. I will swear upon the cross of Holywood I am as innocent of that good knight’s hurt, whether in act or purpose, as the babe unchristened. Neither was his throat cut; for therein they are again in error, as there still live credible witnesses to show.”

“It boots not, sir parson,” said Bennet. “Here is unseasonable talk.”

“Nay, Master Bennet, not so. Keep ye in your due place, good Bennet,” answered the priest. “I shall make mine innocence appear. I will, upon no consideration, lose my poor life in error. I take all men to witness that I am clear of this matter. I was not even in the Moat House. I was sent of an errand before nine upon the clock — — ”

“Sir Oliver,” said Hatch, interrupting, “since it please you not to stop this sermon, I will take other means. Goffe, sound to horse.”

And while the tucket was sounding, Bennet moved close to the bewildered parson, and whispered violently in his ear.

Dick Shelton saw the priest’s eye turned upon him for an instant in a startled glance. He had some cause for thought; for this Sir Harry Shelton was his own natural father. But he said never a word, and kept his countenance unmoved.

Hatch and Sir Oliver discussed together for awhile their altered situation; ten men, it was decided between them, should be reserved, not only to garrison the Moat House, but to escort the priest across the wood. In the meantime, as Bennet was to remain behind, the command of the reinforcement was given to Master Shelton. Indeed, there was no choice; the men were loutish fellows, dull and unskilled in war, while Dick was not only popular, but resolute and grave beyond his age. Although his youth had been spent in these rough, country places, the lad had been well taught in letters by Sir Oliver, and Hatch himself had shown him the management of arms and the first principles of command. Bennet had always been kind and helpful; he was one of those who are cruel as the grave to those they call their enemies, but ruggedly faithful and well willing to their friends; and now, while Sir Oliver entered the next house to write, in his swift, exquisite penmanship, a memorandum of the last occurrences to his master, Sir Daniel Brackley, Bennet came up to his pupil to wish him God-speed upon his enterprise.

"Ye must go the long way about, Master Shelton," he said; "round by the bridge, for your life! Keep a sure man fifty paces afore you, to draw shots; and go softly till y'are past the wood. If the rogues fall upon you, ride for't; ye will do naught by standing. And keep ever forward, Master Shelton; turn me not back again, an ye love your life; there is no help in Tunstall, mind ye that. And now, since ye go to the great wars about the king, and I continue to dwell here in extreme jeopardy of my life, and the saints alone can certify if we shall meet again below, I give you my last counsels now at your riding. Keep an eye on Sir Daniel; he is unsure. Put not your trust in the jack-priest; he intendeth not amiss, but doth the will of others; it is a hand-gun for Sir Daniel! Get your good lordship where ye go; make you strong friends; look to it. And think ever a paternoster-while on Bennet Hatch. There are worse rogues afoot than Bennet. So, God-speed!"

"And Heaven be with you, Bennet!" returned Dick. "Ye were a good friend to meward, and so I shall say ever."

"And, look ye, master," added Hatch, with a certain embarrassment, "if this Amend-All should get a shaft into me, ye might, mayhap, lay out a gold mark or mayhap a pound for my poor soul; for it is like to go stiff with me in purgatory."

"Ye shall have your will of it, Bennet," answered Dick. "But, what cheer, man! we shall meet again, where ye shall have more need of ale than masses."

"The saints so grant it, Master Dick!" returned the other. "But here comes Sir Oliver. An he were as quick with the long-bow as with the pen, he would be a brave man-at-arms."

Sir Oliver gave Dick a sealed packet, with this superscription: "To my ryght worchypful master. Sir Daniel Brackley, knyght, be thys delyvered in haste."

And Dick, putting it in the bosom of his jacket, gave the word and set forth westward up the village.

BOOK I

THE TWO LADS

CHAPTER I

AT THE SIGN OF THE SUN IN KETTLEY

Sir Daniel and his men lay in and about Kettley that night, warmly quartered and well patrolled. But the Knight of Tunstall was one who never rested from money-getting; and even now, when he was on the brink of an adventure which should make or mar him, he was up an hour after midnight to squeeze poor neighbours. He was one who trafficked greatly in disputed inheritances; it was his way to buy out the most unlikely claimant, and then, by the favour he curried with great lords about the king, procure unjust decisions in his favour; or, if that was too roundabout, to seize the disputed manor by force of arms, and rely on his influence and Sir Oliver's cunning in the law to hold what he had snatched. Kettley was one such place; it had come very lately into his clutches; he still met with opposition from the tenants; and it was to overawe discontent that he had led his troops that way.

By two in the morning, Sir Daniel sat in the inn room, close by the fireside, for it was cold at that hour among the fens of Kettley. By his elbow stood a pottle of spiced ale. He had taken off his visored headpiece, and sat with his bald head and thin, dark visage resting on one hand, wrapped warmly in a sanguine-coloured cloak. At the lower end of the room about a dozen of his men stood sentry over the door or lay asleep on benches; and somewhat nearer hand, a young lad, apparently of twelve or thirteen, was stretched in a mantle on the floor. The host of the Sun stood before the great man.

"Now, mark me, mine host," Sir Daniel said, "follow but mine orders, and I shall be your good lord ever. I must have good men for head boroughs, and I will have Adam-a-More high constable; see to it narrowly. If other men be chosen, it shall avail you nothing; rather it shall be found to your sore cost. For those that have paid rent to Walsingham I shall take good measure — you among the rest, mine host."

"Good knight," said the host, "I will swear upon the cross of Holywood I did but pay to Walsingham upon compulsion. Nay, bully knight, I love not the rogue Walsinghams; they were as poor as thieves, bully knight. Give me a great lord like you. Nay; ask me among the neighbours, I am stout for Brackley."

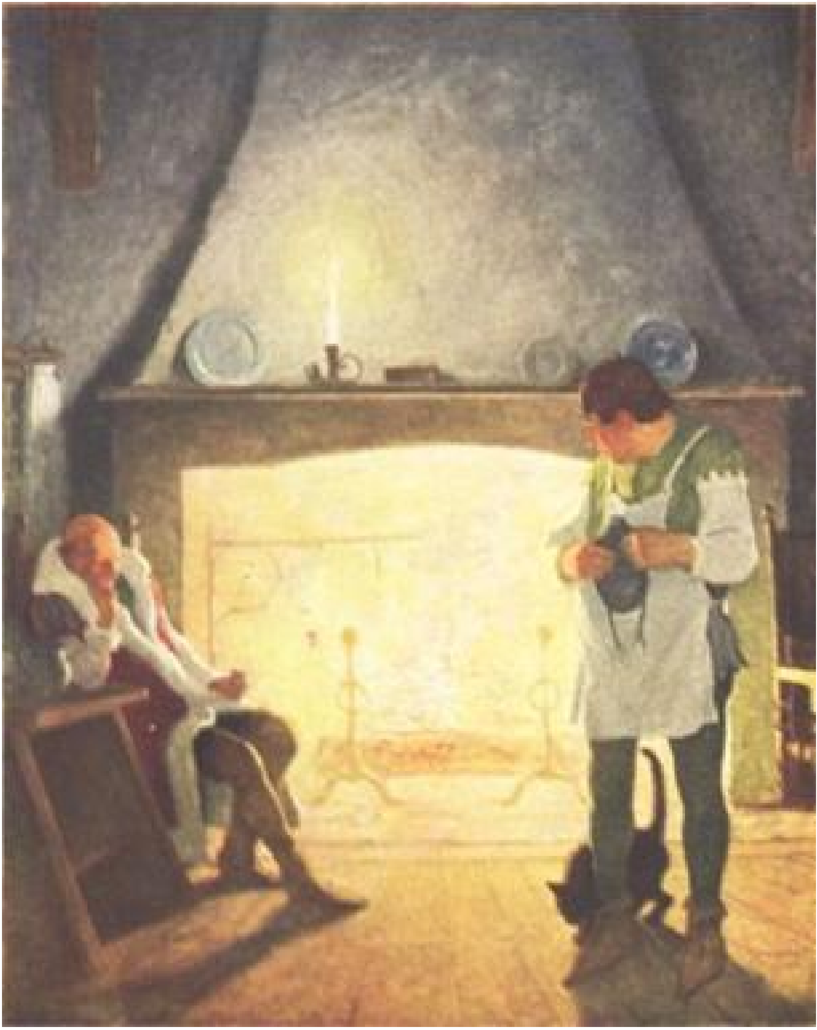
"It may be," said Sir Daniel, drily. "Ye shall then pay twice."

The innkeeper made a horrid grimace; but this was a piece of bad luck that might readily befall a tenant in these unruly times, and he was perhaps glad to make his peace so easily.

"Bring up yon fellow, Selden!" cried the knight.

And one of his retainers led up a poor, cringing old man, as pale as a candle, and all shaking with the fen fever.

"Sirrah," said Sir Daniel, "your name?"



"Now, mark me, mine host," Sir Daniel said, "follow but mine orders, and I shall be your good lord ever"

"An't please your worship," replied the man, "my name is Condall — Condall of Shoreby, at your good worship's pleasure."

"I have heard you ill reported on," returned the knight. "Ye deal in treason, rogue; ye trudge the country leasing; y'are heavily suspicioned of the death of severals. How, fellow, are ye so bold? But I will bring you down."

"Right honourable and my reverend lord," the man cried, "here is some hodge-podge, saving your good presence. I am but a poor private man, and have hurt none."

"The under-sheriff did report of you most vilely," said the knight. "'Seize me,' saith he, 'that Tyndal of Shoreby.'"

"Condall, my good lord; Condall is my poor name," said the unfortunate.

"Condall or Tyndal, it is all one," replied Sir Daniel, coolly. "For, by my sooth, y'are here, and I do mightily suspect your honesty. If ye would save your neck, write me swiftly an obligation for twenty pound."

"For twenty pound, my good lord!" cried Condall. "Here is midsummer madness! My whole estate amounteth not to seventy shillings."

"Condall or Tyndal," returned Sir Daniel, grinning, "I will run my peril of that loss. Write me down twenty, and when I have recovered all I may, I will be good lord to you, and pardon you the rest."

"Alas! my good lord, it may not be; I have no skill to write," said Condall.

"Well-a-day!" returned the knight. "Here, then, is no remedy. Yet I would fain have spared you, Tyndal, had my conscience suffered. Selden, take me this old shrew softly to the nearest elm, and hang me him tenderly by the neck, where I may see him at my riding. Fare ye well, good Master Condall, dear Master Tyndal; y'are post-haste for Paradise; fare ye then well!"

"Nay, my right pleasant lord," replied Condall, forcing an obsequious smile, "an ye be so masterful, as doth right well become you, I will even, with all my poor skill, do your good bidding."

"Friend," quoth Sir Daniel, "ye will now write two-score. Go to! y'are too cunning for a livelihood of seventy shillings. Selden, see him write me this in good form, and have it duly witnessed."

And Sir Daniel, who was a very merry knight, none merrier in England, took a drink of his mulled ale, and lay back, smiling.

Meanwhile, the boy upon the floor began to stir, and presently sat up and looked about him with a scare.

"Hither," said Sir Daniel; and as the other rose at his command and came slowly towards him, he leaned back and laughed outright. "By the rood!" he cried, "a sturdy boy!"

The lad flushed crimson with anger, and darted a look of hate out of his dark eyes. Now that he was on his legs, it was more difficult to make certain of his age. His face looked somewhat older in expression, but it was as smooth as a young child's; and in bone and body he was unusually slender, and somewhat awkward of gait.

"Ye have called me, Sir Daniel," he said. "Was it to laugh at my poor plight?"

"Nay, now, let laugh," said the knight. "Good shrew, let laugh, I pray you. An ye could see yourself, I warrant ye would laugh the first."

"Well," cried the lad, flushing, "ye shall answer this when ye answer for the other. Laugh while yet ye may!"

"Nay, now, good cousin," replied Sir Daniel, with some earnestness, "think not that I mock at you, except in mirth, as between kinsfolk and singular friends. I will make you a marriage of a thousand pounds, go to! and cherish you exceedingly. I took you, indeed, roughly, as the time demanded; but from henceforth I shall ungrudgingly maintain and cheerfully serve you. Ye shall be Mrs. Shelton — Lady Shelton, by my troth! for the lad promiseth bravely. Tut! ye will not shy for honest laughter; it purgeth melancholy. They are no rogues who laugh, good cousin. Good mine host, lay me a meal now for my cousin, Master John. Sit ye down, sweetheart, and eat."

"Nay," said Master John, "I will break no bread. Since ye force me to this sin, I will fast for my soul's interest. But, good mine host, I pray you of courtesy give me a cup of fair water; I shall be much beholden to your courtesy indeed."

"Ye shall have a dispensation, go to!" cried the knight. "Shalt be well shriven, by my faith! Content you, then, and eat."

But the lad was obstinate, drank a cup of water, and, once more wrapping himself closely in his mantle, sat in a far corner, brooding.

In an hour or two, there rose a stir in the village of sentries challenging and the clatter of arms and horses; and then a troop drew up by the inn door, and Richard Shelton, splashed with mud, presented himself upon the threshold.

"Save you, Sir Daniel," he said.

"How! Dickie Shelton!" cried the knight; and at the mention of Dick's name the other lad looked curiously across. "What maketh Bennet Hatch?"

"Please you, sir knight, to take cognisance of this packet from Sir Oliver, wherein are all things fully stated," answered Richard, presenting the priest's letter. "And please you farther, ye were best make all speed to Risingham; for on the way hither we encountered one riding furiously with letters, and by his report, my Lord of Risingham was sore bested, and lacked exceedingly your presence."

"How say you? Sore bested?" returned the knight. "Nay, then, we will make speed sitting down, good Richard. As the world goes in this poor realm of England, he that rides softliest rides surest. Delay, they say, begetteth peril; but it is rather this itch of doing that undoes men; mark it, Dick. But let me see, first, what cattle ye have brought. Selden, a link here at the door!"

And Sir Daniel strode forth into the village street, and, by the red glow of a torch, inspected his new troops. He was an unpopular neighbour and an unpopular master; but as a leader in war he was well beloved by those who rode behind his pennant. His dash, his proved courage, his forethought for the soldiers' comfort, even his rough gibes, were all to the taste of the bold blades in jack and salet.

"Nay, by the rood!" he cried, "what poor dogs are these? Here be some as crooked as a bow, and some as lean as a spear. Friends, ye shall ride in the front of the battle; I can spare you, friends. Mark me this old villain on the piebald! A two-year mutton riding on a hog would look more soldierly! Ha! Clipsby, are ye there, old rat? Y'are a man I could lose with a good heart; ye shall go in front of all, with a bull's eye painted on your jack, to be the better butt for archery; sirrah, ye shall show me the way."

"I will show you any way, Sir Daniel, but the way to change sides," returned Clipsby, sturdily.

Sir Daniel laughed a guffaw.

"Why, well said!" he cried. "Hast a shrewd tongue in thy mouth, go to! I will forgive you for that merry word. Selden, see them fed, both man and brute."

The knight re-entered the inn.

"Now, friend Dick," he said, "fall to. Here is good ale and bacon. Eat, while that I read."

Sir Daniel opened the packet, and as he read his brow darkened. When he had done he sat a little, musing. Then he looked sharply at his ward.

"Dick," said he, "y' have seen this penny rhyme?"

The lad replied in the affirmative.

"It bears your father's name," continued the knight; "and our poor shrew of a parson is, by some mad soul, accused of slaying him."

"He did most eagerly deny it," answered Dick.

"He did?" cried the knight, very sharply. "Heed him not. He has a loose tongue; he babbles like a jack-sparrow. Some day, when I may find the leisure, Dick, I will myself more fully inform you of these matters. There was one Duckworth shrewdly blamed for it; but the times were troubled, and there was no justice to be got."

"It befell at the Moat House?" Dick ventured, with a beating at his heart.

"It befell between the Moat House and Holywood," replied Sir Daniel, calmly; but he shot a covert glance, black with suspicion, at Dick's face. "And now," added the knight, "speed you with your meal; ye shall return to Tunstall with a line from me."

Dick's face fell sorely.

"Prithee, Sir Daniel," he cried, "send one of the villains! I beseech you let me to the battle. I can strike a stroke, I promise you."

"I misdoubt it not," replied Sir Daniel, sitting down to write. "But here, Dick, is no honour to be won. I lie in Kettley till I have sure tidings of the war, and then ride to join me with the conqueror. Cry not on cowardice; it is but wisdom, Dick; for this poor realm so tosseth with rebellion, and the king's name and custody so changeth hands, that no man may be certain of the morrow. Toss-pot and Shuttle-wit run in, but my Lord Good-Counsel sits o' one side, waiting."

With that, Sir Daniel, turning his back to Dick, and quite at the farther end of the long table, began to write his letter, with his mouth on one side, for this business of the Black Arrow stuck sorely in his throat.

Meanwhile, young Shelton was going on heartily enough with his breakfast, when he felt a touch upon his arm, and a very soft voice whispering in his ear.

"Make not a sign, I do beseech you," said the voice, "but of your charity tell me the straight way to Holywood. Beseech you, now, good boy, comfort a poor soul in peril and extreme distress, and set me so far forth upon the way to my repose."

"Take the path by the windmill," answered Dick, in the same tone; "it will bring you to Till Ferry; there inquire again."

And without turning his head, he fell again to eating. But with the tail of his eye he caught a glimpse of the young lad called Master John stealthily creeping from the room.

"Why," thought Dick, "he is as young as I. 'Good boy' doth he call me? An I had known, I should have seen the varlet hanged ere I had told him. Well, if he goes through the fen, I may come up with him and pull his ears."

Half an hour later, Sir Daniel gave Dick the letter, and bade him speed to the Moat House. And, again, some half an hour after Dick's departure, a messenger came, in hot haste, from my Lord of Risingham.

"Sir Daniel," the messenger said, "ye lose great honour, by my sooth! The fight began again this morning ere the dawn, and we have beaten their van and scattered their right wing. Only the main battle standeth fast. An we had your fresh men, we should tilt you them all into the river. What, sir knight! Will ye be the last? It stands not with your good credit."

"Nay," cried the knight, "I was but now upon the march. Selden, sound me the tucket. Sir, I am with you on the instant. It is not two hours since the more part of my command came in, sir messenger. What would ye have? Spurring is good meat, but yet it killed the charger. Bustle, boys!"

By this time the tucket was sounding cheerily in the morning, and from all sides Sir Daniel's men poured into the main street and formed before the inn. They had slept upon their arms, with chargers saddled, and in ten minutes five-score men-at-arms and archers, cleanly equipped and briskly disciplined, stood ranked and ready. The chief part were in Sir Daniel's livery, murrey and blue, which gave the greater show to their array. The best armed rode first; and away out of sight, at the tail of the column, came the sorry reinforcement of the night before. Sir Daniel looked with pride along the line.

"Here be the lads to serve you in a pinch," he said.

"They are pretty men, indeed," replied the messenger. "It but augments my sorrow that ye had not marched the earlier."

"Well," said the knight, "what would ye? The beginning of a feast and the end of a fray, sir messenger"; and he mounted into his saddle. "Why! how now!" he cried. "John! Joanna! Nay, by the sacred rood! where is she? Host, where is that girl?"

"Girl, Sir Daniel?" cried the landlord. "Nay, sir, I saw no girl."

"Boy, then, dotard!" cried the knight. "Could ye not see it was a wench? She in the murrey-coloured mantle — she that broke her fast with water, rogue — where is she?"

"Nay, the saints bless us! Master John, ye called him," said the host. "Well, I thought none evil. He is gone. I saw him — her — I saw her in the stable a good hour agone; 'a was saddling a grey horse."

"Now, by the rood!" cried Sir Daniel, "the wench was worth five hundred pound to me and more."

"Sir knight," observed the messenger, with bitterness, "while that ye are here, roaring for five hundred pounds, the realm of England is elsewhere being lost and won."

"It is well said," replied Sir Daniel. "Selden, fall me out with six cross-bowmen; hunt me her down. I care not what it cost; but, at my returning, let me find her at the Moat House. Be it upon your head. And now, sir messenger, we march."

And the troop broke into a good trot, and Selden and his six men were left behind upon the street of Kettley, with the staring villagers.

CHAPTER II

IN THE FEN

It was near six in the May morning when Dick began to ride down into the fen upon his homeward way. The sky was all blue; the jolly wind blew loud and steady; the windmill sails were spinning; and the willows over all the fen rippling and whitening like a field of corn. He had been all night in the saddle, but his heart was good and his body sound, and he rode right merrily.

The path went down and down into the marsh, till he lost sight of all the neighbouring landmarks but Kettley windmill on the knoll behind him, and the extreme top of Tunstall Forest far before. On either hand there were great fields of blowing reeds and willows, pools of water shaking in the wind, and treacherous bogs, as green as emerald, to tempt and to betray the traveller. The path lay almost straight through the morass. It was already very ancient; its foundation had been laid by Roman soldiery; in the lapse of ages much of it had sunk, and every here and there, for a few hundred yards, it lay submerged below the stagnant waters of the fen.

About a mile from Kettley, Dick came to one such break in the plain line of causeway, where the reeds and willows grew dispersedly like little islands and confused the eye. The gap, besides, was more than usually long; it was a place where any stranger might come readily to mischief; and Dick bethought him, with something like a pang, of the lad whom he had so imperfectly directed. As for himself, one look backward to where the windmill sails were turning black against the blue of heaven — one look forward to the high ground of Tunstall Forest, and he was sufficiently directed and held straight on, the water washing to his horse's knees, as safe as on a highway.

Half-way across, and when he had already sighted the path rising high and dry upon the farther side, he was aware of a great splashing on his right, and saw a grey horse, sunk to its belly in the mud, and still spasmodically struggling. Instantly, as though it had divined the neighbourhood of help, the poor beast began to neigh most piercingly. It rolled, meanwhile, a bloodshot eye, insane with terror; and as it sprawled wallowing in the quag, clouds of stinging insects rose and buzzed about it in the air.

"Alack!" thought Dick, "can the poor lad have perished? There is his horse, for certain — a brave grey! Nay, comrade, if thou criest to me so piteously, I will do all man can to help thee. Shalt not lie there to drown by inches!"

And he made ready his cross-bow, and put a quarrel through the creature's head.

Dick rode on after this act of rugged mercy, somewhat sobered in spirit, and looking closely about him for any sign of his less happy predecessor in the way.

"I would I had dared to tell him further," he thought; "for I fear he has miscarried in the slough."

And just as he was so thinking, a voice cried upon his name from the causeway-side, and, looking over his shoulder, he saw the lad's face peering from a clump of reeds.

"Are ye there?" he said, reining in. "Ye lay so close among the reeds that I had passed you by. I saw your horse bemired, and put him from his agony; which, by my sooth! an ye had been a more merciful rider, ye had done yourself. But come forth out of your hiding. Here be none to trouble you."

"Nay, good boy, I have no arms, nor skill to use them if I had," replied the other, stepping forth upon the pathway.

"Why call me 'boy'?" cried Dick. "Y'are not, I trow, the elder of us twain."

"Good Master Shelton," said the other, "prithee forgive me. I have none the least intention to offend. Rather I would in every way beseech your gentleness and favour, for I am now worse bested than ever, having lost my way, my cloak, and my poor horse. To have a riding-rod and spurs, and never a horse to sit upon! And before all," he added, looking ruefully upon his clothes — "before all, to be so sorrily besmirched!"

"Tut!" cried Dick. "Would ye mind a ducking? Blood of wound or dust of travel — that's a man's adornment."

"Nay, then, I like him better plain," observed the lad. "But, prithee, how shall I do? Prithee, good Master Richard, help me with your good counsel. If I come not safe to Holywood, I am undone."

"Nay," said Dick, dismounting, "I will give more than counsel. Take my horse, and I will run awhile, and when I am weary we shall change again, that so, riding and running, both may go the speedier."

So the change was made, and they went forward as briskly as they durst on the uneven causeway, Dick with his hand upon the other's knee.

"How call ye your name?" asked Dick.

"Call me John Matcham," replied the lad.

"And what make ye to Holywood?" Dick continued.

"I seek sanctuary from a man that would oppress me," was the answer. "The good Abbot of Holywood is a strong pillar to the weak."

"And how came ye with Sir Daniel, Master Matcham?" pursued Dick.

"Nay," cried the other, "by the abuse of force! He hath taken me by violence from my own place; dressed me in these weeds; ridden with me till my heart was sick; gibed me till I could ‘a’ wept; and when certain of my friends pursued, thinking to have me back, claps me in the rear to stand their shot! I was even grazed in the right foot, and walk but lamely. Nay, there shall come a day between us; he shall smart for all!”

“Would ye shoot at the moon with a hand-gun?” said Dick. “‘Tis a valiant knight, and hath a hand of iron. An he guessed I had made or meddled with your flight, it would go sore with me.”

“Ay, poor boy,” returned the other, “y’are his ward, I know it. By the same token, so am I, or so he saith; or else he hath bought my marriage — I wot not rightly which; but it is some handle to oppress me by.”

“Boy again!” said Dick.

“Nay, then, shall I call you girl, good Richard?” asked Matcham.

“Never a girl for me,” returned Dick. “I do abjure the crew of them!”

“Ye speak boyishly,” said the other. “Ye think more of them than ye pretend.”

“Not I,” said Dick, stoutly. “They come not in my mind. A plague of them, say I! Give me to hunt and to fight and to feast, and to live with jolly foresters. I never heard of a maid yet that was for any service, save one only; and she, poor shrew, was burned for a witch and the wearing of men’s clothes in spite of nature.”

Master Matcham crossed himself with fervour, and appeared to pray.

“What make ye?” Dick inquired.

“I pray for her spirit,” answered the other, with a somewhat troubled voice.

“For a witch’s spirit?” Dick cried. “But pray for her, an ye list; she was the best wench in Europe, was this Joan of Arc. Old Appleyard the archer ran from her, he said, as if she had been Mahoun. Nay, she was a brave wench.”

“Well, but, good Master Richard,” resumed Matcham, “an ye like maids so little, y’are no true natural man; for God made them twain by intention, and brought true love into the world, to be man’s hope and woman’s comfort.”

“Faugh!” said Dick. “Y’are a milk-sopping baby, so to harp on women. An ye think I be no true man, get down upon the path, and whether at fists, backsword, or bow and arrow, I will prove my manhood on your body.”

“Nay, I am no fighter,” said Matcham, eagerly. “I mean no tittle of offence. I meant but pleasantry. And if I talk of women, it is because I heard ye were to marry.”

"I to marry!" Dick exclaimed. "Well, it is the first I hear of it. And with whom was I to marry?"

"One Joan Sedley," replied Matcham, colouring. "It was Sir Daniel's doing; he hath money to gain upon both sides; and, indeed, I have heard the poor wench bemoaning herself pitifully of the match. It seems she is of your mind, or else distasted to the bridegroom."

"Well! marriage is like death, it comes to all," said Dick, with resignation. "And she bemoaned herself? I pray ye now, see there how shuttle-witted are these girls: to bemoan herself before that she had seen me! Do I bemoan myself? Not I. An I be to marry, I will marry dry-eyed! But if ye know her, prithee, of what favour is she? fair or foul? And is she shrewish or pleasant?"

"Nay, what matters it?" said Matcham. "An y'are to marry, ye can but marry. What matters foul or fair? These be but toys. Y'are no milksop, Master Richard; ye will wed with dry eyes, anyhow."

"It is well said," replied Shelton. "Little I reck."

"Your lady wife is like to have a pleasant lord," said Matcham.

"She shall have the lord Heaven made her for," returned Dick. "I trow there be worse as well as better."

"Ah, the poor wench!" cried the other.

"And why so poor?" asked Dick.

"To wed a man of wood," replied his companion. "O me, for a wooden husband!"

"I think I be a man of wood, indeed," said Dick, "to trudge afoot the while you ride my horse; but it is good wood, I trow."

"Good Dick, forgive me," cried the other. "Nay, y'are the best heart in England; I but laughed. Forgive me now, sweet Dick."

"Nay, no fool words," returned Dick, a little embarrassed by his companion's warmth. "No harm is done. I am not touchy, praise the saints."

And at that moment the wind, which was blowing straight behind them as they went, brought them the rough flourish of Sir Daniel's trumpeter.

"Hark!" said Dick, "the tucket soundeth."

"Ay," said Matcham, "they have found my flight, and now I am unhorsed!" and he became pale as death.

"Nay, what cheer!" returned Dick. "Y' have a long start, and we are near the ferry. And it is I, methinks, that am unhorsed."

"Alack, I shall be taken!" cried the fugitive. "Dick, kind Dick, beseech ye help me but a little!"

"Why, now, what aileth thee?" said Dick. "Methinks I help you very patently. But my heart is sorry for so spiritless a fellow! And see ye here, John Matcham — sith John Matcham is your name — I, Richard Shelton, tide what betideth, come what may, will see you safe in

Holywood. The saints so do to me again if I default you. Come, pick me up a good heart, Sir Whiteface. The way betters here; spur me the horse. Go faster! faster! Nay, mind not for me; I can run like a deer."

So, with the horse trotting hard, and Dick running easily alongside, they crossed the remainer of the fen, and came out upon the banks of the river by the ferryman's hut.

CHAPTER III

THE FEN FERRY

The river Till was a wide, sluggish, clayey water, oozing out of fens, and in this part of its course it strained among some score of willow-covered, marshy islets.

It was a dingy stream; but upon this bright, spirited morning everything was become beautiful. The wind and the martens broke it up into innumerable dimples; and the reflection of the sky was scattered over all the surface in crumbs of smiling blue.

A creek ran up to meet the path, and close under the bank the ferryman's hut lay snugly. It was of wattle and clay, and the grass grew green upon the roof.

Dick went to the door and opened it. Within, upon a foul old russet cloak, the ferryman lay stretched and shivering; a great hulk of a man, but lean and shaken by the country fever.

"Hey, Master Shelton," he said, "be ye for the ferry? Ill times, ill times! Look to yourself. There is a fellowship abroad. Ye were better turn round on your two heels and try the bridge."

"Nay; time's in the saddle," answered Dick. "Time will ride, Hugh Ferryman. I am hot in haste."

"A wilful man!" returned the ferryman, rising. "An ye win safe to the Moat House, y' have done lucky; but I say no more." And then catching sight of Matcham, "Who be this?" he asked, as he paused, blinking, on the threshold of his cabin.

"It is my kinsman, Master Matcham," answered Dick.

"Give ye good day, good ferryman," said Matcham, who had dismounted, and now came forward, leading the horse. "Launch me your boat, I prithee; we are sore in haste."

The gaunt ferryman continued staring.

"By the mass!" he cried at length, and laughed with open throat.

Matcham coloured to his neck and winced; and Dick, with an angry countenance, put his hand on the lout's shoulder.

"How now, churl!" he cried. "Fall to thy business, and leave mocking thy betters."

Hugh Ferryman grumblingly undid his boat, and shoved it a little forth into the deep water. Then Dick led in the horse, and Matcham followed.

"Ye be mortal small made, master," said Hugh, with a wide grin; "something o' the wrong model, belike. Nay, Master Shelton, I am for you," he added, getting to his oars. "A cat may look at a king. I did but take a shot of the eye at Master Matcham."

"Sirrah, no more words," said Dick. "Bend me your back."

They were by that time at the mouth of the creek, and the view opened up and down the river. Everywhere it was enclosed with islands. Clay banks were falling in, willows nodding, reeds waving, martens dipping and piping. There was no sign of man in the labyrinth of waters.

"My master," said the ferryman, keeping the boat steady with one oar, "I have a shrew guess that John-a-Fenne is on the island. He bears me a black grudge to all Sir Daniel's. How if I turned me up stream and landed you an arrow-flight above the path? Ye were best not meddle with John Fenne."

"How, then, is he of this company?" asked Dick.

"Nay, mum is the word," said Hugh. "But I would go up water, Dick. How if Master Matcham came by an arrow?" and he laughed again.

"Be it so, Hugh," answered Dick.

"Look ye, then," pursued Hugh. "Sith it shall so be, unsling me your cross-bow — so: now make it ready — good; place me a quarrel. Ay, keep it so, and look upon me grimly."

"What meaneth this?" asked Dick.

"Why, my master, if I steal you across, it must be under force or fear," replied the ferryman; "for else, if John Fenne got wind of it, he were like to prove my most distressful neighbour."

"Do these churls ride so roughly?" Dick inquired. "Do they command Sir Daniel's own ferry?"

"Nay," whispered the ferryman, winking. "Mark me! Sir Daniel shall down. His time is out. He shall down. Mum!" And he bent over his oars.

They pulled a long way up the river, turned the tail of an island, and came softly down a narrow channel next the opposite bank. Then Hugh held water in mid-stream.

"I must land you here among the willows," he said.

"Here is no path but willow swamps and quagmires," answered Dick.

"Master Shelton," replied Hugh, "I dare not take ye nearer down, for your own sake now. He watcheth me the ferry, lying on his bow. All that go by and owe Sir Daniel good-will, he shooteth down like rabbits. I heard him swear it by the rood. An I had not known you of old days — ay, and from so high upward — I would 'a' let you go on; but for old days' remembrance, and because ye had this toy with you that's not fit for wounds or warfare, I did risk my two poor ears to have you over whole. Content you; I can no more, on my salvation!"

Hugh was still speaking, lying on his oars, when there came a great shout from among the willows on the island, and sounds followed as of a strong man breasting roughly through the wood.

“A murrain!” cried Hugh. “He was on the upper island all the while!” He pulled straight for shore. “Threat me with your bow, good Dick; threat me with it plain,” he added. “I have tried to save your skins, save you mine!”

The boat ran into a tough thicket of willows with a crash. Matcham, pale, but steady and alert, at a sign from Dick, ran along the thwarts and leaped ashore; Dick, taking the horse by the bridle, sought to follow, but what with the animal’s bulk, and what with the closeness of the thicket, both stuck fast. The horse neighed and trampled; and the boat, which was swinging in an eddy, came on and off and pitched with violence.

“It may not be, Hugh; here is no landing,” cried Dick; but he still struggled valiantly with the obstinate thicket and the startled animal.

A tall man appeared upon the shore of the island, a long-bow in his hand. Dick saw him for an instant, with the corner of his eye, bending the bow with a great effort, his face crimson with hurry.

“Who goes?” he shouted. “Hugh, who goes?”

“‘Tis Master Shelton, John,” replied the ferryman.

“Stand, Dick Shelton!” bawled the man upon the island. “Ye shall have no hurt, upon the rood! Stand! Back out, Hugh Ferryman.”

Dick cried a taunting answer.

“Nay, then, ye shall go afoot,” returned the man; and he let drive an arrow.

The horse, struck by the shaft, lashed out in agony and terror; the boat capsized, and the next moment all were struggling in the eddies of the river.

When Dick came up, he was within a yard of the bank; and before his eyes were clear, his hand had closed on something firm and strong that instantly began to drag him forward. It was the riding-rod, that Matcham, crawling forth upon an overhanging willow, had opportunely thrust into his grasp.

“By the mass!” cried Dick, as he was helped ashore, “that makes a life I owe you. I swim like a cannon-ball.” And he turned instantly towards the island.

Midway over, Hugh Ferryman was swimming with his upturned boat, while John-a-Fenne, furious at the ill-fortune of his shot, bawled to him to hurry.

“Come, Jack,” said Shelton, “run for it! Ere Hugh can hale his barge across, or the pair of ‘em can get it righted, we may be out of cry.”

And adding example to his words, he began to run, dodging among the willows, and in marshy places leaping from tussock to tussock. He had no time to look for his direction; all he could do was to turn his back upon the river, and put all his heart to running.

Presently, however, the ground began to rise, which showed him he was still in the right way, and soon after they came forth upon a slope of solid turf, where elms began to mingle with the willows.

But here Matcham, who had been dragging far into the rear, threw himself fairly down.

"Leave me, Dick!" he cried, pantingly; "I can no more."

Dick turned, and came back to where his companion lay.

"Nay, Jack, leave thee!" he cried. "That were a knave's trick, to be sure, when ye risked a shot and a ducking, ay, and a drowning too, to save my life. Drowning, in sooth; for why I did not pull you in along with me, the saints alone can tell!"

"Nay," said Matcham, "I would 'a' saved us both, good Dick, for I can swim."

"Can ye so?" cried Dick, with open eyes. It was the one manly accomplishment of which he was himself incapable. In the order of the things that he admired, next to having killed a man in single fight came swimming. "Well," he said, "here is a lesson to despise no man. I promised to care for you as far as Holywood, and, by the rood, Jack, y'are more capable to care for me."

"Well, Dick, we're friends now," said Matcham.

"Nay, I never was unfriends," answered Dick. "Y'are a brave lad in your way, albeit something of a milksop, too. I never met your like before this day. But, prithee, fetch back your breath, and let us on. Here is no place for chatter."

"My foot hurts shrewdly," said Matcham.

"Nay, I had forgot your foot," returned Dick. "Well, we must go the gentlier. I would I knew rightly where we were. I have clean lost the path; yet that may be for the better, too. An they watch the ferry, they watch the path, belike, as well. I would Sir Daniel were back with two-score men; he would sweep me these rascals as the wind sweeps leaves. Come, Jack, lean ye on my shoulder, ye poor shrew. Nay, y'are not tall enough. What age are ye, for a wager? — twelve?"

"Nay, I am sixteen," said Matcham.

"Y'are poorly grown to height, then," answered Dick. "But take my hand. We shall go softly, never fear. I owe you a life; I am a good repayer, Jack, of good or evil."

They began to go forward up the slope.

"We must hit the road, early or late," continued Dick; "and then for a fresh start. By the mass! but y' 'ave a rickety hand, Jack. If I had a hand like that, I would think shame. I tell you," he went on, with a sudden chuckle, "I swear by the mass I believe Hugh Ferryman took you for a maid."

"Nay, never!" cried the other, colouring high.

"A' did, though, for a wager!" Dick exclaimed. "Small blame to him.

Ye look liker maid than man; and I tell you more — y'are a strange-looking rogue for a boy; but for a hussy, Jack, ye would be right fair — ye would. Ye would be well favoured for a wench."

"Well," said Matcham, "ye know right well that I am none."

"Nay, I know that; I do but jest," said Dick. "Ye'll be a man before your mother, Jack. What cheer, my bully! Ye shall strike shrewd strokes. Now, which, I marvel, of you or me, shall be first knighted, Jack? for knighted I shall be, or die for't. 'Sir Richard Shelton, Knight': it soundeth bravely. But 'Sir John Matcham' soundeth not amiss."

"Prithee, Dick, stop till I drink," said the other, pausing where a little clear spring welled out of the slope into a gravelled basin no bigger than a pocket. "And O, Dick, if I might come by anything to eat! — my very heart aches with hunger."

"Why, fool, did ye not eat at Kettley?" asked Dick.

"I had made a vow — it was a sin I had been led into," stammered Matcham; "but now, if it were but dry bread, I would eat it greedily."

"Sit ye, then, and eat," said Dick, "while that I scout a little forward for the road." And he took a wallet from his girdle, wherein were bread and pieces of dry bacon, and, while Matcham fell heartily to, struck farther forth among the trees.

A little beyond there was a dip in the ground, where a streamlet soaked among dead leaves; and beyond that, again, the trees were better grown and stood wider, and oak and beech began to take the place of willow and elm. The continued tossing and pouring of the wind among the leaves sufficiently concealed the sounds of his footsteps on the mast; it was for the ear what a moonless night is to the eye; but for all that Dick went cautiously, slipping from one big trunk to another, and looking sharply about him as he went. Suddenly a doe passed like a shadow through the underwood in front of him, and he paused, disgusted at the chance. This part of the wood had been certainly deserted, but now that the poor deer had run, she was like a messenger he should have sent before him to announce his coming; and instead of pushing farther, he turned him to the nearest well-grown tree, and rapidly began to climb.

Luck had served him well. The oak on which he had mounted was one of the tallest in that quarter of the wood, and easily out-topped its neighbours by a fathom and a half; and when Dick had clambered into the topmost fork and clung there, swinging dizzily in the great wind, he saw behind him the whole fenny plain as far as Kettley, and the Till wandering among woody islets, and in front of him, the white line of highroad winding through the forest. The boat had been righted — it was even now midway on the ferry. Beyond that there was no sign of man, nor aught moving but the wind. He was about to descend, when, taking a last view, his eye lit upon a string of moving points about the middle of the fen. Plainly a small troop was threading the causeway, and that at a good pace; and this gave him some concern as he shinned vigorously down the trunk and returned across the wood for his companion.

CHAPTER IV

A GREENWOOD COMPANY

Matcham was well rested and revived; and the two lads, winged by what Dick had seen, hurried through the remainder of the outwood, crossed the road in safety, and began to mount into the high ground of TunstallForest. The trees grew more and more in groves, with healthy places in between, sandy, gorsy, and dotted with old yews. The ground became more and more uneven, full of pits and hillocks. And with every step of the ascent the wind still blew the shriller, and the trees bent before the gusts like fishing-rods.

They had just entered one of the clearings, when Dick suddenly clapped down upon his face among the brambles, and began to crawl slowly backward towards the shelter of the grove. Matcham, in great bewilderment, for he could see no reason for this flight, still imitated his companion's course; and it was not until they had gained the harbour of a thicket that he turned and begged him to explain.

For all reply, Dick pointed with his finger.

At the far end of the clearing, a fir grew high above the neighbouring wood, and planted its black shock of foliage clear against the sky. For about fifty feet above the ground the trunk grew straight and solid like a column. At that level, it split into two massive boughs; and in the fork, like a mastheaded seaman, there stood a man in a green tabard, spying far and wide. The sun glistened upon his hair; with one hand he shaded his eyes to look abroad, and he kept slowly rolling his head from side to side, with the regularity of a machine.

The lads exchanged glances.

"Let us try to the left," said Dick. "We had near fallen foully, Jack."

Ten minutes afterwards they struck into a beaten path.

"Here is a piece of forest that I know not," Dick remarked. "Where goeth me this track?"

"Let us even try," said Matcham.

A few yards farther, the path came to the top of a ridge and began to go down abruptly into a cup-shaped hollow. At the foot, out of a thick wood of flowering hawthorn, two or three roofless gables, blackened as if by fire, and a single tall chimney marked the ruins of a house.

"What may this be?" whispered Matcham.

"Nay, by the mass, I know not," answered Dick. "I am all at sea. Let us go warily."

With beating hearts, they descended through the hawthorns. Here and there, they passed signs of recent cultivation; fruit trees and pot herbs ran wild among the thicket; a sun-dial had fallen in the grass; it seemed they were treading what once had been a garden. Yet a little farther and they came forth before the ruins of the house.

It had been a pleasant mansion and a strong. A dry ditch was dug deep about it; but it was now choked with masonry, and bridged by a fallen rafter. The two farther walls still stood, the sun shining through their empty windows; but the remainder of the building had collapsed, and now lay in a great cairn of ruin, grimed with fire. Already in the interior a few plants were springing green among the chinks.

"Now I bethink me," whispered Dick, "this must be Grimstone. It was a hold of one Simon Malmesbury; Sir Daniel was his bane! 'Twas Bennet Hatch that burned it, now five years agone. In sooth, 'twas pity, for it was a fair house."

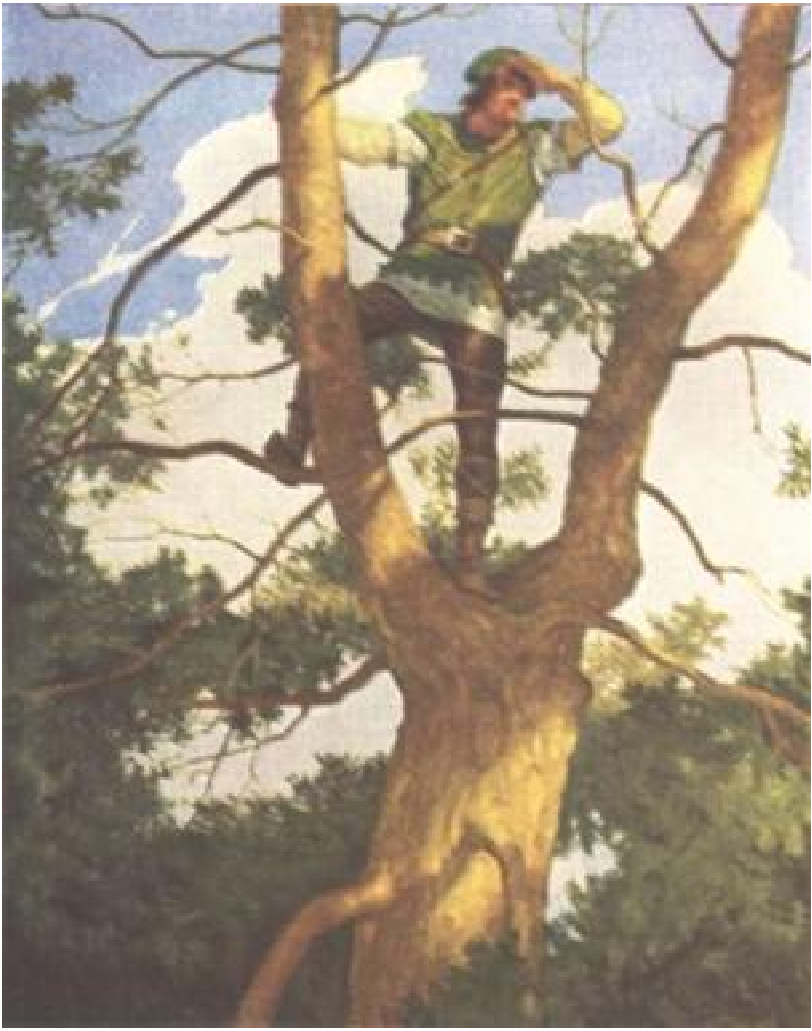
Down in the hollow, where no wind blew, it was both warm and still; and Matcham, laying one hand upon Dick's arm, held up a warning finger.

"Hist!" he said.

Then came a strange sound, breaking on the quiet. It was twice repeated ere they recognised its nature. It was the sound of a big man clearing his throat; and just then a hoarse, untuneful voice broke into singing.

"Then up and spake the master, the king of the outlaws:
'What make ye here, my merry men, among the greenwood shaws?'
And Gamelyn made answer — he looked never adown:
'O, they must need to walk in wood that may not walk in town!'"

The singer paused, a faint clink of iron followed, and then silence.



In the fork, like a mastheaded seaman, there stood a man in a green tabard, spying far and wide

The two lads stood looking at each other. Whoever he might be, their invisible neighbour was just beyond the ruin. And suddenly the colour came into Matcham's face, and next moment he had crossed the fallen rafter, and was climbing cautiously on the huge pile of lumber that filled the interior of the roofless house. Dick would have withheld him, had he been in time; as it was, he was fain to follow.

Right in the corner of the ruin, two rafters had fallen crosswise, and protected a clear space no larger than a pew in church. Into this the lads silently lowered themselves. There they were perfectly concealed, and through an arrow-loophole commanded a view upon the farther side.

Peering through this, they were struck stiff with terror at their predicament. To retreat was impossible; they scarce dared to breathe.

Upon the very margin of the ditch, not thirty feet from where they crouched, an iron caldron bubbled and steamed above a glowing fire; and close by, in an attitude of listening, as though he had caught some sound of their clambering among the ruins, a tall, red-faced, battered-looking man stood poised, an iron spoon in his right hand, a horn and a formidable dagger at his belt. Plainly this was the singer; plainly he had been stirring the caldron, when some incautious step among the lumber had fallen upon his ear. A little farther off, another man lay slumbering, rolled in a brown cloak, with a butterfly hovering above his face. All this was in a clearing white with daisies; and at the extreme verge, a bow, a sheaf of arrows, and part of a deer's carcase hung upon a flowering hawthorn.

Presently the fellow relaxed from his attitude of attention, raised the spoon to his mouth, tasted its contents, nodded, and then fell again to stirring and singing.

"'O, they must need to walk in wood that may not walk in town,'" he croaked, taking up his song where he had left it.

"O, sir, we walk not here at all an evil thing to do.
But if we meet with the good king's deer to shoot a shaft into."

Still as he sang, he took from time to time another spoonful of the broth, blew upon it, and tasted it, with all the airs of an experienced cook. At length, apparently, he judged the mess was ready; for taking the horn from his girdle, he blew three modulated calls.

The other fellow awoke, rolled over, brushed away the butterfly, and looked about him.

"How now, brother?" he said. "Dinner?"

"Ay, sot," replied the cook, "dinner it is, and a dry dinner, too, with neither ale nor bread. But there is little pleasure in the greenwood now; time was when a good fellow could live here like a mitred abbot, set aside the rain and the white frosts; he had his heart's desire both of ale and wine. But now are men's spirits dead; and this John Amend-All, save us and guard us! but a stuffed booby to scare crows withal."

"Nay," returned the other, "y'are too set on meat and drinking, Lawless. Bide ye a bit; the good time cometh."

"Look ye," returned the cook, "I have even waited for this good time sith that I was so high. I have been a Grey Friar; I have been a king's archer; I have been a shipman, and sailed the salt seas; and I have been in greenwood before this, forsooth! and shot the king's deer. What cometh of it? Naught! I were better to have bided in the cloister. John Abbot availeth more than John Amend-All. By 'r Lady! here they come."

One after another, tall, likely fellows began to stroll into the lawn. Each as he came produced a knife and a horn cup, helped himself from the caldron, and sat down upon the grass to eat. They were very variously equipped and armed; some in rusty smocks, and with nothing but a knife and an old bow; others in the height of forest gallantry, all in Lincoln green, both hood and jerkin, with dainty peacock arrows in their belts, a horn upon a baldrick, and a sword and dagger at their sides. They came in the silence of hunger, and scarce growled a salutation, but fell instantly to meat.

There were, perhaps, a score of them already gathered, when a sound of suppressed cheering arose close by among the hawthorns, and immediately after five or six woodmen carrying a stretcher debouched upon the lawn. A tall, lusty fellow, somewhat grizzled, and as brown as a smoked ham, walked before them with an air of some authority, his bow at his back, a bright boar-spear in his hand.

"Lads!" he cried, "good fellows all, and my right merry friends, y' have sung this while on a dry whistle and lived at little ease. But what said I ever? Abide Fortune constantly; she turneth, turneth swift. And lo! here is her little firstling — even that good creature, ale!"

There was a murmur of applause as the bearers set down the stretcher and displayed a goodly cask.

"And now haste ye, boys," the man continued. "There is work toward. A handful of archers are but now come to the ferry; murrey and blue is their wear; they are our butts — they shall all taste arrows — no man of them shall struggle through this wood. For, lads, we are here some fifty strong, each man of us most foully wronged; for some they have lost lands, and some friends; and some they have been outlawed — all oppressed! Who, then, hath done this evil? Sir Daniel, by the rood! Shall he then profit? shall he sit snug in our houses? shall he till our fields? shall he suck the bone he robbed us of? I trow not. He getteth him strength at law; he gaineth cases; nay, there is one case he shall not gain — I have a writ here at my belt that, please the saints, shall conquer him."

Lawless the cook was by this time already at his second horn of ale. He raised it, as if to pledge the speaker.

"Master Ellis," he said, "y'are for vengeance — well it becometh you! — but your poor brother o' the greenwood, that had never lands to lose nor friends to think upon, looketh rather, for his poor part, to the profit of the thing. He had liever a gold noble and a pottle of canary wine than all the vengeances in purgatory."

"Lawless," replied the other, "to reach the Moat House, Sir Daniel must pass the forest. We shall make that passage dearer, pardy, than any battle. Then, when he hath got to earth with such ragged handful as escapeth us — all his great friends fallen and fled away, and none to give him aid — we shall beleaguer that old fox about, and great shall be the fall of him. 'Tis a fat buck; he will make a dinner for us all."

"Ay," returned Lawless, "I have eaten many of these dinners beforehand; but the cooking of them is hot work, good Master Ellis. And meanwhile what do we? We make black arrows, we write rhymes, and we drink fair cold water, that discomfortable drink."

"Y'are untrue, Will Lawless. Ye still smell of the Grey Friars' buttery; greed is your undoing," answered Ellis. "We took twenty pounds from Appleyard. We took seven marks from the messenger last night. A day ago we had fifty from the merchant."

"And to-day," said one of the men, "I stopped a fat pardoner riding apace for Holywood. Here is his purse."

Ellis counted the contents.

"Five-score shillings!" he grumbled. "Fool, he had more in his sandal, or stitched into his tippet. Y'are but a child, Tom Cuckow; ye have lost the fish."

But, for all that, Ellis pocketed the purse with nonchalance. He stood leaning on his boar-spear, and looked round upon the rest. They, in various attitudes, took greedily of the venison pottage, and liberally washed it down with ale. This was a good day; they were in luck; but business pressed, and they were speedy in their eating. The first-comers had by this time even despatched their dinner. Some lay down upon the grass and fell instantly asleep, like boa-constrictors; others talked together, or overhauled their weapons; and one, whose humour was particularly gay, holding forth an ale-horn, began to sing:

"Here is no law in good green shaw,
Here is no lack of meat;
'Tis merry and quiet, with deer for our diet,
In summer, when all is sweet.

"Come winter again, with wind and rain —
Come winter, with snow and sleet,
Get home to your places, with hoods on your faces,
And sit by the fire and eat."

All this while the two lads had listened and lain close; only Richard had unslung his cross-bow, and held ready in one hand the windac, or grappling-iron that he used to bend it. Otherwise they had not dared to stir; and this scene of forest life had gone on before their eyes like a scene upon a theatre. But now there came a strange interruption. The tall chimney which overtopped the remainder of the ruins rose right above their hiding-place. There came a whistle in the air, and then a sounding smack, and the fragments of a broken arrow fell about their ears. Some one from the upper quarters of the wood, perhaps the very sentinel they saw posted in the fir, had shot an arrow at the chimney-top.

Matcham could not restrain a little cry, which he instantly stifled, and even Dick started with surprise, and dropped the windac from his fingers. But to the fellows on the lawn, this shaft was an expected signal. They were all afoot together, tightening their belts, testing their bow-strings, loosening sword and dagger in the sheath. Ellis held up his hand; his face had suddenly assumed a look of savage energy; the white of his eyes shone in his sun-brown face.

"Lads," he said, "ye know your places. Let not one man's soul escape you. Appleyard was a whet before a meal; but now we go to table. I have three men whom I will bitterly avenge — Harry Shelton, Simon Malmesbury, and" — striking his broad bosom — "and Ellis Duckworth, by the mass!"

Another man came, red with hurry, through the thorns.

"'Tis not Sir Daniel!" he panted. "They are but seven. Is the arrow gone?"

"It struck but now," replied Ellis.

"A murrain!" cried the messenger. "Methought I heard it whistle. And I go dinnerless!"

In the space of a minute, some running, some walking sharply, according as their stations were nearer or farther away, the men of the Black Arrow had all disappeared from the neighbourhood of the ruined house; and the caldron, and the fire, which was now burning low, and the dead deer's carcase on the hawthorn, remained alone to testify they had been there.

CHAPTER V

“BLOODY AS THE HUNTER”

The lads lay quiet till the last footstep had melted on the wind. Then they arose, and with many an ache, for they were weary with constraint, clambered through the ruins, and recrossed the ditch upon the rafter. Matcham had picked up the windac and went first, Dick following stiffly, with his cross-bow on his arm.

“And now,” said Matcham, “forth to Holywood.”

“To Holywood!” cried Dick, “when good fellows stand shot? Not I! I would see you hanged first, Jack!”

“Ye would leave me, would ye?” Matcham asked.

“Ay, by my sooth!” returned Dick. “An I be not in time to warn these lads, I will go die with them. What! would ye have me leave my own men that I have lived among? I trow not! Give me my windac.”

But there was nothing further from Matcham’s mind.

“Dick,” he said, “ye sware before the saints that ye would see me safe to Holywood. Would ye be forsworn? Would you desert me — a perjurer?”

“Nay, I sware for the best,” returned Dick. “I meant it too; but now! But look ye, Jack, turn again with me. Let me but warn these men, and, if needs must, stand shot with them; then shall all be clear, and I will on again to Holywood and purge mine oath.”

“Ye but deride me,” answered Matcham. “These men ye go to succour are the same that hunt me to my ruin.”

Dick scratched his head.

“I cannot help it, Jack,” he said. “Here is no remedy. What would ye? Ye run no great peril, man; and these are in the way of death. Death!” he added. “Think of it! What a murrain do ye keep me here for? Give me the windac. St. George! shall they all die?”

“Richard Shelton,” said Matcham, looking him squarely in the face, “would ye, then, join party with Sir Daniel? Have ye not ears? Heard ye not this Ellis, what he said? or have ye no heart for your own kindly blood and the father that men slew? ‘Harry Shelton,’ he said; and Sir Harry Shelton was your father, as the sun shines in heaven.”

“What would ye?” Dick cried again. “Would ye have me credit thieves?”

“Nay, I have heard it before now,” returned Matcham. “The fame goeth currently, it was Sir Daniel slew him. He slew him under oath; in his own house he shed the innocent blood. Heaven wearies for the avenging on’t; and you — the man’s son — ye go about to comfort and defend the murderer!”

"Jack," cried the lad, "I know not. It may be; what know I? But, see here: This man hath bred me up and fostered me, and his men I have hunted with and played among; and to leave them in the hour of peril — O, man, if I did that, I were stark dead to honour! Nay, Jack, ye would not ask it; ye would not wish me to be base."

"But your father, Dick?" said Matcham, somewhat wavering. "Your father? and your oath to me? Ye took the saints to witness."

"My father?" cried Shelton. "Nay, he would have me go! If Sir Daniel slew him, when the hour comes this hand shall slay Sir Daniel; but neither him nor his will I desert in peril. And for mine oath, good Jack, ye shall absolve me of it here. For the lives' sake of many men that hurt you not, and for mine honour, ye shall set me free."

"I, Dick? Never!" returned Matcham. "An ye leave me, y'are forsworn, and so I shall declare it."

"My blood heats," said Dick. "Give me the windac! Give it me!"

"I'll not," said Matcham. "I'll save you in your teeth."

"Not?" cried Dick. "I'll make you!"

"Try it," said the other.

They stood, looking in each other's eyes, each ready for a spring. Then Dick leaped; and though Matcham turned instantly and fled, in two bounds he was overtaken, the windac was twisted from his grasp, he was thrown roughly to the ground, and Dick stood across him, flushed and menacing, with doubled fist. Matcham lay where he had fallen, with his face in the grass, not thinking of resistance.

Dick bent his bow.

"I'll teach you!" he cried, fiercely. "Oath or no oath, ye may go hang for me!"

And he turned and began to run. Matcham was on his feet at once, and began running after him.

"What d'ye want?" cried Dick, stopping. "What make ye after me? Stand off!"

"I will follow an I please," said Matcham. "This wood is free to me."

"Stand back, by 'r Lady!" returned Dick, raising his bow.

"Ah, y'are a brave boy!" retorted Matcham. "Shoot!"

Dick lowered his weapon in some confusion.

"See here," he said. "Y' have done me ill enough. Go, then. Go your way in fair wise; or, whether I will or not, I must even drive you to it."

"Well," said Matcham, doggedly, "y'are the stronger. Do your worst. I shall not leave to follow thee, Dick, unless thou makest me," he added.

Dick was almost beside himself. It went against his heart to beat a creature so defenceless; and, for the life of him, he knew no other way to rid himself of this unwelcome and, as he began to think, perhaps untrue companion.

"Y'are mad, I think," he cried. "Fool-fellow, I am hasting to your foes; as fast as foot can carry me, go I thither."

"I care not, Dick," replied the lad. "If y'are bound to die, Dick, I'll die too. I would liever go with you to prison than to go free without you."

"Well," returned the other, "I may stand no longer prating. Follow me, if ye must; but if ye play me false, it shall but little advance you, mark ye that. Shalt have a quarrel in thine inwards, boy."

So saying, Dick took once more to his heels, keeping in the margin of the thicket and looking briskly about him as he went. At a good pace he rattled out of the dell, and came again into the more open quarters of the wood. To the left a little eminence appeared, spotted with golden gorse, and crowned with a black tuft of firs.

"I shall see from there," he thought, and struck for it across a heathy clearing.

He had gone but a few yards, when Matcham touched him on the arm, and pointed. To the eastward of the summit there was a dip, and, as it were, a valley passing to the other side; the heath was not yet out; all the ground was rusty, like an unscoured buckler, and dotted sparingly with yews; and there, one following another, Dick saw half a score green jerkins mounting the ascent, and marching at their head, conspicuous by his boar-spear, Ellis Duckworth in person. One after another gained the top, showed for a moment against the sky, and then dipped upon the farther side, until the last was gone.

Dick looked at Matcham with a kindlier eye.

"So y'are to be true to me, Jack?" he asked. "I thought ye were of the other party."

Matcham began to sob.

"What cheer!" cried Dick. "Now the saints behold us! would ye snivel for a word?"

"Ye hurt me," sobbed Matcham. "Ye hurt me when ye threw me down. Y'are a coward to abuse your strength."

"Nay, that is fool's talk," said Dick, roughly. "Y' had no title to my windac, Master John. I would 'a' done right to have well basted you. If ye go with me, ye must obey me; and so, come."

Matcham had half a thought to stay behind; but, seeing that Dick continued to scour full-tilt towards the eminence and not so much as looked across his shoulder, he soon thought better of that, and began to run in turn. But the ground was very difficult and steep; Dick had already a long start, and had, at any rate, the lighter heels, and he had long since come to the summit, crawled forward through the firs, and ensconced himself in a thick tuft of gorse, before Matcham, panting like a deer, rejoined him, and lay down in silence by his side.

Below, in the bottom of a considerable valley, the short cut from

Tunstall hamlet wound downwards to the ferry. It was well beaten, and the eye followed it easily from point to point. Here it was bordered by open glades; there the forest closed upon it; every hundred yards it ran beside an ambush. Far down the path, the sun shone on seven steel salets, and from time to time, as the trees opened, Selden and his men could be seen riding briskly, still bent upon Sir Daniel's mission. The wind had somewhat fallen, but still tussled merrily with the trees, and, perhaps, had Appleyard been there, he would have drawn a warning from the troubled conduct of the birds.

"Now, mark," Dick whispered. "They be already well advanced into the wood; their safety lieth rather in continuing forward. But see ye where this wide glade runneth down before us, and in the midst of it, these two-score trees make like an island? There were their safety. An they but come sound as far as that, I will make shift to warn them. But my heart misgiveth me; they are but seven against so many, and they but carry cross-bows. The long-bow, Jack, will have the uppermost ever."

Meanwhile, Selden and his men still wound up the path, ignorant of their danger, and momently drew nearer hand. Once, indeed, they paused, drew into a group, and seemed to point and listen. But it was something from far away across the plain that had arrested their attention — a hollow growl of cannon that came, from time to time, upon the wind, and told of the great battle. It was worth a thought, to be sure; for if the voice of the big guns were thus become audible in TunstallForest, the fight must have rolled ever eastward, and the day, by consequence, gone sore against Sir Daniel and the lords of the dark rose.

But presently the little troop began again to move forward, and came next to a very open, heathy portion of the way, where but a single tongue of forest ran down to join the road. They were but just abreast of this, when an arrow shone flying. One of the men threw up his arms, his horse reared, and both fell and struggled together in a mass. Even from where the boys lay they could hear the rumour of the men's voices crying out; they could see the startled horses prancing, and, presently, as the troop began to recover from their first surprise, one fellow beginning to dismount. A second arrow from somewhat farther off glanced in a wide arch; a second rider bit the dust. The man who was dismounting lost hold upon the rein, and his horse fled galloping, and dragged him by the foot along the road, bumping from stone to stone, and battered by the fleeing hoofs. The four who still kept the saddle instantly broke and scattered; one wheeled and rode, shrieking, towards the ferry; the other three, with loose rein and flying raiment, came galloping up the road from Tunstall. From every clump they passed an arrow sped. Soon a horse fell, but the rider found his feet and continued to pursue his comrades till a second shot despatched him. Another man fell; then another horse; out of the whole troop there was but one fellow left, and he on foot; only, in different directions, the noise of the galloping of three riderless horses was dying fast into the distance.

All this time not one of the assailants had for a moment shown himself. Here and there along the path, horse or man rolled, undespatched, in his agony; but no merciful enemy broke cover to put them from their pain.

The solitary survivor stood bewildered in the road beside his fallen charger. He had come the length of that broad glade, with the island of timber, pointed out by Dick. He was not, perhaps, five hundred yards from where the boys lay hidden; and they could see him plainly, looking to and fro in deadly expectation. But nothing came; and the man began to pluck up his courage, and suddenly unslung and bent his bow. At the same time, by something in his action, Dick recognised Selden.

At this offer of resistance, from all about him in the covert of the woods there went up the sound of laughter. A score of men, at least, for this was the very thickest of the ambush, joined in this cruel and untimely mirth. Then an arrow glanced over Selden's shoulder; and he leaped and ran a little back. Another dart struck quivering at his heel. He made for the cover. A third shaft leaped out right in his face, and fell short in front of him. And then the laughter was repeated loudly, rising and re-echoing from different thickets.

It was plain that his assailants were but baiting him, as men, in those days, baited the poor bull, or as the cat still trifles with the mouse. The skirmish was well over; farther down the road, a fellow in green was already calmly gathering the arrows; and now, in the evil pleasure of their hearts, they gave themselves the spectacle of their poor fellow-sinner in his torture.

Selden began to understand; he uttered a roar of anger, shouldered his cross-bow, and sent a quarrel at a venture into the wood. Chance favoured him, for a slight cry responded. Then, throwing down his weapon, Selden began to run before him up the glade, and almost in a straight line for Dick and Matcham.

The companions of the Black Arrow now began to shoot in earnest. But they were properly served; their chance had past; most of them had now to shoot against the sun; and Selden, as he ran, bounded from side to side to baffle and deceive their aim. Best of all, by turning up the glade he had defeated their preparations; there were no marksmen posted higher up than the one whom he had just killed or wounded; and the confusion of the foresters' counsels soon became apparent. A whistle sounded thrice, and then again twice. It was repeated from another quarter. The woods on either side became full of the sound of people bursting through the underwood; and a bewildered deer ran out into the open, stood for a second on three feet, with nose in air, and then plunged again into the thicket.

Selden still ran, bounding; ever and again an arrow followed him, but still would miss. It began to appear as if he might escape. Dick had his bow armed, ready to support him; even Matcham, forgetful of his interest, took sides at heart for the poor fugitive; and both lads glowed and trembled in the ardour of their hearts.

He was within fifty yards of them, when an arrow struck him and he fell. He was up again, indeed, upon the instant; but now he ran staggering, and, like a blind man, turned aside from his direction.

Dick leaped to his feet and waved to him.

“Here!” he cried. “This way! here is help! Nay, run, fellow — run!”

But just then a second arrow struck Selden in the shoulder, between the plates of his brigandine, and, piercing through his jack, brought him, like a stone, to earth.

“O, the poor heart!” cried Matcham, with clasped hands.

And Dick stood petrified upon the hill, a mark for archery.

Ten to one he had speedily been shot — for the foresters were furious with themselves, and taken unawares by Dick’s appearance in the rear of their position — but instantly, out of a quarter of the wood surprisingly near to the two lads, a stentorian voice arose, the voice of Ellis Duckworth.

“Hold!” it roared. “Shoot not! Take him alive! It is young Shelton — Harry’s son.”

And immediately after a shrill whistle sounded several times, and was again taken up and repeated farther off. The whistle, it appeared, was John Amend-All’s battle trumpet, by which he published his directions.

“Ah, foul fortune!” cried Dick. “We are undone. Swiftly, Jack, come swiftly!”

And the pair turned and ran back through the open pine clump that covered the summit of the hill.

CHAPTER VI

TO THE DAY’S END

It was, indeed, high time for them to run. On every side the company of the Black Arrow was making for the hill. Some, being better runners, or having open ground to run upon, had far outstripped the others, and were already close upon the goal; some, following valleys, had spread out to right and left, and outflanked the lads on either side.

Dick plunged into the nearest cover. It was a tall grove of oaks, firm underfoot and clear of underbrush, and as it lay down-hill, they made good speed. There followed next a piece of open, which Dick avoided, holding to his left. Two minutes after, and the same obstacle arising, the lads followed the same course. Thus it followed that, while the lads, bending continually to the left, drew nearer and nearer to the highroad and the river which they had crossed an hour or two before, the great bulk of their pursuers were leaning to the other hand, and running towards Tunstall.

The lads paused to breathe. There was no sound of pursuit. Dick put his ear to the ground, and still there was nothing; but the wind, to be sure, still made a turmoil in the trees, and it was hard to make certain.

“On again,” said Dick; and, tired as they were, and Matcham limping with his injured foot, they pulled themselves together, and once more pelted down the hill.

Three minutes later, they were breasting through a low thicket of evergreen. High overhead, the tall trees made a continuous roof of foliage. It was a pillared grove, as high as a cathedral, and except for the hollies among which the lads were struggling, open and smoothly swarded.

On the other side, pushing through the last fringe of evergreen, they blundered forth again into the open twilight of the grove.

“Stand!” cried a voice.

And there, between the huge stems, not fifty feet before them, they beheld a stout fellow in green, sore blown with running, who instantly drew an arrow to the head and covered them. Matcham stopped with a cry; but Dick, without a pause, ran straight upon the forester, drawing his dagger as he went. The other, whether he was startled by the daring of the onslaught, or whether he was hampered by his orders, did not shoot; he stood wavering; and before he had time to come to himself, Dick bounded at his throat, and sent him sprawling backward on the turf. The arrow went one way and the bow another with a sounding twang. The disarmed forester grappled his assailant;

but the dagger shone and descended twice. Then came a couple of groans, and then Dick rose to his feet again, and the man lay motionless, stabbed to the heart.

“On!” said Dick; and he once more pelted forward, Matcham trailing in the rear. To say truth, they made but poor speed of it by now, labouring dismally as they ran, and catching for their breath like fish. Matcham had a cruel stitch, and his head swam; and as for Dick, his knees were like lead. But they kept up the form of running with undiminished courage.

Presently they came to the end of the grove. It stopped abruptly; and there, a few yards before them, was the highroad from Risingham to Shoreby, lying, at this point, between two even walls of forest.

At the sight Dick paused; and as soon as he stopped running, he became aware of a confused noise, which rapidly grew louder. It was at first like the rush of a very high gust of wind, but soon it became more definite, and resolved itself into the galloping of horses; and then, in a flash, a whole company of men-at-arms came driving round the corner, swept before the lads, and were gone again upon the instant. They rode as for their lives, in complete disorder; some of them were wounded; riderless horses galloped at their side with bloody saddles. They were plainly fugitives from the great battle.

The noise of their passage had scarce begun to die away towards Shoreby, before fresh hoofs came echoing in their wake, and another deserter clattered down the road; this time a single rider and, by his splendid armour, a man of high degree. Close after him there followed several baggage-waggons, fleeing at an ungainly canter, the drivers flailing at the horses as if for life. These must have run early in the day; but their cowardice was not to save them. For just before they came abreast of where the lads stood wondering, a man in hacked armour, and seemingly beside himself with fury, overtook the waggons, and with the truncheon of a sword, began to cut the drivers down. Some leaped from their places and plunged into the wood; the others he sabred as they sat, cursing them the while for cowards in a voice that was scarce human.

All this time the noise in the distance had continued to increase; the rumble of carts, the clatter of horses, the cries of men, a great, confused rumour, came swelling on the wind; and it was plain that the rout of a whole army was pouring, like an inundation, down the road.

Dick stood sombre. He had meant to follow the highway till the turn for Holywood, and now he had to change his plan. But above all, he had recognised the colours of Earl Risingham, and he knew that the battle had gone finally against the rose of Lancaster. Had Sir Daniel joined, and was he now a fugitive and ruined? or had he deserted to the side of York, and was he forfeit to honour? It was an ugly choice.

"Come," he said, sternly; and, turning on his heel, he began to walk forward through the grove, with Matcham limping in his rear.

For some time they continued to thread the forest in silence. It was now growing late; the sun was setting in the plain beyond Kettley; the tree-tops overhead glowed golden; but the shadows had begun to grow darker and the chill of the night to fall.

"If there were anything to eat!" cried Dick, suddenly, pausing as he spoke.

Matcham sat down and began to weep.

"Ye can weep for your own supper, but when it was to save men's lives, your heart was hard enough," said Dick, contemptuously. "Y' 'ave seven deaths upon your conscience, Master John; I'll ne'er forgive you that."

"Conscience!" cried Matcham, looking fiercely up. "Mine! And ye have the man's red blood upon your dagger! And wherefore did ye slay him, the poor soul? He drew his arrow, but he let not fly; he held you in his hand, and spared you! 'Tis as brave to kill a kitten, as a man that not defends himself."

Dick was struck dumb.

"I slew him fair. I ran me in upon his bow," he cried.

"It was a coward blow," returned Matcham. "Y'are but a lout and bully, Master Dick; ye but abuse advantages; let there come a stronger, we will see you truckle at his boot! Ye care not for vengeance, neither — for your father's death that goes unpaid, and his poor ghost that clamoureth for justice. But if there come but a poor creature in your hands that lacketh skill and strength, and would befriend you, down she shall go!"

Dick was too furious to observe that "she."

"Marry!" he cried, "and here is news! Of any two the one will still be stronger. The better man throweth the worse, and the worse is well served. Ye deserve a belting, Master Matcham, for your ill-guidance and unthankfulness to meward; and what ye deserve ye shall have."

And Dick, who, even in his angriest temper, still preserved the appearance of composure, began to unbuckle his belt.

"Here shall be your supper," he said, grimly.

Matcham had stopped his tears; he was as white as a sheet, but he looked Dick steadily in the face, and never moved. Dick took a step, swinging the belt. Then he paused, embarrassed by the large eyes and the thin, weary face of his companion. His courage began to subside.

"Say ye were in the wrong, then," he said, lamely.

"Nay," said Matcham, "I was in the right. Come, cruel! I be lame; I be weary; I resist not; I ne'er did thee hurt; come, beat me — coward!"

Dick raised the belt at this last provocation; but Matcham winced and drew himself together with so cruel an apprehension, that his heart failed him yet again. The strap fell by his side, and he stood irresolute, feeling like a fool.

“A plague upon thee, shrew!” he said. “An ye be so feeble of hand, ye should keep the closer guard upon your tongue. But I’ll be hanged before I beat you!” and he put on his belt again. “Beat you I will not,” he continued; “but forgive you? — never. I knew ye not; ye were my master’s enemy; I lent you my horse; my dinner ye have eaten; y’ ‘ave called me a man o’ wood, a coward, and a bully. Nay, by the mass! the measure is filled, and runneth over. ‘Tis a great thing to be weak, I trow: ye can do your worst, yet shall none punish you; ye may steal a man’s weapons in the hour of need, yet may the man not take his own again; — y’are weak, forsooth! Nay, then, if one cometh charging at you with a lance, and crieth he is weak, ye must let him pierce your body through! Tut! fool words!”

“And yet ye beat me not,” returned Matcham.

“Let be,” said Dick — ”let be. I will instruct you. Y’ ‘ave been ill-nurtured, methinks, and yet ye have the makings of some good, and, beyond all question, saved me from the river. Nay, I had forgotten it; I am as thankless as thyself. But, come, let us on. An we be for Holywood this night, ay, or to-morrow early, we had best set forward speedily.”

But though Dick had talked himself back into his usual good-humour, Matcham had forgiven him nothing. His violence, the recollection of the forester whom he had slain — above all, the vision of the upraised belt, were things not easily to be forgotten.

“I will thank you, for the form’s sake,” said Matcham. “But, in sooth, good Master Shelton, I had liever find my way alone. Here is a wide wood; prithee, let each choose his path; I owe you a dinner and a lesson. Fare ye well!”

“Nay,” cried Dick, “if that be your tune, so be it, and a plague be with you!”

Each turned aside, and they began walking off severally, with no thought of the direction, intent solely on their quarrel. But Dick had not gone ten paces ere his name was called, and Matcham came running after.

“Dick,” he said, “it were unmannerly to part so coldly. Here is my hand, and my heart with it. For all that wherein you have so excellently served and helped me — not for the form, but from the heart, I thank you. Fare ye right well.”

“Well, lad,” returned Dick, taking the hand which was offered him, “good speed to you, if speed you may. But I misdoubt it shrewdly. Y’are too disputatious.”

So then they separated for the second time; and presently it was Dick who was running after Matcham.

"Here," he said, "take my cross-bow; shalt not go unarmed."

"A cross-bow!" said Matcham. "Nay, boy, I have neither the strength to bend nor yet the skill to aim with it. It were no help to me, good boy. But yet I thank you."

The night had now fallen, and under the trees they could no longer read each other's face.

"I will go some little way with you," said Dick. "The night is dark. I would fain leave you on a path, at least. My mind misgiveth me, y'are likely to be lost."

Without any more words, he began to walk forward, and the other once more followed him. The blackness grew thicker and thicker. Only here and there, in open places, they saw the sky, dotted with small stars. In the distance, the noise of the rout of the Lancastrian army still continued to be faintly audible; but with every step they left it farther in the rear.

At the end of half an hour of silent progress they came forth upon a broad patch of heathy open. It glimmered in the light of the stars, shaggy with fern and islanded with clumps of yew. And here they paused and looked upon each other.

"Y'are weary?" Dick said.

"Nay, I am so weary," answered Matcham, "that methinks I could lie down and die."

"I hear the chiding of a river," returned Dick. "Let us go so far forth, for I am sore athirst."

The ground sloped down gently; and, sure enough, in the bottom, they found a little murmuring river, running among willows. Here they threw themselves down together by the brink; and putting their mouths to the level of a starry pool, they drank their fill.

"Dick," said Matcham, "it may not be. I can no more."

"I saw a pit as we came down," said Dick. "Let us lie down therein and sleep."

"Nay, but with all my heart!" cried Matcham.

The pit was sandy and dry; a shock of brambles hung upon one hedge, and made a partial shelter; and there the two lads lay down, keeping close together for the sake of warmth, their quarrel all forgotten. And soon sleep fell upon them like a cloud, and under the dew and stars they rested peacefully.

CHAPTER VII

THE HOODED FACE

They awoke in the grey of the morning; the birds were not yet in full song, but twittered here and there among the woods; the sun was not yet up, but the eastern sky was barred with solemn colours. Half starved and over-weary as they were, they lay without moving, sunk in a delightful lassitude. And as they thus lay, the clang of a bell fell suddenly upon their ears.

"A bell!" said Dick, sitting up. "Can we be, then, so near to Holywood?"

A little after, the bell clanged again, but this time somewhat nearer hand; and from that time forth, and still drawing nearer and nearer, it continued to sound brokenly abroad in the silence of the morning.

"Nay, what should this betoken?" said Dick, who was now broad awake.

"It is some one walking," returned Matcham, "and the bell tolleth ever as he moves."

"I see that well," said Dick. "But wherefore? What maketh he in Tunstall Woods? Jack," he added, "laugh at me an ye will, but I like not the hollow sound of it."

"Nay," said Matcham, with a shiver, "it hath a doleful note. An the day were not come — — "

But just then the bell, quickening its pace, began to ring thick and hurried, and then it gave a single hammering jangle, and was silent for a space.

"It is as though the bearer had run for a paternoster while, and then leaped the river," Dick observed.

"And now beginneth he again to pace soberly forward," added Matcham.

"Nay," returned Dick — "nay, not so soberly, Jack. 'Tis a man that walketh you right speedily. 'Tis a man in some fear of his life, or about some hurried business. See ye not how swift the beating draweth near?"

"It is now close by," said Matcham.

They were now on the edge of the pit; and as the pit itself was on a certain eminence, they commanded a view over the greater proportion of the clearing, up to the thick woods that closed it in.

The daylight, which was very clear and grey, showed them a riband of white foot-path wandering among the gorse. It passed some hundred yards from the pit, and ran the whole length of the clearing, east and west. By the line of its course, Dick judged it should lead more or less directly to the Moat House.

Upon this path, stepping forth from the margin of the wood, a white figure now appeared. It paused a little, and seemed to look about; and then, at a slow pace, and bent almost double, it began to draw near across the heath. At every step the bell clanked. Face, it had none; a white hood, not even pierced with eye-holes, veiled the head; and as the creature moved, it seemed to feel its way with the tapping of a stick. Fear fell upon the lads, as cold as death.

"A leper!" said Dick, hoarsely.

"His touch is death," said Matcham. "Let us run."

"Not so," returned Dick. "See ye not? — he is stone blind. He guideth him with a staff. Let us lie still; the wind bloweth towards the path, and he will go by and hurt us not. Alas, poor soul, and we should rather pity him!"

"I will pity him when he is by," replied Matcham.

The blind leper was now about half-way towards them, and just then the sun rose and shone full on his veiled face. He had been a tall man before he was bowed by his disgusting sickness, and even now he walked with a vigorous step. The dismal beating of his bell, the pattering of the stick, the eyeless screen before his countenance, and the knowledge that he was not only doomed to death and suffering, but shut out for ever from the touch of his fellow-men, filled the lads' bosoms with dismay; and at every step that brought him nearer, their courage and strength seemed to desert them.

As he came about level with the pit, he paused, and turned his face full upon the lads.

"Mary be my shield! He sees us!" said Matcham, faintly.

"Hush!" whispered Dick. "He doth but hearken. He is blind, fool!"

The leper looked or listened, whichever he was really doing, for some seconds. Then he began to move on again, but presently paused once more, and again turned and seemed to gaze upon the lads. Even Dick became dead-white and closed his eyes, as if by the mere sight he might become infected. But soon the bell sounded, and this time, without any further hesitation, the leper crossed the remainder of the little heath and disappeared into the covert of the woods.

"He saw us," said Matcham. "I could swear it!"

"Tut!" returned Dick, recovering some sparks of courage. "He but heard us. He was in fear, poor soul! An ye were blind, and walked in a perpetual night, ye would start yourself, if ever a twig rustled or a bird cried 'Peep.'"

"Dick, good Dick, he saw us," repeated Matcham. "When a man hearkeneth, he doth not as this man; he doth otherwise, Dick. This was seeing; it was not hearing. He means foully. Hark, else, if his bell be not stopped!"

Such was the case. The bell rang no longer.

“Nay,” said Dick, “I like not that. Nay,” he cried again, “I like that little. What may this betoken? Let us go, by the mass!”

“He hath gone east,” added Matcham. “Good Dick, let us go westward straight; I shall not breathe till I have my back turned upon that leper.”

“Jack, y’are too cowardly,” replied Dick. “We shall go fair for Holywood, or as fair, at least, as I can guide you, and that will be due north.”

They were afoot at once, passed the stream upon some stepping-stones, and began to mount on the other side, which was steeper, towards the margin of the wood. The ground became very uneven, full of knolls and hollows; trees grew scattered or in clumps; it became difficult to choose a path, and the lads somewhat wandered. They were weary, besides, with yesterday’s exertions and the lack of food, and they moved but heavily and dragged their feet among the sand.

Presently, coming to the top of a knoll, they were aware of the leper, some hundred feet in front of them, crossing the line of their march by a hollow. His bell was silent, his staff no longer tapped the ground, and he went before him with the swift and assured footsteps of a man who sees. Next moment he had disappeared into a little thicket.

The lads, at the first glimpse, had crouched behind a tuft of gorse; there they lay, horror-struck.

“Certain, he pursueth us,” said Dick — ”certain! He held the clapper of his bell in one hand, saw ye? that it should not sound. Now may the saints aid and guide us, for I have no strength to combat pestilence!”

“What maketh he?” cried Matcham. “What doth he want? Who ever heard the like, that a leper, out of mere malice, should pursue unfortunates? Hath he not his bell to that very end, that people may avoid him? Dick, there is below this something deeper.”

“Nay, I care not,” moaned Dick; “the strength is gone out of me; my legs are like water. The saints be mine assistance!”

“Would ye lie there idle?” cried Matcham. “Let us back into the open. We have the better chance; he cannot steal upon us unawares.”

“Not I,” said Dick. “My time is come, and peradventure he may pass us by.”

“Bend me, then, your bow!” cried the other. “What! will ye be a man?”

Dick crossed himself. “Would ye have me shoot upon a leper?” he cried. “The hand would fail me. Nay, now,” he added — ”nay, now, let be! With sound men I will fight, but not with ghosts and lepers. Which this is I wot not. One or other, Heaven be our protection!”

“Now,” said Matcham, “if this be man’s courage, what a poor thing is man! But sith ye will do naught, let us lie close."

Then came a single, broken jangle on the bell.

"He hath missed his hold upon the clapper," whispered Matcham. "Saints! how near he is!"

But Dick answered never a word; his teeth were near chattering.

Soon they saw a piece of the white robe between some bushes; then the leper's head was thrust forth from behind a trunk, and he seemed narrowly to scan the neighbourhood before he once again withdrew. To their stretched senses, the whole bush appeared alive with rustlings and the creak of twigs; and they heard the beating of each other's heart.

Suddenly, with a cry, the leper sprang into the open close by, and ran straight upon the lads. They, shrieking aloud, separated and began to run different ways. But their horrible enemy fastened upon Matcham, ran him swiftly down, and had him almost instantly a prisoner. The lad gave one scream that echoed high and far over the forest, he had one spasm of struggling, and then all his limbs relaxed, and he fell limp into his captor's arms.

Dick heard the cry and turned. He saw Matcham fall; and on the instant his spirit and his strength revived. With a cry of pity and anger, he unslung and bent his arblast. But ere he had time to shoot, the leper held up his hand.

"Hold your shot, Dickon!" cried a familiar voice. "Hold your shot, mad wag! Know ye not a friend?"

And then laying down Matcham on the turf, he undid the hood from off his face, and disclosed the features of Sir Daniel Brackley.

"Sir Daniel!" cried Dick.

"Ay, by the mass, Sir Daniel!" returned the knight. "Would ye shoot upon your guardian, rogue? But here is this — — " And there he broke off, and pointing to Matcham, asked: "How call ye him, Dick?"

"Nay," said Dick, "I call him Master Matcham. Know ye him not? He said ye knew him!"

"Ay," replied Sir Daniel, "I know the lad"; and he chuckled. "But he has fainted; and, by my sooth, he might have had less to faint for! Hey, Dick? Did I put the fear of death upon you?"

"Indeed, Sir Daniel, ye did that," said Dick, and sighed again at the mere recollection. "Nay, sir, saving your respect, I had as lief 'a' met the devil in person; and to speak truth, I am yet all a-quake. But what made ye, sir, in such a guise?"

Sir Daniel's brow grew suddenly black with anger.

"What made I?" he said. "Ye do well to mind me of it! What? I skulked for my poor life in my own wood of Tunstall, Dick. We were ill sped at the battle; we but got there to be swept among the rout. Where be all my good men-at-arms? Dick, by the mass, I know not!

We were swept down; the shot fell thick among us; I have not seen one man in my own colours since I saw three fall. For myself, I came sound to Shoreby, and being mindful of the Black Arrow, got me this gown and bell, and came softly by the path for the Moat House. There is no disguise to be compared with it; the jingle of this bell would scare me the stoutest outlaw in the forest; they would all turn pale to hear it. At length I came by you and Matcham. I could see but evilly through this same hood, and was not sure of you, being chiefly, and for many a good cause, astonished at the finding you together. Moreover, in the open, where I had to go slowly and tap with my staff, I feared to disclose myself. But see," he added, "this poor shrew begins a little to revive. A little good canary will comfort me the heart of it."

The knight, from under his long dress, produced a stout bottle, and began to rub the temples and wet the lips of the patient, who returned gradually to consciousness, and began to roll dim eyes from one to another.

"What cheer, Jack!" said Dick. "It was no leper, after all; it was Sir Daniel! See!"

"Swallow me a good draught of this," said the knight. "This will give you manhood. Thereafter, I will give you both a meal, and we shall all three on to Tunstall. For, Dick," he continued, laying forth bread and meat upon the grass, "I will avow to you, in all good conscience, it irks me sorely to be safe between four walls. Not since I backed a horse have I been pressed so hard; peril of life, jeopardy of land and livelihood, and to sum up, all these losels in the wood to hunt me down. But I be not yet shent. Some of my lads will pick me their way home. Hatch hath ten fellows; Selden, he had six. Nay, we shall soon be strong again; and if I can but buy my peace with my right fortunate and undeserving Lord of York, why, Dick, we'll be a man again and go a-horseback!"

And so saying, the knight filled himself a horn of canary, and pledged his ward in dumb show.

"Selden," Dick faltered — "Selden — " And he paused again.

Sir Daniel put down the wine untasted.

"How!" he cried, in a changed voice. "Selden? Speak! What of Selden?"

Dick stammered forth the tale of the ambush and the massacre.

The knight heard in silence; but as he listened, his countenance became convulsed with rage and grief.

"Now here," he cried, "on my right hand, I swear to avenge it! If that I fail, if that I spill not ten men's souls for each, may this hand wither from my body! I broke this Duckworth like a rush; I beggared him to his door; I burned the thatch above his head; I drove him from this country; and now, cometh he back to beard me? Nay, but, Duckworth, this time it shall go bitter hard!"

He was silent for some time, his face working.

"Eat!" he cried, suddenly. "And you here," he added to Matcham, "swear me an oath to follow straight to the Moat House."

"I will pledge mine honour," replied Matcham.

"What make I with your honour?" cried the knight. "Swear me upon your mother's welfare!"

Matcham gave the required oath; and Sir Daniel readjusted the hood over his face, and prepared his bell and staff. To see him once more in that appalling travesty somewhat revived the horror of his two companions. But the knight was soon upon his feet.

"Eat with despatch," he said, "and follow me yarely to mine house."

And with that he set forth again into the woods; and presently after the bell began to sound, numbering his steps, and the two lads sat by their untasted meal, and heard it die slowly away up-hill into the distance.

"And so ye go to Tunstall?" Dick inquired.

"Yea, verily," said Matcham, "when needs must! I am braver behind Sir Daniel's back than to his face."

They ate hastily, and set forth along the path through the airy upper levels of the forest, where great beeches stood apart among green lawns, and the birds and squirrels made merry on the boughs. Two hours later, they began to descend upon the other side, and already, among the tree-tops, saw before them the red walls and roofs of Tunstall House.

"Here," said Matcham, pausing, "ye shall take your leave of your friend Jack, whom y'are to see no more. Come, Dick, forgive him what he did amiss, as he, for his part, cheerfully and lovingly forgiveth you."

"And wherefore so?" asked Dick. "An we both go to Tunstall, I shall see you yet again, I trow, and that right often."

"Ye'll never again see poor Jack Matcham," replied the other, "that was so fearful and burthensome, and yet plucked you from the river; ye'll not see him more, Dick, by mine honour!" He held his arms open, and the lads embraced and kissed. "And, Dick," continued Matcham, "my spirit bodeth ill. Y'are now to see a new Sir Daniel; for heretofore hath all prospered in his hands exceedingly, and fortune followed him; but now, methinks, when his fate hath come upon him, and he runs the adventure of his life, he will prove but a foul lord to both of us. He may be brave in battle, but he hath the liar's eye; there is fear in his eye, Dick, and fear is as cruel as the wolf! We go down into that house, St. Mary guide us forth again!"

And so they continued their descent in silence, and came out at last before Sir Daniel's forest stronghold, where it stood, low and shady, flanked with round towers and stained with moss and lichen, in the lilied waters of the moat. Even as they appeared, the doors were opened, the bridge lowered, and Sir Daniel himself, with Hatch and the parson at his side, stood ready to receive them.

BOOK II

THE MOAT HOUSE

CHAPTER I

DICK ASKS QUESTIONS

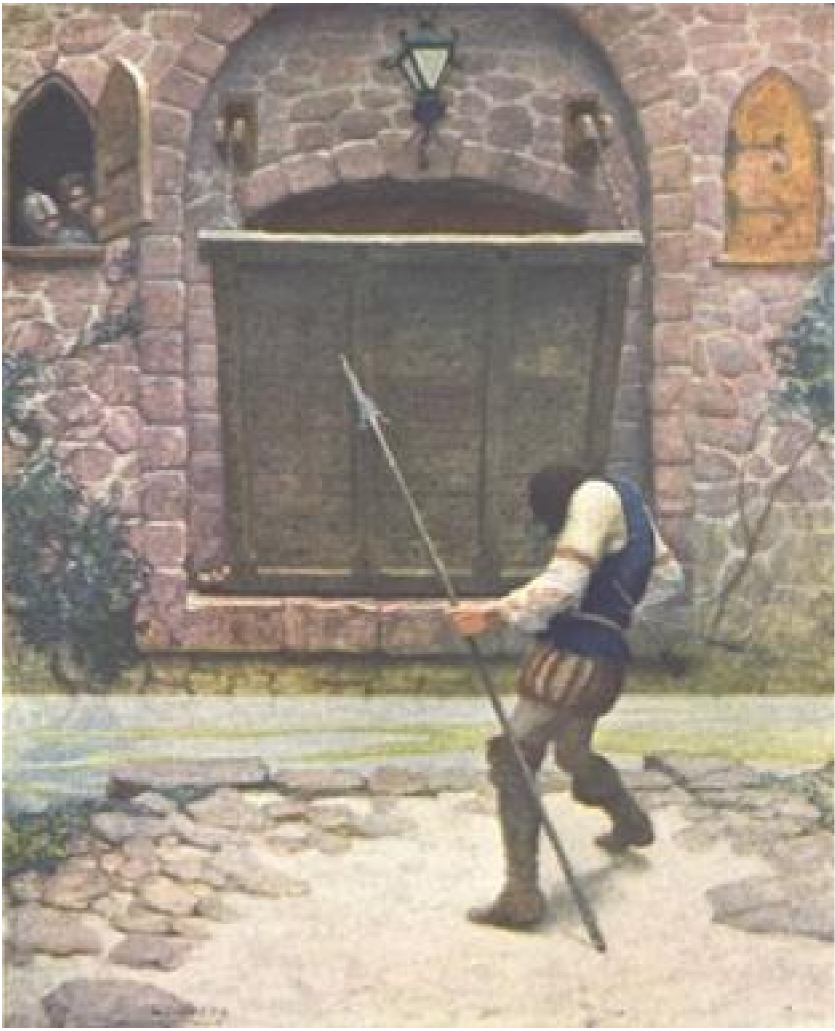
The Moat House stood not far from the rough forest road. Externally, it was a compact rectangle of red stone, flanked at each corner by a round tower, pierced for archery and battlemented at the top. Within, it enclosed a narrow court. The moat was perhaps twelve feet wide, crossed by a single drawbridge. It was supplied with water by a trench, leading to a forest pool and commanded, through its whole length, from the battlements of the two southern towers. Except that one or two tall and thick trees had been suffered to remain within half a bowshot of the walls, the house was in a good posture for defence.

In the court, Dick found a part of the garrison, busy with preparations for defence, and gloomily discussing the chances of a siege. Some were making arrows, some sharpening swords that had long been disused; but even as they worked, they shook their heads.

Twelve of Sir Daniel's party had escaped the battle, run the gauntlet through the wood, and come alive to the Moat House. But out of this dozen, three had been gravely wounded: two at Risingham in the disorder of the rout, one by John Amend-All's marksmen as he crossed the forest.

This raised the force of the garrison, counting Hatch, Sir Daniel, and young Shelton, to twenty-two effective men. And more might be continually expected to arrive. The danger lay not therefore in the lack of men.

It was the terror of the Black Arrow that oppressed the spirits of the garrison. For their open foes of the party of York, in these most changing times, they felt but a far-away concern. "The world," as people said in those days, "might change again" before harm came. But for their neighbours in the wood, they trembled. It was not Sir Daniel alone who was a mark for hatred. His men, conscious of impunity, had carried themselves cruelly through all the country. Harsh commands had been harshly executed; and of the little band that now sat talking in the court, there was not one but had been guilty of some act of oppression or barbarity. And now, by the fortune of war, Sir Daniel had become powerless to protect his instruments; now, by the issue of some hours of battle, at which many of them had not been present, they had all become punishable traitors to the State, outside the buckler of the law, a shrunken company in a poor fortress that was hardly tenable, and exposed upon all sides to the just resentment of their victims. Nor had there been lacking grisly advertisements of what they might expect.



Lastly, a little before dawn, a spearman had come staggering to the moat side, pierced by arrows

At different periods of the evening and the night, no fewer than seven riderless horses had come neighing in terror to the gate. Two were from Selden's troop; five belonged to men who had ridden with Sir Daniel to the field. Lastly, a little before dawn, a spearman had come staggering to the moat side, pierced by three arrows; even as they carried him in, his spirit had departed; but by the words that he uttered in his agony, he must have been the last survivor of a considerable company of men.

Hatch himself showed, under his sun-brown, the pallor of anxiety; and when he had taken Dick aside and learned the fate of Selden, he fell on a stone bench and fairly wept. The others, from where they sat on stools or doorsteps in the sunny angle of the court, looked at him with wonder and alarm, but none ventured to inquire the cause of his emotion.

“Nay, Master Shelton,” said Hatch, at last — ”nay, but what said I? We shall all go. Selden was a man of his hands; he was like a brother to me. Well, he has gone second; well, we shall all follow! For what said their knave rhyme? — ’A black arrow in each black heart.’ Was it not so it went? Appleyard, Selden, Smith, old Humphrey gone; and there lieth poor John Carter, crying, poor sinner, for the priest.”

Dick gave ear. Out of a low window, hard by where they were talking, groans and murmurs came to his ear.

“Lieth he there?” he asked.

“Ay, in the second porter’s chamber,” answered Hatch. “We could not bear him further, soul and body were so bitterly at odds. At every step we lifted him, he thought to wend. But now, methinks, it is the soul that suffereth. Ever for the priest he crieth, and Sir Oliver, I wot not why, still cometh not. ‘Twill be a long shrift; but poor Appleyard and poor Selden, they had none.”

Dick stooped to the window and looked in. The little cell was low and dark, but he could make out the wounded soldier lying moaning on his pallet.

“Carter, poor friend, how goeth it?” he asked.

“Master Shelton,” returned the man, in an excited whisper, “for the dear light of heaven, bring the priest. Alack, I am sped; I am brought very low down; my hurt is to the death. Ye may do me no more service; this shall be the last. Now, for my poor soul’s interest, and as a loyal gentleman, bestir you; for I have that matter on my conscience that shall drag me deep.”

He groaned, and Dick heard the grating of his teeth, whether in pain or terror.

Just then Sir Daniel appeared upon the threshold of the hall. He had a letter in one hand.

“Lads,” he said, “we have had a shog, we have had a tumble; wherefore, then, deny it? Rather it imputeth to get speedily again to saddle. This old Harry the Sixt has had the undermost. Wash we, then, our hands of him. I have a good friend that rideth next the duke, the Lord of Wensleydale. Well, I have writ a letter to my friend, praying his good lordship, and offering large satisfaction for the past and reasonable surety for the future. Doubt not but he will lend a favourable ear. A prayer without gifts is like a song without music: I surfeit him with promises, boys — I spare not to promise. What, then, is lacking? Nay, a great thing — wherefore should I deceive you? — a great thing and a difficult: a messenger to bear it. The woods — y’are not ignorant of that — lie thick with our ill-willers. Haste is most needful; but without sleight and caution all is naught. Which, then, of this company will take me this letter, bear me it to my Lord of

Wensleydale, and bring me the answer back?"

One man instantly arose.

"I will, an't like you," said he. "I will even risk my carcase."

"Nay, Dicky Bowyer, not so," returned the knight. "It likes me not. Y'are sly indeed, but not speedy. Ye were a laggard ever."

"An't be so, Sir Daniel, here am I," cried another.

"The saints forfend!" said the knight. "Y'are speedy, but not sly. Ye would blunder me head-foremost into John Amend-All's camp. I thank you both for your good courage; but, in sooth, it may not be."

Then Hatch offered himself, and he also was refused.

"I want you here, good Bennet; y'are my right hand, indeed," returned the knight; and then several coming forward in a group, Sir Daniel at length selected one and gave him the letter.

"Now," he said, "upon your good speed and better discretion we do all depend. Bring me a good answer back, and before three weeks, I will have purged my forest of these vagabonds that brave us to our faces. But mark it well, Throgmorton: the matter is not easy. Ye must steal forth under night, and go like a fox; and how ye are to cross Till I know not, neither by the bridge nor ferry."

"I can swim," returned Throgmorton. "I will come soundly, fear not."

"Well, friend, get ye to the buttery," replied Sir Daniel. "Ye shall swim first of all in nut-brown ale." And with that he turned back into the hall.

"Sir Daniel hath a wise tongue," said Hatch, aside, to Dick. "See, now, where many a lesser man had glossed the matter over, he speaketh it out plainly to his company. Here is a danger, 'a saith, and here difficulty; and jesteth in the very saying. Nay, by St. Barbary, he is a born captain! Not a man but he is some deal heartened up! See how they fall again to work."

This praise of Sir Daniel put a thought in the lad's head.

"Bennet," he said, "how came my father by his end?"

"Ask me not that," replied Hatch. "I had no hand nor knowledge in it; furthermore, I will even be silent, Master Dick. For look you, in a man's own business there he may speak; but of hearsay matters and of common talk, not so. Ask me Sir Oliver — ay, or Carter, if ye will; not me."

And Hatch set off to make the rounds, leaving Dick in a muse.

"Wherefore would he not tell me?" thought the lad. "And wherefore named he Carter? Carter — nay, then Carter had a hand in it, perchance."

He entered the house, and passing some little way along a flagged and vaulted passage, came to the door of the cell where the hurt man lay groaning. At his entrance Carter started eagerly.

"Have ye brought the priest?" he cried.

"Not yet awhile," returned Dick. "Y' 'ave a word to tell me first. How came my father, Harry Shelton, by his death?"

The man's face altered instantly.

"I know not," he replied, doggedly.

"Nay, ye know well," returned Dick. "Seek not to put me by."

"I tell you I know not," repeated Carter.

"Then," said Dick, "ye shall die unshriven. Here am I, and here shall stay. There shall no priest come near you, rest assured. For of what avail is penitence, an ye have no mind to right those wrongs ye had a hand in? and without penitence, confession is but mockery."

"Ye say what ye mean not, Master Dick," said Carter, composedly. "It is ill threatening the dying, and becometh you (to speak truth) little. And for as little as it commends you, it shall serve you less. Stay, an ye please. Ye will condemn my soul — ye shall learn nothing! There is my last word to you." And the wounded man turned upon the other side.

Now, Dick, to say truth, had spoken hastily, and was ashamed of his threat. But he made one more effort.

"Carter," he said, "mistake me not. I know ye were but an instrument in the hands of others; a churl must obey his lord; I would not bear heavily on such an one. But I begin to learn upon many sides that this great duty lieth on my youth and ignorance, to avenge my father. Prithee, then, good Carter, set aside the memory of my threatenings, and in pure good-will and honest penitence give me a word of help."

The wounded man lay silent; nor, say what Dick pleased, could he extract another word from him.

"Well," said Dick, "I will go call the priest to you as ye desired; for howsoever ye be in fault to me or mine, I would not be willingly in fault to any, least of all to one upon the last change."

Again the old soldier heard him without speech or motion; even his groans he had suppressed; and as Dick turned and left the room, he was filled with admiration for that rugged fortitude.

"And yet," he thought, "of what use is courage without wit? Had his hands been clean, he would have spoken; his silence did confess the secret louder than words. Nay, upon all sides, proof floweth on me. Sir Daniel, he or his men, hath done this thing."

Dick paused in the stone passage with a heavy heart. At that hour, in the ebb of Sir Daniel's fortune, when he was beleaguered by the archers of the Black Arrow and proscribed by the victorious Yorkists, was Dick, also, to turn upon the man who had nourished and taught him, who had severely punished, indeed, but yet unwearyingly protected his youth? The necessity, if it should prove to be one, was cruel.

"Pray Heaven he be innocent!" he said.

And then steps sounded on the flagging, and Sir Oliver came gravely towards the lad.

"One seeketh you earnestly," said Dick.

"I am upon the way, good Richard," said the priest. "It is this poor Carter. Alack, he is beyond cure."

"And yet his soul is sicker than his body," answered Dick.

"Have ye seen him?" asked Sir Oliver, with a manifest start.

"I do but come from him," replied Dick.

"What said he? what said he?" snapped the priest, with extraordinary eagerness.

"He but cried for you the more piteously, Sir Oliver. It were well done to go the faster, for his hurt is grievous," returned the lad.

"I am straight for him," was the reply. "Well, we have all our sins. We must all come to our latter day, good Richard."

"Ay, sir; and it were well if we all came fairly," answered Dick.

The priest dropped his eyes, and with an inaudible benediction hurried on.

"He, too!" thought Dick — "he, that taught me in piety! Nay, then, what a world is this, if all that care for me be blood-guilty of my father's death? Vengeance! Alas! what a sore fate is mine, if I must be avenged upon my friends!"

The thought put Matcham in his head. He smiled at the remembrance of his strange companion, and then wondered where he was. Ever since they had come together to the doors of the Moat House the younger lad had disappeared, and Dick began to weary for a word with him.

About an hour after, mass being somewhat hastily run through by Sir Oliver, the company gathered in the hall for dinner. It was a long, low apartment, strewn with green rushes, and the walls hung with arras in a design of savage men and questioning bloodhounds; here and there hung spears and bows and bucklers; a fire blazed in the big chimney; there were arras-covered benches round the wall, and in the midst the table, fairly spread, awaited the arrival of the diners. Neither Sir Daniel nor his lady made their appearance. Sir Oliver himself was absent, and here again there was no word of Matcham. Dick began to grow alarmed, to recall his companion's melancholy forebodings, and to wonder to himself if any foul play had befallen him in that house.

After dinner he found Goody Hatch, who was hurrying to my Lady Brackley.

"Goody," he said, "where is Master Matcham, I prithee? I saw ye go in with him when we arrived."

The old woman laughed aloud.

“Ah, Master Dick,” she said, “y’ have a famous bright eye in your head, to be sure!” and laughed again.

“Nay, but where is he, indeed?” persisted Dick.

“Ye will never see him more,” she returned — ”never. It is sure.”

“An I do not,” returned the lad, “I will know the reason why. He came not hither of his full free will; such as I am, I am his best protector, and I will see him justly used. There be too many mysteries; I do begin to weary of the game!”

But as Dick was speaking, a heavy hand fell on his shoulder. It was Bennet Hatch that had come unperceived behind him. With a jerk of his thumb, the retainer dismissed his wife.

“Friend Dick,” he said, as soon as they were alone, “are ye a moon-struck natural? An ye leave not certain things in peace, ye were better in the salt sea than here in Tunstall Moat House. Y’ have questioned me; y’ have baited Carter; y’ have frighted the jack-priest with hints. Bear ye more wisely, fool; and even now, when Sir Daniel calleth you, show me a smooth face for the love of wisdom. Y’are to be sharply questioned. Look to your answers.”

“Hatch,” returned Dick, “in all this I smell a guilty conscience.”

“An ye go not the wiser, ye will soon smell blood,” replied Bennet. “I do but warn you. And here cometh one to call you.”

And indeed, at that very moment, a messenger came across the court to summon Dick into the presence of Sir Daniel.

CHAPTER II

THE TWO OATHS

Sir Daniel was in the hall; there he paced angrily before the fire, awaiting Dick's arrival. None was by except Sir Oliver, and he sat discreetly backward, thumbing and muttering over his breviary.

"Y' have sent for me, Sir Daniel?" said young Shelton.

"I have sent for you, indeed," replied the knight. "For what cometh to mine ears? Have I been to you so heavy a guardian that ye make haste to credit ill of me? Or sith that ye see me, for the nonce, some worsted, do ye think to quit my party? By the mass, your father was not so! Those he was near, those he stood by, come wind or weather. But you, Dick, y'are a fair-day friend, it seemeth, and now seek to clear yourself of your allegiance."

"An't please you, Sir Daniel, not so," returned Dick, firmly. "I am grateful and faithful, where gratitude and faith are due. And before more is said, I thank you, and I thank Sir Oliver; y' have great claims upon me both — none can have more; I were a hound if I forgot them."

"It is well," said Sir Daniel; and then, rising into anger: "Gratitude and faith are words, Dick Shelton," he continued; "but I look to deeds. In this hour of my peril, when my name is attainted, when my lands are forfeit, when this wood is full of men that hunger and thirst for my destruction, what doth gratitude? what doth faith? I have but a little company remaining; is it grateful or faithful to poison me their hearts with your insidious whisperings? Save me from such gratitude! But, come, now, what is it ye wish? Speak; we are here to answer. If ye have aught against me, stand forth and say it."

"Sir," replied Dick, "my father fell when I was yet a child. It hath come to mine ears that he was foully done by. It hath come to mine ears — for I will not dissemble — that ye had a hand in his undoing. And in all verity, I shall not be at peace in mine own mind, nor very clear to help you, till I have certain resolution of these doubts."

Sir Daniel sat down in a deep settle. He took his chin in his hand and looked at Dick fixedly.

"And ye think I would be guardian to the man's son that I had murdered?" he asked.

"Nay," said Dick, "pardon me if I answer churlishly; but indeed ye know right well a wardship is most profitable. All these years have ye not enjoyed my revenues, and led my men? Have ye not still my marriage? I wot not what it may be worth — it is worth something. Pardon me again; but if ye were base enough to slay a man under trust, here were, perhaps, reasons enough to move you to the lesser baseness."

"When I was a lad of your years," returned Sir Daniel, sternly, "my mind had not so turned upon suspicions. And Sir Oliver here," he added, "why should he, a priest, be guilty of this act?"

"Nay, Sir Daniel," said Dick, "but where the master biddeth there will the dog go. It is well known this priest is but your instrument. I speak very freely; the time is not for courtesies. Even as I speak, so would I be answered. And answer get I none! Ye but put more questions. I rede ye be ware, Sir Daniel; for in this way ye will but nourish and not satisfy my doubts."

"I will answer you fairly, Master Richard," said the knight. "Were I to pretend ye have not stirred my wrath, I were no honest man. But I will be just even in anger. Come to me with these words when y'are grown and come to man's estate, and I am no longer your guardian, and so helpless to resent them. Come to me then, and I will answer you as ye merit, with a buffet in the mouth. Till then ye have two courses: either swallow me down these insults, keep a silent tongue, and fight in the meanwhile for the man that fed and fought for your infancy; or else — the door standeth open, the woods are full of mine enemies — go."

The spirit with which these words were uttered, the looks with which they were accompanied, staggered Dick; and yet he could not but observe that he had got no answer.

"I desire nothing more earnestly, Sir Daniel, than to believe you," he replied. "Assure me ye are free from this."

"Will ye take my word of honour, Dick?" inquired the knight.

"That would I," answered the lad.

"I give it you," returned Sir Daniel. "Upon my word of honour, upon the eternal welfare of my spirit, and as I shall answer for my deeds hereafter, I had no hand nor portion in your father's death."

He extended his hand, and Dick took it eagerly. Neither of them observed the priest, who, at the pronunciation of that solemn and false oath, had half arisen from his seat in an agony of horror and remorse.

"Ah," cried Dick, "ye must find it in your great-heartedness to pardon me! I was a churl, indeed, to doubt of you. But ye have my hand upon it; I will doubt no more."

"Nay, Dick," replied Sir Daniel, "y'are forgiven. Ye know not the world and its calumnious nature."

"I was the more to blame," added Dick, "in that the rogues pointed, not directly at yourself, but at Sir Oliver."

As he spoke, he turned towards the priest, and paused in the middle of the last word. This tall, ruddy, corpulent, high-stepping man had fallen, you might say, to pieces; his colour was gone, his limbs were relaxed, his lips stammered prayers; and now, when Dick's eyes were fixed upon him suddenly, he cried out aloud, like some wild animal, and buried his face in his hands.

Sir Daniel was by him in two strides, and shook him fiercely by the shoulder. At the same moment Dick's suspicions reawakened.

"Nay," he said, "Sir Oliver may swear also. 'Twas him they accused."

"He shall swear," said the knight.

Sir Oliver speechlessly waved his arms.

"Ay, by the mass! but ye shall swear," cried Sir Daniel, beside himself with fury. "Here, upon this book, ye shall swear," he continued, picking up the breviary, which had fallen to the ground. "What! Ye make me doubt you! Swear, I say; swear!"

But the priest was still incapable of speech. His terror of Sir Daniel, his terror of perjury, risen to about an equal height, strangled him.

And just then, through the high, stained-glass window of the hall, a black arrow crashed, and struck, and stuck quivering, in the midst of the long table.

Sir Oliver, with a loud scream, fell fainting on the rushes; while the knight, followed by Dick, dashed into the court and up the nearest corkscrew stair to the battlements. The sentries were all on the alert. The sun shone quietly on green lawns dotted with trees, and on the wooded hills of the forest which enclosed the view. There was no sign of a besieger.

"Whence came that shot?" asked the knight.

"From yonder clump, Sir Daniel," returned a sentinel.

The knight stood a little, musing. Then he turned to Dick. "Dick," he said, "keep me an eye upon these men; I leave you in charge here. As for the priest, he shall clear himself, or I will know the reason why. I do almost begin to share in your suspicions. He shall swear, trust me, or we shall prove him guilty."

Dick answered somewhat coldly, and the knight, giving him a piercing glance, hurriedly returned to the hall. His first glance was for the arrow. It was the first of these missiles he had seen, and as he turned it to and fro, the dark hue of it touched him with some fear. Again there was some writing: one word — ”Earthed."

"Ay," he broke out, "they know I am home, then. Earthed! Ay, but there is not a dog among them fit to dig me out."

Sir Oliver had come to himself, and now scrambled to his feet.

"Alack, Sir Daniel!" he moaned, "y' 'ave sworn a dread oath; y'are doomed to the end of time."

"Ay," returned the knight, "I have sworn an oath, indeed, thou chucklehead; but thyself shalt swear a greater. It shall be on the blessed cross of Holywood. Look to it; get the words ready. It shall be sworn to-night."

"Now, may Heaven lighten you!" replied the priest; "may Heaven incline your heart from this iniquity!"

"Look you, my good father," said Sir Daniel, "if y'are for piety, I say no more; ye begin late, that is all. But if y'are in any sense bent upon wisdom, hear me. This lad beginneth to irk me like a wasp. I have a need for him, for I would sell his marriage. But I tell you, in all plainness, if that he continue to weary me, he shall go join his father. I give orders now to change him to the chamber above the chapel. If that ye can swear your innocency with a good, solid oath and an assured countenance, it is well; the lad will be at peace a little, and I will spare him. If that ye stammer or blench, or anyways boggle at the swearing, he will not believe you; and by the mass, he shall die. There is for your thinking on."

"The chamber above the chapel!" gasped the priest.

"That same," replied the knight. "So if ye desire to save him, save him; and if ye desire not, prithee, go to, and let me be at peace! For an I had been a hasty man, I would already have put my sword through you, for your intolerable cowardice and folly. Have ye chosen? Say!"

"I have chosen," said the priest. "Heaven pardon me, I will do evil for good. I will swear for the lad's sake."

"So is it best!" said Sir Daniel. "Send for him, then, speedily. Ye shall see him alone. Yet I shall have an eye on you. I shall be here in the panel room."

The knight raised the arras and let it fall again behind him. There was the sound of a spring opening; then followed the creaking of trod stairs.

Sir Oliver, left alone, cast a timorous glance upward at the arras-covered wall, and crossed himself with every appearance of terror and contrition.

"Nay, if he is in the chapel room," the priest murmured, "were it at my soul's cost, I must save him."

Three minutes later, Dick, who had been summoned by another messenger, found Sir Oliver standing by the hall table, resolute and pale.

"Richard Shelton," he said, "ye have required an oath from me. I might complain, I might deny you; but my heart is moved towards you for the past, and I will even content you as ye choose. By the true cross of Holywood, I did not slay your father."

"Sir Oliver," returned Dick, "when first we read John Amend-All's paper, I was convinced of so much. But suffer me to put two questions. Ye did not slay him; granted. But had ye no hand in it?"

"None," said Sir Oliver. And at the same time he began to contort his face, and signal with his mouth and eyebrows, like one who desired to convey a warning, yet dared not utter a sound.

Dick regarded him in wonder; then he turned and looked all about him at the empty hall.

“What make ye?” he inquired.

“Why, naught,” returned the priest, hastily smoothing his countenance. “I make naught; I do but suffer; I am sick. I — I — prithee, Dick, I must begone. On the true cross of Holywood, I am clean innocent alike of violence or treachery. Content ye, good lad. Farewell!”

And he made his escape from the apartment with unusual alacrity.

Dick remained rooted to the spot, his eyes wandering about the room, his face a changing picture of various emotions, wonder, doubt, suspicion, and amusement. Gradually, as his mind grew clearer, suspicion took the upper hand, and was succeeded by certainty of the worst. He raised his head, and, as he did so, violently started. High upon the wall there was the figure of a savage hunter woven in the tapestry. With one hand he held a horn to his mouth; in the other he brandished a stout spear. His face was dark, for he was meant to represent an African.

Now, here was what had startled Richard Shelton. The sun had moved away from the hall windows, and at the same time the fire had blazed up high on the wide hearth, and shed a changeful glow upon the roof and hangings. In this light the figure of the black hunter had winked at him with a white eyelid.

He continued staring at the eye. The light shone upon it like a gem; it was liquid, it was alive. Again the white eyelid closed upon it for a fraction of a second, and the next moment it was gone.

There could be no mistake. The live eye that had been watching him through a hole in the tapestry was gone. The firelight no longer shone on a reflecting surface.

And instantly Dick awoke to the terrors of his position. Hatch’s warning, the mute signals of the priest, this eye that had observed him from the wall, ran together in his mind. He saw he had been put upon his trial, that he had once more betrayed his suspicions, and that, short of some miracle, he was lost.

“If I cannot get me forth out of this house,” he thought, “I am dead man! And this poor Matcham, too — to what a cockatrice’s nest have I not led him!”

He was still so thinking, when there came one in haste, to bid him help in changing his arms, his clothing, and his two or three books, to a new chamber.

“A new chamber?” he repeated. “Wherefore so? What chamber?”

“’Tis one above the chapel,” answered the messenger.

“It hath stood long empty,” said Dick, musing. “What manner of room is it?”

“Nay, a brave room,” returned the man. “But yet” — lowering his voice — ”they call it haunted.”

“Haunted?” repeated Dick, with a chill. “I have not heard of it. Nay, then, and by whom?”

The messenger looked about him; and then, in a low whisper, “By the sacrist of St. John’s,” he said. “They had him there to sleep one night, and in the morning — whew! — he was gone. The devil had taken him, they said; the more betoken, he had drunk late the night before.”

Dick followed the man with black forebodings.

CHAPTER III

THE ROOM OVER THE CHAPEL

From the battlements nothing further was observed. The sun journeyed westward, and at last went down; but, to the eyes of all these eager sentinels, no living thing appeared in the neighbourhood of Tunstall House.

When the night was at length fairly come, Throgmorton was led to a room overlooking an angle of the moat. Thence he was lowered with every precaution; the ripple of his swimming was audible for a brief period; then a black figure was observed to land by the branches of a willow and crawl away among the grass. For some half-hour Sir Daniel and Hatch stood eagerly giving ear; but all remained quiet. The messenger had got away in safety.

Sir Daniel's brow grew clearer. He turned to Hatch.

"Bennet," he said, "this John Amend-All is no more than a man, ye see. He sleepeth. We will make a good end of him, go to!"

All the afternoon and evening, Dick had been ordered hither and thither, one command following another, till he was bewildered with the number and the hurry of commissions. All that time he had seen no more of Sir Oliver, and nothing of Matcham; and yet both the priest and the young lad ran continually in his mind. It was now his chief purpose to escape from Tunstall Moat House as speedily as might be; and yet, before he went, he desired a word with both of these.

At length, with a lamp in one hand, he mounted to his new apartment. It was large, low, and somewhat dark. The window looked upon the moat, and although it was so high up, it was heavily barred. The bed was luxurious, with one pillow of down and one of lavender, and a red coverlet worked in a pattern of roses. All about the walls were cupboards, locked and padlocked, and concealed from view by hangings of dark-coloured arras. Dick made the round, lifting the arras, sounding the panels, seeking vainly to open the cupboards. He assured himself that the door was strong and the bolt solid; then he set down his lamp upon a bracket, and once more looked all around.

For what reason had he been given this chamber? It was larger and finer than his own. Could it conceal a snare? Was there a secret entrance? Was it, indeed, haunted? His blood ran a little chilly in his veins.

Immediately over him the heavy foot of a sentry trod the leads. Below him, he knew, was the arched roof of the chapel; and next to the chapel was the hall. Certainly there was a secret passage in the hall; the eye that had watched him from the arras gave him proof of that. Was it not more than probable that the passage extended to the chapel, and, if so, that it had an opening in his room?

To sleep in such a place, he felt, would be foolhardy. He made his weapons ready, and took his position in a corner of the room behind the door. If ill was intended, he would sell his life dear.

The sound of many feet, the challenge, and the password sounded overhead along the battlements; the watch was being changed.

And just then there came a scratching at the door of the chamber; it grew a little louder; then a whisper:

“Dick, Dick, it is I!”

Dick ran to the door, drew the bolt, and admitted Matcham. He was very pale, and carried a lamp in one hand and a drawn dagger in the other.

“Shut me the door,” he whispered. “Swift, Dick! This house is full of spies; I hear their feet follow me in the corridors; I hear them breathe behind the arras.”

“Well, content you,” returned Dick, “it is closed. We are safe for this while, if there be safety anywhere within these walls. But my heart is glad to see you. By the mass, lad, I thought ye were sped! Where hid ye?”

“It matters not,” returned Matcham. “Since we be met, it matters not. But, Dick, are your eyes open? Have they told you of to-morrow’s doings?”

“Not they,” replied Dick. “What make they to-morrow?”

“To-morrow, or to-night, I know not,” said the other, “but one time or other, Dick, they do intend upon your life. I had the proof of it; I have heard them whisper; nay, they as good as told me.”

“Ay,” returned Dick, “is it so? I had thought as much.”

And he told him the day’s occurrences at length.

When it was done, Matcham arose and began, in turn, to examine the apartment.

“No,” he said, “there is no entrance visible. Yet ‘tis a pure certainty there is one. Dick, I will stay by you. An y’are to die, I will die with you. And I can help — look! I have stolen a dagger — I will do my best! And meanwhile, an ye know of any issue, any sally-port we could get opened, or any window that we might descend by, I will most joyfully face any jeopardy to flee with you.”

“Jack,” said Dick, “by the mass, Jack, y’are the best soul, and the truest, and the bravest in all England! Give me your hand, Jack.”

And he grasped the other’s hand in silence.

“I will tell you,” he resumed. “There is a window, out of which the messenger descended; the rope should still be in the chamber. ‘Tis a hope.”

“Hist!” said Matcham.

Both gave ear. There was a sound below the floor; then it paused, and then began again.

“Some one walketh in the room below,” whispered Matcham.

“Nay,” returned Dick, “there is no room below; we are above the chapel. It is my murderer in the secret passage. Well, let him come; it shall go hard with him”; and he ground his teeth.

“Blow me the lights out,” said the other. “Perchance he will betray himself.”

They blew out both the lamps and lay still as death. The footfalls underneath were very soft, but they were clearly audible. Several times they came and went; and then there was a loud jar of a key turning in a lock, followed by a considerable silence.

Presently the steps began again, and then, all of a sudden, a chink of light appeared in the planking of the room in a far corner. It widened; a trap-door was being opened, letting in a gush of light. They could see the strong hand pushing it up; and Dick raised his cross-bow, waiting for the head to follow.

But now there came an interruption. From a distant corner of the Moat House shouts began to be heard, and first one voice, and then several, crying aloud upon a name. This noise had plainly disconcerted the murderer, for the trap-door was silently lowered to its place, and the steps hurriedly returned, passed once more close below the lads, and died away in the distance.

Here was a moment’s respite. Dick breathed deep, and then, and not till then, he gave ear to the disturbance which had interrupted the attack, and which was now rather increasing than diminishing. All about the Moat House feet were running, doors were opening and slamming, and still the voice of Sir Daniel towered above all this bustle, shouting for “Joanna.”

“Joanna!” repeated Dick. “Why, who the murrain should this be? Here is no Joanna, nor ever hath been. What meaneth it?”

Matcham was silent. He seemed to have drawn further away. But only a little faint starlight entered by the window, and at the far end of the apartment, where the pair were, the darkness was complete.

“Jack,” said Dick, “I wot not where ye were all day. Saw ye this Joanna?”

“Nay,” returned Matcham, “I saw her not.”

“Nor heard tell of her?” he pursued.

The steps drew nearer. Sir Daniel was still roaring the name of Joanna from the courtyard.

“Did ye hear of her?” repeated Dick.

“I heard of her,” said Matcham.

“How your voice twitters! What aileth you?” said Dick. “’Tis a most excellent good fortune, this Joanna; it will take their minds from us.”

"Dick," cried Matcham, "I am lost; we are both lost. Let us flee if there be yet time. They will not rest till they have found me. Or, see! let me go forth; when they have found me, ye may flee. Let me forth, Dick — good Dick, let me away!"

She was groping for the bolt, when Dick at last comprehended.

"By the mass!" he cried, "y'are no Jack; y'are Joanna Sedley; y'are the maid that would not marry me!"

The girl paused, and stood silent and motionless. Dick, too, was silent for a little; then he spoke again.

"Joanna," he said, "y' 'ave saved my life, and I have saved yours; and we have seen blood flow, and been friends and enemies — ay, and I took my belt to thrash you; and all that time I thought ye were a boy. But now death has me, and my time's out, and before I die I must say this: Y'are the best maid and the bravest under heaven, and, if only I could live, I would marry you blithely; and, live or die, I love you."

She answered nothing.

"Come," he said, "speak up, Jack. Come, be a good maid, and say ye love me!"

"Why, Dick," she cried, "would I be here?"

"Well, see ye here," continued Dick, "an we but escape whole we'll marry; and an we're to die, we die, and there's an end on't. But now that I think, how found ye my chamber?"

"I asked it of Dame Hatch," she answered.

"Well, the dame's staunch," he answered; "she'll not tell upon you. We have time before us."

And just then, as if to contradict his words, feet came down the corridor, and a fist beat roughly on the door.

"Here!" cried a voice. "Open, Master Dick; open!"

Dick neither moved nor answered.

"It is all over," said the girl; and she put her arms about Dick's neck.

One after another, men came trooping to the door. Then Sir Daniel arrived himself, and there was a sudden cessation of the noise.

"Dick," cried the knight, "be not an ass. The Seven Sleepers had been awake ere now. We know she is within there. Open, then, the door, man."

Dick was again silent.

"Down with it," said Sir Daniel. And immediately his followers fell savagely upon the door with foot and fist. Solid as it was, and strongly bolted, it would soon have given way; but once more fortune interfered. Over the thunder-storm of blows the cry of a sentinel was heard; it was followed by another; shouts ran along the battlements, shouts answered out of the wood. In the first moment of alarm it sounded as if the foresters were carrying the Moat House by assault.

And Sir Daniel and his men, desisting instantly from their attack upon Dick's chamber, hurried to defend the walls.

"Now," cried Dick, "we are saved."

He seized the great old bedstead with both hands, and bent himself in vain to move it.

"Help me, Jack. For your life's sake, help me stoutly!" he cried.

Between them, with a huge effort, they dragged the big frame of oak across the room, and thrust it endwise to the chamber door.

"Ye do but make things worse," said Joanna, sadly. "He will then enter by the trap."

"Not so," replied Dick. "He durst not tell his secret to so many. It is by the trap that we shall flee. Hark! The attack is over. Nay, it was none!"

It had, indeed, been no attack; it was the arrival of another party of stragglers from the defeat of Risingham that had disturbed Sir Daniel. They had run the gauntlet under cover of the darkness; they had been admitted by the great gate; and now, with a great stamping of hoofs and jingle of accoutrements and arms, they were dismounting in the court.

"He will return anon," said Dick. "To the trap!"

He lighted a lamp, and they went together into the corner of the room. The open chink through which some light still glittered was easily discovered, and, taking a stout sword from his small armoury, Dick thrust it deep into the seam, and weighed strenuously on the hilt. The trap moved, gaped a little, and at length came widely open. Seizing it with their hands, the two young folk threw it back. It disclosed a few steps descending, and at the foot of them, where the would-be murderer had left it, a burning lamp.

"Now," said Dick, "go first and take the lamp. I will follow to close the trap."

So they descended one after the other, and as Dick lowered the trap, the blows began once again to thunder on the panels of the door.

CHAPTER IV

THE PASSAGE

The passage in which Dick and Joanna now found themselves was narrow, dirty, and short. At the other end of it, a door stood partly open; the same door, without doubt, that they had heard the man unlocking. Heavy cobwebs hung from the roof; and the paved flooring echoed hollow under the lightest tread.

Beyond the door there were two branches, at right angles. Dick chose one of them at random, and the pair hurried, with echoing footsteps, along the hollow of the chapel roof. The top of the arched ceiling rose like a whale's back in the dim glimmer of the lamp. Here and there were spy-holes, concealed, on the other side, by the carving of the cornice; and looking down through one of these, Dick saw the paved floor of the chapel — the altar, with its burning tapers — and stretched before it on the steps, the figure of Sir Oliver praying with uplifted hands.

At the other end, they descended a few steps. The passage grew narrower; the wall upon one hand was now of wood; the noise of people talking, and a faint flickering of lights, came through the interstices; and presently they came to a round hole about the size of a man's eye, and Dick, looking down through it, beheld the interior of the hall, and some half-a-dozen men sitting, in their jacks, about the table, drinking deep and demolishing a venison pie. These were certainly some of the late arrivals.

"Here is no help," said Dick. "Let us try back."

"Nay," said Joanna; "maybe the passage goeth farther."

And she pushed on. But a few yards farther the passage ended at the top of a short flight of steps; and it became plain that, as long as the soldiers occupied the hall, escape was impossible upon that side.

They retraced their steps with all imaginable speed, and set forward to explore the other branch. It was exceedingly narrow, scarce wide enough for a large man; and it led them continually up and down by little breakneck stairs, until even Dick had lost all notion of his whereabouts.

At length it grew both narrower and lower; the stairs continued to descend; the walls on either hand became damp and slimy to the touch; and far in front of them they heard the squeaking and scuttling of the rats.

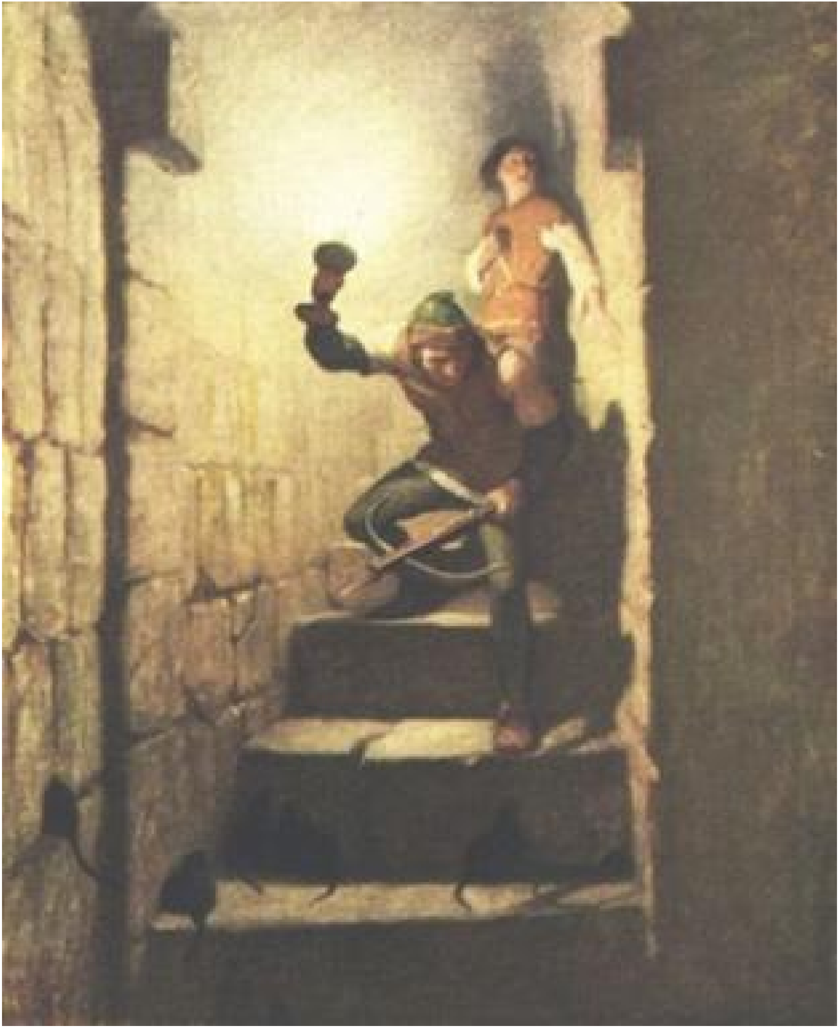
"We must be in the dungeons," Dick remarked.

"And still there is no outlet," added Joanna.

"Nay, but an outlet there must be!" Dick answered.

Presently, sure enough, they came to a sharp angle, and then the passage ended in a flight of steps. On the top of that there was a solid flag of stone by way of trap, and to this they both set their backs. It was immovable.

“Some one holdeth it,” suggested Joanna.



“We must be in the dungeons,” Dick remarked

“Not so,” said Dick; “for were a man strong as ten, he must still yield a little. But this resisteth like dead rock. There is a weight upon the trap. Here is no issue; and, by my sooth, good Jack, we are here as fairly prisoners as though the gyves were on our ankle bones. Sit ye then down, and let us talk. After awhile we shall return, when perchance they shall be less carefully upon their guard; and, who knoweth? we may break out and stand a chance. But, in my poor opinion, we are as good as shent.”

“Dick!” she cried, “alas the day that ever ye should have seen me!

For like a most unhappy and unthankful maid, it is I have led you hither.”

“What cheer!” returned Dick. “It was all written, and that which is written, willy nilly, cometh still to pass. But tell me a little what manner of a maid ye are, and how ye came into Sir Daniel’s hands; that will do better than to bemoan yourself, whether for your sake or mine.”

“I am an orphan, like yourself, of father and mother,” said Joanna; “and for my great misfortune, Dick, and hitherto for yours, I am a rich marriage. My Lord Foxham had me to ward; yet it appears Sir Daniel bought the marriage of me from the king, and a right dear price he paid for it. So here was I, poor babe, with two great and rich men fighting which should marry me, and I still at nurse! Well, then the world changed, and there was a new chancellor, and Sir Daniel bought the warding of me over the Lord Foxham’s head. And then the world changed again, and Lord Foxham bought my marriage over Sir Daniel’s; and from then to now it went on ill betwixt the two of them. But still Lord Foxham kept me in his hands, and was a good lord to me. And at last I was to be married — or sold, if ye like it better. Five hundred pounds Lord Foxham was to get for me. Hamley was the groom’s name, and to-morrow, Dick, of all days in the year, was I to be betrothed. Had it not come to Sir Daniel, I had been wedded, sure — and never seen thee, Dick — dear Dick!”

And here she took his hand, and kissed it, with the prettiest grace; and Dick drew her hand to him and did the like.

“Well,” she went on, “Sir Daniel took me unawares in the garden, and made me dress in these men’s clothes, which is a deadly sin for a woman; and, besides, they fit me not. He rode with me to Kettley, as ye saw, telling me I was to marry you; but I, in my heart, made sure I would marry Hamley in his teeth.”

“Ay!” cried Dick, “and so ye loved this Hamley!”

“Nay,” replied Joanna, “not I. I did but hate Sir Daniel. And then, Dick, ye helped me, and ye were right kind, and very bold, and my heart turned towards you in mine own despite; and now, if we can in any way compass it, I would marry you with right good-will. And if, by cruel destiny, it may not be, still ye’ll be dear to me. While my heart beats, it’ll be true to you.”

“And I,” said Dick, “that never cared a straw for any manner of woman until now, I took to you when I thought ye were a boy. I had a pity to you, and knew not why. When I would have belted you, the hand failed me. But when ye owned ye were a maid, Jack — for still I will call you Jack — I made sure ye were the maid for me. Hark!” he said, breaking off — ”one cometh.”

And indeed a heavy tread was now audible in the echoing passage, and the rats again fled in armies.

Dick reconnoitred his position. The sudden turn gave him a post of vantage. He could thus shoot in safety from the cover of the wall. But it was plain the light was too near him, and, running some way forward, he set down the lamp in the middle of the passage, and then returned to watch.

Presently, at the far end of the passage, Bennet hove in sight. He seemed to be alone, and he carried in his hand a burning torch, which made him the better mark.

"Stand, Bennet!" cried Dick. "Another step, and y'are dead."

"So here ye are," returned Hatch, peering forward into the darkness. "I see you not. Aha! y' 'ave done wisely, Dick; y' 'ave put your lamp before you. By my sooth, but, though it was done to shoot my own knave body, I do rejoice to see ye profit of my lessons! And now, what make ye? what seek ye here? Why would ye shoot upon an old, kind friend? And have ye the young gentlewoman there?"

"Nay, Bennet, it is I should question and you answer," replied Dick. "Why am I in this jeopardy of my life? Why do men come privily to slay me in my bed? Why am I now fleeing in mine own guardian's strong house, and from the friends that I have lived among and never injured?"

"Master Dick, Master Dick," said Bennet, "what told I you? Y'are brave, but the most uncrafty lad that I can think upon!"

"Well," returned Dick, "I see ye know all, and that I am doomed indeed. It is well. Here, where I am, I stay. Let Sir Daniel get me out if he be able!"

Hatch was silent for a space.

"Hark ye," he began, "I return to Sir Daniel, to tell him where ye are, and how posted; for, in truth, it was to that end he sent me. But you, if ye are no fool, had best be gone ere I return."

"Be gone!" repeated Dick. "I would be gone already, an I wist how. I cannot move the trap."

"Put me your hand into the corner, and see what ye find there," replied Bennet. "Throgmorton's rope is still in the brown chamber. Fare ye well."

And Hatch, turning upon his heel, disappeared again into the windings of the passage.

Dick instantly returned for his lamp, and proceeded to act upon the hint. At one corner of the trap there was a deep cavity in the wall. Pushing his arm into the aperture, Dick found an iron bar, which he thrust vigorously upwards. There followed a snapping noise, and the slab of stone instantly started in its bed.

They were free of the passage. A little exercise of strength easily raised the trap; and they came forth into a vaulted chamber, opening on one hand upon the court, where one or two fellows, with bare arms, were rubbing down the horses of the last arrivals. A torch or two, each stuck in an iron ring against the wall, changefully lit up the scene.

CHAPTER V

HOW DICK CHANGED SIDES

Dick, blowing out his lamp lest it should attract attention, led the way up-stairs and along the corridor. In the brown chamber the rope had been made fast to the frame of an exceeding heavy and ancient bed. It had not been detached, and Dick, taking the coil to the window, began to lower it slowly and cautiously into the darkness of the night. Joan stood by; but as the rope lengthened, and still Dick continued to pay it out, extreme fear began to conquer her resolution.

"Dick," she said, "is it so deep? I may not essay it. I should infallibly fall, good Dick."

It was just at the delicate moment of the operations that she spoke. Dick started; the remainder of the coil slipped from his grasp, and the end fell with a splash into the moat. Instantly, from the battlement above, the voice of a sentinel cried, "Who goes?"

"A murrain!" cried Dick. "We are paid now! Down with you — take the rope."

"I cannot," she cried, recoiling.

"An ye cannot, no more can I," said Shelton. "How can I swim the moat without you? Do you desert me, then?"

"Dick," she gasped, "I cannot. The strength is gone from me."

"By the mass, then, we are all shent!" he shouted, stamping with his foot; and then, hearing steps, he ran to the room door and sought to close it.

Before he could shoot the bolt, strong arms were thrusting it back upon him from the other side. He struggled for a second; then, feeling himself overpowered, ran back to the window. The girl had fallen against the wall in the embrasure of the window; she was more than half insensible; and when he tried to raise her in his arms, her body was limp and unresponsive.

At the same moment the men who had forced the door against him laid hold upon him. The first he poniarded at a blow, and the others falling back for a second in some disorder, he profited by the chance, bestrode the window-sill, seized the cord in both hands, and let his body slip.

The cord was knotted, which made it the easier to descend; but so furious was Dick's hurry, and so small his experience of such gymnastics, that he span round and round in mid-air like a criminal upon a gibbet, and now beat his head, and now bruised his hands, against the rugged stonework of the wall. The air roared in his ears; he saw the stars overhead, and the reflected stars below him in the moat, whirling like dead leaves before the tempest. And then he lost hold, and fell, and soused head over ears into the icy water.

When he came to the surface his hand encountered the rope, which, newly lightened of his weight, was swinging wildly to and fro. There was a red glow overhead, and looking up, he saw, by the light of several torches and a cresset full of burning coals, the battlements lined with faces. He saw the men’s eyes turning hither and thither in quest of him; but he was too far below, the light reached him not, and they looked in vain.

And now he perceived that the rope was considerably too long, and he began to struggle as well as he could towards the other side of the moat, still keeping his head above water. In this way he got much more than half-way over; indeed the bank was almost within reach, before the rope began to draw him back by its own weight. Taking his courage in both hands, he left go and made a leap for the trailing sprays of willow that had already, that same evening, helped Sir Daniel’s messenger to land. He went down, rose again, sank a second time, and then his hand caught a branch, and with the speed of thought he had dragged himself into the thick of the tree and clung there, dripping and panting, and still half uncertain of his escape.

But all this had not been done without a considerable splashing, which had so far indicated his position to the men along the battlements. Arrows and quarrels fell thick around him in the darkness, thick like driving hail; and suddenly a torch was thrown down — flared through the air in its swift passage — stuck for a moment on the edge of the bank, where it burned high and lit up its whole surroundings like a bonfire — and then, in a good hour for Dick, slipped off, plumped into the moat, and was instantly extinguished.

It had served its purpose. The marksmen had had time to see the willow, and Dick ensconced among its boughs; and though the lad instantly sprang higher up the bank, and ran for his life, he was yet not quick enough to escape a shot. An arrow struck him in the shoulder, another grazed his head.

The pain of his wounds lent him wings; and he had no sooner got upon the level than he took to his heels and ran straight before him in the dark, without a thought for the direction of his flight.

For a few steps missiles followed him, but these soon ceased; and when at length he came to a halt and looked behind, he was already a good way from the Moat House, though he could still see the torches moving to and fro along its battlements.

He leaned against a tree, streaming with blood and water, bruised, wounded, alone, and unarmed. For all that, he had saved his life for that bout; and though Joanna remained behind in the power of Sir

Daniel, he neither blamed himself for an accident that it had been beyond his power to prevent, nor did he augur any fatal consequences to the girl herself. Sir Daniel was cruel, but he was not likely to be cruel to a young gentlewoman who had other protectors, willing and able to bring him to account. It was more probable he would make haste to marry her to some friend of his own.

"Well," thought Dick, "between then and now I will find me the means to bring that traitor under; for I think, by the mass, that I be now absolved from any gratitude or obligation; and when war is open, there is a fair chance for all."

In the meanwhile, here he was in a sore plight.

For some little way farther he struggled forward through the forest; but what with the pain of his wounds, the darkness of the night, and the extreme uneasiness and confusion of his mind, he soon became equally unable to guide himself or to continue to push through the close undergrowth, and he was fain at length to sit down and lean his back against a tree.

When he awoke from something betwixt sleep and swooning, the grey of the morning had begun to take the place of night. A little chilly breeze was bustling among the trees, and as he still sat staring before him, only half awake, he became aware of something dark that swung to and fro among the branches, some hundred yards in front of him. The progressive brightening of the day and the return of his own senses at last enabled him to recognise the object. It was a man hanging from the bough of a tall oak. His head had fallen forward on his breast; but at every stronger puff of wind his body span round and round, and his legs and arms tossed, like some ridiculous plaything.

Dick clambered to his feet, and, staggering and leaning on the tree-trunks as he went, drew near to this grim object.

The bough was perhaps twenty feet above the ground, and the poor fellow had been drawn up so high by his executioners that his boots swung clear above Dick's reach; and as his hood had been drawn over his face, it was impossible to recognise the man.

Dick looked about him right and left; and at last he perceived that the other end of the cord had been made fast to the trunk of a little hawthorn which grew, thick with blossom, under the lofty arcade of the oak. With his dagger, which alone remained to him of all his arms, young Shelton severed the rope, and instantly, with a dead thump, the corpse fell in a heap upon the ground.

Dick raised the hood; it was Throgmorton, Sir Daniel's messenger. He had not gone far upon his errand. A paper, which had apparently escaped the notice of the men of the Black Arrow, stuck from the bosom of his doublet, and Dick, pulling it forth, found it was Sir Daniel's letter to Lord Wensleydale.

"Come," thought he, "if the world changes yet again, I may have here the wherewithal to shame Sir Daniel — nay, and perchance to bring him to the block."

And he put the paper in his own bosom, said a prayer over the dead man, and set forth again through the woods.

His fatigue and weakness increased; his ears sang, his steps faltered, his mind at intervals failed him, so low had he been brought by loss of blood. Doubtless he made many deviations from his true path, but at last he came out upon the highroad, not very far from Tunstall hamlet.

A rough voice bid him stand.

"Stand?" repeated Dick. "By the mass, but I am nearer falling."

And he suited the action to the word, and fell all his length upon the road.

Two men came forth out of the thicket, each in green forest jerkin, each with long-bow and quiver and short sword.

"Why, Lawless," said the younger of the two, "it is young Shelton."

"Ay, this will be as good as bread to John Amend-All," returned the other. "Though, faith, he hath been to the wars. Here is a tear in his scalp that must 'a' cost him many a good ounce of blood."

"And here," added Greensheve, "is a hole in his shoulder that must have pricked him well. Who hath done this, think ye? If it be one of ours, he may all to prayer; Ellis will give him a short shrift and a long rope."

"Up with the cub," said Lawless. "Clap him on my back."

And then, when Dick had been hoisted to his shoulders, and he had taken the lad's arms about his neck, and got a firm hold of him, the ex-Grey Friar added:

"Keep ye the post, brother Greensheve. I will on with him by myself."

So Greensheve returned to his ambush on the wayside, and Lawless trudged down the hill, whistling as he went, with Dick, still in a dead faint, comfortably settled on his shoulders.

The sun rose as he came out of the skirts of the wood and saw Tunstall hamlet straggling up the opposite hill. All seemed quiet, but a strong post of some half a score of archers lay close by the bridge on either side of the road, and, as soon as they perceived Lawless with his burthen, began to bestir themselves and set arrow to string like vigilant sentries.

"Who goes?" cried the man in command.

"Will Lawless, by the rood — ye know me as well as your own hand," returned the outlaw, contemptuously.

"Give the word, Lawless," returned the other.

"Now, Heaven lighten thee, thou great fool," replied Lawless. "Did I not tell it thee myself? But ye are all mad for this playing at soldiers.

When I am in the greenwood, give me greenwood ways; and my word for this tide is: ‘A fig for all mock soldiery!’”

“Lawless, ye but show an ill example; give us the word, fool jester,” said the commander of the post.

“And if I had forgotten it?” asked the other.

“An ye had forgotten it — as I know y’ ‘ave not — by the mass, I would clap an arrow into your big body,” returned the first.

“Nay, an y’are so ill a jester,” said Lawless, “ye shall have your word for me. ‘Duckworth and Shelton’ is the word; and here, to the illustration, is Shelton on my shoulders, and to Duckworth do I carry him.”

“Pass, Lawless,” said the sentry.

“And where is John?” asked the Grey Friar.

“He holdeth a court, by the mass, and taketh rents as to the manner born!” cried another of the company.

So it proved. When Lawless got as far up the village as the little inn, he found Ellis Duckworth surrounded by Sir Daniel’s tenants, and, by the right of his good company of archers, coolly taking rents, and giving written receipts in return for them. By the faces of the tenants, it was plain how little this proceeding pleased them; for they argued very rightly that they would simply have to pay them twice.

As soon as he knew what had brought Lawless, Ellis dismissed the remainder of the tenants, and, with every mark of interest and apprehension, conducted Dick into an inner chamber of the inn. There the lad’s hurts were looked to; and he was recalled, by simple remedies, to consciousness.

“Dear lad,” said Ellis, pressing his hand, “y’are in a friend’s hands that loved your father, and loves you for his sake. Rest ye a little quietly, for ye are somewhat out of case. Then shall ye tell me your story, and betwixt the two of us we shall find a remedy for all.”

A little later in the day, and after Dick had awakened from a comfortable slumber to find himself still very weak, but clearer in mind and easier in body, Ellis returned, and sitting down by the bedside, begged him, in the name of his father, to relate the circumstance of his escape from Tunstall Moat House. There was something in the strength of Duckworth’s frame, in the honesty of his brown face, in the clearness and shrewdness of his eyes, that moved Dick to obey him; and from first to last the lad told him the story of his two days’ adventures.

“Well,” said Ellis, when he had done, “see what the kind saints have done for you, Dick Shelton, not alone to save your body in so numerous and deadly perils, but to bring you into my hands that have no dearer wish than to assist your father’s son. Be but true to me — and I see y’are true — and betwixt you and me, we shall bring that false-heart traitor to the death."

"Will ye assault the house?" asked Dick.

"I were mad, indeed, to think of it," returned Ellis. "He hath too much power; his men gather to him; those that gave me the slip last night, and by the mass came in so handily for you — those have made him safe. Nay, Dick, to the contrary, thou and I and my brave bowmen, we must all slip from this forest speedily, and leave Sir Daniel free."

"My mind misgiveth me for Jack," said the lad.

"For Jack!" repeated Duckworth. "O, I see, for the wench! Nay, Dick, I promise you, if there come talk of any marriage we shall act at once; till then, or till the time is ripe, we shall all disappear, even like shadows at morning; Sir Daniel shall look east and west, and see none enemies; he shall think, by the mass, that he hath dreamed awhile, and hath now awakened in his bed. But our four eyes, Dick, shall follow him right close, and our four hands — so help us all the army of the saints! — shall bring that traitor low!"

Two days later Sir Daniel's garrison had grown to such a strength that he ventured on a sally, and at the head of some two-score horsemen, pushed without opposition as far as Tunstall hamlet. Not an arrow flew, not a man stirred in the thicket; the bridge was no longer guarded, but stood open to all comers; and as Sir Daniel crossed it, he saw the villagers looking timidly from their doors.

Presently one of them, taking heart of grace, came forward, and with the lowliest salutations, presented a letter to the knight.

His face darkened as he read the contents. It ran thus:

To the most untrue and cruel gentylman, Sir Daniel Brackley, Knyght, These:

I fynde ye were unture and unkynd fro the first. Ye have my father's blood upon your hands; let be, it will not wasshe. Some day ye shall perish by my procurement, so much I let you to wytte; and I let you to wytte farther, that if ye seek to wed to any other the gentylwoman, Mistresse Joan Sedley, whom that I am bound upon a great oath to wed myself, the blow will be very swift. The first step therinne will be thy first step to the grave.

Ric. Shelton.

BOOK III
MY LORD FOXHAM

CHAPTER I

THE HOUSE BY THE SHORE

Months had passed away since Richard Shelton made his escape from the hands of his guardian. These months had been eventful for England. The party of Lancaster, which was then in the very article of death, had once more raised its head. The Yorkists defeated and dispersed, their leader butchered on the field, it seemed, for a very brief season in the winter following upon the events already recorded, as if the House of Lancaster had finally triumphed over its foes.

The small town of Shoreby-on-the-Till was full of the Lancastrian nobles of the neighbourhood. Earl Risingham was there, with three hundred men-at-arms; Lord Shoreby, with two hundred; Sir Daniel himself, high in favour and once more growing rich on confiscations, lay in a house of his own, on the main street, with three-score men. The world had changed indeed.

It was a black, bitter cold evening in the first week of January, with a hard frost, a high wind, and every likelihood of snow before the morning.

In an obscure alehouse in a by-street near the harbour, three or four men sat drinking ale and eating a hasty mess of eggs. They were all likely, lusty, weather-beaten fellows, hard of hand, bold of eye; and though they wore plain tabards, like country ploughmen, even a drunken soldier might have looked twice before he sought a quarrel in such company.

A little apart before the huge fire sat a younger man, almost a boy, dressed in much the same fashion, though it was easy to see by his looks that he was better born, and might have worn a sword, had the time suited.

“Nay,” said one of the men at the table, “I like it not. Ill will come of it. This is no place for jolly fellows. A jolly fellow loveth open country, good cover, and scarce foes; but here we are shut in a town, girt about with enemies; and, for the bull’s-eye of misfortune, see if it snow not ere the morning.”

“’Tis for Master Shelton there,” said another, nodding his head towards the lad before the fire.

“I will do much for Master Shelton,” returned the first; “but to come to the gallows for any man — nay, brothers, not that!”

The door of the inn opened, and another man entered hastily and approached the youth before the fire.

“Master Shelton,” he said, “Sir Daniel goeth forth with a pair of links and four archers.”

Dick (for this was our young friend) rose instantly to his feet.

"Lawless," he said, "ye will take John Capper's watch. Greensheve, follow with me. Capper, lead forward. We will follow him this time, an he go to York."

The next moment they were outside in the dark street, and Capper, the man who had just come, pointed to where two torches flared in the wind at a little distance.

The town was already sound asleep; no one moved upon the streets, and there was nothing easier than to follow the party without observation. The two link-bearers went first; next followed a single man, whose long cloak blew about him in the wind; and the rear was brought up by the four archers, each with his bow upon his arm. They moved at a brisk walk, threading the intricate lanes and drawing nearer to the shore.

"He hath gone each night in this direction?" asked Dick, in a whisper.

"This is the third night running, Master Shelton," returned Capper, "and still at the same hour and with the same small following, as though his end were secret."

Sir Daniel and his six men were now come to the outskirts of the country. Shoreby was an open town, and though the Lancastrian lords who lay there kept a strong guard on the main roads, it was still possible to enter or depart unseen by any of the lesser streets or across the open country.

The lane which Sir Daniel had been following came to an abrupt end. Before him there was a stretch of rough down, and the noise of the sea-surf was audible upon one hand. There were no guards in the neighbourhood, nor any light in that quarter of the town.

Dick and his two outlaws drew a little closer to the object of their chase, and presently, as they came forth from between the houses and could see a little farther upon either hand, they were aware of another torch drawing near from another direction.

"Hey," said Dick, "I smell treason."

Meanwhile, Sir Daniel had come to a full halt. The torches were stuck into the sand, and the men lay down, as if to await the arrival of the other party.

This drew near at a good rate. It consisted of four men only — a pair of archers, a varlet with a link, and a cloaked gentleman walking in their midst.

"Is it you, my lord?" cried Sir Daniel.

"It is I, indeed; and if ever true knight gave proof I am that man," replied the leader of the second troop; "for who would not rather face giants, sorcerers, or pagans, than this pinching cold?"

"My lord," returned Sir Daniel, "beauty will be the more beholden, misdoubt it not. But shall we forth? for the sooner ye have seen my merchandise, the sooner shall we both get home."

"But why keep ye her here, good knight?" inquired the other. "An she be so young, and so fair, and so wealthy, why do ye not bring her forth among her mates? Ye would soon make her a good marriage, and no need to freeze your fingers and risk arrow-shots by going abroad at such untimely seasons in the dark."

"I have told you, my lord," replied Sir Daniel, "the reason thereof concerneth me only. Neither do I purpose to explain it further. Suffice it, that if ye be weary of your old gossip, Daniel Brackley, publish it abroad that y'are to wed Joanna Sedley, and I give you my word ye will be quit of him right soon. Ye will find him with an arrow in his back."

Meantime the two gentlemen were walking briskly forward over the down; the three torches going before them, stooping against the wind and scattering clouds of smoke and tufts of flame, and the rear brought up by the six archers.

Close upon the heels of these, Dick followed. He had, of course, heard no word of this conversation; but he had recognised in the second of the speakers old Lord Shoreby himself, a man of an infamous reputation, whom even Sir Daniel affected, in public, to condemn.

Presently they came close down upon the beach. The air smelt salt; the noise of the surf increased; and here, in a large walled garden, there stood a small house of two storeys, with stables and other offices.

The foremost torch-bearer unlocked a door in the wall, and after the whole party had passed into the garden, again closed and locked it on the other side.

Dick and his men were thus excluded from any farther following, unless they should scale the wall and thus put their necks in a trap.

They sat down in a tuft of furze and waited. The red glow of the torches moved up and down and to and fro within the enclosure, as if the link-bearers steadily patrolled the garden.

Twenty minutes passed, and then the whole party issued forth again upon the down; and Sir Daniel and the baron, after an elaborate salutation, separated and turned severally homeward, each with his own following of men and lights.

As soon as the sound of their steps had been swallowed by the wind, Dick got to his feet as briskly as he was able, for he was stiff and aching with the cold.

"Capper, ye will give me a back up," he said.

They advanced, all three, to the wall; Capper stooped, and Dick, getting upon his shoulders, clambered on to the cope-stone.

"Now, Greensheve," whispered Dick, "follow me up here; lie flat upon your face, that ye may be the less seen; and be ever ready to give me a hand if I fall foully on the other side."

And so saying he dropped into the garden.

It was all pitch dark; there was no light in the house. The wind whistled shrill among the poor shrubs, and the surf beat upon the beach; there was no other sound. Cautiously Dick footed it forth, stumbling among bushes, and groping with his hands; and presently the crisp noise of gravel underfoot told him that he had struck upon an alley.

Here he paused, and taking his cross-bow from where he kept it concealed under his long tabard, he prepared it for instant action, and went forward once more with greater resolution and assurance. The path led him straight to the group of buildings.

All seemed to be sorely dilapidated: the windows of the house were secured by crazy shutters; the stables were open and empty; there was no hay in the hay-loft, no corn in the corn-box. Any one would have supposed the place to be deserted. But Dick had good reason to think otherwise. He continued his inspection, visiting the offices, trying all the windows. At length he came round to the sea-side of the house, and there, sure enough, there burned a pale light in one of the upper windows.

He stepped back a little way, till he thought he could see the movement of a shadow on the wall of the apartment. Then he remembered that, in the stable, his groping hand had rested for a moment on a ladder, and he returned with all despatch to bring it. The ladder was very short, but yet, by standing on the topmost round, he could bring his hands as high as the iron bars of the windows; and seizing these, he raised his body by main force until his eyes commanded the interior of the room.

Two persons were within; the first he readily knew to be Dame Hatch; the second, a tall and beautiful and grave young lady, in a long, embroidered dress — could that be Joanna Sedley? his old wood-companion, Jack, whom he had thought to punish with a belt?

He dropped back again to the top round of the ladder in a kind of amazement. He had never thought of his sweetheart as of so superior a being, and he was instantly taken with a feeling of diffidence. But he had little opportunity for thought. A low "Hist!" sounded from close by, and he hastened to descend the ladder.

"Who goes?" he whispered.

"Greensheve," came the reply, in tones similarly guarded.

"What want ye?" asked Dick.

"The house is watched, Master Shelton," returned the outlaw. "We are not alone to watch it; for even as I lay on my belly on the wall I saw men prowling in the dark, and heard them whistle softly one to the other."

"By my sooth," said Dick, "but this is passing strange! Were they not men of Sir Daniel's?"

"Nay, sir, that they were not," returned Greensheve; "for if I have eyes in my head, every man-Jack of them weareth me a white badge in his bonnet, something chequered with dark."

"White, chequered with dark," repeated Dick. "Faith, 'tis a badge I know not. It is none of this country's badges. Well, an that be so, let us slip as quietly forth from this garden as we may; for here we are in an evil posture for defence. Beyond all question there are men of Sir Daniel's in that house, and to be taken between two shots is a beggarman's position. Take me this ladder; I must leave it where I found it."

They returned the ladder to the stable, and groped their way to the place where they had entered.

Capper had taken Greensheve's position on the cope, and now he leaned down his hand, and, first one and then the other, pulled them up.

Cautiously and silently, they dropped again upon the other side; nor did they dare to speak until they had returned to their old ambush in the gorse.

"Now, John Capper," said Dick, "back with you to Shoreby, even as for your life. Bring me instantly what men ye can collect. Here shall be the rendezvous; or if the men be scattered and the day be near at hand before they muster, let the place be something farther back, and by the entering in of the town. Greensheve and I lie here to watch. Speed ye, John Capper, and the saints aid you to despatch. And now, Greensheve," he continued, as soon as Capper had departed, "let thou and I go round about the garden in a wide circuit. I would fain see whether thine eyes betrayed thee."

Keeping well outwards from the wall, and profiting by every height and hollow, they passed about two sides, beholding nothing. On the third side the garden wall was built close upon the beach, and to preserve the distance necessary to their purpose, they had to go some way down upon the sands. Although the tide was still pretty far out, the surf was so high, and the sands so flat, that at each breaker a great sheet of froth and water came careering over the expanse, and Dick and Greensheve made this part of their inspection wading, now to the ankles, and now as deep as to the knees, in the salt and icy waters of the German Ocean.

Suddenly, against the comparative whiteness of the garden wall, the figure of a man was seen, like a faint Chinese shadow, violently signalling with both arms. As he dropped again to the earth, another arose a little farther on and repeated the same performance. And so, like a silent watchword, these gesticulations made the round of the beleaguered garden.

“They keep good watch,” Dick whispered.

“Let us back to land, good master,” answered Greensheve. “We stand here too open; for, look ye, when the seas break heavy and white out there behind us, they shall see us plainly against the foam.”

“Ye speak sooth,” returned Dick. “Ashore with us, right speedily.”

CHAPTER II

A SKIRMISH IN THE DARK

Thoroughly drenched and chilled, the two adventurers returned to their position in the gorse.

“I pray Heaven that Capper make good speed!” said Dick. “I vow a candle to St. Mary of Shoreby if he come before the hour!”

“Y’are in a hurry, Master Dick?” asked Greensheve.

“Ay, good fellow,” answered Dick; “for in that house lieth my lady, whom I love, and who should these be that lie about her secretly by night? Unfriends, for sure!”

“Well,” returned Greensheve, “an John come speedily, we shall give a good account of them. They are not two-score at the outside — I judge so by the spacing of their sentries — and, taken where they are, lying so widely, one score would scatter them like sparrows. And yet, Master Dick, an she be in Sir Daniel’s power already, it will little hurt that she should change into another’s. Who should these be?”

“I do suspect the Lord of Shoreby,” Dick replied. “When came they?”

“They began to come, Master Dick,” said Greensheve, “about the time ye crossed the wall. I had not lain there the space of a minute ere I marked the first of the knaves crawling round the corner.”

The last light had been already extinguished in the little house when they were wading in the wash of the breakers, and it was impossible to predict at what moment the lurking men about the garden wall might make their onslaught. Of two evils, Dick preferred the least. He preferred that Joanna should remain under the guardianship of Sir Daniel rather than pass into the clutches of Lord Shoreby; and his mind was made up, if the house should be assaulted, to come at once to the relief of the besieged.

But the time passed, and still there was no movement. From quarter of an hour to quarter of an hour the same signal passed about the garden wall, as if the leader desired to assure himself of the vigilance of his scattered followers; but in every other particular the neighbourhood of the little house lay undisturbed.

Presently Dick’s reinforcements began to arrive. The night was not yet old before nearly a score of men crouched beside him in the gorse.

Separating these into two bodies, he took the command of the smaller himself, and entrusted the larger to the leadership of Greensheve.

“Now, Kit,” said he to this last, “take me your men to the near angle of the garden wall upon the beach. Post them strongly, and wait till that ye hear me falling on upon the other side. It is those upon the sea-front that I would fain make certain of, for there will be the leader. The rest will run; even let them. And now, lads, let no man draw an arrow; ye will but hurt friends. Take to the steel, and keep to the steel; and if we have the uppermost, I promise every man of you a gold noble when I come to mine estate."

Out of the odd collection of broken men, thieves, murderers, and ruined peasantry, whom Duckworth had gathered together to serve the purposes of his revenge, some of the boldest and the most experienced in war had volunteered to follow Richard Shelton. The service of watching Sir Daniel's movements in the town of Shoreby had from the first been irksome to their temper, and they had of late begun to grumble loudly and threaten to disperse. The prospect of a sharp encounter and possible spoils restored them to good-humour, and they joyfully prepared for battle.

Their long tabards thrown aside, they appeared, some in plain green jerkins, and some in stout leathern jacks; under their hoods many wore bonnets strengthened by iron plates; and, for offensive armour, swords, daggers, a few stout boar-spears, and a dozen of bright bills, put them in a posture to engage even regular feudal troops. The bows, quivers, and tabards were concealed among the gorse, and the two bands set resolutely forward.

Dick, when he had reached the other side of the house, posted his six men in a line, about twenty yards from the garden wall, and took position himself a few paces in front. Then they all shouted with one voice, and closed upon the enemy.

These, lying widely scattered, stiff with cold, and taken at unawares, sprang stupidly to their feet, and stood undecided. Before they had time to get their courage about them, or even to form an idea of the number and mettle of their assailants, a similar shout of onslaught sounded in their ears from the far side of the enclosure. Thereupon they gave themselves up for lost and ran.

In this way the two small troops of the men of the Black Arrow closed upon the sea-front of the garden wall, and took a part of the strangers, as it were, between two fires; while the whole of the remainder ran for their lives in different directions, and were soon scattered in the darkness.

For all that, the fight was but beginning. Dick's outlaws, although they had the advantage of the surprise, were still considerably outnumbered by the men they had surrounded. The tide had flowed, in the meanwhile; the beach was narrowed to a strip; and on this wet field, between the surf and the garden wall, there began, in the darkness, a doubtful, furious, and deadly contest.

The strangers were well armed; they fell in silence upon their assailants; and the affray became a series of single combats. Dick, who had come first into the mellay, was engaged by three; the first he cut down at the first blow, but the other two coming upon him, hotly, he was fain to give ground before their onset. One of these two was a huge fellow, almost a giant for stature, and armed with a two-handed sword, which he brandished like a switch. Against this opponent, with his reach of arm and the length and weight of his weapon, Dick and his bill were quite defenceless; and had the other continued to join vigorously in the attack, the lad must have indubitably fallen. This second man, however, less in stature and slower in his movements, paused for a moment to peer about him in the darkness, and to give ear to the sounds of the battle.

The giant still pursued his advantage, and still Dick fled before him, spying for his chance. Then the huge blade flashed and descended, and the lad, leaping on one side and running in, slashed sideways and upwards with his bill. A roar of agony responded, and, before the wounded man could raise his formidable weapon, Dick, twice repeating his blow, had brought him to the ground.

The next moment he was engaged, upon more equal terms, with his second pursuer. Here there was no great difference in size, and though the man, fighting with sword and dagger against a bill, and being wary and quick of fence, had a certain superiority of arms, Dick more than made it up by his greater agility on foot. Neither at first gained any obvious advantage; but the older man was still insensibly profiting by the ardour of the younger to lead him where he would; and presently Dick found that they had crossed the whole width of the beach, and were now fighting above the knees in the spume and bubble of the breakers. Here his own superior activity was rendered useless; he found himself more or less at the discretion of his foe; yet a little, and he had his back turned upon his own men, and saw that this adroit and skilful adversary was bent upon drawing him farther and farther away.

Dick ground his teeth. He determined to decide the combat instantly; and when the wash of the next wave had ebbed and left them dry, he rushed in, caught a blow upon his bill, and leaped right at the throat of his opponent. The man went down backwards, with Dick still upon the top of him; and the next wave, speedily succeeding to the last, buried him below a rush of water.

While he was still submerged, Dick forced his dagger from his grasp, and rose to his feet, victorious.

“Yield ye!” he said. “I give you life.”

“I yield me,” said the other, getting to his knees. “Ye fight, like a young man, ignorantly and foolhardily; but, by the array of the saints, ye fight bravely!”

Dick turned to the beach. The combat was still raging doubtfully in the night; over the hoarse roar of the breakers steel clanged upon steel, and cries of pain and the shout of battle resounded.

“Lead me to your captain, youth,” said the conquered knight. “It is fit this butchery should cease.”

“Sir,” replied Dick, “so far as these brave fellows have a captain, the poor gentleman who here addresses you is he.”

“Call off your dogs, then, and I will bid my villains hold,” returned the other.

There was something noble both in the voice and manner of his late opponent, and Dick instantly dismissed all fears of treachery.

“Lay down your arms, men!” cried the stranger knight. “I have yielded me, upon promise of life.”

The tone of the stranger was one of absolute command, and almost instantly the din and confusion of the mellay ceased.

“Lawless,” cried Dick, “are ye safe?”

“Ay,” cried Lawless, “safe and hearty.”

“Light me the lantern,” said Dick.

“Is not Sir Daniel here?” inquired the knight.

“Sir Daniel?” echoed Dick. “Now, by the rood, I pray not. It would go ill with me if he were.”

“Ill with *you*, fair sir?” inquired the other. “Nay, then, if ye be not of Sir Daniel’s party, I profess I comprehend no longer. Wherefore, then, fell ye upon mine ambush? in what quarrel, my young and very fiery friend? to what earthly purpose? and, to make a clear end of questioning, to what good gentleman have I surrendered?”

But before Dick could answer, a voice spoke in the darkness from close by. Dick could see the speaker’s black and white badge, and the respectful salute which he addressed to his superior.

“My lord,” said he, “if these gentlemen be unfriends to Sir Daniel, it is pity, indeed, we should have been at blows with them; but it were tenfold greater that either they or we should linger here. The watchers in the house — — unless they be all dead or deaf — — have heard our hammering this quarter-hour agone; instantly they will have signalled to the town; and unless we be the livelier in our departure, we are like to be taken, both of us, by a fresh foe.”

“Hawksley is in the right,” added the lord. “How please ye, sir? Whither shall we march?”

“Nay, my lord,” said Dick, “go where ye will for me. I do begin to suspect we have some ground of friendship, and if, indeed, I began our acquaintance somewhat ruggedly, I would not churlishly continue. Let us, then, separate, my lord, you laying your right hand in mine; and at the hour and place that ye shall name, let us encounter and agree.”

“Y’are too trustful, boy,” said the other; “but this time your trust is not misplaced. I will meet you at the point of day at St. Bride’s Cross. Come, lads, follow!”

The strangers disappeared from the scene with a rapidity that seemed suspicious; and while the outlaws fell to the congenial task of rifling the dead bodies, Dick made once more the circuit of the garden wall to examine the front of the house. In a little upper loophole of the roof he beheld a light set; and as it would certainly be visible in town from the back windows of Sir Daniel’s mansion, he doubted not that this was the signal feared by Hawksley, and that ere long the lances of the Knight of Tunstall would arrive upon the scene.

He put his ear to the ground, and it seemed to him as if he heard a jarring and hollow noise from townward. Back to the beach he went hurrying. But the work was already done; the last body was disarmed and stripped to the skin, and four fellows were already wading seaward to commit it to the mercies of the deep.

A few minutes later, when there debouched out of the nearest lanes of Shoreby some two-score horsemen, hastily arrayed and moving at the gallop of their steeds, the neighbourhood of the house beside the sea was entirely silent and deserted.

Meanwhile, Dick and his men had returned to the alehouse of the Goat and Bagpipes to snatch some hours of sleep before the morning tryst.

CHAPTER III

ST. BRIDE'S CROSS

St. Bride's Cross stood a little way back from Shoreby, on the skirts of TunstallForest. Two roads met: one, from Holywood across the forest; one, that road from Risingham down which we saw the wrecks of a Lancastrian army fleeing in disorder. Here the two joined issue, and went on together down the hill to Shoreby; and a little back from the point of junction, the summit of a little knoll was crowned by the ancient and weather-beaten cross.

Here, then, about seven in the morning, Dick arrived. It was as cold as ever; the earth was all grey and silver with the hoar-frost, and the day began to break in the east with many colours of purple and orange.

Dick set him down upon the lowest step of the cross, wrapped himself well in his tabard, and looked vigilantly upon all sides. He had not long to wait. Down the road from Holywood a gentleman in very rich and bright armour, and wearing over that a surcoat of the rarest furs, came pacing on a splendid charger. Twenty yards behind him followed a clump of lances; but these halted as soon as they came in view of the trysting-place, while the gentleman in the fur surcoat continued to advance alone.

His visor was raised, and showed a countenance of great command and dignity, answerable to the richness of his attire and arms. And it was with some confusion of manner that Dick arose from the cross and stepped down the bank to meet his prisoner.

"I thank you, my lord, for your exactitude," he said, louting very low. "Will it please your lordship to set foot to earth?"

"Are ye here alone, young man?" inquired the other.

"I was not so simple," answered Dick; "and, to be plain with your lordship, the woods upon either hand of this cross lie full of mine honest fellows lying on their weapons."

"Y' 'ave done wisely," said the lord. "It pleaseth me the rather, since last night ye fought foolhardily, and more like a savage Saracen lunatic than any Christian warrior. But it becomes not me to complain that had the undermost."

"Ye had the undermost indeed, my lord, since ye so fell," returned Dick; "but had the waves not holpen me, it was I that should have had the worst. Ye were pleased to make me yours with several dagger marks, which I still carry. And in fine, my lord, methinks I had all the danger, as well as all the profit, of that little blind-man's mellay on the beach."

“Y’are shrewd enough to make light of it, I see,” returned the stranger.

“Nay, my lord, not shrewd,” replied Dick, “in that I shoot at no advantage to myself. But when, by the light of this new day, I see how stout a knight hath yielded, not to my arms alone, but to fortune, and the darkness, and the surf — and how easily the battle had gone otherwise, with a soldier so untried and rustic as myself — think it not strange, my lord, if I feel confounded with my victory.”

“Ye speak well,” said the stranger. “Your name?”

“My name, an’t like you, is Shelton,” answered Dick.

“Men call me the Lord Foxham,” added the other.

“Then, my lord, and under your good favour, ye are guardian to the sweetest maid in England,” replied Dick; “and for your ransom, and the ransom of such as were taken with you on the beach, there will be no uncertainty of terms. I pray you, my lord, of your good-will and charity, yield me the hand of my mistress, Joan Sedley; and take ye, upon the other part, your liberty, the liberty of these your followers, and (if ye will have it) my gratitude and service till I die.”

“But are ye not ward to Sir Daniel? Methought, if y’are Harry Shelton’s son, that I had heard it so reported,” said Lord Foxham.

“Will it please you, my lord, to alight? I would fain tell you fully who I am, how situate, and why so bold in my demands. Beseech you, my lord, take place upon these steps, hear me to a full end, and judge me with allowance.”

And so saying, Dick lent a hand to Lord Foxham to dismount; led him up the knoll to the cross; installed him in the place where he had himself been sitting; and standing respectfully before his noble prisoner, related the story of his fortunes up to the events of the evening before.

Lord Foxham listened gravely, and when Dick had done, “Master Shelton,” he said, “ye are a most fortunate-unfortunate young gentleman; but what fortune y’ ‘ave had, that ye have amply merited; and what unfortune, ye have noways deserved. Be of a good cheer; for ye have made a friend who is devoid neither of power nor favour. For yourself, although it fits not for a person of your birth to herd with outlaws, I must own ye are both brave and honourable; very dangerous in battle, right courteous in peace; a youth of excellent disposition and brave bearing. For your estates, ye will never see them till the world shall change again; so long as Lancaster hath the strong hand, so long shall Sir Daniel enjoy them for his own. For my ward, it is another matter; I had promised her before to a gentleman a kinsman of my house, one Hamley; the promise is old — — ”

“Ay, my lord, and now Sir Daniel hath promised her to my Lord Shoreby,” interrupted Dick. “And his promise, for all it is but young, is still the likelier to be made good."

"'Tis the plain truth," returned his lordship. "And considering, moreover, that I am your prisoner, upon no better composition than my bare life, and over and above that, that the maiden is unhappily in other hands, I will so far consent. Aid me with your good fellows — — "

"My lord," cried Dick, "they are these same outlaws that ye blame me for consorting with."

"Let them be what they will, they can fight," returned Lord Foxham. "Help me, then; and if between us we regain the maid, upon my knightly honour, she shall marry you!"

Dick bent his knee before his prisoner; but he, leaping up lightly from the cross, caught the lad up and embraced him like a son.

"Come," he said, "an y'are to marry Joan, we must be early friends."

CHAPTER IV

THE “GOOD HOPE”

An hour thereafter, Dick was back at the Goat and Bagpipes, breaking his fast, and receiving the report of his messengers and sentries. Duckworth was still absent from Shoreby; and this was frequently the case, for he played many parts in the world, shared many different interests, and conducted many various affairs. He had founded that fellowship of the Black Arrow, as a ruined man longing for vengeance and money; and yet among those who knew him best, he was thought to be the agent and emissary of the great king-maker of England, Richard, Earl of Warwick.

In his absence, at any rate, it fell upon Richard Shelton to command affairs in Shoreby; and, as he sat at meat, his mind was full of care, and his face heavy with consideration. It had been determined, between him and the Lord Foxham, to make one bold stroke that evening, and, by brute force, to set Joanna free. The obstacles, however, were many; and as one after another of his scouts arrived, each brought him more discomfortable news.

Sir Daniel was alarmed by the skirmish of the night before. He had increased the garrison of the house in the garden; but not content with that, he had stationed horsemen in all the neighbouring lanes, so that he might have instant word of any movement. Meanwhile, in the court of his mansion, steeds stood saddled, and the riders, armed at every point, awaited but the signal to ride.

The adventure of the night appeared more and more difficult of execution, till suddenly Dick’s countenance lightened.

“Lawless!” he cried, “you that were a shipman, can ye steal me a ship?”

“Master Dick,” replied Lawless, “if ye would back me, I would agree to steal York Minster.”

Presently after, these two set forth and descended to the harbour. It was a considerable basin, lying among sand-hills, and surrounded with patches of down, ancient ruinous lumber, and tumble-down slums of the town. Many decked ships and many open boats either lay there at anchor, or had been drawn up on the beach. A long duration of bad weather had driven them from the high seas into the shelter of the port; and the great trooping of black clouds, and the cold squalls that followed one another, now with a sprinkling of dry snow, now in a mere swoop of wind, promised no improvement but rather threatened a more serious storm in the immediate future.

The seamen, in view of the cold and the wind, had for the most part slunk ashore, and were now roaring and singing in the shoreside taverns. Many of the ships already rode unguarded at their anchors; and as the day wore on, and the weather offered no appearance of improvement, the number was continually being augmented. It was to these deserted ships, and, above all, to those of them that lay far out, that Lawless directed his attention; while Dick, seated upon an anchor that was half embedded in the sand, and giving ear, now to the rude, potent, and boding voices of the gale, and now to the hoarse singing of the shipmen in a neighbouring tavern, soon forgot his immediate surroundings and concerns in the agreeable recollection of Lord Foxham's promise.

He was disturbed by a touch upon his shoulder. It was Lawless, pointing to a small ship that lay somewhat by itself, and within but a little of the harbour mouth, where it heaved regularly and smoothly on the entering swell. A pale gleam of winter sunshine fell, at that moment, on the vessel's deck, relieving her against a bank of scowling cloud; and in this momentary glitter Dick could see a couple of men hauling the skiff alongside.

"There, sir," said Lawless, "mark ye it well! There is the ship for to-night."

Presently the skiff put out from the vessel's side, and the two men, keeping her head well to the wind, pulled lustily for shore, Lawless turned to a loiterer.

"How call ye her?" he asked, pointing to the little vessel.

"They call her the *Good Hope*, of Dartmouth," replied the loiterer. "Her captain, Arblaster by name. He pulleth the bow oar in yon skiff."

This was all that Lawless wanted. Hurriedly thanking the man, he moved round the shore to a certain sandy creek, for which the skiff was heading. There he took up his position, and as soon as they were within earshot, opened fire on the sailors of the *Good Hope*.

"What! Gossip Arblaster!" he cried. "Why, ye be well met; nay, gossip, ye be right well met, upon the rood! And is that the *Good Hope*? Ay, I would know her among ten thousand! — a sweet shear, a sweet boat! But marry come up, my gossip, will ye drink? I have come into mine estate which doubtless ye remember to have heard on. I am now rich; I have left to sail upon the sea; I do sail now, for the most part, upon spiced ale. Come, fellow; thy hand upon't! Come, drink with an old shipfellow!"

Skipper Arblaster, a long-faced, elderly, weather-beaten man, with a knife hanging about his neck by a plaited cord, and for all the world like any modern seaman in his gait and bearing, had hung back in obvious amazement and distrust. But the name of an estate, and a certain air of tipsified simplicity and good-fellowship which Lawless very well affected, combined to conquer his suspicious jealousy; his countenance relaxed, and he at once extended his open hand and squeezed that of the outlaw in a formidable grasp.

"Nay," he said, "I cannot mind you. But what o' that? I would drink with any man, gossip, and so would my man Tom. Man Tom," he added, addressing his follower, "here is my gossip, whose name I cannot mind, but no doubt a very good seaman. Let's go drink with him and his shore friend."

Lawless led the way, and they were soon seated in an alehouse, which, as it was very new, and stood in an exposed and solitary station, was less crowded than those nearer to the centre of the port. It was but a shed of timber, much like a blockhouse in the backwoods of to-day, and was coarsely furnished with a press or two, a number of naked benches, and boards set upon barrels to play the part of tables. In the middle, and besieged by half a hundred violent draughts, a fire of wreck-wood blazed and vomited thick smoke.

"Ay, now," said Lawless, "here is a shipman's joy — a good fire and a good stiff cup ashore, with foul weather without and an off-sea gale a-snoring in the roof! Here's to the *Good Hope*! May she ride easy!"

"Ay," said Skipper Arblaster, "'tis good weather to be ashore in, that is sooth. Man Tom, how say ye to that? Gossip, ye speak well, though I can never think upon your name; but ye speak very well. May the *Good Hope* ride easy! Amen!"

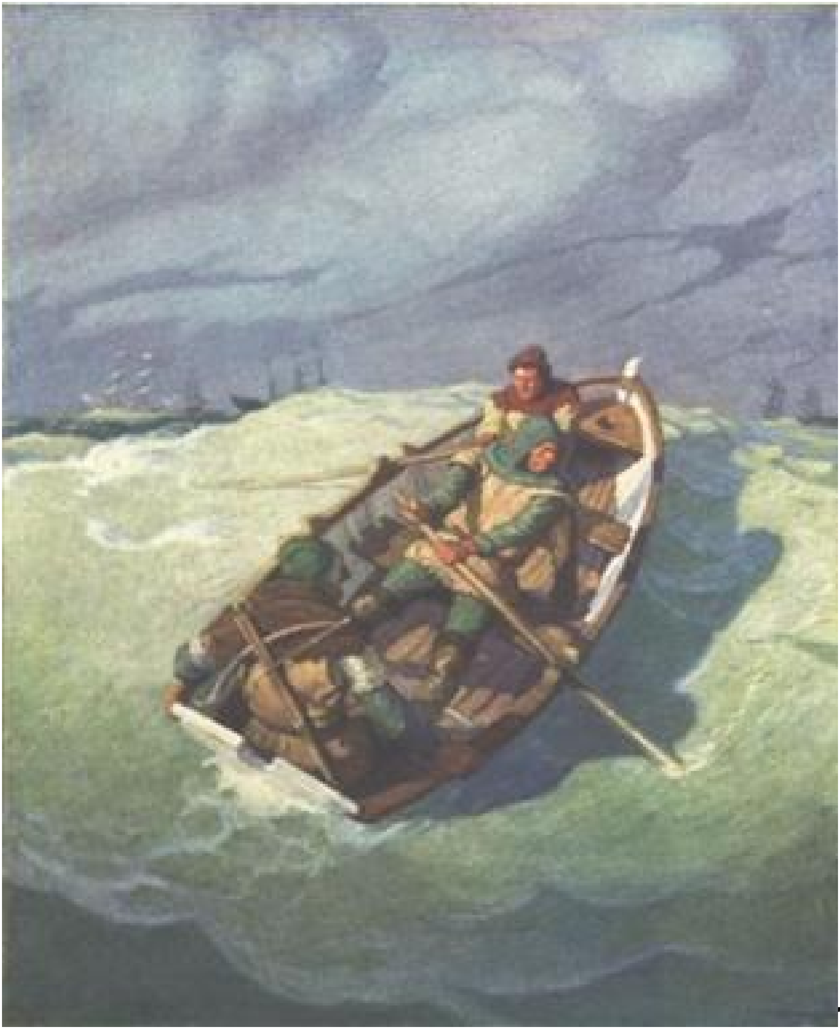
"Friend Dickon," resumed Lawless, addressing his commander, "ye have certain matters on hand, unless I err? Well, prithee be about them incontinently. For here I be with the choice of all good company, two tough old shipmen; and till that ye return I will go warrant these brave fellows will bide here and drink me cup for cup. We are not like shore-men, we old, tough tarry-Johns!"

"It is well meant," returned the skipper. "Ye can go, boy; for I will keep your good friend and my good gossip company till curfew — ay, and by St. Mary, till the sun get up again! For, look ye, when a man hath been long enough at sea, the salt getteth me into the clay upon his bones; and let him drink a draw-well, he will never be quenched."

Thus encouraged upon all hands, Dick rose, saluted his company, and going forth again into the gusty afternoon, got him as speedily as he might to the Goat and Bagpipes. Thence he sent word to my Lord Foxham that, so soon as ever the evening closed, they would have a stout boat to keep the sea in. And then leading along with him a couple of outlaws who had some experience of the sea, he returned himself to the harbour and the little sandy creek.

The skiff of the *Good Hope* lay among many others, from which it was easily distinguished by its extreme smallness and fragility. Indeed, when Dick and his two men had taken their places, and begun to put forth out of the creek into the open harbour, the little cockle dipped into the swell and staggered under every gust of wind, like a thing upon the point of sinking.

The *Good Hope*, as we have said, was anchored far out, where the swell was heaviest. No other vessel lay nearer than several cables' length; those that were the nearest were themselves entirely deserted; and as the skiff approached, a thick flurry of snow and a sudden darkening of the weather further concealed the movements of the outlaws from all possible espial. In a trice they had leaped upon the heaving deck, and the skiff was dancing at the stern. The *Good Hope* was captured.



The little cockle dipped into the swell and staggered under every gust of wind

She was a good stout boat, decked in the bows and amid-ships, but open in the stern. She carried one mast, and was rigged between a felucca and a lugger. It would seem that Skipper Arblaster had made an excellent venture, for the hold was full of pieces of French wine; and in the little cabin, besides the Virgin Mary in the bulkhead which proved the captain's piety, there were many lock-fast chests and cupboards, which showed him to be rich and careful.

A dog, who was the sole occupant of the vessel, furiously barked and bit the heels of the boarders; but he was soon kicked into the cabin, and the door shut upon his just resentment. A lamp was lit and fixed in the shrouds to mark the vessel clearly from the shore; one of the wine pieces in the hold was broached, and a cup of excellent Gascony emptied to the adventure of the evening; and then, while one of the outlaws began to get ready his bow and arrows and prepare to hold the ship against all comers, the other hauled in the skiff and got overboard, where he held on, waiting for Dick.

"Well, Jack, keep me a good watch," said the young commander, preparing to follow his subordinate. "Ye will do right well."

"Why," returned Jack, "I shall do excellent well indeed, so long as we lie here; but once we put the nose of this poor ship outside the harbour — See, there she trembles! Nay, the poor shrew heard the words, and the heart misgave her in her oak-tree ribs. But look, Master Dick! how black the weather gathers!"

The darkness ahead was, indeed, astonishing. Great billows heaved up out of the blackness, one after another; and one after another the *Good Hope* buoyantly climbed, and giddily plunged upon the farther side. A thin sprinkle of snow and thin flakes of foam came flying, and powdered the deck; and the wind harped dismally among the rigging.

"In sooth, it looketh evilly," said Dick, "But what cheer! 'Tis but a squall, and presently it will blow over." But, in spite of his words, he was depressingly affected by the bleak disorder of the sky and the wailing and fluting of the wind; and as he got over the side of the *Good Hope* and made once more for the landing-creek with the best speed of oars, he crossed himself devoutly, and recommended to Heaven the lives of all who should adventure on the sea.

At the landing-creek there had already gathered about a dozen of the outlaws. To these the skiff was left, and they were bidden embark without delay.

A little farther up the beach Dick found Lord Foxham hurrying in quest of him, his face concealed with a dark hood, and his bright armour covered by a long russet mantle of a poor appearance.

"Young Shelton," he said, "are ye for sea, then, truly?"

"My lord," replied Richard, "they lie about the house with horsemen; it may not be reached from the land side without alarum; and Sir Daniel once advertised of our adventure, we can no more carry it to a good end than, saving your presence, we could ride upon the wind. Now, in going round by sea, we do run some peril by the elements; but, what much outweigheth all, we have a chance to make good our purpose and bear off the maid."

"Well," returned Lord Foxham, "lead on. I will, in some sort, follow you for shame's sake; but I own I would I were in bed."

"Here, then," said Dick. "Hither we go to fetch our pilot."

And he led the way to the rude alehouse where he had given rendezvous to a portion of his men. Some of these he found lingering round the door outside; others had pushed more boldly in, and, choosing places as near as possible to where they saw their comrade, gathered close about Lawless and the two shipmen. These, to judge by the distempered countenance and cloudy eye, had long since gone beyond the boundaries of moderation; and as Richard entered, closely followed by Lord Foxham, they were all three tuning up an old, pitiful sea-ditty, to the chorus of the wailing of the gale.

The young leader cast a rapid glance about the shed. The fire had just been replenished, and gave forth volumes of black smoke, so that it was difficult to see clearly in the farther corners. It was plain, however, that the outlaws very largely outnumbered the remainder of the guests. Satisfied upon this point, in case of any failure in the operation of his plan, Dick strode up to the table and resumed his place upon the bench.

"Hey?" cried the skipper, tipsily, "who are ye, hey?"

"I want a word with you without, Master Arblaster," returned Dick; "and here is what we shall talk of." And he showed him a gold noble in the glimmer of the firelight.

The shipman's eyes burned, although he still failed to recognise our hero.

"Ay, boy," he said, "I am with you. Gossip, I will be back anon. Drink fair, gossip"; and, taking Dick's arm to steady his uneven steps, he walked to the door of the alehouse.

As soon as he was over the threshold, ten strong arms had seized and bound him; and in two minutes more, with his limbs trussed one to another, and a good gag in his mouth, he had been tumbled neck and crop into a neighbouring hay-barn. Presently, his man Tom, similarly secured, was tossed beside him, and the pair were left to their uncouth reflections for the night.

And now, as the time for concealment had gone by, Lord Foxham's followers were summoned by a preconcerted signal, and the party, boldly taking possession of as many boats as their numbers required, pulled in a flotilla for the light in the rigging of the ship. Long before the last man had climbed to the deck of the *Good Hope*, the sound of furious shouting from the shore showed that a part, at least, of the seamen had discovered the loss of their skiffs.

But it was now too late, whether for recovery or revenge. Out of some forty fighting men now mustered in the stolen ship, eight had been to sea, and could play the part of mariners. With the aid of these, a slice of sail was got upon her. The cable was cut. Lawless, vacillating on his feet, and still shouting the chorus of sea-ballads, took the long tiller in his hands: and the *Good Hope* began to flit forward into the darkness of the night, and to face the great waves beyond the harbour bar.

Richard took his place beside the weather rigging. Except for the ship's own lantern, and for some lights in Shoreby town, that were already fading to leeward, the whole world of air was as black as in a pit. Only from time to time, as the *Good Hope* swooped dizzily down into the valley of the rollers, a crest would break — a great cataract of snowy foam would leap in one instant into being — and, in an instant more, would stream into the wake and vanish.

Many of the men lay holding on and praying aloud; many more were sick, and had crept into the bottom, where they sprawled among the cargo. And what with the extreme violence of the motion, and the continued drunken bravado of Lawless, still shouting and singing at the helm, the stoutest heart on board may have nourished a shrewd misgiving as to the result.

But Lawless, as if guided by an instinct, steered the ship across the breakers, struck the lee of a great sand-bank, where they sailed for awhile in smooth water, and presently after laid her alongside a rude stone pier, where she was hastily made fast, and lay ducking and grinding in the dark.

CHAPTER V

THE “GOOD HOPE” (CONTINUED)

The pier was not far distant from the house in which Joanna lay; it now only remained to get the men on shore, to surround the house with a strong party, burst in the door and carry off the captive. They might then regard themselves as done with the *Good Hope*; it had placed them on the rear of their enemies; and the retreat, whether they should succeed or fail in the main enterprise, would be directed with a greater measure of hope in the direction of the forest and my Lord Foxham’s reserve.

To get the men on shore, however, was no easy task; many had been sick, all were pierced with cold; the promiscuity and disorder on board had shaken their discipline; the movement of the ship and the darkness of the night had cowed their spirits. They made a rush upon the pier; my lord, with his sword drawn on his own retainers, must throw himself in front; and this impulse of rabblement was not restrained without a certain clamour of voices, highly to be regretted in the case.

When some degree of order had been restored, Dick, with a few chosen men, set forth in advance. The darkness on shore, by contrast with the flashing of the surf, appeared before him like a solid body; and the howling and whistling of the gale drowned any lesser noise.

He had scarce reached the end of the pier, however, when there fell a lull of the wind; and in this he seemed to hear on shore the hollow footing of horses and the clash of arms. Checking his immediate followers, he passed forward a step or two alone, even setting foot upon the down; and here he made sure he could detect the shape of men and horses moving. A strong discouragement assailed him. If their enemies were really on the watch, if they had beleaguered the shoreward end of the pier, he and Lord Foxham were taken in a posture of very poor defence, the sea behind, the men jostled in the dark upon a narrow causeway. He gave a cautious whistle, the signal previously agreed upon.

It proved to be a signal far more than he desired. Instantly there fell, through the black night, a shower of arrows sent at a venture; and so close were the men huddled on the pier that more than one was hit, and the arrows were answered with cries of both fear and pain. In this first discharge, Lord Foxham was struck down; Hawksley had him carried on board again at once; and his men, during the brief remainder of the skirmish, fought (when they fought at all) without guidance. That was perhaps the chief cause of the disaster which made haste to follow.

At the shore end of the pier, for perhaps a minute, Dick held his own with a handful; one or two were wounded upon either side; steel crossed steel; nor had there been the least signal of advantage, when in the twinkling of an eye the tide turned against the party from the ship. Some one cried out that all was lost; the men were in the very humour to lend an ear to a discomfortable counsel; the cry was taken up. “On board, lads, for your lives!” cried another. A third, with the true instinct of the coward, raised that inevitable report on all retreats: “We are betrayed!” And in a moment the whole mass of men went surging and jostling backward down the pier, turning their defenceless backs on their pursuers and piercing the night with craven outcry.

One coward thrust off the ship’s stern, while another still held her by the bows. The fugitives leaped, screaming, and were hauled on board, or fell back and perished in the sea. Some were cut down upon the pier by the pursuers. Many were injured on the ship’s deck in the blind haste and terror of the moment, one man leaping upon another, and a third on both. At last, and whether by design or accident, the bows of the *Good Hope* were liberated; and the ever-ready Lawless, who had maintained his place at the helm through all the hurly-burly by sheer strength of body and a liberal use of the cold steel, instantly clapped her on the proper tack. The ship began to move once more forward on the stormy sea, its scuppers running blood, its deck heaped with fallen men, sprawling and struggling in the dark.

Thereupon, Lawless sheathed his dagger, and turning to his next neighbour, “I have left my mark on them, gossip,” said he, “the yelping, coward hounds.”

Now, while they were all leaping and struggling for their lives, the men had not appeared to observe the rough shoves and cutting stabs with which Lawless had held his post in the confusion. But perhaps they had already begun to understand somewhat more clearly, or perhaps another ear had overheard, the helmsman’s speech.

Panic-stricken troops recover slowly, and men who have just disgraced themselves by cowardice, as if to wipe out the memory of their fault, will sometimes run straight into the opposite extreme of insubordination. So it was now; and the same men who had thrown away their weapons and been hauled, feet-foremost, into the *Good Hope*, began to cry out upon their leaders, and demand that some one should be punished.

This growing ill-feeling turned upon Lawless.

In order to get a proper offing, the old outlaw had put the head of the *Good Hope* to seaward.

"What!" bawled one of the grumblers, "he carrieth us to seaward!"

"'Tis sooth," cried another. "Nay, we are betrayed for sure."

And they all began to cry out in chorus that they were betrayed, and in shrill tones and with abominable oaths bade Lawless go about-ship and bring them speedily ashore. Lawless, grinding his teeth, continued in silence to steer the true course, guiding the *Good Hope* among the formidable billows. To their empty terrors, as to their dishonourable threats, between drink and dignity he scorned to make reply. The malcontents drew together a little abaft the mast, and it was plain they were like barnyard cocks, "crowing for courage." Presently they would be fit for any extremity of injustice or ingratitude. Dick began to mount by the ladder, eager to interpose; but one of the outlaws, who was also something of a seaman, got beforehand.

"Lads," he began, "y'are right wooden heads, I think. For to get back, by the mass, we must have an offing, must we not? And this old Lawless — — "

Some one struck the speaker on the mouth, and the next moment, as a fire springs among dry straw, he was felled upon the deck, trampled under the feet, and despatched by the daggers of his cowardly companions. At this the wrath of Lawless rose and broke.

"Steer yourselves," he bellowed, with a curse; and, careless of the result, he left the helm.

The *Good Hope* was, at that moment, trembling on the summit of a swell. She subsided, with sickening velocity, upon the farther side. A wave, like a great black bulwark, hove immediately in front of her; and, with a staggering blow, she plunged head-foremost through that liquid hill. The green water passed right over her from stem to stern, as high as a man's knees; the sprays ran higher than the mast; and she rose again upon the other side, with an appalling, tremulous indecision, like a beast that has been deadly wounded.

Six or seven of the malcontents had been carried bodily overboard; and as for the remainder, when they found their tongues again, it was to bellow to the saints and wail upon Lawless to come back and take the tiller.

Nor did Lawless wait to be twice bidden. The terrible result of his fling of just resentment sobered him completely. He knew, better than any one on board, how nearly the *Good Hope* had gone bodily down below their feet; and he could tell, by the laziness with which she met the sea, that the peril was by no means over.

Dick, who had been thrown down by the concussion and half drowned, rose wading to his knees in the swamped well of the stern, and crept to the old helmsman’s side.

“Lawless,” he said, “we do all depend on you; y’are a brave, steady man, indeed, and crafty in the management of ships; I shall put three sure men to watch upon your safety.”

“Bootless, my master, bootless,” said the steersman, peering forward through the dark. “We come every moment somewhat clearer of these sand-banks; with every moment, then, the sea packeth upon us heavier, and for all these whimperers, they will presently be on their backs. For, my master, ‘tis a right mystery, but true, there never yet was a bad man that was a good shipman. None but the honest and the bold can endure me this tossing of a ship.”

“Nay, Lawless,” said Dick, laughing, “that is a right shipman’s by-word, and hath no more of sense than the whistle of the wind. But, prithee, how go we? Do we lie well? Are we in good case?”

“Master Shelton,” replied Lawless, “I have been a Grey Friar — I praise fortune — an archer, a thief, and a shipman. Of all these coats, I had the best fancy to die in the Grey Friar’s, as ye may readily conceive, and the least fancy to die in John Shipman’s tarry jacket; and that for two excellent good reasons: first, that the death might take a man suddenly; and second, for the horror of that great, salt smother and welter under my foot here” — and Lawless stamped with his foot. “Howbeit,” he went on, “an I die not a sailor’s death, and that this night, I shall owe a tall candle to our Lady.”

“Is it so?” asked Dick.

“It is right so,” replied the outlaw. “Do ye not feel how heavy and dull she moves upon the waves? Do ye not hear the water washing in her hold? She will scarce mind the rudder even now. Bide till she has settled a bit lower; and she will either go down below your boots like a stone image, or drive ashore here, under our lee, and come all to pieces like a twist of string.”

“Ye speak with a good courage,” returned Dick. “Ye are not then appalled?”

“Why, master,” answered Lawless, “if ever a man had an ill crew to come to port with, it is I — a renegade friar, a thief, and all the rest on’t. Well, ye may wonder, but I keep a good hope in my wallet; and if that I be to drown, I will drown with a bright eye, Master Shelton, and a steady hand.”

Dick returned no answer; but he was surprised to find the old vagabond of so resolute a temper, and fearing some fresh violence or treachery, set forth upon his quest for three sure men. The great bulk of the men had now deserted the deck, which was continually wetted with the flying sprays, and where they lay exposed to the shrewdness of the winter wind. They had gathered, instead, into the hold of the merchandise, among the butts of wine, and lighted by two swinging lanterns.

Here a few kept up the form of revelry, and toasted each other deep in Arblaster's Gascony wine. But as the *Good Hope* continued to tear through the smoking waves, and toss her stem and stern alternately high in air and deep into white foam, the number of these jolly companions diminished with every moment and with every lurch. Many sat apart, tending their hurts, but the majority were already prostrated with sickness, and lay moaning in the bilge.

Greensheve, Cuckow, and a young fellow of Lord Foxham's whom Dick had already remarked for his intelligence and spirit, were still, however, both fit to understand and willing to obey. These Dick set, as a body-guard, about the person of the steersman, and then, with a last look at the black sky and sea, he turned and went below into the cabin, whither Lord Foxham had been carried by his servants.

CHAPTER VI

THE “GOOD HOPE” (CONCLUDED)

The moans of the wounded baron blended with the wailing of the ship’s dog. The poor animal, whether he was merely sick at heart to be separated from his friends, or whether he indeed recognised some peril in the labouring of the ship, raised his cries, like minute-guns, above the roar of wave and weather; and the more superstitious of the men heard, in these sounds, the knell of the *Good Hope*.

Lord Foxham had been laid in a berth upon a fur cloak. A little lamp burned dim before the Virgin in the bulkhead, and by its glimmer Dick could see the pale countenance and hollow eyes of the hurt man.

“I am sore hurt,” said he. “Come near to my side, young Shelton; let there be one by me who, at least, is gentle born; for after having lived nobly and richly all the days of my life, this is a sad pass that I should get my hurt in a little ferreting skirmish, and die here, in a foul, cold ship upon the sea, among broken men and churls.”

“Nay, my lord,” said Dick, “I pray rather to the saints that ye will recover you of your hurt, and come soon and sound ashore.”

“How!” demanded his lordship. “Come sound ashore? There is, then, a question of it?”

“The ship laboureth — the sea is grievous and contrary,” replied the lad; “and by what I can learn of my fellow that steereth us, we shall do well, indeed, if we come dry-shod to land.”

“Ha!” said the baron, gloomily, “thus shall every terror attend upon the passage of my soul! Sir, pray rather to live hard, that ye may die easy, than to be fooled and fluted all through life, as to the pipe and tabour, and, in the last hour, be plunged among misfortunes! Howbeit, I have that upon my mind that must not be delayed. We have no priest aboard?”

“None,” replied Dick.

“Here, then, to my secular interests,” resumed Lord Foxham: “ye must be as good a friend to me dead, as I found you a gallant enemy when I was living. I fall in an evil hour for me, for England, and for them that trusted me. My men are being brought by Hamley — he that was your rival; they will rendezvous in the long holm at Holywood; this ring from off my finger will accredit you to represent mine orders; and I shall write, besides, two words upon this paper, bidding Hamley yield to you the damsel. Will he obey? I know not.”

“But, my lord, what orders?” inquired Dick.

“Ay,” quoth the baron, “ay — the orders”; and he looked upon Dick with hesitation. “Are ye Lancaster or York?” he asked, at length.

“I shame to say it,” answered Dick, “I can scarce clearly answer. But so much I think is certain: since I serve with Ellis Duckworth, I serve the house of York. Well, if that be so, I declare for York.”

“It is well,” returned the other; “it is exceeding well. For, truly, had ye said Lancaster, I wot not for the world what I had done. But sith ye are for York, follow me. I came hither but to watch these lords at Shoreby, while mine excellent young lord, Richard of Gloucester, prepareth a sufficient force to fall upon and scatter them. I have made me notes of their strength, what watch they keep, and how they lie; and these I was to deliver to my young lord on Sunday, an hour before noon, at St. Bride’s Cross beside the forest. This tryst I am not like to keep, but I pray you, of courtesy, to keep it in my stead; and see that not pleasure, nor pain, tempest, wound, nor pestilence withhold you from the hour and place, for the welfare of England lieth upon this cast.”

“I do soberly take this upon me,” said Dick. “In so far as in me lieth, your purpose shall be done.”

“It is good,” said the wounded man. “My lord duke shall order you further, and if ye obey him with spirit and good-will, then is your fortune made. Give me the lamp a little nearer to mine eyes, till that I write these words for you.”

He wrote a note “to his worshipful kinsman, Sir John Hamley”; and then a second, which he left without external superscripture.

“This is for the duke,” he said. “The word is ‘England and Edward,’ and the counter, ‘England and York.’”

“And Joanna, my lord?” asked Dick.

“Nay, ye must get Joanna how ye can,” replied the baron. “I have named you for my choice in both these letters; but ye must get her for yourself, boy. I have tried, as ye see here before you, and have lost my life. More could no man do.”

By this time the wounded man began to be very weary; and Dick, putting the precious papers in his bosom, bade him be of good cheer, and left him to repose.

The day was beginning to break, cold and blue, with flying squalls of snow. Close under the lee of the *Good Hope,* the coast lay in alternate rocky headlands and sandy bays; and farther inland the wooded hill-tops of Tunstall showed along the sky. Both the wind and the sea had gone down; but the vessel wallowed deep, and scarce rose upon the waves.

Lawless was still fixed at the rudder; and by this time nearly all the men had crawled on deck, and were now gazing, with blank faces, upon the inhospitable coast.

"Are we going ashore?" asked Dick.

"Ay," said Lawless, "unless we get first to the bottom."

And just then the ship rose so languidly to meet a sea, and the water weltered so loudly in her hold, that Dick involuntarily seized the steersman by the arm.

"By the mass!" cried Dick, as the bows of the *Good Hope* reappeared above the foam, "I thought we had foundered, indeed; my heart was at my throat."

In the waist, Greensheve, Hawksley, and the better men of both companies were busy breaking up the deck to build a raft; and to these Dick joined himself, working the harder to drown the memory of his predicament. But, even as he worked, every sea that struck the poor ship, and every one of her dull lurches, as she tumbled wallowing among the waves, recalled him with a horrid pang to the immediate proximity of death.

Presently, looking up from his work, he saw that they were close in below a promontory; a piece of ruinous cliff, against the base of which the sea broke white and heavy, almost overplumbed the deck; and, above that, again, a house appeared, crowning a down.

Inside the bay the seas ran gaily, raised the *Good Hope* upon their foam-flecked shoulders, carried her beyond the control of the steersman, and in a moment dropped her, with a great concussion, on the sand, and began to break over her half-mast high, and roll her to and fro. Another great wave followed, raised her again, and carried her yet farther in; and then a third succeeded, and left her far inshore of the more dangerous breakers, wedged upon a bank.

"Now, boys," cried Lawless, "the saints have had a care of us, indeed. The tide ebbs; let us but sit down and drink a cup of wine, and before half an hour ye may all march me ashore as safe as on a bridge."

A barrel was broached, and, sitting in what shelter they could find from the flying snow and spray, the shipwrecked company handed the cup around, and sought to warm their bodies and restore their spirits.

Dick, meanwhile, returned to Lord Foxham, who lay in great perplexity and fear, the floor of his cabin washing knee-deep in water, and the lamp, which had been his only light, broken and extinguished by the violence of the blow.

"My lord," said young Shelton, "fear not at all; the saints are plainly for us; the seas have cast us high upon a shoal, and as soon as the tide hath somewhat ebbed, we may walk ashore upon our feet."

It was nearly an hour before the vessel was sufficiently deserted by the ebbing sea, and they could set forth for the land, which appeared dimly before them through a veil of driving snow.

Upon a hillock on one side of their way a party of men lay huddled together, suspiciously observing the movements of the new arrivals.

"They might draw near and offer us some comfort," Dick remarked.

"Well, an' they come not to us, let us even turn aside to them," said Hawksley. "The sooner we come to a good fire and a dry bed the better for my poor lord."

But they had not moved far in the direction of the hillock, before the men, with one consent, rose suddenly to their feet, and poured a flight of well-directed arrows on the shipwrecked company.

"Back! back!" cried his lordship. "Beware, in Heaven's name, that ye reply not."

"Nay," cried Greensheve, pulling an arrow from his leather jack. "We are in no posture to fight, it is certain, being drenching wet, dog-weary, and three-parts frozen; but for the love of old England, what aileth them to shoot thus cruelly on their poor country people in distress?"

"They take us to be French pirates," answered Lord Foxham. "In these most troublesome and degenerate days we cannot keep our own shores of England; but our old enemies, whom we once chased on sea and land, do now range at pleasure, robbing and slaughtering and burning. It is the pity and reproach of this poor land."

The men upon the hillock lay, closely observing them, while they trailed upward from the beach and wound inland among desolate sand-hills; for a mile or so they even hung upon the rear of the march, ready, at a sign, to pour another volley on the weary and dispirited fugitives; and it was only when, striking at length upon a firm highroad, Dick began to call his men to some more martial order, that these jealous guardians of the coast of England silently disappeared among the snow. They had done what they desired; they had protected their own homes and farms, their own families and cattle; and their private interest being thus secured, it mattered not the weight of a straw to any one of them, although the Frenchmen should carry blood and fire to every other parish in the realm of England.

BOOK IV
THE DISGUISE

CHAPTER I

THE DEN

The place where Dick had struck the line of a highroad was not far from Holywood, and within nine or ten miles of Shoreby-on-the-Till; and here, after making sure that they were pursued no longer, the two bodies separated. Lord Foxham's followers departed, carrying their wounded master towards the comfort and security of the great abbey; and Dick, as he saw them wind away and disappear in the thick curtain of the falling snow, was left alone with near upon a dozen outlaws, the last remainder of his troop of volunteers.

Some were wounded; one and all were furious at their ill-success and long exposure; and though they were now too cold and hungry to do more, they grumbled and cast sullen looks upon their leaders. Dick emptied his purse among them, leaving himself nothing; thanked them for the courage they had displayed, though he could have found it more readily in his heart to rate them for poltroonery; and having thus somewhat softened the effect of his prolonged misfortune, despatched them to find their way, either severally or in pairs, to Shoreby and the Goat and Bagpipes.

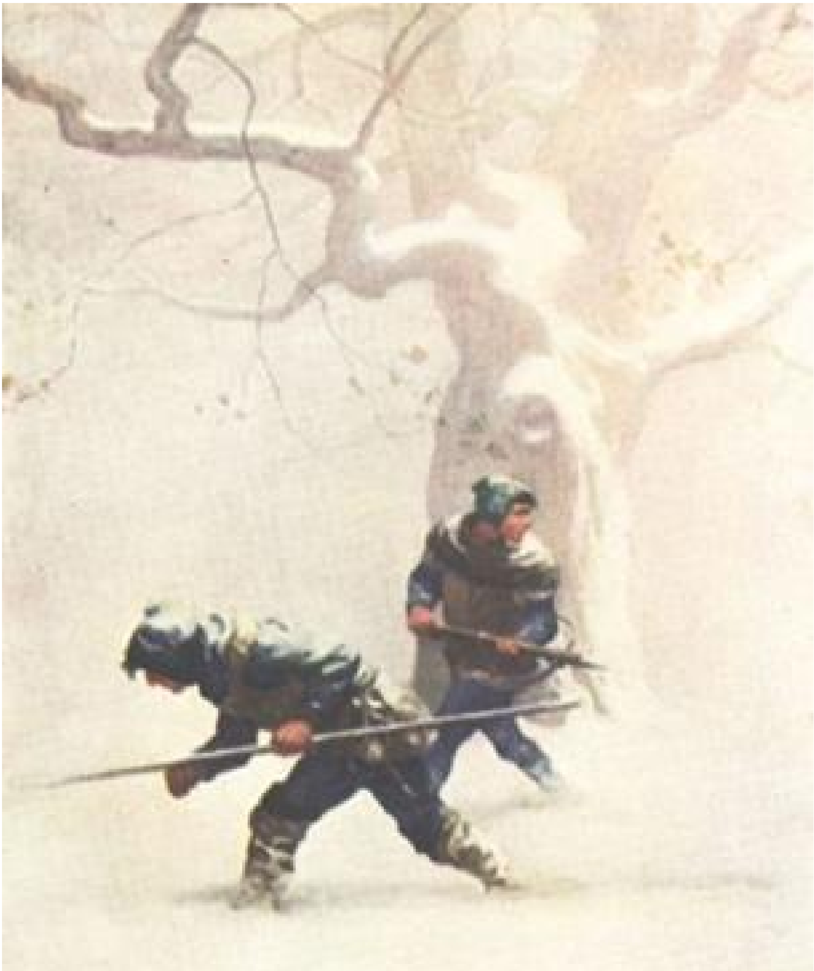
For his own part, influenced by what he had seen on board of the *Good Hope*, he chose Lawless to be his companion on the walk. The snow was falling, without pause or variation, in one even, blinding cloud; the wind had been strangled, and now blew no longer; and the whole world was blotted out and sheeted down below that silent inundation. There was great danger of wandering by the way and perishing in drifts; and Lawless, keeping half a step in front of his companion, and holding his head forward like a hunting dog upon the scent, inquired his way of every tree, and studied out their path as though he were conning a ship among dangers.

About a mile into the forest they came to a place where several ways met, under a grove of lofty and contorted oaks. Even in the narrow horizon of the falling snow, it was a spot that could not fail to be recognised; and Lawless evidently recognised it with particular delight.

"Now, Master Richard," said he, "an y'are not too proud to be the guest of a man who is neither a gentleman by birth nor so much as a good Christian, I can offer you a cup of wine and a good fire to melt the marrow in your frozen bones."

"Lead on, Will," answered Dick. "A cup of wine and a good fire! Nay, I would go a far way round to see them."

Lawless turned aside under the bare branches of the grove, and, walking resolutely forward for some time, came to a steepish hollow or den, that had now drifted a quarter full of snow. On the verge, a great beech-tree hung, precariously rooted; and here the old outlaw, pulling aside some bushy underwood, bodily disappeared into the earth.



And Lawless, keeping half a step in front of his companion and holding his head forward like a hunting-dog upon the scent, ... studied out their path

The beech had, in some violent gale, been half uprooted, and had torn up a considerable stretch of turf; and it was under this that old Lawless had dug out his forest hiding-place. The roots served him for rafters, the turf was his thatch; for walls and floor he had his mother the earth. Rude as it was, the hearth in one corner, blackened by fire, and the presence in another of a large oaken chest well fortified with iron, showed it at one glance to be the den of a man, and not the burrow of a digging beast.

Though the snow had drifted at the mouth and sifted in upon the floor of this earth cavern, yet was the air much warmer than without; and when Lawless had struck a spark, and the dry furze bushes had begun to blaze and crackle on the hearth, the place assumed, even to the eye, an air of comfort and of home.

With a sigh of great contentment, Lawless spread his broad hands before the fire, and seemed to breathe the smoke.

“Here, then,” he said, “is this old Lawless’s rabbit-hole; pray Heaven there come no terrier! Far I have rolled hither and thither, and here and about, since that I was fourteen years of mine age and first ran away from mine abbey, with the sacrist’s gold chain and a mass-book that I sold for four marks. I have been in England and France and Burgundy, and in Spain, too, on a pilgrimage for my poor soul; and upon the sea, which is no man’s country. But here is my place, Master Shelton. This is my native land, this burrow in the earth! Come rain or wind — and whether it’s April, and the birds all sing, and the blossoms fall about my bed — or whether it’s winter, and I sit alone with my good gossip the fire, and robin redbreast twitters in the woods — here, is my church and market, and my wife and child. It’s here I come back to, and it’s here, so please the saints, that I would like to die.”

“’Tis a warm corner, to be sure,” replied Dick, “and a pleasant, and a well hid.”

“It had need to be,” returned Lawless, “for an they found it, Master Shelton, it would break my heart. But here,” he added, burrowing with his stout fingers in the sandy floor, “here is my wine cellar; and ye shall have a flask of excellent strong stingo.”

Sure enough, after but a little digging, he produced a big leathern bottle of about a gallon, nearly three-parts full of a very heady and sweet wine; and when they had drunk to each other comradely, and the fire had been replenished and blazed up again, the pair lay at full length, thawing and steaming, and divinely warm.

“Master Shelton,” observed the outlaw, “y’ ‘ave had two mischances this last while, and y’are like to lose the maid — do I take it aright?”

“Aright!” returned Dick, nodding his head.

“Well, now,” continued Lawless, “hear an old fool that hath been nigh-hand everything, and seen nigh-hand all! Ye go too much on other people’s errands, Master Dick. Ye go on Ellis’s; but he desireth rather the death of Sir Daniel. Ye go on Lord Foxham’s; well — the saints preserve him! — doubtless he meaneth well. But go ye upon your own, good Dick. Come right to the maid’s side. Court her, lest that she forget you. Be ready; and when the chance shall come, off with her at the saddle-bow.”

"Ay, but, Lawless, beyond doubt she is now in Sir Daniel's own mansion," answered Dick.

"Thither, then, go we," replied the outlaw.

Dick stared at him.

"Nay, I mean it," nodded Lawless. "And if y'are of so little faith, and stumble at a word, see here!"

And the outlaw, taking a key from about his neck, opened the oak chest, and dipping and groping deep among its contents, produced first a friar's robe, and next a girdle of rope; and then a huge rosary of wood, heavy enough to be counted as a weapon.

"Here," he said, "is for you. On with them!"

And then, when Dick had clothed himself in this clerical disguise, Lawless produced some colours and a pencil, and proceeded, with the greatest cunning, to disguise his face. The eyebrows he thickened and produced; to the moustache, which was yet hardly visible, he rendered a little service; while, by a few lines around the eye, he changed the expression and increased the apparent age of this young monk.

"Now," he resumed, "when I have done the like, we shall make as bonny a pair of friars as the eye could wish. Boldly to Sir Daniel's we shall go, and there be hospitably welcome for the love of Mother Church."

"And how, dear Lawless," cried the lad, "shall I repay you?"

"Tut, brother," replied the outlaw, "I do naught but for my pleasure. Mind not for me. I am one, by the mass, that mindeth for himself. When that I lack, I have a long tongue and a voice like the monastery bell — I do ask, my son; and where asking faileth, I do most usually take."

The old rogue made a humorous grimace; and although Dick was displeased to lie under so great favours to so equivocal a personage, he was yet unable to restrain his mirth.

With that, Lawless returned to the big chest, and was soon similarly disguised; but, below his gown, Dick wondered to observe him conceal a sheaf of black arrows.

"Wherefore do ye that?" asked the lad. "Wherefore arrows, when ye take no bow?"

"Nay," replied Lawless, lightly, "'tis like there will be heads broke — not to say backs — ere you and I win sound from where we're going to; and if any fall, I would our fellowship should come by the credit on't. A black arrow, Master Dick, is the seal of our abbey; it showeth you who writ the bill."

"An ye prepare so carefully," said Dick, "I have here some papers that, for mine own sake, and the interest of those that trusted me, were better left behind than found upon my body. Where shall I conceal them, Will?"

"Nay," replied Lawless, "I will go forth into the wood and whistle me three verses of a song; meanwhile, do you bury them where ye please, and smooth the sand upon the place."

"Never!" cried Richard. "I trust you, man. I were base indeed if I not trusted you."

"Brother, y'are but a child," replied the old outlaw, pausing and turning his face upon Dick from the threshold of the den. "I am a kind old Christian, and no traitor to men's blood, and no sparer of mine own in a friend's jeopardy. But, fool, child, I am a thief by trade and birth and habit. If my bottle were empty and my mouth dry, I would rob you, dear child, as sure as I love, honour, and admire your parts and person! Can it be clearer spoken? No."

And he stumped forth through the bushes with a snap of his big fingers.

Dick, thus left alone, after a wondering thought upon the inconsistencies of his companion's character, hastily produced, reviewed, and buried his papers. One only he reserved to carry along with him, since it in nowise compromised his friends, and yet might serve him, in a pinch, against Sir Daniel. That was the knight's own letter to Lord Wensleydale, sent by Throgmorton, on the morrow of the defeat at Risingham, and found next day by Dick upon the body of the messenger.

Then, treading down the embers of the fire, Dick left the den, and rejoined the old outlaw, who stood awaiting him under the leafless oaks, and was already beginning to be powdered by the falling snow. Each looked upon the other, and each laughed, so thorough and so droll was the disguise.

"Yet I would it were but summer and a clear day," grumbled the outlaw, "that I might see myself in the mirror of a pool. There be many of Sir Daniel's men that know me; and if we fell to be recognised, there might be two words for you, brother, but as for me, in a paternoster while, I should be kicking in a rope's-end."

Thus they set forth together along the road to Shoreby, which, in this part of its course, kept near along the margin of the forest, coming forth, from time to time, in the open country, and passing beside poor folks' houses and small farms.

Presently at sight of one of these, Lawless pulled up.

"Brother Martin," he said, in a voice capitally disguised, and suited to his monkish robe, "let us enter and seek alms from these poor sinners. *Pax vobiscum!* Ay," he added, in his own voice, "'tis as I feared; I have somewhat lost the whine of it; and by your leave, good Master Shelton, ye must suffer me to practise in these country places, before that I risk my fat neck by entering Sir Daniel's. But look ye a little, what an excellent thing it is to be a Jack-of-all-trades! An I had not been a shipman, ye had infallibly gone down in the *Good Hope*; an I had not been a thief, I could not have painted me your face; and but that I had been a Grey Friar, and sung loud in the choir, and ate hearty at the board, I could not have carried this disguise, but the very dogs would have spied us out and barked at us for shams."

He was by this time close to the window of the farm, and he rose on his tip-toes and peeped in.

"Nay," he cried, "better and better. We shall here try our false faces with a vengeance, and have a merry jest on Brother Capper to boot."

And so saying, he opened the door and led the way into the house.

Three of their own company sat at the table, greedily eating. Their daggers, stuck beside them in the board, and the black and menacing looks which they continued to shower upon the people of the house, proved that they owed their entertainment rather to force than favour. On the two monks, who now, with a sort of humble dignity, entered the kitchen of the farm, they seemed to turn with a particular resentment; and one — it was John Capper in person — who seemed to play the leading part, instantly and rudely ordered them away.

"We want no beggars here!" he cried.

But another — although he was as far from recognising Dick and Lawless — inclined to more moderate counsels.

"Not so," he cried. "We be strong men, and take; these be weak, and crave; but in the latter end these shall be uppermost and we below. Mind him not, my father; but come, drink of my cup, and give me a benediction."

"Y'are men of a light mind, carnal, and accursed," said the monk. "Now, may the saints forbid that ever I should drink with such companions! But here, for the pity I bear to sinners, here I do leave you a blessed relic, the which, for your souls' interest, I bid you kiss and cherish."

So far Lawless thundered upon them like a preaching friar; but with these words he drew from under his robe a black arrow, tossed it on the board in front of the three startled outlaws, turned in the same instant, and, taking Dick along with him, was out of the room and out of sight among the falling snow before they had time to utter a word or move a finger.

"So," he said, "we have proved our false faces, Master Shelton. I will now adventure my poor carcase where ye please."

"Good!" returned Richard. "It irks me to be doing. Set we on for Shoreby!"

CHAPTER II

“IN MINE ENEMIES’ HOUSE”

Sir Daniel’s residence in Shoreby was a tall, commodious, plastered mansion, framed in carven oak, and covered by a low-pitched roof of thatch. To the back there stretched a garden, full of fruit-trees, alleys, and thick arbours, and overlooked from the far end by the tower of the abbey church.

The house might contain, upon a pinch, the retinue of a greater person than Sir Daniel; but even now it was filled with hubbub. The court rang with arms and horseshoe-iron; the kitchens roared with cookery like a bees’-hive; minstrels, and the players of instruments, and the cries of tumblers, sounded from the hall. Sir Daniel, in his profusion, in the gaiety and gallantry of his establishment, rivalled with Lord Shoreby, and eclipsed Lord Risingham.

All guests were made welcome. Minstrels, tumblers, players of chess, the sellers of relics, medicines, perfumes, and enchantments, and along with these every sort of priest, friar, or pilgrim, were made welcome to the lower table, and slept together in the ample lofts, or on the bare boards of the long dining-hall.

On the afternoon following the wreck of the *Good Hope*, the buttery, the kitchens, the stables, the covered cartshed that surrounded two sides of the court, were all crowded by idle people, partly belonging to Sir Daniel’s establishment, and attired in his livery of murrey and blue, partly nondescript strangers attracted to the town by greed, and received by the knight through policy, and because it was the fashion of the time.

The snow, which still fell without interruption, the extreme chill of the air, and the approach of night, combined to keep them under shelter. Wine, ale, and money were all plentiful; many sprawled gambling in the straw of the barn, many were still drunken from the noontide meal. To the eye of a modern it would have looked like the sack of a city; to the eye of a contemporary it was like any other rich and noble household at a festive season.

Two monks — a young and an old — had arrived late, and were now warming themselves at a bonfire in a corner of the shed. A mixed crowd surrounded them — jugglers, mountebanks, and soldiers; and with these the elder of the two had soon engaged so brisk a conversation, and exchanged so many loud guffaws and country witticisms, that the group momentarily increased in number.

The younger companion, in whom the reader has already recognised Dick Shelton, sat from the first somewhat backward, and gradually drew himself away. He listened, indeed, closely, but he opened not his mouth; and by the grave expression of his countenance, he made but little account of his companion’s pleasantries.

At last his eye, which travelled continually to and fro, and kept a guard upon all the entrances of the house, lit upon a little procession entering by the main gate and crossing the court in an oblique direction. Two ladies, muffled in thick furs, led the way, and were followed by a pair of waiting-women and four stout men-at-arms. The next moment they had disappeared within the house; and Dick, slipping through the crowd of loiterers in the shed, was already giving hot pursuit.

“The taller of these twain was Lady Brackley,” he thought; “and where Lady Brackley is, Joan will not be far.”

At the door of the house the four men-at-arms had ceased to follow, and the ladies were now mounting the stairway of polished oak, under no better escort than that of the two waiting-women. Dick followed close behind. It was already the dusk of the day; and in the house the darkness of the night had almost come. On the stair-landings, torches flared in iron holders; down the long, tapestried corridors, a lamp burned by every door. And where the door stood open, Dick could look in upon arras-covered walls and rush-bescattered floors, glowing in the light of the wood fires.

Two floors were passed, and at every landing the younger and shorter of the two ladies had looked back keenly at the monk. He, keeping his eyes lowered, and affecting the demure manners that suited his disguise, had but seen her once, and was unaware that he had attracted her attention. And now, on the third floor, the party separated, the younger lady continuing to ascend alone, the other, followed by the Waiting-maids, descending the corridor to the right.

Dick mounted with a swift foot, and holding to the corner, thrust forth his head and followed the three women with his eyes. Without turning or looking behind them, they continued to descend the corridor.

“It is right well,” thought Dick. “Let me but know my Lady Brackley’s chamber, and it will go hard an I find not Dame Hatch upon an errand.”

And just then a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and, with a bound and a choked cry, he turned to grapple his assailant.

He was somewhat abashed to find, in the person whom he had so roughly seized, the short young lady in the furs. She, on her part, was shocked and terrified beyond expression, and hung trembling in his grasp.

“Madam,” said Dick, releasing her, “I cry you a thousand pardons;

but I have no eyes behind, and, by the mass, I could not tell ye were a maid."

The girl continued to look at him, but, by this time, terror began to be succeeded by surprise, and surprise by suspicion. Dick, who could read these changes on her face, became alarmed for his own safety in that hostile house.

"Fair maid," he said, affecting easiness, "suffer me to kiss your hand, in token ye forgive my roughness, and I will even go."

"Y'are a strange monk, young sir," returned the young lady, looking him both boldly and shrewdly in the face; "and now that my first astonishment hath somewhat passed away, I can spy the layman in each word you utter. What do ye here? Why are ye thus sacrilegiously tricked out? Come ye in peace or war? And why spy ye after Lady Brackley like a thief?"

"Madam," quoth Dick, "of one thing I pray you to be very sure: I am no thief. And even if I come here in war, as in some degree I do, I make no war upon fair maids, and I hereby entreat them to copy me so far, and to leave me be. For, indeed, fair mistress, cry out — if such be your pleasure — cry but once, and say what ye have seen, and the poor gentleman before you is merely a dead man. I cannot think ye would be cruel," added Dick; and taking the girl's hand gently in both of his, he looked at her with courteous admiration.

"Are ye, then, a spy — a Yorkist?" asked the maid.

"Madam," he replied, "I am indeed a Yorkist, and, in some sort, a spy. But that which bringeth me into this house, the same which will win for me the pity and interest of your kind heart, is neither of York nor Lancaster. I will wholly put my life in your discretion. I am a lover, and my name — — "

But here the young lady clapped her hand suddenly upon Dick's mouth, looked hastily up and down and east and west, and, seeing the coast clear, began to drag the young man, with great strength and vehemence, up-stairs.

"Hush!" she said, "and come! Shalt talk hereafter."

Somewhat bewildered, Dick suffered himself to be pulled up-stairs, bustled along a corridor, and thrust suddenly into a chamber, lit, like so many of the others, by a blazing log upon the hearth.

"Now," said the young lady, forcing him down upon a stool, "sit ye there and attend my sovereign good pleasure. I have life and death over you, and I will not scruple to abuse my power. Look to yourself; y' 'ave cruelly mauled my arm. He knew not I was a maid, quoth he! Had he known I was a maid, he had ta'en his belt to me, forsooth!"

And with these words, she whipped out of the room and left Dick gaping with wonder, and not very sure if he were dreaming or awake.

"Ta'en my belt to her!" he repeated. "Ta'en my belt to her!" And the recollection of that evening in the forest flowed back upon his mind, and he once more saw Matcham's wincing body and beseeching eyes.

And then he was recalled to the dangers of the present. In the next room he heard a stir, as of a person moving; then followed a sigh, which sounded strangely near; and then the rustle of skirts and tap of feet once more began. As he stood hearkening, he saw the arras wave along the wall; there was the sound of a door being opened, the hangings divided, and, lamp in hand, Joanna Sedley entered the apartment.

She was attired in costly stuffs of deep and warm colours, such as befit the winter and the snow. Upon her head, her hair had been gathered together and became her as a crown. And she, who had seemed so little and so awkward in the attire of Matcham, was now tall like a young willow, and swam across the floor as though she scorned the drudgery of walking.

Without a start, without a tremor, she raised her lamp and looked at the young monk.

"What make ye here, good brother?" she inquired. "Ye are doubtless ill-directed. Whom do ye require?" And she set her lamp upon the bracket.

"Joanna," said Dick; and then his voice failed him. "Joanna," he began again, "ye said ye loved me; and the more fool I, but I believed it!"

"Dick!" she cried. "Dick!"

And then, to the wonder of the lad, this beautiful and tall young lady made but one step of it, and threw her arms about his neck and gave him a hundred kisses all in one.

"Oh, the fool fellow!" she cried. "Oh, dear Dick! Oh, if ye could see yourself! Alack!" she added, pausing. "I have spoilt you, Dick! I have knocked some of the paint off. But that can be mended. What cannot be mended, Dick — or I much fear it cannot! — is my marriage with Lord Shoreby."

"Is it decided, then?" asked the lad.

"To-morrow, before noon, Dick, in the abbey church," she answered, "John Matcham and Joanna Sedley both shall come to a right miserable end. There is no help in tears, or I could weep mine eyes out. I have not spared myself to pray, but Heaven frowns on my petition. And, dear Dick — good Dick — but that ye can get me forth of this house before the morning, we must even kiss and say good-bye."

"Nay," said Dick, "not I; I will never say that word. 'Tis like despair; but while there's life, Joanna, there is hope. Yet will I hope. Ay, by the mass, and triumph! Look ye, now, when ye were but a name to me, did I not follow — did I not rouse good men — did I not stake my life upon the quarrel? And now that I have seen you for what ye are — the fairest maid and stateliest of England — think ye I would turn? — if the deep sea were there, I would straight through it; if the way were full of lions, I would scatter them like mice.”

“Ay,” she said, drily, “ye make a great ado about a sky-blue robe!”

“Nay, Joan,” protested Dick, “’tis not alone the robe. But, lass, ye were disguised. Here am I disguised; and, to the proof, do I not cut a figure of fun — a right fool’s figure?”

“Ay, Dick, an’ that ye do!” she answered, smiling.

“Well, then!” he returned, triumphant. “So was it with you, poor Matcham, in the forest. In sooth, ye were a wench to laugh at. But now!”

So they ran on, holding each other by both hands, exchanging smiles and lovely looks, and melting minutes into seconds; and so they might have continued all night long. But presently there was a noise behind them; and they were aware of the short young lady, with her finger on her lips.

“Saints!” she cried, “but what a noise ye keep! Can ye not speak in compass? And now, Joanna, my fair maid of the woods, what will ye give your gossip for bringing you your sweetheart?”

Joanna ran to her, by way of answer, and embraced her fierily.

“And you, sir,” added the young lady, “what do ye give me?”

“Madam,” said Dick, “I would fain offer to pay you in the same money.” “Come, then,” said the lady, “it is permitted you.”

But Dick, blushing like a peony, only kissed her hand.

“What ails ye at my face, fair sir?” she inquired, curtseying to the very ground; and then, when Dick had at length and most tepidly embraced her, “Joanna,” she added, “your sweetheart is very backwards under your eyes; but I warrant you, when first we met, he was more ready. I am all black and blue, wench; trust me never, if I be not black and blue! And now,” she continued, “have ye said your sayings? for I must speedily dismiss the paladin.”

But at this they both cried out that they had said nothing, that the night was still very young, and that they would not be separated so early.

“And supper?” asked the young lady. “Must we not go down to supper?”

“Nay, to be sure!” cried Joan. “I had forgotten.”

“Hide me, then,” said Dick, “put me behind the arras, shut me in a chest, or what ye will, so that I may be here on your return. Indeed, fair lady,” he added, “bear this in mind, that we are sore bested, and may never look upon each other’s face from this night forward till we die.”

At this the young lady melted; and when, a little after, the bell summoned Sir Daniel’s household to the board, Dick was planted very stiffly against the wall, at a place where a division in the tapestry permitted him to breathe the more freely, and even to see into the room.

He had not been long in this position, when he was somewhat strangely disturbed. The silence in that upper storey of the house, was only broken by the flickering of the flames and the hissing of a green log in the chimney; but presently, to Dick’s strained hearing, there came the sound of some one walking with extreme precaution; and soon after the door opened, and a little black-faced, dwarfish fellow, in Lord Shoreby’s colours, pushed first his head, and then his crooked body, into the chamber. His mouth was open, as though to hear the better; and his eyes, which were very bright, flitted restlessly and swiftly to and fro. He went round and round the room, striking here and there upon the hangings; but Dick, by a miracle, escaped his notice. Then he looked below the furniture, and examined the lamp; and, at last, with an air of cruel disappointment, was preparing to go away as silently as he had come, when down he dropped upon his knees, picked up something from among the rushes on the floor, examined it, and, with every signal of delight, concealed it in the wallet at his belt.

Dick’s heart sank, for the object in question was a tassel from his own girdle; and it was plain to him that this dwarfish spy, who took a malign delight in his employment, would lose no time in bearing it to his master, the baron. He was half tempted to throw aside the arras, fall upon the scoundrel, and, at the risk of his life, remove the tell-tale token. And while he was still hesitating, a new cause of concern was added. A voice, hoarse and broken by drink, began to be audible from the stair; and presently after, uneven, wandering, and heavy footsteps sounded without along the passage.

“What make ye here, my merry men, among the greenwood shaws?” sang the voice. “What make ye here? Hey! sots, what make ye here?” it added, with a rattle of drunken laughter; and then, once more breaking into song:

“If ye should drink the clary wine,
Fat Friar John, ye friend o’ mine —
If I should eat, and ye should drink,
Who shall sing the mass, d’ye think?”

Lawless, alas! rolling drunk, was wandering the house, seeking for a corner wherein to slumber off the effect of his potations. Dick inwardly raged. The spy, at first terrified, had grown reassured as he found he had to deal with an intoxicated man, and now, with a movement of cat-like rapidity, slipped from the chamber, and was gone from Richard’s eyes.

What was to be done? If he lost touch of Lawless for the night, he was left impotent, whether to plan or carry forth Joanna's rescue. If, on the other hand, he dared to address the drunken outlaw, the spy might still be lingering within sight, and the most fatal consequences ensue.

It was, nevertheless, upon this last hazard that Dick decided. Slipping from behind the tapestry, he stood ready in the doorway of the chamber, with a warning hand upraised. Lawless, flushed crimson, with his eyes injected, vacillating on his feet, drew still unsteadily nearer. At last he hazily caught sight of his commander, and, in despite of Dick's imperious signals, hailed him instantly and loudly by his name.

Dick leaped upon and shook the drunkard furiously.

"Beast!" he hissed — "beast and no man! It is worse than treachery to be so witless. We may all be shent for thy sotting."

But Lawless only laughed and staggered, and tried to clap young Shelton on the back.

And just then Dick's quick ear caught a rapid brushing in the arras. He leaped towards the sound, and the next moment a piece of the wall-hanging had been torn down, and Dick and the spy were sprawling together in its folds. Over and over they rolled, grappling for each other's throat, and still baffled by the arras, and still silent in their deadly fury. But Dick was by much the stronger, and soon the spy lay prostrate under his knee, and, with a single stroke of the long poniard, ceased to breathe.

CHAPTER III

THE DEAD SPY

Throughout this furious and rapid passage, Lawless had looked on helplessly, and even when all was over, and Dick, already re-arisen to his feet, was listening with the most passionate attention to the distant bustle in the lower storeys of the house, the old outlaw was still wavering on his legs like a shrub in a breeze of wind, and still stupidly staring on the face of the dead man.

"It is well," said Dick, at length; "they have not heard us, praise the saints! But, now, what shall I do with this poor spy? At least, I will take my tassel from his wallet."

So saying, Dick opened the wallet; within he found a few pieces of money, the tassel, and a letter addressed to Lord Wensleydale, and sealed with my Lord Shoreby's seal. The name awoke Dick's recollection; and he instantly broke the wax and read the contents of the letter. It was short, but, to Dick's delight, it gave evident proof that Lord Shoreby was treacherously corresponding with the House of York.

The young fellow usually carried his ink-horn and implements about him, and so now, bending a knee beside the body of the dead spy, he was able to write these words upon a corner of the paper:

My Lord of Shoreby, ye that writt the letter, wot ye why your man is ded? But let me rede you, marry not.

Jon Amend-all.

He laid this paper on the breast of the corpse; and the Lawless, who had been looking on upon these last manœuvres with some flickering returns of intelligence, suddenly drew a black arrow from below his robe, and therewith pinned the paper in its place. The sight of this disrespect, or, as it almost seemed, cruelty to the dead, drew a cry of horror from young Shelton; but the old outlaw only laughed.

"Nay, I will have the credit for mine order," he hiccupped. "My jolly boys must have the credit on't — the credit, brother"; and then, shutting his eyes tight and opening his mouth like a precentor, he began to thunder, in a formidable voice:

"If ye should drink the clary wine" —

"Peace, sot!" cried Dick, and thrust him hard against the wall. "In two words — if so be that such a man can understand me who hath more wine than wit in him — in two words, and, a-Mary's name, begone out of this house, where, if ye continue to abide, ye will not only hang yourself, but me also! Faith, then, up foot! be yare, or, by the mass, I may forget that I am in some sort your captain and in some your debtor! Go!"

The sham monk was now, in some degree, recovering the use of his intelligence; and the ring in Dick's voice, and the glitter in Dick's eye, stamped home the meaning of his words.

"By the mass," cried Lawless, "an I be not wanted, I can go"; and he turned tipsily along the corridor and proceeded to flounder downstairs, lurching against the wall.

So soon as he was out of sight, Dick returned to his hiding-place, resolutely fixed to see the matter out. Wisdom, indeed, moved him to be gone; but love and curiosity were stronger.

Time passed slowly for the young man, bolt upright behind the arras. The fire in the room began to die down, and the lamp to burn low and to smoke. And still there was no word of the return of any one to these upper quarters of the house; still the faint hum and clatter of the supper party sounded from far below; and still, under the thick fall of the snow, Shoreby town lay silent upon every side.

At length, however, feet and voices began to draw near upon the stair; and presently after several of Sir Daniel's guests arrived upon the landing, and, turning down the corridor, beheld the torn arras and the body of the spy.

Some ran forward and some back, and all together began to cry aloud.

At the sound of their cries, guests, men-at-arms, ladies, servants, and, in a word, all the inhabitants of that great house, came flying from every direction, and began to join their voices to the tumult.

Soon a way was cleared, and Sir Daniel came forth in person, followed by the bridegroom of the morrow, my Lord Shoreby.

"My lord," said Sir Daniel, "have I not told you of this knave Black Arrow? To the proof, behold it! There it stands, and, by the rood, my gossip, in a man of yours, or one that stole your colours!"

"In good sooth, it was a man of mine," replied Lord Shoreby, hanging back. "I would I had more such. He was keen as a beagle and secret as a mole."

"Ay, gossip, truly?" asked Sir Daniel, keenly. "And what came he smelling up so many stairs in my poor mansion? But he will smell no more."

"An't please you, Sir Daniel," said one, "here is a paper written upon with some matter, pinned upon his breast."

"Give it me, arrow and all," said the knight. And when he had taken into his hand the shaft, he continued for some time to gaze upon it in a sullen musing. "Ay," he said, addressing Lord Shoreby, "here is a hate that followeth hard and close upon my heels. This black stick, or its just likeness, shall yet bring me down. And, gossip, suffer a plain knight to counsel you; and if these hounds begin to wind you, flee! 'Tis like a sickness — it still hangeth, hangeth upon the limbs. But let us see what they have written. It is as I thought, my lord; y'are marked, like an old oak, by the woodman; to-morrow or next day, by will come the axe. But what wrote ye in a letter?"

Lord Shoreby snatched the paper from the arrow, read it, crumpled it between his hands, and overcoming the reluctance which had hitherto withheld him from approaching, threw himself on his knees beside the body and eagerly groped in the wallet.

He rose to his feet with a somewhat unsettled countenance.

"Gossip," he said, "I have indeed lost a letter here that much imported; and could I lay my hand upon the knave that took it, he should incontinently grace a halter. But let us, first of all, secure the issues of the house. Here is enough harm already, by St. George!"

Sentinels were posted close around the house and garden; a sentinel on every landing of the stair, a whole troop in the main entrance-hall; and yet another about the bonfire in the shed. Sir Daniel's followers were supplemented by Lord Shoreby's; there was thus no lack of men or weapons to make the house secure, or to entrap a lurking enemy, should one be there.

Meanwhile, the body of the spy was carried out through the falling snow and deposited in the abbey church.

It was not until these dispositions had been taken, and all had returned to a decorous silence, that the two girls drew Richard Shelton from his place of concealment, and made a full report to him of what had passed. He, upon his side, recounted the visit of the spy, his dangerous discovery, and speedy end.

Joanna leaned back very faint against the curtained wall.

"It will avail but little," she said. "I shall be wed to-morrow, in the morning, after all!"

"What!" cried her friend. "And here is our paladin that driveth lions like mice! Ye have little faith, of a surety. But come, friend lion-driver, give us some comfort; speak, and let us hear bold counsels."

Dick was confounded to be thus outfaced with his own exaggerated words; but though he coloured, he still spoke stoutly.

"Truly," said he, "we are in straits. Yet, could I but win out of this house for half an hour, I do honestly tell myself that all might still go well; and for the marriage, it should be prevented."

"And for the lions," mimicked the girl, "they shall be driven."

"I crave your excuse," said Dick. "I speak not now in any boasting humour, but rather as one inquiring after help or counsel; for if I get not forth of this house and through these sentinels, I can do less than naught. Take me, I pray you, rightly."

"Why said ye he was rustic, Joan?" the girl inquired. "I warrant he hath a tongue in his head; ready, soft, and bold is his speech at pleasure. What would ye more?"

"Nay," sighed Joanna, with a smile, "they have changed me my friend Dick, 'tis sure enough. When I beheld him, he was rough indeed. But it matters little; there is no help for my hard case, and I must still be Lady Shoreby!"

"Nay, then," said Dick, "I will even make the adventure. A friar is not much regarded; and if I found a good fairy to lead me up, I may find another belike to carry me down. How call they the name of this spy?"

"Rutter," said the young lady; "and an excellent good name to call him by. But how mean ye, lion-driver? What is in your mind to do?"

"To offer boldly to go forth," returned Dick; "and if any stop me, to keep an unchanged countenance, and say I go to pray for Rutter. They will be praying over his poor clay even now."

"The device is somewhat simple," replied the girl, "yet it may hold."

"Nay," said young Shelton, "it is no device, but mere boldness, which serveth often better in great straits."

"Ye say true," she said. "Well, go, a-Mary's name, and may Heaven speed you! Ye leave here a poor maid that loves you entirely, and another that is most heartily your friend. Be wary, for their sakes, and make not shipwreck of your safety."

"Ay," added Joanna, "go, Dick. Ye run no more peril, whether ye go or stay. Go; ye take my heart with you; the saints defend you!"

Dick passed the first sentry with so assured a countenance that the fellow merely fidgeted and stared; but at the second landing the man carried his spear across and bade him name his business.

"*Pax vobiscum,*" answered Dick. "I go to pray over the body of this poor Rutter."

"Like enough," returned the sentry; "but to go alone is not permitted you." He leaned over the oaken balusters and whistled shrill. "One cometh!" he cried; and then motioned Dick to pass.

At the foot of the stair he found the guard afoot and awaiting his arrival; and when he had once more repeated his story, the commander of the post ordered four men out to accompany him to the church.

"Let him not slip, my lads," he said. "Bring him to Sir Oliver, on your lives!"

The door was then opened; one of the men took Dick by either arm, another marched ahead with a link, and the fourth, with bent bow and the arrow on the string, brought up the rear. In this order they proceeded through the garden, under the thick darkness of the night and the scattering snow, and drew near to the dimly illuminated windows of the abbey church.

At the western portal a picket of archers stood, taking what shelter they could find in the hollow of the arched doorways, and all powdered with the snow; and it was not until Dick's conductors had exchanged a word with these, that they were suffered to pass forth and enter the nave of the sacred edifice.

The church was doubtfully lighted by the tapers upon the great altar, and by a lamp or two that swung from the arched roof before the private chapels of illustrious families. In the midst of the choir the dead spy lay, his limbs piously composed, upon a bier.

A hurried mutter of prayer sounded along the arches; cowled figures knelt in the stalls of the choir, and on the steps of the high altar a priest in pontifical vestments celebrated mass.

Upon this fresh entrance, one of the cowled figures arose, and, coming down the steps which elevated the level of the choir above that of the nave, demanded from the leader of the four men what business brought him to the church. Out of respect for the service and the dead, they spoke in guarded tones; but the echoes of that huge, empty building caught up their words, and hollowly repeated and repeated them along the aisles.

“A monk!” returned Sir Oliver (for he it was), when he had heard the report of the archer. “My brother, I looked not for your coming,” he added, turning to young Shelton. “In all civility, who are ye? and at whose instance do ye join your supplications to ours?”

Dick, keeping his cowl about his face, signed to Sir Oliver to move a pace or two aside from the archers; and, so soon as the priest had done so, “I cannot hope to deceive you, sir,” he said. “My life is in your hands.”

Sir Oliver violently started; his stout cheeks grew pale, and for a space he was silent.

“Richard,” he said, “what brings you here, I know not; but I much misdoubt it to be evil. Nevertheless, for the kindness that was, I would not willingly deliver you to harm. Ye shall sit all night beside me in the stalls: ye shall sit there till my Lord of Shoreby be married, and the party gone safe home; and if all goeth well, and ye have planned no evil, in the end ye shall go whither ye will. But if your purpose be bloody, it shall return upon your head. Amen!”

And the priest devoutly crossed himself, and turned and louted to the altar.

With that, he spoke a few words more to the soldiers, and taking Dick by the hand, led him up to the choir, and placed him in the stall beside his own, where, for mere decency, the lad had instantly to kneel and appear to be busy with his devotions.

His mind and his eyes, however, were continually wandering. Three of the soldiers, he observed, instead of returning to the house, had got them quietly into a point of vantage in the aisle; and he could not doubt that they had done so by Sir Oliver's command. Here, then, he was trapped. Here he must spend the night in the ghostly glimmer and shadow of the church, and looking on the pale face of him he slew; and here, in the morning, he must see his sweetheart married to another man before his eyes.

But, for all that, he obtained a command upon his mind, and built himself up in patience to await the issue.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE ABBEYCHURCH

In ShorebyAbbeyChurch the prayers were kept up all night without cessation, now with the singing of psalms, now with a note or two upon the bell.

Rutter, the spy, was nobly waked. There he lay, meanwhile, as they had arranged him, his dead hands crossed upon his bosom, his dead eyes staring on the roof; and hard by, in the stall, the lad who had slain him waited, in sore disquietude, the coming of the morning.

Once only, in the course of the hours, Sir Oliver leaned across to his captive.

“Richard,” he whispered, “my son, if ye mean me evil, I will certify, on my soul’s welfare, ye design upon an innocent man. Sinful in the eye of Heaven I do declare myself; but sinful as against you I am not, neither have been ever.”

“My father,” returned Dick, in the same tone of voice, “trust me, I design nothing; but as for your innocence, I may not forget that ye cleared yourself but lamely.”

“A man may be innocently guilty,” replied the priest. “He may be set blindfolded upon a mission, ignorant of its true scope. So it was with me. I did decoy your father to his death; but as Heaven sees us in this sacred place, I knew not what I did.”

“It may be,” returned Dick. “But see what a strange web ye have woven, that I should be, at this hour, at once your prisoner and your judge; that ye should both threaten my days and deprecate my anger. Methinks, if ye had been all your life a true man and good priest, ye would neither thus fear nor thus detest me. And now to your prayers. I do obey you, since needs must; but I will not be burthened with your company.”

The priest uttered a sigh so heavy that it had almost touched the lad into some sentiment of pity, and he bowed his head upon his hands like a man borne down below a weight of care. He joined no longer in the psalms; but Dick could hear the beads rattle though his fingers and the prayers a-pattering between his teeth.

Yet a little, and the grey of the morning began to struggle through the painted casements of the church, and to put to shame the glimmer of the tapers. The light slowly broadened and brightened, and presently through the southeastern clerestories a flush of rosy sunlight flickered on the walls. The storm was over; the great clouds had disburthened their snow and fled farther on, and the new day was breaking on a merry winter landscape sheathed in white.

A bustle of church officers followed; the bier was carried forth to the deadhouse, and the stains of blood were cleansed from off the tiles, that no such ill-omened spectacle should disgrace the marriage of Lord Shoreby. At the same time, the very ecclesiastics who had been so dismally engaged all night began to put on morning faces, to do honour to the merrier ceremony which was about to follow. And further to announce the coming of the day, the pious of the town began to assemble and fall to prayer before their favourite shrines, or wait their turn at the confessionals.

Favoured by this stir, it was of course easily possible for any man to avoid the vigilance of Sir Daniel's sentries at the door; and presently Dick, looking about him wearily, caught the eye of no less a person than Will Lawless, still in his monk's habit.

The outlaw, at the same moment, recognised his leader, and privily signed to him with hand and eye.

Now, Dick was far from having forgiven the old rogue his most untimely drunkenness, but he had no desire to involve him in his own predicament; and he signalled back to him, as plain as he was able, to begone.

Lawless, as though he had understood, disappeared at once behind a pillar, and Dick breathed again.

What, then, was his dismay to feel himself plucked by the sleeve and to find the old robber installed beside him, upon the next seat, and, to all appearance, plunged in his devotions!

Instantly Sir Oliver arose from his place, and, gliding behind the stalls, made for the soldiers in the aisle. If the priest's suspicions had been so lightly wakened, the harm was already done, and Lawless a prisoner in the church.

"Move not," whispered Dick. "We are in the plaguiest pass, thanks, before all things, to thy swinishness of yestereven. When ye saw me here, so strangely seated where I have neither right nor interest, what a murrain! could ye not smell harm and get ye gone from evil?"

"Nay," returned Lawless, "I thought ye had heard from Ellis, and were here on duty."

"Ellis!" echoed Dick. "Is Ellis, then, returned?"

"For sure," replied the outlaw. "He came last night, and belted me sore for being in wine — so there ye are avenged, my master. A furious man is Ellis Duckworth! He hath ridden me hot-spur from Craven to prevent this marriage; and, Master Dick, ye know the way of him — do so he will!"

"Nay, then," returned Dick, with composure, "you and I, my poor brother, are dead men; for I sit here a prisoner upon suspicion, and my neck was to answer for this very marriage that he purposeth to mar. I had a fair choice, by the rood! to lose my sweetheart or else lose my life! Well, the cast is thrown — it is to be my life."

"By the mass," cried Lawless, half arising, "I am gone!"

But Dick had his hand at once upon his shoulder.

"Friend Lawless, sit ye still," he said. "An ye have eyes, look yonder at the corner by the chancel arch; see ye not that, even upon the motion of your rising, yon armed men are up and ready to intercept you? Yield ye, friend. Ye were bold aboard ship, when ye thought to die a sea-death; be bold again, now that y'are to die presently upon the gallows."

"Master Dick," gasped Lawless, "the thing hath come upon me somewhat of the suddenest. But give me a moment till I fetch my breath again; and, by the mass, I will be as stout-hearted as yourself."

"Here is my bold fellow!" returned Dick. "And yet, Lawless, it goes hard against the grain with me to die; but where whining mendeth nothing, wherefore whine?"

"Nay, that indeed!" chimed Lawless. "And a fig for death, at worst! It has to be done, my master, soon or late. And hanging in a good quarrel is an easy death, they say, though I could never hear of any that came back to say so."

And so saying, the stout old rascal leaned back in his stall, folded his arms, and began to look about him with the greatest air of insolence and unconcern.

"And for the matter of that," Dick added, "it is yet our best chance to keep quiet. We wot not yet what Duckworth purposes; and when all is said, and if the worst befall, we may yet clear our feet of it."

Now that they ceased talking, they were aware of a very distant and thin strain of mirthful music which steadily drew nearer, louder, and merrier. The bells in the tower began to break forth into a doubling peal, and a greater and greater concourse of people to crowd into the church, shuffling the snow from off their feet, and clapping and blowing in their hands. The western door was flung wide open, showing a glimpse of sunlit, snowy street, and admitting in a great gust the shrewd air of the morning; and in short, it became plain by every sign that Lord Shoreby desired to be married very early in the day, and that the wedding-train was drawing near.

Some of Lord Shoreby's men now cleared a passage down the middle aisle, forcing the people back with lance-stocks; and just then, outside the portal, the secular musicians could be descried drawing near over the frozen snow, the fifers and trumpeters scarlet in the face with lusty blowing, the drummers and the cymbalists beating as for a wager.

These, as they drew near the door of the sacred building, filed off on either side, and, marking time to their own vigorous music, stood stamping in the snow. As they thus opened their ranks, the leaders of this noble bridal train appeared behind and between them; and such was the variety and gaiety of their attire, such the displays of silk and velvet, fur and satin, embroidery and lace, that the procession showed forth upon the snow like a flower-bed in a path or a painted window in a wall.

First came the bride, a sorry sight, as pale as winter, clinging to Sir Daniel's arm, and attended, as bridesmaid, by the short young lady who had befriended Dick the night before. Close behind, in the most radiant toilet, followed the bridegroom, halting on a gouty foot; and as he passed the threshold of the sacred building and doffed his hat, his bald head was seen to be rosy with emotion.

And now came the hour of Ellis Duckworth.

Dick, who sat stunned among contrary emotions, grasping the desk in front of him, beheld a movement in the crowd, people jostling backward, and eyes and arms uplifted. Following these signs, he beheld three or four men with bent bows, leaning from the clerestory gallery. At the same instant they delivered their discharge, and before the clamour and cries of the astounded populace had time to swell fully upon the ear, they had flitted from their perch and disappeared.

The nave was full of swaying heads and voices screaming; the ecclesiastics thronged in terror from their places; the music ceased, and though the bells overhead continued for some seconds to clang upon the air, some wind of the disaster seemed to find its way at last even to the chamber where the ringers were leaping on their ropes, and they also desisted from their merry labours.

Right in the midst of the nave the bridegroom lay stone-dead, pierced by two black arrows. The bride had fainted. Sir Daniel stood, towering above the crowd in his surprise and anger, a cloth-yard shaft quivering in his left forearm, and his face streaming blood from another which had grazed his brow.

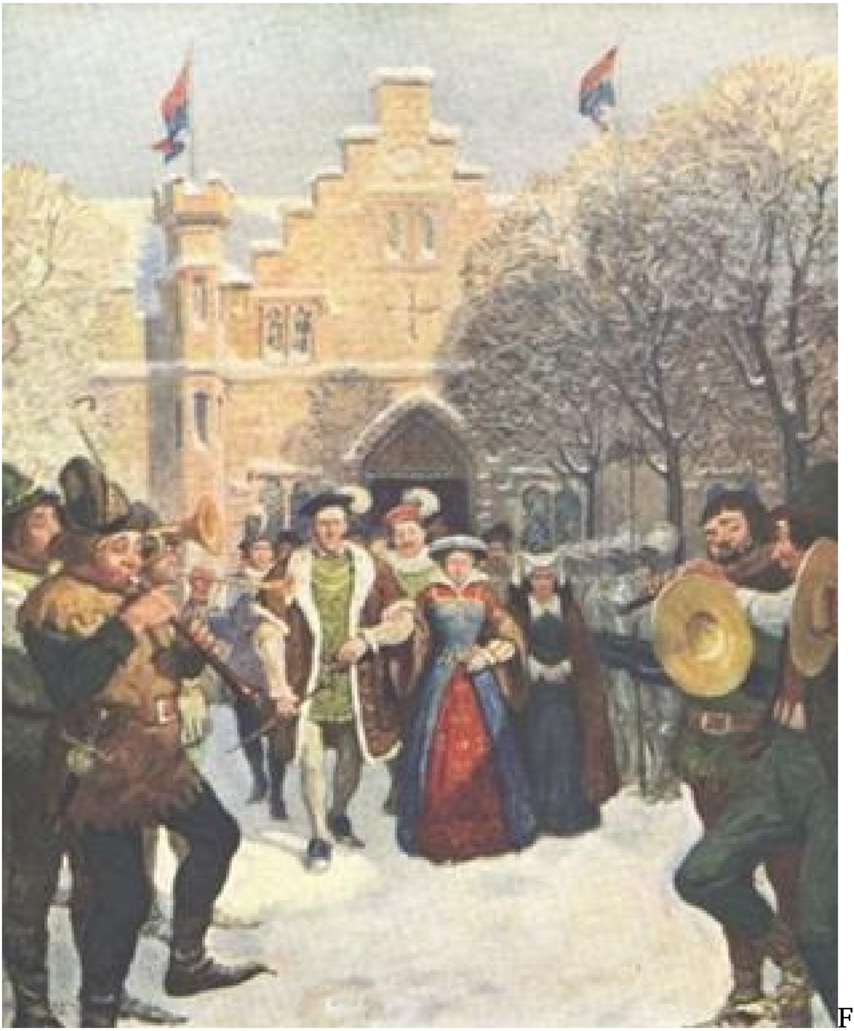
Long before any search could be made for them, the authors of this tragic interruption had clattered down a turn-pike stair and decamped by a postern door.

But Dick and Lawless still remained in pawn; they had, indeed, arisen on the first alarm, and pushed manfully to gain the door; but what with the narrowness of the stalls and the crowding of terrified priests and choristers, the attempt had been in vain, and they had stoically resumed their places.

And now, pale with horror, Sir Oliver rose to his feet and called upon Sir Daniel, pointing with one hand to Dick.

"Here," he cried, "is Richard Shelton — alas the hour! — blood guilty! Seize him! — bid him be seized! For all our lives' sakes, take him and bind him surely! He hath sworn our fall."

Sir Daniel was blinded by anger — blinded by the hot blood that still streamed across his face.



First came the bride, a sorry sight, as pale as the winter, clinging to Sir Daniel’s arm

“Where?” he bellowed. “Hale him forth! By the cross of Holywood, but he shall rue this hour!”

The crowd fell back, and a party of archers invaded the choir, laid rough hands on Dick, dragged him head-foremost from the stall, and thrust him by the shoulders down the chancel steps. Lawless, on his part, sat as still as a mouse.

Sir Daniel, brushing the blood out of his eyes, stared blinkingly upon his captive.

“Ay,” he said, “treacherous and insolent, I have thee fast; and by all potent oaths, for every drop of blood that now trickles in mine eyes, I will wring a groan out of thy carcase. Away with him!” he added.

"Here is no place! Off with him to my house. I will number every joint of thy body with a torture."

But Dick, putting off his captors, uplifted his voice.

"Sanctuary!" he shouted. "Sanctuary! Ho, there, my fathers! They would drag me from the church!"

"From the church thou hast defiled with murder, boy," added a tall man, magnificently dressed.

"On what probation?" cried Dick. "They do accuse me, indeed, of some complicity, but have not proved one tittle. I was, in truth, a suitor for this damsel's hand; and she, I will be bold to say it, repaid my suit with favour. But what then? To love a maid is no offence, I trow — nay, nor to gain her love. In all else, I stand here free from guiltiness."

There was a murmur of approval among the bystanders, so boldly Dick declared his innocence; but at the same time a throng of accusers arose upon the other side, crying how he had been found last night in Sir Daniel's house, how he wore a sacrilegious disguise; and in the midst of the babel, Sir Oliver indicated Lawless, both by voice and gesture, as accomplice to the fact. He, in his turn, was dragged from his seat and set beside his leader. The feelings of the crowd rose high on either side, and while some dragged the prisoners to and fro to favour their escape, others cursed and struck them with their fists. Dick's ears rang and his brain swam dizzily, like a man struggling in the eddies of a furious river.

But the tall man who had already answered Dick, by a prodigious exercise of voice restored silence and order in the mob.

"Search them," he said, "for arms. We may so judge of their intentions."

Upon Dick they found no weapon but his poniard, and this told in his favour, until one man officiously drew it from its sheath, and found it still uncleansed of the blood of Rutter. At this there was a great shout among Sir Daniel's followers, which the tall man suppressed by a gesture and an imperious glance. But when it came to the turn of Lawless, there was found under his gown a sheaf of arrows identical with those that had been shot.

"How say ye now?" asked the tall man, frowningly, of Dick.

"Sir," replied Dick, "I am here in sanctuary, is it not so? Well, sir, I see by your bearing that ye are high in station, and I read in your countenance the marks of piety and justice. To you, then, I will yield me prisoner, and that blithely, foregoing the advantage of this holy place. But rather than to be yielded into the discretion of that man — whom I do here accuse with a loud voice to be the murderer of my natural father and the unjust retainer of my lands and revenues — rather than that, I would beseech you, under favour, with your own gentle hand, to despatch me on the spot. Your own ears have heard him, how before that I was proven guilty he did threaten me with torments. It standeth not with your own honour to deliver me to my sworn enemy and old oppressor, but to try me fairly by the way of law, and, if that I be guilty indeed, to slay me mercifully."

"My lord," cried Sir Daniel, "ye will not hearken to this wolf? His bloody dagger reeks him the lie into his face."

"Nay, but suffer me, good knight," returned the tall stranger; "your own vehemence doth somewhat tell against yourself."

And here the bride, who had come to herself some minutes past and looked wildly on upon this scene, broke loose from those that held her, and fell upon her knees before the last speaker.

"My Lord of Risingham," she cried, "hear me, in justice. I am here in this man's custody by mere force, reft from mine own people. Since that day I had never pity, countenance, nor comfort from the face of man — but from him only — Richard Shelton — whom they now accuse and labour to undo. My lord, if he was yesternight in Sir Daniel's mansion, it was I that brought him there; he came but at my prayer, and thought to do no hurt. While yet Sir Daniel was a good lord to him, he fought with them of the Black Arrow loyally; but when his foul guardian sought his life by practices, and he fled by night, for his soul's sake, out of that bloody house, whither was he to turn — he, helpless and penniless? Or if he be fallen among ill company, whom should ye blame — the lad that was unjustly handled, or the guardian that did abuse his trust?"

And then the short young lady fell on her knees by Joanna's side.

"And I, my good lord and natural uncle," she added, "I can bear testimony, on my conscience and before the face of all, that what this maiden saith is true. It was I, unworthy, that did lead the young man in."

Earl Risingham had heard in silence, and when the voices ceased, he still stood silent for a space. Then he gave Joanna his hand to arise, though it was to be observed that he did not offer the like courtesy to her who had called herself his niece.

"Sir Daniel," he said, "here is a right intricate affair, the which, with your good leave, it shall be mine to examine and adjust. Content ye, then; your business is in careful hands; justice shall be done you; and in the meanwhile, get ye incontinently home, and have your hurts attended. The air is shrewd, and I would not ye took cold upon these scratches."

He made a sign with his hand; it was passed down the nave by obsequious servants, who waited there upon his smallest gesture. Instantly, without the church, a tucket sounded shrill, and through the open portal archers and men-at-arms, uniformly arrayed in the colours and wearing the badge of Lord Risingham, began to file into the church, took Dick and Lawless from those who still detained them, and closing their files about the prisoners, marched forth again and disappeared.

As they were passing, Joanna held both her hands to Dick and cried him her farewell; and the bridesmaid, nothing downcast by her uncle's evident displeasure, blew him a kiss, with a "Keep your heart up, lion-driver!" that for the first time since the accident called up a smile to the faces of the crowd.

CHAPTER V

EARL RISINGHAM

Earl Risingham, although by far the most important person then in Shoreby, was poorly lodged in the house of a private gentleman upon the extreme outskirts of the town. Nothing but the armed men at the doors, and the mounted messengers that kept arriving and departing, announced the temporary residence of a great lord.

Thus it was that, from lack of space, Dick and Lawless were clapped into the same apartment.

“Well spoken, Master Richard,” said the outlaw; “it was excellently well spoken, and, for my part, I thank you cordially. Here we are in good hands; we shall be justly tried, and, some time this evening, decently hanged on the same tree.”

“Indeed, my poor friend, I do believe it,” answered Dick.

“Yet have we a string to our bow,” returned Lawless. “Ellis Duckworth is a man out of ten thousand; he holdeth you right near his heart, both for your own and for your father’s sake; and knowing you guiltless of this fact, he will stir earth and heaven to bear you clear.”

“It may not be,” said Dick. “What can he do? He hath but a handful. Alack, if it were but to-morrow — could I but keep a certain tryst an hour before noon to-morrow — all were, I think, otherwise. But now there is no help.”

“Well,” concluded Lawless, “an ye will stand to it for my innocence, I will stand to it for yours, and that stoutly. It shall naught avail us; but an I be to hang, it shall not be for lack of swearing.”

And then, while Dick gave himself over to his reflections, the old rogue curled himself down into a corner, pulled his monkish hood about his face, and composed himself to sleep. Soon he was loudly snoring, so utterly had his long life of hardship and adventure blunted the sense of apprehension.

It was long after noon, and the day was already failing, before the door was opened and Dick taken forth and led up-stairs to where, in a warm cabinet, Earl Risingham sat musing over the fire.

On his captive’s entrance he looked up.

“Sir,” he said, “I knew your father, who was a man of honour, and this inclineth me to be the more lenient; but I may not hide from you that heavy charges lie against your character. Ye do consort with murderers and robbers; upon a clear probation ye have carried war against the king’s peace; ye are suspected to have piratically seized upon a ship; ye are found skulking with a counterfeit presentment in your enemy’s house; a man is slain that very evening — — ”

"An it like you, my lord," Dick interposed, "I will at once avow my guilt, such as it is. I slew this fellow Rutter; and to the proof" — searching in his bosom — "here is a letter from his wallet."

Lord Risingham took the letter, and opened and read it twice.

"Ye have read this?" he inquired.

"I have read it," answered Dick.

"Are ye for York or Lancaster?" the earl demanded.

"My lord, it was but a little while back that I was asked that question, and knew not how to answer it," said Dick; "but having answered once, I will not vary. My lord, I am for York."

The earl nodded approvingly.

"Honestly replied," he said. "But wherefore, then, deliver me this letter?"

"Nay, but against traitors, my lord, are not all sides arrayed?" cried Dick.

"I would they were, young gentleman," returned the earl; "and I do at least approve your saying. There is more youth than guile in you, I do perceive; and were not Sir Daniel a mighty man upon our side, I were half tempted to espouse your quarrel. For I have inquired, and it appears ye have been hardly dealt with, and have much excuse. But look ye, sir, I am, before all else, a leader in the Queen's interest; and though by nature a just man, as I believe, and leaning even to the excess of mercy, yet must I order my goings for my party's interest, and, to keep Sir Daniel, I would go far about."

"My lord," returned Dick, "ye will think me very bold to counsel you; but do ye count upon Sir Daniel's faith? Methought he had changed sides intolerably often."

"Nay, it is the way of England. What would ye have?" the earl demanded. "But ye are unjust to the knight of Tunstall; and as faith goes, in this unfaithful generation, he hath of late been honourably true to us of Lancaster. Even in our last reverses he stood firm."

"An it pleased you, then," said Dick, "to cast your eye upon this letter, ye might somewhat change your thought of him"; and he handed to the earl Sir Daniel's letter to Lord Wensleydale.

The effect upon the earl's countenance was instant; he lowered like an angry lion, and his hand, with a sudden movement, clutched at his dagger.

"Ye have read this also?" he asked.

"Even so," said Dick. "It is your lordship's own estate he offers to Lord Wensleydale?"

"It is my own estate, even as ye say!" returned the earl. "I am your bedesman for this letter. It hath shown me a fox's hole. Command me, Master Shelton; I will not be backward in gratitude, and to begin with, York or Lancaster, true man or thief, I do now set you at freedom. Go, a-Mary’s name! But judge it right that I retain and hang your fellow, Lawless. The crime hath been most open, and it were fitting that some open punishment should follow.”

“My lord, I make it my first suit to you to spare him also,” pleaded Dick.

“It is an old, condemned rogue, thief, and vagabond, Master Shelton,” said the earl. “He hath been gallows-ripe this score of years. And, whether for one thing or another, whether to-morrow or the day after, where is the great choice?”

“Yet, my lord, it was through love to me that he came hither,” answered Dick, “and I were churlish and thankless to desert him.”

“Master Shelton, ye are troublesome,” replied the earl, severely. “It is an evil way to prosper in this world. Howbeit, and to be quit of your importunity, I will once more humour you. Go, then, together; but go warily, and get swiftly out of Shoreby town. For this Sir Daniel (whom may the saints confound!) thirsteth most greedily to have your blood.”

“My lord, I do now offer you in words my gratitude, trusting at some brief date to pay you some of it in service,” replied Dick, as he turned from the apartment.

CHAPTER VI

ARBLASTER AGAIN

When Dick and Lawless were suffered to steal, by a back way, out of the house where Lord Risingham held his garrison, the evening had already come.

They paused in shelter of the garden wall to consult on their best course. The danger was extreme. If one of Sir Daniel’s men caught sight of them and raised the view-hallo, they would be run down and butchered instantly. And not only was the town of Shoreby a mere net of peril for their lives, but to make for the open country was to run the risk of the patrols.

A little way off, upon some open ground, they spied a windmill standing; and hard by that, a very large granary with open doors.

“How if we lay there until the night fall?” Dick proposed.

And Lawless having no better suggestion to offer, they made a straight push for the granary at a run, and concealed themselves behind the door among some straw. The daylight rapidly departed; and presently the moon was silvering the frozen snow. Now or never was their opportunity to gain the Goat and Bagpipes unobserved and change their tell-tale garments. Yet even then it was advisable to go round by the outskirts, and not run the gauntlet of the market-place, where, in the concourse of people, they stood the more imminent peril to be recognised and slain.

This course was a long one. It took them not far from the house by the beach, now lying dark and silent, and brought them forth at last by the margin of the harbour. Many of the ships, as they could see by the clear moonshine, had weighed anchor, and, profiting by the calm sky, proceeded for more distant parts; answerably to this, the rude alehouses along the beach (although, in defiance of the curfew law, they still shone with fire and candle) were no longer thronged with customers, and no longer echoed to the chorus of sea-songs.

Hastily, half running, with their monkish raiment kilted to the knee, they plunged through the deep snow and threaded the labyrinth of marine lumber; and they were already more than half-way round the harbour when, as they were passing close before an alehouse, the door suddenly opened and let out a gush of light upon their fleeting figures.

Instantly they stopped, and made believe to be engaged in earnest conversation.

Three men, one after another, came out of the alehouse, and the last closed the door behind him. All three were unsteady upon their feet, as if they had passed the day in deep potations, and they now stood wavering in the moonlight, like men who knew not what they would be after. The tallest of the three was talking in a loud, lamentable voice.

"Seven pieces of as good Gascony as ever a tapster broached," he was saying, "the best ship out o' the port o' Dartmouth, a Virgin Mary parcel-gilt, thirteen pounds of good gold money — — "

"I have had losses, too," interrupted one of the others. "I have had losses of mine own, gossip Arblaster. I was robbed at Martinmas of five shillings and a leather wallet well worth ninepence farthing."

Dick's heart smote him at what he heard. Until that moment he had not perhaps thought twice of the poor skipper who had been ruined by the loss of the *Good Hope*; so careless, in those days, were men who wore arms of the goods and interests of their inferiors. But this sudden encounter reminded him sharply of the high-handed manner and ill-ending of his enterprise; and both he and Lawless turned their heads the other way, to avoid the chance of recognition.

The ship's dog had, however, made his escape from the wreck and found his way back again to Shoreby. He was now at Arblaster's heels, and suddenly sniffing and pricking his ears, he darted forward and began to bark furiously at the two sham friars.

His master unsteadily followed him.

"Hey, shipmates!" he cried. "Have ye ever a penny piece for a poor old shipman, clean destroyed by pirates? I am a man that would have paid for you both o' Thursday morning; and now here I be, o' Saturday night, begging for a flagon of ale! Ask my man Tom, if ye misdoubt me. Seven pieces of good Gascon wine, a ship that was mine own, and was my father's before me, a Blessed Mary of plane-tree wood and parcel-gilt, and thirteen pounds in gold and silver. Hey! what say ye? A man that fought the French, too; for I have fought the French; I have cut more French throats upon the high seas than ever a man that sails out of Dartmouth. Come, a penny piece."

Neither Dick nor Lawless durst answer him a word, lest he should recognise their voices; and they stood there as helpless as a ship ashore, not knowing where to turn nor what to hope.

"Are ye dumb, boy?" inquired the skipper. "Mates," he added, with a hiccup, "they be dumb. I like not this manner of discourtesy; for an a man be dumb, so be as he's courteous, he will still speak when he was spoken to, methinks."

By this time the sailor, Tom, who was a man of great personal strength, seemed to have conceived some suspicion of these two speechless figures; and being soberer than his captain, stepped suddenly before him, took Lawless roughly by the shoulder, and asked him, with an oath, what ailed him that he held his tongue. To this the outlaw, thinking all was over, made answer by a wrestling feint that stretched the sailor on the sand, and, calling upon Dick to follow him, took to his heels among the lumber.

The affair passed in a second. Before Dick could run at all, Arblaster had him in his arms; Tom, crawling on his face, had caught him by one foot, and the third man had a drawn cutlass brandishing above his head.

It was not so much the danger, it was not so much the annoyance, that now bowed down the spirits of young Shelton; it was the profound humiliation to have escaped Sir Daniel, convinced Lord Risingham, and now fall helpless in the hands of this old, drunken sailor; and not merely helpless, but, as his conscience loudly told him when it was too late, actually guilty — actually the bankrupt debtor of the man whose ship he had stolen and lost.

“Bring me him back into the alehouse, till I see his face,” said Arblaster.

“Nay, nay,” returned Tom; “but let us first unload his wallet, lest the other lads cry share.”

But though he was searched from head to foot, not a penny was found upon him; nothing but Lord Foxham’s signet, which they plucked savagely from his finger.

“Turn me him to the moon,” said the skipper; and taking Dick by the chin, he cruelly jerked his head into the air. “Blessed Virgin!” he cried, “it is the pirate!”

“Hey!” cried Tom.

“By the Virgin of Bordeaux, it is the man himself!” repeated Arblaster. “What, sea-thief, do I hold you?” he cried. “Where is my ship? Where is my wine? Hey! have I you in my hands? Tom, give me one end of a cord here; I will so truss me this sea-thief, hand and foot together, like a basting turkey — marry, I will so bind him up — and thereafter I will so beat — so beat him!”

And so he ran on, winding the cord meanwhile about Dick’s limbs with the dexterity peculiar to seamen, and at every turn and cross securing it with a knot, and tightening the whole fabric with a savage pull.

When he had done, the lad was a mere package in his hands — as helpless as the dead. The skipper held him at arm’s length, and laughed aloud. Then he fetched him a stunning buffet on the ear; and then turned him about, and furiously kicked and kicked him. Anger rose up in Dick’s bosom like a storm; anger strangled him, and he thought to have died; but when the sailor, tired of this cruel play, dropped him all his length upon the sand and turned to consult with his companions, he instantly regained command of his temper. Here was a momentary respite; ere they began again to torture him, he might have found some method to escape from this degrading and fatal misadventure.

Presently, sure enough, and while his captors were still discussing what to do with him, he took heart of grace, and, with a pretty steady voice, addressed them.

“My masters,” he began, “are ye gone clean foolish? Here hath Heaven put into your hands as pretty an occasion to grow rich as ever shipman had — such as ye might make thirty over-sea adventures and not find again — and, by the mass! what do ye? Beat me? — nay; so would an angry child! But for long-headed tarry-Johns, that fear not fire nor water, and that love gold as they love beef, methinks ye are not wise.”

“Ay,” said Tom, “now y’are trussed ye would cozen us.”

“Cozen you!” repeated Dick. “Nay, if ye be fools, it would be easy. But if ye be shrewd fellows, as I trow ye are, ye can see plainly where your interest lies. When I took your ship from you, we were many, we were well clad and armed; but now, bethink you a little, who mustered that array? One incontestably that hath much gold. And if he, being already rich, continueth to hunt after more even in the face of storms — bethink you once more — shall there not be a treasure somewhere hidden?”

“What meaneth he?” asked one of the men.

“Why, if ye have lost an old skiff and a few jugs of vinegary wine,” continued Dick, “forget them, for the trash they are; and do ye rather buckle to an adventure worth the name, that shall, in twelve hours, make or mar you for ever. But take me up from where I lie, and let us go somewhere near at hand and talk across a flagon, for I am sore and frozen, and my mouth is half among the snow.”

“He seeks but to cozen us,” said Tom, contemptuously.

“Cozen! cozen!” cried the third man. “I would I could see the man that could cozen me! He were a cozener indeed! Nay, I was not born yesterday. I can see a church when it hath a steeple on it; and for my part, gossip Arblaster, methinks there is some sense in this young man. Shall we go hear him, indeed? Say, shall we go hear him?”

“I would look gladly on a pottle of strong ale, good Master Pirret,” returned Arblaster. “How say ye, Tom? But then the wallet is empty.”

“I will pay,” said the other — ”I will pay. I would fain see this matter out; I do believe, upon my conscience, there is gold in it.”

“Nay, if ye get again to drinking, all is lost!” cried Tom.

“Gossip Arblaster, ye suffer your fellow to have too much liberty,” returned Master Pirret. “Would ye be led by a hired man? Fy, fy!”

“Peace, fellow!” said Arblaster, addressing Tom. “Will ye put your oar in? Truly a fine pass, when the crew is to correct the skipper!”

“Well, then, go your way,” said Tom; “I wash my hands of you.”

“Set him, then, upon his feet,” said Master Pirret. “I know a privy place where we may drink and discourse."

"If I am to walk, my friends, ye must set my feet at liberty," said Dick, when he had been once more planted upright like a post.

"He saith true," laughed Pirret. "Truly, he could not walk accoutred as he is. Give it a slit — out with your knife and slit it, gossip."

Even Arblaster paused at this proposal; but as his companion continued to insist, and Dick had the sense to keep the merest wooden indifference of expression, and only shrugged his shoulders over the delay, the skipper consented at last, and cut the cords which tied his prisoner's feet and legs. Not only did this enable Dick to walk; but the whole network of his bonds being proportionately loosened, he felt the arm behind his back begin to move more freely, and could hope, with time and trouble, to entirely disengage it. So much he owed already to the owlish silliness and greed of Master Pirret.

That worthy now assumed the lead, and conducted them to the very same rude alehouse where Lawless had taken Arblaster on the day of the gale. It was now quite deserted; the fire was a pile of red embers, radiating the most ardent heat; and when they had chosen their places, and the landlord had set before them a measure of mulled ale, both Pirret and Arblaster stretched forth their legs and squared their elbows like men bent upon a pleasant hour.

The table at which they sat, like all the others in the alehouse, consisted of a heavy, square board, set on a pair of barrels; and each of the four curiously-assorted cronies sat at one side of the square, Pirret facing Arblaster, and Dick opposite to the common sailor.

"And now, young man," said Pirret, "to your tale. It doth appear, indeed, that ye have somewhat abused our gossip Arblaster; but what then? Make it up to him — show him but this chance to become wealthy — and I will go pledge he will forgive you."

So far Dick had spoken pretty much at random; but it was now necessary, under the supervision of six eyes, to invent and tell some marvellous story, and, if it were possible, get back into his hands the all-important signet. To squander time was the first necessity. The longer his stay lasted, the more would his captors drink, and the surer should he be when he attempted his escape.

Well, Dick was not much of an inventor, and what he told was pretty much the tale of Ali Baba, with Shoreby and TunstallForest substituted for the East, and the treasures of the cavern rather exaggerated than diminished. As the reader is aware, it is an excellent story, and has but one drawback — that it is not true; and so, as these three simple shipmen now heard it for the first time, their eyes stood out of their faces, and their mouths gaped like codfish at a fishmonger's.

Pretty soon a second measure of mulled ale was called for; and while Dick was still artfully spinning out the incidents a third followed the second.

Here was the position of the parties towards the end:

Arblaster, three-parts drunk and one-half asleep, hung helpless on his stool. Even Tom had been much delighted with the tale, and his vigilance had abated in proportion. Meanwhile, Dick had gradually wormed his right arm clear of its bonds, and was ready to risk all.

“And so,” said Pirret, “y’are one of these?”

“I was made so,” replied Dick, “against my will; but an I could but get a sack or two of gold coin to my share, I should be a fool indeed to continue dwelling in a filthy cave, and standing shot and buffet like a soldier. Here be we four; good! Let us, then, go forth into the forest to-morrow ere the sun be up. Could we come honestly by a donkey, it were better; but an we cannot, we have our four strong backs, and I warrant me we shall come home staggering.”

Pirret licked his lips.

“And this magic,” he said — ”this password, whereby the cave is opened — how call ye it, friend?”

“Nay, none know the word but the three chiefs,” returned Dick; “but here is your great good fortune, that, on this very evening, I should be the bearer of a spell to open it. It is a thing not trusted twice a year beyond the captain’s wallet.”

“A spell!” said Arblaster, half awakening, and squinting upon Dick with one eye. “Aroint thee! no spells! I be a good Christian. Ask my man Tom, else.”

“Nay, but this is white magic,” said Dick. “It doth naught with the devil; only the powers of numbers, herbs, and planets.”

“Ay, ay,” said Pirret; “‘tis but white magic, gossip. There is no sin therein, I do assure you. But proceed, good youth. This spell — in what should it consist?”

“Nay, that I will incontinently show you,” answered Dick. “Have ye there the ring ye took from my finger? Good! Now hold it forth before you by the extreme finger-ends, at the arm’s length, and over against the shining of these embers. ‘Tis so exactly. Thus, then, is the spell.”

With a haggard glance, Dick saw the coast was clear between him and the door. He put up an internal prayer. Then whipping forth his arm, he made but one snatch of the ring, and at the same instant, levering up the table, he sent it bodily over upon the seaman Tom. He, poor soul, went down bawling under the ruins; and before Arblaster understood that anything was wrong, or Pirret could collect his dazzled wits, Dick had run to the door and escaped into the moonlit night.

The moon, which now rode in the mid-heavens, and the extreme whiteness of the snow, made the open ground about the harbour bright as day; and young Shelton leaping, with kilted robe, among the lumber, was a conspicuous figure from afar.

Tom and Pirret followed him with shouts; from every drinking-shop they were joined by others whom their cries aroused; and presently a whole fleet of sailors was in full pursuit. But Jack ashore was a bad runner, even in the fifteenth century, and Dick, besides, had a start, which he rapidly improved, until, as he drew near the entrance of a narrow lane, he even paused and looked laughingly behind him.

Upon the white floor of snow, all the shipmen of Shoreby came clustering in an inky mass, and tailing out rearward in isolated clumps. Every man was shouting or screaming; every man was gesticulating with both arms in air; some one was continually falling; and to complete the picture, when one fell, a dozen would fall upon the top of him.

The confused mass of sound which they rolled up as high as to the moon was partly comical and partly terrifying to the fugitive whom they were hunting. In itself, it was impotent, for he made sure no seaman in the port could run him down. But the mere volume of noise, in so far as it must awake all the sleepers in Shoreby and bring all the skulking sentries to the street, did really threaten him with danger in the front. So, spying a dark doorway at a corner, he whipped briskly into it, and let the uncouth hunt go by him, still shouting and gesticulating, and all red with hurry and white with tumbles in the snow.

It was a long while, indeed, before this great invasion of the town by the harbour came to an end, and it was long before silence was restored. For long, lost sailors were still to be heard pounding and shouting through the streets in all directions and in every quarter of the town. Quarrels followed, sometimes among themselves, sometimes with the men of the patrols; knives were drawn, blows given and received, and more than one dead body remained behind upon the snow.

When, a full hour later, the last seaman returned grumblingly to the harbour side and his particular tavern, it may fairly be questioned if he had ever known what manner of man he was pursuing, but it was absolutely sure that he had now forgotten. By next morning there were many strange stories flying; and a little while after, the legend of the devil’s nocturnal visit was an article of faith with all the lads of Shoreby.

But the return of the last seaman did not, even yet, set free young Shelton from his cold imprisonment in the doorway.

For some time after, there was a great activity of patrols; and special parties came forth to make the round of the place and report to one or other of the great lords, whose slumbers had been thus unusually broken.

The night was already well spent before Dick ventured from his hiding-place and came, safe and sound, but aching with cold and bruises, to the door of the Goat and Bagpipes. As the law required, there was neither fire nor candle in the house; but he groped his way into a corner of the icy guest-room, found an end of a blanket, which he hitched around his shoulders, and creeping close to the nearest sleeper, was soon lost in slumber.

BOOK V

CROOKBACK

CHAPTER I

THE SHRILL TRUMPET

Very early the next morning, before the first peep of the day, Dick arose, changed his garments, armed himself once more like a gentleman, and set forth for Lawless's den in the forest. There, it will be remembered, he had left Lord Foxham's papers; and to get these and be back in time for the tryst with the young Duke of Gloucester could only be managed by an early start and the most vigorous walking.

The frost was more rigorous than ever; the air windless and dry, and stinging to the nostril. The moon had gone down, but the stars were still bright and numerous, and the reflection from the snow was clear and cheerful. There was no need for a lamp to walk by; nor, in that still but ringing air, the least temptation to delay.

Dick had crossed the greater part of the open ground between Shoreby and the forest, and had reached the bottom of the little hill, some hundred yards below the Cross of St. Bride, when, through the stillness of the black morn, there rang forth the note of a trumpet, so shrill, clear, and piercing, that he thought he had never heard the match of it for audibility. It was blown once, and then hurriedly a second time; and then the clash of steel succeeded.

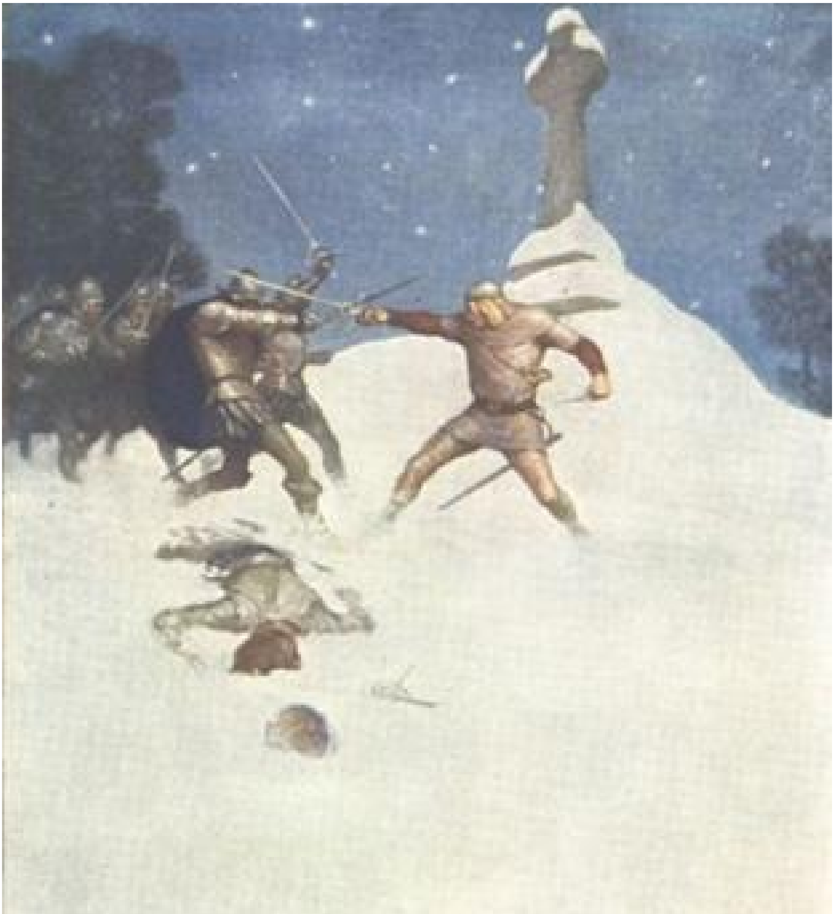
At this young Shelton pricked his ears, and drawing his sword, ran forward up the hill.

Presently he came in sight of the cross, and was aware of a most fierce encounter raging on the road before it. There were seven or eight assailants, and but one to keep head against them; but so active and dexterous was this one, so desperately did he charge and scatter his opponents, so deftly keep his footing on the ice, that already, before Dick could intervene, he had slain one, wounded another, and kept the whole in check.

Still, it was by a miracle that he continued his defence, and at any moment, any accident, the least slip of foot or error of hand, his life would be a forfeit.

“Hold ye well, sir! Here is help!” cried Richard; and forgetting that he was alone, and that the cry was somewhat irregular, “To the Arrow! to the Arrow!” he shouted, as he fell upon the rear of the assailants.

These were stout fellows also, for they gave not an inch at this surprise, but faced about, and fell with astonishing fury upon Dick. Four against one, the steel flashed about him in the starlight; the sparks flew fiercely; one of the men opposed to him fell — in the stir of the fight he hardly knew why; then he himself was struck across the head, and though the steel cap below his hood protected him, the blow beat him down upon one knee, with a brain whirling like a windmill-sail.



There were seven or eight assailants, and but one to keep head against them

Meanwhile the man whom he had come to rescue, instead of joining in the conflict, had, on the first sign of intervention, leaped aback and blown again, and yet more urgently and loudly, on that same shrill-voiced trumpet that began the alarm. Next moment, indeed, his foes were on him, and he was once more charging and fleeing, leaping, stabbing, dropping to his knee, and using indifferently sword and dagger, foot and hand, with the same unshaken courage and feverish energy and speed.

But that ear-piercing summons had been heard at last. There was a muffled rushing in the snow; and in a good hour for Dick, who saw the sword-points glitter already at his throat, there poured forth out of the wood upon both sides a disorderly torrent of mounted men-at-arms, each cased in iron, and with visor lowered, each bearing his lance in rest, or his sword bared and raised, and each carrying, so to speak, a passenger, in the shape of an archer or page, who leaped one after another from their perches, and had presently doubled the array.

The original assailants, seeing themselves outnumbered and surrounded, threw down their arms without a word.

"Seize me these fellows!" said the hero of the trumpet; and when his order had been obeyed, he drew near to Dick and looked him in the face.

Dick, returning this scrutiny, was surprised to find in one who had displayed such strength, skill, and energy, a lad no older than himself — slightly deformed, with one shoulder higher than the other, and of a pale, painful, and distorted countenance. The eyes, however, were very clear and bold.

"Sir," said this lad, "ye came in good time for me, and none too early."

"My lord," returned Dick, with a faint sense that he was in the presence of a great personage, "ye are yourself so marvellous a good swordsman that I believe ye had managed them single-handed. Howbeit, it was certainly well for me that your men delayed no longer than they did."

"How knew ye who I was?" demanded the stranger.

"Even now, my lord," Dick answered, "I am ignorant of whom I speak with."

"Is it so?" asked the other. "And yet ye threw yourself head-first into this unequal battle."

"I saw one man valiantly contending against many," replied Dick, "and I had thought myself dishonoured not to bear him aid."

A singular sneer played about the young nobleman's mouth as he made answer:

"These are very brave words. But to the more essential — are ye Lancaster or York?"

"My lord, I make no secret; I am clear for York," Dick answered.

"By the mass!" replied the other, "it is well for you."

And so saying, he turned towards one of his followers.

"Let me see," he continued, in the same sneering and cruel tones — "let me see a clean end of these brave gentlemen. Truss me them up."

There were but five survivors of the attacking party. Archers seized them by the arms; they were hurried to the borders of the wood, and each placed below a tree of suitable dimension; the rope was adjusted; an archer, carrying the end of it, hastily clambered overhead; and before a minute was over, and without a word passing upon either hand, the five men were swinging by the neck.

"And now," cried the deformed leader, "back to your posts, and when I summon you next, be readier to attend."

"My lord duke," said one man, "beseech you, tarry not here alone. Keep but a handful of lances at your hand."

"Fellow," said the duke, "I have forborne to chide you for your slowness. Cross me not, therefore. I trust my hand and arm, for all that I be crooked. Ye were backwards when the trumpet sounded; and ye are now too forward with your counsels. But it is ever so; last with the lance and first with tongue. Let it be reversed."

And with a gesture that was not without a sort of dangerous nobility, he waved them off.

The footmen climbed again to their seats behind the men-at-arms, and the whole party moved slowly away and disappeared in twenty different directions, under the cover of the forest.

The day was by this time beginning to break, and the stars to fade. The first grey glimmer of dawn shone upon the countenances of the two young men, who now turned once more to face each other.

"Here," said the duke, "ye have seen my vengeance, which is, like my blade, both sharp and ready. But I would not have you, for all Christendom, suppose me thankless. You that came to my aid with a good sword and a better courage — unless that ye recoil from my misshapeness — come to my heart."

And so saying, the young leader held out his arms for an embrace.

In the bottom of his heart Dick already entertained a great terror and some hatred for the man whom he had rescued; but the invitation was so worded that it would not have been merely discourteous, but cruel, to refuse or hesitate; and he hastened to comply.

"And now, my lord duke," he said, when he had regained his freedom, "do I suppose aright? Are ye my Lord Duke of Gloucester?"

"I am Richard of Gloucester," returned the other. "And you — how call they you?"

Dick told him his name, and presented Lord Foxham's signet, which the duke immediately recognised.

"Ye come too soon," he said; "but why should I complain? Ye are like me, that was here at watch two hours before the day. But this is the first sally of mine arms; upon this adventure, Master Shelton, shall I make or mar the quality of my renown. There lie mine enemies, under two old, skilled captains — Risingham and Brackley — well posted for strength, I do believe, but yet upon two sides without retreat, enclosed betwixt the sea, the harbour, and the river. Methinks, Shelton, here were a great blow to be stricken, an we could strike it silently and suddenly."

"I do think so, indeed," cried Dick, warming.

"Have ye my Lord Foxham's notes?" inquired the duke.

And then, Dick, having explained how he was without them for the moment, made himself bold to offer information every jot as good, of his own knowledge.

"And for mine own part, my lord duke," he added, "an ye had men enough, I would fall on even at this present. For, look ye, at the peep of day the watches of the night are over; but by day they keep neither watch nor ward — only scour the outskirts with horsemen. Now, then, when the night watch is already unarmed, and the rest are at their morning cup — now were the time to break them."

"How many do ye count?" asked Gloucester.

"They number not two thousand," Dick replied.

"I have seven hundred in the woods behind us," said the duke; "seven hundred follow from Kettley, and will be here anon; behind these, and further, are four hundred more; and my Lord Foxham hath five hundred half a day from here, at Holywood. Shall we attend their coming, or fall on?"

"My lord," said Dick, "when ye hanged these five poor rogues ye did decide the question. Churls although they were, in these uneasy times they will be lacked and looked for, and the alarm be given. Therefore, my lord, if ye do count upon the advantage of a surprise, ye have not, in my poor opinion, one whole hour in front of you."

"I do think so indeed," returned Crookback. "Well, before an hour, ye shall be in the thick on't, winning spurs. A swift man to Holywood, carrying Lord Foxham's signet; another along the road to speed my laggards! Nay, Shelton, by the rood, it may be done!"

Therewith he once more set his trumpet to his lips and blew.

This time he was not long kept waiting. In a moment the open space about the cross was filled with horse and foot. Richard of Gloucester took his place upon the steps, and despatched messenger after messenger to hasten the concentration of the seven hundred men that lay hidden in the immediate neighbourhood among the woods; and before a quarter of an hour had passed, all his dispositions being taken, he put himself at their head, and began to move down the hill towards Shoreby.

His plan was simple. He was to seize a quarter of the town of Shoreby lying on the right hand of the highroad and make his position good there in the narrow lanes until his reinforcements followed.

If Lord Risingham chose to retreat, Richard would follow upon his rear, and take him between two fires; or, if he preferred to hold the town, he would be shut in a trap, there to be gradually overwhelmed by force of numbers.

There was but one danger, but that was imminent and great —

Gloucester's seven hundred might be rolled up and cut to pieces in the first encounter, and, to avoid this, it was needful to make the surprise of their arrival as complete as possible.

The footmen, therefore, were all once more taken up behind the riders, and Dick had the signal honour meted out to him of mounting behind Gloucester himself. For as far as there was any cover the troops moved slowly, and when they came near the end of the trees that lined the highway, stopped to breathe and reconnoitre.

The sun was now well up, shining with a frosty brightness out of a yellow halo, and right over against the luminary, Shoreby, a field of snowy roofs and ruddy gables, was rolling up its columns of morning smoke.

Gloucester turned round to Dick.

"In that poor place," he said, "where people are cooking breakfast, either you shall gain your spurs and I begin a life of mighty honour and glory in the world's eye, or both of us, as I conceive it, shall fall dead and be unheard of. Two Richards are we. Well, then, Richard Shelton, they shall be heard about, these two! Their swords shall not ring more loudly on men's helmets than their names shall ring in people's ears."

Dick was astonished at so great a hunger after fame, expressed with so great vehemence of voice and language, and he answered very sensibly and quietly, that, for his part, he promised he would do his duty, and doubted not of victory if every one did the like.

By this time the horses were well breathed, and the leader holding up his, sword and giving rein, the whole troop of chargers broke into the gallop and thundered, with their double load of fighting men, down the remainder of the hill and across the snow-covered plain that still divided them from Shoreby.

CHAPTER II

THE BATTLE OF SHOREBY

The whole distance to be crossed was not above a quarter of a mile. But they had no sooner debouched beyond the cover of the trees than they were aware of people fleeing and screaming in the snowy meadows upon either hand. Almost at the same moment a great rumour began to arise, and spread and grow continually louder in the town; and they were not yet half-way to the nearest house before the bells began to ring backwards from the steeple.

The young duke ground his teeth together. By these so early signals of alarm he feared to find his enemies prepared; and if he failed to gain a footing in the town, he knew that his small party would soon be broken and exterminated in the open.

In the town, however, the Lancastrians were far from being in so good a posture. It was as Dick had said. The night-guard had already doffed their harness; the rest were still hanging — unlatched, unbraced, all unprepared for battle — about their quarters; and in the whole of Shoreby there were not, perhaps, fifty men full armed, or fifty chargers ready to be mounted.

The beating of the bells, the terrifying summons of men who ran about the streets crying and beating upon the doors, aroused in an incredibly short space at least two-score out of that half-hundred. These got speedily to horse, and, the alarm still flying wild and contrary, galloped in different directions.

Thus it befell that, when Richard of Gloucester reached the first house of Shoreby, he was met in the mouth of the street by a mere handful of lances, whom he swept before his onset as the storm chases the bark.

A hundred paces into the town, Dick Shelton touched the duke's arm; the duke, in answer, gathered his reins, put the shrill trumpet to his mouth, and blowing a concerted point, turned to the right hand out of the direct advance. Swerving like a single rider, his whole command turned after him, and, still at the full gallop of the chargers, swept up the narrow by-street. Only the last score of riders drew rein and faced about in the entrance; the footmen, whom they carried behind them, leapt at the same instant to the earth, and began, some to bend their bows, and others to break into and secure the houses upon either hand.

Surprised at this sudden change of direction, and daunted by the firm front of the rear-guard, the few Lancastrians, after a momentary consultation, turned and rode farther into town to seek for reinforcements.

The quarter of the town upon which, by the advice of Dick, Richard of Gloucester had now seized, consisted of five small streets of poor and ill-inhabited houses, occupying a very gentle eminence, and lying open towards the back.

The five streets being each secured by a good guard, the reserve would thus occupy the centre, out of shot, and yet ready to carry aid wherever it was needed.

Such was the poorness of the neighbourhood that none of the Lancastrian lords, and but few of their retainers, had been lodged therein; and the inhabitants, with one accord, deserted their houses and fled, squalling, along the streets or over garden walls.

In the centre, where the five ways all met, a somewhat ill-favoured alehouse displayed the sign of the Chequers; and here the Duke of Gloucester chose his headquarters for the day.

To Dick he assigned the guard of one of the five streets.

"Go," he said, "win your spurs. Win glory for me: one Richard for another. I tell you, if I rise, ye shall rise by the same ladder. Go," he added, shaking him by the hand.

But, as soon as Dick was gone, he turned to a little shabby archer at his elbow.

"Go, Dutton, and that right speedily," he added. "Follow that lad. If ye find him faithful, ye answer for his safety, a head for a head. Woe unto you, if ye return without him! But if he be faithless — or, for one instant, ye misdoubt him — stab him from behind."

In the meanwhile Dick hastened to secure his post. The street he had to guard was very narrow, and closely lined with houses, which projected and overhung the roadway; but narrow and dark as it was, since it opened upon the market-place of the town, the main issue of the battle would probably fall to be decided on that spot.

The market-place was full of townspeople fleeing in disorder; but there was as yet no sign of any foeman ready to attack, and Dick judged he had some time before him to make ready his defence.

The two houses at the end stood deserted, with open doors, as the inhabitants had left them in their flight, and from these he had the furniture hastily tossed forth and piled into a barrier in the entry of the lane. A hundred men were placed at his disposal, and of these he threw the more part into the houses, where they might lie in shelter and deliver their arrows from the windows. With the rest, under his own immediate eye, he lined the barricade.

Meanwhile the utmost uproar and confusion had continued to prevail throughout the town; and what with the hurried clashing of bells, the sounding of trumpets, the swift movement of bodies of horse, the cries of the commanders, and the shrieks of women, the noise was almost deafening to the ear. Presently, little by little, the tumult began to subside; and soon after, files of men in armour and bodies of archers began to assemble and form in line of battle in the market-place.

A large portion of this body were in murrey and blue, and in the mounted knight who ordered their array Dick recognised Sir Daniel Brackley.

Then there befell a long pause, which was followed by the almost simultaneous sounding of four trumpets from four different quarters of the town. A fifth rang in answer from the market-place, and at the same moment the files began to move, and a shower of arrows rattled about the barricade, and sounded like blows upon the walls of the two flanking houses.

The attack had begun, by a common signal, on all the five issues of the quarter. Gloucester was beleaguered upon every side; and Dick judged, if he would make good his post, he must rely entirely on the hundred men of his command.

Seven volleys of arrows followed one upon the other, and in the very thick of the discharges Dick was touched from behind upon the arm, and found a page holding out to him a leathern jack, strengthened with bright plates of mail.

“It is from my Lord of Gloucester,” said the page. “He hath observed, Sir Richard, that ye went unarmed.”

Dick, with a glow at his heart at being so addressed, got to his feet and, with the assistance of the page, donned the defensive coat. Even as he did so, two arrows rattled harmlessly upon the plates, and a third struck down the page, mortally wounded, at his feet.

Meantime the whole body of the enemy had been steadily drawing nearer across the market-place; and by this time were so close at hand that Dick gave the order to return their shot. Immediately, from behind the barrier and from the windows of the houses, a counterblast of arrows sped, carrying death. But the Lancastrians, as if they had but waited for a signal, shouted loudly in answer; and began to close at a run upon the barrier, the horsemen still hanging back, with visors lowered.

Then followed an obstinate and deadly struggle, hand to hand. The assailants, wielding their falchions with one hand, strove with the other to drag down the structure of the barricade. On the other side, the parts were reversed; and the defenders exposed themselves like madmen to protect their rampart. So for some minutes the contest raged almost in silence, friend and foe falling one upon another. But it is always the easier to destroy; and when a single note upon the tucket recalled the attacking party from this desperate service, much of the barricade had been removed piecemeal, and the whole fabric had sunk to half its height, and tottered to a general fall.

And now the footmen in the market-place fell back, at a run, on every side. The horsemen, who had been standing in a line two deep, wheeled suddenly, and made their flank into their front; and as swift as a striking adder, the long, steel-clad column was launched upon the ruinous barricade.

Of the first two horsemen, one fell, rider and steed, and was ridden down by his companions. The second leaped clean upon the summit of the rampart, transpiercing an archer with his lance. Almost in the same instant he was dragged from the saddle and his horse despatched.

And then the full weight and impetus of the charge burst upon and scattered the defenders. The men-at-arms, surmounting their fallen comrades, and carried onward by the fury of their onslaught, dashed through Dick’s broken line and poured thundering up the lane beyond, as a stream bestrides and pours across a broken dam.

Yet was the fight not over. Still, in the narrow jaws of the entrance, Dick and a few survivors plied their bills like woodmen; and already, across the width of the passage, there had been formed a second, a higher, and a more effectual rampart of fallen men and disembowelled horses, lashing in the agonies of death.

Baffled by this fresh obstacle, the remainder of the cavalry fell back; and as, at the sight of this movement, the flight of arrows redoubled from the casements of the houses, their retreat had, for a moment, almost degenerated into flight.

Almost at the same time, those who had crossed the barricade and charged farther up the street, being met before the door of the Chequers by the formidable hunchback and the whole reserve of the Yorkists, began to come scattering backwards, in the excess of disarray and terror.

Dick and his fellows faced about, fresh men poured out of the houses; a cruel blast of arrows met the fugitives full in the face, while Gloucester was already riding down their rear; in the inside of a minute and a half there was no living Lancastrian in the street.

Then, and not till then, did Dick hold up his reeking blade and give the word to cheer.

Meanwhile Gloucester dismounted from his horse and came forward to inspect the post. His face was as pale as linen; but his eyes shone in his head like some strange jewel, and his voice, when he spoke, was hoarse and broken with the exultation of battle and success. He looked at the rampart, which neither friend nor foe could now approach without precaution, so fiercely did the horses struggle in the throes of death, and at the sight of that great carnage he smiled upon one side.

“Despatch these horses,” he said; “they keep you from your vantage.

Richard Shelton," he added, "ye have pleased me. Kneel."

The Lancastrians had already resumed their archery, and the shafts fell thick in the mouth of the street; but the duke, minding them not at all, deliberately drew his sword and dubbed Richard a knight upon the spot.

"And now, Sir Richard," he continued, "if that ye see Lord Risingham, send me an express upon the instant. Were it your last man, let me hear of it incontinently. I had rather venture the post than lose my stroke at him. For mark me, all of ye," he added, raising his voice, "if Earl Risingham fall by another hand than mine, I shall count this victory a defeat."

"My lord duke," said one of his attendants, "is your grace not weary of exposing his dear life unneedfully? Why tarry we here?"

"Catesby," returned the duke, "here is the battle, not elsewhere. The rest are but feigned onslaughts. Here must we vanquish. And for the exposure — if ye were an ugly hunchback, and the children gecked at you upon the street, ye would count your body cheaper, and an hour of glory worth a life. Howbeit, if ye will, let us ride on and visit the other posts. Sir Richard here, my namesake, he shall still hold this entry, where he wadeth to the ankles in hot blood. Him can we trust. But mark it, Sir Richard, ye are not yet done. The worst is yet to ward. Sleep not."

He came right up to young Shelton, looking him hard in the eyes, and taking his hand in both of his, gave it so extreme a squeeze that the blood had nearly spurted. Dick quailed before his eyes. The insane excitement, the courage, and the cruelty that he read therein filled him with dismay about the future. This young duke's was indeed a gallant spirit, to ride foremost in the ranks of war; but after the battle, in the days of peace and in the circle of his trusted friends, that mind, it was to be dreaded, would continue to bring forth the fruits of death.

CHAPTER III

THE BATTLE OF SHOREBY (CONCLUDED)

Dick, once more left to his own counsels, began to look about him. The arrow-shot had somewhat slackened. On all sides the enemy were falling back; and the greater part of the market-place was now left empty, the snow here trampled into orange mud, there splashed with gore, scattered all over with dead men and horses, and bristling thick with feathered arrows.

On his own side the loss had been cruel. The jaws of the little street and the ruins of the barricade were heaped with the dead and dying; and out of the hundred men with whom he had begun the battle, there were not seventy left who could still stand to arms.

At the same time, the day was passing. The first reinforcements might be looked for to arrive at any moment; and the Lancastrians, already shaken by the result of their desperate but unsuccessful onslaught, were in an ill temper to support a fresh invader.

There was a dial in the wall of one of the two flanking houses; and this, in the frosty winter sunshine, indicated ten of the forenoon.

Dick turned to the man who was at his elbow, a little insignificant archer, binding a cut in his arm.

“It was well fought,” he said, “and, by my sooth, they will not charge us twice.”

“Sir,” said the little archer, “ye have fought right well for York, and better for yourself. Never hath man in so brief space prevailed so greatly on the duke’s affections. That he should have entrusted such a post to one he knew not is a marvel. But look to your head, Sir Richard! If ye be vanquished — ay, if ye give way one foot’s breadth — axe or cord shall punish it; and I am set if ye do aught doubtful, I will tell you honestly, here to stab you from behind.”

Dick looked at the little man in amaze.

“You!” he cried. “And from behind!”

“It is right so,” returned the archer; “and because I like not the affair I tell it you. Ye must make the post good, Sir Richard, at your peril. O, our Crookback is a bold blade and a good warrior; but, whether in cold blood or in hot, he will have all things done exact to his commandment. If any fail or hinder, they shall die the death.”

“Now, by the saints!” cried Richard, “is this so? And will men follow such a leader?”

"Nay, they follow him gleefully," replied the other; "for if he be exact to punish, he is most open-handed to reward. And if he spare not the blood and sweat of others, he is ever liberal of his own, still in the first front of battle, still the last to sleep. He will go far, will Crookback Dick o' Gloucester!"

The young knight, if he had before been brave and vigilant, was now all the more inclined to watchfulness and courage. His sudden favour, he began to perceive, had brought perils in its train. And he turned from the archer, and once more scanned anxiously the market-place. It lay empty as before.

"I like not this quietude," he said. "Doubtless they prepare us some surprise."

And, as if in answer to his remark, the archers began once more to advance against the barricade, and the arrows to fall thick. But there was something hesitating in the attack. They came not on roundly, but seemed rather to await a further signal.

Dick looked uneasily about him, spying for a hidden danger. And sure enough, about half-way up the little street, a door was suddenly opened from within, and the house continued, for some seconds, and both by door and window, to disgorge a torrent of Lancastrian archers. These, as they leaped down, hurriedly stood to their ranks, bent their bows, and proceeded to pour upon Dick's rear a flight of arrows.

At the same time, the assailants in the market-place redoubled their shot, and began to close in stoutly upon the barricade.

Dick called down his whole command out of the houses, and facing them both ways, and encouraging their valour both by word and gesture, returned as best he could the double shower of shafts that fell about his post.

Meanwhile house after house was opened in the street, and the Lancastrians continued to pour out of the doors and leap down from the windows, shouting victory, until the number of enemies upon Dick's rear was almost equal to the number in his face. It was plain that he could hold the post no longer; what was worse, even if he could have held it, it had now become useless; and the whole Yorkist army lay in a posture of helplessness upon the brink of a complete disaster.

The men behind him formed the vital flaw in the general defence; and it was upon these that Dick turned, charging at the head of his men. So vigorous was the attack, that the Lancastrian archers gave ground and staggered, and, at last, breaking their ranks, began to crowd back into the houses from which they had so recently and so vain-gloriously sallied.

Meanwhile the men from the market-place had swarmed across the undefended barricade, and fell on hotly upon the other side; and Dick must once again face about, and proceed to drive them back. Once again the spirit of his men prevailed; they cleared the street in a triumphant style, but even as they did so the others issued again out of the houses, and took them, a third time, upon the rear.

The Yorkists began to be scattered; several times Dick found himself alone among his foes and plying his bright sword for life; several times he was conscious of a hurt. And meanwhile the fight swayed to and fro in the street without determinate result.

Suddenly Dick was aware of a great trumpeting about the outskirts of the town. The war-cry of York began to be rolled up to heaven, as by many and triumphant voices. And at the same time the men in front of him began to give ground rapidly, streaming out of the street and back upon the market-place. Some one gave the word to fly. Trumpets were blown distractedly, some for a rally, some to charge. It was plain that a great blow had been struck, and the Lancastrians were thrown, at least for the moment, into full disorder, and some degree of panic.

And then, like a theatre trick, there followed the last act of Shoreby Battle. The men in front of Richard turned tail, like a dog that has been whistled home, and fled like the wind. At the same moment there came through the market-place a storm of horsemen, fleeing and pursuing, the Lancastrians turning back to strike with the sword, the Yorkists riding them down at the point of the lance.

Conspicuous in the mellay, Dick beheld the Crookback. He was already giving a foretaste of that furious valour and skill to cut his way across the ranks of war, which, years afterwards upon the field of Bosworth, and when he was stained with crimes, almost sufficed to change the fortunes of the day and the destiny of the English throne. Evading, striking, riding down, he so forced and so manœuvred his strong horse, so aptly defended himself, and so liberally scattered death to his opponents, that he was now far ahead of the foremost of his knights, hewing his way, with the truncheon of a bloody sword, to where Lord Risingham was rallying the bravest. A moment more and they had met; the tall, splendid, and famous warrior against the deformed and sickly boy.

Yet Shelton had never a doubt of the result; and when the fight next opened for a moment, the figure of the earl had disappeared; but still, in the first of the danger, Crookback Dick was launching his big horse and plying the truncheon of his sword.

Thus, by Shelton's courage in holding the mouth of the street against the first attack, and by the opportune arrival of his seven hundred reinforcements, the lad, who was afterwards to be handed down to the execration of posterity under the name of Richard III., had won his first considerable fight.

CHAPTER IV

THE SACK OF SHOREBY

There was not a foe left within striking distance; and Dick, as he looked ruefully about him on the remainder of his gallant force, began to count the cost of victory. He was himself, now that the danger was ended, so stiff and sore, so bruised and cut and broken, and, above all, so utterly exhausted by his desperate and unremitting labours in the fight, that he seemed incapable of any fresh exertion.

But this was not yet the hour for repose. Shoreby had been taken by assault; and though an open town, and not in any manner to be charged with the resistance, it was plain that these rough fighters would be not less rough now that the fight was over, and that the more horrid part of war would fall to be enacted. Richard of Gloucester was not the captain to protect the citizens from his infuriated soldiery; and even if he had the will, it might be questioned if he had the power.

It was, therefore, Dick's business to find and to protect Joanna; and with that end he looked about him at the faces of his men. The three or four who seemed likeliest to be obedient and to keep sober he drew aside; and promising them a rich reward and a special recommendation to the duke, led them across the market-place, now empty of horsemen, and into the streets upon the farther side.

Every here and there small combats of from two to a dozen still raged upon the open street; here and there a house was being besieged, the defenders throwing out stools and tables on the heads of the assailants. The snow was strewn with arms and corpses; but except for these partial combats the streets were deserted, and the houses, some standing open, and some shuttered and barricaded, had for the most part ceased to give out smoke.

Dick, threading the skirts of these skirmishers, led his followers briskly in the direction of the abbey church; but when he came the length of the main street, a cry of horror broke from his lips. Sir Daniel's great house had been carried by assault. The gates hung in splinters from the hinges, and a double throng kept pouring in and out through the entrance, seeking and carrying booty. Meanwhile, in the upper storeys, some resistance was still being offered to the pillagers; for just as Dick came within eyeshot of the building, a casement was burst open from within, and a poor wretch in murrey and blue, screaming and resisting, was forced through the embrasure and tossed into the street below.

The most sickening apprehension fell upon Dick. He ran forward like one possessed, forced his way into the house among the foremost, and mounted without pause to the chamber on the third floor where he had last parted from Joanna. It was a mere wreck; the furniture had been overthrown, the cupboards broken open, and in one place a trailing corner of the arras lay smouldering on the embers of the fire.

Dick, almost without thinking, trod out the incipient conflagration, and then stood bewildered. Sir Daniel, Sir Oliver, Joanna, all were gone; but whether butchered in the rout or safe escaped from Shoreby, who should say?

He caught a passing archer by the tabard.

“Fellow,” he asked, “were ye here when this house was taken?”

“Let be,” said the archer. “A murrain! let be, or I strike.”

“Hark ye,” returned Richard, “two can play at that. Stand and be plain.”

But the man, flushed with drink and battle, struck Dick upon the shoulder with one hand, while with the other he twitched away his garment. Thereupon the full wrath of the young leader burst from his control. He seized the fellow in his strong embrace, and crushed him on the plates of his mailed bosom like a child; then, holding him at arm’s length, he bid him speak as he valued life.

“I pray you mercy!” gasped the archer. “An I had thought ye were so angry I would ‘a’ been charier of crossing you. I was here indeed.”

“Know ye Sir Daniel?” pursued Dick.

“Well do I know him,” returned the man.

“Was he in the mansion?”

“Ay, sir, he was,” answered the archer; “but even as we entered by the yard gate he rode forth by the garden.”

“Alone?” cried Dick.

“He may ‘a’ had a score of lances with him,” said the man.

“Lances! No women, then?” asked Shelton.

“Troth, I saw not,” said the archer. “But there were none in the house, if that be your quest.”

“I thank you,” said Dick. “Here is a piece for your pains.” But groping in his wallet, Dick found nothing. “Inquire for me to-morrow,” he added — ”Richard Shelt — Sir Richard Shelton,” he corrected, “and I will see you handsomely rewarded.”

And then an idea struck Dick. He hastily descended to the courtyard, ran with all his might across the garden, and came to the great door of the church. It stood wide open; within, every corner of the pavement was crowded with fugitive burghers, surrounded by their families and laden with the most precious of their possessions, while, at the high altar, priests in full canonicals were imploring the mercy of God. Even as Dick entered, the loud chorus began to thunder in the vaulted roofs.

He hurried through the groups of refugees, and came to the door of the stair that led into the steeple. And here a tall churchman stepped before him and arrested his advance.

“Whither, my son?” he asked, severely.

“My father,” answered Dick, “I am here upon an errand of expedition. Stay me not. I command here for my Lord of Gloucester.”

“For my Lord of Gloucester?” repeated the priest. “Hath, then, the battle gone so sore?”

“The battle, father, is at an end, Lancaster clean sped, my Lord of Risingham — Heaven rest him! — left upon the field. And now, with your good leave, I follow mine affairs.” And thrusting on one side the priest, who seemed stupefied at the news, Dick pushed open the door and rattled up the stairs four at a bound, and without pause or stumble, till he stepped upon the open platform at the top.

Shoreby Church tower not only commanded the town, as in a map, but looked far, on both sides, over sea and land. It was now near upon noon; the day exceeding bright, the snow dazzling. And as Dick looked around him, he could measure the consequences of the battle.

A confused, growling uproar reached him from the streets, and now and then, but very rarely, the clash of steel. Not a ship, not so much as a skiff remained in harbour; but the sea was dotted with sails and row-boats laden with fugitives. On shore, too, the surface of the snowy meadows was broken up with bands of horsemen, some cutting their way towards the borders of the forest, others, who were doubtless of the Yorkist side, stoutly interposing and beating them back upon the town. Over all the open ground there lay a prodigious quantity of fallen men and horses, clearly defined upon the snow.

To complete the picture, those of the foot soldiers as had not found place upon a ship still kept up an archery combat on the borders of the port, and from the cover of the shoreside taverns. In that quarter, also, one or two houses had been fired, and the smoke towered high in the frosty sunlight, and blew off to sea in voluminous folds.

Already close upon the margin of the woods, and somewhat in the line of Holywood, one particular clump of fleeing horsemen riveted the attention of the young watcher on the tower. It was fairly numerous; in no other quarter of the field did so many Lancastrians still hold together; thus they had left a wide, discoloured wake upon the snow, and Dick was able to trace them step by step from where they had left the town.

While Dick stood watching them, they had gained, unopposed, the first fringe of the leafless forest, and, turning a little from their direction, the sun fell for a moment full on their array, as it was relieved against the dusky wood.

“Murrey and blue!” cried Dick. “I swear it — murrey and blue!”

The next moment he was descending the stairway.

It was now his business to seek out the Duke of Gloucester, who alone, in the disorder of the forces, might be able to supply him with a sufficiency of men. The fighting in the main town was now practically at an end; and as Dick ran hither and thither, seeking the commander, the streets were thick with wandering soldiers, some laden with more booty than they could well stagger under, others shouting drunk. None of them, when questioned, had the least notion of the duke's whereabouts; and, at last, it was by sheer good fortune that Dick found him, where he sat in the saddle directing operations to dislodge the archers from the harbour side.

"Sir Richard Shelton, ye are well found," he said. "I owe you one thing that I value little, my life; and one that I can never pay you for, this victory. Catesby, if I had ten such captains as Sir Richard, I would march forthright on London. But now, sir, claim your reward."

"Freely, my lord," said Dick, "freely and loudly. One hath escaped to whom I owe some grudges, and taken with him one whom I owe love and service. Give me, then, fifty lances, that I may pursue; and for any obligation that your graciousness is pleased to allow, it shall be clean discharged."

"How call ye him?" inquired the duke.

"Sir Daniel Brackley," answered Richard.

"Out upon him, double-face!" cried Gloucester. "Here is no reward, Sir Richard; here is fresh service offered, and, if that ye bring his head to me, a fresh debt upon my conscience. Catesby, get him these lances; and you, sir, bethink ye, in the meanwhile, what pleasure, honour, or profit it shall be mine to give you."

Just then the Yorkist skirmishers carried one of the shoreside taverns, swarming in upon it on three sides, and driving out or taking its defenders. Crookback Dick was pleased to cheer the exploit, and pushing his horse a little nearer, called to see the prisoners.

There were four or five of them — two men of my Lord Shoreby's and one of Lord Risingham's among the number, and last, but in Dick's eyes not least, a tall, shambling, grizzled old shipman, between drunk and sober, and with a dog whimpering and jumping at his heels.

The young duke passed them for a moment under a severe review.

"Good," he said. "Hang them."

And he turned the other way to watch the progress of the fight.

"My lord," said Dick, "so please you, I have found my reward. Grant me the life and liberty of yon old shipman."

Gloucester turned and looked the speaker in the face.

"Sir Richard," he said, "I make not war with peacock's feathers, but steel shafts. Those that are mine enemies I slay, and that without excuse or favour. For, bethink ye, in this realm of England, that is so torn in pieces, there is not a man of mine but hath a brother or a friend upon the other party. If, then, I did begin to grant these pardons, I might sheathe my sword."

"It may be so, my lord; and yet I will be overbold, and, at the risk of your disfavour, recall your lordship's promise," replied Dick.

Richard of Gloucester flushed.

"Mark it right well," he said, harshly. "I love not mercy, nor yet mercymongers. Ye have this day laid the foundations of high fortune. If ye oppose to me my word, which I have plighted, I will yield. But, by the glory of heaven, there your favour dies!"

"Mine is the loss," said Dick.

"Give him his sailor," said the duke; and wheeling his horse, he turned his back upon young Shelton.

Dick was nor glad nor sorry. He had seen too much of the young duke to set great store on his affection; and the origin and growth of his own favour had been too flimsy and too rapid to inspire much confidence. One thing alone he feared — that the vindictive leader might revoke the offer of the lances. But here he did justice neither to Gloucester's honour (such as it was) nor, above all, to his decision. If he had once judged Dick to be the right man to pursue Sir Daniel, he was not one to change; and he soon proved it by shouting after Catesby to be speedy, for the paladin was waiting.

In the meanwhile, Dick turned to the old shipman, who had seemed equally indifferent to his condemnation and to his subsequent release.

"Arblaster," said Dick, "I have done you ill; but now, by the rood, I think I have cleared the score."

But the old skipper only looked upon him dully and held his peace.

"Come," continued Dick, "a life is a life, old shrew, and it is more than ships or liquor. Say ye forgive me; for if your life be worth nothing to you, it hath cost me the beginnings of my fortune. Come, I have paid for it dearly; be not so churlish."

"An I had had my ship," said Arblaster, "I would 'a' been forth and safe on the high seas — I and my man Tom. But ye took my ship, gossip, and I'm a beggar; and for my man Tom, a knave fellow in russet shot him down. 'Murrain!' quoth he, and spake never again. 'Murrain' was the last of his words, and the poor spirit of him passed. 'A will never sail no more, will my Tom."

Dick was seized with unavailing penitence and pity; he sought to take the skipper's hand, but Arblaster avoided his touch.

"Nay," said he, "let be. Y' have played the devil with me, and let that content you."

The words died in Richard's throat. He saw, through tears, the poor old man, bemused with liquor and sorrow, go shambling away, with bowed head, across the snow, and the unnoticed dog whimpering at his heels, and for the first time began to understand the desperate game that we play in life; and how a thing once done is not to be changed or remedied, by any penitence.

But there was no time left to him for vain regret. Catesby had now collected the horsemen, and riding up to Dick he dismounted, and offered him his own horse.

"This morning," he said, "I was somewhat jealous of your favour; it hath not been of a long growth; and now, Sir Richard, it is with a very good heart that I offer you this horse — to ride away with."

"Suffer me yet a moment," replied Dick. "This favour of mine — whereupon was it founded?"

"Upon your name," answered Catesby. "It is my lord's chief superstition. Were my name Richard, I should be an earl to-morrow."

"Well, sir, I thank you," returned Dick; "and since I am little likely to follow these great fortunes, I will even say farewell. I will not pretend I was displeased to think myself upon the road to fortune; but I will not pretend, neither, that I am over-sorry to be done with it. Command and riches, they are brave things, to be sure; but a word in your ear — yon duke of yours, he is a fearsome lad."

Catesby laughed.

"Nay," said he, "of a verity he that rides with Crooked Dick will ride deep. Well, God keep us all from evil! Speed ye well."

Thereupon Dick put himself at the head of his men, and giving the word of command, rode off.

He made straight across the town, following what he supposed to be the route of Sir Daniel, and spying around for any signs that might decide if he were right.

The streets were strewn with the dead and the wounded, whose fate, in the bitter frost, was far the more pitiable. Gangs of the victors went from house to house, pillaging and stabbing, and sometimes singing together as they went.

From different quarters, as he rode on, the sounds of violence and outrage came to young Shelton's ears; now the blows of the sledge-hammer on some barricaded door, and now the miserable shrieks of women.

Dick's heart had just been awakened. He had just seen the cruel consequences of his own behaviour; and the thought of the sum of misery that was now acting in the whole of Shoreby filled him with despair.

At length he reached the outskirts, and there, sure enough, he saw straight before him the same broad, beaten track across the snow that he had marked from the summit of the church. Here, then, he went the faster on; but still, as he rode, he kept a bright eye upon the fallen men and horses that lay beside the track. Many of these, he was relieved to see, wore Sir Daniel's colours, and the faces of some, who lay upon their back, he even recognised.

About half-way between the town and the forest, those whom he was following had plainly been assailed by archers; for the corpses lay pretty closely scattered, each pierced by an arrow. And here Dick spied among the rest the body of a very young lad, whose face was somehow hauntingly familiar to him.

He halted his troop, dismounted, and raised the lad's head. As he did so, the hood fell back, and a profusion of long brown hair unrolled itself. At the same time the eyes opened.

"Ah! lion driver!" said a feeble voice. "She is farther on. Ride — ride fast!"

And then the poor young lady fainted once again.

One of Dick's men carried a flask of some strong cordial, and with this Dick succeeded in reviving consciousness. Then he took Joanna's friend upon his saddle-bow, and once more pushed toward the forest.

"Why do ye take me?" said the girl. "Ye but delay your speed."

"Nay, Mistress Risingham," replied Dick. "Shoreby is full of blood and drunkenness and riot. Here ye are safe; content ye."

"I will not be beholden to any of your faction," she cried; "set me down."

"Madam, ye know not what ye say," returned Dick. "Y'are hurt — — "

"I am not," she said. "It was my horse was slain."

"It matters not one jot," replied Richard. "Ye are here in the midst of open snow, and compassed about with enemies. Whether ye will or not, I carry you with me. Glad am I to have the occasion; for thus shall I repay some portion of our debt."

For a little while she was silent. Then, very suddenly, she asked:

"My uncle?"

"My Lord Risingham?" returned Dick. "I would I had good news to give you, madam; but I have none. I saw him once in the battle, and once only. Let us hope the best."

CHAPTER V

NIGHT IN THE WOODS: ALICIA RISINGHAM

It was almost certain that Sir Daniel had made for the Moat House; but, considering the heavy snow, the lateness of the hour, and the necessity under which he would lie of avoiding the few roads and striking across the wood, it was equally certain that he could not hope to reach it ere the morrow.

There were two courses open to Dick: either to continue to follow in the knight's trail, and, if he were able, to fall upon him that very night in camp, or to strike out a path of his own, and seek to place himself between Sir Daniel and his destination.

Either scheme was open to serious objection, and Dick, who feared to expose Joanna to the hazards of a fight, had not yet decided between them when he reached the borders of the wood.

At this point Sir Daniel had turned a little to his left, and then plunged straight under a grove of very lofty timber. His party had then formed to a narrower front, in order to pass between the trees, and the track was trod proportionally deeper in the snow. The eye followed it, under the leafless tracery of the oaks, running direct and narrow; the trees stood over it, with knotty joints and the great, uplifted forest of their boughs; there was no sound, whether of man or beast — not so much as the stirring of a robin; and over the field of snow the winter sun lay golden among netted shadows.

"How say ye," asked Dick of one of the men, "to follow straight on, or strike across for Tunstall?"

"Sir Richard," replied the man-at-arms, "I would follow the line until they scatter."

"Ye are, doubtless, right," returned Dick; "but we came right hastily upon the errand, even as the time commanded. Here are no houses, neither for food nor shelter, and by the morrow's dawn we shall know both cold fingers and an empty belly. How say ye, lads? Will ye stand a pinch for expedition's sake, or shall we turn by Holywood and sup with MotherChurch? The case being somewhat doubtful, I will drive no man; yet if ye would suffer me to lead you, ye would choose the first."

The men answered, almost with one voice, that they would follow Sir Richard where he would.

And Dick, setting spur to his horse, began once more to go forward.

The snow in the trail had been trodden very hard, and the pursuers had thus a great advantage over the pursued. They pushed on, indeed, at a round trot, two hundred hoofs beating alternately on the dull pavement of the snow, and the jingle of weapons and the snorting of horses raising a warlike noise along the arches of the silent wood.

Presently, the wide slot of the pursued came out upon the highroad from Holywood; it was there, for a moment, indistinguishable; and, where it once more plunged into the unbeaten snow upon the farther side, Dick was surprised to see it narrower and lighter trod. Plainly, profiting by the road, Sir Daniel had begun already to scatter his command.

At all hazards, one chance being equal to another, Dick continued to pursue the straight trail; and that, after an hour's riding, in which it led into the very depths of the forest, suddenly split, like a bursting shell, into two dozen others, leading to every point of the compass.

Dick drew bridle in despair. The short winter's day was near an end; the sun, a dull red orange, shorn of rays, swam low among the leafless thickets; the shadows were a mile long upon the snow; the frost bit cruelly at the finger-nails; and the breath and steam of the horses mounted in a cloud.

"Well, we are outwitted," Dick confessed. "Strike we for Holywood, after all. It is still nearer us than Tunstall — or should be by the station of the sun."

So they wheeled to their left, turning their backs on the red shield of sun, and made across country for the abbey. But now times were changed with them; they could no longer spank forth briskly on a path beaten firm by the passage of their foes, and for a goal to which that path itself conducted them. Now they must plough at a dull pace through the encumbering snow, continually pausing to decide their course, continually floundering in drifts. The sun soon left them; the glow of the west decayed; and presently they were wandering in a shadow of blackness, under frosty stars.

Presently, indeed, the moon would clear the hill-tops, and they might resume their march. But till then, every random step might carry them wider of their march. There was nothing for it but to camp and wait.

Sentries were posted; a spot of ground was cleared of snow, and, after some failures, a good fire blazed in the midst. The men-at-arms sat close about this forest hearth, sharing such provisions as they had, and passing about the flask; and Dick, having collected the most delicate of the rough and scanty fare, brought it to Lord Risingham's niece, where she sat apart from the soldiery against a tree.

She sat upon one horse-cloth, wrapped in another, and stared straight before her at the firelit scene. At the offer of food she started, like one wakened from a dream, and then silently refused.

"Madam," said Dick, "let me beseech you, punish me not so cruelly. Wherein I have offended you, I know not; I have, indeed, carried you away, but with a friendly violence; I have, indeed, exposed you to the inclemency of night, but the hurry that lies upon me hath for its end the preservation of another, who is no less frail and no less unfriended than yourself. At least, madam, punish not yourself; and eat, if not for hunger, then for strength."

"I will eat nothing at the hands that slew my kinsman," she replied.

"Dear madam," Dick cried, "I swear to you upon the rood I touched him not."

"Swear to me that he still lives," she returned.

"I will not palter with you," answered Dick. "Pity bids me to wound you. In my heart I do believe him dead."

"And ye ask me to eat!" she cried. "Ay, and they call you 'sir'! Y' have won your spurs by my good kinsman's murder. And had I not been fool and traitor both, and saved you in your enemy's house, ye should have died the death, and he — he that was worth twelve of you — were living."

"I did but my man's best, even as your kinsman did upon the other party," answered Dick. "Were he still living — as I vow to Heaven I wish it! — he would praise, not blame me."

"Sir Daniel hath told me," she replied. "He marked you at the barricade. Upon you, he saith, their party foundered; it was you that won the battle. Well, then, it was you that killed my good Lord Risingham, as sure as though ye had strangled him. And ye would have me eat with you — and your hands not washed from killing? But Sir Daniel hath sworn your downfall. He 'tis that will avenge me!"

The unfortunate Dick was plunged in gloom. Old Arblaster returned upon his mind, and he groaned aloud.

"Do ye hold me so guilty?" he said; "you that defended me — you that are Joanna's friend?"

"What made ye in the battle?" she retorted. "Y'are of no party; y'are but a lad — but legs and body, without government of wit or counsel! Wherefore did ye fight? For the love of hurt, pardy!"

"Nay," cried Dick, "I know not. But as the realm of England goes, if that a poor gentleman fight not upon the one side, perforce he must fight upon the other. He may not stand alone; 'tis not in nature."

"They that have no judgment should not draw the sword," replied the young lady. "Ye that fight but for a hazard, what are ye but a butcher? War is but noble by the cause, and y' have disgraced it."

"Madam," said the miserable Dick, "I do partly see mine error. I have made too much haste; I have been busy before my time. Already I stole a ship — thinking, I do swear it, to do well — and thereby brought about the death of many innocent, and the grief and ruin of a poor old man whose face this very day hath stabbed me like a dagger. And for this morning, I did but design to do myself credit, and get fame to marry with, and, behold! I have brought about the death of your dear kinsman that was good to me. And what besides, I know not. For, alas! I may have set York upon the throne, and that may be the worser cause, and may do hurt to England. O, madam, I do see my sin. I am unfit for life. I will, for penance' sake and to avoid worse evil, once I have finished this adventure, get me to a cloister. I will forswear Joanna and the trade of arms. I will be a friar, and pray for your good kinsman's spirit all my days."

It appeared to Dick, in this extremity of his humiliation and repentance, that the young lady had laughed.

Raising his countenance, he found her looking down upon him, in the firelight, with a somewhat peculiar but not unkind expression.

"Madam," he cried, thinking the laughter to have been an illusion of his hearing, but still, from her changed looks, hoping to have touched her heart, "madam, will not this content you? I give up all to undo what I have done amiss; I make heaven certain for Lord Risingham. And all this upon the very day that I have won my spurs, and thought myself the happiest young gentleman on ground."

"O boy," she said — "good boy!"

And then, to the extreme surprise of Dick, she first very tenderly wiped the tears away from his cheeks, and then, as if yielding to a sudden impulse, threw both her arms about his neck, drew up his face, and kissed him. A pitiful bewilderment came over simple-minded Dick.

"But come," she said, with great cheerfulness, "you that are a captain, ye must eat. Why sup ye not?"

"Dear Mistress Risingham," replied Dick, "I did but wait first upon my prisoner; but, to say truth, penitence will no longer suffer me to endure the sight of food. I were better to fast, dear lady, and to pray."

"Call me Alicia," she said; "are we not old friends? And now, come, I will eat with you, bit for bit and sup for sup; so if ye eat not, neither will I; but if ye eat hearty, I will dine like a ploughman."

So there and then she fell to; and Dick, who had an excellent stomach, proceeded to bear her company, at first with great reluctance, but gradually, as he entered into the spirit, with more and more vigour and devotion: until, at last, he forgot even to watch his model, and most heartily repaired the expenses of his day of labour and excitement.

"Lion-driver," she said, at length, "ye do not admire a maid in a man's jerkin?"

The moon was now up; and they were only waiting to repose the wearied horses. By the moon's light, the still penitent but now well-fed Richard beheld her looking somewhat coquettishly down upon him.

"Madam — " he stammered, surprised at this new turn in her manners.

"Nay," she interrupted, "it skills not to deny; Joanna hath told me, but come, sir lion-driver, look at me — am I so homely — come!"

And she made bright eyes at him.

"Ye are something smallish, indeed — " began Dick.

And here again she interrupted him, this time with a ringing peal of laughter that completed his confusion and surprise.

"Smallish!" she cried. "Nay, now, be honest as ye are bold; I am a dwarf, or little better; but for all that — come, tell me! — for all that, passably fair to look upon; is't not so?"

"Nay, madam, exceedingly fair," said the distressed knight, pitifully trying to seem easy.

"And a man would be right glad to wed me?" she pursued.

"O, madam, right glad!" agreed Dick.

"Call me Alicia," said she.

"Alicia," quoth Sir Richard.

"Well, then, lion-driver," she continued, "sith that ye slew my kinsman, and left me without stay, ye owe me, in honour, every reparation; do ye not?"

"I do, madam," said Dick. "Although, upon my heart, I do hold me but partially guilty of that brave knight's blood."

"Would ye evade me?" she cried.

"Madam, not so. I have told you; at your bidding, I will even turn me a monk," said Richard.

"Then, in honour, ye belong to me?" she concluded.

"In honour, madam, I suppose — " began the young man.

"Go to!" she interrupted; "ye are too full of catches. In honour do ye belong to me, till ye have paid the evil?"

"In honour, I do," said Dick.

"Hear, then," she continued. "Ye would make but a sad friar, methinks; and since I am to dispose of you at pleasure, I will even take you for my husband. Nay, now, no words!" cried she. "They will avail you nothing. For see how just it is, that you who deprived me of one home, should supply me with another. And as for Joanna, she will be the first, believe me, to commend the change; for, after all, as we be dear friends, what matters it with which of us ye wed? Not one whit!"

"Madam," said Dick, "I will go into a cloister, an ye please to bid me; but to wed with any one in this big world besides Joanna Sedley is what I will consent to neither for man's force nor yet for lady's pleasure. Pardon me if I speak my plain thoughts plainly; but where a maid is very bold, a poor man must even be the bolder."

"Dick," she said, "ye sweet boy, ye must come and kiss me for that word. Nay, fear not, ye shall kiss me for Joanna; and when we meet, I shall give it back to her, and say I stole it. And as for what ye owe me, why, dear simpleton, methinks ye were not alone in that great battle; and even if York be on the throne, it was not you that set him there. But for a good, sweet, honest heart, Dick, y'are all that; and if I could find it in my soul to envy your Joanna anything, I would even envy her your love."

CHAPTER VI

NIGHT IN THE WOODS (CONCLUDED): DICK AND JOAN

The horses had by this time finished the small store of provender, and fully breathed from their fatigues. At Dick's command, the fire was smothered in snow; and while his men got once more wearily to saddle, he himself, remembering, somewhat late, true woodland caution, chose a tall oak and nimbly clambered to the topmost fork. Hence he could look far abroad on the moonlit and snow-paven forest. On the south-west, dark against the horizon, stood those upland, heathy quarters where he and Joanna had met with the terrifying misadventure of the leper. And there his eye was caught by a spot of ruddy brightness no bigger than a needle's eye.

He blamed himself sharply for his previous neglect. Were that, as it appeared to be, the shining of Sir Daniel's camp-fire, he should long ago have seen and marched for it; above all, he should, for no consideration, have announced his neighbourhood by lighting a fire of his own. But now he must no longer squander valuable hours. The direct way to the uplands was about two miles in length; but it was crossed by a very deep, precipitous dingle, impassable to mounted men; and for the sake of speed, it seemed to Dick advisable to desert the horses and attempt the adventure on foot.

Ten men were left to guard the horses; signals were agreed upon by which they could communicate in case of need; and Dick set forth at the head of the remainder, Alicia Risingham walking stoutly by his side.

The men had freed themselves of heavy armour, and left behind their lances; and they now marched with a very good spirit in the frozen snow, and under the exhilarating lustre of the moon. The descent into the dingle, where a stream strained sobbing through the snow and ice, was effected with silence and order; and on the farther side, being then within a short half-mile of where Dick had seen the glimmer of the fire, the party halted to breathe before the attack.

In the vast silence of the wood, the lightest sounds were audible from far; and Alicia, who was keen of hearing, held up her finger warningly and stooped to listen. All followed her example; but besides the groans of the choked brook in the dingle close behind, and the barking of a fox at a distance of many miles among the forest, to Dick's acutest hearkening, not a breath was audible.

"But yet, for sure, I heard the clash of harness," whispered Alicia.

"Madam," returned Dick, who was more afraid of that young lady than of ten stout warriors, "I would not hint ye were mistaken; but it might well have come from either of the camps."

"It came not thence. It came from westward," she declared.

"It may be what it will," returned Dick; "and it must be as Heaven please. Reck we not a jot, but push on the livelier, and put it to the touch. Up, friends — enough breathed."

As they advanced, the snow became more and more trampled with hoof-marks, and it was plain that they were drawing near to the encampment of a considerable force of mounted men. Presently they could see the smoke pouring from among the trees, ruddily coloured on its lower edge and scattering bright sparks.

And here, pursuant to Dick's orders, his men began to open out, creeping stealthily in the covert, to surround on every side the camp of their opponents. He himself, placing Alicia in the shelter of a bulky oak, stole straight forth in the direction of the fire.

At last, through an opening of the wood, his eye embraced the scene of the encampment. The fire had been built upon a heathy hummock of the ground, surrounded on three sides by thicket, and it now burned very strong, roaring aloud and brandishing flames. Around it there sat not quite a dozen people, warmly cloaked; but though the neighbouring snow was trampled down as by a regiment, Dick looked in vain for any horse. He began to have a terrible misgiving that he was out-manœuvred. At the same time, in a tall man with a steel salet, who was spreading his hands before the blaze, he recognised his old friend and still kindly enemy, Bennet Hatch; and in two others, sitting a little back, he made out, even in their male disguise, Joanna Sedley and Sir Daniel's wife.

"Well," thought he to himself, "even if I lose my horses, let me get my Joanna, and why should I complain?"

And then, from the farther side of the encampment, there came a little whistle, announcing that his men had joined, and the investment was complete.

Bennet, at the sound, started to his feet; but ere he had time to spring upon his arms, Dick hailed him.

"Bennet," he said — "Bennet, old friend, yield ye. Ye will but spill men's lives in vain, if ye resist."

"'Tis Master Shelton, by St. Barbary!" cried Hatch. "Yield me? Ye ask much. What force have ye?"

"I tell you, Bennet, ye are both outnumbered and begirt," said Dick. "Cæsar and Charlemagne would cry for quarter. I have two-score men at my whistle, and with one shoot of arrows I could answer for you all."

"Master Dick," said Bennet, "it goes against my heart; but I must do my duty. The saints help you!" And therewith he raised a little tucket to his mouth and wound a rousing call.

Then followed a moment of confusion; for while Dick, fearing for the ladies, still hesitated to give the word to shoot, Hatch's little band sprang to their weapons and formed back to back as for a fierce resistance. In the hurry of their change of place, Joanna sprang from her seat and ran like an arrow to her lover's side.

"Here, Dick!" she cried, as she clasped his hand in hers.

But Dick still stood irresolute; he was yet young to the more deplorable necessities of war, and the thought of old Lady Brackley checked the command upon his tongue. His own men became restive. Some of them cried on him by name; others, of their own accord, began to shoot; and at the first discharge poor Bennet bit the dust. Then Dick awoke.

"On!" he cried. "Shoot, boys, and keep to cover. England and York!"

But just then the dull beat of many horses on the snow suddenly arose in the hollow ear of the night, and, with incredible swiftness, drew nearer and swelled louder. At the same time, answering tuckets repeated and repeated Hatch's call.

"Rally, rally!" cried Dick. "Rally upon me! Rally for your lives!"

But his men — afoot, scattered, taken in the hour when they had counted on an easy triumph — began instead to give ground severally, and either stood wavering or dispersed into the thickets. And when the first of the horsemen came charging through the open avenues and fiercely riding their steeds into the underwood, a few stragglers were overthrown or speared among the brush, but the bulk of Dick's command had simply melted at the rumour of their coming.

Dick stood for a moment, bitterly recognising the fruits of his precipitate and unwise valour. Sir Daniel had seen the fire; he had moved out with his main force, whether to attack his pursuers or to take them in the rear if they should venture the assault. His had been throughout the part of a sagacious captain; Dick's the conduct of an eager boy. And here was the young knight, his sweetheart, indeed, holding him tightly by the hand, but otherwise alone, his whole command of men and horses dispersed in the night and the wide forest, like a paper of pins in a hay barn.

"The saints enlighten me!" he thought. "It is well I was knighted for this morning's matter; this doth me little honour."

And thereupon, still holding Joanna, he began to run.

The silence of the night was now shattered by the shouts of the men of Tunstall, as they galloped hither and thither, hunting fugitives; and Dick broke boldly through the underwood and ran straight before him like a deer. The silver clearness of the moon upon the open snow increased, by contrast, the obscurity of the thickets; and the extreme dispersion of the vanquished led the pursuers into widely divergent paths. Hence, in but a little while, Dick and Joanna paused, in a close covert, and heard the sounds of the pursuit, scattering abroad, indeed, in all directions, but yet fainting already in the distance.

"An I had but kept a reserve of them together," Dick cried, bitterly, "I could have turned the tables yet! Well, we live and learn; next time it shall go better, by the rood."

"Nay, Dick," said Joanna, "what matters it? Here we are together once again."

He looked at her, and there she was — John Matcham, as of yore, in hose and doublet. But now he knew her; now, even in that ungainly dress, she smiled upon him, bright with love; and his heart was transported with joy.

"Sweetheart," he said, "if ye forgive this blunderer, what care I? Make we direct for Holywood; there lieth your good guardian and my better friend, Lord Foxham. There shall we be wed; and whether poor or wealthy, famous or unknown, what matters it? This day, dear love, I won my spurs; I was commended by great men for my valour; I thought myself the goodliest man of war in all broad England. Then, first, I fell out of my favour with the great; and now have I been well thrashed, and clean lost my soldiers. There was a downfall for conceit! But, dear, I care not — dear, if ye still love me and will wed, I would have my knighthood done away, and mind it not a jot."

"My Dick!" she cried. "And did they knight you?"

"Ay, dear, ye are my lady now," he answered, fondly; "or ye shall, ere noon to-morrow — will ye not?"

"That will I, Dick, with a glad heart," she answered.

"Ay, sir? Methought ye were to be a monk!" said a voice in their ears.

"Alicia!" cried Joanna.

"Even so," replied the young lady, coming forward. "Alicia, whom ye left for dead, and whom your lion-driver found, and brought to life again, and, by my sooth, made love to, if ye want to know!"

"I'll not believe it," cried Joanna. "Dick!"

"Dick!" mimicked Alicia. "Dick, indeed! Ay, fair sir, and ye desert poor damsels in distress," she continued, turning to the young knight. "Ye leave them planted behind oaks. But they say true — the age of chivalry is dead."

"Madam," cried Dick, in despair, "upon my soul I had forgotten you outright. Madam, ye must try to pardon me. Ye see, I had new found Joanna!"

"I did not suppose that ye had done it o' purpose," she retorted. "But I will be cruelly avenged. I will tell a secret to my Lady Shelton — she that is to be," she added, curtseying. "Joanna," she continued, "I believe, upon my soul, your sweetheart is a bold fellow in a fight, but he is, let me tell you plainly, the softest-hearted simpleton in England. Go to — ye may do your pleasure with him! And now, fool children, first kiss me, either one of you, for luck and kindness; and then kiss each other just one minute by the glass, and not one second longer; and then let us all three set forth for Holywood as fast as we can stir; for these woods, methinks, are full of peril and exceeding cold."

"But did my Dick make love to you?" asked Joanna, clinging to her sweetheart's side.

"Nay, fool girl," returned Alicia; "It was I made love to him. I offered to marry him, indeed; but he bade me go marry with my likes. These were his words. Nay, that I will say: he is more plain than pleasant. But now, children, for the sake of sense, set forward. Shall we go once more over the dingle, or push straight for Holywood?"

"Why," said Dick, "I would like dearly to get upon a horse; for I have been sore mauled and beaten, one way and another, these last days, and my poor body is one bruise. But how think ye? If the men, upon the alarm of the fighting, had fled away, we should have gone about for nothing. 'Tis but some three short miles to Holywood direct; the bell hath not beat nine; the snow is pretty firm to walk upon, the moon clear; how if we went even as we are?"

"Agreed," cried Alicia; but Joanna only pressed upon Dick's arm.

Forth, then, they went, through open leafless groves and down snow-clad alleys, under the white face of the winter moon; Dick and Joanna walking hand in hand and in a heaven of pleasure; and their light-minded companion, her own bereavements heartily forgotten, followed a pace or two behind, now rallying them upon their silence, and now drawing happy pictures of their future and united lives.

Still, indeed, in the distance of the wood, the riders of Tunstall might be heard urging their pursuit; and from time to time cries or the clash of steel announced the shock of enemies. But in these young folk, bred among the alarms of war, and fresh from such a multiplicity of dangers, neither fear nor pity could be lightly wakened. Content to find the sounds still drawing farther and farther away, they gave up their hearts to the enjoyment of the hour, walking already, as Alicia put it, in a wedding procession; and neither the rude solitude of the forest, nor the cold of the freezing night, had any force to shadow or distract their happiness.

At length, from a rising hill, they looked below them on the dell of Holywood. The great windows of the forest abbey shone with torch and candle; its high pinnacles and spires arose very clear and silent, and the gold rood upon the topmost summit glittered brightly in the moon. All about it, in the open glade, camp-fires were burning, and the ground was thick with huts; and across the midst of the picture the frozen river curved.

“By the mass,” said Richard, “there are Lord Foxham’s fellows still encamped. The messenger hath certainly miscarried. Well, then, so better. We have power at hand to face Sir Daniel.”

But if Lord Foxham’s men still lay encamped in the long holm at Holywood, it was from a different reason from the one supposed by Dick. They had marched, indeed, for Shoreby; but ere they were half-way thither, a second messenger met them, and bade them return to their morning’s camp, to bar the road against Lancastrian fugitives, and to be so much nearer to the main army of York. For Richard of Gloucester, having finished the battle and stamped out his foes in that district, was already on the march to rejoin his brother; and not long after the return of my Lord Foxham’s retainers, Crookback himself drew rein before the abbey door. It was in honour of this august visitor that the windows shone with lights; and at the hour of Dick’s arrival with his sweetheart and her friend, the whole ducal party was being entertained in the refectory with the splendour of that powerful and luxurious monastery.

Dick, not quite with his good-will, was brought before them. Gloucester, sick with fatigue, sat leaning upon one hand his white and terrifying countenance; Lord Foxham, half recovered from his wound, was in a place of honour on his left.

“How, sir?” asked Richard. “Have ye brought me Sir Daniel’s head?”

“My lord duke,” replied Dick, stoutly enough, but with a qualm at heart, “I have not even the good fortune to return with my command. I have been, so please your grace, well beaten.”

Gloucester looked upon him with a formidable frown.

“I gave you fifty lances, sir,” he said.

“My lord duke, I had but fifty men-at-arms,” replied the young knight.

“How is this?” said Gloucester. “He did ask me fifty lances.”

“May it please your grace,” replied Catesby, smoothly, “for a pursuit we gave him but the horsemen.”

“It is well,” replied Richard, adding, “Shelton, ye may go.”

“Stay!” said Lord Foxham. “This young man likewise had a charge from me. It may be he hath better sped. Say, Master Shelton, have ye found the maid?”

“I praise the saints, my lord,” said Dick, “she is in this house.”

“Is it even so? Well, then, my lord the duke,” resumed Lord Foxham, “with your good-will, to-morrow, before the army march, I do propose a marriage. This young squire — — ”

“Young knight,” interrupted Catesby.

"Say ye so, Sir William?" cried Lord Foxham.

"I did myself, and for good service, dub him knight," said Gloucester. "He hath twice manfully served me. It is not valour of hands, it is a man's mind of iron, that he lacks. He will not rise, Lord Foxham. 'Tis a fellow that will fight indeed bravely in a mellay, but hath a capon's heart. Howbeit, if he is to marry, marry him in the name of Mary, and be done!"

"Nay, he is a brave lad — I know it," said Lord Foxham. "Content ye, then, Sir Richard. I have compounded this affair with Master Hamley, and to-morrow ye shall wed."

Whereupon Dick judged it prudent to withdraw; but he was not yet clear of the refectory, when a man, but newly alighted at the gate, came running four stairs at a bound, and, brushing through the abbey servants, threw himself on one knee before the duke.

"Victory, my lord," he cried.

And before Dick had got to the chamber set apart for him as Lord Foxham's guest, the troops in the holm were cheering around their fires; for upon that same day, not twenty miles away, a second crushing blow had been dealt to the power of Lancaster.

CHAPTER VII

DICK'S REVENGE

The next morning Dick was afoot before the sun, and having dressed himself to the best advantage with the aid of the Lord Foxham's baggage, and got good reports of Joan, he set forth on foot to walk away his impatience.

For some while he made rounds among the soldiery, who were getting to arms in the wintry twilight of the dawn and by the red glow of torches; but gradually he strolled farther afield, and at length passed clean beyond the outposts, and walked alone in the frozen forest, waiting for the sun.

His thoughts were both quiet and happy. His brief favour with the duke he could not find it in his heart to mourn; with Joan to wife, and my Lord Foxham for a faithful patron, he looked most happily upon the future; and in the past he found but little to regret.

As he thus strolled and pondered, the solemn light of the morning grew more clear, the east was already coloured by the sun, and a little scathing wind blew up the frozen snow. He turned to go home; but even as he turned, his eye lit upon a figure behind a tree.

"Stand!" he cried. "Who goes?"

The figure stepped forth and waved its hand like a dumb person. It was arrayed like a pilgrim, the hood lowered over the face, but Dick, in an instant, recognised Sir Daniel.

He strode up to him, drawing his sword; and the knight, putting his hand in his bosom, as if to seize a hidden weapon, steadfastly awaited his approach.

"Well, Dickon," said Sir Daniel, "how is it to be? Do ye make war upon the fallen?"

"I made no war upon your life," replied the lad; "I was your true friend until ye sought for mine; but ye have sought for it greedily."

"Nay — self-defence," replied the knight. "And now, boy, the news of this battle, and the presence of yon crooked devil here in mine own wood, have broken me beyond all help. I go to Holywood for sanctuary; thence overseas, with what I can carry, and to begin life again in Burgundy or France."

"Ye may not go to Holywood," said Dick.

"How! May not?" asked the knight.

"Look ye, Sir Daniel, this is my marriage morn," said Dick; "and yon sun that is to rise will make the brightest day that ever shone for me. Your life is forfeit — doubly forfeit, for my father's death and your own practices to meward. But I myself have done amiss; I have brought about men’s deaths; and upon this glad day I will be neither judge nor hangman. An ye were the devil, I would not lay a hand on you. An ye were the devil, ye might go where ye will for me. Seek God’s forgiveness; mine ye have freely. But to go on to Holywood is different. I carry arms for York, and I will suffer no spy within their lines. Hold it, then, for certain, if ye set one foot before another, I will uplift my voice and call the nearest post to seize you.”

“Ye mock me,” said Sir Daniel. “I have no safety out of Holywood.”

“I care no more,” returned Richard. “I let you go east, west, or south; north I will not. Holywood is shut against you. Go, and seek not to return. For, once ye are gone, I will warn every post about this army, and there will be so shrewd a watch upon all pilgrims that, once again, were ye the very devil, ye would find it ruin to make the essay.”

“Ye doom me,” said Sir Daniel, gloomily.

“I doom you not,” returned Richard. “If it so please you to set your valour against mine, come on; and though I fear it be disloyal to my party, I will take the challenge openly and fully, fight you with mine own single strength, and call for none to help me. So shall I avenge my father, with a perfect conscience.”

“Ay,” said Sir Daniel, “y’ have a long sword against my dagger.”

“I rely upon Heaven only,” answered Dick, casting his sword some way behind him on the snow. “Now, if your ill-fate bids you, come; and, under the pleasure of the Almighty, I make myself bold to feed your bones to foxes.”

“I did but try you, Dickon,” returned the knight, with an uneasy semblance of a laugh. “I would not spill your blood.”

“Go, then, ere it be too late,” replied Shelton. “In five minutes I will call the post. I do perceive that I am too long-suffering. Had but our places been reversed, I should have been bound hand and foot some minutes past.”

“Well, Dickon, I will go,” replied Sir Daniel. “When we next meet, it shall repent you that ye were so harsh.”

And with these words, the knight turned and began to move off under the trees. Dick watched him with strangely-mingled feelings, as he went, swiftly and warily, and ever and again turning a wicked eye upon the lad who had spared him, and whom he still suspected.

There was upon one side of where he went a thicket, strongly matted with green ivy, and, even in its winter state, impervious to the eye. Herein, all of a sudden, a bow sounded like a note of music. An arrow flew, and with a great, choked cry of agony and anger, the Knight of Tunstall threw up his hands and fell forward in the snow.

Dick bounded to his side and raised him. His face desperately worked; his whole body was shaken by contorting spasms.

"Is the arrow black?" he gasped.

"It is black," replied Dick, gravely.

And then, before he could add one word, a desperate seizure of pain shook the wounded man from head to foot, so that his body leaped in Dick's supporting arms, and with the extremity of that pang his spirit fled in silence.

The young man laid him back gently on the snow and prayed for that unprepared and guilty spirit, and as he prayed the sun came up at a bound, and the robins began chirping in the ivy.

When he rose to his feet, he found another man upon his knees but a few steps behind him, and, still with uncovered head, he waited until that prayer also should be over. It took long; the man, with his head bowed and his face covered with his hands, prayed like one in a great disorder or distress of mind; and by the bow that lay beside him, Dick judged that he was no other than the archer who had laid Sir Daniel low.

At length he, also, rose, and showed the countenance of Ellis Duckworth.

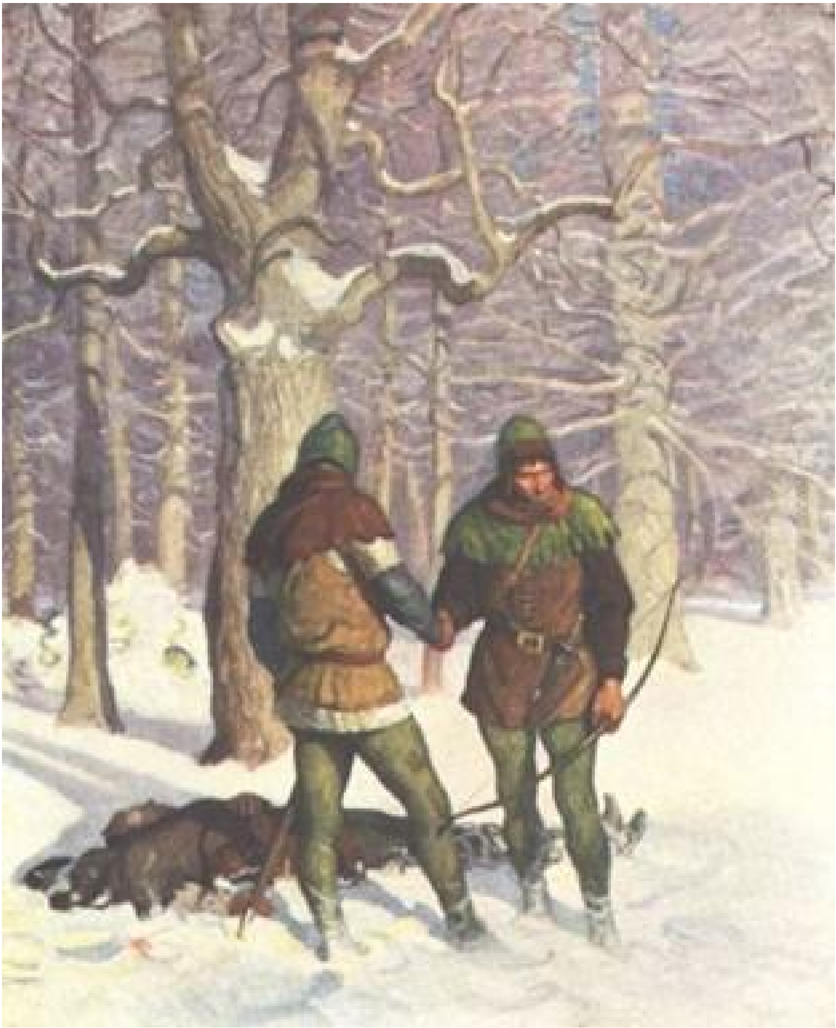
"Richard," he said, very gravely, "I heard you. Ye took the better part and pardoned; I took the worse, and there lies the clay of mine enemy. Pray for me."

And he wrung him by the hand.

"Sir," said Richard, "I will pray for you, indeed; though how I may prevail I wot not. But if ye have so long pursued revenge, and find it now of such a sorry flavour, bethink ye, were it not well to pardon others? Hatch — he is dead, poor shrew! I would have spared a better; and for Sir Daniel, here lies his body. But for the priest, if I might anywise prevail, I would have you let him go."

A flash came into the eyes of Ellis Duckworth.

"Nay," he said, "the devil is still strong within me. But be at rest; the Black Arrow flieth nevermore — the fellowship is broken. They that still live shall come to their quiet and ripe end, in Heaven's good time, for me; and for yourself, go where your better fortune calls you, and think no more of Ellis."



“But be at rest; the Black Arrow flieth nevermore”

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

About nine in the morning, Lord Foxham was leading his ward, once more dressed as befitted her sex, and followed by Alicia Risingham, to the church of Holywood, when Richard Crookback, his brow already heavy with cares, crossed their path and paused.

"Is this the maid?" he asked; and when Lord Foxham had replied in the affirmative, "Minion," he added, "hold up your face until I see its favour."

He looked upon her sourly for a little.

"Ye are fair," he said at last, "and, as they tell me, dowered. How if I offered you a brave marriage, as became your face and parentage?"

"My lord duke," replied Joanna, "may it please your grace, I had rather wed with Sir Richard."

"How so?" he asked, harshly. "Marry but the man I name to you, and he shall be my lord, and you my lady, before night. For Sir Richard, let me tell you plainly, he will die Sir Richard."

"I ask no more of Heaven, my lord, than but to die Sir Richard's wife," returned Joanna.

"Look ye at that, my lord," said Gloucester, turning to Lord Foxham. "Here be a pair for you. The lad, when for good services I gave him his choice of my favour, chose but the grace of an old, drunken shipman. I did warn him freely, but he was stout in his besottedness. 'Here dieth your favour,' said I; and he, my lord, with a most assured impertinence, 'Mine be the loss,' quoth he. It shall be so, by the rood!"

"Said he so?" cried Alicia. "Then well said, lion-driver!"

"Who is this?" asked the duke.

"A prisoner of Sir Richard's," answered Lord Foxham; "Mistress Alicia Risingham."

"See that she be married to a sure man," said the duke.

"I had thought of my kinsman, Hamley, an it like your grace," returned Lord Foxham. "He hath well served the cause."

"It likes me well," said Richard. "Let them be wedded speedily. Say, fair maid, will you wed?"

"My lord duke," said Alicia, "so as the man is straight — " And there, in a perfect consternation, the voice died on her tongue.

"He is straight, my mistress," replied Richard, calmly. "I am the only crookback of my party; we are else passably well shapen. Ladies, and you, my lord," he added, with a sudden change to grave courtesy, "judge me not too churlish if I leave you. A captain, in the time of war, hath not the ordering of his hours.”

And with a very handsome salutation he passed on, followed by his officers.

“Alack,” cried Alicia, “I am shent!”

“Ye know him not,” replied Lord Foxham. “It is but a trifle; he hath already clean forgot your words.”

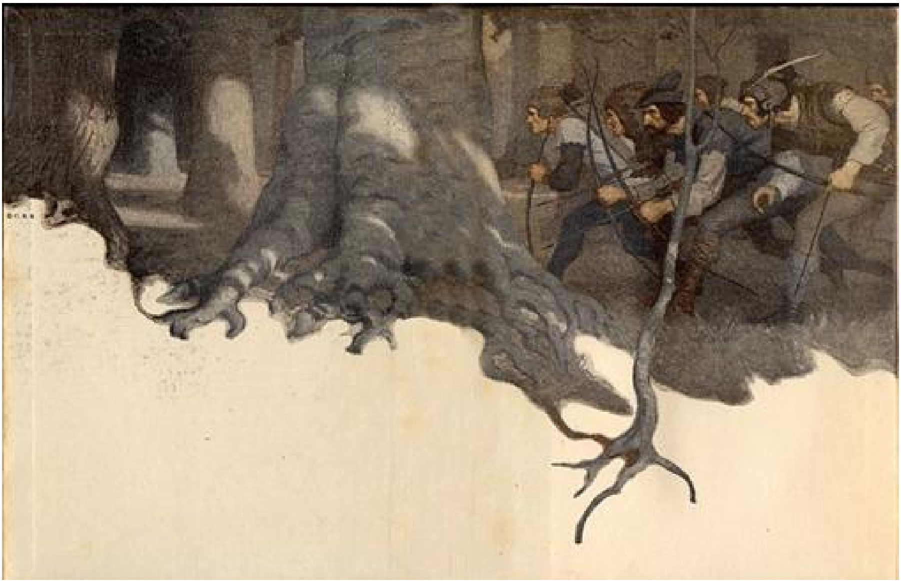
“He is, then, the very flower of knighthood,” said Alicia.

“Nay, he but mindeth other things,” returned Lord Foxham. “Tarry we no more.”

In the chancel they found Dick waiting, attended by a few young men; and there were he and Joan united. When they came forth again, happy and yet serious, into the frosty air and sunlight, the long files of the army were already winding forward up the road; already the Duke of Gloucester’s banner was unfolded and began to move from before the abbey in a clump of spears; and behind it, girt by steel-clad knights, the bold, black-hearted, and ambitious hunchback moved on towards his brief kingdom and his lasting infamy. But the wedding party turned upon the other side, and sat down, with sober merriment, to breakfast. The father cellarer attended on their wants, and sat with them at table. Hamley, all jealousy forgotten, began to ply the nowise loth Alicia with courtship. And there, amid the sounding of tuckets and the clash of armoured soldiery and horses continually moving forth, Dick and Joan sat side by side, tenderly held hands, and looked, with ever growing affection, in each other’s eyes.

Thenceforth the dust and blood of that unruly epoch passed them by. They dwelt apart from alarms in the green forest where their love began.

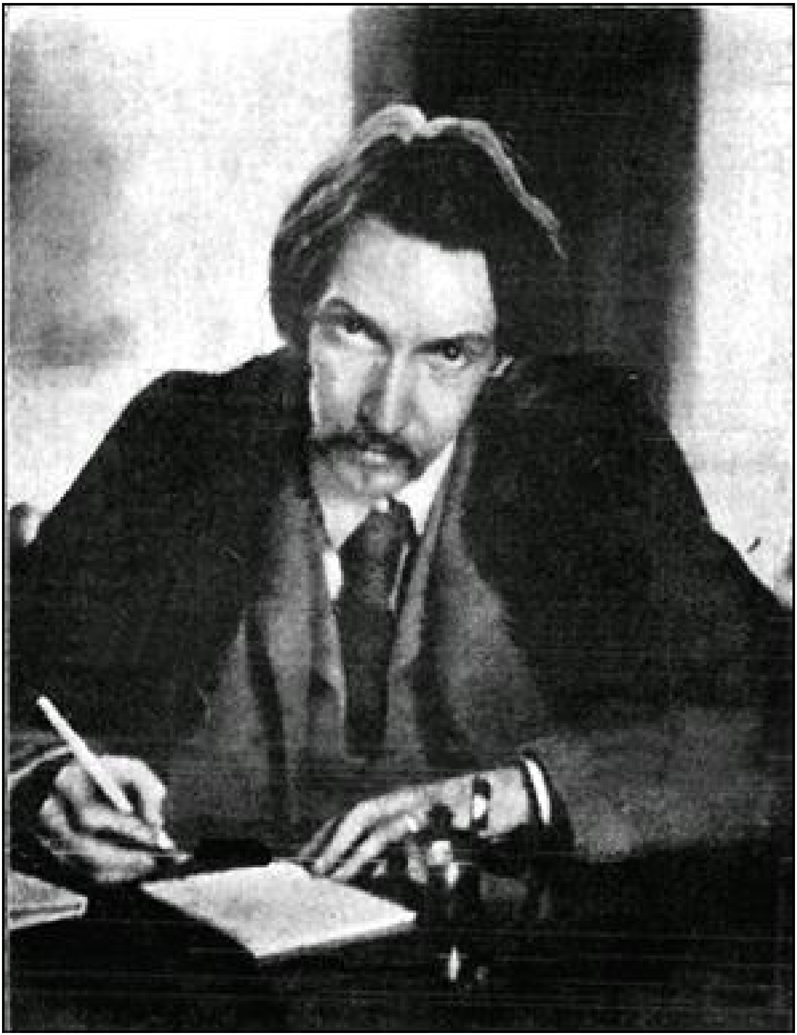
Two old men in the meanwhile enjoyed pensions in great prosperity and peace, and with perhaps a superfluity of ale and wine, in Tunstall hamlet. One had been all his life a shipman, and continued to the last to lament his man Tom. The other, who had been a bit of everything, turned in the end towards piety, and made a most religious death under the name of Brother Honestus in the neighbouring abbey. So Lawless had his will, and died a friar.



PRINCE OTTO

A ROMANCE

This novel was first published in 1885. Interestingly, Stevenson referred to Prince Otto as “my hardest effort”, as one of the chapters was rewritten eight times and once by Stevenson’s wife.



Stevenson at the time of publication

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BOOK I — PRINCE ERRANT

CHAPTER I — IN WHICH THE PRINCE DEPARTS ON AN ADVENTURE

You shall seek in vain upon the map of Europe for the bygone state of Grünewald. An independent principality, an infinitesimal member of the German Empire, she played, for several centuries, her part in the discord of Europe; and, at last, in the ripeness of time and at the spiriting of several bald diplomatists, vanished like a morning ghost. Less fortunate than Poland, she left not a regret behind her; and the very memory of her boundaries has faded.

It was a patch of hilly country covered with thick wood. Many streams took their beginning in the glens of Grünewald, turning mills for the inhabitants. There was one town, Mittwalden, and many brown, wooden hamlets, climbing roof above roof, along the steep bottom of dells, and communicating by covered bridges over the larger of the torrents. The hum of watermills, the splash of running water, the clean odour of pine sawdust, the sound and smell of the pleasant wind among the innumerable army of the mountain pines, the dropping fire of huntsmen, the dull stroke of the wood-axe, intolerable roads, fresh trout for supper in the clean bare chamber of an inn, and the song of birds and the music of the village-bells — these were the recollections of the Grünewald tourist.

North and east the foothills of Grünewald sank with varying profile into a vast plain. On these sides many small states bordered with the principality, Gerolstein, an extinct grand duchy, among the number. On the south it marched with the comparatively powerful kingdom of SeaboardBohemia, celebrated for its flowers and mountain bears, and inhabited by a people of singular simplicity and tenderness of heart. Several intermarriages had, in the course of centuries, united the crowned families of Grünewald and Maritime Bohemia; and the last Prince of Grünewald, whose history I purpose to relate, drew his descent through Perdita, the only daughter of King Florizel the First of Bohemia. That these intermarriages had in some degree mitigated the rough, manly stock of the first Grünewalds, was an opinion widely held within the borders of the principality. The charcoal burner, the mountain sawyer, the wielder of the broad axe among the congregated pines of Grünewald, proud of their hard hands, proud of their shrewd ignorance and almost savage lore, looked with an unfeigned contempt on the soft character and manners of the sovereign race.

The precise year of grace in which this tale begins shall be left to the conjecture of the reader. But for the season of the year (which, in such a story, is the more important of the two) it was already so far forward in the spring, that when mountain people heard horns echoing all day about the north-west corner of the principality, they told themselves that Prince Otto and his hunt were up and out for the last time till the return of autumn.

At this point the borders of Grünewald descend somewhat steeply, here and there breaking into crags; and this shaggy and trackless country stands in a bold contrast to the cultivated plain below. It was traversed at that period by two roads alone; one, the imperial highway, bound to Brandenau in Gerolstein, descended the slope obliquely and by the easiest gradients. The other ran like a fillet across the very forehead of the hills, dipping into savage gorges, and wetted by the spray of tiny waterfalls. Once it passed beside a certain tower or castle, built sheer upon the margin of a formidable cliff, and commanding a vast prospect of the skirts of Grünewald and the busy plains of Gerolstein. The Felsenburg (so this tower was called) served now as a prison, now as a hunting-seat; and for all it stood so lonesome to the naked eye, with the aid of a good glass the burghers of Brandenau could count its windows from the lime-tree terrace where they walked at night.

In the wedge of forest hillside enclosed between the roads, the horns continued all day long to scatter tumult; and at length, as the sun began to draw near to the horizon of the plain, a rousing triumph announced the slaughter of the quarry. The first and second huntsman had drawn somewhat aside, and from the summit of a knoll gazed down before them on the drooping shoulders of the hill and across the expanse of plain. They covered their eyes, for the sun was in their faces. The glory of its going down was somewhat pale. Through the confused tracery of many thousands of naked poplars, the smoke of so many houses, and the evening steam ascending from the fields, the sails of a windmill on a gentle eminence moved very conspicuously, like a donkey’s ears. And hard by, like an open gash, the imperial high-road ran straight sun-ward, an artery of travel.

There is one of nature’s spiritual ditties, that has not yet been set to words or human music: ‘The Invitation to the Road’; an air continually sounding in the ears of gipsies, and to whose inspiration our nomadic fathers journeyed all their days. The hour, the season, and the scene, all were in delicate accordance. The air was full of birds of passage, steering westward and northward over Grünewald, an army of specks to the up-looking eye. And below, the great practicable road was bound for the same quarter.

But to the two horsemen on the knoll this spiritual ditty was unheard. They were, indeed, in some concern of mind, scanning every fold of the subjacent forest, and betraying both anger and dismay in their impatient gestures.

‘I do not see him, Kuno,’ said the first huntsman, ‘nowhere — not a trace, not a hair of the mare’s tail! No, sir, he’s off; broke cover and got away. Why, for twopence I would hunt him with the dogs!’

‘Mayhap, he’s gone home,’ said Kuno, but without conviction.

‘Home!’ sneered the other. ‘I give him twelve days to get home. No, it’s begun again; it’s as it was three years ago, before he married; a disgrace! Hereditary prince, hereditary fool! There goes the government over the borders on a grey mare. What’s that? No, nothing — no, I tell you, on my word, I set more store by a good gelding or an English dog. That for your Otto!’

‘He’s not my Otto,’ growled Kuno.

‘Then I don’t know whose he is,’ was the retort.

‘You would put your hand in the fire for him to-morrow,’ said Kuno, facing round.

‘Me!’ cried the huntsman. ‘I would see him hanged! I’m a Grünewald patriot — enrolled, and have my medal, too; and I would help a prince! I’m for liberty and Gondremark.’

‘Well, it’s all one,’ said Kuno. ‘If anybody said what you said, you would have his blood, and you know it.’

‘You have him on the brain,’ retorted his companion. ‘There he goes!’ he cried, the next moment.

And sure enough, about a mile down the mountain, a rider on a white horse was seen to flit rapidly across a heathy open and vanish among the trees on the farther side.

‘In ten minutes he’ll be over the border into Gerolstein,’ said Kuno. ‘It’s past cure.’

‘Well, if he founders that mare, I’ll never forgive him,’ added the other, gathering his reins.

And as they turned down from the knoll to rejoin their comrades, the sun dipped and disappeared, and the woods fell instantly into the gravity and greyness of the early night.

CHAPTER II — IN WHICH THE PRINCE PLAYS HAROUN-AL-RASCHID

The night fell upon the Prince while he was threading green tracks in the lower valleys of the wood; and though the stars came out overhead and displayed the interminable order of the pine-tree pyramids, regular and dark like cypresses, their light was of small service to a traveller in such lonely paths, and from thenceforth he rode at random. The austere face of nature, the uncertain issue of his course, the open sky and the free air, delighted him like wine; and the hoarse chafing of a river on his left sounded in his ears agreeably.

It was past eight at night before his toil was rewarded and he issued at last out of the forest on the firm white high-road. It lay downhill before him, with a sweeping eastward trend, faintly bright between the thickets; and Otto paused and gazed upon it. So it ran, league after league, still joining others, to the farthest ends of Europe, there skirting the sea-surge, here gleaming in the lights of cities; and the innumerable army of tramps and travellers moved upon it in all lands as by a common impulse, and were now in all places drawing near to the inn door and the night's rest. The pictures swarmed and vanished in his brain; a surge of temptation, a beat of all his blood, went over him, to set spur to the mare and to go on into the unknown for ever. And then it passed away; hunger and fatigue, and that habit of middling actions which we call common sense, resumed their empire; and in that changed mood his eye lighted upon two bright windows on his left hand, between the road and river.

He turned off by a by-road, and in a few minutes he was knocking with his whip on the door of a large farmhouse, and a chorus of dogs from the farmyard were making angry answer. A very tall, old, white-headed man came, shading a candle, at the summons. He had been of great strength in his time, and of a handsome countenance; but now he was fallen away, his teeth were quite gone, and his voice when he spoke was broken and falsetto.

'You will pardon me,' said Otto. 'I am a traveller and have entirely lost my way.'

'Sir,' said the old man, in a very stately, shaky manner, 'you are at the River Farm, and I am Killian Gottesheim, at your disposal. We are here, sir, at about an equal distance from Mittwalden in Grünewald and Brandenau in Gerolstein: six leagues to either, and the road excellent; but there is not a wine bush, not a carter's alehouse, anywhere between. You will have to accept my hospitality for the night; rough hospitality, to which I make you freely welcome; for, sir,' he added with a bow, ‘it is God who sends the guest.’

‘Amen. And I most heartily thank you,’ replied Otto, bowing in his turn.

‘Fritz,’ said the old man, turning towards the interior, ‘lead round this gentleman’s horse; and you, sir, condescend to enter.’

Otto entered a chamber occupying the greater part of the ground-floor of the building. It had probably once been divided; for the farther end was raised by a long step above the nearer, and the blazing fire and the white supper-table seemed to stand upon a daïs. All around were dark, brass-mounted cabinets and cupboards; dark shelves carrying ancient country crockery; guns and antlers and broadside ballads on the wall; a tall old clock with roses on the dial; and down in one corner the comfortable promise of a wine barrel. It was homely, elegant, and quaint.

A powerful youth hurried out to attend on the grey mare; and when Mr. Killian Gottesheim had presented him to his daughter Ottilia, Otto followed to the stable as became, not perhaps the Prince, but the good horseman. When he returned, a smoking omelette and some slices of home-cured ham were waiting him; these were followed by a ragout and a cheese; and it was not until his guest had entirely satisfied his hunger, and the whole party drew about the fire over the wine jug, that Killian Gottesheim’s elaborate courtesy permitted him to address a question to the Prince.

‘You have perhaps ridden far, sir?’ he inquired.

‘I have, as you say, ridden far,’ replied Otto; ‘and, as you have seen, I was prepared to do justice to your daughters cookery.’

‘Possibly, sir, from the direction of Brandenau?’ continued Killian.

‘Precisely: and I should have slept to-night, had I not wandered, in Mittwalden,’ answered the Prince, weaving in a patch of truth, according to the habit of all liars.

‘Business leads you to Mittwalden?’ was the next question.

‘Mere curiosity,’ said Otto. ‘I have never yet visited the principality of Grünewald.’

‘A pleasant state, sir,’ piped the old man, nodding, ‘a very pleasant state, and a fine race, both pines and people. We reckon ourselves part Grünewalders here, lying so near the borders; and the river there is all good Grünewald water, every drop of it. Yes, sir, a fine state. A man of Grünewald now will swing me an axe over his head that many a man of Gerolstein could hardly lift; and the pines, why, deary me, there must be more pines in that little state, sir, than people in this whole big world. ‘Tis twenty years now since I crossed the marshes, for we grow home-keepers in old age; but I mind it as if it was yesterday. Up and down, the road keeps right on from here to Mittwalden; and nothing all the way but the good green pine-trees, big and little, and water-power! water-power at every step, sir. We once sold a bit of forest, up there beside the high-road; and the sight of minted money that we got for it has set me ciphering ever since what all the pines in Grünewald would amount to.'

'I suppose you see nothing of the Prince?' inquired Otto.

'No,' said the young man, speaking for the first time, 'nor want to.'

'Why so? is he so much disliked?' asked Otto.

'Not what you might call disliked,' replied the old gentleman, 'but despised, sir.'

'Indeed,' said the Prince, somewhat faintly.

'Yes, sir, despised,' nodded Killian, filling a long pipe, 'and, to my way of thinking, justly despised. Here is a man with great opportunities, and what does he do with them? He hunts, and he dresses very prettily — which is a thing to be ashamed of in a man — and he acts plays; and if he does aught else, the news of it has not come here.'

'Yet these are all innocent,' said Otto. 'What would you have him do — make war?'

'No, sir,' replied the old man. 'But here it is; I have been fifty years upon this River Farm, and wrought in it, day in, day out; I have ploughed and sowed and reaped, and risen early, and waked late; and this is the upshot: that all these years it has supported me and my family; and been the best friend that ever I had, set aside my wife; and now, when my time comes, I leave it a better farm than when I found it. So it is, if a man works hearty in the order of nature, he gets bread and he receives comfort, and whatever he touches breeds. And it humbly appears to me, if that Prince was to labour on his throne, as I have laboured and wrought in my farm, he would find both an increase and a blessing.'

'I believe with you, sir,' Otto said; 'and yet the parallel is inexact. For the farmer's life is natural and simple; but the prince's is both artificial and complicated. It is easy to do right in the one, and exceedingly difficult not to do wrong in the other. If your crop is blighted, you can take off your bonnet and say, "God's will be done"; but if the prince meets with a reverse, he may have to blame himself for the attempt. And perhaps, if all the kings in Europe were to confine themselves to innocent amusement, the subjects would be the better off.'

'Ay,' said the young man Fritz, 'you are in the right of it there. That was a true word spoken. And I see you are like me, a good patriot and an enemy to princes.'

Otto was somewhat abashed at this deduction, and he made haste to change his ground. 'But,' said he, 'you surprise me by what you say of this Prince Otto. I have heard him, I must own, more favourably painted. I was told he was, in his heart, a good fellow, and the enemy of no one but himself.'

'And so he is, sir,' said the girl, 'a very handsome, pleasant prince; and we know some who would shed their blood for him.'

'O! Kuno!' said Fritz. 'An ignoramus!'

'Ay, Kuno, to be sure,' quavered the old farmer. 'Well, since this gentleman is a stranger to these parts, and curious about the Prince, I do believe that story might divert him. This Kuno, you must know, sir, is one of the hunt servants, and a most ignorant, intemperate man: a right Grünewalder, as we say in Gerolstein. We know him well, in this house; for he has come as far as here after his stray dogs; and I make all welcome, sir, without account of state or nation. And, indeed, between Gerolstein and Grünewald the peace has held so long that the roads stand open like my door; and a man will make no more of the frontier than the very birds themselves.'

'Ay,' said Otto, 'it has been a long peace — a peace of centuries.'

'Centuries, as you say,' returned Killian; 'the more the pity that it should not be for ever. Well, sir, this Kuno was one day in fault, and Otto, who has a quick temper, up with his whip and thrashed him, they do say, soundly. Kuno took it as best he could, but at last he broke out, and dared the Prince to throw his whip away and wrestle like a man; for we are all great at wrestling in these parts, and it's so that we generally settle our disputes. Well, sir, the Prince did so; and, being a weakly creature, found the tables turned; for the man whom he had just been thrashing like a negro slave, lifted him with a back grip and threw him heels overhead.'

'He broke his bridle-arm,' cried Fritz — 'and some say his nose. Serve him right, say I! Man to man, which is the better at that?'

'And then?' asked Otto.

'O, then Kuno carried him home; and they were the best of friends from that day forth. I don't say it's a discreditable story, you observe,' continued Mr. Gottesheim; 'but it's droll, and that's the fact. A man should think before he strikes; for, as my nephew says, man to man was the old valuation.'

'Now, if you were to ask me,' said Otto, 'I should perhaps surprise you. I think it was the Prince that conquered.'

'And, sir, you would be right,' replied Killian seriously. 'In the eyes of God, I do not question but you would be right; but men, sir, look at these things differently, and they laugh.'

'They made a song of it,' observed Fritz. 'How does it go? Ta-tum-ta-ra . . .'

'Well,' interrupted Otto, who had no great anxiety to hear the song, 'the Prince is young; he may yet mend.'

'Not so young, by your leave,' cried Fritz. 'A man of forty.'

‘Thirty-six,’ corrected Mr. Gottesheim.

‘O,’ cried Ottilia, in obvious disillusion, ‘a man of middle age! And they said he was so handsome when he was young!’

‘And bald, too,’ added Fritz.

Otto passed his hand among his locks. At that moment he was far from happy, and even the tedious evenings at MittwaldenPalace began to smile upon him by comparison.

‘O, six-and-thirty!’ he protested. ‘A man is not yet old at six-and-thirty. I am that age myself.’

‘I should have taken you for more, sir,’ piped the old farmer. ‘But if that be so, you are of an age with Master Ottekin, as people call him; and, I would wager a crown, have done more service in your time. Though it seems young by comparison with men of a great age like me, yet it’s some way through life for all that; and the mere fools and fiddlers are beginning to grow weary and to look old. Yes, sir, by six-and-thirty, if a man be a follower of God’s laws, he should have made himself a home and a good name to live by; he should have got a wife and a blessing on his marriage; and his works, as the Word says, should begin to follow him.’

‘Ah, well, the Prince is married,’ cried Fritz, with a coarse burst of laughter.

‘That seems to entertain you, sir,’ said Otto.

‘Ay,’ said the young boor. ‘Did you not know that? I thought all Europe knew it!’ And he added a pantomime of a nature to explain his accusation to the dullest.

‘Ah, sir,’ said Mr. Gottesheim, ‘it is very plain that you are not from hereabouts! But the truth is, that the whole princely family and Court are rips and rascals, not one to mend another. They live, sir, in idleness and — what most commonly follows it — corruption. The Princess has a lover — a Baron, as he calls himself, from East Prussia; and the Prince is so little of a man, sir, that he holds the candle. Nor is that the worst of it, for this foreigner and his paramour are suffered to transact the State affairs, while the Prince takes the salary and leaves all things to go to wrack. There will follow upon this some manifest judgment which, though I am old, I may survive to see.’

‘Good man, you are in the wrong about Gondremark,’ said Fritz, showing a greatly increased animation; ‘but for all the rest, you speak the God’s truth like a good patriot. As for the Prince, if he would take and strangle his wife, I would forgive him yet.’

‘Nay, Fritz,’ said the old man, ‘that would be to add iniquity to evil. For you perceive, sir,’ he continued, once more addressing himself to the unfortunate Prince, ‘this Otto has himself to thank for these disorders. He has his young wife and his principality, and he has sworn to cherish both.’

‘Sworn at the altar!’ echoed Fritz. ‘But put your faith in princes!’

‘Well, sir, he leaves them both to an adventurer from East Prussia,’ pursued the farmer: ‘leaves the girl to be seduced and to go on from bad to worse, till her name’s become a tap-room by-word, and she not yet twenty; leaves the country to be overtaxed, and bullied with armaments, and jockied into war — ’

‘War!’ cried Otto.

‘So they say, sir; those that watch their ongoings, say to war,’ asseverated Killian. ‘Well, sir, that is very sad; it is a sad thing for this poor, wicked girl to go down to hell with people’s curses; it’s a sad thing for a tight little happy country to be misconducted; but whoever may complain, I humbly conceive, sir, that this Otto cannot. What he has worked for, that he has got; and may God have pity on his soul, for a great and a silly sinner’s!’

‘He has broke his oath; then he is a perjurer. He takes the money and leaves the work; why, then plainly he’s a thief. A cuckold he was before, and a fool by birth. Better me that!’ cried Fritz, and snapped his fingers.

‘And now, sir, you will see a little,’ continued the farmer, ‘why we think so poorly of this Prince Otto. There’s such a thing as a man being pious and honest in the private way; and there is such a thing, sir, as a public virtue; but when a man has neither, the Lord lighten him! Even this Gondremark, that Fritz here thinks so much of — ’

‘Ay,’ interrupted Fritz, ‘Gondremark’s the man for me. I would we had his like in Gerolstein.’

‘He is a bad man,’ said the old farmer, shaking his head; ‘and there was never good begun by the breach of God’s commandments. But so far I will go with you; he is a man that works for what he has.’

‘I tell you he’s the hope of Grünewald,’ cried Fritz. ‘He doesn’t suit some of your high-and-dry, old, ancient ideas; but he’s a downright modern man — a man of the new lights and the progress of the age. He does some things wrong; so they all do; but he has the people’s interests next his heart; and you mark me — you, sir, who are a Liberal, and the enemy of all their governments, you please to mark my words — the day will come in Grünewald, when they take out that yellow-headed skulk of a Prince and that dough-faced Messalina of a Princess, march ‘em back foremost over the borders, and proclaim the Baron Gondremark first President. I’ve heard them say it in a speech. I was at a meeting once at Brandenau, and the Mittwalden delegates spoke up for fifteen thousand. Fifteen thousand, all brigaded, and each man with a medal round his neck to rally by. That’s all Gondremark.’

‘Ay, sir, you see what it leads to; wild talk to-day, and wilder doings to-morrow,’ said the old man. ‘For there is one thing certain: that this

Gondremark has one foot in the Court backstairs, and the other in the Masons' lodges. He gives himself out, sir, for what nowadays they call a patriot: a man from East Prussia!'

'Give himself out!' cried Fritz. 'He is! He is to lay by his title as soon as the Republic is declared; I heard it in a speech.'

'Lay by Baron to take up President?' returned Killian. 'King Log, King Stork. But you'll live longer than I, and you will see the fruits of it.'

'Father,' whispered Ottilia, pulling at the speaker's coat, 'surely the gentleman is ill.'

'I beg your pardon,' cried the farmer, rewaking to hospitable thoughts; 'can I offer you anything?'

'I thank you. I am very weary,' answered Otto. 'I have presumed upon my strength. If you would show me to a bed, I should be grateful.'

'Ottilia, a candle!' said the old man. 'Indeed, sir, you look paley. A little cordial water? No? Then follow me, I beseech you, and I will bring you to the stranger's bed. You are not the first by many who has slept well below my roof,' continued the old gentleman, mounting the stairs before his guest; 'for good food, honest wine, a grateful conscience, and a little pleasant chat before a man retires, are worth all the possets and apothecary's drugs. See, sir,' and here he opened a door and ushered Otto into a little white-washed sleeping-room, 'here you are in port. It is small, but it is airy, and the sheets are clean and kept in lavender. The window, too, looks out above the river, and there's no music like a little river's. It plays the same tune (and that's the favourite) over and over again, and yet does not weary of it like men fiddlers. It takes the mind out of doors: and though we should be grateful for good houses, there is, after all, no house like God's out-of-doors. And lastly, sir, it quiets a man down like saying his prayers. So here, sir, I take my kind leave of you until to-morrow; and it is my prayerful wish that you may slumber like a prince.'

And the old man, with the twentieth courteous inclination, left his guest alone.

CHAPTER III — IN WHICH THE PRINCE COMFORTS AGE AND BEAUTY AND DELIVERS A LECTURE ON DISCRETION IN LOVE

The Prince was early abroad: in the time of the first chorus of birds, of the pure and quiet air, of the slanting sunlight and the mile-long shadows. To one who had passed a miserable night, the freshness of that hour was tonic and reviving; to steal a march upon his slumbering fellows, to be the Adam of the coming day, composed and fortified his spirits; and the Prince, breathing deep and pausing as he went, walked in the wet fields beside his shadow, and was glad.

A trellised path led down into the valley of the brook, and he turned to follow it. The stream was a break-neck, boiling Highland river. Hard by the farm, it leaped a little precipice in a thick grey-mare's tail of twisted filaments, and then lay and worked and bubbled in a lynn. Into the middle of this quaking pool a rock protruded, shelving to a cape; and thither Otto scrambled and sat down to ponder.

Soon the sun struck through the screen of branches and thin early leaves that made a hanging bower above the fall; and the golden lights and flitting shadows fell upon and marbled the surface of that so seething pot; and rays plunged deep among the turning waters; and a spark, as bright as a diamond, lit upon the swaying eddy. It began to grow warm where Otto lingered, warm and heady; the lights swam, weaving their maze across the shaken pool; on the impending rock, reflections danced like butterflies; and the air was fanned by the waterfall as by a swinging curtain.

Otto, who was weary with tossing and beset with horrid phantoms of remorse and jealousy, instantly fell dead in love with that sun-chequered, echoing corner. Holding his feet, he stared out of a drowsy trance, wondering, admiring, musing, losing his way among uncertain thoughts. There is nothing that so apes the external bearing of free will as that unconscious bustle, obscurely following liquid laws, with which a river contends among obstructions. It seems the very play of man and destiny, and as Otto pored on these recurrent changes, he grew, by equal steps, the sleepier and the more profound. Eddy and Prince were alike jostled in their purpose, alike anchored by intangible influences in one corner of the world. Eddy and Prince were alike useless, starkly useless, in the cosmology of men. Eddy and Prince — Prince and Eddy.

It is probable he had been some while asleep when a voice recalled him from oblivion. 'Sir,' it was saying; and looking round, he saw Mr. Killian's daughter, terrified by her boldness and making bashful signals from the shore. She was a plain, honest lass, healthy and happy and good, and with that sort of beauty that comes of happiness and health. But her confusion lent her for the moment an additional charm.

‘Good-morning,’ said Otto, rising and moving towards her. ‘I arose early and was in a dream.’

‘O, sir!’ she cried, ‘I wish to beg of you to spare my father; for I assure your Highness, if he had known who you was, he would have bitten his tongue out sooner. And Fritz, too — how he went on! But I had a notion; and this morning I went straight down into the stable, and there was your Highness’s crown upon the stirrup-irons! But, O, sir, I made certain you would spare them; for they were as innocent as lambs.’

‘My dear,’ said Otto, both amused and gratified, ‘you do not understand. It is I who am in the wrong; for I had no business to conceal my name and lead on these gentleman to speak of me. And it is I who have to beg of you that you will keep my secret and not betray the discourtesy of which I was guilty. As for any fear of me, your friends are safe in Gerolstein; and even in my own territory, you must be well aware I have no power.’

‘O, sir,’ she said, curtsying, ‘I would not say that: the huntsmen would all die for you.’

‘Happy Prince!’ said Otto. ‘But although you are too courteous to avow the knowledge, you have had many opportunities of learning that I am a vain show. Only last night we heard it very clearly stated. You see the shadow flitting on this hard rock? Prince Otto, I am afraid, is but the moving shadow, and the name of the rock is Gondremark. Ah! if your friends had fallen foul of Gondremark! But happily the younger of the two admires him. And as for the old gentleman your father, he is a wise man and an excellent talker, and I would take a long wager he is honest.’

‘O, for honest, your Highness, that he is!’ exclaimed the girl. ‘And Fritz is as honest as he. And as for all they said, it was just talk and nonsense. When countryfolk get gossiping, they go on, I do assure you, for the fun; they don’t as much as think of what they say. If you went to the next farm, it’s my belief you would hear as much against my father.’

‘Nay, nay,’ said Otto, ‘there you go too fast. For all that was said against Prince Otto — ’

‘O, it was shameful!’ cried the girl.

‘Not shameful — true,’ returned Otto. ‘O, yes — true. I am all they said of me — all that and worse.’

‘I never!’ cried ‘Ottilia. ‘Is that how you do? Well, you would never be a soldier. Now if any one accuses me, I get up and give it them. O, I defend myself. I wouldn't take a fault at another person's hands, no, not if I had it on my forehead. And that's what you must do, if you mean to live it out. But, indeed, I never heard such nonsense. I should think you was ashamed of yourself! You're bald, then, I suppose?'

'O no,' said Otto, fairly laughing. 'There I acquit myself: not bald!'

'Well, and good?' pursued the girl. 'Come now, you know you are good, and I'll make you say so . . . Your Highness, I beg your humble pardon. But there's no disrespect intended. And anyhow, you know you are.'

'Why, now, what am I to say?' replied Otto. 'You are a cook, and excellently well you do it; I embrace the chance of thanking you for the ragout. Well now, have you not seen good food so bedevilled by unskilful cookery that no one could be brought to eat the pudding? That is me, my dear. I am full of good ingredients, but the dish is worthless. I am — I give it you in one word — sugar in the salad.'

'Well, I don't care, you're good,' reiterated Ottilia, a little flushed by having failed to understand.

'I will tell you one thing,' replied Otto: 'You are!'

'Ah, well, that's what they all said of you,' moralised the girl; 'such a tongue to come round — such a flattering tongue!'

'O, you forget, I am a man of middle age,' the Prince chuckled.

'Well, to speak to you, I should think you was a boy; and Prince or no Prince, if you came worrying where I was cooking, I would pin a napkin to your tails. . . . And, O Lord, I declare I hope your Highness will forgive me,' the girl added. 'I can't keep it in my mind.'

'No more can I,' cried Otto. 'That is just what they complain of!'

They made a loverly-looking couple; only the heavy pouring of that horse-tail of water made them raise their voices above lovers' pitch. But to a jealous onlooker from above, their mirth and close proximity might easily give umbrage; and a rough voice out of a tuft of brambles began calling on Ottilia by name. She changed colour at that. 'It is Fritz,' she said. 'I must go.'

'Go, my dear, and I need not bid you go in peace, for I think you have discovered that I am not formidable at close quarters,' said the Prince, and made her a fine gesture of dismissal.

So Ottilia skipped up the bank, and disappeared into the thicket, stopping once for a single blushing bob — blushing, because she had in the interval once more forgotten and remembered the stranger's quality.

Otto returned to his rock promontory; but his humour had in the meantime changed. The sun now shone more fairly on the pool; and over its brown, welling surface, the blue of heaven and the golden green of the spring foliage danced in fleeting arabesque. The eddies laughed and brightened with essential colour. And the beauty of the dell began to rankle in the Prince's mind; it was so near to his own borders, yet without. He had never had much of the joy of possessorship in any of the thousand and one beautiful and curious things that were his; and now he was conscious of envy for what was another's. It was, indeed, a smiling, dilettante sort of envy; but yet there it was: the passion of Ahab for the vineyard, done in little; and he was relieved when Mr. Killian appeared upon the scene.

'I hope, sir, that you have slept well under my plain roof,' said the old farmer.

'I am admiring this sweet spot that you are privileged to dwell in,' replied Otto, evading the inquiry.

'It is rustic,' returned Mr. Gottesheim, looking around him with complacency, 'a very rustic corner; and some of the land to the west is most excellent fat land, excellent deep soil. You should see my wheat in the ten-acre field. There is not a farm in Grünewald, no, nor many in Gerolstein, to match the River Farm. Some sixty — I keep thinking when I sow — some sixty, and some seventy, and some an hundredfold; and my own place, six score! But that, sir, is partly the farming.'

'And the stream has fish?' asked Otto.

'A fish-pond,' said the farmer. 'Ay, it is a pleasant bit. It is pleasant even here, if one had time, with the brook drumming in that black pool, and the green things hanging all about the rocks, and, dear heart, to see the very pebbles! all turned to gold and precious stones! But you have come to that time of life, sir, when, if you will excuse me, you must look to have the rheumatism set in. Thirty to forty is, as one may say, their seed-time. And this is a damp cold corner for the early morning and an empty stomach. If I might humbly advise you, sir, I would be moving.'

'With all my heart,' said Otto gravely. 'And so you have lived your life here?' he added, as they turned to go.

'Here I was born,' replied the farmer, 'and here I wish I could say I was to die. But fortune, sir, fortune turns the wheel. They say she is blind, but we will hope she only sees a little farther on. My grandfather and my father and I, we have all tilled these acres, my furrow following theirs. All the three names are on the garden bench, two Killians and one Johann. Yes, sir, good men have prepared themselves for the great change in my old garden. Well do I mind my father, in a woollen night-cap, the good soul, going round and round to see the last of it. 'Killian,' said he, 'do you see the smoke of my tobacco? Why,' said he, 'that is man's life.' It was his last pipe, and I believe he knew it; and it was a strange thing, without doubt, to leave the trees that he had planted, and the son that he had begotten, ay, sir, and even the old pipe with the Turk's head that he had smoked since he was a lad and went a-courting. But here we have no continuing city; and as for the eternal, it's a comfortable thought that we have other merits than our own. And yet you would hardly think how sore it goes against the grain with me, to die in a strange bed.'

'And must you do so? For what reason?' Otto asked.

'The reason? The place is to be sold; three thousand crowns,' replied Mr. Gottesheim. 'Had it been a third of that, I may say without boasting that, what with my credit and my savings, I could have met the sum. But at three thousand, unless I have singular good fortune and the new proprietor continues me in office, there is nothing left me but to budge.'

Otto's fancy for the place redoubled at the news, and became joined with other feelings. If all he heard were true, Grünewald was growing very hot for a sovereign Prince; it might be well to have a refuge; and if so, what more delightful hermitage could man imagine? Mr. Gottesheim, besides, had touched his sympathies. Every man loves in his soul to play the part of the stage deity. And to step down to the aid of the old farmer, who had so roughly handled him in talk, was the ideal of a Fair Revenge. Otto's thoughts brightened at the prospect, and he began to regard himself with a renewed respect.

'I can find you, I believe, a purchaser,' he said, 'and one who would continue to avail himself of your skill.'

'Can you, sir, indeed?' said the old man. 'Well, I shall be heartily obliged; for I begin to find a man may practise resignation all his days, as he takes physic, and not come to like it in the end.'

'If you will have the papers drawn, you may even burthen the purchase with your interest,' said Otto. 'Let it be assured to you through life.'

'Your friend, sir,' insinuated Killian, 'would not, perhaps, care to make the interest reversible? Fritz is a good lad.'

'Fritz is young,' said the Prince dryly; 'he must earn consideration, not inherit.'

'He has long worked upon the place, sir,' insisted Mr. Gottesheim; 'and at my great age, for I am seventy-eight come harvest, it would be a troublesome thought to the proprietor how to fill my shoes. It would be a care spared to assure yourself of Fritz. And I believe he might be tempted by a permanency.'

'The young man has unsettled views,' returned Otto.

'Possibly the purchaser — ' began Killian.

A little spot of anger burned in Otto's cheek. 'I am the purchaser,' he said.

'It was what I might have guessed,' replied the farmer, bowing with an aged, obsequious dignity. 'You have made an old man very happy;

and I may say, indeed, that I have entertained an angel unawares. Sir, the great people of this world — and by that I mean those who are great in station — if they had only hearts like yours, how they would make the fires burn and the poor sing!'

'I would not judge them hardly, sir,' said Otto. 'We all have our frailties.'

'Truly, sir,' said Mr. Gottesheim, with unction. 'And by what name, sir, am I to address my generous landlord?'

The double recollection of an English traveller, whom he had received the week before at court, and of an old English rogue called Transome, whom he had known in youth, came pertinently to the Prince's help. 'Transome,' he answered, 'is my name. I am an English traveller. It is, to-day, Tuesday. On Thursday, before noon, the money shall be ready. Let us meet, if you please, in Mittwalden, at the "Morning Star."'

'I am, in all things lawful, your servant to command,' replied the farmer. 'An Englishman! You are a great race of travellers. And has your lordship some experience of land?'

'I have had some interest of the kind before,' returned the Prince; 'not in Gerolstein, indeed. But fortune, as you say, turns the wheel, and I desire to be beforehand with her revolutions.'

'Very right, sir, I am sure,' said Mr. Killian.

They had been strolling with deliberation; but they were now drawing near to the farmhouse, mounting by the trellised pathway to the level of the meadow. A little before them, the sound of voices had been some while audible, and now grew louder and more distinct with every step of their advance. Presently, when they emerged upon the top of the bank, they beheld Fritz and Ottilia some way off; he, very black and bloodshot, emphasising his hoarse speech with the smacking of his fist against his palm; she, standing a little way off in blowsy, voluble distress.

'Dear me!' said Mr. Gottesheim, and made as if he would turn aside.

But Otto went straight towards the lovers, in whose dissension he believed himself to have a share. And, indeed, as soon as he had seen the Prince, Fritz had stood tragic, as if awaiting and defying his approach.

'O, here you are!' he cried, as soon as they were near enough for easy speech. 'You are a man at least, and must reply. What were you after? Why were you two skulking in the bush? God!' he broke out, turning again upon Ottilia, 'to think that I should waste my heart on you!'

'I beg your pardon,' Otto cut in. 'You were addressing me. In virtue of what circumstance am I to render you an account of this young lady's conduct? Are you her father? her brother? her husband?'

‘O, sir, you know as well as I,’ returned the peasant. ‘We keep company, she and I. I love her, and she is by way of loving me; but all shall be above-board, I would have her to know. I have a good pride of my own.’

‘Why, I perceive I must explain to you what love is,’ said Otto. ‘Its measure is kindness. It is very possible that you are proud; but she, too, may have some self-esteem; I do not speak for myself. And perhaps, if your own doings were so curiously examined, you might find it inconvenient to reply.’

‘These are all set-offs,’ said the young man. ‘You know very well that a man is a man, and a woman only a woman. That holds good all over, up and down. I ask you a question, I ask it again, and here I stand.’ He drew a mark and toed it.

‘When you have studied liberal doctrines somewhat deeper,’ said the Prince, ‘you will perhaps change your note. You are a man of false weights and measures, my young friend. You have one scale for women, another for men; one for princes, and one for farmer-folk. On the prince who neglects his wife you can be most severe. But what of the lover who insults his mistress? You use the name of love. I should think this lady might very fairly ask to be delivered from love of such a nature. For if I, a stranger, had been one-tenth part so gross and so discourteous, you would most righteously have broke my head. It would have been in your part, as lover, to protect her from such insolence. Protect her first, then, from yourself.’

‘Ay,’ quoth Mr. Gottesheim, who had been looking on with his hands behind his tall old back, ‘ay, that’s Scripture truth.’

Fritz was staggered, not only by the Prince’s imperturbable superiority of manner, but by a glimmering consciousness that he himself was in the wrong. The appeal to liberal doctrines had, besides, unmanned him.

‘Well,’ said he, ‘if I was rude, I’ll own to it. I meant no ill, and did nothing out of my just rights; but I am above all these old vulgar notions too; and if I spoke sharp, I’ll ask her pardon.’

‘Freely granted, Fritz,’ said Ottilia.

‘But all this doesn’t answer me,’ cried Fritz. ‘I ask what you two spoke about. She says she promised not to tell; well, then, I mean to know. Civility is civility, but I’ll be no man’s gull. I have a right to common justice, if I *do* keep company!’

‘If you will ask Mr. Gottesheim,’ replied Otto, ‘you will find I have not spent my hours in idleness. I have, since I arose this morning, agreed to buy the farm. So far I will go to satisfy a curiosity which I condemn.’

‘O, well, if there was business, that’s another matter,’ returned Fritz. ‘Though it beats me why you could not tell. But, of course, if the gentleman is to buy the farm, I suppose there would naturally be an end.'

'To be sure,' said Mr. Gottesheim, with a strong accent of conviction.

But Ottilia was much braver. 'There now!' she cried in triumph. 'What did I tell you? I told you I was fighting your battles. Now you see! Think shame of your suspicious temper! You should go down upon your bended knees both to that gentleman and me.'

CHAPTER IV — IN WHICH THE PRINCE COLLECTS OPINIONS BY THE WAY

A little before noon Otto, by a triumph of manoeuvring, effected his escape. He was quit in this way of the ponderous gratitude of Mr. Killian, and of the confidential gratitude of poor Ottilia; but of Fritz he was not quit so readily. That young politician, brimming with mysterious glances, offered to lend his convoy as far as to the high-road; and Otto, in fear of some residuary jealousy and for the girl's sake, had not the courage to gainsay him; but he regarded his companion with uneasy glances, and devoutly wished the business at an end. For some time Fritz walked by the mare in silence; and they had already traversed more than half the proposed distance when, with something of a blush, he looked up and opened fire.

'Are you not,' he asked, 'what they call a socialist?'

'Why, no,' returned Otto, 'not precisely what they call so. Why do you ask?'

'I will tell you why,' said the young man. 'I saw from the first that you were a red progressional, and nothing but the fear of old Killian kept you back. And there, sir, you were right: old men are always cowards. But nowadays, you see, there are so many groups: you can never tell how far the likeliest kind of man may be prepared to go; and I was never sure you were one of the strong thinkers, till you hinted about women and free love.'

'Indeed,' cried Otto, 'I never said a word of such a thing.'

'Not you!' cried Fritz. 'Never a word to compromise! You was sowing seed: ground-bait, our president calls it. But it's hard to deceive me, for I know all the agitators and their ways, and all the doctrines; and between you and me,' lowering his voice, 'I am myself affiliated. O yes, I am a secret society man, and here is my medal.' And drawing out a green ribbon that he wore about his neck, he held up, for Otto's inspection, a pewter medal bearing the imprint of a Phoenix and the legend *Libertas*. 'And so now you see you may trust me,' added Fritz, 'I am none of your alehouse talkers; I am a convinced revolutionary.' And he looked meltingly upon Otto.

'I see,' replied the Prince; 'that is very gratifying. Well, sir, the great thing for the good of one's country is, first of all, to be a good man. All springs from there. For my part, although you are right in thinking that I have to do with politics, I am unfit by intellect and temper for a leading rôle. I was intended, I fear, for a subaltern. Yet we have all something to command, Mr. Fritz, if it be only our own temper; and a man about to marry must look closely to himself. The husband’s, like the prince’s, is a very artificial standing; and it is hard to be kind in either. Do you follow that?’

‘O yes, I follow that,’ replied the young man, sadly chop-fallen over the nature of the information he had elicited; and then brightening up: ‘Is it,’ he ventured, ‘is it for an arsenal that you have bought the farm?’

‘We’ll see about that,’ the Prince answered, laughing. ‘You must not be too zealous. And in the meantime, if I were you, I would say nothing on the subject.’

‘O, trust me, sir, for that,’ cried Fritz, as he pocketed a crown. ‘And you’ve let nothing out; for I suspected — I might say I knew it — from the first. And mind you, when a guide is required,’ he added, ‘I know all the forest paths.’

Otto rode away, chuckling. This talk with Fritz had vastly entertained him; nor was he altogether discontented with his bearing at the farm; men, he was able to tell himself, had behaved worse under smaller provocation. And, to harmonise all, the road and the April air were both delightful to his soul.

Up and down, and to and fro, ever mounting through the wooded foothills, the broad white high-road wound onward into Grünewald. On either hand the pines stood coolly rooted — green moss prospering, springs welling forth between their knuckled spurs; and though some were broad and stalwart, and others spiry and slender, yet all stood firm in the same attitude and with the same expression, like a silent army presenting arms.

The road lay all the way apart from towns and villages, which it left on either hand. Here and there, indeed, in the bottom of green glens, the Prince could spy a few congregated roofs, or perhaps above him, on a shoulder, the solitary cabin of a woodman. But the highway was an international undertaking and with its face set for distant cities, scorned the little life of Grünewald. Hence it was exceeding solitary. Near the frontier Otto met a detachment of his own troops marching in the hot dust; and he was recognised and somewhat feebly cheered as he rode by. But from that time forth and for a long while he was alone with the great woods.

Gradually the spell of pleasure relaxed; his own thoughts returned, like stinging insects, in a cloud; and the talk of the night before, like a shower of buffets, fell upon his memory. He looked east and west for any comforter; and presently he was aware of a cross-road coming steeply down hill, and a horseman cautiously descending. A human voice or presence, like a spring in the desert, was now welcome in itself, and Otto drew bridle to await the coming of this stranger. He proved to be a very red-faced, thick-lipped countryman, with a pair of fat saddle-bags and a stone bottle at his waist; who, as soon as the Prince hailed him, jovially, if somewhat thickly, answered. At the same time he gave a beery yaw in the saddle. It was clear his bottle was no longer full.

‘Do you ride towards Mittwalden?’ asked the Prince.

‘As far as the cross-road to Tannenbrunn,’ the man replied. ‘Will you bear company?’

‘With pleasure. I have even waited for you on the chance,’ answered Otto.

By this time they were close alongside; and the man, with the countryfolk instinct, turned his cloudy vision first of all on his companion’s mount. ‘The devil!’ he cried. ‘You ride a bonny mare, friend!’ And then, his curiosity being satisfied about the essential, he turned his attention to that merely secondary matter, his companion’s face. He started. ‘The Prince!’ he cried, saluting, with another yaw that came near dismounting him. ‘I beg your pardon, your Highness, not to have recognised you at once.’

The Prince was vexed out of his self-possession. ‘Since you know me,’ he said, ‘it is unnecessary we should ride together. I will precede you, if you please.’ And he was about to set spur to the grey mare, when the half-drunken fellow, reaching over, laid his hand upon the rein.

‘Hark you,’ he said, ‘prince or no prince, that is not how one man should conduct himself with another. What! You’ll ride with me incog. and set me talking! But if I know you, you’ll preshede me, if you please! Spy!’ And the fellow, crimson with drink and injured vanity, almost spat the word into the Prince’s face.

A horrid confusion came over Otto. He perceived that he had acted rudely, grossly presuming on his station. And perhaps a little shiver of physical alarm mingled with his remorse, for the fellow was very powerful and not more than half in the possession of his senses. ‘Take your hand from my rein,’ he said, with a sufficient assumption of command; and when the man, rather to his wonder, had obeyed: ‘You should understand, sir,’ he added, ‘that while I might be glad to ride with you as one person of sagacity with another, and so receive your true opinions, it would amuse me very little to hear the empty compliments you would address to me as Prince.’

‘You think I would lie, do you?’ cried the man with the bottle, purpling deeper.

‘I know you would,’ returned Otto, entering entirely into his self-possession. ‘You would not even show me the medal you wear about your neck.’ For he had caught a glimpse of a green ribbon at the fellow’s throat.

The change was instantaneous: the red face became mottled with yellow: a thick-fingered, tottering hand made a clutch at the tell-tale ribbon. ‘Medal!’ the man cried, wonderfully sobered. ‘I have no medal.'

'Pardon me,' said the Prince. 'I will even tell you what that medal bears: a Phoenix burning, with the word *Libertas*.' The medallist remaining speechless, 'You are a pretty fellow,' continued Otto, smiling, 'to complain of incivility from the man whom you conspire to murder.'

'Murder!' protested the man. 'Nay, never that; nothing criminal for me!'

'You are strangely misinformed,' said Otto. 'Conspiracy itself is criminal, and ensures the pain of death. Nay, sir, death it is; I will guarantee my accuracy. Not that you need be so deplorably affected, for I am no officer. But those who mingle with politics should look at both sides of the medal.'

'Your Highness . . . ' began the knight of the bottle.

'Nonsense! you are a Republican,' cried Otto; 'what have you to do with highnesses? But let us continue to ride forward. Since you so much desire it, I cannot find it in my heart to deprive you of my company. And for that matter, I have a question to address to you. Why, being so great a body of men — for you are a great body — fifteen thousand, I have heard, but that will be understated; am I right?'

The man gurgled in his throat.

'Why, then, being so considerable a party,' resumed Otto, 'do you not come before me boldly with your wants? — what do I say? with your commands? Have I the name of being passionately devoted to my throne? I can scarce suppose it. Come, then; show me your majority, and I will instantly resign. Tell this to your friends; assure them from me of my docility; assure them that, however they conceive of my deficiencies, they cannot suppose me more unfit to be a ruler than I do myself. I am one of the worst princes in Europe; will they improve on that?'

'Far be it from me . . .' the man began.

'See, now, if you will not defend my government!' cried Otto. 'If I were you, I would leave conspiracies. You are as little fit to be a conspirator as I to be a king.'

'One thing I will say out,' said the man. 'It is not so much you that we complain of, it's your lady.'

'Not a word, sir' said the Prince; and then after a moment's pause, and in tones of some anger and contempt: 'I once more advise you to have done with politics,' he added; 'and when next I see you, let me see you sober. A morning drunkard is the last man to sit in judgment even upon the worst of princes.'

'I have had a drop, but I had not been drinking,' the man replied, triumphing in a sound distinction. 'And if I had, what then? Nobody hangs by me. But my mill is standing idle, and I blame it on your wife. Am I alone in that? Go round and ask. Where are the mills? Where are the young men that should be working? Where is the currency? All paralysed. No, sir, it is not equal; for I suffer for your faults — I pay for them, by George, out of a poor man's pocket. And what have you to do with mine? Drunk or sober, I can see my country going to hell, and I can see whose fault it is. And so now, I've said my say, and you may drag me to a stinking dungeon; what care I? I've spoke the truth, and so I'll hold hard, and not intrude upon your Highness's society.'

And the miller reined up and, clumsily enough, saluted.

'You will observe, I have not asked your name,' said Otto. 'I wish you a good ride,' and he rode on hard. But let him ride as he pleased, this interview with the miller was a chokepear, which he could not swallow. He had begun by receiving a reproof in manners, and ended by sustaining a defeat in logic, both from a man whom he despised. All his old thoughts returned with fresher venom. And by three in the afternoon, coming to the cross-roads for Beckstein, Otto decided to turn aside and dine there leisurely. Nothing at least could be worse than to go on as he was going.

In the inn at Beckstein he remarked, immediately upon his entrance, an intelligent young gentleman dining, with a book in front of him. He had his own place laid close to the reader, and with a proper apology, broke ground by asking what he read.

'I am perusing,' answered the young gentleman, 'the last work of the Herr Doctor Hohenstockwitz, cousin and librarian of your Prince here in Grünewald — a man of great erudition and some lambencies of wit.'

'I am acquainted,' said Otto, 'with the Herr Doctor, though not yet with his work.'

'Two privileges that I must envy you,' replied the young man politely: 'an honour in hand, a pleasure in the bush.'

'The Herr Doctor is a man much respected, I believe, for his attainments?' asked the Prince.

'He is, sir, a remarkable instance of the force of intellect,' replied the reader. 'Who of our young men know anything of his cousin, all reigning Prince although he be? Who but has heard of Doctor Gotthold? But intellectual merit, alone of all distinctions, has its base in nature.'

'I have the gratification of addressing a student — perhaps an author?' Otto suggested.

The young man somewhat flushed. 'I have some claim to both distinctions, sir, as you suppose,' said he; 'there is my card. I am the licentiate Roederer, author of several works on the theory and practice of politics.'

'You immensely interest me,' said the Prince; 'the more so as I gather that here in Grünewald we are on the brink of revolution. Pray, since these have been your special studies, would you augur hopefully of such a movement?'

'I perceive,' said the young author, with a certain vinegary twitch, 'that you are unacquainted with my opuscula. I am a convinced authoritarian. I share none of those illusory, Utopian fancies with which empirics blind themselves and exasperate the ignorant. The day of these ideas is, believe me, past, or at least passing.'

'When I look about me — ' began Otto.

'When you look about you,' interrupted the licentiate, 'you behold the ignorant. But in the laboratory of opinion, beside the studious lamp, we begin already to discard these figments. We begin to return to nature's order, to what I might call, if I were to borrow from the language of therapeutics, the expectant treatment of abuses. You will not misunderstand me,' he continued: 'a country in the condition in which we find Grünewald, a prince such as your Prince Otto, we must explicitly condemn; they are behind the age. But I would look for a remedy not to brute convulsions, but to the natural supervenience of a more able sovereign. I should amuse you, perhaps,' added the licentiate, with a smile, 'I think I should amuse you if I were to explain my notion of a prince. We who have studied in the closet, no longer, in this age, propose ourselves for active service. The paths, we have perceived, are incompatible. I would not have a student on the throne, though I would have one near by for an adviser. I would set forward as prince a man of a good, medium understanding, lively rather than deep; a man of courtly manner, possessed of the double art to ingratiate and to command; receptive, accommodating, seductive. I have been observing you since your first entrance. Well, sir, were I a subject of Grünewald I should pray heaven to set upon the seat of government just such another as yourself.'

'The devil you would!' exclaimed the Prince.

The licentiate Roederer laughed most heartily. 'I thought I should astonish you,' he said. 'These are not the ideas of the masses.'

'They are not, I can assure you,' Otto said.

'Or rather,' distinguished the licentiate, 'not to-day. The time will come, however, when these ideas shall prevail.'

'You will permit me, sir, to doubt it,' said Otto.

'Modesty is always admirable,' chuckled the theorist. 'But yet I assure you, a man like you, with such a man as, say, Doctor Gotthold at your elbow, would be, for all practical issues, my ideal ruler.'

At this rate the hours sped pleasantly for Otto. But the licentiate unfortunately slept that night at Beckstein, where he was, being dainty in the saddle and given to half stages. And to find a convoy to Mittwalden, and thus mitigate the company of his own thoughts, the Prince had to make favour with a certain party of wood-merchants from various states of the empire, who had been drinking together somewhat noisily at the far end of the apartment.

The night had already fallen when they took the saddle. The merchants were very loud and mirthful; each had a face like a nor'west moon; and they played pranks with each others' horses, and mingled songs and choruses, and alternately remembered and forgot the companion of their ride. Otto thus combined society and solitude, hearkening now to their chattering and empty talk, now to the voices of the encircling forest. The starlit dark, the faint wood airs, the clank of the horse-shoes making broken music, accorded together and attuned his mind. And he was still in a most equal temper when the party reached the top of that long hill that overlooks Mittwalden.

Down in the bottom of a bowl of forest, the lights of the little formal town glittered in a pattern, street crossing street; away by itself on the right, the palace was glowing like a factory.

Although he knew not Otto, one of the wood-merchants was a native of the state. 'There,' said he, pointing to the palace with his whip, 'there is Jezebel's inn.'

'What, do you call it that?' cried another, laughing.

'Ay, that's what they call it,' returned the Grünewalder; and he broke into a song, which the rest, as people well acquainted with the words and air, instantly took up in chorus. Her Serene Highness Amalia Seraphina, Princess of Grünewald, was the heroine, Gondremark the hero of this ballad. Shame hissed in Otto's ears. He reined up short and sat stunned in the saddle; and the singers continued to descend the hill without him.

The song went to a rough, swashing, popular air; and long after the words became inaudible the swing of the music, rising and falling, echoed insult in the Prince's brain. He fled the sounds. Hard by him on his right a road struck towards the palace, and he followed it through the thick shadows and branching alleys of the park. It was a busy place on a fine summer's afternoon, when the court and burghers met and saluted; but at that hour of the night in the early spring it was deserted to the roosting birds. Hares rustled among the covert; here and there a statue stood glimmering, with its eternal gesture; here and there the echo of an imitation temple clattered ghostly to the trampling of the mare. Ten minutes brought him to the upper end of his own home garden, where the small stables opened, over a bridge, upon the park. The yard clock was striking the hour of ten; so was the big bell in the palace bell-tower; and, farther off, the belfries of the town. About the stable all else was silent but the stamping of stalled horses and the rattle of halters. Otto dismounted; and as he did so a memory came back to him: a whisper of dishonest grooms and stolen corn, once heard, long forgotten, and now recurring in the nick of opportunity. He crossed the bridge, and, going up to a window, knocked six or seven heavy blows in a particular cadence, and, as he did so, smiled. Presently a wicket was opened in the gate, and a man's head appeared in the dim starlight.

'Nothing to-night,' said a voice.

'Bring a lantern,' said the Prince.

'Dear heart a' mercy!' cried the groom. 'Who's that?'

'It is I, the Prince,' replied Otto. 'Bring a lantern, take in the mare, and let me through into the garden.'

The man remained silent for a while, his head still projecting through the wicket.

'His Highness!' he said at last. 'And why did your Highness knock so strange?'

'It is a superstition in Mittwalden,' answered Otto, 'that it cheapens corn.'

With a sound like a sob the groom fled. He was very white when he returned, even by the light of the lantern; and his hand trembled as he undid the fastenings and took the mare.

'Your Highness,' he began at last, 'for God's sake . . . ' And there he paused, oppressed with guilt.

'For God's sake, what?' asked Otto cheerfully. 'For God's sake let us have cheaper corn, say I. Good-night!' And he strode off into the garden, leaving the groom petrified once more.

The garden descended by a succession of stone terraces to the level of the fish-pond. On the far side the ground rose again, and was crowned by the confused roofs and gables of the palace. The modern pillared front, the ball-room, the great library, the princely apartments, the busy and illuminated quarters of that great house, all faced the town. The garden side was much older; and here it was almost dark; only a few windows quietly lighted at various elevations. The great square tower rose, thinning by stages like a telescope; and on the top of all the flag hung motionless.

The garden, as it now lay in the dusk and glimmer of the starshine, breathed of April violets. Under night's cavern arch the shrubs obscurely bustled. Through the plotted terraces and down the marble stairs the Prince rapidly descended, fleeing before uncomfortable thoughts. But, alas! from these there is no city of refuge. And now, when he was about midway of the descent, distant strains of music began to fall upon his ear from the ball-room, where the court was dancing. They reached him faint and broken, but they touched the keys of memory; and through and above them Otto heard the ranting melody of the wood-merchants' song. Mere blackness seized upon his mind. Here he was, coming home; the wife was dancing, the husband had been playing a trick upon a lackey; and meanwhile, all about them, they were a by-word to their subjects. Such a prince, such a husband, such a man, as this Otto had become! And he sped the faster onward.

Some way below he came unexpectedly upon a sentry; yet a little farther, and he was challenged by a second; and as he crossed the bridge over the fish-pond, an officer making the rounds stopped him once more. The parade of watch was more than usual; but curiosity was dead in Otto's mind, and he only chafed at the interruption. The porter of the back postern admitted him, and started to behold him so disordered. Thence, hasting by private stairs and passages, he came at length unseen to his own chamber, tore off his clothes, and threw himself upon his bed in the dark. The music of the ball-room still continued to a very lively measure; and still, behind that, he heard in spirit the chorus of the merchants clanking down the hill.

BOOK II — OF LOVE AND POLITICS

CHAPTER I — WHAT HAPPENED IN THE LIBRARY

At a quarter before six on the following morning Doctor Gotthold was already at his desk in the library; and with a small cup of black coffee at his elbow, and an eye occasionally wandering to the busts and the long array of many-coloured books, was quietly reviewing the labours of the day before. He was a man of about forty, flaxen-haired, with refined features a little worn, and bright eyes somewhat faded. Early to bed and early to rise, his life was devoted to two things: erudition and Rhine wine. An ancient friendship existed latent between him and Otto; they rarely met, but when they did it was to take up at once the thread of their suspended intimacy. Gotthold, the virgin priest of knowledge, had envied his cousin, for half a day, when he was married; he had never envied him his throne.

Reading was not a popular diversion at the court of Grünewald; and that great, pleasant, sunshiny gallery of books and statues was, in practice, Gotthold's private cabinet. On this particular Wednesday morning, however, he had not been long about his manuscript when a door opened and the Prince stepped into the apartment. The doctor watched him as he drew near, receiving, from each of the embayed windows in succession, a flush of morning sun; and Otto looked so gay, and walked so airily, he was so well dressed and brushed and frizzled, so point-device, and of such a sovereign elegance, that the heart of his cousin the recluse was rather moved against him.

'Good-morning, Gotthold,' said Otto, dropping in a chair.

'Good-morning, Otto,' returned the librarian. 'You are an early bird. Is this an accident, or do you begin reforming?'

'It is about time, I fancy,' answered the Prince.

'I cannot imagine,' said the Doctor. 'I am too sceptical to be an ethical adviser; and as for good resolutions, I believed in them when I was young. They are the colours of hope's rainbow.'

'If you come to think of it,' said Otto, 'I am not a popular sovereign.' And with a look he changed his statement to a question.

'Popular? Well, there I would distinguish,' answered Gotthold, leaning back and joining the tips of his fingers. 'There are various kinds of popularity; the bookish, which is perfectly impersonal, as unreal as the nightmare; the politician's, a mixed variety; and yours, which is the most personal of all. Women take to you; footmen adore you; it is as natural to like you as to pat a dog; and were you a saw-miller you would be the most popular citizen in Grünewald. As a prince — well, you are in the wrong trade. It is perhaps philosophical to recognise it as you do.'

'Perhaps philosophical?' repeated Otto.

'Yes, perhaps. I would not be dogmatic,' answered Gotthold.

'Perhaps philosophical, and certainly not virtuous,' Otto resumed.

'Not of a Roman virtue,' chuckled the recluse.

Otto drew his chair nearer to the table, leaned upon it with his elbow, and looked his cousin squarely in the face. 'In short,' he asked, 'not manly?'

'Well,' Gotthold hesitated, 'not manly, if you will.' And then, with a laugh, 'I did not know that you gave yourself out to be manly,' he added. 'It was one of the points that I inclined to like about you; inclined, I believe, to admire. The names of virtues exercise a charm on most of us; we must lay claim to all of them, however incompatible; we must all be both daring and prudent; we must all vaunt our pride and go to the stake for our humility. Not so you. Without compromise you were yourself: a pretty sight. I have always said it: none so void of all pretence as Otto.'

'Pretence and effort both!' cried Otto. 'A dead dog in a canal is more alive. And the question, Gotthold, the question that I have to face is this: Can I not, with effort and self-denial, can I not become a tolerable sovereign?'

'Never,' replied Gotthold. 'Dismiss the notion. And besides, dear child, you would not try.'

'Nay, Gotthold, I am not to be put by,' said Otto. 'If I am constitutionally unfit to be a sovereign, what am I doing with this money, with this palace, with these guards? And I — a thief — am to execute the law on others?'

'I admit the difficulty,' said Gotthold.

'Well, can I not try?' continued Otto. 'Am I not bound to try? And with the advice and help of such a man as you — '

'Me!' cried the librarian. 'Now, God forbid!'

Otto, though he was in no very smiling humour, could not forbear to smile. 'Yet I was told last night,' he laughed, 'that with a man like me to impersonate, and a man like you to touch the springs, a very possible government could be composed.'

'Now I wonder in what diseased imagination,' Gotthold said, 'that preposterous monster saw the light of day?'

'It was one of your own trade — a writer: one Roederer,' said Otto.

'Roederer! an ignorant puppy!' cried the librarian.

'You are ungrateful,' said Otto. 'He is one of your professed admirers.'

'Is he?' cried Gotthold, obviously impressed. 'Come, that is a good account of the young man. I must read his stuff again. It is the rather to his credit, as our views are opposite. The east and west are not more opposite. Can I have converted him? But no; the incident belongs to Fairyland.'

'You are not then,' asked the Prince, 'an authoritarian?'

'I? God bless me, no!' said Gotthold. 'I am a red, dear child.'

'That brings me then to my next point, and by a natural transition. If I am so clearly unfitted for my post,' the Prince asked; 'if my friends admit it, if my subjects clamour for my downfall, if revolution is preparing at this hour, must I not go forth to meet the inevitable? should I not save these horrors and be done with these absurdities? in a word, should I not abdicate? O, believe me, I feel the ridicule, the vast abuse of language,' he added, wincing, 'but even a principulus like me cannot resign; he must make a great gesture, and come buskined forth, and abdicate.'

'Ay,' said Gotthold, 'or else stay where he is. What gnat has bitten you to-day? Do you not know that you are touching, with lay hands, the very holiest inwards of philosophy, where madness dwells? Ay, Otto, madness; for in the serene temples of the wise, the inmost shrine, which we carefully keep locked, is full of spiders' webs. All men, all, are fundamentally useless; nature tolerates, she does not need, she does not use them: sterile flowers! All — down to the fellow swinking in a byre, whom fools point out for the exception — all are useless; all weave ropes of sand; or like a child that has breathed on a window, write and obliterate, write and obliterate, idle words! Talk of it no more. That way, I tell you, madness lies.' The speaker rose from his chair and then sat down again. He laughed a little laugh, and then, changing his tone, resumed: 'Yes, dear child, we are not here to do battle with giants; we are here to be happy like the flowers, if we can be. It is because you could, that I have always secretly admired you. Cling to that trade; believe me, it is the right one. Be happy, be idle, be airy. To the devil with all casuistry! and leave the state to Gondremark, as heretofore. He does it well enough, they say; and his vanity enjoys the situation.'

'Gotthold,' cried Otto, 'what is this to me? Useless is not the question; I cannot rest at uselessness; I must be useful or I must be noxious — one or other. I grant you the whole thing, prince and principality alike, is pure absurdity, a stroke of satire; and that a banker or the man who keeps an inn has graver duties. But now, when I have washed my hands of it three years, and left all — labour, responsibility, and honour and enjoyment too, if there be any — to Gondremark and to — Seraphina — ' He hesitated at the name, and Gotthold glanced aside. 'Well,' the Prince continued, 'what has come of it? Taxes, army, cannon — why, it's like a box of lead soldiers! And the people sick at the folly of it, and fired with the injustice! And war, too — I hear of war — war in this teapot! What a complication of absurdity and disgrace! And when the inevitable end arrives — the revolution — who will be to blame in the sight of God, who will be gibbeted in public opinion? I! Prince Puppet!'

'I thought you had despised public opinion,' said Gotthold.

'I did,' said Otto sombrely, 'but now I do not. I am growing old. And then, Gotthold, there is Seraphina. She is loathed in this country that I brought her to and suffered her to spoil. Yes, I gave it her as a plaything, and she has broken it: a fine Prince, an admirable Princess! Even her life — I ask you, Gotthold, is her life safe?'

'It is safe enough to-day,' replied the librarian: 'but since you ask me seriously, I would not answer for to-morrow. She is ill-advised.'

'And by whom? By this Gondremark, to whom you counsel me to leave my country,' cried the Prince. 'Rare advice! The course that I have been following all these years, to come at last to this. O, ill-advised! if that were all! See now, there is no sense in beating about the bush between two men: you know what scandal says of her?'

Gotthold, with pursed lips, silently nodded.

'Well, come, you are not very cheering as to my conduct as the Prince; have I even done my duty as a husband?' Otto asked.

'Nay, nay,' said Gotthold, earnestly and eagerly, 'this is another chapter. I am an old celibate, an old monk. I cannot advise you in your marriage.'

'Nor do I require advice,' said Otto, rising. 'All of this must cease.' And he began to walk to and fro with his hands behind his back.

'Well, Otto, may God guide you!' said Gotthold, after a considerable silence. 'I cannot.'

'From what does all this spring?' said the Prince, stopping in his walk. 'What am I to call it? Diffidence? The fear of ridicule? Inverted vanity? What matter names, if it has brought me to this? I could never bear to be bustling about nothing; I was ashamed of this toy kingdom from the first; I could not tolerate that people should fancy I believed in a thing so patently absurd! I would do nothing that cannot be done smiling. I have a sense of humour, forsooth! I must know better than my Maker. And it was the same thing in my marriage,' he added more hoarsely. 'I did not believe this girl could care for me; I must not intrude; I must preserve the foppery of my indifference. What an impotent picture!'

'Ay, we have the same blood,' moralised Gotthold. 'You are drawing, with fine strokes, the character of the born sceptic.'

'Sceptic? — coward!' cried Otto. 'Coward is the word. A springless, putty-hearted, cowering coward!'

And as the Prince rapped out the words in tones of unusual vigour, a little, stout, old gentleman, opening a door behind Gotthold, received them fairly in the face. With his parrot's beak for a nose, his pursed mouth, his little goggling eyes, he was the picture of formality; and in ordinary circumstances, strutting behind the drum of his corporation, he impressed the beholder with a certain air of frozen dignity and wisdom. But at the smallest contrariety, his trembling hands and disconnected gestures betrayed the weakness at the root. And now, when he was thus surprisingly received in that library of Mittwalden Palace, which was the customary haunt of silence, his hands went up into the air as if he had been shot, and he cried aloud with the scream of an old woman.

'O!' he gasped, recovering, 'Your Highness! I beg ten thousand pardons. But your Highness at such an hour in the library! — a circumstance so unusual as your Highness's presence was a thing I could not be expected to foresee.'

'There is no harm done, Herr Cancellarius,' said Otto.

'I came upon the errand of a moment: some papers I left over-night with the Herr Doctor,' said the Chancellor of Grünewald. 'Herr Doctor, if you will kindly give me them, I will intrude no longer.'

Gotthold unlocked a drawer and handed a bundle of manuscript to the old gentleman, who prepared, with fitting salutations, to take his departure.

'Herr Greisengesang, since we have met,' said Otto, 'let us talk.'

'I am honoured by his Highness's commands,' replied the Chancellor.

'All has been quiet since I left?' asked the Prince, resuming his seat.

'The usual business, your Highness,' answered Greisengesang; 'punctual trifles: huge, indeed, if neglected, but trifles when discharged. Your Highness is most zealously obeyed.'

'Obeyed, Herr Cancellarius?' returned the Prince. 'And when have I obliged you with an order? Replaced, let us rather say. But to touch upon these trifles; instance me a few.'

'The routine of government, from which your Highness has so wisely dissociated his leisure . . . ' began Greisengesang.

'We will leave my leisure, sir,' said Otto. 'Approach the facts.'

'The routine of business was proceeded with,' replied the official, now visibly twittering.

'It is very strange, Herr Cancellarius, that you should so persistently avoid my questions,' said the Prince. 'You tempt me to suppose a purpose in your dulness. I have asked you whether all was quiet; do me the pleasure to reply.'

'Perfectly — O, perfectly quiet,' jerked the ancient puppet, with every signal of untruth.

'I make a note of these words,' said the Prince gravely. 'You assure me, your sovereign, that since the date of my departure nothing has occurred of which you owe me an account.'

‘I take your Highness, I take the Herr Doctor to witness,’ cried Greisengesang, ‘that I have had no such expression.’

‘Halt!’ said the Prince; and then, after a pause: ‘Herr Greisengesang, you are an old man, and you served my father before you served me,’ he added. ‘It consists neither with your dignity nor mine that you should babble excuses and stumble possibly upon untruths. Collect your thoughts; and then categorically inform me of all you have been charged to hide.’

Gotthold, stooping very low over his desk, appeared to have resumed his labours; but his shoulders heaved with subterranean merriment. The Prince waited, drawing his handkerchief quietly through his fingers.

‘Your Highness, in this informal manner,’ said the old gentleman at last, ‘and being unavoidably deprived of documents, it would be difficult, it would be impossible, to do justice to the somewhat grave occurrences which have transpired.’

‘I will not criticise your attitude,’ replied the Prince. ‘I desire that, between you and me, all should be done gently; for I have not forgotten, my old friend, that you were kind to me from the first, and for a period of years a faithful servant. I will thus dismiss the matters on which you waive immediate inquiry. But you have certain papers actually in your hand. Come, Herr Greisengesang, there is at least one point for which you have authority. Enlighten me on that.’

‘On that?’ cried the old gentleman. ‘O, that is a trifle; a matter, your Highness, of police; a detail of a purely administrative order. These are simply a selection of the papers seized upon the English traveller.’

‘Seized?’ echoed Otto. ‘In what sense? Explain yourself.’

‘Sir John Crabtree,’ interposed Gotthold, looking up, ‘was arrested yesterday evening.’

‘It this so, Herr Cancellarius?’ demanded Otto sternly.

‘It was judged right, your Highness,’ protested Greisengesang. ‘The decree was in due form, invested with your Highness’s authority by procuration. I am but an agent; I had no status to prevent the measure.’

‘This man, my guest, has been arrested,’ said the Prince. ‘On what grounds, sir? With what colour of pretence?’

The Chancellor stammered.

‘Your Highness will perhaps find the reason in these documents,’ said Gotthold, pointing with the tail of his pen.

Otto thanked his cousin with a look. ‘Give them to me,’ he said, addressing the Chancellor.

But that gentleman visibly hesitated to obey. ‘Baron von Gondremark,’ he said, ‘has made the affair his own. I am in this case a mere messenger; and as such, I am not clothed with any capacity to communicate the documents I carry. Herr Doctor, I am convinced you will not fail to bear me out.'

'I have heard a great deal of nonsense,' said Gotthold, 'and most of it from you; but this beats all.'

'Come, sir,' said Otto, rising, 'the papers. I command.'

Herr Greisengesang instantly gave way.

'With your Highness's permission,' he said, 'and laying at his feet my most submiss apologies, I will now hasten to attend his further orders in the Chancery.'

'Herr Cancellarius, do you see this chair?' said Otto. 'There is where you shall attend my further orders. O, now, no more!' he cried, with a gesture, as the old man opened his lips. 'You have sufficiently marked your zeal to your employer; and I begin to weary of a moderation you abuse.'

The Chancellor moved to the appointed chair and took his seat in silence.

'And now,' said Otto, opening the roll, 'what is all this? it looks like the manuscript of a book.'

'It is,' said Gotthold, 'the manuscript of a book of travels.'

'You have read it, Doctor Hohenstockwitz?' asked the Prince.

'Nay, I but saw the title-page,' replied Gotthold. 'But the roll was given to me open, and I heard no word of any secrecy.'

Otto dealt the Chancellor an angry glance.

'I see,' he went on. 'The papers of an author seized at this date of the world's history, in a state so petty and so ignorant as Grünewald, here is indeed an ignominious folly. Sir,' to the Chancellor, 'I marvel to find you in so scurvy an employment. On your conduct to your Prince I will not dwell; but to descend to be a spy! For what else can it be called? To seize the papers of this gentleman, the private papers of a stranger, the toil of a life, perhaps — to open, and to read them. And what have we to do with books? The Herr Doctor might perhaps be asked for his advice; but we have no *index expurgatorius* in Grünewald. Had we but that, we should be the most absolute parody and farce upon this tawdry earth.'

Yet, even while Otto spoke, he had continued to unfold the roll; and now, when it lay fully open, his eye rested on the title-page elaborately written in red ink. It ran thus:

MEMOIRS
OF A VISIT TO THE VARIOUS
COURTS OF EUROPE,
BY
SIR JOHN CRABTREE, BARONET.

Below was a list of chapters, each bearing the name of one of the

European Courts; and among these the nineteenth and the last upon the list was dedicated to Grünewald.

'Ah! The Court of Grünewald!' said Otto, 'that should be droll reading.' And his curiosity itched for it.

'A methodical dog, this English Baronet,' said Gotthold. 'Each chapter written and finished on the spot. I shall look for his work when it appears.'

'It would be odd, now, just to glance at it,' said Otto, wavering.

Gotthold's brow darkened, and he looked out of window.

But though the Prince understood the reproof, his weakness prevailed. 'I will,' he said, with an uneasy laugh, 'I will, I think, just glance at it.'

So saying, he resumed his seat and spread the traveller's manuscript upon the table.

CHAPTER II — ’ON THE COURT OF GRÜNEWALD,’ BEING A PORTION OF THE TRAVELLER’S MANUSCRIPT

It may well be asked (*it was thus the English traveller began his nineteenth chapter*) why I should have chosen Grünewald out of so many other states equally petty, formal, dull, and corrupt. Accident, indeed, decided, and not I; but I have seen no reason to regret my visit. The spectacle of this small society macerating in its own abuses was not perhaps instructive, but I have found it exceedingly diverting.

The reigning Prince, Otto Johann Friedrich, a young man of imperfect education, questionable valour, and no scintilla of capacity, has fallen into entire public contempt. It was with difficulty that I obtained an interview, for he is frequently absent from a court where his presence is unheeded, and where his only rôle is to be a cloak for the amours of his wife. At last, however, on the third occasion when I visited the palace, I found this sovereign in the exercise of his inglorious function, with the wife on one hand, and the lover on the other. He is not ill-looking; he has hair of a ruddy gold, which naturally curls, and his eyes are dark, a combination which I always regard as the mark of some congenital deficiency, physical or moral; his features are irregular, but pleasing; the nose perhaps a little short, and the mouth a little womanish; his address is excellent, and he can express himself with point. But to pierce below these externals is to come on a vacuity of any sterling quality, a deliquescence of the moral nature, a frivolity and inconsequence of purpose that mark the nearly perfect fruit of a decadent age. He has a worthless smattering of many subjects, but a grasp of none. ‘I soon weary of a pursuit,’ he said to me, laughing; it would almost appear as if he took a pride in his incapacity and lack of moral courage. The results of his dilettanteism are to be seen in every field; he is a bad fencer, a second-rate horseman, dancer, shot; he sings — I have heard him — and he sings like a child; he writes intolerable verses in more than doubtful French; he acts like the common amateur; and in short there is no end to the number of the things that he does, and does badly. His one manly taste is for the chase. In sum, he is but a plexus of weaknesses; the singing chambermaid of the stage, tricked out in man’s apparel, and mounted on a circus horse. I have seen this poor phantom of a prince riding out alone or with a few huntsmen, disregarded by all, and I have been even grieved for the bearer of so futile and melancholy an existence. The last Merovingians may have looked not otherwise.

The Princess Amalia Seraphina, a daughter of the Grand-Ducal house of Toggenburg-Tannhäuser, would be equally inconsiderable if she were not a cutting instrument in the hands of an ambitious man. She is much younger than the Prince, a girl of two-and-twenty, sick with vanity, superficially clever, and fundamentally a fool. She has a red-brown rolling eye, too large for her face, and with sparks of both levity and ferocity; her forehead is high and narrow, her figure thin and a little stooping. Her manners, her conversation, which she interlards with French, her very tastes and ambitions, are alike assumed; and the assumption is ungracefully apparent: Hoyden playing Cleopatra. I should judge her to be incapable of truth. In private life a girl of this description embroils the peace of families, walks attended by a troop of scowling swains, and passes, once at least, through the divorce court; it is a common and, except to the cynic, an uninteresting type. On the throne, however, and in the hands of a man like Gondremark, she may become the authoress of serious public evils.

Gondremark, the true ruler of this unfortunate country, is a more complex study. His position in Grünewald, to which he is a foreigner, is eminently false; and that he should maintain it as he does, a very miracle of impudence and dexterity. His speech, his face, his policy, are all double: heads and tails. Which of the two extremes may be his actual design he were a bold man who should offer to decide. Yet I will hazard the guess that he follows both experimentally, and awaits, at the hand of destiny, one of those directing hints of which she is so lavish to the wise.

On the one hand, as *Maire du Palais* to the incompetent Otto, and using the love-sick Princess for a tool and mouthpiece, he pursues a policy of arbitrary power and territorial aggrandisement. He has called out the whole capable male population of the state to military service; he has bought cannon; he has tempted away promising officers from foreign armies; and he now begins, in his international relations, to assume the swaggering port and the vague, threatful language of a bully. The idea of extending Grünewald may appear absurd, but the little state is advantageously placed, its neighbours are all defenceless; and if at any moment the jealousies of the greater courts should neutralise each other, an active policy might double the principality both in population and extent. Certainly at least the scheme is entertained in the court of Mittwalden; nor do I myself regard it as entirely desperate. The margravate of Brandenburg has grown from as small beginnings to a formidable power; and though it is late in the day to try adventurous policies, and the age of war seems ended, Fortune, we must not forget, still blindly turns her wheel for men and nations. Concurrently with, and tributary to, these warlike preparations, crushing taxes have been levied, journals have been suppressed, and the country, which three years ago was prosperous and happy, now stagnates in a forced inaction, gold has become a curiosity, and the mills stand idle on the mountain streams.

On the other hand, in his second capacity of popular tribune, Gondremark is the incarnation of the free lodges, and sits at the centre of an organised conspiracy against the state. To any such movement my sympathies were early acquired, and I would not willingly let fall a word that might embarrass or retard the revolution. But to show that I speak of knowledge, and not as the reporter of mere gossip, I may mention that I have myself been present at a meeting where the details of a republican Constitution were minutely debated and arranged; and I may add that Gondremark was throughout referred to by the speakers as their captain in action and the arbiter of their disputes. He has taught his dupes (for so I must regard them) that his power of resistance to the Princess is limited, and at each fresh stretch of authority persuades them, with specious reasons, to postpone the hour of insurrection. Thus (to give some instances of his astute diplomacy) he salved over the decree enforcing military service, under the plea that to be well drilled and exercised in arms was even a necessary preparation for revolt. And the other day, when it began to be rumoured abroad that a war was being forced on a reluctant neighbour, the Grand Duke of Gerolstein, and I made sure it would be the signal for an instant rising, I was struck dumb with wonder to find that even this had been prepared and was to be accepted. I went from one to another in the Liberal camp, and all were in the same story, all had been drilled and schooled and fitted out with vacuous argument. ‘The lads had better see some real fighting,’ they said; ‘and besides, it will be as well to capture Gerolstein: we can then extend to our neighbours the blessing of liberty on the same day that we snatch it for ourselves; and the republic will be all the stronger to resist, if the kings of Europe should band themselves together to reduce it.’ I know not which of the two I should admire the more: the simplicity of the multitude or the audacity of the adventurer. But such are the subtleties, such the quibbling reasons, with which he blinds and leads this people. How long a course so tortuous can be pursued with safety I am incapable of guessing; not long, one would suppose; and yet this singular man has been treading the mazes for five years, and his favour at court and his popularity among the lodges still endure unbroken.

I have the privilege of slightly knowing him. Heavily and somewhat clumsily built, of a vast, disjointed, rambling frame, he can still pull himself together, and figure, not without admiration, in the saloon or the ball-room. His hue and temperament are plentifully bilious; he has a saturnine eye; his cheek is of a dark blue where he has been shaven. Essentially he is to be numbered among the man-haters, a convinced contemner of his fellows. Yet he is himself of a commonplace ambition and greedy of applause. In talk, he is remarkable for a thirst of information, loving rather to hear than to communicate; for sound and studious views; and, judging by the extreme short-sightedness of common politicians, for a remarkable provision of events. All this, however, without grace, pleasantry, or charm, heavily set forth, with a dull countenance. In our numerous conversations, although he has always heard me with deference, I have been conscious throughout of a sort of ponderous finessing hard to tolerate. He produces none of the effect of a gentleman; devoid not merely of pleasantry, but of all attention or communicative warmth of bearing. No gentleman, besides, would so parade his amours with the Princess; still less repay the Prince for his long-suffering with a studied insolence of demeanour and the fabrication of insulting nicknames, such as Prince Featherhead, which run from ear to ear and create a laugh throughout the country. Gondremark has thus some of the clumsier characters of the self-made man, combined with an inordinate, almost a besotted, pride of intellect and birth. Heavy, bilious, selfish, inornate, he sits upon this court and country like an incubus.

But it is probable that he preserves softer gifts for necessary purposes. Indeed, it is certain, although he vouchsafed none of it to me, that this cold and stolid politician possesses to a great degree the art of ingratiation, and can be all things to all men. Hence there has probably sprung up the idle legend that in private life he is a gross romping voluptuary. Nothing, at least, can well be more surprising than the terms of his connection with the Princess. Older than her husband, certainly uglier, and, according to the feeble ideas common among women, in every particular less pleasing, he has not only seized the complete command of all her thought and action, but has imposed on her in public a humiliating part. I do not here refer to the complete sacrifice of every rag of her reputation; for to many women these extremities are in themselves attractive. But there is about the court a certain lady of a dishevelled reputation, a Countess von Rosen, wife or widow of a cloudy count, no longer in her second youth, and already bereft of some of her attractions, who unequivocally occupies the station of the Baron’s mistress. I had thought, at first, that she was but a hired accomplice, a mere blind or buffer for the more important sinner. A few hours’ acquaintance with Madame von Rosen for ever dispelled the illusion. She is one rather to make than to prevent a scandal, and she values none of those bribes — money, honours, or employment — with which the situation might be gilded. Indeed, as a person frankly bad, she pleased me, in the court of Grünewald, like a piece of nature.

The power of this man over the Princess is, therefore, without bounds. She has sacrificed to the adoration with which he has inspired her not only her marriage vow and every shred of public decency, but that vice of jealousy which is so much dearer to the female sex than either intrinsic honour or outward consideration. Nay, more: a young, although not a very attractive woman, and a princess both by birth and fact, she submits to the triumphant rivalry of one who might be her mother as to years, and who is so manifestly her inferior in station. This is one of the mysteries of the human heart. But the rage of illicit love, when it is once indulged, appears to grow by feeding; and to a person of the character and temperament of this unfortunate young lady, almost any depth of degradation is within the reach of possibility.

CHAPTER III — THE PRINCE AND THE ENGLISH TRAVELLER

So far Otto read, with waxing indignation; and here his fury overflowed. He tossed the roll upon the table and stood up. 'This man,' he said, 'is a devil. A filthy imagination, an ear greedy of evil, a ponderous malignity of thought and language: I grow like him by the reading! Chancellor, where is this fellow lodged?'

'He was committed to the FlagTower,' replied Greisengesang, 'in the Gamiani apartment.'

'Lead me to him,' said the Prince; and then, a thought striking him, 'Was it for that,' he asked, 'that I found so many sentries in the garden?'

'Your Highness, I am unaware,' answered Greisengesang, true to his policy. 'The disposition of the guards is a matter distinct from my functions.'

Otto turned upon the old man fiercely, but ere he had time to speak, Gotthold touched him on the arm. He swallowed his wrath with a great effort. 'It is well,' he said, taking the roll. 'Follow me to the FlagTower.'

The Chancellor gathered himself together, and the two set forward. It was a long and complicated voyage; for the library was in the wing of the new buildings, and the tower which carried the flag was in the old schloss upon the garden. By a great variety of stairs and corridors, they came out at last upon a patch of gravelled court; the garden peeped through a high grating with a flash of green; tall, old gabled buildings mounted on every side; the Flag Tower climbed, stage after stage, into the blue; and high over all, among the building daws, the yellow flag wavered in the wind. A sentinel at the foot of the tower stairs presented arms; another paced the first landing; and a third was stationed before the door of the extemporised prison.

'We guard this mud-bag like a jewel,' Otto sneered.

The Gamiani apartment was so called from an Italian doctor who had imposed on the credulity of a former prince. The rooms were large, airy, pleasant, and looked upon the garden; but the walls were of great thickness (for the tower was old), and the windows were heavily barred. The Prince, followed by the Chancellor, still trotting to keep up with him, brushed swiftly through the little library and the long saloon, and burst like a thunderbolt into the bedroom at the farther end. Sir John was finishing his toilet; a man of fifty, hard, uncompromising, able, with the eye and teeth of physical courage. He was unmoved by the irruption, and bowed with a sort of sneering ease.

‘To what am I to attribute the honour of this visit?’ he asked.

‘You have eaten my bread,’ replied Otto, ‘you have taken my hand, you have been received under my roof. When did I fail you in courtesy? What have you asked that was not granted as to an honoured guest? And here, sir,’ tapping fiercely on the manuscript, ‘here is your return.’

‘Your Highness has read my papers?’ said the Baronet. ‘I am honoured indeed. But the sketch is most imperfect. I shall now have much to add. I can say that the Prince, whom I had accused of idleness, is zealous in the department of police, taking upon himself those duties that are most distasteful. I shall be able to relate the burlesque incident of my arrest, and the singular interview with which you honour me at present. For the rest, I have already communicated with my Ambassador at Vienna; and unless you propose to murder me, I shall be at liberty, whether you please or not, within the week. For I hardly fancy the future empire of Grünewald is yet ripe to go to war with England. I conceive I am a little more than quits. I owe you no explanation; yours has been the wrong. You, if you have studied my writing with intelligence, owe me a large debt of gratitude. And to conclude, as I have not yet finished my toilet, I imagine the courtesy of a turnkey to a prisoner would induce you to withdraw.’

There was some paper on the table, and Otto, sitting down, wrote a passport in the name of Sir John Crabtree.

‘Affix the seal, Herr Cancellarius,’ he said, in his most princely manner, as he rose.

Greisengesang produced a red portfolio, and affixed the seal in the unpoetic guise of an adhesive stamp; nor did his perturbed and clumsy movements at all lessen the comedy of the performance. Sir John looked on with a malign enjoyment; and Otto chafed, regretting, when too late, the unnecessary royalty of his command and gesture. But at length the Chancellor had finished his piece of prestidigitation, and, without waiting for an order, had countersigned the passport. Thus regularised, he returned it to Otto with a bow.

‘You will now,’ said the Prince, ‘order one of my own carriages to be prepared; see it, with your own eyes, charged with Sir John’s effects, and have it waiting within the hour behind the Pheasant House. Sir John departs this morning for Vienna.’

The Chancellor took his elaborate departure.

‘Here, sir, is your passport,’ said Otto, turning to the Baronet. ‘I regret it from my heart that you have met inhospitable usage.’

‘Well, there will be no English war,’ returned Sir John.

‘Nay, sir,’ said Otto, ‘you surely owe me your civility. Matters are now changed, and we stand again upon the footing of two gentlemen.

It was not I who ordered your arrest; I returned late last night from hunting; and as you cannot blame me for your imprisonment, you may even thank me for your freedom.’

‘And yet you read my papers,’ said the traveller shrewdly.

‘There, sir, I was wrong,’ returned Otto; ‘and for that I ask your pardon. You can scarce refuse it, for your own dignity, to one who is a plexus of weaknesses. Nor was the fault entirely mine. Had the papers been innocent, it would have been at most an indiscretion. Your own guilt is the sting of my offence.’

Sir John regarded Otto with an approving twinkle; then he bowed, but still in silence.

‘Well, sir, as you are now at your entire disposal, I have a favour to beg of your indulgence,’ continued the Prince. ‘I have to request that you will walk with me alone into the garden so soon as your convenience permits.’

‘From the moment that I am a free man,’ Sir John replied, this time with perfect courtesy, ‘I am wholly at your Highness’s command; and if you will excuse a rather summary toilet, I will even follow you, as I am.’

‘I thank you, sir,’ said Otto.

So without more delay, the Prince leading, the pair proceeded down through the echoing stairway of the tower, and out through the grating, into the ample air and sunshine of the morning, and among the terraces and flower-beds of the garden. They crossed the fish-pond, where the carp were leaping as thick as bees; they mounted, one after another, the various flights of stairs, snowed upon, as they went, with April blossoms, and marching in time to the great orchestra of birds. Nor did Otto pause till they had reached the highest terrace of the garden. Here was a gate into the park, and hard by, under a tuft of laurel, a marble garden seat. Hence they looked down on the green tops of many elm-trees, where the rooks were busy; and, beyond that, upon the palace roof, and the yellow banner flying in the blue. I pray you to be seated, sir,’ said Otto.

Sir John complied without a word; and for some seconds Otto walked to and fro before him, plunged in angry thought. The birds were all singing for a wager.

‘Sir,’ said the Prince at length, turning towards the Englishman, ‘you are to me, except by the conventions of society, a perfect stranger. Of your character and wishes I am ignorant. I have never wittingly disobliged you. There is a difference in station, which I desire to waive. I would, if you still think me entitled to so much consideration — I would be regarded simply as a gentleman. Now, sir, I did wrong to glance at these papers, which I here return to you; but if curiosity be undignified, as I am free to own, falsehood is both cowardly and cruel. I opened your roll; and what did I find — what did I find about my wife; Lies!' he broke out. 'They are lies! There are not, so help me God! four words of truth in your intolerable libel! You are a man; you are old, and might be the girl's father; you are a gentleman; you are a scholar, and have learned refinement; and you rake together all this vulgar scandal, and propose to print it in a public book! Such is your chivalry! But, thank God, sir, she has still a husband. You say, sir, in that paper in your hand, that I am a bad fencer; I have to request from you a lesson in the art. The park is close behind; yonder is the Pheasant House, where you will find your carriage; should I fall, you know, sir — you have written it in your paper — how little my movements are regarded; I am in the custom of disappearing; it will be one more disappearance; and long before it has awakened a remark, you may be safe across the border.'

'You will observe,' said Sir John, 'that what you ask is impossible.'

'And if I struck you?' cried the Prince, with a sudden menacing flash.

'It would be a cowardly blow,' returned the Baronet, unmoved, 'for it would make no change. I cannot draw upon a reigning sovereign.'

'And it is this man, to whom you dare not offer satisfaction, that you choose to insult!' cried Otto.

'Pardon me,' said the traveller, 'you are unjust. It is because you are a reigning sovereign that I cannot fight with you; and it is for the same reason that I have a right to criticise your action and your wife. You are in everything a public creature; you belong to the public, body and bone. You have with you the law, the muskets of the army, and the eyes of spies. We, on our side, have but one weapon — truth.'

'Truth!' echoed the Prince, with a gesture.

There was another silence.

'Your Highness,' said Sir John at last, 'you must not expect grapes from a thistle. I am old and a cynic. Nobody cares a rush for me; and on the whole, after the present interview, I scarce know anybody that I like better than yourself. You see, I have changed my mind, and have the uncommon virtue to avow the change. I tear up this stuff before you, here in your own garden; I ask your pardon, I ask the pardon of the Princess; and I give you my word of honour as a gentleman and an old man, that when my book of travels shall appear it shall not contain so much as the name of Grünewald. And yet it was a racy chapter! But had your Highness only read about the other courts! I am a carrion crow; but it is not my fault, after all, that the world is such a nauseous kennel.'

'Sir,' said Otto, 'is the eye not jaundiced?'

'Nay,' cried the traveller, 'very likely. I am one who goes sniffing; I am no poet. I believe in a better future for the world; or, at all accounts, I do most potently disbelieve in the present. Rotten eggs is the burthen of my song. But indeed, your Highness, when I meet with any merit, I do not think that I am slow to recognise it. This is a day that I shall still recall with gratitude, for I have found a sovereign with some manly virtues; and for once — old courtier and old radical as I am — it is from the heart and quite sincerely that I can request the honour of kissing your Highness's hand?'

'Nay, sir,' said Otto, 'to my heart!'

And the Englishman, taken at unawares, was clasped for a moment in the Prince's arms.

'And now, sir,' added Otto, 'there is the Pheasant House; close behind it you will find my carriage, which I pray you to accept. God speed you to Vienna!'

'In the impetuosity of youth,' replied Sir John, 'your Highness has overlooked one circumstance. I am still fasting.'

'Well, sir,' said Otto, smiling, 'you are your own master; you may go or stay. But I warn you, your friend may prove less powerful than your enemies. The Prince, indeed, is thoroughly on your side; he has all the will to help; but to whom do I speak? — you know better than I do, he is not alone in Grünewald.'

'There is a deal in position,' returned the traveller, gravely nodding. 'Gondremark loves to temporise; his policy is below ground, and he fears all open courses; and now that I have seen you act with so much spirit, I will cheerfully risk myself on your protection. Who knows? You may be yet the better man.'

'Do you indeed believe so?' cried the Prince. 'You put life into my heart!'

'I will give up sketching portraits,' said the Baronet. 'I am a blind owl; I had misread you strangely. And yet remember this; a sprint is one thing, and to run all day another. For I still mistrust your constitution; the short nose, the hair and eyes of several complexions; no, they are diagnostic; and I must end, I see, as I began.'

'I am still a singing chambermaid?' said Otto.

'Nay, your Highness, I pray you to forget what I had written,' said Sir John; 'I am not like Pilate; and the chapter is no more. Bury it, if you love me.'

CHAPTER IV — WHILE THE PRINCE IS IN THE ANTE-ROOM . . .

Greatly comforted by the exploits of the morning, the Prince turned towards the Princess's ante-room, bent on a more difficult enterprise. The curtains rose before him, the usher called his name, and he entered the room with an exaggeration of his usual mincing and airy dignity. There were about a score of persons waiting, principally ladies; it was one of the few societies in Grünewald where Otto knew himself to be popular; and while a maid of honour made her exit by a side door to announce his arrival to the Princess, he moved round the apartment, collecting homage and bestowing compliments with friendly grace. Had this been the sum of his duties, he had been an admirable monarch. Lady after lady was impartially honoured by his attention.

'Madam,' he said to one, 'how does this happen? I find you daily more adorable.'

'And your Highness daily browner,' replied the lady. 'We began equal; O, there I will be bold: we have both beautiful complexions. But while I study mine, your Highness tans himself.'

'A perfect negro, madam; and what so fitly — being beauty's slave?' said Otto. — 'Madame Grafinski, when is our next play? I have just heard that I am a bad actor.'

'*O ciel*!' cried Madame Grafinski. 'Who could venture? What a bear!'

'An excellent man, I can assure you,' returned Otto.

'O, never! O, is it possible!' fluted the lady. 'Your Highness plays like an angel.'

'You must be right, madam; who could speak falsely and yet look so charming?' said the Prince. 'But this gentleman, it seems, would have preferred me playing like an actor.'

A sort of hum, a falsetto, feminine cooing, greeted the tiny sally; and Otto expanded like a peacock. This warm atmosphere of women and flattery and idle chatter pleased him to the marrow.

'Madame von Eisenthal, your coiffure is delicious,' he remarked.

'Every one was saying so,' said one.

'If I have pleased Prince Charming?' And Madame von Eisenthal swept him a deep curtsy with a killing glance of adoration.

'It is new?' he asked. 'Vienna fashion.'

'Mint new,' replied the lady, 'for your Highness's return. I felt young this morning; it was a premonition. But why, Prince, do you ever leave us?'

‘For the pleasure of the return,’ said Otto. ‘I am like a dog; I must bury my bone, and then come back to great upon it.’

‘O, a bone! Fie, what a comparison! You have brought back the manners of the wood,’ returned the lady.

‘Madam, it is what the dog has dearest,’ said the Prince. ‘But I observe Madame von Rosen.’

And Otto, leaving the group to which he had been piping, stepped towards the embrasure of a window where a lady stood.

The Countess von Rosen had hitherto been silent, and a thought depressed, but on the approach of Otto she began to brighten. She was tall, slim as a nymph, and of a very airy carriage; and her face, which was already beautiful in repose, lightened and changed, flashed into smiles, and glowed with lovely colour at the touch of animation. She was a good vocalist; and, even in speech, her voice commanded a great range of changes, the low notes rich with tenor quality, the upper ringing, on the brink of laughter, into music. A gem of many facets and variable hues of fire; a woman who withheld the better portion of her beauty, and then, in a caressing second, flashed it like a weapon full on the beholder; now merely a tall figure and a sallow handsome face, with the evidences of a reckless temper; anon opening like a flower to life and colour, mirth and tenderness: — Madame von Rosen had always a dagger in reserve for the despatch of ill-assured admirers. She met Otto with the dart of tender gaiety.

‘You have come to me at last, Prince Cruel,’ she said. ‘Butterfly! Well, and am I not to kiss your hand?’ she added.

‘Madam, it is I who must kiss yours.’ And Otto bowed and kissed it.

‘You deny me every indulgence,’ she said, smiling.

‘And now what news in Court?’ inquired the Prince. ‘I come to you for my gazette.’

‘Ditch-water!’ she replied. ‘The world is all asleep, grown grey in slumber; I do not remember any waking movement since quite an eternity; and the last thing in the nature of a sensation was the last time my governess was allowed to box my ears. But yet I do myself and your unfortunate enchanted palace some injustice. Here is the last — O positively!’ And she told him the story from behind her fan, with many glances, many cunning strokes of the narrator’s art. The others had drawn away, for it was understood that Madame von Rosen was in favour with the Prince. None the less, however, did the Countess lower her voice at times to within a semitone of whispering; and the pair leaned together over the narrative.

‘Do you know,’ said Otto, laughing, ‘you are the only entertaining woman on this earth!’

‘O, you have found out so much,’ she cried.

‘Yes, madam, I grow wiser with advancing years,’ he returned.

‘Years,’ she repeated. ‘Do you name the traitors? I do not believe in years; the calendar is a delusion.’

‘You must be right, madam,’ replied the Prince. ‘For six years that we have been good friends, I have observed you to grow younger.’

‘Flatterer!’ cried she, and then with a change, ‘But why should I say so,’ she added, ‘when I protest I think the same? A week ago I had a council with my father director, the glass; and the glass replied, “Not yet!” I confess my face in this way once a month. O! a very solemn moment. Do you know what I shall do when the mirror answers, “Now”?’

‘I cannot guess,’ said he.

‘No more can I,’ returned the Countess. ‘There is such a choice! Suicide, gambling, a nunnery, a volume of memoirs, or politics — the last, I am afraid.’

‘It is a dull trade,’ said Otto.

‘Nay,’ she replied, ‘it is a trade I rather like. It is, after all, first cousin to gossip, which no one can deny to be amusing. For instance, if I were to tell you that the Princess and the Baron rode out together daily to inspect the cannon, it is either a piece of politics or scandal, as I turn my phrase. I am the alchemist that makes the transmutation. They have been everywhere together since you left,’ she continued, brightening as she saw Otto darken; ‘that is a poor snippet of malicious gossip — and they were everywhere cheered — and with that addition all becomes political intelligence.’

‘Let us change the subject,’ said Otto.

‘I was about to propose it,’ she replied, ‘or rather to pursue the politics. Do you know? this war is popular — popular to the length of cheering Princess Seraphina.’

‘All things, madam, are possible,’ said the Prince; and this among others, that we may be going into war, but I give you my word of honour I do not know with whom.’

‘And you put up with it?’ she cried. ‘I have no pretensions to morality; and I confess I have always abominated the lamb, and nourished a romantic feeling for the wolf. O, be done with lambiness! Let us see there is a prince, for I am weary of the distaff.’

‘Madam,’ said Otto, ‘I thought you were of that faction.’

‘I should be of yours, *mon Prince*, if you had one,’ she retorted. ‘Is it true that you have no ambition? There was a man once in England whom they call the kingmaker. Do you know,’ she added, ‘I fancy I could make a prince?’

‘Some day, madam,’ said Otto, ‘I may ask you to help make a farmer.’

‘Is that a riddle?’ asked the Countess.

‘It is,’ replied the Prince, ‘and a very good one too.’

‘Tit for tat. I will ask you another,’ she returned. ‘Where is Gondremark?’

‘The Prime Minister? In the prime-ministry, no doubt,’ said Otto.

‘Precisely,’ said the Countess; and she pointed with her fan to the door of the Princess’s apartments. ‘You and I, *mon Prince*, are in the ante-room. You think me unkind,’ she added. ‘Try me and you will see. Set me a task, put me a question; there is no enormity I am not capable of doing to oblige you, and no secret that I am not ready to betray.’

‘Nay, madam, but I respect my friend too much,’ he answered, kissing her hand. ‘I would rather remain ignorant of all. We fraternise like foemen soldiers at the outposts, but let each be true to his own army.’

‘Ah,’ she cried, ‘if all men were generous like you, it would be worth while to be a woman!’ Yet, judging by her looks, his generosity, if anything, had disappointed her; she seemed to seek a remedy, and, having found it, brightened once more. ‘And now,’ she said, ‘may I dismiss my sovereign? This is rebellion and a *cas pendable*; but what am I to do? My bear is jealous!’

‘Madam, enough!’ cried Otto. ‘Ahasuerus reaches you the sceptre; more, he will obey you in all points. I should have been a dog to come to whistling.’

And so the Prince departed, and fluttered round Grafinski and von Eisenthal. But the Countess knew the use of her offensive weapons, and had left a pleasant arrow in the Prince’s heart. That Gondremark was jealous — here was an agreeable revenge! And Madame von Rosen, as the occasion of the jealousy, appeared to him in a new light.

CHAPTER V — . . . GONDREMARK IS IN MY LADY'S CHAMBER

The Countess von Rosen spoke the truth. The great Prime Minister of Grünewald was already closeted with Seraphina. The toilet was over; and the Princess, tastefully arrayed, sat face to face with a tall mirror. Sir John's description was unkindly true, true in terms and yet a libel, a misogynistic masterpiece. Her forehead was perhaps too high, but it became her; her figure somewhat stooped, but every detail was formed and finished like a gem; her hand, her foot, her ear, the set of her comely head, were all dainty and accordant; if she was not beautiful, she was vivid, changeful, coloured, and pretty with a thousand various prettinesses; and her eyes, if they indeed rolled too consciously, yet rolled to purpose. They were her most attractive feature, yet they continually bore eloquent false witness to her thoughts; for while she herself, in the depths of her immature, unsoftened heart, was given altogether to manlike ambition and the desire of power, the eyes were by turns bold, inviting, fiery, melting, and artful, like the eyes of a rapacious siren. And artful, in a sense, she was. Chafing that she was not a man, and could not shine by action, she had conceived a woman's part, of answerable domination; she sought to subjugate for by-ends, to rain influence and be fancy free; and, while she loved not man, loved to see man obey her. It is a common girl's ambition. Such was perhaps that lady of the glove, who sent her lover to the lions. But the snare is laid alike for male and female, and the world most artfully contrived.

Near her, in a low chair, Gondremark had arranged his limbs into a cat-like attitude, high-shouldered, stooping, and submiss. The formidable blue jowl of the man, and the dull bilious eye, set perhaps a higher value on his evident desire to please. His face was marked by capacity, temper, and a kind of bold, piratical dishonesty which it would be calumnious to call deceit. His manners, as he smiled upon the Princess, were over-fine, yet hardly elegant.

'Possibly,' said the Baron, 'I should now proceed to take my leave. I must not keep my sovereign in the ante-room. Let us come at once to a decision.'

'It cannot, cannot be put off?' she asked.

'It is impossible,' answered Gondremark. 'Your Highness sees it for herself. In the earlier stages, we might imitate the serpent; but for the ultimatum, there is no choice but to be bold like lions. Had the Prince chosen to remain away, it had been better; but we have gone too far forward to delay.'

‘What can have brought him?’ she cried. ‘To-day of all days?’

‘The marplot, madam, has the instinct of his nature,’ returned Gondremark. ‘But you exaggerate the peril. Think, madam, how far we have prospered, and against what odds! Shall a Featherhead? — but no!’ And he blew upon his fingers lightly with a laugh.

‘Featherhead,’ she replied, ‘is still the Prince of Grünewald.’

‘On your sufferance only, and so long as you shall please to be indulgent,’ said the Baron. ‘There are rights of nature; power to the powerful is the law. If he shall think to cross your destiny — well, you have heard of the brazen and the earthen pot.’

‘Do you call me pot? You are ungallant, Baron,’ laughed the Princess.

‘Before we are done with your glory, I shall have called you by many different titles,’ he replied.

The girl flushed with pleasure. ‘But Frédéric is still the Prince, *monsieur le flatteur,*’ she said. ‘You do not propose a revolution? — you of all men?’

‘Dear madam, when it is already made!’ he cried. ‘The Prince reigns indeed in the almanac; but my Princess reigns and rules.’ And he looked at her with a fond admiration that made the heart of Seraphina swell. Looking on her huge slave, she drank the intoxicating joys of power. Meanwhile he continued, with that sort of massive archness that so ill became him, ‘She has but one fault; there is but one danger in the great career that I foresee for her. May I name it? may I be so irreverent? It is in herself — her heart is soft.’

‘Her courage is faint, Baron,’ said the Princess. ‘Suppose we have judged ill, suppose we were defeated?’

‘Defeated, madam?’ returned the Baron, with a touch of ill-humour. ‘Is the dog defeated by the hare? Our troops are all cantoned along the frontier; in five hours the vanguard of five thousand bayonets shall be hammering on the gates of Brandenau; and in all Gerolstein there are not fifteen hundred men who can manœuvre. It is as simple as a sum. There can be no resistance.’

‘It is no great exploit,’ she said. ‘Is that what you call glory? It is like beating a child.’

‘The courage, madam, is diplomatic,’ he replied. ‘We take a grave step; we fix the eyes of Europe, for the first time, on Grünewald; and in the negotiations of the next three months, mark me, we stand or fall. It is there, madam, that I shall have to depend upon your counsels,’ he added, almost gloomily. ‘If I had not seen you at work, if I did not know the fertility of your mind, I own I should tremble for the consequence. But it is in this field that men must recognise their inability. All the great negotiators, when they have not been women, have had women at their elbows. Madame de Pompadour was ill served; she had not found her Gondremark; but what a mighty politician! Catherine de' Medici, too, what justice of sight, what readiness of means, what elasticity against defeat! But alas! madam, her Featherheads were her own children; and she had that one touch of vulgarity, that one trait of the good-wife, that she suffered family ties and affections to confine her liberty.'

These singular views of history, strictly *ad usum Seraphinæ,* did not weave their usual soothing spell over the Princess. It was plain that she had taken a momentary distaste to her own resolutions; for she continued to oppose her counsellor, looking upon him out of half-closed eyes and with the shadow of a sneer upon her lips. 'What boys men are!' she said; 'what lovers of big words! Courage, indeed! If you had to scour pans, Herr Von Gondremark, you would call it, I suppose, Domestic Courage?'

'I would, madam,' said the Baron stoutly, 'if I scoured them well. I would put a good name upon a virtue; you will not overdo it: they are not so enchanting in themselves.'

'Well, but let me see,' she said. 'I wish to understand your courage. Why we asked leave, like children! Our grannie in Berlin, our uncle in Vienna, the whole family, have patted us on the head and sent us forward. Courage? I wonder when I hear you!'

'My Princess is unlike herself,' returned the Baron. 'She has forgotten where the peril lies. True, we have received encouragement on every hand; but my Princess knows too well on what untenable conditions; and she knows besides how, in the publicity of the diet, these whispered conferences are forgotten and disowned. The danger is very real' — he raged inwardly at having to blow the very coal he had been quenching — 'none the less real in that it is not precisely military, but for that reason the easier to be faced. Had we to count upon your troops, although I share your Highness's expectations of the conduct of Alvenau, we cannot forget that he has not been proved in chief command. But where negotiation is concerned, the conduct lies with us; and with your help, I laugh at danger.'

'It may be so,' said Seraphina, sighing. 'It is elsewhere that I see danger. The people, these abominable people — suppose they should instantly rebel? What a figure we should make in the eyes of Europe to have undertaken an invasion while my own throne was tottering to its fall!'

'Nay, madam,' said Gondremark, smiling, 'here you are beneath yourself. What is it that feeds their discontent? What but the taxes? Once we have seized Gerolstein, the taxes are remitted, the sons return covered with renown, the houses are adorned with pillage, each tastes his little share of military glory, and behold us once again a happy family! "Ay," they will say, in each other's long ears, "the

Princess knew what she was about; she was in the right of it; she has a head upon her shoulders; and here we are, you see, better off than before." But why should I say all this? It is what my Princess pointed out to me herself; it was by these reasons that she converted me to this adventure.'

'I think, Herr von Gondremark,' said Seraphina, somewhat tartly, 'you often attribute your own sagacity to your Princess.'

For a second Gondremark staggered under the shrewdness of the attack; the next, he had perfectly recovered. 'Do I?' he said. 'It is very possible. I have observed a similar tendency in your Highness.'

It was so openly spoken, and appeared so just, that Seraphina breathed again. Her vanity had been alarmed, and the greatness of the relief improved her spirits. 'Well,' she said, 'all this is little to the purpose. We are keeping Frédéric without, and I am still ignorant of our line of battle. Come, co-admiral, let us consult. . . . How am I to receive him now? And what are we to do if he should appear at the council?'

'Now,' he answered. 'I shall leave him to my Princess for just now! I have seen her at work. Send him off to his theatricals! But in all gentleness,' he added. 'Would it, for instance, would it displease my sovereign to affect a headache?'

'Never!' said she. 'The woman who can manage, like the man who can fight, must never shrink from an encounter. The knight must not disgrace his weapons.'

'Then let me pray my *belle dame sans merci,*' he returned, 'to affect the only virtue that she lacks. Be pitiful to the poor young man; affect an interest in his hunting; be weary of politics; find in his society, as it were, a grateful repose from dry considerations. Does my Princess authorise the line of battle?'

'Well, that is a trifle,' answered Seraphina. 'The council — there is the point.'

'The council?' cried Gondremark. 'Permit me, madam.' And he rose and proceeded to flutter about the room, counterfeiting Otto both in voice and gesture not unhappily. 'What is there to-day, Herr von Gondremark? Ah, Herr Cancellarius, a new wig! You cannot deceive me; I know every wig in Grünewald; I have the sovereign's eye. What are these papers about? O, I see. O, certainly. Surely, surely. I wager none of you remarked that wig. By all means. I know nothing about that. Dear me, are there as many as all that? Well, you can sign them; you have the procuration. You see, Herr Cancellarius, I knew your wig. And so,' concluded Gondremark, resuming his own voice, 'our sovereign, by the particular grace of God, enlightens and supports his privy councillors.'

But when the Baron turned to Seraphina for approval, he found her frozen. ‘You are pleased to be witty, Herr von Gondremark,’ she said, ‘and have perhaps forgotten where you are. But these rehearsals are apt to be misleading. Your master, the Prince of Grünewald, is sometimes more exacting.’

Gondremark cursed her in his soul. Of all injured vanities, that of the reproved buffoon is the most savage; and when grave issues are involved, these petty stabs become unbearable. But Gondremark was a man of iron; he showed nothing; he did not even, like the common trickster, retreat because he had presumed, but held to his point bravely. ‘Madam,’ he said, ‘if, as you say, he prove exacting, we must take the bull by the horns.’

‘We shall see,’ she said, and she arranged her skirt like one about to rise. Temper, scorn, disgust, all the more acrid feelings, became her like jewels; and she now looked her best.

‘Pray God they quarrel,’ thought Gondremark. ‘The damned minx may fail me yet, unless they quarrel. It is time to let him in. Zz — fight, dogs!’ Consequent on these reflections, he bent a stiff knee and chivalrously kissed the Princess’s hand. ‘My Princess,’ he said, ‘must now dismiss her servant. I have much to arrange against the hour of council.’

‘Go,’ she said, and rose.

And as Gondremark tripped out of a private door, she touched a bell, and gave the order to admit the Prince.

CHAPTER VI — THE PRINCE DELIVERS A LECTURE ON MARRIAGE, WITH PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF DIVORCE

With what a world of excellent intentions Otto entered his wife's cabinet! how fatherly, how tender! how morally affecting were the words he had prepared! Nor was Seraphina unamiably inclined. Her usual fear of Otto as a marplot in her great designs was now swallowed up in a passing distrust of the designs themselves. For Gondremark, besides, she had conceived an angry horror. In her heart she did not like the Baron. Behind his impudent servility, behind the devotion which, with indelicate delicacy, he still forced on her attention, she divined the grossness of his nature. So a man may be proud of having tamed a bear, and yet sicken at his captive's odour. And above all, she had certain jealous intimations that the man was false and the deception double. True, she falsely trifled with his love; but he, perhaps, was only trifling with her vanity. The insolence of his late mimicry, and the odium of her own position as she sat and watched it, lay besides like a load upon her conscience. She met Otto almost with a sense of guilt, and yet she welcomed him as a deliverer from ugly things.

But the wheels of an interview are at the mercy of a thousand ruts; and even at Otto's entrance, the first jolt occurred. Gondremark, he saw, was gone; but there was the chair drawn close for consultation; and it pained him not only that this man had been received, but that he should depart with such an air of secrecy. Struggling with this twinge, it was somewhat sharply that he dismissed the attendant who had brought him in.

'You make yourself at home, *chez moi*,' she said, a little ruffled both by his tone of command and by the glance he had thrown upon the chair.

'Madam,' replied Otto, 'I am here so seldom that I have almost the rights of a stranger.'

'You choose your own associates, Frédéric,' she said.

'I am here to speak of it,' he returned. 'It is now four years since we were married; and these four years, Seraphina, have not perhaps been happy either for you or for me. I am well aware I was unsuitable to be your husband. I was not young, I had no ambition, I was a trifler; and you despised me, I dare not say unjustly. But to do justice on both sides, you must bear in mind how I have acted. When I found it amused you to play the part of Princess on this little stage, did I not immediately resign to you my box of toys, this Grünewald? And when

I found I was distasteful as a husband, could any husband have been less intrusive? You will tell me that I have no feelings, no preference, and thus no credit; that I go before the wind; that all this was in my character. And indeed, one thing is true, that it is easy, too easy, to leave things undone. But Seraphina, I begin to learn it is not always wise. If I were too old and too uncongenial for your husband, I should still have remembered that I was the Prince of that country to which you came, a visitor and a child. In that relation also there were duties, and these duties I have not performed.'

To claim the advantage of superior age is to give sure offence. 'Duty!' laughed Seraphina, 'and on your lips, Frédéric! You make me laugh. What fancy is this? Go, flirt with the maids and be a prince in Dresden china, as you look. Enjoy yourself, *mon enfant,* and leave duty and the state to us.'

The plural grated on the Prince. 'I have enjoyed myself too much,' he said, 'since enjoyment is the word. And yet there were much to say upon the other side. You must suppose me desperately fond of hunting. But indeed there were days when I found a great deal of interest in what it was courtesy to call my government. And I have always had some claim to taste; I could tell live happiness from dull routine; and between hunting, and the throne of Austria, and your society, my choice had never wavered, had the choice been mine. You were a girl, a bud, when you were given me — '

'Heavens!' she cried, 'is this to be a love-scene?'

'I am never ridiculous,' he said; 'it is my only merit; and you may be certain this shall be a scene of marriage *à la mode*. But when I remember the beginning, it is bare courtesy to speak in sorrow. Be just, madam: you would think me strangely uncivil to recall these days without the decency of a regret. Be yet a little juster, and own, if only in complaisance, that you yourself regret that past.'

'I have nothing to regret,' said the Princess. 'You surprise me. I thought you were so happy.'

'Happy and happy, there are so many hundred ways,' said Otto. 'A man may be happy in revolt; he may be happy in sleep; wine, change, and travel make him happy; virtue, they say, will do the like — I have not tried; and they say also that in old, quiet, and habitual marriages there is yet another happiness. Happy, yes; I am happy if you like; but I will tell you frankly, I was happier when I brought you home.'

'Well,' said the Princess, not without constraint, 'it seems you changed your mind.'

'Not I,' returned Otto, 'I never changed. Do you remember, Seraphina, on our way home, when you saw the roses in the lane, and I got out and plucked them? It was a narrow lane between great trees; the sunset at the end was all gold, and the rooks were flying overhead. There were nine, nine red roses; you gave me a kiss for each, and I told myself that every rose and every kiss should stand for a year of love. Well, in eighteen months there was an end. But do you fancy, Seraphina, that my heart has altered?'

'I am sure I cannot tell,' she said, like an automaton.

'It has not,' the Prince continued. 'There is nothing ridiculous, even from a husband, in a love that owns itself unhappy and that asks no more. I built on sand; pardon me, I do not breathe a reproach — I built, I suppose, upon my own infirmities; but I put my heart in the building, and it still lies among the ruins.'

'How very poetical!' she said, with a little choking laugh, unknown relentings, unfamiliar softnesses, moving within her. 'What would you be at?' she added, hardening her voice.

'I would be at this,' he answered; 'and hard it is to say. I would be at this: — Seraphina, I am your husband after all, and a poor fool that loves you. Understand,' he cried almost fiercely, 'I am no suppliant husband; what your love refuses I would scorn to receive from your pity. I do not ask, I would not take it. And for jealousy, what ground have I? A dog-in-the-manger jealousy is a thing the dogs may laugh at. But at least, in the world's eye, I am still your husband; and I ask you if you treat me fairly? I keep to myself, I leave you free, I have given you in everything your will. What do you in return? I find, Seraphina, that you have been too thoughtless. But between persons such as we are, in our conspicuous station, particular care and a particular courtesy are owing. Scandal is perhaps not easy to avoid; but it is hard to bear.'

'Scandal!' she cried, with a deep breath. 'Scandal! It is for this you have been driving!'

'I have tried to tell you how I feel,' he replied. 'I have told you that I love you — love you in vain — a bitter thing for a husband; I have laid myself open that I might speak without offence. And now that I have begun, I will go on and finish.'

'I demand it,' she said. 'What is this about?'

Otto flushed crimson. 'I have to say what I would fain not,' he answered. 'I counsel you to see less of Gondremark.'

'Of Gondremark? And why?' she asked.

'Your intimacy is the ground of scandal, madam,' said Otto, firmly enough — 'of a scandal that is agony to me, and would be crushing to your parents if they knew it.'

'You are the first to bring me word of it,' said she. 'I thank you.'

'You have perhaps cause,' he replied. 'Perhaps I am the only one among your friends — '

'O, leave my friends alone,' she interrupted. 'My friends are of a different stamp. You have come to me here and made a parade of sentiment. When have I last seen you? I have governed your kingdom for you in the meanwhile, and there I got no help. At last, when I am weary with a man's work, and you are weary of your playthings, you return to make me a scene of conjugal reproaches — the grocer and his wife! The positions are too much reversed; and you should understand, at least, that I cannot at the same time do your work of government and behave myself like a little girl. Scandal is the atmosphere in which we live, we princes; it is what a prince should know. You play an odious part. Do you believe this rumour?'

'Madam, should I be here?' said Otto.

'It is what I want to know!' she cried, the tempest of her scorn increasing. 'Suppose you did — I say, suppose you did believe it?'

'I should make it my business to suppose the contrary,' he answered.

'I thought so. O, you are made of baseness!' said she.

'Madam,' he cried, roused at last, 'enough of this. You wilfully misunderstand my attitude; you outwear my patience. In the name of your parents, in my own name, I summon you to be more circumspect.'

'Is this a request, *monsieur mon mari*?' she demanded.

'Madam, if I chose, I might command,' said Otto.

'You might, sir, as the law stands, make me prisoner,' returned Seraphina. 'Short of that you will gain nothing.'

'You will continue as before?' he asked.

'Precisely as before,' said she. 'As soon as this comedy is over, I shall request the Freiherr von Gondremark to visit me. Do you understand?' she added, rising. 'For my part, I have done.'

'I will then ask the favour of your hand, madam,' said Otto, palpitating in every pulse with anger. 'I have to request that you will visit in my society another part of my poor house. And reassure yourself — it will not take long — and it is the last obligation that you shall have the chance to lay me under.'

'The last?' she cried. 'Most joyfully?'

She offered her hand, and he took it; on each side with an elaborate affectation, each inwardly incandescent. He led her out by the private door, following where Gondremark had passed; they threaded a corridor or two, little frequented, looking on a court, until they came at last into the Prince's suite. The first room was an armoury, hung all about with the weapons of various countries, and looking forth on the front terrace.

'Have you brought me here to slay me?' she inquired.

'I have brought you, madam, only to pass on,' replied Otto.

Next they came to a library, where an old chamberlain sat half asleep. He rose and bowed before the princely couple, asking for orders.

‘You will attend us here,’ said Otto.

The next stage was a gallery of pictures, where Seraphina’s portrait hung conspicuous, dressed for the chase, red roses in her hair, as Otto, in the first months of marriage, had directed. He pointed to it without a word; she raised her eyebrows in silence; and they passed still forward into a matted corridor where four doors opened. One led to Otto’s bedroom; one was the private door to Seraphina’s. And here, for the first time, Otto left her hand, and stepping forward, shot the bolt.

‘It is long, madam,’ said he, ‘since it was bolted on the other side.’

‘One was effectual,’ returned the Princess. ‘Is this all?’

‘Shall I reconduct you?’ he asking, bowing.

‘I should prefer,’ she asked, in ringing tones, ‘the conduct of the Freiherr von Gondremark.’

Otto summoned the chamberlain. ‘If the Freiherr von Gondremark is in the palace,’ he said, ‘bid him attend the Princess here.’ And when the official had departed, ‘Can I do more to serve you, madam?’ the Prince asked.

‘Thank you, no. I have been much amused,’ she answered.

‘I have now,’ continued Otto, ‘given you your liberty complete. This has been for you a miserable marriage.’

‘Miserable!’ said she.

‘It has been made light to you; it shall be lighter still,’ continued the Prince. ‘But one thing, madam, you must still continue to bear — my father’s name, which is now yours. I leave it in your hands. Let me see you, since you will have no advice of mine, apply the more attention of your own to bear it worthily.’

‘Herr von Gondremark is long in coming,’ she remarked.

‘O Seraphina, Seraphina!’ he cried. And that was the end of their interview.

She tripped to a window and looked out; and a little after, the chamberlain announced the Freiherr von Gondremark, who entered with something of a wild eye and changed complexion, confounded, as he was, at this unusual summons. The Princess faced round from the window with a pearly smile; nothing but her heightened colour spoke of discomposure.

Otto was pale, but he was otherwise master of himself.

‘Herr von Gondremark,’ said he, ‘oblige me so far: reconduct the Princess to her own apartment.’

The Baron, still all at sea, offered his hand, which was smilingly accepted, and the pair sailed forth through the picture-gallery.

As soon as they were gone, and Otto knew the length and breadth of his miscarriage, and how he had done the contrary of all that he intended, he stood stupefied. A fiasco so complete and sweeping was laughable, even to himself; and he laughed aloud in his wrath. Upon this mood there followed the sharpest violence of remorse; and to that again, as he recalled his provocation, anger succeeded afresh. So he was tossed in spirit; now bewailing his inconsequence and lack of temper, now flaming up in white-hot indignation and a noble pity for himself.

He paced his apartment like a leopard. There was danger in Otto, for a flash. Like a pistol, he could kill at one moment, and the next he might he kicked aside. But just then, as he walked the long floors in his alternate humours, tearing his handkerchief between his hands, he was strung to his top note, every nerve attent. The pistol, you might say, was charged. And when jealousy from time to time fetched him a lash across the tenderest of his feeling, and sent a string of her fire-pictures glancing before his mind's eye, the contraction of his face was even dangerous. He disregarded jealousy's inventions, yet they stung. In this height of anger, he still preserved his faith in Seraphina's innocence; but the thought of her possible misconduct was the bitterest ingredient in his pot of sorrow.

There came a knock at the door, and the chamberlain brought him a note. He took it and ground it in his hand, continuing his march, continuing his bewildered thoughts; and some minutes had gone by before the circumstance came clearly to his mind. Then he paused and opened it. It was a pencil scratch from Gotthold, thus conceived:

'The council is privately summoned at once.

G. v. H.'

If the council was thus called before the hour, and that privately, it was plain they feared his interference. Feared: here was a sweet thought. Gotthold, too — Gotthold, who had always used and regarded him as a mere peasant lad, had now been at the pains to warn him; Gotthold looked for something at his hands. Well, none should be disappointed; the Prince, too long beshadowed by the uxorious lover, should now return and shine. He summoned his valet, repaired the disorder of his appearance with elaborate care; and then, curled and scented and adorned, Prince Charming in every line, but with a twitching nostril, he set forth unattended for the council.

CHAPTER VII — THE PRINCE DISSOLVES THE COUNCIL

It was as Gotthold wrote. The liberation of Sir John, Greisengesang's uneasy narrative, last of all, the scene between Seraphina and the Prince, had decided the conspirators to take a step of bold timidity. There had been a period of bustle, liveried messengers speeding here and there with notes; and at half-past ten in the morning, about an hour before its usual hour, the council of Grünewald sat around the board.

It was not a large body. At the instance of Gondremark, it had undergone a strict purgation, and was now composed exclusively of tools. Three secretaries sat at a side-table. Seraphina took the head; on her right was the Baron, on her left Greisengesang; below these Grafinski the treasurer, Count Eisenthal, a couple of non-combatants, and, to the surprise of all, Gotthold. He had been named a privy councillor by Otto, merely that he might profit by the salary; and as he was never known to attend a meeting, it had occurred to nobody to cancel his appointment. His present appearance was the more ominous, coming when it did. Gondremark scowled upon him; and the non-combatant on his right, intercepting this black look, edged away from one who was so clearly out of favour.

'The hour presses, your Highness,' said the Baron; 'may we proceed to business?'

'At once,' replied Seraphina.

'Your Highness will pardon me,' said Gotthold; 'but you are still, perhaps, unacquainted with the fact that Prince Otto has returned.'

'The Prince will not attend the council,' replied Seraphina, with a momentary blush. 'The despatches, Herr Cancellarius? There is one for Gerolstein?'

A secretary brought a paper.

'Here, madam,' said Greisengesang. 'Shall I read it?'

'We are all familiar with its terms,' replied Gondremark. 'Your Highness approves?'

'Unhesitatingly,' said Seraphina.

'It may then be held as read,' concluded the Baron. 'Will your Highness sign?'

The Princess did so; Gondremark, Eisenthal, and one of the non-combatants followed suit; and the paper was then passed across the table to the librarian. He proceeded leisurely to read.

'We have no time to spare, Herr Doctor,' cried the Baron brutally. 'If you do not choose to sign on the authority of your sovereign, pass it on. Or you may leave the table,’ he added, his temper ripping out.

‘I decline your invitation, Herr von Gondremark; and my sovereign, as I continue to observe with regret, is still absent from the board,’ replied the Doctor calmly; and he resumed the perusal of the paper, the rest chafing and exchanging glances. ‘Madame and gentlemen,’ he said, at last, ‘what I hold in my hand is simply a declaration of war.’

‘Simply,’ said Seraphina, flashing defiance.

‘The sovereign of this country is under the same roof with us,’ continued Gotthold, ‘and I insist he shall be summoned. It is needless to adduce my reasons; you are all ashamed at heart of this projected treachery.’

The council waved like a sea. There were various outcries.

‘You insult the Princess,’ thundered Gondremark.

‘I maintain my protest,’ replied Gotthold.

At the height of this confusion the door was thrown open; an usher announced, ‘Gentlemen, the Prince!’ and Otto, with his most excellent bearing, entered the apartment. It was like oil upon the troubled waters; every one settled instantly into his place, and Griesengesang, to give himself a countenance, became absorbed in the arrangement of his papers; but in their eagerness to dissemble, one and all neglected to rise.

‘Gentlemen,’ said the Prince, pausing.

They all got to their feet in a moment; and this reproof still further demoralised the weaker brethren.

The Prince moved slowly towards the lower end of the table; then he paused again, and, fixing his eye on Greisengesang, ‘How comes it, Herr Cancellarius,’ he asked, ‘that I have received no notice of the change of hour?’

‘Your Highness,’ replied the Chancellor, ‘her Highness the Princess . . . ‘ and there paused.

‘I understood,’ said Seraphina, taking him up, ‘that you did not purpose to be present.’

Their eyes met for a second, and Seraphina’s fell; but her anger only burned the brighter for that private shame.

‘And now, gentlemen,’ said Otto, taking his chair, ‘I pray you to be seated. I have been absent: there are doubtless some arrears; but ere we proceed to business, Herr Grafinski, you will direct four thousand crowns to be sent to me at once. Make a note, if you please,’ he added, as the treasurer still stared in wonder.

‘Four thousand crowns?’ asked Seraphina. ‘Pray, for what?’

‘Madam,’ returned Otto, smiling, ‘for my own purposes.’

Gondremark spurred up Grafinski underneath the table.

‘If your Highness will indicate the destination . . . ‘ began the puppet.

‘You are not here, sir, to interrogate your Prince,’ said Otto.

Grafinski looked for help to his commander; and Gondremark came to his aid, in suave and measured tones.

‘Your Highness may reasonably be surprised,’ he said; ‘and Herr Grafinski, although I am convinced he is clear of the intention of offending, would have perhaps done better to begin with an explanation. The resources of the state are at the present moment entirely swallowed up, or, as we hope to prove, wisely invested. In a month from now, I do not question we shall be able to meet any command your Highness may lay upon us; but at this hour I fear that, even in so small a matter, he must prepare himself for disappointment. Our zeal is no less, although our power may be inadequate.’

‘How much, Herr Grafinski, have we in the treasury?’ asked Otto.

‘Your Highness,’ protested the treasurer, ‘we have immediate need of every crown.’

‘I think, sir, you evade me,’ flashed the Prince; and then turning to the side-table, ‘Mr. Secretary,’ he added, ‘bring me, if you please, the treasury docket.’

Herr Grafinski became deadly pale; the Chancellor, expecting his own turn, was probably engaged in prayer; Gondremark was watching like a ponderous cat. Gotthold, on his part, looked on with wonder at his cousin; he was certainly showing spirit, but what, in such a time of gravity, was all this talk of money? and why should he waste his strength upon a personal issue?

‘I find,’ said Otto, with his finger on the docket, ‘that we have 20,000 crowns in case.’

‘That is exact, your Highness,’ replied the Baron. ‘But our liabilities, all of which are happily not liquid, amount to a far larger sum; and at the present point of time it would be morally impossible to divert a single florin. Essentially, the case is empty. We have, already presented, a large note for material of war.’

‘Material of war?’ exclaimed Otto, with an excellent assumption of surprise. ‘But if my memory serves me right, we settled these accounts in January.’

‘There have been further orders,’ the Baron explained. ‘A new park of artillery has been completed; five hundred stand of arms, seven hundred baggage mules — the details are in a special memorandum. — Mr. Secretary Holtz, the memorandum, if you please.’

‘One would think, gentlemen, that we were going to war,’ said Otto.

‘We are,’ said Seraphina.

‘War!’ cried the Prince, ‘and, gentlemen, with whom? The peace of Grünewald has endured for centuries. What aggression, what insult, have we suffered?’

‘Here, your Highness,’ said Gotthold, ‘is the ultimatum. It was in the very article of signature, when your Highness so opportunely entered.’

Otto laid the paper before him; as he read, his fingers played tattoo upon the table. ‘Was it proposed,’ he inquired, ‘to send this paper forth without a knowledge of my pleasure?’

One of the non-combatants, eager to trim, volunteered an answer. ‘The Herr Doctor von Hohenstockwitz had just entered his dissent,’ he added.

‘Give me the rest of this correspondence,’ said the Prince. It was handed to him, and he read it patiently from end to end, while the councillors sat foolishly enough looking before them on the table.

The secretaries, in the background, were exchanging glances of delight; a row at the council was for them a rare and welcome feature.

‘Gentlemen,’ said Otto, when he had finished, ‘I have read with pain. This claim upon Obermünsterol is palpably unjust; it has not a tincture, not a show, of justice. There is not in all this ground enough for after-dinner talk, and you propose to force it as a *casus belli.*’

‘Certainly, your Highness,’ returned Gondremark, too wise to defend the indefensible, ‘the claim on Obermünsterol is simply a pretext.’

‘It is well,’ said the Prince. ‘Herr Cancellarius, take your pen. “The council,” he began to dictate — ’I withhold all notice of my intervention,’ he said, in parenthesis, and addressing himself more directly to his wife; ‘and I say nothing of the strange suppression by which this business has been smuggled past my knowledge. I am content to be in time — ”The council,”‘ he resumed, ‘“on a further examination of the facts, and enlightened by the note in the last despatch from Gerolstein, have the pleasure to announce that they are entirely at one, both as to fact and sentiment, with the Grand-Ducal Court of Gerolstein.” You have it? Upon these lines, sir, you will draw up the despatch.’

‘If your Highness will allow me,’ said the Baron, ‘your Highness is so imperfectly acquainted with the internal history of this correspondence, that any interference will be merely hurtful. Such a paper as your Highness proposes would be to stultify the whole previous policy of Grünewald.’

‘The policy of Grünewald!’ cried the Prince. ‘One would suppose you had no sense of humour! Would you fish in a coffee cup?’

‘With deference, your Highness,’ returned the Baron, ‘even in a coffee cup there may be poison. The purpose of this war is not simply territorial enlargement; still less is it a war of glory; for, as your Highness indicates, the state of Grünewald is too small to be ambitious. But the body politic is seriously diseased; republicanism, socialism, many disintegrating ideas are abroad; circle within circle, a really formidable organisation has grown up about your Highness's throne.'

'I have heard of it, Herr von Gondremark,' put in the Prince; 'but I have reason to be aware that yours is the more authoritative information.'

'I am honoured by this expression of my Prince's confidence' returned Gondremark, unabashed. 'It is, therefore, with a single eye to these disorders that our present external policy has been shaped. Something was required to divert public attention, to employ the idle, to popularise your Highness's rule, and, if it were possible, to enable him to reduce the taxes at a blow and to a notable amount. The proposed expedition — for it cannot without hyperbole be called a war — seemed to the council to combine the various characters required; a marked improvement in the public sentiment has followed even upon our preparations; and I cannot doubt that when success shall follow, the effect will surpass even our boldest hopes.'

'You are very adroit, Herr von Gondremark,' said Otto. 'You fill me with admiration. I had not heretofore done justice to your qualities.'

Seraphina looked up with joy, supposing Otto conquered; but Gondremark still waited, armed at every point; he knew how very stubborn is the revolt of a weak character.

'And the territorial army scheme, to which I was persuaded to consent — was it secretly directed to the same end?' the Prince asked.

'I still believe the effect to have been good,' replied the Baron; 'discipline and mounting guard are excellent sedatives. But I will avow to your Highness, I was unaware, at the date of that decree, of the magnitude of the revolutionary movement; nor did any of us, I think, imagine that such a territorial army was a part of the republican proposals.'

'It was?' asked Otto. 'Strange! Upon what fancied grounds?'

'The grounds were indeed fanciful,' returned the Baron. 'It was conceived among the leaders that a territorial army, drawn from and returning to the people, would, in the event of any popular uprising, prove lukewarm or unfaithful to the throne.'

'I see,' said the Prince. 'I begin to understand.'

'His Highness begins to understand?' repeated Gondremark, with the sweetest politeness. 'May I beg of him to complete the phrase?'

'The history of the revolution,' replied Otto dryly. 'And now,' he added, 'what do you conclude?'

'I conclude, your Highness, with a simple reflection,' said the Baron, accepting the stab without a quiver, 'the war is popular; were the rumour contradicted to-morrow, a considerable disappointment would be felt in many classes; and in the present tension of spirits, the most lukewarm sentiment may be enough to precipitate events. There lies the danger. The revolution hangs imminent; we sit, at this council board, below the sword of Damocles.'

'We must then lay our heads together,' said the Prince, 'and devise some honourable means of safety.'

Up to this moment, since the first note of opposition fell from the librarian, Seraphina had uttered about twenty words. With a somewhat heightened colour, her eyes generally lowered, her foot sometimes nervously tapping on the floor, she had kept her own counsel and commanded her anger like a hero. But at this stage of the engagement she lost control of her impatience.

'Means!' she cried. 'They have been found and prepared before you knew the need for them. Sign the despatch, and let us be done with this delay.'

'Madam, I said "honourable,"' returned Otto, bowing. 'This war is, in my eyes, and by Herr von Gondremark's account, an inadmissible expedient. If we have misgoverned here in Grünewald, are the people of Gerolstein to bleed and pay for our mis-doings? Never, madam; not while I live. But I attach so much importance to all that I have heard to-day for the first time — and why only to-day, I do not even stop to ask — that I am eager to find some plan that I can follow with credit to myself.'

'And should you fail?' she asked.

'Should I fail, I will then meet the blow half-way,' replied the Prince. 'On the first open discontent, I shall convoke the States, and, when it pleases them to bid me, abdicate.'

Seraphina laughed angrily. 'This is the man for whom we have been labouring!' she cried. 'We tell him of change; he will devise the means, he says; and his device is abdication? Sir, have you no shame to come here at the eleventh hour among those who have borne the heat and burthen of the day? Do you not wonder at yourself? I, sir, was here in my place, striving to uphold your dignity alone. I took counsel with the wisest I could find, while you were eating and hunting. I have laid my plans with foresight; they were ripe for action; and then — 'she choked — 'then you return — for a forenoon — to ruin all! To-morrow, you will be once more about your pleasures; you will give us leave once more to think and work for you; and again you will come back, and again you will thwart what you had not the industry or knowledge to conceive. O! it is intolerable. Be modest, sir. Do not presume upon the rank you cannot worthily uphold. I would not issue my commands with so much gusto — it is from no merit in yourself they are obeyed. What are you? What have you to do in this grave council? Go,' she cried, 'go among your equals? The very people in the streets mock at you for a prince.'

At this surprising outburst the whole council sat aghast.

‘Madam,’ said the Baron, alarmed out of his caution, ‘command yourself.’

‘Address yourself to me, sir!’ cried the Prince. ‘I will not bear these whisperings!’

Seraphina burst into tears.

‘Sir,’ cried the Baron, rising, ‘this lady — ’

‘Herr von Gondremark,’ said the Prince, ‘one more observation, and I place you under arrest.’

‘Your Highness is the master,’ replied Gondremark, bowing.

‘Bear it in mind more constantly,’ said Otto. ‘Herr Cancellarius, bring all the papers to my cabinet. Gentlemen, the council is dissolved.’

And he bowed and left the apartment, followed by Greisengesang and the secretaries, just at the moment when the Princess’s ladies, summoned in all haste, entered by another door to help her forth.

CHAPTER VIII — THE PARTY OF WAR TAKES ACTION

Half an hour after, Gondremark was once more closeted with Seraphina.

‘Where is he now?’ she asked, on his arrival.

‘Madam, he is with the Chancellor,’ replied the Baron. ‘Wonder of wonders, he is at work!’

‘Ah,’ she said, ‘he was born to torture me! O what a fall, what a humiliation! Such a scheme to wreck upon so small a trifle! But now all is lost.’

‘Madam,’ said Gondremark, ‘nothing is lost. Something, on the other hand, is found. You have found your senses; you see him as he is — see him as you see everything where your too-good heart is not in question — with the judicial, with the statesman’s eye. So long as he had a right to interfere, the empire that may be was still distant. I have not entered on this course without the plain foresight of its dangers; and even for this I was prepared. But, madam, I knew two things: I knew that you were born to command, that I was born to serve; I knew that by a rare conjuncture, the hand had found the tool; and from the first I was confident, as I am confident to-day, that no hereditary trifler has the power to shatter that alliance.’

‘I, born to command!’ she said. ‘Do you forget my tears?’

‘Madam, they were the tears of Alexander,’ cried the Baron. ‘They touched, they thrilled me; I, forgot myself a moment — even I! But do you suppose that I had not remarked, that I had not admired, your previous bearing? your great self-command? Ay, that was princely!’ He paused. ‘It was a thing to see. I drank confidence! I tried to imitate your calm. And I was well inspired; in my heart, I think that I was well inspired; that any man, within the reach of argument, had been convinced! But it was not to be; nor, madam, do I regret the failure. Let us be open; let me disclose my heart. I have loved two things, not unworthily: Grünewald and my sovereign!’ Here he kissed her hand. ‘Either I must resign my ministry, leave the land of my adoption and the queen whom I had chosen to obey — or — ’ He paused again.

‘Alas, Herr von Gondremark, there is no “or,”‘ said Seraphina.

‘Nay, madam, give me time,’ he replied. ‘When first I saw you, you were still young; not every man would have remarked your powers; but I had not been twice honoured by your conversation ere I had found my mistress. I have, madam, I believe, some genius; and I have much ambition. But the genius is of the serving kind; and to offer a career to my ambition, I had to find one born to rule. This is the base and essence of our union; each had need of the other; each recognised, master and servant, lever and fulcrum, the complement of his endowment. Marriages, they say, are made in heaven: how much more these pure, laborious, intellectual fellowships, born to found empires! Nor is this all. We found each other ripe, filled with great ideas that took shape and clarified with every word. We grew together — ay, madam, in mind we grew together like twin children. All of my life until we met was petty and groping; was it not — I will flatter myself openly — it *was* the same with you! Not till then had you those eagle surveys, that wide and hopeful sweep of intuition! Thus we had formed ourselves, and we were ready.'

'It is true,' she cried. 'I feel it. Yours is the genius; your generosity confounds your insight; all I could offer you was the position, was this throne, to be a fulcrum. But I offered it without reserve; I entered at least warmly into all your thoughts; you were sure of me — sure of my support — certain of justice. Tell me, tell me again, that I have helped you.'

'Nay, madam,' he said, 'you made me. In everything you were my inspiration. And as we prepared our policy, weighing every step, how often have I had to admire your perspicacity, your man-like diligence and fortitude! You know that these are not the words of flattery; your conscience echoes them; have you spared a day? have you indulged yourself in any pleasure? Young and beautiful, you have lived a life of high intellectual effort, of irksome intellectual patience with details. Well, you have your reward: with the fall of Brandenau, the throne of your Empire is founded.'

'What thought have you in your mind?' she asked. 'Is not all ruined?'

'Nay, my Princess, the same thought is in both our minds,' he said.

'Herr von Gondremark,' she replied, 'by all that I hold sacred, I have none; I do not think at all; I am crushed.'

'You are looking at the passionate side of a rich nature, misunderstood and recently insulted,' said the Baron. 'Look into your intellect, and tell me.'

'I find nothing, nothing but tumult,' she replied.

'You find one word branded, madam,' returned the Baron: '"Abdication!"'

'O!' she cried. 'The coward! He leaves me to bear all, and in the hour of trial he stabs me from behind. There is nothing in him, not respect, not love, not courage — his wife, his dignity, his throne, the honour of his father, he forgets them all!'

'Yes,' pursued the Baron, 'the word Abdication. I perceive a glimmering there.'

‘I read your fancy,’ she returned. ‘It is mere madness, midsummer madness. Baron, I am more unpopular than he. You know it. They can excuse, they can love, his weakness; but me, they hate.’

‘Such is the gratitude of peoples,’ said the Baron. ‘But we trifle. Here, madam, are my plain thoughts. The man who in the hour of danger speaks of abdication is, for me, a venomous animal. I speak with the bluntness of gravity, madam; this is no hour for mincing. The coward, in a station of authority, is more dangerous than fire. We dwell on a volcano; if this man can have his way, Grünewald before a week will have been deluged with innocent blood. You know the truth of what I say; we have looked unblenching into this ever-possible catastrophe. To him it is nothing: he will abdicate! Abdicate, just God! and this unhappy country committed to his charge, and the lives of men and the honour of women . . .’ His voice appeared to fail him; in an instant he had conquered his emotion and resumed: ‘But you, madam, conceive more worthily of your responsibilities. I am with you in the thought; and in the face of the horrors that I see impending, I say, and your heart repeats it — we have gone too far to pause. Honour, duty, ay, and the care of our own lives, demand we should proceed.’

She was looking at him, her brow thoughtfully knitted. ‘I feel it,’ she said. ‘But how? He has the power.’

‘The power, madam? The power is in the army,’ he replied; and then hastily, ere she could intervene, ‘we have to save ourselves,’ he went on; ‘I have to save my Princess, she has to save her minister; we have both of us to save this infatuated youth from his own madness. He in the outbreak would be the earliest victim; I see him,’ he cried, ‘torn in pieces; and Grünewald, unhappy Grünewald! Nay, madam, you who have the power must use it; it lies hard upon your conscience.’

‘Show me how!’ she cried. ‘Suppose I were to place him under some constraint, the revolution would break upon us instantly.’

The Baron feigned defeat. ‘It is true,’ he said. ‘You see more clearly than I do. Yet there should, there must be, some way.’ And he waited for his chance.

‘No,’ she said; ‘I told you from the first there is no remedy. Our hopes are lost: lost by one miserable trifler, ignorant, fretful, fitful — who will have disappeared to-morrow, who knows? to his boorish pleasures!’

Any peg would do for Gondremark. ‘The thing!’ he cried, striking his brow. ‘Fool, not to have thought of it! Madam, without perhaps knowing it, you have solved our problem.’

‘What do you mean? Speak!’ she said.

He appeared to collect himself; and then, with a smile, ‘The Prince,’ he said, ‘must go once more a-hunting.’

‘Ay, if he would!’ cried she, ‘and stay there!’

‘And stay there,’ echoed the Baron. It was so significantly said, that her face changed; and the schemer, fearful of the sinister ambiguity of his expressions, hastened to explain. ‘This time he shall go hunting in a carriage, with a good escort of our foreign lancers. His destination shall be the Felsenburg; it is healthy, the rock is high, the windows are small and barred; it might have been built on purpose. We shall intrust the captaincy to the Scotsman Gordon; he at least will have no scruple. Who will miss the sovereign? He is gone hunting; he came home on Tuesday, on Thursday he returned; all is usual in that. Meanwhile the war proceeds; our Prince will soon weary of his solitude; and about the time of our triumph, or, if he prove very obstinate, a little later, he shall be released upon a proper understanding, and I see him once more directing his theatricals.’

Seraphina sat gloomy, plunged in thought. ‘Yes,’ she said suddenly, ‘and the despatch? He is now writing it.’

‘It cannot pass the council before Friday,’ replied Gondremark; ‘and as for any private note, the messengers are all at my disposal. They are picked men, madam. I am a person of precaution.’

‘It would appear so,’ she said, with a flash of her occasional repugnance to the man; and then after a pause, ‘Herr von Gondremark,’ she added, ‘I recoil from this extremity.’

‘I share your Highness’s repugnance,’ answered he. ‘But what would you have? We are defenceless, else.’

‘I see it, but this is sudden. It is a public crime,’ she said, nodding at him with a sort of horror.

‘Look but a little deeper,’ he returned, ‘and whose is the crime?’

‘His!’ she cried. ‘His, before God! And I hold him liable. But still — ’

‘It is not as if he would be harmed,’ submitted Gondremark.

‘I know it,’ she replied, but it was still unheartily.

And then, as brave men are entitled, by prescriptive right as old as the world’s history, to the alliance and the active help of Fortune, the punctual goddess stepped down from the machine. One of the Princess’s ladies begged to enter; a man, it appeared, had brought a line for the Freiherr von Gondremark. It proved to be a pencil billet, which the crafty Greisengesang had found the means to scribble and despatch under the very guns of Otto; and the daring of the act bore testimony to the terror of the actor. For Greisengesang had but one influential motive: fear. The note ran thus: ‘At the first council, procuration to be withdrawn. — Corn. Greis.’

So, after three years of exercise, the right of signature was to be stript from Seraphina. It was more than an insult; it was a public disgrace; and she did not pause to consider how she had earned it, but morally bounded under the attack as bounds the wounded tiger.

‘Enough,’ she said; ‘I will sign the order. When shall he leave?’

‘It will take me twelve hours to collect my men, and it had best be done at night. To-morrow midnight, if you please?’ answered the Baron.

‘Excellent,’ she said. ‘My door is always open to you, Baron. As soon as the order is prepared, bring it me to sign.’

‘Madam,’ he said, ‘alone of all of us you do not risk your head in this adventure. For that reason, and to prevent all hesitation, I venture to propose the order should be in your hand throughout.’

‘You are right,’ she replied.

He laid a form before her, and she wrote the order in a clear hand, and re-read it. Suddenly a cruel smile came on her face. ‘I had forgotten his puppet,’ said she. ‘They will keep each other company.’ And she interlined and initiated the condemnation of Doctor Gotthold.

‘Your Highness has more memory than your servant,’ said the Baron; and then he, in his turn, carefully perused the fateful paper. ‘Good!’ said he.

‘You will appear in the drawing-room, Baron?’ she asked.

‘I thought it better,’ said he, ‘to avoid the possibility of a public affront. Anything that shook my credit might hamper us in the immediate future.’

‘You are right,’ she said; and she held out her hand as to an old friend and equal.

CHAPTER IX — THE PRICE OF THE RIVER FARM; IN WHICH VAINGLORY GOES BEFORE A FALL

The pistol had been practically fired. Under ordinary circumstances the scene at the council table would have entirely exhausted Otto's store both of energy and anger; he would have begun to examine and condemn his conduct, have remembered all that was true, forgotten all that was unjust in Seraphina's onslaught; and by half an hour after would have fallen into that state of mind in which a Catholic flees to the confessional and a sot takes refuge with the bottle. Two matters of detail preserved his spirits. For, first, he had still an infinity of business to transact; and to transact business, for a man of Otto's neglectful and procrastinating habits, is the best anodyne for conscience. All afternoon he was hard at it with the Chancellor, reading, dictating, signing, and despatching papers; and this kept him in a glow of self-approval. But, secondly, his vanity was still alarmed; he had failed to get the money; to-morrow before noon he would have to disappoint old Killian; and in the eyes of that family which counted him so little, and to which he had sought to play the part of the heroic comforter, he must sink lower than at first. To a man of Otto's temper, this was death. He could not accept the situation. And even as he worked, and worked wisely and well, over the hated details of his principality, he was secretly maturing a plan by which to turn the situation. It was a scheme as pleasing to the man as it was dishonourable in the prince; in which his frivolous nature found and took vengeance for the gravity and burthen of the afternoon. He chuckled as he thought of it: and Greisengesang heard him with wonder, and attributed his lively spirits to the skirmish of the morning.

Led by this idea, the antique courtier ventured to compliment his sovereign on his bearing. It reminded him, he said, of Otto's father.

'What?' asked the Prince, whose thoughts were miles away.

'Your Highness's authority at the board,' explained the flatterer.

'O, that! O yes,' returned Otto; but for all his carelessness, his vanity was delicately tickled, and his mind returned and dwelt approvingly over the details of his victory. 'I quelled them all,' he thought.

When the more pressing matters had been dismissed, it was already late, and Otto kept the Chancellor to dinner, and was entertained with a leash of ancient histories and modern compliments. The Chancellor's career had been based, from the first off-put, on entire subserviency; he had crawled into honours and employments; and his mind was prostitute. The instinct of the creature served him well with Otto. First, he let fall a sneering word or two upon the female intellect; thence he proceeded to a closer engagement; and before the third course he was artfully dissecting Seraphina's character to her approving husband. Of course no names were used; and of course the identity of that abstract or ideal man, with whom she was currently contrasted, remained an open secret. But this stiff old gentleman had a wonderful instinct for evil, thus to wind his way into man's citadel; thus to harp by the hour on the virtues of his hearer and not once alarm his self-respect. Otto was all roseate, in and out, with flattery and Tokay and an approving conscience. He saw himself in the most attractive colours. If even Greisengesang, he thought, could thus espy the loose stitches in Seraphina's character, and thus disloyally impart them to the opposite camp, he, the discarded husband — the dispossessed Prince — could scarce have erred on the side of severity.

In this excellent frame he bade adieu to the old gentleman, whose voice had proved so musical, and set forth for the drawing-room. Already on the stair, he was seized with some compunction; but when he entered the great gallery and beheld his wife, the Chancellor's abstract flatteries fell from him like rain, and he re-awoke to the poetic facts of life. She stood a good way off below a shining lustre, her back turned. The bend of her waist overcame him with physical weakness. This was the girl-wife who had lain in his arms and whom he had sworn to cherish; there was she, who was better than success.

It was Seraphina who restored him from the blow. She swam forward and smiled upon her husband with a sweetness that was insultingly artificial. 'Frédéric,' she lisped, 'you are late.' It was a scene of high comedy, such as is proper to unhappy marriages; and her *aplomb* disgusted him.

There was no etiquette at these small drawing-rooms. People came and went at pleasure. The window embrasures became the roost of happy couples; at the great chimney the talkers mostly congregated, each full-charged with scandal; and down at the farther end the gamblers gambled. It was towards this point that Otto moved, not ostentatiously, but with a gentle insistence, and scattering attentions as he went. Once abreast of the card-table, he placed himself opposite to Madame von Rosen, and, as soon as he had caught her eye, withdrew to the embrasure of a window. There she had speedily joined him.

'You did well to call me,' she said, a little wildly. 'These cards will be my ruin.'

'Leave them,' said Otto.

'I!' she cried, and laughed; 'they are my destiny. My only chance was to die of a consumption; now I must die in a garret.'

'You are bitter to-night,' said Otto.

'I have been losing,' she replied. 'You do not know what greed is.'

'I have come, then, in an evil hour,' said he.

'Ah, you wish a favour!' she cried, brightening beautifully.

'Madam,' said he, 'I am about to found my party, and I come to you for a recruit.'

'Done,' said the Countess. 'I am a man again.'

'I may be wrong,' continued Otto, 'but I believe upon my heart you wish me no ill.'

'I wish you so well,' she said, 'that I dare not tell it you.'

'Then if I ask my favour?' quoth the Prince.

'Ask it, *mon Prince*,' she answered. 'Whatever it is, it is granted.'

'I wish you,' he returned, 'this very night to make the farmer of our talk.'

'Heaven knows your meaning!' she exclaimed. 'I know not, neither care; there are no bounds to my desire to please you. Call him made.'

'I will put it in another way,' returned Otto. 'Did you ever steal?'

'Often!' cried the Countess. 'I have broken all the ten commandments; and if there were more to-morrow, I should not sleep till I had broken these.'

'This is a case of burglary: to say the truth, I thought it would amuse you,' said the Prince.

'I have no practical experience,' she replied, 'but O! the good-will! I have broken a work-box in my time, and several hearts, my own included. Never a house! But it cannot be difficult; sins are so unromantically easy! What are we to break?'

'Madam, we are to break the treasury,' said Otto and he sketched to her briefly, wittily, with here and there a touch of pathos, the story of his visit to the farm, of his promise to buy it, and of the refusal with which his demand for money had been met that morning at the council; concluding with a few practical words as to the treasury windows, and the helps and hindrances of the proposed exploit.

'They refused you the money,' she said when he had done. 'And you accepted the refusal? Well!'

'They gave their reasons,' replied Otto, colouring. 'They were not such as I could combat; and I am driven to dilapidate the funds of my own country by a theft. It is not dignified; but it is fun.'

'Fun,' she said; 'yes.' And then she remained silently plunged in thought for an appreciable time. 'How much do you require?' she asked at length.

'Three thousand crowns will do,' he answered, 'for I have still some money of my own.'

'Excellent,' she said, regaining her levity. 'I am your true accomplice. And where are we to meet?’

‘You know the Flying Mercury,’ he answered, ‘in the Park? Three pathways intersect; there they have made a seat and raised the statue. The spot is handy and the deity congenial.’

‘Child,’ she said, and tapped him with her fan. ‘But do you know, my Prince, you are an egoist — your handy trysting-place is miles from me. You must give me ample time; I cannot, I think, possibly be there before two. But as the bell beats two, your helper shall arrive: welcome, I trust. Stay — do you bring any one?’ she added. ‘O, it is not for a chaperon — I am not a prude!’

‘I shall bring a groom of mine,’ said Otto. ‘I caught him stealing corn.’

‘His name?’ she asked.

‘I profess I know not. I am not yet intimate with my corn-stealer,’ returned the Prince. ‘It was in a professional capacity — ’

‘Like me! Flatterer!’ she cried. ‘But oblige me in one thing. Let me find you waiting at the seat — yes, you shall await me; for on this expedition it shall be no longer Prince and Countess, it shall be the lady and the squire — and your friend the thief shall be no nearer than the fountain. Do you promise?’

‘Madam, in everything you are to command; you shall be captain, I am but supercargo,’ answered Otto.

‘Well, Heaven bring all safe to port!’ she said. ‘It is not Friday!’

Something in her manner had puzzled Otto, had possibly touched him with suspicion.

‘Is it not strange,’ he remarked, ‘that I should choose my accomplice from the other camp?’

‘Fool!’ she said. ‘But it is your only wisdom that you know your friends.’ And suddenly, in the vantage of the deep window, she caught up his hand and kissed it with a sort of passion. ‘Now go,’ she added, ‘go at once.’

He went, somewhat staggered, doubting in his heart that he was over-bold. For in that moment she had flashed upon him like a jewel; and even through the strong panoply of a previous love he had been conscious of a shock. Next moment he had dismissed the fear.

Both Otto and the Countess retired early from the drawing-room; and the Prince, after an elaborate feint, dismissed his valet, and went forth by the private passage and the back postern in quest of the groom.

Once more the stable was in darkness, once more Otto employed the talismanic knock, and once more the groom appeared and sickened with terror.

‘Good-evening, friend,’ said Otto pleasantly. ‘I want you to bring a corn sack — empty this time — and to accompany me. We shall be gone all night.'

'Your Highness,' groaned the man, 'I have the charge of the small stables. I am here alone.'

'Come,' said the Prince, 'you are no such martinet in duty.' And then seeing that the man was shaking from head to foot, Otto laid a hand upon his shoulder. 'If I meant you harm,' he said, 'should I be here?'

The fellow became instantly reassured. He got the sack; and Otto led him round by several paths and avenues, conversing pleasantly by the way, and left him at last planted by a certain fountain where a goggle-eyed Triton spouted intermittently into a rippling laver. Thence he proceeded alone to where, in a round clearing, a copy of Gian Bologna's Mercury stood tiptoe in the twilight of the stars. The night was warm and windless. A shaving of new moon had lately arisen; but it was still too small and too low down in heaven to contend with the immense host of lesser luminaries; and the rough face of the earth was drenched with starlight. Down one of the alleys, which widened as it receded, he could see a part of the lamplit terrace where a sentry silently paced, and beyond that a corner of the town with interlacing street-lights. But all around him the young trees stood mystically blurred in the dim shine; and in the stock-still quietness the upleaping god appeared alive.

In this dimness and silence of the night, Otto's conscience became suddenly and staringly luminous, like the dial of a city clock. He averted the eyes of his mind, but the finger rapidly travelling, pointed to a series of misdeeds that took his breath away. What was he doing in that place? The money had been wrongly squandered, but that was largely by his own neglect. And he now proposed to embarrass the finances of this country which he had been too idle to govern. And he now proposed to squander the money once again, and this time for a private, if a generous end. And the man whom he had reproved for stealing corn he was now to set stealing treasure. And then there was Madame von Rosen, upon whom he looked down with some of that ill-favoured contempt of the chaste male for the imperfect woman. Because he thought of her as one degraded below scruples, he had picked her out to be still more degraded, and to risk her whole irregular establishment in life by complicity in this dishonourable act. It was uglier than a seduction.

Otto had to walk very briskly and whistle very busily; and when at last he heard steps in the narrowest and darkest of the alleys, it was with a gush of relief that he sprang to meet the Countess. To wrestle alone with one's good angel is so hard! and so precious, at the proper time, is a companion certain to be less virtuous than oneself!

It was a young man who came towards him — a young man of small stature and a peculiar gait, wearing a wide flapping hat, and carrying, with great weariness, a heavy bag. Otto recoiled; but the young man held up his hand by way of signal, and coming up with a panting run, as if with the last of his endurance, laid the bag upon the ground, threw himself upon the bench, and disclosed the features of Madame von Rosen.

'You, Countess!' cried the Prince.

'No, no,' she panted, 'the Count von Rosen — my young brother. A capital fellow. Let him get his breath.'

'Ah, madam . . . ' said he.

'Call me Count,' she returned, 'respect my incognito.'

'Count be it, then,' he replied. 'And let me implore that gallant gentleman to set forth at once on our enterprise.'

'Sit down beside me here,' she returned, patting the further corner of the bench. 'I will follow you in a moment. O, I am so tired — feel how my heart leaps! Where is your thief?'

'At his post,' replied Otto. 'Shall I introduce him? He seems an excellent companion.'

'No,' she said, 'do not hurry me yet. I must speak to you. Not but I adore your thief; I adore any one who has the spirit to do wrong. I never cared for virtue till I fell in love with my Prince.' She laughed musically. 'And even so, it is not for your virtues,' she added.

Otto was embarrassed. 'And now,' he asked, 'if you are anyway rested?'

'Presently, presently. Let me breathe,' she said, panting a little harder than before.

'And what has so wearied you?' he asked. 'This bag? And why, in the name of eccentricity, a bag? For an empty one, you might have relied on my own foresight; and this one is very far from being empty. My dear Count, with what trash have you come laden? But the shortest method is to see for myself.' And he put down his hand.

She stopped him at once. 'Otto,' she said, 'no — not that way. I will tell, I will make a clean breast. It is done already. I have robbed the treasury single-handed. There are three thousand two hundred crowns. O, I trust it is enough!'

Her embarrassment was so obvious that the Prince was struck into a muse, gazing in her face, with his hand still outstretched, and she still holding him by the wrist. 'You!' he said at last. 'How?' And then drawing himself up, 'O madam,' he cried, 'I understand. You must indeed think meanly of the Prince.'

'Well, then, it was a lie!' she cried. 'The money is mine, honestly my own — now yours. This was an unworthy act that you proposed. But I love your honour, and I swore to myself that I should save it in your teeth. I beg of you to let me save it' — with a sudden lovely change of tone. ‘Otto, I beseech you let me save it. Take this dross from your poor friend who loves you!’

‘Madam, madam,’ babbled Otto, in the extreme of misery, ‘I cannot — I must go.’

And he half rose; but she was on the ground before him in an instant, clasping his knees. ‘No,’ she gasped, ‘you shall not go. Do you despise me so entirely? It is dross; I hate it; I should squander it at play and be no richer; it is an investment, it is to save me from ruin. Otto,’ she cried, as he again feebly tried to put her from him, ‘if you leave me alone in this disgrace, I will die here!’ He groaned aloud. ‘O,’ she said, ‘think what I suffer! If you suffer from a piece of delicacy, think what I suffer in my shame! To have my trash refused! You would rather steal, you think of me so basely! You would rather tread my heart in pieces! O, unkind! O my Prince! O Otto! O pity me!’ She was still clasping him; then she found his hand and covered it with kisses, and at this his head began to turn. ‘O,’ she cried again, ‘I see it! O what a horror! It is because I am old, because I am no longer beautiful.’ And she burst into a storm of sobs.

This was the *coup de grâce*. Otto had now to comfort and compose her as he could, and before many words, the money was accepted. Between the woman and the weak man such was the inevitable end. Madame von Rosen instantly composed her sobs. She thanked him with a fluttering voice, and resumed her place upon the bench, at the far end from Otto. ‘Now you see,’ she said, ‘why I bade you keep the thief at distance, and why I came alone. How I trembled for my treasure!’

‘Madam,’ said Otto, with a tearful whimper in his voice, ‘spare me! You are too good, too noble!’

‘I wonder to hear you,’ she returned. ‘You have avoided a great folly. You will be able to meet your good old peasant. You have found an excellent investment for a friend’s money. You have preferred essential kindness to an empty scruple; and now you are ashamed of it! You have made your friend happy; and now you mourn as the dove! Come, cheer up. I know it is depressing to have done exactly right; but you need not make a practice of it. Forgive yourself this virtue; come now, look me in the face and smile!’

He did look at her. When a man has been embraced by a woman, he sees her in a glamour; and at such a time, in the baffling glimmer of the stars, she will look wildly well. The hair is touched with light; the eyes are constellations; the face sketched in shadows — a sketch, you might say, by passion. Otto became consoled for his defeat; he began to take an interest. ‘No,’ he said, ‘I am no ingrate.’

‘You promised me fun,’ she returned, with a laugh. ‘I have given you as good. We have had a stormy *scena*.’

He laughed in his turn, and the sound of the laughter, in either case, was hardly reassuring.

'Come, what are you going to give me in exchange,' she continued, 'for my excellent declamation?'

'What you will,' he said.

'Whatever I will? Upon your honour? Suppose I asked the crown?' She was flashing upon him, beautiful in triumph.

'Upon my honour,' he replied.

'Shall I ask the crown?' she continued. 'Nay; what should I do with it? Grünewald is but a petty state; my ambition swells above it. I shall ask — I find I want nothing,' she concluded. 'I will give you something instead. I will give you leave to kiss me — once.'

Otto drew near, and she put up her face; they were both smiling, both on the brink of laughter, all was so innocent and playful; and the Prince, when their lips encountered, was dumbfoundered by the sudden convulsion of his being. Both drew instantly apart, and for an appreciable time sat tongue-tied. Otto was indistinctly conscious of a peril in the silence, but could find no words to utter. Suddenly the Countess seemed to awake. 'As for your wife — ' she began in a clear and steady voice.

The word recalled Otto, with a shudder, from his trance. 'I will hear nothing against my wife,' he cried wildly; and then, recovering himself and in a kindlier tone, 'I will tell you my one secret,' he added. 'I love my wife.'

'You should have let me finish,' she returned, smiling. 'Do you suppose I did not mention her on purpose? You know you had lost your head. Well, so had I. Come now, do not be abashed by words,' she added somewhat sharply. 'It is the one thing I despise. If you are not a fool, you will see that I am building fortresses about your virtue. And at any rate, I choose that you shall understand that I am not dying of love for you. It is a very smiling business; no tragedy for me! And now here is what I have to say about your wife; she is not and she never has been Gondremark's mistress. Be sure he would have boasted if she had. Good-night!'

And in a moment she was gone down the alley, and Otto was alone with the bag of money and the flying god.

CHAPTER X — GOTTHOLD'S REVISED OPINION; AND THE FALL COMPLETED

The Countess left poor Otto with a caress and buffet simultaneously administered. The welcome word about his wife and the virtuous ending of his interview should doubtless have delighted him. But for all that, as he shouldered the bag of money and set forward to rejoin his groom, he was conscious of many aching sensibilities. To have gone wrong and to have been set right makes but a double trial for man's vanity. The discovery of his own weakness and possible unfaith had staggered him to the heart; and to hear, in the same hour, of his wife's fidelity from one who loved her not, increased the bitterness of the surprise.

He was about half-way between the fountain and the Flying Mercury before his thoughts began to be clear; and he was surprised to find them resentful. He paused in a kind of temper, and struck with his hand a little shrub. Thence there arose instantly a cloud of awakened sparrows, which as instantly dispersed and disappeared into the thicket. He looked at them stupidly, and when they were gone continued staring at the stars. 'I am angry. By what right? By none!' he thought; but he was still angry. He cursed Madame von Rosen and instantly repented. Heavy was the money on his shoulders.

When he reached the fountain, he did, out of ill-humour and parade, an unpardonable act. He gave the money bodily to the dishonest groom. 'Keep this for me,' he said, 'until I call for it to-morrow. It is a great sum, and by that you will judge that I have not condemned you.' And he strode away ruffling, as if he had done something generous. It was a desperate stroke to re-enter at the point of the bayonet into his self-esteem; and, like all such, it was fruitless in the end. He got to bed with the devil, it appeared: kicked and tumbled till the grey of the morning; and then fell inopportunely into a leaden slumber, and awoke to find it ten. To miss the appointment with old Killian after all, had been too tragic a miscarriage: and he hurried with all his might, found the groom (for a wonder) faithful to his trust, and arrived only a few minutes before noon in the guest-chamber of the Morning Star. Killian was there in his Sunday's best and looking very gaunt and rigid; a lawyer from Brandenau stood sentinel over his outspread papers; and the groom and the landlord of the inn were called to serve as witnesses. The obvious deference of that great man, the innkeeper, plainly affected the old farmer with surprise; but it was not until Otto had taken the pen and signed that the truth flashed upon him fully. Then, indeed, he was beside himself.

'His Highness!' he cried, 'His Highness!' and repeated the exclamation till his mind had grappled fairly with the facts. Then he turned to the witnesses. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'you dwell in a country highly favoured by God; for of all generous gentlemen, I will say it on my conscience, this one is the king. I am an old man, and I have seen good and bad, and the year of the great famine; but a more excellent gentleman, no, never.'

'We know that,' cried the landlord, 'we know that well in Grünewald. If we saw more of his Highness we should be the better pleased.'

'It is the kindest Prince,' began the groom, and suddenly closed his mouth upon a sob, so that every one turned to gaze upon his emotion — Otto not last; Otto struck with remorse, to see the man so grateful.

Then it was the lawyer's turn to pay a compliment. 'I do not know what Providence may hold in store,' he said, 'but this day should be a bright one in the annals of your reign. The shouts of armies could not be more eloquent than the emotion on these honest faces.' And the Brandenau lawyer bowed, skipped, stepped back, and took snuff, with the air of a man who has found and seized an opportunity.

'Well, young gentleman,' said Killian, 'if you will pardon me the plainness of calling you a gentleman, many a good day's work you have done, I doubt not, but never a better, or one that will be better blessed; and whatever, sir, may be your happiness and triumph in that high sphere to which you have been called, it will be none the worse, sir, for an old man's blessing!'

The scene had almost assumed the proportions of an ovation; and when the Prince escaped he had but one thought: to go wherever he was most sure of praise. His conduct at the board of council occurred to him as a fair chapter; and this evoked the memory of Gotthold. To Gotthold he would go.

Gotthold was in the library as usual, and laid down his pen, a little angrily, on Otto's entrance. 'Well,' he said, 'here you are.'

'Well,' returned Otto, 'we made a revolution, I believe.'

'It is what I fear,' returned the Doctor.

'How?' said Otto. 'Fear? Fear is the burnt child. I have learned my strength and the weakness of the others; and I now mean to govern.'

Gotthold said nothing, but he looked down and smoothed his chin.

'You disapprove?' cried Otto. 'You are a weather-cock.'

'On the contrary,' replied the Doctor. 'My observation has confirmed my fears. It will not do, Otto, not do.'

'What will not do?' demanded the Prince, with a sickening stab of pain.

'None of it,' answered Gotthold. 'You are unfitted for a life of action; you lack the stamina, the habit, the restraint, the patience.

Your wife is greatly better, vastly better; and though she is in bad hands, displays a very different aptitude. She is a woman of affairs; you are — dear boy, you are yourself. I bid you back to your amusements; like a smiling dominie, I give you holidays for life. Yes,' he continued, 'there is a day appointed for all when they shall turn again upon their own philosophy. I had grown to disbelieve impartially in all; and if in the atlas of the sciences there were two charts I disbelieved in more than all the rest, they were politics and morals. I had a sneaking kindness for your vices; as they were negative, they flattered my philosophy; and I called them almost virtues. Well, Otto, I was wrong; I have forsworn my sceptical philosophy; and I perceive your faults to be unpardonable. You are unfit to be a Prince, unfit to be a husband. And I give you my word, I would rather see a man capably doing evil than blundering about good.'

Otto was still silent, in extreme dudgeon.

Presently the Doctor resumed: 'I will take the smaller matter first: your conduct to your wife. You went, I hear, and had an explanation. That may have been right or wrong; I know not; at least, you had stirred her temper. At the council she insults you; well, you insult her back — a man to a woman, a husband to his wife, in public! Next upon the back of this, you propose — the story runs like wildfire — to recall the power of signature. Can she ever forgive that? a woman — a young woman — ambitious, conscious of talents beyond yours? Never, Otto. And to sum all, at such a crisis in your married life, you get into a window corner with that ogling dame von Rosen. I do not dream that there was any harm; but I do say it was an idle disrespect to your wife. Why, man, the woman is not decent.'

'Gotthold,' said Otto, 'I will hear no evil of the Countess.'

'You will certainly hear no good of her,' returned Gotthold; 'and if you wish your wife to be the pink of nicety, you should clear your court of demi-reputations.'

'The commonplace injustice of a by-word,' Otto cried. 'The partiality of sex. She is a demirep; what then is Gondremark? Were she a man — '

'It would be all one,' retorted Gotthold roughly. 'When I see a man, come to years of wisdom, who speaks in double-meanings and is the braggart of his vices, I spit on the other side. "You, my friend," say I, "are not even a gentleman." Well, she's not even a lady.'

'She is the best friend I have, and I choose that she shall be respected,' Otto said.

'If she is your friend, so much the worse,' replied the Doctor. 'It will not stop there.'

'Ah!' cried Otto, 'there is the charity of virtue! All evil in the spotted fruit. But I can tell you, sir, that you do Madame von Rosen prodigal injustice.'

'You can tell me!' said the Doctor shrewdly. 'Have you, tried? have you been riding the marches?'

The blood came into Otto's face.

'Ah!' cried Gotthold, 'look at your wife and blush! There's a wife for a man to marry and then lose! She's a carnation, Otto. The soul is in her eyes.'

'You have changed your note for Seraphina, I perceive,' said Otto.

'Changed it!' cried the Doctor, with a flush. 'Why, when was it different? But I own I admired her at the council. When she sat there silent, tapping with her foot, I admired her as I might a hurricane. Were I one of those who venture upon matrimony, there had been the prize to tempt me! She invites, as Mexico invited Cortez; the enterprise is hard, the natives are unfriendly — I believe them cruel too — but the metropolis is paved with gold and the breeze blows out of paradise. Yes, I could desire to be that conqueror. But to philander with von Rosen! never! Senses? I discard them; what are they? — pruritus! Curiosity? Reach me my Anatomy!'

'To whom do you address yourself?' cried Otto. 'Surely you, of all men, know that I love my wife!'

'O, love!' cried Gotthold; 'love is a great word; it is in all the dictionaries. If you had loved, she would have paid you back. What does she ask? A little ardour!'

'It is hard to love for two,' replied the Prince.

'Hard? Why, there's the touchstone! O, I know my poets!' cried the Doctor. 'We are but dust and fire, too and to endure life's scorching; and love, like the shadow of a great rock, should lend shelter and refreshment, not to the lover only, but to his mistress and to the children that reward them; and their very friends should seek repose in the fringes of that peace. Love is not love that cannot build a home. And you call it love to grudge and quarrel and pick faults? You call it love to thwart her to her face, and bandy insults? Love!'

'Gotthold, you are unjust. I was then fighting for my country,' said the Prince.

'Ay, and there's the worst of all,' returned the Doctor. 'You could not even see that you were wrong; that being where they were, retreat was ruin.'

Why, you supported me!' cried Otto.

'I did. I was a fool like you,' replied Gotthold. 'But now my eyes are open. If you go on as you have started, disgrace this fellow Gondremark, and publish the scandal of your divided house, there will befall a most abominable thing in Grünewald. A revolution, friend — a revolution.'

‘You speak strangely for a red,’ said Otto.

‘A red republican, but not a revolutionary,’ returned the Doctor. ‘An ugly thing is a Grünewalder drunk! One man alone can save the country from this pass, and that is the double-dealer Gondremark, with whom I conjure you to make peace. It will not be you; it never can be you: — you, who can do nothing, as your wife said, but trade upon your station — you, who spent the hours in begging money! And in God’s name, what for? Why money? What mystery of idiocy was this?’

‘It was to no ill end. It was to buy a farm,’ quoth Otto sulkily.

‘To buy a farm!’ cried Gotthold. ‘Buy a farm!’

‘Well, what then?’ returned Otto. ‘I have bought it, if you come to that.’

Gotthold fairly bounded on his seat. ‘And how that?’ he cried.

‘How?’ repeated Otto, startled.

‘Ay, verily, how!’ returned the Doctor. ‘How came you by the money?’

The Prince’s countenance darkened. ‘That is my affair,’ said he.

‘You see you are ashamed,’ retorted Gotthold. ‘And so you bought a farm in the hour of our country’s need — doubtless to be ready for the abdication; and I put it that you stole the funds. There are not three ways of getting money: there are but two: to earn and steal. And now, when you have combined Charles the Fifth and Long-fingered Tom, you come to me to fortify your vanity! But I will clear my mind upon this matter: until I know the right and wrong of the transaction, I put my hand behind my back. A man may be the pitifullest prince; he must be a spotless gentleman.’

The Prince had gotten to his feet, as pale as paper. Gotthold,’ he said, ‘you drive me beyond bounds. Beware, sir, beware!’

‘Do you threaten me, friend Otto?’ asked the Doctor grimly. ‘That would be a strange conclusion.’

‘When have you ever known me use my power in any private animosity?’ cried Otto. ‘To any private man your words were an unpardonable insult, but at me you shoot in full security, and I must turn aside to compliment you on your plainness. I must do more than pardon, I must admire, because you have faced this — this formidable monarch, like a Nathan before David. You have uprooted an old kindness, sir, with an unsparing hand. You leave me very bare. My last bond is broken; and though I take Heaven to witness that I sought to do the right, I have this reward: to find myself alone. You say I am no gentleman; yet the sneers have been upon your side; and though I can very well perceive where you have lodged your sympathies, I will forbear the taunt.’

‘Otto, are you insane?’ cried Gotthold, leaping up. ‘Because I ask you how you came by certain moneys, and because you refuse — '

'Herr von Hohenstockwitz, I have ceased to invite your aid in my affairs,' said Otto. 'I have heard all that I desire, and you have sufficiently trampled on my vanity. It may be that I cannot govern, it may be that I cannot love — you tell me so with every mark of honesty; but God has granted me one virtue, and I can still forgive. I forgive you; even in this hour of passion, I can perceive my faults and your excuses; and if I desire that in future I may be spared your conversation, it is not, sir, from resentment — not resentment — but, by Heaven, because no man on earth could endure to be so rated. You have the satisfaction to see your sovereign weep; and that person whom you have so often taunted with his happiness reduced to the last pitch of solitude and misery. No, — I will hear nothing; I claim the last word, sir, as your Prince; and that last word shall be — forgiveness.'

And with that Otto was gone from the apartment, and Doctor Gotthold was left alone with the most conflicting sentiments of sorrow, remorse, and merriment; walking to and fro before his table, and asking himself, with hands uplifted, which of the pair of them was most to blame for this unhappy rupture. Presently, he took from a cupboard a bottle of Rhine wine and a goblet of the deep Bohemian ruby. The first glass a little warmed and comforted his bosom; with the second he began to look down upon these troubles from a sunny mountain; yet a while, and filled with this false comfort and contemplating life throughout a golden medium, he owned to himself, with a flush, a smile, and a half-pleasurable sigh, that he had been somewhat over plain in dealing with his cousin. 'He said the truth, too,' added the penitent librarian, 'for in my monkish fashion I adore the Princess.' And then, with a still deepening flush and a certain stealth, although he sat all alone in that great gallery, he toasted Seraphina to the dregs.

CHAPTER XI — PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE FIRST
SHE BEGUILES THE BARON

At a sufficiently late hour, or to be more exact, at three in the afternoon, Madame von Rosen issued on the world. She swept downstairs and out across the garden, a black mantilla thrown over her head, and the long train of her black velvet dress ruthlessly sweeping in the dirt.

At the other end of that long garden, and back to back with the villa of the Countess, stood the large mansion where the Prime Minister transacted his affairs and pleasures. This distance, which was enough for decency by the easy canons of Mittwalden, the Countess swiftly traversed, opened a little door with a key, mounted a flight of stairs, and entered unceremoniously into Gondremark's study. It was a large and very high apartment; books all about the walls, papers on the table, papers on the floor; here and there a picture, somewhat scant of drapery; a great fire glowing and flaming in the blue tiled hearth; and the daylight streaming through a cupola above. In the midst of this sat the great Baron Gondremark in his shirt-sleeves, his business for that day fairly at an end, and the hour arrived for relaxation. His expression, his very nature, seemed to have undergone a fundamental change. Gondremark at home appeared the very antipode of Gondremark on duty. He had an air of massive jollity that well became him; grossness and geniality sat upon his features; and along with his manners, he had laid aside his sly and sinister expression. He lolled there, sunning his bulk before the fire, a noble animal.

'Hey!' he cried. 'At last!'

The Countess stepped into the room in silence, threw herself on a chair, and crossed her legs. In her lace and velvet, with a good display of smooth black stocking and of snowy petticoat, and with the refined profile of her face and slender plumpness of her body, she showed in singular contrast to the big, black, intellectual satyr by the fire.

'How often do you send for me?' she cried. 'It is compromising.'

Gondremark laughed. 'Speaking of that,' said he, 'what in the devil's name were you about? You were not home till morning.'

'I was giving alms,' she said.

The Baron again laughed loud and long, for in his shirt-sleeves he was a very mirthful creature. 'It is fortunate I am not jealous,' he remarked. 'But you know my way: pleasure and liberty go hand in hand. I believe what I believe; it is not much, but I believe it. — But now to business. Have you not read my letter?'

'No,' she said; 'my head ached.'

'Ah, well! then I have news indeed!' cried Gondremark. 'I was mad to see you all last night and all this morning: for yesterday afternoon I brought my long business to a head; the ship has come home; one more dead lift, and I shall cease to fetch and carry for the Princess Ratafia. Yes, 'tis done. I have the order all in Ratafia's hand; I carry it on my heart. At the hour of twelve to-night, Prince Featherhead is to be taken in his bed and, like the bambino, whipped into a chariot; and by next morning he will command a most romantic prospect from the donjon of the Felsenburg. Farewell, Featherhead! The war goes on, the girl is in my hand; I have long been indispensable, but now I shall be sole. I have long,' he added exultingly, 'long carried this intrigue upon my shoulders, like Samson with the gates of Gaza; now I discharge that burthen.'

She had sprung to her feet a little paler. 'Is this true?' she cried.

'I tell you a fact,' he asseverated. 'The trick is played.'

'I will never believe it,' she said. 'An order in her own hand? I will never believe it, Heinrich.'

'I swear to you,' said he.

'O, what do you care for oaths — or I either? What would you swear by? Wine, women, and song? It is not binding,' she said. She had come quite close up to him and laid her hand upon his arm. 'As for the order — no, Heinrich, never! I will never believe it. I will die ere I believe it. You have some secret purpose — what, I cannot guess — but not one word of it is true.'

'Shall I show it you?' he asked.

'You cannot,' she answered. 'There is no such thing.'

'Incorrigible Sadducee!' he cried. 'Well, I will convert you; you shall see the order.' He moved to a chair where he had thrown his coat, and then drawing forth and holding out a paper, 'Read,' said he.

She took it greedily, and her eye flashed as she perused it.

'Hey!' cried the Baron, 'there falls a dynasty, and it was I that felled it; and I and you inherit!' He seemed to swell in stature; and next moment, with a laugh, he put his hand forward. Give me the dagger,' said he.

But she whisked the paper suddenly behind her back and faced him, lowering. 'No, no,' she said. 'You and I have first a point to settle. Do you suppose me blind? She could never have given that paper but to one man, and that man her lover. Here you stand — her lover, her accomplice, her master — O, I well believe it, for I know your power. But what am I?' she cried; 'I, whom you deceive!'

'Jealousy!' cried Gondremark. 'Anna, I would never have believed it! But I declare to you by all that's credible that I am not her lover. I might be, I suppose; but I never yet durst risk the declaration. The chit is so unreal; a mincing doll; she will and she will not; there is no counting on her, by God! And hitherto I have had my own way without, and keep the lover in reserve. And I say, Anna,' he added with severity, 'you must break yourself of this new fit, my girl; there must be no combustion. I keep the creature under the belief that I adore her; and if she caught a breath of you and me, she is such a fool, prude, and dog in the manger, that she is capable of spoiling all.'

'All very fine,' returned the lady. 'With whom do you pass your days? and which am I to believe, your words or your actions?'

'Anna, the devil take you, are you blind?' cried Gondremark. 'You know me. Am I likely to care for such a preciosa? 'Tis hard that we should have been together for so long, and you should still take me for a troubadour. But if there is one thing that I despise and deprecate, it is all such figures in Berlin wool. Give me a human woman — like myself. You are my mate; you were made for me; you amuse me like the play. And what have I to gain that I should pretend to you? If I do not love you, what use are you to me? Why, none. It is as clear as noonday.'

'Do you love me, Heinrich?' she asked, languishing. 'Do you truly?'

'I tell you,' he cried, 'I love you next after myself. I should be all abroad if I had lost you.'

'Well, then,' said she, folding up the paper and putting it calmly in her pocket, 'I will believe you, and I join the plot. Count upon me. At midnight, did you say? It is Gordon, I see, that you have charged with it. Excellent; he will stick at nothing — '

Gondremark watched her suspiciously. 'Why do you take the paper?' he demanded. 'Give it here.'

'No,' she returned; 'I mean to keep it. It is I who must prepare the stroke; you cannot manage it without me; and to do my best I must possess the paper. Where shall I find Gordon? In his rooms?' She spoke with a rather feverish self-possession.

'Anna,' he said sternly, the black, bilious countenance of his palace *rôle* taking the place of the more open favour of his hours at home, 'I ask you for that paper. Once, twice, and thrice.'

'Heinrich,' she returned, looking him in the face, 'take care. I will put up with no dictation.'

Both looked dangerous; and the silence lasted for a measurable interval of time. Then she made haste to have the first word; and with a laugh that rang clear and honest, 'Do not be a child,' she said. 'I wonder at you. If your assurances are true, you can have no reason to mistrust me, nor I to play you false. The difficulty is to get the Prince out of the palace without scandal. His valets are devoted; his chamberlain a slave; and yet one cry might ruin all.'

‘They must be overpowered,’ he said, following her to the new ground, ‘and disappear along with him.’

‘And your whole scheme along with them!’ she cried. ‘He does not take his servants when he goes a-hunting: a child could read the truth. No, no; the plan is idiotic; it must be Ratafia’s. But hear me. You know the Prince worships me?’

‘I know,’ he said. ‘Poor Featherhead, I cross his destiny!’

‘Well now,’ she continued, ‘what if I bring him alone out of the palace, to some quiet corner of the Park — the Flying Mercury, for instance? Gordon can be posted in the thicket; the carriage wait behind the temple; not a cry, not a scuffle, not a footfall; simply, the Prince vanishes! — What do you say? Am I an able ally? Are my *beaux yuex* of service? Ah, Heinrich, do not lose your Anna! — she has power!’

He struck with his open hand upon the chimney. ‘Witch!’ he said, ‘there is not your match for devilry in Europe. Service! the thing runs on wheels.’

‘Kiss me, then, and let me go. I must not miss my Featherhead,’ she said.

‘Stay, stay,’ said the Baron; ‘not so fast. I wish, upon my soul, that I could trust you; but you are, out and in, so whimsical a devil that I dare not. Hang it, Anna, no; it’s not possible!’

‘You doubt me, Heinrich?’ she cried.

‘Doubt is not the word,’ said he. ‘I know you. Once you were clear of me with that paper in your pocket, who knows what you would do with it? — not you, at least — nor I. You see,’ he added, shaking his head paternally upon the Countess, ‘you are as vicious as a monkey.’

‘I swear to you,’ she cried, ‘by my salvation . . . ‘

‘I have no curiosity to hear you swearing,’ said the Baron.

‘You think that I have no religion? You suppose me destitute of honour. Well,’ she said, ‘see here: I will not argue, but I tell you once for all: leave me this order, and the Prince shall be arrested — take it from me, and, as certain as I speak, I will upset the coach. Trust me, or fear me: take your choice.’ And she offered him the paper.

The Baron, in a great contention of mind, stood irresolute, weighing the two dangers. Once his hand advanced, then dropped. ‘Well,’ he said, ‘since trust is what you call it . . .’

‘No more,’ she interrupted, ‘Do not spoil your attitude. And now since you have behaved like a good sort of fellow in the dark, I will condescend to tell you why. I go to the palace to arrange with Gordon; but how is Gordon to obey me? And how can I foresee the hours? It may be midnight; ay, and it may be nightfall; all’s a chance; and to act, I must be free and hold the strings of the adventure. And now,’ she cried, ‘your Vivien goes. Dub me your knight!’ And she held out her arms and smiled upon him radiant.

‘Well,’ he said, when he had kissed her, ‘every man must have his folly; I thank God mine is no worse. Off with you! I have given a child a squib.’

CHAPTER XII — PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE SECOND
SHE INFORMS THE PRINCE

It was the first impulse of Madame von Rosen to return to her own villa and revise her toilette. Whatever else should come of this adventure, it was her firm design to pay a visit to the Princess. And before that woman, so little beloved, the Countess would appear at no disadvantage. It was the work of minutes. Von Rosen had the captain’s eye in matters of the toilette; she was none of those who hang in Fabian helplessness among their finery and, after hours, come forth upon the world as dowdies. A glance, a loosened curl, a studied and admired disorder in the hair, a bit of lace, a touch of colour, a yellow rose in the bosom; and the instant picture was complete.

‘That will do,’ she said. ‘Bid my carriage follow me to the palace. In half an hour it should be there in waiting.’

The night was beginning to fall and the shops to shine with lamps along the tree-beshadowed thorough-fares of Otto’s capital, when the Countess started on her high emprise. She was jocund at heart; pleasure and interest had winged her beauty, and she knew it. She paused before the glowing jeweller’s; she remarked and praised a costume in the milliner’s window; and when she reached the lime-tree walk, with its high, umbrageous arches and stir of passers-by in the dim alleys, she took her place upon a bench and began to dally with the pleasures of the hour. It was cold, but she did not feel it, being warm within; her thoughts, in that dark corner, shone like the gold and rubies at the jewellers; her ears, which heard the brushing of so many footfalls, transposed it into music.

What was she to do? She held the paper by which all depended. Otto and Gondremark and Ratafia, and the state itself, hung light in her balances, as light as dust; her little finger laid in either scale would set all flying: and she hugged herself upon her huge preponderance, and then laughed aloud to think how giddily it might be used. The vertigo of omnipotence, the disease of Cæsars, shook her reason. ‘O the mad world!’ she thought, and laughed aloud in exultation.

A child, finger in mouth, had paused a little way from where she sat, and stared with cloudy interest upon this laughing lady. She called it nearer; but the child hung back. Instantly, with that curious passion which you may see any woman in the world display, on the most odd occasions, for a similar end, the Countess bent herself with singleness of mind to overcome this diffidence; and presently, sure enough, the child was seated on her knee, thumbing and glowering at her watch.

‘If you had a clay bear and a china monkey,’ asked Von Rosen, ‘which would you prefer to break?’

‘But I have neither,’ said the child.

‘Well,’ she said, ‘here is a bright florin, with which you may purchase both the one and the other; and I shall give it you at once, if you will answer my question. The clay bear or the china monkey — come?’

But the unbreeched soothsayer only stared upon the florin with big eyes; the oracle could not be persuaded to reply; and the Countess kissed him lightly, gave him the florin, set him down upon the path, and resumed her way with swinging and elastic gait.

‘Which shall I break?’ she wondered; and she passed her hand with delight among the careful disarrangement of her locks. ‘Which?’ and she consulted heaven with her bright eyes. ‘Do I love both or neither? A little — passionately — not at all? Both or neither — both, I believe; but at least I will make hay of Ratafia.’

By the time she had passed the iron gates, mounted the drive, and set her foot upon the broad flagged terrace, the night had come completely; the palace front was thick with lighted windows; and along the balustrade, the lamp on every twentieth baluster shone clear. A few withered tracks of sunset, amber and glow-worm green, still lingered in the western sky; and she paused once again to watch them fading.

‘And to think,’ she said, ‘that here am I — destiny embodied, a norn, a fate, a providence — and have no guess upon which side I shall declare myself! What other woman in my place would not be prejudiced, and think herself committed? But, thank Heaven! I was born just!’ Otto’s windows were bright among the rest, and she looked on them with rising tenderness. ‘How does it feel to be deserted?’ she thought. ‘Poor dear fool! The girl deserves that he should see this order.’

Without more delay, she passed into the palace and asked for an audience of Prince Otto. The Prince, she was told, was in his own apartment, and desired to be private. She sent her name. A man presently returned with word that the Prince tendered his apologies, but could see no one. ‘Then I will write,’ she said, and scribbled a few lines alleging urgency of life and death. ‘Help me, my Prince,’ she added; ‘none but you can help me.’ This time the messenger returned more speedily, and begged the Countess to follow him: the Prince was graciously pleased to receive the Frau Gräfin von Rosen.

Otto sat by the fire in his large armoury, weapons faintly glittering all about him in the changeful light. His face was disfigured by the marks of weeping; he looked sour and sad; nor did he rise to greet his visitor, but bowed, and bade the man begone. That kind of general tenderness which served the Countess for both heart and conscience, sharply smote her at this spectacle of grief and weakness; she began immediately to enter into the spirit of her part; and as soon as they were alone, taking one step forward and with a magnificent gesture — ’Up!’ she cried.

‘Madame von Rosen,’ replied Otto dully, ‘you have used strong words. You speak of life and death. Pray, madam, who is threatened? Who is there,’ he added bitterly, ‘so destitute that even Otto of Grünewald can assist him?’

‘First learn,’ said she, ‘the names of the conspirators; the Princess and the Baron Gondremark. Can you not guess the rest?’ And then, as he maintained his silence — ’You!’ she cried, pointing at him with her finger. “Tis you they threaten! Your rascal and mine have laid their heads together and condemned you. But they reckoned without you and me. We make a *partie carrée*, Prince, in love and politics. They lead an ace, but we shall trump it. Come, partner, shall I draw my card?’

‘Madam,’ he said, ‘explain yourself. Indeed I fail to comprehend.’

‘See, then,’ said she; and handed him the order.

He took it, looked upon it with a start; and then, still without speech, he put his hand before his face. She waited for a word in vain.

‘What!’ she cried, ‘do you take the thing down-heartedly? As well seek wine in a milk-pail as love in that girl’s heart! Be done with this, and be a man. After the league of the lions, let us have a conspiracy of mice, and pull this piece of machinery to ground. You were brisk enough last night when nothing was at stake and all was frolic. Well, here is better sport; here is life indeed.’

He got to his feet with some alacrity, and his face, which was a little flushed, bore the marks of resolution.

‘Madame von Rosen,’ said he, ‘I am neither unconscious nor ungrateful; this is the true continuation of your friendship; but I see that I must disappoint your expectations. You seem to expect from me some effort of resistance; but why should I resist? I have not much to gain; and now that I have read this paper, and the last of a fool’s paradise is shattered, it would be hyperbolical to speak of loss in the same breath with Otto of Grünewald. I have no party, no policy; no pride, nor anything to be proud of. For what benefit or principle under Heaven do you expect me to contend? Or would you have me bite and scratch like a trapped weasel? No, madam; signify to those who sent you my readiness to go. I would at least avoid a scandal.’

‘You go? — of your own will, you go?’ she cried.

‘I cannot say so much, perhaps,’ he answered; ‘but I go with good alacrity. I have desired a change some time; behold one offered me! Shall I refuse? Thank God, I am not so destitute of humour as to make a tragedy of such a farce.’ He flicked the order on the table. ‘You may signify my readiness,’ he added grandly.

‘Ah,’ she said, ‘you are more angry than you own.’

‘I, madam? angry?’ he cried. ‘You rave! I have no cause for anger. In every way I have been taught my weakness, my instability, and my unfitness for the world. I am a plexus of weaknesses, an impotent Prince, a doubtful gentleman; and you yourself, indulgent as you are, have twice reproved my levity. And shall I be angry? I may feel the unkindness, but I have sufficient honesty of mind to see the reasons of this *coup d’état*.’

‘From whom have you got this?’ she cried in wonder. ‘You think you have not behaved well? My Prince, were you not young and handsome, I should detest you for your virtues. You push them to the verge of commonplace. And this ingratitude — ’

‘Understand me, Madame von Rosen,’ returned the Prince, flushing a little darker, ‘there can be here no talk of gratitude, none of pride. You are here, by what circumstance I know not, but doubtless led by your kindness, mixed up in what regards my family alone. You have no knowledge what my wife, your sovereign, may have suffered; it is not for you — no, nor for me — to judge. I own myself in fault; and were it otherwise, a man were a very empty boaster who should talk of love and start before a small humiliation. It is in all the copybooks that one should die to please his lady-love; and shall a man not go to prison?’

‘Love? And what has love to do with being sent to gaol?’ exclaimed the Countess, appealing to the walls and roof. ‘Heaven knows I think as much of love as any one; my life would prove it; but I admit no love, at least for a man, that is not equally returned. The rest is moonshine.’

‘I think of love more absolutely, madam, though I am certain no more tenderly, than a lady to whom I am indebted for such kindnesses,’ returned the Prince. ‘But this is unavailing. We are not here to hold a court of troubadours.’

‘Still,’ she replied, ‘there is one thing you forget. If she conspires with Gondremark against your liberty, she may conspire with him against your honour also.’

‘My honour?’ he repeated. ‘For a woman, you surprise me. If I have failed to gain her love or play my part of husband, what right is left me? or what honour can remain in such a scene of defeat? No honour that I recognise. I am become a stranger. If my wife no longer loves me, I will go to prison, since she wills it; if she love another, where should I be more in place? or whose fault is it but mine? You speak, Madame von Rosen, like too many women, with a man's tongue. Had I myself fallen into temptation (as, Heaven knows, I might) I should have trembled, but still hoped and asked for her forgiveness; and yet mine had been a treason in the teeth of love. But let me tell you, madam,' he pursued, with rising irritation, 'where a husband by futility, facility, and ill-timed humours has outwearied his wife's patience, I will suffer neither man nor woman to misjudge her. She is free; the man has been found wanting.'

'Because she loves you not?' the Countess cried. 'You know she is incapable of such a feeling.'

'Rather, it was I who was born incapable of inspiring it,' said Otto.

Madame von Rosen broke into sudden laughter. 'Fool,' she cried, 'I am in love with you myself!'

'Ah, madam, you are most compassionate,' the Prince retorted, smiling. 'But this is waste debate. I know my purpose. Perhaps, to equal you in frankness, I know and embrace my advantage. I am not without the spirit of adventure. I am in a false position — so recognised by public acclamation: do you grudge me, then, my issue?'

'If your mind is made up, why should I dissuade you?' said the Countess. 'I own, with a bare face, I am the gainer. Go, you take my heart with you, or more of it than I desire; I shall not sleep at night for thinking of your misery. But do not be afraid; I would not spoil you, you are such a fool and hero.'

'Alas! madam,' cried the Prince, 'and your unlucky money! I did amiss to take it, but you are a wonderful persuader. And I thank God, I can still offer you the fair equivalent.' He took some papers from the chimney. 'Here, madam, are the title-deeds,' he said; 'where I am going, they can certainly be of no use to me, and I have now no other hope of making up to you your kindness. You made the loan without formality, obeying your kind heart. The parts are somewhat changed; the sun of this Prince of Grünewald is upon the point of setting; and I know you better than to doubt you will once more waive ceremony, and accept the best that he can give you. If I may look for any pleasure in the coming time, it will be to remember that the peasant is secure, and my most generous friend no loser.'

'Do you not understand my odious position?' cried the Countess. 'Dear Prince, it is upon your fall that I begin my fortune.'

'It was the more like you to tempt me to resistance,' returned Otto. 'But this cannot alter our relations; and I must, for the last time, lay my commands upon you in the character of Prince.' And with his loftiest dignity, he forced the deeds on her acceptance.

'I hate the very touch of them,' she cried.

There followed upon this a little silence. 'At what time,' resumed

Otto, '(if indeed you know) am I to be arrested?'

'Your Highness, when you please!' exclaimed the Countess. 'Or, if you choose to tear that paper, never!'

'I would rather it were done quickly,' said the Prince. 'I shall take but time to leave a letter for the Princess.'

'Well,' said the Countess, 'I have advised you to resist; at the same time, if you intend to be dumb before your shearers, I must say that I ought to set about arranging your arrest. I offered' — she hesitated — 'I offered to manage it, intending, my dear friend — intending, upon my soul, to be of use to you. Well, if you will not profit by my goodwill, then be of use to me; and as soon as ever you feel ready, go to the Flying Mercury where we met last night. It will be none the worse for you; and to make it quite plain, it will be better for the rest of us.'

'Dear madam, certainly,' said Otto. 'If I am prepared for the chief evil, I shall not quarrel with details. Go, then, with my best gratitude; and when I have written a few lines of leave-taking, I shall immediately hasten to keep tryst. To-night I shall not meet so dangerous a cavalier,' he added, with a smiling gallantry.

As soon as Madame von Rosen was gone, he made a great call upon his self-command. He was face to face with a miserable passage where, if it were possible, he desired to carry himself with dignity. As to the main fact, he never swerved or faltered; he had come so heart-sick and so cruelly humiliated from his talk with Gotthold, that he embraced the notion of imprisonment with something bordering on relief. Here was, at least, a step which he thought blameless; here was a way out of his troubles. He sat down to write to Seraphina; and his anger blazed. The tale of his forbearances mounted, in his eyes, to something monstrous; still more monstrous, the coldness, egoism, and cruelty that had required and thus requited them. The pen which he had taken shook in his hand. He was amazed to find his resignation fled, but it was gone beyond his recall. In a few white-hot words, he bade adieu, dubbing desperation by the name of love, and calling his wrath forgiveness; then he cast but one look of leave-taking on the place that had been his for so long and was now to be his no longer; and hurried forth — love's prisoner — or pride's.

He took that private passage which he had trodden so often in less momentous hours. The porter let him out; and the bountiful, cold air of the night and the pure glory of the stars received him on the threshold. He looked round him, breathing deep of earth's plain fragrance; he looked up into the great array of heaven, and was quieted. His little turgid life dwindled to its true proportions; and he saw himself (that great flame-hearted martyr!) stand like a speck under the cool cupola of the night. Thus he felt his careless injuries already soothed; the live air of out-of-doors, the quiet of the world, as if by their silent music, sobering and dwarfing his emotions.

‘Well, I forgive her,’ he said. ‘If it be of any use to her, I forgive.’

And with brisk steps he crossed the garden, issued upon the Park, and came to the Flying Mercury. A dark figure moved forward from the shadow of the pedestal.

‘I have to ask your pardon, sir,’ a voice observed, ‘but if I am right in taking you for the Prince, I was given to understand that you would be prepared to meet me.’

‘Herr Gordon, I believe?’ said Otto.

‘Herr Oberst Gordon,’ replied that officer. ‘This is rather a ticklish business for a man to be embarked in; and to find that all is to go pleasantly is a great relief to me. The carriage is at hand; shall I have the honour of following your Highness?’

‘Colonel,’ said the Prince, ‘I have now come to that happy moment of my life when I have orders to receive but none to give.’

‘A most philosophical remark,’ returned the Colonel. ‘Begad, a very pertinent remark! it might be Plutarch. I am not a drop’s blood to your Highness, or indeed to any one in this principality; or else I should dislike my orders. But as it is, and since there is nothing unnatural or unbecoming on my side, and your Highness takes it in good part, I begin to believe we may have a capital time together, sir — a capital time. For a gaoler is only a fellow-captive.’

‘May I inquire, Herr Gordon,’ asked Otto, ‘what led you to accept this dangerous and I would fain hope thankless office?’

‘Very natural, I am sure,’ replied the officer of fortune. ‘My pay is, in the meanwhile, doubled.’

‘Well, sir, I will not presume to criticise,’ returned the Prince. ‘And I perceive the carriage.’

Sure enough, at the intersection of two alleys of the Park, a coach and four, conspicuous by its lanterns, stood in waiting. And a little way off about a score of lancers were drawn up under the shadow of the trees.

CHAPTER XIII — PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE THIRD
SHE ENLIGHTENS SERAPHINA

When Madame von Rosen left the Prince, she hurried straight to Colonel Gordon; and not content with directing the arrangements, she had herself accompanied the soldier of fortune to the Flying Mercury. The Colonel gave her his arm, and the talk between this pair of conspirators ran high and lively. The Countess, indeed, was in a whirl of pleasure and excitement; her tongue stumbled upon laughter, her eyes shone, the colour that was usually wanting now perfected her face. It would have taken little more to bring Gordon to her feet — or so, at least, she believed, disdaining the idea.

Hidden among some lilac bushes, she enjoyed the great decorum of the arrest, and heard the dialogue of the two men die away along the path. Soon after, the rolling of a carriage and the beat of hoofs arose in the still air of the night, and passed speedily farther and fainter into silence. The Prince was gone.

Madame von Rosen consulted her watch. She had still, she thought, time enough for the tit-bit of her evening; and hurrying to the palace, winged by the fear of Gondremark's arrival, she sent her name and a pressing request for a reception to the Princess Seraphina. As the Countess von Rosen unqualified, she was sure to be refused; but as an emissary of the Baron's, for so she chose to style herself, she gained immediate entry.

The Princess sat alone at table, making a feint of dining. Her cheeks were mottled, her eyes heavy; she had neither slept nor eaten; even her dress had been neglected. In short, she was out of health, out of looks, out of heart, and hag-ridden by her conscience. The Countess drew a swift comparison, and shone brighter in beauty.

'You come, madam, *de la part de Monsieur le Baron*,' drawled the Princess. 'Be seated! What have you to say?'

'To say?' repeated Madame von Rosen, 'O, much to say! Much to say that I would rather not, and much to leave unsaid that I would rather say. For I am like St. Paul, your Highness, and always wish to do the things I should not. Well! to be categorical — that is the word? — I took the Prince your order. He could not credit his senses. "Ah," he cried "dear Madame von Rosen, it is not possible — it cannot be I must hear it from your lips. My wife is a poor girl misled, she is only silly, she is not cruel." "*Mon Prince*," said I, "a girl — and therefore cruel; youth kills flies." — He had such pain to understand it!'

'Madame von Rosen,' said the Princess, in most steadfast tones, but with a rose of anger in her face, 'who sent you here, and for what purpose? Tell your errand.'

'O, madam, I believe you understand me very well,' returned von Rosen. 'I have not your philosophy. I wear my heart upon my sleeve, excuse the indecency! It is a very little one,' she laughed, 'and I so often change the sleeve!'

'Am I to understand the Prince has been arrested?' asked the Princess, rising.

'While you sat there dining!' cried the Countess, still nonchalantly seated.

'You have discharged your errand,' was the reply; 'I will not detain you.'

'O no, madam,' said the Countess, 'with your permission, I have not yet done. I have borne much this evening in your service. I have suffered. I was made to suffer in your service.' She unfolded her fan as she spoke. Quick as her pulses beat, the fan waved languidly. She betrayed her emotion only by the brightness of her eyes and face, and by the almost insolent triumph with which she looked down upon the Princess. There were old scores of rivalry between them in more than one field; so at least von Rosen felt; and now she was to have her hour of victory in them all.

'You are no servant, Madame von Rosen, of mine,' said Seraphina.

'No, madam, indeed,' returned the Countess; 'but we both serve the same person, as you know — or if you do not, then I have the pleasure of informing you. Your conduct is so light — so light,' she repeated, the fan wavering higher like a butterfly, 'that perhaps you do not truly understand.' The Countess rolled her fan together, laid it in her lap, and rose to a less languorous position. 'Indeed,' she continued, 'I should be sorry to see any young woman in your situation. You began with every advantage — birth, a suitable marriage — quite pretty too — and see what you have come to! My poor girl, to think of it! But there is nothing that does so much harm,' observed the Countess finely, 'as giddiness of mind.' And she once more unfurled the fan, and approvingly fanned herself.

'I will no longer permit you to forget yourself,' cried Seraphina. 'I think you are mad.'

'Not mad,' returned von Rosen. 'Sane enough to know you dare not break with me to-night, and to profit by the knowledge. I left my poor, pretty Prince Charming crying his eyes out for a wooden doll. My heart is soft; I love my pretty Prince; you will never understand it, but I long to give my Prince his doll, dry his poor eyes, and send him off happy. O, you immature fool!' the Countess cried, rising to her feet, and pointing at the Princess the closed fan that now began to tremble in her hand. 'O wooden doll!' she cried, 'have you a heart, or blood, of any nature? This is a man, child — a man who loves you. O, it will not happen twice! it is not common; beautiful and clever women look in vain for it. And you, you pitiful schoolgirl, tread this jewel under foot! you, stupid with your vanity! Before you try to govern kingdoms, you should first be able to behave yourself at home; home is the woman's kingdom.' She paused and laughed a little, strangely to hear and look upon. 'I will tell you one of the things,' she said, 'that were to stay unspoken. Von Rosen is a better women than you, my Princess, though you will never have the pain of understanding it; and when I took the Prince your order, and looked upon his face, my soul was melted — O, I am frank — here, within my arms, I offered him repose!' She advanced a step superbly as she spoke, with outstretched arms; and Seraphina shrank. 'Do not be alarmed!' the Countess cried; 'I am not offering that hermitage to you; in all the world there is but one who wants to, and him you have dismissed! "If it will give her pleasure I should wear the martyr's crown," he cried, "I will embrace the thorns." I tell you — I am quite frank — I put the order in his power and begged him to resist. You, who have betrayed your husband, may betray me to Gondremark; my Prince would betray no one. Understand it plainly,' she cried, "tis of his pure forbearance that you sit there; he had the power — I gave it him — to change the parts; and he refused, and went to prison in your place.'

The Princess spoke with some distress. 'Your violence shocks me and pains me,' she began, 'but I cannot be angry with what at least does honour to the mistaken kindness of your heart: it was right for me to know this. I will condescend to tell you. It was with deep regret that I was driven to this step. I admire in many ways the Prince — I admit his amiability. It was our great misfortune, it was perhaps somewhat of my fault, that we were so unsuited to each other; but I have a regard, a sincere regard, for all his qualities. As a private person I should think as you do. It is difficult, I know, to make allowances for state considerations. I have only with deep reluctance obeyed the call of a superior duty; and so soon as I dare do it for the safety of the state, I promise you the Prince shall be released. Many in my situation would have resented your freedoms. I am not' — and she looked for a moment rather piteously upon the Countess — 'I am not altogether so inhuman as you think.'

'And you can put these troubles of the state,' the Countess cried, 'to weigh with a man's love?'

'Madame von Rosen, these troubles are affairs of life and death to many; to the Prince, and perhaps even to yourself, among the number,' replied the Princess, with dignity. 'I have learned, madam, although still so young, in a hard school, that my own feelings must everywhere come last.'

'O callow innocence!' exclaimed the other. 'Is it possible you do not know, or do not suspect, the intrigue in which you move? I find it in my heart to pity you! We are both women after all — poor girl, poor girl! — and who is born a woman is born a fool. And though I hate all women — come, for the common folly, I forgive you. Your Highness' — she dropped a deep stage curtsey and resumed her fan — 'I am going to insult you, to betray one who is called my lover, and if it pleases you to use the power I now put unreservedly into your hands, to ruin my dear self. O what a French comedy! You betray, I betray, they betray. It is now my cue. The letter, yes. Behold the letter, madam, its seal unbroken as I found it by my bed this morning; for I was out of humour, and I get many, too many, of these favours. For your own sake, for the sake of my Prince Charming, for the sake of this great principality that sits so heavy on your conscience, open it and read!'

'Am I to understand,' inquired the Princess, 'that this letter in any way regards me?'

'You see I have not opened it,' replied von Rosen; 'but 'tis mine, and I beg you to experiment.'

'I cannot look at it till you have,' returned Seraphina, very seriously. 'There may be matter there not meant for me to see; it is a private letter.'

The Countess tore it open, glanced it through, and tossed it back; and the Princess, taking up the sheet, recognised the hand of Gondremark, and read with a sickening shock the following lines: —

'Dearest Anna, come at once. Ratafia has done the deed, her husband is to be packed to prison. This puts the minx entirely in my power; *le tour est joué*; she will now go steady in harness, or I will know the reason why. Come.

Heinrich.'

'Command yourself, madam,' said the Countess, watching with some alarm the white face of Seraphina. 'It is in vain for you to fight with Gondremark; he has more strings than mere court favour, and could bring you down to-morrow with a word. I would not have betrayed him otherwise; but Heinrich is a man, and plays with all of you like marionnettes. And now at least you see for what you sacrificed my Prince. Madam, will you take some wine? I have been cruel.'

'Not cruel, madam — salutary,' said Seraphina, with a phantom smile. 'No, I thank you, I require no attentions. The first surprise affected me: will you give me time a little? I must think.'

She took her head between her hands, and contemplated for a while the hurricane confusion of her thoughts.

‘This information reaches me,’ she said, ‘when I have need of it. I would not do as you have done, but yet I thank you. I have been much deceived in Baron Gondremark.’

‘O, madam, leave Gondremark, and think upon the Prince!’ cried von Rosen.

‘You speak once more as a private person,’ said the Princess; ‘nor do I blame you. But my own thoughts are more distracted. However, as I believe you are truly a friend to my — to the — as I believe,’ she said, ‘you are a friend to Otto, I shall put the order for his release into your hands this moment. Give me the ink-dish. There!’ And she wrote hastily, steadying her arm upon the table, for she trembled like a reed. ‘Remember; madam,’ she resumed, handing her the order, ‘this must not be used nor spoken of at present; till I have seen the Baron, any hurried step — I lose myself in thinking. The suddenness has shaken me.’

‘I promise you I will not use it,’ said the Countess, ‘till you give me leave, although I wish the Prince could be informed of it, to comfort his poor heart. And O, I had forgotten, he has left a letter. Suffer me, madam, I will bring it you. This is the door, I think?’ And she sought to open it.

‘The bolt is pushed,’ said Seraphina, flushing.

‘O! O!’ cried the Countess.

A silence fell between them.

‘I will get it for myself,’ said Seraphina; ‘and in the meanwhile I beg you to leave me. I thank you, I am sure, but I shall be obliged if you will leave me.’

The Countess deeply curtseyed, and withdrew.

CHAPTER XIV — RELATES THE CAUSE AND OUTBREAK OF THE REVOLUTION

Brave as she was, and brave by intellect, the Princess, when first she was alone, clung to the table for support. The four corners of her universe had fallen. She had never liked nor trusted Gondremark completely; she had still held it possible to find him false to friendship; but from that to finding him devoid of all those public virtues for which she had honoured him, a mere commonplace intriguer, using her for his own ends, the step was wide and the descent giddy. Light and darkness succeeded each other in her brain; now she believed, and now she could not. She turned, blindly groping for the note. But von Rosen, who had not forgotten to take the warrant from the Prince, had remembered to recover her note from the Princess: von Rosen was an old campaigner, whose most violent emotion aroused rather than clouded the vigour of her reason.

The thought recalled to Seraphina the remembrance of the other letter — Otto's. She rose and went speedily, her brain still wheeling, and burst into the Prince's armoury. The old chamberlain was there in waiting; and the sight of another face, prying (or so she felt) on her distress, struck Seraphina into childish anger.

'Go!' she cried; and then, when the old man was already half-way to the door, 'Stay!' she added. 'As soon as Baron Gondremark arrives, let him attend me here.'

'It shall be so directed,' said the chamberlain.

'There was a letter . . . ' she began, and paused.

'Her Highness,' said the chamberlain, 'will, find a letter on the table. I had received no orders, or her Highness had been spared this trouble.'

'No, no, no,' she cried. 'I thank you. I desire to be alone.'

And then, when he was gone, she leaped upon the letter. Her mind was still obscured; like the moon upon a night of clouds and wind, her reason shone and was darkened, and she read the words by flashes.

'Seraphina,' the Prince wrote, 'I will write no syllable of reproach. I have seen your order, and I go. What else is left me? I have wasted my love, and have no more. To say that I forgive you is not needful; at least, we are now separate for ever; by your own act, you free me from my willing bondage: I go free to prison. This is the last that you will hear of me in love or anger. I have gone out of your life; you may breathe easy; you have now rid yourself of the husband who allowed you to desert him, of the Prince who gave you his rights, and of the married lover who made it his pride to defend you in your absence.

How you have requited him, your own heart more loudly tells you than my words. There is a day coming when your vain dreams will roll away like clouds, and you will find yourself alone. Then you will remember

Otto.'

She read with a great horror on her mind; that day, of which he wrote, was come. She was alone; she had been false, she had been cruel; remorse rolled in upon her; and then with a more piercing note, vanity bounded on the stage of consciousness. She a dupe! she helpless! she to have betrayed herself in seeking to betray her husband! she to have lived these years upon flattery, grossly swallowing the bolus, like a clown with sharpers! she — Seraphina! Her swift mind drank the consequences; she foresaw the coming fall, her public shame; she saw the odium, disgrace, and folly of her story flaunt through Europe. She recalled the scandal she had so royally braved; and alas! she had now no courage to confront it with. To be thought the mistress of that man: perhaps for that. . . . She closed her eyes on agonising vistas. Swift as thought she had snatched a bright dagger from the weapons that shone along the wall. Ay, she would escape. From that world-wide theatre of nodding heads and buzzing whisperers, in which she now beheld herself unpitiably martyred, one door stood open. At any cost, through any stress of suffering, that greasy laughter should be stifled. She closed her eyes, breathed a wordless prayer, and pressed the weapon to her bosom.

At the astonishing sharpness of the prick, she gave a cry and awoke to a sense of undeserved escape. A little ruby spot of blood was the reward of that great act of desperation; but the pain had braced her like a tonic, and her whole design of suicide had passed away.

At the same instant regular feet drew near along the gallery, and she knew the tread of the big Baron, so often gladly welcome, and even now rallying her spirits like a call to battle. She concealed the dagger in the folds of her skirt; and drawing her stature up, she stood firm-footed, radiant with anger, waiting for the foe.

The Baron was announced, and entered. To him, Seraphina was a hated task: like the schoolboy with his Virgil, he had neither will nor leisure to remark her beauties; but when he now beheld her standing illuminated by her passion, new feelings flashed upon him, a frank admiration, a brief sparkle of desire. He noted both with joy; they were means. 'If I have to play the lover,' thought he, for that was his constant preoccupation, 'I believe I can put soul into it.' Meanwhile, with his usual ponderous grace, he bent before the lady.

'I propose,' she said in a strange voice, not known to her till then, 'that we release the Prince and do not prosecute the war.'

'Ah, madam,' he replied, "tis as I knew it would be! Your heart, I knew, would wound you when we came to this distasteful but most necessary step. Ah, madam, believe me, I am not unworthy to be your ally; I know you have qualities to which I am a stranger, and count them the best weapons in the armoury of our alliance: — the girl in the queen — pity, love, tenderness, laughter; the smile that can reward. I can only command; I am the frowner. But you! And you have the fortitude to command these comely weaknesses, to tread them down at the call of reason. How often have I not admired it even to yourself! Ay, even to yourself,' he added tenderly, dwelling, it seemed, in memory on hours of more private admiration. 'But now, madam — '

'But now, Herr von Gondremark, the time for these declarations has gone by,' she cried. 'Are you true to me? are you false? Look in your heart and answer: it is your heart I want to know.'

'It has come,' thought Gondremark. 'You, madam!' he cried, starting back — with fear, you would have said, and yet a timid joy. 'You! yourself, you bid me look into my heart?'

'Do you suppose I fear?' she cried, and looked at him with such a heightened colour, such bright eyes, and a smile of so abstruse a meaning, that the Baron discarded his last doubt.

'Ah, madam!' he cried, plumping on his knees. 'Seraphina! Do you permit me? have you divined my secret? It is true — I put my life with joy into your power — I love you, love with ardour, as an equal, as a mistress, as a brother-in-arms, as an adored, desired, sweet-hearted woman. O Bride!' he cried, waxing dithyrambic, 'bride of my reason and my senses, have pity, have pity on my love!'

She heard him with wonder, rage, and then contempt. His words offended her to sickness; his appearance, as he grovelled bulkily upon the floor, moved her to such laughter as we laugh in nightmares.

'O shame!' she cried. 'Absurd and odious! What would the Countess say?'

That great Baron Gondremark, the excellent politician, remained for some little time upon his knees in a frame of mind which perhaps we are allowed to pity. His vanity, within his iron bosom, bled and raved. If he could have blotted all, if he could have withdrawn part, if he had not called her bride — with a roaring in his ears, he thus regretfully reviewed his declaration. He got to his feet tottering; and then, in that first moment when a dumb agony finds a vent in words, and the tongue betrays the inmost and worst of a man, he permitted himself a retort which, for six weeks to follow, he was to repent at leisure.

'Ah,' said he, 'the Countess? Now I perceive the reason of your Highness's disorder.'

The lackey-like insolence of the words was driven home by a more insolent manner. There fell upon Seraphina one of those storm-clouds which had already blackened upon her reason; she heard herself cry out; and when the cloud dispersed, flung the blood-stained dagger on the floor, and saw Gondremark reeling back with open mouth and clapping his hand upon the wound. The next moment, with oaths that she had never heard, he leaped at her in savage passion; clutched her as she recoiled; and in the very act, stumbled and drooped. She had scarce time to fear his murderous onslaught ere he fell before her feet.

He rose upon one elbow; she still staring upon him, white with horror.

'Anna!' he cried, 'Anna! Help!'

And then his utterance failed him, and he fell back, to all appearance dead.

Seraphina ran to and fro in the room; she wrung her hands and cried aloud; within she was all one uproar of terror, and conscious of no articulate wish but to awake.

There came a knocking at the door; and she sprang to it and held it, panting like a beast, and with the strength of madness in her arms, till she had pushed the bolt. At this success a certain calm fell upon her reason. She went back and looked upon her victim, the knocking growing louder. O yes, he was dead. She had killed him. He had called upon von Rosen with his latest breath; ah! who would call on Seraphina? She had killed him. She, whose irresolute hand could scarce prick blood from her own bosom, had found strength to cast down that great colossus at a blow.

All this while the knocking was growing more uproarious and more unlike the staid career of life in such a palace. Scandal was at the door, with what a fatal following she dreaded to conceive; and at the same time among the voices that now began to summon her by name, she recognised the Chancellor's. He or another, somebody must be the first.

'Is Herr von Greisengesang without?' she called.

'Your Highness — yes!' the old gentleman answered. 'We have heard cries, a fall. Is anything amiss?'

'Nothing,' replied Seraphina 'I desire to speak with you. Send off the rest.' She panted between each phrase; but her mind was clear. She let the looped curtain down upon both sides before she drew the bolt; and, thus secure from any sudden eyeshot from without, admitted the obsequious Chancellor, and again made fast the door.

Greisengesang clumsily revolved among the wings of the curtain, so that she was clear of it as soon as he.

'My God!' he cried 'The Baron!'

'I have killed him,' she said. 'O, killed him!'

'Dear me,' said the old gentleman, 'this is most unprecedented.

Lovers' quarrels,' he added ruefully, 'redintegratio — ' and then paused. 'But, my dear madam,' he broke out again, 'in the name of all that is practical, what are we to do? This is exceedingly grave; morally, madam, it is appalling. I take the liberty, your Highness, for one moment, of addressing you as a daughter, a loved although respected daughter; and I must say that I cannot conceal from you that this is morally most questionable. And, O dear me, we have a dead body!'

She had watched him closely; hope fell to contempt; she drew away her skirts from his weakness, and, in the act, her own strength returned to her.

'See if he be dead,' she said; not one word of explanation or defence; she had scorned to justify herself before so poor a creature: 'See if he be dead' was all.

With the greatest compunction, the Chancellor drew near; and as he did so the wounded Baron rolled his eyes.

'He lives,' cried the old courtier, turning effusively to Seraphina. 'Madam, he still lives.'

'Help him, then,' returned the Princess, standing fixed. 'Bind up his wound.'

'Madam, I have no means,' protested the Chancellor.

'Can you not take your handkerchief, your neck-cloth, anything?' she cried; and at the same moment, from her light muslin gown she rent off a flounce and tossed it on the floor. 'Take that,' she said, and for the first time directly faced Greisengesang.

But the Chancellor held up his hands and turned away his head in agony. The grasp of the falling Baron had torn down the dainty fabric of the bodice; and — 'O Highness!' cried Greisengesang, appalled, 'the terrible disorder of your toilette!'

'Take up that flounce,' she said; 'the man may die.'

Greisengesang turned in a flutter to the Baron, and attempted some innocent and bungling measures. 'He still breathes,' he kept saying. 'All is not yet over; he is not yet gone.'

'And now,' said she 'if that is all you can do, begone and get some porters; he must instantly go home.'

'Madam,' cried the Chancellor, 'if this most melancholy sight were seen in town — O dear, the State would fall!' he piped.

'There is a litter in the Palace,' she replied. 'It is your part to see him safe. I lay commands upon you. On your life it stands.'

'I see it, dear Highness,' he jerked. 'Clearly I see it. But how? what men? The Prince's servants — yes. They had a personal affection. They will be true, if any.'

'O, not them!' she cried. 'Take Sabra, my own man.'

'Sabra! The grand-mason?' returned the Chancellor, aghast. 'If he but saw this, he would sound the tocsin — we should all be butchered.’

She measured the depth of her abasement steadily. ‘Take whom you must,’ she said, ‘and bring the litter here.’

Once she was alone she ran to the Baron, and with a sickening heart sought to allay the flux of blood. The touch of the skin of that great charlatan revolted her to the toes; the wound, in her ignorant eyes, looked deathly; yet she contended with her shuddering, and, with more skill at least than the Chancellor’s, staunched the welling injury. An eye unprejudiced with hate would have admired the Baron in his swoon; he looked so great and shapely; it was so powerful a machine that lay arrested; and his features, cleared for the moment both of temper and dissimulation, were seen to be so purely modelled. But it was not thus with Seraphina. Her victim, as he lay outspread, twitching a little, his big chest unbared, fixed her with his ugliness; and her mind flitted for a glimpse to Otto.

Rumours began to sound about the Palace of feet running and of voices raised; the echoes of the great arched staircase were voluble of some confusion; and then the gallery jarred with a quick and heavy tramp. It was the Chancellor, followed by four of Otto’s valets and a litter. The servants, when they were admitted, stared at the dishevelled Princess and the wounded man; speech was denied them, but their thoughts were riddled with profanity. Gondremark was bundled in; the curtains of the litter were lowered; the bearers carried it forth, and the Chancellor followed behind with a white face.

Seraphina ran to the window. Pressing her face upon the pane, she could see the terrace, where the lights contended; thence, the avenue of lamps that joined the Palace and town; and overhead the hollow night and the larger stars. Presently the small procession issued from the Palace, crossed the parade, and began to thread the glittering alley: the swinging couch with its four porters, the much-pondering Chancellor behind. She watched them dwindle with strange thoughts: her eyes fixed upon the scene, her mind still glancing right and left on the overthrow of her life and hopes. There was no one left in whom she might confide; none whose hand was friendly, or on whom she dared to reckon for the barest loyalty. With the fall of Gondremark, her party, her brief popularity, had fallen. So she sat crouched upon the window-seat, her brow to the cool pane; her dress in tatters, barely shielding her; her mind revolving bitter thoughts.

Meanwhile, consequences were fast mounting; and in the deceptive quiet of the night, downfall and red revolt were brewing. The litter had passed forth between the iron gates and entered on the streets of the town. By what flying panic, by what thrill of air communicated, who shall say? but the passing bustle in the Palace had already reached and re-echoed in the region of the burghers. Rumour, with her loud whisper, hissed about the town; men left their homes without knowing why; knots formed along the boulevard; under the rare lamps and the great limes the crowd grew blacker.

And now through the midst of that expectant company, the unusual sight of a closed litter was observed approaching, and trotting hard behind it that great dignitary Cancellarius Greisengesang. Silence looked on as it went by; and as soon as it was passed, the whispering seethed over like a boiling pot. The knots were sundered; and gradually, one following another, the whole mob began to form into a procession and escort the curtained litter. Soon spokesmen, a little bolder than their mates, began to ply the Chancellor with questions. Never had he more need of that great art of falsehood, by whose exercise he had so richly lived. And yet now he stumbled, the master passion, fear, betraying him. He was pressed; he became incoherent; and then from the jolting litter came a groan. In the instant hubbub and the gathering of the crowd as to a natural signal, the clear-eyed quavering Chancellor heard the catch of the clock before it strikes the hour of doom; and for ten seconds he forgot himself. This shall atone for many sins. He plucked a bearer by the sleeve. 'Bid the Princess flee. All is lost,' he whispered. And the next moment he was babbling for his life among the multitude.

Five minutes later the wild-eyed servant burst into the armoury. 'All is lost!' he cried. 'The Chancellor bids you flee.' And at the same time, looking through the window, Seraphina saw the black rush of the populace begin to invade the lamplit avenue.

'Thank you, Georg,' she said. 'I thank you. Go.' And as the man still lingered, 'I bid you go,' she added. 'Save yourself.'

Down by the private passage, and just some two hours later, Amalia Seraphina, the last Princess, followed Otto Johann Friedrich, the last Prince of Grünewald.

BOOK III — FORTUNATE MISFORTUNE

CHAPTER I — PRINCESS CINDERELLA

The porter, drawn by the growing turmoil, had vanished from the postern, and the door stood open on the darkness of the night. As Seraphina fled up the terraces, the cries and loud footing of the mob drew nearer the doomed palace; the rush was like the rush of cavalry; the sound of shattering lamps tingled above the rest; and, overtowering all, she heard her own name bandied among the shouters. A bugle sounded at the door of the guard-room; one gun was fired; and then with the yell of hundreds, MittwaldenPalace was carried at a rush.

Sped by these dire sounds and voices, the Princess scaled the long garden, skimming like a bird the starlit stairways; crossed the Park, which was in that place narrow; and plunged upon the farther side into the rude shelter of the forest. So, at a bound, she left the discretion and the cheerful lamps of Palace evenings; ceased utterly to be a sovereign lady; and, falling from the whole height of civilisation, ran forth into the woods, a ragged Cinderella.

She went direct before her through an open tract of the forest, full of brush and birches, and where the starlight guided her; and, beyond that again, must thread the columned blackness of a pine grove joining overhead the thatch of its long branches. At that hour the place was breathless; a horror of night like a presence occupied that dungeon of the wood; and she went groping, knocking against the boles — her ear, betweenwhiles, strained to aching and yet unrewarded.

But the slope of the ground was upward, and encouraged her; and presently she issued on a rocky hill that stood forth above the sea of forest. All around were other hill-tops, big and little; sable vales of forest between; overhead the open heaven and the brilliancy of countless stars; and along the western sky the dim forms of mountains. The glory of the great night laid hold upon her; her eyes shone with stars; she dipped her sight into the coolness and brightness of the sky, as she might have dipped her wrist into a spring; and her heart, at that ethereal shock, began to move more soberly. The sun that sails overhead, ploughing into gold the fields of daylight azure and uttering the signal to man's myriads, has no word apart for man the individual; and the moon, like a violin, only praises and laments our private destiny. The stars alone, cheerful whisperers, confer quietly with each of us like friends; they give ear to our sorrows smilingly, like wise old men, rich in tolerance; and by their double scale, so small to the eye, so vast to the imagination, they keep before the mind the double character of man's nature and fate.

There sat the Princess, beautifully looking upon beauty, in council with these glad advisers. Bright like pictures, clear like a voice in the porches of her ear, memory re-enacted the tumult of the evening: the Countess and the dancing fan, the big Baron on his knees, the blood on the polished floor, the knocking, the swing of the litter down the avenue of lamps, the messenger, the cries of the charging mob; and yet all were far away and phantasmal, and she was still healingly conscious of the peace and glory of the night. She looked towards Mittwalden; and above the hill-top, which already hid it from her view, a throbbing redness hinted of fire. Better so: better so, that she should fall with tragic greatness, lit by a blazing palace! She felt not a trace of pity for Gondremark or of concern for Grünewald: that period of her life was closed for ever, a wrench of wounded vanity alone surviving. She had but one clear idea: to flee; — and another, obscure and half-rejected, although still obeyed: to flee in the direction of the Felsenburg. She had a duty to perform, she must free Otto — so her mind said, very coldly; but her heart embraced the notion of that duty even with ardour, and her hands began to yearn for the grasp of kindness.

She rose, with a start of recollection, and plunged down the slope into the covert. The woods received and closed upon her. Once more, she wandered and hasted in a blot, uncheered, unpiloted. Here and there, indeed, through rents in the wood-roof, a glimmer attracted her; here and there a tree stood out among its neighbours by some force of outline; here and there a brushing among the leaves, a notable blackness, a dim shine, relieved, only to exaggerate, the solid oppression of the night and silence. And betweenwhiles, the unfeatured darkness would redouble and the whole ear of night appear to be gloating on her steps. Now she would stand still, and the silence, would grow and grow, till it weighed upon her breathing; and then she would address herself again to run, stumbling, falling, and still hurrying the more. And presently the whole wood rocked and began to run along with her. The noise of her own mad passage through the silence spread and echoed, and filled the night with terror. Panic hunted her: Panic from the trees reached forth with clutching branches; the darkness was lit up and peopled with strange forms and faces. She strangled and fled before her fears. And yet in the last fortress, reason, blown upon by these gusts of terror, still shone with a troubled light. She knew, yet could not act upon her knowledge; she knew that she must stop, and yet she still ran.

She was already near madness, when she broke suddenly into a narrow clearing. At the same time the din grew louder, and she became conscious of vague forms and fields of whiteness. And with that the earth gave way; she fell and found her feet again with an incredible shock to her senses, and her mind was swallowed up.

When she came again to herself, she was standing to the mid-leg in an icy eddy of a brook, and leaning with one hand on the rock from which it poured. The spray had wet her hair. She saw the white cascade, the stars wavering in the shaken pool, foam flitting, and high overhead the tall pines on either hand serenely drinking starshine; and in the sudden quiet of her spirit she heard with joy the firm plunge of the cataract in the pool. She scrambled forth dripping. In the face of her proved weakness, to adventure again upon the horror of blackness in the groves were a suicide of life or reason. But here, in the alley of the brook, with the kind stars above her, and the moon presently swimming into sight, she could await the coming of day without alarm.

This lane of pine-trees ran very rapidly down-hill and wound among the woods; but it was a wider thoroughfare than the brook needed, and here and there were little dimpling lawns and coves of the forest, where the starshine slumbered. Such a lawn she paced, taking patience bravely; and now she looked up the hill and saw the brook coming down to her in a series of cascades; and now approached the margin, where it welled among the rushes silently; and now gazed at the great company of heaven with an enduring wonder. The early evening had fallen chill, but the night was now temperate; out of the recesses of the wood there came mild airs as from a deep and peaceful breathing; and the dew was heavy on the grass and the tight-shut daisies. This was the girl's first night under the naked heaven; and now that her fears were overpast, she was touched to the soul by its serene amenity and peace. Kindly the host of heaven blinked down upon that wandering Princess; and the honest brook had no words but to encourage her.

At last she began to be aware of a wonderful revolution, compared to which the fire of Mittwalden Palace was but the crack and flash of a percussion-cap. The countenance with which the pines regarded her began insensibly to change; the grass too, short as it was, and the whole winding staircase of the brook's course, began to wear a solemn freshness of appearance. And this slow transfiguration reached her heart, and played upon it, and transpierced it with a serious thrill. She looked all about; the whole face of nature looked back, brimful of meaning, finger on lip, leaking its glad secret. She looked up. Heaven was almost emptied of stars. Such as still lingered shone with a changed and waning brightness, and began to faint in their stations. And the colour of the sky itself was the most wonderful; for the rich blue of the night had now melted and softened and brightened; and there had succeeded in its place a hue that has no name, and that is never seen but as the herald of morning. 'O!' she cried, joy catching at her voice, 'O! it is the dawn!'

In a breath she passed over the brook, and looped up her skirts and fairly ran in the dim alleys. As she ran, her ears were aware of many pipings, more beautiful than music; in the small dish-shaped houses in the fork of giant arms, where they had lain all night, lover by lover, warmly pressed, the bright-eyed, big-hearted singers began to awaken for the day. Her heart melted and flowed forth to them in kindness. And they, from their small and high perches in the clerestories of the wood cathedral, peered down sidelong at the ragged Princess as she flitted below them on the carpet of the moss and tassel.

Soon she had struggled to a certain hill-top, and saw far before her the silent inflooding of the day. Out of the East it welled and whitened; the darkness trembled into light; and the stars were extinguished like the street-lamps of a human city. The whiteness brightened into silver, the silver warmed into gold, the gold kindled into pure and living fire; and the face of the East was barred with elemental scarlet. The day drew its first long breath, steady and chill; and for leagues around the woods sighed and shivered. And then, at one bound, the sun had floated up; and her startled eyes received day's first arrow, and quailed under the buffet. On every side, the shadows leaped from their ambush and fell prone. The day was come, plain and garish; and up the steep and solitary eastern heaven, the sun, victorious over his competitors, continued slowly and royally to mount.

Seraphina drooped for a little, leaning on a pine, the shrill joy of the woodlands mocking her. The shelter of the night, the thrilling and joyous changes of the dawn, were over; and now, in the hot eye of the day, she turned uneasily and looked sighingly about her. Some way off among the lower woods, a pillar of smoke was mounting and melting in the gold and blue. There, surely enough, were human folk, the hearth-surrounders. Man's fingers had laid the twigs; it was man's breath that had quickened and encouraged the baby flames; and now, as the fire caught, it would be playing ruddily on the face of its creator. At the thought, she felt a-cold and little and lost in that great out-of-doors. The electric shock of the young sun-beams and the unhuman beauty of the woods began to irk and daunt her. The covert of the house, the decent privacy of rooms, the swept and regulated fire, all that denotes or beautifies the home life of man, began to draw her as with cords. The pillar of smoke was now risen into some stream of moving air; it began to lean out sideways in a pennon; and thereupon, as though the change had been a summons, Seraphina plunged once more into the labyrinth of the wood.

She left day upon the high ground. In the lower groves there still lingered the blue early twilight and the seizing freshness of the dew.

But here and there, above this field of shadow, the head of a great outspread pine was already glorious with day; and here and there, through the breaches of the hills, the sun-beams made a great and luminous entry. Here Seraphina hastened along forest paths. She had lost sight of the pilot smoke, which blew another way, and conducted herself in that great wilderness by the direction of the sun. But presently fresh signs bespoke the neighbourhood of man; felled trunks, white slivers from the axe, bundles of green boughs, and stacks of firewood. These guided her forward; until she came forth at last upon the clearing whence the smoke arose. A hut stood in the clear shadow, hard by a brook which made a series of inconsiderable falls; and on the threshold the Princess saw a sun-burnt and hard-featured woodman, standing with his hands behind his back and gazing skyward.

She went to him directly: a beautiful, bright-eyed, and haggard vision; splendidly arrayed and pitifully tattered; the diamond ear-drops still glittering in her ears; and with the movement of her coming, one small breast showing and hiding among the ragged covert of the laces. At that ambiguous hour, and coming as she did from the great silence of the forest, the man drew back from the Princess as from something elfin.

‘I am cold,’ she said, ‘and weary. Let me rest beside your fire.’

The woodman was visibly commoved, but answered nothing.

‘I will pay,’ she said, and then repented of the words, catching perhaps a spark of terror from his frightened eyes. But, as usual, her courage rekindled brighter for the check. She put him from the door and entered; and he followed her in superstitious wonder.

Within, the hut was rough and dark; but on the stone that served as hearth, twigs and a few dry branches burned with the brisk sounds and all the variable beauty of fire. The very sight of it composed her; she crouched hard by on the earth floor and shivered in the glow, and looked upon the eating blaze with admiration. The woodman was still staring at his guest: at the wreck of the rich dress, the bare arms, the bedraggled laces and the gems. He found no word to utter.

‘Give me food,’ said she, — ’here, by the fire.’

He set down a pitcher of coarse wine, bread, a piece of cheese, and a handful of raw onions. The bread was hard and sour, the cheese like leather; even the onion, which ranks with the truffle and the nectarine in the chief place of honour of earth’s fruits, is not perhaps a dish for princesses when raw. But she ate, if not with appetite, with courage; and when she had eaten, did not disdain the pitcher. In all her life before, she had not tasted of gross food nor drunk after another; but a brave woman far more readily accepts a change of circumstances than the bravest man. All that while, the woodman continued to observe her furtively, many low thoughts of fear and greed contending in his eyes. She read them clearly, and she knew she must begone.

Presently she arose and offered him a florin.

‘Will that repay you?’ she asked.

But here the man found his tongue. ‘I must have more than that,’ said he.

‘It is all I have to give you,’ she returned, and passed him by serenely.

Yet her heart trembled, for she saw his hand stretched forth as if to arrest her, and his unsteady eyes wandering to his axe. A beaten path led westward from the clearing, and she swiftly followed it. She did not glance behind her. But as soon as the least turning of the path had concealed her from the woodman’s eyes, she slipped among the trees and ran till she deemed herself in safety.

By this time the strong sunshine pierced in a thousand places the pine-thatch of the forest, fired the red boles, irradiated the cool aisles of shadow, and burned in jewels on the grass. The gum of these trees was dearer to the senses than the gums of Araby; each pine, in the lusty morning sunlight, burned its own wood-incense; and now and then a breeze would rise and toss these rooted censers, and send shade and sun-gem flitting, swift as swallows, thick as bees; and wake a brushing bustle of sounds that murmured and went by.

On she passed, and up and down, in sun and shadow; now aloft on the bare ridge among the rocks and birches, with the lizards and the snakes; and anon in the deep grove among sunless pillars. Now she followed wandering wood-paths, in the maze of valleys; and again, from a hill-top, beheld the distant mountains and the great birds circling under the sky. She would see afar off a nestling hamlet, and go round to avoid it. Below, she traced the course of the foam of mountain torrents. Nearer hand, she saw where the tender springs welled up in silence, or oozed in green moss; or in the more favoured hollows a whole family of infant rivers would combine, and tinkle in the stones, and lie in pools to be a bathing-place for sparrows, or fall from the sheer rock in rods of crystal. Upon all these things, as she still sped along in the bright air, she looked with a rapture of surprise and a joyful fainting of the heart; they seemed so novel, they touched so strangely home, they were so hued and scented, they were so beset and canopied by the dome of the blue air of heaven.

At length, when she was well weary, she came upon a wide and shallow pool. Stones stood in it, like islands; bulrushes fringed the coast; the floor was paved with the pine needles; and the pines themselves, whose roots made promontories, looked down silently on their green images. She crept to the margin and beheld herself with wonder, a hollow and bright-eyed phantom, in the ruins of her palace robe. The breeze now shook her image; now it would be marred with flies; and at that she smiled; and from the fading circles, her counterpart smiled back to her and looked kind. She sat long in the warm sun, and pitied her bare arms that were all bruised and marred with falling, and marvelled to see that she was dirty, and could not grow to believe that she had gone so long in such a strange disorder.

Then, with a sigh, she addressed herself to make a toilette by that forest mirror, washed herself pure from all the stains of her adventure, took off her jewels and wrapped them in her handkerchief, re-arranged the tatters of her dress, and took down the folds of her hair. She shook it round her face, and the pool repeated her thus veiled. Her hair had smelt like violets, she remembered Otto saying; and so now she tried to smell it, and then shook her head, and laughed a little, sadly, to herself.

The laugh was returned upon her in a childish echo.

She looked up; and lo! two children looking on, — a small girl and a yet smaller boy, standing, like playthings, by the pool, below a spreading pine. Seraphina was not fond of children, and now she was startled to the heart.

‘Who are you?’ she cried hoarsely.

The mites huddled together and drew back; and Seraphina’s heart reproached her that she should have frightened things so quaint and little, and yet alive with senses. She thought upon the birds and looked again at her two visitors; so little larger and so far more innocent. On their clear faces, as in a pool, she saw the reflection of their fears. With gracious purpose she arose.

‘Come,’ she said, ‘do not be afraid of me,’ and took a step towards them.

But alas! at the first moment, the two poor babes in the wood turned and ran helter-skelter from the Princess.

The most desolate pang was struck into the girl’s heart. Here she was, twenty-two — soon twenty-three — and not a creature loved her; none but Otto; and would even he forgive? If she began weeping in these woods alone, it would mean death or madness. Hastily she trod the thoughts out like a burning paper; hastily rolled up her locks, and with terror dogging her, and her whole bosom sick with grief, resumed her journey.

Past ten in the forenoon, she struck a high-road, marching in that place uphill between two stately groves, a river of sunlight; and here, dead weary, careless of consequences, and taking some courage from the human and civilised neighbourhood of the road, she stretched herself on the green margin in the shadow of a tree. Sleep closed on her, at first with a horror of fainting, but when she ceased to struggle, kindly embracing her. So she was taken home for a little, from all her toils and sorrows, to her Father's arms. And there in the meanwhile her body lay exposed by the highwayside, in tattered finery; and on either hand from the woods the birds came flying by and calling upon others, and debated in their own tongue this strange appearance.

The sun pursued his journey; the shadow flitted from her feet, shrank higher and higher, and was upon the point of leaving her altogether, when the rumble of a coach was signalled to and fro by the birds. The road in that part was very steep; the rumble drew near with great deliberation; and ten minutes passed before a gentleman appeared, walking with a sober elderly gait upon the grassy margin of the highway, and looking pleasantly around him as he walked. From time to time he paused, took out his note-book and made an entry with a pencil; and any spy who had been near enough would have heard him mumbling words as though he were a poet testing verses. The voice of the wheels was still faint, and it was plain the traveller had far outstripped his carriage.

He had drawn very near to where the Princess lay asleep, before his eye alighted on her; but when it did he started, pocketed his note-book, and approached. There was a milestone close to where she lay; and he sat down on that and coolly studied her. She lay upon one side, all curled and sunken, her brow on one bare arm, the other stretched out, limp and dimpled. Her young body, like a thing thrown down, had scarce a mark of life. Her breathing stirred her not. The deadliest fatigue was thus confessed in every language of the sleeping flesh. The traveller smiled grimly. As though he had looked upon a statue, he made a grudging inventory of her charms: the figure in that touching freedom of forgetfulness surprised him; the flush of slumber became her like a flower.

'Upon my word,' he thought, 'I did not think the girl could be so pretty. And to think,' he added, 'that I am under obligation not to use one word of this!' He put forth his stick and touched her; and at that she awoke, sat up with a cry, and looked upon him wildly.

'I trust your Highness has slept well,' he said, nodding.

But she only uttered sounds.

'Compose yourself,' said he, giving her certainly a brave example in his own demeanour. 'My chaise is close at hand; and I shall have, I trust, the singular entertainment of abducting a sovereign Princess.'

'Sir John!' she said, at last.

'At your Highness's disposal,' he replied.

She sprang to her feet. 'O!' she cried, 'have you come from Mittwalden?'

'This morning,' he returned, 'I left it; and if there is any one less likely to return to it than yourself, behold him!'

'The Baron — ' she began, and paused.

‘Madam,’ he answered, ‘it was well meant, and you are quite a Judith; but after the hours that have elapsed, you will probably be relieved to hear that he is fairly well. I took his news this morning ere I left. Doing fairly well, they said, but suffering acutely. Hey? — acutely. They could hear his groans in the next room.’

‘And the Prince,’ she asked, ‘is anything known of him?’

‘It is reported,’ replied Sir John, with the same pleasurable deliberation, ‘that upon that point your Highness is the best authority.’

‘Sir John,’ she said eagerly, ‘you were generous enough to speak about your carriage. Will you, I beseech you, will you take me to the Felsenburg? I have business there of an extreme importance.’

‘I can refuse you nothing,’ replied the old gentleman, gravely and seriously enough. ‘Whatever, madam, it is in my power to do for you, that shall be done with pleasure. As soon as my chaise shall overtake us, it is yours to carry you where you will. But,’ added he, reverting to his former manner, ‘I observe you ask me nothing of the Palace.’

‘I do not care,’ she said. ‘I thought I saw it burning.’

‘Prodigious!’ said the Baronet. ‘You thought? And can the loss of forty toilettes leave you cold? Well, madam, I admire your fortitude. And the state, too? As I left, the government was sitting, — the new government, of which at least two members must be known to you by name: Sabra, who had, I believe, the benefit of being formed in your employment — a footman, am I right? — and our old friend the Chancellor, in something of a subaltern position. But in these convulsions the last shall be first, and the first last.’

‘Sir John,’ she said, with an air of perfect honesty, ‘I am sure you mean most kindly, but these matters have no interest for me.’

The Baronet was so utterly discountenanced that he hailed the appearance of his chaise with welcome, and, by way of saying something, proposed that they should walk back to meet it. So it was done; and he helped her in with courtesy, mounted to her side, and from various receptacles (for the chaise was most completely fitted out) produced fruits and truffled liver, beautiful white bread, and a bottle of delicate wine. With these he served her like a father, coaxing and praising her to fresh exertions; and during all that time, as though silenced by the laws of hospitality, he was not guilty of the shadow of a sneer. Indeed his kindness seemed so genuine that Seraphina was moved to gratitude.

‘Sir John,’ she said, ‘you hate me in your heart; why are you so kind to me?’

‘Ah, my good lady,’ said he, with no disclaimer of the accusation, ‘I have the honour to be much your husband’s friend, and somewhat his admirer.’

‘You!’ she cried. ‘They told me you wrote cruelly of both of us.’

‘Such was the strange path by which we grew acquainted,’ said Sir John. ‘I had written, madam, with particular cruelty (since that shall be the phrase) of your fair self. Your husband set me at liberty, gave me a passport, ordered a carriage, and then, with the most boyish spirit, challenged me to fight. Knowing the nature of his married life, I thought the dash and loyalty he showed delightful. “Do not be afraid,” says he; “if I am killed, there is nobody to miss me.” It appears you subsequently thought of that yourself. But I digress. I explained to him it was impossible that I could fight! “Not if I strike you?” says he. Very droll; I wish I could have put it in my book. However, I was conquered, took the young gentleman to my high favour, and tore up my bits of scandal on the spot. That is one of the little favours, madam, that you owe your husband.’

Seraphina sat for some while in silence. She could bear to be misjudged without a pang by those whom she contemned; she had none of Otto’s eagerness to be approved, but went her own way straight and head in air. To Sir John, however, after what he had said, and as her husband’s friend, she was prepared to stoop.

‘What do you think of me?’ she asked abruptly.

‘I have told you already,’ said Sir John: ‘I think you want another glass of my good wine.’

‘Come,’ she said, ‘this is unlike you. You are not wont to be afraid. You say that you admire my husband: in his name, be honest.’

‘I admire your courage,’ said the Baronet. ‘Beyond that, as you have guessed, and indeed said, our natures are not sympathetic.’

‘You spoke of scandal,’ pursued Seraphina. ‘Was the scandal great?’

‘It was considerable,’ said Sir John.

‘And you believed it?’ she demanded.

‘O, madam,’ said Sir John, ‘the question!’

‘Thank you for that answer!’ cried Seraphina. ‘And now here, I will tell you, upon my honour, upon my soul, in spite of all the scandal in this world, I am as true a wife as ever stood.’

‘We should probably not agree upon a definition,’ observed Sir John.

‘O!’ she cried, ‘I have abominably used him — I know that; it is not that I mean. But if you admire my husband, I insist that you shall understand me: I can look him in the face without a blush.’

‘It may be, madam,’ said Sir John; ‘nor have I presumed to think the contrary.’

‘You will not believe me?’ she cried. ‘You think I am a guilty wife? You think he was my lover?’

‘Madam,’ returned the Baronet, ‘when I tore up my papers, I promised your good husband to concern myself no more with your affairs; and I assure you for the last time that I have no desire to judge you.’

‘But you will not acquit me! Ah!’ she cried, ‘*he* will — he knows me better!’

Sir John smiled.

‘You smile at my distress?’ asked Seraphina.

‘At your woman’s coolness,’ said Sir John. ‘A man would scarce have had the courage of that cry, which was, for all that, very natural, and I make no doubt quite true. But remark, madam — since you do me the honour to consult me gravely — I have no pity for what you call your distresses. You have been completely selfish, and now reap the consequence. Had you once thought of your husband, instead of singly thinking of yourself, you would not now have been alone, a fugitive, with blood upon your hands, and hearing from a morose old Englishman truth more bitter than scandal.’

‘I thank you,’ she said, quivering. ‘This is very true. Will you stop the carriage?’

‘No, child,’ said Sir John, ‘not until I see you mistress of yourself.’

There was a long pause, during which the carriage rolled by rock and woodland.

‘And now,’ she resumed, with perfect steadiness, ‘will you consider me composed? I request you, as a gentleman, to let me out.’

‘I think you do unwisely,’ he replied. ‘Continue, if you please, to use my carriage.’

‘Sir John,’ she said, ‘if death were sitting on that pile of stones, I would alight! I do not blame, I thank you; I now know how I appear to others; but sooner than draw breath beside a man who can so think of me, I would — O!’ she cried, and was silent.

Sir John pulled the string, alighted, and offered her his hand; but she refused the help.

The road had now issued from the valleys in which it had been winding, and come to that part of its course where it runs, like a cornice, along the brow of the steep northward face of Grünewald. The place where they had alighted was at a salient angle; a bold rock and some wind-tortured pine-trees overhung it from above; far below the blue plains lay forth and melted into heaven; and before them the road, by a succession of bold zigzags, was seen mounting to where a tower upon a tall cliff closed the view.

‘There,’ said the Baronet, pointing to the tower, ‘you see the Felsenburg, your goal. I wish you a good journey, and regret I cannot be of more assistance.’

He mounted to his place and gave a signal, and the carriage rolled away.

Seraphina stood by the wayside, gazing before her with blind eyes. Sir John she had dismissed already from her mind: she hated him, that was enough; for whatever Seraphina hated or contemned fell instantly to Lilliputian smallness, and was thenceforward steadily ignored in thought. And now she had matter for concern indeed. Her interview with Otto, which she had never yet forgiven him, began to appear before her in a very different light. He had come to her, still thrilling under recent insult, and not yet breathed from fighting her own cause; and how that knowledge changed the value of his words! Yes, he must have loved her! this was a brave feeling — it was no mere weakness of the will. And she, was she incapable of love? It would appear so; and she swallowed her tears, and yearned to see Otto, to explain all, to ask pity upon her knees for her transgressions, and, if all else were now beyond the reach of reparation, to restore at least the liberty of which she had deprived him.

Swiftly she sped along the highway, and, as the road wound out and in about the bluffs and gullies of the mountain, saw and lost by glimpses the tall tower that stood before and above her, purpled by the mountain air.

CHAPTER II — TREATS OF A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE

When Otto mounted to his rolling prison he found another occupant in a corner of the front seat; but as this person hung his head and the brightness of the carriage lamps shone outward, the Prince could only see it was a man. The Colonel followed his prisoner and clapped-to the door; and at that the four horses broke immediately into a swinging trot.

‘Gentlemen,’ said the Colonel, after some little while had passed, ‘if we are to travel in silence, we might as well be at home. I appear, of course, in an invidious character; but I am a man of taste, fond of books and solidly informing talk, and unfortunately condemned for life to the guard-room. Gentlemen, this is my chance: don’t spoil it for me. I have here the pick of the whole court, barring lovely woman; I have a great author in the person of the Doctor — ’

‘Gotthold!’ cried Otto.

‘It appears,’ said the Doctor bitterly, ‘that we must go together. Your Highness had not calculated upon that.’

‘What do you infer?’ cried Otto; ‘that I had you arrested?’

‘The inference is simple,’ said the Doctor.

‘Colonel Gordon,’ said the Prince, ‘oblige me so far, and set me right with Herr von Hohenstockwitz.’

‘Gentlemen,’ said the Colonel, ‘you are both arrested on the same warrant in the name of the Princess Seraphina, acting regent, countersigned by Prime Minister Freiherr von Gondremark, and dated the day before yesterday, the twelfth. I reveal to you the secrets of the prison-house,’ he added.

‘Otto,’ said Gotthold, ‘I ask you to pardon my suspicions.’

‘Gotthold,’ said the Prince, ‘I am not certain I can grant you that.’

‘Your Highness is, I am sure, far too magnanimous to hesitate,’ said the Colonel. ‘But allow me: we speak at home in my religion of the means of grace: and I now propose to offer them.’ So saying, the Colonel lighted a bright lamp which he attached to one side of the carriage, and from below the front seat produced a goodly basket adorned with the long necks of bottles. ‘*Tu spem reducis* — how does it go, Doctor?’ he asked gaily. ‘I am, in a sense, your host; and I am sure you are both far too considerate of my embarrassing position to refuse to do me honour. Gentlemen, I drink to the Prince!’

‘Colonel,’ said Otto, ‘we have a jovial entertainer. I drink to Colonel Gordon.’

Thereupon all three took their wine very pleasantly; and even as they did so, the carriage with a lurch turned into the high-road and began to make better speed.

All was bright within; the wine had coloured Gotthold's cheek; dim forms of forest trees, dwindling and spiring, scarves of the starry sky, now wide and now narrow, raced past the windows, through one that was left open the air of the woods came in with a nocturnal raciness; and the roll of wheels and the tune of the trotting horses sounded merrily on the ear. Toast followed toast; glass after glass was bowed across and emptied by the trio; and presently there began to fall upon them a luxurious spell, under the influence of which little but the sound of quiet and confidential laughter interrupted the long intervals of meditative silence.

'Otto,' said Gotthold, after one of these seasons of quiet, 'I do not ask you to forgive me. Were the parts reversed, I could not forgive you.'

'Well,' said Otto, 'it is a phrase we use. I do forgive you, but your words and your suspicions rankle; and not yours alone. It is idle, Colonel Gordon, in view of the order you are carrying out, to conceal from you the dissensions of my family; they have gone so far that they are now public property. Well, gentlemen, can I forgive my wife? I can, of course, and do; but in what sense? I would certainly not stoop to any revenge; as certainly I could not think of her but as one changed beyond my recognition.'

'Allow me,' returned the Colonel. 'You will permit me to hope that I am addressing Christians? We are all conscious, I trust, that we are miserable sinners.'

'I disown the consciousness,' said Gotthold. 'Warmed with this good fluid, I deny your thesis.'

'How, sir? You never did anything wrong? and I heard you asking pardon but this moment, not of your God, sir, but of a common fellow-worm!' the Colonel cried.

'I own you have me; you are expert in argument, Herr Oberst,' said the Doctor.

'Begad, sir, I am proud to hear you say so,' said the Colonel. 'I was well grounded indeed at Aberdeen. And as for this matter of forgiveness, it comes, sir, of loose views and (what is if anything more dangerous) a regular life. A sound creed and a bad morality, that's the root of wisdom. You two gentlemen are too good to be forgiving.'

'The paradox is somewhat forced,' said Gotthold.

'Pardon me, Colonel,' said the Prince; 'I readily acquit you of any design of offence, but your words bite like satire. Is this a time, do you think, when I can wish to hear myself called good, now that I am paying the penalty (and am willing like yourself to think it just) of my prolonged misconduct?'

‘O, pardon me!’ cried the Colonel. ‘You have never been expelled from the divinity hall; you have never been broke. I was: broke for a neglect of military duty. To tell you the open truth, your Highness, I was the worse of drink; it’s a thing I never do now,’ he added, taking out his glass. ‘But a man, you see, who has really tasted the defects of his own character, as I have, and has come to regard himself as a kind of blind teetotum knocking about life, begins to learn a very different view about forgiveness. I will talk of not forgiving others, sir, when I have made out to forgive myself, and not before; and the date is like to be a long one. My father, the Reverend Alexander Gordon, was a good man, and damned hard upon others. I am what they call a bad one, and that is just the difference. The man who cannot forgive any mortal thing is a green hand in life.’

‘And yet I have heard of you, Colonel, as a duellist,’ said Gotthold.

‘A different thing, sir,’ replied the soldier. ‘Professional etiquette. And I trust without unchristian feeling.’

Presently after the Colonel fell into a deep sleep and his companions looked upon each other, smiling.

‘An odd fish,’ said Gotthold.

‘And a strange guardian,’ said the Prince. ‘Yet what he said was true.’

‘Rightly looked upon,’ mused Gotthold, ‘it is ourselves that we cannot forgive, when we refuse forgiveness to our friend. Some strand of our own misdoing is involved in every quarrel.’

‘Are there not offences that disgrace the pardoner?’ asked Otto. ‘Are there not bounds of self-respect?’

‘Otto,’ said Gotthold, ‘does any man respect himself? To this poor waif of a soldier of fortune we may seem respectable gentlemen; but to ourselves, what are we unless a pasteboard portico and a deliquium of deadly weaknesses within?’

‘I? yes,’ said Otto; ‘but you, Gotthold — you, with your interminable industry, your keen mind, your books — serving mankind, scorning pleasures and temptations! You do not know how I envy you.’

‘Otto,’ said the Doctor, ‘in one word, and a bitter one to say: I am a secret tippler. Yes, I drink too much. The habit has robbed these very books, to which you praise my devotion, of the merits that they should have had. It has spoiled my temper. When I spoke to you the other day, how much of my warmth was in the cause of virtue? how much was the fever of last night’s wine? Ay, as my poor fellow-sot there said, and as I vaingloriously denied, we are all miserable sinners, put here for a moment, knowing the good, choosing the evil, standing naked and ashamed in the eye of God.’

‘Is it so?’ said Otto. ‘Why, then, what are we? Are the very best — ’

‘There is no best in man,’ said Gotthold. ‘I am not better, it is likely

I am not worse, than you or that poor sleeper. I was a sham, and now you know me: that is all.'

'And yet it has not changed my love,' returned Otto softly. 'Our misdeeds do not change us. Gotthold, fill your glass. Let us drink to what is good in this bad business; let us drink to our old affection; and, when we have done so, forgive your too just grounds of offence, and drink with me to my wife, whom I have so misused, who has so misused me, and whom I have left, I fear, I greatly fear, in danger. What matters it how bad we are, if others can still love us, and we can still love others?'

'Ay!' replied the Doctor. 'It is very well said. It is the true answer to the pessimist, and the standing miracle of mankind. So you still love me? and so you can forgive your wife? Why, then, we may bid conscience "Down, dog," like an ill-trained puppy yapping at shadows.'

The pair fell into silence, the Doctor tapping on his empty glass.

The carriage swung forth out of the valleys on that open balcony of high-road that runs along the front of Grünewald, looking down on Gerolstein. Far below, a white waterfall was shining to the stars from the falling skirts of forest, and beyond that, the night stood naked above the plain. On the other hand, the lamp-light skimmed the face of the precipices, and the dwarf pine-trees twinkled with all their needles, and were gone again into the wake. The granite roadway thundered under wheels and hoofs; and at times, by reason of its continual winding, Otto could see the escort on the other side of a ravine, riding well together in the night. Presently the Felsenburg came plainly in view, some way above them, on a bold projection of the mountain, and planting its bulk against the starry sky.

'See, Gotthold,' said the Prince, 'our destination.'

Gotthold awoke as from a trance.

'I was thinking,' said he, 'if there is any danger, why did you not resist? I was told you came of your free will; but should you not be there to help her?'

The colour faded from the Prince's cheeks.

CHAPTER III — PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE LAST

IN WHICH SHE GALLOPS OFF

When the busy Countess came forth from her interview with Seraphina, it is not too much to say that she was beginning to be terribly afraid. She paused in the corridor and reckoned up her doings with an eye to Gondremark. The fan was in requisition in an instant; but her disquiet was beyond the reach of fanning. ‘The girl has lost her head,’ she thought; and then dismally, ‘I have gone too far.’ She instantly decided on secession. Now the *Mons Sacer* of the Frau von Rosen was a certain rustic villa in the forest, called by herself, in a smart attack of poesy, Tannen Zauber, and by everybody else plain Kleinbrunn.

Thither, upon the thought, she furiously drove, passing Gondremark at the entrance to the Palace avenue, but feigning not to observe him; and as Kleinbrunn was seven good miles away, and in the bottom of a narrow dell, she passed the night without any rumour of the outbreak reaching her; and the glow of the conflagration was concealed by intervening hills. Frau von Rosen did not sleep well; she was seriously uneasy as to the results of her delightful evening, and saw herself condemned to quite a lengthy sojourn in her deserts and a long defensive correspondence, ere she could venture to return to Gondremark. On the other hand, she examined, by way of pastime, the deeds she had received from Otto; and even here saw cause for disappointment. In these troublous days she had no taste for landed property, and she was convinced, besides, that Otto had paid dearer than the farm was worth. Lastly, the order for the Prince’s release fairly burned her meddling fingers.

All things considered, the next day beheld an elegant and beautiful lady, in a riding-habit and a flapping hat, draw bridle at the gate of the Felsenburg, not perhaps with any clear idea of her purpose, but with her usual experimental views on life. Governor Gordon, summoned to the gate, welcomed the omnipotent Countess with his most gallant bearing, though it was wonderful how old he looked in the morning.

‘Ah, Governor,’ she said, ‘we have surprises for you, sir,’ and nodded at him meaningly.

‘Eh, madam, leave me my prisoners,’ he said; ‘and if you will but join the band, begad, I’ll be happy for life.’

‘You would spoil me, would you not?’ she asked.

‘I would try, I would try,’ returned the Governor, and he offered her his arm.

She took it, picked up her skirt, and drew him close to her. ‘I have come to see the Prince,’ she said. ‘Now, infidel! on business. A message from that stupid Gondremark, who keeps me running like a courier. Do I look like one, Herr Gordon?’ And she planted her eyes in him.

‘You look like an angel, ma’am,’ returned the Governor, with a great air of finished gallantry.

The Countess laughed. ‘An angel on horseback!’ she said. ‘Quick work.’

‘You came, you saw, you conquered,’ flourished Gordon, in high good humour with his own wit and grace. ‘We toasted you, madam, in the carriage, in an excellent good glass of wine; toasted you fathom deep; the finest woman, with, begad, the finest eyes in Grünewald. I never saw the like of them but once, in my own country, when I was a young fool at College: Thomasina Haig her name was. I give you my word of honour, she was as like you as two peas.’

‘And so you were merry in the carriage?’ asked the Countess, gracefully dissembling a yawn.

‘We were; we had a very pleasant conversation; but we took perhaps a glass more than that fine fellow of a Prince has been accustomed to,’ said the Governor; ‘and I observe this morning that he seems a little off his mettle. We’ll get him mellow again ere bedtime. This is his door.’

‘Well,’ she whispered, ‘let me get my breath. No, no; wait. Have the door ready to open.’ And the Countess, standing like one inspired, shook out her fine voice in ‘Lascia ch’io pianga’; and when she had reached the proper point, and lyrically uttered forth her sighings after liberty, the door, at a sign, was flung wide open, and she swam into the Prince’s sight, bright-eyed, and with her colour somewhat freshened by the exercise of singing. It was a great dramatic entrance, and to the somewhat doleful prisoner within the sight was sunshine.

‘Ah, madam,’ he cried, running to her — ’you here!’

She looked meaningly at Gordon; and as soon as the door was closed she fell on Otto’s neck. ‘To see you here!’ she moaned and clung to him.

But the Prince stood somewhat stiffly in that enviable situation, and the Countess instantly recovered from her outburst.

‘Poor child,’ she said, ‘poor child! Sit down beside me here, and tell me all about it. My heart really bleeds to see you. How does time go?’

‘Madam,’ replied the Prince, sitting down beside her, his gallantry recovered, ‘the time will now go all too quickly till you leave. But I must ask you for the news. I have most bitterly condemned myself for my inertia of last night. You wisely counselled me; it was my duty to resist. You wisely and nobly counselled me; I have since thought of it with wonder. You have a noble heart.'

'Otto,' she said, 'spare me. Was it even right, I wonder? I have duties, too, you poor child; and when I see you they all melt — all my good resolutions fly away.'

'And mine still come too late,' he replied, sighing. 'O, what would I not give to have resisted? What would I not give for freedom?'

'Well, what would you give?' she asked; and the red fan was spread; only her eyes, as if from over battlements, brightly surveyed him.

'I? What do you mean? Madam, you have some news for me,' he cried.

'O, O!' said madam dubiously.

He was at her feet. 'Do not trifle with my hopes,' he pleaded. 'Tell me, dearest Madame von Rosen, tell me! You cannot be cruel: it is not in your nature. Give? I can give nothing; I have nothing; I can only plead in mercy.'

'Do not,' she said; 'it is not fair. Otto, you know my weakness. Spare me. Be generous.'

'O, madam,' he said, 'it is for you to be generous, to have pity.' He took her hand and pressed it; he plied her with caresses and appeals. The Countess had a most enjoyable sham siege, and then relented. She sprang to her feet, she tore her dress open, and, all warm from her bosom, threw the order on the floor.

'There!' she cried. 'I forced it from her. Use it, and I am ruined!' And she turned away as if to veil the force of her emotions.

Otto sprang upon the paper, read it, and cried out aloud. 'O, God bless her!' he said, 'God bless her.' And he kissed the writing.

Von Rosen was a singularly good-natured woman, but her part was now beyond her. 'Ingrate!' she cried; 'I wrung it from her, I betrayed my trust to get it, and 'tis she you thank!'

'Can you blame me?' said the Prince. 'I love her.'

'I see that,' she said. 'And I?'

'You, Madame von Rosen? You are my dearest, my kindest, and most generous of friends,' he said, approaching her. 'You would be a perfect friend, if you were not so lovely. You have a great sense of humour, you cannot be unconscious of your charm, and you amuse yourself at times by playing on my weakness; and at times I can take pleasure in the comedy. But not to-day: to-day you will be the true, the serious, the manly friend, and you will suffer me to forget that you are lovely and that I am weak. Come, dear Countess, let me to-day repose in you entirely.'

He held out his hand, smiling, and she took it frankly. 'I vow you have bewitched me,' she said; and then with a laugh, 'I break my staff!' she added; 'and I must pay you my best compliment. You made a difficult speech. You are as adroit, dear Prince, as I am — charming.' And as she said the word with a great curtsey, she justified it.

'You hardly keep the bargain, madam, when you make yourself so beautiful,' said the Prince, bowing.

'It was my last arrow,' she returned. 'I am disarmed. Blank cartridge, *O mon Prince*! And now I tell you, if you choose to leave this prison, you can, and I am ruined. Choose!'

'Madame von Rosen,' replied Otto, 'I choose, and I will go. My duty points me, duty still neglected by this Featherhead. But do not fear to be a loser. I propose instead that you should take me with you, a bear in chains, to Baron Gondremark. I am become perfectly unscrupulous: to save my wife I will do all, all he can ask or fancy. He shall be filled; were he huge as leviathan and greedy as the grave, I will content him. And you, the fairy of our pantomime, shall have the credit.'

'Done!' she cried. 'Admirable! Prince Charming no longer — Prince Sorcerer, Prince Solon! Let us go this moment. Stay,' she cried, pausing. 'I beg dear Prince, to give you back these deeds. 'Twas you who liked the farm — I have not seen it; and it was you who wished to benefit the peasants. And, besides,' she added, with a comical change of tone, 'I should prefer the ready money.'

Both laughed. 'Here I am, once more a farmer,' said Otto, accepting the papers, 'but overwhelmed in debt.'

The Countess touched a bell, and the Governor appeared.

'Governor,' she said, 'I am going to elope with his Highness. The result of our talk has been a thorough understanding, and the *coup d'état* is over. Here is the order.'

Colonel Gordon adjusted silver spectacles upon his nose. 'Yes,' he said, 'the Princess: very right. But the warrant, madam, was countersigned.'

'By Heinrich!' said von Rosen. 'Well, and here am I to represent him.'

'Well, your Highness,' resumed the soldier of fortune, 'I must congratulate you upon my loss. You have been cut out by beauty, and I am left lamenting. The Doctor still remains to me: *probus, doctus, lepidus, jucundus*: a man of books.'

'Ay, there is nothing about poor Gotthold,' said the Prince.

'The Governor's consolation? Would you leave him bare?' asked von Rosen.

'And, your Highness,' resumed Gordon, 'may I trust that in the course of this temporary obscuration, you have found me discharge my part with suitable respect and, I may add, tact? I adopted purposely a cheerfulness of manner; mirth, it appeared to me, and a good glass of wine, were the fit alleviations.'

'Colonel,' said Otto, holding out his hand, 'your society was of itself enough. I do not merely thank you for your pleasant spirits; I have to thank you, besides, for some philosophy, of which I stood in need. I trust I do not see you for the last time; and in the meanwhile, as a memento of our strange acquaintance, let me offer you these verses on which I was but now engaged. I am so little of a poet, and was so ill inspired by prison bars, that they have some claim to be at least a curiosity.'

The Colonel's countenance lighted as he took the paper; the silver spectacles were hurriedly replaced. 'Ha!' he said, 'Alexandrines, the tragic metre. I shall cherish this, your Highness, like a relic; no more suitable offering, although I say it, could be made. "*Dieux de l'immense plaine et des vastes forêts*." Very good,' he said, 'very good indeed! "*Et du geôlier lui-même apprendre des leçons*." Most handsome, begad!'

'Come, Governor,' cried the Countess, 'you can read his poetry when we are gone. Open your grudging portals.'

'I ask your pardon,' said the Colonel. 'To a man of my character and tastes, these verses, this handsome reference — most moving, I assure you. Can I offer you an escort?'

'No, no,' replied the Countess. 'We go incogniti, as we arrived. We ride together; the Prince will take my servant's horse. Hurry and privacy, Herr Oberst, that is all we seek.' And she began impatiently to lead the way.

But Otto had still to bid farewell to Dr. Gotthold; and the Governor following, with his spectacles in one hand and the paper in the other, had still to communicate his treasured verses, piece by piece, as he succeeded in deciphering the manuscript, to all he came across; and still his enthusiasm mounted. 'I declare,' he cried at last, with the air of one who has at length divined a mystery, 'they remind me of Robbie Burns!'

But there is an end to all things; and at length Otto was walking by the side of Madame von Rosen, along that mountain wall, her servant following with both the horses, and all about them sunlight, and breeze, and flying bird, and the vast regions of the air, and the capacious prospect: wildwood and climbing pinnacle, and the sound and voice of mountain torrents, at their hand: and far below them, green melting into sapphire on the plains.

They walked at first in silence; for Otto's mind was full of the delight of liberty and nature, and still, betweenwhiles, he was preparing his interview with Gondremark. But when the first rough promontory of the rock was turned, and the Felsenburg concealed behind its bulk, the lady paused.

‘Here,’ she said, ‘I will dismount poor Karl, and you and I must ply our spurs. I love a wild ride with a good companion.’

As she spoke, a carriage came into sight round the corner next below them in the order of the road. It came heavily creaking, and a little ahead of it a traveller was soberly walking, note-book in hand.

‘It is Sir John,’ cried Otto, and he hailed him.

The Baronet pocketed his note-book, stared through an eye-glass, and then waved his stick; and he on his side, and the Countess and the Prince on theirs, advanced with somewhat quicker steps. They met at the re-entrant angle, where a thin stream sprayed across a boulder and was scattered in rain among the brush; and the Baronet saluted the Prince with much punctilio. To the Countess, on the other hand, he bowed with a kind of sneering wonder.

‘Is it possible, madam, that you have not heard the news?’ he asked.

‘What news?’ she cried.

‘News of the first order,’ returned Sir John: ‘a revolution in the State, a Republic declared, the palace burned to the ground, the Princess in flight, Gondremark wounded — ’

‘Heinrich wounded?’ she screamed.

‘Wounded and suffering acutely,’ said Sir John. ‘His groans — ’

There fell from the lady’s lips an oath so potent that, in smoother hours, it would have made her hearers jump. She ran to her horse, scrambled to the saddle, and, yet half seated, dashed down the road at full gallop. The groom, after a pause of wonder, followed her. The rush of her impetuous passage almost scared the carriage horses over the verge of the steep hill; and still she clattered further, and the crags echoed to her flight, and still the groom flogged vainly in pursuit of her. At the fourth corner, a woman trailing slowly up leaped back with a cry and escaped death by a hand’s-breadth. But the Countess wasted neither glance nor thought upon the incident. Out and in, about the bluffs of the mountain wall, she fled, loose-reined, and still the groom toiled in her pursuit.

‘A most impulsive lady!’ said Sir John. ‘Who would have thought she cared for him?’ And before the words were uttered, he was struggling in the Prince’s grasp.

‘My wife! the Princess? What of her?’

‘She is down the road,’ he gasped. ‘I left her twenty minutes back.’

And next moment, the choked author stood alone, and the Prince on foot was racing down the hill behind the Countess.

CHAPTER IV — BABES IN THE WOOD

While the feet of the Prince continued to run swiftly, his heart, which had at first by far outstripped his running, soon began to linger and hang back. Not that he ceased to pity the misfortune or to yearn for the sight of Seraphina; but the memory of her obdurate coldness awoke within him, and woke in turn his own habitual diffidence of self. Had Sir John been given time to tell him all, had he even known that she was speeding to the Felsenburg, he would have gone to her with ardour. As it was, he began to see himself once more intruding, profiting, perhaps, by her misfortune, and now that she was fallen, proffering unloved caresses to the wife who had spurned him in prosperity. The sore spots upon his vanity began to burn; once more, his anger assumed the carriage of a hostile generosity; he would utterly forgive indeed; he would help, save, and comfort his unloving wife; but all with distant self-denial, imposing silence on his heart, respecting Seraphina's disaffection as he would the innocence of a child. So, when at length he turned a corner and beheld the Princess, it was his first thought to reassure her of the purity of his respect, and he at once ceased running and stood still. She, upon her part, began to run to him with a little cry; then, seeing him pause, she paused also, smitten with remorse; and at length, with the most guilty timidity, walked nearly up to where he stood.

'Otto,' she said, 'I have ruined all!'

'Seraphina!' he cried with a sob, but did not move, partly withheld by his resolutions, partly struck stupid at the sight of her weariness and disorder. Had she stood silent, they had soon been locked in an embrace. But she too had prepared herself against the interview, and must spoil the golden hour with protestations.

'All!' she went on, 'I have ruined all! But, Otto, in kindness you must hear me — not justify, but own, my faults. I have been taught so cruelly; I have had such time for thought, and see the world so changed. I have been blind, stone-blind; I have let all true good go by me, and lived on shadows. But when this dream fell, and I had betrayed you, and thought I had killed — ' She paused. 'I thought I had killed Gondremark,' she said with a deep flush, 'and I found myself alone, as you said.'

The mention of the name of Gondremark pricked the Princes generosity like a spur. 'Well,' he cried, 'and whose fault was it but mine? It was my duty to be beside you, loved or not. But I was a skulker in the grain, and found it easier to desert than to oppose you. I could never learn that better part of love, to fight love's battles. But yet the love was there. And now when this toy kingdom of ours has fallen, first of all by my demerits, and next by your inexperience, and we are here alone together, as poor as Job and merely a man and a woman — let me conjure you to forgive the weakness and to repose in the love. Do not mistake me!' he cried, seeing her about to speak, and imposing silence with uplifted hand. 'My love is changed; it is purged of any conjugal pretension; it does not ask, does not hope, does not wish for a return in kind. You may forget for ever that part in which you found me so distasteful, and accept without embarrassment the affection of a brother.'

'You are too generous, Otto,' she said. 'I know that I have forfeited your love. I cannot take this sacrifice. You had far better leave me. O, go away, and leave me to my fate!'

'O no!' said Otto; 'we must first of all escape out of this hornet's nest, to which I led you. My honour is engaged. I said but now we were as poor as Job; and behold! not many miles from here I have a house of my own to which I will conduct you. Otto the Prince being down, we must try what luck remains to Otto the Hunter. Come, Seraphina; show that you forgive me, and let us set about this business of escape in the best spirits possible. You used to say, my dear, that, except as a husband and a prince, I was a pleasant fellow. I am neither now, and you may like my company without remorse. Come, then; it were idle to be captured. Can you still walk? Forth, then,' said he, and he began to lead the way.

A little below where they stood, a good-sized brook passed below the road, which overleapt it in a single arch. On one bank of that loquacious water a foot-path descended a green dell. Here it was rocky and stony, and lay on the steep scarps of the ravine; here it was choked with brambles; and there, in fairy haughs, it lay for a few paces evenly on the green turf. Like a sponge, the hillside oozed with well-water. The burn kept growing both in force and volume; at every leap it fell with heavier plunges and span more widely in the pool. Great had been the labours of that stream, and great and agreeable the changes it had wrought. It had cut through dykes of stubborn rock, and now, like a blowing dolphin, spouted through the orifice; along all its humble coasts, it had undermined and rafted-down the goodlier timber of the forest; and on these rough clearings it now set and tended primrose gardens, and planted woods of willow, and made a favourite of the silver birch. Through all these friendly features the path, its human acolyte, conducted our two wanderers downward, — Otto before, still pausing at the more difficult passages to lend assistance; the Princess following. From time to time, when he turned to help her, her face would lighten upon his — her eyes, half desperately, woo him. He saw, but dared not understand. 'She does not love me,' he told himself, with magnanimity. 'This is remorse or gratitude; I were no gentleman, no, nor yet a man, if I presumed upon these pitiful concessions.'

Some way down the glen, the stream, already grown to a good bulk of water, was rudely dammed across, and about a third of it abducted in a wooden trough. Gaily the pure water, air's first cousin, fleeted along the rude aqueduct, whose sides and floor it had made green with grasses. The path, bearing it close company, threaded a wilderness of briar and wild-rose. And presently, a little in front, the brown top of a mill and the tall mill-wheel, spraying diamonds, arose in the narrows of the glen; at the same time the snoring music of the saws broke the silence.

The miller, hearing steps, came forth to his door, and both he and Otto started.

'Good-morning, miller,' said the Prince. 'You were right, it seems, and I was wrong. I give you the news, and bid you to Mittwalden. My throne has fallen — great was the fall of it! — and your good friends of the Phoenix bear the rule.'

The red-faced miller looked supreme astonishment. 'And your Highness?' he gasped.

'My Highness is running away,' replied Otto, 'straight for the frontier.'

'Leaving Grünewald?' cried the man. 'Your father's son? It's not to be permitted!'

'Do you arrest us, friend?' asked Otto, smiling.

'Arrest you? I?' exclaimed the man. 'For what does your Highness take me? Why, sir, I make sure there is not a man in Grünewald would lay hands upon you.'

'O, many, many,' said the Prince; 'but from you, who were bold with me in my greatness, I should even look for aid in my distress.'

The miller became the colour of beetroot. 'You may say so indeed,' said he. 'And meanwhile, will you and your lady step into my house.'

'We have not time for that,' replied the Prince; 'but if you would oblige us with a cup of wine without here, you will give a pleasure and a service, both in one.'

The miller once more coloured to the nape. He hastened to bring forth wine in a pitcher and three bright crystal tumblers. 'Your Highness must not suppose,' he said, as he filled them, 'that I am an habitual drinker. The time when I had the misfortune to encounter you, I was a trifle overtaken, I allow; but a more sober man than I am in my ordinary, I do not know where you are to look for; and even this glass that I drink to you (and to the lady) is quite an unusual recreation.'

The wine was drunk with due rustic courtesies; and then, refusing further hospitality, Otto and Seraphina once more proceeded to descend the glen, which now began to open and to be invaded by the taller trees.

‘I owed that man a reparation,’ said the Prince; ‘for when we met I was in the wrong and put a sore affront upon him. I judge by myself, perhaps; but I begin to think that no one is the better for a humiliation.’

‘But some have to be taught so,’ she replied.

‘Well, well,’ he said, with a painful embarrassment. ‘Well, well. But let us think of safety. My miller is all very good, but I do not pin my faith to him. To follow down this stream will bring us, but after innumerable windings, to my house. Here, up this glade, there lies a cross-cut — the world’s end for solitude — the very deer scarce visit it. Are you too tired, or could you pass that way?’

‘Choose the path, Otto. I will follow you,’ she said.

‘No,’ he replied, with a singular imbecility of manner and appearance, ‘but I meant the path was rough. It lies, all the way, by glade and dingle, and the dingles are both deep and thorny.’

‘Lead on,’ she said. ‘Are you not Otto the Hunter?’

They had now burst across a veil of underwood, and were come into a lawn among the forest, very green and innocent, and solemnly surrounded by trees. Otto paused on the margin, looking about him with delight; then his glance returned to Seraphina, as she stood framed in that silvan pleasantness and looking at her husband with undecipherable eyes. A weakness both of the body and mind fell on him like the beginnings of sleep; the cords of his activity were relaxed, his eyes clung to her. ‘Let us rest,’ he said; and he made her sit down, and himself sat down beside her on the slope of an inconsiderable mound.

She sat with her eyes downcast, her slim hand dabbling in grass, like a maid waiting for love’s summons. The sound of the wind in the forest swelled and sank, and drew near them with a running rush, and died away and away in the distance into fainting whispers. Nearer hand, a bird out of the deep covert uttered broken and anxious notes. All this seemed but a halting prelude to speech. To Otto it seemed as if the whole frame of nature were waiting for his words; and yet his pride kept him silent. The longer he watched that slender and pale hand plucking at the grasses, the harder and rougher grew the fight between pride and its kindly adversary.

‘Seraphina,’ he said at last, ‘it is right you should know one thing: I never . . .’ He was about to say ‘doubted you,’ but was that true? And, if true, was it generous to speak of it? Silence succeeded.

‘I pray you, tell it me,’ she said; ‘tell it me, in pity.’

‘I mean only this,’ he resumed, ‘that I understand all, and do not blame you. I understand how the brave woman must look down on the weak man. I think you were wrong in some things; but I have tried to understand it, and I do. I do not need to forget or to forgive, Seraphina, for I have understood.'

'I know what I have done,' she said. 'I am not so weak that I can be deceived with kind speeches. I know what I have been — I see myself. I am not worth your anger, how much less to be forgiven! In all this downfall and misery, I see only me and you: you, as you have been always; me, as I was — me, above all! O yes, I see myself: and what can I think?'

'Ah, then, let us reverse the parts!' said Otto. 'It is ourselves we cannot forgive, when we deny forgiveness to another — so a friend told me last night. On these terms, Seraphina, you see how generously *I* have forgiven myself. But am not I to be forgiven? Come, then, forgive yourself — and me.'

She did not answer in words, but reached out her hand to him quickly. He took it; and as the smooth fingers settled and nestled in his, love ran to and fro between them in tender and transforming currents.

'Seraphina,' he cried, 'O, forget the past! Let me serve and help you; let me be your servant; it is enough for me to serve you and to be near you; let me be near you, dear — do not send me away.' He hurried his pleading like the speech of a frightened child. 'It is not love,' he went on; 'I do not ask for love; my love is enough . . .'

'Otto!' she said, as if in pain.

He looked up into her face. It was wrung with the very ecstasy of tenderness and anguish; on her features, and most of all in her changed eyes, there shone the very light of love.

'Seraphina?' he cried aloud, and with a sudden, tuneless voice, 'Seraphina?'

'Look round you at this glade,' she cried, 'and where the leaves are coming on young trees, and the flowers begin to blossom. This is where we meet, meet for the first time; it is so much better to forget and to be born again. O what a pit there is for sins — God's mercy, man's oblivion!'

'Seraphina,' he said, 'let it be so, indeed; let all that was be merely the abuse of dreaming; let me begin again, a stranger. I have dreamed, in a long dream, that I adored a girl unkind and beautiful; in all things my superior, but still cold, like ice. And again I dreamed, and thought she changed and melted, glowed and turned to me. And I — who had no merit but a love, slavish and unerect — lay close, and durst not move for fear of waking.'

'Lie close,' she said, with a deep thrill of speech.

So they spake in the spring woods; and meanwhile, in Mittwalden Rath-haus, the Republic was declared.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL POSTSCRIPT TO COMPLETE THE STORY

The reader well informed in modern history will not require details as to the fate of the Republic. The best account is to be found in the memoirs of Herr Greisengesang (7 Bände: Leipzig), by our passing acquaintance the licentiate Roederer. Herr Roederer, with too much of an author's licence, makes a great figure of his hero — poses him, indeed, to be the centre-piece and cloud-compeller of the whole. But, with due allowance for this bias, the book is able and complete.

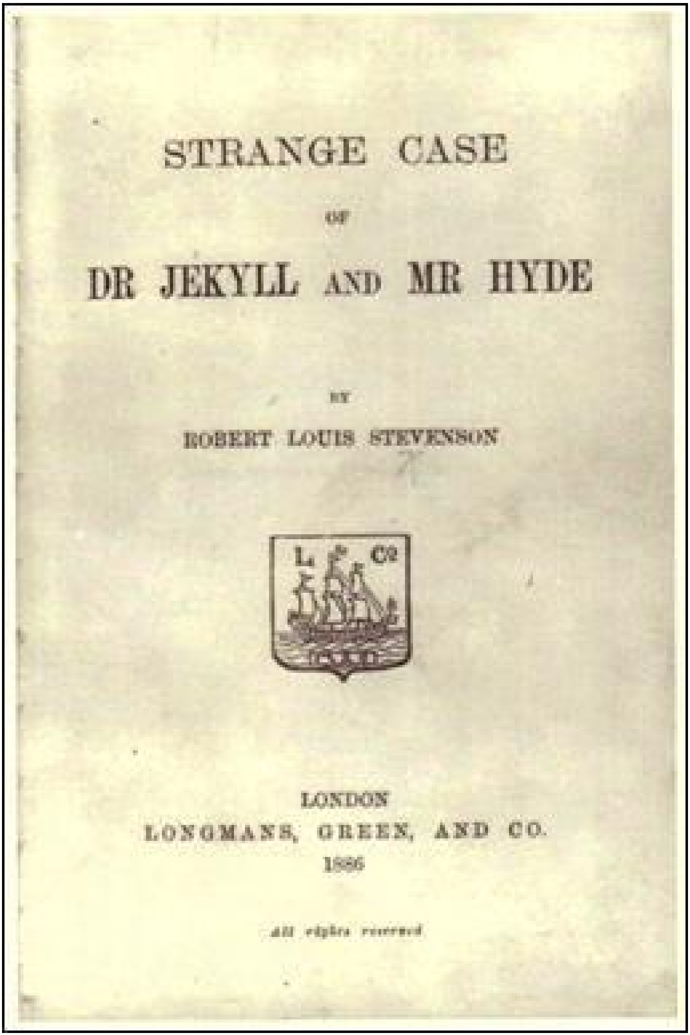
The reader is of course acquainted with the vigorous and bracing pages of Sir John (2 vols., London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown). Sir John, who plays but a tooth-comb in the orchestra of this historical romance, blows in his own book the big bassoon. His character is there drawn at large; and the sympathy of Landor has countersigned the admiration of the public. One point, however, calls for explanation; the chapter on Grünewald was torn by the hand of the author in the palace gardens; how comes it, then, to figure at full length among my more modest pages, the Lion of the caravan? That eminent literatus was a man of method; 'Juvenal by double entry,' he was once profanely called; and when he tore the sheets in question, it was rather, as he has since explained, in the search for some dramatic evidence of his sincerity, than with the thought of practical deletion. At that time, indeed, he was possessed of two blotted scrolls and a fair copy in double. But the chapter, as the reader knows, was honestly omitted from the famous 'Memoirs on the various Courts of Europe.' It has been mine to give it to the public.

Bibliography still helps us with a further glimpse of our characters. I have here before me a small volume (printed for private circulation: no printer's name; n.d.), 'Poésies par Frédéric et Amélie.' Mine is a presentation copy, obtained for me by Mr. Bain in the Haymarket; and the name of the first owner is written on the fly-leaf in the hand of Prince Otto himself. The modest epigraph — 'Le rime n'est pas riche' — may be attributed, with a good show of likelihood, to the same collaborator. It is strikingly appropriate, and I have found the volume very dreary. Those pieces in which I seem to trace the hand of the Princess are particularly dull and conscientious. But the booklet had a fair success with that public for which it was designed; and I have come across some evidences of a second venture of the same sort, now unprocurable. Here, at least, we may take leave of Otto and Seraphina — what do I say? of Frédéric and Amélie — ageing together peaceably at the court of the wife's father, jingling French rhymes and correcting joint proofs.

Still following the book-lists, I perceive that Mr. Swinburne has dedicated a rousing lyric and some vigorous sonnets to the memory of Gondremark; that name appears twice at least in Victor Hugo’s trumpet-blasts of patriot enumeration; and I came latterly, when I supposed my task already ended, on a trace of the fallen politician and his Countess. It is in the ‘Diary of J. Hogg Cotterill, Esq.’ (that very interesting work). Mr. Cotterill, being at Naples, is introduced (May 27th) to ‘a Baron and Baroness Gondremark — he a man who once made a noise — she still beautiful — both witty. She complimented me much upon my French — should never have known me to be English — had known my uncle, Sir John, in Germany — recognised in me, as a family trait, some of his *grand air* and studious courtesy — asked me to call.’ And again (May 30th), ‘visited the Baronne de Gondremark — much gratified — a most *refined, intelligent* woman, quite of the old school, now, *hélas*! extinct — had read my *Remarks on Sicily* — it reminds her of my uncle, but with more of grace — I feared she thought there was less energy — assured no — a softer style of presentation, more of the *literary grace*, but the same firm grasp of circumstance and force of thought — in short, just Buttonhole’s opinion. Much encouraged. I have a real esteem for this patrician lady.’ The acquaintance lasted some time; and when Mr. Cotterill left in the suite of Lord Protocol, and, as he is careful to inform us, in Admiral Yardarm’s flag-ship, one of his chief causes of regret is to leave ‘that most *spirituelle* and sympathetic lady, who already regards me as a younger brother.’

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

This famous novella was first published in 1886. It tells the story of a London lawyer named Gabriel John Utterson who investigates strange occurrences between his old friend, Dr Henry Jekyll, and the misanthropic Edward Hyde. The story is commonly associated with the mental condition called a “split personality”, where the same person has at least two distinct personalities. In this case, the two personalities in Dr Jekyll are apparently good and evil, with completely opposite views of morality. Due to the novel’s fame, the phrase “Jekyll and Hyde” has become a part of everyday speech. The novella was an immediate success and it is one of Stevenson’s most popular works.



STRANGE CASE

OF

DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE

BY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1886

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Title page of the first edition

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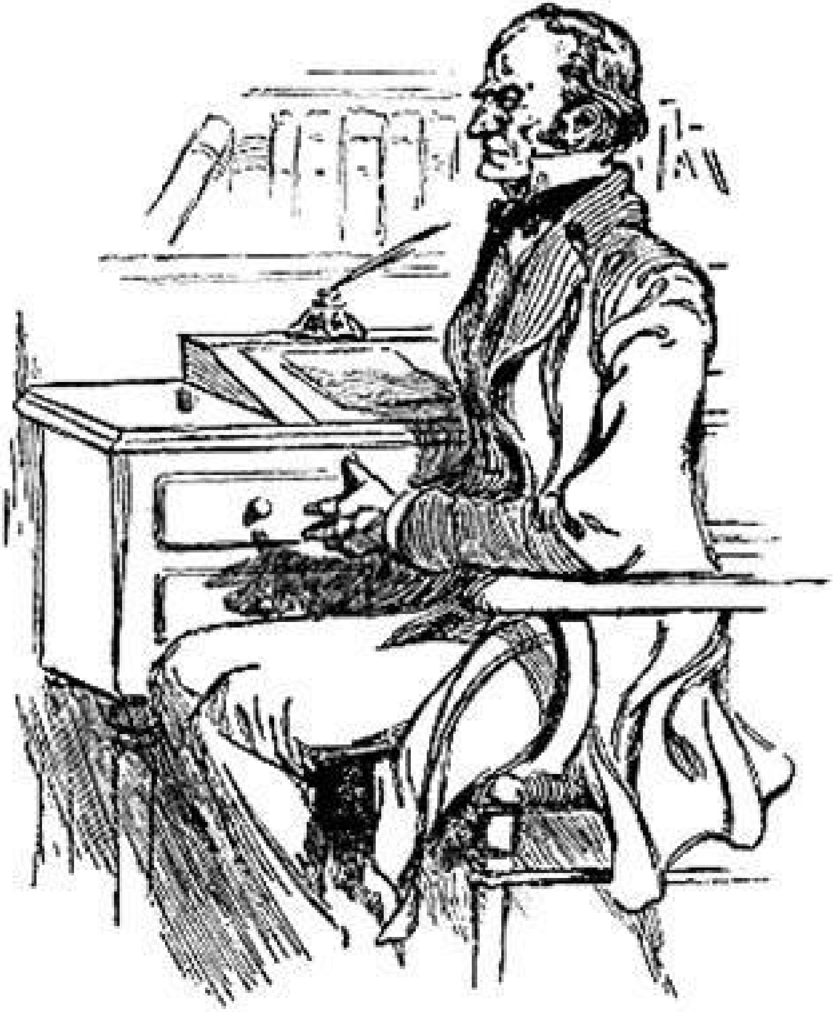
STORY OF THE DOOR

Mr. Utterson the lawyer was a man of a rugged countenance that was never lighted by a smile; cold, scanty and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment; lean, long, dusty, dreary and yet somehow lovable. At friendly meetings, and when the wine was to his taste, something eminently human beaconed from his eye; something indeed which never found its way into his talk, but which spoke not only in these silent symbols of the after-dinner face, but more often and loudly in the acts of his life. He was austere with himself; drank gin when he was alone, to mortify a taste for vintages; and though he enjoyed the theater, had not crossed the doors of one for twenty years. But he had an approved tolerance for others; sometimes wondering, almost with envy, at the high pressure of spirits involved in their misdeeds; and in any extremity inclined to help rather than to reprove. “I incline to Cain’s heresy,” he used to say quaintly: “I let my brother go to the devil in his own way.” In this character, it was frequently his fortune to be the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of downgoing men. And to such as these, so long as they came about his chambers, he never marked a shade of change in his demeanour.



No doubt the feat was easy to Mr. Utterson; for he was undemonstrative at the best, and even his friendship seemed to be founded in a similar catholicity of good-nature. It is the mark of a modest man to accept his friendly circle ready-made from the hands of opportunity; and that was the lawyer's way. His friends were those of his own blood or those whom he had known the longest; his affections, like ivy, were the growth of time, they implied no aptness in the object. Hence, no doubt the bond that united him to Mr. Richard Enfield, his distant kinsman, the well-known man about town. It was a nut to crack for many, what these two could see in each other, or what subject they could find in common. It was reported by those who encountered them in their Sunday walks, that they said nothing, looked singularly dull and would hail with obvious relief the appearance of a friend. For all that, the two men put the greatest store by these excursions, counted them the chief jewel of each week, and not only set aside occasions of pleasure, but even resisted the calls of business, that they might enjoy them uninterrupted.

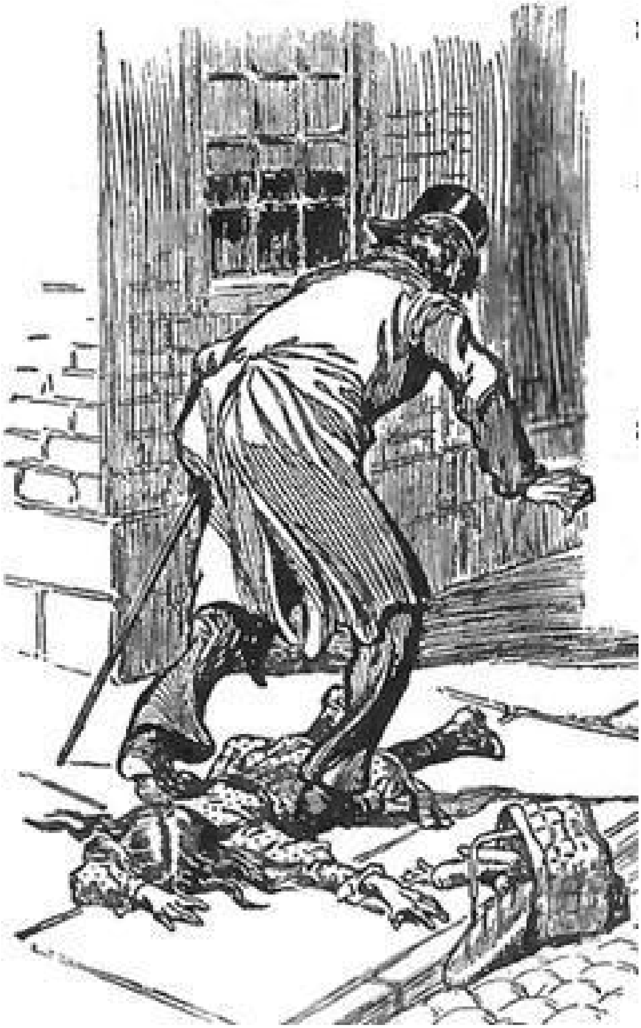
It chanced on one of these rambles that their way led them down a by-street in a busy quarter of London. The street was small and what is called quiet, but it drove a thriving trade on the weekdays. The inhabitants were all doing well, it seemed and all emulously hoping to do better still, and laying out the surplus of their grains in coquetry; so that the shop fronts stood along that thoroughfare with an air of invitation, like rows of smiling saleswomen. Even on Sunday, when it veiled its more florid charms and lay comparatively empty of passage, the street shone out in contrast to its dingy neighbourhood, like a fire in a forest; and with its freshly painted shutters, well-polished brasses, and general cleanliness and gaiety of note, instantly caught and pleased the eye of the passenger.

Two doors from one corner, on the left hand going east the line was broken by the entry of a court; and just at that point a certain sinister block of building thrust forward its gable on the street. It was two storeys high; showed no window, nothing but a door on the lower storey and a blind forehead of discoloured wall on the upper; and bore in every feature, the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence. The door, which was equipped with neither bell nor knocker, was blistered and distained. Tramps slouched into the recess and struck matches on the panels; children kept shop upon the steps; the schoolboy had tried his knife on the mouldings; and for close on a generation, no one had appeared to drive away these random visitors or to repair their ravages.

Mr. Enfield and the lawyer were on the other side of the by-street; but when they came abreast of the entry, the former lifted up his cane and pointed.

“Did you ever remark that door?” he asked; and when his companion had replied in the affirmative. “It is connected in my mind,” added he, “with a very odd story.”

“Indeed?” said Mr. Utterson, with a slight change of voice, “and what was that?”



“Well, it was this way,” returned Mr. Enfield: “I was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o’clock of a black winter morning, and my way lay through a part of town where there was literally nothing to be seen but lamps. Street after street and all the folks asleep — street after street, all lighted up as if for a procession and all as empty as a church — till at last I got into that state of mind when a man listens and listens and begins to long for the sight of a policeman. All at once, I saw two figures: one a little man who was stumping along eastward at a good walk, and the other a girl of maybe eight or ten who was running as hard as she was able down a cross street. Well, sir, the two ran into one another naturally enough at the corner; and then came the horrible part of the thing; for the man trampled calmly over the child’s body and left her screaming on the ground. It sounds nothing to hear, but it was hellish to see. It wasn’t like a man; it was like some damned Juggernaut. I gave a few halloa, took to my heels, collared my gentleman, and brought him back to where there was already quite a group about the screaming child. He was perfectly cool and made no resistance, but gave me one look, so ugly that it brought out the sweat on me like running. The people who had turned out were the girl's own family; and pretty soon, the doctor, for whom she had been sent put in his appearance. Well, the child was not much the worse, more frightened, according to the Sawbones; and there you might have supposed would be an end to it. But there was one curious circumstance. I had taken a loathing to my gentleman at first sight. So had the child's family, which was only natural. But the doctor's case was what struck me. He was the usual cut and dry apothecary, of no particular age and colour, with a strong Edinburgh accent and about as emotional as a bagpipe. Well, sir, he was like the rest of us; every time he looked at my prisoner, I saw that Sawbones turn sick and white with desire to kill him. I knew what was in his mind, just as he knew what was in mine; and killing being out of the question, we did the next best. We told the man we could and would make such a scandal out of this as should make his name stink from one end of London to the other. If he had any friends or any credit, we undertook that he should lose them. And all the time, as we were pitching it in red hot, we were keeping the women off him as best we could for they were as wild as harpies. I never saw a circle of such hateful faces; and there was the man in the middle, with a kind of black sneering coolness — frightened too, I could see that — but carrying it off, sir, really like Satan. `If you choose to make capital out of this accident,' said he, `I am naturally helpless. No gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene,' says he. `Name your figure.' Well, we screwed him up to a hundred pounds for the child's family; he would have clearly liked to stick out; but there was something about the lot of us that meant mischief, and at last he struck. The next thing was to get the money; and where do you think he carried us but to that place with the door? — whipped out a key, went in, and presently came back with the matter of ten pounds in gold and a cheque for the balance on Coutts's, drawn payable to bearer and signed with a name that I can't mention, though it's one of the points of my story, but it was a name at least very well known and often printed. The figure was stiff; but the signature was good for more than that if it was only genuine. I took the liberty of pointing out to my gentleman that the whole business looked apocryphal, and that a man does not, in real life, walk into a cellar door at four in the morning and come out with another man's cheque for close upon a hundred pounds. But he was quite easy and sneering. `Set your mind at rest,' says he, `I will stay with you till the banks open and cash the cheque myself.' So we all set off, the doctor, and the child's father, and our friend and myself, and passed the rest of the night in my chambers; and next day, when we had breakfasted, went in a body to the bank. I gave in the cheque myself, and said I had every reason to believe it was a forgery. Not a bit of it. The cheque was genuine."

"Tut-tut," said Mr. Utterson.

"I see you feel as I do," said Mr. Enfield. "Yes, it's a bad story. For my man was a fellow that nobody could have to do with, a really damnable man; and the person that drew the cheque is the very pink of the proprieties, celebrated too, and (what makes it worse) one of your fellows who do what they call good. Black mail I suppose; an honest man paying through the nose for some of the capers of his youth. Black Mail House is what I call the place with the door, in consequence. Though even that, you know, is far from explaining all," he added, and with the words fell into a vein of musing.

From this he was recalled by Mr. Utterson asking rather suddenly: "And you don't know if the drawer of the cheque lives there?"

"A likely place, isn't it?" returned Mr. Enfield. "But I happen to have noticed his address; he lives in some square or other."

"And you never asked about the — place with the door?" said Mr. Utterson.

"No, sir: I had a delicacy," was the reply. "I feel very strongly about putting questions; it partakes too much of the style of the day of judgment. You start a question, and it's like starting a stone. You sit quietly on the top of a hill; and away the stone goes, starting others; and presently some bland old bird (the last you would have thought of) is knocked on the head in his own back garden and the family have to change their name. No sir, I make it a rule of mine: the more it looks like Queer Street, the less I ask."

"A very good rule, too," said the lawyer.

"But I have studied the place for myself," continued Mr. Enfield. "It seems scarcely a house. There is no other door, and nobody goes in or out of that one but, once in a great while, the gentleman of my adventure. There are three windows looking on the court on the first floor; none below; the windows are always shut but they're clean. And then there is a chimney which is generally smoking; so somebody must live there. And yet it's not so sure; for the buildings are so packed together about the court, that it's hard to say where one ends and another begins."

The pair walked on again for a while in silence; and then "Enfield," said Mr. Utterson, "that's a good rule of yours."

"Yes, I think it is," returned Enfield.

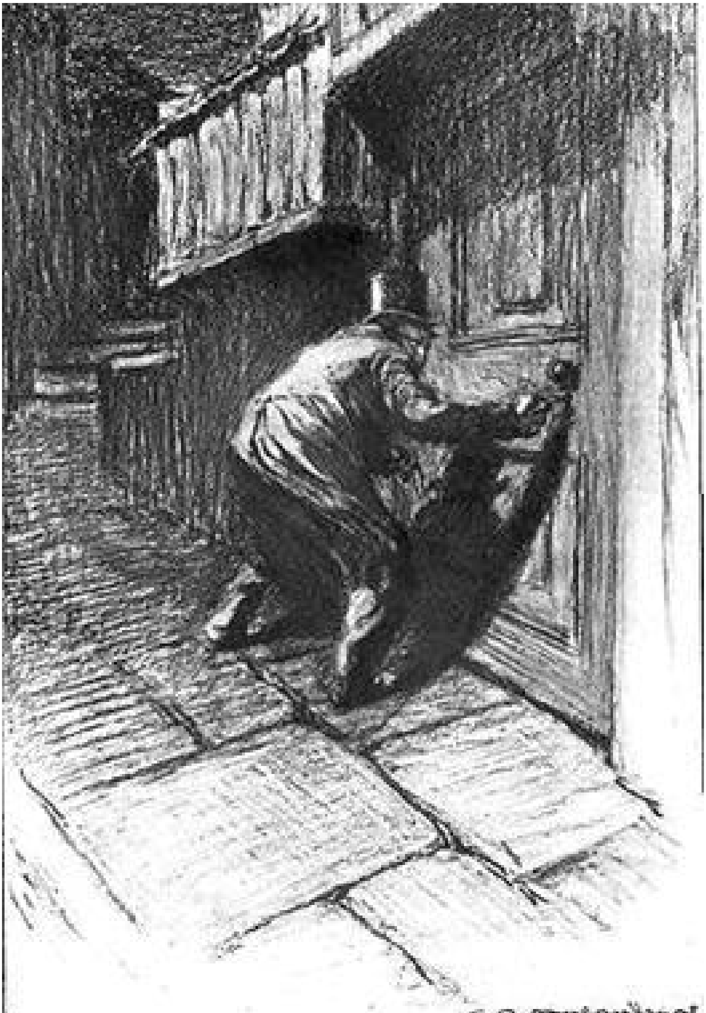
"But for all that," continued the lawyer, "there's one point I want to ask: I want to ask the name of that man who walked over the child."

"Well," said Mr. Enfield, "I can't see what harm it would do. It was a man of the name of Hyde."

"Hm," said Mr. Utterson. "What sort of a man is he to see?"

"He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something down-right detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory; for I declare I can see him this moment."

Mr. Utterson again walked some way in silence and obviously under a weight of consideration. "You are sure he used a key?" he inquired at last.



"My dear sir..." began Enfield, surprised out of himself.

"Yes, I know," said Utterson; "I know it must seem strange. The fact is, if I do not ask you the name of the other party, it is because I know it already. You see, Richard, your tale has gone home. If you have been inexact in any point you had better correct it.”

“I think you might have warned me,” returned the other with a touch of sullenness. “But I have been pedantically exact, as you call it. The fellow had a key; and what’s more, he has it still. I saw him use it not a week ago.”

Mr. Utterson sighed deeply but said never a word; and the young man presently resumed. “Here is another lesson to say nothing,” said he. “I am ashamed of my long tongue. Let us make a bargain never to refer to this again.”

“With all my heart,” said the lawyer. “I shake hands on that, Richard.”

SEARCH FOR MR. HYDE

That evening Mr. Utterson came home to his bachelor house in sombre spirits and sat down to dinner without relish. It was his custom of a Sunday, when this meal was over, to sit close by the fire, a volume of some dry divinity on his reading desk, until the clock of the neighbouring church rang out the hour of twelve, when he would go soberly and gratefully to bed. On this night however, as soon as the cloth was taken away, he took up a candle and went into his business room. There he opened his safe, took from the most private part of it a document endorsed on the envelope as Dr. Jekyll's Will and sat down with a clouded brow to study its contents. The will was holograph, for Mr. Utterson though he took charge of it now that it was made, had refused to lend the least assistance in the making of it; it provided not only that, in case of the decease of Henry Jekyll, M.D., D.C.L., L.L.D., F.R.S., etc., all his possessions were to pass into the hands of his "friend and benefactor Edward Hyde," but that in case of Dr. Jekyll's "disappearance or unexplained absence for any period exceeding three calendar months," the said Edward Hyde should step into the said Henry Jekyll's shoes without further delay and free from any burthen or obligation beyond the payment of a few small sums to the members of the doctor's household. This document had long been the lawyer's eyesore. It offended him both as a lawyer and as a lover of the sane and customary sides of life, to whom the fanciful was the immodest. And hitherto it was his ignorance of Mr. Hyde that had swelled his indignation; now, by a sudden turn, it was his knowledge. It was already bad enough when the name was but a name of which he could learn no more. It was worse when it began to be clothed upon with detestable attributes; and out of the shifting, insubstantial mists that had so long baffled his eye, there leaped up the sudden, definite presentment of a fiend.

"I thought it was madness," he said, as he replaced the obnoxious paper in the safe, "and now I begin to fear it is disgrace."

With that he blew out his candle, put on a greatcoat, and set forth in the direction of Cavendish Square, that citadel of medicine, where his friend, the great Dr. Lanyon, had his house and received his crowding patients. "If anyone knows, it will be Lanyon," he had thought.

The solemn butler knew and welcomed him; he was subjected to no stage of delay, but ushered direct from the door to the dining-room where Dr. Lanyon sat alone over his wine. This was a hearty, healthy, dapper, red-faced gentleman, with a shock of hair prematurely white, and a boisterous and decided manner. At sight of Mr. Utterson, he sprang up from his chair and welcomed him with both hands. The geniality, as was the way of the man, was somewhat theatrical to the eye; but it reposed on genuine feeling. For these two were old friends, old mates both at school and college, both thorough respectors of themselves and of each other, and what does not always follow, men who thoroughly enjoyed each other's company.

After a little rambling talk, the lawyer led up to the subject which so disagreeably preoccupied his mind.

"I suppose, Lanyon," said he, "you and I must be the two oldest friends that Henry Jekyll has?"

"I wish the friends were younger," chuckled Dr. Lanyon. "But I suppose we are. And what of that? I see little of him now."

"Indeed?" said Utterson. "I thought you had a bond of common interest."

"We had," was the reply. "But it is more than ten years since Henry Jekyll became too fanciful for me. He began to go wrong, wrong in mind; and though of course I continue to take an interest in him for old sake's sake, as they say, I see and I have seen devilish little of the man. Such unscientific balderdash," added the doctor, flushing suddenly purple, "would have estranged Damon and Pythias."

This little spirit of temper was somewhat of a relief to Mr. Utterson. "They have only differed on some point of science," he thought; and being a man of no scientific passions (except in the matter of conveyancing), he even added: "It is nothing worse than that!" He gave his friend a few seconds to recover his composure, and then approached the question he had come to put. "Did you ever come across a protege of his — one Hyde?" he asked.

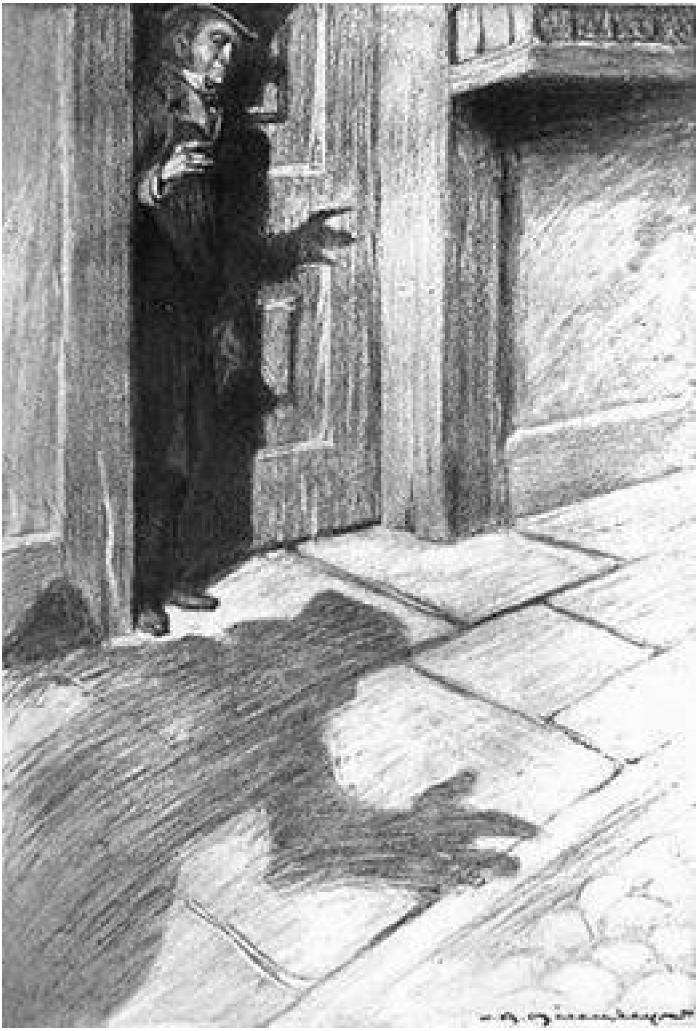
"Hyde?" repeated Lanyon. "No. Never heard of him. Since my time."

That was the amount of information that the lawyer carried back with him to the great, dark bed on which he tossed to and fro, until the small hours of the morning began to grow large. It was a night of little ease to his toiling mind, toiling in mere darkness and beseiged by questions.

Six o'clock struck on the bells of the church that was so conveniently near to Mr. Utterson's dwelling, and still he was digging at the problem. Hitherto it had touched him on the intellectual side alone; but now his imagination also was engaged, or rather enslaved; and as he lay and tossed in the gross darkness of the night and the curtained room, Mr. Enfield's tale went by before his mind in a scroll of lighted pictures. He would be aware of the great field of lamps of a nocturnal city; then of the figure of a man walking swiftly; then of a child running from the doctor's; and then these met, and that human Juggernaut trod the child down and passed on regardless of her screams. Or else he would see a room in a rich house, where his friend lay asleep, dreaming and smiling at his dreams; and then the door of that room would be opened, the curtains of the bed plucked apart, the sleeper recalled, and lo! there would stand by his side a figure to whom power was given, and even at that dead hour, he must rise and do its bidding. The figure in these two phases haunted the lawyer all night; and if at any time he dozed over, it was but to see it glide more stealthily through sleeping houses, or move the more swiftly and still the more swiftly, even to dizziness, through wider labyrinths of lamplighted city, and at every street corner crush a child and leave her screaming. And still the figure had no face by which he might know it; even in his dreams, it had no face, or one that baffled him and melted before his eyes; and thus it was that there sprang up and grew apace in the lawyer's mind a singularly strong, almost an inordinate, curiosity to behold the features of the real Mr. Hyde. If he could but once set eyes on him, he thought the mystery would lighten and perhaps roll altogether away, as was the habit of mysterious things when well examined. He might see a reason for his friend's strange preference or bondage (call it which you please) and even for the startling clause of the will. At least it would be a face worth seeing: the face of a man who was without bowels of mercy: a face which had but to show itself to raise up, in the mind of the unimpressionable Enfield, a spirit of enduring hatred.

From that time forward, Mr. Utterson began to haunt the door in the by-street of shops. In the morning before office hours, at noon when business was plenty, and time scarce, at night under the face of the fogged city moon, by all lights and at all hours of solitude or concourse, the lawyer was to be found on his chosen post.

"If he be Mr. Hyde," he had thought, "I shall be Mr. Seek."



And at last his patience was rewarded. It was a fine dry night; frost in the air; the streets as clean as a ballroom floor; the lamps, unshaken by any wind, drawing a regular pattern of light and shadow. By ten o'clock, when the shops were closed the by-street was very solitary and, in spite of the low growl of London from all round, very silent. Small sounds carried far; domestic sounds out of the houses were clearly audible on either side of the roadway; and the rumour of the approach of any passenger preceded him by a long time. Mr. Utterson had been some minutes at his post, when he was aware of an odd light footstep drawing near. In the course of his nightly patrols, he had long grown accustomed to the quaint effect with which the footfalls of a single person, while he is still a great way off, suddenly spring out distinct from the vast hum and clatter of the city. Yet his attention had never before been so sharply and decisively arrested; and it was with a strong, superstitious prevision of success that he withdrew into the entry of the court.

The steps drew swiftly nearer, and swelled out suddenly louder as they turned the end of the street. The lawyer, looking forth from the entry, could soon see what manner of man he had to deal with. He was small and very plainly dressed and the look of him, even at that distance, went somehow strongly against the watcher's inclination. But he made straight for the door, crossing the roadway to save time; and as he came, he drew a key from his pocket like one approaching home.

Mr. Utterson stepped out and touched him on the shoulder as he passed. "Mr. Hyde, I think?"

Mr. Hyde shrank back with a hissing intake of the breath. But his fear was only momentary; and though he did not look the lawyer in the face, he answered coolly enough: "That is my name. What do you want?"

"I see you are going in," returned the lawyer. "I am an old friend of Dr. Jekyll's — Mr. Utterson of Gaunt Street — you must have heard of my name; and meeting you so conveniently, I thought you might admit me."

"You will not find Dr. Jekyll; he is from home," replied Mr. Hyde, blowing in the key. And then suddenly, but still without looking up, "How did you know me?" he asked.

"On your side," said Mr. Utterson "will you do me a favour?"

"With pleasure," replied the other. "What shall it be?"

"Will you let me see your face?" asked the lawyer.

Mr. Hyde appeared to hesitate, and then, as if upon some sudden reflection, fronted about with an air of defiance; and the pair stared at each other pretty fixedly for a few seconds. "Now I shall know you again," said Mr. Utterson. "It may be useful."

"Yes," returned Mr. Hyde, "It is as well we have met; and apropos, you should have my address." And he gave a number of a street in Soho.

"Good God!" thought Mr. Utterson, "can he, too, have been thinking of the will?" But he kept his feelings to himself and only grunted in acknowledgment of the address.

"And now," said the other, "how did you know me?"

"By description," was the reply.

"Whose description?"

"We have common friends," said Mr. Utterson.

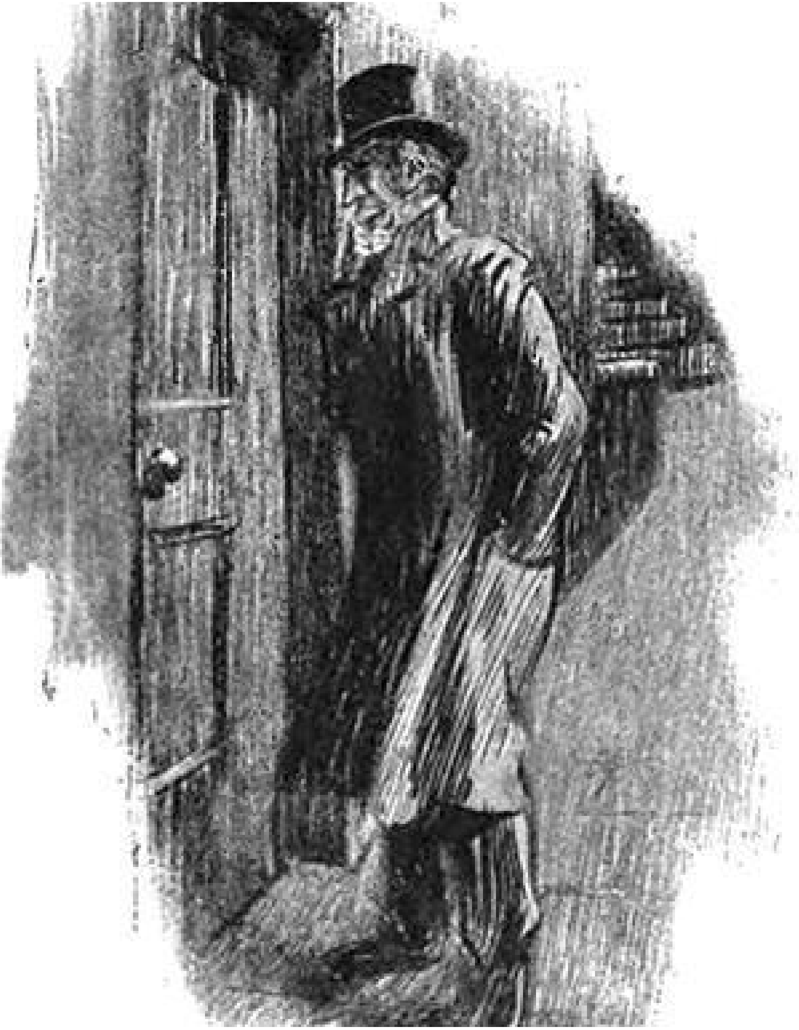
"Common friends," echoed Mr. Hyde, a little hoarsely. "Who are they?"

"Jekyll, for instance," said the lawyer.

"He never told you," cried Mr. Hyde, with a flush of anger. "I did not think you would have lied."

“Come,” said Mr. Utterson, “that is not fitting language.”

The other snarled aloud into a savage laugh; and the next moment, with extraordinary quickness, he had unlocked the door and disappeared into the house.



The lawyer stood awhile when Mr. Hyde had left him, the picture of disquietude. Then he began slowly to mount the street, pausing every step or two and putting his hand to his brow like a man in mental perplexity. The problem he was thus debating as he walked, was one of a class that is rarely solved. Mr. Hyde was pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice; all these were points against him, but not all of these together could explain the hitherto unknown disgust, loathing and fear with which Mr. Utterson regarded him. “There must be something else,” said the perplexed gentleman. “There is something more, if I could find a name for it. God bless me, the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic, shall we say? or can it be the old story of Dr. Fell? or is it the mere radiance of a foul soul that thus transpires through, and transfigures, its clay continent? The last, I think; for, O my poor old Harry Jekyll, if ever I read Satan’s signature upon a face, it is on that of your new friend.”

Round the corner from the by-street, there was a square of ancient, handsome houses, now for the most part decayed from their high estate and let in flats and chambers to all sorts and conditions of men; map-engravers, architects, shady lawyers and the agents of obscure enterprises. One house, however, second from the corner, was still occupied entire; and at the door of this, which wore a great air of wealth and comfort, though it was now plunged in darkness except for the fanlight, Mr. Utterson stopped and knocked. A well-dressed, elderly servant opened the door.

“Is Dr. Jekyll at home, Poole?” asked the lawyer.

“I will see, Mr. Utterson,” said Poole, admitting the visitor, as he spoke, into a large, low-roofed, comfortable hall paved with flags, warmed (after the fashion of a country house) by a bright, open fire, and furnished with costly cabinets of oak. “Will you wait here by the fire, sir? or shall I give you a light in the dining-room?”

“Here, thank you,” said the lawyer, and he drew near and leaned on the tall fender. This hall, in which he was now left alone, was a pet fancy of his friend the doctor’s; and Utterson himself was wont to speak of it as the pleasantest room in London. But tonight there was a shudder in his blood; the face of Hyde sat heavy on his memory; he felt (what was rare with him) a nausea and distaste of life; and in the gloom of his spirits, he seemed to read a menace in the flickering of the firelight on the polished cabinets and the uneasy starting of the shadow on the roof. He was ashamed of his relief, when Poole presently returned to announce that Dr. Jekyll was gone out.

“I saw Mr. Hyde go in by the old dissecting room, Poole,” he said. “Is that right, when Dr. Jekyll is from home?”

“Quite right, Mr. Utterson, sir,” replied the servant. “Mr. Hyde has a key.”

“Your master seems to repose a great deal of trust in that young man, Poole,” resumed the other musingly.

“Yes, sir, he does indeed,” said Poole. “We have all orders to obey him.”

“I do not think I ever met Mr. Hyde?” asked Utterson.

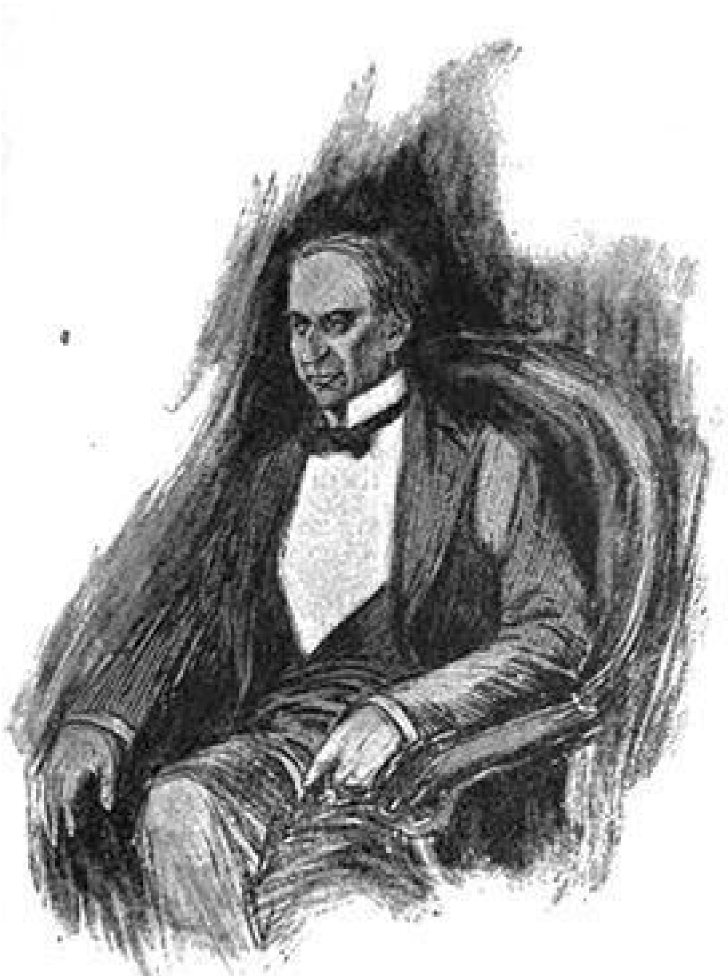
“O, dear no, sir. He never dines here,” replied the butler. “Indeed we see very little of him on this side of the house; he mostly comes and goes by the laboratory.”

“Well, good-night, Poole.”

“Good-night, Mr. Utterson.”

And the lawyer set out homeward with a very heavy heart. “Poor Harry Jekyll,” he thought, “my mind misgives me he is in deep waters! He was wild when he was young; a long while ago to be sure; but in the law of God, there is no statute of limitations. Ay, it must be that; the ghost of some old sin, the cancer of some concealed disgrace: punishment coming, PEDE CLAUDO, years after memory has forgotten and self-love condoned the fault.” And the lawyer, scared by the thought, brooded awhile on his own past, groping in all the corners of memory, least by chance some Jack-in-the-Box of an old iniquity should leap to light there. His past was fairly blameless; few men could read the rolls of their life with less apprehension; yet he was humbled to the dust by the many ill things he had done, and raised up again into a sober and fearful gratitude by the many he had come so near to doing yet avoided. And then by a return on his former subject, he conceived a spark of hope. “This Master Hyde, if he were studied,” thought he, “must have secrets of his own; black secrets, by the look of him; secrets compared to which poor Jekyll’s worst would be like sunshine. Things cannot continue as they are. It turns me cold to think of this creature stealing like a thief to Harry’s bedside; poor Harry, what a wakening! And the danger of it; for if this Hyde suspects the existence of the will, he may grow impatient to inherit. Ay, I must put my shoulders to the wheel — if Jekyll will but let me,” he added, “if Jekyll will only let me.” For once more he saw before his mind’s eye, as clear as transparency, the strange clauses of the will.

DR. JEKYLL WAS QUITE AT EASE



A fortnight later, by excellent good fortune, the doctor gave one of his pleasant dinners to some five or six old cronies, all intelligent, reputable men and all judges of good wine; and Mr. Utterson so contrived that he remained behind after the others had departed. This was no new arrangement, but a thing that had befallen many scores of times. Where Utterson was liked, he was liked well. Hosts loved to detain the dry lawyer, when the light-hearted and loose-tongued had already their foot on the threshold; they liked to sit a while in his unobtrusive company, practising for solitude, sobering their minds in the man's rich silence after the expense and strain of gaiety. To this rule, Dr. Jekyll was no exception; and as he now sat on the opposite side of the fire — a large, well-made, smooth-faced man of fifty, with something of a stylish cast perhaps, but every mark of capacity and kindness — you could see by his looks that he cherished for Mr. Utterson a sincere and warm affection.

“I have been wanting to speak to you, Jekyll,” began the latter. “You know that will of yours?”

A close observer might have gathered that the topic was distasteful; but the doctor carried it off gaily. “My poor Utterson,” said he, “you are unfortunate in such a client. I never saw a man so distressed as you were by my will; unless it were that hide-bound pedant, Lanyon, at what he called my scientific heresies. O, I know he’s a good fellow — you needn’t frown — an excellent fellow, and I always mean to see more of him; but a hide-bound pedant for all that; an ignorant, blatant pedant. I was never more disappointed in any man than Lanyon.”

“You know I never approved of it,” pursued Utterson, ruthlessly disregarding the fresh topic.

“My will? Yes, certainly, I know that,” said the doctor, a trifle sharply. “You have told me so.”

“Well, I tell you so again,” continued the lawyer. “I have been learning something of young Hyde.”

The large handsome face of Dr. Jekyll grew pale to the very lips, and there came a blackness about his eyes. “I do not care to hear more,” said he. “This is a matter I thought we had agreed to drop.”

“What I heard was abominable,” said Utterson.

“It can make no change. You do not understand my position,” returned the doctor, with a certain incoherency of manner. “I am painfully situated, Utterson; my position is a very strange — a very strange one. It is one of those affairs that cannot be mended by talking.”

“Jekyll,” said Utterson, “you know me: I am a man to be trusted. Make a clean breast of this in confidence; and I make no doubt I can get you out of it.”

“My good Utterson,” said the doctor, “this is very good of you, this is downright good of you, and I cannot find words to thank you in. I believe you fully; I would trust you before any man alive, ay, before myself, if I could make the choice; but indeed it isn’t what you fancy; it is not as bad as that; and just to put your good heart at rest, I will tell you one thing: the moment I choose, I can be rid of Mr. Hyde. I give you my hand upon that; and I thank you again and again; and I will just add one little word, Utterson, that I’m sure you’ll take in good part: this is a private matter, and I beg of you to let it sleep.”

Utterson reflected a little, looking in the fire.

“I have no doubt you are perfectly right,” he said at last, getting to his feet.

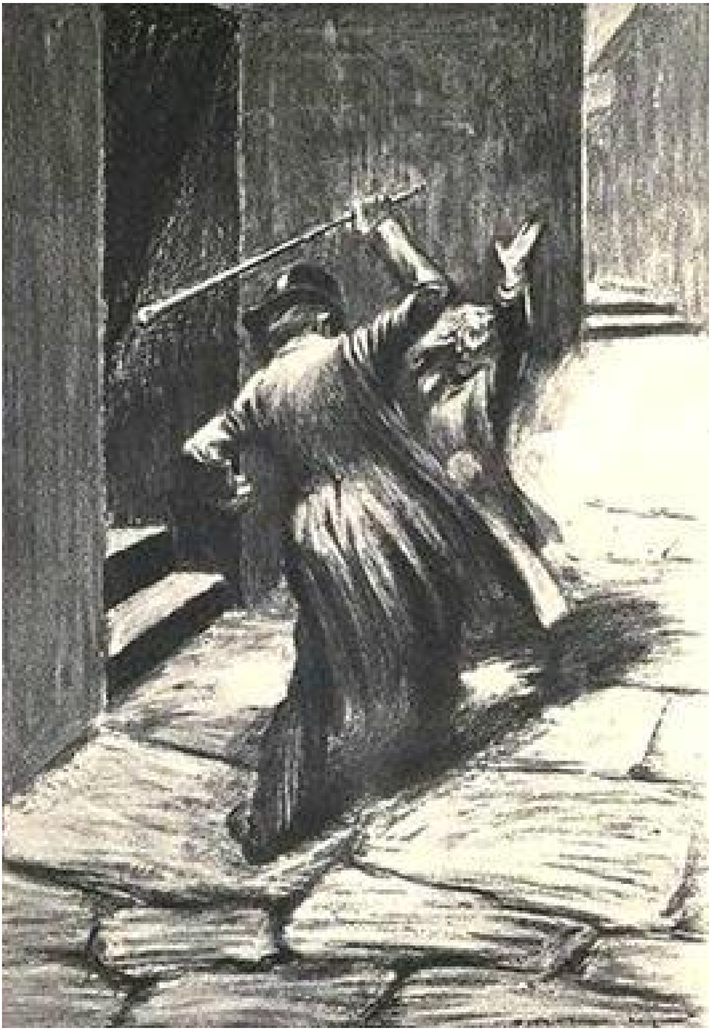
“Well, but since we have touched upon this business, and for the last time I hope,” continued the doctor, “there is one point I should like you to understand. I have really a very great interest in poor Hyde. I know you have seen him; he told me so; and I fear he was rude. But I do sincerely take a great, a very great interest in that young man; and if I am taken away, Utterson, I wish you to promise me that you will bear with him and get his rights for him. I think you would, if you knew all; and it would be a weight off my mind if you would promise."

"I can't pretend that I shall ever like him," said the lawyer.

"I don't ask that," pleaded Jekyll, laying his hand upon the other's arm; "I only ask for justice; I only ask you to help him for my sake, when I am no longer here."

Utterson heaved an irrepressible sigh. "Well," said he, "I promise."

THE CAREW MURDER CASE



Nearly a year later, in the month of October, 18 — , London was startled by a crime of singular ferocity and rendered all the more notable by the high position of the victim. The details were few and startling. A maid servant living alone in a house not far from the river, had gone upstairs to bed about eleven. Although a fog rolled over the city in the small hours, the early part of the night was cloudless, and the lane, which the maid's window overlooked, was brilliantly lit by the full moon. It seems she was romantically given, for she sat down upon her box, which stood immediately under the window, and fell into a dream of musing. Never (she used to say, with streaming tears, when she narrated that experience), never had she felt more at peace with all men or thought more kindly of the world. And as she so sat she became aware of an aged beautiful gentleman with white hair, drawing near along the lane; and advancing to meet him, another and very small gentleman, to whom at first she paid less attention. When they had come within speech (which was just under the maid's eyes) the older man bowed and accosted the other with a very pretty manner of politeness. It did not seem as if the subject of his address were of great importance; indeed, from his pointing, it some times appeared as if he were only inquiring his way; but the moon shone on his face as he spoke, and the girl was pleased to watch it, it seemed to breathe such an innocent and old-world kindness of disposition, yet with something high too, as of a well-founded self-content. Presently her eye wandered to the other, and she was surprised to recognise in him a certain Mr. Hyde, who had once visited her master and for whom she had conceived a dislike. He had in his hand a heavy cane, with which he was trifling; but he answered never a word, and seemed to listen with an ill-contained impatience. And then all of a sudden he broke out in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot, brandishing the cane, and carrying on (as the maid described it) like a madman. The old gentleman took a step back, with the air of one very much surprised and a trifle hurt; and at that Mr. Hyde broke out of all bounds and clubbed him to the earth. And next moment, with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim under foot and hailing down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumped upon the roadway. At the horror of these sights and sounds, the maid fainted.

It was two o'clock when she came to herself and called for the police. The murderer was gone long ago; but there lay his victim in the middle of the lane, incredibly mangled. The stick with which the deed had been done, although it was of some rare and very tough and heavy wood, had broken in the middle under the stress of this insensate cruelty; and one splintered half had rolled in the neighbouring gutter — the other, without doubt, had been carried away by the murderer. A purse and gold watch were found upon the victim: but no cards or papers, except a sealed and stamped envelope, which he had been probably carrying to the post, and which bore the name and address of Mr. Utterson.

This was brought to the lawyer the next morning, before he was out of bed; and he had no sooner seen it and been told the circumstances, than he shot out a solemn lip. "I shall say nothing till I have seen the body," said he; "this may be very serious. Have the kindness to wait while I dress." And with the same grave countenance he hurried through his breakfast and drove to the police station, whither the body had been carried. As soon as he came into the cell, he nodded.

"Yes," said he, "I recognise him. I am sorry to say that this is Sir Danvers Carew."

"Good God, sir," exclaimed the officer, "is it possible?" And the next moment his eye lighted up with professional ambition. "This will make a deal of noise," he said. "And perhaps you can help us to the man." And he briefly narrated what the maid had seen, and showed the broken stick.

Mr. Utterson had already quailed at the name of Hyde; but when the stick was laid before him, he could doubt no longer; broken and battered as it was, he recognized it for one that he had himself presented many years before to Henry Jekyll.

"Is this Mr. Hyde a person of small stature?" he inquired.

"Particularly small and particularly wicked-looking, is what the maid calls him," said the officer.

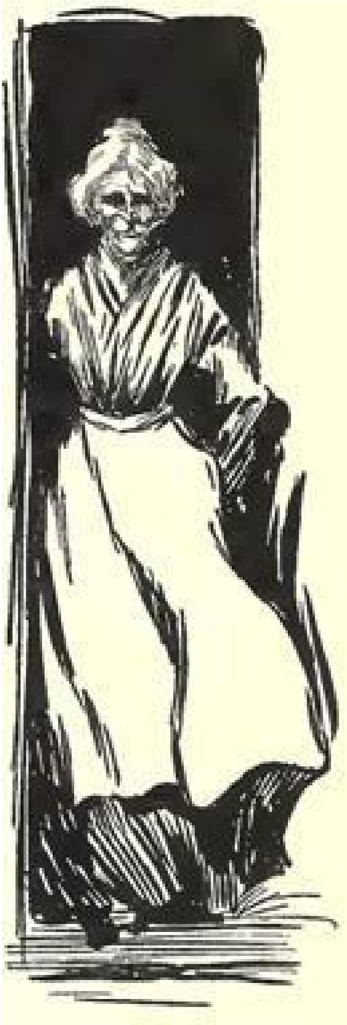
Mr. Utterson reflected; and then, raising his head, "If you will come with me in my cab," he said, "I think I can take you to his house."

It was by this time about nine in the morning, and the first fog of the season. A great chocolate-coloured pall lowered over heaven, but the wind was continually charging and routing these embattled vapours; so that as the cab crawled from street to street, Mr. Utterson beheld a marvelous number of degrees and hues of twilight; for here it would be dark like the back-end of evening; and there would be a glow of a rich, lurid brown, like the light of some strange conflagration; and here, for a moment, the fog would be quite broken up, and a haggard shaft of daylight would glance in between the swirling wreaths. The dismal quarter of Soho seen under these changing glimpses, with its muddy ways, and slatternly passengers, and its lamps, which had never been extinguished or had been kindled afresh to combat this mournful reinvasion of darkness, seemed, in the lawyer's eyes, like a district of some city in a nightmare. The thoughts of his mind, besides, were of the gloomiest dye; and when he glanced at the companion of his drive, he was conscious of some touch of that terror of the law and the law's officers, which may at times assail the most honest.

As the cab drew up before the address indicated, the fog lifted a little and showed him a dingy street, a gin palace, a low French eating house, a shop for the retail of penny numbers and twopenny salads, many ragged children huddled in the doorways, and many women of many different nationalities passing out, key in hand, to have a morning glass; and the next moment the fog settled down again upon that part, as brown as umber, and cut him off from his blackguardly surroundings. This was the home of Henry Jekyll's favourite; of a man who was heir to a quarter of a million sterling.

An ivory-faced and silvery-haired old woman opened the door. She had an evil face, smoothed by hypocrisy: but her manners were excellent. Yes, she said, this was Mr. Hyde's, but he was not at home;

he had been in that night very late, but he had gone away again in less than an hour; there was nothing strange in that; his habits were very irregular, and he was often absent; for instance, it was nearly two months since she had seen him till yesterday.



"Very well, then, we wish to see his rooms," said the lawyer; and when the woman began to declare it was impossible, "I had better tell you who this person is," he added. "This is Inspector Newcomen of Scotland Yard."

A flash of odious joy appeared upon the woman's face. "Ah!" said she, "he is in trouble! What has he done?"

Mr. Utterson and the inspector exchanged glances. "He don't seem a very popular character," observed the latter. "And now, my good woman, just let me and this gentleman have a look about us."

In the whole extent of the house, which but for the old woman remained otherwise empty, Mr. Hyde had only used a couple of rooms; but these were furnished with luxury and good taste. A closet was filled with wine; the plate was of silver, the napery elegant; a good picture hung upon the walls, a gift (as Utterson supposed) from Henry Jekyll, who was much of a connoisseur; and the carpets were of many plies and agreeable in colour. At this moment, however, the rooms bore every mark of having been recently and hurriedly ransacked; clothes lay about the floor, with their pockets inside out; lock-fast drawers stood open; and on the hearth there lay a pile of grey ashes, as though many papers had been burned. From these embers the inspector disinterred the butt end of a green cheque book, which had resisted the action of the fire; the other half of the stick was found behind the door; and as this clinched his suspicions, the officer declared himself delighted. A visit to the bank, where several thousand pounds were found to be lying to the murderer's credit, completed his gratification.

"You may depend upon it, sir," he told Mr. Utterson: "I have him in my hand. He must have lost his head, or he never would have left the stick or, above all, burned the cheque book. Why, money's life to the man. We have nothing to do but wait for him at the bank, and get out the handbills."

This last, however, was not so easy of accomplishment; for Mr. Hyde had numbered few familiars — even the master of the servant maid had only seen him twice; his family could nowhere be traced; he had never been photographed; and the few who could describe him differed widely, as common observers will. Only on one point were they agreed; and that was the haunting sense of unexpressed deformity with which the fugitive impressed his beholders.

INCIDENT OF THE LETTER

It was late in the afternoon, when Mr. Utterson found his way to Dr. Jekyll's door, where he was at once admitted by Poole, and carried down by the kitchen offices and across a yard which had once been a garden, to the building which was indifferently known as the laboratory or dissecting rooms. The doctor had bought the house from the heirs of a celebrated surgeon; and his own tastes being rather chemical than anatomical, had changed the destination of the block at the bottom of the garden. It was the first time that the lawyer had been received in that part of his friend's quarters; and he eyed the dingy, windowless structure with curiosity, and gazed round with a distasteful sense of strangeness as he crossed the theatre, once crowded with eager students and now lying gaunt and silent, the tables laden with chemical apparatus, the floor strewn with crates and littered with packing straw, and the light falling dimly through the foggy cupola. At the further end, a flight of stairs mounted to a door covered with red baize; and through this, Mr. Utterson was at last received into the doctor's cabinet. It was a large room fitted round with glass presses, furnished, among other things, with a cheval-glass and a business table, and looking out upon the court by three dusty windows barred with iron. The fire burned in the grate; a lamp was set lighted on the chimney shelf, for even in the houses the fog began to lie thickly; and there, close up to the warmth, sat Dr. Jekyll, looking deathly sick. He did not rise to meet his visitor, but held out a cold hand and bade him welcome in a changed voice.

"And now," said Mr. Utterson, as soon as Poole had left them, "you have heard the news?"

The doctor shuddered. "They were crying it in the square," he said. "I heard them in my dining-room."

"One word," said the lawyer. "Carew was my client, but so are you, and I want to know what I am doing. You have not been mad enough to hide this fellow?"

"Utterson, I swear to God," cried the doctor, "I swear to God I will never set eyes on him again. I bind my honour to you that I am done with him in this world. It is all at an end. And indeed he does not want my help; you do not know him as I do; he is safe, he is quite safe; mark my words, he will never more be heard of."

The lawyer listened gloomily; he did not like his friend's feverish manner. "You seem pretty sure of him," said he; "and for your sake, I hope you may be right. If it came to a trial, your name might appear."

"I am quite sure of him," replied Jekyll; "I have grounds for certainty that I cannot share with any one. But there is one thing on which you may advise me. I have — I have received a letter; and I am at a loss whether I should show it to the police. I should like to leave it in your hands, Utterson; you would judge wisely, I am sure; I have so great a trust in you."

"You fear, I suppose, that it might lead to his detection?" asked the lawyer.

"No," said the other. "I cannot say that I care what becomes of Hyde; I am quite done with him. I was thinking of my own character, which this hateful business has rather exposed."

Utterson ruminated awhile; he was surprised at his friend's selfishness, and yet relieved by it. "Well," said he, at last, "let me see the letter."

The letter was written in an odd, upright hand and signed "Edward Hyde": and it signified, briefly enough, that the writer's benefactor, Dr. Jekyll, whom he had long so unworthily repaid for a thousand generosities, need labour under no alarm for his safety, as he had means of escape on which he placed a sure dependence. The lawyer liked this letter well enough; it put a better colour on the intimacy than he had looked for; and he blamed himself for some of his past suspicions.

"Have you the envelope?" he asked.

"I burned it," replied Jekyll, "before I thought what I was about. But it bore no postmark. The note was handed in."

"Shall I keep this and sleep upon it?" asked Utterson.

"I wish you to judge for me entirely," was the reply. "I have lost confidence in myself."

"Well, I shall consider," returned the lawyer. "And now one word more: it was Hyde who dictated the terms in your will about that disappearance?"

The doctor seemed seized with a qualm of faintness; he shut his mouth tight and nodded.

"I knew it," said Utterson. "He meant to murder you. You had a fine escape."

"I have had what is far more to the purpose," returned the doctor solemnly: "I have had a lesson — O God, Utterson, what a lesson I have had!" And he covered his face for a moment with his hands.

On his way out, the lawyer stopped and had a word or two with Poole. "By the bye," said he, "there was a letter handed in to-day: what was the messenger like?" But Poole was positive nothing had come except by post; "and only circulars by that," he added.

This news sent off the visitor with his fears renewed. Plainly the letter had come by the laboratory door; possibly, indeed, it had been written in the cabinet; and if that were so, it must be differently judged, and handled with the more caution. The newsboys, as he went, were crying themselves hoarse along the footways: “Special edition. Shocking murder of an M.P.” That was the funeral oration of one friend and client; and he could not help a certain apprehension lest the good name of another should be sucked down in the eddy of the scandal. It was, at least, a ticklish decision that he had to make; and self-reliant as he was by habit, he began to cherish a longing for advice. It was not to be had directly; but perhaps, he thought, it might be fished for.

Presently after, he sat on one side of his own hearth, with Mr. Guest, his head clerk, upon the other, and midway between, at a nicely calculated distance from the fire, a bottle of a particular old wine that had long dwelt unsunned in the foundations of his house. The fog still slept on the wing above the drowned city, where the lamps glimmered like carbuncles; and through the muffle and smother of these fallen clouds, the procession of the town’s life was still rolling in through the great arteries with a sound as of a mighty wind. But the room was gay with firelight. In the bottle the acids were long ago resolved; the imperial dye had softened with time, as the colour grows richer in stained windows; and the glow of hot autumn afternoons on hillside vineyards, was ready to be set free and to disperse the fogs of London. Insensibly the lawyer melted. There was no man from whom he kept fewer secrets than Mr. Guest; and he was not always sure that he kept as many as he meant. Guest had often been on business to the doctor’s; he knew Poole; he could scarce have failed to hear of Mr. Hyde’s familiarity about the house; he might draw conclusions: was it not as well, then, that he should see a letter which put that mystery to right? and above all since Guest, being a great student and critic of handwriting, would consider the step natural and obliging? The clerk, besides, was a man of counsel; he could scarce read so strange a document without dropping a remark; and by that remark Mr. Utterson might shape his future course.

“This is a sad business about Sir Danvers,” he said.

“Yes, sir, indeed. It has elicited a great deal of public feeling,” returned Guest. “The man, of course, was mad.”

“I should like to hear your views on that,” replied Utterson. “I have a document here in his handwriting; it is between ourselves, for I scarce know what to do about it; it is an ugly business at the best. But there it is; quite in your way: a murderer’s autograph.”

Guest’s eyes brightened, and he sat down at once and studied it with passion. “No sir,” he said: “not mad; but it is an odd hand.”

“And by all accounts a very odd writer,” added the lawyer.

Just then the servant entered with a note.

“Is that from Dr. Jekyll, sir?” inquired the clerk. “I thought I knew the writing. Anything private, Mr. Utterson?”

“Only an invitation to dinner. Why? Do you want to see it?”

“One moment. I thank you, sir;” and the clerk laid the two sheets of paper alongside and sedulously compared their contents. “Thank you, sir,” he said at last, returning both; “it’s a very interesting autograph.”

There was a pause, during which Mr. Utterson struggled with himself. “Why did you compare them, Guest?” he inquired suddenly.

“Well, sir,” returned the clerk, “there’s a rather singular resemblance; the two hands are in many points identical: only differently sloped.”

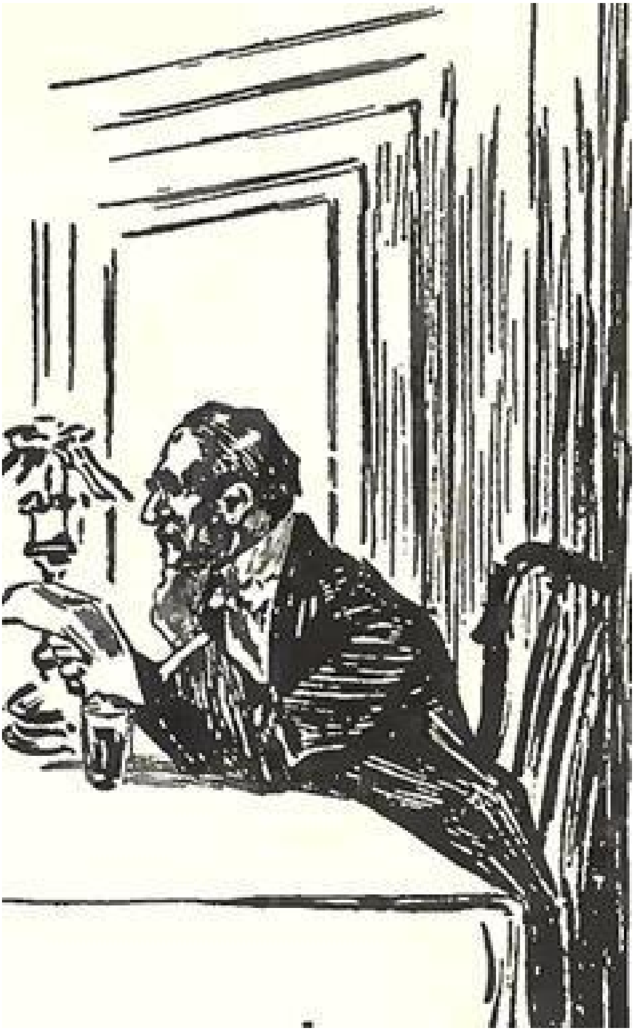
“Rather quaint,” said Utterson.

“It is, as you say, rather quaint,” returned Guest.

“I wouldn’t speak of this note, you know,” said the master.

“No, sir,” said the clerk. “I understand.”

But no sooner was Mr. Utterson alone that night, than he locked the note into his safe, where it reposed from that time forward. “What!” he thought. “Henry Jekyll forge for a murderer!” And his blood ran cold in his veins.

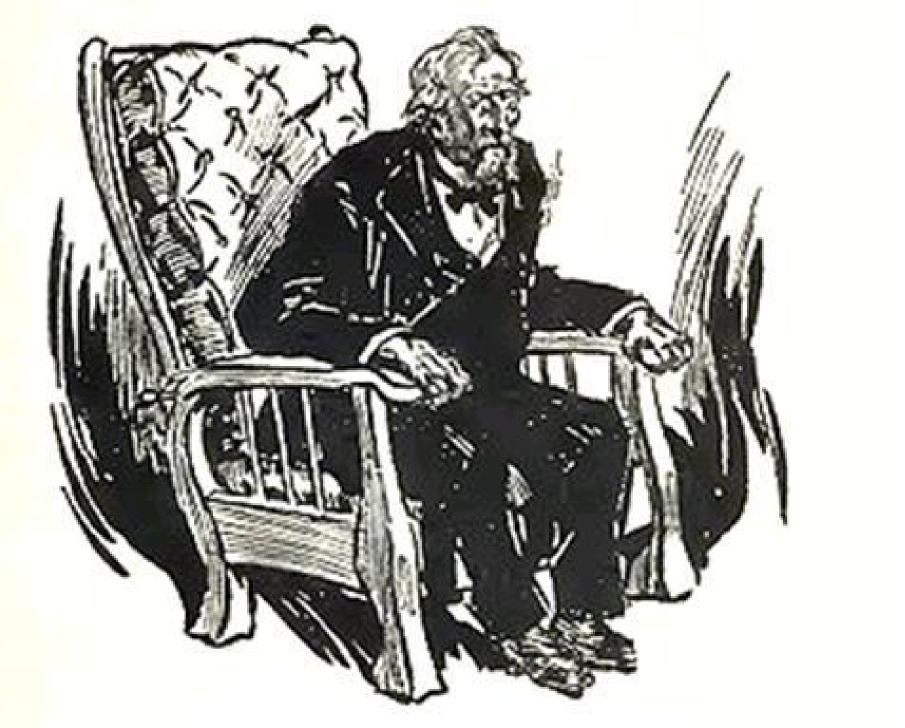


INCIDENT OF DR. LANYON

Time ran on; thousands of pounds were offered in reward, for the death of Sir Danvers was resented as a public injury; but Mr. Hyde had disappeared out of the ken of the police as though he had never existed. Much of his past was unearthed, indeed, and all disreputable: tales came out of the man's cruelty, at once so callous and violent; of his vile life, of his strange associates, of the hatred that seemed to have surrounded his career; but of his present whereabouts, not a whisper. From the time he had left the house in Soho on the morning of the murder, he was simply blotted out; and gradually, as time drew on, Mr. Utterson began to recover from the hotness of his alarm, and to grow more at quiet with himself. The death of Sir Danvers was, to his way of thinking, more than paid for by the disappearance of Mr. Hyde. Now that that evil influence had been withdrawn, a new life began for Dr. Jekyll. He came out of his seclusion, renewed relations with his friends, became once more their familiar guest and entertainer; and whilst he had always been known for charities, he was now no less distinguished for religion. He was busy, he was much in the open air, he did good; his face seemed to open and brighten, as if with an inward consciousness of service; and for more than two months, the doctor was at peace.

On the 8th of January Utterson had dined at the doctor's with a small party; Lanyon had been there; and the face of the host had looked from one to the other as in the old days when the trio were inseparable friends. On the 12th, and again on the 14th, the door was shut against the lawyer. "The doctor was confined to the house," Poole said, "and saw no one." On the 15th, he tried again, and was again refused; and having now been used for the last two months to see his friend almost daily, he found this return of solitude to weigh upon his spirits. The fifth night he had in Guest to dine with him; and the sixth he betook himself to Dr. Lanyon's.

There at least he was not denied admittance; but when he came in, he was shocked at the change which had taken place in the doctor's appearance. He had his death-warrant written legibly upon his face. The rosy man had grown pale; his flesh had fallen away; he was visibly balder and older; and yet it was not so much these tokens of a swift physical decay that arrested the lawyer's notice, as a look in the eye and quality of manner that seemed to testify to some deep-seated terror of the mind. It was unlikely that the doctor should fear death; and yet that was what Utterson was tempted to suspect. "Yes," he thought; "he is a doctor, he must know his own state and that his days are counted; and the knowledge is more than he can bear." And yet when Utterson remarked on his ill-looks, it was with an air of great firmness that Lanyon declared himself a doomed man.



"I have had a shock," he said, "and I shall never recover. It is a question of weeks. Well, life has been pleasant; I liked it; yes, sir, I used to like it. I sometimes think if we knew all, we should be more glad to get away."

"Jekyll is ill, too," observed Utterson. "Have you seen him?"

But Lanyon's face changed, and he held up a trembling hand. "I wish to see or hear no more of Dr. Jekyll," he said in a loud, unsteady voice. "I am quite done with that person; and I beg that you will spare me any allusion to one whom I regard as dead."

"Tut-tut," said Mr. Utterson; and then after a considerable pause, "Can't I do anything?" he inquired. "We are three very old friends, Lanyon; we shall not live to make others."

"Nothing can be done," returned Lanyon; "ask himself."

"He will not see me," said the lawyer.

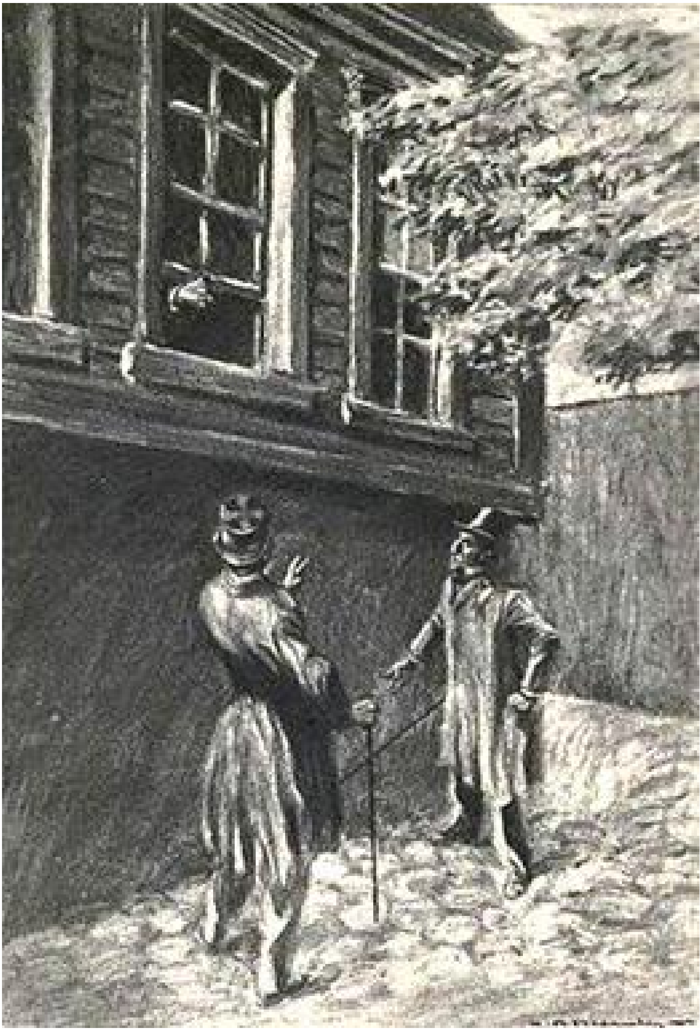
"I am not surprised at that," was the reply. "Some day, Utterson, after I am dead, you may perhaps come to learn the right and wrong of this. I cannot tell you. And in the meantime, if you can sit and talk with me of other things, for God's sake, stay and do so; but if you cannot keep clear of this accursed topic, then in God's name, go, for I cannot bear it."

As soon as he got home, Utterson sat down and wrote to Jekyll, complaining of his exclusion from the house, and asking the cause of this unhappy break with Lanyon; and the next day brought him a long answer, often very pathetically worded, and sometimes darkly mysterious in drift. The quarrel with Lanyon was incurable. “I do not blame our old friend,” Jekyll wrote, “but I share his view that we must never meet. I mean from henceforth to lead a life of extreme seclusion; you must not be surprised, nor must you doubt my friendship, if my door is often shut even to you. You must suffer me to go my own dark way. I have brought on myself a punishment and a danger that I cannot name. If I am the chief of sinners, I am the chief of sufferers also. I could not think that this earth contained a place for sufferings and terrors so unmanning; and you can do but one thing, Utterson, to lighten this destiny, and that is to respect my silence.” Utterson was amazed; the dark influence of Hyde had been withdrawn, the doctor had returned to his old tasks and amities; a week ago, the prospect had smiled with every promise of a cheerful and an honoured age; and now in a moment, friendship, and peace of mind, and the whole tenor of his life were wrecked. So great and unprepared a change pointed to madness; but in view of Lanyon’s manner and words, there must lie for it some deeper ground.

A week afterwards Dr. Lanyon took to his bed, and in something less than a fortnight he was dead. The night after the funeral, at which he had been sadly affected, Utterson locked the door of his business room, and sitting there by the light of a melancholy candle, drew out and set before him an envelope addressed by the hand and sealed with the seal of his dead friend. “PRIVATE: for the hands of G. J. Utterson ALONE, and in case of his predecease to be destroyed unread,” so it was emphatically superscribed; and the lawyer dreaded to behold the contents. “I have buried one friend to-day,” he thought: “what if this should cost me another?” And then he condemned the fear as a disloyalty, and broke the seal. Within there was another enclosure, likewise sealed, and marked upon the cover as “not to be opened till the death or disappearance of Dr. Henry Jekyll.” Utterson could not trust his eyes. Yes, it was disappearance; here again, as in the mad will which he had long ago restored to its author, here again were the idea of a disappearance and the name of Henry Jekyll bracketted. But in the will, that idea had sprung from the sinister suggestion of the man Hyde; it was set there with a purpose all too plain and horrible. Written by the hand of Lanyon, what should it mean? A great curiosity came on the trustee, to disregard the prohibition and dive at once to the bottom of these mysteries; but professional honour and faith to his dead friend were stringent obligations; and the packet slept in the inmost corner of his private safe.

It is one thing to mortify curiosity, another to conquer it; and it may be doubted if, from that day forth, Utterson desired the society of his surviving friend with the same eagerness. He thought of him kindly; but his thoughts were disquieted and fearful. He went to call indeed; but he was perhaps relieved to be denied admittance; perhaps, in his heart, he preferred to speak with Poole upon the doorstep and surrounded by the air and sounds of the open city, rather than to be admitted into that house of voluntary bondage, and to sit and speak with its inscrutable recluse. Poole had, indeed, no very pleasant news to communicate. The doctor, it appeared, now more than ever confined himself to the cabinet over the laboratory, where he would sometimes even sleep; he was out of spirits, he had grown very silent, he did not read; it seemed as if he had something on his mind. Utterson became so used to the unvarying character of these reports, that he fell off little by little in the frequency of his visits.

INCIDENT AT THE WINDOW



It chanced on Sunday, when Mr. Utterson was on his usual walk with Mr. Enfield, that their way lay once again through the by-street; and that when they came in front of the door, both stopped to gaze on it.

“Well,” said Enfield, “that story’s at an end at least. We shall never see more of Mr. Hyde.”

“I hope not,” said Utterson. “Did I ever tell you that I once saw him, and shared your feeling of repulsion?”

“It was impossible to do the one without the other,” returned Enfield. “And by the way, what an ass you must have thought me, not to know that this was a back way to Dr. Jekyll’s! It was partly your own fault that I found it out, even when I did.”

“So you found it out, did you?” said Utterson. “But if that be so, we may step into the court and take a look at the windows. To tell you the truth, I am uneasy about poor Jekyll; and even outside, I feel as if the presence of a friend might do him good."

The court was very cool and a little damp, and full of premature twilight, although the sky, high up overhead, was still bright with sunset. The middle one of the three windows was half-way open; and sitting close beside it, taking the air with an infinite sadness of mien, like some disconsolate prisoner, Utterson saw Dr. Jekyll.

"What! Jekyll!" he cried. "I trust you are better."

"I am very low, Utterson," replied the doctor drearily, "very low. It will not last long, thank God."

"You stay too much indoors," said the lawyer. "You should be out, whipping up the circulation like Mr. Enfield and me. (This is my cousin — Mr. Enfield — Dr. Jekyll.) Come now; get your hat and take a quick turn with us."

"You are very good," sighed the other. "I should like to very much; but no, no, no, it is quite impossible; I dare not. But indeed, Utterson, I am very glad to see you; this is really a great pleasure; I would ask you and Mr. Enfield up, but the place is really not fit."

"Why, then," said the lawyer, good-naturedly, "the best thing we can do is to stay down here and speak with you from where we are."

"That is just what I was about to venture to propose," returned the doctor with a smile. But the words were hardly uttered, before the smile was struck out of his face and succeeded by an expression of such abject terror and despair, as froze the very blood of the two gentlemen below. They saw it but for a glimpse for the window was instantly thrust down; but that glimpse had been sufficient, and they turned and left the court without a word. In silence, too, they traversed the by-street; and it was not until they had come into a neighbouring thoroughfare, where even upon a Sunday there were still some stirrings of life, that Mr. Utterson at last turned and looked at his companion. They were both pale; and there was an answering horror in their eyes.

"God forgive us, God forgive us," said Mr. Utterson.

But Mr. Enfield only nodded his head very seriously, and walked on once more in silence.

THE LAST NIGHT

Mr. Utterson was sitting by his fireside one evening after dinner, when he was surprised to receive a visit from Poole.

“Bless me, Poole, what brings you here?” he cried; and then taking a second look at him, “What ails you?” he added; “is the doctor ill?”

“Mr. Utterson,” said the man, “there is something wrong.”

“Take a seat, and here is a glass of wine for you,” said the lawyer. “Now, take your time, and tell me plainly what you want.”

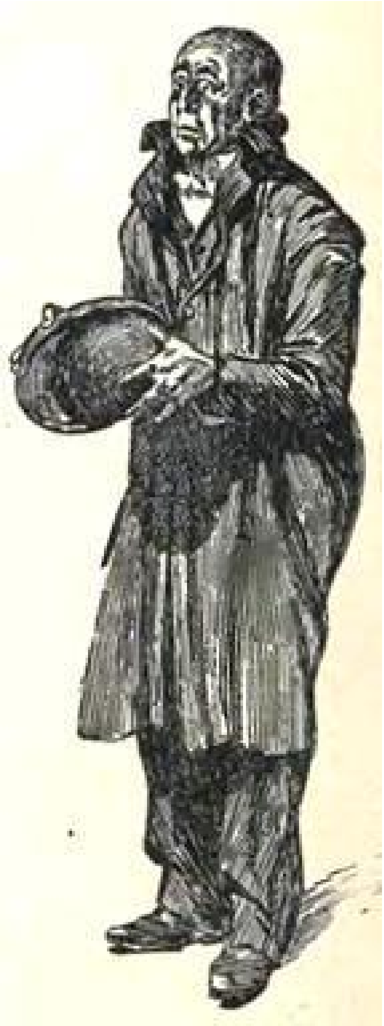
“You know the doctor’s ways, sir,” replied Poole, “and how he shuts himself up. Well, he’s shut up again in the cabinet; and I don’t like it, sir — I wish I may die if I like it. Mr. Utterson, sir, I’m afraid.”

“Now, my good man,” said the lawyer, “be explicit. What are you afraid of?”

“I’ve been afraid for about a week,” returned Poole, doggedly disregarding the question, “and I can bear it no more.”

The man’s appearance amply bore out his words; his manner was altered for the worse; and except for the moment when he had first announced his terror, he had not once looked the lawyer in the face. Even now, he sat with the glass of wine untasted on his knee, and his eyes directed to a corner of the floor. “I can bear it no more,” he repeated.

“Come,” said the lawyer, “I see you have some good reason, Poole; I see there is something seriously amiss. Try to tell me what it is.”



“I think there’s been foul play,” said Poole, hoarsely.

“Foul play!” cried the lawyer, a good deal frightened and rather inclined to be irritated in consequence. “What foul play! What does the man mean?”

“I daren’t say, sir,” was the answer; “but will you come along with me and see for yourself?”

Mr. Utterson’s only answer was to rise and get his hat and greatcoat; but he observed with wonder the greatness of the relief that appeared upon the butler’s face, and perhaps with no less, that the wine was still untasted when he set it down to follow.

It was a wild, cold, seasonable night of March, with a pale moon, lying on her back as though the wind had tilted her, and flying wrack of the most diaphanous and lawny texture. The wind made talking difficult, and flecked the blood into the face. It seemed to have swept the streets unusually bare of passengers, besides; for Mr. Utterson thought he had never seen that part of London so deserted. He could have wished it otherwise; never in his life had he been conscious of so sharp a wish to see and touch his fellow-creatures; for struggle as he might, there was borne in upon his mind a crushing anticipation of calamity. The square, when they got there, was full of wind and dust, and the thin trees in the garden were lashing themselves along the railing. Poole, who had kept all the way a pace or two ahead, now pulled up in the middle of the pavement, and in spite of the biting weather, took off his hat and mopped his brow with a red pocket-handkerchief. But for all the hurry of his coming, these were not the dews of exertion that he wiped away, but the moisture of some strangling anguish; for his face was white and his voice, when he spoke, harsh and broken.

“Well, sir,” he said, “here we are, and God grant there be nothing wrong.”

“Amen, Poole,” said the lawyer.

Thereupon the servant knocked in a very guarded manner; the door was opened on the chain; and a voice asked from within, “Is that you, Poole?”

“It’s all right,” said Poole. “Open the door.”

The hall, when they entered it, was brightly lighted up; the fire was built high; and about the hearth the whole of the servants, men and women, stood huddled together like a flock of sheep. At the sight of Mr. Utterson, the housemaid broke into hysterical whimpering; and the cook, crying out “Bless God! it’s Mr. Utterson,” ran forward as if to take him in her arms.

“What, what? Are you all here?” said the lawyer peevishly. “Very irregular, very unseemly; your master would be far from pleased.”

“They’re all afraid,” said Poole.

Blank silence followed, no one protesting; only the maid lifted her voice and now wept loudly.

“Hold your tongue!” Poole said to her, with a ferocity of accent that testified to his own jangled nerves; and indeed, when the girl had so suddenly raised the note of her lamentation, they had all started and turned towards the inner door with faces of dreadful expectation. “And now,” continued the butler, addressing the knife-boy, “reach me a candle, and we’ll get this through hands at once.” And then he begged Mr. Utterson to follow him, and led the way to the back garden.

“Now, sir,” said he, “you come as gently as you can. I want you to hear, and I don’t want you to be heard. And see here, sir, if by any chance he was to ask you in, don’t go.”

Mr. Utterson’s nerves, at this unlooked-for termination, gave a jerk that nearly threw him from his balance; but he recollected his courage and followed the butler into the laboratory building through the surgical theatre, with its lumber of crates and bottles, to the foot of the stair. Here Poole motioned him to stand on one side and listen; while he himself, setting down the candle and making a great and obvious call on his resolution, mounted the steps and knocked with a somewhat uncertain hand on the red baize of the cabinet door.

“Mr. Utterson, sir, asking to see you,” he called; and even as he did so, once more violently signed to the lawyer to give ear.

A voice answered from within: “Tell him I cannot see anyone,” it said complainingly.

“Thank you, sir,” said Poole, with a note of something like triumph in his voice; and taking up his candle, he led Mr. Utterson back across the yard and into the great kitchen, where the fire was out and the beetles were leaping on the floor.

“Sir,” he said, looking Mr. Utterson in the eyes, “Was that my master’s voice?”

“It seems much changed,” replied the lawyer, very pale, but giving look for look.

“Changed? Well, yes, I think so,” said the butler. “Have I been twenty years in this man’s house, to be deceived about his voice? No, sir; master’s made away with; he was made away with eight days ago, when we heard him cry out upon the name of God; and who’s in there instead of him, and why it stays there, is a thing that cries to Heaven, Mr. Utterson!”

“This is a very strange tale, Poole; this is rather a wild tale my man,” said Mr. Utterson, biting his finger. “Suppose it were as you suppose, supposing Dr. Jekyll to have been — well, murdered what could induce the murderer to stay? That won’t hold water; it doesn’t commend itself to reason.”

“Well, Mr. Utterson, you are a hard man to satisfy, but I’ll do it yet,” said Poole. “All this last week (you must know) him, or it, whatever it is that lives in that cabinet, has been crying night and day for some sort of medicine and cannot get it to his mind. It was sometimes his way — the master’s, that is — to write his orders on a sheet of paper and throw it on the stair. We’ve had nothing else this week back; nothing but papers, and a closed door, and the very meals left there to be smuggled in when nobody was looking. Well, sir, every day, ay, and twice and thrice in the same day, there have been orders and complaints, and I have been sent flying to all the wholesale chemists in town. Every time I brought the stuff back, there would be another paper telling me to return it, because it was not pure, and another order to a different firm. This drug is wanted bitter bad, sir, whatever for.”

“Have you any of these papers?” asked Mr. Utterson.

Poole felt in his pocket and handed out a crumpled note, which the lawyer, bending nearer to the candle, carefully examined. Its contents ran thus: “Dr. Jekyll presents his compliments to Messrs. Maw. He assures them that their last sample is impure and quite useless for his present purpose. In the year 18 — , Dr. J. purchased a somewhat large quantity from Messrs. M. He now begs them to search with most sedulous care, and should any of the same quality be left, forward it to him at once. Expense is no consideration. The importance of this to Dr. J. can hardly be exaggerated.” So far the letter had run composedly enough, but here with a sudden splutter of the pen, the writer’s emotion had broken loose. “For God’s sake,” he added, “find me some of the old.”

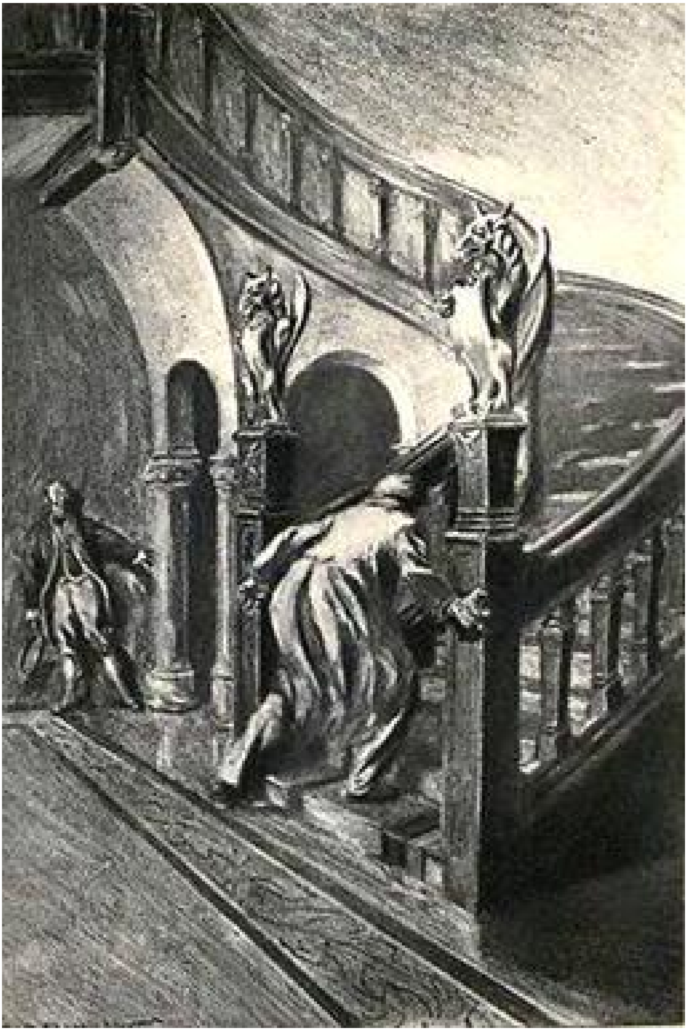
“This is a strange note,” said Mr. Utterson; and then sharply, “How do you come to have it open?”

“The man at Maw’s was main angry, sir, and he threw it back to me like so much dirt,” returned Poole.

“This is unquestionably the doctor’s hand, do you know?” resumed the lawyer.

“I thought it looked like it,” said the servant rather sulkily; and then, with another voice, “But what matters hand of write?” he said. “I’ve seen him!”

“Seen him?” repeated Mr. Utterson. “Well?”



“That’s it!” said Poole. “It was this way. I came suddenly into the theater from the garden. It seems he had slipped out to look for this drug or whatever it is; for the cabinet door was open, and there he was at the far end of the room digging among the crates. He looked up when I came in, gave a kind of cry, and whipped upstairs into the cabinet. It was but for one minute that I saw him, but the hair stood upon my head like quills. Sir, if that was my master, why had he a mask upon his face? If it was my master, why did he cry out like a rat, and run from me? I have served him long enough. And then…” The man paused and passed his hand over his face.

“These are all very strange circumstances,” said Mr. Utterson, “but I think I begin to see daylight. Your master, Poole, is plainly seized with one of those maladies that both torture and deform the sufferer; hence, for aught I know, the alteration of his voice; hence the mask and the avoidance of his friends; hence his eagerness to find this drug, by means of which the poor soul retains some hope of ultimate recovery — God grant that he be not deceived! There is my explanation; it is sad enough, Poole, ay, and appalling to consider; but it is plain and natural, hangs well together, and delivers us from all exorbitant alarms."

"Sir," said the butler, turning to a sort of mottled pallor, "that thing was not my master, and there's the truth. My master" — here he looked round him and began to whisper — "is a tall, fine build of a man, and this was more of a dwarf." Utterson attempted to protest. "O, sir," cried Poole, "do you think I do not know my master after twenty years? Do you think I do not know where his head comes to in the cabinet door, where I saw him every morning of my life? No, sir, that thing in the mask was never Dr. Jekyll — God knows what it was, but it was never Dr. Jekyll; and it is the belief of my heart that there was murder done."

"Poole," replied the lawyer, "if you say that, it will become my duty to make certain. Much as I desire to spare your master's feelings, much as I am puzzled by this note which seems to prove him to be still alive, I shall consider it my duty to break in that door."

"Ah, Mr. Utterson, that's talking!" cried the butler.

"And now comes the second question," resumed Utterson: "Who is going to do it?"

"Why, you and me, sir," was the undaunted reply.

"That's very well said," returned the lawyer; "and whatever comes of it, I shall make it my business to see you are no loser."

"There is an axe in the theatre," continued Poole; "and you might take the kitchen poker for yourself."

The lawyer took that rude but weighty instrument into his hand, and balanced it. "Do you know, Poole," he said, looking up, "that you and I are about to place ourselves in a position of some peril?"

"You may say so, sir, indeed," returned the butler.

"It is well, then that we should be frank," said the other. "We both think more than we have said; let us make a clean breast. This masked figure that you saw, did you recognise it?"

"Well, sir, it went so quick, and the creature was so doubled up, that I could hardly swear to that," was the answer. "But if you mean, was it Mr. Hyde? — why, yes, I think it was! You see, it was much of the same bigness; and it had the same quick, light way with it; and then who else could have got in by the laboratory door? You have not forgot, sir, that at the time of the murder he had still the key with him? But that's not all. I don't know, Mr. Utterson, if you ever met this Mr. Hyde?"

"Yes," said the lawyer, "I once spoke with him."

"Then you must know as well as the rest of us that there was something queer about that gentleman — something that gave a man a turn — I don't know rightly how to say it, sir, beyond this: that you felt in your marrow kind of cold and thin."

"I own I felt something of what you describe," said Mr. Utterson.

"Quite so, sir," returned Poole. "Well, when that masked thing like a monkey jumped from among the chemicals and whipped into the cabinet, it went down my spine like ice. O, I know it's not evidence, Mr. Utterson; I'm book-learned enough for that; but a man has his feelings, and I give you my bible-word it was Mr. Hyde!"

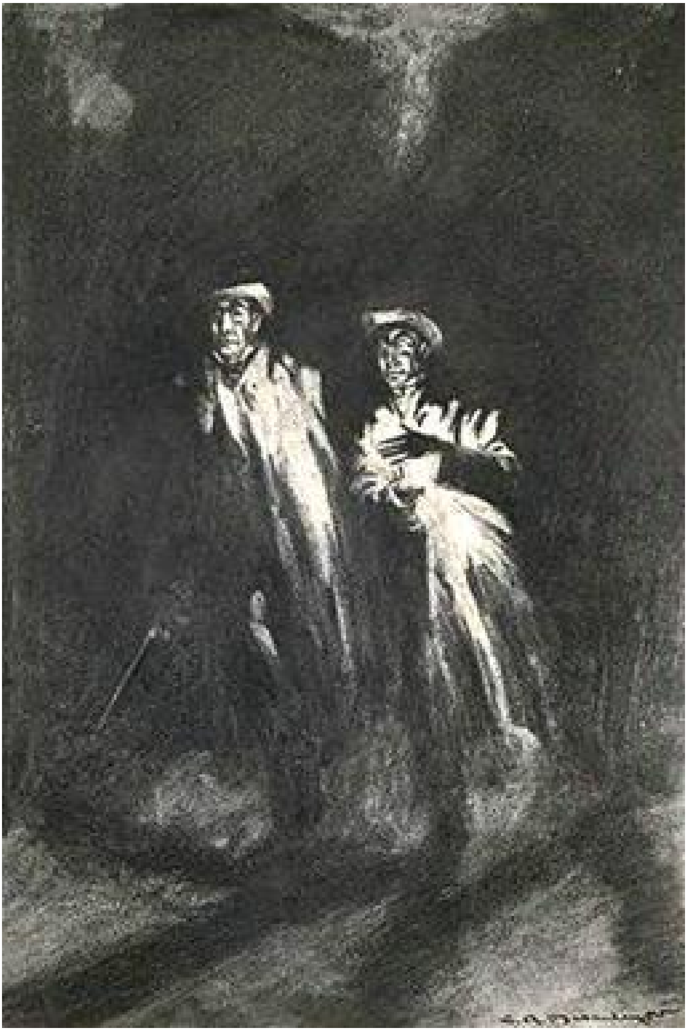
"Ay, ay," said the lawyer. "My fears incline to the same point. Evil, I fear, founded — evil was sure to come — of that connection. Ay truly, I believe you; I believe poor Harry is killed; and I believe his murderer (for what purpose, God alone can tell) is still lurking in his victim's room. Well, let our name be vengeance. Call Bradshaw."

The footman came at the summons, very white and nervous.

"Put yourself together, Bradshaw," said the lawyer. "This suspense, I know, is telling upon all of you; but it is now our intention to make an end of it. Poole, here, and I are going to force our way into the cabinet. If all is well, my shoulders are broad enough to bear the blame. Meanwhile, lest anything should really be amiss, or any malefactor seek to escape by the back, you and the boy must go round the corner with a pair of good sticks and take your post at the laboratory door. We give you ten minutes, to get to your stations."

As Bradshaw left, the lawyer looked at his watch. "And now, Poole, let us get to ours," he said; and taking the poker under his arm, led the way into the yard. The scud had banked over the moon, and it was now quite dark. The wind, which only broke in puffs and draughts into that deep well of building, tossed the light of the candle to and fro about their steps, until they came into the shelter of the theatre, where they sat down silently to wait. London hummed solemnly all around; but nearer at hand, the stillness was only broken by the sounds of a footfall moving to and fro along the cabinet floor.

"So it will walk all day, sir," whispered Poole; "ay, and the better part of the night. Only when a new sample comes from the chemist, there's a bit of a break. Ah, it's an ill conscience that's such an enemy to rest! Ah, sir, there's blood foully shed in every step of it! But hark again, a little closer — put your heart in your ears, Mr. Utterson, and tell me, is that the doctor's foot?"



The steps fell lightly and oddly, with a certain swing, for all they went so slowly; it was different indeed from the heavy creaking tread of Henry Jekyll. Utterson sighed. “Is there never anything else?” he asked.

Poole nodded. “Once,” he said. “Once I heard it weeping!”

“Weeping? how that?” said the lawyer, conscious of a sudden chill of horror.

“Weeping like a woman or a lost soul,” said the butler. “I came away with that upon my heart, that I could have wept too.”

But now the ten minutes drew to an end. Poole disinterred the axe from under a stack of packing straw; the candle was set upon the nearest table to light them to the attack; and they drew near with bated breath to where that patient foot was still going up and down, up and down, in the quiet of the night. “Jekyll,” cried Utterson, with a loud voice, “I demand to see you.” He paused a moment, but there came no reply. “I give you fair warning, our suspicions are aroused, and I must and shall see you,” he resumed; “if not by fair means, then by foul — if not of your consent, then by brute force!”

“Utterson,” said the voice, “for God’s sake, have mercy!”

“Ah, that’s not Jekyll’s voice — it’s Hyde’s!” cried Utterson. “Down with the door, Poole!”

Poole swung the axe over his shoulder; the blow shook the building, and the red baize door leaped against the lock and hinges. A dismal screech, as of mere animal terror, rang from the cabinet. Up went the axe again, and again the panels crashed and the frame bounded; four times the blow fell; but the wood was tough and the fittings were of excellent workmanship; and it was not until the fifth, that the lock burst and the wreck of the door fell inwards on the carpet.

The besiegers, appalled by their own riot and the stillness that had succeeded, stood back a little and peered in. There lay the cabinet before their eyes in the quiet lamplight, a good fire glowing and chattering on the hearth, the kettle singing its thin strain, a drawer or two open, papers neatly set forth on the business table, and nearer the fire, the things laid out for tea; the quietest room, you would have said, and, but for the glazed presses full of chemicals, the most commonplace that night in London.

Right in the middle there lay the body of a man sorely contorted and still twitching. They drew near on tiptoe, turned it on its back and beheld the face of Edward Hyde. He was dressed in clothes far too large for him, clothes of the doctor’s bigness; the cords of his face still moved with a semblance of life, but life was quite gone: and by the crushed phial in the hand and the strong smell of kernels that hung upon the air, Utterson knew that he was looking on the body of a self-destroyer.

“We have come too late,” he said sternly, “whether to save or punish. Hyde is gone to his account; and it only remains for us to find the body of your master.”

The far greater proportion of the building was occupied by the theatre, which filled almost the whole ground storey and was lighted from above, and by the cabinet, which formed an upper story at one end and looked upon the court. A corridor joined the theatre to the door on the by-street; and with this the cabinet communicated separately by a second flight of stairs. There were besides a few dark closets and a spacious cellar. All these they now thoroughly examined. Each closet needed but a glance, for all were empty, and all, by the dust that fell from their doors, had stood long unopened. The cellar, indeed, was filled with crazy lumber, mostly dating from the times of the surgeon who was Jekyll’s predecessor; but even as they opened the door they were advertised of the uselessness of further search, by the fall of a perfect mat of cobweb which had for years sealed up the entrance. No where was there any trace of Henry Jekyll dead or alive.

Poole stamped on the flags of the corridor. “He must be buried here,” he said, hearkening to the sound.

“Or he may have fled,” said Utterson, and he turned to examine the door in the by-street. It was locked; and lying near by on the flags, they found the key, already stained with rust.

“This does not look like use,” observed the lawyer.

“Use!” echoed Poole. “Do you not see, sir, it is broken? much as if a man had stamped on it.”

“Ay,” continued Utterson, “and the fractures, too, are rusty.” The two men looked at each other with a scare. “This is beyond me, Poole,” said the lawyer. “Let us go back to the cabinet.”

They mounted the stair in silence, and still with an occasional awestruck glance at the dead body, proceeded more thoroughly to examine the contents of the cabinet. At one table, there were traces of chemical work, various measured heaps of some white salt being laid on glass saucers, as though for an experiment in which the unhappy man had been prevented.

“That is the same drug that I was always bringing him,” said Poole; and even as he spoke, the kettle with a startling noise boiled over.

This brought them to the fireside, where the easy-chair was drawn cosily up, and the tea things stood ready to the sitter’s elbow, the very sugar in the cup. There were several books on a shelf; one lay beside the tea things open, and Utterson was amazed to find it a copy of a pious work, for which Jekyll had several times expressed a great esteem, annotated, in his own hand with startling blasphemies.

Next, in the course of their review of the chamber, the searchers came to the cheval-glass, into whose depths they looked with an involuntary horror. But it was so turned as to show them nothing but the rosy glow playing on the roof, the fire sparkling in a hundred repetitions along the glazed front of the presses, and their own pale and fearful countenances stooping to look in.

“This glass has seen some strange things, sir,” whispered Poole.

“And surely none stranger than itself,” echoed the lawyer in the same tones. “For what did Jekyll” — he caught himself up at the word with a start, and then conquering the weakness — ”what could Jekyll want with it?” he said.

“You may say that!” said Poole.

Next they turned to the business table. On the desk, among the neat array of papers, a large envelope was uppermost, and bore, in the doctor’s hand, the name of Mr. Utterson. The lawyer unsealed it, and several enclosures fell to the floor. The first was a will, drawn in the same eccentric terms as the one which he had returned six months before, to serve as a testament in case of death and as a deed of gift in case of disappearance; but in place of the name of Edward Hyde, the lawyer, with indescribable amazement read the name of Gabriel John Utterson. He looked at Poole, and then back at the paper, and last of all at the dead malefactor stretched upon the carpet.

“My head goes round,” he said. “He has been all these days in possession; he had no cause to like me; he must have raged to see himself displaced; and he has not destroyed this document.”

He caught up the next paper; it was a brief note in the doctor’s hand and dated at the top. “O Poole!” the lawyer cried, “he was alive and here this day. He cannot have been disposed of in so short a space; he must be still alive, he must have fled! And then, why fled? and how? and in that case, can we venture to declare this suicide? O, we must be careful. I foresee that we may yet involve your master in some dire catastrophe.”

“Why don’t you read it, sir?” asked Poole.

“Because I fear,” replied the lawyer solemnly. “God grant I have no cause for it!” And with that he brought the paper to his eyes and read as follows:

“My dear Utterson, — When this shall fall into your hands, I shall have disappeared, under what circumstances I have not the penetration to foresee, but my instinct and all the circumstances of my nameless situation tell me that the end is sure and must be early. Go then, and first read the narrative which Lanyon warned me he was to place in your hands; and if you care to hear more, turn to the confession of

“Your unworthy and unhappy friend,

“HENRY JEKYLL.”

“There was a third enclosure?” asked Utterson.

“Here, sir,” said Poole, and gave into his hands a considerable packet sealed in several places.

The lawyer put it in his pocket. “I would say nothing of this paper. If your master has fled or is dead, we may at least save his credit. It is now ten; I must go home and read these documents in quiet; but I shall be back before midnight, when we shall send for the police.”

They went out, locking the door of the theatre behind them; and Utterson, once more leaving the servants gathered about the fire in the hall, trudged back to his office to read the two narratives in which this mystery was now to be explained.

DR. LANYON'S NARRATIVE

On the ninth of January, now four days ago, I received by the evening delivery a registered envelope, addressed in the hand of my colleague and old school companion, Henry Jekyll. I was a good deal surprised by this; for we were by no means in the habit of correspondence; I had seen the man, dined with him, indeed, the night before; and I could imagine nothing in our intercourse that should justify formality of registration. The contents increased my wonder; for this is how the letter ran:

"10th December, 18 — .

"Dear Lanyon, — You are one of my oldest friends; and although we may have differed at times on scientific questions, I cannot remember, at least on my side, any break in our affection. There was never a day when, if you had said to me, `Jekyll, my life, my honour, my reason, depend upon you,' I would not have sacrificed my left hand to help you. Lanyon my life, my honour, my reason, are all at your mercy; if you fail me to-night, I am lost. You might suppose, after this preface, that I am going to ask you for something dishonourable to grant. Judge for yourself.

"I want you to postpone all other engagements for to-night — ay, even if you were summoned to the bedside of an emperor; to take a cab, unless your carriage should be actually at the door; and with this letter in your hand for consultation, to drive straight to my house. Poole, my butler, has his orders; you will find him waiting your arrival with a locksmith. The door of my cabinet is then to be forced: and you are to go in alone; to open the glazed press (letter E) on the left hand, breaking the lock if it be shut; and to draw out, with all its contents as they stand, the fourth drawer from the top or (which is the same thing) the third from the bottom. In my extreme distress of mind, I have a morbid fear of misdirecting you; but even if I am in error, you may know the right drawer by its contents: some powders, a phial and a paper book. This drawer I beg of you to carry back with you to Cavendish Square exactly as it stands.

"That is the first part of the service: now for the second. You should be back, if you set out at once on the receipt of this, long before midnight; but I will leave you that amount of margin, not only in the fear of one of those obstacles that can neither be prevented nor foreseen, but because an hour when your servants are in bed is to be preferred for what will then remain to do. At midnight, then, I have to ask you to be alone in your consulting room, to admit with your own hand into the house a man who will present himself in my name, and to place in his hands the drawer that you will have brought with you from my cabinet. Then you will have played your part and earned my gratitude completely. Five minutes afterwards, if you insist upon an explanation, you will have understood that these arrangements are of capital importance; and that by the neglect of one of them, fantastic as they must appear, you might have charged your conscience with my death or the shipwreck of my reason.

"Confident as I am that you will not trifle with this appeal, my heart sinks and my hand trembles at the bare thought of such a possibility. Think of me at this hour, in a strange place, labouring under a blackness of distress that no fancy can exaggerate, and yet well aware that, if you will but punctually serve me, my troubles will roll away like a story that is told. Serve me, my dear Lanyon and save

"Your friend,

"H.J.

"P.S. — I had already sealed this up when a fresh terror struck upon my soul. It is possible that the post-office may fail me, and this letter not come into your hands until to-morrow morning. In that case, dear Lanyon, do my errand when it shall be most convenient for you in the course of the day; and once more expect my messenger at midnight. It may then already be too late; and if that night passes without event, you will know that you have seen the last of Henry Jekyll."

Upon the reading of this letter, I made sure my colleague was insane; but till that was proved beyond the possibility of doubt, I felt bound to do as he requested. The less I understood of this farrago, the less I was in a position to judge of its importance; and an appeal so worded could not be set aside without a grave responsibility. I rose accordingly from table, got into a hansom, and drove straight to Jekyll's house. The butler was awaiting my arrival; he had received by the same post as mine a registered letter of instruction, and had sent at once for a locksmith and a carpenter. The tradesmen came while we were yet speaking; and we moved in a body to old Dr. Denman's surgical theatre, from which (as you are doubtless aware) Jekyll's private cabinet is most conveniently entered. The door was very strong, the lock excellent; the carpenter avowed he would have great trouble and have to do much damage, if force were to be used; and the locksmith was near despair. But this last was a handy fellow, and after two hour's work, the door stood open. The press marked E was unlocked; and I took out the drawer, had it filled up with straw and tied in a sheet, and returned with it to Cavendish Square.

Here I proceeded to examine its contents. The powders were neatly enough made up, but not with the nicety of the dispensing chemist; so that it was plain they were of Jekyll's private manufacture: and when I opened one of the wrappers I found what seemed to me a simple crystalline salt of a white colour. The phial, to which I next turned my attention, might have been about half full of a blood-red liquor, which was highly pungent to the sense of smell and seemed to me to contain phosphorus and some volatile ether. At the other ingredients I could make no guess. The book was an ordinary version book and contained little but a series of dates. These covered a period of many years, but I observed that the entries ceased nearly a year ago and quite abruptly. Here and there a brief remark was appended to a date, usually no more than a single word: “double” occurring perhaps six times in a total of several hundred entries; and once very early in the list and followed by several marks of exclamation, “total failure!!!” All this, though it whetted my curiosity, told me little that was definite. Here were a phial of some salt, and the record of a series of experiments that had led (like too many of Jekyll’s investigations) to no end of practical usefulness. How could the presence of these articles in my house affect either the honour, the sanity, or the life of my flighty colleague? If his messenger could go to one place, why could he not go to another? And even granting some impediment, why was this gentleman to be received by me in secret? The more I reflected the more convinced I grew that I was dealing with a case of cerebral disease; and though I dismissed my servants to bed, I loaded an old revolver, that I might be found in some posture of self-defence.

Twelve o’clock had scarce rung out over London, ere the knocker sounded very gently on the door. I went myself at the summons, and found a small man crouching against the pillars of the portico.

“Are you come from Dr. Jekyll?” I asked.

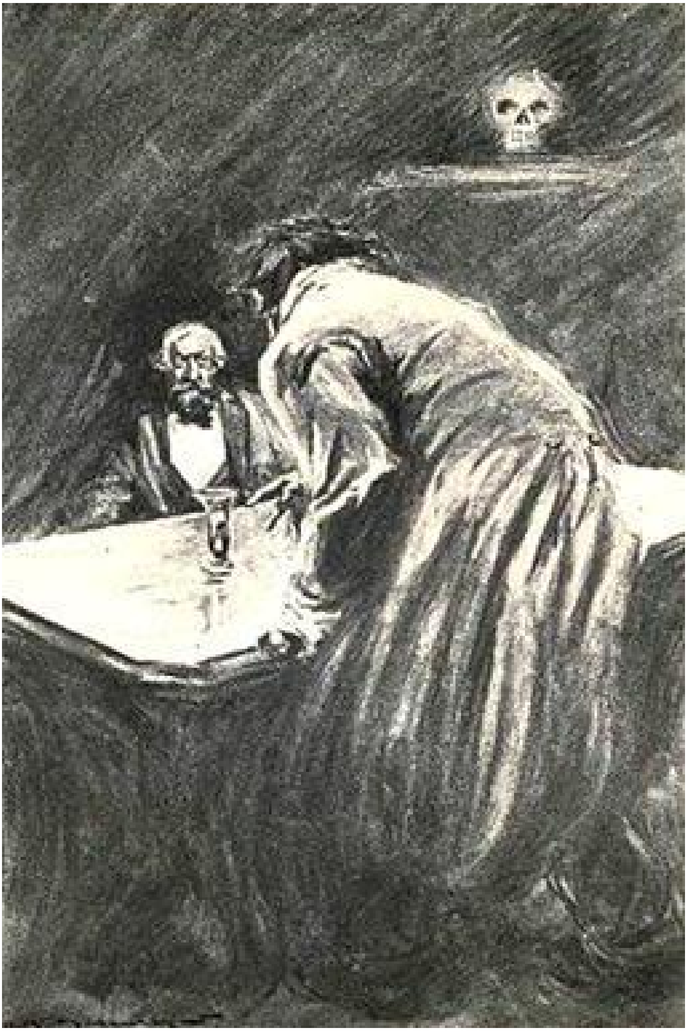
He told me “yes” by a constrained gesture; and when I had bidden him enter, he did not obey me without a searching backward glance into the darkness of the square. There was a policeman not far off, advancing with his bull’s eye open; and at the sight, I thought my visitor started and made greater haste.

These particulars struck me, I confess, disagreeably; and as I followed him into the bright light of the consulting room, I kept my hand ready on my weapon. Here, at last, I had a chance of clearly seeing him. I had never set eyes on him before, so much was certain. He was small, as I have said; I was struck besides with the shocking expression of his face, with his remarkable combination of great muscular activity and great apparent debility of constitution, and — last but not least — with the odd, subjective disturbance caused by his neighbourhood. This bore some resemblance to incipient rigour, and was accompanied by a marked sinking of the pulse. At the time, I set it down to some idiosyncratic, personal distaste, and merely wondered at the acuteness of the symptoms; but I have since had reason to believe the cause to lie much deeper in the nature of man, and to turn on some nobler hinge than the principle of hatred.

This person (who had thus, from the first moment of his entrance, struck in me what I can only, describe as a disgustful curiosity) was dressed in a fashion that would have made an ordinary person laughable; his clothes, that is to say, although they were of rich and sober fabric, were enormously too large for him in every measurement — the trousers hanging on his legs and rolled up to keep them from the ground, the waist of the coat below his haunches, and the collar sprawling wide upon his shoulders. Strange to relate, this ludicrous accoutrement was far from moving me to laughter. Rather, as there was something abnormal and misbegotten in the very essence of the creature that now faced me — something seizing, surprising and revolting — this fresh disparity seemed but to fit in with and to reinforce it; so that to my interest in the man's nature and character, there was added a curiosity as to his origin, his life, his fortune and status in the world.

These observations, though they have taken so great a space to be set down in, were yet the work of a few seconds. My visitor was, indeed, on fire with sombre excitement.

"Have you got it?" he cried. "Have you got it?" And so lively was his impatience that he even laid his hand upon my arm and sought to shake me.



I put him back, conscious at his touch of a certain icy pang along my blood. “Come, sir,” said I. “You forget that I have not yet the pleasure of your acquaintance. Be seated, if you please.” And I showed him an example, and sat down myself in my customary seat and with as fair an imitation of my ordinary manner to a patient, as the lateness of the hour, the nature of my preoccupations, and the horror I had of my visitor, would suffer me to muster.

“I beg your pardon, Dr. Lanyon,” he replied civilly enough. “What you say is very well founded; and my impatience has shown its heels to my politeness. I come here at the instance of your colleague, Dr. Henry Jekyll, on a piece of business of some moment; and I understood...” He paused and put his hand to his throat, and I could see, in spite of his collected manner, that he was wrestling against the approaches of the hysteria — ”I understood, a drawer...”

But here I took pity on my visitor’s suspense, and some perhaps on my own growing curiosity.

"There it is, sir," said I, pointing to the drawer, where it lay on the floor behind a table and still covered with the sheet.

He sprang to it, and then paused, and laid his hand upon his heart: I could hear his teeth grate with the convulsive action of his jaws; and his face was so ghastly to see that I grew alarmed both for his life and reason.

"Compose yourself," said I.

He turned a dreadful smile to me, and as if with the decision of despair, plucked away the sheet. At sight of the contents, he uttered one loud sob of such immense relief that I sat petrified. And the next moment, in a voice that was already fairly well under control, "Have you a graduated glass?" he asked.

I rose from my place with something of an effort and gave him what he asked.

He thanked me with a smiling nod, measured out a few minims of the red tincture and added one of the powders. The mixture, which was at first of a reddish hue, began, in proportion as the crystals melted, to brighten in colour, to effervesce audibly, and to throw off small fumes of vapour. Suddenly and at the same moment, the ebullition ceased and the compound changed to a dark purple, which faded again more slowly to a watery green. My visitor, who had watched these metamorphoses with a keen eye, smiled, set down the glass upon the table, and then turned and looked upon me with an air of scrutiny.

"And now," said he, "to settle what remains. Will you be wise? will you be guided? will you suffer me to take this glass in my hand and to go forth from your house without further parley? or has the greed of curiosity too much command of you? Think before you answer, for it shall be done as you decide. As you decide, you shall be left as you were before, and neither richer nor wiser, unless the sense of service rendered to a man in mortal distress may be counted as a kind of riches of the soul. Or, if you shall so prefer to choose, a new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power shall be laid open to you, here, in this room, upon the instant; and your sight shall be blasted by a prodigy to stagger the unbelief of Satan."

"Sir," said I, affecting a coolness that I was far from truly possessing, "you speak enigmas, and you will perhaps not wonder that I hear you with no very strong impression of belief. But I have gone too far in the way of inexplicable services to pause before I see the end."

"It is well," replied my visitor. "Lanyon, you remember your vows: what follows is under the seal of our profession. And now, you who have so long been bound to the most narrow and material views, you who have denied the virtue of transcendental medicine, you who have derided your superiors — behold!”

He put the glass to his lips and drank at one gulp. A cry followed; he reeled, staggered, clutched at the table and held on, staring with injected eyes, gasping with open mouth; and as I looked there came, I thought, a change — he seemed to swell — his face became suddenly black and the features seemed to melt and alter — and the next moment, I had sprung to my feet and leaped back against the wall, my arms raised to shield me from that prodigy, my mind submerged in terror.

“O God!” I screamed, and “O God!” again and again; for there before my eyes — pale and shaken, and half fainting, and groping before him with his hands, like a man restored from death — there stood Henry Jekyll!

What he told me in the next hour, I cannot bring my mind to set on paper. I saw what I saw, I heard what I heard, and my soul sickened at it; and yet now when that sight has faded from my eyes, I ask myself if I believe it, and I cannot answer. My life is shaken to its roots; sleep has left me; the deadliest terror sits by me at all hours of the day and night; and I feel that my days are numbered, and that I must die; and yet I shall die incredulous. As for the moral turpitude that man unveiled to me, even with tears of penitence, I can not, even in memory, dwell on it without a start of horror. I will say but one thing, Utterson, and that (if you can bring your mind to credit it) will be more than enough. The creature who crept into my house that night was, on Jekyll’s own confession, known by the name of Hyde and hunted for in every corner of the land as the murderer of Carew.

HASTIE LANYON

HENRY JEKYLL'S FULL STATEMENT OF THE CASE

I was born in the year 18 — to a large fortune, endowed besides with excellent parts, inclined by nature to industry, fond of the respect of the wise and good among my fellowmen, and thus, as might have been supposed, with every guarantee of an honourable and distinguished future. And indeed the worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition, such as has made the happiness of many, but such as I found it hard to reconcile with my imperious desire to carry my head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public. Hence it came about that I concealed my pleasures; and that when I reached years of reflection, and began to look round me and take stock of my progress and position in the world, I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of me. Many a man would have even blazoned such irregularities as I was guilty of; but from the high views that I had set before me, I regarded and hid them with an almost morbid sense of shame. It was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspirations than any particular degradation in my faults, that made me what I was, and, with even a deeper trench than in the majority of men, severed in me those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature. In this case, I was driven to reflect deeply and inveterately on that hard law of life, which lies at the root of religion and is one of the most plentiful springs of distress. Though so profound a double-dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite; both sides of me were in dead earnest; I was no more myself when I laid aside restraint and plunged in shame, than when I laboured, in the eye of day, at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering. And it chanced that the direction of my scientific studies, which led wholly towards the mystic and the transcendental, reacted and shed a strong light on this consciousness of the perennial war among my members. With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth, by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens. I, for my part, from the nature of my life, advanced infallibly in one direction and in one direction only. It was on the moral side, and in my own person, that I learned to recognise the thorough and primitive duality of man; I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both; and from an early date, even before the course of my scientific discoveries had begun to suggest the most naked possibility of such a miracle, I had learned to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved daydream, on the thought of the separation of these elements. If each, I told myself, could be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin; and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path, doing the good things in which he found his pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil. It was the curse of mankind that these incongruous faggots were thus bound together — that in the agonised womb of consciousness, these polar twins should be continuously struggling. How, then were they dissociated?

I was so far in my reflections when, as I have said, a side light began to shine upon the subject from the laboratory table. I began to perceive more deeply than it has ever yet been stated, the trembling immateriality, the mistlike transience, of this seemingly so solid body in which we walk attired. Certain agents I found to have the power to shake and pluck back that fleshly vestment, even as a wind might toss the curtains of a pavilion. For two good reasons, I will not enter deeply into this scientific branch of my confession. First, because I have been made to learn that the doom and burthen of our life is bound for ever on man's shoulders, and when the attempt is made to cast it off, it but returns upon us with more unfamiliar and more awful pressure. Second, because, as my narrative will make, alas! too evident, my discoveries were incomplete. Enough then, that I not only recognised my natural body from the mere aura and effulgence of certain of the powers that made up my spirit, but managed to compound a drug by which these powers should be dethroned from their supremacy, and a second form and countenance substituted, none the less natural to me because they were the expression, and bore the stamp of lower elements in my soul.

I hesitated long before I put this theory to the test of practice. I knew well that I risked death; for any drug that so potently controlled and shook the very fortress of identity, might, by the least scruple of an overdose or at the least inopportunity in the moment of exhibition, utterly blot out that immaterial tabernacle which I looked to it to change. But the temptation of a discovery so singular and profound at last overcame the suggestions of alarm. I had long since prepared my tincture; I purchased at once, from a firm of wholesale chemists, a large quantity of a particular salt which I knew, from my experiments, to be the last ingredient required; and late one accursed night, I compounded the elements, watched them boil and smoke together in the glass, and when the ebullition had subsided, with a strong glow of courage, drank off the potion.

The most racking pangs succeeded: a grinding in the bones, deadly nausea, and a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death. Then these agonies began swiftly to subside, and I came to myself as if out of a great sickness. There was something strange in my sensations, something indescribably new and, from its very novelty, incredibly sweet. I felt younger, lighter, happier in body; within I was conscious of a heady recklessness, a current of disordered sensual images running like a millrace in my fancy, a solution of the bonds of obligation, an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul. I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine. I stretched out my hands, exulting in the freshness of these sensations; and in the act, I was suddenly aware that I had lost in stature.

There was no mirror, at that date, in my room; that which stands beside me as I write, was brought there later on and for the very purpose of these transformations. The night however, was far gone into the morning — the morning, black as it was, was nearly ripe for the conception of the day — the inmates of my house were locked in the most rigorous hours of slumber; and I determined, flushed as I was with hope and triumph, to venture in my new shape as far as to my bedroom. I crossed the yard, wherein the constellations looked down upon me, I could have thought, with wonder, the first creature of that sort that their unsleeping vigilance had yet disclosed to them; I stole through the corridors, a stranger in my own house; and coming to my room, I saw for the first time the appearance of Edward Hyde.

I must here speak by theory alone, saying not that which I know, but that which I suppose to be most probable. The evil side of my nature, to which I had now transferred the stamping efficacy, was less robust and less developed than the good which I had just deposed. Again, in the course of my life, which had been, after all, nine tenths a life of effort, virtue and control, it had been much less exercised and much less exhausted. And hence, as I think, it came about that Edward Hyde was so much smaller, slighter and younger than Henry Jekyll. Even as good shone upon the countenance of the one, evil was written broadly and plainly on the face of the other. Evil besides (which I must still believe to be the lethal side of man) had left on that body an imprint of deformity and decay. And yet when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather of a leap of welcome. This, too, was myself. It seemed natural and human. In my eyes it bore a livelier image of the spirit, it seemed more express and single, than the imperfect and divided countenance I had been hitherto accustomed to call mine. And in so far I was doubtless right. I have observed that when I wore the semblance of Edward Hyde, none could come near to me at first without a visible misgiving of the flesh. This, as I take it, was because all human beings, as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil: and Edward Hyde, alone in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil.

I lingered but a moment at the mirror: the second and conclusive experiment had yet to be attempted; it yet remained to be seen if I had lost my identity beyond redemption and must flee before daylight from a house that was no longer mine; and hurrying back to my cabinet, I once more prepared and drank the cup, once more suffered the pangs of dissolution, and came to myself once more with the character, the stature and the face of Henry Jekyll.

That night I had come to the fatal cross-roads. Had I approached my discovery in a more noble spirit, had I risked the experiment while under the empire of generous or pious aspirations, all must have been otherwise, and from these agonies of death and birth, I had come forth an angel instead of a fiend. The drug had no discriminating action; it was neither diabolical nor divine; it but shook the doors of the prisonhouse of my disposition; and like the captives of Philippi, that which stood within ran forth. At that time my virtue slumbered; my evil, kept awake by ambition, was alert and swift to seize the occasion; and the thing that was projected was Edward Hyde. Hence, although I had now two characters as well as two appearances, one was wholly evil, and the other was still the old Henry Jekyll, that incongruous compound of whose reformation and improvement I had already learned to despair. The movement was thus wholly toward the worse.

Even at that time, I had not conquered my aversions to the dryness of a life of study. I would still be merrily disposed at times; and as my pleasures were (to say the least) undignified, and I was not only well known and highly considered, but growing towards the elderly man, this incoherency of my life was daily growing more unwelcome. It was on this side that my new power tempted me until I fell in slavery. I had but to drink the cup, to doff at once the body of the noted professor, and to assume, like a thick cloak, that of Edward Hyde. I smiled at the notion; it seemed to me at the time to be humourous; and I made my preparations with the most studious care. I took and furnished that house in Soho, to which Hyde was tracked by the police; and engaged as a housekeeper a creature whom I knew well to be silent and unscrupulous. On the other side, I announced to my servants that a Mr. Hyde (whom I described) was to have full liberty and power about my house in the square; and to parry mishaps, I even called and made myself a familiar object, in my second character. I next drew up that will to which you so much objected; so that if anything befell me in the person of Dr. Jekyll, I could enter on that of Edward Hyde without pecuniary loss. And thus fortified, as I supposed, on every side, I began to profit by the strange immunities of my position.

Men have before hired bravos to transact their crimes, while their own person and reputation sat under shelter. I was the first that ever did so for his pleasures. I was the first that could plod in the public eye with a load of genial respectability, and in a moment, like a schoolboy, strip off these lendings and spring headlong into the sea of liberty. But for me, in my impenetrable mantle, the safety was complete. Think of it — I did not even exist! Let me but escape into my laboratory door, give me but a second or two to mix and swallow the draught that I had always standing ready; and whatever he had done, Edward Hyde would pass away like the stain of breath upon a mirror; and there in his stead, quietly at home, trimming the midnight lamp in his study, a man who could afford to laugh at suspicion, would be Henry Jekyll.

The pleasures which I made haste to seek in my disguise were, as I have said, undignified; I would scarce use a harder term. But in the hands of Edward Hyde, they soon began to turn toward the monstrous. When I would come back from these excursions, I was often plunged into a kind of wonder at my vicarious depravity. This familiar that I called out of my own soul, and sent forth alone to do his good pleasure, was a being inherently malign and villainous; his every act and thought centered on self; drinking pleasure with bestial avidity from any degree of torture to another; relentless like a man of stone. Henry Jekyll stood at times aghast before the acts of Edward Hyde; but the situation was apart from ordinary laws, and insidiously relaxed the grasp of conscience. It was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone, that was guilty. Jekyll was no worse; he woke again to his good qualities seemingly unimpaired; he would even make haste, where it was possible, to undo the evil done by Hyde. And thus his conscience slumbered.

Into the details of the infamy at which I thus connived (for even now I can scarce grant that I committed it) I have no design of entering; I mean but to point out the warnings and the successive steps with which my chastisement approached. I met with one accident which, as it brought on no consequence, I shall no more than mention. An act of cruelty to a child aroused against me the anger of a passer-by, whom I recognised the other day in the person of your kinsman; the doctor and the child's family joined him; there were moments when I feared for my life; and at last, in order to pacify their too just resentment, Edward Hyde had to bring them to the door, and pay them in a cheque drawn in the name of Henry Jekyll. But this danger was easily eliminated from the future, by opening an account at another bank in the name of Edward Hyde himself; and when, by sloping my own hand backward, I had supplied my double with a signature, I thought I sat beyond the reach of fate.

Some two months before the murder of Sir Danvers, I had been out for one of my adventures, had returned at a late hour, and woke the next day in bed with somewhat odd sensations. It was in vain I looked about me; in vain I saw the decent furniture and tall proportions of my room in the square; in vain that I recognised the pattern of the bed curtains and the design of the mahogany frame; something still kept insisting that I was not where I was, that I had not wakened where I seemed to be, but in the little room in Soho where I was accustomed to sleep in the body of Edward Hyde. I smiled to myself, and in my psychological way, began lazily to inquire into the elements of this illusion, occasionally, even as I did so, dropping back into a comfortable morning doze. I was still so engaged when, in one of my more wakeful moments, my eyes fell upon my hand. Now the hand of Henry Jekyll (as you have often remarked) was professional in shape and size: it was large, firm, white and comely. But the hand which I now saw, clearly enough, in the yellow light of a mid-London morning, lying half shut on the bedclothes, was lean, corder, knuckly, of a dusky pallor and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair. It was the hand of Edward Hyde.

I must have stared upon it for near half a minute, sunk as I was in the mere stupidity of wonder, before terror woke up in my breast as sudden and startling as the crash of cymbals; and bounding from my bed I rushed to the mirror. At the sight that met my eyes, my blood was changed into something exquisitely thin and icy. Yes, I had gone to bed Henry Jekyll, I had awakened Edward Hyde. How was this to be explained? I asked myself; and then, with another bound of terror — how was it to be remedied? It was well on in the morning; the servants were up; all my drugs were in the cabinet — a long journey down two pairs of stairs, through the back passage, across the open court and through the anatomical theatre, from where I was then standing horror-struck. It might indeed be possible to cover my face; but of what use was that, when I was unable to conceal the alteration in my stature? And then with an overpowering sweetness of relief, it came back upon my mind that the servants were already used to the coming and going of my second self. I had soon dressed, as well as I was able, in clothes of my own size: had soon passed through the house, where Bradshaw stared and drew back at seeing Mr. Hyde at such an hour and in such a strange array; and ten minutes later, Dr. Jekyll had returned to his own shape and was sitting down, with a darkened brow, to make a feint of breakfasting.

Small indeed was my appetite. This inexplicable incident, this reversal of my previous experience, seemed, like the Babylonian finger on the wall, to be spelling out the letters of my judgment; and I began to reflect more seriously than ever before on the issues and possibilities of my double existence. That part of me which I had the power of projecting, had lately been much exercised and nourished; it had seemed to me of late as though the body of Edward Hyde had grown in stature, as though (when I wore that form) I were conscious of a more generous tide of blood; and I began to spy a danger that, if this were much prolonged, the balance of my nature might be permanently overthrown, the power of voluntary change be forfeited, and the character of Edward Hyde become irrevocably mine. The power of the drug had not been always equally displayed. Once, very early in my career, it had totally failed me; since then I had been obliged on more than one occasion to double, and once, with infinite risk of death, to treble the amount; and these rare uncertainties had cast hitherto the sole shadow on my contentment. Now, however, and in the light of that morning's accident, I was led to remark that whereas, in the beginning, the difficulty had been to throw off the body of Jekyll, it had of late gradually but decidedly transferred itself to the other side. All things therefore seemed to point to this; that I was slowly losing hold of my original and better self, and becoming slowly incorporated with my second and worse.

Between these two, I now felt I had to choose. My two natures had memory in common, but all other faculties were most unequally shared between them. Jekyll (who was composite) now with the most sensitive apprehensions, now with a greedy gusto, projected and shared in the pleasures and adventures of Hyde; but Hyde was indifferent to Jekyll, or but remembered him as the mountain bandit remembers the cavern in which he conceals himself from pursuit. Jekyll had more than a father's interest; Hyde had more than a son's indifference. To cast in my lot with Jekyll, was to die to those appetites which I had long secretly indulged and had of late begun to pamper. To cast it in with Hyde, was to die to a thousand interests and aspirations, and to become, at a blow and forever, despised and friendless. The bargain might appear unequal; but there was still another consideration in the scales; for while Jekyll would suffer smartingly in the fires of abstinence, Hyde would be not even conscious of all that he had lost. Strange as my circumstances were, the terms of this debate are as old and commonplace as man; much the same inducements and alarms cast the die for any tempted and trembling sinner; and it fell out with me, as it falls with so vast a majority of my fellows, that I chose the better part and was found wanting in the strength to keep to it.

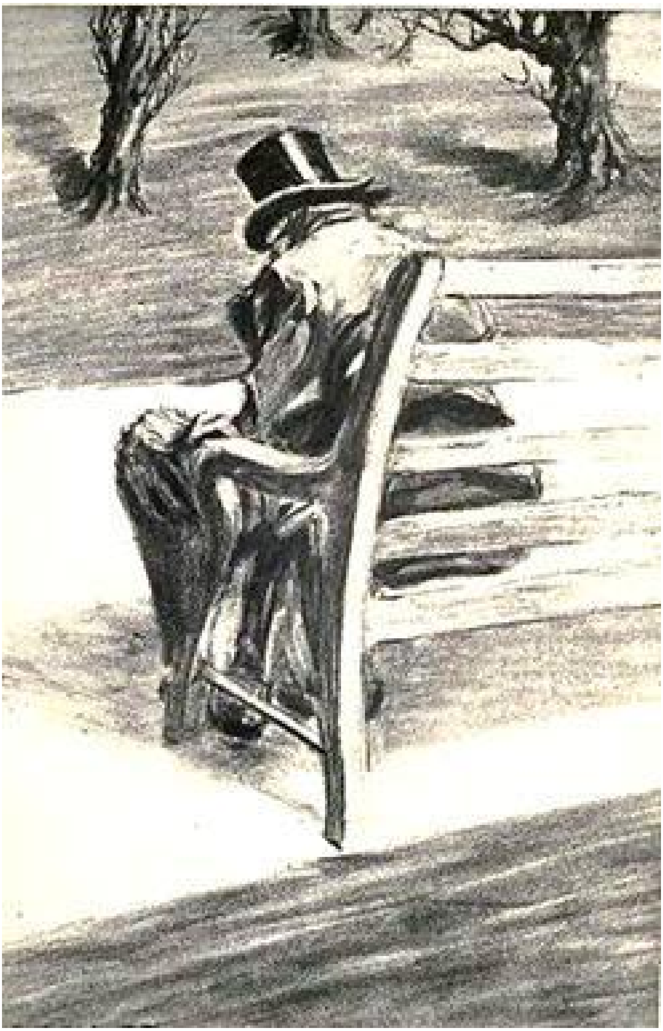
Yes, I preferred the elderly and discontented doctor, surrounded by friends and cherishing honest hopes; and bade a resolute farewell to the liberty, the comparative youth, the light step, leaping impulses and secret pleasures, that I had enjoyed in the disguise of Hyde. I made this choice perhaps with some unconscious reservation, for I neither gave up the house in Soho, nor destroyed the clothes of Edward Hyde, which still lay ready in my cabinet. For two months, however, I was true to my determination; for two months, I led a life of such severity as I had never before attained to, and enjoyed the compensations of an approving conscience. But time began at last to obliterate the freshness of my alarm; the praises of conscience began to grow into a thing of course; I began to be tortured with throes and longings, as of Hyde struggling after freedom; and at last, in an hour of moral weakness, I once again compounded and swallowed the transforming draught.

I do not suppose that, when a drunkard reasons with himself upon his vice, he is once out of five hundred times affected by the dangers that he runs through his brutish, physical insensibility; neither had I, long as I had considered my position, made enough allowance for the complete moral insensibility and insensate readiness to evil, which were the leading characters of Edward Hyde. Yet it was by these that I was punished. My devil had been long caged, he came out roaring. I was conscious, even when I took the draught, of a more unbridled, a more furious propensity to ill. It must have been this, I suppose, that stirred in my soul that tempest of impatience with which I listened to the civilities of my unhappy victim; I declare, at least, before God, no man morally sane could have been guilty of that crime upon so pitiful a provocation; and that I struck in no more reasonable spirit than that in which a sick child may break a plaything. But I had voluntarily stripped myself of all those balancing instincts by which even the worst of us continues to walk with some degree of steadiness among temptations; and in my case, to be tempted, however slightly, was to fall.

Instantly the spirit of hell awoke in me and raged. With a transport of glee, I mauled the unresisting body, tasting delight from every blow; and it was not till weariness had begun to succeed, that I was suddenly, in the top fit of my delirium, struck through the heart by a cold thrill of terror. A mist dispersed; I saw my life to be forfeit; and fled from the scene of these excesses, at once glorying and trembling, my lust of evil gratified and stimulated, my love of life screwed to the topmost peg. I ran to the house in Soho, and (to make assurance doubly sure) destroyed my papers; thence I set out through the lamplit streets, in the same divided ecstasy of mind, gloating on my crime, light-headedly devising others in the future, and yet still hastening and still hearkening in my wake for the steps of the avenger. Hyde had a song upon his lips as he compounded the draught, and as he drank it, pledged the dead man. The pangs of transformation had not done tearing him, before Henry Jekyll, with streaming tears of gratitude and remorse, had fallen upon his knees and lifted his clasped hands to God. The veil of self-indulgence was rent from head to foot. I saw my life as a whole: I followed it up from the days of childhood, when I had walked with my father's hand, and through the self-denying toils of my professional life, to arrive again and again, with the same sense of unreality, at the damned horrors of the evening. I could have screamed aloud; I sought with tears and prayers to smother down the crowd of hideous images and sounds with which my memory swarmed against me; and still, between the petitions, the ugly face of my iniquity stared into my soul. As the acuteness of this remorse began to die away, it was succeeded by a sense of joy. The problem of my conduct was solved. Hyde was thenceforth impossible; whether I would or not, I was now confined to the better part of my existence; and O, how I rejoiced to think of it! with what willing humility I embraced anew the restrictions of natural life! with what sincere renunciation I locked the door by which I had so often gone and come, and ground the key under my heel!

The next day, came the news that the murder had not been overlooked, that the guilt of Hyde was patent to the world, and that the victim was a man high in public estimation. It was not only a crime, it had been a tragic folly. I think I was glad to know it; I think I was glad to have my better impulses thus buttressed and guarded by the terrors of the scaffold. Jekyll was now my city of refuge; let but Hyde peep out an instant, and the hands of all men would be raised to take and slay him.

I resolved in my future conduct to redeem the past; and I can say with honesty that my resolve was fruitful of some good. You know yourself how earnestly, in the last months of the last year, I laboured to relieve suffering; you know that much was done for others, and that the days passed quietly, almost happily for myself. Nor can I truly say that I wearied of this beneficent and innocent life; I think instead that I daily enjoyed it more completely; but I was still cursed with my duality of purpose; and as the first edge of my penitence wore off, the lower side of me, so long indulged, so recently chained down, began to growl for licence. Not that I dreamed of resuscitating Hyde; the bare idea of that would startle me to frenzy: no, it was in my own person that I was once more tempted to trifle with my conscience; and it was as an ordinary secret sinner that I at last fell before the assaults of temptation.



There comes an end to all things; the most capacious measure is filled at last; and this brief condescension to my evil finally destroyed the balance of my soul. And yet I was not alarmed; the fall seemed natural, like a return to the old days before I had made my discovery. It was a fine, clear, January day, wet under foot where the frost had melted, but cloudless overhead; and the Regent's Park was full of winter chirrupings and sweet with spring odours. I sat in the sun on a bench; the animal within me licking the chops of memory; the spiritual side a little drowsed, promising subsequent penitence, but not yet moved to begin. After all, I reflected, I was like my neighbours; and then I smiled, comparing myself with other men, comparing my active good-will with the lazy cruelty of their neglect.

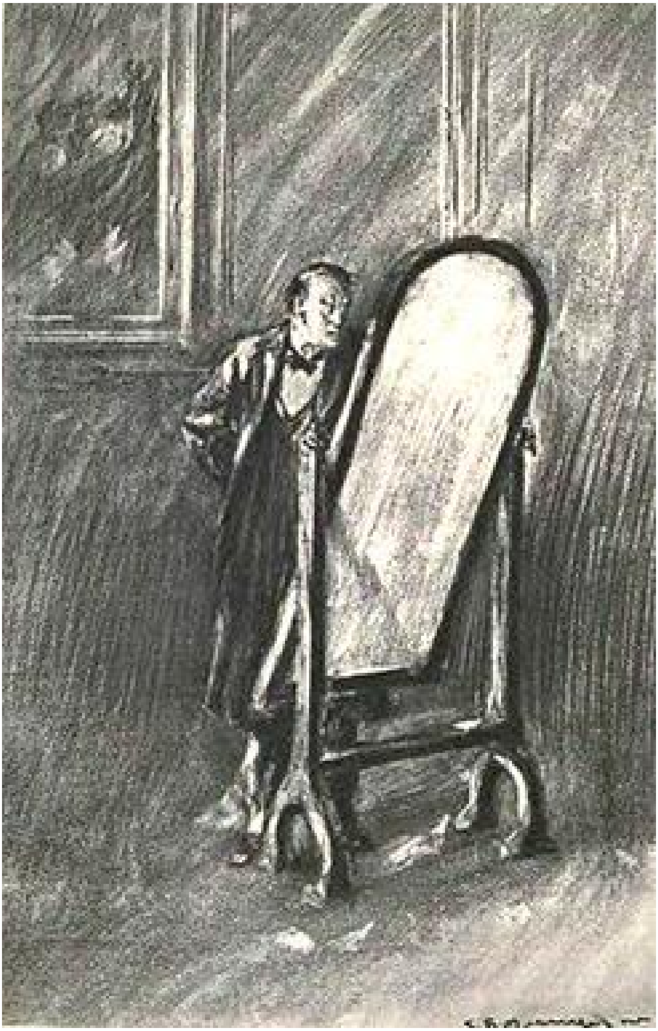
And at the very moment of that vainglorious thought, a qualm came over me, a horrid nausea and the most deadly shuddering. These passed away, and left me faint; and then as in its turn faintness subsided, I began to be aware of a change in the temper of my thoughts, a greater boldness, a contempt of danger, a solution of the bonds of obligation. I looked down; my clothes hung formlessly on my shrunken limbs; the hand that lay on my knee was corded and hairy. I was once more Edward Hyde. A moment before I had been safe of all men's respect, wealthy, beloved — the cloth laying for me in the dining-room at home; and now I was the common quarry of mankind, hunted, houseless, a known murderer, thrall to the gallows.

My reason wavered, but it did not fail me utterly. I have more than once observed that in my second character, my faculties seemed sharpened to a point and my spirits more tensely elastic; thus it came about that, where Jekyll perhaps might have succumbed, Hyde rose to the importance of the moment. My drugs were in one of the presses of my cabinet; how was I to reach them? That was the problem that (crushing my temples in my hands) I set myself to solve. The laboratory door I had closed. If I sought to enter by the house, my own servants would consign me to the gallows. I saw I must employ another hand, and thought of Lanyon. How was he to be reached? how persuaded? Supposing that I escaped capture in the streets, how was I to make my way into his presence? and how should I, an unknown and displeasing visitor, prevail on the famous physician to rifle the study of his colleague, Dr. Jekyll? Then I remembered that of my original character, one part remained to me: I could write my own hand; and once I had conceived that kindling spark, the way that I must follow became lighted up from end to end.

Thereupon, I arranged my clothes as best I could, and summoning a passing hansom, drove to an hotel in Portland Street, the name of which I chanced to remember. At my appearance (which was indeed comical enough, however tragic a fate these garments covered) the driver could not conceal his mirth. I gnashed my teeth upon him with a gust of devilish fury; and the smile withered from his face — happily for him — yet more happily for myself, for in another instant I had certainly dragged him from his perch. At the inn, as I entered, I looked about me with so black a countenance as made the attendants tremble; not a look did they exchange in my presence; but obsequiously took my orders, led me to a private room, and brought me wherewithal to write. Hyde in danger of his life was a creature new to me; shaken with inordinate anger, strung to the pitch of murder, lusting to inflict pain. Yet the creature was astute; mastered his fury with a great effort of the will; composed his two important letters, one to Lanyon and one to Poole; and that he might receive actual evidence of their being posted, sent them out with directions that they should be registered. Thenceforward, he sat all day over the fire in the private room, gnawing his nails; there he dined, sitting alone with his fears, the waiter visibly quailing before his eye; and thence, when the night was fully come, he set forth in the corner of a closed cab, and was driven to and fro about the streets of the city. He, I say — I cannot say, I. That child of Hell had nothing human; nothing lived in him but fear and hatred. And when at last, thinking the driver had begun to grow suspicious, he discharged the cab and ventured on foot, attired in his misfitting clothes, an object marked out for observation, into the midst of the nocturnal passengers, these two base passions raged within him like a tempest. He walked fast, hunted by his fears, chattering to himself, skulking through the less frequented thoroughfares, counting the minutes that still divided him from midnight. Once a woman spoke to him, offering, I think, a box of lights. He smote her in the face, and she fled.

When I came to myself at Lanyon's, the horror of my old friend perhaps affected me somewhat: I do not know; it was at least but a drop in the sea to the abhorrence with which I looked back upon these hours. A change had come over me. It was no longer the fear of the gallows, it was the horror of being Hyde that racked me. I received Lanyon's condemnation partly in a dream; it was partly in a dream that I came home to my own house and got into bed. I slept after the prostration of the day, with a stringent and profound slumber which not even the nightmares that wrung me could avail to break. I awoke in the morning shaken, weakened, but refreshed. I still hated and feared the thought of the brute that slept within me, and I had not of course forgotten the appalling dangers of the day before; but I was once more at home, in my own house and close to my drugs; and gratitude for my escape shone so strong in my soul that it almost rivalled the brightness of hope.

I was stepping leisurely across the court after breakfast, drinking the chill of the air with pleasure, when I was seized again with those indescribable sensations that heralded the change; and I had but the time to gain the shelter of my cabinet, before I was once again raging and freezing with the passions of Hyde. It took on this occasion a double dose to recall me to myself; and alas! six hours after, as I sat looking sadly in the fire, the pangs returned, and the drug had to be re-administered. In short, from that day forth it seemed only by a great effort as of gymnastics, and only under the immediate stimulation of the drug, that I was able to wear the countenance of Jekyll. At all hours of the day and night, I would be taken with the premonitory shudder; above all, if I slept, or even dozed for a moment in my chair, it was always as Hyde that I awakened. Under the strain of this continually impending doom and by the sleeplessness to which I now condemned myself, ay, even beyond what I had thought possible to man, I became, in my own person, a creature eaten up and emptied by fever, languidly weak both in body and mind, and solely occupied by one thought: the horror of my other self. But when I slept, or when the virtue of the medicine wore off, I would leap almost without transition (for the pangs of transformation grew daily less marked) into the possession of a fancy brimming with images of terror, a soul boiling with causeless hatreds, and a body that seemed not strong enough to contain the raging energies of life. The powers of Hyde seemed to have grown with the sickliness of Jekyll. And certainly the hate that now divided them was equal on each side. With Jekyll, it was a thing of vital instinct. He had now seen the full deformity of that creature that shared with him some of the phenomena of consciousness, and was co-heir with him to death: and beyond these links of community, which in themselves made the most poignant part of his distress, he thought of Hyde, for all his energy of life, as of something not only hellish but inorganic. This was the shocking thing; that the slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices; that the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned; that what was dead, and had no shape, should usurp the offices of life. And this again, that that insurgent horror was knit to him closer than a wife, closer than an eye; lay caged in his flesh, where he heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born; and at every hour of weakness, and in the confidence of slumber, prevailed against him, and deposed him out of life. The hatred of Hyde for Jekyll was of a different order. His terror of the gallows drove him continually to commit temporary suicide, and return to his subordinate station of a part instead of a person; but he loathed the necessity, he loathed the despondency into which Jekyll was now fallen, and he resented the dislike with which he was himself regarded. Hence the ape-like tricks that he would play me, scrawling in my own hand blasphemies on the pages of my books, burning the letters and destroying the portrait of my father; and indeed, had it not been for his fear of death, he would long ago have ruined himself in order to involve me in the ruin. But his love of me is wonderful; I go further: I, who sicken and freeze at the mere thought of him, when I recall the abjection and passion of this attachment, and when I know how he fears my power to cut him off by suicide, I find it in my heart to pity him.



It is useless, and the time awfully fails me, to prolong this description; no one has ever suffered such torments, let that suffice; and yet even to these, habit brought — no, not alleviation — but a certain callousness of soul, a certain acquiescence of despair; and my punishment might have gone on for years, but for the last calamity which has now fallen, and which has finally severed me from my own face and nature. My provision of the salt, which had never been renewed since the date of the first experiment, began to run low. I sent out for a fresh supply and mixed the draught; the ebullition followed, and the first change of colour, not the second; I drank it and it was without efficiency. You will learn from Poole how I have had London ransacked; it was in vain; and I am now persuaded that my first supply was impure, and that it was that unknown impurity which lent efficacy to the draught.

About a week has passed, and I am now finishing this statement under the influence of the last of the old powders. This, then, is the last time, short of a miracle, that Henry Jekyll can think his own thoughts or see his own face (now how sadly altered!) in the glass. Nor must I delay too long to bring my writing to an end; for if my narrative has hitherto escaped destruction, it has been by a combination of great prudence and great good luck. Should the throes of change take me in the act of writing it, Hyde will tear it in pieces; but if some time shall have elapsed after I have laid it by, his wonderful selfishness and circumscription to the moment will probably save it once again from the action of his ape-like spite. And indeed the doom that is closing on us both has already changed and crushed him. Half an hour from now, when I shall again and forever reindue that hated personality, I know how I shall sit shuddering and weeping in my chair, or continue, with the most strained and fearstruck ecstasy of listening, to pace up and down this room (my last earthly refuge) and give ear to every sound of menace. Will Hyde die upon the scaffold? or will he find courage to release himself at the last moment? God knows; I am careless; this is my true hour of death, and what is to follow concerns another than myself. Here then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end.

KIDNAPPED

This historical fiction adventure novel was first published in the magazine *Young Folks* from May to July 1886. *Kidnapped* has attracted the praise and admiration of writers such as Henry James, Jorge Luis Borges, and Seamus Heaney. As historical fiction, it is set around 18th-century Scottish events, notably the “Appin Murder”, which occurred near Ballachulish in 1752 in the aftermath of the Jacobite Rising. Many of the characters, and one of the principals, Alan Breck Stewart, were real people. The political situation of the time is portrayed from different viewpoints, and the Scottish Highlanders are treated sympathetically.

Beginning with some of the earliest reviews of Kidnapped in 1886, it has been thought the novel was structured after the true story of James Annesley, a presumptive heir to five aristocratic titles who was kidnapped at the age of 12 by his uncle Richard and shipped from Dublin to America in 1728. He managed to escape after 13 years and return to reclaim his birthright from his uncle in one of the longest court-room dramas of its time.

The sequel *Catriona* was published in 1893.

YOUNG FOLKS PAPER.

FOR OLD AND YOUNG BOYS AND GIRLS.

KIDNAPPED;

How the novel first appeared

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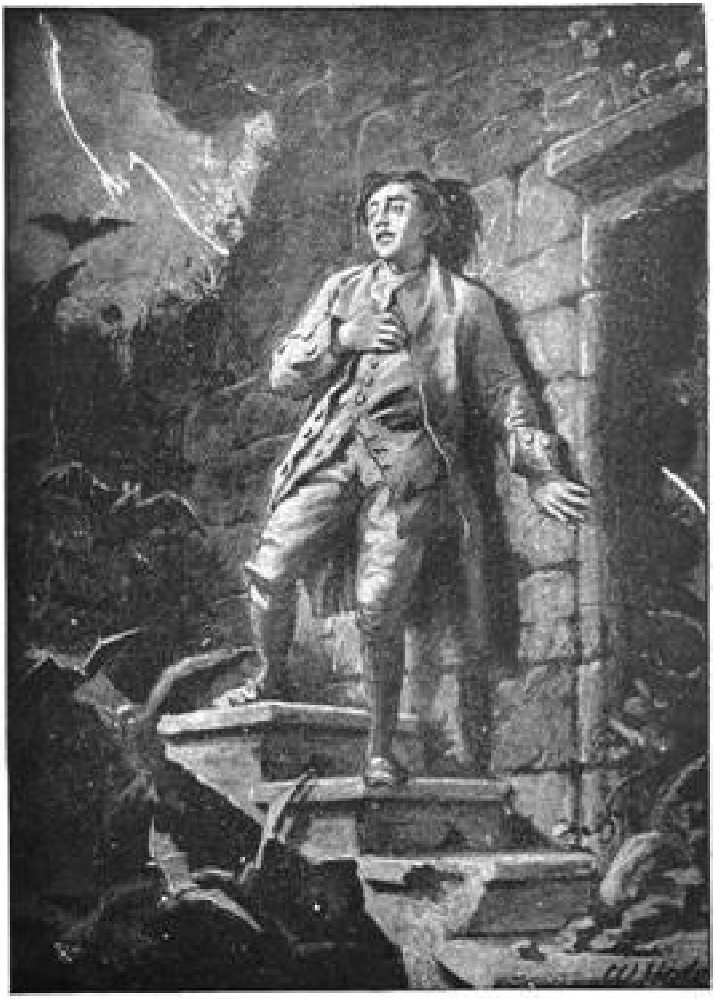

CHAPTER I

I SET OFF UPON MY JOURNEY TO THE HOUSE OF SHAWS

I will begin the story of my adventures with a certain morning early in the month of June, the year of grace 1751, when I took the key for the last time out of the door of my father's house. The sun began to shine upon the summit of the hills as I went down the road; and by the time I had come as far as the manse, the blackbirds were whistling in the garden lilacs, and the mist that hung around the valley in the time of the dawn was beginning to arise and die away.

Mr. Campbell, the minister of Essendean, was waiting for me by the garden gate, good man! He asked me if I had breakfasted; and hearing that I lacked for nothing, he took my hand in both of his and clapped it kindly under his arm.

"Well, Davie, lad," said he, "I will go with you as far as the ford, to set you on the way." And we began to walk forward in silence.

"Are ye sorry to leave Essendean?" said he, after awhile.

"Why, sir," said I, "if I knew where I was going, or what was likely to become of me, I would tell you candidly. Essendean is a good place indeed, and I have been very happy there; but then I have never been anywhere else. My father and mother, since they are both dead, I shall be no nearer to in Essendean than in the Kingdom of Hungary, and, to speak truth, if I thought I had a chance to better myself where I was going I would go with a good will."

"Ay?" said Mr. Campbell. "Very well, Davie. Then it behoves me to tell your fortune; or so far as I may. When your mother was gone, and your father (the worthy, Christian man) began to sicken for his end, he gave me in charge a certain letter, which he said was your inheritance. 'So soon,' says he, 'as I am gone, and the house is redd up and the gear disposed of' (all which, Davie, hath been done), 'give my boy this letter into his hand, and start him off to the house of Shaws, not far from Cramond. That is the place I came from,' he said, 'and it's where it befits that my boy should return. He is a steady lad,' your father said, 'and a canny goer; and I doubt not he will come safe, and be well lived where he goes.'"

"The house of Shaws!" I cried. "What had my poor father to do with the house of Shaws?"

"Nay," said Mr. Campbell, "who can tell that for a surety? But the name of that family, Davie, boy, is the name you bear — Balfours of

Shaws: an ancient, honest, reputable house, peradventure in these latter days decayed. Your father, too, was a man of learning as befitted his position; no man more plausibly conducted school; nor had he the manner or the speech of a common dominie; but (as ye will yourself remember) I took aye a pleasure to have him to the manse to meet the gentry; and those of my own house, Campbell of Kilrennet, Campbell of Dunswire, Campbell of Minch, and others, all well-kenned gentlemen, had pleasure in his society. Lastly, to put all the elements of this affair before you, here is the testamentary letter itself, superscrived by the own hand of our departed brother."

He gave me the letter, which was addressed in these words: "To the hands of Ebenezer Balfour, Esquire, of Shaws, in his house of Shaws, these will be delivered by my son, David Balfour." My heart was beating hard at this great prospect now suddenly opening before a lad of seventeen years of age, the son of a poor country dominie in the Forest of Ettrick.

"Mr. Campbell," I stammered, "and if you were in my shoes, would you go?"

"Of a surety," said the minister, "that would I, and without pause. A pretty lad like you should get to Cramond (which is near in by Edinburgh) in two days of walk. If the worst came to the worst, and your high relations (as I cannot but suppose them to be somewhat of your blood) should put you to the door, ye can but walk the two days back again and risp at the manse door. But I would rather hope that ye shall be well received, as your poor father forecast for you, and for anything that I ken come to be a great man in time. And here, Davie, laddie," he resumed, "it lies near upon my conscience to improve this parting, and set you on the right guard against the dangers of the world."

Here he cast about for a comfortable seat, lighted on a big boulder under a birch by the trackside, sate down upon it with a very long, serious upper lip, and the sun now shining in upon us between two peaks, put his pocket-handkerchief over his cocked hat to shelter him. There, then, with uplifted forefinger, he first put me on my guard against a considerable number of heresies, to which I had no temptation, and urged upon me to be instant in my prayers and reading of the Bible. That done, he drew a picture of the great house that I was bound to, and how I should conduct myself with its inhabitants.

"Be soople, Davie, in things immaterial," said he. "Bear ye this in mind, that, though gentle born, ye have had a country rearing. Dinnae shame us, Davie, dinnae shame us! In yon great, muckle house, with all these domestics, upper and under, show yourself as nice, as circumspect, as quick at the conception, and as slow of speech as any.

As for the laird — remember he's the laird; I say no more: honour to whom honour. It's a pleasure to obey a laird; or should be, to the young."

"Well, sir," said I, "it may be; and I'll promise you I'll try to make it so."

"Why, very well said," replied Mr. Campbell, heartily. "And now to come to the material, or (to make a quibble) to the immaterial. I have here a little packet which contains four things." He tugged it, as he spoke, and with some great difficulty, from the skirt pocket of his coat. "Of these four things, the first is your legal due: the little pickle money for your father's books and plenishing, which I have bought (as I have explained from the first) in the design of re-selling at a profit to the incoming dominie. The other three are gifties that Mrs. Campbell and myself would be blithe of your acceptance. The first, which is round, will likely please ye best at the first off-go; but, O Davie, laddie, it's but a drop of water in the sea; it'll help you but a step, and vanish like the morning. The second, which is flat and square and written upon, will stand by you through life, like a good staff for the road, and a good pillow to your head in sickness. And as for the last, which is cubical, that'll see you, it's my prayerful wish, into a better land."

With that he got upon his feet, took off his hat, and prayed a little while aloud, and in affecting terms, for a young man setting out into the world; then suddenly took me in his arms and embraced me very hard; then held me at arm's length, looking at me with his face all working with sorrow; and then whipped about, and crying good-bye to me, set off backward by the way that we had come at a sort of jogging run. It might have been laughable to another; but I was in no mind to laugh. I watched him as long as he was in sight; and he never stopped hurrying, nor once looked back. Then it came in upon my mind that this was all his sorrow at my departure; and my conscience smote me hard and fast, because I, for my part, was overjoyed to get away out of that quiet country-side, and go to a great, busy house, among rich and respected gentlefolk of my own name and blood.

"Davie, Davie," I thought, "was ever seen such black ingratitude? Can you forget old favours and old friends at the mere whistle of a name? Fie, fie; think shame."

And I sat down on the boulder the good man had just left, and opened the parcel to see the nature of my gifts. That which he had called cubical, I had never had much doubt of; sure enough it was a little Bible, to carry in a plaid-neuk. That which he had called round, I found to be a shilling piece; and the third, which was to help me so wonderfully both in health and sickness all the days of my life, was a little piece of coarse yellow paper, written upon thus in red ink:

“TO MAKE LILLY OF THE VALLEY WATER. — Take the flowers of lilly of the valley and distil them in sack, and drink a spooneful or two as there is occasion. It restores speech to those that have the dumb palsey. It is good against the Gout; it comforts the heart and strengthens the memory; and the flowers, put into a Glasse, close stopt, and set into ane hill of ants for a month, then take it out, and you will find a liquor which comes from the flowers, which keep in a vial; it is good, ill or well, and whether man or woman.”

And then, in the minister’s own hand, was added:

“Likewise for sprains, rub it in; and for the cholic, a great spooneful in the hour.”

To be sure, I laughed over this; but it was rather tremulous laughter; and I was glad to get my bundle on my staff’s end and set out over the ford and up the hill upon the farther side; till, just as I came on the green drove-road running wide through the heather, I took my last look of Kirk Essendean, the trees about the manse, and the big rowans in the kirkyard where my father and my mother lay.

CHAPTER II

I COME TO MY JOURNEY’S END

On the forenoon of the second day, coming to the top of a hill, I saw all the country fall away before me down to the sea; and in the midst of this descent, on a long ridge, the city of Edinburgh smoking like a kiln. There was a flag upon the castle, and ships moving or lying anchored in the firth; both of which, for as far away as they were, I could distinguish clearly; and both brought my country heart into my mouth.

Presently after, I came by a house where a shepherd lived, and got a rough direction for the neighbourhood of Cramond; and so, from one to another, worked my way to the westward of the capital by Colinton, till I came out upon the Glasgow road. And there, to my great pleasure and wonder, I beheld a regiment marching to the fifes, every foot in time; an old red-faced general on a grey horse at the one end, and at the other the company of Grenadiers, with their Pope’s-hats. The pride of life seemed to mount into my brain at the sight of the red coats and the hearing of that merry music.

A little farther on, and I was told I was in Cramond parish, and began to substitute in my inquiries the name of the house of Shaws. It was a word that seemed to surprise those of whom I sought my way. At first I thought the plainness of my appearance, in my country habit, and that all dusty from the road, consorted ill with the greatness of the place to which I was bound. But after two, or maybe three, had given me the same look and the same answer, I began to take it in my head there was something strange about the Shaws itself.

The better to set this fear at rest, I changed the form of my inquiries; and spying an honest fellow coming along a lane on the shaft of his cart, I asked him if he had ever heard tell of a house they called the house of Shaws.

He stopped his cart and looked at me, like the others.

“Ay” said he. “What for?”

“It’s a great house?” I asked.

“Doubtless,” says he. “The house is a big, muckle house.”

“Ay,” said I, “but the folk that are in it?”

“Folk?” cried he. “Are ye daft? There’s nae folk there — to call folk.”

“What?” say I; “not Mr. Ebenezer?”

“Ou, ay” says the man; “there’s the laird, to be sure, if it’s him you’re wanting. What’ll like be your business, mannie?”

“I was led to think that I would get a situation,” I said, looking as modest as I could.

"What?" cries the carter, in so sharp a note that his very horse started; and then, "Well, mannie," he added, "it's nane of my affairs; but ye seem a decent-spoken lad; and if ye'll take a word from me, ye'll keep clear of the Shaws."

The next person I came across was a dapper little man in a beautiful white wig, whom I saw to be a barber on his rounds; and knowing well that barbers were great gossips, I asked him plainly what sort of a man was Mr. Balfour of the Shaws.

"Hoot, hoot, hoot," said the barber, "nae kind of a man, nae kind of a man at all;" and began to ask me very shrewdly what my business was; but I was more than a match for him at that, and he went on to his next customer no wiser than he came.

I cannot well describe the blow this dealt to my illusions. The more indistinct the accusations were, the less I liked them, for they left the wider field to fancy. What kind of a great house was this, that all the parish should start and stare to be asked the way to it? or what sort of a gentleman, that his ill-fame should be thus current on the wayside? If an hour's walking would have brought me back to Essendean, had left my adventure then and there, and returned to Mr. Campbell's. But when I had come so far a way already, mere shame would not suffer me to desist till I had put the matter to the touch of proof; I was bound, out of mere self-respect, to carry it through; and little as I liked the sound of what I heard, and slow as I began to travel, I still kept asking my way and still kept advancing.

It was drawing on to sundown when I met a stout, dark, sour-looking woman coming trudging down a hill; and she, when I had put my usual question, turned sharp about, accompanied me back to the summit she had just left, and pointed to a great bulk of building standing very bare upon a green in the bottom of the next valley. The country was pleasant round about, running in low hills, pleasantly watered and wooded, and the crops, to my eyes, wonderfully good; but the house itself appeared to be a kind of ruin; no road led up to it; no smoke arose from any of the chimneys; nor was there any semblance of a garden. My heart sank. "That!" I cried.

The woman's face lit up with a malignant anger. "That is the house of Shaws!" she cried. "Blood built it; blood stopped the building of it; blood shall bring it down. See here!" she cried again — "I spit upon the ground, and crack my thumb at it! Black be its fall! If ye see the laird, tell him what ye hear; tell him this makes the twelve hunner and nineteen time that Jennet Clouston has called down the curse on him and his house, byre and stable, man, guest, and master, wife, miss, or bairn — black, black be their fall!"

And the woman, whose voice had risen to a kind of eldritch sing-song, turned with a skip, and was gone. I stood where she left me, with my hair on end. In those days folk still believed in witches and trembled at a curse; and this one, falling so pat, like a wayside omen, to arrest me ere I carried out my purpose, took the pith out of my legs.

I sat me down and stared at the house of Shaws. The more I looked, the pleasanter that country-side appeared; being all set with hawthorn bushes full of flowers; the fields dotted with sheep; a fine flight of rooks in the sky; and every sign of a kind soil and climate; and yet the barrack in the midst of it went sore against my fancy.

Country folk went by from the fields as I sat there on the side of the ditch, but I lacked the spirit to give them a good-e'en. At last the sun went down, and then, right up against the yellow sky, I saw a scroll of smoke go mounting, not much thicker, as it seemed to me, than the smoke of a candle; but still there it was, and meant a fire, and warmth, and cookery, and some living inhabitant that must have lit it; and this comforted my heart.

So I set forward by a little faint track in the grass that led in my direction. It was very faint indeed to be the only way to a place of habitation; yet I saw no other. Presently it brought me to stone uprights, with an unroofed lodge beside them, and coats of arms upon the top. A main entrance it was plainly meant to be, but never finished; instead of gates of wrought iron, a pair of hurdles were tied across with a straw rope; and as there were no park walls, nor any sign of avenue, the track that I was following passed on the right hand of the pillars, and went wandering on toward the house.

The nearer I got to that, the drearier it appeared. It seemed like the one wing of a house that had never been finished. What should have been the inner end stood open on the upper floors, and showed against the sky with steps and stairs of uncompleted masonry. Many of the windows were unglazed, and bats flew in and out like doves out of a dove-cote.

The night had begun to fall as I got close; and in three of the lower windows, which were very high up and narrow, and well barred, the changing light of a little fire began to glimmer. Was this the palace I had been coming to? Was it within these walls that I was to seek new friends and begin great fortunes? Why, in my father's house on Essen-Waterside, the fire and the bright lights would show a mile away, and the door open to a beggar's knock!

I came forward cautiously, and giving ear as I came, heard some one rattling with dishes, and a little dry, eager cough that came in fits; but there was no sound of speech, and not a dog barked.

The door, as well as I could see it in the dim light, was a great piece of wood all studded with nails; and I lifted my hand with a faint heart under my jacket, and knocked once. Then I stood and waited. The house had fallen into a dead silence; a whole minute passed away, and nothing stirred but the bats overhead. I knocked again, and hearkened again. By this time my ears had grown so accustomed to the quiet, that I could hear the ticking of the clock inside as it slowly counted out the seconds; but whoever was in that house kept deadly still, and must have held his breath.

I was in two minds whether to run away; but anger got the upper hand, and I began instead to rain kicks and buffets on the door, and to shout out aloud for Mr. Balfour. I was in full career, when I heard the cough right overhead, and jumping back and looking up, beheld a man's head in a tall nightcap, and the bell mouth of a blunderbuss, at one of the first-storey windows.

"It's loaded," said a voice.

"I have come here with a letter," I said, "to Mr. Ebenezer Balfour of Shaws. Is he here?"

"From whom is it?" asked the man with the blunderbuss.

"That is neither here nor there," said I, for I was growing very wroth.

"Well," was the reply, "ye can put it down upon the doorstep, and be off with ye."

"I will do no such thing," I cried. "I will deliver it into Mr. Balfour's hands, as it was meant I should. It is a letter of introduction."

"A what?" cried the voice, sharply.

I repeated what I had said.

"Who are ye, yourself?" was the next question, after a considerable pause.

"I am not ashamed of my name," said I. "They call me David Balfour."

At that, I made sure the man started, for I heard the blunderbuss rattle on the window-sill; and it was after quite a long pause, and with a curious change of voice, that the next question followed:

"Is your father dead?"

I was so much surprised at this, that I could find no voice to answer, but stood staring.

"Ay" the man resumed, "he'll be dead, no doubt; and that'll be what brings ye chapping to my door." Another pause, and then defiantly, "Well, man," he said, "I'll let ye in;" and he disappeared from the window.

CHAPTER III

I MAKE ACQUAINTANCE OF MY UNCLE

Presently there came a great rattling of chains and bolts, and the door was cautiously opened and shut to again behind me as soon as I had passed.

"Go into the kitchen and touch naething," said the voice; and while the person of the house set himself to replacing the defences of the door, I groped my way forward and entered the kitchen.

The fire had burned up fairly bright, and showed me the barest room I think I ever put my eyes on. Half-a-dozen dishes stood upon the shelves; the table was laid for supper with a bowl of porridge, a horn spoon, and a cup of small beer. Besides what I have named, there was not another thing in that great, stone-vaulted, empty chamber but lockfast chests arranged along the wall and a corner cupboard with a padlock.

As soon as the last chain was up, the man rejoined me. He was a mean, stooping, narrow-shouldered, clay-faced creature; and his age might have been anything between fifty and seventy. His nightcap was of flannel, and so was the nightgown that he wore, instead of coat and waistcoat, over his ragged shirt. He was long unshaved; but what most distressed and even daunted me, he would neither take his eyes away from me nor look me fairly in the face. What he was, whether by trade or birth, was more than I could fathom; but he seemed most like an old, unprofitable serving-man, who should have been left in charge of that big house upon board wages.

"Are ye sharp-set?" he asked, glancing at about the level of my knee. "Ye can eat that drop parritch?"

I said I feared it was his own supper.

"O," said he, "I can do fine wanting it. I'll take the ale, though, for it slockens (moistens) my cough." He drank the cup about half out, still keeping an eye upon me as he drank; and then suddenly held out his hand. "Let's see the letter," said he.

I told him the letter was for Mr. Balfour; not for him.

"And who do ye think I am?" says he. "Give me Alexander's letter."

"You know my father's name?"

"It would be strange if I didnae," he returned, "for he was my born brother; and little as ye seem to like either me or my house, or my good parritch, I'm your born uncle, Davie, my man, and you my born nephew. So give us the letter, and sit down and fill your kyte."

If I had been some years younger, what with shame, weariness, and disappointment, I believe I had burst into tears. As it was, I could find no words, neither black nor white, but handed him the letter, and sat down to the porridge with as little appetite for meat as ever a young man had.

Meanwhile, my uncle, stooping over the fire, turned the letter over and over in his hands.

“Do ye ken what’s in it?” he asked, suddenly.

“You see for yourself, sir,” said I, “that the seal has not been broken.”

“Ay,” said he, “but what brought you here?”

“To give the letter,” said I.

“No,” says he, cunningly, “but ye’ll have had some hopes, nae doubt?”

“I confess, sir,” said I, “when I was told that I had kinsfolk well-to-do, I did indeed indulge the hope that they might help me in my life. But I am no beggar; I look for no favours at your hands, and I want none that are not freely given. For as poor as I appear, I have friends of my own that will be blithe to help me.”

“Hoot-toot!” said Uncle Ebenezer, “dinnae fly up in the snuff at me. We’ll agree fine yet. And, Davie, my man, if you’re done with that bit parritch, I could just take a sup of it myself. Ay,” he continued, as soon as he had ousted me from the stool and spoon, “they’re fine, halesome food — they’re grand food, parritch.” He murmured a little grace to himself and fell to. “Your father was very fond of his meat, I mind; he was a hearty, if not a great eater; but as for me, I could never do mair than pyke at food.” He took a pull at the small beer, which probably reminded him of hospitable duties, for his next speech ran thus: “If ye’re dry ye’ll find water behind the door.”

To this I returned no answer, standing stiffly on my two feet, and looking down upon my uncle with a mighty angry heart. He, on his part, continued to eat like a man under some pressure of time, and to throw out little darting glances now at my shoes and now at my home-spun stockings. Once only, when he had ventured to look a little higher, our eyes met; and no thief taken with a hand in a man’s pocket could have shown more lively signals of distress. This set me in a muse, whether his timidity arose from too long a disuse of any human company; and whether perhaps, upon a little trial, it might pass off, and my uncle change into an altogether different man. From this I was awakened by his sharp voice.

“Your father’s been long dead?” he asked.

“Three weeks, sir,” said I.

“He was a secret man, Alexander — a secret, silent man,” he continued. “He never said muckle when he was young. He’ll never have spoken muckle of me?”

“I never knew, sir, till you told it me yourself, that he had any brother."

"Dear me, dear me!" said Ebenezer. "Nor yet of Shaws, I dare say?"

"Not so much as the name, sir," said I.

"To think o' that!" said he. "A strange nature of a man!" For all that, he seemed singularly satisfied, but whether with himself, or me, or with this conduct of my father's, was more than I could read. Certainly, however, he seemed to be outgrowing that distaste, or ill-will, that he had conceived at first against my person; for presently he jumped up, came across the room behind me, and hit me a smack upon the shoulder. "We'll agree fine yet!" he cried. "I'm just as glad I let you in. And now come awa' to your bed."

To my surprise, he lit no lamp or candle, but set forth into the dark passage, groped his way, breathing deeply, up a flight of steps, and paused before a door, which he unlocked. I was close upon his heels, having stumbled after him as best I might; and then he bade me go in, for that was my chamber. I did as he bid, but paused after a few steps, and begged a light to go to bed with.

"Hoot-toot!" said Uncle Ebenezer, "there's a fine moon."

"Neither moon nor star, sir, and pit-mirk,"* said I. "I cannae see the bed."

* Dark as the pit.

"Hoot-toot, hoot-toot!" said he. "Lights in a house is a thing I dinnae agree with. I'm unco feared of fires. Good-night to ye, Davie, my man." And before I had time to add a further protest, he pulled the door to, and I heard him lock me in from the outside.

I did not know whether to laugh or cry. The room was as cold as a well, and the bed, when I had found my way to it, as damp as a peat-hag; but by good fortune I had caught up my bundle and my plaid, and rolling myself in the latter, I lay down upon the floor under lee of the big bedstead, and fell speedily asleep.

With the first peep of day I opened my eyes, to find myself in a great chamber, hung with stamped leather, furnished with fine embroidered furniture, and lit by three fair windows. Ten years ago, or perhaps twenty, it must have been as pleasant a room to lie down or to awake in as a man could wish; but damp, dirt, disuse, and the mice and spiders had done their worst since then. Many of the window-panes, besides, were broken; and indeed this was so common a feature in that house, that I believe my uncle must at some time have stood a siege from his indignant neighbours — perhaps with Jennet Clouston at their head.

Meanwhile the sun was shining outside; and being very cold in that miserable room, I knocked and shouted till my gaoler came and let me out. He carried me to the back of the house, where was a draw-well, and told me to "wash my face there, if I wanted;" and when that was done, I made the best of my own way back to the kitchen, where he had lit the fire and was making the porridge. The table was laid with two bowls and two horn spoons, but the same single measure of small beer. Perhaps my eye rested on this particular with some surprise, and perhaps my uncle observed it; for he spoke up as if in answer to my thought, asking me if I would like to drink ale — for so he called it.

I told him such was my habit, but not to put himself about.

“Na, na,” said he; “I’ll deny you nothing in reason.”

He fetched another cup from the shelf; and then, to my great surprise, instead of drawing more beer, he poured an accurate half from one cup to the other. There was a kind of nobleness in this that took my breath away; if my uncle was certainly a miser, he was one of that thorough breed that goes near to make the vice respectable.

When we had made an end of our meal, my uncle Ebenezer unlocked a drawer, and drew out of it a clay pipe and a lump of tobacco, from which he cut one fill before he locked it up again. Then he sat down in the sun at one of the windows and silently smoked. From time to time his eyes came coasting round to me, and he shot out one of his questions. Once it was, “And your mother?” and when I had told him that she, too, was dead, “Ay, she was a bonnie lassie!” Then, after another long pause, “Whae were these friends o’ yours?”

I told him they were different gentlemen of the name of Campbell; though, indeed, there was only one, and that the minister, that had ever taken the least note of me; but I began to think my uncle made too light of my position, and finding myself all alone with him, I did not wish him to suppose me helpless.

He seemed to turn this over in his mind; and then, “Davie, my man,” said he, “ye’ve come to the right bit when ye came to your uncle Ebenezer. I’ve a great notion of the family, and I mean to do the right by you; but while I’m taking a bit think to mysel’ of what’s the best thing to put you to — whether the law, or the meenistry, or maybe the army, whilk is what boys are fondest of — I wouldnae like the Balfours to be humbled before a wheen Hieland Campbells, and I’ll ask you to keep your tongue within your teeth. Nae letters; nae messages; no kind of word to onybody; or else — there’s my door.”

“Uncle Ebenezer,” said I, “I’ve no manner of reason to suppose you mean anything but well by me. For all that, I would have you to know that I have a pride of my own. It was by no will of mine that I came seeking you; and if you show me your door again, I’ll take you at the word.”

He seemed grievously put out. “Hoots-toots,” said he, “ca’ cannie, man — ca’ cannie! Bide a day or two. I’m nae warlock, to find a fortune for you in the bottom of a parritch bowl; but just you give me a day or two, and say naething to naebody, and as sure as sure, I’ll do the right by you."

"Very well," said I, "enough said. If you want to help me, there's no doubt but I'll be glad of it, and none but I'll be grateful."

It seemed to me (too soon, I dare say) that I was getting the upper hand of my uncle; and I began next to say that I must have the bed and bedclothes aired and put to sun-dry; for nothing would make me sleep in such a pickle.

"Is this my house or yours?" said he, in his keen voice, and then all of a sudden broke off. "Na, na," said he, "I didnae mean that. What's mine is yours, Davie, my man, and what's yours is mine. Blood's thicker than water; and there's naebody but you and me that ought the name." And then on he rambled about the family, and its ancient greatness, and his father that began to enlarge the house, and himself that stopped the building as a sinful waste; and this put it in my head to give him Jennet Clouston's message.

"The limmer!" he cried. "Twelve hunner and fifteen — that's every day since I had the limmer rowpit!* Dod, David, I'll have her roasted on red peats before I'm by with it! A witch — a proclaimed witch! I'll aff and see the session clerk."

* Sold up.

And with that he opened a chest, and got out a very old and well-preserved blue coat and waistcoat, and a good enough beaver hat, both without lace. These he threw on any way, and taking a staff from the cupboard, locked all up again, and was for setting out, when a thought arrested him.

"I cannae leave you by yoursel' in the house," said he. "I'll have to lock you out."

The blood came to my face. "If you lock me out," I said, "it'll be the last you'll see of me in friendship."

He turned very pale, and sucked his mouth in.

"This is no the way" he said, looking wickedly at a corner of the floor — "this is no the way to win my favour, David."

"Sir," says I, "with a proper reverence for your age and our common blood, I do not value your favour at a boddle's purchase. I was brought up to have a good conceit of myself; and if you were all the uncle, and all the family, I had in the world ten times over, I wouldn't buy your liking at such prices."

Uncle Ebenezer went and looked out of the window for awhile. I could see him all trembling and twitching, like a man with palsy. But when he turned round, he had a smile upon his face.

"Well, well," said he, "we must bear and forbear. I'll no go; that's all that's to be said of it."

"Uncle Ebenezer," I said, "I can make nothing out of this. You use me like a thief; you hate to have me in this house; you let me see it, every word and every minute: it's not possible that you can like me; and as for me, I've spoken to you as I never thought to speak to any man. Why do you seek to keep me, then? Let me gang back — let me gang back to the friends I have, and that like me!"

"Na, na; na, na," he said, very earnestly. "I like you fine; we'll agree fine yet; and for the honour of the house I couldnae let you leave the way ye came. Bide here quiet, there's a good lad; just you bide here quiet a bittie, and ye'll find that we agree."

"Well, sir," said I, after I had thought the matter out in silence, "I'll stay awhile. It's more just I should be helped by my own blood than strangers; and if we don't agree, I'll do my best it shall be through no fault of mine."

CHAPTER IV

I RUN A GREAT DANGER IN THE HOUSE OF SHAWS

For a day that was begun so ill, the day passed fairly well. We had the porridge cold again at noon, and hot porridge at night; porridge and small beer was my uncle's diet. He spoke but little, and that in the same way as before, shooting a question at me after a long silence; and when I sought to lead him to talk about my future, slipped out of it again. In a room next door to the kitchen, where he suffered me to go, I found a great number of books, both Latin and English, in which I took great pleasure all the afternoon. Indeed, the time passed so lightly in this good company, that I began to be almost reconciled to my residence at Shaws; and nothing but the sight of my uncle, and his eyes playing hide and seek with mine, revived the force of my distrust.

One thing I discovered, which put me in some doubt. This was an entry on the fly-leaf of a chap-book (one of Patrick Walker's) plainly written by my father's hand and thus conceived: "To my brother Ebenezer on his fifth birthday" Now, what puzzled me was this: That, as my father was of course the younger brother, he must either have made some strange error, or he must have written, before he was yet five, an excellent, clear manly hand of writing.

I tried to get this out of my head; but though I took down many interesting authors, old and new, history, poetry, and story-book, this notion of my father's hand of writing stuck to me; and when at length I went back into the kitchen, and sat down once more to porridge and small beer, the first thing I said to Uncle Ebenezer was to ask him if my father had not been very quick at his book.

"Alexander? No him!" was the reply. "I was far quicker mysel'; I was a clever chappie when I was young. Why, I could read as soon as he could."

This puzzled me yet more; and a thought coming into my head, I asked if he and my father had been twins.

He jumped upon his stool, and the horn spoon fell out of his hand upon the floor. "What gars ye ask that?" he said, and he caught me by the breast of the jacket, and looked this time straight into my eyes: his own were little and light, and bright like a bird's, blinking and winking strangely.

"What do you mean?" I asked, very calmly, for I was far stronger than he, and not easily frightened. "Take your hand from my jacket. This is no way to behave."

My uncle seemed to make a great effort upon himself. "Dod man, David," he said, "ye should-nae speak to me about your father. That's where the mistake is." He sat awhile and shook, blinking in his plate: "He was all the brother that ever I had," he added, but with no heart in his voice; and then he caught up his spoon and fell to supper again, but still shaking.

Now this last passage, this laying of hands upon my person and sudden profession of love for my dead father, went so clean beyond my comprehension that it put me into both fear and hope. On the one hand, I began to think my uncle was perhaps insane and might be dangerous; on the other, there came up into my mind (quite unbidden by me and even discouraged) a story like some ballad I had heard folk singing, of a poor lad that was a rightful heir and a wicked kinsman that tried to keep him from his own. For why should my uncle play a part with a relative that came, almost a beggar, to his door, unless in his heart he had some cause to fear him?

With this notion, all unacknowledged, but nevertheless getting firmly settled in my head, I now began to imitate his covert looks; so that we sat at table like a cat and a mouse, each stealthily observing the other. Not another word had he to say to me, black or white, but was busy turning something secretly over in his mind; and the longer we sat and the more I looked at him, the more certain I became that the something was unfriendly to myself.

When he had cleared the platter, he got out a single pipeful of tobacco, just as in the morning, turned round a stool into the chimney corner, and sat awhile smoking, with his back to me.

"Davie," he said, at length, "I've been thinking;" then he paused, and said it again. "There's a wee bit siller that I half promised ye before ye were born," he continued; "promised it to your father. O, naething legal, ye understand; just gentlemen daffing at their wine. Well, I keepit that bit money separate — it was a great expense, but a promise is a promise — and it has grown by now to be a matter of just precisely — just exactly" — and here he paused and stumbled — "of just exactly forty pounds!" This last he rapped out with a sidelong glance over his shoulder; and the next moment added, almost with a scream, "Scots!"

The pound Scots being the same thing as an English shilling, the difference made by this second thought was considerable; I could see, besides, that the whole story was a lie, invented with some end which it puzzled me to guess; and I made no attempt to conceal the tone of raillery in which I answered —

"O, think again, sir! Pounds sterling, I believe!"

"That's what I said," returned my uncle: "pounds sterling! And if you'll step out-by to the door a minute, just to see what kind of a night it is, I'll get it out to ye and call ye in again."

I did his will, smiling to myself in my contempt that he should think I was so easily to be deceived. It was a dark night, with a few stars low down; and as I stood just outside the door, I heard a hollow moaning of wind far off among the hills. I said to myself there was something thundery and changeful in the weather, and little knew of what a vast importance that should prove to me before the evening passed.

When I was called in again, my uncle counted out into my hand seven and thirty golden guinea pieces; the rest was in his hand, in small gold and silver; but his heart failed him there, and he crammed the change into his pocket.

“There,” said he, “that’ll show you! I’m a queer man, and strange wi’ strangers; but my word is my bond, and there’s the proof of it.”

Now, my uncle seemed so miserly that I was struck dumb by this sudden generosity, and could find no words in which to thank him.

“No a word!” said he. “Nae thanks; I want nae thanks. I do my duty. I’m no saying that everybody would have, done it; but for my part (though I’m a careful body, too) it’s a pleasure to me to do the right by my brother’s son; and it’s a pleasure to me to think that now we’ll agree as such near friends should.”

I spoke him in return as handsomely as I was able; but all the while I was wondering what would come next, and why he had parted with his precious guineas; for as to the reason he had given, a baby would have refused it.

Presently he looked towards me sideways.

“And see here,” says he, “tit for tat.”

I told him I was ready to prove my gratitude in any reasonable degree, and then waited, looking for some monstrous demand. And yet, when at last he plucked up courage to speak, it was only to tell me (very properly, as I thought) that he was growing old and a little broken, and that he would expect me to help him with the house and the bit garden.

I answered, and expressed my readiness to serve.

“Well,” he said, “let’s begin.” He pulled out of his pocket a rusty key. “There,” says he, “there’s the key of the stair-tower at the far end of the house. Ye can only win into it from the outside, for that part of the house is no finished. Gang ye in there, and up the stairs, and bring me down the chest that’s at the top. There’s papers in’t,” he added.

“Can I have a light, sir?” said I.

“Na,” said he, very cunningly. “Nae lights in my house.”

“Very well, sir,” said I. “Are the stairs good?”

“They’re grand,” said he; and then, as I was going, “Keep to the wall,” he added; “there’s nae bannisters. But the stairs are grand underfoot.”

Out I went into the night. The wind was still moaning in the distance, though never a breath of it came near the house of Shaws. It had fallen blacker than ever; and I was glad to feel along the wall, till I came the length of the stairtower door at the far end of the unfinished wing. I had got the key into the keyhole and had just turned it, when all upon a sudden, without sound of wind or thunder, the whole sky lighted up with wild fire and went black again. I had to put my hand over my eyes to get back to the colour of the darkness; and indeed I was already half blinded when I stepped into the tower.

It was so dark inside, it seemed a body could scarce breathe; but I pushed out with foot and hand, and presently struck the wall with the one, and the lowermost round of the stair with the other. The wall, by the touch, was of fine hewn stone; the steps too, though somewhat steep and narrow, were of polished masonwork, and regular and solid underfoot. Minding my uncle's word about the bannisters, I kept close to the tower side, and felt my way in the pitch darkness with a beating heart.

The house of Shaws stood some five full storeys high, not counting lofts. Well, as I advanced, it seemed to me the stair grew airier and a thought more lightsome; and I was wondering what might be the cause of this change, when a second blink of the summer lightning came and went. If I did not cry out, it was because fear had me by the throat; and if I did not fall, it was more by Heaven's mercy than my own strength. It was not only that the flash shone in on every side through breaches in the wall, so that I seemed to be clambering aloft upon an open scaffold, but the same passing brightness showed me the steps were of unequal length, and that one of my feet rested that moment within two inches of the well.

This was the grand stair! I thought; and with the thought, a gust of a kind of angry courage came into my heart. My uncle had sent me here, certainly to run great risks, perhaps to die. I swore I would settle that "perhaps," if I should break my neck for it; got me down upon my hands and knees; and as slowly as a snail, feeling before me every inch, and testing the solidity of every stone, I continued to ascend the stair. The darkness, by contrast with the flash, appeared to have redoubled; nor was that all, for my ears were now troubled and my mind confounded by a great stir of bats in the top part of the tower, and the foul beasts, flying downwards, sometimes beat about my face and body.

The tower, I should have said, was square; and in every corner the step was made of a great stone of a different shape to join the flights. Well, I had come close to one of these turns, when, feeling forward as usual, my hand slipped upon an edge and found nothing but emptiness beyond it. The stair had been carried no higher; to set a stranger mounting it in the darkness was to send him straight to his death; and (although, thanks to the lightning and my own precautions, I was safe enough) the mere thought of the peril in which I might have stood, and the dreadful height I might have fallen from, brought out the sweat upon my body and relaxed my joints.

But I knew what I wanted now, and turned and groped my way down again, with a wonderful anger in my heart. About half-way down, the wind sprang up in a clap and shook the tower, and died again; the rain followed; and before I had reached the ground level it fell in buckets. I put out my head into the storm, and looked along towards the kitchen. The door, which I had shut behind me when I left, now stood open, and shed a little glimmer of light; and I thought I could see a figure standing in the rain, quite still, like a man hearkening. And then there came a blinding flash, which showed me my uncle plainly, just where I had fancied him to stand; and hard upon the heels of it, a great tow-row of thunder.

Now, whether my uncle thought the crash to be the sound of my fall, or whether he heard in it God's voice denouncing murder, I will leave you to guess. Certain it is, at least, that he was seized on by a kind of panic fear, and that he ran into the house and left the door open behind him. I followed as softly as I could, and, coming unheard into the kitchen, stood and watched him.

He had found time to open the corner cupboard and bring out a great case bottle of aqua vitae, and now sat with his back towards me at the table. Ever and again he would be seized with a fit of deadly shuddering and groan aloud, and carrying the bottle to his lips, drink down the raw spirits by the mouthful.

I stepped forward, came close behind him where he sat, and suddenly clapping my two hands down upon his shoulders — ”Ah!” cried I.

My uncle gave a kind of broken cry like a sheep's bleat, flung up his arms, and tumbled to the floor like a dead man. I was somewhat shocked at this; but I had myself to look to first of all, and did not hesitate to let him lie as he had fallen. The keys were hanging in the cupboard; and it was my design to furnish myself with arms before my uncle should come again to his senses and the power of devising evil. In the cupboard were a few bottles, some apparently of medicine; a great many bills and other papers, which I should willingly enough have rummaged, had I had the time; and a few necessaries that were nothing to my purpose. Thence I turned to the chests. The first was full of meal; the second of moneybags and papers tied into sheaves; in the third, with many other things (and these for the most part clothes) I found a rusty, ugly-looking Highland dirk without the scabbard. This, then, I concealed inside my waistcoat, and turned to my uncle.

He lay as he had fallen, all huddled, with one knee up and one arm sprawling abroad; his face had a strange colour of blue, and he seemed to have ceased breathing. Fear came on me that he was dead; then I got water and dashed it in his face; and with that he seemed to come a little to himself, working his mouth and fluttering his eyelids. At last he looked up and saw me, and there came into his eyes a terror that was not of this world.

“Come, come,” said I; “sit up.”

“Are ye alive?” he sobbed. “O man, are ye alive?”

“That am I,” said I. “Small thanks to you!”

He had begun to seek for his breath with deep sighs. “The blue phial,” said he — ”in the aumry — the blue phial.” His breath came slower still.

I ran to the cupboard, and, sure enough, found there a blue phial of medicine, with the dose written on it on a paper, and this I administered to him with what speed I might.

“It’s the trouble,” said he, reviving a little; “I have a trouble, Davie. It’s the heart.”

I set him on a chair and looked at him. It is true I felt some pity for a man that looked so sick, but I was full besides of righteous anger; and I numbered over before him the points on which I wanted explanation: why he lied to me at every word; why he feared that I should leave him; why he disliked it to be hinted that he and my father were twins — ”Is that because it is true?” I asked; why he had given me money to which I was convinced I had no claim; and, last of all, why he had tried to kill me. He heard me all through in silence; and then, in a broken voice, begged me to let him go to bed.

“I’ll tell ye the morn,” he said; “as sure as death I will.”

And so weak was he that I could do nothing but consent. I locked him into his room, however, and pocketed the key, and then returning to the kitchen, made up such a blaze as had not shone there for many a long year, and wrapping myself in my plaid, lay down upon the chests and fell asleep.

CHAPTER V

I GO TO THE QUEEN'S FERRY

Much rain fell in the night; and the next morning there blew a bitter wintry wind out of the north-west, driving scattered clouds. For all that, and before the sun began to peep or the last of the stars had vanished, I made my way to the side of the burn, and had a plunge in a deep whirling pool. All aglow from my bath, I sat down once more beside the fire, which I replenished, and began gravely to consider my position.

There was now no doubt about my uncle's enmity; there was no doubt I carried my life in my hand, and he would leave no stone unturned that he might compass my destruction. But I was young and spirited, and like most lads that have been country-bred, I had a great opinion of my shrewdness. I had come to his door no better than a beggar and little more than a child; he had met me with treachery and violence; it would be a fine consummation to take the upper hand, and drive him like a herd of sheep.

I sat there nursing my knee and smiling at the fire; and I saw myself in fancy smell out his secrets one after another, and grow to be that man's king and ruler. The warlock of Essendean, they say, had made a mirror in which men could read the future; it must have been of other stuff than burning coal; for in all the shapes and pictures that I sat and gazed at, there was never a ship, never a seaman with a hairy cap, never a big bludgeon for my silly head, or the least sign of all those tribulations that were ripe to fall on me.

Presently, all swollen with conceit, I went up-stairs and gave my prisoner his liberty. He gave me good-morning civilly; and I gave the same to him, smiling down upon him, from the heights of my sufficiency. Soon we were set to breakfast, as it might have been the day before.

"Well, sir," said I, with a jeering tone, "have you nothing more to say to me?" And then, as he made no articulate reply, "It will be time, I think, to understand each other," I continued. "You took me for a country Johnnie Raw, with no more mother-wit or courage than a porridge-stick. I took you for a good man, or no worse than others at the least. It seems we were both wrong. What cause you have to fear me, to cheat me, and to attempt my life — "

He murmured something about a jest, and that he liked a bit of fun; and then, seeing me smile, changed his tone, and assured me he would make all clear as soon as we had breakfasted. I saw by his face that he had no lie ready for me, though he was hard at work preparing one;

and I think I was about to tell him so, when we were interrupted by a knocking at the door.

Bidding my uncle sit where he was, I went to open it, and found on the doorstep a half-grown boy in sea-clothes. He had no sooner seen me than he began to dance some steps of the sea-hornpipe (which I had never before heard of far less seen), snapping his fingers in the air and footing it right cleverly. For all that, he was blue with the cold; and there was something in his face, a look between tears and laughter, that was highly pathetic and consisted ill with this gaiety of manner.

“What cheer, mate?” says he, with a cracked voice.

I asked him soberly to name his pleasure.

“O, pleasure!” says he; and then began to sing:

“For it’s my delight, of a shiny night,
In the season of the year.”

“Well,” said I, “if you have no business at all, I will even be so unmannerly as to shut you out.”

“Stay, brother!” he cried. “Have you no fun about you? or do you want to get me thrashed? I’ve brought a letter from old Heasyoasy to Mr. Belflower.” He showed me a letter as he spoke. “And I say, mate,” he added, “I’m mortal hungry.”

“Well,” said I, “come into the house, and you shall have a bite if I go empty for it.”

With that I brought him in and set him down to my own place, where he fell-to greedily on the remains of breakfast, winking to me between whiles, and making many faces, which I think the poor soul considered manly. Meanwhile, my uncle had read the letter and sat thinking; then, suddenly, he got to his feet with a great air of liveliness, and pulled me apart into the farthest corner of the room.

“Read that,” said he, and put the letter in my hand.

Here it is, lying before me as I write:

“The Hawes Inn, at the Queen’s Ferry.

“Sir, — I lie here with my hawser up and down, and send my cabin-boy to informe. If you have any further commands for over-seas, to-day will be the last occasion, as the wind will serve us well out of the firth. I will not seek to deny that I have had crosses with your doer,* Mr. Rankeillor; of which, if not speedily redd up, you may looke to see some losses follow. I have drawn a bill upon you, as per margin, and am, sir, your most obedt., humble servant, “ELIAS HOSEASON.”* Agent.

“You see, Davie,” resumed my uncle, as soon as he saw that I had done, “I have a venture with this man Hoseason, the captain of a trading brig, the Covenant, of Dysart. Now, if you and me was to walk over with yon lad, I could see the captain at the Hawes, or maybe on board the Covenant if there was papers to be signed; and so far from a loss of time, we can jog on to the lawyer, Mr. Rankeillor's. After a' that's come and gone, ye would be swier* to believe me upon my naked word; but ye'll believe Rankeillor. He's factor to half the gentry in these parts; an auld man, forby: highly respeckit, and he kenned your father."

* Unwilling.

I stood awhile and thought. I was going to some place of shipping, which was doubtless populous, and where my uncle durst attempt no violence, and, indeed, even the society of the cabin-boy so far protected me. Once there, I believed I could force on the visit to the lawyer, even if my uncle were now insincere in proposing it; and, perhaps, in the bottom of my heart, I wished a nearer view of the sea and ships. You are to remember I had lived all my life in the inland hills, and just two days before had my first sight of the firth lying like a blue floor, and the sailed ships moving on the face of it, no bigger than toys. One thing with another, I made up my mind.

"Very well," says I, "let us go to the Ferry."

My uncle got into his hat and coat, and buckled an old rusty cutlass on; and then we trod the fire out, locked the door, and set forth upon our walk.

The wind, being in that cold quarter the north-west, blew nearly in our faces as we went. It was the month of June; the grass was all white with daisies, and the trees with blossom; but, to judge by our blue nails and aching wrists, the time might have been winter and the whiteness a December frost.

Uncle Ebenezer trudged in the ditch, jogging from side to side like an old ploughman coming home from work. He never said a word the whole way; and I was thrown for talk on the cabin-boy. He told me his name was Ransome, and that he had followed the sea since he was nine, but could not say how old he was, as he had lost his reckoning. He showed me tattoo marks, baring his breast in the teeth of the wind and in spite of my remonstrances, for I thought it was enough to kill him; he swore horribly whenever he remembered, but more like a silly schoolboy than a man; and boasted of many wild and bad things that he had done: stealthy thefts, false accusations, ay, and even murder; but all with such a dearth of likelihood in the details, and such a weak and crazy swagger in the delivery, as disposed me rather to pity than to believe him.

I asked him of the brig (which he declared was the finest ship that sailed) and of Captain Hoseason, in whose praises he was equally loud. Heasyoasy (for so he still named the skipper) was a man, by his account, that minded for nothing either in heaven or earth; one that, as people said, would "crack on all sail into the day of judgment;"

rough, fierce, unscrupulous, and brutal; and all this my poor cabin-boy had taught himself to admire as something seamanlike and manly. He would only admit one flaw in his idol. “He ain’t no seaman,” he admitted. “That’s Mr. Shuan that navigates the brig; he’s the finest seaman in the trade, only for drink; and I tell you I believe it! Why, look’ere;” and turning down his stocking he showed me a great, raw, red wound that made my blood run cold. “He done that — Mr. Shuan done it,” he said, with an air of pride.

“What!” I cried, “do you take such savage usage at his hands? Why, you are no slave, to be so handled!”

“No,” said the poor moon-calf, changing his tune at once, “and so he’ll find. See’ere;” and he showed me a great case-knife, which he told me was stolen. “O,” says he, “let me see him, try; I dare him to; I’ll do for him! O, he ain’t the first!” And he confirmed it with a poor, silly, ugly oath.

I have never felt such pity for any one in this wide world as I felt for that half-witted creature, and it began to come over me that the brig Covenant (for all her pious name) was little better than a hell upon the seas.

“Have you no friends?” said I.

He said he had a father in some English seaport, I forget which.

“He was a fine man, too,” he said, “but he’s dead.”

“In Heaven’s name,” cried I, “can you find no reputable life on shore?”

“O, no,” says he, winking and looking very sly, “they would put me to a trade. I know a trick worth two of that, I do!”

I asked him what trade could be so dreadful as the one he followed, where he ran the continual peril of his life, not alone from wind and sea, but by the horrid cruelty of those who were his masters. He said it was very true; and then began to praise the life, and tell what a pleasure it was to get on shore with money in his pocket, and spend it like a man, and buy apples, and swagger, and surprise what he called stick-in-the-mud boys. “And then it’s not all as bad as that,” says he; “there’s worse off than me: there’s the twenty-pounders. O, laws! you should see them taking on. Why, I’ve seen a man as old as you, I dessay” — (to him I seemed old) — ”ah, and he had a beard, too — well, and as soon as we cleared out of the river, and he had the drug out of his head — my! how he cried and carried on! I made a fine fool of him, I tell you! And then there’s little uns, too: oh, little by me! I tell you, I keep them in order. When we carry little uns, I have a rope’s end of my own to wollop’em.” And so he ran on, until it came in on me what he meant by twenty-pounders were those unhappy criminals who were sent over-seas to slavery in North America, or the still more unhappy innocents who were kidnapped or trepanned (as the word went) for private interest or vengeance.

Just then we came to the top of the hill, and looked down on the Ferry and the Hope. The Firth of Forth (as is very well known) narrows at this point to the width of a good-sized river, which makes a convenient ferry going north, and turns the upper reach into a landlocked haven for all manner of ships. Right in the midst of the narrows lies an islet with some ruins; on the south shore they have built a pier for the service of the Ferry; and at the end of the pier, on the other side of the road, and backed against a pretty garden of holly-trees and hawthorns, I could see the building which they called the Hawes Inn.

The town of Queensferry lies farther west, and the neighbourhood of the inn looked pretty lonely at that time of day, for the boat had just gone north with passengers. A skiff, however, lay beside the pier, with some seamen sleeping on the thwarts; this, as Ransome told me, was the brig's boat waiting for the captain; and about half a mile off, and all alone in the anchorage, he showed me the Covenant herself. There was a sea-going bustle on board; yards were swinging into place; and as the wind blew from that quarter, I could hear the song of the sailors as they pulled upon the ropes. After all I had listened to upon the way, I looked at that ship with an extreme abhorrence; and from the bottom of my heart I pitied all poor souls that were condemned to sail in her.

We had all three pulled up on the brow of the hill; and now I marched across the road and addressed my uncle. “I think it right to tell you, sir.” says I, “there's nothing that will bring me on board that Covenant.”

He seemed to waken from a dream. “Eh?” he said. “What's that?”

I told him over again.

“Well, well,” he said, “we'll have to please ye, I suppose. But what are we standing here for? It's perishing cold; and if I'm no mistaken, they're busking the Covenant for sea.”

CHAPTER VI

WHAT BEFELL AT THE QUEEN'S FERRY

As soon as we came to the inn, Ransome led us up the stair to a small room, with a bed in it, and heated like an oven by a great fire of coal. At a table hard by the chimney, a tall, dark, sober-looking man sat writing. In spite of the heat of the room, he wore a thick sea-jacket, buttoned to the neck, and a tall hairy cap drawn down over his ears; yet I never saw any man, not even a judge upon the bench, look cooler, or more studious and self-possessed, than this ship-captain.

He got to his feet at once, and coming forward, offered his large hand to Ebenezer. "I am proud to see you, Mr. Balfour," said he, in a fine deep voice, "and glad that ye are here in time. The wind's fair, and the tide upon the turn; we'll see the old coal-bucket burning on the Isle of May before to-night."

"Captain Hoseason," returned my uncle, "you keep your room unco hot."

"It's a habit I have, Mr. Balfour," said the skipper. "I'm a cold-rife man by my nature; I have a cold blood, sir. There's neither fur, nor flannel — no, sir, nor hot rum, will warm up what they call the temperature. Sir, it's the same with most men that have been carbonadoed, as they call it, in the tropic seas."

"Well, well, captain," replied my uncle, "we must all be the way we're made."

But it chanced that this fancy of the captain's had a great share in my misfortunes. For though I had promised myself not to let my kinsman out of sight, I was both so impatient for a nearer look of the sea, and so sickened by the closeness of the room, that when he told me to "run down-stairs and play myself awhile," I was fool enough to take him at his word.

Away I went, therefore, leaving the two men sitting down to a bottle and a great mass of papers; and crossing the road in front of the inn, walked down upon the beach. With the wind in that quarter, only little wavelets, not much bigger than I had seen upon a lake, beat upon the shore. But the weeds were new to me — some green, some brown and long, and some with little bladders that crackled between my fingers. Even so far up the firth, the smell of the sea-water was exceedingly salt and stirring; the Covenant, besides, was beginning to shake out her sails, which hung upon the yards in clusters; and the spirit of all that I beheld put me in thoughts of far voyages and foreign places.

I looked, too, at the seamen with the skiff — big brown fellows, some in shirts, some with jackets, some with coloured handkerchiefs about their throats, one with a brace of pistols stuck into his pockets, two or three with knotty bludgeons, and all with their case-knives. I passed the time of day with one that looked less desperate than his fellows, and asked him of the sailing of the brig. He said they would get under way as soon as the ebb set, and expressed his gladness to be out of a port where there were no taverns and fiddlers; but all with such horrifying oaths, that I made haste to get away from him.

This threw me back on Ransome, who seemed the least wicked of that gang, and who soon came out of the inn and ran to me, crying for a bowl of punch. I told him I would give him no such thing, for neither he nor I was of an age for such indulgences. "But a glass of ale you may have, and welcome," said I. He mopped and mowed at me, and called me names; but he was glad to get the ale, for all that; and presently we were set down at a table in the front room of the inn, and both eating and drinking with a good appetite.

Here it occurred to me that, as the landlord was a man of that county, I might do well to make a friend of him. I offered him a share, as was much the custom in those days; but he was far too great a man to sit with such poor customers as Ransome and myself, and he was leaving the room, when I called him back to ask if he knew Mr. Rankeillor.

"Hoot, ay," says he, "and a very honest man. And, O, by-the-by," says he, "was it you that came in with Ebenezer?" And when I had told him yes, "Ye'll be no friend of his?" he asked, meaning, in the Scottish way, that I would be no relative.

I told him no, none.

"I thought not," said he, "and yet ye have a kind of gliff* of Mr. Alexander."

* Look.

I said it seemed that Ebenezer was ill-seen in the country.

"Nae doubt," said the landlord. "He's a wicked auld man, and there's many would like to see him girning in the tow*. Jennet Clouston and mony mair that he has harried out of house and hame. And yet he was ance a fine young fellow, too. But that was before the sough** gaed abroad about Mr. Alexander, that was like the death of him."

* Rope.

** Report.

"And what was it?" I asked.

"Ou, just that he had killed him," said the landlord. "Did ye never hear that?"

"And what would he kill him for?" said I.

"And what for, but just to get the place," said he.

"The place?" said I. "The Shaws?"

"Nae other place that I ken," said he.

"Ay, man?" said I. "Is that so? Was my — was Alexander the eldest son?"

"'Deed was he," said the landlord. "What else would he have killed him for?"

And with that he went away, as he had been impatient to do from the beginning.

Of course, I had guessed it a long while ago; but it is one thing to guess, another to know; and I sat stunned with my good fortune, and could scarce grow to believe that the same poor lad who had trudged in the dust from Ettrick Forest not two days ago, was now one of the rich of the earth, and had a house and broad lands, and might mount his horse tomorrow. All these pleasant things, and a thousand others, crowded into my mind, as I sat staring before me out of the inn window, and paying no heed to what I saw; only I remember that my eye lighted on Captain Hoseason down on the pier among his seamen, and speaking with some authority. And presently he came marching back towards the house, with no mark of a sailor's clumsiness, but carrying his fine, tall figure with a manly bearing, and still with the same sober, grave expression on his face. I wondered if it was possible that Ransome's stories could be true, and half disbelieved them; they fitted so ill with the man's looks. But indeed, he was neither so good as I supposed him, nor quite so bad as Ransome did; for, in fact, he was two men, and left the better one behind as soon as he set foot on board his vessel.

The next thing, I heard my uncle calling me, and found the pair in the road together. It was the captain who addressed me, and that with an air (very flattering to a young lad) of grave equality.

"Sir," said he, "Mr. Balfour tells me great things of you; and for my own part, I like your looks. I wish I was for longer here, that we might make the better friends; but we'll make the most of what we have. Ye shall come on board my brig for half an hour, till the ebb sets, and drink a bowl with me."

Now, I longed to see the inside of a ship more than words can tell; but I was not going to put myself in jeopardy, and I told him my uncle and I had an appointment with a lawyer.

"Ay, ay," said he, "he passed me word of that. But, ye see, the boat'll set ye ashore at the town pier, and that's but a penny stonecast from Rankeillor's house." And here he suddenly leaned down and whispered in my ear: "Take care of the old tod;* he means mischief. Come aboard till I can get a word with ye." And then, passing his arm through mine, he continued aloud, as he set off towards his boat: "But, come, what can I bring ye from the Carolinas? Any friend of Mr. Balfour's can command. A roll of tobacco? Indian feather-work? a skin of a wild beast? a stone pipe? the mocking-bird that mews for all the world like a cat? the cardinal bird that is as red as blood? — take your pick and say your pleasure."

* Fox.

By this time we were at the boat-side, and he was handing me in. I did not dream of hanging back; I thought (the poor fool!) that I had found a good friend and helper, and I was rejoiced to see the ship. As soon as we were all set in our places, the boat was thrust off from the pier and began to move over the waters: and what with my pleasure in this new movement and my surprise at our low position, and the appearance of the shores, and the growing bigness of the brig as we drew near to it, I could hardly understand what the captain said, and must have answered him at random.

As soon as we were alongside (where I sat fairly gaping at the ship's height, the strong humming of the tide against its sides, and the pleasant cries of the seamen at their work) Hoseason, declaring that he and I must be the first aboard, ordered a tackle to be sent down from the main-yard. In this I was whipped into the air and set down again on the deck, where the captain stood ready waiting for me, and instantly slipped back his arm under mine. There I stood some while, a little dizzy with the unsteadiness of all around me, perhaps a little afraid, and yet vastly pleased with these strange sights; the captain meanwhile pointing out the strangest, and telling me their names and uses.

"But where is my uncle?" said I suddenly.

"Ay," said Hoseason, with a sudden grimness, "that's the point."

I felt I was lost. With all my strength, I plucked myself clear of him and ran to the bulwarks. Sure enough, there was the boat pulling for the town, with my uncle sitting in the stern. I gave a piercing cry — "Help, help! Murder!" — so that both sides of the anchorage rang with it, and my uncle turned round where he was sitting, and showed me a face full of cruelty and terror.

It was the last I saw. Already strong hands had been plucking me back from the ship's side; and now a thunderbolt seemed to strike me; I saw a great flash of fire, and fell senseless.

CHAPTER VII

I GO TO SEA IN THE BRIG “COVENANT” OF DYSART

I came to myself in darkness, in great pain, bound hand and foot, and deafened by many unfamiliar noises. There sounded in my ears a roaring of water as of a huge mill-dam, the thrashing of heavy sprays, the thundering of the sails, and the shrill cries of seamen. The whole world now heaved giddily up, and now rushed giddily downward; and so sick and hurt was I in body, and my mind so much confounded, that it took me a long while, chasing my thoughts up and down, and ever stunned again by a fresh stab of pain, to realise that I must be lying somewhere bound in the belly of that unlucky ship, and that the wind must have strengthened to a gale. With the clear perception of my plight, there fell upon me a blackness of despair, a horror of remorse at my own folly, and a passion of anger at my uncle, that once more bereft me of my senses.

When I returned again to life, the same uproar, the same confused and violent movements, shook and deafened me; and presently, to my other pains and distresses, there was added the sickness of an unused landsman on the sea. In that time of my adventurous youth, I suffered many hardships; but none that was so crushing to my mind and body, or lit by so few hopes, as these first hours aboard the brig.

I heard a gun fire, and supposed the storm had proved too strong for us, and we were firing signals of distress. The thought of deliverance, even by death in the deep sea, was welcome to me. Yet it was no such matter; but (as I was afterwards told) a common habit of the captain’s, which I here set down to show that even the worst man may have his kindlier side. We were then passing, it appeared, within some miles of Dysart, where the brig was built, and where old Mrs. Hoseason, the captain’s mother, had come some years before to live; and whether outward or inward bound, the Covenant was never suffered to go by that place by day, without a gun fired and colours shown.

I had no measure of time; day and night were alike in that ill-smelling cavern of the ship’s bowels where, I lay; and the misery of my situation drew out the hours to double. How long, therefore, I lay waiting to hear the ship split upon some rock, or to feel her reel head foremost into the depths of the sea, I have not the means of computation. But sleep at length stole from me the consciousness of sorrow.

I was awakened by the light of a hand-lantern shining in my face. A small man of about thirty, with green eyes and a tangle of fair hair, stood looking down at me.

"Well," said he, "how goes it?"

I answered by a sob; and my visitor then felt my pulse and temples, and set himself to wash and dress the wound upon my scalp.

"Ay," said he, "a sore dunt*. What, man? Cheer up! The world's no done; you've made a bad start of it but you'll make a better. Have you had any meat?"

* Stroke.

I said I could not look at it: and thereupon he gave me some brandy and water in a tin pannikin, and left me once more to myself.

The next time he came to see me, I was lying betwixt sleep and waking, my eyes wide open in the darkness, the sickness quite departed, but succeeded by a horrid giddiness and swimming that was almost worse to bear. I ached, besides, in every limb, and the cords that bound me seemed to be of fire. The smell of the hole in which I lay seemed to have become a part of me; and during the long interval since his last visit I had suffered tortures of fear, now from the scurrying of the ship's rats, that sometimes pattered on my very face, and now from the dismal imaginings that haunt the bed of fever.

The glimmer of the lantern, as a trap opened, shone in like the heaven's sunlight; and though it only showed me the strong, dark beams of the ship that was my prison, I could have cried aloud for gladness. The man with the green eyes was the first to descend the ladder, and I noticed that he came somewhat unsteadily. He was followed by the captain. Neither said a word; but the first set to and examined me, and dressed my wound as before, while Hoseason looked me in my face with an odd, black look.

"Now, sir, you see for yourself," said the first: "a high fever, no appetite, no light, no meat: you see for yourself what that means."

"I am no conjurer, Mr. Riach," said the captain.

"Give me leave, sir" said Riach; "you've a good head upon your shoulders, and a good Scotch tongue to ask with; but I will leave you no manner of excuse; I want that boy taken out of this hole and put in the forecastle."

"What ye may want, sir, is a matter of concern to nobody but yoursel'," returned the captain; "but I can tell ye that which is to be. Here he is; here he shall bide."

"Admitting that you have been paid in a proportion," said the other, "I will crave leave humbly to say that I have not. Paid I am, and none too much, to be the second officer of this old tub, and you ken very well if I do my best to earn it. But I was paid for nothing more."

"If ye could hold back your hand from the tin-pan, Mr. Riach, I would have no complaint to make of ye," returned the skipper; "and instead of asking riddles, I make bold to say that ye would keep your breath to cool your porridge. We'll be required on deck," he added, in a sharper note, and set one foot upon the ladder.

But Mr. Riach caught him by the sleeve.

"Admitting that you have been paid to do a murder — — " he began.

Hoseason turned upon him with a flash.

"What's that?" he cried. "What kind of talk is that?"

"It seems it is the talk that you can understand," said Mr. Riach, looking him steadily in the face.

"Mr. Riach, I have sailed with ye three cruises," replied the captain. "In all that time, sir, ye should have learned to know me: I'm a stiff man, and a dour man; but for what ye say the now — fie, fie! — it comes from a bad heart and a black conscience. If ye say the lad will die — — "

"Ay, will he!" said Mr. Riach.

"Well, sir, is not that enough?" said Hoseason. "Flit him where ye please!"

Thereupon the captain ascended the ladder; and I, who had lain silent throughout this strange conversation, beheld Mr. Riach turn after him and bow as low as to his knees in what was plainly a spirit of derision. Even in my then state of sickness, I perceived two things: that the mate was touched with liquor, as the captain hinted, and that (drunk or sober) he was like to prove a valuable friend.

Five minutes afterwards my bonds were cut, I was hoisted on a man's back, carried up to the forecastle, and laid in a bunk on some sea-blankets; where the first thing that I did was to lose my senses.

It was a blessed thing indeed to open my eyes again upon the daylight, and to find myself in the society of men. The forecastle was a roomy place enough, set all about with berths, in which the men of the watch below were seated smoking, or lying down asleep. The day being calm and the wind fair, the scuttle was open, and not only the good daylight, but from time to time (as the ship rolled) a dusty beam of sunlight shone in, and dazzled and delighted me. I had no sooner moved, moreover, than one of the men brought me a drink of something healing which Mr. Riach had prepared, and bade me lie still and I should soon be well again. There were no bones broken, he explained: "A clour* on the head was naething. Man," said he, "it was me that gave it ye!"

* Blow.

Here I lay for the space of many days a close prisoner, and not only got my health again, but came to know my companions. They were a rough lot indeed, as sailors mostly are: being men rooted out of all the kindly parts of life, and condemned to toss together on the rough seas, with masters no less cruel. There were some among them that had sailed with the pirates and seen things it would be a shame even to speak of; some were men that had run from the king's ships, and went with a halter round their necks, of which they made no secret; and all, as the saying goes, were "at a word and a blow" with their best friends. Yet I had not been many days shut up with them before I began to be ashamed of my first judgment, when I had drawn away from them at the Ferry pier, as though they had been unclean beasts. No class of man is altogether bad, but each has its own faults and virtues; and these shipmates of mine were no exception to the rule. Rough they were, sure enough; and bad, I suppose; but they had many virtues. They were kind when it occurred to them, simple even beyond the simplicity of a country lad like me, and had some glimmerings of honesty.

There was one man, of maybe forty, that would sit on my berthside for hours and tell me of his wife and child. He was a fisher that had lost his boat, and thus been driven to the deep-sea voyaging. Well, it is years ago now: but I have never forgotten him. His wife (who was "young by him," as he often told me) waited in vain to see her man return; he would never again make the fire for her in the morning, nor yet keep the bairn when she was sick. Indeed, many of these poor fellows (as the event proved) were upon their last cruise; the deep seas and cannibal fish received them; and it is a thankless business to speak ill of the dead.

Among other good deeds that they did, they returned my money, which had been shared among them; and though it was about a third short, I was very glad to get it, and hoped great good from it in the land I was going to. The ship was bound for the Carolinas; and you must not suppose that I was going to that place merely as an exile. The trade was even then much depressed; since that, and with the rebellion of the colonies and the formation of the United States, it has, of course, come to an end; but in those days of my youth, white men were still sold into slavery on the plantations, and that was the destiny to which my wicked uncle had condemned me.

The cabin-boy Ransome (from whom I had first heard of these atrocities) came in at times from the round-house, where he berthed and served, now nursing a bruised limb in silent agony, now raving against the cruelty of Mr. Shuan. It made my heart bleed; but the men had a great respect for the chief mate, who was, as they said, "the only seaman of the whole jing-bang, and none such a bad man when he was sober." Indeed, I found there was a strange peculiarity about our two mates: that Mr. Riach was sullen, unkind, and harsh when he was sober, and Mr. Shuan would not hurt a fly except when he was drinking. I asked about the captain; but I was told drink made no difference upon that man of iron.

I did my best in the small time allowed me to make some thing like a man, or rather I should say something like a boy, of the poor creature, Ransome. But his mind was scarce truly human. He could remember nothing of the time before he came to sea; only that his father had made clocks, and had a starling in the parlour, which could whistle "The North Countrie;" all else had been blotted out in these years of hardship and cruelties. He had a strange notion of the dry land, picked up from sailor's stories: that it was a place where lads were put to some kind of slavery called a trade, and where apprentices were continually lashed and clapped into foul prisons. In a town, he thought every second person a decoy, and every third house a place in which seamen would be drugged and murdered. To be sure, I would tell him how kindly I had myself been used upon that dry land he was so much afraid of, and how well fed and carefully taught both by my friends and my parents: and if he had been recently hurt, he would weep bitterly and swear to run away; but if he was in his usual crackbrain humour, or (still more) if he had had a glass of spirits in the roundhouse, he would deride the notion.

It was Mr. Riach (Heaven forgive him!) who gave the boy drink; and it was, doubtless, kindly meant; but besides that it was ruin to his health, it was the pitifullest thing in life to see this unhappy, unfriended creature staggering, and dancing, and talking he knew not what. Some of the men laughed, but not all; others would grow as black as thunder (thinking, perhaps, of their own childhood or their own children) and bid him stop that nonsense, and think what he was doing. As for me, I felt ashamed to look at him, and the poor child still comes about me in my dreams.

All this time, you should know, the Covenant was meeting continual head-winds and tumbling up and down against head-seas, so that the scuttle was almost constantly shut, and the forecastle lighted only by a swinging lantern on a beam. There was constant labour for all hands; the sails had to be made and shortened every hour; the strain told on the men's temper; there was a growl of quarrelling all day, long from berth to berth; and as I was never allowed to set my foot on deck, you can picture to yourselves how weary of my life I grew to be, and how impatient for a change.

And a change I was to get, as you shall hear; but I must first tell of a conversation I had with Mr. Riach, which put a little heart in me to bear my troubles. Getting him in a favourable stage of drink (for indeed he never looked near me when he was sober), I pledged him to secrecy, and told him my whole story.

He declared it was like a ballad; that he would do his best to help me; that I should have paper, pen, and ink, and write one line to Mr. Campbell and another to Mr. Rankeillor; and that if I had told the truth, ten to one he would be able (with their help) to pull me through and set me in my rights.

"And in the meantime," says he, "keep your heart up. You're not the only one, I'll tell you that. There's many a man hoeing tobacco overseas that should be mounting his horse at his own door at home; many and many! And life is all a variorum, at the best. Look at me: I'm a laird's son and more than half a doctor, and here I am, man-Jack to Hoseason!"

I thought it would be civil to ask him for his story.

He whistled loud.

"Never had one," said he. "I like fun, that's all." And he skipped out of the forecastle.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROUND-HOUSE

One night, about eleven o'clock, a man of Mr. Riach's watch (which was on deck) came below for his jacket; and instantly there began to go a whisper about the forecastle that "Shuan had done for him at last." There was no need of a name; we all knew who was meant; but we had scarce time to get the idea rightly in our heads, far less to speak of it, when the scuttle was again flung open, and Captain Hoseason came down the ladder. He looked sharply round the bunks in the tossing light of the lantern; and then, walking straight up to me, he addressed me, to my surprise, in tones of kindness.

"My man," said he, "we want ye to serve in the round-house. You and Ransome are to change berths. Run away aft with ye."

Even as he spoke, two seamen appeared in the scuttle, carrying Ransome in their arms; and the ship at that moment giving a great sheer into the sea, and the lantern swinging, the light fell direct on the boy's face. It was as white as wax, and had a look upon it like a dreadful smile. The blood in me ran cold, and I drew in my breath as if I had been struck.

"Run away aft; run away aft with ye!" cried Hoseason.

And at that I brushed by the sailors and the boy (who neither spoke nor moved), and ran up the ladder on deck.

The brig was sheering swiftly and giddily through a long, cresting swell. She was on the starboard tack, and on the left hand, under the arched foot of the foresail, I could see the sunset still quite bright. This, at such an hour of the night, surprised me greatly; but I was too ignorant to draw the true conclusion — that we were going north-about round Scotland, and were now on the high sea between the Orkney and Shetland Islands, having avoided the dangerous currents of the Pentland Firth. For my part, who had been so long shut in the dark and knew nothing of head-winds, I thought we might be half-way or more across the Atlantic. And indeed (beyond that I wondered a little at the lateness of the sunset light) I gave no heed to it, and pushed on across the decks, running between the seas, catching at ropes, and only saved from going overboard by one of the hands on deck, who had been always kind to me.

The round-house, for which I was bound, and where I was now to sleep and serve, stood some six feet above the decks, and considering the size of the brig, was of good dimensions. Inside were a fixed table and bench, and two berths, one for the captain and the other for the two mates, turn and turn about. It was all fitted with lockers from top to bottom, so as to stow away the officers' belongings and a part of the ship's stores; there was a second store-room underneath, which you entered by a hatchway in the middle of the deck; indeed, all the best of the meat and drink and the whole of the powder were collected in this place; and all the firearms, except the two pieces of brass ordnance, were set in a rack in the aftermost wall of the round-house. The most of the cutlasses were in another place.

A small window with a shutter on each side, and a skylight in the roof, gave it light by, day; and after dark there was a lamp always burning. It was burning when I entered, not brightly, but enough to show Mr. Shuan sitting at the table, with the brandy bottle and a tin pannikin in front of him. He was a tall man, strongly made and very black; and he stared before him on the table like one stupid.

He took no notice of my coming in; nor did he move when the captain followed and leant on the berth beside me, looking darkly at the mate. I stood in great fear of Hoseason, and had my reasons for it; but something told me I need not be afraid of him just then; and I whispered in his ear: "How is he?" He shook his head like one that does not know and does not wish to think, and his face was very stern.

Presently Mr. Riach came in. He gave the captain a glance that meant the boy was dead as plain as speaking, and took his place like the rest of us; so that we all three stood without a word, staring down at Mr. Shuan, and Mr. Shuan (on his side) sat without a word, looking hard upon the table.

All of a sudden he put out his hand to take the bottle; and at that Mr. Riach started forward and caught it away from him, rather by surprise than violence, crying out, with an oath, that there had been too much of this work altogether, and that a judgment would fall upon the ship. And as he spoke (the weather sliding-doors standing open) he tossed the bottle into the sea.

Mr. Shuan was on his feet in a trice; he still looked dazed, but he meant murder, ay, and would have done it, for the second time that night, had not the captain stepped in between him and his victim.

"Sit down!" roars the captain. "Ye sot and swine, do ye know what ye've done? Ye've murdered the boy!"

Mr. Shuan seemed to understand; for he sat down again, and put up his hand to his brow.

"Well," he said, "he brought me a dirty pannikin!"

At that word, the captain and I and Mr. Riach all looked at each other for a second with a kind of frightened look; and then Hoseason walked up to his chief officer, took him by the shoulder, led him across to his bunk, and bade him lie down and go to sleep, as you might speak to a bad child. The murderer cried a little, but he took off his sea-boots and obeyed.

"Ah!" cried Mr. Riach, with a dreadful voice, "ye should have interfered long syne. It's too late now."

"Mr. Riach," said the captain, "this night's work must never be kennt in Dysart. The boy went overboard, sir; that's what the story is; and I would give five pounds out of my pocket it was true!" He turned to the table. "What made ye throw the good bottle away?" he added. "There was nae sense in that, sir. Here, David, draw me another. They're in the bottom locker;" and he tossed me a key. "Ye'll need a glass yourself, sir," he added to Riach. "Yon was an ugly thing to see."

So the pair sat down and hob-a-nobbed; and while they did so, the murderer, who had been lying and whimpering in his berth, raised himself upon his elbow and looked at them and at me.

That was the first night of my new duties; and in the course of the next day I had got well into the run of them. I had to serve at the meals, which the captain took at regular hours, sitting down with the officer who was off duty; all the day through I would be running with a dram to one or other of my three masters; and at night I slept on a blanket thrown on the deck boards at the aftermost end of the round-house, and right in the draught of the two doors. It was a hard and a cold bed; nor was I suffered to sleep without interruption; for some one would be always coming in from deck to get a dram, and when a fresh watch was to be set, two and sometimes all three would sit down and brew a bowl together. How they kept their health, I know not, any more than how I kept my own.

And yet in other ways it was an easy service. There was no cloth to lay; the meals were either of oatmeal porridge or salt junk, except twice a week, when there was duff: and though I was clumsy enough and (not being firm on my sealegs) sometimes fell with what I was bringing them, both Mr. Riach and the captain were singularly patient. I could not but fancy they were making up lee-way with their consciences, and that they would scarce have been so good with me if they had not been worse with Ransome.

As for Mr. Shuan, the drink or his crime, or the two together, had certainly troubled his mind. I cannot say I ever saw him in his proper wits. He never grew used to my being there, stared at me continually (sometimes, I could have thought, with terror), and more than once drew back from my hand when I was serving him. I was pretty sure from the first that he had no clear mind of what he had done, and on my second day in the round-house I had the proof of it. We were alone, and he had been staring at me a long time, when all at once, up he got, as pale as death, and came close up to me, to my great terror. But I had no cause to be afraid of him.

"You were not here before?" he asked.

"No, sir," said I."

"There was another boy?" he asked again; and when I had answered him, "Ah!" says he, "I thought that," and went and sat down, without another word, except to call for brandy.

You may think it strange, but for all the horror I had, I was still sorry for him. He was a married man, with a wife in Leith; but whether or no he had a family, I have now forgotten; I hope not.

Altogether it was no very hard life for the time it lasted, which (as you are to hear) was not long. I was as well fed as the best of them; even their pickles, which were the great dainty, I was allowed my share of; and had I liked I might have been drunk from morning to night, like Mr. Shuan. I had company, too, and good company of its sort. Mr. Riach, who had been to the college, spoke to me like a friend when he was not sulking, and told me many curious things, and some that were informing; and even the captain, though he kept me at the stick's end the most part of the time, would sometimes unbuckle a bit, and tell me of the fine countries he had visited.

The shadow of poor Ransome, to be sure, lay on all four of us, and on me and Mr. Shuan in particular, most heavily. And then I had another trouble of my own. Here I was, doing dirty work for three men that I looked down upon, and one of whom, at least, should have hung upon a gallows; that was for the present; and as for the future, I could only see myself slaving alongside of negroes in the tobacco fields. Mr. Riach, perhaps from caution, would never suffer me to say another word about my story; the captain, whom I tried to approach, rebuffed me like a dog and would not hear a word; and as the days came and went, my heart sank lower and lower, till I was even glad of the work which kept me from thinking.

CHAPTER IX

THE MAN WITH THE BELT OF GOLD

More than a week went by, in which the ill-luck that had hitherto pursued the Covenant upon this voyage grew yet more strongly marked. Some days she made a little way; others, she was driven actually back. At last we were beaten so far to the south that we tossed and tacked to and fro the whole of the ninth day, within sight of Cape Wrath and the wild, rocky coast on either hand of it. There followed on that a council of the officers, and some decision which I did not rightly understand, seeing only the result: that we had made a fair wind of a foul one and were running south.

The tenth afternoon there was a falling swell and a thick, wet, white fog that hid one end of the brig from the other. All afternoon, when I went on deck, I saw men and officers listening hard over the bulwarks — ”for breakers,” they said; and though I did not so much as understand the word, I felt danger in the air, and was excited.

Maybe about ten at night, I was serving Mr. Riach and the captain at their supper, when the ship struck something with a great sound, and we heard voices singing out. My two masters leaped to their feet.

“She’s struck!” said Mr. Riach.

“No, sir,” said the captain. “We’ve only run a boat down.”

And they hurried out.

The captain was in the right of it. We had run down a boat in the fog, and she had parted in the midst and gone to the bottom with all her crew but one. This man (as I heard afterwards) had been sitting in the stern as a passenger, while the rest were on the benches rowing. At the moment of the blow, the stern had been thrown into the air, and the man (having his hands free, and for all he was encumbered with a frieze overcoat that came below his knees) had leaped up and caught hold of the brig’s bowsprit. It showed he had luck and much agility and unusual strength, that he should have thus saved himself from such a pass. And yet, when the captain brought him into the round-house, and I set eyes on him for the first time, he looked as cool as I did.

He was smallish in stature, but well set and as nimble as a goat; his face was of a good open expression, but sunburnt very dark, and heavily freckled and pitted with the small-pox; his eyes were unusually light and had a kind of dancing madness in them, that was both engaging and alarming; and when he took off his great-coat, he laid a pair of fine silver-mounted pistols on the table, and I saw that he was belted with a great sword. His manners, besides, were elegant, and he pledged the captain handsomely. Altogether I thought of him, at the first sight, that here was a man I would rather call my friend than my enemy.

The captain, too, was taking his observations, but rather of the man's clothes than his person. And to be sure, as soon as he had taken off the great-coat, he showed forth mighty fine for the round-house of a merchant brig: having a hat with feathers, a red waistcoat, breeches of black plush, and a blue coat with silver buttons and handsome silver lace; costly clothes, though somewhat spoiled with the fog and being slept in.

"I'm vexed, sir, about the boat," says the captain.

"There are some pretty men gone to the bottom," said the stranger, "that I would rather see on the dry land again than half a score of boats."

"Friends of yours?" said Hoseason.

"You have none such friends in your country," was the reply. "They would have died for me like dogs."

"Well, sir," said the captain, still watching him, "there are more men in the world than boats to put them in."

"And that's true, too," cried the other, "and ye seem to be a gentleman of great penetration."

"I have been in France, sir," says the captain, so that it was plain he meant more by the words than showed upon the face of them.

"Well, sir," says the other, "and so has many a pretty man, for the matter of that."

"No doubt, sir" says the captain, "and fine coats."

"Oho!" says the stranger, "is that how the wind sets?" And he laid his hand quickly on his pistols.

"Don't be hasty," said the captain. "Don't do a mischief before ye see the need of it. Ye've a French soldier's coat upon your back and a Scotch tongue in your head, to be sure; but so has many an honest fellow in these days, and I dare say none the worse of it."

"So?" said the gentleman in the fine coat: "are ye of the honest party?" (meaning, Was he a Jacobite? for each side, in these sort of civil broils, takes the name of honesty for its own).

"Why, sir," replied the captain, "I am a true-blue Protestant, and I thank God for it." (It was the first word of any religion I had ever heard from him, but I learnt afterwards he was a great church-goer while on shore.) "But, for all that," says he, "I can be sorry to see another man with his back to the wall."

"Can ye so, indeed?" asked the Jacobite. "Well, sir, to be quite plain with ye, I am one of those honest gentlemen that were in trouble about the years forty-five and six; and (to be still quite plain with ye) if I got into the hands of any of the red-coated gentry, it's like it would go hard with me. Now, sir, I was for France; and there was a French ship cruising here to pick me up; but she gave us the go-by in the fog — as I wish from the heart that ye had done yoursel'! And the best that I can say is this: If ye can set me ashore where I was going, I have that upon me will reward you highly for your trouble."

"In France?" says the captain. "No, sir; that I cannot do. But where ye come from — we might talk of that."

And then, unhappily, he observed me standing in my corner, and packed me off to the galley to get supper for the gentleman. I lost no time, I promise you; and when I came back into the round-house, I found the gentleman had taken a money-belt from about his waist, and poured out a guinea or two upon the table. The captain was looking at the guineas, and then at the belt, and then at the gentleman's face; and I thought he seemed excited.

"Half of it," he cried, "and I'm your man!"

The other swept back the guineas into the belt, and put it on again under his waistcoat. "I have told ye sir" said he, "that not one doit of it belongs to me. It belongs to my chieftain," and here he touched his hat, "and while I would be but a silly messenger to grudge some of it that the rest might come safe, I should show myself a hound indeed if I bought my own carcase any too dear. Thirty guineas on the sea-side, or sixty if ye set me on the Linnhe Loch. Take it, if ye will; if not, ye can do your worst."

"Ay," said Hoseason. "And if I give ye over to the soldiers?"

"Ye would make a fool's bargain," said the other. "My chief, let me tell you, sir, is forfeited, like every honest man in Scotland. His estate is in the hands of the man they call King George; and it is his officers that collect the rents, or try to collect them. But for the honour of Scotland, the poor tenant bodies take a thought upon their chief lying in exile; and this money is a part of that very rent for which King George is looking. Now, sir, ye seem to me to be a man that understands things: bring this money within the reach of Government, and how much of it'll come to you?"

"Little enough, to be sure," said Hoseason; and then, "if they, knew" he added, drily. "But I think, if I was to try, that I could hold my tongue about it."

"Ah, but I'll begowk* ye there!" cried the gentleman. "Play me false, and I'll play you cunning. If a hand is laid upon me, they shall ken what money it is."

*Befool.

"Well," returned the captain, "what must be must. Sixty guineas, and done. Here's my hand upon it."

"And here's mine," said the other.

And thereupon the captain went out (rather hurriedly, I thought), and left me alone in the round-house with the stranger.

At that period (so soon after the forty-five) there were many exiled gentlemen coming back at the peril of their lives, either to see their friends or to collect a little money; and as for the Highland chiefs that had been forfeited, it was a common matter of talk how their tenants would stint themselves to send them money, and their clansmen outface the soldiery to get it in, and run the gauntlet of our great navy to carry it across. All this I had, of course, heard tell of; and now I had a man under my eyes whose life was forfeit on all these counts and upon one more, for he was not only a rebel and a smuggler of rents, but had taken service with King Louis of France. And as if all this were not enough, he had a belt full of golden guineas round his loins. Whatever my opinions, I could not look on such a man without a lively interest.

"And so you're a Jacobite?" said I, as I set meat before him.

"Ay," said he, beginning to eat. "And you, by your long face, should be a Whig?"*

> * Whig or Whigamore was the cant name for those who were loyal to King George.

"Betwixt and between," said I, not to annoy him; for indeed I was as good a Whig as Mr. Campbell could make me.

"And that's naething," said he. "But I'm saying, Mr. Betwixt-and-Between," he added, "this bottle of yours is dry; and it's hard if I'm to pay sixty guineas and be grudged a dram upon the back of it."

"I'll go and ask for the key," said I, and stepped on deck.

The fog was as close as ever, but the swell almost down. They had laid the brig to, not knowing precisely where they were, and the wind (what little there was of it) not serving well for their true course. Some of the hands were still hearkening for breakers; but the captain and the two officers were in the waist with their heads together. It struck me (I don't know why) that they were after no good; and the first word I heard, as I drew softly near, more than confirmed me.

It was Mr. Riach, crying out as if upon a sudden thought: "Couldn't we wile him out of the round-house?"

"He's better where he is," returned Hoseason; "he hasn't room to use his sword."

"Well, that's true," said Riach; "but he's hard to come at."

"Hut!" said Hoseason. "We can get the man in talk, one upon each side, and pin him by the two arms; or if that'll not hold, sir, we can make a run by both the doors and get him under hand before he has the time to draw."

At this hearing, I was seized with both fear and anger at these treacherous, greedy, bloody men that I sailed with. My first mind was to run away; my second was bolder.

"Captain," said I, "the gentleman is seeking a dram, and the bottle's out. Will you give me the key?”

They all started and turned about.

“Why, here’s our chance to get the firearms!”

Riach cried; and then to me: “Hark ye, David,” he said, “do ye ken where the pistols are?”

“Ay, ay,” put in Hoseason. “David kens; David’s a good lad. Ye see, David my man, yon wild Hielandman is a danger to the ship, besides being a rank foe to King George, God bless him!”

I had never been so be-Davided since I came on board: but I said Yes, as if all I heard were quite natural.

“The trouble is,” resumed the captain, “that all our firelocks, great and little, are in the round-house under this man’s nose; likewise the powder. Now, if I, or one of the officers, was to go in and take them, he would fall to thinking. But a lad like you, David, might snap up a horn and a pistol or two without remark. And if ye can do it cleverly, I’ll bear it in mind when it’ll be good for you to have friends; and that’s when we come to Carolina.”

Here Mr. Riach whispered him a little.

“Very right, sir,” said the captain; and then to myself: “And see here, David, yon man has a beltful of gold, and I give you my word that you shall have your fingers in it.”

I told him I would do as he wished, though indeed I had scarce breath to speak with; and upon that he gave me the key of the spirit locker, and I began to go slowly back to the round-house. What was I to do? They were dogs and thieves; they had stolen me from my own country; they had killed poor Ransome; and was I to hold the candle to another murder? But then, upon the other hand, there was the fear of death very plain before me; for what could a boy and a man, if they were as brave as lions, against a whole ship’s company?

I was still arguing it back and forth, and getting no great clearness, when I came into the round-house and saw the Jacobite eating his supper under the lamp; and at that my mind was made up all in a moment. I have no credit by it; it was by no choice of mine, but as if by compulsion, that I walked right up to the table and put my hand on his shoulder.

“Do ye want to be killed?” said I. He sprang to his feet, and looked a question at me as clear as if he had spoken.

“O!” cried I, “they’re all murderers here; it’s a ship full of them! They’ve murdered a boy already. Now it’s you.”

“Ay, ay” said he; “but they have n’t got me yet.” And then looking at me curiously, “Will ye stand with me?”

“That will I!” said I. “I am no thief, nor yet murderer. I’ll stand by you.”

“Why, then,” said he, “what’s your name?”

"David Balfour," said I; and then, thinking that a man with so fine a coat must like fine people, I added for the first time, "of Shaws."

It never occurred to him to doubt me, for a Highlander is used to see great gentlefolk in great poverty; but as he had no estate of his own, my words nettled a very childish vanity he had.

"My name is Stewart," he said, drawing himself up. "Alan Breck, they call me. A king's name is good enough for me, though I bear it plain and have the name of no farm-midden to clap to the hind-end of it."

And having administered this rebuke, as though it were something of a chief importance, he turned to examine our defences.

The round-house was built very strong, to support the breaching of the seas. Of its five apertures, only the skylight and the two doors were large enough for the passage of a man. The doors, besides, could be drawn close: they were of stout oak, and ran in grooves, and were fitted with hooks to keep them either shut or open, as the need arose. The one that was already shut I secured in this fashion; but when I was proceeding to slide to the other, Alan stopped me.

"David," said he — "for I cannae bring to mind the name of your landed estate, and so will make so bold as to call you David — that door, being open, is the best part of my defences."

"It would be yet better shut," says I.

"Not so, David," says he. "Ye see, I have but one face; but so long as that door is open and my face to it, the best part of my enemies will be in front of me, where I would aye wish to find them."

Then he gave me from the rack a cutlass (of which there were a few besides the firearms), choosing it with great care, shaking his head and saying he had never in all his life seen poorer weapons; and next he set me down to the table with a powder-horn, a bag of bullets and all the pistols, which he bade me charge.

"And that will be better work, let me tell you," said he, "for a gentleman of decent birth, than scraping plates and raxing* drams to a wheen tarry sailors."

*Reaching.

Thereupon he stood up in the midst with his face to the door, and drawing his great sword, made trial of the room he had to wield it in.

"I must stick to the point," he said, shaking his head; "and that's a pity, too. It doesn't set my genius, which is all for the upper guard. And, now" said he, "do you keep on charging the pistols, and give heed to me."

I told him I would listen closely. My chest was tight, my mouth dry, the light dark to my eyes; the thought of the numbers that were soon to leap in upon us kept my heart in a flutter: and the sea, which I heard washing round the brig, and where I thought my dead body would be cast ere morning, ran in my mind strangely.

“First of all,” said he, “how many are against us?”

I reckoned them up; and such was the hurry of my mind, I had to cast the numbers twice. “Fifteen,” said I.

Alan whistled. “Well,” said he, “that can’t be cured. And now follow me. It is my part to keep this door, where I look for the main battle. In that, ye have no hand. And mind and dinnae fire to this side unless they get me down; for I would rather have ten foes in front of me than one friend like you cracking pistols at my back.”

I told him, indeed I was no great shot.

“And that’s very bravely said,” he cried, in a great admiration of my candour. “There’s many a pretty gentleman that wouldnae dare to say it.”

“But then, sir” said I, “there is the door behind you” which they may perhaps break in.”

“Ay,” said he, “and that is a part of your work. No sooner the pistols charged, than ye must climb up into yon bed where ye’re handy at the window; and if they lift hand, against the door, ye’re to shoot. But that’s not all. Let’s make a bit of a soldier of ye, David. What else have ye to guard?”

“There’s the skylight,” said I. “But indeed, Mr. Stewart, I would need to have eyes upon both sides to keep the two of them; for when my face is at the one, my back is to the other.”

“And that’s very true,” said Alan. “But have ye no ears to your head?”

“To be sure!” cried I. “I must hear the bursting of the glass!”

“Ye have some rudiments of sense,” said Alan, grimly.

CHAPTER X

THE SIEGE OF THE ROUND-HOUSE

But now our time of truce was come to an end. Those on deck had waited for my coming till they grew impatient; and scarce had Alan spoken, when the captain showed face in the open door.

“Stand!” cried Alan, and pointed his sword at him. The captain stood, indeed; but he neither winced nor drew back a foot.

“A naked sword?” says he. “This is a strange return for hospitality.”

“Do ye see me?” said Alan. “I am come of kings; I bear a king’s name. My badge is the oak. Do ye see my sword? It has slashed the heads off mair Whigamores than you have toes upon your feet. Call up your vermin to your back, sir, and fall on! The sooner the clash begins, the sooner ye’ll taste this steel throughout your vitals.”

The captain said nothing to Alan, but he looked over at me with an ugly look. “David,” said he, “I’ll mind this;” and the sound of his voice went through me with a jar.

Next moment he was gone.

“And now,” said Alan, “let your hand keep your head, for the grip is coming.”

Alan drew a dirk, which he held in his left hand in case they should run in under his sword. I, on my part, clambered up into the berth with an armful of pistols and something of a heavy heart, and set open the window where I was to watch. It was a small part of the deck that I could overlook, but enough for our purpose. The sea had gone down, and the wind was steady and kept the sails quiet; so that there was a great stillness in the ship, in which I made sure I heard the sound of muttering voices. A little after, and there came a clash of steel upon the deck, by which I knew they were dealing out the cutlasses and one had been let fall; and after that, silence again.

I do not know if I was what you call afraid; but my heart beat like a bird’s, both quick and little; and there was a dimness came before my eyes which I continually rubbed away, and which continually returned. As for hope, I had none; but only a darkness of despair and a sort of anger against all the world that made me long to sell my life as dear as I was able. I tried to pray, I remember, but that same hurry of my mind, like a man running, would not suffer me to think upon the words; and my chief wish was to have the thing begin and be done with it.

It came all of a sudden when it did, with a rush of feet and a roar, and then a shout from Alan, and a sound of blows and some one crying out as if hurt. I looked back over my shoulder, and saw Mr.

Shuan in the doorway, crossing blades with Alan.

"That's him that killed the boy!" I cried.

"Look to your window!" said Alan; and as I turned back to my place, I saw him pass his sword through the mate's body.

It was none too soon for me to look to my own part; for my head was scarce back at the window, before five men, carrying a spare yard for a battering-ram, ran past me and took post to drive the door in. I had never fired with a pistol in my life, and not often with a gun; far less against a fellow-creature. But it was now or never; and just as they swang the yard, I cried out: "Take that!" and shot into their midst.

I must have hit one of them, for he sang out and gave back a step, and the rest stopped as if a little disconcerted. Before they had time to recover, I sent another ball over their heads; and at my third shot (which went as wide as the second) the whole party threw down the yard and ran for it.

Then I looked round again into the deck-house. The whole place was full of the smoke of my own firing, just as my ears seemed to be burst with the noise of the shots. But there was Alan, standing as before; only now his sword was running blood to the hilt, and himself so swelled with triumph and fallen into so fine an attitude, that he looked to be invincible. Right before him on the floor was Mr. Shuan, on his hands and knees; the blood was pouring from his mouth, and he was sinking slowly lower, with a terrible, white face; and just as I looked, some of those from behind caught hold of him by the heels and dragged him bodily out of the round-house. I believe he died as they were doing it.

"There's one of your Whigs for ye!" cried Alan; and then turning to me, he asked if I had done much execution.

I told him I had winged one, and thought it was the captain.

"And I've settled two," says he. "No, there's not enough blood let; they'll be back again. To your watch, David. This was but a dram before meat."

I settled back to my place, re-charging the three pistols I had fired, and keeping watch with both eye and ear.

Our enemies were disputing not far off upon the deck, and that so loudly that I could hear a word or two above the washing of the seas.

"It was Shuan bauchled* it," I heard one say.

* Bungled.

And another answered him with a "Wheesht, man! He's paid the piper."

After that the voices fell again into the same muttering as before. Only now, one person spoke most of the time, as though laying down a plan, and first one and then another answered him briefly, like men taking orders. By this, I made sure they were coming on again, and told Alan.

"It's what we have to pray for," said he. "Unless we can give them a good distaste of us, and done with it, there'll be nae sleep for either you or me. But this time, mind, they'll be in earnest."

By this, my pistols were ready, and there was nothing to do but listen and wait. While the brush lasted, I had not the time to think if I was frighted; but now, when all was still again, my mind ran upon nothing else. The thought of the sharp swords and the cold steel was strong in me; and presently, when I began to hear stealthy steps and a brushing of men's clothes against the round-house wall, and knew they were taking their places in the dark, I could have found it in my mind to cry out aloud.

All this was upon Alan's side; and I had begun to think my share of the fight was at an end, when I heard some one drop softly on the roof above me.

Then there came a single call on the sea-pipe, and that was the signal. A knot of them made one rush of it, cutlass in hand, against the door; and at the same moment, the glass of the skylight was dashed in a thousand pieces, and a man leaped through and landed on the floor. Before he got his feet, I had clapped a pistol to his back, and might have shot him, too; only at the touch of him (and him alive) my whole flesh misgave me, and I could no more pull the trigger than I could have flown.

He had dropped his cutlass as he jumped, and when he felt the pistol, whipped straight round and laid hold of me, roaring out an oath; and at that either my courage came again, or I grew so much afraid as came to the same thing; for I gave a shriek and shot him in the midst of the body. He gave the most horrible, ugly groan and fell to the floor. The foot of a second fellow, whose legs were dangling through the skylight, struck me at the same time upon the head; and at that I snatched another pistol and shot this one through the thigh, so that he slipped through and tumbled in a lump on his companion's body. There was no talk of missing, any more than there was time to aim; I clapped the muzzle to the very place and fired.

I might have stood and stared at them for long, but I heard Alan shout as if for help, and that brought me to my senses.

He had kept the door so long; but one of the seamen, while he was engaged with others, had run in under his guard and caught him about the body. Alan was dirking him with his left hand, but the fellow clung like a leech. Another had broken in and had his cutlass raised. The door was thronged with their faces. I thought we were lost, and catching up my cutlass, fell on them in flank.

But I had not time to be of help. The wrestler dropped at last; and

Alan, leaping back to get his distance, ran upon the others like a bull, roaring as he went. They broke before him like water, turning, and running, and falling one against another in their haste. The sword in his hands flashed like quicksilver into the huddle of our fleeing enemies; and at every flash there came the scream of a man hurt. I was still thinking we were lost, when lo! they were all gone, and Alan was driving them along the deck as a sheep-dog chases sheep.

Yet he was no sooner out than he was back again, being as cautious as he was brave; and meanwhile the seamen continued running and crying out as if he was still behind them; and we heard them tumble one upon another into the forecastle, and clap-to the hatch upon the top.

The round-house was like a shambles; three were dead inside, another lay in his death agony across the threshold; and there were Alan and I victorious and unhurt.

He came up to me with open arms. "Come to my arms!" he cried, and embraced and kissed me hard upon both cheek. "David," said he, "I love you like a brother. And O, man," he cried in a kind of ecstasy, "am I no a bonny fighter?"

Thereupon he turned to the four enemies, passed his sword clean through each of them, and tumbled them out of doors one after the other. As he did so, he kept humming and singing and whistling to himself, like a man trying to recall an air; only what HE was trying was to make one. All the while, the flush was in his face, and his eyes were as bright as a five-year-old child's with a new toy. And presently he sat down upon the table, sword in hand; the air that he was making all the time began to run a little clearer, and then clearer still; and then out he burst with a great voice into a Gaelic song.

I have translated it here, not in verse (of which I have no skill) but at least in the king's English.

He sang it often afterwards, and the thing became popular; so that I have, heard it, and had it explained to me, many's the time.

"This is the song of the sword of Alan; The smith made it, The fire set it; Now it shines in the hand of Alan Breck.

"Their eyes were many and bright, Swift were they to behold, Many the hands they guided: The sword was alone.

"The dun deer troop over the hill, They are many, the hill is one; The dun deer vanish, The hill remains.

"Come to me from the hills of heather, Come from the isles of the sea. O far-beholding eagles, Here is your meat."

Now this song which he made (both words and music) in the hour of our victory, is something less than just to me, who stood beside him in the tussle. Mr. Shuan and five more were either killed outright or thoroughly disabled; but of these, two fell by my hand, the two that came by the skylight. Four more were hurt, and of that number, one (and he not the least important) got his hurt from me. So that, altogether, I did my fair share both of the killing and the wounding, and might have claimed a place in Alan's verses. But poets have to think upon their rhymes; and in good prose talk, Alan always did me more than justice.

In the meanwhile, I was innocent of any wrong being done me. For not only I knew no word of the Gaelic; but what with the long suspense of the waiting, and the scurry and strain of our two spirts of fighting, and more than all, the horror I had of some of my own share in it, the thing was no sooner over than I was glad to stagger to a seat. There was that tightness on my chest that I could hardly breathe; the thought of the two men I had shot sat upon me like a nightmare; and all upon a sudden, and before I had a guess of what was coming, I began to sob and cry like any child.

Alan clapped my shoulder, and said I was a brave lad and wanted nothing but a sleep.

"I'll take the first watch," said he. "Ye've done well by me, David, first and last; and I wouldn't lose you for all Appin — no, nor for Breadalbane."

So I made up my bed on the floor; and he took the first spell, pistol in hand and sword on knee, three hours by the captain's watch upon the wall. Then he roused me up, and I took my turn of three hours; before the end of which it was broad day, and a very quiet morning, with a smooth, rolling sea that tossed the ship and made the blood run to and fro on the round-house floor, and a heavy rain that drummed upon the roof. All my watch there was nothing stirring; and by the banging of the helm, I knew they had even no one at the tiller. Indeed (as I learned afterwards) there were so many of them hurt or dead, and the rest in so ill a temper, that Mr. Riach and the captain had to take turn and turn like Alan and me, or the brig might have gone ashore and nobody the wiser. It was a mercy the night had fallen so still, for the wind had gone down as soon as the rain began. Even as it was, I judged by the wailing of a great number of gulls that went crying and fishing round the ship, that she must have drifted pretty near the coast or one of the islands of the Hebrides; and at last, looking out of the door of the round-house, I saw the great stone hills of Skye on the right hand, and, a little more astern, the strange isle of Rum.

CHAPTER XI

THE CAPTAIN KNUCKLES UNDER

Alan and I sat down to breakfast about six of the clock. The floor was covered with broken glass and in a horrid mess of blood, which took away my hunger. In all other ways we were in a situation not only agreeable but merry; having ousted the officers from their own cabin, and having at command all the drink in the ship — both wine and spirits — and all the dainty part of what was eatable, such as the pickles and the fine sort of bread. This, of itself, was enough to set us in good humour, but the richest part of it was this, that the two thirstiest men that ever came out of Scotland (Mr. Shuan being dead) were now shut in the fore-part of the ship and condemned to what they hated most — cold water.

"And depend upon it," Alan said, "we shall hear more of them ere long. Ye may keep a man from the fighting, but never from his bottle."

We made good company for each other. Alan, indeed, expressed himself most lovingly; and taking a knife from the table, cut me off one of the silver buttons from his coat.

"I had them," says he, "from my father, Duncan Stewart; and now give ye one of them to be a keepsake for last night's work. And wherever ye go and show that button, the friends of Alan Breck will come around you."

He said this as if he had been Charlemagne, and commanded armies; and indeed, much as I admired his courage, I was always in danger of smiling at his vanity: in danger, I say, for had I not kept my countenance, I would be afraid to think what a quarrel might have followed.

As soon as we were through with our meal he rummaged in the captain's locker till he found a clothes-brush; and then taking off his coat, began to visit his suit and brush away the stains, with such care and labour as I supposed to have been only usual with women. To be sure, he had no other; and, besides (as he said), it belonged to a king and so behoved to be royally looked after.

For all that, when I saw what care he took to pluck out the threads where the button had been cut away, I put a higher value on his gift.

He was still so engaged when we were hailed by Mr. Riach from the deck, asking for a parley; and I, climbing through the skylight and sitting on the edge of it, pistol in hand and with a bold front, though inwardly in fear of broken glass, hailed him back again and bade him speak out. He came to the edge of the round-house, and stood on a coil of rope, so that his chin was on a level with the roof; and we looked at each other awhile in silence. Mr. Riach, as I do not think he had been very forward in the battle, so he had got off with nothing worse than a blow upon the cheek: but he looked out of heart and very weary, having been all night afoot, either standing watch or doctoring the wounded.

"This is a bad job," said he at last, shaking his head.

"It was none of our choosing," said I.

"The captain," says he, "would like to speak with your friend. They might speak at the window."

"And how do we know what treachery he means?" cried I.

"He means none, David," returned Mr. Riach, "and if he did, I'll tell ye the honest truth, we couldnae get the men to follow."

"Is that so?" said I.

"I'll tell ye more than that," said he. "It's not only the men; it's me. I'm frich'ened, Davie." And he smiled across at me. "No," he continued, "what we want is to be shut of him."

Thereupon I consulted with Alan, and the parley was agreed to and parole given upon either side; but this was not the whole of Mr. Riach's business, and he now begged me for a dram with such instancy and such reminders of his former kindness, that at last I handed him a pannikin with about a gill of brandy. He drank a part, and then carried the rest down upon the deck, to share it (I suppose) with his superior.

A little after, the captain came (as was agreed) to one of the windows, and stood there in the rain, with his arm in a sling, and looking stern and pale, and so old that my heart smote me for having fired upon him.

Alan at once held a pistol in his face.

"Put that thing up!" said the captain. "Have I not passed my word, sir? or do ye seek to affront me?"

"Captain," says Alan, "I doubt your word is a breakable. Last night ye haggled and argle-bargled like an apple-wife; and then passed me your word, and gave me your hand to back it; and ye ken very well what was the upshot. Be damned to your word!" says he.

"Well, well, sir," said the captain, "ye'll get little good by swearing." (And truly that was a fault of which the captain was quite free.) "But we have other things to speak," he continued, bitterly. "Ye've made a sore hash of my brig; I haven't hands enough left to work her; and my first officer (whom I could ill spare) has got your sword throughout his vitals, and passed without speech. There is nothing left me, sir, but to put back into the port of Glasgow after hands; and there (by your leave) ye will find them that are better able to talk to you."

"Ay?" said Alan; "and faith, I'll have a talk with them mysel'! Unless there's naebody speaks English in that town, I have a bonny tale for them. Fifteen tarry sailors upon the one side, and a man and a halfling boy upon the other! O, man, it's peetiful!"

Hoseason flushed red.

"No," continued Alan, "that'll no do. Ye'll just have to set me ashore as we agreed."

"Ay," said Hoseason, "but my first officer is dead — ye ken best how. There's none of the rest of us acquaint with this coast, sir; and it's one very dangerous to ships."

"I give ye your choice," says Alan. "Set me on dry ground in Appin, or Ardgour, or in Morven, or Arisaig, or Morar; or, in brief, where ye please, within thirty miles of my own country; except in a country of the Campbells. That's a broad target. If ye miss that, ye must be as feckless at the sailoring as I have found ye at the fighting. Why, my poor country people in their bit cobles* pass from island to island in all weathers, ay, and by night too, for the matter of that."

*Coble: a small boat used in fishing.

"A coble's not a ship, sir," said the captain. "It has nae draught of water."

"Well, then, to Glasgow if ye list!" says Alan. "We'll have the laugh of ye at the least."

"My mind runs little upon laughing," said the captain. "But all this will cost money, sir."

"Well, sir" says Alan, "I am nae weathercock. Thirty guineas, if ye land me on the sea-side; and sixty, if ye put me in the Linnhe Loch."

"But see, sir, where we lie, we are but a few hours' sail from Ardnamurchan," said Hoseason. "Give me sixty, and I'll set ye there."

"And I'm to wear my brogues and run jeopardy of the red-coats to please you?" cries Alan. "No, sir; if ye want sixty guineas earn them, and set me in my own country."

"It's to risk the brig, sir," said the captain, "and your own lives along with her."

"Take it or want it," says Alan.

"Could ye pilot us at all?" asked the captain, who was frowning to himself.

"Well, it's doubtful," said Alan. "I'm more of a fighting man (as ye have seen for yoursel') than a sailor-man. But I have been often enough picked up and set down upon this coast, and should ken something of the lie of it."

The captain shook his head, still frowning.

"If I had lost less money on this unchancy cruise," says he, "I would see you in a rope's end before I risked my brig, sir. But be it as ye will. As soon as I get a slant of wind (and there's some coming, or I'm the more mistaken) I'll put it in hand. But there's one thing more. We may meet in with a king's ship and she may lay us aboard, sir, with no blame of mine: they keep the cruisers thick upon this coast, ye ken who for. Now, sir, if that was to befall, ye might leave the money."

"Captain," says Alan, "if ye see a pennant, it shall be your part to run away. And now, as I hear you're a little short of brandy in the fore-part, I'll offer ye a change: a bottle of brandy against two buckets of water."

That was the last clause of the treaty, and was duly executed on both sides; so that Alan and I could at last wash out the round-house and be quit of the memorials of those whom we had slain, and the captain and Mr. Riach could be happy again in their own way, the name of which was drink.

CHAPTER XII

I HEAR OF THE “RED FOX”

Before we had done cleaning out the round-house, a breeze sprang up from a little to the east of north. This blew off the rain and brought out the sun.

And here I must explain; and the reader would do well to look at a map. On the day when the fog fell and we ran down Alan’s boat, we had been running through the Little Minch. At dawn after the battle, we lay becalmed to the east of the Isle of Canna or between that and Isle Eriska in the chain of the Long Island. Now to get from there to the Linnhe Loch, the straight course was through the narrows of the Sound of Mull. But the captain had no chart; he was afraid to trust his brig so deep among the islands; and the wind serving well, he preferred to go by west of Tiree and come up under the southern coast of the great Isle of Mull.

All day the breeze held in the same point, and rather freshened than died down; and towards afternoon, a swell began to set in from round the outer Hebrides. Our course, to go round about the inner isles, was to the west of south, so that at first we had this swell upon our beam, and were much rolled about. But after nightfall, when we had turned the end of Tiree and began to head more to the east, the sea came right astern.

Meanwhile, the early part of the day, before the swell came up, was very pleasant; sailing, as we were, in a bright sunshine and with many mountainous islands upon different sides. Alan and I sat in the round-house with the doors open on each side (the wind being straight astern), and smoked a pipe or two of the captain’s fine tobacco. It was at this time we heard each other’s stories, which was the more important to me, as I gained some knowledge of that wild Highland country on which I was so soon to land. In those days, so close on the back of the great rebellion, it was needful a man should know what he was doing when he went upon the heather.

It was I that showed the example, telling him all my misfortune; which he heard with great good-nature. Only, when I came to mention that good friend of mine, Mr. Campbell the minister, Alan fired up and cried out that he hated all that were of that name.

“Why,” said I, “he is a man you should be proud to give your hand to.”

“I know nothing I would help a Campbell to,” says he, “unless it was a leaden bullet. I would hunt all of that name like blackcocks. If I lay dying, I would crawl upon my knees to my chamber window for a shot at one."

"Why, Alan," I cried, "what ails ye at the Campbells?"

"Well," says he, "ye ken very well that I am an Appin Stewart, and the Campbells have long harried and wasted those of my name; ay, and got lands of us by treachery — but never with the sword," he cried loudly, and with the word brought down his fist upon the table. But I paid the less attention to this, for I knew it was usually said by those who have the underhand. "There's more than that," he continued, "and all in the same story: lying words, lying papers, tricks fit for a peddler, and the show of what's legal over all, to make a man the more angry."

"You that are so wasteful of your buttons," said I, "I can hardly think you would be a good judge of business."

"Ah!" says he, falling again to smiling, "I got my wastefulness from the same man I got the buttons from; and that was my poor father, Duncan Stewart, grace be to him! He was the prettiest man of his kindred; and the best swordsman in the Hielands, David, and that is the same as to say, in all the world, I should ken, for it was him that taught me. He was in the Black Watch, when first it was mustered; and, like other gentlemen privates, had a gillie at his back to carry his firelock for him on the march. Well, the King, it appears, was wishful to see Hieland swordsmanship; and my father and three more were chosen out and sent to London town, to let him see it at the best. So they were had into the palace and showed the whole art of the sword for two hours at a stretch, before King George and Queen Carline, and the Butcher Cumberland, and many more of whom I havenae mind. And when they were through, the King (for all he was a rank usurper) spoke them fair and gave each man three guineas in his hand. Now, as they were going out of the palace, they had a porter's lodge to go, by; and it came in on my father, as he was perhaps the first private Hieland gentleman that had ever gone by that door, it was right he should give the poor porter a proper notion of their quality. So he gives the King's three guineas into the man's hand, as if it was his common custom; the three others that came behind him did the same; and there they were on the street, never a penny the better for their pains. Some say it was one, that was the first to fee the King's porter; and some say it was another; but the truth of it is, that it was Duncan Stewart, as I am willing to prove with either sword or pistol. And that was the father that I had, God rest him!"

"I think he was not the man to leave you rich," said I.

"And that's true," said Alan. "He left me my breeks to cover me, and little besides. And that was how I came to enlist, which was a black spot upon my character at the best of times, and would still be a sore job for me if I fell among the red-coats."

“What,” cried I, “were you in the English army?”

“That was I,” said Alan. “But I deserted to the right side at Preston Pans — and that’s some comfort.”

I could scarcely share this view: holding desertion under arms for an unpardonable fault in honour. But for all I was so young, I was wiser than say my thought. “Dear, dear,” says I, “the punishment is death.”

“Ay” said he, “if they got hands on me, it would be a short shrift and a lang tow for Alan! But I have the King of France’s commission in my pocket, which would aye be some protection.”

“I misdoubt it much,” said I.

“I have doubts mysel’,” said Alan drily.

“And, good heaven, man,” cried I, “you that are a condemned rebel, and a deserter, and a man of the French King’s — what tempts ye back into this country? It’s a braving of Providence.”

“Tut!” says Alan, “I have been back every year since forty-six!”

“And what brings ye, man?” cried I.

“Well, ye see, I weary for my friends and country,” said he. “France is a braw place, nae doubt; but I weary for the heather and the deer. And then I have bit things that I attend to. Whiles I pick up a few lads to serve the King of France: recruits, ye see; and that’s aye a little money. But the heart of the matter is the business of my chief, Ardshiel.”

“I thought they called your chief Appin,” said I.

“Ay, but Ardshiel is the captain of the clan,” said he, which scarcely cleared my mind. “Ye see, David, he that was all his life so great a man, and come of the blood and bearing the name of kings, is now brought down to live in a French town like a poor and private person. He that had four hundred swords at his whistle, I have seen, with these eyes of mine, buying butter in the market-place, and taking it home in a kale-leaf. This is not only a pain but a disgrace to us of his family and clan. There are the bairns forby, the children and the hope of Appin, that must be learned their letters and how to hold a sword, in that far country. Now, the tenants of Appin have to pay a rent to King George; but their hearts are staunch, they are true to their chief; and what with love and a bit of pressure, and maybe a threat or two, the poor folk scrape up a second rent for Ardshiel. Well, David, I’m the hand that carries it.” And he struck the belt about his body, so that the guineas rang.

“Do they pay both?” cried I.

“Ay, David, both,” says he.

“What! two rents?” I repeated.

“Ay, David,” said he. “I told a different tale to yon captain man; but this is the truth of it. And it’s wonderful to me how little pressure is needed. But that’s the handiwork of my good kinsman and my father’s friend, James of the Glens: James Stewart, that is: Ardshiel's half-brother. He it is that gets the money in, and does the management."

This was the first time I heard the name of that James Stewart, who was afterwards so famous at the time of his hanging. But I took little heed at the moment, for all my mind was occupied with the generosity of these poor Highlanders.

"I call it noble," I cried. "I'm a Whig, or little better; but I call it noble."

"Ay" said he, "ye're a Whig, but ye're a gentleman; and that's what does it. Now, if ye were one of the cursed race of Campbell, ye would gnash your teeth to hear tell of it. If ye were the Red Fox..." And at that name, his teeth shut together, and he ceased speaking. I have seen many a grim face, but never a grimmer than Alan's when he had named the Red Fox.

"And who is the Red Fox?" I asked, daunted, but still curious.

"Who is he?" cried Alan. "Well, and I'll tell you that. When the men of the clans were broken at Culloden, and the good cause went down, and the horses rode over the fetlocks in the best blood of the north, Ardshiel had to flee like a poor deer upon the mountains — he and his lady and his bairns. A sair job we had of it before we got him shipped; and while he still lay in the heather, the English rogues, that couldnae come at his life, were striking at his rights. They stripped him of his powers; they stripped him of his lands; they plucked the weapons from the hands of his clansmen, that had borne arms for thirty centuries; ay, and the very clothes off their backs — so that it's now a sin to wear a tartan plaid, and a man may be cast into a gaol if he has but a kilt about his legs. One thing they couldnae kill. That was the love the clansmen bore their chief. These guineas are the proof of it. And now, in there steps a man, a Campbell, red-headed Colin of Glenure — — "

"Is that him you call the Red Fox?" said I.

"Will ye bring me his brush?" cries Alan, fiercely. "Ay, that's the man. In he steps, and gets papers from King George, to be so-called King's factor on the lands of Appin. And at first he sings small, and is hail-fellow-well-met with Sheamus — that's James of the Glens, my chieftain's agent. But by-and-by, that came to his ears that I have just told you; how the poor commons of Appin, the farmers and the crofters and the boumen, were wringing their very plaids to get a second rent, and send it over-seas for Ardshiel and his poor bairns. What was it ye called it, when I told ye?"

"I called it noble, Alan," said I.

"And you little better than a common Whig!" cries Alan. "But when it came to Colin Roy, the black Campbell blood in him ran wild. He sat gnashing his teeth at the wine table. What! should a Stewart get a bite of bread, and him not be able to prevent it? Ah! Red Fox, if ever I hold you at a gun's end, the Lord have pity upon ye!" (Alan stopped to swallow down his anger.) "Well, David, what does he do? He declares all the farms to let. And, thinks he, in his black heart, 'I'll soon get other tenants that'll overbid these Stewarts, and Maccolls, and Macrobs' (for these are all names in my clan, David); 'and then,' thinks he, 'Ardshiel will have to hold his bonnet on a French roadside.'"

"Well," said I, "what followed?"

Alan laid down his pipe, which he had long since suffered to go out, and set his two hands upon his knees.

"Ay," said he, "ye'll never guess that! For these same Stewarts, and Maccolls, and Macrobs (that had two rents to pay, one to King George by stark force, and one to Ardshiel by natural kindness) offered him a better price than any Campbell in all broad Scotland; and far he sent seeking them — as far as to the sides of Clyde and the cross of Edinburgh — seeking, and fleeching, and begging them to come, where there was a Stewart to be starved and a red-headed hound of a Campbell to be pleasured!"

"Well, Alan," said I, "that is a strange story, and a fine one, too. And Whig as I may be, I am glad the man was beaten."

"Him beaten?" echoed Alan. "It's little ye ken of Campbells, and less of the Red Fox. Him beaten? No: nor will be, till his blood's on the hillside! But if the day comes, David man, that I can find time and leisure for a bit of hunting, there grows not enough heather in all Scotland to hide him from my vengeance!"

"Man Alan," said I, "ye are neither very wise nor very Christian to blow off so many words of anger. They will do the man ye call the Fox no harm, and yourself no good. Tell me your tale plainly out. What did he next?"

"And that's a good observe, David," said Alan. "Troth and indeed, they will do him no harm; the more's the pity! And barring that about Christianity (of which my opinion is quite otherwise, or I would be nae Christian), I am much of your mind."

"Opinion here or opinion there," said I, "it's a kent thing that Christianity forbids revenge."

"Ay" said he, "it's well seen it was a Campbell taught ye! It would be a convenient world for them and their sort, if there was no such a thing as a lad and a gun behind a heather bush! But that's nothing to the point. This is what he did."

"Ay" said I, "come to that."

"Well, David," said he, "since he couldnae be rid of the loyal commons by fair means, he swore he would be rid of them by foul. Ardshiel was to starve: that was the thing he aimed at. And since them that fed him in his exile wouldnae be bought out — right or wrong, he would drive them out. Therefore he sent for lawyers, and papers, and red-coats to stand at his back. And the kindly folk of that country must all pack and tramp, every father's son out of his father's house, and out of the place where he was bred and fed, and played when he was a callant. And who are to succeed them? Bare-leggit beggars! King George is to whistle for his rents; he maun dow with less; he can spread his butter thinner: what cares Red Colin? If he can hurt Ardshiel, he has his wish; if he can pluck the meat from my chieftain's table, and the bit toys out of his children's hands, he will gang hame singing to Glenure!"

"Let me have a word," said I. "Be sure, if they take less rents, be sure Government has a finger in the pie. It's not this Campbell's fault, man — it's his orders. And if ye killed this Colin to-morrow, what better would ye be? There would be another factor in his shoes, as fast as spur can drive."

"Ye're a good lad in a fight," said Alan; "but, man! ye have Whig blood in ye!"

He spoke kindly enough, but there was so much anger under his contempt that I thought it was wise to change the conversation. I expressed my wonder how, with the Highlands covered with troops, and guarded like a city in a siege, a man in his situation could come and go without arrest.

"It's easier than ye would think," said Alan. "A bare hillside (ye see) is like all one road; if there's a sentry at one place, ye just go by another. And then the heather's a great help. And everywhere there are friends' houses and friends' byres and haystacks. And besides, when folk talk of a country covered with troops, it's but a kind of a byword at the best. A soldier covers nae mair of it than his boot-soles. I have fished a water with a sentry on the other side of the brae, and killed a fine trout; and I have sat in a heather bush within six feet of another, and learned a real bonny tune from his whistling. This was it," said he, and whistled me the air.

"And then, besides," he continued, "it's no sae bad now as it was in forty-six. The Hielands are what they call pacified. Small wonder, with never a gun or a sword left from Cantyre to Cape Wrath, but what tenty* folk have hidden in their thatch! But what I would like to ken, David, is just how long? Not long, ye would think, with men like Ardshiel in exile and men like the Red Fox sitting birling the wine and oppressing the poor at home. But it's a kittle thing to decide what folk'll bear, and what they will not. Or why would Red Colin be riding his horse all over my poor country of Appin, and never a pretty lad to put a bullet in him?"

* Careful.

And with this Alan fell into a muse, and for a long time sate very sad and silent.

I will add the rest of what I have to say about my friend, that he was skilled in all kinds of music, but principally pipe-music; was a well-considered poet in his own tongue; had read several books both in French and English; was a dead shot, a good angler, and an excellent fencer with the small sword as well as with his own particular weapon. For his faults, they were on his face, and I now knew them all. But the worst of them, his childish propensity to take offence and to pick quarrels, he greatly laid aside in my case, out of regard for the battle of the round-house. But whether it was because I had done well myself, or because I had been a witness of his own much greater prowess, is more than I can tell. For though he had a great taste for courage in other men, yet he admired it most in Alan Breck.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LOSS OF THE BRIG

It was already late at night, and as dark as it ever would be at that season of the year (and that is to say, it was still pretty bright), when Hoseason clapped his head into the round-house door.

“Here,” said he, “come out and see if ye can pilot.”

“Is this one of your tricks?” asked Alan.

“Do I look like tricks?” cries the captain. “I have other things to think of — my brig’s in danger!”

By the concerned look of his face, and, above all, by the sharp tones in which he spoke of his brig, it was plain to both of us he was in deadly earnest; and so Alan and I, with no great fear of treachery, stepped on deck.

The sky was clear; it blew hard, and was bitter cold; a great deal of daylight lingered; and the moon, which was nearly full, shone brightly. The brig was close hauled, so as to round the southwest corner of the Island of Mull, the hills of which (and Ben More above them all, with a wisp of mist upon the top of it) lay full upon the larboard bow. Though it was no good point of sailing for the Covenant, she tore through the seas at a great rate, pitching and straining, and pursued by the westerly swell.

Altogether it was no such ill night to keep the seas in; and I had begun to wonder what it was that sat so heavily upon the captain, when the brig rising suddenly on the top of a high swell, he pointed and cried to us to look. Away on the lee bow, a thing like a fountain rose out of the moonlit sea, and immediately after we heard a low sound of roaring.

“What do ye call that?” asked the captain, gloomily.

“The sea breaking on a reef,” said Alan. “And now ye ken where it is; and what better would ye have?”

“Ay,” said Hoseason, “if it was the only one.”

And sure enough, just as he spoke there came a second fountain farther to the south.

“There!” said Hoseason. “Ye see for yourself. If I had kent of these reefs, if I had had a chart, or if Shuan had been spared, it’s not sixty guineas, no, nor six hundred, would have made me risk my brig in sic a stoneyard! But you, sir, that was to pilot us, have ye never a word?”

“I’m thinking,” said Alan, “these’ll be what they call the Torran Rocks.”

“Are there many of them?” says the captain.

“Truly, sir, I am nae pilot,” said Alan; “but it sticks in my mind there are ten miles of them."

Mr. Riach and the captain looked at each other.

"There's a way through them, I suppose?" said the captain.

"Doubtless," said Alan, "but where? But it somehow runs in my mind once more that it is clearer under the land."

"So?" said Hoseason. "We'll have to haul our wind then, Mr. Riach; we'll have to come as near in about the end of Mull as we can take her, sir; and even then we'll have the land to kep the wind off us, and that stoneyard on our lee. Well, we're in for it now, and may as well crack on."

With that he gave an order to the steersman, and sent Riach to the foretop. There were only five men on deck, counting the officers; these being all that were fit (or, at least, both fit and willing) for their work. So, as I say, it fell to Mr. Riach to go aloft, and he sat there looking out and hailing the deck with news of all he saw.

"The sea to the south is thick," he cried; and then, after a while, "it does seem clearer in by the land."

"Well, sir," said Hoseason to Alan, "we'll try your way of it. But I think I might as well trust to a blind fiddler. Pray God you're right."

"Pray God I am!" says Alan to me. "But where did I hear it? Well, well, it will be as it must."

As we got nearer to the turn of the land the reefs began to be sown here and there on our very path; and Mr. Riach sometimes cried down to us to change the course. Sometimes, indeed, none too soon; for one reef was so close on the brig's weather board that when a sea burst upon it the lighter sprays fell upon her deck and wetted us like rain.

The brightness of the night showed us these perils as clearly as by day, which was, perhaps, the more alarming. It showed me, too, the face of the captain as he stood by the steersman, now on one foot, now on the other, and sometimes blowing in his hands, but still listening and looking and as steady as steel. Neither he nor Mr. Riach had shown well in the fighting; but I saw they were brave in their own trade, and admired them all the more because I found Alan very white.

"Ochone, David," says he, "this is no the kind of death I fancy!"

"What, Alan!" I cried, "you're not afraid?"

"No," said he, wetting his lips, "but you'll allow, yourself, it's a cold ending."

By this time, now and then sheering to one side or the other to avoid a reef, but still hugging the wind and the land, we had got round Iona and begun to come alongside Mull. The tide at the tail of the land ran very strong, and threw the brig about. Two hands were put to the helm, and Hoseason himself would sometimes lend a help; and it was strange to see three strong men throw their weight upon the tiller, and it (like a living thing) struggle against and drive them back. This would have been the greater danger had not the sea been for some while free of obstacles. Mr. Riach, besides, announced from the top that he saw clear water ahead.

“Ye were right,” said Hoseason to Alan. “Ye have saved the brig, sir. I’ll mind that when we come to clear accounts.” And I believe he not only meant what he said, but would have done it; so high a place did the Covenant hold in his affections.

But this is matter only for conjecture, things having gone otherwise than he forecast.

“Keep her away a point,” sings out Mr. Riach. “Reef to windward!”

And just at the same time the tide caught the brig, and threw the wind out of her sails. She came round into the wind like a top, and the next moment struck the reef with such a dunch as threw us all flat upon the deck, and came near to shake Mr. Riach from his place upon the mast.

I was on my feet in a minute. The reef on which we had struck was close in under the southwest end of Mull, off a little isle they call Earraid, which lay low and black upon the larboard. Sometimes the swell broke clean over us; sometimes it only ground the poor brig upon the reef, so that we could hear her beat herself to pieces; and what with the great noise of the sails, and the singing of the wind, and the flying of the spray in the moonlight, and the sense of danger, I think my head must have been partly turned, for I could scarcely understand the things I saw.

Presently I observed Mr. Riach and the seamen busy round the skiff, and, still in the same blank, ran over to assist them; and as soon as I set my hand to work, my mind came clear again. It was no very easy task, for the skiff lay amidships and was full of hamper, and the breaking of the heavier seas continually forced us to give over and hold on; but we all wrought like horses while we could.

Meanwhile such of the wounded as could move came clambering out of the fore-scuttle and began to help; while the rest that lay helpless in their bunks harrowed me with screaming and begging to be saved.

The captain took no part. It seemed he was struck stupid. He stood holding by the shrouds, talking to himself and groaning out aloud whenever the ship hammered on the rock. His brig was like wife and child to him; he had looked on, day by day, at the mishandling of poor Ransome; but when it came to the brig, he seemed to suffer along with her.

All the time of our working at the boat, I remember only one other thing: that I asked Alan, looking across at the shore, what country it was; and he answered, it was the worst possible for him, for it was a land of the Campbells.

We had one of the wounded men told off to keep a watch upon the seas and cry us warning. Well, we had the boat about ready to be launched, when this man sang out pretty shrill: “For God’s sake, hold on!” We knew by his tone that it was something more than ordinary; and sure enough, there followed a sea so huge that it lifted the brig right up and canted her over on her beam. Whether the cry came too late, or my hold was too weak, I know not; but at the sudden tilting of the ship I was cast clean over the bulwarks into the sea.

I went down, and drank my fill, and then came up, and got a blink of the moon, and then down again. They say a man sinks a third time for good. I cannot be made like other folk, then; for I would not like to write how often I went down, or how often I came up again. All the while, I was being hurled along, and beaten upon and choked, and then swallowed whole; and the thing was so distracting to my wits, that I was neither sorry nor afraid.

Presently, I found I was holding to a spar, which helped me somewhat. And then all of a sudden I was in quiet water, and began to come to myself.

It was the spare yard I had got hold of, and I was amazed to see how far I had travelled from the brig. I hailed her, indeed; but it was plain she was already out of cry. She was still holding together; but whether or not they had yet launched the boat, I was too far off and too low down to see.

While I was hailing the brig, I spied a tract of water lying between us where no great waves came, but which yet boiled white all over and bristled in the moon with rings and bubbles. Sometimes the whole tract swung to one side, like the tail of a live serpent; sometimes, for a glimpse, it would all disappear and then boil up again. What it was I had no guess, which for the time increased my fear of it; but I now know it must have been the roost or tide race, which had carried me away so fast and tumbled me about so cruelly, and at last, as if tired of that play, had flung out me and the spare yard upon its landward margin.

I now lay quite becalmed, and began to feel that a man can die of cold as well as of drowning. The shores of Earraid were close in; I could see in the moonlight the dots of heather and the sparkling of the mica in the rocks.

“Well,” thought I to myself, “if I cannot get as far as that, it’s strange!”

I had no skill of swimming, Essen Water being small in our neighbourhood; but when I laid hold upon the yard with both arms, and kicked out with both feet, I soon begun to find that I was moving. Hard work it was, and mortally slow; but in about an hour of kicking and splashing, I had got well in between the points of a sandy bay surrounded by low hills.

The sea was here quite quiet; there was no sound of any surf; the moon shone clear; and I thought in my heart I had never seen a place so desert and desolate. But it was dry land; and when at last it grew so shallow that I could leave the yard and wade ashore upon my feet, I cannot tell if I was more tired or more grateful. Both, at least, I was: tired as I never was before that night; and grateful to God as I trust I have been often, though never with more cause.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ISLET

With my stepping ashore I began the most unhappy part of my adventures. It was half-past twelve in the morning, and though the wind was broken by the land, it was a cold night. I dared not sit down (for I thought I should have frozen), but took off my shoes and walked to and fro upon the sand, bare-foot, and beating my breast with infinite weariness. There was no sound of man or cattle; not a cock crew, though it was about the hour of their first waking; only the surf broke outside in the distance, which put me in mind of my perils and those of my friend. To walk by the sea at that hour of the morning, and in a place so desert-like and lonesome, struck me with a kind of fear.

As soon as the day began to break I put on my shoes and climbed a hill — the ruggedest scramble I ever undertook — falling, the whole way, between big blocks of granite, or leaping from one to another. When I got to the top the dawn was come. There was no sign of the brig, which must have lifted from the reef and sunk. The boat, too, was nowhere to be seen. There was never a sail upon the ocean; and in what I could see of the land was neither house nor man.

I was afraid to think what had befallen my shipmates, and afraid to look longer at so empty a scene. What with my wet clothes and weariness, and my belly that now began to ache with hunger, I had enough to trouble me without that. So I set off eastward along the south coast, hoping to find a house where I might warm myself, and perhaps get news of those I had lost. And at the worst, I considered the sun would soon rise and dry my clothes.

After a little, my way was stopped by a creek or inlet of the sea, which seemed to run pretty deep into the land; and as I had no means to get across, I must needs change my direction to go about the end of it. It was still the roughest kind of walking; indeed the whole, not only of Earraid, but of the neighbouring part of Mull (which they call the Ross) is nothing but a jumble of granite rocks with heather in among. At first the creek kept narrowing as I had looked to see; but presently to my surprise it began to widen out again. At this I scratched my head, but had still no notion of the truth: until at last I came to a rising ground, and it burst upon me all in a moment that I was cast upon a little barren isle, and cut off on every side by the salt seas.

Instead of the sun rising to dry me, it came on to rain, with a thick mist; so that my case was lamentable.

I stood in the rain, and shivered, and wondered what to do, till it occurred to me that perhaps the creek was fordable. Back I went to the narrowest point and waded in. But not three yards from shore, I plumped in head over ears; and if ever I was heard of more, it was rather by God's grace than my own prudence. I was no wetter (for that could hardly be), but I was all the colder for this mishap; and having lost another hope was the more unhappy.

And now, all at once, the yard came in my head. What had carried me through the roost would surely serve me to cross this little quiet creek in safety. With that I set off, undaunted, across the top of the isle, to fetch and carry it back. It was a weary tramp in all ways, and if hope had not buoyed me up, I must have cast myself down and given up. Whether with the sea salt, or because I was growing fevered, I was distressed with thirst, and had to stop, as I went, and drink the peaty water out of the hags.

I came to the bay at last, more dead than alive; and at the first glance, I thought the yard was something farther out than when I left it. In I went, for the third time, into the sea. The sand was smooth and firm, and shelved gradually down, so that I could wade out till the water was almost to my neck and the little waves splashed into my face. But at that depth my feet began to leave me, and I durst venture in no farther. As for the yard, I saw it bobbing very quietly some twenty feet beyond.

I had borne up well until this last disappointment; but at that I came ashore, and flung myself down upon the sands and wept.

The time I spent upon the island is still so horrible a thought to me, that I must pass it lightly over. In all the books I have read of people cast away, they had either their pockets full of tools, or a chest of things would be thrown upon the beach along with them, as if on purpose. My case was very different. I had nothing in my pockets but money and Alan's silver button; and being inland bred, I was as much short of knowledge as of means.

I knew indeed that shell-fish were counted good to eat; and among the rocks of the isle I found a great plenty of limpets, which at first I could scarcely strike from their places, not knowing quickness to be needful. There were, besides, some of the little shells that we call buckies; I think periwinkle is the English name. Of these two I made my whole diet, devouring them cold and raw as I found them; and so hungry was I, that at first they seemed to me delicious.

Perhaps they were out of season, or perhaps there was something wrong in the sea about my island. But at least I had no sooner eaten my first meal than I was seized with giddiness and retching, and lay for a long time no better than dead. A second trial of the same food (indeed I had no other) did better with me, and revived my strength. But as long as I was on the island, I never knew what to expect when I had eaten; sometimes all was well, and sometimes I was thrown into a miserable sickness; nor could I ever distinguish what particular fish it was that hurt me.

All day it streamed rain; the island ran like a sop, there was no dry spot to be found; and when I lay down that night, between two boulders that made a kind of roof, my feet were in a bog.

The second day I crossed the island to all sides. There was no one part of it better than another; it was all desolate and rocky; nothing living on it but game birds which I lacked the means to kill, and the gulls which haunted the outlying rocks in a prodigious number. But the creek, or strait, that cut off the isle from the main-land of the Ross, opened out on the north into a bay, and the bay again opened into the Sound of Iona; and it was the neighbourhood of this place that I chose to be my home; though if I had thought upon the very name of home in such a spot, I must have burst out weeping.

I had good reasons for my choice. There was in this part of the isle a little hut of a house like a pig's hut, where fishers used to sleep when they came there upon their business; but the turf roof of it had fallen entirely in; so that the hut was of no use to me, and gave me less shelter than my rocks. What was more important, the shell-fish on which I lived grew there in great plenty; when the tide was out I could gather a peck at a time: and this was doubtless a convenience. But the other reason went deeper. I had become in no way used to the horrid solitude of the isle, but still looked round me on all sides (like a man that was hunted), between fear and hope that I might see some human creature coming. Now, from a little up the hillside over the bay, I could catch a sight of the great, ancient church and the roofs of the people's houses in Iona. And on the other hand, over the low country of the Ross, I saw smoke go up, morning and evening, as if from a homestead in a hollow of the land.

I used to watch this smoke, when I was wet and cold, and had my head half turned with loneliness; and think of the fireside and the company, till my heart burned. It was the same with the roofs of Iona. Altogether, this sight I had of men's homes and comfortable lives, although it put a point on my own sufferings, yet it kept hope alive, and helped me to eat my raw shell-fish (which had soon grown to be a disgust), and saved me from the sense of horror I had whenever I was quite alone with dead rocks, and fowls, and the rain, and the cold sea.

I say it kept hope alive; and indeed it seemed impossible that I should be left to die on the shores of my own country, and within view of a church-tower and the smoke of men's houses. But the second day passed; and though as long as the light lasted I kept a bright look-out for boats on the Sound or men passing on the Ross, no help came near me. It still rained, and I turned in to sleep, as wet as ever, and with a cruel sore throat, but a little comforted, perhaps, by having said good-night to my next neighbours, the people of Iona.

Charles the Second declared a man could stay outdoors more days in the year in the climate of England than in any other. This was very like a king, with a palace at his back and changes of dry clothes. But he must have had better luck on his flight from Worcester than I had on that miserable isle. It was the height of the summer; yet it rained for more than twenty-four hours, and did not clear until the afternoon of the third day.

This was the day of incidents. In the morning I saw a red deer, a buck with a fine spread of antlers, standing in the rain on the top of the island; but he had scarce seen me rise from under my rock, before he trotted off upon the other side. I supposed he must have swum the strait; though what should bring any creature to Earraid, was more than I could fancy.

A little after, as I was jumping about after my limpets, I was startled by a guinea-piece, which fell upon a rock in front of me and glanced off into the sea. When the sailors gave me my money again, they kept back not only about a third of the whole sum, but my father's leather purse; so that from that day out, I carried my gold loose in a pocket with a button. I now saw there must be a hole, and clapped my hand to the place in a great hurry. But this was to lock the stable door after the steed was stolen. I had left the shore at Queensferry with near on fifty pounds; now I found no more than two guinea-pieces and a silver shilling.

It is true I picked up a third guinea a little after, where it lay shining on a piece of turf. That made a fortune of three pounds and four shillings, English money, for a lad, the rightful heir of an estate, and now starving on an isle at the extreme end of the wild Highlands.

This state of my affairs dashed me still further; and, indeed my plight on that third morning was truly pitiful. My clothes were beginning to rot; my stockings in particular were quite worn through, so that my shanks went naked; my hands had grown quite soft with the continual soaking; my throat was very sore, my strength had much abated, and my heart so turned against the horrid stuff I was condemned to eat, that the very sight of it came near to sicken me.

And yet the worst was not yet come.

There is a pretty high rock on the northwest of Earraid, which (because it had a flat top and overlooked the Sound) I was much in the habit of frequenting; not that ever I stayed in one place, save when asleep, my misery giving me no rest. Indeed, I wore myself down with continual and aimless goings and comings in the rain.

As soon, however, as the sun came out, I lay down on the top of that rock to dry myself. The comfort of the sunshine is a thing I cannot tell. It set me thinking hopefully of my deliverance, of which I had begun to despair; and I scanned the sea and the Ross with a fresh interest. On the south of my rock, a part of the island jutted out and hid the open ocean, so that a boat could thus come quite near me upon that side, and I be none the wiser.

Well, all of a sudden, a coble with a brown sail and a pair of fishers aboard of it, came flying round that corner of the isle, bound for Iona. I shouted out, and then fell on my knees on the rock and reached up my hands and prayed to them. They were near enough to hear — I could even see the colour of their hair; and there was no doubt but they observed me, for they cried out in the Gaelic tongue, and laughed. But the boat never turned aside, and flew on, right before my eyes, for Iona.

I could not believe such wickedness, and ran along the shore from rock to rock, crying on them piteously even after they were out of reach of my voice, I still cried and waved to them; and when they were quite gone, I thought my heart would have burst. All the time of my troubles I wept only twice. Once, when I could not reach the yard, and now, the second time, when these fishers turned a deaf ear to my cries. But this time I wept and roared like a wicked child, tearing up the turf with my nails, and grinding my face in the earth. If a wish would kill men, those two fishers would never have seen morning, and I should likely have died upon my island.

When I was a little over my anger, I must eat again, but with such loathing of the mess as I could now scarce control. Sure enough, I should have done as well to fast, for my fishes poisoned me again. I had all my first pains; my throat was so sore I could scarce swallow; I had a fit of strong shuddering, which clucked my teeth together; and there came on me that dreadful sense of illness, which we have no name for either in Scotch or English. I thought I should have died, and made my peace with God, forgiving all men, even my uncle and the fishers; and as soon as I had thus made up my mind to the worst, clearness came upon me; I observed the night was falling dry; my clothes were dried a good deal; truly, I was in a better case than ever before, since I had landed on the isle; and so I got to sleep at last, with a thought of gratitude.

The next day (which was the fourth of this horrible life of mine) I found my bodily strength run very low. But the sun shone, the air was sweet, and what I managed to eat of the shell-fish agreed well with me and revived my courage.

I was scarce back on my rock (where I went always the first thing after I had eaten) before I observed a boat coming down the Sound, and with her head, as I thought, in my direction.

I began at once to hope and fear exceedingly; for I thought these men might have thought better of their cruelty and be coming back to my assistance. But another disappointment, such as yesterday’s, was more than I could bear. I turned my back, accordingly, upon the sea, and did not look again till I had counted many hundreds. The boat was still heading for the island. The next time I counted the full thousand, as slowly as I could, my heart beating so as to hurt me. And then it was out of all question. She was coming straight to Earraid!

I could no longer hold myself back, but ran to the seaside and out, from one rock to another, as far as I could go. It is a marvel I was not drowned; for when I was brought to a stand at last, my legs shook under me, and my mouth was so dry, I must wet it with the sea-water before I was able to shout.

All this time the boat was coming on; and now I was able to perceive it was the same boat and the same two men as yesterday. This I knew by their hair, which the one had of a bright yellow and the other black. But now there was a third man along with them, who looked to be of a better class.

As soon as they were come within easy speech, they let down their sail and lay quiet. In spite of my supplications, they drew no nearer in, and what frightened me most of all, the new man tee-hee’d with laughter as he talked and looked at me.

Then he stood up in the boat and addressed me a long while, speaking fast and with many wavings of his hand. I told him I had no Gaelic; and at this he became very angry, and I began to suspect he thought he was talking English. Listening very close, I caught the word “whateffer” several times; but all the rest was Gaelic and might have been Greek and Hebrew for me.

“Whatever,” said I, to show him I had caught a word.

“Yes, yes — yes, yes,” says he, and then he looked at the other men, as much as to say, “I told you I spoke English,” and began again as hard as ever in the Gaelic.

This time I picked out another word, “tide.” Then I had a flash of hope. I remembered he was always waving his hand towards the mainland of the Ross.

“Do you mean when the tide is out — ?” I cried, and could not finish.

“Yes, yes,” said he. “Tide.”

At that I turned tail upon their boat (where my adviser had once more begun to tee-hee with laughter), leaped back the way I had come, from one stone to another, and set off running across the isle as I had never run before. In about half an hour I came out upon the shores of the creek; and, sure enough, it was shrunk into a little trickle of water, through which I dashed, not above my knees, and landed with a shout on the main island.

A sea-bred boy would not have stayed a day on Earraid; which is only what they call a tidal islet, and except in the bottom of the neaps, can be entered and left twice in every twenty-four hours, either dry-shod, or at the most by wading. Even I, who had the tide going out and in before me in the bay, and even watched for the ebbs, the better to get my shellfish — even I (I say) if I had sat down to think, instead of raging at my fate, must have soon guessed the secret, and got free. It was no wonder the fishers had not understood me. The wonder was rather that they had ever guessed my pitiful illusion, and taken the trouble to come back. I had starved with cold and hunger on that island for close upon one hundred hours. But for the fishers, I might have left my bones there, in pure folly. And even as it was, I had paid for it pretty dear, not only in past sufferings, but in my present case; being clothed like a beggar-man, scarce able to walk, and in great pain of my sore throat.

I have seen wicked men and fools, a great many of both; and I believe they both get paid in the end; but the fools first.

CHAPTER XV

THE LAD WITH THE SILVER BUTTON: THROUGH THE ISLE OF MULL

The Ross of Mull, which I had now got upon, was rugged and trackless, like the isle I had just left; being all bog, and brier, and big stone. There may be roads for them that know that country well; but for my part I had no better guide than my own nose, and no other landmark than Ben More.

I aimed as well as I could for the smoke I had seen so often from the island; and with all my great weariness and the difficulty of the way came upon the house in the bottom of a little hollow about five or six at night. It was low and longish, roofed with turf and built of unmortared stones; and on a mound in front of it, an old gentleman sat smoking his pipe in the sun.

With what little English he had, he gave me to understand that my shipmates had got safe ashore, and had broken bread in that very house on the day after.

"Was there one," I asked, "dressed like a gentleman?"

He said they all wore rough great-coats; but to be sure, the first of them, the one that came alone, wore breeches and stockings, while the rest had sailors' trousers.

"Ah," said I, "and he would have a feathered hat?"

He told me, no, that he was bareheaded like myself.

At first I thought Alan might have lost his hat; and then the rain came in my mind, and I judged it more likely he had it out of harm's way under his great-coat. This set me smiling, partly because my friend was safe, partly to think of his vanity in dress.

And then the old gentleman clapped his hand to his brow, and cried out that I must be the lad with the silver button.

"Why, yes!" said I, in some wonder.

"Well, then," said the old gentleman, "I have a word for you, that you are to follow your friend to his country, by Torosay."

He then asked me how I had fared, and I told him my tale. A south-country man would certainly have laughed; but this old gentleman (I call him so because of his manners, for his clothes were dropping off his back) heard me all through with nothing but gravity and pity. When I had done, he took me by the hand, led me into his hut (it was no better) and presented me before his wife, as if she had been the Queen and I a duke.

The good woman set oat-bread before me and a cold grouse, patting my shoulder and smiling to me all the time, for she had no English;

and the old gentleman (not to be behind) brewed me a strong punch out of their country spirit. All the while I was eating, and after that when I was drinking the punch, I could scarce come to believe in my good fortune; and the house, though it was thick with the peat-smoke and as full of holes as a colander, seemed like a palace.

The punch threw me in a strong sweat and a deep slumber; the good people let me lie; and it was near noon of the next day before I took the road, my throat already easier and my spirits quite restored by good fare and good news. The old gentleman, although I pressed him hard, would take no money, and gave me an old bonnet for my head; though I am free to own I was no sooner out of view of the house than I very jealously washed this gift of his in a wayside fountain.

Thought I to myself: “If these are the wild Highlanders, I could wish my own folk wilder.”

I not only started late, but I must have wandered nearly half the time. True, I met plenty of people, grubbing in little miserable fields that would not keep a cat, or herding little kine about the bigness of asses. The Highland dress being forbidden by law since the rebellion, and the people condemned to the Lowland habit, which they much disliked, it was strange to see the variety of their array. Some went bare, only for a hanging cloak or great-coat, and carried their trousers on their backs like a useless burthen: some had made an imitation of the tartan with little parti-coloured stripes patched together like an old wife’s quilt; others, again, still wore the Highland philabeg, but by putting a few stitches between the legs transformed it into a pair of trousers like a Dutchman’s. All those makeshifts were condemned and punished, for the law was harshly applied, in hopes to break up the clan spirit; but in that out-of-the-way, sea-bound isle, there were few to make remarks and fewer to tell tales.

They seemed in great poverty; which was no doubt natural, now that rapine was put down, and the chiefs kept no longer an open house; and the roads (even such a wandering, country by — track as the one I followed) were infested with beggars. And here again I marked a difference from my own part of the country. For our Lowland beggars — even the gownsmen themselves, who beg by patent — had a louting, flattering way with them, and if you gave them a plaek and asked change, would very civilly return you a boddle. But these Highland beggars stood on their dignity, asked alms only to buy snuff (by their account) and would give no change.

To be sure, this was no concern of mine, except in so far as it entertained me by the way. What was much more to the purpose, few had any English, and these few (unless they were of the brotherhood of beggars) not very anxious to place it at my service. I knew Torosay to be my destination, and repeated the name to them and pointed; but instead of simply pointing in reply, they would give me a screed of the Gaelic that set me foolish; so it was small wonder if I went out of my road as often as I stayed in it.

At last, about eight at night, and already very weary, I came to a lone house, where I asked admittance, and was refused, until I bethought me of the power of money in so poor a country, and held up one of my guineas in my finger and thumb. Thereupon, the man of the house, who had hitherto pretended to have no English, and driven me from his door by signals, suddenly began to speak as clearly as was needful, and agreed for five shillings to give me a night's lodging and guide me the next day to Torosay.

I slept uneasily that night, fearing I should be robbed; but I might have spared myself the pain; for my host was no robber, only miserably poor and a great cheat. He was not alone in his poverty; for the next morning, we must go five miles about to the house of what he called a rich man to have one of my guineas changed. This was perhaps a rich man for Mull; he would have scarce been thought so in the south; for it took all he had — the whole house was turned upside down, and a neighbour brought under contribution, before he could scrape together twenty shillings in silver. The odd shilling he kept for himself, protesting he could ill afford to have so great a sum of money lying "locked up." For all that he was very courteous and well spoken, made us both sit down with his family to dinner, and brewed punch in a fine china bowl, over which my rascal guide grew so merry that he refused to start.

I was for getting angry, and appealed to the rich man (Hector Maclean was his name), who had been a witness to our bargain and to my payment of the five shillings. But Maclean had taken his share of the punch, and vowed that no gentleman should leave his table after the bowl was brewed; so there was nothing for it but to sit and hear Jacobite toasts and Gaelic songs, till all were tipsy and staggered off to the bed or the barn for their night's rest.

Next day (the fourth of my travels) we were up before five upon the clock; but my rascal guide got to the bottle at once, and it was three hours before I had him clear of the house, and then (as you shall hear) only for a worse disappointment.

As long as we went down a heathery valley that lay before Mr. Maclean's house, all went well; only my guide looked constantly over his shoulder, and when I asked him the cause, only grinned at me. No sooner, however, had we crossed the back of a hill, and got out of sight of the house windows, than he told me Torosay lay right in front, and that a hill-top (which he pointed out) was my best landmark.

"I care very little for that," said I, "since you are going with me."

The impudent cheat answered me in the Gaelic that he had no English.

“My fine fellow,” I said, “I know very well your English comes and goes. Tell me what will bring it back? Is it more money you wish?”

“Five shillings mair,” said he, “and hersel’ will bring ye there.”

I reflected awhile and then offered him two, which he accepted greedily, and insisted on having in his hands at once “for luck,” as he said, but I think it was rather for my misfortune.

The two shillings carried him not quite as many miles; at the end of which distance, he sat down upon the wayside and took off his brogues from his feet, like a man about to rest.

I was now red-hot. “Ha!” said I, “have you no more English?”

He said impudently, “No.”

At that I boiled over, and lifted my hand to strike him; and he, drawing a knife from his rags, squatted back and grinned at me like a wildcat. At that, forgetting everything but my anger, I ran in upon him, put aside his knife with my left, and struck him in the mouth with the right. I was a strong lad and very angry, and he but a little man; and he went down before me heavily. By good luck, his knife flew out of his hand as he fell.

I picked up both that and his brogues, wished him a good morning, and set off upon my way, leaving him barefoot and disarmed. I chuckled to myself as I went, being sure I was done with that rogue, for a variety of reasons. First, he knew he could have no more of my money; next, the brogues were worth in that country only a few pence; and, lastly, the knife, which was really a dagger, it was against the law for him to carry.

In about half an hour of walk, I overtook a great, ragged man, moving pretty fast but feeling before him with a staff. He was quite blind, and told me he was a catechist, which should have put me at my ease. But his face went against me; it seemed dark and dangerous and secret; and presently, as we began to go on alongside, I saw the steel butt of a pistol sticking from under the flap of his coat-pocket. To carry such a thing meant a fine of fifteen pounds sterling upon a first offence, and transportation to the colonies upon a second. Nor could I quite see why a religious teacher should go armed, or what a blind man could be doing with a pistol.

I told him about my guide, for I was proud of what I had done, and my vanity for once got the heels of my prudence. At the mention of the five shillings he cried out so loud that I made up my mind I should say nothing of the other two, and was glad he could not see my blushes.

“Was it too much?” I asked, a little faltering.

“Too much!” cries he. “Why, I will guide you to Torosay myself for a dram of brandy. And give you the great pleasure of my company (me that is a man of some learning) in the bargain."

I said I did not see how a blind man could be a guide; but at that he laughed aloud, and said his stick was eyes enough for an eagle.

"In the Isle of Mull, at least," says he, "where I know every stone and heather-bush by mark of head. See, now," he said, striking right and left, as if to make sure, "down there a burn is running; and at the head of it there stands a bit of a small hill with a stone cocked upon the top of that; and it's hard at the foot of the hill, that the way runs by to Torosay; and the way here, being for droves, is plainly trodden, and will show grassy through the heather."

I had to own he was right in every feature, and told my wonder.

"Ha!" says he, "that's nothing. Would ye believe me now, that before the Act came out, and when there were weepons in this country, I could shoot? Ay, could I!" cries he, and then with a leer: "If ye had such a thing as a pistol here to try with, I would show ye how it's done."

I told him I had nothing of the sort, and gave him a wider berth. If he had known, his pistol stuck at that time quite plainly out of his pocket, and I could see the sun twinkle on the steel of the butt. But by the better luck for me, he knew nothing, thought all was covered, and lied on in the dark.

He then began to question me cunningly, where I came from, whether I was rich, whether I could change a five-shilling piece for him (which he declared he had that moment in his sporran), and all the time he kept edging up to me and I avoiding him. We were now upon a sort of green cattle-track which crossed the hills towards Torosay, and we kept changing sides upon that like ancers in a reel. I had so plainly the upper-hand that my spirits rose, and indeed I took a pleasure in this game of blindman's buff; but the catechist grew angrier and angrier, and at last began to swear in Gaelic and to strike for my legs with his staff.

Then I told him that, sure enough, I had a pistol in my pocket as well as he, and if he did not strike across the hill due south I would even blow his brains out.

He became at once very polite, and after trying to soften me for some time, but quite in vain, he cursed me once more in Gaelic and took himself off. I watched him striding along, through bog and brier, tapping with his stick, until he turned the end of a hill and disappeared in the next hollow. Then I struck on again for Torosay, much better pleased to be alone than to travel with that man of learning. This was an unlucky day; and these two, of whom I had just rid myself, one after the other, were the two worst men I met with in the Highlands.

At Torosay, on the Sound of Mull and looking over to the mainland of Morven, there was an inn with an innkeeper, who was a Maclean, it appeared, of a very high family; for to keep an inn is thought even more genteel in the Highlands than it is with us, perhaps as partaking of hospitality, or perhaps because the trade is idle and drunken. He spoke good English, and finding me to be something of a scholar, tried me first in French, where he easily beat me, and then in the Latin, in which I don't know which of us did best. This pleasant rivalry put us at once upon friendly terms; and I sat up and drank punch with him (or to be more correct, sat up and watched him drink it), until he was so tipsy that he wept upon my shoulder.

I tried him, as if by accident, with a sight of Alan's button; but it was plain he had never seen or heard of it. Indeed, he bore some grudge against the family and friends of Ardshiel, and before he was drunk he read me a lampoon, in very good Latin, but with a very ill meaning, which he had made in elegiac verses upon a person of that house.

When I told him of my catechist, he shook his head, and said I was lucky to have got clear off. "That is a very dangerous man," he said; "Duncan Mackiegh is his name; he can shoot by the ear at several yards, and has been often accused of highway robberies, and once of murder."

"The cream of it is," says I, "that he called himself a catechist."

"And why should he not?" says he, "when that is what he is. It was Maclean of Duart gave it to him because he was blind. But perhaps it was a peety," says my host, "for he is always on the road, going from one place to another to hear the young folk say their religion; and, doubtless, that is a great temptation to the poor man."

At last, when my landlord could drink no more, he showed me to a bed, and I lay down in very good spirits; having travelled the greater part of that big and crooked Island of Mull, from Earraid to Torosay, fifty miles as the crow flies, and (with my wanderings) much nearer a hundred, in four days and with little fatigue. Indeed I was by far in better heart and health of body at the end of that long tramp than I had been at the beginning.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LAD WITH THE SILVER BUTTON: ACROSS MORVEN

There is a regular ferry from Torosay to Kinlochaline on the mainland. Both shores of the Sound are in the country of the strong clan of the Macleans, and the people that passed the ferry with me were almost all of that clan. The skipper of the boat, on the other hand, was called Neil Roy Macrob; and since Macrob was one of the names of Alan's clansmen, and Alan himself had sent me to that ferry, I was eager to come to private speech of Neil Roy.

In the crowded boat this was of course impossible, and the passage was a very slow affair. There was no wind, and as the boat was wretchedly equipped, we could pull but two oars on one side, and one on the other. The men gave way, however, with a good will, the passengers taking spells to help them, and the whole company giving the time in Gaelic boat-songs. And what with the songs, and the sea-air, and the good-nature and spirit of all concerned, and the bright weather, the passage was a pretty thing to have seen.

But there was one melancholy part. In the mouth of Loch Aline we found a great sea-going ship at anchor; and this I supposed at first to be one of the King's cruisers which were kept along that coast, both summer and winter, to prevent communication with the French. As we got a little nearer, it became plain she was a ship of merchandise; and what still more puzzled me, not only her decks, but the sea-beach also, were quite black with people, and skiffs were continually plying to and fro between them. Yet nearer, and there began to come to our ears a great sound of mourning, the people on board and those on the shore crying and lamenting one to another so as to pierce the heart.

Then I understood this was an emigrant ship bound for the American colonies.

We put the ferry-boat alongside, and the exiles leaned over the bulwarks, weeping and reaching out their hands to my fellow-passengers, among whom they counted some near friends. How long this might have gone on I do not know, for they seemed to have no sense of time: but at last the captain of the ship, who seemed near beside himself (and no great wonder) in the midst of this crying and confusion, came to the side and begged us to depart.

Thereupon Neil sheered off; and the chief singer in our boat struck into a melancholy air, which was presently taken up both by the emigrants and their friends upon the beach, so that it sounded from all sides like a lament for the dying. I saw the tears run down the cheeks of the men and women in the boat, even as they bent at the oars; and the circumstances and the music of the song (which is one called "Lochaber no more") were highly affecting even to myself.

At Kinlochaline I got Neil Roy upon one side on the beach, and said I made sure he was one of Appin's men.

"And what for no?" said he.

"I am seeking somebody," said I; "and it comes in my mind that you will have news of him. Alan Breck Stewart is his name." And very foolishly, instead of showing him the button, I sought to pass a shilling in his hand.

At this he drew back. "I am very much affronted," he said; "and this is not the way that one shentleman should behave to another at all. The man you ask for is in France; but if he was in my sporran," says he, "and your belly full of shillings, I would not hurt a hair upon his body."

I saw I had gone the wrong way to work, and without wasting time upon apologies, showed him the button lying in the hollow of my palm.

"Aweel, aweel," said Neil; "and I think ye might have begun with that end of the stick, whatever! But if ye are the lad with the silver button, all is well, and I have the word to see that ye come safe. But if ye will pardon me to speak plainly," says he, "there is a name that you should never take into your mouth, and that is the name of Alan Breck; and there is a thing that ye would never do, and that is to offer your dirty money to a Hieland shentleman."

It was not very easy to apologise; for I could scarce tell him (what was the truth) that I had never dreamed he would set up to be a gentleman until he told me so. Neil on his part had no wish to prolong his dealings with me, only to fulfil his orders and be done with it; and he made haste to give me my route. This was to lie the night in Kinlochaline in the public inn; to cross Morven the next day to Ardgour, and lie the night in the house of one John of the Claymore, who was warned that I might come; the third day, to be set across one loch at Corran and another at Balachulish, and then ask my way to the house of James of the Glens, at Aucharn in Duror of Appin. There was a good deal of ferrying, as you hear; the sea in all this part running deep into the mountains and winding about their roots. It makes the country strong to hold and difficult to travel, but full of prodigious wild and dreadful prospects.

I had some other advice from Neil: to speak with no one by the way, to avoid Whigs, Campbells, and the "red-soldiers;" to leave the road and lie in a bush if I saw any of the latter coming, "for it was never chancy to meet in with them;" and in brief, to conduct myself like a robber or a Jacobite agent, as perhaps Neil thought me.

The inn at Kinlochaline was the most beggarly vile place that ever pigs were styed in, full of smoke, vermin, and silent Highlanders. I was not only discontented with my lodging, but with myself for my mismanagement of Neil, and thought I could hardly be worse off. But very wrongly, as I was soon to see; for I had not been half an hour at the inn (standing in the door most of the time, to ease my eyes from the peat smoke) when a thunderstorm came close by, the springs broke in a little hill on which the inn stood, and one end of the house became a running water. Places of public entertainment were bad enough all over Scotland in those days; yet it was a wonder to myself, when I had to go from the fireside to the bed in which I slept, wading over the shoes.

Early in my next day's journey I overtook a little, stout, solemn man, walking very slowly with his toes turned out, sometimes reading in a book and sometimes marking the place with his finger, and dressed decently and plainly in something of a clerical style.

This I found to be another catechist, but of a different order from the blind man of Mull: being indeed one of those sent out by the Edinburgh Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, to evangelise the more savage places of the Highlands. His name was Henderland; he spoke with the broad south-country tongue, which I was beginning to weary for the sound of; and besides common countryship, we soon found we had a more particular bond of interest. For my good friend, the minister of Essendean, had translated into the Gaelic in his by-time a number of hymns and pious books which Henderland used in his work, and held in great esteem. Indeed, it was one of these he was carrying and reading when we met.

We fell in company at once, our ways lying together as far as to Kingairloch. As we went, he stopped and spoke with all the wayfarers and workers that we met or passed; and though of course I could not tell what they discoursed about, yet I judged Mr. Henderland must be well liked in the countryside, for I observed many of them to bring out their mulls and share a pinch of snuff with him.

I told him as far in my affairs as I judged wise; as far, that is, as they were none of Alan's; and gave Balachulish as the place I was travelling to, to meet a friend; for I thought Aucharn, or even Duror, would be too particular, and might put him on the scent.

On his part, he told me much of his work and the people he worked among, the hiding priests and Jacobites, the Disarming Act, the dress, and many other curiosities of the time and place. He seemed moderate; blaming Parliament in several points, and especially because they had framed the Act more severely against those who wore the dress than against those who carried weapons.

This moderation put it in my mind to question him of the Red Fox and the Appin tenants; questions which, I thought, would seem natural enough in the mouth of one travelling to that country.

He said it was a bad business. “It’s wonderful,” said he, “where the tenants find the money, for their life is mere starvation. (Ye don’t carry such a thing as snuff, do ye, Mr. Balfour? No. Well, I’m better wanting it.) But these tenants (as I was saying) are doubtless partly driven to it. James Stewart in Duror (that’s him they call James of the Glens) is half-brother to Ardshiel, the captain of the clan; and he is a man much looked up to, and drives very hard. And then there’s one they call Alan Breck — ”

“Ah!” I cried, “what of him?”

“What of the wind that bloweth where it listeth?” said Henderland. “He’s here and awa; here to-day and gone to-morrow: a fair heather-cat. He might be glowering at the two of us out of yon whin-bush, and I wouldnae wonder! Ye’ll no carry such a thing as snuff, will ye?”

I told him no, and that he had asked the same thing more than once.

“It’s highly possible,” said he, sighing. “But it seems strange ye shouldnae carry it. However, as I was saying, this Alan Breck is a bold, desperate customer, and well kent to be James’s right hand. His life is forfeit already; he would boggle at naething; and maybe, if a tenant-body was to hang back he would get a dirk in his wame.”

“You make a poor story of it all, Mr. Henderland,” said I. “If it is all fear upon both sides, I care to hear no more of it.”

“Na,” said Mr. Henderland, “but there’s love too, and self-denial that should put the like of you and me to shame. There’s something fine about it; no perhaps Christian, but humanly fine. Even Alan Breck, by all that I hear, is a chield to be respected. There’s many a lying sneck-draw sits close in kirk in our own part of the country, and stands well in the world’s eye, and maybe is a far worse man, Mr. Balfour, than yon misguided shedder of man’s blood. Ay, ay, we might take a lesson by them. — Ye’ll perhaps think I’ve been too long in the Hielands?” he added, smiling to me.

I told him not at all; that I had seen much to admire among the Highlanders; and if he came to that, Mr. Campbell himself was a Highlander.

“Ay,” said he, “that’s true. It’s a fine blood.”

“And what is the King’s agent about?” I asked.

“Colin Campbell?” says Henderland. “Putting his head in a bees’ byke!”

“He is to turn the tenants out by force, I hear?” said I.

“Yes,” says he, “but the business has gone back and forth, as folk say. First, James of the Glens rode to Edinburgh, and got some lawyer (a Stewart, nae doubt — they all hing together like bats in a steeple) and had the proceedings stayed. And then Colin Campbell cam' in again, and had the upper-hand before the Barons of Exchequer. And now they tell me the first of the tenants are to flit to-morrow. It's to begin at Duror under James's very windows, which doesnae seem wise by my humble way of it."

"Do you think they'll fight?" I asked.

"Well," says Henderland, "they're disarmed — or supposed to be — for there's still a good deal of cold iron lying by in quiet places. And then Colin Campbell has the sogers coming. But for all that, if I was his lady wife, I wouldnae be well pleased till I got him home again. They're queer customers, the Appin Stewarts."

I asked if they were worse than their neighbours.

"No they," said he. "And that's the worst part of it. For if Colin Roy can get his business done in Appin, he has it all to begin again in the next country, which they call Mamore, and which is one of the countries of the Camerons. He's King's Factor upon both, and from both he has to drive out the tenants; and indeed, Mr. Balfour (to be open with ye), it's my belief that if he escapes the one lot, he'll get his death by the other."

So we continued talking and walking the great part of the day; until at last, Mr. Henderland after expressing his delight in my company, and satisfaction at meeting with a friend of Mr. Campbell's ("whom," says he, "I will make bold to call that sweet singer of our covenanted Zion"), proposed that I should make a short stage, and lie the night in his house a little beyond Kingairloch. To say truth, I was overjoyed; for I had no great desire for John of the Claymore, and since my double misadventure, first with the guide and next with the gentleman skipper, I stood in some fear of any Highland stranger. Accordingly we shook hands upon the bargain, and came in the afternoon to a small house, standing alone by the shore of the Linnhe Loch. The sun was already gone from the desert mountains of Ardgour upon the hither side, but shone on those of Appin on the farther; the loch lay as still as a lake, only the gulls were crying round the sides of it; and the whole place seemed solemn and uncouth.

We had no sooner come to the door of Mr. Henderland's dwelling, than to my great surprise (for I was now used to the politeness of Highlanders) he burst rudely past me, dashed into the room, caught up a jar and a small horn-spoon, and began ladling snuff into his nose in most excessive quantities. Then he had a hearty fit of sneezing, and looked round upon me with a rather silly smile.

"It's a vow I took," says he. "I took a vow upon me that I wouldnae carry it. Doubtless it's a great privation; but when I think upon the martyrs, not only to the Scottish Covenant but to other points of Christianity, I think shame to mind it."

As soon as we had eaten (and porridge and whey was the best of the good man's diet) he took a grave face and said he had a duty to perform by Mr. Campbell, and that was to inquire into my state of mind towards God. I was inclined to smile at him since the business of the snuff; but he had not spoken long before he brought the tears into my eyes. There are two things that men should never weary of, goodness and humility; we get none too much of them in this rough world among cold, proud people; but Mr. Henderland had their very speech upon his tongue. And though I was a good deal puffed up with my adventures and with having come off, as the saying is, with flying colours; yet he soon had me on my knees beside a simple, poor old man, and both proud and glad to be there.

Before we went to bed he offered me sixpence to help me on my way, out of a scanty store he kept in the turf wall of his house; at which excess of goodness I knew not what to do. But at last he was so earnest with me that I thought it the more mannerly part to let him have his way, and so left him poorer than myself.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DEATH OF THE RED FOX

The next day Mr. Henderland found for me a man who had a boat of his own and was to cross the Linnhe Loch that afternoon into Appin, fishing. Him he prevailed on to take me, for he was one of his flock; and in this way I saved a long day's travel and the price of the two public ferries I must otherwise have passed.

It was near noon before we set out; a dark day with clouds, and the sun shining upon little patches. The sea was here very deep and still, and had scarce a wave upon it; so that I must put the water to my lips before I could believe it to be truly salt. The mountains on either side were high, rough and barren, very black and gloomy in the shadow of the clouds, but all silver-laced with little watercourses where the sun shone upon them. It seemed a hard country, this of Appin, for people to care as much about as Alan did.

There was but one thing to mention. A little after we had started, the sun shone upon a little moving clump of scarlet close in along the water-side to the north. It was much of the same red as soldiers' coats; every now and then, too, there came little sparks and lightnings, as though the sun had struck upon bright steel.

I asked my boatman what it should be, and he answered he supposed it was some of the red soldiers coming from Fort William into Appin, against the poor tenantry of the country. Well, it was a sad sight to me; and whether it was because of my thoughts of Alan, or from something prophetic in my bosom, although this was but the second time I had seen King George's troops, I had no good will to them.

At last we came so near the point of land at the entering in of Loch Leven that I begged to be set on shore. My boatman (who was an honest fellow and mindful of his promise to the catechist) would fain have carried me on to Balachulish; but as this was to take me farther from my secret destination, I insisted, and was set on shore at last under the wood of Lettermore (or Lettervore, for I have heard it both ways) in Alan's country of Appin.

This was a wood of birches, growing on a steep, craggy side of a mountain that overhung the loch. It had many openings and ferny howes; and a road or bridle track ran north and south through the midst of it, by the edge of which, where was a spring, I sat down to eat some oat-bread of Mr. Henderland's and think upon my situation.

Here I was not only troubled by a cloud of stinging midges, but far more by the doubts of my mind. What I ought to do, why I was going to join myself with an outlaw and a would-be murderer like Alan, whether I should not be acting more like a man of sense to tramp back to the south country direct, by my own guidance and at my own charges, and what Mr. Campbell or even Mr. Henderland would think of me if they should ever learn my folly and presumption: these were the doubts that now began to come in on me stronger than ever.

As I was so sitting and thinking, a sound of men and horses came to me through the wood; and presently after, at a turning of the road, I saw four travellers come into view. The way was in this part so rough and narrow that they came single and led their horses by the reins. The first was a great, red-headed gentleman, of an imperious and flushed face, who carried his hat in his hand and fanned himself, for he was in a breathing heat. The second, by his decent black garb and white wig, I correctly took to be a lawyer. The third was a servant, and wore some part of his clothes in tartan, which showed that his master was of a Highland family, and either an outlaw or else in singular good odour with the Government, since the wearing of tartan was against the Act. If I had been better versed in these things, I would have known the tartan to be of the Argyle (or Campbell) colours. This servant had a good-sized portmanteau strapped on his horse, and a net of lemons (to brew punch with) hanging at the saddle-bow; as was often enough the custom with luxurious travellers in that part of the country.

As for the fourth, who brought up the tail, I had seen his like before, and knew him at once to be a sheriff's officer.

I had no sooner seen these people coming than I made up my mind (for no reason that I can tell) to go through with my adventure; and when the first came alongside of me, I rose up from the bracken and asked him the way to Aucharn.

He stopped and looked at me, as I thought, a little oddly; and then, turning to the lawyer, "Mungo," said he, "there's many a man would think this more of a warning than two pyats. Here am I on my road to Duror on the job ye ken; and here is a young lad starts up out of the bracken, and speers if I am on the way to Aucharn."

"Glenure," said the other, "this is an ill subject for jesting."

These two had now drawn close up and were gazing at me, while the two followers had halted about a stone-cast in the rear.

"And what seek ye in Aucharn?" said Colin Roy Campbell of Glenure, him they called the Red Fox; for he it was that I had stopped.

"The man that lives there," said I.

"James of the Glens," says Glenure, musingly; and then to the lawyer: "Is he gathering his people, think ye?"

"Anyway," says the lawyer, "we shall do better to bide where we are, and let the soldiers rally us."

"If you are concerned for me," said I, "I am neither of his people nor yours, but an honest subject of King George, owing no man and fearing no man."

"Why, very well said," replies the Factor. "But if I may make so bold as ask, what does this honest man so far from his country? and why does he come seeking the brother of Ardshiel? I have power here, I must tell you. I am King's Factor upon several of these estates, and have twelve files of soldiers at my back."

"I have heard a waif word in the country," said I, a little nettled, "that you were a hard man to drive."

He still kept looking at me, as if in doubt.

"Well," said he, at last, "your tongue is bold; but I am no unfriend to plainness. If ye had asked me the way to the door of James Stewart on any other day but this, I would have set ye right and bidden ye God speed. But to-day — eh, Mungo?" And he turned again to look at the lawyer.

But just as he turned there came the shot of a firelock from higher up the hill; and with the very sound of it Glenure fell upon the road.

"O, I am dead!" he cried, several times over.

The lawyer had caught him up and held him in his arms, the servant standing over and clasping his hands. And now the wounded man looked from one to another with scared eyes, and there was a change in his voice, that went to the heart.

"Take care of yourselves," says he. "I am dead."

He tried to open his clothes as if to look for the wound, but his fingers slipped on the buttons. With that he gave a great sigh, his head rolled on his shoulder, and he passed away.

The lawyer said never a word, but his face was as sharp as a pen and as white as the dead man's; the servant broke out into a great noise of crying and weeping, like a child; and I, on my side, stood staring at them in a kind of horror. The sheriff's officer had run back at the first sound of the shot, to hasten the coming of the soldiers.

At last the lawyer laid down the dead man in his blood upon the road, and got to his own feet with a kind of stagger.

I believe it was his movement that brought me to my senses; for he had no sooner done so than I began to scramble up the hill, crying out, "The murderer! the murderer!"

So little a time had elapsed, that when I got to the top of the first steepness, and could see some part of the open mountain, the murderer was still moving away at no great distance. He was a big man, in a black coat, with metal buttons, and carried a long fowling-piece.

"Here!" I cried. "I see him!"

At that the murderer gave a little, quick look over his shoulder, and began to run. The next moment he was lost in a fringe of birches; then he came out again on the upper side, where I could see him climbing like a jackanapes, for that part was again very steep; and then he dipped behind a shoulder, and I saw him no more.

All this time I had been running on my side, and had got a good way up, when a voice cried upon me to stand.

I was at the edge of the upper wood, and so now, when I halted and looked back, I saw all the open part of the hill below me.

The lawyer and the sheriff's officer were standing just above the road, crying and waving on me to come back; and on their left, the red-coats, musket in hand, were beginning to struggle singly out of the lower wood.

"Why should I come back?" I cried. "Come you on!"

"Ten pounds if ye take that lad!" cried the lawyer. "He's an accomplice. He was posted here to hold us in talk."

At that word (which I could hear quite plainly, though it was to the soldiers and not to me that he was crying it) my heart came in my mouth with quite a new kind of terror. Indeed, it is one thing to stand the danger of your life, and quite another to run the peril of both life and character. The thing, besides, had come so suddenly, like thunder out of a clear sky, that I was all amazed and helpless.

The soldiers began to spread, some of them to run, and others to put up their pieces and cover me; and still I stood.

"Jock* in here among the trees," said a voice close by.

* Duck.

Indeed, I scarce knew what I was doing, but I obeyed; and as I did so, I heard the firelocks bang and the balls whistle in the birches.

Just inside the shelter of the trees I found Alan Breck standing, with a fishing-rod. He gave me no salutation; indeed it was no time for civilities; only "Come!" says he, and set off running along the side of the mountain towards Balaehulish; and I, like a sheep, to follow him.

Now we ran among the birches; now stooping behind low humps upon the mountain-side; now crawling on all fours among the heather. The pace was deadly: my heart seemed bursting against my ribs; and I had neither time to think nor breath to speak with. Only I remember seeing with wonder, that Alan every now and then would straighten himself to his full height and look back; and every time he did so, there came a great far-away cheering and crying of the soldiers.

Quarter of an hour later, Alan stopped, clapped down flat in the heather, and turned to me.

"Now," said he, "it's earnest. Do as I do, for your life."

And at the same speed, but now with infinitely more precaution, we traced back again across the mountain-side by the same way that we had come, only perhaps higher; till at last Alan threw himself down in the upper wood of Lettermore, where I had found him at the first, and lay, with his face in the bracken, panting like a dog.

My own sides so ached, my head so swam, my tongue so hung out of my mouth with heat and dryness, that I lay beside him like one dead.

CHAPTER XVIII

I TALK WITH ALAN IN THE WOOD OF LETTERMORE

Alan was the first to come round. He rose, went to the border of the wood, peered out a little, and then returned and sat down.

"Well," said he, "yon was a hot burst, David."

I said nothing, nor so much as lifted my face. I had seen murder done, and a great, ruddy, jovial gentleman struck out of life in a moment; the pity of that sight was still sore within me, and yet that was but a part of my concern. Here was murder done upon the man Alan hated; here was Alan skulking in the trees and running from the troops; and whether his was the hand that fired or only the head that ordered, signified but little. By my way of it, my only friend in that wild country was blood-guilty in the first degree; I held him in horror; I could not look upon his face; I would have rather lain alone in the rain on my cold isle, than in that warm wood beside a murderer.

"Are ye still wearied?" he asked again.

"No," said I, still with my face in the bracken; "no, I am not wearied now, and I can speak. You and me must twine,"* I said. "I liked you very well, Alan, but your ways are not mine, and they're not God's: and the short and the long of it is just that we must twine."

* Part.

"I will hardly twine from ye, David, without some kind of reason for the same," said Alan, mighty gravely. "If ye ken anything against my reputation, it's the least thing that ye should do, for old acquaintance' sake, to let me hear the name of it; and if ye have only taken a distaste to my society, it will be proper for me to judge if I'm insulted."

"Alan," said I, "what is the sense of this? Ye ken very well yon Campbell-man lies in his blood upon the road."

He was silent for a little; then says he, "Did ever ye hear tell of the story of the Man and the Good People?" — by which he meant the fairies.

"No," said I, "nor do I want to hear it."

"With your permission, Mr. Balfour, I will tell it you, whatever," says Alan. "The man, ye should ken, was cast upon a rock in the sea, where it appears the Good People were in use to come and rest as they went through to Ireland. The name of this rock is called the Skerryvore, and it's not far from where we suffered ship-wreck. Well, it seems the man cried so sore, if he could just see his little bairn before he died! that at last the king of the Good People took peety upon him, and sent one flying that brought back the bairn in a poke* and laid it down beside the man where he lay sleeping. So when the man woke, there was a poke beside him and something into the inside of it that moved. Well, it seems he was one of these gentry that think aye the worst of things; and for greater security, he stuck his dirk throughout that poke before he opened it, and there was his bairn dead. I am thinking to myself, Mr. Balfour, that you and the man are very much alike."

* Bag.

"Do you mean you had no hand in it?" cried I, sitting up.

"I will tell you first of all, Mr. Balfour of Shaws, as one friend to another," said Alan, "that if I were going to kill a gentleman, it would not be in my own country, to bring trouble on my clan; and I would not go wanting sword and gun, and with a long fishing-rod upon my back."

"Well," said I, "that's true!"

"And now," continued Alan, taking out his dirk and laying his hand upon it in a certain manner, "I swear upon the Holy Iron I had neither art nor part, act nor thought in it."

"I thank God for that!" cried I, and offered him my hand.

He did not appear to see it.

"And here is a great deal of work about a Campbell!" said he. "They are not so scarce, that I ken!"

"At least," said I, "you cannot justly blame me, for you know very well what you told me in the brig. But the temptation and the act are different, I thank God again for that. We may all be tempted; but to take a life in cold blood, Alan!" And I could say no more for the moment. "And do you know who did it?" I added. "Do you know that man in the black coat?"

"I have nae clear mind about his coat," said Alan cunningly, "but it sticks in my head that it was blue."

"Blue or black, did ye know him?" said I.

"I couldnae just conscientiously swear to him," says Alan. "He gaed very close by me, to be sure, but it's a strange thing that I should just have been tying my brogues."

"Can you swear that you don't know him, Alan?" I cried, half angered, half in a mind to laugh at his evasions.

"Not yet," says he; "but I've a grand memory for forgetting, David."

"And yet there was one thing I saw clearly," said I; "and that was, that you exposed yourself and me to draw the soldiers."

"It's very likely," said Alan; "and so would any gentleman. You and me were innocent of that transaction."

"The better reason, since we were falsely suspected, that we should get clear," I cried. "The innocent should surely come before the guilty."

"Why, David," said he, "the innocent have aye a chance to get assoiled in court; but for the lad that shot the bullet, I think the best place for him will be the heather. Them that havenae dipped their hands in any little difficulty, should be very mindful of the case of them that have. And that is the good Christianity. For if it was the other way round about, and the lad whom I couldnae just clearly see had been in our shoes, and we in his (as might very well have been), I think we would be a good deal obliged to him oursel's if he would draw the soldiers."

When it came to this, I gave Alan up. But he looked so innocent all the time, and was in such clear good faith in what he said, and so ready to sacrifice himself for what he deemed his duty, that my mouth was closed. Mr. Henderland's words came back to me: that we ourselves might take a lesson by these wild Highlanders. Well, here I had taken mine. Alan's morals were all tail-first; but he was ready to give his life for them, such as they were.

"Alan," said I, "I'll not say it's the good Christianity as I understand it, but it's good enough. And here I offer ye my hand for the second time."

Whereupon he gave me both of his, saying surely I had cast a spell upon him, for he could forgive me anything. Then he grew very grave, and said we had not much time to throw away, but must both flee that country: he, because he was a deserter, and the whole of Appin would now be searched like a chamber, and every one obliged to give a good account of himself; and I, because I was certainly involved in the murder.

"O!" says I, willing to give him a little lesson, "I have no fear of the justice of my country."

"As if this was your country!" said he. "Or as if ye would be tried here, in a country of Stewarts!"

"It's all Scotland," said I.

"Man, I whiles wonder at ye," said Alan. "This is a Campbell that's been killed. Well, it'll be tried in Inverara, the Campbells' head place; with fifteen Campbells in the jury-box and the biggest Campbell of all (and that's the Duke) sitting cocking on the bench. Justice, David? The same justice, by all the world, as Glenure found awhile ago at the roadside."

This frightened me a little, I confess, and would have frightened me more if I had known how nearly exact were Alan's predictions; indeed it was but in one point that he exaggerated, there being but eleven Campbells on the jury; though as the other four were equally in the Duke's dependence, it mattered less than might appear. Still, I cried out that he was unjust to the Duke of Argyle, who (for all he was a Whig) was yet a wise and honest nobleman.

"Hoot!" said Alan, "the man's a Whig, nae doubt; but I would never deny he was a good chieftain to his clan. And what would the clan think if there was a Campbell shot, and naebody hanged, and their own chief the Justice General? But I have often observed," says Alan, "that you Low-country bodies have no clear idea of what's right and wrong."

At this I did at last laugh out aloud, when to my surprise, Alan joined in, and laughed as merrily as myself.

"Na, na," said he, "we're in the Hielands, David; and when I tell ye to run, take my word and run. Nae doubt it's a hard thing to skulk and starve in the Heather, but it's harder yet to lie shackled in a red-coat prison."

I asked him whither we should flee; and as he told me "to the Lowlands," I was a little better inclined to go with him; for, indeed, I was growing impatient to get back and have the upper-hand of my uncle. Besides, Alan made so sure there would be no question of justice in the matter, that I began to be afraid he might be right. Of all deaths, I would truly like least to die by the gallows; and the picture of that uncanny instrument came into my head with extraordinary clearness (as I had once seen it engraved at the top of a pedlar's ballad) and took away my appetite for courts of justice.

"I'll chance it, Alan," said I. "I'll go with you."

"But mind you," said Alan, "it's no small thing. Ye maun lie bare and hard, and brook many an empty belly. Your bed shall be the moorcock's, and your life shall be like the hunted deer's, and ye shall sleep with your hand upon your weapons. Ay, man, ye shall taigle many a weary foot, or we get clear! I tell ye this at the start, for it's a life that I ken well. But if ye ask what other chance ye have, I answer: Nane. Either take to the heather with me, or else hang."

"And that's a choice very easily made," said I; and we shook hands upon it.

"And now let's take another keek at the red-coats," says Alan, and he led me to the north-eastern fringe of the wood.

Looking out between the trees, we could see a great side of mountain, running down exceeding steep into the waters of the loch. It was a rough part, all hanging stone, and heather, and big scrogs of birchwood; and away at the far end towards Balachulish, little wee red soldiers were dipping up and down over hill and howe, and growing smaller every minute. There was no cheering now, for I think they had other uses for what breath was left them; but they still stuck to the trail, and doubtless thought that we were close in front of them.

Alan watched them, smiling to himself.

"Ay," said he, "they'll be gey weary before they've got to the end of that employ! And so you and me, David, can sit down and eat a bite, and breathe a bit longer, and take a dram from my bottle. Then we'll strike for Aucharn, the house of my kinsman, James of the Glens, where I must get my clothes, and my arms, and money to carry us along; and then, David, we'll cry, 'Forth, Fortune!' and take a cast among the heather."

So we sat again and ate and drank, in a place whence we could see the sun going down into a field of great, wild, and houseless mountains, such as I was now condemned to wander in with my companion. Partly as we so sat, and partly afterwards, on the way to Aucharn, each of us narrated his adventures; and I shall here set down so much of Alan's as seems either curious or needful.

It appears he ran to the bulwarks as soon as the wave was passed; saw me, and lost me, and saw me again, as I tumbled in the roost; and at last had one glimpse of me clinging on the yard. It was this that put him in some hope I would maybe get to land after all, and made him leave those clues and messages which had brought me (for my sins) to that unlucky country of Appin.

In the meanwhile, those still on the brig had got the skiff launched, and one or two were on board of her already, when there came a second wave greater than the first, and heaved the brig out of her place, and would certainly have sent her to the bottom, had she not struck and caught on some projection of the reef. When she had struck first, it had been bows-on, so that the stern had hitherto been lowest. But now her stern was thrown in the air, and the bows plunged under the sea; and with that, the water began to pour into the fore-scuttle like the pouring of a mill-dam.

It took the colour out of Alan's face, even to tell what followed. For there were still two men lying impotent in their bunks; and these, seeing the water pour in and thinking the ship had foundered, began to cry out aloud, and that with such harrowing cries that all who were on deck tumbled one after another into the skiff and fell to their oars. They were not two hundred yards away, when there came a third great sea; and at that the brig lifted clean over the reef; her canvas filled for a moment, and she seemed to sail in chase of them, but settling all the while; and presently she drew down and down, as if a hand was drawing her; and the sea closed over the Covenant of Dysart.

Never a word they spoke as they pulled ashore, being stunned with the horror of that screaming; but they had scarce set foot upon the beach when Hoseason woke up, as if out of a muse, and bade them lay hands upon Alan. They hung back indeed, having little taste for the employment; but Hoseason was like a fiend, crying that Alan was alone, that he had a great sum about him, that he had been the means of losing the brig and drowning all their comrades, and that here was both revenge and wealth upon a single cast. It was seven against one; in that part of the shore there was no rock that Alan could set his back to; and the sailors began to spread out and come behind him.

"And then," said Alan, "the little man with the red head — I havenae mind of the name that he is called."

"Riach," said I.

"Ay" said Alan, "Riach! Well, it was him that took up the clubs for me, asked the men if they werenae feared of a judgment, and, says he 'Dod, I'll put my back to the Hielandman's mysel'.' That's none such an entirely bad little man, yon little man with the red head," said Alan. "He has some spunks of decency."

"Well," said I, "he was kind to me in his way."

"And so he was to Alan," said he; "and by my troth, I found his way a very good one! But ye see, David, the loss of the ship and the cries of these poor lads sat very ill upon the man; and I'm thinking that would be the cause of it."

"Well, I would think so," says I; "for he was as keen as any of the rest at the beginning. But how did Hoseason take it?"

"It sticks in my mind that he would take it very ill," says Alan. "But the little man cried to me to run, and indeed I thought it was a good observe, and ran. The last that I saw they were all in a knot upon the beach, like folk that were not agreeing very well together."

"What do you mean by that?" said I.

"Well, the fists were going," said Alan; "and I saw one man go down like a pair of breeks. But I thought it would be better no to wait. Ye see there's a strip of Campbells in that end of Mull, which is no good company for a gentleman like me. If it hadnae been for that I would have waited and looked for ye mysel', let alone giving a hand to the little man." (It was droll how Alan dwelt on Mr. Riach's stature, for, to say the truth, the one was not much smaller than the other.) "So," says he, continuing, "I set my best foot forward, and whenever I met in with any one I cried out there was a wreck ashore. Man, they didnae stop to fash with me! Ye should have seen them linking for the beach! And when they got there they found they had had the pleasure of a run, which is aye good for a Campbell. I'm thinking it was a judgment on the clan that the brig went down in the lump and didnae break. But it was a very unlucky thing for you, that same; for if any wreck had come ashore they would have hunted high and low, and would soon have found ye."

CHAPTER XIX

THE HOUSE OF FEAR

Night fell as we were walking, and the clouds, which had broken up in the afternoon, settled in and thickened, so that it fell, for the season of the year, extremely dark. The way we went was over rough mountainsides; and though Alan pushed on with an assured manner, I could by no means see how he directed himself.

At last, about half-past ten of the clock, we came to the top of a brae, and saw lights below us. It seemed a house door stood open and let out a beam of fire and candle-light; and all round the house and steading five or six persons were moving hurriedly about, each carrying a lighted brand.

“James must have tint his wits,” said Alan. “If this was the soldiers instead of you and me, he would be in a bonny mess. But I dare say he’ll have a sentry on the road, and he would ken well enough no soldiers would find the way that we came.”

Hereupon he whistled three times, in a particular manner. It was strange to see how, at the first sound of it, all the moving torches came to a stand, as if the bearers were affrighted; and how, at the third, the bustle began again as before.

Having thus set folks’ minds at rest, we came down the brae, and were met at the yard gate (for this place was like a well-doing farm) by a tall, handsome man of more than fifty, who cried out to Alan in the Gaelic.

“James Stewart,” said Alan, “I will ask ye to speak in Scotch, for here is a young gentleman with me that has nane of the other. This is him,” he added, putting his arm through mine, “a young gentleman of the Lowlands, and a laird in his country too, but I am thinking it will be the better for his health if we give his name the go-by.”

James of the Glens turned to me for a moment, and greeted me courteously enough; the next he had turned to Alan.

“This has been a dreadful accident,” he cried. “It will bring trouble on the country.” And he wrung his hands.

“Hoots!” said Alan, “ye must take the sour with the sweet, man. Colin Roy is dead, and be thankful for that!”

“Ay” said James, “and by my troth, I wish he was alive again! It’s all very fine to blow and boast beforehand; but now it’s done, Alan; and who’s to bear the wyte* of it? The accident fell out in Appin — mind ye that, Alan; it’s Appin that must pay; and I am a man that has a family.”

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* Blame.

While this was going on I looked about me at the servants. Some were on ladders, digging in the thatch of the house or the farm buildings, from which they brought out guns, swords, and different weapons of war; others carried them away; and by the sound of mattock blows from somewhere farther down the brae, I suppose they buried them. Though they were all so busy, there prevailed no kind of order in their efforts; men struggled together for the same gun and ran into each other with their burning torches; and James was continually turning about from his talk with Alan, to cry out orders which were apparently never understood. The faces in the torchlight were like those of people overborne with hurry and panic; and though none spoke above his breath, their speech sounded both anxious and angry.

It was about this time that a lassie came out of the house carrying a pack or bundle; and it has often made me smile to think how Alan's instinct awoke at the mere sight of it.

"What's that the lassie has?" he asked.

"We're just setting the house in order, Alan," said James, in his frightened and somewhat fawning way. "They'll search Appin with candles, and we must have all things straight. We're digging the bit guns and swords into the moss, ye see; and these, I am thinking, will be your ain French clothes. We'll be to bury them, I believe."

"Bury my French clothes!" cried Alan. "Troth, no!" And he laid hold upon the packet and retired into the barn to shift himself, recommending me in the meanwhile to his kinsman.

James carried me accordingly into the kitchen, and sat down with me at table, smiling and talking at first in a very hospitable manner. But presently the gloom returned upon him; he sat frowning and biting his fingers; only remembered me from time to time; and then gave me but a word or two and a poor smile, and back into his private terrors. His wife sat by the fire and wept, with her face in her hands; his eldest son was crouched upon the floor, running over a great mass of papers and now and again setting one alight and burning it to the bitter end; all the while a servant lass with a red face was rummaging about the room, in a blind hurry of fear, and whimpering as she went; and every now and again one of the men would thrust in his face from the yard, and cry for orders.

At last James could keep his seat no longer, and begged my permission to be so unmannerly as walk about. "I am but poor company altogether, sir," says he, "but I can think of nothing but this dreadful accident, and the trouble it is like to bring upon quite innocent persons."

A little after he observed his son burning a paper which he thought should have been kept; and at that his excitement burst out so that it was painful to witness. He struck the lad repeatedly.

"Are you gone gyte?"* he cried. "Do you wish to hang your father?" and forgetful of my presence, carried on at him a long time together in the Gaelic, the young man answering nothing; only the wife, at the name of hanging, throwing her apron over her face and sobbing out louder than before.

* Mad.

This was all wretched for a stranger like myself to hear and see; and I was right glad when Alan returned, looking like himself in his fine French clothes, though (to be sure) they were now grown almost too battered and withered to deserve the name of fine. I was then taken out in my turn by another of the sons, and given that change of clothing of which I had stood so long in need, and a pair of Highland brogues made of deer-leather, rather strange at first, but after a little practice very easy to the feet.

By the time I came back Alan must have told his story; for it seemed understood that I was to fly with him, and they were all busy upon our equipment. They gave us each a sword and pistols, though I professed my inability to use the former; and with these, and some ammunition, a bag of oatmeal, an iron pan, and a bottle of right French brandy, we were ready for the heather. Money, indeed, was lacking. I had about two guineas left; Alan's belt having been despatched by another hand, that trusty messenger had no more than seventeen-pence to his whole fortune; and as for James, it appears he had brought himself so low with journeys to Edinburgh and legal expenses on behalf of the tenants, that he could only scrape together three-and-five-pence-halfpenny, the most of it in coppers.

"This'll no do," said Alan.

"Ye must find a safe bit somewhere near by," said James, "and get word sent to me. Ye see, ye'll have to get this business prettily off, Alan. This is no time to be stayed for a guinea or two. They're sure to get wind of ye, sure to seek ye, and by my way of it, sure to lay on ye the wyte of this day's accident. If it falls on you, it falls on me that am your near kinsman and harboured ye while ye were in the country. And if it comes on me — — " he paused, and bit his fingers, with a white face. "It would be a painful thing for our friends if I was to hang," said he.

"It would be an ill day for Appin," says Alan.

"It's a day that sticks in my throat," said James. "O man, man, man — man Alan! you and me have spoken like two fools!" he cried, striking his hand upon the wall so that the house rang again.

"Well, and that's true, too," said Alan; "and my friend from the Lowlands here" (nodding at me) "gave me a good word upon that head, if I would only have listened to him."

"But see here," said James, returning to his former manner, "if they lay me by the heels, Alan, it's then that you'll be needing the money. For with all that I have said and that you have said, it will look very black against the two of us; do ye mark that? Well, follow me out, and ye'll, I'll see that I'll have to get a paper out against ye mysel'; have to offer a reward for ye; ay, will I! It's a sore thing to do between such near friends; but if I get the dirdum* of this dreadful accident, I'll have to fend for myself, man. Do ye see that?"

* Blame.

He spoke with a pleading earnestness, taking Alan by the breast of the coat.

"Ay" said Alan, "I see that."

"And ye'll have to be clear of the country, Alan — ay, and clear of Scotland — you and your friend from the Lowlands, too. For I'll have to paper your friend from the Lowlands. Ye see that, Alan — say that ye see that!"

I thought Alan flushed a bit. "This is unco hard on me that brought him here, James," said he, throwing his head back. "It's like making me a traitor!"

"Now, Alan, man!" cried James. "Look things in the face! He'll be papered anyway; Mungo Campbell'll be sure to paper him; what matters if I paper him too? And then, Alan, I am a man that has a family." And then, after a little pause on both sides, "And, Alan, it'll be a jury of Campbells," said he.

"There's one thing," said Alan, musingly, "that naebody kens his name."

"Nor yet they shallnae, Alan! There's my hand on that," cried James, for all the world as if he had really known my name and was foregoing some advantage. "But just the habit he was in, and what he looked like, and his age, and the like? I couldnae well do less."

"I wonder at your father's son," cried Alan, sternly. "Would ye sell the lad with a gift? Would ye change his clothes and then betray him?"

"No, no, Alan," said James. "No, no: the habit he took off — the habit Mungo saw him in." But I thought he seemed crestfallen; indeed, he was clutching at every straw, and all the time, I dare say, saw the faces of his hereditary foes on the bench, and in the jury-box, and the gallows in the background.

"Well, sir" says Alan, turning to me, "what say ye to, that? Ye are here under the safeguard of my honour; and it's my part to see nothing done but what shall please you."

"I have but one word to say," said I; "for to all this dispute I am a perfect stranger. But the plain common-sense is to set the blame where it belongs, and that is on the man who fired the shot. Paper him, as ye call it, set the hunt on him; and let honest, innocent folk show their faces in safety." But at this both Alan and James cried out in horror; bidding me hold my tongue, for that was not to be thought of; and asking me what the Camerons would think? (which confirmed me, it must have been a Cameron from Mamore that did the act) and if I did not see that the lad might be caught? "Ye havenae surely thought of that?" said they, with such innocent earnestness, that my hands dropped at my side and I despaired of argument.

"Very well, then," said I, "paper me, if you please, paper Alan, paper King George! We're all three innocent, and that seems to be what's wanted. But at least, sir," said I to James, recovering from my little fit of annoyance, "I am Alan's friend, and if I can be helpful to friends of his, I will not stumble at the risk."

I thought it best to put a fair face on my consent, for I saw Alan troubled; and, besides (thinks I to myself), as soon as my back is turned, they will paper me, as they call it, whether I consent or not. But in this I saw I was wrong; for I had no sooner said the words, than Mrs. Stewart leaped out of her chair, came running over to us, and wept first upon my neck and then on Alan's, blessing God for our goodness to her family.

"As for you, Alan, it was no more than your bounden duty," she said. "But for this lad that has come here and seen us at our worst, and seen the goodman fleeching like a suitor, him that by rights should give his commands like any king — as for you, my lad," she says, "my heart is wae not to have your name, but I have your face; and as long as my heart beats under my bosom, I will keep it, and think of it, and bless it." And with that she kissed me, and burst once more into such sobbing, that I stood abashed.

"Hoot, hoot," said Alan, looking mighty silly. "The day comes unco soon in this month of July; and to-morrow there'll be a fine to-do in Appin, a fine riding of dragoons, and crying of 'Cruachan!'* and running of red-coats; and it behoves you and me to the sooner be gone."

* The rallying-word of the Campbells.

Thereupon we said farewell, and set out again, bending somewhat eastwards, in a fine mild dark night, and over much the same broken country as before.

CHAPTER XX

THE FLIGHT IN THE HEATHER: THE ROCKS

Sometimes we walked, sometimes ran; and as it drew on to morning, walked ever the less and ran the more. Though, upon its face, that country appeared to be a desert, yet there were huts and houses of the people, of which we must have passed more than twenty, hidden in quiet places of the hills. When we came to one of these, Alan would leave me in the way, and go himself and rap upon the side of the house and speak awhile at the window with some sleeper awakened. This was to pass the news; which, in that country, was so much of a duty that Alan must pause to attend to it even while fleeing for his life; and so well attended to by others, that in more than half of the houses where we called they had heard already of the murder. In the others, as well as I could make out (standing back at a distance and hearing a strange tongue), the news was received with more of consternation than surprise.

For all our hurry, day began to come in while we were still far from any shelter. It found us in a prodigious valley, strewn with rocks and where ran a foaming river. Wild mountains stood around it; there grew there neither grass nor trees; and I have sometimes thought since then, that it may have been the valley called Glencoe, where the massacre was in the time of King William. But for the details of our itinerary, I am all to seek; our way lying now by short cuts, now by great detours; our pace being so hurried, our time of journeying usually by night; and the names of such places as I asked and heard being in the Gaelic tongue and the more easily forgotten.

The first peep of morning, then, showed us this horrible place, and I could see Alan knit his brow.

“This is no fit place for you and me,” he said. “This is a place they’re bound to watch.”

And with that he ran harder than ever down to the water-side, in a part where the river was split in two among three rocks. It went through with a horrid thundering that made my belly quake; and there hung over the lynn a little mist of spray. Alan looked neither to the right nor to the left, but jumped clean upon the middle rock and fell there on his hands and knees to check himself, for that rock was small and he might have pitched over on the far side. I had scarce time to measure the distance or to understand the peril before I had followed him, and he had caught and stopped me.

So there we stood, side by side upon a small rock slippery with spray, a far broader leap in front of us, and the river dinning upon all sides. When I saw where I was, there came on me a deadly sickness of fear, and I put my hand over my eyes. Alan took me and shook me; I saw he was speaking, but the roaring of the falls and the trouble of my mind prevented me from hearing; only I saw his face was red with anger, and that he stamped upon the rock. The same look showed me the water raging by, and the mist hanging in the air: and with that I covered my eyes again and shuddered.

The next minute Alan had set the brandy bottle to my lips, and forced me to drink about a gill, which sent the blood into my head again. Then, putting his hands to his mouth, and his mouth to my ear, he shouted, “Hang or drown!” and turning his back upon me, leaped over the farther branch of the stream, and landed safe.

I was now alone upon the rock, which gave me the more room; the brandy was singing in my ears; I had this good example fresh before me, and just wit enough to see that if I did not leap at once, I should never leap at all. I bent low on my knees and flung myself forth, with that kind of anger of despair that has sometimes stood me in stead of courage. Sure enough, it was but my hands that reached the full length; these slipped, caught again, slipped again; and I was sliddering back into the lynn, when Alan seized me, first by the hair, then by the collar, and with a great strain dragged me into safety.

Never a word he said, but set off running again for his life, and I must stagger to my feet and run after him. I had been weary before, but now I was sick and bruised, and partly drunken with the brandy; I kept stumbling as I ran, I had a stitch that came near to overmaster me; and when at last Alan paused under a great rock that stood there among a number of others, it was none too soon for David Balfour.

A great rock I have said; but by rights it was two rocks leaning together at the top, both some twenty feet high, and at the first sight inaccessible. Even Alan (though you may say he had as good as four hands) failed twice in an attempt to climb them; and it was only at the third trial, and then by standing on my shoulders and leaping up with such force as I thought must have broken my collar-bone, that he secured a lodgment. Once there, he let down his leathern girdle; and with the aid of that and a pair of shallow footholds in the rock, I scrambled up beside him.

Then I saw why we had come there; for the two rocks, being both somewhat hollow on the top and sloping one to the other, made a kind of dish or saucer, where as many as three or four men might have lain hidden.

All this while Alan had not said a word, and had run and climbed with such a savage, silent frenzy of hurry, that I knew that he was in mortal fear of some miscarriage. Even now we were on the rock he said nothing, nor so much as relaxed the frowning look upon his face;

but clapped flat down, and keeping only one eye above the edge of our place of shelter scouted all round the compass. The dawn had come quite, clear; we could see the stony sides of the valley, and its bottom, which was bestrewed with rocks, and the river, which went from one side to another, and made white falls; but nowhere the smoke of a house, nor any living creature but some eagles screaming round a cliff.

Then at last Alan smiled.

"Ay" said he, "now we have a chance;" and then looking at me with some amusement. "Ye're no very gleg* at the jumping," said he.

* Brisk.

At this I suppose I coloured with mortification, for he added at once, "Hoots! small blame to ye! To be feared of a thing and yet to do it, is what makes the prettiest kind of a man. And then there was water there, and water's a thing that dauntons even me. No, no," said Alan, "it's no you that's to blame, it's me."

I asked him why.

"Why," said he, "I have proved myself a gomeral this night. For first of all I take a wrong road, and that in my own country of Appin; so that the day has caught us where we should never have been; and thanks to that, we lie here in some danger and mair discomfort. And next (which is the worst of the two, for a man that has been so much among the heather as myself) I have come wanting a water-bottle, and here we lie for a long summer's day with naething but neat spirit. Ye may think that a small matter; but before it comes night, David, ye'll give me news of it."

I was anxious to redeem my character, and offered, if he would pour out the brandy, to run down and fill the bottle at the river.

"I wouldnae waste the good spirit either," says he. "It's been a good friend to you this night; or in my poor opinion, ye would still be cocking on yon stone. And what's mair," says he, "ye may have observed (you that's a man of so much penetration) that Alan Breck Stewart was perhaps walking quicker than his ordinar'."

"You!" I cried, "you were running fit to burst."

"Was I so?" said he. "Well, then, ye may depend upon it, there was nae time to be lost. And now here is enough said; gang you to your sleep, lad, and I'll watch."

Accordingly, I lay down to sleep; a little peaty earth had drifted in between the top of the two rocks, and some bracken grew there, to be a bed to me; the last thing I heard was still the crying of the eagles.

I dare say it would be nine in the morning when I was roughly awakened, and found Alan's hand pressed upon my mouth.

"Wheesht!" he whispered. "Ye were snoring."

"Well," said I, surprised at his anxious and dark face, "and why not?"

He peered over the edge of the rock, and signed to me to do the like.

It was now high day, cloudless, and very hot. The valley was as clear as in a picture. About half a mile up the water was a camp of red-coats; a big fire blazed in their midst, at which some were cooking; and near by, on the top of a rock about as high as ours, there stood a sentry, with the sun sparkling on his arms. All the way down along the river-side were posted other sentries; here near together, there widelier scattered; some planted like the first, on places of command, some on the ground level and marching and counter-marching, so as to meet half-way. Higher up the glen, where the ground was more open, the chain of posts was continued by horse-soldiers, whom we could see in the distance riding to and fro. Lower down, the infantry continued; but as the stream was suddenly swelled by the confluence of a considerable burn, they were more widely set, and only watched the fords and stepping-stones.

I took but one look at them, and ducked again into my place. It was strange indeed to see this valley, which had lain so solitary in the hour of dawn, bristling with arms and dotted with the red coats and breeches.

"Ye see," said Alan, "this was what I was afraid of, Davie: that they would watch the burn-side. They began to come in about two hours ago, and, man! but ye're a grand hand at the sleeping! We're in a narrow place. If they get up the sides of the hill, they could easy spy us with a glass; but if they'll only keep in the foot of the valley, we'll do yet. The posts are thinner down the water; and, come night, we'll try our hand at getting by them."

"And what are we to do till night?" I asked.

"Lie here," says he, "and birstle."

That one good Scotch word, "birstle," was indeed the most of the story of the day that we had now to pass. You are to remember that we lay on the bare top of a rock, like scones upon a girdle; the sun beat upon us cruelly; the rock grew so heated, a man could scarce endure the touch of it; and the little patch of earth and fern, which kept cooler, was only large enough for one at a time. We took turn about to lie on the naked rock, which was indeed like the position of that saint that was martyred on a gridiron; and it ran in my mind how strange it was, that in the same climate and at only a few days' distance, I should have suffered so cruelly, first from cold upon my island and now from heat upon this rock.

All the while we had no water, only raw brandy for a drink, which was worse than nothing; but we kept the bottle as cool as we could, burying it in the earth, and got some relief by bathing our breasts and temples.

The soldiers kept stirring all day in the bottom of the valley, now changing guard, now in patrolling parties hunting among the rocks. These lay round in so great a number, that to look for men among them was like looking for a needle in a bottle of hay; and being so hopeless a task, it was gone about with the less care. Yet we could see the soldiers pike their bayonets among the heather, which sent a cold thrill into my vitals; and they would sometimes hang about our rock, so that we scarce dared to breathe.

It was in this way that I first heard the right English speech; one fellow as he went by actually clapping his hand upon the sunny face of the rock on which we lay, and plucking it off again with an oath. “I tell you it’s ‘ot,” says he; and I was amazed at the clipping tones and the odd sing-song in which he spoke, and no less at that strange trick of dropping out the letter “h.” To be sure, I had heard Ransome; but he had taken his ways from all sorts of people, and spoke so imperfectly at the best, that I set down the most of it to childishness. My surprise was all the greater to hear that manner of speaking in the mouth of a grown man; and indeed I have never grown used to it; nor yet altogether with the English grammar, as perhaps a very critical eye might here and there spy out even in these memoirs.

The tediousness and pain of these hours upon the rock grew only the greater as the day went on; the rock getting still the hotter and the sun fiercer. There were giddiness, and sickness, and sharp pangs like rheumatism, to be supported. I minded then, and have often minded since, on the lines in our Scotch psalm: —

“The moon by night thee shall not smite,
Nor yet the sun by day;”

and indeed it was only by God’s blessing that we were neither of us sun-smitten.

At last, about two, it was beyond men’s bearing, and there was now temptation to resist, as well as pain to thole. For the sun being now got a little into the west, there came a patch of shade on the east side of our rock, which was the side sheltered from the soldiers.

“As well one death as another,” said Alan, and slipped over the edge and dropped on the ground on the shadowy side.

I followed him at once, and instantly fell all my length, so weak was I and so giddy with that long exposure. Here, then, we lay for an hour or two, aching from head to foot, as weak as water, and lying quite naked to the eye of any soldier who should have strolled that way. None came, however, all passing by on the other side; so that our rock continued to be our shield even in this new position.

Presently we began again to get a little strength; and as the soldiers were now lying closer along the river-side, Alan proposed that we should try a start. I was by this time afraid of but one thing in the world; and that was to be set back upon the rock; anything else was welcome to me; so we got ourselves at once in marching order, and began to slip from rock to rock one after the other, now crawling flat on our bellies in the shade, now making a run for it, heart in mouth.

The soldiers, having searched this side of the valley after a fashion, and being perhaps somewhat sleepy with the sultriness of the afternoon, had now laid by much of their vigilance, and stood dozing at their posts or only kept a look-out along the banks of the river; so that in this way, keeping down the valley and at the same time towards the mountains, we drew steadily away from their neighbourhood. But the business was the most wearing I had ever taken part in. A man had need of a hundred eyes in every part of him, to keep concealed in that uneven country and within cry of so many and scattered sentries. When we must pass an open place, quickness was not all, but a swift judgment not only of the lie of the whole country, but of the solidity of every stone on which we must set foot; for the afternoon was now fallen so breathless that the rolling of a pebble sounded abroad like a pistol shot, and would start the echo calling among the hills and cliffs.

By sundown we had made some distance, even by our slow rate of progress, though to be sure the sentry on the rock was still plainly in our view. But now we came on something that put all fears out of season; and that was a deep rushing burn, that tore down, in that part, to join the glen river. At the sight of this we cast ourselves on the ground and plunged head and shoulders in the water; and I cannot tell which was the more pleasant, the great shock as the cool stream went over us, or the greed with which we drank of it.

We lay there (for the banks hid us), drank again and again, bathed our chests, let our wrists trail in the running water till they ached with the chill; and at last, being wonderfully renewed, we got out the meal-bag and made drammach in the iron pan. This, though it is but cold water mingled with oatmeal, yet makes a good enough dish for a hungry man; and where there are no means of making fire, or (as in our case) good reason for not making one, it is the chief stand-by of those who have taken to the heather.

As soon as the shadow of the night had fallen, we set forth again, at first with the same caution, but presently with more boldness, standing our full height and stepping out at a good pace of walking. The way was very intricate, lying up the steep sides of mountains and along the brows of cliffs; clouds had come in with the sunset, and the night was dark and cool; so that I walked without much fatigue, but in continual fear of falling and rolling down the mountains, and with no guess at our direction.

The moon rose at last and found us still on the road; it was in its last quarter, and was long beset with clouds; but after awhile shone out and showed me many dark heads of mountains, and was reflected far underneath us on the narrow arm of a sea-loch.

At this sight we both paused: I struck with wonder to find myself so high and walking (as it seemed to me) upon clouds; Alan to make sure of his direction.

Seemingly he was well pleased, and he must certainly have judged us out of ear-shot of all our enemies; for throughout the rest of our night-march he beguiled the way with whistling of many tunes, warlike, merry, plaintive; reel tunes that made the foot go faster; tunes of my own south country that made me fain to be home from my adventures; and all these, on the great, dark, desert mountains, making company upon the way.

CHAPTER XXI

THE FLIGHT IN THE HEATHER: THE HEUGH OF CORRYNAKIEGH

Early as day comes in the beginning of July, it was still dark when we reached our destination, a cleft in the head of a great mountain, with a water running through the midst, and upon the one hand a shallow cave in a rock. Birches grew there in a thin, pretty wood, which a little farther on was changed into a wood of pines. The burn was full of trout; the wood of cushat-doves; on the open side of the mountain beyond, whaups would be always whistling, and cuckoos were plentiful. From the mouth of the cleft we looked down upon a part of Mamore, and on the sea-loch that divides that country from Appin; and this from so great a height as made it my continual wonder and pleasure to sit and behold them.

The name of the cleft was the Heugh of Corrynakiegh; and although from its height and being so near upon the sea, it was often beset with clouds, yet it was on the whole a pleasant place, and the five days we lived in it went happily.

We slept in the cave, making our bed of heather bushes which we cut for that purpose, and covering ourselves with Alan's great-coat. There was a low concealed place, in a turning of the glen, where we were so bold as to make fire: so that we could warm ourselves when the clouds set in, and cook hot porridge, and grill the little trouts that we caught with our hands under the stones and overhanging banks of the burn. This was indeed our chief pleasure and business; and not only to save our meal against worse times, but with a rivalry that much amused us, we spent a great part of our days at the water-side, stripped to the waist and groping about or (as they say) guddling for these fish. The largest we got might have been a quarter of a pound; but they were of good flesh and flavour, and when broiled upon the coals, lacked only a little salt to be delicious.

In any by-time Alan must teach me to use my sword, for my ignorance had much distressed him; and I think besides, as I had sometimes the upper-hand of him in the fishing, he was not sorry to turn to an exercise where he had so much the upper-hand of me. He made it somewhat more of a pain than need have been, for he stormed at me all through the lessons in a very violent manner of scolding, and would push me so close that I made sure he must run me through the body. I was often tempted to turn tail, but held my ground for all that, and got some profit of my lessons; if it was but to stand on guard with an assured countenance, which is often all that is required. So, though

I could never in the least please my master, I was not altogether displeased with myself.

In the meanwhile, you are not to suppose that we neglected our chief business, which was to get away.

“It will be many a long day,” Alan said to me on our first morning, “before the red-coats think upon seeking Corrynakiegh; so now we must get word sent to James, and he must find the siller for us.”

“And how shall we send that word?” says I. “We are here in a desert place, which yet we dare not leave; and unless ye get the fowls of the air to be your messengers, I see not what we shall be able to do.”

“Ay?” said Alan. “Ye’re a man of small contrivance, David.”

Thereupon he fell in a muse, looking in the embers of the fire; and presently, getting a piece of wood, he fashioned it in a cross, the four ends of which he blackened on the coals. Then he looked at me a little shyly.

“Could ye lend me my button?” says he. “It seems a strange thing to ask a gift again, but I own I am laith to cut another.”

I gave him the button; whereupon he strung it on a strip of his great-coat which he had used to bind the cross; and tying in a little sprig of birch and another of fir, he looked upon his work with satisfaction.

“Now,” said he, “there is a little clachan” (what is called a hamlet in the English) “not very far from Corrynakiegh, and it has the name of Koalisnacoan. There there are living many friends of mine whom I could trust with my life, and some that I am no just so sure of. Ye see, David, there will be money set upon our heads; James himsel’ is to set money on them; and as for the Campbells, they would never spare siller where there was a Stewart to be hurt. If it was otherwise, I would go down to Koalisnacoan whatever, and trust my life into these people’s hands as lightly as I would trust another with my glove.”

“But being so?” said I.

“Being so,” said he, “I would as lief they didnae see me. There’s bad folk everywhere, and what’s far worse, weak ones. So when it comes dark again, I will steal down into that clachan, and set this that I have been making in the window of a good friend of mine, John Breck Maccoll, a bouman* of Appin’s.”

*A bouman is a tenant who takes stock from the landlord and shares with him the increase.

“With all my heart,” says I; “and if he finds it, what is he to think?”

“Well,” says Alan, “I wish he was a man of more penetration, for by my troth I am afraid he will make little enough of it! But this is what I have in my mind. This cross is something in the nature of the crosstarrie, or fiery cross, which is the signal of gathering in our clans; yet he will know well enough the clan is not to rise, for there it is standing in his window, and no word with it. So he will say to himsel', THE CLAN IS NOT TO RISE, BUT THERE IS SOMETHING. Then he will see my button, and that was Duncan Stewart's. And then he will say to himsel', THE SON OF DUNCAN IS IN THE HEATHER, AND HAS NEED OF ME."

"Well," said I, "it may be. But even supposing so, there is a good deal of heather between here and the Forth."

"And that is a very true word," says Alan. "But then John Breck will see the sprig of birch and the sprig of pine; and he will say to himsel' (if he is a man of any penetration at all, which I misdoubt), ALAN WILL BE LYING IN A WOOD WHICH IS BOTH OF PINES AND BIRCHES. Then he will think to himsel', THAT IS NOT SO VERY RIFE HEREABOUT; and then he will come and give us a look up in Corrynakiegh. And if he does not, David, the devil may fly away with him, for what I care; for he will no be worth the salt to his porridge."

"Eh, man," said I, drolling with him a little, "you're very ingenious! But would it not be simpler for you to write him a few words in black and white?"

"And that is an excellent observe, Mr. Balfour of Shaws," says Alan, drolling with me; "and it would certainly be much simpler for me to write to him, but it would be a sore job for John Breck to read it. He would have to go to the school for two-three years; and it's possible we might be wearied waiting on him."

So that night Alan carried down his fiery cross and set it in the bouman's window. He was troubled when he came back; for the dogs had barked and the folk run out from their houses; and he thought he had heard a clatter of arms and seen a red-coat come to one of the doors. On all accounts we lay the next day in the borders of the wood and kept a close look-out, so that if it was John Breck that came we might be ready to guide him, and if it was the red-coats we should have time to get away.

About noon a man was to be spied, straggling up the open side of the mountain in the sun, and looking round him as he came, from under his hand. No sooner had Alan seen him than he whistled; the man turned and came a little towards us: then Alan would give another "peep!" and the man would come still nearer; and so by the sound of whistling, he was guided to the spot where we lay.

He was a ragged, wild, bearded man, about forty, grossly disfigured with the small pox, and looked both dull and savage. Although his English was very bad and broken, yet Alan (according to his very handsome use, whenever I was by) would suffer him to speak no Gaelic. Perhaps the strange language made him appear more backward than he really was; but I thought he had little good-will to serve us, and what he had was the child of terror.

Alan would have had him carry a message to James; but the bouman would hear of no message. “She was forget it,” he said in his screaming voice; and would either have a letter or wash his hands of us.

I thought Alan would be gravelled at that, for we lacked the means of writing in that desert.

But he was a man of more resources than I knew; searched the wood until he found the quill of a cushat-dove, which he shaped into a pen; made himself a kind of ink with gunpowder from his horn and water from the running stream; and tearing a corner from his French military commission (which he carried in his pocket, like a talisman to keep him from the gallows), he sat down and wrote as follows:

“DEAR KINSMAN, — Please send the money by the bearer to the place he kens of.

“Your affectionate cousin,

“A. S.”

This he intrusted to the bouman, who promised to make what manner of speed he best could, and carried it off with him down the hill.

He was three full days gone, but about five in the evening of the third, we heard a whistling in the wood, which Alan answered; and presently the bouman came up the water-side, looking for us, right and left. He seemed less sulky than before, and indeed he was no doubt well pleased to have got to the end of such a dangerous commission.

He gave us the news of the country; that it was alive with red-coats; that arms were being found, and poor folk brought in trouble daily; and that James and some of his servants were already clapped in prison at Fort William, under strong suspicion of complicity. It seemed it was noised on all sides that Alan Breck had fired the shot; and there was a bill issued for both him and me, with one hundred pounds reward.

This was all as bad as could be; and the little note the bouman had carried us from Mrs. Stewart was of a miserable sadness. In it she besought Alan not to let himself be captured, assuring him, if he fell in the hands of the troops, both he and James were no better than dead men. The money she had sent was all that she could beg or borrow, and she prayed heaven we could be doing with it. Lastly, she said, she enclosed us one of the bills in which we were described.

This we looked upon with great curiosity and not a little fear, partly as a man may look in a mirror, partly as he might look into the barrel of an enemy’s gun to judge if it be truly aimed. Alan was advertised as “a small, pock-marked, active man of thirty-five or thereby, dressed in a feathered hat, a French side-coat of blue with silver buttons, and lace a great deal tarnished, a red waistcoat and breeches of black, shag;" and I as "a tall strong lad of about eighteen, wearing an old blue coat, very ragged, an old Highland bonnet, a long homespun waistcoat, blue breeches; his legs bare, low-country shoes, wanting the toes; speaks like a Lowlander, and has no beard."

Alan was well enough pleased to see his finery so fully remembered and set down; only when he came to the word tarnish, he looked upon his lace like one a little mortified. As for myself, I thought I cut a miserable figure in the bill; and yet was well enough pleased too, for since I had changed these rags, the description had ceased to be a danger and become a source of safety.

"Alan," said I, "you should change your clothes."

"Na, troth!" said Alan, "I have nae others. A fine sight I would be, if I went back to France in a bonnet!"

This put a second reflection in my mind: that if I were to separate from Alan and his tell-tale clothes I should be safe against arrest, and might go openly about my business. Nor was this all; for suppose I was arrested when I was alone, there was little against me; but suppose I was taken in company with the reputed murderer, my case would begin to be grave. For generosity's sake I dare not speak my mind upon this head; but I thought of it none the less.

I thought of it all the more, too, when the bouman brought out a green purse with four guineas in gold, and the best part of another in small change. True, it was more than I had. But then Alan, with less than five guineas, had to get as far as France; I, with my less than two, not beyond Queensferry; so that taking things in their proportion, Alan's society was not only a peril to my life, but a burden on my purse.

But there was no thought of the sort in the honest head of my companion. He believed he was serving, helping, and protecting me. And what could I do but hold my peace, and chafe, and take my chance of it?

"It's little enough," said Alan, putting the purse in his pocket, "but it'll do my business. And now, John Breck, if ye will hand me over my button, this gentleman and me will be for taking the road."

But the bouman, after feeling about in a hairy purse that hung in front of him in the Highland manner (though he wore otherwise the Lowland habit, with sea-trousers), began to roll his eyes strangely, and at last said, "Her nainsel will loss it," meaning he thought he had lost it.

"What!" cried Alan, "you will lose my button, that was my father's before me? Now I will tell you what is in my mind, John Breck: it is in my mind this is the worst day's work that ever ye did since ye was born."

And as Alan spoke, he set his hands on his knees and looked at the bouman with a smiling mouth, and that dancing light in his eyes that meant mischief to his enemies.

Perhaps the bouman was honest enough; perhaps he had meant to cheat and then, finding himself alone with two of us in a desert place, cast back to honesty as being safer; at least, and all at once, he seemed to find that button and handed it to Alan.

“Well, and it is a good thing for the honour of the Maccolls,” said Alan, and then to me, “Here is my button back again, and I thank you for parting with it, which is of a piece with all your friendships to me.” Then he took the warmest parting of the bouman. “For,” says he, “ye have done very well by me, and set your neck at a venture, and I will always give you the name of a good man.”

Lastly, the bouman took himself off by one way; and Alan I (getting our chattels together) struck into another to resume our flight.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FLIGHT IN THE HEATHER: THE MOOR

Some seven hours' incessant, hard travelling brought us early in the morning to the end of a range of mountains. In front of us there lay a piece of low, broken, desert land, which we must now cross. The sun was not long up, and shone straight in our eyes; a little, thin mist went up from the face of the moorland like a smoke; so that (as Alan said) there might have been twenty squadron of dragoons there and we none the wiser.

We sat down, therefore, in a howe of the hill-side till the mist should have risen, and made ourselves a dish of drammach, and held a council of war.

"David," said Alan, "this is the kittle bit. Shall we lie here till it comes night, or shall we risk it, and stave on ahead?"

"Well," said I, "I am tired indeed, but I could walk as far again, if that was all."

"Ay, but it isnae," said Alan, "nor yet the half. This is how we stand: Appin's fair death to us. To the south it's all Campbells, and no to be thought of. To the north; well, there's no muckle to be gained by going north; neither for you, that wants to get to Queensferry, nor yet for me, that wants to get to France. Well, then, we'll can strike east."

"East be it!" says I, quite cheerily; but I was thinking in to myself: "O, man, if you would only take one point of the compass and let me take any other, it would be the best for both of us."

"Well, then, east, ye see, we have the muirs," said Alan. "Once there, David, it's mere pitch-and-toss. Out on yon bald, naked, flat place, where can a body turn to? Let the red-coats come over a hill, they can spy you miles away; and the sorrow's in their horses' heels, they would soon ride you down. It's no good place, David; and I'm free to say, it's worse by daylight than by dark."

"Alan," said I, "hear my way of it. Appin's death for us; we have none too much money, nor yet meal; the longer they seek, the nearer they may guess where we are; it's all a risk; and I give my word to go ahead until we drop."

Alan was delighted. "There are whiles," said he, "when ye are altogether too canny and Whiggish to be company for a gentleman like me; but there come other whiles when ye show yoursel' a mettle spark; and it's then, David, that I love ye like a brother."

The mist rose and died away, and showed us that country lying as waste as the sea; only the moorfowl and the pewees crying upon it, and far over to the east, a herd of deer, moving like dots. Much of it was red with heather; much of the rest broken up with bogs and hags and peaty pools; some had been burnt black in a heath fire; and in another place there was quite a forest of dead firs, standing like skeletons. A wearier-looking desert man never saw; but at least it was clear of troops, which was our point.

We went down accordingly into the waste, and began to make our toilsome and devious travel towards the eastern verge. There were the tops of mountains all round (you are to remember) from whence we might be spied at any moment; so it behoved us to keep in the hollow parts of the moor, and when these turned aside from our direction to move upon its naked face with infinite care. Sometimes, for half an hour together, we must crawl from one heather bush to another, as hunters do when they are hard upon the deer. It was a clear day again, with a blazing sun; the water in the brandy bottle was soon gone; and altogether, if I had guessed what it would be to crawl half the time upon my belly and to walk much of the rest stooping nearly to the knees, I should certainly have held back from such a killing enterprise.

Toiling and resting and toiling again, we wore away the morning; and about noon lay down in a thick bush of heather to sleep. Alan took the first watch; and it seemed to me I had scarce closed my eyes before I was shaken up to take the second. We had no clock to go by; and Alan stuck a sprig of heath in the ground to serve instead; so that as soon as the shadow of the bush should fall so far to the east, I might know to rouse him. But I was by this time so weary that I could have slept twelve hours at a stretch; I had the taste of sleep in my throat; my joints slept even when my mind was waking; the hot smell of the heather, and the drone of the wild bees, were like possets to me; and every now and again I would give a jump and find I had been dozing.

The last time I woke I seemed to come back from farther away, and thought the sun had taken a great start in the heavens. I looked at the sprig of heath, and at that I could have cried aloud: for I saw I had betrayed my trust. My head was nearly turned with fear and shame; and at what I saw, when I looked out around me on the moor, my heart was like dying in my body. For sure enough, a body of horse-soldiers had come down during my sleep, and were drawing near to us from the south-east, spread out in the shape of a fan and riding their horses to and fro in the deep parts of the heather.

When I waked Alan, he glanced first at the soldiers, then at the mark and the position of the sun, and knitted his brows with a sudden, quick look, both ugly and anxious, which was all the reproach I had of him.

“What are we to do now?” I asked.

"We'll have to play at being hares," said he. "Do ye see yon mountain?" pointing to one on the north-eastern sky.

"Ay," said I.

"Well, then," says he, "let us strike for that. Its name is Ben Alder. it is a wild, desert mountain full of hills and hollows, and if we can win to it before the morn, we may do yet."

"But, Alan," cried I, "that will take us across the very coming of the soldiers!"

"I ken that fine," said he; "but if we are driven back on Appin, we are two dead men. So now, David man, be brisk!"

With that he began to run forward on his hands and knees with an incredible quickness, as though it were his natural way of going. All the time, too, he kept winding in and out in the lower parts of the moorland where we were the best concealed. Some of these had been burned or at least scathed with fire; and there rose in our faces (which were close to the ground) a blinding, choking dust as fine as smoke. The water was long out; and this posture of running on the hands and knees brings an overmastering weakness and weariness, so that the joints ache and the wrists faint under your weight.

Now and then, indeed, where was a big bush of heather, we lay awhile, and panted, and putting aside the leaves, looked back at the dragoons. They had not spied us, for they held straight on; a half-troop, I think, covering about two miles of ground, and beating it mighty thoroughly as they went. I had awakened just in time; a little later, and we must have fled in front of them, instead of escaping on one side. Even as it was, the least misfortune might betray us; and now and again, when a grouse rose out of the heather with a clap of wings, we lay as still as the dead and were afraid to breathe.

The aching and faintness of my body, the labouring of my heart, the soreness of my hands, and the smarting of my throat and eyes in the continual smoke of dust and ashes, had soon grown to be so unbearable that I would gladly have given up. Nothing but the fear of Alan lent me enough of a false kind of courage to continue. As for himself (and you are to bear in mind that he was cumbered with a great-coat) he had first turned crimson, but as time went on the redness began to be mingled with patches of white; his breath cried and whistled as it came; and his voice, when he whispered his observations in my ear during our halts, sounded like nothing human. Yet he seemed in no way dashed in spirits, nor did he at all abate in his activity, so that I was driven, to marvel at the man's endurance.

At length, in the first gloaming of the night, we heard a trumpet sound, and looking back from among the heather, saw the troop beginning to collect. A little after, they had built a fire and camped for the night, about the middle of the waste.

At this I begged and besought that we might lie down and sleep.

"There shall be no sleep the night!" said Alan. "From now on, these weary dragoons of yours will keep the crown of the muirland, and none will get out of Appin but winged fowls. We got through in the nick of time, and shall we jeopard what we've gained? Na, na, when the day comes, it shall find you and me in a fast place on Ben Alder."

"Alan," I said, "it's not the want of will: it's the strength that I want. If I could, I would; but as sure as I'm alive I cannot."

"Very well, then," said Alan. "I'll carry ye."

I looked to see if he were jesting; but no, the little man was in dead earnest; and the sight of so much resolution shamed me.

"Lead away!" said I. "I'll follow."

He gave me one look as much as to say, "Well done, David!" and off he set again at his top speed.

It grew cooler and even a little darker (but not much) with the coming of the night. The sky was cloudless; it was still early in July, and pretty far north; in the darkest part of that night, you would have needed pretty good eyes to read, but for all that, I have often seen it darker in a winter mid-day. Heavy dew fell and drenched the moor like rain; and this refreshed me for a while. When we stopped to breathe, and I had time to see all about me, the clearness and sweetness of the night, the shapes of the hills like things asleep, and the fire dwindling away behind us, like a bright spot in the midst of the moor, anger would come upon me in a clap that I must still drag myself in agony and eat the dust like a worm.

By what I have read in books, I think few that have held a pen were ever really wearied, or they would write of it more strongly. I had no care of my life, neither past nor future, and I scarce remembered there was such a lad as David Balfour. I did not think of myself, but just of each fresh step which I was sure would be my last, with despair — and of Alan, who was the cause of it, with hatred. Alan was in the right trade as a soldier; this is the officer's part to make men continue to do things, they know not wherefore, and when, if the choice was offered, they would lie down where they were and be killed. And I dare say I would have made a good enough private; for in these last hours it never occurred to me that I had any choice but just to obey as long as I was able, and die obeying.

Day began to come in, after years, I thought; and by that time we were past the greatest danger, and could walk upon our feet like men, instead of crawling like brutes. But, dear heart have mercy! what a pair we must have made, going double like old grandfathers, stumbling like babes, and as white as dead folk. Never a word passed between us; each set his mouth and kept his eyes in front of him, and lifted up his foot and set it down again, like people lifting weights at a country play;* all the while, with the moorfowl crying "peep!" in the heather, and the light coming slowly clearer in the east.

* Village fair.

I say Alan did as I did. Not that ever I looked at him, for I had enough ado to keep my feet; but because it is plain he must have been as stupid with weariness as myself, and looked as little where we were going, or we should not have walked into an ambush like blind men.

It fell in this way. We were going down a heathery brae, Alan leading and I following a pace or two behind, like a fiddler and his wife; when upon a sudden the heather gave a rustle, three or four ragged men leaped out, and the next moment we were lying on our backs, each with a dirk at his throat.

I don't think I cared; the pain of this rough handling was quite swallowed up by the pains of which I was already full; and I was too glad to have stopped walking to mind about a dirk. I lay looking up in the face of the man that held me; and I mind his face was black with the sun, and his eyes very light, but I was not afraid of him. I heard Alan and another whispering in the Gaelic; and what they said was all one to me.

Then the dirks were put up, our weapons were taken away, and we were set face to face, sitting in the heather.

"They are Cluny's men," said Alan. "We couldnae have fallen better. We're just to bide here with these, which are his out-sentries, till they can get word to the chief of my arrival."

Now Cluny Macpherson, the chief of the clan Vourich, had been one of the leaders of the great rebellion six years before; there was a price on his life; and I had supposed him long ago in France, with the rest of the heads of that desperate party. Even tired as I was, the surprise of what I heard half wakened me.

"What," I cried, "is Cluny still here?"

"Ay, is he so!" said Alan. "Still in his own country and kept by his own clan. King George can do no more."

I think I would have asked farther, but Alan gave me the put-off. "I am rather wearied," he said, "and I would like fine to get a sleep." And without more words, he rolled on his face in a deep heather bush, and seemed to sleep at once.

There was no such thing possible for me. You have heard grasshoppers whirring in the grass in the summer time? Well, I had no sooner closed my eyes, than my body, and above all my head, belly, and wrists, seemed to be filled with whirring grasshoppers; and I must open my eyes again at once, and tumble and toss, and sit up and lie down; and look at the sky which dazzled me, or at Cluny's wild and dirty sentries, peering out over the top of the brae and chattering to each other in the Gaelic.

That was all the rest I had, until the messenger returned; when, as it appeared that Cluny would be glad to receive us, we must get once more upon our feet and set forward. Alan was in excellent good spirits, much refreshed by his sleep, very hungry, and looking pleasantly forward to a dram and a dish of hot collops, of which, it seems, the messenger had brought him word. For my part, it made me sick to hear of eating. I had been dead-heavy before, and now I felt a kind of dreadful lightness, which would not suffer me to walk. I drifted like a gossamer; the ground seemed to me a cloud, the hills a feather-weight, the air to have a current, like a running burn, which carried me to and fro. With all that, a sort of horror of despair sat on my mind, so that I could have wept at my own helplessness.

I saw Alan knitting his brows at me, and supposed it was in anger; and that gave me a pang of light-headed fear, like what a child may have. I remember, too, that I was smiling, and could not stop smiling, hard as I tried; for I thought it was out of place at such a time. But my good companion had nothing in his mind but kindness; and the next moment, two of the gillies had me by the arms, and I began to be carried forward with great swiftness (or so it appeared to me, although I dare say it was slowly enough in truth), through a labyrinth of dreary glens and hollows and into the heart of that dismal mountain of Ben Alder.

CHAPTER XXIII

CLUNY'S CAGE

We came at last to the foot of an exceeding steep wood, which scrambled up a craggy hillside, and was crowned by a naked precipice.

"It's here," said one of the guides, and we struck up hill.

The trees clung upon the slope, like sailors on the shrouds of a ship, and their trunks were like the rounds of a ladder, by which we mounted.

Quite at the top, and just before the rocky face of the cliff sprang above the foliage, we found that strange house which was known in the country as "Cluny's Cage." The trunks of several trees had been wattled across, the intervals strengthened with stakes, and the ground behind this barricade levelled up with earth to make the floor. A tree, which grew out from the hillside, was the living centre-beam of the roof. The walls were of wattle and covered with moss. The whole house had something of an egg shape; and it half hung, half stood in that steep, hillside thicket, like a wasp's nest in a green hawthorn.

Within, it was large enough to shelter five or six persons with some comfort. A projection of the cliff had been cunningly employed to be the fireplace; and the smoke rising against the face of the rock, and being not dissimilar in colour, readily escaped notice from below.

This was but one of Cluny's hiding-places; he had caves, besides, and underground chambers in several parts of his country; and following the reports of his scouts, he moved from one to another as the soldiers drew near or moved away. By this manner of living, and thanks to the affection of his clan, he had not only stayed all this time in safety, while so many others had fled or been taken and slain: but stayed four or five years longer, and only went to France at last by the express command of his master. There he soon died; and it is strange to reflect that he may have regretted his Cage upon Ben Alder.

When we came to the door he was seated by his rock chimney, watching a gillie about some cookery. He was mighty plainly habited, with a knitted nightcap drawn over his ears, and smoked a foul cutty pipe. For all that he had the manners of a king, and it was quite a sight to see him rise out of his place to welcome us.

"Well, Mr. Stewart, come awa', sir!" said he, "and bring in your friend that as yet I dinna ken the name of."

"And how is yourself, Cluny?" said Alan. "I hope ye do brawly, sir. And I am proud to see ye, and to present to ye my friend the Laird of Shaws, Mr. David Balfour."

Alan never referred to my estate without a touch of a sneer, when we were alone; but with strangers, he rang the words out like a herald.

"Step in by, the both of ye, gentlemen," says Cluny. "I make ye welcome to my house, which is a queer, rude place for certain, but one where I have entertained a royal personage, Mr. Stewart — ye doubtless ken the personage I have in my eye. We'll take a dram for luck, and as soon as this handless man of mine has the collops ready, we'll dine and take a hand at the cartes as gentlemen should. My life is a bit driegh," says he, pouring out the brandy; "I see little company, and sit and twirl my thumbs, and mind upon a great day that is gone by, and weary for another great day that we all hope will be upon the road. And so here's a toast to ye: The Restoration!"

Thereupon we all touched glasses and drank. I am sure I wished no ill to King George; and if he had been there himself in proper person, it's like he would have done as I did. No sooner had I taken out the drain than I felt hugely better, and could look on and listen, still a little mistily perhaps, but no longer with the same groundless horror and distress of mind.

It was certainly a strange place, and we had a strange host. In his long hiding, Cluny had grown to have all manner of precise habits, like those of an old maid. He had a particular place, where no one else must sit; the Cage was arranged in a particular way, which none must disturb; cookery was one of his chief fancies, and even while he was greeting us in, he kept an eye to the collops.

It appears, he sometimes visited or received visits from his wife and one or two of his nearest friends, under the cover of night; but for the more part lived quite alone, and communicated only with his sentinels and the gillies that waited on him in the Cage. The first thing in the morning, one of them, who was a barber, came and shaved him, and gave him the news of the country, of which he was immoderately greedy. There was no end to his questions; he put them as earnestly as a child; and at some of the answers, laughed out of all bounds of reason, and would break out again laughing at the mere memory, hours after the barber was gone.

To be sure, there might have been a purpose in his questions; for though he was thus sequestered, and like the other landed gentlemen of Scotland, stripped by the late Act of Parliament of legal powers, he still exercised a patriarchal justice in his clan. Disputes were brought to him in his hiding-hole to be decided; and the men of his country, who would have snapped their fingers at the Court of Session, laid aside revenge and paid down money at the bare word of this forfeited and hunted outlaw. When he was angered, which was often enough, he gave his commands and breathed threats of punishment like any, king; and his gillies trembled and crouched away from him like children before a hasty father. With each of them, as he entered, he ceremoniously shook hands, both parties touching their bonnets at the same time in a military manner. Altogether, I had a fair chance to see some of the inner workings of a Highland clan; and this with a proscribed, fugitive chief; his country conquered; the troops riding upon all sides in quest of him, sometimes within a mile of where he lay; and when the least of the ragged fellows whom he rated and threatened, could have made a fortune by betraying him.

On that first day, as soon as the collops were ready, Cluny gave them with his own hand a squeeze of a lemon (for he was well supplied with luxuries) and bade us draw in to our meal.

"They," said he, meaning the collops, "are such as I gave his Royal Highness in this very house; bating the lemon juice, for at that time we were glad to get the meat and never fashed for kitchen.* Indeed, there were mair dragoons than lemons in my country in the year forty-six."

* Condiment.

I do not know if the collops were truly very good, but my heart rose against the sight of them, and I could eat but little. All the while Cluny entertained us with stories of Prince Charlie's stay in the Cage, giving us the very words of the speakers, and rising from his place to show us where they stood. By these, I gathered the Prince was a gracious, spirited boy, like the son of a race of polite kings, but not so wise as Solomon. I gathered, too, that while he was in the Cage, he was often drunk; so the fault that has since, by all accounts, made such a wreck of him, had even then begun to show itself.

We were no sooner done eating than Cluny brought out an old, thumbed, greasy pack of cards, such as you may find in a mean inn; and his eyes brightened in his face as he proposed that we should fall to playing.

Now this was one of the things I had been brought up to eschew like disgrace; it being held by my father neither the part of a Christian nor yet of a gentleman to set his own livelihood and fish for that of others, on the cast of painted pasteboard. To be sure, I might have pleaded my fatigue, which was excuse enough; but I thought it behoved that I should bear a testimony. I must have got very red in the face, but I spoke steadily, and told them I had no call to be a judge of others, but for my own part, it was a matter in which I had no clearness.

Cluny stopped mingling the cards. "What in deil's name is this?" says he. "What kind of Whiggish, canting talk is this, for the house of Cluny Macpherson?"

"I will put my hand in the fire for Mr. Balfour," says Alan. "He is an honest and a mettle gentleman, and I would have ye bear in mind who says it. I bear a king's name," says he, cocking his hat; "and I and any that I call friend are company for the best. But the gentleman is tired, and should sleep; if he has no mind to the cartes, it will never hinder you and me. And I'm fit and willing, sir, to play ye any game that ye can name."

"Sir," says Cluny, "in this poor house of mine I would have you to ken that any gentleman may follow his pleasure. If your friend would like to stand on his head, he is welcome. And if either he, or you, or any other man, is not preceesely satisfied, I will be proud to step outside with him."

I had no will that these two friends should cut their throats for my sake.

"Sir," said I, "I am very wearied, as Alan says; and what's more, as you are a man that likely has sons of your own, I may tell you it was a promise to my father."

"Say nae mair, say nae mair," said Cluny, and pointed me to a bed of heather in a corner of the Cage. For all that he was displeased enough, looked at me askance, and grumbled when he looked. And indeed it must be owned that both my scruples and the words in which I declared them, smacked somewhat of the Covenanter, and were little in their place among wild Highland Jacobites.

What with the brandy and the venison, a strange heaviness had come over me; and I had scarce lain down upon the bed before I fell into a kind of trance, in which I continued almost the whole time of our stay in the Cage. Sometimes I was broad awake and understood what passed; sometimes I only heard voices, or men snoring, like the voice of a silly river; and the plaids upon the wall dwindled down and swelled out again, like firelight shadows on the roof. I must sometimes have spoken or cried out, for I remember I was now and then amazed at being answered; yet I was conscious of no particular nightmare, only of a general, black, abiding horror — a horror of the place I was in, and the bed I lay in, and the plaids on the wall, and the voices, and the fire, and myself.

The barber-gillie, who was a doctor too, was called in to prescribe for me; but as he spoke in the Gaelic, I understood not a word of his opinion, and was too sick even to ask for a translation. I knew well enough I was ill, and that was all I cared about.

I paid little heed while I lay in this poor pass. But Alan and Cluny were most of the time at the cards, and I am clear that Alan must have begun by winning; for I remember sitting up, and seeing them hard at it, and a great glittering pile of as much as sixty or a hundred guineas on the table. It looked strange enough, to see all this wealth in a nest upon a cliff-side, wattled about growing trees. And even then, I thought it seemed deep water for Alan to be riding, who had no better battle-horse than a green purse and a matter of five pounds.

The luck, it seems, changed on the second day. About noon I was wakened as usual for dinner, and as usual refused to eat, and was given a dram with some bitter infusion which the barber had prescribed. The sun was shining in at the open door of the Cage, and this dazzled and offended me. Cluny sat at the table, biting the pack of cards. Alan had stooped over the bed, and had his face close to my eyes; to which, troubled as they were with the fever, it seemed of the most shocking bigness.

He asked me for a loan of my money.

"What for?" said I.

"O, just for a loan," said he.

"But why?" I repeated. "I don't see."

"Hut, David!" said Alan, "ye wouldnae grudge me a loan?"

I would, though, if I had had my senses! But all I thought of then was to get his face away, and I handed him my money.

On the morning of the third day, when we had been forty-eight hours in the Cage, I awoke with a great relief of spirits, very weak and weary indeed, but seeing things of the right size and with their honest, everyday appearance. I had a mind to eat, moreover, rose from bed of my own movement, and as soon as we had breakfasted, stepped to the entry of the Cage and sat down outside in the top of the wood. It was a grey day with a cool, mild air: and I sat in a dream all morning, only disturbed by the passing by of Cluny's scouts and servants coming with provisions and reports; for as the coast was at that time clear, you might almost say he held court openly.

When I returned, he and Alan had laid the cards aside, and were questioning a gillie; and the chief turned about and spoke to me in the Gaelic.

"I have no Gaelic, sir," said I.

Now since the card question, everything I said or did had the power of annoying Cluny. "Your name has more sense than yourself, then," said he angrily, "for it's good Gaelic. But the point is this. My scout reports all clear in the south, and the question is, have ye the strength to go?"

I saw cards on the table, but no gold; only a heap of little written papers, and these all on Cluny's side. Alan, besides, had an odd look, like a man not very well content; and I began to have a strong misgiving.

"I do not know if I am as well as I should be," said I, looking at Alan; "but the little money we have has a long way to carry us."

Alan took his under-lip into his mouth, and looked upon the ground.

"David," says he at last, "I've lost it; there's the naked truth."

"My money too?" said I.

"Your money too," says Alan, with a groan. "Ye shouldnae have given it me. I'm daft when I get to the cartes."

"Hoot-toot! hoot-toot!" said Cluny. "It was all daffing; it's all nonsense. Of course you'll have your money back again, and the double of it, if ye'll make so free with me. It would be a singular thing for me to keep it. It's not to be supposed that I would be any hindrance to gentlemen in your situation; that would be a singular thing!" cries he, and began to pull gold out of his pocket with a mighty red face.

Alan said nothing, only looked on the ground.

"Will you step to the door with me, sir?" said I.

Cluny said he would be very glad, and followed me readily enough, but he looked flustered and put out.

"And now, sir," says I, "I must first acknowledge your generosity."

"Nonsensical nonsense!" cries Cluny. "Where's the generosity? This is just a most unfortunate affair; but what would ye have me do — boxed up in this bee-skep of a cage of mine — but just set my friends to the cartes, when I can get them? And if they lose, of course, it's not to be supposed — — " And here he came to a pause.

"Yes," said I, "if they lose, you give them back their money; and if they win, they carry away yours in their pouches! I have said before that I grant your generosity; but to me, sir, it's a very painful thing to be placed in this position."

There was a little silence, in which Cluny seemed always as if he was about to speak, but said nothing. All the time he grew redder and redder in the face.

"I am a young man," said I, "and I ask your advice. Advise me as you would your son. My friend fairly lost his money, after having fairly gained a far greater sum of yours; can I accept it back again? Would that be the right part for me to play? Whatever I do, you can see for yourself it must be hard upon a man of any pride."

"It's rather hard on me, too, Mr. Balfour," said Cluny, "and ye give me very much the look of a man that has entrapped poor people to their hurt. I wouldnae have my friends come to any house of mine to accept affronts; no," he cried, with a sudden heat of anger, "nor yet to give them!"

"And so you see, sir," said I, "there is something to be said upon my side; and this gambling is a very poor employ for gentlefolks. But I am still waiting your opinion."

I am sure if ever Cluny hated any man it was David Balfour. He looked me all over with a warlike eye, and I saw the challenge at his lips. But either my youth disarmed him, or perhaps his own sense of justice. Certainly it was a mortifying matter for all concerned, and not least Cluny; the more credit that he took it as he did.

“Mr. Balfour,” said he, “I think you are too nice and covenanting, but for all that you have the spirit of a very pretty gentleman. Upon my honest word, ye may take this money — it’s what I would tell my son — and here’s my hand along with it!”

CHAPTER XXIV

THE FLIGHT IN THE HEATHER: THE QUARREL

Alan and I were put across Loch Errocht under cloud of night, and went down its eastern shore to another hiding-place near the head of Loch Rannoch, whither we were led by one of the gillies from the Cage. This fellow carried all our luggage and Alan's great-coat in the bargain, trotting along under the burthen, far less than the half of which used to weigh me to the ground, like a stout hill pony with a feather; yet he was a man that, in plain contest, I could have broken on my knee.

Doubtless it was a great relief to walk disencumbered; and perhaps without that relief, and the consequent sense of liberty and lightness, I could not have walked at all. I was but new risen from a bed of sickness; and there was nothing in the state of our affairs to hearten me for much exertion; travelling, as we did, over the most dismal deserts in Scotland, under a cloudy heaven, and with divided hearts among the travellers.

For long, we said nothing; marching alongside or one behind the other, each with a set countenance: I, angry and proud, and drawing what strength I had from these two violent and sinful feelings; Alan angry and ashamed, ashamed that he had lost my money, angry that I should take it so ill.

The thought of a separation ran always the stronger in my mind; and the more I approved of it, the more ashamed I grew of my approval. It would be a fine, handsome, generous thing, indeed, for Alan to turn round and say to me: "Go, I am in the most danger, and my company only increases yours." But for me to turn to the friend who certainly loved me, and say to him: "You are in great danger, I am in but little; your friendship is a burden; go, take your risks and bear your hardships alone — — " no, that was impossible; and even to think of it privily to myself, made my cheeks to burn.

And yet Alan had behaved like a child, and (what is worse) a treacherous child. Wheedling my money from me while I lay half-conscious was scarce better than theft; and yet here he was trudging by my side, without a penny to his name, and by what I could see, quite blithe to sponge upon the money he had driven me to beg. True, I was ready to share it with him; but it made me rage to see him count upon my readiness.

These were the two things uppermost in my mind; and I could open my mouth upon neither without black ungenerosity. So I did the next worst, and said nothing, nor so much as looked once at my companion, save with the tail of my eye.

At last, upon the other side of Loch Errocht, going over a smooth, rushy place, where the walking was easy, he could bear it no longer, and came close to me.

"David," says he, "this is no way for two friends to take a small accident. I have to say that I'm sorry; and so that's said. And now if you have anything, ye'd better say it."

"O," says I, "I have nothing."

He seemed disconcerted; at which I was meanly pleased.

"No," said he, with rather a trembling voice, "but when I say I was to blame?"

"Why, of course, ye were to blame," said I, coolly; "and you will bear me out that I have never reproached you."

"Never," says he; "but ye ken very well that ye've done worse. Are we to part? Ye said so once before. Are ye to say it again? There's hills and heather enough between here and the two seas, David; and I will own I'm no very keen to stay where I'm no wanted."

This pierced me like a sword, and seemed to lay bare my private disloyalty.

"Alan Breck!" I cried; and then: "Do you think I am one to turn my back on you in your chief need? You dursn't say it to my face. My whole conduct's there to give the lie to it. It's true, I fell asleep upon the muir; but that was from weariness, and you do wrong to cast it up to me — — "

"Which is what I never did," said Alan.

"But aside from that," I continued, "what have I done that you should even me to dogs by such a supposition? I never yet failed a friend, and it's not likely I'll begin with you. There are things between us that I can never forget, even if you can."

"I will only say this to ye, David," said Alan, very quietly, "that I have long been owing ye my life, and now I owe ye money. Ye should try to make that burden light for me."

This ought to have touched me, and in a manner it did, but the wrong manner. I felt I was behaving, badly; and was now not only angry with Alan, but angry with myself in the bargain; and it made me the more cruel.

"You asked me to speak," said I. "Well, then, I will. You own yourself that you have done me a disservice; I have had to swallow an affront: I have never reproached you, I never named the thing till you did. And now you blame me," cried I, "because I cannae laugh and sing as if I was glad to be affronted. The next thing will be that I'm to go down upon my knees and thank you for it! Ye should think more of others, Alan Breck. If ye thought more of others, ye would perhaps speak less about yourself; and when a friend that likes you very well has passed over an offence without a word, you would be blithe to let it lie, instead of making it a stick to break his back with. By your own way of it, it was you that was to blame; then it shouldnae be you to seek the quarrel."

"Aweel," said Alan, "say nae mair."

And we fell back into our former silence; and came to our journey's end, and supped, and lay down to sleep, without another word.

The gillie put us across Loch Rannoch in the dusk of the next day, and gave us his opinion as to our best route. This was to get us up at once into the tops of the mountains: to go round by a circuit, turning the heads of Glen Lyon, Glen Lochay, and Glen Dochart, and come down upon the lowlands by Kippen and the upper waters of the Forth. Alan was little pleased with a route which led us through the country of his blood-foes, the Glenorchy Campbells. He objected that by turning to the east, we should come almost at once among the Athole Stewarts, a race of his own name and lineage, although following a different chief, and come besides by a far easier and swifter way to the place whither we were bound. But the gillie, who was indeed the chief man of Cluny's scouts, had good reasons to give him on all hands, naming the force of troops in every district, and alleging finally (as well as I could understand) that we should nowhere be so little troubled as in a country of the Campbells.

Alan gave way at last, but with only half a heart. "It's one of the dowiest countries in Scotland," said he. "There's naething there that I ken, but heath, and crows, and Campbells. But I see that ye're a man of some penetration; and be it as ye please!"

We set forth accordingly by this itinerary; and for the best part of three nights travelled on eerie mountains and among the well-heads of wild rivers; often buried in mist, almost continually blown and rained upon, and not once cheered by any glimpse of sunshine. By day, we lay and slept in the drenching heather; by night, incessantly clambered upon break-neck hills and among rude crags. We often wandered; we were often so involved in fog, that we must lie quiet till it lightened. A fire was never to be thought of. Our only food was drammach and a portion of cold meat that we had carried from the Cage; and as for drink, Heaven knows we had no want of water.

This was a dreadful time, rendered the more dreadful by the gloom of the weather and the country. I was never warm; my teeth chattered in my head; I was troubled with a very sore throat, such as I had on the isle; I had a painful stitch in my side, which never left me; and when I slept in my wet bed, with the rain beating above and the mud oozing below me, it was to live over again in fancy the worst part of my adventures — to see the tower of Shaws lit by lightning, Ransome carried below on the men's backs, Shuan dying on the round-house floor, or Colin Campbell grasping at the bosom of his coat. From such broken slumbers, I would be aroused in the gloaming, to sit up in the same puddle where I had slept, and sup cold drammach; the rain driving sharp in my face or running down my back in icy trickles; the mist enfolding us like as in a gloomy chamber — or, perhaps, if the wind blew, falling suddenly apart and showing us the gulf of some dark valley where the streams were crying aloud.

The sound of an infinite number of rivers came up from all round. In this steady rain the springs of the mountain were broken up; every glen gushed water like a cistern; every stream was in high spate, and had filled and overflowed its channel. During our night tramps, it was solemn to hear the voice of them below in the valleys, now booming like thunder, now with an angry cry. I could well understand the story of the Water Kelpie, that demon of the streams, who is fabled to keep wailing and roaring at the ford until the coming of the doomed traveller. Alan I saw believed it, or half believed it; and when the cry of the river rose more than usually sharp, I was little surprised (though, of course, I would still be shocked) to see him cross himself in the manner of the Catholics.

During all these horrid wanderings we had no familiarity, scarcely even that of speech. The truth is that I was sickening for my grave, which is my best excuse. But besides that I was of an unforgiving disposition from my birth, slow to take offence, slower to forget it, and now incensed both against my companion and myself. For the best part of two days he was unweariedly kind; silent, indeed, but always ready to help, and always hoping (as I could very well see) that my displeasure would blow by. For the same length of time I stayed in myself, nursing my anger, roughly refusing his services, and passing him over with my eyes as if he had been a bush or a stone.

The second night, or rather the peep of the third day, found us upon a very open hill, so that we could not follow our usual plan and lie down immediately to eat and sleep. Before we had reached a place of shelter, the grey had come pretty clear, for though it still rained, the clouds ran higher; and Alan, looking in my face, showed some marks of concern.

“Ye had better let me take your pack,” said he, for perhaps the ninth time since we had parted from the scout beside Loch Rannoch.

“I do very well, I thank you,” said I, as cold as ice.

Alan flushed darkly. “I’ll not offer it again,” he said. “I’m not a patient man, David.”

“I never said you were,” said I, which was exactly the rude, silly speech of a boy of ten.

Alan made no answer at the time, but his conduct answered for him. Henceforth, it is to be thought, he quite forgave himself for the affair at Cluny's; cocked his hat again, walked jauntily, whistled airs, and looked at me upon one side with a provoking smile.

The third night we were to pass through the western end of the country of Balquhidder. It came clear and cold, with a touch in the air like frost, and a northerly wind that blew the clouds away and made the stars bright. The streams were full, of course, and still made a great noise among the hills; but I observed that Alan thought no more upon the Kelpie, and was in high good spirits. As for me, the change of weather came too late; I had lain in the mire so long that (as the Bible has it) my very clothes "abhorred me." I was dead weary, deadly sick and full of pains and shiverings; the chill of the wind went through me, and the sound of it confused my ears. In this poor state I had to bear from my companion something in the nature of a persecution. He spoke a good deal, and never without a taunt. "Whig" was the best name he had to give me. "Here," he would say, "here's a dub for ye to jump, my Whiggie! I ken you're a fine jumper!" And so on; all the time with a gibing voice and face.

I knew it was my own doing, and no one else's; but I was too miserable to repent. I felt I could drag myself but little farther; pretty soon, I must lie down and die on these wet mountains like a sheep or a fox, and my bones must whiten there like the bones of a beast. My head was light perhaps; but I began to love the prospect, I began to glory in the thought of such a death, alone in the desert, with the wild eagles besieging my last moments. Alan would repent then, I thought; he would remember, when I was dead, how much he owed me, and the remembrance would be torture. So I went like a sick, silly, and bad-hearted schoolboy, feeding my anger against a fellow-man, when I would have been better on my knees, crying on God for mercy. And at each of Alan's taunts, I hugged myself. "Ah!" thinks I to myself, "I have a better taunt in readiness; when I lie down and die, you will feel it like a buffet in your face; ah, what a revenge! ah, how you will regret your ingratitude and cruelty!"

All the while, I was growing worse and worse. Once I had fallen, my leg simply doubling under me, and this had struck Alan for the moment; but I was afoot so briskly, and set off again with such a natural manner, that he soon forgot the incident. Flushes of heat went over me, and then spasms of shuddering. The stitch in my side was hardly bearable. At last I began to feel that I could trail myself no farther: and with that, there came on me all at once the wish to have it out with Alan, let my anger blaze, and be done with my life in a more sudden manner. He had just called me "Whig." I stopped.

"Mr. Stewart," said I, in a voice that quivered like a fiddle-string, "you are older than I am, and should know your manners. Do you think it either very wise or very witty to cast my politics in my teeth?

I thought, where folk differed, it was the part of gentlemen to differ civilly; and if I did not, I may tell you I could find a better taunt than some of yours."

Alan had stopped opposite to me, his hat cocked, his hands in his breeches pockets, his head a little on one side. He listened, smiling evilly, as I could see by the starlight; and when I had done he began to whistle a Jacobite air. It was the air made in mockery of General Cope's defeat at Preston Pans:

"Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye waukin' yet?
And are your drums a-beatin' yet?"

And it came in my mind that Alan, on the day of that battle, had been engaged upon the royal side.

"Why do ye take that air, Mr. Stewart?" said I. "Is that to remind me you have been beaten on both sides?"

The air stopped on Alan's lips. "David!" said he.

"But it's time these manners ceased," I continued; "and I mean you shall henceforth speak civilly of my King and my good friends the Campbells."

"I am a Stewart — " began Alan.

"O!" says I, "I ken ye bear a king's name. But you are to remember, since I have been in the Highlands, I have seen a good many of those that bear it; and the best I can say of them is this, that they would be none the worse of washing."

"Do you know that you insult me?" said Alan, very low.

"I am sorry for that," said I, "for I am not done; and if you distaste the sermon, I doubt the pirliecue* will please you as little. You have been chased in the field by the grown men of my party; it seems a poor kind of pleasure to out-face a boy. Both the Campbells and the Whigs have beaten you; you have run before them like a hare. It behoves you to speak of them as of your betters."

* A second sermon.

Alan stood quite still, the tails of his great-coat clapping behind him in the wind.

"This is a pity" he said at last. "There are things said that cannot be passed over."

"I never asked you to," said I. "I am as ready as yourself."

"Ready?" said he.

"Ready," I repeated. "I am no blower and boaster like some that I could name. Come on!" And drawing my sword, I fell on guard as Alan himself had taught me.

"David!" he cried. "Are ye daft? I cannae draw upon ye, David. It's fair murder."

"That was your look-out when you insulted me," said I.

"It's the truth!" cried Alan, and he stood for a moment, wringing his mouth in his hand like a man in sore perplexity. "It's the bare truth," he said, and drew his sword. But before I could touch his blade with mine, he had thrown it from him and fallen to the ground. "Na, na," he kept saying, "na, na — I cannae, I cannae."

At this the last of my anger oozed all out of me; and I found myself only sick, and sorry, and blank, and wondering at myself. I would have given the world to take back what I had said; but a word once spoken, who can recapture it? I minded me of all Alan's kindness and courage in the past, how he had helped and cheered and borne with me in our evil days; and then recalled my own insults, and saw that I had lost for ever that doughty friend. At the same time, the sickness that hung upon me seemed to redouble, and the pang in my side was like a sword for sharpness. I thought I must have swooned where I stood.

This it was that gave me a thought. No apology could blot out what I had said; it was needless to think of one, none could cover the offence; but where an apology was vain, a mere cry for help might bring Alan back to my side. I put my pride away from me. "Alan!" I said; "if ye cannae help me, I must just die here."

He started up sitting, and looked at me.

"It's true," said I. "I'm by with it. O, let me get into the bield of a house — I'll can die there easier." I had no need to pretend; whether I chose or not, I spoke in a weeping voice that would have melted a heart of stone.

"Can ye walk?" asked Alan.

"No," said I, "not without help. This last hour my legs have been fainting under me; I've a stitch in my side like a red-hot iron; I cannae breathe right. If I die, ye'll can forgive me, Alan? In my heart, I liked ye fine — even when I was the angriest."

"Wheesht, wheesht!" cried Alan. "Dinna say that! David man, ye ken — " He shut his mouth upon a sob. "Let me get my arm about ye," he continued; "that's the way! Now lean upon me hard. Gude kens where there's a house! We're in Balwhidder, too; there should be no want of houses, no, nor friends' houses here. Do ye gang easier so, Davie?"

"Ay" said I, "I can be doing this way;" and I pressed his arm with my hand.

Again he came near sobbing. "Davie," said he, "I'm no a right man at all; I have neither sense nor kindness; I could nae remember ye were just a bairn, I couldnae see ye were dying on your feet; Davie, ye'll have to try and forgive me."

"O man, let's say no more about it!" said I. "We're neither one of us to mend the other — that's the truth! We must just bear and forbear, man Alan. O, but my stitch is sore! Is there nae house?"

"I'll find a house to ye, David," he said, stoutly. "We'll follow down the burn, where there's bound to be houses. My poor man, will ye no be better on my back?"

"O, Alan," says I, "and me a good twelve inches taller?"

"Ye're no such a thing," cried Alan, with a start. "There may be a trifling matter of an inch or two; I'm no saying I'm just exactly what ye would call a tall man, whatever; and I dare say," he added, his voice tailing off in a laughable manner, "now when I come to think of it, I dare say ye'll be just about right. Ay, it'll be a foot, or near hand; or may be even mair!"

It was sweet and laughable to hear Alan eat his words up in the fear of some fresh quarrel. I could have laughed, had not my stitch caught me so hard; but if I had laughed, I think I must have wept too.

"Alan," cried I, "what makes ye so good to me? What makes ye care for such a thankless fellow?"

"'Deed, and I don't, know" said Alan. "For just precisely what I thought I liked about ye, was that ye never quarrelled: — and now I like ye better!"

CHAPTER XXV

IN BALQUHIDDER

At the door of the first house we came to, Alan knocked, which was of no very safe enterprise in such a part of the Highlands as the Braes of Balquhidder. No great clan held rule there; it was filled and disputed by small septs, and broken remnants, and what they call "chiefless folk," driven into the wild country about the springs of Forth and Teith by the advance of the Campbells. Here were Stewarts and Maclarens, which came to the same thing, for the Maclarens followed Alan's chief in war, and made but one clan with Appin. Here, too, were many of that old, proscribed, nameless, red-handed clan of the Macgregors. They had always been ill-considered, and now worse than ever, having credit with no side or party in the whole country of Scotland. Their chief, Macgregor of Macgregor, was in exile; the more immediate leader of that part of them about Balquhidder, James More, Rob Roy's eldest son, lay waiting his trial in Edinburgh Castle; they were in ill-blood with Highlander and Lowlander, with the Grahames, the Maclarens, and the Stewarts; and Alan, who took up the quarrel of any friend, however distant, was extremely wishful to avoid them.

Chance served us very well; for it was a household of Maclarens that we found, where Alan was not only welcome for his name's sake but known by reputation. Here then I was got to bed without delay, and a doctor fetched, who found me in a sorry plight. But whether because he was a very good doctor, or I a very young, strong man, I lay bedridden for no more than a week, and before a month I was able to take the road again with a good heart.

All this time Alan would not leave me though I often pressed him, and indeed his foolhardiness in staying was a common subject of outcry with the two or three friends that were let into the secret. He hid by day in a hole of the braes under a little wood; and at night, when the coast was clear, would come into the house to visit me. I need not say if I was pleased to see him; Mrs. Maclaren, our hostess, thought nothing good enough for such a guest; and as Duncan Dhu (which was the name of our host) had a pair of pipes in his house, and was much of a lover of music, this time of my recovery was quite a festival, and we commonly turned night into day.

The soldiers let us be; although once a party of two companies and some dragoons went by in the bottom of the valley, where I could see them through the window as I lay in bed. What was much more astonishing, no magistrate came near me, and there was no question put of whence I came or whither I was going; and in that time of excitement, I was as free of all inquiry as though I had lain in a desert. Yet my presence was known before I left to all the people in Balquhidder and the adjacent parts; many coming about the house on visits and these (after the custom of the country) spreading the news among their neighbours. The bills, too, had now been printed. There was one pinned near the foot of my bed, where I could read my own not very flattering portrait and, in larger characters, the amount of the blood money that had been set upon my life. Duncan Dhu and the rest that knew that I had come there in Alan's company, could have entertained no doubt of who I was; and many others must have had their guess. For though I had changed my clothes, I could not change my age or person; and Lowland boys of eighteen were not so rife in these parts of the world, and above all about that time, that they could fail to put one thing with another, and connect me with the bill. So it was, at least. Other folk keep a secret among two or three near friends, and somehow it leaks out; but among these clansmen, it is told to a whole countryside, and they will keep it for a century.

There was but one thing happened worth narrating; and that is the visit I had of Robin Oig, one of the sons of the notorious Rob Roy. He was sought upon all sides on a charge of carrying a young woman from Balfron and marrying her (as was alleged) by force; yet he stepped about Balquhidder like a gentleman in his own walled policy. It was he who had shot James Maclaren at the plough stilts, a quarrel never satisfied; yet he walked into the house of his blood enemies as a rider* might into a public inn.* Commercial traveller.

Duncan had time to pass me word of who it was; and we looked at one another in concern. You should understand, it was then close upon the time of Alan's coming; the two were little likely to agree; and yet if we sent word or sought to make a signal, it was sure to arouse suspicion in a man under so dark a cloud as the Macgregor.

He came in with a great show of civility, but like a man among inferiors; took off his bonnet to Mrs. Maclaren, but clapped it on his head again to speak to Duncan; and leaving thus set himself (as he would have thought) in a proper light, came to my bedside and bowed.

"I am given to know, sir," says he, "that your name is Balfour."

"They call me David Balfour," said I, "at your service."

"I would give ye my name in return, sir" he replied, "but it's one somewhat blown upon of late days; and it'll perhaps suffice if I tell ye that I am own brother to James More Drummond or Macgregor, of whom ye will scarce have failed to hear."

"No, sir," said I, a little alarmed; "nor yet of your father, Macgregor-Campbell." And I sat up and bowed in bed; for I thought best to compliment him, in case he was proud of having had an outlaw to his father.

He bowed in return. “But what I am come to say, sir,” he went on, “is this. In the year ‘45, my brother raised a part of the ‘Gregara’ and marched six companies to strike a stroke for the good side; and the surgeon that marched with our clan and cured my brother’s leg when it was broken in the brush at Preston Pans, was a gentleman of the same name precisely as yourself. He was brother to Balfour of Baith; and if you are in any reasonable degree of nearness one of that gentleman’s kin, I have come to put myself and my people at your command.”

You are to remember that I knew no more of my descent than any cadger’s dog; my uncle, to be sure, had prated of some of our high connections, but nothing to the present purpose; and there was nothing left me but that bitter disgrace of owning that I could not tell.

Robin told me shortly he was sorry he had put himself about, turned his back upon me without a sign of salutation, and as he went towards the door, I could hear him telling Duncan that I was “only some kinless loon that didn’t know his own father.” Angry as I was at these words, and ashamed of my own ignorance, I could scarce keep from smiling that a man who was under the lash of the law (and was indeed hanged some three years later) should be so nice as to the descent of his acquaintances.

Just in the door, he met Alan coming in; and the two drew back and looked at each other like strange dogs. They were neither of them big men, but they seemed fairly to swell out with pride. Each wore a sword, and by a movement of his haunch, thrust clear the hilt of it, so that it might be the more readily grasped and the blade drawn.

“Mr. Stewart, I am thinking,” says Robin.

“Troth, Mr. Macgregor, it’s not a name to be ashamed of,” answered Alan.

“I did not know ye were in my country, sir,” says Robin.

“It sticks in my mind that I am in the country of my friends the Maclarens,” says Alan.

“That’s a kittle point,” returned the other. “There may be two words to say to that. But I think I will have heard that you are a man of your sword?”

“Unless ye were born deaf, Mr. Macgregor, ye will have heard a good deal more than that,” says Alan. “I am not the only man that can draw steel in Appin; and when my kinsman and captain, Ardshiel, had a talk with a gentleman of your name, not so many years back, I could never hear that the Macgregor had the best of it.”

“Do ye mean my father, sir?” says Robin.

“Well, I wouldnae wonder,” said Alan. “The gentleman I have in my mind had the ill-taste to clap Campbell to his name.”

"My father was an old man," returned Robin.

"The match was unequal. You and me would make a better pair, sir."

"I was thinking that," said Alan.

I was half out of bed, and Duncan had been hanging at the elbow of these fighting cocks, ready to intervene upon the least occasion. But when that word was uttered, it was a case of now or never; and Duncan, with something of a white face to be sure, thrust himself between.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I will have been thinking of a very different matter, whateffer. Here are my pipes, and here are you two gentlemen who are baith acclaimed pipers. It's an auld dispute which one of ye's the best. Here will be a braw chance to settle it."

"Why, sir," said Alan, still addressing Robin, from whom indeed he had not so much as shifted his eyes, nor yet Robin from him, "why, sir," says Alan, "I think I will have heard some sough* of the sort. Have ye music, as folk say? Are ye a bit of a piper?"

* Rumour.

"I can pipe like a Macrimmon!" cries Robin.

"And that is a very bold word," quoth Alan.

"I have made bolder words good before now," returned Robin, "and that against better adversaries."

"It is easy to try that," says Alan.

Duncan Dhu made haste to bring out the pair of pipes that was his principal possession, and to set before his guests a mutton-ham and a bottle of that drink which they call Athole brose, and which is made of old whiskey, strained honey and sweet cream, slowly beaten together in the right order and proportion. The two enemies were still on the very breach of a quarrel; but down they sat, one upon each side of the peat fire, with a mighty show of politeness. Maclaren pressed them to taste his mutton-ham and "the wife's brose," reminding them the wife was out of Athole and had a name far and wide for her skill in that confection. But Robin put aside these hospitalities as bad for the breath.

"I would have ye to remark, sir," said Alan, "that I havenae broken bread for near upon ten hours, which will be worse for the breath than any brose in Scotland."

"I will take no advantages, Mr. Stewart," replied Robin. "Eat and drink; I'll follow you."

Each ate a small portion of the ham and drank a glass of the brose to Mrs. Maclaren; and then after a great number of civilities, Robin took the pipes and played a little spring in a very ranting manner.

"Ay, ye can, blow" said Alan; and taking the instrument from his rival, he first played the same spring in a manner identical with

Robin's; and then wandered into variations, which, as he went on, he decorated with a perfect flight of grace-notes, such as pipers love, and call the "warblers."

I had been pleased with Robin's playing, Alan's ravished me.

"That's no very bad, Mr. Stewart," said the rival, "but ye show a poor device in your warblers."

"Me!" cried Alan, the blood starting to his face. "I give ye the lie."

"Do ye own yourself beaten at the pipes, then," said Robin, "that ye seek to change them for the sword?"

"And that's very well said, Mr. Macgregor," returned Alan; "and in the meantime" (laying a strong accent on the word) "I take back the lie. I appeal to Duncan."

"Indeed, ye need appeal to naebody," said Robin. "Ye're a far better judge than any Maclaren in Balquhidder: for it's a God's truth that you're a very creditable piper for a Stewart. Hand me the pipes." Alan did as he asked; and Robin proceeded to imitate and correct some part of Alan's variations, which it seemed that he remembered perfectly.

"Ay, ye have music," said Alan, gloomily.

"And now be the judge yourself, Mr. Stewart," said Robin; and taking up the variations from the beginning, he worked them throughout to so new a purpose, with such ingenuity and sentiment, and with so odd a fancy and so quick a knack in the grace-notes, that I was amazed to hear him.

As for Alan, his face grew dark and hot, and he sat and gnawed his fingers, like a man under some deep affront. "Enough!" he cried. "Ye can blow the pipes — make the most of that." And he made as if to rise.

But Robin only held out his hand as if to ask for silence, and struck into the slow measure of a pibroch. It was a fine piece of music in itself, and nobly played; but it seems, besides, it was a piece peculiar to the Appin Stewarts and a chief favourite with Alan. The first notes were scarce out, before there came a change in his face; when the time quickened, he seemed to grow restless in his seat; and long before that piece was at an end, the last signs of his anger died from him, and he had no thought but for the music.

"Robin Oig," he said, when it was done, "ye are a great piper. I am not fit to blow in the same kingdom with ye. Body of me! ye have mair music in your sporran than I have in my head! And though it still sticks in my mind that I could maybe show ye another of it with the cold steel, I warn ye beforehand — it'll no be fair! It would go against my heart to haggle a man that can blow the pipes as you can!"

Thereupon that quarrel was made up; all night long the brose was going and the pipes changing hands; and the day had come pretty bright, and the three men were none the better for what they had been taking, before Robin as much as thought upon the road.

CHAPTER XXVI

END OF THE FLIGHT: WE PASS THE FORTH

The month, as I have said, was not yet out, but it was already far through August, and beautiful warm weather, with every sign of an early and great harvest, when I was pronounced able for my journey. Our money was now run to so low an ebb that we must think first of all on speed; for if we came not soon to Mr. Rankeillor's, or if when we came there he should fail to help me, we must surely starve. In Alan's view, besides, the hunt must have now greatly slackened; and the line of the Forth and even StirlingBridge, which is the main pass over that river, would be watched with little interest.

"It's a chief principle in military affairs," said he, "to go where ye are least expected. Forth is our trouble; ye ken the saying, 'Forth bridles the wild Hielandman.' Well, if we seek to creep round about the head of that river and come down by Kippen or Balfron, it's just precisely there that they'll be looking to lay hands on us. But if we stave on straight to the auld Brig of Stirling, I'll lay my sword they let us pass unchallenged."

The first night, accordingly, we pushed to the house of a Maclaren in Strathire, a friend of Duncan's, where we slept the twenty-first of the month, and whence we set forth again about the fall of night to make another easy stage. The twenty-second we lay in a heather bush on the hillside in Uam Var, within view of a herd of deer, the happiest ten hours of sleep in a fine, breathing sunshine and on bone-dry ground, that I have ever tasted. That night we struck Allan Water, and followed it down; and coming to the edge of the hills saw the whole Carse of Stirling underfoot, as flat as a pancake, with the town and castle on a hill in the midst of it, and the moon shining on the Links of Forth.

"Now," said Alan, "I kenna if ye care, but ye're in your own land again. We passed the Hieland Line in the first hour; and now if we could but pass yon crooked water, we might cast our bonnets in the air."

In Allan Water, near by where it falls into the Forth, we found a little sandy islet, overgrown with burdock, butterbur and the like low plants, that would just cover us if we lay flat. Here it was we made our camp, within plain view of StirlingCastle, whence we could hear the drums beat as some part of the garrison paraded. Shearers worked all day in a field on one side of the river, and we could hear the stones going on the hooks and the voices and even the words of the men talking. It behoved to lie close and keep silent. But the sand of the little isle was sun-warm, the green plants gave us shelter for our heads, we had food and drink in plenty; and to crown all, we were within sight of safety.

As soon as the shearers quit their work and the dusk began to fall, we waded ashore and struck for the Bridge of Stirling, keeping to the fields and under the field fences.

The bridge is close under the castle hill, an old, high, narrow bridge with pinnacles along the parapet; and you may conceive with how much interest I looked upon it, not only as a place famous in history, but as the very doors of salvation to Alan and myself. The moon was not yet up when we came there; a few lights shone along the front of the fortress, and lower down a few lighted windows in the town; but it was all mighty still, and there seemed to be no guard upon the passage.

I was for pushing straight across; but Alan was more wary.

“It looks unco’ quiet,” said he; “but for all that we’ll lie down here cannily behind a dyke, and make sure.”

So we lay for about a quarter of an hour, whiles whispering, whiles lying still and hearing nothing earthly but the washing of the water on the piers. At last there came by an old, hobbling woman with a crutch stick; who first stopped a little, close to where we lay, and bemoaned herself and the long way she had travelled; and then set forth again up the steep spring of the bridge. The woman was so little, and the night still so dark, that we soon lost sight of her; only heard the sound of her steps, and her stick, and a cough that she had by fits, draw slowly farther away.

“She’s bound to be across now,” I whispered.

“Na,” said Alan, “her foot still sounds boss* upon the bridge.”

* Hollow.

And just then — ”Who goes?” cried a voice, and we heard the butt of a musket rattle on the stones. I must suppose the sentry had been sleeping, so that had we tried, we might have passed unseen; but he was awake now, and the chance forfeited.

“This’ll never do,” said Alan. “This’ll never, never do for us, David.”

And without another word, he began to crawl away through the fields; and a little after, being well out of eye-shot, got to his feet again, and struck along a road that led to the eastward. I could not conceive what he was doing; and indeed I was so sharply cut by the disappointment, that I was little likely to be pleased with anything. A moment back and I had seen myself knocking at Mr. Rankeillor’s door to claim my inheritance, like a hero in a ballad; and here was I back again, a wandering, hunted blackguard, on the wrong side of Forth.

“Well?” said I.

“Well,” said Alan, “what would ye have? They’re none such fools as

I took them for. We have still the Forth to pass, Davie — weary fall the rains that fed and the hillsides that guided it!"

"And why go east?" said I.

"Ou, just upon the chance!" said he. "If we cannae pass the river, we'll have to see what we can do for the firth."

"There are fords upon the river, and none upon the firth," said I.

"To be sure there are fords, and a bridge forbye," quoth Alan; "and of what service, when they are watched?"

"Well," said I, "but a river can be swum."

"By them that have the skill of it," returned he; "but I have yet to hear that either you or me is much of a hand at that exercise; and for my own part, I swim like a stone."

"I'm not up to you in talking back, Alan," I said; "but I can see we're making bad worse. If it's hard to pass a river, it stands to reason it must be worse to pass a sea."

"But there's such a thing as a boat," says Alan, "or I'm the more deceived."

"Ay, and such a thing as money," says I. "But for us that have neither one nor other, they might just as well not have been invented."

"Ye think so?" said Alan.

"I do that," said I.

"David," says he, "ye're a man of small invention and less faith. But let me set my wits upon the hone, and if I cannae beg, borrow, nor yet steal a boat, I'll make one!"

"I think I see ye!" said I. "And what's more than all that: if ye pass a bridge, it can tell no tales; but if we pass the firth, there's the boat on the wrong side — somebody must have brought it — the country-side will all be in a bizz — -"

"Man!" cried Alan, "if I make a boat, I'll make a body to take it back again! So deave me with no more of your nonsense, but walk (for that's what you've got to do) — and let Alan think for ye."

All night, then, we walked through the north side of the Carse under the high line of the Ochil mountains; and by Alloa and Clackmannan and Culross, all of which we avoided: and about ten in the morning, mighty hungry and tired, came to the little clachan of Limekilns. This is a place that sits near in by the water-side, and looks across the Hope to the town of the Queensferry. Smoke went up from both of these, and from other villages and farms upon all hands. The fields were being reaped; two ships lay anchored, and boats were coming and going on the Hope. It was altogether a right pleasant sight to me; and I could not take my fill of gazing at these comfortable, green, cultivated hills and the busy people both of the field and sea.

For all that, there was Mr. Rankeillor's house on the south shore, where I had no doubt wealth awaited me; and here was I upon the north, clad in poor enough attire of an outlandish fashion, with three silver shillings left to me of all my fortune, a price set upon my head, and an outlawed man for my sole company.

"O, Alan!" said I, "to think of it! Over there, there's all that heart could want waiting me; and the birds go over, and the boats go over — all that please can go, but just me only! O, man, but it's a heart-break!"

In Limekilns we entered a small change-house, which we only knew to be a public by the wand over the door, and bought some bread and cheese from a good-looking lass that was the servant. This we carried with us in a bundle, meaning to sit and eat it in a bush of wood on the sea-shore, that we saw some third part of a mile in front. As we went, I kept looking across the water and sighing to myself; and though I took no heed of it, Alan had fallen into a muse. At last he stopped in the way.

"Did ye take heed of the lass we bought this of?" says he, tapping on the bread and cheese.

"To be sure," said I, "and a bonny lass she was."

"Ye thought that?" cries he. "Man, David, that's good news."

"In the name of all that's wonderful, why so?" says I. "What good can that do?"

"Well," said Alan, with one of his droll looks, "I was rather in hopes it would maybe get us that boat."

"If it were the other way about, it would be liker it," said I.

"That's all that you ken, ye see," said Alan. "I don't want the lass to fall in love with ye, I want her to be sorry for ye, David; to which end there is no manner of need that she should take you for a beauty. Let me see" (looking me curiously over). "I wish ye were a wee thing paler; but apart from that ye'll do fine for my purpose — ye have a fine, hang-dog, rag-and-tatter, clappermaclaw kind of a look to ye, as if ye had stolen the coat from a potato-bogle. Come; right about, and back to the change-house for that boat of ours."

I followed him, laughing.

"David Balfour," said he, "ye're a very funny gentleman by your way of it, and this is a very funny employ for ye, no doubt. For all that, if ye have any affection for my neck (to say nothing of your own) ye will perhaps be kind enough to take this matter responsibly. I am going to do a bit of play-acting, the bottom ground of which is just exactly as serious as the gallows for the pair of us. So bear it, if ye please, in mind, and conduct yourself according."

"Well, well," said I, "have it as you will."

As we got near the clachan, he made me take his arm and hang upon it like one almost helpless with weariness; and by the time he pushed open the change-house door, he seemed to be half carrying me. The maid appeared surprised (as well she might be) at our speedy return; but Alan had no words to spare for her in explanation, helped me to a chair, called for a tass of brandy with which he fed me in little sips, and then breaking up the bread and cheese helped me to eat it like a nursery-lass; the whole with that grave, concerned, affectionate countenance, that might have imposed upon a judge. It was small wonder if the maid were taken with the picture we presented, of a poor, sick, overwrought lad and his most tender comrade. She drew quite near, and stood leaning with her back on the next table.

"What's like wrong with him?" said she at last.

Alan turned upon her, to my great wonder, with a kind of fury. "Wrong?" cries he. "He's walked more hundreds of miles than he has hairs upon his chin, and slept oftener in wet heather than dry sheets. Wrong, quo' she! Wrong enough, I would think! Wrong, indeed!" and he kept grumbling to himself as he fed me, like a man ill-pleased.

"He's young for the like of that," said the maid.

"Ower young," said Alan, with his back to her.

"He would be better riding," says she.

"And where could I get a horse to him?" cried Alan, turning on her with the same appearance of fury. "Would ye have me steal?"

I thought this roughness would have sent her off in dudgeon, as indeed it closed her mouth for the time. But my companion knew very well what he was doing; and for as simple as he was in some things of life, had a great fund of roguishness in such affairs as these.

"Ye neednae tell me," she said at last — "ye're gentry."

"Well," said Alan, softened a little (I believe against his will) by this artless comment, "and suppose we were? Did ever you hear that gentrice put money in folk's pockets?"

She sighed at this, as if she were herself some disinherited great lady. "No," says she, "that's true indeed."

I was all this while chafing at the part I played, and sitting tongue-tied between shame and merriment; but somehow at this I could hold in no longer, and bade Alan let me be, for I was better already. My voice stuck in my throat, for I ever hated to take part in lies; but my very embarrassment helped on the plot, for the lass no doubt set down my husky voice to sickness and fatigue.

"Has he nae friends?" said she, in a tearful voice.

"That has he so!" cried Alan, "if we could but win to them! — friends and rich friends, beds to lie in, food to eat, doctors to see to him — and here he must tramp in the dubs and sleep in the heather like a beggarman."

"And why that?" says the lass.

"My dear," said Alan, "I cannae very safely say; but I'll tell ye what

I’ll do instead,” says he, “I’ll whistle ye a bit tune.” And with that he leaned pretty far over the table, and in a mere breath of a whistle, but with a wonderful pretty sentiment, gave her a few bars of “Charlie is my darling.”

“Wheesht,” says she, and looked over her shoulder to the door.

“That’s it,” said Alan.

“And him so young!” cries the lass.

“He’s old enough to — — ” and Alan struck his forefinger on the back part of his neck, meaning that I was old enough to lose my head.

“It would be a black shame,” she cried, flushing high.

“It’s what will be, though,” said Alan, “unless we manage the better.”

At this the lass turned and ran out of that part of the house, leaving us alone together. Alan in high good humour at the furthering of his schemes, and I in bitter dudgeon at being called a Jacobite and treated like a child.

“Alan,” I cried, “I can stand no more of this.”

“Ye’ll have to sit it then, Davie,” said he. “For if ye upset the pot now, ye may scrape your own life out of the fire, but Alan Breck is a dead man.”

This was so true that I could only groan; and even my groan served Alan’s purpose, for it was overheard by the lass as she came flying in again with a dish of white puddings and a bottle of strong ale.

“Poor lamb!” says she, and had no sooner set the meat before us, than she touched me on the shoulder with a little friendly touch, as much as to bid me cheer up. Then she told us to fall to, and there would be no more to pay; for the inn was her own, or at least her father’s, and he was gone for the day to Pittencrieff. We waited for no second bidding, for bread and cheese is but cold comfort and the puddings smelt excellently well; and while we sat and ate, she took up that same place by the next table, looking on, and thinking, and frowning to herself, and drawing the string of her apron through her hand.

“I’m thinking ye have rather a long tongue,” she said at last to Alan.

“Ay” said Alan; “but ye see I ken the folk I speak to.”

“I would never betray ye,” said she, “if ye mean that.”

“No,” said he, “ye’re not that kind. But I’ll tell ye what ye would do, ye would help.”

“I couldnae,” said she, shaking her head. “Na, I couldnae.”

“No,” said he, “but if ye could?”

She answered him nothing.

“Look here, my lass,” said Alan, “there are boats in the Kingdom of Fife, for I saw two (no less) upon the beach, as I came in by your town’s end. Now if we could have the use of a boat to pass under cloud of night into Lothian, and some secret, decent kind of a man to bring that boat back again and keep his counsel, there would be two souls saved — mine to all likelihood — his to a dead surety. If we lack that boat, we have but three shillings left in this wide world; and where to go, and how to do, and what other place there is for us except the chains of a gibbet — I give you my naked word, I kenna! Shall we go wanting, lassie? Are ye to lie in your warm bed and think upon us, when the wind gowls in the chimney and the rain tirls on the roof? Are ye to eat your meat by the cheeks of a red fire, and think upon this poor sick lad of mine, biting his finger ends on a blae muir for cauld and hunger? Sick or sound, he must aye be moving; with the death grapple at his throat he must aye be trailing in the rain on the lang roads; and when he gants his last on a rickle of cauld stanes, there will be nae friends near him but only me and God."

At this appeal, I could see the lass was in great trouble of mind, being tempted to help us, and yet in some fear she might be helping malefactors; and so now I determined to step in myself and to allay her scruples with a portion of the truth.

"Did ever you, hear" said I, "of Mr. Rankeillor of the Ferry?"

"Rankeillor the writer?" said she. "I daur say that!"

"Well," said I, "it's to his door that I am bound, so you may judge by that if I am an ill-doer; and I will tell you more, that though I am indeed, by a dreadful error, in some peril of my life, King George has no truer friend in all Scotland than myself."

Her face cleared up mightily at this, although Alan's darkened.

"That's more than I would ask," said she. "Mr. Rankeillor is a kennt man." And she bade us finish our meat, get clear of the clachan as soon as might be, and lie close in the bit wood on the sea-beach. "And ye can trust me," says she, "I'll find some means to put you over."

At this we waited for no more, but shook hands with her upon the bargain, made short work of the puddings, and set forth again from Limekilns as far as to the wood. It was a small piece of perhaps a score of elders and hawthorns and a few young ashes, not thick enough to veil us from passersby upon the road or beach. Here we must lie, however, making the best of the brave warm weather and the good hopes we now had of a deliverance, and planing more particularly what remained for us to do.

We had but one trouble all day; when a strolling piper came and sat in the same wood with us; a red-nosed, bleareyed, drunken dog, with a great bottle of whisky in his pocket, and a long story of wrongs that had been done him by all sorts of persons, from the Lord President of the Court of Session, who had denied him justice, down to the Bailies of Inverkeithing who had given him more of it than he desired. It was impossible but he should conceive some suspicion of two men lying all day concealed in a thicket and having no business to allege. As long as he stayed there he kept us in hot water with prying questions; and after he was gone, as he was a man not very likely to hold his tongue, we were in the greater impatience to be gone ourselves.

The day came to an end with the same brightness; the night fell quiet and clear; lights came out in houses and hamlets and then, one after another, began to be put out; but it was past eleven, and we were long since strangely tortured with anxieties, before we heard the grinding of oars upon the rowing-pins. At that, we looked out and saw the lass herself coming rowing to us in a boat. She had trusted no one with our affairs, not even her sweetheart, if she had one; but as soon as her father was asleep, had left the house by a window, stolen a neighbour's boat, and come to our assistance single-handed.

I was abashed how to find expression for my thanks; but she was no less abashed at the thought of hearing them; begged us to lose no time and to hold our peace, saying (very properly) that the heart of our matter was in haste and silence; and so, what with one thing and another, she had set us on the Lothian shore not far from Carriden, had shaken hands with us, and was out again at sea and rowing for Limekilns, before there was one word said either of her service or our gratitude.

Even after she was gone, we had nothing to say, as indeed nothing was enough for such a kindness. Only Alan stood a great while upon the shore shaking his head.

"It is a very fine lass," he said at last. "David, it is a very fine lass." And a matter of an hour later, as we were lying in a den on the sea-shore and I had been already dozing, he broke out again in commendations of her character. For my part, I could say nothing, she was so simple a creature that my heart smote me both with remorse and fear: remorse because we had traded upon her ignorance; and fear lest we should have anyway involved her in the dangers of our situation.

CHAPTER XXVII

I COME TO MR. RANKEILLOR

The next day it was agreed that Alan should fend for himself till sunset; but as soon as it began to grow dark, he should lie in the fields by the roadside near to Newhalls, and stir for naught until he heard me whistling. At first I proposed I should give him for a signal the "Bonnie House of Airlie," which was a favourite of mine; but he objected that as the piece was very commonly known, any ploughman might whistle it by accident; and taught me instead a little fragment of a Highland air, which has run in my head from that day to this, and will likely run in my head when I lie dying. Every time it comes to me, it takes me off to that last day of my uncertainty, with Alan sitting up in the bottom of the den, whistling and beating the measure with a finger, and the grey of the dawn coming on his face.

I was in the long street of Queensferry before the sun was up. It was a fairly built burgh, the houses of good stone, many slated; the town-hall not so fine, I thought, as that of Peebles, nor yet the street so noble; but take it altogether, it put me to shame for my foul tatters.

As the morning went on, and the fires began to be kindled, and the windows to open, and the people to appear out of the houses, my concern and despondency grew ever the blacker. I saw now that I had no grounds to stand upon; and no clear proof of my rights, nor so much as of my own identity. If it was all a bubble, I was indeed sorely cheated and left in a sore pass. Even if things were as I conceived, it would in all likelihood take time to establish my contentions; and what time had I to spare with less than three shillings in my pocket, and a condemned, hunted man upon my hands to ship out of the country? Truly, if my hope broke with me, it might come to the gallows yet for both of us. And as I continued to walk up and down, and saw people looking askance at me upon the street or out of windows, and nudging or speaking one to another with smiles, I began to take a fresh apprehension: that it might be no easy matter even to come to speech of the lawyer, far less to convince him of my story.

For the life of me I could not muster up the courage to address any of these reputable burghers; I thought shame even to speak with them in such a pickle of rags and dirt; and if I had asked for the house of such a man as Mr. Rankeillor, I suppose they would have burst out laughing in my face. So I went up and down, and through the street, and down to the harbour-side, like a dog that has lost its master, with a strange gnawing in my inwards, and every now and then a movement of despair. It grew to be high day at last, perhaps nine in the forenoon; and I was worn with these wanderings, and chanced to have stopped in front of a very good house on the landward side, a house with beautiful, clear glass windows, flowering knots upon the sills, the walls new-harled* and a chase-dog sitting yawning on the step like one that was at home. Well, I was even envying this dumb brute, when the door fell open and there issued forth a shrewd, ruddy, kindly, consequential man in a well-powdered wig and spectacles. I was in such a plight that no one set eyes on me once, but he looked at me again; and this gentleman, as it proved, was so much struck with my poor appearance that he came straight up to me and asked me what I did.

* Newly rough-cast.

I told him I was come to the Queensferry on business, and taking heart of grace, asked him to direct me to the house of Mr. Rankeillor.

"Why," said he, "that is his house that I have just come out of; and for a rather singular chance, I am that very man."

"Then, sir," said I, "I have to beg the favour of an interview."

"I do not know your name," said he, "nor yet your face."

"My name is David Balfour," said I.

"David Balfour?" he repeated, in rather a high tone, like one surprised. "And where have you come from, Mr. David Balfour?" he asked, looking me pretty drily in the face.

"I have come from a great many strange places, sir," said I; "but I think it would be as well to tell you where and how in a more private manner."

He seemed to muse awhile, holding his lip in his hand, and looking now at me and now upon the causeway of the street.

"Yes," says he, "that will be the best, no doubt." And he led me back with him into his house, cried out to some one whom I could not see that he would be engaged all morning, and brought me into a little dusty chamber full of books and documents. Here he sate down, and bade me be seated; though I thought he looked a little ruefully from his clean chair to my muddy rags. "And now," says he, "if you have any business, pray be brief and come swiftly to the point. Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo — do you understand that?" says he, with a keen look.

"I will even do as Horace says, sir," I answered, smiling, "and carry you in medias res." He nodded as if he was well pleased, and indeed his scrap of Latin had been set to test me. For all that, and though I was somewhat encouraged, the blood came in my face when I added: "I have reason to believe myself some rights on the estate of Shaws."

He got a paper book out of a drawer and set it before him open. "Well?" said he.

But I had shot my bolt and sat speechless.

"Come, come, Mr. Balfour," said he, "you must continue. Where were you born?"

"In Essendean, sir," said I, "the year 1733, the 12th of March."

He seemed to follow this statement in his paper book; but what that meant I knew not. "Your father and mother?" said he.

"My father was Alexander Balfour, schoolmaster of that place," said I, "and my mother Grace Pitarrow; I think her people were from Angus."

"Have you any papers proving your identity?" asked Mr. Rankeillor.

"No, sir," said I, "but they are in the hands of Mr. Campbell, the minister, and could be readily produced. Mr. Campbell, too, would give me his word; and for that matter, I do not think my uncle would deny me."

"Meaning Mr. Ebenezer Balfour?" says he.

"The same," said I.

"Whom you have seen?" he asked.

"By whom I was received into his own house," I answered.

"Did you ever meet a man of the name of Hoseason?" asked Mr. Rankeillor.

"I did so, sir, for my sins," said I; "for it was by his means and the procurement of my uncle, that I was kidnapped within sight of this town, carried to sea, suffered shipwreck and a hundred other hardships, and stand before you to-day in this poor accoutrement."

"You say you were shipwrecked," said Rankeillor; "where was that?"

"Off the south end of the Isle of Mull," said I. "The name of the isle on which I was cast up is the Island Earraid."

"Ah!" says he, smiling, "you are deeper than me in the geography. But so far, I may tell you, this agrees pretty exactly with other informations that I hold. But you say you were kidnapped; in what sense?"

"In the plain meaning of the word, sir," said I. "I was on my way to your house, when I was trepanned on board the brig, cruelly struck down, thrown below, and knew no more of anything till we were far at sea. I was destined for the plantations; a fate that, in God's providence, I have escaped."

"The brig was lost on June the 27th," says he, looking in his book, "and we are now at August the 24th. Here is a considerable hiatus, Mr. Balfour, of near upon two months. It has already caused a vast amount of trouble to your friends; and I own I shall not be very well contented until it is set right."

"Indeed, sir," said I, "these months are very easily filled up; but yet before I told my story, I would be glad to know that I was talking to a friend."

"This is to argue in a circle," said the lawyer. "I cannot be convinced till I have heard you. I cannot be your friend till I am properly informed. If you were more trustful, it would better befit your time of life. And you know, Mr. Balfour, we have a proverb in the country that evil-doers are aye evil-dreaders."

"You are not to forget, sir," said I, "that I have already suffered by my trustfulness; and was shipped off to be a slave by the very man that (if I rightly understand) is your employer?"

All this while I had been gaining ground with Mr. Rankeillor, and in proportion as I gained ground, gaining confidence. But at this sally, which I made with something of a smile myself, he fairly laughed aloud.

"No, no," said he, "it is not so bad as that. Fui, non sum. I was indeed your uncle's man of business; but while you (imberbis juvenis custode remoto) were gallivanting in the west, a good deal of water has run under the bridges; and if your ears did not sing, it was not for lack of being talked about. On the very day of your sea disaster, Mr. Campbell stalked into my office, demanding you from all the winds. I had never heard of your existence; but I had known your father; and from matters in my competence (to be touched upon hereafter) I was disposed to fear the worst. Mr. Ebenezer admitted having seen you; declared (what seemed improbable) that he had given you considerable sums; and that you had started for the continent of Europe, intending to fulfil your education, which was probable and praiseworthy. Interrogated how you had come to send no word to Mr. Campbell, he deponed that you had expressed a great desire to break with your past life. Further interrogated where you now were, protested ignorance, but believed you were in Leyden. That is a close sum of his replies. I am not exactly sure that any one believed him," continued Mr. Rankeillor with a smile; "and in particular he so much disrelished me expressions of mine that (in a word) he showed me to the door. We were then at a full stand; for whatever shrewd suspicions we might entertain, we had no shadow of probation. In the very article, comes Captain Hoseason with the story of your drowning; whereupon all fell through; with no consequences but concern to Mr. Campbell, injury to my pocket, and another blot upon your uncle's character, which could very ill afford it. And now, Mr. Balfour," said he, "you understand the whole process of these matters, and can judge for yourself to what extent I may be trusted."

Indeed he was more pedantic than I can represent him, and placed more scraps of Latin in his speech; but it was all uttered with a fine geniality of eye and manner which went far to conquer my distrust. Moreover, I could see he now treated me as if I was myself beyond a doubt; so that first point of my identity seemed fully granted.

"Sir," said I, "if I tell you my story, I must commit a friend's life to your discretion. Pass me your word it shall be sacred; and for what touches myself, I will ask no better guarantee than just your face."

He passed me his word very seriously. "But," said he, "these are rather alarming prolocutions; and if there are in your story any little jostles to the law, I would beg you to bear in mind that I am a lawyer, and pass lightly."

Thereupon I told him my story from the first, he listening with his spectacles thrust up and his eyes closed, so that I sometimes feared he was asleep. But no such matter! he heard every word (as I found afterward) with such quickness of hearing and precision of memory as often surprised me. Even strange outlandish Gaelic names, heard for that time only, he remembered and would remind me of, years after. Yet when I called Alan Breck in full, we had an odd scene. The name of Alan had of course rung through Scotland, with the news of the Appin murder and the offer of the reward; and it had no sooner escaped me than the lawyer moved in his seat and opened his eyes.

"I would name no unnecessary names, Mr. Balfour," said he; "above all of Highlanders, many of whom are obnoxious to the law."

"Well, it might have been better not," said I, "but since I have let it slip, I may as well continue."

"Not at all," said Mr. Rankeillor. "I am somewhat dull of hearing, as you may have remarked; and I am far from sure I caught the name exactly. We will call your friend, if you please, Mr. Thomson — that there may be no reflections. And in future, I would take some such way with any Highlander that you may have to mention — dead or alive."

By this, I saw he must have heard the name all too clearly, and had already guessed I might be coming to the murder. If he chose to play this part of ignorance, it was no matter of mine; so I smiled, said it was no very Highland-sounding name, and consented. Through all the rest of my story Alan was Mr. Thomson; which amused me the more, as it was a piece of policy after his own heart. James Stewart, in like manner, was mentioned under the style of Mr. Thomson's kinsman; Colin Campbell passed as a Mr. Glen; and to Cluny, when I came to that part of my tale, I gave the name of "Mr. Jameson, a Highland chief." It was truly the most open farce, and I wondered that the lawyer should care to keep it up; but, after all, it was quite in the taste of that age, when there were two parties in the state, and quiet persons, with no very high opinions of their own, sought out every cranny to avoid offence to either.

"Well, well," said the lawyer, when I had quite done, "this is a great epic, a great Odyssey of yours. You must tell it, sir, in a sound Latinity when your scholarship is riper; or in English if you please, though for my part I prefer the stronger tongue. You have rolled much; quae regio in terris — what parish in Scotland (to make a homely translation) has not been filled with your wanderings? You have shown, besides, a singular aptitude for getting into false positions; and, yes, upon the whole, for behaving well in them. This Mr. Thomson seems to me a gentleman of some choice qualities, though perhaps a trifle bloody-minded. It would please me none the worse, if (with all his merits) he were soused in the North Sea, for the man, Mr. David, is a sore embarrassment. But you are doubtless quite right to adhere to him; indubitably, he adhered to you. It comes — we may say — he was your true companion; nor less paribus curis vestigia figit, for I dare say you would both take an orra thought upon the gallows. Well, well, these days are fortunately, by; and I think (speaking humanly) that you are near the end of your troubles."

As he thus moralised on my adventures, he looked upon me with so much humour and benignity that I could scarce contain my satisfaction. I had been so long wandering with lawless people, and making my bed upon the hills and under the bare sky, that to sit once more in a clean, covered house, and to talk amicably with a gentleman in broadcloth, seemed mighty elevations. Even as I thought so, my eye fell on my unseemly tatters, and I was once more plunged in confusion. But the lawyer saw and understood me. He rose, called over the stair to lay another plate, for Mr. Balfour would stay to dinner, and led me into a bedroom in the upper part of the house. Here he set before me water and soap, and a comb; and laid out some clothes that belonged to his son; and here, with another apposite tag, he left me to my toilet.

CHAPTER XXVIII

I GO IN QUEST OF MY INHERITANCE

I made what change I could in my appearance; and blithe was I to look in the glass and find the beggarman a thing of the past, and David Balfour come to life again. And yet I was ashamed of the change too, and, above all, of the borrowed clothes. When I had done, Mr. Rankeillor caught me on the stair, made me his compliments, and had me again into the cabinet.

"Sit ye down, Mr. David," said he, "and now that you are looking a little more like yourself, let me see if I can find you any news. You will be wondering, no doubt, about your father and your uncle? To be sure it is a singular tale; and the explanation is one that I blush to have to offer you. For," says he, really with embarrassment, "the matter hinges on a love affair."

"Truly," said I, "I cannot very well join that notion with my uncle."

"But your uncle, Mr. David, was not always old," replied the lawyer, "and what may perhaps surprise you more, not always ugly. He had a fine, gallant air; people stood in their doors to look after him, as he went by upon a mettle horse. I have seen it with these eyes, and I ingenuously confess, not altogether without envy; for I was a plain lad myself and a plain man's son; and in those days it was a case of Odi te, qui bellus es, Sabelle."

"It sounds like a dream," said I.

"Ay, ay," said the lawyer, "that is how it is with youth and age. Nor was that all, but he had a spirit of his own that seemed to promise great things in the future. In 1715, what must he do but run away to join the rebels? It was your father that pursued him, found him in a ditch, and brought him back multum gementem; to the mirth of the whole country. However, majora canamus — the two lads fell in love, and that with the same lady. Mr. Ebenezer, who was the admired and the beloved, and the spoiled one, made, no doubt, mighty certain of the victory; and when he found he had deceived himself, screamed like a peacock. The whole country heard of it; now he lay sick at home, with his silly family standing round the bed in tears; now he rode from public-house to public-house, and shouted his sorrows into the lug of Tom, Dick, and Harry. Your father, Mr. David, was a kind gentleman; but he was weak, dolefully weak; took all this folly with a long countenance; and one day — by your leave! — resigned the lady. She was no such fool, however; it's from her you must inherit your excellent good sense; and she refused to be bandied from one to another. Both got upon their knees to her; and the upshot of the matter for that while was that she showed both of them the door. That was in August; dear me! the same year I came from college. The scene must have been highly farcical."

I thought myself it was a silly business, but I could not forget my father had a hand in it. "Surely, sir, it had some note of tragedy," said I.

"Why, no, sir, not at all," returned the lawyer. "For tragedy implies some ponderable matter in dispute, some dignus vindice nodus; and this piece of work was all about the petulance of a young ass that had been spoiled, and wanted nothing so much as to be tied up and soundly belted. However, that was not your father's view; and the end of it was, that from concession to concession on your father's part, and from one height to another of squalling, sentimental selfishness upon your uncle's, they came at last to drive a sort of bargain, from whose ill results you have recently been smarting. The one man took the lady, the other the estate. Now, Mr. David, they talk a great deal of charity and generosity; but in this disputable state of life, I often think the happiest consequences seem to flow when a gentleman consults his lawyer, and takes all the law allows him. Anyhow, this piece of Quixotry on your father's part, as it was unjust in itself, has brought forth a monstrous family of injustices. Your father and mother lived and died poor folk; you were poorly reared; and in the meanwhile, what a time it has been for the tenants on the estate of Shaws! And I might add (if it was a matter I cared much about) what a time for Mr. Ebenezer!"

"And yet that is certainly the strangest part of all," said I, "that a man's nature should thus change."

"True," said Mr. Rankeillor. "And yet I imagine it was natural enough. He could not think that he had played a handsome part. Those who knew the story gave him the cold shoulder; those who knew it not, seeing one brother disappear, and the other succeed in the estate, raised a cry of murder; so that upon all sides he found himself evited. Money was all he got by his bargain; well, he came to think the more of money. He was selfish when he was young, he is selfish now that he is old; and the latter end of all these pretty manners and fine feelings you have seen for yourself."

"Well, sir," said I, "and in all this, what is my position?"

"The estate is yours beyond a doubt," replied the lawyer. "It matters nothing what your father signed, you are the heir of entail. But your uncle is a man to fight the indefensible; and it would be likely your identity that he would call in question. A lawsuit is always expensive, and a family lawsuit always scandalous; besides which, if any of your doings with your friend Mr. Thomson were to come out, we might find that we had burned our fingers. The kidnapping, to be sure, would be a court card upon our side, if we could only prove it. But it may be difficult to prove; and my advice (upon the whole) is to make a very easy bargain with your uncle, perhaps even leaving him at Shaws where he has taken root for a quarter of a century, and contenting yourself in the meanwhile with a fair provision."

I told him I was very willing to be easy, and that to carry family concerns before the public was a step from which I was naturally much averse. In the meantime (thinking to myself) I began to see the outlines of that scheme on which we afterwards acted.

"The great affair," I asked, "is to bring home to him the kidnapping?"

"Surely," said Mr. Rankeillor, "and if possible, out of court. For mark you here, Mr. David: we could no doubt find some men of the Covenant who would swear to your reclusion; but once they were in the box, we could no longer check their testimony, and some word of your friend Mr. Thomson must certainly crop out. Which (from what you have let fall) I cannot think to be desirable."

"Well, sir," said I, "here is my way of it." And I opened my plot to him.

"But this would seem to involve my meeting the man Thomson?" says he, when I had done.

"I think so, indeed, sir," said I.

"Dear doctor!" cries he, rubbing his brow. "Dear doctor! No, Mr. David, I am afraid your scheme is inadmissible. I say nothing against your friend, Mr. Thomson: I know nothing against him; and if I did — mark this, Mr. David! — it would be my duty to lay hands on him. Now I put it to you: is it wise to meet? He may have matters to his charge. He may not have told you all. His name may not be even Thomson!" cries the lawyer, twinkling; "for some of these fellows will pick up names by the roadside as another would gather haws."

"You must be the judge, sir," said I.

But it was clear my plan had taken hold upon his fancy, for he kept musing to himself till we were called to dinner and the company of Mrs. Rankeillor; and that lady had scarce left us again to ourselves and a bottle of wine, ere he was back harping on my proposal. When and where was I to meet my friend Mr. Thomson; was I sure of Mr. T.'s discretion; supposing we could catch the old fox tripping, would I consent to such and such a term of an agreement — these and the like questions he kept asking at long intervals, while he thoughtfully rolled his wine upon his tongue. When I had answered all of them, seemingly to his contentment, he fell into a still deeper muse, even the claret being now forgotten. Then he got a sheet of paper and a pencil, and set to work writing and weighing every word; and at last touched a bell and had his clerk into the chamber.

"Torrance," said he, "I must have this written out fair against to-night; and when it is done, you will be so kind as put on your hat and be ready to come along with this gentleman and me, for you will probably be wanted as a witness."

"What, sir," cried I, as soon as the clerk was gone, "are you to venture it?"

"Why, so it would appear," says he, filling his glass. "But let us speak no more of business. The very sight of Torrance brings in my head a little droll matter of some years ago, when I had made a tryst with the poor oaf at the cross of Edinburgh. Each had gone his proper errand; and when it came four o'clock, Torrance had been taking a glass and did not know his master, and I, who had forgot my spectacles, was so blind without them, that I give you my word I did not know my own clerk." And thereupon he laughed heartily.

I said it was an odd chance, and smiled out of politeness; but what held me all the afternoon in wonder, he kept returning and dwelling on this story, and telling it again with fresh details and laughter; so that I began at last to be quite put out of countenance and feel ashamed for my friend's folly.

Towards the time I had appointed with Alan, we set out from the house, Mr. Rankeillor and I arm in arm, and Torrance following behind with the deed in his pocket and a covered basket in his hand. All through the town, the lawyer was bowing right and left, and continually being button-holed by gentlemen on matters of burgh or private business; and I could see he was one greatly looked up to in the county. At last we were clear of the houses, and began to go along the side of the haven and towards the Hawes Inn and the Ferry pier, the scene of my misfortune. I could not look upon the place without emotion, recalling how many that had been there with me that day were now no more: Ransome taken, I could hope, from the evil to come; Shuan passed where I dared not follow him; and the poor souls that had gone down with the brig in her last plunge. All these, and the brig herself, I had outlived; and come through these hardships and fearful perils without scath. My only thought should have been of gratitude; and yet I could not behold the place without sorrow for others and a chill of recollected fear.

I was so thinking when, upon a sudden, Mr. Rankeillor cried out, clapped his hand to his pockets, and began to laugh.

"Why," he cries, "if this be not a farcical adventure! After all that I said, I have forgot my glasses!"

At that, of course, I understood the purpose of his anecdote, and knew that if he had left his spectacles at home, it had been done on purpose, so that he might have the benefit of Alan's help without the awkwardness of recognising him. And indeed it was well thought upon; for now (suppose things to go the very worst) how could Rankeillor swear to my friend's identity, or how be made to bear damaging evidence against myself? For all that, he had been a long while of finding out his want, and had spoken to and recognised a good few persons as we came through the town; and I had little doubt myself that he saw reasonably well.

As soon as we were past the Hawes (where I recognised the landlord smoking his pipe in the door, and was amazed to see him look no older) Mr. Rankeillor changed the order of march, walking behind with Torrance and sending me forward in the manner of a scout. I went up the hill, whistling from time to time my Gaelic air; and at length I had the pleasure to hear it answered and to see Alan rise from behind a bush. He was somewhat dashed in spirits, having passed a long day alone skulking in the county, and made but a poor meal in an alehouse near Dundas. But at the mere sight of my clothes, he began to brighten up; and as soon as I had told him in what a forward state our matters were and the part I looked to him to play in what remained, he sprang into a new man.

"And that is a very good notion of yours," says he; "and I dare to say that you could lay your hands upon no better man to put it through than Alan Breck. It is not a thing (mark ye) that any one could do, but takes a gentleman of penetration. But it sticks in my head your lawyer-man will be somewhat wearying to see me," says Alan.

Accordingly I cried and waved on Mr. Rankeillor, who came up alone and was presented to my friend, Mr. Thomson.

"Mr. Thomson, I am pleased to meet you," said he. "But I have forgotten my glasses; and our friend, Mr. David here" (clapping me on the shoulder), "will tell you that I am little better than blind, and that you must not be surprised if I pass you by to-morrow."

This he said, thinking that Alan would be pleased; but the Highlandman's vanity was ready to startle at a less matter than that.

"Why, sir," says he, stiffly, "I would say it mattered the less as we are met here for a particular end, to see justice done to Mr. Balfour; and by what I can see, not very likely to have much else in common. But I accept your apology, which was a very proper one to make."

"And that is more than I could look for, Mr. Thomson," said Rankeillor, heartily. "And now as you and I are the chief actors in this enterprise, I think we should come into a nice agreement; to which end, I propose that you should lend me your arm, for (what with the dusk and the want of my glasses) I am not very clear as to the path; and as for you, Mr. David, you will find Torrance a pleasant kind of body to speak with. Only let me remind you, it's quite needless he should hear more of your adventures or those of — ahem — Mr.

Thomson."

Accordingly these two went on ahead in very close talk, and Torrance and I brought up the rear.

Night was quite come when we came in view of the house of Shaws. Ten had been gone some time; it was dark and mild, with a pleasant, rustling wind in the south-west that covered the sound of our approach; and as we drew near we saw no glimmer of light in any portion of the building. It seemed my uncle was already in bed, which was indeed the best thing for our arrangements. We made our last whispered consultations some fifty yards away; and then the lawyer and Torrance and I crept quietly up and crouched down beside the corner of the house; and as soon as we were in our places, Alan strode to the door without concealment and began to knock.

CHAPTER XXIX

I COME INTO MY KINGDOM

For some time Alan volleyed upon the door, and his knocking only roused the echoes of the house and neighbourhood. At last, however, I could hear the noise of a window gently thrust up, and knew that my uncle had come to his observatory. By what light there was, he would see Alan standing, like a dark shadow, on the steps; the three witnesses were hidden quite out of his view; so that there was nothing to alarm an honest man in his own house. For all that, he studied his visitor awhile in silence, and when he spoke his voice had a quaver of misgiving.

"What's this?" says he. "This is nae kind of time of night for decent folk; and I hae nae trokings* wi' night-hawks. What brings ye here? I have a blunderbush."

* Dealings.

"Is that yoursel', Mr. Balfour?" returned Alan, stepping back and looking up into the darkness. "Have a care of that blunderbuss; they're nasty things to burst."

"What brings ye here? and whae are ye?" says my uncle, angrily.

"I have no manner of inclination to rowt out my name to the country-side," said Alan; "but what brings me here is another story, being more of your affair than mine; and if ye're sure it's what ye would like, I'll set it to a tune and sing it to you."

"And what is't?" asked my uncle.

"David," says Alan.

"What was that?" cried my uncle, in a mighty changed voice.

"Shall I give ye the rest of the name, then?" said Alan.

There was a pause; and then, "I'm thinking I'll better let ye in," says my uncle, doubtfully.

"I dare say that," said Alan; "but the point is, Would I go? Now I will tell you what I am thinking. I am thinking that it is here upon this doorstep that we must confer upon this business; and it shall be here or nowhere at all whatever; for I would have you to understand that I am as stiffnecked as yoursel', and a gentleman of better family."

This change of note disconcerted Ebenezer; he was a little while digesting it, and then says he, "Weel, weel, what must be must," and shut the window. But it took him a long time to get down-stairs, and a still longer to undo the fastenings, repenting (I dare say) and taken with fresh claps of fear at every second step and every bolt and bar. At last, however, we heard the creak of the hinges, and it seems my uncle slipped gingerly out and (seeing that Alan had stepped back a pace or two) sate him down on the top doorstep with the blunderbuss ready in his hands.

"And, now" says he, "mind I have my blunderbush, and if ye take a step nearer ye're as good as deid."

"And a very civil speech," says Alan, "to be sure."

"Na," says my uncle, "but this is no a very chanty kind of a proceeding, and I'm bound to be prepared. And now that we understand each other, ye'll can name your business."

"Why," says Alan, "you that are a man of so much understanding, will doubtless have perceived that I am a Hieland gentleman. My name has nae business in my story; but the county of my friends is no very far from the Isle of Mull, of which ye will have heard. It seems there was a ship lost in those parts; and the next day a gentleman of my family was seeking wreck-wood for his fire along the sands, when he came upon a lad that was half drowned. Well, he brought him to; and he and some other gentleman took and clapped him in an auld, ruined castle, where from that day to this he has been a great expense to my friends. My friends are a wee wild-like, and not so particular about the law as some that I could name; and finding that the lad owned some decent folk, and was your born nephew, Mr. Balfour, they asked me to give ye a bit call and confer upon the matter. And I may tell ye at the off-go, unless we can agree upon some terms, ye are little likely to set eyes upon him. For my friends," added Alan, simply, "are no very well off."

My uncle cleared his throat. "I'm no very caring," says he. "He wasnae a good lad at the best of it, and I've nae call to interfere."

"Ay, ay," said Alan, "I see what ye would be at: pretending ye don't care, to make the ransom smaller."

"Na," said my uncle, "it's the mere truth. I take nae manner of interest in the lad, and I'll pay nae ransome, and ye can make a kirk and a mill of him for what I care."

"Hoot, sir," says Alan. "Blood's thicker than water, in the deil's name! Ye cannae desert your brother's son for the fair shame of it; and if ye did, and it came to be kennt, ye wouldnae be very popular in your country-side, or I'm the more deceived."

"I'm no just very popular the way it is," returned Ebenezer; "and I dinnae see how it would come to be kennt. No by me, onyway; nor yet by you or your friends. So that's idle talk, my buckie," says he.

"Then it'll have to be David that tells it," said Alan.

"How that?" says my uncle, sharply.

"Ou, just this, way" says Alan. "My friends would doubtless keep your nephew as long as there was any likelihood of siller to be made of it, but if there was nane, I am clearly of opinion they would let him gang where he pleased, and be damned to him!"

"Ay, but I'm no very caring about that either," said my uncle. "I wouldnae be muckle made up with that."

"I was thinking that," said Alan.

"And what for why?" asked Ebenezer.

"Why, Mr. Balfour," replied Alan, "by all that I could hear, there were two ways of it: either ye liked David and would pay to get him back; or else ye had very good reasons for not wanting him, and would pay for us to keep him. It seems it's not the first; well then, it's the second; and blythe am I to ken it, for it should be a pretty penny in my pocket and the pockets of my friends."

"I dinnae follow ye there," said my uncle.

"No?" said Alan. "Well, see here: you dinnae want the lad back; well, what do ye want done with him, and how much will ye pay?"

My uncle made no answer, but shifted uneasily on his seat.

"Come, sir," cried Alan. "I would have you to ken that I am a gentleman; I bear a king's name; I am nae rider to kick my shanks at your hall door. Either give me an answer in civility, and that out of hand; or by the top of Glencoe, I will ram three feet of iron through your vitals."

"Eh, man," cried my uncle, scrambling to his feet, "give me a meenit! What's like wrong with ye? I'm just a plain man and nae dancing master; and I'm tryin to be as ceevil as it's morally possible. As for that wild talk, it's fair disrepitable. Vitals, says you! And where would I be with my blunderbush?" he snarled.

"Powder and your auld hands are but as the snail to the swallow against the bright steel in the hands of Alan," said the other. "Before your jottering finger could find the trigger, the hilt would dirl on your breast-bane."

"Eh, man, whae's denying it?" said my uncle. "Pit it as ye please, hae't your ain way; I'll do naething to cross ye. Just tell me what like ye'll be wanting, and ye'll see that we'll can agree fine."

"Troth, sir," said Alan, "I ask for nothing but plain dealing. In two words: do ye want the lad killed or kept?"

"O, sirs!" cried Ebenezer. "O, sirs, me! that's no kind of language!"

"Killed or kept!" repeated Alan.

"O, keepit, keepit!" wailed my uncle. "We'll have nae bloodshed, if you please."

"Well," says Alan, "as ye please; that'll be the dearer."

"The dearer?" cries Ebenezer. "Would ye fyle your hands wi' crime?"

"Hoot!" said Alan, "they're baith crime, whatever! And the killing's easier, and quicker, and surer. Keeping the lad'll be a fashious* job, a fashious, kittle business."

* Troublesome.

"I'll have him keepit, though," returned my uncle. "I never had naething to do with onything morally wrong; and I'm no gaun to begin to pleasure a wild Hielandman."

"Ye're unco scrupulous," sneered Alan.

"I'm a man o' principle," said Ebenezer, simply; "and if I have to pay for it, I'll have to pay for it. And besides," says he, "ye forget the lad's my brother's son."

"Well, well," said Alan, "and now about the price. It's no very easy for me to set a name upon it; I would first have to ken some small matters. I would have to ken, for instance, what ye gave Hoseason at the first off-go?"

"Hoseason!" cries my uncle, struck aback. "What for?"

"For kidnapping David," says Alan.

"It's a lee, it's a black lee!" cried my uncle. "He was never kidnapped. He leed in his throat that tauld ye that. Kidnapped? He never was!"

"That's no fault of mine nor yet of yours," said Alan; "nor yet of Hoseason's, if he's a man that can be trusted."

"What do ye mean?" cried Ebenezer. "Did Hoseason tell ye?"

"Why, ye donnered auld runt, how else would I ken?" cried Alan. "Hoseason and me are partners; we gang shares; so ye can see for yoursel' what good ye can do leeing. And I must plainly say ye drove a fool's bargain when ye let a man like the sailor-man so far forward in your private matters. But that's past praying for; and ye must lie on your bed the way ye made it. And the point in hand is just this: what did ye pay him?"

"Has he tauld ye himsel'?" asked my uncle.

"That's my concern," said Alan.

"Weel," said my uncle, "I dinnae care what he said, he leed, and the solemn God's truth is this, that I gave him twenty pound. But I'll be perfec'ly honest with ye: forby that, he was to have the selling of the lad in Caroliny, whilk would be as muckle mair, but no from my pocket, ye see."

"Thank you, Mr. Thomson. That will do excellently well," said the lawyer, stepping forward; and then mighty civilly, "Good-evening, Mr. Balfour," said he.

And, "Good-evening, Uncle Ebenezer," said I.

And, "It's a braw nicht, Mr. Balfour" added Torrance.

Never a word said my uncle, neither black nor white; but just sat where he was on the top door-step and stared upon us like a man turned to stone. Alan filched away his blunderbuss; and the lawyer, taking him by the arm, plucked him up from the doorstep, led him into the kitchen, whither we all followed, and set him down in a chair beside the hearth, where the fire was out and only a rush-light burning.

There we all looked upon him for a while, exulting greatly in our success, but yet with a sort of pity for the man's shame.

"Come, come, Mr. Ebenezer," said the lawyer, "you must not be down-hearted, for I promise you we shall make easy terms. In the meanwhile give us the cellar key, and Torrance shall draw us a bottle of your father's wine in honour of the event." Then, turning to me and taking me by the hand, "Mr. David," says he, "I wish you all joy in your good fortune, which I believe to be deserved." And then to Alan, with a spice of drollery, "Mr. Thomson, I pay you my compliment; it was most artfully conducted; but in one point you somewhat outran my comprehension. Do I understand your name to be James? or Charles? or is it George, perhaps?"

"And why should it be any of the three, sir?" quoth Alan, drawing himself up, like one who smelt an offence.

"Only, sir, that you mentioned a king's name," replied Rankeillor; "and as there has never yet been a King Thomson, or his fame at least has never come my way, I judged you must refer to that you had in baptism."

This was just the stab that Alan would feel keenest, and I am free to confess he took it very ill. Not a word would he answer, but stepped off to the far end of the kitchen, and sat down and sulked; and it was not till I stepped after him, and gave him my hand, and thanked him by title as the chief spring of my success, that he began to smile a bit, and was at last prevailed upon to join our party.

By that time we had the fire lighted, and a bottle of wine uncorked; a good supper came out of the basket, to which Torrance and I and Alan set ourselves down; while the lawyer and my uncle passed into the next chamber to consult. They stayed there closeted about an hour; at the end of which period they had come to a good understanding, and my uncle and I set our hands to the agreement in a formal manner. By the terms of this, my uncle bound himself to satisfy Rankeillor as to his intromissions, and to pay me two clear thirds of the yearly income of Shaws.

So the beggar in the ballad had come home; and when I lay down that night on the kitchen chests, I was a man of means and had a name in the country. Alan and Torrance and Rankeillor slept and snored on their hard beds; but for me who had lain out under heaven and upon dirt and stones, so many days and nights, and often with an empty belly, and in fear of death, this good change in my case unmanned me more than any of the former evil ones; and I lay till dawn, looking at the fire on the roof and planning the future.

CHAPTER XXX

GOOD-BYE

So far as I was concerned myself, I had come to port; but I had still Alan, to whom I was so much beholden, on my hands; and I felt besides a heavy charge in the matter of the murder and James of the Glens. On both these heads I unbosomed to Rankeillor the next morning, walking to and fro about six of the clock before the house of Shaws, and with nothing in view but the fields and woods that had been my ancestors' and were now mine. Even as I spoke on these grave subjects, my eye would take a glad bit of a run over the prospect, and my heart jump with pride.

About my clear duty to my friend, the lawyer had no doubt. I must help him out of the county at whatever risk; but in the case of James, he was of a different mind.

"Mr. Thomson," says he, "is one thing, Mr. Thomson's kinsman quite another. I know little of the facts, but I gather that a great noble (whom we will call, if you like, the D. of A.)* has some concern and is even supposed to feel some animosity in the matter. The D. of A. is doubtless an excellent nobleman; but, Mr. David, timeo qui nocuere deos. If you interfere to balk his vengeance, you should remember there is one way to shut your testimony out; and that is to put you in the dock. There, you would be in the same pickle as Mr. Thomson's kinsman. You will object that you are innocent; well, but so is he. And to be tried for your life before a Highland jury, on a Highland quarrel and with a Highland Judge upon the bench, would be a brief transition to the gallows."

* The Duke of Argyle.

Now I had made all these reasonings before and found no very good reply to them; so I put on all the simplicity I could. "In that case, sir," said I, "I would just have to be hanged — would I not?"

"My dear boy," cries he, "go in God's name, and do what you think is right. It is a poor thought that at my time of life I should be advising you to choose the safe and shameful; and I take it back with an apology. Go and do your duty; and be hanged, if you must, like a gentleman. There are worse things in the world than to be hanged."

"Not many, sir," said I, smiling.

"Why, yes, sir," he cried, "very many. And it would be ten times better for your uncle (to go no farther afield) if he were dangling decently upon a gibbet."

Thereupon he turned into the house (still in a great fervour of mind, so that I saw I had pleased him heartily) and there he wrote me two letters, making his comments on them as he wrote.

"This," says he, "is to my bankers, the British Linen Company, placing a credit to your name. Consult Mr. Thomson, he will know of ways; and you, with this credit, can supply the means. I trust you will be a good husband of your money; but in the affair of a friend like Mr. Thompson, I would be even prodigal. Then for his kinsman, there is no better way than that you should seek the Advocate, tell him your tale, and offer testimony; whether he may take it or not, is quite another matter, and will turn on the D. of A. Now, that you may reach the Lord Advocate well recommended, I give you here a letter to a namesake of your own, the learned Mr. Balfour of Pilrig, a man whom I esteem. It will look better that you should be presented by one of your own name; and the laird of Pilrig is much looked up to in the Faculty and stands well with Lord Advocate Grant. I would not trouble him, if I were you, with any particulars; and (do you know?) I think it would be needless to refer to Mr. Thomson. Form yourself upon the laird, he is a good model; when you deal with the Advocate, be discreet; and in all these matters, may the Lord guide you, Mr. David!"

Thereupon he took his farewell, and set out with Torrance for the Ferry, while Alan and I turned our faces for the city of Edinburgh. As we went by the footpath and beside the gateposts and the unfinished lodge, we kept looking back at the house of my fathers. It stood there, bare and great and smokeless, like a place not lived in; only in one of the top windows, there was the peak of a nightcap bobbing up and down and back and forward, like the head of a rabbit from a burrow. I had little welcome when I came, and less kindness while I stayed; but at least I was watched as I went away.

Alan and I went slowly forward upon our way, having little heart either to walk or speak. The same thought was uppermost in both, that we were near the time of our parting; and remembrance of all the bygone days sate upon us sorely. We talked indeed of what should be done; and it was resolved that Alan should keep to the county, biding now here, now there, but coming once in the day to a particular place where I might be able to communicate with him, either in my own person or by messenger. In the meanwhile, I was to seek out a lawyer, who was an Appin Stewart, and a man therefore to be wholly trusted; and it should be his part to find a ship and to arrange for Alan's safe embarkation. No sooner was this business done, than the words seemed to leave us; and though I would seek to jest with Alan under the name of Mr. Thomson, and he with me on my new clothes and my estate, you could feel very well that we were nearer tears than laughter.

We came the by-way over the hill of Corstorphine; and when we got near to the place called Rest-and-be-Thankful, and looked down on Corstorphine bogs and over to the city and the castle on the hill, we both stopped, for we both knew without a word said that we had come to where our ways parted. Here he repeated to me once again what had been agreed upon between us: the address of the lawyer, the daily hour at which Alan might be found, and the signals that were to be made by any that came seeking him. Then I gave what money I had (a guinea or two of Rankeillor's) so that he should not starve in the meanwhile; and then we stood a space, and looked over at Edinburgh in silence.

"Well, good-bye," said Alan, and held out his left hand.

"Good-bye," said I, and gave the hand a little grasp, and went off down hill.

Neither one of us looked the other in the face, nor so long as he was in my view did I take one back glance at the friend I was leaving. But as I went on my way to the city, I felt so lost and lonesome, that I could have found it in my heart to sit down by the dyke, and cry and weep like any baby.

It was coming near noon when I passed in by the West Kirk and the Grassmarket into the streets of the capital. The huge height of the buildings, running up to ten and fifteen storeys, the narrow arched entries that continually vomited passengers, the wares of the merchants in their windows, the hubbub and endless stir, the foul smells and the fine clothes, and a hundred other particulars too small to mention, struck me into a kind of stupor of surprise, so that I let the crowd carry me to and fro; and yet all the time what I was thinking of was Alan at Rest-and-be-Thankful; and all the time (although you would think I would not choose but be delighted with these braws and novelties) there was a cold gnawing in my inside like a remorse for something wrong.

The hand of Providence brought me in my drifting to the very doors of the British Linen Company's bank.

THE MASTER OF BALLANTRAE

A Winter's Tale

Published in 1889, this novel concerns the conflict between two brothers. These Scottish noblemen are torn apart by the Jacobite rising of 1745, opposing each other in beliefs and morality.

The novel is presented as the memoir of one Ephraim Mackellar, steward of the Durrisdeer estate in Scotland. The novel opens in 1745, the year of the Jacobite Rising. When Bonnie Prince Charlie raises the banner of the Stewarts the Durie family — the Laird of Durrisdeer, his older son James Durie (the Master of Ballantrae).

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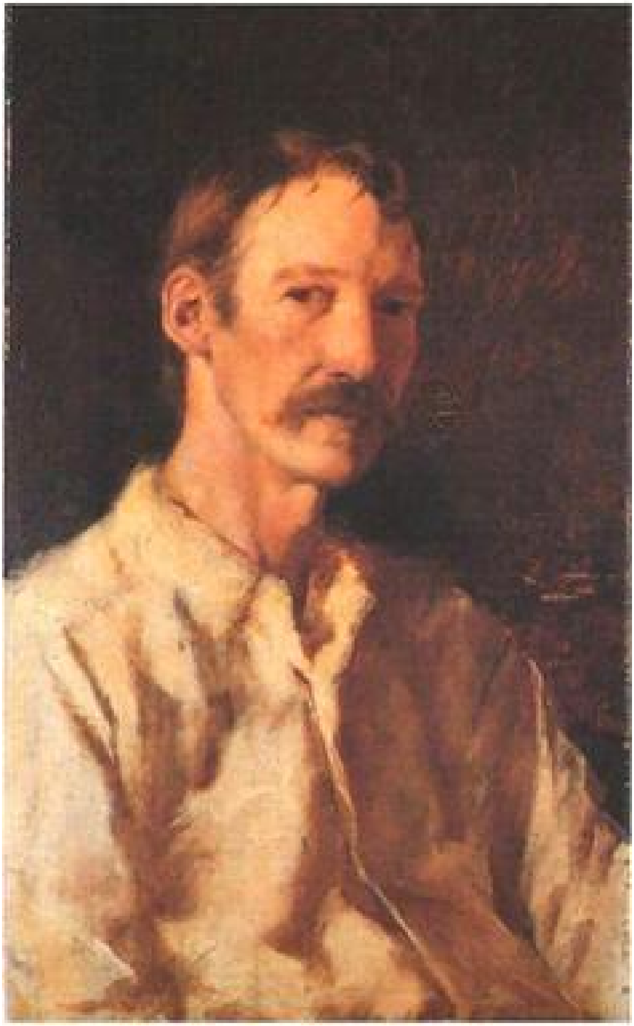

Portrait by Girolamo Nerli, 1892

PREFACE

Although an old, consistent exile, the editor of the following pages revisits now and again the city of which he exults to be a native; and there are few things more strange, more painful, or more salutary, than such revisitations. Outside, in foreign spots, he comes by surprise and awakens more attention than he had expected; in his own city, the relation is reversed, and he stands amazed to be so little recollected. Elsewhere he is refreshed to see attractive faces, to remark possible friends; there he scouts the long streets, with a pang at heart, for the faces and friends that are no more. Elsewhere he is delighted with the presence of what is new, there tormented by the absence of what is old. Elsewhere he is content to be his present self; there he is smitten with an equal regret for what he once was and for what he once hoped to be.

He was feeling all this dimly, as he drove from the station, on his last visit; he was feeling it still as he alighted at the door of his friend Mr. Johnstone Thomson, W.S., with whom he was to stay. A hearty welcome, a face not altogether changed, a few words that sounded of old days, a laugh provoked and shared, a glimpse in passing of the snowy cloth and bright decanters and the Piranesis on the dining-room wall, brought him to his bed-room with a somewhat lightened cheer, and when he and Mr. Thomson sat down a few minutes later, cheek by jowl, and pledged the past in a preliminary bumper, he was already almost consoled, he had already almost forgiven himself his two unpardonable errors, that he should ever have left his native city, or ever returned to it.

“I have something quite in your way,” said Mr. Thomson. “I wished to do honour to your arrival; because, my dear fellow, it is my own youth that comes back along with you; in a very tattered and withered state, to be sure, but - well! - all that’s left of it.”

“A great deal better than nothing,” said the editor. “But what is this which is quite in my way?”

“I was coming to that,” said Mr. Thomson: “Fate has put it in my power to honour your arrival with something really original by way of dessert. A mystery.”

“A mystery?” I repeated.

“Yes,” said his friend, “a mystery. It may prove to be nothing, and it may prove to be a great deal. But in the meanwhile it is truly mysterious, no eye having looked on it for near a hundred years; it is highly genteel, for it treats of a titled family; and it ought to be melodramatic, for (according to the superscription) it is concerned with death.”

“I think I rarely heard a more obscure or a more promising annunciation," the other remarked. "But what is It?"

"You remember my predecessor's, old Peter M'Brair's business?"

"I remember him acutely; he could not look at me without a pang of reprobation, and he could not feel the pang without betraying it. He was to me a man of a great historical interest, but the interest was not returned."

"Ah well, we go beyond him," said Mr. Thomson. "I daresay old Peter knew as little about this as I do. You see, I succeeded to a prodigious accumulation of old law-papers and old tin boxes, some of them of Peter's hoarding, some of his father's, John, first of the dynasty, a great man in his day. Among other collections, were all the papers of the Durrisdeers."

"The Durrisdeers!" cried I. "My dear fellow, these may be of the greatest interest. One of them was out in the '45; one had some strange passages with the devil - you will find a note of it in Law's MEMORIALS, I think; and there was an unexplained tragedy, I know not what, much later, about a hundred years ago - "

"More than a hundred years ago," said Mr. Thomson. "In 1783."

"How do you know that? I mean some death."

"Yes, the lamentable deaths of my Lord Durrisdeer and his brother, the Master of Ballantrae (attainted in the troubles)," said Mr. Thomson with something the tone of a man quoting. "Is that it?"

"To say truth," said I, "I have only seen some dim reference to the things in memoirs; and heard some traditions dimmer still, through my uncle (whom I think you knew). My uncle lived when he was a boy in the neighbourhood of St. Bride's; he has often told me of the avenue closed up and grown over with grass, the great gates never opened, the last lord and his old maid sister who lived in the back parts of the house, a quiet, plain, poor, hum-drum couple it would seem - but pathetic too, as the last of that stirring and brave house - and, to the country folk, faintly terrible from some deformed traditions."

"Yes," said Mr. Thomson. "Henry Graeme Durie, the last lord, died in 1820; his sister, the honourable Miss Katherine Durie, in '27; so much I know; and by what I have been going over the last few days, they were what you say, decent, quiet people and not rich. To say truth, it was a letter of my lord's that put me on the search for the packet we are going to open this evening. Some papers could not be found; and he wrote to Jack M'Brair suggesting they might be among those sealed up by a Mr. Mackellar. M'Brair answered, that the papers in question were all in Mackellar's own hand, all (as the writer understood) of a purely narrative character; and besides, said he, 'I am bound not to open them before the year 1889.' You may fancy if these words struck me: I instituted a hunt through all the M'Brair repositories; and at last hit upon that packet which (if you have had enough wine) I propose to show you at once."

In the smoking-room, to which my host now led me, was a packet, fastened with many seals and enclosed in a single sheet of strong paper thus endorsed:

Papers relating to the lives and lamentable deaths of the late Lord
Durisdeer, and his elder brother James, commonly called Master of
Ballantrae, attainted in the troubles: entrusted into the hands of
John M'Brair in the Lawnmarket of Edinburgh, W.S.; this 20th day of
September Anno Domini 1789; by him to be kept secret until the
revolution of one hundred years complete, or until the 20th day of
September 1889: the same compiled and written by me, EPHRAIM
MACKELLAR,

For near forty years Land Steward on the estates of his Lordship.

As Mr. Thomson is a married man, I will not say what hour had struck when we laid down the last of the following pages; but I will give a few words of what ensued.

"Here," said Mr. Thomson, "is a novel ready to your hand: all you have to do is to work up the scenery, develop the characters, and improve the style."

"My dear fellow," said I, "they are just the three things that I would rather die than set my hand to. It shall be published as it stands."

"But it's so bald," objected Mr. Thomson.

"I believe there is nothing so noble as baldness," replied I, "and I am sure there in nothing so interesting. I would have all literature bald, and all authors (if you like) but one."

"Well, well," add Mr. Thomson, "we shall see."

CHAPTERI. - SUMMARY OF EVENTS DURING THIS MASTER’S WANDERINGS.

The full truth of this odd matter is what the world has long been looking for, and public curiosity is sure to welcome. It so befell that I was intimately mingled with the last years and history of the house; and there does not live one man so able as myself to make these matters plain, or so desirous to narrate them faithfully. I knew the Master; on many secret steps of his career I have an authentic memoir in my hand; I sailed with him on his last voyage almost alone; I made one upon that winter’s journey of which so many tales have gone abroad; and I was there at the man’s death. As for my late Lord Durrisdeer, I served him and loved him near twenty years; and thought more of him the more I knew of him. Altogether, I think it not fit that so much evidence should perish; the truth is a debt I owe my lord’s memory; and I think my old years will flow more smoothly, and my white hair lie quieter on the pillow, when the debt is paid.

The Duries of Durrisdeer and Ballantrae were a strong family in the south-west from the days of David First. A rhyme still current in the countryside -

Kittle folk are the Durrisdeers,
They ride wi’ over mony spears -

bears the mark of its antiquity; and the name appears in another, which common report attributes to Thomas of Ercildoune himself - I cannot say how truly, and which some have applied - I dare not say with how much justice - to the events of this narration:

Twa Duries in Durrisdeer,
Ane to tie and ane to ride,
An ill day for the groom
And a waur day for the bride.

Authentic history besides is filled with their exploits which (to our modern eyes) seem not very commendable: and the family suffered its full share of those ups and downs to which the great houses of Scotland have been ever liable. But all these I pass over, to come to that memorable year 1745, when the foundations of this tragedy were laid.

At that time there dwelt a family of four persons in the house of Durrisdeer, near St. Bride’s, on the Solway shore; a chief hold of their race since the Reformation. My old lord, eighth of the name, was not old in years, but he suffered prematurely from the disabilities of age; his place was at the chimney side; there he sat reading, in a lined gown, with few words for any man, and wry words for none: the model of an old retired housekeeper; and yet his mind very well nourished with study, and reputed in the country to be more cunning than he seemed. The master of Ballantrae, James in baptism, took from his father the love of serious reading; some of his tact perhaps as well, but that which was only policy in the father became black dissimulation in the son. The face of his behaviour was merely popular and wild: he sat late at wine, later at the cards; had the name in the country of "an unco man for the lasses;" and was ever in the front of broils. But for all he was the first to go in, yet it was observed he was invariably the best to come off; and his partners in mischief were usually alone to pay the piper. This luck or dexterity got him several ill-wishers, but with the rest of the country, enhanced his reputation; so that great things were looked for in his future, when he should have gained more gravity. One very black mark he had to his name; but the matter was hushed up at the time, and so defaced by legends before I came into those parts, that I scruple to set it down. If it was true, it was a horrid fact in one so young; and if false, it was a horrid calumny. I think it notable that he had always vaunted himself quite implacable, and was taken at his word; so that he had the addition among his neighbours of "an ill man to cross." Here was altogether a young nobleman (not yet twenty-four in the year '45) who had made a figure in the country beyond his time of life. The less marvel if there were little heard of the second son, Mr. Henry (my late Lord Durrisdeer), who was neither very bad nor yet very able, but an honest, solid sort of lad like many of his neighbours. Little heard, I say; but indeed it was a case of little spoken. He was known among the salmon fishers in the firth, for that was a sport that he assiduously followed; he was an excellent good horse-doctor besides; and took a chief hand, almost from a boy, in the management of the estates. How hard a part that was, in the situation of that family, none knows better than myself; nor yet with how little colour of justice a man may there acquire the reputation of a tyrant and a miser. The fourth person in the house was Miss Alison Graeme, a near kinswoman, an orphan, and the heir to a considerable fortune which her father had acquired in trade. This money was loudly called for by my lord's necessities; indeed the land was deeply mortgaged; and Miss Alison was designed accordingly to be the Master's wife, gladly enough on her side; with how much good-will on his, is another matter. She was a comely girl, and in those days very spirited and self-willed; for the old lord having no daughter of his own, and my lady being long dead, she had grown up as best she might.

To these four came the news of Prince Charlie's landing, and set them presently by the ears. My lord, like the chimney-keeper that he was, was all for temporising. Miss Alison held the other side, because it appeared romantical; and the Master (though I have heard they did not agree often) was for this once of her opinion. The adventure tempted him, as I conceive; he was tempted by the opportunity to raise the fortunes of the house, and not less by the hope of paying off his private liabilities, which were heavy beyond all opinion. As for Mr. Henry, it appears he said little enough at first; his part came later on. It took the three a whole day's disputation, before they agreed to steer a middle course, one son going forth to strike a blow for King James, my lord and the other staying at home to keep in favour with King George. Doubtless this was my lord's decision; and, as is well known, it was the part played by many considerable families. But the one dispute settled, another opened. For my lord, Miss Alison, and Mr. Henry all held the one view: that it was the cadet's part to go out; and the Master, what with restlessness and vanity, would at no rate consent to stay at home. My lord pleaded, Miss Alison wept, Mr. Henry was very plain spoken: all was of no avail.

"It is the direct heir of Durrisdeer that should ride by his King's bridle," says the Master.

"If we were playing a manly part," says Mr. Henry, "there might be sense in such talk. But what are we doing? Cheating at cards!"

"We are saving the house of Durrisdeer, Henry," his father said.

"And see, James," said Mr. Henry, "if I go, and the Prince has the upper hand, it will be easy to make your peace with King James. But if you go, and the expedition fails, we divide the right and the title. And what shall I be then?"

"You will be Lord Durrisdeer," said the Master. "I put all I have upon the table."

"I play at no such game," cries Mr. Henry. "I shall be left in such a situation as no man of sense and honour could endure. I shall be neither fish nor flesh!" he cried. And a little after he had another expression, plainer perhaps than he intended. "It is your duty to be here with my father," said he. "You know well enough you are the favourite."

"Ay?" said the Master. "And there spoke Envy! Would you trip up my heels - Jacob?" said he, and dwelled upon the name maliciously.

Mr. Henry went and walked at the low end of the hall without reply; for he had an excellent gift of silence. Presently he came back.

"I am the cadet and I SHOULD go," said he. "And my lord here in the master, and he says I SHALL go. What say ye to that, my brother?"

"I say this, Harry," returned the Master, "that when very obstinate folk are met, there are only two ways out: Blows - and I think none of us could care to go so far; or the arbitrament of chance - and here is a guinea piece. Will you stand by the toss of the coin?"

"I will stand and fall by it," said Mr. Henry. "Heads, I go; shield, I stay."

The coin was spun, and it fell shield. "So there is a lesson for Jacob," says the Master.

"We shall live to repent of this," says Mr. Henry, and flung out of the hall.

As for Miss Alison, she caught up that piece of gold which had just sent her lover to the wars, and flung it clean through the family shield in the great painted window.

"If you loved me as well as I love you, you would have stayed," cried she.

"'I could not love you, dear, so well, loved I not honour more,'" sang the Master.

"Oh!" she cried, "you have no heart - I hope you may be killed!" and she ran from the room, and in tears, to her own chamber.

It seems the Master turned to my lord with his most comical manner, and says he, "This looks like a devil of a wife."

"I think you are a devil of a son to me," cried his father, "you that have always been the favourite, to my shame be it spoken. Never a good hour have I gotten of you, since you were born; no, never one good hour," and repeated it again the third time. Whether it was the Master's levity, or his insubordination, or Mr. Henry's word about the favourite son, that had so much disturbed my lord, I do not know; but I incline to think it was the last, for I have it by all accounts that Mr. Henry was more made up to from that hour.

Altogether it was in pretty ill blood with his family that the Master rode to the North; which was the more sorrowful for others to remember when it seemed too late. By fear and favour he had scraped together near upon a dozen men, principally tenants' sons; they were all pretty full when they set forth, and rode up the hill by the old abbey, roaring and singing, the white cockade in every hat. It was a desperate venture for so small a company to cross the most of Scotland unsupported; and (what made folk think so the more) even as that poor dozen was clattering up the hill, a great ship of the king's navy, that could have brought them under with a single boat, lay with her broad ensign streaming in the bay. The next afternoon, having given the Master a fair start, it was Mr. Henry's turn; and he rode off, all by himself, to offer his sword and carry letters from his father to King George's Government. Miss Alison was shut in her room, and did little but weep, till both were gone; only she stitched the cockade upon the Master's hat, and (as John Paul told me) it was wetted with tears when he carried it down to him.

In all that followed, Mr. Henry and my old lord were true to their bargain. That ever they accomplished anything is more than I could learn; and that they were anyway strong on the king's side, more than believe. But they kept the letter of loyalty, corresponded with my Lord President, sat still at home, and had little or no commerce with the Master while that business lasted. Nor was he, on his side, more communicative. Miss Alison, indeed, was always sending him expresses, but I do not know if she had many answers. Macconochie rode for her once, and found the highlanders before Carlisle, and the Master riding by the Prince's side in high favour; he took the letter (so Macconochie tells), opened it, glanced it through with a mouth like a man whistling, and stuck it in his belt, whence, on his horse passageing, it fell unregarded to the ground. It was Macconochie who picked it up; and he still kept it, and indeed I have seen it in his hands. News came to Durrisdeer of course, by the common report, as it goes travelling through a country, a thing always wonderful to me. By that means the family learned more of the Master's favour with the Prince, and the ground it was said to stand on: for by a strange condescension in a man so proud - only that he was a man still more ambitious - he was said to have crept into notability by truckling to the Irish. Sir Thomas Sullivan, Colonel Burke and the rest, were his daily comrades, by which course he withdrew himself from his own country-folk. All the small intrigues he had a hand in fomenting; thwarted my Lord George upon a thousand points; was always for the advice that seemed palatable to the Prince, no matter if it was good or bad; and seems upon the whole (like the gambler he was all through life) to have had less regard to the chances of the campaign than to the greatness of favour he might aspire to, if, by any luck, it should succeed. For the rest, he did very well in the field; no one questioned that; for he was no coward.

The next was the news of Culloden, which was brought to Durrisdeer by one of the tenants' sons - the only survivor, he declared, of all those that had gone singing up the hill. By an unfortunate chance John Paul and Macconochie had that very morning found the guinea piece - which was the root of all the evil - sticking in a holly bush; they had been "up the gait," as the servants say at Durrisdeer, to the change-house; and if they had little left of the guinea, they had less of their wits. What must John Paul do but burst into the hall where the family sat at dinner, and cry the news to them that "Tam Macmorland was but new lichtit at the door, and - wirra, wirra - there were nane to come behind him"?

They took the word in silence like folk condemned; only Mr. Henry carrying his palm to his face, and Miss Alison laying her head outright upon her hands. As for my lord, he was like ashes.

"I have still one son," says he. "And, Henry, I will do you this justice - it is the kinder that is left."

It was a strange thing to say in such a moment; but my lord had never forgotten Mr. Henry's speech, and he had years of injustice on his conscience. Still it was a strange thing, and more than Miss Alison could let pass. She broke out and blamed my lord for his unnatural words, and Mr. Henry because he was sitting there in safety when his brother lay dead, and herself because she had given her sweetheart ill words at his departure, calling him the flower of the flock, wringing her hands, protesting her love, and crying on him by his name - so that the servants stood astonished.

Mr. Henry got to his feet, and stood holding his chair. It was he that was like ashes now.

"Oh!" he burst out suddenly, "I know you loved him."

"The world knows that, glory be to God!" cries she; and then to Mr. Henry: "There is none but me to know one thing - that you were a traitor to him in your heart."

"God knows," groans he, "it was lost love on both sides."

Time went by in the house after that without much change; only they were now three instead of four, which was a perpetual reminder of their loss. Miss Alison's money, you are to bear in mind, wag highly needful for the estates; and the one brother being dead, my old lord soon set his heart upon her marrying the other. Day in, day out, he would work upon her, sitting by the chimney-side with his finger in his Latin book, and his eyes set upon her face with a kind of pleasant intentness that became the old gentleman very well. If she wept, he would condole with her like an ancient man that has seen worse times and begins to think lightly even of sorrow; if she raged, he would fall to reading again in his Latin book, but always with some civil excuse; if she offered, as she often did, to let them have her money in a gift, he would show her how little it consisted with his honour, and remind her, even if he should consent, that Mr. Henry would certainly refuse. NON VI SED SAEPE CADENDO was a favourite word of his; and no doubt this quiet persecution wore away much of her resolve; no doubt, besides, he had a great influence on the girl, having stood in the place of both her parents; and, for that matter, she was herself filled with the spirit of the Duries, and would have gone a great way for the glory of Durrisdeer; but not so far, I think, as to marry my poor patron, had it not been - strangely enough - for the circumstance of his extreme unpopularity.

This was the work of Tam Macmorland. There was not much harm in Tam; but he had that grievous weakness, a long tongue; and as the only man in that country who had been out - or, rather, who had come in again - he was sure of listeners. Those that have the underhand in any fighting, I have observed, are ever anxious to persuade themselves they were betrayed. By Tam's account of it, the rebels had been betrayed at every turn and by every officer they had;

they had been betrayed at Derby, and betrayed at Falkirk; the night march was a step of treachery of my Lord George's; and Culloden was lost by the treachery of the Macdonalds. This habit of imputing treason grew upon the fool, till at last he must have in Mr. Henry also. Mr. Henry (by his account) had betrayed the lads of Durrisdeer; he had promised to follow with more men, and instead of that he had ridden to King George. "Ay, and the next day!" Tam would cry. "The puir bonnie Master, and the puir, kind lads that rade wi' him, were hardly ower the scaur, or he was aff - the Judis! Ay, weel - he has his way o't: he's to be my lord, nae less, and there's mony a cold corp amang the Hieland heather!" And at this, if Tam had been drinking, he would begin to weep.

Let anyone speak long enough, he will get believers. This view of Mr. Henry's behaviour crept about the country by little and little; it was talked upon by folk that knew the contrary, but were short of topics; and it was heard and believed and given out for gospel by the ignorant and the ill-willing. Mr. Henry began to be shunned; yet awhile, and the commons began to murmur as he went by, and the women (who are always the most bold because they are the most safe) to cry out their reproaches to his face. The Master was cried up for a saint. It was remembered how he had never any hand in pressing the tenants; as, indeed, no more he had, except to spend the money. He was a little wild perhaps, the folk said; but how much better was a natural, wild lad that would soon have settled down, than a skinflint and a sneckdraw, sitting, with his nose in an account book, to persecute poor tenants! One trollop, who had had a child to the Master, and by all accounts been very badly used, yet made herself a kind of champion of his memory. She flung a stone one day at Mr. Henry.

"Whaur's the bonnie lad that trustit ye?" she cried.

Mr. Henry reined in his horse and looked upon her, the blood flowing from his lip. "Ay, Jess?" says he. "You too? And yet ye should ken me better." For it was he who had helped her with money.

The woman had another stone ready, which she made as if she would cast; and he, to ward himself, threw up the hand that held his riding-rod.

"What, would ye beat a lassie, ye ugly - ?" cries she, and ran away screaming as though he had struck her.

Next day word went about the country like wildfire that Mr. Henry had beaten Jessie Broun within an inch of her life. I give it as one instance of how this snowball grew, and one calumny brought another; until my poor patron was so perished in reputation that he began to keep the house like my lord. All this while, you may be very sure, he uttered no complaints at home; the very ground of the scandal was too sore a matter to be handled; and Mr. Henry was very proud and strangely obstinate in silence. My old lord must have heard of it, by John Paul, if by no one else; and he must at least have remarked the altered habits of his son. Yet even he, it is probable, knew not how high the feeling ran; and as for Miss Alison, she was ever the last person to hear news, and the least interested when she heard them.

In the height of the ill-feeling (for it died away as it came, no man could say why) there was an election forward in the town of St. Bride's, which is the next to Durrisdeer, standing on the Water of Swift; some grievance was fermenting, I forget what, if ever I heard; and it was currently said there would be broken heads ere night, and that the sheriff had sent as far as Dumfries for soldiers. My lord moved that Mr. Henry should be present, assuring him it was necessary to appear, for the credit of the house. "It will soon be reported," said he, "that we do not take the lead in our own country."

"It is a strange lead that I can take," said Mr. Henry; and when they had pushed him further, "I tell you the plain truth," he said, "I dare not show my face."

"You are the first of the house that ever said so," cries Miss Alison.

"We will go all three," said my lord; and sure enough he got into his boots (the first time in four years - a sore business John Paul had to get them on), and Miss Alison into her riding-coat, and all three rode together to St. Bride's.

The streets were full of the rift-raff of all the countryside, who had no sooner clapped eyes on Mr. Henry than the hissing began, and the hooting, and the cries of "Judas!" and "Where was the Master?" and "Where were the poor lads that rode with him?" Even a stone was cast; but the more part cried shame at that, for my old lord's sake, and Miss Alison's. It took not ten minutes to persuade my lord that Mr. Henry had been right. He said never a word, but turned his horse about, and home again, with his chin upon his bosom. Never a word said Miss Alison; no doubt she thought the more; no doubt her pride was stung, for she was a bone-bred Durie; and no doubt her heart was touched to see her cousin so unjustly used. That night she was never in bed; I have often blamed my lady - when I call to mind that night, I readily forgive her all; and the first thing in the morning she came to the old lord in his usual seat.

"If Henry still wants me," said she, "he can have me now." To himself she had a different speech: "I bring you no love, Henry; but God knows, all the pity in the world."

June the 1st, 1748, was the day of their marriage. It was December of the same year that first saw me alighting at the doors of the great house; and from there I take up the history of events as they befell under my own observation, like a witness in a court.

CHAPTER II. SUMMARY OF EVENTS (continued)

I made the last of my journey in the cold end of December, in a mighty dry day of frost, and who should be my guide but Patey Macmorland, brother of Tam! For a tow-headed, bare-legged brat of ten, he had more ill tales upon his tongue than ever I heard the match of; having drunken betimes in his brother's cup. I was still not so old myself; pride had not yet the upper hand of curiosity; and indeed it would have taken any man, that cold morning, to hear all the old clashes of the country, and be shown all the places by the way where strange things had fallen out. I had tales of Claverhouse as we came through the bogs, and tales of the devil, as we came over the top of the scaur. As we came in by the abbey I heard somewhat of the old monks, and more of the freetraders, who use its ruins for a magazine, landing for that cause within a cannon-shot of Durrisdeer; and along all the road the Duries and poor Mr. Henry were in the first rank of slander. My mind was thus highly prejudiced against the family I was about to serve, so that I was half surprised when I beheld Durrisdeer itself, lying in a pretty, sheltered bay, under the Abbey Hill; the house most commodiously built in the French fashion, or perhaps Italianate, for I have no skill in these arts; and the place the most beautified with gardens, lawns, shrubberies, and trees I had ever seen. The money sunk here unproductively would have quite restored the family; but as it was, it cost a revenue to keep it up.

Mr. Henry came himself to the door to welcome me: a tall dark young gentleman (the Duries are all black men) of a plain and not cheerful face, very strong in body, but not so strong in health: taking me by the hand without any pride, and putting me at home with plain kind speeches. He led me into the hall, booted as I was, to present me to my lord. It was still daylight; and the first thing I observed was a lozenge of clear glass in the midst of the shield in the painted window, which I remember thinking a blemish on a room otherwise so handsome, with its family portraits, and the pargeted ceiling with pendants, and the carved chimney, in one corner of which my old lord sat reading in his Livy. He was like Mr. Henry, with much the same plain countenance, only more subtle and pleasant, and his talk a thousand times more entertaining. He had many questions to ask me, I remember, of Edinburgh College, where I had just received my mastership of arts, and of the various professors, with whom and their proficiency he seemed well acquainted; and thus, talking of things that I knew, I soon got liberty of speech in my new home.

In the midst of this came Mrs. Henry into the room; she was very far gone, Miss Katharine being due in about six weeks, which made me think less of her beauty at the first sight; and she used me with more of condescension than the rest; so that, upon all accounts, I kept her in the third place of my esteem.

It did not take long before all Patey Macmorland's tales were blotted out of my belief, and I was become, what I have ever since remained, a loving servant of the house of Durrisdeer. Mr. Henry had the chief part of my affection. It was with him I worked; and I found him an exacting master, keeping all his kindness for those hours in which we were unemployed, and in the steward's office not only loading me with work, but viewing me with a shrewd supervision. At length one day he looked up from his paper with a kind of timidness, and says he, "Mr. Mackellar, I think I ought to tell you that you do very well." That was my first word of commendation; and from that day his jealousy of my performance was relaxed; soon it was "Mr. Mackellar" here, and "Mr. Mackellar" there, with the whole family; and for much of my service at Durrisdeer, I have transacted everything at my own time, and to my own fancy, and never a farthing challenged. Even while he was driving me, I had begun to find my heart go out to Mr. Henry; no doubt, partly in pity, he was a man so palpably unhappy. He would fall into a deep muse over our accounts, staring at the page or out of the window; and at those times the look of his face, and the sigh that would break from him, awoke in me strong feelings of curiosity and commiseration. One day, I remember, we were late upon some business in the steward's room.

This room is in the top of the house, and has a view upon the bay, and over a little wooded cape, on the long sands; and there, right over against the sun, which was then dipping, we saw the freetraders, with a great force of men and horses, scouring on the beach. Mr. Henry had been staring straight west, so that I marvelled he was not blinded by the sun; suddenly he frowns, rubs his hand upon his brow, and turns to me with a smile.

"You would not guess what I was thinking," says he. "I was thinking I would be a happier man if I could ride and run the danger of my life, with these lawless companions."

I told him I had observed he did not enjoy good spirits; and that it was a common fancy to envy others and think we should be the better of some change; quoting Horace to the point, like a young man fresh from college.

"Why, just so," said he. "And with that we may get back to our accounts."

It was not long before I began to get wind of the causes that so much depressed him. Indeed a blind man must have soon discovered there was a shadow on that house, the shadow of the Master of Ballantrae. Dead or alive (and he was then supposed to be dead) that man was his brother's rival: his rival abroad, where there was never a good word for Mr. Henry, and nothing but regret and praise for the Master; and his rival at home, not only with his father and his wife, but with the very servants.

They were two old serving-men that were the leaders. John Paul, a little, bald, solemn, stomachy man, a great professor of piety and (take him for all in all) a pretty faithful servant, was the chief of the Master's faction. None durst go so far as John. He took a pleasure in disregarding Mr. Henry publicly, often with a slighting comparison. My lord and Mrs. Henry took him up, to be sure, but never so resolutely as they should; and he had only to pull his weeping face and begin his lamentations for the Master - "his laddie," as he called him - to have the whole condoned. As for Henry, he let these things pass in silence, sometimes with a sad and sometimes with a black look. There was no rivalling the dead, he knew that; and how to censure an old serving-man for a fault of loyalty, was more than he could see. His was not the tongue to do it.

Macconochie was chief upon the other side; an old, ill-spoken, swearing, ranting, drunken dog; and I have often thought it an odd circumstance in human nature that these two serving-men should each have been the champion of his contrary, and blackened their own faults and made light of their own virtues when they beheld them in a master. Macconochie had soon smelled out my secret inclination, took me much into his confidence, and would rant against the Master by the hour, so that even my work suffered. "They're a' daft here," he would cry, "and be damned to them! The Master - the deil's in their thrapples that should call him sae! it's Mr. Henry should be master now! They were nane sae fond o' the Master when they had him, I'll can tell ye that. Sorrow on his name! Never a guid word did I hear on his lips, nor naebody else, but just fleering and flyting and profane cursing - deil hae him! There's nane kent his wickedness: him a gentleman! Did ever ye hear tell, Mr. Mackellar, o' Wully White the wabster? No? Aweel, Wully was an unco praying kind o' man; a dreigh body, nane o' my kind, I never could abide the sight o' him; onyway he was a great hand by his way of it, and he up and rebukit the Master for some of his on- goings. It was a grand thing for the Master o' Ball'ntrae to tak up a feud wi' a' wabster, wasnae't?" Macconochie would sneer; indeed, he never took the full name upon his lips but with a sort of a whine of hatred. "But he did! A fine employ it was: chapping at the man's door, and crying 'boo' in his lum, and puttin' poother in his fire, and pee-oys (1) in his window; till the man thocht it was auld Hornie was come seekin' him. Weel, to mak a lang story short, Wully gaed gyte. At the hinder end, they couldnae get him frae his knees, but he just roared and prayed and grat straucht on, till he got his release. It was fair murder, a'body said that. Ask John Paul - he was brawly ashamed o' that game, him that's sic a Christian man! Grand doin's for the Master o' Ball'ntrae!" I asked him what the Master had thought of it himself. "How would I ken?" says he. "He never said naething." And on again in his usual manner of banning and swearing, with every now and again a "Master of Ballantrae" sneered through his nose. It was in one of these confidences that he showed me the Carlisle letter, the print of the horse-shoe still stamped in the paper. Indeed, that was our last confidence; for he then expressed himself so ill-naturedly of Mrs. Henry that I had to reprimand him sharply, and must thenceforth hold him at a distance.

My old lord was uniformly kind to Mr. Henry; he had even pretty ways of gratitude, and would sometimes clap him on the shoulder and say, as if to the world at large: "This is a very good son to me." And grateful he was, no doubt, being a man of sense and justice. But I think that was all, and I am sure Mr. Henry thought so. The love was all for the dead son. Not that this was often given breath to; indeed, with me but once. My lord had asked me one day how I got on with Mr. Henry, and I had told him the truth.

"Ay," said he, looking sideways on the burning fire, "Henry is a good lad, a very good lad," said he. "You have heard, Mr. Mackellar, that I had another son? I am afraid he was not so virtuous a lad as Mr. Henry; but dear me, he's dead, Mr. Mackellar! and while he lived we were all very proud of him, all very proud. If he was not all he should have been in some ways, well, perhaps we loved him better!" This last he said looking musingly in the fire; and then to me, with a great deal of briskness, "But I am rejoiced you do so well with Mr. Henry. You will find him a good master." And with that he opened his book, which was the customary signal of dismission. But it would be little that he read, and less that he understood; Culloden field and the Master, these would be the burthen of his thought; and the burthen of mine was an unnatural jealousy of the dead man for Mr. Henry's sake, that had even then begun to grow on me.

I am keeping Mrs. Henry for the last, so that this expression of my sentiment may seem unwarrantably strong: the reader shall judge for himself when I have done. But I must first tell of another matter, which was the means of bringing me more intimate. I had not yet been six months at Durrisdeer when it chanced that John Paul fell sick and must keep his bed; drink was the root of his malady, in my poor thought; but he was tended, and indeed carried himself, like an afflicted saint; and the very minister, who came to visit him, professed himself edified when he went away. The third morning of his sickness, Mr. Henry comes to me with something of a hang-dog look.

"Mackellar," says he, "I wish I could trouble you upon a little service. There is a pension we pay; it is John's part to carry it, and now that he is sick I know not to whom I should look unless it was yourself. The matter is very delicate; I could not carry it with my own hand for a sufficient reason; I dare not send Macconochie, who is a talker, and I am - I have - I am desirous this should not come to Mrs. Henry's ears," says he, and flushed to his neck as he said it.

To say truth, when I found I was to carry money to one Jessie Broun, who was no better than she should be, I supposed it was some trip of his own that Mr. Henry was dissembling. I was the more impressed when the truth came out.

It was up a wynd off a side street in St. Bride's that Jessie had her lodging. The place was very ill inhabited, mostly by the freetrading sort. There was a man with a broken head at the entry; half-way up, in a tavern, fellows were roaring and singing, though it was not yet nine in the day. Altogether, I had never seen a worse neighbourhood, even in the great city of Edinburgh, and I was in two minds to go back. Jessie's room was of a piece with her surroundings, and herself no better. She would not give me the receipt (which Mr. Henry had told me to demand, for he was very methodical) until she had sent out for spirits, and I had pledged her in a glass; and all the time she carried on in a light-headed, reckless way - now aping the manners of a lady, now breaking into unseemly mirth, now making coquettish advances that oppressed me to the ground. Of the money she spoke more tragically.

"It's blood money!" said she; "I take it for that: blood money for the betrayed! See what I'm brought down to! Ah, if the bonnie lad were back again, it would be changed days. But he's deid - he's lyin' deid amang the Hieland hills - the bonnie lad, the bonnie lad!"

She had a rapt manner of crying on the bonnie lad, clasping her hands and casting up her eyes, that I think she must have learned of strolling players; and I thought her sorrow very much of an affectation, and that she dwelled upon the business because her shame was now all she had to be proud of. I will not say I did not pity her, but it was a loathing pity at the best; and her last change of manner wiped it out. This was when she had had enough of me for an audience, and had set her name at last to the receipt. "There!" says she, and taking the most unwomanly oaths upon her tongue, bade me begone and carry it to the Judas who had sent me. It was the first time I had heard the name applied to Mr. Henry; I was staggered besides at her sudden vehemence of word and manner, and got forth from the room, under this shower of curses, like a beaten dog. But even then I was not quit, for the vixen threw up her window, and, leaning forth, continued to revile me as I went up the wynd; the freetraders, coming to the tavern door, joined in the mockery, and one had even the inhumanity to set upon me a very savage small dog, which bit me in the ankle. This was a strong lesson, had I required one, to avoid ill company; and I rode home in much pain from the bite and considerable indignation of mind.

Mr. Henry was in the steward's room, affecting employment, but I could see he was only impatient to hear of my errand.

"Well?" says he, as soon as I came in; and when I had told him something of what passed, and that Jessie seemed an undeserving woman and far from grateful: "She is no friend to me," said he; "but, indeed, Mackellar, I have few friends to boast of, and Jessie has some cause to be unjust. I need not dissemble what all the country knows: she was not very well used by one of our family." This was the first time I had heard him refer to the Master even distantly; and I think he found his tongue rebellious even for that much, but presently he resumed - "This is why I would have nothing said. It would give pain to Mrs. Henry . . . and to my father," he added, with another flush.

"Mr. Henry," said I, "if you will take a freedom at my hands, I would tell you to let that woman be. What service is your money to the like of her? She has no sobriety and no economy - as for gratitude, you will as soon get milk from a whinstone; and if you will pretermit your bounty, it will make no change at all but just to save the ankles of your messengers."

Mr. Henry smiled. "But I am grieved about your ankle," said he, the next moment, with a proper gravity.

"And observe," I continued, "I give you this advice upon consideration; and yet my heart was touched for the woman in the beginning."

"Why, there it is, you see!" said Mr. Henry. "And you are to remember that I knew her once a very decent lass. Besides which, although I speak little of my family, I think much of its repute."

And with that he broke up the talk, which was the first we had together in such confidence. But the same afternoon I had the proof that his father was perfectly acquainted with the business, and that it was only from his wife that Mr. Henry kept it secret.

"I fear you had a painful errand to-day," says my lord to me, "for which, as it enters in no way among your duties, I wish to thank you, and to remind you at the same time (in case Mr. Henry should have neglected) how very desirable it is that no word of it should reach my daughter. Reflections on the dead, Mr. Mackellar, are doubly painful."

Anger glowed in my heart; and I could have told my lord to his face how little he had to do, bolstering up the image of the dead in Mrs.

Henry's heart, and how much better he were employed to shatter that false idol; for by this time I saw very well how the land lay between my patron and his wife.

My pen is clear enough to tell a plain tale; but to render the effect of an infinity of small things, not one great enough in itself to be narrated; and to translate the story of looks, and the message of voices when they are saying no great matter; and to put in half a page the essence of near eighteen months - this is what I despair to accomplish. The fault, to be very blunt, lay all in Mrs. Henry. She felt it a merit to have consented to the marriage, and she took it like a martyrdom; in which my old lord, whether he knew it or not, fomented her. She made a merit, besides, of her constancy to the dead, though its name, to a nicer conscience, should have seemed rather disloyalty to the living; and here also my lord gave her his countenance. I suppose he was glad to talk of his loss, and ashamed to dwell on it with Mr. Henry. Certainly, at least, he made a little coterie apart in that family of three, and it was the husband who was shut out. It seems it was an old custom when the family were alone in Durrisdeer, that my lord should take his wine to the chimney-side, and Miss Alison, instead of withdrawing, should bring a stool to his knee, and chatter to him privately; and after she had become my patron's wife the same manner of doing was continued. It should have been pleasant to behold this ancient gentleman so loving with his daughter, but I was too much a partisan of Mr. Henry's to be anything but wroth at his exclusion. Many's the time I have seen him make an obvious resolve, quit the table, and go and join himself to his wife and my Lord Durrisdeer; and on their part, they were never backward to make him welcome, turned to him smilingly as to an intruding child, and took him into their talk with an effort so ill-concealed that he was soon back again beside me at the table, whence (so great is the hall of Durrisdeer) we could but hear the murmur of voices at the chimney. There he would sit and watch, and I along with him; and sometimes by my lord's head sorrowfully shaken, or his hand laid on Mrs. Henry's head, or hers upon his knee as if in consolation, or sometimes by an exchange of tearful looks, we would draw our conclusion that the talk had gone to the old subject and the shadow of the dead was in the hall.

I have hours when I blame Mr. Henry for taking all too patiently; yet we are to remember he was married in pity, and accepted his wife upon that term. And, indeed, he had small encouragement to make a stand. Once, I remember, he announced he had found a man to replace the pane of the stained window, which, as it was he that managed all the business, was a thing clearly within his attributions. But to the Master's fancies, that pane was like a relic; and on the first word of any change, the blood flew to Mrs. Henry's face.

"I wonder at you!" she cried.

"I wonder at myself," says Mr. Henry, with more of bitterness than I had ever heard him to express.

Thereupon my old lord stepped in with his smooth talk, so that before the meal was at an end all seemed forgotten; only that, after dinner, when the pair had withdrawn as usual to the chimney- side, we could see her weeping with her head upon his knee. Mr. Henry kept up the talk with me upon some topic of the estates - he could speak of little else but business, and was never the best of company; but he kept it up that day with more continuity, his eye straying ever and again to the chimney, and his voice changing to another key, but without check of delivery. The pane, however, was not replaced; and I believe he counted it a great defeat.

Whether he was stout enough or no, God knows he was kind enough. Mrs. Henry had a manner of condescension with him, such as (in a wife) would have pricked my vanity into an ulcer; he took it like a favour. She held him at the staff's end; forgot and then remembered and unbent to him, as we do to children; burthened him with cold kindness; reproved him with a change of colour and a bitten lip, like one shamed by his disgrace: ordered him with a look of the eye, when she was off her guard; when she was on the watch, pleaded with him for the most natural attentions, as though they were unheard-of favours. And to all this he replied with the most unwearied service, loving, as folk say, the very ground she trod on, and carrying that love in his eyes as bright as a lamp. When Miss Katharine was to be born, nothing would serve but he must stay in the room behind the head of the bed. There he sat, as white (they tell me) as a sheet, and the sweat dropping from his brow; and the handkerchief he had in his hand was crushed into a little ball no bigger than a musket-bullet. Nor could he bear the sight of Miss Katharine for many a day; indeed, I doubt if he was ever what he should have been to my young lady; for the which want of natural feeling he was loudly blamed.

Such was the state of this family down to the 7th April, 1749, when there befell the first of that series of events which were to break so many hearts and lose so many lives.

On that day I was sitting in my room a little before supper, when John Paul burst open the door with no civility of knocking, and told me there was one below that wished to speak with the steward; sneering at the name of my office.

I asked what manner of man, and what his name was; and this disclosed the cause of John's ill-humour; for it appeared the visitor refused to name himself except to me, a sore affront to the major-domo's consequence.

"Well," said I, smiling a little, "I will see what he wants."

I found in the entrance hall a big man, very plainly habited, and wrapped in a sea-cloak, like one new landed, as indeed he was. Not, far off Macconochie was standing, with his tongue out of his mouth and his hand upon his chin, like a dull fellow thinking hard; and the stranger, who had brought his cloak about his face, appeared uneasy. He had no sooner seen me coming than he went to meet me with an effusive manner.

"My dear man," said he, "a thousand apologies for disturbing you, but I'm in the most awkward position. And there's a son of a ramrod there that I should know the looks of, and more betoken I believe that he knows mine. Being in this family, sir, and in a place of some responsibility (which was the cause I took the liberty to send for you), you are doubtless of the honest party?"

"You may be sure at least," says I, "that all of that party are quite safe in Durrisdeer."

"My dear man, it is my very thought," says he. "You see, I have just been set on shore here by a very honest man, whose name I cannot remember, and who is to stand off and on for me till morning, at some danger to himself; and, to be clear with you, I am a little concerned lest it should be at some to me. I have saved my life so often, Mr. -, I forget your name, which is a very good one - that, faith, I would be very loath to lose it after all. And the son of a ramrod, whom I believe I saw before Carlisle . . . "

"Oh, sir," said I, "you can trust Macconochie until to-morrow."

"Well, and it's a delight to hear you say so," says the stranger. "The truth is that my name is not a very suitable one in this country of Scotland. With a gentleman like you, my dear man, I would have no concealments of course; and by your leave I'll just breathe it in your ear. They call me Francis Burke - Colonel Francis Burke; and I am here, at a most damnable risk to myself, to see your masters - if you'll excuse me, my good man, for giving them the name, for I'm sure it's a circumstance I would never have guessed from your appearance. And if you would just be so very obliging as to take my name to them, you might say that I come bearing letters which I am sure they will be very rejoiced to have the reading of."

Colonel Francis Burke was one of the Prince's Irishmen, that did his cause such an infinity of hurt, and were so much distasted of the Scots at the time of the rebellion; and it came at once into my mind, how the Master of Ballantrae had astonished all men by going with that party. In the same moment a strong foreboding of the truth possessed my soul.

"If you will step in here," said I, opening a chamber door, "I will let my lord know."

"And I am sure it's very good of you, Mr. What-is-your-name," says the Colonel.

Up to the hall I went, slow-footed. There they were, all three - my old lord in his place, Mrs. Henry at work by the window, Mr. Henry (as was much his custom) pacing the low end. In the midst was the table laid for supper. I told them briefly what I had to say. My old lord lay back in his seat. Mrs. Henry sprang up standing with a mechanical motion, and she and her husband stared at each other's eyes across the room; it was the strangest, challenging look these two exchanged, and as they looked, the colour faded in their faces. Then Mr. Henry turned to me; not to speak, only to sign with his finger; but that was enough, and I went down again for the Colonel.

When we returned, these three were in much the same position I same left them in; I believe no word had passed.

"My Lord Durrisdeer, no doubt?" says the Colonel, bowing, and my lord bowed in answer. "And this," continues the Colonel, "should be the Master of Ballantrae?"

"I have never taken that name," said Mr. Henry; "but I am Henry Durie, at your service."

Then the Colonel turns to Mrs. Henry, bowing with his hat upon his heart and the most killing airs of gallantry. "There can be no mistake about so fine a figure of a lady," says he. "I address the seductive Miss Alison, of whom I have so often heard?"

Once more husband and wife exchanged a look.

"I am Mrs. Henry Durie," said she; "but before my marriage my name was Alison Graeme."

Then my lord spoke up. "I am an old man, Colonel Burke," said he, "and a frail one. It will be mercy on your part to be expeditious. Do you bring me news of - " he hesitated, and then the words broke from him with a singular change of voice - "my son?"

"My dear lord, I will be round with you like a soldier," said the Colonel. "I do."

My lord held out a wavering hand; he seemed to wave a signal, but whether it was to give him time or to speak on, was more than we could guess. At length he got out the one word, "Good?"

"Why, the very best in the creation!" cries the Colonel. "For my good friend and admired comrade is at this hour in the fine city of Paris, and as like as not, if I know anything of his habits, he will be drawing in his chair to a piece of dinner. - Bedad, I believe the lady's fainting."

Mrs. Henry was indeed the colour of death, and drooped against the window-frame. But when Mr. Henry made a movement as if to run to her, she straightened with a sort of shiver. "I am well," she said, with her white lips.

Mr. Henry stopped, and his face had a strong twitch of anger. The next moment he had turned to the Colonel. “You must not blame yourself,” says he, “for this effect on Mrs. Durie. It is only natural; we were all brought up like brother and sister.”

Mrs. Henry looked at her husband with something like relief or even gratitude. In my way of thinking, that speech was the first step he made in her good graces.

“You must try to forgive me, Mrs. Durie, for indeed and I am just an Irish savage,” said the Colonel; “and I deserve to be shot for not breaking the matter more artistically to a lady. But here are the Master’s own letters; one for each of the three of you; and to be sure (if I know anything of my friend’s genius) he will tell his own story with a better grace.”

He brought the three letters forth as he spoke, arranged them by their superscriptions, presented the first to my lord, who took it greedily, and advanced towards Mrs. Henry holding out the second.

But the lady waved it back. “To my husband,” says she, with a choked voice.

The Colonel was a quick man, but at this he was somewhat nonplussed. “To be sure!” says he; “how very dull of me! To be sure!” But he still held the letter.

At last Mr. Henry reached forth his hand, and there was nothing to be done but give it up. Mr. Henry took the letters (both hers and his own), and looked upon their outside, with his brows knit hard, as if he were thinking. He had surprised me all through by his excellent behaviour; but he was to excel himself now.

“Let me give you a hand to your room,” said he to his wife. “This has come something of the suddenest; and, at any rate, you will wish to read your letter by yourself.”

Again she looked upon him with the same thought of wonder; but he gave her no time, coming straight to where she stood. “It will be better so, believe me,” said he; “and Colonel Burke is too considerate not to excuse you.” And with that he took her hand by the fingers, and led her from the hall.

Mrs. Henry returned no more that night; and when Mr. Henry went to visit her next morning, as I heard long afterwards, she gave him the letter again, still unopened.

“Oh, read it and be done!” he had cried.

“Spare me that,” said she.

And by these two speeches, to my way of thinking, each undid a great part of what they had previously done well. But the letter, sure enough, came into my hands, and by me was burned, unopened.

To be very exact as to the adventures of the Master after Culloden, I wrote not long ago to Colonel Burke, now a Chevalier of the Order of

St. Louis, begging him for some notes in writing, since I could scarce depend upon my memory at so great an interval. To confess the truth, I have been somewhat embarrassed by his response; for he sent me the complete memoirs of his life, touching only in places on the Master; running to a much greater length than my whole story, and not everywhere (as it seems to me) designed for edification. He begged in his letter, dated from Ettenheim, that I would find a publisher for the whole, after I had made what use of it I required; and I think I shall best answer my own purpose and fulfil his wishes by printing certain parts of it in full. In this way my readers will have a detailed, and, I believe, a very genuine account of some essential matters; and if any publisher should take a fancy to the Chevalier's manner of narration, he knows where to apply for the rest, of which there is plenty at his service. I put in my first extract here, so that it may stand in the place of what the Chevalier told us over our wine in the hall of Durrisdeer; but you are to suppose it was not the brutal fact, but a very varnished version that he offered to my lord.

CHAPTER III. - THE MASTER'S WANDERINGS.

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF THE CHEVALIER DE BURKE.

. . . I left Ruthven (it's hardly necessary to remark) with much greater satisfaction than I had come to it; but whether I missed my way in the deserts, or whether my companions failed me, I soon found myself alone. This was a predicament very disagreeable; for I never understood this horrid country or savage people, and the last stroke of the Prince's withdrawal had made us of the Irish more unpopular than ever. I was reflecting on my poor chances, when I saw another horseman on the hill, whom I supposed at first to have been a phantom, the news of his death in the very front at Culloden being current in the army generally. This was the Master of Ballantrae, my Lord Durrisdeer's son, a young nobleman of the rarest gallantry and parts, and equally designed by nature to adorn a Court and to reap laurels in the field. Our meeting was the more welcome to both, as he was one of the few Scots who had used the Irish with consideration, and as he might now be of very high utility in aiding my escape. Yet what founded our particular friendship was a circumstance, by itself as romantic as any fable of King Arthur.

This was on the second day of our flight, after we had slept one night in the rain upon the inclination of a mountain. There was an Appin man, Alan Black Stewart (or some such name, (2) but I have seen him since in France) who chanced to be passing the same way, and had a jealousy of my companion. Very uncivil expressions were exchanged; and Stewart calls upon the Master to alight and have it out.

"Why, Mr. Stewart," says the Master, "I think at the present time I would prefer to run a race with you." And with the word claps spurs to his horse.

Stewart ran after us, a childish thing to do, for more than a mile; and I could not help laughing, as I looked back at last and saw him on a hill, holding his hand to his side, and nearly burst with running.

"But, all the same," I could not help saying to my companion, "I would let no man run after me for any such proper purpose, and not give him his desire. It was a good jest, but it smells a trifle cowardly."

He bent his brows at me. "I do pretty well," says he, "when I saddle myself with the most unpopular man in Scotland, and let that suffice for courage."

"O, bedad," says I, "I could show you a more unpopular with the naked eye. And if you like not my company, you can 'saddle' yourself on some one else."

"Colonel Burke," says he, "do not let us quarrel; and, to that effect, let me assure you I am the least patient man in the world."

"I am as little patient as yourself," said I. "I care not who knows that."

"At this rate," says he, reining in, "we shall not go very far. And I propose we do one of two things upon the instant: either quarrel and be done; or make a sure bargain to bear everything at each other's hands."

"Like a pair of brothers?" said I.

"I said no such foolishness," he replied. "I have a brother of my own, and I think no more of him than of a colewort. But if we are to have our noses rubbed together in this course of flight, let us each dare to be ourselves like savages, and each swear that he will neither resent nor deprecate the other. I am a pretty bad fellow at bottom, and I find the pretence of virtues very irksome."

"O, I am as bad as yourself," said I. "There is no skim milk in Francis Burke. But which is it to be? Fight or make friends?"

"Why," says be, "I think it will be the best manner to spin a coin for it."

This proposition was too highly chivalrous not to take my fancy; and, strange as it may seem of two well-born gentlemen of to-day, we span a half-crown (like a pair of ancient paladins) whether we were to cut each other's throats or be sworn friends. A more romantic circumstance can rarely have occurred; and it is one of those points in my memoirs, by which we may see the old tales of Homer and the poets are equally true to-day - at least, of the noble and genteel. The coin fell for peace, and we shook hands upon our bargain. And then it was that my companion explained to me his thought in running away from Mr. Stewart, which was certainly worthy of his political intellect. The report of his death, he said, was a great guard to him; Mr. Stewart having recognised him, had become a danger; and he had taken the briefest road to that gentleman's silence. "For," says he, "Alan Black is too vain a man to narrate any such story of himself."

Towards afternoon we came down to the shores of that loch for which we were heading; and there was the ship, but newly come to anchor. She was the SAINTE-MARIE-DES-ANGES, out of the port of Havre-de- Grace. The Master, after we had signalled for a boat, asked me if I knew the captain. I told him he was a countryman of mine, of the most unblemished integrity, but, I was afraid, a rather timorous man.

"No matter," says he. "For all that, he should certainly hear the truth."

I asked him if he meant about the battle? for if the captain once knew the standard was down, he would certainly put to sea again at once.

"And even then!" said he; "the arms are now of no sort of utility."

"My dear man," said I, "who thinks of the arms? But, to be sure, we must remember our friends. They will be close upon our heels, perhaps the Prince himself, and if the ship be gone, a great number of valuable lives may be imperilled."

"The captain and the crew have lives also, if you come to that," says Ballantrae.

This I declared was but a quibble, and that I would not hear of the captain being told; and then it was that Ballantrae made me a witty answer, for the sake of which (and also because I have been blamed myself in this business of the SAINTE-MARIE-DES-ANGES) I have related the whole conversation as it passed.

"Frank," says he, "remember our bargain. I must not object to your holding your tongue, which I hereby even encourage you to do; but, by the same terms, you are not to resent my telling."

I could not help laughing at this; though I still forewarned him what would come of it.

"The devil may come of it for what I care," says the reckless fellow. "I have always done exactly as I felt inclined."

As is well known, my prediction came true. The captain had no sooner heard the news than he cut his cable and to sea again; and before morning broke, we were in the Great Minch.

The ship was very old; and the skipper, although the most honest of men (and Irish too), was one of the least capable. The wind blew very boisterous, and the sea raged extremely. All that day we had little heart whether to eat or drink; went early to rest in some concern of mind; and (as if to give us a lesson) in the night the wind chopped suddenly into the north-east, and blew a hurricane. We were awaked by the dreadful thunder of the tempest and the stamping of the mariners on deck; so that I supposed our last hour was certainly come; and the terror of my mind was increased out of all measure by Ballantrae, who mocked at my devotions. It is in hours like these that a man of any piety appears in his true light, and we find (what we are taught as babes) the small trust that can be set in worldly friends. I would be unworthy of my religion if I let this pass without particular remark. For three days we lay in the dark in the cabin, and had but a biscuit to nibble. On the fourth the wind fell, leaving the ship dismasted and heaving on vast billows. The captain had not a guess of whither we were blown; he was stark ignorant of his trade, and could do naught but bless the Holy Virgin; a very good thing, too, but scarce the whole of seamanship. It seemed, our one hope was to be picked up by another vessel; and if that should prove to be an English ship, it might be no great blessing to the Master and myself.

The fifth and sixth days we tossed there helpless. The seventh some sail was got on her, but she was an unwieldy vessel at the best, and we made little but leeway. All the time, indeed, we had been drifting to the south and west, and during the tempest must have driven in that direction with unheard-of violence. The ninth dawn was cold and black, with a great sea running, and every mark of foul weather. In this situation we were overjoyed to sight a small ship on the horizon, and to perceive her go about and head for the SAINTE-MARIE. But our gratification did not very long endure; for when she had laid to and lowered a boat, it was immediately filled with disorderly fellows, who sang and shouted as they pulled across to us, and swarmed in on our deck with bare cutlasses, cursing loudly. Their leader was a horrible villain, with his face blacked and his whiskers curled in ringlets; Teach, his name; a most notorious pirate. He stamped about the deck, raving and crying out that his name was Satan, and his ship was called Hell. There was something about him like a wicked child or a half-witted person, that daunted me beyond expression. I whispered in the ear of Ballantrae that I would not be the last to volunteer, and only prayed God they might be short of hands; he approved my purpose with a nod.

“Bedad,” said I to Master Teach, “if you are Satan, here is a devil for ye.”

The word pleased him; and (not to dwell upon these shocking incidents) Ballantrae and I and two others were taken for recruits, while the skipper and all the rest were cast into the sea by the method of walking the plank. It was the first time I had seen this done; my heart died within me at the spectacle; and Master Teach or one of his acolytes (for my head was too much lost to be precise) remarked upon my pale face in a very alarming manner. I had the strength to cut a step or two of a jig, and cry out some ribaldry, which saved me for that time; but my legs were like water when I must get down into the skiff among these miscreants; and what with my horror of my company and fear of the monstrous billows, it was all I could do to keep an Irish tongue and break a jest or two as we were pulled aboard. By the blessing of God, there was a fiddle in the pirate ship, which I had no sooner seen than I fell upon; and in my quality of crowder I had the heavenly good luck to get favour in their eyes. CROWDING PAT was the name they dubbed me with; and it was little I cared for a name so long as my skin was whole.

What kind of a pandemonium that vessel was, I cannot describe, but she was commanded by a lunatic, and might be called a floating Bedlam. Drinking, roaring, singing, quarrelling, dancing, they were never all sober at one time; and there were days together when, if a squall had supervened, it must have sent us to the bottom; or if a king's ship had come along, it would have found us quite helpless for defence. Once or twice we sighted a sail, and, if we were sober enough, overhauled it, God forgive us! and if we were all too drunk, she got away, and I would bless the saints under my breath. Teach ruled, if you can call that rule which brought no order, by the terror he created; and I observed the man was very vain of his position. I have known marshals of France - ay, and even Highland chieftains - that were less openly puffed up; which throws a singular light on the pursuit of honour and glory. Indeed, the longer we live, the more we perceive the sagacity of Aristotle and the other old philosophers; and though I have all my life been eager for legitimate distinctions, I can lay my hand upon my heart, at the end of my career, and declare there is not one - no, nor yet life itself - which is worth acquiring or preserving at the slightest cost of dignity.

It was long before I got private speech of Ballantrae; but at length one night we crept out upon the boltsprit, when the rest were better employed, and commiserated our position.

"None can deliver us but the saints," said I.

"My mind is very different," said Ballantrae; "for I am going to deliver myself. This Teach is the poorest creature possible; we make no profit of him, and lie continually open to capture; and," says he, "I am not going to be a tarry pirate for nothing, nor yet to hang in chains if I can help it." And he told me what was in his mind to better the state of the ship in the way of discipline, which would give us safety for the present, and a sooner hope of deliverance when they should have gained enough and should break up their company.

I confessed to him ingenuously that my nerve was quite shook amid these horrible surroundings, and I durst scarce tell him to count upon me.

"I am not very easy frightened," said he, "nor very easy beat."

A few days after, there befell an accident which had nearly hanged us all; and offers the most extraordinary picture of the folly that ruled in our concerns. We were all pretty drunk: and some bedlamite spying a sail, Teach put the ship about in chase without a glance, and we began to bustle up the arms and boast of the horrors that should follow. I observed Ballantrae stood quiet in the bows, looking under the shade of his hand; but for my part, true to my policy among these savages, I was at work with the busiest and passing Irish jests for their diversion.

"Run up the colours," cries Teach. "Show the -s the Jolly Roger!"

It was the merest drunken braggadocio at such a stage, and might have lost us a valuable prize; but I thought it no part of mine to reason, and I ran up the black flag with my own hand.

Ballantrae steps presently aft with a smile upon his face.

“You may perhaps like to know, you drunken dog,” says he, “that you are chasing a king’s ship.”

Teach roared him the lie; but he ran at the same time to the bulwarks, and so did they all. I have never seen so many drunken men struck suddenly sober. The cruiser had gone about, upon our impudent display of colours; she was just then filling on the new tack; her ensign blew out quite plain to see; and even as we stared, there came a puff of smoke, and then a report, and a shot plunged in the waves a good way short of us. Some ran to the ropes, and got the SARAH round with an incredible swiftness. One fellow fell on the rum barrel, which stood broached upon the deck, and rolled it promptly overboard. On my part, I made for the Jolly Roger, struck it, tossed it in the sea; and could have flung myself after, so vexed was I with our mismanagement. As for Teach, he grew as pale as death, and incontinently went down to his cabin. Only twice he came on deck that afternoon; went to the taffrail; took a long look at the king’s ship, which was still on the horizon heading after us; and then, without speech, back to his cabin. You may say he deserted us; and if it had not been for one very capable sailor we had on board, and for the lightness of the airs that blew all day, we must certainly have gone to the yard-arm.

It is to be supposed Teach was humiliated, and perhaps alarmed for his position with the crew; and the way in which he set about regaining what he had lost, was highly characteristic of the man. Early next day we smelled him burning sulphur in his cabin and crying out of “Hell, hell!” which was well understood among the crew, and filled their minds with apprehension. Presently he comes on deck, a perfect figure of fun, his face blacked, his hair and whiskers curled, his belt stuck full of pistols; chewing bits of glass so that the blood ran down his chin, and brandishing a dirk. I do not know if he had taken these manners from the Indians of America, where he was a native; but such was his way, and he would always thus announce that he was wound up to horrid deeds. The first that came near him was the fellow who had sent the rum overboard the day before; him he stabbed to the heart, damning him for a mutineer; and then capered about the body, raving and swearing and daring us to come on. It was the silliest exhibition; and yet dangerous too, for the cowardly fellow was plainly working himself up to another murder.

All of a sudden Ballantrae stepped forth. “Have done with this play-acting,” says he. “Do you think to frighten us with making faces? We saw nothing of you yesterday, when you were wanted; and we did well without you, let me tell you that.”

There was a murmur and a movement in the crew, of pleasure and alarm, I thought, in nearly equal parts. As for Teach, he gave a barbarous howl, and swung his dirk to fling it, an art in which (like many seamen) he was very expert.

"Knock that out of his hand!" says Ballantrae, so sudden and sharp that my arm obeyed him before my mind had understood.

Teach stood like one stupid, never thinking on his pistols.

"Go down to your cabin," cries Ballantrae, "and come on deck again when you are sober. Do you think we are going to hang for you, you black-faced, half-witted, drunken brute and butcher? Go down!" And he stamped his foot at him with such a sudden smartness that Teach fairly ran for it to the companion.

"And now, mates," says Ballantrae, "a word with you. I don't know if you are gentlemen of fortune for the fun of the thing, but I am not. I want to make money, and get ashore again, and spend it like a man. And on one thing my mind is made up: I will not hang if I can help it. Come: give me a hint; I'm only a beginner! Is there no way to get a little discipline and common sense about this business?"

One of the men spoke up: he said by rights they should have a quartermaster; and no sooner was the word out of his mouth than they were all of that opinion. The thing went by acclamation, Ballantrae was made quartermaster, the rum was put in his charge, laws were passed in imitation of those of a pirate by the name of Roberts, and the last proposal was to make an end of Teach. But Ballantrae was afraid of a more efficient captain, who might be a counterweight to himself, and he opposed this stoutly. Teach, he said, was good enough to board ships and frighten fools with his blacked face and swearing; we could scarce get a better man than Teach for that; and besides, as the man was now disconsidered and as good as deposed, we might reduce his proportion of the plunder. This carried it; Teach's share was cut down to a mere derision, being actually less than mine; and there remained only two points: whether he would consent, and who was to announce to him this resolution.

"Do not let that stick you," says Ballantrae, "I will do that."

And he stepped to the companion and down alone into the cabin to face that drunken savage.

"This is the man for us," cries one of the hands. "Three cheers for the quartermaster!" which were given with a will, my own voice among the loudest, and I dare say these plaudits had their effect on Master Teach in the cabin, as we have seen of late days how shouting in the streets may trouble even the minds of legislators.

What passed precisely was never known, though some of the heads of it came to the surface later on; and we were all amazed, as well as gratified, when Ballantrae came on deck with Teach upon his arm, and announced that all had been consented.

I pass swiftly over those twelve or fifteen months in which we continued to keep the sea in the North Atlantic, getting our food and water from the ships we over-hauled, and doing on the whole a pretty fortunate business. Sure, no one could wish to read anything so ungenteel as the memoirs of a pirate, even an unwilling one like me! Things went extremely better with our designs, and Ballantrae kept his lead, to my admiration, from that day forth. I would be tempted to suppose that a gentleman must everywhere be first, even aboard a rover: but my birth is every whit as good as any Scottish lord's, and I am not ashamed to confess that I stayed Crowding Pat until the end, and was not much better than the crew's buffoon. Indeed, it was no scene to bring out my merits. My health suffered from a variety of reasons; I was more at home to the last on a horse's back than a ship's deck; and, to be ingenuous, the fear of the sea was constantly in my mind, battling with the fear of my companions. I need not cry myself up for courage; I have done well on many fields under the eyes of famous generals, and earned my late advancement by an act of the most distinguished valour before many witnesses. But when we must proceed on one of our abordages, the heart of Francis Burke was in his boots; the little eggshell skiff in which we must set forth, the horrible heaving of the vast billows, the height of the ship that we must scale, the thought of how many might be there in garrison upon their legitimate defence, the scowling heavens which (in that climate) so often looked darkly down upon our exploits, and the mere crying of the wind in my ears, were all considerations most unpalatable to my valour. Besides which, as I was always a creature of the nicest sensibility, the scenes that must follow on our success tempted me as little as the chances of defeat. Twice we found women on board; and though I have seen towns sacked, and of late days in France some very horrid public tumults, there was something in the smallness of the numbers engaged, and the bleak dangerous sea-surroundings, that made these acts of piracy far the most revolting. I confess ingenuously I could never proceed unless I was three parts drunk; it was the same even with the crew; Teach himself was fit for no enterprise till he was full of rum; and it was one of the most difficult parts of Ballantrae's performance, to serve us with liquor in the proper quantities. Even this he did to admiration; being upon the whole the most capable man I ever met with, and the one of the most natural genius. He did not even scrape favour with the crew, as I did, by continual buffoonery made upon a very anxious heart; but preserved on most occasions a great deal of gravity and distance; so that he was like a parent among a family of young children, or a schoolmaster with his boys. What made his part the harder to perform, the men were most inveterate grumblers; Ballantrae's discipline, little as it was, was yet irksome to their love of licence; and what was worse, being kept sober they had time to think. Some of them accordingly would fall to repenting their abominable crimes; one in particular, who was a good Catholic, and with whom I would sometimes steal apart for prayer; above all in bad weather, fogs, lashing rain and the like, when we would be the less observed; and I am sure no two criminals in the cart have ever performed their devotions with more anxious sincerity. But the rest, having no such grounds of hope, fell to another pastime, that of computation. All day long they would he telling up their shares or grooming over the result. I have said we were pretty fortunate. But an observation fails to be made: that in this world, in no business that I have tried, do the profits rise to a man's expectations. We found many ships and took many; yet few of them contained much money, their goods were usually nothing to our purpose - what did we want with a cargo of ploughs, or even of tobacco? - and it is quite a painful reflection how many whole crews we have made to walk the plank for no more than a stock of biscuit or an anker or two of spirit.

In the meanwhile our ship was growing very foul, and it was high time we should make for our PORT DE CARRENAGE, which was in the estuary of a river among swamps. It was openly understood that we should then break up and go and squander our proportions of the spoil; and this made every man greedy of a little more, so that our decision was delayed from day to day. What finally decided matters, was a trifling accident, such as an ignorant person might suppose incidental to our way of life. But here I must explain: on only one of all the ships we boarded, the first on which we found women, did we meet with any genuine resistance. On that occasion we had two men killed and several injured, and if it had not been for the gallantry of Ballantrae we had surely been beat back at last. Everywhere else the defence (where there was any at all) was what the worst troops in Europe would have laughed at; so that the most dangerous part of our employment was to clamber up the side of the ship; and I have even known the poor souls on board to cast us a line, so eager were they to volunteer instead of walking the plank. This constant immunity had made our fellows very soft, so that I understood how Teach had made so deep a mark upon their minds; for indeed the company of that lunatic was the chief danger in our way of life. The accident to which I have referred was this:- We had sighted a little full-rigged ship very close under our board in a haze; she sailed near as well as we did - I should be nearer truth if I said, near as ill; and we cleared the bow-chaser to see if we could bring a spar or two about their ears. The swell was exceeding great; the motion of the ship beyond description; it was little wonder if our gunners should fire thrice and be still quite broad of what they aimed at. But in the meanwhile the chase had cleared a stern gun, the thickness of the air concealing them; and being better marksmen, their first shot struck us in the bows, knocked our two gunners into mince-meat, so that we were all sprinkled with the blood, and plunged through the deck into the forecastle, where we slept. Ballantrae would have held on; indeed, there was nothing in this CONTRETEMPS to affect the mind of any soldier; but he had a quick perception of the men's wishes, and it was plain this lucky shot had given them a sickener of their trade. In a moment they were all of one mind: the chase was drawing away from us, it was needless to hold on, the SARAH was too foul to overhaul a bottle, it was mere foolery to keep the sea with her; and on these pretended grounds her head was incontinently put about and the course laid for the river. It was strange to see what merriment fell on that ship's company, and how they stamped about the deck jesting, and each computing what increase had come to his share by the death of the two gunners.

We were nine days making our port, so light were the airs we had to sail on, so foul the ship's bottom; but early on the tenth, before dawn, and in a light lifting haze, we passed the head. A little after, the haze lifted, and fell again, showing us a cruiser very close. This was a sore blow, happening so near our refuge. There was a great debate of whether she had seen us, and if so whether it was likely they had recognised the SARAH. We were very careful, by destroying every member of those crews we overhauled, to leave no evidence as to our own persons; but the appearance of the SARAH herself we could not keep so private; and above all of late, since she had been foul, and we had pursued many ships without success, it was plain that her description had been often published. I supposed this alert would have made us separate upon the instant. But here again that original genius of Ballantrae's had a surprise in store for me. He and Teach (and it was the most remarkable step of his success) had gone hand in hand since the first day of his appointment. I often questioned him upon the fact, and never got an answer but once, when he told me he and Teach had an understanding "which would very much surprise the crew if they should hear of it, and would surprise himself a good deal if it was carried out." Well, here again he and Teach were of a mind; and by their joint procurement the anchor was no sooner down than the whole crew went off upon a scene of drunkenness indescribable. By afternoon we were a mere shipful of lunatical persons, throwing of things overboard, howling of different songs at the same time, quarrelling and falling together, and then forgetting our quarrels to embrace. Ballantrae had bidden me drink nothing, and feign drunkenness, as I valued my life; and I have never passed a day so wearisomely, lying the best part of the time upon the forecastle and watching the swamps and thickets by which our little basin was entirely surrounded for the eye. A little after dusk Ballantrae stumbled up to my side, feigned to fall, with a drunken laugh, and before he got his feet again, whispered me to "reel down into the cabin and seem to fall asleep upon a locker, for there would be need of me soon." I did as I was told, and coming into the cabin, where it was quite dark, let myself fall on the first locker. There was a man there already; by the way he stirred and threw me off, I could not think he was much in liquor; and yet when I had found another place, he seemed to continue to sleep on. My heart now beat very hard, for I saw some desperate matter was in act. Presently down came Ballantrae, lit the lamp, looked about the cabin, nodded as if pleased, and on deck again without a word. I peered out from between my fingers, and saw there were three of us slumbering, or feigning to slumber, on the lockers: myself, one Dutton and one Grady, both resolute men. On deck the rest were got to a pitch of revelry quite beyond the bounds of what is human; so that no reasonable name can describe the sounds they were now making. I have heard many a drunken bout in my time, many on board that very SARAH, but never anything the least like this, which made me early suppose the liquor had been tampered with. It was a long while before these yells and howls died out into a sort of miserable moaning, and then to silence; and it seemed a long while after that before Ballantrae came down again, this time with Teach upon his heels. The latter cursed at the sight of us three upon the lockers.

"Tut," says Ballantrae, "you might fire a pistol at their ears.
You know what stuff they have been swallowing."

There was a hatch in the cabin floor, and under that the richest part of the booty was stored against the day of division. It fastened with a ring and three padlocks, the keys (for greater security) being divided; one to Teach, one to Ballantrae, and one to the mate, a man called Hammond. Yet I was amazed to see they were now all in the one hand; and yet more amazed (still looking through my fingers) to observe Ballantrae and Teach bring up several packets, four of them in all, very carefully made up and with a loop for carriage.

"And now," says Teach, "let us be going."

"One word," says Ballantrae. "I have discovered there is another man besides yourself who knows a private path across the swamp; and it seems it is shorter than yours."

Teach cried out, in that case, they were undone.

"I do not know for that," says Ballantrae. "For there are several other circumstances with which I must acquaint you. First of all, there is no bullet in your pistols, which (if you remember) I was kind enough to load for both of us this morning. Secondly, as there is someone else who knows a passage, you must think it highly improbable I should saddle myself with a lunatic like you. Thirdly, these gentlemen (who need no longer pretend to be asleep) are those of my party, and will now proceed to gag and bind you to the mast; and when your men awaken (if they ever do awake after the drugs we have mingled in their liquor), I am sure they will be so obliging as to deliver you, and you will have no difficulty, I daresay, to explain the business of the keys."

Not a word said Teach, but looked at us like a frightened baby as we gagged and bound him.

"Now you see, you moon-calf," says Ballantrae, "why we made four packets. Heretofore you have been called Captain Teach, but I think you are now rather Captain Learn."

That was our last word on board the SARAH. We four, with our four packets, lowered ourselves softly into a skiff, and left that ship behind us as silent as the grave, only for the moaning of some of the drunkards. There was a fog about breast-high on the waters; so that Dutton, who knew the passage, must stand on his feet to direct our rowing; and this, as it forced us to row gently, was the means of our deliverance. We were yet but a little way from the ship, when it began to come grey, and the birds to fly abroad upon the water. All of a sudden Dutton clapped down upon his hams, and whispered us to be silent for our lives, and hearken. Sure enough, we heard a little faint creak of oars upon one hand, and then again, and further off, a creak of oars upon the other. It was clear we had been sighted yesterday in the morning; here were the cruiser's boats to cut us out; here were we defenceless in their very midst. Sure, never were poor souls more perilously placed; and as we lay there on our oars, praying God the mist might hold, the sweat poured from my brow. Presently we heard one of the boats where we might have thrown a biscuit in her. "Softly, men," we heard an officer whisper; and I marvelled they could not hear the drumming of my heart.

"Never mind the path," says Ballantrae; "we must get shelter anyhow; let us pull straight ahead for the sides of the basin."

This we did with the most anxious precaution, rowing, as best we could, upon our hands, and steering at a venture in the fog, which was (for all that) our only safety. But Heaven guided us; we touched ground at a thicket; scrambled ashore with our treasure; and having no other way of concealment, and the mist beginning already to lighten, hove down the skiff and let her sink. We were still but new under cover when the sun rose; and at the same time, from the midst of the basin, a great shouting of seamen sprang up, and we knew the SARAH was being boarded. I heard afterwards the officer that took her got great honour; and it's true the approach was creditably managed, but I think he had an easy capture when he came to board.

(3)

I was still blessing the saints for my escape, when I became aware we were in trouble of another kind. We were here landed at random in a vast and dangerous swamp; and how to come at the path was a concern of doubt, fatigue, and peril. Dutton, indeed, was of opinion we should wait until the ship was gone, and fish up the skiff; for any delay would be more wise than to go blindly ahead in that morass. One went back accordingly to the basin-side and (peering through the thicket) saw the fog already quite drunk up, and English colours flying on the SARAH, but no movement made to get her under way. Our situation was now very doubtful. The swamp was an unhealthful place to linger in; we had been so greedy to bring treasures that we had brought but little food; it was highly desirable, besides, that we should get clear of the neighbourhood and into the settlements before the news of the capture went abroad; and against all these considerations, there was only the peril of the passage on the other side. I think it not wonderful we decided on the active part.

It was already blistering hot when we set forth to pass the marsh, or rather to strike the path, by compass. Dutton took the compass, and one or other of us three carried his proportion of the treasure. I promise you he kept a sharp eye to his rear, for it was like the man's soul that he must trust us with. The thicket was as close as a bush; the ground very treacherous, so that we often sank in the most terrifying manner, and must go round about; the heat, besides, was stifling, the air singularly heavy, and the stinging insects abounded in such myriads that each of us walked under his own cloud. It has often been commented on, how much better gentlemen of birth endure fatigue than persons of the rabble; so that walking officers who must tramp in the dirt beside their men, shame them by their constancy. This was well to be observed in the present instance; for here were Ballantrae and I, two gentlemen of the highest breeding, on the one hand; and on the other, Grady, a common mariner, and a man nearly a giant in physical strength. The case of Dutton is not in point, for I confess he did as well as any of us. (4) But as for Grady, he began early to lament his case, tailed in the rear, refused to carry Dutton's packet when it came his turn, clamoured continually for rum (of which we had too little), and at last even threatened us from behind with a cooked pistol, unless we should allow him rest. Ballantrae would have fought it out, I believe; but I prevailed with him the other way; and we made a stop and ate a meal. It seemed to benefit Grady little; he was in the rear again at once, growling and bemoaning his lot; and at last, by some carelessness, not having followed properly in our tracks, stumbled into a deep part of the slough where it was mostly water, gave some very dreadful screams, and before we could come to his aid had sunk along with his booty. His fate, and above all these screams of his, appalled us to the soul; yet it was on the whole a fortunate circumstance and the means of our deliverance, for it moved Dutton to mount into a tree, whence he was able to perceive and to show me, who had climbed after him, a high piece of the wood, which was a landmark for the path. He went forward the more carelessly, I must suppose; for presently we saw him sink a little down, draw up his feet and sink again, and so twice. Then he turned his face to us, pretty white.

“Lend a hand,” said he, “I am in a bad place.”

“I don’t know about that,” says Ballantrae, standing still.

Dutton broke out into the most violent oaths, sinking a little lower as he did, so that the mud was nearly to his waist, and plucking a pistol from his belt, “Help me,” he cries, “or die and be damned to you!”

“Nay,” says Ballantrae, “I did but jest. I am coming.” And he set down his own packet and Dutton’s, which he was then carrying. “Do not venture near till we see if you are needed,” said he to me, and went forward alone to where the man was bogged. He was quiet now, though he still held the pistol; and the marks of terror in his countenance were very moving to behold.

“For the Lord’s sake,” says he, “look sharp.”

Ballantrae was now got close up. “Keep still,” says he, and seemed to consider; and then, “Reach out both your hands!”

Dutton laid down his pistol, and so watery was the top surface that it went clear out of sight; with an oath he stooped to snatch it; and as he did so, Ballantrae leaned forth and stabbed him between the shoulders. Up went his hands over his head - I know not whether with the pain or to ward himself; and the next moment he doubled forward in the mud.

Ballantrae was already over the ankles; but he plucked himself out, and came back to me, where I stood with my knees smiting one another. “The devil take you, Francis!” says he. “I believe you are a half-hearted fellow, after all. I have only done justice on a pirate. And here we are quite clear of the SARAH! Who shall now say that we have dipped our hands in any irregularities?”

I assured him he did me injustice; but my sense of humanity was so much affected by the horridness of the fact that I could scarce find breath to answer with.

“Come,” said he, “you must be more resolved. The need for this fellow ceased when he had shown you where the path ran; and you cannot deny I would have been daft to let slip so fair an opportunity.”

I could not deny but he was right in principle; nor yet could I refrain from shedding tears, of which I think no man of valour need have been ashamed; and it was not until I had a share of the rum that I was able to proceed. I repeat, I am far from ashamed of my generous emotion; mercy is honourable in the warrior; and yet I cannot altogether censure Ballantrae, whose step was really fortunate, as we struck the path without further misadventure, and the same night, about sundown, came to the edge of the morass.

We were too weary to seek far; on some dry sands, still warm with the day's sun, and close under a wood of pines, we lay down and were instantly plunged in sleep.

We awaked the next morning very early, and began with a sullen spirit a conversation that came near to end in blows. We were now cast on shore in the southern provinces, thousands of miles from any French settlement; a dreadful journey and a thousand perils lay in front of us; and sure, if there was ever need for amity, it was in such an hour. I must suppose that Ballantrae had suffered in his sense of what is truly polite; indeed, and there is nothing strange in the idea, after the sea-wolves we had consorted with so long; and as for myself, he fubbed me off unhandsomely, and any gentleman would have resented his behaviour.

I told him in what light I saw his conduct; he walked a little off, I following to upbraid him; and at last he stopped me with his hand.

"Frank," says he, "you know what we swore; and yet there is no oath invented would induce me to swallow such expressions, if I did not regard you with sincere affection. It is impossible you should doubt me there: I have given proofs. Dutton I had to take, because he knew the pass, and Grady because Dutton would not move without him; but what call was there to carry you along? You are a perpetual danger to me with your cursed Irish tongue. By rights you should now be in irons in the cruiser. And you quarrel with me like a baby for some trinkets!"

I considered this one of the most unhandsome speeches ever made; and indeed to this day I can scarce reconcile it to my notion of a gentleman that was my friend. I retorted upon him with his Scotch accent, of which he had not so much as some, but enough to be very barbarous and disgusting, as I told him plainly; and the affair would have gone to a great length, but for an alarming intervention.

We had got some way off upon the sand. The place where we had slept, with the packets lying undone and the money scattered openly, was now between us and the pines; and it was out of these the stranger must have come. There he was at least, a great hulking fellow of the country, with a broad axe on his shoulder, looking open-mouthed, now at the treasure, which was just at his feet, and now at our disputation, in which we had gone far enough to have weapons in our hands. We had no sooner observed him than he found his legs and made off again among the pines.

This was no scene to put our minds at rest: a couple of armed men in sea-clothes found quarrelling over a treasure, not many miles from where a pirate had been captured - here was enough to bring the whole country about our ears. The quarrel was not even made up; it was blotted from our minds; and we got our packets together in the twinkling of an eye, and made off, running with the best will in the world. But the trouble was, we did not know in what direction, and must continually return upon our steps. Ballantrae had indeed collected what he could from Dutton; but it's hard to travel upon hearsay; and the estuary, which spreads into a vast irregular harbour, turned us off upon every side with a new stretch of water.

We were near beside ourselves, and already quite spent with running, when, coming to the top of a dune, we saw we were again cut off by another ramification of the bay. This was a creek, however, very different from those that had arrested us before; being set in rocks, and so precipitously deep that a small vessel was able to lie alongside, made fast with a hawser; and her crew had laid a plank to the shore. Here they had lighted a fire, and were sitting at their meal. As for the vessel herself, she was one of those they build in the Bermudas.

The love of gold and the great hatred that everybody has to pirates were motives of the most influential, and would certainly raise the country in our pursuit. Besides, it was now plain we were on some sort of straggling peninsula, like the fingers of a hand; and the wrist, or passage to the mainland, which we should have taken at the first, was by this time not improbably secured. These considerations put us on a bolder counsel. For as long as we dared, looking every moment to hear sounds of the chase, we lay among some bushes on the top of the dune; and having by this means secured a little breath and recomposed our appearance, we strolled down at last, with a great affectation of carelessness, to the party by the fire.

It was a trader and his negroes, belonging to Albany, in the province of New York, and now on the way home from the Indies with a cargo; his name I cannot recall. We were amazed to learn he had put in here from terror of the SARAH; for we had no thought our exploits had been so notorious. As soon as the Albanian heard she had been taken the day before, he jumped to his feet, gave us a cup of spirits for our good news, and sent big negroes to get sail on the Bermudan. On our side, we profited by the dram to become more confidential, and at last offered ourselves as passengers. He looked askance at our tarry clothes and pistols, and replied civilly enough that he had scarce accommodation for himself; nor could either our prayers or our offers of money, in which we advanced pretty far, avail to shake him.

"I see, you think ill of us," says Ballantrae, "but I will show you how well we think of you by telling you the truth. We are Jacobite fugitives, and there is a price upon our heads."

At this, the Albanian was plainly moved a little. He asked us many questions as to the Scotch war, which Ballantrae very patiently answered. And then, with a wink, in a vulgar manner, "I guess you and your Prince Charlie got more than you cared about," said he.

"Bedad, and that we did," said I. "And, my dear man, I wish you would set a new example and give us just that much."

This I said in the Irish way, about which there is allowed to be something very engaging. It's a remarkable thing, and a testimony to the love with which our nation is regarded, that this address scarce ever fails in a handsome fellow. I cannot tell how often I have seen a private soldier escape the horse, or a beggar wheedle out a good alms by a touch of the brogue. And, indeed, as soon as the Albanian had laughed at me I was pretty much at rest. Even then, however, he made many conditions, and - for one thing - took away our arms, before he suffered us aboard; which was the signal to cast off; so that in a moment after, we were gliding down the bay with a good breeze, and blessing the name of God for our deliverance. Almost in the mouth of the estuary, we passed the cruiser, and a little after the poor SARAH with her prize crew; and these were both sights to make us tremble. The Bermudan seemed a very safe place to be in, and our bold stroke to have been fortunately played, when we were thus reminded of the case of our companions. For all that, we had only exchanged traps, jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire, ran from the yard-arm to the block, and escaped the open hostility of the man-of-war to lie at the mercy of the doubtful faith of our Albanian merchant.

From many circumstances, it chanced we were safer than we could have dared to hope. The town of Albany was at that time much concerned in contraband trade across the desert with the Indians and the French. This, as it was highly illegal, relaxed their loyalty, and as it brought them in relation with the politest people on the earth, divided even their sympathies. In short, they were like all the smugglers in the world, spies and agents ready- made for either party. Our Albanian, besides, was a very honest man indeed, and very greedy; and, to crown our luck, he conceived a great delight in our society. Before we had reached the town of New York we had come to a full agreement, that he should carry us as far as Albany upon his ship, and thence put us on a way to pass the boundaries and join the French. For all this we were to pay at a high rate; but beggars cannot be choosers, nor outlaws bargainers.

We sailed, then, up the Hudson River, which, I protest, is a very fine stream, and put up at the "King's Arms" in Albany. The town was full of the militia of the province, breathing slaughter against the French. Governor Clinton was there himself, a very busy man, and, by what I could learn, very near distracted by the factiousness of his Assembly. The Indians on both sides were on the war-path; we saw parties of them bringing in prisoners and (what was much worse) scalps, both male and female, for which they were paid at a fixed rate; and I assure you the sight was not encouraging. Altogether, we could scarce have come at a period more unsuitable for our designs; our position in the chief inn was dreadfully conspicuous; our Albanian fubbed us off with a thousand delays, and seemed upon the point of a retreat from his engagements; nothing but peril appeared to environ the poor fugitives, and for some time we drowned our concern in a very irregular course of living.

This, too, proved to be fortunate; and it's one of the remarks that fall to be made upon our escape, how providentially our steps were conducted to the very end. What a humiliation to the dignity of man! My philosophy, the extraordinary genius of Ballantrae, our valour, in which I grant that we were equal - all these might have proved insufficient without the Divine blessing on our efforts. And how true it is, as the Church tells us, that the Truths of Religion are, after all, quite applicable even to daily affairs! At least, it was in the course of our revelry that we made the acquaintance of a spirited youth by the name of Chew. He was one of the most daring of the Indian traders, very well acquainted with the secret paths of the wilderness, needy, dissolute, and, by a last good fortune, in some disgrace with his family. Him we persuaded to come to our relief; he privately provided what was needful for our flight, and one day we slipped out of Albany, without a word to our former friend, and embarked, a little above, in a canoe.

To the toils and perils of this journey, it would require a pen more elegant than mine to do full justice. The reader must conceive for himself the dreadful wilderness which we had now to thread; its thickets, swamps, precipitous rocks, impetuous rivers, and amazing waterfalls. Among these barbarous scenes we must toil all day, now paddling, now carrying our canoe upon our shoulders; and at night we slept about a fire, surrounded by the howling of wolves and other savage animals. It was our design to mount the headwaters of the Hudson, to the neighbourhood of Crown Point, where the French had a strong place in the woods, upon Lake Champlain. But to have done this directly were too perilous; and it was accordingly gone upon by such a labyrinth of rivers, lakes, and portages as makes my head giddy to remember. These paths were in ordinary times entirely desert; but the country was now up, the tribes on the war-path, the woods full of Indian scouts. Again and again we came upon these parties when we least expected, them; and one day, in particular, I shall never forget, how, as dawn was coming in, we were suddenly surrounded by five or six of these painted devils, uttering a very dreary sort of cry, and brandishing their hatchets. It passed off harmlessly, indeed, as did the rest of our encounters; for Chew was well known and highly valued among the different tribes. Indeed, he was a very gallant, respectable young man; but even with the advantage of his companionship, you must not think these meetings were without sensible peril. To prove friendship on our part, it was needful to draw upon our stock of rum - indeed, under whatever disguise, that is the true business of the Indian trader, to keep a travelling public-house in the forest; and when once the braves had got their bottle of SCAURA (as they call this beastly liquor), it behoved us to set forth and paddle for our scalps. Once they were a little drunk, goodbye to any sense or decency; they had but the one thought, to get more SCAURA. They might easily take it in their heads to give us chase, and had we been overtaken, I had never written these memoirs.

We were come to the most critical portion of our course, where we might equally expect to fall into the hands of French or English, when a terrible calamity befell us. Chew was taken suddenly sick with symptoms like those of poison, and in the course of a few hours expired in the bottom of the canoe. We thus lost at once our guide, our interpreter, our boatman, and our passport, for he was all these in one; and found ourselves reduced, at a blow, to the most desperate and irremediable distress. Chew, who took a great pride in his knowledge, had indeed often lectured us on the geography; and Ballantrae, I believe, would listen. But for my part I have always found such information highly tedious; and beyond the fact that we were now in the country of the Adirondack Indians, and not so distant from our destination, could we but have found the way, I was entirely ignorant. The wisdom of my course was soon the more apparent; for with all his pains, Ballantrae was no further advanced than myself. He knew we must continue to go up one stream; then, by way of a portage, down another; and then up a third. But you are to consider, in a mountain country, how many streams come rolling in from every hand. And how is a gentleman, who is a perfect stranger in that part of the world, to tell any one of them from any other? Nor was this our only trouble. We were great novices, besides, in handling a canoe; the portages were almost beyond our strength, so that I have seen us sit down in despair for half an hour at a time without one word; and the appearance of a single Indian, since we had now no means of speaking to them, would have been in all probability the means of our destruction. There is altogether some excuse if Ballantrae showed something of a grooming disposition; his habit of imputing blame to others, quite as capable as himself, was less tolerable, and his language it was not always easy to accept. Indeed, he had contracted on board the pirate ship a manner of address which was in a high degree unusual between gentlemen; and now, when you might say he was in a fever, it increased upon him hugely.

The third day of these wanderings, as we were carrying the canoe upon a rocky portage, she fell, and was entirely bilged. The portage was between two lakes, both pretty extensive; the track, such as it was, opened at both ends upon the water, and on both hands was enclosed by the unbroken woods; and the sides of the lakes were quite impassable with bog: so that we beheld ourselves not only condemned to go without our boat and the greater part of our provisions, but to plunge at once into impenetrable thickets and to desert what little guidance we still had - the course of the river. Each stuck his pistols in his belt, shouldered an axe, made a pack of his treasure and as much food as he could stagger under; and deserting the rest of our possessions, even to our swords, which would have much embarrassed us among the woods, we set forth on this deplorable adventure. The labours of Hercules, so finely described by Homer, were a trifle to what we now underwent. Some parts of the forest were perfectly dense down to the ground, so that we must cut our way like mites in a cheese. In some the bottom was full of deep swamp, and the whole wood entirely rotten. I have leaped on a great fallen log and sunk to the knees in touchwood; I have sought to stay myself, in falling, against what looked to be a solid trunk, and the whole thing has whiffed away at my touch like a sheet of paper. Stumbling, falling, bogging to the knees, hewing our way, our eyes almost put out with twigs and branches, our clothes plucked from our bodies, we laboured all day, and it is doubtful if we made two miles. What was worse, as we could rarely get a view of the country, and were perpetually justled from our path by obstacles, it was impossible even to have a guess in what direction we were moving.

A little before sundown, in an open place with a stream, and set about with barbarous mountains, Ballantrae threw down his pack. “I will go no further,” said he, and bade me light the fire, damning my blood in terms not proper for a chairman.

I told him to try to forget he had ever been a pirate, and to remember he had been a gentleman.

“Are you mad?” he cried. “Don’t cross me here! And then, shaking his fist at the hills, “To think,” cries he, “that I must leave my bones in this miserable wilderness! Would God I had died upon the scaffold like a gentleman!” This he said ranting like an actor; and then sat biting his fingers and staring on the ground, a most unchristian object.

I took a certain horror of the man, for I thought a soldier and a gentleman should confront his end with more philosophy. I made him no reply, therefore, in words; and presently the evening fell so chill that I was glad, for my own sake, to kindle a fire. And yet God knows, in such an open spot, and the country alive with savages, the act was little short of lunacy. Ballantrae seemed never to observe me; but at last, as I was about parching a little corn, he looked up.

"Have you ever a brother?" said be.

"By the blessing of Heaven," said I, "not less than five."

"I have the one," said he, with a strange voice; and then presently, "He shall pay me for all this," he added. And when I asked him what was his brother's part in our distress, "What!" he cried, "he sits in my place, he bears my name, he courts my wife; and I am here alone with a damned Irishman in this tooth-chattering desert! Oh, I have been a common gull!" he cried.

The explosion was in all ways so foreign to my friend's nature that I was daunted out of all my just susceptibility. Sure, an offensive expression, however vivacious, appears a wonderfully small affair in circumstances so extreme! But here there is a strange thing to be noted. He had only once before referred to the lady with whom he was contracted. That was when we came in view of the town of New York, when he had told me, if all had their rights, he was now in sight of his own property, for Miss Graeme enjoyed a large estate in the province. And this was certainly a natural occasion; but now here she was named a second time; and what is surely fit to be observed, in this very month, which was November, '47, and I BELIEVE UPON THAT VERY DAY AS WE SAT AMONG THESE BARBAROUS MOUNTAINS, his brother and Miss Graeme were married. I am the least superstitious of men; but the hand of Providence is here displayed too openly not to be remarked. (5)

The next day, and the next, were passed in similar labours; Ballantrae often deciding on our course by the spinning of a coin; and once, when I expostulated on this childishness, he had an odd remark that I have never forgotten. "I know no better way," said he, "to express my scorn of human reason." I think it was the third day that we found the body of a Christian, scalped and most abominably mangled, and lying in a pudder of his blood; the birds of the desert screaming over him, as thick as flies. I cannot describe how dreadfully this sight affected us; but it robbed me of all strength and all hope for this world. The same day, and only a little after, we were scrambling over a part of the forest that had been burned, when Ballantrae, who was a little ahead, ducked suddenly behind a fallen trunk. I joined him in this shelter, whence we could look abroad without being seen ourselves; and in the bottom of the next vale, beheld a large war party of the savages going by across our line. There might be the value of a weak battalion present; all naked to the waist, blacked with grease and soot, and painted with white lead and vermilion, according to their beastly habits. They went one behind another like a string of geese, and at a quickish trot; so that they took but a little while to rattle by, and disappear again among the woods. Yet I suppose we endured a greater agony of hesitation and suspense in these few minutes than goes usually to a man's whole life. Whether they were French or English Indians, whether they desired scalps or prisoners, whether we should declare ourselves upon the chance, or lie quiet and continue the heart-breaking business of our journey: sure, I think these were questions to have puzzled the brains of Aristotle himself. Ballantrae turned to me with a face all wrinkled up and his teeth showing in his mouth, like what I have read of people starving; he said no word, but his whole appearance was a kind of dreadful question.

"They may be of the English side," I whispered; "and think! the best we could then hope, is to begin this over again."

"I know - I know," he said. "Yet it must come to a plunge at last." And he suddenly plucked out his coin, shook it in his closed hands, looked at it, and then lay down with his face in the dust.

ADDITION BY MR. MACKELLAR. - I drop the Chevalier's narration at this point because the couple quarrelled and separated the same day; and the Chevalier's account of the quarrel seems to me (I must confess) quite incompatible with the nature of either of the men. Henceforth they wandered alone, undergoing extraordinary sufferings; until first one and then the other was picked up by a party from Fort St. Frederick. Only two things are to be noted. And first (as most important for my purpose) that the Master, in the course of his miseries buried his treasure, at a point never since discovered, but of which he took a drawing in his own blood on the lining of his hat. And second, that on his coming thus penniless to the Fort, he was welcomed like a brother by the Chevalier, who thence paid his way to France. The simplicity of Mr. Burke's character leads him at this point to praise the Master exceedingly; to an eye more worldly wise, it would seem it was the Chevalier alone that was to be commended. I have the more pleasure in pointing to this really very noble trait of my esteemed correspondent, as I fear I may have wounded him immediately before. I have refrained from comments on any of his extraordinary and (in my eyes) immoral opinions, for I know him to be jealous of respect. But his version of the quarrel is really more than I can reproduce; for I knew the Master myself, and a man more insusceptible of fear is not conceivable. I regret this oversight of the Chevalier's, and all the more because the tenor of his narrative (set aside a few flourishes) strikes me as highly ingenuous.

CHAPTER IV. - PERSECUTIONS ENDURED BY MR. HENRY.

You can guess on what part of his adventures the Colonel principally dwelled. Indeed, if we had heard it all, it is to be thought the current of this business had been wholly altered; but the pirate ship was very gently touched upon. Nor did I hear the Colonel to an end even of that which he was willing to disclose; for Mr. Henry, having for some while been plunged in a brown study, rose at last from his seat and (reminding the Colonel there were matters that he must attend to) bade me follow him immediately to the office.

Once there, he sought no longer to dissemble his concern, walking to and fro in the room with a contorted face, and passing his hand repeatedly upon his brow.

"We have some business," he began at last; and there broke off, declared we must have wine, and sent for a magnum of the best. This was extremely foreign to his habitudes; and what was still more so, when the wine had come, he gulped down one glass upon another like a man careless of appearances. But the drink steadied him.

"You will scarce be surprised, Mackellar," says he, "when I tell you that my brother - whose safety we are all rejoiced to learn - stands in some need of money."

I told him I had misdoubted as much; but the time was not very fortunate, as the stock was low.

"Not mine," said he. "There is the money for the mortgage."

I reminded him it was Mrs. Henry's.

"I will be answerable to my wife," he cried violently.

"And then," said I, "there is the mortgage."

"I know," said he; "it is on that I would consult you."

I showed him how unfortunate a time it was to divert this money from its destination; and how, by so doing, we must lose the profit of our past economies, and plunge back the estate into the mire. I even took the liberty to plead with him; and when he still opposed me with a shake of the head and a bitter dogged smile, my zeal quite carried me beyond my place. "This is midsummer madness," cried I; "and I for one will be no party to it."

"You speak as though I did it for my pleasure," says he. "But I have a child now; and, besides, I love order; and to say the honest truth, Mackellar, I had begun to take a pride in the estates." He gloomed for a moment. "But what would you have?" he went on. "Nothing is mine, nothing. This day's news has knocked the bottom out of my life. I have only the name and the shadow of things - only the shadow; there is no substance in my rights."

"They will prove substantial enough before a court," said I.

He looked at me with a burning eye, and seemed to repress the word upon his lips; and I repented what I had said, for I saw that while he spoke of the estate he had still a side-thought to his marriage. And then, of a sudden, he twitched the letter from his pocket, where it lay all crumpled, smoothed it violently on the table, and read these words to me with a trembling tongue: "'My dear Jacob' - This is how he begins!" cries he - "'My dear Jacob, I once called you so, you may remember; and you have now done the business, and flung my heels as high as Criffel.' What do you think of that, Mackellar," says he, "from an only brother? I declare to God I liked him very well; I was always staunch to him; and this is how he writes! But I will not sit down under the imputation" - walking to and fro - "I am as good as he; I am a better man than he, I call on God to prove it! I cannot give him all the monstrous sum he asks; he knows the estate to be incompetent; but I will give him what I have, and it in more than he expects. I have borne all this too long. See what he writes further on; read it for yourself: 'I know you are a niggardly dog.' A niggardly dog! I niggardly? Is that true, Mackellar? You think it is?" I really thought he would have struck me at that. "Oh, you all think so! Well, you shall see, and he shall see, and God shall see. If I ruin the estate and go barefoot, I shall stuff this bloodsucker. Let him ask all - all, and he shall have it! It is all his by rights. Ah!" he cried, "and I foresaw all this, and worse, when he would not let me go." He poured out another glass of wine, and was about to carry it to his lips, when I made so bold as to lay a finger on his arm. He stopped a moment. "You are right," said he, and flung glass and all in the fireplace. "Come, let us count the money."

I durst no longer oppose him; indeed, I was very much affected by the sight of so much disorder in a man usually so controlled; and we sat down together, counted the money, and made it up in packets for the greater ease of Colonel Burke, who was to be the bearer. This done, Mr. Henry returned to the hall, where he and my old lord sat all night through with their guest.

A little before dawn I was called and set out with the Colonel. He would scarce have liked a less responsible convoy, for he was a man who valued himself; nor could we afford him one more dignified, for Mr. Henry must not appear with the freetraders. It was a very bitter morning of wind, and as we went down through the long shrubbery the Colonel held himself muffled in his cloak.

"Sir," said I, "this is a great sum of money that your friend requires. I must suppose his necessities to be very great."

"We must suppose so," says he, I thought drily; but perhaps it was the cloak about his mouth.

"I am only a servant of the family," said I. "You may deal openly with me. I think we are likely to get little good by him?"

"My dear man," said the Colonel, "Ballantrae is a gentleman of the most eminent natural abilities, and a man that I admire, and that I revere, to the very ground he treads on." And then he seemed to me to pause like one in a difficulty.

"But for all that," said I, "we are likely to get little good by him?"

"Sure, and you can have it your own way, my dear man," says the Colonel.

By this time we had come to the side of the creek, where the boat awaited him. "Well," said be, "I am sure I am very much your debtor for all your civility, Mr. Whatever-your-name-is; and just as a last word, and since you show so much intelligent interest, I will mention a small circumstance that may be of use to the family. For I believe my friend omitted to mention that he has the largest pension on the Scots Fund of any refugee in Paris; and it's the more disgraceful, sir," cries the Colonel, warming, "because there's not one dirty penny for myself."

He cocked his hat at me, as if I had been to blame for this partiality; then changed again into his usual swaggering civility, shook me by the hand, and set off down to the boat, with the money under his arms, and whistling as he went the pathetic air of SHULE AROON. It was the first time I had heard that tune; I was to hear it again, words and all, as you shall learn, but I remember how that little stave of it ran in my head after the freetraders had bade him "Wheesht, in the deil's name," and the grating of the oars had taken its place, and I stood and watched the dawn creeping on the sea, and the boat drawing away, and the lugger lying with her foresail backed awaiting it.

The gap made in our money was a sore embarrassment, and, among other consequences, it had this: that I must ride to Edinburgh, and there raise a new loan on very questionable terms to keep the old afloat; and was thus, for close upon three weeks, absent from the house of Durrisdeer.

What passed in the interval I had none to tell me, but I found Mrs. Henry, upon my return, much changed in her demeanour. The old talks with my lord for the most part pretermitted; a certain deprecation visible towards her husband, to whom I thought she addressed herself more often; and, for one thing, she was now greatly wrapped up in Miss Katharine. You would think the change was agreeable to Mr. Henry; no such matter! To the contrary, every circumstance of alteration was a stab to him; he read in each the avowal of her truant fancies. That constancy to the Master of which she was proud while she supposed him dead, she had to blush for now she knew he was alive, and these blushes were the hated spring of her new conduct. I am to conceal no truth; and I will here say plainly, I think this was the period in which Mr. Henry showed the worst. He contained himself, indeed, in public; but there was a deep-seated irritation visible underneath. With me, from whom he had less concealment, he was often grossly unjust, and even for his wife he would sometimes have a sharp retort: perhaps when she had ruffled him with some unwonted kindness; perhaps upon no tangible occasion, the mere habitual tenor of the man's annoyance bursting spontaneously forth. When he would thus forget himself (a thing so strangely out of keeping with the terms of their relation), there went a shook through the whole company, and the pair would look upon each other in a kind of pained amazement.

All the time, too, while he was injuring himself by this defect of temper, he was hurting his position by a silence, of which I scarce know whether to say it was the child of generosity or pride. The freetraders came again and again, bringing messengers from the Master, and none departed empty-handed. I never durst reason with Mr. Henry; he gave what was asked of him in a kind of noble rage. Perhaps because he knew he was by nature inclining to the parsimonious, he took a backforemost pleasure in the recklessness with which he supplied his brother's exigence. Perhaps the falsity of the position would have spurred a humbler man into the same excess. But the estate (if I may say so) groaned under it; our daily expenses were shorn lower and lower; the stables were emptied, all but four roadsters; servants were discharged, which raised a dreadful murmuring in the country, and heated up the old disfavour upon Mr. Henry; and at last the yearly visit to Edinburgh must be discontinued.

This was in 1756. You are to suppose that for seven years this bloodsucker had been drawing the life's blood from Durrisdeer, and that all this time my patron had held his peace. It was an effect of devilish malice in the Master that he addressed Mr. Henry alone upon the matter of his demands, and there was never a word to my lord. The family had looked on, wondering at our economies. They had lamented, I have no doubt, that my patron had become so great a miser - a fault always despicable, but in the young abhorrent, and Mr. Henry was not yet thirty years of age. Still, he had managed the business of Durrisdeer almost from a boy; and they bore with these changes in a silence as proud and bitter as his own, until the coping-stone of the Edinburgh visit.

At this time I believe my patron and his wife were rarely together, save at meals. Immediately on the back of Colonel Burke's announcement Mrs. Henry made palpable advances; you might say she had laid a sort of timid court to her husband, different, indeed, from her former manner of unconcern and distance. I never had the heart to blame Mr. Henry because he recoiled from these advances; nor yet to censure the wife, when she was cut to the quick by their rejection. But the result was an entire estrangement, so that (as I say) they rarely spoke, except at meals. Even the matter of the Edinburgh visit was first broached at table, and it chanced that Mrs. Henry was that day ailing and querulous. She had no sooner understood her husband's meaning than the red flew in her face.

"At last," she cried, "this is too much! Heaven knows what pleasure I have in my life, that I should be denied my only consolation. These shameful proclivities must be trod down; we are already a mark and an eyesore in the neighbourhood. I will not endure this fresh insanity."

"I cannot afford it," says Mr. Henry.

"Afford?" she cried. "For shame! But I have money of my own."

"That is all mine, madam, by marriage," he snarled, and instantly left the room.

My old lord threw up his hands to Heaven, and he and his daughter, withdrawing to the chimney, gave me a broad hint to be gone. I found Mr. Henry in his usual retreat, the steward's room, perched on the end of the table, and plunging his penknife in it with a very ugly countenance.

"Mr. Henry," said I, "you do yourself too much injustice, and it is time this should cease."

"Oh!" cries he, "nobody minds here. They think it only natural. I have shameful proclivities. I am a niggardly dog," and he drove his knife up to the hilt. "But I will show that fellow," he cried with an oath, "I will show him which is the more generous."

"This is no generosity," said I; "this is only pride."

"Do you think I want morality?" he asked.

I thought he wanted help, and I should give it him, willy-nilly; and no sooner was Mrs. Henry gone to her room than I presented myself at her door and sought admittance.

She openly showed her wonder. "What do you want with me, Mr. Mackellar?" said she.

"The Lord knows, madam," says I, "I have never troubled you before with any freedoms; but this thing lies too hard upon my conscience, and it will out. Is it possible that two people can be so blind as you and my lord? and have lived all these years with a noble gentleman like Mr. Henry, and understand so little of his nature?"

"What does this mean?" she cried.

"Do you not know where his money goes to? his - and yours - and the money for the very wine he does not drink at table?" I went on.

“To Paris - to that man! Eight thousand pounds has he had of us in seven years, and my patron fool enough to keep it secret!”

“Eight thousand pounds!” she repeated. “It in impossible; the estate is not sufficient.”

“God knows how we have sweated farthings to produce it,” said I. “But eight thousand and sixty is the sum, beside odd shillings. And if you can think my patron miserly after that, this shall be my last interference.”

“You need say no more, Mr. Mackellar,” said she. “You have done most properly in what you too modestly call your interference. I am much to blame; you must think me indeed a very unobservant wife” (looking upon me with a strange smile), “but I shall put this right at once. The Master was always of a very thoughtless nature; but his heart is excellent; he is the soul of generosity. I shall write to him myself. You cannot think how you have pained me by this communication.”

“Indeed, madam, I had hoped to have pleased you,” said I, for I raged to see her still thinking of the Master.

“And pleased,” said she, “and pleased me of course.”

That same day (I will not say but what I watched) I had the satisfaction to see Mr. Henry come from his wife’s room in a state most unlike himself; for his face was all bloated with weeping, and yet he seemed to me to walk upon the air. By this, I was sure his wife had made him full amends for once. “Ah,” thought I to myself, “I have done a brave stroke this day.”

On the morrow, as I was seated at my books, Mr. Henry came in softly behind me, took me by the shoulders, and shook me in a manner of playfulness. “I find you are a faithless fellow after all,” says he, which was his only reference to my part; but the tone he spoke in was more to me than any eloquence of protestation. Nor was this all I had effected; for when the next messenger came (as he did not long afterwards) from the Master, he got nothing away with him but a letter. For some while back it had been I myself who had conducted these affairs; Mr. Henry not setting pen to paper, and I only in the dryest and most formal terms. But this letter I did not even see; it would scarce be pleasant reading, for Mr. Henry felt he had his wife behind him for once, and I observed, on the day it was despatched, he had a very gratified expression.

Things went better now in the family, though it could scarce be pretended they went well. There was now at least no misconception; there was kindness upon all sides; and I believe my patron and his wife might again have drawn together if he could but have pocketed his pride, and she forgot (what was the ground of all) her brooding on another man. It is wonderful how a private thought leaks out; it is wonderful to me now how we should all have followed the current of her sentiments; and though she bore herself quietly, and had a very even disposition, yet we should have known whenever her fancy ran to Paris. And would not any one have thought that my disclosure must have rooted up that idol? I think there is the devil in women: all these years passed, never a sight of the man, little enough kindness to remember (by all accounts) even while she had him, the notion of his death intervening, his heartless rapacity laid bare to her; that all should not do, and she must still keep the best place in her heart for this accursed fellow, is a thing to make a plain man rage. I had never much natural sympathy for the passion of love; but this unreason in my patron's wife disgusted me outright with the whole matter. I remember checking a maid because she sang some bairnly kickshaw while my mind was thus engaged; and my asperity brought about my ears the enmity of all the petticoats about the house; of which I reeked very little, but it amused Mr. Henry, who rallied me much upon our joint unpopularity. It is strange enough (for my own mother was certainly one of the salt of the earth, and my Aunt Dickson, who paid my fees at the University, a very notable woman), but I have never had much toleration for the female sex, possibly not much understanding; and being far from a bold man, I have ever shunned their company. Not only do I see no cause to regret this diffidence in myself, but have invariably remarked the most unhappy consequences follow those who were less wise. So much I thought proper to set down, lest I show myself unjust to Mrs. Henry. And, besides, the remark arose naturally, on a re-perusal of the letter which was the next step in these affairs, and reached me, to my sincere astonishment, by a private hand, some week or so after the departure of the last messenger.

Letter from Colonel BURKE (afterwards Chevalier) to MR. MACKELLAR.

TROYES IN CHAMPAGNE,
July 12, 1756

My Dear Sir, - You will doubtless be surprised to receive a communication from one so little known to you; but on the occasion I had the good fortune to rencounter you at Durrisdeer, I remarked you for a young man of a solid gravity of character: a qualification which I profess I admire and revere next to natural genius or the bold chivalrous spirit of the soldier. I was, besides, interested in the noble family which you have the honour to serve, or (to speak more by the book) to be the humble and respected friend of; and a conversation I had the pleasure to have with you very early in the morning has remained much upon my mind.

Being the other day in Paris, on a visit from this famous city, where

I am in garrison, I took occasion to inquire your name (which I profess I had forgot) at my friend, the Master of B.; and a fair opportunity occurring, I write to inform you of what's new.

The Master of B. (when we had last some talk of him together) was in receipt, as I think I then told you, of a highly advantageous pension on the Scots Fund. He next received a company, and was soon after advanced to a regiment of his own. My dear sir, I do not offer to explain this circumstance; any more than why I myself, who have rid at the right hand of Princes, should be fubbed off with a pair of colours and sent to rot in a hole at the bottom of the province. Accustomed as I am to Courts, I cannot but feel it is no atmosphere for a plain soldier; and I could never hope to advance by similar means, even could I stoop to the endeavour. But our friend has a particular aptitude to succeed by the means of ladies; and if all be true that I have heard, he enjoyed a remarkable protection. It is like this turned against him; for when I had the honour to shake him by the hand, he was but newly released from the Bastille, where he had been cast on a sealed letter; and, though now released, has both lost his regiment and his pension. My dear sir, the loyalty of a plain Irishman will ultimately succeed in the place of craft; as I am sure a gentleman of your probity will agree.

Now, sir, the Master is a man whose genius I admire beyond expression, and, besides, he is my friend; but I thought a little word of this revolution in his fortunes would not come amiss, for, in my opinion, the man's desperate. He spoke, when I saw him, of a trip to India (whither I am myself in some hope of accompanying my illustrious countryman, Mr. Lally); but for this he would require (as I understood) more money than was readily at his command. You may have heard a military proverb: that it is a good thing to make a bridge of gold to a flying enemy? I trust you will take my meaning and I subscribe myself, with proper respects to my Lord Durrisdeer, to his son, and to the beauteous Mrs. Durie,

My dear Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

FRANCIS BURKE.

This missive I carried at once to Mr. Henry; and I think there was but the one thought between the two of us: that it had come a week too late. I made haste to send an answer to Colonel Burke, in which I begged him, if he should see the Master, to assure him his next messenger would be attended to. But with all my haste I was not in time to avert what was impending; the arrow had been drawn, it must now fly. I could almost doubt the power of Providence (and certainly His will) to stay the issue of events; and it is a strange thought, how many of us had been storing up the elements of this catastrophe, for how long a time, and with how blind an ignorance of what we did.

From the coming of the Colonel's letter, I had a spyglass in my room, began to drop questions to the tenant folk, and as there was no great secrecy observed, and the freetrade (in our part) went by force as much as stealth, I had soon got together a knowledge of the signals in use, and knew pretty well to an hour when any messenger might be expected. I say, I questioned the tenants; for with the traders themselves, desperate blades that went habitually armed, I could never bring myself to meddle willingly. Indeed, by what proved in the sequel an unhappy chance, I was an object of scorn to some of these braggadocios; who had not only gratified me with a nickname, but catching me one night upon a by-path, and being all (as they would have said) somewhat merry, had caused me to dance for their diversion. The method employed was that of cruelly chipping at my toes with naked cutlasses, shouting at the same time "Square-Toes"; and though they did me no bodily mischief, I was none the less deplorably affected, and was indeed for several days confined to my bed: a scandal on the state of Scotland on which no comment is required.

It happened on the afternoon of November 7th, in this same unfortunate year, that I espied, during my walk, the smoke of a beacon fire upon the Muckleross. It was drawing near time for my return; but the uneasiness upon my spirits was that day so great that I must burst through the thickets to the edge of what they call the Craig Head. The sun was already down, but there was still a broad light in the west, which showed me some of the smugglers treading out their signal fire upon the Ross, and in the bay the lugger lying with her sails brailed up. She was plainly but new come to anchor, and yet the skiff was already lowered and pulling for the landing-place at the end of the long shrubbery. And this I knew could signify but one thing, the coming of a messenger for Durrisdeer.

I laid aside the remainder of my terrors, clambered down the brae - a place I had never ventured through before, and was hid among the shore-side thickets in time to see the boat touch. Captain Crail himself was steering, a thing not usual; by his side there sat a passenger; and the men gave way with difficulty, being hampered with near upon half a dozen portmanteaus, great and small. But the business of landing was briskly carried through; and presently the baggage was all tumbled on shore, the boat on its return voyage to the lugger, and the passenger standing alone upon the point of rock, a tall slender figure of a gentleman, habited in black, with a sword by his side and a walking-cane upon his wrist. As he so stood, he waved the cane to Captain Crail by way of salutation, with something both of grace and mockery that wrote the gesture deeply on my mind.

No sooner was the boat away with my sworn enemies than I took a sort of half courage, came forth to the margin of the thicket, and there halted again, my mind being greatly pulled about between natural diffidence and a dark foreboding of the truth. Indeed, I might have stood there swithering all night, had not the stranger turned, spied me through the mists, which were beginning to fall, and waved and cried on me to draw near. I did so with a heart like lead.

"Here, my good man," said he, in the English accent, "there are some things for Durrisdeer."

I was now near enough to see him, a very handsome figure and countenance, swarthy, lean, long, with a quick, alert, black look, as of one who was a fighter, and accustomed to command; upon one cheek he had a mole, not unbecoming; a large diamond sparkled on his hand; his clothes, although of the one hue, were of a French and foppish design; his ruffles, which he wore longer than common, of exquisite lace; and I wondered the more to see him in such a guise when he was but newly landed from a dirty smuggling lugger. At the same time he had a better look at me, toised me a second time sharply, and then smiled.

"I wager, my friend," says he, "that I know both your name and your nickname. I divined these very clothes upon your hand of writing, Mr. Mackellar."

At these words I fell to shaking.

"Oh,"' says he, "you need not be afraid of me. I bear no malice for your tedious letters; and it is my purpose to employ you a good deal. You may call me Mr. Bally: it is the name I have assumed; or rather (since I am addressing so great a precision) it is so I have curtailed my own. Come now, pick up that and that" - indicating two of the portmanteaus. "That will be as much as you are fit to bear, and the rest can very well wait. Come, lose no more time, if you please."

His tone was so cutting that I managed to do as he bid by a sort of instinct, my mind being all the time quite lost. No sooner had I picked up the portmanteaus than he turned his back and marched off through the long shrubbery, where it began already to be dusk, for the wood is thick and evergreen. I followed behind, loaded almost to the dust, though I profess I was not conscious of the burthen; being swallowed up in the monstrosity of this return, and my mind flying like a weaver's shuttle.

On a sudden I set the portmanteaus to the ground and halted. He turned and looked back at me.

"Well?" said he.

"You are the Master of Ballantrae?"

"You will do me the justice to observe," says he, "I have made no secret with the astute Mackellar."

"And in the name of God," cries I, "what brings you here? Go back, while it is yet time."

"I thank you," said he. "Your master has chosen this way, and not I; but since he has made the choice, he (and you also) must abide by the result. And now pick up these things of mine, which you have set down in a very boggy place, and attend to that which I have made your business."

But I had no thought now of obedience; I came straight up to him. "If nothing will move you to go back," said I; "though, sure, under all the circumstances, any Christian or even any gentleman would scruple to go forward . . . "

"These are gratifying expressions," he threw in.

"If nothing will move you to go back," I continued, "there are still some decencies to be observed. Wait here with your baggage, and I will go forward and prepare your family. Your father is an old man; and . . . " I stumbled . . . "there are decencies to be observed."

"Truly," said he, "this Mackellar improves upon acquaintance. But look you here, my man, and understand it once for all - you waste your breath upon me, and I go my own way with inevitable motion."

"Ah!" says I. "Is that so? We shall see then!"

And I turned and took to my heels for Durrisdeer. He clutched at me and cried out angrily, and then I believe I heard him laugh, and then I am certain he pursued me for a step or two, and (I suppose) desisted. One thing at least is sure, that I came but a few minutes later to the door of the great house, nearly strangled for the lack of breath, but quite alone. Straight up the stair I ran, and burst into the hall, and stopped before the family without the power of speech; but I must have carried my story in my looks, for they rose out of their places and stared on me like changelings.

"He has come," I panted out at last.

"He?" said Mr. Henry.

"Himself," said I.

"My son?" cried my lord. "Imprudent, imprudent boy! Oh, could he not stay where he was safe!"

Never a word says Mrs. Henry; nor did I look at her, I scarce knew why.

"Well," said Mr. Henry, with a very deep breath, "and where is he?"

"I left him in the long shrubbery," said I.

"Take me to him," said he.

So we went out together, he and I, without another word from any one; and in the midst of the gravelled plot encountered the Master strolling up, whistling as he came, and beating the air with his cane. There was still light enough overhead to recognise, though not to read, a countenance.

“Ah! Jacob,” says the Master. “So here is Esau back.”

“James,” says Mr. Henry, “for God’s sake, call me by my name. I will not pretend that I am glad to see you; but I would fain make you as welcome as I can in the house of our fathers.”

“Or in MY house? or YOURS?” says the Master. “Which were you about to say? But this is an old sore, and we need not rub it. If you would not share with me in Paris, I hope you will yet scarce deny your elder brother a corner of the fire at Durrisdeer?”

“That is very idle speech,” replied Mr. Henry. “And you understand the power of your position excellently well.”

“Why, I believe I do,” said the other with a little laugh. And this, though they had never touched hands, was (as we may say) the end of the brothers’ meeting; for at this the Master turned to me and bade me fetch his baggage.

I, on my side, turned to Mr. Henry for a confirmation; perhaps with some defiance.

“As long as the Master is here, Mr. Mackellar, you will very much oblige me by regarding his wishes as you would my own,” says Mr. Henry. “We are constantly troubling you: will you be so good as send one of the servants?” - with an accent on the word.

If this speech were anything at all, it was surely a well-deserved reproof upon the stranger; and yet, so devilish was his impudence, he twisted it the other way.

“And shall we be common enough to say ‘Sneck up’?” inquires he softly, looking upon me sideways.

Had a kingdom depended on the act, I could not have trusted myself in words; even to call a servant was beyond me; I had rather serve the man myself than speak; and I turned away in silence and went into the long shrubbery, with a heart full of anger and despair. It was dark under the trees, and I walked before me and forgot what business I was come upon, till I near broke my shin on the portmanteaus. Then it was that I remarked a strange particular; for whereas I had before carried both and scarce observed it, it was now as much as I could do to manage one. And this, as it forced me to make two journeys, kept me the longer from the hall.

When I got there, the business of welcome was over long ago; the company was already at supper; and by an oversight that cut me to the quick, my place had been forgotten. I had seen one side of the Master’s return; now I was to see the other. It was he who first remarked my coming in and standing back (as I did) in some annoyance. He jumped from his seat.

“And if I have not got the good Mackellar’s place!” cries he. “John, lay another for Mr. Bally; I protest he will disturb no one, and your table is big enough for all.”

I could scarce credit my ears, nor yet my senses, when he took me by the shoulders and thrust me, laughing, into my own place - such an affectionate playfulness was in his voice. And while John laid the fresh place for him (a thing on which he still insisted), he went and leaned on his father's chair and looked down upon him, and the old man turned about and looked upwards on his son, with such a pleasant mutual tenderness that I could have carried my hand to my head in mere amazement.

Yet all was of a piece. Never a harsh word fell from him, never a sneer showed upon his lip. He had laid aside even his cutting English accent, and spoke with the kindly Scots' tongue, that set a value on affectionate words; and though his manners had a graceful elegance mighty foreign to our ways in Durrisdeer, it was still a homely courtliness, that did not shame but flattered us. All that, he did throughout the meal, indeed, drinking wine with me with a notable respect, turning about for a pleasant word with John, fondling his father's hand, breaking into little merry tales of his adventures, calling up the past with happy reference - all he did was so becoming, and himself so handsome, that I could scarce wonder if my lord and Mrs. Henry sat about the board with radiant faces, or if John waited behind with dropping tears.

As soon as supper was over, Mrs. Henry rose to withdraw.

“This was never your way, Alison,” said he.

“It is my way now,” she replied: which was notoriously false, “and I will give you a good-night, James, and a welcome - from the dead,” said she, and her voice dropped and trembled.

Poor Mr. Henry, who had made rather a heavy figure through the meal, was more concerned than ever; pleased to see his wife withdraw, and yet half displeased, as he thought upon the cause of it; and the next moment altogether dashed by the fervour of her speech.

On my part, I thought I was now one too many; and was stealing after Mrs. Henry, when the Master saw me.

“Now, Mr. Mackellar,” says he, “I take this near on an unfriendliness. I cannot have you go: this is to make a stranger of the prodigal son; and let me remind you where - in his own father's house! Come, sit ye down, and drink another glass with Mr. Bally.”

“Ay, ay, Mr. Mackellar,” says my lord, “we must not make a stranger either of him or you. I have been telling my son,” he added, his voice brightening as usual on the word, “how much we valued all your friendly service.”

So I sat there, silent, till my usual hour; and might have been almost deceived in the man's nature but for one passage, in which his perfidy appeared too plain. Here was the passage; of which, after what he knows of the brothers' meeting, the reader shall consider for himself.

Mr. Henry sitting somewhat dully, in spite of his best endeavours to carry things before my lord, up jumps the Master, passes about the board, and claps his brother on the shoulder.

"Come, come, HAIRRY LAD," says he, with a broad accent such as they must have used together when they were boys, "you must not be downcast because your brother has come home. All's yours, that's sure enough, and little I grudge it you. Neither must you grudge me my place beside my father's fire."

"And that is too true, Henry," says my old lord with a little frown, a thing rare with him. "You have been the elder brother of the parable in the good sense; you must be careful of the other."

"I am easily put in the wrong," said Mr. Henry.

"Who puts you in the wrong?" cried my lord, I thought very tartly for so mild a man. "You have earned my gratitude and your brother's many thousand times: you may count on its endurance; and let that suffice."

"Ay, Harry, that you may," said the Master; and I thought Mr. Henry looked at him with a kind of wildness in his eye.

On all the miserable business that now followed, I have four questions that I asked myself often at the time and ask myself still:- Was the man moved by a particular sentiment against Mr. Henry? or by what he thought to be his interest? or by a mere delight in cruelty such as cats display and theologians tell us of the devil? or by what he would have called love? My common opinion halts among the three first; but perhaps there lay at the spring of his behaviour an element of all. As thus:- Animosity to Mr. Henry would explain his hateful usage of him when they were alone; the interests he came to serve would explain his very different attitude before my lord; that and some spice of a design of gallantry, his care to stand well with Mrs. Henry; and the pleasure of malice for itself, the pains he was continually at to mingle and oppose these lines of conduct.

Partly because I was a very open friend to my patron, partly because in my letters to Paris I had often given myself some freedom of remonstrance, I was included in his diabolical amusement. When I was alone with him, he pursued me with sneers; before the family he used me with the extreme of friendly condescension. This was not only painful in itself; not only did it put me continually in the wrong; but there was in it an element of insult indescribable. That he should thus leave me out in his dissimulation, as though even my testimony were too despicable to be considered, galled me to the blood. But what it was to me is not worth notice. I make but memorandum of it here; and chiefly for this reason, that it had one good result, and gave me the quicker sense of Mr. Henry's martyrdom.

It was on him the burthen fell. How was he to respond to the public advances of one who never lost a chance of gibing him in private? How was he to smile back on the deceiver and the insulter? He was condemned to seem ungracious. He was condemned to silence. Had he been less proud, had he spoken, who would have credited the truth? The acted calumny had done its work; my lord and Mrs. Henry were the daily witnesses of what went on; they could have sworn in court that the Master was a model of long-suffering good-nature, and Mr. Henry a pattern of jealousy and thanklessness. And ugly enough as these must have appeared in any one, they seemed tenfold uglier in Mr. Henry; for who could forget that the Master lay in peril of his life, and that he had already lost his mistress, his title, and his fortune?

"Henry, will you ride with me?" asks the Master one day.

And Mr. Henry, who had been goaded by the man all morning, raps out: "I will not."

"I sometimes wish you would be kinder, Henry," says the other, wistfully.

I give this for a specimen; but such scenes befell continually. Small wonder if Mr. Henry was blamed; small wonder if I fretted myself into something near upon a bilious fever; nay, and at the mere recollection feel a bitterness in my blood.

Sure, never in this world was a more diabolical contrivance: so perfidious, so simple, so impossible to combat. And yet I think again, and I think always, Mrs. Henry might have road between the lines; she might have had more knowledge of her husband's nature; after all these years of marriage she might have commanded or captured his confidence. And my old lord, too - that very watchful gentleman - where was all his observation? But, for one thing, the deceit was practised by a master hand, and might have gulled an angel. For another (in the case of Mrs. Henry), I have observed there are no persons so far away as those who are both married and estranged, so that they seem out of ear-shot or to have no common tongue. For a third (in the case of both of these spectators), they were blinded by old ingrained predilection. And for a fourth, the risk the Master was supposed to stand in (supposed, I say - you will soon hear why) made it seem the more ungenerous to criticise; and, keeping them in a perpetual tender solicitude about his life, blinded them the more effectually to his faults.

It was during this time that I perceived most clearly the effect of manner, and was led to lament most deeply the plainness of my own. Mr. Henry had the essence of a gentleman; when he was moved, when there was any call of circumstance, he could play his part with dignity and spirit; but in the day's commerce (it is idle to deny it) he fell short of the ornamental. The Master (on the other hand) had never a movement but it commanded him. So it befell that when the one appeared gracious and the other ungracious, every trick of their bodies seemed to call out confirmation. Not that alone: but the more deeply Mr. Henry floundered in his brother's toils, the more clownish he grew; and the more the Master enjoyed his spiteful entertainment, the more engagingly, the more smilingly, he went! So that the plot, by its own scope and progress, furthered and confirmed itself.

It was one of the man's arts to use the peril in which (as I say) he was supposed to stand. He spoke of it to those who loved him with a gentle pleasantry, which made it the more touching. To Mr. Henry he used it as a cruel weapon of offence. I remember his laying his finger on the clean lozenge of the painted window one day when we three were alone together in the hall. "Here went your lucky guinea, Jacob," said he. And when Mr. Henry only looked upon him darkly, "Oh!" he added, "you need not look such impotent malice, my good fly. You can be rid of your spider when you please. How long, O Lord? When are you to be wrought to the point of a denunciation, scrupulous brother? It is one of my interests in this dreary hole. I ever loved experiment." Still Mr. Henry only stared upon him with a grooming brow, and a changed colour; and at last the Master broke out in a laugh and clapped him on the shoulder, calling him a sulky dog. At this my patron leaped back with a gesture I thought very dangerous; and I must suppose the Master thought so too, for he looked the least in the world discountenance, and I do not remember him again to have laid hands on Mr. Henry.

But though he had his peril always on his lips in the one way or the other, I thought his conduct strangely incautious, and began to fancy the Government - who had set a price upon his head - was gone sound asleep. I will not deny I was tempted with the wish to denounce him; but two thoughts withheld me: one, that if he were thus to end his life upon an honourable scaffold, the man would be canonised for good in the minds of his father and my patron's wife; the other, that if I was anyway mingled in the matter, Mr. Henry himself would scarce escape some glancings of suspicion. And in the meanwhile our enemy went in and out more than I could have thought possible, the fact that he was home again was buzzed about all the country-side, and yet he was never stirred. Of all these so-many and so-different persons who were acquainted with his presence, none had the least greed - as I used to say in my annoyance - or the least loyalty; and the man rode here and there - fully more welcome, considering the lees of old unpopularity, than Mr. Henry - and considering the freetraders, far safer than myself.

Not but what he had a trouble of his own; and this, as it brought about the gravest consequences, I must now relate. The reader will scarce have forgotten Jessie Broun; her way of life was much among the smuggling party; Captain Crail himself was of her intimates; and she had early word of Mr. Bally's presence at the house. In my opinion, she had long ceased to care two straws for the Master's person; but it was become her habit to connect herself continually with the Master's name; that was the ground of all her play-acting; and so now, when he was back, she thought she owed it to herself to grow a haunter of the neighbourhood of Durrisdeer. The Master could scarce go abroad but she was there in wait for him; a scandalous figure of a woman, not often sober; hailing him wildly as "her bonny laddie," quoting pedlar's poetry, and, as I receive the story, even seeking to weep upon his neck. I own I rubbed my hands over this persecution; but the Master, who laid so much upon others, was himself the least patient of men. There were strange scenes enacted in the policies. Some say he took his cane to her, and Jessie fell back upon her former weapons - stones. It is certain at least that he made a motion to Captain Crail to have the woman trepanned, and that the Captain refused the proposition with uncommon vehemence. And the end of the matter was victory for Jessie. Money was got together; an interview took place, in which my proud gentleman must consent to be kissed and wept upon; and the woman was set up in a public of her own, somewhere on Solway side (but I forget where), and, by the only news I ever had of it, extremely ill-frequented.

This is to look forward. After Jessie had been but a little while upon his heels, the Master comes to me one day in the steward's office, and with more civility than usual, "Mackellar," says he, "there is a damned crazy wench comes about here. I cannot well move in the matter myself, which brings me to you. Be so good as to see to it: the men must have a strict injunction to drive the wench away."

"Sir," said I, trembling a little, "you can do your own dirty errands for yourself."

He said not a word to that, and left the room.

Presently came Mr. Henry. "Here is news!" cried he. "It seems all is not enough, and you must add to my wretchedness. It seems you have insulted Mr. Bally."

"Under your kind favour, Mr. Henry," said I, "it was he that insulted me, and, as I think, grossly. But I may have been careless of your position when I spoke; and if you think so when you know all, my dear patron, you have but to say the word. For you I would obey in any point whatever, even to sin, God pardon me!" And thereupon I told him what had passed.

Mr. Henry smiled to himself; a grimmer smile I never witnessed. "You did exactly well," said he. "He shall drink his Jessie Broun to the dregs." And then, spying the Master outside, he opened the window, and crying to him by the name of Mr. Bally, asked him to step up and have a word.

"James," said he, when our persecutor had come in and closed the door behind him, looking at me with a smile, as if he thought I was to be humbled, "you brought me a complaint against Mr. Mackellar, into which I have inquired. I need not tell you I would always take his word against yours; for we are alone, and I am going to use something of your own freedom. Mr. Mackellar is a gentleman I value; and you must contrive, so long as you are under this roof, to bring yourself into no more collisions with one whom I will support at any possible cost to me or mine. As for the errand upon which you came to him, you must deliver yourself from the consequences of your own cruelty, and, none of my servants shall be at all employed in such a case."

"My father's servants, I believe," says the Master.

"Go to him with this tale," said Mr. Henry.

The Master grew very white. He pointed at me with his finger. "I want that man discharged," he said.

"He shall not be," said Mr. Henry.

"You shall pay pretty dear for this," says the Master.

"I have paid so dear already for a wicked brother," said Mr. Henry, "that I am bankrupt even of fears. You have no place left where you can strike me."

"I will show you about that," says the Master, and went softly away.

"What will he do next, Mackellar?" cries Mr. Henry.

"Let me go away," said I. "My dear patron, let me go away; I am but the beginning of fresh sorrows."

"Would you leave me quite alone?" said he.

We were not long in suspense as to the nature of the new assault. Up to that hour the Master had played a very close game with Mrs. Henry; avoiding pointedly to be alone with her, which I took at the time for an effect of decency, but now think to be a most insidious art; meeting her, you may say, at meal-time only; and behaving, when he did so, like an affectionate brother. Up to that hour, you may say he had scarce directly interfered between Mr. Henry and his wife; except in so far as he had manoeuvred the one quite forth from the good graces of the other. Now all that was to be changed; but whether really in revenge, or because he was wearying of Durrisdeer and looked about for some diversion, who but the devil shall decide?

From that hour, at least, began the siege of Mrs. Henry; a thing so deftly carried on that I scarce know if she was aware of it herself, and that her husband must look on in silence. The first parallel was opened (as was made to appear) by accident. The talk fell, as it did often, on the exiles in France; so it glided to the matter of their songs.

"There is one," says the Master, "if you are curious in these matters, that has always seemed to me very moving. The poetry is harsh; and yet, perhaps because of my situation, it has always found the way to my heart. It is supposed to be sung, I should tell you, by an exile's sweetheart; and represents perhaps, not so much the truth of what she is thinking, as the truth of what he hopes of her, poor soul! in these far lands." And here the Master sighed, "I protest it is a pathetic sight when a score of rough Irish, all common sentinels, get to this song; and you may see, by their falling tears, how it strikes home to them. It goes thus, father," says he, very adroitly taking my lord for his listener, "and if I cannot get to the end of it, you must think it is a common case with us exiles." And thereupon he struck up the same air as I had heard the Colonel whistle; but now to words, rustic indeed, yet most pathetically setting forth a poor girl's aspirations for an exiled lover; of which one verse indeed (or something like it) still sticks by me:-

O, I will dye my petticoat red,
With my dear boy I'll beg my bread,
Though all my friends should wish me dead,
For Willie among the rushes, O!

He sang it well, even as a song; but he did better yet a performer. I have heard famous actors, when there was not a dry eye in the Edinburgh theatre; a great wonder to behold; but no more wonderful than how the Master played upon that little ballad, and on those who heard him, like an instrument, and seemed now upon the point of failing, and now to conquer his distress, so that words and music seemed to pour out of his own heart and his own past, and to be aimed directly at Mrs. Henry. And his art went further yet; for all was so delicately touched, it seemed impossible to suspect him of the least design; and so far from making a parade of emotion, you would have sworn he was striving to be calm. When it came to an end, we all sat silent for a time; he had chosen the dusk of the afternoon, so that none could see his neighbour's face; but it seemed as if we held our breathing; only my old lord cleared his throat. The first to move was the singer, who got to his feet suddenly and softly, and went and walked softly to and fro in the low end of the hall, Mr. Henry's customary place. We were to suppose that he there struggled down the last of his emotion; for he presently returned and launched into a disquisition on the nature of the Irish (always so much miscalled, and whom he defended) in his natural voice; so that, before the lights were brought, we were in the usual course of talk. But even then, methought Mrs. Henry's face was a shade pale; and, for another thing, she withdrew almost at once.

The next sign was a friendship this insidious devil struck up with innocent Miss Katharine; so that they were always together, hand in hand, or she climbing on his knee, like a pair of children. Like all his diabolical acts, this cut in several ways. It was the last stroke to Mr. Henry, to see his own babe debauched against him; it made him harsh with the poor innocent, which brought him still a peg lower in his wife's esteem; and (to conclude) it was a bond of union between the lady and the Master. Under this influence, their old reserve melted by daily stages. Presently there came walks in the long shrubbery, talks in the Belvedere, and I know not what tender familiarity. I am sure Mrs. Henry was like many a good woman; she had a whole conscience but perhaps by the means of a little winking. For even to so dull an observer as myself, it was plain her kindness was of a more moving nature than the sisterly. The tones of her voice appeared more numerous; she had a light and softness in her eye; she was more gentle with all of us, even with Mr. Henry, even with myself; methought she breathed of some quiet melancholy happiness.

To look on at this, what a torment it was for Mr. Henry! And yet it brought our ultimate deliverance, as I am soon to tell.

The purport of the Master's stay was no more noble (gild it as they might) than to wring money out. He had some design of a fortune in the French Indies, as the Chevalier wrote me; and it was the sum required for this that he came seeking. For the rest of the family it spelled ruin; but my lord, in his incredible partiality, pushed ever for the granting. The family was now so narrowed down (indeed, there were no more of them than just the father and the two sons) that it was possible to break the entail and alienate a piece of land. And to this, at first by hints, and then by open pressure, Mr. Henry was brought to consent. He never would have done so, I am very well assured, but for the weight of the distress under which he laboured. But for his passionate eagerness to see his brother gone, he would not thus have broken with his own sentiment and the traditions of his house. And even so, he sold them his consent at a dear rate, speaking for once openly, and holding the business up in its own shameful colours.

"You will observe," he said, "this is an injustice to my son, if ever I have one."

"But that you are not likely to have," said my lord.

"God knows!" says Mr. Henry. "And considering the cruel falseness of the position in which I stand to my brother, and that you, my lord, are my father, and have the right to command me, I set my hand to this paper. But one thing I will say first: I have been ungenerously pushed, and when next, my lord, you are tempted to compare your sons, I call on you to remember what I have done and what he has done. Acts are the fair test."

My lord was the most uneasy man I ever saw; even in his old face the blood came up. "I think this is not a very wisely chosen moment, Henry, for complaints," said he. "This takes away from the merit of your generosity."

"Do not deceive yourself, my lord," said Mr. Henry. "This injustice is not done from generosity to him, but in obedience to yourself."

"Before strangers . . . " begins my lord, still more unhappily affected.

"There is no one but Mackellar here," said Mr. Henry; "he is my friend. And, my lord, as you make him no stranger to your frequent blame, it were hard if I must keep him one to a thing so rare as my defence."

Almost I believe my lord would have rescinded his decision; but the Master was on the watch.

"Ah! Henry, Henry," says he, "you are the best of us still.
Rugged and true! Ah! man, I wish I was as good."

And at that instance of his favourite's generosity my lord desisted from his hesitation, and the deed was signed.

As soon as it could he brought about, the land of Ochterhall was sold for much below its value, and the money paid over to our leech and sent by some private carriage into France. Or so he said; though I have suspected since it did not go so far. And now here was all the man's business brought to a successful head, and his pockets once more bulging with our gold; and yet the point for which we had consented to this sacrifice was still denied us, and the visitor still lingered on at Durrisdeer. Whether in malice, or because the time was not yet come for his adventure to the Indies, or because he had hopes of his design on Mrs. Henry, or from the orders of the Government, who shall say? but linger he did, and that for weeks.

You will observe I say: from the orders of Government; for about this time the man's disreputable secret trickled out.

The first hint I had was from a tenant, who commented on the Master's stay, and yet more on his security; for this tenant was a Jacobitish sympathiser, and had lost a son at Culloden, which gave him the more critical eye. "There is one thing," said he, "that I cannot but think strange; and that is how he got to Cockermouth."

"To Cockermouth?" said I, with a sudden memory of my first wonder on beholding the man disembark so point-de-vice after so long a voyage.

"Why, yes," says the tenant, "it was there he was picked up by Captain Crail. You thought he had come from France by sea? And so we all did."

I turned this news a little in my head, and then carried it to Mr. Henry. "Here is an odd circumstance," said I, and told him.

"What matters how he came, Mackellar, so long as he is here?" groans Mr. Henry.

"No, sir," said I, "but think again! Does not this smack a little of some Government connivance? You know how much we have wondered already at the man's security."

"Stop," said Mr. Henry. "Let me think of this." And as he thought, there came that grim smile upon his face that was a little like the Master's. "Give me paper," said he. And he sat without another word and wrote to a gentleman of his acquaintance - I will name no unnecessary names, but he was one in a high place. This letter I despatched by the only hand I could depend upon in such a case - Macconochie's; and the old man rode hard, for he was back with the reply before even my eagerness had ventured to expect him. Again, as he read it, Mr. Henry had the same grim smile.

"This is the best you have done for me yet, Mackellar," says he. "With this in my hand I will give him a shog. Watch for us at dinner."

At dinner accordingly Mr. Henry proposed some very public appearance for the Master; and my lord, as he had hoped, objected to the danger of the course.

"Oh!" says Mr. Henry, very easily, "you need no longer keep this up with me. I am as much in the secret as yourself."

"In the secret?" says my lord. "What do you mean, Henry? I give you my word, I am in no secret from which you are excluded."

The Master had changed countenance, and I saw he was struck in a joint of his harness.

"How?" says Mr. Henry, turning to him with a huge appearance of surprise. "I see you serve your masters very faithfully; but I had thought you would have been humane enough to set your father's mind at rest."

"What are you talking of? I refuse to have my business publicly discussed. I order this to cease," cries the Master very foolishly and passionately, and indeed more like a child than a man.

"So much discretion was not looked for at your hands, I can assure you," continued Mr. Henry. "For see what my correspondent writes" - unfolding the paper - "'It is, of course, in the interests both of the Government and the gentleman whom we may perhaps best continue to call Mr. Bally, to keep this understanding secret; but it was never meant his own family should continue to endure the suspense you paint so feelingly; and I am pleased mine should be the hand to set these fears at rest. Mr. Bally is as safe in Great Britain as yourself.'"

"Is this possible?" cries my lord, looking at his son, with a great deal of wonder and still more of suspicion in his face.

"My dear father," says the Master, already much recovered. "I am overjoyed that this may be disclosed. My own instructions, direct from London, bore a very contrary sense, and I was charged to keep the indulgence secret from every one, yourself not excepted, and indeed yourself expressly named - as I can show in black and white unless I have destroyed the letter. They must have changed their mind very swiftly, for the whole matter is still quite fresh; or rather, Henry's correspondent must have misconceived that part, as he seems to have misconceived the rest. To tell you the truth, sir," he continued, getting visibly more easy, "I had supposed this unexplained favour to a rebel was the effect of some application from yourself; and the injunction to secrecy among my family the result of a desire on your part to conceal your kindness. Hence I was the more careful to obey orders. It remains now to guess by what other channel indulgence can have flowed on so notorious an offender as myself; for I do not think your son need defend himself from what seems hinted at in Henry's letter. I have never yet heard of a Durrisdeer who was a turncoat or a spy," says he, proudly.

And so it seemed he had swum out of this danger unharmed; but this was to reckon without a blunder he had made, and without the pertinacity of Mr. Henry, who was now to show he had something of his brother's spirit.

"You say the matter is still fresh," says Mr. Henry.

"It is recent," says the Master, with a fair show of stoutness and yet not without a quaver.

"Is it so recent as that?" asks Mr. Henry, like a man a little puzzled, and spreading his letter forth again.

In all the letter there was no word as to the date; but how was the Master to know that?

"It seemed to come late enough for me," says he, with a laugh. And at the sound of that laugh, which rang false, like a cracked bell, my lord looked at him again across the table, and I saw his old lips draw together close.

"No," said Mr. Henry, still glancing on his letter, "but I remember your expression. You said it was very fresh."

And here we had a proof of our victory, and the strongest instance yet of my lord's incredible indulgence; for what must he do but interfere to save his favourite from exposure!

"I think, Henry," says he, with a kind of pitiful eagerness, "I think we need dispute no more. We are all rejoiced at last to find your brother safe; we are all at one on that; and, as grateful subjects, we can do no less than drink to the king's health and bounty."

Thus was the Master extricated; but at least he had been put to his defence, he had come lamely out, and the attraction of his personal danger was now publicly plucked away from him. My lord, in his heart of hearts, now knew his favourite to be a Government spy; and Mrs. Henry (however she explained the tale) was notably cold in her behaviour to the discredited hero of romance. Thus in the best fabric of duplicity, there is some weak point, if you can strike it, which will loosen all; and if, by this fortunate stroke, we had not shaken the idol, who can say how it might have gone with us at the catastrophe?

And yet at the time we seemed to have accomplished nothing. Before a day or two he had wiped off the ill-results of his discomfiture, and, to all appearance, stood as high as ever. As for my Lord Durrisdeer, he was sunk in parental partiality; it was not so much love, which should be an active quality, as an apathy and torpor of his other powers; and forgiveness (so to mis-apply a noble word) flowed from him in sheer weakness, like the tears of senility. Mrs. Henry's was a different case; and Heaven alone knows what he found to say to her, or how he persuaded her from her contempt. It is one of the worst things of sentiment, that the voice grows to be more important than the words, and the speaker than that which is spoken. But some excuse the Master must have found, or perhaps he had even struck upon some art to wrest this exposure to his own advantage; for after a time of coldness, it seemed as if things went worse than ever between him and Mrs. Henry. They were then constantly together. I would not be thought to cut one shadow of blame, beyond what is due to a half-wilful blindness, on that unfortunate lady; but I do think, in these last days, she was playing very near the fire; and whether I be wrong or not in that, one thing is sure and quite sufficient: Mr. Henry thought so. The poor gentleman sat for days in my room, so great a picture of distress that I could never venture to address him; yet it is to be thought he found some comfort even in my presence and the knowledge of my sympathy. There were times, too, when we talked, and a strange manner of talk it was; there was never a person named, nor an individual circumstance referred to; yet we had the same matter in our minds, and we were each aware of it. It is a strange art that can thus be practised; to talk for hours of a thing, and never name nor yet so much as hint at it. And I remember I wondered if it was by some such natural skill that the Master made love to Mrs. Henry all day long (as he manifestly did), yet never startled her into reserve.

To show how far affairs had gone with Mr. Henry, I will give some words of his, uttered (as I have cause not to forget) upon the 26th of February, 1757. It was unseasonable weather, a cast back into Winter: windless, bitter cold, the world all white with rime, the sky low and gray . the sea black and silent like a quarry-hole. Mr. Henry sat close by the fire, and debated (as was now common with him) whether "a man" should "do things," whether "interference was wise," and the like general propositions, which each of us particularly applied. I was by the window, looking out, when there passed below me the Master, Mrs. Henry, and Miss Katharine, that now constant trio. The child was running to and fro, delighted with the frost; the Master spoke close in the lady’s ear with what seemed (even from so far) a devilish grace of insinuation; and she on her part looked on the ground like a person lost in listening. I broke out of my reserve.

“If I were you, Mr. Henry,” said I, “I would deal openly with my lord.”

“Mackellar, Mackellar,” said he, “you do not see the weakness of my ground. I can carry no such base thoughts to any one - to my father least of all; that would be to fall into the bottom of his scorn. The weakness of my ground,” he continued, “lies in myself, that I am not one who engages love. I have their gratitude, they all tell me that; I have a rich estate of it! But I am not present in their minds; they are moved neither to think with me nor to think for me. There is my loss!” He got to his feet, and trod down the fire. “But some method must be found, Mackellar,” said he, looking at me suddenly over his shoulder; “some way must be found. I am a man of a great deal of patience - far too much - far too much. I begin to despise myself. And yet, sure, never was a man involved in such a toil!” He fell back to his brooding.

“Cheer up,” said I. “It will burst of itself.”

“I am far past anger now,” says he, which had so little coherency with my own observation that I let both fall.

CHAPTER V. - ACCOUNT OF ALL THAT PASSED ON THE NIGHT ON FEBRUARY 27TH, 1757.

On the evening of the interview referred to, the Master went abroad; he was abroad a great deal of the next day also, that fatal 27th; but where he went, or what he did, we never concerned ourselves to ask until next day. If we had done so, and by any chance found out, it might have changed all. But as all we did was done in ignorance, and should be so judged, I shall so narrate these passages as they appeared to us in the moment of their birth, and reserve all that I since discovered for the time of its discovery. For I have now come to one of the dark parts of my narrative, and must engage the reader's indulgence for my patron.

All the 27th that rigorous weather endured: a stifling cold; the folk passing about like smoking chimneys; the wide hearth in the hall piled high with fuel; some of the spring birds that had already blundered north into our neighbourhood, besieging the windows of the house or trotting on the frozen turf like things distracted. About noon there came a blink of sunshine, showing a very pretty, wintry, frosty landscape of white hills and woods, with Crail's lugger waiting for a wind under the Craig Head, and the smoke mounting straight into the air from every farm and cottage. With the coming of night, the haze closed in overhead; it fell dark and still and starless, and exceeding cold: a night the most unseasonable, fit for strange events.

Mrs. Henry withdrew, as was now her custom, very early. We had set ourselves of late to pass the evening with a game of cards; another mark that our visitor was wearying mightily of the life at Durrisdeer; and we had not been long at this when my old lord slipped from his place beside the fire, and was off without a word to seek the warmth of bed. The three thus left together had neither love nor courtesy to share; not one of us would have sat up one instant to oblige another; yet from the influence of custom, and as the cards had just been dealt, we continued the form of playing out the round. I should say we were late sitters; and though my lord had departed earlier than was his custom, twelve was already gone some time upon the clock, and the servants long ago in bed. Another thing I should say, that although I never saw the Master anyway affected with liquor, he had been drinking freely, and was perhaps (although he showed it not) a trifle heated.

Anyway, he now practised one of his transitions; and so soon as the door closed behind my lord, and without the smallest change of voice, shifted from ordinary civil talk into a stream of insult.

“My dear Henry, it is yours to play,” he had been saying, and now continued: “It is a very strange thing how, even in so small a matter as a game of cards, you display your rusticity. You play, Jacob, like a bonnet laird, or a sailor in a tavern. The same dulness, the same petty greed, CETTE LENTEUR D’HEBETE QUI ME FAIT RAGER; it is strange I should have such a brother. Even Square- toes has a certain vivacity when his stake is imperilled; but the dreariness of a game with you I positively lack language to depict.”

Mr. Henry continued to look at his cards, as though very maturely considering some play; but his mind was elsewhere.

“Dear God, will this never be done?” cries the Master. “QUEL LOURDEAU! But why do I trouble you with French expressions, which are lost on such an ignoramus? A LOURDEAU, my dear brother, is as we might say a bumpkin, a clown, a clodpole: a fellow without grace, lightness, quickness; any gift of pleasing, any natural brilliancy: such a one as you shall see, when you desire, by looking in the mirror. I tell you these things for your good, I assure you; and besides, Square-toes” (looking at me and stifling a yawn), “it is one of my diversions in this very dreary spot to toast you and your master at the fire like chestnuts. I have great pleasure in your case, for I observe the nickname (rustic as it is) has always the power to make you writhe. But sometimes I have more trouble with this dear fellow here, who seems to have gone to sleep upon his cards. Do you not see the applicability of the epithet I have just explained, dear Henry? Let me show you. For instance, with all those solid qualities which I delight to recognise in you, I never knew a woman who did not prefer me - nor, I think,” he continued, with the most silken deliberation, “I think - who did not continue to prefer me.”

Mr. Henry laid down his cards. He rose to his feet very softly, and seemed all the while like a person in deep thought. “You coward!” he said gently, as if to himself. And then, with neither hurry nor any particular violence, he struck the Master in the mouth.

The Master sprang to his feet like one transfigured; I had never seen the man so beautiful. “A blow!” he cried. “I would not take a blow from God Almighty!”

“Lower your voice,” said Mr. Henry. “Do you wish my father to interfere for you again?”

“Gentlemen, gentlemen,” I cried, and sought to come between them.

The Master caught me by the shoulder, held me at arm’s length, and still addressing his brother: “Do you know what this means?” said he.

“It was the most deliberate act of my life,” says Mr. Henry.

“I must have blood, I must have blood for this,” says the Master.

“Please God it shall be yours,” said Mr. Henry; and he went to the wall and took down a pair of swords that hung there with others, naked. These he presented to the Master by the points. “Mackellar shall see us play fair,” said Mr. Henry. “I think it very needful.”

“You need insult me no more,” said the Master, taking one of the swords at random. “I have hated you all my life.”

“My father is but newly gone to bed,” said Mr. Henry. “We must go somewhere forth of the house.”

“There is an excellent place in the long shrubbery,” said the Master.

“Gentlemen,” said I, “shame upon you both! Sons of the same mother, would you turn against the life she gave you?”

“Even so, Mackellar,” said Mr. Henry, with the same perfect quietude of manner he had shown throughout.

“It is what I will prevent,” said I.

And now here is a blot upon my life. At these words of mine the Master turned his blade against my bosom; I saw the light run along the steel; and I threw up my arms and fell to my knees before him on the floor. “No, no,” I cried, like a baby.

“We shall have no more trouble with him,” said the Master. “It is a good thing to have a coward in the house.”

“We must have light,” said Mr. Henry, as though there had been no interruption.

“This trembler can bring a pair of candles,” said the Master.

To my shame be it said, I was still so blinded with the flashing of that bare sword that I volunteered to bring a lantern.

“We do not need a l-l-lantern,” says the Master, mocking me. “There is no breath of air. Come, get to your feet, take a pair of lights, and go before. I am close behind with this - “ making. the blade glitter as he spoke.

I took up the candlesticks and went before them, steps that I would give my hand to recall; but a coward is a slave at the best; and even as I went, my teeth smote each other in my mouth. It was as he had said: there was no breath stirring; a windless stricture of frost had bound the air; and as we went forth in the shine of the candles, the blackness was like a roof over our heads. Never a word was said; there was never a sound but the creaking of our steps along the frozen path. The cold of the night fell about me like a bucket of water; I shook as I went with more than terror; but my companions, bare-headed like myself, and fresh from the warm ball, appeared not even conscious of the change.

“Here is the place,” said the Master. “Set down the candles.”

I did as he bid me, and presently the flames went up, as steady as in a chamber, in the midst of the frosted trees, and I beheld these two brothers take their places.

"The light is something in my eyes," said the Master.

"I will give you every advantage," replied Mr. Henry, shifting his ground, "for I think you are about to die." He spoke rather sadly than otherwise, yet there was a ring in his voice.

"Henry Durie," said the Master, "two words before I begin. You are a fencer, you can hold a foil; you little know what a change it makes to hold a sword! And by that I know you are to fall. But see how strong is my situation! If you fall, I shift out of this country to where my money is before me. If I fall, where are you? My father, your wife - who is in love with me, as you very well know - your child even, who prefers me to yourself:- how will these avenge me! Had you thought of that, dear Henry?" He looked at his brother with a smile; then made a fencing-room salute.

Never a word said Mr. Henry, but saluted too, and the swords rang together.

I am no judge of the play; my head, besides, was gone with cold and fear and horror; but it seems that Mr. Henry took and kept the upper hand from the engagement, crowding in upon his foe with a contained and glowing fury. Nearer and nearer he crept upon the man, till of a sudden the Master leaped back with a little sobbing oath; and I believe the movement brought the light once more against his eyes. To it they went again, on the fresh ground; but now methought closer, Mr. Henry pressing more outrageously, the Master beyond doubt with shaken confidence. For it is beyond doubt he now recognised himself for lost, and had some taste of the cold agony of fear; or he had never attempted the foul stroke. I cannot say I followed it, my untrained eye was never quick enough to seize details, but it appears he caught his brother's blade with his left hand, a practice not permitted. Certainly Mr. Henry only saved himself by leaping on one side; as certainly the Master, lunging in the air, stumbled on his knee, and before he could move the sword was through his body.

I cried out with a stifled scream, and ran in; but the body was already fallen to the ground, where it writhed a moment like a trodden worm, and then lay motionless.

"Look at his left hand." said Mr. Henry.

"It is all bloody," said I.

"On the inside?" said he.

"It is cut on the inside," said I.

"I thought so," said he, and turned his back.

I opened the man's clothes; the heart was quite still, it gave not a flutter.

"God forgive us, Mr. Henry!" said I. "He is dead."

"Dead?" he repeated, a little stupidly; and then with a rising tone, "Dead? dead?" says he, and suddenly cast his bloody sword upon the ground.

"What must we do?" said I. "Be yourself, sir. It is too late now: you must be yourself."

He turned and stared at me. "Oh, Mackellar!" says he, and put his face in his hands.

I plucked him by the coat. "For God's sake, for all our sakes, be more courageous!" said I. "What must we do?"

He showed me his face with the same stupid stare.

"Do?" says he. And with that his eye fell on the body, and "Oh!" he cries out, with his hand to his brow, as if he had never remembered; and, turning from me, made off towards the house of Durrisdeer at a strange stumbling run.

I stood a moment mused; then it seemed to me my duty lay most plain on the side of the living; and I ran after him, leaving the candles on the frosty ground and the body lying in their light under the trees. But run as I pleased, he had the start of me, and was got into the house, and up to the hall, where I found him standing before the fire with his face once more in his hands, and as he so stood he visibly shuddered.

"Mr. Henry, Mr. Henry," I said, "this will be the ruin of us all."

"What is this that I have done?" cries he, and then looking upon me with a countenance that I shall never forget, "Who is to tell the old man?" he said.

The word knocked at my heart; but it was no time for weakness. I went and poured him out a glass of brandy. "Drink that," said I, "drink it down." I forced him to swallow it like a child; and, being still perished with the cold of the night, I followed his example.

"It has to be told, Mackellar," said he. "It must be told." And he fell suddenly in a seat - my old lord's seat by the chimney-side - and was shaken with dry sobs.

Dismay came upon my soul; it was plain there was no help in Mr. Henry. "Well," said I, "sit there, and leave all to me." And taking a candle in my hand, I set forth out of the room in the dark house. There was no movement; I must suppose that all had gone unobserved; and I was now to consider how to smuggle through the rest with the like secrecy. It was no hour for scruples; and I opened my lady's door without so much as a knock, and passed boldly in.

"There is some calamity happened," she cried, sitting up in bed.

"Madam," said I, "I will go forth again into the passage; and do you get as quickly as you can into your clothes. There is much to be done."

She troubled me with no questions, nor did she keep me waiting. Ere I had time to prepare a word of that which I must say to her, she was on the threshold signing me to enter.

"Madam," said I, "if you cannot be very brave, I must go elsewhere;

for if no one helps me to-night, there is an end of the house of Durrisdeer."

"I am very courageous," said she; and she looked at me with a sort of smile, very painful to see, but very brave too.

"It has come to a duel," said I.

"A duel?" she repeated. "A duel! Henry and - "

"And the Master," said I. "Things have been borne so long, things of which you know nothing, which you would not believe if I should tell. But to-night it went too far, and when he insulted you - "

"Stop," said she. "He? Who?"

"Oh! madam," cried I, my bitterness breaking forth, "do you ask me such a question? Indeed, then, I may go elsewhere for help; there is none here!"

"I do not know in what I have offended you," said she. "Forgive me; put me out of this suspense."

But I dared not tell her yet; I felt not sure of her; and at the doubt, and under the sense of impotence it brought with it, I turned on the poor woman with something near to anger.

"Madam," said I, "we are speaking of two men: one of them insulted you, and you ask me which. I will help you to the answer. With one of these men you have spent all your hours: has the other reproached you? To one you have been always kind; to the other, as God sees me and judges between us two, I think not always: has his love ever failed you? To-night one of these two men told the other, in my hearing - the hearing of a hired stranger, - that you were in love with him. Before I say one word, you shall answer your own question: Which was it? Nay, madam, you shall answer me another: If it has come to this dreadful end, whose fault is it?"

She stared at me like one dazzled. "Good God!" she said once, in a kind of bursting exclamation; and then a second time in a whisper to herself: "Great God! - In the name of mercy, Mackellar, what is wrong?" she cried. "I am made up; I can hear all."

"You are not fit to hear," said I. "Whatever it was, you shall say first it was your fault."

"Oh!" she cried, with a gesture of wringing her hands, "this man will drive me mad! Can you not put me out of your thoughts?"

"I think not once of you," I cried. "I think of none but my dear unhappy master."

"Ah!" she cried, with her hand to her heart, "is Henry dead?"

"Lower your voice," said I. "The other."

I saw her sway like something stricken by the wind; and I know not whether in cowardice or misery, turned aside and looked upon the floor. "These are dreadful tidings," said I at length, when her silence began to put me in some fear; "and you and I behove to be the more bold if the house is to be saved." Still she answered nothing. "There is Miss Katharine, besides," I added: "unless we bring this matter through, her inheritance is like to be of shame."

I do not know if it was the thought of her child or the naked word shame, that gave her deliverance; at least, I had no sooner spoken than a sound passed her lips, the like of it I never heard; it was as though she had lain buried under a hill and sought to move that burthen. And the next moment she had found a sort of voice.

"It was a fight," she whispered. "It was not - " and she paused upon the word.

"It was a fair fight on my dear master's part," said I. "As for the other, he was slain in the very act of a foul stroke."

"Not now!" she cried.

"Madam," said I, "hatred of that man glows in my bosom like a burning fire; ay, even now he is dead. God knows, I would have stopped the fighting, had I dared. It is my shame I did not. But when I saw him fall, if I could have spared one thought from pitying of my master, it had been to exult in that deliverance."

I do not know if she marked; but her next words were, "My lord?"

"That shall be my part," said I.

"You will not speak to him as you have to me?" she asked.

"Madam," said I, "have you not some one else to think of? Leave my lord to me."

"Some one else?" she repeated.

"Your husband," said I. She looked at me with a countenance illegible. "Are you going to turn your back on him?" I asked.

Still she looked at me; then her hand went to her heart again.
"No," said she.

"God bless you for that word!" I said. "Go to him now, where he sits in the hall; speak to him - it matters not what you say; give him your hand; say, 'I know all;' - if God gives you grace enough, say, 'Forgive me.'"

"God strengthen you, and make you merciful," said she. "I will go to my husband."

"Let me light you there," said I, taking up the candle.

"I will find my way in the dark," she said, with a shudder, and I think the shudder was at me.

So we separated - she down stairs to where a little light glimmered in the hall-door, I along the passage to my lord's room. It seems hard to say why, but I could not burst in on the old man as I could on the young woman; with whatever reluctance, I must knock. But his old slumbers were light, or perhaps he slept not; and at the first summons I was bidden enter.

He, too, sat up in bed; very aged and bloodless he looked; and whereas he had a certain largeness of appearance when dressed for daylight, he now seemed frail and little, and his face (the wig being laid aside) not bigger than a child's. This daunted me; nor less, the haggard surmise of misfortune in his eye. Yet his voice was even peaceful as he inquired my errand. I set my candle down upon a chair, leaned on the bed-foot, and looked at him.

"Lord Durrisdeer," said I, "it is very well known to you that I am a partisan in your family."

"I hope we are none of us partisans," said he. "That you love my son sincerely, I have always been glad to recognise."

"Oh! my lord, we are past the hour of these civilities," I replied. "If we are to save anything out of the fire, we must look the fact in its bare countenance. A partisan I am; partisans we have all been; it is as a partisan that I am here in the middle of the night to plead before you. Hear me; before I go, I will tell you why."

"I would always hear you, Mr. Mackellar," said he, "and that at any hour, whether of the day or night, for I would be always sure you had a reason. You spoke once before to very proper purpose; I have not forgotten that."

"I am here to plead the cause of my master," I said. "I need not tell you how he acts. You know how he is placed. You know with what generosity, he has always met your other - met your wishes," I corrected myself, stumbling at that name of son. "You know - you must know - what he has suffered - what he has suffered about his wife."

"Mr. Mackellar!" cried my lord, rising in bed like a bearded lion.

"You said you would hear me," I continued. "What you do not know, what you should know, one of the things I am here to speak of, is the persecution he must bear in private. Your back is not turned before one whom I dare not name to you falls upon him with the most unfeeling taunts; twits him - pardon me, my lord - twits him with your partiality, calls him Jacob, calls him clown, pursues him with ungenerous raillery, not to be borne by man. And let but one of you appear, instantly he changes; and my master must smile and courtesy to the man who has been feeding him with insults; I know, for I have shared in some of it, and I tell you the life is insupportable. All these months it has endured; it began with the man's landing; it was by the name of Jacob that my master was greeted the first night."

My lord made a movement as if to throw aside the clothes and rise. "If there be any truth in this - " said he.

"Do I look like a man lying?" I interrupted, checking him with my hand.

"You should have told me at first," he odd.

"Ah, my lord! indeed I should, and you may well hate the face of this unfaithful servant!" I cried.

"I will take order," said he, "at once." And again made the movement to rise.

Again I checked him. "I have not done," said I. "Would God I had! All this my dear, unfortunate patron has endured without help or countenance. Your own best word, my lord, was only gratitude. Oh, but he was your son, too! He had no other father. He was hated in the country, God knows how unjustly. He had a loveless marriage. He stood on all hands without affection or support - dear, generous, ill-fated, noble heart!"

"Your tears do you much honour and me much shame," says my lord, with a palsied trembling. "But you do me some injustice. Henry has been ever dear to me, very dear. James (I do not deny it, Mr. Mackellar), James is perhaps dearer; you have not seen my James in quite a favourable light; he has suffered under his misfortunes; and we can only remember how great and how unmerited these were. And even now his is the more affectionate nature. But I will not speak of him. All that you say of Henry is most true; I do not wonder, I know him to be very magnanimous; you will say I trade upon the knowledge? It is possible; there are dangerous virtues: virtues that tempt the encroacher. Mr. Mackellar, I will make it up to him; I will take order with all this. I have been weak; and, what is worse, I have been dull!"

"I must not hear you blame yourself, my lord, with that which I have yet to tell upon my conscience," I replied. "You have not been weak; you have been abused by a devilish dissembler. You saw yourself how he had deceived you in the matter of his danger; he has deceived you throughout in every step of his career. I wish to pluck him from your heart; I wish to force your eyes upon your other son; ah, you have a son there!"

"No, no" said he, "two sons - I have two sons."

I made some gesture of despair that struck him; he looked at me with a changed face. "There is much worse behind?" he asked, his voice dying as it rose upon the question.

"Much worse," I answered. "This night he said these words to Mr. Henry: 'I have never known a woman who did not prefer me to you, and I think who did not continue to prefer me.'"

"I will hear nothing against my daughter," he cried; and from his readiness to stop me in this direction, I conclude his eyes were not so dull as I had fancied, and he had looked not without anxiety upon the siege of Mrs. Henry.

"I think not of blaming her," cried I. "It is not that. These words were said in my hearing to Mr. Henry; and if you find them not yet plain enough, these others but a little after: Your wife, who is in love with me!'"

"They have quarrelled?" he said.

I nodded.

"I must fly to them," he said, beginning once again to leave his bed.

"No, no!" I cried, holding forth my hands.

"You do not know," said he. "These are dangerous words."

"Will nothing make you understand, my lord?' said I.

His eyes besought me for the truth.

I flung myself on my knees by the bedside. "Oh, my lord," cried I, "think on him you have left; think of this poor sinner whom you begot, whom your wife bore to you, whom we have none of us strengthened as we could; think of him, not of yourself; he is the other sufferer - think of him! That is the door for sorrow - Christ's door, God's door: oh! it stands open. Think of him, even as he thought of you. 'WHO IS TO TELL THE OLD MAN?' - these were his words. It was for that I came; that is why I am here pleading at your feet."

"Let me get up," he cried, thrusting me aside, and was on his feet before myself. His voice shook like a sail in the wind, yet he spoke with a good loudness; his face was like the snow, but his eyes were steady and dry.

"Here is too much speech," said he. "Where was it?"

"In the shrubbery," said I.

"And Mr. Henry?" he asked. And when I had told him he knotted his old face in thought.

"And Mr. James?" says he.

"I have left him lying," said I, "beside the candles."

"Candles?" he cried. And with that he ran to the window, opened it, and looked abroad. "It might be spied from the road."

"Where none goes by at such an hour," I objected.

"It makes no matter," he said. "One might. Hark!" cries he. "What is that?"

It was the sound of men very guardedly rowing in the bay; and I told him so.

"The freetraders," said my lord. "Run at once, Mackellar; put these candles out. I will dress in the meanwhile; and when you return we can debate on what is wisest."

I groped my way downstairs, and out at the door. From quite a far way off a sheen was visible, making points of brightness in the shrubbery; in so black a night it might have been remarked for miles; and I blamed myself bitterly for my incaution. How much more sharply when I reached the place! One of the candlesticks was overthrown, and that taper quenched. The other burned steadily by itself, and made a broad space of light upon the frosted ground. All within that circle seemed, by the force of contrast and the overhanging blackness, brighter than by day. And there was the bloodstain in the midst; and a little farther off Mr. Henry's sword, the pommel of which was of silver; but of the body, not a trace. My heart thumped upon my ribs, the hair stirred upon my scalp, as I stood there staring - so strange was the sight, so dire the fears it wakened. I looked right and left; the ground was so hard, it told no story. I stood and listened till my ears ached, but the night was hollow about me like an empty church; not even a ripple stirred upon the shore; it seemed you might have heard a pin drop in the county.

I put the candle out, and the blackness fell about me groping dark; it was like a crowd surrounding me; and I went back to the house of Durrisdeer, with my chin upon my shoulder, startling, as I went, with craven suppositions. In the door a figure moved to meet me, and I had near screamed with terror ere I recognised Mrs. Henry.

"Have you told him?" says she.

"It was he who sent me," said I. "It is gone. But why are you here?"

"It is gone!" she repeated. "What is gone?"

"The body," said I. "Why are you not with your husband?"

"Gone!" said she. "You cannot have looked. Come back."

"There is no light now," said I. "I dare not."

"I can see in the dark. I have been standing here so long - so long," said she. "Come, give me your hand."

We returned to the shrubbery hand in hand, and to the fatal place.

"Take care of the blood," said I.

"Blood?" she cried, and started violently back.

"I suppose it will be," said I. "I am like a blind man."

"No!" said she, "nothing! Have you not dreamed?"

"Ah, would to God we had!" cried I.

She spied the sword, picked it up, and seeing the blood, let it fall again with her hands thrown wide. "Ah!" she cried. And then, with an instant courage, handled it the second time, and thrust it to the hilt into the frozen ground. "I will take it back and clean it properly," says she, and again looked about her on all sides. "It cannot be that he was dead?" she added.

"There was no flutter of his heart," said I, and then remembering: "Why are you not with your husband?"

"It is no use," said she; "he will not speak to me."

"Not speak to you?" I repeated. "Oh! you have not tried."

"You have a right to doubt me," she replied, with a gentle dignity.

At this, for the first time, I was seized with sorrow for her. "God knows, madam," I cried, "God knows I am not so hard as I appear; on this dreadful night who can veneer his words? But I am a friend to all who are not Henry Durie's enemies."

"It is hard, then, you should hesitate about his wife," said she.

I saw all at once, like the rending of a veil, how nobly she had borne this unnatural calamity, and how generously my reproaches.

"We must go back and tell this to my lord," said I.

"Him I cannot face," she cried.

"You will find him the least moved of all of us," said I.

"And yet I cannot face him," said she.

"Well," said I, "you can return to Mr. Henry; I will see my lord."

As we walked back, I bearing the candlesticks, she the sword - a strange burthen for that woman - she had another thought. "Should we tell Henry?" she asked.

"Let my lord decide," said I.

My lord was nearly dressed when I came to his chamber. He heard me with a frown. "The freetraders," said he. "But whether dead or alive?"

"I thought him - " said I, and paused, ashamed of the word.

"I know; but you may very well have been in error. Why should they remove him if not living?" he asked. "Oh! here is a great door of hope. It must be given out that he departed - as he came - without any note of preparation. We must save all scandal."

I saw he had fallen, like the rest of us, to think mainly of the house. Now that all the living members of the family were plunged in irremediable sorrow, it was strange how we turned to that conjoint abstraction of the family itself, and sought to bolster up the airy nothing of its reputation: not the Duries only, but the hired steward himself.

"Are we to tell Mr. Henry?" I asked him.

"I will see," said he. "I am going first to visit him; then I go forth with you to view the shrubbery and consider."

We went downstairs into the hall. Mr. Henry sat by the table with his head upon his hand, like a man of stone. His wife stood a little back from him, her hand at her mouth; it was plain she could not move him. My old lord walked very steadily to where his son was sitting; he had a steady countenance, too, but methought a little cold. When he was come quite up, he held out both his hands and said, "My son!"

With a broken, strangled cry, Mr. Henry leaped up and fell on his father's neck, crying and weeping, the most pitiful sight that ever a man witnessed. "Oh! father," he cried, "you know I loved him; you know I loved him in the beginning; I could have died for him - you know that! I would have given my life for him and you. Oh! say you know that. Oh! say you can forgive me. O father, father, what have I done - what have I done? And we used to be bairns together!" and wept and sobbed, and fondled the old man, and clutched him about the neck, with the passion of a child in terror.

And then he caught sight of his wife (you would have thought for the first time), where she stood weeping to hear him, and in a moment had fallen at her knees. “And O my lass,” he cried, “you must forgive me, too! Not your husband - I have only been the ruin of your life. But you knew me when I was a lad; there was no harm in Henry Durie then; he meant aye to be a friend to you. It’s him - it’s the old bairn that played with you - oh, can ye never, never forgive him?”

Throughout all this my lord was like a cold, kind spectator with his wits about him. At the first cry, which was indeed enough to call the house about us, he had said to me over his shoulder, “Close the door.” And now he nodded to himself.

“We may leave him to his wife now,”‘ says he. “Bring a light, Mr. Mackellar.”

Upon my going forth again with my lord, I was aware of a strange phenomenon; for though it was quite dark, and the night not yet old, methought I smelt the morning. At the same time there went a tossing through the branches of the evergreens, so that they sounded like a quiet sea, and the air pulled at times against our faces, and the flame of the candle shook. We made the more speed, I believe, being surrounded by this bustle; visited the scene of the duel, where my lord looked upon the blood with stoicism; and passing farther on toward the landing-place, came at last upon some evidences of the truth. For, first of all, where there was a pool across the path, the ice had been trodden in, plainly by more than one man’s weight; next, and but a little farther, a young tree was broken, and down by the landing-place, where the traders’ boats were usually beached, another stain of blood marked where the body must have been infallibly set down to rest the bearers.

This stain we set ourselves to wash away with the sea-water, carrying it in my lord’s hat; and as we were thus engaged there came up a sudden moaning gust and left us instantly benighted.

“It will come to snow,” says my lord; “and the best thing that we could hope. Let us go back now; we can do nothing in the dark.”

As we went houseward, the wind being again subsided, we were aware of a strong pattering noise about us in the night; and when we issued from the shelter of the trees, we found it raining smartly.

Throughout the whole of this, my lord’s clearness of mind, no less than his activity of body, had not ceased to minister to my amazement. He set the crown upon it in the council we held on our return. The freetraders had certainly secured the Master, though whether dead or alive we were still left to our conjectures; the rain would, long before day, wipe out all marks of the transaction; by this we must profit. The Master had unexpectedly come after the fall of night; it must now he given out he had as suddenly departed before the break of day; and, to make all this plausible, it now only remained for me to mount into the man's chamber, and pack and conceal his baggage. True, we still lay at the discretion of the traders; but that was the incurable weakness of our guilt.

I heard him, as I said, with wonder, and hastened to obey. Mr. and Mrs. Henry were gone from the hall; my lord, for warmth's sake, hurried to his bed; there was still no sign of stir among the servants, and as I went up the tower stair, and entered the dead man's room, a horror of solitude weighed upon my mind. To my extreme surprise, it was all in the disorder of departure. Of his three portmanteaux, two were already locked; the third lay open and near full. At once there flashed upon me some suspicion of the truth. The man had been going, after all; he had but waited upon Crail, as Crail waited upon the wind; early in the night the seamen had perceived the weather changing; the boat had come to give notice of the change and call the passenger aboard, and the boat's crew had stumbled on him dying in his blood. Nay, and there was more behind. This pre-arranged departure shed some light upon his inconceivable insult of the night before; it was a parting shot, hatred being no longer checked by policy. And, for another thing, the nature of that insult, and the conduct of Mrs. Henry, pointed to one conclusion, which I have never verified, and can now never verify until the great assize - the conclusion that he had at last forgotten himself, had gone too far in his advances, and had been rebuffed. It can never be verified, as I say; but as I thought of it that morning among his baggage, the thought was sweet to me like honey.

Into the open portmanteau I dipped a little ere I closed it. The most beautiful lace and linen, many suits of those fine plain clothes in which he loved to appear; a book or two, and those of the best, Caesar's "Commentaries," a volume of Mr. Hobbes, the "Henriade" of M. de Voltaire, a book upon the Indies, one on the mathematics, far beyond where I have studied: these were what I observed with very mingled feelings. But in the open portmanteau, no papers of any description. This set me musing. It was possible the man was dead; but, since the traders had carried him away, not likely. It was possible he might still die of his wound; but it was also possible he might not. And in this latter case I was determined to have the means of some defence.

One after another I carried his portmanteaux to a loft in the top of the house which we kept locked; went to my own room for my keys, and, returning to the loft, had the gratification to find two that fitted pretty well. In one of the portmanteaux there was a shagreen letter-case, which I cut open with my knife; and thenceforth (so far as any credit went) the man was at my mercy. Here was a vast deal of gallant correspondence, chiefly of his Paris days; and, what was more to the purpose, here were the copies of his own reports to the English Secretary, and the originals of the Secretary's answers: a most damning series: such as to publish would be to wreck the Master's honour and to set a price upon his life. I chuckled to myself as I ran through the documents; I rubbed my hands, I sang aloud in my glee. Day found me at the pleasing task; nor did I then remit my diligence, except in so far as I went to the window - looked out for a moment, to see the frost quite gone, the world turned black again, and the rain and the wind driving in the bay - and to assure myself that the lugger was gone from its anchorage, and the Master (whether dead or alive) now tumbling on the Irish Sea.

It is proper I should add in this place the very little I have subsequently angled out upon the doings of that night. It took me a long while to gather it; for we dared not openly ask, and the freetraders regarded me with enmity, if not with scorn. It was near six months before we even knew for certain that the man survived; and it was years before I learned from one of Crail's men, turned publican on his ill-gotten gain, some particulars which smack to me of truth. It seems the traders found the Master struggled on one elbow, and now staring round him, and now gazing at the candle or at his hand which was all bloodied, like a man stupid. Upon their coming, he would seem to have found his mind, bade them carry him aboard, and hold their tongues; and on the captain asking how he had come in such a pickle, replied with a burst of passionate swearing, and incontinently fainted. They held some debate, but they were momently looking for a wind, they were highly paid to smuggle him to France, and did not care to delay. Besides which, he was well enough liked by these abominable wretches: they supposed him under capital sentence, knew not in what mischief he might have got his wound, and judged it a piece of good nature to remove him out of the way of danger. So he was taken aboard, recovered on the passage over, and was set ashore a convalescent at the Havre de Grace. What is truly notable: he said not a word to anyone of the duel, and not a trader knows to this day in what quarrel, or by the hand of what adversary, he fell. With any other man I should have set this down to natural decency; with him, to pride. He could not bear to avow, perhaps even to himself, that he had been vanquished by one whom he had so much insulted whom he so cruelly despised.

CHAPTER VI. - SUMMARY OF EVENTS DURING THE MASTER'S SECOND ABSENCE.

Of the heavy sickness which declared itself next morning I can think with equanimity, as of the last unmingled trouble that befell my master; and even that was perhaps a mercy in disguise; for what pains of the body could equal the miseries of his mind? Mrs. Henry and I had the watching by the bed. My old lord called from time to time to take the news, but would not usually pass the door. Once, I remember, when hope was nigh gone, he stepped to the bedside, looked awhile in his son's face, and turned away with a gesture of the head and hand thrown up, that remains upon my mind as something tragic; such grief and such a scorn of sublunary things were there expressed. But the most of the time Mrs. Henry and I had the room to ourselves, taking turns by night, and bearing each other company by day, for it was dreary watching. Mr. Henry, his shaven head bound in a napkin, tossed fro without remission, beating the bed with his hands. His tongue never lay; his voice ran continuously like a river, so that my heart was weary with the sound of it. It was notable, and to me inexpressibly mortifying, that he spoke all the while on matters of no import: comings and goings, horses - which he was ever calling to have saddled, thinking perhaps (the poor soul!) that he might ride away from his discomfort - matters of the garden, the salmon nets, and (what I particularly raged to hear) continually of his affairs, cyphering figures and holding disputation with the tenantry. Never a word of his father or his wife, nor of the Master, save only for a day or two, when his mind dwelled entirely in the past, and he supposed himself a boy again and upon some innocent child's play with his brother. What made this the more affecting: it appeared the Master had then run some peril of his life, for there was a cry - "Oh! Jamie will be drowned - Oh, save Jamie!" which he came over and over with a great deal of passion.

This, I say, was affecting, both to Mrs. Henry and myself; but the balance of my master's wanderings did him little justice. It seemed he had set out to justify his brother's calumnies; as though he was bent to prove himself a man of a dry nature, immersed in money-getting. Had I been there alone, I would not have troubled my thumb; but all the while, as I listened, I was estimating the effect on the man's wife, and telling myself that he fell lower every day. I was the one person on the surface of the globe that comprehended him, and I was bound there should be yet another. Whether he was to die there and his virtues perish: or whether he should save his days and come back to that inheritance of sorrows, his right memory: I was bound he should be heartily lamented in the one case, and unaffectedly welcomed in the other, by the person he loved the most, his wife.

Finding no occasion of free speech, I bethought me at last of a kind of documentary disclosure; and for some nights, when I was off duty and should have been asleep, I gave my time to the preparation of that which I may call my budget. But this I found to be the easiest portion of my task, and that which remained - namely, the presentation to my lady - almost more than I had fortitude to overtake. Several days I went about with my papers under my arm, spying for some juncture of talk to serve as introduction. I will not deny but that some offered; only when they did my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth; and I think I might have been carrying about my packet till this day, had not a fortunate accident delivered me from all my hesitations. This was at night, when I was once more leaving the room, the thing not yet done, and myself in despair at my own cowardice.

“What do you carry about with you, Mr. Mackellar?” she asked. “These last days, I see you always coming in and out with the same armful.”

I returned upon my steps without a word, laid the papers before her on the table, and left her to her reading. Of what that was, I am now to give you some idea; and the best will be to reproduce a letter of my own which came first in the budget and of which (according to an excellent habitude) I have preserved the scroll. It will show, too, the moderation of my part in these affairs, a thing which some have called recklessly in question.

“Durrisdeer. “1757.

“HONOURED MADAM,

“I trust I would not step out of my place without occasion; but I see how much evil has flowed in the past to all of your noble house from that unhappy and secretive fault of reticency, and the papers on which I venture to call your attention are family papers, and all highly worthy your acquaintance.

“I append a schedule with some necessary observations,

“And am,
“Honoured Madam,
“Your ladyship’s obliged, obedient servant,
“EPHRAIM MACKELLAR.

“Schedule of Papers.

“A. Scroll of ten letters from Ephraim Mackellar to the Hon. James Durie, Esq., by courtesy Master of Ballantrae during the latter’s residence in Paris: under dates . . . “ (follow the dates) . . .

“Nota: to be read in connection with B. and C.

“B. Seven original letters from the said Mr of Ballantrae to the said

E. Mackellar, under dates . . . “ (follow the dates.)

“C. Three original letters from the Mr of Ballantrae to the Hon. Henry Durie, Esq., under dates . . . “ (follow the dates) . . . “Nota: given me by Mr. Henry to answer: copies of my answers A 4, A 5, and A 9 of these productions. The purport of Mr. Henry’s communications, of which I can find no scroll, may be gathered from those of his unnatural brother.

“D. A correspondence, original and scroll, extending over a period of three years till January of the current year, between the said Mr of Ballantrae and - -, Under Secretary of State; twenty-seven in all. Nota: found among the Master’s papers.”

Weary as I was with watching and distress of mind, it was impossible for me to sleep. All night long I walked in my chamber, revolving what should be the issue, and sometimes repenting the temerity of my immixture in affairs so private; and with the first peep of the morning I was at the sick-room door. Mrs. Henry had thrown open the shutters and even the window, for the temperature was mild. She looked steadfastly before her; where was nothing to see, or only the blue of the morning creeping among woods. Upon the stir of my entrance she did not so much as turn about her face: a circumstance from which I augured very ill.

“Madam,” I began; and then again, “Madam;” but could make no more of it. Nor yet did Mrs. Henry come to my assistance with a word. In this pass I began gathering up the papers where they lay scattered on the table; and the first thing that struck me, their bulk appeared to have diminished. Once I ran them through, and twice; but the correspondence with the Secretary of State, on which I had reckoned so much against the future, was nowhere to be found. I looked in the chimney; amid the smouldering embers, black ashes of paper fluttered in the draught; and at that my timidity vanished.

“Good God, madam,” cried I, in a voice not fitting for a sick-room, “Good God, madam, what have you done with my papers?”

“I have burned them,” said Mrs. Henry, turning about. “It is enough, it is too much, that you and I have seen them.”

“This is a fine night’s work that you have done!” cried I. “And all to save the reputation of a man that ate bread by the shedding of his comrades’ blood, as I do by the shedding of ink.”

“To save the reputation of that family in which you are a servant, Mr. Mackellar,” she returned, “and for which you have already done so much.”

“It is a family I will not serve much longer,” I cried, “for I am driven desperate. You have stricken the sword out of my hands; you have left us all defenceless. I had always these letters I could shake over his head; and now - What is to do? We are so falsely situate we dare not show the man the door; the country would fly on fire against us; and I had this one hold upon him - and now it is gone - now he may come back to-morrow, and we must all sit down with him to dinner, go for a stroll with him on the terrace, or take a hand at cards, of all things, to divert his leisure! No, madam! God forgive you, if He can find it in His heart; for I cannot find it in mine."

"I wonder to find you so simple, Mr. Mackellar," said Mrs. Henry. "What does this man value reputation? But he knows how high we prize it; he knows we would rather die than make these letters public; and do you suppose he would not trade upon the knowledge? What you call your sword, Mr. Mackellar, and which had been one indeed against a man of any remnant of propriety, would have been but a sword of paper against him. He would smile in your face at such a threat. He stands upon his degradation, he makes that his strength; it is in vain to struggle with such characters." She cried out this last a little desperately, and then with more quiet: "No, Mr. Mackellar; I have thought upon this matter all night, and there is no way out of it. Papers or no papers, the door of this house stands open for him; he is the rightful heir, forsooth! If we sought to exclude him, all would redound against poor Henry, and I should see him stoned again upon the streets. Ah! if Henry dies, it is a different matter! They have broke the entail for their own good purposes; the estate goes to my daughter; and I shall see who sets a foot upon it. But if Henry lives, my poor Mr. Mackellar, and that man returns, we must suffer: only this time it will be together."

On the whole I was well pleased with Mrs. Henry's attitude of mind; nor could I even deny there was some cogency in that which she advanced about the papers.

"Let us say no more about it," said I. "I can only be sorry I trusted a lady with the originals, which was an unbusinesslike proceeding at the best. As for what I said of leaving the service of the family, it was spoken with the tongue only; and you may set your mind at rest. I belong to Durrisdeer, Mrs. Henry, as if I had been born there."

I must do her the justice to say she seemed perfectly relieved; so that we began this morning, as we were to continue for so many years, on a proper ground of mutual indulgence and respect.

The same day, which was certainly prededicate to joy, we observed the first signal of recovery in Mr. Henry; and about three of the following afternoon he found his mind again, recognising me by name with the strongest evidences of affection. Mrs. Henry was also in the room, at the bedfoot; but it did not appear that he observed her. And indeed (the fever being gone) he was so weak that he made but the one effort and sank again into lethargy. The course of his restoration was now slow but equal; every day his appetite improved; every week we were able to remark an increase both of strength and flesh; and before the end of the month he was out of bed and had even begun to be carried in his chair upon the terrace.

It was perhaps at this time that Mrs. Henry and I were the most uneasy in mind. Apprehension for his days was at an end; and a worse fear succeeded. Every day we drew consciously nearer to a day of reckoning; and the days passed on, and still there was nothing. Mr. Henry bettered in strength, he held long talks with us on a great diversity of subjects, his father came and sat with him and went again; and still there was no reference to the late tragedy or to the former troubles which had brought it on. Did he remember, and conceal his dreadful knowledge? or was the whole blotted from his mind? This was the problem that kept us watching and trembling all day when we were in his company and held us awake at night when we were in our lonely beds. We knew not even which alternative to hope for, both appearing so unnatural and pointing so directly to an unsound brain. Once this fear offered, I observed his conduct with sedulous particularity. Something of the child he exhibited: a cheerfulness quite foreign to his previous character, an interest readily aroused, and then very tenacious, in small matters which he had heretofore despised. When he was stricken down, I was his only confidant, and I may say his only friend, and he was on terms of division with his wife; upon his recovery, all was changed, the past forgotten, the wife first and even single in his thoughts. He turned to her with all his emotions, like a child to its mother, and seemed secure of sympathy; called her in all his needs with something of that querulous familiarity that marks a certainty of indulgence; and I must say, in justice to the woman, he was never disappointed. To her, indeed, this changed behaviour was inexpressibly affecting; and I think she felt it secretly as a reproach; so that I have seen her, in early days, escape out of the room that she might indulge herself in weeping. But to me the change appeared not natural; and viewing it along with all the rest, I began to wonder, with many head-shakings, whether his reason were perfectly erect.

As this doubt stretched over many years, endured indeed until my master’s death, and clouded all our subsequent relations, I may well consider of it more at large. When he was able to resume some charge of his affairs, I had many opportunities to try him with precision. There was no lack of understanding, nor yet of authority; but the old continuous interest had quite departed; he grew readily fatigued, and fell to yawning; and he carried into money relations, where it is certainly out of place, a facility that bordered upon slackness. True, since we had no longer the exactions of the Master to contend against, there was the less occasion to raise strictness into principle or do battle for a farthing. True, again, there was nothing excessive in these relaxations, or I would have been no party to them. But the whole thing marked a change, very slight yet very perceptible; and though no man could say my master had gone at all out of his mind, no man could deny that he had drifted from his character. It was the same to the end, with his manner and appearance. Some of the heat of the fever lingered in his veins: his movements a little hurried, his speech notably more voluble, yet neither truly amiss. His whole mind stood open to happy impressions, welcoming these and making much of them; but the smallest suggestion of trouble or sorrow he received with visible impatience and dismissed again with immediate relief. It was to this temper that he owed the felicity of his later days; and yet here it was, if anywhere, that you could call the man insane. A great part of this life consists in contemplating what we cannot cure; but Mr. Henry, if he could not dismiss solicitude by an effort of the mind, must instantly and at whatever cost annihilate the cause of it; so that he played alternately the ostrich and the bull. It is to this strenuous cowardice of pain that I have to set down all the unfortunate and excessive steps of his subsequent career. Certainly this was the reason of his beating McManus, the groom, a thing so much out of all his former practice, and which awakened so much comment at the time. It is to this, again, that I must lay the total lose of near upon two hundred pounds, more than the half of which I could have saved if his impatience would have suffered me. But he preferred loss or any desperate extreme to a continuance of mental suffering.

All this has led me far from our immediate trouble: whether he remembered or had forgotten his late dreadful act; and if he remembered, in what light he viewed it. The truth burst upon us suddenly, and was indeed one of the chief surprises of my life. He had been several times abroad, and was now beginning to walk a little with an arm, when it chanced I should be left alone with him upon the terrace. He turned to me with a singular furtive smile, such as schoolboys use when in fault; and says he, in a private whisper and without the least preface: "Where have you buried him?"

I could not make one sound in answer.

"Where have you buried him?" he repeated. "I want to see his grave."

I conceived I had best take the bull by the horns. "Mr. Henry," said I, "I have news to give that will rejoice you exceedingly. In all human likelihood, your hands are clear of blood. I reason from certain indices; and by these it should appear your brother was not dead, but was carried in a swound on board the lugger. But now he may be perfectly recovered."

What there was in his countenance I could not read. "James?" he asked.

"Your brother James," I answered. "I would not raise a hope that may be found deceptive, but in my heart I think it very probable he is alive."

"Ah!" says Mr. Henry; and suddenly rising from his seat with more alacrity than he had yet discovered, set one finger on my breast, and cried at me in a kind of screaming whisper, "Mackellar" - these were his words - "nothing can kill that man. He is not mortal. He is bound upon my back to all eternity - to all eternity!" says he, and, sitting down again, fell upon a stubborn silence.

A day or two after, with the same secret smile, and first looking about as if to be sure we were alone, "Mackellar," said he, "when you have any intelligence, be sure and let me know. We must keep an eye upon him, or he will take us when we least expect."

"He will not show face here again," said I.

"Oh yes he will," said Mr. Henry. "Wherever I am, there will he be." And again he looked all about him.

"You must not dwell upon this thought, Mr. Henry," said I.

"No," said he, "that is a very good advice. We will never think of it, except when you have news. And we do not know yet," he added; "he may be dead."

The manner of his saying this convinced me thoroughly of what I had scarce ventured to suspect: that, so far from suffering any penitence for the attempt, he did but lament his failure. This was a discovery I kept to myself, fearing it might do him a prejudice with his wife. But I might have saved myself the trouble; she had divined it for herself, and found the sentiment quite natural. Indeed, I could not but say that there were three of us, all of the same mind; nor could any news have reached Durrisdeer more generally welcome than tidings of the Master's death.

This brings me to speak of the exception, my old lord. As soon as my anxiety for my own master began to be relaxed, I was aware of a change in the old gentleman, his father, that seemed to threaten mortal consequences.

His face was pale and swollen; as he sat in the chimney-side with his Latin, he would drop off sleeping and the book roll in the ashes; some days he would drag his foot, others stumble in speaking. The amenity of his behaviour appeared more extreme; full of excuses for the least trouble, very thoughtful for all; to myself, of a most flattering civility. One day, that he had sent for his lawyer and remained a long while private, he met me as he was crossing the hall with painful footsteps, and took me kindly by the hand. "Mr. Mackellar," said he, "I have had many occasions to set a proper value on your services; and to-day, when I re-cast my will, I have taken the freedom to name you for one of my executors. I believe you bear love enough to our house to render me this service." At that very time he passed the greater portion of his days in clamber, from which it was often difficult to rouse him; seemed to have losst all count of years, and had several times (particularly on waking) called for his wife and for an old servant whose very gravestone was now green with moss. If I had been put to my oath, I must have declared he was incapable of testing; and yet there was never a will drawn more sensible in every trait, or showing a more excellent judgment both of persons and affairs.

His dissolution, though it took not very long, proceeded by infinitesimal gradations. His faculties decayed together steadily; the power of his limbs was almost gone, he was extremely deaf, his speech had sunk into mere mumblings; and yet to the end he managed to discover something of his former courtesy and kindness, pressing the hand of any that helped him, presenting me with one of his Latin books, in which he had laboriously traced my name, and in a thousand ways reminding us of the greatness of that loss which it might almost be said we had already suffered. To the end, the power of articulation returned to him in flashes; it seemed he had only forgotten the art of speech as a child forgets his lesson, and at times he would call some part of it to mind. On the last night of his life he suddenly broke silence with these words from Virgil: "Gnatique pratisque, alma, precor, miserere," perfectly uttered, and with a fitting accent. At the sudden clear sound of it we started from our several occupations; but it was in vain we turned to him; he sat there silent, and, to all appearance, fatuous. A little later he was had to bed with more difficulty than ever before; and some time in the night, without any more violence, his spirit fled.

At a far later period I chanced to speak of these particulars with a doctor of medicine, a man of so high a reputation that I scruple to adduce his name. By his view of it father and son both suffered from the affection: the father from the strain of his unnatural sorrows - the son perhaps in the excitation of the fever; each had ruptured a vessel on the brain, and there was probably (my doctor added) some predisposition in the family to accidents of that description. The father sank, the son recovered all the externals of a healthy man; but it is like there was some destruction in those delicate tissues where the soul resides and does her earthly business; her heavenly, I would fain hope, cannot be thus obstructed by material accidents. And yet, upon a more mature opinion, it matters not one jot; for He who shall pass judgment on the records of our life is the same that formed us in frailty.

The death of my old lord was the occasion of a fresh surprise to us who watched the behaviour of his successor. To any considering mind, the two sons had between them slain their father, and he who took the sword might be even said to have slain him with his hand, but no such thought appeared to trouble my new lord. He was becomingly grave; I could scarce say sorrowful, or only with a pleasant sorrow; talking of the dead with a regretful cheerfulness, relating old examples of his character, smiling at them with a good conscience; and when the day of the funeral came round, doing the honours with exact propriety. I could perceive, besides, that he found a solid gratification in his accession to the title; the which he was punctilious in exacting.

And now there came upon the scene a new character, and one that played his part, too, in the story; I mean the present lord, Alexander, whose birth (17th July, 1757) filled the cup of my poor master's happiness. There was nothing then left him to wish for; nor yet leisure to wish for it. Indeed, there never was a parent so fond and doting as he showed himself. He was continually uneasy in his son's absence. Was the child abroad? the father would be watching the clouds in case it rained. Was it night? he would rise out of his bed to observe its slumbers. His conversation grew even wearyful to strangers, since he talked of little but his son. In matters relating to the estate, all was designed with a particular eye to Alexander; and it would be:- "Let us put it in hand at once, that the wood may be grown against Alexander's majority;" or, "This will fall in again handsomely for Alexander's marriage." Every day this absorption of the man's nature became more observable, with many touching and some very blameworthy particulars. Soon the child could walk abroad with him, at first on the terrace, hand in hand, and afterward at large about the policies; and this grew to be my lord's chief occupation. The sound of their two voices (audible a great way off, for they spoke loud) became familiar in the neighbourhood; and for my part I found it more agreeable than the sound of birds. It was pretty to see the pair returning, full of briars, and the father as flushed and sometimes as bemuddied as the child, for they were equal sharers in all sorts of boyish entertainment, digging in the beach, damming of streams, and what not; and I have seen them gaze through a fence at cattle with the same childish contemplation.

The mention of these rambles brings me to a strange scene of which I was a witness. There was one walk I never followed myself without emotion, so often had I gone there upon miserable errands, so much had there befallen against the house of Durrisdeer. But the path lay handy from all points beyond the Muckle Ross; and I was driven, although much against my will, to take my use of it perhaps once in the two months. It befell when Mr. Alexander was of the age of seven or eight, I had some business on the far side in the morning, and entered the shrubbery, on my homeward way, about nine of a bright forenoon. It was that time of year when the woods are all in their spring colours, the thorns all in flower, and the birds in the high season of their singing. In contrast to this merriment, the shrubbery was only the more sad, and I the more oppressed by its associations. In this situation of spirit it struck me disagreeably to hear voices a little way in front, and to recognise the tones of my lord and Mr. Alexander. I pushed ahead, and came presently into their view. They stood together in the open space where the duel was, my lord with his hand on his son's shoulder, and speaking with some gravity. At least, as he raised his head upon my coming, I thought I could perceive his countenance to lighten.

"Ah!" says he, "here comes the good Mackellar. I have just been telling Sandie the story of this place, and how there was a man whom the devil tried to kill, and how near he came to kill the devil instead."

I had thought it strange enough he should bring the child into that scene; that he should actually be discoursing of his act, passed measure. But the worst was yet to come; for he added, turning to his son - "You can ask Mackellar; he was here and saw it."

"Is it true, Mr. Mackellar?" asked the child. "And did you really see the devil?"

"I have not heard the tale," I replied; "and I am in a press of business." So far I said a little sourly, fencing with the embarrassment of the position; and suddenly the bitterness of the past, and the terror of that scene by candle-light, rushed in upon my mind. I bethought me that, for a difference of a second's quickness in parade, the child before me might have never seen the day; and the emotion that always fluttered round my heart in that dark shrubbery burst forth in words. "But so much is true," I cried, "that I have met the devil in these woods, and seen him foiled here. Blessed be God that we escaped with life - blessed be God that one stone yet stands upon another in the walls of Durrisdeer! And, oh! Mr. Alexander, if ever you come by this spot, though it was a hundred years hence, and you came with the gayest and the highest in the land, I would step aside and remember a bit prayer."

My lord bowed his head gravely. "Ah!" says he, "Mackellar is always in the right. Come, Alexander, take your bonnet off." And with that he uncovered, and held out his hand. "O Lord," said he, "I thank Thee, and my son thanks Thee, for Thy manifold great mercies. Let us have peace for a little; defend us from the evil man. Smite him, O Lord, upon the lying mouth!" The last broke out of him like a cry; and at that, whether remembered anger choked his utterance, or whether he perceived this was a singular sort of prayer, at least he suddenly came to a full stop; and, after a moment, set back his hat upon his head.

“I think you have forgot a word, my lord,” said I. “‘Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.’“

“Ah! that is easy saying,” said my lord. “That is very easy saying, Mackellar. But for me to forgive! - I think I would cut a very silly figure if I had the affectation to pretend it.”

“The bairn, my lord!” said I, with some severity, for I thought his expressions little fitted for the care of children.

“Why, very true,” said he. “This is dull work for a bairn. Let’s go nesting.”

I forget if it was the same day, but it was soon after, my lord, finding me alone, opened himself a little more on the same head.

“Mackellar,” he said, “I am now a very happy man.”

“I think so indeed, my lord,” said I, “and the sight of it gives me a light heart.”

“There is an obligation in happiness - do you not think so?” says he, musingly.

“I think so indeed,” says I, “and one in sorrow, too. If we are not here to try to do the best, in my humble opinion the sooner we are away the better for all parties.”

“Ay, but if you were in my shoes, would you forgive him?” asks my lord.

The suddenness of the attack a little gravelled me.

“It is a duty laid upon us strictly,” said I.

“Hut!” said he. “These are expressions! Do you forgive the man yourself?”

“Well - no!” said I. “God forgive me, I do not.”

“Shake hands upon that!” cries my lord, with a kind of joviality.

“It is an ill sentiment to shake hands upon,” said I, “for Christian people. I think I will give you mine on some more evangelical occasion.”

This I said, smiling a little; but as for my lord, he went from the room laughing aloud.

For my lord’s slavery to the child, I can find no expression adequate. He lost himself in that continual thought: business, friends, and wife being all alike forgotten, or only remembered with a painful effort, like that of one struggling with a posset. It was most notable in the matter of his wife. Since I had known Durrisdeer, she had been the burthen of his thought and the loadstone of his eyes; and now she was quite cast out. I have seen him come to the door of a room, look round, and pass my lady over as though she were a dog before the fire. It would be Alexander he was seeking, and my lady knew it well. I have heard him speak to her so ruggedly that I nearly found it in my heart to intervene: the cause would still be the same, that she had in some way thwarted Alexander. Without doubt this was in the nature of a judgment on my lady. Without doubt she had the tables turned upon her, as only Providence can do it; she who had been cold so many years to every mark of tenderness, it was her part now to be neglected: the more praise to her that she played it well.

An odd situation resulted: that we had once more two parties in the house, and that now I was of my lady's. Not that ever I lost the love I bore my master. But, for one thing, he had the less use for my society. For another, I could not but compare the case of Mr. Alexander with that of Miss Katharine; for whom my lord had never found the least attention. And for a third, I was wounded by the change he discovered to his wife, which struck me in the nature of an infidelity. I could not but admire, besides, the constancy and kindness she displayed. Perhaps her sentiment to my lord, as it had been founded from the first in pity, was that rather of a mother than a wife; perhaps it pleased her - if I may so say - to behold her two children so happy in each other; the more as one had suffered so unjustly in the past. But, for all that, and though I could never trace in her one spark of jealousy, she must fall back for society on poor neglected Miss Katharine; and I, on my part, came to pass my spare hours more and more with the mother and daughter. It would be easy to make too much of this division, for it was a pleasant family, as families go; still the thing existed; whether my lord knew it or not, I am in doubt. I do not think he did; he was bound up so entirely in his son; but the rest of us knew it, and in a manner suffered from the knowledge.

What troubled us most, however, was the great and growing danger to the child. My lord was his father over again; it was to be feared the son would prove a second Master. Time has proved these fears to have been quite exaggerate. Certainly there is no more worthy gentleman to-day in Scotland than the seventh Lord Durrisdeer. Of my own exodus from his employment it does not become me to speak, above all in a memorandum written only to justify his father. . . .

[Editor's Note. Five pages of Mr. Mackellar's MS. are here omitted. I have gathered from their perusal an impression that Mr. Mackellar, in his old age, was rather an exacting servant. Against the seventh Lord Durrisdeer (with whom, at any rate, we have no concern) nothing material is alleged. - R. L. S.]

. . . But our fear at the time was lest he should turn out, in the person of his son, a second edition of his brother. My lady had tried to interject some wholesome discipline; she had been glad to give that up, and now looked on with secret dismay; sometimes she even spoke of it by hints; and sometimes, when there was brought to her knowledge some monstrous instance of my lord's indulgence, she would betray herself in a gesture or perhaps an exclamation. As for myself, I was haunted by the thought both day and night: not so much for the child's sake as for the father's. The man had gone to sleep, he was dreaming a dream, and any rough wakening must infallibly prove mortal. That he should survive its death was inconceivable; and the fear of its dishonour made me cover my face.

It was this continual preoccupation that screwed me up at last to a remonstrance: a matter worthy to be narrated in detail. My lord and I sat one day at the same table upon some tedious business of detail; I have said that he had lost his former interest in such occupations; he was plainly itching to be gone, and he looked fretful, weary, and methought older than I had ever previously observed. I suppose it was the haggard face that put me suddenly upon my enterprise.

"My lord," said I, with my head down, and feigning to continue my occupation - "or, rather, let me call you again by the name of Mr. Henry, for I fear your anger and want you to think upon old times - "

"My good Mackellar!" said he; and that in tones so kindly that I had near forsook my purpose. But I called to mind that I was speaking for his good, and stuck to my colours.

"Has it never come in upon your mind what you are doing?" I asked.

"What I am doing?" he repeated; "I was never good at guessing riddles."

"What you are doing with your son?" said I.

"Well," said he, with some defiance in his tone, "and what am I doing with my son?"

"Your father was a very good man," says I, straying from the direct path. "But do you think he was a wise father?"

There was a pause before he spoke, and then: "I say nothing against him," he replied. "I had the most cause perhaps; but I say nothing."

"Why, there it is," said I. "You had the cause at least. And yet your father was a good man; I never knew a better, save on the one point, nor yet a wiser. Where he stumbled, it is highly possible another man should fail. He had the two sons - "

My lord rapped suddenly and violently on the table.

"What is this?" cried he. "Speak out!"

"I will, then," said I, my voice almost strangled with the thumping of my heart. "If you continue to indulge Mr. Alexander, you are following in your father's footsteps. Beware, my lord, lest (when he grows up) your son should follow in the Master's."

I had never meant to put the thing so crudely; but in the extreme of fear, there comes a brutal kind of courage, the most brutal indeed of all; and I burnt my ships with that plain word. I never had the answer. When I lifted my head, my lord had risen to his feet, and the next moment he fell heavily on the floor. The fit or seizure endured not very long; he came to himself vacantly, put his hand to his head, which I was then supporting, and says he, in a broken voice: “I have been ill,” and a little after: “Help me.” I got him to his feet, and he stood pretty well, though he kept hold of the table. “I have been ill, Mackellar,” he said again. “Something broke, Mackellar - or was going to break, and then all swam away. I think I was very angry. Never you mind, Mackellar; never you mind, my man. I wouldnae hurt a hair upon your head. Too much has come and gone. It’s a certain thing between us two. But I think, Mackellar, I will go to Mrs. Henry - I think I will go to Mrs. Henry,” said he, and got pretty steadily from the room, leaving me overcome with penitence.

Presently the door flew open, and my lady swept in with flashing eyes. “What is all this?” she cried. “What have you done to my husband? Will nothing teach you your position in this house? Will you never cease from making and meddling?”

“My lady,” said I, “since I have been in this house I have had plenty of hard words. For a while they were my daily diet, and I swallowed them all. As for to-day, you may call me what you please; you will never find the name hard enough for such a blunder. And yet I meant it for the best.”

I told her all with ingenuity, even as it is written here; and when she had heard me out, she pondered, and I could see her animosity fall. “Yes,” she said, “you meant well indeed. I have had the same thought myself, or the same temptation rather, which makes me pardon you. But, dear God, can you not understand that he can bear no more? He can bear no more!” she cried. “The cord is stretched to snapping. What matters the future if he have one or two good days?”

“Amen,” said I. “I will meddle no more. I am pleased enough that you should recognise the kindness of my meaning.”

“Yes,” said my lady; “but when it came to the point, I have to suppose your courage failed you; for what you said was said cruelly.” She paused, looking at me; then suddenly smiled a little, and said a singular thing: “Do you know what you are, Mr. Mackellar? You are an old maid.”

No more incident of any note occurred in the family until the return of that ill-starred man the Master. But I have to place here a second extract from the memoirs of Chevalier Burke, interesting in itself, and highly necessary for my purpose. It is our only sight of the Master on his Indian travels; and the first word in these pages of Secundra Dass. One fact, it is to observe, appears here very clearly, which if we had known some twenty years ago, how many calamities and sorrows had been spared! - that Secundra Dass spoke English.

CHAPTER VII. - ADVENTURE OF CHEVALIER BURKE IN INDIA.

Extracted from his Memoirs.

. . . Here was I, therefore, on the streets of that city, the name of which I cannot call to mind, while even then I was so ill- acquainted with its situation that I knew not whether to go south or north. The alert being sudden, I had run forth without shoes or stockings; my hat had been struck from my head in the mellay; my kit was in the hands of the English; I had no companion but the cipaye, no weapon but my sword, and the devil a coin in my pocket. In short, I was for all the world like one of those calendars with whom Mr. Galland has made us acquainted in his elegant tales. These gentlemen, you will remember, were for ever falling in with extraordinary incidents; and I was myself upon the brink of one so astonishing that I protest I cannot explain it to this day.

The cipaye was a very honest man; he had served many years with the French colours, and would have let himself be cut to pieces for any of the brave countrymen of Mr. Lally. It is the same fellow (his name has quite escaped me) of whom I have narrated already a surprising instance of generosity of mind - when he found Mr. de Fessac and myself upon the ramparts, entirely overcome with liquor, and covered us with straw while the commandant was passing by. I consulted him, therefore, with perfect freedom. It was a fine question what to do; but we decided at last to escalade a garden wall, where we could certainly sleep in the shadow of the trees, and might perhaps find an occasion to get hold of a pair of slippers and a turban. In that part of the city we had only the difficulty of the choice, for it was a quarter consisting entirely of walled gardens, and the lanes which divided them were at that hour of the night deserted. I gave the cipaye a back, and we had soon dropped into a large enclosure full of trees. The place was soaking with the dew, which, in that country, is exceedingly unwholesome, above all to whites; yet my fatigue was so extreme that I was already half asleep, when the cipaye recalled me to my senses. In the far end of the enclosure a bright light had suddenly shone out, and continued to burn steadily among the leaves. It was a circumstance highly unusual in such a place and hour; and, in our situation, it behoved us to proceed with some timidity. The cipaye was sent to reconnoitre, and pretty soon returned with the intelligence that we had fallen extremely amiss, for the house belonged to a white man, who was in all likelihood English.

“Faith,” says I, “if there is a white man to be seen, I will have a look at him; for, the Lord be praised! there are more sorts than the one!"

The cipaye led me forward accordingly to a place from which I had a clear view upon the house. It was surrounded with a wide verandah; a lamp, very well trimmed, stood upon the floor of it, and on either side of the lamp there sat a man, cross-legged, after the Oriental manner. Both, besides, were bundled up in muslin like two natives; and yet one of them was not only a white man, but a man very well known to me and the reader, being indeed that very Master of Ballantrae of whose gallantry and genius I have had to speak so often. Word had reached me that he was come to the Indies, though we had never met at least, and I heard little of his occupations. But, sure, I had no sooner recognised him, and found myself in the arms of so old a comrade, than I supposed my tribulations were quite done. I stepped plainly forth into the light of the moon, which shone exceeding strong, and hailing Ballantrae by name, made him in a few words master of my grievous situation. He turned, started the least thing in the world, looked me fair in the face while I was speaking, and when I had done addressed himself to his companion in the barbarous native dialect. The second person, who was of an extraordinary delicate appearance, with legs like walking canes and fingers like the stalk of a tobacco pipe, (6) now rose to his feet.

"The Sahib," says he, "understands no English language. I understand it myself, and I see you make some small mistake - oh! which may happen very often. But the Sahib would be glad to know how you come in a garden."

"Ballantrae!" I cried, "have you the damned impudence to deny me to my face?"

Ballantrae never moved a muscle, staring at me like an image in a pagoda.

"The Sahib understands no English language," says the native, as glib as before. "He be glad to know how you come in a garden."

"Oh! the divil fetch him," says I. "He would be glad to know how I come in a garden, would he? Well, now, my dear man, just have the civility to tell the Sahib, with my kind love, that we are two soldiers here whom he never met and never heard of, but the cipaye is a broth of a boy, and I am a broth of a boy myself; and if we don't get a full meal of meat, and a turban, and slippers, and the value of a gold mohur in small change as a matter of convenience, bedad, my friend, I could lay my finger on a garden where there is going to be trouble."

They carried their comedy so far as to converse awhile in Hindustanee; and then says the Hindu, with the same smile, but sighing as if he were tired of the repetition, "The Sahib would be glad to know how you come in a garden."

"Is that the way of it?" says I, and laying my hand on my sword- hilt

I bade the cipaye draw.

Ballantrae's Hindu, still smiling, pulled out a pistol from his bosom, and though Ballantrae himself never moved a muscle I knew him well enough to be sure he was prepared.

"The Sahib thinks you better go away," says the Hindu.

Well, to be plain, it was what I was thinking myself; for the report of a pistol would have been, under Providence, the means of hanging the pair of us.

"Tell the Sahib I consider him no gentleman," says I, and turned away with a gesture of contempt.

I was not gone three steps when the voice of the Hindu called me back. "The Sahib would be glad to know if you are a dam low Irishman," says he; and at the words Ballantrae smiled and bowed very low.

"What is that?" says I.

"The Sahib say you ask your friend Mackellar," says the Hindu.
"The Sahib he cry quits."

"Tell the Sahib I will give him a cure for the Scots fiddle when next we meet," cried I.

The pair were still smiling as I left.

There is little doubt some flaws may be picked in my own behaviour; and when a man, however gallant, appeals to posterity with an account of his exploits, he must almost certainly expect to share the fate of Caesar and Alexander, and to meet with some detractors. But there is one thing that can never be laid at the door of Francis Burke: he never turned his back on a friend. . . .

(Here follows a passage which the Chevalier Burke has been at the pains to delete before sending me his manuscript. Doubtless it was some very natural complaint of what he supposed to be an indiscretion on my part; though, indeed, I can call none to mind. Perhaps Mr. Henry was less guarded; or it is just possible the Master found the means to examine my correspondence, and himself read the letter from Troyes: in revenge for which this cruel jest was perpetrated on Mr. Burke in his extreme necessity. The Master, for all his wickedness, was not without some natural affection; I believe he was sincerely attached to Mr. Burke in the beginning; but the thought of treachery dried up the springs of his very shallow friendship, and his detestable nature appeared naked. - E. McK.)

CHAPTER VIII. - THE ENEMY IN THE HOUSE.

It is a strange thing that I should be at a stick for a date - the date, besides, of an incident that changed the very nature of my life, and sent us all into foreign lands. But the truth is, I was stricken out of all my habitudes, and find my journals very ill redd-up, (7) the day not indicated sometimes for a week or two together, and the whole fashion of the thing like that of a man near desperate. It was late in March at least, or early in April, 1764. I had slept heavily, and wakened with a premonition of some evil to befall. So strong was this upon my spirit that I hurried downstairs in my shirt and breeches, and my hand (I remember) shook upon the rail. It was a cold, sunny morning, with a thick white frost; the blackbirds sang exceeding sweet and loud about the house of Durrisdeer, and there was a noise of the sea in all the chambers. As I came by the doors of the hall, another sound arrested me - of voices talking. I drew nearer, and stood like a man dreaming. Here was certainly a human voice, and that in my own master's house, and yet I knew it not; certainly human speech, and that in my native land; and yet, listen as I pleased, I could not catch one syllable. An old tale started up in my mind of a fairy wife (or perhaps only a wandering stranger), that came to the place of my fathers some generations back, and stayed the matter of a week, talking often in a tongue that signified nothing to the hearers; and went again, as she had come, under cloud of night, leaving not so much as a name behind her. A little fear I had, but more curiosity; and I opened the hall-door, and entered.

The supper-things still lay upon the table; the shutters were still closed, although day peeped in the divisions; and the great room was lighted only with a single taper and some lurching reverberation of the fire. Close in the chimney sat two men. The one that was wrapped in a cloak and wore boots, I knew at once: it was the bird of ill omen back again. Of the other, who was set close to the red embers, and made up into a bundle like a mummy, I could but see that he was an alien, of a darker hue than any man of Europe, very frailly built, with a singular tall forehead, and a secret eye. Several bundles and a small valise were on the floor; and to judge by the smallness of this luggage, and by the condition of the Master's boots, grossly patched by some unscrupulous country cobbler, evil had not prospered.

He rose upon my entrance; our eyes crossed; and I know not why it should have been, but my courage rose like a lark on a May morning.

"Ha!" said I, "is this you?" - and I was pleased with the unconcern of my own voice.

"It is even myself, worthy Mackellar," says the Master.

“This time you have brought the black dog visibly upon your back,” I continued.

“Referring to Secundra Dass?” asked the Master. “Let me present you. He is a native gentleman of India.”

“Hum!” said I. “I am no great lover either of you or your friends, Mr. Bally. But I will let a little daylight in, and have a look at you.” And so saying, I undid the shutters of the eastern window.

By the light of the morning I could perceive the man was changed. Later, when we were all together, I was more struck to see how lightly time had dealt with him; but the first glance was otherwise.

“You are getting an old man,” said I.

A shade came upon his face. “If you could see yourself,” said he, “you would perhaps not dwell upon the topic.”

“Hut!” I returned, “old age is nothing to me. I think I have been always old; and I am now, I thank God, better known and more respected. It is not every one that can say that, Mr. Bally! The lines in your brow are calamities; your life begins to close in upon you like a prison; death will soon be rapping at the door; and I see not from what source you are to draw your consolations.”

Here the Master addressed himself to Secundra Dass in Hindustanee, from which I gathered (I freely confess, with a high degree of pleasure) that my remarks annoyed him. All this while, you may be sure, my mind had been busy upon other matters, even while I rallied my enemy; and chiefly as to how I should communicate secretly and quickly with my lord. To this, in the breathing-space now given me, I turned all the forces of my mind; when, suddenly shifting my eyes, I was aware of the man himself standing in the doorway, and, to all appearance, quite composed. He had no sooner met my looks than he stepped across the threshold. The Master heard him coming, and advanced upon the other side; about four feet apart, these brothers came to a full pause, and stood exchanging steady looks, and then my lord smiled, bowed a little forward, and turned briskly away.

“Mackellar,” says he, “we must see to breakfast for these travellers.”

It was plain the Master was a trifle disconcerted; but he assumed the more impudence of speech and manner. “I am as hungry as a hawk,” says he. “Let it be something good, Henry.”

My lord turned to him with the same hard smile.

“Lord Durrisdeer,” says he.

“Oh! never in the family,” returned the Master.

“Every one in this house renders me my proper title,” says my lord. “If it please you to make an exception, I will leave you to consider what appearance it will bear to strangers, and whether it may not be translated as an effect of impotent jealousy.”

I could have clapped my hands together with delight: the more so as my lord left no time for any answer, but, bidding me with a sign to follow him, went straight out of the hall.

"Come quick," says he; "we have to sweep vermin from the house." And he sped through the passages, with so swift a step that I could scarce keep up with him, straight to the door of John Paul, the which he opened without summons and walked in. John was, to all appearance, sound asleep, but my lord made no pretence of waking him.

"John Paul," said he, speaking as quietly as ever I heard him, "you served my father long, or I would pack you from the house like a dog. If in half an hour's time I find you gone, you shall continue to receive your wages in Edinburgh. If you linger here or in St. Bride's - old man, old servant, and altogether - I shall find some very astonishing way to make you smart for your disloyalty. Up and begone. The door you let them in by will serve for your departure. I do not choose my son shall see your face again."

"I am rejoiced to find you bear the thing so quietly," said I, when we were forth again by ourselves.

"Quietly!" cries he, and put my hand suddenly against his heart, which struck upon his bosom like a sledge.

At this revelation I was filled with wonder and fear. There was no constitution could bear so violent a strain - his least of all, that was unhinged already; and I decided in my mind that we must bring this monstrous situation to an end.

"It would be well, I think, if I took word to my lady," said I. Indeed, he should have gone himself, but I counted - not in vain - on his indifference.

"Aye," says he, "do. I will hurry breakfast: we must all appear at the table, even Alexander; it must appear we are untroubled."

I ran to my lady's room, and with no preparatory cruelty disclosed my news.

"My mind was long ago made up," said she. "We must make our packets secretly to-day, and leave secretly to-night. Thank Heaven, we have another house! The first ship that sails shall bear us to New York."

"And what of him?" I asked.

"We leave him Durrisdeer," she cried. "Let him work his pleasure upon that."

"Not so, by your leave," said I. "There shall be a dog at his heels that can hold fast. Bed he shall have, and board, and a horse to ride upon, if he behave himself; but the keys - if you think well of it, my lady - shall be left in the hands of one Mackellar. There will be good care taken; trust him for that."

"Mr. Mackellar," she cried, "I thank you for that thought. All shall be left in your hands. If we must go into a savage country, I bequeath it to you to take our vengeance. Send Macconochie to St. Bride's, to arrange privately for horses and to call the lawyer. My lord must leave procuration."

At that moment my lord came to the door, and we opened our plan to him.

"I will never hear of it," he cried; "he would think I feared him. I will stay in my own house, please God, until I die. There lives not the man can beard me out of it. Once and for all, here I am, and here I stay in spite of all the devils in hell." I can give no idea of the vehemency of his words and utterance; but we both stood aghast, and I in particular, who had been a witness of his former self-restraint.

My lady looked at me with an appeal that went to my heart and recalled me to my wits. I made her a private sign to go, and when my lord and I were alone, went up to him where he was racing to and fro in one end of the room like a half-lunatic, and set my hand firmly on his shoulder.

"My lord," says I, "I am going to be the plain-dealer once more; if for the last time, so much the better, for I am grown weary of the part."

"Nothing will change me," he answered. "God forbid I should refuse to hear you; but nothing will change me." This he said firmly, with no signal of the former violence, which already raised my hopes.

"Very well," said I "I can afford to waste my breath." I pointed to a chair, and he sat down and looked at me. "I can remember a time when my lady very much neglected you," said I.

"I never spoke of it while it lasted," returned my lord, with a high flush of colour; "and it is all changed now."'

"Do you know how much?" I said. "Do you know how much it is all changed? The tables are turned, my lord! It is my lady that now courts you for a word, a look - ay, and courts you in vain. Do you know with whom she passes her days while you are out gallivanting in the policies? My lord, she is glad to pass them with a certain dry old grieve (8) of the name of Ephraim Mackellar; and I think you may be able to remember what that means, for I am the more in a mistake or you were once driven to the same company yourself."

"Mackellar!" cries my lord, getting to his feet. "O my God, Mackellar!"

"It is neither the name of Mackellar nor the name of God that can change the truth," said I; "and I am telling you the fact. Now for you, that suffered so much, to deal out the same suffering to another, is that the part of any Christian? But you are so swallowed up in your new friend that the old are all forgotten. They are all clean vanished from your memory. And yet they stood by you at the darkest; my lady not the least. And does my lady ever cross your mind? Does it ever cross your mind what she went through that night? - or what manner of a wife she has been to you thenceforward? - or in what kind of a position she finds herself to-day? Never. It is your pride to stay and face him out, and she must stay along with you. Oh! my lord's pride - that's the great affair! And yet she is the woman, and you are a great hulking man! She is the woman that you swore to protect; and, more betoken, the own mother of that son of yours!"

"You are speaking very bitterly, Mackellar," said he; "but, the Lord knows, I fear you are speaking very true. I have not proved worthy of my happiness. Bring my lady back."

My lady was waiting near at hand to learn the issue. When I brought her in, my lord took a hand of each of us, and laid them both upon his bosom. "I have had two friends in my life," said he. "All the comfort ever I had, it came from one or other. When you two are in a mind, I think I would be an ungrateful dog - " He shut his mouth very hard, and looked on us with swimming eyes. "Do what ye like with me," says he, "only don't think - " He stopped again. "Do what ye please with me: God knows I love and honour you." And dropping our two hands, he turned his back and went and gazed out of the window. But my lady ran after, calling his name, and threw herself upon his neck in a passion of weeping.

I went out and shut the door behind me, and stood and thanked God from the bottom of my heart.

At the breakfast board, according to my lord's design, we were all met. The Master had by that time plucked off his patched boots and made a toilet suitable to the hour; Secundra Dass was no longer bundled up in wrappers, but wore a decent plain black suit, which misbecame him strangely; and the pair were at the great window, looking forth, when the family entered. They turned; and the black man (as they had already named him in the house) bowed almost to his knees, but the Master was for running forward like one of the family. My lady stopped him, curtseying low from the far end of the hall, and keeping her children at her back. My lord was a little in front: so there were the three cousins of Durrisdeer face to face. The hand of time was very legible on all; I seemed to read in their changed faces a MEMENTO MORI; and what affected me still more, it was the wicked man that bore his years the handsomest. My lady was quite transfigured into the matron, a becoming woman for the head of a great tableful of children and dependents. My lord was grown slack in his limbs; he stooped; he walked with a running motion, as though he had learned again from Mr. Alexander; his face was drawn; it seemed a trifle longer than of old; and it wore at times a smile very singularly mingled, and which (in my eyes) appeared both bitter and pathetic.

But the Master still bore himself erect, although perhaps with effort; his brow barred about the centre with imperious lines, his mouth set as for command. He had all the gravity and something of the splendour of Satan in the "Paradise Lost." I could not help but see the man with admiration, and was only surprised that I saw him with so little fear.

But indeed (as long as we were at the table) it seemed as if his authority were quite vanished and his teeth all drawn. We had known him a magician that controlled the elements; and here he was, transformed into an ordinary gentleman, chatting like his neighbours at the breakfast-board. For now the father was dead, and my lord and lady reconciled, in what ear was he to pour his calumnies? It came upon me in a kind of vision how hugely I had overrated the man's subtlety. He had his malice still; he was false as ever; and, the occasion being gone that made his strength, he sat there impotent; he was still the viper, but now spent his venom on a file. Two more thoughts occurred to me while yet we sat at breakfast: the first, that he was abashed - I had almost said, distressed - to find his wickedness quite unavailing; the second, that perhaps my lord was in the right, and we did amiss to fly from our dismasted enemy. But my poor man's leaping heart came in my mind, and I remembered it was for his life we played the coward.

When the meal was over, the Master followed me to my room, and, taking a chair (which I had never offered him), asked me what was to be done with him.

"Why, Mr. Bally," said I, "the house will still be open to you for a time."

"For a time?" says he. "I do not know if I quite take your meaning."

"It is plain enough," said I. "We keep you for our reputation; as soon as you shall have publicly disgraced yourself by some of your misconduct, we shall pack you forth again."

"You are become an impudent rogue," said the Master, bending his brows at me dangerously.

"I learned in a good school," I returned. "And you must have perceived yourself that with my old lord's death your power is quite departed. I do not fear you now, Mr. Bally; I think even - God forgive me - that I take a certain pleasure in your company."

He broke out in a burst of laughter, which I clearly saw to be assumed.

"I have come with empty pockets," says he, after a pause.

"I do not think there will be any money going," I replied. "I would advise you not to build on that."

"I shall have something to say on the point," he returned.

"Indeed?" said I. "I have not a guess what it will be, then."

"Oh! you affect confidence," said the Master. "I have still one strong position - that you people fear a scandal, and I enjoy it."

"Pardon me, Mr. Bally," says I. "We do not in the least fear a scandal against you."

He laughed again. "You have been studying repartee," he said. "But speech is very easy, and sometimes very deceptive. I warn you fairly: you will find me vitriol in the house. You would do wiser to pay money down and see my back." And with that he waved his hand to me and left the room.

A little after, my lord came with the lawyer, Mr. Carlyle; a bottle of old wine was brought, and we all had a glass before we fell to business. The necessary deeds were then prepared and executed, and the Scotch estates made over in trust to Mr. Carlyle and myself.

"There is one point, Mr. Carlyle," said my lord, when these affairs had been adjusted, "on which I wish that you would do us justice. This sudden departure coinciding with my brother's return will be certainly commented on. I wish you would discourage any conjunction of the two."

"I will make a point of it, my lord," said Mr. Carlyle. "The Mas-
Bally does not, then, accompany you?"

"It is a point I must approach," said my lord. "Mr. Bally remains at Durrisdeer, under the care of Mr. Mackellar; and I do not mean that he shall even know our destination."

"Common report, however - " began the lawyer.

"Ah! but, Mr. Carlyle, this is to be a secret quite among ourselves," interrupted my lord. "None but you and Mackellar are to be made acquainted with my movements."

"And Mr. Bally stays here? Quite so," said Mr. Carlyle. "The powers you leave - " Then he broke off again. "Mr. Mackellar, we have a rather heavy weight upon us."

"No doubt," said I.

"No doubt," said he. "Mr. Bally will have no voice?"

"He will have no voice," said my lord; "and, I hope, no influence.
Mr. Bally is not a good adviser."

"I see," said the lawyer. "By the way, has Mr. Bally means?"

"I understand him to have nothing," replied my lord. "I give him table, fire, and candle in this house."

"And in the matter of an allowance? If I am to share the responsibility, you will see how highly desirable it is that I should understand your views," said the lawyer. "On the question of an allowance?"

"There will be no allowance," said my lord. "I wish Mr. Bally to live very private. We have not always been gratified with his behaviour."

"And in the matter of money," I added, "he has shown himself an infamous bad husband. Glance your eye upon that docket, Mr. Carlyle, where I have brought together the different sums the man has drawn from the estate in the last fifteen or twenty years. The total is pretty."

Mr. Carlyle made the motion of whistling. "I had no guess of this," said he. "Excuse me once more, my lord, if I appear to push you; but it is really desirable I should penetrate your intentions. Mr. Mackellar might die, when I should find myself alone upon this trust. Would it not be rather your lordship's preference that Mr. Bally should - ahem - should leave the country?"

My lord looked at Mr. Carlyle. "Why do you ask that?" said he.

"I gather, my lord, that Mr. Bally is not a comfort to his family," says the lawyer with a smile.

My lord's face became suddenly knotted. "I wish he was in hell!" cried he, and filled himself a glass of wine, but with a hand so tottering that he spilled the half into his bosom. This was the second time that, in the midst of the most regular and wise behaviour, his animosity had spirted out. It startled Mr. Carlyle, who observed my lord thenceforth with covert curiosity; and to me it restored the certainty that we were acting for the best in view of my lord's health and reason.

Except for this explosion the interview was very successfully conducted. No doubt Mr. Carlyle would talk, as lawyers do, little by little. We could thus feel we had laid the foundations of a better feeling in the country, and the man's own misconduct would certainly complete what we had begun. Indeed, before his departure, the lawyer showed us there had already gone abroad some glimmerings of the truth.

"I should perhaps explain to you, my lord," said he, pausing, with his hat in his hand, "that I have not been altogether surprised with your lordship's dispositions in the case of Mr. Bally. Something of this nature oozed out when he was last in Durrisdeer. There was some talk of a woman at St. Bride's, to whom you had behaved extremely handsome, and Mr. Bally with no small degree of cruelty. There was the entail, again, which was much controverted. In short, there was no want of talk, back and forward; and some of our wise-acres took up a strong opinion. I remained in suspense, as became one of my cloth; but Mr. Mackellar's docket here has finally opened my eyes. I do not think, Mr. Mackellar, that you and I will give him that much rope."

The rest of that important day passed prosperously through. It was our policy to keep the enemy in view, and I took my turn to be his watchman with the rest. I think his spirits rose as he perceived us to be so attentive, and I know that mine insensibly declined. What chiefly daunted me was the man's singular dexterity to worm himself into our troubles. You may have felt (after a horse accident) the hand of a bone-setter artfully divide and interrogate the muscles, and settle strongly on the injured place? It was so with the Master's tongue, that was so cunning to question; and his eyes, that were so quick to observe. I seemed to have said nothing, and yet to have let all out. Before I knew where I was the man was condoling with me on my lord's neglect of my lady and myself, and his hurtful indulgence to his son. On this last point I perceived him (with panic fear) to return repeatedly. The boy had displayed a certain shrinking from his uncle; it was strong in my mind his father had been fool enough to indoctrinate the same, which was no wise beginning: and when I looked upon the man before me, still so handsome, so apt a speaker, with so great a variety of fortunes to relate, I saw he was the very personage to captivate a boyish fancy. John Paul had left only that morning; it was not to be supposed he had been altogether dumb upon his favourite subject: so that here would be Mr. Alexander in the part of Dido, with a curiosity inflamed to hear; and there would be the Master, like a diabolical AEneas, full of matter the most pleasing in the world to any youthful ear, such as battles, sea-disasters, flights, the forests of the West, and (since his later voyage) the ancient cities of the Indies. How cunningly these baits might be employed, and what an empire might be so founded, little by little, in the mind of any boy, stood obviously clear to me. There was no inhibition, so long as the man was in the house, that would be strong enough to hold these two apart; for if it be hard to charm serpents, it is no very difficult thing to cast a glamour on a little chip of manhood not very long in breeches. I recalled an ancient sailor-man who dwelt in a lone house beyond the Figgate Whins (I believe, he called it after Portobello), and how the boys would troop out of Leith on a Saturday, and sit and listen to his swearing tales, as thick as crows about a carrion: a thing I often remarked as I went by, a young student, on my own more meditative holiday diversion. Many of these boys went, no doubt, in the face of an express command; many feared and even hated the old brute of whom they made their hero; and I have seen them flee from him when he was tipsy, and stone him when he was drunk. And yet there they came each Saturday! How much more easily would a boy like Mr. Alexander fall under the influence of a high-looking, high-spoken gentleman-adventurer, who should conceive the fancy to entrap him; and, the influence gained, how easy to employ it for the child's perversion!

I doubt if our enemy had named Mr. Alexander three times before I perceived which way his mind was aiming - all this train of thought and memory passed in one pulsation through my own - and you may say I started back as though an open hole had gaped across a pathway. Mr. Alexander: there was the weak point, there was the Eve in our perishable paradise; and the serpent was already hissing on the trail.

I promise you, I went the more heartily about the preparations; my last scruple gone, the danger of delay written before me in huge characters. From that moment forth I seem not to have sat down or breathed. Now I would be at my post with the Master and his Indian; now in the garret, buckling a valise; now sending forth Macconochie by the side postern and the wood-path to bear it to the trysting-place; and, again, snatching some words of counsel with my lady. This was the VERSO of our life in Durrisdeer that day; but on the RECTO all appeared quite settled, as of a family at home in its paternal seat; and what perturbation may have been observable, the Master would set down to the blow of his unlooked-for coming, and the fear he was accustomed to inspire.

Supper went creditably off, cold salutations passed and the company trooped to their respective chambers. I attended the Master to the last. We had put him next door to his Indian, in the north wing; because that was the most distant and could be severed from the body of the house with doors. I saw he was a kind friend or a good master (whichever it was) to his Secundra Dass - seeing to his comfort; mending the fire with his own hand, for the Indian complained of cold; inquiring as to the rice on which the stranger made his diet; talking with him pleasantly in the Hindustanee, while I stood by, my candle in my hand, and affected to be overcome with slumber. At length the Master observed my signals of distress. “I perceive,” says he, “that you have all your ancient habits: early to bed and early to rise. Yawn yourself away!”

Once in my own room, I made the customary motions of undressing, so that I might time myself; and when the cycle was complete, set my tinder-box ready, and blew out my taper. The matter of an hour afterward I made a light again, put on my shoes of list that I had worn by my lord’s sick-bed, and set forth into the house to call the voyagers. All were dressed and waiting - my lord, my lady, Miss Katharine, Mr. Alexander, my lady’s woman Christie; and I observed the effect of secrecy even upon quite innocent persons, that one after another showed in the chink of the door a face as white as paper. We slipped out of the side postern into a night of darkness, scarce broken by a star or two; so that at first we groped and stumbled and fell among the bushes. A few hundred yards up the wood-path Macconochie was waiting us with a great lantern; so the rest of the way we went easy enough, but still in a kind of guilty silence. A little beyond the abbey the path debauched on the main road and some quarter of a mile farther, at the place called Eagles, where the moors begin, we saw the lights of the two carriages stand shining by the wayside. Scarce a word or two was uttered at our parting, and these regarded business: a silent grasping of hands, a turning of faces aside, and the thing was over; the horses broke into a trot, the lamplight sped like Will- o'-the-Wisp upon the broken moorland, it dipped beyond Stony Brae; and there were Macconochie and I alone with our lantern on the road. There was one thing more to wait for, and that was the reappearance of the coach upon Cartmore. It seems they must have pulled up upon the summit, looked back for a last time, and seen our lantern not yet moved away from the place of separation. For a lamp was taken from a carriage, and waved three times up and down by way of a farewell. And then they were gone indeed, having looked their last on the kind roof of Durrisdeer, their faces toward a barbarous country. I never knew before, the greatness of that vault of night in which we two poor serving-men - the one old, and the one elderly - stood for the first time deserted; I had never felt before my own dependency upon the countenance of others. The sense of isolation burned in my bowels like a fire. It seemed that we who remained at home were the true exiles, and that Durrisdeer and Solwayside, and all that made my country native, its air good to me, and its language welcome, had gone forth and was far over the sea with my old masters.

The remainder of that night I paced to and fro on the smooth highway, reflecting on the future and the past. My thoughts, which at first dwelled tenderly on those who were just gone, took a more manly temper as I considered what remained for me to do. Day came upon the inland mountain-tops, and the fowls began to cry, and the smoke of homesteads to arise in the brown bosom of the moors, before I turned my face homeward, and went down the path to where the roof of Durrisdeer shone in the morning by the sea.

At the customary hour I had the Master called, and awaited his coming in the hall with a quiet mind. He looked about him at the empty room and the three covers set.

"We are a small party," said he. "How comes?"

"This is the party to which we must grow accustomed," I replied.

He looked at me with a sudden sharpness. "What is all this?" said he.

"You and I and your friend Mr. Dass are now all the company," I replied. "My lord, my lady, and the children, are gone upon a voyage."

"Upon my word!" said he. "Can this be possible? I have indeed fluttered your Volscians in Corioli! But this is no reason why our breakfast should go cold. Sit down, Mr. Mackellar, if you please" - taking, as he spoke, the head of the table, which I had designed to occupy myself - "and as we eat, you can give me the details of this evasion."

I could see he was more affected than his language carried, and I determined to equal him in coolness. “I was about to ask you to take the head of the table,” said I; “for though I am now thrust into the position of your host, I could never forget that you were, after all, a member of the family.”

For a while he played the part of entertainer, giving directions to Macconochie, who received them with an evil grace, and attending specially upon Secundra. “And where has my good family withdrawn to?” he asked carelessly.

“Ah! Mr. Bally, that is another point,” said I. “I have no orders to communicate their destination.”

“To me,” he corrected.

“To any one,” said I.

“It is the less pointed,” said the master; “C’EST DE BON TON: my brother improves as he continues. And I, dear Mr. Mackellar?”

“You will have bed and board, Mr. Bally,” said I. “I am permitted to give you the run of the cellar, which is pretty reasonably stocked. You have only to keep well with me, which is no very difficult matter, and you shall want neither for wine nor a saddle- horse.”

He made an excuse to send Macconochie from the room.

“And for money?” he inquired. “Have I to keep well with my good friend Mackellar for my pocket-money also? This is a pleasing return to the principles of boyhood.”

“There was no allowance made,” said I; “but I will take it on myself to see you are supplied in moderation.”

“In moderation?” he repeated. “And you will take it on yourself?” He drew himself up, and looked about the hall at the dark rows of portraits. “In the name of my ancestors, I thank you,” says he; and then, with a return to irony, “But there must certainly be an allowance for Secundra Dass?” he said. “It in not possible they have omitted that?”

“I will make a note of it, and ask instructions when I write,” said I.

And he, with a sudden change of manner, and leaning forward with an elbow on the table - “Do you think this entirely wise?”

“I execute my orders, Mr. Bally,” said I.

“Profoundly modest,” said the Master; “perhaps not equally ingenuous. You told me yesterday my power was fallen with my father’s death. How comes it, then, that a peer of the realm flees under cloud of night out of a house in which his fathers have stood several sieges? that he conceals his address, which must be a matter of concern to his Gracious Majesty and to the whole republic? and that he should leave me in possession, and under the paternal charge of his invaluable Mackellar? This smacks to me of a very considerable and genuine apprehension.”

I sought to interrupt him with some not very truthful denegation; but he waved me down, and pursued his speech.

“I say, it smacks of it,” he said; “but I will go beyond that, for I think the apprehension grounded. I came to this house with some reluctancy. In view of the manner of my last departure, nothing but necessity could have induced me to return. Money, however, is that which I must have. You will not give with a good grace; well, I have the power to force it from you. Inside of a week, without leaving Durrisdeer, I will find out where these fools are fled to. I will follow; and when I have run my quarry down, I will drive a wedge into that family that shall once more burst it into shivers. I shall see then whether my Lord Durrisdeer” (said with indescribable scorn and rage) “will choose to buy my absence; and you will all see whether, by that time, I decide for profit or revenge.”

I was amazed to hear the man so open. The truth is, he was consumed with anger at my lord’s successful flight, felt himself to figure as a dupe, and was in no humour to weigh language.

“Do you consider THIS entirely wise?” said I, copying his words.

“These twenty years I have lived by my poor wisdom,” he answered with a smile that seemed almost foolish in its vanity.

“And come out a beggar in the end,” said I, “if beggar be a strong enough word for it.”

“I would have you to observe, Mr. Mackellar,” cried he, with a sudden imperious heat, in which I could not but admire him, “that I am scrupulously civil: copy me in that, and we shall be the better friends.”

Throughout this dialogue I had been incommoded by the observation of Secundra Dass. Not one of us, since the first word, had made a feint of eating: our eyes were in each other’s faces - you might say, in each other’s bosoms; and those of the Indian troubled me with a certain changing brightness, as of comprehension. But I brushed the fancy aside, telling myself once more he understood no English; only, from the gravity of both voices, and the occasional scorn and anger in the Master’s, smelled out there was something of import in the wind.

For the matter of three weeks we continued to live together in the house of Durrisdeer: the beginning of that most singular chapter of my life - what I must call my intimacy with the Master. At first he was somewhat changeable in his behaviour: now civil, now returning to his old manner of flouting me to my face; and in both I met him half-way. Thanks be to Providence, I had now no measure to keep with the man; and I was never afraid of black brows, only of naked swords. So that I found a certain entertainment in these bouts of incivility, and was not always ill-inspired in my rejoinders. At last (it was at supper) I had a droll expression that entirely vanquished him. He laughed again and again; and "Who would have guessed," he cried, "that this old wife had any wit under his petticoats?"

"It is no wit, Mr. Bally," said I: "a dry Scot's humour, and something of the driest." And, indeed, I never had the least pretension to be thought a wit.

From that hour he was never rude with me, but all passed between us in a manner of pleasantry. One of our chief times of daffing (9) was when he required a horse, another bottle, or some money. He would approach me then after the manner of a schoolboy, and I would carry it on by way of being his father: on both sides, with an infinity of mirth. I could not but perceive that he thought more of me, which tickled that poor part of mankind, the vanity. He dropped, besides (I must suppose unconsciously), into a manner that was not only familiar, but even friendly; and this, on the part of one who had so long detested me, I found the more insidious. He went little abroad; sometimes even refusing invitations. "No," he would say, "what do I care for these thick-headed bonnet-lairds? I will stay at home, Mackellar; and we shall share a bottle quietly, and have one of our good talks." And, indeed, meal-time at Durrisdeer must have been a delight to any one, by reason of the brilliancy of the discourse. He would often express wonder at his former indifference to my society. "But, you see," he would add, "we were upon opposite sides. And so we are to-day; but let us never speak of that. I would think much less of you if you were not staunch to your employer." You are to consider he seemed to me quite impotent for any evil; and how it is a most engaging form of flattery when (after many years) tardy justice is done to a man's character and parts. But I have no thought to excuse myself. I was to blame; I let him cajole me, and, in short, I think the watch-dog was going sound asleep, when he was suddenly aroused.

I should say the Indian was continually travelling to and fro in the house. He never spoke, save in his own dialect and with the Master; walked without sound; and was always turning up where you would least expect him, fallen into a deep abstraction, from which he would start (upon your coming) to mock you with one of his grovelling obeisances. He seemed so quiet, so frail, and so wrapped in his own fancies, that I came to pass him over without much regard, or even to pity him for a harmless exile from his country. And yet without doubt the creature was still eavesdropping; and without doubt it was through his stealth and my security that our secret reached the Master.

It was one very wild night, after supper, and when we had been making more than usually merry, that the blow fell on me.

"This is all very fine," says the Master, "but we should do better to be buckling our valise."

"Why so?" I cried. "Are you leaving?"

"We are all leaving to-morrow in the morning," said he. "For the port of Glascow first, thence for the province of New York."

I suppose I must have groaned aloud.

"Yes," he continued, "I boasted; I said a week, and it has taken me near twenty days. But never mind; I shall make it up; I will go the faster."

"Have you the money for this voyage?" I asked.

"Dear and ingenuous personage, I have," said he. "Blame me, if you choose, for my duplicity; but while I have been wringing shillings from my daddy, I had a stock of my own put by against a rainy day. You will pay for your own passage, if you choose to accompany us on our flank march; I have enough for Secundra and myself, but not more - enough to be dangerous, not enough to be generous. There is, however, an outside seat upon the chaise which I will let you have upon a moderate commutation; so that the whole menagerie can go together - the house-dog, the monkey, and the tiger."

"I go with you," said I.

"I count upon it," said the Master. "You have seen me foiled; I mean you shall see me victorious. To gain that I will risk wetting you like a sop in this wild weather."

"And at least," I added, "you know very well you could not throw me off."

"Not easily," said he. "You put your finger on the point with your usual excellent good sense. I never fight with the inevitable."

"I suppose it is useless to appeal to you?" said I.

"Believe me, perfectly," said he.

"And yet, if you would give me time, I could write - " I began.

"And what would be my Lord Durrisdeer's answer?" asks he.

"Aye," said I, "that is the rub."

"And, at any rate, how much more expeditions that I should go myself!" says he. "But all this is quite a waste of breath. At seven to-morrow the chaise will be at the door. For I start from the door, Mackellar; I do not skulk through woods and take my chaise upon the wayside - shall we say, at Eagles?"

My mind was now thoroughly made up. "Can you spare me quarter of an hour at St. Bride's?" said I. "I have a little necessary business with Carlyle."

"An hour, if you prefer," said he. "I do not seek to deny that the money for your seat is an object to me; and you could always get the first to Glascow with saddle-horses."

"Well," said I, "I never thought to leave old Scotland."

"It will brisken you up," says he.

"This will be an ill journey for some one," I said. "I think, sir, for you. Something speaks in my bosom; and so much it says plain - that this is an ill-omened journey."

"If you take to prophecy," says he, "listen to that."

There came up a violent squall off the open Solway, and the rain was dashed on the great windows.

"Do ye ken what that bodes, warlock?" said he, in a broad accent: "that there'll be a man Mackellar unco' sick at sea."

When I got to my chamber, I sat there under a painful excitation, hearkening to the turmoil of the gale, which struck full upon that gable of the house. What with the pressure on my spirits, the eldritch cries of the wind among the turret-tops, and the perpetual trepidation of the masoned house, sleep fled my eyelids utterly. I sat by my taper, looking on the black panes of the window, where the storm appeared continually on the point of bursting in its entrance; and upon that empty field I beheld a perspective of consequences that made the hair to rise upon my scalp. The child corrupted, the home broken up, my master dead or worse than dead, my mistress plunged in desolation - all these I saw before me painted brightly on the darkness; and the outcry of the wind appeared to mock at my inaction.

CHAPTER IX. - MR. MACKELLAR'S JOURNEY WITH THE MASTER.

The chaise came to the door in a strong drenching mist. We took our leave in silence: the house of Durrisdeer standing with dropping gutters and windows closed, like a place dedicate to melancholy. I observed the Master kept his head out, looking back on these splashed walls and glimmering roofs, till they were suddenly swallowed in the mist; and I must suppose some natural sadness fell upon the man at this departure; or was it some provision of the end? At least, upon our mounting the long brae from Durrisdeer, as we walked side by side in the wet, he began first to whistle and then to sing the saddest of our country tunes, which sets folk weeping in a tavern, WANDERING WILLIE. The set of words he used with it I have not heard elsewhere, and could never come by any copy; but some of them which were the most appropriate to our departure linger in my memory. One verse began -

Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,
Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.

And ended somewhat thus -

Now, when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,
Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is cold.
Lone let it stand, now the folks are all departed,
The kind hearts, the true hearts, that loved the place of old.

I could never be a judge of the merit of these verses; they were so hallowed by the melancholy of the air, and were sung (or rather "soothed") to me by a master-singer at a time so fitting. He looked in my face when he had done, and saw that my eyes watered.

"Ah! Mackellar," said he, "do you think I have never a regret?"

"I do not think you could be so bad a man," said I, "if you had not all the machinery to be a good one."

"No, not all," says he: "not all. You are there in error. The malady of not wanting, my evangelist." But methought he sighed as he mounted again into the chaise.

All day long we journeyed in the same miserable weather: the mist besetting us closely, the heavens incessantly weeping on my head. The road lay over moorish hills, where was no sound but the crying of moor-fowl in the wet heather and the pouring of the swollen burns. Sometimes I would doze off in slumber, when I would find myself plunged at once in some foul and ominous nightmare, from the which I would awake strangling. Sometimes, if the way was steep and the wheels turning slowly, I would overhear the voices from within, talking in that tropical tongue which was to me as inarticulate as the piping of the fowls. Sometimes, at a longer ascent, the Master would set foot to ground and walk by my side, mostly without speech. And all the time, sleeping or waking, I beheld the same black perspective of approaching ruin; and the same pictures rose in my view, only they were now painted upon hillside mist. One, I remember, stood before me with the colours of a true illusion. It showed me my lord seated at a table in a small room; his head, which was at first buried in his hands, he slowly raised, and turned upon me a countenance from which hope had fled. I saw it first on the black window-panes, my last night in Durrisdeer; it haunted and returned upon me half the voyage through; and yet it was no effect of lunacy, for I have come to a ripe old age with no decay of my intelligence; nor yet (as I was then tempted to suppose) a heaven-sent warning of the future, for all manner of calamities befell, not that calamity - and I saw many pitiful sights, but never that one.

It was decided we should travel on all night; and it was singular, once the dusk had fallen, my spirits somewhat rose. The bright lamps, shining forth into the mist and on the smoking horses and the hodding post-boy, gave me perhaps an outlook intrinsically more cheerful than what day had shown; or perhaps my mind had become wearied of its melancholy. At least, I spent some waking hours, not without satisfaction in my thoughts, although wet and weary in my body; and fell at last into a natural slumber without dreams. Yet I must have been at work even in the deepest of my sleep; and at work with at least a measure of intelligence. For I started broad awake, in the very act of crying out to myself

Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child,

stricken to find in it an appropriateness, which I had not yesterday observed, to the Master's detestable purpose in the present journey.

We were then close upon the city of Glascow, where we were soon breakfasting together at an inn, and where (as the devil would have it) we found a ship in the very article of sailing. We took our places in the cabin; and, two days after, carried our effects on board. Her name was the NONESUCH, a very ancient ship and very happily named. By all accounts this should be her last voyage; people shook their heads upon the quays, and I had several warnings offered me by strangers in the street to the effect that she was rotten as a cheese, too deeply loaden, and must infallibly founder if we met a gale. From this it fell out we were the only passengers; the Captain, McMurtrie, was a silent, absorbed man, with the Glascow or Gaelic accent; the mates ignorant rough seafarers, come in through the hawsehole; and the Master and I were cast upon each other's company.

THE NONESUCH carried a fair wind out of the Clyde, and for near upon a week we enjoyed bright weather and a sense of progress. I found myself (to my wonder) a born seaman, in so far at least as I was never sick; yet I was far from tasting the usual serenity of my health. Whether it was the motion of the ship on the billows, the confinement, the salted food, or all of these together, I suffered from a blackness of spirit and a painful strain upon my temper. The nature of my errand on that ship perhaps contributed; I think it did no more; the malady (whatever it was) sprang from my environment; and if the ship were not to blame, then it was the Master. Hatred and fear are ill bedfellows; but (to my shame be it spoken) I have tasted those in other places, lain down and got up with them, and eaten and drunk with them, and yet never before, nor after, have I been so poisoned through and through, in soul and body, as I was on board the NONESUCH. I freely confess my enemy set me a fair example of forbearance; in our worst days displayed the most patient geniality, holding me in conversation as long as I would suffer, and when I had rebuffed his civility, stretching himself on deck to read. The book he had on board with him was Mr. Richardson's famous CLARISSA! and among other small attentions he would read me passages aloud; nor could any elocutionist have given with greater potency the pathetic portions of that work. I would retort upon him with passages out of the Bible, which was all my library - and very fresh to me, my religious duties (I grieve to say it) being always and even to this day extremely neglected. He tasted the merits of the word like the connoisseur he was; and would sometimes take it from my hand, turn the leaves over like a man that knew his way, and give me, with his fine declamation, a Roland for my Oliver. But it was singular how little he applied his reading to himself; it passed high above his head like summer thunder: Lovelace and Clarissa, the tales of David's generosity, the psalms of his penitence, the solemn questions of the book of Job, the touching poetry of Isaiah - they were to him a source of entertainment only, like the scraping of a fiddle in a change- house. This outer sensibility and inner toughness set me against him; it seemed of a piece with that impudent grossness which I knew to underlie the veneer of his fine manners; and sometimes my gorge rose against him as though he were deformed - and sometimes I would draw away as though from something partly spectral. I had moments when I thought of him as of a man of pasteboard - as though, if one should strike smartly through the buckram of his countenance, there would be found a mere vacuity within. This horror (not merely fanciful, I think) vastly increased my detestation of his neighbourhood; I began to feel something shiver within me on his drawing near; I had at times a longing to cry out; there were days when I thought I could have struck him. This frame of mind was doubtless helped by shame, because I had dropped during our last days at Durrisdeer into a certain toleration of the man; and if any one had then told me I should drop into it again, I must have laughed in his face. It is possible he remained unconscious of this extreme fever of my resentment; yet I think he was too quick; and rather that he had fallen, in a long life of idleness, into a positive need of company, which obliged him to confront and tolerate my unconcealed aversion. Certain, at least, that he loved the note of his own tongue, as, indeed, he entirely loved all the parts and properties of himself; a sort of imbecility which almost necessarily attends on wickedness. I have seen him driven, when I proved recalcitrant, to long discourses with the skipper; and this, although the man plainly testified his weariness, fiddling miserably with both hand and foot, and replying only with a grunt.

After the first week out we fell in with foul winds and heavy weather. The sea was high. The NONESUCH, being an old-fashioned ship and badly loaden, rolled beyond belief; so that the skipper trembled for his masts, and I for my life. We made no progress on our course. An unbearable ill-humour settled on the ship: men, mates, and master, girding at one another all day long. A saucy word on the one hand, and a blow on the other, made a daily incident. There were times when the whole crew refused their duty; and we of the afterguard were twice got under arms - being the first time that ever I bore weapons - in the fear of mutiny.

In the midst of our evil season sprang up a hurricane of wind; so that all supposed she must go down. I was shut in the cabin from noon of one day till sundown of the next; the Master was somewhere lashed on deck. Secundra had eaten of some drug and lay insensible; so you may say I passed these hours in an unbroken solitude. At first I was terrified beyond motion, and almost beyond thought, my mind appearing to be frozen. Presently there stole in on me a ray of comfort. If the NONESUCH foundered, she would carry down with her into the deeps of that unsounded sea the creature whom we all so feared and hated; there would be no more Master of Ballantrae, the fish would sport among his ribs; his schemes all brought to nothing, his harmless enemies at peace. At first, I have said, it was but a ray of comfort; but it had soon grown to be broad sunshine. The thought of the man's death, of his deletion from this world, which he embittered for so many, took possession of my mind. I hugged it, I found it sweet in my belly. I conceived the ship's last plunge, the sea bursting upon all sides into the cabin, the brief mortal conflict there, all by myself, in that closed place; I numbered the horrors, I had almost said with satisfaction; I felt I could bear all and more, if the NONESUCH carried down with her, overtook by the same ruin, the enemy of my poor master's house. Towards noon of the second day the screaming of the wind abated; the ship lay not so perilously over, and it began to be clear to me that we were past the height of the tempest. As I hope for mercy, I was singly disappointed. In the selfishness of that vile, absorbing passion of hatred, I forgot the case of our innocent shipmates, and thought but of myself and my enemy. For myself, I was already old; I had never been young, I was not formed for the world's pleasures, I had few affections; it mattered not the toss of a silver tester whether I was drowned there and then in the Atlantic, or dribbled out a few more years, to die, perhaps no less terribly, in a deserted sick-bed. Down I went upon my knees - holding on by the locker, or else I had been instantly dashed across the tossing cabin - and, lifting up my voice in the midst of that clamour of the abating hurricane, impiously prayed for my own death. "O God!" I cried, "I would be liker a man if I rose and struck this creature down; but Thou madest me a coward from my mother's womb. O Lord, Thou madest me so, Thou knowest my weakness, Thou knowest that any face of death will set me shaking in my shoes. But, lo! here is Thy servant ready, his mortal weakness laid aside. Let me give my life for this creature's; take the two of them, Lord! take the two, and have mercy on the innocent!" In some such words as these, only yet more irreverent and with more sacred adjurations, I continued to pour forth my spirit. God heard me not, I must suppose in mercy; and I was still absorbed in my agony of supplication when some one, removing the tarpaulin cover, let the light of the sunset pour into the cabin. I stumbled to my feet ashamed, and was seized with surprise to find myself totter and ache like one that had been stretched upon the rack. Secundra Dass, who had slept off the effects of his drug, stood in a corner not far off, gazing at me with wild eyes; and from the open skylight the captain thanked me for my supplications.

"It's you that saved the ship, Mr. Mackellar," says he. "There is no craft of seamanship that could have kept her floating: well may we say, 'Except the Lord the city keep, the watchmen watch in vain!'"

I was abashed by the captain's error; abashed, also, by the surprise and fear with which the Indian regarded me at first, and the obsequious civilities with which he soon began to cumber me. I know now that he must have overheard and comprehended the peculiar nature of my prayers. It is certain, of course, that he at once disclosed the matter to his patron; and looking back with greater knowledge, I can now understand what so much puzzled me at the moment, those singular and (so to speak) approving smiles with which the Master honoured me. Similarly, I can understand a word that I remember to have fallen from him in conversation that same night; when, holding up his hand and smiling, "Ah! Mackellar," said he, "not every man is so great a coward as he thinks he is - nor yet so good a Christian.” He did not guess how true he spoke! For the fact is, the thoughts which had come to me in the violence of the storm retained their hold upon my spirit; and the words that rose to my lips unbidden in the instancy of prayer continued to sound in my ears: with what shameful consequences, it is fitting I should honestly relate; for I could not support a part of such disloyalty as to describe the sins of others and conceal my own.

The wind fell, but the sea hove ever the higher. All night the NONESUCH rolled outrageously; the next day dawned, and the next, and brought no change. To cross the cabin was scarce possible; old experienced seamen were cast down upon the deck, and one cruelly mauled in the concussion; every board and block in the old ship cried out aloud; and the great bell by the anchor-bitts continually and dolefully rang. One of these days the Master and I sate alone together at the break of the poop. I should say the NONESUCH carried a high, raised poop. About the top of it ran considerable bulwarks, which made the ship unweatherly; and these, as they approached the front on each side, ran down in a fine, old- fashioned, carven scroll to join the bulwarks of the waist. From this disposition, which seems designed rather for ornament than use, it followed there was a discontinuance of protection: and that, besides, at the very margin of the elevated part where (in certain movements of the ship) it might be the most needful. It was here we were sitting: our feet hanging down, the Master betwixt me and the side, and I holding on with both hands to the grating of the cabin skylight; for it struck me it was a dangerous position, the more so as I had continually before my eyes a measure of our evolutions in the person of the Master, which stood out in the break of the bulwarks against the sun. Now his head would be in the zenith and his shadow fall quite beyond the NONESUCH on the farther side; and now he would swing down till he was underneath my feet, and the line of the sea leaped high above him like the ceiling of a room. I looked on upon this with a growing fascination, as birds are said to look on snakes. My mind, besides, was troubled with an astonishing diversity of noises; for now that we had all sails spread in the vain hope to bring her to the sea, the ship sounded like a factory with their reverberations. We spoke first of the mutiny with which we had been threatened; this led us on to the topic of assassination; and that offered a temptation to the Master more strong than he was able to resist. He must tell me a tale, and show me at the same time how clever he was and how wicked. It was a thing he did always with affectation and display; generally with a good effect. But this tale, told in a high key in the midst of so great a tumult, and by a narrator who was one moment looking down at me from the skies and the next up from under the soles of my feet - this particular tale, I say, took hold upon me in a degree quite singular.

“My friend the count,” it was thus that he began his story, “had for an enemy a certain German baron, a stranger in Rome. It matters not what was the ground of the count’s enmity; but as he had a firm design to be revenged, and that with safety to himself, he kept it secret even from the baron. Indeed, that is the first principle of vengeance; and hatred betrayed is hatred impotent. The count was a man of a curious, searching mind; he had something of the artist; if anything fell for him to do, it must always be done with an exact perfection, not only as to the result, but in the very means and instruments, or he thought the thing miscarried. It chanced he was one day riding in the outer suburbs, when he came to a disused by-road branching off into the moor which lies about Rome. On the one hand was an ancient Roman tomb; on the other a deserted house in a garden of evergreen trees. This road brought him presently into a field of ruins, in the midst of which, in the side of a hill, he saw an open door, and, not far off, a single stunted pine no greater than a currant-bush. The place was desert and very secret; a voice spoke in the count’s bosom that there was something here to his advantage. He tied his horse to the pine- tree, took his flint and steel in his hand to make a light, and entered into the hill. The doorway opened on a passage of old Roman masonry, which shortly after branched in two. The count took the turning to the right, and followed it, groping forward in the dark, till he was brought up by a kind of fence, about elbow-high, which extended quite across the passage. Sounding forward with his foot, he found an edge of polished stone, and then vacancy. All his curiosity was now awakened, and, getting some rotten sticks that lay about the floor, he made a fire. In front of him was a profound well; doubtless some neighbouring peasant had once used it for his water, and it was he that had set up the fence. A long while the count stood leaning on the rail and looking down into the pit. It was of Roman foundation, and, like all that nation set their hands to, built as for eternity; the sides were still straight, and the joints smooth; to a man who should fall in, no escape was possible. ‘Now,’ the count was thinking, ‘a strong impulsion brought me to this place. What for? what have I gained? why should I be sent to gaze into this well?’ when the rail of the fence gave suddenly under his weight, and he came within an ace of falling headlong in. Leaping back to save himself, he trod out the last flicker of his fire, which gave him thenceforward no more light, only an incommoding smoke. ‘Was I sent here to my death?’ says he, and shook from head to foot. And then a thought flashed in his mind. He crept forth on hands and knees to the brink of the pit, and felt above him in the air. The rail had been fast to a pair of uprights; it had only broken from the one, and still depended from the other. The count set it back again as he had found it, so that the place meant death to the first comer, and groped out of the catacomb like a sick man. The next day, riding in the Corso with the baron, he purposely betrayed a strong preoccupation. The other (as he had designed) inquired into the cause; and he, after some fencing, admitted that his spirits had been dashed by an unusual dream. This was calculated to draw on the baron - a superstitious man, who affected the scorn of superstition. Some rallying followed, and then the count, as if suddenly carried away, called on his friend to beware, for it was of him that he had dreamed. You know enough of human nature, my excellent Mackellar, to be certain of one thing: I mean that the baron did not rest till he had heard the dream. The count, sure that he would never desist, kept him in play till his curiosity was highly inflamed, and then suffered himself, with seeming reluctance, to be overborne. 'I warn you,' says he, 'evil will come of it; something tells me so. But since there is to be no peace either for you or me except on this condition, the blame be on your own head! This was the dream:- I beheld you riding, I know not where, yet I think it must have been near Rome, for on your one hand was an ancient tomb, and on the other a garden of evergreen trees. Methought I cried and cried upon you to come back in a very agony of terror; whether you heard me I know not, but you went doggedly on. The road brought you to a desert place among ruins, where was a door in a hillside, and hard by the door a misbegotten pine. Here you dismounted (I still crying on you to beware), tied your horse to the pine-tree, and entered resolutely in by the door. Within, it was dark; but in my dream I could still see you, and still besought you to hold back. You felt your way along the right-hand wall, took a branching passage to the right, and came to a little chamber, where was a well with a railing. At this - I know not why - my alarm for you increased a thousandfold, so that I seemed to scream myself hoarse with warnings, crying it was still time, and bidding you begone at once from that vestibule. Such was the word I used in my dream, and it seemed then to have a clear significancy; but to-day, and awake, I profess I know not what it means. To all my outcry you rendered not the least attention, leaning the while upon the rail and looking down intently in the water. And then there was made to you a communication; I do not think I even gathered what it was, but the fear of it plucked me clean out of my slumber, and I awoke shaking and sobbing. And now,' continues the count, 'I thank you from my heart for your insistency. This dream lay on me like a load; and now I have told it in plain words and in the broad daylight, it seems no great matter.' - 'I do not know,' says the baron. 'It is in some points strange. A communication, did you say?

Oh! it is an odd dream. It will make a story to amuse our friends.' - 'I am not so sure,' says the count. 'I am sensible of some reluctancy. Let us rather forget it.' - 'By all means,' says the baron. And (in fact) the dream was not again referred to. Some days after, the count proposed a ride in the fields, which the baron (since they were daily growing faster friends) very readily accepted. On the way back to Rome, the count led them insensibly by a particular route. Presently he reined in his horse, clapped his hand before his eyes, and cried out aloud. Then he showed his face again (which was now quite white, for he was a consummate actor), and stared upon the baron. 'What ails you?' cries the baron. 'What is wrong with you?' - 'Nothing,' cries the count. 'It is nothing. A seizure, I know not what. Let us hurry back to Rome.' But in the meanwhile the baron had looked about him; and there, on the left-hand side of the way as they went back to Rome, he saw a dusty by-road with a tomb upon the one hand and a garden of evergreen trees upon the other. - 'Yes,' says he, with a changed voice. 'Let us by all means hurry back to Rome. I fear you are not well in health.' - 'Oh, for God's sake!' cries the count, shuddering, 'back to Rome and let me get to bed.' They made their return with scarce a word; and the count, who should by rights have gone into society, took to his bed and gave out he had a touch of country fever. The next day the baron's horse was found tied to the pine, but himself was never heard of from that hour. - And, now, was that a murder?" says the Master, breaking sharply off.

"Are you sure he was a count?" I asked.

"I am not certain of the title," said he, "but he was a gentleman of family: and the Lord deliver you, Mackellar, from an enemy so subtile!"

These last words he spoke down at me, smiling, from high above; the next, he was under my feet. I continued to follow his evolutions with a childish fixity; they made me giddy and vacant, and I spoke as in a dream.

"He hated the baron with a great hatred?" I asked.

His belly moved when the man came near him," said the Master.

"I have felt that same," said I.

"Verily!" cries the Master. "Here is news indeed! I wonder - do I flatter myself? or am I the cause of these ventral perturbations?"

He was quite capable of choosing out a graceful posture, even with no one to behold him but myself, and all the more if there were any element of peril. He sat now with one knee flung across the other, his arms on his bosom, fitting the swing of the ship with an exquisite balance, such as a featherweight might overthrow. All at once I had the vision of my lord at the table, with his head upon his hands; only now, when he showed me his countenance, it was heavy with reproach. The words of my own prayer - I WERE LIKER A MAN IF I STRUCK THIS CREATURE DOWN - shot at the same time into my memory. I called my energies together, and (the ship then heeling downward toward my enemy) thrust at him swiftly with my foot. It was written I should have the guilt of this attempt without the profit. Whether from my own uncertainty or his incredible quickness, he escaped the thrust, leaping to his feet and catching hold at the same moment of a stay.

I do not know how long a time passed by. I lying where I was upon the deck, overcome with terror and remorse and shame: he standing with the stay in his hand, backed against the bulwarks, and regarding me with an expression singularly mingled. At last he spoke.

“Mackellar,” said he, “I make no reproaches, but I offer you a bargain. On your side, I do not suppose you desire to have this exploit made public; on mine, I own to you freely I do not care to draw my breath in a perpetual terror of assassination by the man I sit at meat with. Promise me - but no,” says he, breaking off, “you are not yet in the quiet possession of your mind; you might think I had extorted the promise from your weakness; and I would leave no door open for casuistry to come in - that dishonesty of the conscientious. Take time to meditate.”

With that he made off up the sliding deck like a squirrel, and plunged into the cabin. About half an hour later he returned - I still lying as he had left me.

“Now,’ says be, “will you give me your troth as a Christian, and a faithful servant of my brother’s, that I shall have no more to fear from your attempts?”

“I give it you,” said I.

“I shall require your hand upon it,” says he.

“You have the right to make conditions,” I replied, and we shook hands.

He sat down at once in the same place and the old perilous attitude.

“Hold on!” cried I, covering my eyes. “I cannot bear to see you in that posture. The least irregularity of the sea might plunge you overboard.”

“You are highly inconsistent,” he replied, smiling, but doing as I asked. “For all that, Mackellar, I would have you to know you have risen forty feet in my esteem. You think I cannot set a price upon fidelity? But why do you suppose I carry that Secundra Dass about the world with me? Because he would die or do murder for me to-morrow; and I love him for it. Well, you may think it odd, but I like you the better for this afternoon’s performance. I thought you were magnetised with the Ten Commandments; but no - God damn my soul!” - he cries, “the old wife has blood in his body after all! Which does not change the fact," he continued, smiling again, "that you have done well to give your promise; for I doubt if you would ever shine in your new trade."

"I suppose," said I, "I should ask your pardon and God's for my attempt. At any rate, I have passed my word, which I will keep faithfully. But when I think of those you persecute - " I paused.

"Life is a singular thing," said he, "and mankind a very singular people. You suppose yourself to love my brother. I assure you, it is merely custom. Interrogate your memory; and when first you came to Durrisdeer, you will find you considered him a dull, ordinary youth. He is as dull and ordinary now, though not so young. Had you instead fallen in with me, you would to-day be as strong upon my side."

"I would never say you were ordinary, Mr. Bally," I returned; "but here you prove yourself dull. You have just shown your reliance on my word. In other terms, that is my conscience - the same which starts instinctively back from you, like the eye from a strong light."

"Ah!" says he, "but I mean otherwise. I mean, had I met you in my youth. You are to consider I was not always as I am to-day; nor (had I met in with a friend of your description) should I have ever been so."

"Hut, Mr. Bally," says I, "you would have made a mock of me; you would never have spent ten civil words on such a Square-toes."

But he was now fairly started on his new course of justification, with which he wearied me throughout the remainder of the passage. No doubt in the past he had taken pleasure to paint himself unnecessarily black, and made a vaunt of his wickedness, bearing it for a coat-of-arms. Nor was he so illogical as to abate one item of his old confessions. "But now that I know you are a human being," he would say, "I can take the trouble to explain myself. For I assure you I am human, too, and have my virtues, like my neighbours." I say, he wearied me, for I had only the one word to say in answer: twenty times I must have said it: "Give up your present purpose and return with me to Durrisdeer; then I will believe you."

Thereupon he would shake his head at me. "Ah! Mackellar, you might live a thousand years and never understand my nature," he would say. "This battle is now committed, the hour of reflection quite past, the hour for mercy not yet come. It began between us when we span a coin in the hall of Durrisdeer, now twenty years ago; we have had our ups and downs, but never either of us dreamed of giving in; and as for me, when my glove is cast, life and honour go with it."

"A fig for your honour!" I would say. "And by your leave, these warlike similitudes are something too high-sounding for the matter in hand. You want some dirty money; there is the bottom of your contention; and as for your means, what are they? to stir up sorrow in a family that never harmed you, to debauch (if you can) your own nephew, and to wring the heart of your born brother! A footpad that kills an old granny in a woollen mutch with a dirty bludgeon, and that for a shilling-piece and a paper of snuff - there is all the warrior that you are."

When I would attack him thus (or somewhat thus) he would smile, and sigh like a man misunderstood. Once, I remember, he defended himself more at large, and had some curious sophistries, worth repeating, for a light upon his character.

"You are very like a civilian to think war consists in drums and banners," said he. "War (as the ancients said very wisely) is ULTIMA RATIO. When we take our advantage unrelentingly, then we make war. Ah! Mackellar, you are a devil of a soldier in the steward's room at Durrisdeer, or the tenants do you sad injustice!"

"I think little of what war is or is not," I replied. "But you weary me with claiming my respect. Your brother is a good man, and you are a bad one - neither more nor less."

"Had I been Alexander - " he began.

"It is so we all dupe ourselves," I cried. "Had I been St. Paul, it would have been all one; I would have made the same hash of that career that you now see me making of my own."

"I tell you," he cried, bearing down my interruption, "had I been the least petty chieftain in the Highlands, had I been the least king of naked negroes in the African desert, my people would have adored me. A bad man, am I? Ah! but I was born for a good tyrant! Ask Secundra Dass; he will tell you I treat him like a son. Cast in your lot with me to-morrow, become my slave, my chattel, a thing I can command as I command the powers of my own limbs and spirit - you will see no more that dark side that I turn upon the world in anger. I must have all or none. But where all is given, I give it back with usury. I have a kingly nature: there is my loss!"

"It has been hitherto rather the loss of others," I remarked, "which seems a little on the hither side of royalty."

"Tilly-vally!" cried he. "Even now, I tell you, I would spare that family in which you take so great an interest: yes, even now - to-morrow I would leave them to their petty welfare, and disappear in that forest of cut-throats and thimble-riggers that we call the world. I would do it to-morrow!" says he. "Only - only - "

"Only what?" I asked.

"Only they must beg it on their bended knees. I think in public, too," he added, smiling. "Indeed, Mackellar, I doubt if there be a hall big enough to serve my purpose for that act of reparation."

"Vanity, vanity!" I moralised. "To think that this great force for evil should be swayed by the same sentiment that sets a lassie mincing to her glass!"

“Oh! there are double words for everything: the word that swells, the word that belittles; you cannot fight me with a word!” said he. “You said the other day that I relied on your conscience: were I in your humour of detraction, I might say I built upon your vanity. It is your pretension to be UN HOMME DE PAROLE; ‘tis mine not to accept defeat. Call it vanity, call it virtue, call it greatness of soul - what signifies the expression? But recognise in each of us a common strain: that we both live for an idea.”

It will be gathered from so much familiar talk, and so much patience on both sides, that we now lived together upon excellent terms. Such was again the fact, and this time more seriously than before. Apart from disputations such as that which I have tried to reproduce, not only consideration reigned, but, I am tempted to say, even kindness. When I fell sick (as I did shortly after our great storm), he sat by my berth to entertain me with his conversation, and treated me with excellent remedies, which I accepted with security. Himself commented on the circumstance. “You see,” says he, “you begin to know me better. A very little while ago, upon this lonely ship, where no one but myself has any smattering of science, you would have made sure I had designs upon your life. And, observe, it is since I found you had designs upon my own, that I have shown you most respect. You will tell me if this speaks of a small mind.” I found little to reply. In so far as regarded myself, I believed him to mean well; I am, perhaps, the more a dupe of his dissimulation, but I believed (and I still believe) that he regarded me with genuine kindness. Singular and sad fact! so soon as this change began, my animosity abated, and these haunting visions of my master passed utterly away. So that, perhaps, there was truth in the man’s last vaunting word to me, uttered on the second day of July, when our long voyage was at last brought almost to an end, and we lay becalmed at the sea end of the vast harbour of New York, in a gasping heat, which was presently exchanged for a surprising waterfall of rain. I stood on the poop, regarding the green shores near at hand, and now and then the light smoke of the little town, our destination. And as I was even then devising how to steal a march on my familiar enemy, I was conscious of a shade of embarrassment when he approached me with his hand extended.

“I am now to bid you farewell,” said he, “and that for ever. For now you go among my enemies, where all your former prejudices will revive. I never yet failed to charm a person when I wanted; even you, my good friend - to call you so for once - even you have now a very different portrait of me in your memory, and one that you will never quite forget. The voyage has not lasted long enough, or I should have wrote the impression deeper. But now all is at an end, and we are again at war. Judge by this little interlude how dangerous I am; and tell those fools" - pointing with his finger to the town - "to think twice and thrice before they set me at defiance."

CHAPTER X. - PASSAGES AT NEW YORK.

I have mentioned I was resolved to steal a march upon the Master; and this, with the complicity of Captain McMurtrie, was mighty easily effected: a boat being partly loaded on the one side of our ship and the Master placed on board of it, the while a skiff put off from the other, carrying me alone. I had no more trouble in finding a direction to my lord's house, whither I went at top speed, and which I found to be on the outskirts of the place, a very suitable mansion, in a fine garden, with an extraordinary large barn, byre, and stable, all in one. It was here my lord was walking when I arrived; indeed, it had become his chief place of frequentation, and his mind was now filled with farming. I burst in upon him breathless, and gave him my news: which was indeed no news at all, several ships having outsailed the NONESUCH in the interval.

"We have been expecting you long," said my lord; "and indeed, of late days, ceased to expect you any more. I am glad to take your hand again, Mackellar. I thought you had been at the bottom of the sea."

"Ah! my lord, would God I had!" cried I. "Things would have been better for yourself."

"Not in the least," says he, grimly. "I could not ask better. There is a long score to pay, and now - at last - I can begin to pay it."

I cried out against his security.

"Oh!" says he, "this is not Durrisdeer, and I have taken my precautions. His reputation awaits him; I have prepared a welcome for my brother. Indeed, fortune has served me; for I found here a merchant of Albany who knew him after the '45 and had mighty convenient suspicions of a murder: some one of the name of Chew it was, another Albanian. No one here will be surprised if I deny him my door; he will not be suffered to address my children, nor even to salute my wife: as for myself, I make so much exception for a brother that he may speak to me. I should lose my pleasure else," says my lord, rubbing his palms.

Presently he bethought himself, and set men off running, with billets, to summon the magnates of the province. I cannot recall what pretext he employed; at least, it was successful; and when our ancient enemy appeared upon the scene, he found my lord pacing in front of his house under some trees of shade, with the Governor upon one hand and various notables upon the other. My lady, who was seated in the verandah, rose with a very pinched expression and carried her children into the house.

The Master, well dressed and with an elegant walking-sword, bowed to the company in a handsome manner and nodded to my lord with familiarity. My lord did not accept the salutation, but looked upon his brother with bended brows.

"Well, sir," says he, at last, "what ill wind brings you hither of all places, where (to our common disgrace) your reputation has preceded you?"

"Your lordship is pleased to be civil," said the Master, with a fine start.

"I am pleased to be very plain," returned my lord; "because it is needful you should clearly understand your situation. At home, where you were so little known, it was still possible to keep appearances; that would be quite vain in this province; and I have to tell you that I am quite resolved to wash my hands of you. You have already ruined me almost to the door, as you ruined my father before me; - whose heart you also broke. Your crimes escape the law; but my friend the Governor has promised protection to my family. Have a care, sir!" cries my lord, shaking his cane at him: "if you are observed to utter two words to any of my innocent household, the law shall be stretched to make you smart for it."

"Ah!" says the Master, very slowly. "And so this is the advantage of a foreign land! These gentlemen are unacquainted with our story, I perceive. They do not know that I am the Lord Durrisdeer; they do not know you are my younger brother, sitting in my place under a sworn family compact; they do not know (or they would not be seen with you in familiar correspondence) that every acre is mine before God Almighty - and every doit of the money you withhold from me, you do it as a thief, a perjurer, and a disloyal brother!"

"General Clinton," I cried, "do not listen to his lies. I am the steward of the estate, and there is not one word of truth in it. The man is a forfeited rebel turned into a hired spy: there is his story in two words."

It was thus that (in the heat of the moment) I let slip his infamy.

"Fellow," said the Governor, turning his face sternly on the Master, "I know more of you than you think for. We have some broken ends of your adventures in the provinces, which you will do very well not to drive me to investigate. There is the disappearance of Mr. Jacob Chew with all his merchandise; there is the matter of where you came ashore from with so much money and jewels, when you were picked up by a Bermudan out of Albany. Believe me, if I let these matters lie, it is in commiseration for your family and out of respect for my valued friend, Lord Durrisdeer."

There was a murmur of applause from the provincials.

"I should have remembered how a title would shine out in such a hole as this," says the Master, white as a sheet: "no matter how unjustly come by. It remains for me, then, to die at my lord's door, where my dead body will form a very cheerful ornament."

"Away with your affectations!" cries my lord. "You know very well I have no such meaning; only to protect myself from calumny, and my home from your intrusion. I offer you a choice. Either I shall pay your passage home on the first ship, when you may perhaps be able to resume your occupations under Government, although God knows I would rather see you on the highway! Or, if that likes you not, stay here and welcome! I have inquired the least sum on which body and soul can be decently kept together in New York; so much you shall have, paid weekly; and if you cannot labour with your hands to better it, high time you should betake yourself to learn. The condition is - that you speak with no member of my family except myself," he added.

I do not think I have ever seen any man so pale as was the Master; but he was erect and his mouth firm.

"I have been met here with some very unmerited insults," said he, "from which I have certainly no idea to take refuge by flight. Give me your pittance; I take it without shame, for it is mine already - like the shirt upon your back; and I choose to stay until these gentlemen shall understand me better. Already they must spy the cloven hoof, since with all your pretended eagerness for the family honour, you take a pleasure to degrade it in my person."

"This is all very fine," says my lord; "but to us who know you of old, you must be sure it signifies nothing. You take that alternative out of which you think that you can make the most. Take it, if you can, in silence; it will serve you better in the long run, you may believe me, than this ostentation of ingratitude."

"Oh, gratitude, my lord!" cries the Master, with a mounting intonation and his forefinger very conspicuously lifted up. "Be at rest: it will not fail you. It now remains that I should salute these gentlemen whom we have wearied with our family affairs."

And he bowed to each in succession, settled his walking-sword, and took himself off, leaving every one amazed at his behaviour, and me not less so at my lord's.

We were now to enter on a changed phase of this family division. The Master was by no manner of means so helpless as my lord supposed, having at his hand, and entirely devoted to his service, an excellent artist in all sorts of goldsmith work. With my lord's allowance, which was not so scanty as he had described it, the pair could support life; and all the earnings of Secundra Dass might be laid upon one side for any future purpose. That this was done, I have no doubt. It was in all likelihood the Master's design to gather a sufficiency, and then proceed in quest of that treasure which he had buried long before among the mountains; to which, if he had confined himself, he would have been more happily inspired. But unfortunately for himself and all of us, he took counsel of his anger. The public disgrace of his arrival - which I sometimes wonder he could manage to survive - rankled in his bones; he was in that humour when a man - in the words of the old adage - will cut off his nose to spite his face; and he must make himself a public spectacle in the hopes that some of the disgrace might spatter on my lord.

He chose, in a poor quarter of the town, a lonely, small house of boards, overhung with some acacias. It was furnished in front with a sort of hutch opening, like that of a dog's kennel, but about as high as a table from the ground, in which the poor man that built it had formerly displayed some wares; and it was this which took the Master's fancy and possibly suggested his proceedings. It appears, on board the pirate ship he had acquired some quickness with the needle - enough, at least, to play the part of tailor in the public eye; which was all that was required by the nature of his vengeance. A placard was hung above the hutch, bearing these words in something of the following disposition:

JAMES DURIE,
FORMERLY MASTER OF BALLANTRAE.
CLOTHES NEATLY CLOUTED.

* * * * *

SECUNDRA DASS,
DECAYED GENTLEMAN OF INDIA.
FINE GOLDSMITH WORK.

Underneath this, when he had a job, my gentleman sat withinside tailor-wise and busily stitching. I say, when he had a job; but such customers as came were rather for Secundra, and the Master's sewing would be more in the manner of Penelope's. He could never have designed to gain even butter to his bread by such a means of livelihood: enough for him that there was the name of Durie dragged in the dirt on the placard, and the sometime heir of that proud family set up cross-legged in public for a reproach upon his brother's meanness. And in so far his device succeeded that there was murmuring in the town and a party formed highly inimical to my lord. My lord's favour with the Governor laid him more open on the other side; my lady (who was never so well received in the colony) met with painful innuendoes; in a party of women, where it would be the topic most natural to introduce, she was almost debarred from the naming of needle-work; and I have seen her return with a flushed countenance and vow that she would go abroad no more.

In the meanwhile my lord dwelled in his decent mansion, immersed in farming; a popular man with his intimates, and careless or unconscious of the rest. He laid on flesh; had a bright, busy face; even the heat seemed to prosper with him; and my lady - in despite of her own annoyances - daily blessed Heaven her father should have left her such a paradise. She had looked on from a window upon the Master's humiliation; and from that hour appeared to feel at ease. I was not so sure myself; as time went on, there seemed to me a something not quite wholesome in my lord's condition. Happy he was, beyond a doubt, but the grounds of this felicity were wont; even in the bosom of his family he brooded with manifest delight upon some private thought; and I conceived at last the suspicion (quite unworthy of us both) that he kept a mistress somewhere in the town. Yet he went little abroad, and his day was very fully occupied; indeed, there was but a single period, and that pretty early in the morning, while Mr. Alexander was at his lesson-book, of which I was not certain of the disposition. It should be borne in mind, in the defence of that which I now did, that I was always in some fear my lord was not quite justly in his reason; and with our enemy sitting so still in the same town with us, I did well to be upon my guard. Accordingly I made a pretext, had the hour changed at which I taught Mr. Alexander the foundation of cyphering and the mathematic, and set myself instead to dog my master's footsteps.

Every morning, fair or foul, he took his gold-headed cane, set his hat on the back of his head - a recent habitude, which I thought to indicate a burning brow - and betook himself to make a certain circuit. At the first his way was among pleasant trees and beside a graveyard, where he would sit awhile, if the day were fine, in meditation. Presently the path turned down to the waterside, and came back along the harbour-front and past the Master's booth. As he approached this second part of his circuit, my Lord Durrisdeer began to pace more leisurely, like a man delighted with the air and scene; and before the booth, half-way between that and the water's edge, would pause a little, leaning on his staff. It was the hour when the Master sate within upon his board and plied his needle. So these two brothers would gaze upon each other with hard faces; and then my lord move on again, smiling to himself.

It was but twice that I must stoop to that ungrateful necessity of playing spy. I was then certain of my lord's purpose in his rambles and of the secret source of his delight. Here was his mistress: it was hatred and not love that gave him healthful colours. Some moralists might have been relieved by the discovery; I confess that I was dismayed. I found this situation of two brethren not only odious in itself, but big with possibilities of further evil; and I made it my practice, in so far as many occupations would allow, to go by a shorter path and be secretly present at their meeting. Coming down one day a little late, after I had been near a week prevented, I was struck with surprise to find a new development. I should say there was a bench against the Master's house, where customers might sit to parley with the shopman; and here I found my lord seated, nursing his cane and looking pleasantly forth upon the bay. Not three feet from him sate the Master, stitching. Neither spoke; nor (in this new situation) did my lord so much as cut a glance upon his enemy. He tasted his neighbourhood, I must suppose, less indirectly in the bare proximity of person; and, without doubt, drank deep of hateful pleasures.

He had no sooner come away than I openly joined him. "My lord, my lord," said I, "this is no manner of behaviour."

"I grow fat upon it," he replied; and not merely the words, which were strange enough, but the whole character of his expression, shocked me.

"I warn you, my lord, against this indulgency of evil feeling," said I. "I know not to which it is more perilous, the soul or the reason; but you go the way to murder both."

"You cannot understand," said he. "You had never such mountains of bitterness upon your heart."

"And if it were no more," I added, "you will surely goad the man to some extremity."

"To the contrary; I am breaking his spirit," says my lord.

Every morning for hard upon a week my lord took his same place upon the bench. It was a pleasant place, under the green acacias, with a sight upon the bay and shipping, and a sound (from some way off) of marines singing at their employ. Here the two sate without speech or any external movement, beyond that of the needle or the Master biting off a thread, for he still clung to his pretence of industry; and here I made a point to join them, wondering at myself and my companions. If any of my lord's friends went by, he would hail them cheerfully, and cry out he was there to give some good advice to his brother, who was now (to his delight) grown quite industrious. And even this the Master accepted with a steady countenance; what was in his mind, God knows, or perhaps Satan only.

All of a sudden, on a still day of what they call the Indian Summer, when the woods were changed into gold and pink and scarlet, the Master laid down his needle and burst into a fit of merriment. I think he must have been preparing it a long while in silence, for the note in itself was pretty naturally pitched; but breaking suddenly from so extreme a silence, and in circumstances so averse from mirth, it sounded ominously on my ear.

"Henry," said he, "I have for once made a false step, and for once you have had the wit to profit by it. The farce of the cobbler ends to-day; and I confess to you (with my compliments) that you have had the best of it. Blood will out; and you have certainly a choice idea of how to make yourself unpleasant."

Never a word said my lord; it was just as though the Master had not broken silence.

"Come," resumed the Master, "do not be sulky; it will spoil your attitude. You can now afford (believe me) to be a little gracious; for I have not merely a defeat to accept. I had meant to continue this performance till I had gathered enough money for a certain purpose; I confess ingenuously, I have not the courage. You naturally desire my absence from this town; I have come round by another way to the same idea. And I have a proposition to make; or, if your lordship prefers, a favour to ask."

"Ask it," says my lord.

"You may have heard that I had once in this country a considerable treasure," returned the Master; "it matters not whether or no - such is the fact; and I was obliged to bury it in a spot of which I have sufficient indications. To the recovery of this, has my ambition now come down; and, as it is my own, you will not grudge it me."

"Go and get it," says my lord. "I make no opposition."

"Yes," said the Master; "but to do so, I must find men and carriage. The way is long and rough, and the country infested with wild Indians. Advance me only so much as shall be needful: either as a lump sum, in lieu of my allowance; or, if you prefer it, as a loan, which I shall repay on my return. And then, if you so decide, you may have seen the last of me."

My lord stared him steadily in the eyes; there was a hard smile upon his face, but he uttered nothing.

"Henry," said the Master, with a formidable quietness, and drawing at the same time somewhat back - "Henry, I had the honour to address you."

"Let us be stepping homeward," says my lord to me, who was plucking at his sleeve; and with that he rose, stretched himself, settled his hat, and still without a syllable of response, began to walk steadily along the shore.

I hesitated awhile between the two brothers, so serious a climax did we seem to have reached. But the Master had resumed his occupation, his eyes lowered, his hand seemingly as deft as ever; and I decided to pursue my lord.

"Are you mad?" I cried, so soon as I had overtook him. "Would you cast away so fair an opportunity?"

"Is it possible you should still believe in him?" inquired my lord, almost with a sneer.

"I wish him forth of this town!" I cried. "I wish him anywhere and anyhow but as he is."

"I have said my say," returned my lord, "and you have said yours.

There let it rest."

But I was bent on dislodging the Master. That sight of him patiently returning to his needlework was more than my imagination could digest. There was never a man made, and the Master the least of any, that could accept so long a series of insults. The air smelt blood to me. And I vowed there should be no neglect of mine if, through any chink of possibility, crime could be yet turned aside. That same day, therefore, I came to my lord in his business room, where he sat upon some trivial occupation.

"My lord," said I, "I have found a suitable investment for my small economies. But these are unhappily in Scotland; it will take some time to lift them, and the affair presses. Could your lordship see his way to advance me the amount against my note?"

He read me awhile with keen eyes. "I have never inquired into the state of your affairs, Mackellar," says he. "Beyond the amount of your caution, you may not be worth a farthing, for what I know."

"I have been a long while in your service, and never told a lie, nor yet asked a favour for myself," said I, "until to-day."

"A favour for the Master," he returned, quietly. "Do you take me for a fool, Mackellar? Understand it once and for all, I treat this beast in my own way; fear nor favour shall not move me; and before I am hoodwinked, it will require a trickster less transparent than yourself. I ask service, loyal service; not that you should make and mar behind my back, and steal my own money to defeat me."

"My lord," said I, "these are very unpardonable expressions."

"Think once more, Mackellar," he replied; "and you will see they fit the fact. It is your own subterfuge that is unpardonable. Deny (if you can) that you designed this money to evade my orders with, and I will ask your pardon freely. If you cannot, you must have the resolution to hear your conduct go by its own name."

"If you think I had any design but to save you - " I began.

"Oh! my old friend," said he, "you know very well what I think! Here is my hand to you with all my heart; but of money, not one rap."

Defeated upon this side, I went straight to my room, wrote a letter, ran with it to the harbour, for I knew a ship was on the point of sailing; and came to the Master's door a little before dusk. Entering without the form of any knock, I found him sitting with his Indian at a simple meal of maize porridge with some milk. The house within was clean and poor; only a few books upon a shelf distinguished it, and (in one corner) Secundra's little bench.

"Mr. Bally," said I, "I have near five hundred pounds laid by in Scotland, the economies of a hard life. A letter goes by yon ship to have it lifted. Have so much patience till the return ship comes in, and it is all yours, upon the same condition you offered to my lord this morning.”

He rose from the table, came forward, took me by the shoulders, and looked me in the face, smiling.

“And yet you are very fond of money!” said he. “And yet you love money beyond all things else, except my brother!”

“I fear old age and poverty,” said I, “which is another matter.”

“I will never quarrel for a name. Call it so,” he replied. “Ah! Mackellar, Mackellar, if this were done from any love to me, how gladly would I close upon your offer!”

“And yet,” I eagerly answered - “I say it to my shame, but I cannot see you in this poor place without compunction. It is not my single thought, nor my first; and yet it’s there! I would gladly see you delivered. I do not offer it in love, and far from that; but, as God judges me - and I wonder at it too! - quite without enmity.”

“Ah!” says he, still holding my shoulders, and now gently shaking me, “you think of me more than you suppose. ‘And I wonder at it too,’“ he added, repeating my expression and, I suppose, something of my voice. “You are an honest man, and for that cause I spare you.”

“Spare me?” I cried.

“Spare you,” he repeated, letting me go and turning away. And then, fronting me once more. “You little know what I would do with it, Mackellar! Did you think I had swallowed my defeat indeed? Listen: my life has been a series of unmerited cast-backs. That fool, Prince Charlie, mismanaged a most promising affair: there fell my first fortune. In Paris I had my foot once more high upon the ladder: that time it was an accident; a letter came to the wrong hand, and I was bare again. A third time, I found my opportunity; I built up a place for myself in India with an infinite patience; and then Clive came, my rajah was swallowed up, and I escaped out of the convulsion, like another AEneas, with Secundra Dass upon my back. Three times I have had my hand upon the highest station: and I am not yet three-and-forty. I know the world as few men know it when they come to die - Court and camp, the East and the West; I know where to go, I see a thousand openings. I am now at the height of my resources, sound of health, of inordinate ambition. Well, all this I resign; I care not if I die, and the world never hear of me; I care only for one thing, and that I will have. Mind yourself; lest, when the roof falls, you, too, should be crushed under the ruins.”

As I came out of his house, all hope of intervention quite destroyed, I was aware of a stir on the harbour-side, and, raising my eyes, there was a great ship newly come to anchor. It seems strange I could have looked upon her with so much indifference, for she brought death to the brothers of Durrisdeer. After all the desperate episodes of this contention, the insults, the opposing interests, the fraternal duel in the shrubbery, it was reserved for some poor devil in Grub Street, scribbling for his dinner, and not caring what he scribbled, to cast a spell across four thousand miles of the salt sea, and send forth both these brothers into savage and wintry deserts, there to die. But such a thought was distant from my mind; and while all the provincials were fluttered about me by the unusual animation of their port, I passed throughout their midst on my return homeward, quite absorbed in the recollection of my visit and the Master's speech.

The same night there was brought to us from the ship a little packet of pamphlets. The next day my lord was under engagement to go with the Governor upon some party of pleasure; the time was nearly due, and I left him for a moment alone in his room and skimming through the pamphlets. When I returned, his head had fallen upon the table, his arms lying abroad amongst the crumpled papers.

"My lord, my lord!" I cried as I ran forward, for I supposed he was in some fit.

He sprang up like a figure upon wires, his countenance deformed with fury, so that in a strange place I should scarce have known him. His hand at the same time flew above his head, as though to strike me down. "Leave me alone!" he screeched, and I fled, as fast as my shaking legs would bear me, for my lady. She, too, lost no time; but when we returned, he had the door locked within, and only cried to us from the other side to leave him be. We looked in each other's faces, very white - each supposing the blow had come at last.

"I will write to the Governor to excuse him," says she. "We must keep our strong friends." But when she took up the pen, it flew out of her fingers. "I cannot write," said she. "Can you?"

"I will make a shift, my lady," said I.

She looked over me as I wrote. "That will do," she said, when I had done. "Thank God, Mackellar, I have you to lean upon! But what can it be now? What, what can it be?"

In my own mind, I believed there was no explanation possible, and none required; it was my fear that the man's madness had now simply burst forth its way, like the long-smothered flames of a volcano; but to this (in mere mercy to my lady) I durst not give expression.

"It is more to the purpose to consider our own behaviour," said I. "Must we leave him there alone?"

"I do not dare disturb him," she replied. "Nature may know best; it may be Nature that cries to be alone; and we grope in the dark. Oh yes, I would leave him as he is."

"I will, then, despatch this letter, my lady, and return here, if you please, to sit with you," said I.

"Pray do," cries my lady.

All afternoon we sat together, mostly in silence, watching my lord's door. My own mind was busy with the scene that had just passed, and its singular resemblance to my vision. I must say a word upon this, for the story has gone abroad with great exaggeration, and I have even seen it printed, and my own name referred to for particulars. So much was the same: here was my lord in a room, with his head upon the table, and when he raised his face, it wore such an expression as distressed me to the soul. But the room was different, my lord's attitude at the table not at all the same, and his face, when he disclosed it, expressed a painful degree of fury instead of that haunting despair which had always (except once, already referred to) characterised it in the vision. There is the whole truth at last before the public; and if the differences be great, the coincidence was yet enough to fill me with uneasiness. All afternoon, as I say, I sat and pondered upon this quite to myself; for my lady had trouble of her own, and it was my last thought to vex her with fancies. About the midst of our time of waiting, she conceived an ingenious scheme, had Mr. Alexander fetched, and bid him knock at his father's door. My lord sent the boy about his business, but without the least violence, whether of manner or expression; so that I began to entertain a hope the fit was over.

At last, as the night fell and I was lighting a lamp that stood there trimmed, the door opened and my lord stood within upon the threshold. The light was not so strong that we could read his countenance; when he spoke, methought his voice a little altered but yet perfectly steady.

"Mackellar," said he, "carry this note to its destination with your own hand. It is highly private. Find the person alone when you deliver it."

"Henry," says my lady, "you are not ill?"

"No, no," says be, querulously, "I am occupied. Not at all; I am only occupied. It is a singular thing a man must be supposed to be ill when he has any business! Send me supper to this room, and a basket of wine: I expect the visit of a friend. Otherwise I am not to be disturbed."

And with that he once more shut himself in.

The note was addressed to one Captain Harris, at a tavern on the portside. I knew Harris (by reputation) for a dangerous adventurer, highly suspected of piracy in the past, and now following the rude business of an Indian trader. What my lord should have to say to him, or he to my lord, it passed my imagination to conceive: or yet how my lord had heard of him, unless by a disgraceful trial from which the man was recently escaped. Altogether I went upon the errand with reluctance, and from the little I saw of the captain, returned from it with sorrow. I found him in a foul-smelling chamber, sitting by a guttering candle and an empty bottle; he had the remains of a military carriage, or rather perhaps it was an affectation, for his manners were low.

"Tell my lord, with my service, that I will wait upon his lordship in the inside of half an hour," says he, when he had read the note; and then had the servility, pointing to his empty bottle, to propose that I should buy him liquor.

Although I returned with my best speed, the Captain followed close upon my heels, and he stayed late into the night. The cock was crowing a second time when I saw (from my chamber window) my lord lighting him to the gate, both men very much affected with their potations, and sometimes leaning one upon the other to confabulate. Yet the next morning my lord was abroad again early with a hundred pounds of money in his pocket. I never supposed that he returned with it; and yet I was quite sure it did not find its way to the Master, for I lingered all morning within view of the booth. That was the last time my Lord Durrisdeer passed his own enclosure till we left New York; he walked in his barn, or sat and talked with his family, all much as usual; but the town saw nothing of him, and his daily visits to the Master seemed forgotten. Nor yet did Harris reappear; or not until the end.

I was now much oppressed with a sense of the mysteries in which we had begun to move. It was plain, if only from his change of habitude, my lord had something on his mind of a grave nature; but what it was, whence it sprang, or why he should now keep the house and garden, I could make no guess at. It was clear, even to probation, the pamphlets had some share in this revolution; I read all I could find, and they were all extremely insignificant, and of the usual kind of party scurrility; even to a high politician, I could spy out no particular matter of offence, and my lord was a man rather indifferent on public questions. The truth is, the pamphlet which was the spring of this affair, lay all the time on my lord's bosom. There it was that I found it at last, after he was dead, in the midst of the north wilderness: in such a place, in such dismal circumstances, I was to read for the first time these idle, lying words of a Whig pamphleteer declaiming against indulgency to Jacobites:- "Another notorious Rebel, the M-r of B-e, is to have his Title restored," the passage ran. "This Business has been long in hand, since he rendered some very disgraceful Services in Scotland and France. His Brother, L-D D-R, is known to be no better than himself in Inclination; and the supposed Heir, who is now to be set aside, was bred up in the most detestable Principles. In the old Phrase, it is SIX OF THE ONE AND HALF A DOZEN OF THE OTHER; but the Favour of such a Reposition is too extreme to be passed over." A man in his right wits could not have cared two straws for a tale so manifestly false; that Government should ever entertain the notion, was inconceivable to any reasoning creature, unless possibly the fool that penned it; and my lord, though never brilliant, was ever remarkable for sense. That he should credit such a rodomontade, and carry the pamphlet on his bosom and the words in his heart, is the clear proof of the man's lunacy. Doubtless the mere mention of Mr. Alexander, and the threat directly held out against the child's succession, precipitated that which had so long impended. Or else my master had been truly mad for a long time, and we were too dull or too much used to him, and did not perceive the extent of his infirmity.

About a week after the day of the pamphlets I was late upon the harbour-side, and took a turn towards the Master's, as I often did. The door opened, a flood of light came forth upon the road, and I beheld a man taking his departure with friendly salutations. I cannot say how singularly I was shaken to recognise the adventurer Harris. I could not but conclude it was the hand of my lord that had brought him there; and prolonged my walk in very serious and apprehensive thought. It was late when I came home, and there was my lord making up his portmanteau for a voyage.

"Why do you come so late?" he cried. "We leave to-morrow for Albany, you and I together; and it is high time you were about your preparations."

"For Albany, my lord?" I cried. "And for what earthly purpose?"

"Change of scene," said he.

And my lady, who appeared to have been weeping, gave me the signal to obey without more parley. She told me a little later (when we found occasion to exchange some words) that he had suddenly announced his intention after a visit from Captain Harris, and her best endeavours, whether to dissuade him from the journey, or to elicit some explanation of its purpose, had alike proved unavailing.

CHAPTER XI. - THE JOURNEY IN THE WILDERNESS.

We made a prosperous voyage up that fine river of the Hudson, the weather grateful, the hills singularly beautified with the colours of the autumn. At Albany we had our residence at an inn, where I was not so blind and my lord not so cunning but what I could see he had some design to hold me prisoner. The work he found for me to do was not so pressing that we should transact it apart from necessary papers in the chamber of an inn; nor was it of such importance that I should be set upon as many as four or five scrolls of the same document. I submitted in appearance; but I took private measures on my own side, and had the news of the town communicated to me daily by the politeness of our host. In this way I received at last a piece of intelligence for which, I may say, I had been waiting. Captain Harris (I was told) with “Mr. Mountain, the trader,” had gone by up the river in a boat. I would have feared the landlord’s eye, so strong the sense of some complicity upon my master’s part oppressed me. But I made out to say I had some knowledge of the Captain, although none of Mr. Mountain, and to inquire who else was of the party. My informant knew not; Mr. Mountain had come ashore upon some needful purchases; had gone round the town buying, drinking, and prating; and it seemed the party went upon some likely venture, for he had spoken much of great things he would do when he returned. No more was known, for none of the rest had come ashore, and it seemed they were pressed for time to reach a certain spot before the snow should fall.

And sure enough, the next day, there fell a sprinkle even in Albany; but it passed as it came, and was but a reminder of what lay before us. I thought of it lightly then, knowing so little as I did of that inclement province: the retrospect is different; and I wonder at times if some of the horror of there events which I must now rehearse flowed not from the foul skies and savage winds to which we were exposed, and the agony of cold that we must suffer.

The boat having passed by, I thought at first we should have left the town. But no such matter. My lord continued his stay in Albany where he had no ostensible affairs, and kept me by him, far from my due employment, and making a pretence of occupation. It is upon this passage I expect, and perhaps deserve, censure. I was not so dull but what I had my own thoughts. I could not see the Master entrust himself into the hands of Harris, and not suspect some underhand contrivance. Harris bore a villainous reputation, and he had been tampered with in private by my lord; Mountain, the trader, proved, upon inquiry, to be another of the same kidney; the errand they were all gone upon being the recovery of ill-gotten treasures, offered in itself a very strong incentive to foul play; and the character of the country where they journeyed promised impunity to deeds of blood. Well: it is true I had all these thoughts and fears, and guesses of the Master's fate. But you are to consider I was the same man that sought to dash him from the bulwarks of a ship in the mid-sea; the same that, a little before, very impiously but sincerely offered God a bargain, seeking to hire God to be my bravo. It is true again that I had a good deal melted towards our enemy. But this I always thought of as a weakness of the flesh and even culpable; my mind remaining steady and quite bent against him. True, yet again, that it was one thing to assume on my own shoulders the guilt and danger of a criminal attempt, and another to stand by and see my lord imperil and besmirch himself. But this was the very ground of my inaction. For (should I anyway stir in the business) I might fail indeed to save the Master, but I could not miss to make a byword of my lord.

Thus it was that I did nothing; and upon the same reasons, I am still strong to justify my course. We lived meanwhile in Albany, but though alone together in a strange place, had little traffic beyond formal salutations. My lord had carried with him several introductions to chief people of the town and neighbourhood; others he had before encountered in New York: with this consequence, that he went much abroad, and I am sorry to say was altogether too convivial in his habits. I was often in bed, but never asleep, when he returned; and there was scarce a night when he did not betray the influence of liquor. By day he would still lay upon me endless tasks, which he showed considerable ingenuity to fish up and renew, in the manner of Penelope's web. I never refused, as I say, for I was hired to do his bidding; but I took no pains to keep my penetration under a bushel, and would sometimes smile in his face.

"I think I must be the devil and you Michael Scott," I said to him one day. "I have bridged Tweed and split the Eildons; and now you set me to the rope of sand."

He looked at me with shining eyes, and looked away again, his jaw chewing, but without words.

"Well, well, my lord," said I, "your will is my pleasure. I will do this thing for the fourth time; but I would beg of you to invent another task against to-morrow, for by my troth, I am weary of this one."

"You do not know what you are saying," returned my lord, putting on his hat and turning his back to me. "It is a strange thing you should take a pleasure to annoy me. A friend - but that is a different affair. It is a strange thing. I am a man that has had ill-fortune all my life through. I am still surrounded by contrivances. I am always treading in plots," he burst out. "The whole world is banded against me."

"I would not talk wicked nonsense if I were you," said I; "but I will tell you what I WOULD do - I would put my head in cold water, for you had more last night than you could carry."

"Do ye think that?" said he, with a manner of interest highly awakened. "Would that be good for me? It's a thing I never tried."

"I mind the days when you had no call to try, and I wish, my lord, that they were back again," said I. "But the plain truth is, if you continue to exceed, you will do yourself a mischief."

"I don't appear to carry drink the way I used to," said my lord. "I get overtaken, Mackellar. But I will be more upon my guard."

"That is what I would ask of you," I replied. "You are to bear in mind that you are Mr. Alexander's father: give the bairn a chance to carry his name with some responsibility."

"Ay, ay," said he. "Ye're a very sensible man, Mackellar, and have been long in my employ. But I think, if you have nothing more to say to me I will be stepping. If you have nothing more to say?" he added, with that burning, childish eagerness that was now so common with the man.

"No, my lord, I have nothing more," said I, dryly enough.

"Then I think I will be stepping," says my lord, and stood and looked at me fidgeting with his hat, which he had taken off again. "I suppose you will have no errands? No? I am to meet Sir William Johnson, but I will be more upon my guard." He was silent for a time, and then, smiling: "Do you call to mind a place, Mackellar - it's a little below Engles - where the burn runs very deep under a wood of rowans. I mind being there when I was a lad - dear, it comes over me like an old song! - I was after the fishing, and I made a bonny cast. Eh, but I was happy. I wonder, Mackellar, why I am never happy now?"

"My lord," said I, "if you would drink with more moderation you would have the better chance. It is an old byword that the bottle is a false consoler."

"No doubt," said he, "no doubt. Well, I think I will be going."

"Good-morning, my lord," said I.

"Good-morning, good-morning," said he, and so got himself at last from the apartment.

I give that for a fair specimen of my lord in the morning; and I must have described my patron very ill if the reader does not perceive a notable falling off. To behold the man thus fallen: to know him accepted among his companions for a poor, muddled toper, welcome (if he were welcome at all) for the bare consideration of his title; and to recall the virtues he had once displayed against such odds of fortune; was not this a thing at once to rage and to be humbled at?

In his cups, he was more expensive. I will give but the one scene, close upon the end, which is strongly marked upon my memory to this day, and at the time affected me almost with horror

I was in bed, lying there awake, when I heard him stumbling on the stair and singing. My lord had no gift of music, his brother had all the graces of the family, so that when I say singing, you are to understand a manner of high, carolling utterance, which was truly neither speech nor song. Something not unlike is to be heard upon the lips of children, ere they learn shame; from those of a man grown elderly, it had a strange effect. He opened the door with noisy precaution; peered in, shading his candle; conceived me to slumber; entered, set his light upon the table, and took off his hat. I saw him very plain; a high, feverish exultation appeared to boil in his veins, and he stood and smiled and smirked upon the candle. Presently he lifted up his arm, snapped his fingers, and fell to undress. As he did so, having once more forgot my presence, he took back to his singing; and now I could hear the words, which were those from the old song of the TWA CORBIES endlessly repeated:

“And over his banes when they are bare
The wind sall blaw for evermair!”

I have said there was no music in the man. His strains had no logical succession except in so far as they inclined a little to the minor mode; but they exercised a rude potency upon the feelings, and followed the words, and signified the feelings of the singer with barbaric fitness. He took it first in the time and manner of a rant; presently this ill-favoured gleefulness abated, he began to dwell upon the notes more feelingly, and sank at last into a degree of maudlin pathos that was to me scarce bearable. By equal steps, the original briskness of his acts declined; and when he was stripped to his breeches, he sat on the bedside and fell to whimpering. I know nothing less respectable than the tears of drunkenness, and turned my back impatiently on this poor sight.

But he had started himself (I am to suppose) on that slippery descent of self-pity; on the which, to a man unstrung by old sorrows and recent potations there is no arrest except exhaustion. His tears continued to flow, and the man to sit there, three parts naked, in the cold air of the chamber. I twitted myself alternately with inhumanity and sentimental weakness, now half rising in my bed to interfere, now reading myself lessons of indifference and courting slumber, until, upon a sudden, the QUANTUM MUTATUS AB ILLO shot into my mind; and calling to remembrance his old wisdom, constancy, and patience, I was overborne with a pity almost approaching the passionate, not for my master alone but for the sons of man.

At this I leaped from my place, went over to his side and laid a hand on his bare shoulder, which was cold as stone. He uncovered his face and showed it me all swollen and begrutten (10) like a child's; and at the sight my impatience partially revived.

"Think shame to yourself," said I. "This is bairnly conduct. I might have been snivelling myself, if I had cared to swill my belly with wine. But I went to my bed sober like a man. Come: get into yours, and have done with this pitiable exhibition."

"Oh, Mackellar," said he, "my heart is wae!"

"Wae?" cried I. "For a good cause, I think. What words were these you sang as you came in? Show pity to others, we then can talk of pity to yourself. You can be the one thing or the other, but I will be no party to half-way houses. If you're a striker, strike, and if you're a bleater, bleat!"

"Cry!" cries he, with a burst, "that's it - strike! that's talking! Man, I've stood it all too long. But when they laid a hand upon the child, when the child's threatened" - his momentary vigour whimpering off - "my child, my Alexander!" - and he was at his tears again.

I took him by the shoulders and shook him. "Alexander!" said I. "Do you even think of him? Not you! Look yourself in the face like a brave man, and you'll find you're but a self-deceiver. The wife, the friend, the child, they're all equally forgot, and you sunk in a mere log of selfishness."

"Mackellar," said he, with a wonderful return to his old manner and appearance, "you may say what you will of me, but one thing I never was - I was never selfish."

"I will open your eyes in your despite," said I. "How long have we been here? and how often have you written to your family? I think this is the first time you were ever separate: have you written at all? Do they know if you are dead or living?"

I had caught him here too openly; it braced his better nature; there was no more weeping, he thanked me very penitently, got to bed and was soon fast asleep; and the first thing he did the next morning was to sit down and begin a letter to my lady: a very tender letter it was too, though it was never finished. Indeed all communication with New York was transacted by myself; and it will be judged I had a thankless task of it. What to tell my lady and in what words, and how far to be false and how far cruel, was a thing that kept me often from my slumber.

All this while, no doubt, my lord waited with growing impatiency for news of his accomplices. Harris, it is to be thought, had promised a high degree of expedition; the time was already overpast when word was to be looked for; and suspense was a very evil counsellor to a man of an impaired intelligence. My lord's mind throughout this interval dwelled almost wholly in the Wilderness, following that party with whose deeds he had so much concern. He continually conjured up their camps and progresses, the fashion of the country, the perpetration in a thousand different manners of the same horrid fact, and that consequent spectacle of the Master’s bones lying scattered in the wind. These private, guilty considerations I would continually observe to peep forth in the man’s talk, like rabbits from a hill. And it is the less wonder if the scene of his meditations began to draw him bodily.

It is well known what pretext he took. Sir William Johnson had a diplomatic errand in these parts; and my lord and I (from curiosity, as was given out) went in his company. Sir William was well attended and liberally supplied. Hunters brought us venison, fish was taken for us daily in the streams, and brandy ran like water. We proceeded by day and encamped by night in the military style; sentinels were set and changed; every man had his named duty; and Sir William was the spring of all. There was much in this that might at times have entertained me; but for our misfortune, the weather was extremely harsh, the days were in the beginning open, but the nights frosty from the first. A painful keen wind blew most of the time, so that we sat in the boat with blue fingers, and at night, as we scorched our faces at the fire, the clothes upon our back appeared to be of paper. A dreadful solitude surrounded our steps; the land was quite dispeopled, there was no smoke of fires, and save for a single boat of merchants on the second day, we met no travellers. The season was indeed late, but this desertion of the waterways impressed Sir William himself; and I have heard him more than once express a sense of intimidation. “I have come too late, I fear; they must have dug up the hatchet;” he said; and the future proved how justly he had reasoned.

I could never depict the blackness of my soul upon this journey. I have none of those minds that are in love with the unusual: to see the winter coming and to lie in the field so far from any house, oppressed me like a nightmare; it seemed, indeed, a kind of awful braving of God’s power; and this thought, which I daresay only writes me down a coward, was greatly exaggerated by my private knowledge of the errand we were come upon. I was besides encumbered by my duties to Sir William, whom it fell upon me to entertain; for my lord was quite sunk into a state bordering on PERVIGILIUM, watching the woods with a rapt eye, sleeping scarce at all, and speaking sometimes not twenty words in a whole day. That which he said was still coherent; but it turned almost invariably upon the party for whom he kept his crazy lookout. He would tell Sir William often, and always as if it were a new communication, that he had “a brother somewhere in the woods,” and beg that the sentinels should be directed “to inquire for him.” “I am anxious for news of my brother,” he would say. And sometimes, when we were under way, he would fancy he spied a canoe far off upon the water or a camp on the shore, and exhibit painful agitation. It was impossible but Sir William should be struck with these singularities; and at last he led me aside, and hinted his uneasiness. I touched my head and shook it; quite rejoiced to prepare a little testimony against possible disclosures.

"But in that case," cries Sir William, "is it wise to let him go at large?"

"Those that know him best," said I, "are persuaded that he should be humoured."

"Well, well," replied Sir William, "it is none of my affairs. But if I had understood, you would never have been here."

Our advance into this savage country had thus uneventfully proceeded for about a week, when we encamped for a night at a place where the river ran among considerable mountains clothed in wood. The fires were lighted on a level space at the water's edge; and we supped and lay down to sleep in the customary fashion. It chanced the night fell murderously cold; the stringency of the frost seized and bit me through my coverings so that pain kept me wakeful; and I was afoot again before the peep of day, crouching by the fires or trotting to and for at the stream's edge, to combat the aching of my limbs. At last dawn began to break upon hoar woods and mountains, the sleepers rolled in their robes, and the boisterous river dashing among spears of ice. I stood looking about me, swaddled in my stiff coat of a bull's fur, and the breath smoking from my scorched nostrils, when, upon a sudden, a singular, eager cry rang from the borders of the wood. The sentries answered it, the sleepers sprang to their feet; one pointed, the rest followed his direction with their eyes, and there, upon the edge of the forest and betwixt two trees, we beheld the figure of a man reaching forth his hands like one in ecstasy. The next moment he ran forward, fell on his knees at the side of the camp, and burst in tears.

This was John Mountain, the trader, escaped from the most horrid perils; and his fist word, when he got speech, was to ask if we had seen Secundra Dass.

"Seen what?" cries Sir William.

"No," said I, "we have seen nothing of him. Why?"

"Nothing?" says Mountain. "Then I was right after all." With that he struck his palm upon his brow. "But what takes him back?" he cried. "What takes the man back among dead bodies. There is some damned mystery here."

This was a word which highly aroused our curiosity, but I shall be more perspicacious, if I narrate these incidents in their true order. Here follows a narrative which I have compiled out of three sources, not very consistent in all points:

FIRST, a written statement by Mountain, in which everything criminal is cleverly smuggled out of view;

SECOND, two conversations with Secundra Dass; and

THIRD, many conversations with Mountain himself, in which he was pleased to be entirely plain; for the truth is he regarded me as an accomplice.

NARRATIVE OF THE TRADER, MOUNTAIN.

The crew that went up the river under the joint command of Captain Harris and the Master numbered in all nine persons, of whom (if I except Secundra Dass) there was not one that had not merited the gallows. From Harris downward the voyagers were notorious in that colony for desperate, bloody-minded miscreants; some were reputed pirates, the most hawkers of rum; all ranters and drinkers; all fit associates, embarking together without remorse, upon this treacherous and murderous design. I could not hear there was much discipline or any set captain in the gang; but Harris and four others, Mountain himself, two Scotchmen - Pinkerton and Hastie - and a man of the name of Hicks, a drunken shoemaker, put their heads together and agreed upon the course. In a material sense, they were well enough provided; and the Master in particular brought with him a tent where he might enjoy some privacy and shelter.

Even this small indulgence told against him in the minds of his companions. But indeed he was in a position so entirely false (and even ridiculous) that all his habit of command and arts of pleasing were here thrown away. In the eyes of all, except Secundra Dass, he figured as a common gull and designated victim; going unconsciously to death; yet he could not but suppose himself the contriver and the leader of the expedition; he could scarce help but so conduct himself and at the least hint of authority or condescension, his deceivers would be laughing in their sleeves. I was so used to see and to conceive him in a high, authoritative attitude, that when I had conceived his position on this journey, I was pained and could have blushed. How soon he may have entertained a first surmise, we cannot know; but it was long, and the party had advanced into the Wilderness beyond the reach of any help, ere he was fully awakened to the truth.

It fell thus. Harris and some others had drawn apart into the woods for consultation, when they were startled by a rustling in the brush. They were all accustomed to the arts of Indian warfare, and Mountain had not only lived and hunted, but fought and earned some reputation, with the savages. He could move in the woods without noise, and follow a trail like a hound; and upon the emergence of this alert, he was deputed by the rest to plunge into the thicket for intelligence. He was soon convinced there was a man in his close neighbourhood, moving with precaution but without art among the leaves and branches; and coming shortly to a place of advantage, he was able to observe Secundra Dass crawling briskly off with many backward glances. At this he knew not whether to laugh or cry; and his accomplices, when he had returned and reported, were in much the same dubiety. There was now no danger of an Indian onslaught; but on the other hand, since Secundra Dass was at the pains to spy upon them, it was highly probable he knew English, and if he knew English it was certain the whole of their design was in the Master's knowledge. There was one singularity in the position. If Secundra Dass knew and concealed his knowledge of English, Harris was a proficient in several of the tongues of India, and as his career in that part of the world had been a great deal worse than profligate, he had not thought proper to remark upon the circumstance. Each side had thus a spy-hole on the counsels of the other. The plotters, so soon as this advantage was explained, returned to camp; Harris, hearing the Hindustani was once more closeted with his master, crept to the side of the tent; and the rest, sitting about the fire with their tobacco, awaited his report with impatience. When he came at last, his face was very black. He had overheard enough to confirm the worst of his suspicions. Secundra Dass was a good English scholar; he had been some days creeping and listening, the Master was now fully informed of the conspiracy, and the pair proposed on the morrow to fall out of line at a carrying place and plunge at a venture in the woods: preferring the full risk of famine, savage beasts, and savage men to their position in the midst of traitors.

What, then, was to be done? Some were for killing the Master on the spot; but Harris assured them that would be a crime without profit, since the secret of the treasure must die along with him that buried it. Others were for desisting at once from the whole enterprise and making for New York; but the appetising name of treasure, and the thought of the long way they had already travelled dissuaded the majority. I imagine they were dull fellows for the most part. Harris, indeed, had some acquirements, Mountain was no fool, Hastie was an educated man; but even these had manifestly failed in life, and the rest were the dregs of colonial rascality. The conclusion they reached, at least, was more the offspring of greed and hope, than reason. It was to temporise, to be wary and watch the Master, to be silent and supply no further aliment to his suspicions, and to depend entirely (as well as I make out) on the chance that their victim was as greedy, hopeful, and irrational as themselves, and might, after all, betray his life and treasure.

Twice in the course of the next day Secundra and the Master must have appeared to themselves to have escaped; and twice they were circumvented. The Master, save that the second time he grew a little pale, displayed no sign of disappointment, apologised for the stupidity with which he had fallen aside, thanked his recapturers as for a service, and rejoined the caravan with all his usual gallantry and cheerfulness of mien and bearing. But it is certain he had smelled a rat; for from thenceforth he and Secundra spoke only in each other's ear, and Harris listened and shivered by the tent in vain. The same night it was announced they were to leave the boats and proceed by foot, a circumstance which (as it put an end to the confusion of the portages) greatly lessened the chances of escape.

And now there began between the two sides a silent contest, for life on the one hand, for riches on the other. They were now near that quarter of the desert in which the Master himself must begin to play the part of guide; and using this for a pretext of persecution, Harris and his men sat with him every night about the fire, and laboured to entrap him into some admission. If he let slip his secret, he knew well it was the warrant for his death; on the other hand, he durst not refuse their questions, and must appear to help them to the best of his capacity, or he practically published his mistrust. And yet Mountain assures me the man's brow was never ruffled. He sat in the midst of these jackals, his life depending by a thread, like some easy, witty householder at home by his own fire; an answer he had for everything - as often as not, a jesting answer; avoided threats, evaded insults; talked, laughed, and listened with an open countenance; and, in short, conducted himself in such a manner as must have disarmed suspicion, and went near to stagger knowledge. Indeed, Mountain confessed to me they would soon have disbelieved the Captain's story, and supposed their designated victim still quite innocent of their designs; but for the fact that he continued (however ingeniously) to give the slip to questions, and the yet stronger confirmation of his repeated efforts to escape. The last of these, which brought things to a head, I am now to relate. And first I should say that by this time the temper of Harris's companions was utterly worn out; civility was scarce pretended; and for one very significant circumstance, the Master and Secundra had been (on some pretext) deprived of weapons. On their side, however, the threatened pair kept up the parade of friendship handsomely; Secundra was all bows, the Master all smiles; and on the last night of the truce he had even gone so far as to sing for the diversion of the company. It was observed that he had also eaten with unusual heartiness, and drank deep, doubtless from design.

At least, about three in the morning, he came out of the tent into the open air, audibly mourning and complaining, with all the manner of a sufferer from surfeit. For some while, Secundra publicly attended on his patron, who at last became more easy, and fell asleep on the frosty ground behind the tent, the Indian returning within. Some time after, the sentry was changed; had the Master pointed out to him, where he lay in what is called a robe of buffalo: and thenceforth kept an eye upon him (he declared) without remission. With the first of the dawn, a draught of wind came suddenly and blew open one side the corner of the robe; and with the same puff, the Master's hat whirled in the air and fell some yards away. The sentry thinking it remarkable the sleeper should not awaken, thereupon drew near; and the next moment, with a great shout, informed the camp their prisoner was escaped. He had left behind his Indian, who (in the first vivacity of the surprise) came near to pay the forfeit of his life, and was, in fact, inhumanly mishandled; but Secundra, in the midst of threats and cruelties, stuck to it with extraordinary loyalty, that he was quite ignorant of his master's plans, which might indeed be true, and of the manner of his escape, which was demonstrably false. Nothing was therefore left to the conspirators but to rely entirely on the skill of Mountain. The night had been frosty, the ground quite hard; and the sun was no sooner up than a strong thaw set in. It was Mountain's boast that few men could have followed that trail, and still fewer (even of the native Indians) found it. The Master had thus a long start before his pursuers had the scent, and he must have travelled with surprising energy for a pedestrian so unused, since it was near noon before Mountain had a view of him. At this conjuncture the trader was alone, all his companions following, at his own request, several hundred yards in the rear; he knew the Master was unarmed; his heart was besides heated with the exercise and lust of hunting; and seeing the quarry so close, so defenceless, and seeming so fatigued, he vaingloriously determined to effect the capture with his single hand. A step or two farther brought him to one margin of a little clearing; on the other, with his arms folded and his back to a huge stone, the Master sat. It is possible Mountain may have made a rustle, it is certain, at least, the Master raised his head and gazed directly at that quarter of the thicket where his hunter lay; "I could not be sure he saw me," Mountain said; "he just looked my way like a man with his mind made up, and all the courage ran out of me like rum out of a bottle." And presently, when the Master looked away again, and appeared to resume those meditations in which he had sat immersed before the trader's coming, Mountain slunk stealthily back and returned to seek the help of his companions.

And now began the chapter of surprises, for the scout had scarce informed the others of his discovery, and they were yet preparing their weapons for a rush upon the fugitive, when the man himself appeared in their midst, walking openly and quietly, with his hands behind his back.

"Ah, men!" says he, on his beholding them. "Here is a fortunate encounter. Let us get back to camp."

Mountain had not mentioned his own weakness or the Master's disconcerting gaze upon the thicket, so that (with all the rest) his return appeared spontaneous. For all that, a hubbub arose; oaths flew, fists were shaken, and guns pointed.

"Let us get back to camp," said the Master. "I have an explanation to make, but it must be laid before you all. And in the meanwhile I would put up these weapons, one of which might very easily go off and blow away your hopes of treasure. I would not kill," says he, smiling, "the goose with the golden eggs."

The charm of his superiority once more triumphed; and the party, in no particular order, set off on their return. By the way, he found occasion to get a word or two apart with Mountain.

"You are a clever fellow and a bold," says he, "but I am not so sure that you are doing yourself justice. I would have you to consider whether you would not do better, ay, and safer, to serve me instead of serving so commonplace a rascal as Mr. Harris. Consider of it," he concluded, dealing the man a gentle tap upon the shoulder, "and don't be in haste. Dead or alive, you will find me an ill man to quarrel with."

When they were come back to the camp, where Harris and Pinkerton stood guard over Secundra, these two ran upon the Master like viragoes, and were amazed out of measure when they were bidden by their comrades to "stand back and hear what the gentleman had to say." The Master had not flinched before their onslaught; nor, at this proof of the ground he had gained, did he betray the least sufficiency.

"Do not let us be in haste," says he. "Meat first and public speaking after."

With that they made a hasty meal: and as soon as it was done, the Master, leaning on one elbow, began his speech. He spoke long, addressing himself to each except Harris, finding for each (with the same exception) some particular flattery. He called them "bold, honest blades," declared he had never seen a more jovial company, work better done, or pains more merrily supported. "Well, then," says he, "some one asks me, Why the devil I ran away? But that is scarce worth answer, for I think you all know pretty well. But you know only pretty well: that is a point I shall arrive at presently, and be you ready to remark it when it comes. There is a traitor here: a double traitor: I will give you his name before I am done; and let that suffice for now. But here comes some other gentleman and asks me, 'Why, in the devil, I came back?' Well, before I answer that question, I have one to put to you. It was this cur here, this Harris, that speaks Hindustani?" cries he, rising on one knee and pointing fair at the man’s face, with a gesture indescribably menacing; and when he had been answered in the affirmative, “Ah!” says he, “then are all my suspicions verified, and I did rightly to come back. Now, men, hear the truth for the first time.” Thereupon he launched forth in a long story, told with extraordinary skill, how he had all along suspected Harris, how he had found the confirmation of his fears, and how Harris must have misrepresented what passed between Secundra and himself. At this point he made a bold stroke with excellent effect. “I suppose,” says he, “you think you are going shares with Harris; I suppose you think you will see to that yourselves; you would naturally not think so flat a rogue could cozen you. But have a care! These half idiots have a sort of cunning, as the skunk has its stench; and it may be news to you that Harris has taken care of himself already. Yes, for him the treasure is all money in the bargain. You must find it or go starve. But he has been paid beforehand; my brother paid him to destroy me; look at him, if you doubt - look at him, grinning and gulping, a detected thief!” Thence, having made this happy impression, he explained how he had escaped, and thought better of it, and at last concluded to come back, lay the truth before the company, and take his chance with them once more: persuaded as he was, they would instantly depose Harris and elect some other leader. “There is the whole truth,” said he: “and with one exception, I put myself entirely in your hands. What is the exception? There he sits,” he cried, pointing once more to Harris; “a man that has to die! Weapons and conditions are all one to me; put me face to face with him, and if you give me nothing but a stick, in five minutes I will show you a sop of broken carrion, fit for dogs to roll in.”

It was dark night when he made an end; they had listened in almost perfect silence; but the firelight scarce permitted any one to judge, from the look of his neighbours, with what result of persuasion or conviction. Indeed, the Master had set himself in the brightest place, and kept his face there, to be the centre of men’s eyes: doubtless on a profound calculation. Silence followed for awhile, and presently the whole party became involved in disputation: the Master lying on his back, with his hands knit under his head and one knee flung across the other, like a person unconcerned in the result. And here, I daresay, his bravado carried him too far and prejudiced his case. At least, after a cast or two back and forward, opinion settled finally against him. It’s possible he hoped to repeat the business of the pirate ship, and be himself, perhaps, on hard enough conditions, elected leader; and things went so far that way, that Mountain actually threw out the proposition. But the rock he split upon was Hastie. This fellow was not well liked, being sour and slow, with an ugly, glowering disposition, but he had studied some time for the church at Edinburgh College, before ill conduct had destroyed his prospects, and he now remembered and applied what he had learned. Indeed he had not proceeded very far, when the Master rolled carelessly upon one side, which was done (in Mountain's opinion) to conceal the beginnings of despair upon his countenance. Hastie dismissed the most of what they had heard as nothing to the matter: what they wanted was the treasure. All that was said of Harris might be true, and they would have to see to that in time. But what had that to do with the treasure? They had heard a vast of words; but the truth was just this, that Mr. Durie was damnably frightened and had several times run off. Here he was - whether caught or come back was all one to Hastie: the point was to make an end of the business. As for the talk of deposing and electing captains, he hoped they were all free men and could attend their own affairs. That was dust flung in their eyes, and so was the proposal to fight Harris. "He shall fight no one in this camp, I can tell him that," said Hastie. "We had trouble enough to get his arms away from him, and we should look pretty fools to give them back again. But if it's excitement the gentleman is after, I can supply him with more than perhaps he cares about. For I have no intention to spend the remainder of my life in these mountains; already I have been too long; and I propose that he should immediately tell us where that treasure is, or else immediately be shot. And there," says he, producing his weapon, "there is the pistol that I mean to use."

"Come, I call you a man," cries the Master, sitting up and looking at the speaker with an air of admiration.

"I didn't ask you to call me anything," returned Hastie; "which is it to be?"

"That's an idle question," said the Master. "Needs must when the devil drives. The truth is we are within easy walk of the place, and I will show it you to-morrow."

With that, as if all were quite settled, and settled exactly to his mind, he walked off to his tent, whither Secundra had preceded him.

I cannot think of these last turns and wriggles of my old enemy except with admiration; scarce even pity is mingled with the sentiment, so strongly the man supported, so boldly resisted his misfortunes. Even at that hour, when he perceived himself quite lost, when he saw he had but effected an exchange of enemies, and overthrown Harris to set Hastie up, no sign of weakness appeared in his behaviour, and he withdrew to his tent, already determined (I must suppose) upon affronting the incredible hazard of his last expedient, with the same easy, assured, genteel expression and demeanour as he might have left a theatre withal to join a supper of the wits. But doubtless within, if we could see there, his soul trembled.

Early in the night, word went about the camp that he was sick; and the first thing the next morning he called Hastie to his side, and inquired most anxiously if he had any skill in medicine. As a matter of fact, this was a vanity of that fallen divinity student's, to which he had cunningly addressed himself. Hastie examined him; and being flattered, ignorant, and highly auspicious, knew not in the least whether the man was sick or malingering. In this state he went forth again to his companions; and (as the thing which would give himself most consequence either way) announced that the patient was in a fair way to die.

"For all that," he added with an oath, "and if he bursts by the wayside, he must bring us this morning to the treasure."

But there were several in the camp (Mountain among the number) whom this brutality revolted. They would have seen the Master pistolled, or pistolled him themselves, without the smallest sentiment of pity; but they seemed to have been touched by his gallant fight and unequivocal defeat the night before; perhaps, too, they were even already beginning to oppose themselves to their new leader: at least, they now declared that (if the man was sick) he should have a day's rest in spite of Hastie's teeth.

The next morning he was manifestly worse, and Hastie himself began to display something of humane concern, so easily does even the pretence of doctoring awaken sympathy. The third the Master called Mountain and Hastie to the tent, announced himself to be dying, gave them full particulars as to the position of the cache, and begged them to set out incontinently on the quest, so that they might see if he deceived them, and (if they were at first unsuccessful) he should be able to correct their error.

But here arose a difficulty on which he doubtless counted. None of these men would trust another, none would consent to stay behind. On the other hand, although the Master seemed extremely low, spoke scarce above a whisper, and lay much of the time insensible, it was still possible it was a fraudulent sickness; and if all went treasure-hunting, it might prove they had gone upon a wild-goose chase, and return to find their prisoner flown. They concluded, therefore, to hang idling round the camp, alleging sympathy to their reason; and certainly, so mingled are our dispositions, several were sincerely (if not very deeply) affected by the natural peril of the man whom they callously designed to murder. In the afternoon, Hastie was called to the bedside to pray: the which (incredible as it must appear) he did with unction; about eight at night, the wailing of Secundra announced that all was over; and before ten, the Indian, with a link stuck in the ground, was toiling at the grave. Sunrise of next day beheld the

Master's burial, all hands attending with great decency of demeanour; and the body was laid in the earth, wrapped in a fur robe, with only the face uncovered; which last was of a waxy whiteness, and had the nostrils plugged according to some Oriental habit of Secundra's. No sooner was the grave filled than the lamentations of the Indian once more struck concern to every heart; and it appears this gang of murderers, so far from resenting his outcries, although both distressful and (in such a country) perilous to their own safety, roughly but kindly endeavoured to console him.

But if human nature is even in the worst of men occasionally kind, it is still, and before all things, greedy; and they soon turned from the mourner to their own concerns. The cache of the treasure being hard by, although yet unidentified, it was concluded not to break camp; and the day passed, on the part of the voyagers, in unavailing exploration of the woods, Secundra the while lying on his master's grave. That night they placed no sentinel, but lay altogether about the fire, in the customary woodman fashion, the heads outward, like the spokes of a wheel. Morning found them in the same disposition; only Pinkerton, who lay on Mountain's right, between him and Hastie, had (in the hours of darkness) been secretly butchered, and there lay, still wrapped as to his body in his mantle, but offering above that ungodly and horrific spectacle of the scalped head. The gang were that morning as pale as a company of phantoms, for the pertinacity of Indian war (or to speak more correctly, Indian murder) was well known to all. But they laid the chief blame on their unsentinelled posture; and fired with the neighbourhood of the treasure, determined to continue where they were. Pinkerton was buried hard by the Master; the survivors again passed the day in exploration, and returned in a mingled humour of anxiety and hope, being partly certain they were now close on the discovery of what they sought, and on the other hand (with the return of darkness) were infected with the fear of Indians. Mountain was the first sentry; he declares he neither slept nor yet sat down, but kept his watch with a perpetual and straining vigilance, and it was even with unconcern that (when he saw by the stars his time was up) he drew near the fire to awaken his successor. This man (it was Hicks the shoemaker) slept on the lee side of the circle, something farther off in consequence than those to windward, and in a place darkened by the blowing smoke. Mountain stooped and took him by the shoulder; his hand was at once smeared by some adhesive wetness; and (the wind at the moment veering) the firelight shone upon the sleeper, and showed him, like Pinkerton, dead and scalped.

It was clear they had fallen in the hands of one of those matchless Indian bravos, that will sometimes follow a party for days, and in spite of indefatigable travel, and unsleeping watch, continue to keep up with their advance, and steal a scalp at every resting- place. Upon this discovery, the treasure-seekers, already reduced to a poor half dozen, fell into mere dismay, seized a few necessaries, and deserting the remainder of their goods, fled outright into the forest. Their fire they left still burning, and their dead comrade unburied. All day they ceased not to flee, eating by the way, from hand to mouth; and since they feared to sleep, continued to advance at random even in the hours of darkness. But the limit of man's endurance is soon reached; when they rested at last it was to sleep profoundly; and when they woke, it was to find that the enemy was still upon their heels, and death and mutilation had once more lessened and deformed their company.

By this they had become light-headed, they had quite missed their path in the wilderness, their stores were already running low. With the further horrors, it is superfluous that I should swell this narrative, already too prolonged. Suffice it to say that when at length a night passed by innocuous, and they might breathe again in the hope that the murderer had at last desisted from pursuit, Mountain and Secundra were alone. The trader is firmly persuaded their unseen enemy was some warrior of his own acquaintance, and that he himself was spared by favour. The mercy extended to Secundra he explains on the ground that the East Indian was thought to be insane; partly from the fact that, through all the horrors of the flight and while others were casting away their very food and weapons, Secundra continued to stagger forward with a mattock on his shoulder, and partly because, in the last days and with a great degree of heat and fluency, he perpetually spoke with himself in his own language. But he was sane enough when it came to English.

"You think he will be gone quite away?" he asked, upon their blest awakening in safety.

"I pray God so, I believe so, I dare to believe so," Mountain had replied almost with incoherence, as he described the scene to me.

And indeed he was so much distempered that until he met us, the next morning, he could scarce be certain whether he had dreamed, or whether it was a fact, that Secundra had thereupon turned directly about and returned without a word upon their footprints, setting his face for these wintry and hungry solitudes, along a path whose every stage was mile-stoned with a mutilated corpse.

CHAPTER XII. - THE JOURNEY IN THE WILDERNESS (continued).

Mountain's story, as it was laid before Sir William Johnson and my lord, was shorn, of course, of all the earlier particulars, and the expedition described to have proceeded uneventfully, until the Master sickened. But the latter part was very forcibly related, the speaker visibly thrilling to his recollections; and our then situation, on the fringe of the same desert, and the private interests of each, gave him an audience prepared to share in his emotions. For Mountain's intelligence not only changed the world for my Lord Durrisdeer, but materially affected the designs of Sir William Johnson.

These I find I must lay more at length before the reader. Word had reached Albany of dubious import; it had been rumoured some hostility was to be put in act; and the Indian diplomatist had, thereupon, sped into the wilderness, even at the approach of winter, to nip that mischief in the bud. Here, on the borders, he learned that he was come too late; and a difficult choice was thus presented to a man (upon the whole) not any more bold than prudent. His standing with the painted braves may be compared to that of my Lord President Culloden among the chiefs of our own Highlanders at the 'forty-five; that is as much as to say, he was, to these men, reason's only speaking trumpet, and counsels of peace and moderation, if they were to prevail at all, must prevail singly through his influence. If, then, he should return, the province must lie open to all the abominable tragedies of Indian war - the houses blaze, the wayfarer be cut off, and the men of the woods collect their usual disgusting spoil of human scalps. On the other side, to go farther forth, to risk so small a party deeper in the desert, to carry words of peace among warlike savages already rejoicing to return to war: here was an extremity from which it was easy to perceive his mind revolted.

"I have come too late," he said more than once, and would fall into a deep consideration, his head bowed in his hands, his foot patting the ground.

At length he raised his face and looked upon us, that is to say upon my lord, Mountain, and myself, sitting close round a small fire, which had been made for privacy in one corner of the camp.

"My lord, to be quite frank with you, I find myself in two minds," said he. "I think it very needful I should go on, but not at all proper I should any longer enjoy the pleasure of your company. We are here still upon the water side; and I think the risk to southward no great matter. Will not yourself and Mr. Mackellar take a single boat's crew and return to Albany?"

My lord, I should say, had listened to Mountain's narrative, regarding him throughout with a painful intensity of gaze; and since the tale concluded, had sat as in a dream. There was something very daunting in his look; something to my eyes not rightly human; the face, lean, and dark, and aged, the mouth painful, the teeth disclosed in a perpetual rictus; the eyeball swimming clear of the lids upon a field of blood-shot white. I could not behold him myself without a jarring irritation, such as, I believe, is too frequently the uppermost feeling on the sickness of those dear to us. Others, I could not but remark. were scarce able to support his neighbourhood - Sir William eviting to be near him, Mountain dodging his eye, and, when he met it, blenching and halting in his story. At this appeal, however, my lord appeared to recover his command upon himself.

"To Albany?" said he, with a good voice.

"Not short of it, at least," replied Sir William. "There is no safety nearer hand."

"I would be very sweir (11) to return," says my lord. "I am not afraid - of Indians," he added, with a jerk.

"I wish that I could say so much," returned Sir William, smiling; "although, if any man durst say it, it should be myself. But you are to keep in view my responsibility, and that as the voyage has now become highly dangerous, and your business - if you ever had any," says he, "brought quite to a conclusion by the distressing family intelligence you have received, I should be hardly justified if I even suffered you to proceed, and run the risk of some obloquy if anything regrettable should follow."

My lord turned to Mountain. "What did he pretend he died of?" he asked.

"I don't think I understand your honour," said the trader, pausing like a man very much affected, in the dressing of some cruel frost-bites.

For a moment my lord seemed at a full stop; and then, with some irritation, "I ask you what he died of. Surely that's a plain question," said he.

"Oh! I don't know," said Mountain. "Hastie even never knew. He seemed to sicken natural, and just pass away."

"There it is, you see!" concluded my lord, turning to Sir William.

"Your lordship is too deep for me," replied Sir William.

"Why," says my lord, "this in a matter of succession; my son's title may be called in doubt; and the man being supposed to be dead of nobody can tell what, a great deal of suspicion would be naturally roused."

"But, God damn me, the man's buried!" cried Sir William.

"I will never believe that," returned my lord, painfully trembling. "I'll never believe it!" he cried again, and jumped to his feet. "Did he LOOK dead?" he asked of Mountain.

"Look dead?" repeated the trader. "He looked white. Why, what would he be at? I tell you, I put the sods upon him."

My lord caught Sir William by the coat with a hooked hand. "This man has the name of my brother," says he, "but it's well understood that he was never canny."

"Canny?" says Sir William. "What is that?"

"He's not of this world," whispered my lord, "neither him nor the black deil that serves him. I have struck my sword throughout his vitals," he cried; "I have felt the hilt dirl (12) on his breastbone, and the hot blood spirt in my very face, time and again, time and again!" he repeated, with a gesture indescribable. "But he was never dead for that," said he, and I sighed aloud. "Why should I think he was dead now? No, not till I see him rotting," says he.

Sir William looked across at me with a long face. Mountain forgot his wounds, staring and gaping.

"My lord," said I, "I wish you would collect your spirits." But my throat was so dry, and my own wits so scattered, I could add no more.

"No," says my lord, "it's not to be supposed that he would understand me. Mackellar does, for he kens all, and has seen him buried before now. This is a very good servant to me, Sir William, this man Mackellar; he buried him with his own hands - he and my father - by the light of two siller candlesticks. The other man is a familiar spirit; he brought him from Coromandel. I would have told ye this long syne, Sir William, only it was in the family." These last remarks he made with a kind of a melancholy composure, and his time of aberration seemed to pass away. "You can ask yourself what it all means," he proceeded. "My brother falls sick, and dies, and is buried, as so they say; and all seems very plain. But why did the familiar go back? I think ye must see for yourself it's a point that wants some clearing."

"I will be at your service, my lord, in half a minute," said Sir William, rising. "Mr. Mackellar, two words with you;" and he led me without the camp, the frost crunching in our steps, the trees standing at our elbow, hoar with frost, even as on that night in the Long Shrubbery. "Of course, this is midsummer madness," said Sir William, as soon as we were gotten out of bearing.

"Why, certainly," said I. "The man is mad. I think that manifest."

"Shall I seize and bind him?" asked Sir William. "I will upon your authority. If these are all ravings, that should certainly be done."

I looked down upon the ground, back at the camp, with its bright fires and the folk watching us, and about me on the woods and mountains; there was just the one way that I could not look, and that was in Sir William's face.

"Sir William," said I at last, "I think my lord not sane, and have long thought him so. But there are degrees in madness; and whether he should be brought under restraint - Sir William, I am no fit judge," I concluded.

"I will be the judge," said he. "I ask for facts. Was there, in all that jargon, any word of truth or sanity? Do you hesitate?" he asked. "Am I to understand you have buried this gentleman before?"

"Not buried," said I; and then, taking up courage at last, "Sir William," said I, "unless I were to tell you a long story, which much concerns a noble family (and myself not in the least), it would be impossible to make this matter clear to you. Say the word, and I will do it, right or wrong. And, at any rate, I will say so much, that my lord is not so crazy as he seems. This is a strange matter, into the tail of which you are unhappily drifted."

"I desire none of your secrets," replied Sir William; "but I will be plain, at the risk of incivility, and confess that I take little pleasure in my present company."

"I would be the last to blame you," said I, "for that."

"I have not asked either for your censure or your praise, sir," returned Sir William. "I desire simply to be quit of you; and to that effect, I put a boat and complement of men at your disposal."

"This is fairly offered," said I, after reflection. "But you must suffer me to say a word upon the other side. We have a natural curiosity to learn the truth of this affair; I have some of it myself; my lord (it is very plain) has but too much. The matter of the Indian's return is enigmatical."

"I think so myself," Sir William interrupted, "and I propose (since I go in that direction) to probe it to the bottom. Whether or not the man has gone like a dog to die upon his master's grave, his life, at least, is in great danger, and I propose, if I can, to save it. There is nothing against his character?"

"Nothing, Sir William," I replied.

"And the other?" he said. "I have heard my lord, of course; but, from the circumstances of his servant's loyalty, I must suppose he had some noble qualities."

"You must not ask me that!" I cried. "Hell may have noble flames. I have known him a score of years, and always hated, and always admired, and always slavishly feared him."

"I appear to intrude again upon your secrets," said Sir William, "believe me, inadvertently. Enough that I will see the grave, and (if possible) rescue the Indian. Upon these terms, can you persuade your master to return to Albany?"

"Sir William," said I, "I will tell you how it is. You do not see my lord to advantage; it will seem even strange to you that I should love him; but I do, and I am not alone. If he goes back to Albany, it must be by force, and it will be the death-warrant of his reason, and perhaps his life. That is my sincere belief; but I am in your hands, and ready to obey, if you will assume so much responsibility as to command."

"I will have no shred of responsibility; it is my single endeavour to avoid the same," cried Sir William. "You insist upon following this journey up; and be it so! I wash my hands of the whole matter."

With which word, he turned upon his heel and gave the order to break camp; and my lord, who had been hovering near by, came instantly to my side.

"Which is it to be?" said he.

"You are to have your way," I answered. "You shall see the grave."

The situation of the Master's grave was, between guides, easily described; it lay, indeed, beside a chief landmark of the wilderness, a certain range of peaks, conspicuous by their design and altitude, and the source of many brawling tributaries to that inland sea, Lake Champlain. It was therefore possible to strike for it direct, instead of following back the blood-stained trail of the fugitives, and to cover, in some sixteen hours of march, a distance which their perturbed wanderings had extended over more than sixty. Our boats we left under a guard upon the river; it was, indeed, probable we should return to find them frozen fast; and the small equipment with which we set forth upon the expedition, included not only an infinity of furs to protect us from the cold, but an arsenal of snow-shoes to render travel possible, when the inevitable snow should fall. Considerable alarm was manifested at our departure; the march was conducted with soldierly precaution, the camp at night sedulously chosen and patrolled; and it was a consideration of this sort that arrested us, the second day, within not many hundred yards of our destination - the night being already imminent, the spot in which we stood well qualified to be a strong camp for a party of our numbers; and Sir William, therefore, on a sudden thought, arresting our advance.

Before us was the high range of mountains toward which we had been all day deviously drawing near. From the first light of the dawn, their silver peaks had been the goal of our advance across a tumbled lowland forest, thrid with rough streams, and strewn with monstrous boulders; the peaks (as I say) silver, for already at the higher altitudes the snow fell nightly; but the woods and the low ground only breathed upon with frost. All day heaven had been charged with ugly vapours, in the which the sun swam and glimmered like a shilling piece; all day the wind blew on our left cheek barbarous cold, but very pure to breathe. With the end of the afternoon, however, the wind fell; the clouds, being no longer reinforced, were scattered or drunk up; the sun set behind us with some wintry splendour, and the white brow of the mountains shared its dying glow.

It was dark ere we had supper; we ate in silence, and the meal was scarce despatched before my lord slunk from the fireside to the margin of the camp; whither I made haste to follow him. The camp was on high ground, overlooking a frozen lake, perhaps a mile in its longest measurement; all about us, the forest lay in heights and hollows; above rose the white mountains; and higher yet, the moon rode in a fair sky. There was no breath of air; nowhere a twig creaked; and the sounds of our own camp were hushed and swallowed up in the surrounding stillness. Now that the sun and the wind were both gone down, it appeared almost warm, like a night of July: a singular illusion of the sense, when earth, air, and water were strained to bursting with the extremity of frost.

My lord (or what I still continued to call by his loved name) stood with his elbow in one hand, and his chin sunk in the other, gazing before him on the surface of the wood. My eyes followed his, and rested almost pleasantly upon the frosted contexture of the pines, rising in moonlit hillocks, or sinking in the shadow of small glens. Hard by, I told myself, was the grave of our enemy, now gone where the wicked cease from troubling, the earth heaped for ever on his once so active limbs. I could not but think of him as somehow fortunate to be thus done with man's anxiety and weariness, the daily expense of spirit, and that daily river of circumstance to be swum through, at any hazard, under the penalty of shame or death. I could not but think how good was the end of that long travel; and with that, my mind swung at a tangent to my lord. For was not my lord dead also? a maimed soldier, looking vainly for discharge, lingering derided in the line of battle? A kind man, I remembered him; wise, with a decent pride, a son perhaps too dutiful, a husband only too loving, one that could suffer and be silent, one whose hand I loved to press. Of a sudden, pity caught in my windpipe with a sob; I could have wept aloud to remember and behold him; and standing thus by his elbow, under the broad moon, I prayed fervently either that he should be released, or I strengthened to persist in my affection.

"Oh God," said I, "this was the best man to me and to himself, and now I shrink from him. He did no wrong, or not till he was broke with sorrows; these are but his honourable wounds that we begin to shrink from. Oh, cover them up, oh, take him away, before we hate him!"

I was still so engaged in my own bosom, when a sound broke suddenly upon the night. It was neither very loud, nor very near; yet, bursting as it did from so profound and so prolonged a silence, it startled the camp like an alarm of trumpets. Ere I had taken breath, Sir William was beside me, the main part of the voyagers clustered at his back, intently giving ear. Methought, as I glanced at them across my shoulder, there was a whiteness, other than moonlight, on their cheeks; and the rays of the moon reflected with a sparkle on the eyes of some, and the shadows lying black under the brows of others (according as they raised or bowed the head to listen) gave to the group a strange air of animation and anxiety. My lord was to the front, crouching a little forth, his hand raised as for silence: a man turned to stone. And still the sounds continued, breathlessly renewed with a precipitate rhythm.

Suddenly Mountain spoke in a loud, broken whisper, as of a man relieved. “I have it now,” he said; and, as we all turned to hear him, “the Indian must have known the cache,” he added. “That is he - he is digging out the treasure.”

“Why, to be sure!” exclaimed Sir William. “We were geese not to have supposed so much.”

“The only thing is,” Mountain resumed, “the sound is very close to our old camp. And, again, I do not see how he is there before us, unless the man had wings!”

“Greed and fear are wings,” remarked Sir William. “But this rogue has given us an alert, and I have a notion to return the compliment. What say you, gentlemen, shall we have a moonlight hunt?”

It was so agreed; dispositions were made to surround Secundra at his task; some of Sir William’s Indians hastened in advance; and a strong guard being left at our headquarters, we set forth along the uneven bottom of the forest; frost crackling, ice sometimes loudly splitting under foot; and overhead the blackness of pine-woods, and the broken brightness of the moon. Our way led down into a hollow of the land; and as we descended, the sounds diminished and had almost died away. Upon the other slope it was more open, only dotted with a few pines, and several vast and scattered rocks that made inky shadows in the moonlight. Here the sounds began to reach us more distinctly; we could now perceive the ring of iron, and more exactly estimate the furious degree of haste with which the digger plied his instrument. As we neared the top of the ascent, a bird or two winged aloft and hovered darkly in the moonlight; and the next moment we were gazing through a fringe of trees upon a singular picture.

A narrow plateau, overlooked by the white mountains, and encompassed nearer hand by woods, lay bare to the strong radiance of the moon. Rough goods, such as make the wealth of foresters, were sprinkled here and there upon the ground in meaningless disarray. About the midst, a tent stood, silvered with frost: the door open, gaping on the black interior. At the one end of this small stage lay what seemed the tattered remnants of a man. Without doubt we had arrived upon the scene of Harris's encampment; there were the goods scattered in the panic of flight; it was in yon tent the Master breathed his last; and the frozen carrion that lay before us was the body of the drunken shoemaker. It was always moving to come upon the theatre of any tragic incident; to come upon it after so many days, and to find it (in the seclusion of a desert) still unchanged, must have impressed the mind of the most careless. And yet it was not that which struck us into pillars of stone; but the sight (which yet we had been half expecting) of Secundra ankle deep in the grave of his late master. He had cast the main part of his raiment by, yet his frail arms and shoulders glistered in the moonlight with a copious sweat; his face was contracted with anxiety and expectation; his blows resounded on the grave, as thick as sobs; and behind him, strangely deformed and ink-black upon the frosty ground, the creature's shadow repeated and parodied his swift gesticulations. Some night birds arose from the boughs upon our coming, and then settled back; but Secundra, absorbed in his toil; heard or heeded not at all.

I heard Mountain whisper to Sir William, "Good God! it's the grave! He's digging him up!" It was what we had all guessed, and yet to hear it put in language thrilled me. Sir William violently started.

"You damned sacrilegious hound!" he cried. "What's this?"

Secundra leaped in the air, a little breathless cry escaped him, the tool flew from his grasp, and he stood one instant staring at the speaker. The next, swift as an arrow, he sped for the woods upon the farther side; and the next again, throwing up his hands with a violent gesture of resolution, he had begun already to retrace his steps.

"Well, then, you come, you help - " he was saying. But by now my lord had stepped beside Sir William; the moon shone fair upon his face, and the words were still upon Secundra's lips, when he beheld and recognised his master's enemy. "Him!" he screamed, clasping his hands, and shrinking on himself.

"Come, come!" said Sir William. "There is none here to do you harm, if you be innocent; and if you be guilty, your escape is quite cut off. Speak, what do you here among the graves of the dead and the remains of the unburied?"

"You no murderer?" inquired Secundra. "You true man? you see me safe?"

"I will see you safe, if you be innocent," returned Sir William. "I have said the thing, and I see not wherefore you should doubt it."

"There all murderers," cried Secundra, "that is why! He kill - murderer," pointing to Mountain; "there two hire-murderers," pointing to my lord and myself - "all gallows - murderers! Ah! I see you all swing in a rope. Now I go save the sahib; he see you swing in a rope. The sahib," he continued, pointing to the grave, "he not dead. He bury, he not dead."

My lord uttered a little noise, moved nearer to the grave, and stood and stared in it.

"Buried and not dead?" exclaimed Sir William. "What kind of rant is this?"

"See, sahib," said Secundra. "The sahib and I alone with murderers; try all way to escape, no way good. Then try this way: good way in warm climate, good way in India; here, in this dam cold place, who can tell? I tell you pretty good hurry: you help, you light a fire, help rub."

"What is the creature talking of?" cried Sir William. "My head goes round."

"I tell you I bury him alive," said Secundra. "I teach him swallow his tongue. Now dig him up pretty good hurry, and he not much worse. You light a fire."

Sir William turned to the nearest of his men. "Light a fire," said he. "My lot seems to be cast with the insane."

"You good man," returned Secundra. "Now I go dig the sahib up."

He returned as he spoke to the grave, and resumed his former toil. My lord stood rooted, and I at my lord's side, fearing I knew not what.

The frost was not yet very deep, and presently the Indian threw aside his tool, and began to scoop the dirt by handfuls. Then he disengaged a corner of a buffalo robe; and then I saw hair catch among his fingers: yet, a moment more, and the moon shone on something white. Awhile Secundra crouched upon his knees, scraping with delicate fingers, breathing with puffed lips; and when he moved aside, I beheld the face of the Master wholly disengaged. It was deadly white, the eyes closed, the ears and nostrils plugged, the cheeks fallen, the nose sharp as if in death; but for all he had lain so many days under the sod, corruption had not approached him, and (what strangely affected all of us) his lips and chin were mantled with a swarthy beard.

"My God!" cried Mountain, "he was as smooth as a baby when we laid him there!"

"They say hair grows upon the dead," observed Sir William; but his voice was thick and weak.

Secundra paid no heed to our remarks, digging swift as a terrier in the loose earth. Every moment the form of the Master, swathed in his buffalo robe, grew more distinct in the bottom of that shallow trough; the moon shining strong, and the shadows of the standers- by, as they drew forward and back, falling and flitting over his emergent countenance. The sight held us with a horror not before experienced. I dared not look my lord in the face; but for as long as it lasted, I never observed him to draw breath; and a little in the background one of the men (I know not whom) burst into a kind of sobbing.

"Now," said Secundra, "you help me lift him out."

Of the flight of time, I have no idea; it may have been three hours, and it may have been five, that the Indian laboured to reanimate his master's body. One thing only I know, that it was still night, and the moon was not yet set, although it had sunk low, and now barred the plateau with long shadows, when Secundra uttered a small cry of satisfaction; and, leaning swiftly forth, I thought I could myself perceive a change upon that icy countenance of the unburied. The next moment I beheld his eyelids flutter; the next they rose entirely, and the week-old corpse looked me for a moment in the face.

So much display of life I can myself swear to. I have heard from others that he visibly strove to speak, that his teeth showed in his beard, and that his brow was contorted as with an agony of pain and effort. And this may have been; I know not, I was otherwise engaged. For at that first disclosure of the dead man's eyes, my Lord Durrisdeer fell to the ground, and when I raised him up, he was a corpse.

Day came, and still Secundra could not be persuaded to desist from his unavailing efforts. Sir William, leaving a small party under my command, proceeded on his embassy with the first light; and still the Indian rubbed the limbs and breathed in the mouth of the dead body. You would think such labours might have vitalised a stone; but, except for that one moment (which was my lord's death), the black spirit of the Master held aloof from its discarded clay; and by about the hour of noon, even the faithful servant was at length convinced. He took it with unshaken quietude.

"Too cold," said he, "good way in India, no good here." And, asking for some food, which he ravenously devoured as soon as it was set before him, he drew near to the fire and took his place at my elbow. In the same spot, as soon as he had eaten, he stretched himself out, and fell into a childlike slumber, from which I must arouse him, some hours afterwards, to take his part as one of the mourners at the double funeral. It was the same throughout; he seemed to have outlived at once and with the same effort, his grief for his master and his terror of myself and Mountain.

One of the men left with me was skilled in stone-cutting; and before Sir William returned to pick us up, I had chiselled on a boulder this inscription, with a copy of which I may fitly bring my narrative to a close:

J. D.,
HEIR TO A SCOTTISH TITLE,
A MASTER OF THE ARTS AND GRACES,

ADMIRED IN EUROPE, ASIA, AMERICA,
IN WAR AND PEACE,
IN THE TENTS OF SAVAGE HUNTERS AND THE
CITADELS OF KINGS, AFTER SO MUCH
ACQUIRED, ACCOMPLISHED, AND
ENDURED, LIES HERE FORGOTTEN.

* * * * *

H. D.,
HIS BROTHER,
AFTER A LIFE OF UNMERITED DISTRESS,
BRAVELY SUPPORTED,
DIED ALMOST IN THE SAME HOUR,
AND SLEEPS IN THE SAME GRAVE
WITH HIS FRATERNAL ENEMY.

* * * * *

THE PIETY OF HIS WIFE AND ONE OLD
SERVANT RAISED THIS STONE
TO BOTH.

THE WRONG BOX

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON and LLOYD OSBOURNE

The Wrong Box is a black comedy novel, first published in 1889. It tells the story of two brothers who are the last surviving members of a tontine. The novel is notable for being the first of three novels that Stevenson co-wrote with his stepson Osbourne, who wrote the first draft of the novel late in 1887 (then called The Finsbury Tontine), Stevenson revised it in 1888, calling it A Game of Bluff and again in 1889 when it was finally titled *The Wrong Box*.

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PREFACE

‘Nothing like a little judicious levity,’ says Michael Finsbury in the text: nor can any better excuse be found for the volume in the reader’s hand. The authors can but add that one of them is old enough to be ashamed of himself, and the other young enough to learn better.

R. L. S.   L. O.

CHAPTER I. In Which Morris Suspects

How very little does the amateur, dwelling at home at ease, comprehend the labours and perils of the author, and, when he smilingly skims the surface of a work of fiction, how little does he consider the hours of toil, consultation of authorities, researches in the Bodleian, correspondence with learned and illegible Germans — in one word, the vast scaffolding that was first built up and then knocked down, to while away an hour for him in a railway train! Thus I might begin this tale with a biography of Tonti — birthplace, parentage, genius probably inherited from his mother, remarkable instance of precocity, etc — and a complete treatise on the system to which he bequeathed his name. The material is all beside me in a pigeon-hole, but I scorn to appear vainglorious. Tonti is dead, and I never saw anyone who even pretended to regret him; and, as for the tontine system, a word will suffice for all the purposes of this unvarnished narrative.

A number of sprightly youths (the more the merrier) put up a certain sum of money, which is then funded in a pool under trustees; coming on for a century later, the proceeds are fluttered for a moment in the face of the last survivor, who is probably deaf, so that he cannot even hear of his success — and who is certainly dying, so that he might just as well have lost. The peculiar poetry and even humour of the scheme is now apparent, since it is one by which nobody concerned can possibly profit; but its fine, sportsmanlike character endeared it to our grandparents.

When Joseph Finsbury and his brother Masterman were little lads in white-frilled trousers, their father — a well-to-do merchant in Cheapside — caused them to join a small but rich tontine of seven-and-thirty lives. A thousand pounds was the entrance fee; and Joseph Finsbury can remember to this day the visit to the lawyer's, where the members of the tontine — all children like himself — were assembled together, and sat in turn in the big office chair, and signed their names with the assistance of a kind old gentleman in spectacles and Wellington boots. He remembers playing with the children afterwards on the lawn at the back of the lawyer's house, and a battle-royal that he had with a brother tontiner who had kicked his shins. The sound of war called forth the lawyer from where he was dispensing cake and wine to the assembled parents in the office, and the combatants were separated, and Joseph's spirit (for he was the smaller of the two) commended by the gentleman in the Wellington boots, who vowed he had been just such another at the same age. Joseph wondered to himself if he had worn at that time little Wellingtons and a little bald head, and when, in bed at night, he grew tired of telling himself stories of sea-fights, he used to dress himself up as the old gentleman, and entertain other little boys and girls with cake and wine.

In the year 1840 the thirty-seven were all alive; in 1850 their number had decreased by six; in 1856 and 1857 business was more lively, for the Crimea and the Mutiny carried off no less than nine. There remained in 1870 but five of the original members, and at the date of my story, including the two Finsburys, but three.

By this time Masterman was in his seventy-third year; he had long complained of the effects of age, had long since retired from business, and now lived in absolute seclusion under the roof of his son Michael, the well-known solicitor. Joseph, on the other hand, was still up and about, and still presented but a semi-venerable figure on the streets in which he loved to wander. This was the more to be deplored because Masterman had led (even to the least particular) a model British life. Industry, regularity, respectability, and a preference for the four per cents are understood to be the very foundations of a green old age. All these Masterman had eminently displayed, and here he was, ab agendo, at seventy-three; while Joseph, barely two years younger, and in the most excellent preservation, had disgraced himself through life by idleness and eccentricity. Embarked in the leather trade, he had early wearied of business, for which he was supposed to have small parts. A taste for general information, not promptly checked, had soon begun to sap his manhood. There is no passion more debilitating to the mind, unless, perhaps, it be that itch of public speaking which it not infrequently accompanies or begets. The two were conjoined in the case of Joseph; the acute stage of this double malady, that in which the patient delivers gratuitous lectures, soon declared itself with severity, and not many years had passed over his head before he would have travelled thirty miles to address an infant school. He was no student; his reading was confined to elementary textbooks and the daily papers; he did not even fly as high as cyclopedias; life, he would say, was his volume. His lectures were not meant, he would declare, for college professors; they were addressed direct to 'the great heart of the people', and the heart of the people must certainly be sounder than its head, for his lucubrations were received with favour. That entitled 'How to Live Cheerfully on Forty Pounds a Year', created a sensation among the unemployed. 'Education: Its Aims, Objects, Purposes, and Desirability', gained him the respect of the shallow-minded. As for his celebrated essay on 'Life Insurance Regarded in its Relation to the Masses', read before the Working Men's Mutual Improvement Society, Isle of Dogs, it was received with a 'literal ovation' by an unintelligent audience of both sexes, and so marked was the effect that he was next year elected honorary president of the institution, an office of less than no emolument — since the holder was expected to come down with a donation — but one which highly satisfied his self-esteem.

While Joseph was thus building himself up a reputation among the more cultivated portion of the ignorant, his domestic life was suddenly overwhelmed by orphans. The death of his younger brother Jacob saddled him with the charge of two boys, Morris and John; and in the course of the same year his family was still further swelled by the addition of a little girl, the daughter of John Henry Hazeltine, Esq., a gentleman of small property and fewer friends. He had met Joseph only once, at a lecture-hall in Holloway; but from that formative experience he returned home to make a new will, and consign his daughter and her fortune to the lecturer. Joseph had a kindly disposition; and yet it was not without reluctance that he accepted this new responsibility, advertised for a nurse, and purchased a second-hand perambulator. Morris and John he made more readily welcome; not so much because of the tie of consanguinity as because the leather business (in which he hastened to invest their fortune of thirty thousand pounds) had recently exhibited inexplicable symptoms of decline. A young but capable Scot was chosen as manager to the enterprise, and the cares of business never again afflicted Joseph Finsbury. Leaving his charges in the hands of the capable Scot (who was married), he began his extensive travels on the Continent and in Asia Minor.

With a polyglot Testament in one hand and a phrase-book in the other, he groped his way among the speakers of eleven European languages. The first of these guides is hardly applicable to the purposes of the philosophic traveller, and even the second is designed more expressly for the tourist than for the expert in life. But he pressed interpreters into his service — whenever he could get their services for nothing — and by one means and another filled many notebooks with the results of his researches.

In these wanderings he spent several years, and only returned to England when the increasing age of his charges needed his attention. The two lads had been placed in a good but economical school, where they had received a sound commercial education; which was somewhat awkward, as the leather business was by no means in a state to court enquiry. In fact, when Joseph went over his accounts preparatory to surrendering his trust, he was dismayed to discover that his brother's fortune had not increased by his stewardship; even by making over to his two wards every penny he had in the world, there would still be a deficit of seven thousand eight hundred pounds. When these facts were communicated to the two brothers in the presence of a lawyer, Morris Finsbury threatened his uncle with all the terrors of the law, and was only prevented from taking extreme steps by the advice of the professional man. 'You cannot get blood from a stone,' observed the lawyer.

And Morris saw the point and came to terms with his uncle. On the one side, Joseph gave up all that he possessed, and assigned to his nephew his contingent interest in the tontine, already quite a hopeful speculation. On the other, Morris agreed to harbour his uncle and Miss Hazeltine (who had come to grief with the rest), and to pay to each of them one pound a month as pocket-money. The allowance was amply sufficient for the old man; it scarce appears how Miss Hazeltine contrived to dress upon it; but she did, and, what is more, she never complained. She was, indeed, sincerely attached to her incompetent guardian. He had never been unkind; his age spoke for him loudly; there was something appealing in his whole-souled quest of knowledge and innocent delight in the smallest mark of admiration; and, though the lawyer had warned her she was being sacrificed, Julia had refused to add to the perplexities of Uncle Joseph.

In a large, dreary house in John Street, Bloomsbury, these four dwelt together; a family in appearance, in reality a financial association. Julia and Uncle Joseph were, of course, slaves; John, a gentle man with a taste for the banjo, the music-hall, the Gaiety bar, and the sporting papers, must have been anywhere a secondary figure; and the cares and delights of empire devolved entirely upon Morris. That these are inextricably intermixed is one of the commonplaces with which the bland essayist consoles the incompetent and the obscure, but in the case of Morris the bitter must have largely outweighed the sweet. He grudged no trouble to himself, he spared none to others; he called the servants in the morning, he served out the stores with his own hand, he took soundings of the sherry, he numbered the remainder biscuits; painful scenes took place over the weekly bills, and the cook was frequently impeached, and the tradespeople came and hectored with him in the back parlour upon a question of three farthings. The superficial might have deemed him a miser; in his own eyes he was simply a man who had been defrauded; the world owed him seven thousand eight hundred pounds, and he intended that the world should pay.

But it was in his dealings with Joseph that Morris's character particularly shone. His uncle was a rather gambling stock in which he had invested heavily; and he spared no pains in nursing the security. The old man was seen monthly by a physician, whether he was well or ill. His diet, his raiment, his occasional outings, now to Brighton, now to Bournemouth, were doled out to him like pap to infants. In bad weather he must keep the house. In good weather, by half-past nine, he must be ready in the hall; Morris would see that he had gloves and that his shoes were sound; and the pair would start for the leather business arm in arm. The way there was probably dreary enough, for there was no pretence of friendly feeling; Morris had never ceased to upbraid his guardian with his defalcation and to lament the burthen of Miss Hazeltine; and Joseph, though he was a mild enough soul, regarded his nephew with something very near akin to hatred. But the way there was nothing to the journey back; for the mere sight of the place of business, as well as every detail of its transactions, was enough to poison life for any Finsbury.

Joseph's name was still over the door; it was he who still signed the cheques; but this was only policy on the part of Morris, and designed to discourage other members of the tontine. In reality the business was entirely his; and he found it an inheritance of sorrows. He tried to sell it, and the offers he received were quite derisory. He tried to extend it, and it was only the liabilities he succeeded in extending; to restrict it, and it was only the profits he managed to restrict. Nobody had ever made money out of that concern except the capable Scot, who retired (after his discharge) to the neighbourhood of Banff and built a castle with his profits. The memory of this fallacious Caledonian Morris would revile daily, as he sat in the private office opening his mail, with old Joseph at another table, sullenly awaiting orders, or savagely affixing signatures to he knew not what. And when the man of the heather pushed cynicism so far as to send him the announcement of his second marriage (to Davida, eldest daughter of the Revd. Alexander McCraw), it was really supposed that Morris would have had a fit.

Business hours, in the Finsbury leather trade, had been cut to the quick; even Morris's strong sense of duty to himself was not strong enough to dally within those walls and under the shadow of that bankruptcy; and presently the manager and the clerks would draw a long breath, and compose themselves for another day of procrastination. Raw Haste, on the authority of my Lord Tennyson, is half-sister to Delay; but the Business Habits are certainly her uncles. Meanwhile, the leather merchant would lead his living investment back to John Street like a puppy dog; and, having there immured him in the hall, would depart for the day on the quest of seal rings, the only passion of his life. Joseph had more than the vanity of man, he had that of lecturers. He owned he was in fault, although more sinned against (by the capable Scot) than sinning; but had he steeped his hands in gore, he would still not deserve to be thus dragged at the chariot-wheels of a young man, to sit a captive in the halls of his own leather business, to be entertained with mortifying comments on his whole career — to have his costume examined, his collar pulled up, the presence of his mittens verified, and to be taken out and brought home in custody, like an infant with a nurse. At the thought of it his soul would swell with venom, and he would make haste to hang up his hat and coat and the detested mittens, and slink upstairs to Julia and his notebooks. The drawing-room at least was sacred from Morris; it belonged to the old man and the young girl; it was there that she made her dresses; it was there that he inked his spectacles over the registration of disconnected facts and the calculation of insignificant statistics.

Here he would sometimes lament his connection with the tontine. ‘If it were not for that,’ he cried one afternoon, ‘he would not care to keep me. I might be a free man, Julia. And I could so easily support myself by giving lectures.’

‘To be sure you could,’ said she; ‘and I think it one of the meanest things he ever did to deprive you of that amusement. There were those nice people at the Isle of Cats (wasn’t it?) who wrote and asked you so very kindly to give them an address. I did think he might have let you go to the Isle of Cats.’

‘He is a man of no intelligence,’ cried Joseph. ‘He lives here literally surrounded by the absorbing spectacle of life, and for all the good it does him, he might just as well be in his coffin. Think of his opportunities! The heart of any other young man would burn within him at the chance. The amount of information that I have it in my power to convey, if he would only listen, is a thing that beggars language, Julia.’

‘Whatever you do, my dear, you mustn’t excite yourself,’ said Julia; ‘for you know, if you look at all ill, the doctor will be sent for.’

‘That is very true,’ returned the old man humbly, ‘I will compose myself with a little study.’ He thumbed his gallery of notebooks. ‘I wonder,’ he said, ‘I wonder (since I see your hands are occupied) whether it might not interest you — ’

‘Why, of course it would,’ cried Julia. ‘Read me one of your nice stories, there’s a dear.’

He had the volume down and his spectacles upon his nose instanter, as though to forestall some possible retractation. ‘What I propose to read to you,’ said he, skimming through the pages, ‘is the notes of a highly important conversation with a Dutch courier of the name of David Abbas, which is the Latin for abbot. Its results are well worth the money it cost me, for, as Abbas at first appeared somewhat impatient, I was induced to (what is, I believe, singularly called) stand him drink. It runs only to about five-and-twenty pages. Yes, here it is.’ He cleared his throat, and began to read.

Mr Finsbury (according to his own report) contributed about four hundred and ninety-nine five-hundredths of the interview, and elicited from Abbas literally nothing. It was dull for Julia, who did not require to listen; for the Dutch courier, who had to answer, it must have been a perfect nightmare. It would seem as if he had consoled himself by frequent appliances to the bottle; it would even seem that (toward the end) he had ceased to depend on Joseph's frugal generosity and called for the flagon on his own account. The effect, at least, of some mellowing influence was visible in the record: Abbas became suddenly a willing witness; he began to volunteer disclosures; and Julia had just looked up from her seam with something like a smile, when Morris burst into the house, eagerly calling for his uncle, and the next instant plunged into the room, waving in the air the evening paper.

It was indeed with great news that he came charged. The demise was announced of Lieutenant-General Sir Glasgow Biggar, KCSI, KCMG, etc., and the prize of the tontine now lay between the Finsbury brothers. Here was Morris's opportunity at last. The brothers had never, it is true, been cordial. When word came that Joseph was in Asia Minor, Masterman had expressed himself with irritation. 'I call it simply indecent,' he had said. 'Mark my words — we shall hear of him next at the North Pole.' And these bitter expressions had been reported to the traveller on his return. What was worse, Masterman had refused to attend the lecture on 'Education: Its Aims, Objects, Purposes, and Desirability', although invited to the platform. Since then the brothers had not met. On the other hand, they never had openly quarrelled; Joseph (by Morris's orders) was prepared to waive the advantage of his juniority; Masterman had enjoyed all through life the reputation of a man neither greedy nor unfair. Here, then, were all the elements of compromise assembled; and Morris, suddenly beholding his seven thousand eight hundred pounds restored to him, and himself dismissed from the vicissitudes of the leather trade, hastened the next morning to the office of his cousin Michael.

Michael was something of a public character. Launched upon the law at a very early age, and quite without protectors, he had become a trafficker in shady affairs. He was known to be the man for a lost cause; it was known he could extract testimony from a stone, and interest from a gold-mine; and his office was besieged in consequence by all that numerous class of persons who have still some reputation to lose, and find themselves upon the point of losing it; by those who have made undesirable acquaintances, who have mislaid a compromising correspondence, or who are blackmailed by their own butlers. In private life Michael was a man of pleasure; but it was thought his dire experience at the office had gone far to sober him, and it was known that (in the matter of investments) he preferred the solid to the brilliant. What was yet more to the purpose, he had been all his life a consistent scoffer at the Finsbury tontine.

It was therefore with little fear for the result that Morris presented himself before his cousin, and proceeded feverishly to set forth his scheme. For near upon a quarter of an hour the lawyer suffered him to dwell upon its manifest advantages uninterrupted. Then Michael rose from his seat, and, ringing for his clerk, uttered a single clause: 'It won't do, Morris.'

It was in vain that the leather merchant pleaded and reasoned, and returned day after day to plead and reason. It was in vain that he offered a bonus of one thousand, of two thousand, of three thousand pounds; in vain that he offered, in Joseph's name, to be content with only one-third of the pool. Still there came the same answer: 'It won't do.'

'I can't see the bottom of this,' he said at last. 'You answer none of my arguments; you haven't a word to say. For my part, I believe it's malice.'

The lawyer smiled at him benignly. 'You may believe one thing,' said he. 'Whatever else I do, I am not going to gratify any of your curiosity. You see I am a trifle more communicative today, because this is our last interview upon the subject.'

'Our last interview!' cried Morris.

'The stirrup-cup, dear boy,' returned Michael. 'I can't have my business hours encroached upon. And, by the by, have you no business of your own? Are there no convulsions in the leather trade?'

'I believe it to be malice,' repeated Morris doggedly. 'You always hated and despised me from a boy.'

'No, no — not hated,' returned Michael soothingly. 'I rather like you than otherwise; there's such a permanent surprise about you, you look so dark and attractive from a distance. Do you know that to the naked eye you look romantic? — like what they call a man with a history? And indeed, from all that I can hear, the history of the leather trade is full of incident.'

'Yes,' said Morris, disregarding these remarks, 'it's no use coming here. I shall see your father.'

'O no, you won't,' said Michael. 'Nobody shall see my father.'

'I should like to know why,' cried his cousin.

'I never make any secret of that,' replied the lawyer. 'He is too ill.'

'If he is as ill as you say,' cried the other, 'the more reason for accepting my proposal. I will see him.'

'Will you?' said Michael, and he rose and rang for his clerk.

It was now time, according to Sir Faraday Bond, the medical baronet whose name is so familiar at the foot of bulletins, that Joseph (the poor Golden Goose) should be removed into the purer air of Bournemouth; and for that uncharted wilderness of villas the family now shook off the dust of Bloomsbury; Julia delighted, because at Bournemouth she sometimes made acquaintances; John in despair, for he was a man of city tastes; Joseph indifferent where he was, so long as there was pen and ink and daily papers, and he could avoid martyrdom at the office; Morris himself, perhaps, not displeased to pretermit these visits to the city, and have a quiet time for thought. He was prepared for any sacrifice; all he desired was to get his money again and clear his feet of leather; and it would be strange, since he was so modest in his desires, and the pool amounted to upward of a hundred and sixteen thousand pounds — it would be strange indeed if he could find no way of influencing Michael. 'If I could only guess his reason,' he repeated to himself; and by day, as he walked in Branksome Woods, and by night, as he turned upon his bed, and at meal-times, when he forgot to eat, and in the bathing machine, when he forgot to dress himself, that problem was constantly before him: Why had Michael refused?

At last, one night, he burst into his brother's room and woke him.

'What's all this?' asked John.

'Julia leaves this place tomorrow,' replied Morris. 'She must go up to town and get the house ready, and find servants. We shall all follow in three days.'

'Oh, brayvo!' cried John. 'But why?'

'I've found it out, John,' returned his brother gently.

'It? What?' enquired John.

'Why Michael won't compromise,' said Morris. 'It's because he can't. It's because Masterman's dead, and he's keeping it dark.'

'Golly!' cried the impressionable John. 'But what's the use? Why does he do it, anyway?'

'To defraud us of the tontine,' said his brother.

'He couldn't; you have to have a doctor's certificate,' objected John.

'Did you never hear of venal doctors?' enquired Morris. 'They're as common as blackberries: you can pick 'em up for three-pound-ten a head.'

'I wouldn't do it under fifty if I were a sawbones,' ejaculated John.

'And then Michael,' continued Morris, 'is in the very thick of it. All his clients have come to grief; his whole business is rotten eggs. If any man could arrange it, he could; and depend upon it, he has his plan all straight; and depend upon it, it's a good one, for he's clever, and be damned to him! But I'm clever too; and I'm desperate. I lost seven thousand eight hundred pounds when I was an orphan at school.'

'O, don't be tedious,' interrupted John. 'You've lost far more already trying to get it back.'

CHAPTER II. In Which Morris takes Action

Some days later, accordingly, the three males of this depressing family might have been observed (by a reader of G. P. R. James) taking their departure from the East Station of Bournemouth. The weather was raw and changeable, and Joseph was arrayed in consequence according to the principles of Sir Faraday Bond, a man no less strict (as is well known) on costume than on diet. There are few polite invalids who have not lived, or tried to live, by that punctilious physician's orders. 'Avoid tea, madam,' the reader has doubtless heard him say, 'avoid tea, fried liver, antimonial wine, and bakers' bread. Retire nightly at 10.45; and clothe yourself (if you please) throughout in hygienic flannel. Externally, the fur of the marten is indicated. Do not forget to procure a pair of health boots at Messrs Dail and Crumbie's.' And he has probably called you back, even after you have paid your fee, to add with stentorian emphasis: 'I had forgotten one caution: avoid kippered sturgeon as you would the very devil.' The unfortunate Joseph was cut to the pattern of Sir Faraday in every button; he was shod with the health boot; his suit was of genuine ventilating cloth; his shirt of hygienic flannel, a somewhat dingy fabric; and he was draped to the knees in the inevitable greatcoat of marten's fur. The very railway porters at Bournemouth (which was a favourite station of the doctor's) marked the old gentleman for a creature of Sir Faraday. There was but one evidence of personal taste, a vizarded forage cap; from this form of headpiece, since he had fled from a dying jackal on the plains of Ephesus, and weathered a bora in the Adriatic, nothing could divorce our traveller.

The three Finsburys mounted into their compartment, and fell immediately to quarrelling, a step unseemly in itself and (in this case) highly unfortunate for Morris. Had he lingered a moment longer by the window, this tale need never have been written. For he might then have observed (as the porters did not fail to do) the arrival of a second passenger in the uniform of Sir Faraday Bond. But he had other matters on hand, which he judged (God knows how erroneously) to be more important.

'I never heard of such a thing,' he cried, resuming a discussion which had scarcely ceased all morning. 'The bill is not yours; it is mine.'

'It is payable to me,' returned the old gentleman, with an air of bitter obstinacy. 'I will do what I please with my own property.'

The bill was one for eight hundred pounds, which had been given him at breakfast to endorse, and which he had simply pocketed.

'Hear him, Johnny!' cried Morris. 'His property! the very clothes upon his back belong to me.'

'Let him alone,' said John. 'I am sick of both of you.'

'That is no way to speak of your uncle, sir,' cried Joseph. 'I will not endure this disrespect. You are a pair of exceedingly forward, impudent, and ignorant young men, and I have quite made up my mind to put an end to the whole business.'.

'O skittles!' said the graceful John.

But Morris was not so easy in his mind. This unusual act of insubordination had already troubled him; and these mutinous words now sounded ominously in his ears. He looked at the old gentleman uneasily. Upon one occasion, many years before, when Joseph was delivering a lecture, the audience had revolted in a body; finding their entertainer somewhat dry, they had taken the question of amusement into their own hands; and the lecturer (along with the board schoolmaster, the Baptist clergyman, and a working-man's candidate, who made up his bodyguard) was ultimately driven from the scene. Morris had not been present on that fatal day; if he had, he would have recognized a certain fighting glitter in his uncle's eye, and a certain chewing movement of his lips, as old acquaintances. But even to the inexpert these symptoms breathed of something dangerous.

'Well, well,' said Morris. 'I have no wish to bother you further till we get to London.'

Joseph did not so much as look at him in answer; with tremulous hands he produced a copy of the British Mechanic, and ostentatiously buried himself in its perusal.

'I wonder what can make him so cantankerous?' reflected the nephew. 'I don't like the look of it at all.' And he dubiously scratched his nose.

The train travelled forth into the world, bearing along with it the customary freight of obliterated voyagers, and along with these old Joseph, affecting immersion in his paper, and John slumbering over the columns of the Pink Un, and Morris revolving in his mind a dozen grudges, and suspicions, and alarms. It passed Christchurch by the sea, Herne with its pinewoods, Ringwood on its mazy river. A little behind time, but not much for the South-Western, it drew up at the platform of a station, in the midst of the New Forest, the real name of which (in case the railway company 'might have the law of me') I shall veil under the alias of Browndean.

Many passengers put their heads to the window, and among the rest an old gentleman on whom I willingly dwell, for I am nearly done with him now, and (in the whole course of the present narrative) I am not in the least likely to meet another character so decent. His name is immaterial, not so his habits. He had passed his life wandering in a tweed suit on the continent of Europe; and years of Galignani's

Messenger having at length undermined his eyesight, he suddenly remembered the rivers of Assyria and came to London to consult an oculist. From the oculist to the dentist, and from both to the physician, the step appears inevitable; presently he was in the hands of Sir Faraday, robed in ventilating cloth and sent to Bournemouth; and to that domineering baronet (who was his only friend upon his native soil) he was now returning to report. The case of these tweedsuited wanderers is unique. We have all seen them entering the table d'hote (at Spezzia, or Grdtz, or Venice) with a genteel melancholy and a faint appearance of having been to India and not succeeded. In the offices of many hundred hotels they are known by name; and yet, if the whole of this wandering cohort were to disappear tomorrow, their absence would be wholly unremarked. How much more, if only one — say this one in the ventilating cloth — should vanish! He had paid his bills at Bournemouth; his worldly effects were all in the van in two portmanteaux, and these after the proper interval would be sold as unclaimed baggage to a Jew; Sir Faraday's butler would be a half-crown poorer at the year's end, and the hotelkeepers of Europe about the same date would be mourning a small but quite observable decline in profits. And that would be literally all. Perhaps the old gentleman thought something of the sort, for he looked melancholy enough as he pulled his bare, grey head back into the carriage, and the train smoked under the bridge, and forth, with ever quickening speed, across the mingled heaths and woods of the New Forest.

Not many hundred yards beyond Browndean, however, a sudden jarring of brakes set everybody's teeth on edge, and there was a brutal stoppage. Morris Finsbury was aware of a confused uproar of voices, and sprang to the window. Women were screaming, men were tumbling from the windows on the track, the guard was crying to them to stay where they were; at the same time the train began to gather way and move very slowly backward toward Browndean; and the next moment — , all these various sounds were blotted out in the apocalyptic whistle and the thundering onslaught of the down express.

The actual collision Morris did not hear. Perhaps he fainted. He had a wild dream of having seen the carriage double up and fall to pieces like a pantomime trick; and sure enough, when he came to himself, he was lying on the bare earth and under the open sky. His head ached savagely; he carried his hand to his brow, and was not surprised to see it red with blood. The air was filled with an intolerable, throbbing roar, which he expected to find die away with the return of consciousness; and instead of that it seemed but to swell the louder and to pierce the more cruelly through his ears. It was a raging, bellowing thunder, like a boiler-riveting factory.

And now curiosity began to stir, and he sat up and looked about him. The track at this point ran in a sharp curve about a wooded hillock; all of the near side was heaped with the wreckage of the Bournemouth train; that of the express was mostly hidden by the trees; and just at the turn, under clouds of vomiting steam and piled about with cairns of living coal, lay what remained of the two engines, one upon the other. On the heathy margin of the line were many people running to and fro, and crying aloud as they ran, and many others lying motionless like sleeping tramps.

Morris suddenly drew an inference. 'There has been an accident' thought he, and was elated at his perspicacity. Almost at the same time his eye lighted on John, who lay close by as white as paper. 'Poor old John! poor old cove!' he thought, the schoolboy expression popping forth from some forgotten treasury, and he took his brother's hand in his with childish tenderness. It was perhaps the touch that recalled him; at least John opened his eyes, sat suddenly up, and after several ineffectual movements of his lips, 'What's the row?' said he, in a phantom voice.

The din of that devil's smithy still thundered in their ears. 'Let us get away from that,' Morris cried, and pointed to the vomit of steam that still spouted from the broken engines. And the pair helped each other up, and stood and quaked and wavered and stared about them at the scene of death.

Just then they were approached by a party of men who had already organized themselves for the purposes of rescue.

'Are you hurt?' cried one of these, a young fellow with the sweat streaming down his pallid face, and who, by the way he was treated, was evidently the doctor.

Morris shook his head, and the young man, nodding grimly, handed him a bottle of some spirit.

'Take a drink of that,' he said; 'your friend looks as if he needed it badly. We want every man we can get,' he added; 'there's terrible work before us, and nobody should shirk. If you can do no more, you can carry a stretcher.'

The doctor was hardly gone before Morris, under the spur of the dram, awoke to the full possession of his wits.

'My God!' he cried. 'Uncle Joseph!'

'Yes,' said John, 'where can he be? He can't be far off. I hope the old party isn't damaged.'

'Come and help me to look,' said Morris, with a snap of savage determination strangely foreign to his ordinary bearing; and then, for one moment, he broke forth. 'If he's dead!' he cried, and shook his fist at heaven.

To and fro the brothers hurried, staring in the faces of the wounded, or turning the dead upon their backs. They must have thus examined forty people, and still there was no word of Uncle Joseph. But now the course of their search brought them near the centre of the collision, where the boilers were still blowing off steam with a deafening clamour. It was a part of the field not yet gleaned by the rescuing party. The ground, especially on the margin of the wood, was full of inequalities — here a pit, there a hillock surmounted with a bush of furze. It was a place where many bodies might lie concealed, and they beat it like pointers after game. Suddenly Morris, who was leading, paused and reached forth his index with a tragic gesture. John followed the direction of his brother's hand.

In the bottom of a sandy hole lay something that had once been human. The face had suffered severely, and it was unrecognizable; but that was not required. The snowy hair, the coat of marten, the ventilating cloth, the hygienic flannel — everything down to the health boots from Messrs Dail and Crumbie's, identified the body as that of Uncle Joseph. Only the forage cap must have been lost in the convulsion, for the dead man was bareheaded.

'The poor old beggar!' said John, with a touch of natural feeling; 'I would give ten pounds if we hadn't chivvied him in the train!'

But there was no sentiment in the face of Morris as he gazed upon the dead. Gnawing his nails, with introverted eyes, his brow marked with the stamp of tragic indignation and tragic intellectual effort, he stood there silent. Here was a last injustice; he had been robbed while he was an orphan at school, he had been lashed to a decadent leather business, he had been saddled with Miss Hazeltine, his cousin had been defrauding him of the tontine, and he had borne all this, we might almost say, with dignity, and now they had gone and killed his uncle!

'Here!' he said suddenly, 'take his heels, we must get him into the woods. I'm not going to have anybody find this.'

'O, fudge!' said John, 'where's the use?'

'Do what I tell you,' spirted Morris, as he took the corpse by the shoulders. 'Am I to carry him myself?'

They were close upon the borders of the wood; in ten or twelve paces they were under cover; and a little further back, in a sandy clearing of the trees, they laid their burthen down, and stood and looked at it with loathing.

'What do you mean to do?' whispered John.

'Bury him, to be sure,' responded Morris, and he opened his pocket-knife and began feverishly to dig.

'You'll never make a hand of it with that,' objected the other.

'If you won't help me, you cowardly shirk,' screamed Morris, 'you can go to the devil!'

‘It’s the childishest folly,’ said John; ‘but no man shall call me a coward,’ and he began to help his brother grudgingly.

The soil was sandy and light, but matted with the roots of the surrounding firs. Gorse tore their hands; and as they baled the sand from the grave, it was often discoloured with their blood. An hour passed of unremitting energy upon the part of Morris, of lukewarm help on that of John; and still the trench was barely nine inches in depth. Into this the body was rudely flung: sand was piled upon it, and then more sand must be dug, and gorse had to be cut to pile on that; and still from one end of the sordid mound a pair of feet projected and caught the light upon their patent-leather toes. But by this time the nerves of both were shaken; even Morris had enough of his grisly task; and they skulked off like animals into the thickest of the neighbouring covert.

‘It’s the best that we can do,’ said Morris, sitting down.

‘And now,’ said John, ‘perhaps you’ll have the politeness to tell me what it’s all about.’

‘Upon my word,’ cried Morris, ‘if you do not understand for yourself, I almost despair of telling you.’

‘O, of course it’s some rot about the tontine,’ returned the other. ‘But it’s the merest nonsense. We’ve lost it, and there’s an end.’

‘I tell you,’ said Morris, ‘Uncle Masterman is dead. I know it, there’s a voice that tells me so.’

‘Well, and so is Uncle Joseph,’ said John.

‘He’s not dead, unless I choose,’ returned Morris.

‘And come to that,’ cried John, ‘if you’re right, and Uncle Masterman’s been dead ever so long, all we have to do is to tell the truth and expose Michael.’

‘You seem to think Michael is a fool,’ sneered Morris. ‘Can’t you understand he’s been preparing this fraud for years? He has the whole thing ready: the nurse, the doctor, the undertaker, all bought, the certificate all ready but the date! Let him get wind of this business, and you mark my words, Uncle Masterman will die in two days and be buried in a week. But see here, Johnny; what Michael can do, I can do. If he plays a game of bluff, so can I. If his father is to live for ever, by God, so shall my uncle!’

‘It’s illegal, ain’t it?’ said John.

‘A man must have SOME moral courage,’ replied Morris with dignity.

‘And then suppose you’re wrong? Suppose Uncle Masterman’s alive and kicking?’

‘Well, even then,’ responded the plotter, ‘we are no worse off than we were before; in fact, we’re better. Uncle Masterman must die some day; as long as Uncle Joseph was alive, he might have died any day;

but we're out of all that trouble now: there's no sort of limit to the game that I propose — it can be kept up till Kingdom Come.'

'If I could only see how you meant to set about it' sighed John. 'But you know, Morris, you always were such a bungler.'

'I'd like to know what I ever bungled,' cried Morris; 'I have the best collection of signet rings in London.'

'Well, you know, there's the leather business,' suggested the other. 'That's considered rather a hash.'

It was a mark of singular self-control in Morris that he suffered this to pass unchallenged, and even unresented.

'About the business in hand,' said he, 'once we can get him up to Bloomsbury, there's no sort of trouble. We bury him in the cellar, which seems made for it; and then all I have to do is to start out and find a venal doctor.'

'Why can't we leave him where he is?' asked John.

'Because we know nothing about the country,' retorted Morris. 'This wood may be a regular lovers' walk. Turn your mind to the real difficulty. How are we to get him up to Bloomsbury?'

Various schemes were mooted and rejected. The railway station at Browndean was, of course, out of the question, for it would now be a centre of curiosity and gossip, and (of all things) they would be least able to dispatch a dead body without remark. John feebly proposed getting an ale-cask and sending it as beer, but the objections to this course were so overwhelming that Morris scorned to answer. The purchase of a packing-case seemed equally hopeless, for why should two gentlemen without baggage of any kind require a packing-case? They would be more likely to require clean linen.

'We are working on wrong lines,' cried Morris at last. 'The thing must be gone about more carefully. Suppose now,' he added excitedly, speaking by fits and starts, as if he were thinking aloud, 'suppose we rent a cottage by the month. A householder can buy a packing-case without remark. Then suppose we clear the people out today, get the packing-case tonight, and tomorrow I hire a carriage or a cart that we could drive ourselves — and take the box, or whatever we get, to Ringwood or Lyndhurst or somewhere; we could label it "specimens", don't you see? Johnny, I believe I've hit the nail at last.'

'Well, it sounds more feasible,' admitted John.

'Of course we must take assumed names,' continued Morris. 'It would never do to keep our own. What do you say to "Masterman" itself? It sounds quiet and dignified.'

'I will NOT take the name of Masterman,' returned his brother; 'you may, if you like. I shall call myself Vance — the Great Vance; positively the last six nights. There's some go in a name like that.'

'Vance?' cried Morris. 'Do you think we are playing a pantomime for our amusement? There was never anybody named Vance who wasn't a music-hall singer.'

'That's the beauty of it,' returned John; 'it gives you some standing at once. You may call yourself Fortescue till all's blue, and nobody cares; but to be Vance gives a man a natural nobility.'

'But there's lots of other theatrical names,' cried Morris. 'Leybourne, Irving, Brough, Toole — '

'Devil a one will I take!' returned his brother. 'I am going to have my little lark out of this as well as you.'

'Very well,' said Morris, who perceived that John was determined to carry his point, 'I shall be Robert Vance.'

'And I shall be George Vance,' cried John, 'the only original George Vance! Rally round the only original!'

Repairing as well as they were able the disorder of their clothes, the Finsbury brothers returned to Browndean by a circuitous route in quest of luncheon and a suitable cottage. It is not always easy to drop at a moment's notice on a furnished residence in a retired locality; but fortune presently introduced our adventurers to a deaf carpenter, a man rich in cottages of the required description, and unaffectedly eager to supply their wants. The second place they visited, standing, as it did, about a mile and a half from any neighbours, caused them to exchange a glance of hope. On a nearer view, the place was not without depressing features. It stood in a marshy-looking hollow of a heath; tall trees obscured its windows; the thatch visibly rotted on the rafters; and the walls were stained with splashes of unwholesome green. The rooms were small, the ceilings low, the furniture merely nominal; a strange chill and a haunting smell of damp pervaded the kitchen; and the bedroom boasted only of one bed.

Morris, with a view to cheapening the place, remarked on this defect.

'Well,' returned the man; 'if you can't sleep two abed, you'd better take a villa residence.'

'And then,' pursued Morris, 'there's no water. How do you get your water?'

'We fill THAT from the spring,' replied the carpenter, pointing to a big barrel that stood beside the door. 'The spring ain't so VERY far off, after all, and it's easy brought in buckets. There's a bucket there.'

Morris nudged his brother as they examined the water-butt. It was new, and very solidly constructed for its office. If anything had been wanting to decide them, this eminently practical barrel would have turned the scale. A bargain was promptly struck, the month's rent was paid upon the nail, and about an hour later the Finsbury brothers might have been observed returning to the blighted cottage, having along with them the key, which was the symbol of their tenancy, a spirit-lamp, with which they fondly told themselves they would be able to cook, a pork pie of suitable dimensions, and a quart of the worst whisky in Hampshire. Nor was this all they had effected; already (under the plea that they were landscape-painters) they had hired for dawn on the morrow a light but solid two-wheeled cart; so that when they entered in their new character, they were able to tell themselves that the back of the business was already broken.

John proceeded to get tea; while Morris, foraging about the house, was presently delighted by discovering the lid of the water-butt upon the kitchen shelf. Here, then, was the packing-case complete; in the absence of straw, the blankets (which he himself, at least, had not the smallest intention of using for their present purpose) would exactly take the place of packing; and Morris, as the difficulties began to vanish from his path, rose almost to the brink of exultation. There was, however, one difficulty not yet faced, one upon which his whole scheme depended. Would John consent to remain alone in the cottage? He had not yet dared to put the question.

It was with high good-humour that the pair sat down to the deal table, and proceeded to fall-to on the pork pie. Morris retailed the discovery of the lid, and the Great Vance was pleased to applaud by beating on the table with his fork in true music-hall style.

'That's the dodge,' he cried. 'I always said a water-butt was what you wanted for this business.'

'Of course,' said Morris, thinking this a favourable opportunity to prepare his brother, 'of course you must stay on in this place till I give the word; I'll give out that uncle is resting in the New Forest. It would not do for both of us to appear in London; we could never conceal the absence of the old man.'

John's jaw dropped.

'O, come!' he cried. 'You can stay in this hole yourself. I won't.'

The colour came into Morris's cheeks. He saw that he must win his brother at any cost.

'You must please remember, Johnny,' he said, 'the amount of the tontine. If I succeed, we shall have each fifty thousand to place to our bank account; ay, and nearer sixty.'

'But if you fail,' returned John, 'what then? What'll be the colour of our bank account in that case?'

'I will pay all expenses,' said Morris, with an inward struggle; 'you shall lose nothing.'

'Well,' said John, with a laugh, 'if the ex-s are yours, and half-profits mine, I don't mind remaining here for a couple of days.'

'A couple of days!' cried Morris, who was beginning to get angry and controlled himself with difficulty; 'why, you would do more to win five pounds on a horse-race!'

'Perhaps I would,' returned the Great Vance; 'it's the artistic temperament.'

'This is monstrous!' burst out Morris. 'I take all risks; I pay all expenses; I divide profits; and you won't take the slightest pains to help me. It's not decent; it's not honest; it's not even kind.'

'But suppose,' objected John, who was considerably impressed by his brother's vehemence, 'suppose that Uncle Masterman is alive after all, and lives ten years longer; must I rot here all that time?'

'Of course not,' responded Morris, in a more conciliatory tone; 'I only ask a month at the outside; and if Uncle Masterman is not dead by that time you can go abroad.'

'Go abroad?' repeated John eagerly. 'Why shouldn't I go at once? Tell 'em that Joseph and I are seeing life in Paris.'

'Nonsense,' said Morris.

'Well, but look here,' said John; 'it's this house, it's such a pig-sty, it's so dreary and damp. You said yourself that it was damp.'

'Only to the carpenter,' Morris distinguished, 'and that was to reduce the rent. But really, you know, now we're in it, I've seen worse.'

'And what am I to do?' complained the victim. 'How can I entertain a friend?'

'My dear Johnny, if you don't think the tontine worth a little trouble, say so, and I'll give the business up.'

'You're dead certain of the figures, I suppose?' asked John. 'Well' — with a deep sigh — 'send me the Pink Un and all the comic papers regularly. I'll face the music.'

As afternoon drew on, the cottage breathed more thrillingly of its native marsh; a creeping chill inhabited its chambers; the fire smoked, and a shower of rain, coming up from the channel on a slant of wind, tingled on the window-panes. At intervals, when the gloom deepened toward despair, Morris would produce the whisky-bottle, and at first John welcomed the diversion — not for long. It has been said this spirit was the worst in Hampshire; only those acquainted with the county can appreciate the force of that superlative; and at length even the Great Vance (who was no connoisseur) waved the decoction from his lips. The approach of dusk, feebly combated with a single tallow candle, added a touch of tragedy; and John suddenly stopped whistling through his fingers — an art to the practice of which he had been reduced — and bitterly lamented his concessions.

'I can't stay here a month,' he cried. 'No one could. The thing's nonsense, Morris. The parties that lived in the Bastille would rise against a place like this.'

With an admirable affectation of indifference, Morris proposed a game of pitch-and-toss. To what will not the diplomatist condescend!

It was John's favourite game; indeed his only game — he had found all the rest too intellectual — and he played it with equal skill and good fortune. To Morris himself, on the other hand, the whole business was detestable; he was a bad pitcher, he had no luck in tossing, and he was one who suffered torments when he lost. But John was in a dangerous humour, and his brother was prepared for any sacrifice.

By seven o'clock, Morris, with incredible agony, had lost a couple of half-crowns. Even with the tontine before his eyes, this was as much as he could bear; and, remarking that he would take his revenge some other time, he proposed a bit of supper and a grog.

Before they had made an end of this refreshment it was time to be at work. A bucket of water for present necessities was withdrawn from the water-butt, which was then emptied and rolled before the kitchen fire to dry; and the two brothers set forth on their adventure under a starless heaven.

CHAPTER III. The Lecturer at Large

Whether mankind is really partial to happiness is an open question. Not a month passes by but some cherished son runs off into the merchant service, or some valued husband decamps to Texas with a lady help; clergymen have fled from their parishioners; and even judges have been known to retire. To an open mind, it will appear (upon the whole) less strange that Joseph Finsbury should have been led to entertain ideas of escape. His lot (I think we may say) was not a happy one. My friend, Mr Morris, with whom I travel up twice or thrice a week from Snaresbrook Park, is certainly a gentleman whom I esteem; but he was scarce a model nephew. As for John, he is of course an excellent fellow; but if he was the only link that bound one to a home, I think the most of us would vote for foreign travel. In the case of Joseph, John (if he were a link at all) was not the only one; endearing bonds had long enchained the old gentleman to Bloomsbury; and by these expressions I do not in the least refer to Julia Hazeltine (of whom, however, he was fond enough), but to that collection of manuscript notebooks in which his life lay buried. That he should ever have made up his mind to separate himself from these collections, and go forth upon the world with no other resources than his memory supplied, is a circumstance highly pathetic in itself, and but little creditable to the wisdom of his nephews.

The design, or at least the temptation, was already some months old; and when a bill for eight hundred pounds, payable to himself, was suddenly placed in Joseph's hand, it brought matters to an issue. He retained that bill, which, to one of his frugality, meant wealth; and he promised himself to disappear among the crowds at Waterloo, or (if that should prove impossible) to slink out of the house in the course of the evening and melt like a dream into the millions of London. By a peculiar interposition of Providence and railway mismanagement he had not so long to wait.

He was one of the first to come to himself and scramble to his feet after the Browndean catastrophe, and he had no sooner remarked his prostrate nephews than he understood his opportunity and fled. A man of upwards of seventy, who has just met with a railway accident, and who is cumbered besides with the full uniform of Sir Faraday Bond, is not very likely to flee far, but the wood was close at hand and offered the fugitive at least a temporary covert. Hither, then, the old gentleman skipped with extraordinary expedition, and, being somewhat winded and a good deal shaken, here he lay down in a convenient grove and was presently overwhelmed by slumber. The way of fate is often highly entertaining to the looker-on, and it is certainly a pleasant circumstance, that while Morris and John were delving in the sand to conceal the body of a total stranger, their uncle lay in dreamless sleep a few hundred yards deeper in the wood.

He was awakened by the jolly note of a bugle from the neighbouring high road, where a char-a-banc was bowling by with some belated tourists. The sound cheered his old heart, it directed his steps into the bargain, and soon he was on the highway, looking east and west from under his vizor, and doubtfully revolving what he ought to do. A deliberate sound of wheels arose in the distance, and then a cart was seen approaching, well filled with parcels, driven by a good-natured looking man on a double bench, and displaying on a board the legend, ‘I Chandler, carrier’. In the infamously prosaic mind of Mr Finsbury, certain streaks of poetry survived and were still efficient; they had carried him to Asia Minor as a giddy youth of forty, and now, in the first hours of his recovered freedom, they suggested to him the idea of continuing his flight in Mr Chandler’s cart. It would be cheap; properly broached, it might even cost nothing, and, after years of mittens and hygienic flannel, his heart leaped out to meet the notion of exposure.

Mr Chandler was perhaps a little puzzled to find so old a gentleman, so strangely clothed, and begging for a lift on so retired a roadside. But he was a good-natured man, glad to do a service, and so he took the stranger up; and he had his own idea of civility, and so he asked no questions. Silence, in fact, was quite good enough for Mr Chandler; but the cart had scarcely begun to move forward ere he found himself involved in a one-sided conversation.

‘I can see,’ began Mr Finsbury, ‘by the mixture of parcels and boxes that are contained in your cart, each marked with its individual label, and by the good Flemish mare you drive, that you occupy the post of carrier in that great English system of transport which, with all its defects, is the pride of our country.’

‘Yes, sir,’ returned Mr Chandler vaguely, for he hardly knew what to reply; ‘them parcels posts has done us carriers a world of harm.’

‘I am not a prejudiced man,’ continued Joseph Finsbury. ‘As a young man I travelled much. Nothing was too small or too obscure for me to acquire. At sea I studied seamanship, learned the complicated knots employed by mariners, and acquired the technical terms. At Naples, I would learn the art of making macaroni; at Nice, the principles of making candied fruit. I never went to the opera without first buying the book of the piece, and making myself acquainted with the principal airs by picking them out on the piano with one finger.’

‘You must have seen a deal, sir,’ remarked the carrier, touching up his horse; ‘I wish I could have had your advantages.’

‘Do you know how often the word whip occurs in the Old

Testament?' continued the old gentleman. 'One hundred and (if I remember exactly) forty-seven times.'

'Do it indeed, sir?' said Mr Chandler. 'I never should have thought it.'

'The Bible contains three million five hundred and one thousand two hundred and forty-nine letters. Of verses I believe there are upward of eighteen thousand. There have been many editions of the Bible; Wycliff was the first to introduce it into England about the year 1300. The "Paragraph Bible", as it is called, is a well-known edition, and is so called because it is divided into paragraphs. The "Breeches Bible" is another well-known instance, and gets its name either because it was printed by one Breeches, or because the place of publication bore that name.'

The carrier remarked drily that he thought that was only natural, and turned his attention to the more congenial task of passing a cart of hay; it was a matter of some difficulty, for the road was narrow, and there was a ditch on either hand.

'I perceive,' began Mr Finsbury, when they had successfully passed the cart, 'that you hold your reins with one hand; you should employ two.'

'Well, I like that!' cried the carrier contemptuously. 'Why?'

'You do not understand,' continued Mr Finsbury. 'What I tell you is a scientific fact, and reposes on the theory of the lever, a branch of mechanics. There are some very interesting little shilling books upon the field of study, which I should think a man in your station would take a pleasure to read. But I am afraid you have not cultivated the art of observation; at least we have now driven together for some time, and I cannot remember that you have contributed a single fact. This is a very false principle, my good man. For instance, I do not know if you observed that (as you passed the hay-cart man) you took your left?'

'Of course I did,' cried the carrier, who was now getting belligerent; 'he'd have the law on me if I hadn't.'

'In France, now,' resumed the old man, 'and also, I believe, in the United States of America, you would have taken the right.'

'I would not,' cried Mr Chandler indignantly. 'I would have taken the left.'

'I observe again,' continued Mr Finsbury, scorning to reply, 'that you mend the dilapidated parts of your harness with string. I have always protested against this carelessness and slovenliness of the English poor. In an essay that I once read before an appreciative audience — '

'It ain't string,' said the carrier sullenly, 'it's pack-thread.'

'I have always protested,' resumed the old man, 'that in their private and domestic life, as well as in their labouring career, the lower classes of this country are improvident, thriftless, and extravagant. A stitch in time — '

'Who the devil ARE the lower classes?' cried the carrier. 'You are the lower classes yourself! If I thought you were a blooming aristocrat, I shouldn't have given you a lift.'

The words were uttered with undisguised ill-feeling; it was plain the pair were not congenial, and further conversation, even to one of Mr Finsbury's pathetic loquacity, was out of the question. With an angry gesture, he pulled down the brim of the forage-cap over his eyes, and, producing a notebook and a blue pencil from one of his innermost pockets, soon became absorbed in calculations.

On his part the carrier fell to whistling with fresh zest; and if (now and again) he glanced at the companion of his drive, it was with mingled feelings of triumph and alarm — triumph because he had succeeded in arresting that prodigy of speech, and alarm lest (by any accident) it should begin again. Even the shower, which presently overtook and passed them, was endured by both in silence; and it was still in silence that they drove at length into Southampton.

Dusk had fallen; the shop windows glimmered forth into the streets of the old seaport; in private houses lights were kindled for the evening meal; and Mr Finsbury began to think complacently of his night's lodging. He put his papers by, cleared his throat, and looked doubtfully at Mr Chandler.

'Will you be civil enough,' said he, 'to recommend me to an inn?' Mr Chandler pondered for a moment.

'Well,' he said at last, 'I wonder how about the "Tregonwell Arms".'

'The "Tregonwell Arms" will do very well,' returned the old man, 'if it's clean and cheap, and the people civil.'

'I wasn't thinking so much of you,' returned Mr Chandler thoughtfully. 'I was thinking of my friend Watts as keeps the 'ouse; he's a friend of mine, you see, and he helped me through my trouble last year. And I was thinking, would it be fair-like on Watts to saddle him with an old party like you, who might be the death of him with general information. Would it be fair to the 'ouse?' enquired Mr Chandler, with an air of candid appeal.

'Mark me,' cried the old gentleman with spirit. 'It was kind in you to bring me here for nothing, but it gives you no right to address me in such terms. Here's a shilling for your trouble; and, if you do not choose to set me down at the "Tregonwell Arms", I can find it for myself.'

Chandler was surprised and a little startled; muttering something apologetic, he returned the shilling, drove in silence through several intricate lanes and small streets, drew up at length before the bright windows of an inn, and called loudly for Mr Watts.

‘Is that you, Jem?’ cried a hearty voice from the stableyard. ‘Come in and warm yourself.’

‘I only stopped here,’ Mr Chandler explained, ‘to let down an old gent that wants food and lodging. Mind, I warn you agin him; he’s worse nor a temperance lecturer.’

Mr Finsbury dismounted with difficulty, for he was cramped with his long drive, and the shaking he had received in the accident. The friendly Mr Watts, in spite of the carter’s scarcely agreeable introduction, treated the old gentleman with the utmost courtesy, and led him into the back parlour, where there was a big fire burning in the grate. Presently a table was spread in the same room, and he was invited to seat himself before a stewed fowl — somewhat the worse for having seen service before — and a big pewter mug of ale from the tap.

He rose from supper a giant refreshed; and, changing his seat to one nearer the fire, began to examine the other guests with an eye to the delights of oratory. There were near a dozen present, all men, and (as Joseph exulted to perceive) all working men. Often already had he seen cause to bless that appetite for disconnected fact and rotatory argument which is so marked a character of the mechanic. But even an audience of working men has to be courted, and there was no man more deeply versed in the necessary arts than Joseph Finsbury. He placed his glasses on his nose, drew from his pocket a bundle of papers, and spread them before him on a table. He crumpled them, he smoothed them out; now he skimmed them over, apparently well pleased with their contents; now, with tapping pencil and contracted brows, he seemed maturely to consider some particular statement. A stealthy glance about the room assured him of the success of his manoeuvres; all eyes were turned on the performer, mouths were open, pipes hung suspended; the birds were charmed. At the same moment the entrance of Mr Watts afforded him an opportunity.

‘I observe,’ said he, addressing the landlord, but taking at the same time the whole room into his confidence with an encouraging look, ‘I observe that some of these gentlemen are looking with curiosity in my direction; and certainly it is unusual to see anyone immersed in literary and scientific labours in the public apartment of an inn. I have here some calculations I made this morning upon the cost of living in this and other countries — a subject, I need scarcely say, highly interesting to the working classes. I have calculated a scale of living for incomes of eighty, one hundred and sixty, two hundred, and two hundred and forty pounds a year. I must confess that the income of eighty pounds has somewhat baffled me, and the others are not so exact as I could wish; for the price of washing varies largely in foreign countries, and the different cokes, coals and firewoods fluctuate surprisingly. I will read my researches, and I hope you won't scruple to point out to me any little errors that I may have committed either from oversight or ignorance. I will begin, gentlemen, with the income of eighty pounds a year.'

Whereupon the old gentleman, with less compassion than he would have had for brute beasts, delivered himself of all his tedious calculations. As he occasionally gave nine versions of a single income, placing the imaginary person in London, Paris, Bagdad, Spitzbergen, Bassorah, Heligoland, the Scilly Islands, Brighton, Cincinnati, and Nijni-Novgorod, with an appropriate outfit for each locality, it is no wonder that his hearers look back on that evening as the most tiresome they ever spent.

Long before Mr Finsbury had reached Nijni-Novgorod with the income of one hundred and sixty pounds, the company had dwindled and faded away to a few old topers and the bored but affable Watts. There was a constant stream of customers from the outer world, but so soon as they were served they drank their liquor quickly and departed with the utmost celerity for the next public-house.

By the time the young man with two hundred a year was vegetating in the Scilly Islands, Mr Watts was left alone with the economist; and that imaginary person had scarce commenced life at Brighton before the last of his pursuers desisted from the chase.

Mr Finsbury slept soundly after the manifold fatigues of the day. He rose late, and, after a good breakfast, ordered the bill. Then it was that he made a discovery which has been made by many others, both before and since: that it is one thing to order your bill, and another to discharge it. The items were moderate and (what does not always follow) the total small; but, after the most sedulous review of all his pockets, one and nine pence halfpenny appeared to be the total of the old gentleman's available assets. He asked to see Mr Watts.

'Here is a bill on London for eight hundred pounds,' said Mr Finsbury, as that worthy appeared. 'I am afraid, unless you choose to discount it yourself, it may detain me a day or two till I can get it cashed.'

Mr Watts looked at the bill, turned it over, and dogs-eared it with his fingers. 'It will keep you a day or two?' he said, repeating the old man's words. 'You have no other money with you?'

'Some trifling change,' responded Joseph. 'Nothing to speak of.'

'Then you can send it me; I should be pleased to trust you.'

'To tell the truth,' answered the old gentleman, 'I am more than half inclined to stay; I am in need of funds.'

'If a loan of ten shillings would help you, it is at your service,' responded Watts, with eagerness.

‘No, I think I would rather stay,’ said the old man, ‘and get my bill discounted.’

‘You shall not stay in my house,’ cried Mr Watts. ‘This is the last time you shall have a bed at the “Tregonwell Arms”.’

‘I insist upon remaining,’ replied Mr Finsbury, with spirit; ‘I remain by Act of Parliament; turn me out if you dare.’

‘Then pay your bill,’ said Mr Watts.

‘Take that,’ cried the old man, tossing him the negotiable bill.

‘It is not legal tender,’ replied Mr Watts. ‘You must leave my house at once.’

‘You cannot appreciate the contempt I feel for you, Mr Watts,’ said the old gentleman, resigning himself to circumstances. ‘But you shall feel it in one way: I refuse to pay my bill.’

‘I don’t care for your bill,’ responded Mr Watts. ‘What I want is your absence.’

‘That you shall have!’ said the old gentleman, and, taking up his forage cap as he spoke, he crammed it on his head. ‘Perhaps you are too insolent,’ he added, ‘to inform me of the time of the next London train?’

‘It leaves in three-quarters of an hour,’ returned the innkeeper with alacrity. ‘You can easily catch it.’

Joseph’s position was one of considerable weakness. On the one hand, it would have been well to avoid the direct line of railway, since it was there he might expect his nephews to lie in wait for his recapture; on the other, it was highly desirable, it was even strictly needful, to get the bill discounted ere it should be stopped. To London, therefore, he decided to proceed on the first train; and there remained but one point to be considered, how to pay his fare.

Joseph’s nails were never clean; he ate almost entirely with his knife. I doubt if you could say he had the manners of a gentleman; but he had better than that, a touch of genuine dignity. Was it from his stay in Asia Minor? Was it from a strain in the Finsbury blood sometimes alluded to by customers? At least, when he presented himself before the station-master, his salaam was truly Oriental, palm-trees appeared to crowd about the little office, and the simoom or the bulbul — but I leave this image to persons better acquainted with the East. His appearance, besides, was highly in his favour; the uniform of Sir Faraday, however inconvenient and conspicuous, was, at least, a costume in which no swindler could have hoped to prosper; and the exhibition of a valuable watch and a bill for eight hundred pounds completed what deportment had begun. A quarter of an hour later, when the train came up, Mr Finsbury was introduced to the guard and installed in a first-class compartment, the station-master smilingly assuming all responsibility.

As the old gentleman sat waiting the moment of departure, he was the witness of an incident strangely connected with the fortunes of his house. A packing-case of cyclopean bulk was borne along the platform by some dozen of tottering porters, and ultimately, to the delight of a considerable crowd, hoisted on board the van. It is often the cheering task of the historian to direct attention to the designs and (if it may be reverently said) the artifices of Providence. In the luggage van, as Joseph was borne out of the station of Southampton East upon his way to London, the egg of his romance lay (so to speak) unhatched. The huge packing-case was directed to lie at Waterloo till called for, and addressed to one 'William Dent Pitman'; and the very next article, a goodly barrel jammed into the corner of the van, bore the superscription, 'M. Finsbury, 16 John Street, Bloomsbury. Carriage paid.'

In this juxtaposition, the train of powder was prepared; and there was now wanting only an idle hand to fire it off.

CHAPTER IV. The Magistrate in the Luggage Van

The city of Winchester is famed for a cathedral, a bishop — but he was unfortunately killed some years ago while riding — a public school, a considerable assortment of the military, and the deliberate passage of the trains of the London and South-Western line. These and many similar associations would have doubtless crowded on the mind of Joseph Finsbury; but his spirit had at that time flitted from the railway compartment to a heaven of populous lecture-halls and endless oratory. His body, in the meanwhile, lay doubled on the cushions, the forage-cap rakishly tilted back after the fashion of those that lie in wait for nursery-maids, the poor old face quiescent, one arm clutching to his heart Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper.

To him, thus unconscious, enter and exeunt again a pair of voyagers. These two had saved the train and no more. A tandem urged to its last speed, an act of something closely bordering on brigandage at the ticket office, and a spasm of running, had brought them on the platform just as the engine uttered its departing snort. There was but one carriage easily within their reach; and they had sprung into it, and the leader and elder already had his feet upon the floor, when he observed Mr Finsbury.

'Good God!' he cried. 'Uncle Joseph! This'll never do.'

And he backed out, almost upsetting his companion, and once more closed the door upon the sleeping patriarch.

The next moment the pair had jumped into the baggage van.

'What's the row about your Uncle Joseph?' enquired the younger traveller, mopping his brow. 'Does he object to smoking?'

'I don't know that there's anything the row with him,' returned the other. 'He's by no means the first comer, my Uncle Joseph, I can tell you! Very respectable old gentleman; interested in leather; been to Asia Minor; no family, no assets — and a tongue, my dear Wickham, sharper than a serpent's tooth.'

'Cantankerous old party, eh?' suggested Wickham.

'Not in the least,' cried the other; 'only a man with a solid talent for being a bore; rather cheery I dare say, on a desert island, but on a railway journey insupportable. You should hear him on Tonti, the ass that started tontines. He's incredible on Tonti.'

'By Jove!' cried Wickham, 'then you're one of these Finsbury tontine fellows. I hadn't a guess of that.'

'Ah!' said the other, 'do you know that old boy in the carriage is worth a hundred thousand pounds to me? There he was asleep, and nobody there but you! But I spared him, because I'm a Conservative in politics.'

Mr Wickham, pleased to be in a luggage van, was flitting to and fro like a gentlemanly butterfly.

'By Jingo!' he cried, 'here's something for you! "M. Finsbury, 16 John Street, Bloomsbury, London." M. stands for Michael, you sly dog; you keep two establishments, do you?'

'O, that's Morris,' responded Michael from the other end of the van, where he had found a comfortable seat upon some sacks. 'He's a little cousin of mine. I like him myself, because he's afraid of me. He's one of the ornaments of Bloomsbury, and has a collection of some kind — birds' eggs or something that's supposed to be curious. I bet it's nothing to my clients!'

'What a lark it would be to play billy with the labels!' chuckled Mr Wickham. 'By George, here's a tack-hammer! We might send all these things skipping about the premises like what's-his-name!'

At this moment, the guard, surprised by the sound of voices, opened the door of his little cabin.

'You had best step in here, gentlemen,' said he, when he had heard their story.

'Won't you come, Wickham?' asked Michael.

'Catch me — I want to travel in a van,' replied the youth.

And so the door of communication was closed; and for the rest of the run Mr Wickham was left alone over his diversions on the one side, and on the other Michael and the guard were closeted together in familiar talk.

'I can get you a compartment here, sir,' observed the official, as the train began to slacken speed before Bishopstoke station. 'You had best get out at my door, and I can bring your friend.'

Mr Wickham, whom we left (as the reader has shrewdly suspected) beginning to 'play billy' with the labels in the van, was a young gentleman of much wealth, a pleasing but sandy exterior, and a highly vacant mind. Not many months before, he had contrived to get himself blackmailed by the family of a Wallachian Hospodar, resident for political reasons in the gay city of Paris. A common friend (to whom he had confided his distress) recommended him to Michael; and the lawyer was no sooner in possession of the facts than he instantly assumed the offensive, fell on the flank of the Wallachian forces, and, in the inside of three days, had the satisfaction to behold them routed and fleeing for the Danube. It is no business of ours to follow them on this retreat, over which the police were so obliging as to preside paternally. Thus relieved from what he loved to refer to as the Bulgarian Atrocity, Mr Wickham returned to London with the most unbounded and embarrassing gratitude and admiration for his saviour. These sentiments were not repaid either in kind or degree; indeed, Michael was a trifle ashamed of his new client's friendship; it had taken many invitations to get him to Winchester and Wickham Manor; but he had gone at last, and was now returning. It has been remarked by some judicious thinker (possibly J. F. Smith) that Providence despises to employ no instrument, however humble; and it is now plain to the dullest that both Mr Wickham and the Wallachian Hospodar were liquid lead and wedges in the hand of Destiny.

Smitten with the desire to shine in Michael's eyes and show himself a person of original humour and resources, the young gentleman (who was a magistrate, more by token, in his native county) was no sooner alone in the van than he fell upon the labels with all the zeal of a reformer; and, when he rejoined the lawyer at Bishopstoke, his face was flushed with his exertions, and his cigar, which he had suffered to go out was almost bitten in two.

'By George, but this has been a lark!' he cried. 'I've sent the wrong thing to everybody in England. These cousins of yours have a packing-case as big as a house. I've muddled the whole business up to that extent, Finsbury, that if it were to get out it's my belief we should get lynched.'

It was useless to be serious with Mr Wickham. 'Take care,' said Michael. 'I am getting tired of your perpetual scrapes; my reputation is beginning to suffer.'

'Your reputation will be all gone before you finish with me,' replied his companion with a grin. 'Clap it in the bill, my boy. "For total loss of reputation, six and eightpence." But,' continued Mr Wickham with more seriousness, 'could I be bowled out of the Commission for this little jest? I know it's small, but I like to be a JP. Speaking as a professional man, do you think there's any risk?'

'What does it matter?' responded Michael, 'they'll chuck you out sooner or later. Somehow you don't give the effect of being a good magistrate.'

'I only wish I was a solicitor,' retorted his companion, 'instead of a poor devil of a country gentleman. Suppose we start one of those tontine affairs ourselves; I to pay five hundred a year, and you to guarantee me against every misfortune except illness or marriage.'

'It strikes me,' remarked the lawyer with a meditative laugh, as he lighted a cigar, 'it strikes me that you must be a cursed nuisance in this world of ours.'

'Do you really think so, Finsbury?' responded the magistrate, leaning back in his cushions, delighted with the compliment. 'Yes, I suppose I am a nuisance. But, mind you, I have a stake in the country: don't forget that, dear boy.'

CHAPTER V. Mr Gideon Forsyth and the Gigantic Box

It has been mentioned that at Bournemouth Julia sometimes made acquaintances; it is true she had but a glimpse of them before the doors of John Street closed again upon its captives, but the glimpse was sometimes exhilarating, and the consequent regret was tempered with hope. Among those whom she had thus met a year before was a young barrister of the name of Gideon Forsyth.

About three o'clock of the eventful day when the magistrate tampered with the labels, a somewhat moody and distempered ramble had carried Mr Forsyth to the corner of John Street; and about the same moment Miss Hazeltine was called to the door of No. 16 by a thundering double knock.

Mr Gideon Forsyth was a happy enough young man; he would have been happier if he had had more money and less uncle. One hundred and twenty pounds a year was all his store; but his uncle, Mr Edward Hugh Bloomfield, supplemented this with a handsome allowance and a great deal of advice, couched in language that would probably have been judged intemperate on board a pirate ship. Mr Bloomfield was indeed a figure quite peculiar to the days of Mr Gladstone; what we may call (for the lack of an accepted expression) a Squirradical. Having acquired years without experience, he carried into the Radical side of politics those noisy, after-dinner-table passions, which we are more accustomed to connect with Toryism in its severe and senile aspects. To the opinions of Mr Bradlaugh, in fact, he added the temper and the sympathies of that extinct animal, the Squire; he admired pugilism, he carried a formidable oaken staff, he was a reverent churchman, and it was hard to know which would have more volcanically stirred his choler — a person who should have defended the established church, or one who should have neglected to attend its celebrations. He had besides some levelling catchwords, justly dreaded in the family circle; and when he could not go so far as to declare a step un-English, he might still (and with hardly less effect) denounce it as unpractical. It was under the ban of this lesser excommunication that Gideon had fallen. His views on the study of law had been pronounced unpractical; and it had been intimated to him, in a vociferous interview punctuated with the oaken staff, that he must either take a new start and get a brief or two, or prepare to live on his own money.

No wonder if Gideon was moody. He had not the slightest wish to modify his present habits; but he would not stand on that, since the recall of Mr Bloomfield’s allowance would revolutionize them still more radically. He had not the least desire to acquaint himself with law; he had looked into it already, and it seemed not to repay attention; but upon this also he was ready to give way. In fact, he would go as far as he could to meet the views of his uncle, the Squirradical. But there was one part of the programme that appeared independent of his will. How to get a brief? there was the question. And there was another and a worse. Suppose he got one, should he prove the better man?

Suddenly he found his way barred by a crowd. A garishly illuminated van was backed against the kerb; from its open stern, half resting on the street, half supported by some glistening athletes, the end of the largest packing-case in the county of Middlesex might have been seen protruding; while, on the steps of the house, the burly person of the driver and the slim figure of a young girl stood as upon a stage, disputing.

‘It is not for us,’ the girl was saying. ‘I beg you to take it away; it couldn’t get into the house, even if you managed to get it out of the van.’

‘I shall leave it on the pavement, then, and M. Finsbury can arrange with the Vestry as he likes,’ said the vanman.

‘But I am not M. Finsbury,’ expostulated the girl.

‘It doesn’t matter who you are,’ said the vanman.

‘You must allow me to help you, Miss Hazeltine,’ said Gideon, putting out his hand.

Julia gave a little cry of pleasure. ‘O, Mr Forsyth,’ she cried, ‘I am so glad to see you; we must get this horrid thing, which can only have come here by mistake, into the house. The man says we’ll have to take off the door, or knock two of our windows into one, or be fined by the Vestry or Custom House or something for leaving our parcels on the pavement.’

The men by this time had successfully removed the box from the van, had plumped it down on the pavement, and now stood leaning against it, or gazing at the door of No. 16, in visible physical distress and mental embarrassment. The windows of the whole street had filled, as if by magic, with interested and entertained spectators.

With as thoughtful and scientific an expression as he could assume, Gideon measured the doorway with his cane, while Julia entered his observations in a drawing-book. He then measured the box, and, upon comparing his data, found that there was just enough space for it to enter. Next, throwing off his coat and waistcoat, he assisted the men to take the door from its hinges. And lastly, all bystanders being pressed into the service, the packing-case mounted the steps upon some fifteen pairs of wavering legs — scraped, loudly grinding, through the doorway — and was deposited at length, with a formidable convulsion, in the far end of the lobby, which it almost blocked. The artisans of this victory smiled upon each other as the dust subsided. It was true they had smashed a bust of Apollo and ploughed the wall into deep ruts; but, at least, they were no longer one of the public spectacles of London.

‘Well, sir,’ said the vanman, ‘I never see such a job.’

Gideon eloquently expressed his concurrence in this sentiment by pressing a couple of sovereigns in the man’s hand.

‘Make it three, sir, and I’ll stand Sam to everybody here!’ cried the latter, and, this having been done, the whole body of volunteer porters swarmed into the van, which drove off in the direction of the nearest reliable public-house. Gideon closed the door on their departure, and turned to Julia; their eyes met; the most uncontrollable mirth seized upon them both, and they made the house ring with their laughter. Then curiosity awoke in Julia’s mind, and she went and examined the box, and more especially the label.

‘This is the strangest thing that ever happened,’ she said, with another burst of laughter. ‘It is certainly Morris’s handwriting, and I had a letter from him only this morning, telling me to expect a barrel. Is there a barrel coming too, do you think, Mr Forsyth?’

“‘Statuary with Care, Fragile,’“ read Gideon aloud from the painted warning on the box. ‘Then you were told nothing about this?’

‘No,’ responded Julia. ‘O, Mr Forsyth, don’t you think we might take a peep at it?’

‘Yes, indeed,’ cried Gideon. ‘Just let me have a hammer.’

‘Come down, and I’ll show you where it is,’ cried Julia. ‘The shelf is too high for me to reach’; and, opening the door of the kitchen stair, she bade Gideon follow her. They found both the hammer and a chisel; but Gideon was surprised to see no sign of a servant. He also discovered that Miss Hazeltine had a very pretty little foot and ankle; and the discovery embarrassed him so much that he was glad to fall at once upon the packing-case.

He worked hard and earnestly, and dealt his blows with the precision of a blacksmith; Julia the while standing silently by his side, and regarding rather the workman than the work. He was a handsome fellow; she told herself she had never seen such beautiful arms. And suddenly, as though he had overheard these thoughts, Gideon turned and smiled to her. She, too, smiled and coloured; and the double change became her so prettily that Gideon forgot to turn away his eyes, and, swinging the hammer with a will, discharged a smashing blow on his own knuckles. With admirable presence of mind he crushed down an oath and substituted the harmless comment, ‘Butter fingers!’ But the pain was sharp, his nerve was shaken, and after an abortive trial he found he must desist from further operations.

In a moment Julia was off to the pantry; in a moment she was back again with a basin of water and a sponge, and had begun to bathe his wounded hand.

‘I am dreadfully sorry!’ said Gideon apologetically. ‘If I had had any manners I should have opened the box first and smashed my hand afterward. It feels much better,’ he added. ‘I assure you it does.’

‘And now I think you are well enough to direct operations,’ said she. ‘Tell me what to do, and I’ll be your workman.’

‘A very pretty workman,’ said Gideon, rather forgetting himself. She turned and looked at him, with a suspicion of a frown; and the indiscreet young man was glad to direct her attention to the packing-case. The bulk of the work had been accomplished; and presently Julia had burst through the last barrier and disclosed a zone of straw. in a moment they were kneeling side by side, engaged like haymakers; the next they were rewarded with a glimpse of something white and polished; and the next again laid bare an unmistakable marble leg.

‘He is surely a very athletic person,’ said Julia.

‘I never saw anything like it,’ responded Gideon. ‘His muscles stand out like penny rolls.’

Another leg was soon disclosed, and then what seemed to be a third. This resolved itself, however, into a knotted club resting upon a pedestal.

‘It is a Hercules,’ cried Gideon; ‘I might have guessed that from his calf. I’m supposed to be rather partial to statuary, but when it comes to Hercules, the police should interfere. I should say,’ he added, glancing with disaffection at the swollen leg, ‘that this was about the biggest and the worst in Europe. What in heaven’s name can have induced him to come here?’

‘I suppose nobody else would have a gift of him,’ said Julia. ‘And for that matter, I think we could have done without the monster very well.’

‘O, don’t say that,’ returned Gideon. ‘This has been one of the most amusing experiences of my life.’

‘I don’t think you’ll forget it very soon,’ said Julia. ‘Your hand will remind you.’

‘Well, I suppose I must be going,’ said Gideon reluctantly. ‘No,’ pleaded Julia. ‘Why should you? Stay and have tea with me.’

‘If I thought you really wished me to stay,’ said Gideon, looking at his hat, ‘of course I should only be too delighted.’

‘What a silly person you must take me for!’ returned the girl. ‘Why, of course I do; and, besides, I want some cakes for tea, and I’ve nobody to send. Here is the latchkey.’

Gideon put on his hat with alacrity, and casting one look at Miss

Hazeltine, and another at the legs of Hercules, threw open the door and departed on his errand.

He returned with a large bag of the choicest and most tempting of cakes and tartlets, and found Julia in the act of spreading a small tea-table in the lobby.

'The rooms are all in such a state,' she cried, 'that I thought we should be more cosy and comfortable in our own lobby, and under our own vine and statuary.'

'Ever so much better,' cried Gideon delightedly.

'O what adorable cream tarts!' said Julia, opening the bag, 'and the dearest little cherry tartlets, with all the cherries spilled out into the cream!'

'Yes,' said Gideon, concealing his dismay, 'I knew they would mix beautifully; the woman behind the counter told me so.'

'Now,' said Julia, as they began their little festival, 'I am going to show you Morris's letter; read it aloud, please; perhaps there's something I have missed.'

Gideon took the letter, and spreading it out on his knee, read as follows:

DEAR JULIA, I write you from Browndean, where we are stopping over for a few days. Uncle was much shaken in that dreadful accident, of which, I dare say, you have seen the account. Tomorrow I leave him here with John, and come up alone; but before that, you will have received a barrel CONTAINING SPECIMENS FOR A FRIEND. Do not open it on any account, but leave it in the lobby till I come.

Yours in haste,

M. FINSBURY.

P.S. — Be sure and leave the barrel in the lobby.

'No,' said Gideon, 'there seems to be nothing about the monument,' and he nodded, as he spoke, at the marble legs. 'Miss Hazeltine,' he continued, 'would you mind me asking a few questions?'

'Certainly not,' replied Julia; 'and if you can make me understand why Morris has sent a statue of Hercules instead of a barrel containing specimens for a friend, I shall be grateful till my dying day. And what are specimens for a friend?'

'I haven't a guess,' said Gideon. 'Specimens are usually bits of stone, but rather smaller than our friend the monument. Still, that is not the point. Are you quite alone in this big house?'

'Yes, I am at present,' returned Julia. 'I came up before them to prepare the house, and get another servant. But I couldn't get one I liked.'

'Then you are utterly alone,' said Gideon in amazement. 'Are you not afraid?'

'No,' responded Julia stoutly. 'I don't see why I should be more afraid than you would be; I am weaker, of course, but when I found I must sleep alone in the house I bought a revolver wonderfully cheap, and made the man show me how to use it.'

'And how do you use it?' demanded Gideon, much amused at her courage.

'Why,' said she, with a smile, 'you pull the little trigger thing on top, and then pointing it very low, for it springs up as you fire, you pull the underneath little trigger thing, and it goes off as well as if a man had done it.'

'And how often have you used it?' asked Gideon.

'O, I have not used it yet,' said the determined young lady; 'but I know how, and that makes me wonderfully courageous, especially when I barricade my door with a chest of drawers.'

'I'm awfully glad they are coming back soon,' said Gideon. 'This business strikes me as excessively unsafe; if it goes on much longer, I could provide you with a maiden aunt of mine, or my landlady if you preferred.'

'Lend me an aunt!' cried Julia. 'O, what generosity! I begin to think it must have been you that sent the Hercules.'

'Believe me,' cried the young man, 'I admire you too much to send you such an infamous work of art..'

Julia was beginning to reply, when they were both startled by a knocking at the door.

'O, Mr Forsyth!'

'Don't be afraid, my dear girl,' said Gideon, laying his hand tenderly on her arm.

'I know it's the police,' she whispered. 'They are coming to complain about the statue.'

The knock was repeated. It was louder than before, and more impatient.

'It's Morris,' cried Julia, in a startled voice, and she ran to the door and opened it.

It was indeed Morris that stood before them; not the Morris of ordinary days, but a wild-looking fellow, pale and haggard, with bloodshot eyes, and a two-days' beard upon his chin.

'The barrel!' he cried. 'Where's the barrel that came this morning?' And he stared about the lobby, his eyes, as they fell upon the legs of Hercules, literally goggling in his head. 'What is that?' he screamed. 'What is that waxwork? Speak, you fool! What is that? And where's the barrel — the water-butt?'

'No barrel came, Morris,' responded Julia coldly. 'This is the only thing that has arrived.'

'This!' shrieked the miserable man. 'I never heard of it!'

'It came addressed in your hand,' replied Julia; 'we had nearly to pull the house down to get it in, that is all that I can tell you.'

Morris gazed at her in utter bewilderment. He passed his hand over his forehead; he leaned against the wall like a man about to faint. Then his tongue was loosed, and he overwhelmed the girl with torrents of abuse. Such fire, such directness, such a choice of ungentlemanly language, none had ever before suspected Morris to possess; and the girl trembled and shrank before his fury.

'You shall not speak to Miss Hazeltine in that way,' said Gideon sternly. 'It is what I will not suffer.'

'I shall speak to the girl as I like,' returned Morris, with a fresh outburst of anger. 'I'll speak to the hussy as she deserves.'

'Not a word more, sir, not one word,' cried Gideon. 'Miss Hazeltine,' he continued, addressing the young girl, 'you cannot stay a moment longer in the same house with this unmanly fellow. Here is my arm; let me take you where you will be secure from insult.'

'Mr Forsyth,' returned Julia, 'you are right; I cannot stay here longer, and I am sure I trust myself to an honourable gentleman.'

Pale and resolute, Gideon offered her his arm, and the pair descended the steps, followed by Morris clamouring for the latchkey.

Julia had scarcely handed the key to Morris before an empty hansom drove smartly into John Street. It was hailed by both men, and as the cabman drew up his restive horse, Morris made a dash into the vehicle.

'Sixpence above fare,' he cried recklessly. 'Waterloo Station for your life. Sixpence for yourself!'

'Make it a shilling, guv'ner,' said the man, with a grin; 'the other parties were first.'

'A shilling then,' cried Morris, with the inward reflection that he would reconsider it at Waterloo. The man whipped up his horse, and the hansom vanished from John Street.

CHAPTER VI. The Tribulations of Morris: Part the First

As the hansom span through the streets of London, Morris sought to rally the forces of his mind. The water-butt with the dead body had miscarried, and it was essential to recover it. So much was clear; and if, by some blest good fortune, it was still at the station, all might be well. If it had been sent out, however, if it were already in the hands of some wrong person, matters looked more ominous. People who receive unexplained packages are usually keen to have them open; the example of Miss Hazeltine (whom he cursed again) was there to remind him of the circumstance; and if anyone had opened the water-butt — ’O Lord!’ cried Morris at the thought, and carried his hand to his damp forehead. The private conception of any breach of law is apt to be inspiriting, for the scheme (while yet inchoate) wears dashing and attractive colours. Not so in the least that part of the criminal’s later reflections which deal with the police. That useful corps (as Morris now began to think) had scarce been kept sufficiently in view when he embarked upon his enterprise. ‘I must play devilish close,’ he reflected, and he was aware of an exquisite thrill of fear in the region of the spine.

‘Main line or loop?’ enquired the cabman, through the scuttle.

‘Main line,’ replied Morris, and mentally decided that the man should have his shilling after all. ‘It would be madness to attract attention,’ thought he. ‘But what this thing will cost me, first and last, begins to be a nightmare!’

He passed through the booking-office and wandered disconsolately on the platform. It was a breathing-space in the day’s traffic. There were few people there, and these for the most part quiescent on the benches. Morris seemed to attract no remark, which was a good thing; but, on the other hand, he was making no progress in his quest. Something must be done, something must be risked. Every passing instant only added to his dangers. Summoning all his courage, he stopped a porter, and asked him if he remembered receiving a barrel by the morning train. He was anxious to get information, for the barrel belonged to a friend. ‘It is a matter of some moment,’ he added, ‘for it contains specimens.’

‘I was not here this morning, sir,’ responded the porter, somewhat reluctantly, ‘but I’ll ask Bill. Do you recollect, Bill, to have got a barrel from Bournemouth this morning containing specimens?’

‘I don’t know about specimens,’ replied Bill; ‘but the party as received the barrel I mean raised a sight of trouble.’

‘What’s that?’ cried Morris, in the agitation of the moment pressing a penny into the man’s hand.

‘You see, sir, the barrel arrived at one-thirty. No one claimed it till about three, when a small, sickly — looking gentleman (probably a curate) came up, and sez he, “Have you got anything for Pitman?” or “Wili’m Bent Pitman,” if I recollect right. “I don’t exactly know,” sez I, “but I rather fancy that there barrel bears that name.” The little man went up to the barrel, and seemed regularly all took aback when he saw the address, and then he pitched into us for not having brought what he wanted. “I don’t care a damn what you want,” sez I to him, “but if you are Will’m Bent Pitman, there’s your barrel.”‘

‘Well, and did he take it?’ cried the breathless Morris.

‘Well, sir,’ returned Bill, ‘it appears it was a packing-case he was after. The packing-case came; that’s sure enough, because it was about the biggest packing-case ever I clapped eyes on. And this Pitman he seemed a good deal cut up, and he had the superintendent out, and they got hold of the vanman — him as took the packing-case. Well, sir,’ continued Bill, with a smile, ‘I never see a man in such a state. Everybody about that van was mortal, bar the horses. Some gen’leman (as well as I could make out) had given the vanman a sov.; and so that was where the trouble come in, you see.’

‘But what did he say?’ gasped Morris.

‘I don’t know as he SAID much, sir,’ said Bill. ‘But he offered to fight this Pitman for a pot of beer. He had lost his book, too, and the receipts, and his men were all as mortal as himself. O, they were all like’ — and Bill paused for a simile — ’like lords! The superintendent sacked them on the spot.’

‘O, come, but that’s not so bad,’ said Morris, with a bursting sigh. ‘He couldn’t tell where he took the packing-case, then?’

‘Not he,’ said Bill, ‘nor yet nothink else.’

‘And what — what did Pitman do?’ asked Morris.

‘O, he went off with the barrel in a four-wheeler, very trembling like,’ replied Bill. ‘I don’t believe he’s a gentleman as has good health.’

‘Well, so the barrel’s gone,’ said Morris, half to himself.

‘You may depend on that, sir,’ returned the porter. ‘But you had better see the superintendent.’

‘Not in the least; it’s of no account,’ said Morris. ‘It only contained specimens.’ And he walked hastily away.

Ensconced once more in a hansom, he proceeded to reconsider his position. Suppose (he thought), suppose he should accept defeat and declare his uncle’s death at once? He should lose the tontine, and with that the last hope of his seven thousand eight hundred pounds. But on the other hand, since the shilling to the hansom cabman, he had begun to see that crime was expensive in its course, and, since the loss of the water-butt, that it was uncertain in its consequences. Quietly at first, and then with growing heat, he reviewed the advantages of backing out. It involved a loss; but (come to think of it) no such great loss after all; only that of the tontine, which had been always a toss-up, which at bottom he had never really expected. He reminded himself of that eagerly; he congratulated himself upon his constant moderation. He had never really expected the tontine; he had never even very definitely hoped to recover his seven thousand eight hundred pounds; he had been hurried into the whole thing by Michael's obvious dishonesty. Yes, it would probably be better to draw back from this high-flying venture, settle back on the leather business —

'Great God!' cried Morris, bounding in the hansom like a Jack-in-a-box. 'I have not only not gained the tontine — I have lost the leather business!'

Such was the monstrous fact. He had no power to sign; he could not draw a cheque for thirty shillings. Until he could produce legal evidence of his uncle's death, he was a penniless outcast — and as soon as he produced it he had lost the tontine! There was no hesitation on the part of Morris; to drop the tontine like a hot chestnut, to concentrate all his forces on the leather business and the rest of his small but legitimate inheritance, was the decision of a single instant. And the next, the full extent of his calamity was suddenly disclosed to him. Declare his uncle's death? He couldn't! Since the body was lost Joseph had (in a legal sense) become immortal.

There was no created vehicle big enough to contain Morris and his woes. He paid the hansom off and walked on he knew not whither.

'I seem to have gone into this business with too much precipitation,' he reflected, with a deadly sigh. 'I fear it seems too ramified for a person of my powers of mind.'

And then a remark of his uncle's flashed into his memory: If you want to think clearly, put it all down on paper. 'Well, the old boy knew a thing or two,' said Morris. 'I will try; but I don't believe the paper was ever made that will clear my mind.'

He entered a place of public entertainment, ordered bread and cheese, and writing materials, and sat down before them heavily. He tried the pen. It was an excellent pen, but what was he to write? 'I have it,' cried Morris. 'Robinson Crusoe and the double columns!' He prepared his paper after that classic model, and began as follows:

Bad. — — Good.

1. I have lost my uncle's body.

1. But then Pitman has found it.

'Stop a bit,' said Morris. 'I am letting the spirit of antithesis run away with me. Let's start again.'

Bad. — — Good.

1. I have lost my uncle's body.

1. But then I no longer require to bury it.
2. I have lost the tontine.

2.But I may still save that if Pitman disposes of the body, and if I can find a physician who will stick at nothing.
3. I have lost the leather business and the rest of my uncle's succession.

3. But not if Pitman gives the body up to the police.

'O, but in that case I go to gaol; I had forgot that,' thought Morris. 'Indeed, I don't know that I had better dwell on that hypothesis at all; it's all very well to talk of facing the worst; but in a case of this kind a man's first duty is to his own nerve. Is there any answer to No. 3? Is there any possible good side to such a beastly bungle? There must be, of course, or where would be the use of this double-entry business? And — by George, I have it!' he exclaimed; 'it's exactly the same as the last!' And he hastily re-wrote the passage:

Bad. — — Good.

3. I have lost the leather business and the rest of my uncle's succession.

3. But not if I can find a physician who will stick at nothing.

'This venal doctor seems quite a desideratum,' he reflected. 'I want him first to give me a certificate that my uncle is dead, so that I may get the leather business; and then that he's alive — but here we are again at the incompatible interests!' And he returned to his tabulation:

Bad. — — Good.

4. I have almost no money.

4. But there is plenty in the bank.
5. Yes, but I can't get the money in the bank.

5. But — well, that seems unhappily to be the case.
6. I have left the bill for eight hundred pounds in Uncle Joseph's pocket.

6. But if Pitman is only a dishonest man, the presence of this
bill may lead him to keep the whole thing dark and throw the body
into the New Cut.
7. Yes, but if Pitman is dishonest and finds the bill, he will
know who Joseph is, and he may blackmail me.

7. Yes, but if I am right about Uncle Masterman, I can blackmail
Michael.
8. But I can't blackmail Michael (which is, besides, a very
dangerous thing to do) until I find out.

8. Worse luck!
9. The leather business will soon want money for current
expenses, and I have none to give.

9. But the leather business is a sinking ship.
10. Yes, but it's all the ship I have.

10. A fact.
11. John will soon want money, and I have none to give.

11.
12. And the venal doctor will want money down.

12.
13. And if Pitman is dishonest and don't send me to gaol, he will
want a fortune.

13.

'O, this seems to be a very one-sided business,' exclaimed Morris. 'There's not so much in this method as I was led to think.' He crumpled the paper up and threw it down; and then, the next moment, picked it up again and ran it over. 'It seems it's on the financial point that my position is weakest,' he reflected. 'Is there positively no way of raising the wind? In a vast city like this, and surrounded by all the resources of civilization, it seems not to be conceived! Let us have no more precipitation. Is there nothing I can sell? My collection of signet — ' But at the thought of scattering these loved treasures the blood leaped into Morris's check. 'I would rather die!' he exclaimed, and, cramming his hat upon his head, strode forth into the streets.

'I MUST raise funds,' he thought. 'My uncle being dead, the money in the bank is mine, or would be mine but for the cursed injustice that has pursued me ever since I was an orphan in a commercial academy. I know what any other man would do; any other man in Christendom would forge; although I don't know why I call it forging, either, when Joseph's dead, and the funds are my own. When I think of that, when I think that my uncle is really as dead as mutton, and that I can't prove it, my gorge rises at the injustice of the whole affair. I used to feel bitterly about that seven thousand eight hundred pounds; it seems a trifle now! Dear me, why, the day before yesterday I was comparatively happy.'

And Morris stood on the sidewalk and heaved another sobbing sigh.

'Then there's another thing,' he resumed; 'can I? Am I able? Why didn't I practise different handwritings while I was young? How a fellow regrets those lost opportunities when he grows up! But there's one comfort: it's not morally wrong; I can try it on with a clear conscience, and even if I was found out, I wouldn't greatly care — morally, I mean. And then, if I succeed, and if Pitman is staunch, there's nothing to do but find a venal doctor; and that ought to be simple enough in a place like London. By all accounts the town's alive with them. It wouldn't do, of course, to advertise for a corrupt physician; that would be impolitic. No, I suppose a fellow has simply to spot along the streets for a red lamp and herbs in the window, and then you go in and — and — and put it to him plainly; though it seems a delicate step.'

He was near home now, after many devious wanderings, and turned up John Street. As he thrust his latchkey in the lock, another mortifying reflection struck him to the heart.

'Not even this house is mine till I can prove him dead,' he snarled, and slammed the door behind him so that the windows in the attic rattled.

Night had long fallen; long ago the lamps and the shop-fronts had begun to glitter down the endless streets; the lobby was pitch — dark; and, as the devil would have it, Morris barked his shins and sprawled all his length over the pedestal of Hercules. The pain was sharp; his temper was already thoroughly undermined; by a last misfortune his hand closed on the hammer as he fell; and, in a spasm of childish irritation, he turned and struck at the offending statue. There was a splintering crash.

'O Lord, what have I done next?' wailed Morris; and he groped his way to find a candle. 'Yes,' he reflected, as he stood with the light in his hand and looked upon the mutilated leg, from which about a pound of muscle was detached. 'Yes, I have destroyed a genuine antique; I may be in for thousands!' And then there sprung up in his bosom a sort of angry hope. 'Let me see,' he thought. 'Julia's got rid of

— , there's nothing to connect me with that beast Forsyth; the men were all drunk, and (what's better) they've been all discharged. O, come, I think this is another case of moral courage! I'll deny all knowledge of the thing.'

A moment more, and he stood again before the Hercules, his lips sternly compressed, the coal-axe and the meat-cleaver under his arm. The next, he had fallen upon the packing-case. This had been already seriously undermined by the operations of Gideon; a few well-directed blows, and it already quaked and gaped; yet a few more, and it fell about Morris in a shower of boards followed by an avalanche of straw.

And now the leather-merchant could behold the nature of his task: and at the first sight his spirit quailed. It was, indeed, no more ambitious a task for De Lesseps, with all his men and horses, to attack the hills of Panama, than for a single, slim young gentleman, with no previous experience of labour in a quarry, to measure himself against that bloated monster on his pedestal. And yet the pair were well encountered: on the one side, bulk — on the other, genuine heroic fire.

'Down you shall come, you great big, ugly brute!' cried Morris aloud, with something of that passion which swept the Parisian mob against the walls of the Bastille. 'Down you shall come, this night. I'll have none of you in my lobby.'

The face, from its indecent expression, had particularly animated the zeal of our iconoclast; and it was against the face that he began his operations. The great height of the demigod — for he stood a fathom and half in his stocking-feet — offered a preliminary obstacle to this attack. But here, in the first skirmish of the battle, intellect already began to triumph over matter. By means of a pair of library steps, the injured householder gained a posture of advantage; and, with great swipes of the coal-axe, proceeded to decapitate the brute.

Two hours later, what had been the erect image of a gigantic coal-porter turned miraculously white, was now no more than a medley of disjected members; the quadragenarian torso prone against the pedestal; the lascivious countenance leering down the kitchen stair; the legs, the arms, the hands, and even the fingers, scattered broadcast on the lobby floor. Half an hour more, and all the debris had been laboriously carted to the kitchen; and Morris, with a gentle sentiment of triumph, looked round upon the scene of his achievements. Yes, he could deny all knowledge of it now: the lobby, beyond the fact that it was partly ruinous, betrayed no trace of the passage of Hercules. But it was a weary Morris that crept up to bed; his arms and shoulders ached, the palms of his hands burned from the rough kisses of the coal-axe, and there was one smarting finger that stole continually to his mouth. Sleep long delayed to visit the dilapidated hero, and with the first peep of day it had again deserted him.

The morning, as though to accord with his disastrous fortunes, dawned inclemently. An easterly gale was shouting in the streets; flaws of rain angrily assailed the windows; and as Morris dressed, the draught from the fireplace vividly played about his legs.

‘I think,’ he could not help observing bitterly, ‘that with all I have to bear, they might have given me decent weather.’

There was no bread in the house, for Miss Hazeltine (like all women left to themselves) had subsisted entirely upon cake. But some of this was found, and (along with what the poets call a glass of fair, cold water) made up a semblance of a morning meal, and then down he sat undauntedly to his delicate task.

Nothing can be more interesting than the study of signatures, written (as they are) before meals and after, during indigestion and intoxication; written when the signer is trembling for the life of his child or has come from winning the Derby, in his lawyer’s office, or under the bright eyes of his sweetheart. To the vulgar, these seem never the same; but to the expert, the bank clerk, or the lithographer, they are constant quantities, and as recognizable as the North Star to the night-watch on deck.

To all this Morris was alive. In the theory of that graceful art in which he was now embarking, our spirited leather-merchant was beyond all reproach. But, happily for the investor, forgery is an affair of practice. And as Morris sat surrounded by examples of his uncle’s signature and of his own incompetence, insidious depression stole upon his spirits. From time to time the wind wuthered in the chimney at his back; from time to time there swept over Bloomsbury a squall so dark that he must rise and light the gas; about him was the chill and the mean disorder of a house out of commission — the floor bare, the sofa heaped with books and accounts enveloped in a dirty table-cloth, the pens rusted, the paper glazed with a thick film of dust; and yet these were but adminicles of misery, and the true root of his depression lay round him on the table in the shape of misbegotten forgeries.

‘It’s one of the strangest things I ever heard of,’ he complained. ‘It almost seems as if it was a talent that I didn’t possess.’ He went once more minutely through his proofs. ‘A clerk would simply gibe at them,’ said he. ‘Well, there’s nothing else but tracing possible.’

He waited till a squall had passed and there came a blink of scowling daylight. Then he went to the window, and in the face of all John Street traced his uncle’s signature. It was a poor thing at the best. ‘But it must do,’ said he, as he stood gazing woefully on his handiwork. ‘He’s dead, anyway.’ And he filled up the cheque for a couple of hundred and sallied forth for the Anglo-Patagonian Bank.

There, at the desk at which he was accustomed to transact business, and with as much indifference as he could assume, Morris presented the forged cheque to the big, red-bearded Scots teller. The teller seemed to view it with surprise; and as he turned it this way and that, and even scrutinized the signature with a magnifying-glass, his surprise appeared to warm into disfavour. Begging to be excused for a moment, he passed away into the rearmost quarters of the bank; whence, after an appreciable interval, he returned again in earnest talk with a superior, an oldish and a baldish, but a very gentlemanly man.

'Mr Morris Finsbury, I believe,' said the gentlemanly man, fixing Morris with a pair of double eye-glasses.

'That is my name,' said Morris, quavering. 'Is there anything wrong.

'Well, the fact is, Mr Finsbury, you see we are rather surprised at receiving this,' said the other, flicking at the cheque. 'There are no effects.'

'No effects?' cried Morris. 'Why, I know myself there must be eight-and-twenty hundred pounds, if there's a penny.'

'Two seven six four, I think,' replied the gentlemanly man; 'but it was drawn yesterday.'

'Drawn!' cried Morris.

'By your uncle himself, sir,' continued the other. 'Not only that, but we discounted a bill for him for — let me see — how much was it for, Mr Bell?'

'Eight hundred, Mr Judkin,' replied the teller.

'Bent Pitman!' cried Morris, staggering back.

'I beg your pardon,' said Mr Judkin.

'It's — it's only an expletive,' said Morris.

'I hope there's nothing wrong, Mr Finsbury,' said Mr Bell.

'All I can tell you,' said Morris, with a harsh laugh,' is that the whole thing's impossible. My uncle is at Bournemouth, unable to move.'

'Really!' cried Mr Bell, and he recovered the cheque from Mr Judkin. 'But this cheque is dated in London, and today,' he observed. 'How d'ye account for that, sir?'

'O, that was a mistake,' said Morris, and a deep tide of colour dyed his face and neck.

'No doubt, no doubt,' said Mr Judkin, but he looked at his customer enquiringly.

'And — and — ' resumed Morris, 'even if there were no effects — this is a very trifling sum to overdraw — our firm — the name of Finsbury, is surely good enough for such a wretched sum as this.'

'No doubt, Mr Finsbury,' returned Mr Judkin; 'and if you insist I will take it into consideration; but I hardly think — in short, Mr Finsbury, if there had been nothing else, the signature seems hardly all that we could wish.'

'That's of no consequence,' replied Morris nervously. 'I'll get my uncle to sign another. The fact is,' he went on, with a bold stroke, 'my uncle is so far from well at present that he was unable to sign this cheque without assistance, and I fear that my holding the pen for him may have made the difference in the signature.'

Mr Judkin shot a keen glance into Morris's face; and then turned and looked at Mr Bell.

'Well,' he said, 'it seems as if we had been victimized by a swindler. Pray tell Mr Finsbury we shall put detectives on at once. As for this cheque of yours, I regret that, owing to the way it was signed, the bank can hardly consider it — what shall I say? — businesslike,' and he returned the cheque across the counter.

Morris took it up mechanically; he was thinking of something very different.

'In a — case of this kind,' he began, 'I believe the loss falls on us; I mean upon my uncle and myself.'

'It does not, sir,' replied Mr Bell; 'the bank is responsible, and the bank will either recover the money or refund it, you may depend on that.'

Morris's face fell; then it was visited by another gleam of hope.

'I'll tell you what,' he said, 'you leave this entirely in my hands. I'll sift the matter. I've an idea, at any rate; and detectives,' he added appealingly, 'are so expensive.'

'The bank would not hear of it,' returned Mr Judkin. 'The bank stands to lose between three and four thousand pounds; it will spend as much more if necessary. An undiscovered forger is a permanent danger. We shall clear it up to the bottom, Mr Finsbury; set your mind at rest on that.'

'Then I'll stand the loss,' said Morris boldly. 'I order you to abandon the search.' He was determined that no enquiry should be made.

'I beg your pardon,' returned Mr Judkin, 'but we have nothing to do with you in this matter, which is one between your uncle and ourselves. If he should take this opinion, and will either come here himself or let me see him in his sick-room — '

'Quite impossible,' cried Morris.

'Well, then, you see,' said Mr Judkin, 'how my hands are tied. The whole affair must go at once into the hands of the police.'

Morris mechanically folded the cheque and restored it to his pocket — book.

'Good — morning,' said he, and scrambled somehow out of the bank.

'I don't know what they suspect,' he reflected; 'I can't make them out, their whole behaviour is thoroughly unbusinesslike. But it doesn't matter; all's up with everything. The money has been paid; the police are on the scent; in two hours that idiot Pitman will be nabbed — and the whole story of the dead body in the evening papers.'

If he could have heard what passed in the bank after his departure he would have been less alarmed, perhaps more mortified.

'That was a curious affair, Mr Bell,' said Mr Judkin.

'Yes, sir,' said Mr Bell, 'but I think we have given him a fright.'

'O, we shall hear no more of Mr Morris Finsbury,' returned the other; 'it was a first attempt, and the house have dealt with us so long that I was anxious to deal gently. But I suppose, Mr Bell, there can be no mistake about yesterday? It was old Mr Finsbury himself?'

'There could be no possible doubt of that,' said Mr Bell with a chuckle. 'He explained to me the principles of banking.'

'Well, well,' said Mr Judkin. 'The next time he calls ask him to step into my room. It is only proper he should be warned.'

CHAPTER VII. In Which William Dent Pitman takes Legal Advice

Norfolk Street, King's Road — jocularly known among Mr Pitman's lodgers as 'Norfolk Island' — is neither a long, a handsome, nor a pleasing thoroughfare. Dirty, undersized maids-of-all-work issue from it in pursuit of beer, or linger on its sidewalk listening to the voice of love. The cat's-meat man passes twice a day. An occasional organ-grinder wanders in and wanders out again, disgusted. In holiday-time the street is the arena of the young bloods of the neighbourhood, and the householders have an opportunity of studying the manly art of self-defence. And yet Norfolk Street has one claim to be respectable, for it contains not a single shop — unless you count the public-house at the corner, which is really in the King's Road.

The door of No. 7 bore a brass plate inscribed with the legend 'W. D. Pitman, Artist'. It was not a particularly clean brass plate, nor was No. 7 itself a particularly inviting place of residence. And yet it had a character of its own, such as may well quicken the pulse of the reader's curiosity. For here was the home of an artist — and a distinguished artist too, highly distinguished by his ill-success — which had never been made the subject of an article in the illustrated magazines. No wood-engraver had ever reproduced 'a corner in the back drawing-room' or 'the studio mantelpiece' of No. 7; no young lady author had ever commented on 'the unaffected simplicity' with which Mr Pitman received her in the midst of his 'treasures'. It is an omission I would gladly supply, but our business is only with the backward parts and 'abject rear' of this aesthetic dwelling.

Here was a garden, boasting a dwarf fountain (that never played) in the centre, a few grimy-looking flowers in pots, two or three newly planted trees which the spring of Chelsea visited without noticeable consequence, and two or three statues after the antique, representing satyrs and nymphs in the worst possible style of sculptured art. On one side the garden was overshadowed by a pair of crazy studios, usually hired out to the more obscure and youthful practitioners of British art. Opposite these another lofty out-building, somewhat more carefully finished, and boasting of a communication with the house and a private door on the back lane, enshrined the multifarious industry of Mr Pitman. All day, it is true, he was engaged in the work of education at a seminary for young ladies; but the evenings at least were his own, and these he would prolong far into the night, now dashing off 'A landscape with waterfall' in oil, now a volunteer bust ('in marble', as he would gently but proudly observe) of some public character, now stooping his chisel to a mere ‘nymph’ for a gasbracket on a stair, sir’, or a life-size ‘Infant Samuel’ for a religious nursery. Mr Pitman had studied in Paris, and he had studied in Rome, supplied with funds by a fond parent who went subsequently bankrupt in consequence of a fall in corsets; and though he was never thought to have the smallest modicum of talent, it was at one time supposed that he had learned his business. Eighteen years of what is called ‘tuition’ had relieved him of the dangerous knowledge. His artist lodgers would sometimes reason with him; they would point out to him how impossible it was to paint by gaslight, or to sculpture life-sized nymphs without a model.

‘I know that,’ he would reply. ‘No one in Norfolk Street knows it better; and if I were rich I should certainly employ the best models in London; but, being poor, I have taught myself to do without them. An occasional model would only disturb my ideal conception of the figure, and be a positive impediment in my career. As for painting by an artificial light,’ he would continue, ‘that is simply a knack I have found it necessary to acquire, my days being engrossed in the work of tuition.’

At the moment when we must present him to our readers, Pitman was in his studio alone, by the dying light of the October day. He sat (sure enough with ‘unaffected simplicity’) in a Windsor chair, his low-crowned black felt hat by his side; a dark, weak, harmless, pathetic little man, clad in the hue of mourning, his coat longer than is usual with the laity, his neck enclosed in a collar without a parting, his neckcloth pale in hue and simply tied; the whole outward man, except for a pointed beard, tentatively clerical. There was a thinning on the top of Pitman’s head, there were silver hairs at Pitman’s temple. Poor gentleman, he was no longer young; and years, and poverty, and humble ambition thwarted, make a cheerless lot.

In front of him, in the corner by the door, there stood a portly barrel; and let him turn them where he might, it was always to the barrel that his eyes and his thoughts returned.

‘Should I open it? Should I return it? Should I communicate with Mr Sernitopolis at once?’ he wondered. ‘No,’ he concluded finally, ‘nothing without Mr Finsbury’s advice.’ And he arose and produced a shabby leathern desk. It opened without the formality of unlocking, and displayed the thick cream-coloured notepaper on which Mr Pitman was in the habit of communicating with the proprietors of schools and the parents of his pupils. He placed the desk on the table by the window, and taking a saucer of Indian ink from the chimney-piece, laboriously composed the following letter:

‘My dear Mr Finsbury,’ it ran, ‘would it be presuming on your kindness if I asked you to pay me a visit here this evening? It is in no trifling matter that I invoke your valuable assistance, for need I say more than it concerns the welfare of Mr Semitopolis's statue of Hercules? I write you in great agitation of mind; for I have made all enquiries, and greatly fear that this work of ancient art has been mislaid. I labour besides under another perplexity, not unconnected with the first. Pray excuse the inelegance of this scrawl, and believe me yours in haste, William D. Pitman.'

Armed with this he set forth and rang the bell of No. 233 King's Road, the private residence of Michael Finsbury. He had met the lawyer at a time of great public excitement in Chelsea; Michael, who had a sense of humour and a great deal of careless kindness in his nature, followed the acquaintance up, and, having come to laugh, remained to drop into a contemptuous kind of friendship. By this time, which was four years after the first meeting, Pitman was the lawyer's dog.

'No,' said the elderly housekeeper, who opened the door in person, 'Mr Michael's not in yet. But ye're looking terribly poorly, Mr Pitman. Take a glass of sherry, sir, to cheer ye up.'

'No, I thank you, ma'am,' replied the artist. 'It is very good in you, but I scarcely feel in sufficient spirits for sherry. Just give Mr Finsbury this note, and ask him to look round — to the door in the lane, you will please tell him; I shall be in the studio all evening.'

And he turned again into the street and walked slowly homeward. A hairdresser's window caught his attention, and he stared long and earnestly at the proud, high — born, waxen lady in evening dress, who circulated in the centre of the show. The artist woke in him, in spite of his troubles.

'It is all very well to run down the men who make these things,' he cried, 'but there's a something — there's a haughty, indefinable something about that figure. It's what I tried for in my "Empress Eugenie",' he added, with a sigh.

And he went home reflecting on the quality. 'They don't teach you that direct appeal in Paris,' he thought. 'It's British. Come, I am going to sleep, I must wake up, I must aim higher — aim higher,' cried the little artist to himself. All through his tea and afterward, as he was giving his eldest boy a lesson on the fiddle, his mind dwelt no longer on his troubles, but he was rapt into the better land; and no sooner was he at liberty than he hastened with positive exhilaration to his studio.

Not even the sight of the barrel could entirely cast him down. He flung himself with rising zest into his work — a bust of Mr Gladstone from a photograph; turned (with extraordinary success) the difficulty of the back of the head, for which he had no documents beyond a hazy recollection of a public meeting; delighted himself by his treatment of the collar; and was only recalled to the cares of life by Michael Finsbury's rattle at the door.

'Well, what's wrong?' said Michael, advancing to the grate, where, knowing his friend's delight in a bright fire, Mr Pitman had not spared the fuel. 'I suppose you have come to grief somehow.'

'There is no expression strong enough,' said the artist. 'Mr Semitopolis's statue has not turned up, and I am afraid I shall be answerable for the money; but I think nothing of that — what I fear, my dear Mr Finsbury, what I fear — alas that I should have to say it! is exposure. The Hercules was to be smuggled out of Italy; a thing positively wrong, a thing of which a man of my principles and in my responsible position should have taken (as I now see too late) no part whatever.'

'This sounds like very serious work,' said the lawyer. 'It will require a great deal of drink, Pitman.'

'I took the liberty of — in short, of being prepared for you,' replied the artist, pointing to a kettle, a bottle of gin, a lemon, and glasses. Michael mixed himself a grog, and offered the artist a cigar.

'No, thank you,' said Pitman. 'I used occasionally to be rather partial to it, but the smell is so disagreeable about the clothes.'

'All right,' said the lawyer. 'I am comfortable now. Unfold your tale.'

At some length Pitman set forth his sorrows. He had gone today to Waterloo, expecting to receive the colossal Hercules, and he had received instead a barrel not big enough to hold Discobolus; yet the barrel was addressed in the hand (with which he was perfectly acquainted) of his Roman correspondent. What was stranger still, a case had arrived by the same train, large enough and heavy enough to contain the Hercules; and this case had been taken to an address now undiscoverable. 'The vanman (I regret to say it) had been drinking, and his language was such as I could never bring myself to repeat.

He was at once discharged by the superintendent of the line, who behaved most properly throughout, and is to make enquiries at Southampton. In the meanwhile, what was I to do? I left my address and brought the barrel home; but, remembering an old adage, I determined not to open it except in the presence of my lawyer.'

'Is that all?' asked Michael. 'I don't see any cause to worry. The Hercules has stuck upon the road. It will drop in tomorrow or the day after; and as for the barrel, depend upon it, it's a testimonial from one of your young ladies, and probably contains oysters.'

'O, don't speak so loud!' cried the little artist. 'It would cost me my place if I were heard to speak lightly of the young ladies; and besides, why oysters from Italy? and why should they come to me addressed in Signor Ricardi's hand?'

'Well, let's have a look at it,' said Michael. 'Let's roll it forward to the light.'

The two men rolled the barrel from the corner, and stood it on end before the fire.

'It's heavy enough to be oysters,' remarked Michael judiciously.

'Shall we open it at once?' enquired the artist, who had grown decidedly cheerful under the combined effects of company and gin; and without waiting for a reply, he began to strip as if for a prize-fight, tossed his clerical collar in the wastepaper basket, hung his clerical coat upon a nail, and with a chisel in one hand and a hammer in the other, struck the first blow of the evening.

'That's the style, William Dent' cried Michael. 'There's fire for — your money! It may be a romantic visit from one of the young ladies — a sort of Cleopatra business. Have a care and don't stave in Cleopatra's head.'

But the sight of Pitman's alacrity was infectious. The lawyer could sit still no longer. Tossing his cigar into the fire, he snatched the instrument from the unwilling hands of the artist, and fell to himself. Soon the sweat stood in beads upon his large, fair brow; his stylish trousers were defaced with iron rust, and the state of his chisel testified to misdirected energies.

A cask is not an easy thing to open, even when you set about it in the right way; when you set about it wrongly, the whole structure must be resolved into its elements. Such was the course pursued alike by the artist and the lawyer. Presently the last hoop had been removed — a couple of smart blows tumbled the staves upon the ground — and what had once been a barrel was no more than a confused heap of broken and distorted boards.

In the midst of these, a certain dismal something, swathed in blankets, remained for an instant upright, and then toppled to one side and heavily collapsed before the fire. Even as the thing subsided, an eye-glass tingled to the floor and rolled toward the screaming Pitman.

'Hold your tongue!' said Michael. He dashed to the house door and locked it; then, with a pale face and bitten lip, he drew near, pulled aside a corner of the swathing blanket, and recoiled, shuddering. There was a long silence in the studio.

'Now tell me,' said Michael, in a low voice: 'Had you any hand in it?' and he pointed to the body.

The little artist could only utter broken and disjointed sounds.

Michael poured some gin into a glass. 'Drink that,' he said. 'Don't be afraid of me. I'm your friend through thick and thin.'

Pitman put the liquor down untasted.

'I swear before God,' he said, 'this is another mystery to me. In my worst fears I never dreamed of such a thing. I would not lay a finger on a sucking infant.’

‘That’s all square,’ said Michael, with a sigh of huge relief. ‘I believe you, old boy.’ And he shook the artist warmly by the hand. ‘I thought for a moment,’ he added with rather a ghastly smile, ‘I thought for a moment you might have made away with Mr Semitopolis.’

‘It would make no difference if I had,’ groaned Pitman. ‘All is at an end for me. There’s the writing on the wall.’

‘To begin with,’ said Michael, ‘let’s get him out of sight; for to be quite plain with you, Pitman, I don’t like your friend’s appearance.’ And with that the lawyer shuddered. ‘Where can we put it?’

‘You might put it in the closet there — if you could bear to touch it,’ answered the artist.

‘Somebody has to do it, Pitman,’ returned the lawyer; ‘and it seems as if it had to be me. You go over to the table, turn your back, and mix me a grog; that’s a fair division of labour.’

About ninety seconds later the closet-door was heard to shut.

‘There,’ observed Michael, ‘that’s more homelike. You can turn now, my pallid Pitman. Is this the grog?’ he ran on. ‘Heaven forgive you, it’s a lemonade.’

‘But, O, Finsbury, what are we to do with it?’ walled the artist, laying a clutching hand upon the lawyer’s arm.

‘Do with it?’ repeated Michael. ‘Bury it in one of your flowerbeds, and erect one of your own statues for a monument. I tell you we should look devilish romantic shovelling out the sod by the moon’s pale ray. Here, put some gin in this.’

‘I beg of you, Mr Finsbury, do not trifle with my misery,’ cried Pitman. ‘You see before you a man who has been all his life — I do not hesitate to say it — imminently respectable. Even in this solemn hour I can lay my hand upon my heart without a blush. Except on the really trifling point of the smuggling of the Hercules (and even of that I now humbly repent), my life has been entirely fit for publication. I never feared the light,’ cried the little man; ‘and now — now — !’

‘Cheer up, old boy,’ said Michael. ‘I assure you we should count this little contretemps a trifle at the office; it’s the sort of thing that may occur to any one; and if you’re perfectly sure you had no hand in it — ’

‘What language am I to find — ’ began Pitman.

‘O, I’ll do that part of it,’ interrupted Michael, ‘you have no experience.’ But the point is this: If — or rather since — you know nothing of the crime, since the — the party in the closet — is neither your father, nor your brother, nor your creditor, nor your mother-in-law, nor what they call an injured husband — ’

‘O, my dear sir!’ interjected Pitman, horrified.

‘Since, in short,’ continued the lawyer, ‘you had no possible interest in the crime, we have a perfectly free field before us and a safe game to play. Indeed, the problem is really entertaining; it is one I have long contemplated in the light of an A. B. case; here it is at last under my hand in specie; and I mean to pull you through. Do you hear that? — I mean to pull you through. Let me see: it’s a long time since I have had what I call a genuine holiday; I’ll send an excuse tomorrow to the office. We had best be lively,’ he added significantly; ‘for we must not spoil the market for the other man.’

‘What do you mean?’ enquired Pitman. ‘What other man? The inspector of police?’

‘Damn the inspector of police!’ remarked his companion. ‘If you won’t take the short cut and bury this in your back garden, we must find some one who will bury it in his. We must place the affair, in short, in the hands of some one with fewer scruples and more resources.’

‘A private detective, perhaps?’ suggested Pitman.

‘There are times when you fill me with pity,’ observed the lawyer. ‘By the way, Pitman,’ he added in another key, ‘I have always regretted that you have no piano in this den of yours. Even if you don’t play yourself, your friends might like to entertain themselves with a little music while you were mudding.’

‘I shall get one at once if you like,’ said Pitman nervously, anxious to please. ‘I play the fiddle a little as it is.’

‘I know you do,’ said Michael; ‘but what’s the fiddle — above all as you play it? What you want is polyphonic music. And I’ll tell you what it is — since it’s too late for you to buy a piano I’ll give you mine.’

‘Thank you,’ said the artist blankly. ‘You will give me yours? I am sure it’s very good in you.’

‘Yes, I’ll give you mine,’ continued Michael, ‘for the inspector of police to play on while his men are digging up your back garden.’ Pitman stared at him in pained amazement.

‘No, I’m not insane,’ Michael went on. ‘I’m playful, but quite coherent. See here, Pitman: follow me one half minute. I mean to profit by the refreshing fact that we are really and truly innocent; nothing but the presence of the — you know what — connects us with the crime; once let us get rid of it, no matter how, and there is no possible clue to trace us by. Well, I give you my piano; we’ll bring it round this very night. Tomorrow we rip the fittings out, deposit the — our friend — inside, plump the whole on a cart, and carry it to the chambers of a young gentleman whom I know by sight.’

‘Whom do you know by sight?’ repeated Pitman.

‘And what is more to the purpose,’ continued Michael, ‘whose chambers I know better than he does himself. A friend of mine — I call him my friend for brevity; he is now, I understand, in Demerara and (most likely) in gaol — was the previous occupant. I defended him, and I got him off too — all saved but honour; his assets were nil, but he gave me what he had, poor gentleman, and along with the rest — the key of his chambers. It's there that I propose to leave the piano and, shall we say, Cleopatra?'

'It seems very wild,' said Pitman. 'And what will become of the poor young gentleman whom you know by sight?'

'It will do him good,' — said Michael cheerily. 'Just what he wants to steady him.'

'But, my dear sit, he might be involved in a charge of — a charge of murder,' gulped the artist.

'Well, he'll be just where we are,' returned the lawyer. 'He's innocent, you see. What hangs people, my dear Pitman, is the unfortunate circumstance of guilt.'

'But indeed, indeed,' pleaded Pitman, 'the whole scheme appears to me so wild. Would it not be safer, after all, just to send for the police?'

'And make a scandal?' enquired Michael. '"The Chelsea Mystery; alleged innocence of Pitman"? How would that do at the Seminary?'

'It would imply my discharge,' admitted the drawing — master. 'I cannot deny that.'

'And besides,' said Michael, 'I am not going to embark in such a business and have no fun for my money.'

'O my dear sir, is that a proper spirit?' cried Pitman.

'O, I only said that to cheer you up,' said the unabashed Michael. 'Nothing like a little judicious levity. But it's quite needless to discuss. If you mean to follow my advice, come on, and let us get the piano at once. If you don't, just drop me the word, and I'll leave you to deal with the whole thing according to your better judgement.'

'You know perfectly well that I depend on you entirely,' returned Pitman. 'But O, what a night is before me with that — horror in my studio! How am I to think of it on my pillow?'

'Well, you know, my piano will be there too,' said Michael. 'That'll raise the average.'

An hour later a cart came up the lane, and the lawyer's piano — a momentous Broadwood grand — was deposited in Mr Pitman's studio.

CHAPTER VIII. In Which Michael Finsbury Enjoys a Holiday

Punctually at eight o'clock next morning the lawyer rattled (according to previous appointment) on the studio door. He found the artist sadly altered for the worse — bleached, bloodshot, and chalky — a man upon wires, the tail of his haggard eye still wandering to the closet. Nor was the professor of drawing less inclined to wonder at his friend. Michael was usually attired in the height of fashion, with a certain mercantile brilliancy best described perhaps as stylish; nor could anything be said against him, as a rule, but that he looked a trifle too like a wedding guest to be quite a gentleman. Today he had fallen altogether from these heights. He wore a flannel shirt of washed-out shepherd's tartan, and a suit of reddish tweeds, of the colour known to tailors as 'heather mixture'; his neckcloth was black, and tied loosely in a sailor's knot; a rusty ulster partly concealed these advantages; and his feet were shod with rough walking boots. His hat was an old soft felt, which he removed with a flourish as he entered.

'Here I am, William Dent!' he cried, and drawing from his pocket two little wisps of reddish hair, he held them to his cheeks like sidewhiskers and danced about the studio with the filmy graces of a ballet-girl.

Pitman laughed sadly. 'I should never have known you,' said he.

'Nor were you intended to,' returned Michael, replacing his false whiskers in his pocket. 'Now we must overhaul you and your wardrobe, and disguise you up to the nines.'

'Disguise!' cried the artist. 'Must I indeed disguise myself. Has it come to that?'

'My dear creature,' returned his companion, 'disguise is the spice of life. What is life, passionately exclaimed a French philosopher, without the pleasures of disguise? I don't say it's always good taste, and I know it's unprofessional; but what's the odds, downhearted drawing-master? It has to be. We have to leave a false impression on the minds of many persons, and in particular on the mind of Mr Gideon Forsyth — the young gentleman I know by sight — if he should have the bad taste to be at home.'

'If he be at home?' faltered the artist. 'That would be the end of all.'

'Won't matter a d — ,' returned Michael airily. 'Let me see your clothes, and I'll make a new man of you in a jiffy.'

In the bedroom, to which he was at once conducted, Michael examined Pitman's poor and scanty wardrobe with a humorous eye, picked out a short jacket of black alpaca, and presently added to that a pair of summer trousers which somehow took his fancy as incongruous. Then, with the garments in his hand, he scrutinized the artist closely.

‘I don’t like that clerical collar,’ he remarked. ‘Have you nothing else?’

The professor of drawing pondered for a moment, and then brightened; ‘I have a pair of low-necked shirts,’ he said, ‘that I used to wear in Paris as a student. They are rather loud.’

‘The very thing!’ ejaculated Michael. ‘You’ll look perfectly beastly. Here are spats, too,’ he continued, drawing forth a pair of those offensive little gaiters. ‘Must have spats! And now you jump into these, and whistle a tune at the window for (say) three-quarters of an hour. After that you can rejoin me on the field of glory.’

So saying, Michael returned to the studio. It was the morning of the easterly gale; the wind blew shrilly among the statues in the garden, and drove the rain upon the skylight in the studio ceiling; and at about the same moment of the time when Morris attacked the hundredth version of his uncle’s signature in Bloomsbury, Michael, in Chelsea, began to rip the wires out of the Broadwood grand.

Three-quarters of an hour later Pitman was admitted, to find the closet-door standing open, the closet untenanted, and the piano discreetly shut.

‘It’s a remarkably heavy instrument,’ observed Michael, and turned to consider his friend’s disguise. ‘You must shave off that beard of yours,’ he said.

‘My beard!’ cried Pitman. ‘I cannot shave my beard. I cannot tamper with my appearance — my principals would object. They hold very strong views as to the appearance of the professors — young ladies are considered so romantic. My beard was regarded as quite a feature when I went about the place. It was regarded,’ said the artist, with rising colour, ‘it was regarded as unbecoming.’

‘You can let it grow again,’ returned Michael, ‘and then you’ll be so precious ugly that they’ll raise your salary.’

‘But I don’t want to be ugly,’ cried the artist.

‘Don’t be an ass,’ said Michael, who hated beards and was delighted to destroy one. ‘Off with it like a man!’

‘Of course, if you insist,’ said Pitman; and then he sighed, fetched some hot water from the kitchen, and setting a glass upon his easel, first clipped his beard with scissors and then shaved his chin. He could not conceal from himself, as he regarded the result, that his last claims to manhood had been sacrificed, but Michael seemed delighted.

‘A new man, I declare!’ he cried. ‘When I give you the windowglass spectacles I have in my pocket, you’ll be the beau-ideal of a French commercial traveller.’

Pitman did not reply, but continued to gaze disconsolately on his image in the glass.

‘Do you know,’ asked Michael, ‘what the Governor of South Carolina said to the Governor of North Carolina? “It’s a long time between drinks,” observed that powerful thinker; and if you will put your hand into the top left-hand pocket of my ulster, I have an impression you will find a flask of brandy. Thank you, Pitman,’ he added, as he filled out a glass for each. ‘Now you will give me news of this.’

The artist reached out his hand for the water-jug, but Michael arrested the movement.

‘Not if you went upon your knees!’ he cried. ‘This is the finest liqueur brandy in Great Britain.’

Pitman put his lips to it, set it down again, and sighed.

‘Well, I must say you’re the poorest companion for a holiday!’ cried Michael. ‘If that’s all you know of brandy, you shall have no more of it; and while I finish the flask, you may as well begin business. Come to think of it,’ he broke off, ‘I have made an abominable error: you should have ordered the cart before you were disguised. Why, Pitman, what the devil’s the use of you? why couldn’t you have reminded me of that?’

‘I never even knew there was a cart to be ordered,’ said the artist. ‘But I can take off the disguise again,’ he suggested eagerly.

‘You would find it rather a bother to put on your beard,’ observed the lawyer. ‘No, it’s a false step; the sort of thing that hangs people,’ he continued, with eminent cheerfulness, as he sipped his brandy; ‘and it can’t be retraced now. Off to the mews with you, make all the arrangements; they’re to take the piano from here, cart it to Victoria, and dispatch it thence by rail to Cannon Street, to lie till called for in the name of Fortune du Boisgobey.’

‘Isn’t that rather an awkward name?’ pleaded Pitman.

‘Awkward?’ cried Michael scornfully. ‘It would hang us both! Brown is both safer and easier to pronounce. Call it Brown.’

‘I wish,’ said Pitman, ‘for my sake, I wish you wouldn’t talk so much of hanging.’

‘Talking about it’s nothing, my boy!’ returned Michael. ‘But take your hat and be off, and mind and pay everything beforehand.’

Left to himself, the lawyer turned his attention for some time exclusively to the liqueur brandy, and his spirits, which had been pretty fair all morning, now prodigiously rose. He proceeded to adjust his whiskers finally before the glass. ‘Devilish rich,’ he remarked, as he contemplated his reflection. ‘I look like a purser’s mate.’ And at that moment the window-glass spectacles (which he had hitherto destined for Pitman) flashed into his mind; he put them on, and fell in love with the effect. ‘Just what I required,’ he said. ‘I wonder what I look like now? A humorous novelist, I should think,’ and he began to practise divers characters of walk, naming them to himself as — he proceeded. ‘Walk of a humorous novelist — but that would require an umbrella. Walk of a purser’s mate. Walk of an Australian colonist revisiting the scenes of childhood. Walk of Sepoy colonel, ditto, ditto. And in the midst of the Sepoy colonel (which was an excellent assumption, although inconsistent with the style of his make-up), his eye lighted on the piano. This instrument was made to lock both at the top and at the keyboard, but the key of the latter had been mislaid. Michael opened it and ran his fingers over the dumb keys. ‘Fine instrument — full, rich tone,’ he observed, and he drew in a seat.

When Mr Pitman returned to the studio, he was appalled to observe his guide, philosopher, and friend performing miracles of execution on the silent grand.

‘Heaven help me!’ thought the little man, ‘I fear he has been drinking! Mr Finsbury,’ he said aloud; and Michael, without rising, turned upon him a countenance somewhat flushed, encircled with the bush of the red whiskers, and bestridden by the spectacles. ‘Capriccio in B-flat on the departure of a friend,’ said he, continuing his noiseless evolutions.

Indignation awoke in the mind of Pitman. ‘Those spectacles were to be mine,’ he cried. ‘They are an essential part of my disguise.’

‘I am going to wear them myself,’ replied Michael; and he added, with some show of truth, ‘There would be a devil of a lot of suspicion aroused if we both wore spectacles.’

‘O, well,’ said the assenting Pitman, ‘I rather counted on them; but of course, if you insist. And at any rate, here is the cart at the door.’

While the men were at work, Michael concealed himself in the closet among the debris of the barrel and the wires of the piano; and as soon as the coast was clear the pair sallied forth by the lane, jumped into a hansom in the King’s Road, and were driven rapidly toward town. It was still cold and raw and boisterous; the rain beat strongly in their faces, but Michael refused to have the glass let down; he had now suddenly donned the character of cicerone, and pointed out and lucidly commented on the sights of London, as they drove. ‘My dear fellow,’ he said, ‘you don’t seem to know anything of your native city. Suppose we visited the Tower? No? Well, perhaps it’s a trifle out of our way. But, anyway — Here, cabby, drive round by Trafalgar Square!’ And on that historic battlefield he insisted on drawing up, while he criticized the statues and gave the artist many curious details (quite new to history) of the lives of the celebrated men they represented.

It would be difficult to express what Pitman suffered in the cab:

cold, wet, terror in the capital degree, a grounded distrust of the commander under whom he served, a sense of imprudency in the matter of the low-necked shirt, a bitter sense of the decline and fall involved in the deprivation of his beard, all these were among the ingredients of the bowl. To reach the restaurant, for which they were deviously steering, was the first relief. To hear Michael bespeak a private room was a second and a still greater. Nor, as they mounted the stair under the guidance of an unintelligible alien, did he fail to note with gratitude the fewness of the persons present, or the still more cheering fact that the greater part of these were exiles from the land of France. It was thus a blessed thought that none of them would be connected with the Seminary; for even the French professor, though admittedly a Papist, he could scarce imagine frequenting so rakish an establishment.

The alien introduced them into a small bare room with a single table, a sofa, and a dwarfish fire; and Michael called promptly for more coals and a couple of brandies and sodas.

‘O, no,’ said Pitman, ‘surely not — no more to drink.’

‘I don’t know what you would be at,’ said Michael plaintively. ‘It’s positively necessary to do something; and one shouldn’t smoke before meals I thought that was understood. You seem to have no idea of hygiene.’ And he compared his watch with the clock upon the chimney-piece.

Pitman fell into bitter musing; here he was, ridiculously shorn, absurdly disguised, in the company of a drunken man in spectacles, and waiting for a champagne luncheon in a restaurant painfully foreign. What would his principals think, if they could see him? What if they knew his tragic and deceitful errand?

From these reflections he was aroused by the entrance of the alien with the brandies and sodas. Michael took one and bade the waiter pass the other to his friend.

Pitman waved it from him with his hand. ‘Don’t let me lose all self-respect,’ he said.

‘Anything to oblige a friend,’ returned Michael. ‘But I’m not going to drink alone. Here,’ he added to the waiter, ‘you take it.’ And, then, touching glasses, ‘The health of Mr Gideon Forsyth,’ said he.

‘Meestare Gidden Borsye,’ replied the waiter, and he tossed off the liquor in four gulps.

‘Have another?’ said Michael, with undisguised interest. ‘I never saw a man drink faster. It restores one’s confidence in the human race.

But the waiter excused himself politely, and, assisted by some one from without, began to bring in lunch.

Michael made an excellent meal, which he washed down with a bottle of Heidsieck’s dry monopole. As for the artist, he was far too uneasy to eat, and his companion flatly refused to let him share in the champagne unless he did.

‘One of us must stay sober,’ remarked the lawyer, ‘and I won’t give you champagne on the strength of a leg of grouse. I have to be cautious,’ he added confidentially. ‘One drunken man, excellent business — two drunken men, all my eye.’

On the production of coffee and departure of the waiter, Michael might have been observed to make portentous efforts after gravity of mien. He looked his friend in the face (one eye perhaps a trifle off), and addressed him thickly but severely.

‘Enough of this fooling,’ was his not inappropriate exordium. ‘To business. Mark me closely. I am an Australian. My name is John Dickson, though you mightn’t think it from my unassuming appearance. You will be relieved to hear that I am rich, sir, very rich. You can’t go into this sort of thing too thoroughly, Pitman; the whole secret is preparation, and I can get up my biography from the beginning, and I could tell it you now, only I have forgotten it.’

‘Perhaps I’m stupid — ’ began Pitman.

‘That’s it!’ cried Michael. ‘Very stupid; but rich too — richer than I am. I thought you would enjoy it, Pitman, so I’ve arranged that you were to be literally wallowing in wealth. But then, on the other hand, you’re only an American, and a maker of india-rubber overshoes at that. And the worst of it is — why should I conceal it from you? — the worst of it is that you’re called Ezra Thomas. Now,’ said Michael, with a really appalling seriousness of manner, ‘tell me who we are.’

The unfortunate little man was cross-examined till he knew these facts by heart.

‘There!’ cried the lawyer. ‘Our plans are laid. Thoroughly consistent — that’s the great thing.’

‘But I don’t understand,’ objected Pitman.

‘O, you’ll understand right enough when it comes to the point,’ said Michael, rising.

‘There doesn’t seem any story to it,’ said the artist.

‘We can invent one as we go along,’ returned the lawyer.

‘But I can’t invent,’ protested Pitman. ‘I never could invent in all my life.’

‘You’ll find you’ll have to, my boy,’ was Michael’s easy comment, and he began calling for the waiter, with whom he at once resumed a sparkling conversation.

It was a downcast little man that followed him. ‘Of course he is very clever, but can I trust him in such a state?’ he asked himself. And when they were once more in a hansom, he took heart of grace.

‘Don’t you think,’ he faltered, ‘it would be wiser, considering all things, to put this business off?’

‘Put off till tomorrow what can be done today?’ cried Michael, with indignation. ‘Never heard of such a thing! Cheer up, it’s all right, go in and win — there’s a lion-hearted Pitman!’

At Cannon Street they enquired for Mr Brown’s piano, which had duly arrived, drove thence to a neighbouring mews, where they contracted for a cart, and while that was being got ready, took shelter in the harness-room beside the stove. Here the lawyer presently toppled against the wall and fell into a gentle slumber; so that Pitman found himself launched on his own resources in the midst of several staring loafers, such as love to spend unprofitable days about a stable. ‘Rough day, sir,’ observed one. ‘Do you go far?’

‘Yes, it’s a — rather a rough day,’ said the artist; and then, feeling that he must change the conversation, ‘My friend is an Australian; he is very impulsive,’ he added.

‘An Australian?’ said another. ‘I’ve a brother myself in Melbourne. Does your friend come from that way at all?’

‘No, not exactly,’ replied the artist, whose ideas of the geography of New Holland were a little scattered. ‘He lives immensely far inland, and is very rich.’

The loafers gazed with great respect upon the slumbering colonist.

‘Well,’ remarked the second speaker, ‘it’s a mighty big place, is Australia. Do you come from thereaway too?’

‘No, I do not,’ said Pitman. ‘I do not, and I don’t want to,’ he added irritably. And then, feeling some diversion needful, he fell upon Michael and shook him up.

‘Hullo,’ said the lawyer, ‘what’s wrong?’

‘The cart is nearly ready,’ said Pitman sternly. ‘I will not allow you to sleep.’

‘All right — no offence, old man,’ replied Michael, yawning. ‘A little sleep never did anybody any harm; I feel comparatively sober now. But what’s all the hurry?’ he added, looking round him glassily. ‘I don’t see the cart, and I’ve forgotten where we left the piano.’

What more the lawyer might have said, in the confidence of the moment, is with Pitman a matter of tremulous conjecture to this day; but by the most blessed circumstance the cart was then announced, and Michael must bend the forces of his mind to the more difficult task of rising.

‘Of course you’ll drive,’ he remarked to his companion, as he clambered on the vehicle.

‘I drive!’ cried Pitman. ‘I never did such a thing in my life. I cannot drive.’

‘Very well,’ responded Michael with entire composure, ‘neither can I see. But just as you like. Anything to oblige a friend.’

A glimpse of the ostler’s darkening countenance decided Pitman.

'All right,' he said desperately, 'you drive. I'll tell you where to go.'

On Michael in the character of charioteer (since this is not intended to be a novel of adventure) it would be superfluous to dwell at length. Pitman, as he sat holding on and gasping counsels, sole witness of this singular feat, knew not whether most to admire the driver's valour or his undeserved good fortune. But the latter at least prevailed, the cart reached Cannon Street without disaster; and Mr Brown's piano was speedily and cleverly got on board.

'Well, sir,' said the leading porter, smiling as he mentally reckoned up a handful of loose silver, 'that's a mortal heavy piano.'

'It's the richness of the tone,' returned Michael, as he drove away.

It was but a little distance in the rain, which now fell thick and quiet, to the neighbourhood of Mr Gideon Forsyth's chambers in the Temple. There, in a deserted by-street, Michael drew up the horses and gave them in charge to a blighted shoe-black; and the pair descending from the cart, whereon they had figured so incongruously, set forth on foot for the decisive scene of their adventure. For the first time Michael displayed a shadow of uneasiness.

'Are my whiskers right?' he asked. 'It would be the devil and all if I was spotted.'

'They are perfectly in their place,' returned Pitman, with scant attention. 'But is my disguise equally effective? There is nothing more likely than that I should meet some of my patrons.'

'O, nobody could tell you without your beard,' said Michael. 'All you have to do is to remember to speak slow; you speak through your nose already.'

'I only hope the young man won't be at home,' sighed Pitman.

'And I only hope he'll be alone,' returned the lawyer. 'It will save a precious sight of manoeuvring.'

And sure enough, when they had knocked at the door, Gideon admitted them in person to a room, warmed by a moderate fire, framed nearly to the roof in works connected with the bench of British Themis, and offering, except in one particular, eloquent testimony to the legal zeal of the proprietor. The one particular was the chimney-piece, which displayed a varied assortment of pipes, tobacco, cigar-boxes, and yellow-backed French novels.

'Mr Forsyth, I believe?' It was Michael who thus opened the engagement. 'We have come to trouble you with a piece of business. I fear it's scarcely professional — '

'I am afraid I ought to be instructed through a solicitor,' replied Gideon.

'Well, well, you shall name your own, and the whole affair can be put on a more regular footing tomorrow,' replied Michael, taking a chair and motioning Pitman to do the same. 'But you see we didn't know any solicitors; we did happen to know of you, and time presses.'

'May I enquire, gentlemen,' asked Gideon, 'to whom it was I am indebted for a recommendation?'

'You may enquire,' returned the lawyer, with a foolish laugh; 'but I was invited not to tell you — till the thing was done.'

'My uncle, no doubt,' was the barrister's conclusion.

'My name is John Dickson,' continued Michael; 'a pretty well-known name in Ballarat; and my friend here is Mr Ezra Thomas, of the United States of America, a wealthy manufacturer of india-rubber overshoes.'

'Stop one moment till I make a note of that,' said Gideon; any one might have supposed he was an old practitioner.

'Perhaps you wouldn't mind my smoking a cigar?' asked Michael. He had pulled himself together for the entrance; now again there began to settle on his mind clouds of irresponsible humour and incipient slumber; and he hoped (as so many have hoped in the like case) that a cigar would clear him.

'Oh, certainly,' cried Gideon blandly. 'Try one of mine; I can confidently recommend them.' And he handed the box to his client.

'In case I don't make myself perfectly clear,' observed the Australian, 'it's perhaps best to tell you candidly that I've been lunching. It's a thing that may happen to any one.'

'O, certainly,' replied the affable barrister. 'But please be under no sense of hurry. I can give you,' he added, thoughtfully consulting his watch — 'yes, I can give you the whole afternoon.'

'The business that brings me here,' resumed the Australian with gusto, 'is devilish delicate, I can tell you. My friend Mr Thomas, being an American of Portuguese extraction, unacquainted with our habits, and a wealthy manufacturer of Broadwood pianos — '

'Broadwood pianos?' cried Gideon, with some surprise. 'Dear me, do I understand Mr Thomas to be a member of the firm?'

'O, pirated Broadwoods,' returned Michael. 'My friend's the American Broadwood.'

'But I understood you to say,' objected Gideon, 'I certainly have it so in my notes — that your friend was a manufacturer of india — rubber overshoes.'

'I know it's confusing at first,' said the Australian, with a beaming smile. 'But he — in short, he combines the two professions. And many others besides — many, many, many others,' repeated Mr Dickson, with drunken solemnity. 'Mr Thomas's cotton-mills are one of the sights of Tallahassee; Mr Thomas's tobacco-mills are the pride of Richmond, Va.; in short, he's one of my oldest friends, Mr Forsyth, and I lay his case before you with emotion.'

The barrister looked at Mr Thomas and was agreeably prepossessed by his open although nervous countenance, and the simplicity and timidity of his manner. 'What a people are these Americans!' he thought. 'Look at this nervous, weedy, simple little bird in a lownecked shirt, and think of him wielding and directing interests so extended and seemingly incongruous! 'But had we not better,' he observed aloud, 'had we not perhaps better approach the facts?'

'Man of business, I perceive, sir!' said the Australian. 'Let's approach the facts. It's a breach of promise case.'

The unhappy artist was so unprepared for this view of his position that he could scarce suppress a cry.

'Dear me,' said Gideon, 'they are apt to be very troublesome. Tell me everything about it,' he added kindly; 'if you require my assistance, conceal nothing.'

'You tell him,' said Michael, feeling, apparently, that he had done his share. 'My friend will tell you all about it,' he added to Gideon, with a yawn. 'Excuse my closing my eyes a moment; I've been sitting up with a sick friend.'

Pitman gazed blankly about the room; rage and despair seethed in his innocent spirit; thoughts of flight, thoughts even of suicide, came and went before him; and still the barrister patiently waited, and still the artist groped in vain for any form of words, however insignificant.

'It's a breach of promise case,' he said at last, in a low voice. 'I — I am threatened with a breach of promise case.' Here, in desperate quest of inspiration, he made a clutch at his beard; his fingers closed upon the unfamiliar smoothness of a shaven chin; and with that, hope and courage (if such expressions could ever have been appropriate in the case of Pitman) conjointly fled. He shook Michael roughly. 'Wake up!' he cried, with genuine irritation in his tones. 'I cannot do it, and you know I can't.'

'You must excuse my friend,' said Michael; 'he's no hand as a narrator of stirring incident. The case is simple,' he went on. 'My friend is a man of very strong passions, and accustomed to a simple, patriarchal style of life. You see the thing from here: unfortunate visit to Europe, followed by unfortunate acquaintance with sham foreign count, who has a lovely daughter. Mr Thomas was quite carried away; he proposed, he was accepted, and he wrote — wrote in a style which I am sure he must regret today. If these letters are produced in court, sir, Mr Thomas's character is gone.'

'Am I to understand — ' began Gideon.

'My dear sir,' said the Australian emphatically, 'it isn't possible to understand unless you saw them.'

'That is a painful circumstance,' said Gideon; he glanced pityingly in the direction of the culprit, and, observing on his countenance every mark of confusion, pityingly withdrew his eyes.

'And that would be nothing,' continued Mr Dickson sternly, 'but I wish — I wish from my heart, sir, I could say that Mr Thomas's hands were clean. He has no excuse; for he was engaged at the time — and is still engaged — to the belle of Constantinople, Ga. My friend's conduct was unworthy of the brutes that perish.'

'Ga.?' repeated Gideon enquiringly.

'A contraction in current use,' said Michael. 'Ga. for Georgia, in The same way as Co. for Company.'

'I was aware it was sometimes so written,' returned the barrister, 'but not that it was so pronounced.'

'Fact, I assure you,' said Michael. 'You now see for yourself, sir, that if this unhappy person is to be saved, some devilish sharp practice will be needed. There's money, and no desire to spare it. Mr Thomas could write a cheque tomorrow for a hundred thousand. And, Mr Forsyth, there's better than money. The foreign count — Count Tarnow, he calls himself — was formerly a tobacconist in Bayswater, and passed under the humble but expressive name of Schmidt; his daughter — if she is his daughter — there's another point — make a note of that, Mr Forsyth — his daughter at that time actually served in the shop — and she now proposes to marry a man of the eminence of Mr Thomas! Now do you see our game? We know they contemplate a move; and we wish to forestall 'em. Down you go to Hampton Court, where they live, and threaten, or bribe, or both, until you get the letters; if you can't, God help us, we must go to court and Thomas must be exposed. I'll be done with him for one,' added the unchivalrous friend.

'There seem some elements of success,' said Gideon. 'Was Schmidt at all known to the police?'

'We hope so,' said Michael. 'We have every ground to think so. Mark the neighbourhood — Bayswater! Doesn't Bayswater occur to you as very suggestive?'

For perhaps the sixth time during this remarkable interview, Gideon wondered if he were not becoming light-headed. 'I suppose it's just because he has been lunching,' he thought; and then added aloud, 'To what figure may I go?'

'Perhaps five thousand would be enough for today,' said Michael. 'And now, sir, do not let me detain you any longer; the afternoon wears on; there are plenty of trains to Hampton Court; and I needn't try to describe to you the impatience of my friend. Here is a five-pound note for current expenses; and here is the address.' And Michael began to write, paused, tore up the paper, and put the pieces in his pocket. 'I will dictate,' he said, 'my writing is so uncertain.'

Gideon took down the address, 'Count Tarnow, Kurnaul Villa, Hampton Court.' Then he wrote something else on a sheet of paper. 'You said you had not chosen a solicitor,' he said. 'For a case of this sort, here is the best man in London.' And he handed the paper to

Michael.

‘God bless me!’ ejaculated Michael, as he read his own address.

‘O, I daresay you have seen his name connected with some rather painful cases,’ said Gideon. ‘But he is himself a perfectly honest man, and his capacity is recognized. And now, gentlemen, it only remains for me to ask where I shall communicate with you.’

‘The Langham, of course,’ returned Michael. ‘Till tonight.’

‘Till tonight,’ replied Gideon, smiling. ‘I suppose I may knock you up at a late hour?’

‘Any hour, any hour,’ cried the vanishing solicitor.

‘Now there’s a young fellow with a head upon his shoulders,’ he said to Pitman, as soon as they were in the street.

Pitman was indistinctly heard to murmur, ‘Perfect fool.’

‘Not a bit of him,’ returned Michael. ‘He knows who’s the best solicitor in London, and it’s not every man can say the same. But, I say, didn’t I pitch it in hot?’

Pitman returned no answer.

‘Hullo!’ said the lawyer, pausing, ‘what’s wrong with the long-suffering Pitman?’

‘You had no right to speak of me as you did,’ the artist broke out; ‘your language was perfectly unjustifiable; you have wounded me deeply.’

‘I never said a word about you,’ replied Michael. ‘I spoke of Ezra Thomas; and do please remember that there’s no such party.’

‘It’s just as hard to bear,’ said the artist.

But by this time they had reached the corner of the by-street; and there was the faithful shoeblack, standing by the horses’ heads with a splendid assumption of dignity; and there was the piano, figuring forlorn upon the cart, while the rain beat upon its unprotected sides and trickled down its elegantly varnished legs.

The shoeblack was again put in requisition to bring five or six strong fellows from the neighbouring public-house; and the last battle of the campaign opened. It is probable that Mr Gideon Forsyth had not yet taken his seat in the train for Hampton Court, before Michael opened the door of the chambers, and the grunting porters deposited the Broadwood grand in the middle of the floor.

‘And now,’ said the lawyer, after he had sent the men about their business, ‘one more precaution. We must leave him the key of the piano, and we must contrive that he shall find it. Let me see.’ And he built a square tower of cigars upon the top of the instrument, and dropped the key into the middle.

‘Poor young man,’ said the artist, as they descended the stairs.

‘He is in a devil of a position,’ assented Michael drily. ‘It’ll brace him up.’

‘And that reminds me,’ observed the excellent Pitman, ‘that I fear I displayed a most ungrateful temper. I had no right, I see, to resent expressions, wounding as they were, which were in no sense directed.’

‘That’s all right,’ cried Michael, getting on the cart. ‘Not a word more, Pitman. Very proper feeling on your part; no man of self-respect can stand by and hear his alias insulted.’

The rain had now ceased, Michael was fairly sober, the body had been disposed of, and the friends were reconciled. The return to the mews was therefore (in comparison with previous stages of the day’s adventures) quite a holiday outing; and when they had returned the cart and walked forth again from the stable-yard, unchallenged, and even unsuspected, Pitman drew a deep breath of joy. ‘And now,’ he said, ‘we can go home.’

‘Pitman,’ said the lawyer, stopping short, ‘your recklessness fills me with concern. What! we have been wet through the greater part of the day, and you propose, in cold blood, to go home! No, sir — hot Scotch.’

And taking his friend’s arm he led him sternly towards the nearest public-house. Nor was Pitman (I regret to say) wholly unwilling. Now that peace was restored and the body gone, a certain innocent skittishness began to appear in the manners of the artist; and when he touched his steaming glass to Michael’s, he giggled aloud like a venturesome schoolgirl at a picnic.

CHAPTER IX. Glorious Conclusion of Michael Finsbury's Holiday

I know Michael Finsbury personally; my business — I know the awkwardness of having such a man for a lawyer — still it's an old story now, and there is such a thing as gratitude, and, in short, my legal business, although now (I am thankful to say) of quite a placid character, remains entirely in Michael's hands. But the trouble is I have no natural talent for addresses; I learn one for every man — that is friendship's offering; and the friend who subsequently changes his residence is dead to me, memory refusing to pursue him. Thus it comes about that, as I always write to Michael at his office, I cannot swear to his number in the King's Road. Of course (like my neighbours), I have been to dinner there. Of late years, since his accession to wealth, neglect of business, and election to the club, these little festivals have become common. He picks up a few fellows in the smoking-room — all men of Attic wit — myself, for instance, if he has the luck to find me disengaged; a string of hansoms may be observed (by Her Majesty) bowling gaily through St James's Park; and in a quarter of an hour the party surrounds one of the best appointed boards in London.

But at the time of which we write the house in the King's Road (let us still continue to call it No. 233) was kept very quiet; when Michael entertained guests it was at the halls of Nichol or Verrey that he would convene them, and the door of his private residence remained closed against his friends. The upper storey, which was sunny, was set apart for his father; the drawing-room was never opened; the dining-room was the scene of Michael's life. It is in this pleasant apartment, sheltered from the curiosity of King's Road by wire blinds, and entirely surrounded by the lawyer's unrivalled library of poetry and criminal trials, that we find him sitting down to his dinner after his holiday with Pitman. A spare old lady, with very bright eyes and a mouth humorously compressed, waited upon the lawyer's needs; in every line of her countenance she betrayed the fact that she was an old retainer; in every word that fell from her lips she flaunted the glorious circumstance of a Scottish origin; and the fear with which this powerful combination fills the boldest was obviously no stranger to the bosom of our friend. The hot Scotch having somewhat warmed up the embers of the Heidsieck, It was touching to observe the master's eagerness to pull himself together under the servant's eye; and when he remarked, 'I think, Teena, I'll take a brandy and soda,' he spoke like a man doubtful of his elocution, and not half certain of obedience.

‘No such a thing, Mr Michael,’ was the prompt return. ‘Clar’t and water.’

‘Well, well, Teena, I daresay you know best,’ said the master. ‘Very fatiguing day at the office, though.’

‘What?’ said the retainer, ‘ye never were near the office!’

‘O yes, I was though; I was repeatedly along Fleet Street,’ returned Michael.

‘Pretty pliskies ye’ve been at this day!’ cried the old lady, with humorous alacrity; and then, ‘Take care — don’t break my crystal!’ she cried, as the lawyer came within an ace of knocking the glasses off the table.

‘And how is he keeping?’ asked Michael.

‘O, just the same, Mr Michael, just the way he’ll be till the end, worthy man!’ was the reply. ‘But ye’ll not be the first that’s asked me that the day.’

‘No?’ said the lawyer. ‘Who else?’

‘Ay, that’s a joke, too,’ said Teena grimly. ‘A friend of yours: Mr Morris.’

‘Morris! What was the little beggar wanting here?’ enquired Michael.

‘Wantin’? To see him,’ replied the housekeeper, completing her meaning by a movement of the thumb toward the upper storey. ‘That’s by his way of it; but I’ve an idee of my own. He tried to bribe me, Mr Michael. Bribe — me!’ she repeated, with inimitable scorn. ‘That’s no’ kind of a young gentleman.’

‘Did he so?’ said Michael. ‘I bet he didn’t offer much.’

‘No more he did,’ replied Teena; nor could any subsequent questioning elicit from her the sum with which the thrifty leather merchant had attempted to corrupt her. ‘But I sent him about his business,’ she said gallantly. ‘He’ll not come here again in a hurry.’

‘He mustn’t see my father, you know; mind that!’ said Michael. ‘I’m not going to have any public exhibition to a little beast like him.’

‘No fear of me lettin’ him,’ replied the trusty one. ‘But the joke is this, Mr Michael — see, ye’re upsettin’ the sauce, that’s a clean tablecloth — the best of the joke is that he thinks your father’s dead and you’re keepin’ it dark.’

Michael whistled. ‘Set a thief to catch a thief,’ said he.

‘Exac’ly what I told him!’ cried the delighted dame.

‘I’ll make him dance for that,’ said Michael.

‘Couldn’t ye get the law of him some way?’ suggested Teena truculently.

‘No, I don’t think I could, and I’m quite sure I don’t want to,’ replied Michael. ‘But I say, Teena, I really don’t believe this claret’s wholesome; it's not a sound, reliable wine. Give us a brandy and soda, there's a good soul.' Teena's face became like adamant. 'Well, then,' said the lawyer fretfully, 'I won't eat any more dinner.'

'Ye can please yourself about that, Mr Michael,' said Teena, and began composedly to take away.

'I do wish Teena wasn't a faithful servant!' sighed the lawyer, as he issued into Kings's Road.

The rain had ceased; the wind still blew, but only with a pleasant freshness; the town, in the clear darkness of the night, glittered with street-lamps and shone with glancing rain-pools. 'Come, this is better,' thought the lawyer to himself, and he walked on eastward, lending a pleased ear to the wheels and the million footfalls of the city.

Near the end of the King's Road he remembered his brandy and soda, and entered a flaunting public-house. A good many persons were present, a waterman from a cab-stand, half a dozen of the chronically unemployed, a gentleman (in one corner) trying to sell aesthetic photographs out of a leather case to another and very youthful gentleman with a yellow goatee, and a pair of lovers debating some fine shade (in the other). But the centre-piece and great attraction was a little old man, in a black, ready-made surtout, which was obviously a recent purchase. On the marble table in front of him, beside a sandwich and a glass of beer, there lay a battered forage cap. His hand fluttered abroad with oratorical gestures; his voice, naturally shrill, was plainly tuned to the pitch of the lecture room; and by arts, comparable to those of the Ancient Mariner, he was now holding spellbound the barmaid, the waterman, and four of the unemployed.

'I have examined all the theatres in London,' he was saying; 'and pacing the principal entrances, I have ascertained them to be ridiculously disproportionate to the requirements of their audiences. The doors opened the wrong way — I forget at this moment which it is, but have a note of it at home; they were frequently locked during the performance, and when the auditorium was literally thronged with English people. You have probably not had my opportunities of comparing distant lands; but I can assure you this has been long ago recognized as a mark of aristocratic government. Do you suppose, in a country really self-governed, such abuses could exist? Your own intelligence, however uncultivated, tells you they could not. Take Austria, a country even possibly more enslaved than England. I have myself conversed with one of the survivors of the Ring Theatre, and though his colloquial German was not very good, I succeeded in gathering a pretty clear idea of his opinion of the case. But, what will perhaps interest you still more, here is a cutting on the subject from a Vienna newspaper, which I will now read to you, translating as I go. You can see for yourselves; it is printed in the German character.' And he held the cutting out for verification, much as a conjuror passes a trick orange along the front bench.

‘Hullo, old gentleman! Is this you?’ said Michael, laying his hand upon the orator’s shoulder.

The figure turned with a convulsion of alarm, and showed the countenance of Mr Joseph Finsbury. ‘You, Michael!’ he cried. ‘There’s no one with you, is there?’

‘No,’ replied Michael, ordering a brandy and soda, ‘there’s nobody with me; whom do you expect?’

‘I thought of Morris or John,’ said the old gentleman, evidently greatly relieved.

‘What the devil would I be doing with Morris or John?’ cried the nephew.

‘There is something in that,’ returned Joseph. ‘And I believe I can trust you. I believe you will stand by me.’

‘I hardly know what you mean,’ said the lawyer, ‘but if you are in need of money I am flush.’

‘It’s not that, my dear boy,’ said the uncle, shaking him by the hand. ‘I’ll tell you all about it afterwards.’

‘All right,’ responded the nephew. ‘I stand treat, Uncle Joseph; what will you have?’

‘In that case,’ replied the old gentleman, ‘I’ll take another sandwich. I daresay I surprise you,’ he went on, ‘with my presence in a public-house; but the fact is, I act on a sound but little-known principle of my own — ’

‘O, it’s better known than you suppose,’ said Michael sipping his brandy and soda. ‘I always act on it myself when I want a drink.’

The old gentleman, who was anxious to propitiate Michael, laughed a cheerless laugh. ‘You have such a flow of spirits,’ said he, ‘I am sure I often find it quite amusing. But regarding this principle of which I was about to speak. It is that of accommodating one’s-self to the manners of any land (however humble) in which our lot may be cast. Now, in France, for instance, every one goes to a cafe for his meals; in America, to what is called a “two-bit house”; in England the people resort to such an institution as the present for refreshment. With sandwiches, tea, and an occasional glass of bitter beer, a man can live luxuriously in London for fourteen pounds twelve shillings per annum.’

‘Yes, I know,’ returned Michael, ‘but that’s not including clothes, washing, or boots. The whole thing, with cigars and occasional sprees, costs me over seven hundred a year.’

But this was Michael’s last interruption. He listened in good-humoured silence to the remainder of his uncle’s lecture, which speedily branched to political reform, thence to the theory of the weather-glass, with an illustrative account of a bora in the Adriatic; thence again to the best manner of teaching arithmetic to the deaf-and-dumb; and with that, the sandwich being then no more, explicuit valde feliciter. A moment later the pair issued forth on the King's Road.

'Michael,' said his uncle, 'the reason that I am here is because I cannot endure those nephews of mine. I find them intolerable.'

'I daresay you do,' assented Michael, 'I never could stand them for a moment.'

'They wouldn't let me speak,' continued the old gentleman bitterly; 'I never was allowed to get a word in edgewise; I was shut up at once with some impertinent remark. They kept me on short allowance of pencils, when I wished to make notes of the most absorbing interest; the daily newspaper was guarded from me like a young baby from a gorilla. Now, you know me, Michael. I live for my calculations; I live for my manifold and ever-changing views of life; pens and paper and the productions of the popular press are to me as important as food and drink; and my life was growing quite intolerable when, in the confusion of that fortunate railway accident at Browndean, I made my escape. They must think me dead, and are trying to deceive the world for the chance of the tontine.'

'By the way, how do you stand for money?' asked Michael kindly.

'Pecuniarily speaking, I am rich,' returned the old man with cheerfulness. 'I am living at present at the rate of one hundred a year, with unlimited pens and paper; the British Museum at which to get books; and all the newspapers I choose to read. But it's extraordinary how little a man of intellectual interest requires to bother with books in a progressive age. The newspapers supply all the conclusions.'

'I'll tell you what,' said Michael, 'come and stay with me.'

'Michael,' said the old gentleman, 'it's very kind of you, but you scarcely understand what a peculiar position I occupy. There are some little financial complications; as a guardian, my efforts were not altogether blessed; and not to put too fine a point upon the matter, I am absolutely in the power of that vile fellow, Morris.'

'You should be disguised,' cried Michael eagerly; 'I will lend you a pair of window-glass spectacles and some red side-whiskers.'

'I had already canvassed that idea,' replied the old gentleman, 'but feared to awaken remark in my unpretentious lodgings. The aristocracy, I am well aware — '

'But see here,' interrupted Michael, 'how do you come to have any money at all? Don't make a stranger of me, Uncle Joseph; I know all about the trust, and the hash you made of it, and the assignment you were forced to make to Morris.'

Joseph narrated his dealings with the bank.

‘O, but I say, this won’t do,’ cried the lawyer. ‘You’ve put your foot in it. You had no right to do what you did.’

‘The whole thing is mine, Michael,’ protested the old gentleman. ‘I founded and nursed that business on principles entirely of my own.’

‘That’s all very fine,’ said the lawyer; ‘but you made an assignment, you were forced to make it, too; even then your position was extremely shaky; but now, my dear sir, it means the dock.’

‘It isn’t possible,’ cried Joseph; ‘the law cannot be so unjust as that?’

‘And the cream of the thing,’ interrupted Michael, with a sudden shout of laughter, ‘the cream of the thing is this, that of course you’ve downed the leather business! I must say, Uncle Joseph, you have strange ideas of law, but I like your taste in humour.’

‘I see nothing to laugh at,’ observed Mr Finsbury tartly.

‘And talking of that, has Morris any power to sign for the firm?’ asked Michael.

‘No one but myself,’ replied Joseph.

‘Poor devil of a Morris! O, poor devil of a Morris!’ cried the lawyer in delight. ‘And his keeping up the farce that you’re at home! O, Morris, the Lord has delivered you into my hands! Let me see, Uncle Joseph, what do you suppose the leather business worth?’

‘It was worth a hundred thousand,’ said Joseph bitterly, ‘when it was in my hands. But then there came a Scotsman — it is supposed he had a certain talent — it was entirely directed to bookkeeping — no accountant in London could understand a word of any of his books; and then there was Morris, who is perfectly incompetent. And now it is worth very little. Morris tried to sell it last year; and Pogram and Jarris offered only four thousand.’

‘I shall turn my attention to leather,’ said Michael with decision.

‘You?’ asked Joseph. ‘I advise you not. There is nothing in the whole field of commerce more surprising than the fluctuations of the leather market. Its sensitiveness may be described as morbid.’

‘And now, Uncle Joseph, what have you done with all that money?’ asked the lawyer.

‘Paid it into a bank and drew twenty pounds,’ answered Mr Finsbury promptly. ‘Why?’

‘Very well,’ said Michael. ‘Tomorrow I shall send down a clerk with a cheque for a hundred, and he’ll draw out the original sum and return it to the Anglo-Patagonian, with some sort of explanation which I will try to invent for you. That will clear your feet, and as Morris can’t touch a penny of it without forgery, it will do no harm to my little scheme.’

‘But what am I to do?’ asked Joseph; ‘I cannot live upon nothing.’

‘Don’t you hear?’ returned Michael. ‘I send you a cheque for a hundred; which leaves you eighty to go along upon; and when that’s done, apply to me again.'

'I would rather not be beholden to your bounty all the same,' said Joseph, biting at his white moustache. 'I would rather live on my own money, since I have it.'

Michael grasped his arm. 'Will nothing make you believe,' he cried, 'that I am trying to save you from Dartmoor?'

His earnestness staggered the old man. 'I must turn my attention to law,' he said; 'it will be a new field; for though, of course, I understand its general principles, I have never really applied my mind to the details, and this view of yours, for example, comes on me entirely by surprise. But you may be right, and of course at my time of life — for I am no longer young — any really long term of imprisonment would be highly prejudicial. But, my dear nephew, I have no claim on you; you have no call to support me.'

'That's all right,' said Michael; 'I'll probably get it out of the leather business.'

And having taken down the old gentleman's address, Michael left him at the corner of a street.

'What a wonderful old muddler!' he reflected, 'and what a singular thing is life! I seem to be condemned to be the instrument of Providence. Let me see; what have I done today? Disposed of a dead body, saved Pitman, saved my Uncle Joseph, brightened up Forsyth, and drunk a devil of a lot of most indifferent liquor. Let's top off with a visit to my cousins, and be the instrument of Providence in earnest. Tomorrow I can turn my attention to leather; tonight I'll just make it lively for 'em in a friendly spirit.'

About a quarter of an hour later, as the clocks were striking eleven, the instrument of Providence descended from a hansom, and, bidding the driver wait, rapped at the door of No. 16 John Street.

It was promptly opened by Morris.

'O, it's you, Michael,' he said, carefully blocking up the narrow opening: 'it's very late.'

Michael without a word reached forth, grasped Morris warmly by the hand, and gave it so extreme a squeeze that the sullen householder fell back. Profiting by this movement, the lawyer obtained a footing in the lobby and marched into the dining-room, with Morris at his heels.

'Where's my Uncle Joseph?' demanded Michael, sitting down in the most comfortable chair.

'He's not been very well lately,' replied Morris; 'he's staying at Browndean; John is nursing him; and I am alone, as you see.'

Michael smiled to himself. 'I want to see him on particular business,' he said.

'You can't expect to see my uncle when you won't let me see your father,' returned Morris.

‘Fiddlestick,’ said Michael. ‘My father is my father; but Joseph is just as much my uncle as he’s yours; and you have no right to sequestrate his person.’

‘I do no such thing,’ said Morris doggedly. ‘He is not well, he is dangerously ill and nobody can see him.’

‘I’ll tell you what, then,’ said Michael. ‘I’ll make a clean breast of it. I have come down like the opossum, Morris; I have come to compromise.’

Poor Morris turned as pale as death, and then a flush of wrath against the injustice of man’s destiny dyed his very temples. ‘What do you mean?’ he cried, ‘I don’t believe a word of it.’ And when Michael had assured him of his seriousness, ‘Well, then,’ he cried, with another deep flush, ‘I won’t; so you can put that in your pipe and smoke it.’

‘Oho!’ said Michael queerly. ‘You say your uncle is dangerously ill, and you won’t compromise? There’s something very fishy about that.’

‘What do you mean?’ cried Morris hoarsely.

‘I only say it’s fishy,’ returned Michael, ‘that is, pertaining to the finny tribe.’

‘Do you mean to insinuate anything?’ cried Morris stormily, trying the high hand.

‘Insinuate?’ repeated Michael. ‘O, don’t let’s begin to use awkward expressions! Let us drown our differences in a bottle, like two affable kinsmen. The Two Affable Kinsmen, sometimes attributed to Shakespeare,’ he added.

Morris’s mind was labouring like a mill. ‘Does he suspect? or is this chance and stuff? Should I soap, or should I bully? Soap,’ he concluded. ‘It gains time.’ ‘Well,’ said he aloud, and with rather a painful affectation of heartiness, ‘it’s long since we have had an evening together, Michael; and though my habits (as you know) are very temperate, I may as well make an exception. Excuse me one moment till I fetch a bottle of whisky from the cellar.’

‘No whisky for me,’ said Michael; ‘a little of the old still champagne or nothing.’

For a moment Morris stood irresolute, for the wine was very valuable: the next he had quitted the room without a word. His quick mind had perceived his advantage; in thus dunning him for the cream of the cellar, Michael was playing into his hand. ‘One bottle?’ he thought. ‘By George, I’ll give him two! this is no moment for economy; and once the beast is drunk, it’s strange if I don’t wring his secret out of him.’

With two bottles, accordingly, he returned. Glasses were produced, and Morris filled them with hospitable grace.

‘I drink to you, cousin!’ he cried gaily. ‘Don’t spare the wine-cup in my house.’

Michael drank his glass deliberately, standing at the table; filled it again, and returned to his chair, carrying the bottle along with him.

'The spoils of war!' he said apologetically. 'The weakest goes to the wall. Science, Morris, science.' Morris could think of no reply, and for an appreciable interval silence reigned. But two glasses of the still champagne produced a rapid change in Michael.

'There's a want of vivacity about you, Morris,' he observed. 'You may be deep; but I'll be hanged if you're vivacious!'

'What makes you think me deep?' asked Morris with an air of pleased simplicity.

'Because you won't compromise,' said the lawyer. 'You're deep dog, Morris, very deep dog, not t' compromise — remarkable deep dog. And a very good glass of wine; it's the only respectable feature in the Finsbury family, this wine; rarer thing than a title — much rarer. Now a man with glass wine like this in cellar, I wonder why won't compromise?'

'Well, YOU wouldn't compromise before, you know,' said the smiling Morris. 'Turn about is fair play.'

'I wonder why *I* wouldn' compromise? I wonder why YOU wouldn'?' enquired Michael. 'I wonder why we each think the other wouldn'? 'S quite a remarrable — remarkable problem,' he added, triumphing over oral obstacles, not without obvious pride. 'Wonder what we each think — don't you?'

'What do you suppose to have been my reason?' asked Morris adroitly.

Michael looked at him and winked. 'That's cool,' said he. 'Next thing, you'll ask me to help you out of the muddle. I know I'm emissary of Providence, but not that kind! You get out of it yourself, like Aesop and the other fellow. Must be dreadful muddle for young orphan o' forty; leather business and all!'

'I am sure I don't know what you mean,' said Morris.

'Not sure I know myself,' said Michael. 'This is exc'lent vintage, sir — exc'lent vintage. Nothing against the tipple. Only thing: here's a valuable uncle disappeared. Now, what I want to know: where's valuable uncle?'

'I have told you: he is at Browndean,' answered Morris, furtively wiping his brow, for these repeated hints began to tell upon him cruelly.

'Very easy say Brown — Browndee — no' so easy after all!' cried Michael. 'Easy say; anything's easy say, when you can say it. What I don' like's total disappearance of an uncle. Not businesslike.' And he wagged his head.

'It is all perfectly simple,' returned Morris, with laborious calm. 'There is no mystery. He stays at Browndean, where he got a shake in the accident.'

'Ah!' said Michael, 'got devil of a shake!'

'Why do you say that?' cried Morris sharply.

'Best possible authority. Told me so yourself,' said the lawyer. 'But if you tell me contrary now, of course I'm bound to believe either the one story or the other. Point is I've upset this bottle, still champagne's exc'lent thing carpet — point is, is valuable uncle dead — an' — bury?'

Morris sprang from his seat. 'What's that you say?' he gasped.

'I say it's exc'lent thing carpet,' replied Michael, rising. 'Exc'lent thing promote healthy action of the skin. Well, it's all one, anyway. Give my love to Uncle Champagne.'

'You're not going away?' said Morris.

'Awf'ly sorry, ole man. Got to sit up sick friend,' said the wavering Michael.

'You shall not go till you have explained your hints,' returned Morris fiercely. 'What do you mean? What brought you here?'

'No offence, I trust,' said the lawyer, turning round as he opened the door; 'only doing my duty as shemishery of Providence.'

Groping his way to the front-door, he opened it with some difficulty, and descended the steps to the hansom. The tired driver looked up as he approached, and asked where he was to go next.

Michael observed that Morris had followed him to the steps; a brilliant inspiration came to him. 'Anything t' give pain,' he reflected. . . . 'Drive Shcotlan' Yard,' he added aloud, holding to the wheel to steady himself; 'there's something devilish fishy, cabby, about those cousins. Mush' be cleared up! Drive Shcotlan' Yard.'

'You don't mean that, sir,' said the man, with the ready sympathy of the lower orders for an intoxicated gentleman. 'I had better take you home, sir; you can go to Scotland Yard tomorrow.'

'Is it as friend or as perfessional man you advise me not to go Shcotlan' Yard t'night?' enquired Michael. 'All righ', never min' Shcotlan' Yard, drive Gaiety bar.'

'The Gaiety bar is closed,' said the man.

'Then home,' said Michael, with the same cheerfulness.

'Where to, sir?'

'I don't remember, I'm sure,' said Michael, entering the vehicle, 'drive Shcotlan' Yard and ask.'

'But you'll have a card,' said the man, through the little aperture in the top, 'give me your card-case.'

'What imagi — imagination in a cabby!' cried the lawyer, producing his card-case, and handing it to the driver.

The man read it by the light of the lamp. 'Mr Michael Finsbury, 233 King's Road, Chelsea. Is that it, sir?'

‘Right you are,’ cried Michael, ‘drive there if you can see way.’

CHAPTER X. Gideon Forsyth and the Broadwood Grand

The reader has perhaps read that remarkable work, Who Put Back the Clock? by E. H. B., which appeared for several days upon the railway bookstalls and then vanished entirely from the face of the earth. Whether eating Time makes the chief of his diet out of old editions; whether Providence has passed a special enactment on behalf of authors; or whether these last have taken the law into their own hand, bound themselves into a dark conspiracy with a password, which I would die rather than reveal, and night after night sally forth under some vigorous leader, such as Mr James Payn or Mr Walter Besant, on their task of secret spoliation — certain it is, at least, that the old editions pass, giving place to new. To the proof, it is believed there are now only three copies extant of Who Put Back the Clock? one in the British Museum, successfully concealed by a wrong entry in the catalogue; another in one of the cellars (the cellar where the music accumulates) of the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh; and a third, bound in morocco, in the possession of Gideon Forsyth. To account for the very different fate attending this third exemplar, the readiest theory is to suppose that Gideon admired the tale. How to explain that admiration might appear (to those who have perused the work) more difficult; but the weakness of a parent is extreme, and Gideon (and not his uncle, whose initials he had humorously borrowed) was the author of Who Put Back the Clock? He had never acknowledged it, or only to some intimate friends while it was still in proof; after its appearance and alarming failure, the modesty of the novelist had become more pressing, and the secret was now likely to be better kept than that of the authorship of Waverley.

A copy of the work (for the date of my tale is already yesterday) still figured in dusty solitude in the bookstall at Waterloo; and Gideon, as he passed with his ticket for Hampton Court, smiled contemptuously at the creature of his thoughts. What an idle ambition was the author's! How far beneath him was the practice of that childish art! With his hand closing on his first brief, he felt himself a man at last; and the muse who presides over the police romance, a lady presumably of French extraction, fled his neighbourhood, and returned to join the dance round the springs of Helicon, among her Grecian sisters.

Robust, practical reflection still cheered the young barrister upon his journey. Again and again he selected the little country-house in its islet of great oaks, which he was to make his future home. Like a prudent householder, he projected improvements as he passed; to one he added a stable, to another a tennis-court, a third he supplied with a becoming rustic boat-house.

‘How little a while ago,’ he could not but reflect, ‘I was a careless young dog with no thought but to be comfortable! I cared for nothing but boating and detective novels. I would have passed an old-fashioned country-house with large kitchen-garden, stabling, boat-house, and spacious offices, without so much as a look, and certainly would have made no enquiry as to the drains. How a man ripens with the years!’

The intelligent reader will perceive the ravages of Miss Hazeltine. Gideon had carried Julia straight to Mr Bloomfield’s house; and that gentleman, having been led to understand she was the victim of oppression, had noisily espoused her cause. He worked himself into a fine breathing heat; in which, to a man of his temperament, action became needful.

‘I do not know which is the worse,’ he cried, ‘the fraudulent old villain or the unmanly young cub. I will write to the Pall Mall and expose them. Nonsense, sir; they must be exposed! It’s a public duty. Did you not tell me the fellow was a Tory? O, the uncle is a Radical lecturer, is he? No doubt the uncle has been grossly wronged. But of course, as you say, that makes a change; it becomes scarce so much a public duty.’

And he sought and instantly found a fresh outlet for his alacrity. Miss Hazeltine (he now perceived) must be kept out of the way; his houseboat was lying ready — he had returned but a day or two before from his usual cruise; there was no place like a houseboat for concealment; and that very morning, in the teeth of the easterly gale, Mr and Mrs Bloomfield and Miss Julia Hazeltine had started forth on their untimely voyage. Gideon pled in vain to be allowed to join the party. ‘No, Gid,’ said his uncle. ‘You will be watched; you must keep away from us.’ Nor had the barrister ventured to contest this strange illusion; for he feared if he rubbed off any of the romance, that Mr Bloomfield might weary of the whole affair. And his discretion was rewarded; for the Squirradical, laying a heavy hand upon his nephew’s shoulder, had added these notable expressions: ‘I see what you are after, Gid. But if you’re going to get the girl, you have to work, sir.’

These pleasing sounds had cheered the barrister all day, as he sat reading in chambers; they continued to form the ground-base of his manly musings as he was whirled to Hampton Court; even when he landed at the station, and began to pull himself together for his delicate interview, the voice of Uncle Ned and the eyes of Julia were not forgotten.

But now it began to rain surprises: in all Hampton Court there was no Kurnaul Villa, no Count Tarnow, and no count. This was strange; but, viewed in the light of the incoherency of his instructions, not perhaps inexplicable; Mr Dickson had been lunching, and he might have made some fatal oversight in the address. What was the thoroughly prompt, manly, and businesslike step? thought Gideon; and he answered himself at once: ‘A telegram, very laconic.’ Speedily the wires were flashing the following very important missive: ‘Dickson, Langham Hotel. Villa and persons both unknown here, suppose erroneous address; follow self next train. — Forsyth.’ And at the Langham Hotel, sure enough, with a brow expressive of dispatch and intellectual effort, Gideon descended not long after from a smoking hansom.

I do not suppose that Gideon will ever forget the Langham Hotel. No Count Tarnow was one thing; no John Dickson and no Ezra Thomas, quite another. How, why, and what next, danced in his bewildered brain; from every centre of what we playfully call the human intellect incongruous messages were telegraphed; and before the hubbub of dismay had quite subsided, the barrister found himself driving furiously for his chambers. There was at least a cave of refuge; it was at least a place to think in; and he climbed the stair, put his key in the lock and opened the door, with some approach to hope.

It was all dark within, for the night had some time fallen; but Gideon knew his room, he knew where the matches stood on the end of the chimney-piece; and he advanced boldly, and in so doing dashed himself against a heavy body; where (slightly altering the expressions of the song) no heavy body should have been. There had been nothing there when Gideon went out; he had locked the door behind him, he had found it locked on his return, no one could have entered, the furniture could not have changed its own position. And yet undeniably there was a something there. He thrust out his hands in the darkness. Yes, there was something, something large, something smooth, something cold.

‘Heaven forgive me!’ said Gideon, ‘it feels like a piano.’

And the next moment he remembered the vestas in his waistcoat pocket and had struck a light.

It was indeed a piano that met his doubtful gaze; a vast and costly instrument, stained with the rains of the afternoon and defaced with recent scratches. The light of the vesta was reflected from the varnished sides, like a staice in quiet water; and in the farther end of the room the shadow of that strange visitor loomed bulkily and wavered on the wall.

Gideon let the match burn to his fingers, and the darkness closed once more on his bewilderment. Then with trembling hands he lit the lamp and drew near. Near or far, there was no doubt of the fact: the thing was a piano. There, where by all the laws of God and man it was impossible that it should be — there the thing impudently stood. Gideon threw open the keyboard and struck a chord. Not a sound disturbed the quiet of the room. ‘Is there anything wrong with me?’ he thought, with a pang; and drawing in a seat, obstinately persisted in his attempts to ravish silence, now with sparkling arpeggios, now with a sonata of Beethoven’s which (in happier days) he knew to be one of the loudest pieces of that powerful composer. Still not a sound. He gave the Broadwood two great bangs with his clenched first. All was still as the grave. The young barrister started to his feet.

‘I am stark-staring mad,’ he cried aloud, ‘and no one knows it but myself. God’s worst curse has fallen on me.’

His fingers encountered his watch-chain; instantly he had plucked forth his watch and held it to his ear. He could hear it ticking.

‘I am not deaf,’ he said aloud. ‘I am only insane. My mind has quitted me for ever.’

He looked uneasily about the room, and — gazed with lacklustre eyes at the chair in which Mr Dickson had installed himself. The end of a cigar lay near on the fender.

‘No,’ he thought, ‘I don’t believe that was a dream; but God knows my mind is failing rapidly. I seem to be hungry, for instance; it’s probably another hallucination. Still I might try. I shall have one more good meal; I shall go to the Cafe Royal, and may possibly be removed from there direct to the asylum.’

He wondered with morbid interest, as he descended the stairs, how he would first betray his terrible condition — would he attack a waiter? or eat glass? — and when he had mounted into a cab, he bade the man drive to Nichol’s, with a lurking fear that there was no such place.

The flaring, gassy entrance of the cafe speedily set his mind at rest; he was cheered besides to recognize his favourite waiter; his orders appeared to be coherent; the dinner, when it came, was quite a sensible meal, and he ate it with enjoyment. ‘Upon my word,’ he reflected, ‘I am about tempted to indulge a hope. Have I been hasty? Have I done what Robert Skill would have done?’ Robert Skill (I need scarcely mention) was the name of the principal character in Who Put Back the Clock? It had occurred to the author as a brilliant and probable invention; to readers of a critical turn, Robert appeared scarce upon a level with his surname; but it is the difficulty of the police romance, that the reader is always a man of such vastly greater ingenuity than the writer. In the eyes of his creator, however, Robert Skill was a word to conjure with; the thought braced and spurred him; what that brilliant creature would have done Gideon would do also. This frame of mind is not uncommon; the distressed general, the baited divine, the hesitating author, decide severally to do what Napoleon, what St Paul, what Shakespeare would have done; and there remains only the minor question, What is that? In Gideon's case one thing was clear: Skill was a man of singular decision, he would have taken some step (whatever it was) at once; and the only step that Gideon could think of was to return to his chambers.

This being achieved, all further inspiration failed him, and he stood pitifully staring at the instrument of his confusion. To touch the keys again was more than he durst venture on; whether they had maintained their former silence, or responded with the tones of the last trump, it would have equally dethroned his resolution. 'It may be a practical jest,' he reflected, 'though it seems elaborate and costly. And yet what else can it be? It MUST be a practical jest.' And just then his eye fell upon a feature which seemed corroborative of that view: the pagoda of cigars which Michael had erected ere he left the chambers. 'Why that?' reflected Gideon. 'It seems entirely irresponsible.' And drawing near, he gingerly demolished it. 'A key,' he thought. 'Why that? And why so conspicuously placed?' He made the circuit of the instrument, and perceived the keyhole at the back. 'Aha! this is what the key is for,' said he. 'They wanted me to look inside. Stranger and stranger.' And with that he turned the key and raised the lid.

In what antics of agony, in what fits of flighty resolution, in what collapses of despair, Gideon consumed the night, it would be ungenerous to enquire too closely.

That trill of tiny song with which the eaves-birds of London welcome the approach of day found him limp and rumpled and bloodshot, and with a mind still vacant of resource. He rose and looked forth unrejoicingly on blinded windows, an empty street, and the grey daylight dotted with the yellow lamps. There are mornings when the city seems to awake with a sick headache; this was one of them; and still the twittering reveille of the sparrows stirred in Gideon's spirit.

'Day here,' he thought, 'and I still helpless! This must come to an end.' And he locked up the piano, put the key in his pocket, and set forth in quest of coffee. As he went, his mind trudged for the hundredth time a certain mill-road of terrors, misgivings, and regrets. To call in the police, to give up the body, to cover London with handbills describing John Dickson and Ezra Thomas, to fill the papers with paragraphs, Mysterious Occurrence in the Temple — Mr Forsyth admitted to bail, this was one course, an easy course, a safe course; but not, the more he reflected on it, not a pleasant one. For, was it not to publish abroad a number of singular facts about himself? A child ought to have seen through the story of these adventurers, and he had gaped and swallowed it. A barrister of the least self-respect should have refused to listen to clients who came before him in a manner so irregular, and he had listened. And O, if he had only listened; but he had gone upon their errand — he, a barrister, uninstructed even by the shadow of a solicitor — upon an errand fit only for a private detective; and alas! — and for the hundredth time the blood surged to his brow — he had taken their money! 'No,' said he, 'the thing is as plain as St Paul's. I shall be dishonoured! I have smashed my career for a five-pound note.'

Between the possibility of being hanged in all innocence, and the certainty of a public and merited disgrace, no gentleman of spirit could long hesitate. After three gulps of that hot, snuffy, and muddy beverage, that passes on the streets of London for a decoction of the coffee berry, Gideon's mind was made up. He would do without the police. He must face the other side of the dilemma, and be Robert Skill in earnest. What would Robert Skill have done? How does a gentleman dispose of a dead body, honestly come by? He remembered the inimitable story of the hunchback; reviewed its course, and dismissed it for a worthless guide. It was impossible to prop a corpse on the corner of Tottenham Court Road without arousing fatal curiosity in the bosoms of the passers-by; as for lowering it down a London chimney, the physical obstacles were insurmountable. To get it on board a train and drop it out, or on the top of an omnibus and drop it off, were equally out of the question. To get it on a yacht and drop it overboard, was more conceivable; but for a man of moderate means it seemed extravagant. The hire of the yacht was in itself a consideration; the subsequent support of the whole crew (which seemed a necessary consequence) was simply not to be thought of. His uncle and the houseboat here occurred in very luminous colours to his mind. A musical composer (say, of the name of Jimson) might very well suffer, like Hogarth's musician before him, from the disturbances of London. He might very well be pressed for time to finish an opera — say the comic opera Orange Pekoe — Orange Pekoe, music by Jimson — 'this young maestro, one of the most promising of our recent English school' — vigorous entrance of the drums, etc. — the whole character of Jimson and his music arose in bulk before the mind of Gideon. What more likely than Jimson's arrival with a grand piano (say, at Padwick), and his residence in a houseboat alone with the unfinished score of Orange Pekoe? His subsequent disappearance, leaving nothing behind but an empty piano case, it might be more difficult to account for. And yet even that was susceptible of explanation. For, suppose Jimson had gone mad over a fugal passage, and had thereupon destroyed the accomplice of his infamy, and plunged into the welcome river? What end, on the whole, more probable for a modern musician?

‘By Jove, I’ll do it,’ cried Gideon. ‘Jimson is the boy!’

CHAPTER XI. The Maestro Jimson

Mr Edward Hugh Bloomfield having announced his intention to stay in the neighbourhood of Maidenhead, what more probable than that the Maestro Jimson should turn his mind toward Padwick? Near this pleasant riverside village he remembered to have observed an ancient, weedy houseboat lying moored beside a tuft of willows. It had stirred in him, in his careless hours, as he pulled down the river under a more familiar name, a certain sense of the romantic; and when the nice contrivance of his story was already complete in his mind, he had come near pulling it all down again, like an ungrateful clock, in order to introduce a chapter in which Richard Skill (who was always being decoyed somewhere) should be decoyed on board that lonely hulk by Lord Bellew and the American desperado Gin Sling. It was fortunate he had not done so, he reflected, since the hulk was now required for very different purposes.

Jimson, a man of inconspicuous costume, but insinuating manners, had little difficulty in finding the hireling who had charge of the houseboat, and still less in persuading him to resign his care. The rent was almost nominal, the entry immediate, the key was exchanged against a suitable advance in money, and Jimson returned to town by the afternoon train to see about dispatching his piano.

‘I will be down tomorrow,’ he had said reassuringly. ‘My opera is waited for with such impatience, you know.’

And, sure enough, about the hour of noon on the following day, Jimson might have been observed ascending the riverside road that goes from Padwick to Great Haverham, carrying in one hand a basket of provisions, and under the other arm a leather case containing (it is to be conjectured) the score of Orange Pekoe. It was October weather; the stone-grey sky was full of larks, the leaden mirror of the Thames brightened with autumnal foliage, and the fallen leaves of the chestnuts chirped under the composer’s footing. There is no time of the year in England more courageous; and Jimson, though he was not without his troubles, whistled as he went.

A little above Padwick the river lies very solitary. On the opposite shore the trees of a private park enclose the view, the chimneys of the mansion just pricking forth above their clusters; on the near side the path is bordered by willows. Close among these lay the houseboat, a thing so soiled by the tears of the overhanging willows, so grown upon with parasites, so decayed, so battered, so neglected, such a haunt of rats, so advertised a storehouse of rheumatic agonies, that the heart of an intending occupant might well recoil. A plank, by way of flying drawbridge, joined it to the shore. And it was a dreary moment for

Jimson when he pulled this after him and found himself alone on this unwholesome fortress. He could hear the rats scuttle and flop in the abhorred interior; the key cried among the wards like a thing in pain; the sitting-room was deep in dust, and smelt strong of bilge-water. It could not be called a cheerful spot, even for a composer absorbed in beloved toil; how much less for a young gentleman haunted by alarms and awaiting the arrival of a corpse!

He sat down, cleared away a piece of the table, and attacked the cold luncheon in his basket. In case of any subsequent inquiry into the fate of Jimson, It was desirable he should be little seen: in other words, that he should spend the day entirely in the house. To this end, and further to corroborate his fable, he had brought in the leather case not only writing materials, but a ream of large-size music paper, such as he considered suitable for an ambitious character like Jimson's. 'And now to work,' said he, when he had satisfied his appetite. 'We must leave traces of the wretched man's activity.' And he wrote in bold characters:

ORANGE PEKOE.
O.
J. B. JIMSON.
Vocal and p. f. score.

'I suppose they never do begin like this,' reflected Gideon; 'but then it's quite out of the question for me to tackle a full score, and Jimson was so unconventional. A dedication would be found convincing, I believe. "Dedicated to" (let me see) "to William Ewart Gladstone, by his obedient servant the composer." And now some music: I had better avoid the overture; it seems to present difficulties. Let's give an air for the tenor: key — O, something modern! — seven sharps.' And he made a businesslike signature across the staves, and then paused and browsed for a while on the handle of his pen. Melody, with no better inspiration than a sheet of paper, is not usually found to spring unbidden in the mind of the amateur; nor is the key of seven sharps a place of much repose to the untried. He cast away that sheet. 'It will help to build up the character of Jimson,' Gideon remarked, and again waited on the muse, in various keys and on divers sheets of paper, but all with results so inconsiderable that he stood aghast. 'It's very odd,' thought he. 'I seem to have less fancy than I thought, or this is an off-day with me; yet Jimson must leave something.' And again he bent himself to the task.

Presently the penetrating chill of the houseboat began to attack the very seat of life. He desisted from his unremunerative trial, and, to the audible annoyance of the rats, walked briskly up and down the cabin. Still he was cold. 'This is all nonsense,' said he. 'I don't care about the risk, but I will not catch a catarrh. I must get out of this den.'

He stepped on deck, and passing to the bow of his embarkation, looked for the first time up the river. He started. Only a few hundred yards above another houseboat lay moored among the willows. It was very spick-and-span, an elegant canoe hung at the stern, the windows were concealed by snowy curtains, a flag floated from a staff. The more Gideon looked at it, the more there mingled with his disgust a sense of impotent surprise. It was very like his uncle's houseboat; it was exceedingly like — it was identical. But for two circumstances, he could have sworn it was the same. The first, that his uncle had gone to Maidenhead, might be explained away by that flightiness of purpose which is so common a trait among the more than usually manly. The second, however, was conclusive: it was not in the least like Mr Bloomfield to display a banner on his floating residence; and if he ever did, it would certainly be dyed in hues of emblematical propriety. Now the Squirradical, like the vast majority of the more manly, had drawn knowledge at the wells of Cambridge — he was wooden spoon in the year 1850; and the flag upon the houseboat streamed on the afternoon air with the colours of that seat of Toryism, that cradle of Puseyism, that home of the inexact and the effete Oxford. Still it was strangely like, thought Gideon.

And as he thus looked and thought, the door opened, and a young lady stepped forth on deck. The barrister dropped and fled into his cabin — it was Julia Hazeltine! Through the window he watched her draw in the canoe, get on board of it, cast off, and come dropping downstream in his direction.

'Well, all is up now,' said he, and he fell on a seat.

'Good-afternoon, miss,' said a voice on the water. Gideon knew it for the voice of his landlord.

'Good-afternoon,' replied Julia, 'but I don't know who you are; do I? O yes, I do though. You are the nice man that gave us leave to sketch from the old houseboat.'

Gideon's heart leaped with fear.

'That's it,' returned the man. 'And what I wanted to say was as you couldn't do it any more. You see I've let it.'

'Let it!' cried Julia.

'Let it for a month,' said the man. 'Seems strange, don't it? Can't see what the party wants with it?'

'It seems very romantic of him, I think,' said Julia, 'What sort of a person is he?'

Julia in her canoe, the landlord in his wherry, were close alongside, and holding on by the gunwale of the houseboat; so that not a word was lost on Gideon.

'He's a music-man,' said the landlord, 'or at least that's what he told me, miss; come down here to write an op'ra.'

‘Really!’ cried Julia, ‘I never heard of anything so delightful! Why, we shall be able to slip down at night and hear him improvise! What’ is his name?’

‘Jimson,’ said the man.

‘Jimson?’ repeated Julia, and interrogated her memory in vain. But indeed our rising school of English music boasts so many professors that we rarely hear of one till he is made a baronet. ‘Are you sure you have it right?’

‘Made him spell it to me,’ replied the landlord. ‘J-I-M-S-O-N — Jimson; and his op’ra’s called — some kind of tea.’

‘SOME KIND OF TEA!’ cried the girl. ‘What a very singular name for an opera! What can it be about?’ And Gideon heard her pretty laughter flow abroad. ‘We must try to get acquainted with this Mr Jimson; I feel sure he must be nice.’

‘Well, miss, I’m afraid I must be going on. I’ve got to be at Haverham, you see.’

‘O, don’t let me keep you, you kind man!’ said Julia. ‘Good afternoon.’

‘Good afternoon to you, miss.’

Gideon sat in the cabin a prey to the most harrowing thoughts. Here he was anchored to a rotting houseboat, soon to be anchored to it still more emphatically by the presence of the corpse, and here was the country buzzing about him, and young ladies already proposing pleasure parties to surround his house at night. Well, that meant the gallows; and much he cared for that. What troubled him now was Julia’s indescribable levity. That girl would scrape acquaintance with anybody; she had no reserve, none of the enamel of the lady. She was familiar with a brute like his landlord; she took an immediate interest (which she lacked even the delicacy to conceal) in a creature like Jimson! He could conceive her asking Jimson to have tea with her! And it was for a girl like this that a man like Gideon — Down, manly heart!

He was interrupted by a sound that sent him whipping behind the door in a trice. Miss Hazeltine had stepped on board the houseboat. Her sketch was promising; judging from the stillness, she supposed Jimson not yet come; and she had decided to seize occasion and complete the work of art. Down she sat therefore in the bow, produced her block and water-colours, and was soon singing over (what used to be called) the ladylike accomplishment. Now and then indeed her song was interrupted, as she searched in her memory for some of the odious little receipts by means of which the game is practised — or used to be practised in the brave days of old; they say the world, and those ornaments of the world, young ladies, are become more sophisticated now; but Julia had probably studied under

Pitman, and she stood firm in the old ways.

Gideon, meanwhile, stood behind the door, afraid to move, afraid to breathe, afraid to think of what must follow, racked by confinement and borne to the ground with tedium. This particular phase, he felt with gratitude, could not last for ever; whatever impended (even the gallows, he bitterly and perhaps erroneously reflected) could not fail to be a relief. To calculate cubes occurred to him as an ingenious and even profitable refuge from distressing thoughts, and he threw his manhood into that dreary exercise.

Thus, then, were these two young persons occupied — Gideon attacking the perfect number with resolution; Julia vigorously stippling incongruous colours on her block, when Providence dispatched into these waters a steam-launch asthmatically panting up the Thames. All along the banks the water swelled and fell, and the reeds rustled. The houseboat itself, that ancient stationary creature, became suddenly imbued with life, and rolled briskly at her moorings, like a sea-going ship when she begins to smell the harbour bar. The wash had nearly died away, and the quick panting of the launch sounded already faint and far off, when Gideon was startled by a cry from Julia. Peering through the window, he beheld her staring disconsolately downstream at the fast-vanishing canoe. The barrister (whatever were his faults) displayed on this occasion a promptitude worthy of his hero, Robert Skill; with one effort of his mind he foresaw what was about to follow; with one movement of his body he dropped to the floor and crawled under the table.

Julia, on her part, was not yet alive to her position. She saw she had lost the canoe, and she looked forward with something less than avidity to her next interview with Mr Bloomfield; but she had no idea that she was imprisoned, for she knew of the plank bridge.

She made the circuit of the house, and found the door open and the bridge withdrawn. It was plain, then, that Jimson must have come; plain, too, that he must be on board. He must be a very shy man to have suffered this invasion of his residence, and made no sign; and her courage rose higher at the thought. He must come now, she must force him from his privacy, for the plank was too heavy for her single strength; so she tapped upon the open door. Then she tapped again.

‘Mr Jimson,’ she cried, ‘Mr Jimson! here, come! — you must come, you know, sooner or later, for I can’t get off without you. O, don’t be so exceedingly silly! O, please, come!’

Still there was no reply.

‘If he is here he must be mad,’ she thought, with a little fear. And the next moment she remembered he had probably gone aboard like herself in a boat. In that case she might as well see the houseboat, and she pushed open the door and stepped in. Under the table, where he lay smothered with dust, Gideon’s heart stood still.

There were the remains of Jimson’s lunch. ‘He likes rather nice things to eat,’ she thought. ‘O, I am sure he is quite a delightful man. I wonder if he is as good-looking as Mr Forsyth. Mrs Jimson — I don’t believe it sounds as nice as Mrs Forsyth; but then “Gideon” is so really odious! And here is some of his music too; this is delightful. Orange Pekoe — O, that’s what he meant by some kind of tea.’ And she trilled with laughter. ‘Adagio molto espressivo, sempre legato,’ she read next. (For the literary part of a composer’s business Gideon was well equipped.) ‘How very strange to have all these directions, and only three or four notes! O, here’s another with some more. Andante patetico.’ And she began to glance over the music. ‘O dear me,’ she thought, ‘he must be terribly modern! It all seems discords to me. Let’s try the air. It is very strange, it seems familiar.’ She began to sing it, and suddenly broke off with laughter. ‘Why, it’s “Tommy make room for your Uncle!”‘ she cried aloud, so that the soul of Gideon was filled with bitterness. ‘Andante patetico, indeed! The man must be a mere impostor.’

And just at this moment there came a confused, scuffling sound from underneath the table; a strange note, like that of a barn-door fowl, ushered in a most explosive sneeze; the head of the sufferer was at the same time brought smartly in contact with the boards above; and the sneeze was followed by a hollow groan.

Julia fled to the door, and there, with the salutary instinct of the brave, turned and faced the danger. There was no pursuit. The sounds continued; below the table a crouching figure was indistinctly to be seen jostled by the throes of a sneezing-fit; and that was all.

‘Surely,’ thought Julia, ‘this is most unusual behaviour. He cannot be a man of the world!’

Meanwhile the dust of years had been disturbed by the young barrister’s convulsions; and the sneezing-fit was succeeded by a passionate access of coughing.

Julia began to feel a certain interest. ‘I am afraid you are really quite ill,’ she said, drawing a little nearer. ‘Please don’t let me put you out, and do not stay under that table, Mr Jimson. Indeed it cannot be good for you.’

Mr Jimson only answered by a distressing cough; and the next moment the girl was on her knees, and their faces had almost knocked together under the table.

‘O, my gracious goodness!’ exclaimed Miss Hazeltine, and sprang to her feet. ‘Mr Forsyth gone mad!’

‘I am not mad,’ said the gentleman ruefully, extricating himself from his position. ‘Dearest. Miss Hazeltine, I vow to you upon my knees I am not mad!’

'You are not!' she cried, panting.

'I know,' he said, 'that to a superficial eye my conduct may appear unconventional.'

'If you are not mad, it was no conduct at all,' cried the girl, with a flash of colour, 'and showed you did not care one penny for my feelings!'

'This is the very devil and all. I know — I admit that,' cried Gideon, with a great effort of manly candour.

'It was abominable conduct!' said Julia, with energy.

'I know it must have shaken your esteem,' said the barrister. 'But, dearest Miss Hazeltine, I beg of you to hear me out; my behaviour, strange as it may seem, is not unsusceptible of explanation; and I positively cannot and will not consent to continue to try to exist without — without the esteem of one whom I admire — the moment is ill chosen, I am well aware of that; but I repeat the expression — one whom I admire.'

A touch of amusement appeared on Miss Hazeltine's face. 'Very well,' said she, 'come out of this dreadfully cold place, and let us sit down on deck.' The barrister dolefully followed her. 'Now,' said she, making herself comfortable against the end of the house, 'go on. I will hear you out.' And then, seeing him stand before her with so much obvious disrelish to the task, she was suddenly overcome with laughter. Julia's laugh was a thing to ravish lovers; she rolled her mirthful descant with the freedom and the melody of a blackbird's song upon the river, and repeated by the echoes of the farther bank. It seemed a thing in its own place and a sound native to the open air. There was only one creature who heard it without joy, and that was her unfortunate admirer.

'Miss Hazeltine,' he said, in a voice that tottered with annoyance, 'I speak as your sincere well-wisher, but this can only be called levity.'

Julia made great eyes at him.

'I can't withdraw the word,' he said: 'already the freedom with which I heard you hobnobbing with a boatman gave me exquisite pain. Then there was a want of reserve about Jimson — '

'But Jimson appears to be yourself,' objected Julia.

'I am far from denying that,' cried the barrister, 'but you did not know it at the time. What could Jimson be to you? Who was Jimson? Miss Hazeltine, it cut me to the heart.'

'Really this seems to me to be very silly,' returned Julia, with severe decision. 'You have behaved in the most extraordinary manner; you pretend you are able to explain your conduct, and instead of doing so you begin to attack me.'

'I am well aware of that,' replied Gideon. 'I — I will make a clean breast of it. When you know all the circumstances you will be able to excuse me.

And sitting down beside her on the deck, he poured forth his miserable history.

‘O, Mr Forsyth,’ she cried, when he had done, ‘I am — so — sorry! wish I hadn’t laughed at you — only you know you really were so exceedingly funny. But I wish I hadn’t, and I wouldn’t either if I had only known.’ And she gave him her hand.

Gideon kept it in his own. ‘You do not think the worse of me for this?’ he asked tenderly.

‘Because you have been so silly and got into such dreadful trouble? you poor boy, no!’ cried Julia; and, in the warmth of the moment, reached him her other hand; ‘you may count on me,’ she added.

‘Really?’ said Gideon.

‘Really and really!’ replied the girl.

‘I do then, and I will,’ cried the young man. ‘I admit the moment is not well chosen; but I have no friends — to speak of.’

‘No more have I,’ said Julia. ‘But don’t you think it’s perhaps time you gave me back my hands?’

‘La ci darem la mano,’ said the barrister, ‘the merest moment more! I have so few friends,’ he added.

‘I thought it was considered such a bad account of a young man to have no friends,’ observed Julia.

‘O, but I have crowds of FRIENDS!’ cried Gideon. ‘That’s not what I mean. I feel the moment is ill chosen; but O, Julia, if you could only see yourself!’

‘Mr Forsyth — ’

‘Don’t call me by that beastly name!’ cried the youth. ‘Call me Gideon!’

‘O, never that,’ from Julia. ‘Besides, we have known each other such a short time.’

‘Not at all!’ protested Gideon. ‘We met at Bournemouth ever so long ago. I never forgot you since. Say you never forgot me. Say you never forgot me, and call me Gideon!’

‘Isn’t this rather — a want of reserve about Jimson?’ enquired the girl.

‘O, I know I am an ass,’ cried the barrister, ‘and I don’t care a halfpenny! I know I’m an ass, and you may laugh at me to your heart’s delight.’ And as Julia’s lips opened with a smile, he once more dropped into music. ‘There’s the Land of Cherry Isle!’ he sang, courting her with his eyes.

‘It’s like an opera,’ said Julia, rather faintly.

‘What should it be?’ said Gideon. ‘Am I not Jimson? It would be strange if I did not serenade my love. O yes, I mean the word, my Julia; and I mean to win you. I am in dreadful trouble, and I have not a penny of my own, and I have cut the silliest figure; and yet I mean to win you, Julia. Look at me, if you can, and tell me no!'

She looked at him; and whatever her eyes may have told him, it is to be supposed he took a pleasure in the message, for he read it a long while.

'And Uncle Ned will give us some money to go on upon in the meanwhile,' he said at last.

'Well, I call that cool!' said a cheerful voice at his elbow.

Gideon and Julia sprang apart with wonderful alacrity; the latter annoyed to observe that although they had never moved since they sat down, they were now quite close together; both presenting faces of a very heightened colour to the eyes of Mr Edward Hugh Bloomfield. That gentleman, coming up the river in his boat, had captured the truant canoe, and divining what had happened, had thought to steal a march upon Miss Hazeltine at her sketch. He had unexpectedly brought down two birds with one stone; and as he looked upon the pair of flushed and breathless culprits, the pleasant human instinct of the matchmaker softened his heart.

'Well, I call that cool,' he repeated; 'you seem to count very securely upon Uncle Ned. But look here, Gid, I thought I had told you to keep away?'

'To keep away from Maidenhead,' replied Gid. 'But how should I expect to find you here?'

'There is something in that,' Mr Bloomfield admitted. 'You see I thought it better that even you should be ignorant of my address; those rascals, the Finsburys, would have wormed it out of you. And just to put them off the scent I hoisted these abominable colours. But that is not all, Gid; you promised me to work, and here I find you playing the fool at Padwick.'

'Please, Mr Bloomfield, you must not be hard on Mr Forsyth,' said Julia. 'Poor boy, he is in dreadful straits.'

'What's this, Gid?' enquired the uncle. 'Have you been fighting? or is it a bill?'

These, in the opinion of the Squirradical, were the two misfortunes incident to gentlemen; and indeed both were culled from his own career. He had once put his name (as a matter of form) on a friend's paper; it had cost him a cool thousand; and the friend had gone about with the fear of death upon him ever since, and never turned a corner without scouting in front of him for Mr Bloomfield and the oaken staff. As for fighting, the Squirradical was always on the brink of it; and once, when (in the character of president of a Radical club) he had cleared out the hall of his opponents, things had gone even further. Mr Holtum, the Conservative candidate, who lay so long on the bed of sickness, was prepared to swear to Mr Bloomfield. 'I will swear to it in any court — it was the hand of that brute that struck me down,' he was reported to have said; and when he was thought to be sinking, it was known that he had made an ante-mortem statement in that sense. It was a cheerful day for the Squirradical when Holtum was restored to his brewery.

'It's much worse than that,' said Gideon; 'a combination of circumstances really providentially unjust — a — in fact, a syndicate of murderers seem to have perceived my latent ability to rid them of the traces of their crime. It's a legal study after all, you see!' And with these words, Gideon, for the second time that day, began to describe the adventures of the Broadwood Grand.

'I must write to The Times,' cried Mr Bloomfield.

'Do you want to get me disbarred?' asked Gideon.

'Disbarred! Come, it can't be as bad as that,' said his uncle. 'It's a good, honest, Liberal Government that's in, and they would certainly move at my request. Thank God, the days of Tory jobbery are at an end.'

'It wouldn't do, Uncle Ned,' said Gideon.

'But you're not mad enough,' cried Mr Bloomfield, 'to persist in trying to dispose of it yourself?'

'There is no other path open to me,' said Gideon.

'It's not common sense, and I will not hear of it,' cried Mr Bloomfield. 'I command you, positively, Gid, to desist from this criminal interference.'

'Very well, then, I hand it over to you,' said Gideon, 'and you can do what you like with the dead body.'

'God forbid!' ejaculated the president of the Radical Club, 'I'll have nothing to do with it.'

'Then you must allow me to do the best I can,' returned his nephew. 'Believe me, I have a distinct talent for this sort of difficulty.'

'We might forward it to that pest-house, the Conservative Club,' observed Mr Bloomfield. 'It might damage them in the eyes of their constituents; and it could be profitably worked up in the local journal.'

'If you see any political capital in the thing,' said Gideon, 'you may have it for me.'

'No, no, Gid — no, no, I thought you might. I will have no hand in the thing. On reflection, it's highly undesirable that either I or Miss Hazeltine should linger here. We might be observed,' said the president, looking up and down the river; 'and in my public position the consequences would be painful for the party. And, at any rate, it's dinner-time.'

'What?' cried Gideon, plunging for his watch. 'And so it is! Great heaven, the piano should have been here hours ago!'

Mr Bloomfield was clambering back into his boat; but at these words he paused.

'I saw it arrive myself at the station; I hired a carrier man; he had a round to make, but he was to be here by four at the latest,' cried the barrister. 'No doubt the piano is open, and the body found.'

'You must fly at once,' cried Mr Bloomfield, 'it's the only manly step.'

'But suppose it's all right?' wailed Gideon. 'Suppose the piano comes, and I am not here to receive it? I shall have hanged myself by my cowardice. No, Uncle Ned, enquiries must be made in Padwick; I dare not go, of course; but you may — you could hang about the police office, don't you see?'

'No, Gid — no, my dear nephew,' said Mr Bloomfield, with the voice of one on the rack. 'I regard you with the most sacred affection; and I thank God I am an Englishman — and all that. But not — not the police, Gid.'

'Then you desert me?' said Gideon. 'Say it plainly.'

'Far from it! far from it!' protested Mr Bloomfield. 'I only propose caution. Common sense, Gid, should always be an Englishman's guide.'

'Will you let me speak?' said Julia. 'I think Gideon had better leave this dreadful houseboat, and wait among the willows over there. If the piano comes, then he could step out and take it in; and if the police come, he could slip into our houseboat, and there needn't be any more Jimson at all. He could go to bed, and we could burn his clothes (couldn't we?) in the steam-launch; and then really it seems as if it would be all right. Mr Bloomfield is so respectable, you know, and such a leading character, it would be quite impossible even to fancy that he could be mixed up with it.'

'This young lady has strong common sense,' said the Squirradical.

'O, I don't think I'm at all a fool,' said Julia, with conviction.

'But what if neither of them come?' asked Gideon; 'what shall I do then?'

'Why then,' said she, 'you had better go down to the village after dark; and I can go with you, and then I am sure you could never be suspected; and even if you were, I could tell them it was altogether a mistake.'

'I will not permit that — I will not suffer Miss Hazeltine to go,' cried Mr Bloomfield.

'Why?' asked Julia.

Mr Bloomfield had not the least desire to tell her why, for it was simply a craven fear of being drawn himself into the imbroglio; but with the usual tactics of a man who is ashamed of himself, he took the high hand. 'God forbid, my dear Miss Hazeltine, that I should dictate to a lady on the question of propriety — ’ he began.

‘O, is that all?’ interrupted Julia. ‘Then we must go all three.’

‘Caught!’ thought the Squirradical.

CHAPTER XII. Positively the Last Appearance of the Broadwood Grand

England is supposed to be unmusical; but without dwelling on the patronage extended to the organ-grinder, without seeking to found any argument on the prevalence of the jew's trump, there is surely one instrument that may be said to be national in the fullest acceptance of the word. The herdboy in the broom, already musical in the days of Father Chaucer, startles (and perhaps pains) the lark with this exiguous pipe; and in the hands of the skilled bricklayer,

'The thing becomes a trumpet, whence he blows'

(as a general rule) either 'The British Grenadiers' or 'Cherry Ripe'. The latter air is indeed the shibboleth and diploma piece of the penny whistler; I hazard a guess it was originally composed for this instrument. It is singular enough that a man should be able to gain a livelihood, or even to tide over a period of unemployment, by the display of his proficiency upon the penny whistle; still more so, that the professional should almost invariably confine himself to 'Cherry Ripe'. But indeed, singularities surround the subject, thick like blackberries. Why, for instance, should the pipe be called a penny whistle? I think no one ever bought it for a penny. Why should the alternative name be tin whistle? I am grossly deceived if it be made of tin. Lastly, in what deaf catacomb, in what earless desert, does the beginner pass the excruciating interval of his apprenticeship? We have all heard people learning the piano, the fiddle, and the cornet; but the young of the penny whistler (like that of the salmon) is occult from observation; he is never heard until proficient; and providence (perhaps alarmed by the works of Mr Mallock) defends human hearing from his first attempts upon the upper octave.

A really noteworthy thing was taking place in a green lane, not far from Padwick. On the bench of a carrier's cart there sat a tow-headed, lanky, modest-looking youth; the reins were on his lap; the whip lay behind him in the interior of the cart; the horse proceeded without guidance or encouragement; the carrier (or the carrier's man), rapt into a higher sphere than that of his daily occupations, his looks dwelling on the skies, devoted himself wholly to a brand-new D penny whistle, whence he diffidently endeavoured to elicit that pleasing melody 'The Ploughboy'. To any observant person who should have chanced to saunter in that lane, the hour would have been thrilling. 'Here at last,' he would have said, 'is the beginner.'

The tow-headed youth (whose name was Harker) had just encored himself for the nineteenth time, when he was struck into the extreme of confusion by the discovery that he was not alone.

‘There you have it!’ cried a manly voice from the side of the road.

‘That’s as good as I want to hear. Perhaps a leetle oilier in the run,’ the voice suggested, with meditative gusto. ‘Give it us again.’

Harker glanced, from the depths of his humiliation, at the speaker. He beheld a powerful, sun-brown, clean-shaven fellow, about forty years of age, striding beside the cart with a non-commissioned military bearing, and (as he strode) spinning in the air a cane. The fellow’s clothes were very bad, but he looked clean and self-reliant.

‘I’m only a beginner,’ gasped the blushing Harker, ‘I didn’t think anybody could hear me.’

‘Well, I like that!’ returned the other. ‘You’re a pretty old beginner. Come, I’ll give you a lead myself. Give us a seat here beside you.’

The next moment the military gentleman was perched on the cart, pipe in hand. He gave the instrument a knowing rattle on the shaft, mouthed it, appeared to commune for a moment with the muse, and dashed into ‘The girl I left behind me’. He was a great, rather than a fine, performer; he lacked the bird-like richness; he could scarce have extracted all the honey out of ‘Cherry Ripe’; he did not fear — he even ostentatiously displayed and seemed to revel in he shrillness of the instrument; but in fire, speed, precision, evenness, and fluency; in linked agility of jimmy — a technical expression, by your leave, answering to warblers on the bagpipe; and perhaps, above all, in that inspiring side-glance of the eye, with which he followed the effect and (as by a human appeal) eked out the insufficiency of his performance: in these, the fellow stood without a rival. Harker listened: ‘The girl I left behind me’ filled him with despair; ‘The Soldier’s Joy’ carried him beyond jealousy into generous enthusiasm.

‘Turn about,’ said the military gentleman, offering the pipe.

‘O, not after you!’ cried Harker; ‘you’re a professional.’

‘No,’ said his companion; ‘an amatyure like yourself. That’s one style of play, yours is the other, and I like it best. But I began when I was a boy, you see, before my taste was formed. When you’re my age you’ll play that thing like a cornet-a-piston. Give us that air again; how does it go?’ and he affected to endeavour to recall ‘The Ploughboy’.

A timid, insane hope sprang in the breast of Harker. Was it possible? Was there something in his playing? It had, indeed, seemed to him at times as if he got a kind of a richness out of it. Was he a genius? Meantime the military gentleman stumbled over the air.

‘No,’ said the unhappy Harker, ‘that’s not quite it. It goes this way — just to show you.’

And, taking the pipe between his lips, he sealed his doom. When he had played the air, and then a second time, and a third; when the military gentleman had tried it once more, and once more failed; when it became clear to Harker that he, the blushing debutant, was actually giving a lesson to this full-grown flutist — and the flutist under his care was not very brilliantly progressing — how am I to tell what floods of glory brightened the autumnal countryside; how, unless the reader were an amateur himself, describe the heights of idiotic vanity to which the carrier climbed? One significant fact shall paint the situation: thenceforth it was Harker who played, and the military gentleman listened and approved.

As he listened, however, he did not forget the habit of soldierly precaution, looking both behind and before. He looked behind and computed the value of the carrier's load, divining the contents of the brown-paper parcels and the portly hamper, and briefly setting down the grand piano in the brand-new piano-case as 'difficult to get rid of'. He looked before, and spied at the corner of the green lane a little country public-house embowered in roses. 'I'll have a shy at it,' concluded the military gentleman, and roundly proposed a glass. 'Well, I'm not a drinking man,' said Harker.

'Look here, now,' cut in the other, 'I'll tell you who I am: I'm Colour-Sergeant Brand of the Blankth. That'll tell you if I'm a drinking man or not.' It might and it might not, thus a Greek chorus would have intervened, and gone on to point out how very far it fell short of telling why the sergeant was tramping a country lane in tatters; or even to argue that he must have pretermitted some while ago his labours for the general defence, and (in the interval) possibly turned his attention to oakum. But there was no Greek chorus present; and the man of war went on to contend that drinking was one thing and a friendly glass another.

In the Blue Lion, which was the name of the country public-house, Colour-Sergeant Brand introduced his new friend, Mr Harker, to a number of ingenious mixtures, calculated to prevent the approaches of intoxication. These he explained to be 'rekisite' in the service, so that a self-respecting officer should always appear upon parade in a condition honourable to his corps. The most efficacious of these devices was to lace a pint of mild ale with twopenceworth of London gin. I am pleased to hand in this recipe to the discerning reader, who may find it useful even in civil station; for its effect upon Mr Harker was revolutionary. He must be helped on board his own waggon, where he proceeded to display a spirit entirely given over to mirth and music, alternately hooting with laughter, to which the sergeant hastened to bear chorus, and incoherently tootling on the pipe. The man of war, meantime, unostentatiously possessed himself of the reins. It was plain he had a taste for the secluded beauties of an English landscape; for the cart, although it wandered under his guidance for some time, was never observed to issue on the dusty highway, journeying between hedge and ditch, and for the most part under overhanging boughs. It was plain, besides, he had an eye to the true interests of Mr Harker; for though the cart drew up more than once at the doors of public-houses, it was only the sergeant who set foot to ground, and, being equipped himself with a quart bottle, once more proceeded on his rural drive.

To give any idea of the complexity of the sergeant's course, a map of that part of Middlesex would be required, and my publisher is averse from the expense. Suffice it, that a little after the night had closed, the cart was brought to a standstill in a woody road; where the sergeant lifted from among the parcels, and tenderly deposited upon the wayside, the inanimate form of Harker.

'If you come-to before daylight,' thought the sergeant, 'I shall be surprised for one.'

From the various pockets of the slumbering carrier he gently collected the sum of seventeen shillings and eightpence sterling; and, getting once more into the cart, drove thoughtfully away.

'If I was exactly sure of where I was, it would be a good job,' he reflected. 'Anyway, here's a corner.'

He turned it, and found himself upon the riverside. A little above him the lights of a houseboat shone cheerfully; and already close at hand, so close that it was impossible to avoid their notice, three persons, a lady and two gentlemen, were deliberately drawing near. The sergeant put his trust in the convenient darkness of the night, and drove on to meet them. One of the gentlemen, who was of a portly figure, walked in the midst of the fairway, and presently held up a staff by way of signal.

'My man, have you seen anything of a carrier's cart?' he cried.

Dark as it was, it seemed to the sergeant as though the slimmer of the two gentlemen had made a motion to prevent the other speaking, and (finding himself too late) had skipped aside with some alacrity. At another season, Sergeant Brand would have paid more attention to the fact; but he was then immersed in the perils of his own predicament.

'A carrier's cart?' said he, with a perceptible uncertainty of voice. 'No, sir.'

'Ah!' said the portly gentleman, and stood aside to let the sergeant pass. The lady appeared to bend forward and study the cart with every mark of sharpened curiosity, the slimmer gentleman still keeping in the rear.

'I wonder what the devil they would be at,' thought Sergeant Brand; and, looking fearfully back, he saw the trio standing together in the midst of the way, like folk consulting. The bravest of military heroes are not always equal to themselves as to their reputation; and fear, on some singular provocation, will find a lodgment in the most unfamiliar bosom. The word ‘detective’ might have been heard to gurgle in the sergeant’s throat; and vigorously applying the whip, he fled up the riverside road to Great Haverham, at the gallop of the carrier’s horse. The lights of the houseboat flashed upon the flying waggon as it passed; the beat of hoofs and the rattle of the vehicle gradually coalesced and died away; and presently, to the trio on the riverside, silence had redescended.

‘It’s the most extraordinary thing,’ cried the slimmer of the two gentlemen, ‘but that’s the cart.’

‘And I know I saw a piano,’ said the girl.

‘O, it’s the cart, certainly; and the extraordinary thing is, it’s not the man,’ added the first.

‘It must be the man, Gid, it must be,’ said the portly one.

‘Well, then, why is he running away?’ asked Gideon.

‘His horse bolted, I suppose,’ said the Squirradical.

‘Nonsense! I heard the whip going like a flail,’ said Gideon. ‘It simply defies the human reason.’

‘I’ll tell you,’ broke in the girl, ‘he came round that corner. Suppose we went and — what do you call it in books? — followed his trail? There may be a house there, or somebody who saw him, or something.’

‘Well, suppose we did, for the fun of the thing,’ said Gideon.

The fun of the thing (it would appear) consisted in the extremely close juxtaposition of himself and Miss Hazeltine. To Uncle Ned, who was excluded from these simple pleasures, the excursion appeared hopeless from the first; and when a fresh perspective of darkness opened up, dimly contained between park palings on the one side and a hedge and ditch upon the other, the whole without the smallest signal of human habitation, the Squirradical drew up.

‘This is a wild-goose chase,’ said he.

With the cessation of the footfalls, another sound smote upon their ears.

‘O, what’s that?’ cried Julia.

‘I can’t think,’ said Gideon.

The Squirradical had his stick presented like a sword. ‘Gid,’ he began, ‘Gid, I — ’

‘O Mr Forsyth!’ cried the girl. ‘O don’t go forward, you don’t know what it might be — it might be something perfectly horrid.’

‘It may be the devil itself,’ said Gideon, disengaging himself, ‘but I am going to see it.’

‘Don’t be rash, Gid,’ cried his uncle.

The barrister drew near to the sound, which was certainly of a portentous character. In quality it appeared to blend the strains of the cow, the fog-horn, and the mosquito; and the startling manner of its enunciation added incalculably to its terrors. A dark object, not unlike the human form divine, appeared on the brink of the ditch.

'It's a man,' said Gideon, 'it's only a man; he seems to be asleep and snoring. Hullo,' he added, a moment after, 'there must be something wrong with him, he won't waken.'

Gideon produced his vestas, struck one, and by its light recognized the tow head of Harker.

'This is the man,' said he, 'as drunk as Belial. I see the whole story'; and to his two companions, who had now ventured to rejoin him, he set forth a theory of the divorce between the carrier and his cart, which was not unlike the truth.

'Drunken brute!' said Uncle Ned, 'let's get him to a pump and give him what he deserves.'

'Not at all!' said Gideon. 'It is highly undesirable he should see us together; and really, do you know, I am very much obliged to him, for this is about the luckiest thing that could have possibly occurred. It seems to me — Uncle Ned, I declare to heaven it seems to me — I'm clear of it!'

'Clear of what?' asked the Squirradical.

'The whole affair!' cried Gideon. 'That man has been ass enough to steal the cart and the dead body; what he hopes to do with it I neither know nor care. My hands are free, Jimson ceases; down with Jimson. Shake hands with me, Uncle Ned — Julia, darling girl, Julia, I — '

'Gideon, Gideon!' said his uncle. 'O, it's all right, uncle, when we're going to be married so soon,' said Gideon. 'You know you said so yourself in the houseboat.'

'Did I?' said Uncle Ned; 'I am certain I said no such thing.'

'Appeal to him, tell him he did, get on his soft side,' cried Gideon. 'He's a real brick if you get on his soft side.'

'Dear Mr Bloomfield,' said Julia, 'I know Gideon will be such a very good boy, and he has promised me to do such a lot of law, and I will see that he does too. And you know it is so very steadying to young men, everybody admits that; though, of course, I know I have no money, Mr Bloomfield,' she added.

'My dear young lady, as this rapscallion told you today on the boat, Uncle Ned has plenty,' said the Squirradical, 'and I can never forget that you have been shamefully defrauded. So as there's nobody looking, you had better give your Uncle Ned a kiss. There, you rogue,' resumed Mr Bloomfield, when the ceremony had been daintily performed, 'this very pretty young lady is yours, and a vast deal more than you deserve. But now, let us get back to the houseboat, get up steam on the launch, and away back to town.'

'That's the thing!' cried Gideon; 'and tomorrow there will be no houseboat, and no Jimson, and no carrier's cart, and no piano; and when Harker awakes on the ditchside, he may tell himself the whole affair has been a dream.'

'Aha!' said Uncle Ned, 'but there's another man who will have a different awakening. That fellow in the cart will find he has been too clever by half.'

'Uncle Ned and Julia,' said Gideon, 'I am as happy as the King of Tartary, my heart is like a threepenny-bit, my heels are like feathers; I am out of all my troubles, Julia's hand is in mine. Is this a time for anything but handsome sentiments? Why, there's not room in me for anything that's not angelic! And when I think of that poor unhappy devil in the cart, I stand here in the night and cry with a single heart God help him!'

'Amen,' said Uncle Ned.

CHAPTER XIII. The Tribulations of Morris: Part the Second

In a really polite age of literature I would have scorned to cast my eye again on the contortions of Morris. But the study is in the spirit of the day; it presents, besides, features of a high, almost a repulsive, morality; and if it should prove the means of preventing any respectable and inexperienced gentleman from plunging light-heartedly into crime, even political crime, this work will not have been penned in vain.

He rose on the morrow of his night with Michael, rose from the leaden slumber of distress, to find his hand tremulous, his eyes closed with rheum, his throat parched, and his digestion obviously paralysed. ‘Lord knows it’s not from eating!’ Morris thought; and as he dressed he reconsidered his position under several heads. Nothing will so well depict the troubled seas in which he was now voyaging as a review of these various anxieties. I have thrown them (for the reader’s convenience) into a certain order; but in the mind of one poor human equal they whirled together like the dust of hurricanes. With the same obliging preoccupation, I have put a name to each of his distresses; and it will be observed with pity that every individual item would have graced and commended the cover of a railway novel.

Anxiety the First: Where is the Body? or, The Mystery of Bent Pitman. It was now manifestly plain that Bent Pitman (as was to be looked for from his ominous appellation) belonged to the darker order of the criminal class. An honest man would not have cashed the bill; a humane man would not have accepted in silence the tragic contents of the water-butt; a man, who was not already up to the hilts in gore, would have lacked the means of secretly disposing them. This process of reasoning left a horrid image of the monster, Pitman. Doubtless he had long ago disposed of the body — dropping it through a trapdoor in his back kitchen, Morris supposed, with some hazy recollection of a picture in a penny dreadful; and doubtless the man now lived in wanton splendour on the proceeds of the bill. So far, all was peace. But with the profligate habits of a man like Bent Pitman (who was no doubt a hunchback in the bargain), eight hundred pounds could be easily melted in a week. When they were gone, what would he be likely to do next? A hell-like voice in Morris’s own bosom gave the answer: ‘Blackmail me.’

Anxiety the Second: The Fraud of the Tontine; or, Is my Uncle dead? This, on which all Morris’s hopes depended, was yet a question. He had tried to bully Teena; he had tried to bribe her; and nothing came of it. He had his moral conviction still; but you cannot blackmail a sharp lawyer on a moral conviction. And besides, since his interview with Michael, the idea wore a less attractive countenance. Was Michael the man to be blackmailed? and was Morris the man to do it? Grave considerations. ‘It’s not that I’m afraid of him,’ Morris so far condescended to reassure himself; ‘but I must be very certain of my ground, and the deuce of it is, I see no way. How unlike is life to novels! I wouldn’t have even begun this business in a novel, but what I’d have met a dark, slouching fellow in the Oxford Road, who’d have become my accomplice, and known all about how to do it, and probably broken into Michael’s house at night and found nothing but a waxwork image; and then blackmailed or murdered me. But here, in real life, I might walk the streets till I dropped dead, and none of the criminal classes would look near me. Though, to be sure, there is always Pitman,’ he added thoughtfully.

Anxiety the Third: The Cottage at Browndean; or, The Underpaid Accomplice. For he had an accomplice, and that accomplice was blooming unseen in a damp cottage in Hampshire with empty pockets. What could be done about that? He really ought to have sent him something; if it was only a post-office order for five bob, enough to prove that he was kept in mind, enough to keep him in hope, beer, and tobacco. ‘But what would you have?’ thought Morris; and ruefully poured into his hand a half-crown, a florin, and eightpence in small change. For a man in Morris’s position, at war with all society, and conducting, with the hand of inexperience, a widely ramified intrigue, the sum was already a derision. John would have to be doing; no mistake of that. ‘But then,’ asked the hell-like voice, ‘how long is John likely to stand it?’

Anxiety the Fourth: The Leather Business; or, The Shutters at Last: a Tale of the City. On this head Morris had no news. He had not yet dared to visit the family concern; yet he knew he must delay no longer, and if anything had been wanted to sharpen this conviction, Michael’s references of the night before rang ambiguously in his ear. Well and good. To visit the city might be indispensable; but what was he to do when he was there? He had no right to sign in his own name; and, with all the will in the world, he seemed to lack the art of signing with his uncle’s. Under these circumstances, Morris could do nothing to procrastinate the crash; and, when it came, when prying eyes began to be applied to every joint of his behaviour, two questions could not fail to be addressed, sooner or later, to a speechless and perspiring insolvent. Where is Mr Joseph Finsbury? and how about your visit to the bank? Questions, how easy to put! — ye gods, how impossible to answer! The man to whom they should be addressed went certainly to gaol, and — eh! what was this? — possibly to the gallows. Morris was trying to shave when this idea struck him, and he laid the razor down. Here (in Michael's words) was the total disappearance of a valuable uncle; here was a time of inexplicable conduct on the part of a nephew who had been in bad blood with the old man any time these seven years; what a chance for a judicial blunder! 'But no,' thought Morris, 'they cannot, they dare not, make it murder. Not that. But honestly, and speaking as a man to a man, I don't see any other crime in the calendar (except arson) that I don't seem somehow to have committed. And yet I'm a perfectly respectable man, and wished nothing but my due. Law is a pretty business.'

With this conclusion firmly seated in his mind, Morris Finsbury descended to the hall of the house in John Street, still half-shaven. There was a letter in the box; he knew the handwriting: John at last!

'Well, I think I might have been spared this,' he said bitterly, and tore it open.

Dear Morris [it ran], what the dickens do you mean by it? I'm in an awful hole down here; I have to go on tick, and the parties on the spot don't cotton to the idea; they couldn't, because it is so plain I'm in a stait of Destitution. I've got no bedclothes, think of that, I must have coins, the hole thing's a Mockry, I wont stand it, nobody would. I would have come away before, only I have no money for the railway fare. Don't be a lunatic, Morris, you don't seem to understand my dredful situation. I have to get the stamp on tick. A fact.

— Ever your affte. Brother,

J. FINSBURY

'Can't even spell!' Morris reflected, as he crammed the letter in his pocket, and left the house. 'What can I do for him? I have to go to the expense of a barber, I'm so shattered! How can I send anybody coins? It's hard lines, I daresay; but does he think I'm living on hot muffins? One comfort,' was his grim reflection, 'he can't cut and run — he's got to stay; he's as helpless as the dead.' And then he broke forth again: 'Complains, does he? and he's never even heard of Bent Pitman! If he had what I have on my mind, he might complain with a good grace.'

But these were not honest arguments, or not wholly honest; there was a struggle in the mind of Morris; he could not disguise from himself that his brother John was miserably situated at Browndean, without news, without money, without bedclothes, without society or any entertainment; and by the time he had been shaved and picked a hasty breakfast at a coffee tavern, Morris had arrived at a compromise.

'Poor Johnny,' he said to himself, 'he's in an awful box! I can't send him coins, but I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll send him the Pink Un — it'll cheer John up; and besides, it'll do his credit good getting anything by post.'

Accordingly, on his way to the leather business, whither he proceeded (according to his thrifty habit) on foot, Morris purchased and dispatched a single copy of that enlivening periodical, to which (in a sudden pang of remorse) he added at random the Athenaeum, the Revivalist, and the Penny Pictorial Weekly. So there was John set up with literature, and Morris had laid balm upon his conscience.

As if to reward him, he was received in his place of business with good news. Orders were pouring in; there was a run on some of the back stock, and the figure had gone up. Even the manager appeared elated. As for Morris, who had almost forgotten the meaning of good news, he longed to sob like a little child; he could have caught the manager (a pallid man with startled eyebrows) to his bosom; he could have found it in his generosity to give a cheque (for a small sum) to every clerk in the counting-house. As he sat and opened his letters a chorus of airy vocalists sang in his brain, to most exquisite music, 'This whole concern may be profitable yet, profitable yet, profitable yet.'

To him, in this sunny moment of relief, enter a Mr Rodgerson, a creditor, but not one who was expected to be pressing, for his connection with the firm was old and regular.

'O, Finsbury,' said he, not without embarrassment, 'it's of course only fair to let you know — the fact is, money is a trifle tight — I have some paper out — for that matter, every one's complaining — and in short — '

'It has never been our habit, Rodgerson,' said Morris, turning pale. 'But give me time to turn round, and I'll see what I can do; I daresay we can let you have something to account.'

'Well, that's just where is,' replied Rodgerson. 'I was tempted; I've let the credit out of MY hands.'

'Out of your hands?' repeated Morris. 'That's playing rather fast and loose with us, Mr Rodgerson.'

'Well, I got cent. for cent. for it,' said the other, 'on the nail, in a certified cheque.'

'Cent. for cent.!' cried Morris. 'Why, that's something like thirty per cent. bonus; a singular thing! Who's the party?'

'Don't know the man,' was the reply. 'Name of Moss.'

'A Jew,' Morris reflected, when his visitor was gone. And what could a Jew want with a claim of — he verified the amount in the books — a claim of three five eight, nineteen, ten, against the house of Finsbury? And why should he pay cent. for cent.? The figure proved the loyalty of Rodgerson — even Morris admitted that. But it proved unfortunately something else — the eagerness of Moss. The claim must have been wanted instantly, for that day, for that morning even. Why? The mystery of Moss promised to be a fit pendant to the mystery of Pitman. ‘And just when all was looking well too!’ cried Morris, smiting his hand upon the desk. And almost at the same moment Mr Moss was announced.

Mr Moss was a radiant Hebrew, brutally handsome, and offensively polite. He was acting, it appeared, for a third party; he understood nothing of the circumstances; his client desired to have his position regularized; but he would accept an antedated cheque — antedated by two months, if Mr Finsbury chose.

‘But I don’t understand this,’ said Morris. ‘What made you pay cent. per cent. for it today?’

Mr Moss had no idea; only his orders.

‘The whole thing is thoroughly irregular,’ said Morris. ‘It is not the custom of the trade to settle at this time of the year. What are your instructions if I refuse?’

‘I am to see Mr Joseph Finsbury, the head of the firm,’ said Mr Moss. ‘I was directed to insist on that; it was implied you had no status here — the expressions are not mine.’

‘You cannot see Mr Joseph; he is unwell,’ said Morris.

‘In that case I was to place the matter in the hands of a lawyer. Let me see,’ said Mr Moss, opening a pocket-book with, perhaps, suspicious care, at the right place — ’Yes — of Mr Michael Finsbury. A relation, perhaps? In that case, I presume, the matter will be pleasantly arranged.’

To pass into the hands of Michael was too much for Morris. He struck his colours. A cheque at two months was nothing, after all. In two months he would probably be dead, or in a gaol at any rate. He bade the manager give Mr Moss a chair and the paper. ‘I’m going over to get a cheque signed by Mr Finsbury,’ said he, ‘who is lying ill at John Street.’

A cab there and a cab back; here were inroads on his wretched capital! He counted the cost; when he was done with Mr Moss he would be left with twelvepence-halfpenny in the world. What was even worse, he had now been forced to bring his uncle up to Bloomsbury. ‘No use for poor Johnny in Hampshire now,’ he reflected. ‘And how the farce is to be kept up completely passes me. At Browndean it was just possible; in Bloomsbury it seems beyond human ingenuity — though I suppose it’s what Michael does. But then he has accomplices — that Scotsman and the whole gang. Ah, if I had accomplices!’

Necessity is the mother of the arts. Under a spur so immediate, Morris surprised himself by the neatness and dispatch of his new forgery, and within three-fourths of an hour had handed it to Mr Moss.

‘That is very satisfactory,’ observed that gentleman, rising. ‘I was to tell you it will not be presented, but you had better take care.'

The room swam round Morris. 'What — what's that?' he cried, grasping the table. He was miserably conscious the next moment of his shrill tongue and ashen face. 'What do you mean — it will not be presented? Why am I to take care? What is all this mummery?'

'I have no idea, Mr Finsbury,' replied the smiling Hebrew. 'It was a message I was to deliver. The expressions were put into my mouth.'

'What is your client's name?' asked Morris.

'That is a secret for the moment,' answered Mr Moss. Morris bent toward him. 'It's not the bank?' he asked hoarsely.

'I have no authority to say more, Mr Finsbury,' returned Mr Moss. 'I will wish you a good morning, if you please.'

'Wish me a good morning!' thought Morris; and the next moment, seizing his hat, he fled from his place of business like a madman. Three streets away he stopped and groaned. 'Lord! I should have borrowed from the manager!' he cried. 'But it's too late now; it would look dicky to go back; I'm penniless — simply penniless — like the unemployed.'

He went home and sat in the dismantled dining-room with his head in his hands. Newton never thought harder than this victim of circumstances, and yet no clearness came. 'It may be a defect in my intelligence,' he cried, rising to his feet, 'but I cannot see that I am fairly used. The bad luck I've had is a thing to write to The Times about; it's enough to breed a revolution. And the plain English of the whole thing is that I must have money at once. I'm done with all morality now; I'm long past that stage; money I must have, and the only chance I see is Bent Pitman. Bent Pitman is a criminal, and therefore his position's weak. He must have some of that eight hundred left; if he has I'll force him to go shares; and even if he hasn't, I'll tell him the tontine affair, and with a desperate man like Pitman at my back, it'll be strange if I don't succeed.'

Well and good. But how to lay hands upon Bent Pitman, except by advertisement, was not so clear. And even so, in what terms to ask a meeting? on what grounds? and where? Not at John Street, for it would never do to let a man like Bent Pitman know your real address; nor yet at Pitman's house, some dreadful place in Holloway, with a trapdoor in the back kitchen; a house which you might enter in a light summer overcoat and varnished boots, to come forth again piecemeal in a market-basket. That was the drawback of a really efficient accomplice, Morris felt, not without a shudder. 'I never dreamed I should come to actually covet such society,' he thought. And then a brilliant idea struck him. Waterloo Station, a public place, yet at certain hours of the day a solitary; a place, besides, the very name of which must knock upon the heart of Pitman, and at once suggest a knowledge of the latest of his guilty secrets. Morris took a piece of paper and sketched his advertisement.

WILLIAM BENT PITMAN, if this should meet the eye of, he will hear of SOMETHING TO HIS ADVANTAGE on the far end of the main line departure platform, Waterloo Station, 2 to 4 P.M., Sunday next.

Morris reperused this literary trifle with approbation. ‘Terse,’ he reflected. ‘Something to his advantage is not strictly true; but it’s taking and original, and a man is not on oath in an advertisement. All that I require now is the ready cash for my own meals and for the advertisement, and — no, I can’t lavish money upon John, but I’ll give him some more papers. How to raise the wind?’

He approached his cabinet of signets, and the collector suddenly revolted in his blood. ‘I will not!’ he cried; ‘nothing shall induce me to massacre my collection — rather theft!’ And dashing upstairs to the drawing-room, he helped himself to a few of his uncle’s curiosities: a pair of Turkish babooshes, a Smyrna fan, a water-cooler, a musket guaranteed to have been seized from an Ephesian bandit, and a pocketful of curious but incomplete seashells.

CHAPTER XIV. William Bent Pitman Hears of Something to his Advantage

On the morning of Sunday, William Dent Pitman rose at his usual hour, although with something more than the usual reluctance. The day before (it should be explained) an addition had been made to his family in the person of a lodger. Michael Finsbury had acted sponsor in the business, and guaranteed the weekly bill; on the other hand, no doubt with a spice of his prevailing jocularity, he had drawn a depressing portrait of the lodger's character. Mr Pitman had been led to understand his guest was not good company; he had approached the gentleman with fear, and had rejoiced to find himself the entertainer of an angel. At tea he had been vastly pleased; till hard on one in the morning he had sat entranced by eloquence and progressively fortified with information in the studio; and now, as he reviewed over his toilet the harmless pleasures of the evening, the future smiled upon him with revived attractions. 'Mr Finsbury is indeed an acquisition,' he remarked to himself; and as he entered the little parlour, where the table was already laid for breakfast, the cordiality of his greeting would have befitted an acquaintanceship already old.

'I am delighted to see you, sir' — these were his expressions — 'and I trust you have slept well.'

'Accustomed as I have been for so long to a life of almost perpetual change,' replied the guest, 'the disturbance so often complained of by the more sedentary, as attending their first night in (what is called) a new bed, is a complaint from which I am entirely free.'

'I am delighted to hear it,' said the drawing-master warmly. 'But I see I have interrupted you over the paper.'

'The Sunday paper is one of the features of the age,' said Mr Finsbury. 'In America, I am told, it supersedes all other literature, the bone and sinew of the nation finding their requirements catered for; hundreds of columns will be occupied with interesting details of the world's doings, such as water-spouts, elopements, conflagrations, and public entertainments; there is a corner for politics, ladies' work, chess, religion, and even literature; and a few spicy editorials serve to direct the course of public thought. It is difficult to estimate the part played by such enormous and miscellaneous repositories in the education of the people. But this (though interesting in itself) partakes of the nature of a digression; and what I was about to ask you was this: Are you yourself a student of the daily press?'

'There is not much in the papers to interest an artist,' returned

Pitman.

‘In that case,’ resumed Joseph, ‘an advertisement which has appeared the last two days in various journals, and reappears this morning, may possibly have failed to catch your eye. The name, with a trifling variation, bears a strong resemblance to your own. Ah, here it is. If you please, I will read it to you:

WILIAM BENT PITMAN, if this should meet the eye of, he will hear of SOMETHING TO HIS ADVANTAGE at the far end of the main line departure platform, Waterloo Station, 2 to 4 P.M. today.

‘Is that in print?’ cried Pitman. ‘Let me see it! Bent? It must be Dent! SOMETHING TO MY ADVANTAGE? Mr Finsbury, excuse me offering a word of caution; I am aware how strangely this must sound in your ears, but there are domestic reasons why this little circumstance might perhaps be better kept between ourselves. Mrs Pitman — my dear Sir, I assure you there is nothing dishonourable in my secrecy; the reasons are domestic, merely domestic; and I may set your conscience at rest when I assure you all the circumstances are known to our common friend, your excellent nephew, Mr Michael, who has not withdrawn from me his esteem.’

‘A word is enough, Mr Pitman,’ said Joseph, with one of his Oriental reverences.

Half an hour later, the drawing-master found Michael in bed and reading a book, the picture of good-humour and repose.

‘Hillo, Pitman,’ he said, laying down his book, ‘what brings you here at this inclement hour? Ought to be in church, my boy!’

‘I have little thought of church today, Mr Finsbury,’ said the drawing-master. ‘I am on the brink of something new, Sir.’ And he presented the advertisement.

‘Why, what is this?’ cried Michael, sitting suddenly up. He studied it for half a minute with a frown. ‘Pitman, I don’t care about this document a particle,’ said he.

‘It will have to be attended to, however,’ said Pitman.

‘I thought you’d had enough of Waterloo,’ returned the lawyer. ‘Have you started a morbid craving? You’ve never been yourself anyway since you lost that beard. I believe now it was where you kept your senses.’

‘Mr Finsbury,’ said the drawing-master, ‘I have tried to reason this matter out, and, with your permission, I should like to lay before you the results.’

‘Fire away,’ said Michael; ‘but please, Pitman, remember it’s Sunday, and let’s have no bad language.’

‘There are three views open to us,’ began Pitman. ‘First this may be connected with the barrel; second, it may be connected with Mr Semitopolis’s statue; and third, it may be from my wife’s brother, who went to Australia. In the first case, which is of course possible, I confess the matter would be best allowed to drop.'

'The court is with you there, Brother Pitman,' said Michael.

'In the second,' continued the other, 'it is plainly my duty to leave no stone unturned for the recovery of the lost antique.'

'My dear fellow, Semitopolis has come down like a trump; he has pocketed the loss and left you the profit. What more would you have?' enquired the lawyer.

'I conceive, sir, under correction, that Mr Semitopolis's generosity binds me to even greater exertion,' said the drawing-master. 'The whole business was unfortunate; it was — I need not disguise it from you — it was illegal from the first: the more reason that I should try to behave like a gentleman,' concluded Pitman, flushing.

'I have nothing to say to that,' returned the lawyer. 'I have sometimes thought I should like to try to behave like a gentleman myself; only it's such a one-sided business, with the world and the legal profession as they are.'

'Then, in the third,' resumed the drawing-master, 'if it's Uncle Tim, of course, our fortune's made.'

'It's not Uncle Tim, though,' said the lawyer.

'Have you observed that very remarkable expression: SOMETHING TO HIS ADVANTAGE?' enquired Pitman shrewdly.

'You innocent mutton,' said Michael, 'it's the seediest commonplace in the English language, and only proves the advertiser is an ass. Let me demolish your house of cards for you at once. Would Uncle Tim make that blunder in your name? — in itself, the blunder is delicious, a huge improvement on the gross reality, and I mean to adopt it in the future; but is it like Uncle Tim?'

'No, it's not like him,' Pitman admitted. 'But his mind may have become unhinged at Ballarat.'

'If you come to that, Pitman,' said Michael, 'the advertiser may be Queen Victoria, fired with the desire to make a duke of you. I put it to yourself if that's probable; and yet it's not against the laws of nature. But we sit here to consider probabilities; and with your genteel permission, I eliminate her Majesty and Uncle Tim on the threshold. To proceed, we have your second idea, that this has some connection with the statue. Possible; but in that case who is the advertiser? Not Ricardi, for he knows your address; not the person who got the box, for he doesn't know your name. The vanman, I hear you suggest, in a lucid interval. He might have got your name, and got it incorrectly, at the station; and he might have failed to get your address. I grant the vanman. But a question: Do you really wish to meet the vanman?'

'Why should I not?' asked Pitman.

'If he wants to meet you,' replied Michael, 'observe this: it is because he has found his address-book, has been to the house that got the statue, and-mark my words! — is moving at the instigation of the murderer.'

'I should be very sorry to think so,' said Pitman; 'but I still consider it my duty to Mr Sernitopolis. . .'

'Pitman,' interrupted Michael, 'this will not do. Don't seek to impose on your legal adviser; don't try to pass yourself off for the Duke of Wellington, for that is not your line. Come, I wager a dinner I can read your thoughts. You still believe it's Uncle Tim.'

'Mr Finsbury,' said the drawing-master, colouring, 'you are not a man in narrow circumstances, and you have no family. Guendolen is growing up, a very promising girl — she was confirmed this year; and I think you will be able to enter into my feelings as a parent when I tell you she is quite ignorant of dancing. The boys are at the board school, which is all very well in its way; at least, I am the last man in the world to criticize the institutions of my native land. But I had fondly hoped that Harold might become a professional musician; and little Otho shows a quite remarkable vocation for the Church. I am not exactly an ambitious man...'

'Well, well,' interrupted Michael. 'Be explicit; you think it's Uncle Tim?'

'It might be Uncle Tim,' insisted Pitman, 'and if it were, and I neglected the occasion, how could I ever took my children in the face? I do not refer to Mrs Pitman. . .'

'No, you never do,' said Michael.

'. . . but in the case of her own brother returning from Ballarat. . .' continued Pitman.

'. . . with his mind unhinged,' put in the lawyer.

'. . . returning from Ballarat with a large fortune, her impatience may be more easily imagined than described,' concluded Pitman.

'All right,' said Michael, 'be it so. And what do you propose to do?'

'I am going to Waterloo,' said Pitman, 'in disguise.'

'All by your little self?' enquired the lawyer. 'Well, I hope you think it safe. Mind and send me word from the police cells.'

'O, Mr Finsbury, I had ventured to hope — perhaps you might be induced to — to make one of us,' faltered Pitman.

'Disguise myself on Sunday?' cried Michael. 'How little you understand my principles!'

'Mr Finsbury, I have no means of showing you my gratitude; but let me ask you one question,' said Pitman. 'If I were a very rich client, would you not take the risk?'

'Diamond, Diamond, you know not what you do!' cried Michael. 'Why, man, do you suppose I make a practice of cutting about London with my clients in disguise? Do you suppose money would induce me to touch this business with a stick? I give you my word of honour, it would not. But I own I have a real curiosity to see how you conduct this interview — that tempts me; it tempts me, Pitman, more than gold — it should be exquisitely rich.' And suddenly Michael laughed. 'Well, Pitman,' said he, 'have all the truck ready in the studio. I'll go.'

About twenty minutes after two, on this eventful day, the vast and gloomy shed of Waterloo lay, like the temple of a dead religion, silent and deserted. Here and there at one of the platforms, a train lay becalmed; here and there a wandering footfall echoed; the cab-horses outside stamped with startling reverberations on the stones; or from the neighbouring wilderness of railway an engine snorted forth a whistle. The main-line departure platform slumbered like the rest; the booking-hutches closed; the backs of Mr Haggard's novels, with which upon a weekday the bookstall shines emblazoned, discreetly hidden behind dingy shutters; the rare officials, undisguisedly somnambulant; and the customary loiterers, even to the middle-aged woman with the ulster and the handbag, fled to more congenial scenes. As in the inmost dells of some small tropic island the throbbing of the ocean lingers, so here a faint pervading hum and trepidation told in every corner of surrounding London.

At the hour already named, persons acquainted with John Dickson, of Ballarat, and Ezra Thomas, of the United States of America, would have been cheered to behold them enter through the booking-office.

'What names are we to take?' enquired the latter, anxiously adjusting the window-glass spectacles which he had been suffered on this occasion to assume.

'There's no choice for you, my boy,' returned Michael. 'Bent Pitman or nothing. As for me, I think I look as if I might be called Appleby; something agreeably old-world about Appleby — breathes of Devonshire cider. Talking of which, suppose you wet your whistle? the interview is likely to be trying.'

'I think I'll wait till afterwards,' returned Pitman; 'on the whole, I think I'll wait till the thing's over. I don't know if it strikes you as it does me; but the place seems deserted and silent, Mr Finsbury, and filled with very singular echoes.'

'Kind of Jack-in-the-box feeling?' enquired Michael, 'as if all these empty trains might be filled with policemen waiting for a signal? and Sir Charles Warren perched among the girders with a silver whistle to his lips? It's guilt, Pitman.'

In this uneasy frame of mind they walked nearly the whole length of the departure platform, and at the western extremity became aware of a slender figure standing back against a pillar. The figure was plainly sunk into a deep abstraction; he was not aware of their approach, but gazed far abroad over the sunlit station. Michael stopped.

‘Holloa!’ said he, ‘can that be your advertiser? If so, I’m done with it.’ And then, on second thoughts: ‘Not so, either,’ he resumed more cheerfully. ‘Here, turn your back a moment. So. Give me the specs.’

‘But you agreed I was to have them,’ protested Pitman.

‘Ah, but that man knows me,’ said Michael.

‘Does he? what’s his name?’ cried Pitman.

‘O, he took me into his confidence,’ returned the lawyer. ‘But I may say one thing: if he’s your advertiser (and he may be, for he seems to have been seized with criminal lunacy) you can go ahead with a clear conscience, for I hold him in the hollow of my hand.’

The change effected, and Pitman comforted with this good news, the pair drew near to Morris.

‘Are you looking for Mr William Bent Pitman?’ enquired the drawing-master. ‘I am he.’

Morris raised his head. He saw before him, in the speaker, a person of almost indescribable insignificance, in white spats and a shirt cut indecently low. A little behind, a second and more burly figure offered little to criticism, except ulster, whiskers, spectacles, and deerstalker hat. Since he had decided to call up devils from the underworld of London, Morris had pondered deeply on the probabilities of their appearance. His first emotion, like that of Charoba when she beheld the sea, was one of disappointment; his second did more justice to the case. Never before had he seen a couple dressed like these; he had struck a new stratum.

‘I must speak with you alone,’ said he.

‘You need not mind Mr Appleby,’ returned Pitman. ‘He knows all.’

‘All? Do you know what I am here to speak of?’ enquired Morris — . ‘The barrel.’

Pitman turned pale, but it was with manly indignation. ‘You are the man!’ he cried. ‘You very wicked person.’

‘Am I to speak before him?’ asked Morris, disregarding these severe expressions.

‘He has been present throughout,’ said Pitman. ‘He opened the barrel; your guilty secret is already known to him, as well as to your Maker and myself.’

‘Well, then,’ said Morris, ‘what have you done with the money?’

‘I know nothing about any money,’ said Pitman.

‘You needn’t try that on,’ said Morris. ‘I have tracked you down; you came to the station sacrilegiously disguised as a clergyman, procured my barrel, opened it, rifled the body, and cashed the bill. I have been to the bank, I tell you! I have followed you step by step, and your denials are childish and absurd.’

‘Come, come, Morris, keep your temper,’ said Mr Appleby.

‘Michael!’ cried Morris, ‘Michael here too!’

‘Here too,’ echoed the lawyer; ‘here and everywhere, my good fellow; every step you take is counted; trained detectives follow you like your shadow; they report to me every three-quarters of an hour; no expense is spared.’

Morris’s face took on a hue of dirty grey. ‘Well, I don’t care; I have the less reserve to keep,’ he cried. ‘That man cashed my bill; it’s a theft, and I want the money back.’

‘Do you think I would lie to you, Morris?’ asked Michael.

‘I don’t know,’ said his cousin. ‘I want my money.’

‘It was I alone who touched the body,’ began Michael.

‘You? Michael!’ cried Morris, starting back. ‘Then why haven’t you declared the death?’ ‘What the devil do you mean?’ asked Michael.

‘Am I mad? or are you?’ cried Morris.

‘I think it must be Pitman,’ said Michael.

The three men stared at each other, wild-eyed.

‘This is dreadful,’ said Morris, ‘dreadful. I do not understand one word that is addressed to me.’

‘I give you my word of honour, no more do I,’ said Michael.

‘And in God’s name, why whiskers?’ cried Morris, pointing in a ghastly manner at his cousin. ‘Does my brain reel? How whiskers?’

‘O, that’s a matter of detail,’ said Michael.

There was another silence, during which Morris appeared to himself to be shot in a trapeze as high as St Paul’s, and as low as Baker Street Station.

‘Let us recapitulate,’ said Michael, ‘unless it’s really a dream, in which case I wish Teena would call me for breakfast. My friend Pitman, here, received a barrel which, it now appears, was meant for you. The barrel contained the body of a man. How or why you killed him...’

‘I never laid a hand on him,’ protested Morris. ‘This is what I have dreaded all along. But think, Michael! I’m not that kind of man; with all my faults, I wouldn’t touch a hair of anybody’s head, and it was all dead loss to me. He got killed in that vile accident.’

Suddenly Michael was seized by mirth so prolonged and excessive that his companions supposed beyond a doubt his reason had deserted him. Again and again he struggled to compose himself, and again and again laughter overwhelmed him like a tide. In all this maddening interview there had been no more spectral feature than this of Michael’s merriment; and Pitman and Morris, drawn together by the common fear, exchanged glances of anxiety.

‘Morris,’ gasped the lawyer, when he was at last able to articulate, ‘hold on, I see it all now. I can make it clear in one word. Here’s the key: I NEVER GUESSED IT WAS UNCLE JOSEPH TILL THIS

MOMENT.’

This remark produced an instant lightening of the tension for Morris. For Pitman it quenched the last ray of hope and daylight. Uncle Joseph, whom he had left an hour ago in Norfolk Street, pasting newspaper cuttings? — it? — the dead body? — then who was he, Pitman? and was this Waterloo Station or Colney Hatch?

‘To be sure!’ cried Morris; ‘it was badly smashed, I know. How stupid not to think of that! Why, then, all’s clear; and, my dear Michael, I’ll tell you what — we’re saved, both saved. You get the tontine — I don’t grudge it you the least — and I get the leather business, which is really beginning to look up. Declare the death at once, don’t mind me in the smallest, don’t consider me; declare the death, and we’re all right.’

‘Ah, but I can’t declare it,’ said Michael.

‘Why not?’ cried Morris.

‘I can’t produce the corpus, Morris. I’ve lost it,’ said the lawyer.

‘Stop a bit,’ ejaculated the leather merchant. ‘How is this? It’s not possible. I lost it.’

‘Well, I’ve lost it too, my son,’ said Michael, with extreme serenity. ‘Not recognizing it, you see, and suspecting something irregular in its origin, I got rid of — what shall we say? — got rid of the proceeds at once.’

‘You got rid of the body? What made you do that?’ walled Morris. ‘But you can get it again? You know where it is?’

‘I wish I did, Morris, and you may believe me there, for it would be a small sum in my pocket; but the fact is, I don’t,’ said Michael.

‘Good Lord,’ said Morris, addressing heaven and earth, ‘good Lord, I’ve lost the leather business!’

Michael was once more shaken with laughter.

‘Why do you laugh, you fool?’ cried his cousin, ‘you lose more than I. You’ve bungled it worse than even I did. If you had a spark of feeling, you would be shaking in your boots with vexation. But I’ll tell you one thing — I’ll have that eight hundred pound — I’ll have that and go to Swan River — that’s mine, anyway, and your friend must have forged to cash it. Give me the eight hundred, here, upon this platform, or I go straight to Scotland Yard and turn the whole disreputable story inside out.’

‘Morris,’ said Michael, laying his hand upon his shoulder, ‘hear reason. It wasn’t us, it was the other man. We never even searched the body.’

‘The other man?’ repeated Morris.

‘Yes, the other man. We palmed Uncle Joseph off upon another man,’ said Michael.

‘You what? You palmed him off? That’s surely a singular expression,' said Morris.

'Yes, palmed him off for a piano,' said Michael with perfect simplicity. 'Remarkably full, rich tone,' he added.

Morris carried his hand to his brow and looked at it; it was wet with sweat. 'Fever,' said he.

'No, it was a Broadwood grand,' said Michael. 'Pitman here will tell you if it was genuine or not.'

'Eh? O! O yes, I believe it was a genuine Broadwood; I have played upon it several times myself,' said Pitman. 'The three-letter E was broken.'

'Don't say anything more about pianos,' said Morris, with a strong shudder; 'I'm not the man I used to be! This — this other man — let's come to him, if I can only manage to follow. Who is he? Where can I get hold of him?'

'Ah, that's the rub,' said Michael. 'He's been in possession of the desired article, let me see — since Wednesday, about four o'clock, and is now, I should imagine, on his way to the isles of Javan and Gadire.'

'Michael,' said Morris pleadingly, 'I am in a very weak state, and I beg your consideration for a kinsman. Say it slowly again, and be sure you are correct. When did he get it?'

Michael repeated his statement.

'Yes, that's the worst thing yet,' said Morris, drawing in his breath.

'What is?' asked the lawyer.

'Even the dates are sheer nonsense,' said the leather merchant.

'The bill was cashed on Tuesday. There's not a gleam of reason in the whole transaction.'

A young gentleman, who had passed the trio and suddenly started and turned back, at this moment laid a heavy hand on Michael's shoulder.

'Aha! so this is Mr Dickson?' said he.

The trump of judgement could scarce have rung with a more dreadful note in the ears of Pitman and the lawyer. To Morris this erroneous name seemed a legitimate enough continuation of the nightmare in which he had so long been wandering. And when Michael, with his brand-new bushy whiskers, broke from the grasp of the stranger and turned to run, and the weird little shaven creature in the low-necked shirt followed his example with a bird-like screech, and the stranger (finding the rest of his prey escape him) pounced with a rude grasp on Morris himself, that gentleman's frame of mind might be very nearly expressed in the colloquial phrase: 'I told you so!'

'I have one of the gang,' said Gideon Forsyth.

'I do not understand,' said Morris dully.

'O, I will make you understand,' returned Gideon grimly.

'You will be a good friend to me if you can make me understand anything,' cried Morris, with a sudden energy of conviction.

'I don't know you personally, do I?' continued Gideon, examining his unresisting prisoner. 'Never mind, I know your friends. They are your friends, are they not?'

'I do not understand you,' said Morris.

'You had possibly something to do with a piano?' suggested Gideon.

'A piano!' cried Morris, convulsively clasping Gideon by the arm. 'Then you're the other man! Where is it? Where is the body? And did you cash the draft?'

'Where is the body? This is very strange,' mused Gideon. 'Do you want the body?'

'Want it?' cried Morris. 'My whole fortune depends upon it! I lost it. Where is it? Take me to it?

'O, you want it, do you? And the other man, Dickson — does he want it?' enquired Gideon.

'Who do you mean by Dickson? O, Michael Finsbury! Why, of course he does! He lost it too. If he had it, he'd have won the tontine tomorrow.'

'Michael Finsbury! Not the solicitor?' cried Gideon. 'Yes, the solicitor,' said Morris. 'But where is the body?'

'Then that is why he sent the brief! What is Mr Finsbury's private address?' asked Gideon.

'233 King's Road. What brief? Where are you going? Where is the body?' cried Morris, clinging to Gideon's arm.

'I have lost it myself,' returned Gideon, and ran out of the station.

CHAPTER XV. The Return of the Great Vance

Morris returned from Waterloo in a frame of mind that baffles description. He was a modest man; he had never conceived an overweening notion of his own powers; he knew himself unfit to write a book, turn a table napkin-ring, entertain a Christmas party with legerdemain — grapple (in short) any of those conspicuous accomplishments that are usually classed under the head of genius. He knew — he admitted — his parts to be pedestrian, but he had considered them (until quite lately) fully equal to the demands of life. And today he owned himself defeated: life had the upper hand; if there had been any means of flight or place to flee to, if the world had been so ordered that a man could leave it like a place of entertainment, Morris would have instantly resigned all further claim on its rewards and pleasures, and, with inexpressible contentment, ceased to be. As it was, one aim shone before him: he could get home. Even as the sick dog crawls under the sofa, Morris could shut the door of John Street and be alone.

The dusk was falling when he drew near this place of refuge; and the first thing that met his eyes was the figure of a man upon the step, alternately plucking at the bell-handle and pounding on the panels. The man had no hat, his clothes were hideous with filth, he had the air of a hop-picker. Yet Morris knew him; it was John.

The first impulse of flight was succeeded, in the elder brother's bosom, by the empty quiescence of despair. 'What does it matter now?' he thought, and drawing forth his latchkey ascended the steps.

John turned about; his face was ghastly with weariness and dirt and fury; and as he recognized the head of his family, he drew in a long rasping breath, and his eyes glittered.

'Open that door,' he said, standing back.

'I am going to,' said Morris, and added mentally, 'He looks like murder!'

The brothers passed into the hall, the door closed behind them; and suddenly John seized Morris by the shoulders and shook him as a terrier shakes a rat. 'You mangy little cad,' he said, 'I'd serve you right to smash your skull!' And shook him again, so that his teeth rattled and his head smote upon the wall.

'Don't be violent, Johnny,' said Morris. 'It can't do any good now.'

'Shut your mouth,' said John, 'your time's come to listen.'

He strode into the dining-room, fell into the easy-chair, and taking off one of his burst walking-shoes, nursed for a while his foot like one in agony. 'I'm lame for life,' he said. 'What is there for dinner?'

'Nothing, Johnny,' said Morris.

‘Nothing? What do you mean by that?’ enquired the Great Vance. ‘Don’t set up your chat to me!’

‘I mean simply nothing,’ said his brother. ‘I have nothing to eat, and nothing to buy it with. I’ve only had a cup of tea and a sandwich all this day myself.’

‘Only a sandwich?’ sneered Vance. ‘I suppose YOU’RE going to complain next. But you had better take care: I’ve had all I mean to take; and I can tell you what it is, I mean to dine and to dine well. Take your signets and sell them.’

‘I can’t today,’ objected Morris; ‘it’s Sunday.’

‘I tell you I’m going to dine!’ cried the younger brother.

‘But if it’s not possible, Johnny?’ pleaded the other.

‘You nincompoop!’ cried Vance. ‘Ain’t we householders? Don’t they know us at that hotel where Uncle Parker used to come. Be off with you; and if you ain’t back in half an hour, and if the dinner ain’t good, first I’ll lick you till you don’t want to breathe, and then I’ll go straight to the police and blow the gaff. Do you understand that, Morris Finsbury? Because if you do, you had better jump.’

The idea smiled even upon the wretched Morris, who was sick with famine. He sped upon his errand, and returned to find John still nursing his foot in the armchair.

‘What would you like to drink, Johnny?’ he enquired soothingly.

‘Fizz,’ said John. ‘Some of the poppy stuff from the end bin; a bottle of the old port that Michael liked, to follow; and see and don’t shake the port. And look here, light the fire — and the gas, and draw down the blinds; it’s cold and it’s getting dark. And then you can lay the cloth. And, I say — here, you! bring me down some clothes.’

The room looked comparatively habitable by the time the dinner came; and the dinner itself was good: strong gravy soup, fillets of sole, mutton chops and tomato sauce, roast beef done rare with roast potatoes, cabinet pudding, a piece of Chester cheese, and some early celery: a meal uncompromisingly British, but supporting.

‘Thank God!’ said John, his nostrils sniffing wide, surprised by joy into the unwonted formality of grace. ‘Now I’m going to take this chair with my back to the fire — there’s been a strong frost these two last nights, and I can’t get it out of my bones; the celery will be just the ticket — I’m going to sit here, and you are going to stand there, Morris Finsbury, and play butler.’

‘But, Johnny, I’m so hungry myself,’ pleaded Morris.

‘You can have what I leave,’ said Vance. ‘You’re just beginning to pay your score, my daisy; I owe you one-pound-ten; don’t you rouse the British lion!’ There was something indescribably menacing in the face and voice of the Great Vance as he uttered these words, at which the soul of Morris withered. ‘There!’ resumed the feaster, ‘give us a glass of the fizz to start with. Gravy soup! And I thought I didn't like gravy soup! Do you know how I got here?' he asked, with another explosion of wrath.

'No, Johnny; how could I?' said the obsequious Morris.

'I walked on my ten toes!' cried John; 'tramped the whole way from Browndean; and begged! I would like to see you beg. It's not so easy as you might suppose. I played it on being a shipwrecked mariner from Blyth; I don't know where Blyth is, do you? but I thought it sounded natural. I begged from a little beast of a schoolboy, and he forked out a bit of twine, and asked me to make a clove hitch; I did, too, I know I did, but he said it wasn't, he said it was a granny's knot, and I was a what-d'ye-call-'em, and he would give me in charge. Then I begged from a naval officer — he never bothered me with knots, but he only gave me a tract; there's a nice account of the British navy! — and then from a widow woman that sold lollipops, and I got a hunch of bread from her. Another party I fell in with said you could generally always get bread; and the thing to do was to break a plateglass window and get into gaol; seemed rather a brilliant scheme. Pass the beef.'

'Why didn't you stay at Browndean?' Morris ventured to enquire.

'Skittles!' said John. 'On what? The Pink Un and a measly religious paper? I had to leave Browndean; I had to, I tell you. I got tick at a public, and set up to be the Great Vance; so would you, if you were leading such a beastly existence! And a card stood me a lot of ale and stuff, and we got swipey, talking about music-halls and the piles of tin I got for singing; and then they got me on to sing "Around her splendid form I weaved the magic circle," and then he said I couldn't be Vance, and I stuck to it like grim death I was. It was rot of me to sing, of course, but I thought I could brazen it out with a set of yokels. It settled my hash at the public,' said John, with a sigh. 'And then the last thing was the carpenter — '

'Our landlord?' enquired Morris.

'That's the party,' said John. 'He came nosing about the place, and then wanted to know where the water-butt was, and the bedclothes. I told him to go to the devil; so would you too, when there was no possible thing to say! And then he said I had pawned them, and did I know it was felony? Then I made a pretty neat stroke. I remembered he was deaf, and talked a whole lot of rot, very politely, just so low he couldn't hear a word. "I don't hear you," says he. "I know you don't, my buck, and I don't mean you to," says I, smiling away like a haberdasher. "I'm hard of hearing," he roars. "I'd be in a pretty hot corner if you weren't," says I, making signs as if I was explaining everything. It was tip-top as long as it lasted. "Well," he said, "I'm deaf, worse luck, but I bet the constable can hear you." And off he started one way, and I the other. They got a spirit-lamp and the Pink Un, and that old religious paper, and another periodical you sent me. I think you must have been drunk — it had a name like one of those spots that Uncle Joseph used to hold forth at, and it was all full of the most awful swipes about poetry and the use of the globes. It was the kind of thing that nobody could read out of a lunatic asylum. The Athaeneum, that was the name! Golly, what a paper!'

'Athenaeum, you mean,' said Morris.

'I don't care what you call it,' said John, 'so as I don't require to take it in! There, I feel better. Now I'm going to sit by the fire in the easy-chair; pass me the cheese, and the celery, and the bottle of port — no, a champagne glass, it holds more. And now you can pitch in; there's some of the fish left and a chop, and some fizz. Ah,' sighed the refreshed pedestrian, 'Michael was right about that port; there's old and vatted for you! Michael's a man I like; he's clever and reads books, and the Athaeneum, and all that; but he's not dreary to meet, he don't talk Athaeneum like the other parties; why, the most of them would throw a blight over a skittle alley! Talking of Michael, I ain't bored myself to put the question, because of course I knew it from the first. You've made a hash of it, eh?'

'Michael made a hash of it,' said Morris, flushing dark.

'What have we got to do with that?' enquired John.

'He has lost the body, that's what we have to do with it,' cried Morris. 'He has lost the body, and the death can't be established.'

'Hold on,' said John. 'I thought you didn't want to?'

'O, we're far past that,' said his brother. 'It's not the tontine now, it's the leather business, Johnny; it's the clothes upon our back.'

'Stow the slow music,' said John, 'and tell your story from beginning to end.' Morris did as he was bid.

'Well, now, what did I tell you?' cried the Great Vance, when the other had done. 'But I know one thing: I'm not going to be humbugged out of my property.'

'I should like to know what you mean to do,' said Morris.

'I'll tell you that,' responded John with extreme decision. 'I'm going to put my interests in the hands of the smartest lawyer in London; and whether you go to quod or not is a matter of indifference to me.'

'Why, Johnny, we're in the same boat!' expostulated Morris.

'Are we?' cried his brother. 'I bet we're not! Have I committed forgery? have I lied about Uncle Joseph? have I put idiotic advertisements in the comic papers? have I smashed other people's statues? I like your cheek, Morris Finsbury. No, I've let you run my affairs too long; now they shall go to Michael. I like Michael, anyway; and it's time I understood my situation.'

At this moment the brethren were interrupted by a ring at the bell, and Morris, going timorously to the door, received from the hands of a commissionaire a letter addressed in the hand of Michael. Its contents ran as follows:

MORRIS FINSBURY, if this should meet the eye of, he will hear of SOMETHING TO HIS ADVANTAGE at my office, in Chancery Lane, at 10 A.M. tomorrow.

MICHAEL FINSBURY

So utter was Morris's subjection that he did not wait to be asked, but handed the note to John as soon as he had glanced at it himself.

'That's the way to write a letter,' cried John. 'Nobody but Michael could have written that.'

And Morris did not even claim the credit of priority.

CHAPTER XVI. Final Adjustment of the Leather Business

Finsbury brothers were ushered, at ten the next morning, into a large apartment in Michael's office; the Great Vance, somewhat restored from yesterday's exhaustion, but with one foot in a slipper; Morris, not positively damaged, but a man ten years older than he who had left Bournemouth eight days before, his face ploughed full of anxious wrinkles, his dark hair liberally grizzled at the temples.

Three persons were seated at a table to receive them: Michael in the midst, Gideon Forsyth on his right hand, on his left an ancient gentleman with spectacles and silver hair. 'By Jingo, it's Uncle Joe!' cried John.

But Morris approached his uncle with a pale countenance and glittering eyes.

'I'll tell you what you did!' he cried. 'You absconded!'

'Good morning, Morris Finsbury,' returned Joseph, with no less asperity; 'you are looking seriously ill.'

'No use making trouble now,' remarked Michael. 'Look the facts in the face. Your uncle, as you see, was not so much as shaken in the accident; a man of your humane disposition ought to be delighted.'

'Then, if that's so,' Morris broke forth, 'how about the body? You don't mean to insinuate that thing I schemed and sweated for, and colported with my own hands, was the body of a total stranger?'

'O no, we can't go as far as that,' said Michael soothingly; 'you may have met him at the club.'

Morris fell into a chair. 'I would have found it out if it had come to the house,' he complained. 'And why didn't it? why did it go to Pitman? what right had Pitman to open it?'

'If you come to that, Morris, what have you done with the colossal Hercules?' asked Michael.

'He went through it with the meat-axe,' said John. 'It's all in spillikins in the back garden.'

'Well, there's one thing,' snapped Morris; 'there's my uncle again, my fraudulent trustee. He's mine, anyway. And the tontine too. I claim the tontine; I claim it now. I believe Uncle Masterman's dead.'

'I must put a stop to this nonsense,' said Michael, 'and that for ever. You say too near the truth. In one sense your uncle is dead, and has been so long; but not in the sense of the tontine, which it is even on the cards he may yet live to win. Uncle Joseph saw him this morning; he will tell you he still lives, but his mind is in abeyance.'

'He did not know me,' said Joseph; to do him justice, not without emotion.

‘So you’re out again there, Morris,’ said John. ‘My eye! what a fool you’ve made of yourself!’

‘And that was why you wouldn’t compromise,’ said Morris.

‘As for the absurd position in which you and Uncle Joseph have been making yourselves an exhibition,’ resumed Michael, ‘it is more than time it came to an end. I have prepared a proper discharge in full, which you shall sign as a preliminary.’

‘What?’ cried Morris, ‘and lose my seven thousand eight hundred pounds, and the leather business, and the contingent interest, and get nothing? Thank you.’

‘It’s like you to feel gratitude, Morris,’ began Michael.

‘O, I know it’s no good appealing to you, you sneering devil!’ cried Morris. ‘But there’s a stranger present, I can’t think why, and I appeal to him. I was robbed of that money when I was an orphan, a mere child, at a commercial academy. Since then, I’ve never had a wish but to get back my own. You may hear a lot of stuff about me; and there’s no doubt at times I have been ill-advised. But it’s the pathos of my situation; that’s what I want to show you.’

‘Morris,’ interrupted Michael, ‘I do wish you would let me add one point, for I think it will affect your judgement. It’s pathetic too since that’s your taste in literature.’

‘Well, what is it?’ said Morris.

‘It’s only the name of one of the persons who’s to witness your signature, Morris,’ replied Michael. ‘His name’s Moss, my dear.’

There was a long silence. ‘I might have been sure it was you!’ cried Morris.

‘You’ll sign, won’t you?’ said Michael.

‘Do you know what you’re doing?’ cried Morris. ‘You’re compounding a felony.’

‘Very well, then, we won’t compound it, Morris,’ returned Michael. ‘See how little I understood the sterling integrity of your character! I thought you would prefer it so.’

‘Look here, Michael,’ said John, ‘this is all very fine and large; but how about me? Morris is gone up, I see that; but I’m not. And I was robbed, too, mind you; and just as much an orphan, and at the blessed same academy as himself.’

‘Johnny,’ said Michael, ‘don’t you think you’d better leave it to me?’

‘I’m your man,’ said John. ‘You wouldn’t deceive a poor orphan, I’ll take my oath. Morris, you sign that document, or I’ll start in and astonish your weak mind.’

With a sudden alacrity, Morris proffered his willingness. Clerks were brought in, the discharge was executed, and there was Joseph a free man once more.

‘And now,’ said Michael, ‘hear what I propose to do. Here, John and Morris, is the leather business made over to the pair of you in partnership. I have valued it at the lowest possible figure, Pogram and Jarris’s. And here is a cheque for the balance of your fortune. Now, you see, Morris, you start fresh from the commercial academy; and, as you said yourself the leather business was looking up, I suppose you’ll probably marry before long. Here’s your marriage present — from a Mr Moss.’

Morris bounded on his cheque with a crimsoned countenance.

‘I don’t understand the performance,’ remarked John. ‘It seems too good to be true.’

‘It’s simply a readjustment,’ Michael explained. ‘I take up Uncle Joseph’s liabilities; and if he gets the tontine, it’s to be mine; if my father gets it, it’s mine anyway, you see. So that I’m rather advantageously placed.’

‘Morris, my unconverted friend, you’ve got left,’ was John’s comment.

‘And now, Mr Forsyth,’ resumed Michael, turning to his silent guest, ‘here are all the criminals before you, except Pitman. I really didn’t like to interrupt his scholastic career; but you can have him arrested at the seminary — I know his hours. Here we are then; we’re not pretty to look at: what do you propose to do with us?’

‘Nothing in the world, Mr Finsbury,’ returned Gideon. ‘I seem to understand that this gentleman’ — -indicating Morris — ’is the fons et origo of the trouble; and, from what I gather, he has already paid through the nose. And really, to be quite frank, I do not see who is to gain by any scandal; not me, at least. And besides, I have to thank you for that brief.’

Michael blushed. ‘It was the least I could do to let you have some business,’ he said. ‘But there’s one thing more. I don’t want you to misjudge poor Pitman, who is the most harmless being upon earth. I wish you would dine with me tonight, and see the creature on his native heath — say at Verrey’s?’

‘I have no engagement, Mr Finsbury,’ replied Gideon. ‘I shall be delighted. But subject to your judgement, can we do nothing for the man in the cart? I have qualms of conscience.’

‘Nothing but sympathize,’ said Michael.

THE WRECKER

by Robert Louis Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne

Published in 1892, this novel was the second collaboration of Stevenson and his stepson Lloyd Osbourne. It is an episodic adventure, with comedy of brash manners and features of a detective mystery. The tale concerns the abandoned wreck of the Flying Scud at MidwayIsland. Clues in a stamp collection are used to track down the missing crew and solve the mystery. It is only in the last chapter that different story elements become linked. Stevenson described it as a 'SouthSea yarn' concerning 'a very strange and defective plan that was accepted with open eyes for what seemed countervailing opportunities offered'. Although the book sold well, reviews were mixed

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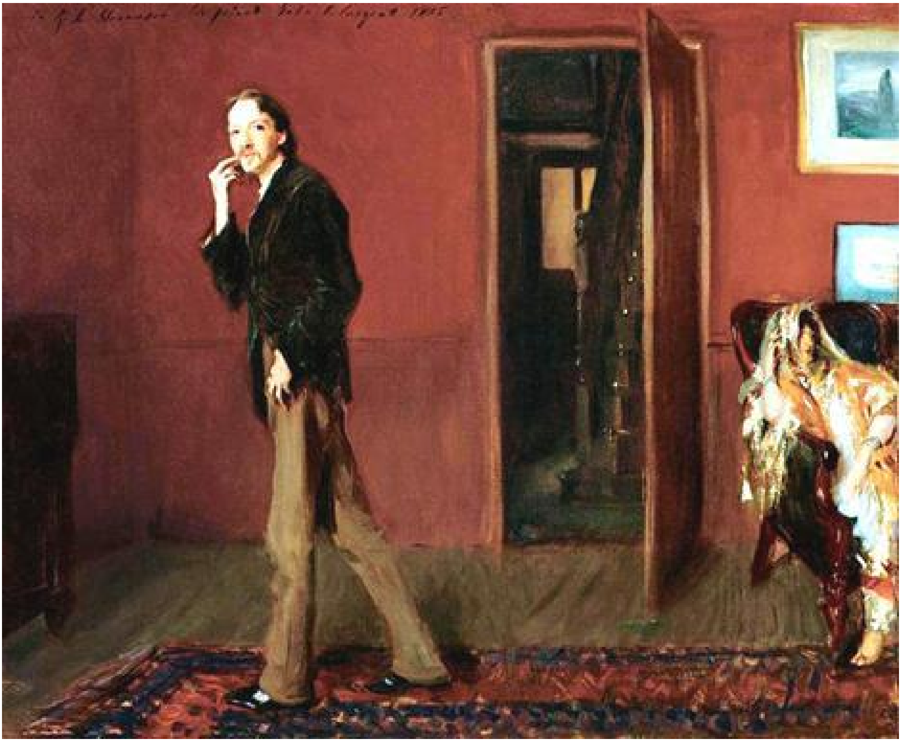

PROLOGUE.

IN THE MARQUESAS.

It was about three o'clock of a winter's afternoon in Tai-o-hae, the French capital and port of entry of the Marquesas Islands. The trades blew strong and squally; the surf roared loud on the shingle beach; and the fifty-ton schooner of war, that carries the flag and influence of France about the islands of the cannibal group, rolled at her moorings under Prison Hill. The clouds hung low and black on the surrounding amphitheatre of mountains; rain had fallen earlier in the day, real tropic rain, a waterspout for violence; and the green and gloomy brow of the mountain was still seamed with many silver threads of torrent.

In these hot and healthy islands winter is but a name. The rain had not refreshed, nor could the wind invigorate, the dwellers of Tai-o-hae: away at one end, indeed, the commandant was directing some changes in the residency garden beyond Prison Hill; and the gardeners, being all convicts, had no choice but to continue to obey. All other folks slumbered and took their rest: Vaekehu, the native queen, in her trim house under the rustling palms; the Tahitian commissary, in his beflagged official residence; the merchants, in their deserted stores; and even the club-servant in the club, his head fallen forward on the bottle-counter, under the map of the world and the cards of navy officers. In the whole length of the single shoreside street, with its scattered board houses looking to the sea, its grateful shade of palms and green jungle of puraos, no moving figure could be seen. Only, at the end of the rickety pier, that once (in the prosperous days of the American rebellion) was used to groan under the cotton of John Hart, there might have been spied upon a pile of lumber the famous tattooed white man, the living curiosity of Tai-o-hae.

His eyes were open, staring down the bay. He saw the mountains droop, as they approached the entrance, and break down in cliffs; the surf boil white round the two sentinel islets; and between, on the narrow bight of blue horizon, Ua-pu upraise the ghost of her pinnacled mountain tops. But his mind would take no account of these familiar features; as he dodged in and out along the frontier line of sleep and waking, memory would serve him with broken fragments of the past: brown faces and white, of skipper and shipmate, king and chief, would arise before his mind and vanish; he would recall old voyages, old landfalls in the hour of dawn; he would hear again the drums beat for a man-eating festival; perhaps he would summon up the form of that island princess for the love of whom he had submitted his body to the cruel hands of the tattooer, and now sat on the lumber, at the pier-end of Tai-o-hae, so strange a figure of a European. Or perhaps from yet further back, sounds and scents of England and his childhood might assail him: the merry clamour of cathedral bells, the broom upon the foreland, the song of the river on the weir.

It is bold water at the mouth of the bay; you can steer a ship about either sentinel, close enough to toss a biscuit on the rocks. Thus it chanced that, as the tattooed man sat dozing and dreaming, he was startled into wakefulness and animation by the appearance of a flying jib beyond the western islet. Two more headsails followed; and before the tattooed man had scrambled to his feet, a topsail schooner, of some hundred tons, had luffed about the sentinel and was standing up the bay, close-hauled.

The sleeping city awakened by enchantment. Natives appeared upon all sides, hailing each other with the magic cry “Ehippy” — ship; the Queen stepped forth on her verandah, shading her eyes under a hand that was a miracle of the fine art of tattooing; the commandant broke from his domestic convicts and ran into the residency for his glass; the harbour master, who was also the gaoler, came speeding down the Prison Hill; the seventeen brown Kanakas and the French boatswain’s mate, that make up the complement of the war-schooner, crowded on the forward deck; and the various English, Americans, Germans, Poles, Corsicans, and Scots — the merchants and the clerks of Tai-o-hae — deserted their places of business, and gathered, according to invariable custom, on the road before the club.

So quickly did these dozen whites collect, so short are the distances in Tai-o-hae, that they were already exchanging guesses as to the nationality and business of the strange vessel, before she had gone about upon her second board towards the anchorage. A moment after, English colours were broken out at the main truck.

“I told you she was a Johnny Bull — knew it by her headsails,” said an evergreen old salt, still qualified (if he could anywhere have found an owner unacquainted with his story) to adorn another quarter-deck and lose another ship.

“She has American lines, anyway,” said the astute Scots engineer of the gin-mill; “it’s my belief she’s a yacht.”

“That’s it,” said the old salt, “a yacht! look at her davits, and the boat over the stern.”

“A yacht in your eye!” said a Glasgow voice. “Look at her red ensign! A yacht! not much she isn’t!”

“You can close the store, anyway, Tom,” observed a gentlemanly German. “Bon jour, mon Prince!” he added, as a dark, intelligent native cantered by on a neat chestnut. “Vous allez boire un verre de biere?"

But Prince Stanilas Moanatini, the only reasonably busy human creature on the island, was riding hot-spur to view this morning's landslip on the mountain road: the sun already visibly declined; night was imminent; and if he would avoid the perils of darkness and precipice, and the fear of the dead, the haunters of the jungle, he must for once decline a hospitable invitation. Even had he been minded to alight, it presently appeared there would be difficulty as to the refreshment offered.

"Beer!" cried the Glasgow voice. "No such a thing; I tell you there's only eight bottles in the club! Here's the first time I've seen British colours in this port! and the man that sails under them has got to drink that beer."

The proposal struck the public mind as fair, though far from cheering; for some time back, indeed, the very name of beer had been a sound of sorrow in the club, and the evenings had passed in dolorous computation.

"Here is Havens," said one, as if welcoming a fresh topic. "What do you think of her, Havens?"

"I don't think," replied Havens, a tall, bland, cool-looking, leisurely Englishman, attired in spotless duck, and deliberately dealing with a cigarette. "I may say I know. She's consigned to me from Auckland by Donald & Edenborough. I am on my way aboard."

"What ship is she?" asked the ancient mariner.

"Haven't an idea," returned Havens. "Some tramp they have chartered."

With that he placidly resumed his walk, and was soon seated in the stern-sheets of a whaleboat manned by uproarious Kanakas, himself daintily perched out of the way of the least maculation, giving his commands in an unobtrusive, dinner-table tone of voice, and sweeping neatly enough alongside the schooner.

A weather-beaten captain received him at the gangway.

"You are consigned to us, I think," said he. "I am Mr. Havens."

"That is right, sir," replied the captain, shaking hands. "You will find the owner, Mr. Dodd, below. Mind the fresh paint on the house."

Havens stepped along the alley-way, and descended the ladder into the main cabin.

"Mr. Dodd, I believe," said he, addressing a smallish, bearded gentleman, who sat writing at the table. "Why," he cried, "it isn't Loudon Dodd?"

"Myself, my dear fellow," replied Mr. Dodd, springing to his feet with companionable alacrity. "I had a half-hope it might be you, when I found your name on the papers. Well, there's no change in you; still the same placid, fresh-looking Britisher."

"I can't return the compliment; for you seem to have become a Britisher yourself," said Havens.

"I promise you, I am quite unchanged," returned Dodd. "The red tablecloth at the top of the stick is not my flag; it's my partner's. He is not dead, but sleepeth. There he is," he added, pointing to a bust which formed one of the numerous unexpected ornaments of that unusual cabin.

Havens politely studied it. "A fine bust," said he; "and a very nice-looking fellow."

"Yes; he's a good fellow," said Dodd. "He runs me now. It's all his money."

"He doesn't seem to be particularly short of it," added the other, peering with growing wonder round the cabin.

"His money, my taste," said Dodd. "The black-walnut bookshelves are Old English; the books all mine, — mostly Renaissance French. You should see how the beach-combers wilt away when they go round them looking for a change of Seaside Library novels. The mirrors are genuine Venice; that's a good piece in the corner. The daubs are mine — and his; the mudding mine."

"Mudding? What is that?" asked Havens.

"These bronzes," replied Dodd. "I began life as a sculptor."

"Yes; I remember something about that," said the other. "I think, too, you said you were interested in Californian real estate."

"Surely, I never went so far as that," said Dodd. "Interested? I guess not. Involved, perhaps. I was born an artist; I never took an interest in anything but art. If I were to pile up this old schooner to-morrow," he added, "I declare I believe I would try the thing again!"

"Insured?" inquired Havens.

"Yes," responded Dodd. "There's some fool in 'Frisco who insures us, and comes down like a wolf on the fold on the profits; but we'll get even with him some day."

"Well, I suppose it's all right about the cargo," said Havens.

"O, I suppose so!" replied Dodd. "Shall we go into the papers?"

"We'll have all to-morrow, you know," said Havens; "and they'll be rather expecting you at the club. C'est l'heure de l'absinthe. Of course, Loudon, you'll dine with me later on?"

Mr. Dodd signified his acquiescence; drew on his white coat, not without a trifling difficulty, for he was a man of middle age, and well-to-do; arranged his beard and moustaches at one of the Venetian mirrors; and, taking a broad felt hat, led the way through the trade-room into the ship's waist.

The stern boat was waiting alongside, — a boat of an elegant model, with cushions and polished hard-wood fittings.

"You steer," observed Loudon. "You know the best place to land."

“I never like to steer another man’s boat,” replied Havens.

“Call it my partner’s, and cry quits,” returned Loudon, getting nonchalantly down the side.

Havens followed and took the yoke lines without further protest. “I am sure I don’t know how you make this pay,” he said. “To begin with, she is too big for the trade, to my taste; and then you carry so much style.”

“I don’t know that she does pay,” returned Loudon. “I never pretend to be a business man. My partner appears happy; and the money is all his, as I told you — I only bring the want of business habits.”

“You rather like the berth, I suppose?” suggested Havens.

“Yes,” said Loudon; “it seems odd, but I rather do.”

While they were yet on board, the sun had dipped; the sunset gun (a rifle) cracked from the war-schooner, and the colours had been handed down. Dusk was deepening as they came ashore; and the Cercle Internationale (as the club is officially and significantly named) began to shine, from under its low verandas, with the light of many lamps. The good hours of the twenty-four drew on; the hateful, poisonous day-fly of Nukahiva, was beginning to desist from its activity; the land-breeze came in refreshing draughts; and the club men gathered together for the hour of absinthe. To the commandant himself, to the man whom he was then contending with at billiards — a trader from the next island, honorary member of the club, and once carpenter’s mate on board a Yankee war-ship — to the doctor of the port, to the Brigadier of Gendarmerie, to the opium farmer, and to all the white men whom the tide of commerce, or the chances of shipwreck and desertion, had stranded on the beach of Tai-o-hae, Mr. Loudon Dodd was formally presented; by all (since he was a man of pleasing exterior, smooth ways, and an unexceptionable flow of talk, whether in French or English) he was excellently well received; and presently, with one of the last eight bottles of beer on a table at his elbow, found himself the rather silent centre-piece of a voluble group on the verandah.

Talk in the South Seas is all upon one pattern; it is a wide ocean, indeed, but a narrow world: you shall never talk long and not hear the name of Bully Hayes, a naval hero whose exploits and deserved extinction left Europe cold; commerce will be touched on, copra, shell, perhaps cotton or fungus; but in a far-away, dilettante fashion, as by men not deeply interested; through all, the names of schooners and their captains, will keep coming and going, thick as may-flies; and news of the last shipwreck will be placidly exchanged and debated. To a stranger, this conversation will at first seem scarcely brilliant; but he will soon catch the tone; and by the time he shall have moved a year or so in the island world, and come across a good number of the schooners so that every captain’s name calls up a figure in pyjamas or white duck, and becomes used to a certain laxity of moral tone which prevails (as in memory of Mr. Hayes) on smuggling, ship-scuttling, barratry, piracy, the labour trade, and other kindred fields of human activity, he will find Polynesia no less amusing and no less instructive than Pall Mall or Paris.

Mr. Loudon Dodd, though he was new to the group of the Marquesas, was already an old, salted trader; he knew the ships and the captains; he had assisted, in other islands, at the first steps of some career of which he now heard the culmination, or (vice versa) he had brought with him from further south the end of some story which had begun in Tai-o-hae. Among other matter of interest, like other arrivals in the South Seas, he had a wreck to announce. The John T. Richards, it appeared, had met the fate of other island schooners.

“Dickinson piled her up on PalmerstonIsland,” Dodd announced.

“Who were the owners?” inquired one of the club men.

“O, the usual parties!” returned Loudon, — ”Capsicum & Co.”

A smile and a glance of intelligence went round the group; and perhaps Loudon gave voice to the general sentiment by remarking, “Talk of good business! I know nothing better than a schooner, a competent captain, and a sound, reliable reef.”

“Good business! There’s no such a thing!” said the Glasgow man. “Nobody makes anything but the missionaries — dash it!”

“I don’t know,” said another. “There’s a good deal in opium.”

“It’s a good job to strike a tabooed pearl-island, say, about the fourth year,” remarked a third; “skim the whole lagoon on the sly, and up stick and away before the French get wind of you.”

“A pig nokket of cold is good,” observed a German.

“There’s something in wrecks, too,” said Havens. “Look at that man in Honolulu, and the ship that went ashore on Waikiki Reef; it was blowing a kona, hard; and she began to break up as soon as she touched. Lloyd’s agent had her sold inside an hour; and before dark, when she went to pieces in earnest, the man that bought her had feathered his nest. Three more hours of daylight, and he might have retired from business. As it was, he built a house on Beretania Street, and called it for the ship.”

“Yes, there’s something in wrecks sometimes,” said the Glasgow voice; “but not often.”

“As a general rule, there’s deuced little in anything,” said Havens.

“Well, I believe that’s a Christian fact,” cried the other. “What I want is a secret; get hold of a rich man by the right place, and make him squeal.”

“I suppose you know it’s not thought to be the ticket,” returned Havens.

"I don't care for that; it's good enough for me," cried the man from Glasgow, stoutly. "The only devil of it is, a fellow can never find a secret in a place like the South Seas: only in London and Paris."

"M'Gibbon's been reading some dime-novel, I suppose," said one club man.

"He's been reading *Aurora Floyd*," remarked another.

"And what if I have?" cried M'Gibbon. "It's all true. Look at the newspapers! It's just your confounded ignorance that sets you snickering. I tell you, it's as much a trade as underwriting, and a dashed sight more honest."

The sudden acrimony of these remarks called Loudon (who was a man of peace) from his reserve. "It's rather singular," said he, "but I seem to have practised about all these means of livelihood."

"Tit you effer vind a nokket?" inquired the inarticulate German, eagerly.

"No. I have been most kinds of fool in my time," returned Loudon, "but not the gold-digging variety. Every man has a sane spot somewhere."

"Well, then," suggested some one, "did you ever smuggle opium?"

"Yes, I did," said Loudon.

"Was there money in that?"

"All the way," responded Loudon.

"And perhaps you bought a wreck?" asked another.

"Yes, sir," said Loudon.

"How did that pan out?" pursued the questioner.

"Well, mine was a peculiar kind of wreck," replied Loudon. "I don't know, on the whole, that I can recommend that branch of industry."

"Did she break up?" asked some one.

"I guess it was rather I that broke down," says Loudon. "Head not big enough."

"Ever try the blackmail?" inquired Havens.

"Simple as you see me sitting here!" responded Dodd.

"Good business?"

"Well, I'm not a lucky man, you see," returned the stranger. "It ought to have been good."

"You had a secret?" asked the Glasgow man.

"As big as the State of Texas."

"And the other man was rich?"

"He wasn't exactly Jay Gould, but I guess he could buy these islands if he wanted."

"Why, what was wrong, then? Couldn't you get hands on him?"

"It took time, but I had him cornered at last; and then — — "

"What then?"

"The speculation turned bottom up. I became the man's bosom friend."

"The deuce you did!"

"He couldn't have been particular, you mean?" asked Dodd pleasantly. "Well, no; he's a man of rather large sympathies."

"If you're done talking nonsense, Loudon," said Havens, "let's be getting to my place for dinner."

Outside, the night was full of the roaring of the surf. Scattered lights glowed in the green thicket. Native women came by twos and threes out of the darkness, smiled and ogled the two whites, perhaps wooed them with a strain of laughter, and went by again, bequeathing to the air a heady perfume of palm-oil and frangipani blossom. From the club to Mr. Havens's residence was but a step or two, and to any dweller in Europe they must have seemed steps in fairyland. If such an one could but have followed our two friends into the wide-verandahed house, sat down with them in the cool trellised room, where the wine shone on the lamp-lighted tablecloth; tasted of their exotic food — the raw fish, the breadfruit, the cooked bananas, the roast pig served with the inimitable miti, and that king of delicacies, palm-tree salad; seen and heard by fits and starts, now peering round the corner of the door, now railing within against invisible assistants, a certain comely young native lady in a sacque, who seemed too modest to be a member of the family, and too imperious to be less; and then if such an one were whisked again through space to Upper Tooting, or wherever else he honored the domestic gods, "I have had a dream," I think he would say, as he sat up, rubbing his eyes, in the familiar chimney-corner chair, "I have had a dream of a place, and I declare I believe it must be heaven." But to Dodd and his entertainer, all this amenity of the tropic night and all these dainties of the island table, were grown things of custom; and they fell to meat like men who were hungry, and drifted into idle talk like men who were a trifle bored.

The scene in the club was referred to.

"I never heard you talk so much nonsense, Loudon," said the host.

"Well, it seemed to me there was sulphur in the air, so I talked for talking," returned the other. "But it was none of it nonsense."

"Do you mean to say it was true?" cried Havens, — "that about the opium and the wreck, and the blackmailing and the man who became your friend?"

"Every last word of it," said Loudon.

"You seem to have been seeing life," returned the other.

"Yes, it's a queer yarn," said his friend; "if you think you would like, I'll tell it you."

Here follows the yarn of Loudon Dodd, not as he told it to his friend, but as he subsequently wrote it.

THE YARN.

CHAPTER I. A SOUND COMMERCIAL EDUCATION.

The beginning of this yarn is my poor father’s character. There never was a better man, nor a handsomer, nor (in my view) a more unhappy — unhappy in his business, in his pleasures, in his place of residence, and (I am sorry to say it) in his son. He had begun life as a land-surveyor, soon became interested in real estate, branched off into many other speculations, and had the name of one of the smartest men in the State of Muskegon. “Dodd has a big head,” people used to say; but I was never so sure of his capacity. His luck, at least, was beyond doubt for long; his assiduity, always. He fought in that daily battle of money-grubbing, with a kind of sad-eyed loyalty like a martyr’s; rose early, ate fast, came home dispirited and over-weary, even from success; grudged himself all pleasure, if his nature was capable of taking any, which I sometimes wondered; and laid out, upon some deal in wheat or corner in aluminium, the essence of which was little better than highway robbery, treasures of conscientiousness and self-denial.

Unluckily, I never cared a cent for anything but art, and never shall. My idea of man’s chief end was to enrich the world with things of beauty, and have a fairly good time myself while doing so. I do not think I mentioned that second part, which is the only one I have managed to carry out; but my father must have suspected the suppression, for he branded the whole affair as self-indulgence.

“Well,” I remember crying once, “and what is your life? You are only trying to get money, and to get it from other people at that.”

He sighed bitterly (which was very much his habit), and shook his poor head at me. “Ah, Loudon, Loudon!” said he, “you boys think yourselves very smart. But, struggle as you please, a man has to work in this world. He must be an honest man or a thief, Loudon.”

You can see for yourself how vain it was to argue with my father. The despair that seized upon me after such an interview was, besides, embittered by remorse; for I was at times petulant, but he invariably gentle; and I was fighting, after all, for my own liberty and pleasure, he singly for what he thought to be my good. And all the time he never despaired. “There is good stuff in you, Loudon,” he would say; “there is the right stuff in you. Blood will tell, and you will come right in time. I am not afraid my boy will ever disgrace me; I am only vexed he should sometimes talk nonsense.” And then he would pat my shoulder or my hand with a kind of motherly way he had, very affecting in a man so strong and beautiful.

As soon as I had graduated from the high school, he packed me off to the MuskegonCommercialAcademy. You are a foreigner, and you will have a difficulty in accepting the reality of this seat of education. I assure you before I begin that I am wholly serious. The place really existed, possibly exists to-day: we were proud of it in the State, as something exceptionally nineteenth century and civilized; and my father, when he saw me to the cars, no doubt considered he was putting me in a straight line for the Presidency and the New Jerusalem.

“Loudon,” said he, “I am now giving you a chance that Julius Caesar could not have given to his son — a chance to see life as it is, before your own turn comes to start in earnest. Avoid rash speculation, try to behave like a gentleman; and if you will take my advice, confine yourself to a safe, conservative business in railroads. Breadstuffs are tempting, but very dangerous; I would not try breadstuffs at your time of life; but you may feel your way a little in other commodities. Take a pride to keep your books posted, and never throw good money after bad. There, my dear boy, kiss me good-by; and never forget that you are an only chick, and that your dad watches your career with fond suspense.”

The commercial college was a fine, roomy establishment, pleasantly situate among woods. The air was healthy, the food excellent, the premium high. Electric wires connected it (to use the words of the prospectus) with “the various world centres.” The reading-room was well supplied with “commercial organs.” The talk was that of Wall Street; and the pupils (from fifty to a hundred lads) were principally engaged in rooking or trying to rook one another for nominal sums in what was called “college paper.” We had class hours, indeed, in the morning, when we studied German, French, book-keeping, and the like goodly matters; but the bulk of our day and the gist of the education centred in the exchange, where we were taught to gamble in produce and securities. Since not one of the participants possessed a bushel of wheat or a dollar’s worth of stock, legitimate business was of course impossible from the beginning. It was cold-drawn gambling, without colour or disguise. Just that which is the impediment and destruction of all genuine commercial enterprise, just that we were taught with every luxury of stage effect. Our simulacrum of a market was ruled by the real markets outside, so that we might experience the course and vicissitude of prices. We must keep books, and our ledgers were overhauled at the month’s end by the principal or his assistants. To add a spice of verisimilitude, “college paper” (like poker chips) had an actual marketable value. It was bought for each pupil by anxious parents and guardians at the rate of one cent for the dollar. The same pupil, when his education was complete, resold, at the same figure, so much as was left him to the college; and even in the midst of his curriculum, a successful operator would sometimes realise a proportion of his holding, and stand a supper on the sly in the neighbouring hamlet. In short, if there was ever a worse education, it must have been in that academy where Oliver met Charlie Bates.

When I was first guided into the exchange to have my desk pointed out by one of the assistant teachers, I was overwhelmed by the clamour and confusion. Certain blackboards at the other end of the building were covered with figures continually replaced. As each new set appeared, the pupils swayed to and fro, and roared out aloud with a formidable and to me quite meaningless vociferation; leaping at the same time upon the desks and benches, signalling with arms and heads, and scribbling briskly in note-books. I thought I had never beheld a scene more disagreeable; and when I considered that the whole traffic was illusory, and all the money then upon the market would scarce have sufficed to buy a pair of skates, I was at first astonished, although not for long. Indeed, I had no sooner called to mind how grown-up men and women of considerable estate will lose their temper about half-penny points, than (making an immediate allowance for my fellow-students) I transferred the whole of my astonishment to the assistant teacher, who — poor gentleman — had quite forgot to show me to my desk, and stood in the midst of this hurly-burly, absorbed and seemingly transported.

“Look, look,” he shouted in my ear; “a falling market! The bears have had it all their own way since yesterday.”

“It can’t matter,” I replied, making him hear with difficulty, for I was unused to speak in such a babel, “since it is all fun.”

“True,” said he; “and you must always bear in mind that the real profit is in the book-keeping. I trust, Dodd, to be able to congratulate you upon your books. You are to start in with ten thousand dollars of college paper, a very liberal figure, which should see you through the whole curriculum, if you keep to a safe, conservative business.... Why, what’s that?” he broke off, once more attracted by the changing figures on the board. “Seven, four, three! Dodd, you are in luck: this is the most spirited rally we have had this term. And to think that the same scene is now transpiring in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and rival business centres! For two cents, I would try a flutter with the boys myself,” he cried, rubbing his hands; “only it’s against the regulations.”

“What would you do, sir?” I asked.

“Do?” he cried, with glittering eyes. “Buy for all I was worth!”

“Would that be a safe, conservative business?” I inquired, as innocent as a lamb.

He looked daggers at me. “See that sandy-haired man in glasses?”

he asked, as if to change the subject. "That's Billson, our most prominent undergraduate. We build confidently on Billson's future. You could not do better, Dodd, than follow Billson."

Presently after, in the midst of a still growing tumult, the figures coming and going more busily than ever on the board, and the hall resounding like Pandemonium with the howls of operators, the assistant teacher left me to my own resources at my desk. The next boy was posting up his ledger, figuring his morning's loss, as I discovered later on; and from this ungenial task he was readily diverted by the sight of a new face.

"Say, Freshman," he said, "what's your name? What? Son of Big Head Dodd? What's your figure? Ten thousand? O, you're away up! What a soft-headed clam you must be to touch your books!"

I asked him what else I could do, since the books were to be examined once a month.

"Why, you galoot, you get a clerk!" cries he. "One of our dead beats — that's all they're here for. If you're a successful operator, you need never do a stroke of work in this old college."

The noise had now become deafening; and my new friend, telling me that some one had certainly "gone down," that he must know the news, and that he would bring me a clerk when he returned, buttoned his coat and plunged into the tossing throng. It proved that he was right: some one had gone down; a prince had fallen in Israel; the corner in lard had proved fatal to the mighty; and the clerk who was brought back to keep my books, spare me all work, and get all my share of the education, at a thousand dollars a month, college paper (ten dollars, United States currency) was no other than the prominent Billson whom I could do no better than follow. The poor lad was very unhappy. It's the only good thing I have to say for Muskegon Commercial College, that we were all, even the small fry, deeply mortified to be posted as defaulters; and the collapse of a merchant prince like Billson, who had ridden pretty high in his days of prosperity, was, of course, particularly hard to bear. But the spirit of make-believe conquered even the bitterness of recent shame; and my clerk took his orders, and fell to his new duties, with decorum and civility.

Such were my first impressions in this absurd place of education; and, to be frank, they were far from disagreeable. As long as I was rich, my evenings and afternoons would be my own; the clerk must keep my books, the clerk could do the jostling and bawling in the exchange; and I could turn my mind to landscape-painting and Balzac's novels, which were then my two preoccupations. To remain rich, then, became my problem; or, in other words, to do a safe, conservative line of business. I am looking for that line still; and I believe the nearest thing to it in this imperfect world is the sort of speculation sometimes insidiously proposed to childhood, in the formula, “Heads, I win; tails, you lose.” Mindful of my father’s parting words, I turned my attention timidly to railroads; and for a month or so maintained a position of inglorious security, dealing for small amounts in the most inert stocks, and bearing (as best I could) the scorn of my hired clerk. One day I had ventured a little further by way of experiment; and, in the sure expectation they would continue to go down, sold several thousand dollars of Pan-Handle Preference (I think it was). I had no sooner made this venture than some fools in New York began to bull the market; Pan-Handles rose like a balloon; and in the inside of half an hour I saw my position compromised. Blood will tell, as my father said; and I stuck to it gallantly: all afternoon I continued selling that infernal stock, all afternoon it continued skying. I suppose I had come (a frail cockle-shell) athwart the hawse of Jay Gould; and, indeed, I think I remember that this vagary in the market proved subsequently to be the first move in a considerable deal. That evening, at least, the name of H. Loudon Dodd held the first rank in our collegiate gazette, and I and Billson (once more thrown upon the world) were competing for the same clerkship. The present object takes the present eye. My disaster, for the moment, was the more conspicuous; and it was I that got the situation. So you see, even in Muskegon Commercial College, there were lessons to be learned.

For my own part, I cared very little whether I lost or won at a game so random, so complex, and so dull; but it was sorry news to write to my poor father, and I employed all the resources of my eloquence. I told him (what was the truth) that the successful boys had none of the education; so that if he wished me to learn, he should rejoice at my misfortune. I went on (not very consistently) to beg him to set me up again, when I would solemnly promise to do a safe business in reliable railroads. Lastly (becoming somewhat carried away), I assured him I was totally unfit for business, and implored him to take me away from this abominable place, and let me go to Paris to study art. He answered briefly, gently, and sadly, telling me the vacation was near at hand, when we could talk things over.

When the time came, he met me at the depot, and I was shocked to see him looking older. He seemed to have no thought but to console me and restore (what he supposed I had lost) my courage. I must not be down-hearted; many of the best men had made a failure in the beginning. I told him I had no head for business, and his kind face darkened. “You must not say that, Loudon,” he replied; “I will never believe my son to be a coward.”

“But I don’t like it,” I pleaded. “It hasn’t got any interest for me, and art has. I know I could do more in art,” and I reminded him that a successful painter gains large sums; that a picture of Meissonier's would sell for many thousand dollars.

"And do you think, Loudon," he replied, "that a man who can paint a thousand dollar picture has not grit enough to keep his end up in the stock market? No, sir; this Mason (of whom you speak) or our own American Bierstadt — if you were to put them down in a wheat pit to-morrow, they would show their mettle. Come, Loudon, my dear; heaven knows I have no thought but your own good, and I will offer you a bargain. I start you again next term with ten thousand dollars; show yourself a man, and double it, and then (if you still wish to go to Paris, which I know you won't) I'll let you go. But to let you run away as if you were whipped, is what I am too proud to do."

My heart leaped at this proposal, and then sank again. It seemed easier to paint a Meissonier on the spot than to win ten thousand dollars on that mimic stock exchange. Nor could I help reflecting on the singularity of such a test for a man's capacity to be a painter. I ventured even to comment on this.

He sighed deeply. "You forget, my dear," said he, "I am a judge of the one, and not of the other. You might have the genius of Bierstadt himself, and I would be none the wiser."

"And then," I continued, "it's scarcely fair. The other boys are helped by their people, who telegraph and give them pointers. There's Jim Costello, who never budges without a word from his father in New York. And then, don't you see, if anybody is to win, somebody must lose?"

"I'll keep you posted," cried my father, with unusual animation; "I did not know it was allowed. I'll wire you in the office cipher, and we'll make it a kind of partnership business, Loudon: — Dodd & Son, eh?" and he patted my shoulder and repeated, "Dodd & Son, Dodd & Son," with the kindliest amusement.

If my father was to give me pointers, and the commercial college was to be a stepping-stone to Paris, I could look my future in the face. The old boy, too, was so pleased at the idea of our association in this foolery that he immediately plucked up spirit. Thus it befell that those who had met at the depot like a pair of mutes, sat down to table with holiday faces.

And now I have to introduce a new character that never said a word nor wagged a finger, and yet shaped my whole subsequent career. You have crossed the States, so that in all likelihood you have seen the head of it, parcel-gilt and curiously fluted, rising among trees from a wide plain; for this new character was no other than the State capitol of Muskegon, then first projected. My father had embraced the idea with a mixture of patriotism and commercial greed both perfectly genuine. He was of all the committees, he had subscribed a great deal of money, and he was making arrangements to have a finger in most of the contracts. Competitive plans had been sent in; at the time of my return from college my father was deep in their consideration; and as the idea entirely occupied his mind, the first evening did not pass away before he had called me into council. Here was a subject at last into which I could throw myself with pleasurable zeal. Architecture was new to me, indeed; but it was at least an art; and for all the arts I had a taste naturally classical and that capacity to take delighted pains which some famous idiot has supposed to be synonymous with genius. I threw myself headlong into my father's work, acquainted myself with all the plans, their merits and defects, read besides in special books, made myself a master of the theory of strains, studied the current prices of materials, and (in one word) "devilled" the whole business so thoroughly, that when the plans came up for consideration, Big Head Dodd was supposed to have earned fresh laurels. His arguments carried the day, his choice was approved by the committee, and I had the anonymous satisfaction to know that arguments and choice were wholly mine. In the recasting of the plan which followed, my part was even larger; for I designed and cast with my own hand a hot-air grating for the offices, which had the luck or merit to be accepted. The energy and aptitude which I displayed throughout delighted and surprised my father, and I believe, although I say it whose tongue should be tied, that they alone prevented Muskegon capitol from being the eyesore of my native State.

Altogether, I was in a cheery frame of mind when I returned to the commercial college; and my earlier operations were crowned with a full measure of success. My father wrote and wired to me continually. "You are to exercise your own judgment, Loudon," he would say. "All that I do is to give you the figures; but whatever operation you take up must be upon your own responsibility, and whatever you earn will be entirely due to your own dash and forethought." For all that, it was always clear what he intended me to do, and I was always careful to do it. Inside of a month I was at the head of seventeen or eighteen thousand dollars, college paper. And here I fell a victim to one of the vices of the system. The paper (I have already explained) had a real value of one per cent; and cost, and could be sold for, currency. Unsuccessful speculators were thus always selling clothes, books, banjos, and sleeve-links, in order to pay their differences; the successful, on the other hand, were often tempted to realise, and enjoy some return upon their profits. Now I wanted thirty dollars' worth of artist-truck, for I was always sketching in the woods; my allowance was for the time exhausted; I had begun to regard the exchange (with my father's help) as a place where money was to be got for stooping; and in an evil hour I realised three thousand dollars of the college paper and bought my easel.

It was a Wednesday morning when the things arrived, and set me in the seventh heaven of satisfaction. My father (for I can scarcely say myself) was trying at this time a “straddle” in wheat between Chicago and New York; the operation so called is, as you know, one of the most tempting and least safe upon the chess-board of finance. On the Thursday, luck began to turn against my father’s calculations; and by the Friday evening, I was posted on the boards as a defaulter for the second time. Here was a rude blow: my father would have taken it ill enough in any case; for however much a man may resent the incapacity of an only son, he will feel his own more sensibly. But it chanced that, in our bitter cup of failure, there was one ingredient that might truly be called poisonous. He had been keeping the run of my position; he missed the three thousand dollars, paper; and in his view, I had stolen thirty dollars, currency. It was an extreme view perhaps; but in some senses, it was just: and my father, although (to my judgment) quite reckless of honesty in the essence of his operations, was the soul of honour as to their details. I had one grieved letter from him, dignified and tender; and during the rest of that wretched term, working as a clerk, selling my clothes and sketches to make futile speculations, my dream of Paris quite vanished. I was cheered by no word of kindness and helped by no hint of counsel from my father.

All the time he was no doubt thinking of little else but his son, and what to do with him. I believe he had been really appalled by what he regarded as my laxity of principle, and began to think it might be well to preserve me from temptation; the architect of the capitol had, besides, spoken obligingly of my design; and while he was thus hanging between two minds, Fortune suddenly stepped in, and Muskegon State capitol reversed my destiny.

“Loudon,” said my father, as he met me at the depot, with a smiling countenance, “if you were to go to Paris, how long would it take you to become an experienced sculptor?”

“How do you mean, father?” I cried. “Experienced?”

“A man that could be entrusted with the highest styles,” he answered; “the nude, for instance; and the patriotic and emblematical styles.”

“It might take three years,” I replied.

“You think Paris necessary?” he asked. “There are great advantages in our own country; and that man Prodgers appears to be a very clever sculptor, though I suppose he stands too high to go around giving lessons.”

“Paris is the only place,” I assured him.

“Well, I think myself it will sound better,” he admitted. “A Young

Man, a Native of this State, Son of a Leading Citizen, Studies Prosecuted under the Most Experienced Masters in Paris," he added, relishingly.

"But, my dear dad, what is it all about?" I interrupted. "I never even dreamed of being a sculptor."

"Well, here it is," said he. "I took up the statuary contract on our new capitol; I took it up at first as a deal; and then it occurred to me it would be better to keep it in the family. It meets your idea; there's considerable money in the thing; and it's patriotic. So, if you say the word, you shall go to Paris, and come back in three years to decorate the capitol of your native State. It's a big chance for you, Loudon; and I'll tell you what — every dollar you earn, I'll put another alongside of it. But the sooner you go, and the harder you work, the better; for if the first half-dozen statues aren't in a line with public taste in Muskegon, there will be trouble."

CHAPTER II. ROUSSILLON WINE.

My mother’s family was Scotch, and it was judged fitting I should pay a visit on my way Paris-ward, to my Uncle Adam Loudon, a wealthy retired grocer of Edinburgh. He was very stiff and very ironical; he fed me well, lodged me sumptuously, and seemed to take it out of me all the time, cent per cent, in secret entertainment which caused his spectacles to glitter and his mouth to twitch. The ground of this ill-suppressed mirth (as well as I could make out) was simply the fact that I was an American. “Well,” he would say, drawing out the word to infinity, “and I suppose now in your country, things will be so and so.” And the whole group of my cousins would titter joyously. Repeated receptions of this sort must be at the root, I suppose, of what they call the Great American Jest; and I know I was myself goaded into saying that my friends went naked in the summer months, and that the Second Methodist Episcopal Church in Muskegon was decorated with scalps. I cannot say that these flights had any great success; they seemed to awaken little more surprise than the fact that my father was a Republican or that I had been taught in school to spell COLOUR without the U. If I had told them (what was after all the truth) that my father had paid a considerable annual sum to have me brought up in a gambling hell, the tittering and grinning of this dreadful family might perhaps have been excused.

I cannot deny but I was sometimes tempted to knock my Uncle Adam down; and indeed I believe it must have come to a rupture at last, if they had not given a dinner party at which I was the lion. On this occasion, I learned (to my surprise and relief) that the incivility to which I had been subjected was a matter for the family circle and might be regarded almost in the light of an endearment. To strangers I was presented with consideration; and the account given of “my American brother-in-law, poor Janie’s man, James K. Dodd, the well-known millionnaire of Muskegon,” was calculated to enlarge the heart of a proud son.

An aged assistant of my grandfather’s, a pleasant, humble creature with a taste for whiskey, was at first deputed to be my guide about the city. With this harmless but hardly aristocratic companion, I went to Arthur’s Seat and the Calton Hill, heard the band play in the Princes Street Gardens, inspected the regalia and the blood of Rizzio, and fell in love with the great castle on its cliff, the innumerable spires of churches, the stately buildings, the broad prospects, and those narrow and crowded lanes of the old town where my ancestors had lived and died in the days before Columbus.

But there was another curiosity that interested me more deeply —

my grandfather, Alexander Loudon. In his time, the old gentleman had been a working mason, and had risen from the ranks more, I think, by shrewdness than by merit. In his appearance, speech, and manners, he bore broad marks of his origin, which were gall and wormwood to my Uncle Adam. His nails, in spite of anxious supervision, were often in conspicuous mourning; his clothes hung about him in bags and wrinkles like a ploughman's Sunday coat; his accent was rude, broad, and dragging: take him at his best, and even when he could be induced to hold his tongue, his mere presence in a corner of the drawing-room, with his open-air wrinkles, his scanty hair, his battered hands, and the cheerful craftiness of his expression, advertised the whole gang of us for a self-made family. My aunt might mince and my cousins bridle; but there was no getting over the solid, physical fact of the stonemason in the chimney-corner.

That is one advantage of being an American: it never occurred to me to be ashamed of my grandfather, and the old gentleman was quick to mark the difference. He held my mother in tender memory, perhaps because he was in the habit of daily contrasting her with Uncle Adam, whom he detested to the point of frenzy; and he set down to inheritance from his favourite my own becoming treatment of himself. On our walks abroad, which soon became daily, he would sometimes (after duly warning me to keep the matter dark from "Aadam") skulk into some old familiar pot-house; and there (if he had the luck to encounter any of his veteran cronies) he would present me to the company with manifest pride, casting at the same time a covert slur on the rest of his descendants. "This is my Jeannie's yin," he would say. "He's a fine fallow, him." The purpose of our excursions was not to seek antiquities or to enjoy famous prospects, but to visit one after another a series of doleful suburbs, for which it was the old gentleman's chief claim to renown that he had been the sole contractor, and too often the architect besides. I have rarely seen a more shocking exhibition: the bricks seemed to be blushing in the walls, and the slates on the roof to have turned pale with shame; but I was careful not to communicate these impressions to the aged artificer at my side; and when he would direct my attention to some fresh monstrosity — perhaps with the comment, "There's an idee of mine's: it's cheap and tasty, and had a graand run; the idee was soon stole, and there's whole deestricts near Glesgie with the goathic adeetion and that plunth," — I would civilly make haste to admire and (what I found particularly delighted him) to inquire into the cost of each adornment. It will be conceived that Muskegon capitol was a frequent and a welcome ground of talk; I drew him all the plans from memory; and he, with the aid of a narrow volume full of figures and tables, which answered (I believe) to the name of Molesworth, and was his constant pocket companion, would draw up rough estimates and make imaginary offers on the various contracts. Our Muskegon builders he pronounced a pack of cormorants; and the congenial subject, together with my knowledge of architectural terms, the theory of strains, and the prices of materials in the States, formed a strong bond of union between what might have been otherwise an ill-assorted pair, and led my grandfather to pronounce me, with emphasis, "a real intalligent kind of a cheild." Thus a second time, as you will presently see, the capitol of my native State had influentially affected the current of my life.

I left Edinburgh, however, with not the least idea that I had done a stroke of excellent business for myself, and singly delighted to escape out of a somewhat dreary house and plunge instead into the rainbow city of Paris. Every man has his own romance; mine clustered exclusively about the practice of the arts, the life of Latin Quarter students, and the world of Paris as depicted by that grimy wizard, the author of the *Comedie Humaine*. I was not disappointed — I could not have been; for I did not see the facts, I brought them with me ready-made. Z. Marcas lived next door to me in my ungainly, ill-smelling hotel of the Rue Racine; I dined at my villainous restaurant with Lousteau and with Rastignac: if a curricle nearly ran me down at a street-crossing, Maxime de Trailles would be the driver. I dined, I say, at a poor restaurant and lived in a poor hotel; and this was not from need, but sentiment. My father gave me a profuse allowance, and I might have lived (had I chosen) in the Quartier de l'Etoile and driven to my studies daily. Had I done so, the glamour must have fled: I should still have been but Loudon Dodd; whereas now I was a Latin Quarter student, Murger's successor, living in flesh and blood the life of one of those romances I had loved to read, to re-read, and to dream over, among the woods of Muskegon.

At this time we were all a little Murger-mad in the Latin Quarter. The play of the *Vie de Boheme* (a dreary, snivelling piece) had been produced at the Odeon, had run an unconscionable time — for Paris, and revived the freshness of the legend. The same business, you may say, or there and thereabout, was being privately enacted in consequence in every garret of the neighbourhood, and a good third of the students were consciously impersonating Rodolphe or Schaunard to their own incommunicable satisfaction. Some of us went far, and some farther. I always looked with awful envy (for instance) on a certain countryman of my own who had a studio in the Rue Monsieur le Prince, wore boots, and long hair in a net, and could be seen tramping off, in this guise, to the worst eating-house of the quarter, followed by a Corsican model, his mistress, in the conspicuous costume of her race and calling. It takes some greatness of soul to carry even folly to such heights as these; and for my own part, I had to content myself by pretending very arduously to be poor, by wearing a smoking-cap on the streets, and by pursuing, through a series of misadventures, that extinct mammal, the grisette. The most grievous part was the eating and the drinking. I was born with a dainty tooth and a palate for wine; and only a genuine devotion to romance could have supported me under the cat-civets that I had to swallow, and the red ink of Bercy I must wash them down withal. Every now and again, after a hard day at the studio, where I was steadily and far from unsuccessfully industrious, a wave of distaste would overbear me; I would slink away from my haunts and companions, indemnify myself for weeks of self-denial with fine wines and dainty dishes; seated perhaps on a terrace, perhaps in an arbour in a garden, with a volume of one of my favourite authors propped open in front of me, and now consulted awhile, and now forgotten: — so remain, relishing my situation, till night fell and the lights of the city kindled; and thence stroll homeward by the riverside, under the moon or stars, in a heaven of poetry and digestion.

One such indulgence led me in the course of my second year into an adventure which I must relate: indeed, it is the very point I have been aiming for, since that was what brought me in acquaintance with Jim Pinkerton. I sat down alone to dinner one October day when the rusty leaves were falling and scuttling on the boulevard, and the minds of impressionable men inclined in about an equal degree towards sadness and conviviality. The restaurant was no great place, but boasted a considerable cellar and a long printed list of vintages. This I was perusing with the double zest of a man who is fond of wine and a lover of beautiful names, when my eye fell (near the end of the card) on that not very famous or familiar brand, Roussillon. I remembered it was a wine I had never tasted, ordered a bottle, found it excellent, and when I had discussed the contents, called (according to my habit) for a final pint. It appears they did not keep Roussillon in half-bottles. “All right,” said I. “Another bottle.” The tables at this eating-house are close together; and the next thing I can remember, I was in somewhat loud conversation with my nearest neighbours. From these I must have gradually extended my attentions; for I have a clear recollection of gazing about a room in which every chair was half turned round and every face turned smilingly to mine. I can even remember what I was saying at the moment; but after twenty years, the embers of shame are still alive; and I prefer to give your imagination the cue, by simply mentioning that my muse was the patriotic. It had been my design to adjourn for coffee in the company of some of these new friends; but I was no sooner on the sidewalk than I found myself unaccountably alone. The circumstance scarce surprised me at the time, much less now; but I was somewhat chagrined a little after to find I had walked into a kiosque. I began to wonder if I were any the worse for my last bottle, and decided to steady myself with coffee and brandy. In the Cafe de la Source, where I went for this restorative, the fountain was playing, and (what greatly surprised me) the mill and the various mechanical figures on the rockery appeared to have been freshly repaired and performed the most enchanting antics. The cafe was extraordinarily hot and bright, with every detail of a conspicuous clearness, from the faces of the guests to the type of the newspapers on the tables, and the whole apartment swang to and fro like a hammock, with an exhilarating motion. For some while I was so extremely pleased with these particulars that I thought I could never be weary of beholding them: then dropped of a sudden into a causeless sadness; and then, with the same swiftness and spontaneity, arrived at the conclusion that I was drunk and had better get to bed.

It was but a step or two to my hotel, where I got my lighted candle from the porter and mounted the four flights to my own room. Although I could not deny that I was drunk, I was at the same time lucidly rational and practical. I had but one preoccupation — to be up in time on the morrow for my work; and when I observed the clock on my chimney-piece to have stopped, I decided to go down stairs again and give directions to the porter. Leaving the candle burning and my door open, to be a guide to me on my return, I set forth accordingly. The house was quite dark; but as there were only the three doors on each landing, it was impossible to wander, and I had nothing to do but descend the stairs until I saw the glimmer of the porter’s night light. I counted four flights: no porter. It was possible, of course, that I had reckoned incorrectly; so I went down another and another, and another, still counting as I went, until I had reached the preposterous figure of nine flights. It was now quite clear that I had somehow passed the porter’s lodge without remarking it; indeed, I was, at the lowest figure, five pairs of stairs below the street, and plunged in the very bowels of the earth. That my hotel should thus be founded upon catacombs was a discovery of considerable interest; and if I had not been in a frame of mind entirely businesslike, I might have continued to explore all night this subterranean empire. But I was bound I must be up betimes on the next morning, and for that end it was imperative that I should find the porter. I faced about accordingly, and counting with painful care, remounted towards the level of the street. Five, six, and seven flights I climbed, and still there was no porter. I began to be weary of the job, and reflecting that I was now close to my own room, decided I should go to bed. Eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen flights I mounted; and my open door seemed to be as wholly lost to me as the porter and his floating dip. I remembered that the house stood but six stories at its highest point, from which it appeared (on the most moderate computation) I was now three stories higher than the roof. My original sense of amusement was succeeded by a not unnatural irritation. “My room has just GOT to be here,” said I, and I stepped towards the door with outspread arms. There was no door and no wall; in place of either there yawned before me a dark corridor, in which I continued to advance for some time without encountering the smallest opposition. And this in a house whose extreme area scantily contained three small rooms, a narrow landing, and the stair! The thing was manifestly nonsense; and you will scarcely be surprised to learn that I now began to lose my temper. At this juncture I perceived a filtering of light along the floor, stretched forth my hand which encountered the knob of a door-handle, and without further ceremony entered a room. A young lady was within; she was going to bed, and her toilet was far advanced, or the other way about, if you prefer.

“I hope you will pardon this intrusion,” said I; “but my room is No. 12, and something has gone wrong with this blamed house.”

She looked at me a moment; and then, “If you will step outside for a moment, I will take you there,” says she.

Thus, with perfect composure on both sides, the matter was arranged. I waited a while outside her door. Presently she rejoined me, in a dressing-gown, took my hand, led me up another flight, which made the fourth above the level of the roof, and shut me into my own room, where (being quite weary after these contraordinary explorations) I turned in, and slumbered like a child.

I tell you the thing calmly, as it appeared to me to pass; but the next day, when I awoke and put memory in the witness-box, I could not conceal from myself that the tale presented a good many improbable features. I had no mind for the studio, after all, and went instead to the Luxembourg gardens, there, among the sparrows and the statues and the falling leaves, to cool and clear my head. It is a garden I have always loved. You sit there in a public place of history and fiction. Barras and Fouche have looked from these windows. Lousteau and de Banville (one as real as the other) have rhymed upon these benches. The city tramples by without the railings to a lively measure; and within and about you, trees rustle, children and sparrows utter their small cries, and the statues look on forever. Here, then, in a seat opposite the gallery entrance, I set to work on the events of the last night, to disengage (if it were possible) truth from fiction.

The house, by daylight, had proved to be six stories high, the same as ever. I could find, with all my architectural experience, no room in its altitude for those interminable stairways, no width between its walls for that long corridor, where I had tramped at night. And there was yet a greater difficulty. I had read somewhere an aphorism that everything may be false to itself save human nature. A house might elongate or enlarge itself — or seem to do so to a gentleman who had been dining. The ocean might dry up, the rocks melt in the sun, the stars fall from heaven like autumn apples; and there was nothing in these incidents to boggle the philosopher. But the case of the young lady stood upon a different foundation. Girls were not good enough, or not good that way, or else they were too good. I was ready to accept any of these views: all pointed to the same conclusion, which I was thus already on the point of reaching, when a fresh argument occurred, and instantly confirmed it. I could remember the exact words we had each said; and I had spoken, and she had replied, in English. Plainly, then, the whole affair was an illusion: catacombs, and stairs, and charitable lady, all were equally the stuff of dreams.

I had just come to this determination, when there blew a flaw of wind through the autumnal gardens; the dead leaves showered down, and a flight of sparrows, thick as a snowfall, wheeled above my head with sudden pipings. This agreeable bustle was the affair of a moment, but it startled me from the abstraction into which I had fallen like a summons. I sat briskly up, and as I did so, my eyes rested on the figure of a lady in a brown jacket and carrying a paint-box. By her side walked a fellow some years older than myself, with an easel under his arm; and alike by their course and cargo I might judge they were bound for the gallery, where the lady was, doubtless, engaged upon some copying. You can imagine my surprise when I recognized in her the heroine of my adventure. To put the matter beyond question, our eyes met, and she, seeing herself remembered and recalling the trim in which I had last beheld her, looked swiftly on the ground with just a shadow of confusion.

I could not tell you to-day if she were plain or pretty; but she had behaved with so much good sense, and I had cut so poor a figure in her presence, that I became instantly fired with the desire to display myself in a more favorable light. The young man besides was possibly her brother; brothers are apt to be hasty, theirs being a part in which it is possible, at a comparatively early age, to assume the dignity of manhood; and it occurred to me it might be wise to forestall all possible complications by an apology.

On this reasoning I drew near to the gallery door, and had hardly got in position before the young man came out. Thus it was that I came face to face with my third destiny; for my career has been entirely shaped by these three elements, — my father, the capitol of Muskegon, and my friend, Jim Pinkerton. As for the young lady with whom my mind was at the moment chiefly occupied, I was never to hear more of her from that day forward: an excellent example of the Blind Man's Buff that we call life.

CHAPTER III. TO INTRODUCE MR. PINKERTON.

The stranger, I have said, was some years older than myself: a man of a good stature, a very lively face, cordial, agitated manners, and a gray eye as active as a fowl's.

"May I have a word with you?" said I.

"My dear sir," he replied, "I don't know what it can be about, but you may have a hundred if you like."

"You have just left the side of a young lady," I continued, "towards whom I was led (very unintentionally) into the appearance of an offence. To speak to herself would be only to renew her embarrassment, and I seize the occasion of making my apology, and declaring my respect, to one of my own sex who is her friend, and perhaps," I added, with a bow, "her natural protector."

"You are a countryman of mine; I know it!" he cried: "I am sure of it by your delicacy to a lady. You do her no more than justice. I was introduced to her the other night at tea, in the apartment of some people, friends of mine; and meeting her again this morning, I could not do less than carry her easel for her. My dear sir, what is your name?"

I was disappointed to find he had so little bond with my young lady; and but that it was I who had sought the acquaintance, might have been tempted to retreat. At the same time, something in the stranger's eye engaged me.

"My name," said I, "is Loudon Dodd; I am a student of sculpture here from Muskegon."

"Of sculpture?" he cried, as though that would have been his last conjecture. "Mine is James Pinkerton; I am delighted to have the pleasure of your acquaintance."

"Pinkerton!" it was now my turn to exclaim. "Are you Broken-Stool Pinkerton?"

He admitted his identity with a laugh of boyish delight; and indeed any young man in the quarter might have been proud to own a sobriquet thus gallantly acquired.

In order to explain the name, I must here digress into a chapter of the history of manners in the nineteenth century, very well worth commemoration for its own sake. In some of the studios at that date, the hazing of new pupils was both barbarous and obscene. Two incidents, following one on the heels of the other tended to produce an advance in civilization by the means (as so commonly happens) of a passing appeal to savage standards. The first was the arrival of a little gentleman from Armenia. He had a fez upon his head and (what nobody counted on) a dagger in his pocket. The hazing was set about in the customary style, and, perhaps in virtue of the victim's head-gear, even more boisterously than usual. He bore it at first with an inviting patience; but upon one of the students proceeding to an unpardonable freedom, plucked out his knife and suddenly plunged it in the belly of the jester. This gentleman, I am pleased to say, passed months upon a bed of sickness, before he was in a position to resume his studies. The second incident was that which had earned Pinkerton his reputation. In a crowded studio, while some very filthy brutalities were being practised on a trembling debutant, a tall, pale fellow sprang from his stool and (without the smallest preface or explanation) sang out, "All English and Americans to clear the shop!" Our race is brutal, but not filthy; and the summons was nobly responded to. Every Anglo-Saxon student seized his stool; in a moment the studio was full of bloody coxcombs, the French fleeing in disorder for the door, the victim liberated and amazed. In this feat of arms, both English-speaking nations covered themselves with glory; but I am proud to claim the author of the whole for an American, and a patriotic American at that, being the same gentleman who had subsequently to be held down in the bottom of a box during a performance of *L'Oncle Sam*, sobbing at intervals, "My country! O my country!" While yet another (my new acquaintance, Pinkerton) was supposed to have made the most conspicuous figure in the actual battle. At one blow, he had broken his own stool, and sent the largest of his opponents back foremost through what we used to call a "conscientious nude." It appears that, in the continuation of his flight, this fallen warrior issued on the boulevard still framed in the burst canvas.

It will be understood how much talk the incident aroused in the students' quarter, and that I was highly gratified to make the acquaintance of my famous countryman. It chanced I was to see more of the quixotic side of his character before the morning was done; for as we continued to stroll together, I found myself near the studio of a young Frenchman whose work I had promised to examine, and in the fashion of the quarter carried up Pinkerton along with me. Some of my comrades of this date were pretty obnoxious fellows. I could almost always admire and respect the grown-up practitioners of art in Paris; but many of those who were still in a state of pupilage were sorry specimens, so much so that I used often to wonder where the painters came from, and where the brutes of students went to. A similar mystery hangs over the intermediate stages of the medical profession, and must have perplexed the least observant. The ruffian, at least, whom I now carried Pinkerton to visit, was one of the most crapulous in the quarter. He turned out for our delectation a huge “crust” (as we used to call it) of St. Stephen, wallowing in red upon his belly in an exhausted receiver, and a crowd of Hebrews in blue, green, and yellow, pelting him — apparently with buns; and while we gazed upon this contrivance, regaled us with a piece of his own recent biography, of which his mind was still very full, and which he seemed to fancy, represented him in a heroic posture. I was one of those cosmopolitan Americans, who accept the world (whether at home or abroad) as they find it, and whose favourite part is that of the spectator; yet even I was listening with ill-suppressed disgust, when I was aware of a violent plucking at my sleeve.

“Is he saying he kicked her down stairs?” asked Pinkerton, white as St. Stephen.

“Yes,” said I: “his discarded mistress; and then he pelted her with stones. I suppose that’s what gave him the idea for his picture. He has just been alleging the pathetic excuse that she was old enough to be his mother.”

Something like a sob broke from Pinkerton. “Tell him,” he gasped — ”I can’t speak this language, though I understand a little; I never had any proper education — tell him I’m going to punch his head.”

“For God’s sake, do nothing of the sort!” I cried. “They don’t understand that sort of thing here.” And I tried to bundle him out.

“Tell him first what we think of him,” he objected. “Let me tell him what he looks in the eyes of a pure-minded American”

“Leave that to me,” said I, thrusting Pinkerton clear through the door.

“Qu’est-ce qu’il a?” inquired the student.

“What’s the matter with him?”

“Monsieur se sent mal au coeur d’avoir trop regarde votre croute,” said I, and made my escape, scarce with dignity, at Pinkerton’s heels.

“The gentleman is sick at his stomach from having looked too long at your daub.”

“What did you say to him?” he asked.

“The only thing that he could feel,” was my reply.

After this scene, the freedom with which I had ejected my new acquaintance, and the precipitation with which I had followed him, the least I could do was to propose luncheon. I have forgot the name of the place to which I led him, nothing loath; it was on the far side of the Luxembourg at least, with a garden behind, where we were speedily set face to face at table, and began to dig into each other’s history and character, like terriers after rabbits, according to the approved fashion of youth.

Pinkerton’s parents were from the old country; there too, I incidentally gathered, he had himself been born, though it was a circumstance he seemed prone to forget. Whether he had run away, or his father had turned him out, I never fathomed; but about the age of twelve, he was thrown upon his own resources. A travelling tin-type photographer picked him up, like a haw out of a hedgerow, on a wayside in New Jersey; took a fancy to the urchin; carried him on with him in his wandering life; taught him all he knew himself — to take tin-types (as well as I can make out) and doubt the Scriptures; and died at last in Ohio at the corner of a road. "He was a grand specimen," cried Pinkerton; "I wish you could have seen him, Mr. Dodd. He had an appearance of magnanimity that used to remind me of the patriarchs." On the death of this random protector, the boy inherited the plant and continued the business. "It was a life I could have chosen, Mr. Dodd!" he cried. "I have been in all the finest scenes of that magnificent continent that we were born to be the heirs of. I wish you could see my collection of tin-types; I wish I had them here. They were taken for my own pleasure and to be a memento; and they show Nature in her grandest as well as her gentlest moments." As he tramped the Western States and Territories, taking tin-types, the boy was continually getting hold of books, good, bad, and indifferent, popular and abstruse, from the novels of Sylvanus Cobb to Euclid's Elements, both of which I found (to my almost equal wonder) he had managed to peruse: he was taking stock by the way, of the people, the products, and the country, with an eye unusually observant and a memory unusually retentive; and he was collecting for himself a body of magnanimous and semi-intellectual nonsense, which he supposed to be the natural thoughts and to contain the whole duty of the born American. To be pure-minded, to be patriotic, to get culture and money with both hands and with the same irrational fervour — these appeared to be the chief articles of his creed. In later days (not of course upon this first occasion) I would sometimes ask him why; and he had his answer pat. "To build up the type!" he would cry. "We're all committed to that; we're all under bond to fulfil the American Type! Loudon, the hope of the world is there. If we fail, like these old feudal monarchies, what is left?"

The trade of a tin-typer proved too narrow for the lad's ambition; it was insusceptible of expansion, he explained, it was not truly modern; and by a sudden conversion of front, he became a railroad-scalper. The principles of this trade I never clearly understood; but its essence appears to be to cheat the railroads out of their due fare. "I threw my whole soul into it; I grudged myself food and sleep while I was at it; the most practised hands admitted I had caught on to the idea in a month and revolutionised the practice inside of a year," he said. "And there's interest in it, too. It's amusing to pick out some one going by, make up your mind about his character and tastes, dash out of the office and hit him flying with an offer of the very place he wants to go to. I don't think there was a scalper on the continent made fewer blunders. But I took it only as a stage. I was saving every dollar; I was looking ahead. I knew what I wanted — wealth, education, a refined home, and a conscientious, cultured lady for a wife; for, Mr. Dodd" — this with a formidable outcry — "every man is bound to marry above him: if the woman's not the man's superior, I brand it as mere sensuality. There was my idea, at least. That was what I was saving for; and enough, too! But it isn't every man, I know that — it's far from every man — could do what I did: close up the livest agency in Saint Jo, where he was coining dollars by the pot, set out alone, without a friend or a word of French, and settle down here to spend his capital learning art."

"Was it an old taste?" I asked him, "or a sudden fancy?"

"Neither, Mr. Dodd," he admitted. "Of course I had learned in my tin-typing excursions to glory and exult in the works of God. But it wasn't that. I just said to myself, What is most wanted in my age and country? More culture and more art, I said; and I chose the best place, saved my money, and came here to get them."

The whole attitude of this young man warmed and shamed me. He had more fire in his little toe than I had in my whole carcase; he was stuffed to bursting with the manly virtues; thrift and courage glowed in him; and even if his artistic vocation seemed (to one of my exclusive tenets) not quite clear, who could predict what might be accomplished by a creature so full-blooded and so inspired with animal and intellectual energy? So, when he proposed that I should come and see his work (one of the regular stages of a Latin Quarter friendship), I followed him with interest and hope.

He lodged parsimoniously at the top of a tall house near the Observatory, in a bare room, principally furnished with his own trunks and papered with his own despicable studies. No man has less taste for disagreeable duties than myself; perhaps there is only one subject on which I cannot flatter a man without a blush; but upon that, upon all that touches art, my sincerity is Roman. Once and twice I made the circuit of his walls in silence, spying in every corner for some spark of merit; he, meanwhile, following close at my heels, reading the verdict in my face with furtive glances, presenting some fresh study for my inspection with undisguised anxiety, and (after it had been silently weighed in the balances and found wanting) whisking it away with an open gesture of despair. By the time the second round was completed, we were both extremely depressed.

"O!" he groaned, breaking the long silence, "it's quite unnecessary you should speak!"

"Do you want me to be frank with you? I think you are wasting time," said I.

"You don't see any promise?" he inquired, beguiled by some return of hope, and turning upon me the embarrassing brightness of his eye. "Not in this still-life here, of the melon? One fellow thought it good."

It was the least I could do to give the melon a more particular examination; which, when I had done, I could but shake my head. "I am truly sorry, Pinkerton," said I, "but I can't advise you to persevere."

He seemed to recover his fortitude at the moment, rebounding from disappointment like a man of india-rubber. "Well," said he stoutly, "I don't know that I'm surprised. But I'll go on with the course; and throw my whole soul into it, too. You mustn't think the time is lost. It's all culture; it will help me to extend my relations when I get back home; it may fit me for a position on one of the illustrateds; and then I can always turn dealer," he said, uttering the monstrous proposition, which was enough to shake the Latin Quarter to the dust, with entire simplicity. "It's all experience, besides;" he continued, "and it seems to me there's a tendency to underrate experience, both as net profit and investment. Never mind. That's done with. But it took courage for you to say what you did, and I'll never forget it. Here's my hand, Mr. Dodd. I'm not your equal in culture or talent — "

"You know nothing about that," I interrupted. "I have seen your work, but you haven't seen mine.

"No more I have," he cried; "and let's go see it at once! But I know you are away up. I can feel it here."

To say truth, I was almost ashamed to introduce him to my studio — my work, whether absolutely good or bad, being so vastly superior to his. But his spirits were now quite restored; and he amazed me, on the way, with his light-hearted talk and new projects. So that I began at last to understand how matters lay: that this was not an artist who had been deprived of the practice of his single art; but only a business man of very extended interests, informed (perhaps something of the most suddenly) that one investment out of twenty had gone wrong.

As a matter of fact besides (although I never suspected it) he was already seeking consolation with another of the muses, and pleasing himself with the notion that he would repay me for my sincerity, cement our friendship, and (at one and the same blow) restore my estimation of his talents. Several times already, when I had been speaking of myself, he had pulled out a writing-pad and scribbled a brief note; and now, when we entered the studio, I saw it in his hand again, and the pencil go to his mouth, as he cast a comprehensive glance round the uncomfortable building.

"Are you going to make a sketch of it?" I could not help asking, as I unveiled the Genius of Muskegon.

"Ah, that's my secret," said he. "Never you mind. A mouse can help a lion."

He walked round my statue and had the design explained to him. I had represented Muskegon as a young, almost a stripling, mother, with something of an Indian type; the babe upon her knees was winged, to indicate our soaring future; and her seat was a medley of sculptured fragments, Greek, Roman, and Gothic, to remind us of the older worlds from which we trace our generation.

"Now, does this satisfy you, Mr. Dodd?" he inquired, as soon as I had explained to him the main features of the design.

"Well," I said, "the fellows seem to think it's not a bad bonne femme for a beginner. I don't think it's entirely bad myself. Here is the best point; it builds up best from here. No, it seems to me it has a kind of merit," I admitted; "but I mean to do better."

"Ah, that's the word!" cried Pinkerton. "There's the word I love!" and he scribbled in his pad.

"What in creation ails you?" I inquired. "It's the most commonplace expression in the English language."

"Better and better!" chuckled Pinkerton. "The unconsciousness of genius. Lord, but this is coming in beautiful!" and he scribbled again.

"If you're going to be fulsome," said I, "I'll close the place of entertainment." And I threatened to replace the veil upon the Genius.

"No, no," said he. "Don't be in a hurry. Give me a point or two. Show me what's particularly good."

"I would rather you found that out for yourself," said I.

"The trouble is," said he, "that I've never turned my attention to sculpture, beyond, of course, admiring it, as everybody must who has a soul. So do just be a good fellow, and explain to me what you like in it, and what you tried for, and where the merit comes in. It'll be all education for me."

"Well, in sculpture, you see, the first thing you have to consider is the masses. It's, after all, a kind of architecture," I began, and delivered a lecture on that branch of art, with illustrations from my own masterpiece there present, all of which, if you don't mind, or whether you mind or not, I mean to conscientiously omit. Pinkerton listened with a fiery interest, questioned me with a certain uncultivated shrewdness, and continued to scratch down notes, and tear fresh sheets from his pad. I found it inspiring to have my words thus taken down like a professor's lecture; and having had no previous experience of the press, I was unaware that they were all being taken down wrong. For the same reason (incredible as it must appear in an American) I never entertained the least suspicion that they were destined to be dished up with a sauce of penny-a-lining gossip; and myself, my person, and my works of art butchered to make a holiday for the readers of a Sunday paper. Night had fallen over the Genius of Muskegon before the issue of my theoretic eloquence was stayed, nor did I separate from my new friend without an appointment for the morrow.

I was indeed greatly taken with this first view of my countryman, and continued, on further acquaintance, to be interested, amused, and attracted by him in about equal proportions. I must not say he had a fault, not only because my mouth is sealed by gratitude, but because those he had sprang merely from his education, and you could see he had cultivated and improved them like virtues. For all that, I can never deny he was a troublous friend to me, and the trouble began early.

It may have been a fortnight later that I divined the secret of the writing-pad. My wretch (it leaked out) wrote letters for a paper in the West, and had filled a part of one of them with descriptions of myself. I pointed out to him that he had no right to do so without asking my permission.

“Why, this is just what I hoped!” he exclaimed. “I thought you didn’t seem to catch on; only it seemed too good to be true.”

“But, my good fellow, you were bound to warn me,” I objected.

“I know it’s generally considered etiquette,” he admitted; “but between friends, and when it was only with a view of serving you, I thought it wouldn’t matter. I wanted it (if possible) to come on you as a surprise; I wanted you just to waken, like Lord Byron, and find the papers full of you. You must admit it was a natural thought. And no man likes to boast of a favour beforehand.”

“But, heavens and earth! how do you know I think it a favour?” I cried.

He became immediately plunged in despair. “You think it a liberty,” said he; “I see that. I would rather have cut off my hand. I would stop it now, only it’s too late; it’s published by now. And I wrote it with so much pride and pleasure!”

I could think of nothing but how to console him. “O, I daresay it’s all right,” said I. “I know you meant it kindly, and you would be sure to do it in good taste.”

“That you may swear to,” he cried. “It’s a pure, bright, A number 1 paper; the St. Jo *Sunday Herald*. The idea of the series was quite my own; I interviewed the editor, put it to him straight; the freshness of the idea took him, and I walked out of that office with the contract in my pocket, and did my first Paris letter that evening in Saint Jo. The editor did no more than glance his eye down the headlines. ‘You’re the man for us,’ said he.”

I was certainly far from reassured by this sketch of the class of literature in which I was to make my first appearance; but I said no more, and possessed my soul in patience, until the day came when I received a copy of a newspaper marked in the corner, "Compliments of J.P." I opened it with sensible shrinkings; and there, wedged between an account of a prize-fight and a skittish article upon chiropody — think of chiropody treated with a leer! — I came upon a column and a half in which myself and my poor statue were embalmed. Like the editor with the first of the series, I did but glance my eye down the head-lines and was more than satisfied.

ANOTHER OF PINKERTON'S SPICY CHATS.

ART PRACTITIONERS IN PARIS.

MUSKEGON'S COLUMNED CAPITOL.

SON OF MILLIONAIRE DODD,

PATRIOT AND ARTIST.

"HE MEANS TO DO BETTER."

In the body of the text, besides, my eye caught, as it passed, some deadly expressions: "Figure somewhat fleshy," "bright, intellectual smile," "the unconsciousness of genius," "'Now, Mr. Dodd,' resumed the reporter, 'what would be your idea of a distinctively American quality in sculpture?'" It was true the question had been asked; it was true, alas! that I had answered; and now here was my reply, or some strange hash of it, gibbeted in the cold publicity of type. I thanked God that my French fellow-students were ignorant of English; but when I thought of the British — of Myner (for instance) or the Stennises — I think I could have fallen on Pinkerton and beat him.

To divert my thoughts (if it were possible) from this calamity, I turned to a letter from my father which had arrived by the same post. The envelope contained a strip of newspaper-cutting; and my eye caught again, "Son of Millionaire Dodd — Figure somewhat fleshy," and the rest of the degrading nonsense. What would my father think of it? I wondered, and opened his manuscript. "My dearest boy," it began, "I send you a cutting which has pleased me very much, from a St. Joseph paper of high standing. At last you seem to be coming fairly to the front; and I cannot but reflect with delight and gratitude how very few youths of your age occupy nearly two columns of press-matter all to themselves. I only wish your dear mother had been here to read it over my shoulder; but we will hope she shares my grateful emotion in a better place. Of course I have sent a copy to your grandfather and uncle in Edinburgh; so you can keep the one I enclose. This Jim Pinkerton seems a valuable acquaintance; he has certainly great talent; and it is a good general rule to keep in with pressmen."

I hope it will be set down to the right side of my account, but I had no sooner read these words, so touchingly silly, than my anger against Pinkerton was swallowed up in gratitude. Of all the circumstances of my career, my birth, perhaps, excepted, not one had given my poor father so profound a pleasure as this article in the *Sunday Herald*. What a fool, then, was I, to be lamenting! when I had at last, and for once, and at the cost of only a few blushes, paid back a fraction of my debt of gratitude. So that, when I next met Pinkerton, I took things very lightly; my father was pleased, and thought the letter very clever, I told him; for my own part, I had no taste for publicity: thought the public had no concern with the artist, only with his art; and though I owned he had handled it with great consideration, I should take it as a favour if he never did it again.

"There it is," he said despondingly. "I've hurt you. You can't deceive me, Loudon. It's the want of tact, and it's incurable." He sat down, and leaned his head upon his hand. "I had no advantages when I was young, you see," he added.

"Not in the least, my dear fellow," said I. "Only the next time you wish to do me a service, just speak about my work; leave my wretched person out, and my still more wretched conversation; and above all," I added, with an irrepressible shudder, "don't tell them how I said it! There's that phrase, now: 'With a proud, glad smile.' Who cares whether I smiled or not?"

"Oh, there now, Loudon, you're entirely wrong," he broke in. "That's what the public likes; that's the merit of the thing, the literary value. It's to call up the scene before them; it's to enable the humblest citizen to enjoy that afternoon the same as I did. Think what it would have been to me when I was tramping around with my tin-types to find a column and a half of real, cultured conversation — an artist, in his studio abroad, talking of his art — and to know how he looked as he did it, and what the room was like, and what he had for breakfast; and to tell myself, eating tinned beans beside a creek, that if all went well, the same sort of thing would, sooner or later, happen to myself: why, Loudon, it would have been like a peephole into heaven!"

"Well, if it gives so much pleasure," I admitted, "the sufferers shouldn't complain. Only give the other fellows a turn."

The end of the matter was to bring myself and the journalist in a more close relation. If I know anything at all of human nature — and the IF is no mere figure of speech, but stands for honest doubt — no series of benefits conferred, or even dangers shared, would have so rapidly confirmed our friendship as this quarrel avoided, this fundamental difference of taste and training accepted and condoned.

CHAPTER IV. IN WHICH I EXPERIENCE EXTREMES OF FORTUNE.

Whether it came from my training and repeated bankruptcy at the commercial college, or by direct inheritance from old Loudon, the Edinburgh mason, there can be no doubt about the fact that I was thrifty. Looking myself impartially over, I believe that is my only manly virtue. During my first two years in Paris I not only made it a point to keep well inside of my allowance, but accumulated considerable savings in the bank. You will say, with my masquerade of living as a penniless student, it must have been easy to do so: I should have had no difficulty, however, in doing the reverse. Indeed, it is wonderful I did not; and early in the third year, or soon after I had known Pinkerton, a singular incident proved it to have been equally wise. Quarter-day came, and brought no allowance. A letter of remonstrance was despatched, and for the first time in my experience, remained unanswered. A cablegram was more effectual; for it brought me at least a promise of attention. "Will write at once," my father telegraphed; but I waited long for his letter. I was puzzled, angry, and alarmed; but thanks to my previous thrift, I cannot say that I was ever practically embarrassed. The embarrassment, the distress, the agony, were all for my unhappy father at home in Muskegon, struggling for life and fortune against untoward chances, returning at night from a day of ill-starred shifts and ventures, to read and perhaps to weep over that last harsh letter from his only child, to which he lacked the courage to reply.

Nearly three months after time, and when my economies were beginning to run low, I received at last a letter with the customary bills of exchange.

"My dearest boy," it ran, "I believe, in the press of anxious business, your letters and even your allowance have been somewhile neglected. You must try to forgive your poor old dad, for he has had a trying time; and now when it is over, the doctor wants me to take my shotgun and go to the Adirondacks for a change. You must not fancy I am sick, only over-driven and under the weather. Many of our foremost operators have gone down: John T. M'Brady skipped to Canada with a trunkful of boodle; Billy Sandwith, Charlie Downs, Joe Kaiser, and many others of our leading men in this city bit the dust. But Big-Head Dodd has again weathered the blizzard, and I think I have fixed things so that we may be richer than ever before autumn.

"Now I will tell you, my dear, what I propose. You say you are well advanced with your first statue; start in manfully and finish it, and if your teacher — I can never remember how to spell his name — will send me a certificate that it is up to market standard, you shall have ten thousand dollars to do what you like with, either at home or in Paris. I suggest, since you say the facilities for work are so much greater in that city, you would do well to buy or build a little home; and the first thing you know, your dad will be dropping in for a luncheon. Indeed, I would come now, for I am beginning to grow old, and I long to see my dear boy; but there are still some operations that want watching and nursing. Tell your friend, Mr. Pinkerton, that I read his letters every week; and though I have looked in vain lately for my Loudon's name, still I learn something of the life he is leading in that strange, old world, depicted by an able pen."

Here was a letter that no young man could possibly digest in solitude. It marked one of those junctures when the confidant is necessary; and the confidant selected was none other than Jim Pinkerton. My father's message may have had an influence in this decision; but I scarce suppose so, for the intimacy was already far advanced. I had a genuine and lively taste for my compatriot; I laughed at, I scolded, and I loved him. He, upon his side, paid me a kind of doglike service of admiration, gazing at me from afar off as at one who had liberally enjoyed those "advantages" which he envied for himself. He followed at heel; his laugh was ready chorus; our friends gave him the nickname of "The Henchman." It was in this insidious form that servitude approached me.

Pinkerton and I read and re-read the famous news: he, I can swear, with an enjoyment as unalloyed and far more vocal than my own. The statue was nearly done: a few days' work sufficed to prepare it for exhibition; the master was approached; he gave his consent; and one cloudless morning of May beheld us gathered in my studio for the hour of trial. The master wore his many-hued rosette; he came attended by two of my French fellow-pupils — friends of mine and both considerable sculptors in Paris at this hour. "Corporal John" (as we used to call him) breaking for once those habits of study and reserve which have since carried him so high in the opinion of the world, had left his easel of a morning to countenance a fellow-countryman in some suspense. My dear old Romney was there by particular request; for who that knew him would think a pleasure quite complete unless he shared it, or not support a mortification more easily if he were present to console? The party was completed by John Myner, the Englishman; by the brothers Stennis, — Stennis-aine and Stennis-frere, as they used to figure on their accounts at Barbizon — a pair of hare-brained Scots; and by the inevitable Jim, as white as a sheet and bedewed with the sweat of anxiety.

I suppose I was little better myself when I unveiled the Genius of

Muskegon. The master walked about it seriously; then he smiled.

"It is already not so bad," said he, in that funny English of which he was so proud. "No, already not so bad."

We all drew a deep breath of relief; and Corporal John (as the most considerable junior present) explained to him it was intended for a public building, a kind of prefecture —

"He! Quoi?" cried he, relapsing into French. "Qu'est-ce que vous me chantez la? O, in America," he added, on further information being hastily furnished. "That is anozer sing. O, very good, very good."

The idea of the required certificate had to be introduced to his mind in the light of a pleasantry — the fancy of a nabob little more advanced than the red Indians of "Fennimore Cooperr"; and it took all our talents combined to conceive a form of words that would be acceptable on both sides. One was found, however: Corporal John engrossed it in his undecipherable hand, the master lent it the sanction of his name and flourish, I slipped it into an envelope along with one of the two letters I had ready prepared in my pocket, and as the rest of us moved off along the boulevard to breakfast, Pinkerton was detached in a cab and duly committed it to the post.

The breakfast was ordered at Lavenue's, where no one need be ashamed to entertain even the master; the table was laid in the garden; I had chosen the bill of fare myself; on the wine question we held a council of war with the most fortunate results; and the talk, as soon as the master laid aside his painful English, became fast and furious. There were a few interruptions, indeed, in the way of toasts. The master's health had to be drunk, and he responded in a little well-turned speech, full of neat allusions to my future and to the United States; my health followed; and then my father's must not only be proposed and drunk, but a full report must be despatched to him at once by cablegram — an extravagance which was almost the means of the master's dissolution. Choosing Corporal John to be his confidant (on the ground, I presume, that he was already too good an artist to be any longer an American except in name) he summed up his amazement in one oft-repeated formula — "C'est barbare!" Apart from these genial formalities, we talked, talked of art, and talked of it as only artists can. Here in the South Seas we talk schooners most of the time; in the Quarter we talked art with the like unflagging interest, and perhaps as much result.

Before very long, the master went away; Corporal John (who was already a sort of young master) followed on his heels; and the rank and file were naturally relieved by their departure. We were now among equals; the bottle passed, the conversation sped. I think I can still hear the Stennis brothers pour forth their copious tirades; Dijon, my portly French fellow-student, drop witticisms well-conditioned like himself; and another (who was weak in foreign languages) dash hotly into the current of talk with some “Je trove que pore oon sontimong de delicacy, Corot …,” or some “Pour moi Corot est le plou …,” and then, his little raft of French foundering at once, scramble silently to shore again. He at least could understand; but to Pinkerton, I think the noise, the wine, the sun, the shadows of the leaves, and the esoteric glory of being seated at a foreign festival, made up the whole available means of entertainment.

We sat down about half past eleven; I suppose it was two when, some point arising and some particular picture being instanced, an adjournment to the Louvre was proposed. I paid the score, and in a moment we were trooping down the Rue de Renne. It was smoking hot; Paris glittered with that superficial brilliancy which is so agreeable to the man in high spirits, and in moods of dejection so depressing; the wine sang in my ears, it danced and brightened in my eyes. The pictures that we saw that afternoon, as we sped briskly and loquaciously through the immortal galleries, appear to me, upon a retrospect, the loveliest of all; the comments we exchanged to have touched the highest mark of criticism, grave or gay.

It was only when we issued again from the museum that a difference of race broke up the party. Dijon proposed an adjournment to a cafe, there to finish the afternoon on beer; the elder Stennis, revolted at the thought, moved for the country, a forest if possible, and a long walk. At once the English speakers rallied to the name of any exercise: even to me, who have been often twitted with my sedentary habits, the thought of country air and stillness proved invincibly attractive. It appeared, upon investigation, we had just time to hail a cab and catch one of the fast trains for Fontainebleau. Beyond the clothes we stood in, all were destitute of what is called (with dainty vagueness) personal effects; and it was earnestly mooted, on the other side, whether we had not time to call upon the way and pack a satchel? But the Stennis boys exclaimed upon our effeminacy. They had come from London, it appeared, a week before with nothing but greatcoats and tooth-brushes. No baggage — there was the secret of existence. It was expensive, to be sure; for every time you had to comb your hair, a barber must be paid, and every time you changed your linen, one shirt must be bought and another thrown away; but anything was better (argued these young gentlemen) than to be the slaves of haversacks. “A fellow has to get rid gradually of all material attachments; that was manhood” (said they); “and as long as you were bound down to anything, — house, umbrella, or portmanteau, — you were still tethered by the umbilical cord.” Something engaging in this theory carried the most of us away. The two Frenchmen, indeed, retired, scoffing, to their bock; and Romney, being too poor to join the excursion on his own resources and too proud to borrow, melted unobtrusively away. Meanwhile the remainder of the company crowded the benches of a cab; the horse was urged (as horses have to be) by an appeal to the pocket of the driver; the train caught by the inside of a minute; and in less than an hour and a half we were breathing deep of the sweet air of the forest and stretching our legs up the hill from Fontainebleau octroi, bound for Barbizon. That the leading members of our party covered the distance in fifty-one minutes and a half is (I believe) one of the historic landmarks of the colony; but you will scarce be surprised to learn that I was somewhat in the rear. Myner, a comparatively philosophic Briton, kept me company in my deliberate advance; the glory of the sun's going down, the fall of the long shadows, the inimitable scent and the inspiration of the woods, attuned me more and more to walk in a silence which progressively infected my companion; and I remember that, when at last he spoke, I was startled from a deep abstraction.

"Your father seems to be a pretty good kind of a father," said he. "Why don't he come to see you?" I was ready with some dozen of reasons, and had more in stock; but Myner, with that shrewdness which made him feared and admired, suddenly fixed me with his eye-glass and asked, "Ever press him?"

The blood came in my face. No; I had never pressed him; I had never even encouraged him to come. I was proud of him; proud of his handsome looks, of his kind, gentle ways, of that bright face he could show when others were happy; proud, too (meanly proud, if you like) of his great wealth and startling liberalities. And yet he would have been in the way of my Paris life, of much of which he would have disapproved. I had feared to expose to criticism his innocent remarks on art; I had told myself, I had even partly believed, he did not want to come; I had been (and still am) convinced that he was sure to be unhappy out of Muskegon; in short, I had a thousand reasons, good and bad, not all of which could alter one iota of the fact that I knew he only waited for my invitation.

"Thank you, Myner," said I; "you're a much better fellow than ever I supposed. I'll write to-night."

"O, you're a pretty decent sort yourself," returned Myner, with more than his usual flippancy of manner, but (as I was gratefully aware) not a trace of his occasional irony of meaning.

Well, these were brave days, on which I could dwell forever. Brave, too, were those that followed, when Pinkerton and I walked Paris and the suburbs, viewing and pricing houses for my new establishment, or covered ourselves with dust and returned laden with Chinese gods and brass warming-pans from the dealers in antiquities. I found Pinkerton well up in the situation of these establishments as well as in the current prices, and with quite a smattering of critical judgment; it turned out he was investing capital in pictures and curiosities for the States, and the superficial thoroughness of the creature appeared in the fact, that although he would never be a connoisseur, he was already something of an expert. The things themselves left him as near as may be cold; but he had a joy of his own in understanding how to buy and sell them.

In such engagements the time passed until I might very well expect an answer from my father. Two mails followed each other, and brought nothing. By the third I received a long and almost incoherent letter of remorse, encouragement, consolation, and despair. From this pitiful document, which (with a movement of piety) I burned as soon as I had read it, I gathered that the bubble of my father's wealth was burst, that he was now both penniless and sick; and that I, so far from expecting ten thousand dollars to throw away in juvenile extravagance, must look no longer for the quarterly remittances on which I lived. My case was hard enough; but I had sense enough to perceive, and decency enough to do my duty. I sold my curiosities, or rather I sent Pinkerton to sell them; and he had previously bought and now disposed of them so wisely that the loss was trifling. This, with what remained of my last allowance, left me at the head of no less than five thousand francs. Five hundred I reserved for my own immediate necessities; the rest I mailed inside of the week to my father at Muskegon, where they came in time to pay his funeral expenses.

The news of his death was scarcely a surprise and scarce a grief to me. I could not conceive my father a poor man. He had led too long a life of thoughtless and generous profusion to endure the change; and though I grieved for myself, I was able to rejoice that my father had been taken from the battle. I grieved, I say, for myself; and it is probable there were at the same date many thousands of persons grieving with less cause. I had lost my father; I had lost the allowance; my whole fortune (including what had been returned from Muskegon) scarce amounted to a thousand francs; and to crown my sorrows, the statuary contract had changed hands. The new contractor had a son of his own, or else a nephew; and it was signified to me, with business-like plainness, that I must find another market for my pigs. In the meanwhile I had given up my room, and slept on a truckle-bed in the corner of the studio, where as I read myself to sleep at night, and when I awoke in the morning, that now useless bulk, the Genius of Muskegon, was ever present to my eyes. Poor stone lady! born to be enthroned under the gilded, echoing dome of the new capitol, whither was she now to drift? for what base purposes be ultimately broken up, like an unseaworthy ship? and what should befall her ill-starred artificer, standing, with his thousand francs, on the threshold of a life so hard as that of the unbefriended sculptor?

It was a subject often and earnestly debated by myself and Pinkerton. In his opinion, I should instantly discard my profession. “Just drop it, here and now,” he would say. “Come back home with me, and let’s throw our whole soul into business. I have the capital; you bring the culture. Dodd & Pinkerton — I never saw a better name for an advertisement; and you can’t think, Loudon, how much depends upon a name.” On my side, I would admit that a sculptor should possess one of three things — capital, influence, or an energy only to be qualified as hellish. The first two I had now lost; to the third I never had the smallest claim; and yet I wanted the cowardice (or perhaps it was the courage) to turn my back on my career without a fight. I told him, besides, that however poor my chances were in sculpture, I was convinced they were yet worse in business, for which I equally lacked taste and aptitude. But upon this head, he was my father over again; assured me that I spoke in ignorance; that any intelligent and cultured person was Bound to succeed; that I must, besides, have inherited some of my father’s fitness; and, at any rate, that I had been regularly trained for that career in the commercial college.

“Pinkerton,” I said, “can’t you understand that, as long as I was there, I never took the smallest interest in any stricken thing? The whole affair was poison to me.”

“It’s not possible,” he would cry; “it can’t be; you couldn’t live in the midst of it and not feel the charm; with all your poetry of soul, you couldn’t help! Loudon,” he would go on, “you drive me crazy. You expect a man to be all broken up about the sunset, and not to care a dime for a place where fortunes are fought for and made and lost all day; or for a career that consists in studying up life till you have it at your finger-ends, spying out every cranny where you can get your hand in and a dollar out, and standing there in the midst — one foot on bankruptcy, the other on a borrowed dollar, and the whole thing spinning round you like a mill — raking in the stamps, in spite of fate and fortune.”

To this romance of dickering I would reply with the romance (which is also the virtue) of art: reminding him of those examples of constancy through many tribulations, with which the role of Apollo is illustrated; from the case of Millet, to those of many of our friends and comrades, who had chosen this agreeable mountain path through life, and were now bravely clambering among rocks and brambles, penniless and hopeful.

“You will never understand it, Pinkerton,” I would say. “You look to the result, you want to see some profit of your endeavours: that is why you could never learn to paint, if you lived to be Methusalem. The result is always a fizzle: the eyes of the artist are turned in; he lives for a frame of mind. Look at Romney, now. There is the nature of the artist. He hasn't a cent; and if you offered him to-morrow the command of an army, or the presidentship of the United States, he wouldn't take it, and you know he wouldn't."

"I suppose not," Pinkerton would cry, scouring his hair with both his hands; "and I can't see why; I can't see what in fits he would be after, not to; I don't seem to rise to these views. Of course, it's the fault of not having had advantages in early life; but, Loudon, I'm so miserably low that it seems to me silly. The fact is," he might add with a smile, "I don't seem to have the least use for a frame of mind without square meals; and you can't get it out of my head that it's a man's duty to die rich, if he can."

"What for?" I asked him once.

"O, I don't know," he replied. "Why in snakes should anybody want to be a sculptor, if you come to that? I would love to sculp myself. But what I can't see is why you should want to do nothing else. It seems to argue a poverty of nature."

Whether or not he ever came to understand me — and I have been so tossed about since then that I am not very sure I understand myself — he soon perceived that I was perfectly in earnest; and after about ten days of argument, suddenly dropped the subject, and announced that he was wasting capital, and must go home at once. No doubt he should have gone long before, and had already lingered over his intended time for the sake of our companionship and my misfortune; but man is so unjustly minded that the very fact, which ought to have disarmed, only embittered my vexation. I resented his departure in the light of a desertion; I would not say, but doubtless I betrayed it; and something hang-dog in the man's face and bearing led me to believe he was himself remorseful. It is certain at least that, during the time of his preparations, we drew sensibly apart — a circumstance that I recall with shame. On the last day, he had me to dinner at a restaurant which he knew I had formerly frequented, and had only forsworn of late from considerations of economy. He seemed ill at ease; I was myself both sorry and sulky; and the meal passed with little conversation.

"Now, Loudon," said he, with a visible effort, after the coffee was come and our pipes lighted, "you can never understand the gratitude and loyalty I bear you. You don't know what a boon it is to be taken up by a man that stands on the pinnacle of civilization; you can't think how it's refined and purified me, how it's appealed to my spiritual nature; and I want to tell you that I would die at your door like a dog."

I don’t know what answer I tried to make, but he cut me short.

“Let me say it out!” he cried. “I revere you for your whole-souled devotion to art; I can’t rise to it, but there’s a strain of poetry in my nature, Loudon, that responds to it. I want you to carry it out, and I mean to help you.”

“Pinkerton, what nonsense is this?” I interrupted.

“Now don’t get mad, Loudon; this is a plain piece of business,” said he; “it’s done every day; it’s even typical. How are all those fellows over here in Paris, Henderson, Sumner, Long? — it’s all the same story: a young man just plum full of artistic genius on the one side, a man of business on the other who doesn’t know what to do with his dollars — ”

“But, you fool, you’re as poor as a rat,” I cried.

“You wait till I get my irons in the fire!” returned Pinkerton. “I’m bound to be rich; and I tell you I mean to have some of the fun as I go along. Here’s your first allowance; take it at the hand of a friend; I’m one that holds friendship sacred as you do yourself. It’s only a hundred francs; you’ll get the same every month, and as soon as my business begins to expand we’ll increase it to something fitting. And so far from it’s being a favour, just let me handle your statuary for the American market, and I’ll call it one of the smartest strokes of business in my life.”

It took me a long time, and it had cost us both much grateful and painful emotion, before I had finally managed to refuse his offer and compounded for a bottle of particular wine. He dropped the subject at last suddenly with a “Never mind; that’s all done with,” nor did he again refer to the subject, though we passed together the rest of the afternoon, and I accompanied him, on his departure; to the doors of the waiting-room at St. Lazare. I felt myself strangely alone; a voice told me that I had rejected both the counsels of wisdom and the helping hand of friendship; and as I passed through the great bright city on my homeward way, I measured it for the first time with the eye of an adversary.

CHAPTER V. IN WHICH I AM DOWN ON MY LUCK IN PARIS.

In no part of the world is starvation an agreeable business; but I believe it is admitted there is no worse place to starve in than this city of Paris. The appearances of life are there so especially gay, it is so much a magnified beer-garden, the houses are so ornate, the theatres so numerous, the very pace of the vehicles is so brisk, that a man in any deep concern of mind or pain of body is constantly driven in upon himself. In his own eyes, he seems the one serious creature moving in a world of horrible unreality; voluble people issuing from a cafe, the queue at theatre doors, Sunday cabfuls of second-rate pleasure-seekers, the bedizened ladies of the pavement, the show in the jewellers' windows — all the familiar sights contributing to flout his own unhappiness, want, and isolation. At the same time, if he be at all after my pattern, he is perhaps supported by a childish satisfaction: this is life at last, he may tell himself, this is the real thing; the bladders on which I was set swimming are now empty, my own weight depends upon the ocean; by my own exertions I must perish or succeed; and I am now enduring in the vivid fact, what I so much delighted to read of in the case of Lonsteau or Lucien, Rodolphe or Schaunard.

Of the steps of my misery, I cannot tell at length. In ordinary times what were politically called "loans" (although they were never meant to be repaid) were matters of constant course among the students, and many a man has partly lived on them for years. But my misfortune befell me at an awkward juncture. Many of my friends were gone; others were themselves in a precarious situation. Romney (for instance) was reduced to tramping Paris in a pair of country sabots, his only suit of clothes so imperfect (in spite of cunningly adjusted pins) that the authorities at the Luxembourg suggested his withdrawal from the gallery. Dijon, too, was on a leeshore, designing clocks and gas-brackets for a dealer; and the most he could do was to offer me a corner of his studio where I might work. My own studio (it will be gathered) I had by that time lost; and in the course of my expulsion the Genius of Muskegon was finally separated from her author. To continue to possess a full-sized statue, a man must have a studio, a gallery, or at least the freedom of a back garden. He cannot carry it about with him, like a satchel, in the bottom of a cab, nor can he cohabit in a garret, ten by fifteen, with so momentous a companion. It was my first idea to leave her behind at my departure. There, in her birthplace, she might lend an inspiration, methought, to my successor.

But the proprietor, with whom I had unhappily quarrelled, seized the occasion to be disagreeable, and called upon me to remove my property. For a man in such straits as I now found myself, the hire of a lorry was a consideration; and yet even that I could have faced, if I had had anywhere to drive to after it was hired. Hysterical laughter seized upon me as I beheld (in imagination) myself, the waggoner, and the Genius of Muskegon, standing in the public view of Paris, without the shadow of a destination; perhaps driving at last to the nearest rubbish heap, and dumping there, among the ordures of a city, the beloved child of my invention. From these extremities I was relieved by a seasonable offer, and I parted from the Genius of Muskegon for thirty francs. Where she now stands, under what name she is admired or criticised, history does not inform us; but I like to think she may adorn the shrubbery of some suburban tea-garden, where holiday shop-girls hang their hats upon the mother, and their swains (by way of an approach of gallantry) identify the winged infant with the god of love.

In a certain cabman's eating-house on the outer boulevard I got credit for my midday meal. Supper I was supposed not to require, sitting down nightly to the delicate table of some rich acquaintances. This arrangement was extremely ill-considered. My fable, credible enough at first, and so long as my clothes were in good order, must have seemed worse than doubtful after my coat became frayed about the edges, and my boots began to squelch and pipe along the restaurant floors. The allowance of one meal a day besides, though suitable enough to the state of my finances, agreed poorly with my stomach. The restaurant was a place I had often visited experimentally, to taste the life of students then more unfortunate than myself; and I had never in those days entered it without disgust, or left it without nausea. It was strange to find myself sitting down with avidity, rising up with satisfaction, and counting the hours that divided me from my return to such a table. But hunger is a great magician; and so soon as I had spent my ready cash, and could no longer fill up on bowls of chocolate or hunks of bread, I must depend entirely on that cabman's eating-house, and upon certain rare, long-expected, long-remembered windfalls. Dijon (for instance) might get paid for some of his pot-boiling work, or else an old friend would pass through Paris; and then I would be entertained to a meal after my own soul, and contract a Latin Quarter loan, which would keep me in tobacco and my morning coffee for a fortnight. It might be thought the latter would appear the more important. It might be supposed that a life, led so near the confines of actual famine, should have dulled the nicety of my palate. On the contrary, the poorer a man's diet, the more sharply is he set on dainties. The last of my ready cash, about thirty francs, was deliberately squandered on a single dinner; and a great part of my time when I was alone was passed upon the details of imaginary feasts.

One gleam of hope visited me — an order for a bust from a rich Southerner. He was free-handed, jolly of speech, merry of countenance; kept me in good humour through the sittings, and when they were over, carried me off with him to dinner and the sights of Paris. I ate well; I laid on flesh; by all accounts, I made a favourable likeness of the being, and I confess I thought my future was assured. But when the bust was done, and I had despatched it across the Atlantic, I could never so much as learn of its arrival. The blow felled me; I should have lain down and tried no stroke to right myself, had not the honour of my country been involved. For Dijon improved the opportunity in the European style; informing me (for the first time) of the manners of America: how it was a den of banditti without the smallest rudiment of law or order, and debts could be there only collected with a shotgun. “The whole world knows it,” he would say; “you are alone, mon petit Loudon, you are alone to be in ignorance of these facts. The judges of the Supreme Court fought but the other day with stilettos on the bench at Cincinnati. You should read the little book of one of my friends: *Le Touriste dans le Far-West*; you will see it all there in good French.” At last, incensed by days of such discussion, I undertook to prove to him the contrary, and put the affair in the hands of my late father’s lawyer. From him I had the gratification of hearing, after a due interval, that my debtor was dead of the yellow fever in Key West, and had left his affairs in some confusion. I suppress his name; for though he treated me with cruel nonchalance, it is probable he meant to deal fairly in the end.

Soon after this a shade of change in my reception at the cabman’s eating-house marked the beginning of a new phase in my distress. The first day, I told myself it was but fancy; the next, I made quite sure it was a fact; the third, in mere panic I stayed away, and went for forty-eight hours fasting. This was an act of great unreason; for the debtor who stays away is but the more remarked, and the boarder who misses a meal is sure to be accused of infidelity. On the fourth day, therefore, I returned, inwardly quaking. The proprietor looked askance upon my entrance; the waitresses (who were his daughters) neglected my wants and sniffed at the affected joviality of my salutations; last and most plain, when I called for a suisse (such as was being served to all the other diners) I was bluntly told there were no more. It was obvious I was near the end of my tether; one plank divided me from want, and now I felt it tremble. I passed a sleepless night, and the first thing in the morning took my way to Myner’s studio. It was a step I had long meditated and long refrained from; for

I was scarce intimate with the Englishman; and though I knew him to possess plenty of money, neither his manner nor his reputation were the least encouraging to beggars.

I found him at work on a picture, which I was able conscientiously to praise, dressed in his usual tweeds, plain, but pretty fresh, and standing out in disagreeable contrast to my own withered and degraded outfit. As we talked, he continued to shift his eyes watchfully between his handiwork and the fat model, who sat at the far end of the studio in a state of nature, with one arm gallantly arched above her head. My errand would have been difficult enough under the best of circumstances: placed between Myner, immersed in his art, and the white, fat, naked female in a ridiculous attitude, I found it quite impossible. Again and again I attempted to approach the point, again and again fell back on commendations of the picture; and it was not until the model had enjoyed an interval of repose, during which she took the conversation in her own hands and regaled us (in a soft, weak voice) with details as to her husband's prosperity, her sister's lamented decline from the paths of virtue, and the consequent wrath of her father, a peasant of stern principles, in the vicinity of Chalons on the Marne; — it was not, I say, until after this was over, and I had once more cleared my throat for the attack, and once more dropped aside into some commonplace about the picture, that Myner himself brought me suddenly and vigorously to the point.

"You didn't come here to talk this rot," said he.

"No," I replied sullenly; "I came to borrow money."

He painted awhile in silence.

"I don't think we were ever very intimate?" he asked.

"Thank you," said I. "I can take my answer," and I made as if to go, rage boiling in my heart.

"Of course you can go if you like," said Myner; "but I advise you to stay and have it out."

"What more is there to say?" I cried. "You don't want to keep me here for a needless humiliation?"

"Look here, Dodd, you must try and command your temper," said he. "This interview is of your own seeking, and not mine; if you suppose it's not disagreeable to me, you're wrong; and if you think I will give you money without knowing thoroughly about your prospects, you take me for a fool. Besides," he added, "if you come to look at it, you've got over the worst of it by now: you have done the asking, and you have every reason to know I mean to refuse. I hold out no false hopes, but it may be worth your while to let me judge."

Thus — I was going to say — encouraged, I stumbled through my story; told him I had credit at the cabman's eating-house, but began to think it was drawing to a close; how Dijon lent me a corner of his studio, where I tried to model ornaments, figures for clocks, Time with the scythe, Leda and the swan, musketeers for candlesticks, and other kickshaws, which had never (up to that day) been honoured with the least approval.

"And your room?" asked Myner.

"O, my room is all right, I think," said I. "She is a very good old lady, and has never even mentioned her bill."

"Because she is a very good old lady, I don't see why she should be fined," observed Myner.

"What do you mean by that?" I cried.

"I mean this," said he. "The French give a great deal of credit amongst themselves; they find it pays on the whole, or the system would hardly be continued; but I can't see where WE come in; I can't see that it's honest of us Anglo-Saxons to profit by their easy ways, and then skip over the Channel or (as you Yankees do) across the Atlantic."

"But I'm not proposing to skip," I objected.

"Exactly," he replied. "And shouldn't you? There's the problem. You seem to me to have a lack of sympathy for the proprietors of cabmen's eating-houses. By your own account you're not getting on: the longer you stay, it'll only be the more out of the pocket of the dear old lady at your lodgings. Now, I'll tell you what I'll do: if you consent to go, I'll pay your passage to New York, and your railway fare and expenses to Muskegon (if I have the name right) where your father lived, where he must have left friends, and where, no doubt, you'll find an opening. I don't seek any gratitude, for of course you'll think me a beast; but I do ask you to pay it back when you are able. At any rate, that's all I can do. It might be different if I thought you a genius, Dodd; but I don't, and I advise you not to."

"I think that was uncalled for, at least," said I.

"I daresay it was," he returned, with the same steadiness. "It seemed to me pertinent; and, besides, when you ask me for money upon no security, you treat me with the liberty of a friend, and it's to be presumed that I can do the like. But the point is, do you accept?"

"No, thank you," said I; "I have another string to my bow."

"All right," says Myner. "Be sure it's honest."

"Honest? honest?" I cried. "What do you mean by calling my honesty in question?"

"I won't, if you don't like it," he replied. "You seem to think honesty as easy as Blind Man's Buff: I don't. It's some difference of definition."

I went straight from this irritating interview, during which Myner had never discontinued painting, to the studio of my old master. Only one card remained for me to play, and I was now resolved to play it: I must drop the gentleman and the frock-coat, and approach art in the workman's tunic.

"Tiens, this little Dodd!" cried the master; and then, as his eye fell on my dilapidated clothing, I thought I could perceive his countenance to darken.

I made my plea in English; for I knew, if he were vain of anything, it was of his achievement of the island tongue. "Master," said I, "will you take me in your studio again? but this time as a workman."

"I sought your fazer was immensely reech," said he.

I explained to him that I was now an orphan and penniless.

He shook his head. "I have betterr workmen waiting at my door," said he, "far betterr workmen.

"You used to think something of my work, sir," I pleaded.

"Somesing, somesing — yes!" he cried; "enough for a son of a reech man — not enough for an orphan. Besides, I sought you might learn to be an artist; I did not sink you might learn to be a workman."

On a certain bench on the outer boulevard, not far from the tomb of Napoleon, a bench shaded at that date by a shabby tree, and commanding a view of muddy roadway and blank wall, I sat down to wrestle with my misery. The weather was cheerless and dark; in three days I had eaten but once; I had no tobacco; my shoes were soaked, my trousers horrid with mire; my humour and all the circumstances of the time and place lugubriously attuned. Here were two men who had both spoken fairly of my work while I was rich and wanted nothing; now that I was poor and lacked all: "no genius," said the one; "not enough for an orphan," the other; and the first offered me my passage like a pauper immigrant, and the second refused me a day's wage as a hewer of stone — plain dealing for an empty belly. They had not been insincere in the past; they were not insincere to-day: change of circumstance had introduced a new criterion: that was all.

But if I acquitted my two Job's comforters of insincerity, I was yet far from admitting them infallible. Artists had been contemned before, and had lived to turn the laugh on their contemners. How old was Corot before he struck the vein of his own precious metal? When had a young man been more derided (or more justly so) than the god of my admiration, Balzac? Or if I required a bolder inspiration, what had I to do but turn my head to where the gold dome of the Invalides glittered against inky squalls, and recall the tale of him sleeping there: from the day when a young artillery-sub could be giggled at and nicknamed Puss-in-Boots by frisky misses; on to the days of so many crowns and so many victories, and so many hundred mouths of cannon, and so many thousand war-hoofs trampling the roadways of astonished Europe eighty miles in front of the grand army? To go back, to give up, to proclaim myself a failure, an ambitious failure, first a rocket, then a stick! I, Loudon Dodd, who had refused all other livelihoods with scorn, and been advertised in the Saint Joseph *Sunday Herald* as a patriot and an artist, to be returned upon my native Muskegon like damaged goods, and go the circuit of my father's acquaintance, cap in hand, and begging to sweep offices! No, by Napoleon! I would die at my chosen trade; and the two who had that day flouted me should live to envy my success, or to weep tears of unavailing penitence behind my pauper coffin.

Meantime, if my courage was still undiminished, I was none the nearer to a meal. At no great distance my cabman's eating-house stood, at the tail of a muddy cab-rank, on the shores of a wide thoroughfare of mud, offering (to fancy) a face of ambiguous invitation. I might be received, I might once more fill my belly there; on the other hand, it was perhaps this day the bolt was destined to fall, and I might be expelled instead, with vulgar hubbub. It was policy to make the attempt, and I knew it was policy; but I had already, in the course of that one morning, endured too many affronts, and I felt I could rather starve than face another. I had courage and to spare for the future, none left for that day; courage for the main campaign, but not a spark of it for that preliminary skirmish of the cabman's restaurant. I continued accordingly to sit upon my bench, not far from the ashes of Napoleon, now drowsy, now light-headed, now in complete mental obstruction, or only conscious of an animal pleasure in quiescence; and now thinking, planning, and remembering with unexampled clearness, telling myself tales of sudden wealth, and gustfully ordering and greedily consuming imaginary meals: in the course of which I must have dropped asleep.

It was towards dark that I was suddenly recalled to famine by a cold souse of rain, and sprang shivering to my feet. For a moment I stood bewildered: the whole train of my reasoning and dreaming passed afresh through my mind; I was again tempted, drawn as if with cords, by the image of the cabman's eating-house, and again recoiled from the possibility of insult. "Qui dort dine," thought I to myself; and took my homeward way with wavering footsteps, through rainy streets in which the lamps and the shop-windows now began to gleam; still marshalling imaginary dinners as I went.

"Ah, Monsieur Dodd," said the porter, "there has been a registered letter for you. The facteur will bring it again to-morrow."

A registered letter for me, who had been so long without one? Of what it could possibly contain, I had no vestige of a guess; nor did I delay myself guessing; far less form any conscious plan of dishonesty: the lies flowed from me like a natural secretion.

"O," said I, "my remittance at last! What a bother I should have missed it! Can you lend me a hundred francs until to-morrow?"

I had never attempted to borrow from the porter till that moment:

the registered letter was, besides, my warranty; and he gave me what he had — three napoleons and some francs in silver. I pocketed the money carelessly, lingered a while chaffing, strolled leisurely to the door; and then (fast as my trembling legs could carry me) round the corner to the Cafe de Cluny. French waiters are deft and speedy; they were not deft enough for me; and I had scarce decency to let the man set the wine upon the table or put the butter alongside the bread, before my glass and my mouth were filled. Exquisite bread of the Cafe Cluny, exquisite first glass of old Pomard tingling to my wet feet, indescribable first olive culled from the hors d'oeuvre — I suppose, when I come to lie dying, and the lamp begins to grow dim, I shall still recall your savour. Over the rest of that meal, and the rest of the evening, clouds lie thick; clouds perhaps of Burgundy; perhaps, more properly, of famine and repletion.

I remember clearly, at least, the shame, the despair, of the next morning, when I reviewed what I had done, and how I had swindled the poor honest porter; and, as if that were not enough, fairly burnt my ships, and brought bankruptcy home to that last refuge, my garret. The porter would expect his money; I could not pay him; here was scandal in the house; and I knew right well the cause of scandal would have to pack. "What do you mean by calling my honesty in question?" I had cried the day before, turning upon Myner. Ah, that day before! the day before Waterloo, the day before the Flood; the day before I had sold the roof over my head, my future, and my self-respect, for a dinner at the Cafe Cluny!

In the midst of these lamentations the famous registered letter came to my door, with healing under its seals. It bore the postmark of San Francisco, where Pinkerton was already struggling to the neck in multifarious affairs: it renewed the offer of an allowance, which his improved estate permitted him to announce at the figure of two hundred francs a month; and in case I was in some immediate pinch, it enclosed an introductory draft for forty dollars. There are a thousand excellent reasons why a man, in this self-helpful epoch, should decline to be dependent on another; but the most numerous and cogent considerations all bow to a necessity as stern as mine; and the banks were scarce open ere the draft was cashed.

It was early in December that I thus sold myself into slavery; and for six months I dragged a slowly lengthening chain of gratitude and uneasiness. At the cost of some debt I managed to excel myself and eclipse the Genius of Muskegon, in a small but highly patriotic Standard Bearer for the Salon; whither it was duly admitted, where it stood the proper length of days entirely unremarked, and whence it came back to me as patriotic as before. I threw my whole soul (as Pinkerton would have phrased it) into clocks and candlesticks; the devil a candlestick-maker would have anything to say to my designs. Even when Dijon, with his infinite good humour and infinite scorn for all such journey-work, consented to peddle them in indiscriminately with his own, the dealers still detected and rejected mine. Home they returned to me, true as the Standard Bearer; who now, at the head of quite a regiment of lesser idols, began to grow an eyesore in the scanty studio of my friend. Dijon and I have sat by the hour, and gazed upon that company of images. The severe, the frisky, the classical, the Louis Quinze, were there — from Joan of Arc in her soldierly cuirass to Leda with the swan; nay, and God forgive me for a man that knew better! the humorous was represented also. We sat and gazed, I say; we criticised, we turned them hither and thither; even upon the closest inspection they looked quite like statuettes; and yet nobody would have a gift of them!

Vanity dies hard; in some obstinate cases it outlives the man: but about the sixth month, when I already owed near two hundred dollars to Pinkerton, and half as much again in debts scattered about Paris, I awoke one morning with a horrid sentiment of oppression, and found I was alone: my vanity had breathed her last during the night. I dared not plunge deeper in the bog; I saw no hope in my poor statuary; I owned myself beaten at last; and sitting down in my nightshirt beside the window, whence I had a glimpse of the tree-tops at the corner of the boulevard, and where the music of its early traffic fell agreeably upon my ear, I penned my farewell to Paris, to art, to my whole past life, and my whole former self. “I give in,” I wrote. “When the next allowance arrives, I shall go straight out West, where you can do what you like with me.”

It is to be understood that Pinkerton had been, in a sense, pressing me to come from the beginning; depicting his isolation among new acquaintances, “who have none of them your culture,” he wrote; expressing his friendship in terms so warm that it sometimes embarrassed me to think how poorly I could echo them; dwelling upon his need for assistance; and the next moment turning about to commend my resolution and press me to remain in Paris. “Only remember, Loudon,” he would write, “if you ever DO tire of it, there’s plenty of work here for you — honest, hard, well-paid work, developing the resources of this practically virgin State. And of course I needn’t say what a pleasure it would be to me if we were going at it SHOULDER TO SHOULDER.” I marvel (looking back) that I could so long have resisted these appeals, and continue to sink my friend’s money in a manner that I knew him to dislike. At least, when I did awake to any sense of my position, I awoke to it entirely; and determined not only to follow his counsel for the future, but even as regards the past, to rectify his losses. For in this juncture of affairs I called to mind that I was not without a possible resource, and resolved, at whatever cost of mortification, to beard the Loudon family in their historic city.

In the excellent Scots' phrase, I made a moonlight flitting, a thing never dignified, but in my case unusually easy. As I had scarce a pair of boots worth portage, I deserted the whole of my effects without a pang. Dijon fell heir to Joan of Arc, the Standard Bearer, and the Musketeers. He was present when I bought and frugally stocked my new portmanteau; and it was at the door of the trunk shop that I took my leave of him, for my last few hours in Paris must be spent alone. It was alone (and at a far higher figure than my finances warranted) that I discussed my dinner; alone that I took my ticket at Saint Lazare; all alone, though in a carriage full of people, that I watched the moon shine on the Seine flood with its tufted islets, on Rouen with her spires, and on the shipping in the harbour of Dieppe. When the first light of the morning called me from troubled slumbers on the deck, I beheld the dawn at first with pleasure; I watched with pleasure the green shores of England rising out of rosy haze; I took the salt air with delight into my nostrils; and then all came back to me; that I was no longer an artist, no longer myself; that I was leaving all I cared for, and returning to all that I detested, the slave of debt and gratitude, a public and a branded failure.

From this picture of my own disgrace and wretchedness, it is not wonderful if my mind turned with relief to the thought of Pinkerton, waiting for me, as I knew, with unwearied affection, and regarding me with a respect that I had never deserved, and might therefore fairly hope that I should never forfeit. The inequality of our relation struck me rudely. I must have been stupid, indeed, if I could have considered the history of that friendship without shame — I, who had given so little, who had accepted and profited by so much. I had the whole day before me in London, and I determined (at least in words) to set the balance somewhat straighter. Seated in the corner of a public place, and calling for sheet after sheet of paper, I poured forth the expression of my gratitude, my penitence for the past, my resolutions for the future. Till now, I told him, my course had been mere selfishness. I had been selfish to my father and to my friend, taking their help, and denying them (which was all they asked) the poor gratification of my company and countenance.

Wonderful are the consolations of literature! As soon as that letter was written and posted, the consciousness of virtue glowed in my veins like some rare vintage.

CHAPTER VI. IN WHICH I GO WEST.

I reached my uncle's door next morning in time to sit down with the family to breakfast. More than three years had intervened almost without mutation in that stationary household, since I had sat there first, a young American freshman, bewildered among unfamiliar dainties, Finnan haddock, kippered salmon, baps and mutton ham, and had wearied my mind in vain to guess what should be under the tea-cosey. If there were any change at all, it seemed that I had risen in the family esteem. My father's death once fittingly referred to, with a ceremonial lengthening of Scotch upper lips and wagging of the female head, the party launched at once (God help me) into the more cheerful topic of my own successes. They had been so pleased to hear such good accounts of me; I was quite a great man now; where was that beautiful statue of the Genius of Something or other? "You haven't it here? not here? Really?" asks the sprightliest of my cousins, shaking curls at me; as though it were likely I had brought it in a cab, or kept it concealed about my person like a birthday surprise. In the bosom of this family, unaccustomed to the tropical nonsense of the West, it became plain the *Sunday Herald* and poor, blethering Pinkerton had been accepted for their face. It is not possible to invent a circumstance that could have more depressed me; and I am conscious that I behaved all through that breakfast like a whipt schoolboy.

At length, the meal and family prayers being both happily over, I requested the favour of an interview with Uncle Adam on "the state of my affairs." At sound of this ominous expression, the good man's face conspicuously lengthened; and when my grandfather, having had the proposition repeated to him (for he was hard of hearing) announced his intention of being present at the interview, I could not but think that Uncle Adam's sorrow kindled into momentary irritation. Nothing, however, but the usual grim cordiality appeared upon the surface; and we all three passed ceremoniously to the adjoining library, a gloomy theatre for a depressing piece of business. My grandfather charged a clay pipe, and sat tremulously smoking in a corner of the fireless chimney; behind him, although the morning was both chill and dark, the window was partly open and the blind partly down: I cannot depict what an air he had of being out of place, like a man shipwrecked there. Uncle Adam had his station at the business table in the midst. Valuable rows of books looked down upon the place of torture; and I could hear sparrows chirping in the garden, and my sprightly cousin already banging the piano and pouring forth an acid stream of song from the drawing-room overhead.

It was in these circumstances that, with all brevity of speech and a certain boyish sullenness of manner, looking the while upon the floor, I informed my relatives of my financial situation: the amount I owed Pinkerton; the hopelessness of any maintenance from sculpture; the career offered me in the States; and how, before becoming more beholden to a stranger, I had judged it right to lay the case before my family.

"I am only sorry you did not come to me at first," said Uncle Adam. "I take the liberty to say it would have been more decent."

"I think so too, Uncle Adam," I replied; "but you must bear in mind I was ignorant in what light you might regard my application."

"I hope I would never turn my back on my own flesh and blood," he returned with emphasis; but to my anxious ear, with more of temper than affection. "I could never forget you were my sister's son. I regard this as a manifest duty. I have no choice but to accept the entire responsibility of the position you have made."

I did not know what else to do but murmur "thank you."

"Yes," he pursued, "and there is something providential in the circumstance that you come at the right time. In my old firm there is a vacancy; they call themselves Italian Warehousemen now," he continued, regarding me with a twinkle of humour; "so you may think yourself in luck: we were only grocers in my day. I shall place you there to-morrow."

"Stop a moment, Uncle Adam," I broke in. "This is not at all what I am asking. I ask you to pay Pinkerton, who is a poor man. I ask you to clear my feet of debt, not to arrange my life or any part of it."

"If I wished to be harsh, I might remind you that beggars cannot be choosers," said my uncle; "and as to managing your life, you have tried your own way already, and you see what you have made of it. You must now accept the guidance of those older and (whatever you may think of it) wiser than yourself. All these schemes of your friend (of whom I know nothing, by the by) and talk of openings in the West, I simply disregard. I have no idea whatever of your going troking across a continent on a wild-goose chase. In this situation, which I am fortunately able to place at your disposal, and which many a well-conducted young man would be glad to jump at, you will receive, to begin with, eighteen shillings a week."

"Eighteen shillings a week!" I cried. "Why, my poor friend gave me more than that for nothing!"

"And I think it is this very friend you are now trying to repay?" observed my uncle, with an air of one advancing a strong argument.

"Aadam!" said my grandfather.

"I'm vexed you should be present at this business," quoth Uncle Adam, swinging rather obsequiously towards the stonemason; "but I must remind you it is of your own seeking.”

“Aadam!” repeated the old man.

“Well, sir, I am listening,” says my uncle.

My grandfather took a puff or two in silence; and then, “Ye’re makin’ an awfu’ poor appearance, Aadam,” said he.

My uncle visibly reared at the affront. “I’m sorry you should think so,” said he, “and still more sorry you should say so before present company.”

“A believe that; A ken that, Aadam,” returned old Loudon, dryly; “and the curiis thing is, I’m no very carin’. See here, ma man,” he continued, addressing himself to me. “A’m your grandfaither, amn’t I not? Never you mind what Aadam says. A’ll see justice din ye. A’m rich.”

“Father,” said Uncle Adam, “I would like one word with you in private.”

I rose to go.

“Set down upon your hinderlands,” cried my grandfather, almost savagely. “If Aadam has anything to say, let him say it. It’s me that has the money here; and by Gravy! I’m goin’ to be obeyed.”

Upon this scurvy encouragement, it appeared that my uncle had no remark to offer: twice challenged to “speak out and be done with it,” he twice sullenly declined; and I may mention that about this period of the engagement, I began to be sorry for him.

“See here, then, Jeannie’s yin!” resumed my grandfather. “A’m goin’ to give ye a set-off. Your mither was always my fav’rite, for A never could agree with Aadam. A like ye fine yoursel’; there’s nae noansense aboot ye; ye’ve a fine nayteral idee of builder’s work; ye’ve been to France, where they tell me they’re grand at the stuccy. A splendid thing for ceilin’s, the stuccy! and it’s a vailyable disguise, too; A don’t believe there’s a builder in Scotland has used more stuccy than me. But as A was sayin’, if ye’ll follie that trade, with the capital that A’m goin’ to give ye, ye may live yet to be as rich as mysel’. Ye see, ye would have always had a share of it when A was gone; it appears ye’re needin’ it now; well, ye’ll get the less, as is only just and proper.”

Uncle Adam cleared his throat. “This is very handsome, father,” said he; “and I am sure Loudon feels it so. Very handsome, and as you say, very just; but will you allow me to say that it had better, perhaps, be put in black and white?”

The enmity always smouldering between the two men at this ill-judged interruption almost burst in flame. The stonemason turned upon his offspring, his long upper lip pulled down, for all the world, like a monkey’s. He stared a while in virulent silence; and then “Get Gregg!” said he.

The effect of these words was very visible. “He will be gone to his office," stammered my uncle.

"Get Gregg!" repeated my grandfather.

"I tell you, he will be gone to his office," reiterated Adam.

"And I tell ye, he's takin' his smoke," retorted the old man.

"Very well, then," cried my uncle, getting to his feet with some alacrity, as upon a sudden change of thought, "I will get him myself."

"Ye will not!" cried my grandfather. "Ye will sit there upon your hinderland."

"Then how the devil am I to get him?" my uncle broke forth, with not unnatural petulance.

My grandfather (having no possible answer) grinned at his son with the malice of a schoolboy; then he rang the bell.

"Take the garden key," said Uncle Adam to the servant; "go over to the garden, and if Mr. Gregg the lawyer is there (he generally sits under the red hawthorn), give him old Mr. Loudon's compliments, and will he step in here for a moment?"

"Mr. Gregg the lawyer!" At once I understood (what had been puzzling me) the significance of my grandfather and the alarm of my poor uncle: the stonemason's will, it was supposed, hung trembling in the balance.

"Look here, grandfather," I said, "I didn't want any of this. All I wanted was a loan of (say) two hundred pounds. I can take care of myself; I have prospects and opportunities, good friends in the States — — "

The old man waved me down. "It's me that speaks here," he said curtly; and we waited the coming of the lawyer in a triple silence. He appeared at last, the maid ushering him in — a spectacled, dry, but not ungenial looking man.

"Here, Gregg," cried my grandfather. "Just a question: What has Aadam got to do with my will?"

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand," said the lawyer, staring.

"What has he got to do with it?" repeated the old man, smiting with his fist upon the arm of his chair. "Is my money mine's, or is it Aadam's? Can Aadam interfere?"

"O, I see," said Mr. Gregg. "Certainly not. On the marriage of both of your children a certain sum was paid down and accepted in full of legitim. You have surely not forgotten the circumstance, Mr. Loudon?"

"So that, if I like," concluded my grandfather, hammering out his words, "I can leave every doit I die possessed of to the Great Magunn?" — meaning probably the Great Mogul.

"No doubt of it," replied Gregg, with a shadow of a smile.

"Ye hear that, Aadam?" asked my grandfather.

"I may be allowed to say I had no need to hear it," said my uncle.

"Very well," says my grandfather. "You and Jeannie's yin can go for a bit walk. Me and Gregg has business."

When once I was in the hall alone with Uncle Adam, I turned to him, sick at heart. "Uncle Adam," I said, "you can understand, better than I can say, how very painful all this is to me."

"Yes, I am sorry you have seen your grandfather in so unamiable a light," replied this extraordinary man. "You shouldn't allow it to affect your mind though. He has sterling qualities, quite an extraordinary character; and I have no fear but he means to behave handsomely to you."

His composure was beyond my imitation: the house could not contain me, nor could I even promise to return to it: in concession to which weakness, it was agreed that I should call in about an hour at the office of the lawyer, whom (as he left the library) Uncle Adam should waylay and inform of the arrangement. I suppose there was never a more topsy-turvy situation: you would have thought it was I who had suffered some rebuff, and that iron-sided Adam was a generous conqueror who scorned to take advantage.

It was plain enough that I was to be endowed: to what extent and upon what conditions I was now left for an hour to meditate in the wide and solitary thoroughfares of the new town, taking counsel with street-corner statues of George IV. and William Pitt, improving my mind with the pictures in the window of a music-shop, and renewing my acquaintance with Edinburgh east wind. By the end of the hour I made my way to Mr. Gregg's office, where I was placed, with a few appropriate words, in possession of a cheque for two thousand pounds and a small parcel of architectural works.

"Mr. Loudon bids me add," continued the lawyer, consulting a little sheet of notes, "that although these volumes are very valuable to the practical builder, you must be careful not to lose originality. He tells you also not to be 'hadden doun' — his own expression — by the theory of strains, and that Portland cement, properly sanded, will go a long way."

I smiled, and remarked that I supposed it would.

"I once lived in one of my excellent client's houses," observed the lawyer; "and I was tempted, in that case, to think it had gone far enough."

"Under these circumstances, sir," said I, "you will be rather relieved to hear that I have no intention of becoming a builder."

At this, he fairly laughed; and, the ice being broken, I was able to consult him as to my conduct. He insisted I must return to the house, at least, for luncheon, and one of my walks with Mr. Loudon. "For the evening, I will furnish you with an excuse, if you please," said he, "by asking you to a bachelor dinner with myself. But the luncheon and the walk are unavoidable. He is an old man, and, I believe, really fond of you; he would naturally feel aggrieved if there were any appearance of avoiding him; and as for Mr. Adam, do you know, I think your delicacy out of place.... And now, Mr. Dodd, what are you to do with this money?"

Ay, there was the question. With two thousand pounds — fifty thousand francs — I might return to Paris and the arts, and be a prince and millionaire in that thrifty Latin Quarter. I think I had the grace, with one corner of my mind, to be glad that I had sent the London letter: I know very well that with the rest and worst of me, I repented bitterly of that precipitate act. On one point, however, my whole multiplex estate of man was unanimous: the letter being gone, there was no help but I must follow. The money was accordingly divided in two unequal shares: for the first, Mr. Gregg got me a bill in the name of Dijon to meet my liabilities in Paris; for the second, as I had already cash in hand for the expenses of my journey, he supplied me with drafts on San Francisco.

The rest of my business in Edinburgh, not to dwell on a very agreeable dinner with the lawyer or the horrors of the family luncheon, took the form of an excursion with the stonemason, who led me this time to no suburb or work of his old hands, but with an impulse both natural and pretty, to that more enduring home which he had chosen for his clay. It was in a cemetery, by some strange chance, immured within the bulwarks of a prison; standing, besides, on the margin of a cliff, crowded with elderly stone memorials, and green with turf and ivy. The east wind (which I thought too harsh for the old man) continually shook the boughs, and the thin sun of a Scottish summer drew their dancing shadows.

"I wanted ye to see the place," said he. "Yon's the stane. Euphemia Ross: that was my goodwife, your grandmither — hoots! I'm wrong; that was my first yin; I had no bairns by her; — yours is the second, Mary Murray, Born 1819, Died 1850: that's her — a fine, plain, decent sort of a creature, tak' her athegether. Alexander Loudon, Born Seventeen Ninety-Twa, Died — and then a hole in the ballant: that's me. Alexander's my name. They ca'd me Ecky when I was a boy. Eh, Ecky! ye're an awfu' auld man!"

I had a second and sadder experience of graveyards at my next alighting-place, the city of Muskegon, now rendered conspicuous by the dome of the new capitol encaged in scaffolding. It was late in the afternoon when I arrived, and raining; and as I walked in great streets, of the very name of which I was quite ignorant — double, treble, and quadruple lines of horse-cars jingling by — hundred-fold wires of telegraph and telephone matting heaven above my head — huge, staring houses, garish and gloomy, flanking me from either hand — the thought of the Rue Racine, ay, and of the cabman's eating-house, brought tears to my eyes. The whole monotonous Babel had grown, or I should rather say swelled, with such a leap since my departure, that I must continually inquire my way; and the very cemetery was brand new. Death, however, had been active; the graves were already numerous, and I must pick my way in the rain, among the tawdry sepulchres of millionnaires, and past the plain black crosses of Hungarian labourers, till chance or instinct led me to the place that was my father's. The stone had been erected (I knew already) "by admiring friends"; I could now judge their taste in monuments; their taste in literature, methought, I could imagine, and I refrained from drawing near enough to read the terms of the inscription. But the name was in larger letters and stared at me — JAMES K. DODD. What a singular thing is a name, I thought; how it clings to a man, and continually misrepresents, and then survives him; and it flashed across my mind, with a mixture of regret and bitter mirth, that I had never known, and now probably never should know, what the K had represented. King, Kilter, Kay, Kaiser, I went, running over names at random, and then stumbled with ludicrous misspelling on Kornelius, and had nearly laughed aloud. I have never been more childish; I suppose (although the deeper voices of my nature seemed all dumb) because I have never been more moved. And at this last incongruous antic of my nerves, I was seized with a panic of remorse and fled the cemetery.

Scarce less funereal was the rest of my experience in Muskegon, where, nevertheless, I lingered, visiting my father's circle, for some days. It was in piety to him I lingered; and I might have spared myself the pain. His memory was already quite gone out. For his sake, indeed, I was made welcome; and for mine the conversation rolled awhile with laborious effort on the virtues of the deceased. His former comrades dwelt, in my company, upon his business talents or his generosity for public purposes; when my back was turned, they remembered him no more. My father had loved me; I had left him alone to live and die among the indifferent; now I returned to find him dead and buried and forgotten. Unavailing penitence translated itself in my thoughts to fresh resolve. There was another poor soul who loved me: Pinkerton. I must not be guilty twice of the same error.

A week perhaps had been thus wasted, nor had I prepared my friend for the delay. Accordingly, when I had changed trains at Council Bluffs, I was aware of a man appearing at the end of the car with a telegram in his hand and inquiring whether there were any one aboard "of the name of LONDON Dodd?" I thought the name near enough, claimed the despatch, and found it was from Pinkerton: "What day do you arrive? Awfully important." I sent him an answer giving day and hour, and at Ogden found a fresh despatch awaiting me: “That will do. Unspeakable relief. Meet you at Sacramento.” In Paris days I had a private name for Pinkerton: “The Irrepressible” was what I had called him in hours of bitterness, and the name rose once more on my lips. What mischief was he up to now? What new bowl was my benignant monster brewing for his Frankenstein? In what new imbroglio should I alight on the Pacific coast? My trust in the man was entire, and my distrust perfect. I knew he would never mean amiss; but I was convinced he would almost never (in my sense) do aright.

I suppose these vague anticipations added a shade of gloom to that already gloomy place of travel: Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, scowled in my face at least, and seemed to point me back again to that other native land of mine, the Latin Quarter. But when the Sierras had been climbed, and the train, after so long beating and panting, stretched itself upon the downward track — when I beheld that vast extent of prosperous country rolling seaward from the woods and the blue mountains, that illimitable spread of rippling corn, the trees growing and blowing in the merry weather, the country boys thronging aboard the train with figs and peaches, and the conductors, and the very darky stewards, visibly exulting in the change — up went my soul like a balloon; Care fell from his perch upon my shoulders; and when I spied my Pinkerton among the crowd at Sacramento, I thought of nothing but to shout and wave for him, and grasp him by the hand, like what he was — my dearest friend.

“O Loudon!” he cried. “Man, how I’ve pined for you! And you haven’t come an hour too soon. You’re known here and waited for; I’ve been booming you already; you’re billed for a lecture to-morrow night: *Student Life in Paris, Grave and Gay*: twelve hundred places booked at the last stock! Tut, man, you’re looking thin! Here, try a drop of this.” And he produced a case bottle, staringly labelled PINKERTON’S THIRTEEN STAR GOLDEN STATE BRANDY, WARRANTED ENTIRE.

“God bless me!” said I, gasping and winking after my first plunge into this fiery fluid. “And what does ‘Warranted Entire’ mean?”

“Why, Loudon! you ought to know that!” cried Pinkerton. “It’s real, copper-bottomed English; you see it on all the old-time wayside hostelries over there.”

“But if I’m not mistaken, it means something Warranted Entirely different,” said I, “and applies to the public house, and not the beverages sold.”

“It’s very possible,” said Jim, quite unabashed. “It’s effective, anyway; and I can tell you, sir, it has boomed that spirit: it goes now by the gross of cases. By the way, I hope you won’t mind; I’ve got your portrait all over San Francisco for the lecture, enlarged from that carte de visite: H. Loudon Dodd, the Americo-Parisienne Sculptor. Here's a proof of the small handbills; the posters are the same, only in red and blue, and the letters fourteen by one."

I looked at the handbill, and my head turned. What was the use of words? why seek to explain to Pinkerton the knotted horrors of "Americo-Parisienne"? He took an early occasion to point it out as "rather a good phrase; gives the two sides at a glance: I wanted the lecture written up to that." Even after we had reached San Francisco, and at the actual physical shock of my own effigy placarded on the streets I had broken forth in petulant words, he never comprehended in the least the ground of my aversion.

"If I had only known you disliked red lettering!" was as high as he could rise. "You are perfectly right: a clear-cut black is preferable, and shows a great deal further. The only thing that pains me is the portrait: I own I thought that a success. I'm dreadfully and truly sorry, my dear fellow: I see now it's not what you had a right to expect; but I did it, Loudon, for the best; and the press is all delighted."

At the moment, sweeping through green tule swamps, I fell direct on the essential. "But, Pinkerton," I cried, "this lecture is the maddest of your madnesses. How can I prepare a lecture in thirty hours?"

"All done, Loudon!" he exclaimed in triumph. "All ready. Trust me to pull a piece of business through. You'll find it all type-written in my desk at home. I put the best talent of San Francisco on the job: Harry Miller, the brightest pressman in the city."

And so he rattled on, beyond reach of my modest protestations, blurting out his complicated interests, crying up his new acquaintances, and ever and again hungering to introduce me to some "whole-souled, grand fellow, as sharp as a needle," from whom, and the very thought of whom, my spirit shrank instinctively.

Well, I was in for it: in for Pinkerton, in for the portrait, in for the type-written lecture. One promise I extorted — that I was never again to be committed in ignorance; even for that, when I saw how its extortion puzzled and depressed the Irrepressible, my soul repented me; and in all else I suffered myself to be led uncomplaining at his chariot wheels. The Irrepressible, did I say? The Irresistible were nigher truth.

But the time to have seen me was when I sat down to Harry Miller's lecture. He was a facetious dog, this Harry Miller; he had a gallant way of skirting the indecent which (in my case) produced physical nausea; and he could be sentimental and even melodramatic about grisettes and starving genius. I found he had enjoyed the benefit of my correspondence with Pinkerton: adventures of my own were here and there horridly misrepresented, sentiments of my own echoed and exaggerated till I blushed to recognise them. I will do Harry Miller justice: he must have had a kind of talent, almost of genius; all attempts to lower his tone proving fruitless, and the Harry-Millerism ineradicable. Nay, the monster had a certain key of style, or want of style, so that certain milder passages, which I sought to introduce, discorded horribly, and impoverished (if that were possible) the general effect.

By an early hour of the numbered evening I might have been observed at the sign of the Poodle Dog, dining with my agent: so Pinkerton delighted to describe himself. Thence, like an ox to the slaughter, he led me to the hall, where I stood presently alone, confronting assembled San Francisco, with no better allies than a table, a glass of water, and a mass of manuscript and typework, representing Harry Miller and myself. I read the lecture; for I had lacked both time and will to get the trash by heart — read it hurriedly, humbly, and with visible shame. Now and then I would catch in the auditorium an eye of some intelligence, now and then, in the manuscript, would stumble on a richer vein of Harry Miller, and my heart would fail me, and I gabbled. The audience yawned, it stirred uneasily, it muttered, grumbled, and broke forth at last in articulate cries of “Speak up!” and “Nobody can hear!” I took to skipping, and being extremely ill-acquainted with the country, almost invariably cut in again in the unintelligible midst of some new topic. What struck me as extremely ominous, these misfortunes were allowed to pass without a laugh. Indeed, I was beginning to fear the worst, and even personal indignity, when all at once the humour of the thing broke upon me strongly. I could have laughed aloud; and being again summoned to speak up, I faced my patrons for the first time with a smile. “Very well,” I said, “I will try, though I don’t suppose anybody wants to hear, and I can’t see why anybody should.” Audience and lecturer laughed together till the tears ran down; vociferous and repeated applause hailed my impromptu sally. Another hit which I made but a little after, as I turned three pages of the copy: “You see, I am leaving out as much as I possibly can,” increased the esteem with which my patrons had begun to regard me; and when I left the stage at last, my departing form was cheered with laughter, stamping, shouting, and the waving of hats.

Pinkerton was in the waiting-room, feverishly jotting in his pocket-book. As he saw me enter, he sprang up, and I declare the tears were trickling on his cheeks.

“My dear boy,” he cried, “I can never forgive myself, and you can never forgive me. Never mind: I did it for the best. And how nobly you clung on! I dreaded we should have had to return the money at the doors.”

“It would have been more honest if we had,” said I.

The pressmen followed me, Harry Miller in the front ranks; and I was amazed to find them, on the whole, a pleasant set of lads, probably more sinned against than sinning, and even Harry Miller apparently a gentleman. I had in oysters and champagne — for the receipts were excellent — and being in a high state of nervous tension, kept the table in a roar. Indeed, I was never in my life so well inspired as when I described my vigil over Harry Miller's literature or the series of my emotions as I faced the audience. The lads vowed I was the soul of good company and the prince of lecturers; and — so wonderful an institution is the popular press — if you had seen the notices next day in all the papers, you must have supposed my evening's entertainment an unqualified success.

I was in excellent spirits when I returned home that night, but the miserable Pinkerton sorrowed for us both.

"O, Loudon," he said, "I shall never forgive myself. When I saw you didn't catch on to the idea of the lecture, I should have given it myself!"

CHAPTER VII. IRONS IN THE FIRE.

Opes Strepitumque.

The food of the body differs not so greatly for the fool or the sage, the elephant or the cock-sparrow; and similar chemical elements, variously disguised, support all mortals. A brief study of Pinkerton in his new setting convinced me of a kindred truth about that other and mental digestion, by which we extract what is called “fun for our money” out of life. In the same spirit as a schoolboy, deep in Mayne Reid, handles a dummy gun and crawls among imaginary forests, Pinkerton sped through Kearney Street upon his daily business, representing to himself a highly coloured part in life’s performance, and happy for hours if he should have chanced to brush against a millionnaire. Reality was his romance; he gloried to be thus engaged; he wallowed in his business. Suppose a man to dig up a galleon on the Coromandel coast, his rakish schooner keeping the while an offing under easy sail, and he, by the blaze of a great fire of wreckwood, to measure ingots by the bucketful on the uproarious beach: such an one might realise a greater material spoil; he should have no more profit of romance than Pinkerton when he cast up his weekly balance-sheet in a bald office. Every dollar gained was like something brought ashore from a mysterious deep; every venture made was like a diver’s plunge; and as he thrust his bold hand into the plexus of the money-market, he was delightedly aware of how he shook the pillars of existence, turned out men (as at a battle-cry) to labour in far countries, and set the gold twitching in the drawers of millionnaires.

I could never fathom the full extent of his speculations; but there were five separate businesses which he avowed and carried like a banner. The Thirteen Star Golden State Brandy, Warranted Entire (a very flagrant distillation) filled a great part of his thoughts, and was kept before the public in an eloquent but misleading treatise: *Why Drink French Brandy? A Word to the Wise.* He kept an office for advertisers, counselling, designing, acting as middleman with printers and bill-stickers, for the inexperienced or the uninspired: the dull haberdasher came to him for ideas, the smart theatrical agent for his local knowledge; and one and all departed with a copy of his pamphlet: *How, When, and Where; or, the Advertiser’s Vade-Mecum.* He had a tug chartered every Saturday afternoon and night, carried people outside the Heads, and provided them with lines and bait for six hours’ fishing, at the rate of five dollars a person. I am told that some of them (doubtless adroit anglers) made a profit on the transaction. Occasionally he bought wrecks and condemned vessels; these latter (I cannot tell you how) found their way to sea again under aliases, and continued to stem the waves triumphantly enough under the colours of Bolivia or Nicaragua. Lastly, there was a certain agricultural engine, glorying in a great deal of vermilion and blue paint, and filling (it appeared) a "long-felt want," in which his interest was something like a tenth.

This for the face or front of his concerns. "On the outside," as he phrased it, he was variously and mysteriously engaged. No dollar slept in his possession; rather he kept all simultaneously flying like a conjurer with oranges. My own earnings, when I began to have a share, he would but show me for a moment, and disperse again, like those illusive money gifts which are flashed in the eyes of childhood only to be entombed in the missionary box. And he would come down radiant from a weekly balance-sheet, clap me on the shoulder, declare himself a winner by Gargantuan figures, and prove destitute of a quarter for a drink.

"What on earth have you done with it?" I would ask.

"Into the mill again; all re-invested!" he would cry, with infinite delight. Investment was ever his word. He could not bear what he called gambling. "Never touch stocks, Loudon," he would say; "nothing but legitimate business." And yet, Heaven knows, many an indurated gambler might have drawn back appalled at the first hint of some of Pinkerton's investments! One, which I succeeded in tracking home, and instance for a specimen, was a seventh share in the charter of a certain ill-starred schooner bound for Mexico, to smuggle weapons on the one trip, and cigars upon the other. The latter end of this enterprise, involving (as it did) shipwreck, confiscation, and a lawsuit with the underwriters, was too painful to be dwelt upon at length. "It's proved a disappointment," was as far as my friend would go with me in words; but I knew, from observation, that the fabric of his fortunes tottered. For the rest, it was only by accident I got wind of the transaction; for Pinkerton, after a time, was shy of introducing me to his arcana: the reason you are to hear presently.

The office which was (or should have been) the point of rest for so many evolving dollars stood in the heart of the city: a high and spacious room, with many plate-glass windows. A glazed cabinet of polished redwood offered to the eye a regiment of some two hundred bottles, conspicuously labelled. These were all charged with Pinkerton's Thirteen Star, although from across the room it would have required an expert to distinguish them from the same number of bottles of Courvoisier. I used to twit my friend with this resemblance, and propose a new edition of the pamphlet, with the title thus improved: *Why Drink French Brandy, when we give you the same labels?* The doors of the cabinet revolved all day upon their hinges; and if there entered any one who was a stranger to the merits of the brand, he departed laden with a bottle. When I used to protest at this extravagance, “My dear Loudon,” Pinkerton would cry, “you don’t seem to catch on to business principles! The prime cost of the spirit is literally nothing. I couldn’t find a cheaper advertisement if I tried.” Against the side post of the cabinet there leaned a gaudy umbrella, preserved there as a relic. It appears that when Pinkerton was about to place Thirteen Star upon the market, the rainy season was at hand. He lay dark, almost in penury, awaiting the first shower, at which, as upon a signal, the main thoroughfares became dotted with his agents, vendors of advertisements; and the whole world of San Francisco, from the businessman fleeing for the ferry-boat, to the lady waiting at the corner for her car, sheltered itself under umbrellas with this strange device: Are you wet? Try Thirteen Star. “It was a mammoth boom,” said Pinkerton, with a sigh of delighted recollection. “There wasn’t another umbrella to be seen. I stood at this window, Loudon, feasting my eyes; and I declare, I felt like Vanderbilt.” And it was to this neat application of the local climate that he owed, not only much of the sale of Thirteen Star, but the whole business of his advertising agency.

The large desk (to resume our survey of the office) stood about the middle, knee-deep in stacks of handbills and posters, of *Why Drink French Brandy?* and *The Advertiser’s Vade-Mecum.* It was flanked upon the one hand by two female type-writers, who rested not between the hours of nine and four, and upon the other by a model of the agricultural machine. The walls, where they were not broken by telephone boxes and a couple of photographs — one representing the wreck of the James L. Moody on a bold and broken coast, the other the Saturday tug alive with amateur fishers — almost disappeared under oil-paintings gaudily framed. Many of these were relics of the Latin Quarter, and I must do Pinkerton the justice to say that none of them were bad, and some had remarkable merit. They went off slowly but for handsome figures; and their places were progressively supplied with the work of local artists. These last it was one of my first duties to review and criticise. Some of them were villainous, yet all were saleable. I said so; and the next moment saw myself, the figure of a miserable renegade, bearing arms in the wrong camp. I was to look at pictures thenceforward, not with the eye of the artist, but the dealer; and I saw the stream widen that divided me from all I loved.

“Now, Loudon,” Pinkerton had said, the morning after the lecture, “now Loudon, we can go at it shoulder to shoulder. This is what I have longed for: I wanted two heads and four arms; and now I have ‘em. You’ll find it’s just the same as art — all observation and imagination; only more movement. Just wait till you begin to feel the charm!”

I might have waited long. Perhaps I lack a sense; for our whole existence seemed to me one dreary bustle, and the place we bustled in fitly to be called the Place of Yawning. I slept in a little den behind the office; Pinkerton, in the office itself, stretched on a patent sofa which sometimes collapsed, his slumbers still further menaced by an imminent clock with an alarm. Roused by this diabolical contrivance, we rose early, went forth early to breakfast, and returned by nine to what Pinkerton called work, and I distraction. Masses of letters must be opened, read, and answered; some by me at a subsidiary desk which had been introduced on the morning of my arrival; others by my bright-eyed friend, pacing the room like a caged lion as he dictated to the tinkling type-writers. Masses of wet proof had to be overhauled and scrawled upon with a blue pencil — ”rustic” — ”six-inch caps” — ”bold spacing here” — or sometimes terms more fervid, as for instance this, which I remember Pinkerton to have spirted on the margin of an advertisement of Soothing Syrup: “Throw this all down. Have you never printed an advertisement? I’ll be round in half an hour.” The ledger and sale-book, besides, we had always with us. Such was the backbone of our occupation, and tolerable enough; but the far greater proportion of our time was consumed by visitors, whole-souled, grand fellows no doubt, and as sharp as a needle, but to me unfortunately not diverting. Some were apparently half-witted, and must be talked over by the hour before they could reach the humblest decision, which they only left the office to return again (ten minutes later) and rescind. Others came with a vast show of hurry and despatch, but I observed it to be principally show. The agricultural model for instance, which was practicable, proved a kind of flypaper for these busybodies. I have seen them blankly turn the crank of it for five minutes at a time, simulating (to nobody’s deception) business interest: “Good thing this, Pinkerton? Sell much of it? Ha! Couldn’t use it, I suppose, as a medium of advertisement for my article?” — which was perhaps toilet soap. Others (a still worse variety) carried us to neighbouring saloons to dice for cocktails and (after the cocktails were paid) for dollars on a corner of the counter. The attraction of dice for all these people was indeed extraordinary: at a certain club, where I once dined in the character of “my partner, Mr. Dodd,” the dice-box came on the table with the wine, an artless substitute for after-dinner wit.

Of all our visitors, I believe I preferred Emperor Norton; the very mention of whose name reminds me I am doing scanty justice to the folks of San Francisco. In what other city would a harmless madman who supposed himself emperor of the two Americas have been so fostered and encouraged? Where else would even the people of the streets have respected the poor soul’s illusion? Where else would bankers and merchants have received his visits, cashed his cheques, and submitted to his small assessments? Where else would he have been suffered to attend and address the exhibition days of schools and colleges? where else, in God's green earth, have taken his pick of restaurants, ransacked the bill of fare, and departed scathless? They tell me he was even an exacting patron, threatening to withdraw his custom when dissatisfied; and I can believe it, for his face wore an expression distinctly gastronomical. Pinkerton had received from this monarch a cabinet appointment; I have seen the brevet, wondering mainly at the good nature of the printer who had executed the forms, and I think my friend was at the head either of foreign affairs or education: it mattered, indeed, nothing, the presentation being in all offices identical. It was at a comparatively early date that I saw Jim in the exercise of his public functions. His Majesty entered the office — a portly, rather flabby man, with the face of a gentleman, rendered unspeakably pathetic and absurd by the great sabre at his side and the peacock's feather in his hat.

"I have called to remind you, Mr. Pinkerton, that you are somewhat in arrear of taxes," he said, with old-fashioned, stately courtesy.

"Well, your Majesty, what is the amount?" asked Jim; and when the figure was named (it was generally two or three dollars), paid upon the nail and offered a bonus in the shape of Thirteen Star.

"I am always delighted to patronise native industries," said Norton the First. "San Francisco is public-spirited in what concerns its Emperor; and indeed, sir, of all my domains, it is my favourite city."

"Come," said I, when he was gone, "I prefer that customer to the lot."

"It's really rather a distinction," Jim admitted. "I think it must have been the umbrella racket that attracted him."

We were distinguished under the rose by the notice of other and greater men. There were days when Jim wore an air of unusual capacity and resolve, spoke with more brevity like one pressed for time, and took often on his tongue such phrases as "Longhurst told me so this morning," or "I had it straight from Longhurst himself." It was no wonder, I used to think, that Pinkerton was called to council with such Titans; for the creature's quickness and resource were beyond praise. In the early days when he consulted me without reserve, pacing the room, projecting, ciphering, extending hypothetical interests, trebling imaginary capital, his "engine" (to renew an excellent old word) labouring full steam ahead, I could never decide whether my sense of respect or entertainment were the stronger. But these good hours were destined to curtailment.

"Yes, it's smart enough," I once observed. "But, Pinkerton, do you think it's honest?"

"You don't think it's honest!" he wailed. "O dear me, that ever I should have heard such an expression on your lips!"

At sight of his distress, I plagiarised unblushingly from Myner. "You seem to think honesty as simple as Blind Man's Buff," said I. "It's a more delicate affair than that: delicate as any art."

"O well! at that rate!" he exclaimed, with complete relief. "That's casuistry."

"I am perfectly certain of one thing: that what you propose is dishonest," I returned.

"Well, say no more about it. That's settled," he replied.

Thus, almost at a word, my point was carried. But the trouble was that such differences continued to recur, until we began to regard each other with alarm. If there were one thing Pinkerton valued himself upon, it was his honesty; if there were one thing he clung to, it was my good opinion; and when both were involved, as was the case in these commercial cruces, the man was on the rack. My own position, if you consider how much I owed him, how hateful is the trade of fault-finder, and that yet I lived and fattened on these questionable operations, was perhaps equally distressing. If I had been more sterling or more combative things might have gone extremely far. But, in truth, I was just base enough to profit by what was not forced on my attention, rather than seek scenes: Pinkerton quite cunning enough to avail himself of my weakness; and it was a relief to both when he began to involve his proceedings in a decent mystery.

Our last dispute, which had a most unlooked-for consequence, turned on the refitting of condemned ships. He had bought a miserable hulk, and came, rubbing his hands, to inform me she was already on the slip, under a new name, to be repaired. When first I had heard of this industry I suppose I scarcely comprehended; but much discussion had sharpened my faculties, and now my brow became heavy.

"I can be no party to that, Pinkerton," said I.

He leaped like a man shot. "What next?" he cried. "What ails you, anyway? You seem to me to dislike everything that's profitable."

"This ship has been condemned by Lloyd's agent," said I.

"But I tell you it's a deal. The ship's in splendid condition; there's next to nothing wrong with her but the garboard streak and the sternpost. I tell you Lloyd's is a ring like everybody else; only it's an English ring, and that's what deceives you. If it was American, you would be crying it down all day. It's Anglomania, common Anglomania," he cried, with growing irritation.

"I will not make money by risking men's lives," was my ultimatum.

"Great Caesar! isn't all speculation a risk? Isn't the fairest kind of shipowning to risk men's lives? And mining — how's that for risk? And look at the elevator business — there's danger, if you like! Didn't

I take my risk when I bought her? She might have been too far gone; and where would I have been? Loudon," he cried, "I tell you the truth: you're too full of refinement for this world!"

"I condemn you out of your own lips," I replied. "'The fairest kind of shipowning,' says you. If you please, let us only do the fairest kind of business."

The shot told; the Irrepressible was silenced; and I profited by the chance to pour in a broadside of another sort. He was all sunk in money-getting, I pointed out; he never dreamed of anything but dollars. Where were all his generous, progressive sentiments? Where was his culture? I asked. And where was the American Type?

"It's true, Loudon," he cried, striding up and down the room, and wildly scouring at his hair. "You're perfectly right. I'm becoming materialised. O, what a thing to have to say, what a confession to make! Materialised! Me! Loudon, this must go on no longer. You've been a loyal friend to me once more; give me your hand! — you've saved me again. I must do something to rouse the spiritual side; something desperate; study something, something dry and tough. What shall it be? Theology? Algebra? What's Algebra?"

"It's dry and tough enough," said I; "a squared + 2ab + b squared."

"It's stimulating, though?" he inquired.

I told him I believed so, and that it was considered fortifying to Types.

"Then that's the thing for me. I'll study Algebra," he concluded.

The next day, by application to one of his type-writing women, he got word of a young lady, one Miss Mamie McBride, who was willing and able to conduct him in these bloomless meadows; and, her circumstances being lean, and terms consequently moderate, he and Mamie were soon in agreement for two lessons in the week. He took fire with unexampled rapidity; he seemed unable to tear himself away from the symbolic art; an hour's lesson occupied the whole evening; and the original two was soon increased to four, and then to five. I bade him beware of female blandishments. "The first thing you know, you'll be falling in love with the algebraist," said I.

"Don't say it even in jest," he cried. "She's a lady I revere. I could no more lay a hand upon her than I could upon a spirit. Loudon, I don't believe God ever made a purer-minded woman."

Which appeared to me too fervent to be reassuring.

Meanwhile I had been long expostulating with my friend upon a different matter. "I'm the fifth wheel," I kept telling him. "For any use I am, I might as well be in Senegambia. The letters you give me to attend to might be answered by a sucking child. And I tell you what it is, Pinkerton: either you've got to find me some employment, or I'll have to start in and find it for myself.”

This I said with a corner of my eye in the usual quarter, toward the arts, little dreaming what destiny was to provide.

“I’ve got it, Loudon,” Pinkerton at last replied. “Got the idea on the Potrero cars. Found I hadn’t a pencil, borrowed one from the conductor, and figured on it roughly all the way in town. I saw it was the thing at last; gives you a real show. All your talents and accomplishments come in. Here’s a sketch advertisement. Just run your eye over it. ‘Sun, Ozone, and Music! PINKERTON’S HEBDOMADARY PICNICS!’ (That’s a good, catching phrase, ‘hebdomadary,’ though it’s hard to say. I made a note of it when I was looking in the dictionary how to spell hectagonal. ‘Well, you’re a boss word,’ I said. ‘Before you’re very much older, I’ll have you in type as long as yourself.’ And here it is, you see.) ‘Five dollars a head, and ladies free. MONSTER OLIO OF ATTRACTIONS.’ (How does that strike you?) ‘Free luncheon under the greenwood tree. Dance on the elastic sward. Home again in the Bright Evening Hours. Manager and Honorary Steward, H. Loudon Dodd, Esq., the well-known connoisseur.’“

Singular how a man runs from Scylla to Charybdis! I was so intent on securing the disappearance of a single epithet that I accepted the rest of the advertisement and all that it involved without discussion. So it befell that the words “well-known connoisseur” were deleted; but that H. Loudon Dodd became manager and honorary steward of Pinkerton’s Hebdomadary Picnics, soon shortened, by popular consent, to the Dromedary.

By eight o’clock, any Sunday morning, I was to be observed by an admiring public on the wharf. The garb and attributes of sacrifice consisted of a black frock coat, rosetted, its pockets bulging with sweetmeats and inferior cigars, trousers of light blue, a silk hat like a reflector, and a varnished wand. A goodly steamer guarded my one flank, panting and throbbing, flags fluttering fore and aft of her, illustrative of the Dromedary and patriotism. My other flank was covered by the ticket-office, strongly held by a trusty character of the Scots persuasion, rosetted like his superior and smoking a cigar to mark the occasion festive. At half-past, having assured myself that all was well with the free luncheons, I lit a cigar myself, and awaited the strains of the “Pioneer Band.” I had never to wait long — they were German and punctual — and by a few minutes after the half-hour, I would hear them booming down street with a long military roll of drums, some score of gratuitous asses prancing at the head in bearskin hats and buckskin aprons, and conspicuous with resplendent axes. The band, of course, we paid for; but so strong is the San Franciscan passion for public masquerade, that the asses (as I say) were all gratuitous, pranced for the love of it, and cost us nothing but their luncheon.

The musicians formed up in the bows of my steamer, and struck into a skittish polka; the asses mounted guard upon the gangway and the ticket-office; and presently after, in family parties of father, mother, and children, in the form of duplicate lovers or in that of solitary youth, the public began to descend upon us by the carful at a time; four to six hundred perhaps, with a strong German flavour, and all merry as children. When these had been shepherded on board, and the inevitable belated two or three had gained the deck amidst the cheering of the public, the hawser was cast off, and we plunged into the bay.

And now behold the honorary steward in hour of duty and glory; see me circulate amid crowd, radiating affability and laughter, liberal with my sweetmeats and cigars. I say unblushing things to hobbledehoy girls, tell shy young persons this is the married people's boat, roguishly ask the abstracted if they are thinking of their sweethearts, offer Paterfamilias a cigar, am struck with the beauty and grow curious about the age of mamma's youngest who (I assure her gaily) will be a man before his mother; or perhaps it may occur to me, from the sensible expression of her face, that she is a person of good counsel, and I ask her earnestly if she knows any particularly pleasant place on the Saucelito or San Rafael coast, for the scene of our picnic is always supposed to be uncertain. The next moment I am back at my giddy badinage with the young ladies, wakening laughter as I go, and leaving in my wake applausive comments of "Isn't Mr. Dodd a funny gentleman?" and "O, I think he's just too nice!"

An hour having passed in this airy manner, I start upon my rounds afresh, with a bag full of coloured tickets, all with pins attached, and all with legible inscriptions: "Old Germany," "California," "True Love," "Old Fogies," "La Belle France," "Green Erin," "The Land of Cakes," "Washington," "Blue Jay," "Robin Red-Breast," — twenty of each denomination; for when it comes to the luncheon, we sit down by twenties. These are distributed with anxious tact — for, indeed, this is the most delicate part of my functions — but outwardly with reckless unconcern, amidst the gayest flutter and confusion; and are immediately after sported upon hats and bonnets, to the extreme diffusion of cordiality, total strangers hailing each other by "the number of their mess" — so we humorously name it — and the deck ringing with cries of, "Here, all Blue Jays to the rescue!" or, "I say, am I alone in this blame' ship? Ain't there no more Californians?"

By this time we are drawing near to the appointed spot. I mount upon the bridge, the observed of all observers.

"Captain," I say, in clear, emphatic tones, heard far and wide, "the majority of the company appear to be in favour of the little cove beyond One Tree Point."

"All right, Mr. Dodd," responds the captain, heartily; "all one to me. I am not exactly sure of the place you mean; but just you stay here and pilot me."

I do, pointing with my wand. I do pilot him, to the inexpressible entertainment of the picnic; for I am (why should I deny it?) the popular man. We slow down off the mouth of a grassy valley, watered by a brook, and set in pines and redwoods. The anchor is let go; the boats are lowered, two of them already packed with the materials of an impromptu bar; and the Pioneer Band, accompanied by the resplendent asses, fill the other, and move shoreward to the inviting strains of Buffalo Gals, won't you come out to-night? It is a part of our programme that one of the asses shall, from sheer clumsiness, in the course of this embarkation, drop a dummy axe into the water, whereupon the mirth of the picnic can hardly be assuaged. Upon one occasion, the dummy axe floated, and the laugh turned rather the wrong way.

In from ten to twenty minutes the boats are along-side again, the messes are marshalled separately on the deck, and the picnic goes ashore, to find the band and the impromptu bar awaiting them. Then come the hampers, which are piled upon the beach, and surrounded by a stern guard of stalwart asses, axe on shoulder. It is here I take my place, note-book in hand, under a banner bearing the legend, "Come here for hampers." Each hamper contains a complete outfit for a separate twenty, cold provender, plates, glasses, knives, forks, and spoons: an agonized printed appeal from the fevered pen of Pinkerton, pasted on the inside of the lid, beseeches that care be taken of the glass and silver. Beer, wine, and lemonade are flowing already from the bar, and the various clans of twenty file away into the woods, with bottles under their arms, and the hampers strung upon a stick. Till one they feast there, in a very moderate seclusion, all being within earshot of the band. From one till four, dancing takes place upon the grass; the bar does a roaring business; and the honorary steward, who has already exhausted himself to bring life into the dullest of the messes, must now indefatigably dance with the plainest of the women. At four a bugle-call is sounded; and by half-past behold us on board again, pioneers, corrugated iron bar, empty bottles, and all; while the honorary steward, free at last, subsides into the captain's cabin over a brandy and soda and a book. Free at last, I say; yet there remains before him the frantic leave-takings at the pier, and a sober journey up to Pinkerton's office with two policemen and the day's takings in a bag.

What I have here sketched was the routine. But we appealed to the taste of San Francisco more distinctly in particular fetes. “Ye Olde Time Pycke-Nycke,” largely advertised in hand-bills beginning “Oyez, Oyez!” and largely frequented by knights, monks, and cavaliers, was drowned out by unseasonable rain, and returned to the city one of the saddest spectacles I ever remember to have witnessed. In pleasing contrast, and certainly our chief success, was “The Gathering of the Clans,” or Scottish picnic. So many milk-white knees were never before simultaneously exhibited in public, and to judge by the prevalence of “Royal Stewart” and the number of eagle’s feathers, we were a high-born company. I threw forward the Scottish flank of my own ancestry, and passed muster as a clansman with applause. There was, indeed, but one small cloud on this red-letter day. I had laid in a large supply of the national beverage, in the shape of The “Rob Roy MacGregor O” Blend, Warranted Old and Vatted; and this must certainly have been a generous spirit, for I had some anxious work between four and half-past, conveying on board the inanimate forms of chieftains.

To one of our ordinary festivities, where he was the life and soul of his own mess, Pinkerton himself came incognito, bringing the algebraist on his arm. Miss Mamie proved to be a well-enough-looking mouse, with a large, limpid eye, very good manners, and a flow of the most correct expressions I have ever heard upon the human lip. As Pinkerton’s incognito was strict, I had little opportunity to cultivate the lady’s acquaintance; but I was informed afterwards that she considered me “the wittiest gentleman she had ever met.” “The Lord mend your taste in wit!” thought I; but I cannot conceal that such was the general impression. One of my pleasantries even went the round of San Francisco, and I have heard it (myself all unknown) bandied in saloons. To be unknown began at last to be a rare experience; a bustle woke upon my passage; above all, in humble neighbourhoods. “Who’s that?” one would ask, and the other would cry, “That! Why, Dromedary Dodd!” or, with withering scorn, “Not know Mr. Dodd of the Picnics? Well!” and indeed I think it marked a rather barren destiny; for our picnics, if a trifle vulgar, were as gay and innocent as the age of gold; I am sure no people divert themselves so easily and so well: and even with the cares of my stewardship, I was often happy to be there.

Indeed, there were but two drawbacks in the least considerable. The first was my terror of the hobbledehoy girls, to whom (from the demands of my situation) I was obliged to lay myself so open. The other, if less momentous, was more mortifying. In early days, at my mother’s knee, as a man may say, I had acquired the unenviable accomplishment (which I have never since been able to lose) of singing *Just before the Battle.* I have what the French call a fillet of voice, my best notes scarce audible about a dinner-table, and the upper register rather to be regarded as a higher power of silence: experts tell me besides that I sing flat; nor, if I were the best singer in the world, does *Just before the Battle* occur to my mature taste as the song that I would choose to sing. In spite of all which considerations, at one picnic, memorably dull, and after I had exhausted every other art of pleasing, I gave, in desperation, my one song. From that hour my doom was gone forth. Either we had a chronic passenger (though I could never detect him), or the very wood and iron of the steamer must have retained the tradition. At every successive picnic word went round that Mr. Dodd was a singer; that Mr. Dodd sang *Just before the Battle*, and finally that now was the time when Mr. Dodd sang *Just before the Battle;* so that the thing became a fixture like the dropping of the dummy axe, and you are to conceive me, Sunday after Sunday, piping up my lamentable ditty and covered, when it was done, with gratuitous applause. It is a beautiful trait in human nature that I was invariably offered an encore.

I was well paid, however, even to sing. Pinkerton and I, after an average Sunday, had five hundred dollars to divide. Nay, and the picnics were the means, although indirectly, of bringing me a singular windfall. This was at the end of the season, after the “Grand Farewell Fancy Dress Gala.” Many of the hampers had suffered severely; and it was judged wiser to save storage, dispose of them, and lay in a fresh stock when the campaign re-opened. Among my purchasers was a workingman of the name of Speedy, to whose house, after several unavailing letters, I must proceed in person, wondering to find myself once again on the wrong side, and playing the creditor to some one else’s debtor. Speedy was in the belligerent stage of fear. He could not pay. It appeared he had already resold the hampers, and he defied me to do my worst. I did not like to lose my own money; I hated to lose Pinkerton’s; and the bearing of my creditor incensed me.

“Do you know, Mr. Speedy, that I can send you to the penitentiary?” said I, willing to read him a lesson.

The dire expression was overheard in the next room. A large, fresh, motherly Irishwoman ran forth upon the instant, and fell to besiege me with caresses and appeals. “Sure now, and ye couldn’t have the heart to ut, Mr. Dodd, you, that’s so well known to be a pleasant gentleman; and it’s a pleasant face ye have, and the picture of me own brother that’s dead and gone. It’s a truth that he’s been drinking. Ye can smell it off of him, more blame to him. But, indade, and there’s nothing in the house beyont the furnicher, and Thim Stock. It’s the stock that ye’ll be taking, dear. A sore penny it has cost me, first and last, and by all tales, not worth an owld tobacco pipe.” Thus adjured, and somewhat embarrassed by the stern attitude I had adopted, I suffered myself to be invested with a considerable quantity of what is called wild-cat stock, in which this excellent if illogical female had been squandering her hard-earned gold. It could scarce be said to better my position, but the step quieted the woman; and, on the other hand, I could not think I was taking much risk, for the shares in question (they were those of what I will call the Catamount Silver Mine) had fallen some time before to the bed-rock quotation, and now lay perfectly inert, or were only kicked (like other waste paper) about the kennel of the exchange by bankrupt speculators.

A month or two after, I perceived by the stock-list that Catamount had taken a bound; before afternoon, "thim stock" were worth a quite considerable pot of money; and I learned, upon inquiry, that a bonanza had been found in a condemned lead, and the mine was now expected to do wonders. Remarkable to philosophers how bonanzas are found in condemned leads, and how the stock is always at freezing-point immediately before! By some stroke of chance the, Speedys had held on to the right thing; they had escaped the syndicate; yet a little more, if I had not come to dun them, and Mrs. Speedy would have been buying a silk dress. I could not bear, of course, to profit by the accident, and returned to offer restitution. The house was in a bustle; the neighbours (all stock-gamblers themselves) had crowded to condole; and Mrs. Speedy sat with streaming tears, the centre of a sympathetic group. "For fifteen year I've been at ut," she was lamenting, as I entered, "and grudging the babes the very milk, more shame to me! to pay their dhirty assessments. And now, my dears, I should be a lady, and driving in my coach, if all had their rights; and a sorrow on that man Dodd! As soon as I set eyes on him, I seen the divil was in the house."

It was upon these words that I made my entrance, which was therefore dramatic enough, though nothing to what followed. For when it appeared that I was come to restore the lost fortune, and when Mrs. Speedy (after copiously weeping on my bosom) had refused the restitution, and when Mr. Speedy (summoned to that end from a camp of the Grand Army of the Republic) had added his refusal, and when I had insisted, and they had insisted, and the neighbours had applauded and supported each of us in turn; and when at last it was agreed we were to hold the stock together, and share the proceeds in three parts — one for me, one for Mr. Speedy, and one for his spouse — I will leave you to conceive the enthusiasm that reigned in that small, bare apartment, with the sewing-machine in the one corner, and the babes asleep in the other, and pictures of Garfield and the Battle of Gettysburg on the yellow walls. Port wine was had in by a sympathiser, and we drank it mingled with tears.

"And I dhrink to your health, my dear," sobbed Mrs. Speedy, especially affected by my gallantry in the matter of the third share; “and I’m sure we all dhrink to his health — Mr. Dodd of the picnics, no gentleman better known than him; and it’s my prayer, dear, the good God may be long spared to see ye in health and happiness!”

In the end I was the chief gainer; for I sold my third while it was worth five thousand dollars, but the Speedys more adventurously held on until the syndicate reversed the process, when they were happy to escape with perhaps a quarter of that sum. It was just as well; for the bulk of the money was (in Pinkerton’s phrase) reinvested; and when next I saw Mrs. Speedy, she was still gorgeously dressed from the proceeds of the late success, but was already moist with tears over the new catastrophe. “We’re froze out, me darlin’! All the money we had, dear, and the sewing-machine, and Jim’s uniform, was in the Golden West; and the vipers has put on a new assessment.”

By the end of the year, therefore, this is how I stood. I had made

By Catamount Silver Mine	$5,000
By the picnics	3,000
By the lecture	600
By profit and loss on capital in Pinkerton’s business	1,350
— — —	
$9,950	
to which must be added	
What remained of my grandfather’s donation	8,500
— — —	
$18,450	
It appears, on the other hand, that	
I had spent	4,000
— — — -	
Which thus left me to the good	$14,450

A result on which I am not ashamed to say I looked with gratitude and pride. Some eight thousand (being late conquest) was liquid and actually tractile in the bank; the rest whirled beyond reach and even sight (save in the mirror of a balance-sheet) under the compelling spell of wizard Pinkerton. Dollars of mine were tacking off the shores of Mexico, in peril of the deep and the guarda-costas; they rang on saloon-counters in the city of Tombstone, Arizona; they shone in faro-tents among the mountain diggings; the imagination flagged in following them, so wide were they diffused, so briskly they span to the turning of the wizard's crank. But here, there, or everywhere I could still tell myself it was all mine, and what was more convincing, draw substantial dividends. My fortune, I called it; and it represented, when expressed in dollars, or even British pounds, an honest pot of money; when extended into francs, a veritable fortune. Perhaps I have let the cat out of the bag; perhaps you see already where my hopes were pointing, and begin to blame my inconsistency. But I must first tell you my excuse, and the change that had befallen Pinkerton.

About a week after the picnic to which he escorted Mamie, Pinkerton avowed the state of his affections. From what I had observed on board the steamer, where methought Mamie waited on him with her limpid eyes, I encouraged the bashful lover to proceed; and the very next evening he was carrying me to call on his affianced.

"You must befriend her, Loudon, as you have always befriended me," he said, pathetically.

"By saying disagreeable things? I doubt if that be the way to a young lady's favour," I replied; "and since this picnicking I begin to be a man of some experience."

"Yes, you do nobly there; I can't describe how I admire you," he cried. "Not that she will ever need it; she has had every advantage. God knows what I have done to deserve her. O man, what a responsibility this is for a rough fellow and not always truthful!"

"Brace up, old man, brace up!" said I.

But when we reached Mamie's boarding-house, it was almost with tears that he presented me. "Here is Loudon, Mamie," were his words. "I want you to love him; he has a grand nature."

"You are certainly no stranger to me, Mr. Dodd," was her gracious expression. "James is never weary of descanting on your goodness."

"My dear lady," said I, "when you know our friend a little better, you will make a large allowance for his warm heart. My goodness has consisted in allowing him to feed and clothe and toil for me when he could ill afford it. If I am now alive, it is to him I owe it; no man had a kinder friend. You must take good care of him," I added, laying my hand on his shoulder, "and keep him in good order, for he needs it."

Pinkerton was much affected by this speech, and so, I fear, was Mamie. I admit it was a tactless performance. "When you know our friend a little better," was not happily said; and even "keep him in good order, for he needs it" might be construed into matter of offence; but I lay it before you in all confidence of your acquittal: was the general tone of it "patronising"? Even if such was the verdict of the lady, I cannot but suppose the blame was neither wholly hers nor wholly mine; I cannot but suppose that Pinkerton had already sickened the poor woman of my very name; so that if I had come with the songs of Apollo, she must still have been disgusted.

Here, however, were two finger-posts to Paris. Jim was going to be married, and so had the less need of my society. I had not pleased his bride, and so was, perhaps, better absent. Late one evening I broached the idea to my friend. It had been a great day for me; I had just banked my five thousand catamountain dollars; and as Jim had refused to lay a finger on the stock, risk and profit were both wholly mine, and I was celebrating the event with stout and crackers. I began by telling him that if it caused him any pain or any anxiety about his affairs, he had but to say the word, and he should hear no more of my proposal. He was the truest and best friend I ever had or was ever like to have; and it would be a strange thing if I refused him any favour he was sure he wanted. At the same time I wished him to be sure; for my life was wasting in my hands. I was like one from home; all my true interests summoned me away. I must remind him, besides, that he was now about to marry and assume new interests, and that our extreme familiarity might be even painful to his wife. — ”O no, Loudon; I feel you are wrong there,” he interjected warmly; “she DOES appreciate your nature.” — So much the better, then, I continued; and went on to point out that our separation need not be for long; that, in the way affairs were going, he might join me in two years with a fortune, small, indeed, for the States, but in France almost conspicuous; that we might unite our resources, and have one house in Paris for the winter and a second near Fontainebleau for summer, where we could be as happy as the day was long, and bring up little Pinkertons as practical artistic workmen, far from the money-hunger of the West. “Let me go then,” I concluded; “not as a deserter, but as the vanguard, to lead the march of the Pinkerton men.”

So I argued and pleaded, not without emotion; my friend sitting opposite, resting his chin upon his hand and (but for that single interjection) silent. “I have been looking for this, Loudon,” said he, when I had done. “It does pain me, and that’s the fact — I’m so miserably selfish. And I believe it’s a death blow to the picnics; for it’s idle to deny that you were the heart and soul of them with your wand and your gallant bearing, and wit and humour and chivalry, and throwing that kind of society atmosphere about the thing. But for all that, you’re right, and you ought to go. You may count on forty dollars a week; and if Depew City — one of nature’s centres for this State — pan out the least as I expect, it may be double. But it’s forty dollars anyway; and to think that two years ago you were almost reduced to beggary!”

“I WAS reduced to it,” said I.

“Well, the brutes gave you nothing, and I’m glad of it now!” cried Jim. “It’s the triumphant return I glory in! Think of the master, and that cold-blooded Myner too! Yes, just let the Depew City boom get on its legs, and you shall go; and two years later, day for day, I'll shake hands with you in Paris, with Mamie on my arm, God bless her!"

We talked in this vein far into the night. I was myself so exultant in my new-found liberty, and Pinkerton so proud of my triumph, so happy in my happiness, in so warm a glow about the gallant little woman of his choice, and the very room so filled with castles in the air and cottages at Fontainebleau, that it was little wonder if sleep fled our eyelids, and three had followed two upon the office clock before Pinkerton unfolded the mechanism of his patent sofa.

CHAPTER VIII. FACES ON THE CITY FRONT.

It is very much the custom to view life as if it were exactly ruled in two, like sleep and waking; the provinces of play and business standing separate. The business side of my career in San Francisco has been now disposed of; I approach the chapter of diversion; and it will be found they had about an equal share in building up the story of the Wrecker — a gentleman whose appearance may be presently expected.

With all my occupations, some six afternoons and two or three odd evenings remained at my disposal every week: a circumstance the more agreeable as I was a stranger in a city singularly picturesque. From what I had once called myself, The Amateur Parisian, I grew (or declined) into a waterside prowler, a lingerer on wharves, a frequenter of shy neighbourhoods, a scraper of acquaintance with eccentric characters. I visited Chinese and Mexican gambling-hells, German secret societies, sailors' boarding-houses, and "dives" of every complexion of the disreputable and dangerous. I have seen greasy Mexican hands pinned to the table with a knife for cheating, seamen (when blood-money ran high) knocked down upon the public street and carried insensible on board short-handed ships, shots exchanged, and the smoke (and the company) dispersing from the doors of the saloon. I have heard cold-minded Polacks debate upon the readiest method of burning San Francisco to the ground, hot-headed working men and women bawl and swear in the tribune at the Sandlot, and Kearney himself open his subscription for a gallows, name the manufacturers who were to grace it with their dangling bodies, and read aloud to the delighted multitude a telegram of adhesion from a member of the State legislature: all which preparations of proletarian war were (in a moment) breathed upon and abolished by the mere name and fame of Mr. Coleman. That lion of the Vigilantes had but to rouse himself and shake his ears, and the whole brawling mob was silenced. I could not but reflect what a strange manner of man this was, to be living unremarked there as a private merchant, and to be so feared by a whole city; and if I was disappointed, in my character of looker-on, to have the matter end ingloriously without the firing of a shot or the hanging of a single millionnaire, philosophy tried to tell me that this sight was truly the more picturesque. In a thousand towns and different epochs I might have had occasion to behold the cowardice and carnage of street fighting; where else, but only there and then, could I have enjoyed a view of Coleman (the intermittent despot) walking meditatively up hill in a quiet part of town, with a very rolling gait, and slapping gently his great thigh?

Minora Canamus. This historic figure stalks silently through a corner of the San Francisco of my memory: the rest is bric-a-brac, the reminiscences of a vagrant sketcher. My delight was much in slums. Little Italy was a haunt of mine; there I would look in at the windows of small eating-shops, transported bodily from Genoa or Naples, with their macaroni, and chianti flasks, and portraits of Garibaldi, and coloured political caricatures; or (entering in) hold high debate with some ear-ringed fisher of the bay as to the designs of "Mr. Owstria" and "Mr. Rooshia." I was often to be observed (had there been any to observe me) in that dis-peopled, hill-side solitude of Little Mexico, with its crazy wooden houses, endless crazy wooden stairs, and perilous mountain goat-paths in the sand. Chinatown by a thousand eccentricities drew and held me; I could never have enough of its ambiguous, interracial atmosphere, as of a vitalised museum; never wonder enough at its outlandish, necromantic-looking vegetables set forth to sell in commonplace American shop-windows, its temple doors open and the scent of the joss-stick streaming forth on the American air, its kites of Oriental fashion hanging fouled in Western telegraph-wires, its flights of paper prayers which the trade-wind hunts and dissipates along Western gutters. I was a frequent wanderer on North Beach, gazing at the straits, and the huge Cape-Horners creeping out to sea, and imminent Tamalpais. Thence, on my homeward way, I might visit that strange and filthy shed, earth-paved and walled with the cages of wild animals and birds, where at a ramshackle counter, amid the yells of monkeys, and a poignant atmosphere of menagerie, forty-rod whiskey was administered by a proprietor as dirty as his beasts. Nor did I even neglect Nob Hill, which is itself a kind of slum, being the habitat of the mere millionnaire. There they dwell upon the hill-top, high raised above man's clamour, and the trade-wind blows between their palaces about deserted streets.

But San Francisco is not herself only. She is not only the most interesting city in the Union, and the hugest smelting-pot of races and the precious metals. She keeps, besides, the doors of the Pacific, and is the port of entry to another world and an earlier epoch in man's history. Nowhere else shall you observe (in the ancient phrase) so many tall ships as here convene from round the Horn, from China, from Sydney, and the Indies; but scarce remarked amid that crowd of deep-sea giants, another class of craft, the Island schooner, circulates: low in the water, with lofty spars and dainty lines, rigged and fashioned like a yacht, manned with brown-skinned, soft-spoken, sweet-eyed native sailors, and equipped with their great double-ender boats that tell a tale of boisterous sea-beaches. These steal out and in again, unnoted by the world or even the newspaper press, save for the line in the clearing column, “Schooner So-and-so for Yap and South Sea Islands” — steal out with nondescript cargoes of tinned salmon, gin, bolts of gaudy cotton stuff, women’s hats, and Waterbury watches, to return, after a year, piled as high as to the eaves of the house with copra, or wallowing deep with the shells of the tortoise or the pearl oyster. To me, in my character of the Amateur Parisian, this island traffic, and even the island world, were beyond the bounds of curiosity, and how much more of knowledge. I stood there on the extreme shore of the West and of to-day. Seventeen hundred years ago, and seven thousand miles to the east, a legionary stood, perhaps, upon the wall of Antoninus, and looked northward toward the mountains of the Picts. For all the interval of time and space, I, when I looked from the cliff-house on the broad Pacific, was that man’s heir and analogue: each of us standing on the verge of the Roman Empire (or, as we now call it, Western civilization), each of us gazing onward into zones unromanised. But I was dull. I looked rather backward, keeping a kind eye on Paris; and it required a series of converging incidents to change my attitude of nonchalance for one of interest, and even longing, which I little dreamed that I should live to gratify.

The first of these incidents brought me in acquaintance with a certain San Francisco character, who had something of a name beyond the limits of the city, and was known to many lovers of good English. I had discovered a new slum, a place of precarious, sandy cliffs, deep, sandy cuttings, solitary, ancient houses, and the butt-ends of streets. It was already environed. The ranks of the street-lamps threaded it unbroken. The city, upon all sides of it, was tightly packed, and growled with traffic. To-day, I do not doubt the very landmarks are all swept away; but it offered then, within narrow limits, a delightful peace, and (in the morning, when I chiefly went there) a seclusion almost rural. On a steep sand-hill, in this neighbourhood, toppled, on the most insecure foundation, a certain row of houses, each with a bit of garden, and all (I have to presume) inhabited. Thither I used to mount by a crumbling footpath, and in front of the last of the houses, would sit down to sketch. The very first day I saw I was observed, out of the ground-floor window by a youngish, good-looking fellow, prematurely bald, and with an expression both lively and engaging. The second, as we were still the only figures in the landscape, it was no more than natural that we should nod. The third, he came out fairly from his intrenchments, praised my sketch, and with the impromptu cordiality of artists carried me into his apartment; where I sat presently in the midst of a museum of strange objects, — paddles and battle-clubs and baskets, rough-hewn stone images, ornaments of threaded shell, cocoanut bowls, snowy cocoanut plumes — evidences and examples of another earth, another climate, another race, and another (if a ruder) culture. Nor did these objects lack a fitting commentary in the conversation of my new acquaintance. Doubtless you have read his book. You know already how he tramped and starved, and had so fine a profit of living, in his days among the islands; and meeting him, as I did, one artist with another, after months of offices and picnics, you can imagine with what charm he would speak, and with what pleasure I would hear. It was in such talks, which we were both eager to repeat, that I first heard the names — first fell under the spell — of the islands; and it was from one of the first of them that I returned (a happy man) with *Omoo* under one arm, and my friend's own adventures under the other.

The second incident was more dramatic, and had, besides, a bearing on my future. I was standing, one day, near a boat-landing under Telegraph Hill. A large barque, perhaps of eighteen hundred tons, was coming more than usually close about the point to reach her moorings; and I was observing her with languid inattention, when I observed two men to stride across the bulwarks, drop into a shore boat, and, violently dispossessing the boatman of his oars, pull toward the landing where I stood. In a surprisingly short time they came tearing up the steps; and I could see that both were too well dressed to be foremast hands — the first even with research, and both, and specially the first, appeared under the empire of some strong emotion.

"Nearest police office!" cried the leader.

"This way," said I, immediately falling in with their precipitate pace. "What's wrong? What ship is that?"

"That's the Gleaner," he replied. "I am chief officer, this gentleman's third; and we've to get in our depositions before the crew. You see they might corral us with the captain; and that's no kind of berth for me. I've sailed with some hard cases in my time, and seen pins flying like sand on a squally day — but never a match to our old man. It never let up from the Hook to the Farallones; and the last man was dropped not sixteen hours ago. Packet rats our men were, and as tough a crowd as ever sand-bagged a man's head in; but they looked sick enough when the captain started in with his fancy shooting."

"O, he's done up," observed the other. "He won't go to sea no more."

"You make me tired," retorted his superior. "If he gets ashore in one piece and isn't lynched in the next ten minutes, he'll do yet. The owners have a longer memory than the public; they'll stand by him; they don't find as smart a captain every day in the year."

"O, he's a son of a gun of a fine captain; there ain't no doubt of that," concurred the other, heartily. "Why, I don't suppose there's been no wages paid aboard that Gleaner for three trips."

"No wages?" I exclaimed, for I was still a novice in maritime affairs.

"Not to sailor-men before the mast," agreed the mate. "Men cleared out; wasn't the soft job they maybe took it for. She isn' the first ship that never paid wages."

I could not but observe that our pace was progressively relaxing; and indeed I have often wondered since whether the hurry of the start were not intended for the gallery alone. Certain it is at least, that when we had reached the police office, and the mates had made their deposition, and told their horrid tale of five men murdered, some with savage passion, some with cold brutality, between Sandy Hook and San Francisco, the police were despatched in time to be too late. Before we arrived, the ruffian had slipped out upon the dock, had mingled with the crowd, and found a refuge in the house of an acquaintance; and the ship was only tenanted by his late victims. Well for him that he had been thus speedy. For when word began to go abroad among the shore-side characters, when the last victim was carried by to the hospital, when those who had escaped (as by miracle) from that floating shambles, began to circulate and show their wounds in the crowd, it was strange to witness the agitation that seized and shook that portion of the city. Men shed tears in public; bosses of lodging-houses, long inured to brutality, and above all, brutality to sailors, shook their fists at heaven: if hands could have been laid on the captain of the Gleaner, his shrift would have been short. That night (so gossip reports) he was headed up in a barrel and smuggled across the bay: in two ships already he had braved the penitentiary and the gallows; and yet, by last accounts, he now commands another on the Western Ocean.

As I have said, I was never quite certain whether Mr. Nares (the mate) did not intend that his superior should escape. It would have been like his preference of loyalty to law; it would have been like his prejudice, which was all in favour of the after-guard. But it must remain a matter of conjecture only. Well as I came to know him in the sequel, he was never communicative on that point, nor indeed on any that concerned the voyage of the Gleaner. Doubtless he had some reason for his reticence. Even during our walk to the police office, he debated several times with Johnson, the third officer, whether he ought not to give up himself, as well as to denounce the captain. He had decided in the negative, arguing that "it would probably come to nothing; and even if there was a stink, he had plenty good friends in San Francisco." And to nothing it came; though it must have very nearly come to something, for Mr. Nares disappeared immediately from view and was scarce less closely hidden than his captain.

Johnson, on the other hand, I often met. I could never learn this man's country; and though he himself claimed to be American, neither his English nor his education warranted the claim. In all likelihood he was of Scandinavian birth and blood, long pickled in the forecastles of English and American ships. It is possible that, like so many of his race in similar positions, he had already lost his native tongue. In mind, at least, he was quite denationalised; thought only in English — to call it so; and though by nature one of the mildest, kindest, and most feebly playful of mankind, he had been so long accustomed to the cruelty of sea discipline, that his stories (told perhaps with a giggle) would sometimes turn me chill. In appearance, he was tall, light of weight, bold and high-bred of feature, dusky-haired, and with a face of a clean even brown: the ornament of outdoor men. Seated in a chair, you might have passed him off for a baronet or a military officer; but let him rise, and it was Fo'c's'le Jack that came rolling toward you, crab-like; let him but open his lips, and it was Fo'c's'le Jack that piped and drawled his ungrammatical gibberish. He had sailed (among other places) much among the islands; and after a Cape Horn passage with its snow-squalls and its frozen sheets, he announced his intention of "taking a turn among them Kanakas." I thought I should have lost him soon; but according to the unwritten usage of mariners, he had first to dissipate his wages. "Guess I'll have to paint this town red," was his hyperbolical expression; for sure no man ever embarked upon a milder course of dissipation, most of his days being passed in the little parlour behind Black Tom's public house, with a select corps of old particular acquaintances, all from the South Seas, and all patrons of a long yarn, a short pipe, and glasses round.

Black Tom's, to the front, presented the appearance of a fourth-rate saloon, devoted to Kanaka seamen, dirt, negrohead tobacco, bad cigars, worse gin, and guitars and banjos in a state of decline. The proprietor, a powerful coloured man, was at once a publican, a ward politician, leader of some brigade of "lambs" or "smashers," at the wind of whose clubs the party bosses and the mayor were supposed to tremble, and (what hurt nothing) an active and reliable crimp. His front quarters, then, were noisy, disreputable, and not even safe. I have seen worse frequented saloons where there were fewer scandals; for Tom was often drunk himself; and there is no doubt the Lambs must have been a useful body, or the place would have been closed. I remember one day, not long before an election, seeing a blind man, very well dressed, led up to the counter and remain a long while in consultation with the negro. The pair looked so ill-assorted, and the awe with which the drinkers fell back and left them in the midst of an impromptu privacy was so unusual in such a place, that I turned to my next neighbour with a question. He told me the blind man was a distinguished party boss, called by some the King of San Francisco, but perhaps better known by his picturesque Chinese nickname of the Blind White Devil. "The Lambs must be wanted pretty bad, I guess," my informant added. I have here a sketch of the Blind White Devil leaning on the counter; on the next page, and taken the same hour, a jotting of Black Tom threatening a whole crowd of customers with a long Smith and Wesson: to such heights and depths we rose and fell in the front parts of the saloon.

Meanwhile, away in the back quarters, sat the small informal South Sea club, talking of another world and surely of a different century. Old schooner captains they were, old South Sea traders, cooks, and mates: fine creatures, softened by residence among a softer race: full men besides, though not by reading, but by strange experience; and for days together I could hear their yarns with an unfading pleasure. All had indeed some touch of the poetic; for the beach-comber, when not a mere ruffian, is the poor relation of the artist. Even through Johnson's inarticulate speech, his "O yes, there ain't no harm in them Kanakas," or "O yes, that's a son of a gun of a fine island, mountainious right down; I didn't never ought to have left that island," there pierced a certain gusto of appreciation: and some of the rest were master-talkers. From their long tales, their traits of character and unpremeditated landscape, there began to piece itself together in my head some image of the islands and the island life: precipitous shores, spired mountain tops, the deep shade of hanging forests, the unresting surf upon the reef, and the unending peace of the lagoon; sun, moon, and stars of an imperial brightness; man moving in these scenes scarce fallen, and woman lovelier than Eve; the primal curse abrogated, the bed made ready for the stranger, life set to perpetual music, and the guest welcomed, the boat urged, and the long night beguiled, with poetry and choral song. A man must have been an unsuccessful artist; he must have starved on the streets of Paris; he must have been yoked to a commercial force like Pinkerton, before he can conceive the longings that at times assailed me. The draughty, rowdy city of San Francisco, the bustling office where my friend Jim paced like a caged lion daily between ten and four, even (at times) the retrospect of Paris, faded in comparison. Many a man less tempted would have thrown up all to realise his visions; but I was by nature unadventurous and uninitiative: to divert me from all former paths and send me cruising through the isles of paradise, some force external to myself must be exerted; Destiny herself must use the fitting wedge; and little as I deemed it, that tool was already in her hand of brass.

I sat, one afternoon, in the corner of a great, glassy, silvered saloon, a free lunch at my one elbow, at the other a "conscientious nude" from the brush of local talent; when, with the tramp of feet and a sudden buzz of voices, the swing-doors were flung broadly open and the place carried as by storm. The crowd which thus entered (mostly seafaring men, and all prodigiously excited) contained a sort of kernel or general centre of interest, which the rest merely surrounded and advertised, as children in the Old World surround and escort the Punch-and-Judy man; the word went round the bar like wildfire that these were Captain Trent and the survivors of the British brig Flying Scud, picked up by a British war-ship on Midway Island, arrived that morning in San Francisco Bay, and now fresh from making the necessary declarations. Presently I had a good sight of them: four brown, seamanlike fellows, standing by the counter, glass in hand, the centre of a score of questioners. One was a Kanaka — the cook, I was informed; one carried a cage with a canary, which occasionally trilled into thin song; one had his left arm in a sling and looked gentlemanlike, and somewhat sickly, as though the injury had been severe and he was scarce recovered; and the captain himself — a red-faced, blue-eyed, thickset man of five and forty — wore a bandage on his right hand. The incident struck me; I was struck particularly to see captain, cook, and foremost hands walking the street and visiting saloons in company; and, as when anything impressed me, I got my sketch-book out, and began to steal a sketch of the four castaways. The crowd, sympathising with my design, made a clear lane across the room; and I was thus enabled, all unobserved myself, to observe with a still-growing closeness the face and the demeanour of Captain Trent.

Warmed by whiskey and encouraged by the eagerness of the bystanders, that gentleman was now rehearsing the history of his misfortune. It was but scraps that reached me: how he “filled her on the starboard tack,” and how “it came up sudden out of the nor’nor’west,” and “there she was, high and dry.” Sometimes he would appeal to one of the men — ”That was how it was, Jack?” — and the man would reply, “That was the way of it, Captain Trent.” Lastly, he started a fresh tide of popular sympathy by enunciating the sentiment, “Damn all these Admirality Charts, and that’s what I say!” From the nodding of heads and the murmurs of assent that followed, I could see that Captain Trent had established himself in the public mind as a gentleman and a thorough navigator: about which period, my sketch of the four men and the canary-bird being finished, and all (especially the canary-bird) excellent likenesses, I buckled up my book, and slipped from the saloon.

Little did I suppose that I was leaving Act I, Scene I, of the drama of my life; and yet the scene, or rather the captain’s face, lingered for some time in my memory. I was no prophet, as I say; but I was something else: I was an observer; and one thing I knew, I knew when a man was terrified. Captain Trent, of the British brig Flying Scud, had been glib; he had been ready; he had been loud; but in his blue eyes I could detect the chill, and in the lines of his countenance spy the agitation of perpetual terror. Was he trembling for his certificate? In my judgment, it was some livelier kind of fear that thrilled in the man's marrow as he turned to drink. Was it the result of recent shock, and had he not yet recovered the disaster to his brig? I remembered how a friend of mine had been in a railway accident, and shook and started for a month; and although Captain Trent of the Flying Scud had none of the appearance of a nervous man, I told myself, with incomplete conviction, that his must be a similar case.

CHAPTER IX. THE WRECK OF THE "FLYING SCUD."

The next morning I found Pinkerton, who had risen before me, seated at our usual table, and deep in the perusal of what I will call the *Daily Occidental*. This was a paper (I know not if it be so still) that stood out alone among its brethren in the West; the others, down to their smallest item, were defaced with capitals, head-lines, alliterations, swaggering misquotations, and the shoddy picturesque and unpathetic pathos of the Harry Millers: the *Occidental* alone appeared to be written by a dull, sane, Christian gentleman, singly desirous of communicating knowledge. It had not only this merit, which endeared it to me, but was admittedly the best informed on business matters, which attracted Pinkerton.

"Loudon," said he, looking up from the journal, "you sometimes think I have too many irons in the fire. My notion, on the other hand, is, when you see a dollar lying, pick it up! Well, here I've tumbled over a whole pile of 'em on a reef in the middle of the Pacific."

"Why, Jim, you miserable fellow!" I exclaimed; "haven't we Depew City, one of God's green centres for this State? haven't we — — "

"Just listen to this," interrupted Jim. "It's miserable copy; these *Occidental* reporter fellows have no fire; but the facts are right enough, I guess." And he began to read: —

"WRECK OF THE BRITISH BRIG, 'FLYING SCUD.'

"H.B.M.S. Tempest, which arrived yesterday at this port, brings Captain Trent and four men of the British brig Flying Scud, cast away February 12th on Midway Island, and most providentially rescued the next day. The Flying Scud was of 200 tons burthen, owned in London, and has been out nearly two years tramping. Captain Trent left Hong Kong December 8th, bound for this port in rice and a small mixed cargo of silks, teas, and China notions, the whole valued at $10,000, fully covered by insurance. The log shows plenty of fine weather, with light airs, calms, and squalls. In lat. 28 N., long. 177 W., his water going rotten, and misled by Hoyt's *North Pacific Directory*, which informed him there was a coaling station on the island, Captain Trent put in to Midway Island. He found it a literal sandbank, surrounded by a coral reef mostly submerged. Birds were very plenty, there was good fish in the lagoon, but no firewood; and the water, which could be obtained by digging, brackish. He found good holding-ground off the north end of the larger bank in fifteen fathoms water; bottom sandy, with coral patches. Here he was detained seven days by a calm, the crew suffering severely from the water, which was gone quite bad;

and it was only on the evening of the 12th, that a little wind sprang up, coming puffy out of N.N.E. Late as it was, Captain Trent immediately weighed anchor and attempted to get out. While the vessel was beating up to the passage, the wind took a sudden lull, and then veered squally into N. and even N.N.W., driving the brig ashore on the sand at about twenty minutes before six o'clock. John Wallen, a native of Finland, and Charles Holdorsen, a native of Sweden, were drowned alongside, in attempting to lower a boat, neither being able to swim, the squall very dark, and the noise of the breakers drowning everything. At the same time John Brown, another of the crew, had his arm broken by the falls. Captain Trent further informed the OCCIDENTAL reporter, that the brig struck heavily at first bows on, he supposes upon coral; that she then drove over the obstacle, and now lies in sand, much down by the head and with a list to starboard. In the first collision she must have sustained some damage, as she was making water forward. The rice will probably be all destroyed: but the more valuable part of the cargo is fortunately in the afterhold. Captain Trent was preparing his long-boat for sea, when the providential arrival of the Tempest, pursuant to Admiralty orders to call at islands in her course for castaways, saved the gallant captain from all further danger. It is scarcely necessary to add that both the officers and men of the unfortunate vessel speak in high terms of the kindness they received on board the man-of-war. We print a list of the survivors: Jacob Trent, master, of Hull, England; Elias Goddedaal, mate, native of Christiansand, Sweden; Ah Wing, cook, native of Sana, China; John Brown, native of Glasgow, Scotland; John Hardy, native of London, England. The Flying Scud is ten years old, and this morning will be sold as she stands, by order of Lloyd's agent, at public auction for the benefit of the underwriters. The auction will take place in the Merchants' Exchange at ten o'clock.

"Farther Particulars. — Later in the afternoon the OCCIDENTAL reporter found Lieutenant Sebright, first officer of H.B.M.S. Tempest, at the Palace Hotel. The gallant officer was somewhat pressed for time, but confirmed the account given by Captain Trent in all particulars. He added that the Flying Scud is in an excellent berth, and except in the highly improbable event of a heavy N.W. gale, might last until next winter."

"You will never know anything of literature," said I, when Jim had finished. "That is a good, honest, plain piece of work, and tells the story clearly. I see only one mistake: the cook is not a Chinaman; he is a Kanaka, and I think a Hawaiian."

"Why, how do you know that?" asked Jim.

"I saw the whole gang yesterday in a saloon," said I. "I even heard the tale, or might have heard it, from Captain Trent himself, who struck me as thirsty and nervous."

"Well, that's neither here nor there," cried Pinkerton. "The point is, how about these dollars lying on a reef?"

"Will it pay?" I asked.

"Pay like a sugar trust!" exclaimed Pinkerton. "Don't you see what this British officer says about the safety? Don't you see the cargo's valued at ten thousand? Schooners are begging just now; I can get my pick of them at two hundred and fifty a month; and how does that foot up? It looks like three hundred per cent. to me."

"You forget," I objected, "the captain himself declares the rice is damaged."

"That's a point, I know," admitted Jim. "But the rice is the sluggish article, anyway; it's little more account than ballast; it's the tea and silks that I look to: all we have to find is the proportion, and one look at the manifest will settle that. I've rung up Lloyd's on purpose; the captain is to meet me there in an hour, and then I'll be as posted on that brig as if I built her. Besides, you've no idea what pickings there are about a wreck — copper, lead, rigging, anchors, chains, even the crockery, Loudon!"

"You seem to me to forget one trifle," said I. "Before you pick that wreck, you've got to buy her, and how much will she cost?"

"One hundred dollars," replied Jim, with the promptitude of an automaton.

"How on earth do you guess that?" I cried.

"I don't guess; I know it," answered the Commercial Force. "My dear boy, I may be a galoot about literature, but you'll always be an outsider in business. How do you suppose I bought the James L. Moody for two hundred and fifty, her boats alone worth four times the money? Because my name stood first in the list. Well it stands there again; I have the naming of the figure, and I name a small one because of the distance: but it wouldn't matter what I named; that would be the price."

"It sounds mysterious enough," said I. "Is this public auction conducted in a subterranean vault? Could a plain citizen — myself, for instance — come and see?"

"O, everything's open and above board!" he cried indignantly. "Anybody can come, only nobody bids against us; and if he did, he would get frozen out. It's been tried before now, and once was enough. We hold the plant; we've got the connection; we can afford to go higher than any outsider; there's two million dollars in the ring; and we stick at nothing. Or suppose anybody did buy over our head — I tell you, Loudon, he would think this town gone crazy; he could no more get business through on the city front than I can dance; schooners, divers, men — all he wanted — the prices would fly right up and strike him."

"But how did you get in?" I asked. "You were once an outsider like your neighbours, I suppose?"

"I took hold of that thing, Loudon, and just studied it up," he replied. "It took my fancy; it was so romantic, and then I saw there was boodle in the thing; and I figured on the business till no man alive could give me points. Nobody knew I had an eye on wrecks till one fine morning I dropped in upon Douglas B. Longhurst in his den, gave him all the facts and figures, and put it to him straight: 'Do you want me in this ring? or shall I start another?' He took half an hour, and when I came back, 'Pink,' says he, 'I've put your name on.' The first time I came to the top, it was that Moody racket; now it's the Flying Scud."

Whereupon Pinkerton, looking at his watch, uttered an exclamation, made a hasty appointment with myself for the doors of the Merchants' Exchange, and fled to examine manifests and interview the skipper. I finished my cigarette with the deliberation of a man at the end of many picnics; reflecting to myself that of all forms of the dollar hunt, this wrecking had by far the most address to my imagination. Even as I went down town, in the brisk bustle and chill of the familiar San Francisco thoroughfares, I was haunted by a vision of the wreck, baking so far away in the strong sun, under a cloud of sea-birds; and even then, and for no better reason, my heart inclined towards the adventure. If not myself, something that was mine, some one at least in my employment, should voyage to that ocean-bounded pin-point and descend to that deserted cabin.

Pinkerton met me at the appointed moment, pinched of lip and more than usually erect of bearing, like one conscious of great resolves.

"Well?" I asked.

"Well," said he, "it might be better, and it might be worse. This Captain Trent is a remarkably honest fellow — one out of a thousand. As soon as he knew I was in the market, he owned up about the rice in so many words. By his calculation, if there's thirty mats of it saved, it's an outside figure. However, the manifest was cheerier. There's about five thousand dollars of the whole value in silks and teas and nut-oils and that, all in the lazarette, and as safe as if it was in Kearney Street. The brig was new coppered a year ago. There's upwards of a hundred and fifty fathom away-up chain. It's not a bonanza, but there's boodle in it; and we'll try it on."

It was by that time hard on ten o'clock, and we turned at once into the place of sale. The Flying Scud, although so important to ourselves, appeared to attract a very humble share of popular attention. The auctioneer was surrounded by perhaps a score of lookers-on, big fellows, for the most part, of the true Western build, long in the leg, broad in the shoulder, and adorned (to a plain man's taste) with needless finery. A jaunty, ostentatious comradeship prevailed. Bets were flying, and nicknames. "The boys" (as they would have called themselves) were very boyish; and it was plain they were here in mirth, and not on business. Behind, and certainly in strong contrast to these gentlemen, I could detect the figure of my friend Captain Trent, come (as I could very well imagine that a captain would) to hear the last of his old vessel. Since yesterday, he had rigged himself anew in ready-made black clothes, not very aptly fitted; the upper left-hand pocket showing a corner of silk handkerchief, the lower, on the other side, bulging with papers. Pinkerton had just given this man a high character. Certainly he seemed to have been very frank, and I looked at him again to trace (if possible) that virtue in his face. It was red and broad and flustered and (I thought) false. The whole man looked sick with some unknown anxiety; and as he stood there, unconscious of my observation, he tore at his nails, scowled on the floor, or glanced suddenly, sharply, and fearfully at passers-by. I was still gazing at the man in a kind of fascination, when the sale began.

Some preliminaries were rattled through, to the irreverent, uninterrupted gambolling of the boys; and then, amid a trifle more attention, the auctioneer sounded for some two or three minutes the pipe of the charmer. Fine brig — new copper — valuable fittings — three fine boats — remarkably choice cargo — what the auctioneer would call a perfectly safe investment; nay, gentlemen, he would go further, he would put a figure on it: he had no hesitation (had that bold auctioneer) in putting it in figures; and in his view, what with this and that, and one thing and another, the purchaser might expect to clear a sum equal to the entire estimated value of the cargo; or, gentlemen, in other words, a sum of ten thousand dollars. At this modest computation the roof immediately above the speaker's head (I suppose, through the intervention of a spectator of ventriloquial tastes) uttered a clear "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" — whereat all laughed, the auctioneer himself obligingly joining.

"Now, gentlemen, what shall we say?" resumed that gentleman, plainly ogling Pinkerton, — "what shall we say for this remarkable opportunity?"

"One hundred dollars," said Pinkerton.

"One hundred dollars from Mr. Pinkerton," went the auctioneer, "one hundred dollars. No other gentleman inclined to make any advance? One hundred dollars, only one hundred dollars — — "

The auctioneer was droning on to some such tune as this, and I, on my part, was watching with something between sympathy and amazement the undisguised emotion of Captain Trent, when we were all startled by the interjection of a bid.

"And fifty," said a sharp voice.

Pinkerton, the auctioneer, and the boys, who were all equally in the open secret of the ring, were now all equally and simultaneously taken aback.

"I beg your pardon," said the auctioneer. "Anybody bid?"

"And fifty," reiterated the voice, which I was now able to trace to its origin, on the lips of a small, unseemly rag of human-kind. The speaker's skin was gray and blotched; he spoke in a kind of broken song, with much variety of key; his gestures seemed (as in the disease called Saint Vitus's dance) to be imperfectly under control; he was badly dressed; he carried himself with an air of shrinking assumption, as though he were proud to be where he was and to do what he was doing, and yet half expected to be called in question and kicked out. I think I never saw a man more of a piece; and the type was new to me; I had never before set eyes upon his parallel, and I thought instinctively of Balzac and the lower regions of the *Comedie Humaine*.

Pinkerton stared a moment on the intruder with no friendly eye, tore a leaf from his note-book, and scribbled a line in pencil, turned, beckoned a messenger boy, and whispered, "To Longhurst." Next moment the boy had sped upon his errand, and Pinkerton was again facing the auctioneer.

"Two hundred dollars," said Jim.

"And fifty," said the enemy.

"This looks lively," whispered I to Pinkerton.

"Yes; the little beast means cold drawn biz," returned my friend. "Well, he'll have to have a lesson. Wait till I see Longhurst. Three hundred," he added aloud.

"And fifty," came the echo.

It was about this moment when my eye fell again on Captain Trent. A deeper shade had mounted to his crimson face: the new coat was unbuttoned and all flying open; the new silk handkerchief in busy requisition; and the man's eye, of a clear sailor blue, shone glassy with excitement. He was anxious still, but now (if I could read a face) there was hope in his anxiety.

"Jim," I whispered, "look at Trent. Bet you what you please he was expecting this."

"Yes," was the reply, "there's some blame' thing going on here." And he renewed his bid.

The figure had run up into the neighbourhood of a thousand when I was aware of a sensation in the faces opposite, and looking over my shoulder, saw a very large, bland, handsome man come strolling forth and make a little signal to the auctioneer.

"One word, Mr. Borden," said he; and then to Jim, "Well, Pink, where are we up to now?”

Pinkerton gave him the figure. “I ran up to that on my own responsibility, Mr. Longhurst,” he added, with a flush. “I thought it the square thing.”

“And so it was,” said Mr. Longhurst, patting him kindly on the shoulder, like a gratified uncle. “Well, you can drop out now; we take hold ourselves. You can run it up to five thousand; and if he likes to go beyond that, he’s welcome to the bargain.”

“By the by, who is he?” asked Pinkerton. “He looks away down.”

“I’ve sent Billy to find out.” And at the very moment Mr. Longhurst received from the hands of one of the expensive young gentlemen a folded paper. It was passed round from one to another till it came to me, and I read: “Harry D. Bellairs, Attorney-at-Law; defended Clara Varden; twice nearly disbarred.”

“Well, that gets me!” observed Mr. Longhurst. “Who can have put up a shyster like that? Nobody with money, that’s a sure thing. Suppose you tried a big bluff? I think I would, Pink. Well, ta-ta! Your partner, Mr. Dodd? Happy to have the pleasure of your acquaintance, sir.” And the great man withdrew.

A low lawyer.

“Well, what do you think of Douglas B.?” whispered Pinkerton, looking reverently after him as he departed. “Six foot of perfect gentleman and culture to his boots.”

During this interview the auction had stood transparently arrested, the auctioneer, the spectators, and even Bellairs, all well aware that Mr. Longhurst was the principal, and Jim but a speaking-trumpet. But now that the Olympian Jupiter was gone, Mr. Borden thought proper to affect severity.

“Come, come, Mr. Pinkerton. Any advance?” he snapped.

And Pinkerton, resolved on the big bluff, replied, “Two thousand dollars.”

Bellairs preserved his composure. “And fifty,” said he. But there was a stir among the onlookers, and what was of more importance, Captain Trent had turned pale and visibly gulped.

“Pitch it in again, Jim,” said I. “Trent is weakening.”

“Three thousand,” said Jim.

“And fifty,” said Bellairs.

And then the bidding returned to its original movement by hundreds and fifties; but I had been able in the meanwhile to draw two conclusions. In the first place, Bellairs had made his last advance with a smile of gratified vanity; and I could see the creature was glorying in the kudos of an unusual position and secure of ultimate success. In the second, Trent had once more changed colour at the thousand leap, and his relief, when he heard the answering fifty was manifest and unaffected. Here then was a problem: both were presumably in the same interest, yet the one was not in the confidence of the other. Nor was this all. A few bids later it chanced that my eye encountered that of Captain Trent, and his, which glittered with excitement, was instantly, and I thought guiltily, withdrawn. He wished, then, to conceal his interest? As Jim had said, there was some blamed thing going on. And for certain, here were these two men, so strangely united, so strangely divided, both sharp-set to keep the wreck from us, and that at an exorbitant figure.

Was the wreck worth more than we supposed? A sudden heat was kindled in my brain; the bids were nearing Longhurst's limit of five thousand; another minute, and all would be too late. Tearing a leaf from my sketch-book, and inspired (I suppose) by vanity in my own powers of inference and observation, I took the one mad decision of my life. "If you care to go ahead," I wrote, "I'm in for all I'm worth."

Jim read and looked round at me like one bewildered; then his eyes lightened, and turning again to the auctioneer, he bid, "Five thousand one hundred dollars."

"And fifty," said monotonous Bellairs.

Presently Pinkerton scribbled, "What can it be?" and I answered, still on paper: "I can't imagine; but there's something. Watch Bellairs; he'll go up to the ten thousand, see if he don't."

And he did, and we followed. Long before this, word had gone abroad that there was battle royal: we were surrounded by a crowd that looked on wondering; and when Pinkerton had offered ten thousand dollars (the outside value of the cargo, even were it safe in San Francisco Bay) and Bellairs, smirking from ear to ear to be the centre of so much attention, had jerked out his answering, "And fifty," wonder deepened to excitement.

"Ten thousand one hundred," said Jim; and even as he spoke he made a sudden gesture with his hand, his face changed, and I could see that he had guessed, or thought that he had guessed, the mystery. As he scrawled another memorandum in his note-book, his hand shook like a telegraph-operator's.

"Chinese ship," ran the legend; and then, in big, tremulous half-text, and with a flourish that overran the margin, "Opium!"

To be sure! thought I: this must be the secret. I knew that scarce a ship came in from any Chinese port, but she carried somewhere, behind a bulkhead, or in some cunning hollow of the beams, a nest of the valuable poison. Doubtless there was some such treasure on the Flying Scud. How much was it worth? We knew not, we were gambling in the dark; but Trent knew, and Bellairs; and we could only watch and judge.

By this time neither Pinkerton nor I were of sound mind. Pinkerton was beside himself, his eyes like lamps. I shook in every member. To any stranger entering (say) in the course of the fifteenth thousand, we should probably have cut a poorer figure than Bellairs himself. But we did not pause; and the crowd watched us, now in silence, now with a buzz of whispers.

Seventeen thousand had been reached, when Douglas B. Longhurst, forcing his way into the opposite row of faces, conspicuously and repeatedly shook his head at Jim. Jim's answer was a note of two words: "My racket!" which, when the great man had perused, he shook his finger warningly and departed, I thought, with a sorrowful countenance.

Although Mr. Longhurst knew nothing of Bellairs, the shady lawyer knew all about the Wrecker Boss. He had seen him enter the ring with manifest expectation; he saw him depart, and the bids continue, with manifest surprise and disappointment. "Hullo," he plainly thought, "this is not the ring I'm fighting, then?" And he determined to put on a spurt.

"Eighteen thousand," said he.

"And fifty," said Jim, taking a leaf out of his adversary's book.

"Twenty thousand," from Bellairs.

"And fifty," from Jim, with a little nervous titter.

And with one consent they returned to the old pace, only now it was Bellairs who took the hundreds, and Jim who did the fifty business. But by this time our idea had gone abroad. I could hear the word "opium" pass from mouth to mouth; and by the looks directed at us, I could see we were supposed to have some private information. And here an incident occurred highly typical of San Francisco. Close at my back there had stood for some time a stout, middle-aged gentleman, with pleasant eyes, hair pleasantly grizzled, and a ruddy, pleasing face. All of a sudden he appeared as a third competitor, skied the Flying Scud with four fat bids of a thousand dollars each, and then as suddenly fled the field, remaining thenceforth (as before) a silent, interested spectator.

Ever since Mr. Longhurst's useless intervention, Bellairs had seemed uneasy; and at this new attack, he began (in his turn) to scribble a note between the bids. I imagined naturally enough that it would go to Captain Trent; but when it was done, and the writer turned and looked behind him in the crowd, to my unspeakable amazement, he did not seem to remark the captain's presence.

"Messenger boy, messenger boy!" I heard him say. "Somebody call me a messenger boy."

At last somebody did, but it was not the captain.

"He's sending for instructions," I wrote to Pinkerton.

"For money," he wrote back. "Shall I strike out? I think this is the time.”

I nodded.

“Thirty thousand,” said Pinkerton, making a leap of close upon three thousand dollars.

I could see doubt in Bellairs’s eye; then, sudden resolution. “Thirty-five thousand,” said he.

“Forty thousand,” said Pinkerton.

There was a long pause, during which Bellairs’s countenance was as a book; and then, not much too soon for the impending hammer, “Forty thousand and five dollars,” said he.

Pinkerton and I exchanged eloquent glances. We were of one mind. Bellairs had tried a bluff; now he perceived his mistake, and was bidding against time; he was trying to spin out the sale until the messenger boy returned.

“Forty-five thousand dollars,” said Pinkerton: his voice was like a ghost’s and tottered with emotion.

“Forty-five thousand and five dollars,” said Bellairs.

“Fifty thousand,” said Pinkerton.

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Pinkerton. Did I hear you make an advance, sir?” asked the auctioneer.

“I — I have a difficulty in speaking,” gasped Jim. “It’s fifty thousand, Mr. Borden.”

Bellairs was on his feet in a moment. “Auctioneer,” he said, “I have to beg the favour of three moments at the telephone. In this matter, I am acting on behalf of a certain party to whom I have just written — — ”

“I have nothing to do with any of this,” said the auctioneer, brutally. “I am here to sell this wreck. Do you make any advance on fifty thousand?”

“I have the honour to explain to you, sir,” returned Bellairs, with a miserable assumption of dignity. “Fifty thousand was the figure named by my principal; but if you will give me the small favour of two moments at the telephone — ”

“O, nonsense!” said the auctioneer. “If you make no advance, I’ll knock it down to Mr. Pinkerton.”

“I warn you,” cried the attorney, with sudden shrillness. “Have a care what you’re about. You are here to sell for the underwriters, let me tell you — not to act for Mr. Douglas Longhurst. This sale has been already disgracefully interrupted to allow that person to hold a consultation with his minions. It has been much commented on.”

“There was no complaint at the time,” said the auctioneer, manifestly discountenanced. “You should have complained at the time.”

“I am not here to conduct this sale,” replied Bellairs; “I am not paid for that."

"Well, I am, you see," retorted the auctioneer, his impudence quite restored; and he resumed his sing-song. "Any advance on fifty thousand dollars? No advance on fifty thousand? No advance, gentlemen? Going at fifty thousand, the wreck of the brig Flying Scud — going — going — gone!"

"My God, Jim, can we pay the money?" I cried, as the stroke of the hammer seemed to recall me from a dream.

"It's got to be raised," said he, white as a sheet. "It'll be a hell of a strain, Loudon. The credit's good for it, I think; but I shall have to get around. Write me a cheque for your stuff. Meet me at the Occidental in an hour."

I wrote my cheque at a desk, and I declare I could never have recognised my signature. Jim was gone in a moment; Trent had vanished even earlier; only Bellairs remained exchanging insults with the auctioneer; and, behold! as I pushed my way out of the exchange, who should run full tilt into my arms, but the messenger boy?

It was by so near a margin that we became the owners of the Flying Scud.

CHAPTER X. IN WHICH THE CREW VANISH.

At the door of the exchange I found myself along-side of the short, middle-aged gentleman who had made an appearance, so vigorous and so brief, in the great battle.

“Congratulate you, Mr. Dodd,” he said. “You and your friend stuck to your guns nobly.”

“No thanks to you, sir,” I replied, “running us up a thousand at a time, and tempting all the speculators in San Francisco to come and have a try.”

“O, that was temporary insanity,” said he; “and I thank the higher powers I am still a free man. Walking this way, Mr. Dodd? I’ll walk along with you. It’s pleasant for an old fogy like myself to see the young bloods in the ring; I’ve done some pretty wild gambles in my time in this very city, when it was a smaller place and I was a younger man. Yes, I know you, Mr. Dodd. By sight, I may say I know you extremely well, you and your followers, the fellows in the kilts, eh? Pardon me. But I have the misfortune to own a little box on the Saucelito shore. I’ll be glad to see you there any Sunday — without the fellows in kilts, you know; and I can give you a bottle of wine, and show you the best collection of Arctic voyages in the States. Morgan is my name — Judge Morgan — a Welshman and a forty-niner.”

“O, if you’re a pioneer,” cried I, “come to me and I’ll provide you with an axe.”

“You’ll want your axes for yourself, I fancy,” he returned, with one of his quick looks. “Unless you have private knowledge, there will be a good deal of rather violent wrecking to do before you find that — opium, do you call it?”

“Well, it’s either opium, or we are stark, staring mad,” I replied. “But I assure you we have no private information. We went in (as I suppose you did yourself) on observation.”

“An observer, sir?” inquired the judge.

“I may say it is my trade — or, rather, was,” said I.

“Well now, and what did you think of Bellairs?” he asked.

“Very little indeed,” said I.

“I may tell you,” continued the judge, “that to me, the employment of a fellow like that appears inexplicable. I knew him; he knows me, too; he has often heard from me in court; and I assure you the man is utterly blown upon; it is not safe to trust him with a dollar; and here we find him dealing up to fifty thousand. I can’t think who can have so trusted him, but I am very sure it was a stranger in San Francisco.”

“Some one for the owners, I suppose,” said I.

“Surely not!” exclaimed the judge. “Owners in London can have nothing to say to opium smuggled between Hong Kong and San Francisco. I should rather fancy they would be the last to hear of it — until the ship was seized. No; I was thinking of the captain. But where would he get the money? above all, after having laid out so much to buy the stuff in China? Unless, indeed, he were acting for some one in 'Frisco; and in that case — here we go round again in the vicious circle — Bellairs would not have been employed."

"I think I can assure you it was not the captain," said I; "for he and Bellairs are not acquainted."

"Wasn't that the captain with the red face and coloured handkerchief? He seemed to me to follow Bellairs's game with the most thrilling interest," objected Mr. Morgan.

"Perfectly true," said I; "Trent is deeply interested; he very likely knew Bellairs, and he certainly knew what he was there for; but I can put my hand in the fire that Bellairs didn't know Trent."

"Another singularity," observed the judge. "Well, we have had a capital forenoon. But you take an old lawyer's advice, and get to Midway Island as fast as you can. There's a pot of money on the table, and Bellairs and Co. are not the men to stick at trifles."

With this parting counsel Judge Morgan shook hands and made off along Montgomery Street, while I entered the Occidental Hotel, on the steps of which we had finished our conversation. I was well known to the clerks, and as soon as it was understood that I was there to wait for Pinkerton and lunch, I was invited to a seat inside the counter. Here, then, in a retired corner, I was beginning to come a little to myself after these so violent experiences, when who should come hurrying in, and (after a moment with a clerk) fly to one of the telephone boxes but Mr. Henry D. Bellairs in person? Call it what you will, but the impulse was irresistible, and I rose and took a place immediately at the man's back. It may be some excuse that I had often practised this very innocent form of eavesdropping upon strangers, and for fun. Indeed, I scarce know anything that gives a lower view of man's intelligence than to overhear (as you thus do) one side of a communication.

"Central," said the attorney, "2241 and 584 B" (or some such numbers) — "Who's that? — All right — Mr. Bellairs — Occidental; the wires are fouled in the other place — Yes, about three minutes — Yes — Yes — Your figure, I am sorry to say — No — I had no authority — Neither more nor less — I have every reason to suppose so — O, Pinkerton, Montana Block — Yes — Yes — Very good, sir — As you will, sir — Disconnect 584 B."

Bellairs turned to leave; at sight of me behind him, up flew his hands, and he winced and cringed, as though in fear of bodily attack. "O, it's you!" he cried; and then, somewhat recovered, "Mr.

Pinkerton's partner, I believe? I am pleased to see you, sir — to congratulate you on your late success." And with that he was gone, obsequiously bowing as he passed.

And now a madcap humour came upon me. It was plain Bellairs had been communicating with his principal; I knew the number, if not the name; should I ring up at once, it was more than likely he would return in person to the telephone; why should not I dash (vocally) into the presence of this mysterious person, and have some fun for my money. I pressed the bell.

"Central," said I, "connect again 2241 and 584 B."

A phantom central repeated the numbers; there was a pause, and then "Two two four one," came in a tiny voice into my ear — a voice with the English sing-song — the voice plainly of a gentleman. "Is that you again, Mr. Bellairs?" it trilled. "I tell you it's no use. Is that you, Mr. Bellairs? Who is that?"

"I only want to put a single question," said I, civilly. "Why do you want to buy the Flying Scud?"

No answer came. The telephone vibrated and hummed in miniature with all the numerous talk of a great city; but the voice of 2241 was silent. Once and twice I put my question; but the tiny, sing-song English voice, I heard no more. The man, then, had fled? fled from an impertinent question? It scarce seemed natural to me; unless on the principle that the wicked fleeth when no man pursueth. I took the telephone list and turned the number up: "2241, Mrs. Keane, res. 942 Mission Street." And that, short of driving to the house and renewing my impertinence in person, was all that I could do.

Yet, as I resumed my seat in the corner of the office, I was conscious of a new element of the uncertain, the underhand, perhaps even the dangerous, in our adventure; and there was now a new picture in my mental gallery, to hang beside that of the wreck under its canopy of sea-birds and of Captain Trent mopping his red brow — the picture of a man with a telephone dice-box to his ear, and at the small voice of a single question, struck suddenly as white as ashes.

From these considerations I was awakened by the striking of the clock. An hour and nearly twenty minutes had elapsed since Pinkerton departed for the money: he was twenty minutes behind time; and to me who knew so well his gluttonous despatch of business and had so frequently admired his iron punctuality, the fact spoke volumes. The twenty minutes slowly stretched into an hour; the hour had nearly extended to a second; and I still sat in my corner of the office, or paced the marble pavement of the hall, a prey to the most wretched anxiety and penitence. The hour for lunch was nearly over before I remembered that I had not eaten. Heaven knows I had no appetite; but there might still be much to do — it was needful I should keep myself in proper trim, if it were only to digest the now too probable bad news; and leaving word at the office for Pinkerton, I sat down to table and called for soup, oysters, and a pint of champagne.

I was not long set, before my friend returned. He looked pale and rather old, refused to hear of food, and called for tea.

"I suppose all's up?" said I, with an incredible sinking.

"No," he replied; "I've pulled it through, Loudon; just pulled it through. I couldn't have raised another cent in all 'Frisco. People don't like it; Longhurst even went back on me; said he wasn't a three-card-monte man."

"Well, what's the odds?" said I. "That's all we wanted, isn't it?"

"Loudon, I tell you I've had to pay blood for that money," cried my friend, with almost savage energy and gloom. "It's all on ninety days, too; I couldn't get another day — not another day. If we go ahead with this affair, Loudon, you'll have to go yourself and make the fur fly. I'll stay of course — I've got to stay and face the trouble in this city; though, I tell you, I just long to go. I would show these fat brutes of sailors what work was; I would be all through that wreck and out at the other end, before they had boosted themselves upon the deck! But you'll do your level best, Loudon; I depend on you for that. You must be all fire and grit and dash from the word 'go.' That schooner and the boodle on board of her are bound to be here before three months, or it's B. U. S. T. — bust."

"I'll swear I'll do my best, Jim; I'll work double tides," said I. "It is my fault that you are in this thing, and I'll get you out again or kill myself. But what is that you say? 'If we go ahead?' Have we any choice, then?"

"I'm coming to that," said Jim. "It isn't that I doubt the investment. Don't blame yourself for that; you showed a fine, sound business instinct: I always knew it was in you, but then it ripped right out. I guess that little beast of an attorney knew what he was doing; and he wanted nothing better than to go beyond. No, there's profit in the deal; it's not that; it's these ninety-day bills, and the strain I've given the credit, for I've been up and down, borrowing, and begging and bribing to borrow. I don't believe there's another man but me in 'Frisco," he cried, with a sudden fervor of self admiration, "who could have raised that last ten thousand! — Then there's another thing. I had hoped you might have peddled that opium through the islands, which is safer and more profitable. But with this three-month limit, you must make tracks for Honolulu straight, and communicate by steamer. I'll try to put up something for you there; I'll have a man spoken to who's posted on that line of biz. Keep a bright lookout for him as soon's you make the islands; for it's on the cards he might pick you up at sea in a whaleboat or a steam-launch, and bring the dollars right on board."

It shows how much I had suffered morally during my sojourn in San Francisco, that even now when our fortunes trembled in the balance, I should have consented to become a smuggler and (of all things) a smuggler of opium. Yet I did, and that in silence; without a protest, not without a twinge.

"And suppose," said I, "suppose the opium is so securely hidden that I can't get hands on it?"

"Then you will stay there till that brig is kindling-wood, and stay and split that kindling-wood with your penknife," cried Pinkerton. "The stuff is there; we know that; and it must be found. But all this is only the one string to our bow — though I tell you I've gone into it head-first, as if it was our bottom dollar. Why, the first thing I did before I'd raised a cent, and with this other notion in my head already — the first thing I did was to secure the schooner. The Nora Creina, she is, sixty-four tons, quite big enough for our purpose since the rice is spoiled, and the fastest thing of her tonnage out of San Francisco. For a bonus of two hundred, and a monthly charter of three, I have her for my own time; wages and provisions, say four hundred more: a drop in the bucket. They began firing the cargo out of her (she was part loaded) near two hours ago; and about the same time John Smith got the order for the stores. That's what I call business."

"No doubt of that," said I. "But the other notion?"

"Well, here it is," said Jim. "You agree with me that Bellairs was ready to go higher?"

I saw where he was coming. "Yes — and why shouldn't he?" said I. "Is that the line?"

"That's the line, Loudon Dodd," assented Jim. "If Bellairs and his principal have any desire to go me better, I'm their man."

A sudden thought, a sudden fear, shot into my mind. What if I had been right? What if my childish pleasantry had frightened the principal away, and thus destroyed our chance? Shame closed my mouth; I began instinctively a long course of reticence; and it was without a word of my meeting with Bellairs, or my discovery of the address in Mission Street, that I continued the discussion.

"Doubtless fifty thousand was originally mentioned as a round sum," said I, "or at least, so Bellairs supposed. But at the same time it may be an outside sum; and to cover the expenses we have already incurred for the money and the schooner — I am far from blaming you; I see how needful it was to be ready for either event — but to cover them we shall want a rather large advance."

"Bellairs will go to sixty thousand; it's my belief, if he were properly handled, he would take the hundred," replied Pinkerton. "Look back on the way the sale ran at the end."

"That is my own impression as regards Bellairs," I admitted. "The point I am trying to make is that Bellairs himself may be mistaken; that what he supposed to be a round sum was really an outside figure."

"Well, Loudon, if that is so," said Jim, with extraordinary gravity of face and voice, "if that is so, let him take the Flying Scud at fifty thousand, and joy go with her! I prefer the loss."

"Is that so, Jim? Are we dipped as bad as that?" I cried.

"We've put our hand farther out than we can pull it in again, Loudon," he replied. "Why, man, that fifty thousand dollars, before we get clear again, will cost us nearer seventy. Yes, it figures up overhead to more than ten per cent a month; and I could do no better, and there isn't the man breathing could have done as well. It was a miracle, Loudon. I couldn't but admire myself. O, if we had just the four months! And you know, Loudon, it may still be done. With your energy and charm, if the worst comes to the worst, you can run that schooner as you ran one of your picnics; and we may have luck. And, O, man! if we do pull it through, what a dashing operation it will be! What an advertisement! what a thing to talk of, and remember all our lives! However," he broke off suddenly, "we must try the safe thing first. Here's for the shyster!"

There was another struggle in my mind, whether I should even now admit my knowledge of the Mission Street address. But I had let the favourable moment slip. I had now, which made it the more awkward, not merely the original discovery, but my late suppression to confess. I could not help reasoning, besides, that the more natural course was to approach the principal by the road of his agent's office; and there weighed upon my spirits a conviction that we were already too late, and that the man was gone two hours ago. Once more, then, I held my peace; and after an exchange of words at the telephone to assure ourselves he was at home, we set out for the attorney's office.

The endless streets of any American city pass, from one end to another, through strange degrees and vicissitudes of splendour and distress, running under the same name between monumental warehouses, the dens and taverns of thieves, and the sward and shrubbery of villas. In San Francisco, the sharp inequalities of the ground, and the sea bordering on so many sides, greatly exaggerate these contrasts. The street for which we were now bound took its rise among blowing sands, somewhere in view of the Lone Mountain Cemetery; ran for a term across that rather windy Olympus of Nob Hill, or perhaps just skirted its frontier; passed almost immediately after through a stage of little houses, rather impudently painted, and offering to the eye of the observer this diagnostic peculiarity, that the huge brass plates upon the small and highly coloured doors bore only the first names of ladies — Norah or Lily or Florence; traversed China Town, where it was doubtless undermined with opium cellars, and its blocks pierced, after the similitude of rabbit-warrens, with a hundred doors and passages and galleries; enjoyed a glimpse of high publicity at the corner of Kearney; and proceeded, among dives and warehouses, towards the City Front and the region of the water-rats. In this last stage of its career, where it was both grimy and solitary, and alternately quiet and roaring to the wheels of drays, we found a certain house of some pretension to neatness, and furnished with a rustic outside stair. On the pillar of the stair a black plate bore in gilded lettering this device: "Harry D. Bellairs, Attorney-at-law. Consultations, 9 to 6." On ascending the stairs, a door was found to stand open on the balcony, with this further inscription, "Mr. Bellairs In."

"I wonder what we do next," said I.

"Guess we sail right in," returned Jim, and suited the action to the word.

The room in which we found ourselves was clean, but extremely bare. A rather old-fashioned secretaire stood by the wall, with a chair drawn to the desk; in one corner was a shelf with half-a-dozen law books; and I can remember literally not another stick of furniture. One inference imposed itself: Mr. Bellairs was in the habit of sitting down himself and suffering his clients to stand. At the far end, and veiled by a curtain of red baize, a second door communicated with the interior of the house. Hence, after some coughing and stamping, we elicited the shyster, who came timorously forth, for all the world like a man in fear of bodily assault, and then, recognising his guests, suffered from what I can only call a nervous paroxysm of courtesy.

"Mr. Pinkerton and partner!" said he. "I will go and fetch you seats."

"Not the least," said Jim. "No time. Much rather stand. This is business, Mr. Bellairs. This morning, as you know, I bought the wreck, Flying Scud."

The lawyer nodded.

"And bought her," pursued my friend, "at a figure out of all proportion to the cargo and the circumstances, as they appeared?"

"And now you think better of it, and would like to be off with your bargain? I have been figuring upon this," returned the lawyer. "My client, I will not hide from you, was displeased with me for putting her so high. I think we were both too heated, Mr. Pinkerton: rivalry — the spirit of competition. But I will be quite frank — I know when I am dealing with gentlemen — and I am almost certain, if you leave the matter in my hands, my client would relieve you of the bargain, so as you would lose" — he consulted our faces with gimlet-eyed calculation — ”nothing,” he added shrilly.

And here Pinkerton amazed me.

“That’s a little too thin,” said he. “I have the wreck. I know there’s boodle in her, and I mean to keep her. What I want is some points which may save me needless expense, and which I’m prepared to pay for, money down. The thing for you to consider is just this: am I to deal with you or direct with your principal? If you are prepared to give me the facts right off, why, name your figure. Only one thing!” added Jim, holding a finger up, “when I say ‘money down,’ I mean bills payable when the ship returns, and if the information proves reliable. I don’t buy pigs in pokes.”

I had seen the lawyer’s face light up for a moment, and then, at the sound of Jim’s proviso, miserably fade. “I guess you know more about this wreck than I do, Mr. Pinkerton,” said he. “I only know that I was told to buy the thing, and tried, and couldn’t.”

“What I like about you, Mr. Bellairs, is that you waste no time,” said Jim. “Now then, your client’s name and address.”

“On consideration,” replied the lawyer, with indescribable furtivity, “I cannot see that I am entitled to communicate my client’s name. I will sound him for you with pleasure, if you care to instruct me; but I cannot see that I can give you his address.”

“Very well,” said Jim, and put his hat on. “Rather a strong step, isn’t it?” (Between every sentence was a clear pause.) “Not think better of it? Well, come — call it a dollar?”

“Mr. Pinkerton, sir!” exclaimed the offended attorney; and, indeed, I myself was almost afraid that Jim had mistaken his man and gone too far.

“No present use for a dollar?” says Jim. “Well, look here, Mr. Bellairs: we’re both busy men, and I’ll go to my outside figure with you right away — ”

“Stop this, Pinkerton,” I broke in. “I know the address: 924 Mission Street.”

I do not know whether Pinkerton or Bellairs was the more taken aback.

“Why in snakes didn’t you say so, Loudon?” cried my friend.

“You didn’t ask for it before,” said I, colouring to my temples under his troubled eyes.

It was Bellairs who broke silence, kindly supplying me with all that I had yet to learn. “Since you know Mr. Dickson’s address,” said he, plainly burning to be rid of us, “I suppose I need detain you no longer.”

I do not know how Pinkerton felt, but I had death in my soul as we came down the outside stair, from the den of this blotched spider. My whole being was strung, waiting for Jim’s first question, and prepared to blurt out, I believe, almost with tears, a full avowal. But my friend asked nothing.

“We must hack it,” said he, tearing off in the direction of the nearest stand. “No time to be lost. You saw how I changed ground. No use in paying the shyster’s commission.”

Again I expected a reference to my suppression; again I was disappointed. It was plain Jim feared the subject, and I felt I almost hated him for that fear. At last, when we were already in the hack and driving towards Mission Street, I could bear my suspense no longer.

“You do not ask me about that address,” said I.

“No,” said he, quickly and timidly. “What was it? I would like to know.”

The note of timidity offended me like a buffet; my temper rose as hot as mustard. “I must request you do not ask me,” said I. “It is a matter I cannot explain.”

The moment the foolish words were said, that moment I would have given worlds to recall them: how much more, when Pinkerton, patting my hand, replied: “All right, dear boy; not another word; that’s all done. I’m convinced it’s perfectly right.” To return upon the subject was beyond my courage; but I vowed inwardly that I should do my utmost in the future for this mad speculation, and that I would cut myself in pieces before Jim should lose one dollar.

We had no sooner arrived at the address than I had other things to think of.

“Mr. Dickson? He’s gone,” said the landlady.

Where had he gone?

“I’m sure I can’t tell you,” she answered. “He was quite a stranger to me.”

“Did he express his baggage, ma’am?” asked Pinkerton.

“Hadn’t any,” was the reply. “He came last night and left again to-day with a satchel.”

“When did he leave?” I inquired.

“It was about noon,” replied the landlady. “Some one rang up the telephone, and asked for him; and I reckon he got some news, for he left right away, although his rooms were taken by the week. He seemed considerable put out: I reckon it was a death.”

My heart sank; perhaps my idiotic jest had indeed driven him away; and again I asked myself, Why? and whirled for a moment in a vortex of untenable hypotheses.

“What was he like, ma’am?” Pinkerton was asking, when I returned to consciousness of my surroundings.

“A clean shaved man,” said the woman, and could be led or driven into no more significant description.

“Pull up at the nearest drug-store,” said Pinkerton to the driver; and when there, the telephone was put in operation, and the message sped to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's office — this was in the days before Spreckels had arisen — "When does the next China steamer touch at Honolulu?"

"The City of Pekin; she cast off the dock to-day, at half-past one," came the reply.

"It's a clear case of bolt," said Jim. "He's skipped, or my name's not Pinkerton. He's gone to head us off at Midway Island."

Somehow I was not so sure; there were elements in the case, not known to Pinkerton — the fears of the captain, for example — that inclined me otherwise; and the idea that I had terrified Mr. Dickson into flight, though resting on so slender a foundation, clung obstinately in my mind. "Shouldn't we see the list of passengers?" I asked.

"Dickson is such a blamed common name," returned Jim; "and then, as like as not, he would change it."

At this I had another intuition. A negative of a street scene, taken unconsciously when I was absorbed in other thought, rose in my memory with not a feature blurred: a view, from Bellairs's door as we were coming down, of muddy roadway, passing drays, matted telegraph wires, a Chinaboy with a basket on his head, and (almost opposite) a corner grocery with the name of Dickson in great gilt letters.

"Yes," said I, "you are right; he would change it. And anyway, I don't believe it was his name at all; I believe he took it from a corner grocery beside Bellairs's."

"As like as not," said Jim, still standing on the sidewalk with contracted brows.

"Well, what shall we do next?" I asked.

"The natural thing would be to rush the schooner," he replied. "But I don't know. I telephoned the captain to go at it head down and heels in air; he answered like a little man; and I guess he's getting around. I believe, Loudon, we'll give Trent a chance. Trent was in it; he was in it up to the neck; even if he couldn't buy, he could give us the straight tip."

"I think so, too," said I. "Where shall we find him?"

"British consulate, of course," said Jim. "And that's another reason for taking him first. We can hustle that schooner up all evening; but when the consulate's shut, it's shut."

At the consulate, we learned that Captain Trent had alighted (such is I believe the classic phrase) at the What Cheer House. To that large and unaristocratic hostelry we drove, and addressed ourselves to a large clerk, who was chewing a toothpick and looking straight before him.

“Captain Jacob Trent?”

“Gone,” said the clerk.

“Where has he gone?” asked Pinkerton.

“Cain’t say,” said the clerk.

“When did he go?” I asked.

“Don’t know,” said the clerk, and with the simplicity of a monarch offered us the spectacle of his broad back.

What might have happened next I dread to picture, for Pinkerton’s excitement had been growing steadily, and now burned dangerously high; but we were spared extremities by the intervention of a second clerk.

“Why! Mr. Dodd!” he exclaimed, running forward to the counter. “Glad to see you, sir! Can I do anything in your way?”

How virtuous actions blossom! Here was a young man to whose pleased ears I had rehearsed *Just before the battle, mother,* at some weekly picnic; and now, in that tense moment of my life, he came (from the machine) to be my helper.

“Captain Trent, of the wreck? O yes, Mr. Dodd; he left about twelve; he and another of the men. The Kanaka went earlier by the City of Pekin; I know that; I remember expressing his chest. Captain Trent? I’ll inquire, Mr. Dodd. Yes, they were all here. Here are the names on the register; perhaps you would care to look at them while I go and see about the baggage?”

I drew the book toward me, and stood looking at the four names all written in the same hand, rather a big and rather a bad one: Trent, Brown, Hardy, and (instead of Ah Sing) Jos. Amalu.

“Pinkerton,” said I, suddenly, “have you that *Occidental* in your pocket?”

“Never left me,” said Pinkerton, producing the paper.

I turned to the account of the wreck. “Here,” said I; “here’s the name. ‘Elias Goddedaal, mate.’ Why do we never come across Elias Goddedaal?”

“That’s so,” said Jim. “Was he with the rest in that saloon when you saw them?”

“I don’t believe it,” said I. “They were only four, and there was none that behaved like a mate.”

At this moment the clerk returned with his report.

“The captain,” it appeared, “came with some kind of an express waggon, and he and the man took off three chests and a big satchel. Our porter helped to put them on, but they drove the cart themselves. The porter thinks they went down town. It was about one.”

“Still in time for the City of Pekin,” observed Jim.

“How many of them were here?” I inquired.

“Three, sir, and the Kanaka,” replied the clerk. “I can’t somehow fin out about the third, but he's gone too."

"Mr. Goddedaal, the mate, wasn't here then?" I asked.

"No, Mr. Dodd, none but what you see," says the clerk.

"Nor you never heard where he was?"

"No. Any particular reason for finding these men, Mr. Dodd?" inquired the clerk.

"This gentleman and I have bought the wreck," I explained; "we wished to get some information, and it is very annoying to find the men all gone."

A certain group had gradually formed about us, for the wreck was still a matter of interest; and at this, one of the bystanders, a rough seafaring man, spoke suddenly.

"I guess the mate won't be gone," said he. "He's main sick; never left the sick-bay aboard the Tempest; so they tell ME."

Jim took me by the sleeve. "Back to the consulate," said he.

But even at the consulate nothing was known of Mr. Goddedaal. The doctor of the Tempest had certified him very sick; he had sent his papers in, but never appeared in person before the authorities.

"Have you a telephone laid on to the Tempest?" asked Pinkerton.

"Laid on yesterday," said the clerk.

"Do you mind asking, or letting me ask? We are very anxious to get hold of Mr. Goddedaal."

"All right," said the clerk, and turned to the telephone. "I'm sorry," he said presently, "Mr. Goddedaal has left the ship, and no one knows where he is."

"Do you pay the men's passage home?" I inquired, a sudden thought striking me.

"If they want it," said the clerk; "sometimes they don't. But we paid the Kanaka's passage to Honolulu this morning; and by what Captain Trent was saying, I understand the rest are going home together."

"Then you haven't paid them?" said I.

"Not yet," said the clerk.

"And you would be a good deal surprised, if I were to tell you they were gone already?" I asked.

"O, I should think you were mistaken," said he.

"Such is the fact, however," said I.

"I am sure you must be mistaken," he repeated.

"May I use your telephone one moment?" asked Pinkerton; and as soon as permission had been granted, I heard him ring up the printing-office where our advertisements were usually handled. More I did not hear; for suddenly recalling the big, bad hand in the register of the What Cheer House, I asked the consulate clerk if he had a specimen of Captain Trent's writing. Whereupon I learned that the captain could not write, having cut his hand open a little before the loss of the brig; that the latter part of the log even had been written up by Mr. Goddedaal; and that Trent had always signed with his left hand. By the time I had gleaned this information, Pinkerton was ready.

"That's all that we can do. Now for the schooner," said he; "and by to-morrow evening I lay hands on Goddedaal, or my name's not Pinkerton."

"How have you managed?" I inquired.

"You'll see before you get to bed," said Pinkerton. "And now, after all this backwarding and forwarding, and that hotel clerk, and that bug Bellairs, it'll be a change and a kind of consolation to see the schooner. I guess things are humming there."

But on the wharf, when we reached it, there was no sign of bustle, and, but for the galley smoke, no mark of life on the Norah Creina. Pinkerton's face grew pale, and his mouth straightened, as he leaped on board.

"Where's the captain of this — — ?" and he left the phrase unfinished, finding no epithet sufficiently energetic for his thoughts.

It did not appear whom or what he was addressing; but a head, presumably the cook's, appeared in answer at the galley door.

"In the cabin, at dinner," said the cook deliberately, chewing as he spoke.

"Is that cargo out?"

"No, sir."

"None of it?"

"O, there's some of it out. We'll get at the rest of it livelier to-morrow, I guess."

"I guess there'll be something broken first," said Pinkerton, and strode to the cabin.

Here we found a man, fat, dark, and quiet, seated gravely at what seemed a liberal meal. He looked up upon our entrance; and seeing Pinkerton continue to stand facing him in silence, hat on head, arms folded, and lips compressed, an expression of mingled wonder and annoyance began to dawn upon his placid face.

"Well!" said Jim; "and so this is what you call rushing around?"

"Who are you?" cries the captain.

"Me! I'm Pinkerton!" retorted Jim, as though the name had been a talisman.

"You're not very civil, whoever you are," was the reply. But still a certain effect had been produced, for he scrambled to his feet, and added hastily, "A man must have a bit of dinner, you know, Mr. Pinkerton."

"Where's your mate?" snapped Jim.

"He's up town," returned the other.

"Up town!" sneered Pinkerton. "Now, I'll tell you what you are: you're a Fraud; and if I wasn't afraid of dirtying my boot, I would kick you and your dinner into that dock."

"I'll tell you something, too," retorted the captain, duskily flushing. "I wouldn't sail this ship for the man you are, if you went upon your knees. I've dealt with gentlemen up to now."

"I can tell you the names of a number of gentlemen you'll never deal with any more, and that's the whole of Longhurst's gang," said Jim. "I'll put your pipe out in that quarter, my friend. Here, rout out your traps as quick as look at it, and take your vermin along with you. I'll have a captain in, this very night, that's a sailor, and some sailors to work for him."

"I'll go when I please, and that's to-morrow morning," cried the captain after us, as we departed for the shore.

"There's something gone wrong with the world to-day; it must have come bottom up!" wailed Pinkerton. "Bellairs, and then the hotel clerk, and now This Fraud! And what am I to do for a captain, Loudon, with Longhurst gone home an hour ago, and the boys all scattered?"

"I know," said I. "Jump in!" And then to the driver: "Do you know Black Tom's?"

Thither then we rattled; passed through the bar, and found (as I had hoped) Johnson in the enjoyment of club life. The table had been thrust upon one side; a South Sea merchant was discoursing music from a mouth-organ in one corner; and in the middle of the floor Johnson and a fellow-seaman, their arms clasped about each other's bodies, somewhat heavily danced. The room was both cold and close; a jet of gas, which continually menaced the heads of the performers, shed a coarse illumination; the mouth-organ sounded shrill and dismal; and the faces of all concerned were church-like in their gravity. It were, of course, indelicate to interrupt these solemn frolics; so we edged ourselves to chairs, for all the world like belated comers in a concert-room, and patiently waited for the end. At length the organist, having exhausted his supply of breath, ceased abruptly in the middle of a bar. With the cessation of the strain, the dancers likewise came to a full stop, swayed a moment, still embracing, and then separated and looked about the circle for applause.

"Very well danced!" said one; but it appears the compliment was not strong enough for the performers, who (forgetful of the proverb) took up the tale in person.

"Well," said Johnson. "I mayn't be no sailor, but I can dance!"

And his late partner, with an almost pathetic conviction, added, "My foot is as light as a feather."

Seeing how the wind set, you may be sure I added a few words of praise before I carried Johnson alone into the passage: to whom, thus mollified, I told so much as I judged needful of our situation, and begged him, if he would not take the job himself, to find me a smart man.

"Me!" he cried. "I couldn't no more do it than I could try to go to hell!"

"I thought you were a mate?" said I.

"So I am a mate," giggled Johnson, "and you don't catch me shipping noways else. But I'll tell you what, I believe I can get you Arty Nares: you seen Arty; first-rate navigator and a son of a gun for style." And he proceeded to explain to me that Mr. Nares, who had the promise of a fine barque in six months, after things had quieted down, was in the meantime living very private, and would be pleased to have a change of air.

I called out Pinkerton and told him. "Nares!" he cried, as soon as I had come to the name. "I would jump at the chance of a man that had had Nares's trousers on! Why, Loudon, he's the smartest deep-water mate out of San Francisco, and draws his dividends regular in service and out." This hearty indorsation clinched the proposal; Johnson agreed to produce Nares before six the following morning; and Black Tom, being called into the consultation, promised us four smart hands for the same hour, and even (what appeared to all of us excessive) promised them sober.

The streets were fully lighted when we left Black Tom's: street after street sparkling with gas or electricity, line after line of distant luminaries climbing the steep sides of hills towards the overvaulting darkness; and on the other hand, where the waters of the bay invisibly trembled, a hundred riding lanterns marked the position of a hundred ships. The sea-fog flew high in heaven; and at the level of man's life and business it was clear and chill. By silent consent, we paid the hack off, and proceeded arm in arm towards the Poodle Dog for dinner.

At one of the first hoardings, I was aware of a bill-sticker at work: it was a late hour for this employment, and I checked Pinkerton until the sheet should be unfolded. This is what I read: —

TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD.

OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE

WRECKED BRIG FLYING SCUD

APPLYING,

PERSONALLY OR BY LETTER,

AT THE OFFICE OF JAMES PINKERTON, MONTANA BLOCK,

BEFORE NOON TO-MORROW, TUESDAY, 12TH,

WILL RECEIVE

TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD.

"This is your idea, Pinkerton!" I cried.

"Yes. They've lost no time; I'll say that for them — not like the Fraud," said he. "But mind you, Loudon, that's not half of it. The cream of the idea's here: we know our man's sick; well, a copy of that has been mailed to every hospital, every doctor, and every drug-store in San Francisco."

Of course, from the nature of our business, Pinkerton could do a thing of the kind at a figure extremely reduced; for all that, I was appalled at the extravagance, and said so.

"What matter a few dollars now?" he replied sadly. "It's in three months that the pull comes, Loudon."

We walked on again in silence, not without a shiver. Even at the Poodle Dog, we took our food with small appetite and less speech; and it was not until he was warmed with a third glass of champagne that Pinkerton cleared his throat and looked upon me with a deprecating eye.

"Loudon," said he, "there was a subject you didn't wish to be referred to. I only want to do so indirectly. It wasn't" — he faltered — "it wasn't because you were dissatisfied with me?" he concluded, with a quaver.

"Pinkerton!" cried I.

"No, no, not a word just now," he hastened to proceed. "Let me speak first. I appreciate, though I can't imitate, the delicacy of your nature; and I can well understand you would rather die than speak of it, and yet might feel disappointed. I did think I could have done better myself. But when I found how tight money was in this city, and a man like Douglas B. Longhurst — a forty-niner, the man that stood at bay in a corn patch for five hours against the San Diablo squatters — weakening on the operation, I tell you, Loudon, I began to despair; and — I may have made mistakes, no doubt there are thousands who could have done better — but I give you a loyal hand on it, I did my best."

"My poor Jim," said I, "as if I ever doubted you! as if I didn't know you had done wonders! All day I've been admiring your energy and resource. And as for that affair — — "

"No, Loudon, no more, not a word more! I don't want to hear," cried Jim.

"Well, to tell you the truth, I don't want to tell you," said I; "for it's a thing I'm ashamed of."

"Ashamed, Loudon? O, don't say that; don't use such an expression even in jest!" protested Pinkerton.

"Do you never do anything you're ashamed of?" I inquired.

"No," says he, rolling his eyes. "Why? I'm sometimes sorry afterwards, when it pans out different from what I figured. But I can't see what I would want to be ashamed for."

I sat a while considering with admiration the simplicity of my friend's character. Then I sighed. "Do you know, Jim, what I'm sorriest for?" said I. "At this rate, I can't be best man at your marriage."

"My marriage!" he repeated, echoing the sigh. "No marriage for me now. I'm going right down to-night to break it to her. I think that's what's shaken me all day. I feel as if I had had no right (after I was engaged) to operate so widely."

"Well, you know, Jim, it was my doing, and you must lay the blame on me," said I.

"Not a cent of it!" he cried. "I was as eager as yourself, only not so bright at the beginning. No; I've myself to thank for it; but it's a wrench."

While Jim departed on his dolorous mission, I returned alone to the office, lit the gas, and sat down to reflect on the events of that momentous day: on the strange features of the tale that had been so far unfolded, the disappearances, the terrors, the great sums of money; and on the dangerous and ungrateful task that awaited me in the immediate future.

It is difficult, in the retrospect of such affairs, to avoid attributing to ourselves in the past a measure of the knowledge we possess to-day. But I may say, and yet be well within the mark, that I was consumed that night with a fever of suspicion and curiosity; exhausted my fancy in solutions, which I still dismissed as incommensurable with the facts; and in the mystery by which I saw myself surrounded, found a precious stimulus for my courage and a convenient soothing draught for conscience. Even had all been plain sailing, I do not hint that I should have drawn back. Smuggling is one of the meanest of crimes, for by that we rob a whole country pro rata, and are therefore certain to impoverish the poor: to smuggle opium is an offence particularly dark, since it stands related not so much to murder, as to massacre. Upon all these points I was quite clear; my sympathy was all in arms against my interest; and had not Jim been involved, I could have dwelt almost with satisfaction on the idea of my failure. But Jim, his whole fortune, and his marriage, depended upon my success; and I preferred the interests of my friend before those of all the islanders in the South Seas. This is a poor, private morality, if you like; but it is mine, and the best I have; and I am not half so much ashamed of having embarked at all on this adventure, as I am proud that (while I was in it, and for the sake of my friend) I was up early and down late, set my own hand to everything, took dangers as they came, and for once in my life played the man throughout. At the same time, I could have desired another field of energy; and I was the more grateful for the redeeming element of mystery. Without that, though I might have gone ahead and done as well, it would scarce have been with ardour; and what inspired me that night with an impatient greed of the sea, the island, and the wreck, was the hope that I might stumble there upon the answer to a hundred questions, and learn why Captain Trent fanned his red face in the exchange, and why Mr. Dickson fled from the telephone in the Mission Street lodging-house.

CHAPTER XI. IN WHICH JIM AND I TAKE DIFFERENT WAYS.

I was unhappy when I closed my eyes; and it was to unhappiness that I opened them again next morning, to a confused sense of some calamity still inarticulate, and to the consciousness of jaded limbs and of a swimming head. I must have lain for some time inert and stupidly miserable, before I became aware of a reiterated knocking at the door; with which discovery all my wits flowed back in their accustomed channels, and I remembered the sale, and the wreck, and Goddedaal, and Nares, and Johnson, and Black Tom, and the troubles of yesterday, and the manifold engagements of the day that was to come. The thought thrilled me like a trumpet in the hour of battle. In a moment, I had leaped from bed, crossed the office where Pinkerton lay in a deep trance of sleep on the convertible sofa, and stood in the doorway, in my night gear, to receive our visitors.

Johnson was first, by way of usher, smiling. From a little behind, with his Sunday hat tilted forward over his brow, and a cigar glowing between his lips, Captain Nares acknowledged our previous acquaintance with a succinct nod. Behind him again, in the top of the stairway, a knot of sailors, the new crew of the Norah Creina, stood polishing the wall with back and elbow. These I left without to their reflections. But our two officers I carried at once into the office, where (taking Jim by the shoulder) I shook him slowly into consciousness. He sat up, all abroad for the moment, and stared on the new captain.

“Jim,” said I, “this is Captain Nares. Captain, Mr. Pinkerton.”

Nares repeated his curt nod, still without speech; and I thought he held us both under a watchful scrutiny.

“O!” says Jim, “this is Captain Nares, is it? Good morning, Captain Nares. Happy to have the pleasure of your acquaintance, sir. I know you well by reputation.”

Perhaps, under the circumstances of the moment, this was scarce a welcome speech. At least, Nares received it with a grunt.

“Well, Captain,” Jim continued, “you know about the size of the business? You’re to take the Nora Creina to Midway Island, break up a wreck, call at Honolulu, and back to this port? I suppose that’s understood?”

“Well,” returned Nares, with the same unamiable reserve, “for a reason, which I guess you know, the cruise may suit me; but there’s a point or two to settle. We shall have to talk, Mr. Pinkerton. But whether I go or not, somebody will; there’s no sense in losing time; and you might give Mr. Johnson a note, let him take the hands right down, and set to to overhaul the rigging. The beasts look sober," he added, with an air of great disgust, "and need putting to work to keep them so."

This being agreed upon, Nares watched his subordinate depart and drew a visible breath.

"And now we're alone and can talk," said he. "What's this thing about? It's been advertised like Barnum's museum; that poster of yours has set the Front talking; that's an objection in itself, for I'm laying a little dark just now; and anyway, before I take the ship, I require to know what I'm going after."

Thereupon Pinkerton gave him the whole tale, beginning with a businesslike precision, and working himself up, as he went on, to the boiling-point of narrative enthusiasm. Nares sat and smoked, hat still on head, and acknowledged each fresh feature of the story with a frowning nod. But his pale blue eyes betrayed him, and lighted visibly.

"Now you see for yourself," Pinkerton concluded: "there's every last chance that Trent has skipped to Honolulu, and it won't take much of that fifty thousand dollars to charter a smart schooner down to Midway. Here's where I want a man!" cried Jim, with contagious energy. "That wreck's mine; I've paid for it, money down; and if it's got to be fought for, I want to see it fought for lively. If you're not back in ninety days, I tell you plainly, I'll make one of the biggest busts ever seen upon this coast; it's life or death for Mr. Dodd and me. As like as not, it'll come to grapples on the island; and when I heard your name last night — and a blame' sight more this morning when I saw the eye you've got in your head — I said, 'Nares is good enough for me!'"

"I guess," observed Nares, studying the ash of his cigar, "the sooner I get that schooner outside the Farallones, the better you'll be pleased."

"You're the man I dreamed of!" cried Jim, bouncing on the bed. "There's not five per cent of fraud in all your carcase."

"Just hold on," said Nares. "There's another point. I heard some talk about a supercargo."

"That's Mr. Dodd, here, my partner," said Jim.

"I don't see it," returned the captain drily. "One captain's enough for any ship that ever I was aboard."

"Now don't you start disappointing me," said Pinkerton; "for you're talking without thought. I'm not going to give you the run of the books of this firm, am I? I guess not. Well, this is not only a cruise; it's a business operation; and that's in the hands of my partner. You sail that ship, you see to breaking up that wreck and keeping the men upon the jump, and you'll find your hands about full. Only, no mistake about one thing: it has to be done to Mr. Dodd's satisfaction;

for it’s Mr. Dodd that’s paying.”

“I’m accustomed to give satisfaction,” said Mr. Nares, with a dark flush.

“And so you will here!” cried Pinkerton. “I understand you. You’re prickly to handle, but you’re straight all through.”

“The position’s got to be understood, though,” returned Nares, perhaps a trifle mollified. “My position, I mean. I’m not going to ship sailing-master; it’s enough out of my way already, to set a foot on this mosquito schooner.”

“Well, I’ll tell you,” retorted Jim, with an indescribable twinkle: “you just meet me on the ballast, and we’ll make it a barquentine.”

Nares laughed a little; tactless Pinkerton had once more gained a victory in tact. “Then there’s another point,” resumed the captain, tacitly relinquishing the last. “How about the owners?”

“O, you leave that to me; I’m one of Longhurst’s crowd, you know,” said Jim, with sudden bristling vanity. “Any man that’s good enough for me, is good enough for them.”

“Who are they?” asked Nares.

“M’Intyre and Spittal,” said Jim.

“O, well, give me a card of yours,” said the captain: “you needn’t bother to write; I keep M’Intyre and Spittal in my vest-pocket.”

Boast for boast; it was always thus with Nares and Pinkerton — the two vainest men of my acquaintance. And having thus reinstated himself in his own opinion, the captain rose, and, with a couple of his stiff nods, departed.

“Jim,” I cried, as the door closed behind him, “I don’t like that man.”

“You’ve just got to, Loudon,” returned Jim. “He’s a typical American seaman — brave as a lion, full of resource, and stands high with his owners. He’s a man with a record.”

“For brutality at sea,” said I.

“Say what you like,” exclaimed Pinkerton, “it was a good hour we got him in: I’d trust Mamie’s life to him to-morrow.”

“Well, and talking of Mamie?” says I.

Jim paused with his trousers half on. “She’s the gallantest little soul God ever made!” he cried. “Loudon, I’d meant to knock you up last night, and I hope you won’t take it unfriendly that I didn’t. I went in and looked at you asleep; and I saw you were all broken up, and let you be. The news would keep, anyway; and even you, Loudon, couldn’t feel it the same way as I did.”

“What news?” I asked.

“It’s this way,” says Jim. “I told her how we stood, and that I backed down from marrying. ‘Are you tired of me?’ says she: God bless her! Well, I explained the whole thing over again, the chance of smash, your absence unavoidable, the point I made of having you for the best man, and that. ‘If you’re not tired of me, I think I see one way to manage,’ says she. ‘Let’s get married to-morrow, and Mr. Loudon can be best man before he goes to sea.’ That’s how she said it, crisp and bright, like one of Dickens’s characters. It was no good for me to talk about the smash. ‘You’ll want me all the more,’ she said. Loudon, I only pray I can make it up to her; I prayed for it last night beside your bed, while you lay sleeping — for you, and Mamie and myself; and — I don’t know if you quite believe in prayer, I’m a bit Ingersollian myself — but a kind of sweetness came over me, and I couldn’t help but think it was an answer. Never was a man so lucky! You and me and Mamie; it’s a triple cord, Loudon. If either of you were to die! And she likes you so much, and thinks you so accomplished and distingue-looking, and was just as set as I was to have you for best man. ‘Mr. Loudon,’ she calls you; seems to me so friendly! And she sat up till three in the morning fixing up a costume for the marriage; it did me good to see her, Loudon, and to see that needle going, going, and to say ‘All this hurry, Jim, is just to marry you!’ I couldn’t believe it; it was so like some blame’ fairy story. To think of those old tin-type times about turned my head; I was so unrefined then, and so illiterate, and so lonesome; and here I am in clover, and I’m blamed if I can see what I’ve done to deserve it.”

So he poured forth with innocent volubility the fulness of his heart; and I, from these irregular communications, must pick out, here a little and there a little, the particulars of his new plan. They were to be married, sure enough, that day; the wedding breakfast was to be at Frank’s; the evening to be passed in a visit of God-speed aboard the Norah Creina; and then we were to part, Jim and I, he to his married life, I on my sea-enterprise. If ever I cherished an ill-feeling for Miss Mamie, I forgave her now; so brave and kind, so pretty and venturesome, was her decision. The weather frowned overhead with a leaden sky, and San Francisco had never (in all my experience) looked so bleak and gaunt, and shoddy, and crazy, like a city prematurely old; but through all my wanderings and errands to and fro, by the dock side or in the jostling street, among rude sounds and ugly sights, there ran in my mind, like a tiny strain of music, the thought of my friend’s happiness.

For that was indeed a day of many and incongruous occupations. Breakfast was scarce swallowed before Jim must run to the City Hall and Frank’s about the cares of marriage, and I hurry to John Smith’s upon the account of stores, and thence, on a visit of certification, to the Norah Creina. Methought she looked smaller than ever, sundry great ships overspiring her from close without. She was already a nightmare of disorder; and the wharf alongside was piled with a world of casks, and cases, and tins, and tools, and coils of rope, and miniature barrels of giant powder, such as it seemed no human ingenuity could stuff on board of her. Johnson was in the waist, in a red shirt and dungaree trousers, his eye kindled with activity. With him I exchanged a word or two; thence stepped aft along the narrow alleyway between the house and the rail, and down the companion to the main cabin, where the captain sat with the commissioner at wine.

I gazed with disaffection at the little box which for many a day I was to call home. On the starboard was a stateroom for the captain; on the port, a pair of frowsy berths, one over the other, and abutting astern upon the side of an unsavoury cupboard. The walls were yellow and damp, the floor black and greasy; there was a prodigious litter of straw, old newspapers, and broken packing-cases; and by way of ornament, only a glass-rack, a thermometer presented "with compliments" of some advertising whiskey-dealer, and a swinging lamp. It was hard to foresee that, before a week was up, I should regard that cabin as cheerful, lightsome, airy, and even spacious.

I was presented to the commissioner, and to a young friend of his whom he had brought with him for the purpose (apparently) of smoking cigars; and after we had pledged one another in a glass of California port, a trifle sweet and sticky for a morning beverage, the functionary spread his papers on the table, and the hands were summoned. Down they trooped, accordingly, into the cabin; and stood eyeing the ceiling or the floor, the picture of sheepish embarrassment, and with a common air of wanting to expectorate and not quite daring. In admirable contrast, stood the Chinese cook, easy, dignified, set apart by spotless raiment, the hidalgo of the seas.

I daresay you never had occasion to assist at the farce which followed. Our shipping laws in the United States (thanks to the inimitable Dana) are conceived in a spirit of paternal stringency, and proceed throughout on the hypothesis that poor Jack is an imbecile, and the other parties to the contract, rogues and ruffians. A long and wordy paper of precautions, a fo'c's'le bill of rights, must be read separately to each man. I had now the benefit of hearing it five times in brisk succession; and you would suppose I was acquainted with its contents. But the commissioner (worthy man) spends his days in doing little else; and when we bear in mind the parallel case of the irreverent curate, we need not be surprised that he took the passage tempo prestissimo, in one roulade of gabble — that I, with the trained attention of an educated man, could gather but a fraction of its import — and the sailors nothing. No profanity in giving orders, no sheath-knives, Midway Island and any other port the master may direct, not to exceed six calendar months, and to this port to be paid off: so it seemed to run, with surprising verbiage; so ended. And with the end, the commissioner, in each case, fetched a deep breath, resumed his natural voice, and proceeded to business. “Now, my man,” he would say, “you ship A. B. at so many dollars, American gold coin. Sign your name here, if you have one, and can write.” Whereupon, and the name (with infinite hard breathing) being signed, the commissioner would proceed to fill in the man’s appearance, height, etc., on the official form. In this task of literary portraiture he seemed to rely wholly upon temperament; for I could not perceive him to cast one glance on any of his models. He was assisted, however, by a running commentary from the captain: “Hair blue and eyes red, nose five foot seven, and stature broken” — jests as old, presumably, as the American marine; and, like the similar pleasantries of the billiard board, perennially relished. The highest note of humour was reached in the case of the Chinese cook, who was shipped under the name of “One Lung,” to the sound of his own protests and the self-approving chuckles of the functionary.

“Now, captain,” said the latter, when the men were gone, and he had bundled up his papers, “the law requires you to carry a slop-chest and a chest of medicines.”

“I guess I know that,” said Nares.

“I guess you do,” returned the commissioner, and helped himself to port.

But when he was gone, I appealed to Nares on the same subject, for I was well aware we carried none of these provisions.

“Well,” drawled Nares, “there’s sixty pounds of niggerhead on the quay, isn’t there? and twenty pounds of salts; and I never travel without some painkiller in my gripsack.”

As a matter of fact, we were richer. The captain had the usual sailor’s provision of quack medicines, with which, in the usual sailor fashion, he would daily drug himself, displaying an extreme inconstancy, and flitting from Kennedy’s Red Discovery to Kennedy’s White, and from Hood’s Sarsaparilla to Mother Seigel’s Syrup. And there were, besides, some mildewed and half-empty bottles, the labels obliterated, over which Nares would sometimes sniff and speculate. “Seems to smell like diarrhoea stuff,” he would remark. “I wish’t I knew, and I would try it.” But the slop-chest was indeed represented by the plugs of niggerhead, and nothing else. Thus paternal laws are made, thus they are evaded; and the schooner put to sea, like plenty of her neighbours, liable to a fine of six hundred dollars.

This characteristic scene, which has delayed me overlong, was but a moment in that day of exercise and agitation. To fit out a schooner for sea, and improvise a marriage between dawn and dusk, involves heroic effort. All day Jim and I ran, and tramped, and laughed, and came near crying, and fell in sudden anxious consultations, and were sped (with a prepared sarcasm on our lips) to some fallacious milliner, and made dashes to the schooner and John Smith's, and at every second corner were reminded (by our own huge posters) of our desperate estate. Between whiles, I had found the time to hover at some half-a-dozen jewellers' windows; and my present, thus intemperately chosen, was graciously accepted. I believe, indeed, that was the last (though not the least) of my concerns, before the old minister, shabby and benign, was routed from his house and led to the office like a performing poodle; and there, in the growing dusk, under the cold glitter of Thirteen Star, two hundred strong, and beside the garish glories of the agricultural engine, Mamie and Jim were made one. The scene was incongruous, but the business pretty, whimsical, and affecting: the typewriters with such kindly faces and fine posies, Mamie so demure, and Jim — how shall I describe that poor, transfigured Jim? He began by taking the minister aside to the far end of the office. I knew not what he said, but I have reason to believe he was protesting his unfitness; for he wept as he said it: and the old minister, himself genuinely moved, was heard to console and encourage him, and at one time to use this expression: "I assure you, Mr. Pinkerton, there are not many who can say so much" — from which I gathered that my friend had tempered his self-accusations with at least one legitimate boast. From this ghostly counselling, Jim turned to me; and though he never got beyond the explosive utterance of my name and one fierce handgrip, communicated some of his own emotion, like a charge of electricity, to his best man. We stood up to the ceremony at last, in a general and kindly discomposure. Jim was all abroad; and the divine himself betrayed his sympathy in voice and demeanour, and concluded with a fatherly allocution, in which he congratulated Mamie (calling her "my dear") upon the fortune of an excellent husband, and protested he had rarely married a more interesting couple. At this stage, like a glory descending, there was handed in, ex machina, the card of Douglas B. Longhurst, with congratulations and four dozen Perrier-Jouet. A bottle was opened; and the minister pledged the bride, and the bridesmaids simpered and tasted, and I made a speech with airy bacchanalianism, glass in hand. But poor Jim must leave the wine untasted. "Don't touch it," I had found the opportunity to whisper; "in your state it will make you as drunk as a fiddler." And Jim had wrung my hand with a "God bless you, Loudon! — saved me again!"

Hard following upon this, the supper passed off at Frank's with somewhat tremulous gaiety. And thence, with one half of the Perrier-Jouet — I would accept no more — we voyaged in a hack to the Norah Creina.

"What a dear little ship!" cried Mamie, as our miniature craft was pointed out to her. And then, on second thought, she turned to the best man. “And how brave you must be, Mr. Dodd,” she cried, “to go in that tiny thing so far upon the ocean!” And I perceived I had risen in the lady’s estimation.

The dear little ship presented a horrid picture of confusion, and its occupants of weariness and ill-humour. From the cabin the cook was storing tins into the lazarette, and the four hands, sweaty and sullen, were passing them from one to another from the waist. Johnson was three parts asleep over the table; and in his bunk, in his own cabin, the captain sourly chewed and puffed at a cigar.

“See here,” he said, rising; “you’ll be sorry you came. We can’t stop work if we’re to get away to-morrow. A ship getting ready for sea is no place for people, anyway. You’ll only interrupt my men.”

I was on the point of answering something tart; but Jim, who was acquainted with the breed, as he was with most things that had a bearing on affairs, made haste to pour in oil.

“Captain,” he said, “I know we’re a nuisance here, and that you’ve had a rough time. But all we want is that you should drink one glass of wine with us, Perrier-Jouet, from Longhurst, on the occasion of my marriage, and Loudon’s — Mr. Dodd’s — departure.”

“Well, it’s your lookout,” said Nares. “I don’t mind half an hour. Spell, O!” he added to the men; “go and kick your heels for half an hour, and then you can turn to again a trifle livelier. Johnson, see if you can’t wipe off a chair for the lady.”

His tone was no more gracious than his language; but when Mamie had turned upon him the soft fire of her eyes, and informed him that he was the first sea-captain she had ever met, “except captains of steamers, of course” — she so qualified the statement — and had expressed a lively sense of his courage, and perhaps implied (for I suppose the arts of ladies are the same as those of men) a modest consciousness of his good looks, our bear began insensibly to soften; and it was already part as an apology, though still with unaffected heat of temper, that he volunteered some sketch of his annoyances.

“A pretty mess we’ve had!” said he. “Half the stores were wrong; I’ll wring John Smith’s neck for him some of these days. Then two newspaper beasts came down, and tried to raise copy out of me, till I threatened them with the first thing handy; and then some kind of missionary bug, wanting to work his passage to Raiatea or somewhere. I told him I would take him off the wharf with the butt end of my boot, and he went away cursing. This vessel’s been depreciated by the look of him.”

While the captain spoke, with his strange, humorous, arrogant abruptness, I observed Jim to be sizing him up, like a thing at once quaint and familiar, and with a scrutiny that was both curious and knowing.

"One word, dear boy," he said, turning suddenly to me. And when he had drawn me on deck, "That man," says he, "will carry sail till your hair grows white; but never you let on, never breathe a word. I know his line: he'll die before he'll take advice; and if you get his back up, he'll run you right under. I don't often jam in my advice, Loudon; and when I do, it means I'm thoroughly posted."

The little party in the cabin, so disastrously begun, finished, under the mellowing influence of wine and woman, in excellent feeling and with some hilarity. Mamie, in a plush Gainsborough hat and a gown of wine-coloured silk, sat, an apparent queen, among her rude surroundings and companions. The dusky litter of the cabin set off her radiant trimness: tarry Johnson was a foil to her fair beauty; she glowed in that poor place, fair as a star; until even I, who was not usually of her admirers, caught a spark of admiration; and even the captain, who was in no courtly humour, proposed that the scene should be commemorated by my pencil. It was the last act of the evening. Hurriedly as I went about my task, the half-hour had lengthened out to more than three before it was completed: Mamie in full value, the rest of the party figuring in outline only, and the artist himself introduced in a back view, which was pronounced a likeness. But it was to Mamie that I devoted the best of my attention; and it was with her I made my chief success.

"O!" she cried, "am I really like that? No wonder Jim ..." She paused. "Why it's just as lovely as he's good!" she cried: an epigram which was appreciated, and repeated as we made our salutations, and called out after the retreating couple as they passed away under the lamplight on the wharf.

Thus it was that our farewells were smuggled through under an ambuscade of laughter, and the parting over ere I knew it was begun. The figures vanished, the steps died away along the silent city front; on board, the men had returned to their labours, the captain to his solitary cigar; and after that long and complex day of business and emotion, I was at last alone and free. It was, perhaps, chiefly fatigue that made my heart so heavy. I leaned at least upon the house, and stared at the foggy heaven, or over the rail at the wavering reflection of the lamps, like a man that was quite done with hope and would have welcomed the asylum of the grave. And all at once, as I thus stood, the City of Pekin flashed into my mind, racing her thirteen knots for Honolulu, with the hated Trent — perhaps with the mysterious Goddedaal — on board; and with the thought, the blood leaped and careered through all my body. It seemed no chase at all; it seemed we had no chance, as we lay there bound to iron pillars, and fooling away the precious moments over tins of beans. "Let them get there first!" I thought. "Let them! We can't be long behind." And from that moment, I date myself a man of a rounded experience: nothing had lacked but this, that I should entertain and welcome the grim thought of bloodshed.

It was long before the toil remitted in the cabin, and it was worth my while to get to bed; long after that, before sleep favoured me; and scarce a moment later (or so it seemed) when I was recalled to consciousness by bawling men and the jar of straining hawsers.

The schooner was cast off before I got on deck. In the misty obscurity of the first dawn, I saw the tug heading us with glowing fires and blowing smoke, and heard her beat the roughened waters of the bay. Beside us, on her flock of hills, the lighted city towered up and stood swollen in the raw fog. It was strange to see her burn on thus wastefully, with half-quenched luminaries, when the dawn was already grown strong enough to show me, and to suffer me to recognise, a solitary figure standing by the piles.

Or was it really the eye, and not rather the heart, that identified that shadow in the dusk, among the shoreside lamps? I know not. It was Jim, at least; Jim, come for a last look; and we had but time to wave a valedictory gesture and exchange a wordless cry. This was our second parting, and our capacities were now reversed. It was mine to play the Argonaut, to speed affairs, to plan and to accomplish — if need were, at the price of life; it was his to sit at home, to study the calendar, and to wait. I knew besides another thing that gave me joy. I knew that my friend had succeeded in my education; that the romance of business, if our fantastic purchase merited the name, had at last stirred my dilletante nature; and, as we swept under cloudy Tamalpais and through the roaring narrows of the bay, the Yankee blood sang in my veins with suspense and exultation.

Outside the heads, as if to meet my desire, we found it blowing fresh from the northeast. No time had been lost. The sun was not yet up before the tug cast off the hawser, gave us a salute of three whistles, and turned homeward toward the coast, which now began to gleam along its margin with the earliest rays of day. There was no other ship in view when the Norah Creina, lying over under all plain sail, began her long and lonely voyage to the wreck.

CHAPTER XII. THE “NORAH CREINA.”

I love to recall the glad monotony of a Pacific voyage, when the trades are not stinted, and the ship, day after day, goes free. The mountain scenery of trade-wind clouds, watched (and in my case painted) under every vicissitude of light — blotting stars, withering in the moon’s glory, barring the scarlet eve, lying across the dawn collapsed into the unfeatured morning bank, or at noon raising their snowy summits between the blue roof of heaven and the blue floor of sea; the small, busy, and deliberate world of the schooner, with its unfamiliar scenes, the spearing of dolphin from the bowsprit end, the holy war on sharks, the cook making bread on the main hatch; reefing down before a violent squall, with the men hanging out on the foot-ropes; the squall itself, the catch at the heart, the opened sluices of the sky; and the relief, the renewed loveliness of life, when all is over, the sun forth again, and our out-fought enemy only a blot upon the leeward sea. I love to recall, and would that I could reproduce that life, the unforgettable, the unrememberable. The memory, which shows so wise a backwardness in registering pain, is besides an imperfect recorder of extended pleasures; and a long-continued well-being escapes (as it were, by its mass) our petty methods of commemoration. On a part of our life’s map there lies a roseate, undecipherable haze, and that is all.

Of one thing, if I am at all to trust my own annals, I was delightedly conscious. Day after day, in the sun-gilded cabin, the whiskey-dealer’s thermometer stood at 84. Day after day, the air had the same indescribable liveliness and sweetness, soft and nimble, and cool as the cheek of health. Day after day the sun flamed; night after night the moon beaconed, or the stars paraded their lustrous regiment. I was aware of a spiritual change, or, perhaps, rather a molecular reconstitution. My bones were sweeter to me. I had come home to my own climate, and looked back with pity on those damp and wintry zones, miscalled the temperate.

“Two years of this, and comfortable quarters to live in, kind of shake the grit out of a man,” the captain remarked; “can’t make out to be happy anywhere else. A townie of mine was lost down this way, in a coalship that took fire at sea. He struck the beach somewhere in the Navigators; and he wrote to me that when he left the place, it would be feet first. He’s well off, too, and his father owns some coasting craft Down East; but Billy prefers the beach, and hot rolls off the bread-fruit trees.”

A voice told me I was on the same track as Billy. But when was this? Our outward track in the Norah Creina lay well to the northward; and perhaps it is but the impression of a few pet days which I have unconsciously spread longer, or perhaps the feeling grew upon me later, in the run to Honolulu. One thing I am sure: it was before I had ever seen an island worthy of the name that I must date my loyalty to the South Seas. The blank sea itself grew desirable under such skies; and wherever the trade-wind blows, I know no better country than a schooner's deck.

But for the tugging anxiety as to the journey's end, the journey itself must thus have counted for the best of holidays. My physical well-being was over-proof; effects of sea and sky kept me for ever busy with my pencil; and I had no lack of intellectual exercise of a different order in the study of my inconsistent friend, the captain. I call him friend, here on the threshold; but that is to look well ahead. At first, I was too much horrified by what I considered his barbarities, too much puzzled by his shifting humours, and too frequently annoyed by his small vanities, to regard him otherwise than as the cross of my existence. It was only by degrees, in his rare hours of pleasantness, when he forgot (and made me forget) the weaknesses to which he was so prone, that he won me to a kind of unconsenting fondness. Lastly, the faults were all embraced in a more generous view: I saw them in their place, like discords in a musical progression; and accepted them and found them picturesque, as we accept and admire, in the habitable face of nature, the smoky head of the volcano or the pernicious thicket of the swamp.

He was come of good people Down East, and had the beginnings of a thorough education. His temper had been ungovernable from the first; and it is likely the defect was inherited, and the blame of the rupture not entirely his. He ran away at least to sea; suffered horrible maltreatment, which seemed to have rather hardened than enlightened him; ran away again to shore in a South American port; proved his capacity and made money, although still a child; fell among thieves and was robbed; worked back a passage to the States, and knocked one morning at the door of an old lady whose orchard he had often robbed. The introduction appears insufficient; but Nares knew what he was doing. The sight of her old neighbourly depredator shivering at the door in tatters, the very oddity of his appeal, touched a soft spot in the spinster's heart. "I always had a fancy for the old lady," Nares said, "even when she used to stampede me out of the orchard, and shake her thimble and her old curls at me out of the window as I was going by; I always thought she was a kind of pleasant old girl. Well, when she came to the door that morning, I told her so, and that I was stone-broke; and she took me right in, and fetched out the pie." She clothed him, taught him, and had him to sea again in better shape, welcomed him to her hearth on his return from every cruise, and when she died bequeathed him her possessions. “She was a good old girl,” he would say. “I tell you, Mr. Dodd, it was a queer thing to see me and the old lady talking a pasear in the garden, and the old man scowling at us over the pickets. She lived right next door to the old man, and I guess that’s just what took me there. I wanted him to know that I was badly beat, you see, and would rather go to the devil than to him. What made the dig harder, he had quarrelled with the old lady about me and the orchard: I guess that made him rage. Yes, I was a beast when I was young. But I was always pretty good to the old lady.” Since then he had prospered, not uneventfully, in his profession; the old lady’s money had fallen in during the voyage of the Gleaner, and he was now, as soon as the smoke of that engagement cleared away, secure of his ship. I suppose he was about thirty: a powerful, active man, with a blue eye, a thick head of hair, about the colour of oakum and growing low over the brow; clean-shaved and lean about the jaw; a good singer; a good performer on that sea-instrument, the accordion; a quick observer, a close reasoner; when he pleased, of a really elegant address; and when he chose, the greatest brute upon the seas.

His usage of the men, his hazing, his bullying, his perpetual fault-finding for no cause, his perpetual and brutal sarcasm, might have raised a mutiny in a slave galley. Suppose the steersman’s eye to have wandered: “You — — , — — , little, mutton-faced Dutchman,” Nares would bawl; “you want a booting to keep you on your course! I know a little city-front slush when I see one. Just you glue your eye to that compass, or I’ll show you round the vessel at the butt-end of my boot.” Or suppose a hand to linger aft, whither he had perhaps been summoned not a minute before. “Mr. Daniells, will you oblige me by stepping clear of that main-sheet?” the captain might begin, with truculent courtesy. “Thank you. And perhaps you’ll be so kind as to tell me what the hell you’re doing on my quarter-deck? I want no dirt of your sort here. Is there nothing for you to do? Where’s the mate? Don’t you set ME to find work for you, or I’ll find you some that will keep you on your back a fortnight.” Such allocutions, conceived with a perfect knowledge of his audience, so that every insult carried home, were delivered with a mien so menacing, and an eye so fiercely cruel, that his unhappy subordinates shrank and quailed. Too often violence followed; too often I have heard and seen and boiled at the cowardly aggression; and the victim, his hands bound by law, has risen again from deck and crawled forward stupefied — I know not what passion of revenge in his wronged heart.

It seems strange I should have grown to like this tyrant. It may even seem strange that I should have stood by and suffered his excesses to proceed. But I was not quite such a chicken as to interfere in public;

for I would rather have a man or two mishandled than one half of us butchered in a mutiny and the rest suffer on the gallows. And in private, I was unceasing in my protests.

"Captain," I once said to him, appealing to his patriotism, which was of a hardy quality, "this is no way to treat American seamen. You don't call it American to treat men like dogs?"

"Americans?" he said grimly. "Do you call these Dutchmen and Scattermouches Americans? I've been fourteen years to sea, all but one trip under American colours, and I've never laid eye on an American foremast hand. There used to be such things in the old days, when thirty-five dollars were the wages out of Boston; and then you could see ships handled and run the way they want to be. But that's all past and gone; and nowadays the only thing that flies in an American ship is a belaying-pin. You don't know; you haven't a guess. How would you like to go on deck for your middle watch, fourteen months on end, with all your duty to do and every one's life depending on you, and expect to get a knife ripped into you as you come out of your stateroom, or be sand-bagged as you pass the boat, or get tripped into the hold, if the hatches are off in fine weather? That kind of shakes the starch out of the brotherly love and New Jerusalem business. You go through the mill, and you'll have a bigger grudge against every old shellback that dirties his plate in the three oceans, than the Bank of California could settle up. No; it has an ugly look to it, but the only way to run a ship is to make yourself a terror."

In sea-lingo (Pacific) DUTCHMAN includes all Teutons and folk from the basin of the Baltic; SCATTERMOUCH, all Latins and Levantines.

"Come, Captain," said I, "there are degrees in everything. You know American ships have a bad name; you know perfectly well if it wasn't for the high wage and the good food, there's not a man would ship in one if he could help; and even as it is, some prefer a British ship, beastly food and all."

"O, the lime-juicers?" said he. "There's plenty booting in lime-juicers, I guess; though I don't deny but what some of them are soft." And with that he smiled like a man recalling something. "Look here, that brings a yarn in my head," he resumed; "and for the sake of the joke, I'll give myself away. It was in 1874, I shipped mate in the British ship Maria, from 'Frisco for Melbourne. She was the queerest craft in some ways that ever I was aboard of. The food was a caution; there was nothing fit to put your lips to — but the lime-juice, which was from the end bin no doubt: it used to make me sick to see the men's dinners, and sorry to see my own. The old man was good enough, I guess; Green was his name; a mild, fatherly old galoot. But the hands were the lowest gang I ever handled; and whenever I tried to knock a little spirit into them, the old man took their part! It was Gilbert and Sullivan on the high seas; but you bet I wouldn't let any man dictate to me. 'You give me your orders, Captain Green,' I said, 'and you'll find I'll carry them out; that's all you've got to say. You'll find I do my duty,' I said; 'how I do it is my lookout; and there's no man born that's going to give me lessons.' Well, there was plenty dirt on board that Maria first and last. Of course, the old man put my back up, and, of course, he put up the crew's; and I had to regular fight my way through every watch. The men got to hate me, so's I would hear them grit their teeth when I came up. At last, one day, I saw a big hulking beast of a Dutchman booting the ship's boy. I made one shoot of it off the house and laid that Dutchman out. Up he came, and I laid him out again. 'Now,' I said, 'if there's a kick left in you, just mention it, and I'll stamp your ribs in like a packing-case.' He thought better of it, and never let on; lay there as mild as a deacon at a funeral; and they took him below to reflect on his native Dutchland. One night we got caught in rather a dirty thing about 25 south. I guess we were all asleep; for the first thing I knew there was the fore-royal gone. I ran forward, bawling blue hell; and just as I came by the foremast, something struck me right through the forearm and stuck there. I put my other hand up, and by George! it was the grain; the beasts had speared me like a porpoise. 'Cap'n!' I cried. — 'What's wrong?' says he. — 'They've grained me,' says I. — 'Grained you?' says he. 'Well, I've been looking for that.' — — 'And by God,' I cried, 'I want to have some of these beasts murdered for it!' — 'Now, Mr. Nares,' says he, 'you better go below. If I had been one of the men, you'd have got more than this. And I want no more of your language on deck. You've cost me my fore-royal already,' says he; 'and if you carry on, you'll have the three sticks out of her.' That was old man Green's idea of supporting officers. But you wait a bit; the cream's coming. We made Melbourne right enough, and the old man said: 'Mr. Nares, you and me don't draw together. You're a first-rate seaman, no mistake of that; but you're the most disagreeable man I ever sailed with; and your language and your conduct to the crew I cannot stomach. I guess we'll separate.' I didn't care about the berth, you may be sure; but I felt kind of mean; and if he made one kind of stink, I thought I could make another. So I said I would go ashore and see how things stood; went, found I was all right, and came aboard again on the top rail. — 'Are you getting your traps together, Mr. Nares?' says the old man. — 'No,' says I, 'I don't know as we'll separate much before 'Frisco; at least,' I said, 'it's a point for your consideration. I'm very willing to say good-by to the Maria, but I don't know whether you'll care to start me out with three months' wages.' He got his money-box right away. 'My son,' says he, 'I think it cheap at the money.' He had me there."

It was a singular tale for a man to tell of himself; above all, in the midst of our discussion; but it was quite in character for Nares. I never made a good hit in our disputes, I never justly resented any act or speech of his, but what I found it long after carefully posted in his day-book and reckoned (here was the man's oddity) to my credit. It was the same with his father, whom he had hated; he would give a sketch of the old fellow, frank and credible, and yet so honestly touched that it was charming. I have never met a man so strangely constituted: to possess a reason of the most equal justice, to have his nerves at the same time quivering with petty spite, and to act upon the nerves and not the reason.

A kindred wonder in my eyes was the nature of his courage. There was never a braver man: he went out to welcome danger; an emergency (came it never so sudden) strung him like a tonic. And yet, upon the other hand, I have known none so nervous, so oppressed with possibilities, looking upon the world at large, and the life of a sailor in particular, with so constant and haggard a consideration of the ugly chances. All his courage was in blood, not merely cold, but icy with reasoned apprehension. He would lay our little craft rail under, and "hang on" in a squall, until I gave myself up for lost, and the men were rushing to their stations of their own accord. "There," he would say, "I guess there's not a man on board would have hung on as long as I did that time; they'll have to give up thinking me no schooner sailor. I guess I can shave just as near capsizing as any other captain of this vessel, drunk or sober." And then he would fall to repining and wishing himself well out of the enterprise, and dilate on the peril of the seas, the particular dangers of the schooner rig, which he abhorred, the various ways in which we might go to the bottom, and the prodigious fleet of ships that have sailed out in the course of history, dwindled from the eyes of watchers, and returned no more. "Well," he would wind up, "I guess it don't much matter. I can't see what any one wants to live for, anyway. If I could get into some one else's apple-tree, and be about twelve years old, and just stick the way I was, eating stolen apples, I won't say. But there's no sense in this grown-up business — sailorising, politics, the piety mill, and all the rest of it. Good clean drowning is good enough for me." It is hard to imagine any more depressing talk for a poor landsman on a dirty night; it is hard to imagine anything less sailor-like (as sailors are supposed to be, and generally are) than this persistent harping on the minor.

But I was to see more of the man's gloomy constancy ere the cruise was at an end.

On the morning of the seventeenth day I came on deck, to find the schooner under double reefs, and flying rather wild before a heavy run of sea. Snoring trades and humming sails had been our portion hitherto. We were already nearing the island. My restrained excitement had begun again to overmaster me; and for some time my only book had been the patent log that trailed over the taffrail, and my chief interest the daily observation and our caterpillar progress across the chart. My first glance, which was at the compass, and my second, which was at the log, were all that I could wish. We lay our course; we had been doing over eight since nine the night before; and I drew a heavy breath of satisfaction. And then I know not what odd and wintry appearance of the sea and sky knocked suddenly at my heart. I observed the schooner to look more than usually small, the men silent and studious of the weather. Nares, in one of his rusty humours, afforded me no shadow of a morning salutation. He, too, seemed to observe the behaviour of the ship with an intent and anxious scrutiny. What I liked still less, Johnson himself was at the wheel, which he span busily, often with a visible effort; and as the seas ranged up behind us, black and imminent, he kept casting behind him eyes of animal swiftness, and drawing in his neck between his shoulders, like a man dodging a blow. From these signs, I gathered that all was not exactly for the best; and I would have given a good handful of dollars for a plain answer to the questions which I dared not put. Had I dared, with the present danger signal in the captain's face, I should only have been reminded of my position as supercargo — an office never touched upon in kindness — and advised, in a very indigestible manner, to go below. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to entertain my vague apprehensions as best I should be able, until it pleased the captain to enlighten me of his own accord. This he did sooner than I had expected; as soon, indeed, as the Chinaman had summoned us to breakfast, and we sat face to face across the narrow board.

"See here, Mr. Dodd," he began, looking at me rather queerly, "here is a business point arisen. This sea's been running up for the last two days, and now it's too high for comfort. The glass is falling, the wind is breezing up, and I won't say but what there's dirt in it. If I lay her to, we may have to ride out a gale of wind and drift God knows where — on these French Frigate Shoals, for instance. If I keep her as she goes, we'll make that island to-morrow afternoon, and have the lee of it to lie under, if we can't make out to run in. The point you have to figure on, is whether you'll take the big chances of that Captain Trent making the place before you, or take the risk of something happening. I'm to run this ship to your satisfaction," he added, with an ugly sneer. "Well, here's a point for the supercargo."

"Captain," I returned, with my heart in my mouth, "risk is better than certain failure."

“Life is all risk, Mr. Dodd,” he remarked. “But there’s one thing: it’s now or never; in half an hour, Archdeacon Gabriel couldn’t lay her to, if he came down stairs on purpose.”

“All right,” said I. “Let’s run.”

“Run goes,” said he; and with that he fell to breakfast, and passed half an hour in stowing away pie and devoutly wishing himself back in San Francisco.

When we came on deck again, he took the wheel from Johnson — it appears they could trust none among the hands — and I stood close beside him, feeling safe in this proximity, and tasting a fearful joy from our surroundings and the consciousness of my decision. The breeze had already risen, and as it tore over our heads, it uttered at times a long hooting note that sent my heart into my boots. The sea pursued us without remission, leaping to the assault of the low rail. The quarter-deck was all awash, and we must close the companion doors.

“And all this, if you please, for Mr. Pinkerton’s dollars!” the captain suddenly exclaimed. “There’s many a fine fellow gone under, Mr. Dodd, because of drivers like your friend. What do they care for a ship or two? Insured, I guess. What do they care for sailors’ lives alongside of a few thousand dollars? What they want is speed between ports, and a damned fool of a captain that’ll drive a ship under as I’m doing this one. You can put in the morning, asking why I do it.”

I sheered off to another part of the vessel as fast as civility permitted. This was not at all the talk that I desired, nor was the train of reflection which it started anyway welcome. Here I was, running some hazard of my life, and perilling the lives of seven others; exactly for what end, I was now at liberty to ask myself. For a very large amount of a very deadly poison, was the obvious answer; and I thought if all tales were true, and I were soon to be subjected to cross-examination at the bar of Eternal Justice, it was one which would not increase my popularity with the court. “Well, never mind, Jim,” thought I. “I’m doing it for you.”

Before eleven, a third reef was taken in the mainsail; and Johnson filled the cabin with a storm-sail of No. 1 duck and sat cross-legged on the streaming floor, vigorously putting it to rights with a couple of the hands. By dinner I had fled the deck, and sat in the bench corner, giddy, dumb, and stupefied with terror. The frightened leaps of the poor Norah Creina, spanking like a stag for bare existence, bruised me between the table and the berths. Overhead, the wild huntsman of the storm passed continuously in one blare of mingled noises; screaming wind, straining timber, lashing rope’s end, pounding block and bursting sea contributed; and I could have thought there was at times another, a more piercing, a more human note, that dominated all, like the wailing of an angel; I could have thought I knew the angel's name, and that his wings were black. It seemed incredible that any creature of man's art could long endure the barbarous mishandling of the seas, kicked as the schooner was from mountain side to mountain side, beaten and blown upon and wrenched in every joint and sinew, like a child upon the rack. There was not a plank of her that did not cry aloud for mercy; and as she continued to hold together, I became conscious of a growing sympathy with her endeavours, a growing admiration for her gallant staunchness, that amused and at times obliterated my terrors for myself. God bless every man that swung a mallet on that tiny and strong hull! It was not for wages only that he laboured, but to save men's lives.

All the rest of the day, and all the following night, I sat in the corner or lay wakeful in my bunk; and it was only with the return of morning that a new phase of my alarms drove me once more on deck. A gloomier interval I never passed. Johnson and Nares steadily relieved each other at the wheel and came below. The first glance of each was at the glass, which he repeatedly knuckled and frowned upon; for it was sagging lower all the time. Then, if Johnson were the visitor, he would pick a snack out of the cupboard, and stand, braced against the table, eating it, and perhaps obliging me with a word or two of his hee-haw conversation: how it was "a son of a gun of a cold night on deck, Mr. Dodd" (with a grin); how "it wasn't no night for panjammers, he could tell me": having transacted all which, he would throw himself down in his bunk and sleep his two hours with compunction. But the captain neither ate nor slept. "You there, Mr. Dodd?" he would say, after the obligatory visit to the glass. "Well, my son, we're one hundred and four miles" (or whatever it was) "off the island, and scudding for all we're worth. We'll make it to-morrow about four, or not, as the case may be. That's the news. And now, Mr. Dodd, I've stretched a point for you; you can see I'm dead tired; so just you stretch away back to your bunk again." And with this attempt at geniality, his teeth would settle hard down on his cigar, and he would pass his spell below staring and blinking at the cabin lamp through a cloud of tobacco smoke. He has told me since that he was happy, which I should never have divined. "You see," he said, "the wind we had was never anything out of the way; but the sea was really nasty, the schooner wanted a lot of humouring, and it was clear from the glass that we were close to some dirt. We might be running out of it, or we might be running right crack into it. Well, there's always something sublime about a big deal like that; and it kind of raises a man in his own liking. We're a queer kind of beasts, Mr. Dodd."

The morning broke with sinister brightness; the air alarmingly transparent, the sky pure, the rim of the horizon clear and strong against the heavens. The wind and the wild seas, now vastly swollen, indefatigably hunted us. I stood on deck, choking with fear; I seemed to lose all power upon my limbs; my knees were as paper when she plunged into the murderous valleys; my heart collapsed when some black mountain fell in avalanche beside her counter, and the water, that was more than spray, swept round my ankles like a torrent. I was conscious of but one strong desire, to bear myself decently in my terrors, and whatever should happen to my life, preserve my character: as the captain said, we are a queer kind of beasts. Breakfast time came, and I made shift to swallow some hot tea. Then I must stagger below to take the time, reading the chronometer with dizzy eyes, and marvelling the while what value there could be in observations taken in a ship launched (as ours then was) like a missile among flying seas. The forenoon dragged on in a grinding monotony of peril; every spoke of the wheel a rash, but an obliged experiment — rash as a forlorn hope, needful as the leap that lands a fireman from a burning staircase. Noon was made; the captain dined on his day's work, and I on watching him; and our place was entered on the chart with a meticulous precision which seemed to me half pitiful and half absurd, since the next eye to behold that sheet of paper might be the eye of an exploring fish. One o'clock came, then two; the captain gloomed and chafed, as he held to the coaming of the house, and if ever I saw dormant murder in man's eye, it was in his. God help the hand that should have disobeyed him.

Of a sudden, he turned towards the mate, who was doing his trick at the wheel.

"Two points on the port bow," I heard him say. And he took the wheel himself.

Johnson nodded, wiped his eyes with the back of his wet hand, watched a chance as the vessel lunged up hill, and got to the main rigging, where he swarmed aloft. Up and up, I watched him go, hanging on at every ugly plunge, gaining with every lull of the schooner's movement, until, clambering into the cross-trees and clinging with one arm around the masts, I could see him take one comprehensive sweep of the southwesterly horizon. The next moment, he had slid down the backstay and stood on deck, with a grin, a nod, and a gesture of the finger that said "yes"; the next again, and he was back sweating and squirming at the wheel, his tired face streaming and smiling, and his hair and the rags and corners of his clothes lashing round him in the wind.

Nares went below, fetched up his binocular, and fell into a silent perusal of the sea-line; I also, with my unaided eyesight. Little by little, in that white waste of water, I began to make out a quarter where the whiteness appeared more condensed: the sky above was whitish likewise, and misty like a squall; and little by little there thrilled upon my ears a note deeper and more terrible than the yelling of the gale — the long, thundering roll of breakers. Nares wiped his night glass on his sleeve and passed it to me, motioning, as he did so, with his hand. An endless wilderness of raging billows came and went and danced in the circle of the glass; now and then a pale corner of sky, or the strong line of the horizon rugged with the heads of waves; and then of a sudden — come and gone ere I could fix it, with a swallow's swiftness — one glimpse of what we had come so far and paid so dear to see: the masts and rigging of a brig pencilled on heaven, with an ensign streaming at the main, and the ragged ribbons of a topsail thrashing from the yard. Again and again, with toilful searching, I recalled that apparition. There was no sign of any land; the wreck stood between sea and sky, a thing the most isolated I had ever viewed; but as we drew nearer, I perceived her to be defended by a line of breakers which drew off on either hand, and marked, indeed, the nearest segment of the reef. Heavy spray hung over them like a smoke, some hundred feet into the air; and the sound of their consecutive explosions rolled like a cannonade.

In half an hour we were close in; for perhaps as long again, we skirted that formidable barrier toward its farther side; and presently the sea began insensibly to moderate and the ship to go more sweetly. We had gained the lee of the island as (for form's sake) I may call that ring of foam and haze and thunder; and shaking out a reef, wore ship and headed for the passage.

CHAPTER XIII. THE ISLAND AND THE WRECK.

All hands were filled with joy. It was betrayed in their alacrity and easy faces: Johnson smiling broadly at the wheel, Nares studying the sketch chart of the island with an eye at peace, and the hands clustered forward, eagerly talking and pointing: so manifest was our escape, so wonderful the attraction of a single foot of earth after so many suns had set and risen on an empty sea. To add to the relief, besides, by one of those malicious coincidences which suggest for fate the image of an underbred and grinning schoolboy, we had no sooner worn ship than the wind began to abate.

For myself, however, I did but exchange anxieties. I was no sooner out of one fear than I fell upon another; no sooner secure that I should myself make the intended haven, than I began to be convinced that Trent was there before me. I climbed into the rigging, stood on the board, and eagerly scanned that ring of coral reef and bursting breaker, and the blue lagoon which they enclosed. The two islets within began to show plainly — Middle Brooks and Lower Brooks Island, the Directory named them: two low, bush-covered, rolling strips of sand, each with glittering beaches, each perhaps a mile or a mile and a half in length, running east and west, and divided by a narrow channel. Over these, innumerable as maggots, there hovered, chattered, screamed and clanged, millions of twinkling sea-birds: white and black; the black by far the largest. With singular scintillations, this vortex of winged life swayed to and fro in the strong sunshine, whirled continually through itself, and would now and again burst asunder and scatter as wide as the lagoon: so that I was irresistibly reminded of what I had read of nebular convulsions. A thin cloud overspread the area of the reef and the adjacent sea — the dust, as I could not but fancy, of earlier explosions. And a little apart, there was yet another focus of centrifugal and centripetal flight, where, hard by the deafening line of breakers, her sails (all but the tattered topsail) snugly furled down, and the red rag that marks Old England on the seas beating, union down, at the main — the Flying Scud, the fruit of so many toilers, a recollection in so many lives of men, whose tall spars had been mirrored in the remotest corners of the sea — lay stationary at last and forever, in the first stage of naval dissolution. Towards her, the taut Norah Creina, vulture-wise, wriggled to windward: come from so far to pick her bones. And, look as I pleased, there was no other presence of man or of man's handiwork; no Honolulu schooner lay there crowded with armed rivals, no smoke rose from the fire at which I fancied Trent cooking a meal of sea-birds. It seemed, after all, we were in time, and I drew a mighty breath.

I had not arrived at this reviving certainty before the breakers were already close aboard, the leadsman at his station, and the captain posted in the fore cross-trees to con us through the coral lumps of the lagoon. All circumstances were in our favour, the light behind, the sun low, the wind still fresh and steady, and the tide about the turn. A moment later we shot at racing speed betwixt two pier heads of broken water; the lead began to be cast, the captain to bawl down his anxious directions, the schooner to tack and dodge among the scattered dangers of the lagoon; and at one bell in the first dog watch, we had come to our anchor off the north-east end of Middle Brooks Island, in five fathoms water. The sails were gasketted and covered, the boats emptied of the miscellaneous stores and odds and ends of sea-furniture, that accumulate in the course of a voyage, the kedge sent ashore, and the decks tidied down: a good three-quarters of an hour's work, during which I raged about the deck like a man with a strong toothache. The transition from the wild sea to the comparative immobility of the lagoon had wrought strange distress among my nerves: I could not hold still whether in hand or foot; the slowness of the men, tired as dogs after our rough experience outside, irritated me like something personal; and the irrational screaming of the sea-birds saddened me like a dirge. It was a relief when, with Nares, and a couple of hands, I might drop into the boat and move off at last for the Flying Scud.

"She looks kind of pitiful, don't she?" observed the captain, nodding towards the wreck, from which we were separated by some half a mile. "Looks as if she didn't like her berth, and Captain Trent had used her badly. Give her ginger, boys!" he added to the hands, "and you can all have shore liberty to-night to see the birds and paint the town red."

We all laughed at the pleasantry, and the boat skimmed the faster over the rippling face of the lagoon. The Flying Scud would have seemed small enough beside the wharves of San Francisco, but she was some thrice the size of the Norah Creina, which had been so long our continent; and as we craned up at her wall-sides, she impressed us with a mountain magnitude. She lay head to the reef, where the huge blue wall of the rollers was for ever ranging up and crumbling down; and to gain her starboard side, we must pass below the stern. The rudder was hard aport, and we could read the legend:

FLYING SCUD

HULL

On the other side, about the break of the poop, some half a fathom of rope ladder trailed over the rail, and by this we made our entrance.

She was a roomy ship inside, with a raised poop standing some three feet higher than the deck, and a small forward house, for the men's bunks and the galley, just abaft the foremast. There was one boat on the house, and another and larger one, in beds on deck, on either hand of it. She had been painted white, with tropical economy, outside and in; and we found, later on, that the stanchions of the rail, hoops of the scuttle but, etc., were picked out with green. At that time, however, when we first stepped aboard, all was hidden under the droppings of innumerable sea-birds.

The birds themselves gyrated and screamed meanwhile among the rigging; and when we looked into the galley, their outrush drove us back. Savage-looking fowl they were, savagely beaked, and some of the black ones great as eagles. Half-buried in the slush, we were aware of a litter of kegs in the waist; and these, on being somewhat cleaned, proved to be water beakers and quarter casks of mess beef with some colonial brand, doubtless collected there before the Tempest hove in sight, and while Trent and his men had no better expectation than to strike for Honolulu in the boats. Nothing else was notable on deck, save where the loose topsail had played some havoc with the rigging, and there hung, and swayed, and sang in the declining wind, a raffle of intorted cordage.

With a shyness that was almost awe, Nares and I descended the companion. The stair turned upon itself and landed us just forward of a thwart-ship bulkhead that cut the poop in two. The fore part formed a kind of miscellaneous store-room, with a double-bunked division for the cook (as Nares supposed) and second mate. The after part contained, in the midst, the main cabin, running in a kind of bow into the curvature of the stern; on the port side, a pantry opening forward and a stateroom for the mate; and on the starboard, the captain's berth and water-closet. Into these we did but glance: the main cabin holding us. It was dark, for the sea-birds had obscured the skylight with their droppings; it smelt rank and fusty; and it was beset with a loud swarm of flies that beat continually in our faces. Supposing them close attendants upon man and his broken meat, I marvelled how they had found their way to Midway reef; it was sure at least some vessel must have brought them, and that long ago, for they had multiplied exceedingly. Part of the floor was strewn with a confusion of clothes, books, nautical instruments, odds and ends of finery, and such trash as might be expected from the turning out of several seamen's chests, upon a sudden emergency and after a long cruise. It was strange in that dim cabin, quivering with the near thunder of the breakers and pierced with the screaming of the fowls, to turn over so many things that other men had coveted, and prized, and worn on their warm bodies — frayed old underclothing, pyjamas of strange design, duck suits in every stage of rustiness, oil skins, pilot coats, bottles of scent, embroidered shirts, jackets of Ponjee silk — clothes for the night watch at sea or the day ashore in the hotel verandah; and mingled among these, books, cigars, fancy pipes, quantities of tobacco, many keys, a rusty pistol, and a sprinkling of cheap curiosities — Benares brass, Chinese jars and pictures, and bottles of odd shells in cotton, each designed no doubt for somebody at home — perhaps in Hull, of which Trent had been a native and his ship a citizen.

Thence we turned our attention to the table, which stood spread, as if for a meal, with stout ship's crockery and the remains of food — a pot of marmalade, dregs of coffee in the mugs, unrecognisable remains of foods, bread, some toast, and a tin of condensed milk. The tablecloth, originally of a red colour, was stained a dark brown at the captain's end, apparently with coffee; at the other end, it had been folded back, and a pen and ink-pot stood on the bare table. Stools were here and there about the table, irregularly placed, as though the meal had been finished and the men smoking and chatting; and one of the stools lay on the floor, broken.

"See! they were writing up the log," said Nares, pointing to the ink-bottle. "Caught napping, as usual. I wonder if there ever was a captain yet, that lost a ship with his log-book up to date? He generally has about a month to fill up on a clean break, like Charles Dickens and his serial novels. — What a regular, lime-juicer spread!" he added contemptuously. "Marmalade — and toast for the old man! Nasty, slovenly pigs!"

There was something in this criticism of the absent that jarred upon my feelings. I had no love indeed for Captain Trent or any of his vanished gang; but the desertion and decay of this once habitable cabin struck me hard: the death of man's handiwork is melancholy like the death of man himself; and I was impressed with an involuntary and irrational sense of tragedy in my surroundings.

"This sickens me," I said. "Let's go on deck and breathe."

The captain nodded. "It IS kind of lonely, isn't it?" he said. "But I can't go up till I get the code signals. I want to run up 'Got Left' or something, just to brighten up this island home. Captain Trent hasn't been here yet, but he'll drop in before long; and it'll cheer him up to see a signal on the brig."

"Isn't there some official expression we could use?" I asked, vastly taken by the fancy. "'Sold for the benefit of the underwriters: for further particulars, apply to J. Pinkerton, Montana Block, S.F.'"

"Well," returned Nares, "I won't say but what an old navy quartermaster might telegraph all that, if you gave him a day to do it in and a pound of tobacco for himself. But it's above my register. I must try something short and sweet: KB, urgent signal, 'Heave all aback'; or LM, urgent, 'The berth you're now in is not safe'; or what do you say to PQH? — 'Tell my owners the ship answers remarkably well.'"

"It's premature," I replied; "but it seems calculated to give pain to Trent. PQH for me."

The flags were found in Trent's cabin, neatly stored behind a lettered grating; Nares chose what he required and (I following) returned on deck, where the sun had already dipped, and the dusk was coming.

"Here! don't touch that, you fool!" shouted the captain to one of the hands, who was drinking from the scuttle but. "That water's rotten!"

"Beg pardon, sir," replied the man. "Tastes quite sweet."

"Let me see," returned Nares, and he took the dipper and held it to his lips. "Yes, it's all right," he said. "Must have rotted and come sweet again. Queer, isn't it, Mr. Dodd? Though I've known the same on a Cape Horner."

There was something in his intonation that made me look him in the face; he stood a little on tiptoe to look right and left about the ship, like a man filled with curiosity, and his whole expression and bearing testified to some suppressed excitement.

"You don't believe what you're saying!" I broke out.

"O, I don't know but what I do!" he replied, laying a hand upon me soothingly. "The thing's very possible. Only, I'm bothered about something else."

And with that he called a hand, gave him the code flags, and stepped himself to the main signal halliards, which vibrated under the weight of the ensign overhead. A minute later, the American colours, which we had brought in the boat, replaced the English red, and PQH was fluttering at the fore.

"Now, then," said Nares, who had watched the breaking out of his signal with the old-maidish particularity of an American sailor, "out with those handspikes, and let's see what water there is in the lagoon."

The bars were shoved home; the barbarous cacophony of the clanking pump rose in the waist; and streams of ill-smelling water gushed on deck and made valleys in the slab guano. Nares leaned on the rail, watching the steady stream of bilge as though he found some interest in it.

"What is it that bothers you?" I asked.

"Well, I'll tell you one thing shortly," he replied. "But here's another. Do you see those boats there, one on the house and two on the beds? Well, where is the boat Trent lowered when he lost the hands?"

"Got it aboard again, I suppose," said I.

"Well, if you'll tell me why!" returned the captain.

"Then it must have been another," I suggested.

"She might have carried another on the main hatch, I won't deny," admitted Nares; "but I can't see what she wanted with it, unless it was for the old man to go out and play the accordion in, on moonlight nights."

"It can't much matter, anyway," I reflected.

"O, I don't suppose it does," said he, glancing over his shoulder at the spouting of the scuppers.

"And how long are we to keep up this racket?" I asked. "We're simply pumping up the lagoon. Captain Trent himself said she had settled down and was full forward."

"Did he?" said Nares, with a significant dryness. And almost as he spoke the pumps sucked, and sucked again, and the men threw down their bars. "There, what do you make of that?" he asked. "Now, I'll tell, Mr. Dodd," he went on, lowering his voice, but not shifting from his easy attitude against the rail, "this ship is as sound as the Norah Creina. I had a guess of it before we came aboard, and now I know."

"It's not possible!" I cried. "What do you make of Trent?"

"I don't make anything of Trent; I don't know whether he's a liar or only an old wife; I simply tell you what's the fact," said Nares. "And I'll tell you something more," he added: "I've taken the ground myself in deep-water vessels; I know what I'm saying; and I say that, when she first struck and before she bedded down, seven or eight hours' work would have got this hooker off, and there's no man that ever went two years to sea but must have known it."

I could only utter an exclamation.

Nares raised his finger warningly. "Don't let THEM get hold of it," said he. "Think what you like, but say nothing."

I glanced round; the dusk was melting into early night; the twinkle of a lantern marked the schooner's position in the distance; and our men, free from further labour, stood grouped together in the waist, their faces illuminated by their glowing pipes.

"Why didn't Trent get her off?" inquired the captain. "Why did he want to buy her back in 'Frisco for these fabulous sums, when he might have sailed her into the bay himself?"

"Perhaps he never knew her value until then," I suggested.

"I wish we knew her value now," exclaimed Nares. "However, I don't want to depress you; I'm sorry for you, Mr. Dodd; I know how bothering it must be to you; and the best I can say's this: I haven't taken much time getting down, and now I'm here I mean to work this thing in proper style. I just want to put your mind at rest: you shall have no trouble with me."

There was something trusty and friendly in his voice; and I found myself gripping hands with him, in that hard, short shake that means so much with English-speaking people.

"We'll do, old fellow," said he. "We've shaken down into pretty good friends, you and me; and you won't find me working the business any the less hard for that. And now let's scoot for supper."

After supper, with the idle curiosity of the seafarer, we pulled ashore in a fine moonlight, and landed on Middle Brook's Island. A flat beach surrounded it upon all sides; and the midst was occupied by a thicket of bushes, the highest of them scarcely five feet high, in which the sea-fowl lived. Through this we tried at first to strike; but it were easier to cross Trafalgar Square on a day of demonstration than to invade these haunts of sleeping sea-birds. The nests sank, and the eggs burst under footing; wings beat in our faces, beaks menaced our eyes, our minds were confounded with the screeching, and the coil spread over the island and mounted high into the air.

"I guess we'll saunter round the beach," said Nares, when we had made good our retreat.

The hands were all busy after sea-birds' eggs, so there were none to follow us. Our way lay on the crisp sand by the margin of the water: on one side, the thicket from which we had been dislodged; on the other, the face of the lagoon, barred with a broad path of moonlight, and beyond that, the line, alternately dark and shining, alternately hove high and fallen prone, of the external breakers. The beach was strewn with bits of wreck and drift: some redwood and spruce logs, no less than two lower masts of junks, and the stern-post of a European ship; all of which we looked on with a shade of serious concern, speaking of the dangers of the sea and the hard case of castaways. In this sober vein we made the greater part of the circuit of the island; had a near view of its neighbour from the southern end; walked the whole length of the westerly side in the shadow of the thicket; and came forth again into the moonlight at the opposite extremity.

On our right, at the distance of about half a mile, the schooner lay faintly heaving at her anchors. About half a mile down the beach, at a spot still hidden from us by the thicket, an upboiling of the birds showed where the men were still (with sailor-like insatiability) collecting eggs. And right before us, in a small indentation of the sand, we were aware of a boat lying high and dry, and right side up.

Nares crouched back into the shadow of the bushes.

"What the devil's this?" he whispered.

"Trent," I suggested, with a beating heart.

"We were damned fools to come ashore unarmed," said he. "But I've got to know where I stand." In the shadow, his face looked conspicuously white, and his voice betrayed a strong excitement. He took his boat's whistle from his pocket. "In case I might want to play a tune," said he, grimly, and thrusting it between his teeth, advanced into the moonlit open; which we crossed with rapid steps, looking guiltily about us as we went. Not a leaf stirred; and the boat, when we came up to it, offered convincing proof of long desertion. She was an eighteen-foot whaleboat of the ordinary type, equipped with oars and thole-pins. Two or three quarter-casks lay on the bilge amidships, one of which must have been broached, and now stank horribly; and these, upon examination, proved to bear the same New Zealand brand as the beef on board the wreck.

"Well, here's the boat," said I; "here's one of your difficulties cleared away."

"H'm," said he. There was a little water in the bilge, and here he stooped and tasted it.

"Fresh," he said. "Only rain-water."

"You don't object to that?" I asked.

"No," said he.

"Well, then, what ails you?" I cried.

"In plain United States, Mr. Dodd," he returned, "a whaleboat, five ash sweeps, and a barrel of stinking pork."

"Or, in other words, the whole thing?" I commented.

"Well, it's this way," he condescended to explain. "I've no use for a fourth boat at all; but a boat of this model tops the business. I don't say the type's not common in these waters; it's as common as dirt; the traders carry them for surf-boats. But the Flying Scud? a deep-water tramp, who was lime-juicing around between big ports, Calcutta and Rangoon and 'Frisco and the Canton River? No, I don't see it."

We were leaning over the gunwale of the boat as we spoke. The captain stood nearest the bow, and he was idly playing with the trailing painter, when a thought arrested him. He hauled the line in hand over hand, and stared, and remained staring, at the end.

"Anything wrong with it?" I asked.

"Do you know, Mr. Dodd," said he, in a queer voice, "this painter's been cut? A sailor always seizes a rope's end, but this is sliced short off with the cold steel. This won't do at all for the men," he added. "Just stand by till I fix it up more natural."

"Any guess what it all means?" I asked.

"Well, it means one thing," said he. "It means Trent was a liar. I guess the story of the Flying Scud was a sight more picturesque than he gave out."

Half an hour later, the whaleboat was lying astern of the Norah Creina; and Nares and I sought our bunks, silent and half-bewildered by our late discoveries.

CHAPTER XIV. THE CABIN OF THE “FLYING SCUD.”

The sun of the morrow had not cleared the morning bank: the lake of the lagoon, the islets, and the wall of breakers now beginning to subside, still lay clearly pictured in the flushed obscurity of early day, when we stepped again upon the deck of the Flying Scud: Nares, myself, the mate, two of the hands, and one dozen bright, virgin axes, in war against that massive structure. I think we all drew pleasurable breath; so profound in man is the instinct of destruction, so engaging is the interest of the chase. For we were now about to taste, in a supreme degree, the double joys of demolishing a toy and playing “Hide the handkerchief”: sports from which we had all perhaps desisted since the days of infancy. And the toy we were to burst in pieces was a deep-sea ship; and the hidden good for which we were to hunt was a prodigious fortune.

The decks were washed down, the main hatch removed, and a gun-tackle purchase rigged before the boat arrived with breakfast. I had grown so suspicious of the wreck, that it was a positive relief to me to look down into the hold, and see it full, or nearly full, of undeniable rice packed in the Chinese fashion in boluses of matting. Breakfast over, Johnson and the hands turned to upon the cargo; while Nares and I, having smashed open the skylight and rigged up a windsail on deck, began the work of rummaging the cabins.

I must not be expected to describe our first day’s work, or (for that matter) any of the rest, in order and detail as it occurred. Such particularity might have been possible for several officers and a draft of men from a ship of war, accompanied by an experienced secretary with a knowledge of shorthand. For two plain human beings, unaccustomed to the use of the broad-axe and consumed with an impatient greed of the result, the whole business melts, in the retrospect, into a nightmare of exertion, heat, hurry, and bewilderment; sweat pouring from the face like rain, the scurry of rats, the choking exhalations of the bilge, and the throbs and splinterings of the toiling axes. I shall content myself with giving the cream of our discoveries in a logical rather than a temporal order; though the two indeed practically coincided, and we had finished our exploration of the cabin, before we could be certain of the nature of the cargo.

Nares and I began operations by tossing up pell-mell through the companion, and piling in a squalid heap about the wheel, all clothes, personal effects, the crockery, the carpet, stale victuals, tins of meat, and in a word, all movables from the main cabin. Thence, we transferred our attention to the captain's quarters on the starboard side. Using the blankets for a basket, we sent up the books, instruments, and clothes to swell our growing midden on the deck; and then Nares, going on hands and knees, began to forage underneath the bed. Box after box of Manilla cigars rewarded his search. I took occasion to smash some of these boxes open, and even to guillotine the bundles of cigars; but quite in vain — no secret cache of opium encouraged me to continue.

"I guess I've got hold of the dicky now!" exclaimed Nares, and turning round from my perquisitions, I found he had drawn forth a heavy iron box, secured to the bulkhead by chain and padlock. On this he was now gazing, not with the triumph that instantly inflamed my own bosom, but with a somewhat foolish appearance of surprise.

"By George, we have it now!" I cried, and would have shaken hands with my companion; but he did not see, or would not accept, the salutation.

"Let's see what's in it first," he remarked dryly. And he adjusted the box upon its side, and with some blows of an axe burst the lock open. I threw myself beside him, as he replaced the box on its bottom and removed the lid. I cannot tell what I expected; a million's worth of diamonds might perhaps have pleased me; my cheeks burned, my heart throbbed to bursting; and lo! there was disclosed but a trayful of papers, neatly taped, and a cheque-book of the customary pattern. I made a snatch at the tray to see what was beneath; but the captain's hand fell on mine, heavy and hard.

"Now, boss!" he cried, not unkindly, "is this to be run shipshape? or is it a Dutch grab-racket?"

And he proceeded to untie and run over the contents of the papers, with a serious face and what seemed an ostentation of delay. Me and my impatience it would appear he had forgotten; for when he was quite done, he sat a while thinking, whistled a bar or two, refolded the papers, tied them up again; and then, and not before, deliberately raised the tray.

I saw a cigar-box, tied with a piece of fishing-line, and four fat canvas-bags. Nares whipped out his knife, cut the line, and opened the box. It was about half full of sovereigns.

"And the bags?" I whispered.

The captain ripped them open one by one, and a flood of mixed silver coin burst forth and rattled in the rusty bottom of the box. Without a word, he set to work to count the gold.

"What is this?" I asked.

"It's the ship's money," he returned, doggedly continuing his work.

"The ship's money?" I repeated. "That's the money Trent tramped and traded with? And there's his cheque-book to draw upon his owners? And he has left it?"

"I guess he has," said Nares, austerely, jotting down a note of the gold; and I was abashed into silence till his task should be completed.

It came, I think, to three hundred and seventy-eight pounds sterling; some nineteen pounds of it in silver: all of which we turned again into the chest.

"And what do you think of that?" I asked.

"Mr. Dodd," he replied, "you see something of the rumness of this job, but not the whole. The specie bothers you, but what gets me is the papers. Are you aware that the master of a ship has charge of all the cash in hand, pays the men advances, receives freight and passage money, and runs up bills in every port? All this he does as the owner's confidential agent, and his integrity is proved by his receipted bills. I tell you, the captain of a ship is more likely to forget his pants than these bills which guarantee his character. I've known men drown to save them: bad men, too; but this is the shipmaster's honour. And here this Captain Trent — not hurried, not threatened with anything but a free passage in a British man-of-war — has left them all behind! I don't want to express myself too strongly, because the facts appear against me, but the thing is impossible."

Dinner came to us not long after, and we ate it on deck, in a grim silence, each privately racking his brain for some solution of the mysteries. I was indeed so swallowed up in these considerations, that the wreck, the lagoon, the islets, and the strident sea-fowl, the strong sun then beating on my head, and even the gloomy countenance of the captain at my elbow, all vanished from the field of consciousness. My mind was a blackboard, on which I scrawled and blotted out hypotheses; comparing each with the pictorial records in my memory: cyphering with pictures. In the course of this tense mental exercise I recalled and studied the faces of one memorial masterpiece, the scene of the saloon; and here I found myself, on a sudden, looking in the eyes of the Kanaka.

"There's one thing I can put beyond doubt, at all events," I cried, relinquishing my dinner and getting briskly afoot. "There was that Kanaka I saw in the bar with Captain Trent, the fellow the newspapers and ship's articles made out to be a Chinaman. I mean to rout his quarters out and settle that."

"All right," said Nares. "I'll lazy off a bit longer, Mr. Dodd; I feel pretty rocky and mean."

We had thoroughly cleared out the three after-compartments of the ship: all the stuff from the main cabin and the mate's and captain's quarters lay piled about the wheel; but in the forward stateroom with the two bunks, where Nares had said the mate and cook most likely berthed, we had as yet done nothing. Thither I went. It was very bare; a few photographs were tacked on the bulkhead, one of them indecent; a single chest stood open, and, like all we had yet found, it had been partly rifled. An armful of two-shilling novels proved to me beyond a doubt it was a European's; no Chinaman would have possessed any, and the most literate Kanaka conceivable in a ship's galley was not likely to have gone beyond one. It was plain, then, that the cook had not berthed aft, and I must look elsewhere.

The men had stamped down the nests and driven the birds from the galley, so that I could now enter without contest. One door had been already blocked with rice; the place was in part darkness, full of a foul stale smell, and a cloud of nasty flies; it had been left, besides, in some disorder, or else the birds, during their time of tenancy, had knocked the things about; and the floor, like the deck before we washed it, was spread with pasty filth. Against the wall, in the far corner, I found a handsome chest of camphor-wood bound with brass, such as Chinamen and sailors love, and indeed all of mankind that plies in the Pacific. From its outside view I could thus make no deduction; and, strange to say, the interior was concealed. All the other chests, as I have said already, we had found gaping open, and their contents scattered abroad; the same remark we found to apply afterwards in the quarters of the seamen; only this camphor-wood chest, a singular exception, was both closed and locked.

I took an axe to it, readily forced the paltry Chinese fastening, and, like a Custom-House officer, plunged my hands among the contents. For some while I groped among linen and cotton. Then my teeth were set on edge with silk, of which I drew forth several strips covered with mysterious characters. And these settled the business, for I recognised them as a kind of bed-hanging popular with the commoner class of the Chinese. Nor were further evidences wanting, such as night-clothes of an extraordinary design, a three-stringed Chinese fiddle, a silk handkerchief full of roots and herbs, and a neat apparatus for smoking opium, with a liberal provision of the drug. Plainly, then, the cook had been a Chinaman; and, if so, who was Jos. Amalu? Or had Jos. stolen the chest before he proceeded to ship under a false name and domicile? It was possible, as anything was possible in such a welter; but, regarded as a solution, it only led and left me deeper in the bog. For why should this chest have been deserted and neglected, when the others were rummaged or removed? and where had Jos. come by that second chest, with which (according to the clerk at the What Cheer) he had started for Honolulu?

"And how have YOU fared?" inquired the captain, whom I found luxuriously reclining in our mound of litter. And the accent on the pronoun, the heightened colour of the speaker's face, and the contained excitement in his tones, advertised me at once that I had not been alone to make discoveries.

"I have found a Chinaman's chest in the galley," said I, "and John (if there was any John) was not so much as at the pains to take his opium."

Nares seemed to take it mighty quietly. "That so?" said he. "Now, cast your eyes on that and own you're beaten!" And with a formidable clap of his open hand he flattened out before me, on the deck, a pair of newspapers.

I gazed upon them dully, being in no mood for fresh discoveries.

"Look at them, Mr. Dodd," cried the captain sharply. "Can't you look at them?" And he ran a dirty thumb along the title. "'*Sydney Morning Herald,* November 26th,' can't you make that out?" he cried, with rising energy. "And don't you know, sir, that not thirteen days after this paper appeared in New South Pole, this ship we're standing in heaved her blessed anchors out of China? How did the *Sydney Morning Herald* get to Hong Kong in thirteen days? Trent made no land, he spoke no ship, till he got here. Then he either got it here or in Hong Kong. I give you your choice, my son!" he cried, and fell back among the clothes like a man weary of life.

"Where did you find them?" I asked. "In that black bag?"

"Guess so," he said. "You needn't fool with it. There's nothing else but a lead-pencil and a kind of worked-out knife."

I looked in the bag, however, and was well rewarded.

"Every man to his trade, captain," said I. "You're a sailor, and you've given me plenty of points; but I am an artist, and allow me to inform you this is quite as strange as all the rest. The knife is a palette-knife; the pencil a Winsor and Newton, and a B B B at that. A palette-knife and a B B B on a tramp brig! It's against the laws of nature."

"It would sicken a dog, wouldn't it?" said Nares.

"Yes," I continued, "it's been used by an artist, too: see how it's sharpened — not for writing — no man could write with that. An artist, and straight from Sydney? How can he come in?"

"O, that's natural enough," sneered Nares. "They cabled him to come up and illustrate this dime novel."

We fell a while silent.

"Captain," I said at last, "there is something deuced underhand about this brig. You tell me you've been to sea a good part of your life. You must have seen shady things done on ships, and heard of more. Well, what is this? is it insurance? is it piracy? what is it ABOUT? what can it be for?"

"Mr. Dodd," returned Nares, "you're right about me having been to sea the bigger part of my life. And you're right again when you think I know a good many ways in which a dishonest captain mayn't be on the square, nor do exactly the right thing by his owners, and altogether be just a little too smart by ninety-nine and three-quarters. There's a good many ways, but not so many as you'd think; and not one that has any mortal thing to do with Trent. Trent and his whole racket has got to do with nothing — that's the bed-rock fact; there's no sense to it, and no use in it, and no story to it: it's a beastly dream. And don't you run away with that notion that landsmen take about ships. A society actress don't go around more publicly than what a ship does, nor is more interviewed, nor more humbugged, nor more run after by all sorts of little fussinesses in brass buttons. And more than an actress, a ship has a deal to lose; she's capital, and the actress only character — if she's that. The ports of the world are thick with people ready to kick a captain into the penitentiary if he's not as bright as a dollar and as honest as the morning star; and what with Lloyd keeping watch and watch in every corner of the three oceans, and the insurance leeches, and the consuls, and the customs bugs, and the medicos, you can only get the idea by thinking of a landsman watched by a hundred and fifty detectives, or a stranger in a village Down East."

"Well, but at sea?" I said.

"You make me tired," retorted the captain. "What's the use — at sea? Everything's got to come to bearings at some port, hasn't it? You can't stop at sea for ever, can you? — No; the Flying Scud is rubbish; if it meant anything, it would have to mean something so almighty intricate that James G. Blaine hasn't got the brains to engineer it; and I vote for more axeing, pioneering, and opening up the resources of this phenomenal brig, and less general fuss," he added, arising. "The dime-museum symptoms will drop in of themselves, I guess, to keep us cheery."

But it appeared we were at the end of discoveries for the day; and we left the brig about sundown, without being further puzzled or further enlightened. The best of the cabin spoils — books, instruments, papers, silks, and curiosities — we carried along with us in a blanket, however, to divert the evening hours; and when supper was over, and the table cleared, and Johnson set down to a dreary game of cribbage between his right hand and his left, the captain and I turned out our blanket on the floor, and sat side by side to examine and appraise the spoils.

The books were the first to engage our notice. These were rather numerous (as Nares contemptuously put it) "for a lime-juicer." Scorn of the British mercantile marine glows in the breast of every Yankee merchant captain; as the scorn is not reciprocated, I can only suppose it justified in fact; and certainly the old country mariner appears of a less studious disposition. The more credit to the officers of the Flying Scud, who had quite a library, both literary and professional. There were Findlay's five directories of the world — all broken-backed, as is usual with Findlay, and all marked and scribbled over with corrections and additions — several books of navigation, a signal code, and an Admiralty book of a sort of orange hue, called *Islands of the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Vol. III.*, which appeared from its imprint to be the latest authority, and showed marks of frequent consultation in the passages about the French Frigate Shoals, the Harman, Cure, Pearl, and Hermes reefs, Lisiansky Island, Ocean Island, and the place where we then lay — Brooks or Midway. A volume of Macaulay's *Essays* and a shilling Shakespeare led the van of the belles lettres; the rest were novels: several Miss Braddons — of course, *Aurora Floyd*, which has penetrated to every isle of the Pacific, a good many cheap detective books, *Rob Roy*, Auerbach's *Auf der Hohe* in the German, and a prize temperance story, pillaged (to judge by the stamp) from an Anglo-Indian circulating library.

"The Admiralty man gives a fine picture of our island," remarked Nares, who had turned up Midway Island. "He draws the dreariness rather mild, but you can make out he knows the place."

"Captain," I cried, "you've struck another point in this mad business. See here," I went on eagerly, drawing from my pocket a crumpled fragment of the *Daily Occidental* which I had inherited from Jim: "'misled by Hoyt's Pacific Directory'? Where's Hoyt?"

"Let's look into that," said Nares. "I got that book on purpose for this cruise." Therewith he fetched it from the shelf in his berth, turned to Midway Island, and read the account aloud. It stated with precision that the Pacific Mail Company were about to form a depot there, in preference to Honolulu, and that they had already a station on the island.

"I wonder who gives these Directory men their information," Nares reflected. "Nobody can blame Trent after that. I never got in company with squarer lying; it reminds a man of a presidential campaign."

"All very well," said I. "That's your Hoyt, and a fine, tall copy. But what I want to know is, where is Trent's Hoyt?"

"Took it with him," chuckled Nares. "He had left everything else, bills and money and all the rest; he was bound to take something, or it would have aroused attention on the Tempest: 'Happy thought,' says he, 'let's take Hoyt.'"

"And has it not occurred to you," I went on, "that all the Hoyts in creation couldn't have misled Trent, since he had in his hand that red admiralty book, an official publication, later in date, and particularly full on Midway Island?"

"That's a fact!" cried Nares; "and I bet the first Hoyt he ever saw was out of the mercantile library of San Francisco. Looks as if he had brought her here on purpose, don't it? But then that's inconsistent with the steam-crusher of the sale. That's the trouble with this brig racket; any one can make half a dozen theories for sixty or seventy per cent of it; but when they're made, there's always a fathom or two of slack hanging out of the other end."

I believe our attention fell next on the papers, of which we had altogether a considerable bulk. I had hoped to find among these matter for a full-length character of Captain Trent; but here I was doomed, on the whole, to disappointment. We could make out he was an orderly man, for all his bills were docketed and preserved. That he was convivial, and inclined to be frugal even in conviviality, several documents proclaimed. Such letters as we found were, with one exception, arid notes from tradesmen. The exception, signed Hannah Trent, was a somewhat fervid appeal for a loan. "You know what misfortunes I have had to bear," wrote Hannah, "and how much I am disappointed in George. The landlady appeared a true friend when I first came here, and I thought her a perfect lady. But she has come out since then in her true colours; and if you will not be softened by this last appeal, I can't think what is to become of your affectionate — —" and then the signature. This document was without place or date, and a voice told me that it had gone likewise without answer. On the whole, there were few letters anywhere in the ship; but we found one before we were finished, in a seaman's chest, of which I must transcribe some sentences. It was dated from some place on the Clyde. "My dearist son," it ran, "this is to tell you your dearist father passed away, Jan twelft, in the peace of the Lord. He had your photo and dear David's lade upon his bed, made me sit by him. Let's be a' thegither, he said, and gave you all his blessing. O my dear laddie, why were nae you and Davie here? He would have had a happier passage. He spok of both of ye all night most beautiful, and how ye used to stravaig on the Saturday afternoons, and of auld Kelvinside. Sooth the tune to me, he said, though it was the Sabbath, and I had to sooth him Kelvin Grove, and he looked at his fiddle, the dear man. I cannae bear the sight of it, he'll never play it mair. O my lamb, come home to me, I'm all by my lane now." The rest was in a religious vein and quite conventional. I have never seen any one more put out than Nares, when I handed him this letter; he had read but a few words, before he cast it down; it was perhaps a minute ere he picked it up again, and the performance was repeated the third time before he reached the end.

"It's touching, isn't it?" said I.

For all answer, Nares exploded in a brutal oath; and it was some half an hour later that he vouchsafed an explanation. "I'll tell you what broke me up about that letter," said he. "My old man played the fiddle, played it all out of tune: one of the things he played was *Martyrdom,* I remember — it was all martyrdom to me. He was a pig of a father, and I was a pig of a son; but it sort of came over me I would like to hear that fiddle squeak again. Natural," he added; "I guess we're all beasts."

"All sons are, I guess," said I. "I have the same trouble on my conscience: we can shake hands on that." Which (oddly enough, perhaps) we did.

Amongst the papers we found a considerable sprinkling of photographs; for the most part either of very debonair-looking young ladies or old women of the lodging-house persuasion. But one among them was the means of our crowning discovery.

"They're not pretty, are they, Mr. Dodd?" said Nares, as he passed it over.

"Who?" I asked, mechanically taking the card (it was a quarter-plate) in hand, and smothering a yawn; for the hour was late, the day had been laborious, and I was wearying for bed.

"Trent and Company," said he. "That's a historic picture of the gang."

I held it to the light, my curiosity at a low ebb: I had seen Captain Trent once, and had no delight in viewing him again. It was a photograph of the deck of the brig, taken from forward: all in apple-pie order; the hands gathered in the waist, the officers on the poop. At the foot of the card was written "Brig Flying Scud, Rangoon," and a date; and above or below each individual figure the name had been carefully noted.

As I continued to gaze, a shock went through me; the dimness of sleep and fatigue lifted from my eyes, as fog lifts in the channel; and I beheld with startled clearness the photographic presentment of a crowd of strangers. "J. Trent, Master" at the top of the card directed me to a smallish, weazened man, with bushy eyebrows and full white beard, dressed in a frock coat and white trousers; a flower stuck in his button-hole, his bearded chin set forward, his mouth clenched with habitual determination. There was not much of the sailor in his looks, but plenty of the martinet: a dry, precise man, who might pass for a preacher in some rigid sect; and whatever he was, not the Captain Trent of San Francisco. The men, too, were all new to me: the cook, an unmistakable Chinaman, in his characteristic dress, standing apart on the poop steps. But perhaps I turned on the whole with the greatest curiosity to the figure labelled "E. Goddedaal, 1st off." He whom I had never seen, he might be the identical; he might be the clue and spring of all this mystery; and I scanned his features with the eye of a detective. He was of great stature, seemingly blonde as a viking, his hair clustering round his head in frowsy curls, and two enormous whiskers, like the tusks of some strange animal, jutting from his cheeks. With these virile appendages and the defiant attitude in which he stood, the expression of his face only imperfectly harmonised. It was wild, heroic, and womanish looking; and I felt I was prepared to hear he was a sentimentalist, and to see him weep.

For some while I digested my discovery in private, reflecting how best, and how with most of drama, I might share it with the captain. Then my sketch-book came in my head; and I fished it out from where it lay, with other miscellaneous possessions, at the foot of my bunk and turned to my sketch of Captain Trent and the survivors of the British brig Flying Scud in the San Francisco bar-room.

“Nares,” said I, “I’ve told you how I first saw Captain Trent in that saloon in ‘Frisco? how he came with his men, one of them a Kanaka with a canary-bird in a cage? and how I saw him afterwards at the auction, frightened to death, and as much surprised at how the figures skipped up as anybody there? Well,” said I, “there’s the man I saw” — and I laid the sketch before him — ”there’s Trent of ‘Frisco and there are his three hands. Find one of them in the photograph, and I’ll be obliged.”

Nares compared the two in silence. “Well,” he said at last, “I call this rather a relief: seems to clear the horizon. We might have guessed at something of the kind from the double ration of chests that figured.”

“Does it explain anything?” I asked.

“It would explain everything,” Nares replied, “but for the steam-crusher. It’ll all tally as neat as a patent puzzle, if you leave out the way these people bid the wreck up. And there we come to a stone wall. But whatever it is, Mr. Dodd, it’s on the crook.”

“And looks like piracy,” I added.

“Looks like blind hookey!” cried the captain. “No, don’t you deceive yourself; neither your head nor mine is big enough to put a name on this business.”

CHAPTER XV. THE CARGO OF THE “FLYING SCUD.”

In my early days I was a man, the most wedded to his idols of my generation. I was a dweller under roofs: the gull of that which we call civilisation; a superstitious votary of the plastic arts; a cit; and a prop of restaurants. I had a comrade in those days, somewhat of an outsider, though he moved in the company of artists, and a man famous in our small world for gallantry, knee breeches, and dry and pregnant sayings. He, looking on the long meals and waxing bellies of the French, whom I confess I somewhat imitated, branded me as “a cultivator of restaurant fat.” And I believe he had his finger on the dangerous spot; I believe, if things had gone smooth with me, I should be now swollen like a prize-ox in body, and fallen in mind to a thing perhaps as low as many types of bourgeois — the implicit or exclusive artist. That was a home word of Pinkerton’s, deserving to be writ in letters of gold on the portico of every school of art: “What I can’t see is why you should want to do nothing else.” The dull man is made, not by the nature, but by the degree of his immersion in a single business. And all the more if that be sedentary, uneventful, and ingloriously safe. More than one half of him will then remain unexercised and undeveloped; the rest will be distended and deformed by over-nutrition, over-cerebration, and the heat of rooms. And I have often marvelled at the impudence of gentlemen, who describe and pass judgment on the life of man, in almost perfect ignorance of all its necessary elements and natural careers. Those who dwell in clubs and studios may paint excellent pictures or write enchanting novels. There is one thing that they should not do: they should pass no judgment on man’s destiny, for it is a thing with which they are unacquainted. Their own life is an excrescence of the moment, doomed, in the vicissitude of history, to pass and disappear: the eternal life of man, spent under sun and rain and in rude physical effort, lies upon one side, scarce changed since the beginning.

I would I could have carried along with me to Midway Island all the writers and the prating artists of my time. Day after day of hope deferred, of heat, of unremitting toil; night after night of aching limbs, bruised hands, and a mind obscured with the grateful vacancy of physical fatigue: the scene, the nature of my employment; the rugged speech and faces of my fellow-toilers, the glare of the day on deck, the stinking twilight in the bilge, the shrill myriads of the ocean-fowl: above all, the sense of our immitigable isolation from the world and from the current epoch; — keeping another time, some eras old; the new day heralded by no daily paper, only by the rising sun; and the State, the churches, the peopled empires, war, and the rumours of war, and the voices of the arts, all gone silent as in the days ere they were yet invented. Such were the conditions of my new experience in life, of which (if I had been able) I would have had all my confreres and contemporaries to partake: forgetting, for that while, the orthodoxies of the moment, and devoted to a single and material purpose under the eye of heaven.

Of the nature of our task, I must continue to give some summary idea. The forecastle was lumbered with ship's chandlery, the hold nigh full of rice, the lazarette crowded with the teas and silks. These must all be dug out; and that made but a fraction of our task. The hold was ceiled throughout; a part, where perhaps some delicate cargo was once stored, had been lined, in addition, with inch boards; and between every beam there was a movable panel into the bilge. Any of these, the bulkheads of the cabins, the very timbers of the hull itself, might be the place of hiding. It was therefore necessary to demolish, as we proceeded, a great part of the ship's inner skin and fittings, and to auscultate what remained, like a doctor sounding for a lung disease. Upon the return, from any beam or bulkhead, of a flat or doubtful sound, we must up axe and hew into the timber: a violent and — from the amount of dry rot in the wreck — a mortifying exercise. Every night saw a deeper inroad into the bones of the Flying Scud — more beams tapped and hewn in splinters, more planking peeled away and tossed aside — and every night saw us as far as ever from the end and object of our arduous devastation. In this perpetual disappointment, my courage did not fail me, but my spirits dwindled; and Nares himself grew silent and morose. At night, when supper was done, we passed an hour in the cabin, mostly without speech: I, sometimes dozing over a book; Nares, sullenly but busily drilling sea-shells with the instrument called a Yankee Fiddle. A stranger might have supposed we were estranged; as a matter of fact, in this silent comradeship of labour, our intimacy grew.

I had been struck, at the first beginning of our enterprise upon the wreck, to find the men so ready at the captain's lightest word. I dare not say they liked, but I can never deny that they admired him thoroughly. A mild word from his mouth was more valued than flattery and half a dollar from myself; if he relaxed at all from his habitual attitude of censure, smiling alacrity surrounded him; and I was led to think his theory of captainship, even if pushed to excess, reposed upon some ground of reason. But even terror and admiration of the captain failed us before the end. The men wearied of the hopeless, unremunerative quest and the long strain of labour. They began to shirk and grumble. Retribution fell on them at once, and retribution multiplied the grumblings. With every day it took harder driving to keep them to the daily drudge; and we, in our narrow boundaries, were kept conscious every moment of the ill-will of our assistants.

In spite of the best care, the object of our search was perfectly well known to all on board; and there had leaked out besides some knowledge of those inconsistencies that had so greatly amazed the captain and myself. I could overhear the men debate the character of Captain Trent, and set forth competing theories of where the opium was stowed; and as they seemed to have been eavesdropping on ourselves, I thought little shame to prick up my ears when I had the return chance of spying upon them, in this way. I could diagnose their temper and judge how far they were informed upon the mystery of the Flying Scud. It was after having thus overheard some almost mutinous speeches that a fortunate idea crossed my mind. At night, I matured it in my bed, and the first thing the next morning, broached it to the captain.

“Suppose I spirit up the hands a bit,” I asked, “by the offer of a reward?”

“If you think you’re getting your month’s wages out of them the way it is, I don’t,” was his reply. “However, they are all the men you’ve got, and you’re the supercargo.”

This, from a person of the captain’s character, might be regarded as complete adhesion; and the crew were accordingly called aft. Never had the captain worn a front more menacing. It was supposed by all that some misdeed had been discovered, and some surprising punishment was to be announced.

“See here, you!” he threw at them over his shoulder as he walked the deck, “Mr. Dodd here is going to offer a reward to the first man who strikes the opium in that wreck. There’s two ways of making a donkey go; both good, I guess: the one’s kicks and the other’s carrots. Mr. Dodd’s going to try the carrots. Well, my sons,” — and here he faced the men for the first time with his hands behind him — ”if that opium’s not found in five days, you can come to me for the kicks.”

He nodded to the present narrator, who took up the tale. “Here is what I propose, men,” said I: “I put up one hundred and fifty dollars. If any man can lay hands on the stuff right away, and off his own club, he shall have the hundred and fifty down. If any one can put us on the scent of where to look, he shall have a hundred and twenty-five, and the balance shall be for the lucky one who actually picks it up. We’ll call it the Pinkerton Stakes, captain,” I added, with a smile.

“Call it the Grand Combination Sweep, then,” cries he. “For I go you better. — Look here, men, I make up this jack-pot to two hundred and fifty dollars, American gold coin.”

"Thank you, Captain Nares," said I; "that was handsomely done."

"It was kindly meant," he returned.

The offer was not made in vain; the hands had scarce yet realised the magnitude of the reward, they had scarce begun to buzz aloud in the extremity of hope and wonder, ere the Chinese cook stepped forward with gracious gestures and explanatory smiles.

"Captain," he began, "I serv-um two year Melican navy; serv-um six year mail-boat steward. Savvy plenty."

"Oho!" cried Nares, "you savvy plenty, do you? (Beggar's seen this trick in the mail-boats, I guess.) Well, why you no savvy a little sooner, sonny?"

"I think bimeby make-um reward," replied the cook, with smiling dignity.

"Well, you can't say fairer than that," the captain admitted, "and now the reward's offered, you'll talk? Speak up, then. Suppose you speak true, you get reward. See?"

"I think long time," replied the Chinaman. "See plenty litty mat lice; too-muchy plenty litty mat lice; sixty ton, litty mat lice. I think all-e-time: perhaps plenty opium plenty litty mat lice."

"Well, Mr. Dodd, how does that strike you?" asked the captain. "He may be right, he may be wrong. He's likely to be right: for if he isn't, where can the stuff be? On the other hand, if he's wrong, we destroy a hundred and fifty tons of good rice for nothing. It's a point to be considered."

"I don't hesitate," said I. "Let's get to the bottom of the thing. The rice is nothing; the rice will neither make nor break us."

"That's how I expected you to see it," returned Nares.

And we called the boat away and set forth on our new quest.

The hold was now almost entirely emptied; the mats (of which there went forty to the short ton) had been stacked on deck, and now crowded the ship's waist and forecastle. It was our task to disembowel and explore six thousand individual mats, and incidentally to destroy a hundred and fifty tons of valuable food. Nor were the circumstances of the day's business less strange than its essential nature. Each man of us, armed with a great knife, attacked the pile from his own quarter, slashed into the nearest mat, burrowed in it with his hands, and shed forth the rice upon the deck, where it heaped up, overflowed, and was trodden down, poured at last into the scuppers, and occasionally spouted from the vents. About the wreck, thus transformed into an overflowing granary, the sea-fowl swarmed in myriads and with surprising insolence. The sight of so much food confounded them; they deafened us with their shrill tongues, swooped in our midst, dashed in our faces, and snatched the grain from between our fingers. The men — their hands bleeding from these assaults — turned savagely on the offensive, drove their knives into the birds, drew them out crimsoned, and turned again to dig among the rice, unmindful of the gawking creatures that struggled and died among their feet. We made a singular picture: the hovering and diving birds; the bodies of the dead discolouring the rice with blood; the scuppers vomiting breadstuff; the men, frenzied by the gold hunt, toiling, slaying, and shouting aloud: over all, the lofty intricacy of rigging and the radiant heaven of the Pacific. Every man there toiled in the immediate hope of fifty dollars; and I, of fifty thousand. Small wonder if we waded callously in blood and food.

It was perhaps about ten in the forenoon when the scene was interrupted. Nares, who had just ripped open a fresh mat, drew forth, and slung at his feet, among the rice, a papered tin box.

"How's that?" he shouted.

A cry broke from all hands: the next moment, forgetting their own disappointment, in that contagious sentiment of success, they gave three cheers that scared the sea-birds; and the next, they had crowded round the captain, and were jostling together and groping with emulous hands in the new-opened mat. Box after box rewarded them, six in all; wrapped, as I have said, in a paper envelope, and the paper printed on, in Chinese characters.

Nares turned to me and shook my hand. "I began to think we should never see this day," said he. "I congratulate you, Mr. Dodd, on having pulled it through."

The captain's tones affected me profoundly; and when Johnson and the men pressed round me in turn with congratulations, the tears came in my eyes.

"These are five-tael boxes, more than two pounds," said Nares, weighing one in his hand. "Say two hundred and fifty dollars to the mat. Lay into it, boys! We'll make Mr. Dodd a millionnaire before dark."

It was strange to see with what a fury we fell to. The men had now nothing to expect; the mere idea of great sums inspired them with disinterested ardour. Mats were slashed and disembowelled, the rice flowed to our knees in the ship's waist, the sweat ran in our eyes and blinded us, our arms ached to agony; and yet our fire abated not. Dinner came; we were too weary to eat, too hoarse for conversation; and yet dinner was scarce done, before we were afoot again and delving in the rice. Before nightfall not a mat was unexplored, and we were face to face with the astonishing result.

For of all the inexplicable things in the story of the Flying Scud, here was the most inexplicable. Out of the six thousand mats, only twenty were found to have been sugared; in each we found the same amount, about twelve pounds of drug; making a grand total of two hundred and forty pounds. By the last San Francisco quotation, opium was selling for a fraction over twenty dollars a pound; but it had been known not long before to bring as much as forty in Honolulu, where it was contraband.

Taking, then, this high Honolulu figure, the value of the opium on board the Flying Scud fell considerably short of ten thousand dollars, while at the San Francisco rate it lacked a trifle of five thousand. And fifty thousand was the price that Jim and I had paid for it. And Bellairs had been eager to go higher! There is no language to express the stupor with which I contemplated this result.

It may be argued we were not yet sure; there might be yet another cache; and you may be certain in that hour of my distress the argument was not forgotten. There was never a ship more ardently perquested; no stone was left unturned, and no expedient untried; day after day of growing despair, we punched and dug in the brig's vitals, exciting the men with promises and presents; evening after evening Nares and I sat face to face in the narrow cabin, racking our minds for some neglected possibility of search. I could stake my salvation on the certainty of the result: in all that ship there was nothing left of value but the timber and the copper nails. So that our case was lamentably plain; we had paid fifty thousand dollars, borne the charges of the schooner, and paid fancy interest on money; and if things went well with us, we might realise fifteen per cent of the first outlay. We were not merely bankrupt, we were comic bankrupts: a fair butt for jeering in the streets. I hope I bore the blow with a good countenance; indeed, my mind had long been quite made up, and since the day we found the opium I had known the result. But the thought of Jim and Mamie ached in me like a physical pain, and I shrank from speech and companionship.

I was in this frame of mind when the captain proposed that we should land upon the island. I saw he had something to say, and only feared it might be consolation; for I could just bear my grief, not bungling sympathy; and yet I had no choice but to accede to his proposal.

We walked awhile along the beach in silence. The sun overhead reverberated rays of heat; the staring sand, the glaring lagoon, tortured our eyes; and the birds and the boom of the far-away breakers made a savage symphony.

"I don't require to tell you the game's up?" Nares asked.

"No," said I.

"I was thinking of getting to sea to-morrow," he pursued.

"The best thing you can do," said I.

"Shall we say Honolulu?" he inquired.

"O, yes; let's stick to the programme," I cried. "Honolulu be it!"

There was another silence, and then Nares cleared his throat.

"We've been pretty good friends, you and me, Mr. Dodd," he resumed. "We've been going through the kind of thing that tries a man. We've had the hardest kind of work, we've been badly backed, and now we're badly beaten. And we've fetched through without a word of disagreement. I don't say this to praise myself: it's my trade; it's what I'm paid for, and trained for, and brought up to. But it was another thing for you; it was all new to you; and it did me good to see you stand right up to it and swing right into it, day in, day out. And then see how you've taken this disappointment, when everybody knows you must have been tautened up to shying-point! I wish you'd let me tell you, Mr. Dodd, that you've stood out mighty manly and handsomely in all this business, and made every one like you and admire you. And I wish you'd let me tell you, besides, that I've taken this wreck business as much to heart as you have; something kind of rises in my throat when I think we're beaten; and if I thought waiting would do it, I would stick on this reef until we starved."

I tried in vain to thank him for these generous words, but he was beforehand with me in a moment.

"I didn't bring you ashore to sound my praises," he interrupted. "We understand one another now, that's all; and I guess you can trust me. What I wished to speak about is more important, and it's got to be faced. What are we to do about the Flying Scud and the dime novel?"

"I really have thought nothing about that," I replied. "But I expect I mean to get at the bottom of it; and if the bogus Captain Trent is to be found on the earth's surface, I guess I mean to find him."

"All you've got to do is talk," said Nares; "you can make the biggest kind of boom; it isn't often the reporters have a chance at such a yarn as this; and I can tell you how it will go. It will go by telegraph, Mr. Dodd; it'll be telegraphed by the column, and head-lined, and frothed up, and denied by authority, and it'll hit bogus Captain Trent in a Mexican bar-room, and knock over bogus Goddedaal in a slum somewhere up the Baltic, and bowl down Hardy and Brown in sailors' music halls round Greenock. O, there's no doubt you can have a regular domestic Judgment Day. The only point is whether you deliberately want to."

"Well," said I, "I deliberately don't want one thing: I deliberately don't want to make a public exhibition of myself and Pinkerton: so moral — smuggling opium; such damned fools — paying fifty thousand for a 'dead horse'!"

"No doubt it might damage you in a business sense," the captain agreed. "And I'm pleased you take that view; for I've turned kind of soft upon the job. There's been some crookedness about, no doubt of it; but, Law bless you! if we dropped upon the troupe, all the premier artists would slip right out with the boodle in their grip-sacks, and you'd only collar a lot of old mutton-headed shell-backs that didn't know the back of the business from the front. I don't take much stock in Mercantile Jack, you know that; but, poor devil, he's got to go where he's told; and if you make trouble, ten to one it'll make you sick to see the innocents who have to stand the racket. It would be different if we understood the operation; but we don't, you see: there's a lot of queer corners in life; and my vote is to let the blame' thing lie."

"You speak as if we had that in our power," I objected.

"And so we have," said he.

"What about the men?" I asked. "They know too much by half; and you can't keep them from talking."

"Can't I?" returned Nares. "I bet a boarding-master can! They can be all half-seas-over, when they get ashore, blind drunk by dark, and cruising out of the Golden Gate in different deep-sea ships by the next morning. Can't keep them from talking, can't I? Well, I can make 'em talk separate, leastways. If a whole crew came talking, parties would listen; but if it's only one lone old shell-back, it's the usual yarn. And at least, they needn't talk before six months, or — if we have luck, and there's a whaler handy — three years. And by that time, Mr. Dodd, it's ancient history."

"That's what they call Shanghaiing, isn't it?" I asked. "I thought it belonged to the dime novel."

"O, dime novels are right enough," returned the captain. "Nothing wrong with the dime novel, only that things happen thicker than they do in life, and the practical seamanship is off-colour."

"So we can keep the business to ourselves," I mused.

"There's one other person that might blab," said the captain. "Though I don't believe she has anything left to tell."

"And who is SHE?" I asked.

"The old girl there," he answered, pointing to the wreck. "I know there's nothing in her; but somehow I'm afraid of some one else — it's the last thing you'd expect, so it's just the first that'll happen — some one dropping into this God-forgotten island where nobody drops in, waltzing into that wreck that we've grown old with searching, stooping straight down, and picking right up the very thing that tells the story. What's that to me? you may ask, and why am I gone Soft Tommy on this Museum of Crooks? They've smashed up you and Mr. Pinkerton; they've turned my hair grey with conundrums; they've been up to larks, no doubt; and that's all I know of them — you say. Well, and that's just where it is. I don't know enough; I don't know what's uppermost; it's just such a lot of miscellaneous eventualities as I don't care to go stirring up; and I ask you to let me deal with the old girl after a patent of my own.”

“Certainly — what you please,” said I, scarce with attention, for a new thought now occupied my brain. “Captain,” I broke out, “you are wrong: we cannot hush this up. There is one thing you have forgotten.”

“What is that?” he asked.

“A bogus Captain Trent, a bogus Goddedaal, a whole bogus crew, have all started home,” said I. “If we are right, not one of them will reach his journey’s end. And do you mean to say that such a circumstance as that can pass without remark?”

“Sailors,” said the captain, “only sailors! If they were all bound for one place, in a body, I don’t say so; but they’re all going separate — to Hull, to Sweden, to the Clyde, to the Thames. Well, at each place, what is it? Nothing new. Only one sailor man missing: got drunk, or got drowned, or got left: the proper sailor’s end.”

Something bitter in the thought and in the speaker’s tones struck me hard. “Here is one that has got left!” I cried, getting sharply to my feet; for we had been some time seated. “I wish it were the other. I don’t — don’t relish going home to Jim with this!”

“See here,” said Nares, with ready tact, “I must be getting aboard. Johnson’s in the brig annexing chandlery and canvas, and there’s some things in the Norah that want fixing against we go to sea. Would you like to be left here in the chicken-ranch? I’ll send for you to supper.”

I embraced the proposal with delight. Solitude, in my frame of mind, was not too dearly purchased at the risk of sunstroke or sand-blindness; and soon I was alone on the ill-omened islet. I should find it hard to tell of what I thought — of Jim, of Mamie, of our lost fortune, of my lost hopes, of the doom before me: to turn to at some mechanical occupation in some subaltern rank, and to toil there, unremarked and unamused, until the hour of the last deliverance. I was, at least, so sunk in sadness that I scarce remarked where I was going; and chance (or some finer sense that lives in us, and only guides us when the mind is in abeyance) conducted my steps into a quarter of the island where the birds were few. By some devious route, which I was unable to retrace for my return, I was thus able to mount, without interruption, to the highest point of land. And here I was recalled to consciousness by a last discovery.

The spot on which I stood was level, and commanded a wide view of the lagoon, the bounding reef, the round horizon. Nearer hand I saw the sister islet, the wreck, the Norah Creina, and the Norah’s boat already moving shoreward. For the sun was now low, flaming on the sea’s verge; and the galley chimney smoked on board the schooner.

It thus befell that though my discovery was both affecting and suggestive, I had no leisure to examine further. What I saw was the blackened embers of fire of wreck. By all the signs, it must have blazed to a good height and burned for days; from the scantling of a spar that lay upon the margin only half consumed, it must have been the work of more than one; and I received at once the image of a forlorn troop of castaways, houseless in that lost corner of the earth, and feeding there their fire of signal. The next moment a hail reached me from the boat; and bursting through the bushes and the rising sea-fowl, I said farewell (I trust for ever) to that desert isle.

CHAPTER XVI. IN WHICH I TURN SMUGGLER, AND THE CAPTAIN CASUIST

The last night at Midway, I had little sleep; the next morning, after the sun was risen, and the clatter of departure had begun to reign on deck, I lay a long while dozing; and when at last I stepped from the companion, the schooner was already leaping through the pass into the open sea. Close on her board, the huge scroll of a breaker unfurled itself along the reef with a prodigious clamour; and behind I saw the wreck vomiting into the morning air a coil of smoke. The wreaths already blew out far to leeward, flames already glittered in the cabin skylight; and the sea-fowl were scattered in surprise as wide as the lagoon. As we drew farther off, the conflagration of the Flying Scud flamed higher; and long after we had dropped all signs of Midway Island, the smoke still hung in the horizon like that of a distant steamer. With the fading out of that last vestige, the Norah Creina, passed again into the empty world of cloud and water by which she had approached; and the next features that appeared, eleven days later, to break the line of sky, were the arid mountains of Oahu.

It has often since been a comfortable thought to me that we had thus destroyed the tell-tale remnants of the Flying Scud; and often a strange one that my last sight and reminiscence of that fatal ship should be a pillar of smoke on the horizon. To so many others besides myself the same appearance had played a part in the various stages of that business: luring some to what they little imagined, filling some with unimaginable terrors. But ours was the last smoke raised in the story; and with its dying away the secret of the Flying Scud became a private property.

It was by the first light of dawn that we saw, close on board, the metropolitan island of Hawaii. We held along the coast, as near as we could venture, with a fresh breeze and under an unclouded heaven; beholding, as we went, the arid mountain sides and scrubby cocoa-palms of that somewhat melancholy archipelago. About four of the afternoon we turned Waimanolo Point, the westerly headland of the great bight of Honolulu; showed ourselves for twenty minutes in full view; and then fell again to leeward, and put in the rest of daylight, plying under shortened sail under the lee of Waimanolo.

A little after dark we beat once more about the point, and crept cautiously toward the mouth of the Pearl Lochs, where Jim and I had arranged I was to meet the smugglers. The night was happily obscure, the water smooth. We showed, according to instructions, no light on deck: only a red lantern dropped from either cathead to within a couple of feet of the water. A lookout was stationed on the bowsprit end, another in the crosstrees; and the whole ship's company crowded forward, scouting for enemies or friends. It was now the crucial moment of our enterprise; we were now risking liberty and credit; and that for a sum so small to a man in my bankrupt situation, that I could have laughed aloud in bitterness. But the piece had been arranged, and we must play it to the finish.

For some while, we saw nothing but the dark mountain outline of the island, the torches of native fishermen glittering here and there along the foreshore, and right in the midst that cluster of brave lights with which the town of Honolulu advertises itself to the seaward. Presently a ruddy star appeared inshore of us, and seemed to draw near unsteadily. This was the anticipated signal; and we made haste to show the countersign, lowering a white light from the quarter, extinguishing the two others, and laying the schooner incontinently to. The star approached slowly; the sounds of oars and of men's speech came to us across the water; and then a voice hailed us.

"Is that Mr. Dodd?"

"Yes," I returned. "Is Jim Pinkerton there?"

"No, sir," replied the voice. "But there's one of his crowd here; name of Speedy."

"I'm here, Mr. Dodd," added Speedy himself. "I have letters for you."

"All right," I replied. "Come aboard, gentlemen, and let me see my mail."

A whaleboat accordingly ranged alongside, and three men boarded us: my old San Francisco friend, the stock-gambler Speedy, a little wizened person of the name of Sharpe, and a big, flourishing, dissipated-looking man called Fowler. The two last (I learned afterward) were frequent partners; Sharpe supplied the capital, and Fowler, who was quite a character in the islands and occupied a considerable station, brought activity, daring, and a private influence, highly necessary in the case. Both seemed to approach the business with a keen sense of romance; and I believe this was the chief attraction, at least with Fowler — for whom I early conceived a sentiment of liking. But in that first moment I had something else to think of than to judge my new acquaintances; and before Speedy had fished out the letters, the full extent of our misfortune was revealed.

"We've rather bad news for you, Mr. Dodd," said Fowler. "Your firm's gone up."

"Already!" I exclaimed.

"Well, it was thought rather a wonder Pinkerton held on as long as he did," was the reply. "The wreck deal was too big for your credit; you were doing a big business, no doubt, but you were doing it on precious little capital; and when the strain came, you were bound to go. Pinkerton's through all right: seven cents dividend; some remarks made, but nothing to hurt; the press let you down easy — I guess Jim had relations there. The only trouble is, that all this Flying Scud affair got in the papers with the rest; everybody's wide awake in Honolulu, and the sooner we get the stuff in and the dollars out, the better for all concerned."

"Gentlemen," said I, "you must excuse me. My friend, the captain here, will drink a glass of champagne with you to give you patience; but as for myself, I am unfit even for ordinary conversation till I have read these letters."

They demurred a little: and indeed the danger of delay seemed obvious; but the sight of my distress, which I was unable entirely to control, appealed strongly to their good-nature; and I was suffered at last to get by myself on deck, where, by the light of a lantern smuggled under shelter of the low rail, I read the following wretched correspondence.

"My dear Loudon," ran the first, "this will be handed you by your friend Speedy of the Catamount. His sterling character and loyal devotion to yourself pointed him out as the best man for our purposes in Honolulu — the parties on the spot being difficult to manipulate. A man called Billy Fowler (you must have heard of Billy) is the boss; he is in politics some, and squares the officers. I have hard times before me in the city, but I feel as bright as a dollar and as strong as John L. Sullivan. What with Mamie here, and my partner speeding over the seas, and the bonanza in the wreck, I feel like I could juggle with the Pyramids of Egypt, same as conjurers do with aluminium balls. My earnest prayers follow you, Loudon, that you may feel the way I do — just inspired! My feet don't touch the ground; I kind of swim. Mamie is like Moses and Aaron that held up the other individual's arms. She carries me along like a horse and buggy. I am beating the record.

"Your true partner,

"J. PINKERTON."

Number two was in a different style: —

"My dearest Loudon, how am I to prepare you for this dire intelligence? O dear me, it will strike you to the earth. The Fiat has gone forth; our firm went bust at a quarter before twelve. It was a bill of Bradley's (for $200) that brought these vast operations to a close, and evolved liabilities of upwards of two hundred and fifty thousand. O, the shame and pity of it! and you but three weeks gone! Loudon, don't blame your partner: if human hands and brains could have sufficed, I would have held the thing together. But it just slowly crumbled; Bradley was the last kick, but the blamed business just MELTED. I give the liabilities; it's supposed they're all in; for the cowards were waiting, and the claims were filed like taking tickets to hear Patti. I don't quite have the hang of the assets yet, our interests were so extended; but I am at it day and night, and I guess will make a creditable dividend. If the wreck pans out only half the way it ought, we'll turn the laugh still. I am as full of grit and work as ever, and just tower above our troubles. Mamie is a host in herself. Somehow I feel like it was only me that had gone bust, and you and she soared clear of it. Hurry up. That's all you have to do.

"Yours ever,

"J. PINKERTON."

The third was yet more altered: —

"My poor Loudon," it began, "I labour far into the night getting our affairs in order; you could not believe their vastness and complexity. Douglas B. Longhurst said humorously that the receiver's work would be cut out for him. I cannot deny that some of them have a speculative look. God forbid a sensitive, refined spirit like yours should ever come face to face with a Commissioner in Bankruptcy; these men get all the sweetness knocked right out of them. But I could bear up better if it weren't for press comments. Often and often, Loudon, I recall to mind your most legitimate critiques of the press system. They published an interview with me, not the least like what I said, and with JEERING comments; it would make your blood boil, it was literally INHUMANE; I wouldn't have written it about a yellow dog that was in trouble like what I am. Mamie just winced, the first time she has turned a hair right through the whole catastrophe. How wonderfully true was what you said long ago in Paris, about touching on people's personal appearance! The fellow said — " And then these words had been scored through; and my distressed friend turned to another subject. "I cannot bear to dwell upon our assets. They simply don't show up. Even Thirteen Star, as sound a line as can be produced upon this coast, goes begging. The wreck has thrown a blight on all we ever touched. And where's the use? God never made a wreck big enough to fill our deficit. I am haunted by the thought that you may blame me; I know how I despised your remonstrances. O, Loudon, don't be hard on your miserable partner. The funny-dog business is what kills. I fear your stern rectitude of mind like the eye of God. I cannot think but what some of my books seem mixed up; otherwise, I don't seem to see my way as plain as I could wish to. Or else my brain is gone soft. Loudon, if there should be any unpleasantness, you can trust me to do the right thing and keep you clear. I've been telling them already, how you had no business grip and never saw the books. O, I trust I have done right in this! I knew it was a liberty; I know you may justly complain; but it was some things that were said. And mind you, all legitimate business! Not even your shrinking sensitiveness could find fault with the first look of one of them, if they had panned out right. And you know, the Flying Scud was the biggest gamble of the crowd, and that was your own idea. Mamie says she never could bear to look you in the face, if that idea had been mine, she is SO conscientious!

"Your broken-hearted

"JIM."

The last began without formality: —

"This is the end of me commercially. I give up; my nerve is gone. I suppose I ought to be glad; for we're through the court. I don't know as ever I knew how, and I'm sure I don't remember. If it pans out — the wreck, I mean — we'll go to Europe, and live on the interest of our money. No more work for me. I shake when people speak to me. I have gone on, hoping and hoping, and working and working, and the lead has pinched right out. I want to lie on my back in a garden and read Shakespeare and E. P. Roe. Don't suppose it's cowardice, Loudon. I'm a sick man. Rest is what I must have. I've worked hard all my life; I never spared myself; every dollar I ever made, I've coined my brains for it. I've never done a mean thing; I've lived respectable, and given to the poor. Who has a better right to a holiday than I have? And I mean to have a year of it straight out; and if I don't, I shall lie right down here in my tracks, and die of worry and brain trouble. Don't mistake. That's so. If there are any pickings at all, TRUST SPEEDY; don't let the creditors get wind of what there is. I helped you when you were down; help me now. Don't deceive yourself; you've got to help me right now, or never. I am clerking, and NOT FIT TO CYPHER. Mamie's typewriting at the Phoenix Guano Exchange, down town. The light is right out of my life. I know you'll not like to do what I propose. Think only of this; that it's life or death for

"JIM PINKERTON.

"P.S. Our figure was seven per cent. O, what a fall was there! Well, well, it's past mending; I don't want to whine. But, Loudon, I do want to live. No more ambition; all I ask is life. I have so much to make it sweet to me! I am clerking, and USELESS AT THAT. I know I would have fired such a clerk inside of forty minutes, in MY time. But my time's over. I can only cling on to you. Don't fail

"JIM PINKERTON."

There was yet one more postscript, yet one more outburst of self-pity and pathetic adjuration; and a doctor's opinion, unpromising enough, was besides enclosed. I pass them both in silence. I think shame to have shown, at so great length, the half-baked virtues of my friend dissolving in the crucible of sickness and distress; and the effect upon my spirits can be judged already. I got to my feet when I had done, drew a deep breath, and stared hard at Honolulu. One moment the world seemed at an end; the next, I was conscious of a rush of independent energy. On Jim I could rely no longer; I must now take hold myself. I must decide and act on my own better thoughts.

The word was easy to say; the thing, at the first blush, was undiscoverable. I was overwhelmed with miserable, womanish pity for my broken friend; his outcries grieved my spirit; I saw him then and now — then, so invincible; now, brought so low — and knew neither how to refuse, nor how to consent to his proposal. The remembrance of my father, who had fallen in the same field unstained, the image of his monument incongruously rising, a fear of the law, a chill air that seemed to blow upon my fancy from the doors of prisons, and the imaginary clank of fetters, recalled me to a different resolve. And then again, the wails of my sick partner intervened. So I stood hesitating, and yet with a strong sense of capacity behind: sure, if I could but choose my path, that I should walk in it with resolution.

Then I remembered that I had a friend on board, and stepped to the companion.

“Gentlemen,” said I, “only a few moments more: but these, I regret to say, I must make more tedious still by removing your companion. It is indispensable that I should have a word or two with Captain Nares.”

Both the smugglers were afoot at once, protesting. The business, they declared, must be despatched at once; they had run risk enough, with a conscience; and they must either finish now, or go.

“The choice is yours, gentlemen,” said I, “and, I believe, the eagerness. I am not yet sure that I have anything in your way; even if I have, there are a hundred things to be considered; and I assure you it is not at all my habit to do business with a pistol to my head.”

“That is all very proper, Mr. Dodd; there is no wish to coerce you, believe me,” said Fowler; “only, please consider our position. It is really dangerous; we were not the only people to see your schooner off Waimanolo.”

“Mr. Fowler,” I replied, “I was not born yesterday. Will you allow me to express an opinion, in which I may be quite wrong, but to which I am entirely wedded? If the custom-house officers had been coming, they would have been here now. In other words, somebody is working the oracle, and (for a good guess) his name is Fowler.”

Both men laughed loud and long; and being supplied with another bottle of Longhurst’s champagne, suffered the captain and myself to leave them without further word.

I gave Nares the correspondence, and he skimmed it through.

“Now, captain,” said I, “I want a fresh mind on this. What does it mean?”

“It’s large enough text,” replied the captain. “It means you’re to stake your pile on Speedy, hand him over all you can, and hold your tongue. I almost wish you hadn’t shown it me,” he added wearily.

“What with the specie from the wreck and the opium money, it comes to a biggish deal.”

“That’s supposing that I do it?” said I.

“Exactly,” said he, “supposing you do it.”

“And there are pros and cons to that,” I observed.

“There’s San Quentin, to start in with,” said the captain; “and suppose you clear the penitentiary, there’s the nasty taste in the mouth. The figure’s big enough to make bad trouble, but it’s not big enough to be picturesque; and I should guess a man always feels kind of small who has sold himself under six cyphers. That would be my way, at least; there’s an excitement about a million that might carry me on; but the other way, I should feel kind of lonely when I woke in bed. Then there’s Speedy. Do you know him well?”

“No, I do not,” said I.

“Well, of course he can vamoose with the entire speculation, if he chooses,” pursued the captain, “and if he don’t I can’t see but what you’ve got to support and bed and board with him to the end of time. I guess it would weary me. Then there’s Mr. Pinkerton, of course. He’s been a good friend to you, hasn’t he? Stood by you, and all that? and pulled you through for all he was worth?”

“That he has,” I cried; “I could never begin telling you my debt to him!”

“Well, and that’s a consideration,” said the captain. “As a matter of principle, I wouldn’t look at this business at the money. ‘Not good enough,’ would be my word. But even principle goes under when it comes to friends — the right sort, I mean. This Pinkerton is frightened, and he seems sick; the medico don’t seem to care a cent about his state of health; and you’ve got to figure how you would like it if he came to die. Remember, the risk of this little swindle is all yours; it’s no sort of risk to Mr. Pinkerton. Well, you’ve got to put it that way plainly, and see how you like the sound of it: my friend Pinkerton is in danger of the New Jerusalem, I am in danger of San Quentin; which risk do I propose to run?”

“That’s an ugly way to put it,” I objected, “and perhaps hardly fair. There’s right and wrong to be considered.”

“Don’t know the parties,” replied Nares; “and I’m coming to them, anyway. For it strikes me, when it came to smuggling opium, you walked right up?”

“So I did,” I said; “sick I am to have to say it!”

“All the same,” continued Nares, “you went into the opium-smuggling with your head down; and a good deal of fussing I’ve listened to, that you hadn’t more of it to smuggle. Now, maybe your partner’s not quite fixed the same as you are; maybe he sees precious little difference between the one thing and the other.”

"You could not say truer: he sees none, I do believe," cried I; "and though I see one, I could never tell you how."

"We never can," said the oracular Nares; "taste is all a matter of opinion. But the point is, how will your friend take it? You refuse a favour, and you take the high horse at the same time; you disappoint him, and you rap him over the knuckles. It won't do, Mr. Dodd; no friendship can stand that. You must be as good as your friend, or as bad as your friend, or start on a fresh deal without him."

"I don't see it!" said I. "You don't know Jim!"

"Well, you WILL see," said Nares. "And now, here's another point. This bit of money looks mighty big to Mr. Pinkerton; it may spell life or health to him; but among all your creditors, I don't see that it amounts to a hill of beans — I don't believe it'll pay their car-fares all round. And don't you think you'll ever get thanked. You were known to pay a long price for the chance of rummaging that wreck; you do the rummaging, you come home, and you hand over ten thousand — or twenty, if you like — a part of which you'll have to own up you made by smuggling; and, mind! you'll never get Billy Fowler to stick his name to a receipt. Now just glance at the transaction from the outside, and see what a clear case it makes. Your ten thousand is a sop; and people will only wonder you were so damned impudent as to offer such a small one! Whichever way you take it, Mr. Dodd, the bottom's out of your character; so there's one thing less to be considered."

"I daresay you'll scarce believe me," said I, "but I feel that a positive relief."

"You must be made some way different from me, then," returned Nares. "And, talking about me, I might just mention how I stand. You'll have no trouble from me — you've trouble enough of your own; and I'm friend enough, when a friend's in need, to shut my eyes and go right where he tells me. All the same, I'm rather queerly fixed. My owners'll have to rank with the rest on their charter-party. Here am I, their representative! and I have to look over the ship's side while the bankrupt walks his assets ashore in Mr. Speedy's hat-box. It's a thing I wouldn't do for James G. Blaine; but I'll do it for you, Mr. Dodd, and only sorry I can't do more."

"Thank you, captain; my mind is made up," said I. "I'll go straight, RUAT COELUM! I never understood that old tag before to-night."

"I hope it isn't my business that decides you?" asked the captain.

"I'll never deny it was an element," said I. "I hope, I hope I'm not cowardly; I hope I could steal for Jim myself; but when it comes to dragging in you and Speedy, and this one and the other, why, Jim has got to die, and there's an end. I'll try and work for him when I get to 'Frisco, I suppose; and I suppose I'll fail, and look on at his death, and kick myself: it can’t be helped — I’ll fight it on this line.”

“I don’t say as you’re wrong,” replied Nares, “and I’ll be hanged if I know if you’re right. It suits me anyway. And look here — hadn’t you better just show our friends over the side?” he added; “no good of being at the risk and worry of smuggling for the benefit of creditors.”

“I don’t think of the creditors,” said I. “But I’ve kept this pair so long, I haven’t got the brass to fire them now.”

Indeed, I believe that was my only reason for entering upon a transaction which was now outside my interest, but which (as it chanced) repaid me fifty-fold in entertainment. Fowler and Sharpe were both preternaturally sharp; they did me the honour in the beginning to attribute to myself their proper vices; and before we were done had grown to regard me with an esteem akin to worship. This proud position I attained by no more recondite arts, than telling the mere truth and unaffectedly displaying my indifference to the result. I have doubtless stated the essentials of all good diplomacy, which may be rather regarded, therefore, as a grace of state, than the effect of management. For to tell the truth is not in itself diplomatic, and to have no care for the result a thing involuntary. When I mentioned, for instance, that I had but two hundred and forty pounds of drug, my smugglers exchanged meaning glances, as who should say, “Here is a foeman worthy of our steel!” But when I carelessly proposed thirty-five dollars a pound, as an amendment to their offered twenty, and wound up with the remark: “The whole thing is a matter of moonshine to me, gentlemen. Take it or want it, and fill your glasses” — I had the indescribable gratification to see Sharpe nudge Fowler warningly, and Fowler choke down the jovial acceptance that stood ready on his lips, and lamely substitute a “No — no more wine, please, Mr. Dodd!” Nor was this all: for when the affair was settled at fifty dollars a pound — a shrewd stroke of business for my creditors — and our friends had got on board their whaleboat and shoved off, it appeared they were imperfectly acquainted with the conveyance of sound upon still water, and I had the joy to overhear the following testimonial.

“Deep man, that Dodd,” said Sharpe.

And the bass-toned Fowler echoed, “Damned if I understand his game.”

Thus we were left once more alone upon the Norah Creina; and the news of the night, and the lamentations of Pinkerton, and the thought of my own harsh decision, returned and besieged me in the dark. According to all the rubbish I had read, I should have been sustained by the warm consciousness of virtue. Alas, I had but the one feeling: that I had sacrificed my sick friend to the fear of prison-cells and stupid starers. And no moralist has yet advanced so far as to number cowardice amongst the things that are their own reward.

CHAPTER XVII. LIGHT FROM THE MAN OF WAR.

In the early sunlight of the next day, we tossed close off the buoy and saw the city sparkle in its groves about the foot of the Punch-bowl, and the masts clustering thick in the small harbour. A good breeze, which had risen with the sea, carried us triumphantly through the intricacies of the passage; and we had soon brought up not far from the landing-stairs. I remember to have remarked an ugly horned reptile of a modern warship in the usual moorings across the port, but my mind was so profoundly plunged in melancholy that I paid no heed.

Indeed, I had little time at my disposal. Messieurs Sharpe and Fowler had left the night before in the persuasion that I was a liar of the first magnitude; the genial belief brought them aboard again with the earliest opportunity, proffering help to one who had proved how little he required it, and hospitality to so respectable a character. I had business to mind, I had some need both of assistance and diversion; I liked Fowler — I don't know why; and in short, I let them do with me as they desired. No creditor intervening, I spent the first half of the day inquiring into the conditions of the tea and silk market under the auspices of Sharpe; lunched with him in a private apartment at the Hawaiian Hotel — for Sharpe was a teetotaler in public; and about four in the afternoon was delivered into the hands of Fowler. This gentleman owned a bungalow on the Waikiki beach; and there in company with certain young bloods of Honolulu, I was entertained to a sea-bathe, indiscriminate cocktails, a dinner, a hula-hula, and (to round off the night), poker and assorted liquors. To lose money in the small hours to pale, intoxicated youth, has always appeared to me a pleasure overrated. In my then frame of mind, I confess I found it even delightful; put up my money (or rather my creditors'), and put down Fowler's champagne with equal avidity and success; and awoke the next morning to a mild headache and the rather agreeable lees of the last night's excitement. The young bloods, many of whom were still far from sober, had taken the kitchen into their own hands, vice the Chinaman deposed; and since each was engaged upon a dish of his own, and none had the least scruple in demolishing his neighbour's handiwork, I became early convinced that many eggs would be broken and few omelets made. The discovery of a jug of milk and a crust of bread enabled me to stay my appetite; and since it was Sunday, when no business could be done, and the festivities were to be renewed that night in the abode of Fowler, it occurred to me to slip silently away and enjoy some air and solitude.

I turned seaward under the dead crater known as Diamond Head. My way was for some time under the shade of certain thickets of green, thorny trees, dotted with houses. Here I enjoyed some pictures of the native life: wide-eyed, naked children, mingled with pigs; a youth asleep under a tree; an old gentleman spelling through glasses his Hawaiian Bible; the somewhat embarrassing spectacle of a lady at her bath in a spring; and the glimpse of gaudy-coloured gowns in the deep shade of the houses. Thence I found a road along the beach itself, wading in sand, opposed and buffeted by the whole weight of the Trade: on one hand, the glittering and sounding surf, and the bay lively with many sails; on the other, precipitous, arid gullies and sheer cliffs, mounting towards the crater and the blue sky. For all the companionship of skimming vessels, the place struck me with a sense of solitude. There came in my head what I had been told the day before at dinner, of a cavern above in the bowels of the volcano, a place only to be visited with the light of torches, a treasure-house of the bones of priests and warriors, and clamorous with the voice of an unseen river pouring seaward through the crannies of the mountain. At the thought, it was revealed to me suddenly, how the bungalows, and the Fowlers, and the bright busy town and crowding ships, were all children of yesterday; and for centuries before, the obscure life of the natives, with its glories and ambitions, its joys and crimes and agonies, had rolled unseen, like the mountain river, in that sea-girt place. Not Chaldea appeared more ancient, nor the Pyramids of Egypt more abstruse; and I heard time measured by "the drums and tramplings" of immemorial conquests, and saw myself the creature of an hour. Over the bankruptcy of Pinkerton and Dodd, of Montana Block, S. F., and the conscientious troubles of the junior partner, the spirit of eternity was seen to smile.

To this mood of philosophic sadness, my excesses of the night before no doubt contributed; for more things than virtue are at times their own reward: but I was greatly healed at least of my distresses. And while I was yet enjoying my abstracted humour, a turn of the beach brought me in view of the signal-station, with its watch-house and flag-staff, perched on the immediate margin of a cliff. The house was new and clean and bald, and stood naked to the Trades. The wind beat about it in loud squalls; the seaward windows rattled without mercy; the breach of the surf below contributed its increment of noise; and the fall of my foot in the narrow verandah passed unheard by those within.

There were two on whom I thus entered unexpectedly: the look-out man, with grizzled beard, keen seaman's eyes, and that brand on his countenance that comes of solitary living; and a visitor, an oldish, oratorical fellow, in the smart tropical array of the British man-o'-war's man, perched on a table, and smoking a cigar. I was made pleasantly welcome, and was soon listening with amusement to the sea-lawyer.

"No, if I hadn't have been born an Englishman," was one of his sentiments, "damn me! I'd rather 'a been born a Frenchy! I'd like to see another nation fit to black their boots." Presently after, he developed his views on home politics with similar trenchancy. "I'd rather be a brute beast than what I'd be a liberal," he said. "Carrying banners and that! a pig's got more sense. Why, look at our chief engineer — they do say he carried a banner with his own 'ands: 'Hooroar for Gladstone!' I suppose, or 'Down with the Aristocracy!' What 'arm does the aristocracy do? Show me a country any good without one! Not the States; why, it's the 'ome of corruption! I knew a man — he was a good man, 'ome born — who was signal quartermaster in the Wyandotte. He told me he could never have got there if he hadn't have 'run with the boys' — told it me as I'm telling you. Now, we're all British subjects here — — " he was going on.

"I am afraid I am an American," I said apologetically.

He seemed the least bit taken aback, but recovered himself; and with the ready tact of his betters, paid me the usual British compliment on the riposte. "You don't say so!" he exclaimed. "Well, I give you my word of honour, I'd never have guessed it. Nobody could tell it on you," said he, as though it were some form of liquor.

I thanked him, as I always do, at this particular stage, with his compatriots: not so much perhaps for the compliment to myself and my poor country, as for the revelation (which is ever fresh to me) of Britannic self-sufficiency and taste. And he was so far softened by my gratitude as to add a word of praise on the American method of lacing sails. "You're ahead of us in lacing sails," he said. "You can say that with a clear conscience."

"Thank you," I replied. "I shall certainly do so."

At this rate, we got along swimmingly; and when I rose to retrace my steps to the Fowlery, he at once started to his feet and offered me the welcome solace of his company for the return. I believe I discovered much alacrity at the idea, for the creature (who seemed to be unique, or to represent a type like that of the dodo) entertained me hugely. But when he had produced his hat, I found I was in the way of more than entertainment; for on the ribbon I could read the legend: "H.M.S. Tempest."

"I say," I began, when our adieus were paid, and we were scrambling down the path from the look-out, "it was your ship that picked up the men on board the Flying Scud, wasn't it?"

"You may say so," said he. "And a blessed good job for the Flying-

Scuds. It’s a God-forsaken spot, that Midway Island.”

“I’ve just come from there,” said I. “It was I who bought the wreck.”

“Beg your pardon, sir,” cried the sailor: “gen’lem’n in the white schooner?”

“The same,” said I.

My friend saluted, as though we were now, for the first time, formally introduced.

“Of course,” I continued, “I am rather taken up with the whole story; and I wish you would tell me what you can of how the men were saved.”

“It was like this,” said he. “We had orders to call at Midway after castaways, and had our distance pretty nigh run down the day before. We steamed half-speed all night, looking to make it about noon; for old Tootles — beg your pardon, sir — the captain — was precious scared of the place at night. Well, there’s nasty, filthy currents round that Midway; YOU know, as has been there; and one on ‘em must have set us down. Leastways, about six bells, when we had ought to been miles away, some one sees a sail, and lo and be’old, there was the spars of a full-rigged brig! We raised her pretty fast, and the island after her; and made out she was hard aground, canted on her bilge, and had her ens’n flying, union down. It was breaking ‘igh on the reef, and we laid well out, and sent a couple of boats. I didn’t go in neither; only stood and looked on; but it seems they was all badly scared and muddled, and didn’t know which end was uppermost. One on ‘em kep’ snivelling and wringing of his ‘ands; he come on board all of a sop like a monthly nurse. That Trent, he come first, with his ‘and in a bloody rag. I was near ‘em as I am to you; and I could make out he was all to bits — ’eard his breath rattle in his blooming lungs as he come down the ladder. Yes, they was a scared lot, small blame to ‘em, I say! The next after Trent, come him as was mate.”

“Goddedaal!” I exclaimed.

“And a good name for him too,” chuckled the man-o’-war’s man, who probably confounded the word with a familiar oath. “A good name too; only it weren’t his. He was a gen’lem’n born, sir, as had gone maskewerading. One of our officers knowed him at ‘ome, reckonises him, steps up, ‘olds out his ‘and right off, and says he: “Ullo, Norrie, old chappie!’ he says. The other was coming up, as bold as look at it; didn’t seem put out — that’s where blood tells, sir! Well, no sooner does he ‘ear his born name given him, than he turns as white as the Day of Judgment, stares at Mr. Sebright like he was looking at a ghost, and then (I give you my word of honour) turned to, and doubled up in a dead faint. ‘Take him down to my berth,’ says Mr. Sebright. “Tis poor old Norrie Carthew,’ he says.”

“And what — what sort of a gentleman was this Mr. Carthew?” I gasped.

“The ward-room steward told me he was come of the best blood in England,” was my friend’s reply: “Eton and ‘Arrow bred; — and might have been a bar’net!”

“No, but to look at?” I corrected him.

“The same as you or me,” was the uncompromising answer: “not much to look at. I didn’t know he was a gen’lem’n; but then, I never see him cleaned up.”

“How was that?” I cried. “O yes, I remember: he was sick all the way to ‘Frisco, was he not?”

“Sick, or sorry, or something,” returned my informant. “My belief, he didn’t hanker after showing up. He kep’ close; the ward-room steward, what took his meals in, told me he ate nex’ to nothing; and he was fetched ashore at ‘Frisco on the quiet. Here was how it was. It seems his brother had took and died, him as had the estate. This one had gone in for his beer, by what I could make out; the old folks at ‘ome had turned rusty; no one knew where he had gone to. Here he was, slaving in a merchant brig, shipwrecked on Midway, and packing up his duds for a long voyage in a open boat. He comes on board our ship, and by God, here he is a landed proprietor, and may be in Parliament to-morrow! It’s no less than natural he should keep dark: so would you and me in the same box.”

“I daresay,” said I. “But you saw more of the others?”

“To be sure,” says he: “no ‘arm in them from what I see. There was one ‘Ardy there: colonial born he was, and had been through a power of money. There was no nonsense about ‘Ardy; he had been up, and he had come down, and took it so. His ‘eart was in the right place; and he was well-informed, and knew French; and Latin, I believe, like a native! I liked that ‘Ardy; he was a good-looking boy, too.”

“Did they say much about the wreck?” I asked.

“There wasn’t much to say, I reckon,” replied the man-o’-war’s man. “It was all in the papers. ‘Ardy used to yarn most about the coins he had gone through; he had lived with book-makers, and jockeys, and pugs, and actors, and all that: a precious low lot!” added this judicious person. “But it’s about here my ‘orse is moored, and by your leave I’ll be getting ahead.”

“One moment,” said I. “Is Mr. Sebright on board?”

“No, sir, he’s ashore to-day,” said the sailor. “I took up a bag for him to the ‘otel.”

With that we parted. Presently after my friend overtook and passed me on a hired steed which seemed to scorn its cavalier; and I was left in the dust of his passage, a prey to whirling thoughts. For I now stood, or seemed to stand, on the immediate threshold of these mysteries. I knew the name of the man Dickson — his name was

Carthew; I knew where the money came from that opposed us at the sale — it was part of Carthew's inheritance; and in my gallery of illustrations to the history of the wreck, one more picture hung; perhaps the most dramatic of the series. It showed me the deck of a warship in that distant part of the great ocean, the officers and seamen looking curiously on; and a man of birth and education, who had been sailing under an alias on a trading brig, and was now rescued from desperate peril, felled like an ox by the bare sound of his own name. I could not fail to be reminded of my own experience at the Occidental telephone. The hero of three styles, Dickson, Goddedaal, or Carthew, must be the owner of a lively — or a loaded — conscience, and the reflection recalled to me the photograph found on board the Flying Scud; just such a man, I reasoned, would be capable of just such starts and crises, and I inclined to think that Goddedaal (or Carthew) was the mainspring of the mystery.

One thing was plain: as long as the Tempest was in reach, I must make the acquaintance of both Sebright and the doctor. To this end, I excused myself with Mr. Fowler, returned to Honolulu, and passed the remainder of the day hanging vainly round the cool verandahs of the hotel. It was near nine o'clock at night before I was rewarded.

"That is the gentleman you were asking for," said the clerk.

I beheld a man in tweeds, of an incomparable languor of demeanour, and carrying a cane with genteel effort. From the name, I had looked to find a sort of Viking and young ruler of the battle and the tempest; and I was the more disappointed, and not a little alarmed, to come face to face with this impracticable type.

"I believe I have the pleasure of addressing Lieutenant Sebright," said I, stepping forward.

"Aw, yes," replied the hero; "but, aw! I dawn't knaw you, do I?" (He spoke for all the world like Lord Foppington in the old play — a proof of the perennial nature of man's affectations. But his limping dialect, I scorn to continue to reproduce.)

"It was with the intention of making myself known, that I have taken this step," said I, entirely unabashed (for impudence begets in me its like — perhaps my only martial attribute). "We have a common subject of interest, to me very lively; and I believe I may be in a position to be of some service to a friend of yours — to give him, at least, some very welcome information."

The last clause was a sop to my conscience: I could not pretend, even to myself, either the power or the will to serve Mr. Carthew; but I felt sure he would like to hear the Flying Scud was burned.

"I don't know — I — I don't understand you," stammered my victim. "I don't have any friends in Honolulu, don't you know?"

"The friend to whom I refer is English," I replied. "It is Mr. Carthew, whom you picked up at Midway. My firm has bought the wreck; I am just returned from breaking her up; and — to make my business quite clear to you — I have a communication it is necessary I should make; and have to trouble you for Mr. Carthew's address."

It will be seen how rapidly I had dropped all hope of interesting the frigid British bear. He, on his side, was plainly on thorns at my insistence; I judged he was suffering torments of alarm lest I should prove an undesirable acquaintance; diagnosed him for a shy, dull, vain, unamiable animal, without adequate defence — a sort of dishoused snail; and concluded, rightly enough, that he would consent to anything to bring our interview to a conclusion. A moment later, he had fled, leaving me with a sheet of paper, thus inscribed: —

Norris Carthew,
Stallbridge-le-Carthew,
Dorset.

I might have cried victory, the field of battle and some of the enemy's baggage remaining in my occupation. As a matter of fact, my moral sufferings during the engagement had rivalled those of Mr. Sebright; I was left incapable of fresh hostilities; I owned that the navy of old England was (for me) invincible as of yore; and giving up all thought of the doctor, inclined to salute her veteran flag, in the future, from a prudent distance. Such was my inclination, when I retired to rest; and my first experience the next morning strengthened it to certainty. For I had the pleasure of encountering my fair antagonist on his way on board; and he honoured me with a recognition so disgustingly dry, that my impatience overflowed, and (recalling the tactics of Nelson) I neglected to perceive or to return it.

Judge of my astonishment, some half-hour later, to receive a note of invitation from the Tempest.

"Dear Sir," it began, "we are all naturally very much interested in the wreck of the Flying Scud, and as soon as I mentioned that I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance, a very general wish was expressed that you would come and dine on board. It will give us all the greatest pleasure to see you to-night, or in case you should be otherwise engaged, to luncheon either to-morrow or to-day." A note of the hours followed, and the document wound up with the name of "J. Lascelles Sebright," under an undeniable statement that he was sincerely mine.

"No, Mr. Lascelles Sebright," I reflected, "you are not, but I begin to suspect that (like the lady in the song) you are another's. You have mentioned your adventure, my friend; you have been blown up; you have got your orders; this note has been dictated; and I am asked on board (in spite of your melancholy protests) not to meet the men, and not to talk about the Flying Scud, but to undergo the scrutiny of some one interested in Carthew: the doctor, for a wager. And for a second wager, all this springs from your facility in giving the address." I lost no time in answering the billet, electing for the earliest occasion; and at the appointed hour, a somewhat blackguard-looking boat's crew from the Norah Creina conveyed me under the guns of the Tempest.

The ward-room appeared pleased to see me; Sebright's brother officers, in contrast to himself, took a boyish interest in my cruise; and much was talked of the Flying Scud; of how she had been lost, of how I had found her, and of the weather, the anchorage, and the currents about Midway Island. Carthew was referred to more than once without embarrassment; the parallel case of a late Earl of Aberdeen, who died mate on board a Yankee schooner, was adduced. If they told me little of the man, it was because they had not much to tell, and only felt an interest in his recognition and pity for his prolonged ill-health. I could never think the subject was avoided; and it was clear that the officers, far from practising concealment, had nothing to conceal.

So far, then, all seemed natural, and yet the doctor troubled me. This was a tall, rugged, plain man, on the wrong side of fifty, already gray, and with a restless mouth and bushy eyebrows: he spoke seldom, but then with gaiety; and his great, quaking, silent laughter was infectious. I could make out that he was at once the quiz of the ward-room and perfectly respected; and I made sure that he observed me covertly. It is certain I returned the compliment. If Carthew had feigned sickness — and all seemed to point in that direction — here was the man who knew all — or certainly knew much. His strong, sterling face progressively and silently persuaded of his full knowledge. That was not the mouth, these were not the eyes, of one who would act in ignorance, or could be led at random. Nor again was it the face of a man squeamish in the case of malefactors; there was even a touch of Brutus there, and something of the hanging judge. In short, he seemed the last character for the part assigned him in my theories; and wonder and curiosity contended in my mind.

Luncheon was over, and an adjournment to the smoking-room proposed, when (upon a sudden impulse) I burned my ships, and pleading indisposition, requested to consult the doctor.

"There is nothing the matter with my body, Dr. Urquart," said I, as soon as we were alone.

He hummed, his mouth worked, he regarded me steadily with his gray eyes, but resolutely held his peace.

"I want to talk to you about the Flying Scud and Mr. Carthew," I resumed. "Come: you must have expected this. I am sure you know all; you are shrewd, and must have a guess that I know much. How are we to stand to one another? and how am I to stand to Mr.

Carthew?"

"I do not fully understand you," he replied, after a pause; and then, after another: "It is the spirit I refer to, Mr. Dodd."

"The spirit of my inquiries?" I asked.

He nodded.

"I think we are at cross-purposes," said I. "The spirit is precisely what I came in quest of. I bought the Flying Scud at a ruinous figure, run up by Mr. Carthew through an agent; and I am, in consequence, a bankrupt. But if I have found no fortune in the wreck, I have found unmistakable evidences of foul play. Conceive my position: I am ruined through this man, whom I never saw; I might very well desire revenge or compensation; and I think you will admit I have the means to extort either."

He made no sign in answer to this challenge.

"Can you not understand, then," I resumed, "the spirit in which I come to one who is surely in the secret, and ask him, honestly and plainly: How do I stand to Mr. Carthew?"

"I must ask you to be more explicit," said he.

"You do not help me much," I retorted. "But see if you can understand: my conscience is not very fine-spun; still, I have one. Now, there are degrees of foul play, to some of which I have no particular objection. I am sure with Mr. Carthew, I am not at all the person to forgo an advantage; and I have much curiosity. But on the other hand, I have no taste for persecution; and I ask you to believe that I am not the man to make bad worse, or heap trouble on the unfortunate."

"Yes; I think I understand," said he. "Suppose I pass you my word that, whatever may have occurred, there were excuses — great excuses — I may say, very great?"

"It would have weight with me, doctor," I replied.

"I may go further," he pursued. "Suppose I had been there, or you had been there: after a certain event had taken place, it's a grave question what we might have done — it's even a question what we could have done — ourselves. Or take me. I will be plain with you, and own that I am in possession of the facts. You have a shrewd guess how I have acted in that knowledge. May I ask you to judge from the character of my action, something of the nature of that knowledge, which I have no call, nor yet no title, to share with you?"

I cannot convey a sense of the rugged conviction and judicial emphasis of Dr. Urquart's speech. To those who did not hear him, it may appear as if he fed me on enigmas; to myself, who heard, I seemed to have received a lesson and a compliment.

"I thank you," I said. "I feel you have said as much as possible, and more than I had any right to ask. I take that as a mark of confidence, which I will try to deserve. I hope, sir, you will let me regard you as a friend."

He evaded my proffered friendship with a blunt proposal to rejoin the mess; and yet a moment later, contrived to alleviate the snub. For, as we entered the smoking-room, he laid his hand on my shoulder with a kind familiarity.

"I have just prescribed for Mr. Dodd," says he, "a glass of our Madeira."

I have never again met Dr. Urquart: but he wrote himself so clear upon my memory that I think I see him still. And indeed I had cause to remember the man for the sake of his communication. It was hard enough to make a theory fit the circumstances of the Flying Scud; but one in which the chief actor should stand the least excused, and might retain the esteem or at least the pity of a man like Dr. Urquart, failed me utterly. Here at least was the end of my discoveries; I learned no more, till I learned all; and my reader has the evidence complete. Is he more astute than I was? or, like me, does he give it up?

CHAPTER XVIII. CROSS-QUESTIONS AND CROOKED ANSWERS.

I have said hard words of San Francisco; they must scarce be literally understood (one cannot suppose the Israelites did justice to the land of Pharaoh); and the city took a fine revenge of me on my return. She had never worn a more becoming guise; the sun shone, the air was lively, the people had flowers in their button-holes and smiles upon their faces; and as I made my way towards Jim's place of employment, with some very black anxieties at heart, I seemed to myself a blot on the surrounding gaiety.

My destination was in a by-street in a mean, rickety building; "The Franklin H. Dodge Steam Printing Company" appeared upon its front, and in characters of greater freshness, so as to suggest recent conversion, the watch-cry, "White Labour Only." In the office, in a dusty pen, Jim sat alone before a table. A wretched change had overtaken him in clothes, body, and bearing; he looked sick and shabby; he who had once rejoiced in his day's employment, like a horse among pastures, now sat staring on a column of accounts, idly chewing a pen, at times heavily sighing, the picture of inefficiency and inattention. He was sunk deep in a painful reverie; he neither saw nor heard me; and I stood and watched him unobserved. I had a sudden vain relenting. Repentance bludgeoned me. As I had predicted to Nares, I stood and kicked myself. Here was I come home again, my honour saved; there was my friend in want of rest, nursing, and a generous diet; and I asked myself with Falstaff, "What is in that word honour? what is that honour?" and, like Falstaff, I told myself that it was air.

"Jim!" said I.

"Loudon!" he gasped, and jumped from his chair and stood shaking.

The next moment I was over the barrier, and we were hand in hand.

"My poor old man!" I cried.

"Thank God, you're home at last!" he gulped, and kept patting my shoulder with his hand.

"I've no good news for you, Jim!" said I.

"You've come — that's the good news that I want," he replied. "O, how I've longed for you, Loudon!"

"I couldn't do what you wrote me," I said, lowering my voice. "The creditors have it all. I couldn't do it."

"Ssh!" returned Jim. "I was crazy when wrote. I could never have looked Mamie in the face if we had done it. O, Loudon, what a gift that woman is! You think you know something of life: you just don't know anything. It's the GOODNESS of the woman, it's a revelation!"

"That's all right," said I. "That's how I hoped to hear you, Jim."

"And so the Flying Scud was a fraud," he resumed. "I didn't quite understand your letter, but I made out that."

"Fraud is a mild term for it," said I. "The creditors will never believe what fools we were. And that reminds me," I continued, rejoicing in the transition, "how about the bankruptcy?"

"You were lucky to be out of that," answered Jim, shaking his head; "you were lucky not to see the papers. The *Occidental* called me a fifth-rate Kerbstone broker with water on the brain; another said I was a tree-frog that had got into the same meadow with Longhurst, and had blown myself out till I went pop. It was rough on a man in his honeymoon; so was what they said about my looks, and what I had on, and the way I perspired. But I braced myself up with the Flying Scud. How did it exactly figure out anyway? I don't seem to catch on to that story, Loudon."

"The devil you don't!" thinks I to myself; and then aloud: "You see we had neither one of us good luck. I didn't do much more than cover current expenses; and you got floored immediately. How did we come to go so soon?"

"Well, we'll have to have a talk over all this," said Jim with a sudden start. "I should be getting to my books; and I guess you had better go up right away to Mamie. She's at Speedy's. She expects you with impatience. She regards you in the light of a favourite brother, Loudon."

Any scheme was welcome which allowed me to postpone the hour of explanation, and avoid (were it only for a breathing space) the topic of the Flying Scud. I hastened accordingly to Bush Street. Mrs. Speedy, already rejoicing in the return of a spouse, hailed me with acclamation. "And it's beautiful you're looking, Mr. Dodd, my dear," she was kind enough to say. "And a miracle they naygur waheenies let ye lave the oilands. I have my suspicions of Shpeedy," she added, roguishly. "Did ye see him after the naygresses now?"

I gave Speedy an unblemished character.

"The one of ye will niver bethray the other," said the playful dame, and ushered me into a bare room, where Mamie sat working a type-writer.

I was touched by the cordiality of her greeting. With the prettiest gesture in the world she gave me both her hands; wheeled forth a chair; and produced, from a cupboard, a tin of my favourite tobacco, and a book of my exclusive cigarette papers.

"There!" she cried; "you see, Mr. Loudon, we were all prepared for you; the things were bought the very day you sailed."

I imagined she had always intended me a pleasant welcome; but the certain fervour of sincerity, which I could not help remarking, flowed from an unexpected source. Captain Nares, with a kindness for which I can never be sufficiently grateful, had stolen a moment from his occupations, driven to call on Mamie, and drawn her a generous picture of my prowess at the wreck. She was careful not to breathe a word of this interview, till she had led me on to tell my adventures for myself.

"Ah! Captain Nares was better," she cried, when I had done. "From your account, I have only learned one new thing, that you are modest as well as brave."

I cannot tell with what sort of disclamation I sought to reply.

"It is of no use," said Mamie. "I know a hero. And when I heard of you working all day like a common labourer, with your hands bleeding and your nails broken — and how you told the captain to 'crack on' (I think he said) in the storm, when he was terrified himself — and the danger of that horrid mutiny" — (Nares had been obligingly dipping his brush in earthquake and eclipse) — "and how it was all done, in part at least, for Jim and me — I felt we could never say how we admired and thanked you."

"Mamie," I cried, "don't talk of thanks; it is not a word to be used between friends. Jim and I have been prosperous together; now we shall be poor together. We've done our best, and that's all that need be said. The next thing is for me to find a situation, and send you and Jim up country for a long holiday in the redwoods — for a holiday Jim has got to have."

"Jim can't take your money, Mr. Loudon," said Mamie.

"Jim?" cried I. "He's got to. Didn't I take his?"

Presently after, Jim himself arrived, and before he had yet done mopping his brow, he was at me with the accursed subject. "Now, Loudon," said he, "here we are all together, the day's work done and the evening before us; just start in with the whole story."

"One word on business first," said I, speaking from the lips outward, and meanwhile (in the private apartments of my brain) trying for the thousandth time to find some plausible arrangement of my story. "I want to have a notion how we stand about the bankruptcy."

"O, that's ancient history," cried Jim. "We paid seven cents, and a wonder we did as well. The receiver — — " (methought a spasm seized him at the name of this official, and he broke off). "But it's all past and done with anyway; and what I want to get at is the facts about the wreck. I don't seem to understand it; appears to me like as there was something underneath."

"There was nothing IN it, anyway," I said, with a forced laugh.

"That's what I want to judge of," returned Jim.

"How the mischief is it I can never keep you to that bankruptcy? It looks as if you avoided it," said I — for a man in my situation, with unpardonable folly.

"Don't it look a little as if you were trying to avoid the wreck?" asked Jim.

It was my own doing; there was no retreat. "My dear fellow, if you make a point of it, here goes!" said I, and launched with spurious gaiety into the current of my tale. I told it with point and spirit; described the island and the wreck, mimicked Anderson and the Chinese, maintained the suspense.... My pen has stumbled on the fatal word. I maintained the suspense so well that it was never relieved; and when I stopped — I dare not say concluded, where there was no conclusion — I found Jim and Mamie regarding me with surprise.

"Well?" said Jim.

"Well, that's all," said I.

"But how do you explain it?" he asked.

"I can't explain it," said I.

Mamie wagged her head ominously.

"But, great Caesar's ghost! the money was offered!" cried Jim. "It won't do, Loudon; it's nonsense, on the face of it! I don't say but what you and Nares did your best; I'm sure, of course, you did; but I do say, you got fooled. I say the stuff is in that ship to-day, and I say I mean to get it."

"There is nothing in the ship, I tell you, but old wood and iron!" said I.

"You'll see," said Jim. "Next time I go myself. I'll take Mamie for the trip; Longhurst won't refuse me the expense of a schooner. You wait till I get the searching of her."

"But you can't search her!" cried I. "She's burned."

"Burned!" cried Mamie, starting a little from the attitude of quiescent capacity in which she had hitherto sat to hear me, her hands folded in her lap.

There was an appreciable pause.

"I beg your pardon, Loudon," began Jim at last, "but why in snakes did you burn her?"

"It was an idea of Nares's," said I.

"This is certainly the strangest circumstance of all," observed Mamie.

"I must say, Loudon, it does seem kind of unexpected," added Jim. "It seems kind of crazy even. What did you — what did Nares expect to gain by burning her?"

"I don't know; it didn't seem to matter; we had got all there was to get," said I.

"That's the very point," cried Jim. "It was quite plain you hadn't."

"What made you so sure?" asked Mamie.

"How can I tell you?" I cried. "We had been all through her. We WERE sure; that's all that I can say."

"I begin to think you were," she returned, with a significant emphasis.

Jim hurriedly intervened. "What I don't quite make out, Loudon, is that you don't seem to appreciate the peculiarities of the thing," said he. "It doesn't seem to have struck you same as it does me."

"Pshaw! why go on with this?" cried Mamie, suddenly rising. "Mr. Dodd is not telling us either what he thinks or what he knows."

"Mamie!" cried Jim.

"You need not be concerned for his feelings, James; he is not concerned for yours," returned the lady. "He dare not deny it, besides. And this is not the first time he has practised reticence. Have you forgotten that he knew the address, and did not tell it you until that man had escaped?"

Jim turned to me pleadingly — we were all on our feet. "Loudon," he said, "you see Mamie has some fancy; and I must say there's just a sort of a shadow of an excuse; for it IS bewildering — even to me, Loudon, with my trained business intelligence. For God's sake, clear it up."

"This serves me right," said I. "I should not have tried to keep you in the dark; I should have told you at first that I was pledged to secrecy; I should have asked you to trust me in the beginning. It is all I can do now. There is more of the story, but it concerns none of us, and my tongue is tied. I have given my word of honour. You must trust me and try to forgive me."

"I daresay I am very stupid, Mr. Dodd," began Mamie, with an alarming sweetness, "but I thought you went upon this trip as my husband's representative and with my husband's money? You tell us now that you are pledged, but I should have thought you were pledged first of all to James. You say it does not concern us; we are poor people, and my husband is sick, and it concerns us a great deal to understand how we come to have lost our money, and why our representative comes back to us with nothing. You ask that we should trust you; you do not seem to understand; the question we are asking ourselves is whether we have not trusted you too much."

"I do not ask you to trust me," I replied. "I ask Jim. He knows me."

"You think you can do what you please with James; you trust to his affection, do you not? And me, I suppose, you do not consider," said Mamie. "But it was perhaps an unfortunate day for you when we were married, for I at least am not blind. The crew run away, the ship is sold for a great deal of money, you know that man's address and you conceal it, you do not find what you were sent to look for, and yet you burn the ship; and now, when we ask explanations, you are pledged to secrecy! But I am pledged to no such thing; I will not stand by in silence and see my sick and ruined husband betrayed by his condescending friend. I will give you the truth for once. Mr. Dodd, you have been bought and sold.”

“Mamie,” cried Jim, “no more of this! It’s me you’re striking; it’s only me you hurt. You don’t know, you cannot understand these things. Why, to-day, if it hadn’t been for Loudon, I couldn’t have looked you in the face. He saved my honesty.”

“I have heard plenty of this talk before,” she replied. “You are a sweet-hearted fool, and I love you for it. But I am a clear-headed woman; my eyes are open, and I understand this man’s hypocrisy. Did he not come here to-day and pretend he would take a situation — pretend he would share his hard-earned wages with us until you were well? Pretend! It makes me furious! His wages! a share of his wages! That would have been your pittance, that would have been your share of the Flying Scud — you who worked and toiled for him when he was a beggar in the streets of Paris. But we do not want your charity; thank God, I can work for my own husband! See what it is to have obliged a gentleman. He would let you pick him up when he was begging; he would stand and look on, and let you black his shoes, and sneer at you. For you were always sneering at my James; you always looked down upon him in your heart, you know it!” She turned back to Jim. “And now when he is rich,” she began, and then swooped again on me. “For you are rich, I dare you to deny it; I defy you to look me in the face and try to deny that you are rich — rich with our money — my husband’s money — — ”

Heaven knows to what a height she might have risen, being, by this time, bodily whirled away in her own hurricane of words. Heart-sickness, a black depression, a treacherous sympathy with my assailant, pity unutterable for poor Jim, already filled, divided, and abashed my spirit. Flight seemed the only remedy; and making a private sign to Jim, as if to ask permission, I slunk from the unequal field.

I was but a little way down the street, when I was arrested by the sound of some one running, and Jim’s voice calling me by name. He had followed me with a letter which had been long awaiting my return.

I took it in a dream. “This has been a devil of a business,” said I.

“Don’t think hard of Mamie,” he pleaded. “It’s the way she’s made; it’s her high-toned loyalty. And of course I know it’s all right. I know your sterling character; but you didn’t, somehow, make out to give us the thing straight, Loudon. Anybody might have — I mean it — I mean — — ”

“Never mind what you mean, my poor Jim,” said I. “She’s a gallant little woman and a loyal wife: and I thought her splendid. My story was as fishy as the devil. I'll never think the less of either her or you."

"It'll blow over; it must blow over," said he.

"It never can," I returned, sighing: "and don't you try to make it! Don't name me, unless it's with an oath. And get home to her right away. Good by, my best of friends. Good by, and God bless you. We shall never meet again."

"O Loudon, that we should live to say such words!" he cried.

I had no views on life, beyond an occasional impulse to commit suicide, or to get drunk, and drifted down the street, semi-conscious, walking apparently on air, in the light-headedness of grief. I had money in my pocket, whether mine or my creditors' I had no means of guessing; and, the Poodle Dog lying in my path, I went mechanically in and took a table. A waiter attended me, and I suppose I gave my orders; for presently I found myself, with a sudden return of consciousness, beginning dinner. On the white cloth at my elbow lay the letter, addressed in a clerk's hand, and bearing an English stamp and the Edinburgh postmark. A bowl of bouillon and a glass of wine awakened in one corner of my brain (where all the rest was in mourning, the blinds down as for a funeral) a faint stir of curiosity; and while I waited the next course, wondering the while what I had ordered, I opened and began to read the epoch-making document.

"DEAR SIR: I am charged with the melancholy duty of announcing to you the death of your excellent grandfather, Mr. Alexander Loudon, on the 17th ult. On Sunday the 13th, he went to church as usual in the forenoon, and stopped on his way home, at the corner of Princes Street, in one of our seasonable east winds, to talk with an old friend. The same evening acute bronchitis declared itself; from the first, Dr. M'Combie anticipated a fatal result, and the old gentleman appeared to have no illusion as to his own state. He repeatedly assured me it was 'by' with him now; 'and high time, too,' he once added with characteristic asperity. He was not in the least changed on the approach of death: only (what I am sure must be very grateful to your feelings) he seemed to think and speak even more kindly than usual of yourself: referring to you as 'Jeannie's yin,' with strong expressions of regard. 'He was the only one I ever liket of the hale jing-bang,' was one of his expressions; and you will be glad to know that he dwelt particularly on the dutiful respect you had always displayed in your relations. The small codicil, by which he bequeaths you his Molesworth and other professional works, was added (you will observe) on the day before his death; so that you were in his thoughts until the end. I should say that, though rather a trying patient, he was most tenderly nursed by your uncle, and your cousin, Miss Euphemia. I enclose a copy of the testament, by which you will see that you share equally with Mr. Adam, and that I hold at your disposal a sum nearly approaching seventeen thousand pounds. I beg to congratulate you on this considerable acquisition, and expect your orders, to which I shall hasten to give my best attention. Thinking that you might desire to return at once to this country, and not knowing how you may be placed, I enclose a credit for six hundred pounds. Please sign the accompanying slip, and let me have it at your earliest convenience.

"I am, dear sir, yours truly,

"W. RUTHERFORD GREGG."

"God bless the old gentleman!" I thought; "and for that matter God bless Uncle Adam! and my cousin Euphemia! and Mr. Gregg!" I had a vision of that grey old life now brought to an end — "and high time too" — a vision of those Sabbath streets alternately vacant and filled with silent people; of the babel of the bells, the long-drawn psalmody, the shrewd sting of the east wind, the hollow, echoing, dreary house to which "Ecky" had returned with the hand of death already on his shoulder; a vision, too, of the long, rough country lad, perhaps a serious courtier of the lasses in the hawthorn den, perhaps a rustic dancer on the green, who had first earned and answered to that harsh diminutive. And I asked myself if, on the whole, poor Ecky had succeeded in life; if the last state of that man were not on the whole worse than the first; and the house in Randolph Crescent a less admirable dwelling than the hamlet where he saw the day and grew to manhood. Here was a consolatory thought for one who was himself a failure.

Yes, I declare the word came in my mind; and all the while, in another partition of the brain, I was glowing and singing for my new-found opulence. The pile of gold — four thousand two hundred and fifty double eagles, seventeen thousand ugly sovereigns, twenty-one thousand two hundred and fifty Napoleons — danced, and rang and ran molten, and lit up life with their effulgence, in the eye of fancy. Here were all things made plain to me: Paradise — Paris, I mean — Regained, Carthew protected, Jim restored, the creditors...

"The creditors!" I repeated, and sank back benumbed. It was all theirs to the last farthing: my grandfather had died too soon to save me.

I must have somewhere a rare vein of decision. In that revolutionary moment, I found myself prepared for all extremes except the one: ready to do anything, or to go anywhere, so long as I might save my money. At the worst, there was flight, flight to some of those blest countries where the serpent, extradition, has not yet entered in.

> On no condition is extradition
> Allowed in Callao!

— the old lawless words haunted me; and I saw myself hugging my gold in the company of such men as had once made and sung them, in the rude and bloody wharfside drinking-shops of Chili and Peru. The run of my ill-luck, the breach of my old friendship, this bubble fortune flaunted for a moment in my eyes and snatched again, had made me desperate and (in the expressive vulgarism) ugly. To drink vile spirits among vile companions by the flare of a pine-torch; to go burthened with my furtive treasure in a belt; to fight for it knife in hand, rolling on a clay floor; to flee perpetually in fresh ships and to be chased through the sea from isle to isle, seemed, in my then frame of mind, a welcome series of events.

That was for the worst; but it began to dawn slowly on my mind that there was yet a possible better. Once escaped, once safe in Callao, I might approach my creditors with a good grace; and properly handled by a cunning agent, it was just possible they might accept some easy composition. The hope recalled me to the bankruptcy. It was strange, I reflected: often as I had questioned Jim, he had never obliged me with an answer. In his haste for news about the wreck, my own no less legitimate curiosity had gone disappointed. Hateful as the thought was to me, I must return at once and find out where I stood.

I left my dinner still unfinished, paying for the whole, of course, and tossing the waiter a gold piece. I was reckless; I knew not what was mine and cared not: I must take what I could get and give as I was able; to rob and to squander seemed the complementary parts of my new destiny. I walked up Bush Street, whistling, brazening myself to confront Mamie in the first place, and the world at large and a certain visionary judge upon a bench in the second. Just outside, I stopped and lighted a cigar to give me greater countenance; and puffing this and wearing what (I am sure) was a wretched assumption of braggadocio, I reappeared on the scene of my disgrace.

My friend and his wife were finishing a poor meal — rags of old mutton, the remainder cakes from breakfast eaten cold, and a starveling pot of coffee.

“I beg your pardon, Mrs. Pinkerton,” said I. “Sorry to inflict my presence where it cannot be desired; but there is a piece of business necessary to be discussed.”

“Pray do not consider me,” said Mamie, rising, and she sailed into the adjoining bedroom.

Jim watched her go and shook his head; he looked miserably old and ill.

“What is it, now?” he asked.

“Perhaps you remember you answered none of my questions,” said I.

“Your questions?” faltered Jim.

“Even so, Jim. My questions,” I repeated. “I put questions as well as yourself; and however little I may have satisfied Mamie with my answers, I beg to remind you that you gave me none at all."

"You mean about the bankruptcy?" asked Jim.

I nodded.

He writhed in his chair. "The straight truth is, I was ashamed," he said. "I was trying to dodge you. I've been playing fast and loose with you, Loudon; I've deceived you from the first, I blush to own it. And here you came home and put the very question I was fearing. Why did we bust so soon? Your keen business eye had not deceived you. That's the point, that's my shame; that's what killed me this afternoon when Mamie was treating you so, and my conscience was telling me all the time, Thou art the man."

"What was it, Jim?" I asked.

"What I had been at all the time, Loudon," he wailed; "and I don't know how I'm to look you in the face and say it, after my duplicity. It was stocks," he added in a whisper.

"And you were afraid to tell me that!" I cried. "You poor, old, cheerless dreamer! what would it matter what you did or didn't? Can't you see we're doomed? And anyway, that's not my point. It's how I stand that I want to know. There is a particular reason. Am I clear? Have I a certificate, or what have I to do to get one? And when will it be dated? You can't think what hangs by it!"

"That's the worst of all," said Jim, like a man in a dream, "I can't see how to tell him!"

"What do you mean?" I cried, a small pang of terror at my heart.

"I'm afraid I sacrificed you, Loudon," he said, looking at me pitifully.

"Sacrificed me?" I repeated. "How? What do you mean by sacrifice?"

"I know it'll shock your delicate self-respect," he said; "but what was I to do? Things looked so bad. The receiver — — " (as usual, the name stuck in his throat, and he began afresh). "There was a lot of talk; the reporters were after me already; there was the trouble and all about the Mexican business; and I got scared right out, and I guess I lost my head. You weren't there, you see, and that was my temptation."

I did not know how long he might thus beat about the bush with dreadful hintings, and I was already beside myself with terror. What had he done? I saw he had been tempted; I knew from his letters that he was in no condition to resist. How had he sacrificed the absent?

"Jim," I said, "you must speak right out. I've got all that I can carry."

"Well," he said — "I know it was a liberty — I made it out you were no business man, only a stone-broke painter; that half the time you didn't know anything anyway, particularly money and accounts. I said you never could be got to understand whose was whose. I had to say that because of some entries in the books — — "

"For God's sake," I cried, "put me out of this agony! What did you accuse me of?"

"Accuse you of?" repeated Jim. "Of what I'm telling you. And there being no deed of partnership, I made out you were only a kind of clerk that I called a partner just to give you taffy; and so I got you ranked a creditor on the estate for your wages and the money you had lent. And — — "

I believe I reeled. "A creditor!" I roared; "a creditor! I'm not in the bankruptcy at all?"

"No," said Jim. "I know it was a liberty — — "

"O, damn your liberty! read that," I cried, dashing the letter before him on the table, "and call in your wife, and be done with eating this truck " — as I spoke, I slung the cold mutton in the empty grate — "and let's all go and have a champagne supper. I've dined — I'm sure I don't remember what I had; I'd dine again ten scores of times upon a night like this. Read it, you blaying ass! I'm not insane. Here, Mamie," I continued, opening the bedroom door, "come out and make it up with me, and go and kiss your husband; and I'll tell you what, after the supper, let's go to some place where there's a band, and I'll waltz with you till sunrise."

"What does it all mean?" cried Jim.

"It means we have a champagne supper to-night, and all go to Napa Valley or to Monterey to-morrow," said I. "Mamie, go and get your things on; and you, Jim, sit down right where you are, take a sheet of paper, and tell Franklin Dodge to go to Texas. Mamie, you were right, my dear; I was rich all the time, and didn't know it."

CHAPTER XIX. TRAVELS WITH A SHYSTER.

The absorbing and disastrous adventure of the Flying Scud was now quite ended; we had dashed into these deep waters and we had escaped again to starve, we had been ruined and were saved, had quarrelled and made up; there remained nothing but to sing Te Deum, draw a line, and begin on a fresh page of my unwritten diary. I do not pretend that I recovered all I had lost with Mamie; it would have been more than I had merited; and I had certainly been more uncommunicative than became either the partner or the friend. But she accepted the position handsomely; and during the week that I now passed with them, both she and Jim had the grace to spare me questions. It was to Calistoga that we went; there was some rumour of a Napa land-boom at the moment, the possibility of stir attracted Jim, and he informed me he would find a certain joy in looking on, much as Napoleon on St. Helena took a pleasure to read military works. The field of his ambition was quite closed; he was done with action; and looked forward to a ranch in a mountain dingle, a patch of corn, a pair of kine, a leisurely and contemplative age in the green shade of forests. “Just let me get down on my back in a hayfield,” said he, “and you’ll find there’s no more snap to me than that much putty.”

And for two days the perfervid being actually rested. The third, he was observed in consultation with the local editor, and owned he was in two minds about purchasing the press and paper. “It’s a kind of a hold for an idle man,” he said, pleadingly; “and if the section was to open up the way it ought to, there might be dollars in the thing.” On the fourth day he was gone till dinner-time alone; on the fifth we made a long picnic drive to the fresh field of enterprise; and the sixth was passed entirely in the preparation of prospectuses. The pioneer of McBride City was already upright and self-reliant as of yore; the fire rekindled in his eye, the ring restored to his voice; a charger sniffing battle and saying ha-ha, among the spears. On the seventh morning we signed a deed of partnership, for Jim would not accept a dollar of my money otherwise; and having once more engaged myself — or that mortal part of me, my purse — among the wheels of his machinery, I returned alone to San Francisco and took quarters in the Palace Hotel.

The same night I had Nares to dinner. His sunburnt face, his queer and personal strain of talk, recalled days that were scarce over and that seemed already distant. Through the music of the band outside, and the chink and clatter of the dining-room, it seemed to me as if I heard the foaming of the surf and the voices of the sea-birds about Midway Island. The bruises on our hands were not yet healed; and there we sat, waited on by elaborate darkies, eating pompano and drinking iced champagne.

"Think of our dinners on the Norah, captain, and then oblige me by looking round the room for contrast."

He took the scene in slowly. "Yes, it is like a dream," he said: "like as if the darkies were really about as big as dimes; and a great big scuttle might open up there, and Johnson stick in a great big head and shoulders, and cry, 'Eight bells!' — and the whole thing vanish."

"Well, it's the other thing that has done that," I replied. "It's all bygone now, all dead and buried. Amen! say I."

"I don't know that, Mr. Dodd; and to tell you the fact, I don't believe it," said Nares. "There's more Flying Scud in the oven; and the baker's name, I take it, is Bellairs. He tackled me the day we came in: sort of a razee of poor old humanity — jury clothes — full new suit of pimples: knew him at once from your description. I let him pump me till I saw his game. He knows a good deal that we don't know, a good deal that we do, and suspects the balance. There's trouble brewing for somebody."

I was surprised I had not thought of this before. Bellairs had been behind the scenes; he had known Dickson; he knew the flight of the crew; it was hardly possible but what he should suspect; it was certain if he suspected, that he would seek to trade on the suspicion. And sure enough, I was not yet dressed the next morning ere the lawyer was knocking at my door. I let him in, for I was curious; and he, after some ambiguous prolegomena, roundly proposed I should go shares with him.

"Shares in what?" I inquired.

"If you will allow me to clothe my idea in a somewhat vulgar form," said he, "I might ask you, did you go to Midway for your health?"

"I don't know that I did," I replied.

"Similarly, Mr. Dodd, you may be sure I would never have taken the present step without influential grounds," pursued the lawyer. "Intrusion is foreign to my character. But you and I, sir, are engaged on the same ends. If we can continue to work the thing in company, I place at your disposal my knowledge of the law and a considerable practice in delicate negotiations similar to this. Should you refuse to consent, you might find in me a formidable and" — he hesitated — "and to my own regret, perhaps a dangerous competitor."

"Did you get this by heart?" I asked, genially.

"I advise YOU to!" he said, with a sudden sparkle of temper and menace, instantly gone, instantly succeeded by fresh cringing. "I assure you, sir, I arrive in the character of a friend; and I believe you underestimate my information. If I may instance an example, I am acquainted to the last dime with what you made (or rather lost), and I know you have since cashed a considerable draft on London."

“What do you infer?” I asked.

“I know where that draft came from,” he cried, wincing back like one who has greatly dared, and instantly regrets the venture.

“So?” said I.

“You forget I was Mr. Dickson’s confidential agent,” he explained. “You had his address, Mr. Dodd. We were the only two that he communicated with in San Francisco. You see my deductions are quite obvious: you see how open and frank I deal with you, as I should wish to do with any gentleman with whom I was conjoined in business. You see how much I know; and it can scarcely escape your strong common-sense, how much better it would be if I knew all. You cannot hope to get rid of me at this time of day, I have my place in the affair, I cannot be shaken off; I am, if you will excuse a rather technical pleasantry, an encumbrance on the estate. The actual harm I can do, I leave you to valuate for yourself. But without going so far, Mr. Dodd, and without in any way inconveniencing myself, I could make things very uncomfortable. For instance, Mr. Pinkerton’s liquidation. You and I know, sir — and you better than I — on what a large fund you draw. Is Mr. Pinkerton in the thing at all? It was you only who knew the address, and you were concealing it. Suppose I should communicate with Mr. Pinkerton — — ”

“Look here!” I interrupted, “communicate with him (if you will permit me to clothe my idea in a vulgar shape) till you are blue in the face. There is only one person with whom I refuse to allow you to communicate further, and that is myself. Good morning.”

He could not conceal his rage, disappointment, and surprise; and in the passage (I have no doubt) was shaken by St. Vitus.

I was disgusted by this interview; it struck me hard to be suspected on all hands, and to hear again from this trafficker what I had heard already from Jim’s wife; and yet my strongest impression was different and might rather be described as an impersonal fear. There was something against nature in the man’s craven impudence; it was as though a lamb had butted me; such daring at the hands of such a dastard, implied unchangeable resolve, a great pressure of necessity, and powerful means. I thought of the unknown Carthew, and it sickened me to see this ferret on his trail.

Upon inquiry I found the lawyer was but just disbarred for some malpractice; and the discovery added excessively to my disquiet. Here was a rascal without money or the means of making it, thrust out of the doors of his own trade, publicly shamed, and doubtless in a deuce of a bad temper with the universe. Here, on the other hand, was a man with a secret; rich, terrified, practically in hiding; who had been willing to pay ten thousand pounds for the bones of the Flying Scud. I slipped insensibly into a mental alliance with the victim; the business weighed on me; all day long, I was wondering how much the lawyer knew, how much he guessed, and when he would open his attack.

Some of these problems are unsolved to this day; others were soon made clear. Where he got Carthew's name is still a mystery; perhaps some sailor on the Tempest, perhaps my own sea-lawyer served him for a tool; but I was actually at his elbow when he learned the address. It fell so. One evening, when I had an engagement and was killing time until the hour, I chanced to walk in the court of the hotel while the band played. The place was bright as day with the electric light; and I recognised, at some distance among the loiterers, the person of Bellairs in talk with a gentleman whose face appeared familiar. It was certainly some one I had seen, and seen recently; but who or where, I knew not. A porter standing hard by, gave me the necessary hint. The stranger was an English navy man, invalided home from Honolulu, where he had left his ship; indeed, it was only from the change of clothes and the effects of sickness, that I had not immediately recognised my friend and correspondent, Lieutenant Sebright.

The conjunction of these planets seeming ominous, I drew near; but it seemed Bellairs had done his business; he vanished in the crowd, and I found my officer alone.

"Do you know whom you have been talking to, Mr. Sebright?" I began.

"No," said he; "I don't know him from Adam. Anything wrong?"

"He is a disreputable lawyer, recently disbarred," said I. "I wish I had seen you in time. I trust you told him nothing about Carthew?"

He flushed to his ears. "I'm awfully sorry," he said. "He seemed civil, and I wanted to get rid of him. It was only the address he asked."

"And you gave it?" I cried.

"I'm really awfully sorry," said Sebright. "I'm afraid I did."

"God forgive you!" was my only comment, and I turned my back upon the blunderer.

The fat was in the fire now: Bellairs had the address, and I was the more deceived or Carthew would have news of him. So strong was this impression, and so painful, that the next morning I had the curiosity to pay the lawyer's den a visit. An old woman was scrubbing the stair, and the board was down.

"Lawyer Bellairs?" said the old woman. "Gone East this morning. There's Lawyer Dean next block up."

I did not trouble Lawyer Dean, but walked slowly back to my hotel, ruminating as I went. The image of the old woman washing that desecrated stair had struck my fancy; it seemed that all the water-supply of the city and all the soap in the State would scarce suffice to cleanse it, it had been so long a clearing-house of dingy secrets and a factory of sordid fraud. And now the corner was untenanted; some judge, like a careful housewife, had knocked down the web, and the bloated spider was scuttling elsewhere after new victims. I had of late (as I have said) insensibly taken sides with Carthew; now when his enemy was at his heels, my interest grew more warm; and I began to wonder if I could not help. The drama of the Flying Scud was entering on a new phase. It had been singular from the first: it promised an extraordinary conclusion; and I, who had paid so much to learn the beginning, might pay a little more and see the end. I lingered in San Francisco, indemnifying myself after the hardships of the cruise, spending money, regretting it, continually promising departure for the morrow. Why not go indeed, and keep a watch upon Bellairs? If I missed him, there was no harm done, I was the nearer Paris. If I found and kept his trail, it was hard if I could not put some stick in his machinery, and at the worst I could promise myself interesting scenes and revelations.

In such a mixed humour, I made up what it pleases me to call my mind, and once more involved myself in the story of Carthew and the Flying Scud. The same night I wrote a letter of farewell to Jim, and one of anxious warning to Dr. Urquart begging him to set Carthew on his guard; the morrow saw me in the ferry-boat; and ten days later, I was walking the hurricane deck on the City of Denver. By that time my mind was pretty much made down again, its natural condition: I told myself that I was bound for Paris or Fontainebleau to resume the study of the arts; and I thought no more of Carthew or Bellairs, or only to smile at my own fondness. The one I could not serve, even if I wanted; the other I had no means of finding, even if I could have at all influenced him after he was found.

And for all that, I was close on the heels of an absurd adventure. My neighbour at table that evening was a 'Frisco man whom I knew slightly. I found he had crossed the plains two days in front of me, and this was the first steamer that had left New York for Europe since his arrival. Two days before me meant a day before Bellairs; and dinner was scarce done before I was closeted with the purser.

“Bellairs?” he repeated. “Not in the saloon, I am sure. He may be in the second class. The lists are not made out, but — Hullo! ‘Harry D. Bellairs?’ That the name? He’s there right enough.”

And the next morning I saw him on the forward deck, sitting in a chair, a book in his hand, a shabby puma skin rug about his knees: the picture of respectable decay. Off and on, I kept him in my eye. He read a good deal, he stood and looked upon the sea, he talked occasionally with his neighbours, and once when a child fell he picked it up and soothed it. I damned him in my heart; the book, which I was sure he did not read — the sea, to which I was ready to take oath he was indifferent — the child, whom I was certain he would as lieve have tossed overboard — all seemed to me elements in a theatrical performance; and I made no doubt he was already nosing after the secrets of his fellow-passengers. I took no pains to conceal myself, my scorn for the creature being as strong as my disgust. But he never looked my way, and it was night before I learned he had observed me.

I was smoking by the engine-room door, for the air was a little sharp, when a voice rose close beside me in the darkness.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Dodd," it said.

"That you, Bellairs?" I replied.

"A single word, sir. Your presence on this ship has no connection with our interview?" he asked. "You have no idea, Mr. Dodd, of returning upon your determination?"

"None," said I; and then, seeing he still lingered, I was polite enough to add "Good evening;" at which he sighed and went away.

The next day, he was there again with the chair and the puma skin; read his book and looked at the sea with the same constancy; and though there was no child to be picked up, I observed him to attend repeatedly on a sick woman. Nothing fosters suspicion like the act of watching; a man spied upon can hardly blow his nose but we accuse him of designs; and I took an early opportunity to go forward and see the woman for myself. She was poor, elderly, and painfully plain; I stood abashed at the sight, felt I owed Bellairs amends for the injustice of my thoughts, and seeing him standing by the rail in his usual attitude of contemplation, walked up and addressed him by name.

"You seem very fond of the sea," said I.

"I may really call it a passion, Mr. Dodd," he replied. "And the tall cataract haunted me like a passion," he quoted. "I never weary of the sea, sir. This is my first ocean voyage. I find it a glorious experience." And once more my disbarred lawyer dropped into poetry: "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!"

Though I had learned the piece in my reading-book at school, I came into the world a little too late on the one hand — and I daresay a little too early on the other — to think much of Byron; and the sonorous verse, prodigiously well delivered, struck me with surprise.

"You are fond of poetry, too?" I asked.

"I am a great reader," he replied. "At one time I had begun to amass quite a small but well selected library; and when that was scattered, I still managed to preserve a few volumes — chiefly of pieces designed for recitation — which have been my travelling companions."

"Is that one of them?" I asked, pointing to the volume in his hand.

"No, sir," he replied, showing me a translation of the *Sorrows of Werther*, "that is a novel I picked up some time ago. It has afforded me great pleasure, though immoral."

"O, immoral!" cried I, indignant as usual at any complication of art and ethics.

"Surely you cannot deny that, sir — if you know the book," he said. "The passion is illicit, although certainly drawn with a good deal of pathos. It is not a work one could possibly put into the hands of a lady; which is to be regretted on all accounts, for I do not know how it may strike you; but it seems to me — as a depiction, if I make myself clear — to rise high above its compeers — even famous compeers. Even in Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, or Hawthorne, the sentiment of love appears to me to be frequently done less justice to."

"You are expressing a very general opinion," said I.

"Is that so, indeed, sir?" he exclaimed, with unmistakable excitement. "Is the book well known? and who was GO-EATH? I am interested in that, because upon the title-page the usual initials are omitted, and it runs simply 'by GO-EATH.' Was he an author of distinction? Has he written other works?"

Such was our first interview, the first of many; and in all he showed the same attractive qualities and defects. His taste for literature was native and unaffected; his sentimentality, although extreme and a thought ridiculous, was plainly genuine. I wondered at my own innocent wonder. I knew that Homer nodded, that Caesar had compiled a jest-book, that Turner lived by preference the life of Puggy Booth, that Shelley made paper boats, and Wordsworth wore green spectacles! and with all this mass of evidence before me, I had expected Bellairs to be entirely of one piece, subdued to what he worked in, a spy all through. As I abominated the man's trade, so I had expected to detest the man himself; and behold, I liked him. Poor devil! he was essentially a man on wires, all sensibility and tremor, brimful of a cheap poetry, not without parts, quite without courage. His boldness was despair; the gulf behind him thrust him on; he was one of those who might commit a murder rather than confess the theft of a postage-stamp. I was sure that his coming interview with Carthew rode his imagination like a nightmare; when the thought crossed his mind, I used to think I knew of it, and that the qualm appeared in his face visibly. Yet he would never flinch: necessity stalking at his back, famine (his old pursuer) talking in his ear; and I used to wonder whether I most admired, or most despised, this quivering heroism for evil. The image that occurred to me after his visit was just; I had been butted by a lamb; and the phase of life that I was now studying might be called the Revolt of a Sheep.

It could be said of him that he had learned in sorrow what he taught in song — or wrong; and his life was that of one of his victims. He was born in the back parts of the State of New York; his father a farmer, who became subsequently bankrupt and went West. The lawyer and money-lender who had ruined this poor family seems to have conceived in the end a feeling of remorse; he turned the father out indeed, but he offered, in compensation, to charge himself with one of the sons: and Harry, the fifth child and already sickly, was chosen to be left behind. He made himself useful in the office; picked up the scattered rudiments of an education; read right and left; attended and debated at the Young Men's Christian Association; and in all his early years, was the model for a good story-book. His landlady's daughter was his bane. He showed me her photograph; she was a big, handsome, dashing, dressy, vulgar hussy, without character, without tenderness, without mind, and (as the result proved) without virtue. The sickly and timid boy was in the house; he was handy; when she was otherwise unoccupied, she used and played with him: Romeo and Cressida; till in that dreary life of a poor boy in a country town, she grew to be the light of his days and the subject of his dreams. He worked hard, like Jacob, for a wife; he surpassed his patron in sharp practice; he was made head clerk; and the same night, encouraged by a hundred freedoms, depressed by the sense of his youth and his infirmities, he offered marriage and was received with laughter. Not a year had passed, before his master, conscious of growing infirmities, took him for a partner; he proposed again; he was accepted; led two years of troubled married life; and awoke one morning to find his wife had run away with a dashing drummer, and had left him heavily in debt. The debt, and not the drummer, was supposed to be the cause of the hegira; she had concealed her liabilities, they were on the point of bursting forth, she was weary of Bellairs; and she took the drummer as she might have taken a cab. The blow disabled her husband, his partner was dead; he was now alone in the business, for which he was no longer fit; the debts hampered him; bankruptcy followed; and he fled from city to city, falling daily into lower practice. It is to be considered that he had been taught, and had learned as a delightful duty, a kind of business whose highest merit is to escape the commentaries of the bench: that of the usurious lawyer in a county town. With this training, he was now shot, a penniless stranger, into the deeper gulfs of cities; and the result is scarce a thing to be surprised at.

"Have you heard of your wife again?" I asked.

He displayed a pitiful agitation. "I am afraid you will think ill of me," he said.

"Have you taken her back?" I asked.

"No, sir. I trust I have too much self-respect," he answered, "and, at least, I was never tempted. She won't come, she dislikes, she seems to have conceived a positive distaste for me, and yet I was considered an indulgent husband."

"You are still in relations, then?" I asked.

"I place myself in your hands, Mr. Dodd," he replied. "The world is very hard; I have found it bitter hard myself — bitter hard to live. How much worse for a woman, and one who has placed herself (by her own misconduct, I am far from denying that) in so unfortunate a position!"

"In short, you support her?" I suggested.

"I cannot deny it. I practically do," he admitted. "It has been a millstone round my neck. But I think she is grateful. You can see for yourself."

He handed me a letter in a sprawling, ignorant hand, but written with violet ink on fine, pink paper with a monogram. It was very foolishly expressed, and I thought (except for a few obvious cajoleries) very heartless and greedy in meaning. The writer said she had been sick, which I disbelieved; declared the last remittance was all gone in doctor's bills, for which I took the liberty of substituting dress, drink, and monograms; and prayed for an increase, which I could only hope had been denied her.

"I think she is really grateful?" he asked, with some eagerness, as I returned it.

"I daresay," said I. "Has she any claim on you?"

"O no, sir. I divorced her," he replied. "I have a very strong sense of self-respect in such matters, and I divorced her immediately."

"What sort of life is she leading now?" I asked.

"I will not deceive you, Mr. Dodd. I do not know, I make a point of not knowing; it appears more dignified. I have been very harshly criticised," he added, sighing.

It will be seen that I had fallen into an ignominious intimacy with the man I had gone out to thwart. My pity for the creature, his admiration for myself, his pleasure in my society, which was clearly unassumed, were the bonds with which I was fettered; perhaps I should add, in honesty, my own ill-regulated interest in the phases of life and human character. The fact is (at least) that we spent hours together daily, and that I was nearly as much on the forward deck as in the saloon. Yet all the while I could never forget he was a shabby trickster, embarked that very moment in a dirty enterprise. I used to tell myself at first that our acquaintance was a stroke of art, and that I was somehow fortifying Carthew. I told myself, I say; but I was no such fool as to believe it, even then. In these circumstances I displayed the two chief qualities of my character on the largest scale — my helplessness and my instinctive love of procrastination — and fell upon a course of action so ridiculous that I blush when I recall it.

We reached Liverpool one forenoon, the rain falling thickly and insidiously on the filthy town. I had no plans, beyond a sensible unwillingness to let my rascal escape; and I ended by going to the same inn with him, dining with him, walking with him in the wet streets, and hearing with him in a penny gaff that venerable piece, *The Ticket-of-Leave Man*. It was one of his first visits to a theatre, against which places of entertainment he had a strong prejudice; and his innocent, pompous talk, innocent old quotations, and innocent reverence for the character of Hawkshaw delighted me beyond relief. In charity to myself, I dwell upon and perhaps exaggerate my pleasures. I have need of all conceivable excuses, when I confess that I went to bed without one word upon the matter of Carthew, but not without having covenanted with my rascal for a visit to Chester the next day. At Chester we did the Cathedral, walked on the walls, discussed Shakespeare and the musical glasses — and made a fresh engagement for the morrow. I do not know, and I am glad to have forgotten, how long these travels were continued. We visited at least, by singular zigzags, Stratford, Warwick, Coventry, Gloucester, Bristol, Bath, and Wells. At each stage we spoke dutifully of the scene and its associations; I sketched, the Shyster spouted poetry and copied epitaphs. Who could doubt we were the usual Americans, travelling with a design of self-improvement? Who was to guess that one was a blackmailer, trembling to approach the scene of action — the other a helpless, amateur detective, waiting on events?

It is unnecessary to remark that none occurred, or none the least suitable with my design of protecting Carthew. Two trifles, indeed, completed though they scarcely changed my conception of the Shyster. The first was observed in Gloucester, where we spent Sunday, and I proposed we should hear service in the cathedral. To my surprise, the creature had an ISM of his own, to which he was loyal; and he left me to go alone to the cathedral — or perhaps not to go at all — and stole off down a deserted alley to some Bethel or Ebenezer of the proper shade. When we met again at lunch, I rallied him, and he grew restive.

“You need employ no circumlocutions with me, Mr. Dodd,” he said suddenly. “You regard my behaviour from an unfavourable point of view: you regard me, I much fear, as hypocritical.”

I was somewhat confused by the attack. “You know what I think of your trade,” I replied, lamely and coarsely.

“Excuse me, if I seem to press the subject,” he continued, “but if you think my life erroneous, would you have me neglect the means of grace? Because you consider me in the wrong on one point, would you have me place myself on the wrong in all? Surely, sir, the church is for the sinner.”

“Did you ask a blessing on your present enterprise?” I sneered.

He had a bad attack of St. Vitus, his face was changed, and his eyes flashed. “I will tell you what I did!” he cried. “I prayed for an unfortunate man and a wretched woman whom he tries to support.”

I cannot pretend that I found any repartee.

The second incident was at Bristol, where I lost sight of my gentleman some hours. From this eclipse, he returned to me with thick speech, wandering footsteps, and a back all whitened with plaster. I had half expected, yet I could have wept to see it. All disabilities were piled on that weak back — domestic misfortune, nervous disease, a displeasing exterior, empty pockets, and the slavery of vice.

I will never deny that our prolonged conjunction was the result of double cowardice. Each was afraid to leave the other, each was afraid to speak, or knew not what to say. Save for my ill-judged allusion at Gloucester, the subject uppermost in both our minds was buried. Carthew, Stallbridge-le-Carthew, Stallbridge-Minster — which we had long since (and severally) identified to be the nearest station — even the name of Dorsetshire was studiously avoided. And yet we were making progress all the time, tacking across broad England like an unweatherly vessel on a wind; approaching our destination, not openly, but by a sort of flying sap. And at length, I can scarce tell how, we were set down by a dilatory butt-end of local train on the untenanted platform of Stallbridge-Minster.

The town was ancient and compact: a domino of tiled houses and walled gardens, dwarfed by the disproportionate bigness of the church. From the midst of the thoroughfare which divided it in half, fields and trees were visible at either end; and through the sally-port of every street, there flowed in from the country a silent invasion of green grass. Bees and birds appeared to make the majority of the inhabitants; every garden had its row of hives, the eaves of every house were plastered with the nests of swallows, and the pinnacles of the church were flickered about all day long by a multitude of wings. The town was of Roman foundation; and as I looked out that afternoon from the low windows of the inn, I should scarce have been surprised to see a centurion coming up the street with a fatigue draft of legionaries. In short, Stallbridge-Minster was one of those towns which appear to be maintained by England for the instruction and delight of the American rambler; to which he seems guided by an instinct not less surprising than the setter’s; and which he visits and quits with equal enthusiasm.

I was not at all in the humour of the tourist. I had wasted weeks of time and accomplished nothing; we were on the eve of the engagement, and I had neither plans nor allies. I had thrust myself into the trade of private providence and amateur detective; I was spending money and I was reaping disgrace. All the time, I kept telling myself that I must at least speak; that this ignominious silence should have been broken long ago, and must be broken now. I should have broken it when he first proposed to come to Stallbridge-Minster; I should have broken it in the train; I should break it there and then, on the inn doorstep, as the omnibus rolled off. I turned toward him at the thought; he seemed to wince, the words died on my lips, and I proposed instead that we should visit the Minster.

While we were engaged upon this duty, it came on to rain in a manner worthy of the tropics. The vault reverberated; every gargoyle instantly poured its full discharge; we waded back to the inn, ankle-deep in impromptu brooks; and the rest of the afternoon sat weatherbound, hearkening to the sonorous deluge. For two hours I talked of indifferent matters, laboriously feeding the conversation; for two hours my mind was quite made up to do my duty instantly — and at each particular instant I postponed it till the next. To screw up my faltering courage, I called at dinner for some sparkling wine. It proved when it came to be detestable; I could not put it to my lips; and Bellairs, who had as much palate as a weevil, was left to finish it himself. Doubtless the wine flushed him; doubtless he may have observed my embarrassment of the afternoon; doubtless he was conscious that we were approaching a crisis, and that that evening, if I did not join with him, I must declare myself an open enemy. At least he fled. Dinner was done; this was the time when I had bound myself to break my silence; no more delays were to be allowed, no more excuses received. I went upstairs after some tobacco; which I felt to be a mere necessity in the circumstances; and when I returned, the man was gone. The waiter told me he had left the house.

The rain still plumped, like a vast shower-bath, over the deserted town. The night was dark and windless: the street lit glimmeringly from end to end, lamps, house windows, and the reflections in the rain-pools all contributing. From a public-house on the other side of the way, I heard a harp twang and a doleful voice upraised in the “Larboard Watch,” “The Anchor’s Weighed,” and other naval ditties. Where had my Shyster wandered? In all likelihood to that lyrical tavern; there was no choice of diversion; in comparison with Stallbridge-Minster on a rainy night, a sheepfold would seem gay.

Again I passed in review the points of my interview, on which I was always constantly resolved so long as my adversary was absent from the scene: and again they struck me as inadequate. From this dispiriting exercise I turned to the native amusements of the inn coffee-room, and studied for some time the mezzotints that frowned upon the wall. The railway guide, after showing me how soon I could leave Stallbridge and how quickly I could reach Paris, failed to hold my attention. An illustrated advertisement book of hotels brought me very low indeed; and when it came to the local paper, I could have wept. At this point, I found a passing solace in a copy of Whittaker's Almanac, and obtained in fifty minutes more information than I have yet been able to use.

Then a fresh apprehension assailed me. Suppose Bellairs had given me the slip? suppose he was now rolling on the road to Stallbridge-le-Carthew? or perhaps there already and laying before a very white-faced auditor his threats and propositions? A hasty person might have instantly pursued. Whatever I am, I am not hasty, and I was aware of three grave objections. In the first place, I could not be certain that Bellairs was gone. In the second, I had no taste whatever for a long drive at that hour of the night and in so merciless a rain. In the third, I had no idea how I was to get admitted if I went, and no idea what I should say if I got admitted. "In short," I concluded, "the whole situation is the merest farce. You have thrust yourself in where you had no business and have no power. You would be quite as useful in San Francisco; far happier in Paris; and being (by the wrath of God) at Stallbridge-Minster, the wisest thing is to go quietly to bed." On the way to my room, I saw (in a flash) that which I ought to have done long ago, and which it was now too late to think of — written to Carthew, I mean, detailing the facts and describing Bellairs, letting him defend himself if he were able, and giving him time to flee if he were not. It was the last blow to my self-respect; and I flung myself into my bed with contumely.

I have no guess what hour it was, when I was wakened by the entrance of Bellairs carrying a candle. He had been drunk, for he was bedaubed with mire from head to foot; but he was now sober and under the empire of some violent emotion which he controlled with difficulty. He trembled visibly; and more than once, during the interview which followed, tears suddenly and silently overflowed his cheeks.

"I have to ask your pardon, sir, for this untimely visit," he said. "I make no defence, I have no excuse, I have disgraced myself, I am properly punished; I appear before you to appeal to you in mercy for the most trifling aid or, God help me! I fear I may go mad."

"What on earth is wrong?" I asked.

"I have been robbed," he said. "I have no defence to offer; it was of my own fault, I am properly punished."

"But, gracious goodness me!" I cried, "who is there to rob you in a place like this?"

"I can form no opinion," he replied. "I have no idea. I was lying in a ditch inanimate. This is a degrading confession, sir; I can only say in self-defence that perhaps (in your good nature) you have made yourself partly responsible for my shame. I am not used to these rich wines."

"In what form was your money? Perhaps it may be traced," I suggested.

"It was in English sovereigns. I changed it in New York; I got very good exchange," he said, and then, with a momentary outbreak, "God in heaven, how I toiled for it!" he cried.

"That doesn't sound encouraging," said I. "It may be worth while to apply to the police, but it doesn't sound a hopeful case."

"And I have no hope in that direction," said Bellairs. "My hopes, Mr. Dodd, are all fixed upon yourself. I could easily convince you that a small, a very small advance, would be in the nature of an excellent investment; but I prefer to rely on your humanity. Our acquaintance began on an unusual footing; but you have now known me for some time, we have been some time — I was going to say we had been almost intimate. Under the impulse of instinctive sympathy, I have bared my heart to you, Mr. Dodd, as I have done to few; and I believe — I trust — I may say that I feel sure — you heard me with a kindly sentiment. This is what brings me to your side at this most inexcusable hour. But put yourself in my place — how could I sleep — how could I dream of sleeping, in this blackness of remorse and despair? There was a friend at hand — so I ventured to think of you; it was instinctive; I fled to your side, as the drowning man clutches at a straw. These expressions are not exaggerated, they scarcely serve to express the agitation of my mind. And think, sir, how easily you can restore me to hope and, I may say, to reason. A small loan, which shall be faithfully repaid. Five hundred dollars would be ample." He watched me with burning eyes. "Four hundred would do. I believe, Mr. Dodd, that I could manage with economy on two."

"And then you will repay me out of Carthew's pocket?" I said. "I am much obliged. But I will tell you what I will do: I will see you on board a steamer, pay your fare through to San Francisco, and place fifty dollars in the purser's hands, to be given you in New York."

He drank in my words; his face represented an ecstasy of cunning thought. I could read there, plain as print, that he but thought to overreach me.

"And what am I to do in 'Frisco?" he asked. "I am disbarred, I have no trade, I cannot dig, to beg — — " he paused in the citation. "And you know that I am not alone," he added, "others depend upon me."

"I will write to Pinkerton," I returned. "I feel sure he can help you to some employment, and in the meantime, and for three months after your arrival, he shall pay to yourself personally, on the first and the fifteenth, twenty-five dollars."

"Mr. Dodd, I scarce believe you can be serious in this offer," he replied. "Have you forgotten the circumstances of the case? Do you know these people are the magnates of the section? They were spoken of to-night in the saloon; their wealth must amount to many millions of dollars in real estate alone; their house is one of the sights of the locality, and you offer me a bribe of a few hundred!"

"I offer you no bribe, Mr. Bellairs, I give you alms," I returned. "I will do nothing to forward you in your hateful business; yet I would not willingly have you starve."

"Give me a hundred dollars then, and be done with it," he cried.

"I will do what I have said, and neither more nor less," said I.

"Take care," he cried. "You are playing a fool's game; you are making an enemy for nothing; you will gain nothing by this, I warn you of it!" And then with one of his changes, "Seventy dollars — only seventy — in mercy, Mr. Dodd, in common charity. Don't dash the bowl from my lips! You have a kindly heart. Think of my position, remember my unhappy wife."

"You should have thought of her before," said I. "I have made my offer, and I wish to sleep."

"Is that your last word, sir? Pray consider; pray weigh both sides: my misery, your own danger. I warn you — I beseech you; measure it well before you answer," so he half pleaded, half threatened me, with clasped hands.

"My first word, and my last," said I.

The change upon the man was shocking. In the storm of anger that now shook him, the lees of his intoxication rose again to the surface; his face was deformed, his words insane with fury; his pantomime excessive in itself, was distorted by an access of St. Vitus.

"You will perhaps allow me to inform you of my cold opinion," he began, apparently self-possessed, truly bursting with rage: "when I am a glorified saint, I shall see you howling for a drop of water and exult to see you. That your last word! Take it in your face, you spy, you false friend, you fat hypocrite! I defy, I defy and despise and spit upon you! I'm on the trail, his trail or yours, I smell blood, I'll follow it on my hands and knees, I'll starve to follow it! I'll hunt you down, hunt you, hunt you down! If I were strong, I'd tear your vitals out, here in this room — tear them out — I'd tear them out! Damn, damn, damn! You think me weak! I can bite, bite to the blood, bite you, hurt you, disgrace you ..."

He was thus incoherently raging, when the scene was interrupted by the arrival of the landlord and inn servants in various degrees of deshabille, and to them I gave my temporary lunatic in charge.

"Take him to his room," I said, "he's only drunk."

These were my words; but I knew better. After all my study of Mr. Bellairs, one discovery had been reserved for the last moment: that of his latent and essential madness.

CHAPTER XX. STALLBRIDGE-LE-CARTHEW.

Long before I was awake, the shyster had disappeared, leaving his bill unpaid. I did not need to inquire where he was gone, I knew too well, I knew there was nothing left me but to follow; and about ten in the morning, set forth in a gig for Stallbridge-le-Carthew.

The road, for the first quarter of the way, deserts the valley of the river, and crosses the summit of a chalk-down, grazed over by flocks of sheep and haunted by innumerable larks. It was a pleasant but a vacant scene, arousing but not holding the attention; and my mind returned to the violent passage of the night before. My thought of the man I was pursuing had been greatly changed. I conceived of him, somewhere in front of me, upon his dangerous errand, not to be turned aside, not to be stopped, by either fear or reason. I had called him a ferret; I conceived him now as a mad dog. Methought he would run, not walk; methought, as he ran, that he would bark and froth at the lips; methought, if the great wall of China were to rise across his path, he would attack it with his nails.

Presently the road left the down, returned by a precipitous descent into the valley of the Stall, and ran thenceforward among enclosed fields and under the continuous shade of trees. I was told we had now entered on the Carthew property. By and by, a battlemented wall appeared on the left hand, and a little after I had my first glimpse of the mansion. It stood in a hollow of a bosky park, crowded to a degree that surprised and even displeased me, with huge timber and dense shrubberies of laurel and rhododendron. Even from this low station and the thronging neighbourhood of the trees, the pile rose conspicuous like a cathedral. Behind, as we continued to skirt the park wall, I began to make out a straggling town of offices which became conjoined to the rear with those of the home farm. On the left was an ornamental water sailed in by many swans. On the right extended a flower garden, laid in the old manner, and at this season of the year, as brilliant as stained glass. The front of the house presented a facade of more than sixty windows, surmounted by a formal pediment and raised upon a terrace. A wide avenue, part in gravel, part in turf, and bordered by triple alleys, ran to the great double gateways. It was impossible to look without surprise on a place that had been prepared through so many generations, had cost so many tons of minted gold, and was maintained in order by so great a company of emulous servants. And yet of these there was no sign but the perfection of their work. The whole domain was drawn to the line and weeded like the front plot of some suburban amateur; and I looked in vain for any belated gardener, and listened in vain for any sounds of labour. Some lowing of cattle and much calling of birds alone disturbed the stillness, and even the little hamlet, which clustered at the gates, appeared to hold its breath in awe of its great neighbour, like a troop of children who should have strayed into a king's anteroom.

The Carthew Arms, the small but very comfortable inn, was a mere appendage and outpost of the family whose name it bore. Engraved portraits of by-gone Carthews adorned the walls; Fielding Carthew, Recorder of the city of London; Major-General John Carthew in uniform, commanding some military operations; the Right Honourable Bailley Carthew, Member of Parliament for Stallbridge, standing by a table and brandishing a document; Singleton Carthew, Esquire, represented in the foreground of a herd of cattle — doubtless at the desire of his tenantry, who had made him a compliment of this work of art; and the Venerable Archdeacon Carthew, D.D., LL.D., A.M., laying his hand on the head of a little child in a manner highly frigid and ridiculous. So far as my memory serves me, there were no other pictures in this exclusive hostelry; and I was not surprised to learn that the landlord was an ex-butler, the landlady an ex-lady's-maid, from the great house; and that the bar-parlour was a sort of perquisite of former servants.

To an American, the sense of the domination of this family over so considerable a tract of earth was even oppressive; and as I considered their simple annals, gathered from the legends of the engravings, surprise began to mingle with my disgust. "Mr. Recorder" doubtless occupies an honourable post; but I thought that, in the course of so many generations, one Carthew might have clambered higher. The soldier had stuck at Major-General; the churchman bloomed unremarked in an archidiaconate; and though the Right Honourable Bailley seemed to have sneaked into the privy council, I have still to learn what he did when he had got there. Such vast means, so long a start, and such a modest standard of achievement, struck in me a strong sense of the dulness of that race.

I found that to come to the hamlet and not visit the Hall, would be regarded as a slight. To feed the swans, to see the peacocks and the Raphaels — for these commonplace people actually possessed two Raphaels — to risk life and limb among a famous breed of cattle called the Carthew Chillinghams, and to do homage to the sire (still living) of Donibristle, a renowned winner of the oaks: these, it seemed, were the inevitable stations of the pilgrimage. I was not so foolish as to resist, for I might have need before I was done of general good-will; and two pieces of news fell in which changed my resignation to alacrity. It appeared in the first place, that Mr. Norris was from home "travelling "; in the second, that a visitor had been before me and already made the tour of the Carthew curiosities. I thought I knew who this must be; I was anxious to learn what he had done and seen; and fortune so far favoured me that the under-gardener singled out to be my guide had already performed the same function for my predecessor.

"Yes, sir," he said, "an American gentleman right enough. At least, I don't think he was quite a gentleman, but a very civil person."

The person, it seems, had been civil enough to be delighted with the Carthew Chillinghams, to perform the whole pilgrimage with rising admiration, and to have almost prostrated himself before the shrine of Donibristle's sire.

"He told me, sir," continued the gratified under-gardener, "that he had often read of the 'stately 'omes of England,' but ours was the first he had the chance to see. When he came to the 'ead of the long alley, he fetched his breath. 'This is indeed a lordly domain!' he cries. And it was natural he should be interested in the place, for it seems Mr. Carthew had been kind to him in the States. In fact, he seemed a grateful kind of person, and wonderful taken up with flowers."

I heard this story with amazement. The phrases quoted told their own tale; they were plainly from the shyster's mint. A few hours back I had seen him a mere bedlamite and fit for a strait-waistcoat; he was penniless in a strange country; it was highly probable he had gone without breakfast; the absence of Norris must have been a crushing blow; the man (by all reason) should have been despairing. And now I heard of him, clothed and in his right mind, deliberate, insinuating, admiring vistas, smelling flowers, and talking like a book. The strength of character implied amazed and daunted me.

"This is curious," I said to the under-gardener. "I have had the pleasure of some acquaintance with Mr. Carthew myself; and I believe none of our western friends ever were in England. Who can this person be? He couldn't — no, that's impossible, he could never have had the impudence. His name was not Bellairs?"

"I didn't 'ear the name, sir. Do you know anything against him?" cried my guide.

"Well," said I, "he is certainly not the person Carthew would like to have here in his absence."

"Good gracious me!" exclaimed the gardener. "He was so pleasant spoken, too; I thought he was some form of a schoolmaster. Perhaps, sir, you wouldn't mind going right up to Mr. Denman? I recommended him to Mr. Denman, when he had done the grounds. Mr. Denman is our butler, sir," he added.

The proposal was welcome, particularly as affording me a graceful retreat from the neighbourhood of the Carthew Chillinghams; and, giving up our projected circuit, we took a short cut through the shrubbery and across the bowling green to the back quarters of the

Hall.

The bowling green was surrounded by a great hedge of yew, and entered by an archway in the quick. As we were issuing from this passage, my conductor arrested me.

“The Honourable Lady Ann Carthew,” he said, in an august whisper. And looking over his shoulder, I was aware of an old lady with a stick, hobbling somewhat briskly along the garden path. She must have been extremely handsome in her youth; and even the limp with which she walked could not deprive her of an unusual and almost menacing dignity of bearing. Melancholy was impressed besides on every feature, and her eyes, as she looked straight before her, seemed to contemplate misfortune.

“She seems sad,” said I, when she had hobbled past and we had resumed our walk.

“She enjoy rather poor spirits, sir,” responded the under-gardener. “Mr. Carthew — the old gentleman, I mean — died less than a year ago; Lord Tillibody, her ladyship’s brother, two months after; and then there was the sad business about the young gentleman. Killed in the ‘unting-field, sir; and her ladyship’s favourite. The present Mr. Norris has never been so equally.”

“So I have understood,” said I, persistently, and (I think) gracefully pursuing my inquiries and fortifying my position as a family friend. “Dear, dear, how sad! And has this change — poor Carthew’s return, and all — has this not mended matters?”

“Well, no, sir, not a sign of it,” was the reply. “Worse, we think, than ever.”

“Dear, dear!” said I again.

“When Mr. Norris arrived, she DID seem glad to see him,” he pursued; “and we were all pleased, I’m sure; for no one knows the young gentleman but what likes him. Ah, sir, it didn’t last long! That very night they had a talk, and fell out or something; her ladyship took on most painful; it was like old days, but worse. And the next morning Mr. Norris was off again upon his travels. ‘Denman,’ he said to Mr. Denman, ‘Denman, I’ll never come back,’ he said, and shook him by the ‘and. I wouldn’t be saying all this to a stranger, sir,” added my informant, overcome with a sudden fear lest he had gone too far.

He had indeed told me much, and much that was unsuspected by himself. On that stormy night of his return, Carthew had told his story; the old lady had more upon her mind than mere bereavements; and among the mental pictures on which she looked, as she walked staring down the path, was one of Midway Island and the Flying Scud.

Mr. Denman heard my inquiries with discomposure, but informed me the shyster was already gone.

“Gone?” cried I. “Then what can he have come for? One thing I can tell you, it was not to see the house."

"I don't see it could have been anything else," replied the butler.

"You may depend upon it it was," said I. "And whatever it was, he has got it. By the way, where is Mr. Carthew at present? I was sorry to find he was from home."

"He is engaged in travelling, sir," replied the butler, dryly.

"Ah, bravo!" cried I. "I laid a trap for you there, Mr. Denman. Now I need not ask you; I am sure you did not tell this prying stranger."

"To be sure not, sir," said the butler.

I went through the form of "shaking him by the 'and" — like Mr. Norris — not, however, with genuine enthusiasm. For I had failed ingloriously to get the address for myself; and I felt a sure conviction that Bellairs had done better, or he had still been here and still cultivating Mr. Denman.

I had escaped the grounds and the cattle; I could not escape the house. A lady with silver hair, a slender silver voice, and a stream of insignificant information not to be diverted, led me through the picture gallery, the music-room, the great dining-room, the long drawing-room, the Indian room, the theatre, and every corner (as I thought) of that interminable mansion. There was but one place reserved; the garden-room, whither Lady Ann had now retired. I paused a moment on the outside of the door, and smiled to myself. The situation was indeed strange, and these thin boards divided the secret of the Flying Scud.

All the while, as I went to and fro, I was considering the visit and departure of Bellairs. That he had got the address, I was quite certain: that he had not got it by direct questioning, I was convinced; some ingenuity, some lucky accident, had served him. A similar chance, an equal ingenuity, was required; or I was left helpless, the ferret must run down his prey, the great oaks fall, the Raphaels be scattered, the house let to some stockbroker suddenly made rich, and the name which now filled the mouths of five or six parishes dwindle to a memory. Strange that such great matters, so old a mansion, a family so ancient and so dull, should come to depend for perpetuity upon the intelligence, the discretion, and the cunning of a Latin-Quarter student! What Bellairs had done, I must do likewise. Chance or ingenuity, ingenuity or chance — so I continued to ring the changes as I walked down the avenue, casting back occasional glances at the red brick facade and the twinkling windows of the house. How was I to command chance? where was I to find the ingenuity?

These reflections brought me to the door of the inn. And here, pursuant to my policy of keeping well with all men, I immediately smoothed my brow, and accepted (being the only guest in the house) an invitation to dine with the family in the bar-parlour. I sat down accordingly with Mr. Higgs the ex-butler, Mrs. Higgs the ex-lady's-maid, and Miss Agnes Higgs their frowsy-headed little girl, the least promising and (as the event showed) the most useful of the lot. The talk ran endlessly on the great house and the great family; the roast beef, the Yorkshire pudding, the jam-roll, and the cheddar cheese came and went, and still the stream flowed on; near four generations of Carthews were touched upon without eliciting one point of interest; and we had killed Mr. Henry in "the 'unting-field," with a vast elaboration of painful circumstance, and buried him in the midst of a whole sorrowing county, before I could so much as manage to bring upon the stage my intimate friend, Mr. Norris. At the name, the ex-butler grew diplomatic, and the ex-lady's-maid tender. He was the only person of the whole featureless series who seemed to have accomplished anything worth mention; and his achievements, poor dog, seemed to have been confined to going to the devil and leaving some regrets. He had been the image of the Right Honourable Bailley, one of the lights of that dim house, and a career of distinction had been predicted of him in consequence almost from the cradle. But before he was out of long clothes, the cloven foot began to show; he proved to be no Carthew, developed a taste for low pleasures and bad company, went birdnesting with a stable-boy before he was eleven, and when he was near twenty, and might have been expected to display at least some rudiments of the family gravity, rambled the country over with a knapsack, making sketches and keeping company in wayside inns. He had no pride about him, I was told; he would sit down with any man; and it was somewhat woundingly implied that I was indebted to this peculiarity for my own acquaintance with the hero. Unhappily, Mr. Norris was not only eccentric, he was fast. His debts were still remembered at the University; still more, it appeared, the highly humorous circumstances attending his expulsion. "He was always fond of his jest," commented Mrs. Higgs.

"That he were!" observed her lord.

But it was after he went into the diplomatic service that the real trouble began.

"It seems, sir, that he went the pace extraordinary," said the ex-butler, with a solemn gusto.

"His debts were somethink awful," said the lady's-maid. "And as nice a young gentleman all the time as you would wish to see!"

"When word came to Mr. Carthew's ears, the turn up was 'orrible," continued Mr. Higgs. "I remember it as if it was yesterday. The bell was rung after her la'ship was gone, which I answered it myself, supposing it were the coffee. There was Mr. Carthew on his feet. "Iggs,' he says, pointing with his stick, for he had a turn of the gout, 'order the dog-cart instantly for this son of mine which has disgraced hisself.’ Mr. Norris say nothink: he sit there with his ‘ead down, making belief to be looking at a walnut. You might have bowled me over with a straw,” said Mr. Higgs.

“Had he done anything very bad?” I asked.

“Not he, Mr. Dodsley!” cried the lady — it was so she had conceived my name. “He never did anythink to all really wrong in his poor life. The ‘ole affair was a disgrace. It was all rank favouritising.”

“Mrs. ‘Iggs! Mrs. ‘Iggs!” cried the butler warningly.

“Well, what do I care?” retorted the lady, shaking her ringlets. “You know it was yourself, Mr. ‘Iggs, and so did every member of the staff.”

While I was getting these facts and opinions, I by no means neglected the child. She was not attractive; but fortunately she had reached the corrupt age of seven, when half a crown appears about as large as a saucer and is fully as rare as the dodo. For a shilling down, sixpence in her money-box, and an American gold dollar which I happened to find in my pocket, I bought the creature soul and body. She declared her intention to accompany me to the ends of the earth; and had to be chidden by her sire for drawing comparisons between myself and her uncle William, highly damaging to the latter.

Dinner was scarce done, the cloth was not yet removed, when Miss Agnes must needs climb into my lap with her stamp album, a relic of the generosity of Uncle William. There are few things I despise more than old stamps, unless perhaps it be crests; for cattle (from the Carthew Chillinghams down to the old gate-keeper’s milk-cow in the lane) contempt is far from being my first sentiment. But it seemed I was doomed to pass that day in viewing curiosities, and smothering a yawn, I devoted myself once more to tread the well-known round. I fancy Uncle William must have begun the collection himself and tired of it, for the book (to my surprise) was quite respectably filled. There were the varying shades of the English penny, Russians with the coloured heart, old undecipherable Thurn-und-Taxis, obsolete triangular Cape of Good Hopes, Swan Rivers with the Swan, and Guianas with the sailing ship. Upon all these I looked with the eyes of a fish and the spirit of a sheep; I think indeed I was at times asleep; and it was probably in one of these moments that I capsized the album, and there fell from the end of it, upon the floor, a considerable number of what I believe to be called “exchanges.”

Here, against all probability, my chance had come to me; for as I gallantly picked them up, I was struck with the disproportionate amount of five-sous French stamps. Some one, I reasoned, must write very regularly from France to the neighbourhood of Stallbridge-le-Carthew. Could it be Norris? On one stamp I made out an initial C; upon a second I got as far as CH; beyond which point, the postmark used was in every instance undecipherable. CH, when you consider that about a quarter of the towns in France begin with “chateau,” was an insufficient clue; and I promptly annexed the plainest of the collection in order to consult the post-office.

The wretched infant took me in the fact. “Naughty man, to ‘teal my ‘tamp!” she cried; and when I would have brazened it off with a denial, recovered and displayed the stolen article.

My position was now highly false; and I believe it was in mere pity that Mrs. Higgs came to my rescue with a welcome proposition. If the gentleman was really interested in stamps, she said, probably supposing me a monomaniac on the point, he should see Mr. Denman’s album. Mr. Denman had been collecting forty years, and his collection was said to be worth a mint of money. “Agnes,” she went on, “if you were a kind little girl, you would run over to the ‘All, tell Mr. Denman there’s a connaisseer in the ‘ouse, and ask him if one of the young gentlemen might bring the album down.”

“I should like to see his exchanges too,” I cried, rising to the occasion. “I may have some of mine in my pocket-book and we might trade.”

Half an hour later Mr. Denman arrived himself with a most unconscionable volume under his arm. “Ah, sir,” he cried, “when I ‘eard you was a collector, I dropped all. It’s a saying of mine, Mr. Dodsley, that collecting stamps makes all collectors kin. It’s a bond, sir; it creates a bond.”

Upon the truth of this, I cannot say; but there is no doubt that the attempt to pass yourself off for a collector falsely creates a precarious situation.

“Ah, here’s the second issue!” I would say, after consulting the legend at the side. “The pink — no, I mean the mauve — yes, that’s the beauty of this lot. Though of course, as you say,” I would hasten to add, “this yellow on the thin paper is more rare.”

Indeed I must certainly have been detected, had I not plied Mr. Denman in self-defence with his favourite liquor — a port so excellent that it could never have ripened in the cellar of the Carthew Arms, but must have been transported, under cloud of night, from the neighbouring vaults of the great house. At each threat of exposure, and in particular whenever I was directly challenged for an opinion, I made haste to fill the butler’s glass, and by the time we had got to the exchanges, he was in a condition in which no stamp collector need be seriously feared. God forbid I should hint that he was drunk; he seemed incapable of the necessary liveliness; but the man’s eyes were set, and so long as he was suffered to talk without interruption, he seemed careless of my heeding him.

In Mr. Denman’s exchanges, as in those of little Agnes, the same peculiarity was to be remarked, an undue preponderance of that despicably common stamp, the French twenty-five centimes. And here joining them in stealthy review, I found the C and the CH; then something of an A just following; and then a terminal Y. Here was also the whole name spelt out to me; it seemed familiar, too; and yet for some time I could not bridge the imperfection. Then I came upon another stamp, in which an L was legible before the Y, and in a moment the word leaped up complete. Chailly, that was the name; Chailly-en-Biere, the post town of Barbizon — ah, there was the very place for any man to hide himself — there was the very place for Mr. Norris, who had rambled over England making sketches — the very place for Goddedaal, who had left a palette-knife on board the Flying Scud. Singular, indeed, that while I was drifting over England with the shyster, the man we were in quest of awaited me at my own ultimate destination.

Whether Mr. Denman had shown his album to Bellairs, whether, indeed, Bellairs could have caught (as I did) this hint from an obliterated postmark, I shall never know, and it mattered not. We were equal now; my task at Stallbridge-le-Carthew was accomplished; my interest in postage-stamps died shamelessly away; the astonished Denman was bowed out; and ordering the horse to be put in, I plunged into the study of the time-table.

CHAPTER XXI. FACE TO FACE.

I fell from the skies on Barbizon about two o’clock of a September afternoon. It is the dead hour of the day; all the workers have gone painting, all the idlers strolling, in the forest or the plain; the winding causewayed street is solitary, and the inn deserted. I was the more pleased to find one of my old companions in the dining-room; his town clothes marked him for a man in the act of departure; and indeed his portmanteau lay beside him on the floor.

“Why, Stennis,” I cried, “you’re the last man I expected to find here.”

“You won’t find me here long,” he replied. “King Pandion he is dead; all his friends are lapped in lead. For men of our antiquity, the poor old shop is played out.”

“I have had playmates, I have had companions,” I quoted in return. We were both moved, I think, to meet again in this scene of our old pleasure parties so unexpectedly, after so long an interval, and both already so much altered.

“That is the sentiment,” he replied. “All, all are gone, the old familiar faces. I have been here a week, and the only living creature who seemed to recollect me was the Pharaon. Bar the Sirons, of course, and the perennial Bodmer.”

“Is there no survivor?” I inquired.

“Of our geological epoch? not one,” he replied. “This is the city of Petra in Edom.”

“And what sort of Bedouins encamp among the ruins?” I asked.

“Youth, Dodd, youth; blooming, conscious youth,” he returned. “Such a gang, such reptiles! to think we were like that! I wonder Siron didn’t sweep us from his premises.”

“Perhaps we weren’t so bad,” I suggested.

“Don’t let me depress you,” said he. “We were both Anglo-Saxons, anyway, and the only redeeming feature to-day is another.”

The thought of my quest, a moment driven out by this rencounter, revived in my mind. “Who is he?” I cried. “Tell me about him.”

“What, the Redeeming Feature?” said he. “Well, he’s a very pleasing creature, rather dim, and dull, and genteel, but really pleasing. He is very British, though, the artless Briton! Perhaps you’ll find him too much so for the transatlantic nerves. Come to think of it, on the other hand, you ought to get on famously. He is an admirer of your great republic in one of its (excuse me) shoddiest features; he takes in and sedulously reads a lot of American papers. I warned you he was artless.”

“What papers are they?” cried I.

"San Francisco papers," said he. "He gets a bale of them about twice a week, and studies them like the Bible. That's one of his weaknesses; another is to be incalculably rich. He has taken Masson's old studio — you remember? — at the corner of the road; he has furnished it regardless of expense, and lives there surrounded with vins fins and works of art. When the youth of to-day goes up to the Caverne des Brigands to make punch — they do all that we did, like some nauseous form of ape (I never appreciated before what a creature of tradition mankind is) — this Madden follows with a basket of champagne. I told him he was wrong, and the punch tasted better; but he thought the boys liked the style of the thing, and I suppose they do. He is a very good-natured soul, and a very melancholy, and rather a helpless. O, and he has a third weakness which I came near forgetting. He paints. He has never been taught, and he's past thirty, and he paints."

"How?" I asked.

"Rather well, I think," was the reply. "That's the annoying part of it. See for yourself. That panel is his."

I stepped toward the window. It was the old familiar room, with the tables set like a Greek P, and the sideboard, and the aphasiac piano, and the panels on the wall. There were Romeo and Juliet, Antwerp from the river, Enfield's ships among the ice, and the huge huntsman winding a huge horn; mingled with them a few new ones, the thin crop of a succeeding generation, not better and not worse. It was to one of these I was directed; a thing coarsely and wittily handled, mostly with the palette-knife, the colour in some parts excellent, the canvas in others loaded with mere clay. But it was the scene, and not the art or want of it, that riveted my notice. The foreground was of sand and scrub and wreckwood; in the middle distance the many-hued and smooth expanse of a lagoon, enclosed by a wall of breakers; beyond, a blue strip of ocean. The sky was cloudless, and I could hear the surf break. For the place was Midway Island; the point of view the very spot at which I had landed with the captain for the first time, and from which I had re-embarked the day before we sailed. I had already been gazing for some seconds, before my attention was arrested by a blur on the sea-line; and stooping to look, I recognised the smoke of a steamer.

"Yes," said I, turning toward Stennis, "it has merit. What is it?"

"A fancy piece," he returned. "That's what pleased me. So few of the fellows in our time had the imagination of a garden snail."

"Madden, you say his name is?" I pursued.

"Madden," he repeated.

"Has he travelled much?" I inquired.

"I haven't an idea. He is one of the least autobiographical of men.

He sits, and smokes, and giggles, and sometimes he makes small jests; but his contributions to the art of pleasing are generally confined to looking like a gentleman and being one. No," added Stennis, "he'll never suit you, Dodd; you like more head on your liquor. You'll find him as dull as ditch water."

"Has he big blonde side-whiskers like tusks?" I asked, mindful of the photograph of Goddedaal.

"Certainly not: why should he?" was the reply.

"Does he write many letters?" I continued.

"God knows," said Stennis. "What is wrong with you? I never saw you taken this way before."

"The fact is, I think I know the man," said I. "I think I'm looking for him. I rather think he is my long-lost brother."

"Not twins, anyway," returned Stennis.

And about the same time, a carriage driving up to the inn, he took his departure.

I walked till dinner-time in the plain, keeping to the fields; for I instinctively shunned observation, and was racked by many incongruous and impatient feelings. Here was a man whose voice I had once heard, whose doings had filled so many days of my life with interest and distress, whom I had lain awake to dream of like a lover; and now his hand was on the door; now we were to meet; now I was to learn at last the mystery of the substituted crew. The sun went down over the plain of the Angelus, and as the hour approached, my courage lessened. I let the laggard peasants pass me on the homeward way. The lamps were lit, the soup was served, the company were all at table, and the room sounded already with multitudinous talk before I entered. I took my place and found I was opposite to Madden. Over six feet high and well set up, the hair dark and streaked with silver, the eyes dark and kindly, the mouth very good-natured, the teeth admirable; linen and hands exquisite; English clothes, an English voice, an English bearing: the man stood out conspicuous from the company. Yet he had made himself at home, and seemed to enjoy a certain quiet popularity among the noisy boys of the table d'hote. He had an odd, silver giggle of a laugh, that sounded nervous even when he was really amused, and accorded ill with his big stature and manly, melancholy face. This laugh fell in continually all through dinner like the note of the triangle in a piece of modern French music; and he had at times a kind of pleasantry, rather of manner than of words, with which he started or maintained the merriment. He took his share in these diversions, not so much like a man in high spirits, but like one of an approved good nature, habitually self-forgetful, accustomed to please and to follow others. I have remarked in old soldiers much the same smiling sadness and sociable self-effacement.

I feared to look at him, lest my glances should betray my deep excitement, and chance served me so well that the soup was scarce removed before we were naturally introduced. My first sip of Chateau Siron, a vintage from which I had been long estranged, startled me into speech.

"O, this'll never do!" I cried, in English.

"Dreadful stuff, isn't it?" said Madden, in the same language. "Do let me ask you to share my bottle. They call it Chambertin, which it isn't; but it's fairly palatable, and there's nothing in this house that a man can drink at all."

I accepted; anything would do that paved the way to better knowledge.

"Your name is Madden, I think," said I. "My old friend Stennis told me about you when I came."

"Yes, I am sorry he went; I feel such a Grandfather William, alone among all these lads," he replied.

"My name is Dodd," I resumed.

"Yes," said he, "so Madame Siron told me."

"Dodd, of San Francisco," I continued. "Late of Pinkerton and Dodd."

"Montana Block, I think?" said he.

"The same," said I.

Neither of us looked at each other; but I could see his hand deliberately making bread pills.

"That's a nice thing of yours," I pursued, "that panel. The foreground is a little clayey, perhaps, but the lagoon is excellent."

"You ought to know," said he.

"Yes," returned I, "I'm rather a good judge of — that panel."

There was a considerable pause.

"You know a man by the name of Bellairs, don't you?" he resumed.

"Ah!" cried I, "you have heard from Doctor Urquart?"

"This very morning," he replied.

"Well, there is no hurry about Bellairs," said I. "It's rather a long story and rather a silly one. But I think we have a good deal to tell each other, and perhaps we had better wait till we are more alone."

"I think so," said he. "Not that any of these fellows know English, but we'll be more comfortable over at my place. Your health, Dodd."

And we took wine together across the table.

Thus had this singular introduction passed unperceived in the midst of more than thirty persons, art students, ladies in dressing-gowns and covered with rice powder, six foot of Siron whisking dishes over our head, and his noisy sons clattering in and out with fresh relays.

"One question more," said I: "Did you recognise my voice?"

"Your voice?" he repeated. "How should I? I had never heard it —

we have never met."

"And yet, we have been in conversation before now," said I, "and I asked you a question which you never answered, and which I have since had many thousand better reasons for putting to myself."

He turned suddenly white. "Good God!" he cried, "are you the man in the telephone?"

I nodded.

"Well, well!" said he. "It would take a good deal of magnanimity to forgive you that. What nights I have passed! That little whisper has whistled in my ear ever since, like the wind in a keyhole. Who could it be? What could it mean? I suppose I have had more real, solid misery out of that ..." He paused, and looked troubled. "Though I had more to bother me, or ought to have," he added, and slowly emptied his glass.

"It seems we were born to drive each other crazy with conundrums," said I. "I have often thought my head would split."

Carthew burst into his foolish laugh. "And yet neither you nor I had the worst of the puzzle," he cried. "There were others deeper in."

"And who were they?" I asked.

"The underwriters," said he.

"Why, to be sure!" cried I, "I never thought of that. What could they make of it?"

"Nothing," replied Carthew. "It couldn't be explained. They were a crowd of small dealers at Lloyd's who took it up in syndicate; one of them has a carriage now; and people say he is a deuce of a deep fellow, and has the makings of a great financier. Another furnished a small villa on the profits. But they're all hopelessly muddled; and when they meet each other, they don't know where to look, like the Augurs."

Dinner was no sooner at an end than he carried me across the road to Masson's old studio. It was strangely changed. On the walls were tapestry, a few good etchings, and some amazing pictures — a Rousseau, a Corot, a really superb old Crome, a Whistler, and a piece which my host claimed (and I believe) to be a Titian. The room was furnished with comfortable English smoking-room chairs, some American rockers, and an elaborate business table; spirits and soda-water (with the mark of Schweppe, no less) stood ready on a butler's tray, and in one corner, behind a half-drawn curtain, I spied a camp-bed and a capacious tub. Such a room in Barbizon astonished the beholder, like the glories of the cave of Monte Cristo.

"Now," said he, "we are quiet. Sit down, if you don't mind, and tell me your story all through."

I did as he asked, beginning with the day when Jim showed me the passage in the *Daily Occidental*, and winding up with the stamp album and the Chailly postmark. It was a long business; and Carthew made it longer, for he was insatiable of details; and it had struck midnight on the old eight-day clock in the corner, before I had made an end.

"And now," said he, "turn about: I must tell you my side, much as I hate it. Mine is a beastly story. You'll wonder how I can sleep. I've told it once before, Mr. Dodd."

"To Lady Ann?" I asked.

"As you suppose," he answered; "and to say the truth, I had sworn never to tell it again. Only, you seem somehow entitled to the thing; you have paid dear enough, God knows; and God knows I hope you may like it, now you've got it!"

With that he began his yarn. A new day had dawned, the cocks crew in the village and the early woodmen were afoot, when he concluded.

CHAPTER XXII. THE REMITTANCE MAN.

Singleton Carthew, the father of Norris, was heavily built and feebly vitalised, sensitive as a musician, dull as a sheep, and conscientious as a dog. He took his position with seriousness, even with pomp; the long rooms, the silent servants, seemed in his eyes like the observances of some religion of which he was the mortal god. He had the stupid man's intolerance of stupidity in others; the vain man's exquisite alarm lest it should be detected in himself. And on both sides Norris irritated and offended him. He thought his son a fool, and he suspected that his son returned the compliment with interest. The history of their relation was simple; they met seldom, they quarrelled often. To his mother, a fiery, pungent, practical woman, already disappointed in her husband and her elder son, Norris was only a fresh disappointment.

Yet the lad's faults were no great matter; he was diffident, placable, passive, unambitious, unenterprising; life did not much attract him; he watched it like a curious and dull exhibition, not much amused, and not tempted in the least to take a part. He beheld his father ponderously grinding sand, his mother fierily breaking butterflies, his brother labouring at the pleasures of the Hawbuck with the ardour of a soldier in a doubtful battle; and the vital sceptic looked on wondering. They were careful and troubled about many things; for him there seemed not even one thing needful. He was born disenchanted, the world's promises awoke no echo in his bosom, the world's activities and the world's distinctions seemed to him equally without a base in fact. He liked the open air; he liked comradeship, it mattered not with whom, his comrades were only a remedy for solitude. And he had a taste for painted art. An array of fine pictures looked upon his childhood, and from these roods of jewelled canvas he received an indelible impression. The gallery at Stallbridge betokened generations of picture lovers; Norris was perhaps the first of his race to hold the pencil. The taste was genuine, it grew and strengthened with his growth; and yet he suffered it to be suppressed with scarce a struggle. Time came for him to go to Oxford, and he resisted faintly. He was stupid, he said; it was no good to put him through the mill; he wished to be a painter. The words fell on his father like a thunderbolt, and Norris made haste to give way. "It didn't really matter, don't you know?" said he. "And it seemed an awful shame to vex the old boy."

To Oxford he went obediently, hopelessly; and at Oxford became the hero of a certain circle. He was active and adroit; when he was in the humour, he excelled in many sports; and his singular melancholy detachment gave him a place apart. He set a fashion in his clique. Envious undergraduates sought to parody his unaffected lack of zeal and fear; it was a kind of new Byronism more composed and dignified. “Nothing really mattered”; among other things, this formula embraced the dons; and though he always meant to be civil, the effect on the college authorities was one of startling rudeness. His indifference cut like insolence; and in some outbreak of his constitutional levity (the complement of his melancholy) he was “sent down” in the middle of the second year.

The event was new in the annals of the Carthews, and Singleton was prepared to make the most of it. It had been long his practice to prophesy for his second son a career of ruin and disgrace. There is an advantage in this artless parental habit. Doubtless the father is interested in his son; but doubtless also the prophet grows to be interested in his prophecies. If the one goes wrong, the others come true. Old Carthew drew from this source esoteric consolations; he dwelt at length on his own foresight; he produced variations hitherto unheard from the old theme “I told you so,” coupled his son’s name with the gallows and the hulks, and spoke of his small handful of college debts as though he must raise money on a mortgage to discharge them.

“I don’t think that is fair, sir,” said Norris. “I lived at college exactly as you told me. I am sorry I was sent down, and you have a perfect right to blame me for that; but you have no right to pitch into me about these debts.”

The effect upon a stupid man not unjustly incensed need scarcely be described. For a while Singleton raved.

“I’ll tell you what, father,” said Norris at last, “I don’t think this is going to do. I think you had better let me take to painting. It’s the only thing I take a spark of interest in. I shall never be steady as long as I’m at anything else.”

“When you stand here, sir, to the neck in disgrace,” said the father, “I should have hoped you would have had more good taste than to repeat this levity.”

The hint was taken; the levity was never more obtruded on the father’s notice, and Norris was inexorably launched upon a backward voyage. He went abroad to study foreign languages, which he learned, at a very expensive rate; and a fresh crop of debts fell soon to be paid, with similar lamentations, which were in this case perfectly justified, and to which Norris paid no regard. He had been unfairly treated over the Oxford affair; and with a spice of malice very surprising in one so placable, and an obstinacy remarkable in one so weak, refused from that day forward to exercise the least captaincy on his expenses. He wasted what he would; he allowed his servants to despoil him at their pleasure; he sowed insolvency; and when the crop was ripe, notified his father with exasperating calm. His own capital was put in his hands, he was planted in the diplomatic service and told he must depend upon himself.

He did so till he was twenty-five; by which time he had spent his money, laid in a handsome choice of debts, and acquired (like so many other melancholic and uninterested persons) a habit of gambling. An Austrian colonel — the same who afterwards hanged himself at Monte Carlo — gave him a lesson which lasted two-and-twenty hours, and left him wrecked and helpless. Old Singleton once more repurchased the honour of his name, this time at a fancy figure; and Norris was set afloat again on stern conditions. An allowance of three hundred pounds in the year was to be paid to him quarterly by a lawyer in Sydney, New South Wales. He was not to write. Should he fail on any quarter-day to be in Sydney, he was to be held for dead, and the allowance tacitly withdrawn. Should he return to Europe, an advertisement publicly disowning him was to appear in every paper of repute.

It was one of his most annoying features as a son, that he was always polite, always just, and in whatever whirlwind of domestic anger, always calm. He expected trouble; when trouble came, he was unmoved: he might have said with Singleton, "I told you so"; he was content with thinking, "just as I expected." On the fall of these last thunderbolts, he bore himself like a person only distantly interested in the event; pocketed the money and the reproaches, obeyed orders punctually; took ship and came to Sydney. Some men are still lads at twenty-five; and so it was with Norris. Eighteen days after he landed, his quarter's allowance was all gone, and with the light-hearted hopefulness of strangers in what is called a new country, he began to besiege offices and apply for all manner of incongruous situations. Everywhere, and last of all from his lodgings, he was bowed out; and found himself reduced, in a very elegant suit of summer tweeds, to herd and camp with the degraded outcasts of the city.

In this strait, he had recourse to the lawyer who paid him his allowance.

"Try to remember that my time is valuable, Mr. Carthew," said the lawyer. "It is quite unnecessary you should enlarge on the peculiar position in which you stand. Remittance men, as we call them here, are not so rare in my experience; and in such cases I act upon a system. I make you a present of a sovereign; here it is. Every day you choose to call, my clerk will advance you a shilling; on Saturday, since my office is closed on Sunday, he will advance you half a crown. My conditions are these: that you do not come to me, but to my clerk; that you do not come here the worse of liquor; and you go away the moment you are paid and have signed a receipt. I wish you a good-morning."

"I have to thank you, I suppose," said Carthew. "My position is so wretched that I cannot even refuse this starvation allowance."

"Starvation!" said the lawyer, smiling. "No man will starve here on a shilling a day. I had on my hands another young gentleman, who remained continuously intoxicated for six years on the same allowance." And he once more busied himself with his papers.

In the time that followed, the image of the smiling lawyer haunted Carthew's memory. "That three minutes' talk was all the education I ever had worth talking of," says he. "It was all life in a nut-shell. Confound it! I thought, have I got to the point of envying that ancient fossil?"

Every morning for the next two or three weeks, the stroke of ten found Norris, unkempt and haggard, at the lawyer's door. The long day and longer night he spent in the Domain, now on a bench, now on the grass under a Norfolk Island pine, the companion of perhaps the lowest class on earth, the Larrikins of Sydney. Morning after morning, the dawn behind the lighthouse recalled him from slumber; and he would stand and gaze upon the changing east, the fading lenses, the smokeless city, and the many-armed and many-masted harbour growing slowly clear under his eyes. His bed-fellows (so to call them) were less active; they lay sprawled upon the grass and benches, the dingy men, the frowsy women, prolonging their late repose; and Carthew wandered among the sleeping bodies alone, and cursed the incurable stupidity of his behaviour. Day brought a new society of nursery-maids and children, and fresh-dressed and (I am sorry to say) tight-laced maidens, and gay people in rich traps; upon the skirts of which Carthew and "the other blackguards" — his own bitter phrase — skulked, and chewed grass, and looked on. Day passed, the light died, the green and leafy precinct sparkled with lamps or lay in shadow, and the round of the night began again, the loitering women, the lurking men, the sudden outburst of screams, the sound of flying feet. "You mayn't believe it," says Carthew, "but I got to that pitch that I didn't care a hang. I have been wakened out of my sleep to hear a woman screaming, and I have only turned upon my other side. Yes, it's a queer place, where the dowagers and the kids walk all day, and at night you can hear people bawling for help as if it was the Forest of Bondy, with the lights of a great town all round, and parties spinning through in cabs from Government House and dinner with my lord!"

It was Norris's diversion, having none other, to scrape acquaintance, where, how, and with whom he could. Many a long dull talk he held upon the benches or the grass; many a strange waif he came to know; many strange things he heard, and saw some that were abominable. It was to one of these last that he owed his deliverance from the Domain. For some time the rain had been merciless; one night after another he had been obliged to squander fourpence on a bed and reduce his board to the remaining eightpence: and he sat one morning near the Macquarrie Street entrance, hungry, for he had gone without breakfast, and wet, as he had already been for several days, when the cries of an animal in distress attracted his attention. Some fifty yards away, in the extreme angle of the grass, a party of the chronically unemployed had got hold of a dog, whom they were torturing in a manner not to be described. The heart of Norris, which had grown indifferent to the cries of human anger or distress, woke at the appeal of the dumb creature. He ran amongst the Larrikins, scattered them, rescued the dog, and stood at bay. They were six in number, shambling gallowsbirds; but for once the proverb was right, cruelty was coupled with cowardice, and the wretches cursed him and made off. It chanced that this act of prowess had not passed unwitnessed. On a bench near by there was seated a shopkeeper's assistant out of employ, a diminutive, cheerful, red-headed creature by the name of Hemstead. He was the last man to have interfered himself, for his discretion more than equalled his valour; but he made haste to congratulate Carthew, and to warn him he might not always be so fortunate.

"They're a dyngerous lot of people about this park. My word! it doesn't do to ply with them!" he observed, in that RYCY AUSTRYLIAN English, which (as it has received the imprimatur of Mr. Froude) we should all make haste to imitate.

"Why, I'm one of that lot myself," returned Carthew.

Hemstead laughed and remarked that he knew a gentleman when he saw one.

"For all that, I am simply one of the unemployed," said Carthew, seating himself beside his new acquaintance, as he had sat (since this experience began) beside so many dozen others.

"I'm out of a plyce myself," said Hemstead.

"You beat me all the way and back," says Carthew. "My trouble is that I have never been in one."

"I suppose you've no tryde?" asked Hemstead.

"I know how to spend money," replied Carthew, "and I really do know something of horses and something of the sea. But the unions head me off; if it weren't for them, I might have had a dozen berths."

"My word!" cried the sympathetic listener. "Ever try the mounted police?" he inquired.

"I did, and was bowled out," was the reply; "couldn't pass the doctors."

"Well, what do you think of the ryleways, then?" asked Hemstead.

“What do YOU think of them, if you come to that?” asked Carthew.

“O, *I* don’t think of them; I don’t go in for manual labour,” said the little man proudly. “But if a man don’t mind that, he’s pretty sure of a job there.”

“By George, you tell me where to go!” cried Carthew, rising.

The heavy rains continued, the country was already overrun with floods; the railway system daily required more hands, daily the superintendent advertised; but “the unemployed” preferred the resources of charity and rapine, and a navvy, even an amateur navvy, commanded money in the market. The same night, after a tedious journey, and a change of trains to pass a landslip, Norris found himself in a muddy cutting behind South Clifton, attacking his first shift of manual labour.

For weeks the rain scarce relented. The whole front of the mountain slipped seaward from above, avalanches of clay, rock, and uprooted forest spewed over the cliffs and fell upon the beach or in the breakers. Houses were carried bodily away and smashed like nuts; others were menaced and deserted, the door locked, the chimney cold, the dwellers fled elsewhere for safety. Night and day the fire blazed in the encampment; night and day hot coffee was served to the overdriven toilers in the shift; night and day the engineer of the section made his rounds with words of encouragement, hearty and rough and well suited to his men. Night and day, too, the telegraph clicked with disastrous news and anxious inquiry. Along the terraced line of rail, rare trains came creeping and signalling; and paused at the threatened corner, like living things conscious of peril. The commandant of the post would hastily review his labours, make (with a dry throat) the signal to advance; and the whole squad line the way and look on in a choking silence, or burst into a brief cheer as the train cleared the point of danger and shot on, perhaps through the thin sunshine between squalls, perhaps with blinking lamps into the gathering, rainy twilight.

One such scene Carthew will remember till he dies. It blew great guns from the seaward; a huge surf bombarded, five hundred feet below him, the steep mountain’s foot; close in was a vessel in distress, firing shots from a fowling-piece, if any help might come. So he saw and heard her the moment before the train appeared and paused, throwing up a Babylonian tower of smoke into the rain, and oppressing men’s hearts with the scream of her whistle. The engineer was there himself; he paled as he made the signal: the engine came at a foot’s pace; but the whole bulk of mountain shook and seemed to nod seaward, and the watching navvies instinctively clutched at shrubs and trees: vain precautions, vain as the shots from the poor sailors. Once again fear was disappointed; the train passed unscathed;

and Norris, drawing a long breath, remembered the labouring ship and glanced below. She was gone.

So the days and the nights passed: Homeric labour in Homeric circumstance. Carthew was sick with sleeplessness and coffee; his hands, softened by the wet, were cut to ribbons; yet he enjoyed a peace of mind and health of body hitherto unknown. Plenty of open air, plenty of physical exertion, a continual instancy of toil; here was what had been hitherto lacking in that misdirected life, and the true cure of vital scepticism. To get the train through: there was the recurrent problem; no time remained to ask if it were necessary. Carthew, the idler, the spendthrift, the drifting dilettant, was soon remarked, praised, and advanced. The engineer swore by him and pointed him out for an example. “I’ve a new chum, up here,” Norris overheard him saying, “a young swell. He’s worth any two in the squad.” The words fell on the ears of the discarded son like music; and from that moment, he not only found an interest, he took a pride, in his plebeian tasks.

The press of work was still at its highest when quarter-day approached. Norris was now raised to a position of some trust; at his discretion, trains were stopped or forwarded at the dangerous cornice near North Clifton; and he found in this responsibility both terror and delight. The thought of the seventy-five pounds that would soon await him at the lawyer’s, and of his own obligation to be present every quarter-day in Sydney, filled him for a little with divided councils. Then he made up his mind, walked in a slack moment to the inn at Clifton, ordered a sheet of paper and a bottle of beer, and wrote, explaining that he held a good appointment which he would lose if he came to Sydney, and asking the lawyer to accept this letter as an evidence of his presence in the colony, and retain the money till next quarter-day. The answer came in course of post, and was not merely favourable but cordial. “Although what you propose is contrary to the terms of my instructions,” it ran, “I willingly accept the responsibility of granting your request. I should say I am agreeably disappointed in your behaviour. My experience has not led me to found much expectations on gentlemen in your position.”

The rains abated, and the temporary labour was discharged; not Norris, to whom the engineer clung as to found money; not Norris, who found himself a ganger on the line in the regular staff of navvies. His camp was pitched in a grey wilderness of rock and forest, far from any house; as he sat with his mates about the evening fire, the trains passing on the track were their next and indeed their only neighbours, except the wild things of the wood. Lovely weather, light and monotonous employment, long hours of somnolent camp-fire talk, long sleepless nights, when he reviewed his foolish and fruitless career as he rose and walked in the moonlit forest, an occasional paper of which he would read all, the advertisements with as much relish as the text: such was the tenor of an existence which soon began to weary and harass him. He lacked and regretted the fatigue, the furious hurry, the suspense, the fires, the midnight coffee, the rude and mud-bespattered poetry of the first toilful weeks. In the quietness of his new surroundings, a voice summoned him from this exorbital part of life, and about the middle of October he threw up his situation and bade farewell to the camp of tents and the shoulder of Bald Mountain.

Clad in his rough clothes, with a bundle on his shoulder and his accumulated wages in his pocket, he entered Sydney for the second time, and walked with pleasure and some bewilderment in the cheerful streets, like a man landed from a voyage. The sight of the people led him on. He forgot his necessary errands, he forgot to eat. He wandered in moving multitudes like a stick upon a river. Last he came to the Domain and strolled there, and remembered his shame and sufferings, and looked with poignant curiosity at his successors. Hemstead, not much shabbier and no less cheerful than before, he recognised and addressed like an old family friend.

“That was a good turn you did me,” said he. “That railway was the making of me. I hope you’ve had luck yourself.”

“My word, no!” replied the little man. “I just sit here and read the *Dead Bird*. It’s the depression in tryde, you see. There’s no positions goin’ that a man like me would care to look at.” And he showed Norris his certificates and written characters, one from a grocer in Wooloomooloo, one from an ironmonger, and a third from a billiard saloon. “Yes,” he said, “I tried bein’ a billiard marker. It’s no account; these lyte hours are no use for a man’s health. I won’t be no man’s slyve,” he added firmly.

On the principle that he who is too proud to be a slave is usually not too modest to become a pensioner, Carthew gave him half a sovereign, and departed, being suddenly struck with hunger, in the direction of the Paris House. When he came to that quarter of the city, the barristers were trotting in the streets in wig and gown, and he stood to observe them with his bundle on his shoulder, and his mind full of curious recollections of the past.

“By George!” cried a voice, “it’s Mr. Carthew!”

And turning about he found himself face to face with a handsome sunburnt youth, somewhat fatted, arrayed in the finest of fine raiment, and sporting about a sovereign’s worth of flowers in his buttonhole. Norris had met him during his first days in Sydney at a farewell supper; had even escorted him on board a schooner full of cockroaches and black-boy sailors, in which he was bound for six months among the islands; and had kept him ever since in entertained remembrance. Tom Hadden (known to the bulk of Sydney folk as Tommy) was heir to a considerable property, which a prophetic father had placed in the hands of rigorous trustees. The income supported Mr. Hadden in splendour for about three months out of twelve; the rest of the year he passed in retreat among the islands. He was now about a week returned from his eclipse, pervading Sydney in hansom cabs and airing the first bloom of six new suits of clothes; and yet the unaffected creature hailed Carthew in his working jeans and with the damning bundle on his shoulder, as he might have claimed acquaintance with a duke.

"Come and have a drink!" was his cheerful cry.

"I'm just going to have lunch at the Paris House," returned Carthew. "It's a long time since I have had a decent meal."

"Splendid scheme!" said Hadden. "I've only had breakfast half an hour ago; but we'll have a private room, and I'll manage to pick something. It'll brace me up. I was on an awful tear last night, and I've met no end of fellows this morning." To meet a fellow, and to stand and share a drink, were with Tom synonymous terms.

They were soon at table in the corner room up-stairs, and paying due attention to the best fare in Sydney. The odd similarity of their positions drew them together, and they began soon to exchange confidences. Carthew related his privations in the Domain and his toils as a navvy; Hadden gave his experience as an amateur copra merchant in the South Seas, and drew a humorous picture of life in a coral island. Of the two plans of retirement, Carthew gathered that his own had been vastly the more lucrative; but Hadden's trading outfit had consisted largely of bottled stout and brown sherry for his own consumption.

"I had champagne too," said Hadden, "but I kept that in case of sickness, until I didn't seem to be going to be sick, and then I opened a pint every Sunday. Used to sleep all morning, then breakfast with my pint of fizz, and lie in a hammock and read Hallam's *Middle Ages*. Have you read that? I always take something solid to the islands. There's no doubt I did the thing in rather a fine style; but if it was gone about a little cheaper, or there were two of us to bear the expense, it ought to pay hand over fist. I've got the influence, you see. I'm a chief now, and sit in the speak-house under my own strip of roof. I'd like to see them taboo ME! They daren't try it; I've a strong party, I can tell you. Why, I've had upwards of thirty cowtops sitting in my front verandah eating tins of salmon."

"Cowtops?" asked Carthew, "what are they?"

"That's what Hallam would call feudal retainers," explained Hadden, not without vainglory. "They're My Followers. They belong to My Family. I tell you, they come expensive, though; you can't fill up all these retainers on tinned salmon for nothing; but whenever I could get it, I would give ‘em squid. Squid’s good for natives, but I don’t care for it, do you? — or shark either. It’s like the working classes at home. With copra at the price it is, they ought to be willing to bear their share of the loss; and so I’ve told them again and again. I think it’s a man’s duty to open their minds, and I try to, but you can’t get political economy into them; it doesn’t seem to reach their intelligence.”

There was an expression still sticking in Carthew’s memory, and he returned upon it with a smile. “Talking of political economy,” said he, “you said if there were two of us to bear the expense, the profits would increase. How do you make out that?”

“I’ll show you! I’ll figure it out for you!” cried Hadden, and with a pencil on the back of the bill of fare proceeded to perform miracles. He was a man, or let us rather say a lad, of unusual projective power. Give him the faintest hint of any speculation, and the figures flowed from him by the page. A lively imagination and a ready though inaccurate memory supplied his data; he delivered himself with an inimitable heat that made him seem the picture of pugnacity; lavished contradiction; had a form of words, with or without significance, for every form of criticism; and the looker-on alternately smiled at his simplicity and fervour, or was amazed by his unexpected shrewdness. He was a kind of Pinkerton in play. I have called Jim’s the romance of business; this was its Arabian tale.

“Have you any idea what this would cost?” he asked, pausing at an item.

“Not I,” said Carthew.

“Ten pounds ought to be ample,” concluded the projector.

“O, nonsense!” cried Carthew. “Fifty at the very least.”

“You told me yourself this moment you knew nothing about it!” cried Tommy. “How can I make a calculation, if you blow hot and cold? You don’t seem able to be serious!”

But he consented to raise his estimate to twenty; and a little after, the calculation coming out with a deficit, cut it down again to five pounds ten, with the remark, “I told you it was nonsense. This sort of thing has to be done strictly, or where’s the use?”

Some of these processes struck Carthew as unsound; and he was at times altogether thrown out by the capricious startings of the prophet’s mind. These plunges seemed to be gone into for exercise and by the way, like the curvets of a willing horse. Gradually the thing took shape; the glittering if baseless edifice arose; and the hare still ran on the mountains, but the soup was already served in silver plate. Carthew in a few days could command a hundred and fifty pounds; Hadden was ready with five hundred; why should they not recruit a fellow or two more, charter an old ship, and go cruising on their own account? Carthew was an experienced yachtsman; Hadden professed himself able to "work an approximate sight." Money was undoubtedly to be made, or why should so many vessels cruise about the islands? they, who worked their own ship, were sure of a still higher profit.

"And whatever else comes of it, you see," cried Hadden, "we get our keep for nothing. Come, buy some togs, that's the first thing you have to do of course; and then we'll take a hansom and go to the Currency Lass."

"I'm going to stick to the togs I have," said Norris.

"Are you?" cried Hadden. "Well, I must say I admire you. You're a regular sage. It's what you call Pythagoreanism, isn't it? if I haven't forgotten my philosophy."

"Well, I call it economy," returned Carthew. "If we are going to try this thing on, I shall want every sixpence."

"You'll see if we're going to try it!" cried Tommy, rising radiant from table. "Only, mark you, Carthew, it must be all in your name. I have capital, you see; but you're all right. You can play vacuus viator, if the thing goes wrong."

"I thought we had just proved it was quite safe," said Carthew.

"There's nothing safe in business, my boy," replied the sage; "not even bookmaking."

The public house and tea garden called the Currency Lass represented a moderate fortune gained by its proprietor, Captain Bostock, during a long, active, and occasionally historic career among the islands. Anywhere from Tonga to the Admiralty Isles, he knew the ropes and could lie in the native dialect. He had seen the end of sandal wood, the end of oil, and the beginning of copra; and he was himself a commercial pioneer, the first that ever carried human teeth into the Gilberts. He was tried for his life in Fiji in Sir Arthur Gordon's time; and if ever he prayed at all, the name of Sir Arthur was certainly not forgotten. He was speared in seven places in New Ireland — the same time his mate was killed — the famous "outrage on the brig Jolly Roger"; but the treacherous savages made little by their wickedness, and Bostock, in spite of their teeth, got seventy-five head of volunteer labour on board, of whom not more than a dozen died of injuries. He had a hand, besides, in the amiable pleasantry which cost the life of Patteson; and when the sham bishop landed, prayed, and gave his benediction to the natives, Bostock, arrayed in a female chemise out of the traderoom, had stood at his right hand and boomed amens. This, when he was sure he was among good fellows, was his favourite yarn. "Two hundred head of labour for a hatful of amens," he used to name the tale; and its sequel, the death of the real bishop, struck him as a circumstance of extraordinary humour.

Many of these details were communicated in the hansom, to the surprise of Carthew.

"Why do we want to visit this old ruffian?" he asked.

"You wait till you hear him," replied Tommy. "That man knows everything."

On descending from the hansom at the Currency Lass, Hadden was struck with the appearance of the cabman, a gross, salt-looking man, red-faced, blue-eyed, short-handed and short-winded, perhaps nearing forty.

"Surely I know you?" said he. "Have you driven me before?"

"Many's the time, Mr. Hadden," returned the driver. "The last time you was back from the islands, it was me that drove you to the races, sir."

"All right: jump down and have a drink then," said Tom, and he turned and led the way into the garden.

Captain Bostock met the party: he was a slow, sour old man, with fishy eyes; greeted Tommy offhand, and (as was afterwards remembered) exchanged winks with the driver.

"A bottle of beer for the cabman there at that table," said Tom. "Whatever you please from shandygaff to champagne at this one here; and you sit down with us. Let me make you acquainted with my friend, Mr. Carthew. I've come on business, Billy; I want to consult you as a friend; I'm going into the island trade upon my own account."

Doubtless the captain was a mine of counsel, but opportunity was denied him. He could not venture on a statement, he was scarce allowed to finish a phrase, before Hadden swept him from the field with a volley of protest and correction. That projector, his face blazing with inspiration, first laid before him at inordinate length a question, and as soon as he attempted to reply, leaped at his throat, called his facts in question, derided his policy, and at times thundered on him from the heights of moral indignation.

"I beg your pardon," he said once. "I am a gentleman, Mr. Carthew here is a gentleman, and we don't mean to do that class of business. Can't you see who you are talking to? Can't you talk sense? Can't you give us 'a dead bird' for a good traderoom?"

"No, I don't suppose I can," returned old Bostock; "not when I can't hear my own voice for two seconds together. It was gin and guns I did it with."

"Take your gin and guns to Putney!" cried Hadden. "It was the thing in your times, that's right enough; but you're old now, and the game's up. I'll tell you what's wanted now-a-days, Bill Bostock," said he; and did, and took ten minutes to it.

Carthew could not refrain from smiling. He began to think less seriously of the scheme, Hadden appearing too irresponsible a guide; but on the other hand, he enjoyed himself amazingly. It was far from being the same with Captain Bostock.

"You know a sight, don't you?" remarked that gentleman, bitterly, when Tommy paused.

"I know a sight more than you, if that's what you mean," retorted Tom. "It stands to reason I do. You're not a man of any education; you've been all your life at sea or in the islands; you don't suppose you can give points to a man like me?"

"Here's your health, Tommy," returned Bostock. "You'll make an A-one bake in the New Hebrides."

"That's what I call talking," cried Tom, not perhaps grasping the spirit of this doubtful compliment. "Now you give me your attention. We have the money and the enterprise, and I have the experience: what we want is a cheap, smart boat, a good captain, and an introduction to some house that will give us credit for the trade."

"Well, I'll tell you," said Captain Bostock. "I have seen men like you baked and eaten, and complained of afterwards. Some was tough, and some hadn't no flaviour," he added grimly.

"What do you mean by that?" cried Tom.

"I mean I don't care," cried Bostock. "It ain't any of my interests. I haven't underwrote your life. Only I'm blest if I'm not sorry for the cannibal as tries to eat your head. And what I recommend is a cheap, smart coffin and a good undertaker. See if you can find a house to give you credit for a coffin! Look at your friend there; HE'S got some sense; he's laughing at you so as he can't stand."

The exact degree of ill-feeling in Mr. Bostock's mind was difficult to gauge; perhaps there was not much, perhaps he regarded his remarks as a form of courtly badinage. But there is little doubt that Hadden resented them. He had even risen from his place, and the conference was on the point of breaking up, when a new voice joined suddenly in the conversation.

The cabman sat with his back turned upon the party, smoking a meerschaum pipe. Not a word of Tommy's eloquence had missed him, and he now faced suddenly about with these amazing words: —

"Excuse me, gentlemen; if you'll buy me the ship I want, I'll get you the trade on credit."

There was a pause.

"Well, what do YOU, mean?" gasped Tommy.

"Better tell 'em who I am, Billy," said the cabman.

"Think it safe, Joe?" inquired Mr. Bostock.

"I'll take my risk of it," returned the cabman.

"Gentlemen," said Bostock, rising solemnly, "let me make you acquainted with Captain Wicks of the Grace Darling."

"Yes, gentlemen, that is what I am," said the cabman. "You know I've been in trouble; and I don't deny but what I struck the blow, and where was I to get evidence of my provocation? So I turned to and took a cab, and I've driven one for three year now and nobody the wiser."

"I beg your pardon," said Carthew, joining almost for the first time; "I'm a new chum. What was the charge?"

"Murder," said Captain Wicks, "and I don't deny but what I struck the blow. And there's no sense in my trying to deny I was afraid to go to trial, or why would I be here? But it's a fact it was flat mutiny. Ask Billy here. He knows how it was."

Carthew breathed long; he had a strange, half-pleasurable sense of wading deeper in the tide of life. "Well," said he, "you were going on to say?"

"I was going on to say this," said the captain sturdily. "I've overheard what Mr. Hadden has been saying, and I think he talks good sense. I like some of his ideas first chop. He's sound on traderooms; he's all there on the traderoom, and I see that he and I would pull together. Then you're both gentlemen, and I like that," observed Captain Wicks. "And then I'll tell you I'm tired of this cabbing cruise, and I want to get to work again. Now, here's my offer. I've a little money I can stake up, — all of a hundred anyway. Then my old firm will give me trade, and jump at the chance; they never lost by me; they know what I'm worth as supercargo. And, last of all, you want a good captain to sail your ship for you. Well, here I am. I've sailed schooners for ten years. Ask Billy if I can handle a schooner."

"No man better," said Billy.

"And as for my character as a shipmate," concluded Wicks, "go and ask my old firm."

"But look here!" cried Hadden, "how do you mean to manage? You can whisk round in a hansom, and no questions asked. But if you try to come on a quarter-deck, my boy, you'll get nabbed."

"I'll have to keep back till the last," replied Wicks, "and take another name."

"But how about clearing? what other name?" asked Tommy, a little bewildered.

"I don't know yet," returned the captain, with a grin. "I'll see what the name is on my new certificate, and that'll be good enough for me. If I can't get one to buy, though I never heard of such a thing, there's old Kirkup, he's turned some sort of farmer down Bondi way; he'll hire me his."

"You seemed to speak as if you had a ship in view," said Carthew.

"So I have, too," said Captain Wicks, "and a beauty. Schooner yacht Dream; got lines you never saw the beat of; and a witch to go. She passed me once off Thursday Island, doing two knots to my one and laying a point and a half better; and the Grace Darling was a ship that I was proud of. I took and tore my hair. The Dream's been MY dream ever since. That was in her old days, when she carried a blue ens'n. Grant Sanderson was the party as owned her; he was rich and mad, and got a fever at last somewhere about the Fly River, and took and died. The captain brought the body back to Sydney, and paid off. Well, it turned out Grant Sanderson had left any quantity of wills and any quantity of widows, and no fellow could make out which was the genuine article. All the widows brought lawsuits against all the rest, and every will had a firm of lawyers on the quarterdeck as long as your arm. They tell me it was one of the biggest turns-to that ever was seen, bar Tichborne; the Lord Chamberlain himself was floored, and so was the Lord Chancellor; and all that time the Dream lay rotting up by Glebe Point. Well, it's done now; they've picked out a widow and a will; tossed up for it, as like as not; and the Dream's for sale. She'll go cheap; she's had a long turn-to at rotting."

"What size is she?"

"Well, big enough. We don't want her bigger. A hundred and ninety, going two hundred," replied the captain. "She's fully big for us three; it would be all the better if we had another hand, though it's a pity too, when you can pick up natives for half nothing. Then we must have a cook. I can fix raw sailor-men, but there's no going to sea with a new-chum cook. I can lay hands on the man we want for that: a Highway boy, an old shipmate of mine, of the name of Amalu. Cooks first rate, and it's always better to have a native; he aint fly, you can turn him to as you please, and he don't know enough to stand out for his rights."

From the moment that Captain Wicks joined in the conversation, Carthew recovered interest and confidence; the man (whatever he might have done) was plainly good-natured, and plainly capable; if he thought well of the enterprise, offered to contribute money, brought experience, and could thus solve at a word the problem of the trade, Carthew was content to go ahead. As for Hadden, his cup was full; he and Bostock forgave each other in champagne; toast followed toast; it was proposed and carried amid acclamation to change the name of the schooner (when she should be bought) to the Currency Lass; and the Currency Lass Island Trading Company was practically founded before dusk.

Three days later, Carthew stood before the lawyer, still in his jean suit, received his hundred and fifty pounds, and proceeded rather timidly to ask for more indulgence.

"I have a chance to get on in the world," he said. "By to-morrow evening I expect to be part owner of a ship."

"Dangerous property, Mr. Carthew," said the lawyer.

"Not if the partners work her themselves and stand to go down along with her," was the reply.

"I conceive it possible you might make something of it in that way," returned the other. "But are you a seaman? I thought you had been in the diplomatic service."

"I am an old yachtsman," said Norris. "And I must do the best I can. A fellow can't live in New South Wales upon diplomacy. But the point I wish to prepare you for is this. It will be impossible I should present myself here next quarter-day; we expect to make a six months' cruise of it among the islands."

"Sorry, Mr. Carthew: I can't hear of that," replied the lawyer.

"I mean upon the same conditions as the last," said Carthew.

"The conditions are exactly opposite," said the lawyer. "Last time I had reason to know you were in the colony; and even then I stretched a point. This time, by your own confession, you are contemplating a breach of the agreement; and I give you warning if you carry it out and I receive proof of it (for I will agree to regard this conversation as confidential) I shall have no choice but to do my duty. Be here on quarter-day, or your allowance ceases."

"This is very hard and, I think, rather silly," returned Carthew.

"It is not of my doing. I have my instructions," said the lawyer.

"And you so read these instructions, that I am to be prohibited from making an honest livelihood?" asked Carthew.

"Let us be frank," said the lawyer. "I find nothing in these instructions about an honest livelihood. I have no reason to suppose my clients care anything about that. I have reason to suppose only one thing, — that they mean you shall stay in this colony, and to guess another, Mr. Carthew. And to guess another."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Norris.

"I mean that I imagine, on very strong grounds, that your family desire to see no more of you," said the lawyer. "O, they may be very wrong; but that is the impression conveyed, that is what I suppose I am paid to bring about, and I have no choice but to try and earn my hire."

"I would scorn to deceive you," said Norris, with a strong flush, "you have guessed rightly. My family refuse to see me; but I am not going to England, I am going to the islands. How does that affect the islands?"

"Ah, but I don't know that you are going to the islands," said the lawyer, looking down, and spearing the blotting-paper with a pencil.

"I beg your pardon. I have the pleasure of informing you," said Norris.

"I am afraid, Mr. Carthew, that I cannot regard that communication as official," was the slow reply.

"I am not accustomed to have my word doubted!" cried Norris.

"Hush! I allow no one to raise his voice in my office," said the lawyer. "And for that matter — you seem to be a young gentleman of sense — consider what I know of you. You are a discarded son; your family pays money to be shut of you. What have you done? I don't know. But do you not see how foolish I should be, if I exposed my business reputation on the safeguard of the honour of a gentleman of whom I know just so much and no more? This interview is very disagreeable. Why prolong it? Write home, get my instructions changed, and I will change my behaviour. Not otherwise."

"I am very fond of three hundred a year," said Norris, "but I cannot pay the price required. I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you again."

"You must please yourself," said the lawyer. "Fail to be here next quarter-day, and the thing stops. But I warn you, and I mean the warning in a friendly spirit. Three months later you will be here begging, and I shall have no choice but to show you in the street."

"I wish you a good-evening," said Norris.

"The same to you, Mr. Carthew," retorted the lawyer, and rang for his clerk.

So it befell that Norris during what remained to him of arduous days in Sydney, saw not again the face of his legal adviser; and he was already at sea, and land was out of sight, when Hadden brought him a Sydney paper, over which he had been dozing in the shadow of the galley, and showed him an advertisement.

"Mr. Norris Carthew is earnestly entreated to call without delay at the office of Mr. — — , where important intelligence awaits him."

"It must manage to wait for me six months," said Norris, lightly enough, but yet conscious of a pang of curiosity.

CHAPTER XXIII. THE BUDGET OF THE "CURRENCY LASS."

Before noon on the 26th November, there cleared from the port of Sydney the schooner, Currency Lass. The owner, Norris Carthew, was on board in the somewhat unusual position of mate; the master's name purported to be William Kirkup; the cook was a Hawaiian boy, Joseph Amalu; and there were two hands before the mast, Thomas Hadden and Richard Hemstead, the latter chosen partly because of his humble character, partly because he had an odd-job-man's handiness with tools. The Currency Lass was bound for the South Sea Islands, and first of all for Butaritari in the Gilberts, on a register; but it was understood about the harbour that her cruise was more than half a pleasure trip. A friend of the late Grant Sanderson (of Auchentroon and Kilclarty) might have recognised in that tall-masted ship, the transformed and rechristened Dream; and the Lloyd's surveyor, had the services of such a one been called in requisition, must have found abundant subject of remark.

For time, during her three years' inaction, had eaten deep into the Dream and her fittings; she had sold in consequence a shade above her value as old junk; and the three adventurers had scarce been able to afford even the most vital repairs. The rigging, indeed, had been partly renewed, and the rest set up; all Grant Sanderson's old canvas had been patched together into one decently serviceable suit of sails; Grant Sanderson's masts still stood, and might have wondered at themselves. "I haven't the heart to tap them," Captain Wicks used to observe, as he squinted up their height or patted their rotundity; and "as rotten as our foremast" was an accepted metaphor in the ship's company. The sequel rather suggests it may have been sounder than was thought; but no one knew for certain, just as no one except the captain appreciated the dangers of the cruise. The captain, indeed, saw with clear eyes and spoke his mind aloud; and though a man of an astonishing hot-blooded courage, following life and taking its dangers in the spirit of a hound upon the slot, he had made a point of a big whaleboat. "Take your choice," he had said; "either new masts and rigging or that boat. I simply ain't going to sea without the one or the other. Chicken coops are good enough, no doubt, and so is a dinghy; but they ain't for Joe." And his partners had been forced to consent, and saw six and thirty pounds of their small capital vanish in the turn of a hand.

All four had toiled the best part of six weeks getting ready; and though Captain Wicks was of course not seen or heard of, a fifth was there to help them, a fellow in a bushy red beard, which he would sometimes lay aside when he was below, and who strikingly resembled Captain Wicks in voice and character. As for Captain Kirkup, he did not appear till the last moment, when he proved to be a burly mariner, bearded like Abou Ben Adhem. All the way down the harbour and through the Heads, his milk-white whiskers blew in the wind and were conspicuous from shore; but the Currency Lass had no sooner turned her back upon the lighthouse, than he went below for the inside of five seconds and reappeared clean shaven. So many doublings and devices were required to get to sea with an unseaworthy ship and a captain that was "wanted." Nor might even these have sufficed, but for the fact that Hadden was a public character, and the whole cruise regarded with an eye of indulgence as one of Tom's engaging eccentricities. The ship, besides, had been a yacht before; and it came the more natural to allow her still some of the dangerous liberties of her old employment.

A strange ship they had made of it, her lofty spars disfigured with patched canvas, her panelled cabin fitted for a traderoom with rude shelves. And the life they led in that anomalous schooner was no less curious than herself. Amalu alone berthed forward; the rest occupied staterooms, camped upon the satin divans, and sat down in Grant Sanderson's parquetry smoking-room to meals of junk and potatoes, bad of their kind and often scant in quantity. Hemstead grumbled; Tommy had occasional moments of revolt and increased the ordinary by a few haphazard tins or a bottle of his own brown sherry. But Hemstead grumbled from habit, Tommy revolted only for the moment, and there was underneath a real and general acquiescence in these hardships. For besides onions and potatoes, the Currency Lass may be said to have gone to sea without stores. She carried two thousand pounds' worth of assorted trade, advanced on credit, their whole hope and fortune. It was upon this that they subsisted — mice in their own granary. They dined upon their future profits; and every scanty meal was so much in the savings bank.

Republican as were their manners, there was no practical, at least no dangerous, lack of discipline. Wicks was the only sailor on board, there was none to criticise; and besides, he was so easy-going, and so merry-minded, that none could bear to disappoint him. Carthew did his best, partly for the love of doing it, partly for love of the captain; Amalu was a willing drudge, and even Hemstead and Hadden turned to upon occasion with a will. Tommy's department was the trade and traderoom; he would work down in the hold or over the shelves of the cabin, till the Sydney dandy was unrecognizable; come up at last, draw a bucket of sea-water, bathe, change, and lie down on deck over a big sheaf of Sydney *Heralds* and *Dead Birds*, or perhaps with a volume of Buckle's *History of Civilisation*, the standard work selected for that cruise. In the latter case, a smile went round the ship, for Buckle almost invariably laid his student out, and when Tom awoke again he was almost always in the humour for brown sherry. The connection was so well established that "a glass of Buckle" or "a bottle of civilisation" became current pleasantries on board the Currency Lass.

Hemstead's province was that of the repairs, and he had his hands full. Nothing on board but was decayed in a proportion; the lamps leaked; so did the decks; door-knobs came off in the hand, mouldings parted company with the panels, the pump declined to suck, and the defective bathroom came near to swamp the ship. Wicks insisted that all the nails were long ago consumed, and that she was only glued together by the rust. "You shouldn't make me laugh so much, Tommy," he would say. "I'm afraid I'll shake the sternpost out of her." And, as Hemstead went to and fro with his tool basket on an endless round of tinkering, Wicks lost no opportunity of chaffing him upon his duties. "If you'd turn to at sailoring or washing paint or something useful, now," he would say, "I could see the fun of it. But to be mending things that haven't no insides to them appears to me the height of foolishness." And doubtless these continual pleasantries helped to reassure the landsmen, who went to and fro unmoved, under circumstances that might have daunted Nelson.

The weather was from the outset splendid, and the wind fair and steady. The ship sailed like a witch. "This Currency Lass is a powerful old girl, and has more complaints than I would care to put a name on," the captain would say, as he pricked the chart; "but she could show her blooming heels to anything of her size in the Western Pacific." To wash decks, relieve the wheel, do the day's work after dinner on the smoking-room table, and take in kites at night, — such was the easy routine of their life. In the evening — above all, if Tommy had produced some of his civilisation — yarns and music were the rule. Amalu had a sweet Hawaiian voice; and Hemstead, a great hand upon the banjo, accompanied his own quavering tenor with effect. There was a sense in which the little man could sing. It was great to hear him deliver *My Boy Tammie* in Austrylian; and the words (some of the worst of the ruffian Macneil's) were hailed in his version with inextinguishable mirth.

Where hye ye been a' dye?

he would ask, and answer himself: —

I've been by burn and flowery brye,
Meadow green an' mountain grye,
Courtin' o' this young thing,

Just come frye her mammie.

It was the accepted jest for all hands to greet the conclusion of this song with the simultaneous cry: “My word!” thus winging the arrow of ridicule with a feather from the singer’s wing. But he had his revenge with *Home, Sweet Home,* and *Where is my Wandering Boy To-night?* — ditties into which he threw the most intolerable pathos. It appeared he had no home, nor had ever had one, nor yet any vestige of a family, except a truculent uncle, a baker in Newcastle, N.S.W. His domestic sentiment was therefore wholly in the air, and expressed an unrealised ideal. Or perhaps, of all his experiences, this of the Currency Lass, with its kindly, playful, and tolerant society, approached it the most nearly.

It is perhaps because I know the sequel, but I can never think upon this voyage without a profound sense of pity and mystery; of the ship (once the whim of a rich blackguard) faring with her battered fineries and upon her homely errand, across the plains of ocean, and past the gorgeous scenery of dawn and sunset; and the ship’s company, so strangely assembled, so Britishly chuckle-headed, filling their days with chaff in place of conversation; no human book on board with them except Hadden’s Buckle, and not a creature fit either to read or to understand it; and the one mark of any civilised interest, being when Carthew filled in his spare hours with the pencil and the brush: the whole unconscious crew of them posting in the meanwhile towards so tragic a disaster.

Twenty-eight days out of Sydney, on Christmas eve, they fetched up to the entrance of the lagoon, and plied all that night outside, keeping their position by the lights of fishers on the reef and the outlines of the palms against the cloudy sky. With the break of day, the schooner was hove to, and the signal for a pilot shown. But it was plain her lights must have been observed in the darkness by the native fishermen, and word carried to the settlement, for a boat was already under weigh. She came towards them across the lagoon under a great press of sail, lying dangerously down, so that at times, in the heavier puffs, they thought she would turn turtle; covered the distance in fine style, luffed up smartly alongside, and emitted a haggard looking white man in pyjamas.

“Good-mornin’, Cap’n,” said he, when he had made good his entrance. “I was taking you for a Fiji man-of-war, what with your flush decks and them spars. Well, gen’lemen all, here’s wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,” he added, and lurched against a stay.

“Why, you’re never the pilot?” exclaimed Wicks, studying him with a profound disfavour. “You’ve never taken a ship in — don’t tell me!”

“Well, I should guess I have,” returned the pilot. “I’m Captain

Dobbs, I am; and when I take charge, the captain of that ship can go below and shave."

"But, man alive! you're drunk, man!" cried the captain.

"Drunk!" repeated Dobbs. "You can't have seen much life if you call me drunk. I'm only just beginning. Come night, I won't say; I guess I'll be properly full by then. But now I'm the soberest man in all Big Muggin."

"It won't do," retorted Wicks. "Not for Joseph, sir. I can't have you piling up my schooner."

"All right," said Dobbs, "lay and rot where you are, or take and go in and pile her up for yourself like the captain of the Leslie. That's business, I guess; grudged me twenty dollars' pilotage, and lost twenty thousand in trade and a brand new schooner; ripped the keel right off of her, and she went down in the inside of four minutes, and lies in twenty fathom, trade and all."

"What's all this?" cried Wicks. "Trade? What vessel was this Leslie, anyhow?"

"Consigned to Cohen and Co., from 'Frisco," returned the pilot, "and badly wanted. There's a barque inside filling up for Hamburg — you see her spars over there; and there's two more ships due, all the way from Germany, one in two months, they say, and one in three; Cohen and Co.'s agent (that's Mr. Topelius) has taken and lain down with the jaundice on the strength of it. I guess most people would, in his shoes; no trade, no copra, and twenty hundred ton of shipping due. If you've any copra on board, cap'n, here's your chance. Topelius will buy, gold down, and give three cents. It's all found money to him, the way it is, whatever he pays for it. And that's what come of going back on the pilot."

"Excuse me one moment, Captain Dobbs. I wish to speak with my mate," said the captain, whose face had begun to shine and his eyes to sparkle.

"Please yourself," replied the pilot. "You couldn't think of offering a man a nip, could you? just to brace him up. This kind of thing looks damned inhospitable, and gives a schooner a bad name."

"I'll talk about that after the anchor's down," returned Wicks, and he drew Carthew forward. "I say," he whispered, "here's a fortune."

"How much do you call that?" asked Carthew.

"I can't put a figure on it yet — I daren't!" said the captain. "We might cruise twenty years and not find the match of it. And suppose another ship came in to-night? Everything's possible! And the difficulty is this Dobbs. He's as drunk as a marine. How can we trust him? We ain't insured — worse luck!"

"Suppose you took him aloft and got him to point out the channel?" suggested Carthew. "If he tallied at all with the chart, and didn't fall out of the rigging, perhaps we might risk it."

"Well, all's risk here," returned the captain. "Take the wheel yourself, and stand by. Mind, if there's two orders, follow mine, not his. Set the cook for'ard with the heads'ls, and the two others at the main sheet, and see they don't sit on it." With that he called the pilot; they swarmed aloft in the fore rigging, and presently after there was bawled down the welcome order to ease sheets and fill away.

At a quarter before nine o'clock on Christmas morning the anchor was let go.

The first cruise of the Currency Lass had thus ended in a stroke of fortune almost beyond hope. She had brought two thousand pounds' worth of trade, straight as a homing pigeon, to the place where it was most required. And Captain Wicks (or, rather, Captain Kirkup) showed himself the man to make the best of his advantage. For hard upon two days he walked a verandah with Topelius, for hard upon two days his partners watched from the neighbouring public house the field of battle; and the lamps were not yet lighted on the evening of the second before the enemy surrendered. Wicks came across to the Sans Souci, as the saloon was called, his face nigh black, his eyes almost closed and all bloodshot, and yet bright as lighted matches.

"Come out here, boys," he said; and when they were some way off among the palms, "I hold twenty-four," he added in a voice scarcely recognizable, and doubtless referring to the venerable game of cribbage.

"What do you mean?" asked Tommy.

"I've sold the trade," answered Wicks; "or, rather, I've sold only some of it, for I've kept back all the mess beef and half the flour and biscuit; and, by God, we're still provisioned for four months! By God, it's as good as stolen!"

"My word!" cried Hemstead.

"But what have you sold it for?" gasped Carthew, the captain's almost insane excitement shaking his nerve.

"Let me tell it my own way," cried Wicks, loosening his neck. "Let me get at it gradual, or I'll explode. I've not only sold it, boys, I've wrung out a charter on my own terms to 'Frisco and back; on my own terms. I made a point of it. I fooled him first by making believe I wanted copra, which of course I knew he wouldn't hear of — couldn't, in fact; and whenever he showed fight, I trotted out the copra, and that man dived! I would take nothing but copra, you see; and so I've got the blooming lot in specie — all but two short bills on 'Frisco. And the sum? Well, this whole adventure, including two thousand pounds of credit, cost us two thousand seven hundred and some odd. That's all paid back; in thirty days' cruise we've paid for the schooner and the trade. Heard ever any man the match of that? And it's not all! For besides that," said the captain, hammering his words, "we've got Thirteen Blooming Hundred Pounds of profit to divide. I bled him in four Thou.!" he cried, in a voice that broke like a schoolboy's.

For a moment the partners looked upon their chief with stupefaction, incredulous surprise their only feeling. Tommy was the first to grasp the consequences.

"Here," he said, in a hard, business tone. "Come back to that saloon. I've got to get drunk."

"You must please excuse me, boys," said the captain, earnestly. "I daren't taste nothing. If I was to drink one glass of beer, it's my belief I'd have the apoplexy. The last scrimmage, and the blooming triumph, pretty nigh hand done me."

"Well, then, three cheers for the captain," proposed Tommy.

But Wicks held up a shaking hand. "Not that either, boys," he pleaded. "Think of the other buffer, and let him down easy. If I'm like this, just fancy what Topelius is! If he heard us singing out, he'd have the staggers."

As a matter of fact, Topelius accepted his defeat with a good grace; but the crew of the wrecked Leslie, who were in the same employment and loyal to their firm, took the thing more bitterly. Rough words and ugly looks were common. Once even they hooted Captain Wicks from the saloon verandah; the Currency Lasses drew out on the other side; for some minutes there had like to have been a battle in Butaritari; and though the occasion passed off without blows, it left on either side an increase of ill-feeling.

No such small matter could affect the happiness of the successful traders. Five days more the ship lay in the lagoon, with little employment for any one but Tommy and the captain, for Topelius's natives discharged cargo and brought ballast; the time passed like a pleasant dream; the adventurers sat up half the night debating and praising their good fortune, or strayed by day in the narrow isle, gaping like Cockney tourists; and on the first of the new year, the Currency Lass weighed anchor for the second time and set sail for 'Frisco, attended by the same fine weather and good luck. She crossed the doldrums with but small delay; on a wind and in ballast of broken coral, she outdid expectations; and, what added to the happiness of the ship's company, the small amount of work that fell on them to do, was now lessened by the presence of another hand. This was the boatswain of the Leslie; he had been on bad terms with his own captain, had already spent his wages in the saloons of Butaritari, had wearied of the place, and while all his shipmates coldly refused to set foot on board the Currency Lass, he had offered to work his passage to the coast. He was a north of Ireland man, between Scotch and Irish, rough, loud, humorous, and emotional, not without sterling qualities, and an expert and careful sailor. His frame of mind was different indeed from that of his new shipmates; instead of making an unexpected fortune, he had lost a berth; and he was besides disgusted with the rations, and really appalled at the condition of the schooner. A stateroom door had stuck, the first day at sea, and Mac (as they called him) laid his strength to it and plucked it from the hinges.

"Glory!" said he, "this ship's rotten."

"I believe you, my boy," said Captain Wicks.

The next day the sailor was observed with his nose aloft.

"Don't you get looking at these sticks," the captain said, "or you'll have a fit and fall overboard."

Mac turned towards the speaker with rather a wild eye. "Why, I see what looks like a patch of dry rot up yonder, that I bet I could stick my fist into," said he.

"Looks as if a fellow could stick his head into it, don't it?" returned Wicks. "But there's no good prying into things that can't be mended."

"I think I was a Currency Ass to come on board of her!" reflected Mac.

"Well, I never said she was seaworthy," replied the captain: "I only said she could show her blooming heels to anything afloat. And besides, I don't know that it's dry rot; I kind of sometimes hope it isn't. Here; turn to and heave the log; that'll cheer you up."

"Well, there's no denying it, you're a holy captain," said Mac.

And from that day on, he made but the one reference to the ship's condition; and that was whenever Tommy drew upon his cellar. "Here's to the junk trade!" he would say, as he held out his can of sherry.

"Why do you always say that?" asked Tommy.

"I had an uncle in the business," replied Mac, and launched at once into a yarn, in which an incredible number of the characters were "laid out as nice as you would want to see," and the oaths made up about two-fifths of every conversation.

Only once he gave them a taste of his violence; he talked of it, indeed, often; "I'm rather a voilent man," he would say, not without pride; but this was the only specimen. Of a sudden, he turned on Hemstead in the ship's waist, knocked him against the foresail boom, then knocked him under it, and had set him up and knocked him down once more, before any one had drawn a breath.

"Here! Belay that!" roared Wicks, leaping to his feet. "I won't have none of this."

Mac turned to the captain with ready civility. "I only want to learn him manners," said he. "He took and called me Irishman."

"Did he?" said Wicks. "O, that's a different story! What made you do it, you tomfool? You ain't big enough to call any man that."

"I didn't call him it," spluttered Hemstead, through his blood and tears. "I only mentioned-like he was."

"Well, let's have no more of it," said Wicks.

"But you ARE Irish, ain't you?" Carthew asked of his new shipmate shortly after.

"I may be," replied Mac, "but I'll allow no Sydney duck to call me so. No," he added, with a sudden heated countenance, "nor any Britisher that walks! Why, look here," he went on, "you're a young swell, aren't you? Suppose I called you that! 'I'll show you,' you would say, and turn to and take it out of me straight."

On the 28th of January, when in lat. 27 degrees 20' N., long. 177 degrees W., the wind chopped suddenly into the west, not very strong, but puffy and with flaws of rain. The captain, eager for easting, made a fair wind of it and guyed the booms out wing and wing. It was Tommy's trick at the wheel, and as it was within half an hour of the relief (seven thirty in the morning), the captain judged it not worth while to change him.

The puffs were heavy but short; there was nothing to be called a squall, no danger to the ship, and scarce more than usual to the doubtful spars. All hands were on deck in their oilskins, expecting breakfast; the galley smoked, the ship smelt of coffee, all were in good humour to be speeding eastward a full nine; when the rotten foresail tore suddenly between two cloths and then split to either hand. It was for all the world as though some archangel with a huge sword had slashed it with the figure of a cross; all hands ran to secure the slatting canvas; and in the sudden uproar and alert, Tommy Hadden lost his head. Many of his days have been passed since then in explaining how the thing happened; of these explanations it will be sufficient to say that they were all different and none satisfactory; and the gross fact remains that the main boom gybed, carried away the tackle, broke the mainmast some three feet above the deck and whipped it overboard. For near a minute the suspected foremast gallantly resisted; then followed its companion; and by the time the wreck was cleared, of the whole beautiful fabric that enabled them to skim the seas, two ragged stumps remained.

In these vast and solitary waters, to be dismasted is perhaps the worst calamity. Let the ship turn turtle and go down, and at least the pang is over. But men chained on a hulk may pass months scanning the empty sea line and counting the steps of death's invisible approach. There is no help but in the boats, and what a help is that! There heaved the Currency Lass, for instance, a wingless lump, and the nearest human coast (that of Kauai in the Sandwiches) lay about a thousand miles to south and east of her. Over the way there, to men contemplating that passage in an open boat, all kinds of misery, and the fear of death and of madness, brooded.

A serious company sat down to breakfast; but the captain helped his neighbours with a smile.

"Now, boys," he said, after a pull at the hot coffee, "we're done with this Currency Lass, and no mistake. One good job: we made her pay while she lasted, and she paid first rate; and if we were to try our hand again, we can try in style. Another good job: we have a fine, stiff, roomy boat, and you know who you have to thank for that. We've got six lives to save, and a pot of money; and the point is, where are we to take 'em?"

"It's all two thousand miles to the nearest of the Sandwiches, I fancy," observed Mac.

"No, not so bad as that," returned the captain. "But it's bad enough: rather better'n a thousand."

"I know a man who once did twelve hundred in a boat," said Mac, "and he had all he wanted. He fetched ashore in the Marquesas, and never set a foot on anything floating from that day to this. He said he would rather put a pistol to his head and knock his brains out."

"Ay, ay!" said Wicks. "Well I remember a boat's crew that made this very island of Kauai, and from just about where we lie, or a bit further. When they got up with the land, they were clean crazy. There was an iron-bound coast and an Old Bob Ridley of a surf on. The natives hailed 'em from fishing-boats, and sung out it couldn't be done at the money. Much they cared! there was the land, that was all they knew; and they turned to and drove the boat slap ashore in the thick of it, and was all drowned but one. No; boat trips are my eye," concluded the captain, gloomily.

The tone was surprising in a man of his indomitable temper. "Come, Captain," said Carthew, "you have something else up your sleeve; out with it!"

"It's a fact," admitted Wicks. "You see there's a raft of little bally reefs about here, kind of chicken-pox on the chart. Well, I looked 'em all up, and there's one — Midway or Brooks they call it, not forty mile from our assigned position — that I got news of. It turns out it's a coaling station of the Pacific Mail," he said, simply.

"Well, and I know it ain't no such a thing," said Mac. "I been quartermaster in that line myself."

"All right," returned Wicks. "There's the book. Read what Hoyt says — read it aloud and let the others hear."

Hoyt's falsehood (as readers know) was explicit; incredulity was impossible, and the news itself delightful beyond hope. Each saw in his mind's eye the boat draw in to a trim island with a wharf, coal-sheds, gardens, the Stars and Stripes and the white cottage of the keeper; saw themselves idle a few weeks in tolerable quarters, and then step on board the China mail, romantic waifs, and yet with pocketsful of money, calling for champagne, and waited on by troops of stewards. Breakfast, that had begun so dully, ended amid sober jubilation, and all hands turned immediately to prepare the boat.

Now that all spars were gone, it was no easy job to get her launched. Some of the necessary cargo was first stowed on board; the specie, in particular, being packed in a strong chest and secured with lashings to the afterthwart in case of a capsize. Then a piece of the bulwark was razed to the level of the deck, and the boat swung thwart-ship, made fast with a slack line to either stump, and successfully run out. For a voyage of forty miles to hospitable quarters, not much food or water was required; but they took both in superfluity. Amalu and Mac, both ingrained sailor-men, had chests which were the headquarters of their lives; two more chests with handbags, oilskins, and blankets supplied the others; Hadden, amid general applause, added the last case of the brown sherry; the captain brought the log, instruments, and chronometer; nor did Hemstead forget the banjo or a pinned handkerchief of Butaritari shells.

It was about three P.M. when they pushed off, and (the wind being still westerly) fell to the oars. “Well, we’ve got the guts out of YOU!” was the captain’s nodded farewell to the hulk of the Currency Lass, which presently shrank and faded in the sea. A little after a calm succeeded, with much rain; and the first meal was eaten, and the watch below lay down to their uneasy slumber on the bilge under a roaring shower-bath. The twenty-ninth dawned overhead from out of ragged clouds; there is no moment when a boat at sea appears so trenchantly black and so conspicuously little; and the crew looked about them at the sky and water with a thrill of loneliness and fear. With sunrise the trade set in, lusty and true to the point; sail was made; the boat flew; and by about four in the afternoon, they were well up with the closed part of the reef, and the captain standing on the thwart, and holding by the mast, was studying the island through the binoculars.

“Well, and where’s your station?” cried Mac.

“I don’t someway pick it up,” replied the captain.

“No, nor never will!” retorted Mac, with a clang of despair and triumph in his tones.

The truth was soon plain to all. No buoys, no beacons, no lights, no coal, no station; the castaways pulled through a lagoon and landed on an isle, where was no mark of man but wreckwood, and no sound but of the sea. For the seafowl that harboured and lived there at the epoch of my visit were then scattered into the uttermost parts of the ocean, and had left no traces of their sojourn besides dropped feathers and addled eggs. It was to this they had been sent, for this they had stooped all night over the dripping oars, hourly moving further from relief. The boat, for as small as it was, was yet eloquent of the hands of men, a thing alone indeed upon the sea but yet in itself all human; and the isle, for which they had exchanged it, was ingloriously savage, a place of distress, solitude, and hunger unrelieved. There was a strong glare and shadow of the evening over all; in which they sat or lay, not speaking, careless even to eat, men swindled out of life and riches by a lying book. In the great good nature of the whole party, no word of reproach had been addressed to Hadden, the author of these disasters. But the new blow was less magnanimously borne, and many angry glances rested on the captain.

Yet it was himself who roused them from their lethargy. Grudgingly they obeyed, drew the boat beyond tidemark, and followed him to the top of the miserable islet, whence a view was commanded of the whole wheel of the horizon, then part darkened under the coming night, part dyed with the hues of the sunset and populous with the sunset clouds. Here the camp was pitched and a tent run up with the oars, sails, and mast. And here Amalu, at no man's bidding, from the mere instinct of habitual service, built a fire and cooked a meal. Night was come, and the stars and the silver sickle of new moon beamed overhead, before the meal was ready. The cold sea shone about them, and the fire glowed in their faces, as they ate. Tommy had opened his case, and the brown sherry went the round; but it was long before they came to conversation.

"Well, is it to be Kauai after all?" asked Mac suddenly.

"This is bad enough for me," said Tommy. "Let's stick it out where we are."

"Well, I can tell ye one thing," said Mac, "if ye care to hear it. When I was in the China mail, we once made this island. It's in the course from Honolulu."

"Deuce it is!" cried Carthew. "That settles it, then. Let's stay. We must keep good fires going; and there's plenty wreck."

"Lashings of wreck!" said the Irishman. "There's nothing here but wreck and coffin boards."

"But we'll have to make a proper blyze," objected Hemstead. "You can't see a fire like this, not any wye awye, I mean."

"Can't you?" said Carthew. "Look round."

They did, and saw the hollow of the night, the bare, bright face of the sea, and the stars regarding them; and the voices died in their bosoms at the spectacle. In that huge isolation, it seemed they must be visible from China on the one hand and California on the other.

"My God, it's dreary!" whispered Hemstead.

"Dreary?" cried Mac, and fell suddenly silent.

"It's better than a boat, anyway," said Hadden. "I've had my bellyful of boat.”

“What kills me is that specie!” the captain broke out. “Think of all that riches, — four thousand in gold, bad silver, and short bills — all found money, too! — and no more use than that much dung!”

“I’ll tell you one thing,” said Tommy. “I don’t like it being in the boat — I don’t care to have it so far away.”

“Why, who’s to take it?” cried Mac, with a guffaw of evil laughter.

But this was not at all the feeling of the partners, who rose, clambered down the isle, brought back the inestimable treasure-chest slung upon two oars, and set it conspicuous in the shining of the fire.

“There’s my beauty!” cried Wicks, viewing it with a cocked head. “That’s better than a bonfire. What! we have a chest here, and bills for close upon two thousand pounds; there’s no show to that, — it would go in your vest-pocket, — but the rest! upwards of forty pounds avoirdupois of coined gold, and close on two hundredweight of Chile silver! What! ain’t that good enough to fetch a fleet? Do you mean to say that won’t affect a ship’s compass? Do you mean to tell me that the lookout won’t turn to and SMELL it?” he cried.

Mac, who had no part nor lot in the bills, the forty pounds of gold, or the two hundredweight of silver, heard this with impatience, and fell into a bitter, choking laughter. “You’ll see!” he said harshly. “You’ll be glad to feed them bills into the fire before you’re through with ut!” And he turned, passed by himself out of the ring of the firelight, and stood gazing seaward.

His speech and his departure extinguished instantly those sparks of better humour kindled by the dinner and the chest. The group fell again to an ill-favoured silence, and Hemstead began to touch the banjo, as was his habit of an evening. His repertory was small: the chords of *Home, Sweet Home* fell under his fingers; and when he had played the symphony, he instinctively raised up his voice. “Be it never so ‘umble, there’s no plyce like ‘ome,” he sang. The last word was still upon his lips, when the instrument was snatched from him and dashed into the fire; and he turned with a cry to look into the furious countenance of Mac.

“I’ll be damned if I stand this!” cried the captain, leaping up belligerent.

“I told ye I was a voilent man,” said Mac, with a movement of deprecation very surprising in one of his character. “Why don’t he give me a chance then? Haven’t we enough to bear the way we are?” And to the wonder and dismay of all, the man choked upon a sob. “It’s ashamed of meself I am,” he said presently, his Irish accent twenty-fold increased. “I ask all your pardons for me voilence; and especially the little man’s, who is a harmless crayture, and here’s me hand to’m, if he’ll condescind to take me by ‘t.”

So this scene of barbarity and sentimentalism passed off, leaving behind strange and incongruous impressions. True, every one was perhaps glad when silence succeeded that all too appropriate music; true, Mac's apology and subsequent behaviour rather raised him in the opinion of his fellow-castaways. But the discordant note had been struck, and its harmonics tingled in the brain. In that savage, houseless isle, the passions of man had sounded, if only for the moment, and all men trembled at the possibilities of horror.

It was determined to stand watch and watch in case of passing vessels; and Tommy, on fire with an idea, volunteered to stand the first. The rest crawled under the tent, and were soon enjoying that comfortable gift of sleep, which comes everywhere and to all men, quenching anxieties and speeding time. And no sooner were all settled, no sooner had the drone of many snorers begun to mingle with and overcome the surf, than Tommy stole from his post with the case of sherry, and dropped it in a quiet cove in a fathom of water. But the stormy inconstancy of Mac's behaviour had no connection with a gill or two of wine; his passions, angry and otherwise, were on a different sail plan from his neighbours'; and there were possibilities of good and evil in that hybrid Celt beyond their prophecy.

About two in the morning, the starry sky — or so it seemed, for the drowsy watchman had not observed the approach of any cloud — brimmed over in a deluge; and for three days it rained without remission. The islet was a sponge, the castaways sops; the view all gone, even the reef concealed behind the curtain of the falling water. The fire was soon drowned out; after a couple of boxes of matches had been scratched in vain, it was decided to wait for better weather; and the party lived in wretchedness on raw tins and a ration of hard bread.

By the 2nd February, in the dark hours of the morning watch, the clouds were all blown by; the sun rose glorious; and once more the castaways sat by a quick fire, and drank hot coffee with the greed of brutes and sufferers. Thenceforward their affairs moved in a routine. A fire was constantly maintained; and this occupied one hand continuously, and the others for an hour or so in the day. Twice a day, all hands bathed in the lagoon, their chief, almost their only pleasure. Often they fished in the lagoon with good success. And the rest was passed in lolling, strolling, yarns, and disputation. The time of the China steamers was calculated to a nicety; which done, the thought was rejected and ignored. It was one that would not bear consideration. The boat voyage having been tacitly set aside, the desperate part chosen to wait there for the coming of help or of starvation, no man had courage left to look his bargain in the face, far less to discuss it with his neighbours. But the unuttered terror haunted them; in every hour of idleness, at every moment of silence, it returned, and breathed a chill about the circle, and carried men's eyes to the horizon. Then, in a panic of self-defence, they would rally to some other subject. And, in that lone spot, what else was to be found to speak of but the treasure?

That was indeed the chief singularity, the one thing conspicuous in their island life; the presence of that chest of bills and specie dominated the mind like a cathedral; and there were besides connected with it, certain irking problems well fitted to occupy the idle. Two thousand pounds were due to the Sydney firm: two thousand pounds were clear profit, and fell to be divided in varying proportions among six. It had been agreed how the partners were to range; every pound of capital subscribed, every pound that fell due in wages, was to count for one "lay." Of these, Tommy could claim five hundred and ten, Carthew one hundred and seventy, Wicks one hundred and forty, and Hemstead and Amalu ten apiece: eight hundred and forty "lays" in all. What was the value of a lay? This was at first debated in the air and chiefly by the strength of Tommy's lungs. Then followed a series of incorrect calculations; from which they issued, arithmetically foiled, but agreed from weariness upon an approximate value of 2 pounds, 7 shillings 7 1/4 pence. The figures were admittedly incorrect; the sum of the shares came not to 2000 pounds, but to 1996 pounds, 6 shillings: 3 pounds, 14 shillings being thus left unclaimed. But it was the nearest they had yet found, and the highest as well, so that the partners were made the less critical by the contemplation of their splendid dividends. Wicks put in 100 pounds and stood to draw captain's wages for two months; his taking was 333 pounds 3 shillings 6 1/2 pence. Carthew had put in 150 pounds: he was to take out 401 pounds, 18 shillings 6 1/2 pence. Tommy's 500 pounds had grown to be 1213 pounds 12 shillings 9 3/4 pence; and Amalu and Hemstead, ranking for wages only, had 22 pounds, 16 shillings 1/2 pence, each.

From talking and brooding on these figures, it was but a step to opening the chest; and once the chest open, the glamour of the cash was irresistible. Each felt that he must see his treasure separate with the eye of flesh, handle it in the hard coin, mark it for his own, and stand forth to himself the approved owner. And here an insurmountable difficulty barred the way. There were some seventeen shillings in English silver: the rest was Chile; and the Chile dollar, which had been taken at the rate of six to the pound sterling, was practically their smallest coin. It was decided, therefore, to divide the pounds only, and to throw the shillings, pence, and fractions in a common fund. This, with the three pound fourteen already in the heel, made a total of seven pounds one shilling.

"I'll tell you," said Wicks. "Let Carthew and Tommy and me take one pound apiece, and Hemstead and Amalu split the other four, and toss up for the odd bob."

"O, rot!" said Carthew. "Tommy and I are bursting already. We can take half a sov' each, and let the other three have forty shillings."

"I'll tell you now — it's not worth splitting," broke in Mac. "I've cards in my chest. Why don't you play for the slump sum?"

In that idle place, the proposal was accepted with delight. Mac, as the owner of the cards, was given a stake; the sum was played for in five games of cribbage; and when Amalu, the last survivor in the tournament, was beaten by Mac, it was found the dinner hour was past. After a hasty meal, they fell again immediately to cards, this time (on Carthew's proposal) to Van John. It was then probably two P.M. of the 9th February; and they played with varying chances for twelve hours, slept heavily, and rose late on the morrow to resume the game. All day of the 10th, with grudging intervals for food, and with one long absence on the part of Tommy from which he returned dripping with the case of sherry, they continued to deal and stake. Night fell: they drew the closer to the fire. It was maybe two in the morning, and Tommy was selling his deal by auction, as usual with that timid player; when Carthew, who didn't intend to bid, had a moment of leisure and looked round him. He beheld the moonlight on the sea, the money piled and scattered in that incongruous place, the perturbed faces of the players; he felt in his own breast the familiar tumult; and it seemed as if there rose in his ears a sound of music, and the moon seemed still to shine upon a sea, but the sea was changed, and the Casino towered from among lamplit gardens, and the money clinked on the green board. "Good God!" he thought, "am I gambling again?" He looked the more curiously about the sandy table. He and Mac had played and won like gamblers; the mingled gold and silver lay by their places in the heap. Amalu and Hemstead had each more than held their own, but Tommy was cruel far to leeward, and the captain was reduced to perhaps fifty pounds.

"I say, let's knock off," said Carthew.

"Give that man a glass of Buckle," said some one, and a fresh bottle was opened, and the game went inexorably on.

Carthew was himself too heavy a winner to withdraw or to say more; and all the rest of the night he must look on at the progress of this folly, and make gallant attempts to lose with the not uncommon consequence of winning more. The first dawn of the 11th February found him well-nigh desperate. It chanced he was then dealer, and still winning. He had just dealt a round of many tens; every one had staked heavily; the captain had put up all that remained to him, twelve pounds in gold and a few dollars; and Carthew, looking privately at his cards before he showed them, found he held a natural.

"See here, you fellows," he broke out, "this is a sickening business, and I'm done with it for one." So saying, he showed his cards, tore them across, and rose from the ground.

The company stared and murmured in mere amazement; but Mac stepped gallantly to his support.

"We've had enough of it, I do believe," said he. "But of course it was all fun, and here's my counters back. All counters in, boys!" and he began to pour his winnings into the chest, which stood fortunately near him.

Carthew stepped across and wrung him by the hand. "I'll never forget this," he said.

"And what are ye going to do with the Highway boy and the plumber?" inquired Mac, in a low tone of voice. "They've both wan, ye see."

"That's true!" said Carthew aloud. "Amalu and Hemstead, count your winnings; Tommy and I pay that."

It was carried without speech: the pair glad enough to receive their winnings, it mattered not from whence; and Tommy, who had lost about five hundred pounds, delighted with the compromise.

"And how about Mac?" asked Hemstead. "Is he to lose all?"

"I beg your pardon, plumber. I'm sure ye mean well," returned the Irishman, "but you'd better shut your face, for I'm not that kind of a man. If I t'ought I had wan that money fair, there's never a soul here could get it from me. But I t'ought it was in fun; that was my mistake, ye see; and there's no man big enough upon this island to give a present to my mother's son. So there's my opinion to ye, plumber, and you can put it in your pockut till required."

"Well, I will say, Mac, you're a gentleman," said Carthew, as he helped him to shovel back his winnings into the treasure chest.

"Divil a fear of it, sir! a drunken sailor-man," said Mac.

The captain had sat somewhile with his face in his hands: now he rose mechanically, shaking and stumbling like a drunkard after a debauch. But as he rose, his face was altered, and his voice rang out over the isle, "Sail, ho!"

All turned at the cry, and there, in the wild light of the morning, heading straight for Midway Reef, was the brig Flying Scud of Hull.

CHAPTER XXIV. A HARD BARGAIN.

The ship which thus appeared before the castaways had long "tramped" the ocean, wandering from one port to another as freights offered. She was two years out from London, by the Cape of Good Hope, India, and the Archipelago; and was now bound for San Francisco in the hope of working homeward round the Horn. Her captain was one Jacob Trent. He had retired some five years before to a suburban cottage, a patch of cabbages, a gig, and the conduct of what he called a Bank. The name appears to have been misleading. Borrowers were accustomed to choose works of art and utility in the front shop; loaves of sugar and bolts of broadcloth were deposited in pledge; and it was a part of the manager's duty to dash in his gig on Saturday evenings from one small retailer's to another, and to annex in each the bulk of the week's takings. His was thus an active life, and to a man of the type of a rat, filled with recondite joys. An unexpected loss, a law suit, and the unintelligent commentary of the judge upon the bench, combined to disgust him of the business. I was so extraordinarily fortunate as to find, in an old newspaper, a report of the proceedings in Lyall v. The Cardiff Mutual Accommodation Banking Co. "I confess I fail entirely to understand the nature of the business," the judge had remarked, while Trent was being examined in chief; a little after, on fuller information — "They call it a bank," he had opined, "but it seems to me to be an unlicensed pawnshop"; and he wound up with this appalling allocution: "Mr. Trent, I must put you on your guard; you must be very careful, or we shall see you here again." In the inside of a week the captain disposed of the bank, the cottage, and the gig and horse; and to sea again in the Flying Scud, where he did well and gave high satisfaction to his owners. But the glory clung to him; he was a plain sailor-man, he said, but he could never long allow you to forget that he had been a banker.

His mate, Elias Goddedaal, was a huge viking of a man, six feet three and of proportionate mass, strong, sober, industrious, musical, and sentimental. He ran continually over into Swedish melodies, chiefly in the minor. He had paid nine dollars to hear Patti; to hear Nilsson, he had deserted a ship and two months' wages; and he was ready at any time to walk ten miles for a good concert, or seven to a reasonable play. On board he had three treasures: a canary bird, a concertina, and a blinding copy of the works of Shakespeare. He had a gift, peculiarly Scandinavian, of making friends at sight: an elemental innocence commended him; he was without fear, without reproach, and without money or the hope of making it.

Holdorsen was second mate, and berthed aft, but messed usually with the hands.

Of one more of the crew, some image lives. This was a foremast hand out of the Clyde, of the name of Brown. A small, dark, thickset creature, with dog's eyes, of a disposition incomparably mild and harmless, he knocked about seas and cities, the uncomplaining whiptop of one vice. "The drink is my trouble, ye see," he said to Carthew shyly; "and it's the more shame to me because I'm come of very good people at Bowling, down the wa'er." The letter that so much affected Nares, in case the reader should remember it, was addressed to this man Brown.

Such was the ship that now carried joy into the bosoms of the castaways. After the fatigue and the bestial emotions of their night of play, the approach of salvation shook them from all self-control. Their hands trembled, their eyes shone, they laughed and shouted like children as they cleared their camp: and some one beginning to whistle *Marching Through Georgia,* the remainder of the packing was conducted, amidst a thousand interruptions, to these martial strains. But the strong head of Wicks was only partly turned.

"Boys," he said, "easy all! We're going aboard of a ship of which we don't know nothing; we've got a chest of specie, and seeing the weight, we can't turn to and deny it. Now, suppose she was fishy; suppose it was some kind of a Bully Hayes business! It's my opinion we'd better be on hand with the pistols."

Every man of the party but Hemstead had some kind of a revolver; these were accordingly loaded and disposed about the persons of the castaways, and the packing was resumed and finished in the same rapturous spirit as it was begun. The sun was not yet ten degrees above the eastern sea, but the brig was already close in and hove to, before they had launched the boat and sped, shouting at the oars, towards the passage.

It was blowing fresh outside, with a strong send of sea. The spray flew in the oarsmen's faces. They saw the Union Jack blow abroad from the Flying Scud, the men clustered at the rail, the cook in the galley door, the captain on the quarter-deck with a pith helmet and binoculars. And the whole familiar business, the comfort, company, and safety of a ship, heaving nearer at each stroke, maddened them with joy.

Wicks was the first to catch the line, and swarm on board, helping hands grabbing him as he came and hauling him across the rail.

"Captain, sir, I suppose?" he said, turning to the hard old man in the pith helmet.

"Captain Trent, sir," returned the old gentleman.

"Well, I'm Captain Kirkup, and this is the crew of the Sydney schooner Currency Lass, dismasted at sea January 28th."

"Ay, ay," said Trent. "Well, you're all right now. Lucky for you I saw your signal. I didn't know I was so near this beastly island, there must be a drift to the south'ard here; and when I came on deck this morning at eight bells, I thought it was a ship afire."

It had been agreed that, while Wicks was to board the ship and do the civil, the rest were to remain in the whaleboat and see the treasure safe. A tackle was passed down to them; to this they made fast the invaluable chest, and gave the word to heave. But the unexpected weight brought the hand at the tackle to a stand; two others ran to tail on and help him, and the thing caught the eye of Trent.

"'Vast heaving!" he cried sharply; and then to Wicks: "What's that? I don't ever remember to have seen a chest weigh like that."

"It's money," said Wicks.

"It's what?" cried Trent.

"Specie," said Wicks; "saved from the wreck."

Trent looked at him sharply. "Here, let go that chest again, Mr. Goddedaal," he commanded, "shove the boat off, and stream her with a line astern."

"Ay, ay, sir!" from Goddedaal.

"What the devil's wrong?" asked Wicks.

"Nothing, I daresay," returned Trent. "But you'll allow it's a queer thing when a boat turns up in mid-ocean with half a ton of specie, — and everybody armed," he added, pointing to Wicks's pocket. "Your boat will lay comfortably astern, while you come below and make yourself satisfactory."

"O, if that's all!" said Wicks. "My log and papers are as right as the mail; nothing fishy about us." And he hailed his friends in the boat, bidding them have patience, and turned to follow Captain Trent.

"This way, Captain Kirkup," said the latter. "And don't blame a man for too much caution; no offence intended; and these China rivers shake a fellow's nerve. All I want is just to see you're what you say you are; it's only my duty, sir, and what you would do yourself in the circumstances. I've not always been a ship-captain: I was a banker once, and I tell you that's the trade to learn caution in. You have to keep your weather-eye lifting Saturday nights." And with a dry, business-like cordiality, he produced a bottle of gin.

The captains pledged each other; the papers were overhauled; the tale of Topelius and the trade was told in appreciative ears and cemented their acquaintance. Trent's suspicions, thus finally disposed of, were succeeded by a fit of profound thought, during which he sat lethargic and stern, looking at and drumming on the table.

"Anything more?" asked Wicks.

"What sort of a place is it inside?" inquired Trent, sudden as though Wicks had touched a spring.

"It's a good enough lagoon — a few horses' heads, but nothing to mention," answered Wicks.

"I've a good mind to go in," said Trent. "I was new rigged in China; it's given very bad, and I'm getting frightened for my sticks. We could set it up as good as new in a day. For I daresay your lot would turn to and give us a hand?"

"You see if we don't!" said Wicks.

"So be it, then," concluded Trent. "A stitch in time saves nine."

They returned on deck; Wicks cried the news to the Currency Lasses; the foretopsail was filled again, and the brig ran into the lagoon lively, the whaleboat dancing in her wake, and came to single anchor off Middle Brooks Island before eight. She was boarded by the castaways, breakfast was served, the baggage slung on board and piled in the waist, and all hands turned to upon the rigging. All day the work continued, the two crews rivalling each other in expense of strength. Dinner was served on deck, the officers messing aft under the slack of the spanker, the men fraternising forward. Trent appeared in excellent spirits, served out grog to all hands, opened a bottle of Cape wine for the after-table, and obliged his guests with many details of the life of a financier in Cardiff. He had been forty years at sea, had five times suffered shipwreck, was once nine months the prisoner of a pepper rajah, and had seen service under fire in Chinese rivers; but the only thing he cared to talk of, the only thing of which he was vain, or with which he thought it possible to interest a stranger, was his career as a money-lender in the slums of a seaport town.

The afternoon spell told cruelly on the Currency Lasses. Already exhausted as they were with sleeplessness and excitement, they did the last hours of this violent employment on bare nerves; and when Trent was at last satisfied with the condition of his rigging, expected eagerly the word to put to sea. But the captain seemed in no hurry. He went and walked by himself softly, like a man in thought. Presently he hailed Wicks.

"You're a kind of company, ain't you, Captain Kirkup?" he inquired.

"Yes, we're all on board on lays," was the reply.

"Well, then, you won't mind if I ask the lot of you down to tea in the cabin?" asked Trent.

Wicks was amazed, but he naturally ventured no remark; and a little after, the six Currency Lasses sat down with Trent and Goddedaal to a spread of marmalade, butter, toast, sardines, tinned tongue, and steaming tea. The food was not very good, and I have no doubt Nares would have reviled it, but it was manna to the castaways. Goddedaal waited on them with a kindness far before courtesy, a kindness like that of some old, honest countrywoman in her farm. It was remembered afterwards that Trent took little share in these attentions, but sat much absorbed in thought, and seemed to remember and forget the presence of his guests alternately.

Presently he addressed the Chinaman.

“Clear out!” said he, and watched him till he had disappeared in the stair. “Now, gentlemen,” he went on, “I understand you’re a joint-stock sort of crew, and that’s why I’ve had you all down; for there’s a point I want made clear. You see what sort of a ship this is — a good ship, though I say it, and you see what the rations are — good enough for sailor-men.”

There was a hurried murmur of approval, but curiosity for what was coming next prevented an articulate reply.

“Well,” continued Trent, making bread pills and looking hard at the middle of the table, “I’m glad of course to be able to give you a passage to ‘Frisco; one sailor-man should help another, that’s my motto. But when you want a thing in this world, you generally always have to pay for it.” He laughed a brief, joyless laugh. “I have no idea of losing by my kindness.”

“We have no idea you should, captain,” said Wicks.

“We are ready to pay anything in reason,” added Carthew.

At the words, Goddedaal, who sat next to him, touched him with his elbow, and the two mates exchanged a significant look. The character of Captain Trent was given and taken in that silent second.

“In reason?” repeated the captain of the brig. “I was waiting for that. Reason’s between two people, and there’s only one here. I’m the judge; I’m reason. If you want an advance you have to pay for it” — he hastily corrected himself — ”If you want a passage in my ship, you have to pay my price,” he substituted. “That’s business, I believe. I don’t want you; you want me.”

“Well, sir,” said Carthew, “and what IS your price?”

The captain made bread pills. “If I were like you,” he said, “when you got hold of that merchant in the Gilberts, I might surprise you. You had your chance then; seems to me it’s mine now. Turn about’s fair play. What kind of mercy did you have on that Gilbert merchant?” he cried, with a sudden stridency. “Not that I blame you. All’s fair in love and business,” and he laughed again, a little frosty giggle.

“Well, sir?” said Carthew, gravely.

“Well, this ship’s mine, I think?” he asked sharply.

“Well, I’m of that way of thinking meself,” observed Mac.

“I say it’s mine, sir!” reiterated Trent, like a man trying to be angry. “And I tell you all, if I was a driver like what you are, I would take the lot. But there’s two thousand pounds there that don’t belong to you, and I’m an honest man. Give me the two thousand that’s yours, and I’ll give you a passage to the coast, and land every man-jack of you in ‘Frisco with fifteen pounds in his pocket, and the captain here with twenty-five."

Goddedaal laid down his head on the table like a man ashamed.

"You're joking," said Wicks, purple in the face.

"Am I?" said Trent. "Please yourselves. You're under no compulsion. This ship's mine, but there's that Brooks Island don't belong to me, and you can lay there till you die for what I care."

"It's more than your blooming brig's worth!" cried Wicks.

"It's my price anyway," returned Trent.

"And do you mean to say you would land us there to starve?" cried Tommy.

Captain Trent laughed the third time. "Starve? I defy you to," said he. "I'll sell you all the provisions you want at a fair profit."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Mac, "but my case is by itself I'm working me passage; I got no share in that two thousand pounds nor nothing in my pockut; and I'll be glad to know what you have to say to me?"

"I ain't a hard man," said Trent. "That shall make no difference. I'll take you with the rest, only of course you get no fifteen pound."

The impudence was so extreme and startling, that all breathed deep, and Goddedaal raised up his face and looked his superior sternly in the eye.

But Mac was more articulate. "And you're what ye call a British sayman, I suppose? the sorrow in your guts!" he cried.

"One more such word, and I clap you in irons!" said Trent, rising gleefully at the face of opposition.

"And where would I be the while you were doin' ut?" asked Mac. "After you and your rigging, too! Ye ould puggy, ye haven't the civility of a bug, and I'll learn ye some."

His voice did not even rise as he uttered the threat; no man present, Trent least of all, expected that which followed. The Irishman's hand rose suddenly from below the table, an open clasp-knife balanced on the palm; there was a movement swift as conjuring; Trent started half to his feet, turning a little as he rose so as to escape the table, and the movement was his bane. The missile struck him in the jugular; he fell forward, and his blood flowed among the dishes on the cloth.

The suddenness of the attack and the catastrophe, the instant change from peace to war and from life to death, held all men spellbound. Yet a moment they sat about the table staring open-mouthed upon the prostrate captain and the flowing blood. The next, Goddedaal had leaped to his feet, caught up the stool on which he had been sitting, and swung it high in air, a man transfigured, roaring (as he stood) so that men's ears were stunned with it. There was no thought of battle in the Currency Lasses; none drew his weapon; all huddled helplessly from before the face of the baresark Scandinavian.

His first blow sent Mac to ground with a broken arm. His second bashed out the brains of Hemstead. He turned from one to another, menacing and trumpeting like a wounded elephant, exulting in his rage. But there was no counsel, no light of reason, in that ecstasy of battle; and he shied from the pursuit of victory to hail fresh blows upon the supine Hemstead, so that the stool was shattered and the cabin rang with their violence. The sight of that post-mortem cruelty recalled Carthew to the life of instinct, and his revolver was in hand and he had aimed and fired before he knew. The ear-bursting sound of the report was accompanied by a yell of pain; the colossus paused, swayed, tottered, and fell headlong on the body of his victim.

In the instant silence that succeeded, the sound of feet pounding on the deck and in the companion leaped into hearing; and a face, that of the sailor Holdorsen, appeared below the bulkheads in the cabin doorway. Carthew shattered it with a second shot, for he was a marksman.

“Pistols!” he cried, and charged at the companion, Wicks at his heels, Tommy and Amalu following. They trod the body of Holdorsen underfoot, and flew up-stairs and forth into the dusky blaze of a sunset red as blood. The numbers were still equal, but the Flying Scuds dreamed not of defence, and fled with one accord for the forecastle scuttle. Brown was first in flight; he disappeared below unscathed; the Chinaman followed head-foremost with a ball in his side; and the others shinned into the rigging.

A fierce composure settled upon Wicks and Carthew, their fighting second wind. They posted Tommy at the fore and Amalu at the main to guard the masts and shrouds, and going themselves into the waist, poured out a box of cartridges on deck and filled the chambers. The poor devils aloft bleated aloud for mercy. But the hour of any mercy was gone by; the cup was brewed and must be drunken to the dregs; since so many had fallen all must fall. The light was bad, the cheap revolvers fouled and carried wild, the screaming wretches were swift to flatten themselves against the masts and yards or find a momentary refuge in the hanging sails. The fell business took long, but it was done at last. Hardy the Londoner was shot on the foreroyal yard, and hung horribly suspended in the brails. Wallen, the other, had his jaw broken on the maintop-gallant crosstrees, and exposed himself, shrieking, till a second shot dropped him on the deck.

This had been bad enough, but worse remained behind. There was still Brown in the forepeak. Tommy, with a sudden clamour of weeping, begged for his life. “One man can’t hurt us,” he sobbed. “We can’t go on with this. I spoke to him at dinner. He’s an awful decent little cad. It can’t be done. Nobody can go into that place and murder him. It’s too damned wicked.”

The sound of his supplications was perhaps audible to the unfortunate below.

“One left, and we all hang,” said Wicks. “Brown must go the same road.” The big man was deadly white and trembled like an aspen; and he had no sooner finished speaking, than he went to the ship’s side and vomited.

“We can never do it if we wait,” said Carthew. “Now or never,” and he marched towards the scuttle.

“No, no, no!” wailed Tommy, clutching at his jacket.

But Carthew flung him off, and stepped down the ladder, his heart rising with disgust and shame. The Chinaman lay on the floor, still groaning; the place was pitch dark.

“Brown!” cried Carthew, “Brown, where are you?”

His heart smote him for the treacherous apostrophe, but no answer came.

He groped in the bunks: they were all empty. Then he moved towards the forepeak, which was hampered with coils of rope and spare chandlery in general.

“Brown!” he said again.

“Here, sir,” answered a shaking voice; and the poor invisible caitiff called on him by name, and poured forth out of the darkness an endless, garrulous appeal for mercy. A sense of danger, of daring, had alone nerved Carthew to enter the forecastle; and here was the enemy crying and pleading like a frightened child. His obsequious “Here, sir,” his horrid fluency of obtestation, made the murder tenfold more revolting. Twice Carthew raised the pistol, once he pressed the trigger (or thought he did) with all his might, but no explosion followed; and with that the lees of his courage ran quite out, and he turned and fled from before his victim.

Wicks sat on the fore hatch, raised the face of a man of seventy, and looked a wordless question. Carthew shook his head. With such composure as a man displays marching towards the gallows, Wicks arose, walked to the scuttle, and went down. Brown thought it was Carthew returning, and discovered himself, half crawling from his shelter, with another incoherent burst of pleading. Wicks emptied his revolver at the voice, which broke into mouse-like whimperings and groans. Silence succeeded, and the murderer ran on deck like one possessed.

The other three were now all gathered on the fore hatch, and Wicks took his place beside them without question asked or answered. They sat close, like children in the dark, and shook each other with their shaking. The dusk continued to fall; and there was no sound but the beating of the surf and the occasional hiccup of a sob from Tommy Hadden.

"God, if there was another ship!" cried Carthew of a sudden.

Wicks started and looked aloft with the trick of all seamen, and shuddered as he saw the hanging figure on the royal yard.

"If I went aloft, I'd fall," he said simply. "I'm done up."

It was Amalu who volunteered, climbed to the very truck, swept the fading horizon, and announced nothing within sight.

"No odds," said Wicks. "We can't sleep ..."

"Sleep!" echoed Carthew; and it seemed as if the whole of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* thundered at the gallop through his mind.

"Well, then, we can't sit and chitter here," said Wicks, "till we've cleaned ship; and I can't turn to till I've had gin, and the gin's in the cabin, and who's to fetch it?"

"I will," said Carthew, "if any one has matches."

Amalu passed him a box, and he went aft and down the companion and into the cabin, stumbling upon bodies. Then he struck a match, and his looks fell upon two living eyes.

"Well?" asked Mac, for it was he who still survived in that shambles of a cabin.

"It's done; they're all dead," answered Carthew.

"Christ!" said the Irishman, and fainted.

The gin was found in the dead captain's cabin; it was brought on deck, and all hands had a dram, and attacked their farther task. The night was come, the moon would not be up for hours; a lamp was set on the main hatch to light Amalu as he washed down decks; and the galley lantern was taken to guide the others in their graveyard business. Holdorsen, Hemstead, Trent, and Goddedaal were first disposed of, the last still breathing as he went over the side; Wallen followed; and then Wicks, steadied by the gin, went aloft with a boathook and succeeded in dislodging Hardy. The Chinaman was their last task; he seemed to be light-headed, talked aloud in his unknown language as they brought him up, and it was only with the splash of his sinking body that the gibberish ceased. Brown, by common consent, was left alone. Flesh and blood could go no further.

All this time they had been drinking undiluted gin like water; three bottles stood broached in different quarters; and none passed without a gulp. Tommy collapsed against the mainmast; Wicks fell on his face on the poop ladder and moved no more; Amalu had vanished unobserved. Carthew was the last afoot: he stood swaying at the break of the poop, and the lantern, which he still carried, swung with his movement. His head hummed; it swarmed with broken thoughts; memory of that day's abominations flared up and died down within him like the light of a lamp in a strong draught. And then he had a drunkard's inspiration.

"There must be no more of this," he thought, and stumbled once more below.

The absence of Holdorsen's body brought him to a stand. He stood and stared at the empty floor, and then remembered and smiled. From the captain's room he took the open case with one dozen and three bottles of gin, put the lantern inside, and walked precariously forth. Mac was once more conscious, his eyes haggard, his face drawn with pain and flushed with fever; and Carthew remembered he had never been seen to, had lain there helpless, and was so to lie all night, injured, perhaps dying. But it was now too late; reason had now fled from that silent ship. If Carthew could get on deck again, it was as much as he could hope; and casting on the unfortunate a glance of pity, the tragic drunkard shouldered his way up the companion, dropped the case overboard, and fell in the scuppers helpless.

CHAPTER XXV. A BAD BARGAIN.

With the first colour in the east, Carthew awoke and sat up. A while he gazed at the scroll of the morning bank and the spars and hanging canvas of the brig, like a man who wakes in a strange bed, with a child's simplicity of wonder. He wondered above all what ailed him, what he had lost, what disfavour had been done him, which he knew he should resent, yet had forgotten. And then, like a river bursting through a dam, the truth rolled on him its instantaneous volume: his memory teemed with speech and pictures that he should never again forget; and he sprang to his feet, stood a moment hand to brow, and began to walk violently to and fro by the companion. As he walked, he wrung his hands. "God — God — God," he kept saying, with no thought of prayer, uttering a mere voice of agony.

The time may have been long or short, it was perhaps minutes, perhaps only seconds, ere he awoke to find himself observed, and saw the captain sitting up and watching him over the break of the poop, a strange blindness as of fever in his eyes, a haggard knot of corrugations on his brow. Cain saw himself in a mirror. For a flash they looked upon each other, and then glanced guiltily aside; and Carthew fled from the eye of his accomplice, and stood leaning on the taffrail.

An hour went by, while the day came brighter, and the sun rose and drank up the clouds: an hour of silence in the ship, an hour of agony beyond narration for the sufferers. Brown's gabbling prayers, the cries of the sailors in the rigging, strains of the dead Hemstead's minstrelsy, ran together in Carthew's mind, with sickening iteration. He neither acquitted nor condemned himself: he did not think, he suffered. In the bright water into which he stared, the pictures changed and were repeated: the baresark rage of Goddedaal; the blood-red light of the sunset into which they had run forth; the face of the babbling Chinaman as they cast him over; the face of the captain, seen a moment since, as he awoke from drunkenness into remorse. And time passed, and the sun swam higher, and his torment was not abated.

Then were fulfilled many sayings, and the weakest of these condemned brought relief and healing to the others. Amalu the drudge awoke (like the rest) to sickness of body and distress of mind; but the habit of obedience ruled in that simple spirit, and appalled to be so late, he went direct into the galley, kindled the fire, and began to get breakfast. At the rattle of dishes, the snapping of the fire, and the thin smoke that went up straight into the air, the spell was lifted. The condemned felt once more the good dry land of habit under foot; they touched again the familiar guide-ropes of sanity; they were restored to a sense of the blessed revolution and return of all things earthly. The captain drew a bucket of water and began to bathe. Tommy sat up, watched him awhile, and slowly followed his example; and Carthew, remembering his last thoughts of the night before, hastened to the cabin.

Mac was awake; perhaps had not slept. Over his head Goddedaal's canary twittered shrilly from its cage.

"How are you?" asked Carthew.

"Me arrum's broke," returned Mac; "but I can stand that. It's this place I can't abide. I was coming on deck anyway."

"Stay where you are, though," said Carthew. "It's deadly hot above, and there's no wind. I'll wash out this — — " and he paused, seeking a word and not finding one for the grisly foulness of the cabin.

"Faith, I'll be obliged to ye, then," replied the Irishman. He spoke mild and meek, like a sick child with its mother. There was now no violence in the violent man; and as Carthew fetched a bucket and swab and the steward's sponge, and began to cleanse the field of battle, he alternately watched him or shut his eyes and sighed like a man near fainting. "I have to ask all your pardons," he began again presently, "and the more shame to me as I got ye into trouble and couldn't do nothing when it came. Ye saved me life, sir; ye're a clane shot."

"For God's sake, don't talk of it!" cried Carthew. "It can't be talked of; you don't know what it was. It was nothing down here; they fought. On deck — O, my God!" And Carthew, with the bloody sponge pressed to his face, struggled a moment with hysteria.

"Kape cool, Mr. Cart'ew. It's done now," said Mac; "and ye may bless God ye're not in pain and helpless in the bargain."

There was no more said by one or other, and the cabin was pretty well cleansed when a stroke on the ship's bell summoned Carthew to breakfast. Tommy had been busy in the meanwhile; he had hauled the whaleboat close aboard, and already lowered into it a small keg of beef that he found ready broached beside the galley door; it was plain he had but the one idea — to escape.

"We have a shipful of stores to draw upon," he said. "Well, what are we staying for? Let's get off at once for Hawaii. I've begun preparing already."

"Mac has his arm broken," observed Carthew; "how would he stand the voyage?"

"A broken arm?" repeated the captain. "That all? I'll set it after breakfast. I thought he was dead like the rest. That madman hit out like — — " and there, at the evocation of the battle, his voice ceased and the talk died with it.

After breakfast, the three white men went down into the cabin.

"I've come to set your arm," said the captain.

"I beg your pardon, captain," replied Mac; "but the firrst thing ye got to do is to get this ship to sea. We'll talk of me arrum after that."

"O, there's no such blooming hurry," returned Wicks.

"When the next ship sails in, ye'll tell me stories!" retorted Mac.

"But there's nothing so unlikely in the world," objected Carthew.

"Don't be deceivin' yourself," said Mac. "If ye want a ship, divil a one'll look near ye in six year; but if ye don't, ye may take my word for ut, we'll have a squadron layin' here."

"That's what I say," cried Tommy; "that's what I call sense! Let's stock that whaleboat and be off."

"And what will Captain Wicks be thinking of the whaleboat?" asked the Irishman.

"I don't think of it at all," said Wicks. "We've a smart-looking brig under foot; that's all the whaleboat I want."

"Excuse me!" cried Tommy. "That's childish talk. You've got a brig, to be sure, and what use is she? You daren't go anywhere in her. What port are you to sail for?"

"For the port of Davy Jones's Locker, my son," replied the captain. "This brig's going to be lost at sea. I'll tell you where, too, and that's about forty miles to windward of Kauai. We're going to stay by her till she's down; and once the masts are under, she's the Flying Scud no more, and we never heard of such a brig; and it's the crew of the schooner Currency Lass that comes ashore in the boat, and takes the first chance to Sydney."

"Captain dear, that's the first Christian word I've heard of ut!" cried Mac. "And now, just let me arrum be, jewel, and get the brig outside."

"I'm as anxious as yourself, Mac," returned Wicks; "but there's not wind enough to swear by. So let's see your arm, and no more talk."

The arm was set and splinted; the body of Brown fetched from the forepeak, where it lay still and cold, and committed to the waters of the lagoon; and the washing of the cabin rudely finished. All these were done ere midday; and it was past three when the first cat's-paw ruffled the lagoon, and the wind came in a dry squall, which presently sobered to a steady breeze.

The interval was passed by all in feverish impatience, and by one of the party in secret and extreme concern of mind. Captain Wicks was a fore-and-aft sailor; he could take a schooner through a Scotch reel, felt her mouth and divined her temper like a rider with a horse; she, on her side, recognising her master and following his wishes like a dog. But by a not very unusual train of circumstance, the man's dexterity was partial and circumscribed. On a schooner's deck he was Rembrandt or (at the least) Mr. Whistler; on board a brig he was Pierre Grassou. Again and again in the course of the morning, he had reasoned out his policy and rehearsed his orders; and ever with the same depression and weariness. It was guess-work; it was chance; the ship might behave as he expected, and might not; suppose she failed him, he stood there helpless, beggared of all the proved resources of experience. Had not all hands been so weary, had he not feared to communicate his own misgivings, he could have towed her out. But these reasons sufficed, and the most he could do was to take all possible precautions. Accordingly he had Carthew aft, explained what was to be done with anxious patience, and visited along with him the various sheets and braces.

"I hope I'll remember," said Carthew. "It seems awfully muddled."

"It's the rottenest kind of rig," the captain admitted: "all blooming pocket handkerchiefs! And not one sailor-man on deck! Ah, if she'd only been a brigantine, now! But it's lucky the passage is so plain; there's no manoeuvring to mention. We get under way before the wind, and run right so till we begin to get foul of the island; then we haul our wind and lie as near south-east as may be till we're on that line; 'bout ship there and stand straight out on the port tack. Catch the idea?"

"Yes, I see the idea," replied Carthew, rather dismally, and the two incompetents studied for a long time in silence the complicated gear above their heads.

But the time came when these rehearsals must be put in practice. The sails were lowered, and all hands heaved the anchor short. The whaleboat was then cut adrift, the upper topsails and the spanker set, the yards braced up, and the spanker sheet hauled out to starboard.

"Heave away on your anchor, Mr. Carthew."

"Anchor's gone, sir."

"Set jibs."

It was done, and the brig still hung enchanted. Wicks, his head full of a schooner's mainsail, turned his mind to the spanker. First he hauled in the sheet, and then he hauled it out, with no result.

"Brail the damned thing up!" he bawled at last, with a red face. "There ain't no sense in it."

It was the last stroke of bewilderment for the poor captain, that he had no sooner brailed up the spanker than the vessel came before the wind. The laws of nature seemed to him to be suspended; he was like a man in a world of pantomime tricks; the cause of any result, and the probable result of any action, equally concealed from him. He was the more careful not to shake the nerve of his amateur assistants. He stood there with a face like a torch; but he gave his orders with aplomb; and indeed, now the ship was under weigh, supposed his difficulties over.

The lower topsails and courses were then set, and the brig began to walk the water like a thing of life, her forefoot discoursing music, the birds flying and crying over her spars. Bit by bit the passage began to open and the blue sea to show between the flanking breakers on the reef; bit by bit, on the starboard bow, the low land of the islet began to heave closer aboard. The yards were braced up, the spanker sheet hauled aft again; the brig was close hauled, lay down to her work like a thing in earnest, and had soon drawn near to the point of advantage, where she might stay and lie out of the lagoon in a single tack.

Wicks took the wheel himself, swelling with success. He kept the brig full to give her heels, and began to bark his orders: “Ready about. Helm’s a-lee. Tacks and sheets. Mainsail haul.” And then the fatal words: “That’ll do your mainsail; jump forrard and haul round your foreyards.”

To stay a square-rigged ship is an affair of knowledge and swift sight; and a man used to the succinct evolutions of a schooner will always tend to be too hasty with a brig. It was so now. The order came too soon; the topsails set flat aback; the ship was in irons. Even yet, had the helm been reversed, they might have saved her. But to think of a stern-board at all, far more to think of profiting by one, were foreign to the schooner-sailor’s mind. Wicks made haste instead to wear ship, a manoeuvre for which room was wanting, and the Flying Scud took ground on a bank of sand and coral about twenty minutes before five.

Wicks was no hand with a square-rigger, and he had shown it. But he was a sailor and a born captain of men for all homely purposes, where intellect is not required and an eye in a man’s head and a heart under his jacket will suffice. Before the others had time to understand the misfortune, he was bawling fresh orders, and had the sails clewed up, and took soundings round the ship.

“She lies lovely,” he remarked, and ordered out a boat with the starboard anchor.

“Here! steady!” cried Tommy. “You ain’t going to turn us to, to warp her off?”

“I am though,” replied Wicks.

“I won’t set a hand to such tomfoolery for one,” replied Tommy. “I’m dead beat.” He went and sat down doggedly on the main hatch. “You got us on; get us off again,” he added.

Carthew and Wicks turned to each other.

“Perhaps you don’t know how tired we are,” said Carthew.

“The tide’s flowing!” cried the captain. “You wouldn’t have me miss a rising tide?”

“O, gammon! there’s tides to-morrow!” retorted Tommy.

“And I’ll tell you what,” added Carthew, “the breeze is failing fast, and the sun will soon be down. We may get into all kinds of fresh mess in the dark and with nothing but light airs.”

"I don't deny it," answered Wicks, and stood awhile as if in thought. "But what I can't make out," he began again, with agitation, "what I can't make out is what you're made of! To stay in this place is beyond me. There's the bloody sun going down — and to stay here is beyond me!"

The others looked upon him with horrified surprise. This fall of their chief pillar — this irrational passion in the practical man, suddenly barred out of his true sphere, the sphere of action — shocked and daunted them. But it gave to another and unseen hearer the chance for which he had been waiting. Mac, on the striking of the brig, had crawled up the companion, and he now showed himself and spoke up.

"Captain Wicks," said he, "it's me that brought this trouble on the lot of ye. I'm sorry for ut, I ask all your pardons, and if there's any one can say 'I forgive ye,' it'll make my soul the lighter."

Wicks stared upon the man in amaze; then his self-control returned to him. "We're all in glass houses here," he said; "we ain't going to turn to and throw stones. I forgive you, sure enough; and much good may it do you!"

The others spoke to the same purpose.

"I thank ye for ut, and 'tis done like gentlemen," said Mac. "But there's another thing I have upon my mind. I hope we're all Prodestan's here?"

It appeared they were; it seemed a small thing for the Protestant religion to rejoice in!

"Well, that's as it should be," continued Mac. "And why shouldn't we say the Lord's Prayer? There can't be no hurt in ut."

He had the same quiet, pleading, childlike way with him as in the morning; and the others accepted his proposal, and knelt down without a word.

"Knale if ye like!" said he. "I'll stand." And he covered his eyes.

So the prayer was said to the accompaniment of the surf and seabirds, and all rose refreshed and felt lightened of a load. Up to then, they had cherished their guilty memories in private, or only referred to them in the heat of a moment and fallen immediately silent. Now they had faced their remorse in company, and the worst seemed over. Nor was it only that. But the petition "Forgive us our trespasses," falling in so apposite after they had themselves forgiven the immediate author of their miseries, sounded like an absolution.

Tea was taken on deck in the time of the sunset, and not long after the five castaways — castaways once more — lay down to sleep.

Day dawned windless and hot. Their slumbers had been too profound to be refreshing, and they woke listless, and sat up, and stared about them with dull eyes. Only Wicks, smelling a hard day's work ahead, was more alert. He went first to the well, sounded it once and then a second time, and stood awhile with a grim look, so that all could see he was dissatisfied. Then he shook himself, stripped to the buff, clambered on the rail, drew himself up and raised his arms to plunge. The dive was never taken. He stood instead transfixed, his eyes on the horizon.

"Hand up that glass," he said.

In a trice they were all swarming aloft, the nude captain leading with the glass.

On the northern horizon was a finger of grey smoke, straight in the windless air like a point of admiration.

"What do you make it?" they asked of Wicks.

"She's truck down," he replied; "no telling yet. By the way the smoke builds, she must be heading right here."

"What can she be?"

"She might be a China mail," returned Wicks, "and she might be a blooming man-of-war, come to look for castaways. Here! This ain't the time to stand staring. On deck, boys!"

He was the first on deck, as he had been the first aloft, handed down the ensign, bent it again to the signal halliards, and ran it up union down.

"Now hear me," he said, jumping into his trousers, "and everything I say you grip on to. If that's a man-of-war, she'll be in a tearing hurry; all these ships are what don't do nothing and have their expenses paid. That's our chance; for we'll go with them, and they won't take the time to look twice or to ask a question. I'm Captain Trent; Carthew, you're Goddedaal; Tommy, you're Hardy; Mac's Brown; Amalu — Hold hard! we can't make a Chinaman of him! Ah Wing must have deserted; Amalu stowed away; and I turned him to as cook, and was never at the bother to sign him. Catch the idea? Say your names."

And that pale company recited their lesson earnestly.

"What were the names of the other two?" he asked. "Him Carthew shot in the companion, and the one I caught in the jaw on the main top-gallant?"

"Holdorsen and Wallen," said some one.

"Well, they're drowned," continued Wicks; "drowned alongside trying to lower a boat. We had a bit of a squall last night: that's how we got ashore." He ran and squinted at the compass. "Squall out of nor'-nor'-west-half-west; blew hard; every one in a mess, falls jammed, and Holdorsen and Wallen spilt overboard. See? Clear your blooming heads!" He was in his jacket now, and spoke with a feverish impatience and contention that rang like anger.

"But is it safe?" asked Tommy.

"Safe?" bellowed the captain. "We're standing on the drop, you moon-calf! If that ship's bound for China (which she don't look to be), we're lost as soon as we arrive; if she's bound the other way, she comes from China, don't she? Well, if there's a man on board of her that ever clapped eyes on Trent or any blooming hand out of this brig, we'll all be in irons in two hours. Safe! no, it ain't safe; it's a beggarly last chance to shave the gallows, and that's what it is."

At this convincing picture, fear took hold on all.

"Hadn't we a hundred times better stay by the brig?" cried Carthew. "They would give us a hand to float her off."

"You'll make me waste this holy day in chattering!" cried Wicks. "Look here, when I sounded the well this morning, there was two foot of water there against eight inches last night. What's wrong? I don't know; might be nothing; might be the worst kind of smash. And then, there we are in for a thousand miles in an open boat, if that's your taste!"

"But it may be nothing, and anyway their carpenters are bound to help us repair her," argued Carthew.

"Moses Murphy!" cried the captain. "How did she strike? Bows on, I believe. And she's down by the head now. If any carpenter comes tinkering here, where'll he go first? Down in the forepeak, I suppose! And then, how about all that blood among the chandlery? You would think you were a lot of members of Parliament discussing Plimsoll; and you're just a pack of murderers with the halter round your neck. Any other ass got any time to waste? No? Thank God for that! Now, all hands! I'm going below, and I leave you here on deck. You get the boat cover off that boat; then you turn to and open the specie chest. There are five of us; get five chests, and divide the specie equal among the five — put it at the bottom — and go at it like tigers. Get blankets, or canvas, or clothes, so it won't rattle. It'll make five pretty heavy chests, but we can't help that. You, Carthew — dash me! — You, Mr. Goddedaal, come below. We've our share before us."

And he cast another glance at the smoke, and hurried below with Carthew at his heels.

The logs were found in the main cabin behind the canary's cage; two of them, one kept by Trent, one by Goddedaal. Wicks looked first at one, then at the other, and his lip stuck out.

"Can you forge hand of write?" he asked.

"No," said Carthew.

"There's luck for you — no more can I!" cried the captain. "Hullo! here's worse yet, here's this Goddedaal up to date; he must have filled it in before supper. See for yourself: 'Smoke observed. — Captain Kirkup and five hands of the schooner Currency Lass.' Ah! this is better," he added, turning to the other log. "The old man ain't written anything for a clear fortnight. We'll dispose of your log altogether, Mr. Goddedaal, and stick to the old man's — to mine, I mean; only I ain't going to write it up, for reasons of my own. You are. You're going to sit down right here and fill it in the way I tell you."

"How to explain the loss of mine?" asked Carthew.

"You never kept one," replied the captain. "Gross neglect of duty. You'll catch it."

"And the change of writing?" resumed Carthew. "You began; why do you stop and why do I come in? And you'll have to sign anyway."

"O! I've met with an accident and can't write," replied Wicks.

"An accident?" repeated Carthew. "It don't sound natural. What kind of an accident?"

Wicks spread his hand face-up on the table, and drove a knife through his palm.

"That kind of an accident," said he. "There's a way to draw to windward of most difficulties, if you've a head on your shoulders." He began to bind up his hand with a handkerchief, glancing the while over Goddedaal's log. "Hullo!" he said, "this'll never do for us — this is an impossible kind of a yarn. Here, to begin with, is this Captain Trent trying some fancy course, leastways he's a thousand miles to south'ard of the great circle. And here, it seems, he was close up with this island on the sixth, sails all these days, and is close up with it again by daylight on the eleventh."

"Goddedaal said they had the deuce's luck," said Carthew.

"Well, it don't look like real life — that's all I can say," returned Wicks.

"It's the way it was, though," argued Carthew.

"So it is; and what the better are we for that, if it don't look so?" cried the captain, sounding unwonted depths of art criticism. "Here! try and see if you can't tie this bandage; I'm bleeding like a pig."

As Carthew sought to adjust the handkerchief, his patient seemed sunk in a deep muse, his eye veiled, his mouth partly open. The job was yet scarce done, when he sprang to his feet.

"I have it," he broke out, and ran on deck. "Here, boys!" he cried, "we didn't come here on the eleventh; we came in here on the evening of the sixth, and lay here ever since becalmed. As soon as you've done with these chests," he added, "you can turn to and roll out beef and water breakers; it'll look more shipshape — like as if we were getting ready for the boat voyage."

And he was back again in a moment, cooking the new log. Goddedaal's was then carefully destroyed, and a hunt began for the ship's papers. Of all the agonies of that breathless morning, this was perhaps the most poignant. Here and there the two men searched, cursing, cannoning together, streaming with heat, freezing with terror.

News was bawled down to them that the ship was indeed a man-of-war, that she was close up, that she was lowering a boat; and still they sought in vain. By what accident they missed the iron box with the money and accounts, is hard to fancy; but they did. And the vital documents were found at last in the pocket of Trent's shore-going coat, where he had left them when last he came on board.

Wicks smiled for the first time that morning. "None too soon," said he. "And now for it! Take these others for me; I'm afraid I'll get them mixed if I keep both."

"What are they?" Carthew asked.

"They're the Kirkup and Currency Lass papers," he replied. "Pray God we need 'em again!"

"Boat's inside the lagoon, sir," hailed down Mac, who sat by the skylight doing sentry while the others worked.

"Time we were on deck, then, Mr. Goddedaal," said Wicks.

As they turned to leave the cabin, the canary burst into piercing song.

"My God!" cried Carthew, with a gulp, "we can't leave that wretched bird to starve. It was poor Goddedaal's."

"Bring the bally thing along!" cried the captain.

And they went on deck.

An ugly brute of a modern man-of-war lay just without the reef, now quite inert, now giving a flap or two with her propeller. Nearer hand, and just within, a big white boat came skimming to the stroke of many oars, her ensign blowing at the stern.

"One word more," said Wicks, after he had taken in the scene. "Mac, you've been in China ports? All right; then you can speak for yourself. The rest of you I kept on board all the time we were in Hongkong, hoping you would desert; but you fooled me and stuck to the brig. That'll make your lying come easier."

The boat was now close at hand; a boy in the stern sheets was the only officer, and a poor one plainly, for the men were talking as they pulled.

"Thank God, they've only sent a kind of a middy!" ejaculated Wicks. "Here you, Hardy, stand for'ard! I'll have no deck hands on my quarter-deck," he cried, and the reproof braced the whole crew like a cold douche.

The boat came alongside with perfect neatness, and the boy officer stepped on board, where he was respectfully greeted by Wicks.

"You the master of this ship?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Wicks. "Trent is my name, and this is the Flying Scud of Hull."

"You seem to have got into a mess," said the officer.

"If you'll step aft with me here, I'll tell you all there is of it," said

Wicks.

"Why, man, you're shaking!" cried the officer.

"So would you, perhaps, if you had been in the same berth," returned Wicks; and he told the whole story of the rotten water, the long calm, the squall, the seamen drowned; glibly and hotly; talking, with his head in the lion's mouth, like one pleading in the dock. I heard the same tale from the same narrator in the saloon in San Francisco; and even then his bearing filled me with suspicion. But the officer was no observer.

"Well, the captain is in no end of a hurry," said he; "but I was instructed to give you all the assistance in my power, and signal back for another boat if more hands were necessary. What can I do for you?"

"O, we won't keep you no time," replied Wicks cheerily. "We're all ready, bless you — men's chests, chronometer, papers and all."

"Do you mean to leave her?" cried the officer. "She seems to me to lie nicely; can't we get your ship off?"

"So we could, and no mistake; but how we're to keep her afloat's another question. Her bows is stove in," replied Wicks.

The officer coloured to the eyes. He was incompetent and knew he was; thought he was already detected, and feared to expose himself again. There was nothing further from his mind than that the captain should deceive him; if the captain was pleased, why, so was he. "All right," he said. "Tell your men to get their chests aboard."

"Mr. Goddedaal, turn the hands to to get the chests aboard," said Wicks.

The four Currency Lasses had waited the while on tenter-hooks. This welcome news broke upon them like the sun at midnight; and Hadden burst into a storm of tears, sobbing aloud as he heaved upon the tackle. But the work went none the less briskly forward; chests, men, and bundles were got over the side with alacrity; the boat was shoved off; it moved out of the long shadow of the Flying Scud, and its bows were pointed at the passage.

So much, then, was accomplished. The sham wreck had passed muster; they were clear of her, they were safe away; and the water widened between them and her damning evidences. On the other hand, they were drawing nearer to the ship of war, which might very well prove to be their prison and a hangman's cart to bear them to the gallows — of which they had not yet learned either whence she came or whither she was bound; and the doubt weighed upon their heart like mountains.

It was Wicks who did the talking. The sound was small in Carthew's ears, like the voices of men miles away, but the meaning of each word struck home to him like a bullet. "What did you say your ship was?"

inquired Wicks.

"Tempest, don't you know?" returned the officer.

Don't you know? What could that mean? Perhaps nothing: perhaps that the ships had met already. Wicks took his courage in both hands. "Where is she bound?" he asked.

"O, we're just looking in at all these miserable islands here," said the officer. "Then we bear up for San Francisco."

"O, yes, you're from China ways, like us?" pursued Wicks.

"Hong Kong," said the officer, and spat over the side.

Hong Kong. Then the game was up; as soon as they set foot on board, they would be seized; the wreck would be examined, the blood found, the lagoon perhaps dredged, and the bodies of the dead would reappear to testify. An impulse almost incontrollable bade Carthew rise from the thwart, shriek out aloud, and leap overboard; it seemed so vain a thing to dissemble longer, to dally with the inevitable, to spin out some hundred seconds more of agonised suspense, with shame and death thus visibly approaching. But the indomitable Wicks persevered. His face was like a skull, his voice scarce recognisable; the dullest of men and officers (it seemed) must have remarked that telltale countenance and broken utterance. And still he persevered, bent upon certitude.

"Nice place, Hong Kong?" he said.

"I'm sure I don't know," said the officer. "Only a day and a half there; called for orders and came straight on here. Never heard of such a beastly cruise." And he went on describing and lamenting the untoward fortunes of the Tempest.

But Wicks and Carthew heeded him no longer. They lay back on the gunnel, breathing deep, sunk in a stupor of the body: the mind within still nimbly and agreeably at work, measuring the past danger, exulting in the present relief, numbering with ecstasy their ultimate chances of escape. For the voyage in the man-of-war they were now safe; yet a few more days of peril, activity, and presence of mind in San Francisco, and the whole horrid tale was blotted out; and Wicks again became Kirkup, and Goddedaal became Carthew — men beyond all shot of possible suspicion, men who had never heard of the Flying Scud, who had never been in sight of Midway Reef.

So they came alongside, under many craning heads of seamen and projecting mouths of guns; so they climbed on board somnambulous, and looked blindly about them at the tall spars, the white decks, and the crowding ship's company, and heard men as from far away, and answered them at random.

And then a hand fell softly on Carthew's shoulder.

"Why, Norrie, old chappie, where have you dropped from? All the world's been looking for you. Don't you know you've come into your kingdom?”

He turned, beheld the face of his old schoolmate Sebright, and fell unconscious at his feet.

The doctor was attending him, a while later, in Lieutenant Sebright’s cabin, when he came to himself. He opened his eyes, looked hard in the strange face, and spoke with a kind of solemn vigour.

“Brown must go the same road,” he said; “now or never.” And then paused, and his reason coming to him with more clearness, spoke again: “What was I saying? Where am I? Who are you?”

“I am the doctor of the Tempest,” was the reply. “You are in Lieutenant Sebright’s berth, and you may dismiss all concern from your mind. Your troubles are over, Mr. Carthew.”

“Why do you call me that?” he asked. “Ah, I remember — Sebright knew me! O!” and he groaned and shook. “Send down Wicks to me; I must see Wicks at once!” he cried, and seized the doctor’s wrist with unconscious violence.

“All right,” said the doctor. “Let’s make a bargain. You swallow down this draught, and I’ll go and fetch Wicks.”

And he gave the wretched man an opiate that laid him out within ten minutes and in all likelihood preserved his reason.

It was the doctor’s next business to attend to Mac; and he found occasion, while engaged upon his arm, to make the man repeat the names of the rescued crew. It was now the turn of the captain, and there is no doubt he was no longer the man that we have seen; sudden relief, the sense of perfect safety, a square meal and a good glass of grog, had all combined to relax his vigilance and depress his energy.

“When was this done?” asked the doctor, looking at the wound.

“More than a week ago,” replied Wicks, thinking singly of his log.

“Hey?” cried the doctor, and he raised his hand and looked the captain in the eyes.

“I don’t remember exactly,” faltered Wicks.

And at this remarkable falsehood, the suspicions of the doctor were at once quadrupled.

“By the way, which of you is called Wicks?” he asked easily.

“What’s that?” snapped the captain, falling white as paper.

“Wicks,” repeated the doctor; “which of you is he? that’s surely a plain question.”

Wicks stared upon his questioner in silence.

“Which is Brown, then?” pursued the doctor.

“What are you talking of? what do you mean by this?” cried Wicks, snatching his half-bandaged hand away, so that the blood sprinkled in the surgeon’s face.

He did not trouble to remove it. Looking straight at his victim, he pursued his questions. “Why must Brown go the same way?” he asked.

Wicks fell trembling on a locker. “Carthew’s told you,” he cried.

“No,” replied the doctor, “he has not. But he and you between you have set me thinking, and I think there’s something wrong.”

“Give me some grog,” said Wicks. “I’d rather tell than have you find out. I’m damned if it’s half as bad as what any one would think.”

And with the help of a couple of strong grogs, the tragedy of the Flying Scud was told for the first time.

It was a fortunate series of accidents that brought the story to the doctor. He understood and pitied the position of these wretched men, and came whole-heartedly to their assistance. He and Wicks and Carthew (so soon as he was recovered) held a hundred councils and prepared a policy for San Francisco. It was he who certified “Goddedaal” unfit to be moved and smuggled Carthew ashore under cloud of night; it was he who kept Wicks’s wound open that he might sign with his left hand; he who took all their Chile silver and (in the course of the first day) got it converted for them into portable gold. He used his influence in the wardroom to keep the tongues of the young officers in order, so that Carthew’s identification was kept out of the papers. And he rendered another service yet more important. He had a friend in San Francisco, a millionaire; to this man he privately presented Carthew as a young gentleman come newly into a huge estate, but troubled with Jew debts which he was trying to settle on the quiet. The millionaire came readily to help; and it was with his money that the wrecker gang was to be fought. What was his name, out of a thousand guesses? It was Douglas Longhurst.

As long as the Currency Lasses could all disappear under fresh names, it did not greatly matter if the brig were bought, or any small discrepancies should be discovered in the wrecking. The identification of one of their number had changed all that. The smallest scandal must now direct attention to the movements of Norris. It would be asked how he who had sailed in a schooner from Sydney, had turned up so shortly after in a brig out of Hong Kong; and from one question to another all his original shipmates were pretty sure to be involved. Hence arose naturally the idea of preventing danger, profiting by Carthew’s new-found wealth, and buying the brig under an alias; and it was put in hand with equal energy and caution. Carthew took lodgings alone under a false name, picked up Bellairs at random, and commissioned him to buy the wreck.

“What figure, if you please?” the lawyer asked.

“I want it bought,” replied Carthew. “I don’t mind about the price.”

“Any price is no price,” said Bellairs. “Put a name upon it.”

“Call it ten thousand pounds then, if you like!” said Carthew.

In the meanwhile, the captain had to walk the streets, appear in the consulate, be cross-examined by Lloyd’s agent, be badgered about his lost accounts, sign papers with his left hand, and repeat his lies to every skipper in San Francisco: not knowing at what moment he might run into the arms of some old friend who should hail him by the name of Wicks, or some new enemy who should be in a position to deny him that of Trent. And the latter incident did actually befall him, but was transformed by his stout countenance into an element of strength. It was in the consulate (of all untoward places) that he suddenly heard a big voice inquiring for Captain Trent. He turned with the customary sinking at his heart.

"YOU ain't Captain Trent!" said the stranger, falling back. "Why, what's all this? They tell me you're passing off as Captain Trent — Captain Jacob Trent — a man I knew since I was that high."

"O, you're thinking of my uncle as had the bank in Cardiff," replied Wicks, with desperate aplomb.

"I declare I never knew he had a nevvy!" said the stranger.

"Well, you see he has!" says Wicks.

"And how is the old man?" asked the other.

"Fit as a fiddle," answered Wicks, and was opportunely summoned by the clerk.

This alert was the only one until the morning of the sale, when he was once more alarmed by his interview with Jim; and it was with some anxiety that he attended the sale, knowing only that Carthew was to be represented, but neither who was to represent him nor what were the instructions given. I suppose Captain Wicks is a good life. In spite of his personal appearance and his own known uneasiness, I suppose he is secure from apoplexy, or it must have struck him there and then, as he looked on at the stages of that insane sale and saw the old brig and her not very valuable cargo knocked down at last to a total stranger for ten thousand pounds.

It had been agreed that he was to avoid Carthew, and above all Carthew's lodging, so that no connection might be traced between the crew and the pseudonymous purchaser. But the hour for caution was gone by, and he caught a tram and made all speed to Mission Street.

Carthew met him in the door.

"Come away, come away from here," said Carthew; and when they were clear of the house, "All's up!" he added.

"O, you've heard of the sale, then?" said Wicks.

"The sale!" cried Carthew. "I declare I had forgotten it." And he told of the voice in the telephone, and the maddening question: "Why did you want to buy the Flying Scud?"

This circumstance, coming on the back of the monstrous improbabilities of the sale, was enough to have shaken the reason of Immanuel Kant. The earth seemed banded together to defeat them; the stones and the boys on the street appeared to be in possession of their guilty secret. Flight was their one thought. The treasure of the Currency Lass they packed in waist-belts, expressed their chests to an imaginary address in British Columbia, and left San Francisco the same afternoon, booked for Los Angeles.

The next day they pursued their retreat by the Southern Pacific route, which Carthew followed on his way to England; but the other three branched off for Mexico.

EPILOGUE:
TO WILL H. LOW.

DEAR LOW: The other day (at Manihiki of all places) I had the pleasure to meet Dodd. We sat some two hours in the neat, little, toy-like church, set with pews after the manner of Europe, and inlaid with mother-of-pearl in the style (I suppose) of the New Jerusalem. The natives, who are decidedly the most attractive inhabitants of this planet, crowded round us in the pew, and fawned upon and patted us; and here it was I put my questions, and Dodd answered me.

I first carried him back to the night in Barbizon when Carthew told his story, and asked him what was done about Bellairs. It seemed he had put the matter to his friend at once, and that Carthew took it with an inimitable lightness. “He’s poor, and I’m rich,” he had said. “I can afford to smile at him. I go somewhere else, that’s all — somewhere that’s far away and dear to get to. Persia would be found to answer, I fancy. No end of a place, Persia. Why not come with me?” And they had left the next afternoon for Constantinople, on their way to Teheran. Of the shyster, it is only known (by a newspaper paragraph) that he returned somehow to San Francisco and died in the hospital.

“Now there’s another point,” said I. “There you are off to Persia with a millionaire, and rich yourself. How come you here in the South Seas, running a trader?”

He said, with a smile, that I had not yet heard of Jim’s last bankruptcy. “I was about cleaned out once more,” he said; “and then it was that Carthew had this schooner built, and put me in as supercargo. It’s his yacht and it’s my trader; and as nearly all the expenses go to the yacht, I do pretty well. As for Jim, he’s right again: one of the best businesses, they say, in the West, fruit, cereals, and real estate; and he has a Tartar of a partner now — Nares, no less. Nares will keep him straight, Nares has a big head. They have their country-places next door at Saucelito, and I stayed with them time about, the last time I was on the coast. Jim had a paper of his own — I think he has a notion of being senator one of these days — and he wanted me to throw up the schooner and come and write his editorials. He holds strong views on the State Constitution, and so does Mamie.”

“And what became of the other three Currency Lasses after they left Carthew?” I inquired.

“Well, it seems they had a huge spree in the city of Mexico,” said Dodd; “and then Hadden and the Irishman took a turn at the gold fields in Venezuela, and Wicks went on alone to Valparaiso. There’s a Kirkup in the Chilean navy to this day, I saw the name in the papers about the Balmaceda war. Hadden soon wearied of the mines, and I met him the other day in Sydney. The last news he had from Venezuela, Mac had been knocked over in an attack on the gold train. So there's only the three of them left, for Amalu scarcely counts. He lives on his own land in Maui, at the side of Hale-a-ka-la, where he keeps Goddedaal's canary; and they say he sticks to his dollars, which is a wonder in a Kanaka. He had a considerable pile to start with, for not only Hemstead's share but Carthew's was divided equally among the other four — Mac being counted."

"What did that make for him altogether?" I could not help asking, for I had been diverted by the number of calculations in his narrative.

"One hundred and twenty-eight pounds nineteen shillings and eleven pence halfpenny," he replied with composure. "That's leaving out what little he won at Van John. It's something for a Kanaka, you know."

And about that time we were at last obliged to yield to the solicitations of our native admirers, and go to the pastor's house to drink green cocoanuts. The ship I was in was sailing the same night, for Dodd had been beforehand and got all the shell in the island; and though he pressed me to desert and return with him to Auckland (whither he was now bound to pick up Carthew) I was firm in my refusal.

The truth is, since I have been mixed up with Havens and Dodd in the design to publish the latter's narrative, I seem to feel no want for Carthew's society. Of course I am wholly modern in sentiment, and think nothing more noble than to publish people's private affairs at so much a line. They like it, and if they don't, they ought to. But a still small voice keeps telling me they will not like it always, and perhaps not always stand it. Memory besides supplies me with the face of a pressman (in the sacred phrase) who proved altogether too modern for one of his neighbours, and

> Qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum

as it were, marshalling us our way. I am in no haste to

> — nos proecedens —

be that man's successor. Carthew has a record as "a clane shot," and for some years Samoa will be good enough for me.

We agreed to separate, accordingly; but he took me on board in his own boat with the hard-wood fittings, and entertained me on the way with an account of his late visit to Butaritari, whither he had gone on an errand for Carthew, to see how Topelius was getting along, and, if necessary, to give him a helping hand. But Topelius was in great force, and had patronised and — well — out-manoeuvred him.

"Carthew will be pleased," said Dodd; "for there's no doubt they oppressed the man abominably when they were in the Currency Lass.

It’s diamond cut diamond now.”

This, I think, was the most of the news I got from my friend Loudon; and I hope I was well inspired, and have put all the questions to which you would be curious to hear an answer.

But there is one more that I daresay you are burning to put to myself; and that is, what your own name is doing in this place, cropping up (as it were uncalled-for) on the stern of our poor ship? If you were not born in Arcadia, you linger in fancy on its margin; your thoughts are busied with the flutes of antiquity, with daffodils, and the classic poplar, and the footsteps of the nymphs, and the elegant and moving aridity of ancient art. Why dedicate to you a tale of a caste so modern; — full of details of our barbaric manners and unstable morals; — full of the need and the lust of money, so that there is scarce a page in which the dollars do not jingle; — full of the unrest and movement of our century, so that the reader is hurried from place to place and sea to sea, and the book is less a romance than a panorama — in the end, as blood-bespattered as an epic?

Well, you are a man interested in all problems of art, even the most vulgar; and it may amuse you to hear the genesis and growth of *The Wrecker*. On board the schooner Equator, almost within sight of the JohnstoneIslands (if anybody knows where these are) and on a moonlit night when it was a joy to be alive, the authors were amused with several stories of the sale of wrecks. The subject tempted them; and they sat apart in the alley-way to discuss its possibilities. “What a tangle it would make,” suggested one, “if the wrong crew were aboard. But how to get the wrong crew there?” — ”I have it!” cried the other; “the so-and-so affair!” For not so many months before, and not so many hundred miles from where we were then sailing, a proposition almost tantamount to that of Captain Trent had been made by a British skipper to some British castaways.

Before we turned in, the scaffolding of the tale had been put together. But the question of treatment was as usual more obscure. We had long been at once attracted and repelled by that very modern form of the police novel or mystery story, which consists in beginning your yarn anywhere but at the beginning, and finishing it anywhere but at the end; attracted by its peculiar interest when done, and the peculiar difficulties that attend its execution; repelled by that appearance of insincerity and shallowness of tone, which seems its inevitable drawback. For the mind of the reader, always bent to pick up clews, receives no impression of reality or life, rather of an airless, elaborate mechanism; and the book remains enthralling, but insignificant, like a game of chess, not a work of human art. It seemed the cause might lie partly in the abrupt attack; and that if the tale were gradually approached, some of the characters introduced (as it were) beforehand, and the book started in the tone of a novel of manners and experience briefly treated, this defect might be lessened and our mystery seem to inhere in life. The tone of the age, its movement, the mingling of races and classes in the dollar hunt, the fiery and not quite unromantic struggle for existence with its changing trades and scenery, and two types in particular, that of the American handy-man of business and that of the Yankee merchant sailor — we agreed to dwell upon at some length, and make the woof to our not very precious warp. Hence Dodd's father, and Pinkerton, and Nares, and the Dromedary picnics, and the railway work in New South Wales — the last an unsolicited testimonial from the powers that be, for the tale was half written before I saw Carthew's squad toil in the rainy cutting at South Clifton, or heard from the engineer of his "young swell." After we had invented at some expense of time this method of approaching and fortifying our police novel, it occurred to us it had been invented previously by some one else, and was in fact — however painfully different the results may seem — the method of Charles Dickens in his later work.

I see you staring. Here, you will say, is a prodigious quantity of theory to our halfpenny worth of police novel; and withal not a shadow of an answer to your question.

Well, some of us like theory. After so long a piece of practice, these may be indulged for a few pages. And the answer is at hand. It was plainly desirable, from every point of view of convenience and contrast, that our hero and narrator should partly stand aside from those with whom he mingles, and be but a pressed-man in the dollar hunt. Thus it was that Loudon Dodd became a student of the plastic arts, and that our globe-trotting story came to visit Paris and look in at Barbizon. And thus it is, dear Low, that your name appears in the address of this epilogue.

For sure, if any person can here appreciate and read between the lines, it must be you — and one other, our friend. All the dominos will be transparent to your better knowledge; the statuary contract will be to you a piece of ancient history; and you will not have now heard for the first time of the dangers of Roussillon. Dead leaves from the Bas Breau, echoes from Lavenue's and the Rue Racine, memories of a common past, let these be your bookmarkers as you read. And if you care for naught else in the story, be a little pleased to breathe once more for a moment the airs of our youth.

The End.

CATRIONA

This novel was written in 1893 as a sequel to the earlier novel *Kidnapped*. It tells the further adventures of the central character David Balfour and begins precisely where *Kidnapped* ends in August 1751, outside the British Linen Company in Edinburgh, Scotland. The first part of the novel recounts the attempts of Balfour to gain justice for James Stewart (James of the Glens), who has been arrested and charged with complicity in the Appin Murder.

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DEDICATION.

TO CHARLES BAXTER, Writer to the Signet.

My Dear Charles,

It is the fate of sequels to disappoint those who have waited for them; and my David, having been left to kick his heels for more than a lustre in the British Linen Company's office, must expect his late re-appearance to be greeted with hoots, if not with missiles. Yet, when I remember the days of our explorations, I am not without hope. There should be left in our native city some seed of the elect; some long-legged, hot-headed youth must repeat to-day our dreams and wanderings of so many years ago; he will relish the pleasure, which should have been ours, to follow among named streets and numbered houses the country walks of David Balfour, to identify Dean, and Silvermills, and Broughton, and Hope Park, and Pilrig, and poor old Lochend - if it still be standing, and the Figgate Whins - if there be any of them left; or to push (on a long holiday) so far afield as Gillane or the Bass. So, perhaps, his eye shall be opened to behold the series of the generations, and he shall weigh with surprise his momentous and nugatory gift of life.

You are still - as when first I saw, as when I last addressed you - in the venerable city which I must always think of as my home. And I have come so far; and the sights and thoughts of my youth pursue me; and I see like a vision the youth of my father, and of his father, and the whole stream of lives flowing down there far in the north, with the sound of laughter and tears, to cast me out in the end, as by a sudden freshet, on these ultimate islands. And I admire and bow my head before the romance of destiny.

R. L. S.
Vailima, Upolu,
Samoa, 1892.

CATRIONA - Part I
THE LORD ADVOCATE

CHAPTER I - A BEGGAR ON HORSEBACK

The 25th day of August, 1751, about two in the afternoon, I, David Balfour, came forth of the British Linen Company, a porter attending me with a bag of money, and some of the chief of these merchants bowing me from their doors. Two days before, and even so late as yestermorning, I was like a beggar-man by the wayside, clad in rags, brought down to my last shillings, my companion a condemned traitor, a price set on my own head for a crime with the news of which the country rang. To-day I was served heir to my position in life, a landed laird, a bank porter by me carrying my gold, recommendations in my pocket, and (in the words of the saying) the ball directly at my foot.

There were two circumstances that served me as ballast to so much sail. The first was the very difficult and deadly business I had still to handle; the second, the place that I was in. The tall, black city, and the numbers and movement and noise of so many folk, made a new world for me, after the moorland braes, the sea-sands and the still country-sides that I had frequented up to then. The throng of the citizens in particular abashed me. Rankeillor's son was short and small in the girth; his clothes scarce held on me; and it was plain I was ill qualified to strut in the front of a bank-porter. It was plain, if I did so, I should but set folk laughing, and (what was worse in my case) set them asking questions. So that I behooved to come by some clothes of my own, and in the meanwhile to walk by the porter's side, and put my hand on his arm as though we were a pair of friends.

At a merchant's in the Luckenbooths I had myself fitted out: none too fine, for I had no idea to appear like a beggar on horseback; but comely and responsible, so that servants should respect me. Thence to an armourer's, where I got a plain sword, to suit with my degree in life. I felt safer with the weapon, though (for one so ignorant of defence) it might be called an added danger. The porter, who was naturally a man of some experience, judged my accoutrement to be well chosen.

"Naething kenspeckle," said he; "plain, dacent claes. As for the rapier, nae doubt it sits wi' your degree; but an I had been you, I would has waired my siller better-gates than that." And he proposed I should buy winter-hosen from a wife in the Cowgate-back, that was a cousin of his own, and made them "extraordinar endurable."

But I had other matters on my hand more pressing. Here I was in this old, black city, which was for all the world like a rabbit-warren, not only by the number of its indwellers, but the complication of its passages and holes. It was, indeed, a place where no stranger had a chance to find a friend, let be another stranger. Suppose him even to hit on the right close, people dwelt so thronged in these tall houses, he might very well seek a day before he chanced on the right door. The ordinary course was to hire a lad they called a caddie, who was like a guide or pilot, led you where you had occasion, and (your errands being done) brought you again where you were lodging. But these caddies, being always employed in the same sort of services, and having it for obligation to be well informed of every house and person in the city, had grown to form a brotherhood of spies; and I knew from tales of Mr. Campbell's how they communicated one with another, what a rage of curiosity they conceived as to their employer's business, and how they were like eyes and fingers to the police. It would be a piece of little wisdom, the way I was now placed, to take such a ferret to my tails. I had three visits to make, all immediately needful: to my kinsman Mr. Balfour of Pilrig, to Stewart the Writer that was Appin's agent, and to William Grant Esquire of Prestongrange, Lord Advocate of Scotland. Mr. Balfour's was a non-committal visit; and besides (Pilrig being in the country) I made bold to find the way to it myself, with the help of my two legs and a Scots tongue. But the rest were in a different case. Not only was the visit to Appin's agent, in the midst of the cry about the Appin murder, dangerous in itself, but it was highly inconsistent with the other. I was like to have a bad enough time of it with my Lord Advocate Grant, the best of ways; but to go to him hot-foot from Appin's agent, was little likely to mend my own affairs, and might prove the mere ruin of friend Alan's. The whole thing, besides, gave me a look of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds that was little to my fancy. I determined, therefore, to be done at once with Mr. Stewart and the whole Jacobitical side of my business, and to profit for that purpose by the guidance of the porter at my side. But it chanced I had scarce given him the address, when there came a sprinkle of rain - nothing to hurt, only for my new clothes - and we took shelter under a pend at the head of a close or alley.

Being strange to what I saw, I stepped a little farther in. The narrow paved way descended swiftly. Prodigious tall houses sprang upon each side and bulged out, one storey beyond another, as they rose. At the top only a ribbon of sky showed in. By what I could spy in the windows, and by the respectable persons that passed out and in, I saw the houses to be very well occupied; and the whole appearance of the place interested me like a tale.

I was still gazing, when there came a sudden brisk tramp of feet in time and clash of steel behind me. Turning quickly, I was aware of a party of armed soldiers, and, in their midst, a tall man in a great coat. He walked with a stoop that was like a piece of courtesy, genteel and insinuating: he waved his hands plausibly as he went, and his face was sly and handsome. I thought his eye took me in, but could not meet it. This procession went by to a door in the close, which a serving-man in a fine livery set open; and two of the soldier-lads carried the prisoner within, the rest lingering with their firelocks by the door.

There can nothing pass in the streets of a city without some following of idle folk and children. It was so now; but the more part melted away incontinent until but three were left. One was a girl; she was dressed like a lady, and had a screen of the Drummond colours on her head; but her comrades or (I should say) followers were ragged gillies, such as I had seen the matches of by the dozen in my Highland journey. They all spoke together earnestly in Gaelic, the sound of which was pleasant in my ears for the sake of Alan; and, though the rain was by again, and my porter plucked at me to be going, I even drew nearer where they were, to listen. The lady scolded sharply, the others making apologies and cringeing before her, so that I made sure she was come of a chief's house. All the while the three of them sought in their pockets, and by what I could make out, they had the matter of half a farthing among the party; which made me smile a little to see all Highland folk alike for fine obeisances and empty sporrans.

It chanced the girl turned suddenly about, so that I saw her face for the first time. There is no greater wonder than the way the face of a young woman fits in a man's mind, and stays there, and he could never tell you why; it just seems it was the thing he wanted. She had wonderful bright eyes like stars, and I daresay the eyes had a part in it; but what I remember the most clearly was the way her lips were a trifle open as she turned. And, whatever was the cause, I stood there staring like a fool. On her side, as she had not known there was anyone so near, she looked at me a little longer, and perhaps with more surprise, than was entirely civil.

It went through my country head she might be wondering at my new clothes; with that, I blushed to my hair, and at the sight of my colouring it is to be supposed she drew her own conclusions, for she moved her gillies farther down the close, and they fell again to this dispute, where I could hear no more of it.

I had often admired a lassie before then, if scarce so sudden and strong; and it was rather my disposition to withdraw than to come forward, for I was much in fear of mockery from the womenkind. You would have thought I had now all the more reason to pursue my common practice, since I had met this young lady in the city street, seemingly following a prisoner, and accompanied with two very ragged indecent-like Highlandmen. But there was here a different ingredient; it was plain the girl thought I had been prying in her secrets; and with my new clothes and sword, and at the top of my new fortunes, this was more than I could swallow. The beggar on horseback could not bear to be thrust down so low, or, at least of it, not by this young lady.

I followed, accordingly, and took off my new hat to her the best that I was able.

"Madam," said I, "I think it only fair to myself to let you understand I have no Gaelic. It is true I was listening, for I have friends of my own across the Highland line, and the sound of that tongue comes friendly; but for your private affairs, if you had spoken Greek, I might have had more guess at them."

She made me a little, distant curtsey. "There is no harm done," said she, with a pretty accent, most like the English (but more agreeable). "A cat may look at a king."

"I do not mean to offend," said I. "I have no skill of city manners; I never before this day set foot inside the doors of Edinburgh. Take me for a country lad - it's what I am; and I would rather I told you than you found it out."

"Indeed, it will be a very unusual thing for strangers to be speaking to each other on the causeway," she replied. "But if you are landward bred it will be different. I am as landward as yourself; I am Highland, as you see, and think myself the farther from my home."

"It is not yet a week since I passed the line," said I. "Less than a week ago I was on the braes of Balwhidder."

"Balwhither?" she cries. "Come ye from Balwhither! The name of it makes all there is of me rejoice. You will not have been long there, and not known some of our friends or family?"

"I lived with a very honest, kind man called Duncan Dhu Maclaren," I replied.

"Well, I know Duncan, and you give him the true name!" she said; "and if he is an honest man, his wife is honest indeed."

"Ay," said I, "they are fine people, and the place is a bonny place."

"Where in the great world is such another!" she cries; "I am loving the smell of that place and the roots that grow there."

I was infinitely taken with the spirit of the maid. "I could be wishing I had brought you a spray of that heather," says I. "And, though I did ill to speak with you at the first, now it seems we have common acquaintance, I make it my petition you will not forget me.

David Balfour is the name I am known by. This is my lucky day, when I have just come into a landed estate, and am not very long out of a deadly peril. I wish you would keep my name in mind for the sake of Balwhidder," said I, "and I will yours for the sake of my lucky day."

"My name is not spoken," she replied, with a great deal of haughtiness. "More than a hundred years it has not gone upon men's tongues, save for a blink. I am nameless, like the Folk of Peace. Catriona Drummond is the one I use."

Now indeed I knew where I was standing. In all broad Scotland there was but the one name proscribed, and that was the name of the Macgregors. Yet so far from fleeing this undesirable acquaintancy, I plunged the deeper in.

"I have been sitting with one who was in the same case with yourself," said I, "and I think he will be one of your friends. They called him Robin Oig."

"Did ye so?" cries she. "Ye met Rob?"

"I passed the night with him," said I.

"He is a fowl of the night," said she.

"There was a set of pipes there," I went on, "so you may judge if the time passed."

"You should be no enemy, at all events," said she. "That was his brother there a moment since, with the red soldiers round him. It is him that I call father."

"Is it so?" cried I. "Are you a daughter of James More's?"

"All the daughter that he has," says she: "the daughter of a prisoner; that I should forget it so, even for one hour, to talk with strangers!"

Here one of the gillies addressed her in what he had of English, to know what "she" (meaning by that himself) was to do about "ta sneeshin." I took some note of him for a short, bandy-legged, red-haired, big-headed man, that I was to know more of to my cost.

"There can be none the day, Neil," she replied. "How will you get 'sneeshin,' wanting siller! It will teach you another time to be more careful; and I think James More will not be very well pleased with Neil of the Tom."

"Miss Drummond," I said, "I told you I was in my lucky day. Here I am, and a bank-porter at my tail. And remember I have had the hospitality of your own country of Balwhidder."

"It was not one of my people gave it," said she.

"Ah, well," said I, "but I am owing your uncle at least for some springs upon the pipes. Besides which, I have offered myself to be your friend, and you have been so forgetful that you did not refuse me in the proper time."

"If it had been a great sum, it might have done you honour," said she; "but I will tell you what this is. James More lies shackled in prison; but this time past they will be bringing him down here daily to the Advocate's. . . ."

"The Advocate's!" I cried. "Is that . . . ?"

"It is the house of the Lord Advocate Grant of Prestongrange," said she. "There they bring my father one time and another, for what purpose I have no thought in my mind; but it seems there is some hope dawned for him. All this same time they will not let me be seeing him, nor yet him write; and we wait upon the King's street to catch him; and now we give him his snuff as he goes by, and now something else. And here is this son of trouble, Neil, son of Duncan, has lost my four-penny piece that was to buy that snuff, and James More must go wanting, and will think his daughter has forgotten him."

I took sixpence from my pocket, gave it to Neil, and bade him go about his errand. Then to her, "That sixpence came with me by Balwhidder," said I.

"Ah!" she said, "you are a friend to the Gregara!"

"I would not like to deceive you, either," said I. "I know very little of the Gregara and less of James More and his doings, but since the while I have been standing in this close, I seem to know something of yourself; and if you will just say 'a friend to Miss Catriona' I will see you are the less cheated."

"The one cannot be without the other," said she.

"I will even try," said I.

"And what will you be thinking of myself!" she cried, "to be holding my hand to the first stranger!"

"I am thinking nothing but that you are a good daughter," said I.

"I must not be without repaying it," she said; "where is it you stop!"

"To tell the truth, I am stopping nowhere yet," said I, "being not full three hours in the city; but if you will give me your direction, I will he no bold as come seeking my sixpence for myself."

"Will I can trust you for that?" she asked.

"You need have little fear," said I.

"James More could not bear it else," said she. "I stop beyond the village of Dean, on the north side of the water, with Mrs. Drummond-Ogilvy of Allardyce, who is my near friend and will be glad to thank you."

"You are to see me, then, so soon as what I have to do permits," said I; and, the remembrance of Alan rolling in again upon my mind, I made haste to say farewell.

I could not but think, even as I did so, that we had made extraordinary free upon short acquaintance, and that a really wise young lady would have shown herself more backward. I think it was the bank-porter that put me from this ungallant train of thought.

"I thoucht ye had been a lad of some kind o' sense," he began, shooting out his lips. "Ye're no likely to gang far this gate. A fule and his siller's shune parted. Eh, but ye're a green callant!" he cried, "an' a veecious, tae! Cleikin' up wi' baubeejoes!"

"If you dare to speak of the young lady. . . " I began.

"Leddy!" he cried. "Haud us and safe us, whatten leddy? Ca' thon a leddy? The toun's fu' o' them. Leddies! Man, its weel seen ye're no very acquant in Embro!"

A clap of anger took me.

"Here," said I, "lead me where I told you, and keep your foul mouth shut!"

He did not wholly obey me, for, though he no more addressed me directly, he very impudent sang at me as he went in a manner of innuendo, and with an exceedingly ill voice and ear -

"As Mally Lee cam doun the street, her capuchin did flee,
She cuist a look ahint her to see her negligee.
And we're a' gaun east and wast, we're a' gann ajee,
We're a' gaun east and wast courtin' Mally Lee."

CHAPTER II - THE HIGHLAND WRITER

Mr. Charles Stewart the Writer dwelt at the top of the longest stair ever mason set a hand to; fifteen flights of it, no less; and when I had come to his door, and a clerk had opened it, and told me his master was within, I had scarce breath enough to send my porter packing.

"Awa' east and west wi' ye!" said I, took the money bag out of his hands, and followed the clerk in.

The outer room was an office with the clerk's chair at a table spread with law papers. In the inner chamber, which opened from it, a little brisk man sat poring on a deed, from which he scarce raised his eyes on my entrance; indeed, he still kept his finger in the place, as though prepared to show me out and fall again to his studies. This pleased me little enough; and what pleased me less, I thought the clerk was in a good posture to overhear what should pass between us.

I asked if he was Mr. Charles Stewart the Writer.

"The same," says he; "and, if the question is equally fair, who may you be yourself?"

"You never heard tell of my name nor of me either," said I, "but I bring you a token from a friend that you know well. That you know well," I repeated, lowering my voice, "but maybe are not just so keen to hear from at this present being. And the bits of business that I have to propone to you are rather in the nature of being confidential. In short, I would like to think we were quite private."

He rose without more words, casting down his paper like a man ill-pleased, sent forth his clerk of an errand, and shut to the house-door behind him.

"Now, sir," said he, returning, "speak out your mind and fear nothing; though before you begin," he cries out, "I tell you mine misgives me! I tell you beforehand, ye're either a Stewart or a Stewart sent ye. A good name it is, and one it would ill-become my father's son to lightly. But I begin to grue at the sound of it."

"My name is called Balfour," said I, "David Balfour of Shaws. As for him that sent me, I will let his token speak." And I showed the silver button.

"Put it in your pocket, sir!" cries he. "Ye need name no names. The deevil's buckie, I ken the button of him! And de'il hae't! Where is he now!"

I told him I knew not where Alan was, but he had some sure place (or thought he had) about the north side, where he was to lie until a ship was found for him; and how and where he had appointed to be spoken with.

"It's been always my opinion that I would hang in a tow for this family of mine," he cried, "and, dod! I believe the day's come now! Get a ship for him, quot' he! And who's to pay for it? The man's daft!"

"That is my part of the affair, Mr. Stewart," said I. "Here is a bag of good money, and if more be wanted, more is to be had where it came from."

"I needn't ask your politics," said he.

"Ye need not," said I, smiling, "for I'm as big a Whig as grows."

"Stop a bit, stop a bit," says Mr. Stewart. "What's all this? A Whig? Then why are you here with Alan's button? and what kind of a black-foot traffic is this that I find ye out in, Mr. Whig? Here is a forfeited rebel and an accused murderer, with two hundred pounds on his life, and ye ask me to meddle in his business, and then tell me ye're a Whig! I have no mind of any such Whigs before, though I've kent plenty of them."

"He's a forfeited rebel, the more's the pity," said I, "for the man's my friend. I can only wish he had been better guided. And an accused murderer, that he is too, for his misfortune; but wrongfully accused."

"I hear you say so," said Stewart.

"More than you are to hear me say so, before long," said I. "Alan Breck is innocent, and so is James."

"Oh!" says he, "the two cases hang together. If Alan is out, James can never be in."

Hereupon I told him briefly of my acquaintance with Alan, of the accident that brought me present at the Appin murder, and the various passages of our escape among the heather, and my recovery of my estate. "So, sir, you have now the whole train of these events," I went on, "and can see for yourself how I come to be so much mingled up with the affairs of your family and friends, which (for all of our sakes) I wish had been plainer and less bloody. You can see for yourself, too, that I have certain pieces of business depending, which were scarcely fit to lay before a lawyer chosen at random. No more remains, but to ask if you will undertake my service?"

"I have no great mind to it; but coming as you do with Alan's button, the choice is scarcely left me," said he. "What are your instructions?" he added, and took up his pen.

"The first point is to smuggle Alan forth of this country," said I, "but I need not be repeating that."

"I am little likely to forget it," said Stewart.

"The next thing is the bit money I am owing to Cluny," I went on. "It would be ill for me to find a conveyance, but that should be no stick to you. It was two pounds five shillings and three-halfpence farthing sterling."

He noted it.

"Then," said I, "there's a Mr. Henderland, a licensed preacher and missionary in Ardgour, that I would like well to get some snuff into the hands of; and, as I daresay you keep touch with your friends in Appin (so near by), it's a job you could doubtless overtake with the other."

"How much snuff are we to say?" he asked.

"I was thinking of two pounds," said I.

"Two," said he.

"Then there's the lass Alison Hastie, in Lime Kilns," said I. "Her that helped Alan and me across the Forth. I was thinking if I could get her a good Sunday gown, such as she could wear with decency in her degree, it would be an ease to my conscience; for the mere truth is, we owe her our two lives."

"I am glad so see you are thrifty, Mr. Balfour," says he, making his notes.

"I would think shame to be otherwise the first day of my fortune," said I. "And now, if you will compute the outlay and your own proper charges, I would be glad to know if I could get some spending-money back. It's not that I grudge the whole of it to get Alan safe; it's not that I lack more; but having drawn so much the one day, I think it would have a very ill appearance if I was back again seeking, the next. Only be sure you have enough," I added, "for I am very undesirous to meet with you again."

"Well, and I'm pleased to see you're cautious, too," said the Writer. "But I think ye take a risk to lay so considerable a sum at my discretion."

He said this with a plain sneer.

"I'll have to run the hazard," I replied. "O, and there's another service I would ask, and that's to direct me to a lodging, for I have no roof to my head. But it must be a lodging I may seem to have hit upon by accident, for it would never do if the Lord Advocate were to get any jealousy of our acquaintance."

"Ye may set your weary spirit at rest," said he. "I will never name your name, sir; and it's my belief the Advocate is still so much to be sympathised with that he doesnae ken of your existence."

I saw I had got to the wrong side of the man.

"There's a braw day coming for him, then," said I, "for he'll have to learn of it on the deaf side of his head no later than to-morrow, when I call on him."

"When ye call on him!" repeated Mr. Stewart. "Am I daft, or are you! What takes ye near the Advocate!"

"O, just to give myself up," said I.

“Mr. Balfour,” he cried, “are ye making a mock of me?”

“No, sir,” said I, “though I think you have allowed yourself some such freedom with myself. But I give you to understand once and for all that I am in no jesting spirit.”

“Nor yet me,” says Stewart. “And I give yon to understand (if that’s to be the word) that I like the looks of your behaviour less and less. You come here to me with all sorts of propositions, which will put me in a train of very doubtful acts and bring me among very undesirable persons this many a day to come. And then you tell me you’re going straight out of my office to make your peace with the Advocate! Alan’s button here or Alan’s button there, the four quarters of Alan wouldnae bribe me further in.”

“I would take it with a little more temper,” said I, “and perhaps we can avoid what you object to. I can see no way for it but to give myself up, but perhaps you can see another; and if you could, I could never deny but what I would be rather relieved. For I think my traffic with his lordship is little likely to agree with my health. There’s just the one thing clear, that I have to give my evidence; for I hope it’ll save Alan’s character (what’s left of it), and James’s neck, which is the more immediate.”

He was silent for a breathing-space, and then, “My man,” said he, “you’ll never be allowed to give such evidence.”

“We’ll have to see about that,” said I; “I’m stiff-necked when I like.”

“Ye muckle ass!” cried Stewart, “it’s James they want; James has got to hang - Alan, too, if they could catch him - but James whatever! Go near the Advocate with any such business, and you’ll see! he’ll find a way to muzzle, ye.”

“I think better of the Advocate than that,” said I.

“The Advocate be dammed!” cries he. “It’s the Campbells, man! You’ll have the whole clanjamfry of them on your back; and so will the Advocate too, poor body! It’s extraordinar ye cannot see where ye stand! If there’s no fair way to stop your gab, there’s a foul one gaping. They can put ye in the dock, do ye no see that?” he cried, and stabbed me with one finger in the leg.

“Ay,” said I, “I was told that same no further back than this morning by another lawyer.”

“And who was he?” asked Stewart, “He spoke sense at least.”

I told I must be excused from naming him, for he was a decent stout old Whig, and had little mind to be mixed up in such affairs.

“I think all the world seems to be mixed up in it!” cries Stewart. “But what said you?”

“I told him what had passed between Rankeillor and myself before the house of Shaws.

“Well, and so ye will hang!” said he. “Ye’ll hang beside James

Stewart. There's your fortune told."

"I hope better of it yet than that," said I; "but I could never deny there was a risk."

"Risk!" says he, and then sat silent again. "I ought to thank you for you staunchness to my friends, to whom you show a very good spirit," he says, "if you have the strength to stand by it. But I warn you that you're wading deep. I wouldn't put myself in your place (me that's a Stewart born!) for all the Stewarts that ever there were since Noah. Risk? ay, I take over-many; but to be tried in court before a Campbell jury and a Campbell judge, and that in a Campbell country and upon a Campbell quarrel - think what you like of me, Balfour, it's beyond me."

"It's a different way of thinking, I suppose," said I; "I was brought up to this one by my father before me."

"Glory to his bones! he has left a decent son to his name," says he. "Yet I would not have you judge me over-sorely. My case is dooms hard. See, sir, ye tell me ye're a Whig: I wonder what I am. No Whig to be sure; I couldnae be just that. But - laigh in your ear, man - I'm maybe no very keen on the other side."

"Is that a fact?" cried I. "It's what I would think of a man of your intelligence."

"Hut! none of your whillywhas!" cries he. "There's intelligence upon both sides. But for my private part I have no particular desire to harm King George; and as for King James, God bless him! he does very well for me across the water. I'm a lawyer, ye see: fond of my books and my bottle, a good plea, a well-drawn deed, a crack in the Parliament House with other lawyer bodies, and perhaps a turn at the golf on a Saturday at e'en. Where do ye come in with your Hieland plaids and claymores?"

"Well," said I, "it's a fact ye have little of the wild Highlandman."

"Little?" quoth he. "Nothing, man! And yet I'm Hieland born, and when the clan pipes, who but me has to dance! The clan and the name, that goes by all. It's just what you said yourself; my father learned it to me, and a bonny trade I have of it. Treason and traitors, and the smuggling of them out and in; and the French recruiting, weary fall it! and the smuggling through of the recruits; and their pleas - a sorrow of their pleas! Here have I been moving one for young Ardsheil, my cousin; claimed the estate under the marriage contract - a forfeited estate! I told them it was nonsense: muckle they cared! And there was I cocking behind a yadvocate that liked the business as little as myself, for it was fair ruin to the pair of us - a black mark, disaffected, branded on our hurdies, like folk's names upon their kye! And what can I do? I'm a Stewart, ye see, and must fend for my clan and family. Then no later by than yesterday there was one of our Stewart lads carried to the Castle. What for? I ken fine: Act of 1736: recruiting for King Lewie. And you'll see, he'll whistle me in to be his lawyer, and there'll be another black mark on my chara'ter! I tell you fair: if I but kent the heid of a Hebrew word from the hurdies of it, be dammed but I would fling the whole thing up and turn minister!"

"It's rather a hard position," said I.

"Dooms hard!" cries he. "And that's what makes me think so much of ye - you that's no Stewart - to stick your head so deep in Stewart business. And for what, I do not know: unless it was the sense of duty."

"I hope it will be that," said I.

"Well," says he, "it's a grand quality. But here is my clerk back; and, by your leave, we'll pick a bit of dinner, all the three of us. When that's done, I'll give you the direction of a very decent man, that'll be very fain to have you for a lodger. And I'll fill your pockets to ye, forbye, out of your ain bag. For this business'll not be near as dear as ye suppose - not even the ship part of it."

I made him a sign that his clerk was within hearing.

"Hoot, ye neednae mind for Robbie," cries he. "A Stewart, too, puir deevil! and has smuggled out more French recruits and trafficking Papists than what he has hairs upon his face. Why, it's Robin that manages that branch of my affairs. Who will we have now, Rob, for across the water!"

"There'll be Andie Scougal, in the Thristle," replied Rob. "I saw Hoseason the other day, but it seems he's wanting the ship. Then there'll be Tam Stobo; but I'm none so sure of Tam. I've seen him colloguing with some gey queer acquaintances; and if was anybody important, I would give Tam the go-by."

"The head's worth two hundred pounds, Robin," said Stewart.

"Gosh, that'll no be Alan Breck!" cried the clerk.

"Just Alan," said his master.

"Weary winds! that's sayrious," cried Robin. "I'll try Andie, then; Andie'll be the best."

"It seems it's quite a big business," I observed.

"Mr. Balfour, there's no end to it," said Stewart.

"There was a name your clerk mentioned," I went on: "Hoseason. That must be my man, I think: Hoseason, of the brig Covenant. Would you set your trust on him?"

"He didnae behave very well to you and Alan," said Mr. Stewart; "but my mind of the man in general is rather otherwise. If he had taken Alan on board his ship on an agreement, it's my notion he would have proved a just dealer. How say ye, Rob?"

"No more honest skipper in the trade than Eli," said the clerk. "I would lippen to Eli's word - ay, if it was the Chevalier, or Appin himsel'," he added.

"And it was him that brought the doctor, wasnae't?" asked the master.

"He was the very man," said the clerk.

"And I think he took the doctor back?" says Stewart.

"Ay, with his sporran full!" cried Robin. "And Eli kent of that!"

"Well, it seems it's hard to ken folk rightly," said I.

"That was just what I forgot when ye came in, Mr. Balfour!" says the Writer.

CHAPTER III - I GO TO PILRIG

The next morning, I was no sooner awake in my new lodging than I was up and into my new clothes; and no sooner the breakfast swallowed, than I was forth on my adventurers. Alan, I could hope, was fended for; James was like to be a more difficult affair, and I could not but think that enterprise might cost me dear, even as everybody said to whom I had opened my opinion. It seemed I was come to the top of the mountain only to cast myself down; that I had clambered up, through so many and hard trials, to be rich, to be recognised, to wear city clothes and a sword to my side, all to commit mere suicide at the last end of it, and the worst kind of suicide, besides, which is to get hanged at the King's charges.

What was I doing it for? I asked, as I went down the high Street and out north by Leith Wynd. First I said it was to save James Stewart; and no doubt the memory of his distress, and his wife's cries, and a word or so I had let drop on that occasion worked upon me strongly. At the same time I reflected that it was (or ought to be) the most indifferent matter to my father's son, whether James died in his bed or from a scaffold. He was Alan's cousin, to be sure; but so far as regarded Alan, the best thing would be to lie low, and let the King, and his Grace of Argyll, and the corbie crows, pick the bones of his kinsman their own way. Nor could I forget that, while we were all in the pot together, James had shown no such particular anxiety whether for Alan or me.

Next it came upon me I was acting for the sake of justice: and I thought that a fine word, and reasoned it out that (since we dwelt in polities, at some discomfort to each one of us) the main thing of all must still be justice, and the death of any innocent man a wound upon the whole community. Next, again, it was the Accuser of the Brethren that gave me a turn of his argument; bade me think shame for pretending myself concerned in these high matters, and told me I was but a prating vain child, who had spoken big words to Rankeillor and to Stewart, and held myself bound upon my vanity to make good that boastfulness. Nay, and he hit me with the other end of the stick; for he accused me of a kind of artful cowardice, going about at the expense of a little risk to purchase greater safety. No doubt, until I had declared and cleared myself, I might any day encounter Mungo Campbell or the sheriff's officer, and be recognised, and dragged into the Appin murder by the heels; and, no doubt, in case I could manage my declaration with success, I should breathe more free for ever after. But when I looked this argument full in the face I could see nothing to be ashamed of. As for the rest, “Here are the two roads,” I thought, “and both go to the same place. It’s unjust that James should hang if I can save him; and it would be ridiculous in me to have talked so much and then do nothing. It’s lucky for James of the Glens that I have boasted beforehand; and none so unlucky for myself, because now I’m committed to do right. I have the name of a gentleman and the means of one; it would be a poor duty that I was wanting in the essence.” And then I thought this was a Pagan spirit, and said a prayer in to myself, asking for what courage I might lack, and that I might go straight to my duty like a soldier to battle, and come off again scatheless, as so many do.

This train of reasoning brought me to a more resolved complexion; though it was far from closing up my sense of the dangers that surrounded me, nor of how very apt I was (if I went on) to stumble on the ladder of the gallows. It was a plain, fair morning, but the wind in the east. The little chill of it sang in my blood, and gave me a feeling of the autumn, and the dead leaves, and dead folks’ bodies in their graves. It seemed the devil was in it, if I was to die in that tide of my fortunes and for other folks’ affairs. On the top of the Calton Hill, though it was not the customary time of year for that diversion, some children were crying and running with their kites. These toys appeared very plain against the sky; I remarked a great one soar on the wind to a high altitude and then plump among the whins; and I thought to myself at sight of it, “There goes Davie.”

My way lay over Mouter’s Hill, and through an end of a clachan on the braeside among fields. There was a whirr of looms in it went from house to house; bees bummed in the gardens; the neighbours that I saw at the doorsteps talked in a strange tongue; and I found out later that this was Picardy, a village where the French weavers wrought for the Linen Company. Here I got a fresh direction for Pilrig, my destination; and a little beyond, on the wayside, came by a gibbet and two men hanged in chains. They were dipped in tar, as the manner is; the wind span them, the chains clattered, and the birds hung about the uncanny jumping-jacks and cried. The sight coming on me suddenly, like an illustration of my fears, I could scarce be done with examining it and drinking in discomfort. And, as I thus turned and turned about the gibbet, what should I strike on, but a weird old wife, that sat behind a leg of it, and nodded, and talked aloud to herself with becks and courtesies.

“Who are these two, mother?” I asked, and pointed to the corpses.

“A blessing on your precious face!” she cried. “Twa joes o’mine: just two o’ my old joes, my hinny dear.”

“What did they suffer for?” I asked.

“Ou, just for the guid cause,” said she. “Aften I spaed to them the way that it would end. Twa shillin' Scots: no pickle mair; and there are twa bonny callants hingin' for 't! They took it frae a wean belanged to Brouchton."

"Ay!" said I to myself, and not to the daft limmer, "and did they come to such a figure for so poor a business? This is to lose all indeed."

"Gie's your loof, hinny," says she, "and let me spae your weird to ye."

"No, mother," said I, "I see far enough the way I am. It's an unco thing to see too far in front."

"I read it in your bree," she said. "There's a bonnie lassie that has bricht een, and there's a wee man in a braw coat, and a big man in a pouthered wig, and there's the shadow of the wuddy, joe, that lies braid across your path. Gie's your loof, hinny, and let Auld Merren spae it to ye bonny."

The two chance shots that seemed to point at Alan and the daughter of James More struck me hard; and I fled from the eldritch creature, casting her a baubee, which she continued to sit and play with under the moving shadows of the hanged.

My way down the causeway of Leith Walk would have been more pleasant to me but for this encounter. The old rampart ran among fields, the like of them I had never seen for artfulness of agriculture; I was pleased, besides, to be so far in the still countryside; but the shackles of the gibbet clattered in my head; and the mope and mows of the old witch, and the thought of the dead men, hag-rode my spirits. To hang on a gallows, that seemed a hard case; and whether a man came to hang there for two shillings Scots, or (as Mr. Stewart had it) from the sense of duty, once he was tarred and shackled and hung up, the difference seemed small. There might David Balfour hang, and other lads pass on their errands and think light of him; and old daft limmers sit at a leg-foot and spae their fortunes; and the clean genty maids go by, and look to the other aide, and hold a nose. I saw them plain, and they had grey eyes, and their screens upon their heads were of the Drummed colours.

I was thus in the poorest of spirits, though still pretty resolved, when I came in view of Pilrig, a pleasant gabled house set by the walkside among some brave young woods. The laird's horse was standing saddled at the door as I came up, but himself was in the study, where he received me in the midst of learned works and musical instruments, for he was not only a deep philosopher but much of a musician. He greeted me at first pretty well, and when he had read Rankeillor's letter, placed himself obligingly at my disposal.

"And what is it, cousin David!" said he - "since it appears that we are cousins - what is this that I can do for you! A word to

Prestongrange! Doubtless that is easily given. But what should be the word?"

"Mr. Balfour," said I, "if I were to tell you my whole story the way it fell out, it's my opinion (and it was Rankeillor's before me) that you would be very little made up with it."

"I am sorry to hear this of you, kinsman," says he.

"I must not take that at your hands, Mr. Balfour," said I; "I have nothing to my charge to make me sorry, or you for me, but just the common infirmities of mankind. 'The guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of my whole nature,' so much I must answer for, and I hope I have been taught where to look for help," I said; for I judged from the look of the man he would think the better of me if I knew my questions. "But in the way of worldly honour I have no great stumble to reproach myself with; and my difficulties have befallen me very much against my will and (by all that I can see) without my fault. My trouble is to have become dipped in a political complication, which it is judged you would be blythe to avoid a knowledge of."

"Why, very well, Mr. David," he replied, "I am pleased to see you are all that Rankeillor represented. And for what you say of political complications, you do me no more than justice. It is my study to be beyond suspicion, and indeed outside the field of it. The question is," says he, "how, if I am to know nothing of the matter, I can very well assist you?"

"Why sir," said I, "I propose you should write to his lordship, that I am a young man of reasonable good family and of good means: both of which I believe to be the case."

"I have Rankeillor's word for it," said Mr. Balfour, "and I count that a warran-dice against all deadly."

"To which you might add (if you will take my word for so much) that I am a good churchman, loyal to King George, and so brought up," I went on.

"None of which will do you any harm," said Mr. Balfour.

"Then you might go on to say that I sought his lordship on a matter of great moment, connected with His Majesty's service and the administration of justice," I suggested.

"As I am not to hear the matter," says the laird, "I will not take upon myself to qualify its weight. 'Great moment' therefore falls, and 'moment' along with it. For the rest I might express myself much as you propose."

"And then, sir," said I, and rubbed my neck a little with my thumb, "then I would be very desirous if you could slip in a word that might perhaps tell for my protection."

"Protection?" says he, "for your protection! Here is a phrase that somewhat dampens me. If the matter be so dangerous, I own I would be a little loath to move in it blindfold."

"I believe I could indicate in two words where the thing sticks," said I.

"Perhaps that would be the best," said he.

"Well, it's the Appin murder," said I.

He held up both his hands. "Sirs! sirs!" cried he.

I thought by the expression of his face and voice that I had lost my helper.

"Let me explain. . ." I began.

"I thank you kindly, I will hear no more of it," says he. "I decline in toto to hear more of it. For your name's sake and Rankeillor's, and perhaps a little for your own, I will do what I can to help you; but I will hear no more upon the facts. And it is my first clear duty to warn you. These are deep waters, Mr. David, and you are a young man. Be cautious and think twice."

"It is to be supposed I will have thought oftener than that, Mr. Balfour," said I, "and I will direct your attention again to Rankeillor's letter, where (I hope and believe) he has registered his approval of that which I design."

"Well, well," said he; and then again, "Well, well! I will do what I can for you." There with he took a pen and paper, sat a while in thought, and began to write with much consideration. "I understand that Rankeillor approved of what you have in mind?" he asked presently.

"After some discussion, sir, he bade me to go forward in God's name," said I.

"That is the name to go in," said Mr. Balfour, and resumed his writing. Presently, he signed, re-read what he had written, and addressed me again. "Now here, Mr. David," said he, "is a letter of introduction, which I will seal without closing, and give into your hands open, as the form requires. But, since I am acting in the dark, I will just read it to you, so that you may see if it will secure your end -

"PILRIG, August 26th, 1751.

"My Lord, - This is to bring to your notice my namesake and cousin, David Balfour Esquire of Shaws, a young gentleman of unblemished descent and good estate. He has enjoyed, besides, the more valuable advantages of a godly training, and his political principles are all that your lordship can desire. I am not in Mr. Balfour's confidence, but I understand him to have a matter to declare, touching His Majesty's service and the administration of justice; purposes for which your Lordship's zeal is known. I should add that the young gentleman's intention is known to and approved by some of his friends, who will watch with hopeful anxiety the event of his success or failure.

"Whereupon," continued Mr. Balfour, "I have subscribed myself with the usual compliments. You observe I have said 'some of your friends'; I hope you can justify my plural?"

"Perfectly, sir; my purpose is known and approved by more than one," said I. "And your letter, which I take a pleasure to thank you for, is all I could have hoped."

"It was all I could squeeze out," said he; "and from what I know of the matter you design to meddle in, I can only pray God that it may prove sufficient."

CHAPTER IV - LORD ADVOCATE PRESTONGRANGE

My kinsman kept me to a meal, “for the honour of the roof,” he said; and I believe I made the better speed on my return. I had no thought but to be done with the next stage, and have myself fully committed; to a person circumstanced as I was, the appearance of closing a door on hesitation and temptation was itself extremely tempting; and I was the more disappointed, when I came to Prestongrange’s house, to be informed he was abroad. I believe it was true at the moment, and for some hours after; and then I have no doubt the Advocate came home again, and enjoyed himself in a neighbouring chamber among friends, while perhaps the very fact of my arrival was forgotten. I would have gone away a dozen times, only for this strong drawing to have done with my declaration out of hand and be able to lay me down to sleep with a free conscience. At first I read, for the little cabinet where I was left contained a variety of books. But I fear I read with little profit; and the weather falling cloudy, the dusk coming up earlier than usual, and my cabinet being lighted with but a loophole of a window, I was at last obliged to desist from this diversion (such as it was), and pass the rest of my time of waiting in a very burthensome vacuity. The sound of people talking in a near chamber, the pleasant note of a harpsichord, and once the voice of a lady singing, bore me a kind of company.

I do not know the hour, but the darkness was long come, when the door of the cabinet opened, and I was aware, by the light behind him, of a tall figure of a man upon the threshold. I rose at once.

“Is anybody there?” he asked. “Who in that?”

“I am bearer of a letter from the laird of Pilrig to the Lord Advocate,” said I.

“Have you been here long?” he asked.

“I would not like to hazard an estimate of how many hours,” said I.

“It is the first I hear of it,” he replied, with a chuckle. “The lads must have forgotten you. But you are in the bit at last, for I am Prestongrange.”

So saying, he passed before me into the next room, whither (upon his sign) I followed him, and where he lit a candle and took his place before a business-table. It was a long room, of a good proportion, wholly lined with books. That small spark of light in a corner struck out the man’s handsome person and strong face. He was flushed, his eye watered and sparkled, and before he sat down I observed him to sway back and forth. No doubt, he had been supping liberally; but his mind and tongue were under full control.

"Well, sir, sit ye down," said he, "and let us see Pilrig's letter."

He glanced it through in the beginning carelessly, looking up and bowing when he came to my name; but at the last words I thought I observed his attention to redouble, and I made sure he read them twice. All this while you are to suppose my heart was beating, for I had now crossed my Rubicon and was come fairly on the field of battle.

"I am pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr. Balfour," he said, when he had done. "Let me offer you a glass of claret."

"Under your favour, my lord, I think it would scarce be fair on me," said I. "I have come here, as the letter will have mentioned, on a business of some gravity to myself; and, as I am little used with wine, I might be the sooner affected."

"You shall be the judge," said he. "But if you will permit, I believe I will even have the bottle in myself."

He touched a bell, and a footman came, as at a signal, bringing wine and glasses.

"You are sure you will not join me?" asked the Advocate. "Well, here is to our better acquaintance! In what way can I serve you?"

"I should, perhaps, begin by telling you, my lord, that I am here at your own pressing invitation," said I.

"You have the advantage of me somewhere," said he, "for I profess I think I never heard of you before this evening."

"Right, my lord; the name is, indeed, new to you," said I. "And yet you have been for some time extremely wishful to make my acquaintance, and have declared the same in public."

"I wish you would afford me a clue," says he. "I am no Daniel."

"It will perhaps serve for such," said I, "that if I was in a jesting humour - which is far from the case - I believe I might lay a claim on your lordship for two hundred pounds."

"In what sense?" he inquired.

"In the sense of rewards offered for my person," said I.

He thrust away his glass once and for all, and sat straight up in the chair where he had been previously lolling. "What am I to understand?" said he.

"A tall strong lad of about eighteen," I quoted, "speaks like a Lowlander and has no beard."

"I recognise those words," said he, "which, if you have come here with any ill-judged intention of amusing yourself, are like to prove extremely prejudicial to your safety."

"My purpose in this," I replied, "is just entirely as serious as life and death, and you have understood me perfectly. I am the boy who was speaking with Glenure when he was shot."

"I can only suppose (seeing you here) that you claim to be innocent," said he.

"The inference is clear," I said. "I am a very loyal subject to King George, but if I had anything to reproach myself with, I would have had more discretion than to walk into your den."

"I am glad of that," said he. "This horrid crime, Mr. Balfour, is of a dye which cannot permit any clemency. Blood has been barbarously shed. It has been shed in direct opposition to his Majesty and our whole frame of laws, by those who are their known and public oppugnants. I take a very high sense of this. I will not deny that I consider the crime as directly personal to his Majesty."

"And unfortunately, my lord," I added, a little drily, "directly personal to another great personage who may be nameless."

"If you mean anything by those words, I must tell you I consider them unfit for a good subject; and were they spoke publicly I should make it my business to take note of them," said he. "You do not appear to me to recognise the gravity of your situation, or you would be more careful not to pejorate the same by words which glance upon the purity of justice. Justice, in this country, and in my poor hands, is no respecter of persons."

"You give me too great a share in my own speech, my lord," said I. "I did but repeat the common talk of the country, which I have heard everywhere, and from men of all opinions as I came along."

"When you are come to more discretion you will understand such talk in not to be listened to, how much less repeated," says the Advocate. "But I acquit you of an ill intention. That nobleman, whom we all honour, and who has indeed been wounded in a near place by the late barbarity, sits too high to be reached by these aspersions. The Duke of Argyle - you see that I deal plainly with you - takes it to heart as I do, and as we are both bound to do by our judicial functions and the service of his Majesty; and I could wish that all hands, in this ill age, were equally clean of family rancour. But from the accident that this is a Campbell who has fallen martyr to his duty - as who else but the Campbells have ever put themselves foremost on that path? - I may say it, who am no Campbell - and that the chief of that great house happens (for all our advantages) to be the present head of the College of Justice, small minds and disaffected tongues are set agog in every changehouse in the country; and I find a young gentleman like Mr. Balfour so ill-advised as to make himself their echo." So much he spoke with a very oratorical delivery, as if in court, and then declined again upon the manner of a gentleman. "All this apart," said he. "It now remains that I should learn what I am to do with you."

"I had thought it was rather I that should learn the same from your lordship," said I.

"Ay, true," says the Advocate. "But, you see, you come to me well recommended. There is a good honest Whig name to this letter," says he, picking it up a moment from the table. "And - extra-judicially, Mr, Balfour - there is always the possibility of some arrangement, I tell you, and I tell you beforehand that you may be the more upon your guard, your fate lies with me singly. In such a matter (be it said with reverence) I am more powerful than the King's Majesty; and should you please me - and of course satisfy my conscience - in what remains to be held of our interview, I tell you it may remain between ourselves."

"Meaning how?" I asked.

"Why, I mean it thus, Mr. Balfour," said he, "that if you give satisfaction, no soul need know so much as that you visited my house; and you may observe that I do not even call my clerk."

I saw what way he was driving. "I suppose it is needless anyone should be informed upon my visit," said I, "though the precise nature of my gains by that I cannot see. I am not at all ashamed of coming here."

"And have no cause to be," says he, encouragingly. "Nor yet (if you are careful) to fear the consequences."

"My lord," said I, "speaking under your correction, I am not very easy to be frightened."

"And I am sure I do not seek to frighten you," says he. "But to the interrogation; and let me warn you to volunteer nothing beyond the questions I shall ask you. It may consist very immediately with your safety. I have a great discretion, it is true, but there are bounds to it."

"I shall try to follow your lordship's advice," said I.

He spread a sheet of paper on the table and wrote a heading. "It appears you were present, by the way, in the wood of Lettermore at the moment of the fatal shot," he began. "Was this by accident?"

"By accident," said I.

"How came you in speech with Colin Campbell?" he asked.

"I was inquiring my way of him to Aucharn," I replied.

I observed he did not write this answer down.

"H'm, true," said he, "I had forgotten that. And do you know, Mr. Balfour, I would dwell, if I were you, as little as might be on your relations with these Stewarts. It might be found to complicate our business. I am not yet inclined to regard these matters as essential."

"I had thought, my lord, that all points of fact were equally material in such a case," said I.

"You forget we are now trying these Stewarts," he replied, with great significance. "If we should ever come to be trying you, it will be very different; and I shall press these very questions that I am now willing to glide upon. But to resume: I have it here in Mr. Mungo Campbell's precognition that you ran immediately up the brae. How came that?"

"Not immediately, my lord, and the cause was my seeing of the murderer."

"You saw him, then?"

"As plain as I see your lordship, though not so near hand."

"You know him?"

"I should know him again."

"In your pursuit you were not so fortunate, then, as to overtake him?"

"I was not."

"Was he alone?"

"He was alone."

"There was no one else in that neighbourhood?"

"Alan Breck Stewart was not far off, in a piece of a wood."

The Advocate laid his pen down. "I think we are playing at cross purposes," said he, "which you will find to prove a very ill amusement for yourself."

"I content myself with following your lordship's advice, and answering what I am asked," said I.

"Be so wise as to bethink yourself in time," said he, "I use you with the most anxious tenderness, which you scarce seem to appreciate, and which (unless you be more careful) may prove to be in vain."

"I do appreciate your tenderness, but conceive it to be mistaken," I replied, with something of a falter, for I saw we were come to grips at last. "I am here to lay before you certain information, by which I shall convince you Alan had no hand whatever in the killing of Glenure."

The Advocate appeared for a moment at a stick, sitting with pursed lips, and blinking his eyes upon me like an angry cat. "Mr. Balfour," he said at last, "I tell you pointedly you go an ill way for your own interests."

"My lord," I said, "I am as free of the charge of considering my own interests in this matter as your lordship. As God judges me, I have but the one design, and that is to see justice executed and the innocent go clear. If in pursuit of that I come to fall under your lordship's displeasure, I must bear it as I may."

At this he rose from his chair, lit a second candle, and for a while gazed upon me steadily. I was surprised to see a great change of gravity fallen upon his face, and I could have almost thought he was a little pale.

"You are either very simple, or extremely the reverse, and I see that I must deal with you more confidentially," says he. "This is a political case - ah, yes, Mr. Balfour! whether we like it or no, the case is political - and I tremble when I think what issues may depend from it. To a political case, I need scarce tell a young man of your education, we approach with very different thoughts from one which is criminal only. Salus populi suprema lex is a maxim susceptible of great abuse, but it has that force which we find elsewhere only in the laws of nature: I mean it has the force of necessity. I will open this out to you, if you will allow me, at more length. You would have me believe - "

"Under your pardon, my lord, I would have you to believe nothing but that which I can prove," said I.

"Tut! tut; young gentleman," says he, "be not so pragmatical, and suffer a man who might be your father (if it was nothing more) to employ his own imperfect language, and express his own poor thoughts, even when they have the misfortune not to coincide with Mr. Balfour's. You would have me to believe Breck innocent. I would think this of little account, the more so as we cannot catch our man. But the matter of Breck's innocence shoots beyond itself. Once admitted, it would destroy the whole presumptions of our case against another and a very different criminal; a man grown old in treason, already twice in arms against his king and already twice forgiven; a fomentor of discontent, and (whoever may have fired the shot) the unmistakable original of the deed in question. I need not tell you that I mean James Stewart."

"And I can just say plainly that the innocence of Alan and of James is what I am here to declare in private to your lordship, and what I am prepared to establish at the trial by my testimony," said I.

"To which I can only answer by an equal plainness, Mr. Balfour," said he, "that (in that case) your testimony will not be called by me, and I desire you to withhold it altogether."

"You are at the head of Justice in this country," I cried, "and you propose to me a crime!"

"I am a man nursing with both hands the interests of this country," he replied, "and I press on you a political necessity. Patriotism is not always moral in the formal sense. You might be glad of it, I think: it is your own protection; the facts are heavy against you; and if I am still trying to except you from a very dangerous place, it is in part of course because I am not insensible to your honesty in coming here; in part because of Pilrig's letter; but in part, and in chief part, because I regard in this matter my political duty first and my judicial duty only second. For the same reason - I repeat it to you in the same frank words - I do not want your testimony."

"I desire not to be thought to make a repartee, when I express only the plain sense of our position," said I. "But if your lordship has no need of my testimony, I believe the other side would be extremely blythe to get it."

Prestongrange arose and began to pace to and fro in the room. "You are not so young," he said, "but what you must remember very clearly the year '45 and the shock that went about the country. I read in Pilrig's letter that you are sound in Kirk and State. Who saved them in that fatal year? I do not refer to His Royal Highness and his ramrods, which were extremely useful in their day; but the country had been saved and the field won before ever Cumberland came upon Drummossie. Who saved it? I repeat; who saved the Protestant religion and the whole frame of our civil institutions? The late Lord President Culloden, for one; he played a man's part, and small thanks he got for it - even as I, whom you see before you, straining every nerve in the same service, look for no reward beyond the conscience of my duties done. After the President, who else? You know the answer as well as I do; 'tis partly a scandal, and you glanced at it yourself, and I reproved you for it, when you first came in. It was the Duke and the great clan of Campbell. Now here is a Campbell foully murdered, and that in the King's service. The Duke and I are Highlanders. But we are Highlanders civilised, and it is not so with the great mass of our clans and families. They have still savage virtues and defects. They are still barbarians, like these Stewarts; only the Campbells were barbarians on the right side, and the Stewarts were barbarians on the wrong. Now be you the judge. The Campbells expect vengeance. If they do not get it - if this man James escape - there will be trouble with the Campbells. That means disturbance in the Highlands, which are uneasy and very far from being disarmed: the disarming is a farce. . ."

"I can bear you out in that," said I.

"Disturbance in the Highlands makes the hour of our old watchful enemy," pursued his lordship, holding out a finger as he paced; "and I give you my word we may have a '45 again with the Campbells on the other side. To protect the life of this man Stewart - which is forfeit already on half-a-dozen different counts if not on this - do you propose to plunge your country in war, to jeopardise the faith of your fathers, and to expose the lives and fortunes of how many thousand innocent persons? . . . These are considerations that weigh with me, and that I hope will weigh no less with yourself, Mr. Balfour, as a lover of your country, good government, and religious truth."

"You deal with me very frankly, and I thank you for it," said I. "I will try on my side to be no less honest. I believe your policy to be sound. I believe these deep duties may lie upon your lordship; I believe you may have laid them on your conscience when you took the oath of the high office which you hold. But for me, who am just a plain man - or scarce a man yet - the plain duties must suffice. I can think but of two things, of a poor soul in the immediate and unjust danger of a shameful death, and of the cries and tears of his wife that still tingle in my head. I cannot see beyond, my lord. It's the way that I am made. If the country has to fall, it has to fall. And I pray God, if this be wilful blindness, that He may enlighten me before too late."

He had heard me motionless, and stood so a while longer.

"This is an unexpected obstacle," says he, aloud, but to himself.

"And how is your lordship to dispose of me?" I asked.

"If I wished," said he, "you know that you might sleep in gaol?"

"My lord," said I, "I have slept in worse places."

"Well, my boy," said he, "there is one thing appears very plainly from our interview, that I may rely on your pledged word. Give me your honour that you will be wholly secret, not only on what has passed to-night, but in the matter of the Appin case, and I let you go free."

"I will give it till to-morrow or any other near day that you may please to set," said I. "I would not be thought too wily; but if I gave the promise without qualification your lordship would have attained his end."

"I had no thought to entrap you," said he.

"I am sure of that," said I.

"Let me see," he continued. "To-morrow is the Sabbath. Come to me on Monday by eight in the morning, and give me our promise until then."

"Freely given, my lord," said I. "And with regard to what has fallen from yourself, I will give it for an long as it shall please God to spare your days."

"You will observe," he said next, "that I have made no employment of menaces."

"It was like your lordship's nobility," said I. "Yet I am not altogether so dull but what I can perceive the nature of those you have not uttered."

"Well," said he, "good-night to you. May you sleep well, for I think it is more than I am like to do."

With that he sighed, took up a candle, and gave me his conveyance as far as the street door.

CHAPTER V - IN THE ADVOCATE’S HOUSE

The next day, Sabbath, August 27th, I had the occasion I had long looked forward to, to hear some of the famous Edinburgh preachers, all well known to me already by the report of Mr Campbell. Alas! and I might just as well have been at Essendean, and sitting under Mr. Campbell’s worthy self! the turmoil of my thoughts, which dwelt continually on the interview with Prestongrange, inhibiting me from all attention. I was indeed much less impressed by the reasoning of the divines than by the spectacle of the thronged congregation in the churches, like what I imagined of a theatre or (in my then disposition) of an assize of trial; above all at the West Kirk, with its three tiers of galleries, where I went in the vain hope that I might see Miss Drummond.

On the Monday I betook me for the first time to a barber’s, and was very well pleased with the result. Thence to the Advocate’s, where the red coats of the soldiers showed again about his door, making a bright place in the close. I looked about for the young lady and her gillies: there was never a sign of them. But I was no sooner shown into the cabinet or antechamber where I had spent so wearyful a time upon the Saturday, than I was aware of the tall figure of James More in a corner. He seemed a prey to a painful uneasiness, reaching forth his feet and hands, and his eyes speeding here and there without rest about the walls of the small chamber, which recalled to me with a sense of pity the man’s wretched situation. I suppose it was partly this, and partly my strong continuing interest in his daughter, that moved me to accost him.

“Give you a good-morning, sir,” said I.

“And a good-morning to you, sir,” said he.

“You bide tryst with Prestongrange?” I asked.

“I do, sir, and I pray your business with that gentleman be more agreeable than mine,” was his reply.

“I hope at least that yours will be brief, for I suppose you pass before me,” said I.

“All pass before me,” he said, with a shrug and a gesture upward of the open hands. “It was not always so, sir, but times change. It was not so when the sword was in the scale, young gentleman, and the virtues of the soldier might sustain themselves.”

There came a kind of Highland snuffle out of the man that raised my dander strangely.

“Well, Mr. Macgregor,” said I, “I understand the main thing for a soldier is to be silent, and the first of his virtues never to complain.”

"You have my name, I perceive" - he bowed to me with his arms crossed - "though it's one I must not use myself. Well, there is a publicity - I have shown my face and told my name too often in the beards of my enemies. I must not wonder if both should be known to many that I know not."

"That you know not in the least, sir," said I, "nor yet anybody else; but the name I am called, if you care to hear it, is Balfour."

"It is a good name," he replied, civilly; "there are many decent folk that use it. And now that I call to mind, there was a young gentleman, your namesake, that marched surgeon in the year '45 with my battalion."

"I believe that would be a brother to Balfour of Baith," said I, for I was ready for the surgeon now.

"The same, sir," said James More. "And since I have been fellow-soldier with your kinsman, you must suffer me to grasp your hand."

He shook hands with me long and tenderly, beaming on me the while as though he had found a brother.

"Ah!" says he, "these are changed days since your cousin and I heard the balls whistle in our lugs."

"I think he was a very far-away cousin," said I, drily, "and I ought to tell you that I never clapped eyes upon the man."

"Well, well," said he, "it makes no change. And you - I do not think you were out yourself, sir - I have no clear mind of your face, which is one not probable to be forgotten."

"In the year you refer to, Mr. Macgregor, I was getting skelped in the parish school," said I.

"So young!" cries he. "Ah, then, you will never be able to think what this meeting is to me. In the hour of my adversity, and here in the house of my enemy, to meet in with the blood of an old brother-in-arms - it heartens me, Mr. Balfour, like the skirting of the highland pipes! Sir, this is a sad look back that many of us have to make: some with falling tears. I have lived in my own country like a king; my sword, my mountains, and the faith of my friends and kinsmen sufficed for me. Now I lie in a stinking dungeon; and do you know, Mr. Balfour," he went on, taking my arm and beginning to lead me about, "do you know, sir, that I lack mere necessaries? The malice of my foes has quite sequestered my resources. I lie, as you know, sir, on a trumped-up charge, of which I am as innocent as yourself. They dare not bring me to my trial, and in the meanwhile I am held naked in my prison. I could have wished it was your cousin I had met, or his brother Baith himself. Either would, I know, have been rejoiced to help me; while a comparative stranger like yourself - "

I would be ashamed to set down all he poured out to me in this beggarly vein, or the very short and grudging answers that I made to him. There were times when I was tempted to stop his mouth with some small change; but whether it was from shame or pride - whether it was for my own sake or Catriona's - whether it was because I thought him no fit father for his daughter, or because I resented that grossness of immediate falsity that clung about the man himself - the thing was clean beyond me. And I was still being wheedled and preached to, and still being marched to and fro, three steps and a turn, in that small chamber, and had already, by some very short replies, highly incensed, although not finally discouraged, my beggar, when Prestongrange appeared in the doorway and bade me eagerly into his big chamber.

"I have a moment's engagements," said he; "and that you may not sit empty-handed I am going to present you to my three braw daughters, of whom perhaps you may have heard, for I think they are more famous than papa. This way."

He led me into another long room above, where a dry old lady sat at a frame of embroidery, and the three handsomest young women (I suppose) in Scotland stood together by a window.

"This is my new friend, Mr Balfour," said he, presenting me by the arm, "David, here is my sister, Miss Grant, who is so good as keep my house for me, and will be very pleased if she can help you. And here," says he, turning to the three younger ladies, "here are my three braw dauchters. A fair question to ye, Mr. Davie: which of the three is the best favoured? And I wager he will never have the impudence to propound honest Alan Ramsay's answer!"

Hereupon all three, and the old Miss Grant as well, cried out against this sally, which (as I was acquainted with the verses he referred to) brought shame into my own check. It seemed to me a citation unpardonable in a father, and I was amazed that these ladies could laugh even while they reproved, or made believe to.

Under cover of this mirth, Prestongrange got forth of the chamber, and I was left, like a fish upon dry land, in that very unsuitable society. I could never deny, in looking back upon what followed, that I was eminently stockish; and I must say the ladies were well drilled to have so long a patience with me. The aunt indeed sat close at her embroidery, only looking now and again and smiling; but the misses, and especially the eldest, who was besides the most handsome, paid me a score of attentions which I was very ill able to repay. It was all in vain to tell myself I was a young follow of some worth as well as a good estate, and had no call to feel abashed before these lasses, the eldest not so much older than myself, and no one of them by any probability half as learned. Reasoning would not change the fact; and there were times when the colour came into my face to think I was shaved that day for the first time.

The talk going, with all their endeavours, very heavily, the eldest took pity on my awkwardness, sat down to her instrument, of which she was a passed mistress, and entertained me for a while with playing and singing, both in the Scots and in the Italian manners; this put me more at my ease, and being reminded of Alan's air that he had taught me in the hole near Carriden, I made so bold as to whistle a bar or two, and ask if she knew that.

She shook her head. "I never heard a note of it," said she. "Whistle it all through. And now once again," she added, after I had done so.

Then she picked it out upon the keyboard, and (to my surprise) instantly enriched the same with well-sounding chords, and sang, as she played, with a very droll expression and broad accent -

"Haenae I got just the lilt of it?
Isnae this the tune that ye whustled?"

"You see," she says, "I can do the poetry too, only it won't rhyme. And then again:

"I am Miss Grant, sib to the Advocate:
You, I believe, are Dauvit Balfour."

I told her how much astonished I was by her genius.

"And what do you call the name of it?" she asked.

"I do not know the real name," said I. "I just call it Alan's air."

She looked at me directly in the face. "I shall call it David's air," said she; "though if it's the least like what your namesake of Israel played to Saul I would never wonder that the king got little good by it, for it's but melancholy music. Your other name I do not like; so if you was ever wishing to hear your tune again you are to ask for it by mine."

This was said with a significance that gave my heart a jog. "Why that, Miss Grant?" I asked.

"Why," says she, "if ever you should come to get hanged, I will set your last dying speech and confession to that tune and sing it."

This put it beyond a doubt that she was partly informed of my story and peril. How, or just how much, it was more difficult to guess. It was plain she knew there was something of danger in the name of Alan, and thus warned me to leave it out of reference; and plain she knew that I stood under some criminal suspicion. I judged besides that the harshness of her last speech (which besides she had followed up immediately with a very noisy piece of music) was to put an end to the present conversation. I stood beside her, affecting to listen and admire, but truly whirled away by my own thoughts. I have always found this young lady to be a lover of the mysterious; and certainly this first interview made a mystery that was beyond my plummet. One thing I learned long after, the hours of the Sunday had been well employed, the bank porter had been found and examined, my visit to Charles Stewart was discovered, and the deduction made that I was pretty deep with James and Alan, and most likely in a continued correspondence with the last. Hence this broad hint that was given me across the harpsichord.

In the midst of the piece of music, one of the younger misses, who was at a window over the close, cried on her sisters to come quick, for there was "Grey eyes again." The whole family trooped there at once, and crowded one another for a look. The window whither they ran was in an odd corner of that room, gave above the entrance door, and flanked up the close.

"Come, Mr. Balfour," they cried, "come and see. She is the most beautiful creature! She hangs round the close-head these last days, always with some wretched-like gillies, and yet seems quite a lady."

I had no need to look; neither did I look twice, or long. I was afraid she might have seen me there, looking down upon her from that chamber of music, and she without, and her father in the same house, perhaps begging for his life with tears, and myself come but newly from rejecting his petitions. But even that glance set me in a better conceit of myself and much less awe of the young ladies. They were beautiful, that was beyond question, but Catriona was beautiful too, and had a kind of brightness in her like a coal of fire. As much as the others cast me down, she lifted me up. I remembered I had talked easily with her. If I could make no hand of it with these fine maids, it was perhaps something their own fault. My embarrassment began to be a little mingled and lightened with a sense of fun; and when the aunt smiled at me from her embroidery, and the three daughters unbent to me like a baby, all with "papa's orders" written on their faces, there were times when I could have found it in my heart to smile myself.

Presently papa returned, the same kind, happy-like, pleasant-spoken man.

"Now, girls," said he, "I must take Mr. Balfour away again; but I hope you have been able to persuade him to return where I shall be always gratified to find him."

So they each made me a little farthing compliment, and I was led away.

If this visit to the family had been meant to soften my resistance, it was the worst of failures. I was no such ass but what I understood how poor a figure I had made, and that the girls would be yawning their jaws off as soon as my stiff back was turned. I felt I had shown how little I had in me of what was soft and graceful; and I longed for a chance to prove that I had something of the other stuff, the stern and dangerous.

Well, I was to be served to my desire, for the scene to which he was conducting me was of a different character.

CHAPTER VI - UMQUILE THE MASTER OF LOVAT

There was a man waiting us in Prestongrange's study, whom I distasted at the first look, as we distaste a ferret or an earwig. He was bitter ugly, but seemed very much of a gentleman; had still manners, but capable of sudden leaps and violences; and a small voice, which could ring out shrill and dangerous when he so desired.

The Advocate presented us in a familiar, friendly way.

"Here, Fraser," said he, "here is Mr. Balfour whom we talked about. Mr. David, this is Mr. Simon Fraser, whom we used to call by another title, but that is an old song. Mr. Fraser has an errand to you."

With that he stepped aside to his book-shelves, and made believe to consult a quarto volume in the far end.

I was thus left (in a sense) alone with perhaps the last person in the world I had expected. There was no doubt upon the terms of introduction; this could be no other than the forfeited Master of Lovat and chief of the great clan Fraser. I knew he had led his men in the Rebellion; I knew his father's head - my old lord's, that grey fox of the mountains - to have fallen on the block for that offence, the lands of the family to have been seized, and their nobility attainted. I could not conceive what he should be doing in Grant's house; I could not conceive that he had been called to the bar, had eaten all his principles, and was now currying favour with the Government even to the extent of acting Advocate-Depute in the Appin murder.

"Well, Mr. Balfour," said he, "what is all this I hear of ye?"

"It would not become me to prejudge," said I, "but if the Advocate was your authority he is fully possessed of my opinions."

"I may tell you I am engaged in the Appin case," he went on; "I am to appear under Prestongrange; and from my study of the precognitions I can assure you your opinions are erroneous. The guilt of Breck is manifest; and your testimony, in which you admit you saw him on the hill at the very moment, will certify his hanging."

"It will be rather ill to hang him till you catch him," I observed. "And for other matters I very willingly leave you to your own impressions."

"The Duke has been informed," he went on. "I have just come from his Grace, and he expressed himself before me with an honest freedom like the great nobleman he is. He spoke of you by name, Mr. Balfour, and declared his gratitude beforehand in case you would be led by those who understand your own interests and those of the country so much better than yourself. Gratitude is no empty expression in that mouth: experto-crede. I daresay you know something of my name and clan, and the damnable example and lamented end of my late father, to say nothing of my own errata. Well, I have made my peace with that good Duke; he has intervened for me with our friend Prestongrange; and here I am with my foot in the stirrup again and some of the responsibility shared into my hand of prosecuting King George's enemies and avenging the late daring and barefaced insult to his Majesty."

"Doubtless a proud position for your father's son," says I.

He wagged his bald eyebrows at me. "You are pleased to make experiments in the ironical, I think," said he. "But I am here upon duty, I am here to discharge my errand in good faith, it is in vain you think to divert me. And let me tell you, for a young fellow of spirit and ambition like yourself, a good shove in the beginning will do more than ten years' drudgery. The shove is now at your command; choose what you will to be advanced in, the Duke will watch upon you with the affectionate disposition of a father."

"I am thinking that I lack the docility of the son," says I.

"And do you really suppose, sir, that the whole policy of this country is to be suffered to trip up and tumble down for an ill-mannered colt of a boy?" he cried. "This has been made a test case, all who would prosper in the future must put a shoulder to the wheel. Look at me! Do you suppose it is for my pleasure that I put myself in the highly invidious position of persecuting a man that I have drawn the sword alongside of? The choice is not left me."

"But I think, sir, that you forfeited your choice when you mixed in with that unnatural rebellion," I remarked. "My case is happily otherwise; I am a true man, and can look either the Duke or King George in the face without concern."

"Is it so the wind sits?" says he. "I protest you are fallen in the worst sort of error. Prestongrange has been hitherto so civil (he tells me) as not to combat your allegations; but you must not think they are not looked upon with strong suspicion. You say you are innocent. My dear sir, the facts declare you guilty."

"I was waiting for you there," said I.

"The evidence of Mungo Campbell; your flight after the completion of the murder; your long course of secresy - my good young man!" said Mr. Simon, "here is enough evidence to hang a bullock, let be a David Balfour! I shall be upon that trial; my voice shall be raised; I shall then speak much otherwise from what I do to-day, and far less to your gratification, little as you like it now! Ah, you look white!" cries he. "I have found the key of your impudent heart. You look pale, your eyes waver, Mr. David! You see the grave and the gallows nearer by than you had fancied."

"I own to a natural weakness," said I. "I think no shame for that. Shame. . ." I was going on.

"Shame waits for you on the gibbet," he broke in.

"Where I shall but be even'd with my lord your father," said I.

"Aha, but not so!" he cried, "and you do not yet see to the bottom of this business. My father suffered in a great cause, and for dealing in the affairs of kings. You are to hang for a dirty murder about boddle-pieces. Your personal part in it, the treacherous one of holding the poor wretch in talk, your accomplices a pack of ragged Highland gillies. And it can be shown, my great Mr. Balfour - it can be shown, and it will be shown, trust me that has a finger in the pie - it can be shown, and shall be shown, that you were paid to do it. I think I can see the looks go round the court when I adduce my evidence, and it shall appear that you, a young man of education, let yourself be corrupted to this shocking act for a suit of cast clothes, a bottle of Highland spirits, and three-and-fivepence-halfpenny in copper money."

There was a touch of the truth in these words that knocked me like a blow: clothes, a bottle of usquebaugh, and three-and-fivepence-halfpenny in change made up, indeed, the most of what Alan and I had carried from Auchurn; and I saw that some of James's people had been blabbing in their dungeons.

"You see I know more than you fancied," he resumed in triumph. "And as for giving it this turn, great Mr. David, you must not suppose the Government of Great Britain and Ireland will ever be stuck for want of evidence. We have men here in prison who will swear out their lives as we direct them; as I direct, if you prefer the phrase. So now you are to guess your part of glory if you choose to die. On the one hand, life, wine, women, and a duke to be your handgun: on the other, a rope to your craig, and a gibbet to clatter your bones on, and the lousiest, lowest story to hand down to your namesakes in the future that was ever told about a hired assassin. And see here!" he cried, with a formidable shrill voice, "see this paper that I pull out of my pocket. Look at the name there: it is the name of the great David, I believe, the ink scarce dry yet. Can you guess its nature? It is the warrant for your arrest, which I have but to touch this bell beside me to have executed on the spot. Once in the Tolbooth upon this paper, may God help you, for the die is cast!"

I must never deny that I was greatly horrified by so much baseness, and much unmanned by the immediacy and ugliness of my danger. Mr. Simon had already gloried in the changes of my hue; I make no doubt I was now no ruddier than my shirt; my speech besides trembled.

"There is a gentleman in this room," cried I. "I appeal to him. I put my life and credit in his hands."

Prestongrange shut his book with a snap. "I told you so, Simon," said he; "you have played your hand for all it was worth, and you have lost. Mr. David," he went on, "I wish you to believe it was by no choice of mine you were subjected to this proof. I wish you could understand how glad I am you should come forth from it with so much credit. You may not quite see how, but it is a little of a service to myself. For had our friend here been more successful than I was last night, it might have appeared that he was a better judge of men than I; it might have appeared we were altogether in the wrong situations, Mr. Simon and myself. And I know our friend Simon to be ambitious," says he, striking lightly on Fraser's shoulder. "As for this stage play, it is over; my sentiments are very much engaged in your behalf; and whatever issue we can find to this unfortunate affair, I shall make it my business to see it is adopted with tenderness to you."

These were very good words, and I could see besides that there was little love, and perhaps a spice of genuine ill-will, between these two who were opposed to me. For all that, it was unmistakable this interview had been designed, perhaps rehearsed, with the consent of both; it was plain my adversaries were in earnest to try me by all methods; and now (persuasion, flattery, and menaces having been tried in vain) I could not but wonder what would be their next expedient. My eyes besides were still troubled, and my knees loose under me, with the distress of the late ordeal; and I could do no more than stammer the same form of words: "I put my life and credit in your hands."

"Well, well," said he, "we must try to save them. And in the meanwhile let us return to gentler methods. You must not bear any grudge upon my friend, Mr. Simon, who did but speak by his brief. And even if you did conceive some malice against myself, who stood by and seemed rather to hold a candle, I must not let that extend to innocent members of my family. These are greatly engaged to see more of you, and I cannot consent to have my young womenfolk disappointed. To-morrow they will be going to Hope Park, where I think it very proper you should make your bow. Call for me first, when I may possibly have something for your private hearing; then you shall be turned abroad again under the conduct of my misses; and until that time repeat to me your promise of secrecy."

I had done better to have instantly refused, but in truth I was beside the power of reasoning; did as I was bid; took my leave I know not how; and when I was forth again in the close, and the door had shut behind me, was glad to lean on a house wall and wipe my face. That horrid apparition (as I may call it) of Mr. Simon rang in my memory, as a sudden noise rings after it is over in the ear. Tales of the man's father, of his falseness, of his manifold perpetual treacheries, rose before me from all that I had heard and read, and joined on with what I had just experienced of himself. Each time it occurred to me, the ingenious foulness of that calumny he had proposed to nail upon my character startled me afresh. The case of the man upon the gibbet by Leith Walk appeared scarce distinguishable from that I was now to consider as my own. To rob a child of so little more than nothing was certainly a paltry enterprise for two grown men; but my own tale, as it was to be represented in a court by Simon Fraser, appeared a fair second in every possible point of view of sordidness and cowardice.

The voices of two of Prestongrange's liveried men upon his doorstep recalled me to myself.

"Ha'e," said the one, "this billet as fast as ye can link to the captain."

"Is that for the cateran back again?" asked the other.

"It would seem sae," returned the first. "Him and Simon are seeking him."

"I think Prestongrange is gane gyte," says the second. "He'll have James More in bed with him next."

"Weel, it's neither your affair nor mine's," said the first.

And they parted, the one upon his errand, and the other back into the house.

This looked as ill as possible. I was scarce gone and they were sending already for James More, to whom I thought Mr. Simon must have pointed when he spoke of men in prison and ready to redeem their lives by all extremities. My scalp curdled among my hair, and the next moment the blood leaped in me to remember Catriona. Poor lass! her father stood to be hanged for pretty indefensible misconduct. What was yet more unpalatable, it now seemed he was prepared to save his four quarters by the worst of shame and the most foul of cowardly murders - murder by the false oath; and to complete our misfortunes, it seemed myself was picked out to be the victim.

I began to walk swiftly and at random, conscious only of a desire for movement, air, and the open country.

CHAPTER VII - I MAKE A FAULT IN HONOUR

I came forth, I vow I know not how, on the Lang Dykes . This is a rural road which runs on the north side over against the city. Thence I could see the whole black length of it tail down, from where the castle stands upon its crags above the loch in a long line of spires and gable ends, and smoking chimneys, and at the sight my heart swelled in my bosom. My youth, as I have told, was already inured to dangers; but such danger as I had seen the face of but that morning, in the midst of what they call the safety of a town, shook me beyond experience. Peril of slavery, peril of shipwreck, peril of sword and shot, I had stood all of these without discredit; but the peril there was in the sharp voice and the fat face of Simon, property Lord Lovat, daunted me wholly.

I sat by the lake side in a place where the rushes went down into the water, and there steeped my wrists and laved my temples. If I could have done so with any remains of self-esteem, I would now have fled from my foolhardy enterprise. But (call it courage or cowardice, and I believe it was both the one and the other) I decided I was ventured out beyond the possibility of a retreat. I had out-faced these men, I would continue to out-face them; come what might, I would stand by the word spoken.

The sense of my own constancy somewhat uplifted my spirits, but not much. At the best of it there was an icy place about my heart, and life seemed a black business to be at all engaged in. For two souls in particular my pity flowed. The one was myself, to be so friendless and lost among dangers. The other was the girl, the daughter of James More. I had seen but little of her; yet my view was taken and my judgment made. I thought her a lass of a clean honour, like a man's; I thought her one to die of a disgrace; and now I believed her father to be at that moment bargaining his vile life for mine. It made a bond in my thoughts betwixt the girl and me. I had seen her before only as a wayside appearance, though one that pleased me strangely; I saw her now in a sudden nearness of relation, as the daughter of my blood foe, and I might say, my murderer. I reflected it was hard I should be so plagued and persecuted all my days for other folks' affairs, and have no manner of pleasure myself. I got meals and a bed to sleep in when my concerns would suffer it; beyond that my wealth was of no help to me. If I was to hang, my days were like to be short; if I was not to hang but to escape out of this trouble, they might yet seem long to me ere I was done with them. Of a sudden her face appeared in my memory, the way I had first seen it, with the parted lips; at that, weakness came in my bosom and strength into my legs; and I set resolutely forward on the way to Dean. If I was to hang to-morrow, and it was sure enough I might very likely sleep that night in a dungeon, I determined I should hear and speak once more with Catriona.

The exercise of walking and the thought of my destination braced me yet more, so that I began to pluck up a kind of spirit. In the village of Dean, where it sits in the bottom of a glen beside the river, I inquired my way of a miller's man, who sent me up the hill upon the farther side by a plain path, and so to a decent-like small house in a garden of lawns and apple-trees. My heart beat high as I stepped inside the garden hedge, but it fell low indeed when I came face to face with a grim and fierce old lady, walking there in a white mutch with a man's hat strapped upon the top of it.

"What do ye come seeking here?" she asked.

I told her I was after Miss Drummond.

"And what may be your business with Miss Drummond?" says she.

I told her I had met her on Saturday last, had been so fortunate as to render her a trifling service, and was come now on the young lady's invitation.

"O, so you're Saxpence!" she cried, with a very sneering manner. "A braw gift, a bonny gentleman. And hae ye ony ither name and designation, or were ye bapteesed Saxpence?" she asked.

I told my name.

"Preserve me!" she cried. "Has Ebenezer gotten a son?"

"No, ma'am," said I. "I am a son of Alexander's. It's I that am the Laird of Shaws."

"Ye'll find your work cut out for ye to establish that," quoth she.

"I perceive you know my uncle," said I; "and I daresay you may be the better pleased to hear that business is arranged."

"And what brings ye here after Miss Drummond?" she pursued.

"I'm come after my saxpence, mem," said I. "It's to be thought, being my uncle's nephew, I would be found a careful lad."

"So ye have a spark of sleeness in ye?" observed the old lady, with some approval. "I thought ye had just been a cuif - you and your saxpence, and your lucky day and your sake of Balwhidder" - from which I was gratified to learn that Catriona had not forgotten some of our talk. "But all this is by the purpose," she resumed. "Am I to understand that ye come here keeping company?"

"This is surely rather an early question," said I. "The maid is young, so am I, worse fortune. I have but seen her the once. I'll not deny," I added, making up my mind to try her with some frankness, "I'll not deny but she has run in my head a good deal since I met in with her. That is one thing; but it would be quite another, and I think I would look very like a fool, to commit myself."

"You can speak out of your mouth, I see," said the old lady. "Praise God, and so can I! I was fool enough to take charge of this rogue's daughter: a fine charge I have gotten; but it's mine, and I'll carry it the way I want to. Do ye mean to tell me, Mr. Balfour of Shaws, that you would marry James More's daughter, and him hanged! Well, then, where there's no possible marriage there shall be no manner of carryings on, and take that for said. Lasses are bruckle things," she added, with a nod; "and though ye would never think it by my wrunkled chafts, I was a lassie mysel', and a bonny one."

"Lady Allardyce," said I, "for that I suppose to be your name, you seem to do the two sides of the talking, which is a very poor manner to come to an agreement. You give me rather a home thrust when you ask if I would marry, at the gallow's foot, a young lady whom I have seen but once. I have told you already I would never be so untenty as to commit myself. And yet I'll go some way with you. If I continue to like the lass as well as I have reason to expect, it will be something more than her father, or the gallows either, that keeps the two of us apart. As for my family, I found it by the wayside like a lost bawbee! I owe less than nothing to my uncle and if ever I marry, it will be to please one person: that's myself."

"I have heard this kind of talk before ye were born," said Mrs. Ogilvy, "which is perhaps the reason that I think of it so little. There's much to be considered. This James More is a kinsman of mine, to my shame be it spoken. But the better the family, the mair men hanged or headed, that's always been poor Scotland's story. And if it was just the hanging! For my part I think I would be best pleased with James upon the gallows, which would be at least an end to him. Catrine's a good lass enough, and a good-hearted, and lets herself be deaved all day with a runt of an auld wife like me. But, ye see, there's the weak bit. She's daft about that long, false, fleeching beggar of a father of hers, and red-mad about the Gregara, and proscribed names, and King James, and a wheen blethers. And you might think ye could guide her, ye would find yourself sore mista'en. Ye say ye've seen her but the once. . ."

"Spoke with her but the once, I should have said," I interrupted. "I saw her again this morning from a window at Prestongrange's."

This I daresay I put in because it sounded well; but I was properly paid for my ostentation on the return.

"What's this of it?" cries the old lady, with a sudden pucker of her face. "I think it was at the Advocate's door-cheek that ye met her first."

I told her that was so.

"H'm," she said; and then suddenly, upon rather a scolding tone, "I have your bare word for it," she cries, "as to who and what you are. By your way of it, you're Balfour of the Shaws; but for what I ken you may be Balfour of the Deevil's oxter. It's possible ye may come here for what ye say, and it's equally possible ye may come here for deil care what! I'm good enough Whig to sit quiet, and to have keepit all my men-folk's heads upon their shoulders. But I'm not just a good enough Whig to be made a fool of neither. And I tell you fairly, there's too much Advocate's door and Advocate's window here for a man that comes taigling after a Macgregor's daughter. Ye can tell that to the Advocate that sent ye, with my fond love. And I kiss my loof to ye, Mr. Balfour," says she, suiting the action to the word; "and a braw journey to ye back to where ye cam frae."

"If you think me a spy," I broke out, and speech stuck in my throat. I stood and looked murder at the old lady for a space, then bowed and turned away.

"Here! Hoots! The callant's in a creel!" she cried. "Think ye a spy? what else would I think ye - me that kens naething by ye? But I see that I was wrong; and as I cannot fight, I'll have to apologise. A bonny figure I would be with a broadsword. Ay! ay!" she went on, "you're none such a bad lad in your way; I think ye'll have some redeeming vices. But, O! Davit Balfour, ye're damned countryfeed. Ye'll have to win over that, lad; ye'll have to soople your back-bone, and think a wee pickle less of your dainty self; and ye'll have to try to find out that women-folk are nae grenadiers. But that can never be. To your last day you'll ken no more of women-folk than what I do of sow-gelding."

I had never been used with such expressions from a lady's tongue, the only two ladies I had known, Mrs. Campbell and my mother, being most devout and most particular women; and I suppose my amazement must have been depicted in my countenance, for Mrs. Ogilvy burst forth suddenly in a fit of laughter.

"Keep me!" she cried, struggling with her mirth, "you have the finest timber face - and you to marry the daughter of a Hieland cateran! Davie, my dear, I think we'll have to make a match of it - if it was just to see the weans. And now," she went on, "there's no manner of service in your daidling here, for the young woman is from home, and it's my fear that the old woman is no suitable companion for your father's son. Forbye that I have nobody but myself to look after my reputation, and have been long enough alone with a sedooctive youth. And come back another day for your saxpence!" she cried after me as I left.

My skirmish with this disconcerting lady gave my thoughts a boldness they had otherwise wanted. For two days the image of Catriona had mixed in all my meditations; she made their background, so that I scarce enjoyed my own company without a glint of her in a corner of my mind. But now she came immediately near; I seemed to touch her, whom I had never touched but the once; I let myself flow out to her in a happy weakness, and looking all about, and before and behind, saw the world like an undesirable desert, where men go as soldiers on a march, following their duty with what constancy they have, and Catriona alone there to offer me some pleasure of my days. I wondered at myself that I could dwell on such considerations in that time of my peril and disgrace; and when I remembered my youth I was ashamed. I had my studies to complete: I had to be called into some useful business; I had yet to take my part of service in a place where all must serve; I had yet to learn, and know, and prove myself a man; and I had so much sense as blush that I should be already tempted with these further-on and holier delights and duties. My education spoke home to me sharply; I was never brought up on sugar biscuits but on the hard food of the truth. I knew that he was quite unfit to be a husband who was not prepared to be a father also; and for a boy like me to play the father was a mere derision.

When I was in the midst of these thoughts and about half-way back to town I saw a figure coming to meet me, and the trouble of my heart was heightened. It seemed I had everything in the world to say to her, but nothing to say first; and remembering how tongue-tied I had been that morning at the Advocate's I made sure that I would find myself struck dumb. But when she came up my fears fled away; not even the consciousness of what I had been privately thinking disconcerted me the least; and I found I could talk with her as easily and rationally as I might with Alan.

"O!" she cried, "you have been seeking your sixpence; did you get it?"

I told her no; but now I had met with her my walk was not in vain. "Though I have seen you to-day already," said I, and told her where and when.

"I did not see you," she said. "My eyes are big, but there are better than mine at seeing far. Only I heard singing in the house."

"That was Miss Grant," said I, "the eldest and the bonniest."

"They say they are all beautiful," said she.

"They think the same of you, Miss Drummond," I replied, "and were all crowding to the window to observe you."

"It is a pity about my being so blind," said she, "or I might have seen them too. And you were in the house? You must have been having the fine time with the fine music and the pretty ladies."

"There is just where you are wrong," said I; "for I was as uncouth as a sea-fish upon the brae of a mountain. The truth is that I am better fitted to go about with rudas men than pretty ladies."

"Well, I would think so too, at all events!" said she, at which we both of us laughed.

"It is a strange thing, now," said I. "I am not the least afraid with you, yet I could have run from the Miss Grants. And I was afraid of your cousin too."

"O, I think any man will be afraid of her," she cried. "My father is afraid of her himself."

The name of her father brought me to a stop. I looked at her as she walked by my side; I recalled the man, and the little I knew and the much I guessed of him; and comparing the one with the other, felt like a traitor to be silent.

"Speaking of which," said I, "I met your father no later than this morning."

"Did you?" she cried, with a voice of joy that seemed to mock at me. "You saw James More? You will have spoken with him then?"

"I did even that," said I.

Then I think things went the worst way for me that was humanly possible. She gave me a look of mere gratitude. "Ah, thank you for that!" says she.

"You thank me for very little," said I, and then stopped. But it seemed when I was holding back so much, something at least had to come out. "I spoke rather ill to him," said I; "I did no like him very much; I spoke him rather ill, and he was angry."

"I think you had little to do then, and less to tell it to his daughter!" she cried out. "But those that do not love and cherish him I will not know."

"I will take the freedom of a word yet," said I, beginning to tremble. "Perhaps neither your father nor I are in the best of spirits at Prestongrange's. I daresay we both have anxious business there, for it's a dangerous house. I was sorry for him too, and spoke to him the first, if I could but have spoken the wiser. And for one thing, in my opinion, you will soon find that his affairs are mending."

"It will not be through your friendship, I am thinking," said she; "and he is much made up to you for your sorrow."

"Miss Drummond," cried I, "I am alone in this world."

"And I am not wondering at that," said she.

"O, let me speak!" said I. "I will speak but the once, and then leave you, if you will, for ever. I came this day in the hopes of a kind word that I am sore in want of. I know that what I said must hurt you, and I knew it then. It would have been easy to have spoken smooth, easy to lie to you; can you not think how I was tempted to the same? Cannot you see the truth of my heart shine out?"

"I think here is a great deal of work, Mr. Balfour," said she. "I think we will have met but the once, and will can part like gentle folk."

"O, let me have one to believe in me!" I pleaded, "I cannae bear it else. The whole world is clanned against me. How am I to go through with my dreadful fate? If there's to be none to believe in me I cannot do it. The man must just die, for I cannot do it."

She had still looked straight in front of her, head in air; but at my words or the tone of my voice she came to a stop. "What is this you say?" she asked. "What are you talking of?"

"It is my testimony which may save an innocent life," said I, "and they will not suffer me to bear it. What would you do yourself? You know what this is, whose father lies in danger. Would you desert the poor soul? They have tried all ways with me. They have sought to bribe me; they offered me hills and valleys. And to-day that sleuth-hound told me how I stood, and to what a length he would go to butcher and disgrace me. I am to be brought in a party to the murder; I am to have held Glenure in talk for money and old clothes; I am to be killed and shamed. If this is the way I am to fall, and me scarce a man - if this is the story to be told of me in all Scotland - if you are to believe it too, and my name is to be nothing but a by-word - Catriona, how can I go through with it? The thing's not possible; it's more than a man has in his heart."

I poured my words out in a whirl, one upon the other; and when I stopped I found her gazing on me with a startled face.

"Glenure! It is the Appin murder," she said softly, but with a very deep surprise.

I had turned back to bear her company, and we were now come near the head of the brae above Dean village. At this word I stepped in front of her like one suddenly distracted.

"For God's sake!" I cried, "for God's sake, what is this that I have done?" and carried my fists to my temples. "What made me do it? Sure, I am bewitched to say these things!"

"In the name of heaven, what ails you now!" she cried.

"I gave my honour," I groaned, "I gave my honour and now I have broke it. O, Catriona!"

"I am asking you what it is," she said; "was it these things you should not have spoken? And do you think I have no honour, then? or that I am one that would betray a friend? I hold up my right hand to you and swear."

"O, I knew you would be true!" said I. "It's me - it's here. I that stood but this morning and out-faced them, that risked rather to die disgraced upon the gallows than do wrong - and a few hours after I throw my honour away by the roadside in common talk! 'There is one thing clear upon our interview,' says he, 'that I can rely on your pledged word.' Where is my word now? Who could believe me now? You could not believe me. I am clean fallen down; I had best die!"

All this I said with a weeping voice, but I had no tears in my body.

"My heart is sore for you," said she, "but be sure you are too nice. I would not believe you, do you say? I would trust you with anything. And these men? I would not be thinking of them! Men who go about to entrap and to destroy you! Fy! this is no time to crouch. Look up! Do you not think I will be admiring you like a great hero of the good - and you a boy not much older than myself? And because you said a word too much in a friend's ear, that would die ere she betrayed you - to make such a matter! It is one thing that we must both forget."

"Catriona," said I, looking at her, hang-dog, "is this true of it? Would ye trust me yet?"

"Will you not believe the tears upon my face?" she cried. "It is the world I am thinking of you, Mr. David Balfour. Let them hang you; I will never forget, I will grow old and still remember you. I think it is great to die so: I will envy you that gallows."

"And maybe all this while I am but a child frighted with bogles," said I. "Maybe they but make a mock of me."

"It is what I must know," she said. "I must hear the whole. The harm is done at all events, and I must hear the whole."

I had sat down on the wayside, where she took a place beside me, and I told her all that matter much as I have written it, my thoughts about her father's dealings being alone omitted.

"Well," she said, when I had finished, "you are a hero, surely, and I never would have thought that same! And I think you are in peril, too. O, Simon Fraser! to think upon that man! For his life and the dirty money, to be dealing in such traffic!" And just then she called out aloud with a queer word that was common with her, and belongs, I believe, to her own language. "My torture!" says she, "look at the sun!"

Indeed, it was already dipping towards the mountains.

She bid me come again soon, gave me her hand, and left me in a turmoil of glad spirits. I delayed to go home to my lodging, for I had a terror of immediate arrest; but got some supper at a change house, and the better part of that night walked by myself in the barley-fields, and had such a sense of Catriona's presence that I seemed to bear her in my arms.

CHAPTER VIII - THE BRAVO

The next day, August 29th, I kept my appointment at the Advocate's in a coat that I had made to my own measure, and was but newly ready,

"Aha," says Prestongrange, "you are very fine to-day; my misses are to have a fine cavalier. Come, I take that kind of you. I take that kind of you, Mr. David. O, we shall do very well yet, and I believe your troubles are nearly at an end."

"You have news for me?" cried I.

"Beyond anticipation," he replied. "Your testimony is after all to be received; and you may go, if you will, in my company to the trial, which in to be held at Inverary, Thursday, 21st proximo."

I was too much amazed to find words.

"In the meanwhile," he continued, "though I will not ask you to renew your pledge, I must caution you strictly to be reticent. To-morrow your precognition must be taken; and outside of that, do you know, I think least said will be soonest mended."

"I shall try to go discreetly,' said I. "I believe it is yourself that I must thank for this crowning mercy, and I do thank you gratefully. After yesterday, my lord, this is like the doors of Heaven. I cannot find it in my heart to get the thing believed."

"Ah, but you must try and manage, you must try and manage to believe it," says he, soothing-like, "and I am very glad to hear your acknowledgment of obligation, for I think you may be able to repay me very shortly" - he coughed - "or even now. The matter is much changed. Your testimony, which I shall not trouble you for to-day, will doubtless alter the complexion of the case for all concerned, and this makes it less delicate for me to enter with you on a side issue."

"My Lord," I interrupted, "excuse me for interrupting you, but how has this been brought about? The obstacles you told me of on Saturday appeared even to me to be quite insurmountable; how has it been contrived?"

"My dear Mr. David," said he, "it would never do for me to divulge (even to you, as you say) the councils of the Government; and you must content yourself, if you please, with the gross fact."

He smiled upon me like a father as he spoke, playing the while with a new pen; methought it was impossible there could be any shadow of deception in the man: yet when he drew to him a sheet of paper, dipped his pen among the ink, and began again to address me, I was somehow not so certain, and fell instinctively into an attitude of guard.

"There is a point I wish to touch upon," he began. "I purposely left it before upon one side, which need be now no longer necessary. This is not, of course, a part of your examination, which is to follow by another hand; this is a private interest of my own. You say you encountered Alan Breck upon the hill?"

"I did, my lord," said I

"This was immediately after the murder?"

"It was."

"Did you speak to him?"

"I did."

"You had known him before, I think?" says my lord, carelessly.

"I cannot guess your reason for so thinking, my lord," I replied, "but such in the fact."

"And when did you part with him again?" said he.

"I reserve my answer," said I. "The question will be put to me at the assize."

"Mr. Balfour," said he, "will you not understand that all this is without prejudice to yourself? I have promised you life and honour; and, believe me, I can keep my word. You are therefore clear of all anxiety. Alan, it appears, you suppose you can protect; and you talk to me of your gratitude, which I think (if you push me) is not ill-deserved. There are a great many different considerations all pointing the same way; and I will never be persuaded that you could not help us (if you chose) to put salt on Alan's tail."

"My lord," said I, "I give you my word I do not so much as guess where Alan is."

He paused a breath. "Nor how he might be found?" he asked.

I sat before him like a log of wood.

"And so much for your gratitude, Mr. David!" he observed. Again there was a piece of silence. "Well," said he, rising, "I am not fortunate, and we are a couple at cross purposes. Let us speak of it no more; you will receive notice when, where, and by whom, we are to take your precognition. And in the meantime, my misses must be waiting you. They will never forgive me if I detain their cavalier."

Into the hands of these Graces I was accordingly offered up, and found them dressed beyond what I had thought possible, and looking fair as a posy.

As we went forth from the doors a small circumstance occurred which came afterwards to look extremely big. I heard a whistle sound loud and brief like a signal, and looking all about, spied for one moment the red head of Neil of the Tom, the son of Duncan. The next moment he was gone again, nor could I see so much as the skirt-tail of Catriona, upon whom I naturally supposed him to be then attending.

My three keepers led me out by Bristo and the Bruntsfield Links;

whence a path carried us to Hope Park, a beautiful pleasance, laid with gravel-walks, furnished with seats and summer-sheds, and warded by a keeper. The way there was a little longsome; the two younger misses affected an air of genteel weariness that damped me cruelly, the eldest considered me with something that at times appeared like mirth; and though I thought I did myself more justice than the day before, it was not without some effort. Upon our reaching the park I was launched on a bevy of eight or ten young gentlemen (some of them cockaded officers, the rest chiefly advocates) who crowded to attend upon these beauties; and though I was presented to all of them in very good words, it seemed I was by all immediately forgotten. Young folk in a company are like to savage animals: they fall upon or scorn a stranger without civility, or I may say, humanity; and I am sure, if I had been among baboons, they would have shown me quite as much of both. Some of the advocates set up to be wits, and some of the soldiers to be rattles; and I could not tell which of these extremes annoyed me most. All had a manner of handling their swords and coat-skirts, for the which (in mere black envy) I could have kicked them from the park. I daresay, upon their side, they grudged me extremely the fine company in which I had arrived; and altogether I had soon fallen behind, and stepped stiffly in the rear of all that merriment with my own thoughts.

From these I was recalled by one of the officers, Lieutenant Hector Duncansby, a gawky, leering Highland boy, asking if my name was not “Palfour.”

I told him it was, not very kindly, for his manner was scant civil.

“Ha, Palfour,” says he, and then, repeating it, “Palfour, Palfour!”

“I am afraid you do not like my name, sir,” says I, annoyed with myself to be annoyed with such a rustical fellow.

“No,” says he, “but I wass thinking.”

“I would not advise you to make a practice of that, sir,” says I. “I feel sure you would not find it to agree with you.”

“Tit you effer hear where Alan Grigor fand the tangs?” said he.

I asked him what he could possibly mean, and he answered, with a heckling laugh, that he thought I must have found the poker in the same place and swallowed it.

There could be no mistake about this, and my cheek burned.

“Before I went about to put affronts on gentlemen,” said I, “I think I would learn the English language first.”

He took me by the sleeve with a nod and a wink and led me quietly outside Hope Park. But no sooner were we beyond the view of the promenaders, than the fashion of his countenance changed. “You tam lowland scoon’rel!” cries he, and hit me a buffet on the jaw with his closed fist.

I paid him as good or better on the return; whereupon he stepped a little back and took off his hat to me decorously.

"Enough plows I think," says he. "I will be the offended shentleman, for who effer heard of such suffeeciency as tell a shentlemans that is the king's officer he cannae speak Cot's English? We have swords at our hurdles, and here is the King's Park at hand. Will ye walk first, or let me show ye the way?"

I returned his bow, told him to go first, and followed him. As he went I heard him grumble to himself about Cot's English and the King's coat, so that I might have supposed him to be seriously offended. But his manner at the beginning of our interview was there to belie him. It was manifest he had come prepared to fasten a quarrel on me, right or wrong; manifest that I was taken in a fresh contrivance of my enemies; and to me (conscious as I was of my deficiencies) manifest enough that I should be the one to fall in our encounter.

As we came into that rough rocky desert of the King's Park I was tempted half-a-dozen times to take to my heels and run for it, so loath was I to show my ignorance in fencing, and so much averse to die or even to be wounded. But I considered if their malice went as far as this, it would likely stick at nothing; and that to fall by the sword, however ungracefully, was still an improvement on the gallows. I considered besides that by the unguarded pertness of my words and the quickness of my blow I had put myself quite out of court; and that even if I ran, my adversary would probably pursue and catch me, which would add disgrace to my misfortune. So that, taking all in all, I continued marching behind him, much as a man follows the hangman, and certainly with no more hope.

We went about the end of the long craigs, and came into the Hunter's Bog. Here, on a piece of fair turf, my adversary drew. There was nobody there to see us but some birds; and no resource for me but to follow his example, and stand on guard with the best face I could display. It seems it was not good enough for Mr. Dancansby, who spied some flaw in my manoeuvres, paused, looked upon me sharply, and came off and on, and menaced me with his blade in the air. As I had seen no such proceedings from Alan, and was besides a good deal affected with the proximity of death, I grew quite bewildered, stood helpless, and could have longed to run away.

"Fat deil ails her?" cries the lieutenant.

And suddenly engaging, he twitched the sword out of my grasp and sent it flying far among the rushes.

Twice was this manoeuvre repeated; and the third time when I brought back my humiliated weapon, I found he had returned his own to the scabbard, and stood awaiting me with a face of some anger, and his hands clasped under his skirt.

“Pe tamned if I touch you!” he cried, and asked me bitterly what right I had to stand up before “shentlemans” when I did not know the back of a sword from the front of it.

I answered that was the fault of my upbringing; and would he do me the justice to say I had given him all the satisfaction it was unfortunately in my power to offer, and had stood up like a man?

“And that is the truth,” said he. “I am fery prave myself, and pold as a lions. But to stand up there - and you ken naething of fence! - the way that you did, I declare it was peyond me. And I am sorry for the plow; though I declare I pelief your own was the elder brother, and my heid still sings with it. And I declare if I had kent what way it wass, I would not put a hand to such a piece of pusiness.”

“That is handsomely said,” I replied, “and I am sure you will not stand up a second time to be the actor for my private enemies.”

“Indeed, no, Palfour,” said he; “and I think I was used extremely suffeeciently myself to be set up to fecht with an auld wife, or all the same as a bairn whateffer! And I will tell the Master so, and fecht him, by Cot, himself!”

“And if you knew the nature of Mr. Simon’s quarrel with me,” said I, “you would be yet the more affronted to be mingled up with such affairs.”

He swore he could well believe it; that all the Lovats were made of the same meal and the devil was the miller that ground that; then suddenly shaking me by the hand, he vowed I was a pretty enough fellow after all, that it was a thousand pities I had been neglected, and that if he could find the time, he would give an eye himself to have me educated.

“You can do me a better service than even what you propose,” said I; and when he had asked its nature - “Come with me to the house of one of my enemies, and testify how I have carried myself this day,” I told him. “That will be the true service. For though he has sent me a gallant adversary for the first, the thought in Mr. Simon’s mind is merely murder. There will be a second and then a third; and by what you have seen of my cleverness with the cold steel, you can judge for yourself what is like to be the upshot.”

“And I would not like it myself, if I was no more of a man than what you wass!” he cried. “But I will do you right, Palfour. Lead on!”

If I had walked slowly on the way into that accursed park my heels were light enough on the way out. They kept time to a very good old air, that is as ancient as the Bible, and the words of it are: “Surely the bitterness of death is passed.” I mind that I was extremely thirsty, and had a drink at Saint Margaret’s well on the road down, and the sweetness of that water passed belief. We went through the sanctuary, up the Canongate, in by the Netherbow, and straight to Prestongrange's door, talking as we came and arranging the details of our affair. The footman owned his master was at home, but declared him engaged with other gentlemen on very private business, and his door forbidden.

"My business is but for three minutes, and it cannot wait," said I. "You may say it is by no means private, and I shall be even glad to have some witnesses."

As the man departed unwillingly enough upon this errand, we made so bold as to follow him to the ante-chamber, whence I could hear for a while the murmuring of several voices in the room within. The truth is, they were three at the one table - Prestongrange, Simon Fraser, and Mr. Erskine, Sheriff of Perth; and as they were met in consultation on the very business of the Appin murder, they were a little disturbed at my appearance, but decided to receive me.

"Well, well, Mr. Balfour, and what brings you here again? and who is this you bring with you?" says Prestongrange.

As for Fraser, he looked before him on the table.

"He is here to bear a little testimony in my favour, my lord, which I think it very needful you should hear," said I, and turned to Duncansby.

"I have only to say this," said the lieutenant, "that I stood up this day with Palfour in the Hunter's Pog, which I am now fery sorry for, and he behaved himself as pretty as a shentlemans could ask it. And I have creat respects for Palfour," he added.

"I thank you for your honest expressions," said I.

Whereupon Duncansby made his bow to the company, and left the chamber, as we had agreed upon before.

"What have I to do with this?" says Prestongrange.

"I will tell your lordship in two words," said I. "I have brought this gentleman, a King's officer, to do me so much justice. Now I think my character in covered, and until a certain date, which your lordship can very well supply, it will be quite in vain to despatch against me any more officers. I will not consent to fight my way through the garrison of the castle."

The veins swelled on Prestongrange's brow, and he regarded me with fury.

"I think the devil uncoupled this dog of a lad between my legs!" he cried; and then, turning fiercely on his neighbour, "This is some of your work, Simon," he said. "I spy your hand in the business, and, let me tell you, I resent it. It is disloyal, when we are agreed upon one expedient, to follow another in the dark. You are disloyal to me. What! you let me send this lad to the place with my very daughters! And because I let drop a word to you..... Fy, sir, keep your dishonours to yourself!"

Simon was deadly pale. "I will be a kick-ball between you and the Duke no longer," he exclaimed. "Either come to an agreement, or come to a differ, and have it out among yourselves. But I will no longer fetch and carry, and get your contrary instructions, and be blamed by both. For if I were to tell you what I think of all your Hanover business it would make your head sing."

But Sheriff Erskine had preserved his temper, and now intervened smoothly. "And in the meantime," says he, "I think we should tell Mr. Balfour that his character for valour is quite established. He may sleep in peace. Until the date he was so good as to refer to it shall be put to the proof no more."

His coolness brought the others to their prudence; and they made haste, with a somewhat distracted civility, to pack me from the house.

CHAPTER IX - THE HEATHER ON FIRE

When I left Prestongrange that afternoon I was for the first time angry. The Advocate had made a mock of me. He had pretended my testimony was to be received and myself respected; and in that very hour, not only was Simon practising against my life by the hands of the Highland soldier, but (as appeared from his own language) Prestongrange himself had some design in operation. I counted my enemies; Prestongrange with all the King's authority behind him; and the Duke with the power of the West Highlands; and the Lovat interest by their side to help them with so great a force in the north, and the whole clan of old Jacobite spies and traffickers. And when I remembered James More, and the red head of Neil the son of Duncan, I thought there was perhaps a fourth in the confederacy, and what remained of Rob Roy's old desperate sept of caterans would be banded against me with the others. One thing was requisite - some strong friend or wise adviser. The country must be full of such, both able and eager to support me, or Lovat and the Duke and Prestongrange had not been nosing for expedients; and it made me rage to think that I might brush against my champions in the street and be no wiser.

And just then (like an answer) a gentleman brushed against me going by, gave me a meaning look, and turned into a close. I knew him with the tail of my eye - it was Stewart the Writer; and, blessing my good fortune, turned in to follow him. As soon as I had entered the close I saw him standing in the mouth of a stair, where he made me a signal and immediately vanished. Seven storeys up, there he was again in a house door, the which he looked behind us after we had entered. The house was quite dismantled, with not a stick of furniture; indeed, it was one of which Stewart had the letting in his hands.

"We'll have to sit upon the floor," said he; "but we're safe here for the time being, and I've been wearying to see ye, Mr. Balfour."

"How's it with Alan?" I asked.

"Brawly," said he. "Andie picks him up at Gillane sands to-morrow, Wednesday. He was keen to say good-bye to ye, but the way that things were going, I was feared the pair of ye was maybe best apart. And that brings me to the essential: how does your business speed?"

"Why," said I, "I was told only this morning that my testimony was accepted, and I was to travel to Inverary with the Advocate, no less."

"Hout awa!" cried Stewart. "I'll never believe that."

"I have maybe a suspicion of my own," says I, "but I would like fine to hear your reasons."

"Well, I tell ye fairly, I'm horn-mad," cries Stewart. "If my one hand could pull their Government down I would pluck it like a rotten apple. I'm doer for Appin and for James of the Glens; and, of course, it's my duty to defend my kinsman for his life. Hear how it goes with me, and I'll leave the judgment of it to yourself. The first thing they have to do is to get rid of Alan. They cannae bring in James as art and part until they've brought in Alan first as principal; that's sound law: they could never put the cart before the horse."

"And how are they to bring in Alan till they can catch him?" says I.

"Ah, but there is a way to evite that arrestment," said he. "Sound law, too. It would be a bonny thing if, by the escape of one ill-doer another was to go scatheless, and the remeid is to summon the principal and put him to outlawry for the non-compearance. Now there's four places where a person can be summoned: at his dwelling-house; at a place where he has resided forty days; at the head burgh of the shire where he ordinarily resorts; or lastly (if there be ground to think him forth of Scotland) at the cross of Edinburgh, and the pier and shore of Leith, for sixty days. The purpose of which last provision is evident upon its face: being that outgoing ships may have time to carry news of the transaction, and the summonsing be something other than a form. Now take the case of Alan. He has no dwelling-house that ever I could hear of; I would be obliged if anyone would show me where he has lived forty days together since the '45; there is no shire where he resorts whether ordinarily or extraordinarily; if he has a domicile at all, which I misdoubt, it must be with his regiment in France; and if he is not yet forth of Scotland (as we happen to know and they happen to guess) it must be evident to the most dull it's what he's aiming for. Where, then, and what way should he be summoned? I ask it at yourself, a layman."

"You have given the very words," said I. "Here at the cross, and at the pier and shore of Leith, for sixty days."

"Ye're a sounder Scots lawyer than Prestongrange, then!" cries the Writer. "He has had Alan summoned once; that was on the twenty-fifth, the day that we first met. Once, and done with it. And where? Where, but at the cross of Inverary, the head burgh of the Campbells? A word in your ear, Mr. Balfour - they're not seeking Alan."

"What do you mean?" I cried. "Not seeking him?"

"By the best that I can make of it," said he. "Not wanting to find him, in my poor thought. They think perhaps he might set up a fair defence, upon the back of which James, the man they're really after, might climb out. This is not a case, ye see, it's a conspiracy."

"Yet I can tell you Prestongrange asked after Alan keenly," said I; "though, when I come to think of it, he was something of the easiest put by."

"See that!" says he. "But there! I may be right or wrong, that's guesswork at the best, and let me get to my facts again. It comes to my ears that James and the witnesses - the witnesses, Mr. Balfour! - lay in close dungeons, and shackled forbye, in the military prison at Fort William; none allowed in to them, nor they to write. The witnesses, Mr. Balfour; heard ye ever the match of that? I assure ye, no old, crooked Stewart of the gang ever out-faced the law more impudently. It's clean in the two eyes of the Act of Parliament of 1700, anent wrongous imprisonment. No sooner did I get the news than I petitioned the Lord Justice Clerk. I have his word to-day. There's law for ye! here's justice!"

He put a paper in my hand, that same mealy-mouthed, false-faced paper that was printed since in the pamphlet "by a bystander," for behoof (as the title says) of James's "poor widow and five children."

"See," said Stewart, "he couldn't dare to refuse me access to my client, so he recommends the commanding officer to let me in. Recommends! - the Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland recommends. Is not the purpose of such language plain? They hope the officer may be so dull, or so very much the reverse, as to refuse the recommendation. I would have to make the journey back again betwixt here and Fort William. Then would follow a fresh delay till I got fresh authority, and they had disavowed the officer - military man, notoriously ignorant of the law, and that - I ken the cant of it. Then the journey a third time; and there we should be on the immediate heels of the trial before I had received my first instruction. Am I not right to call this a conspiracy?"

"It will bear that colour," said I.

"And I'll go on to prove it you outright," said he. "They have the right to hold James in prison, yet they cannot deny me to visit him. They have no right to hold the witnesses; but am I to get a sight of them, that should be as free as the Lord Justice Clerk himself! See - read: For the rest, refuses to give any orders to keepers of prisons who are not accused as having done anything contrary to the duties of their office. Anything contrary! Sirs! And the Act of seventeen hunner? Mr. Balfour, this makes my heart to burst; the heather is on fire inside my wame."

"And the plain English of that phrase," said I, "is that the witnesses are still to lie in prison and you are not to see them?"

"And I am not to see them until Inverary, when the court is set!" cries he, "and then to hear Prestongrange upon the anxious responsibilities of his office and the great facilities afforded the defence! But I'll begowk them there, Mr. David. I have a plan to waylay the witnesses upon the road, and see if I cannae get I a little harle of justice out of the military man notoriously ignorant of the law that shall command the party."

It was actually so - it was actually on the wayside near Tynedrum, and by the connivance of a soldier officer, that Mr. Stewart first saw the witnesses upon the case.

"There is nothing that would surprise me in this business," I remarked.

"I'll surprise you ere I'm done!" cries he. "Do ye see this?" - producing a print still wet from the press. "This is the libel: see, there's Prestongrange's name to the list of witnesses, and I find no word of any Balfour. But here is not the question. Who do ye think paid for the printing of this paper?"

"I suppose it would likely be King George," said I.

"But it happens it was me!" he cried. "Not but it was printed by and for themselves, for the Grants and the Erskines, and yon thief of the black midnight, Simon Fraser. But could I win to get a copy! No! I was to go blindfold to my defence; I was to hear the charges for the first time in court alongst the jury."

"Is not this against the law?" I asked

"I cannot say so much," he replied. "It was a favour so natural and so constantly rendered (till this nonesuch business) that the law has never looked to it. And now admire the hand of Providence! A stranger is in Fleming's printing house, spies a proof on the floor, picks it up, and carries it to me. Of all things, it was just this libel. Whereupon I had it set again - printed at the expense of the defence: sumptibus moesti rei; heard ever man the like of it? - and here it is for anybody, the muckle secret out - all may see it now. But how do you think I would enjoy this, that has the life of my kinsman on my conscience?"

"Troth, I think you would enjoy it ill," said I.

"And now you see how it is," he concluded, "and why, when you tell me your evidence is to be let in, I laugh aloud in your face."

It was now my turn. I laid before him in brief Mr. Simon's threats and offers, and the whole incident of the bravo, with the subsequent scene at Prestongrange's. Of my first talk, according to promise, I said nothing, nor indeed was it necessary. All the time I was talking Stewart nodded his head like a mechanical figure; and no sooner had my voice ceased, than he opened his mouth and gave me his opinion in two words, dwelling strong on both of them.

"Disappear yourself," said he.

"I do not take you," said I.

"Then I'll carry you there," said he. "By my view of it you're to disappear whatever. O, that's outside debate. The Advocate, who is not without some spunks of a remainder decency, has wrung your life-safe out of Simon and the Duke. He has refused to put you on your trial, and refused to have you killed; and there is the clue to their ill words together, for Simon and the Duke can keep faith with neither friend nor enemy. Ye're not to be tried then, and ye're not to be murdered; but I'm in bitter error if ye're not to be kidnapped and carried away like the Lady Grange. Bet me what ye please - there was their expedient!"

"You make me think," said I, and told him of the whistle and the red-headed retainer, Neil.

"Wherever James More is there's one big rogue, never be deceived on that," said he. "His father was none so ill a man, though a kenning on the wrong side of the law, and no friend to my family, that I should waste my breath to be defending him! But as for James he's a brock and a blagyard. I like the appearance of this red-headed Neil as little as yourself. It looks uncanny: fiegh! it smells bad. It was old Lovat that managed the Lady Grange affair; if young Lovat is to handle yours, it'll be all in the family. What's James More in prison for? The same offence: abduction. His men have had practice in the business. He'll be to lend them to be Simon's instruments; and the next thing we'll be hearing, James will have made his peace, or else he'll have escaped; and you'll be in Benbecula or Applecross."

"Ye make a strong case," I admitted.

"And what I want," he resumed, "is that you should disappear yourself ere they can get their hands upon ye. Lie quiet until just before the trial, and spring upon them at the last of it when they'll be looking for you least. This is always supposing Mr. Balfour, that your evidence is worth so very great a measure of both risk and fash."

"I will tell you one thing," said I. "I saw the murderer and it was not Alan."

"Then, by God, my cousin's saved!" cried Stewart. "You have his life upon your tongue; and there's neither time, risk, nor money to be spared to bring you to the trial." He emptied his pockets on the floor. "Here is all that I have by me," he went on, "Take it, ye'll want it ere ye're through. Go straight down this close, there's a way out by there to the Lang Dykes, and by my will of it! see no more of Edinburgh till the clash is over."

"Where am I to go, then?" I inquired.

"And I wish that I could tell ye!" says he, "but all the places that I could send ye to, would be just the places they would seek. No, ye must fend for yourself, and God be your guiding! Five days before the trial, September the sixteen, get word to me at the King Arms in Stirling; and if ye've managed for yourself as long as that, I'll see that ye reach Inverary."

"One thing more," said I. "Can I no see Alan?"

He seemed boggled. "Hech, I would rather you wouldnae," said he.

“But I can never deny that Alan is extremely keen of it, and is to lie this night by Silvermills on purpose. If you’re sure that you’re not followed, Mr. Balfour - but make sure of that - lie in a good place and watch your road for a clear hour before ye risk it. It would be a dreadful business if both you and him was to miscarry!”

CHAPTER X - THE RED-HEADED MAN

It was about half-past three when I came forth on the Lang Dykes. Dean was where I wanted to go. Since Catriona dwelled there, and her kinsfolk the Glengyle Macgregors appeared almost certainly to be employed against me, it was just one of the few places I should have kept away from; and being a very young man, and beginning to be very much in love, I turned my face in that direction without pause. As a slave to my conscience and common sense, however, I took a measure of precaution. Coming over the crown of a bit of a rise in the road, I clapped down suddenly among the barley and lay waiting. After a while, a man went by that looked to be a Highlandman, but I had never seen him till that hour. Presently after came Neil of the red head. The next to go past was a miller's cart, and after that nothing but manifest country people. Here was enough to have turned the most foolhardy from his purpose, but my inclination ran too strong the other way. I argued it out that if Neil was on that road, it was the right road to find him in, leading direct to his chief's daughter; as for the other Highlandman, if I was to be startled off by every Highlandman I saw, I would scarce reach anywhere. And having quite satisfied myself with this disingenuous debate, I made the better speed of it, and came a little after four to Mrs. Drumond-Ogilvy's.

Both ladies were within the house; and upon my perceiving them together by the open door, I plucked off my hat and said, "Here was a lad come seeking saxpence," which I thought might please the dowager.

Catriona ran out to greet me heartily, and, to my surprise, the old lady seemed scarce less forward than herself. I learned long afterwards that she had despatched a horseman by daylight to Rankeillor at the Queensferry, whom she knew to be the doer for Shaws, and had then in her pocket a letter from that good friend of mine, presenting, in the most favourable view, my character and prospects. But had I read it I could scarce have seen more clear in her designs. Maybe I was countryfeed; at least, I was not so much so as she thought; and it was even to my homespun wits, that she was bent to hammer up a match between her cousin and a beardless boy that was something of a laird in Lothian.

"Saxpence had better take his broth with us, Catrine," says she. "Run and tell the lasses."

And for the little while we were alone was at a good deal of pains to flatter me; always cleverly, always with the appearance of a banter, still calling me Saxpence, but with such a turn that should rather uplift me in my own opinion. When Catriona returned, the design became if possible more obvious; and she showed off the girl's advantages like a horse-couper with a horse. My face flamed that she should think me so obtuse. Now I would fancy the girl was being innocently made a show of, and then I could have beaten the old carline wife with a cudgel; and now, that perhaps these two had set their heads together to entrap me, and at that I sat and gloomed betwixt them like the very image of ill-will. At last the matchmaker had a better device, which was to leave the pair of us alone. When my suspicions are anyway roused it is sometimes a little the wrong side of easy to allay them. But though I knew what breed she was of, and that was a breed of thieves, I could never look in Catriona's face and disbelieve her.

"I must not ask?" says she, eagerly, the same moment we were left alone.

"Ah, but to-day I can talk with a free conscience," I replied. "I am lightened of my pledge, and indeed (after what has come and gone since morning) I would not have renewed it were it asked."

"Tell me," she said. "My cousin will not be so long."

So I told her the tale of the lieutenant from the first step to the last of it, making it as mirthful as I could, and, indeed, there was matter of mirth in that absurdity.

"And I think you will be as little fitted for the rudas men as for the pretty ladies, after all!" says she, when I had done. "But what was your father that he could not learn you to draw the sword! It is most ungentle; I have not heard the match of that in anyone."

"It is most misconvenient at least," said I; "and I think my father (honest man!) must have been wool-gathering to learn me Latin in the place of it. But you see I do the best I can, and just stand up like Lot's wife and let them hammer at me."

"Do you know what makes me smile?" said she. "Well, it is this. I am made this way, that I should have been a man child. In my own thoughts it is so I am always; and I go on telling myself about this thing that is to befall and that. Then it comes to the place of the fighting, and it comes over me that I am only a girl at all events, and cannot hold a sword or give one good blow; and then I have to twist my story round about, so that the fighting is to stop, and yet me have the best of it, just like you and the lieutenant; and I am the boy that makes the fine speeches all through, like Mr. David Balfour."

"You are a bloodthirsty maid," said I.

"Well, I know it is good to sew and spin, and to make samplers," she said, "but if you were to do nothing else in the great world, I think you will say yourself it is a driech business; and it is not that I want to kill, I think. Did ever you kill anyone?"

"That I have, as it chances. Two, no less, and me still a lad that should be at the college," said I. "But yet, in the look-back, I take no shame for it."

"But how did you feel, then - after it?" she asked.

"'Deed, I sat down and grat like a bairn," said I.

"I know that, too," she cried. "I feel where these tears should come from. And at any rate, I would not wish to kill, only to be Catherine Douglas that put her arm through the staples of the bolt, where it was broken. That is my chief hero. Would you not love to die so - for your king?" she asked.

"Troth," said I, "my affection for my king, God bless the puggy face of him, is under more control; and I thought I saw death so near to me this day already, that I am rather taken up with the notion of living."

"Right," she said, "the right mind of a man! Only you must learn arms; I would not like to have a friend that cannot strike. But it will not have been with the sword that you killed these two?"

"Indeed, no," said I, "but with a pair of pistols. And a fortunate thing it was the men were so near-hand to me, for I am about as clever with the pistols as I am with the sword."

So then she drew from me the story of our battle in the brig, which I had omitted in my first account of my affairs.

"Yes," said she, "you are brave. And your friend, I admire and love him."

"Well, and I think anyone would!" said I. "He has his faults like other folk; but he is brave and staunch and kind, God bless him! That will be a strange day when I forget Alan." And the thought of him, and that it was within my choice to speak with him that night, had almost overcome me.

"And where will my head be gone that I have not told my news!" she cried, and spoke of a letter from her father, bearing that she might visit him to-morrow in the castle whither he was now transferred, and that his affairs were mending. "You do not like to hear it," said she. "Will you judge my father and not know him?"

"I am a thousand miles from judging," I replied. "And I give you my word I do rejoice to know your heart is lightened. If my face fell at all, as I suppose it must, you will allow this is rather an ill day for compositions, and the people in power extremely ill persons to be compounding with. I have Simon Fraser extremely heavy on my stomach still."

"Ah!" she cried, "you will not be evening these two; and you should bear in mind that Prestongrange and James More, my father, are of the one blood."

"I never heard tell of that," said I.

"It is rather singular how little you are acquainted with," said she.

"One part may call themselves Grant, and one Macgregor, but they are still of the same clan. They are all the sons of Alpin, from whom, I think, our country has its name."

"What country is that?" I asked.

"My country and yours," said she

"This is my day for discovering I think," said I, "for I always thought the name of it was Scotland."

"Scotland is the name of what you call Ireland," she replied. "But the old ancient true name of this place that we have our foot-soles on, and that our bones are made of, will be Alban. It was Alban they called it when our forefathers will be fighting for it against Rome and Alexander; and it is called so still in your own tongue that you forget."

"Troth," said I, "and that I never learned!" For I lacked heart to take her up about the Macedonian.

"But your fathers and mothers talked it, one generation with another," said she. "And it was sung about the cradles before you or me were ever dreamed of; and your name remembers it still. Ah, if you could talk that language you would find me another girl. The heart speaks in that tongue."

I had a meal with the two ladies, all very good, served in fine old plate, and the wine excellent, for it seems that Mrs. Ogilvy was rich. Our talk, too, was pleasant enough; but as soon as I saw the sun decline sharply and the shadows to run out long, I rose to take my leave. For my mind was now made up to say farewell to Alan; and it was needful I should see the trysting wood, and reconnoitre it, by daylight. Catriona came with me as far as to the garden gate.

"It is long till I see you now?" she asked.

"It is beyond my judging," I replied. "It will be long, it may be never."

"It may be so," said she. "And you are sorry?"

I bowed my head, looking upon her.

"So am I, at all events," said she. "I have seen you but a small time, but I put you very high. You are true, you are brave; in time I think you will be more of a man yet. I will be proud to hear of that. If you should speed worse, if it will come to fall as we are afraid - O well! think you have the one friend. Long after you are dead and me an old wife, I will be telling the bairns about David Balfour, and my tears running. I will be telling how we parted, and what I said to you, and did to you. God go with you and guide you, prays your little friend: so I said - I will be telling them - and here is what I did."

She took up my hand and kissed it. This so surprised my spirits that I cried out like one hurt. The colour came strong in her face, and she looked at me and nodded.

"O yes, Mr. David," said she, "that is what I think of you. The head goes with the lips."

I could read in her face high spirit, and a chivalry like a brave child's; not anything besides. She kissed my hand, as she had kissed Prince Charlie's, with a higher passion than the common kind of clay has any sense of. Nothing before had taught me how deep I was her lover, nor how far I had yet to climb to make her think of me in such a character. Yet I could tell myself I had advanced some way, and that her heart had beat and her blood flowed at thoughts of me.

After that honour she had done me I could offer no more trivial civility. It was even hard for me to speak; a certain lifting in her voice had knocked directly at the door of my own tears.

"I praise God for your kindness, dear," said I. "Farewell, my little friend!" giving her that name which she had given to herself; with which I bowed and left her.

My way was down the glen of the Leith River, towards Stockbridge and Silvermills. A path led in the foot of it, the water bickered and sang in the midst; the sunbeams overhead struck out of the west among long shadows and (as the valley turned) made like a new scene and a new world of it at every corner. With Catriona behind and Alan before me, I was like one lifted up. The place besides, and the hour, and the talking of the water, infinitely pleased me; and I lingered in my steps and looked before and behind me as I went. This was the cause, under Providence, that I spied a little in my rear a red head among some bushes.

Anger sprang in my heart, and I turned straight about and walked at a stiff pace to where I came from. The path lay close by the bushes where I had remarked the head. The cover came to the wayside, and as I passed I was all strung up to meet and to resist an onfall. No such thing befell, I went by unmeddled with; and at that fear increased upon me. It was still day indeed, but the place exceeding solitary. If my haunters had let slip that fair occasion I could but judge they aimed at something more than David Balfour. The lives of Alan and James weighed upon my spirit with the weight of two grown bullocks.

Catriona was yet in the garden walking by herself.

"Catriona," said I, "you see me back again."

"With a changed face," said she.

"I carry two men's lives besides my own," said I. "It would be a sin and shame not to walk carefully. I was doubtful whether I did right to come here. I would like it ill, if it was by that means we were brought to harm."

"I could tell you one that would be liking it less, and will like little enough to hear you talking at this very same time," she cried. "What have I done, at all events?"

"O, you I you are not alone," I replied. "But since I went off I have been dogged again, and I can give you the name of him that follows me. It is Neil, son of Duncan, your man or your father's."

"To be sure you are mistaken there," she said, with a white face. "Neil is in Edinburgh on errands from my father."

"It is what I fear," said I, "the last of it. But for his being in Edinburgh I think I can show you another of that. For sure you have some signal, a signal of need, such as would bring him to your help, if he was anywhere within the reach of ears and legs?"

"Why, how will you know that?" says she.

"By means of a magical talisman God gave to me when I was born, and the name they call it by is Common-sense," said I. "Oblige me so far as make your signal, and I will show you the red head of Neil."

No doubt but I spoke bitter and sharp. My heart was bitter. I blamed myself and the girl and hated both of us: her for the vile crew that she was come of, myself for my wanton folly to have stuck my head in such a byke of wasps.

Catriona set her fingers to her lips and whistled once, with an exceeding clear, strong, mounting note, as full as a ploughman's. A while we stood silent; and I was about to ask her to repeat the same, when I heard the sound of some one bursting through the bushes below on the braeside. I pointed in that direction with a smile, and presently Neil leaped into the garden. His eyes burned, and he had a black knife (as they call it on the Highland side) naked in his hand; but, seeing me beside his mistress, stood like a man struck.

"He has come to your call," said I; "judge how near he was to Edinburgh, or what was the nature of your father's errands. Ask himself. If I am to lose my life, or the lives of those that hang by me, through the means of your clan, let me go where I have to go with my eyes open."

She addressed him tremulously in the Gaelic. Remembering Alan's anxious civility in that particular, I could have laughed out loud for bitterness; here, sure, in the midst of these suspicions, was the hour she should have stuck by English.

Twice or thrice they spoke together, and I could make out that Neil (for all his obsequiousness) was an angry man.

Then she turned to me. "He swears it is not," she said.

"Catriona," said I, "do you believe the man yourself?"

She made a gesture like wringing the hands.

"How will I can know?" she cried.

But I must find some means to know," said I. "I cannot continue to go dovering round in the black night with two men's lives at my girdle! Catriona, try to put yourself in my place, as I vow to God I try hard to put myself in yours. This is no kind of talk that should ever have fallen between me and you; no kind of talk; my heart is sick with it. See, keep him here till two of the morning, and I care not. Try him with that."

They spoke together once more in the Gaelic.

"He says he has James More my father's errand," said she. She was whiter than ever, and her voice faltered as she said it.

"It is pretty plain now," said I, "and may God forgive the wicked!"

She said never anything to that, but continued gazing at me with the same white face.

"This is a fine business," said I again. "Am I to fall, then, and those two along with me?"

"O, what am I to do?" she cried. "Could I go against my father's orders, him in prison, in the danger of his life!"

"But perhaps we go too fast," said I. "This may be a lie too. He may have no right orders; all may be contrived by Simon, and your father knowing nothing."

She burst out weeping between the pair of us; and my heart smote me hard, for I thought this girl was in a dreadful situation.

"Here," said I, "keep him but the one hour; and I'll chance it, and may God bless you."

She put out her hand to me, "I will he needing one good word," she sobbed.

"The full hour, then?" said I, keeping her hand in mine. "Three lives of it, my lass!"

"The full hour!" she said, and cried aloud on her Redeemer to forgive her.

I thought it no fit place for me, and fled.

CHAPTER XI - THE WOOD BY SILVERMILLS

I lost no time, but down through the valley and by Stockbridge and Silvermills as hard as I could stave. It was Alan's tryst to be every night between twelve and two "in a bit scrog of wood by east of Silvermills and by south the south mill-lade." This I found easy enough, where it grew on a steep brae, with the mill-lade flowing swift and deep along the foot of it; and here I began to walk slower and to reflect more reasonably on my employment. I saw I had made but a fool's bargain with Catriona. It was not to be supposed that Neil was sent alone upon his errand, but perhaps he was the only man belonging to James More; in which case I should have done all I could to hang Catriona's father, and nothing the least material to help myself. To tell the truth, I fancied neither one of these ideas. Suppose by holding back Neil, the girl should have helped to hang her father, I thought she would never forgive herself this side of time. And suppose there were others pursuing me that moment, what kind of a gift was I come bringing to Alan? and how would I like that?

I was up with the west end of that wood when these two considerations struck me like a cudgel. My feet stopped of themselves and my heart along with them. "What wild game is this that I have been playing?" thought I; and turned instantly upon my heels to go elsewhere.

This brought my face to Silvermills; the path came past the village with a crook, but all plainly visible; and, Highland or Lowland, there was nobody stirring. Here was my advantage, here was just such a conjuncture as Stewart had counselled me to profit by, and I ran by the side of the mill-lade, fetched about beyond the east corner of the wood, threaded through the midst of it, and returned to the west selvage, whence I could again command the path, and yet be myself unseen. Again it was all empty, and my heart began to rise.

For more than an hour I sat close in the border of the trees, and no hare or eagle could have kept a more particular watch. When that hour began the sun was already set, but the sky still all golden and the daylight clear; before the hour was done it had fallen to be half mirk, the images and distances of things were mingled, and observation began to be difficult. All that time not a foot of man had come east from Silvermills, and the few that had gone west were honest countryfolk and their wives upon the road to bed. If I were tracked by the most cunning spies in Europe, I judged it was beyond the course of nature they could have any jealousy of where I was: and going a little further home into the wood I lay down to wait for Alan.

The strain of my attention had been great, for I had watched not the path only, but every bush and field within my vision. That was now at an end. The moon, which was in her first quarter, glinted a little in the wood; all round there was a stillness of the country; and as I lay there on my back, the next three or four hours, I had a fine occasion to review my conduct.

Two things became plain to me first: that I had no right to go that day to Dean, and (having gone there) had now no right to be lying where I was. This (where Alan was to come) was just the one wood in all broad Scotland that was, by every proper feeling, closed against me; I admitted that, and yet stayed on, wondering at myself. I thought of the measure with which I had meted to Catriona that same night; how I had prated of the two lives I carried, and had thus forced her to enjeopardy her father's; and how I was here exposing them again, it seemed in wantonness. A good conscience is eight parts of courage. No sooner had I lost conceit of my behaviour, than I seemed to stand disarmed amidst a throng of terrors. Of a sudden I sat up. How if I went now to Prestongrange, caught him (as I still easily might) before he slept, and made a full submission? Who could blame me? Not Stewart the Writer; I had but to say that I was followed, despaired of getting clear, and so gave in. Not Catriona: here, too, I had my answer ready; that I could not bear she should expose her father. So, in a moment, I could lay all these troubles by, which were after all and truly none of mine; swim clear of the Appin Murder; get forth out of hand-stroke of all the Stewarts and Campbells, all the Whigs and Tories, in the land; and live henceforth to my own mind, and be able to enjoy and to improve my fortunes, and devote some hours of my youth to courting Catriona, which would be surely a more suitable occupation than to hide and run and be followed like a hunted thief, and begin over again the dreadful miseries of my escape with Alan.

At first I thought no shame of this capitulation; I was only amazed I had not thought upon the thing and done it earlier; and began to inquire into the causes of the change. These I traced to my lowness of spirits, that back to my late recklessness, and that again to the common, old, public, disconsidered sin of self-indulgence. Instantly the text came in my head, "How can Satan cast out Satan?" What? (I thought) I had, by self-indulgence; and the following of pleasant paths, and the lure of a young maid, cast myself wholly out of conceit with my own character, and jeopardised the lives of James and Alan? And I was to seek the way out by the same road as I had entered in? No; the hurt that had been caused by self-indulgence must be cured by self-denial; the flesh I had pampered must be crucified. I looked about me for that course which I least liked to follow: this was to leave the wood without waiting to see Alan, and go forth again alone, in the dark and in the midst of my perplexed and dangerous fortunes.

I have been the more careful to narrate this passage of my reflections, because I think it is of some utility, and may serve as an example to young men. But there is reason (they say) in planting kale, and even in ethic and religion, room for common sense. It was already close on Alan's hour, and the moon was down. If I left (as I could not very decently whistle to my spies to follow me) they might miss me in the dark and tack themselves to Alan by mistake. If I stayed, I could at the least of it set my friend upon his guard which might prove his mere salvation. I had adventured other peoples' safety in a course of self-indulgence; to have endangered them again, and now on a mere design of penance, would have been scarce rational. Accordingly, I had scarce risen from my place ere I sat down again, but already in a different frame of spirits, and equally marvelling at my past weakness and rejoicing in my present composure.

Presently after came a crackling in the thicket. Putting my mouth near down to the ground, I whistled a note or two, of Alan's air; an answer came in the like guarded tone, and soon we had knocked together in the dark.

"Is this you at last, Davie?" he whispered.

"Just myself," said I.

"God, man, but I've been wearying to see ye!" says he. "I've had the longest kind of a time. A' day, I've had my dwelling into the inside of a stack of hay, where I couldnae see the nebs of my ten fingers; and then two hours of it waiting here for you, and you never coming! Dod, and ye're none too soon the way it is, with me to sail the morn! The morn? what am I saying? - the day, I mean."

"Ay, Alan, man, the day, sure enough," said I. "It's past twelve now, surely, and ye sail the day. This'll be a long road you have before you."

"We'll have a long crack of it first," said he.

"Well, indeed, and I have a good deal it will be telling you to hear," said I.

And I told him what behooved, making rather a jumble of it, but clear enough when done. He heard me out with very few questions, laughing here and there like a man delighted: and the sound of his laughing (above all there, in the dark, where neither one of us could see the other) was extraordinary friendly to my heart.

"Ay, Davie, ye're a queer character," says he, when I had done: "a queer bitch after a', and I have no mind of meeting with the like of ye. As for your story, Prestongrange is a Whig like yoursel', so I'll say the less of him; and, dod! I believe he was the best friend ye had, if ye could only trust him. But Simon Fraser and James More are my ain kind of cattle, and I'll give them the name that they deserve. The muckle black deil was father to the Frasers, a'body kens that; and as for the Gregara, I never could abye the reek of them since I could stotter on two feet. I bloodied the nose of one, I mind, when I was still so wambly on my legs that I cowped upon the top of him. A proud man was my father that day, God rest him! and I think he had the cause. I'll never can deny but what Robin was something of a piper," he added; "but as for James More, the deil guide him for me!"

"One thing we have to consider," said I. "Was Charles Stewart right or wrong? Is it only me they're after, or the pair of us?"

"And what's your ain opinion, you that's a man of so much experience?" said he.

"It passes me," said I.

"And me too," says Alan. "Do ye think this lass would keep her word to ye?" he asked.

"I do that," said I.

"Well, there's nae telling," said he. "And anyway, that's over and done: he'll be joined to the rest of them lang syne."

"How many would ye think there would be of them?" I asked.

"That depends," said Alan. "If it was only you, they would likely send two-three lively, brisk young birkies, and if they thought that I was to appear in the employ, I daresay ten or twelve," said he.

It was no use, I gave a little crack of laughter.

"And I think your own two eyes will have seen me drive that number, or the double of it, nearer hand!" cries he.

"It matters the less," said I, "because I am well rid of them for this time."

"Nae doubt that's your opinion," said he; "but I wouldnae be the least surprised if they were hunkering this wood. Ye see, David man; they'll be Hieland folk. There'll be some Frasers, I'm thinking, and some of the Gregara; and I would never deny but what the both of them, and the Gregara in especial, were clever experienced persons. A man kens little till he's driven a spreagh of neat cattle (say) ten miles through a throng lowland country and the black soldiers maybe at his tail. It's there that I learned a great part of my penetration. And ye need nae tell me: it's better than war; which is the next best, however, though generally rather a bauchle of a business. Now the Gregara have had grand practice."

"No doubt that's a branch of education that was left out with me," said I.

"And I can see the marks of it upon ye constantly," said Alan. "But that's the strange thing about you folk of the college learning: ye're ignorat, and ye cannae see 't. Wae's me for my Greek and Hebrew;

but, man, I ken that I dinnae ken them - there's the differ of it. Now, here's you. Ye lie on your wame a bittie in the bield of this wood, and ye tell me that ye've cuist off these Frasers and Macgregors. Why? Because I couldnae see them, says you. Ye blockhead, that's their livelihood."

"Take the worst of it," said I, "and what are we to do?"

"I am thinking of that same," said he. "We might twine. It wouldnae be greatly to my taste; and forbye that, I see reasons against it. First, it's now unco dark, and it's just humanly possible we might give them the clean slip. If we keep together, we make but the ae line of it; if we gang separate, we make twae of them: the more likelihood to stave in upon some of these gentry of yours. And then, second, if they keep the track of us, it may come to a fecht for it yet, Davie; and then, I'll confess I would be blythe to have you at my oxter, and I think you would be none the worse of having me at yours. So, by my way of it, we should creep out of this wood no further gone than just the inside of next minute, and hold away east for Gillane, where I'm to find my ship. It'll be like old days while it lasts, Davie; and (come the time) we'll have to think what you should be doing. I'm wae to leave ye here, wanting me."

"Have with ye, then!" says I. "Do ye gang back where you were stopping?"

"Deil a fear!" said Alan. "They were good folks to me, but I think they would be a good deal disappointed if they saw my bonny face again. For (the way times go) I amnae just what ye could call a Walcome Guest. Which makes me the keener for your company, Mr. David Balfour of the Shaws, and set ye up! For, leave aside twa cracks here in the wood with Charlie Stewart, I have scarce said black or white since the day we parted at Corstorphine."

With which he rose from his place, and we began to move quietly eastward through the wood.

CHAPTER XII - ON THE MARCH AGAIN WITH ALAN

It was likely between one and two; the moon (as I have said) was down; a strongish wind, carrying a heavy wrack of cloud, had set in suddenly from the west; and we began our movement in as black a night as ever a fugitive or a murderer wanted. The whiteness of the path guided us into the sleeping town of Broughton, thence through Picardy, and beside my old acquaintance the gibbet of the two thieves. A little beyond we made a useful beacon, which was a light in an upper window of Lochend. Steering by this, but a good deal at random, and with some trampling of the harvest, and stumbling and falling down upon the banks, we made our way across country, and won forth at last upon the linky, boggy muirland that they call the Figgate Whins. Here, under a bush of whin, we lay down the remainder of that night and slumbered.

The day called us about five. A beautiful morning it was, the high westerly wind still blowing strong, but the clouds all blown away to Europe. Alan was already sitting up and smiling to himself. It was my first sight of my friend since we were parted, and I looked upon him with enjoyment. He had still the same big great-coat on his back; but (what was new) he had now a pair of knitted boot-hose drawn above the knee. Doubtless these were intended for disguise; but, as the day promised to be warm, he made a most unseasonable figure.

"Well, Davie," said he, "is this no a bonny morning? Here is a day that looks the way that a day ought to. This is a great change of it from the belly of my haystack; and while you were there sottering and sleeping I have done a thing that maybe I do very seldom."

"And what was that?" said I.

"O, just said my prayers," said he.

"And where are my gentry, as ye call them?" I asked.

"Gude kens," says he; "and the short and the long of it is that we must take our chance of them. Up with your foot-soles, Davie! Forth, Fortune, once again of it! And a bonny walk we are like to have."

So we went east by the beach of the sea, towards where the salt-pans were smoking in by the Esk mouth. No doubt there was a by-ordinary bonny blink of morning sun on Arthur's Seat and the green Pentlands; and the pleasantness of the day appeared to set Alan among nettles.

"I feel like a gomeral," says he, "to be leaving Scotland on a day like this. It sticks in my head; I would maybe like it better to stay here and hing."

"Ay, but ye wouldnae, Alan," said I.

"No, but what France is a good place too," he explained; "but it's some way no the same. It's brawer I believe, but it's no Scotland. I like it fine when I'm there, man; yet I kind of weary for Scots divots and the Scots peat-reek."

"If that's all you have to complain of, Alan, it's no such great affair," said I.

"And it sets me ill to be complaining, whatever," said he, "and me but new out of yon deil's haystack."

"And so you were unco weary of your haystack?" I asked.

"Weary's nae word for it," said he. "I'm not just precisely a man that's easily cast down; but I do better with caller air and the lift above my head. I'm like the auld Black Douglas (wasnae't?) that likit better to hear the laverock sing than the mouse cheep. And yon place, ye see, Davie - whilk was a very suitable place to hide in, as I'm free to own - was pit mirk from dawn to gloaming. There were days (or nights, for how would I tell one from other?) that seemed to me as long as a long winter."

"How did you know the hour to bide your tryst?" I asked.

"The goodman brought me my meat and a drop brandy, and a candle-dowp to eat it by, about eleeven," said he. "So, when I had swallowed a bit, it would he time to be getting to the wood. There I lay and wearied for ye sore, Davie," says he, laying his hand on my shoulder "and guessed when the two hours would be about by - unless Charlie Stewart would come and tell me on his watch - and then back to the dooms haystack. Na, it was a driech employ, and praise the Lord that I have warstled through with it!"

"What did you do with yourself?" I asked.

"Faith," said he, "the best I could! Whiles I played at the knucklebones. I'm an extraordinar good hand at the knucklebones, but it's a poor piece of business playing with naebody to admire ye. And whiles I would make songs."

"What were they about?" says I.

"O, about the deer and the heather," says he, "and about the ancient old chiefs that are all by with it lang syne, and just about what songs are about in general. And then whiles I would make believe I had a set of pipes and I was playing. I played some grand springs, and I thought I played them awful bonny; I vow whiles that I could hear the squeal of them! But the great affair is that it's done with."

With that he carried me again to my adventures, which he heard all over again with more particularity, and extraordinary approval, swearing at intervals that I was "a queer character of a callant."

"So ye were frich'ened of Sim Fraser?" he asked once.

"In troth was I!" cried I.

"So would I have been, Davie," said he. "And that is indeed a driedful man. But it is only proper to give the deil his due: and I can tell you he is a most respectable person on the field of war."

"Is he so brave?" I asked.

"Brave!" said he. "He is as brave as my steel sword."

The story of my duel set him beside himself.

"To think of that!" he cried. "I showed ye the trick in Corrynakiegh too. And three times - three times disarmed! It's a disgrace upon my character that learned ye! Here, stand up, out with your airn; ye shall walk no step beyond this place upon the road till ye can do yoursel' and me mair credit."

"Alan," said I, "this is midsummer madness. Here is no time for fencing lessons."

"I cannae well say no to that," he admitted. "But three times, man! And you standing there like a straw bogle and rinning to fetch your ain sword like a doggie with a pocket-napkin! David, this man Duncansby must be something altogether by-ordinar! He maun be extraordinar skilly. If I had the time, I would gang straight back and try a turn at him mysel'. The man must be a provost."

"You silly fellow," said I, "you forget it was just me."

"Na," said he, "but three times!"

"When ye ken yourself that I am fair incompetent," I cried.

"Well, I never heard tell the equal of it," said he.

"I promise you the one thing, Alan," said I. "The next time that we forgather, I'll be better learned. You shall not continue to bear the disgrace of a friend that cannot strike."

"Ay, the next time!" says he. "And when will that be, I would like to ken?"

"Well, Alan, I have had some thoughts of that, too," said I; "and my plan is this. It's my opinion to be called an advocate."

"That's but a weary trade, Davie," says Alan, "and rather a blagyard one forby. Ye would be better in a king's coat than that."

"And no doubt that would be the way to have us meet," cried I. "But as you'll be in King Lewie's coat, and I'll be in King Geordie's, we'll have a dainty meeting of it."

"There's some sense in that," he admitted

"An advocate, then, it'll have to be," I continued, "and I think it a more suitable trade for a gentleman that was three times disarmed. But the beauty of the thing is this: that one of the best colleges for that kind of learning - and the one where my kinsman, Pilrig, made his studies - is the college of Leyden in Holland. Now, what say you, Alan? Could not a cadet of Royal Ecossais get a furlough, slip over the marches, and call in upon a Leyden student?"

"Well, and I would think he could!" cried he. "Ye see, I stand well in with my colonel, Count Drummond-Melfort; and, what's mair to the purpose I have a cousin of mine lieutenant-colonel in a regiment of the Scots-Dutch. Naething could be mair proper than what I would get a leave to see Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart of Halkett's. And Lord Melfort, who is a very scienteefic kind of a man, and writes books like Caesar, would be doubtless very pleased to have the advantage of my observes."

"Is Lord Meloort an author, then?" I asked, for much as Alan thought of soldiers, I thought more of the gentry that write books.

"The very same, Davie," said he. "One would think a colonel would have something better to attend to. But what can I say that make songs?"

"Well, then," said I, "it only remains you should give me an address to write you at in France; and as soon as I am got to Leyden I will send you mine."

"The best will be to write me in the care of my chieftain," said he, "Charles Stewart, of Ardsheil, Esquire, at the town of Melons, in the Isle of France. It might take long, or it might take short, but it would aye get to my hands at the last of it."

We had a haddock to our breakfast in Musselburgh, where it amused me vastly to hear Alan. His great-coat and boot-hose were extremely remarkable this warm morning, and perhaps some hint of an explanation had been wise; but Alan went into that matter like a business, or I should rather say, like a diversion. He engaged the goodwife of the house with some compliments upon the rizzoring of our haddocks; and the whole of the rest of our stay held her in talk about a cold he had taken on his stomach, gravely relating all manner of symptoms and sufferings, and hearing with a vast show of interest all the old wives' remedies she could supply him with in return.

We left Musselburgh before the first ninepenny coach was due from Edinburgh for (as Alan said) that was a rencounter we might very well avoid. The wind although still high, was very mild, the sun shone strong, and Alan began to suffer in proportion. From Prestonpans he had me aside to the field of Gladsmuir, where he exerted himself a great deal more than needful to describe the stages of the battle. Thence, at his old round pace, we travelled to Cockenzie. Though they were building herring-busses there at Mrs. Cadell's, it seemed a desert-like, back-going town, about half full of ruined houses; but the ale-house was clean, and Alan, who was now in a glowing heat, must indulge himself with a bottle of ale, and carry on to the new luckie with the old story of the cold upon his stomach, only now the symptoms were all different.

I sat listening; and it came in my mind that I had scarce ever heard him address three serious words to any woman, but he was always drolling and fleering and making a private mock of them, and yet brought to that business a remarkable degree of energy and interest. Something to this effect I remarked to him, when the good-wife (as chanced) was called away.

"What do ye want?" says he. "A man should aye put his best foot forrit with the womankind; he should aye give them a bit of a story to divert them, the poor lambs! It's what ye should learn to attend to, David; ye should get the principles, it's like a trade. Now, if this had been a young lassie, or onyways bonnie, she would never have heard tell of my stomach, Davie. But aince they're too old to be seeking joes, they a' set up to be apotecaries. Why? What do I ken? They'll be just the way God made them, I suppose. But I think a man would be a gomeral that didnae give his attention to the same."

And here, the luckie coming back, he turned from me as if with impatience to renew their former conversation. The lady had branched some while before from Alan's stomach to the case of a goodbrother of her own in Aberlady, whose last sickness and demise she was describing at extraordinary length. Sometimes it was merely dull, sometimes both dull and awful, for she talked with unction. The upshot was that I fell in a deep muse, looking forth of the window on the road, and scarce marking what I saw. Presently had any been looking they might have seen me to start.

"We pit a fomentation to his feet," the good-wife was saying, "and a het stane to his wame, and we gied him hyssop and water of pennyroyal, and fine, clean balsam of sulphur for the hoast. . . "

"Sir," says I, cutting very quietly in, "there's a friend of mine gone by the house."

"Is that e'en sae?" replies Alan, as though it were a thing of small account. And then, "Ye were saying, mem?" says he; and the wearyful wife went on.

Presently, however, he paid her with a half-crown piece, and she must go forth after the change.

"Was it him with the red head?" asked Alan.

"Ye have it," said I.

"What did I tell you in the wood?" he cried. "And yet it's strange he should be here too! Was he his lane?"

"His lee-lane for what I could see," said I.

"Did he gang by?" he asked.

"Straight by," said I, "and looked neither to the right nor left."

"And that's queerer yet," said Alan. "It sticks in my mind, Davie, that we should be stirring. But where to? - deil hae't! This is like old days fairly," cries he.

"There is one big differ, though," said I, "that now we have money in our pockets."

"And another big differ, Mr. Balfour," says he, "that now we have dogs at our tail. They're on the scent; they're in full cry, David. It's a bad business and be damned to it." And he sat thinking hard with a look of his that I knew well.

"I'm saying, Luckie," says he, when the goodwife returned, "have ye a back road out of this change house?"

She told him there was and where it led to.

"Then, sir," says he to me, "I think that will be the shortest road for us. And here's good-bye to ye, my braw woman; and I'll no forget thon of the cinnamon water."

We went out by way of the woman's kale yard, and up a lane among fields. Alan looked sharply to all sides, and seeing we were in a little hollow place of the country, out of view of men, sat down.

"Now for a council of war, Davie," said he. "But first of all, a bit lesson to ye. Suppose that I had been like you, what would yon old wife have minded of the pair of us! Just that we had gone out by the back gate. And what does she mind now? A fine, canty, friendly, cracky man, that suffered with the stomach, poor body! and was real ta'en up about the goodbrother. O man, David, try and learn to have some kind of intelligence!"

"I'll try, Alan," said I.

"And now for him of the red head," says he; "was he gaun fast or slow?"

"Betwixt and between," said I.

"No kind of a hurry about the man?" he asked.

"Never a sign of it," said I.

"Nhm!" said Alan, "it looks queer. We saw nothing of them this morning on the Whins; he's passed us by, he doesnae seem to be looking, and yet here he is on our road! Dod, Davie, I begin to take a notion. I think it's no you they're seeking, I think it's me; and I think they ken fine where they're gaun."

"They ken?" I asked.

"I think Andie Scougal's sold me - him or his mate wha kent some part of the affair - or else Charlie's clerk callant, which would be a pity too," says Alan; "and if you askit me for just my inward private conviction, I think there'll be heads cracked on Gillane sands."

"Alan," I cried, "if you're at all right there'll be folk there and to spare. It'll be small service to crack heads."

"It would aye be a satisfaction though," says Alan. But bide a bit; bide a bit; I'm thinking - and thanks to this bonny westland wind, I believe I've still a chance of it. It's this way, Davie. I'm no trysted with this man Scougal till the gloaming comes. But," says he, "if I can get a bit of a wind out of the west I'll be there long or that," he says, “and lie-to for ye behind the Isle of Fidra. Now if your gentry kens the place, they ken the time forbye. Do ye see me coming, Davie? Thanks to Johnnie Cope and other red-coat gomerals, I should ken this country like the back of my hand; and if ye’re ready for another bit run with Alan Breck, we’ll can cast back inshore, and come to the seaside again by Dirleton. If the ship’s there, we’ll try and get on board of her. If she’s no there, I’ll just have to get back to my weary haystack. But either way of it, I think we will leave your gentry whistling on their thumbs.”

“I believe there’s some chance in it,” said I. “Have on with ye, Alan!”

CHAPTER XIII - GILLANE SANDS

I did not profit by Alan's pilotage as he had done by his marchings under General Cope; for I can scarce tell what way we went. It is my excuse that we travelled exceeding fast. Some part we ran, some trotted, and the rest walked at a vengeance of a pace. Twice, while we were at top speed, we ran against country-folk; but though we plumped into the first from round a corner, Alan was as ready as a loaded musket.

"Has ye seen my horse?" he gasped.

"Na, man, I haenae seen nae horse the day," replied the countryman.

And Alan spared the time to explain to him that we were travelling "ride and tie"; that our charger had escaped, and it was feared he had gone home to Linton. Not only that, but he expended some breath (of which he had not very much left) to curse his own misfortune and my stupidity which was said to be its cause.

"Them that cannae tell the truth," he observed to myself as we went on again, "should be aye mindful to leave an honest, handy lee behind them. If folk dinnae ken what ye're doing, Davie, they're terrible taken up with it; but if they think they ken, they care nae mair for it than what I do for pease porridge."

As we had first made inland, so our road came in the end to lie very near due north; the old Kirk of Aberlady for a landmark on the left; on the right, the top of the Berwick Law; and it was thus we struck the shore again, not far from Dirleton. From north Berwick west to Gillane Ness there runs a string of four small islets, Craiglieth, the Lamb, Fidra, and Eyebrough, notable by their diversity of size and shape. Fidra is the most particular, being a strange grey islet of two humps, made the more conspicuous by a piece of ruin; and I mind that (as we drew closer to it) by some door or window of these ruins the sea peeped through like a man's eye. Under the lee of Fidra there is a good anchorage in westerly winds, and there, from a far way off, we could see the Thistle riding.

The shore in face of these islets is altogether waste. Here is no dwelling of man, and scarce any passage, or at most of vagabond children running at their play. Gillane is a small place on the far side of the Ness, the folk of Dirleton go to their business in the inland fields, and those of North Berwick straight to the sea-fishing from their haven; so that few parts of the coast are lonelier. But I mind, as we crawled upon our bellies into that multiplicity of heights and hollows, keeping a bright eye upon all sides, and our hearts hammering at our ribs, there was such a shining of the sun and the sea, such a stir of the wind in the bent grass, and such a bustle of down-popping rabbits and up-flying gulls, that the desert seemed to me, like a place alive. No doubt it was in all ways well chosen for a secret embarcation, if the secret had been kept; and even now that it was out, and the place watched, we were able to creep unperceived to the front of the sandhills, where they look down immediately on the beach and sea.

But here Alan came to a full stop.

"Davie," said he, "this is a kittle passage! As long as we lie here we're safe; but I'm nane sae muckle nearer to my ship or the coast of France. And as soon as we stand up and signal the brig, it's another matter. For where will your gentry be, think ye?"

"Maybe they're no come yet," said I. "And even if they are, there's one clear matter in our favour. They'll be all arranged to take us, that's true. But they'll have arranged for our coming from the east and here we are upon their west."

"Ay," says Alan, "I wish we were in some force, and this was a battle, we would have bonnily out-manoeuvred them! But it isnae, Davit; and the way it is, is a wee thing less inspiring to Alan Breck. I swither, Davie."

"Time flies, Alan," said I.

"I ken that," said Alan. "I ken naething else, as the French folk say. But this is a dreidful case of heids or tails. O! if I could but ken where your gentry were!"

"Alan," said I, "this is no like you. It's got to be now or never."

"This is no me, quo' he,"

sang Alan, with a queer face betwixt shame and drollery.

"Neither you nor me, quo' he, neither you nor me.
Wow, na, Johnnie man! neither you nor me."

And then of a sudden he stood straight up where he was, and with a handkerchief flying in his right hand, marched down upon the beach. I stood up myself, but lingered behind him, scanning the sand-hills to the east. His appearance was at first unremarked: Scougal not expecting him so early, and my gentry watching on the other side. Then they awoke on board the Thistle, and it seemed they had all in readiness, for there was scarce a second's bustle on the deck before we saw a skiff put round her stern and begin to pull lively for the coast. Almost at the same moment of time, and perhaps half a mile away towards Gillane Ness, the figure of a man appeared for a blink upon a sandhill, waving with his arms; and though he was gone again in the same flash, the gulls in that part continued a little longer to fly wild.

Alan had not seen this, looking straight to seaward at the ship and skiff.

“It maun be as it will!” said he, when I had told him, “Weel may yon boatie row, or my craig’ll have to thole a raxing.”

That part of the beach was long and flat, and excellent walking when the tide was down; a little cressy burn flowed over it in one place to the sea; and the sandhills ran along the head of it like the rampart of a town. No eye of ours could spy what was passing behind there in the bents, no hurry of ours could mend the speed of the boat’s coming: time stood still with us through that uncanny period of waiting.

“There is one thing I would like to ken,” say Alan. “I would like to ken these gentry’s orders. We’re worth four hunner pound the pair of us: how if they took the guns to us, Davie! They would get a bonny shot from the top of that lang sandy bank.”

“Morally impossible,” said I. “The point is that they can have no guns. This thing has been gone about too secret; pistols they may have, but never guns.”

“I believe ye’ll be in the right,” says Alan. “For all which I am wearing a good deal for yon boat.”

And he snapped his fingers and whistled to it like a dog.

It was now perhaps a third of the way in, and we ourselves already hard on the margin of the sea, so that the soft sand rose over my shoes. There was no more to do whatever but to wait, to look as much as we were able at the creeping nearer of the boat, and as little as we could manage at the long impenetrable front of the sandhills, over which the gulls twinkled and behind which our enemies were doubtless marshalling.

“This is a fine, bright, caller place to get shot in,” says Alan suddenly; “and, man, I wish that I had your courage!”

“Alan!” I cried, “what kind of talk is this of it! You’re just made of courage; it’s the character of the man, as I could prove myself if there was nobody else.”

“And you would be the more mistaken,” said he. “What makes the differ with me is just my great penetration and knowledge of affairs. But for auld, cauld, dour, deadly courage, I am not fit to hold a candle to yourself. Look at us two here upon the sands. Here am I, fair hotching to be off; here’s you (for all that I ken) in two minds of it whether you’ll no stop. Do you think that I could do that, or would? No me! Firstly, because I havenae got the courage and wouldnae daur; and secondly, because I am a man of so much penetration and would see ye damned first.”

“It’s there ye’re coming, is it?” I cried. “Ah, man Alan, you can wile your old wives, but you never can wile me.”

Remembrance of my temptation in the wood made me strong as iron.

“I have a tryst to keep,” I continued. “I am trysted with your cousin Charlie; I have passed my word.”

“Braw trysts that you’ll can keep,” said Alan. “Ye’ll just mistryst aince and for a’ with the gentry in the bents. And what for?” he went on with an extreme threatening gravity. “Just tell me that, my mannie! Are ye to be speerited away like Lady Grange? Are they to drive a dirk in your inside and bury ye in the bents? Or is it to be the other way, and are they to bring ye in with James? Are they folk to be trustit? Would ye stick your head in the mouth of Sim Fraser and the ither Whigs?” he added with extraordinary bitterness.

“Alan,” cried I, “they’re all rogues and liars, and I’m with ye there. The more reason there should be one decent man in such a land of thieves! My word in passed, and I’ll stick to it. I said long syne to your kinswoman that I would stumble at no risk. Do ye mind of that? - the night Red Colin fell, it was. No more I will, then. Here I stop. Prestongrange promised me my life: if he’s to be mansworn, here I’ll have to die.”

“Aweel aweel,” said Alan.

All this time we had seen or heard no more of our pursuers. In truth we had caught them unawares; their whole party (as I was to learn afterwards) had not yet reached the scene; what there was of them was spread among the bents towards Gillane. It was quite an affair to call them in and bring them over, and the boat was making speed. They were besides but cowardly fellows: a mere leash of Highland cattle-thieves, of several clans, no gentleman there to be the captain and the more they looked at Alan and me upon the beach, the less (I must suppose) they liked the look of us.

Whoever had betrayed Alan it was not the captain: he was in the skiff himself, steering and stirring up his oarsmen, like a man with his heart in his employ. Already he was near in, and the boat securing - already Alan’s face had flamed crimson with the excitement of his deliverance, when our friends in the bents, either in their despair to see their prey escape them or with some hope of scaring Andie, raised suddenly a shrill cry of several voices.

This sound, arising from what appeared to be a quite deserted coast, was really very daunting, and the men in the boat held water instantly.

“What’s this of it?” sings out the captain, for he was come within an easy hail.

“Freens o’mine,” says Alan, and began immediately to wade forth in the shallow water towards the boat. "Davie," he said, pausing, "Davie, are ye no coming? I am swier to leave ye."

"Not a hair of me," said I.

"He stood part of a second where he was to his knees in the salt water, hesitating.

"He that will to Cupar, maun to Cupar," said he, and swashing in deeper than his waist, was hauled into the skiff, which was immediately directed for the ship.

I stood where he had left me, with my hands behind my back; Alan sat with his head turned watching me; and the boat drew smoothly away. Of a sudden I came the nearest hand to shedding tears, and seemed to myself the most deserted solitary lad in Scotland. With that I turned my back upon the sea and faced the sandhills. There was no sight or sound of man; the sun shone on the wet sand and the dry, the wind blew in the bents, the gulls made a dreary piping. As I passed higher up the beach, the sand-lice were hopping nimbly about the stranded tangles. The devil any other sight or sound in that unchancy place. And yet I knew there were folk there, observing me, upon some secret purpose. They were no soldiers, or they would have fallen on and taken us ere now; doubtless they were some common rogues hired for my undoing, perhaps to kidnap, perhaps to murder me outright. From the position of those engaged, the first was the more likely; from what I knew of their character and ardency in this business, I thought the second very possible; and the blood ran cold about my heart.

I had a mad idea to loosen my sword in the scabbard; for though I was very unfit to stand up like a gentleman blade to blade, I thought I could do some scathe in a random combat. But I perceived in time the folly of resistance. This was no doubt the joint "expedient" on which Prestongrange and Fraser were agreed. The first, I was very sure, had done something to secure my life; the second was pretty likely to have slipped in some contrary hints into the ears of Neil and his companions; and it I were to show bare steel I might play straight into the hands of my worst enemy and seal my own doom.

These thoughts brought me to the head of the beach. I cast a look behind, the boat was nearing the brig, and Alan flew his handkerchief for a farewell, which I replied to with the waving of my hand. But Alan himself was shrunk to a small thing in my view, alongside of this pass that lay in front of me. I set my hat hard on my head, clenched my teeth, and went right before me up the face of the sand-wreath. It made a hard climb, being steep, and the sand like water underfoot. But I caught hold at last by the long bent-grass on the brae-top, and pulled myself to a good footing. The same moment men stirred and stood up here and there, six or seven of them, ragged-like knaves, each with a dagger in his hand. The fair truth is, I shut my eyes and prayed. When I opened them again, the rogues were crept the least thing nearer without speech or hurry. Every eye was upon mine, which struck me with a strange sensation of their brightness, and of the fear with which they continued to approach me. I held out my hands empty; whereupon one asked, with a strong Highland brogue, if I surrendered.

"Under protest," said I, "if ye ken what that means, which I misdoubt."

At that word, they came all in upon me like a flight of birds upon a carrion, seized me, took my sword, and all the money from my pockets, bound me hand and foot with some strong line, and cast me on a tussock of bent. There they sat about their captive in a part of a circle and gazed upon him silently like something dangerous, perhaps a lion or a tiger on the spring. Presently this attention was relaxed. They drew nearer together, fell to speech in the Gaelic, and very cynically divided my property before my eyes. It was my diversion in this time that I could watch from my place the progress of my friend's escape. I saw the boat come to the brig and be hoisted in, the sails fill, and the ship pass out seaward behind the isles and by North Berwick.

In the course of two hours or so, more and more ragged Highlandmen kept collecting. Neil among the first, until the party must have numbered near a score. With each new arrival there was a fresh bout of talk, that sounded like complaints and explanations; but I observed one thing, none of those who came late had any share in the division of my spoils. The last discussion was very violent and eager, so that once I thought they would have quarrelled; on the heels of which their company parted, the bulk of them returning westward in a troop, and only three, Neil and two others, remaining sentries on the prisoner.

"I could name one who would be very ill pleased with your day's work, Neil Duncanson," said I, when the rest had moved away.

He assured me in answer I should be tenderly used, for he knew he was "acquent wi' the leddy."

This was all our talk, nor did any other son of man appear upon that portion of the coast until the sun had gone down among the Highland mountains, and the gloaming was beginning to grow dark. At which hour I was aware of a long, lean, bony-like Lothian man of a very swarthy countenance, that came towards us among the bents on a farm horse.

"Lads," cried he, "has ye a paper like this?" and held up one in his hand. Neil produced a second, which the newcomer studied through a pair of horn spectacles, and saying all was right and we were the folk he was seeking, immediately dismounted. I was then set in his place, my feet tied under the horse's belly, and we set forth under the guidance of the Lowlander. His path must have been very well chosen, for we met but one pair - a pair of lovers - the whole way, and these, perhaps taking us to be free-traders, fled on our approach. We were at one time close at the foot of Berwick Law on the south side; at another, as we passed over some open hills, I spied the lights of a clachan and the old tower of a church among some trees not far off, but too far to cry for help, if I had dreamed of it. At last we came again within sound of the sea. There was moonlight, though not much; and by this I could see the three huge towers and broken battlements of Tantallon, that old chief place of the Red Douglases. The horse was picketed in the bottom of the ditch to graze, and I was led within, and forth into the court, and thence into the tumble-down stone hall. Here my conductors built a brisk fire in the midst of the pavement, for there was a chill in the night. My hands were loosed, I was set by the wall in the inner end, and (the Lowlander having produced provisions) I was given oatmeal bread and a pitcher of French brandy. This done, I was left once more alone with my three Highlandmen. They sat close by the fire drinking and talking; the wind blew in by the breaches, cast about the smoke and flames, and sang in the tops of the towers; I could hear the sea under the cliffs, and, my mind being reassured as to my life, and my body and spirits wearied with the day's employment, I turned upon one side and slumbered.

I had no means of guessing at what hour I was wakened, only the moon was down and the fire was low. My feet were now loosed, and I was carried through the ruins and down the cliff-side by a precipitous path to where I found a fisher's boat in a haven of the rocks. This I was had on board of, and we began to put forth from the shore in a fine starlight

CHAPTER XIV - THE BASS

I had no thought where they were taking me; only looked here and there for the appearance of a ship; and there ran the while in my head a word of Ransome's - the twenty-pounders. If I were to be exposed a second time to that same former danger of the plantations, I judged it must turn ill with me; there was no second Alan; and no second shipwreck and spare yard to be expected now; and I saw myself hoe tobacco under the whip's lash. The thought chilled me; the air was sharp upon the water, the stretchers of the boat drenched with a cold dew: and I shivered in my place beside the steersman. This was the dark man whom I have called hitherto the Lowlander; his name was Dale, ordinarily called Black Andie. Feeling the thrill of my shiver, he very kindly handed me a rough jacket full of fish-scales, with which I was glad to cover myself.

"I thank you for this kindness," said I, "and will make so free as to repay it with a warning. You take a high responsibility in this affair. You are not like these ignorant, barbarous Highlanders, but know what the law is and the risks of those that break it."

"I am no just exactly what ye would ca' an extremist for the law," says he, "at the best of times; but in this business I act with a good warranty."

"What are you going to do with me?" I asked.

"Nae harm," said he, "nae harm ava'. Ye'll have strong freens, I'm thinking. Ye'll be richt eneuch yet."

There began to fall a greyness on the face of the sea; little dabs of pink and red, like coals of slow fire, came in the east; and at the same time the geese awakened, and began crying about the top of the Bass. It is just the one crag of rock, as everybody knows, but great enough to carve a city from. The sea was extremely little, but there went a hollow plowter round the base of it. With the growing of the dawn I could see it clearer and clearer; the straight crags painted with sea-birds' droppings like a morning frost, the sloping top of it green with grass, the clan of white geese that cried about the sides, and the black, broken buildings of the prison sitting close on the sea's edge.

At the sight the truth came in upon me in a clap.

"It's there you're taking me!" I cried.

"Just to the Bass, mannie," said he: "Whaur the auld saints were afore ye, and I misdoubt if ye have come so fairly by your preeson."

"But none dwells there now," I cried; "the place is long a ruin."

"It'll be the mair pleisand a change for the solan geese, then," quoth Andie dryly.

The day coming slowly brighter I observed on the bilge, among the big stones with which fisherfolk ballast their boats, several kegs and baskets, and a provision of fuel. All these were discharged upon the crag. Andie, myself, and my three Highlanders (I call them mine, although it was the other way about), landed along with them. The sun was not yet up when the boat moved away again, the noise of the oars on the thole-pins echoing from the cliffs, and left us in our singular reclusion:

Andie Dale was the Prefect (as I would jocularly call him) of the Bass, being at once the shepherd and the gamekeeper of that small and rich estate. He had to mind the dozen or so of sheep that fed and fattened on the grass of the sloping part of it, like beasts grazing the roof of a cathedral. He had charge besides of the solan geese that roosted in the crags; and from these an extraordinary income is derived. The young are dainty eating, as much as two shillings a-piece being a common price, and paid willingly by epicures; even the grown birds are valuable for their oil and feathers; and a part of the minister's stipend of North Berwick is paid to this day in solan geese, which makes it (in some folks' eyes) a parish to be coveted. To perform these several businesses, as well as to protect the geese from poachers, Andie had frequent occasion to sleep and pass days together on the crag; and we found the man at home there like a farmer in his steading. Bidding us all shoulder some of the packages, a matter in which I made haste to bear a hand, he led us in by a looked gate, which was the only admission to the island, and through the ruins of the fortress, to the governor's house. There we saw by the ashes in the chimney and a standing bed-place in one corner, that he made his usual occupation.

This bed he now offered me to use, saying he supposed I would set up to be gentry.

"My gentrice has nothing to do with where I lie," said I. "I bless God I have lain hard ere now, and can do the same again with thankfulness. While I am here, Mr. Andie, if that be your name, I will do my part and take my place beside the rest of you; and I ask you on the other hand to spare me your mockery, which I own I like ill."

He grumbled a little at this speech, but seemed upon reflection to approve it. Indeed, he was a long-headed, sensible man, and a good Whig and Presbyterian; read daily in a pocket Bible, and was both able and eager to converse seriously on religion, leaning more than a little towards the Cameronian extremes. His morals were of a more doubtful colour. I found he was deep in the free trade, and used the rains of Tantallon for a magazine of smuggled merchandise. As for a gauger, I do not believe he valued the life of one at half-a-farthing. But that part of the coast of Lothian is to this day as wild a place, and the commons there as rough a crew, as any in Scotland.

One incident of my imprisonment is made memorable by a consequence it had long after. There was a warship at this time stationed in the Firth, the Seahorse, Captain Palliser. It chanced she was cruising in the month of September, plying between Fife and Lothian, and sounding for sunk dangers. Early one fine morning she was seen about two miles to east of us, where she lowered a boat, and seemed to examine the Wildfire Rocks and Satan's Bush, famous dangers of that coast. And presently after having got her boat again, she came before the wind and was headed directly for the Base. This was very troublesome to Andie and the Highlanders; the whole business of my sequestration was designed for privacy, and here, with a navy captain perhaps blundering ashore, it looked to become public enough, if it were nothing worse. I was in a minority of one, I am no Alan to fall upon so many, and I was far from sure that a warship was the least likely to improve my condition. All which considered, I gave Andie my parole of good behaviour and obedience, and was had briskly to the summit of the rock, where we all lay down, at the cliff's edge, in different places of observation and concealment. The Seahorse came straight on till I thought she would have struck, and we (looking giddily down) could see the ship's company at their quarters and hear the leadsman singing at the lead. Then she suddenly wore and let fly a volley of I know not how many great guns. The rock was shaken with the thunder of the sound, the smoke flowed over our heads, and the geese rose in number beyond computation or belief. To hear their screaming and to see the twinkling of their wings, made a most inimitable curiosity; and I suppose it was after this somewhat childish pleasure that Captain Palliser had come so near the Bass. He was to pay dear for it in time. During his approach I had the opportunity to make a remark upon the rigging of that ship by which I ever after knew it miles away; and this was a means (under Providence) of my averting from a friend a great calamity, and inflicting on Captain Palliser himself a sensible disappointment.

All the time of my stay on the rock we lived well. We had small ale and brandy, and oatmeal, of which we made our porridge night and morning. At times a boat came from the Castleton and brought us a quarter of mutton, for the sheep upon the rock we must not touch, these being specially fed to market. The geese were unfortunately out of season, and we let them be. We fished ourselves, and yet more often made the geese to fish for us: observing one when he had made a capture and searing him from his prey ere he had swallowed it.

The strange nature of this place, and the curiosities with which it abounded, held me busy and amused. Escape being impossible, I was allowed my entire liberty, and continually explored the surface of the isle wherever it might support the foot of man. The old garden of the prison was still to be observed, with flowers and pot-herbs running wild, and some ripe cherries on a bush. A little lower stood a chapel or a hermit's cell; who built or dwelt in it, none may know, and the thought of its age made a ground of many meditations. The prison, too, where I now bivouacked with Highland cattle-thieves, was a place full of history, both human and divine. I thought it strange so many saints and martyrs should have gone by there so recently, and left not so much as a leaf out of their Bibles, or a name carved upon the wall, while the rough soldier lads that mounted guard upon the battlements had filled the neighbourhood with their mementoes - broken tobacco-pipes for the most part, and that in a surprising plenty, but also metal buttons from their coats. There were times when I thought I could have heard the pious sound of psalms out of the martyr's dungeons, and seen the soldiers tramp the ramparts with their glinting pipes, and the dawn rising behind them out of the North Sea.

No doubt it was a good deal Andie and his tales that put these fancies in my head. He was extraordinarily well acquainted with the story of the rock in all particulars, down to the names of private soldiers, his father having served there in that same capacity. He was gifted besides with a natural genius for narration, so that the people seemed to speak and the things to be done before your face. This gift of his and my assiduity to listen brought us the more close together. I could not honestly deny but what I liked him; I soon saw that he liked me; and indeed, from the first I had set myself out to capture his good-will. An odd circumstance (to be told presently) effected this beyond my expectation; but even in early days we made a friendly pair to be a prisoner and his gaoler.

I should trifle with my conscience if I pretended my stay upon the Bass was wholly disagreeable. It seemed to me a safe place, as though I was escaped there out of my troubles. No harm was to be offered me; a material impossibility, rock and the deep sea, prevented me from fresh attempts; I felt I had my life safe and my honour safe, and there were times when I allowed myself to gloat on them like stolen waters. At other times my thoughts were very different, I recalled how strong I had expressed myself both to Rankeillor and to Stewart; I reflected that my captivity upon the Bass, in view of a great part of the coasts of Fife and Lothian, was a thing I should be thought more likely to have invented than endured; and in the eyes of these two gentlemen, at least, I must pass for a boaster and a coward. Now I would take this lightly enough; tell myself that so long as I stood well with Catriona Drummond, the opinion of the rest of man was but moonshine and spilled water; and thence pass off into those meditations of a lover which are so delightful to himself and must always appear so surprisingly idle to a reader. But anon the fear would take me otherwise; I would be shaken with a perfect panic of self-esteem, and these supposed hard judgments appear an injustice impossible to be supported. With that another train of thought would he presented, and I had scarce begun to be concerned about men's judgments of myself, than I was haunted with the remembrance of James Stewart in his dungeon and the lamentations of his wife. Then, indeed, passion began to work in me; I could not forgive myself to sit there idle: it seemed (if I were a man at all) that I could fly or swim out of my place of safety; and it was in such humours and to amuse my self-reproaches that I would set the more particularly to win the good side of Andie Dale.

At last, when we two were alone on the summit of the rock on a bright morning, I put in some hint about a bribe. He looked at me, cast back his head, and laughed out loud.

"Ay, you're funny, Mr. Dale," said I, "but perhaps if you'll glance an eye upon that paper you may change your note."

The stupid Highlanders had taken from me at the time of my seizure nothing but hard money, and the paper I now showed Andie was an acknowledgment from the British Linen Company for a considerable sum.

He read it. "Troth, and ye're nane sae ill aff," said he.

"I thought that would maybe vary your opinions," said I.

"Hout!" said he. "It shows me ye can bribe; but I'm no to be bribit."

"We'll see about that yet a while," says I. "And first, I'll show you that I know what I am talking. You have orders to detain me here till after Thursday, 21st September."

"Ye're no a'thegether wrong either," says Andie. "I'm to let you gang, bar orders contrair, on Saturday, the 23rd."

I could not but feel there was something extremely insidious in this arrangement. That I was to re-appear precisely in time to be too late would cast the more discredit on my tale, if I were minded to tell one; and this screwed me to fighting point.

"Now then, Andie, you that kens the world, listen to me, and think while ye listen," said I. "I know there are great folks in the business, and I make no doubt you have their names to go upon. I have seen some of them myself since this affair began, and said my say into their faces too. But what kind of a crime would this be that I had committed? or what kind of a process is this that I am fallen under? To be apprehended by some ragged John-Hielandman on August 30th, carried to a rickle of old stones that is now neither fort nor gaol (whatever it once was) but just the gamekeeper's lodge of the Bass Rock, and set free again, September 23rd, as secretly as I was first arrested - does that sound like law to you? or does it sound like justice? or does it not sound honestly like a piece of some low dirty intrigue, of which the very folk that meddle with it are ashamed?"

"I canna gainsay ye, Shaws. It looks unco underhand," says Andie. "And werenae the folk guid sound Whigs and true-blue Presbyterians I would has seen them ayont Jordan and Jeroozlem or I would have set hand to it."

"The Master of Lovat'll be a braw Whig," says I, "and a grand Presbyterian."

"I ken naething by him," said he. "I hae nae trokings wi' Lovats."

"No, it'll be Prestongrange that you'll be dealing with," said I.

"Ah, but I'll no tell ye that," said Andie.

"Little need when I ken," was my retort.

"There's just the ae thing ye can be fairly sure of, Shaws," says Andie. "And that is that (try as ye please) I'm no dealing wi' yoursel'; nor yet I amnae goin' to," he added.

"Well, Andie, I see I'll have to be speak out plain with you," I replied. And told him so much as I thought needful of the facts.

He heard me out with some serious interest, and when I had done, seemed to consider a little with himself.

"Shaws," said he at last, "I'll deal with the naked hand. It's a queer tale, and no very creditable, the way you tell it; and I'm far frae minting that is other than the way that ye believe it. As for yoursel', ye seem to me rather a dacent-like young man. But me, that's aulder and mair judeecious, see perhaps a wee bit further forrit in the job than what ye can dae. And here the maitter clear and plain to ye. There'll be nae skaith to yoursel' if I keep ye here; far free that, I think ye'll be a hantle better by it. There'll be nae skaith to the kintry - just ae mair Hielantman hangit - Gude kens, a guid riddance! On the ither hand, it would be considerable skaith to me if I would let you free. Sae, speakin' as a guid Whig, an honest freen' to you, and an anxious freen' to my ainsel', the plain fact is that I think ye'll just have to bide here wi' Andie an' the solans."

"Andie," said I, laying my hand upon his knee, "this Hielantman's innocent."

"Ay, it's a peety about that," said he. "But ye see, in this warld, the way God made it, we cannae just get a'thing that we want."

CHAPTER XV - BLACK ANDIE'S TALE OF TOD LAPRAIK

I have yet said little of the Highlanders. They were all three of the followers of James More, which bound the accusation very tight about their master's neck. All understood a word or two of English, but Neil was the only one who judged he had enough of it for general converse, in which (when once he got embarked) his company was often tempted to the contrary opinion. They were tractable, simple creatures; showed much more courtesy than might have been expected from their raggedness and their uncouth appearance, and fell spontaneously to be like three servants for Andie and myself.

Dwelling in that isolated place, in the old falling ruins of a prison, and among endless strange sounds of the sea and the sea-birds, I thought I perceived in them early the effects of superstitious fear. When there was nothing doing they would either lie and sleep, for which their appetite appeared insatiable, or Neil would entertain the others with stories which seemed always of a terrifying strain. If neither of these delights were within reach - if perhaps two were sleeping and the third could find no means to follow their example - I would see him sit and listen and look about him in a progression of uneasiness, starting, his face blenching, his hands clutched, a man strung like a bow. The nature of these fears I had never an occasion to find out, but the sight of them was catching, and the nature of the place that we were in favourable to alarms. I can find no word for it in the English, but Andie had an expression for it in the Scots from which he never varied.

"Ay," he would say, "its an unco place, the Bass."

It is so I always think of it. It was an unco place by night, unco by day; and these were unco sounds, of the calling of the solans, and the plash of the sea and the rock echoes, that hung continually in our ears. It was chiefly so in moderate weather. When the waves were anyway great they roared about the rock like thunder and the drums of armies, dreadful but merry to hear; and it was in the calm days that a man could daunt himself with listening - not a Highlandman only, as I several times experimented on myself, so many still, hollow noises haunted and reverberated in the porches of the rock.

This brings me to a story I heard, and a scene I took part in, which quite changed our terms of living, and had a great effect on my departure. It chanced one night I fell in a muse beside the fire and (that little air of Alan's coming back to my memory) began to whistle.

A hand was laid upon my arm, and the voice of Neil bade me to stop, for it was not “canny musics.”

“Not canny?” I asked. “How can that be?”

“Na,” said he; “it will be made by a bogle and her wanting ta heid upon his body.”

“Well,” said I, “there can be no bogles here, Neil; for it’s not likely they would fash themselves to frighten geese.”

“Ay?” says Andie, “is that what ye think of it! But I’ll can tell ye there’s been waur nor bogles here.”

“What’s waur than bogles, Andie?” said I.

“Warlocks,” said he. “Or a warlock at the least of it. And that’s a queer tale, too,” he added. “And if ye would like, I’ll tell it ye.”

To be sure we were all of the one mind, and even the Highlander that had the least English of the three set himself to listen with all his might.

THE TALE OF TOD LAPRAIK

MY faither, Tam Dale, peace to his banes, was a wild, sploring lad in his young days, wi’ little wisdom and little grace. He was fond of a lass and fond of a glass, and fond of a ran-dan; but I could never hear tell that he was muckle use for honest employment. Frae ae thing to anither, he listed at last for a sodger and was in the garrison of this fort, which was the first way that ony of the Dales cam to set foot upon the Bass. Sorrow upon that service! The governor brewed his ain ale; it seems it was the warst conceivable. The rock was proveesioned free the shore with vivers, the thing was ill-guided, and there were whiles when they but to fish and shoot solans for their diet. To crown a’, thir was the Days of the Persecution. The perishin’ cauld chalmers were all occupeed wi’ sants and martyrs, the saut of the yearth, of which it wasnae worthy. And though Tam Dale carried a firelock there, a single sodger, and liked a lass and a glass, as I was sayin,’ the mind of the man was mair just than set with his position. He had glints of the glory of the kirk; there were whiles when his dander rase to see the Lord’s sants misguided, and shame covered him that he should be haulding a can’le (or carrying a firelock) in so black a business. There were nights of it when he was here on sentry, the place a’ wheesht, the frosts o’ winter maybe riving in the wa’s, and he would hear ane o’ the prisoners strike up a psalm, and the rest join in, and the blessed sounds rising from the different chalmers - or dungeons, I would raither say - so that this auld craig in the sea was like a pairt of Heev’n. Black shame was on his saul; his sins hove up before him muckle as the Bass, and above a’, that chief sin, that he should have a hand in hagging and hashing at Christ’s Kirk. But the truth is that he resisted the spirit. Day cam, there were the rousing compainions, and his guid resolves depairtit.

In thir days, dwalled upon the Bass a man of God, Peden the Prophet was his name. Ye'll have heard tell of Prophet Peden. There was never the wale of him sinsyne, and it's a question wi' mony if there ever was his like afore. He was wild's a peat-hag, fearsome to look at, fearsome to hear, his face like the day of judgment. The voice of him was like a solan's and dinnle'd in folks' lugs, and the words of him like coals of fire.

Now there was a lass on the rock, and I think she had little to do, for it was nae place far decent weemen; but it seems she was bonny, and her and Tam Dale were very well agreed. It befell that Peden was in the gairden his lane at the praying when Tam and the lass cam by; and what should the lassie do but mock with laughter at the sant's devotions? He rose and lookit at the twa o' them, and Tam's knees knoitered thegether at the look of him. But whan he spak, it was mair in sorrow than in anger. 'Poor thing, poor thing!" says he, and it was the lass he lookit at, "I hear you skirl and laugh," he says, "but the Lord has a deid shot prepared for you, and at that surprising judgment ye shall skirl but the ae time!" Shortly thereafter she was daundering on the craigs wi' twa-three sodgers, and it was a blawy day. There cam a gowst of wind, claught her by the coats, and awa' wi' her bag and baggage. And it was remarked by the sodgers that she gied but the ae skirl.

Nae doubt this judgment had some weicht upon Tam Dale; but it passed again and him none the better. Ae day he was flyting wi' anither sodger-lad. "Deil hae me!" quo' Tam, for he was a profane swearer. And there was Peden glowering at him, gash an' waefu'; Peden wi' his lang chafts an' luntin' een, the maud happed about his kist, and the hand of him held out wi' the black nails upon the finger-nebs - for he had nae care of the body. "Fy, fy, poor man!" cries he, "the poor fool man! Deil hae me, quo' he; an' I see the deil at his oxter." The conviction of guilt and grace cam in on Tam like the deep sea; he flang doun the pike that was in his hands - "I will nae mair lift arms against the cause o' Christ!" says he, and was as gude's word. There was a sair fyke in the beginning, but the governor, seeing him resolved, gied him his discharge, and he went and dwallt and merried in North Berwick, and had aye a gude name with honest folk free that day on.

It was in the year seeventeen hunner and sax that the Bass cam in the hands o' the Da'rymples, and there was twa men soucht the chairge of it. Baith were weel qualified, for they had baith been sodgers in the garrison, and kent the gate to handle solans, and the seasons and values of them. Forby that they were baith - or they baith seemed - earnest professors and men of comely conversation. The first of them was just Tam Dale, my faither. The second was ane Lapraik, whom the folk ca'd Tod Lapraik maistly, but whether for his name or his nature I could never hear tell. Weel, Tam gaed to see Lapraik upon this business, and took me, that was a toddlin' laddie, by the hand. Tod had his dwallin' in the lang loan benorth the kirkyaird. It's a dark uncanny loan, forby that the kirk has aye had an ill name since the days o' James the Saxt and the deevil's cantrips played therein when the Queen was on the seas; and as for Tod's house, it was in the mirkest end, and was little liked by some that kenned the best. The door was on the sneck that day, and me and my faither gaed straucht in. Tod was a wabster to his trade; his loom stood in the but. There he sat, a muckle fat, white hash of a man like creish, wi' a kind of a holy smile that gart me scunner. The hand of him aye cawed the shuttle, but his een was steeked. We cried to him by his name, we skirted in the deid lug of him, we shook him by the shou'ther. Nae mainner o' service! There he sat on his dowp, an' cawed the shuttle and smiled like creish.

"God be guid to us," says Tam Dale, "this is no canny?"

He had jimp said the word, when Tod Lapraik cam to himsel'.

"Is this you, Tam?" says he. "Haith, man! I'm blythe to see ye. I whiles fa' into a bit dwam like this," he says; "its frae the stamach."

Weel, they began to crack about the Bass and which of them twa was to get the warding o't, and little by little cam to very ill words, and twined in anger. I mind weel that as my faither and me gaed hame again, he cam ower and ower the same expression, how little he likit Tod Lapraik and his dwams.

"Dwam!" says he. "I think folk hae brunt for dwams like yon."

Aweel, my faither got the Bass and Tod had to go wantin'. It was remembered sinsyne what way he had ta'en the thing. "Tam," says he, "ye hae gotten the better o' me aince mair, and I hope," says he, "ye'll find at least a' that ye expeckit at the Bass." Which have since been thought remarkable expressions. At last the time came for Tam Dale to take young solans. This was a business he was weel used wi', he had been a craigsman frae a laddie, and trustit nane but himsel'. So there was he hingin' by a line an' speldering on the craig face, whaur its hieest and steighest. Fower tenty lads were on the tap, hauldin' the line and mindin' for his signals. But whaur Tam hung there was naething but the craig, and the sea belaw, and the solans skirlin and flying. It was a braw spring morn, and Tam whustled as he claught in the young geese. Mony's the time I've heard him tell of this experience, and aye the swat ran upon the man.

It chanced, ye see, that Tam keeked up, and he was awaur of a muckle solan, and the solan pyking at the line. He thocht this by-ordinar and outside the creature's habits. He minded that ropes was unco saft things, and the solan's neb and the Bass Rock unco hard, and that twa hunner feet were raither mair than he would care to fa'.

"Shoo!" says Tam. "Awa', bird! Shoo, awa' wi' ye!" says he.

The solan keekit doon into Tam's face, and there was something unco in the creature's ee. Just the ae keek it gied, and back to the rope. But now it wroucht and warstl't like a thing dementit. There never was the solan made that wroucht as that solan wroucht; and it seemed to understand its employ brawly, birzing the saft rope between the neb of it and a crunkled jag o' stane.

There gaed a cauld stend o' fear into Tam's heart. "This thing is nae bird," thinks he. His een turnt backward in his heid and the day gaed black aboot him. "If I get a dwam here," he toucht, "it's by wi' Tam Dale." And he signalled for the lads to pu' him up.

And it seemed the solan understood about signals. For nae sooner was the signal made than he let be the rope, spried his wings, squawked out loud, took a turn flying, and dashed straucht at Tam Dale's een. Tam had a knife, he gart the cauld steel glitter. And it seemed the solan understood about knives, for nae suner did the steel glint in the sun than he gied the ae squawk, but laighter, like a body disappointit, and flegged aff about the roundness of the craig, and Tam saw him nae mair. And as sune as that thing was gane, Tam's heid drapt upon his shouther, and they pu'd him up like a deid corp, dadding on the craig.

A dram of brandy (which he went never without) broucht him to his mind, or what was left of it. Up he sat.

"Rin, Geordie, rin to the boat, mak' sure of the boat, man - rin!" he cries, "or yon solan'll have it awa'," says he.

The fower lads stared at ither, an' tried to whilly-wha him to be quiet. But naething would satisfy Tam Dale, till ane o' them had startit on aheid to stand sentry on the boat. The ithers askit if he was for down again.

"Na," says he, "and niether you nor me," says he, "and as sune as I can win to stand on my twa feet we'll be aff frae this craig o' Sawtan."

Sure eneuch, nae time was lost, and that was ower muckle; for before they won to North Berwick Tam was in a crying fever. He lay a' the simmer; and wha was sae kind as come speiring for him, but Tod Lapraik! Folk thocht afterwards that ilka time Tod cam near the house the fever had worsened. I kenna for that; but what I ken the best, that was the end of it.

It was about this time o' the year; my grandfaither was out at the white fishing; and like a bairn, I but to gang wi' him. We had a grand take, I mind, and the way that the fish lay broucht us near in by the Bass, whaur we foregaithered wi' anither boat that belanged to a man

Sandie Fletcher in Castleton. He's no lang deid neither, or ye could speir at himsel'. Weel, Sandie hailed.

"What's yon on the Bass?" says he.

"On the Bass?" says grandfaither.

"Ay," says Sandie, "on the green side o't."

"Whatten kind of a thing?" says grandfaither. "There cannae be naething on the Bass but just the sheep."

"It looks unco like a body," quo' Sandie, who was nearer in.

"A body!" says we, and we none of us likit that. For there was nae boat that could have brought a man, and the key o' the prison yett hung ower my faither's at hame in the press bed.

We keept the twa boats close for company, and crap in nearer hand. Grandfaither had a gless, for he had been a sailor, and the captain of a smack, and had lost her on the sands of Tay. And when we took the glass to it, sure eneuch there was a man. He was in a crunkle o' green brae, a wee below the chaipel, a' by his lee lane, and lowped and flang and danced like a daft quean at a waddin'.

"It's Tod," says grandfather, and passed the gless to Sandie.

"Ay, it's him," says Sandie.

"Or ane in the likeness o' him," says grandfaither.

"Sma' is the differ," quo' Sandie. "De'il or warlock, I'll try the gun at him," quo' he, and broucht up a fowling-piece that he aye carried, for Sandie was a notable famous shot in all that country.

"Haud your hand, Sandie," says grandfaither; "we maun see clearer first," says he, "or this may be a dear day's wark to the baith of us."

"Hout!" says Sandie, "this is the Lord's judgment surely, and be damned to it," says he.

"Maybe ay, and maybe no," says my grandfaither, worthy man! "But have you a mind of the Procurator Fiscal, that I think ye'll have foregaithered wi' before," says he.

This was ower true, and Sandie was a wee thing set ajee. "Aweel, Edie," says he, "and what would be your way of it?"

"Ou, just this," says grandfaither. "Let me that has the fastest boat gang back to North Berwick, and let you bide here and keep an eye on Thon. If I cannae find Lapraik, I'll join ye and the twa of us'll have a crack wi' him. But if Lapraik's at hame, I'll rin up the flag at the harbour, and ye can try Thon Thing wi' the gun."

Aweel, so it was agreed between them twa. I was just a bairn, an' clum in Sandie's boat, whaur I thoucht I would see the best of the employ. My grandsire gied Sandie a siller tester to pit in his gun wi' the leid draps, bein mair deidly again bogles. And then the as boat set aff for North Berwick, an' the tither lay whaur it was and watched the wanchancy thing on the brae-side.

A' the time we lay there it lowped and flang and capered and span

like a teetotum, and whiles we could hear it skelloch as it span. I hae seen lassies, the daft queans, that would lowp and dance a winter's nicht, and still be lowping and dancing when the winter's day cam in. But there would be fowk there to hauld them company, and the lads to egg them on; and this thing was its lee-lane. And there would be a fiddler diddling his elbock in the chimney-side; and this thing had nae music but the skirling of the solans. And the lassies were bits o' young things wi' the reid life dinnling and stending in their members; and this was a muckle, fat, creishy man, and him fa'n in the vale o' years. Say what ye like, I maun say what I believe. It was joy was in the creature's heart, the joy o' hell, I daursay: joy whatever. Mony a time I have askit mysel' why witches and warlocks should sell their sauls (whilk are their maist dear possessions) and be auld, duddy, wrunkl't wives or auld, feckless, doddered men; and then I mind upon Tod Lapraik dancing a' the hours by his lane in the black glory of his heart. Nae doubt they burn for it muckle in hell, but they have a grand time here of it, whatever! - and the Lord forgie us!

Weel, at the hinder end, we saw the wee flag yirk up to the mast-heid upon the harbour rocks. That was a' Sandie waited for. He up wi' the gun, took a deleeberate aim, an' pu'd the trigger. There cam' a bang and then ae waefu' skirl frae the Bass. And there were we rubbin' our een and lookin' at ither like daft folk. For wi' the bang and the skirl the thing had clean disappeared. The sun glintit, the wund blew, and there was the bare yaird whaur the Wonder had been lowping and flinging but ae second syne.

The hale way hame I roared and grat wi' the terror o' that dispensation. The grawn folk were nane sae muckle better; there was little said in Sandie's boat but just the name of God; and when we won in by the pier, the harbour rocks were fair black wi' the folk waitin' us. It seems they had fund Lapraik in ane of his dwams, cawing the shuttle and smiling. Ae lad they sent to hoist the flag, and the rest abode there in the wabster's house. You may be sure they liked it little; but it was a means of grace to severals that stood there praying in to themsel's (for nane cared to pray out loud) and looking on thon awesome thing as it cawed the shuttle. Syne, upon a suddenty, and wi' the ae dreidfu' skelloch, Tod sprang up frae his hinderlands and fell forrit on the wab, a bluidy corp.

When the corp was examined the leid draps hadnae played buff upon the warlock's body; sorrow a leid drap was to be fund! but there was grandfaither's siller tester in the puddock's heart of him.

Andie had scarce done when there befell a mighty silly affair that had its consequence. Neil, as I have said, was himself a great narrator. I have heard since that he knew all the stories in the

Highlands; and thought much of himself, and was thought much of by others on the strength of it. Now Andie's tale reminded him of one he had already heard.

"She would ken that story afore," he said. "She was the story of Uistean More M'Gillie Phadrig and the Gavar Vore."

"It is no sic a thing," cried Andie. "It is the story of my faither (now wi' God) and Tod Lapraik. And the same in your beard," says he; "and keep the tongue of ye inside your Hielant chafts!"

In dealing with Highlanders it will be found, and has been shown in history, how well it goes with Lowland gentlefolk; but the thing appears scarce feasible for Lowland commons. I had already remarked that Andie was continually on the point of quarrelling with our three MacGregors, and now, sure enough, it was to come.

"Thir will be no words to use to shentlemans," says Neil.

"Shentlemans!" cries Andie. "Shentlemans, ye hielant stot! If God would give ye the grace to see yoursel' the way that ithers see ye, ye would throw your denner up."

There came some kind of a Gaelic oath from Neil, and the black knife was in his hand that moment.

There was no time to think; and I caught the Highlander by the leg, and had him down, and his armed hand pinned out, before I knew what I was doing. His comrades sprang to rescue him, Andie and I were without weapons, the Gregara three to two. It seemed we were beyond salvation, when Neil screamed in his own tongue, ordering the others back, and made his submission to myself in a manner the most abject, even giving me up his knife which (upon a repetition of his promises) I returned to him on the morrow.

Two things I saw plain: the first, that I must not build too high on Andie, who had shrunk against the wall and stood there, as pale as death, till the affair was over; the second, the strength of my own position with the Highlanders, who must have received extraordinary charges to be tender of my safety. But if I thought Andie came not very well out in courage, I had no fault to find with him upon the account of gratitude. It was not so much that he troubled me with thanks, as that his whole mind and manner appeared changed; and as he preserved ever after a great timidity of our companions, he and I were yet more constantly together.

CHAPTER XVI - THE MISSING WITNESS

On the seventeenth, the day I was trysted with the Writer, I had much rebellion against fate. The thought of him waiting in the King's Arms, and of what he would think, and what he would say when next we met, tormented and oppressed me. The truth was unbelievable, so much I had to grant, and it seemed cruel hard I should be posted as a liar and a coward, and have never consciously omitted what it was possible that I should do. I repeated this form of words with a kind of bitter relish, and re-examined in that light the steps of my behaviour. It seemed I had behaved to James Stewart as a brother might; all the past was a picture that I could be proud of, and there was only the present to consider. I could not swim the sea, nor yet fly in the air, but there was always Andie. I had done him a service, he liked me; I had a lever there to work on; if it were just for decency, I must try once more with Andie.

It was late afternoon; there was no sound in all the Bass but the lap and bubble of a very quiet sea; and my four companions were all crept apart, the three Macgregors higher on the rock, and Andie with his Bible to a sunny place among the ruins; there I found him in deep sleep, and, as soon as he was awake, appealed to him with some fervour of manner and a good show of argument.

"If I thoucht it was to do guid to ye, Shaws!" said he, staring at me over his spectacles.

"It's to save another," said I, "and to redeem my word. What would be more good than that? Do ye no mind the scripture, Andie? And you with the Book upon your lap! What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world?"

"Ay," said he, "that's grand for you. But where do I come in! I have my word to redeem the same's yoursel'. And what are ye asking me to do, but just to sell it ye for siller?"

"Andie! have I named the name of siller?" cried I.

"Ou, the name's naething", said he; "the thing is there, whatever. It just comes to this; if I am to service ye the way that you propose, I'll lose my lifelihood. Then it's clear ye'll have to make it up to me, and a pickle mair, for your ain credit like. And what's that but just a bribe? And if even I was certain of the bribe! But by a' that I can learn, it's far frae that; and if you were to hang, where would I be? Na: the thing's no possible. And just awa' wi' ye like a bonny lad! and let Andie read his chapter."

I remember I was at bottom a good deal gratified with this result; and the next humour I fell into was one (I had near said) of gratitude to Prestongrange, who had saved me, in this violent, illegal manner, out of the midst of my dangers, temptations, and perplexities. But this was both too flimsy and too cowardly to last me long, and the remembrance of James began to succeed to the possession of my spirits. The 21st, the day set for the trial, I passed in such misery of mind as I can scarce recall to have endured, save perhaps upon Isle Earraid only. Much of the time I lay on a brae-side betwixt sleep and waking, my body motionless, my mind full of violent thoughts. Sometimes I slept indeed; but the court-house of Inverary and the prisoner glancing on all sides to find his missing witness, followed me in slumber; and I would wake again with a start to darkness of spirit and distress of body. I thought Andie seemed to observe me, but I paid him little heed. Verily, my bread was bitter to me, and my days a burthen.

Early the next morning (Friday, 22nd) a boat came with provisions, and Andie placed a packet in my hand. The cover was without address but sealed with a Government seal. It enclosed two notes. "Mr. Balfour can now see for himself it is too late to meddle. His conduct will be observed and his discretion rewarded." So ran the first, which seemed to be laboriously writ with the left hand. There was certainly nothing in these expressions to compromise the writer, even if that person could be found; the seal, which formidably served instead of signature, was affixed to a separate sheet on which there was no scratch of writing; and I had to confess that (so far) my adversaries knew what they were doing, and to digest as well as I was able the threat that peeped under the promise.

But the second enclosure was by far the more surprising. It was in a lady's hand of writ. "Maister Dauvit Balfour is informed a friend was speiring for him and her eyes were of the grey," it ran - and seemed so extraordinary a piece to come to my hands at such a moment and under cover of a Government seal, that I stood stupid. Catriona's grey eyes shone in my remembrance. I thought, with a bound of pleasure, she must be the friend. But who should the writer be, to have her billet thus enclosed with Prestongrange's? And of all wonders, why was it thought needful to give me this pleasing but most inconsequent intelligence upon the Bass? For the writer, I could hit upon none possible except Miss Grant. Her family, I remembered, had remarked on Catriona's eyes and even named her for their colour; and she herself had been much in the habit to address me with a broad pronunciation, by way of a sniff, I supposed, at my rusticity. No doubt, besides, but she lived in the same house as this letter came from. So there remained but one step to be accounted for; and that was how Prestongrange should have permitted her at all in an affair so secret, or let her daft-like billet go in the same cover with his own.

But even here I had a glimmering. For, first of all, there was something rather alarming about the young lady, and papa might be more under her domination than I knew. And, second, there was the man's continual policy to be remembered, how his conduct had been continually mingled with caresses, and he had scarce ever, in the midst of so much contention, laid aside a mask of friendship. He must conceive that my imprisonment had incensed me. Perhaps this little jesting, friendly message was intended to disarm my rancour?

I will be honest - and I think it did. I felt a sudden warmth towards that beautiful Miss Grant, that she should stoop to so much interest in my affairs. The summoning up of Catriona moved me of itself to milder and more cowardly counsels. If the Advocate knew of her and our acquaintance - if I should please him by some of that "discretion" at which his letter pointed - to what might not this lead! In vain is the net prepared in the sight of any fowl, the Scripture says. Well, fowls must be wiser than folk! For I thought I perceived the policy, and yet fell in with it.

I was in this frame, my heart beating, the grey eyes plain before me like two stars, when Andie broke in upon my musing.

"I see ye has gotten guid news," said he.

I found him looking curiously in my face; with that there came before me like a vision of James Stewart and the court of Inverary; and my mind turned at once like a door upon its hinges. Trials, I reflected, sometimes draw out longer than is looked for. Even if I came to Inverary just too late, something might yet be attempted in the interests of James - and in those of my own character, the best would be accomplished. In a moment, it seemed without thought, I had a plan devised.

"Andie," said I, "is it still to be to-morrow?"

He told me nothing was changed.

"Was anything said about the hour?" I asked.

He told me it was to be two o'clock afternoon.

"And about the place?" I pursued.

"Whatten place?" says Andie.

"The place I am to be landed at?" said I.

He owned there was nothing as to that.

"Very well, then," I said, "this shall be mine to arrange. The wind is in the east, my road lies westward: keep your boat, I hire it; let us work up the Forth all day; and land me at two o'clock to-morrow at the westmost we'll can have reached."

"Ye daft callant!" he cried; "ye would try for Inverary after a'!"

"Just that, Andie," says I.

"Weel, ye're ill to beat!" says he. "And I was a kind o' sorry for ye a' day yesterday," he added. "Ye see, I was never entirely sure till then, which way of it ye really wantit."

Here was a spur to a lame horse!

"A word in your ear, Andie," said I. "This plan of mine has another advantage yet. We can leave these Hielandman behind us on the rock, and one of your boats from the Castleton can bring them off to-morrow. Yon Neil has a queer eye when he regards you; maybe, if I was once out of the gate there might be knives again; these red-shanks are unco grudgeful. And if there should come to be any question, here is your excuse. Our lives were in danger by these savages; being answerable for my safety, you chose the part to bring me from their neighbourhood and detain me the rest of the time on board your boat: and do you know, Andie?" says I, with a smile, "I think it was very wisely chosen,"

"The truth is I have nae goo for Neil," says Andie, "nor he for me, I'm thinking; and I would like ill to come to my hands wi' the man. Tam Anster will make a better hand of it with the cattle onyway." (For this man, Anster, came from Fife, where the Gaelic is still spoken.) "Ay, ay!" says Andie, "Tam'll can deal with them the best. And troth! the mair I think of it, the less I see we would be required. The place - ay, feggs! they had forgot the place. Eh, Shaws, ye're a lang-heided chield when ye like! Forby that I'm awing ye my life," he added, with more solemnity, and offered me his hand upon the bargain.

Whereupon, with scarce more words, we stepped suddenly on board the boat, cast off, and set the lug. The Gregara were then busy upon breakfast, for the cookery was their usual part; but, one of them stepping to the battlements, our flight was observed before we were twenty fathoms from the rock; and the three of them ran about the ruins and the landing-shelf, for all the world like ants about a broken nest, hailing and crying on us to return. We were still in both the lee and the shadow of the rock, which last lay broad upon the waters, but presently came forth in almost the same moment into the wind and sunshine; the sail filled, the boat heeled to the gunwale, and we swept immediately beyond sound of the men's voices. To what terrors they endured upon the rock, where they were now deserted without the countenance of any civilised person or so much as the protection of a Bible, no limit can be set; nor had they any brandy left to be their consolation, for even in the haste and secrecy of our departure Andie had managed to remove it.

It was our first care to set Anster ashore in a cove by the Glenteithy Rocks, so that the deliverance of our maroons might be duly seen to the next day. Thence we kept away up Firth. The breeze, which was then so spirited, swiftly declined, but never wholly failed us. All day we kept moving, though often not much more; and it was after dark ere we were up with the Queensferry. To keep the letter of Andie's engagement (or what was left of it) I must remain on board, but I thought no harm to communicate with the shore in writing. On Prestongrange's cover, where the Government seal must have a good deal surprised my correspondent, I writ, by the boat's lantern, a few necessary words, aboard and Andie carried them to Rankeillor. In about an hour he came again, with a purse of money and the assurance that a good horse should be standing saddled for me by two to-morrow at Clackmannan Pool. This done, and the boat riding by her stone anchor, we lay down to sleep under the sail.

We were in the Pool the next day long ere two; and there was nothing left for me but to sit and wait. I felt little alacrity upon my errand. I would have been glad of any passable excuse to lay it down; but none being to be found, my uneasiness was no less great than if I had been running to some desired pleasure. By shortly after one the horse was at the waterside, and I could see a man walking it to and fro till I should land, which vastly swelled my impatience. Andie ran the moment of my liberation very fine, showing himself a man of his bare word, but scarce serving his employers with a heaped measure; and by about fifty seconds after two I was in the saddle and on the full stretch for Stirling. In a little more than an hour I had passed that town, and was already mounting Alan Water side, when the weather broke in a small tempest. The rain blinded me, the wind had nearly beat me from the saddle, and the first darkness of the night surprised me in a wilderness still some way east of Balwhidder, not very sure of my direction and mounted on a horse that began already to be weary.

In the press of my hurry, and to be spared the delay and annoyance of a guide, I had followed (so far as it was possible for any horseman) the line of my journey with Alan. This I did with open eyes, foreseeing a great risk in it, which the tempest had now brought to a reality. The last that I knew of where I was, I think it must have been about Uam Var; the hour perhaps six at night. I must still think it great good fortune that I got about eleven to my destination, the house of Duncan Dhu. Where I had wandered in the interval perhaps the horse could tell. I know we were twice down, and once over the saddle and for a moment carried away in a roaring burn. Steed and rider were bemired up to the eyes.

From Duncan I had news of the trial. It was followed in all these Highland regions with religious interest; news of it spread from Inverary as swift as men could travel; and I was rejoiced to learn that, up to a late hour that Saturday it was not yet concluded; and all men began to suppose it must spread over the Monday. Under the spur of this intelligence I would not sit to eat; but, Duncan having agreed to be my guide, took the road again on foot, with the piece in my hand

and munching as I went. Duncan brought with him a flask of usquebaugh and a hand-lantern; which last enlightened us just so long as we could find houses where to rekindle it, for the thing leaked outrageously and blew out with every gust. The more part of the night we walked blindfold among sheets of rain, and day found us aimless on the mountains. Hard by we struck a hut on a burn-side, where we got bite and a direction; and, a little before the end of the sermon, came to the kirk doors of Inverary.

The rain had somewhat washed the upper parts of me, but I was still bogged as high as to the knees; I streamed water; I was so weary I could hardly limp, and my face was like a ghost's. I stood certainly more in need of a change of raiment and a bed to lie on, than of all the benefits in Christianity. For all which (being persuaded the chief point for me was to make myself immediately public) I set the door of the church with the dirty Duncan at my tails, and finding a vacant place sat down.

"Thirteently, my brethren, and in parenthesis, the law itself must be regarded as a means of grace," the minister was saying, in the voice of one delighting to pursue an argument.

The sermon was in English on account of the assize. The judges were present with their armed attendants, the halberts glittered in a corner by the door, and the seats were thronged beyond custom with the array of lawyers. The text was in Romans 5th and 13th - the minister a skilled hand; and the whole of that able churchful - from Argyle, and my Lords Elchies and Kilkerran, down to the halbertmen that came in their attendance - was sunk with gathered brows in a profound critical attention. The minister himself and a sprinkling of those about the door observed our entrance at the moment and immediately forgot the same; the rest either did not hear or would not hear or would not be heard; and I sat amongst my friends and enemies unremarked.

The first that I singled out was Prestongrange. He sat well forward, like an eager horseman in the saddle, his lips moving with relish, his eyes glued on the minister; the doctrine was clearly to his mind. Charles Stewart, on the other hand, was half asleep, and looked harassed and pale. As for Simon Fraser, he appeared like a blot, and almost a scandal, in the midst of that attentive congregation, digging his hands in his pockets, shifting his legs, clearing his throat, and rolling up his bald eyebrows and shooting out his eyes to right and left, now with a yawn, now with a secret smile. At times, too, he would take the Bible in front of him, run it through, seem to read a bit, run it through again, and stop and yawn prodigiously: the whole as if for exercise.

In the course of this restlessness his eye alighted on myself. He sat a second stupefied, then tore a half-leaf out of the Bible, scrawled upon it with a pencil, and passed it with a whispered word to his next neighbour. The note came to Prestongrange, who gave me but the one look; thence it voyaged to the hands of Mr. Erskine; thence again to Argyle, where he sat between the other two lords of session, and his Grace turned and fixed me with an arrogant eye. The last of those interested in my presence was Charlie Stewart, and he too began to pencil and hand about dispatches, none of which I was able to trace to their destination in the crowd.

But the passage of these notes had aroused notice; all who were in the secret (or supposed themselves to be so) were whispering information - the rest questions; and the minister himself seemed quite discountenanced by the flutter in the church and sudden stir and whispering. His voice changed, he plainly faltered, nor did he again recover the easy conviction and full tones of his delivery. It would be a puzzle to him till his dying day, why a sermon that had gone with triumph through four parts, should this miscarry in the fifth.

As for me, I continued to sit there, very wet and weary, and a good deal anxious as to what should happen next, but greatly exulting in my success.

CHAPTER XVII - THE MEMORIAL

The last word of the blessing was scarce out of the minister's mouth before Stewart had me by the arm. We were the first to be forth of the church, and he made such extraordinary expedition that we were safe within the four walls of a house before the street had begun to be thronged with the home-going congregation.

"Am I yet in time?" I asked.

"Ay and no," said he. "The case is over; the jury is enclosed, and will so kind as let us ken their view of it to-morrow in the morning, the same as I could have told it my own self three days ago before the play began. The thing has been public from the start. The panel kent it, 'Ye may do what ye will for me,' whispers he two days ago. 'Ye ken my fate by what the Duke of Argyle has just said to Mr. Macintosh.' O, it's been a scandal!

"The great Agyle he gaed before,
He gart the cannons and guns to roar,"

and the very macer cried 'Cruachan!' But now that I have got you again I'll never despair. The oak shall go over the myrtle yet; we'll ding the Campbells yet in their own town. Praise God that I should see the day!"

He was leaping with excitement, emptied out his mails upon the floor that I might have a change of clothes, and incommoded me with his assistance as I changed. What remained to be done, or how I was to do it, was what he never told me nor, I believe, so much as thought of. "We'll ding the Campbells yet!" that was still his overcome. And it was forced home upon my mind how this, that had the externals of a sober process of law, was in its essence a clan battle between savage clans. I thought my friend the Writer none of the least savage. Who that had only seen him at a counsel's back before the Lord Ordinary or following a golf ball and laying down his clubs on Bruntsfield links, could have recognised for the same person this voluble and violent clansman?

James Stewart's counsel were four in number - Sheriffs Brown of Colstoun and Miller, Mr. Robert Macintosh, and Mr. Stewart younger of Stewart Hall. These were covenanted to dine with the Writer after sermon, and I was very obligingly included of the party. No sooner the cloth lifted, and the first bowl very artfully compounded by Sheriff Miller, than we fell to the subject in hand. I made a short narration of my seizure and captivity, and was then examined and re-examined upon the circumstances of the murder. It will be remembered this was the first time I had had my say out, or the matter at all handled, among lawyers; and the consequence was very dispiriting to the others and (I must own) disappointing to myself.

“To sum up,” said Colstoun, “you prove that Alan was on the spot; you have heard him proffer menaces against Glenure; and though you assure us he was not the man who fired, you leave a strong impression that he was in league with him, and consenting, perhaps immediately assisting, in the act. You show him besides, at the risk of his own liberty, actively furthering the criminal’s escape. And the rest of your testimony (so far as the least material) depends on the bare word of Alan or of James, the two accused. In short, you do not at all break, but only lengthen by one personage, the chain that binds our client to the murderer; and I need scarcely say that the introduction of a third accomplice rather aggravates that appearance of a conspiracy which has been our stumbling block from the beginning.”

“I am of the same opinion,” said Sheriff Miller. “I think we may all be very much obliged to Prestongrange for taking a most uncomfortable witness out of our way. And chiefly, I think, Mr. Balfour himself might be obliged. For you talk of a third accomplice, but Mr. Balfour (in my view) has very much the appearance of a fourth.”

“Allow me, sirs!” interposed Stewart the Writer. “There is another view. Here we have a witness - never fash whether material or not - a witness in this cause, kidnapped by that old, lawless, bandit crew of the Glengyle Macgregors, and sequestered for near upon a month in a bourock of old ruins on the Bass. Move that and see what dirt you fling on the proceedings! Sirs, this is a tale to make the world ring with! It would be strange, with such a grip as this, if we couldnae squeeze out a pardon for my client.”

“And suppose we took up Mr. Balfour’s cause to-morrow?” said Stewart Hall. “I am much deceived or we should find so many impediments thrown in our path, as that James should have been hanged before we had found a court to hear us. This is a great scandal, but I suppose we have none of us forgot a greater still, I mean the matter of the Lady Grange. The woman was still in durance; my friend Mr. Hope of Rankeillor did what was humanly possible; and how did he speed? He never got a warrant! Well, it’ll be the same now; the same weapons will be used. This is a scene, gentleman, of clan animosity. The hatred of the name which I have the honour to bear, rages in high quarters. There is nothing here to be viewed but naked Campbell spite and scurvy Campbell intrigue.”

You may be sure this was to touch a welcome topic, and I sat for some time in the midst of my learned counsel, almost deaved with their talk but extremely little the wiser for its purport. The Writer was led into some hot expressions; Colstoun must take him up and set him right; the rest joined in on different sides, but all pretty noisy; the Duke of Argyle was beaten like a blanket; King George came in for a few digs in the by-going and a great deal of rather elaborate defence; and there was only one person that seemed to be forgotten, and that was James of the Glens.

Through all this Mr. Miller sat quiet. He was a slip of an oldish gentleman, ruddy and twinkling; he spoke in a smooth rich voice, with an infinite effect of pawkiness, dealing out each word the way an actor does, to give the most expression possible; and even now, when he was silent, and sat there with his wig laid aside, his glass in both hands, his mouth funnily pursed, and his chin out, he seemed the mere picture of a merry slyness. It was plain he had a word to say, and waited for the fit occasion.

It came presently. Colstoun had wound up one of his speeches with some expression of their duty to their client. His brother sheriff was pleased, I suppose, with the transition. He took the table in his confidence with a gesture and a look.

"That suggests to me a consideration which seems overlooked," said he. "The interest of our client goes certainly before all, but the world does not come to an end with James Stewart." Whereat he cocked his eye. "I might condescend, exempli gratia, upon a Mr. George Brown, a Mr. Thomas Miller, and a Mr. David Balfour. Mr. David Balfour has a very good ground of complaint, and I think, gentlemen - if his story was properly redd out - I think there would be a number of wigs on the green."

The whole table turned to him with a common movement.

"Properly handled and carefully redd out, his is a story that could scarcely fail to have some consequence," he continued. "The whole administration of justice, from its highest officer downward, would be totally discredited; and it looks to me as if they would need to be replaced." He seemed to shine with cunning as he said it. "And I need not point out to ye that this of Mr. Balfour's would be a remarkable bonny cause to appear in," he added.

Well, there they all were started on another hare; Mr. Balfour's cause, and what kind of speeches could be there delivered, and what officials could be thus turned out, and who would succeed to their positions. I shall give but the two specimens. It was proposed to approach Simon Fraser, whose testimony, if it could be obtained, would prove certainly fatal to Argyle and to Prestongrange. Miller highly approved of the attempt. "We have here before us a dreeping roast," said he, "here is cut-and-come-again for all." And methought all licked their lips. The other was already near the end. Stewart the

Writer was out of the body with delight, smelling vengeance on his chief enemy, the Duke.

"Gentlemen," cried he, charging his glass, "here is to Sheriff Miller. His legal abilities are known to all. His culinary, this bowl in front of us is here to speak for. But when it comes to the poleetical!" - cries he, and drains the glass.

"Ay, but it will hardly prove politics in your meaning, my friend," said the gratified Miller. "A revolution, if you like, and I think I can promise you that historical writers shall date from Mr. Balfour's cause. But properly guided, Mr. Stewart, tenderly guided, it shall prove a peaceful revolution."

"And if the damned Campbells get their ears rubbed, what care I?" cries Stewart, smiting down his fist.

It will be thought I was not very well pleased with all this, though I could scarce forbear smiling at a kind of innocency in these old intriguers. But it was not my view to have undergone so many sorrows for the advancement of Sheriff Miller or to make a revolution in the Parliament House: and I interposed accordingly with as much simplicity of manner as I could assume.

"I have to thank you, gentlemen, for your advice," said I. "And now I would like, by your leave, to set you two or three questions. There is one thing that has fallen rather on one aide, for instance: Will this cause do any good to our friend James of the Glens?"

They seemed all a hair set back, and gave various answers, but concurring practically in one point, that James had now no hope but in the King's mercy.

"To proceed, then," said I, "will it do any good to Scotland? We have a saying that it is an ill bird that fouls his own nest. I remember hearing we had a riot in Edinburgh when I was an infant child, which gave occasion to the late Queen to call this country barbarous; and I always understood that we had rather lost than gained by that. Then came the year 'Forty-five, which made Scotland to be talked of everywhere; but I never heard it said we had anyway gained by the 'Forty-five. And now we come to this cause of Mr. Balfour's, as you call it. Sheriff Miller tells us historical writers are to date from it, and I would not wonder. It is only my fear they would date from it as a period of calamity and public reproach."

The nimble-witted Miller had already smelt where I was travelling to, and made haste to get on the same road. "Forcibly put, Mr. Balfour," says he. "A weighty observe, sir."

"We have next to ask ourselves if it will be good for King George," I pursued. "Sheriff Miller appears pretty easy upon this; but I doubt you will scarce be able to pull down the house from under him, without his Majesty coming by a knock or two, one of which might easily prove fatal."

I have them a chance to answer, but none volunteered.

"Of those for whom the case was to be profitable," I went on, "Sheriff Miller gave us the names of several, among the which he was good enough to mention mine. I hope he will pardon me if I think otherwise. I believe I hung not the least back in this affair while there was life to be saved; but I own I thought myself extremely hazarded, and I own I think it would be a pity for a young man, with some idea of coming to the Bar, to ingrain upon himself the character of a turbulent, factious fellow before he was yet twenty. As for James, it seems - at this date of the proceedings, with the sentence as good as pronounced - he has no hope but in the King's mercy. May not his Majesty, then, be more pointedly addressed, the characters of these high officers sheltered from the public, and myself kept out of a position which I think spells ruin for me?"

They all sat and gazed into their glasses, and I could see they found my attitude on the affair unpalatable. But Miller was ready at all events.

"If I may be allowed to put my young friend's notion in more formal shape," says he, "I understand him to propose that we should embody the fact of his sequestration, and perhaps some heads of the testimony he was prepared to offer, in a memorial to the Crown. This plan has elements of success. It is as likely as any other (and perhaps likelier) to help our client. Perhaps his Majesty would have the goodness to feel a certain gratitude to all concerned in such a memorial, which might be construed into an expression of a very delicate loyalty; and I think, in the drafting of the same, this view might be brought forward."

They all nodded to each other, not without sighs, for the former alternative was doubtless more after their inclination.

"Paper, then, Mr. Stewart, if you please," pursued Miller; "and I think it might very fittingly be signed by the five of us here present, as procurators for the condemned man."'

"It can do none of us any harm, at least," says Colstoun, heaving another sigh, for he had seen himself Lord Advocate the last ten minutes.

Thereupon they set themselves, not very enthusiastically, to draft the memorial - a process in the course of which they soon caught fire; and I had no more ado but to sit looking on and answer an occasional question. The paper was very well expressed; beginning with a recitation of the facts about myself, the reward offered for my apprehension, my surrender, the pressure brought to bear upon me; my sequestration; and my arrival at Inverary in time to be too late; going on to explain the reasons of loyalty and public interest for which it was agreed to waive any right of action; and winding up with a forcible appeal to the King's mercy on behalf of James.

Methought I was a good deal sacrificed, and rather represented in the light of a firebrand of a fellow whom my cloud of lawyers had restrained with difficulty from extremes. But I let it pass, and made but the one suggestion, that I should be described as ready to deliver my own evidence and adduce that of others before any commission of inquiry - and the one demand, that I should be immediately furnished with a copy.

Colstoun hummed and hawed. "This is a very confidential document," said he.

"And my position towards Prestongrange is highly peculiar," I replied. "No question but I must have touched his heart at our first interview, so that he has since stood my friend consistently. But for him, gentlemen, I must now be lying dead or awaiting my sentence alongside poor James. For which reason I choose to communicate to him the fact of this memorial as soon as it is copied. You are to consider also that this step will make for my protection. I have enemies here accustomed to drive hard; his Grace is in his own country, Lovat by his side; and if there should hang any ambiguity over our proceedings I think I might very well awake in gaol."

Not finding any very ready answer to these considerations, my company of advisers were at the last persuaded to consent, and made only this condition that I was to lay the paper before Prestongrange with the express compliments of all concerned.

The Advocate was at the castle dining with his Grace. By the hand of one of Colstoun's servants I sent him a billet asking for an interview, and received a summons to meet him at once in a private house of the town. Here I found him alone in a chamber; from his face there was nothing to be gleaned; yet I was not so unobservant but what I spied some halberts in the hall, and not so stupid but what I could gather he was prepared to arrest me there and then, should it appear advisable.

"So, Mr. David, this is you?" said he.

"Where I fear I am not overly welcome, my lord," said I. "And I would like before I go further to express my sense of your lordship's good offices, even should they now cease."

"I have heard of your gratitude before," he replied drily, "and I think this can scarce be the matter you called me from my wine to listen to. I would remember also, if I were you, that you still stand on a very boggy foundation."

"Not now, my lord, I think," said I; "and if your lordship will but glance an eye along this, you will perhaps think as I do."

He read it sedulously through, frowning heavily; then turned back to one part and another which he seemed to weigh and compare the effect of. His face a little lightened.

"This is not so bad but what it might be worse," said he; "though I am still likely to pay dear for my acquaintance with Mr. David Balfour."

"Rather for your indulgence to that unlucky young man, my lord," said I.

He still skimmed the paper, and all the while his spirits seemed to mend.

"And to whom am I indebted for this?" he asked presently. "Other counsels must have been discussed, I think. Who was it proposed this private method? Was it Miller?"

"My lord, it was myself," said I. "These gentlemen have shown me no such consideration, as that I should deny myself any credit I can fairly claim, or spare them any responsibility they should properly bear. And the mere truth is, that they were all in favour of a process which should have remarkable consequences in the Parliament House, and prove for them (in one of their own expressions) a dripping roast. Before I intervened, I think they were on the point of sharing out the different law appointments. Our friend Mr. Simon was to be taken in upon some composition."

Prestongrange smiled. "These are our friends," said he. "And what were your reasons for dissenting, Mr. David?"

I told them without concealment, expressing, however, with more force and volume those which regarded Prestongrange himself.

"You do me no more than justice," said he. "I have fought as hard in your interest as you have fought against mine. And how came you here to-day?" he asked. "As the case drew out, I began to grow uneasy that I had clipped the period so fine, and I was even expecting you to-morrow. But to-day - I never dreamed of it."

I was not of course, going to betray Andie.

"I suspect there is some very weary cattle by the road," said I

"If I had known you were such a mosstrooper you should have tasted longer of the Bass," says he.

"Speaking of which, my lord, I return your letter." And I gave him the enclosure in the counterfeit hand.

"There was the cover also with the seal," said he.

"I have it not," said I. "It bore not even an address, and could not compromise a cat. The second enclosure I have, and with your permission, I desire to keep it."

I thought he winced a little, but he said nothing to the point. "To-morrow," he resumed, "our business here is to be finished, and I proceed by Glasgow. I would be very glad to have you of my party, Mr David."

"My lord . . ." I began.

"I do not deny it will be of service to me," he interrupted. "I desire even that, when we shall come to Edinburgh, you should alight at my house. You have very warm friends in the Miss Grants, who will be overjoyed to have you to themselves. If you think I have been of use to you, you can thus easily repay me, and so far from losing, may reap some advantage by the way. It is not every strange young man who is presented in society by the King's Advocate."

Often enough already (in our brief relations) this gentleman had caused my head to spin; no doubt but what for a moment he did so again now. Here was the old fiction still maintained of my particular favour with his daughters, one of whom had been so good as to laugh at me, while the other two had scarce deigned to remark the fact of my existence. And now I was to ride with my lord to Glasgow; I was to dwell with him in Edinburgh; I was to be brought into society under his protection! That he should have so much good-nature as to forgive me was surprising enough; that he could wish to take me up and serve me seemed impossible; and I began to seek some ulterior meaning. One was plain. If I became his guest, repentance was excluded; I could never think better of my present design and bring any action. And besides, would not my presence in his house draw out the whole pungency of the memorial? For that complaint could not be very seriously regarded, if the person chiefly injured was the guest of the official most incriminated. As I thought upon this I could not quite refrain from smiling.

"This is in the nature of a countercheck to the memorial?" said I.

"You are cunning, Mr. David," said he, "and you do not wholly guess wrong the fact will be of use to me in my defence. Perhaps, however, you underrate friendly sentiments, which are perfectly genuine. I have a respect for you, David, mingled with awe," says he, smiling.

"I am more than willing, I am earnestly desirous to meet your wishes," said I. "It is my design to be called to the Bar, where your lordship's countenance would be invaluable; and I am besides sincerely grateful to yourself and family for different marks of interest and of indulgence. The difficulty is here. There is one point in which we pull two ways. You are trying to hang James Stewart, I am trying to save him. In so far as my riding with you would better your lordship's defence, I am at your lordships orders; but in so far as it would help to hang James Stewart, you see me at a stick."

I thought he swore to himself. "You should certainly be called; the Bar is the true scene for your talents," says he, bitterly, and then fell a while silent. "I will tell you," he presently resumed, "there is no question of James Stewart, for or against, James is a dead man; his life is given and taken - bought (if you like it better) and sold; no memorial can help - no defalcation of a faithful Mr. David hurt him. Blow high, blow low, there will be no pardon for James Stewart: and take that for said! The question is now of myself: am I to stand or fall? and I do not deny to you that I am in some danger. But will Mr. David Balfour consider why? It is not because I pushed the case unduly against James; for that, I am sure of condonation. And it is not because I have sequestered Mr. David on a rock, though it will pass under that colour; but because I did not take the ready and plain path, to which I was pressed repeatedly, and send Mr. David to his grave or to the gallows. Hence the scandal - hence this damned memorial," striking the paper on his leg. "My tenderness for you has brought me in this difficulty. I wish to know if your tenderness to your own conscience is too great to let you help me out of it."

No doubt but there was much of the truth in what he said; if James was past helping, whom was it more natural that I should turn to help than just the man before me, who had helped myself so often, and was even now setting me a pattern of patience? I was besides not only weary, but beginning to be ashamed, of my perpetual attitude of suspicion and refusal

"If you will name the time and place, I will be punctually ready to attend your lordship," said I.

He shook hands with me. "And I think my misses have some news for you," says he, dismissing me.

I came away, vastly pleased to have my peace made, yet a little concerned in conscience; nor could I help wondering, as I went back, whether, perhaps, I had not been a scruple too good-natured. But there was the fact, that this was a man that might have been my father, an able man, a great dignitary, and one that, in the hour of my need, had reached a hand to my assistance. I was in the better humour to enjoy the remainder of that evening, which I passed with the advocates, in excellent company no doubt, but perhaps with rather more than a sufficiency of punch: for though I went early to bed I have no clear mind of how I got there.

CHAPTER XVIII - THE TEE'D BALL

On the morrow, from the justices' private room, where none could see me, I heard the verdict given in and judgment rendered upon James. The Duke's words I am quite sure I have correctly; and since that famous passage has been made a subject of dispute, I may as well commemorate my version. Having referred to the year '45, the chief of the Campbells, sitting as Justice-General upon the bench, thus addressed the unfortunate Stewart before him: "If you had been successful in that rebellion, you might have been giving the law where you have now received the judgment of it; we, who are this day your judges, might have been tried before one of your mock courts of judicature; and then you might have been satiated with the blood of any name or clan to which you had an aversion."

"This is to let the cat out of the bag, indeed," thought I. And that was the general impression. It was extraordinary how the young advocate lads took hold and made a mock of this speech, and how scarce a meal passed but what someone would get in the words: "And then you might have been satiated." Many songs were made in time for the hour's diversion, and are near all forgot. I remember one began:

"What do ye want the bluid of, bluid of?
Is it a name, or is it a clan,
Or is it an aefauld Hielandman,
That ye want the bluid of, bluid of?"

Another went to my old favourite air, The House of Airlie, and began thus:

"It fell on a day when Argyle was on the bench,
That they served him a Stewart for his denner."

And one of the verses ran:

"Then up and spak' the Duke, and flyted on his cook,
I regard it as a sensible aspersion,
That I would sup ava', an' satiate my maw,
With the bluid of ony clan of my aversion."

James was as fairly murdered as though the Duke had got a fowling-piece and stalked him. So much of course I knew: but others knew not so much, and were more affected by the items of scandal that came to light in the progress of the cause. One of the chief was certainly this sally of the justice's. It was run hard by another of a juryman, who had struck into the midst of Coulston's speech for the defence with a "Pray, sir, cut it short, we are quite weary," which seemed the very excess of impudence and simplicity. But some of my new lawyer friends were still more staggered with an innovation that had disgraced and even vitiated the proceedings. One witness was never called. His name, indeed, was printed, where it may still be seen on the fourth page of the list: "James Drummond, alias Macgregor, alias James More, late tenant in Inveronachile"; and his precognition had been taken, as the manner is, in writing. He had remembered or invented (God help him) matter which was lead in James Stewart's shoes, and I saw was like to prove wings to his own. This testimony it was highly desirable to bring to the notice of the jury, without exposing the man himself to the perils of cross-examination; and the way it was brought about was a matter of surprise to all. For the paper was handed round (like a curiosity) in court; passed through the jury-box, where it did its work; and disappeared again (as though by accident) before it reached the counsel for the prisoner. This was counted a most insidious device; and that the name of James More should be mingled up with it filled me with shame for Catriona and concern for myself.

The following day, Prestongrange and I, with a considerable company, set out for Glasgow, where (to my impatience) we continued to linger some time in a mixture of pleasure and affairs. I lodged with my lord, with whom I was encouraged to familiarity; had my place at entertainments; was presented to the chief guests; and altogether made more of than I thought accorded either with my parts or station; so that, on strangers being present, I would often blush for Prestongrange. It must be owned the view I had taken of the world in these last months was fit to cast a gloom upon my character. I had met many men, some of them leaders in Israel whether by their birth or talents; and who among them all had shown clean hands? As for the Browns and Millers, I had seen their self-seeking, I could never again respect them. Prestongrange was the best yet; he had saved me, spared me rather, when others had it in their minds to murder me outright; but the blood of James lay at his door; and I thought his present dissimulation with myself a thing below pardon. That he should affect to find pleasure in my discourse almost surprised me out of my patience. I would sit and watch him with a kind of a slow fire of anger in my bowels. "Ah, friend, friend," I would think to myself, "if you were but through with this affair of the memorial, would you not kick me in the streets?" Here I did him, as events have proved, the most grave injustice; and I think he was at once far more sincere, and a far more artful performer, than I supposed.

But I had some warrant for my incredulity in the behaviour of that court of young advocates that hung about in the hope of patronage. The sudden favour of a lad not previously heard of troubled them at first out of measure; but two days were not gone by before I found myself surrounded with flattery and attention. I was the same young man, and neither better nor bonnier, that they had rejected a month before; and now there was no civility too fine for me! The same, do I say? It was not so; and the by-name by which I went behind my back confirmed it. Seeing me so firm with the Advocate, and persuaded that I was to fly high and far, they had taken a word from the golfing green, and called me the Tee'd Ball. I was told I was now "one of themselves"; I was to taste of their soft lining, who had already made my own experience of the roughness of the outer husk; and one, to whom I had been presented in Hope Park, was so aspired as even to remind me of that meeting. I told him I had not the pleasure of remembering it.

"Why" says he, "it was Miss Grant herself presented me! My name is so-and-so."

"It may very well be, sir," said I; "but I have kept no mind of it."

At which he desisted; and in the midst of the disgust that commonly overflowed my spirits I had a glisk of pleasure.

But I have not patience to dwell upon that time at length. When I was in company with these young politics I was borne down with shame for myself and my own plain ways, and scorn for them and their duplicity. Of the two evils, I thought Prestongrange to be the least; and while I was always as stiff as buckram to the young bloods, I made rather a dissimulation of my hard feelings towards the Advocate, and was (in old Mr. Campbell's word) "soople to the laird." Himself commented on the difference, and bid me be more of my age, and make friends with my young comrades.

I told him I was slow of making friends.

"I will take the word back," said he. "But there is such a thing as Fair gude s'en and fair gude day, Mr. David. These are the same young men with whom you are to pass your days and get through life: your backwardness has a look of arrogance; and unless you can assume a little more lightness of manner, I fear you will meet difficulties in the path."

"It will be an ill job to make a silk purse of a sow's ear," said I.

On the morning of October 1st I was awakened by the clattering in of an express; and getting to my window almost before he had dismounted, I saw the messenger had ridden hard. Somewhile after I was called to Prestongrange, where he was sitting in his bedgown and nightcap, with his letters round him.

"Mr. David," add he, "I have a piece of news for you. It concerns some friends of yours, of whom I sometimes think you are a little ashamed, for you have never referred to their existence."

I suppose I blushed.

"See you understand, since you make the answering signal," said he. "And I must compliment you on your excellent taste in beauty. But do you know, Mr. David? this seems to me a very enterprising lass. She crops up from every side. The Government of Scotland appears unable to proceed for Mistress Katrine Drummond, which was somewhat the case (no great while back) with a certain Mr. David Balfour. Should not these make a good match? Her first intromission in politics - but I must not tell you that story, the authorities have decided you are to hear it otherwise and from a livelier narrator. This new example is more serious, however; and I am afraid I must alarm you with the intelligence that she is now in prison."

I cried out.

"Yes," said he, "the little lady is in prison. But I would not have you to despair. Unless you (with your friends and memorials) shall procure my downfall, she is to suffer nothing."

"But what has she done? What is her offence?" I cried.

"It might be almost construed a high treason," he returned, "for she has broke the king's Castle of Edinburgh."

"The lady is much my friend," I said. "I know you would not mock me if the thing were serious."

"And yet it is serious in a sense," said he; "for this rogue of a Katrine - or Cateran, as we may call her - has set adrift again upon the world that very doubtful character, her papa."

Here was one of my previsions justified: James More was once again at liberty. He had lent his men to keep me a prisoner; he had volunteered his testimony in the Appin case, and the same (no matter by what subterfuge) had been employed to influence the jury. Now came his reward, and he was free. It might please the authorities to give to it the colour of an escape; but I knew better - I knew it must be the fulfilment of a bargain. The same course of thought relieved me of the least alarm for Catriona. She might be thought to have broke prison for her father; she might have believed so herself. But the chief hand in the whole business was that of Prestongrange; and I was sure, so far from letting her come to punishment, he would not suffer her to be even tried. Whereupon thus came out of me the not very politic ejaculation:

"Ah! I was expecting that!"

"You have at times a great deal of discretion, too!" says Prestongrange.

"And what is my lord pleased to mean by that?" I asked.

"I was just marvelling", he replied, "that being so clever as to draw these inferences, you should not be clever enough to keep them to yourself. But I think you would like to hear the details of the affair. I have received two versions: and the least official is the more full and far the more entertaining, being from the lively pen of my eldest daughter. 'Here is all the town bizzing with a fine piece of work,' she writes, 'and what would make the thing more noted (if it were only known) the malefactor is a protégée of his lordship my papa. I am sure your heart is too much in your duty (if it were nothing else) to have forgotten Grey Eyes. What does she do, but get a broad hat with the flaps open, a long hairy-like man's greatcoat, and a big gravatt; kilt her coats up to Gude kens whaur, clap two pair of boot-hose upon her legs, take a pair of clouted brogues in her hand, and off to the Castle! Here she gives herself out to be a soutar in the employ of James More, and gets admitted to his cell, the lieutenant (who seems to have been full of pleasantry) making sport among his soldiers of the soutar's greatcoat. Presently they hear disputation and the sound of blows inside. Out flies the cobbler, his coat flying, the flaps of his hat beat about his face, and the lieutenant and his soldiers mock at him as he runs off. They laughed no so hearty the next time they had occasion to visit the cell and found nobody but a tall, pretty, grey-eyed lass in the female habit! As for the cobbler, he was 'over the hills ayout Dumblane,' and it's thought that poor Scotland will have to console herself without him. I drank Catriona's health this night in public.

Indeed, the whole town admires her; and I think the beaux would wear bits of her garters in their button-holes if they could only get them. I would have gone to visit her in prison too, only I remembered in time I was papa's daughter; so I wrote her a billet instead, which I entrusted to the faithful Doig, and I hope you will admit I can be political when I please. The same faithful gomeral is to despatch this letter by the express along with those of the wiseacres, so that you may hear Tom Fool in company with Solomon. Talking of gomerals, do tell Dauvit Balfour. I would I could see the face of him at the thought of a long-legged lass in such a predicament; to say nothing of the levities of your affectionate daughter, and his respectful friend.' So my rascal signs herself!" continued Prestongrange. "And you see, Mr. David, it is quite true what I tell you, that my daughters regard you with the most affectionate playfulness."

"The gomeral is much obliged," said I.

"And was not this prettily done!" he went on. "Is not this Highland maid a piece of a heroine?"

"I was always sure she had a great heart," said I. "And I wager she guessed nothing . . . But I beg your pardon, this is to tread upon forbidden subjects."

"I will go bail she did not," he returned, quite openly. "I will go bail she thought she was flying straight into King George's face."

Remembrance of Catriona and the thought of her lying in captivity, moved me strangely. I could see that even Prestongrange admired, and could not withhold his lips from smiling when he considered her behaviour. As for Miss Grant, for all her ill habit of mockery, her admiration shone out plain. A kind of a heat came on me.

"I am not your lordship's daughter. . . " I began.

"That I know of!" he put in, smiling.

"I speak like a fool," said I; "or rather I began wrong. It would doubtless be unwise in Mistress Grant to go to her in prison; but for me, I think I would look like a half-hearted friend if I did not fly there instantly."

"So-ho, Mr. David," says he; "I thought that you and I were in a bargain?"

"My lord," I said, "when I made that bargain I was a good deal affected by your goodness, but I'll never can deny that I was moved besides by my own interest. There was self-seeking in my heart, and I think shame of it now. It may be for your lordship's safety to say this fashious Davie Balfour is your friend and housemate. Say it then; I'll never contradict you. But as for your patronage, I give it all back. I ask but the one thing - let me go, and give me a pass to see her in her prison."

He looked at me with a hard eye. "You put the cart before the horse, I think," says he. "That which I had given was a portion of my liking, which your thankless nature does not seem to have remarked. But for my patronage, it is not given, nor (to be exact) is it yet offered." He paused a bit. "And I warn you, you do not know yourself," he added. "Youth is a hasty season; you will think better of all this before a year."

"Well, and I would like to be that kind of youth!" I cried. "I have seen too much of the other party in these young advocates that fawn upon your lordship and are even at the pains to fawn on me. And I have seen it in the old ones also. They are all for by-ends, the whole clan of them! It's this that makes me seem to misdoubt your lordship's liking. Why would I think that you would like me? But ye told me yourself ye had an interest!"

I stopped at this, confounded that I had run so far; he was observing me with an unfathomable face.

"My lord, I ask your pardon," I resumed. "I have nothing in my chafts but a rough country tongue. I think it would be only decent-like if I would go to see my friend in her captivity; but I'm owing you my life - I'll never forget that; and if it's for your lordship's good, here I'll stay. That's barely gratitude."

"This might have been reached in fewer words," says Prestongrange grimly. "It is easy, and it is at times gracious, to say a plain Scots 'ay'."

"Ah, but, my lord, I think ye take me not yet entirely!" cried I. "For your sake, for my life-safe, and the kindness that ye say ye bear to me - for these, I'll consent; but not for any good that might be coming to myself. If I stand aside when this young maid is in her trial, it's a thing I will be noways advantaged by; I will lose by it, I will never gain. I would rather make a shipwreck wholly than to build on that foundation."

He was a minute serious, then smiled. "You mind me of the man with the long nose," said he; "was you to see the moon by a telescope you would see David Balfour there! But you shall have your way of it. I will ask at you one service, and then set you free: My clerks are overdriven; be so good as copy me these few pages, and when that is done, I shall bid you God speed! I would never charge myself with Mr. David's conscience; and if you could cast some part of it (as you went by) in a moss hag, you would find yourself to ride much easier without it."

"Perhaps not just entirely in the same direction though, my lord!" says I.

"And you shall have the last word, too!" cries he gaily.

Indeed, he had some cause for gaiety, having now found the means to gain his purpose. To lessen the weight of the memorial, or to have a readier answer at his hand, he desired I should appear publicly in the character of his intimate. But if I were to appear with the same publicity as a visitor to Catriona in her prison the world would scarce stint to draw conclusions, and the true nature of James More's escape must become evident to all. This was the little problem I had to set him of a sudden, and to which he had so briskly found an answer. I was to be tethered in Glasgow by that job of copying, which in mere outward decency I could not well refuse; and during these hours of employment Catriona was privately got rid of. I think shame to write of this man that loaded me with so many goodnesses. He was kind to me as any father, yet I ever thought him as false as a cracked bell.

CHAPTER XIX - I AM MUCH IN THE HANDS OF THE LADIES

The copying was a weary business, the more so as I perceived very early there was no sort of urgency in the matters treated, and began very early to consider my employment a pretext. I had no sooner finished than I got to horse, used what remained of daylight to the best purpose, and being at last fairly benighted, slept in a house by Almond-Water side. I was in the saddle again before the day, and the Edinburgh booths were just opening when I clattered in by the West Bow and drew up a smoking horse at my lord Advocate's door. I had a written word for Doig, my lord's private hand that was thought to be in all his secrets - a worthy little plain man, all fat and snuff and self-sufficiency. Him I found already at his desk and already bedabbled with maccabaw, in the same anteroom where I rencountered with James More. He read the note scrupulously through like a chapter in his Bible.

"H'm," says he; "ye come a wee thing ahint-hand, Mr. Balfour. The bird's flaen - we hae letten her out."

"Miss Drummond is set free?" I cried.

"Achy!" said he. "What would we keep her for, ye ken? To hae made a steer about the bairn would has pleased naebody."

"And where'll she be now?" says I.

"Gude kens!" says Doig, with a shrug.

"She'll have gone home to Lady Allardyce, I'm thinking," said I.

"That'll be it," said he.

"Then I'll gang there straight," says I.

"But ye'll be for a bite or ye go?" said he.

"Neither bite nor sup," said I. "I had a good wauch of milk in by Ratho."

"Aweel, aweel," says Doig. "But ye'll can leave your horse here and your bags, for it seems we're to have your up-put."

"Na, na", said I. "Tamson's mear would never be the thing for me this day of all days."

Doig speaking somewhat broad, I had been led by imitation into an accent much more countrified than I was usually careful to affect a good deal broader, indeed, than I have written it down; and I was the more ashamed when another voice joined in behind me with a scrap of a ballad:

"Gae saddle me the bonny black,

Gae saddle sune and mak' him ready
For I will down the Gatehope-slack,
And a' to see my bonny leddy."

The young lady, when I turned to her, stood in a morning gown, and her hands muffled in the same, as if to hold me at a distance. Yet I could not but think there was kindness in the eye with which she saw me.

"My best respects to you, Mistress Grant," said I, bowing.

"The like to yourself, Mr. David," she replied with a deep courtesy. "And I beg to remind you of an old musty saw, that meat and mass never hindered man. The mass I cannot afford you, for we are all good Protestants. But the meat I press on your attention. And I would not wonder but I could find something for your private ear that would be worth the stopping for."

"Mistress Grant," said I, "I believe I am already your debtor for some merry words - and I think they were kind too - on a piece of unsigned paper."

"Unsigned paper?" says she, and made a droll face, which was likewise wondrous beautiful, as of one trying to remember.

"Or else I am the more deceived," I went on. "But to be sure, we shall have the time to speak of these, since your father is so good as to make me for a while your inmate; and the gomeral begs you at this time only for the favour of his liberty,"

"You give yourself hard names," said she.

"Mr. Doig and I would be blythe to take harder at your clever pen," says I.

"Once more I have to admire the discretion of all men-folk," she replied. "But if you will not eat, off with you at once; you will be back the sooner, for you go on a fool's errand. Off with you, Mr. David," she continued, opening the door.

"He has lowpen on his bonny grey,
He rade the richt gate and the ready
I trow he would neither stint nor stay,
For he was seeking his bonny leddy."

I did not wait to be twice bidden, and did justice to Miss Grant's citation on the way to Dean.

Old Lady Allardyce walked there alone in the garden, in her hat and mutch, and having a silver-mounted staff of some black wood to lean upon. As I alighted from my horse, and drew near to her with congees, I could see the blood come in her face, and her head fling into the air like what I had conceived of empresses.

“What brings you to my poor door?” she cried, speaking high through her nose. “I cannot bar it. The males of my house are dead and buried; I have neither son nor husband to stand in the gate for me; any beggar can pluck me by the baird - and a baird there is, and that’s the worst of it yet?” she added partly to herself.

I was extremely put out at this reception, and the last remark, which seemed like a daft wife’s, left me near hand speechless.

“I see I have fallen under your displeasure, ma’am,” said I. “Yet I will still be so bold as ask after Mistress Drummond.”

She considered me with a burning eye, her lips pressed close together into twenty creases, her hand shaking on her staff. “This cows all!” she cried. “Ye come to me to speir for her? Would God I knew!”

“She is not here?” I cried.

She threw up her chin and made a step and a cry at me, so that I fell back incontinent.

“Out upon your leeing throat!” she cried. “What! ye come and speir at me! She’s in jyle, whaur ye took her to - that’s all there is to it. And of a’ the beings ever I beheld in breeks, to think it should be to you! Ye timmer scoun’rel, if I had a male left to my name I would have your jaicket dustit till ye raired.”

I thought it not good to delay longer in that place, because I remarked her passion to be rising. As I turned to the horse-post she even followed me; and I make no shame to confess that I rode away with the one stirrup on and scrambling for the other.

As I knew no other quarter where I could push my inquiries, there was nothing left me but to return to the Advocate’s. I was well received by the four ladies, who were now in company together, and must give the news of Prestongrange and what word went in the west country, at the most inordinate length and with great weariness to myself; while all the time that young lady, with whom I so much desired to be alone again, observed me quizzically and seemed to find pleasure in the sight of my impatience. At last, after I had endured a meal with them, and was come very near the point of appealing for an interview before her aunt, she went and stood by the music-case, and picking out a tune, sang to it on a high key - “He that will not when he may, When he will he shall have nay.” But this was the end of her rigours, and presently, after making some excuse of which I have no mind, she carried me away in private to her father’s library. I should not fail to say she was dressed to the nines, and appeared extraordinary handsome.

“Now, Mr. David, sit ye down here and let us have a two-handed crack,” said she. “For I have much to tell you, and it appears besides that I have been grossly unjust to your good taste.”

"In what manner, Mistress Grant?" I asked. "I trust I have never seemed to fail in due respect."

"I will be your surety, Mr, David," said she. "Your respect, whether to yourself or your poor neighbours, has been always and most fortunately beyond imitation. But that is by the question. You got a note from me?" she asked.

"I was so bold as to suppose so upon inference," said I, "and it was kindly thought upon."

"It must have prodigiously surprised you," said she. "But let us begin with the beginning. You have not perhaps forgot a day when you were so kind as to escort three very tedious misses to Hope Park? I have the less cause to forget it myself, because you was so particular obliging as to introduce me to some of the principles of the Latin grammar, a thing which wrote itself profoundly on my gratitude."

"I fear I was sadly pedantical," said I, overcome with confusion at the memory. "You are only to consider I am quite unused with the society of ladies."

"I will say the less about the grammar then," she replied. "But how came you to desert your charge? 'He has thrown her out, overboard, his ain dear Annie!'" she hummed; "and his ain dear Annie and her two sisters had to taigle home by theirselves like a string of green geese! It seems you returned to my papa's, where you showed yourself excessively martial, and then on to realms unknown, with an eye (it appears) to the Bass Rock; solan geese being perhaps more to your mind than bonny lasses."

Through all this raillery there was something indulgent in the lady's eye which made me suppose there might be better coming.

"You take a pleasure to torment me," said I, "and I make a very feckless plaything; but let me ask you to be more merciful. At this time there is but the one thing that I care to hear of, and that will be news of Catriona."

"Do you call her by that name to her face, Mr. Balfour?" she asked.

"In troth, and I am not very sure," I stammered.

"I would not do so in any case to strangers," said Miss Grant. "And why are you so much immersed in the affairs of this young lady?"

"I heard she was in prison," said I.

"Well, and now you hear that she is out of it," she replied, "and what more would you have? She has no need of any further champion."

"I may have the greater need of her, ma'am," said I.

"Come, this is better!" says Miss Grant. "But look me fairly in the face; am I not bonnier than she?"

"I would be the last to be denying it," said I. "There is not your marrow in all Scotland."

"Well, here you have the pick of the two at your hand, and must needs speak of the other," said she. "This is never the way to please the ladies, Mr. Balfour."

"But, mistress," said I, "there are surely other things besides mere beauty."

"By which I am to understand that I am no better than I should be, perhaps?" she asked.

"By which you will please understand that I am like the cock in the midden in the fable book," said I. "I see the braw jewel - and I like fine to see it too - but I have more need of the pickle corn."

"Bravissimo!" she cried. "There is a word well said at last, and I will reward you for it with my story. That same night of your desertion I came late from a friend's house - where I was excessively admired, whatever you may think of it - and what should I hear but that a lass in a tartan screen desired to speak with me? She had been there an hour or better, said the servant-lass, and she grat in to herself as she sat waiting. I went to her direct; she rose as I came in, and I knew her at a look. 'Grey Eyes!' says I to myself, but was more wise than to let on. You will be Miss Grant at last? she says, rising and looking at me hard and pitiful. Ay, it was true he said, you are bonny at all events. - The way God made me, my dear, I said, but I would be gey and obliged if you could tell me what brought you here at such a time of the night. - Lady, she said, we are kinsfolk, we are both come of the blood of the sons of Alpin. - My dear, I replied, I think no more of Alpin or his sons than what I do of a kalestock. You have a better argument in these tears upon your bonny face. And at that I was so weak-minded as to kiss her, which is what you would like to do dearly, and I wager will never find the courage of. I say it was weak-minded of me, for I knew no more of her than the outside; but it was the wisest stroke I could have hit upon. She is a very staunch, brave nature, but I think she has been little used with tenderness; and at that caress (though to say the truth, it was but lightly given) her heart went out to me. I will never betray the secrets of my sex, Mr. Davie; I will never tell you the way she turned me round her thumb, because it is the same she will use to twist yourself. Ay, it is a fine lass! She is as clean as hill well water."

"She is e'en't!" I cried.

"Well, then, she told me her concerns," pursued Miss Grant, "and in what a swither she was in about her papa, and what a taking about yourself, with very little cause, and in what a perplexity she had found herself after you was gone away. And then I minded at long last, says she, that we were kinswomen, and that Mr. David should have given you the name of the bonniest of the bonny, and I was thinking to myself 'If she is so bonny she will be good at all events'; and I took up my foot soles out of that. That was when I forgave yourself, Mr. Davie. When you was in my society, you seemed upon hot iron: by all marks, if ever I saw a young man that wanted to be gone, it was yourself, and I and my two sisters were the ladies you were so desirous to be gone from; and now it appeared you had given me some notice in the by-going, and was so kind as to comment on my attractions! From that hour you may date our friendship, and I began to think with tenderness upon the Latin grammar."

"You will have many hours to rally me in," said I; "and I think besides you do yourself injustice. I think it was Catriona turned your heart in my direction. She is too simple to perceive as you do the stiffness of her friend."

"I would not like to wager upon that, Mr. David," said she. "The lasses have clear eyes. But at least she is your friend entirely, as I was to see. I carried her in to his lordship my papa; and his Advocacy being in a favourable stage of claret, was so good as to receive the pair of us. Here is Grey Eyes that you have been deaved with these days past, said I, she is come to prove that we spoke true, and I lay the prettiest lass in the three Lothians at your feet - making a papistical reservation of myself. She suited her action to my words: down she went upon her knees to him - I would not like to swear but he saw two of her, which doubtless made her appeal the more irresistible, for you are all a pack of Mahomedans - told him what had passed that night, and how she had withheld her father's man from following of you, and what a case she was in about her father, and what a flutter for yourself; and begged with weeping for the lives of both of you (neither of which was in the slightest danger), till I vow I was proud of my sex because it was done so pretty, and ashamed for it because of the smallness of the occasion. She had not gone far, I assure you, before the Advocate was wholly sober, to see his inmost politics ravelled out by a young lass and discovered to the most unruly of his daughters. But we took him in hand, the pair of us, and brought that matter straight. Properly managed - and that means managed by me - there is no one to compare with my papa."

"He has been a good man to me," said I.

"Well, he was a good man to Katrine, and I was there to see to it," said she.

"And she pled for me?" say I.

"She did that, and very movingly," said Miss Grant. "I would not like to tell you what she said - I find you vain enough already."

"God reward her for it!" cried I.

"With Mr. David Balfour, I suppose?" says she.

"You do me too much injustice at the last!" I cried. "I would tremble to think of her in such hard hands. Do you think I would presume, because she begged my life? She would do that for a new whelped puppy! I have had more than that to set me up, if you but ken'd. She kissed that hand of mine. Ay, but she did. And why? because she thought I was playing a brave part and might be going to my death. It was not for my sake - but I need not be telling that to you, that cannot look at me without laughter. It was for the love of what she thought was bravery. I believe there is none but me and poor Prince Charlie had that honour done them. Was this not to make a god of me? and do you not think my heart would quake when I remember it?"

"I do laugh at you a good deal, and a good deal more than is quite civil," said she; "but I will tell you one thing: if you speak to her like that, you have some glimmerings of a chance."

"Me?" I cried, "I would never dare. I can speak to you, Miss Grant, because it's a matter of indifference what ye think of me. But her? no fear!" said I.

"I think you have the largest feet in all broad Scotland," says she.

"Troth they are no very small," said I, looking down.

"Ah, poor Catriona!" cries Miss Grant.

And I could but stare upon her; for though I now see very well what she was driving at (and perhaps some justification for the same), I was never swift at the uptake in such flimsy talk.

"Ah well, Mr. David," she said, "it goes sore against my conscience, but I see I shall have to be your speaking board. She shall know you came to her straight upon the news of her imprisonment; she shall know you would not pause to eat; and of our conversation she shall hear just so much as I think convenient for a maid of her age and inexperience. Believe me, you will be in that way much better served than you could serve yourself, for I will keep the big feet out of the platter."

"You know where she is, then?" I exclaimed.

"That I do, Mr. David, and will never tell," said she.

"Why that?" I asked.

"Well," she said, "I am a good friend, as you will soon discover; and the chief of those that I am friend to is my papa. I assure you, you will never heat nor melt me out of that, so you may spare me your sheep's eyes; and adieu to your David-Balfourship for the now."

"But there is yet one thing more," I cried. "There is one thing that must be stopped, being mere ruin to herself, and to me too."

"Well," she said, "be brief; I have spent half the day on you already."

"My Lady Allardyce believes," I began - "she supposes - she thinks that I abducted her."

The colour came into Miss Grant's face, so that at first I was quite abashed to find her ear so delicate, till I bethought me she was struggling rather with mirth, a notion in which I was altogether confirmed by the shaking of her voice as she replied -

“I will take up the defence of your reputation,” she said. “You may leave it in my hands.”

And with that she withdrew out of the library.

CHAPTER XX - I CONTINUE TO MOVE IN GOOD SOCIETY

For about exactly two months I remained a guest in Prestongrange's family, where I bettered my acquaintance with the bench, the bar, and the flower of Edinburgh company. You are not to suppose my education was neglected; on the contrary, I was kept extremely busy. I studied the French, so as to be more prepared to go to Leyden; I set myself to the fencing, and wrought hard, sometimes three hours in the day, with notable advancement; at the suggestion of my cousin, Pilrig, who was an apt musician, I was put to a singing class; and by the orders of my Miss Grant, to one for the dancing, at which I must say I proved far from ornamental. However, all were good enough to say it gave me an address a little more genteel; and there is no question but I learned to manage my coat skirts and sword with more dexterity, and to stand in a room as though the same belonged to me. My clothes themselves were all earnestly re-ordered; and the most trifling circumstance, such as where I should tie my hair, or the colour of my ribbon, debated among the three misses like a thing of weight. One way with another, no doubt I was a good deal improved to look at, and acquired a bit of modest air that would have surprised the good folks at Essendean.

The two younger misses were very willing to discuss a point of my habiliment, because that was in the line of their chief thoughts. I cannot say that they appeared any other way conscious of my presence; and though always more than civil, with a kind of heartless cordiality, could not hide how much I wearied them. As for the aunt, she was a wonderful still woman; and I think she gave me much the same attention as she gave the rest of the family, which was little enough. The eldest daughter and the Advocate himself were thus my principal friends, and our familiarity was much increased by a pleasure that we took in common. Before the court met we spent a day or two at the house of Grange, living very nobly with an open table, and here it was that we three began to ride out together in the fields, a practice afterwards maintained in Edinburgh, so far as the Advocate's continual affairs permitted. When we were put in a good frame by the briskness of the exercise, the difficulties of the way, or the accidents of bad weather, my shyness wore entirely off; we forgot that we were strangers, and speech not being required, it flowed the more naturally on. Then it was that they had my story from me, bit by bit, from the time that I left Essendean, with my voyage and battle in the Covenant, wanderings in the heather, etc.; and from the interest they found in my adventures sprung the circumstance of a jaunt we made a little later on, on a day when the courts were not sitting, and of which I will tell a trifle more at length.

We took horse early, and passed first by the house of Shaws, where it stood smokeless in a great field of white frost, for it was yet early in the day. Here Prestongrange alighted down, gave me his horse, an proceeded alone to visit my uncle. My heart, I remember, swelled up bitter within me at the sight of that bare house and the thought of the old miser sitting chittering within in the cold kitchen!

"There is my home," said I; "and my family."

"Poor David Balfour!" said Miss Grant.

What passed during the visit I have never heard; but it would doubtless not be very agreeable to Ebenezer, for when the Advocate came forth again his face was dark.

"I think you will soon be the laird indeed, Mr. Davie," says he, turning half about with the one foot in the stirrup.

"I will never pretend sorrow," said I; and, to say the truth, during his absence Miss Grant and I had been embellishing the place in fancy with plantations, parterres, and a terrace - much as I have since carried out in fact.

Thence we pushed to the Queensferry, where Rankeillor gave us a good welcome, being indeed out of the body to receive so great a visitor. Here the Advocate was so unaffectedly good as to go quite fully over my affairs, sitting perhaps two hours with the Writer in his study, and expressing (I was told) a great esteem for myself and concern for my fortunes. To while this time, Miss Grant and I and young Rankeillor took boat and passed the Hope to Limekilns. Rankeillor made himself very ridiculous (and, I thought, offensive) with his admiration for the young lady, and to my wonder (only it is so common a weakness of her sex) she seemed, if anything, to be a little gratified. One use it had: for when we were come to the other side, she laid her commands on him to mind the boat, while she and I passed a little further to the alehouse. This was her own thought, for she had been taken with my account of Alison Hastie, and desired to see the lass herself. We found her once more alone - indeed, I believe her father wrought all day in the fields - and she curtsied dutifully to the gentry-folk and the beautiful young lady in the riding-coat.

"Is this all the welcome I am to get?" said I, holding out my hand. "And have you no more memory of old friends?"

"Keep me! wha's this of it?" she cried, and then, "God's truth, it's the tautit laddie!"

"The very same," says

"Mony's the time I've thocht upon you and your freen, and blythe am I to see in your braws," she cried. "Though I kent ye were come to your ain folk by the grand present that ye sent me and that I thank ye for with a' my heart."

"There," said Miss Grant to me, "run out by with ye, like a guid bairn. I didnae come here to stand and haud a candle; it's her and me that are to crack."

I suppose she stayed ten minutes in the house, but when she came forth I observed two things - that her eyes were reddened, and a silver brooch was gone out of her bosom. This very much affected me.

"I never saw you so well adorned," said I.

"O Davie man, dinna be a pompous gowk!" said she, and was more than usually sharp to me the remainder of the day.

About candlelight we came home from this excursion.

For a good while I heard nothing further of Catriona - my Miss Grant remaining quite impenetrable, and stopping my mouth with pleasantries. At last, one day that she returned from walking and found me alone in the parlour over my French, I thought there was something unusual in her looks; the colour heightened, the eyes sparkling high, and a bit of a smile continually bitten in as she regarded me. She seemed indeed like the very spirit of mischief, and, walking briskly in the room, had soon involved me in a kind of quarrel over nothing and (at the least) with nothing intended on my side. I was like Christian in the slough - the more I tried to clamber out upon the side, the deeper I became involved; until at last I heard her declare, with a great deal of passion, that she would take that answer from the hands of none, and I must down upon my knees for pardon.

The causelessness of all this fuff stirred my own bile. "I have said nothing you can properly object to," said I, "and as for my knees, that is an attitude I keep for God."

"And as a goddess I am to be served!" she cried, shaking her brown locks at me and with a bright colour. "Every man that comes within waft of my petticoats shall use me so!"

"I will go so far as ask your pardon for the fashion's sake, although I vow I know not why," I replied. "But for these play-acting postures, you can go to others."

"O Davie!" she said. "Not if I was to beg you?"

I bethought me I was fighting with a woman, which is the same as to say a child, and that upon a point entirely formal.

"I think it a bairnly thing," I said, "not worthy in you to ask, or me to render. Yet I will not refuse you, neither," said I; "and the stain, if there be any, rests with yourself." And at that I kneeled fairly down.

"There!" she cried. "There is the proper station, there is where I have been manoeuvring to bring you." And then, suddenly, "Kep," said she, flung me a folded billet, and ran from the apartment laughing.

The billet had neither place nor date. "Dear Mr. David," it began, "I get your news continually by my cousin, Miss Grant, and it is a pleisand hearing. I am very well, in a good place, among good folk, but necessitated to be quite private, though I am hoping that at long last we may meet again. All your friendships have been told me by my loving cousin, who loves us both. She bids me to send you this writing, and oversees the same. I will be asking you to do all her commands, and rest your affectionate friend, Catriona Macgregor-Drummond. P.S. - Will you not see my cousin, Allardyce?"

I think it not the least brave of my campaigns (as the soldiers say) that I should have done as I was here bidden and gone forthright to the house by Dean. But the old lady was now entirely changed and supple as a glove. By what means Miss Grant had brought this round I could never guess; I am sure, at least, she dared not to appear openly in the affair, for her papa was compromised in it pretty deep. It was he, indeed, who had persuaded Catriona to leave, or rather, not to return, to her cousin's, placing her instead with a family of Gregorys - decent people, quite at the Advocate's disposition, and in whom she might have the more confidence because they were of his own clan and family. These kept her private till all was ripe, heated and helped her to attempt her father's rescue, and after she was discharged from prison received her again into the same secrecy. Thus Prestongrange obtained and used his instrument; nor did there leak out the smallest word of his acquaintance with the daughter of James More. There was some whispering, of course, upon the escape of that discredited person; but the Government replied by a show of rigour, one of the cell porters was flogged, the lieutenant of the guard (my poor friend, Duncansby) was broken of his rank, and as for Catriona, all men were well enough pleased that her fault should be passed by in silence.

I could never induce Miss Grant to carry back an answer. "No," she would say, when I persisted, "I am going to keep the big feet out of the platter." This was the more hard to bear, as I was aware she saw my little friend many times in the week, and carried her my news whenever (as she said) I "had behaved myself." At last she treated me to what she called an indulgence, and I thought rather more of a banter. She was certainly a strong, almost a violent, friend to all she liked, chief among whom was a certain frail old gentlewoman, very blind and very witty, who dwelt on the top of a tall land on a strait close, with a nest of linnets in a cage, and thronged all day with visitors. Miss Grant was very fond to carry me there and put me to entertain her friend with the narrative of my misfortunes: and Miss Tibbie Ramsay (that was her name) was particular kind, and told me a great deal that was worth knowledge of old folks and past affairs in Scotland. I should say that from her chamber window, and not three feet away, such is the straitness of that close, it was possible to look into a barred loophole lighting the stairway of the opposite house.

Here, upon some pretext, Miss Grant left me one day alone with Miss Ramsay. I mind I thought that lady inattentive and like one preoccupied. I was besides very uncomfortable, for the window, contrary to custom, was left open and the day was cold. All at once the voice of Miss Grant sounded in my ears as from a distance.

“Here, Shaws!” she cried, “keek out of the window and see what I have broughten you.”

I think it was the prettiest sight that ever I beheld. The well of the close was all in clear shadow where a man could see distinctly, the walls very black and dingy; and there from the barred loophole I saw two faces smiling across at me - Miss Grant’s and Catriona’s.

“There!” says Miss Grant, “I wanted her to see you in your braws like the lass of Limekilns. I wanted her to see what I could make of you, when I buckled to the job in earnest!”

It came in my mind that she had been more than common particular that day upon my dress; and I think that some of the same care had been bestowed upon Catriona. For so merry and sensible a lady, Miss Grant was certainly wonderful taken up with duds.

“Catriona!” was all I could get out.

As for her, she said nothing in the world, but only waved her hand and smiled to me, and was suddenly carried away again from before the loophole.

That vision was no sooner lost than I ran to the house door, where I found I was locked in; thence back to Miss Ramsay, crying for the key, but might as well have cried upon the castle rock. She had passed her word, she said, and I must be a good lad. It was impossible to burst the door, even if it had been mannerly; it was impossible I should leap from the window, being seven storeys above ground. All I could do was to crane over the close and watch for their reappearance from the stair. It was little to see, being no more than the tops of their two heads each on a ridiculous bobbin of skirts, like to a pair of pincushions. Nor did Catriona so much as look up for a farewell; being prevented (as I heard afterwards) by Miss Grant, who told her folk were never seen to less advantage than from above downward.

On the way home, as soon as I was set free, I upbraided Miss Grant with her cruelty.

“I am sorry you was disappointed,” says she demurely. “For my part I was very pleased. You looked better than I dreaded; you looked - if it will not make you vain - a mighty pretty young man when you appeared in the window. You are to remember that she could not see your feet," says she, with the manner of one reassuring me.

"O!" cried I, "leave my feet be - they are no bigger than my neighbours'."

"They are even smaller than some," said she, "but I speak in parables like a Hebrew prophet."

"I marvel little they were sometimes stoned!" says I. "But, you miserable girl, how could you do it? Why should you care to tantalise me with a moment?"

"Love is like folk," says she; "it needs some kind of vivers."

"Oh, Barbara, let me see her properly!" I pleaded. "You can - you see her when you please; let me have half an hour."

"Who is it that is managing this love affair! You! Or me?" she asked, and as I continued to press her with my instances, fell back upon a deadly expedient: that of imitating the tones of my voice when I called on Catriona by name; with which, indeed, she held me in subjection for some days to follow.

There was never the least word heard of the memorial, or none by me. Prestongrange and his grace the Lord President may have heard of it (for what I know) on the deafest sides of their heads; they kept it to themselves, at least - the public was none the wiser; and in course of time, on November 8th, and in the midst of a prodigious storm of wind and rain, poor James of the Glens was duly hanged at Lettermore by Ballachulish.

So there was the final upshot of my politics! Innocent men have perished before James, and are like to keep on perishing (in spite of all our wisdom) till the end of time. And till the end of time young folk (who are not yet used with the duplicity of life and men) will struggle as I did, and make heroical resolves, and take long risks; and the course of events will push them upon the one side and go on like a marching army. James was hanged; and here was I dwelling in the house of Prestongrange, and grateful to him for his fatherly attention. He was hanged; and behold! when I met Mr. Simon in the causeway, I was fain to pull off my beaver to him like a good little boy before his dominie. He had been hanged by fraud and violence, and the world wagged along, and there was not a pennyweight of difference; and the villains of that horrid plot were decent, kind, respectable fathers of families, who went to kirk and took the sacrament!

But I had had my view of that detestable business they call politics - I had seen it from behind, when it is all bones and blackness; and I was cured for life of any temptations to take part in it again. A plain, quiet, private path was that which I was ambitious to walk in, when I might keep my head out of the way of dangers and my conscience out of the road of temptation. For, upon a retrospect, it appeared I had not done so grandly, after all; but with the greatest possible amount of big speech and preparation, had accomplished nothing.

The 25th of the same month a ship was advertised to sail from Leith; and I was suddenly recommended to make up my mails for Leyden. To Prestongrange I could, of course, say nothing; for I had already been a long while sorning on his house and table. But with his daughter I was more open, bewailing my fate that I should be sent out of the country, and assuring her, unless she should bring me to farewell with Catriona, I would refuse at the last hour.

“Have I not given you my advice?” she asked.

“I know you have,” said I, “and I know how much I am beholden to you already, and that I am bidden to obey your orders. But you must confess you are something too merry a lass at times to lippen to entirely.”

“I will tell you, then,” said she. “Be you on board by nine o’clock forenoon; the ship does not sail before one; keep your boat alongside; and if you are not pleased with my farewells when I shall send them, you can come ashore again and seek Katrine for yourself.”

Since I could make no more of her, I was fain to be content with this.

The day came round at last when she and I were to separate. We had been extremely intimate and familiar; I was much in her debt; and what way we were to part was a thing that put me from my sleep, like the vails I was to give to the domestic servants. I knew she considered me too backward, and rather desired to rise in her opinion on that head. Besides which, after so much affection shown and (I believe) felt upon both sides, it would have looked cold-like to be anyways stiff. Accordingly, I got my courage up and my words ready, and the last chance we were like to be alone, asked pretty boldly to be allowed to salute her in farewell.

“You forget yourself strangely, Mr. Balfour,” said she. “I cannot call to mind that I have given you any right to presume on our acquaintancy.”

I stood before her like a stopped clock, and knew not what to think, far less to say, when of a sudden she cast her arms about my neck and kissed me with the best will in the world.

“You inimitable bairn?” she cried. “Did you think that I would let us part like strangers? Because I can never keep my gravity at you five minutes on end, you must not dream I do not love you very well: I am all love and laughter, every time I cast an eye on you! And now I will give you an advice to conclude your education, which you will have need of before it’s very long.

Never ask womenfolk. They’re bound to answer ‘No’; God never made the lass that could resist the temptation. It’s supposed by divines to be the curse of Eve: because she did not say it when the devil offered her the apple, her daughters can say nothing else."

"Since I am so soon to lose my bonny professor," I began.

"This is gallant, indeed," says she curtseying.

"I would put the one question," I went on. "May I ask a lass to marry to me?"

"You think you could not marry her without!" she asked. "Or else get her to offer?"

"You see you cannot be serious," said I.

"I shall be very serious in one thing, David," said she: "I shall always be your friend."

As I got to my horse the next morning, the four ladies were all at that same window whence we had once looked down on Catriona, and all cried farewell and waved their pocket napkins as I rode away. One out of the four I knew was truly sorry; and at the thought of that, and how I had come to the door three months ago for the first time, sorrow and gratitude made a confusion in my mind.

PART II - FATHER AND DAUGHTER

CHAPTER XXI - THE VOYAGE INTO HOLLAND

The ship lay at a single anchor, well outside the pier of Leith, so that all we passengers must come to it by the means of skiffs. This was very little troublesome, for the reason that the day was a flat calm, very frosty and cloudy, and with a low shifting fog upon the water. The body of the vessel was thus quite hid as I drew near, but the tall spars of her stood high and bright in a sunshine like the flickering of a fire. She proved to be a very roomy, commodious merchant, but somewhat blunt in the bows, and loaden extraordinary deep with salt, salted salmon, and fine white linen stockings for the Dutch. Upon my coming on board, the captain welcomed me - one Sang (out of Lesmahago, I believe), a very hearty, friendly tarpaulin of a man, but at the moment in rather of a bustle. There had no other of the passengers yet appeared, so that I was left to walk about upon the deck, viewing the prospect and wondering a good deal what these farewells should be which I was promised.

All Edinburgh and the Pentland Hills glinted above me in a kind of smuisty brightness, now and again overcome with blots of cloud; of Leith there was no more than the tops of chimneys visible, and on the face of the water, where the haar lay, nothing at all. Out of this I was presently aware of a sound of oars pulling, and a little after (as if out of the smoke of a fire) a boat issued. There sat a grave man in the stern sheets, well muffled from the cold, and by his side a tall, pretty, tender figure of a maid that brought my heart to a stand. I had scarce the time to catch my breath in, and be ready to meet her, as she stepped upon the deck, smiling, and making my best bow, which was now vastly finer than some months before, when first I made it to her ladyship. No doubt we were both a good deal changed: she seemed to have shot up like a young, comely tree. She had now a kind of pretty backwardness that became her well as of one that regarded herself more highly and was fairly woman; and for another thing, the hand of the same magician had been at work upon the pair of us, and Miss Grant had made us both braw, if she could make but the one bonny.

The same cry, in words not very different, came from both of us, that the other was come in compliment to say farewell, and then we perceived in a flash we were to ship together.

"O, why will not Baby have been telling me!" she cried; and then remembered a letter she had been given, on the condition of not opening it till she was well on board. Within was an enclosure for myself, and ran thus:

"DEAR DAVIE, - What do you think of my farewell? and what do you say to your fellow passenger? Did you kiss, or did you ask? I was about to have signed here, but that would leave the purport of my question doubtful, and in my own case I ken the answer. So fill up here with good advice. Do not be too blate, and for God's sake do not try to be too forward; nothing acts you worse. I am

"Your affectionate friend and governess,

"BARBARA GRANT."

I wrote a word of answer and compliment on a leaf out of my pocketbook, put it in with another scratch from Catriona, sealed the whole with my new signet of the Balfour arms, and despatched it by the hand of Prestongrange's servant that still waited in my boat.

Then we had time to look upon each other more at leisure, which we had not done for a piece of a minute before (upon a common impulse) we shook hands again.

"Catriona?" said I. It seemed that was the first and last word of my eloquence.

"You will be glad to see me again?" says she.

"And I think that is an idle word," said I. "We are too deep friends to make speech upon such trifles."

"Is she not the girl of all the world?" she cried again. "I was never knowing such a girl so honest and so beautiful."

"And yet she cared no more for Alpin than what she did for a kale-stock," said I.

"Ah, she will say so indeed!" cries Catriona. "Yet it was for the name and the gentle kind blood that she took me up and was so good to me."

"Well, I will tell you why it was," said I. "There are all sorts of people's faces in this world. There is Barbara's face, that everyone must look at and admire, and think her a fine, brave, merry girl. And then there is your face, which is quite different - I never knew how different till to-day. You cannot see yourself, and that is why you do not understand; but it was for the love of your face that she took you up and was so good to you. And everybody in the world would do the same."

"Everybody?" says she.

"Every living soul?" said I.

"Ah, then, that will be why the soldiers at the castle took me up!" she cried,

"Barbara has been teaching you to catch me," said I.

"She will have taught me more than that at all events. She will have taught me a great deal about Mr. David - all the ill of him, and a little that was not so ill either, now and then," she said, smiling. "She will have told me all there was of Mr. David, only just that he would sail upon this very same ship. And why it is you go?"

I told her.

"Ah, well," said she, "we will be some days in company and then (I suppose) good-bye for altogether! I go to meet my father at a place of the name of Helvoetsluys, and from there to France, to be exiles by the side of our chieftain."

I could say no more than just "O!" the name of James More always drying up my very voice.

She was quick to perceive it, and to guess some portion of my thought.

"There is one thing I must be saying first of all, Mr. David," said she. "I think two of my kinsfolk have not behaved to you altogether very well. And the one of them two is James More, my father, and the other is the Laird of Prestongrange. Prestongrange will have spoken by himself, or his daughter in the place of him. But for James More, my father, I have this much to say: he lay shackled in a prison; he is a plain honest soldier and a plain Highland gentleman; what they would be after he would never be guessing; but if he had understood it was to be some prejudice to a young gentleman like yourself, he would have died first. And for the sake of all your friendships, I will be asking you to pardon my father and family for that same mistake."

"Catriona," said I, "what that mistake was I do not care to know. I know but the one thing - that you went to Prestongrange and begged my life upon your knees. O, I ken well enough it was for your father that you went, but when you were there you pleaded for me also. It is a thing I cannot speak of. There are two things I cannot think of into myself: and the one is your good words when you called yourself my little friend, and the other that you pleaded for my life. Let us never speak more, we two, of pardon or offence."

We stood after that silent, Catriona looking on the deck and I on her; and before there was more speech, a little wind having sprung up in the nor'-west, they began to shake out the sails and heave in upon the anchor.

There were six passengers besides our two selves, which made of it a full cabin. Three were solid merchants out of Leith, Kirkcaldy, and Dundee, all engaged in the same adventure into High Germany. One was a Hollander returning; the rest worthy merchants' wives, to the charge of one of whom Catriona was recommended. Mrs. Gebbie (for that was her name) was by great good fortune heavily incommoded by the sea, and lay day and night on the broad of her back. We were besides the only creatures at all young on board the Rose, except a white-faced boy that did my old duty to attend upon the table; and it came about that Catriona and I were left almost entirely to ourselves.

We had the next seats together at the table, where I waited on her with extraordinary pleasure. On deck, I made her a soft place with my cloak; and the weather being singularly fine for that season, with bright frosty days and nights, a steady, gentle wind, and scarce a sheet started all the way through the North Sea, we sat there (only now and again walking to and fro for warmth) from the first blink of the sun till eight or nine at night under the clear stars. The merchants or Captain Sang would sometimes glance and smile upon us, or pass a merry word or two and give us the go-by again; but the most part of the time they were deep in herring and chintzes and linen, or in computations of the slowness of the passage, and left us to our own concerns, which were very little important to any but ourselves.

At the first, we had a great deal to say, and thought ourselves pretty witty; and I was at a little pains to be the beau, and she (I believe) to play the young lady of experience. But soon we grew plainer with each other. I laid aside my high, clipped English (what little there was left of it) and forgot to make my Edinburgh bows and scrapes; she, upon her side, fell into a sort of kind familiarity; and we dwelt together like those of the same household, only (upon my side) with a more deep emotion. About the same time the bottom seemed to fall out of our conversation, and neither one of us the less pleased. Whiles she would tell me old wives' tales, of which she had a wonderful variety, many of them from my friend red-headed Niel. She told them very pretty, and they were pretty enough childish tales; but the pleasure to myself was in the sound of her voice, and the thought that she was telling and I listening. Whiles, again, we would sit entirely silent, not communicating even with a look, and tasting pleasure enough in the sweetness of that neighbourhood. I speak here only for myself. Of what was in the maid's mind, I am not very sure that ever I asked myself; and what was in my own, I was afraid to consider. I need make no secret of it now, either to myself or to the reader; I was fallen totally in love. She came between me and the sun. She had grown suddenly taller, as I say, but with a wholesome growth; she seemed all health, and lightness, and brave spirits; and I thought she walked like a young deer, and stood like a birch upon the mountains. It was enough for me to sit near by her on the deck; and I declare I scarce spent two thoughts upon the future, and was so well content with what I then enjoyed that I was never at the pains to imagine any further step; unless perhaps that I would be sometimes tempted to take her hand in mine and hold it there. But I was too like a miser of what joys I had, and would venture nothing on a hazard.

What we spoke was usually of ourselves or of each other, so that if anyone had been at so much pains as overhear us, he must have supposed us the most egotistical persons in the world. It befell one day when we were at this practice, that we came on a discourse of friends and friendship, and I think now that we were sailing near the wind. We said what a fine thing friendship was, and how little we had guessed of it, and how it made life a new thing, and a thousand covered things of the same kind that will have been said, since the foundation of the world, by young folk in the same predicament. Then we remarked upon the strangeness of that circumstance, that friends came together in the beginning as if they were there for the first time, and yet each had been alive a good while, losing time with other people.

"It is not much that I have done," said she, "and I could be telling you the five-fifths of it in two-three words. It is only a girl I am, and what can befall a girl, at all events? But I went with the clan in the year '45. The men marched with swords and fire-locks, and some of them in brigades in the same set of tartan; they were not backward at the marching, I can tell you. And there were gentlemen from the Low Country, with their tenants mounted and trumpets to sound, and there was a grant skirling of war-pipes. I rode on a little Highland horse on the right hand of my father, James More, and of Glengyle himself. And here is one fine thing that I remember, that Glengyle kissed me in the face, because (says he) 'my kinswoman, you are the only lady of the clan that has come out,' and me a little maid of maybe twelve years old! I saw Prince Charlie too, and the blue eyes of him; he was pretty indeed! I had his hand to kiss in front of the army. O, well, these were the good days, but it is all like a dream that I have seen and then awakened. It went what way you very well know; and these were the worst days of all, when the red-coat soldiers were out, and my father and uncles lay in the hill, and I was to be carrying them their meat in the middle night, or at the short sight of day when the cocks crow. Yes, I have walked in the night, many's the time, and my heart great in me for terror of the darkness. It is a strange thing I will never have been meddled with by a bogle; but they say a maid goes safe. Next there was my uncle's marriage, and that was a dreadful affair beyond all. Jean Kay was that woman's name; and she had me in the room with her that night at Inversnaid, the night we took her from her friends in the old, ancient manner. She would and she wouldn't; she was for marrying Rob the one minute, and the next she would be for none of him. I will never have seen such a feckless creature of a woman; surely all there was of her would tell her ay or no. Well, she was a widow; and I can never be thinking a widow a good woman."

"Catriona!" says I, "how do you make out that?"

"I do not know," said she; "I am only telling you the seeming in my heart. And then to marry a new man! Fy! But that was her; and she was married again upon my Uncle Robin, and went with him awhile to kirk and market; and then wearied, or else her friends got claught of her and talked her round, or maybe she turned ashamed; at the least of it, she ran away, and went back to her own folk, and said we had held her in the lake, and I will never tell you all what. I have never thought much of any females since that day. And so in the end my father, James More, came to be cast in prison, and you know the rest of it an well as me."

"And through all you had no friends?" said I.

"No," said she; "I have been pretty chief with two-three lasses on the braes, but not to call it friends."

"Well, mine is a plain tale," said I. "I never had a friend to my name till I met in with you."

"And that brave Mr. Stewart?" she asked.

"O, yes, I was forgetting him," I said. "But he in a man, and that in very different."

"I would think so," said she. "O, yes, it is quite different."

"And then there was one other," said I. "I once thought I had a friend, but it proved a disappointment."

She asked me who she was?

"It was a he, then," said I. "We were the two best lads at my father's school, and we thought we loved each other dearly. Well, the time came when he went to Glasgow to a merchant's house, that was his second cousin once removed; and wrote me two-three times by the carrier; and then he found new friends, and I might write till I was tired, he took no notice. Eh, Catriona, it took me a long while to forgive the world. There is not anything more bitter than to lose a fancied friend."

Then she began to question me close upon his looks and character, for we were each a great deal concerned in all that touched the other; till at last, in a very evil hour, I minded of his letters and went and fetched the bundle from the cabin.

"Here are his letters," said I, "and all the letters that ever I got. That will be the last I'll can tell of myself; ye know the lave as well as I do."

"Will you let me read them, then?" says she.

I told her, if she would be at the pains; and she bade me go away and she would read them from the one end to the other. Now, in this bundle that I gave her, there were packed together not only all the letters of my false friend, but one or two of Mr. Campbell's when he was in town at the Assembly, and to make a complete roll of all that ever was written to me, Catriona's little word, and the two I had received from Miss Grant, one when I was on the Bass and one on board that ship. But of these last I had no particular mind at the moment.

I was in that state of subjection to the thought of my friend that it mattered not what I did, nor scarce whether I was in her presence or out of it; I had caught her like some kind of a noble fever that lived continually in my bosom, by night and by day, and whether I was waking or asleep. So it befell that after I was come into the fore-part of the ship where the broad bows splashed into the billows, I was in no such hurry to return as you might fancy; rather prolonged my absence like a variety in pleasure. I do not think I am by nature much of an Epicurean: and there had come till then so small a share of pleasure in my way that I might be excused perhaps to dwell on it unduly.

When I returned to her again, I had a faint, painful impression as of a buckle slipped, so coldly she returned the packet.

"You have read them?" said I; and I thought my voice sounded not wholly natural, for I was turning in my mind for what could ail her.

"Did you mean me to read all?" she asked.

I told her "Yes," with a drooping voice.

"The last of them as well?" said she.

I knew where we were now; yet I would not lie to her either. "I gave them all without afterthought," I said, "as I supposed that you would read them. I see no harm in any."

"I will be differently made," said she. "I thank God I am differently made. It was not a fit letter to be shown me. It was not fit to be written."

"I think you are speaking of your own friend, Barbara Grant?" said I.

"There will not be anything as bitter as to lose a fancied friend," said she, quoting my own expression.

"I think it is sometimes the friendship that was fancied!" I cried. "What kind of justice do you call this, to blame me for some words that a tomfool of a madcap lass has written down upon a piece of paper? You know yourself with what respect I have behaved - and would do always."

"Yet you would show me that same letter!" says she. "I want no such friends. I can be doing very well, Mr. Balfour, without her - or you."

"This is your fine gratitude!" says I.

"I am very much obliged to you," said she. "I will be asking you to take away your - letters." She seemed to choke upon the word, so that it sounded like an oath.

"You shall never ask twice," said I; picked up that bundle, walked a little way forward and cast them as far as possible into the sea. For a very little more I could have cast myself after them.

The rest of the day I walked up and down raging. There were few names so ill but what I gave her them in my own mind before the sun went down. All that I had ever heard of Highland pride seemed quite outdone; that a girl (scarce grown) should resent so trifling an allusion, and that from her next friend, that she had near wearied me with praising of! I had bitter, sharp, hard thoughts of her, like an angry boy's. If I had kissed her indeed (I thought), perhaps she would have taken it pretty well; and only because it had been written down, and with a spice of jocularity, up she must fuff in this ridiculous passion. It seemed to me there was a want of penetration in the female sex, to make angels weep over the case of the poor men.

We were side by side again at supper, and what a change was there! She was like curdled milk to me; her face was like a wooden doll's; I could have indifferently smitten her or grovelled at her feet, but she gave me not the least occasion to do either. No sooner the meal done than she betook herself to attend on Mrs. Gebbie, which I think she had a little neglected heretofore. But she was to make up for lost time, and in what remained of the passage was extraordinary assiduous with the old lady, and on deck began to make a great deal more than I thought wise of Captain Sang. Not but what the Captain seemed a worthy, fatherly man; but I hated to behold her in the least familiarity with anyone except myself.

Altogether, she was so quick to avoid me, and so constant to keep herself surrounded with others, that I must watch a long while before I could find my opportunity; and after it was found, I made not much of it, as you are now to hear.

"I have no guess how I have offended," said I; "it should scarce be beyond pardon, then. O, try if you can pardon me."

"I have no pardon to give," said she; and the words seemed to come out of her throat like marbles. "I will be very much obliged for all your friendships." And she made me an eighth part of a curtsey.

But I had schooled myself beforehand to say more, and I was going to say it too.

"There is one thing," said I. "If I have shocked your particularity by the showing of that letter, it cannot touch Miss Grant. She wrote not to you, but to a poor, common, ordinary lad, who might have had more sense than show it. If you are to blame me - "

"I will advise you to say no more about that girl, at all events!" said Catriona. "It is her I will never look the road of, not if she lay dying." She turned away from me, and suddenly back. "Will you swear you will have no more to deal with her?" she cried.

"Indeed, and I will never be so unjust then," said I; "nor yet so ungrateful."

And now it was I that turned away.

CHAPTER XXII - HELVOETSLUYS

The weather in the end considerably worsened; the wind sang in the shrouds, the sea swelled higher, and the ship began to labour and cry out among the billows. The song of the leadsman in the chains was now scarce ceasing, for we thrid all the way among shoals. About nine in the morning, in a burst of wintry sun between two squalls of hail, I had my first look of Holland - a line of windmills birling in the breeze. It was besides my first knowledge of these daft-like contrivances, which gave me a near sense of foreign travel and a new world and life. We came to an anchor about half-past eleven, outside the harbour of Helvoetsluys, in a place where the sea sometimes broke and the ship pitched outrageously. You may be sure we were all on deck save Mrs. Gebbie, some of us in cloaks, others mantled in the ship's tarpaulins, all clinging on by ropes, and jesting the most like old sailor-folk that we could imitate.

Presently a boat, that was backed like a partancrab, came gingerly alongside, and the skipper of it hailed our master in the Dutch. Thence Captain Sang turned, very troubled-like, to Catriona; and the rest of us crowding about, the nature of the difficulty was made plain to all. The Rose was bound to the port of Rotterdam, whither the other passengers were in a great impatience to arrive, in view of a conveyance due to leave that very evening in the direction of the Upper Germany. This, with the present half-gale of wind, the captain (if no time were lost) declared himself still capable to save. Now James More had trysted in Helvoet with his daughter, and the captain had engaged to call before the port and place her (according to the custom) in a shore boat. There was the boat, to be sure, and here was Catriona ready: but both our master and the patroon of the boat scrupled at the risk, and the first was in no humour to delay.

"Your father," said he, "would be gey an little pleased if we was to break a leg to ye, Miss Drummond, let-a-be drowning of you. Take my way of it," says he, "and come on-by with the rest of us here to Rotterdam. Ye can get a passage down the Maes in a sailing scoot as far as to the Brill, and thence on again, by a place in a rattel-waggon, back to Helvoet."

But Catriona would hear of no change. She looked white-like as she beheld the bursting of the sprays, the green seas that sometimes poured upon the fore-castle, and the perpetual bounding and swooping of the boat among the billows; but she stood firmly by her father's orders. "My father, James More, will have arranged it so," was her first word and her last. I thought it very idle and indeed wanton in the girl to be so literal and stand opposite to so much kind advice; but the fact is she had a very good reason, if she would have told us. Sailing scoots and rattel-waggons are excellent things; only the use of them must first be paid for, and all she was possessed of in the world was just two shillings and a penny halfpenny sterling. So it fell out that captain and passengers, not knowing of her destitution - and she being too proud to tell them - spoke in vain.

"But you ken nae French and nae Dutch neither," said one.

"It is very true," says she, "but since the year '46 there are so many of the honest Scotch abroad that I will be doing very well. I thank you."

There was a pretty country simplicity in this that made some laugh, others looked the more sorry, and Mr. Gebbie fall outright in a passion. I believe he knew it was his duty (his wife having accepted charge of the girl) to have gone ashore with her and seen her safe: nothing would have induced him to have done so, since it must have involved the lose of his conveyance; and I think he made it up to his conscience by the loudness of his voice. At least he broke out upon Captain Sang, raging and saying the thing was a disgrace; that it was mere death to try to leave the ship, and at any event we could not cast down an innocent maid in a boatful of nasty Holland fishers, and leave her to her fate. I was thinking something of the same; took the mate upon one side, arranged with him to send on my chests by track-scoot to an address I had in Leyden, and stood up and signalled to the fishers.

"I will go ashore with the young lady, Captain Sang," said I. "It is all one what way I go to Leyden;" and leaped at the same time into the boat, which I managed not so elegantly but what I fell with two of the fishers in the bilge.

From the boat the business appeared yet more precarious than from the ship, she stood so high over us, swung down so swift, and menaced us so perpetually with her plunging and passaging upon the anchor cable. I began to think I had made a fool's bargain, that it was merely impossible Catriona should be got on board to me, and that I stood to be set ashore at Helvoet all by myself and with no hope of any reward but the pleasure of embracing James More, if I should want to. But this was to reckon without the lass's courage. She had seen me leap with very little appearance (however much reality) of hesitation; to be sure, she was not to be beat by her discarded friend. Up she stood on the bulwarks and held by a stay, the wind blowing in her petticoats, which made the enterprise more dangerous, and gave us rather more of a view of her stockings than would be thought genteel in cities. There was no minute lost, and scarce time given for any to interfere if they had wished the same. I stood up on the other side and spread my arms; the ship swung down on us, the patroon humoured his boat nearer in than was perhaps wholly safe, and Catriona leaped into the air. I was so happy as to catch her, and the fishers readily supporting us, escaped a fall. She held to me a moment very tight, breathing quick and deep; thence (she still clinging to me with both hands) we were passed aft to our places by the steersman; and Captain Sang and all the crew and passengers cheering and crying farewell, the boat was put about for shore.

As soon as Catriona came a little to herself she unhanded me suddenly, but said no word. No more did I; and indeed the whistling of the wind and the breaching of the sprays made it no time for speech; and our crew not only toiled excessively but made extremely little way, so that the Rose had got her anchor and was off again before we had approached the harbour mouth.

We were no sooner in smooth water than the patroon, according to their beastly Hollands custom, stopped his boat and required of us our fares. Two guilders was the man's demand - between three and four shillings English money - for each passenger. But at this Catriona began to cry out with a vast deal of agitation. She had asked of Captain Sang, she said, and the fare was but an English shilling. "Do you think I will have come on board and not ask first?" cries she. The patroon scolded back upon her in a lingo where the oaths were English and the rest right Hollands; till at last (seeing her near tears) I privately slipped in the rogue's hand six shillings, whereupon he was obliging enough to receive from her the other shilling without more complaint. No doubt I was a good deal nettled and ashamed. I like to see folk thrifty, but not with so much passion; and I daresay it would be rather coldly that I asked her, as the boat moved on again for shore, where it was that she was trysted with her father.

"He is to be inquired of at the house of one Sprott, an honest Scotch merchant," says she; and then with the same breath, "I am wishing to thank you very much - you are a brave friend to me."

"It will be time enough when I get you to your father," said I, little thinking that I spoke so true. "I can tell him a fine tale of a loyal daughter."

"O, I do not think I will be a loyal girl, at all events," she cried, with a great deal of painfulness in the expression. "I do not think my heart is true."

"Yet there are very few that would have made that leap, and all to obey a father's orders," I observed.

"I cannot have you to be thinking of me so," she cried again. "When you had done that same, how would I stop behind? And at all events that was not all the reasons." Whereupon, with a burning face, she told me the plain truth upon her poverty.

"Good guide us!" cried I, "what kind of daft-like proceeding is this, to let yourself be launched on the continent of Europe with an empty purse - I count it hardly decent - scant decent!" I cried.

"You forget James More, my father, is a poor gentleman," said she. "He is a hunted exile."

"But I think not all your friends are hunted exiles," I exclaimed. "And was this fair to them that care for you? Was it fair to me? was it fair to Miss Grant that counselled you to go, and would be driven fair horn-mad if she could hear of it? Was it even fair to these Gregory folk that you were living with, and used you lovingly? It's a blessing you have fallen in my hands! Suppose your father hindered by an accident, what would become of you here, and you your lee-lone in a strange place? The thought of the thing frightens me," I said.

"I will have lied to all of them," she replied. "I will have told them all that I had plenty. I told her too. I could not be lowering James More to them."

I found out later on that she must have lowered him in the very dust, for the lie was originally the father's, not the daughter's, and she thus obliged to persevere in it for the man's reputation. But at the time I was ignorant of this, and the mere thought of her destitution and the perils in which see must have fallen, had ruffled me almost beyond reason.

"Well, well, well," said I, "you will have to learn more sense."

I left her mails for the moment in an inn upon the shore, where I got a direction for Sprott's house in my new French, and we walked there - it was some little way - beholding the place with wonder as we went. Indeed, there was much for Scots folk to admire: canals and trees being intermingled with the houses; the houses, each within itself, of a brave red brick, the colour of a rose, with steps and benches of blue marble at the cheek of every door, and the whole town so clean you might have dined upon the causeway. Sprott was within, upon his ledgers, in a low parlour, very neat and clean, and set out with china and pictures, and a globe of the earth in a brass frame. He was a big-chafted, ruddy, lusty man, with a crooked hard look to him; and he made us not that much civility as offer us a seat.

"Is James More Macgregor now in Helvoet, sir?" says I.

"I ken nobody by such a name," says he, impatient-like.

"Since you are so particular," says I, "I will amend my question, and ask you where we are to find in Helvoet one James Drummond, alias Macgregor, alias James More, late tenant in Inveronachile?"

"Sir," says he, "he may be in Hell for what I ken, and for my part I wish he was."

"The young lady is that gentleman's daughter, sir," said I, "before whom, I think you will agree with me, it is not very becoming to discuss his character."

"I have nothing to make either with him, or her, or you!" cries he in his gross voice.

"Under your favour, Mr. Sprott," said I, "this young lady is come from Scotland seeking him, and by whatever mistake, was given the name of your house for a direction. An error it seems to have been, but I think this places both you and me - who am but her fellow-traveller by accident - under a strong obligation to help our countrywoman."

"Will you ding me daft?" he cries. "I tell ye I ken naething and care less either for him or his breed. I tell ye the man owes me money."

"That may very well be, sir," said I, who was now rather more angry than himself. "At least, I owe you nothing; the young lady is under my protection; and I am neither at all used with these manners, nor in the least content with them."

As I said this, and without particularly thinking what I did, I drew a step or two nearer to his table; thus striking, by mere good fortune, on the only argument that could at all affect the man. The blood left his lusty countenance.

"For the Lord's sake dinna be hasty, sir!" he cried. "I am truly wishfu' no to be offensive. But ye ken, sir, I'm like a wheen guid-natured, honest, canty auld fellows - my bark is waur nor my bite. To hear me, ye micht whiles fancy I was a wee thing dour; but na, na! it's a kind auld fallow at heart, Sandie Sprott! And ye could never imagine the fyke and fash this man has been to me."

"Very good, sir," said I. "Then I will make that much freedom with your kindness as trouble you for your last news of Mr. Drummond."

"You're welcome, sir!" said he. "As for the young leddy (my respects to her!), he'll just have clean forgotten her. I ken the man, ye see; I have lost siller by him ere now. He thinks of naebody but just himsel'; clan, king, or dauchter, if he can get his wameful, he would give them a' the go-by! ay, or his correspondent either. For there is a sense in whilk I may be nearly almost said to be his correspondent. The fact is, we are employed thegether in a business affair, and I think it's like to turn out a dear affair for Sandie Sprott. The man's as guid's my pairtner, and I give ye my mere word I ken naething by where he is. He micht be coming here to Helvoet; he micht come here the morn, he michtnae come for a twalmouth; I would wonder at naething - or just at the ae thing, and that's if he was to pay me my siller. Ye see what way I stand with it; and it's clear I'm no very likely to meddle up with the young leddy, as ye ca' her. She cannae stop here, that's ae thing certain sure. Dod, sir, I'm a lone man! If I was to tak her in, its highly possible the hellicat would try and gar me marry her when he turned up."

"Enough of this talk," said I. "I will take the young leddy among better friends. Give me, pen, ink, and paper, and I will leave here for James More the address of my correspondent in Leyden. He can inquire from me where he is to seek his daughter."

This word I wrote and sealed; which while I was doing, Sprott of his own motion made a welcome offer, to charge himself with Miss Drummond's mails, and even send a porter for them to the inn. I advanced him to that effect a dollar or two to be a cover, and he gave me an acknowledgment in writing of the sum.

Whereupon (I giving my arm to Catriona) we left the house of this unpalatable rascal. She had said no word throughout, leaving me to judge and speak in her place; I, upon my side, had been careful not to embarrass her by a glance; and even now, although my heart still glowed inside of me with shame and anger, I made it my affair to seem quite easy.

"Now," said I, "let us get back to yon same inn where they can speak the French, have a piece of dinner, and inquire for conveyances to Rotterdam. I will never be easy till I have you safe again in the hands of Mrs. Gebbie."

"I suppose it will have to be," said Catriona, "though whoever will be pleased, I do not think it will be her. And I will remind you this once again that I have but one shilling, and three baubees."

"And just this once again," said I, "I will remind you it was a blessing that I came alongst with you."

"What else would I be thinking all this time?" says she, and I thought weighed a little on my arm. "It is you that are the good friend to me."

CHAPTER XXIII - TRAVELS IN HOLLAND

The rattel-waggon, which is a kind of a long waggon set with benches, carried us in four hours of travel to the great city of Rotterdam. It was long past dark by then, but the streets were pretty brightly lighted and thronged with wild-like, outlandish characters - bearded Hebrews, black men, and the hordes of courtesans, most indecently adorned with finery and stopping seamen by their very sleeves; the clash of talk about us made our heads to whirl; and what was the most unexpected of all, we appeared to be no more struck with all these foreigners than they with us. I made the best face I could, for the lass's sake and my own credit; but the truth is I felt like a lost sheep, and my heart beat in my bosom with anxiety. Once or twice I inquired after the harbour or the berth of the ship Rose: but either fell on some who spoke only Hollands, or my own French failed me. Trying a street at a venture, I came upon a lane of lighted houses, the doors and windows thronged with wauf-like painted women; these jostled and mocked upon us as we passed, and I was thankful we had nothing of their language. A little after we issued forth upon an open place along the harbour.

"We shall be doing now," cries I, as soon as I spied masts. "Let us walk here by the harbour. We are sure to meet some that has the English, and at the best of it we may light upon that very ship."

We did the next best, as happened; for, about nine of the evening, whom should we walk into the arms of but Captain Sang? He told us they had made their run in the most incredible brief time, the wind holding strong till they reached port; by which means his passengers were all gone already on their further travels. It was impossible to chase after the Gebbies into the High Germany, and we had no other acquaintance to fall back upon but Captain Sang himself. It was the more gratifying to find the man friendly and wishful to assist. He made it a small affair to find some good plain family of merchants, where Catriona might harbour till the Rose was loaden; declared he would then blithely carry her back to Leith for nothing and see her safe in the hands of Mr. Gregory; and in the meanwhile carried us to a late ordinary for the meal we stood in need of. He seemed extremely friendly, as I say, but what surprised me a good deal, rather boisterous in the bargain; and the cause of this was soon to appear. For at the ordinary, calling for Rhenish wine and drinking of it deep, he soon became unutterably tipsy. In this case, as too common with all men, but especially with those of his rough trade, what little sense or manners he possessed deserted him; and he behaved himself so scandalous to the young lady, jesting most ill-favouredly at the figure she had made on the ship's rail, that I had no resource but carry her suddenly away.

She came out of the ordinary clinging to me close. "Take me away, David," she said. "You keep me. I am not afraid with you."

"And have no cause, my little friend!" cried I, and could have found it in my heart to weep.

"Where will you be taking me?" she said again. "Don't leave me at all events - never leave me."

"Where am I taking you to?" says I stopping, for I had been staving on ahead in mere blindness. "I must stop and think. But I'll not leave you, Catriona; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if I should fail or fash you."

She crept close into me by way of a reply.

"Here," I said, "is the stillest place we have hit on yet in this busy byke of a city. Let us sit down here under yon tree and consider of our course."

That tree (which I am little like to forget) stood hard by the harbour side. It was like a black night, but lights were in the houses, and nearer hand in the quiet ships; there was a shining of the city on the one hand, and a buzz hung over it of many thousands walking and talking; on the other, it was dark and the water bubbled on the sides. I spread my cloak upon a builder's stone, and made her sit there; she would have kept her hold upon me, for she still shook with the late affronts; but I wanted to think clear, disengaged myself, and paced to and fro before her, in the manner of what we call a smuggler's walk, belabouring my brains for any remedy. By the course of these scattering thoughts I was brought suddenly face to face with a remembrance that, in the heat and haste of our departure, I had left Captain Sang to pay the ordinary. At this I began to laugh out loud, for I thought the man well served; and at the same time, by an instinctive movement, carried my hand to the pocket where my money was. I suppose it was in the lane where the women jostled us; but there is only the one thing certain, that my purse was gone.

"You will have thought of something good," said she, observing me to pause.

At the pinch we were in, my mind became suddenly clear as a perspective glass, and I saw there was no choice of methods. I had not one doit of coin, but in my pocket-book I had still my letter on the Leyden merchant; and there was now but the one way to get to Leyden, and that was to walk on our two feet.

"Catriona," said I, "I know you're brave and I believe you're strong - do you think you could walk thirty miles on a plain road?" We found it, I believe, scarce the two-thirds of that, but such was my notion of the distance.

"David," she said, "if you will just keep near, I will go anywhere and do anything. The courage of my heart, it is all broken. Do not be leaving me in this horrible country by myself, and I will do all else."

"Can you start now and march all night?" said I.

"I will do all that you can ask of me," she said, "and never ask you why. I have been a bad ungrateful girl to you; and do what you please with me now! And I think Miss Barbara Grant is the best lady in the world," she added, "and I do not see what she would deny you for at all events."

This was Greek and Hebrew to me; but I had other matters to consider, and the first of these was to get clear of that city on the Leyden road. It proved a cruel problem; and it may have been one or two at night ere we had solved it. Once beyond the houses, there was neither moon nor stars to guide us; only the whiteness of the way in the midst and a blackness of an alley on both hands. The walking was besides made most extraordinary difficult by a plain black frost that fell suddenly in the small hours and turned that highway into one long slide.

"Well, Catriona," said I, "here we are like the king's sons and the old wives' daughters in your daft-like Highland tales. Soon we'll be going over the 'seven Bens, the seven glens and the seven mountain moors'." Which was a common byword or overcome in those tales of hers that had stuck in my memory.

"Ah," says she, "but here are no glens or mountains! Though I will never be denying but what the trees and some of the plain places hereabouts are very pretty. But our country is the best yet."

"I wish we could say as much for our own folk," says I, recalling Sprott and Sang, and perhaps James More himself.

"I will never complain of the country of my friend," said she, and spoke it out with an accent so particular that I seemed to see the look upon her face.

I caught in my breath sharp and came near falling (for my pains) on the black ice.

"I do not know what you think, Catriona," said I, when I was a little recovered, "but this has been the best day yet! I think shame to say it, when you have met in with such misfortunes and disfavours; but for me, it has been the best day yet."

"It was a good day when you showed me so much love," said she.

"And yet I think shame to be happy too," I went on, "and you here on the road in the black night."

"Where in the great world would I be else?" she cried. "I am thinking I am safest where I am with you."

"I am quite forgiven, then?" I asked.

"Will you not forgive me that time so much as not to take it in your mouth again?" she cried. "There is nothing in this heart to you but thanks. But I will be honest too," she added, with a kind of suddenness, "and I'll never can forgive that girl."

"Is this Miss Grant again?" said I. "You said yourself she was the best lady in the world."

"So she will be, indeed!" says Catriona. "But I will never forgive her for all that. I will never, never forgive her, and let me hear tell of her no more."

"Well," said I, "this beats all that ever came to my knowledge; and I wonder that you can indulge yourself in such bairnly whims. Here is a young lady that was the best friend in the world to the both of us, that learned us how to dress ourselves, and in a great manner how to behave, as anyone can see that knew us both before and after."

But Catriona stopped square in the midst of the highway.

"It is this way of it," said she. "Either you will go on to speak of her, and I will go back to yon town, and let come of it what God pleases! Or else you will do me that politeness to talk of other things."

I was the most nonplussed person in this world; but I bethought me that she depended altogether on my help, that she was of the frail sex and not so much beyond a child, and it was for me to be wise for the pair of us.

"My dear girl," said I, "I can make neither head nor tails of this; but God forbid that I should do anything to set you on the jee. As for talking of Miss Grant, I have no such a mind to it, and I believe it was yourself began it. My only design (if I took you up at all) was for your own improvement, for I hate the very look of injustice. Not that I do not wish you to have a good pride and a nice female delicacy; they become you well; but here you show them to excess."

"Well, then, have you done?" said she.

"I have done," said I.

"A very good thing," said she, and we went on again, but now in silence.

It was an eerie employment to walk in the gross night, beholding only shadows and hearing nought but our own steps. At first, I believe our hearts burned against each other with a deal of enmity; but the darkness and the cold, and the silence, which only the cocks sometimes interrupted, or sometimes the farmyard dogs, had pretty soon brought down our pride to the dust; and for my own particular, I would have jumped at any decent opening for speech.

Before the day peeped, came on a warmish rain, and the frost was all wiped away from among our feet. I took my cloak to her and sought to hap her in the same; she bade me, rather impatiently, to keep it.

"Indeed and I will do no such thing," said I. "Here am I, a great, ugly lad that has seen all kinds of weather, and here are you a tender, pretty maid! My dear, you would not put me to a shame?"

Without more words she let me cover her; which as I was doing in the darkness, I let my hand rest a moment on her shoulder, almost like an embrace.

"You must try to be more patient of your friend," said I.

I thought she seemed to lean the least thing in the world against my bosom, or perhaps it was but fancy.

"There will be no end to your goodness," said she.

And we went on again in silence; but now all was changed; and the happiness that was in my heart was like a fire in a great chimney.

The rain passed ere day; it was but a sloppy morning as we came into the town of Delft. The red gabled houses made a handsome show on either hand of a canal; the servant lassies were out slestering and scrubbing at the very stones upon the public highway; smoke rose from a hundred kitchens; and it came in upon me strongly it was time to break our fasts.

"Catriona," said I, "I believe you have yet a shilling and three baubees?"

"Are you wanting it?" said she, and passed me her purse. "I am wishing it was five pounds! What will you want it for?"

"And what have we been walking for all night, like a pair of waif Egyptians!" says I. "Just because I was robbed of my purse and all I possessed in that unchancy town of Rotterdam. I will tell you of it now, because I think the worst is over, but we have still a good tramp before us till we get to where my money is, and if you would not buy me a piece of bread, I were like to go fasting."

She looked at me with open eyes. By the light of the new day she was all black and pale for weariness, so that my heart smote me for her. But as for her, she broke out laughing.

"My torture! are we beggars then!" she cried. "You too? O, I could have wished for this same thing! And I am glad to buy your breakfast to you. But it would be pleisand if I would have had to dance to get a meal to you! For I believe they are not very well acquainted with our manner of dancing over here, and might be paying for the curiosity of that sight."

I could have kissed her for that word, not with a lover's mind, but in a heat of admiration. For it always warms a man to see a woman brave.

We got a drink of milk from a country wife but new come to the town, and in a baker's, a piece of excellent, hot, sweet-smelling bread, which we ate upon the road as we went on. That road from Delft to the Hague is just five miles of a fine avenue shaded with trees, a canal on the one hand, on the other excellent pastures of cattle. It was pleasant here indeed.

"And now, Davie," said she, "what will you do with me at all events?"

"It is what we have to speak of," said I, "and the sooner yet the better. I can come by money in Leyden; that will be all well. But the trouble is how to dispose of you until your father come. I thought last night you seemed a little sweir to part from me?"

"It will be more than seeming then," said she.

"You are a very young maid," said I, "and I am but a very young callant. This is a great piece of difficulty. What way are we to manage? Unless indeed, you could pass to be my sister?"

"And what for no?" said she, "if you would let me!"

"I wish you were so, indeed," I cried. "I would be a fine man if I had such a sister. But the rub is that you are Catriona Drummond."

"And now I will be Catriona Balfour," she said. "And who is to ken? They are all strange folk here."

"If you think that it would do," says I. "I own it troubles me. I would like it very ill, if I advised you at all wrong."

"David, I have no friend here but you," she said.

"The mere truth is, I am too young to be your friend," said I. "I am too young to advise you, or you to be advised. I see not what else we are to do, and yet I ought to warn you."

"I will have no choice left," said she. "My father James More has not used me very well, and it is not the first time, I am cast upon your hands like a sack of barley meal, and have nothing else to think of but your pleasure. If you will have me, good and well. If you will not" - she turned and touched her hand upon my arm - "David, I am afraid," said she.

"No, but I ought to warn you," I began; and then bethought me I was the bearer of the purse, and it would never do to seem too churlish. "Catriona," said I, "don't misunderstand me: I am just trying to do my duty by you, girl! Here am I going alone to this strange city, to be a solitary student there; and here is this chance arisen that you might dwell with me a bit, and be like my sister; you can surely understand this much, my dear, that I would just love to have you?"

"Well, and here I am," said she. "So that's soon settled."

I know I was in duty bounden to have spoke more plain. I know this was a great blot on my character, for which I was lucky that I did not pay more dear. But I minded how easy her delicacy had been startled with a word of kissing her in Barbara's letter; now that she depended on me, how was I to be more bold? Besides, the truth is, I could see no other feasible method to dispose of her. And I daresay inclination pulled me very strong.

A little beyond the Hague she fell very lame and made the rest of the distance heavily enough. Twice she must rest by the wayside, which she did with pretty apologies, calling herself a shame to the Highlands and the race she came of, and nothing but a hindrance to myself. It was her excuse, she said, that she was not much used with walking shod. I would have had her strip off her shoes and stockings and go barefoot. But she pointed out to me that the women of that country, even in the landward roads, appeared to be all shod.

"I must not be disgracing my brother," said she, and was very merry with it all, although her face told tales of her.

There is a garden in that city we were bound to, sanded below with clean sand, the trees meeting overhead, some of them trimmed, some preached, and the whole place beautified with alleys and arbours. Here I left Catriona, and went forward by myself to find my correspondent. There I drew on my credit, and asked to be recommended to some decent, retired lodging. My baggage being not yet arrived, I told him I supposed I should require his caution with the people of the house; and explained that, my sister being come for a while to keep house with me, I should be wanting two chambers. This was all very well; but the trouble was that Mr. Balfour in his letter of recommendation had condescended on a great deal of particulars, and never a word of any sister in the case. I could see my Dutchman was extremely suspicious; and viewing me over the rims of a great pair of spectacles - he was a poor, frail body, and reminded me of an infirm rabbit - he began to question me close.

Here I fell in a panic. Suppose he accept my tale (thinks I), suppose he invite my sister to his house, and that I bring her. I shall have a fine ravelled pirn to unwind, and may end by disgracing both the lassie and myself. Thereupon I began hastily to expound to him my sister's character. She was of a bashful disposition, it appeared, and be extremely fearful of meeting strangers that I had left her at that moment sitting in a public place alone. And then, being launched upon the stream of falsehood, I must do like all the rest of the world in the same circumstance, and plunge in deeper than was any service; adding some altogether needless particulars of Miss Balfour's ill-health and retirement during childhood. In the midst of which I awoke to a sense of my behaviour, and was turned to one blush.

The old gentleman was not so much deceived but what he discovered a willingness to be quit of me. But he was first of all a man of business; and knowing that my money was good enough, however it might be with my conduct, he was so far obliging as to send his son to be my guide and caution in the matter of a lodging. This implied my presenting of the young man to Catriona. The poor, pretty child was much recovered with resting, looked and behaved to perfection, and took my arm and gave me the name of brother more easily than I could answer her. But there was one misfortune: thinking to help, she was rather towardly than otherwise to my Dutchman. And I could not but reflect that Miss Balfour had rather suddenly outgrown her bashfulness. And there was another thing, the difference of our speech. I had the Low Country tongue and dwelled upon my words; she had a hill voice, spoke with something of an English accent, only far more delightful, and was scarce quite fit to be called a deacon in the craft of talking English grammar; so that, for a brother and sister, we made a most uneven pair. But the young Hollander was a heavy dog, without so much spirit in his belly as to remark her prettiness, for which I scorned him. And as soon as he had found a cover to our heads, he left us alone, which was the greater service of the two.

CHAPTER XXIV - FULL STORY OF A COPY OF HEINECCIUS

The place found was in the upper part of a house backed on a canal. We had two rooms, the second entering from the first; each had a chimney built out into the floor in the Dutch manner; and being alongside, each had the same prospect from the window of the top of a tree below us in a little court, of a piece of the canal, and of houses in the Hollands architecture and a church spire upon the further side. A full set of bells hung in that spire and made delightful music; and when there was any sun at all, it shone direct in our two chambers. From a tavern hard by we had good meals sent in.

The first night we were both pretty weary, and she extremely so. There was little talk between us, and I packed her off to her bed as soon as she had eaten. The first thing in the morning I wrote word to Sprott to have her mails sent on, together with a line to Alan at his chief's; and had the same despatched, and her breakfast ready, ere I waked her. I was a little abashed when she came forth in her one habit, and the mud of the way upon her stockings. By what inquiries I had made, it seemed a good few days must pass before her mails could come to hand in Leyden, and it was plainly needful she must have a shift of things. She was unwilling at first that I should go to that expense; but I reminded her she was now a rich man's sister and must appear suitably in the part, and we had not got to the second merchant's before she was entirely charmed into the spirit of the thing, and her eyes shining. It pleased me to see her so innocent and thorough in this pleasure. What was more extraordinary was the passion into which I fell on it myself; being never satisfied that I had bought her enough or fine enough, and never weary of beholding her in different attires. Indeed, I began to understand some little of Miss Grant's immersion in the interest of clothes; for the truth is, when you have the ground of a beautiful person to adorn, the whole business becomes beautiful. The Dutch chintzes I should say were extraordinary cheap and fine; but I would be ashamed to set down what I paid for stockings to her. Altogether I spent so great a sum upon this pleasuring (as I may call it) that I was ashamed for a great while to spend more; and by way of a set-off, I left our chambers pretty bare. If we had beds, if Catriona was a little braw, and I had light to see her by, we were richly enough lodged for me.

By the end of this merchandising I was glad to leave her at the door with all our purchases, and go for a long walk alone in which to read myself a lecture. Here had I taken under my roof, and as good as to my bosom, a young lass extremely beautiful, and whose innocence was her peril. My talk with the old Dutchman, and the lies to which I was constrained, had already given me a sense of how my conduct must appear to others; and now, after the strong admiration I had just experienced and the immoderacy with which I had continued my vain purchases, I began to think of it myself as very hazarded. I bethought me, if I had a sister indeed, whether I would so expose her; then, judging the case too problematical, I varied my question into this, whether I would so trust Catriona in the hands of any other Christian being; the answer to which made my face to burn. The more cause, since I had been entrapped and had entrapped the girl into an undue situation, that I should behave in it with scrupulous nicety. She depended on me wholly for her bread and shelter; in case I should alarm her delicacy, she had no retreat. Besides I was her host and her protector; and the more irregularly I had fallen in these positions, the less excuse for me if I should profit by the same to forward even the most honest suit; for with the opportunities that I enjoyed, and which no wise parent would have suffered for a moment, even the most honest suit would be unfair. I saw I must be extremely hold-off in my relations; and yet not too much so neither; for if I had no right to appear at all in the character of a suitor, I must yet appear continually, and if possible agreeably, in that of host. It was plain I should require a great deal of tact and conduct, perhaps more than my years afforded. But I had rushed in where angels might have feared to tread, and there was no way out of that position save by behaving right while I was in it. I made a set of rules for my guidance; prayed for strength to be enabled to observe them, and as a more human aid to the same end purchased a study-book in law. This being all that I could think of, I relaxed from these grave considerations; whereupon my mind bubbled at once into an effervescency of pleasing spirits, and it was like one treading on air that I turned homeward. As I thought that name of home, and recalled the image of that figure awaiting me between four walls, my heart beat upon my bosom.

My troubles began with my return. She ran to greet me with an obvious and affecting pleasure. She was clad, besides, entirely in the new clothes that I had bought for her; looked in them beyond expression well; and must walk about and drop me curtseys to display them and to be admired. I am sure I did it with an ill grace, for I thought to have choked upon the words.

“Well,” she said, “if you will not be caring for my pretty clothes, see what I have done with our two chambers.” And she showed me the place all very finely swept, and the fires glowing in the two chimneys.

I was glad of a chance to seem a little more severe than I quite felt.

"Catriona," said I, "I am very much displeased with you, and you must never again lay a hand upon my room. One of us two must have the rule while we are here together; it is most fit it should be I who am both the man and the elder; and I give you that for my command."

She dropped me one of her curtseys; which were extraordinary taking. "If you will be cross," said she, "I must be making pretty manners at you, Davie. I will be very obedient, as I should be when every stitch upon all there is of me belongs to you. But you will not be very cross either, because now I have not anyone else."

This struck me hard, and I made haste, in a kind of penitence, to blot out all the good effect of my last speech. In this direction progress was more easy, being down hill; she led me forward, smiling; at the sight of her, in the brightness of the fire and with her pretty becks and looks, my heart was altogether melted. We made our meal with infinite mirth and tenderness; and the two seemed to be commingled into one, so that our very laughter sounded like a kindness.

In the midst of which I awoke to better recollections, made a lame word of excuse, and set myself boorishly to my studies. It was a substantial, instructive book that I had bought, by the late Dr. Heineccius, in which I was to do a great deal reading these next few days, and often very glad that I had no one to question me of what I read. Methought she bit her lip at me a little, and that cut me. Indeed it left her wholly solitary, the more as she was very little of a reader, and had never a book. But what was I to do?

So the rest of the evening flowed by almost without speech.

I could have beat myself. I could not lie in my bed that night for rage and repentance, but walked to and fro on my bare feet till I was nearly perished, for the chimney was gone out and the frost keen. The thought of her in the next room, the thought that she might even hear me as I walked, the remembrance of my churlishness and that I must continue to practise the same ungrateful course or be dishonoured, put me beside my reason. I stood like a man between Scylla and Charybdis: What must she think of me? was my one thought that softened me continually into weakness. What is to become of us? the other which steeled me again to resolution. This was my first night of wakefulness and divided counsels, of which I was now to pass many, pacing like a madman, sometimes weeping like a childish boy, sometimes praying (I fain would hope) like a Christian.

But prayer is not very difficult, and the hitch comes in practice. In her presence, and above all if I allowed any beginning of familiarity, I found I had very little command of what should follow. But to sit all day in the same room with her, and feign to be engaged upon Heineccius, surpassed my strength. So that I fell instead upon the expedient of absenting myself so much as I was able; taking out classes and sitting there regularly, often with small attention, the test of which I found the other day in a note-book of that period, where I had left off to follow an edifying lecture and actually scribbled in my book some very ill verses, though the Latinity is rather better than I thought that I could ever have compassed. The evil of this course was unhappily near as great as its advantage. I had the less time of trial, but I believe, while the time lasted, I was tried the more extremely. For she being so much left to solitude, she came to greet my return with an increasing fervour that came nigh to overmaster me. These friendly offers I must barbarously cast back; and my rejection sometimes wounded her so cruelly that I must unbend and seek to make it up to her in kindness. So that our time passed in ups and downs, tiffs and disappointments, upon the which I could almost say (if it may be said with reverence) that I was crucified.

The base of my trouble was Catriona's extraordinary innocence, at which I was not so much surprised as filled with pity and admiration. She seemed to have no thought of our position, no sense of my struggles; welcomed any mark of my weakness with responsive joy; and when I was drove again to my retrenchments, did not always dissemble her chagrin. There were times when I have thought to myself, "If she were over head in love, and set her cap to catch me, she would scarce behave much otherwise;" and then I would fall again into wonder at the simplicity of woman, from whom I felt (in these moments) that I was not worthy to be descended.

There was one point in particular on which our warfare turned, and of all things, this was the question of her clothes. My baggage had soon followed me from Rotterdam, and hers from Helvoet. She had now, as it were, two wardrobes; and it grew to be understood between us (I could never tell how) that when she was friendly she would wear my clothes, and when otherwise her own. It was meant for a buffet, and (as it were) the renunciation of her gratitude; and I felt it so in my bosom, but was generally more wise than to appear to have observed the circumstance.

Once, indeed, I was betrayed into a childishness greater than her own; it fell in this way. On my return from classes, thinking upon her devoutly with a great deal of love and a good deal of annoyance in the bargain, the annoyance began to fade away out of my mind; and spying in a window one of those forced flowers, of which the Hollanders are so skilled in the artifice, I gave way to an impulse and bought it for Catriona. I do not know the name of that flower, but it was of the pink colour, and I thought she would admire the same, and carried it home to her with a wonderful soft heart. I had left her in my clothes, and when I returned to find her all changed and a face to match, I cast but the one look at her from head to foot, ground my teeth together, flung the window open, and my flower into the court, and then (between rage and prudence) myself out of that room again, of which I slammed she door as I went out.

On the steep stair I came near falling, and this brought me to myself, so that I began at once to see the folly of my conduct. I went, not into the street as I had purposed, but to the house court, which was always a solitary place, and where I saw my flower (that had cost me vastly more than it was worth) hanging in the leafless tree. I stood by the side of the canal, and looked upon the ice. Country people went by on their skates, and I envied them. I could see no way out of the pickle I was in no way so much as to return to the room I had just left. No doubt was in my mind but I had now betrayed the secret of my feelings; and to make things worse, I had shown at the same time (and that with wretched boyishness) incivility to my helpless guest.

I suppose she must have seen me from the open window. It did not seem to me that I had stood there very long before I heard the crunching of footsteps on the frozen snow, and turning somewhat angrily (for I was in no spirit to be interrupted) saw Catriona drawing near. She was all changed again, to the clocked stockings.

"Are we not to have our walk to-day?" said she.

I was looking at her in a maze. "Where is your brooch?" says I.

She carried her hand to her bosom and coloured high. "I will have forgotten it," said she. "I will run upstairs for it quick, and then surely we'll can have our walk?"

There was a note of pleading in that last that staggered me; I had neither words nor voice to utter them; I could do no more than nod by way of answer; and the moment she had left me, climbed into the tree and recovered my flower, which on her return I offered her.

"I bought it for you, Catriona," said I.

She fixed it in the midst of her bosom with the brooch, I could have thought tenderly.

"It is none the better of my handling," said I again, and blushed.

"I will be liking it none the worse, you may be sure of that," said she.

We did not speak so much that day; she seemed a thought on the reserve, though not unkindly. As for me, all the time of our walking, and after we came home, and I had seen her put my flower into a pot of water, I was thinking to myself what puzzles women were. I was thinking, the one moment, it was the most stupid thing on earth she should not have perceived my love; and the next, that she had certainly perceived it long ago, and (being a wise girl with the fine female instinct of propriety) concealed her knowledge.

We had our walk daily. Out in the streets I felt more safe; I relaxed a little in my guardedness; and for one thing, there was no Heineccius. This made these periods not only a relief to myself, but a particular pleasure to my poor child. When I came back about the hour appointed, I would generally find her ready dressed, and glowing with anticipation. She would prolong their duration to the extreme, seeming to dread (as I did myself) the hour of the return; and there is scarce a field or waterside near Leyden, scarce a street or lane there, where we have not lingered. Outside of these, I bade her confine herself entirely to our lodgings; this in the fear of her encountering any acquaintance, which would have rendered our position very difficult. From the same apprehension I would never suffer her to attend church, nor even go myself; but made some kind of shift to hold worship privately in our own chamber - I hope with an honest, but I am quite sure with a very much divided mind. Indeed, there was scarce anything that more affected me, than thus to kneel down alone with her before God like man and wife.

One day it was snowing downright hard. I had thought it not possible that we should venture forth, and was surprised to find her waiting for me ready dressed.

“I will not be doing without my walk,” she cried. “You are never a good boy, Davie, in the house; I will never be caring for you only in the open air. I think we two will better turn Egyptian and dwell by the roadside.”

That was the best walk yet of all of them; she clung near to me in the falling snow; it beat about and melted on us, and the drops stood upon her bright cheeks like tears and ran into her smiling mouth. Strength seemed to come upon me with the sight like a giant’s; I thought I could have caught her up and run with her into the uttermost places in the earth; and we spoke together all that time beyond belief for freedom and sweetness.

It was the dark night when we came to the house door. She pressed my arm upon her bosom. “Thank you kindly for these same good hours,” said she, on a deep note of her voice.

The concern in which I fell instantly on this address, put me with the same swiftness on my guard; and we were no sooner in the chamber, and the light made, than she beheld the old, dour, stubborn countenance of the student of Heineccius. Doubtless she was more than usually hurt; and I know for myself, I found it more than usually difficult to maintain any strangeness. Even at the meal, I durst scarce unbuckle and scarce lift my eyes to her; and it was no sooner over than I fell again to my civilian, with more seeming abstraction and less understanding than before. Methought, as I read, I could hear my heart strike like an eight-day clock. Hard as I feigned to study, there was still some of my eyesight that spilled beyond the book upon

Catriona. She sat on the floor by the side of my great mail, and the chimney lighted her up, and shone and blinked upon her, and made her glow and darken through a wonder of fine hues. Now she would be gazing in the fire, and then again at me; and at that I would be plunged in a terror of myself, and turn the pages of Heineccius like a man looking for the text in church.

Suddenly she called out aloud. "O, why does not my father come?" she cried, and fell at once into a storm of tears.

I leaped up, flung Heineccius fairly in the fire, ran to her side, and cast an arm around her sobbing body.

She put me from her sharply, "You do not love your friend," says she. "I could be so happy too, if you would let me!" And then, "O, what will I have done that you should hate me so?"

"Hate you!" cries I, and held her firm. "You blind less, can you not see a little in my wretched heart? Do you not think when I sit there, reading in that fool-book that I have just burned and be damned to it, I take ever the least thought of any stricken thing but just yourself? Night after night I could have grat to see you sitting there your lone. And what was I to do? You are here under my honour; would you punish me for that? Is it for that that you would spurn a loving servant?"

At the word, with a small, sudden motion, she clung near to me. I raised her face to mine, I kissed it, and she bowed her brow upon my bosom, clasping me tight. I saw in a mere whirl like a man drunken. Then I heard her voice sound very small and muffled in my clothes.

"Did you kiss her truly?" she asked.

There went through me so great a heave of surprise that I was all shook with it.

"Miss Grant?" I cried, all in a disorder. "Yes, I asked her to kiss me good-bye, the which she did."

"Ah, well!" said she, "you have kissed me too, at all events."

At the strangeness and sweetness of that word, I saw where we had fallen; rose, and set her on her feet.

"This will never do," said I. "This will never, never do. O Catrine, Catrine!" Then there came a pause in which I was debarred from any speaking. And then, "Go away to your bed," said I. "Go away to your bed and leave me."

She turned to obey me like a child, and the next I knew of it, had stopped in the very doorway.

"Good night, Davie!" said she.

"And O, good night, my love!" I cried, with a great outbreak of my soul, and caught her to me again, so that it seemed I must have broken her. The next moment I had thrust her from the room, shut to the door even with violence, and stood alone.

The milk was spilt now, the word was out and the truth told. I had crept like an untrusty man into the poor maid's affections; she was in my hand like any frail, innocent thing to make or mar; and what weapon of defence was left me? It seemed like a symbol that Heineccius, my old protection, was now burned. I repented, yet could not find it in my heart to blame myself for that great failure. It seemed not possible to have resisted the boldness of her innocence or that last temptation of her weeping. And all that I had to excuse me did but make my sin appear the greater - it was upon a nature so defenceless, and with such advantages of the position, that I seemed to have practised.

What was to become of us now? It seemed we could no longer dwell in the one place. But where was I to go? or where she? Without either choice or fault of ours, life had conspired to wall us together in that narrow place. I had a wild thought of marrying out of hand; and the next moment put it from me with revolt. She was a child, she could not tell her own heart; I had surprised her weakness, I must never go on to build on that surprisal; I must keep her not only clear of reproach, but free as she had come to me.

Down I sat before the fire, and reflected, and repented, and beat my brains in vain for any means of escape. About two of the morning, there were three red embers left and the house and all the city was asleep, when I was aware of a small sound of weeping in the next room. She thought that I slept, the poor soul; she regretted her weakness - and what perhaps (God help her!) she called her forwardness - and in the dead of the night solaced herself with tears. Tender and bitter feelings, love and penitence and pity, struggled in my soul; it seemed I was under bond to heal that weeping.

"O, try to forgive me!" I cried out, "try, try to forgive me. Let us forget it all, let us try if we'll no can forget it!"

There came no answer, but the sobbing ceased. I stood a long while with my hands still clasped as I had spoken; then the cold of the night laid hold upon me with a shudder, and I think my reason reawakened.

"You can make no hand of this, Davie," thinks I. "To bed with you like a wise lad, and try if you can sleep. To-morrow you may see your way."

CHAPTER XXV - THE RETURN OF JAMES MORE

I was called on the morrow out of a late and troubled slumber by a knocking on my door, ran to open it, and had almost swooned with the contrariety of my feelings, mostly painful; for on the threshold, in a rough wraprascal and an extraordinary big laced hat, there stood James More.

I ought to have been glad perhaps without admixture, for there was a sense in which the man came like an answer to prayer. I had been saying till my head was weary that Catriona and I must separate, and looking till my head ached for any possible means of separation. Here were the means come to me upon two legs, and joy was the hindmost of my thoughts. It is to be considered, however, that even if the weight of the future were lifted off me by the man's arrival, the present heaved up the more black and menacing; so that, as I first stood before him in my shirt and breeches, I believe I took a leaping step backward like a person shot.

"Ah," said he, "I have found you, Mr, Balfour." And offered me his large, fine hand, the which (recovering at the same time my post in the doorway, as if with some thought of resistance) I took him by doubtfully. "It is a remarkable circumstance how our affairs appear to intermingle," he continued. "I am owing you an apology for an unfortunate intrusion upon yours, which I suffered myself to be entrapped into by my confidence in that false-face, Prestongrange; I think shame to own to you that I was ever trusting to a lawyer." He shrugged his shoulders with a very French air. "But indeed the man is very plausible," says he. "And now it seems that you have busied yourself handsomely in the matter of my daughter, for whose direction I was remitted to yourself."

"I think, sir," said I, with a very painful air, "that it will be necessary we two should have an explanation."

"There is nothing amiss?" he asked. "My agent, Mr. Sprott - "

"For God's sake moderate your voice!" I cried. "She must not hear till we have had an explanation."

"She is in this place?" cries he.

"That is her chamber door," said I.

"You are here with her alone?" he asked.

"And who else would I have got to stay with us?" cries I.

I will do him the justice to admit that he turned pale.

"This is very unusual," said he. "This is a very unusual circumstance. You are right, we must hold an explanation."

So saying he passed me by, and I must own the tall old rogue appeared at that moment extraordinary dignified. He had now, for the first time, the view of my chamber, which I scanned (I may say) with his eyes. A bit of morning sun glinted in by the window pane, and showed it off; my bed, my mails, and washing dish, with some disorder of my clothes, and the unlighted chimney, made the only plenishing; no mistake but it looked bare and cold, and the most unsuitable, beggarly place conceivable to harbour a young lady. At the same time came in on my mind the recollection of the clothes that I had bought for her; and I thought this contrast of poverty and prodigality bore an ill appearance.

He looked all about the chamber for a seat, and finding nothing else to his purpose except my bed, took a place upon the side of it; where, after I had closed the door, I could not very well avoid joining him. For however this extraordinary interview might end, it must pass if possible without waking Catriona; and the one thing needful was that we should sit close and talk low. But I can scarce picture what a pair we made; he in his great coat which the coldness of my chamber made extremely suitable; I shivering in my shirt and breeks; he with very much the air of a judge; and I (whatever I looked) with very much the feelings of a man who has heard the last trumpet.

"Well?" says he.

And "Well," I began, but found myself unable to go further.

"You tell me she is here?" said he again, but now with a spice of impatience that seemed to brace me up.

"She is in this house," said I, "and I knew the circumstance would be called unusual. But you are to consider how very unusual the whole business was from the beginning. Here is a young lady landed on the coast of Europe with two shillings and a penny halfpenny. She is directed to yon man Sprott in Helvoet. I hear you call him your agent. All I can say is he could do nothing but damn and swear at the mere mention of your name, and I must fee him out of my own pocket even to receive the custody of her effects. You speak of unusual circumstances, Mr. Drummond, if that be the name you prefer. Here was a circumstance, if you like, to which it was barbarity to have exposed her."

"But this is what I cannot understand the least," said James. "My daughter was placed into the charge of some responsible persons, whose names I have forgot." "Gebbie was the name," said I; "and there is no doubt that Mr. Gebbie should have gone ashore with her at Helvoet. But he did not, Mr. Drummond; and I think you might praise God that I was there to offer in his place."

"I shall have a word to say to Mr. Gebbie before long," said he. "As for yourself, I think it might have occurred that you were somewhat young for such a post."

"But the choice was not between me and somebody else, it was between me and nobody," cried I. "Nobody offered in my place, and I must say I think you show a very small degree of gratitude to me that did."

"I shall wait until I understand my obligation a little more in the particular," says he.

"Indeed, and I think it stares you in the face, then," said I. "Your child was deserted, she was clean flung away in the midst of Europe, with scarce two shillings, and not two words of any language spoken there: I must say, a bonny business! I brought her to this place. I gave her the name and the tenderness due to a sister. All this has not gone without expense, but that I scarce need to hint at. They were services due to the young lady's character which I respect; and I think it would be a bonny business too, if I was to be singing her praises to her father."

"You are a young man," he began.

"So I hear you tell me," said I, with a good deal of heat.

"You are a very young man," he repeated, "or you would have understood the significancy of the step."

"I think you speak very much at your ease," cried I. "What else was I to do? It is a fact I might have hired some decent, poor woman to be a third to us, and I declare I never thought of it until this moment! But where was I to find her, that am a foreigner myself? And let me point out to your observation, Mr. Drummond, that it would have cost me money out of my pocket. For here is just what it comes to, that I had to pay through the nose for your neglect; and there is only the one story to it, just that you were so unloving and so careless as to have lost your daughter."

"He that lives in a glass house should not be casting stones," says he; "and we will finish inquiring into the behaviour of Miss Drummond before we go on to sit in judgment on her father."

"But I will be entrapped into no such attitude," said I. "The character of Miss Drummond is far above inquiry, as her father ought to know. So is mine, and I am telling you that. There are but the two ways of it open. The one is to express your thanks to me as one gentleman to another, and to say no more. The other (if you are so difficult as to be still dissatisfied) is to pay me, that which I have expended and be done."

He seemed to soothe me with a hand in the air. "There, there," said he. "You go too fast, you go too fast, Mr. Balfour. It is a good thing that I have learned to be more patient. And I believe you forget that I have yet to see my daughter."

I began to be a little relieved upon this speech and a change in the man's manner that I spied in him as soon as the name of money fell between us.

"I was thinking it would be more fit - if you will excuse the plainness of my dressing in your presence - that I should go forth and leave you to encounter her alone?" said I.

"What I would have looked for at your hands!" says he; and there was no mistake but what he said it civilly.

I thought this better and better still, and as I began to pull on my hose, recalling the man's impudent mendicancy at Prestongrange's, I determined to pursue what seemed to be my victory.

"If you have any mind to stay some while in Leyden," said I, "this room is very much at your disposal, and I can easy find another for myself: in which way we shall have the least amount of flitting possible, there being only one to change."

"Why, sir," said he, making his bosom big, "I think no shame of a poverty I have come by in the service of my king; I make no secret that my affairs are quite involved; and for the moment, it would be even impossible for me to undertake a journey."

"Until you have occasion to communicate with your friends," said I, "perhaps it might be convenient for you (as of course it would be honourable to myself) if you were to regard yourself in the light of my guest?"

"Sir," said he, "when an offer is frankly made, I think I honour myself most to imitate that frankness. Your hand, Mr. David; you have the character that I respect the most; you are one of those from whom a gentleman can take a favour and no more words about it. I am an old soldier," he went on, looking rather disgusted-like around my chamber, "and you need not fear I shall prove burthensome. I have ate too often at a dyke-side, drank of the ditch, and had no roof but the rain."

"I should be telling you," said I, "that our breakfasts are sent customarily in about this time of morning. I propose I should go now to the tavern, and bid them add a cover for yourself and delay the meal the matter of an hour, which will give you an interval to meet your daughter in."

Methought his nostrils wagged at this. "O, an hour" says he. "That is perhaps superfluous. Half an hour, Mr. David, or say twenty minutes; I shall do very well in that. And by the way," he adds, detaining me by the coat, "what is it you drink in the morning, whether ale or wine?"

"To be frank with you, sir," says I, "I drink nothing else but spare, cold water."

"Tut-tut," says he, "that is fair destruction to the stomach, take an old campaigner’s word for it. Our country spirit at home is perhaps the most entirely wholesome; but as that is not come-at-able, Rhenish or a white wine of Burgundy will be next best.”

“I shall make it my business to see you are supplied,” said I.

“Why, very good,” said he, “and we shall make a man of you yet, Mr. David.”

By this time, I can hardly say that I was minding him at all, beyond an odd thought of the kind of father-in-law that he was like to prove; and all my cares centred about the lass his daughter, to whom I determined to convey some warning of her visitor. I stepped to the door accordingly, and cried through the panels, knocking thereon at the same time: “Miss Drummond, here is your father come at last.”

With that I went forth upon my errand, having (by two words) extraordinarily damaged my affairs.

CHAPTER XXVI - THE THREESOME

Whether or not I was to be so much blamed, or rather perhaps pitied, I must leave others to judge. My shrewdness (of which I have a good deal, too) seems not so great with the ladies. No doubt, at the moment when I awaked her, I was thinking a good deal of the effect upon James More; and similarly when I returned and we were all sat down to breakfast, I continued to behave to the young lady with deference and distance; as I still think to have been most wise. Her father had cast doubts upon the innocence of my friendship; and these, it was my first business to allay. But there is a kind of an excuse for Catriona also. We had shared in a scene of some tenderness and passion, and given and received caresses: I had thrust her from me with violence; I had called aloud upon her in the night from the one room to the other; she had passed hours of wakefulness and weeping; and it is not to be supposed I had been absent from her pillow thoughts. Upon the back of this, to be awaked, with unaccustomed formality, under the name of Miss Drummond, and to be thenceforth used with a great deal of distance and respect, led her entirely in error on my private sentiments; and she was indeed so incredibly abused as to imagine me repentant and trying to draw off!

The trouble betwixt us seems to have been this: that whereas I (since I had first set eyes on his great hat) thought singly of James More, his return and suspicions, she made so little of these that I may say she scarce remarked them, and all her troubles and doings regarded what had passed between us in the night before. This is partly to be explained by the innocence and boldness of her character; and partly because James More, having sped so ill in his interview with me, or had his mouth closed by my invitation, said no word to her upon the subject. At the breakfast, accordingly, it soon appeared we were at cross purposes. I had looked to find her in clothes of her own: I found her (as if her father were forgotten) wearing some of the best that I had bought for her, and which she knew (or thought) that I admired her in. I had looked to find her imitate my affectation of distance, and be most precise and formal; instead I found her flushed and wild-like, with eyes extraordinary bright, and a painful and varying expression, calling me by name with a sort of appeal of tenderness, and referring and deferring to my thoughts and wishes like an anxious or a suspected wife.

But this was not for long. As I behold her so regardless of her own interests, which I had jeopardised and was now endeavouring to recover, I redoubled my own coldness in the manner of a lesson to the girl. The more she came forward, the farther I drew back; the more she betrayed the closeness of our intimacy, the more pointedly civil I became, until even her father (if he had not been so engrossed with eating) might have observed the opposition. In the midst of which, of a sudden, she became wholly changed, and I told myself, with a good deal of relief, that she had took the hint at last.

All day I was at my classes or in quest of my new lodging; and though the hour of our customary walk hung miserably on my hands, I cannot say but I was happy on the whole to find my way cleared, the girl again in proper keeping, the father satisfied or at least acquiescent, and myself free to prosecute my love with honour. At supper, as at all our meals, it was James More that did the talking. No doubt but he talked well if anyone could have believed him. But I will speak of him presently more at large. The meal at an end, he rose, got his great coat, and looking (as I thought) at me, observed he had affairs abroad. I took this for a hint that I was to be going also, and got up; whereupon the girl, who had scarce given me greeting at my entrance, turned her eyes upon me wide open with a look that bade me stay. I stood between them like a fish out of water, turning from one to the other; neither seemed to observe me, she gazing on the floor, he buttoning his coat: which vastly swelled my embarrassment. This appearance of indifference argued, upon her side, a good deal of anger very near to burst out. Upon his, I thought it horribly alarming; I made sure there was a tempest brewing there; and considering that to be the chief peril, turned towards him and put myself (so to speak) in the man's hands.

"Can I do anything for you, Mr. Drummond?" says I.

He stifled a yawn, which again I thought to be duplicity. "Why, Mr. David," said he, "since you are so obliging as to propose it, you might show me the way to a certain tavern" (of which he gave the name) "where I hope to fall in with some old companions in arms."

There was no more to say, and I got my hat and cloak to bear him company.

"And as for you," say he to his daughter, "you had best go to your bed. I shall be late home, and Early to bed and early to rise, gars bonny lasses have bright eyes."

Whereupon he kissed her with a good deal of tenderness, and ushered me before him from the door. This was so done (I thought on purpose) that it was scarce possible there should be any parting salutation; but I observed she did not look at me, and set it down to terror of James More.

It was some distance to that tavern. He talked all the way of matters which did not interest me the smallest, and at the door dismissed me with empty manners. Thence I walked to my new lodging, where I had not so much as a chimney to hold me warm, and no society but my own thoughts. These were still bright enough; I did not so much as dream that Catriona was turned against me; I thought we were like folk pledged; I thought we had been too near and spoke too warmly to be severed, least of all by what were only steps in a most needful policy. And the chief of my concern was only the kind of father-in-law that I was getting, which was not at all the kind I would have chosen: and the matter of how soon I ought to speak to him, which was a delicate point on several sides. In the first place, when I thought how young I was I blushed all over, and could almost have found it in my heart to have desisted; only that if once I let them go from Leyden without explanation, I might lose her altogether. And in the second place, there was our very irregular situation to be kept in view, and the rather scant measure of satisfaction I had given James More that morning. I concluded, on the whole, that delay would not hurt anything, yet I would not delay too long neither; and got to my cold bed with a full heart.

The next day, as James More seemed a little on the complaining hand in the matter of my chamber, I offered to have in more furniture; and coming in the afternoon, with porters bringing chairs and tables, found the girl once more left to herself. She greeted me on my admission civilly, but withdrew at once to her own room, of which she shut the door. I made my disposition, and paid and dismissed the men so that she might hear them go, when I supposed she would at once come forth again to speak to me. I waited yet awhile, then knocked upon her door.

"Catriona!" said I.

The door was opened so quickly, even before I had the word out, that I thought she must have stood behind it listening. She remained there in the interval quite still; but she had a look that I cannot put a name on, as of one in a bitter trouble.

"Are we not to have our walk to-day either?" so I faltered.

"I am thanking you," said she. "I will not be caring much to walk, now that my father is come home."

"But I think he has gone out himself and left you here alone," said I.

"And do you think that was very kindly said?" she asked.

"It was not unkindly meant," I replied. "What ails you, Catriona? What have I done to you that you should turn from me like this?"

"I do not turn from you at all," she said, speaking very carefully. "I will ever be grateful to my friend that was good to me; I will ever be his friend in all that I am able. But now that my father James More is come again, there is a difference to be made, and I think there are some things said and done that would be better to be forgotten. But I will ever be your friend in all that I am able, and if that is not all that

. . . . if it is not so much . . . . Not that you will be caring! But I would not have you think of me too hard. It was true what you said to me, that I was too young to be advised, and I am hoping you will remember I was just a child. I would not like to lose your friendship, at all events."

She began this very pale; but before she was done, the blood was in her face like scarlet, so that not her words only, but her face and the trembling of her very hands, besought me to be gentle. I saw, for the first time, how very wrong I had done to place the child in that position, where she had been entrapped into a moment's weakness, and now stood before me like a person shamed.

"Miss Drummond," I said, and stuck, and made the same beginning once again, "I wish you could see into my heart," I cried. "You would read there that my respect is undiminished. If that were possible, I should say it was increased. This is but the result of the mistake we made; and had to come; and the less said of it now the better. Of all of our life here, I promise you it shall never pass my lips; I would like to promise you too that I would never think of it, but it's a memory that will be always dear to me. And as for a friend, you have one here that would die for you."

"I am thanking you," said she.

We stood awhile silent, and my sorrow for myself began to get the upper hand; for here were all my dreams come to a sad tumble, and my love lost, and myself alone again in the world as at the beginning.

"Well," said I, "we shall be friends always, that's a certain thing. But this is a kind of farewell, too: it's a kind of a farewell after all; I shall always ken Miss Drummond, but this is a farewell to my Catriona."

I looked at her; I could hardly say I saw her, but she seemed to grow great and brighten in my eyes; and with that I suppose I must have lost my head, for I called out her name again and made a step at her with my hands reached forth.

She shrank back like a person struck, her face flamed; but the blood sprang no faster up into her cheeks, than what it flowed back upon my own heart, at sight of it, with penitence and concern. I found no words to excuse myself, but bowed before her very deep, and went my ways out of the house with death in my bosom.

I think it was about five days that followed without any change. I saw her scarce ever but at meals, and then of course in the company of James More. If we were alone even for a moment, I made it my devoir to behave the more distantly and to multiply respectful attentions, having always in my mind's eye that picture of the girl shrinking and flaming in a blush, and in my heart more pity for her than I could depict in words. I was sorry enough for myself, I need not dwell on that, having fallen all my length and more than all my height in a few seconds; but, indeed, I was near as sorry for the girl, and sorry enough to be scarce angry with her save by fits and starts. Her plea was good; she had been placed in an unfair position; if she had deceived herself and me, it was no more than was to have been looked for.

And for another thing she was now very much alone. Her father, when he was by, was rather a caressing parent; but he was very easy led away by his affairs and pleasures, neglected her without compunction or remark, spent his nights in taverns when he had the money, which was more often than I could at all account for; and even in the course of these few days, failed once to come to a meal, which Catriona and I were at last compelled to partake of without him. It was the evening meal, and I left immediately that I had eaten, observing I supposed she would prefer to be alone; to which she agreed and (strange as it may seem) I quite believed her. Indeed, I thought myself but an eyesore to the girl, and a reminder of a moment's weakness that she now abhorred to think of. So she must sit alone in that room where she and I had been so merry, and in the blink of that chimney whose light had shone upon our many difficult and tender moments. There she must sit alone, and think of herself as of a maid who had most unmaidenly proffered her affections and had the same rejected. And in the meanwhile I would be alone some other place, and reading myself (whenever I was tempted to be angry) lessons upon human frailty and female delicacy. And altogether I suppose there were never two poor fools made themselves more unhappy in a greater misconception.

As for James, he paid not so much heed to us, or to anything in nature but his pocket, and his belly, and his own prating talk. Before twelve hours were gone he had raised a small loan of me; before thirty, he had asked for a second and been refused. Money and refusal he took with the same kind of high good nature. Indeed, he had an outside air of magnanimity that was very well fitted to impose upon a daughter; and the light in which he was constantly presented in his talk, and the man's fine presence and great ways went together pretty harmoniously. So that a man that had no business with him, and either very little penetration or a furious deal of prejudice, might almost have been taken in. To me, after my first two interviews, he was as plain as print; I saw him to be perfectly selfish, with a perfect innocency in the same; and I would hearken to his swaggering talk (of arms, and "an old soldier," and "a poor Highland gentleman," and "the strength of my country and my friends") as I might to the babbling of a parrot.

The odd thing was that I fancy he believed some part of it himself, or did at times; I think he was so false all through that he scarce knew when he was lying; and for one thing, his moments of dejection must have been wholly genuine. There were times when he would be the most silent, affectionate, clinging creature possible, holding Catriona's hand like a big baby, and begging of me not to leave if I had any love to him; of which, indeed, I had none, but all the more to his daughter. He would press and indeed beseech us to entertain him with our talk, a thing very difficult in the state of our relations; and again break forth in pitiable regrets for his own land and friends, or into Gaelic singing.

"This is one of the melancholy airs of my native land," he would say. "You may think it strange to see a soldier weep, and indeed it is to make a near friend of you," says he. "But the notes of this singing are in my blood, and the words come out of my heart. And when I mind upon my red mountains and the wild birds calling there, and the brave streams of water running down, I would scarce think shame to weep before my enemies." Then he would sing again, and translate to me pieces of the song, with a great deal of boggling and much expressed contempt against the English language. "It says here," he would say, "that the sun is gone down, and the battle is at an end, and the brave chiefs are defeated. And it tells here how the stars see them fleeing into strange countries or lying dead on the red mountain; and they will never more shout the call of battle or wash their feet in the streams of the valley. But if you had only some of this language, you would weep also because the words of it are beyond all expression, and it is mere mockery to tell you it in English."

Well, I thought there was a good deal of mockery in the business, one way and another; and yet, there was some feeling too, for which I hated him, I think, the worst of all. And it used to cut me to the quick to see Catriona so much concerned for the old rogue, and weeping herself to see him weep, when I was sure one half of his distress flowed from his last night's drinking in some tavern. There were times when I was tempted to lend him a round sum, and see the last of him for good; but this would have been to see the last of Catriona as well, for which I was scarcely so prepared; and besides, it went against my conscience to squander my good money on one who was so little of a husband.

CHAPTER XXVII - A TWOSOME

I believe it was about the fifth day, and I know at least that James was in one of his fits of gloom, when I received three letters. The first was from Alan, offering to visit me in Leyden; the other two were out of Scotland and prompted by the same affair, which was the death of my uncle and my own complete accession to my rights. Rankeillor's was, of course, wholly in the business view; Miss Grant's was like herself, a little more witty than wise, full of blame to me for not having written (though how was I to write with such intelligence?) and of rallying talk about Catriona, which it cut me to the quick to read in her very presence.

For it was of course in my own rooms that I found them, when I came to dinner, so that I was surprised out of my news in the very first moment of reading it. This made a welcome diversion for all three of us, nor could any have foreseen the ill consequences that ensued. It was accident that brought the three letters the same day, and that gave them into my hand in the same room with James More; and of all the events that flowed from that accident, and which I might have prevented if I had held my tongue, the truth is that they were preordained before Agricola came into Scotland or Abraham set out upon his travels.

The first that I opened was naturally Alan's; and what more natural than that I should comment on his design to visit me? but I observed James to sit up with an air of immediate attention.

"Is that not Alan Breck that was suspected of the Appin accident?" he inquired.

I told him, "Ay," it was the same; and he withheld me some time from my other letters, asking of our acquaintance, of Alan's manner of life in France, of which I knew very little, and further of his visit as now proposed.

"All we forfeited folk hang a little together," he explained, "and besides I know the gentleman: and though his descent is not the thing, and indeed he has no true right to use the name of Stewart, he was very much admired in the day of Drummossie. He did there like a soldier; if some that need not be named had done as well, the upshot need not have been so melancholy to remember. There were two that did their best that day, and it makes a bond between the pair of us," says he.

I could scarce refrain from shooting out my tongue at him, and could almost have wished that Alan had been there to have inquired a little further into that mention of his birth. Though, they tell me, the same was indeed not wholly regular.

Meanwhile, I had opened Miss Grant's, and could not withhold an exclamation.

"Catriona," I cried, forgetting, the first time since her father was arrived, to address her by a handle, "I am come into my kingdom fairly, I am the laird of Shaws indeed - my uncle is dead at last."

She clapped her hands together leaping from her seat. The next moment it must have come over both of us at once what little cause of joy was left to either, and we stood opposite, staring on each other sadly.

But James showed himself a ready hypocrite. "My daughter," says he, "is this how my cousin learned you to behave? Mr. David has lost a new friend, and we should first condole with him on his bereavement."

"Troth, sir," said I, turning to him in a kind of anger, "I can make no such great faces. His death is as blithe news as ever I got."

"It's a good soldier's philosophy," says James. "'Tis the way of flesh, we must all go, all go. And if the gentleman was so far from your favour, why, very well! But we may at least congratulate you on your accession to your estates."

"Nor can I say that either," I replied, with the same heat. "It is a good estate; what matters that to a lone man that has enough already? I had a good revenue before in my frugality; and but for the man's death - which gratifies me, shame to me that must confess it! - I see not how anyone is to be bettered by this change."

"Come, come," said he, "you are more affected than you let on, or you would never make yourself out so lonely. Here are three letters; that means three that wish you well; and I could name two more, here in this very chamber. I have known you not so very long, but Catriona, when we are alone, is never done with the singing of your praises."

She looked up at him, a little wild at that; and he slid off at once into another matter, the extent of my estate, which (during the most of the dinner time) he continued to dwell upon with interest. But it was to no purpose he dissembled; he had touched the matter with too gross a hand: and I knew what to expect. Dinner was scarce ate when he plainly discovered his designs. He reminded Catriona of an errand, and bid her attend to it. "I do not see you should be one beyond the hour," he added, "and friend David will be good enough to bear me company till you return." She made haste to obey him without words. I do not know if she understood, I believe not; but I was completely satisfied, and sat strengthening my mind for what should follow.

The door had scarce closed behind her departure, when the man leaned back in his chair and addressed me with a good affectation of easiness. Only the one thing betrayed him, and that was his face; which suddenly shone all over with fine points of sweat.

"I am rather glad to have a word alone with you," says he, "because in our first interview there were some expressions you misapprehended and I have long meant to set you right upon. My daughter stands beyond doubt. So do you, and I would make that good with my sword against all gainsayers. But, my dear David, this world is a censorious place - as who should know it better than myself, who have lived ever since the days of my late departed father, God sain him! in a perfect spate of calumnies? We have to face to that; you and me have to consider of that; we have to consider of that." And he wagged his head like a minister in a pulpit.

"To what effect, Mr. Drummond?" said I. "I would be obliged to you if you would approach your point."

"Ay, ay," said he, laughing, "like your character, indeed! and what I most admire in it. But the point, my worthy fellow, is sometimes in a kittle bit." He filled a glass of wine. "Though between you and me, that are such fast friends, it need not bother us long. The point, I need scarcely tell you, is my daughter. And the first thing is that I have no thought in my mind of blaming you. In the unfortunate circumstances, what could you do else? 'Deed, and I cannot tell."

"I thank you for that," said I, pretty close upon my guard.

"I have besides studied your character," he went on; "your talents are fair; you seem to have a moderate competence, which does no harm; and one thing with another, I am very happy to have to announce to you that I have decided on the latter of the two ways open."

"I am afraid I am dull," said I. "What ways are these?"

He bent his brows upon me formidably and uncrossed his legs. "Why, sir," says he, "I think I need scarce describe them to a gentleman of your condition; either that I should cut your throat or that you should marry my daughter."

"You are pleased to be quite plain at last," said I.

"And I believe I have been plain from the beginning!" cries he robustiously. "I am a careful parent, Mr. Balfour; but I thank God, a patient and deleeborate man. There is many a father, sir, that would have hirsled you at once either to the altar or the field. My esteem for your character - "

"Mr. Drummond," I interrupted, "if you have any esteem for me at all, I will beg of you to moderate your voice. It is quite needless to rowt at a gentleman in the same chamber with yourself and lending you his best attention."

"Why, very true," says he, with an immediate change. "And you must excuse the agitations of a parent."

"I understand you then," I continued - "for I will take no note of your other alternative, which perhaps it was a pity you let fall - I understand you rather to offer me encouragement in case I should desire to apply for your daughter's hand?"

"It is not possible to express my meaning better," said he, "and I see we shall do well together."

"That remains to be yet seen," said I. "But so much I need make no secret of, that I bear the lady you refer to the most tender affection, and I could not fancy, even in a dream, a better fortune than to get her."

"I was sure of it, I felt certain of you, David," he cried, and reached out his hand to me.

I put it by. "You go too fast, Mr. Drummond," said I. "There are conditions to be made; and there is a difficulty in the path, which I see not entirely how we shall come over. I have told you that, upon my side, there is no objection to the marriage, but I have good reason to believe there will be much on the young lady's."

"This is all beside the mark," says he. "I will engage for her acceptance."

"I think you forget, Mr. Drummond," said I, "that, even in dealing with myself, you have been betrayed into two-three unpalatable expressions. I will have none such employed to the young lady. I am here to speak and think for the two of us; and I give you to understand that I would no more let a wife be forced upon myself, than what I would let a husband be forced on the young lady."

He sat and glowered at me like one in doubt and a good deal of temper.

"So that is to be the way of it," I concluded. "I will marry Miss Drummond, and that blithely, if she is entirely willing. But if there be the least unwillingness, as I have reason to fear - marry her will I never."

"Well well," said he, "this is a small affair. As soon as she returns I will sound her a bit, and hope to reassure you - "

But I cut in again. "Not a finger of you, Mr. Drummond, or I cry off, and you can seek a husband to your daughter somewhere else," said I. "It is I that am to be the only dealer and the only judge. I shall satisfy myself exactly; and none else shall anyways meddle - you the least of all."

"Upon my word, sir!" he exclaimed, "and who are you to be the judge?"

"The bridegroom, I believe," said I.

"This is to quibble," he cried. "You turn your back upon the fact. The girl, my daughter, has no choice left to exercise. Her character is gone.”

“And I ask your pardon,” said I, “but while this matter lies between her and you and me, that is not so.”

“What security have I!” he cried. “Am I to let my daughter’s reputation depend upon a chance?”

“You should have thought of all this long ago,” said I, “before you were so misguided as to lose her; and not afterwards when it is quite too late. I refuse to regard myself as any way accountable for your neglect, and I will be browbeat by no man living. My mind is quite made up, and come what may, I will not depart from it a hair’s breadth. You and me are to sit here in company till her return: upon which, without either word or look from you, she and I are to go forth again to hold our talk. If she can satisfy me that she is willing to this step, I will then make it; and if she cannot, I will not.”

He leaped out of his chair like a man stung. “I can spy your manoeuvre,” he cried; “you would work upon her to refuse!”

“Maybe ay, and maybe no,” said I. “That is the way it is to be, whatever.”

“And if I refuse?” cries he.

“Then, Mr. Drummond, it will have to come to the throat-cutting,” said I.

What with the size of the man, his great length of arm in which he came near rivalling his father, and his reputed skill at weapons, I did not use this word without trepidation, to say nothing at all of the circumstance that he was Catriona’s father. But I might have spared myself alarms. From the poorness of my lodging - he does not seem to have remarked his daughter’s dresses, which were indeed all equally new to him - and from the fact that I had shown myself averse to lend, he had embraced a strong idea of my poverty. The sudden news of my estate convinced him of his error, and he had made but the one bound of it on this fresh venture, to which he was now so wedded, that I believe he would have suffered anything rather than fall to the alternative of fighting.

A little while longer he continued to dispute with me, until I hit upon a word that silenced him.

“If I find you so averse to let me see the lady by herself,” said I, “I must suppose you have very good grounds to think me in the right about her unwillingness.”

He gabbled some kind of an excuse.

“But all this is very exhausting to both of our tempers,” I added, “and I think we would do better to preserve a judicious silence.”

The which we did until the girl returned, and I must suppose would have cut a very ridiculous figure had there been any there to view us.

CHAPTER XXVIII - IN WHICH I AM LEFT ALONE

I opened the door to Catriona and stopped her on the threshold.

"Your father wishes us to take our walk," said I.

She looked to James More, who nodded, and at that, like a trained soldier, she turned to go with me.

We took one of our old ways, where we had gone often together, and been more happy than I can tell of in the past. I came a half a step behind, so that I could watch her unobserved. The knocking of her little shoes upon the way sounded extraordinary pretty and sad; and I thought it a strange moment that I should be so near both ends of it at once, and walk in the midst between two destinies, and could not tell whether I was hearing these steps for the last time, or whether the sound of them was to go in and out with me till death should part us.

She avoided even to look at me, only walked before her, like one who had a guess of what was coming. I saw I must speak soon before my courage was run out, but where to begin I knew not. In this painful situation, when the girl was as good as forced into my arms and had already besought my forbearance, any excess of pressure must have seemed indecent; yet to avoid it wholly would have a very cold-like appearance. Between these extremes I stood helpless, and could have bit my fingers; so that, when at last I managed to speak at all, it may be said I spoke at random.

"Catriona," said I, "I am in a very painful situation; or rather, so we are both; and I would be a good deal obliged to you if you would promise to let me speak through first of all, and not to interrupt me till I have done."

She promised me that simply.

"Well," said I, "this that I have got to say is very difficult, and I know very well I have no right to be saying it. After what passed between the two of us last Friday, I have no manner of right. We have got so ravelled up (and all by my fault) that I know very well the least I could do is just to hold my tongue, which was what I intended fully, and there was nothing further from my thoughts than to have troubled you again. But, my dear, it has become merely necessary, and no way by it. You see, this estate of mine has fallen in, which makes of me rather a better match; and the - the business would not have quite the same ridiculous-like appearance that it would before. Besides which, it's supposed that our affairs have got so much ravelled up (as I was saying) that it would be better to let them be the way they are. In my view, this part of the thing is vastly exagerate, and if I were you I would not wear two thoughts on it. Only it's right I should mention the same, because there's no doubt it has some influence on James More. Then I think we were none so unhappy when we dwelt together in this town before. I think we did pretty well together. If you would look back, my dear - "

"I will look neither back nor forward," she interrupted. "Tell me the one thing: this is my father's doing?"

"He approves of it," said I. "He approved I that I should ask your hand in marriage," and was going on again with somewhat more of an appeal upon her feelings; but she marked me not, and struck into the midst.

"He told you to!" she cried. "It is no sense denying it, you said yourself that there was nothing farther from your thoughts. He told you to."

"He spoke of it the first, if that is what you mean," I began.

She was walking ever the faster, and looking fain in front of her; but at this she made a little noise in her head, and I thought she would have run.

"Without which," I went on, "after what you said last Friday, I would never have been so troublesome as make the offer. But when he as good as asked me, what was I to do?"

She stopped and turned round upon me.

"Well, it is refused at all events," she cried, "and there will be an end of that."

And she began again to walk forward.

"I suppose I could expect no better," said I, "but I think you might try to be a little kind to me for the last end of it. I see not why you should be harsh. I have loved you very well, Catriona - no harm that I should call you so for the last time. I have done the best that I could manage, I am trying the same still, and only vexed that I can do no better. It is a strange thing to me that you can take any pleasure to be hard to me."

"I am not thinking of you," she said, "I am thinking of that man, my father."

"Well, and that way, too!" said I. "I can be of use to you that way, too; I will have to be. It is very needful, my dear, that we should consult about your father; for the way this talk has gone, an angry man will be James More."

She stopped again. "It is because I am disgraced?" she asked.

"That is what he is thinking," I replied, "but I have told you already to make nought of it."

"It will be all one to me," she cried. "I prefer to be disgraced!"

I did not know very well what to answer, and stood silent.

There seemed to be something working in her bosom after that last cry; presently she broke out, “And what is the meaning of all this? Why is all this shame loundered on my head? How could you dare it, David Balfour?”

“My dear,” said I, “what else was I to do?”

“I am not your dear,” she said, “and I defy you to be calling me these words.”

“I am not thinking of my words,” said I. “My heart bleeds for you, Miss Drummond. Whatever I may say, be sure you have my pity in your difficult position. But there is just the one thing that I wish you would bear in view, if it was only long enough to discuss it quietly; for there is going to be a collieshangie when we two get home. Take my word for it, it will need the two of us to make this matter end in peace.”

“Ay,” said she. There sprang a patch of red in either of her cheeks. “Was he for fighting you?” said she.

“Well, he was that,” said I.

She gave a dreadful kind of laugh. “At all events, it is complete!” she cried. And then turning on me. “My father and I are a fine pair,” said she, “but I am thanking the good God there will be somebody worse than what we are. I am thanking the good God that he has let me see you so. There will never be the girl made that will not scorn you.”

I had borne a good deal pretty patiently, but this was over the mark.

“You have no right to speak to me like that,” said I. “What have I done but to be good to you, or try to be? And here is my repayment! O, it is too much.”

She kept looking at me with a hateful smile. “Coward!” said she.

“The word in your throat and in your father’s!” I cried. “I have dared him this day already in your interest. I will dare him again, the nasty pole-cat; little I care which of us should fall! Come,” said I, “back to the house with us; let us be done with it, let me be done with the whole Hieland crew of you! You will see what you think when I am dead.”

She shook her head at me with that same smile I could have struck her for.

“O, smile away!” I cried. “I have seen your bonny father smile on the wrong side this day. Not that I mean he was afraid, of course,” I added hastily, “but he preferred the other way of it.”

“What is this?” she asked.

“When I offered to draw with him,” said I.

“You offered to draw upon James More!” she cried.

“And I did so,” said I, “and found him backward enough, or how would we be here?"

"There is a meaning upon this," said she. "What is it you are meaning?"

"He was to make you take me," I replied, "and I would not have it. I said you should be free, and I must speak with you alone; little I supposed it would be such a speaking! 'And what if I refuse?' said he. - 'Then it must come to the throat-cutting,' says I, 'for I will no more have a husband forced on that young lady, than what I would have a wife forced upon myself.' These were my words, they were a friend's words; bonnily have I paid for them! Now you have refused me of your own clear free will, and there lives no father in the Highlands, or out of them, that can force on this marriage. I will see that your wishes are respected; I will make the same my business, as I have all through. But I think you might have that decency as to affect some gratitude. 'Deed, and I thought you knew me better! I have not behaved quite well to you, but that was weakness. And to think me a coward, and such a coward as that - O, my lass, there was a stab for the last of it!"

"Davie, how would I guess?" she cried. "O, this is a dreadful business! Me and mine," - she gave a kind of a wretched cry at the word - "me and mine are not fit to speak to you. O, I could be kneeling down to you in the street, I could be kissing your hands for forgiveness!"

"I will keep the kisses I have got from you already," cried I. "I will keep the ones I wanted and that were something worth; I will not be kissed in penitence."

"What can you be thinking of this miserable girl?" says she.

"What I am trying to tell you all this while!" said I, "that you had best leave me alone, whom you can make no more unhappy if you tried, and turn your attention to James More, your father, with whom you are like to have a queer pirn to wind."

"O, that I must be going out into the world alone with such a man!" she cried, and seemed to catch herself in with a great effort. "But trouble yourself no more for that," said she. "He does not know what kind of nature is in my heart. He will pay me dear for this day of it; dear, dear, will he pay."

She turned, and began to go home and I to accompany her. At which she stopped.

"I will be going alone," she said. "It is alone I must be seeing him."

Some little time I raged about the streets, and told myself I was the worst used lad in Christendom. Anger choked me; it was all very well for me to breathe deep; it seemed there was not air enough about Leyden to supply me, and I thought I would have burst like a man at the bottom of the sea. I stopped and laughed at myself at a street corner a minute together, laughing out loud, so that a passenger looked at me, which brought me to myself.

"Well," I thought, "I have been a gull and a ninny and a soft Tommy long enough. Time it was done. Here is a good lesson to have nothing to do with that accursed sex, that was the ruin of the man in the beginning and will be so to the end. God knows I was happy enough before ever I saw her; God knows I can be happy enough again when I have seen the last of her."

That seemed to me the chief affair: to see them go. I dwelled upon the idea fiercely; and presently slipped on, in a kind of malevolence, to consider how very poorly they were likely to fare when Davie Balfour was no longer by to be their milk-cow; at which, to my very own great surprise, the disposition of my mind turned bottom up. I was still angry; I still hated her; and yet I thought I owed it to myself that she should suffer nothing.

This carried me home again at once, where I found the mails drawn out and ready fastened by the door, and the father and daughter with every mark upon them of a recent disagreement. Catriona was like a wooden doll; James More breathed hard, his face was dotted with white spots, and his nose upon one side. As soon as I came in, the girl looked at him with a steady, clear, dark look that might have been followed by a blow. It was a hint that was more contemptuous than a command, and I was surprised to see James More accept it. It was plain he had had a master talking-to; and I could see there must be more of the devil in the girl than I had guessed, and more good humour about the man than I had given him the credit of.

He began, at least, calling me Mr. Balfour, and plainly speaking from a lesson; but he got not very far, for at the first pompous swell of his voice, Catriona cut in.

"I will tell you what James More is meaning," said she. "He means we have come to you, beggar-folk, and have not behaved to you very well, and we are ashamed of our ingratitude and ill-behaviour. Now we are wanting to go away and be forgotten; and my father will have guided his gear so ill, that we cannot even do that unless you will give us some more alms. For that is what we are, at an events, beggar-folk and sorners."

"By your leave, Miss Drummond," said I, "I must speak to your father by myself."

She went into her own room and shut the door, without a word or a look.

"You must excuse her, Mr. Balfour," says James More. "She has no delicacy."

"I am not here to discuss that with you," said I, "but to be quit of you. And to that end I must talk of your position. Now, Mr.

Drummond, I have kept the run of your affairs more closely than you bargained for. I know you had money of your own when you were borrowing mine. I know you have had more since you were here in Leyden, though you concealed it even from your daughter."

"I bid you beware. I will stand no more baiting," he broke out. "I am sick of her and you. What kind of a damned trade is this to be a parent! I have had expressions used to me - " There he broke off. "Sir, this is the heart of a soldier and a parent," he went on again, laying his hand on his bosom, "outraged in both characters - and I bid you beware."

"If you would have let me finish," says I, "you would have found I spoke for your advantage."

"My dear friend," he cried, "I know I might have relied upon the generosity of your character."

"Man! will you let me speak?" said I. "The fact is that I cannot win to find out if you are rich or poor. But it is my idea that your means, as they are mysterious in their source, so they are something insufficient in amount; and I do not choose your daughter to be lacking. If I durst speak to herself, you may be certain I would never dream of trusting it to you; because I know you like the back of my hand, and all your blustering talk is that much wind to me. However, I believe in your way you do still care something for your daughter after all; and I must just be doing with that ground of confidence, such as it is."

Whereupon, I arranged with him that he was to communicate with me, as to his whereabouts and Catriona's welfare, in consideration of which I was to serve him a small stipend.

He heard the business out with a great deal of eagerness; and when it was done, "My dear fellow, my dear son," he cried out, "this is more like yourself than any of it yet! I will serve you with a soldier's faithfulness - "

"Let me hear no more of it!" says I. "You have got me to that pitch that the bare name of soldier rises on my stomach. Our traffic is settled; I am now going forth and will return in one half-hour, when I expect to find my chambers purged of you."

I gave them good measure of time; it was my one fear that I might see Catriona again, because tears and weakness were ready in my heart, and I cherished my anger like a piece of dignity. Perhaps an hour went by; the sun had gone down, a little wisp of a new moon was following it across a scarlet sunset; already there were stars in the east, and in my chambers, when at last I entered them, the night lay blue. I lit a taper and reviewed the rooms; in the first there remained nothing so much as to awake a memory of those who were gone; but in the second, in a corner of the floor, I spied a little heap that brought my heart into my mouth. She had left behind at her departure all that she had ever had of me. It was the blow that I felt sorest, perhaps because it was the last; and I fell upon that pile of clothing and behaved myself more foolish than I care to tell of.

Late in the night, in a strict frost, and my teeth chattering, I came again by some portion of my manhood and considered with myself. The sight of these poor frocks and ribbons, and her shifts, and the clocked stockings, was not to be endured; and if I were to recover any constancy of mind, I saw I must be rid of them ere the morning. It was my first thought to have made a fire and burned them; but my disposition has always been opposed to wastery, for one thing; and for another, to have burned these things that she had worn so close upon her body seemed in the nature of a cruelty. There was a corner cupboard in that chamber; there I determined to bestow them. The which I did and made it a long business, folding them with very little skill indeed but the more care; and sometimes dropping them with my tears. All the heart was gone out of me, I was weary as though I had run miles, and sore like one beaten; when, as I was folding a kerchief that she wore often at her neck, I observed there was a corner neatly cut from it. It was a kerchief of a very pretty hue, on which I had frequently remarked; and once that she had it on, I remembered telling her (by way of a banter) that she wore my colours. There came a glow of hope and like a tide of sweetness in my bosom; and the next moment I was plunged back in a fresh despair. For there was the corner crumpled in a knot and cast down by itself in another part of the floor.

But when I argued with myself, I grew more hopeful. She had cut that corner off in some childish freak that was manifestly tender; that she had cast it away again was little to be wondered at; and I was inclined to dwell more upon the first than upon the second, and to be more pleased that she had ever conceived the idea of that keepsake, than concerned because she had flung it from her in an hour of natural resentment.

CHAPTER XXIX - WE MEET IN DUNKIRK.

Altogether, then, I was scare so miserable the next days but what I had many hopeful and happy snatches; threw myself with a good deal of constancy upon my studies; and made out to endure the time till Alan should arrive, or I might hear word of Catriona by the means of James More. I had altogether three letters in the time of our separation. One was to announce their arrival in the town of Dunkirk in France, from which place James shortly after started alone upon a private mission. This was to England and to see Lord Holderness; and it has always been a bitter thought that my good money helped to pay the charges of the same. But he has need of a long spoon who soups with the de'il, or James More either. During this absence, the time was to fall due for another letter; and as the letter was the condition of his stipend, he had been so careful as to prepare it beforehand and leave it with Catriona to be despatched. The fact of our correspondence aroused her suspicions, and he was no sooner gone than she had burst the seal. What I received began accordingly in the writing of James More:

"My dear Sir, - Your esteemed favour came to hand duly, and I have to acknowledge the inclosure according to agreement. It shall be all faithfully expended on my daughter, who is well, and desires to be remembered to her dear friend. I find her in rather a melancholy disposition, but trust in the mercy of God to see her re-established. Our manner of life is very much alone, but we solace ourselves with the melancholy tunes of our native mountains, and by walking up the margin of the sea that lies next to Scotland. It was better days with me when I lay with five wounds upon my body on the field of Gladsmuir. I have found employment here in the haras of a French nobleman, where my experience is valued. But, my dear Sir, the wages are so exceedingly unsuitable that I would be ashamed to mention them, which makes your remittances the more necessary to my daughter's comfort, though I daresay the sight of old friends would be still better.
"My dear Sir,
"Your affectionate, obedient servant,
"JAMES MACGREGOR DRUMMOND."

Below it began again in the hand of Catriona:-

"Do not be believing him, it is all lies together, - C. M. D."

Not only did she add this postscript, but I think she must have come near suppressing the letter; for it came long after date, and was closely followed by the third. In the time betwixt them, Alan had arrived, and made another life to me with his merry conversation; I had been presented to his cousin of the Scots-Dutch, a man that drank more than I could have thought possible and was not otherwise of interest; I had been entertained to many jovial dinners and given some myself, all with no great change upon my sorrow; and we two (by which I mean Alan and myself, and not at all the cousin) had discussed a good deal the nature of my relations with James More and his daughter. I was naturally diffident to give particulars; and this disposition was not anyway lessened by the nature of Alan's commentary upon those I gave.

"I cannae make heed nor tail of it," he would say, "but it sticks in my mind ye've made a gowk of yourself. There's few people that has had more experience than Alan Breck: and I can never call to mind to have heard tell of a lassie like this one of yours. The way that you tell it, the thing's fair impossible. Ye must have made a terrible hash of the business, David."

"There are whiles that I am of the same mind," said I.

"The strange thing is that ye seem to have a kind of fancy for her too!" said Alan.

"The biggest kind, Alan," said I, "and I think I'll take it to my grave with me."

"Well, ye beat me, whatever!" he would conclude.

I showed him the letter with Catriona's postscript. "And here again!" he cried. "Impossible to deny a kind of decency to this Catriona, and sense forby! As for James More, the man's as boss as a drum; he's just a wame and a wheen words; though I'll can never deny that he fought reasonably well at Gladsmuir, and it's true what he says here about the five wounds. But the loss of him is that the man's boss."

"Ye see, Alan," said I, "it goes against the grain with me to leave the maid in such poor hands."

"Ye couldnae weel find poorer," he admitted. "But what are ye to do with it? It's this way about a man and a woman, ye see, Davie: The weemenfolk have got no kind of reason to them. Either they like the man, and then a' goes fine; or else they just detest him, and ye may spare your breath - ye can do naething. There's just the two sets of them - them that would sell their coats for ye, and them that never look the road ye're on. That's a' that there is to women; and you seem to be such a gomeral that ye cannae tell the tane frae the tither."

"Well, and I'm afraid that's true for me," said I.

"And yet there's naething easier!" cried Alan. "I could easy learn ye the science of the thing; but ye seem to me to be born blind, and there's where the deefficulty comes in."

"And can you no help me?" I asked, "you that are so clever at the trade?"

"Ye see, David, I wasnae here," said he. "I'm like a field officer that has naebody but blind men for scouts and éclaireurs; and what would he ken? But it sticks in my mind that ye'll have made some kind of bauchle; and if I was you I would have a try at her again."

"Would ye so, man Alan?" said I.

"I would e'en't," says he.

The third letter came to my hand while we were deep in some such talk: and it will be seen how pat it fell to the occasion. James professed to be in some concern upon his daughter's health, which I believe was never better; abounded in kind expressions to myself; and finally proposed that I should visit them at Dunkirk.

"You will now be enjoying the society of my old comrade Mr. Stewart," he wrote. "Why not accompany him so far in his return to France? I have something very particular for Mr. Stewart's ear; and, at any rate, I would be pleased to meet in with an old fellow-soldier and one so mettle as himself. As for you, my dear sir, my daughter and I would be proud to receive our benefactor, whom we regard as a brother and a son. The French nobleman has proved a person of the most filthy avarice of character, and I have been necessitate to leave the haras. You will find us in consequence a little poorly lodged in the auberge of a man Bazin on the dunes; but the situation is caller, and I make no doubt but we might spend some very pleasant days, when Mr. Stewart and I could recall our services, and you and my daughter divert yourselves in a manner more befitting your age. I beg at least that Mr. Stewart would come here; my business with him opens a very wide door."

"What does the man want with me?" cried Alan, when he had read. "What he wants with you in clear enough - it's siller. But what can he want with Alan Breck?"

"O, it'll be just an excuse," said I. "He is still after this marriage, which I wish from my heart that we could bring about. And he asks you because he thinks I would be less likely to come wanting you."

"Well, I wish that I kent," says Alan. "Him and me were never onyways pack; we used to girn at ither like a pair of pipers. 'Something for my ear,' quo' he! I'll maybe have something for his hinder-end, before we're through with it. Dod, I'm thinking it would be a kind of divertisement to gang and see what he'll be after! Forby that I could see your lassie then. What say ye, Davie? Will ye ride with Alan?"

You may be sure I was not backward, and Alan's furlough running towards an end, we set forth presently upon this joint adventure.

It was near dark of a January day when we rode at last into the town of Dunkirk. We left our horses at the post, and found a guide to Bazin's Inn, which lay beyond the walls. Night was quite fallen, so that we were the last to leave that fortress, and heard the doors of it close behind us as we passed the bridge. On the other side there lay a lighted suburb, which we thridded for a while, then turned into a dark lane, and presently found ourselves wading in the night among deep sand where we could hear a bullering of the sea. We travelled in this fashion for some while, following our conductor mostly by the sound of his voice; and I had begun to think he was perhaps misleading us, when we came to the top of a small brae, and there appeared out of the darkness a dim light in a window.

"Voilà l'auberge à Bazin," says the guide.

Alan smacked his lips. "An unco lonely bit," said he, and I thought by his tone he was not wholly pleased.

A little after, and we stood in the lower storey of that house, which was all in the one apartment, with a stairs leading to the chambers at the side, benches and tables by the wall, the cooking fire at the one end of it, and shelves of bottles and the cellar-trap at the other. Here Bazin, who was an ill-looking, big man, told us the Scottish gentleman was gone abroad he knew not where, but the young lady was above, and he would call her down to us.

I took from my breast that kerchief wanting the corner, and knotted it about my throat. I could hear my heart go; and Alan patting me on the shoulder with some of his laughable expressions, I could scarce refrain from a sharp word. But the time was not long to wait. I heard her step pass overhead, and saw her on the stair. This she descended very quietly, and greeted me with a pale face and a certain seeming of earnestness, or uneasiness, in her manner that extremely dashed me.

"My father, James More, will be here soon. He will be very pleased to see you," she said. And then of a sudden her face flamed, her eyes lightened, the speech stopped upon her lips; and I made sure she had observed the kerchief. It was only for a breath that she was discomposed; but methought it was with a new animation that she turned to welcome Alan. "And you will be his friend, Alan Breck?" she cried. "Many is the dozen times I will have heard him tell of you; and I love you already for all your bravery and goodness."

"Well, well," says Alan, holding her hand in his and viewing her, "and so this is the young lady at the last of it! David, ye're an awful poor hand of a description."

I do not know that ever I heard him speak so straight to people's hearts; the sound of his voice was like song.

"What? will he have been describing me?" she cried.

"Little else of it since I ever came out of France!" says he, "forby a bit of a speciment one night in Scotland in a shaw of wood by Silvermills. But cheer up, my dear! ye're bonnier than what he said. And now there's one thing sure; you and me are to be a pair of friends. I'm a kind of a henchman to Davie here; I'm like a tyke at his heels; and whatever he cares for, I've got to care for too - and by the holy airn! they've got to care for me! So now you can see what way you stand with Alan Breck, and ye'll find ye'll hardly lose on the transaction. He's no very bonnie, my dear, but he's leal to them he loves."

"I thank you from my heart for your good words," said she. "I have that honour for a brave, honest man that I cannot find any to be answering with."

Using travellers' freedom, we spared to wait for James More, and sat down to meat, we threesome. Alan had Catriona sit by him and wait upon his wants: he made her drink first out of his glass, he surrounded her with continual kind gallantries, and yet never gave me the most small occasion to be jealous; and he kept the talk so much in his own hand, and that in so merry a note, that neither she nor I remembered to be embarrassed. If any had seen us there, it must have been supposed that Alan was the old friend and I the stranger. Indeed, I had often cause to love and to admire the man, but I never loved or admired him better than that night; and I could not help remarking to myself (what I was sometimes rather in danger of forgetting) that he had not only much experience of life, but in his own way a great deal of natural ability besides. As for Catriona, she seemed quite carried away; her laugh was like a peal of bells, her face gay as a May morning; and I own, although I was well pleased, yet I was a little sad also, and thought myself a dull, stockish character in comparison of my friend, and very unfit to come into a young maid's life, and perhaps ding down her gaiety.

But if that was like to be my part, I found that at least I was not alone in it; for, James More returning suddenly, the girl was changed into a piece of stone. Through the rest of that evening, until she made an excuse and slipped to bed, I kept an eye upon her without cease; and I can bear testimony that she never smiled, scarce spoke, and looked mostly on the board in front of her. So that I really marvelled to see so much devotion (as it used to be) changed into the very sickness of hate.

Of James More it is unnecessary to say much; you know the man already, what there was to know of him; and I am weary of writing out his lies. Enough that he drank a great deal, and told us very little that was to any possible purpose. As for the business with Alan, that was to be reserved for the morrow and his private hearing.

It was the more easy to be put off, because Alan and I were pretty weary with four day's ride, and sat not very late after Catriona.

We were soon alone in a chamber where we were to make-shift with a single bed. Alan looked on me with a queer smile.

"Ye muckle ass!" said he.

"What do ye mean by that?" I cried.

"Mean? What do I mean! It's extraordinar, David man," say he, "that you should be so mortal stupit."

Again I begged him to speak out.

"Well, it's this of it," said he. "I told ye there were the two kinds of women - them that would sell their shifts for ye, and the others. Just you try for yoursel, my bonny man! But what's that neepkin at your craig?"

I told him.

"I thocht it was something thereabout" said he.

Nor would he say another word though I besieged him long with importunities.

CHAPTER XXX - THE LETTER FROM THE SHIP

Daylight showed us how solitary the inn stood. It was plainly hard upon the sea, yet out of all view of it, and beset on every side with scabbit hills of sand. There was, indeed, only one thing in the nature of a prospect, where there stood out over a brae the two sails of a windmill, like an ass's ears, but with the ass quite hidden. It was strange (after the wind rose, for at first it was dead calm) to see the turning and following of each other of these great sails behind the hillock. Scarce any road came by there; but a number of footways travelled among the bents in all directions up to Mr. Bazin's door. The truth is, he was a man of many trades, not any one of them honest, and the position of his inn was the best of his livelihood. Smugglers frequented it; political agents and forfeited persons bound across the water came there to await their passages; and I daresay there was worse behind, for a whole family might have been butchered in that house and nobody the wiser.

I slept little and ill. Long ere it was day, I had slipped from beside my bedfellow, and was warming myself at the fire or walking to and fro before the door. Dawn broke mighty sullen; but a little after, sprang up a wind out of the west, which burst the clouds, let through the sun, and set the mill to the turning. There was something of spring in the sunshine, or else it was in my heart; and the appearing of the great sails one after another from behind the hill, diverted me extremely. At times I could hear a creak of the machinery; and by half-past eight of the day, and I thought this dreary, desert place was like a paradise.

For all which, as the day drew on and nobody came near, I began to be aware of an uneasiness that I could scarce explain. It seemed there was trouble afoot; the sails of the windmill, as they came up and went down over the hill, were like persons spying; and outside of all fancy, it was surely a strange neighbourhood and house for a young lady to be brought to dwell in.

At breakfast, which we took late, it was manifest that James More was in some danger or perplexity; manifest that Alan was alive to the same, and watched him close; and this appearance of duplicity upon the one side, and vigilance upon the other, held me on live coals. The meal was no sooner over than James seemed to come began to make apologies. He had an appointment of a private nature in the town (it was with the French nobleman, he told me), and we would please excuse him till about noon. Meanwhile he carried his daughter aside to the far end of the room, where he seemed to speak rather earnestly and she to listen with much inclination.

"I am caring less and less about this man James," said Alan. "There's something no right with the man James, and I shouldnae wonder but what Alan Breck would give an eye to him this day. I would like fine to see yon French nobleman, Davie; and I daresay you could find an employ to yoursel, and that would be to speir at the lassie for some news o' your affair. Just tell it to her plainly - tell her ye're a muckle ass at the off-set; and then, if I were you, and ye could do it naitural, I would just mint to her I was in some kind of a danger; a' weemenfolk likes that."

"I cannae lee, Alan, I cannae do it naitural," says I, mocking him.

"The more fool you!" says he. "Then ye'll can tell her that I recommended it; that'll set her to the laughing; and I wouldnae wonder but what that was the next best. But see to the pair of them! If I didnae feel just sure of the lassie, and that she was awful pleased and chief with Alan, I would think there was some kind of hocus-pocus about you."

"And is she so pleased with ye, then, Alan?" I asked.

"She thinks a heap of me," says he. "And I'm no like you: I'm one that can tell. That she does - she thinks a heap of Alan. And troth! I'm thinking a good deal of him mysel; and with your permission, Shaws, I'll be getting a wee yont amang the bents, so that I can see what way James goes."

One after another went, till I was left alone beside the breakfast table; James to Dunkirk, Alan dogging him, Catriona up the stairs to her own chamber. I could very well understand how she should avoid to be alone with me; yet was none the better pleased with it for that, and bent my mind to entrap her to an interview before the men returned. Upon the whole, the best appeared to me to do like Alan. If I was out of view among the sandhills, the fine morning would decoy her forth; and once I had her in the open, I could please myself.

No sooner said than done; nor was I long under the bield of a hillock before she appeared at the inn door, looked here and there, and (seeing nobody) set out by a path that led directly seaward, and by which I followed her. I was in no haste to make my presence known; the further she went I made sure of the longer hearing to my suit; and the ground being all sandy it was easy to follow her unheard. The path rose and came at last to the head of a knowe. Thence I had a picture for the first time of what a desolate wilderness that inn stood hidden in; where was no man to be seen, nor any house of man, except just Bazin's and the windmill. Only a little further on, the sea appeared and two or three ships upon it, pretty as a drawing. One of these was extremely close in to be so great a vessel; and I was aware of a shock of new suspicion, when I recognised the trim of the

Seahorse. What should an English ship be doing so near in to France? Why was Alan brought into her neighbourhood, and that in a place so far from any hope of rescue? and was it by accident, or by design, that the daughter of James More should walk that day to the seaside?

Presently I came forth behind her in the front of the sandhills and above the beach. It was here long and solitary; with a man-o'-war's boat drawn up about the middle of the prospect, and an officer in charge and pacing the sands like one who waited. I sat down where the rough grass a good deal covered me, and looked for what should follow. Catriona went straight to the boat; the officer met her with civilities; they had ten words together; I saw a letter changing hands; and there was Catriona returning. At the same time, as if this were all her business on the Continent, the boat shoved off and was headed for the Seahorse. But I observed the officer to remain behind and disappear among the bents.

I liked the business little; and the more I considered of it, liked it less. Was it Alan the officer was seeking? or Catriona? She drew near with her head down, looking constantly on the sand, and made so tender a picture that I could not bear to doubt her innocence. The next, she raised her face and recognised me; seemed to hesitate, and then came on again, but more slowly, and I thought with a changed colour. And at that thought, all else that was upon my bosom - fears, suspicions, the care of my friend's life - was clean swallowed up; and I rose to my feet and stood waiting her in a drunkenness of hope.

I gave her "good morning" as she came up, which she returned with a good deal of composure.

"Will you forgive my having followed you?" said I.

"I know you are always meaning kindly," she replied; and then, with a little outburst, "but why will you be sending money to that man! It must not be."

"I never sent it for him," said I, "but for you, as you know well."

"And you have no right to be sending it to either one of us," she said. "David, it is not right."

"It is not, it is all wrong," said I, "and I pray God he will help this dull fellow (if it be at all possible) to make it better. Catriona, this is no kind of life for you to lead; and I ask your pardon for the word, but yon man is no fit father to take care of you."

"Do not be speaking of him, even!" was her cry.

"And I need speak of him no more; it is not of him that I am thinking, O, be sure of that!" says I. "I think of the one thing. I have been alone now this long time in Leyden; and when I was by way of at my studies, still I was thinking of that. Next Alan came, and I went among soldier-men to their big dinners; and still I had the same thought. And it was the same before, when I had her there beside me. Catriona, do you see this napkin at my throat! You cut a corner from it once and then cast it from you. They're your colours now; I wear them in my heart. My dear, I cannot be wanting you. O, try to put up with me!"

I stepped before her so as to intercept her walking on.

"Try to put up with me," I was saying, "try and bear me with a little."

Still she had never the word, and a fear began to rise in me like a fear of death.

"Catriona," I cried, gazing on her hard, "is it a mistake again? Am I quite lost?"

She raised her face to me, breathless.

"Do you want me, Davie, truly?" said she, and I scarce could hear her say it.

"I do that," said I. "O, sure you know it - I do that."

"I have nothing left to give or to keep back," said she. "I was all yours from the first day, if you would have had a gift of me!" she said,

This was on the summit of a brae; the place was windy and conspicuous, we were to be seen there even from the English ship; but I kneeled down before her in the sand, and embraced her knees, and burst into that storm of weeping that I thought it must have broken me. All thought was wholly beaten from my mind by the vehemency of my discomposure. I knew not where I was. I had forgot why I was happy; only I knew she stooped, and I felt her cherish me to her face and bosom, and heard her words out of a whirl.

"Davie," she was saying, "O, Davie, is this what you think of me! Is it so that you were caring for poor me! O, Davie, Davie!"

With that she wept also, and our tears were commingled in a perfect gladness.

It might have been ten in the day before I came to a clear sense of what a mercy had befallen me; and sitting over against her, with her hands in mine, gazed in her face, and laughed out loud for pleasure like a child, and called her foolish and kind names. I have never seen the place that looked so pretty as those bents by Dunkirk; and the windmill sails, as they bobbed over the knowe, were like a tune of music.

I know not how much longer we might have continued to forget all else besides ourselves, had I not chanced upon a reference to her father, which brought us to reality.

"My little friend," I was calling her again and again, rejoicing to summon up the past by the sound of it, and to gaze across on her, and to be a little distant - "My little friend, now you are mine altogether; mine for good, my little friend and that man's no longer at all."

There came a sudden whiteness in her face, she plucked her hands from mine.

"Davie, take me away from him!" she cried. "There's something wrong; he's not true. There will be something wrong; I have a dreadful terror here at my heart. What will he be wanting at all events with that King's ship? What will this word be saying?" And she held the letter forth. "My mind misgives me, it will be some ill to Alan. Open it, Davie - open it and see."

I took it, and looked at it, and shook my head.

"No," said I, "it goes against me, I cannot open a man's letter."

"Not to save your friend?" she cried.

"I cannae tell," said I. "I think not. If I was only sure!"

"And you have but to break the seal!" said she.

"I know it," said I, "but the thing goes against me."

"Give it here," said she, "and I will open it myself."

"Nor you neither," said I. "You least of all. It concerns your father, and his honour, dear, which we are both misdoubting. No question but the place is dangerous-like, and the English ship being here, and your father having word from it, and yon officer that stayed ashore. He would not be alone either; there must be more along with him; I daresay we are spied upon this minute. Ay, no doubt, the letter should be opened; but somehow, not by you nor me."

I was about thus far with it, and my spirit very much overcome with a sense of danger and hidden enemies, when I spied Alan, come back again from following James and walking by himself among the sand-hills. He was in his soldier's coat, of course, and mighty fine; but I could not avoid to shudder when I thought how little that jacket would avail him, if he were once caught and flung in a skiff, and carried on board of the Seahorse, a deserter, a rebel, and now a condemned murderer.

"There," said I, "there is the man that has the best right to open it: or not, as he thinks fit."

With which I called upon his name, and we both stood up to be a mark for him.

"If it is so - if it be more disgrace - will you can bear it?" she asked, looking upon me with a burning eye.

"I was asked something of the same question when I had seen you but the once," said I. "What do you think I answered? That if I liked you as I thought I did - and O, but I like you better! - I would marry you at his gallows' foot."

The blood rose in her face; she came close up and pressed upon me, holding my hand: and it was so that we awaited Alan.

He came with one of his queer smiles. "What was I telling ye, David?" says he.

"There is a time for all things, Alan," said I, "and this time is serious. How have you sped? You can speak out plain before this friend of ours."

"I have been upon a fool's errand," said he.

"I doubt we have done better than you, then," said I; "and, at least, here is a great deal of matter that you must judge of. Do you see that?" I went on, pointing to the ship. "That is the Seahorse, Captain Palliser."

"I should ken her, too," says Alan. "I had fyke enough with her when she was stationed in the Forth. But what ails the man to come so close?"

"I will tell you why he came there first," said I. "It was to bring this letter to James More. Why he stops here now that it's delivered, what it's likely to be about, why there's an officer hiding in the bents, and whether or not it's probable that he's alone - I would rather you considered for yourself."

"A letter to James More?" said he.

"The same," said I.

"Well, and I can tell ye more than that," said Alan. "For the last night, when you were fast asleep, I heard the man colloguing with some one in the French, and then the door of that inn to be opened and shut."

"Alan!" cried I, "you slept all night, and I am here to prove it."

"Ay, but I would never trust Alan whether he was asleep or waking!" says he. "But the business looks bad. Let's see the letter."

I gave it him.

"Catriona," said he, "you have to excuse me, my dear; but there's nothing less than my fine bones upon the cast of it, and I'll have to break this seal."

"It is my wish," said Catriona.

He opened it, glanced it through, and flung his hand in the air.

"The stinking brock!" says he, and crammed the paper in his pocket. "Here, let's get our things together. This place is fair death to me." And he began to walk towards the inn.

It was Catriona that spoke the first. "He has sold you?" she asked.

"Sold me, my dear," said Alan. "But thanks to you and Davie, I'll can jink him yet. Just let me win upon my horse," he added.

"Catriona must come with us," said I. "She can have no more traffic with that man. She and I are to be married." At which she pressed my hand to her side.

"Are ye there with it?" says Alan, looking back. "The best day's work that ever either of you did yet! And I'm bound to say, my dawtie, ye make a real, bonny couple."

The way that he was following brought us close in by the windmill, where I was aware of a man in seaman's trousers, who seemed to be spying from behind it. Only, of course, we took him in the rear.

"See, Alan!"

"Wheesht!" said, he, "this is my affairs."

The man was, no doubt, a little deafened by the clattering of the mill, and we got up close before he noticed. Then he turned, and we saw he was a big fellow with a mahogany face.

"I think, sir," says Alan, "that you speak the English?"

"Non, monsieur," says he, with an incredible bad accent.

"Non, monsieur," cries Alan, mocking him. "Is that how they learn you French on the Seahorse? Ye muckle, gutsey hash, here's a Scots boot to your English hurdies!"

And bounding on him before he could escape, he dealt the man a kick that laid him on his nose. Then he stood, with a savage smile, and watched him scramble to his feet and scamper off into the sand-hills.

"But it's high time I was clear of these empty bents!" said Alan; and continued his way at top speed, and we still following, to the backdoor of Bazin's inn.

It chanced that as we entered by the one door we came face to face with James More entering by the other.

"Here!" said I to Catriona, "quick! upstairs with you and make your packets; this is no fit scene for you."

In the meanwhile James and Alan had met in the midst of the long room. She passed them close by to reach the stairs; and after she was some way up I saw her turn and glance at them again, though without pausing. Indeed, they were worth looking at. Alan wore as they met one of his best appearances of courtesy and friendliness, yet with something eminently warlike, so that James smelled danger off the man, as folk smell fire in a house, and stood prepared for accidents.

Time pressed. Alan's situation in that solitary place, and his enemies about him, might have daunted Caesar. It made no change in him; and it was in his old spirit of mockery and daffing that he began the interview.

"A braw good day to ye again, Mr. Drummond," said he. "What'll yon business of yours be just about?"

"Why, the thing being private, and rather of a long story," says James, "I think it will keep very well till we have eaten."

"I'm none so sure of that," said Alan. "It sticks in my mind it's either now or never; for the fact is me and Mr. Balfour here have gotten a line, and we're thinking of the road."

I saw a little surprise in James's eye; but he held himself stoutly.

"I have but the one word to say to cure you of that," said he, "and that is the name of my business."

"Say it then," says Alan. "Hout! wha minds for Davie?"

"It is a matter that would make us both rich men," said James.

"Do you tell me that?" cries Alan.

"I do, sir," said James. "The plain fact is that it is Cluny's Treasure."

"No!" cried Alan. "Have ye got word of it?"

"I ken the place, Mr. Stewart, and can take you there," said James.

"This crowns all!" says Alan. "Well, and I'm glad I came to Dunkirk. And so this was your business, was it? Halvers, I'm thinking?"

"That is the business, sir," said James.

"Well, well," said Alan; and then in the same tone of childlike interest, "it has naething to do with the Seahorse, then?" he asked,

"With what?" says James.

"Or the lad that I have just kicked the bottom of behind yon windmill?" pursued Alan. "Hut, man! have done with your lees! I have Palliser's letter here in my pouch. You're by with it, James More. You can never show your face again with dacent folk."

James was taken all aback with it. He stood a second, motionless and white, then swelled with the living anger.

"Do you talk to me, you bastard?" he roared out.

"Ye glee'd swine!" cried Alan, and hit him a sounding buffet on the mouth, and the next wink of time their blades clashed together.

At the first sound of the bare steel I instinctively leaped back from the collision. The next I saw, James parried a thrust so nearly that I thought him killed; and it lowed up in my mind that this was the girl's father, and in a manner almost my own, and I drew and ran in to sever them.

"Keep back, Davie! Are ye daft! Damn ye, keep back!" roared Alan. "Your blood be on your ain heid then!"

I beat their blades down twice. I was knocked reeling against the wall; I was back again betwixt them. They took no heed of me, thrusting at each other like two furies. I can never think how I avoided being stabbed myself or stabbing one of these two Rodomonts, and the whole business turned about me like a piece of a dream; in the midst of which I heard a great cry from the stair, and Catriona sprang before her father. In the same moment the point of my sword encountered some thing yielding. It came back to me reddened. I saw the blood flow on the girl's kerchief, and stood sick.

"Will you be killing him before my eyes, and me his daughter after all!" she cried.

"My dear, I have done with him," said Alan, and went, and sat on a table, with his arms crossed and the sword naked in his hand.

Awhile she stood before the man, panting, with big eyes, then swung suddenly about and faced him.

"Begone!" was her word, "take your shame out of my sight; leave me with clean folk. I am a daughter of Alpin! Shame of the sons of Alpin, begone!"

It was said with so much passion as awoke me from the horror of my own bloodied sword. The two stood facing, she with the red stain on her kerchief, he white as a rag. I knew him well enough - I knew it must have pierced him in the quick place of his soul; but he betook himself to a bravado air.

"Why," says he, sheathing his sword, though still with a bright eye on Alan, "if this brawl is over I will but get my portmanteau - "

"There goes no pockmantie out of this place except with me," says Alan.

"Sir!" cries James.

"James More," says Alan, "this lady daughter of yours is to marry my friend Davie, upon the which account I let you pack with a hale carcase. But take you my advice of it and get that carcase out of harm's way or ower late. Little as you suppose it, there are leemits to my temper."

"Be damned, sir, but my money's there!" said James.

"I'm vexed about that, too," says Alan, with his funny face, "but now, ye see, it's mines." And then with more gravity, "Be you advised, James More, you leave this house."

James seemed to cast about for a moment in his mind; but it's to be thought he had enough of Alan's swordsmanship, for he suddenly put off his hat to us and (with a face like one of the damned) bade us farewell in a series. With which he was gone.

At the same time a spell was lifted from me.

"Catriona," I cried, "it was me - it was my sword. O, are you much hurt?"

"I know it, Davie, I am loving you for the pain of it; it was done defending that bad man, my father. See!" she said, and showed me a bleeding scratch, "see, you have made a man of me now. I will carry a wound like an old soldier."

Joy that she should be so little hurt, and the love of her brave nature, supported me. I embraced her, I kissed the wound.

"And am I to be out of the kissing, me that never lost a chance?" says Alan; and putting me aside and taking Catriona by either shoulder, "My dear," he said, "you're a true daughter of Alpin. By all accounts, he was a very fine man, and he may weel be proud of you. If ever I was to get married, it's the marrow of you I would be seeking for a mother to my sons. And I bear's a king's name and speak the truth."

He said it with a serious heat of admiration that was honey to the girl, and through her, to me. It seemed to wipe us clean of all James

More's disgraces. And the next moment he was just himself again.

"And now by your leave, my dawties," said he, "this is a' very bonny; but Alan Breck'll be a wee thing nearer to the gallows than he's caring for; and Dod! I think this is a grand place to be leaving."

The word recalled us to some wisdom. Alan ran upstairs and returned with our saddle-bags and James More's portmanteau; I picked up Catriona's bundle where she had dropped it on the stair; and we were setting forth out of that dangerous house, when Bazin stopped the way with cries and gesticulations. He had whipped under a table when the swords were drawn, but now he was as bold as a lion. There was his bill to be settled, there was a chair broken, Alan had sat among his dinner things, James More had fled.

"Here," I cried, "pay yourself," and flung him down some Lewie d'ors; for I thought it was no time to be accounting.

He sprang upon that money, and we passed him by, and ran forth into the open. Upon three sides of the house were seamen hasting and closing in; a little nearer to us James More waved his hat as if to hurry them; and right behind him, like some foolish person holding up his hands, were the sails of the windmill turning.

Alan gave but one glance, and laid himself down to run. He carried a great weight in James More's portmanteau; but I think he would as soon have lost his life as cast away that booty which was his revenge; and he ran so that I was distressed to follow him, and marvelled and exulted to see the girl bounding at my side.

As soon as we appeared, they cast off all disguise upon the other side; and the seamen pursued us with shouts and view-hullohs. We had a start of some two hundred yards, and they were but bandy-legged tarpaulins after all, that could not hope to better us at such an exercise. I suppose they were armed, but did not care to use their pistols on French ground. And as soon as I perceived that we not only held our advantage but drew a little away, I began to feel quite easy of the issue. For all which, it was a hot, brisk bit of work, so long as it lasted; Dunkirk was still far off; and when we popped over a knowe, and found a company of the garrison marching on the other side on some manoeuvre, I could very well understand the word that Alan had.

He stopped running at once; and mopping at his brow, "They're a real bonny folk, the French nation," says he.

CONCLUSION

No sooner were we safe within the walls of Dunkirk than we held a very necessary council-of-war on our position. We had taken a daughter from her father at the sword's point; any judge would give her back to him at once, and by all likelihood clap me and Alan into jail; and though we had an argument upon our side in Captain Palliser's letter, neither Catriona nor I were very keen to be using it in public. Upon all accounts it seemed the most prudent to carry the girl to Paris to the hands of her own chieftain, Macgregor of Bohaldie, who would be very willing to help his kinswoman, on the one hand, and not at all anxious to dishonour James upon other.

We made but a slow journey of it up, for Catriona was not so good at the riding as the running, and had scarce sat in the saddle since the 'Forty-five. But we made it out at last, reached Paris early of a Sabbath morning, and made all speed, under Alan's guidance, to find Bohaldie. He was finely lodged, and lived in a good style, having a pension on the Scots Fund, as well as private means; greeted Catriona like one of his own house, and seemed altogether very civil and discreet, but not particularly open. We asked of the news of James More. "Poor James!" said he, and shook his head and smiled, so that I thought he knew further than he meant to tell. Then we showed him Palliser's letter, and he drew a long face at that.

"Poor James!" said he again. "Well, there are worse folk than James More, too. But this is dreadful bad. Tut, tut, he must have forgot himself entirely! This is a most undesirable letter. But, for all that, gentlemen, I cannot see what we would want to make it public for. It's an ill bird that fouls his own nest, and we are all Scots folk and all Hieland."

Upon this we all agreed, save perhaps Alan; and still more upon the question of our marriage, which Bohaldie took in his own hands, as though there had been no such person as James More, and gave Catriona away with very pretty manners and agreeable compliments in French. It was not till all was over, and our healths drunk, that he told us James was in that city, whither he had preceded us some days, and where he now lay sick, and like to die. I thought I saw by my wife's face what way her inclination pointed.

"And let us go see him, then," said I.

"If it is your pleasure," said Catriona. These were early days.

He was lodged in the same quarter of the city with his chief, in a great house upon a corner; and we were guided up to the garret where he lay by the sound of Highland piping. It seemed he had just borrowed a set of them from Bohaldie to amuse his sickness; though he was no such hand as was his brother Rob, he made good music of the kind; and it was strange to observe the French folk crowding on the stairs, and some of them laughing. He lay propped in a pallet. The first look of him I saw he was upon his last business; and, doubtless, this was a strange place for him to die in. But even now I find I can scarce dwell upon his end with patience. Doubtless, Bohaldie had prepared him; he seemed to know we were married, complimented us on the event, and gave us a benediction like a patriarch.

"I have been never understood," said he. "I forgive you both without an afterthought;" after which he spoke for all the world in his old manner, was so obliging as to play us a tune or two upon his pipes, and borrowed a small sum before I left.

I could not trace even a hint of shame in any part of his behaviour; but he was great upon forgiveness; it seemed always fresh to him. I think he forgave me every time we met; and when after some four days he passed away in a kind of odour of affectionate sanctity, I could have torn my hair out for exasperation. I had him buried; but what to put upon his tomb was quite beyond me, till at last I considered the date would look best alone.

I thought it wiser to resign all thoughts of Leyden, where we had appeared once as brother and sister, and it would certainly look strange to return in a new character. Scotland would be doing for us; and thither, after I had recovered that which I had left behind, we sailed in a Low Country ship.

And now, Miss Barbara Balfour (to set the ladies first), and Mr. Alan Balfour younger of Shaws, here is the story brought fairly to an end. A great many of the folk that took a part in it, you will find (if you think well) that you have seen and spoken with. Alison Hastie in Limekilns was the lass that rocked your cradle when you were too small to know of it, and walked abroad with you in the policy when you were bigger. That very fine great lady that is Miss Barbara's name-mamma is no other than the same Miss Grant that made so much a fool of David Balfour in the house of the Lord Advocate. And I wonder whether you remember a little, lean, lively gentleman in a scratch-wig and a wraprascal, that came to Shaws very late of a dark night, and whom you were awakened out of your beds and brought down to the dining-hall to be presented to, by the name of Mr. Jamieson? Or has Alan forgotten what he did at Mr. Jamieson's request - a most disloyal act - for which, by the letter of the law, he might be hanged - no less than drinking the king's health across the water? These were strange doings in a good Whig house! But Mr. Jamieson is a man privileged, and might set fire to my corn-barn; and the name they know him by now in France is the Chevalier Stewart.

As for Davie and Catriona, I shall watch you pretty close in the next days, and see if you are so bold as to be laughing at papa and mamma. It is true we were not so wise as we might have been, and made a great deal of sorrow out of nothing; but you will find as you grow up that even the artful Miss Barbara, and even the valiant Mr. Alan, will be not so very much wiser than their parents. For the life of man upon this world of ours is a funny business. They talk of the angels weeping; but I think they must more often be holding their sides as they look on; and there was one thing I determined to do when I began this long story, and that was to tell out everything as it befell.

THE EBB-TIDE

A TRIO AND QUARTETTE

By Robert Louis Stevenson and Lloyde Osbourne

Published in 1894, this short novel was written by Stevenson and his stepson Lloyd Osbourne, and was published the same year Stevenson died. The novel opens by introducing three destitute beggars in the port of Papeete on Tahiti. They are Herrick, a failed English businessman; Davis, an American sea captain disgraced by the loss of his last ship; and Huish, a dishonest Cockney of various employments.

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PART I

CHAPTER 1. NIGHT ON THE BEACH

Throughout the island world of the Pacific, scattered men of many European races and from almost every grade of society carry activity and disseminate disease. Some prosper, some vegetate. Some have mounted the steps of thrones and owned islands and navies. Others again must marry for a livelihood; a strapping, merry, chocolate-coloured dame supports them in sheer idleness; and, dressed like natives, but still retaining some foreign element of gait or attitude, still perhaps with some relic (such as a single eye-glass) of the officer and gentleman, they sprawl in palm-leaf verandahs and entertain an island audience with memoirs of the music-hall. And there are still others, less pliable, less capable, less fortunate, perhaps less base, who continue, even in these isles of plenty, to lack bread.

At the far end of the town of Papeete, three such men were seated on the beach under a purao tree.

It was late. Long ago the band had broken up and marched musically home, a motley troop of men and women, merchant clerks and navy officers, dancing in its wake, arms about waist and crowned with garlands. Long ago darkness and silence had gone from house to house about the tiny pagan city. Only the street lamps shone on, making a glow-worm halo in the umbrageous alleys or drawing a tremulous image on the waters of the port. A sound of snoring ran among the piles of lumber by the Government pier. It was wafted ashore from the graceful clipper-bottomed schooners, where they lay moored close in like dinghies, and their crews were stretched upon the deck under the open sky or huddled in a rude tent amidst the disorder of merchandise.

But the men under the purao had no thought of sleep. The same temperature in England would have passed without remark in summer; but it was bitter cold for the South Seas. Inanimate nature knew it, and the bottle of cocoanut oil stood frozen in every bird-cage house about the island; and the men knew it, and shivered. They wore flimsy cotton clothes, the same they had sweated in by day and run the gauntlet of the tropic showers; and to complete their evil case, they had no breakfast to mention, less dinner, and no supper at all.

In the telling SouthSea phrase, these three men were ON THE BEACH. Common calamity had brought them acquainted, as the three most miserable English-speaking creatures in Tahiti; and beyond their misery, they knew next to nothing of each other, not even their true names. For each had made a long apprenticeship in going downward; and each, at some stage of the descent, had been shamed into the adoption of an alias. And yet not one of them had figured in a court of justice; two were men of kindly virtues; and one, as he sat and shivered under the purao, had a tattered Virgil in his pocket.

Certainly, if money could have been raised upon the book, Robert Herrick would long ago have sacrificed that last possession; but the demand for literature, which is so marked a feature in some parts of the South Seas, extends not so far as the dead tongues; and the Virgil, which he could not exchange against a meal, had often consoled him in his hunger. He would study it, as he lay with tightened belt on the floor of the old calaboose, seeking favourite passages and finding new ones only less beautiful because they lacked the consecration of remembrance. Or he would pause on random country walks; sit on the path side, gazing over the sea on the mountains of Eimeo; and dip into the Aeneid, seeking sortes. And if the oracle (as is the way of oracles) replied with no very certain nor encouraging voice, visions of England at least would throng upon the exile's memory: the busy schoolroom, the green playing-fields, holidays at home, and the perennial roar of London, and the fireside, and the white head of his father. For it is the destiny of those grave, restrained and classic writers, with whom we make enforced and often painful acquaintanceship at school, to pass into the blood and become native in the memory; so that a phrase of Virgil speaks not so much of Mantua or Augustus, but of English places and the student's own irrevocable youth.

Robert Herrick was the son of an intelligent, active, and ambitious man, small partner in a considerable London house. Hopes were conceived of the boy; he was sent to a good school, gained there an Oxford scholarship, and proceeded in course to the WesternUniversity. With all his talent and taste (and he had much of both) Robert was deficient in consistency and intellectual manhood, wandered in bypaths of study, worked at music or at metaphysics when he should have been at Greek, and took at last a paltry degree. Almost at the same time, the London house was disastrously wound up; Mr Herrick must begin the world again as a clerk in a strange office, and Robert relinquish his ambitions and accept with gratitude a career that he detested and despised. He had no head for figures, no interest in affairs, detested the constraint of hours, and despised the aims and the success of merchants. To grow rich was none of his ambitions; rather to do well. A worse or a more bold young man would have refused the destiny; perhaps tried his future with his pen; perhaps enlisted. Robert, more prudent, possibly more timid, consented to embrace that way of life in which he could most readily assist his family. But he did so with a mind divided; fled the neighbourhood of former comrades;

and chose, out of several positions placed at his disposal, a clerkship in New York.

His career thenceforth was one of unbroken shame. He did not drink, he was exactly honest, he was never rude to his employers, yet was everywhere discharged. Bringing no interest to his duties, he brought no attention; his day was a tissue of things neglected and things done amiss; and from place to place and from town to town, he carried the character of one thoroughly incompetent. No man can bear the word applied to him without some flush of colour, as indeed there is none other that so emphatically slams in a man's face the door of self-respect. And to Herrick, who was conscious of talents and acquirements, who looked down upon those humble duties in which he was found wanting, the pain was the more exquisite. Early in his fall, he had ceased to be able to make remittances; shortly after, having nothing but failure to communicate, he ceased writing home; and about a year before this tale begins, turned suddenly upon the streets of San Francisco by a vulgar and infuriated German Jew, he had broken the last bonds of self-respect, and upon a sudden Impulse, changed his name and invested his last dollar in a passage on the mail brigantine, the City of Papeete. With what expectation he had trimmed his flight for the South Seas, Herrick perhaps scarcely knew. Doubtless there were fortunes to be made in pearl and copra; doubtless others not more gifted than himself had climbed in the island world to be queen's consorts and king's ministers. But if Herrick had gone there with any manful purpose, he would have kept his father's name; the alias betrayed his moral bankruptcy; he had struck his flag; he entertained no hope to reinstate himself or help his straitened family; and he came to the islands (where he knew the climate to be soft, bread cheap, and manners easy) a skulker from life's battle and his own immediate duty. Failure, he had said, was his portion; let it be a pleasant failure.

It is fortunately not enough to say 'I will be base.' Herrick continued in the islands his career of failure; but in the new scene and under the new name, he suffered no less sharply than before. A place was got, it was lost in the old style; from the long-suffering of the keepers of restaurants he fell to more open charity upon the wayside; as time went on, good nature became weary, and after a repulse or two, Herrick became shy. There were women enough who would have supported a far worse and a far uglier man; Herrick never met or never knew them: or if he did both, some manlier feeling would revolt, and he preferred starvation. Drenched with rains, broiling by day, shivering by night, a disused and ruinous prison for a bedroom, his diet begged or pilfered out of rubbish heaps, his associates two creatures equally outcast with himself, he had drained for months the cup of penitence. He had known what it was to be resigned, what it was to break forth in a childish fury of rebellion against fate, and what it was to sink into the coma of despair. The time had changed him. He told himself no longer tales of an easy and perhaps agreeable declension; he read his nature otherwise; he had proved himself incapable of rising, and he now learned by experience that he could not stoop to fall. Something that was scarcely pride or strength, that was perhaps only refinement, withheld him from capitulation; but he looked on upon his own misfortune with a growing rage, and sometimes wondered at his patience.

It was now the fourth month completed, and still there was no change or sign of change. The moon, racing through a world of flying clouds of every size and shape and density, some black as ink stains, some delicate as lawn, threw the marvel of her Southern brightness over the same lovely and detested scene: the island mountains crowned with the perennial island cloud, the embowered city studded with rare lamps, the masts in the harbour, the smooth mirror of the lagoon, and the mole of the barrier reef on which the breakers whitened. The moon shone too, with bull's-eye sweeps, on his companions; on the stalwart frame of the American who called himself Brown, and was known to be a master mariner in some disgrace; and on the dwarfish person, the pale eyes and toothless smile of a vulgar and bad-hearted cockney clerk. Here was society for Robert Herrick! The Yankee skipper was a man at least: he had sterling qualities of tenderness and resolution; he was one whose hand you could take without a blush. But there was no redeeming grace about the other, who called himself sometimes Hay and sometimes Tomkins, and laughed at the discrepancy; who had been employed in every store in Papeete, for the creature was able in his way; who had been discharged from each in turn, for he was wholly vile; who had alienated all his old employers so that they passed him in the street as if he were a dog, and all his old comrades so that they shunned him as they would a creditor.

Not long before, a ship from Peru had brought an influenza, and it now raged in the island, and particularly in Papeete. From all round the purao arose and fell a dismal sound of men coughing, and strangling as they coughed. The sick natives, with the islander's impatience of a touch of fever, had crawled from their houses to be cool and, squatting on the shore or on the beached canoes, painfully expected the new day. Even as the crowing of cocks goes about the country in the night from farm to farm, accesses of coughing arose, and spread, and died in the distance, and sprang up again. Each miserable shiverer caught the suggestion from his neighbour, was torn for some minutes by that cruel ecstasy, and left spent and without voice or courage when it passed. If a man had pity to spend, Papeete beach, in that cold night and in that infected season, was a place to spend it on. And of all the sufferers, perhaps the least deserving, but surely the most pitiable, was the London clerk. He was used to another life, to houses, beds, nursing, and the dainties of the sickroom; he lay there now, in the cold open, exposed to the gusting of the wind, and with an empty belly. He was besides infirm; the disease shook him to the vitals; and his companions watched his endurance with surprise. A profound commiseration filled them, and contended with and conquered their abhorrence. The disgust attendant on so ugly a sickness magnified this dislike; at the same time, and with more than compensating strength, shame for a sentiment so inhuman bound them the more straitly to his service; and even the evil they knew of him swelled their solicitude, for the thought of death is always the least supportable when it draws near to the merely sensual and selfish. Sometimes they held him up; sometimes, with mistaken helpfulness, they beat him between the shoulders; and when the poor wretch lay back ghastly and spent after a paroxysm of coughing, they would sometimes peer into his face, doubtfully exploring it for any mark of life. There is no one but has some virtue: that of the clerk was courage; and he would make haste to reassure them in a pleasantry not always decent.

‘I’m all right, pals,’ he gasped once: ‘this is the thing to strengthen the muscles of the larynx.’

‘Well, you take the cake!’ cried the captain.

‘O, I’m good plucked enough,’ pursued the sufferer with a broken utterance. ‘But it do seem bloomin’ hard to me, that I should be the only party down with this form of vice, and the only one to do the funny business. I think one of you other parties might wake up. Tell a fellow something.’

‘The trouble is we’ve nothing to tell, my son,’ returned the captain.

‘I’ll tell you, if you like, what I was thinking,’ said Herrick.

‘Tell us anything,’ said the clerk, ‘I only want to be reminded that I ain’t dead.’

Herrick took up his parable, lying on his face and speaking slowly and scarce above his breath, not like a man who has anything to say, but like one talking against time.

‘Well, I was thinking this,’ he began: ‘I was thinking I lay on Papeete beach one night — all moon and squalls and fellows coughing — and I was cold and hungry, and down in the mouth, and was about ninety years of age, and had spent two hundred and twenty of them on Papeete beach. And I was thinking I wished I had a ring to rub, or had a fairy godmother, or could raise Beelzebub. And I was trying to remember how you did it. I knew you made a ring of skulls, for I had seen that in the Freischutz: and that you took off your coat and turned up your sleeves, for I had seen Formes do that when he was playing Kaspar, and you could see (by the way he went about it) it was a business he had studied; and that you ought to have something to kick up a smoke and a bad smell, I dare say a cigar might do, and that you ought to say the Lord's Prayer backwards. Well, I wondered if I could do that; it seemed rather a feat, you see. And then I wondered if I would say it forward, and I thought I did. Well, no sooner had I got to WORLD WITHOUT END, than I saw a man in a pariu, and with a mat under his arm, come along the beach from the town. He was rather a hard-favoured old party, and he limped and crippled, and all the time he kept coughing. At first I didn't cotton to his looks, I thought, and then I got sorry for the old soul because he coughed so hard. I remembered that we had some of that cough mixture the American consul gave the captain for Hay. It never did Hay a ha'porth of service, but I thought it might do the old gentleman's business for him, and stood up. "Yorana!" says I. "Yorana!" says he. "Look here," I said, "I've got some first-rate stuff in a bottle; it'll fix your cough, savvy? Harry my and I'll measure you a tablespoonful in the palm of my hand, for all our plate is at the bankers." So I thought the old party came up, and the nearer he came, the less I took to him. But I had passed my word, you see.'

'Wot is this bloomin' drivel?' interrupted the clerk. 'It's like the rot there is in tracts.'

'It's a story; I used to tell them to the kids at home,' said Herrick. 'If it bores you, I'll drop it.'

'O, cut along!' returned the sick man, irritably. 'It's better than nothing.'

'Well,' continued Herrick, 'I had no sooner given him the cough mixture than he seemed to straighten up and change, and I saw he wasn't a Tahitian after all, but some kind of Arab, and had a long beard on his chin. "One good turn deserves another," says he. "I am a magician out of the Arabian Nights, and this mat that I have under my arm is the original carpet of Mohammed Ben Somebody-or-other. Say the word, and you can have a cruise upon the carpet." "You don't mean to say this is the Travelling Carpet?" I cried. "You bet I do," said he. "You've been to America since last I read the Arabian Nights," said I, a little suspicious. "I should think so," said he. "Been everywhere. A man with a carpet like this isn't going to moulder in a semi-detached villa." Well, that struck me as reasonable. "All right," I said; "and do you mean to tell me I can get on that carpet and go straight to London, England?" I said, "London, England," captain, because he seemed to have been so long in your part of the world. "In the crack of a whip," said he. I figured up the time. What is the difference between Papeete and London, captain?'

'Taking Greenwich and Point Venus, nine hours, odd minutes and seconds,' replied the mariner.

'Well, that's about what I made it,' resumed Herrick, 'about nine hours. Calling this three in the morning, I made out I would drop into London about noon; and the idea tickled me immensely. "There's only one bother," I said, "I haven't a copper cent. It would be a pity to go to London and not buy the morning Standard." "O!" said he, "you don't realise the conveniences of this carpet. You see this pocket? you've only got to stick your hand in, and you pull it out filled with sovereigns."

'Double-eagles, wasn't iff inquired the captain.

'That was what it was!' cried Herrick. 'I thought they seemed unusually big, and I remember now I had to go to the money-changers at Charing Cross and get English silver.'

'O, you went there?' said the clerk. 'Wot did you do? Bet you had a B. and S.!'

'Well, you see, it was just as the old boy said — like the cut of a whip,' said Herrick. 'The one minute I was here on the beach at three in the morning, the next I was in front of the Golden Cross at midday. At first I was dazzled, and covered my eyes, and there didn't seem the smallest change; the roar of the Strand and the roar of the reef were like the same: hark to it now, and you can hear the cabs and buses rolling and the streets resound! And then at last I could look about, and there was the old place, and no mistake! With the statues in the square, and St Martin's-in-the-Fields, and the bobbies, and the sparrows, and the hacks; and I can't tell you what I felt like. I felt like crying, I believe, or dancing, or jumping clean over the Nelson Column. I was like a fellow caught up out of Hell and flung down into the dandiest part of Heaven. Then I spotted for a hansom with a spanking horse. "A shilling for yourself, if you're there in twenty minutes!" said I to the jarvey. He went a good pace, though of course it was a trifle to the carpet; and in nineteen minutes and a half I was at the door.'

'What door?' asked the captain.

'Oh, a house I know of,' returned Herrick.

'But it was a public-house!' cried the clerk — only these were not his words. 'And w'y didn't you take the carpet there instead of trundling in a growler?'

'I didn't want to startle a quiet street,' said the narrator.

'Bad form. And besides, it was a hansom.'

'Well, and what did you do next?' inquired the captain.

'Oh, I went in,' said Herrick.

'The old folks?' asked the captain.

‘That’s about it,’ said the other, chewing a grass.

‘Well, I think you are about the poorest ‘and at a yarn!’ cried the clerk. ‘Crikey, it’s like Ministering Children! I can tell you there would be more beer and skittles about my little jaunt. I would go and have a B. and S. for luck. Then I would get a big ulster with astrakhan fur, and take my cane and do the la-de-la down Piccadilly. Then I would go to a slap-up restaurant, and have green peas, and a bottle of fizz, and a chump chop — Oh! and I forgot, I’d ‘ave some devilled whitebait first — and green gooseberry tart, and ‘ot coffee, and some of that form of vice in big bottles with a seal — Benedictine — that’s the bloomin’ nyme! Then I’d drop into a theatre, and pal on with some chappies, and do the dancing rooms and bars, and that, and wouldn’t go ‘ome till morning, till daylight doth appear. And the next day I’d have water-cresses, ‘am, muffin, and fresh butter; wouldn’t I just, O my!’

The clerk was interrupted by a fresh attack of coughing.

‘Well, now, I’ll tell you what I would do,’ said the captain: ‘I would have none of your fancy rigs with the man driving from the mizzen cross-trees, but a plain fore-and-aft hack cab of the highest registered tonnage. First of all, I would bring up at the market and get a turkey and a sucking-pig. Then I’d go to a wine merchant’s and get a dozen of champagne, and a dozen of some sweet wine, rich and sticky and strong, something in the port or madeira line, the best in the store. Then I’d bear up for a toy-store, and lay out twenty dollars in assorted toys for the piccaninnies; and then to a confectioner’s and take in cakes and pies and fancy bread, and that stuff with the plums in it; and then to a news-agency and buy all the papers, all the picture ones for the kids, and all the story papers for the old girl about the Earl discovering himself to Anna-Mariar and the escape of the Lady Maude from the private madhouse; and then I’d tell the fellow to drive home.’

‘There ought to be some syrup for the kids,’ suggested Herrick; ‘they like syrup.’

‘Yes, syrup for the kids, red syrup at that!’ said the captain. ‘And those things they pull at, and go pop, and have measly poetry inside. And then I tell you we’d have a thanksgiving day and Christmas tree combined. Great Scott, but I would like to see the kids! I guess they would light right out of the house, when they saw daddy driving up. My little Adar — ’

The captain stopped sharply.

‘Well, keep it up!’ said the clerk.

‘The damned thing is, I don’t know if they ain’t starving!’ cried the captain.

‘They can’t be worse off than we are, and that’s one comfort,’ returned the clerk. ‘I defy the devil to make me worse off.’

It seemed as if the devil heard him. The light of the moon had been some time cut off and they had talked in darkness. Now there was heard a roar, which drew impetuously nearer; the face of the lagoon was seen to whiten; and before they had staggered to their feet, a squall burst in rain upon the outcasts. The rage and volume of that avalanche one must have lived in the tropics to conceive; a man panted in its assault, as he might pant under a shower-bath; and the world seemed whelmed in night and water.

They fled, groping for their usual shelter — it might be almost called their home — in the old calaboose; came drenched into its empty chambers; and lay down, three sops of humanity on the cold coral floors, and presently, when the squall was overpast, the others could hear in the darkness the chattering of the clerk’s teeth.

‘I say, you fellows,’ he walled, ‘for God’s sake, lie up and try to warm me. I’m blymed if I don’t think I’ll die else!’

So the three crept together into one wet mass, and lay until day came, shivering and dozing off, and continually re-awakened to wretchedness by the coughing of the clerk.

CHAPTER 2. MORNING ON THE BEACH — THE THREE LETTERS

The clouds were all fled, the beauty of the tropic day was spread upon Papeete; and the wall of breaking seas upon the reef, and the palms upon the islet, already trembled in the heat. A French man-of-war was going out, homeward bound; she lay in the middle distance of the port, an ant heap for activity. In the night a schooner had come in, and now lay far out, hard by the passage; and the yellow flag, the emblem of pestilence, flew on her. From up the coast, a long procession of canoes headed round the point and towards the market, bright as a scarf with the many-coloured clothing of the natives and the piles of fruit. But not even the beauty and the welcome warmth of the morning, not even these naval movements, so interesting to sailors and to idlers, could engage the attention of the outcasts. They were still cold at heart, their mouths sour from the want of steep, their steps rambling from the lack of food; and they strung like lame geese along the beach in a disheartened silence. It was towards the town they moved; towards the town whence smoke arose, where happier folk were breakfasting; and as they went, their hungry eyes were upon all sides, but they were only scouting for a meal.

A small and dingy schooner lay snug against the quay, with which it was connected by a plank. On the forward deck, under a spot of awning, five Kanakas who made up the crew, were squatted round a basin of fried feis, and drinking coffee from tin mugs.

‘Eight bells: knock off for breakfast!’ cried the captain with a miserable heartiness. ‘Never tried this craft before; positively my first appearance; guess I’ll draw a bumper house.’

He came close up to where the plank rested on the grassy quay; turned his back upon the schooner, and began to whistle that lively air, ‘The Irish Washerwoman.’ It caught the ears of the Kanaka seamen like a preconcerted signal; with one accord they looked up from their meal and crowded to the ship’s side, fei in hand and munching as they looked. Even as a poor brown Pyrenean bear dances in the streets of English towns under his master’s baton; even so, but with how much more of spirit and precision, the captain footed it in time to his own whistling, and his long morning shadow capered beyond him on the grass. The Kanakas smiled on the performance; Herrick looked on heavy-eyed, hunger for the moment conquering all sense of shame; and a little farther off, but still hard by, the clerk was torn by the seven devils of the influenza.

The captain stopped suddenly, appeared to perceive his audience for the first time, and represented the part of a man surprised in his private hour of pleasure.

'Hello!' said he.

The Kanakas clapped hands and called upon him to go on.

'No, SIR!' said the captain. 'No eat, no dance. Savvy?'

'Poor old man!' returned one of the crew. 'Him no eat?'

'Lord, no!' said the captain. 'Like-um too much eat. No got.'

'All right. Me got,' said the sailor; 'you tome here. Plenty toffee, plenty fei. Nutha man him tome too.'

'I guess we'll drop right in,' observed the captain; and he and his companions hastened up the plank. They were welcomed on board with the shaking of hands; place was made for them about the basin; a sticky demijohn of molasses was added to the feast in honour of company, and an accordion brought from the forecastle and significantly laid by the performer's side.

'Ariana,' said he lightly, touching the instrument as he spoke; and he fell to on a long savoury fei, made an end of it, raised his mug of coffee, and nodded across at the spokesman of the crew. 'Here's your health, old man; you're a credit to the South Pacific,' said he.

With the unsightly greed of hounds they glutted themselves with the hot food and coffee; and even the clerk revived and the colour deepened in his eyes. The kettle was drained, the basin cleaned; their entertainers, who had waited on their wants throughout with the pleased hospitality of Polynesians, made haste to bring forward a dessert of island tobacco and rolls of pandanus leaf to serve as paper; and presently all sat about the dishes puffing like Indian Sachems.

'When a man 'as breakfast every day, he don't know what it is,' observed the clerk.

'The next point is dinner,' said Herrick; and then with a passionate utterance: 'I wish to God I was a Kanaka!'

'There's one thing sure,' said the captain. 'I'm about desperate, I'd rather hang than rot here much longer.' And with the word he took the accordion and struck up. 'Home, sweet home.'

'O, drop that!' cried Herrick, 'I can't stand that.'

'No more can I,' said the captain. 'I've got to play something though: got to pay the shot, my son.' And he struck up 'John Brown's Body' in a fine sweet baritone: 'Dandy Jim of Carolina,' came next; 'Rorin the Bold,' 'Swing low, Sweet Chariot,' and 'The Beautiful Land' followed. The captain was paying his shot with usury, as he had done many a time before; many a meal had he bought with the same currency from the melodious-minded natives, always, as now, to their delight.

He was in the middle of 'Fifteen Dollars in the Inside Pocket,' singing with dogged energy, for the task went sore against the grain, when a sensation was suddenly to be observed among the crew.

‘Tapena Tom harry my,’ said the spokesman, pointing.

And the three beachcombers, following his indication, saw the figure of a man in pyjama trousers and a white jumper approaching briskly from the town.

‘Captain Tom is coming.’

‘That’s Tapena Tom, is it?’ said the captain, pausing in his music. ‘I don’t seem to place the brute.’

‘We’d better cut,’ said the clerk. ‘‘E’s no good.’

‘Well,’ said the musician deliberately, ‘one can’t most generally always tell. I’ll try it on, I guess. Music has charms to soothe the savage Tapena, boys. We might strike it rich; it might amount to iced punch in the cabin.’

‘Hiced punch? O my!’ said the clerk. ‘Give him something ‘ot, captain. “Way down the Swannee River”; try that.’

‘No, sir! Looks Scotch,’ said the captain; and he struck, for his life, into ‘Auld Lang Syne.’

Captain Tom continued to approach with the same business-like alacrity; no change was to be perceived in his bearded face as he came swinging up the plank: he did not even turn his eyes on the performer.

‘We twa hae paidled in the burn
Frae morning tide till dine,’

went the song.

Captain Tom had a parcel under his arm, which he laid on the house roof, and then turning suddenly to the strangers: ‘Here, you!’ he bellowed, ‘be off out of that!’

The clerk and Herrick stood not on the order of their going, but fled incontinently by the plank. The performer, on the other hand, flung down the instrument and rose to his full height slowly.

‘What’s that you say?’ he said. ‘I’ve half a mind to give you a lesson in civility.’

‘You set up any more of your gab to me,’ returned the Scotsman, ‘and I’ll show ye the wrong side of a jyle. I’ve heard tell of the three of ye. Ye’re not long for here, I can tell ye that. The Government has their eyes upon ye. They make short work of damned beachcombers, I’ll say that for the French.’

‘You wait till I catch you off your ship!’ cried the captain: and then, turning to the crew, ‘Good-bye, you fellows!’ he said. ‘You’re gentlemen, anyway! The worst nigger among you would look better upon a quarter-deck than that filthy Scotchman.’

Captain Tom scorned to reply; he watched with a hard smile the departure of his guests; and as soon as the last foot was off the plank; turned to the hands to work cargo.

The beachcombers beat their inglorious retreat along the shore; Herrick first, his face dark with blood, his knees trembling under him with the hysteria of rage. Presently, under the same purao where they had shivered the night before, he cast himself down, and groaned aloud, and ground his face into the sand.

‘Don’t speak to me, don’t speak to me. I can’t stand it,’ broke from him.

The other two stood over him perplexed.

‘Wot can’t he stand now?’ said the clerk. “Asn’t he ‘ad a meal? I’M lickin’ my lips.’

Herrick reared up his wild eyes and burning face. ‘I can’t beg!’ he screamed, and again threw himself prone.

‘This thing’s got to come to an end,’ said the captain with an intake of the breath.

‘Looks like signs of an end, don’t it?’ sneered the clerk.

‘He’s not so far from it, and don’t you deceive yourself,’ replied the captain. ‘Well,’ he added in a livelier voice, ‘you fellows hang on here, and I’ll go and interview my representative.’

Whereupon he turned on his heel, and set off at a swinging sailor’s walk towards Papeete.

It was some half hour later when he returned. The clerk was dozing with his back against the tree: Herrick still lay where he had flung himself; nothing showed whether he slept or waked.

‘See, boys!’ cried the captain, with that artificial heartiness of his which was at times so painful, ‘here’s a new idea.’ And he produced note paper, stamped envelopes, and pencils, three of each. ‘We can all write home by the mail brigantine; the consul says I can come over to his place and ink up the addresses.’

‘Well, that’s a start, too,’ said the clerk. ‘I never thought of that.’

‘It was that yarning last night about going home that put me up to it,’ said the captain.

‘Well, ‘and over,’ said the clerk. ‘I’ll ‘ave a shy,’ and he retired a little distance to the shade of a canoe.

The others remained under the purao. Now they would write a word or two, now scribble it out; now they would sit biting at the pencil end and staring seaward; now their eyes would rest on the clerk, where he sat propped on the canoe, leering and coughing, his pencil racing glibly on the paper.

‘I can’t do it,’ said Herrick suddenly. ‘I haven’t got the heart.’

‘See here,’ said the captain, speaking with unwonted gravity; ‘it may be hard to write, and to write lies at that; and God knows it is; but it’s the square thing. It don’t cost anything to say you’re well and happy, and sorry you can’t make a remittance this mail; and if you don’t, I’ll tell you what I think it is — I think it’s about the high-water mark of being a brute beast.’

‘It’s easy to talk,’ said Herrick. ‘You don’t seem to have written much yourself, I notice.'

'What do you bring in me for?' broke from the captain. His voice was indeed scarce raised above a whisper, but emotion clanged in it. 'What do you know about me? If you had commanded the finest barque that ever sailed from Portland; if you had been drunk in your berth when she struck the breakers in Fourteen Island Group, and hadn't had the wit to stay there and drown, but came on deck, and given drunken orders, and lost six lives — I could understand your talking then! There,' he said more quietly, 'that's my yarn, and now you know it. It's a pretty one for the father of a family. Five men and a woman murdered. Yes, there was a woman on board, and hadn't no business to be either. Guess I sent her to Hell, if there is such a place. I never dared go home again; and the wife and the little ones went to England to her father's place. I don't know what's come to them,' he added, with a bitter shrug.

'Thank you, captain,' said Herrick. 'I never liked you better.'

They shook hands, short and hard, with eyes averted, tenderness swelling in their bosoms.

'Now, boys! to work again at lying!' said the captain.

'I'll give my father up,' returned Herrick with a writhen smile. 'I'll try my sweetheart instead for a change of evils.'

And here is what he wrote:

'Emma, I have scratched out the beginning to my father, for I think I can write more easily to you. This is my last farewell to all, the last you will ever hear or see of an unworthy friend and son. I have failed in life; I am quite broken down and disgraced. I pass under a false name; you will have to tell my father that with all your kindness. It is my own fault. I know, had I chosen, that I might have done well; and yet I swear to you I tried to choose. I could not bear that you should think I did not try. For I loved you all; you must never doubt me in that, you least of all. I have always unceasingly loved, but what was my love worth? and what was I worth? I had not the manhood of a common clerk, I could not work to earn you; I have lost you now, and for your sake I could be glad of it. When you first came to my father's house — do you remember those days? I want you to — you saw the best of me then, all that was good in me. Do you remember the day I took your hand and would not let it go — and the day on Battersea Bridge, when we were looking at a barge, and I began to tell you one of my silly stories, and broke off to say I loved you? That was the beginning, and now here is the end. When you have read this letter, you will go round and kiss them all good-bye, my father and mother, and the children, one by one, and poor uncle; And tell them all to forget me, and forget me yourself. Turn the key in the door; let no thought of me return; be done with the poor ghost that pretended he was a man and stole your love. Scorn of myself grinds in me as I write. I should tell you I am well and happy, and want for nothing. I do not exactly make money, or I should send a remittance; but I am well cared for, have friends, live in a beautiful place and climate, such as we have dreamed of together, and no pity need be wasted on me. In such places, you understand, it is easy to live, and live well, but often hard to make sixpence in money. Explain this to my father, he will understand. I have no more to say; only linger, going out, like an unwilling guest. God in heaven bless you. Think of me to the last, here, on a bright beach, the sky and sea immoderately blue, and the great breakers roaring outside on a barrier reef, where a little isle sits green with palms. I am well and strong. It is a more pleasant way to die than if you were crowding about me on a sick-bed. And yet I am dying. This is my last kiss. Forgive, forget the unworthy.'

So far he had written, his paper was all filled, when there returned a memory of evenings at the piano, and that song, the masterpiece of love, in which so many have found the expression of their dearest thoughts. 'Einst, O wunder!' he added. More was not required; he knew that in his love's heart the context would spring up, escorted with fair images and harmony; of how all through life her name should tremble in his ears, her name be everywhere repeated in the sounds of nature; and when death came, and he lay dissolved, her memory lingered and thrilled among his elements.

'Once, O wonder! once from the ashes of my heart
Arose a blossom — '

Herrick and the captain finished their letters about the same time; each was breathing deep, and their eyes met and were averted as they closed the envelopes.

'Sorry I write so big,' said the captain gruffly. 'Came all of a rush, when it did come.'

'Same here,' said Herrick. 'I could have done with a ream when I got started; but it's long enough for all the good I had to say.'

They were still at the addresses when the clerk strolled up, smirking and twirling his envelope, like a man well pleased. He looked over Herrick's shoulder.

'Hullo,' he said, 'you ain't writing 'ome.'

'I am, though,' said Herrick; 'she lives with my father. Oh, I see what you mean,' he added. 'My real name is Herrick. No more Hay' — they had both used the same alias — 'no more Hay than yours, I dare say.'

'Clean bowled in the middle stump!' laughed the clerk. 'My name's 'Uish if you want to know. Everybody has a false nyme in the Pacific. Lay you five to three the captain 'as.'

'So I have too,' replied the captain; 'and I've never told my own since the day I tore the title page out of my Bowditch and flung the damned thing into the sea. But I'll tell it to you, boys. John Davis is my name. I'm Davis of the Sea Ranger.'

'Dooce you are!' said Hush. 'And what was she? a pirate or a slyver?'

'She was the fastest barque out of Portland, Maine,' replied the captain; 'and for the way I lost her, I might as well have bored a hole in her side with an auger.'

'Oh, you lost her, did you?' said the clerk. "Ope she was insured?'

No answer being returned to this sally, Huish, still brimming over with vanity and conversation, struck into another subject.

'I've a good mind to read you my letter,' said he. 'I've a good fist with a pen when I choose, and this is a prime lark. She was a barmaid I ran across in Northampton; she was a spanking fine piece, no end of style; and we cottoned at first sight like parties in the play. I suppose I spent the chynge of a fiver on that girl. Well, I 'appened to remember her nyme, so I wrote to her, and told her 'ow I had got rich, and married a queen in the Hislands, and lived in a blooming palace. Such a sight of crammers! I must read you one bit about my opening the nigger parliament in a cocked 'at. It's really prime.'

The captain jumped to his feet. 'That's what you did with the paper that I went and begged for you?' he roared.

It was perhaps lucky for Huish — it was surely in the end unfortunate for all — that he was seized just then by one of his prostrating accesses of cough; his comrades would have else deserted him, so bitter was their resentment. When the fit had passed, the clerk reached out his hand, picked up the letter, which had fallen to the earth, and tore it into fragments, stamp and all.

'Does that satisfy you?' he asked sullenly.

'We'll say no more about it,' replied Davis.

CHAPTER 3. THE OLD CALABOOSE — DESTINY AT THE DOOR

The old calaboose, in which the waifs had so long harboured, is a low, rectangular enclosure of building at the corner of a shady western avenue and a little townward of the British consulate. Within was a grassy court, littered with wreckage and the traces of vagrant occupation. Six or seven cells opened from the court: the doors, that had once been locked on mutinous whalermen, rotting before them in the grass. No mark remained of their old destination, except the rusty bars upon the windows.

The floor of one of the cells had been a little cleared; a bucket (the last remaining piece of furniture of the three caitiffs) stood full of water by the door, a half cocoanut shell beside it for a drinking cup; and on some ragged ends of mat Huish sprawled asleep, his mouth open, his face deathly. The glow of the tropic afternoon, the green of sunbright foliage, stared into that shady place through door and window; and Herrick, pacing to and fro on the coral floor, sometimes paused and laved his face and neck with tepid water from the bucket. His long arrears of suffering, the night's vigil, the insults of the morning, and the harrowing business of the letter, had strung him to that point when pain is almost pleasure, time shrinks to a mere point, and death and life appear indifferent. To and fro he paced like a caged brute; his mind whirling through the universe of thought and memory; his eyes, as he went, skimming the legends on the wall. The crumbling whitewash was all full of them: Tahitian names, and French, and English, and rude sketches of ships under sail and men at fisticuffs.

It came to him of a sudden that he too must leave upon these walls the memorial of his passage. He paused before a clean space, took the pencil out, and pondered. Vanity, so hard to dislodge, awoke in him. We call it vanity at least; perhaps unjustly. Rather it was the bare sense of his existence prompted him; the sense of his life, the one thing wonderful, to which he scarce clung with a finger. From his jarred nerves there came a strong sentiment of coming change; whether good or ill he could not say: change, he knew no more — change, with inscrutable veiled face, approaching noiseless. With the feeling, came the vision of a concert room, the rich hues of instruments, the silent audience, and the loud voice of the symphony. 'Destiny knocking at the door,' he thought; drew a stave on the plaster, and wrote in the famous phrase from the Fifth Symphony. 'So,' thought he, 'they will know that I loved music and had classical tastes. They? He, I suppose: the unknown, kindred spirit that shall come some day and read my memor querela. Ha, he shall have Latin too!' And he added: terque quaterque beati Queis ante ora patrum.

He turned again to his uneasy pacing, but now with an irrational and supporting sense of duty done. He had dug his grave that morning; now he had carved his epitaph; the folds of the toga were composed, why should he delay the insignificant trifle that remained to do? He paused and looked long in the face of the sleeping Huish, drinking disenchantment and distaste of life. He nauseated himself with that vile countenance. Could the thing continue? What bound him now? Had he no rights? — only the obligation to go on, without discharge or furlough, bearing the unbearable? Ich trage unertragliches, the quotation rose in his mind; he repeated the whole piece, one of the most perfect of the most perfect of poets; and a phrase struck him like a blow: Du, stolzes Herz, A hast es ja gewolit. Where was the pride of his heart? And he raged against himself, as a man bites on a sore tooth, in a heady sensuality of scorn. 'I have no pride, I have no heart, no manhood,' he thought, 'or why should I prolong a life more shameful than the gallows? Or why should I have fallen to it? No pride, no capacity, no force. Not even a bandit! and to be starving here with worse than banditti — with this trivial hell-hound!' His rage against his comrade rose and flooded him, and he shook a trembling fist at the sleeper.

A swift step was audible. The captain appeared upon the threshold of the cell, panting and flushed, and with a foolish face of happiness. In his arms he carried a loaf of bread and bottles of beer; the pockets of his coat were bulging with cigars.

He rolled his treasures on the floor, grasped Herrick by both hands, and crowed with laughter.

'Broach the beer!' he shouted. 'Broach the beer, and glory hallelujah!'

'Beer?' repeated Huish, struggling to his feet. 'Beer it is!' cried Davis. 'Beer and plenty of it. Any number of persons can use it (like Lyon's tooth-tablet) with perfect propriety and neatness. Who's to officiate?'

'Leave me alone for that,' said the clerk. He knocked the necks off with a lump of coral, and each drank in succession from the shell.

'Have a weed,' said Davis. 'It's all in the bill.'

'What is up?' asked Herrick.

The captain fell suddenly grave. 'I'm coming to that,' said he. 'I want to speak with Herrick here. You, Hay — or Huish, or whatever your name is — you take a weed and the other bottle, and go and see how the wind is down by the purao. I'll call you when you're wanted!'

'Hay? Secrets? That ain't the ticket,' said Huish.

'Look here, my son,' said the captain, 'this is business, and don't you make any mistake about it. If you're going to make trouble, you can have it your own way and stop right here. Only get the thing right: if Herrick and I go, we take the beer. Savvy?'

'Oh, I don't want to shove my oar in,' returned Huish. 'I'll cut right enough. Give me the swipes. You can jaw till you're blue in the face for what I care. I don't think it's the friendly touch: that's all.' And he shambled grumbling out of the cell into the staring sun.

The captain watched him clear of the courtyard; then turned to Herrick.

'What is it?' asked Herrick thickly.

'I'll tell you,' said Davis. 'I want to consult you. It's a chance we've got. What's that?' he cried, pointing to the music on the wall.

'What?' said the other. 'Oh, that! It's music; it's a phrase of Beethoven's I was writing up. It means Destiny knocking at the door.'

'Does it?' said the captain, rather low; and he went near and studied the inscription; 'and this French?' he asked, pointing to the Latin.

'O, it just means I should have been luckier if I had died at horne,' returned Herrick impatiently. 'What is this business?'

'Destiny knocking at the door,' repeated the captain; and then, looking over his shoulder. 'Well, Mr Herrick, that's about what it comes to,' he added.

'What do you mean? Explain yourself,' said Herrick.

But the captain was again staring at the music. 'About how long ago since you wrote up this truck?' he asked.

'What does it matter?' exclaimed Herrick. 'I dare say half an hour.'

'My God, it's strange!' cried Davis. 'There's some men would call that accidental: not me. That — ' and he drew his thick finger under the music — 'that's what I call Providence.'

'You said we had a chance,' said Herrick.

'Yes, SIR!' said the captain, wheeling suddenly face to face with his companion. 'I did so. If you're the man I take you for, we have a chance.'

'I don't know what you take me for,' was the reply. 'You can scarce take me too low.'

'Shake hands, Mr Herrick,' said the captain. 'I know you. You're a gentleman and a man of spirit. I didn't want to speak before that bummer there; you'll see why. But to you I'll rip it right out. I got a ship.'

'A ship?' cried Herrick. 'What ship?'

'That schooner we saw this morning off the passage.'

'The schooner with the hospital flag?'

'That's the hooker,' said Davis. 'She's the Farallone, hundred and sixty tons register, out of 'Frisco for Sydney, in California champagne. Captain, mate, and one hand all died of the smallpox, same as they had round in the Paumotus, I guess. Captain and mate were the only white men; all the hands Kanakas; seems a queer kind of outfit from a Christian port. Three of them left and a cook; didn't know where they were; I can't think where they were either, if you come to that; Wiseman must have been on the booze, I guess, to sail the course he did. However, there HE was, dead; and here are the Kanakas as good as lost. They bummed around at sea like the babes in the wood; and tumbled end-on upon Tahiti. The consul here took charge. He offered the berth to Williams; Williams had never had the smallpox and backed down. That was when I came in for the letter paper; I thought there was something up when the consul asked me to look in again; but I never let on to you fellows, so's you'd not be disappointed. Consul tried M'Neil; scared of smallpox. He tried Capirati, that Corsican and Leblue, or whatever his name is, wouldn't lay a hand on it; all too fond of their sweet lives. Last of all, when there wasn't nobody else left to offer it to, he offers it to me. "Brown, will you ship captain and take her to Sydney?" says he. "Let me choose my own mate and another white hand," says I, "for I don't hold with this Kanaka crew racket; give us all two months' advance to get our clothes and instruments out of pawn, and I'll take stock tonight, fill up stores, and get to sea tomorrow before dark!" That's what I said. "That's good enough," says the consul, "and you can count yourself damned lucky, Brown," says he. And he said it pretty meaningful-appearing, too. However, that's all one now. I'll ship Huish before the mast — of course I'll let him berth aft — and I'll ship you mate at seventy-five dollars and two months' advance.'

'Me mate? Why, I'm a landsman!' cried Herrick.

'Guess you've got to learn,' said the captain. 'You don't fancy I'm going to skip and leave you rotting on the beach perhaps? I'm not that sort, old man. And you're handy anyway; I've been shipmates with worse.'

'God knows I can't refuse,' said Herrick. 'God knows I thank you from my heart.'

'That's all right,' said the captain. 'But it ain't all.' He turned aside to light a cigar.

'What else is there?' asked the other, with a pang of undefinable alarm.

'I'm coming to that,' said Davis, and then paused a little. 'See here,' he began, holding out his cigar between his finger and thumb, 'suppose you figure up what this'll amount to. You don't catch on? Well, we get two months' advance; we can't get away from Papeete — our creditors wouldn't let us go — for less; it'll take us along about two months to get to Sydney; and when we get there, I just want to put it to you squarely: What the better are we?'

‘We’re off the beach at least,’ said Herrick.

‘I guess there’s a beach at Sydney,’ returned the captain; ‘and I’ll tell you one thing, Mr Herrick — I don’t mean to try. No, SIR! Sydney will never see me.’

‘Speak out plain,’ said Herrick.

‘Plain Dutch,’ replied the captain. ‘I’m going to own that schooner. It’s nothing new; it’s done every year in the Pacific. Stephens stole a schooner the other day, didn’t he? Hayes and Pease stole vessels all the time. And it’s the making of the crowd of us. See here — you think of that cargo. Champagne! why, it’s like as if it was put up on purpose. In Peru we’ll sell that liquor off at the pier-head, and the schooner after it, if we can find a fool to buy her; and then light out for the mines. If you’ll back me up, I stake my life I carry it through.’

‘Captain,’ said Herrick, with a quailing voice, ‘don’t do it!’

‘I’m desperate,’ returned Davis. ‘I’ve got a chance; I may never get another. Herrick, say the word; back me up; I think we’ve starved together long enough for that.’

‘I can’t do it. I’m sorry. I can’t do it. I’ve not fallen as low as that,’ said Herrick, deadly pale.

‘What did you say this morning?’ said Davis. ‘That you couldn’t beg? It’s the one thing or the other, my son.’

‘Ah, but this is the jail!’ cried Herrick. ‘Don’t tempt me. It’s the jail.’

‘Did you hear what the skipper said on board that schooner?’ pursued the captain. ‘Well, I tell you he talked straight. The French have let us alone for a long time; It can’t last longer; they’ve got their eye on us; and as sure as you live, in three weeks you’ll be in jail whatever you do. I read it in the consul’s face.’

‘You forget, captain,’ said the young man. ‘There is another way. I can die; and to say truth, I think I should have died three years ago.’

The captain folded his arms and looked the other in the face. ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘yes, you can cut your throat; that’s a frozen fact; much good may it do you! And where do I come in?’

The light of a strange excitement came in Herrick’s face. ‘Both of us,’ said he, ‘both of us together. It’s not possible you can enjoy this business. Come,’ and he reached out a timid hand, ‘a few strokes in the lagoon — and rest!’

‘I tell you, Herrick, I’m ‘most tempted to answer you the way the man does in the Bible, and say, “Get thee behind me, Satan!”‘ said the captain. ‘What! you think I would go drown myself, and I got children starving? Enjoy it? No, by God, I do not enjoy it! but it’s the row I’ve got to hoe, and I’ll hoe it till I drop right here. I have three of them, you see, two boys and the one girl, Adar. The trouble is that you are not a parent yourself. I tell you, Herrick, I love you,’ the man broke out; ‘I didn’t take to you at first, you were so anglified and tony, but I love you now; it’s a man that loves you stands here and wrestles with you. I can’t go to sea with the bummer alone; it’s not possible. Go drown yourself, and there goes my last chance — the last chance of a poor miserable beast, earning a crust to feed his family. I can’t do nothing but sail ships, and I’ve no papers. And here I get a chance, and you go back on me! Ah, you’ve no family, and that’s where the trouble is!’

‘I have indeed,’ said Herrick.

‘Yes, I know,’ said the captain, ‘you think so. But no man’s got a family till he’s got children. It’s only the kids count. There’s something about the little shavers... I can’t talk of them. And if you thought a cent about this father that I hear you talk of, or that sweetheart you were writing to this morning, you would feel like me. You would say, What matters laws, and God, and that? My folks are hard up, I belong to them, I’ll get them bread, or, by God! I’ll get them wealth, if I have to burn down London for it. That’s what you would say. And I’ll tell you more: your heart is saying so this living minute. I can see it in your face. You’re thinking, Here’s poor friendship for the man I’ve starved along of, and as for the girl that I set up to be in love with, here’s a mighty limp kind of a love that won’t carry me as far as ‘most any man would go for a demijohn of whisky. There’s not much ROmance to that love, anyway; it’s not the kind they carry on about in songbooks. But what’s the good of my carrying on talking, when it’s all in your inside as plain as print? I put the question to you once for all. Are you going to desert me in my hour of need? — you know if I’ve deserted you — or will you give me your hand, and try a fresh deal, and go home (as like as not) a millionaire? Say no, and God pity me! Say yes, and I’ll make the little ones pray for you every night on their bended knees. “God bless Mr Herrick!” that’s what they’ll say, one after the other, the old girl sitting there holding stakes at the foot of the bed, and the damned little innocents.. . He broke off. ‘I don’t often rip out about the kids,’ he said; ‘but when I do, there’s something fetches loose.’

‘Captain,’ said Herrick faintly, ‘is there nothing else?’

‘I’ll prophesy if you like,’ said the captain with renewed vigour. ‘Refuse this, because you think yourself too honest, and before a month’s out you’ll be jailed for a sneak-thief. I give you the word fair. I can see it, Herrick, if you can’t; you’re breaking down. Don’t think, if you refuse this chance, that you’ll go on doing the evangelical; you’re about through with your stock; and before you know where you are, you’ll be right out on the other side. No, it’s either this for you; or else it’s Caledonia. I bet you never were there, and saw those white, shaved men, in their dust clothes and straw hats, prowling around in gangs in the lamplight at Noumea; they look like wolves, and they look like preachers, and they look like the sick; Hulsh is a daisy to the best of them. Well, there's your company. They're waiting for you, Herrick, and you got to go; and that's a prophecy.'

And as the man stood and shook through his great stature, he seemed indeed like one in whom the spirit of divination worked and might utter oracles. Herrick looked at him, and looked away; It seemed not decent to spy upon such agitation; and the young man's courage sank.

'You talk of going home,' he objected. 'We could never do that.'

'WE could,' said the other. 'Captain Brown couldn't, nor Mr Hay, that shipped mate with him couldn't. But what's that to do with Captain Davis or Mr Herrick, you galoot?'

'But Hayes had these wild islands where he used to call,' came the next fainter objection.

'We have the wild islands of Peru,' retorted Davis. 'They were wild enough for Stephens, no longer agone than just last year. I guess they'll be wild enough for us.'

'And the crew?'

'All Kanakas. Come, I see you're right, old man. I see you'll stand by.' And the captain once more offered his hand.

'Have it your own way then,' said Herrick. 'I'll do it: a strange thing for my father's son. But I'll do it. I'll stand by you, man, for good or evil.'

'God bless you!' cried the captain, and stood silent. 'Herrick,' he added with a smile, 'I believe I'd have died in my tracks, if you'd said, No!'

And Herrick, looking at the man, half believed so also.

'And now we'll go break it to the bummer,' said Davis.

'I wonder how he'll take it,' said Herrick.

'Him? Jump at it!' was the reply.

CHAPTER 4. THE YELLOW FLAG

The schooner Farallone lay well out in the jaws of the pass, where the terrified pilot had made haste to bring her to her moorings and escape. Seen from the beach through the thin line of shipping, two objects stood conspicuous to seaward: the little isle, on the one hand, with its palms and the guns and batteries raised forty years before in defence of Queen Pomare’s capital; the outcast Farallone, upon the other, banished to the threshold of the port, rolling there to her scuppers, and flaunting the plague-flag as she rolled. A few sea birds screamed and cried about the ship; and within easy range, a man-of-war guard boat hung off and on and glittered with the weapons of marines. The exuberant daylight and the blinding heaven of the tropics picked out and framed the pictures.

A neat boat, manned by natives in uniform, and steered by the doctor of the port, put from shore towards three of the afternoon, and pulled smartly for the schooner. The fore-sheets were heaped with sacks of flour, onions, and potatoes, perched among which was Huish dressed as a foremast hand; a heap of chests and cases impeded the action of the oarsmen; and in the stern, by the left hand of the doctor, sat Herrick, dressed in a fresh rig of slops, his brown beard trimmed to a point, a pile of paper novels on his lap, and nursing the while between his feet a chronometer, for which they had exchanged that of the Farallone, long since run down and the rate lost.

They passed the guard boat, exchanging hails with the boat-swain’s mate in charge, and drew near at last to the forbidden ship. Not a cat stirred, there was no speech of man; and the sea being exceeding high outside, and the reef close to where the schooner lay, the clamour of the surf hung round her like the sound of battle.

‘Ohe la goelette!’ sang out the doctor, with his best voice.

Instantly, from the house where they had been stowing away stores, first Davis, and then the ragamuffin, swarthy crew made their appearance.

‘Hullo, Hay, that you?’ said the captain, leaning on the rail. ‘Tell the old man to lay her alongside, as if she was eggs. There’s a hell of a run of sea here, and his boat’s brittle.’

The movement of the schooner was at that time more than usually violent. Now she heaved her side as high as a deep sea steamer’s, and showed the flashing of her copper; now she swung swiftly toward the boat until her scuppers gurgled.

‘I hope you have sea legs,’ observed the doctor. ‘You will require them.’

Indeed, to board the Farallone, in that exposed position where she lay, was an affair of some dexterity. The less precious goods were hoisted roughly in; the chronometer, after repeated failures, was passed gently and successfully from hand to hand; and there remained only the more difficult business of embarking Huish. Even that piece of dead weight (shipped A.B. at eighteen dollars, and described by the captain to the consul as an invaluable man) was at last hauled on board without mishap; and the doctor, with civil salutations, took his leave.

The three co-adventurers looked at each other, and Davis heaved a breath of relief.

'Now let's get this chronometer fixed,' said he, and led the way into the house. It was a fairly spacious place; two staterooms and a good-sized pantry opened from the main cabin; the bulkheads were painted white, the floor laid with waxcloth. No litter, no sign of life remained; for the effects of the dead men had been disinfected and conveyed on shore. Only on the table, in a saucer, some sulphur burned, and the fumes set them coughing as they entered. The captain peered into the starboard stateroom, where the bed-clothes still lay tumbled in the bunk, the blanket flung back as they had flung it back from the disfigured corpse before its burial.

'Now, I told these niggers to tumble that truck overboard,' grumbled Davis. 'Guess they were afraid to lay hands on it. Well, they've hosed the place out; that's as much as can be expected, I suppose. Huish, lay on to these blankets.'

'See you blooming well far enough first,' said Huish, drawing back.

'What's that?' snapped the captain. 'I'll tell you, my young friend, I think you make a mistake. I'm captain here.'

'Fat lot I care,' returned the clerk.

'That so?' said Davis. 'Then you'll berth forward with the niggers! Walk right out of this cabin.'

'Oh, I dessay!' said Huish. 'See any green in my eye? A lark's a lark.'

'Well, now, I'll explain this business, and you'll see (once for all) just precisely how much lark there is to it,' said Davis. 'I'm captain, and I'm going to be it. One thing of three. First, you take my orders here as cabin steward, in which case you mess with us. Or second, you refuse, and I pack you forward — and you get as quick as the word's said. Or, third and last, I'll signal that man-of-war and send you ashore under arrest for mutiny.'

'And, of course, I wouldn't blow the gaff? O no!' replied the jeering Huish.

'And who's to believe you, my son?' inquired the captain. 'No, sir! There ain't no lark about my captainising. Enough said. Up with these blankets.'

Huish was no fool, he knew when he was beaten; and he was no coward either, for he stepped to the bunk, took the infected bedclothes fairly in his arms, and carried them out of the house without a check or tremor.

‘I was waiting for the chance,’ said Davis to Herrick. ‘I needn’t do the same with you, because you understand it for yourself.’

‘Are you going to berth here?’ asked Herrick, following the captain into the stateroom, where he began to adjust the chronometer in its place at the bed-head.

‘Not much!’ replied he. ‘I guess I’ll berth on deck. I don’t know as I’m afraid, but I’ve no immediate use for confluent smallpox.’

‘I don’t know that I’m afraid either,’ said Herrick. ‘But the thought of these two men sticks in my throat; that captain and mate dying here, one opposite to the other. It’s grim. I wonder what they said last?’

‘Wiseman and Wishart?’ said the captain. ‘Probably mighty small potatoes. That’s a thing a fellow figures out for himself one way, and the real business goes quite another. Perhaps Wiseman said, “Here old man, fetch up the gin, I’m feeling powerful rocky.” And perhaps Wishart said, “Oh, hell!”‘

‘Well, that’s grim enough,’ said Herrick.

‘And so it is,’ said Davis. ‘There; there’s that chronometer fixed. And now it’s about time to up anchor and clear out.’

He lit a cigar and stepped on deck.

‘Here, you! What’s YOUR name?’ he cried to one of the hands, a lean-flanked, clean-built fellow from some far western island, and of a darkness almost approaching to the African.

‘Sally Day,’ replied the man.

‘Devil it is,’ said the captain. ‘Didn’t know we had ladies on board. Well, Sally, oblige me by hauling down that rag there. I’ll do the same for you another time.’ He watched the yellow bunting as it was eased past the cross-trees and handed down on deck. ‘You’ll float no more on this ship,’ he observed. ‘Muster the people aft, Mr Hay,’ he added, speaking unnecessarily loud, ‘I’ve a word to say to them.’

It was with a singular sensation that Herrick prepared for the first time to address a crew. He thanked his stars indeed, that they were natives. But even natives, he reflected, might be critics too quick for such a novice as himself; they might perceive some lapse from that precise and cut-and-dry English which prevails on board a ship; it was even possible they understood no other; and he racked his brain, and overhauled his reminiscences of sea romance for some appropriate words.

‘Here, men! tumble aft!’ he said. ‘Lively now! All hands aft!’

They crowded in the alleyway like sheep.

‘Here they are, sir,’ said Herrick.

For some time the captain continued to face the stern; then turned with ferocious suddenness on the crew, and seemed to enjoy their shrinking.

'Now,' he said, twisting his cigar in his mouth and toying with the spokes of the wheel, 'I'm Captain Brown. I command this ship. This is Mr Hay, first officer. The other white man is cabin steward, but he'll stand watch and do his trick. My orders shall be obeyed smartly. You savvy, "smartly"? There shall be no growling about the kaikai, which will be above allowance. You'll put a handle to the mate's name, and tack on "sir" to every order I give you. If you're smart and quick, I'll make this ship comfortable for all hands.' He took the cigar out of his mouth. 'If you're not,' he added, in a roaring voice, 'I'll make it a floating hell. Now, Mr Hay, we'll pick watches, if you please.'

'All right,' said Herrick.

'You will please use "sir" when you address me, Mr Hay,' said the captain. 'I'll take the lady. Step to starboard, Sally.' And then he whispered in Herrick's ear: 'take the old man.'

'I'll take you, there,' said Herrick.

'What's your name?' said the captain. 'What's that you say? Oh, that's no English; I'll have none of your highway gibberish on my ship. We'll call you old Uncle Ned, because you've got no wool on the top of your head, just the place where the wool ought to grow. Step to port, Uncle. Don't you hear Mr Hay has picked you? Then I'll take the white man. White Man, step to starboard. Now which of you two is the cook? You? Then Mr Hay takes your friend in the blue dungaree. Step to port, Dungaree. There, we know who we all are: Dungaree, Uncle Ned, Sally Day, White Man, and Cook. All F.F.V.'s I guess. And now, Mr Hay, we'll up anchor, if you please.'

'For Heaven's sake, tell me some of the words,' whispered Herrick.

An hour later, the Farallone was under all plain sail, the rudder hard a-port, and the cheerfully clanking windlass had brought the anchor home.

'All clear, sir,' cried Herrick from the bow.

The captain met her with the wheel, as she bounded like a stag from her repose, trembling and bending to the puffs. The guard boat gave a parting hail, the wake whitened and ran out; the Farallone was under weigh.

Her berth had been close to the pass. Even as she forged ahead Davis slewed her for the channel between the pier ends of the reef, the breakers sounding and whitening to either hand. Straight through the narrow band of blue, she shot to seaward: and the captain's heart exulted as he felt her tremble underfoot, and (looking back over the taffrail) beheld the roofs of Papeete changing position on the shore and the island mountains rearing higher in the wake.

But they were not yet done with the shore and the horror of the yellow flag. About midway of the pass, there was a cry and a scurry, a man was seen to leap upon the rail, and, throwing his arms over his head, to stoop and plunge into the sea.

'Steady as she goes,' the captain cried, relinquishing the wheel to Huish.

The next moment he was forward in the midst of the Kanakas, belaying pin in hand.

'Anybody else for shore?' he cried, and the savage trumpeting of his voice, no less than the ready weapon in his hand, struck fear in all. Stupidly they stared after their escaped companion, whose black head was visible upon the water, steering for the land. And the schooner meanwhile slipt like a racer through the pass, and met the long sea of the open ocean with a souse of spray.

'Fool that I was, not to have a pistol ready!' exclaimed Davis. 'Well, we go to sea short-handed, we can't help that. You have a lame watch of it, Mr Hay.'

'I don't see how we are to get along,' said Herrick.

'Got to,' said the captain. 'No more Tahiti for me.'

Both turned instinctively and looked astern. The fair island was unfolding mountain top on mountain top; Eimeo, on the port board, lifted her splintered pinnacles; and still the schooner raced to the open sea.

'Think!' cried the captain with a gesture, 'yesterday morning I danced for my breakfast like a poodle dog.'

CHAPTER 5. THE CARGO OF CHAMPAGNE

The ship's head was laid to clear Eimeo to the north, and the captain sat down in the cabin, with a chart, a ruler, and an epitome.

'East a half no'the,' said he, raising his face from his labours. 'Mr Hay, you'll have to watch your dead reckoning; I want every yard she makes on every hair's-breadth of a course. I'm going to knock a hole right straight through the Paumotus, and that's always a near touch. Now, if this South East Trade ever blew out of the S.E., which it don't, we might hope to lie within half a point of our course. Say we lie within a point of it. That'll just about weather Fakarava. Yes, sir, that's what we've got to do, if we tack for it. Brings us through this slush of little islands in the cleanest place: see?' And he showed where his ruler intersected the wide-lying labyrinth of the Dangerous Archipelago. 'I wish it was night, and I could put her about right now; we're losing time and easting. Well, we'll do our best. And if we don't fetch Peru, we'll bring up to Ecuador. All one, I guess. Depreciated dollars down, and no questions asked. A remarkable fine institootion, the South American don.'

Tahiti was already some way astern, the Diadem rising from among broken mountains — Eimeo was already close aboard, and stood black and strange against the golden splendour of the west — when the captain took his departure from the two islands, and the patent log was set.

Some twenty minutes later, Sally Day, who was continually leaving the wheel to peer in at the cabin clock, announced in a shrill cry 'Fo'bell,' and the cook was to be seen carrying the soup into the cabin.

'I guess I'll sit down and have a pick with you,' said Davis to Herrick. 'By the time I've done, it'll be dark, and we'll clap the hooker on the wind for South America.'

In the cabin at one corner of the table, immediately below the lamp, and on the lee side of a bottle of champagne, sat Huish. 'What's this? Where did that come from?' asked the captain.

'It's fizz, and it came from the after-'old, if you want to know,' said Huish, and drained his mug.

'This'll never do,' exclaimed Davis, the merchant seaman's horror of breaking into cargo showing incongruously forth on board that stolen ship. 'There was never any good came of games like that.'

'You byby!' said Huish. 'A fellow would think (to 'ear him) we were on the square! And look 'ere, you've put this job up 'ansomely for me, 'aven't you? I'm to go on deck and steer while you two sit and guzzle, and I'm to go by nickname, and got to call you "sir" and "mister." Well, you look here, my bloke: I'll have fizz ad lib., or it won't wash. I tell you that. And you know mighty well, you ain't got any man-of-war to signal now.'

Davis was staggered. 'I'd give fifty dollars this had never happened,' he said weakly.

'Well, it 'as 'appened, you see,' returned Huish. 'Try some; it's devilish good.'

The Rubicon was crossed without another struggle. The captain filled a mug and drank.

'I wish it was beer,' he said with a sigh. 'But there's no denying it's the genuine stuff and cheap at the money. Now, Huish, you clear out and take your wheel.'

The little wretch had gained a point, and he was gay. 'Ay, ay, sir,' said he, and left the others to their meal.

'Pea soup!' exclaimed the captain. 'Blamed if I thought I should taste pea soup again!'

Herrick sat inert and silent. It was impossible after these months of hopeless want to smell the rough, high-spiced sea victuals without lust, and his mouth watered with desire of the champagne. It was no less impossible to have assisted at the scene between Huish and the captain, and not to perceive, with sudden bluntness, the gulf where he had fallen. He was a thief among thieves. He said it to himself. He could not touch the soup. If he had moved at all, it must have been to leave the table, throw himself overboard, and drown — an honest man.

'Here,' said the captain, 'you look sick, old man; have a drop of this.'

The champagne creamed and bubbled in the mug; its bright colour, its lively effervescence, seized his eye. 'It is too late to hesitate,' he thought; his hand took the mug instinctively; he drank, with unquenchable pleasure and desire of more; drained the vessel dry, and set it down with sparkling eyes.

'There is something in life after all!' he cried. 'I had forgot what it was like. Yes, even this is worth while. Wine, food, dry clothes — why, they're worth dying, worth hanging, for! Captain, tell me one thing: why aren't all the poor folk foot-pads?'

'Give it up,' said the captain.

'They must be damned good,' cried Herrick. 'There's something here beyond me. Think of that calaboose! Suppose we were sent suddenly back.' He shuddered as though stung by a convulsion, and buried his face in his clutching hands.

'Here, what's wrong with you?' cried the captain. There was no reply; only Herrick's shoulders heaved, so that the table was shaken. 'Take some more of this. Here, drink this. I order you to. Don't start crying when you're out of the wood.'

‘I’m not crying,’ said Herrick, raising his face and showing his dry eyes. ‘It’s worse than crying. It’s the horror of that grave that we’ve escaped from.’

‘Come now, you tackle your soup; that’ll fix you,’ said Davis kindly. ‘I told you you were all broken up. You couldn’t have stood out another week.’

‘That’s the dreadful part of it!’ cried Herrick. ‘Another week and I’d have murdered someone for a dollar! God! and I know that? And I’m still living? It’s some beastly dream.’

‘Quietly, quietly! Quietly does it, my son. Take your pea soup. Food, that’s what you want,’ said Davis.

The soup strengthened and quieted Herrick’s nerves; another glass of wine, and a piece of pickled pork and fried banana completed what the soup began; and he was able once more to look the captain in the face.

‘I didn’t know I was so much run down,’ he said.

‘Well,’ said Davis, ‘you were as steady as a rock all day: now you’ve had a little lunch, you’ll be as steady as a rock again.’

‘Yes,’was the reply, ‘I’m steady enough now, but I’m a queer kind of a first officer.’

‘Shucks!’ cried the captain. ‘You’ve only got to mind the ship’s course, and keep your slate to half a point. A babby could do that, let alone a college graduate like you. There ain’t nothing TO sailoring, when you come to look it in the face. And now we’ll go and put her about. Bring the slate; we’ll have to start our dead reckoning right away.’

The distance run since the departure was read off the log by the binnacle light and entered on the slate.

‘Ready about,’ said the captain. ‘Give me the wheel, White Man, and you stand by the mainsheet. Boom tackle, Mr Hay, please, and then you can jump forward and attend head sails.’

‘Ay, ay, sir,’ responded Herrick.

‘All clear forward?’ asked Davis.

‘All clear, sir.’

‘Hard a-lee!’ cried the captain. ‘Haul in your slack as she comes,’ he called to Huish. ‘Haul in your slack, put your back into it; keep your feet out of the coils.’ A sudden blow sent Huish flat along the deck, and the captain was in his place. ‘Pick yourself up and keep the wheel hard over!’ he roared. ‘You wooden fool, you wanted to get killed, I guess. Draw the jib,’ he cried a moment later; and then to Huish, ‘Give me the wheel again, and see if you can coil that sheet.’

But Huish stood and looked at Davis with an evil countenance. ‘Do you know you struck me?’ said he.

‘Do you know I saved your life?’ returned the other, not deigning to look at him, his eyes travelling instead between the compass and the sails. ‘Where would you have been, if that boom had swung out and you bundled in the clack? No, SIR, we’ll have no more of you at the mainsheet. Seaport towns are full of mainsheet-men; they hop upon one leg, my son, what’s left of them, and the rest are dead. (Set your boom tackle, Mr Hay.) Struck you, did I? Lucky for you I did.’

‘Well,’ said Huish slowly, ‘I daresay there may be somethink in that. ‘Ope there is.’ He turned his back elaborately on the captain, and entered the house, where the speedy explosion of a champagne cork showed he was attending to his comfort.

Herrick came aft to the captain. ‘How is she doing now?’ he asked.

‘East and by no’the a half no’the,’ said Davis. ‘It’s about as good as I expected.’

‘What’ll the hands think of it?’ said Herrick.

‘Oh, they don’t think. They ain’t paid to,’ says the captain.

‘There was something wrong, was there not? between you and — ’ Herrick paused.

‘That’s a nasty little beast, that’s a biter,’ replied the captain, shaking his head. ‘But so long as you and me hang in, it don’t matter.’

Herrick lay down in the weather alleyway; the night was cloudless, the movement of the ship cradled him, he was oppressed besides by the first generous meal after so long a time of famine; and he was recalled from deep sleep by the voice of Davis singing out: ‘Eight bells!’

He rose stupidly, and staggered aft, where the captain gave him the wheel.

‘By the wind,’ said the captain. ‘It comes a little puffy; when you get a heavy puff, steal all you can to windward, but keep her a good full.’

He stepped towards the house, paused and hailed the forecastle.

‘Got such a thing as a concertina forward?’ said he. ‘Bully for you, Uncle Ned. Fetch it aft, will you?’

The schooner steered very easy; and Herrick, watching the moon-whitened sails, was overpowered by drowsiness. A sharp report from the cabin startled him; a third bottle had been opened; and Herrick remembered the Sea Ranger and Fourteen Island Group. Presently the notes of the accordion sounded, and then the captain’s voice:

‘O honey, with our pockets full of money,

We will trip, trip, trip, we will trip it on the quay,

And I will dance with Kate, and Tom will dance with Sall,

When we’re all back from South Amerikee.’

So it went to its quaint air; and the watch below lingered and listened by the forward door, and Uncle Ned was to be seen in the moonlight nodding time; and Herrick smiled at the wheel, his anxieties a while forgotten. Song followed song; another cork exploded; there were voices raised, as though the pair in the cabin were in disagreement; and presently it seemed the breach was healed; for it was now the voice of Huish that struck up, to the captain's accompaniment —

'Up in a balloon, boys,

Up in a balloon,

All among the little stars

And round about the moon.'

A wave of nausea overcame Herrick at the wheel. He wondered why the air, the words (which were yet written with a certain knack), and the voice and accent of the singer, should all jar his spirit like a file on a man's teeth. He sickened at the thought of his two comrades drinking away their reason upon stolen wine, quarrelling and hiccupping and waking up, while the doors of the prison yawned for them in the near future. 'Shall I have sold my honour for nothing?' he thought; and a heat of rage and resolution glowed in his bosom — rage against his comrades — resolution to carry through this business if it might be carried; pluck profit out of shame, since the shame at least was now inevitable; and come home, home from South America — how did the song go? — 'with his pockets full of money':

'O honey, with our pockets full of money,
We will trip, trip, trip, we will trip it on the quay:'

so the words ran in his head; and the honey took on visible form, the quay rose before him and he knew it for the lamplit Embankment, and he saw the lights of Battersea bridge bestride the sullen river. All through the remainder of his trick, he stood entranced, reviewing the past. He had been always true to his love, but not always sedulous to recall her. In the growing calamity of his life, she had swum more distant, like the moon in mist. The letter of farewell, the dishonourable hope that had surprised and corrupted him in his distress, the changed scene, the sea, the night and the music — all stirred him to the roots of manhood. 'I WILL win her,' he thought, and ground his teeth. 'Fair or foul, what matters if I win her?'

'Fo' bell, matey. I think um fo' bell' — he was suddenly recalled by these words in the voice of Uncle Ned.

'Look in at the clock, Uncle,' said he. He would not look himself, from horror of the tipplers.

'Him past, matey,' repeated the Hawaiian.

‘So much the better for you, Uncle,’ he replied; and he gave up the wheel, repeating the directions as he had received them.

He took two steps forward and remembered his dead reckoning. ‘How has she been heading?’ he thought; and he flushed from head to foot. He had not observed or had forgotten; here was the old incompetence; the slate must be filled up by guess. ‘Never again!’ he vowed to himself in silent fury, ‘never again. It shall be no fault of mine if this miscarry.’ And for the remainder of his watch, he stood close by Uncle Ned, and read the face of the compass as perhaps he had never read a letter from his sweetheart.

All the time, and spurring him to the more attention, song, loud talk, fleering laughter and the occasional popping of a cork, reached his ears from the interior of the house; and when the port watch was relieved at midnight, Huish and the captain appeared upon the quarter-deck with flushed faces and uneven steps, the former laden with bottles, the latter with two tin mugs. Herrick silently passed them by. They hailed him in thick voices, he made no answer, they cursed him for a churl, he paid no heed although his belly quivered with disgust and rage. He closed-to the door of the house behind him, and cast himself on a locker in the cabin — not to sleep he thought — rather to think and to despair. Yet he had scarce turned twice on his uneasy bed, before a drunken voice hailed him in the ear, and he must go on deck again to stand the morning watch.

The first evening set the model for those that were to follow. Two cases of champagne scarce lasted the four-and-twenty hours, and almost the whole was drunk by Huish and the captain. Huish seemed to thrive on the excess; he was never sober, yet never wholly tipsy; the food and the sea air had soon healed him of his disease, and he began to lay on flesh. But with Davis things went worse. In the drooping, unbuttoned figure that sprawled all day upon the lockers, tippling and reading novels; in the fool who made of the evening watch a public carouse on the quarter-deck, it would have been hard to recognise the vigorous seaman of Papeete roads. He kept himself reasonably well in hand till he had taken the sun and yawned and blotted through his calculations; but from the moment he rolled up the chart, his hours were passed in slavish self-indulgence or in hoggish slumber. Every other branch of his duty was neglected, except maintaining a stern discipline about the dinner table. Again and again Herrick would hear the cook called aft, and see him running with fresh tins, or carrying away again a meal that had been totally condemned. And the more the captain became sunk in drunkenness, the more delicate his palate showed itself. Once, in the forenoon, he had a bo’sun’s chair rigged over the rail, stripped to his trousers, and went overboard with a pot of paint. ‘I don’t like the way this schooner’s painted,’ said he, ‘and

I've taken a down upon her name.' But he tired of it in half an hour, and the schooner went on her way with an incongruous patch of colour on the stern, and the word Farallone part obliterated and part looking through. He refused to stand either the middle or the morning watch. It was fine-weather sailing, he said; and asked, with a laugh, 'Who ever heard of the old man standing watch himself?' To the dead reckoning which Herrick still tried to keep, he would pay not the least attention nor afford the least assistance.

'What do we want of dead reckoning?' he asked. 'We get the sun all right, don't we?'

'We mayn't get it always though,' objected Herrick. 'And you told me yourself you weren't sure of the chronometer.'

'Oh, there ain't no flies in the chronometer!' cried Davis.

'Oblige me so far, captain,' said Herrick stiffly. 'I am anxious to keep this reckoning, which is a part of my duty; I do not know what to allow for current, nor how to allow for it. I am too inexperienced; and I beg of you to help me.'

'Never discourage zealous officer,' said the captain, unrolling the chart again, for Herrick had taken him over his day's work and while he was still partly sober. 'Here it is: look for yourself; anything from west to west no'the-west, and anyways from five to twenty-five miles. That's what the A'm'ralty chart says; I guess you don't expect to get on ahead of your own Britishers?'

'I am trying to do my duty, Captain Brown,' said Herrick, with a dark flush, 'and I have the honour to inform you that I don't enjoy being trifled with.'

'What in thunder do you want?' roared Davis. 'Go and look at the blamed wake. If you're trying to do your duty, why don't you go and do it? I guess it's no business of mine to go and stick my head over the ship's rump? I guess it's yours. And I'll tell you what it is, my fine fellow, I'll trouble you not to come the dude over me. You're insolent, that's what's wrong with you. Don't you crowd me, Mr Herrick, Esquire.'

Herrick tore up his papers, threw them on the floor, and left the cabin.

'He's turned a bloomin' swot, ain't he?' sneered Huish.

'He thinks himself too good for his company, that's what ails Herrick, Esquire,' raged the captain. 'He thinks I don't understand when he comes the heavy swell. Won't sit down with us, won't he? won't say a civil word? I'll serve the son of a gun as he deserves. By God, Huish, I'll show him whether he's too good for John Davis!'

'Easy with the names, cap',' said Huish, who was always the more sober. 'Easy over the stones, my boy!'

'All right, I will. You're a good sort, Huish. I didn't take to you at first, but I guess you’re right enough. Let’s open another bottle,’ said the captain; and that day, perhaps because he was excited by the quarrel, he drank more recklessly, and by four o’clock was stretched insensible upon the locker.

Herrick and Huish supped alone, one after the other, opposite his flushed and snorting body. And if the sight killed Herrick’s hunger, the isolation weighed so heavily on the clerk’s spirit, that he was scarce risen from table ere he was currying favour with his former comrade.

Herrick was at the wheel when he approached, and Huish leaned confidentially across the binnacle.

‘I say, old chappie,’ he said, ‘you and me don’t seem to be such pals somehow.’

Herrick gave her a spoke or two in silence; his eye, as it skirted from the needle to the luff of the foresail, passed the man by without speculation. But Huish was really dull, a thing he could support with difficulty, having no resources of his own. The idea of a private talk with Herrick, at this stage of their relations, held out particular inducements to a person of his character. Drink besides, as it renders some men hyper-sensitive, made Huish callous. And it would almost have required a blow to make him quit his purpose.

‘Pretty business, ain’t it?’ he continued; ‘Dyvis on the lush? Must say I thought you gave it ‘im A1 today. He didn’t like it a bit; took on hawful after you were gone. — ”‘Ere,” says I, “‘old on, easy on the lush,” I says. “‘Errick was right, and you know it. Give ‘im a chanst,” I says. — ”Uish,” sezee, “don’t you gimme no more of your jaw, or I’ll knock your bloomin’ eyes out.” Well, wot can I do, ‘Errick? But I tell you, I don’t ‘arf like it. It looks to me like the Sea Rynger over again.’

Still Herrick was silent.

‘Do you hear me speak?’ asked Huish sharply. ‘You’re pleasant, ain’t you?’

‘Stand away from that binnacle,’ said Herrick.

The clerk looked at him, long and straight and black; his figure seemed to writhe like that of a snake about to strike; then he turned on his heel, went back to the cabin and opened a bottle of champagne. When eight bells were cried, he slept on the floor beside the captain on the locker; and of the whole starboard watch, only Sally Day appeared upon the summons. The mate proposed to stand the watch with him, and let Uncle Ned lie down; it would make twelve hours on deck, and probably sixteen, but in this fair-weather sailing, he might safely sleep between his tricks of wheel, leaving orders to be called on any sign of squalls. So far he could trust the men, between whom and himself a close relation had sprung up. With Uncle Ned he held long nocturnal conversations, and the old man told him his simple and hard story of exile, suffering, and injustice among cruel whites. The cook, when he found Herrick messed alone, produced for him unexpected and sometimes unpalatable dainties, of which he forced himself to eat. And one day, when he was forward, he was surprised to feel a caressing hand run down his shoulder, and to hear the voice of Sally Day crooning in his ear: ‘You gootch man!’ He turned, and, choking down a sob, shook hands with the negrito. They were kindly, cheery, childish souls. Upon the Sunday each brought forth his separate Bible — for they were all men of alien speech even to each other, and Sally Day communicated with his mates in English only, each read or made believe to read his chapter, Uncle Ned with spectacles on his nose; and they would all join together in the singing of missionary hymns. It was thus a cutting reproof to compare the islanders and the whites aboard the Farallone. Shame ran in Herrick’s blood to remember what employment he was on, and to see these poor souls — and even Sally Day, the child of cannibals, in all likelihood a cannibal himself — so faithful to what they knew of good. The fact that he was held in grateful favour by these innocents served like blinders to his conscience, and there were times when he was inclined, with Sally Day, to call himself a good man. But the height of his favour was only now to appear. With one voice, the crew protested; ere Herrick knew what they were doing, the cook was aroused and came a willing volunteer; all hands clustered about their mate with expostulations and caresses; and he was bidden to lie down and take his customary rest without alarm.

‘He tell you tlue,’ said Uncle Ned. ‘You sleep. Evely man hae he do all light. Evely man he like you too much.’

Herrick struggled, and gave way; choked upon some trivial words of gratitude; and walked to the side of the house, against which he leaned, struggling with emotion.

Uncle Ned presently followed him and begged him to lie down.

‘It’s no use, Uncle Ned,’ he replied. ‘I couldn’t sleep. I’m knocked over with all your goodness.’

‘Ah, no call me Uncle Ned no mo’!’ cried the old man. ‘No my name! My name Taveeta, all-e-same Taveeta King of Islael. Wat for he call that Hawaii? I think no savvy nothing — all-e-same Wise-a-mana.’

It was the first time the name of the late captain had been mentioned, and Herrick grasped the occasion. The reader shall be spared Uncle Ned’s unwieldy dialect, and learn in less embarrassing English, the sum of what he now communicated. The ship had scarce cleared the Golden Gates before the captain and mate had entered on a career of drunkenness, which was scarcely interrupted by their malady and only closed by death. For days and weeks they had encountered neither land nor ship; and seeing themselves lost on the huge deep with their insane conductors, the natives had drunk deep of terror.

At length they made a low island, and went in; and Wiseman and Wishart landed in the boat.

There was a great village, a very fine village, and plenty Kanakas in that place; but all mighty serious; and from every here and there in the back parts of the settlement, Taveeta heard the sounds of island lamentation. ‘I no savvy TALK that island,’ said he. ‘I savvy hear um CLY. I think, Hum! too many people die here!’ But upon Wiseman and Wishart the significance of that barbaric keening was lost. Full of bread and drink, they rollicked along unconcerned, embraced the girls who had scarce energy to repel them, took up and joined (with drunken voices) in the death wail, and at last (on what they took to be an invitation) entered under the roof of a house in which was a considerable concourse of people sitting silent. They stooped below the eaves, flushed and laughing; within a minute they came forth again with changed faces and silent tongues; and as the press severed to make way for them, Taveeta was able to perceive, in the deep shadow of the house, the sick man raising from his mat a head already defeatured by disease. The two tragic triflers fled without hesitation for their boat, screaming on Taveeta to make haste; they came aboard with all speed of oars, raised anchor and crowded sail upon the ship with blows and curses, and were at sea again — and again drunk — before sunset. A week after, and the last of the two had been committed to the deep. Herrick asked Taveeta where that island was, and he replied that, by what he gathered of folks’ talk as they went up together from the beach, he supposed it must be one of the Paumotus. This was in itself probable enough, for the Dangerous Archipelago had been swept that year from east to west by devastating smallpox; but Herrick thought it a strange course to lie from Sydney. Then he remembered the drink.

‘Were they not surprised when they made the island?’ he asked.

‘Wise-a-mana he say “dam! what this?”‘ was the reply.

‘O, that’s it then,’ said Herrick. ‘I don’t believe they knew where they were.’

‘I think so too,’ said Uncle Ned. ‘I think no savvy. This one mo’ betta,’ he added, pointing to the house where the drunken captain slumbered: ‘Take-a-sun all-e-time.’

The implied last touch completed Herrick’s picture of the life and death of his two predecessors; of their prolonged, sordid, sodden sensuality as they sailed, they knew not whither, on their last cruise. He held but a twinkling and unsure belief in any future state; the thought of one of punishment he derided; yet for him (as for all) there dwelt a horror about the end of the brutish man. Sickness fell upon him at the image thus called up; and when he compared it with the scene in which himself was acting, and considered the doom that seemed to brood upon the schooner, a horror that was almost superstitious fell upon him. And yet the strange thing was, he did not falter. He who had proved his incapacity in so many fields, being now falsely placed amid duties which he did not understand, without help, and it might be said without countenance, had hitherto surpassed expectation; and even the shameful misconduct and shocking disclosures of that night seemed but to nerve and strengthen him. He had sold his honour; he vowed it should not be in vain; ‘it shall be no fault of mine if this miscarry,’ he repeated. And in his heart he wondered at himself. Living rage no doubt supported him; no doubt also, the sense of the last cast, of the ships burned, of all doors closed but one, which is so strong a tonic to the merely weak, and so deadly a depressant to the merely cowardly.

For some time the voyage went otherwise well. They weathered Fakarava with one board; and the wind holding well to the southward and blowing fresh, they passed between Ranaka and Ratiu, and ran some days north-east by east-half-east under the lee of Takume and Honden, neither of which they made. In about 14 degrees South and between 134 and 135 degrees West, it fell a dead calm with rather a heavy sea. The captain refused to take in sail, the helm was lashed, no watch was set, and the Farallone rolled and banged for three days, according to observation, in almost the same place. The fourth morning, a little before day, a breeze sprang up and rapidly freshened. The captain had drunk hard the night before; he was far from sober when he was roused; and when he came on deck for the first time at half-past eight, it was plain he had already drunk deep again at breakfast. Herrick avoided his eye; and resigned the deck with indignation to a man more than half-seas over.

By the loud commands of the captain and the singing out of fellows at the ropes, he could judge from the house that sail was being crowded on the ship; relinquished his half-eaten breakfast; and came on deck again, to find the main and the jib topsails set, and both watches and the cook turned out to hand the staysail. The Farallone lay already far over; the sky was obscured with misty scud; and from the windward an ominous squall came flying up, broadening and blackening as it rose.

Fear thrilled in Herrick’s vitals. He saw death hard by; and if not death, sure ruin. For if the Farallone lived through the coming squall, she must surely be dismasted. With that their enterprise was at an end, and they themselves bound prisoners to the very evidence of their crime. The greatness of the peril and his own alarm sufficed to silence him. Pride, wrath, and shame raged without issue in his mind; and he shut his teeth and folded his arms close.

The captain sat in the boat to windward, bellowing orders and insults, his eyes glazed, his face deeply congested; a bottle set between his knees, a glass in his hand half empty. His back was to the squall, and he was at first intent upon the setting of the sail. When that was done, and the great trapezium of canvas had begun to draw and to trail the lee-rail of the Farallone level with the foam, he laughed out an empty laugh, drained his glass, sprawled back among the lumber in the boat, and fetched out a crumpled novel.

Herrick watched him, and his indignation glowed red hot. He glanced to windward where the squall already whitened the near sea and heralded its coming with a singular and dismal sound. He glanced at the steersman, and saw him clinging to the spokes with a face of a sickly blue. He saw the crew were running to their stations without orders. And it seemed as if something broke in his brain; and the passion of anger, so long restrained, so long eaten in secret, burst suddenly loose and shook him like a sail. He stepped across to the captain and smote his hand heavily on the drunkard's shoulder.

'You brute,' he said, in a voice that tottered, 'look behind you!'

'Wha's that?' cried Davis, bounding in the boat and upsetting the champagne.

'You lost the Sea Ranger because you were a drunken sot,' said Herrick. 'Now you're going to lose the Farallone. You're going to drown here the same way as you drowned others, and be damned. And your daughter shall walk the streets, and your sons be thieves like their father.'

For the moment, the words struck the captain white and foolish. 'My God!' he cried, looking at Herrick as upon a ghost; 'my God, Herrick!'

'Look behind you, then!' reiterated the assailant.

The wretched man, already partly sobered, did as he was told, and in the same breath of time leaped to his feet. 'Down staysail!' he trumpeted. The hands were thrilling for the order, and the great sail came with a run, and fell half overboard among the racing foam. 'Jib topsail-halyards! Let the stays'l be,' he said again.

But before it was well uttered, the squall shouted aloud and fell, in a solid mass of wind and rain commingled, on the Farallone; and she stooped under the blow, and lay like a thing dead. From the mind of Herrick reason fled; he clung in the weather rigging, exulting; he was done with life, and he gloried in the release; he gloried in the wild noises of the wind and the choking onslaught of the rain; he gloried to die so, and now, amid this coil of the elements. And meanwhile, in the waist up to his knees in water — so low the schooner lay — the captain was hacking at the foresheet with a pocket knife. It was a question of seconds, for the Farallone drank deep of the encroaching seas. But the hand of the captain had the advance; the foresail boom tore apart the last strands of the sheet and crashed to leeward; the Farallone leaped up into the wind and righted; and the peak and throat halyards, which had long been let go, began to run at the same instant.

For some ten minutes more she careered under the impulse of the squall; but the captain was now master of himself and of his ship, and all danger at an end. And then, sudden as a trick change upon the stage, the squall blew by, the wind dropped into light airs, the sun beamed forth again upon the tattered schooner; and the captain, having secured the foresail boom and set a couple of hands to the pump, walked aft, sober, a little pale, and with the sodden end of a cigar still stuck between his teeth even as the squall had found it. Herrick followed him; he could scarce recall the violence of his late emotions, but he felt there was a scene to go through, and he was anxious and even eager to go through with it.

The captain, turning at the house end, met him face to face, and averted his eyes. ‘We’ve lost the two tops’ls and the stays’l,’ he gabbled. ‘Good business, we didn’t lose any sticks. I guess you think we’re all the better without the kites.’

‘That’s not what I’m thinking,’ said Herrick, in a voice strangely quiet, that yet echoed confusion in the captain’s mind.

‘I know that,’ he cried, holding up his hand. ‘I know what you’re thinking. No use to say it now. I’m sober.’

‘I have to say it, though,’ returned Herrick.

‘Hold on, Herrick; you’ve said enough,’ said Davis. ‘You’ve said what I would take from no man breathing but yourself; only I know it’s true.’

‘I have to tell you, Captain Brown,’ pursued Herrick, ‘that I resign my position as mate. You can put me in irons or shoot me, as you please; I will make no resistance — only, I decline in any way to help or to obey you; and I suggest you should put Mr Huish in my place. He will make a worthy first officer to your captain, sir.’ He smiled, bowed, and turned to walk forward.

‘Where are you going, Herrick?’ cried the captain, detaining him by the shoulder.

‘To berth forward with the men, sir,’ replied Herrick, with the same hateful smile. ‘I’ve been long enough aft here with you — gentlemen.

‘You’re wrong there,’ said Davis. ‘Don’t you be too quick with me; there ain’t nothing wrong but the drink — it’s the old story, man! Let me get sober once, and then you’ll see,’ he pleaded.

‘Excuse me, I desire to see no more of you,’ said Herrick.

The captain groaned aloud. ‘You know what you said about my children?’ he broke out.

‘By rote. In case you wish me to say it you again?’ asked Herrick.

‘Don’t!’ cried the captain, clapping his hands to his ears. ‘Don’t make me kill a man I care for! Herrick, if you see me put glass to my lips again till we’re ashore, I give you leave to put bullet through me; I beg you to do it! You’re the only man aboard whose carcase is worth losing; do you think I don’t know that? do you think I ever went back on you? I always knew you were in the right of it — drunk or sober, I knew that. What do you want? — an oath? Man, you’re clever enough to see that this is sure-enough earnest.’

‘Do you mean there shall be no more drinking?’ asked Herrick, ‘neither by you nor Huish? that you won’t go on stealing my profits and drinking my champagne that I gave my honour for? and that you’ll attend to your duties, and stand watch and watch, and bear your proper share of the ship’s work, instead of leaving it all on the shoulders of a landsman, and making yourself the butt and scoff of native seamen? Is that what you mean? If it is, be so good as to say it categorically.’

‘You put these things in a way hard for a gentleman to swallow,’ said the captain. ‘You wouldn’t have me say I was ashamed of myself? Trust me this once; I’ll do the square thing, and there’s my hand on it.’

‘Well, I’ll try it once,’ said Herrick. ‘Fail me again…’

‘No more now!’ interrupted Davis. ‘No more, old man! Enough said. You’ve a riling tongue when your back’s up, Herrick. Just be glad we’re friends again, the same as what I am; and go tender on the raws; I’ll see as you don’t repent it. We’ve been mighty near death this day — don’t say whose fault it was! — pretty near hell, too, I guess. We’re in a mighty bad line of life, us two, and ought to go easy with each other.’

He was maundering; yet it seemed as if he were maundering with some design, beating about the bush of some communication that he feared to make, or perhaps only talking against time in terror of what Herrick might say next. But Herrick had now spat his venom; his was a kindly nature, and, content with his triumph, he had now begun to pity. With a few soothing words, he sought to conclude the interview, and proposed that they should change their clothes.

‘Not right yet,’ said Davis. ‘There’s another thing I want to tell you first. You know what you said about my children? I want to tell you why it hit me so hard; I kind of think you’ll feel bad about it too. It’s about my little Adar. You hadn’t ought to have quite said that — but of course I know you didn’t know. She — she’s dead, you see.’

‘Why, Davis!’ cried Herrick. ‘You’ve told me a dozen times she was alive! Clear your head, man! This must be the drink.’

‘No, SIR,’ said Davis. ‘She’s dead. Died of a bowel complaint. That was when I was away in the brig Oregon. She lies in Portland, Maine.

“Adar, only daughter of Captain John Davis and Mariar his wife, aged five.” I had a doll for her on board. I never took the paper off’n that doll, Herrick; it went down the way it was with the Sea Ranger, that day I was damned.’

The Captain’s eyes were fixed on the horizon, he talked with an extraordinary softness but a complete composure; and Herrick looked upon him with something that was almost terror.

‘Don’t think I’m crazy neither,’ resumed Davis. ‘I’ve all the cold sense that I know what to do with. But I guess a man that’s unhappy’s like a child; and this is a kind of a child’s game of mine. I never could act up to the plain-cut truth, you see; so I pretend. And I warn you square; as soon as we’re through with this talk, I’ll start in again with the pretending. Only, you see, she can’t walk no streets,’ added the captain, ‘couldn’t even make out to live and get that doll!’

Herrick laid a tremulous hand upon the captain’s shoulder.

‘Don’t do that,’ cried Davis, recoiling from the touch. ‘Can’t you see I’m all broken up the way it is? Come along, then; come along, old man; you can put your trust in me right through; come along and get dry clothes.’

They entered the cabin, and there was Huish on his knees prising open a case of champagne.

“Vast, there!’ cried the captain. ‘No more of that. No more drinking on this ship.’

‘Turned teetotal, ‘ave you?’ inquired Hu’sh. ‘I’m agreeable. About time, eh? Bloomin’ nearly lost another ship, I fancy.’ He took out a bottle and began calmly to burst the wire with the spike of a corkscrew.

‘Do you hear me speak?’ cried Davis.

‘I suppose I do. You speak loud enough,’ said Huish. ‘The trouble is that I don’t care.’

Herrick plucked the captain’s sleeve. ‘Let him free now,’ he said. ‘We’ve had all we want this morning.’

‘Let him have it then,’ said the captain. ‘It’s his last.’

By this time the wire was open, the string was cut, the head of glided paper was torn away; and Huish waited, mug in hand, expecting the usual explosion. It did not follow. He eased the cork with his thumb; still there was no result. At last he took the screw and drew it. It came out very easy and with scarce a sound.

“Illo!’said Huish. “Ere’s a bad bottle.’

He poured some of the wine into the mug; it was colourless and still. He smelt and tasted it.

‘W’y, wot’s this?’ he said. ‘It’s water!’

If the voice of trumpets had suddenly sounded about the ship in the midst of the sea, the three men in the house could scarcely have been more stunned than by this incident. The mug passed round; each sipped, each smelt of it; each stared at the bottle in its glory of gold paper as Crusoe may have stared at the footprint; and their minds were swift to fix upon a common apprehension. The difference between a bottle of champagne and a bottle of water is not great; between a shipload of one or the other lay the whole scale from riches to ruin.

A second bottle was broached. There were two cases standing ready in a stateroom; these two were brought out, broken open, and tested. Still with the same result: the contents were still colourless and tasteless, and dead as the rain in a beached fishing-boat.

‘Crikey!’ said Huish.

‘Here, let’s sample the hold!’ said the captain, mopping his brow with a back-handed sweep; and the three stalked out of the house, grim and heavy-footed.

All hands were turned out; two Kanakas were sent below, another stationed at a purchase; and Davis, axe in hand, took his place beside the coamings.

‘Are you going to let the men know?’ whispered Herrick.

‘Damn the men!’ said Davis. ‘It’s beyond that. We’ve got to know ourselves.’

Three cases were sent on deck and sampled in turn; from each bottle, as the captain smashed it with the axe, the champagne ran bubbling and creaming.

‘Go deeper, can’t you?’ cried Davis to the Kanakas in the hold.

The command gave the signal for a disastrous change. Case after case came up, bottle after bottle was burst and bled mere water. Deeper yet, and they came upon a layer where there was scarcely so much as the intention to deceive; where the cases were no longer branded, the bottles no longer wired or papered, where the fraud was manifest and stared them in the face.

‘Here’s about enough of this foolery!’ said Davis. ‘Stow back the cases in the hold, Uncle, and get the broken crockery overboard. Come with me,’ he added to his co-adventurers, and led the way back into the cabin.

CHAPTER 6. THE PARTNERS

Each took a side of the fixed table; it was the first time they had sat down at it together; but now all sense of incongruity, all memory of differences, was quite swept away by the presence of the common ruin.

‘Gentlemen,’ said the captain, after a pause, and with very much the air of a chairman opening a board-meeting, ‘we’re sold.’

Huish broke out in laughter. ‘Well, if this ain’t the ‘ighest old rig!’ he cried. ‘And Dyvis, ‘ere, who thought he had got up so bloomin’ early in the mornin’! We’ve stolen a cargo of spring water! Oh, my crikey!’ and he squirmed with mirth.

The captain managed to screw out a phantom smile.

‘Here’s Old Man Destiny again,’ said he to Herrick, ‘but this time I guess he’s kicked the door right in.’

Herrick only shook his head.

‘O Lord, it’s rich!’ laughed Huish. ‘It would really be a scrumptious lark if it ‘ad ‘appened to somebody else! And wot are we to do next? Oh, my eye! with this bloomin’ schooner, too?’

‘That’s the trouble,’ said Davis. ‘There’s only one thing certain: it’s no use carting this old glass and ballast to Peru. No, SIR, we’re in a hole.’

‘O my, and the merchand’ cried Huish; ‘the man that made this shipment! He’ll get the news by the mail brigantine; and he’ll think of course we’re making straight for Sydney.’

‘Yes, he’ll be a sick merchant,’ said the captain. ‘One thing: this explains the Kanaka crew. If you’re going to lose a ship, I would ask no better myself than a Kanaka crew. But there’s one thing it don’t explain; it don’t explain why she came down Tahiti ways.’

‘Wy, to lose her, you byby!’ said Huish.

‘A lot you know,’ said the captain. ‘Nobody wants to lose a schooner; they want to lose her ON HER COURSE, you skeericks! You seem to think underwriters haven’t got enough sense to come in out of the rain.’

‘Well,’ said Herrick, ‘I can tell you (I am afraid) why she came so far to the eastward. I had it of Uncle Ned. It seems these two unhappy devils, Wiseman and Wishart, were drunk on the champagne from the beginning — and died drunk at the end.’

The captain looked on the table.

‘They lay in their two bunks, or sat here in this damned house,’ he pursued, with rising agitation, ‘filling their skins with the accursed stuff, till sickness took them. As they sickened and the fever rose, they drank the more. They lay here howling and groaning, drunk and dying, all in one. They didn’t know where they were, they didn’t care. They didn’t even take the sun, it seems.’

‘Not take the sun?’ cried the captain, looking up. ‘Sacred Billy! what a crowd!’

‘Well, it don’t matter to Joe!’ said Huish. ‘Wot are Wiseman and the t’other buffer to us?’

‘A good deal, too,’ says the captain. ‘We’re their heirs, I guess.’

‘It is a great inheritance,’ said Herrick.

‘Well, I don’t know about that,’ returned Davis. ‘Appears to me as if it might be worse. ‘Tain’t worth what the cargo would have been of course, at least not money down. But I’ll tell you what it appears to figure up to. Appears to me as if it amounted to about the bottom dollar of the man in ‘Frisco.’

‘‘Old on,’ said Huish. ‘Give a fellow time; ‘ow’s this, umpire?’

‘Well, my sons,’ pursued the captain, who seemed to have recovered his assurance, ‘Wiseman and Wishart were to be paid for casting away this old schooner and its cargo. We’re going to cast away the schooner right enough; and I’ll make it my private business to see that we get paid. What were W. and W. to get? That’s more’n I can tell. But W. and W. went into this business themselves, they were on the crook. Now WE’RE on the square, we only stumbled into it; and that merchant has just got to squeal, and I’m the man to see that he squeals good. No, sir! there’s some stuffing to this Farallone racket after all.’

‘Go it, cap!’ cried Huish. ‘Yoicks! Forrard! ‘Old ‘ard! There’s your style for the money! Blow me if I don’t prefer this to the hother.’

‘I do not understand,’ said Herrick. ‘I have to ask you to excuse me; I do not understand.’

‘Well now, see here, Herrick,’ said Davis, ‘I’m going to have a word with you anyway upon a different matter, and it’s good that Huish should hear it too. We’re done with this boozing business, and we ask your pardon for it right here and now. We have to thank you for all you did for us while we were making hogs of ourselves; you’ll find me turn-to all right in future; and as for the wine, which I grant we stole from you, I’ll take stock and see you paid for it. That’s good enough, I believe. But what I want to point out to you is this. The old game was a risky game. The new game’s as safe as running a Vienna Bakery. We just put this Farallone before the wind, and run till we’re well to looard of our port of departure and reasonably well up with some other place, where they have an American Consul. Down goes the Farallone, and good-bye to her! A day or so in the boat; the consul packs us home, at Uncle Sam’s expense, to ‘Frisco; and if that merchant don’t put the dollars down, you come to me!’

‘But I thought,’ began Herrick; and then broke out; ‘oh, let’s get on to Peru!’

‘Well, if you’re going to Peru for your health, I won’t say no!’ replied the captain. ‘But for what other blame’ shadow of a reason you should want to go there, gets me clear. We don’t want to go there with this cargo; I don’t know as old bottles is a lively article anywheres; leastways, I’ll go my bottom cent, it ain’t Peru. It was always a doubt if we could sell the schooner; I never rightly hoped to, and now I’m sure she ain’t worth a hill of beans; what’s wrong with her, I don’t know; I only know it’s something, or she wouldn’t be here with this truck in her inside. Then again, if we lose her, and land in Peru, where are we? We can’t declare the loss, or how did we get to Peru? In that case the merchant can’t touch the insurance; most likely he’ll go bust; and don’t you think you see the three of us on the beach of Callao?’

‘There’s no extradition there,’ said Herrick.

‘Well, my son, and we want to be extraded,’ said the captain.

‘What’s our point? We want to have a consul extrade us as far as San Francisco and that merchant’s office door. My idea is that Samoa would be found an eligible business centre. It’s dead before the wind; the States have a consul there, and ‘Frisco steamers call, so’s we could skip right back and interview the merchant.’

‘Samoa?’ said Herrick. ‘It will take us for ever to get there.’

‘Oh, with a fair wind!’ said the captain.

‘No trouble about the log, eh?’ asked Huish.

‘No, SIR,’ said Davis. ‘Light airs and baffling winds. Squalls and calms. D. R.: five miles. No obs. Pumps attended. And fill in the barometer and thermometer off of last year’s trip.’ ‘Never saw such a voyage,’ says you to the consul. ‘Thought I was going to run short…’ He stopped in mid career. ‘Say,’ he began again, and once more stopped. ‘Beg your pardon, Herrick,’ he added with undisguised humility, ‘but did you keep the run of the stores?’

‘Had I been told to do so, it should have been done, as the rest was done, to the best of my little ability,’ said Herrick. ‘As it was, the cook helped himself to what he pleased.’

Davis looked at the table.

‘I drew it rather fine, you see,’ he said at last. ‘The great thing was to clear right out of Papeete before the consul could think better of it. Tell you what: I guess I’ll take stock.’

And he rose from table and disappeared with a lamp in the lazarette.

‘‘Ere’s another screw loose,’ observed Huish.

‘My man,’ said Herrick, with a sudden gleam of animosity, ‘it is still your watch on deck, and surely your wheel also?’

‘You come the ‘eavy swell, don’t you, ducky?’ said Huish.

‘Stand away from that binnacle. Surely your w’eel, my man. Yah.’

He lit a cigar ostentatiously, and strolled into the waist with his hands in his pockets.

In a surprisingly short time, the captain reappeared; he did not look at Herrick, but called Huish back and sat down.

‘Well,’ he began, ‘I’ve taken stock — roughly.’ He paused as if for somebody to help him out; and none doing so, both gazing on him instead with manifest anxiety, he yet more heavily resumed. ‘Well, it won’t fight. We can’t do it; that’s the bed rock. I’m as sorry as what you can be, and sorrier. We can’t look near Samoa. I don’t know as we could get to Peru.’

‘Wot-ju mean?’ asked Huish brutally.

‘I can’t ‘most tell myself,’ replied the captain. ‘I drew it fine; I said I did; but what’s been going on here gets me! Appears as if the devil had been around. That cook must be the holiest kind of fraud. Only twelve days, too! Seems like craziness. I’ll own up square to one thing: I seem to have figured too fine upon the flour. But the rest — my land! I’ll never understand it! There’s been more waste on this twopenny ship than what there is to an Atlantic Liner.’ He stole a glance at his companions; nothing good was to be gleaned from their dark faces; and he had recourse to rage. ‘You wait till I interview that cook!’ he roared and smote the table with his fist. ‘I’ll interview the son of a gun so’s he’s never been spoken to before. I’ll put a bead upon the — ’

‘You will not lay a finger on the man,’ said Herrick. ‘The fault is yours and you know it. If you turn a savage loose in your store-room, you know what to expect. I will not allow the man to be molested.’

It is hard to say how Davis might have taken this defiance; but he was diverted to a fresh assailant.

‘Well!’ drawled Huish, ‘you’re a plummy captain, ain’t you? You’re a blooming captain! Don’t you, set up any of your chat to me, John Dyvis: I know you now, you ain’t any more use than a bloomin’ dawl! Oh, you “don’t know”, don’t you? Oh, it “gets you”, do it? Oh, I dessay! W’y, we en’t you ‘owling for fresh tins every blessed day? ‘Ow often ‘ave I ‘eard you send the ‘ole bloomin’ dinner off and tell the man to chuck it in the swill tub? And breakfast? Oh, my crikey! breakfast for ten, and you ‘ollerin’ for more! And now you “can’t ‘most tell”! Blow me, if it ain’t enough to make a man write an insultin’ letter to Gawd! You dror it mild, John Dyvis; don’t ‘andle me; I’m dyngerous.’

Davis sat like one bemused; it might even have been doubted if he heard, but the voice of the clerk rang about the cabin like that of a cormorant among the ledges of the cliff.

‘That will do, Huish,’ said Herrick.

‘Oh, so you tyke his part, do you? you stuck-up sneerin’ snob! Tyke it then. Come on, the pair of you. But as for John Dyvis, let him look out! He struck me the first night aboard, and I never took a blow yet but wot I gave as good. Let him knuckle down on his marrow bones and beg my pardon. That's my last word.'

'I stand by the Captain,' said Herrick. 'That makes us two to one, both good men; and the crew will all follow me. I hope I shall die very soon; but I have not the least objection to killing you before I go. I should prefer it so; I should do it with no more remorse than winking. Take care — take care, you little cad!'

The animosity with which these words were uttered was so marked in itself, and so remarkable in the man who uttered them that Huish stared, and even the humiliated Davis reared up his head and gazed at his defender. As for Herrick, the successive agitations and disappointments of the day had left him wholly reckless; he was conscious of a pleasant glow, an agreeable excitement; his head seemed empty, his eyeballs burned as he turned them, his throat was dry as a biscuit; the least dangerous man by nature, except in so far as the weak are always dangerous, at that moment he was ready to slay or to be slain with equal unconcern.

Here at least was the gage thrown down, and battle offered; he who should speak next would bring the matter to an issue there and then; all knew it to be so and hung back; and for many seconds by the cabin clock, the trio sat motionless and silent.

Then came an interruption, welcome as the flowers in May.

'Land ho!' sang out a voice on deck. 'Land a weatha bow!'

'Land!' cried Davis, springing to his feet. 'What's this? There ain't no land here.'

And as men may run from the chamber of a murdered corpse, the three ran forth out of the house and left their quarrel behind them, undecided.

The sky shaded down at the sea level to the white of opals; the sea itself, insolently, inkily blue, drew all about them the uncompromising wheel of the horizon. Search it as they pleased, not even the practisect eye of Captain Davis could descry the smallest interruption. A few filmy clouds were slowly melting overhead; and about the schooner, as around the only point of interest, a tropic bird, white as a snowflake, hung, and circled, and displayed, as it turned, the long vermilion feather of its tall. Save the sea and the heaven, that was all.

'Who sang out land?' asked Davis. 'If there's any boy playing funny dog with me, I'll teach him skylarking!'

But Uncle Ned contentedly pointed to a part of the horizon, where a greenish, filmy iridescence could be discerned floating like smoke on the pale heavens.

Davis applied his glass to it, and then looked at the Kanaka. 'Call that land?' said he. 'Well, it's more than I do.'

‘One time long ago,’ said Uncle Ned, ‘I see Anaa all-e-same that, four five hours befo’ we come up. Capena he say sun go down, sun go up again; he say lagoon all-e-same milla.’

‘All-e-same WHAT?’ asked Davis.

‘Milla, sah,’ said Uncle Ned.

‘Oh, ah! mirror,’ said Davis. ‘I see; reflection from the lagoon. Well, you know, it is just possible, though it’s strange I never heard of it. Here, let’s look at the chart.’

They went back to the cabin, and found the position of the schooner well to windward of the archipelago in the midst of a white field of paper.

‘There! you see for yourselves,’ said Davis.

‘And yet I don’t know,’ said Herrick, ‘I somehow think there’s something in it. I’ll tell you one thing too, captain; that’s all right about the reflection; I heard it in Papeete.’

‘Fetch up that Findlay, then!’ said Davis. ‘I’ll try it all ways. An island wouldn’t come amiss, the way we’re fixed.’

The bulky volume was handed up to him, broken-backed as is the way with Findlay; and he turned to the place and began to run over the text, muttering to himself and turning over the pages with a wetted finger.

‘Hullo!’ he exclaimed. ‘How’s this?’ And he read aloud. ‘New Island. According to M. Delille this island, which from private interests would remain unknown, lies, it is said, in lat. 12 degrees 49’ 10” S. long. 113 degrees 6’ W. In addition to the position above given Commander Matthews, H.M.S. Scorpion, states that an island exists in lat. 12 degrees 0’ S. long. 13 degrees 16’ W. This must be the same, if such an island exists, which is very doubtful, and totally disbelieved in by South Sea traders.’

‘Golly!’ said Huish.

‘It’s rather in the conditional mood,’ said Herrick.

‘It’s anything you please,’ cried Davis, ‘only there it is! That’s our place, and don’t you make any mistake.’

“‘Which from private interests would remain unknown,’“ read Herrick, over his shoulder. ‘What may that mean?’

‘It should mean pearls,’ said Davis. ‘A pearling island the government don’t know about? That sounds like real estate. Or suppose it don’t mean anything. Suppose it’s just an island; I guess we could fill up with fish, and cocoanuts, and native stuff, and carry out the Samoa scheme hand over fist. How long did he say it was before they raised Anaa? Five hours, I think?’

‘Four or five,’ said Herrick.

Davis stepped to the door. ‘What breeze had you that time you made Anaa, Uncle Ned?’ said he.

‘Six or seven knots,’ was the reply.

‘Thirty or thirty-five miles,’ said Davis. ‘High time we were shortening sail, then. If it is an island, we don’t want to be butting our head against it in the dark; and if it isn’t an island, we can get through it just as well by daylight. Ready about!’ he roared.

And the schooner’s head was laid for that elusive glimmer in the sky, which began already to pale in lustre and diminish in size, as the stain of breath vanishes from a window pane. At the same time she was reefed close down.

PART II
THE QUARTETTE

CHAPTER 7. THE PEARL-FISHER

About four in the morning, as the captain and Herrick sat together on the rail, there arose from the midst of the night in front of them the voice of breakers. Each sprang to his feet and stared and listened. The sound was continuous, like the passing of a train; no rise or fall could be distinguished; minute by minute the ocean heaved with an equal potency against the invisible isle; and as time passed, and Herrick waited in vain for any vicissitude in the volume of that roaring, a sense of the eternal weighed upon his mind. To the expert eye the isle itself was to be inferred from a certain string of blots along the starry heaven. And the schooner was laid to and anxiously observed till daylight.

There was little or no morning bank. A brightening came in the east; then a wash of some ineffable, faint, nameless hue between crimson and silver; and then coals of fire. These glimmered a while on the sea line, and seemed to brighten and darken and spread out, and still the night and the stars reigned undisturbed; it was as though a spark should catch and glow and creep along the foot of some heavy and almost incombustible wall-hanging, and the room itself be scarce menaced. Yet a little after, and the whole east glowed with gold and scarlet, and the hollow of heaven was filled with the daylight.

The isle — the undiscovered, the scarce believed-in — now lay before them and close aboard; and Herrick thought that never in his dreams had he beheld anything more strange and delicate. The beach was excellently white, the continuous barrier of trees inimitably green; the land perhaps ten feet high, the trees thirty more. Every here and there, as the schooner coasted northward, the wood was intermitted; and he could see clear over the inconsiderable strip of land (as a man looks over a wall) to the lagoon within — and clear over that again to where the far side of the atoll prolonged its pencilling of trees against the morning sky. He tortured himself to find analogies. The isle was like the rim of a great vessel sunken in the waters; it was like the embankment of an annular railway grown upon with wood: so slender it seemed amidst the outrageous breakers, so frail and pretty, he would scarce have wondered to see it sink and disappear without a sound, and the waves close smoothly over its descent.

Meanwhile the captain was in the forecross-trees, glass in hand, his eyes in every quarter, spying for an entrance, spying for signs of tenancy. But the isle continued to unfold itself in joints, and to run out in indeterminate capes, and still there was neither house nor man, nor the smoke of fire. Here a multitude of sea-birds soared and twinkled, and fished in the blue waters; and there, and for miles together, the fringe of cocoa-palm and pandanus extended desolate, and made desirable green bowers for nobody to visit, and the silence of death was only broken by the throbbing of the sea.

The airs were very light, their speed was small; the heat intense. The decks were scorching underfoot, the sun flamed overhead, brazen, out of a brazen sky; the pitch bubbled in the seams, and the brains in the brain-pan. And all the while the excitement of the three adventurers glowed about their bones like a fever. They whispered, and nodded, and pointed, and put mouth to ear, with a singular instinct of secrecy, approaching that island underhand like eavesdroppers and thieves; and even Davis from the cross-trees gave his orders mostly by gestures. The hands shared in this mute strain, like dogs, without comprehending it; and through the roar of so many miles of breakers, it was a silent ship that approached an empty island.

At last they drew near to the break in that interminable gangway. A spur of coral sand stood forth on the one hand; on the other a high and thick tuft of trees cut off the view; between was the mouth of the huge laver. Twice a day the ocean crowded in that narrow entrance and was heaped between these frail walls; twice a day, with the return of the ebb, the mighty surplusage of water must struggle to escape. The hour in which the Farallone came there was the hour of flood. The sea turned (as with the instinct of the homing pigeon) for the vast receptacle, swept eddying through the gates, was transmuted, as it did so, into a wonder of watery and silken hues, and brimmed into the inland sea beyond. The schooner looked up close-hauled, and was caught and carried away by the influx like a toy. She skimmed; she flew; a momentary shadow touched her decks from the shore-side trees; the bottom of the channel showed up for a moment and was in a moment gone; the next, she floated on the bosom of the lagoon, and below, in the transparent chamber of waters, a myriad of many-coloured fishes were sporting, a myriad pale-flowers of coral diversified the floor.

Herrick stood transported. In the gratified lust of his eye, he forgot the past and the present; forgot that he was menaced by a prison on the one hand and starvation on the other; forgot that he was come to that island, desperately foraging, clutching at expedients. A drove of fishes, painted like the rainbow and billed like parrots, hovered up in the shadow of the schooner, and passed clear of it, and glinted in the submarine sun. They were beautiful, like birds, and their silent passage impressed him like a strain of song.

Meanwhile, to the eye of Davis in the cross-trees, the lagoon continued to expand its empty waters, and the long succession of the shore-side trees to be paid out like fishing line off a reel. And still there was no mark of habitation. The schooner, immediately on entering, had been kept away to the nor'ard where the water seemed to be the most deep; and she was now skimming past the tall grove of trees, which stood on that side of the channel and denied further view. Of the whole of the low shores of the island, only this bight remained to be revealed. And suddenly the curtain was raised; they began to open out a haven, snugly elbowed there, and beheld, with an astonishment beyond words, the roofs of men.

The appearance, thus 'instantaneously disclosed' to those on the deck of the Farallone, was not that of a city, rather of a substantial country farm with its attendant hamlet: a long line of sheds and store-houses; apart, upon the one side, a deep-verandah'ed dwelling-house; on the other, perhaps a dozen native huts; a building with a belfry and some rude offer at architectural features that might be thought to mark it out for a chapel; on the beach in front some heavy boats drawn up, and a pile of timber running forth into the burning shallows of the lagoon. From a flagstaff at the pierhead, the red ensign of England was displayed. Behind, about, and over, the same tall grove of palms, which had masked the settlement in the beginning, prolonged its root of tumultuous green fans, and turned and ruffled overhead, and sang its silver song all day in the wind. The place had the indescribable but unmistakable appearance of being in commission; yet there breathed from it a sense of desertion that was almost poignant, no human figure was to be observed going to and fro about the houses, and there was no sound of human industry or enjoyment. Only, on the top of the beach and hard by the flagstaff, a woman of exorbitant stature and as white as snow was to be seen beckoning with uplifted arm. The second glance identified her as a piece of naval sculpture, the figure-head of a ship that had long hovered and plunged into so many running billows, and was now brought ashore to be the ensign and presiding genius of that empty town.

The Farallone made a soldier's breeze of it; the wind, besides, was stronger inside than without under the lee of the land; and the stolen schooner opened out successive objects with the swiftness of a panorama, so that the adventurers stood speechless. The flag spoke for itself; it was no frayed and weathered trophy that had beaten itself to pieces on the post, flying over desolation; and to make assurance stronger, there was to be descried in the deep shade of the verandah, a glitter of crystal and the fluttering of white napery. If the figure-head at the pier end, with its perpetual gesture and its leprous whiteness, reigned alone in that hamlet as it seemed to do, it would not have reigned long. Men's hands had been busy, men's feet stirring there, within the circuit of the clock. The Farallones were sure of it; their eyes dug in the deep shadow of the palms for some one hiding; if intensity of looking might have prevailed, they would have pierced the walls of houses; and there came to them, in these pregnant seconds, a sense of being watched and played with, and of a blow impending, that was hardly bearable.

The extreme point of palms they had just passed enclosed a creek, which was thus hidden up to the last moment from the eyes of those on board; and from this, a boat put suddenly and briskly out, and a voice hailed.

'Schooner ahoy!' it cried. 'Stand in for the pier! In two cables' lengths you'll have twenty fathoms water and good holding ground.'

The boat was manned with a couple of brown oarsmen in scanty kilts of blue. The speaker, who was steering, wore white clothes, the full dress of the tropics; a wide hat shaded his face; but it could be seen that he was of stalwart size, and his voice sounded like a gentleman's. So much could be made out. It was plain, besides, that the Farallone had been descried some time before at sea, and the inhabitants were prepared for its reception.

Mechanically the orders were obeyed, and the ship berthed; and the three adventurers gathered aft beside the house and waited, with galloping pulses and a perfect vacancy of mind, the coming of the stranger who might mean so much to them. They had no plan, no story prepared; there was no time to make one; they were caught red-handed and must stand their chance. Yet this anxiety was chequered with hope. The island being undeclared, it was not possible the man could hold any office or be in a position to demand their papers. And beyond that, if there was any truth in Findlay, as it now seemed there should be, he was the representative of the 'private reasons,' he must see their coming with a profound disappointment; and perhaps (hope whispered) he would be willing and able to purchase their silence.

The boat was by that time forging alongside, and they were able at last to see what manner of man they had to do with. He was a huge fellow, six feet four in height, and of a build proportionately strong, but his sinews seemed to be dissolved in a listlessness that was more than languor. It was only the eye that corrected this impression; an eye of an unusual mingled brilliancy and softness, sombre as coal and with lights that outshone the topaz; an eye of unimpaired health and virility; an eye that bid you beware of the man's devastating anger. A complexion, naturally dark, had been tanned in the island to a hue hardly distinguishable from that of a Tahitian; only his manners and movements, and the living force that dwelt in him, like fire in flint, betrayed the European. He was dressed in white drill, exquisitely made; his scarf and tie were of tender-coloured silks; on the thwart beside him there leaned a Winchester rifle.

‘Is the doctor on board?’ he cried as he came up. ‘Dr Symonds, I mean? You never heard of him? Nor yet of the Trinity Hall? Ah!’

He did not look surprised, seemed rather to affect it in politeness; but his eye rested on each of the three white men in succession with a sudden weight of curiosity that was almost savage. ‘Ah, THEN!’ said he, ‘there is some small mistake, no doubt, and I must ask you to what I am indebted for this pleasure?’

He was by this time on the deck, but he had the art to be quite unapproachable; the friendliest vulgarian, three parts drunk, would have known better than take liberties; and not one of the adventurers so much as offered to shake hands.

‘Well,’ said Davis, ‘I suppose you may call it an accident. We had heard of your island, and read that thing in the Directory about the PRIVATE REASONS, you see; so when we saw the lagoon reflected in the sky, we put her head for it at once, and so here we are.’

‘‘Ope we don’t intrude!’ said Huish.

The stranger looked at Huish with an air of faint surprise, and looked pointedly away again. It was hard to be more offensive in dumb show.

‘It may suit me, your coming here,’ he said. ‘My own schooner is overdue, and I may put something in your way in the meantime. Are you open to a charter?’

‘Well, I guess so,’ said Davis; ‘it depends.’

‘My name is Attwater,’ continued the stranger. ‘You, I presume, are the captain?’

‘Yes, sir. I am the captain of this ship: Captain Brown,’ was the reply.

‘Well, see ‘ere!’ said Huish, ‘better begin fair! ‘E’s skipper on deck right enough, but not below. Below, we’re all equal, all got a lay in the adventure; when it comes to business, I’m as good as ‘e; and what I say is, let’s go into the ‘ouse and have a lush, and talk it over among pals. We’ve some prime fizz,’ he said, and winked.

The presence of the gentleman lighted up like a candle the vulgarity of the clerk; and Herrick instinctively, as one shields himself from pain, made haste to interrupt.

‘My name is Hay,’ said he, ‘since introductions are going. We shall be very glad if you will step inside.’

Attwater leaned to him swiftly. ‘University man?’ said he.

‘Yes, Merton,’ said Herrick, and the next moment blushed scarlet at his indiscretion.

‘I am of the other lot,’ said Attwater: ‘Trinity Hall, Cambridge. I called my schooner after the old shop. Well! this is a queer place and company for us to meet in, Mr Hay,’ he pursued, with easy incivility to the others. ‘But do you bear out … I beg this gentleman’s pardon, I really did not catch his name.’

‘My name is ‘Uish, sir,’ returned the clerk, and blushed in turn.

‘Ah!’ said Attwater. And then turning again to Herrick, ‘Do you bear out Mr Whish’s description of your vintage? or was it only the unaffected poetry of his own nature bubbling up?’

Herrick was embarrassed; the silken brutality of their visitor made him blush; that he should be accepted as an equal, and the others thus pointedly ignored, pleased him in spite of himself, and then ran through his veins in a recoil of anger.

‘I don’t know,’ he said. ‘It’s only California; it’s good enough, I believe.’

Attwater seemed to make up his mind. ‘Well then, I’ll tell you what: you three gentlemen come ashore this evening and bring a basket of wine with you; I’ll try and find the food,’ he said. ‘And by the by, here is a question I should have asked you when I come on board: have you had smallpox?’

‘Personally, no,’ said Herrick. ‘But the schooner had it.’

‘Deaths?’ from Attwater.

‘Two,’ said Herrick.

‘Well, it is a dreadful sickness,’ said Attwater.

‘‘Ad you any deaths?’ asked Huish, ‘‘ere on the island?’

‘Twenty-nine,’ said Attwater. ‘Twenty-nine deaths and thirty-one cases, out of thirty-three souls upon the island. — That’s a strange way to calculate, Mr Hay, is it not? Souls! I never say it but it startles me.’

‘Oh, so that’s why everything’s deserted?’ said Huish.

‘That is why, Mr Whish,’ said Attwater; ‘that is why the house is empty and the graveyard full.’

‘Twenty-nine out of thirty-three!’ exclaimed Herrick, ‘Why, when it came to burying — or did you bother burying?’

‘Scarcely,’ said Attwater; ‘or there was one day at least when we gave up. There were five of the dead that morning, and thirteen of the dying, and no one able to go about except the sexton and myself. We held a council of war, took the… empty bottles… into the lagoon, and buried them.’ He looked over his shoulder, back at the bright water. ‘Well, so you’ll come to dinner, then? Shall we say half-past six. So good of you!’

His voice, in uttering these conventional phrases, fell at once into the false measure of society; and Herrick unconsciously followed the example.

‘I am sure we shall be very glad,’ he said. ‘At half-past six? Thank you
so very much.’

‘“For my voice has been tuned to the note of the gun

That startles the deep when the combat’s begun,”‘

quoted Attwater, with a smile, which instantly gave way to an air of funereal solemnity. ‘I shall particularly expect Mr Whish,’ he continued. ‘Mr Whish, I trust you understand the invitation?’

‘I believe you, my boy!’ replied the genial Huish.

‘That is right then; and quite understood, is it not?’ said Attwater. ‘Mr Whish and Captain Brown at six-thirty without fault — and you, Hay, at four sharp.’

And he called his boat.

During all this talk, a load of thought or anxiety had weighed upon the captain. There was no part for which nature had so liberally endowed him as that of the genial ship captain. But today he was silent and abstracted. Those who knew him could see that he hearkened close to every syllable, and seemed to ponder and try it in balances. It would have been hard to say what look there was, cold, attentive, and sinister, as of a man maturing plans, which still brooded over the unconscious guest; it was here, it was there, it was nowhere; it was now so little that Herrick chid himself for an idle fancy; and anon it was so gross and palpable that you could say every hair on the man’s head talked mischief.

He woke up now, as with a start. ‘You were talking of a charter,’ said he.

‘Was I?’ said Attwater. ‘Well, let’s talk of it no more at present.’

‘Your own schooner is overdue, I understand?’ continued the captain.

‘You understand perfectly, Captain Brown,’ said Attwater; ‘thirty-three days overdue at noon today.’

‘She comes and goes, eh? plies between here and...?’ hinted the captain.

‘Exactly; every four months; three trips in the year,’ said Attwater.

‘You go in her, ever?’ asked Davis.

‘No, one stops here,’ said Attwater, ‘one has plenty to attend to.’

‘Stop here, do you?’ cried Davis. ‘Say, how long?’

‘How long, O Lord,’ said Attwater with perfect, stern gravity. ‘But it does not seem so,’ he added, with a smile.

‘No, I dare say not,’ said Davis. ‘No, I suppose not. Not with all your gods about you, and in as snug a berth as this. For it is a pretty snug berth,’ said he, with a sweeping look.

‘The spot, as you are good enough to indicate, is not entirely intolerable,’ was the reply.

‘Shell, I suppose?’ said Davis.

‘Yes, there was shell,’ said Attwater.

‘This is a considerable big beast of a lagoon, sir,’ said the captain. ‘Was there a — was the fishing — would you call the fishing anyways GOOD?’

‘I don’t know that I would call it anyways anything,’ said Attwater, ‘if you put it to me direct.’

‘There were pearls too?’ said Davis.

‘Pearls, too,’ said Attwater.

‘Well, I give out!’ laughed Davis, and his laughter rang cracked like a false piece. ‘If you’re not going to tell, you’re not going to tell, and there’s an end to it.’

‘There can be no reason why I should affect the least degree of secrecy about my island,’ returned Attwater; ‘that came wholly to an end with your arrival; and I am sure, at any rate, that gentlemen like you and Mr Whish, I should have always been charmed to make perfectly at home. The point on which we are now differing — if you can call it a difference — is one of times and seasons. I have some information which you think I might impart, and I think not. Well, we’ll see tonight! By-by, Whish!’ He stepped into his boat and shoved off. ‘All understood, then?’ said he. ‘The captain and Mr Whish at six-thirty, and you, Hay, at four precise. You understand that, Hay? Mind, I take no denial. If you’re not there by the time named, there will be no banquet; no song, no supper, Mr Whish!’

White birds whisked in the air above, a shoal of parti-coloured fishes in the scarce denser medium below; between, like Mahomet’s coffin, the boat drew away briskly on the surface, and its shadow followed it over the glittering floor of the lagoon. Attwater looked steadily back over his shoulders as he sat; he did not once remove his eyes from the Farallone and the group on her quarter-deck beside the house, till his boat ground upon the pier. Thence, with an agile pace, he hurried ashore, and they saw his white clothes shining in the chequered dusk of the grove until the house received him.

The captain, with a gesture and a speaking countenance, called the adventurers into the cabin.

‘Well,’ he said to Herrick, when they were seated, ‘there’s one good job at least. He’s taken to you in earnest.’

‘Why should that be a good job?’ said Herrick.

‘Oh, you’ll see how it pans out presently,’ returned Davis. ‘You go ashore and stand in with him, that’s all! You’ll get lots of pointers; you can find out what he has, and what the charter is, and who’s the fourth man — for there's four of them, and we're only three.'

'And suppose I do, what next?' cried Herrick. 'Answer me that!'

'So I will, Robert Herrick,' said the captain. 'But first, let's see all clear. I guess you know,' he said with an imperious solemnity, 'I guess you know the bottom is out of this Farallone speculation? I guess you know it's RIGHT out? and if this old island hadn't been turned up right when it did, I guess you know where you and I and Huish would have been?'

'Yes, I know that,' said Herrick. 'No matter who's to blame, I know it. And what next?'

'No matter who's to blame, you know it, right enough,' said the captain, 'and I'm obliged to you for the reminder. Now here's this Attwater: what do you think of him?'

'I do not know,' said Herrick. 'I am attracted and repelled. He was insufferably rude to you.'

'And you, Huish?' said the captain.

Huish sat cleaning a favourite briar root; he scarce looked up from that engrossing task. 'Don't ast me what I think of him!' he said. 'There's a day comin', I pray Gawd, when I can tell it him myself.'

'Huish means the same as what I do,' said Davis. 'When that man came stepping around, and saying "Look here, I'm Attwater" — and you knew it was so, by God! — I sized him right straight up. Here's the real article, I said, and I don't like it; here's the real, first-rate, copper-bottomed aristocrat. 'AW' I DON'T KNOW YE, DO I? GOD DAMN YE, DID GOD MAKE YE?' No, that couldn't be nothing but genuine; a man got to be born to that, and notice! smart as champagne and hard as nails; no kind of a fool; no, SIR! not a pound of him! Well, what's he here upon this beastly island for? I said. HE'S not here collecting eggs. He's a palace at home, and powdered flunkies; and if he don't stay there, you bet he knows the reason why! Follow?'

'O yes, I 'ear you,' said Huish.

'He's been doing good business here, then,' continued the captain. 'For ten years, he's been doing a great business. It's pearl and shell, of course; there couldn't be nothing else in such a place, and no doubt the shell goes off regularly by this Trinity Hall, and the money for it straight into the bank, so that's no use to us. But what else is there? Is there nothing else he would be likely to keep here? Is there nothing else he would be bound to keep here? Yes, sir; the pearls! First, because they're too valuable to trust out of his hands. Second, because pearls want a lot of handling and matching; and the man who sells his pearls as they come in, one here, one there, instead of hanging back and holding up — well, that man's a fool, and it's not Attwater.'

'Likely,' said Huish, 'that's w'at it is; not proved, but likely.'

'It's proved,' said Davis bluntly.

'Suppose it was?' said Herrick. 'Suppose that was all so, and he had these pearls — a ten years' collection of them? — Suppose he had? There's my question.'

The captain drummed with his thick hands on the board in front of him; he looked steadily in Herrick's face, and Herrick as steadily looked upon the table and the pattering fingers; there was a gentle oscillation of the anchored ship, and a big patch of sunlight travelled to and fro between the one and the other.

'Hear me!' Herrick burst out suddenly.

'No, you better hear me first,' said Davis. 'Hear me and understand me. WE'VE got no use for that fellow, whatever you may have. He's your kind, he's not ours; he's took to you, and he's wiped his boots on me and Huish. Save him if you can!'

'Save him?' repeated Herrick.

'Save him, if you're able!' reiterated Davis, with a blow of his clenched fist. 'Go ashore, and talk him smooth; and if you get him and his pearls aboard, I'll spare him. If you don't, there's going to be a funeral. Is that so, Huish? does that suit you?'

'I ain't a forgiving man,' said Huish, 'but I'm not the sort to spoil business neither. Bring the bloke on board and bring his pearls along with him, and you can have it your own way; maroon him where you like — I'm agreeable.'

'Well, and if I can't?' cried Herrick, while the sweat streamed upon his face. 'You talk to me as if I was God Almighty, to do this and that! But if I can't?'

'My son,' said the captain, 'you better do your level best, or you'll see sights!'

'O yes,' said Huish. 'O crikey, yes!' He looked across at Herrick with a toothless smile that was shocking in its savagery; and his ear caught apparently by the trivial expression he had used, broke into a piece of the chorus of a comic song which he must have heard twenty years before in London: meaningless gibberish that, in that hour and place, seemed hateful as a blasphemy: 'Hikey, pikey, crikey, fikey, chillingawallaba dory.'

The captain suffered him to finish; his face was unchanged.

'The way things are, there's many a man that wouldn't let you go ashore,' he resumed. 'But I'm not that kind. I know you'd never go back on me, Herrick! Or if you choose to — go, and do it, and be damned!' he cried, and rose abruptly from the table.

He walked out of the house; and as he reached the door, turned and called Huish, suddenly and violently, like the barking of a dog. Huish followed, and Herrick remained alone in the cabin.

'Now, see here!' whispered Davis. 'I know that man. If you open your mouth to him again, you’ll ruin all.’

CHAPTER 8. BETTER ACQUAINTANCE

The boat was gone again, and already half-way to the Farallone, before Herrick turned and went unwillingly up the pier. From the crown of the beach, the figure-head confronted him with what seemed irony, her helmeted head tossed back, her formidable arm apparently hurling something, whether shell or missile, in the direction of the anchored schooner. She seemed a defiant deity from the island, coming forth to its threshold with a rush as of one about to fly, and perpetuated in that dashing attitude. Herrick looked up at her, where she towered above him head and shoulders, with singular feelings of curiosity and romance, and suffered his mind to travel to and fro in her life-history. So long she had been the blind conductress of a ship among the waves; so long she had stood here idle in the violent sun, that yet did not avail to blister her; and was even this the end of so many adventures? he wondered, or was more behind? And he could have found in his heart to regret that she was not a goddess, nor yet he a pagan, that he might have bowed down before her in that hour of difficulty.

When he now went forward, it was cool with the shadow of many well-grown palms; draughts of the dying breeze swung them together overhead; and on all sides, with a swiftness beyond dragon-flies or swallows, the spots of sunshine flitted, and hovered, and returned. Underfoot, the sand was fairly solid and quite level, and Herrick's steps fell there noiseless as in new-fallen snow. It bore the marks of having been once weeded like a garden alley at home; but the pestilence had done its work, and the weeds were returning. The buildings of the settlement showed here and there through the stems of the colonnade, fresh painted, trim and dandy, and all silent as the grave. Only, here and there in the crypt, there was a rustle and scurry and some crowing of poultry; and from behind the house with the verandahs, he saw smoke arise and heard the crackling of a fire.

The stone houses were nearest him upon his right. The first was locked; in the second, he could dimly perceive, through a window, a certain accumulation of pearl-shell piled in the far end; the third, which stood gaping open on the afternoon, seized on the mind of Herrick with its multiplicity and disorder of romantic things. Therein were cables, windlasses and blocks of every size and capacity; cabin windows and ladders; rusty tanks, a companion hutch; a binnacle with its brass mountings and its compass idly pointing, in the confusion and dusk of that shed, to a forgotten pole; ropes, anchors, harpoons, a blubber dipper of copper, green with years, a steering wheel, a tool chest with the vessel's name upon the top, the Asia: a whole curiosity-shop of sea curios, gross and solid, heavy to lift, ill to break, bound with brass and shod with iron. Two wrecks at the least must have contributed to this random heap of lumber; and as Herrick looked upon it, it seemed to him as if the two ships' companies were there on guard, and he heard the tread of feet and whisperings, and saw with the tail of his eye the commonplace ghosts of sailor men.

This was not merely the work of an aroused imagination, but had something sensible to go upon; sounds of a stealthy approach were no doubt audible; and while he still stood staring at the lumber, the voice of his host sounded suddenly, and with even more than the customary softness of enunciation, from behind.

'Junk,', it said, 'only old junk! And does Mr Hay find a parable?'

'I find at least a strong impression,' replied Herrick, turning quickly, lest he might be able to catch, on the face of the speaker, some commentary on the words.

Attwater stood in the doorway, which he almost wholly filled; his hands stretched above his head and grasping the architrave. He smiled when their eyes Met, but the expression was inscrutable.

'Yes, a powerful impression. You are like me; nothing so affecting as ships!' said he. 'The ruins of an empire would leave me frigid, when a bit of an old rail that an old shellback leaned on in the middle watch, would bring me up all standing. But come, let's see some more of the island. It's all sand and coral and palm trees; but there's a kind of a quaintness in the place.'

'I find it heavenly,' said Herrick, breathing deep, with head bared in the shadow.

'Ah, that's because you're new from sea,' said Attwater. 'I dare say, too, you can appreciate what one calls it. It's a lovely name. It has a flavour, it has a colour, it has a ring and fall to it; it's like its author — it's half Christian! Remember your first view of the island, and how it's only woods and water; and suppose you had asked somebody for the name, and he had answered — nemorosa Zacynthos!'

'Jam medio apparet fluctu!' exclaimed Herrick. 'Ye gods, yes, how good!'

'If it gets upon the chart, the skippers will make nice work of it,' said Attwater. 'But here, come and see the diving-shed.'

He opened a door, and Herrick saw a large display of apparatus neatly ordered: pumps and pipes, and the leaded boots, and the huge snouted helmets shining in rows along the wall; ten complete outfits.

'The whole eastern half of my lagoon is shallow, you must understand,' said Attwater; 'so we were able to get in the dress to great advantage. It paid beyond belief, and was a queer sight when they were at it, and these marine monsters' — tapping the nearest of the helmets — 'kept appearing and reappearing in the midst of the lagoon. Fond of parables?' he asked abruptly.

'O yes!' said Herrick.

'Well, I saw these machines come up dripping and go down again, and come up dripping and go down again, and all the while the fellow inside as dry as toast!' said Attwater; 'and I thought we all wanted a dress to go down into the world in, and come up scatheless. What do you think the name was?' he inquired.

'Self-conceit,' said Herrick.

'Ah, but I mean seriously!' said Attwater.

'Call it self-respect, then!' corrected Herrick, with a laugh.

'And why not Grace? Why not God's Grace, Hay?' asked Attwater. 'Why not the grace of your Maker and Redeemer, He who died for you, He who upholds you, He whom you daily crucify afresh? There is nothing here,' — striking on his bosom — 'nothing there' — smiting the wall — 'and nothing there' — stamping — 'nothing but God's Grace! We walk upon it, we breathe it; we live and die by it; it makes the nails and axles of the universe; and a puppy in pyjamas prefers self-conceit!' The huge dark man stood over against Herrick by the line of the divers' helmets, and seemed to swell and glow; and the next moment the life had gone from him. 'I beg your pardon,' said he; 'I see you don't believe in God?'

'Not in your sense, I am afraid,' said Herrick.

'I never argue with young atheists or habitual drunkards,' said Attwater flippantly. 'Let us go across the island to the outer beach.'

It was but a little way, the greatest width of that island scarce exceeding a furlong, and they walked gently. Herrick was like one in a dream. He had come there with a mind divided; come prepared to study that ambiguous and sneering mask, drag out the essential man from underneath, and act accordingly; decision being till then postponed. Iron cruelty, an iron insensibility to the suffering of others, the uncompromising pursuit of his own interests, cold culture, manners without humanity; these he had looked for, these he still thought he saw. But to find the whole machine thus glow with the reverberation of religious zeal, surprised him beyond words; and he laboured in vain, as he walked, to piece together into any kind of whole his odds and ends of knowledge — to adjust again into any kind of focus with itself, his picture of the man beside him.

'What brought you here to the South Seas?' he asked presently.

'Many things,' said Attwater. 'Youth, curiosity, romance, the love of the sea, and (it will surprise you to hear) an interest in missions. That has a good deal declined, which will surprise you less. They go the wrong way to work; they are too parsonish, too much of the old wife, and even the old apple wife. CLOTHES, CLOTHES, are their idea; but clothes are not Christianity, any more than they are the sun in heaven, or could take the place of it! They think a parsonage with roses, and church bells, and nice old women bobbing in the lanes, are part and parcel of religion. But religion is a savage thing, like the universe it illuminates; savage, cold, and bare, but infinitely strong.'

'And you found this island by an accident?' said Herrick.

'As you did!' said Attwater. 'And since then I have had a business, and a colony, and a mission of my own. I was a man of the world before I was a Christian; I'm a man of the world still, and I made my mission pay. No good ever came of coddling. A man has to stand up in God's sight and work up to his weight avoirdupois; then I'll talk to him, but not before. I gave these beggars what they wanted: a judge in Israel, the bearer of the sword and scourge; I was making a new people here; and behold, the angel of the Lord smote them and they were not!'

With the very uttering of the words, which were accompanied by a gesture, they came forth out of the porch of the palm wood by the margin of the sea and full in front of the sun which was near setting. Before them the surf broke slowly. All around, with an air of imperfect wooden things inspired with wicked activity, the crabs trundled and scuttled into holes. On the right, whither Attwater pointed and abruptly turned, was the cemetery of the island, a field of broken stones from the bigness of a child's hand to that of his head, diversified by many mounds of the same material, and walled by a rude rectangular enclosure. Nothing grew there but a shrub or two with some white flowers; nothing but the number of the mounds, and their disquieting shape, indicated the presence of the dead.

'The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep!'

quoted Attwater as he entered by the open gateway into that unholy close. 'Coral to coral, pebbles to pebbles,' he said, 'this has been the main scene of my activity in the South Pacific. Some were good, and some bad, and the majority (of course and always) null. Here was a fellow, now, that used to frisk like a dog; if you had called him he came like an arrow from a bow; if you had not, and he came unbidden, you should have seen the deprecating eye and the little intricate dancing step. Well, his trouble is over now, he has lain down with kings and councillors; the rest of his acts, are they not written in the book of the chronicles? That fellow was from Penrhyn; like all the Penrhyn islanders he was ill to manage; heady, jealous, violent: the man with the nose! He lies here quiet enough. And so they all lie.

"And darkness was the burier of the dead!"'

He stood, in the strong glow of the sunset, with bowed head; his voice sounded now sweet and now bitter with the varying sense.

'You loved these people?' cried Herrick, strangely touched.

'I?' said Attwater. 'Dear no! Don't think me a philanthropist. I dislike men, and hate women. If I like the islands at all, it is because you see them here plucked of their lendings, their dead birds and cocked hats, their petticoats and coloured hose. Here was one I liked though,' and he set his foot upon a mound. 'He was a fine savage fellow; he had a dark soul; yes, I liked this one. I am fanciful,' he added, looking hard at Herrick, 'and I take fads. I like you.'

Herrick turned swiftly and looked far away to where the clouds were beginning to troop together and amass themselves round the obsequies of day. 'No one can like me,' he said.

'You are wrong there,' said the other, 'as a man usually is about himself. You are attractive, very attractive.'

'It is not me,' said Herrick; 'no one can like me. If you knew how I despised myself — and why!' His voice rang out in the quiet graveyard.

'I knew that you despised yourself,' said Attwater. 'I saw the blood come into your face today when you remembered Oxford. And I could have blushed for you myself, to see a man, a gentleman, with these two vulgar wolves.'

Herrick faced him with a thrill. 'Wolves?' he repeated.

'I said wolves and vulgar wolves,' said Attwater. 'Do you know that today, when I came on board, I trembled?'

'You concealed it well,' stammered Herrick.

'A habit of mine,' said Attwater. 'But I was afraid, for all that: I was afraid of the two wolves.' He raised his hand slowly. 'And now, Hay, you poor lost puppy, what do you do with the two wolves?'

'What do I do? I don't do anything,' said Herrick. 'There is nothing wrong; all is above board; Captain Brown is a good soul; he is a... he is...' The phantom voice of Davis called in his ear: 'There's going to be a funeral' and the sweat burst forth and streamed on his brow. 'He is a family man,' he resumed again, swallowing; 'he has children at home — and a wife.'

'And a very nice man?' said Attwater. 'And so is Mr Whish, no doubt?'

'I won't go so far as that,' said Herrick. 'I do not like Huish. And yet... he has his merits too.'

'And, in short, take them for all in all, as good a ship's company as one would ask?' said Attwater.

'O yes,' said Herrick, 'quite.'

'So then we approach the other point of why you despise yourself?' said Attwater.

'Do we not all despise ourselves?' cried Herrick. 'Do not you?'

'Oh, I say I do. But do I?' said Attwater. 'One thing I know at least: I never gave a cry like yours. Hay! it came from a bad conscience! Ah, man, that poor diving dress of self-conceit is sadly tattered! Today, now, while the sun sets, and here in this burying place of brown innocents, fall on your knees and cast your sins and sorrows on the Redeemer. Hay — '

'Not Hay!' interrupted the other, strangling. 'Don't call me that! I mean... For God's sake, can't you see I'm on the rack?'

'I see it, I know it, I put and keep you there, my fingers are on the screws!' said Attwater. 'Please God, I will bring a penitent this night before His throne. Come, come to the mercy-seat! He waits to be gracious, man — waits to be gracious!'

He spread out his arms like a crucifix, his face shone with the brightness of a seraph's; in his voice, as it rose to the last word, the tears seemed ready.

Herrick made a vigorous call upon himself. 'Attwater,' he said, 'you push me beyond bearing. What am I to do? I do not believe. It is living truth to you; to me, upon my conscience, only folk-lore. I do not believe there is any form of words under heaven by which I can lift the burthen from my shoulders. I must stagger on to the end with the pack of my responsibility; I cannot shift it; do you suppose I would not, if I thought I could? I cannot — cannot — cannot — and let that suffice.'

The rapture was all gone from Artwater's countenance; the dark apostle had disappeared; and in his place there stood an easy, sneering gentleman, who took off his hat and bowed. It was pertly done, and the blood burned in Herrick's face.

'What do you mean by that?' he cried.

'Well, shall we go back to the house?' said Attwater. 'Our guests will soon be due.'

Herrick stood his ground a moment with clenched fists and teeth; and as he so stood, the fact of his errand there slowly swung clear in front of him, like the moon out of clouds. He had come to lure that man on board; he was failing, even if it could be said that he had tried; he was sure to fail now, and knew it, and knew it was better so. And what was to be next?

With a groan he turned to follow his host, who was standing with polite smile, and instantly and somewhat obsequiously led the way in the now darkened colonnade of palms. There they went in silence, the earth gave up richly of her perfume, the air tasted warm and aromatic in the nostrils; and from a great way forward in the wood, the brightness of lights and fire marked out the house of Attwater.

Herrick meanwhile resolved and resisted an immense temptation to go up, to touch him on the arm and breathe a word in his ear: 'Beware, they are going to murder you.' There would be one life saved; but what of the two others? The three lives went up and down before him like buckets in a well, or like the scales of balances. It had come to a choice, and one that must be speedy. For certain invaluable minutes, the wheels of life ran before him, and he could still divert them with a touch to the one side or the other, still choose who was to live and who was to die. He considered the men. Attwater intrigued, puzzled, dazzled, enchanted and revolted him; alive, he seemed but a doubtful good; and the thought of him lying dead was so unwelcome that it pursued him, like a vision, with every circumstance of colour and sound. Incessantly, he had before him the image of that great mass of man stricken down in varying attitudes and with varying wounds; fallen prone, fallen supine, fallen on his side; or clinging to a doorpost with the changing face and the relaxing fingers of the death-agony. He heard the click of the trigger, the thud of the ball, the cry of the victim; he saw the blood flow. And this building up of circumstance was like a consecration of the man, till he seemed to walk in sacrificial fillets. Next he considered Davis, with his thick-fingered, coarse-grained, oat-bread commonness of nature, his indomitable valour and mirth in the old days of their starvation, the endearing blend of his faults and virtues, the sudden shining forth of a tenderness that lay too deep for tears; his children, Adar and her bowel complaint, and Adar's doll. No, death could not be suffered to approach that head even in fancy; with a general heat and a bracing of his muscles, it was borne in on Herrick that Adar's father would find in him a son to the death. And even Huish showed a little in that sacredness; by the tacit adoption of daily life they were become brothers; there was an implied bond of loyalty in their cohabitation of the ship and their passed miseries, to which Herrick must be a little true or wholly dishonoured. Horror of sudden death for horror of sudden death, there was here no hesitation possible: it must be Attwater. And no sooner was the thought formed (which was a sentence) than his whole mind of man ran in a panic to the other side: and when he looked within himself, he was aware only of turbulence and inarticulate outcry.

In all this there was no thought of Robert Herrick. He had complied with the ebb-tide in man's affairs, and the tide had carried him away; he heard already the roaring of the maelstrom that must hurry him under. And in his bedevilled and dishonoured soul there was no thought of self.

For how long he walked silent by his companion Herrick had no guess. The clouds rolled suddenly away; the orgasm was over; he found himself placid with the placidity of despair; there returned to him the power of commonplace speech; and he heard with surprise his own voice say: 'What a lovely evening!'

'Is it not?' said Attwater. 'Yes, the evenings here would be very pleasant if one had anything to do. By day, of course, one can shoot.'

'You shoot?' asked Herrick.

'Yes, I am what you would call a fine shot,' said Attwater. 'It is faith; I believe my balls will go true; if I were to miss once, it would spoil me for nine months.'

'You never miss, then?' said Herrick.

'Not unless I mean to,' said Attwater. 'But to miss nicely is the art. There was an old king one knew in the western islands, who used to empty a Winchester all round a man, and stir his hair or nick a rag out of his clothes with every ball except the last; and that went plump between the eyes. It was pretty practice.'

'You could do that?' asked Herrick, with a sudden chill.

'Oh, I can do anything,' returned the other. 'You do not understand: what must be, must.'

They were now come near to the back part of the house. One of the men was engaged about the cooking fire, which burned with the clear, fierce, essential radiance of cocoanut shells. A fragrance of strange meats was in the air. All round in the verandahs lamps were lighted, so that the place shone abroad in the dusk of the trees with many complicated patterns of shadow.

'Come and wash your hands,' said Attwater, and led the way into a clean, matted room with a cot bed, a safe, or shelf or two of books in a glazed case, and an iron washing-stand. Presently he cried in the native, and there appeared for a moment in the doorway a plump and pretty young woman with a clean towel.

'Hullo!' cried Herrick, who now saw for the first time the fourth survivor of the pestilence, and was startled by the recollection of the captain's orders.

'Yes,' said Attwater, 'the whole colony lives about the house, what's left of it. We are all afraid of devils, if you please! and Taniera and she sleep in the front parlour, and the other boy on the verandah.'

'She is pretty,' said Herrick.

'Too pretty,' said Attwater. 'That was why I had her married. A man never knows when he may be inclined to be a fool about women; so when we were left alone, I had the pair of them to the chapel and performed the ceremony. She made a lot of fuss. I do not take at all the romantic view of marriage,' he explained.

'And that strikes you as a safeguard?' asked Herrick with amazement.

'Certainly. I am a plain man and very literal. WHOM GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER, are the words, I fancy. So one married them, and respects the marriage,' said Attwater.

'Ah!' said Herrick.

'You see, I may look to make an excellent marriage when I go home,' began Attwater, confidentially. 'I am rich. This safe alone' —

laying his hand upon it — 'will be a moderate fortune, when I have the time to place the pearls upon the market. Here are ten years' accumulation from a lagoon, where I have had as many as ten divers going all day long; and I went further than people usually do in these waters, for I rotted a lot of shell, and did splendidly. Would you like to see them?'

This confirmation of the captain's guess hit Herrick hard, and he contained himself with difficulty. 'No, thank you, I think not,' said he. 'I do not care for pearls. I am very indifferent to all these...'

'Gewgaws?' suggested Attwater. 'And yet I believe you ought to cast an eye on my collection, which is really unique, and which — oh! it is the case with all of us and everything about us! — hangs by a hair. Today it groweth up and flourisheth; tomorrow it is cut down and cast into the oven. Today it is here and together in this safe; tomorrow — tonight! — it may be scattered. Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.'

'I do not understand you,' said Herrick.

'Not?' said Attwater.

'You seem to speak in riddles,' said Herrick, unsteadily. 'I do not understand what manner of man you are, nor what you are driving at.'

Attwater stood with his hands upon his hips, and his head bent forward. 'I am a fatalist,' he replied, 'and just now (if you insist on it) an experimentalist. Talking of which, by the bye, who painted out the schooner's name?' he said, with mocking softness, 'because, do you know? one thinks it should be done again. It can still be partly read; and whatever is worth doing, is surely worth doing well. You think with me? That is so nice! Well, shall we step on the verandah? I have a dry sherry that I would like your opinion of.'

Herrick followed him forth to where, under the light of the hanging lamps, the table shone with napery and crystal; followed him as the criminal goes with the hangman, or the sheep with the butcher; took the sherry mechanically, drank it, and spoke mechanical words of praise. The object of his terror had become suddenly inverted; till then he had seen Attwater trussed and gagged, a helpless victim, and had longed to run in and save him; he saw him now tower up mysterious and menacing, the angel of the Lord's wrath, armed with knowledge and threatening judgment. He set down his glass again, and was surprised to see it empty.

'You go always armed?' he said, and the next moment could have plucked his tongue out.

'Always,' said Attwater. 'I have been through a mutiny here; that was one of my incidents of missionary life.'

And just then the sound of voices reached them, and looking forth from the verandah they saw Huish and the captain drawing near.

CHAPTER 9. THE DINNER PARTY

They sat down to an island dinner, remarkable for its variety and excellence; turtle soup and steak, fish, fowls, a sucking pig, a cocoanut salad, and sprouting cocoanut roasted for dessert. Not a tin had been opened; and save for the oil and vinegar in the salad, and some green spears of onion which Attwater cultivated and plucked with his own hand, not even the condiments were European. Sherry, hock, and claret succeeded each other, and the Farallone champagne brought up the rear with the dessert.

It was plain that, like so many of the extremely religious in the days before teetotalism, Attwater had a dash of the epicure. For such characters it is softening to eat well; doubly so to have designed and had prepared an excellent meal for others; and the manners of their host were agreeably mollified in consequence.

A cat of huge growth sat on his shoulders purring, and occasionally, with a deft paw, capturing a morsel in the air. To a cat he might be likened himself, as he lolled at the head of his table, dealing out attentions and innuendoes, and using the velvet and the claw indifferently. And both Huish and the captain fell progressively under the charm of his hospitable freedom.

Over the third guest, the incidents of the dinner may be said to have passed for long unheeded. Herrick accepted all that was offered him, ate and drank without tasting, and heard without comprehension. His mind was singly occupied in contemplating the horror of the circumstances in which he sat. What Attwater knew, what the captain designed, from which side treachery was to be first expected, these were the ground of his thoughts. There were times when he longed to throw down the table and flee into the night. And even that was debarred him; to do anything, to say anything, to move at all, were only to precipitate the barbarous tragedy; and he sat spellbound, eating with white lips. Two of his companions observed him narrowly, Attwater with raking, sidelong glances that did not interrupt his talk, the captain with a heavy and anxious consideration.

‘Well, I must say this sherry is a really prime article,’ said Huish. ‘‘Ow much does it stand you in, if it’s a fair question?’

‘A hundred and twelve shillings in London, and the freight to Valparaiso, and on again,’ said Attwater. ‘It strikes one as really not a bad fluid.’

‘A ‘undred and twelve!’ murmured the clerk, relishing the wine and the figures in a common ecstasy: ‘O my!’

‘So glad you like it,’ said Attwater. ‘Help yourself, Mr Whish, and keep the bottle by you.’

‘My friend’s name is Huish and not Whish, sit,’ said the captain with a flush.

‘I beg your pardon, I am sure. Huish and not Whish, certainly,’ said Attwater. ‘I was about to say that I have still eight dozen,’ he added, fixing the captain with his eye.

‘Eight dozen what?’ said Davis.

‘Sherry,’ was the reply. ‘Eight dozen excellent sherry. Why, it seems almost worth it in itself; to a man fond of wine.’

The ambiguous words struck home to guilty consciences, and Huish and the captain sat up in their places and regarded him with a scare.

‘Worth what?’ said Davis.

‘A hundred and twelve shillings,’ replied Attwater.

The captain breathed hard for a moment. He reached out far and wide to find any coherency in these remarks; then, with a great effort, changed the subject.

‘I allow we are about the first white men upon this island, sir,’ said he.

Attwater followed him at once, and with entire gravity, to the new ground. ‘Myself and Dr Symonds excepted, I should say the only ones,’ he returned. ‘And yet who can tell? In the course of the ages someone may have lived here, and we sometimes think that someone must. The cocoa palms grow all round the island, which is scarce like nature’s planting. We found besides, when we landed, an unmistakable cairn upon the beach; use unknown; but probably erected in the hope of gratifying some mumbo jumbo whose very name is forgotten, by some thick-witted gentry whose very bones are lost. Then the island (witness the Directory) has been twice reported; and since my tenancy, we have had two wrecks, both derelict. The rest is conjecture.’

‘Dr Symonds is your partner, I guess?’ said Davis.

‘A dear fellow, Symonds! How he would regret it, if he knew you had been here!’ said Attwater.

‘‘E’s on the Trinity ‘All, ain’t he?’ asked Huish.

‘And if you could tell me where the Trinity ‘All was, you would confer a favour, Mr Whish!’ was the reply.

‘I suppose she has a native crew?’ said Davis.

‘Since the secret has been kept ten years, one would suppose she had,’ replied Attwater.

‘Well, now, see ‘ere!’ said Huish. ‘You have everything about you in no end style, and no mistake, but I tell you it wouldn’t do for me. Too much of “the old rustic bridge by the mill”; too retired, by ‘alf. Give me the sound of Bow Bells!’

‘You must not think it was always so,’ replied Attwater, ‘This was once a busy shore, although now, hark! you can hear the solitude. I find it stimulating. And talking of the sound of bells, kindly follow a little experiment of mine in silence.' There was a silver bell at his right hand to call the servants; he made them a sign to stand still, struck the bell with force, and leaned eagerly forward. The note rose clear and strong; it rang out clear and far into the night and over the deserted island; it died into the distance until there only lingered in the porches of the ear a vibration that was sound no longer. 'Empty houses, empty sea, solitary beaches!' said Attwater. 'And yet God hears the bell! And yet we sit in this verandah on a lighted stage with all heaven for spectators! And you call that solitude?'

There followed a bar of silence, during which the captain sat mesmerised.

Then Attwater laughed softly. 'These are the diversions of a lonely, man,' he resumed, 'and possibly not in good taste. One tells oneself these little fairy tales for company. If there SHOULD happen to be anything in folk-lore, Mr Hay? But here comes the claret. One does not offer you Lafitte, captain, because I believe it is all sold to the railroad dining cars in your great country; but this Brine-Mouton is of a good year, and Mr Whish will give me news of it.'

'That's a queer idea of yours!' cried the captain, bursting with a sigh from the spell that had bound him. 'So you mean to tell me now, that you sit here evenings and ring up... well, ring on the angels... by yourself?'

'As a matter of historic fact, and since you put it directly, one does not,' said Attwater. 'Why ring a bell, when there flows out from oneself and everything about one a far more momentous silence? the least beat of my heart and the least thought in my mind echoing into eternity for ever and for ever and for ever.'

'O look 'ere,' said Huish, 'turn down the lights at once, and the Band of 'Ope will oblige! This ain't a spiritual seance.'

'No folk-lore about Mr Whish — I beg your pardon, captain: Huish not Whish, of course,' said Attwater.

As the boy was filling Huish's glass, the bottle escaped from his hand and was shattered, and the wine spilt on the verandah floor. Instant grimness as of death appeared on the face of Attwater; he smote the bell imperiously, and the two brown natives fell into the attitude of attention and stood mute and trembling. There was just a moment of silence and hard looks; then followed a few savage words in the native; and, upon a gesture of dismissal, the service proceeded as before.

None of the party had as yet observed upon the excellent bearing of the two men. They were dark, undersized, and well set up; stepped softly, waited deftly, brought on the wines and dishes at a look, and their eyes attended studiously on their master.

‘Where do you get your labour from anyway?’ asked Davis.

‘Ah, where not?’ answered Attwater.

‘Not much of a soft job, I suppose?’ said the captain.

‘If you will tell me where getting labour is!’ said Attwater with a shrug. ‘And of course, in our case, as we could name no destination, we had to go far and wide and do the best we could. We have gone as far west as the Kingsmills and as far south as Rapa-iti. Pity Symonds isn’t here! He is full of yarns. That was his part, to collect them. Then began mine, which was the educational.’

‘You mean to run them?’ said Davis.

‘Ay! to run them,’ said Attwater.

‘Wait a bit,’ said Davis, ‘I’m out of my depth. How was this? Do you mean to say you did it single-handed?’

‘One did it single-handed,’ said Attwater, ‘because there was nobody to help one.’

‘By God, but you must be a holy terror!’ cried the captain, in a glow of admiration.

‘One does one’s best,’ said Attwater.

‘Well, now!’ said Davis, ‘I have seen a lot of driving in my time and been counted a good driver myself; I fought my way, third mate, round the Cape Horn with a push of packet rats that would have turned the devil out of hell and shut the door on him; and I tell you, this racket of Mr Attwater’s takes the cake. In a ship, why, there ain’t nothing to it! You’ve got the law with you, that’s what does it. But put me down on this blame’ beach alone, with nothing but a whip and a mouthful of bad words, and ask me to... no, SIR! it’s not good enough! I haven’t got the sand for that!’ cried Davis. ‘It’s the law behind,’ he added; ‘it’s the law does it, every time!’

‘The beak ain’t as black as he’s sometimes pynted,’ observed Huish, humorously.

‘Well, one got the law after a fashion,’ said Attwater. ‘One had to be a number of things. It was sometimes rather a bore.’

‘I should smile!’ said Davis. ‘Rather lively, I should think!’

‘I dare say we mean the same thing,’ said Attwater. ‘However, one way or another, one got it knocked into their heads that they MUST work, and they DID... until the Lord took them!’

“Ope you made ‘em jump,’ said Huish.

‘When it was necessary, Mr Whish, I made them jump,’ said Attwater.

‘You bet you did,’ cried the captain. He was a good deal flushed, but not so much with wine as admiration; and his eyes drank in the huge proportions of the other with delight. ‘You bet you did, and you bet that I can see you doing it! By God, you’re a man, and you can say I said so.’

'Too good of you, I'm sure,' said Attwater.

'Did you — did you ever have crime here?' asked Herrick, breaking his silence with a pungent voice.

'Yes,' said Attwater, 'we did.'

'And how did you handle that, sir?' cried the eager captain.

'Well, you see, it was a queer case,' replied Attwater, 'it was a case that would have puzzled Solomon. Shall I tell it you? yes?'

The captain rapturously accepted.

'Well,' drawled Attwater, 'here is what it was. I dare say you know two types of natives, which may be called the obsequious and the sullen? Well, one had them, the types themselves, detected in the fact; and one had them together. Obsequiousness ran out of the first like wine out of a bottle, sullenness congested in the second. Obsequiousness was all smiles; he ran to catch your eye, he loved to gabble; and he had about a dozen words of beach English, and an eighth-of-an-inch veneer of Christianity. Sullens was industrious; a big down-looking bee. When he was spoken to, he answered with a black look and a shrug of one shoulder, but the thing would be done. I don't give him to you for a model of manners; there was nothing showy about Sullens; but he was strong and steady, and ungraciously obedient. Now Sullens got into trouble; no matter how; the regulations of the place were broken, and he was punished accordingly — without effect. So, the next day, and the next, and the day after, till I began to be weary of the business, and Sullens (I am afraid) particularly so. There came a day when he was in fault again, for the — oh, perhaps the thirtieth time; and he rolled a dull eye upon me, with a spark in it, and appeared to speak. Now the regulations of the place are formal upon one point: we allow no explanations; none are received, none allowed to be offered. So one stopped him instantly; but made a note of the circumstance. The next day, he was gone from the settlement. There could be nothing more annoying; if the labour took to running away, the fishery was wrecked. There are sixty miles of this island, you see, all in length like the Queen's Highway; the idea of pursuit in such a place was a piece of single-minded childishness, which one did not entertain. Two days later, I made a discovery; it came in upon me with a flash that Sullens had been unjustly punished from beginning to end, and the real culprit throughout had been Obsequiousness. The native who talks, like the woman who hesitates, is lost. You set him talking and lying; and he talks, and lies, and watches your face to see if he has pleased you; till at last, out comes the truth! It came out of Obsequiousness in the regular course. I said nothing to him; I dismissed him; and late as it was, for it was already night, set off to look for Sullens. I had not far to go: about two hundred yards up the island, the moon showed him to me. He was hanging in a cocoa palm

— I'm not botanist enough to tell you how — but it's the way, in nine cases out of ten, these natives commit suicide. His tongue was out, poor devil, and the birds had got at him; I spare you details, he was an ugly sight! I gave the business six good hours of thinking in this verandah. My justice had been made a fool of; I don't suppose that I was ever angrier. Next day, I had the conch sounded and all hands out before sunrise. One took one's gun, and led the way, with Obsequiousness. He was very talkative; the beggar supposed that all was right now he had confessed; in the old schoolboy phrase, he was plainly 'sucking up' to me; full of protestations of goodwill and good behaviour; to which one answered one really can't remember what. Presently the tree came in sight, and the hanged man. They all burst out lamenting for their comrade in the island way, and Obsequiousness was the loudest of the mourners. He was quite genuine; a noxious creature, without any consciousness of guilt. Well, presently — to make a long story short — one told him to go up the tree. He stared a bit, looked at one with a trouble in his eye, and had rather a sickly smile; but went. He was obedient to the last; he had all the pretty virtues, but the truth was not in him. So soon as he was up, he looked down, and there was the rifle covering him; and at that he gave a whimper like a dog. You could bear a pin drop; no more keening now. There they all crouched upon the ground, with bulging eyes; there was he in the tree top, the colour of the lead; and between was the dead man, dancing a bit in the air. He was obedient to the last, recited his crime, recommended his soul to God. And then...'

Attwater paused, and Herrick, who had been listening attentively, made a convulsive movement which upset his glass.

'And then?' said the breathless captain.

'Shot,' said Attwater. 'They came to ground together.'

Herrick sprang to his feet with a shriek and an insensate gesture.

'It was a murder,' he screamed. 'A cold-hearted, bloody-minded murder! You monstrous being! Murderer and hypocrite — murderer and hypocrite — murderer and hypocrite — ' he repeated, and his tongue stumbled among the words.

The captain was by him in a moment. 'Herrick!' he cried, 'behave yourself! Here, don't be a blame' fool!'

Herrick struggled in his embrace like a frantic child, and suddenly bowing his face in his hands, choked into a sob, the first of many, which now convulsed his body silently, and now jerked from him indescribable and meaningless sounds.

'Your friend appears over-excited,' remarked Attwater, sitting unmoved but all alert at table.

'It must be the wine,' replied the captain. 'He ain't no drinking man, you see. I — I think I'll take him away. A walk'll sober him up, I guess.’

He led him without resistance out of the verandah and into the night, in which they soon melted; but still for some time, as they drew away, his comfortable voice was to be heard soothing and remonstrating, and Herrick answering, at intervals, with the mechanical noises of hysteria.

‘‘E’s like a bloomin’ poultry yard!’ observed Huish, helping himself to wine (of which he spilled a good deal) with gentlemanly ease. ‘A man should learn to beyave at table,’ he added.

‘Rather bad form, is it not?’ said Attwater. ‘Well, well, we are left tete-a-tete. A glass of wine with you, Mr Whish!’

CHAPTER 10. THE OPEN DOOR

The captain and Herrick meanwhile turned their back upon the lights in Attwater's verandah, and took a direction towards the pier and the beach of the lagoon.

The isle, at this hour, with its smooth floor of sand, the pillared roof overhead, and the prevalent illumination of the lamps, wore an air of unreality like a deserted theatre or a public garden at midnight. A man looked about him for the statues and tables. Not the least air of wind was stirring among the palms, and the silence was emphasised by the continuous clamour of the surf from the seashore, as it might be of traffic in the next street.

Still talking, still soothing him, the captain hurried his patient on, brought him at last to the lagoon-side, and leading him down the beach, laved his head and face with the tepid water. The paroxysm gradually subsided, the sobs became less convulsive and then ceased; by an odd but not quite unnatural conjunction, the captain's soothing current of talk died away at the same time and by proportional steps, and the pair remained sunk in silence. The lagoon broke at their feet in petty wavelets, and with a sound as delicate as a whisper; stars of all degrees looked down on their own images in that vast mirror; and the more angry colour of the Farallone's riding lamp burned in the middle distance. For long they continued to gaze on the scene before them, and hearken anxiously to the rustle and tinkle of that miniature surf, or the more distant and loud reverberations from the outer coast. For long speech was denied them; and when the words came at last, they came to both simultaneously. 'Say, Herrick...'the captain was beginning.

But Herrick, turning swiftly towards his companion, bent him down with the eager cry: 'Let's up anchor, captain, and to sea!'

'Where to, my son?' said the captain. 'Up anchor's easy saying. But where to?'

'To sea,' responded Herrick. 'The sea's big enough! To sea — away from this dreadful island and that, oh! that sinister man!'

'Oh, we'll see about that,' said Davis. 'You brace up, and we'll see about that. You're all run down, that's what's wrong with you; you're all nerves, like Jemimar; you've got to brace up good and be yourself again, and then we'll talk.'

'To sea,' reiterated Herrick, 'to sea tonight — now — this moment!'

'It can't be, my son,' replied the captain firmly. 'No ship of mine puts to sea without provisions, you can take that for settled.'

'You don't seem to understand,' said Herrick. 'The whole thing is over, I tell you. There is nothing to do here, when he knows all. That man there with the cat knows all; can't you take it in?'

'All what?' asked the captain, visibly discomposed. 'Why, he received us like a perfect gentleman and treated us real handsome, until you began with your foolery — and I must say I seen men shot for less, and nobody sorry! What more do you expect anyway?'

Herrick rocked to and fro upon the sand, shaking his head.

'Guying us,' he said, 'he was guying us — only guying us; it's all we're good for.'

'There was one queer thing, to be sure,' admitted the captain, with a misgiving of the voice; 'that about the sherry. Damned if I caught on to that. Say, Herrick, you didn't give me away?'

'Oh! give you away!' repeated Herrick with weary, querulous scorn. 'What was there to give away? We're transparent; we've got rascal branded on us: detected rascal — detected rascal! Why, before he came on board, there was the name painted out, and he saw the whole thing. He made sure we would kill him there and then, and stood guying you and Huish on the chance. He calls that being frightened! Next he had me ashore; a fine time I had! THE TWO WOLVES, he calls you and Huish. — WHAT IS THE PUPPY DOING WITH THE TWO WOLVES? he asked. He showed me his pearls; he said they might be dispersed before morning, and ALL HUNG BY A HAIr — and smiled as he said it, such a smile! O, it's no use, I tell you! He knows all, he sees through all; we only make him laugh with our pretences — he looks at us and laughs like God!'

There was a silence. Davis stood with contorted brows, gazing into the night.

'The pearls?' he said suddenly. 'He showed them to you? he has them?'

'No, he didn't show them; I forgot: only the safe they were in,' said Herrick. 'But you'll never get them!'

'I've two words to say to that,' said the captain.

'Do you think he would have been so easy at table, unless he was prepared?' cried Herrick. 'The servants were both armed. He was armed himself; he always is; he told me. You will never deceive his vigilance. Davis, I know it! It's all up; all up. There's nothing for it, there's nothing to be done: all gone: life, honour, love. Oh, my God, my God, why was I born?'

Another pause followed upon this outburst.

The captain put his hands to his brow.

'Another thing!' he broke out. 'Why did he tell you all this? Seems like madness to me!'

Herrick shook his head with gloomy iteration. 'You wouldn't understand if I were to tell you,' said he.

'I guess I can understand any blame' thing that you can tell me,' said the captain.

‘Well, then, he’s a fatalist,’ said Herrick.

‘What’s that, a fatalist?’ said Davis.

‘Oh, it’s a fellow that believes a lot of things,’ said Herrick, ‘believes that his bullets go true; believes that all falls out as God chooses, do as you like to prevent it; and all that.’

‘Why, I guess I believe right so myself,’ said Davis.

‘You do?’ said Herrick.

‘You bet I do!’ says Davis.

Herrick shrugged his shoulders. ‘Well, you must be a fool,’ said he, and he leaned his head upon his knees.

The captain stood biting his hands.

‘There’s one thing sure,’ he said at last. ‘I must get Huish out of that. HE’S not fit to hold his end up with a man like you describe.’

And he turned to go away. The words had been quite simple; not so the tone; and the other was quick to catch it.

‘Davis!’ he cried, ‘no! Don’t do it. Spare ME, and don’t do it — spare yourself, and leave it alone — for God’s sake, for your children’s sake!’

His voice rose to a passionate shrillness; another moment, and he might be overheard by their not distant victim. But Davis turned on him with a savage oath and gesture; and the miserable young man rolled over on his face on the sand, and lay speechless and helpless.

The captain meanwhile set out rapidly for Attwater’s house. As he went, he considered with himself eagerly, his thoughts racing. The man had understood, he had mocked them from the beginning; he would teach him to make a mockery of John Davis! Herrick thought him a god; give him a second to aim in, and the god was overthrown. He chuckled as he felt the butt of his revolver. It should be done now, as he went in. From behind? It was difficult to get there. From across the table? No, the captain preferred to shoot standing, so as you could be sure to get your hand upon your gun. The best would be to summon Huish, and when Attwater stood up and turned — ah, then would be the moment. Wrapped in his ardent prefiguration of events, the captain posted towards the house with his head down.

‘Hands up! Halt!’ cried the voice of Attwater.

And the captain, before he knew what he was doing, had obeyed. The surprise was complete and irremediable. Coming on the top crest of his murderous intentions, he had walked straight into an ambuscade, and now stood, with his hands impotently lifted, staring at the verandah.

The party was now broken up. Attwater leaned on a post, and kept Davis covered with a Winchester. One of the servants was hard by with a second at the port arms, leaning a little forward, round-eyed with eager expectancy. In the open space at the head of the stair, Huish was partly supported by the other native; his face wreathed in meaningless smiles, his mind seemingly sunk in the contemplation of an unlighted cigar.

'Well,' said Attwater, 'you seem to me to be a very twopenny pirate!'

The captain uttered a sound in his throat for which we have no name; rage choked him.

'I am going to give you Mr Whish — or the wine-sop that remains of him,' continued Attwater. 'He talks a great deal when he drinks, Captain Davis of the Sea Ranger. But I have quite done with him — and return the article with thanks. Now,' he cried sharply. 'Another false movement like that, and your family will have to deplore the loss of an invaluable parent; keep strictly still, Davis.'

Attwater said a word in the native, his eye still undeviatingly fixed on the captain; and the servant thrust Huish smartly forward from the brink of the stair. With an extraordinary simultaneous dispersion of his members, that gentleman bounded forth into space, struck the earth, ricocheted, and brought up with his arms about a palm. His mind was quite a stranger to these events; the expression of anguish that deformed his countenance at the moment of the leap was probably mechanical; and he suffered these convulsions in silence; clung to the tree like an infant; and seemed, by his dips, to suppose himself engaged in the pastime of bobbing for apples. A more finely sympathetic mind or a more observant eye might have remarked, a little in front of him on the sand, and still quite beyond reach, the unlighted cigar.

'There is your Whitechapel carrion!' said Attwater. 'And now you might very well ask me why I do not put a period to you at once, as you deserve. I will tell you why, Davis. It is because I have nothing to do with the Sea Ranger and the people you drowned, or the Farallone and the champagne that you stole. That is your account with God, He keeps it, and He will settle it when the clock strikes. In my own case, I have nothing to go on but suspicion, and I do not kill on suspicion, not even vermin like you. But understand! if ever I see any of you again, it is another matter, and you shall eat a bullet. And now take yourself off. March! and as you value what you call your life, keep your hands up as you go!'

The captain remained as he was, his hands up, his mouth open: mesmerised with fury.

'March!' said Attwater. 'One — two — three!'

And Davis turned and passed slowly away. But even as he went, he was meditating a prompt, offensive return. In the twinkling of an eye, he had leaped behind a tree; and was crouching there, pistol in hand, peering from either side of his place of ambush with bared teeth; a serpent already poised to strike. And already he was too late. Attwater and his servants had disappeared; and only the lamps shone on the deserted table and the bright sand about the house, and threw into the night in all directions the strong and tall shadows of the palms.

Davis ground his teeth. Where were they gone, the cowards? to what hole had they retreated beyond reach? It was in vain he should try anything, he, single and with a second-hand revolver, against three persons, armed with Winchesters, and who did not show an ear out of any of the apertures of that lighted and silent house? Some of them might have already ducked below it from the rear, and be drawing a bead upon him at that moment from the low-browed crypt, the receptacle of empty bottles and broken crockery. No, there was nothing to be done but to bring away (if it were still possible) his shattered and demoralised forces.

'Huish,' he said, 'come along.'

''S lose my ciga',' said Huish, reaching vaguely forward.

The captain let out a rasping oath. 'Come right along here,' said he.

''S all righ'. Sleep here 'th Atty-Attwa. Go boar' t'morr',' replied the festive one.

'If you don't come, and come now, by the living God, I'll shoot you!' cried the captain.

It is not to be supposed that the sense of these words in any way penetrated to the mind of Hulsh; rather that, in a fresh attempt upon the cigar, he overbalanced himself and came flying erratically forward: a course which brought him within reach of Davis.

'Now you walk straight,' said the captain, clutching him, 'or I'll know why not!'

''S lose my ciga',' replied Huish.

The captain's contained fury blazed up for a moment. He twisted

Huish round, grasped him by the neck of the coat, ran him in front of him to the pier end, and flung him savagely forward on his face.

‘Look for your cigar then, you swine!’ said he, and blew his boat call till the pea in it ceased to rattle.

An immediate activity responded on board the Farallone; far away voices, and soon the sound of oars, floated along the surface of the lagoon; and at the same time, from nearer hand, Herrick aroused himself and strolled languidly up. He bent over the insignificant figure of Huish, where it grovelled, apparently insensible, at the base of the figure-head.

‘Dead?’ he asked.

‘No, he’s not dead,’ said Davis.

‘And Attwater?’ asked Herrick.

‘Now you just shut your head!’ replied Davis. ‘You can do that, I fancy, and by God, I’ll show you how! I’ll stand no more of your drivel.’

They waited accordingly in silence till the boat bumped on the furthest piers; then raised Huish, head and heels, carried him down the gangway, and flung him summarily in the bottom. On the way out he was heard murmuring of the loss of his cigar; and after he had been handed up the side like baggage, and cast down in the alleyway to slumber, his last audible expression was: ‘Splen’l fl’ Attwa’!’ This the expert construed into ‘Splendid fellow, Attwater’; with so much innocence had this great spirit issued from the adventures of the evening.

The captain went and walked in the waist with brief, irate turns; Herrick leaned his arms on the taffrail; the crew had all turned in. The ship had a gentle, cradling motion; at times a block piped like a bird. On shore, through the colonnade of palm stems, Attwater’s house was to be seen shining steadily with many lamps. And there was nothing else visible, whether in the heaven above or in the lagoon below, but the stars and their reflections. It might have been minutes or it might have been hours, that Herrick leaned there, looking in the glorified water and drinking peace. ‘A bath of stars,’ he was thinking; when a hand was laid at last on his shoulder.

‘Herrick,’ said the captain, ‘I’ve been walking off my trouble.’

A sharp jar passed through the young man, but he neither answered nor so much as turned his head.

‘I guess I spoke a little rough to you on shore,’ pursued the captain; ‘the fact is, I was real mad; but now it’s over, and you and me have to turn to and think.’

‘I will NOT think,’ said Herrick.

‘Here, old man!’ said Davis, kindly; ‘this won’t fight, you know! You’ve got to brace up and help me get things straight. You’re not going back on a friend? That’s not like you, Herrick!’

‘O yes, it is,’ said Herrick.

‘Come, come!’ said the captain, and paused as if quite at a loss. ‘Look here,’ he cried, ‘you have a glass of champagne. I won’t touch it, so that’ll show you if I’m in earnest. But it’s just the pick-me-up for you; it’ll put an edge on you at once.’

‘O, you leave me alone!’ said Herrick, and turned away.

The captain caught him by the sleeve; and he shook him off and turned on him, for the moment, like a demoniac.

‘Go to hell in your own way!’ he cried.

And he turned away again, this time unchecked, and stepped forward to where the boat rocked alongside and ground occasionally against the schooner. He looked about him. A corner of the house was interposed between the captain and himself; all was well; no eye must see him in that last act. He slid silently into the boat; thence, silently, into the starry water.

Instinctively he swam a little; it would be time enough to stop by and by.

The shock of the immersion brightened his mind immediately. The events of the ignoble day passed before him in a frieze of pictures, and he thanked ‘whatever Gods there be’ for that open door of suicide. In such a little while he would be done with it, the random business at an end, the prodigal son come home. A very bright planet shone before him and drew a trenchant wake along the water. He took that for his line and followed it. That was the last earthly thing that he should look upon; that radiant speck, which he had soon magnified into a City of Laputa, along whose terraces there walked men and women of awful and benignant features, who viewed him with distant commiseration. These imaginary spectators consoled him; he told himself their talk, one to another; it was of himself and his sad destiny.

From such flights of fancy, he was aroused by the growing coldness of the water. Why should he delay? Here, where he was now, let him drop the curtain, let him seek the ineffable refuge, let him lie down with all races and generations of men in the house of sleep. It was easy to say, easy to do. To stop swimming: there was no mystery in that, if he could do it. Could he? And he could not. He knew it instantly. He was aware instantly of an opposition in his members, unanimous and invincible, clinging to life with a single and fixed resolve, finger by finger, sinew by sinew; something that was at once he and not he — at once within and without him; — the shutting of some miniature valve in his brain, which a single manly thought should suffice to open — and the grasp of an external fate ineluctable as gravity. To any man there may come at times a consciousness that there blows, through all the articulations of his body, the wind of a spirit not wholly his; that his mind rebels; that another girds him and carries him whither he would not. It came now to Herrick, with the authority of a revelation. There was no escape possible. The open door was closed in his recreant face. He must go back into the world and amongst men without illusion. He must stagger on to the end with the pack of his responsibility and his disgrace, until a cold, a blow, a merciful chance ball, or the more merciful hangman, should dismiss him from his infamy. There were men who could commit suicide; there were men who could not; and he was one who could not.

For perhaps a minute, there raged in his mind the coil of this discovery; then cheerless certitude followed; and, with an incredible simplicity of submission to ascertained fact, he turned round and struck out for shore. There was a courage in this which he could not appreciate; the ignobility of his cowardice wholly occupying him. A strong current set against him like a wind in his face; he contended with it heavily, wearily, without enthusiasm, but with substantial advantage; marking his progress the while, without pleasure, by the outline of the trees. Once he had a moment of hope. He heard to the southward of him, towards the centre of the lagoon, the wallowing of some great fish, doubtless a shark, and paused for a little, treading water. Might not this be the hangman? he thought. But the wallowing died away; mere silence succeeded; and Herrick pushed on again for the shore, raging as he went at his own nature. Ay, he would wait for the shark; but if he had heard him coming!… His smile was tragic. He could have spat upon himself.

About three in the morning, chance, and the set of the current, and the bias of his own right-handed body, so decided it between them that he came to shore upon the beach in front of Attwater's. There he sat down, and looked forth into a world without any of the lights of hope. The poor diving dress of self-conceit was sadly tattered! With the fairy tale of suicide, of a refuge always open to him, he had hitherto beguiled and supported himself in the trials of life; and behold! that also was only a fairy tale, that also was folk-lore. With the consequences of his acts he saw himself implacably confronted for the duration of life: stretched upon a cross, and nailed there with the iron bolts of his own cowardice. He had no tears; he told himself no stories. His disgust with himself was so complete that even the process of apologetic mythology had ceased. He was like a man cast down from a pillar, and every bone broken. He lay there, and admitted the facts, and did not attempt to rise.

Dawn began to break over the far side of the atoll, the sky brightened, the clouds became dyed with gorgeous colours, the shadows of the night lifted. And, suddenly, Herrick was aware that the lagoon and the trees wore again their daylight livery; and he saw, on board the Farallone, Davis extinguishing the lantern, and smoke rising from the galley.

Davis, without doubt, remarked and recognised the figure on the beach; or perhaps hesitated to recognise it; for after he had gazed a long while from under his hand, he went into the house and fetched a glass. It was very powerful; Herrick had often used it. With an instinct of shame, he hid his face in his hands.

‘And what brings you here, Mr Herrick-Hay, or Mr Hay-Herrick?’ asked the voice of Attwater. ‘Your back view from my present position is remarkably fine, and I would continue to present it. We can get on very nicely as we are, and if you were to turn round, do you know? I think it would be awkward.’

Herrick slowly rose to his feet; his heart throbbed hard, a hideous excitement shook him, but he was master of himself. Slowly he turned, and faced Attwater and the muzzle of a pointed rifle. ‘Why could I not do that last night?’ he thought.

‘Well, why don’t you fire?’ he said aloud, with a voice that trembled.

Attwater slowly put his gun under his arm, then his hands in his pockets.

‘What brings you here?’ he repeated.

‘I don’t know,’ said Herrick; and then, with a cry: ‘Can you do anything with me?’

‘Are you armed?’ said Attwater. ‘I ask for the form’s sake.’

‘Armed? No!’ said Herrick. ‘O yes, I am, too!’ And he flung upon the beach a dripping pistol.

‘You are wet,’ said Attwater.

‘Yes, I am wet,’ said Herrick. ‘Can you do anything with me?’

Attwater read his face attentively.

‘It would depend a good deal upon what you are,’ said he.

‘What I am? A coward!’ said Herrick.

‘There is very little to be done with that,’ said Attwater. ‘And yet the description hardly strikes one as exhaustive.’

‘Oh, what does it matter?’ cried Herrick. ‘Here I am. I am broken crockery; I am a burst drum; the whole of my life is gone to water; I have nothing left that I believe in, except my living horror of myself. Why do I come to you? I don’t know; you are cold, cruel, hateful; and I hate you, or I think I hate you. But you are an honest man, an honest gentleman. I put myself, helpless, in your hands. What must I do? If I can’t do anything, be merciful and put a bullet through me; it’s only a puppy with a broken leg!’

‘If I were you, I would pick up that pistol, come up to the house, and put on some dry clothes,’ said Attwater.

‘If you really mean it?’ said Herrick. ‘You know they — we — they. .. But you know all.’

‘I know quite enough,’ said Attwater. ‘Come up to the house.’

And the captain, from the deck of the Farallone, saw the two men pass together under the shadow of the grove.

CHAPTER 11. DAVID AND GOLIATH

Huish had bundled himself up from the glare of the day — his face to the house, his knees retracted. The frail bones in the thin tropical raiment seemed scarce more considerable than a fowl's; and Davis, sitting on the rail with his arm about a stay, contemplated him with gloom, wondering what manner of counsel that insignificant figure should contain. For since Herrick had thrown him off and deserted to the enemy, Huish, alone of mankind, remained to him to be a helper and oracle.

He considered their position with a sinking heart. The ship was a stolen ship; the stores, either from initial carelessness or ill administration during the voyage, were insufficient to carry them to any port except back to Papeete; and there retribution waited in the shape of a gendarme, a judge with a queer-shaped hat, and the horror of distant Noumea. Upon that side, there was no glimmer of hope. Here, at the island, the dragon was roused; Attwater with his men and his Winchesters watched and patrolled the house; let him who dare approach it. What else was then left but to sit there, inactive, pacing the decks — until the Trinity Hall arrived and they were cast into irons, or until the food came to an end, and the pangs of famine succeeded? For the Trinity Hall Davis was prepared; he would barricade the house, and die there defending it, like a rat in a crevice. But for the other? The cruise of the Farallone, into which he had plunged only a fortnight before, with such golden expectations, could this be the nightmare end of it? The ship rotting at anchor, the crew stumbling and dying in the scuppers? It seemed as if any extreme of hazard were to be preferred to so grisly a certainty; as if it would be better to up-anchor after all, put to sea at a venture, and, perhaps, perish at the hands of cannibals on one of the more obscure Paumotus. His eye roved swiftly over sea and sky in quest of any promise of wind, but the fountains of the Trade were empty. Where it had run yesterday and for weeks before, a roaring blue river charioting clouds, silence now reigned; and the whole height of the atmosphere stood balanced. On the endless ribbon of island that stretched out to either hand of him its array of golden and green and silvery palms, not the most volatile frond was to be seen stirring; they drooped to their stable images in the lagoon like things carved of metal, and already their long line began to reverberate heat. There was no escape possible that day, none probable on the morrow. And still the stores were running out!

Then came over Davis, from deep down in the roots of his being, or at least from far back among his memories of childhood and innocence, a wave of superstition. This run of ill luck was something beyond natural; the chances of the game were in themselves more various; it seemed as if the devil must serve the pieces. The devil? He heard again the clear note of Attwater's bell ringing abroad into the night, and dying away. How if God…?

Briskly, he averted his mind. Attwater: that was the point. Attwater had food and a treasure of pearls; escape made possible in the present, riches in the future. They must come to grips, with Attwater; the man must die. A smoky heat went over his face, as he recalled the impotent figure he had made last night and the contemptuous speeches he must bear in silence. Rage, shame, and the love of life, all pointed the one way; and only invention halted: how to reach him? had he strength enough? was there any help in that misbegotten packet of bones against the house?

His eyes dwelled upon him with a strange avidity, as though he would read into his soul; and presently the sleeper moved, stirred uneasily, turned suddenly round, and threw him a blinking look. Davis maintained the same dark stare, and Huish looked away again and sat up.

'Lord, I've an 'eadache on me!' said he. 'I believe I was a bit swipey last night. W'ere's that cry-byby 'Errick?'

'Gone,' said the captain.

'Ashore?' cried Huish. 'Oh, I say! I'd 'a gone too.'

'Would you?' said the captain.

'Yes, I would,' replied Huish. 'I like Attwater. 'E's all right; we got on like one o'clock when you were gone. And ain't his sherry in it, rather? It's like Spiers and Ponds' Amontillado! I wish I 'ad a drain of it now.' He sighed.

'Well, you'll never get no more of it — that's one thing,' said Davis, gravely.

''Ere! wot's wrong with you, Dyvis? Coppers 'ot? Well, look at me! I ain't grumpy,' said Huish; 'I'm as plyful as a canary-bird, I am.'

'Yes,' said Davis, 'you're playful; I own that; and you were playful last night, I believe, and a damned fine performance you made of it.'

''Allo!' said Huish. ''Ow's this? Wot performance?'

'Well, I'll tell you,' said the captain, getting slowly off the rail.

And he did: at full length, with every wounding epithet and absurd detail repeated and emphasised; he had his own vanity and Huish's upon the grill, and roasted them; and as he spoke, he inflicted and endured agonies of humiliation. It was a plain man's masterpiece of the sardonic.

'What do you think of it?' said he, when he had done, and looked down at Huish, flushed and serious, and yet jeering.

'I'll tell you wot it is,' was the reply, 'you and me cut a pretty dicky figure.’

‘That’s so,’ said Davis, ‘a pretty measly figure, by God! And, by God, I want to see that man at my knees.’

‘Ah!’ said Huish. “Ow to get him there?’

‘That’s it!’ cried Davis. ‘How to get hold of him! They’re four to two; though there’s only one man among them to count, and that’s Attwater. Get a bead on Attwater, and the others would cut and run and sing out like frightened poultry — and old man Herrick would come round with his hat for a share of the pearls. No, SIR! it’s how to get hold of Attwater! And we daren’t even go ashore; he would shoot us in the boat like dogs.’

‘Are you particular about having him dead or alive?’ asked Huish.

‘I want to see him dead,’ said the captain.

‘Ah, well!’ said Huish, ‘then I believe I’ll do a bit of breakfast.’

And he turned into the house.

The captain doggedly followed him.

‘What’s this?’ he asked. ‘What’s your idea, anyway?’

‘Oh, you let me alone, will you?’ said Huish, opening a bottle of champagne. ‘You’ll ‘ear my idea soon enough. Wyte till I pour some chain on my ‘ot coppers.’ He drank a glass off, and affected to listen. “Ark!’ said he, “ear it fizz. Like ‘am fryin’, I declyre. ‘Ave a glass, do, and look sociable.’

‘No!’ said the captain, with emphasis; ‘no, I will not! there’s business.’

‘You p’ys your money and you tykes your choice, my little man,’ returned Huish. ‘Seems rather a shyme to me to spoil your breakfast for wot’s really ancient ‘istory.’

He finished three parts of a bottle of champagne, and nibbled a corner of biscuit, with extreme deliberation; the captain sitting opposite and champing the bit like an impatient horse. Then Huish leaned his arms on the table and looked Davis in the face.

‘W’en you’re ready!’ said he.

‘Well, now, what’s your idea?’ said Davis, with a sigh.

‘Fair play!’ said Huish. ‘What’s yours?’

‘The trouble is that I’ve got none,’ replied Davis; and wandered for some time in aimless discussion of the difficulties in their path, and useless explanations of his own fiasco.

‘About done?’ said Huish.

‘I’ll dry up right here,’ replied Davis.

‘Well, then,’ said Huish, ‘you give me your ‘and across the table, and say, “Gawd strike me dead if I don’t back you up.”‘

His voice was hardly raised, yet it thrilled the hearer. His face seemed the epitome of cunning, and the captain recoiled from it as from a blow.

‘What for?’ said he.

‘Luck,’ said Huish. ‘Substantial guarantee demanded.’

And he continued to hold out his hand.

‘I don’t see the good of any such tomfoolery,’ said the other.

‘I do, though,’ returned Huish. ‘Gimme your ‘and and say the words; then you’ll ‘ear my view of it. Don’t, and you won’t.’

The captain went through the required form, breathing short, and gazing on the clerk with anguish. What to fear, he knew not; yet he feared slavishly what was to fall from the pale lips.

‘Now, if you’ll excuse me ‘alf a second,’ said Huish, ‘I’ll go and fetch the byby.’

‘The baby?’ said Davis. ‘What’s that?’

‘Fragile. With care. This side up,’ replied the clerk with a wink, as he disappeared.

He returned, smiling to himself, and carrying in his hand a silk handkerchief. The long stupid wrinkles ran up Davis’s brow, as he saw it. What should it contain? He could think of nothing more recondite than a revolver.

Huish resumed his seat.

‘Now,’ said he, ‘are you man enough to take charge of ‘Errick and the niggers? Because I’ll take care of Hattwater.’

‘How?’ cried Davis. ‘You can’t!’

‘Tut, tut!’ said the clerk. ‘You gimme time. Wot’s the first point? The first point is that we can’t get ashore, and I’ll make you a present of that for a ‘ard one. But ‘ow about a flag of truce? Would that do the trick, d’ye think? or would Attwater simply blyze aw’y at us in the bloomin’ boat like dawgs?’

‘No,’ said Davis, ‘I don’t believe he would.’

‘No more do I,’ said Huish; ‘I don’t believe he would either; and I’m sure I ‘ope he won’t! So then you can call us ashore. Next point is to get near the managin’ direction. And for that I’m going to ‘ave you write a letter, in w’ich you s’y you’re ashamed to meet his eye, and that the bearer, Mr J. L. ‘Uish, is empowered to represent you. Armed with w’ich seemin’ly simple expedient, Mr J. L. ‘Uish will proceed to business.’

He paused, like one who had finished, but still held Davis with his eye.

‘How?’ said Davis. ‘Why?’

‘Well, you see, you’re big,’ returned Huish; ‘‘e knows you ‘ave a gun in your pocket, and anybody can see with ‘alf an eye that you ain’t the man to ‘esitate about usin’ it. So it’s no go with you, and never was; you’re out of the runnin’, Dyvis. But he won’t be afryde of me, I’m such a little un! I’m unarmed — no kid about that — and I’ll hold my ‘ands up right enough.’ He paused. ‘If I can manage to sneak up nearer to him as we talk,’ he resumed, ‘you look out and back me up smart. If I don’t, we go aw’y again, and nothink to ‘urt. See?’

The captain’s face was contorted by the frenzied effort to comprehend.

‘No, I don’t see,’ he cried, ‘I can’t see. What do you mean?’

‘I mean to do for the Beast!’ cried Huish, in a burst of venomous triumph. ‘I’ll bring the ‘ulkin’ bully to grass. He’s ‘ad his larks out of me; I’m goin’ to ‘ave my lark out of ‘im, and a good lark too!’

‘What is it?’ said the captain, almost in a whisper.

‘Sure you want to know?’ asked Huish.

Davis rose and took a turn in the house.

‘Yes, I want to know,’ he said at last with an effort.

‘We’n you’re back’s at the wall, you do the best you can, don’t you?’ began the clerk. ‘I s’y that, because I ‘appen to know there’s a prejudice against it; it’s considered vulgar, awf’ly vulgar.’ He unrolled the handkerchief and showed a four-ounce jar. ‘This ‘ere’s vitriol, this is,’ said he.

The captain stared upon him with a whitening face.

‘This is the stuff!’ he pursued, holding it up. ‘This’ll burn to the bone; you’ll see it smoke upon ‘im like ‘ell fire! One drop upon ‘is bloomin’ heyesight, and I’ll trouble you for Attwater!’

‘No, no, by God!’ exclaimed the captain.

‘Now, see ‘ere, ducky,’ said Huish, ‘this is my bean feast, I believe? I’m goin’ up to that man single-’anded, I am. ‘E’s about seven foot high, and I’m five foot one. ‘E’s a rifle in his ‘and, ‘e’s on the look-out, ‘e wasn’t born yesterday. This is Dyvid and Goliar, I tell you! If I’d ast you to walk up and face the music I could understand. But I don’t. I on’y ast you to stand by and spifflicate the niggers. It’ll all come in quite natural; you’ll see, else! Fust thing, you know, you’ll see him running round and owling like a good un…’

‘Don’t!’ said Davis. ‘Don’t talk of it!’

‘Well, you ARE a juggins!’ exclaimed Huish. ‘What did you want? You wanted to kill him, and tried to last night. You wanted to kill the ‘ole lot of them and tried to, and ‘ere I show you ‘ow; and because there’s some medicine in a bottle you kick up this fuss!’

‘I suppose that’s so,’ said Davis. ‘It don’t seem someways reasonable, only there it is.’

‘It’s the happlication of science, I suppose?’ sneered Huish.

‘I don’t know what it is,’ cried Davis, pacing the floor; ‘it’s there! I draw the line at it. I can’t put a finger to no such piggishness. It’s too damned hateful!’

‘And I suppose it’s all your fancy pynted it,’ said Huish, ‘w’en you take a pistol and a bit o’ lead, and copse a man’s brains all over him? No accountin’ for tystes.’

‘I’m not denying it,’ said Davis, ‘It’s something here, inside of me. It’s foolishness; I dare say it’s dam foolishness. I don’t argue, I just draw the line. Isn’t there no other way?’

‘Look for yourself,’ said Huish. ‘I ain’t wedded to this, if you think I am; I ain’t ambitious; I don’t make a point of playin’ the lead; I offer to, that’s all, and if you can’t show me better, by Gawd, I’m goin’ to!’

‘Then the risk!’ cried Davis.

‘If you ast me straight, I should say it was a case of seven to one and no takers,’ said Huish. ‘But that’s my look-out, ducky, and I’m gyme, that’s wot I am: gyme all through.’

The captain looked at him. Huish sat there, preening his sinister vanity, glorying in his precedency in evil; and the villainous courage and readiness of the creature shone out of him like a candle from a lantern. Dismay and a kind of respect seized hold on Davis in his own despite. Until that moment, he had seen the clerk always hanging back, always listless, uninterested, and openly grumbling at a word of anything to do; and now, by the touch of an enchanter’s wand, he beheld him sitting girt and resolved, and his face radiant. He had raised the devil, he thought; and asked who was to control him? and his spirits quailed.

‘Look as long as you like,’ Huish was going on. ‘You don’t see any green in my eye! I ain’t afryde of Attwater, I ain’t afryde of you, and I ain’t afryde of words. You want to kill people, that’s wot YOU want; but you want to do it in kid gloves, and it can’t be done that w’y. Murder ain’t genteel, it ain’t easy, it ain’t safe, and it tykes a man to do it. ‘Ere’s the man.’

‘Huish!’ began the captain with energy; and then stopped, and remained staring at him with corrugated brows.

‘Well, hout with it!’ said Huish. “Ave you anythink else to put up? Is there any other chanst to try?’

The captain held his peace.

‘There you are then!’ said Huish with a shrug.

Davis fell again to his pacing.

‘Oh, you may do sentry-go till you’re blue in the mug, you won’t find anythink else,’ said Huish.

There was a little silence; the captain, like a man launched on a swing, flying dizzily among extremes of conjecture and refusal.

‘But see,’ he said, suddenly pausing. ‘Can you? Can the thing be done? It — it can’t be easy.’

‘If I get within twenty foot of ‘im it’ll be done; so you look out,’ said Huish, and his tone of certainty was absolute.

‘How can you know that?’ broke from the captain in a choked cry. ‘You beast, I believe you’ve done it before!’

‘Oh, that’s private affyres,’ returned Huish, ‘I ain’t a talking man.’

A shock of repulsion struck and shook the captain; a scream rose almost to his lips; had he uttered it, he might have cast himself at the same moment on the body of Huish, might have picked him up, and flung him down, and wiped the cabin with him, in a frenzy of cruelty that seemed half moral. But the moment passed; and the abortive crisis left the man weaker. The stakes were so high — the pearls on the one hand — starvation and shame on the other. Ten years of pearls! The imagination of Davis translated them into a new, glorified existence for himself and his family. The seat of this new life must be in London; there were deadly reasons against Portland, Maine; and the pictures that came to him were of English manners. He saw his boys marching in the procession of a school, with gowns on, an usher marshalling them and reading as he walked in a great book. He was installed in a villa, semi-detached; the name, Rosemore, on the gateposts. In a chair on the gravel walk, he seemed to sit smoking a cigar, a blue ribbon in his buttonhole, victor over himself and circumstances, and the malignity of bankers. He saw the parlour with red curtains and shells on the mantelpiece — and with the fine inconsistency of visions, mixed a grog at the mahogany table ere he turned in. With that the Farallone gave one of the aimless and nameless movements which (even in an anchored ship and even in the most profound calm) remind one of the mobility of fluids; and he was back again under the cover of the house, the fierce daylight besieging it all round and glaring in the chinks, and the clerk in a rather airy attitude, awaiting his decision.

He began to walk again. He aspired after the realisation of these dreams, like a horse nickering for water; the lust of them burned in his inside. And the only obstacle was Attwater, who had insulted him from the first. He gave Herrick a full share of the pearls, he insisted on it; Huish opposed him, and he trod the opposition down; and praised himself exceedingly. He was not going to use vitriol himself; was he Huish's keeper? It was a pity he had asked, but after all!... he saw the boys again in the school procession, with the gowns he had thought to be so 'tony' long since... And at the same time the incomparable shame of the last evening blazed up in his mind.

'Have it your own way!' he said hoarsely.

'Oh, I knew you would walk up,' said Huish. 'Now for the letter. There's paper, pens and ink. Sit down and I'll dictyte.'

The captain took a seat and the pen, looked a while helplessly at the paper, then at Huish. The swing had gone the other way; there was a blur upon his eyes. 'It's a dreadful business,' he said, with a strong twitch of his shoulders.

'It's rather a start, no doubt,' said Huish. 'Tyke a dip of ink. That's it. William John Hattwater, Esq., Sir': he dictated.

‘How do you know his name is William John?’ asked Davis.

‘Saw it on a packing case,’ said Huish. ‘Got that?’

‘No,’ said Davis. ‘But there’s another thing. What are we to write?’

‘O my golly!’ cried the exasperated Huish. ‘Wot kind of man do YOU call yourself? I’M goin’ to tell you wot to write; that’s my pitch; if you’ll just be so bloomin’ condescendin’ as to write it down! WILLIAM JOHN ATTWATER, ESQ., SIR’: he reiterated. And the captain at last beginning half mechanically to move his pen, the dictation proceeded:

It is with feelings of shyme and ‘artfelt contrition that I approach you after the yumiliatin’ events of last night. Our Mr ‘Errick has left the ship, and will have doubtless communicated to you the nature of our ‘opes. Needless to s’y, these are no longer possible: Fate ‘as declyred against us, and we bow the ‘ead. Well awyre as I am of the just suspicions with w’ich I am regarded, I do not venture to solicit the fyvour of an interview for myself, but in order to put an end to a situytion w’ich must be equally pyneful to all, I ‘ave deputed my friend and partner, Mr J. L. Huish, to l’y before you my proposals, and w’ich by their moderytion, Will, I trust, be found to merit your attention. Mr J. L. Huish is entirely unarmed, I swear to Gawd! and will ‘old ‘is ‘ands over ‘is ‘ead from the moment he begins to approach you. I am your fytheful servant, John Davis.

Huish read the letter with the innocent joy of amateurs, chuckled gustfully to himself, and reopened it more than once after it was folded, to repeat the pleasure; Davis meanwhile sitting inert and heavily frowning.

Of a sudden he rose; he seemed all abroad. ‘No!’ he cried. ‘No! it can’t be! It’s too much; it’s damnation. God would never forgive it.’

‘Well, and ‘oo wants Him to?’ returned Huish, shrill with fury. ‘You were damned years ago for the Sea Rynger, and said so yourself. Well then, be damned for something else, and ‘old your tongue.’

The captain looked at him mistily. ‘No,’ he pleaded, ‘no, old man! don’t do it.’

‘‘Ere now,’ said Huish, ‘I’ll give you my ultimytum. Go or st’y w’ere you are; I don’t mind; I’m goin’ to see that man and chuck this vitriol in his eyes. If you st’y I’ll go alone; the niggers will likely knock me on the ‘ead, and a fat lot you’ll be the better! But there’s one thing sure: I’ll ‘ear no more of your moonin’, mullygrubbin’ rot, and tyke it stryte.’

The captain took it with a blink and a gulp. Memory, with phantom voices, repeated in his cars something similar, something he had once said to Herrick — years ago it seemed.

‘Now, gimme over your pistol,’ said Huish. ‘I ‘ave to see all clear. Six shots, and mind you don’t wyste them.’

The captain, like a man in a nightmare, laid down his revolver on the table, and Huish wiped the cartridges and oiled the works.

It was close on noon, there was no breath of wind, and the heat was scarce bearable, when the two men came on deck, had the boat manned, and passed down, one after another, into the stern-sheets. A white shirt at the end of an oar served as a flag of truce; and the men, by direction, and to give it the better chance to be observed, pulled with extreme slowness. The isle shook before them like a place incandescent; on the face of the lagoon blinding copper suns, no bigger than sixpences, danced and stabbed them in the eyeballs; there went up from sand and sea, and even from the boat, a glare of scathing brightness; and as they could only peer abroad from between closed lashes, the excess of light seemed to be changed into a sinister darkness, comparable to that of a thundercloud before it bursts.

The captain had come upon this errand for any one of a dozen reasons, the last of which was desire for its success. Superstition rules all men; semi-ignorant and gross natures, like that of Davis, it rules utterly. For murder he had been prepared; but this horror of the medicine in the bottle went beyond him, and he seemed to himself to be parting the last strands that united him to God. The boat carried him on to reprobation, to damnation; and he suffered himself to be carried passively consenting, silently bidding farewell to his better self and his hopes. Huish sat by his side in towering spirits that were not wholly genuine. Perhaps as brave a man as ever lived, brave as a weasel, he must still reassure himself with the tones of his own voice; he must play his part to exaggeration, he must out-Herod Herod, insult all that was respectable, and brave all that was formidable, in a kind of desperate wager with himself.

‘Golly, but it’s ‘ot!’ said he. ‘Cruel ‘ot, I call it. Nice d’y to get your gruel in! I s’y, you know, it must feel awf’ly peculiar to get bowled over on a d’y like this. I’d rather ‘ave it on a cowld and frosty morning, wouldn’t you? (Singing) “‘Ere we go round the mulberry bush on a cowld and frosty mornin’.” (Spoken) Give you my word, I ‘aven’t thought o’ that in ten year; used to sing it at a hinfant school in ‘Ackney, ‘Ackney Wick it was. (Singing) “This is the way the tyler does, the tyler does.” (Spoken) Bloomin’ ‘umbug. ‘Ow are you off now, for the notion of a future styte? Do you cotton to the tea-fight views, or the old red ‘ot boguey business?’

‘Oh, dry up!’ said the captain.

‘No, but I want to know,’ said Huish. ‘It’s within the sp’ere of practical politics for you and me, my boy; we may both be bowled over, one up, t’other down, within the next ten minutes. It would be rather a lark, now, if you only skipped across, came up smilin’ t’other side, and a hangel met you with a B. and S. under his wing. ‘Ullo, you’d s’y: come, I tyke this kind.’

The captain groaned. While Huish was thus airing and exercising his bravado, the man at his side was actually engaged in prayer. Prayer, what for? God knows. But out of his inconsistent, illogical, and agitated spirit, a stream of supplication was poured forth, inarticulate as himself, earnest as death and judgment.

‘Thou Gawd seest me!’ continued Huish. ‘I remember I had that written in my Bible. I remember the Bible too, all about Abinadab and parties. Well, Gawd!’ apostrophising the meridian, ‘you’re goin’ to see a rum start presently, I promise you that!’

The captain bounded.

‘I’ll have no blasphemy!’ he cried, ‘no blasphemy in my boat.’

‘All right, cap,’ said Huish. ‘Anythink to oblige. Any other topic you would like to sudgest, the rynegyge, the lightnin’ rod, Shykespeare, or the musical glasses? ‘Ere’s conversation on a tap. Put a penny in the slot, and... ‘ullo! ‘ere they are!’ he cried. ‘Now or never is ‘e goin’ to shoot?’

And the little man straightened himself into an alert and dashing attitude, and looked steadily at the enemy. But the captain rose half up in the boat with eyes protruding.

‘What’s that?’ he cried.

‘Wot’s wot?’ said Huish.

‘Those — blamed things,’ said the captain.

And indeed it was something strange. Herrick and Attwater, both armed with Winchesters, had appeared out of the grove behind the figure-head; and to either hand of them, the sun glistened upon two metallic objects, locomotory like men, and occupying in the economy of these creatures the places of heads — only the heads were faceless. To Davis between wind and water, his mythology appeared to have come alive, and Tophet to be vomiting demons. But Huish was not mystified a moment.

‘Divers’ ‘elmets, you ninny. Can’t you see?’ he said.

‘So they are,’ said Davis, with a gasp. ‘And why? Oh, I see, it’s for armour.’

‘Wot did I tell you?’ said Huish. ‘Dyvid and Goliar all the w’y and back.’

The two natives (for they it was that were equipped in this unusual panoply of war) spread out to right and left, and at last lay down in the shade, on the extreme flank of the position. Even now that the mystery was explained, Davis was hatefully preoccupied, stared at the flame on their crests, and forgot, and then remembered with a smile, the explanation.

Attwater withdrew again into the grove, and Herrick, with his gun under his arm, came down the pier alone.

About half-way down he halted and hailed the boat.

‘What do you want?’ he cried.

‘I’ll tell that to Mr Attwater,’ replied Huish, stepping briskly on the ladder. ‘I don’t tell it to you, because you played the trucklin’ sneak. Here’s a letter for him: tyke it, and give it, and be ‘anged to you!’

‘Davis, is this all right?’ said Herrick.

Davis raised his chin, glanced swiftly at Herrick and away again, and held his peace. The glance was charged with some deep emotion, but whether of hatred or of fear, it was beyond Herrick to divine.

‘Well,’ he said, ‘I’ll give the letter.’ He drew a score with his foot on the boards of the gangway. ‘Till I bring the answer, don’t move a step past this.’

And he returned to where Attwater leaned against a tree, and gave him the letter. Attwater glanced it through.

‘What does that mean?’ he asked, passing it to Herrick.

‘Treachery?’

‘Oh, I suppose so!’ said Herrick.

‘Well, tell him to come on,’ said Attwater. ‘One isn’t a fatalist for nothing. Tell him to come on and to look out.’

Herrick returned to the figure-head. Half-way down the pier the clerk was waiting, with Davis by his side.

‘You are to come along, Huish,’ said Herrick. ‘He bids you look out, no tricks.’

Huish walked briskly up the pier, and paused face to face with the young man.

‘W’ere is ‘e?’ said he, and to Herrick’s surprise, the low-bred, insignificant face before him flushed suddenly crimson and went white again.

‘Right forward,’ said Herrick, pointing. ‘Now your hands above your head.’

The clerk turned away from him and towards the figure-head, as though he were about to address to it his devotions; he was seen to heave a deep breath; and raised his arms. In common with many men of his unhappy physical endowments, Huish’s hands were disproportionately long and broad, and the palms in particular enormous; a four-ounce jar was nothing in that capacious fist. The next moment he was plodding steadily forward on his mission.

Herrick at first followed. Then a noise in his rear startled him, and he turned about to find Davis already advanced as far as the figure-head. He came, crouching and open-mouthed, as the mesmerised may follow the mesmeriser; all human considerations, and even the care of his own life, swallowed up in one abominable and burning curiosity.

‘Halt!’ cried Herrick, covering him with his rifle. ‘Davis, what are you doing, man? YOU are not to come.’

Davis instinctively paused, and regarded him with a dreadful vacancy of eye.

‘Put your back to that figure-head, do you hear me? and stand fast!’ said Herrick.

The captain fetched a breath, stepped back against the figure-head, and instantly redirected his glances after Huish.

There was a hollow place of the sand in that part, and, as it were, a glade among the cocoa palms in which the direct noonday sun blazed intolerably. At the far end, in the shadow, the tall figure of Attwater was to be seen leaning on a tree; towards him, with his hands over his head, and his steps smothered in the sand, the clerk painfully waded. The surrounding glare threw out and exaggerated the man’s smallness; it seemed no less perilous an enterprise, this that he was gone upon, than for a whelp to besiege a citadel.

‘There, Mr Whish. That will do,’ cried Attwater. ‘From that distance, and keeping your hands up, like a good boy, you can very well put me in possession of the skipper’s views.’

The interval betwixt them was perhaps forty feet; and Huish measured it with his eye, and breathed a curse. He was already distressed with labouring in the loose sand, and his arms ached bitterly from their unnatural position. In the palm of his right hand, the jar was ready; and his heart thrilled, and his voice choked as he began to speak.

‘Mr Hattwater,’ said he, ‘I don’t know if ever you ‘ad a mother...’

‘I can set your mind at rest: I had,’ returned Attwater; ‘and henceforth, if I might venture to suggest it, her name need not recur in our communications. I should perhaps tell you that I am not amenable to the pathetic.’

‘I am sorry, sir, if I ‘ave seemed to tresparse on your private feelin’s,’ said the clerk, cringing and stealing a step. ‘At least, sir, you will never pe’suade me that you are not a perfec’ gentleman; I know a gentleman when I see him; and as such, I ‘ave no ‘esitation in throwin’ myself on your merciful consideration. It IS ‘ard lines, no doubt; it’s ‘ard lines to have to hown yourself beat; it’s ‘ard lines to ‘ave to come and beg to you for charity.’

‘When, if things had only gone right, the whole place was as good as your own?’ suggested Attwater. ‘I can understand the feeling.’

‘You are judging me, Mr Attwater,’ said the clerk, ‘and God knows how unjustly! THOU GAWD SEEST ME, was the tex’ I ‘ad in my Bible, w’ich my father wrote it in with ‘is own ‘and upon the fly leaft.’

‘I am sorry I have to beg your pardon once more,’ said Attwater; ‘but, do you know, you seem to me to be a trifle nearer, which is entirely outside of our bargain. And I would venture to suggest that you take one — two — three — steps back; and stay there.’

The devil, at this staggering disappointment, looked out of Huish’s face, and Attwater was swift to suspect. He frowned, he stared on the little man, and considered. Why should he be creeping nearer? The next moment, his gun was at his shoulder.

‘Kindly oblige me by opening your hands. Open your hands wide — let me see the fingers spread, you dog — throw down that thing you’re holding!’ he roared, his rage and certitude increasing together.

And then, at almost the same moment, the indomitable Huish decided to throw, and Attwater pulled the trigger. There was scarce the difference of a second between the two resolves, but it was in favour of the man with the rifle; and the jar had not yet left the clerk’s hand, before the ball shattered both. For the twinkling of an eye the wretch was in hell’s agonies, bathed in liquid flames, a screaming bedlamite; and then a second and more merciful bullet stretched him dead.

The whole thing was come and gone in a breath. Before Herrick could turn about, before Davis could complete his cry of horror, the clerk lay in the sand, sprawling and convulsed.

Attwater ran to the body; he stooped and viewed it; he put his finger in the vitriol, and his face whitened and hardened with anger.

Davis had not yet moved; he stood astonished, with his back to the figure-head, his hands clutching it behind him, his body inclined forward from the waist.

Attwater turned deliberately and covered him with his rifle.

‘Davis,’ he cried, in a voice like a trumpet, ‘I give you sixty seconds to make your peace with God!’

Davis looked, and his mind awoke. He did not dream of self-defence, he did not reach for his pistol. He drew himself up instead to face death, with a quivering nostril.

‘I guess I’ll not trouble the Old Man,’ he said; ‘considering the job I was on, I guess it’s better business to just shut my face.’

Attwater fired; there came a spasmodic movement of the victim, and immediately above the middle of his forehead, a black hole marred the whiteness of the figure-head. A dreadful pause; then again the report, and the solid sound and jar of the bullet in the wood; and this time the captain had felt the wind of it along his cheek. A third shot, and he was bleeding from one ear; and along the levelled rifle Attwater smiled like a Red Indian.

The cruel game of which he was the puppet was now clear to Davis; three times he had drunk of death, and he must look to drink of it seven times more before he was despatched. He held up his hand.

‘Steady!’ he cried; ‘I’ll take your sixty seconds.’

‘Good!’ said Attwater.

The captain shut his eyes tight like a child: he held his hands up at last with a tragic and ridiculous gesture.

‘My God, for Christ’s sake, look after my two kids,’ he said; and then, after a pause and a falter, ‘for Christ’s sake, Amen.’

And he opened his eyes and looked down the rifle with a quivering mouth.

‘But don’t keep fooling me long!’ he pleaded.

‘That’s all your prayer?’ asked Attwater, with a singular ring in his voice.

‘Guess so,’ said Davis.

So?’ said Attwater, resting the butt of his rifle on the ground, ‘is that done? Is your peace made with Heaven? Because it is with me. Go, and sin no more, sinful father. And remember that whatever you do to others, God shall visit it again a thousand-fold upon your innocents.’

The wretched Davis came staggering forward from his place against the figure-head, fell upon his knees, and waved his hands, and fainted.

When he came to himself again, his head was on Attwater’s arm, and close by stood one of the men in divers’ helmets, holding a bucket of water, from which his late executioner now laved his face. The memory of that dreadful passage returned upon him in a clap; again he saw Huish lying dead, again he seemed to himself to totter on the brink of an unplumbed eternity. With trembling hands he seized hold of the man whom he had come to slay; and his voice broke from him like that of a child among the nightmares of fever: ‘O! isn’t there no mercy? O! what must I do to be saved?’

‘Ah!’ thought Attwater, ‘here’s the true penitent.’

CHAPTER 12. TAIL-PIECE

On a very bright, hot, lusty, strongly blowing noon, a fortnight after the events recorded, and a month since the curtain rose upon this episode, a man might have been spied, praying on the sand by the lagoon beach. A point of palm trees isolated him from the settlement; and from the place where he knelt, the only work of man's hand that interrupted the expanse, was the schooner Farallone, her berth quite changed, and rocking at anchor some two miles to windward in the midst of the lagoon. The noise of the Trade ran very boisterous in all parts of the island; the nearer palm trees crashed and whistled in the gusts, those farther off contributed a humming bass like the roar of cities; and yet, to any man less absorbed, there must have risen at times over this turmoil of the winds, the sharper note of the human voice from the settlement. There all was activity. Attwater, stripped to his trousers and lending a strong hand of help, was directing and encouraging five Kanakas; from his lively voice, and their more lively efforts, it was to be gathered that some sudden and joyful emergency had set them in this bustle; and the Union Jack floated once more on its staff. But the suppliant on the beach, unconscious of their voices, prayed on with instancy and fervour, and the sound of his voice rose and fell again, and his countenance brightened and was deformed with changing moods of piety and terror.

Before his closed eyes, the skiff had been for some time tacking towards the distant and deserted Farallone; and presently the figure of Herrick might have been observed to board her, to pass for a while into the house, thence forward to the forecastle, and at last to plunge into the main hatch. In all these quarters, his visit was followed by a coil of smoke; and he had scarce entered his boat again and shoved off, before flames broke forth upon the schooner. They burned gaily; kerosene had not been spared, and the bellows of the Trade incited the conflagration. About half way on the return voyage, when Herrick looked back, he beheld the Farallone wrapped to the topmasts in leaping arms of fire, and the voluminous smoke pursuing him along the face of the lagoon. In one hour's time, he computed, the waters would have closed over the stolen ship.

It so chanced that, as his boat flew before the wind with much vivacity, and his eyes were continually busy in the wake, measuring the progress of the flames, he found himself embayed to the northward of the point of palms, and here became aware at the same time of the figure of Davis immersed in his devotion. An exclamation, part of annoyance, part of amusement, broke from him: and he touched the helm and ran the prow upon the beach not twenty feet from the unconscious devotee. Taking the painter in his hand, he landed, and drew near, and stood over him. And still the voluble and incoherent stream of prayer continued unabated. It was not possible for him to overhear the suppliant's petitions, which he listened to some while in a very mingled mood of humour and pity: and it was only when his own name began to occur and to be conjoined with epithets, that he at last laid his hand on the captain's shoulder.

'Sorry to interrupt the exercise,' said he; 'but I want you to look at the Farallone.'

The captain scrambled to his feet, and stood gasping and staring. 'Mr Herrick, don't startle a man like that!' he said. 'I don't seem someways rightly myself since...' he broke off. 'What did you say anyway? O, the Farallone,' and he looked languidly out.

'Yes,' said Herrick. 'There she burns! and you may guess from that what the news is.'

'The Trinity Hall, I guess,' said the captain.

'The same,' said Herrick; 'sighted half an hour ago, and coming up hand over fist.'

'Well, it don't amount to a hill of beans,' said the captain with a sigh.

'O, come, that's rank ingratitude!' cried Herrick.

'Well,' replied the captain, meditatively, 'you mayn't just see the way that I view it in, but I'd 'most rather stay here upon this island. I found peace here, peace in believing. Yes, I guess this island is about good enough for John Davis.'

'I never heard such nonsense!' cried Herrick. 'What! with all turning out in your favour the way it does, the Farallone wiped out, the crew disposed of, a sure thing for your wife and family, and you, yourself, Attwater's spoiled darling and pet penitent!'

'Now, Mr Herrick, don't say that,' said the captain gently; 'when you know he don't make no difference between us. But, O! why not be one of us? why not come to Jesus right away, and let's meet in yon beautiful land? That's just the one thing wanted; just say, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief! And He'll fold you in His arms. You see, I know! I've been a sinner myself!'

WEIR OF HERMISTON

AN UNFINISHED ROMANCE

This unfinished novel was cut short by Stevenson's sudden death from a cerebral hemorrhage. It is set in Edinburgh at the time of the Napoleonic Wars and tells the story of Archie Weir, a youth born into an upper-class Edinburgh family. Because of his Romantic sensibilities and sensitivity, Archie is estranged from his father, who is depicted as the coarse and cruel judge of a criminal court. By mutual consent, Archie is banished from his family of origin and sent to live as the local laird on a family property in the vicinity of Hermiston (now on Edinburgh's outskirts, and occupied by Heriot-Watt University, but then out in the countryside). The novel is now considered by many to be a masterpiece.

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TO MY WIFE

I saw rain falling and the rainbow drawn

On Lammermuir. Hearkening I heard again

In my precipitous city beaten bells

Winnow the keen sea wind. And here afar,

Intent on my own race and place, I wrote.

Take thou the writing: thine it is. For who

Burnished the sword, blew on the drowsy coal,

Held still the target higher, chary of praise

And prodigal of counsel — who but thou?

So now, in the end, if this the least be good,

If any deed be done, if any fire
Burn in the imperfect page, the praise be thine.

INTRODUCTORY

In the wild end of a moorland parish, far out of the sight of any house, there stands a cairn among the heather, and a little by east of it, in the going down of the brae-side, a monument with some verses half defaced. It was here that Claverhouse shot with his own hand the Praying Weaver of Balweary, and the chisel of Old Mortality has clinked on that lonely gravestone. Public and domestic history have thus marked with a bloody finger this hollow among the hills; and since the Cameronian gave his life there, two hundred years ago, in a glorious folly, and without comprehension or regret, the silence of the moss has been broken once again by the report of firearms and the cry of the dying.

The Deil's Hags was the old name. But the place is now called Francie's Cairn. For a while it was told that Francie walked. Aggic Hogg met him in the gloaming by the cairnside, and he spoke to her, with chattering teeth, so that his words were lost. He pursued Rob Todd (if any one could have believed Robbie) for the space of half a mile with pitiful entreaties. But the age is one of incredulity; these superstitious decorations speedily fell off; and the facts of the story itself, like the bones of a giant buried there and half dug up, survived, naked and imperfect, in the memory of the scattered neighbours. To this day, of winter nights, when the sleet is on the window and the cattle are quiet in the byre, there will be told again, amid the silence of the young and the additions and corrections of the old, the tale of the Justice-Clerk and of his son, young Hermiston, that vanished from men's knowledge; of the two Kirsties and the Four Black Brothers of the Cauldstaneslap; and of Frank Innes, "the young fool advocate," that came into these moorland parts to find his destiny.

CHAPTER I — LIFE AND DEATH OF MRS. WEIR

The Lord Justice-Clerk was a stranger in that part of the country; but his lady wife was known there from a child, as her race had been before her. The old "riding Rutherfords of Hermiston," of whom she was the last descendant, had been famous men of yore, ill neighbours, ill subjects, and ill husbands to their wives though not their properties. Tales of them were rife for twenty miles about; and their name was even printed in the page of our Scots histories, not always to their credit. One bit the dust at Flodden; one was hanged at his peel door by James the Fifth; another fell dead in a carouse with Tom Dalyell; while a fourth (and that was Jean's own father) died presiding at a Hell-Fire Club, of which he was the founder. There were many heads shaken in Crossmichael at that judgment; the more so as the man had a villainous reputation among high and low, and both with the godly and the worldly. At that very hour of his demise, he had ten going pleas before the Session, eight of them oppressive. And the same doom extended even to his agents; his grieve, that had been his right hand in many a left-hand business, being cast from his horse one night and drowned in a peat-hag on the Kye-skairs; and his very doer (although lawyers have long spoons) surviving him not long, and dying on a sudden in a bloody flux.

In all these generations, while a male Rutherford was in the saddle with his lads, or brawling in a change-house, there would be always a white-faced wife immured at home in the old peel or the later mansion-house. It seemed this succession of martyrs bided long, but took their vengeance in the end, and that was in the person of the last descendant, Jean. She bore the name of the Rutherfords, but she was the daughter of their trembling wives. At the first she was not wholly without charm. Neighbours recalled in her, as a child, a strain of elfin wilfulness, gentle little mutinies, sad little gaieties, even a morning gleam of beauty that was not to be fulfilled. She withered in the growing, and (whether it was the sins of her sires or the sorrows of her mothers) came to her maturity depressed, and, as it were, defaced; no blood of life in her, no grasp or gaiety; pious, anxious, tender, tearful, and incompetent.

It was a wonder to many that she had married — seeming so wholly of the stuff that makes old maids. But chance cast her in the path of Adam Weir, then the new Lord-Advocate, a recognised, risen man, the conqueror of many obstacles, and thus late in the day beginning to think upon a wife. He was one who looked rather to obedience than beauty, yet it would seem he was struck with her at the first look. “Wha’s she?” he said, turning to his host; and, when he had been told, “Ay,” says he, “she looks menseful. She minds me — ”; and then, after a pause (which some have been daring enough to set down to sentimental recollections), “Is she releegious?” he asked, and was shortly after, at his own request, presented. The acquaintance, which it seems profane to call a courtship, was pursued with Mr. Weir’s accustomed industry, and was long a legend, or rather a source of legends, in the Parliament House. He was described coming, rosy with much port, into the drawing-room, walking direct up to the lady, and assailing her with pleasantries, to which the embarrassed fair one responded, in what seemed a kind of agony, “Eh, Mr. Weir!” or “O, Mr. Weir!” or “Keep me, Mr. Weir!” On the very eve of their engagement, it was related that one had drawn near to the tender couple, and had overheard the lady cry out, with the tones of one who talked for the sake of talking, “Keep me, Mr. Weir, and what became of him?” and the profound accents of the suitor reply, “Haangit, mem, haangit.” The motives upon either side were much debated. Mr. Weir must have supposed his bride to be somehow suitable; perhaps he belonged to that class of men who think a weak head the ornament of women — an opinion invariably punished in this life. Her descent and her estate were beyond question. Her wayfaring ancestors and her litigious father had done well by Jean. There was ready money and there were broad acres, ready to fall wholly to the husband, to lend dignity to his descendants, and to himself a title, when he should be called upon the Bench. On the side of Jean, there was perhaps some fascination of curiosity as to this unknown male animal that approached her with the roughness of a ploughman and the *aplomb* of an advocate. Being so trenchantly opposed to all she knew, loved, or understood, he may well have seemed to her the extreme, if scarcely the ideal, of his sex. And besides, he was an ill man to refuse. A little over forty at the period of his marriage, he looked already older, and to the force of manhood added the senatorial dignity of years; it was, perhaps, with an unreverend awe, but he was awful. The Bench, the Bar, and the most experienced and reluctant witness, bowed to his authority — and why not Jeannie Rutherford?

The heresy about foolish women is always punished, I have said, and Lord Hermiston began to pay the penalty at once. His house in George Square was wretchedly ill-guided; nothing answerable to the expense of maintenance but the cellar, which was his own private care. When things went wrong at dinner, as they continually did, my lord would look up the table at his wife: “I think these broth would be better to sweem in than to sup.” Or else to the butler: “Here, M’Killop, awa’ wi’ this Raadical gigot — tak’ it to the French, man, and bring me some puddocks! It seems rather a sore kind of a business that I should be all day in Court haanging Raadicals, and get nawthing to my denner." Of course this was but a manner of speaking, and he had never hanged a man for being a Radical in his life; the law, of which he was the faithful minister, directing otherwise. And of course these growls were in the nature of pleasantry, but it was of a recondite sort; and uttered as they were in his resounding voice, and commented on by that expression which they called in the Parliament House "Hermiston's hanging face" — they struck mere dismay into the wife. She sat before him speechless and fluttering; at each dish, as at a fresh ordeal, her eye hovered toward my lord's countenance and fell again; if he but ate in silence, unspeakable relief was her portion; if there were complaint, the world was darkened. She would seek out the cook, who was always her *sister in the Lord*. "O, my dear, this is the most dreidful thing that my lord can never be contented in his own house!" she would begin; and weep and pray with the cook; and then the cook would pray with Mrs. Weir; and the next day's meal would never be a penny the better — and the next cook (when she came) would be worse, if anything, but just as pious. It was often wondered that Lord Hermiston bore it as he did; indeed, he was a stoical old voluptuary, contented with sound wine and plenty of it. But there were moments when he overflowed. Perhaps half a dozen times in the history of his married life — "Here! tak' it awa', and bring me a piece bread and kebbuck!" he had exclaimed, with an appalling explosion of his voice and rare gestures. None thought to dispute or to make excuses; the service was arrested; Mrs. Weir sat at the head of the table whimpering without disguise; and his lordship opposite munched his bread and cheese in ostentatious disregard. Once only, Mrs. Weir had ventured to appeal. He was passing her chair on his way into the study.

"O, Edom!" she wailed, in a voice tragic with tears, and reaching out to him both hands, in one of which she held a sopping pocket-handkerchief.

He paused and looked upon her with a face of wrath, into which there stole, as he looked, a twinkle of humour.

"Noansense!" he said. "You and your noansense! What do I want with a Christian faim'ly? I want Christian broth! Get me a lass that can plain-boil a potato, if she was a whüre off the streets." And with these words, which echoed in her tender ears like blasphemy, he had passed on to his study and shut the door behind him.

Such was the housewifery in George Square. It was better at Hermiston, where Kirstie Elliott, the sister of a neighbouring bonnet-laird, and an eighteenth cousin of the lady's, bore the charge of all, and kept a trim house and a good country table. Kirstie was a woman in a thousand, clean, capable, notable; once a moorland Helen, and still comely as a blood horse and healthy as the hill wind. High in flesh and voice and colour, she ran the house with her whole intemperate soul, in a bustle, not without buffets. Scarce more pious than decency in those days required, she was the cause of many an anxious thought and many a tearful prayer to Mrs. Weir. Housekeeper and mistress renewed the parts of Martha and Mary; and though with a pricking conscience, Mary reposed on Martha's strength as on a rock. Even Lord Hermiston held Kirstie in a particular regard. There were few with whom he unbent so gladly, few whom he favoured with so many pleasantries. "Kirstie and me maun have our joke," he would declare in high good-humour, as he buttered Kirstie's scones, and she waited at table. A man who had no need either of love or of popularity, a keen reader of men and of events, there was perhaps only one truth for which he was quite unprepared: he would have been quite unprepared to learn that Kirstie hated him. He thought maid and master were well matched; hard, bandy, healthy, broad Scots folk, without a hair of nonsense to the pair of them. And the fact was that she made a goddess and an only child of the effete and tearful lady; and even as she waited at table her hands would sometimes itch for my lord's ears.

Thus, at least, when the family were at Hermiston, not only my lord, but Mrs. Weir too, enjoyed a holiday. Free from the dreadful looking-for of the miscarried dinner, she would mind her seam, read her piety books, and take her walk (which was my lord's orders), sometimes by herself, sometimes with Archie, the only child of that scarce natural union. The child was her next bond to life. Her frosted sentiment bloomed again, she breathed deep of life, she let loose her heart, in that society. The miracle of her motherhood was ever new to her. The sight of the little man at her skirt intoxicated her with the sense of power, and froze her with the consciousness of her responsibility. She looked forward, and, seeing him in fancy grow up and play his diverse part on the world's theatre, caught in her breath and lifted up her courage with a lively effort. It was only with the child that she forgot herself and was at moments natural; yet it was only with the child that she had conceived and managed to pursue a scheme of conduct. Archie was to be a great man and a good; a minister if possible, a saint for certain. She tried to engage his mind upon her favourite books, Rutherford's *Letters*, Scougalls *Grace Abounding*, and the like. It was a common practice of hers (and strange to remember now) that she would carry the child to the Deil's Hags, sit with him on the Praying Weaver's stone, and talk of the Covenanters till their tears ran down. Her view of history was wholly artless, a design in snow and ink; upon the one side, tender innocents with psalms upon their lips; upon the other, the persecutors, booted, bloody-minded, flushed with wine: a suffering Christ, a raging Beelzebub. *Persecutor* was a word that knocked upon the woman's heart; it was her highest thought of wickedness, and the mark of it was on her house. Her great-great-grandfather had drawn the sword against the Lord's anointed on the field of Rullion Green, and breathed his last (tradition said) in the arms of the detestable Dalyell. Nor could she blind herself to this, that had they lived in those old days, Hermiston himself would have been numbered alongside of Bloody MacKenzie and the politic Lauderdale and Rothes, in the band of God's immediate enemies. The sense of this moved her to the more fervour; she had a voice for that name of *persecutor* that thrilled in the child's marrow; and when one day the mob hooted and hissed them all in my lord's travelling carriage, and cried, "Down with the persecutor! down with Hanging Hermiston!" and mamma covered her eyes and wept, and papa let down the glass and looked out upon the rabble with his droll formidable face, bitter and smiling, as they said he sometimes looked when he gave sentence, Archie was for the moment too much amazed to be alarmed, but he had scarce got his mother by herself before his shrill voice was raised demanding an explanation: why had they called papa a persecutor?

"Keep me, my precious!" she exclaimed. "Keep me, my dear! this is poleetical. Ye must never ask me anything poleetical, Erchie. Your faither is a great man, my dear, and it's no for me or you to be judging him. It would be telling us all, if we behaved ourselves in our several stations the way your faither does in his high office; and let me hear no more of any such disrespectful and undutiful questions! No that you meant to be undutiful, my lamb; your mother kens that — she kens it well, dearie!" And so slid off to safer topics, and left on the mind of the child an obscure but ineradicable sense of something wrong.

Mrs. Weir's philosophy of life was summed in one expression — tenderness. In her view of the universe, which was all lighted up with a glow out of the doors of hell, good people must walk there in a kind of ecstasy of tenderness. The beasts and plants had no souls; they were here but for a day, and let their day pass gently! And as for the immortal men, on what black, downward path were many of them wending, and to what a horror of an immortality! "Are not two sparrows," "Whosoever shall smite thee," "God sendeth His rain," "Judge not, that ye be not judged" — these texts made her body of divinity; she put them on in the morning with her clothes and lay down to sleep with them at night; they haunted her like a favourite air, they clung about her like a favourite perfume. Their minister was a marrowy expounder of the law, and my lord sat under him with relish; but Mrs. Weir respected him from far off; heard him (like the cannon of a beleaguered city) usefully booming outside on the dogmatic ramparts; and meanwhile, within and out of shot, dwelt in her private garden which she watered with grateful tears. It seems strange to say of this colourless and ineffectual woman, but she was a true enthusiast, and might have made the sunshine and the glory of a cloister. Perhaps none but Archie knew she could be eloquent; perhaps none but he had seen her — her colour raised, her hands clasped or quivering — glow with gentle ardour. There is a corner of the policy of Hermiston, where you come suddenly in view of the summit of Black Fell, sometimes like the mere grass top of a hill, sometimes (and this is her own expression) like a precious jewel in the heavens. On such days, upon the sudden view of it, her hand would tighten on the child's fingers, her voice rise like a song. "*I to the hills*!" she would repeat. "And O, Erchie, are nae these like the hills of Naphtali?" and her tears would flow.

Upon an impressionable child the effect of this continual and pretty accompaniment to life was deep. The woman's quietism and piety passed on to his different nature undiminished; but whereas in her it was a native sentiment, in him it was only an implanted dogma. Nature and the child's pugnacity at times revolted. A cad from the Potterrow once struck him in the mouth; he struck back, the pair fought it out in the back stable lane towards the Meadows, and Archie returned with a considerable decline in the number of his front teeth, and unregenerately boasting of the losses of the foe. It was a sore day for Mrs. Weir; she wept and prayed over the infant backslider until my lord was due from Court, and she must resume that air of tremulous composure with which she always greeted him. The judge was that day in an observant mood, and remarked upon the absent teeth.

"I am afraid Erchie will have been fechting with some of they blagyard lads," said Mrs. Weir.

My lord's voice rang out as it did seldom in the privacy of his own house. "I'll have norm of that, sir!" he cried. "Do you hear me? — nonn of that! No son of mine shall be speldering in the glaur with any dirty raibble."

The anxious mother was grateful for so much support; she had even feared the contrary. And that night when she put the child to bed — "Now, my dear, ye see!" she said, "I told you what your faither would think of it, if he heard ye had fallen into this dreidful sin; and let you and me pray to God that ye may be keepit from the like temptation or strengthened to resist it!"

The womanly falsity of this was thrown away. Ice and iron cannot be welded; and the points of view of the Justice-Clerk and Mrs. Weir were not less unassimilable. The character and position of his father had long been a stumbling-block to Archie, and with every year of his age the difficulty grew more instant. The man was mostly silent; when he spoke at all, it was to speak of the things of the world, always in a worldly spirit, often in language that the child had been schooled to think coarse, and sometimes with words that he knew to be sins in themselves. Tenderness was the first duty, and my lord was invariably harsh. God was love; the name of my lord (to all who knew him) was fear. In the world, as schematised for Archie by his mother, the place was marked for such a creature. There were some whom it was good to pity and well (though very likely useless) to pray for; they were named reprobates, goats, God's enemies, brands for the burning; and Archie tallied every mark of identification, and drew the inevitable private inference that the Lord Justice-Clerk was the chief of sinners.

The mother's honesty was scarce complete. There was one influence she feared for the child and still secretly combated; that was my lord's; and half unconsciously, half in a wilful blindness, she continued to undermine her husband with his son. As long as Archie remained silent, she did so ruthlessly, with a single eye to heaven and the child's salvation; but the day came when Archie spoke. It was 1801, and Archie was seven, and beyond his years for curiosity and logic, when he brought the case up openly. If judging were sinful and forbidden, how came papa to be a judge? to have that sin for a trade? to bear the name of it for a distinction?

"I can't see it," said the little Rabbi, and wagged his head.

Mrs. Weir abounded in commonplace replies.

"No, I cannae see it," reiterated Archie. "And I'll tell you what, mamma, I don't think you and me's justifeed in staying with him."

The woman awoke to remorse, she saw herself disloyal to her man, her sovereign and bread-winner, in whom (with what she had of worldliness) she took a certain subdued pride. She expatiated in reply on my lord's honour and greatness; his useful services in this world of sorrow and wrong, and the place in which he stood, far above where babes and innocents could hope to see or criticise. But she had builded too well — Archie had his answers pat: Were not babes and innocents the type of the kingdom of heaven? Were not honour and greatness the badges of the world? And at any rate, how about the mob that had once seethed about the carriage?

"It's all very fine," he concluded, "but in my opinion papa has no right to be it. And it seems that's not the worst yet of it. It seems he's called "The Hanging judge" — it seems he's crooool. I'll tell you what it is, mamma, there's a tex' borne in upon me: It were better for that man if a milestone were bound upon his back and him flung into the deepestmost pairts of the sea."

"O, my lamb, ye must never say the like of that!" she cried. "Ye're to honour faither and mother, dear, that your days may be long in the land. It's Atheists that cry out against him — French Atheists, Erchie! Ye would never surely even yourself down to be saying the same thing as French Atheists? It would break my heart to think that of you. And O, Erchie, here are'na *you* setting up to *judge*? And have ye no forgot God's plain command — the First with Promise, dear? Mind you upon the beam and the mote!"

Having thus carried the war into the enemy's camp, the terrified lady breathed again. And no doubt it is easy thus to circumvent a child with catchwords, but it may be questioned how far it is effectual. An instinct in his breast detects the quibble, and a voice condemns it. He will instantly submit, privately hold the same opinion. For even in this simple and antique relation of the mother and the child, hypocrisies are multiplied.

When the Court rose that year and the family returned to Hermiston, it was a common remark in all the country that the lady was sore failed. She seemed to loose and seize again her touch with life, now sitting inert in a sort of durable bewilderment, anon waking to feverish and weak activity. She dawdled about the lasses at their work, looking stupidly on; she fell to rummaging in old cabinets and presses, and desisted when half through; she would begin remarks with an air of animation and drop them without a struggle. Her common appearance was of one who has forgotten something and is trying to remember; and when she overhauled, one after another, the worthless and touching mementoes of her youth, she might have been seeking the clue to that lost thought. During this period, she gave many gifts to the neighbours and house lasses, giving them with a manner of regret that embarrassed the recipients.

The last night of all she was busy on some female work, and toiled upon it with so manifest and painful a devotion that my lord (who was not often curious) inquired as to its nature.

She blushed to the eyes. "O, Edom, it's for you!" she said. "It's slippers. I — I hae never made ye any."

"Ye daft auld wife!" returned his lordship. "A bonny figure I would be, palmering about in bauchles!"

The next day, at the hour of her walk, Kirstie interfered. Kirstie took this decay of her mistress very hard; bore her a grudge, quarrelled with and railed upon her, the anxiety of a genuine love wearing the disguise of temper. This day of all days she insisted disrespectfully, with rustic fury, that Mrs. Weir should stay at home. But, "No, no," she said, "it's my lord's orders," and set forth as usual. Archie was visible in the acre bog, engaged upon some childish enterprise, the instrument of which was mire; and she stood and looked at him a while like one about to call; then thought otherwise, sighed, and shook her head, and proceeded on her rounds alone. The house lasses were at the burnside washing, and saw her pass with her loose, weary, dowdy gait.

"She's a terrible feckless wife, the mistress!" said the one.

"Tut," said the other, "the wumman's seeck."

"Weel, I canna see nae differ in her," returned the first. "A fushionless quean, a feckless carline."

The poor creature thus discussed rambled a while in the grounds without a purpose. Tides in her mind ebbed and flowed, and carried her to and fro like seaweed. She tried a path, paused, returned, and tried another; questing, forgetting her quest; the spirit of choice extinct in her bosom, or devoid of sequency. On a sudden, it appeared as though she had remembered, or had formed a resolution, wheeled about, returned with hurried steps, and appeared in the dining-room, where Kirstie was at the cleaning, like one charged with an important errand.

"Kirstie!" she began, and paused; and then with conviction, "Mr. Weir isna speeritually minded, but he has been a good man to me."

It was perhaps the first time since her husband's elevation that she had forgotten the handle to his name, of which the tender, inconsistent woman was not a little proud. And when Kirstie looked up at the speaker's face, she was aware of a change.

"Godsake, what's the maitter wi' ye, mem?" cried the housekeeper, starting from the rug.

"I do not ken," answered her mistress, shaking her head. "But he is not speeritually minded, my dear."

"Here, sit down with ye! Godsake, what ails the wife?" cried Kirstie, and helped and forced her into my lord's own chair by the cheek of the hearth.

"Keep me, what's this?" she gasped. "Kirstie, what's this? I'm frich'ened."

They were her last words.

It was the lowering nightfall when my lord returned. He had the sunset in his back, all clouds and glory; and before him, by the wayside, spied Kirstie Elliott waiting. She was dissolved in tears, and addressed him in the high, false note of barbarous mourning, such as still lingers modified among Scots heather.

"The Lord peety ye, Hermiston! the Lord prepare ye!" she keened out. "Weary upon me, that I should have to tell it!"

He reined in his horse and looked upon her with the hanging face.

"Has the French landit?" cried he.

"Man, man," she said, "is that a' ye can think of? The Lord prepare ye: the Lord comfort and support ye!"

“Is onybody deid?” said his lordship. “It’s no Erchie?”

“Bethankit, no!” exclaimed the woman, startled into a more natural tone. “Na, na, it’s no sae bad as that. It’s the mistress, my lord; she just fair flittit before my e’en. She just gi’ed a sab and was by wi’ it. Eh, my bonny Miss Jeannie, that I mind sae weel!” And forth again upon that pouring tide of lamentation in which women of her class excel and over-abound.

Lord Hermiston sat in the saddle beholding her. Then he seemed to recover command upon himself.

“Well, it’s something of the suddenest,” said he. “But she was a dwaibly body from the first.”

And he rode home at a precipitate amble with Kirstie at his horse’s heels.

Dressed as she was for her last walk, they had laid the dead lady on her bed. She was never interesting in life; in death she was not impressive; and as her husband stood before her, with his hands crossed behind his powerful back, that which he looked upon was the very image of the insignificant.

“Her and me were never cut out for one another,” he remarked at last. “It was a daft-like marriage.” And then, with a most unusual gentleness of tone, “Puir bitch,” said he, “puir bitch!” Then suddenly: “Where’s Erchie?”

Kirstie had decoyed him to her room and given him “a jeely-piece.”

“Ye have some kind of gumption, too,” observed the judge, and considered his housekeeper grimly. “When all’s said,” he added, “I micht have done waur — I micht have been marriet upon a skirting Jezebel like you!”

“There’s naebody thinking of you, Hermiston!” cried the offended woman. “We think of her that’s out of her sorrows. And could *she* have done waur? Tell me that, Hermiston — tell me that before her clay-cauld corp!”

“Weel, there’s some of them gey an’ ill to please,” observed his lordship.

CHAPTER II — FATHER AND SON

My Lord Justice-Clerk was known to many; the man Adam Weir perhaps to none. He had nothing to explain or to conceal; he sufficed wholly and silently to himself; and that part of our nature which goes out (too often with false coin) to acquire glory or love, seemed in him to be omitted. He did not try to be loved, he did not care to be; it is probable the very thought of it was a stranger to his mind. He was an admired lawyer, a highly unpopular judge; and he looked down upon those who were his inferiors in either distinction, who were lawyers of less grasp or judges not so much detested. In all the rest of his days and doings, not one trace of vanity appeared; and he went on through life with a mechanical movement, as of the unconscious; that was almost august.

He saw little of his son. In the childish maladies with which the boy was troubled, he would make daily inquiries and daily pay him a visit, entering the sick-room with a facetious and appalling countenance, letting off a few perfunctory jests, and going again swiftly, to the patient's relief. Once, a court holiday falling opportunely, my lord had his carriage, and drove the child himself to Hermiston, the customary place of convalescence. It is conceivable he had been more than usually anxious, for that journey always remained in Archie's memory as a thing apart, his father having related to him from beginning to end, and with much detail, three authentic murder cases. Archie went the usual round of other Edinburgh boys, the high school and the college; and Hermiston looked on, or rather looked away, with scarce an affectation of interest in his progress. Daily, indeed, upon a signal after dinner, he was brought in, given nuts and a glass of port, regarded sardonically, sarcastically questioned. "Well, sir, and what have you donn with your book to-day?" my lord might begin, and set him posers in law Latin. To a child just stumbling into Corderius, Papinian and Paul proved quite invincible. But papa had memory of no other. He was not harsh to the little scholar, having a vast fund of patience learned upon the bench, and was at no pains whether to conceal or to express his disappointment. "Well, ye have a long jaunt before ye yet!" he might observe, yawning, and fall back on his own thoughts (as like as not) until the time came for separation, and my lord would take the decanter and the glass, and be off to the back chamber looking on the Meadows, where he toiled on his cases till the hours were small. There was no "fuller man" on the bench; his memory was marvellous, though wholly legal; if he had to "advise" extempore, none did it better; yet there was none who more earnestly prepared. As he thus watched in the night, or sat at table and forgot the presence of his son, no doubt but he tasted deeply of recondite pleasures. To be wholly devoted to some intellectual exercise is to have succeeded in life; and perhaps only in law and the higher mathematics may this devotion be maintained, suffice to itself without reaction, and find continual rewards without excitement. This atmosphere of his father's sterling industry was the best of Archie's education. Assuredly it did not attract him; assuredly it rather rebutted and depressed. Yet it was still present, unobserved like the ticking of a clock, an arid ideal, a tasteless stimulant in the boy's life.

But Hermiston was not all of one piece. He was, besides, a mighty toper; he could sit at wine until the day dawned, and pass directly from the table to the bench with a steady hand and a clear head. Beyond the third bottle, he showed the plebeian in a larger print; the low, gross accent, the low, foul mirth, grew broader and commoner; he became less formidable, and infinitely more disgusting. Now, the boy had inherited from Jean Rutherford a shivering delicacy, unequally mated with potential violence. In the playing-fields, and amongst his own companions, he repaid a coarse expression with a blow; at his father's table (when the time came for him to join these revels) he turned pale and sickened in silence. Of all the guests whom he there encountered, he had toleration for only one: David Keith Carnegie, Lord Glenalmond. Lord Glenalmond was tall and emaciated, with long features and long delicate hands. He was often compared with the statue of Forbes of Culloden in the Parliament House; and his blue eye, at more than sixty, preserved some of the fire of youth. His exquisite disparity with any of his fellow-guests, his appearance as of an artist and an aristocrat stranded in rude company, riveted the boy's attention; and as curiosity and interest are the things in the world that are the most immediately and certainly rewarded, Lord Glenalmond was attracted by the boy.

"And so this is your son, Hermiston?" he asked, laying his hand on Archie's shoulder. "He's getting a big lad."

"Hout!" said the gracious father, "just his mother over again — daurna say boo to a goose!"

But the stranger retained the boy, talked to him, drew him out, found in him a taste for letters, and a fine, ardent, modest, youthful soul; and encouraged him to be a visitor on Sunday evenings in his bare, cold, lonely dining-room, where he sat and read in the isolation of a bachelor grown old in refinement. The beautiful gentleness and grace of the old judge, and the delicacy of his person, thoughts, and language, spoke to Archie's heart in its own tongue. He conceived the ambition to be such another; and, when the day came for him to choose a profession, it was in emulation of Lord Glenalmond, not of Lord Hermiston, that he chose the Bar. Hermiston looked on at this friendship with some secret pride, but openly with the intolerance of scorn. He scarce lost an opportunity to put them down with a rough jape; and, to say truth, it was not difficult, for they were neither of them quick. He had a word of contempt for the whole crowd of poets, painters, fiddlers, and their admirers, the bastard race of amateurs, which was continually on his lips. “Signor Feedle-eerie!” he would say. “O, for Goad’s sake, no more of the Signor!”

“You and my father are great friends, are you not?” asked Archie once.

“There is no man that I more respect, Archie,” replied Lord Glenalmond. “He is two things of price. He is a great lawyer, and he is upright as the day.”

“You and he are so different,” said the boy, his eyes dwelling on those of his old friend, like a lover’s on his mistress’s.

“Indeed so,” replied the judge; “very different. And so I fear are you and he. Yet I would like it very ill if my young friend were to misjudge his father. He has all the Roman virtues: Cato and Brutus were such; I think a son’s heart might well be proud of such an ancestry of one.”

“And I would sooner he were a plaided herd,” cried Archie, with sudden bitterness.

“And that is neither very wise, nor I believe entirely true,” returned Glenalmond. “Before you are done you will find some of these expressions rise on you like a remorse. They are merely literary and decorative; they do not aptly express your thought, nor is your thought clearly apprehended, and no doubt your father (if he were here) would say, ‘Signor Feedle-eerie!’”

With the infinitely delicate sense of youth, Archie avoided the subject from that hour. It was perhaps a pity. Had he but talked — talked freely — let himself gush out in words (the way youth loves to do and should), there might have been no tale to write upon the Weirs of Hermiston. But the shadow of a threat of ridicule sufficed; in the slight tartness of these words he read a prohibition; and it is likely that Glenalmond meant it so.

Besides the veteran, the boy was without confidant or friend. Serious and eager, he came through school and college, and moved among a crowd of the indifferent, in the seclusion of his shyness. He grew up handsome, with an open, speaking countenance, with graceful, youthful ways; he was clever, he took prizes, he shone in the Speculative Society. It should seem he must become the centre of a crowd of friends; but something that was in part the delicacy of his mother, in part the austerity of his father, held him aloof from all. It is a fact, and a strange one, that among his contemporaries Hermiston’s son was thought to be a chip of the old block. “You’re a friend of Archie Weir's?" said one to Frank Innes; and Innes replied, with his usual flippancy and more than his usual insight: "I know Weir, but I never met Archie." No one had met Archie, a malady most incident to only sons. He flew his private signal, and none heeded it; it seemed he was abroad in a world from which the very hope of intimacy was banished; and he looked round about him on the concourse of his fellow-students, and forward to the trivial days and acquaintances that were to come, without hope or interest.

As time went on, the tough and rough old sinner felt himself drawn to the son of his loins and sole continuator of his new family, with softnesses of sentiment that he could hardly credit and was wholly impotent to express. With a face, voice, and manner trained through forty years to terrify and repel, Rhadamanthus may be great, but he will scarce be engaging. It is a fact that he tried to propitiate Archie, but a fact that cannot be too lightly taken; the attempt was so unconspicuously made, the failure so stoically supported. Sympathy is not due to these steadfast iron natures. If he failed to gain his son's friendship, or even his son's toleration, on he went up the great, bare staircase of his duty, uncheered and undepressed. There might have been more pleasure in his relations with Archie, so much he may have recognised at moments; but pleasure was a by-product of the singular chemistry of life, which only fools expected.

An idea of Archie's attitude, since we are all grown up and have forgotten the days of our youth, it is more difficult to convey. He made no attempt whatsoever to understand the man with whom he dined and breakfasted. Parsimony of pain, glut of pleasure, these are the two alternating ends of youth; and Archie was of the parsimonious. The wind blew cold out of a certain quarter — he turned his back upon it; stayed as little as was possible in his father's presence; and when there, averted his eyes as much as was decent from his father's face. The lamp shone for many hundred days upon these two at table — my lord, ruddy, gloomy, and unreverent; Archie with a potential brightness that was always dimmed and veiled in that society; and there were not, perhaps, in Christendom two men more radically strangers. The father, with a grand simplicity, either spoke of what interested himself, or maintained an unaffected silence. The son turned in his head for some topic that should be quite safe, that would spare him fresh evidences either of my lord's inherent grossness or of the innocence of his inhumanity; treading gingerly the ways of intercourse, like a lady gathering up her skirts in a by-path. If he made a mistake, and my lord began to abound in matter of offence, Archie drew himself up, his brow grew dark, his share of the talk expired; but my lord would faithfully and cheerfully continue to pour out the worst of himself before his silent and offended son.

“Well, it’s a poor hert that never rejoices!” he would say, at the conclusion of such a nightmare interview. “But I must get to my plew-stilts.” And he would seclude himself as usual in his back room, and Archie go forth into the night and the city quivering with animosity and scorn.

CHAPTER III — IN THE MATTER OF THE HANGING OF DUNCAN JOPP

It chanced in the year 1813 that Archie strayed one day into the Justiciary Court. The macer made room for the son of the presiding judge. In the dock, the centre of men's eyes, there stood a whey-coloured, misbegotten caitiff, Duncan Jopp, on trial for his life. His story, as it was raked out before him in that public scene, was one of disgrace and vice and cowardice, the very nakedness of crime; and the creature heard and it seemed at times as though he understood — as if at times he forgot the horror of the place he stood in, and remembered the shame of what had brought him there. He kept his head bowed and his hands clutched upon the rail; his hair dropped in his eyes and at times he flung it back; and now he glanced about the audience in a sudden fellness of terror, and now looked in the face of his judge and gulped. There was pinned about his throat a piece of dingy flannel; and this it was perhaps that turned the scale in Archie's mind between disgust and pity. The creature stood in a vanishing point; yet a little while, and he was still a man, and had eyes and apprehension; yet a little longer, and with a last sordid piece of pageantry, he would cease to be. And here, in the meantime, with a trait of human nature that caught at the beholder's breath, he was tending a sore throat.

Over against him, my Lord Hermiston occupied the bench in the red robes of criminal jurisdiction, his face framed in the white wig. Honest all through, he did not affect the virtue of impartiality; this was no case for refinement; there was a man to be hanged, he would have said, and he was hanging him. Nor was it possible to see his lordship, and acquit him of gusto in the task. It was plain he gloried in the exercise of his trained faculties, in the clear sight which pierced at once into the joint of fact, in the rude, unvarnished gibes with which he demolished every figment of defence. He took his ease and jested, unbending in that solemn place with some of the freedom of the tavern; and the rag of man with the flannel round his neck was hunted gallowsward with jeers.

Duncan had a mistress, scarce less forlorn and greatly older than himself, who came up, whimpering and curtseying, to add the weight of her betrayal. My lord gave her the oath in his most roaring voice, and added an intolerant warning.

"Mind what ye say now, Janet," said he. "I have an e'e upon ye, I'm ill to jest with."

Presently, after she was tremblingly embarked on her story, "And what made ye do this, ye auld runt?" the Court interposed. "Do ye mean to tell me ye was the panel's mistress?"

"If you please, ma loard," whined the female.

"Godsake! ye made a bonny couple," observed his lordship; and there was something so formidable and ferocious in his scorn that not even the galleries thought to laugh.

The summing up contained some jewels.

"These two peetiable creatures seem to have made up thegither, it's not for us to explain why." — "The panel, who (whatever else he may be) appears to be equally ill set-out in mind and boady." — "Neither the panel nor yet the old wife appears to have had so much common sense as even to tell a lie when it was necessary." And in the course of sentencing, my lord had this *obiter dictum*: "I have been the means, under God, of haanging a great number, but never just such a disjaskit rascal as yourself." The words were strong in themselves; the light and heat and detonation of their delivery, and the savage pleasure of the speaker in his task, made them tingle in the ears.

When all was over, Archie came forth again into a changed world. Had there been the least redeeming greatness in the crime, any obscurity, any dubiety, perhaps he might have understood. But the culprit stood, with his sore throat, in the sweat of his mortal agony, without defence or excuse: a thing to cover up with blushes: a being so much sunk beneath the zones of sympathy that pity might seem harmless. And the judge had pursued him with a monstrous, relishing gaiety, horrible to be conceived, a trait for nightmares. It is one thing to spear a tiger, another to crush a toad; there are æsthetics even of the slaughter-house; and the loathsomeness of Duncan Jopp enveloped and infected the image of his judge.

Archie passed by his friends in the High Street with incoherent words and gestures. He saw Holyrood in a dream, remembrance of its romance awoke in him and faded; he had a vision of the old radiant stories, of Queen Mary and Prince Charlie, of the hooded stag, of the splendour and crime, the velvet and bright iron of the past; and dismissed them with a cry of pain. He lay and moaned in the Hunter's Bog, and the heavens were dark above him and the grass of the field an offence. "This is my father," he said. "I draw my life from him; the flesh upon my bones is his, the bread I am fed with is the wages of these horrors." He recalled his mother, and ground his forehead in the earth. He thought of flight, and where was he to flee to? of other lives, but was there any life worth living in this den of savage and jeering animals?

The interval before the execution was like a violent dream. He met his father; he would not look at him, he could not speak to him. It seemed there was no living creature but must have been swift to recognise that imminent animosity; but the hide of the Justice-Clerk remained impenetrable. Had my lord been talkative, the truce could never have subsisted; but he was by fortune in one of his humours of sour silence; and under the very guns of his broadside, Archie nursed the enthusiasm of rebellion. It seemed to him, from the top of his nineteen years' experience, as if he were marked at birth to be the perpetrator of some signal action, to set back fallen Mercy, to overthrow the usurping devil that sat, horned and hoofed, on her throne. Seductive Jacobin figments, which he had often refuted at the Speculative, swam up in his mind and startled him as with voices: and he seemed to himself to walk accompanied by an almost tangible presence of new beliefs and duties.

On the named morning he was at the place of execution. He saw the fleering rabble, the flinching wretch produced. He looked on for a while at a certain parody of devotion, which seemed to strip the wretch of his last claim to manhood. Then followed the brutal instant of extinction, and the paltry dangling of the remains like a broken jumping-jack. He had been prepared for something terrible, not for this tragic meanness. He stood a moment silent, and then — "I denounce this God-defying murder," he shouted; and his father, if he must have disclaimed the sentiment, might have owned the stentorian voice with which it was uttered.

Frank Innes dragged him from the spot. The two handsome lads followed the same course of study and recreation, and felt a certain mutual attraction, founded mainly on good looks. It had never gone deep; Frank was by nature a thin, jeering creature, not truly susceptible whether of feeling or inspiring friendship; and the relation between the pair was altogether on the outside, a thing of common knowledge and the pleasantries that spring from a common acquaintance. The more credit to Frank that he was appalled by Archie's outburst, and at least conceived the design of keeping him in sight, and, if possible, in hand, for the day. But Archie, who had just defied — was it God or Satan? — would not listen to the word of a college companion.

"I will not go with you," he said. "I do not desire your company, sir; I would be alone."

"Here, Weir, man, don't be absurd," said Innes, keeping a tight hold upon his sleeve. "I will not let you go until I know what you mean to do with yourself; it's no use brandishing that staff." For indeed at that moment Archie had made a sudden — perhaps a warlike — movement. "This has been the most insane affair; you know it has. You know very well that I'm playing the good Samaritan. All I wish is to keep you quiet."

"If quietness is what you wish, Mr. Innes," said Archie, "and you will promise to leave me entirely to myself, I will tell you so much, that I am going to walk in the country and admire the beauties of nature."

"Honour bright?" asked Frank.

"I am not in the habit of lying, Mr. Innes," retorted Archie. "I have the honour of wishing you good-day."

"You won't forget the Spec.?" asked Innes.

"The Spec.?" said Archie. "O no, I won't forget the Spec."

And the one young man carried his tortured spirit forth of the city and all the day long, by one road and another, in an endless pilgrimage of misery; while the other hastened smilingly to spread the news of Weir's access of insanity, and to drum up for that night a full attendance at the Speculative, where further eccentric developments might certainly be looked for. I doubt if Innes had the least belief in his prediction; I think it flowed rather from a wish to make the story as good and the scandal as great as possible; not from any ill-will to Archie — from the mere pleasure of beholding interested faces. But for all that his words were prophetic. Archie did not forget the Spec.; he put in an appearance there at the due time, and, before the evening was over, had dealt a memorable shock to his companions. It chanced he was the president of the night. He sat in the same room where the Society still meets — only the portraits were not there: the men who afterwards sat for them were then but beginning their career. The same lustre of many tapers shed its light over the meeting; the same chair, perhaps, supported him that so many of us have sat in since. At times he seemed to forget the business of the evening, but even in these periods he sat with a great air of energy and determination. At times he meddled bitterly, and launched with defiance those fines which are the precious and rarely used artillery of the president. He little thought, as he did so, how he resembled his father, but his friends remarked upon it, chuckling. So far, in his high place above his fellow-students, he seemed set beyond the possibility of any scandal; but his mind was made up — he was determined to fulfil the sphere of his offence. He signed to Innes (whom he had just fined, and who just impeached his ruling) to succeed him in the chair, stepped down from the platform, and took his place by the chimney-piece, the shine of many wax tapers from above illuminating his pale face, the glow of the great red fire relieving from behind his slim figure. He had to propose, as an amendment to the next subject in the case-book, "Whether capital punishment be consistent with God's will or man's policy?"

A breath of embarrassment, of something like alarm, passed round the room, so daring did these words appear upon the lips of Hermiston's only son. But the amendment was not seconded; the previous question was promptly moved and unanimously voted, and the momentary scandal smuggled by. Innes triumphed in the fulfilment of his prophecy. He and Archie were now become the heroes of the night; but whereas every one crowded about Innes, when the meeting broke up, but one of all his companions came to speak to Archie.

"Weir, man! That was an extraordinary raid of yours!" observed this courageous member, taking him confidentially by the arm as they went out.

"I don't think it a raid," said Archie grimly. "More like a war. I saw that poor brute hanged this morning, and my gorge rises at it yet."

"Hut-tut," returned his companion, and, dropping his arm like something hot, he sought the less tense society of others.

Archie found himself alone. The last of the faithful — or was it only the boldest of the curious? — had fled. He watched the black huddle of his fellow-students draw off down and up the street, in whispering or boisterous gangs. And the isolation of the moment weighed upon him like an omen and an emblem of his destiny in life. Bred up in unbroken fear himself, among trembling servants, and in a house which (at the least ruffle in the master's voice) shuddered into silence, he saw himself on the brink of the red valley of war, and measured the danger and length of it with awe. He made a detour in the glimmer and shadow of the streets, came into the back stable lane, and watched for a long while the light burn steady in the Judge's room. The longer he gazed upon that illuminated window-blind, the more blank became the picture of the man who sat behind it, endlessly turning over sheets of process, pausing to sip a glass of port, or rising and passing heavily about his book-lined walls to verify some reference. He could not combine the brutal judge and the industrious, dispassionate student; the connecting link escaped him; from such a dual nature, it was impossible he should predict behaviour; and he asked himself if he had done well to plunge into a business of which the end could not be foreseen? and presently after, with a sickening decline of confidence, if he had done loyally to strike his father? For he had struck him — defied him twice over and before a cloud of witnesses — struck him a public buffet before crowds. Who had called him to judge his father in these precarious and high questions? The office was usurped. It might have become a stranger; in a son — there was no blinking it — in a son, it was disloyal. And now, between these two natures so antipathetic, so hateful to each other, there was depending an unpardonable affront: and the providence of God alone might foresee the manner in which it would be resented by Lord Hermiston.

These misgivings tortured him all night and arose with him in the winter's morning; they followed him from class to class, they made him shrinkingly sensitive to every shade of manner in his companions, they sounded in his ears through the current voice of the professor; and he brought them home with him at night unabated and indeed increased. The cause of this increase lay in a chance encounter with the celebrated Dr. Gregory. Archie stood looking vaguely in the lighted window of a book shop, trying to nerve himself for the approaching ordeal. My lord and he had met and parted in the morning as they had now done for long, with scarcely the ordinary civilities of life; and it was plain to the son that nothing had yet reached the father's ears. Indeed, when he recalled the awful countenance of my lord, a timid hope sprang up in him that perhaps there would be found no one bold enough to carry tales. If this were so, he asked himself, would he begin again? and he found no answer. It was at this moment that a hand was laid upon his arm, and a voice said in his ear, "My dear Mr. Archie, you had better come and see me."

He started, turned round, and found himself face to face with Dr. Gregory. "And why should I come to see you?" he asked, with the defiance of the miserable.

"Because you are looking exceedingly ill," said the doctor, "and you very evidently want looking after, my young friend. Good folk are scarce, you know; and it is not every one that would be quite so much missed as yourself. It is not every one that Hermiston would miss."

And with a nod and a smile, the doctor passed on.

A moment after, Archie was in pursuit, and had in turn, but more roughly, seized him by the arm.

"What do you mean? what did you mean by saying that? What makes you think that Hermis — my father would have missed me?"

The doctor turned about and looked him all over with a clinical eye. A far more stupid man than Dr. Gregory might have guessed the truth; but ninety-nine out of a hundred, even if they had been equally inclined to kindness, would have blundered by some touch of charitable exaggeration. The doctor was better inspired. He knew the father well; in that white face of intelligence and suffering, he divined something of the son; and he told, without apology or adornment, the plain truth.

"When you had the measles, Mr. Archibald, you had them gey and ill; and I thought you were going to slip between my fingers," he said. "Well, your father was anxious. How did I know it? says you. Simply because I am a trained observer. The sign that I saw him make, ten thousand would have missed; and perhaps — *perhaps*, I say, because he's a hard man to judge of — but perhaps he never made another. A strange thing to consider! It was this. One day I came to him: 'Hermiston,' said I, 'there's a change.' He never said a word, just glowered at me (if ye'll pardon the phrase) like a wild beast. 'A change for the better,' said I. And I distinctly heard him take his breath."

The doctor left no opportunity for anti-climax; nodding his cocked hat (a piece of antiquity to which he clung) and repeating "Distinctly" with raised eye-brows, he took his departure, and left Archie speechless in the street.

The anecdote might be called infinitely little, and yet its meaning for Archie was immense. "I did not know the old man had so much blood in him." He had never dreamed this sire of his, this aboriginal antique, this adamantine Adam, had even so much of a heart as to be moved in the least degree for another — and that other himself, who had insulted him! With the generosity of youth, Archie was instantly under arms upon the other side: had instantly created a new image of Lord Hermiston, that of a man who was all iron without and all sensibility within. The mind of the vile jester, the tongue that had pursued Duncan Jopp with unmanly insults, the unbeloved countenance that he had known and feared for so long, were all forgotten; and he hastened home, impatient to confess his misdeeds, impatient to throw himself on the mercy of this imaginary character.

He was not to be long without a rude awakening. It was in the gloaming when he drew near the door-step of the lighted house, and was aware of the figure of his father approaching from the opposite side. Little daylight lingered; but on the door being opened, the strong yellow shine of the lamp gushed out upon the landing and shone full on Archie, as he stood, in the old-fashioned observance of respect, to yield precedence. The judge came without haste, stepping stately and firm; his chin raised, his face (as he entered the lamplight) strongly illumined, his mouth set hard. There was never a wink of change in his expression; without looking to the right or left, he mounted the stair, passed close to Archie, and entered the house. Instinctively, the boy, upon his first coming, had made a movement to meet him; instinctively he recoiled against the railing, as the old man swept by him in a pomp of indignation. Words were needless; he knew all — perhaps more than all — and the hour of judgment was at hand.

It is possible that, in this sudden revulsion of hope, and before these symptoms of impending danger, Archie might have fled. But not even that was left to him. My lord, after hanging up his cloak and hat, turned round in the lighted entry, and made him an imperative and silent gesture with his thumb, and with the strange instinct of obedience, Archie followed him into the house.

All dinner-time there reigned over the Judge's table a palpable silence, and as soon as the solids were despatched he rose to his feet.

“M’Killup, tak’ the wine into my room,” said he; and then to his son: “Archie, you and me has to have a talk.”

It was at this sickening moment that Archie’s courage, for the first and last time, entirely deserted him. “I have an appointment,” said he.

“It’ll have to be broken, then,” said Hermiston, and led the way into his study.

The lamp was shaded, the fire trimmed to a nicety, the table covered deep with orderly documents, the backs of law books made a frame upon all sides that was only broken by the window and the doors.

For a moment Hermiston warmed his hands at the fire, presenting his back to Archie; then suddenly disclosed on him the terrors of the Hanging Face.

“What’s this I hear of ye?” he asked.

There was no answer possible to Archie.

“I’ll have to tell ye, then,” pursued Hermiston. “It seems ye’ve been skirting against the father that begot ye, and one of his Maijesty’s Judges in this land; and that in the public street, and while an order of the Court was being executit. Forbye which, it would appear that ye’ve been airing your opeenions in a Coallege Debatin’ Society”; he paused a moment: and then, with extraordinary bitterness, added: “Ye damned eediot.”

“I had meant to tell you,” stammered Archie. “I see you are well informed.”

“Muckle obleeged to ye,” said his lordship, and took his usual seat. “And so you disapprove of Caapital Punishment?” he added.

“I am sorry, sir, I do,” said Archie.

“I am sorry, too,” said his lordship. “And now, if you please, we shall approach this business with a little more parteecularity. I hear that at the hanging of Duncan Jopp — and, man! ye had a fine client there — in the middle of all the riff-raff of the ceety, ye thought fit to cry out, ‘This is a damned murder, and my gorge rises at the man that haangit him.’”

“No, sir, these were not my words,” cried Archie.

“What were yer words, then?” asked the Judge.

“I believe I said, ‘I denounce it as a murder!’” said the son. “I beg your pardon — a God-defying murder. I have no wish to conceal the truth,” he added, and looked his father for a moment in the face.

“God, it would only need that of it next!” cried Hermiston. “There was nothing about your gorge rising, then?”

“That was afterwards, my lord, as I was leaving the Speculative. I said I had been to see the miserable creature hanged, and my gorge rose at it.”

"Did ye, though?" said Hermiston. "And I suppose ye knew who haangit him?"

"I was present at the trial, I ought to tell you that, I ought to explain. I ask your pardon beforehand for any expression that may seem undutiful. The position in which I stand is wretched," said the unhappy hero, now fairly face to face with the business he had chosen. "I have been reading some of your cases. I was present while Jopp was tried. It was a hideous business. Father, it was a hideous thing! Grant he was vile, why should you hunt him with a vileness equal to his own? It was done with glee — that is the word — you did it with glee; and I looked on, God help me! with horror."

"You're a young gentleman that doesna approve of Caapital Punishment," said Hermiston. "Weel, I'm an auld man that does. I was glad to get Jopp haangit, and what for would I pretend I wasna? You're all for honesty, it seems; you couldn't even steik your mouth on the public street. What for should I steik mines upon the bench, the King's officer, bearing the sword, a dreid to evil-doers, as I was from the beginning, and as I will be to the end! Mair than enough of it! Heedious! I never gave twa thoughts to heediousness, I have no call to be bonny. I'm a man that gets through with my day's business, and let that suffice."

The ring of sarcasm had died out of his voice as he went on; the plain words became invested with some of the dignity of the Justice-seat.

"It would be telling you if you could say as much," the speaker resumed. "But ye cannot. Ye've been reading some of my cases, ye say. But it was not for the law in them, it was to spy out your faither's nakedness, a fine employment in a son. You're splairging; you're running at lairge in life like a wild nowt. It's impossible you should think any longer of coming to the Bar. You're not fit for it; no splairger is. And another thing: son of mines or no son of mines, you have flung fylement in public on one of the Senators of the Coallege of Justice, and I would make it my business to see that ye were never admitted there yourself. There is a kind of a decency to be observit. Then comes the next of it — what am I to do with ye next? Ye'll have to find some kind of a trade, for I'll never support ye in idleset. What do ye fancy ye'll be fit for? The pulpit? Na, they could never get diveenity into that bloackhead. Him that the law of man whammles is no likely to do muckle better by the law of God. What would ye make of hell? Wouldna your gorge rise at that? Na, there's no room for splairgers under the fower quarters of John Calvin. What else is there? Speak up. Have ye got nothing of your own?"

"Father, let me go to the Peninsula," said Archie. "That's all I'm fit for — to fight."

"All? quo' he!" returned the Judge. "And it would be enough too, if I thought it. But I'll never trust ye so near the French, you that's so Frenchi-feed."

"You do me injustice there, sir," said Archie. "I am loyal; I will not boast; but any interest I may have ever felt in the French — "

"Have ye been so loyal to me?" interrupted his father.

There came no reply.

"I think not," continued Hermiston. "And I would send no man to be a servant to the King, God bless him! that has proved such a shauchling son to his own faither. You can splairge here on Edinburgh street, and where's the hairm? It doesna play buff on me! And if there were twenty thousand eediots like yourself, sorrow a Duncan Jopp would hang the fewer. But there's no splairging possible in a camp; and if ye were to go to it, you would find out for yourself whether Lord Well'n'ton approves of caapital punishment or not. You a sodger!" he cried, with a sudden burst of scorn. "Ye auld wife, the sodgers would bray at ye like cuddies!"

As at the drawing of a curtain, Archie was aware of some illogicality in his position, and stood abashed. He had a strong impression, besides, of the essential valour of the old gentleman before him, how conveyed it would be hard to say.

"Well, have ye no other proposeetion?" said my lord again.

"You have taken this so calmly, sir, that I cannot but stand ashamed," began Archie.

"I'm nearer voamiting, though, than you would fancy," said my lord. The blood rose to Archie's brow.

"I beg your pardon, I should have said that you had accepted my affront. . . . I admit it was an affront; I did not think to apologise, but I do, I ask your pardon; it will not be so again, I pass you my word of honour. . . . I should have said that I admired your magnanimity with — this — offender," Archie concluded with a gulp.

"I have no other son, ye see," said Hermiston. "A bonny one I have gotten! But I must just do the best I can wi' him, and what am I to do? If ye had been younger, I would have wheepit ye for this rideeculous exhibeetion. The way it is, I have just to grin and bear. But one thing is to be clearly understood. As a faither, I must grin and bear it; but if I had been the Lord Advocate instead of the Lord Justice-Clerk, son or no son, Mr. Erchibald Weir would have been in a jyle the night."

Archie was now dominated. Lord Hermiston was coarse and cruel; and yet the son was aware of a bloomless nobility, an ungracious abnegation of the man's self in the man's office. At every word, this sense of the greatness of Lord Hermiston's spirit struck more home; and along with it that of his own impotence, who had struck — and perhaps basely struck — at his own father, and not reached so far as to have even nettled him.

"I place myself in your hands without reserve," he said.

"That's the first sensible word I've had of ye the night," said Hermiston. "I can tell ye, that would have been the end of it, the one way or the other; but it's better ye should come there yourself, than what I would have had to hirstle ye. Weel, by my way of it — and my way is the best — there's just the one thing it's possible that ye might be with decency, and that's a laird. Ye'll be out of hairm's way at the least of it. If ye have to rowt, ye can rowt amang the kye; and the maist feck of the caapital punishment ye're like to come across'll be guddling trouts. Now, I'm for no idle lairdies; every man has to work, if it's only at peddling ballants; to work, or to be wheeped, or to be haangit. If I set ye down at Hermiston I'll have to see you work that place the way it has never been workit yet; ye must ken about the sheep like a herd; ye must be my grieve there, and I'll see that I gain by ye. Is that understood?"

"I will do my best," said Archie.

"Well, then, I'll send Kirstie word the morn, and ye can go yourself the day after," said Hermiston. "And just try to be less of an eediot!" he concluded with a freezing smile, and turned immediately to the papers on his desk.

CHAPTER IV — OPINIONS OF THE BENCH

Late the same night, after a disordered walk, Archie was admitted into Lord Glenalmond's dining-room, where he sat with a book upon his knee, beside three frugal coals of fire. In his robes upon the bench, Glenalmond had a certain air of burliness: plucked of these, it was a may-pole of a man that rose unsteadily from his chair to give his visitor welcome. Archie had suffered much in the last days, he had suffered again that evening; his face was white and drawn, his eyes wild and dark. But Lord Glenalmond greeted him without the least mark of surprise or curiosity.

"Come in, come in," said he. "Come in and take a seat. Carstairs" (to his servant), "make up the fire, and then you can bring a bit of supper," and again to Archie, with a very trivial accent: "I was half expecting you," he added.

"No supper," said Archie. "It is impossible that I should eat."

"Not impossible," said the tall old man, laying his hand upon his shoulder, "and, if you will believe me, necessary."

"You know what brings me?" said Archie, as soon as the servant had left the room.

"I have a guess, I have a guess," replied Glenalmond. "We will talk of it presently — when Carstairs has come and gone, and you have had a piece of my good Cheddar cheese and a pull at the porter tankard: not before."

"It is impossible I should eat" repeated Archie.

"Tut, tut!" said Lord Glenalmond. "You have eaten nothing to-day, and I venture to add, nothing yesterday. There is no case that may not be made worse; this may be a very disagreeable business, but if you were to fall sick and die, it would be still more so, and for all concerned — for all concerned."

"I see you must know all," said Archie. "Where did you hear it?"

"In the mart of scandal, in the Parliament House," said Glenalmond. "It runs riot below among the bar and the public, but it sifts up to us upon the bench, and rumour has some of her voices even in the divisions."

Carstairs returned at this moment, and rapidly laid out a little supper; during which Lord Glenalmond spoke at large and a little vaguely on indifferent subjects, so that it might be rather said of him that he made a cheerful noise, than that he contributed to human conversation; and Archie sat upon the other side, not heeding him, brooding over his wrongs and errors.

But so soon as the servant was gone, he broke forth again at once. "Who told my father? Who dared to tell him? Could it have been you?”

“No, it was not me,” said the Judge; “although — to be quite frank with you, and after I had seen and warned you — it might have been me — I believe it was Glenkindie.”

“That shrimp!” cried Archie.

“As you say, that shrimp,” returned my lord; “although really it is scarce a fitting mode of expression for one of the senators of the College of Justice. We were hearing the parties in a long, crucial case, before the fifteen; Creech was moving at some length for an infeftment; when I saw Glenkindie lean forward to Hermiston with his hand over his mouth and make him a secret communication. No one could have guessed its nature from your father: from Glenkindie, yes, his malice sparked out of him a little grossly. But your father, no. A man of granite. The next moment he pounced upon Creech. ‘Mr. Creech,’ says he, ‘I’ll take a look of that sasine,’ and for thirty minutes after,” said Glenalmond, with a smile, “Messrs. Creech and Co. were fighting a pretty up-hill battle, which resulted, I need hardly add, in their total rout. The case was dismissed. No, I doubt if ever I heard Hermiston better inspired. He was literally rejoicing *in apicibus juris*.”

Archie was able to endure no longer. He thrust his plate away and interrupted the deliberate and insignificant stream of talk. “Here,” he said, “I have made a fool of myself, if I have not made something worse. Do you judge between us — judge between a father and a son. I can speak to you; it is not like . . . I will tell you what I feel and what I mean to do; and you shall be the judge,” he repeated.

“I decline jurisdiction,” said Glenalmond, with extreme seriousness. “But, my dear boy, if it will do you any good to talk, and if it will interest you at all to hear what I may choose to say when I have heard you, I am quite at your command. Let an old man say it, for once, and not need to blush: I love you like a son.”

There came a sudden sharp sound in Archie’s throat. “Ay,” he cried, “and there it is! Love! Like a son! And how do you think I love my father?”

“Quietly, quietly,” says my lord.

“I will be very quiet,” replied Archie. “And I will be baldly frank. I do not love my father; I wonder sometimes if I do not hate him. There’s my shame; perhaps my sin; at least, and in the sight of God, not my fault. How was I to love him? He has never spoken to me, never smiled upon me; I do not think he ever touched me. You know the way he talks? You do not talk so, yet you can sit and hear him without shuddering, and I cannot. My soul is sick when he begins with it; I could smite him in the mouth. And all that’s nothing. I was at the trial of this Jopp. You were not there, but you must have heard him often; the man’s notorious for it, for being — look at my position!

he's my father and this is how I have to speak of him — notorious for being a brute and cruel and a coward. Lord Glenalmond, I give you my word, when I came out of that Court, I longed to die — the shame of it was beyond my strength: but I — I — " he rose from his seat and began to pace the room in a disorder. "Well, who am I? A boy, who have never been tried, have never done anything except this twopenny impotent folly with my father. But I tell you, my lord, and I know myself, I am at least that kind of a man — or that kind of a boy, if you prefer it — that I could die in torments rather than that any one should suffer as that scoundrel suffered. Well, and what have I done? I see it now. I have made a fool of myself, as I said in the beginning; and I have gone back, and asked my father's pardon, and placed myself wholly in his hands — and he has sent me to Hermiston," with a wretched smile, "for life, I suppose — and what can I say? he strikes me as having done quite right, and let me off better than I had deserved."

"My poor, dear boy!" observed Glenalmond. "My poor dear and, if you will allow me to say so, very foolish boy! You are only discovering where you are; to one of your temperament, or of mine, a painful discovery. The world was not made for us; it was made for ten hundred millions of men, all different from each other and from us; there's no royal road there, we just have to sclamber and tumble. Don't think that I am at all disposed to be surprised; don't suppose that I ever think of blaming you; indeed I rather admire! But there fall to be offered one or two observations on the case which occur to me and which (if you will listen to them dispassionately) may be the means of inducing you to view the matter more calmly. First of all, I cannot acquit you of a good deal of what is called intolerance. You seem to have been very much offended because your father talks a little sculduddery after dinner, which it is perfectly licit for him to do, and which (although I am not very fond of it myself) appears to be entirely an affair of taste. Your father, I scarcely like to remind you, since it is so trite a commonplace, is older than yourself. At least, he is *major* and *sui juris*, and may please himself in the matter of his conversation. And, do you know, I wonder if he might not have as good an answer against you and me? We say we sometimes find him *coarse*, but I suspect he might retort that he finds us always dull. Perhaps a relevant exception."

He beamed on Archie, but no smile could be elicited.

"And now," proceeded the Judge, "for 'Archibald on Capital Punishment.' This is a very plausible academic opinion; of course I do not and I cannot hold it; but that's not to say that many able and excellent persons have not done so in the past. Possibly, in the past also, I may have a little dipped myself in the same heresy. My third client, or possibly my fourth, was the means of a return in my opinions. I never saw the man I more believed in; I would have put my hand in the fire, I would have gone to the cross for him; and when it came to trial he was gradually pictured before me, by undeniable probation, in the light of so gross, so cold-blooded, and so black-hearted a villain, that I had a mind to have cast my brief upon the table. I was then boiling against the man with even a more tropical temperature than I had been boiling for him. But I said to myself: 'No, you have taken up his case; and because you have changed your mind it must not be suffered to let drop. All that rich tide of eloquence that you prepared last night with so much enthusiasm is out of place, and yet you must not desert him, you must say something.' So I said something, and I got him off. It made my reputation. But an experience of that kind is formative. A man must not bring his passions to the bar — or to the bench," he added.

The story had slightly rekindled Archie's interest. "I could never deny," he began — "I mean I can conceive that some men would be better dead. But who are we to know all the springs of God's unfortunate creatures? Who are we to trust ourselves where it seems that God Himself must think twice before He treads, and to do it with delight? Yes, with delight. *Tigris ut aspera*."

"Perhaps not a pleasant spectacle," said Glenalmond. "And yet, do you know, I think somehow a great one."

"I've had a long talk with him to-night," said Archie.

"I was supposing so," said Glenalmond.

"And he struck me — I cannot deny that he struck me as something very big," pursued the son. "Yes, he is big. He never spoke about himself; only about me. I suppose I admired him. The dreadful part — "

"Suppose we did not talk about that," interrupted Glenalmond. "You know it very well, it cannot in any way help that you should brood upon it, and I sometimes wonder whether you and I — who are a pair of sentimentalists — are quite good judges of plain men."

"How do you mean?" asked Archie.

"*Fair* judges, mean," replied Glenalmond. "Can we be just to them? Do we not ask too much? There was a word of yours just now that impressed me a little when you asked me who we were to know all the springs of God's unfortunate creatures. You applied that, as I understood, to capital cases only. But does it — I ask myself — does it not apply all through? Is it any less difficult to judge of a good man or of a half-good man, than of the worst criminal at the bar? And may not each have relevant excuses?"

"Ah, but we do not talk of punishing the good," cried Archie.

"No, we do not talk of it," said Glenalmond. "But I think we do it.

Your father, for instance."

"You think I have punished him?" cried Archie.

Lord Glenalmond bowed his head.

"I think I have," said Archie. "And the worst is, I think he feels it! How much, who can tell, with such a being? But I think he does."

"And I am sure of it," said Glenalmond.

"Has he spoken to you, then?" cried Archie.

"O no," replied the judge.

"I tell you honestly," said Archie, "I want to make it up to him. I will go, I have already pledged myself to go to Hermiston. That was to him. And now I pledge myself to you, in the sight of God, that I will close my mouth on capital punishment and all other subjects where our views may clash, for — how long shall I say? when shall I have sense enough? — ten years. Is that well?"

"It is well," said my lord.

"As far as it goes," said Archie. "It is enough as regards myself, it is to lay down enough of my conceit. But as regards him, whom I have publicly insulted? What am I to do to him? How do you pay attentions to a — an Alp like that?"

"Only in one way," replied Glenalmond. "Only by obedience, punctual, prompt, and scrupulous."

"And I promise that he shall have it," answered Archie. "I offer you my hand in pledge of it."

"And I take your hand as a solemnity," replied the judge. "God bless you, my dear, and enable you to keep your promise. God guide you in the true way, and spare your days, and preserve to you your honest heart." At that, he kissed the young man upon the forehead in a gracious, distant, antiquated way; and instantly launched, with a marked change of voice, into another subject. "And now, let us replenish the tankard; and I believe if you will try my Cheddar again, you would find you had a better appetite. The Court has spoken, and the case is dismissed."

"No, there is one thing I must say," cried Archie. "I must say it in justice to himself. I know — I believe faithfully, slavishly, after our talk — he will never ask me anything unjust. I am proud to feel it, that we have that much in common, I am proud to say it to you."

The Judge, with shining eyes, raised his tankard. "And I think perhaps that we might permit ourselves a toast," said he. "I should like to propose the health of a man very different from me and very much my superior — a man from whom I have often differed, who has often (in the trivial expression) rubbed me the wrong way, but whom I have never ceased to respect and, I may add, to be not a little afraid of. Shall I give you his name?"

"The Lord Justice-Clerk, Lord Hermiston," said Archie, almost with gaiety; and the pair drank the toast deeply.

It was not precisely easy to re-establish, after these emotional passages, the natural flow of conversation. But the Judge eked out what was wanting with kind looks, produced his snuff-box (which was very rarely seen) to fill in a pause, and at last, despairing of any further social success, was upon the point of getting down a book to read a favourite passage, when there came a rather startling summons at the front door, and Carstairs ushered in my Lord Glenkindie, hot from a midnight supper. I am not aware that Glenkindie was ever a beautiful object, being short, and gross-bodied, and with an expression of sensuality comparable to a bear's. At that moment, coming in hissing from many potations, with a flushed countenance and blurred eyes, he was strikingly contrasted with the tall, pale, kingly figure of Glenalmond. A rush of confused thought came over Archie — of shame that this was one of his father's elect friends; of pride, that at the least of it Hermiston could carry his liquor; and last of all, of rage, that he should have here under his eyes the man that had betrayed him. And then that too passed away; and he sat quiet, biding his opportunity.

The tipsy senator plunged at once into an explanation with Glenalmond. There was a point reserved yesterday, he had been able to make neither head nor tail of it, and seeing lights in the house, he had just dropped in for a glass of porter — and at this point he became aware of the third person. Archie saw the cod's mouth and the blunt lips of Glenkindie gape at him for a moment, and the recognition twinkle in his eyes.

"Who's this?" said he. "What? is this possibly you, Don Quickshot? And how are ye? And how's your father? And what's all this we hear of you? It seems you're a most extraordinary leveller, by all tales. No king, no parliaments, and your gorge rises at the macers, worthy men! Hoot, toot! Dear, dear me! Your father's son too! Most rideeculous!"

Archie was on his feet, flushing a little at the reappearance of his unhappy figure of speech, but perfectly self-possessed. "My lord — and you, Lord Glenalmond, my dear friend," he began, "this is a happy chance for me, that I can make my confession and offer my apologies to two of you at once."

"Ah, but I don't know about that. Confession? It'll be judeecial, my young friend," cried the jocular Glenkindie. "And I'm afraid to listen to ye. Think if ye were to make me a coanvert!"

"If you would allow me, my lord," returned Archie, "what I have to say is very serious to me; and be pleased to be humorous after I am gone!"

"Remember, I'll hear nothing against the macers!" put in the incorrigible Glenkindie.

But Archie continued as though he had not spoken. “I have played, both yesterday and to-day, a part for which I can only offer the excuse of youth. I was so unwise as to go to an execution; it seems I made a scene at the gallows; not content with which, I spoke the same night in a college society against capital punishment. This is the extent of what I have done, and in case you hear more alleged against me, I protest my innocence. I have expressed my regret already to my father, who is so good as to pass my conduct over — in a degree, and upon the condition that I am to leave my law studies.” . . .

CHAPTER V — WINTER ON THE MOORS

I. At Hermiston

The road to Hermiston runs for a great part of the way up the valley of a stream, a favourite with anglers and with midges, full of falls and pools, and shaded by willows and natural woods of birch. Here and there, but at great distances, a byway branches off, and a gaunt farmhouse may be descried above in a fold of the hill; but the more part of the time, the road would be quite empty of passage and the hills of habitation. Hermiston parish is one of the least populous in Scotland; and, by the time you came that length, you would scarce be surprised at the inimitable smallness of the kirk, a dwarfish, ancient place seated for fifty, and standing in a green by the burn-side among two-score gravestones. The manse close by, although no more than a cottage, is surrounded by the brightness of a flower-garden and the straw roofs of bees; and the whole colony, kirk and manse, garden and graveyard, finds harbourage in a grove of rowans, and is all the year round in a great silence broken only by the drone of the bees, the tinkle of the burn, and the bell on Sundays. A mile beyond the kirk the road leaves the valley by a precipitous ascent, and brings you a little after to the place of Hermiston, where it comes to an end in the back-yard before the coach-house. All beyond and about is the great field, of the hills; the plover, the curlew, and the lark cry there; the wind blows as it blows in a ship's rigging, hard and cold and pure; and the hill-tops huddle one behind another like a herd of cattle into the sunset.

The house was sixty years old, unsightly, comfortable; a farmyard and a kitchen-garden on the left, with a fruit wall where little hard green pears came to their maturity about the end of October.

The policy (as who should say the park) was of some extent, but very ill reclaimed; heather and moorfowl had crossed the boundary wall and spread and roosted within; and it would have tasked a landscape gardener to say where policy ended and unpolicied nature began. My lord had been led by the influence of Mr. Sheriff Scott into a considerable design of planting; many acres were accordingly set out with fir, and the little feathery besoms gave a false scale and lent a strange air of a toy-shop to the moors. A great, rooty sweetness of bogs was in the air, and at all seasons an infinite melancholy piping of hill birds. Standing so high and with so little shelter, it was a cold, exposed house, splashed by showers, drenched by continuous rains that made the gutters to spout, beaten upon and buffeted by all the winds of heaven; and the prospect would be often black with tempest, and often white with the snows of winter. But the house was wind and weather proof, the hearths were kept bright, and the rooms pleasant with live fires of peat; and Archie might sit of an evening and hear the squalls bugle on the moorland, and watch the fire prosper in the earthy fuel, and the smoke winding up the chimney, and drink deep of the pleasures of shelter.

Solitary as the place was, Archie did not want neighbours. Every night, if he chose, he might go down to the manse and share a "brewst" of toddy with the minister — a hare-brained ancient gentleman, long and light and still active, though his knees were loosened with age, and his voice broke continually in childish trebles — and his lady wife, a heavy, comely dame, without a word to say for herself beyond good-even and good-day. Harum-scarum, clodpole young lairds of the neighbourhood paid him the compliment of a visit. Young Hay of Romanes rode down to call, on his crop-eared pony; young Pringle of Drumanno came up on his bony grey. Hay remained on the hospitable field, and must be carried to bed; Pringle got somehow to his saddle about 3 A.M., and (as Archie stood with the lamp on the upper doorstep) lurched, uttered a senseless view-holloa, and vanished out of the small circle of illumination like a wraith. Yet a minute or two longer the clatter of his break-neck flight was audible, then it was cut off by the intervening steepness of the hill; and again, a great while after, the renewed beating of phantom horse-hoofs, far in the valley of the Hermiston, showed that the horse at least, if not his rider, was still on the homeward way.

There was a Tuesday club at the "Cross-keys" in Crossmichael, where the young bloods of the country-side congregated and drank deep on a percentage of the expense, so that he was left gainer who should have drunk the most. Archie had no great mind to this diversion, but he took it like a duty laid upon him, went with a decent regularity, did his manfullest with the liquor, held up his head in the local jests, and got home again and was able to put up his horse, to the admiration of Kirstie and the lass that helped her. He dined at Driffel, supped at Windielaws. He went to the new year's ball at Huntsfield and was made welcome, and thereafter rode to hounds with my Lord Muirfell, upon whose name, as that of a legitimate Lord of Parliament, in a work so full of Lords of Session, my pen should pause reverently. Yet the same fate attended him here as in Edinburgh. The habit of solitude tends to perpetuate itself, and an austerity of which he was quite unconscious, and a pride which seemed arrogance, and perhaps was chiefly shyness, discouraged and offended his new companions. Hay did not return more than twice, Pringle never at all, and there came a time when Archie even desisted from the Tuesday Club, and became in all things — what he had had the name of almost from the first — the Recluse of Hermiston. High-nosed Miss Pringle of Drumanno and high-stepping Miss Marshall of the Mains were understood to have had a difference of opinion about him the day after the ball — he was none the wiser, he could not suppose himself to be remarked by these entrancing ladies. At the ball itself my Lord Muirfell's daughter, the Lady Flora, spoke to him twice, and the second time with a touch of appeal, so that her colour rose and her voice trembled a little in his ear, like a passing grace in music. He stepped back with a heart on fire, coldly and not ungracefully excused himself, and a little after watched her dancing with young Drumanno of the empty laugh, and was harrowed at the sight, and raged to himself that this was a world in which it was given to Drumanno to please, and to himself only to stand aside and envy. He seemed excluded, as of right, from the favour of such society — seemed to extinguish mirth wherever he came, and was quick to feel the wound, and desist, and retire into solitude. If he had but understood the figure he presented, and the impression he made on these bright eyes and tender hearts; if he had but guessed that the Recluse of Hermiston, young, graceful, well spoken, but always cold, stirred the maidens of the county with the charm of Byronism when Byronism was new, it may be questioned whether his destiny might not even yet have been modified. It may be questioned, and I think it should be doubted. It was in his horoscope to be parsimonious of pain to himself, or of the chance of pain, even to the avoidance of any opportunity of pleasure; to have a Roman sense of duty, an instinctive aristocracy of manners and taste; to be the son of Adam Weir and Jean Rutherford.

2. Kirstie

Kirstie was now over fifty, and might have sat to a sculptor. Long of limb, and still light of foot, deep-breasted, robust-loined, her golden hair not yet mingled with any trace of silver, the years had but caressed and embellished her. By the lines of a rich and vigorous maternity, she seemed destined to be the bride of heroes and the mother of their children; and behold, by the iniquity of fate, she had passed through her youth alone, and drew near to the confines of age, a childless woman. The tender ambitions that she had received at birth had been, by time and disappointment, diverted into a certain barren zeal of industry and fury of interference. She carried her thwarted ardours into housework, she washed floors with her empty heart. If she could not win the love of one with love, she must dominate all by her temper. Hasty, wordy, and wrathful, she had a drawn quarrel with most of her neighbours, and with the others not much more than armed neutrality. The grieve's wife had been "sneisty"; the sister of the gardener who kept house for him had shown herself "upsitten"; and she wrote to Lord Hermiston about once a year demanding the discharge of the offenders, and justifying the demand by much wealth of detail. For it must not be supposed that the quarrel rested with the wife and did not take in the husband also — or with the gardener's sister, and did not speedily include the gardener himself. As the upshot of all this petty quarrelling and intemperate speech, she was practically excluded (like a lightkeeper on his tower) from the comforts of human association; except with her own indoor drudge, who, being but a lassie and entirely at her mercy, must submit to the shifty weather of "the mistress's" moods without complaint, and be willing to take buffets or caresses according to the temper of the hour. To Kirstie, thus situate and in the Indian summer of her heart, which was slow to submit to age, the gods sent this equivocal good thing of Archie's presence. She had known him in the cradle and paddled him when he misbehaved; and yet, as she had not so much as set eyes on him since he was eleven and had his last serious illness, the tall, slender, refined, and rather melancholy young gentleman of twenty came upon her with the shock of a new acquaintance. He was "Young Hermiston," "the laird himsel'": he had an air of distinctive superiority, a cold straight glance of his black eyes, that abashed the woman's tantrums in the beginning, and therefore the possibility of any quarrel was excluded. He was new, and therefore immediately aroused her curiosity; he was reticent, and kept it awake. And lastly he was dark and she fair, and he was male and she female, the everlasting fountains of interest.

Her feeling partook of the loyalty of a clanswoman, the hero-worship of a maiden aunt, and the idolatry due to a god. No matter what he had asked of her, ridiculous or tragic, she would have done it and joyed to do it. Her passion, for it was nothing less, entirely filled her. It was a rich physical pleasure to make his bed or light his lamp for him when he was absent, to pull off his wet boots or wait on him at dinner when he returned. A young man who should have so doted on the idea, moral and physical, of any woman, might be properly described as being in love, head and heels, and would have behaved himself accordingly. But Kirstie — though her heart leaped at his coming footsteps — though, when he patted her shoulder, her face brightened for the day — had not a hope or thought beyond the present moment and its perpetuation to the end of time. Till the end of time she would have had nothing altered, but still continue delightedly to serve her idol, and be repaid (say twice in the month) with a clap on the shoulder.

I have said her heart leaped — it is the accepted phrase. But rather, when she was alone in any chamber of the house, and heard his foot passing on the corridors, something in her bosom rose slowly until her breath was suspended, and as slowly fell again with a deep sigh, when the steps had passed and she was disappointed of her eyes' desire. This perpetual hunger and thirst of his presence kept her all day on the alert. When he went forth at morning, she would stand and follow him with admiring looks. As it grew late and drew to the time of his return, she would steal forth to a corner of the policy wall and be seen standing there sometimes by the hour together, gazing with shaded eyes, waiting the exquisite and barren pleasure of his view a mile off on the mountains. When at night she had trimmed and gathered the fire, turned down his bed, and laid out his night-gear — when there was no more to be done for the king's pleasure, but to remember him fervently in her usually very tepid prayers, and go to bed brooding upon his perfections, his future career, and what she should give him the next day for dinner — there still remained before her one more opportunity; she was still to take in the tray and say good-night. Sometimes Archie would glance up from his book with a preoccupied nod and a perfunctory salutation which was in truth a dismissal; sometimes — and by degrees more often — the volume would be laid aside, he would meet her coming with a look of relief; and the conversation would be engaged, last out the supper, and be prolonged till the small hours by the waning fire. It was no wonder that Archie was fond of company after his solitary days; and Kirstie, upon her side, exerted all the arts of her vigorous nature to ensnare his attention. She would keep back some piece of news during dinner to be fired off with the entrance of the supper tray, and form as it were the *lever de rideau* of the evening's entertainment. Once he had heard her tongue wag, she made sure of the result. From one subject to another she moved by insidious transitions, fearing the least silence, fearing almost to give him time for an answer lest it should slip into a hint of separation. Like so many people of her class, she was a brave narrator; her place was on the hearth-rug and she made it a rostrum, mimeing her stories as she told them, fitting them with vital detail, spinning them out with endless "quo' he's" and "quo' she's," her voice sinking into a whisper over the supernatural or the horrific; until she would suddenly spring up in affected surprise, and pointing to the clock, "Mercy, Mr. Archie!" she would say, "whatten a time o' night is this of it! God forgive me for a daft wife!" So it befell, by good management, that she was not only the first to begin these nocturnal conversations, but invariably the first to break them off; so she managed to retire and not to be dismissed.

3. A Border Family

Such an unequal intimacy has never been uncommon in Scotland, where the clan spirit survives; where the servant tends to spend her life in the same service, a helpmeet at first, then a tyrant, and at last a pensioner; where, besides, she is not necessarily destitute of the pride of birth, but is, perhaps, like Kirstie, a connection of her master's, and at least knows the legend of her own family, and may count kinship with some illustrious dead. For that is the mark of the Scot of all classes: that he stands in an attitude towards the past unthinkable to Englishmen, and remembers and cherishes the memory of his forebears, good or bad; and there burns alive in him a sense of identity with the dead even to the twentieth generation. No more characteristic instance could be found than in the family of Kirstie Elliott. They were all, and Kirstie the first of all, ready and eager to pour forth the particulars of their genealogy, embellished with every detail that memory had handed down or fancy fabricated; and, behold! from every ramification of that tree there dangled a halter. The Elliotts themselves have had a chequered history; but these Elliotts deduced, besides, from three of the most unfortunate of the border clans — the Nicksons, the Ellwalds, and the Crozers. One ancestor after another might be seen appearing a moment out of the rain and the hill mist upon his furtive business, speeding home, perhaps, with a paltry booty of lame horses and lean kine, or squealing and dealing death in some moorland feud of the ferrets and the wild cats. One after another closed his obscure adventures in mid-air, triced up to the arm of the royal gibbet or the Baron's dule-tree. For the rusty blunderbuss of Scots criminal justice, which usually hurt nobody but jurymen, became a weapon of precision for the Nicksons, the Ellwalds, and the Crozers. The exhilaration of their exploits seemed to haunt the memories of their descendants alone, and the shame to be forgotten. Pride glowed in their bosoms to publish their relationship to "Andrew Ellwald of the Laverockstanes, called 'Unchancy Dand,' who was justifeed wi' seeven mair of the same name at Jeddart in the days of King James the Sax." In all this tissue of crime and misfortune, the Elliotts of Cauldstaneslap had one boast which must appear legitimate: the males were gallows-birds, born outlaws, petty thieves, and deadly brawlers; but, according to the same tradition, the females were all chaste and faithful. The power of ancestry on the character is not limited to the inheritance of cells. If I buy ancestors by the gross from the benevolence of Lyon King of Arms, my grandson (if he is Scottish) will feel a quickening emulation of their deeds. The men of the Elliotts were proud, lawless, violent as of right, cherishing and prolonging a tradition. In like manner with the women. And the woman, essentially passionate and reckless, who crouched on the rug, in the shine of the peat fire, telling these tales, had cherished through life a wild integrity of virtue.

Her father Gilbert had been deeply pious, a savage disciplinarian in the antique style, and withal a notorious smuggler. "I mind when I was a bairn getting mony a skelp and being shoo'd to bed like pou'try," she would say. "That would be when the lads and their bit kegs were on the road. We've had the riffraff of two-three counties in our kitchen, mony's the time, betwix' the twelve and the three; and their lanterns would be standing in the forecourt, ay, a score o' them at once. But there was nae ungodly talk permitted at Cauldstaneslap. My faither was a consistent man in walk and conversation; just let slip an aith, and there was the door to ye! He had that zeal for the Lord, it was a fair wonder to hear him pray, but the family has aye had a gift that way." This father was twice married, once to a dark woman of the old Ellwald stock, by whom he had Gilbert, presently of Cauldstaneslap; and, secondly, to the mother of Kirstie. "He was an auld man when he married her, a fell auld man wi' a muckle voice — you could hear him rowting from the top o' the Kye-skairs," she said; "but for her, it appears she was a perfit wonder. It was gentle blood she had, Mr. Archie, for it was your ain. The country-side gaed gyte about her and her gowden hair. Mines is no to be mentioned wi' it, and there's few weemen has mair hair than what I have, or yet a bonnier colour. Often would I tell my dear Miss Jeannie — that was your mother, dear, she was cruel ta'en up about her hair, it was unco' tender, ye see — 'Houts, Miss Jeannie,' I would say, 'just fling your washes and your French dentifrishes in the back o' the fire, for that's the place for them; and awa' down to a burn side, and wash yersel' in cauld hill water, and dry your bonny hair in the caller wind o' the muirs, the way that my mother aye washed hers, and that I have aye made it a practice to have wishen mines — just you do what I tell ye, my dear, and ye'll give me news of it! Ye'll have hair, and routh of hair, a pigtail as thick's my arm,' I said, 'and the bonniest colour like the clear gowden guineas, so as the lads in kirk'll no can keep their eyes off it!' Weel, it lasted out her time, puir thing! I cuttit a lock of it upon her corp that was lying there sae cauld. I'll show it ye some of thir days if ye're good. But, as I was sayin', my mither — "

On the death of the father there remained golden-haired Kirstie, who took service with her distant kinsfolk, the Rutherfords, and black-a-vised Gilbert, twenty years older, who farmed the Cauldstaneslap, married, and begot four sons between 1773 and 1784, and a daughter, like a postscript, in '97, the year of Camperdown and Cape St. Vincent. It seemed it was a tradition in the family to wind up with a belated girl. In 1804, at the age of sixty, Gilbert met an end that might be called heroic. He was due home from market any time from eight at night till five in the morning, and in any condition from the quarrelsome to the speechless, for he maintained to that age the goodly customs of the Scots farmer. It was known on this occasion that he had a good bit of money to bring home; the word had gone round loosely. The laird had shown his guineas, and if anybody had but noticed it, there was an ill-looking, vagabond crew, the scum of Edinburgh, that drew out of the market long ere it was dusk and took the hill-road by Hermiston, where it was not to be believed that they had lawful business. One of the country-side, one Dickieson, they took with them to be their guide, and dear he paid for it! Of a sudden in the ford of the Broken Dykes, this vermin clan fell on the laird, six to one, and him three parts asleep, having drunk hard. But it is ill to catch an Elliott. For a while, in the night and the black water that was deep as to his saddle-girths, he wrought with his staff like a smith at his stithy, and great was the sound of oaths and blows. With that the ambuscade was burst, and he rode for home with a pistol-ball in him, three knife wounds, the loss of his front teeth, a broken rib and bridle, and a dying horse. That was a race with death that the laird rode! In the mirk night, with his broken bridle and his head swimming, he dug his spurs to the rowels in the horse's side, and the horse, that was even worse off than himself, the poor creature! screamed out loud like a person as he went, so that the hills echoed with it, and the folks at Cauldstaneslap got to their feet about the table and looked at each other with white faces. The horse fell dead at the yard gate, the laird won the length of the house and fell there on the threshold. To the son that raised him he gave the bag of money. "Hae," said he. All the way up the thieves had seemed to him to be at his heels, but now the hallucination left him — he saw them again in the place of the ambuscade — and the thirst of vengeance seized on his dying mind. Raising himself and pointing with an imperious finger into the black night from which he had come, he uttered the single command, "Brocken Dykes," and fainted. He had never been loved, but he had been feared in honour. At that sight, at that word, gasped out at them from a toothless and bleeding mouth, the old Elliott spirit awoke with a shout in the four sons. "Wanting the hat," continues my author, Kirstie, whom I but haltingly follow, for she told this tale like one inspired, "wanting guns, for there wasna twa grains o' pouder in the house, wi' nae mair weepons than their sticks into their hands, the fower o' them took the road. Only Hob, and that was the eldest, hunkered at the doorsill where the blood had rin, fyled his hand wi' it — and haddit it up to Heeven in the way o' the auld Border aith. 'Hell shall have her ain again this nicht!' he raired, and rode forth upon his earrand." It was three miles to Broken Dykes, down hill, and a sore road. Kirstie has seen men from Edinburgh dismounting there in plain day to lead their horses. But the four brothers rode it as if Auld Hornie were behind and Heaven in front. Come to the ford, and there was Dickieson. By all tales, he was not dead, but breathed and reared upon his elbow, and cried out to them for help. It was at a graceless face that he asked mercy. As soon as Hob saw, by the glint of the lantern, the eyes shining and the whiteness of the teeth in the man's face, "Damn you!" says he; "ye hae your teeth, hae ye?" and rode his horse to and fro upon that human remnant. Beyond that, Dandie must dismount with the lantern to be their guide; he was the youngest son, scarce twenty at the time. "A' nicht long they gaed in the wet heath and jennipers, and whaur they gaed they neither knew nor cared, but just followed the bluid stains and the footprints o' their faither's murderers. And a' nicht Dandie had his nose to the grund like a tyke, and the ithers followed and spak' naething, neither black nor white. There was nae noise to be heard, but just the sough of the swalled burns, and Hob, the dour yin, risping his teeth as he gaed." With the first glint of the morning they saw they were on the drove road, and at that the four stopped and had a dram to their breakfasts, for they knew that Dand must have guided them right, and the rogues could be but little ahead, hot foot for Edinburgh by the way of the Pentland Hills. By eight o'clock they had word of them — a shepherd had seen four men "uncoly mishandled" go by in the last hour. "That's yin a piece," says Clem, and swung his cudgel. "Five o' them!" says Hob. "God's death, but the faither was a man! And him drunk!" And then there befell them what my author termed "a sair misbegowk," for they were overtaken by a posse of mounted neighbours come to aid in the pursuit. Four sour faces looked on the reinforcement. "The Deil's broughten you!" said Clem, and they rode thenceforward in the rear of the party with hanging heads. Before ten they had found and secured the rogues, and by three of the afternoon, as they rode up the Vennel with their prisoners, they were aware of a concourse of people bearing in their midst something that dripped. "For the boady of the saxt," pursued Kirstie, "wi' his head smashed like a hazelnit, had been a' that nicht in the chairge o' Hermiston Water, and it dunting it on the stanes, and grunding it on the shallows, and flinging the deid thing heels-ower-hurdie at the Fa's o' Spango; and in the first o' the day, Tweed had got a hold o' him and carried him off like a wind, for it was uncoly swalled, and raced wi' him, bobbing under brae-sides, and was long playing with the creature in the drumlie lynns under the castle, and at the hinder end of all cuist him up on the starling of Crossmichael brig. Sae there they were a'thegither at last (for Dickieson had been brought in on a cart long syne), and folk could see what mainner o'man my brither had been that had held his head again sax and saved the siller, and him drunk!" Thus died of honourable injuries and in the savour of fame Gilbert Elliott of the Cauldstaneslap; but his sons had scarce less glory out of the business. Their savage haste, the skill with which Dand had found and followed the trail, the barbarity to the wounded Dickieson (which was like an open secret in the county), and the doom which it was currently supposed they had intended for the others, struck and stirred popular imagination. Some century earlier the last of the minstrels might have fashioned the last of the ballads out of that Homeric fight and chase; but the spirit was dead, or had been reincarnated already in Mr. Sheriff Scott, and the degenerate moorsmen must be content to tell the tale in prose, and to make of the "Four Black Brothers" a unit after the fashion of the "Twelve Apostles" or the "Three Musketeers."

Robert, Gilbert, Clement, and Andrew — in the proper Border diminutives, Hob, Gib, Clem, and Dand Elliott — these ballad heroes, had much in common; in particular, their high sense of the family and the family honour; but they went diverse ways, and prospered and failed in different businesses. According to Kirstie, "they had a' bees in their bonnets but Hob." Hob the laird was, indeed, essentially a decent man. An elder of the Kirk, nobody had heard an oath upon his lips, save perhaps thrice or so at the sheep-washing, since the chase of his father's murderers. The figure he had shown on that eventful night disappeared as if swallowed by a trap. He who had ecstatically dipped his hand in the red blood, he who had ridden down Dickieson, became, from that moment on, a stiff and rather graceless model of the rustic proprieties; cannily profiting by the high war prices, and yearly stowing away a little nest-egg in the bank against calamity; approved of and sometimes consulted by the greater lairds for the massive and placid sense of what he said, when he could be induced to say anything; and particularly valued by the minister, Mr. Torrance, as a right-hand man in the parish, and a model to parents. The transfiguration had been for the moment only; some Barbarossa, some old Adam of our ancestors, sleeps in all of us till the fit circumstance shall call it into action; and, for as sober as he now seemed, Hob had given once for all the measure of the devil that haunted him. He was married, and, by reason of the effulgence of that legendary night, was adored by his wife. He had a mob of little lusty, barefoot children who marched in a caravan the long miles to school, the stages of whose pilgrimage were marked by acts of spoliation and mischief, and who were qualified in the country-side as "fair pests." But in the house, if "faither was in," they were quiet as mice. In short, Hob moved through life in a great peace — the reward of any one who shall have killed his man, with any formidable and figurative circumstance, in the midst of a country gagged and swaddled with civilisation.

It was a current remark that the Elliotts were "guid and bad, like sanguishes"; and certainly there was a curious distinction, the men of business coming alternately with the dreamers. The second brother, Gib, was a weaver by trade, had gone out early into the world to

Edinburgh, and come home again with his wings singed. There was an exaltation in his nature which had led him to embrace with enthusiasm the principles of the French Revolution, and had ended by bringing him under the hawse of my Lord Hermiston in that furious onslaught of his upon the Liberals, which sent Muir and Palmer into exile and dashed the party into chaff. It was whispered that my lord, in his great scorn for the movement, and prevailed upon a little by a sense of neighbourliness, had given Gib a hint. Meeting him one day in the Potterrow, my lord had stopped in front of him: "Gib, ye eediot," he had said, "what's this I hear of you? Poalitics, poalitics, poalitics, weaver's poalitics, is the way of it, I hear. If ye arena a'thegither dozened with cediocy, ye'll gang your ways back to Cauldstaneslap, and ca' your loom, and ca' your loom, man!" And Gilbert had taken him at the word and returned, with an expedition almost to be called flight, to the house of his father. The clearest of his inheritance was that family gift of prayer of which Kirstie had boasted; and the baffled politician now turned his attention to religious matters — or, as others said, to heresy and schism. Every Sunday morning he was in Crossmichael, where he had gathered together, one by one, a sect of about a dozen persons, who called themselves "God's Remnant of the True Faithful," or, for short, "God's Remnant." To the profane, they were known as "Gib's Deils." Bailie Sweedie, a noted humorist in the town, vowed that the proceedings always opened to the tune of "The Deil Fly Away with the Exciseman," and that the sacrament was dispensed in the form of hot whisky-toddy; both wicked hits at the evangelist, who had been suspected of smuggling in his youth, and had been overtaken (as the phrase went) on the streets of Crossmichael one Fair day. It was known that every Sunday they prayed for a blessing on the arms of Bonaparte. For this "God's Remnant," as they were "skailing" from the cottage that did duty for a temple, had been repeatedly stoned by the bairns, and Gib himself hooted by a squadron of Border volunteers in which his own brother, Dand, rode in a uniform and with a drawn sword. The "Remnant" were believed, besides, to be "antinomian in principle," which might otherwise have been a serious charge, but the way public opinion then blew it was quite swallowed up and forgotten in the scandal about Bonaparte. For the rest, Gilbert had set up his loom in an outhouse at Cauldstaneslap, where he laboured assiduously six days of the week. His brothers, appalled by his political opinions, and willing to avoid dissension in the household, spoke but little to him; he less to them, remaining absorbed in the study of the Bible and almost constant prayer. The gaunt weaver was dry-nurse at Cauldstaneslap, and the bairns loved him dearly. Except when he was carrying an infant in his arms, he was rarely seen to smile — as, indeed, there were few smilers in that family. When his sister-in-law rallied him, and proposed that he should get a wife and bairns of his own, since he was so fond of them, “I have no clearness of mind upon that point,” he would reply. If nobody called him in to dinner, he stayed out. Mrs. Hob, a hard, unsympathetic woman, once tried the experiment. He went without food all day, but at dusk, as the light began to fail him, he came into the house of his own accord, looking puzzled. “I’ve had a great gale of prayer upon my speerit,” said he. “I canna mind sae muckle’s what I had for denner.” The creed of God’s Remnant was justified in the life of its founder. “And yet I dinna ken,” said Kirstie. “He’s maybe no more stockfish than his neeghbours! He rode wi’ the rest o’ them, and had a good stamach to the work, by a’ that I hear! God’s Remnant! The deil’s clavers! There wasna muckle Christianity in the way Hob guided Johnny Dickieson, at the least of it; but Guid kens! Is he a Christian even? He might be a Mahommedan or a Deevil or a Fire-worshipper, for what I ken.”

The third brother had his name on a door-plate, no less, in the city of Glasgow, “Mr. Clement Elliott,” as long as your arm. In his case, that spirit of innovation which had shown itself timidly in the case of Hob by the admission of new manures, and which had run to waste with Gilbert in subversive politics and heretical religions, bore useful fruit in many ingenious mechanical improvements. In boyhood, from his addiction to strange devices of sticks and string, he had been counted the most eccentric of the family. But that was all by now; and he was a partner of his firm, and looked to die a bailie. He too had married, and was rearing a plentiful family in the smoke and din of Glasgow; he was wealthy, and could have bought out his brother, the cock-laird, six times over, it was whispered; and when he slipped away to Cauldstaneslap for a well-earned holiday, which he did as often as he was able, he astonished the neighbours with his broadcloth, his beaver hat, and the ample plies of his neckcloth. Though an eminently solid man at bottom, after the pattern of Hob, he had contracted a certain Glasgow briskness and *aplomb* which set him off. All the other Elliotts were as lean as a rake, but Clement was laying on fat, and he panted sorely when he must get into his boots. Dand said, chuckling: “Ay, Clem has the elements of a corporation.” “A provost and corporation,” returned Clem. And his readiness was much admired.

The fourth brother, Dand, was a shepherd to his trade, and by starts, when he could bring his mind to it, excelled in the business. Nobody could train a dog like Dandie; nobody, through the peril of great storms in the winter time, could do more gallantly. But if his dexterity were exquisite, his diligence was but fitful; and he served his brother for bed and board, and a trifle of pocket-money when he asked for it. He loved money well enough, knew very well how to spend it, and could make a shrewd bargain when he liked. But he preferred a vague knowledge that he was well to windward to any counted coins in the pocket; he felt himself richer so. Hob would expostulate: “I’m an amature herd.” Dand would reply, “I’ll keep your sheep to you when I’m so minded, but I’ll keep my liberty too. Thir’s no man can coandescend on what I’m worth.” Clein would expound to him the miraculous results of compound interest, and recommend investments. “Ay, man?” Dand would say; “and do you think, if I took Hob’s siller, that I wouldna drink it or wear it on the lassies? And, anyway, my kingdom is no of this world. Either I’m a poet or else I’m nothing.” Clem would remind him of old age. “I’ll die young, like, Robbie Burns,” he would say stoutly. No question but he had a certain accomplishment in minor verse. His “Hermiston Burn,” with its pretty refrain —

“I love to gang thinking whaur ye gang linking,
    Hermiston burn, in the howe;”

his “Auld, auld Elliotts, clay-cauld Elliotts, dour, bauld Elliotts of auld,” and his really fascinating piece about the Praying Weaver’s Stone, had gained him in the neighbourhood the reputation, still possible in Scotland, of a local bard; and, though not printed himself, he was recognised by others who were and who had become famous. Walter Scott owed to Dandie the text of the “Raid of Wearie” in the *Minstrelsy*; and made him welcome at his house, and appreciated his talents, such as they were, with all his usual generosity. The Ettrick Shepherd was his sworn crony; they would meet, drink to excess, roar out their lyrics in each other’s faces, and quarrel and make it up again till bedtime. And besides these recognitions, almost to be called official, Dandie was made welcome for the sake of his gift through the farmhouses of several contiguous dales, and was thus exposed to manifold temptations which he rather sought than fled. He had figured on the stool of repentance, for once fulfilling to the letter the tradition of his hero and model. His humorous verses to Mr. Torrance on that occasion — ”Kenspeckle here my lane I stand” — unfortunately too indelicate for further citation, ran through the country like a fiery cross — they were recited, quoted, paraphrased, and laughed over as far away as Dumfries on the one hand and Dunbar on the other.

These four brothers were united by a close bond, the bond of that mutual admiration — or rather mutual hero-worship — which is so strong among the members of secluded families who have much ability and little culture. Even the extremes admired each other. Hob, who had as much poetry as the tongs, professed to find pleasure in Dand’s verses; Clem, who had no more religion than Claverhouse, nourished a heartfelt, at least an open-mouthed, admiration of Gib's prayers; and Dandie followed with relish the rise of Clem's fortunes. Indulgence followed hard on the heels of admiration. The laird, Clem, and Dand, who were Tories and patriots of the hottest quality, excused to themselves, with a certain bashfulness, the radical and revolutionary heresies of Gib. By another division of the family, the laird, Clem, and Gib, who were men exactly virtuous, swallowed the dose of Dand's irregularities as a kind of clog or drawback in the mysterious providence of God affixed to bards, and distinctly probative of poetical genius. To appreciate the simplicity of their mutual admiration it was necessary to hear Clem, arrived upon one of his visits, and dealing in a spirit of continuous irony with the affairs and personalities of that great city of Glasgow where he lived and transacted business. The various personages, ministers of the church, municipal officers, mercantile big-wigs, whom he had occasion to introduce, were all alike denigrated, all served but as reflectors to cast back a flattering side-light on the house of Cauldstaneslap. The Provost, for whom Clem by exception entertained a measure of respect, he would liken to Hob. "He minds me o' the laird there," he would say. "He has some of Hob's grand, whunstane sense, and the same way with him of steiking his mouth when he's no very pleased." And Hob, all unconscious, would draw down his upper lip and produce, as if for comparison, the formidable grimace referred to. The unsatisfactory incumbent of St. Enoch's Kirk was thus briefly dismissed: "If he had but twa fingers o' Gib's, he would waken them up." And Gib, honest man! would look down and secretly smile. Clem was a spy whom they had sent out into the world of men. He had come back with the good news that there was nobody to compare with the Four Black Brothers, no position that they would not adorn, no official that it would not be well they should replace, no interest of mankind, secular or spiritual, which would not immediately bloom under their supervision. The excuse of their folly is in two words: scarce the breadth of a hair divided them from the peasantry. The measure of their sense is this: that these symposia of rustic vanity were kept entirely within the family, like some secret ancestral practice. To the world their serious faces were never deformed by the suspicion of any simper of self-contentment. Yet it was known. "They hae a guid pride o' themsel's!" was the word in the country-side.

Lastly, in a Border story, there should be added their "two-names." Hob was The Laird. "Roy ne puis, prince ne daigne"; he was the laird of Cauldstaneslap — say fifty acres — *ipsissimus*. Clement was Mr. Elliott, as upon his door-plate, the earlier Dafty having been discarded as no longer applicable, and indeed only a reminder of misjudgment and the imbecility of the public; and the youngest, in honour of his perpetual wanderings, was known by the sobriquet of Randy Dand.

It will be understood that not all this information was communicated by the aunt, who had too much of the family failing herself to appreciate it thoroughly in others. But as time went on, Archie began to observe an omission in the family chronicle.

"Is there not a girl too?" he asked.

"Ay: Kirstie. She was named for me, or my grandmother at least — it's the same thing," returned the aunt, and went on again about Dand, whom she secretly preferred by reason of his gallantries.

"But what is your niece like?" said Archie at the next opportunity.

"Her? As black's your hat! But I dinna suppose she would maybe be what you would ca' *ill-looked* a'thegither. Na, she's a kind of a handsome jaud — a kind o' gipsy," said the aunt, who had two sets of scales for men and women — or perhaps it would be more fair to say that she had three, and the third and the most loaded was for girls.

"How comes it that I never see her in church?" said Archie.

"'Deed, and I believe she's in Glesgie with Clem and his wife. A heap good she's like to get of it! I dinna say for men folk, but where weemen folk are born, there let them bide. Glory to God, I was never far'er from here than Crossmichael."

In the meanwhile it began to strike Archie as strange, that while she thus sang the praises of her kinsfolk, and manifestly relished their virtues and (I may say) their vices like a thing creditable to herself, there should appear not the least sign of cordiality between the house of Hermiston and that of Cauldstaneslap. Going to church of a Sunday, as the lady housekeeper stepped with her skirts kilted, three tucks of her white petticoat showing below, and her best India shawl upon her back (if the day were fine) in a pattern of radiant dyes, she would sometimes overtake her relatives preceding her more leisurely in the same direction. Gib of course was absent: by skreigh of day he had been gone to Crossmichael and his fellow-heretics; but the rest of the family would be seen marching in open order: Hob and Dand, stiff-necked, straight-backed six-footers, with severe dark faces, and their plaids about their shoulders; the convoy of children scattering (in a state of high polish) on the wayside, and every now and again collected by the shrill summons of the mother; and the mother herself, by a suggestive circumstance which might have afforded matter of thought to a more experienced observer than Archie, wrapped in a shawl nearly identical with Kirstie's, but a thought more gaudy and conspicuously newer. At the sight, Kirstie grew more tall — Kirstie showed her classical profile, nose in air and nostril spread, the pure blood came in her cheek evenly in a delicate living pink.

"A braw day to ye, Mistress Elliott," said she, and hostility and gentility were nicely mingled in her tones. "A fine day, mem," the laird's wife would reply with a miraculous curtsey, spreading the while her plumage — setting off, in other words, and with arts unknown to the mere man, the pattern of her India shawl. Behind her, the whole Cauldstaneslap contingent marched in closer order, and with an indescribable air of being in the presence of the foe; and while Dandie saluted his aunt with a certain familiarity as of one who was well in court, Hob marched on in awful immobility. There appeared upon the face of this attitude in the family the consequences of some dreadful feud. Presumably the two women had been principals in the original encounter, and the laird had probably been drawn into the quarrel by the ears, too late to be included in the present skin-deep reconciliation.

"Kirstie," said Archie one day, "what is this you have against your family?"

"I dinna complean," said Kirstie, with a flush. "I say naething."

"I see you do not — not even good-day to your own nephew," said he.

"I hae naething to be ashamed of," said she. "I can say the Lord's prayer with a good grace. If Hob was ill, or in preeson or poverty, I would see to him blithely. But for curtchying and complimenting and colloguing, thank ye kindly!"

Archie had a bit of a smile: he leaned back in his chair. "I think you and Mrs. Robert are not very good friends," says he slyly, "when you have your India shawls on?"

She looked upon him in silence, with a sparkling eye but an indecipherable expression; and that was all that Archie was ever destined to learn of the battle of the India shawls.

"Do none of them ever come here to see you?" he inquired.

"Mr. Archie," said she, "I hope that I ken my place better. It would be a queer thing, I think, if I was to clamjamfry up your faither's house — that I should say it! — wi' a dirty, black-a-vised clan, no ane o' them it was worth while to mar soap upon but just mysel'! Na, they're all damnifeed wi' the black Ellwalds. I have nae patience wi' black folk." Then, with a sudden consciousness of the case of Archie, "No that it maitters for men sae muckle," she made haste to add, "but there's naebody can deny that it's unwomanly. Long hair is the ornament o' woman ony way; we've good warrandise for that — it's in the Bible — and wha can doubt that the Apostle had some gowden-haired lassie in his mind — Apostle and all, for what was he but just a man like yersel'?"

CHAPTER VI — A LEAF FROM CHRISTINA'S PSALM-BOOK

Archie was sedulous at church. Sunday after Sunday he sat down and stood up with that small company, heard the voice of Mr. Torrance leaping like an ill-played clarionet from key to key, and had an opportunity to study his moth-eaten gown and the black thread mittens that he joined together in prayer, and lifted up with a reverent solemnity in the act of benediction. Hermiston pew was a little square box, dwarfish in proportion with the kirk itself, and enclosing a table not much bigger than a footstool. There sat Archie, an apparent prince, the only undeniable gentleman and the only great heritor in the parish, taking his ease in the only pew, for no other in the kirk had doors. Thence he might command an undisturbed view of that congregation of solid plaided men, strapping wives and daughters, oppressed children, and uneasy sheep-dogs. It was strange how Archie missed the look of race; except the dogs, with their refined foxy faces and inimitably curling tails, there was no one present with the least claim to gentility. The Cauldstaneslap party was scarcely an exception; Dandie perhaps, as he amused himself making verses through the interminable burden of the service, stood out a little by the glow in his eye and a certain superior animation of face and alertness of body; but even Dandie slouched like a rustic. The rest of the congregation, like so many sheep, oppressed him with a sense of hob-nailed routine, day following day — of physical labour in the open air, oatmeal porridge, peas bannock the somnolent fireside in the evening, and the night-long nasal slumbers in a box-bed. Yet he knew many of them to be shrewd and humorous, men of character, notable women, making a bustle in the world and radiating an influence from their low-browed doors. He knew besides they were like other men; below the crust of custom, rapture found a way; he had heard them beat the timbrel before Bacchus — had heard them shout and carouse over their whisky-toddy; and not the most Dutch-bottomed and severe faces among them all, not even the solemn elders themselves, but were capable of singular gambols at the voice of love. Men drawing near to an end of life's adventurous journey — maids thrilling with fear and curiosity on the threshold of entrance — women who had borne and perhaps buried children, who could remember the clinging of the small dead hands and the patter of the little feet now silent — he marvelled that among all those faces there should be no face of expectation, none that was mobile, none into which the rhythm and poetry of life had entered. "O for a live face," he thought; and at times he had a memory of Lady Flora; and at times he would study the living gallery before him with despair, and would see himself go on to waste his days in that joyless pastoral place, and death come to him, and his grave be dug under the rowans, and the Spirit of the Earth laugh out in a thunder-peal at the huge fiasco.

On this particular Sunday, there was no doubt but that the spring had come at last. It was warm, with a latent shiver in the air that made the warmth only the more welcome. The shallows of the stream glittered and tinkled among bunches of primrose. Vagrant scents of the earth arrested Archie by the way with moments of ethereal intoxication. The grey Quakerish dale was still only awakened in places and patches from the sobriety of its winter colouring; and he wondered at its beauty; an essential beauty of the old earth it seemed to him, not resident in particulars but breathing to him from the whole. He surprised himself by a sudden impulse to write poetry — he did so sometimes, loose, galloping octo-syllabics in the vein of Scott — and when he had taken his place on a boulder, near some fairy falls and shaded by a whip of a tree that was already radiant with new leaves, it still more surprised him that he should have nothing to write. His heart perhaps beat in time to some vast indwelling rhythm of the universe. By the time he came to a corner of the valley and could see the kirk, he had so lingered by the way that the first psalm was finishing. The nasal psalmody, full of turns and trills and graceless graces, seemed the essential voice of the kirk itself upraised in thanksgiving, “Everything’s alive,” he said; and again cries it aloud, “thank God, everything’s alive!” He lingered yet a while in the kirk-yard. A tuft of primroses was blooming hard by the leg of an old black table tombstone, and he stopped to contemplate the random apologue. They stood forth on the cold earth with a trenchancy of contrast; and he was struck with a sense of incompleteness in the day, the season, and the beauty that surrounded him — the chill there was in the warmth, the gross black clods about the opening primroses, the damp earthy smell that was everywhere intermingled with the scents. The voice of the aged Torrance within rose in an ecstasy. And he wondered if Torrance also felt in his old bones the joyous influence of the spring morning; Torrance, or the shadow of what once was Torrance, that must come so soon to lie outside here in the sun and rain with all his rheumatisms, while a new minister stood in his room and thundered from his own familiar pulpit? The pity of it, and something of the chill of the grave, shook him for a moment as he made haste to enter.

He went up the aisle reverently, and took his place in the pew with lowered eyes, for he feared he had already offended the kind old gentleman in the pulpit, and was sedulous to offend no further. He could not follow the prayer, not even the heads of it. Brightnesses of azure, clouds of fragrance, a tinkle of falling water and singing birds, rose like exhalations from some deeper, aboriginal memory, that was not his, but belonged to the flesh on his bones. His body remembered; and it seemed to him that his body was in no way gross, but ethereal and perishable like a strain of music; and he felt for it an exquisite tenderness as for a child, an innocent, full of beautiful instincts and destined to an early death. And he felt for old Torrance — of the many supplications, of the few days — a pity that was near to tears. The prayer ended. Right over him was a tablet in the wall, the only ornament in the roughly masoned chapel — for it was no more; the tablet commemorated, I was about to say the virtues, but rather the existence of a former Rutherford of Hermiston; and Archie, under that trophy of his long descent and local greatness, leaned back in the pew and contemplated vacancy with the shadow of a smile between playful and sad, that became him strangely. Dandie's sister, sitting by the side of Clem in her new Glasgow finery, chose that moment to observe the young laird. Aware of the stir of his entrance, the little formalist had kept her eyes fastened and her face prettily composed during the prayer. It was not hypocrisy, there was no one further from a hypocrite. The girl had been taught to behave: to look up, to look down, to look unconscious, to look seriously impressed in church, and in every conjuncture to look her best. That was the game of female life, and she played it frankly. Archie was the one person in church who was of interest, who was somebody new, reputed eccentric, known to be young, and a laird, and still unseen by Christina. Small wonder that, as she stood there in her attitude of pretty decency, her mind should run upon him! If he spared a glance in her direction, he should know she was a well-behaved young lady who had been to Glasgow. In reason he must admire her clothes, and it was possible that he should think her pretty. At that her heart beat the least thing in the world; and she proceeded, by way of a corrective, to call up and dismiss a series of fancied pictures of the young man who should now, by rights, be looking at her. She settled on the plainest of them, — a pink short young man with a dish face and no figure, at whose admiration she could afford to smile; but for all that, the consciousness of his gaze (which was really fixed on Torrance and his mittens) kept her in something of a flutter till the word Amen. Even then, she was far too well-bred to gratify her curiosity with any impatience. She resumed her seat languidly — this was a Glasgow touch — she composed her dress, rearranged her nosegay of primroses, looked first in front, then behind upon the other side, and at last allowed her eyes to move, without hurry, in the direction of the Hermiston pew. For a moment, they were riveted.

Next she had plucked her gaze home again like a tame bird who should have meditated flight. Possibilities crowded on her; she hung over the future and grew dizzy; the image of this young man, slim, graceful, dark, with the inscrutable half-smile, attracted and repelled her like a chasm. "I wonder, will I have met my fate?" she thought, and her heart swelled.

Torrance was got some way into his first exposition, positing a deep layer of texts as he went along, laying the foundations of his discourse, which was to deal with a nice point in divinity, before Archie suffered his eyes to wander. They fell first of all on Clem, looking insupportably prosperous, and patronising Torrance with the favour of a modified attention, as of one who was used to better things in Glasgow. Though he had never before set eyes on him, Archie had no difficulty in identifying him, and no hesitation in pronouncing him vulgar, the worst of the family. Clem was leaning lazily forward when Archie first saw him. Presently he leaned nonchalantly back; and that deadly instrument, the maiden, was suddenly unmasked in profile. Though not quite in the front of the fashion (had anybody cared!), certain artful Glasgow mantua-makers, and her own inherent taste, had arrayed her to great advantage. Her accoutrement was, indeed, a cause of heart-burning, and almost of scandal, in that infinitesimal kirk company. Mrs. Hob had said her say at Cauldstaneslap. "Daft-like!" she had pronounced it. "A jaiket that'll no meet! Whaur's the sense of a jaiket that'll no button upon you, if it should come to be weet? What do ye ca' thir things? Demmy brokens, d'ye say? They'll be brokens wi' a vengeance or ye can win back! Weel, I have nae thing to do wi' it — it's no good taste." Clem, whose purse had thus metamorphosed his sister, and who was not insensible to the advertisement, had come to the rescue with a "Hoot, woman! What do you ken of good taste that has never been to the ceety?" And Hob, looking on the girl with pleased smiles, as she timidly displayed her finery in the midst of the dark kitchen, had thus ended the dispute: "The cutty looks weel," he had said, "and it's no very like rain. Wear them the day, hizzie; but it's no a thing to make a practice o'." In the breasts of her rivals, coming to the kirk very conscious of white under-linen, and their faces splendid with much soap, the sight of the toilet had raised a storm of varying emotion, from the mere unenvious admiration that was expressed in a long-drawn "Eh!" to the angrier feeling that found vent in an emphatic "Set her up!" Her frock was of straw-coloured jaconet muslin, cut low at the bosom and short at the ankle, so as to display her *demi-broquins* of Regency violet, crossing with many straps upon a yellow cobweb stocking. According to the pretty fashion in which our grandmothers did not hesitate to appear, and our great-aunts went forth armed for the pursuit and capture of our great-uncles, the dress was drawn up so as to mould the contour of both breasts, and in the nook between, a cairngorm brooch maintained it. Here, too, surely in a very enviable position, trembled the nosegay of primroses. She wore on her shoulders — or rather on her back and not her shoulders, which it scarcely passed — a French coat of sarsenet, tied in front with Margate braces, and of the same colour with her violet shoes. About her face clustered a disorder of dark ringlets, a little garland of yellow French roses surmounted her brow, and the whole was crowned by a village hat of chipped straw. Amongst all the rosy and all the weathered faces that surrounded her in church, she glowed like an open flower — girl and raiment, and the cairngorm that caught the daylight and returned it in a fiery flash, and the threads of bronze and gold that played in her hair.

Archie was attracted by the bright thing like a child. He looked at her again and yet again, and their looks crossed. The lip was lifted from her little teeth. He saw the red blood work vividly under her tawny skin. Her eye, which was great as a stag's, struck and held his gaze. He knew who she must be — Kirstie, she of the harsh diminutive, his housekeeper's niece, the sister of the rustic prophet, Gib — and he found in her the answer to his wishes.

Christina felt the shock of their encountering glances, and seemed to rise, clothed in smiles, into a region of the vague and bright. But the gratification was not more exquisite than it was brief. She looked away abruptly, and immediately began to blame herself for that abruptness. She knew what she should have done, too late — turned slowly with her nose in the air. And meantime his look was not removed, but continued to play upon her like a battery of cannon constantly aimed, and now seemed to isolate her alone with him, and now seemed to uplift her, as on a pillory, before the congregation. For Archie continued to drink her in with his eyes, even as a wayfarer comes to a well-head on a mountain, and stoops his face, and drinks with thirst unassuageable. In the cleft of her little breasts the fiery eye of the topaz and the pale florets of primrose fascinated him. He saw the breasts heave, and the flowers shake with the heaving, and marvelled what should so much discompose the girl. And Christina was conscious of his gaze — saw it, perhaps, with the dainty plaything of an ear that peeped among her ringlets; she was conscious of changing colour, conscious of her unsteady breath. Like a creature tracked, run down, surrounded, she sought in a dozen ways to give herself a countenance. She used her handkerchief — it was a really fine one — then she desisted in a panic: "He would only think I was too warm." She took to reading in the metrical psalms, and then remembered it was sermon-time. Last she put a "sugar-bool" in her mouth, and the next moment repented of the step. It was such a homely-like thing! Mr. Archie would never be eating sweeties in kirk; and, with a palpable effort, she swallowed it whole, and her colour flamed high. At this signal of distress Archie awoke to a sense of his ill-behaviour. What had he been doing? He had been exquisitely rude in church to the niece of his housekeeper; he had stared like a lackey and a libertine at a beautiful and modest girl. It was possible, it was even likely, he would be presented to her after service in the kirk-yard, and then how was he to look? And there was no excuse. He had marked the tokens of her shame, of her increasing indignation, and he was such a fool that he had not understood them. Shame bowed him down, and he looked resolutely at Mr. Torrance; who little supposed, good, worthy man, as he continued to expound justification by faith, what was his true business: to play the part of derivative to a pair of children at the old game of falling in love.

Christina was greatly relieved at first. It seemed to her that she was clothed again. She looked back on what had passed. All would have been right if she had not blushed, a silly fool! There was nothing to blush at, if she *had* taken a sugar-bool. Mrs. MacTaggart, the elder's wife in St. Enoch's, took them often. And if he had looked at her, what was more natural than that a young gentleman should look at the best-dressed girl in church? And at the same time, she knew far otherwise, she knew there was nothing casual or ordinary in the look, and valued herself on its memory like a decoration. Well, it was a blessing he had found something else to look at! And presently she began to have other thoughts. It was necessary, she fancied, that she should put herself right by a repetition of the incident, better managed. If the wish was father to the thought, she did not know or she would not recognise it. It was simply as a manœuvre of propriety, as something called for to lessen the significance of what had gone before, that she should a second time meet his eyes, and this time without blushing. And at the memory of the blush, she blushed again, and became one general blush burning from head to foot. Was ever anything so indelicate, so forward, done by a girl before? And here she was, making an exhibition of herself before the congregation about nothing! She stole a glance upon her neighbours, and behold! they were steadily indifferent, and Clem had gone to sleep. And still the one idea was becoming more and more potent with her, that in common prudence she must look again before the service ended. Something of the same sort was going forward in the mind of Archie, as he struggled with the load of penitence. So it chanced that, in the flutter of the moment when the last psalm was given out, and Torrance was reading the verse, and the leaves of every psalm-book in church were rustling under busy fingers, two stealthy glances were sent out like antennæ among the pews and on the indifferent and absorbed occupants, and drew timidly nearer to the straight line between Archie and Christina. They met, they lingered together for the least fraction of time, and that was enough. A charge as of electricity passed through Christina, and behold! the leaf of her psalm-book was torn across.

Archie was outside by the gate of the graveyard, conversing with Hob and the minister and shaking hands all round with the scattering congregation, when Clem and Christina were brought up to be presented. The laird took off his hat and bowed to her with grace and respect. Christina made her Glasgow curtsey to the laird, and went on again up the road for Hermiston and Cauldstaneslap, walking fast, breathing hurriedly with a heightened colour, and in this strange frame of mind, that when she was alone she seemed in high happiness, and when any one addressed her she resented it like a contradiction. A part of the way she had the company of some neighbour girls and a loutish young man; never had they seemed so insipid, never had she made herself so disagreeable. But these struck aside to their various destinations or were out-walked and left behind; and when she had driven off with sharp words the proffered convoy of some of her nephews and nieces, she was free to go on alone up Hermiston brae, walking on air, dwelling intoxicated among clouds of happiness. Near to the summit she heard steps behind her, a man's steps, light and very rapid. She knew the foot at once and walked the faster. "If it's me he's wanting, he can run for it," she thought, smiling.

Archie overtook her like a man whose mind was made up.

"Miss Kirstie," he began.

"Miss Christina, if you please, Mr. Weir," she interrupted. "I canna bear the contraction."

"You forget it has a friendly sound for me. Your aunt is an old friend of mine, and a very good one. I hope we shall see much of you at Hermiston?"

"My aunt and my sister-in-law doesna agree very well. Not that I have much ado with it. But still when I'm stopping in the house, if I was to be visiting my aunt, it would not look considerate-like."

"I am sorry," said Archie.

"I thank you kindly, Mr. Weir," she said. "I whiles think myself it's a great peety."

"Ah, I am sure your voice would always be for peace!" he cried.

"I wouldna be too sure of that," she said. "I have my days like other folk, I suppose."

"Do you know, in our old kirk, among our good old grey dames, you made an effect like sunshine."

“Ah, but that would be my Glasgow clothes!”

“I did not think I was so much under the influence of pretty frocks.”

She smiled with a half look at him. “There’s more than you!” she said. “But you see I’m only Cinderella. I’ll have to put all these things by in my trunk; next Sunday I’ll be as grey as the rest. They’re Glasgow clothes, you see, and it would never do to make a practice of it. It would seem terrible conspicuous.”

By that they were come to the place where their ways severed. The old grey moors were all about them; in the midst a few sheep wandered; and they could see on the one hand the straggling caravan scaling the braes in front of them for Cauldstaneslap, and on the other, the contingent from Hermiston bending off and beginning to disappear by detachments into the policy gate. It was in these circumstances that they turned to say farewell, and deliberately exchanged a glance as they shook hands. All passed as it should, genteelly; and in Christina’s mind, as she mounted the first steep ascent for Cauldstaneslap, a gratifying sense of triumph prevailed over the recollection of minor lapses and mistakes. She had kilted her gown, as she did usually at that rugged pass; but when she spied Archie still standing and gazing after her, the skirts came down again as if by enchantment. Here was a piece of nicety for that upland parish, where the matrons marched with their coats kilted in the rain, and the lasses walked barefoot to kirk through the dust of summer, and went bravely down by the burn-side, and sat on stones to make a public toilet before entering! It was perhaps an air wafted from Glasgow; or perhaps it marked a stage of that dizziness of gratified vanity, in which the instinctive act passed unperceived. He was looking after! She unloaded her bosom of a prodigious sigh that was all pleasure, and betook herself to run. When she had overtaken the stragglers of her family, she caught up the niece whom she had so recently repulsed, and kissed and slapped her, and drove her away again, and ran after her with pretty cries and laughter. Perhaps she thought the laird might still be looking! But it chanced the little scene came under the view of eyes less favourable; for she overtook Mrs. Hob marching with Clem and Dand.

“You’re shürely fey, lass!” quoth Dandie.

“Think shame to yersel’, miss!” said the strident Mrs. Hob. “Is this the gait to guide yersel’ on the way hame frae kirk? You’re shiirely no sponsible the day! And anyway I would mind my guid claes.”

“Hoot!” said Christina, and went on before them head in air, treading the rough track with the tread of a wild doe.

She was in love with herself, her destiny, the air of the hills, the benediction of the sun. All the way home, she continued under the intoxication of these sky-scraping spirits. At table she could talk freely of young Hermiston; gave her opinion of him off-hand and with a loud voice, that he was a handsome young gentleman, real well mannered and sensible-like, but it was a pity he looked doleful. Only — the moment after — a memory of his eyes in church embarrassed her. But for this inconsiderable check, all through meal-time she had a good appetite, and she kept them laughing at table, until Gib (who had returned before them from Crossmichael and his separative worship) reproved the whole of them for their levity.

Singing "in to herself" as she went, her mind still in the turmoil of a glad confusion, she rose and tripped upstairs to a little loft, lighted by four panes in the gable, where she slept with one of her nieces. The niece, who followed her, presuming on "Auntie's" high spirits, was flounced out of the apartment with small ceremony, and retired, smarting and half tearful, to bury her woes in the byre among the hay. Still humming, Christina divested herself of her finery, and put her treasures one by one in her great green trunk. The last of these was the psalm-book; it was a fine piece, the gift of Mistress Clem, in distinct old-faced type, on paper that had begun to grow foxy in the warehouse — not by service — and she was used to wrap it in a handkerchief every Sunday after its period of service was over, and bury it end-wise at the head of her trunk. As she now took it in hand the book fell open where the leaf was torn, and she stood and gazed upon that evidence of her bygone discomposure. There returned again the vision of the two brown eyes staring at her, intent and bright, out of that dark corner of the kirk. The whole appearance and attitude, the smile, the suggested gesture of young Hermiston came before her in a flash at the sight of the torn page. "I was surely fey!" she said, echoing the words of Dandie, and at the suggested doom her high spirits deserted her. She flung herself prone upon the bed, and lay there, holding the psalm-book in her hands for hours, for the more part in a mere stupor of unconsenting pleasure and unreasoning fear. The fear was superstitious; there came up again and again in her memory Dandie's ill-omened words, and a hundred grisly and black tales out of the immediate neighbourhood read her a commentary on their force. The pleasure was never realised. You might say the joints of her body thought and remembered, and were gladdened, but her essential self, in the immediate theatre of consciousness, talked feverishly of something else, like a nervous person at a fire. The image that she most complacently dwelt on was that of Miss Christina in her character of the Fair Lass of Cauldstaneslap, carrying all before her in the straw-coloured frock, the violet mantle, and the yellow cobweb stockings. Archie's image, on the other hand, when it presented itself was never welcomed — far less welcomed with any ardour, and it was exposed at times to merciless criticism. In the long vague dialogues she held in her mind, often with imaginary, often with unrealised interlocutors, Archie, if he were referred to at all came in for savage handling. He was described as "looking like a stork," "staring like a caulf," "a face like a ghaist's." "Do you call that manners?" she said; or, "I soon put him in his place." "'*Miss Christina, if you please, Mr. Weir*!' says I, and just flyped up my skirt tails." With gabble like this she would entertain herself long whiles together, and then her eye would perhaps fall on the torn leaf, and the eyes of Archie would appear again from the darkness of the wall, and the voluble words deserted her, and she would lie still and stupid, and think upon nothing with devotion, and be sometimes raised by a quiet sigh. Had a doctor of medicine come into that loft, he would have diagnosed a healthy, well-developed, eminently vivacious lass lying on her face in a fit of the sulks; not one who had just contracted, or was just contracting, a mortal sickness of the mind which should yet carry her towards death and despair. Had it been a doctor of psychology, he might have been pardoned for divining in the girl a passion of childish vanity, self-love *in excelsis*, and no more. It is to be understood that I have been painting chaos and describing the inarticulate. Every lineament that appears is too precise, almost every word used too strong. Take a finger-post in the mountains on a day of rolling mists; I have but copied the names that appear upon the pointers, the names of definite and famous cities far distant, and now perhaps basking in sunshine; but Christina remained all these hours, as it were, at the foot of the post itself, not moving, and enveloped in mutable and blinding wreaths of haze.

The day was growing late and the sunbeams long and level, when she sat suddenly up, and wrapped in its handkerchief and put by that psalm-book which had already played a part so decisive in the first chapter of her love-story. In the absence of the mesmerist's eye, we are told nowadays that the head of a bright nail may fill his place, if it be steadfastly regarded. So that torn page had riveted her attention on what might else have been but little, and perhaps soon forgotten; while the ominous words of Dandie — heard, not heeded, and still remembered — had lent to her thoughts, or rather to her mood, a cast of solemnity, and that idea of Fate — a pagan Fate, uncontrolled by any Christian deity, obscure, lawless, and august — moving indissuadably in the affairs of Christian men. Thus even that phenomenon of love at first sight, which is so rare and seems so simple and violent, like a disruption of life's tissue, may be decomposed into a sequence of accidents happily concurring.

She put on a grey frock and a pink kerchief, looked at herself a moment with approval in the small square of glass that served her for a toilet mirror, and went softly downstairs through the sleeping house that resounded with the sound of afternoon snoring. Just outside the door, Dandie was sitting with a book in his hand, not reading, only honouring the Sabbath by a sacred vacancy of mind. She came near him and stood still.

“I’m for off up the muirs, Dandie,” she said.

There was something unusually soft in her tones that made him look up. She was pale, her eyes dark and bright; no trace remained of the levity of the morning.

“Ay, lass? Ye’ll have yer ups and downs like me, I’m thinkin’,” he observed.

“What for do ye say that?” she asked.

“O, for naething,” says Dand. “Only I think ye’re mair like me than the lave of them. Ye’ve mair of the poetic temper, tho’ Guid kens little enough of the poetic taalent. It’s an ill gift at the best. Look at yoursel’. At denner you were all sunshine and flowers and laughter, and now you’re like the star of evening on a lake.”

She drank in this hackneyed compliment like wine, and it glowed in her veins.

“But I’m saying, Dand” — she came nearer him — ”I’m for the muirs. I must have a braith of air. If Clem was to be speiring for me, try and quaiet him, will ye no?”

“What way?” said Dandie. “I ken but the ae way, and that’s leein’. I’ll say ye had a sair heid, if ye like.”

“But I havena,” she objected.

“I daursay no,” he returned. “I said I would say ye had; and if ye like to nay-say me when ye come back, it’ll no mateerially maitter, for my chara’ter’s clean gane a’ready past reca’.”

“O, Dand, are ye a lecar?” she asked, lingering.

“Folks say sae,” replied the bard.

“Wha says sae?” she pursued.

“Them that should ken the best,” he responded. “The lassies, for ane.”

“But, Dand, you would never lee to me?” she asked.

“I’ll leave that for your pairt of it, ye girzie,” said he. “Ye’ll lee to me fast eneuch, when ye hae gotten a jo. I’m tellin’ ye and it’s true; when you have a jo, Miss Kirstie, it’ll be for guid and ill. I ken: I was made that way mysel’, but the deil was in my luck! Here, gang awa wi’ ye to your muirs, and let me be; I’m in an hour of inspiraution, ye upsetting tawpie!”

But she clung to her brother’s neighbourhood, she knew not why.

“Will ye no gie’s a kiss, Dand?” she said. “I aye likit ye fine.”

He kissed her and considered her a moment; he found something strange in her. But he was a libertine through and through, nourished equal contempt and suspicion of all womankind, and paid his way among them habitually with idle compliments.

“Gae wa’ wi’ ye!” said he. “Ye’re a dentie baby, and be content wi’ that!”

That was Dandie’s way; a kiss and a comfit to Jenny — a bawbee and my blessing to Jill — and goodnight to the whole clan of ye, my dears! When anything approached the serious, it became a matter for men, he both thought and said. Women, when they did not absorb, were only children to be shoo’d away. Merely in his character of connoisseur, however, Dandie glanced carelessly after his sister as she crossed the meadow. “The brat’s no that bad!” he thought with surprise, for though he had just been paying her compliments, he had not really looked at her. “Hey! what’s yon?” For the grey dress was cut with short sleeves and skirts, and displayed her trim strong legs clad in pink stockings of the same shade as the kerchief she wore round her shoulders, and that shimmered as she went. This was not her way in undress; he knew her ways and the ways of the whole sex in the country-side, no one better; when they did not go barefoot, they wore stout “rig and furrow” woollen hose of an invisible blue mostly, when they were not black outright; and Dandie, at sight of this daintiness, put two and two together. It was a silk handkerchief, then they would be silken hose; they matched — then the whole outfit was a present of Clem’s, a costly present, and not something to be worn through bog and briar, or on a late afternoon of Sunday. He whistled. “My denty May, either your heid’s fair turned, or there’s some ongoings!” he observed, and dismissed the subject.

She went slowly at first, but ever straighter and faster for the Cauldstaneslap, a pass among the hills to which the farm owed its name. The Slap opened like a doorway between two rounded hillocks; and through this ran the short cut to Hermiston. Immediately on the other side it went down through the Deil’s Hags, a considerable marshy hollow of the hill tops, full of springs, and crouching junipers, and pools where the black peat-water slumbered. There was no view from here. A man might have sat upon the Praying Weaver’s stone a half century, and seen none but the Cauldstaneslap children twice in the twenty-four hours on their way to the school and back again, an occasional shepherd, the irruption of a clan of sheep, or the birds who haunted about the springs, drinking and shrilly piping. So, when she had once passed the Slap, Kirstie was received into seclusion. She looked back a last time at the farm. It still lay deserted except for the figure of Dandie, who was now seen to be scribbling in his lap, the hour of expected inspiration having come to him at last. Thence she passed rapidly through the morass, and came to the farther end of it, where a sluggish burn discharges, and the path for Hermiston accompanies it on the beginning of its downward path. From this corner a wide view was opened to her of the whole stretch of braes upon the other side, still sallow and in places rusty with the winter, with the path marked boldly, here and there by the burn-side a tuft of birches, and — two miles off as the crow flies — from its enclosures and young plantations, the windows of Hermiston glittering in the western sun.

Here she sat down and waited, and looked for a long time at these far-away bright panes of glass. It amused her to have so extended a view, she thought. It amused her to see the house of Hermiston — to see "folk"; and there was an indistinguishable human unit, perhaps the gardener, visibly sauntering on the gravel paths.

By the time the sun was down and all the easterly braes lay plunged in clear shadow, she was aware of another figure coming up the path at a most unequal rate of approach, now half running, now pausing and seeming to hesitate. She watched him at first with a total suspension of thought. She held her thought as a person holds his breathing. Then she consented to recognise him. "He'll no be coming here, he canna be; it's no possible." And there began to grow upon her a subdued choking suspense. He *was* coming; his hesitations had quite ceased, his step grew firm and swift; no doubt remained; and the question loomed up before her instant: what was she to do? It was all very well to say that her brother was a laird himself: it was all very well to speak of casual intermarriages and to count cousinship, like Auntie Kirstie. The difference in their social station was trenchant; propriety, prudence, all that she had ever learned, all that she knew, bade her flee. But on the other hand the cup of life now offered to her was too enchanting. For one moment, she saw the question clearly, and definitely made her choice. She stood up and showed herself an instant in the gap relieved upon the sky line; and the next, fled trembling and sat down glowing with excitement on the Weaver's stone. She shut her eyes, seeking, praying for composure. Her hand shook in her lap, and her mind was full of incongruous and futile speeches. What was there to make a work about? She could take care of herself, she supposed! There was no harm in seeing the laird. It was the best thing that could happen. She would mark a proper distance to him once and for all. Gradually the wheels of her nature ceased to go round so madly, and she sat in passive expectation, a quiet, solitary figure in the midst of the grey moss. I have said she was no hypocrite, but here I am at fault. She never admitted to herself that she had come up the hill to look for Archie. And perhaps after all she did not know, perhaps came as a stone falls. For the steps of love in the young, and especially in girls, are instinctive and unconscious.

In the meantime Archie was drawing rapidly near, and he at least was consciously seeking her neighbourhood. The afternoon had turned to ashes in his mouth; the memory of the girl had kept him from reading and drawn him as with cords; and at last, as the cool of the evening began to come on, he had taken his hat and set forth, with a smothered ejaculation, by the moor path to Cauldstaneslap. He had no hope to find her; he took the off chance without expectation of result and to relieve his uneasiness. The greater was his surprise, as he surmounted the slope and came into the hollow of the Deil's Hags, to see there, like an answer to his wishes, the little womanly figure in the grey dress and the pink kerchief sitting little, and low, and lost, and acutely solitary, in these desolate surroundings and on the weather-beaten stone of the dead weaver. Those things that still smacked of winter were all rusty about her, and those things that already relished of the spring had put forth the tender and lively colours of the season. Even in the unchanging face of the death-stone, changes were to be remarked; and in the channeled lettering, the moss began to renew itself in jewels of green. By an afterthought that was a stroke of art, she had turned up over her head the back of the kerchief; so that it now framed becomingly her vivacious and yet pensive face. Her feet were gathered under her on the one side, and she leaned on her bare arm, which showed out strong and round, tapered to a slim wrist, and shimmered in the fading light.

Young Hermiston was struck with a certain chill. He was reminded that he now dealt in serious matters of life and death. This was a grown woman he was approaching, endowed with her mysterious potencies and attractions, the treasury of the continued race, and he was neither better nor worse than the average of his sex and age. He had a certain delicacy which had preserved him hitherto unspotted, and which (had either of them guessed it) made him a more dangerous companion when his heart should be really stirred. His throat was dry as he came near; but the appealing sweetness of her smile stood between them like a guardian angel.

For she turned to him and smiled, though without rising. There was a shade in this cavalier greeting that neither of them perceived; neither he, who simply thought it gracious and charming as herself; nor yet she, who did not observe (quick as she was) the difference between rising to meet the laird, and remaining seated to receive the expected admirer.

"Are ye stepping west, Hermiston?" said she, giving him his territorial name after the fashion of the country-side.

"I was," said he, a little hoarsely, "but I think I will be about the end of my stroll now. Are you like me, Miss Christina? The house would not hold me. I came here seeking air."

He took his seat at the other end of the tombstone and studied her, wondering what was she. There was infinite import in the question alike for her and him.

"Ay," she said. "I couldna bear the roof either. It's a habit of mine to come up here about the gloaming when it's quaiet and caller."

"It was a habit of my mother's also," he said gravely. The recollection half startled him as he expressed it. He looked around. "I have scarce been here since. It's peaceful," he said, with a long breath.

"It's no like Glasgow," she replied. "A weary place, yon Glasgow! But what a day have I had for my homecoming, and what a bonny evening!"

"Indeed, it was a wonderful day," said Archie. "I think I will remember it years and years until I come to die. On days like this — I do not know if you feel as I do — but everything appears so brief, and fragile, and exquisite, that I am afraid to touch life. We are here for so short a time; and all the old people before us — Rutherfords of Hermiston, Elliotts of the Cauldstaneslap — that were here but a while since riding about and keeping up a great noise in this quiet corner — making love too, and marrying — why, where are they now? It's deadly commonplace, but, after all, the commonplaces are the great poetic truths."

He was sounding her, semi-consciously, to see if she could understand him; to learn if she were only an animal the colour of flowers, or had a soul in her to keep her sweet. She, on her part, her means well in hand, watched, womanlike, for any opportunity to shine, to abound in his humour, whatever that might be. The dramatic artist, that lies dormant or only half awake in most human beings, had in her sprung to his feet in a divine fury, and chance had served her well. She looked upon him with a subdued twilight look that became the hour of the day and the train of thought; earnestness shone through her like stars in the purple west; and from the great but controlled upheaval of her whole nature there passed into her voice, and rang in her lightest words, a thrill of emotion.

"Have you mind of Dand's song?" she answered. "I think he'll have been trying to say what you have been thinking."

"No, I never heard it," he said. "Repeat it to me, can you?"

"It's nothing wanting the tune," said Kirstie.

"Then sing it me," said he.

"On the Lord's Day? That would never do, Mr. Weir!"

"I am afraid I am not so strict a keeper of the Sabbath, and there is no one in this place to hear us, unless the poor old ancient under the stone."

"No that I'm thinking that really," she said. "By my way of thinking, it's just as serious as a psalm. Will I sooth it to ye, then?"

"If you please," said he, and, drawing near to her on the tombstone, prepared to listen.

She sat up as if to sing. "I'll only can sooth it to ye," she explained. "I wouldna like to sing out loud on the Sabbath. I think the birds would carry news of it to Gilbert," and she smiled. "It's about the Elliotts," she continued, "and I think there's few bonnier bits in the book-poets, though Dand has never got printed yet."

And she began, in the low, clear tones of her half voice, now sinking almost to a whisper, now rising to a particular note which was her best, and which Archie learned to wait for with growing emotion: —

"O they rade in the rain, in the days that are gane,
In the rain and the wind and the lave,
They shoutit in the ha' and they routit on the hill,
But they're a' quaitit noo in the grave.
Auld, auld Elliotts, clay-cauld Elliotts, dour, bauld Elliotte of auld!"

All the time she sang she looked steadfastly before her, her knees straight, her hands upon her knee, her head cast back and up. The expression was admirable throughout, for had she not learned it from the lips and under the criticism of the author? When it was done, she turned upon Archie a face softly bright, and eyes gently suffused and shining in the twilight, and his heart rose and went out to her with boundless pity and sympathy. His question was answered. She was a human being tuned to a sense of the tragedy of life; there were pathos and music and a great heart in the girl.

He arose instinctively, she also; for she saw she had gained a point, and scored the impression deeper, and she had wit enough left to flee upon a victory. They were but commonplaces that remained to be exchanged, but the low, moved voices in which they passed made them sacred in the memory. In the falling greyness of the evening he watched her figure winding through the morass, saw it turn a last time and wave a hand, and then pass through the Slap; and it seemed to him as if something went along with her out of the deepest of his heart. And something surely had come, and come to dwell there. He had retained from childhood a picture, now half obliterated by the passage of time and the multitude of fresh impressions, of his mother telling him, with the fluttered earnestness of her voice, and often with dropping tears, the tale of the "Praying Weaver," on the very scene of his brief tragedy and long repose. And now there was a companion piece; and he beheld, and he should behold for ever, Christina perched on the same tomb, in the grey colours of the evening, gracious, dainty, perfect as a flower, and she also singing —

"Of old, unhappy far off things,
And battles long ago,"

of their common ancestors now dead, of their rude wars composed, their weapons buried with them, and of these strange changelings, their descendants, who lingered a little in their places, and would soon be gone also, and perhaps sung of by others at the gloaming hour. By one of the unconscious arts of tenderness the two women were enshrined together in his memory. Tears, in that hour of sensibility, came into his eyes indifferently at the thought of either; and the girl, from being something merely bright and shapely, was caught up into the zone of things serious as life and death and his dead mother. So that in all ways and on either side, Fate played his game artfully with this poor pair of children. The generations were prepared, the pangs were made ready, before the curtain rose on the dark drama.

In the same moment of time that she disappeared from Archie, there opened before Kirstie's eyes the cup-like hollow in which the farm lay. She saw, some five hundred feet below her, the house making itself bright with candles, and this was a broad hint to her to hurry. For they were only kindled on a Sabbath night with a view to that family worship which rounded in the incomparable tedium of the day and brought on the relaxation of supper. Already she knew that Robert must be within-sides at the head of the table, "waling the portions"; for it was Robert in his quality of family priest and judge, not the gifted Gilbert, who officiated. She made good time accordingly down the steep ascent, and came up to the door panting as the three younger brothers, all roused at last from slumber, stood together in the cool and the dark of the evening with a fry of nephews and nieces about them, chatting and awaiting the expected signal. She stood back; she had no mind to direct attention to her late arrival or to her labouring breath.

"Kirstie, ye have shaved it this time, my lass?" said Clem. "Whaur were ye?"

"O, just taking a dander by mysel'," said Kirstie.

And the talk continued on the subject of the American War, without further reference to the truant who stood by them in the covert of the dusk, thrilling with happiness and the sense of guilt.

The signal was given, and the brothers began to go in one after another, amid the jostle and throng of Hob's children.

Only Dandie, waiting till the last, caught Kirstie by the arm. "When did ye begin to dander in pink hosen, Mistress Elliott?" he whispered slyly.

She looked down; she was one blush. "I maun have forgotten to change them," said she; and went into prayers in her turn with a troubled mind, between anxiety as to whether Dand should have observed her yellow stockings at church, and should thus detect her in a palpable falsehood, and shame that she had already made good his prophecy. She remembered the words of it, how it was to be when she had gotten a jo, and that that would be for good and evil. “Will I have gotten my jo now?” she thought with a secret rapture.

And all through prayers, where it was her principal business to conceal the pink stockings from the eyes of the indifferent Mrs. Hob — and all through supper, as she made a feint of eating and sat at the table radiant and constrained — and again when she had left them and come into her chamber, and was alone with her sleeping niece, and could at last lay aside the armour of society — the same words sounded within her, the same profound note of happiness, of a world all changed and renewed, of a day that had been passed in Paradise, and of a night that was to be heaven opened. All night she seemed to be conveyed smoothly upon a shallow stream of sleep and waking, and through the bowers of Beulah; all night she cherished to her heart that exquisite hope; and if, towards morning, she forgot it a while in a more profound unconsciousness, it was to catch again the rainbow thought with her first moment of awaking.

CHAPTER VII — ENTER MEPHISTOPHELES

Two days later a gig from Crossmichael deposited Frank Innes at the doors of Hermiston. Once in a way, during the past winter, Archie, in some acute phase of boredom, had written him a letter. It had contained something in the nature of an invitation or a reference to an invitation — precisely what, neither of them now remembered. When Innes had received it, there had been nothing further from his mind than to bury himself in the moors with Archie; but not even the most acute political heads are guided through the steps of life with unerring directness. That would require a gift of prophecy which has been denied to man. For instance, who could have imagined that, not a month after he had received the letter, and turned it into mockery, and put off answering it, and in the end lost it, misfortunes of a gloomy cast should begin to thicken over Frank's career? His case may be briefly stated. His father, a small Morayshire laird with a large family, became recalcitrant and cut off the supplies; he had fitted himself out with the beginnings of quite a good law library, which, upon some sudden losses on the turf, he had been obliged to sell before they were paid for; and his bookseller, hearing some rumour of the event, took out a warrant for his arrest. Innes had early word of it, and was able to take precautions. In this immediate welter of his affairs, with an unpleasant charge hanging over him, he had judged it the part of prudence to be off instantly, had written a fervid letter to his father at Inverauld, and put himself in the coach for Crossmichael. Any port in a storm! He was manfully turning his back on the Parliament House and its gay babble, on porter and oysters, the race-course and the ring; and manfully prepared, until these clouds should have blown by, to share a living grave with Archie Weir at Hermiston.

To do him justice, he was no less surprised to be going than Archie was to see him come; and he carried off his wonder with an infinitely better grace.

"Well, here I am!" said he, as he alighted. "Pylades has come to Orestes at last. By the way, did you get my answer? No? How very provoking! Well, here I am to answer for myself, and that's better still."

"I am very glad to see you, of course," said Archie. "I make you heartily welcome, of course. But you surely have not come to stay, with the Courts still sitting; is that not most unwise?"

"Damn the Courts!" says Frank. "What are the Courts to friendship and a little fishing?"

And so it was agreed that he was to stay, with no term to the visit but the term which he had privily set to it himself — the day, namely, when his father should have come down with the dust, and he should be able to pacify the bookseller. On such vague conditions there began for these two young men (who were not even friends) a life of great familiarity and, as the days drew on, less and less intimacy. They were together at meal times, together o' nights when the hour had come for whisky-toddy; but it might have been noticed (had there been any one to pay heed) that they were rarely so much together by day. Archie had Hermiston to attend to, multifarious activities in the hills, in which he did not require, and had even refused, Frank's escort. He would be off sometimes in the morning and leave only a note on the breakfast table to announce the fact; and sometimes, with no notice at all, he would not return for dinner until the hour was long past. Innes groaned under these desertions; it required all his philosophy to sit down to a solitary breakfast with composure, and all his unaffected good-nature to be able to greet Archie with friendliness on the more rare occasions when he came home late for dinner.

"I wonder what on earth he finds to do, Mrs. Elliott?" said he one morning, after he had just read the hasty billet and sat down to table.

"I suppose it will be business, sir," replied the housekeeper drily, measuring his distance off to him by an indicated curtsy.

"But I can't imagine what business!" he reiterated.

"I suppose it will be *his* business," retorted the austere Kirstie.

He turned to her with that happy brightness that made the charm of his disposition, and broke into a peal of healthy and natural laughter.

"Well played, Mrs. Elliott!" he cried; and the housekeeper's face relaxed into the shadow of an iron smile. "Well played indeed!" said he. "But you must not be making a stranger of me like that. Why, Archie and I were at the High School together, and we've been to college together, and we were going to the Bar together, when — you know! Dear, dear me! what a pity that was! A life spoiled, a fine young fellow as good as buried here in the wilderness with rustics; and all for what? A frolic, silly, if you like, but no more. God, how good your scones are, Mrs. Elliott!"

"They're no mines, it was the lassie made them," said Kirstie; "and, saving your presence, there's little sense in taking the Lord's name in vain about idle vivers that you fill your kyte wi'."

"I daresay you're perfectly right, ma'am," quoth the imperturbable Frank. "But as I was saying, this is a pitiable business, this about poor Archie; and you and I might do worse than put our heads together, like a couple of sensible people, and bring it to an end. Let me tell you, ma'am, that Archie is really quite a promising young man, and in my opinion he would do well at the Bar. As for his father, no one can deny his ability, and I don't fancy any one would care to deny that he has the deil's own temper — "

"If you'll excuse me, Mr. Innes, I think the lass is crying on me," said Kirstie, and flounced from the room.

"The damned, cross-grained, old broomstick!" ejaculated Innes.

In the meantime, Kirstie had escaped into the kitchen, and before her vassal gave vent to her feelings.

"Here, ettercap! Ye'll have to wait on yon Innes! I canna haud myself in. 'Puir Erchie!' I'd 'puir Erchie' him, if I had my way! And Hermiston with the deil's ain temper! God, let him take Hermiston's scones out of his mouth first. There's no a hair on ayther o' the Weirs that hasna mair spunk and dirdum to it than what he has in his hale dwaibly body! Settin' up his snash to me! Let him gang to the black toon where he's mebbe wantit — birling in a curricle — wi' pimatum on his heid — making a mess o' himsel' wi' nesty hizzies — a fair disgrace!" It was impossible to hear without admiration Kirstie's graduated disgust, as she brought forth, one after another, these somewhat baseless charges. Then she remembered her immediate purpose, and turned again on her fascinated auditor. "Do ye no hear me, tawpie? Do ye no hear what I'm tellin' ye? Will I have to shoo ye in to him? If I come to attend to ye, mistress!" And the maid fled the kitchen, which had become practically dangerous, to attend on Innes' wants in the front parlour.

Tantaene irae? Has the reader perceived the reason? Since Frank's coming there were no more hours of gossip over the supper tray! All his blandishments were in vain; he had started handicapped on the race for Mrs. Elliott's favour.

But it was a strange thing how misfortune dogged him in his efforts to be genial. I must guard the reader against accepting Kirstie's epithets as evidence; she was more concerned for their vigour than for their accuracy. Dwaibly, for instance; nothing could be more calumnious. Frank was the very picture of good looks, good humour, and manly youth. He had bright eyes with a sparkle and a dance to them, curly hair, a charming smile, brilliant teeth, an admirable carriage of the head, the look of a gentleman, the address of one accustomed to please at first sight and to improve the impression. And with all these advantages, he failed with every one about Hermiston; with the silent shepherd, with the obsequious grieve, with the groom who was also the ploughman, with the gardener and the gardener's sister — a pious, down-hearted woman with a shawl over her ears — he failed equally and flatly. They did not like him, and they showed it. The little maid, indeed, was an exception; she admired him devoutly, probably dreamed of him in her private hours; but she was accustomed to play the part of silent auditor to Kirstie's tirades and silent recipient of Kirstie's buffets, and she had learned not only to be a very capable girl of her years, but a very secret and prudent one besides. Frank was thus conscious that he had one ally and sympathiser in the midst of that general union of disfavour that surrounded, watched, and waited on him in the house of Hermiston; but he had little comfort or society from that alliance, and the demure little maid (twelve on her last birthday) preserved her own counsel, and tripped on his service, brisk, dumbly responsive, but inexorably unconversational. For the others, they were beyond hope and beyond endurance. Never had a young Apollo been cast among such rustic barbarians. But perhaps the cause of his ill-success lay in one trait which was habitual and unconscious with him, yet diagnostic of the man. It was his practice to approach any one person at the expense of some one else. He offered you an alliance against the some one else; he flattered you by slighting him; you were drawn into a small intrigue against him before you knew how. Wonderful are the virtues of this process generally; but Frank's mistake was in the choice of the some one else. He was not politic in that; he listened to the voice of irritation. Archie had offended him at first by what he had felt to be rather a dry reception, had offended him since by his frequent absences. He was besides the one figure continually present in Frank's eye; and it was to his immediate dependants that Frank could offer the snare of his sympathy. Now the truth is that the Weirs, father and son, were surrounded by a posse of strenuous loyalists. Of my lord they were vastly proud. It was a distinction in itself to be one of the vassals of the "Hanging Judge," and his gross, formidable joviality was far from unpopular in the neighbourhood of his home. For Archie they had, one and all, a sensitive affection and respect which recoiled from a word of belittlement.

Nor was Frank more successful when he went farther afield. To the Four Black Brothers, for instance, he was antipathetic in the highest degree. Hob thought him too light, Gib too profane. Clem, who saw him but for a day or two before he went to Glasgow, wanted to know what the fule's business was, and whether he meant to stay here all session time! "Yon's a drone," he pronounced. As for Dand, it will be enough to describe their first meeting, when Frank had been whipping a river and the rustic celebrity chanced to come along the path.

"I'm told you're quite a poet," Frank had said.

"Wha tell't ye that, mannie?" had been the unconciliating answer.

"O, everybody!" says Frank.

"God! Here's fame!" said the sardonic poet, and he had passed on his way.

Come to think of it, we have here perhaps a truer explanation of Frank's failures. Had he met Mr. Sheriff Scott he could have turned a neater compliment, because Mr. Scott would have been a friend worth making. Dand, on the other hand, he did not value sixpence, and he showed it even while he tried to flatter. Condescension is an excellent thing, but it is strange how one-sided the pleasure of it is! He who goes fishing among the Scots peasantry with condescension for a bait will have an empty basket by evening.

In proof of this theory Frank made a great success of it at the Crossmichael Club, to which Archie took him immediately on his arrival; his own last appearance on that scene of gaiety. Frank was made welcome there at once, continued to go regularly, and had attended a meeting (as the members ever after loved to tell) on the evening before his death. Young Hay and young Pringle appeared again. There was another supper at Windiclaws, another dinner at Driffel; and it resulted in Frank being taken to the bosom of the county people as unreservedly as he had been repudiated by the country folk. He occupied Hermiston after the manner of an invader in a conquered capital. He was perpetually issuing from it, as from a base, to toddy parties, fishing parties, and dinner parties, to which Archie was not invited, or to which Archie would not go. It was now that the name of The Recluse became general for the young man. Some say that Innes invented it; Innes, at least, spread it abroad.

"How's all with your Recluse to-day?" people would ask.

"O, reclusing away!" Innes would declare, with his bright air of saying something witty; and immediately interrupt the general laughter which he had provoked much more by his air than his words, "Mind you, it's all very well laughing, but I'm not very well pleased. Poor Archie is a good fellow, an excellent fellow, a fellow I always liked. I think it small of him to take his little disgrace so hard, and shut himself up. 'Grant that it is a ridiculous story, painfully ridiculous,' I keep telling him. 'Be a man! Live it down, man!' But not he. Of course, it's just solitude, and shame, and all that. But I confess I'm beginning to fear the result. It would be all the pities in the world if a really promising fellow like Weir was to end ill. I'm seriously tempted to write to Lord Hermiston, and put it plainly to him."

"I would if I were you," some of his auditors would say, shaking the head, sitting bewildered and confused at this new view of the matter, so deftly indicated by a single word. "A capital idea!" they would add, and wonder at the *aplomb* and position of this young man, who talked as a matter of course of writing to Hermiston and correcting him upon his private affairs.

And Frank would proceed, sweetly confidential: "I'll give you an idea, now. He's actually sore about the way that I'm received and he's left out in the county — actually jealous and sore. I've rallied him and I've reasoned with him, told him that every one was most kindly inclined towards him, told him even that I was received merely because I was his guest. But it's no use. He will neither accept the invitations he gets, nor stop brooding about the ones where he's left out. What I'm afraid of is that the wound's ulcerating. He had always one of those dark, secret, angry natures — a little underhand and plenty of bile — you know the sort. He must have inherited it from the Weirs, whom I suspect to have been a worthy family of weavers somewhere; what's the cant phrase? — sedentary occupation. It's precisely the kind of character to go wrong in a false position like what his father's made for him, or he's making for himself, whichever you like to call it. And for my part, I think it a disgrace," Frank would say generously.

Presently the sorrow and anxiety of this disinterested friend took shape. He began in private, in conversations of two, to talk vaguely of bad habits and low habits. "I must say I'm afraid he's going wrong altogether," he would say. "I'll tell you plainly, and between ourselves, I scarcely like to stay there any longer; only, man, I'm positively afraid to leave him alone. You'll see, I shall be blamed for it later on. I'm staying at a great sacrifice. I'm hindering my chances at the Bar, and I can't blind my eyes to it. And what I'm afraid of is that I'm going to get kicked for it all round before all's done. You see, nobody believes in friendship nowadays."

"Well, Innes," his interlocutor would reply, "it's very good of you, I must say that. If there's any blame going, you'll always be sure of *my* good word, for one thing."

"Well," Frank would continue, "candidly, I don't say it's pleasant. He has a very rough way with him; his father's son, you know. I don't say he's rude — of course, I couldn't be expected to stand that — but he steers very near the wind. No, it's not pleasant; but I tell ye, man, in conscience I don't think it would be fair to leave him. Mind you, I don't say there's anything actually wrong. What I say is that I don't like the looks of it, man!" and he would press the arm of his momentary confidant.

In the early stages I am persuaded there was no malice. He talked but for the pleasure of airing himself. He was essentially glib, as becomes the young advocate, and essentially careless of the truth, which is the mark of the young ass; and so he talked at random. There was no particular bias, but that one which is indigenous and universal, to flatter himself and to please and interest the present friend. And by thus milling air out of his mouth, he had presently built up a presentation of Archie which was known and talked of in all corners of the county. Wherever there was a residential house and a walled garden, wherever there was a dwarfish castle and a park, wherever a quadruple cottage by the ruins of a peel-tower showed an old family going down, and wherever a handsome villa with a carriage approach and a shrubbery marked the coming up of a new one — probably on the wheels of machinery — Archie began to be regarded in the light of a dark, perhaps a vicious mystery, and the future developments of his career to be looked for with uneasiness and confidential whispering. He had done something disgraceful, my dear. What, was not precisely known, and that good kind young man, Mr. Innes, did his best to make light of it. But there it was. And Mr. Innes was very anxious about him now; he was really uneasy, my dear; he was positively wrecking his own prospects because he dared not leave him alone. How wholly we all lie at the mercy of a single prater, not needfully with any malign purpose! And if a man but talks of himself in the right spirit, refers to his virtuous actions by the way, and never applies to them the name of virtue, how easily his evidence is accepted in the court of public opinion!

All this while, however, there was a more poisonous ferment at work between the two lads, which came late indeed to the surface, but had modified and magnified their dissensions from the first. To an idle, shallow, easy-going customer like Frank, the smell of a mystery was attractive. It gave his mind something to play with, like a new toy to a child; and it took him on the weak side, for like many young men coming to the Bar, and before they had been tried and found wanting, he flattered himself he was a fellow of unusual quickness and penetration. They knew nothing of Sherlock Holmes in those days, but there was a good deal said of Talleyrand. And if you could have caught Frank off his guard, he would have confessed with a smirk that, if he resembled any one, it was the Marquis de Talleyrand-Perigord. It was on the occasion of Archie's first absence that this interest took root. It was vastly deepened when Kirstie resented his curiosity at breakfast, and that same afternoon there occurred another scene which clinched the business. He was fishing Swingleburn, Archie accompanying him, when the latter looked at his watch.

"Well, good-bye," said he. "I have something to do. See you at dinner."

"Don't be in such a hurry," cries Frank. "Hold on till I get my rod up. I'll go with you; I'm sick of flogging this ditch."

And he began to reel up his line.

Archie stood speechless. He took a long while to recover his wits under this direct attack; but by the time he was ready with his answer, and the angle was almost packed up, he had become completely Weir, and the hanging face gloomed on his young shoulders. He spoke with a laboured composure, a laboured kindness even; but a child could see that his mind was made up.

"I beg your pardon, Innes; I don't want to be disagreeable, but let us understand one another from the beginning. When I want your company, I'll let you know."

"O!" cries Frank, "you don't want my company, don't you?"

"Apparently not just now," replied Archie. "I even indicated to you when I did, if you'll remember — and that was at dinner. If we two fellows are to live together pleasantly — and I see no reason why we should not — it can only be by respecting each other's privacy. If we begin intruding — "

"O, come! I'll take this at no man's hands. Is this the way you treat a guest and an old friend?" cried Innes.

"Just go home and think over what I said by yourself," continued Archie, "whether it's reasonable, or whether it's really offensive or not; and let's meet at dinner as though nothing had happened, I'll put it this way, if you like — that I know my own character, that I'm looking forward (with great pleasure, I assure you) to a long visit from you, and that I'm taking precautions at the first. I see the thing that we — that I, if you like — might fall out upon, and I step in and *obsto principiis*. I wager you five pounds you'll end by seeing that I mean friendliness, and I assure you, Francie, I do," he added, relenting.

Bursting with anger, but incapable of speech, Innes shouldered his rod, made a gesture of farewell, and strode off down the burn-side. Archie watched him go without moving. He was sorry, but quite unashamed. He hated to be inhospitable, but in one thing he was his father's son. He had a strong sense that his house was his own and no man else's; and to lie at a guest's mercy was what he refused. He hated to seem harsh. But that was Frank's lookout. If Frank had been commonly discreet, he would have been decently courteous. And there was another consideration. The secret he was protecting was not his own merely; it was hers: it belonged to that inexpressible she who was fast taking possession of his soul, and whom he would soon have defended at the cost of burning cities. By the time he had watched Frank as far as the Swingleburn-foot, appearing and disappearing in the tarnished heather, still stalking at a fierce gait but already dwindled in the distance into less than the smallness of Lilliput, he could afford to smile at the occurrence. Either Frank would go, and that would be a relief — or he would continue to stay, and his host must continue to endure him. And Archie was now free — by devious paths, behind hillocks and in the hollow of burns — to make for the trysting-place where Kirstie, cried about by the curlew and the plover, waited and burned for his coming by the Covenanter's stone.

Innes went off down-hill in a passion of resentment, easy to be understood, but which yielded progressively to the needs of his situation. He cursed Archie for a cold-hearted, unfriendly, rude, rude dog; and himself still more passionately for a fool in having come to Hermiston when he might have sought refuge in almost any other house in Scotland. But the step once taken, was practically irretrievable. He had no more ready money to go anywhere else; he would have to borrow from Archie the next club-night; and ill as he thought of his host's manners, he was sure of his practical generosity. Frank's resemblance to Talleyrand strikes me as imaginary; but at least not Talleyrand himself could have more obediently taken his lesson from the facts. He met Archie at dinner without resentment, almost with cordiality. You must take your friends as you find them, he would have said. Archie couldn't help being his father's son, or his grandfather's, the hypothetical weaver's, grandson. The son of a hunks, he was still a hunks at heart, incapable of true generosity and consideration; but he had other qualities with which Frank could divert himself in the meanwhile, and to enjoy which it was necessary that Frank should keep his temper.

So excellently was it controlled that he awoke next morning with his head full of a different, though a cognate subject. What was Archie's little game? Why did he shun Frank's company? What was he keeping secret? Was he keeping tryst with somebody, and was it a woman? It would be a good joke and a fair revenge to discover. To that task he set himself with a great deal of patience, which might have surprised his friends, for he had been always credited not with patience so much as brilliancy; and little by little, from one point to another, he at last succeeded in piecing out the situation. First he remarked that, although Archie set out in all the directions of the compass, he always came home again from some point between the south and west. From the study of a map, and in consideration of the great expanse of untenanted moorland running in that direction towards the sources of the Clyde, he laid his finger on Cauldstaneslap and two other neighbouring farms, Kingsmuirs and Polintarf. But it was difficult to advance farther. With his rod for a pretext, he vainly visited each of them in turn; nothing was to be seen suspicious about this trinity of moorland settlements. He would have tried to follow Archie, had it been the least possible, but the nature of the land precluded the idea. He did the next best, ensconced himself in a quiet corner, and pursued his movements with a telescope. It was equally in vain, and he soon wearied of his futile vigilance, left the telescope at home, and had almost given the matter up in despair, when, on the twenty-seventh day of his visit, he was suddenly confronted with the person whom he sought. The first Sunday Kirstie had managed to stay away from kirk on some pretext of indisposition, which was more truly modesty; the pleasure of beholding Archie seeming too sacred, too vivid for that public place. On the two following, Frank had himself been absent on some of his excursions among the neighbouring families. It was not until the fourth, accordingly, that Frank had occasion to set eyes on the enchantress. With the first look, all hesitation was over. She came with the Cauldstaneslap party; then she lived at Cauldstaneslap. Here was Archie's secret, here was the woman, and more than that — though I have need here of every manageable attenuation of language — with the first look, he had already entered himself as rival. It was a good deal in pique, it was a little in revenge, it was much in genuine admiration: the devil may decide the proportions! I cannot, and it is very likely that Frank could not.

"Mighty attractive milkmaid," he observed, on the way home.

"Who?" said Archie.

"O, the girl you're looking at — aren't you? Forward there on the road. She came attended by the rustic bard; presumably, therefore, belongs to his exalted family. The single objection! for the four black brothers are awkward customers. If anything were to go wrong, Gib would gibber, and Clem would prove inclement; and Dand fly in danders, and Hob blow up in gobbets. It would be a Helliott of a business!"

"Very humorous, I am sure," said Archie.

"Well, I am trying to be so," said Frank. "It's none too easy in this place, and with your solemn society, my dear fellow. But confess that the milkmaid has found favour in your eyes, or resign all claim to be a man of taste."

"It is no matter," returned Archie.

But the other continued to look at him, steadily and quizzically, and his colour slowly rose and deepened under the glance, until not impudence itself could have denied that he was blushing. And at this Archie lost some of his control. He changed his stick from one hand to the other, and — "O, for God's sake, don't be an ass!" he cried.

"Ass? That's the retort delicate without doubt," says Frank. "Beware of the homespun brothers, dear. If they come into the dance, you'll see who's an ass. Think now, if they only applied (say) a quarter as much talent as I have applied to the question of what Mr. Archie does with his evening hours, and why he is so unaffectedly nasty when the subject's touched on — "

"You are touching on it now," interrupted Archie with a wince.

"Thank you. That was all I wanted, an articulate confession," said Frank.

"I beg to remind you — " began Archie.

But he was interrupted in turn. "My dear fellow, don't. It's quite needless. The subject's dead and buried."

And Frank began to talk hastily on other matters, an art in which he was an adept, for it was his gift to be fluent on anything or nothing. But although Archie had the grace or the timidity to suffer him to rattle on, he was by no means done with the subject. When he came home to dinner, he was greeted with a sly demand, how things were looking "Cauldstaneslap ways." Frank took his first glass of port out after dinner to the toast of Kirstie, and later in the evening he returned to the charge again.

"I say, Weir, you'll excuse me for returning again to this affair. I've been thinking it over, and I wish to beg you very seriously to be more careful. It's not a safe business. Not safe, my boy," said he.

"What?" said Archie.

"Well, it's your own fault if I must put a name on the thing; but really, as a friend, I cannot stand by and see you rushing head down into these dangers. My dear boy," said he, holding up a warning cigar, "consider! What is to be the end of it?"

"The end of what?" — Archie, helpless with irritation, persisted in this dangerous and ungracious guard.

"Well, the end of the milkmaid; or, to speak more by the card, the end of Miss Christina Elliott of the Cauldstaneslap."

"I assure you," Archie broke out, "this is all a figment of your imagination. There is nothing to be said against that young lady; you have no right to introduce her name into the conversation."

"I'll make a note of it," said Frank. "She shall henceforth be nameless, nameless, nameless, Grigalach! I make a note besides of your valuable testimony to her character. I only want to look at this thing as a man of the world. Admitted she's an angel — but, my good fellow, is she a lady?"

This was torture to Archie. "I beg your pardon," he said, struggling to be composed, "but because you have wormed yourself into my confidence — "

"O, come!" cried Frank. "Your confidence? It was rosy but unconsenting. Your confidence, indeed? Now, look! This is what I must say, Weir, for it concerns your safety and good character, and therefore my honour as your friend. You say I wormed myself into your confidence. Wormed is good. But what have I done? I have put two and two together, just as the parish will be doing tomorrow, and the whole of Tweeddale in two weeks, and the black brothers — well, I won't put a date on that; it will be a dark and stormy morning! Your secret, in other words, is poor Poll's. And I want to ask of you as a friend whether you like the prospect? There are two horns to your dilemma, and I must say for myself I should look mighty ruefully on either. Do you see yourself explaining to the four Black Brothers? or do you see yourself presenting the milkmaid to papa as the future lady of Hermiston? Do you? I tell you plainly, I don't!"

Archie rose. “I will hear no more of this,” he said, in a trembling voice.

But Frank again held up his cigar. “Tell me one thing first. Tell me if this is not a friend’s part that I am playing?”

“I believe you think it so,” replied Archle. “I can go as far as that. I can do so much justice to your motives. But I will hear no more of it. I am going to bed.”

“That’s right, Weir,” said Frank heartily. “Go to bed and think over it; and I say, man, don’t forget your prayers! I don’t often do the moral — don’t go in for that sort of thing — but when I do there’s one thing sure, that I mean it.”

So Archie marched off to bed, and Frank sat alone by the table for another hour or so, smiling to himself richly. There was nothing vindictive in his nature; but, if revenge came in his way, it might as well be good, and the thought of Archie’s pillow reflections that night was indescribably sweet to him. He felt a pleasant sense of power. He looked down on Archie as on a very little boy whose strings he pulled — as on a horse whom he had backed and bridled by sheer power of intelligence, and whom he might ride to glory or the grave at pleasure. Which was it to be? He lingered long, relishing the details of schemes that he was too idle to pursue. Poor cork upon a torrent, he tasted that night the sweets of omnipotence, and brooded like a deity over the strands of that intrigue which was to shatter him before the summer waned.

CHAPTER VIII — A NOCTURNAL VISIT

Kirstie had many causes of distress. More and more as we grow old — and yet more and more as we grow old and are women, frozen by the fear of age — we come to rely on the voice as the single outlet of the soul. Only thus, in the curtailment of our means, can we relieve the straitened cry of the passion within us; only thus, in the bitter and sensitive shyness of advancing years, can we maintain relations with those vivacious figures of the young that still show before us and tend daily to become no more than the moving wall-paper of life. Talk is the last link, the last relation. But with the end of the conversation, when the voice stops and the bright face of the listener is turned away, solitude falls again on the bruised heart. Kirstie had lost her "cannie hour at e'en"; she could no more wander with Archie, a ghost if you will, but a happy ghost, in fields Elysian. And to her it was as if the whole world had fallen silent; to him, but an unremarkable change of amusements. And she raged to know it. The effervescency of her passionate and irritable nature rose within her at times to bursting point.

This is the price paid by age for unseasonable ardours of feeling. It must have been so for Kirstie at any time when the occasion chanced; but it so fell out that she was deprived of this delight in the hour when she had most need of it, when she had most to say, most to ask, and when she trembled to recognise her sovereignty not merely in abeyance but annulled. For, with the clairvoyance of a genuine love, she had pierced the mystery that had so long embarrassed Frank. She was conscious, even before it was carried out, even on that Sunday night when it began, of an invasion of her rights; and a voice told her the invader's name. Since then, by arts, by accident, by small things observed, and by the general drift of Archie's humour, she had passed beyond all possibility of doubt. With a sense of justice that Lord Hermiston might have envied, she had that day in church considered and admitted the attractions of the younger Kirstie; and with the profound humanity and sentimentality of her nature, she had recognised the coming of fate. Not thus would she have chosen. She had seen, in imagination, Archie wedded to some tall, powerful, and rosy heroine of the golden locks, made in her own image, for whom she would have strewed the bride-bed with delight; and now she could have wept to see the ambition falsified. But the gods had pronounced, and her doom was otherwise.

She lay tossing in bed that night, besieged with feverish thoughts. There were dangerous matters pending, a battle was toward, over the fate of which she hung in jealousy, sympathy, fear, and alternate loyalty and disloyalty to either side. Now she was reincarnated in her niece, and now in Archie. Now she saw, through the girl's eyes, the youth on his knees to her, heard his persuasive instances with a deadly weakness, and received his overmastering caresses. Anon, with a revulsion, her temper raged to see such utmost favours of fortune and love squandered on a brat of a girl, one of her own house, using her own name — a deadly ingredient — and that "didna ken her ain mind an' was as black's your hat." Now she trembled lest her deity should plead in vain, loving the idea of success for him like a triumph of nature; anon, with returning loyalty to her own family and sex, she trembled for Kirstie and the credit of the Elliotts. And again she had a vision of herself, the day over for her old-world tales and local gossip, bidding farewell to her last link with life and brightness and love; and behind and beyond, she saw but the blank butt-end where she must crawl to die. Had she then come to the lees? she, so great, so beautiful, with a heart as fresh as a girl's and strong as womanhood? It could not be, and yet it was so; and for a moment her bed was horrible to her as the sides of the grave. And she looked forward over a waste of hours, and saw herself go on to rage, and tremble, and be softened, and rage again, until the day came and the labours of the day must be renewed.

Suddenly she heard feet on the stairs — his feet, and soon after the sound of a window-sash flung open. She sat up with her heart beating. He had gone to his room alone, and he had not gone to bed. She might again have one of her night cracks; and at the entrancing prospect, a change came over her mind; with the approach of this hope of pleasure, all the baser metal became immediately obliterated from her thoughts. She rose, all woman, and all the best of woman, tender, pitiful, hating the wrong, loyal to her own sex — and all the weakest of that dear miscellany, nourishing, cherishing next her soft heart, voicelessly flattering, hopes that she would have died sooner than have acknowledged. She tore off her nightcap, and her hair fell about her shoulders in profusion. Undying coquetry awoke. By the faint light of her nocturnal rush, she stood before the looking-glass, carried her shapely arms above her head, and gathered up the treasures of her tresses. She was never backward to admire herself; that kind of modesty was a stranger to her nature; and she paused, struck with a pleased wonder at the sight. "Ye daft auld wife!" she said, answering a thought that was not; and she blushed with the innocent consciousness of a child. Hastily she did up the massive and shining coils, hastily donned a wrapper, and with the rushlight in her hand, stole into the hall. Below stairs she heard the clock ticking the deliberate seconds, and Frank jingling with the decanters in the dining-room. Aversion rose in her, bitter and momentary. "Nesty, tippling puggy!” she thought; and the next moment she had knocked guardedly at Archie’s door and was bidden enter.

Archie had been looking out into the ancient blackness, pierced here and there with a rayless star; taking the sweet air of the moors and the night into his bosom deeply; seeking, perhaps finding, peace after the manner of the unhappy. He turned round as she came in, and showed her a pale face against the window-frame.

“Is that you, Kirstie?” he asked. “Come in!”

“It’s unco late, my dear,” said Kirstie, affecting unwillingness.

“No, no,” he answered, “not at all. Come in, if you want a crack. I am not sleepy, God knows!”

She advanced, took a chair by the toilet table and the candle, and set the rushlight at her foot. Something — it might be in the comparative disorder of her dress, it might be the emotion that now welled in her bosom — had touched her with a wand of transformation, and she seemed young with the youth of goddesses.

“Mr. Erchie,” she began, “what’s this that’s come to ye?”

“I am not aware of anything that has come,” said Archie, and blushed, and repented bitterly that he had let her in.

“O, my dear, that’ll no dae!” said Kirstie. “It’s ill to blend the eyes of love. O, Mr. Erchie, tak a thocht ere it’s ower late. Ye shouldna be impatient o’ the braws o’ life, they’ll a’ come in their saison, like the sun and the rain. Ye’re young yet; ye’ve mony cantie years afore ye. See and dinna wreck yersel’ at the outset like sae mony ithers! Hae patience — they telled me aye that was the owercome o’ life — hae patience, there’s a braw day coming yet. Gude kens it never cam to me; and here I am, wi’ nayther man nor bairn to ca’ my ain, wearying a’ folks wi’ my ill tongue, and you just the first, Mr. Erchie!”

“I have a difficulty in knowing what you mean,” said Archie.

“Weel, and I’ll tell ye,” she said. “It’s just this, that I’m feared. I’m feared for ye, my dear. Remember, your faither is a hard man, reaping where he hasna sowed and gaithering where he hasna strawed. It’s easy speakin’, but mind! Ye’ll have to look in the gurly face o’m, where it’s ill to look, and vain to look for mercy. Ye mind me o’ a bonny ship pitten oot into the black and gowsty seas — ye’re a’ safe still, sittin’ quait and crackin’ wi’ Kirstie in your lown chalmer; but whaur will ye be the morn, and in whatten horror o’ the fearsome tempest, cryin’ on the hills to cover ye?”

“Why, Kirstie, you’re very enigmatical to-night — and very eloquent,” Archie put in.

“And, my dear Mr. Erchie,” she continued, with a change of voice, “ye mauna think that I canna sympathise wi’ ye. Ye mauna think that I havena been young mysel’. Lang syne, when I was a bit lassie, no twenty yet — ” She paused and sighed. “Clean and caller, wi’ a fit like the hinney bee," she continned. "I was aye big and buirdly, ye maun understand; a bonny figure o' a woman, though I say it that suldna — built to rear bairns — braw bairns they suld hae been, and grand I would hae likit it! But I was young, dear, wi' the bonny glint o' youth in my e'en, and little I dreamed I'd ever be tellin' ye this, an auld, lanely, rudas wife! Weel, Mr. Erchie, there was a lad cam' courtin' me, as was but naetural. Mony had come before, and I would nane o' them. But this yin had a tongue to wile the birds frae the lift and the bees frae the foxglove bells. Deary me, but it's lang syne! Folk have dee'd sinsyne and been buried, and are forgotten, and bairns been born and got merrit and got bairns o' their ain. Sinsyne woods have been plantit, and have grawn up and are bonny trees, and the joes sit in their shadow, and sinsyne auld estates have changed hands, and there have been wars and rumours of wars on the face of the earth. And here I'm still — like an auld droopit craw — lookin' on and craikin'! But, Mr. Erchie, do ye no think that I have mind o' it a' still? I was dwalling then in my faither's house; and it's a curious thing that we were whiles trysted in the Deil's Hags. And do ye no think that I have mind of the bonny simmer days, the lang miles o' the bluid-red heather, the cryin' of the whaups, and the lad and the lassie that was trysted? Do ye no think that I mind how the hilly sweetness ran about my hairt? Ay, Mr. Erchie, I ken the way o' it — fine do I ken the way — how the grace o' God takes them, like Paul of Tarsus, when they think it least, and drives the pair o' them into a land which is like a dream, and the world and the folks in't' are nae mair than clouds to the puir lassie, and heeven nae mair than windle-straes, if she can but pleesure him! Until Tam dee'd — that was my story," she broke off to say, "he dee'd, and I wasna at the buryin'. But while he was here, I could take care o' mysel'. And can yon puir lassie?"

Kirstie, her eyes shining with unshed tears, stretched out her hand towards him appealingly; the bright and the dull gold of her hair flashed and smouldered in the coils behind her comely head, like the rays of an eternal youth; the pure colour had risen in her face; and Archie was abashed alike by her beauty and her story. He came towards her slowly from the window, took up her hand in his and kissed it.

"Kirstie," he said hoarsely, "you have misjudged me sorely. I have always thought of her, I wouldna harm her for the universe, my woman!"

"Eh, lad, and that's easy sayin'," cried Kirstie, "but it's nane sae easy doin'! Man, do ye no comprehend that it's God's wull we should be blendit and glamoured, and have nae command over our ain members at a time like that? My bairn," she cried, still holding his hand, "think o' the puir lass! have pity upon her, Erchie! and O, be wise for twa!

Think o' the risk she rins! I have seen ye, and what's to prevent ithers! I saw ye once in the Hags, in my ain howl, and I was wae to see ye there — in pairt for the omen, for I think there's a weird on the place — and in pairt for pure nakit envy and bitterness o' hairt. It's strange ye should forgather there tae! God! but yon puir, thrawn, auld Covenanter's seen a heap o' human natur since he lookit his last on the musket barrels, if he never saw nane afore," she added, with a kind of wonder in her eyes.

"I swear by my honour I have done her no wrong," said Archie. "I swear by my honour and the redemption of my soul that there shall none be done her. I have heard of this before. I have been foolish, Kirstie, not unkind, and, above all, not base."

"There's my bairn!" said Kirstie, rising. "I'll can trust ye noo, I'll can gang to my bed wi' an easy hairt." And then she saw in a flash how barren had been her triumph. Archie had promised to spare the girl, and he would keep it; but who had promised to spare Archie? What was to be the end of it? Over a maze of difficulties she glanced, and saw, at the end of every passage, the flinty countenance of Hermiston. And a kind of horror fell upon her at what she had done. She wore a tragic mask. "Erchie, the Lord peety you, dear, and peety me! I have buildit on this foundation" — laying her hand heavily on his shoulder — "and buildit hie, and pit my hairt in the buildin' of it. If the hale hypothec were to fa', I think, laddie, I would dee! Excuse a daft wife that loves ye, and that kenned your mither. And for His name's sake keep yersel' frae inordinate desires; haud your heart in baith your hands, carry it canny and laigh; dinna send it up like a hairn's kite into the collieshangic o' the wunds! Mind, Maister Erchie dear, that this life's a' disappointment, and a mouthfu' o' mools is the appointed end."

"Ay, but Kirstie, my woman, you're asking me ower much at last," said Archie, profoundly moved, and lapsing into the broad Scots. "Ye're asking what nae man can grant ye, what only the Lord of heaven can grant ye if He see fit. Ay! And can even He! I can promise ye what I shall do, and you can depend on that. But how I shall feel — my woman, that is long past thinking of!"

They were both standing by now opposite each other. The face of Archie wore the wretched semblance of a smile; hers was convulsed for a moment.

"Promise me ae thing," she cried in a sharp voice. "Promise me ye'll never do naething without telling me."

"No, Kirstie, I canna promise ye that," he replied. "I have promised enough, God kens!"

"May the blessing of God lift and rest upon ye dear!" she said.

"God bless ye, my old friend," said he.

CHAPTER IX — AT THE WEAVER'S STONE

It was late in the afternoon when Archie drew near by the hill path to the Praying Weaver's stone. The Hags were in shadow. But still, through the gate of the Slap, the sun shot a last arrow, which sped far and straight across the surface of the moss, here and there touching and shining on a tussock, and lighted at length on the gravestone and the small figure awaiting him there. The emptiness and solitude of the great moors seemed to be concentrated there, and Kirstie pointed out by that figure of sunshine for the only inhabitant. His first sight of her was thus excruciatingly sad, like a glimpse of a world from which all light, comfort, and society were on the point of vanishing. And the next moment, when she had turned her face to him and the quick smile had enlightened it, the whole face of nature smiled upon him in her smile of welcome. Archie's slow pace was quickened; his legs hasted to her though his heart was hanging back. The girl, upon her side, drew herself together slowly and stood up, expectant; she was all languor, her face was gone white; her arms ached for him, her soul was on tip-toes. But he deceived her, pausing a few steps away, not less white than herself, and holding up his hand with a gesture of denial.

"No, Christina, not to-day," he said. "To-day I have to talk to you seriously. Sit ye down, please, there where you were. Please!" he repeated.

The revulsion of feeling in Christina's heart was violent. To have longed and waited these weary hours for him, rehearsing her endearments — to have seen him at last come — to have been ready there, breathless, wholly passive, his to do what he would with — and suddenly to have found herself confronted with a grey-faced, harsh schoolmaster — it was too rude a shock. She could have wept, but pride withheld her. She sat down on the stone, from which she had arisen, part with the instinct of obedience, part as though she had been thrust there. What was this? Why was she rejected? Had she ceased to please? She stood here offering her wares, and he would none of them! And yet they were all his! His to take and keep, not his to refuse though! In her quick petulant nature, a moment ago on fire with hope, thwarted love and wounded vanity wrought. The schoolmaster that there is in all men, to the despair of all girls and most women, was now completely in possession of Archie. He had passed a night of sermons, a day of reflection; he had come wound up to do his duty; and the set mouth, which in him only betrayed the effort of his will, to her seemed the expression of an averted heart. It was the same with his constrained voice and embarrassed utterance;

and if so — if it was all over — the pang of the thought took away from her the power of thinking.

He stood before her some way off. "Kirstie, there's been too much of this. We've seen too much of each other." She looked up quickly and her eyes contracted. "There's no good ever comes of these secret meetings. They're not frank, not honest truly, and I ought to have seen it. People have begun to talk; and it's not right of me. Do you see?"

"I see somebody will have been talking to ye," she said sullenly.

"They have, more than one of them," replied Archie.

"And whae were they?" she cried. "And what kind o' love do ye ca' that, that's ready to gang round like a whirligig at folk talking? Do ye think they havena talked to me?"

"Have they indeed?" said Archie, with a quick breath. "That is what I feared. Who were they? Who has dared — ?"

Archie was on the point of losing his temper.

As a matter of fact, not any one had talked to Christina on the matter; and she strenuously repeated her own first question in a panic of self-defence.

"Ah, well! what does it matter?" he said. "They were good folk that wished well to us, and the great affair is that there are people talking. My dear girl, we have to be wise. We must not wreck our lives at the outset. They may be long and happy yet, and we must see to it, Kirstie, like God's rational creatures and not like fool children. There is one thing we must see to before all. You're worth waiting for, Kirstie! worth waiting for a generation; it would be enough reward." — And here he remembered the schoolmaster again, and very unwisely took to following wisdom. "The first thing that we must see to, is that there shall be no scandal about for my father's sake. That would ruin all; do ye no see that?"

Kirstie was a little pleased, there had been some show of warmth of sentiment in what Archie had said last. But the dull irritation still persisted in her bosom; with the aboriginal instinct, having suffered herself, she wished to make Archie suffer.

And besides, there had come out the word she had always feared to hear from his lips, the name of his father. It is not to be supposed that, during so many days with a love avowed between them, some reference had not been made to their conjoint future. It had in fact been often touched upon, and from the first had been the sore point. Kirstie had wilfully closed the eye of thought; she would not argue even with herself; gallant, desperate little heart, she had accepted the command of that supreme attraction like the call of fate and marched blindfold on her doom. But Archie, with his masculine sense of responsibility, must reason; he must dwell on some future good, when the present good was all in all to Kirstie; he must talk — and talk lamely, as necessity drove him — of what was to be. Again and again he had touched on marriage; again and again been driven back into indistinctness by a memory of Lord Hermiston. And Kirstie had been swift to understand and quick to choke down and smother the understanding; swift to leap up in flame at a mention of that hope, which spoke volumes to her vanity and her love, that she might one day be Mrs. Weir of Hermiston; swift, also, to recognise in his stumbling or throttled utterance the death-knell of these expectations, and constant, poor girl! in her large-minded madness, to go on and to reck nothing of the future. But these unfinished references, these blinks in which his heart spoke, and his memory and reason rose up to silence it before the words were well uttered, gave her unqualifiable agony. She was raised up and dashed down again bleeding. The recurrence of the subject forced her, for however short a time, to open her eyes on what she did not wish to see; and it had invariably ended in another disappointment. So now again, at the mere wind of its coming, at the mere mention of his father's name — who might seem indeed to have accompanied them in their whole moorland courtship, an awful figure in a wig with an ironical and bitter smile, present to guilty consciousness — she fled from it head down.

"Ye havena told me yet," she said, "who was it spoke?"

"Your aunt for one," said Archie.

"Auntie Kirstie?" she cried. "And what do I care for my Auntie Kirstie?"

"She cares a great deal for her niece," replied Archie, in kind reproof.

"Troth, and it's the first I've heard of it," retorted the girl.

"The question here is not who it is, but what they say, what they have noticed," pursued the lucid schoolmaster. "That is what we have to think of in self-defence."

"Auntie Kirstie, indeed! A bitter, thrawn auld maid that's fomented trouble in the country before I was born, and will be doing it still, I daur say, when I'm deid! It's in her nature; it's as natural for her as it's for a sheep to eat."

"Pardon me, Kirstie, she was not the only one," interposed Archie. "I had two warnings, two sermons, last night, both most kind and considerate. Had you been there, I promise you you would have grat, my dear! And they opened my eyes. I saw we were going a wrong way."

"Who was the other one?" Kirstie demanded.

By this time Archie was in the condition of a hunted beast. He had come, braced and resolute; he was to trace out a line of conduct for the pair of them in a few cold, convincing sentences; he had now been there some time, and he was still staggering round the outworks and undergoing what he felt to be a savage cross-examination.

"Mr. Frank!" she cried. "What nex', I would like to ken?"

"He spoke most kindly and truly."

"What like did he say?"

"I am not going to tell you; you have nothing to do with that," cried Archie, startled to find he had admitted so much.

"O, I have naething to do with it!" she repeated, springing to her feet. "A'body at Hermiston's free to pass their opinions upon me, but I have naething to do wi' it! Was this at prayers like? Did ye ca' the grieve into the consultation? Little wonder if a'body's talking, when ye make a'body yer confidants! But as you say, Mr. Weir, — most kindly, most considerately, most truly, I'm sure, — I have naething to do with it. And I think I'll better be going. I'll be wishing you good evening, Mr. Weir." And she made him a stately curtsey, shaking as she did so from head to foot, with the barren ecstasy of temper.

Poor Archie stood dumbfounded. She had moved some steps away from him before he recovered the gift of articulate speech.

"Kirstie!" he cried. "O, Kirstie woman!"

There was in his voice a ring of appeal, a clang of mere astonishment that showed the schoolmaster was vanquished.

She turned round on him. "What do ye Kirstie me for?" she retorted. "What have ye to do wi' me! Gang to your ain freends and deave them!"

He could only repeat the appealing "Kirstie!"

"Kirstie, indeed!" cried the girl, her eyes blazing in her white face. "My name is Miss Christina Elliott, I would have ye to ken, and I daur ye to ca' me out of it. If I canna get love, I'll have respect, Mr. Weir. I'm come of decent people, and I'll have respect. What have I done that ye should lightly me? What have I done? What have I done? O, what have I done?" and her voice rose upon the third repetition. "I thocht — I thocht — I thocht I was sae happy!" and the first sob broke from her like the paroxysm of some mortal sickness.

Archie ran to her. He took the poor child in his arms, and she nestled to his breast as to a mother's, and clasped him in hands that were strong like vices. He felt her whole body shaken by the throes of distress, and had pity upon her beyond speech. Pity, and at the same time a bewildered fear of this explosive engine in his arms, whose works he did not understand, and yet had been tampering with. There arose from before him the curtains of boyhood, and he saw for the first time the ambiguous face of woman as she is. In vain he looked back over the interview; he saw not where he had offended. It seemed unprovoked, a wilful convulsion of brute nature. . . .

EDITORIAL NOTE

With the words last printed, “a wilful convulsion of brute nature,” the romance of *Weir of Hermiston* breaks off. They were dictated, I believe, on the very morning of the writer’s sudden seizure and death. *Weir of Hermiston* thus remains in the work of Stevenson what *Edwin Droid* is in the work of Dickens or *Denis Duval* in that of Thackeray: or rather it remains relatively more, for if each of those fragments holds an honourable place among its author’s writings, among Stevenson’s the fragment of *Weir* holds certainly the highest.

Readers may be divided in opinion on the question whether they would or they would not wish to hear more of the intended course of the story and destinies of the characters. To some, silence may seem best, and that the mind should be left to its own conjectures as to the sequel, with the help of such indications as the text affords. I confess that this is the view which has my sympathy. But since others, and those almost certainly a majority, are anxious to be told all they can, and since editors and publishers join in the request, I can scarce do otherwise than comply. The intended argument, then, so far as it was known at the time of the writer’s death to his step-daughter and devoted amanuensis, Mrs. Strong, was nearly as follows: —

Archie persists in his good resolution of avoiding further conduct compromising to young Kirstie’s good name. Taking advantage of the situation thus created, and of the girl’s unhappiness and wounded vanity, Frank Innes pursues his purpose of seduction; and Kirstie, though still caring for Archie in her heart, allows herself to become Frank’s victim. Old Kirstie is the first to perceive something amiss with her, and believing Archie to be the culprit, accuses him, thus making him aware for the first time that mischief has happened. He does not at once deny the charge, but seeks out and questions young Kirstie, who confesses the truth to him; and he, still loving her, promises to protect and defend her in her trouble. He then has an interview with Frank Innes on the moor, which ends in a quarrel, and in Archie killing Frank beside the Weaver’s Stone. Meanwhile the Four Black Brothers, having become aware of their sister’s betrayal, are bent on vengeance against Archie as her supposed seducer. They are about to close in upon him with this purpose when he is arrested by the officers of the law for the murder of Frank. He is tried before his own father, the Lord Justice-Clerk, found guilty, and condemned to death. Meanwhile the elder Kirstie, having discovered from the girl how matters really stand, informs her nephews of the truth; and they, in a great revulsion of feeling in Archie’s favour, determine on an action after the ancient manner of their house. They gather a following, and after a great fight break the prison where Archie lies confined, and rescue him. He and young Kirstie thereafter escape to America. But the ordeal of taking part in the trial of his own son has been too much for the Lord Justice-Clerk, who dies of the shock. “I do not know,” adds the amanuensis, “what becomes of old Kirstie, but that character grew and strengthened so in the writing that I am sure he had some dramatic destiny for her.”

The plan of every imaginative work is subject, of course, to change under the artist’s hand as he carries it out; and not merely the character of the elder Kirstie, but other elements of the design no less, might well have deviated from the lines originally traced. It seems certain, however, that the next stage in the relations of Archie and the younger Kirstie would have been as above foreshadowed; and this conception of the lover’s unconventional chivalry and unshaken devotion to his mistress after her fault is very characteristic of the writer’s mind. The vengeance to be taken on the seducer beside the Weaver’s Stone is prepared for in the first words of the Introduction; while the situation and fate of the judge, confronting like a Brutus, but unable to survive, the duty of sending his own son to the gallows, seem clearly to have been destined to furnish the climax and essential tragedy of the tale.

How this last circumstance was to have been brought about, within the limits of legal usage and possibility, seems hard to conjecture; but it was a point to which the author had evidently given careful consideration. Mrs. Strong says simply that the Lord Justice-Clerk, like an old Roman, condemns his son to death; but I am assured on the best legal authority of Scotland that no judge, however powerful either by character or office, could have insisted on presiding at the trial of a near kinsman of his own. The Lord Justice-Clerk was head of the criminal justiciary of the country; he might have insisted on his right of being present on the bench when his son was tried: but he would never have been allowed to preside or to pass sentence. Now in a letter of Stevenson’s to Mr. Baxter, of October 1892, I find him asking for materials in terms which seem to indicate that he knew this quite well: — ”I wish Pitcairn’s ‘Criminal Trials,’ *quam primum*. Also an absolutely correct text of the Scots judiciary oath. Also, in case Pitcairn does not come down late enough, I wish as full a report as possible of a Scots murder trial between 1790–1820. Understand the *fullest possible*. Is there any book which would guide me to the following facts? The Justice-Clerk tries some people capitally on circuit. Certain evidence cropping up, the charge is transferred to the Justice-Clerk’s own son. Of course in the next trial the Justice-Clerk is excluded, and the case is called before the Lord Justice-General. Where would this trial have to be? I fear in Edinburgh, which would not suit my view. Could it be again at the circuit town?” The point was referred to a quondam fellow-member with Stevenson of the Edinburgh Speculative Society, Mr. Graham Murray, the present Solicitor-General for Scotland; whose reply was to the effect that there would be no difficulty in making the new trial take place at the circuit town; that it would have to be held there in spring or autumn, before two Lords of Justiciary; and that the Lord Justice-General would have nothing to do with it, this title being at the date in question only a nominal one held by a layman (which is no longer the case). On this Stevenson writes, “Graham Murray’s note *re* the venue was highly satisfactory, and did me all the good in the world.” The terms of his inquiry seem to imply that he intended other persons, before Archie, to have fallen first under suspicion of the murder; and also — doubtless in order to make the rescue by the Black Brothers possible — that he wanted Archie to be imprisoned not in Edinburgh but in the circuit town. But they do not show how he meant to get over the main difficulty, which at the same time he fully recognises. Can it have been that Lord Hermiston’s part was to have been limited to presiding at the *first* trial, where the evidence incriminating Archie was unexpectedly brought forward, and to directing that the law should take its course?

Whether the final escape and union of Archie and Christina would have proved equally essential to the plot may perhaps to some readers seem questionable. They may rather feel that a tragic destiny is foreshadowed from the beginning for all concerned, and is inherent in the very conditions of the tale. But on this point, and other matters of general criticism connected with it, I find an interesting discussion by the author himself in his correspondence. Writing to Mr. J. M. Barrie, under date November 1, 1892, and criticising that author’s famous story of *The Little Minister*, Stevenson says: —

“Your descriptions of your dealings with Lord Rintoul are frightfully unconscientious. . . . The *Little Minister* ought to have ended badly; we all know it *did*, and we are infinitely grateful to you for the grace and good feeling with which you have lied about it. If you had told the truth, I for one could never have forgiven you. As you had conceived and written the earlier parts, the truth about the end, though indisputably true to fact, would have been a lie, or what is worse, a discord, in art. If you are going to make a book end badly, it must end badly from the beginning. Now, your book began to end well. You let yourself fall in love with, and fondle, and smile at your puppets. Once you had done that, your honour was committed — at the cost of truth to life you were bound to save them. It is the blot on *Richard Feverel* for instance, that it begins to end well; and then tricks you and ends ill. But in this case, there is worse behind, for the ill ending does not inherently issue from the plot — the story had, in fact, ended well after the great last interview between Richard and Lucy — and the blind, illogical bullet which smashes all has no more to do between the boards than a fly has to do with a room into whose open window it comes buzzing. It might have so happened; it needed not; and unless needs must, we have no right to pain our readers. I have had a heavy case of conscience of the same kind about my Braxfield story. Braxfield — only his name is Hermiston — has a son who is condemned to death; plainly there is a fine tempting fitness about this — and I meant he was to hang. But on considering my minor characters, I saw there were five people who would — in a sense, who must — break prison and attempt his rescue. They are capable hardy folks too, who might very well succeed. Why should they not then? Why should not young Hermiston escape clear out of the country? and be happy, if he could, with his — but soft! I will not betray my secret nor my heroine. . . .”

To pass, now, from the question how the story would have ended to the question how it originated and grew in the writer’s mind. The character of the hero, Weir of Hermiston, is avowedly suggested by the historical personality of Robert Macqueen, Lord Braxfield. This famous judge has been for generations the subject of a hundred Edinburgh tales and anecdotes. Readers of Stevenson’s essay on the Raeburn exhibition, in *Virginibus Puerisque*, will remember how he is fascinated by Raeburn’s portrait of Braxfield, even as Lockhart had been fascinated by a different portrait of the same worthy sixty years before (see *Peter’s Letters to his Kinsfolk*); nor did his interest in the character diminish in later life. Again, the case of a judge involved by the exigencies of his office in a strong conflict between public duty and private interest or affection, was one which had always attracted and exercised Stevenson’s imagination. In the days when he and Mr. Henley were collaborating with a view to the stage, Mr. Henley once proposed a plot founded on the story of Mr. Justice Harbottle in Sheridan Le Fanu’s *In a Glass Darkly*, in which the wicked judge goes headlong *per fas et nefas* to his object of getting the husband of his mistress hanged. Some time later Stevenson and his wife together wrote a play called *The Hanging Judge*. In this, the title character is tempted for the first time in his life to tamper with the course of justice, in order to shield his wife from persecution by a former husband who reappears after being supposed dead. Bulwer’s novel of *Paul Clifford*, with its final situation of the worldly-minded judge, Sir William Brandon, learning that the highwayman whom he is in the act of sentencing is his own son, and dying of the knowledge, was also well known to Stevenson, and no doubt counted for something in the suggestion of the present story.

Once more, the difficulties often attending the relation of father and son in actual life had pressed heavily on Stevenson’s mind and conscience from the days of his youth, when in obeying the law of his own nature he had been constrained to disappoint, distress, and for a time to be much misunderstood by, a father whom he justly loved and admired with all his heart. Difficulties of this kind he had already handled in a lighter vein once or twice in fiction — as for instance in the *Story of a Lie* and in *The Wrecker* — before he grappled with them in the acute and tragic phase in which they occur in the present story.

These three elements, then, the interest of the historical personality of Lord Braxfield, the problems and emotions arising from a violent conflict between duty and nature in a judge, and the difficulties due to incompatibility and misunderstanding between father and son, lie at the foundations of the present story. To touch on minor matters, it is perhaps worth notice, as Mr. Henley reminds me, that the name of Weir had from of old a special significance for Stevenson’s imagination, from the traditional fame in Edinburgh of Major Weir, burned as a warlock, together with his sister, under circumstances of peculiar atrocity. Another name, that of the episodical personage of Mr. Torrance the minister, is borrowed direct from life, as indeed are the whole figure and its surroundings — kirkyard, kirk, and manse — down even to the black thread mittens: witness the following passage from a letter of the early seventies: — ”I’ve been to church and am not depressed — a great step. It was at that beautiful church” [of Glencorse in the Pentlands, three miles from his father’s country house at Swanston]. “It is a little cruciform place, with a steep slate roof. The small kirkyard is full of old grave-stones; one of a Frenchman from Dunkerque, I suppose he died prisoner in the military prison hard by. And one, the most pathetic memorial I ever saw: a poor school-slate, in a wooden frame, with the inscription cut into it evidently by the father’s own hand. In church, old Mr. Torrance preached, over eighty and a relic of times forgotten, with his black thread gloves and mild old face.” A side hint for a particular trait in the character of Mrs. Weir we can trace in some family traditions concerning the writer’s own grandmother, who is reported to have valued piety much more than efficiency in her domestic servants. The other women characters seem, so far at least as I know, to have been pure creation, and especially that new and admirable incarnation of the eternal feminine in the elder Kirstie. The little that he says about her himself is in a letter written a few days before his death to Mr. Gosse. The allusions are to the various moods and attitudes of people in regard to middle age, and are suggested by Mr. Gosse’s volume of poems, *In Russet and Silver*. “It seems rather funny,” he writes, “that this matter should come up just now, as I am at present engaged in treating a severe case of middle age in one of my stories, *The Justice-*

Clerk. The case is that of a woman, and I think I am doing her justice. You will be interested, I believe, to see the difference in our treatments. *Secreta Vitæ* [the title of one of Mr. Gosse's poems] comes nearer to the case of my poor Kirstie." From the wonderful midnight scene between her and Archie, we may judge what we have lost in those later scenes where she was to have taxed him with the fault that was not his — to have presently learned his innocence from the lips of his supposed victim — to have then vindicated him to her kinsmen and fired them to the action of his rescue. The scene of the prison-breaking here planned by Stevenson would have gained interest (as will already have occurred to readers) from comparison with the two famous precedents in Scott, the Porteous mob and the breaking of Portanferry jail.

The best account of Stevenson's methods of imaginative work is in the following sentences from a letter of his own to Mr. W. Craibe Angus of Glasgow: — "I am still 'a slow study,' and sit for a long while silent on my eggs. Unconscious thought, there is the only method: macerate your subject, let it boil slow, then take the lid off and look in — and there your stuff is — good or bad." The several elements above noted having been left to work for many years in his mind, it was in the autumn of 1892 that he was moved to "take the lid off and look in," — under the influence, it would seem, of a special and overmastering wave of that feeling for the romance of Scottish scenery and character which was at all times so strong in him, and which his exile did so much to intensify. I quote again from his letter to Mr. Barrie on November 1st in that year: — "It is a singular thing that I should live here in the South Seas under conditions so new and so striking, and yet my imagination so continually inhabit the cold old huddle of grey hills from which we come. I have finished *David Balfour*, I have another book on the stocks, *The Young Chevalier*, which is to be part in France and part in Scotland, and to deal with Prince Charlie about the year 1749; and now what have I done but begun a third, which is to be all moorland together, and is to have for a centre-piece a figure that I think you will appreciate — that of the immortal Braxfield. Braxfield himself is my grand premier — or since you are so much involved in the British drama, let me say my heavy lead." Writing to me at the same date he makes the same announcement more briefly, with a list of the characters and an indication of the scene and date of the story. To Mr. Baxter he writes a month later, "I have a novel on the stocks to be called *The Justice-Clerk*. It is pretty Scotch; the grand premier is taken from Braxfield (O, by the by, send me Cockburn's *Memorials*), and some of the story is, well, queer. The heroine is seduced by one man, and finally disappears with the other man who shot him. . . . Mind you, I expect *The Justice-Clerk* to be my masterpiece. My Braxfield is already a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, and so far as he has gone, far my best character." From the last extract it appears that he had already at this date drafted some of the earlier chapters of the book. He also about the same time composed the dedication to his wife, who found it pinned to her bed-curtains one morning on awaking. It was always his habit to keep several books in progress at the same time, turning from one to another as the fancy took him, and finding relief in the change of labour; and for many months after the date of this letter, first illness, — then a voyage to Auckland, — then work on the *Ebb-Tide*, on a new tale called *St. Ives*, which was begun during an attack of influenza, and on his projected book of family history, — prevented his making any continuous progress with *Weir*. In August 1893 he says he has been recasting the beginning. A year later, still only the first four or five chapters had been drafted. Then, in the last weeks of his life, he attacked the task again, in a sudden heat of inspiration, and worked at it ardently and without interruption until the end came. No wonder if during these weeks he was sometimes aware of a tension of the spirit difficult to sustain. "How can I keep this pitch?" he is reported to have said after finishing one of the chapters; and all the world knows how that frail organism in fact betrayed him in mid effort. The greatness of the loss to his country's letters can for the first time be fully measured from the foregoing pages.

There remains one more point to be mentioned, as to the speech and manners of the Hanging Judge himself. That these are not a whit exaggerated, in comparison with what is recorded of his historic prototype, Lord Braxfield, is certain. The *locus classicus* in regard to this personage is in Lord Cockburn's *Memorials of his Time*. "Strong built and dark, with rough eyebrows, powerful eyes, threatening lips, and a low growling voice, he was like a formidable blacksmith. His accent and dialect were exaggerated Scotch; his language, like his thoughts, short, strong, and conclusive. Illiterate and without any taste for any refined enjoyment, strength of understanding, which gave him power without cultivation, only encouraged him to a more contemptuous disdain of all natures less coarse than his own. It may be doubted if he was ever so much in his element as when tauntingly repelling the last despairing claim of a wretched culprit, and sending him to Botany Bay or the gallows with an insulting jest. Yet this was not from cruelty, for which he was too strong and too jovial, but from cherished coarseness." Readers, nevertheless, who are at all acquainted with the social history of Scotland will hardly have failed to make the observation that Braxfield's is an extreme case of eighteenth-century manners, as he himself was an eighteenth-century personage (he died in 1799, in his seventy-eighth year); and that for the date in which the story is cast (1814) such manners are somewhat of an anachronism. During the generation contemporary with the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars — or to put it another way, the generation that elapsed between the days when Scott roamed the country as a High School and University student and those when he settled in the fulness of fame and prosperity at Abbotsford, — or again (the allusions will appeal to readers of the admirable Galt) during the interval between the first and the last provostry of Bailie Pawkie in the borough of Gudetown, or between the earlier and the final ministrations of Mr. Balwhidder in the parish of Dalmailing, — during this period a great softening had taken place in Scottish manners generally, and in those of the Bar and Bench not least. "Since the death of Lord Justice-Clerk Macqueen of Braxfield," says Lockhart, writing about 1817, "the whole exterior of judicial deportment has been quite altered." A similar criticism may probably hold good on the picture of border life contained in the chapter concerning the Four Black Brothers of Cauldstaneslap, namely, that it rather suggests the ways of an earlier generation; nor have I any clue to the reasons which led Stevenson to choose this particular date, in the year preceding Waterloo, for a story which, in regard to some of its features at least, might seem more naturally placed some twenty-five or thirty years before.

If the reader seeks, further, to know whether the scenery of Hermiston can be identified with any one special place familiar to the writer's early experience, the answer, I think, must be in the negative. Rather it is distilled from a number of different haunts and associations among the moorlands of southern Scotland. In the dedication and in a letter to me he indicates the Lammermuirs as the scene of his tragedy. And Mrs. Stevenson (his mother) tells me that she thinks he was inspired by recollections of a visit paid in boyhood to an uncle living at a remote farmhouse in that district called Overshiels, in the parish of Stow. But though he may have thought of the Lammermuirs in the first instance, we have already found him drawing his description of the kirk and manse from another haunt of his youth, namely, Glencorse in the Pentlands; while passages in chapters v. and viii. point explicitly to a third district, that is, Upper Tweeddale, with the country stretching thence towards the wells of Clyde. With this country also holiday rides and excursions from Peebles had made him familiar as a boy: and this seems certainly the most natural scene of the story, if only from its proximity to the proper home of the Elliotts, which of course is in the heart of the Border, especially Teviotdale and Ettrick. Some of the geographical names mentioned are clearly not meant to furnish literal indications. The Spango, for instance, is a water running, I believe, not into the

Tweed but into the Nith, and Crossmichael as the name of a town is borrowed from Galloway.

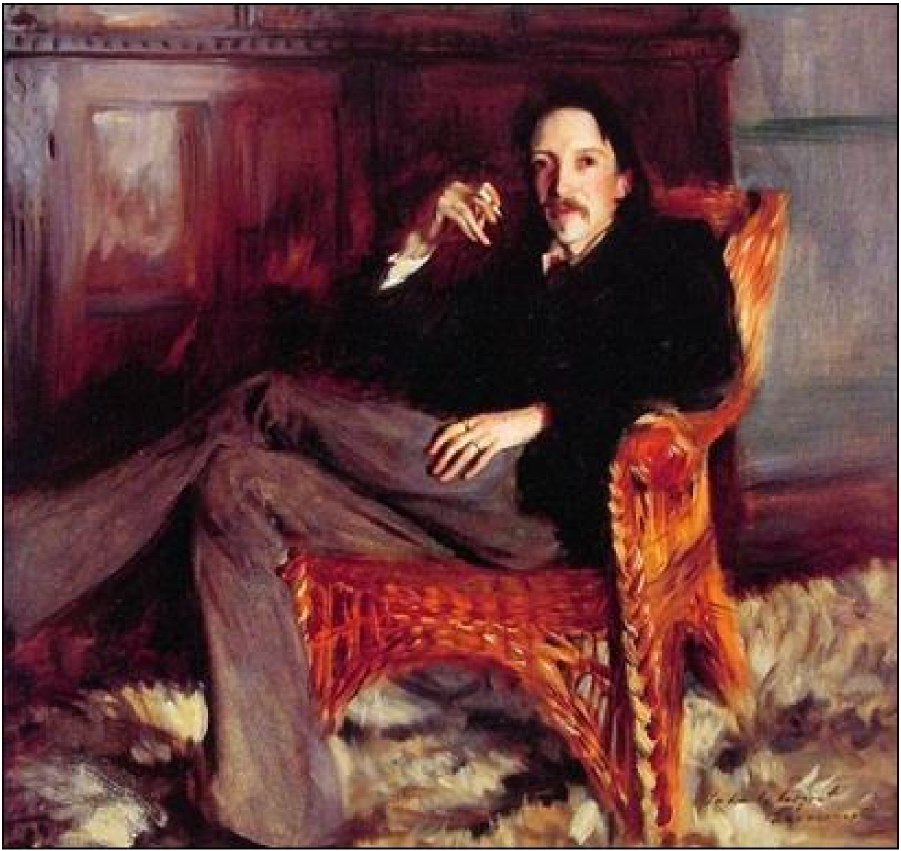
But it is with the general and essential that the artist deals, and questions of strict historical perspective or local definition are beside the mark in considering his work. Nor will any reader expect, or be grateful for, comment in this place on matters which are more properly to the point — on the seizing and penetrating power of the author's ripened art as exhibited in the foregoing pages, the wide range of character and emotion over which he sweeps with so assured a hand, his vital poetry of vision and magic of presentment. Surely no son of Scotland has died leaving with his last breath a worthier tribute to the land he loved.

S. C.

ST. IVES

Being The Adventures of a French Prisoner in England

Published posthumously in 1897, this unfinished novel was completed by Arthur Quiller-Couch. The narrative concerns the adventures of the dashing Capitaine Jacques St. Ives, a Napoleonic soldier, after his capture by the British.



Portrait by John Singer Sargent, 1887

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NOTE

The following tale was taken down from Mr. Stevenson's dictation by his stepdaughter and amanuensis, Mrs. Strong, at intervals between January 1893 *and October* 1894 (*see* Vailima Letters, *p*–246, 299, 324 *and* 350). *About six weeks before his death he laid the story aside to take up* Weir of Hermiston. *The thirty chapters of* St. Ives *which he had written* (*the last few of them apparently unrevised*) *brought the tale within sight of its conclusion, and the intended course of the remainder was known in outline to Mrs. Strong. For the benefit of those readers who do not like a story to be left unfinished, the delicate task of supplying the missing chapters has been entrusted to Mr. Quiller-Couch, whose work begins at Chap. XXXI.*

CHAPTER I — A TALE OF A LION RAMPANT

It was in the month of May 1813 that I was so unlucky as to fall at last into the hands of the enemy. My knowledge of the English language had marked me out for a certain employment. Though I cannot conceive a soldier refusing to incur the risk, yet to be hanged for a spy is a disgusting business; and I was relieved to be held a prisoner of war. Into the Castle of Edinburgh, standing in the midst of that city on the summit of an extraordinary rock, I was cast with several hundred fellow-sufferers, all privates like myself, and the more part of them, by an accident, very ignorant, plain fellows. My English, which had brought me into that scrape, now helped me very materially to bear it. I had a thousand advantages. I was often called to play the part of an interpreter, whether of orders or complaints, and thus brought in relations, sometimes of mirth, sometimes almost of friendship, with the officers in charge. A young lieutenant singled me out to be his adversary at chess, a game in which I was extremely proficient, and would reward me for my gambits with excellent cigars. The major of the battalion took lessons of French from me while at breakfast, and was sometimes so obliging as to have me join him at the meal. Chevenix was his name. He was stiff as a drum-major and selfish as an Englishman, but a fairly conscientious pupil and a fairly upright man. Little did I suppose that his ramrod body and frozen face would, in the end, step in between me and all my dearest wishes; that upon this precise, regular, icy soldier-man my fortunes should so nearly shipwreck! I never liked, but yet I trusted him; and though it may seem but a trifle, I found his snuff-box with the bean in it come very welcome.

For it is strange how grown men and seasoned soldiers can go back in life; so that after but a little while in prison, which is after all the next thing to being in the nursery, they grow absorbed in the most pitiful, childish interests, and a sugar biscuit or a pinch of snuff become things to follow after and scheme for!

We made but a poor show of prisoners. The officers had been all offered their parole, and had taken it. They lived mostly in suburbs of the city, lodging with modest families, and enjoyed their freedom and supported the almost continual evil tidings of the Emperor as best they might. It chanced I was the only gentleman among the privates who remained. A great part were ignorant Italians, of a regiment that had suffered heavily in Catalonia. The rest were mere diggers of the soil, treaders of grapes or hewers of wood, who had been suddenly and violently preferred to the glorious state of soldiers. We had but the one interest in common: each of us who had any skill with his fingers passed the hours of his captivity in the making of little toys and *articles of Paris*; and the prison was daily visited at certain hours by a concourse of people of the country, come to exult over our distress, or — it is more tolerant to suppose — their own vicarious triumph. Some moved among us with a decency of shame or sympathy. Others were the most offensive personages in the world, gaped at us as if we had been baboons, sought to evangelise us to their rustic, northern religion, as though we had been savages, or tortured us with intelligence of disasters to the arms of France. Good, bad, and indifferent, there was one alleviation to the annoyance of these visitors; for it was the practice of almost all to purchase some specimen of our rude handiwork. This led, amongst the prisoners, to a strong spirit of competition. Some were neat of hand, and (the genius of the French being always distinguished) could place upon sale little miracles of dexterity and taste. Some had a more engaging appearance; fine features were found to do as well as fine merchandise, and an air of youth in particular (as it appealed to the sentiment of pity in our visitors) to be a source of profit. Others again enjoyed some acquaintance with the language, and were able to recommend the more agreeably to purchasers such trifles as they had to sell. To the first of these advantages I could lay no claim, for my fingers were all thumbs. Some at least of the others I possessed; and finding much entertainment in our commerce, I did not suffer my advantages to rust. I have never despised the social arts, in which it is a national boast that every Frenchman should excel. For the approach of particular sorts of visitors, I had a particular manner of address, and even of appearance, which I could readily assume and change on the occasion rising. I never lost an opportunity to flatter either the person of my visitor, if it should be a lady, or, if it should be a man, the greatness of his country in war. And in case my compliments should miss their aim, I was always ready to cover my retreat with some agreeable pleasantry, which would often earn me the name of an 'oddity' or a 'droll fellow.' In this way, although I was so left-handed a toy-maker, I made out to be rather a successful merchant; and found means to procure many little delicacies and alleviations, such as children or prisoners desire.

I am scarcely drawing the portrait of a very melancholy man. It is not indeed my character; and I had, in a comparison with my comrades, many reasons for content. In the first place, I had no family: I was an orphan and a bachelor; neither wife nor child awaited me in France. In the second, I had never wholly forgot the emotions with which I first found myself a prisoner; and although a military prison be not altogether a garden of delights, it is still preferable to a gallows. In the third, I am almost ashamed to say it, but I found a certain pleasure in our place of residence: being an obsolete and really mediaeval fortress, high placed and commanding extraordinary prospects, not only over sea, mountain, and champaign but actually over the thoroughfares of a capital city, which we could see blackened by day with the moving crowd of the inhabitants, and at night shining with lamps. And lastly, although I was not insensible to the restraints of prison or the scantiness of our rations, I remembered I had sometimes eaten quite as ill in Spain, and had to mount guard and march perhaps a dozen leagues into the bargain. The first of my troubles, indeed, was the costume we were obliged to wear. There is a horrible practice in England to trick out in ridiculous uniforms, and as it were to brand in mass, not only convicts but military prisoners, and even the children in charity schools. I think some malignant genius had found his masterpiece of irony in the dress which we were condemned to wear: jacket, waistcoat, and trousers of a sulphur or mustard yellow, and a shirt or blue-and-white striped cotton. It was conspicuous, it was cheap, it pointed us out to laughter — we, who were old soldiers, used to arms, and some of us showing noble scars, — like a set of lugubrious zanies at a fair. The old name of that rock on which our prison stood was (I have heard since then) the *Painted Hill*. Well, now it was all painted a bright yellow with our costumes; and the dress of the soldiers who guarded us being of course the essential British red rag, we made up together the elements of a lively picture of hell. I have again and again looked round upon my fellow-prisoners, and felt my anger rise, and choked upon tears, to behold them thus parodied. The more part, as I have said, were peasants, somewhat bettered perhaps by the drill-sergeant, but for all that ungainly, loutish fellows, with no more than a mere barrack-room smartness of address: indeed, you could have seen our army nowhere more discreditably represented than in this Castle of Edinburgh. And I used to see myself in fancy, and blush. It seemed that my more elegant carriage would but point the insult of the travesty. And I remembered the days when I wore the coarse but honourable coat of a soldier; and remembered further back how many of the noble, the fair, and the gracious had taken a delight to tend my childhood. . . . But I must not recall these tender and sorrowful memories twice; their place is further on, and I am now upon another business. The perfidy of the Britannic Government stood nowhere more openly confessed than in one particular of our discipline: that we were shaved twice in the week. To a man who has loved all his life to be fresh shaven, can a more irritating indignity be devised? Monday and Thursday were the days. Take the Thursday, and conceive the picture I must present by Sunday evening! And Saturday, which was almost as bad, was the great day for visitors.

Those who came to our market were of all qualities, men and women, the lean and the stout, the plain and the fairly pretty. Sure, if people at all understood the power of beauty, there would be no prayers addressed except to Venus; and the mere privilege of beholding a comely woman is worth paying for. Our visitors, upon the whole, were not much to boast of; and yet, sitting in a corner and very much ashamed of myself and my absurd appearance, I have again and again tasted the finest, the rarest, and the most ethereal pleasures in a glance of an eye that I should never see again — and never wanted to. The flower of the hedgerow and the star in heaven satisfy and delight us: how much more the look of that exquisite being who was created to bear and rear, to madden and rejoice, mankind!

There was one young lady in particular, about eighteen or nineteen, tall, of a gallant carriage, and with a profusion of hair in which the sun found threads of gold. As soon as she came in the courtyard (and she was a rather frequent visitor) it seemed I was aware of it. She had an air of angelic candour, yet of a high spirit; she stepped like a Diana, every movement was noble and free. One day there was a strong east wind; the banner was straining at the flagstaff; below us the smoke of the city chimneys blew hither and thither in a thousand crazy variations; and away out on the Forth we could see the ships lying down to it and scudding. I was thinking what a vile day it was, when she appeared. Her hair blew in the wind with changes of colour; her garments moulded her with the accuracy of sculpture; the ends of her shawl fluttered about her ear and were caught in again with an inimitable deftness. You have seen a pool on a gusty day, how it suddenly sparkles and flashes like a thing alive? So this lady's face had become animated and coloured; and as I saw her standing, somewhat inclined, her lips parted, a divine trouble in her eyes, I could have clapped my hands in applause, and was ready to acclaim her a genuine daughter of the winds. What put it in my head, I know not: perhaps because it was a Thursday and I was new from the razor; but I determined to engage her attention no later than that day. She was approaching that part of the court in which I sat with my merchandise, when I observed her handkerchief to escape from her hands and fall to the ground; the next moment the wind had taken it up and carried it within my reach. I was on foot at once: I had forgot my mustard-coloured clothes, I had forgot the private soldier and his salute. Bowing deeply, I offered her the slip of cambric.

'Madam,' said I, 'your handkerchief. The wind brought it me.'

I met her eyes fully.

'I thank you, sir,' said she.

'The wind brought it me,' I repeated. 'May I not take it for an omen? You have an English proverb, "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good."‘

‘Well,’ she said, with a smile, ‘“One good turn deserves another.” I will see what you have.’

She followed me to where my wares were spread out under lee of a piece of cannon.

‘Alas, mademoiselle!’ said I, ‘I am no very perfect craftsman. This is supposed to be a house, and you see the chimneys are awry. You may call this a box if you are very indulgent; but see where my tool slipped! Yes, I am afraid you may go from one to another, and find a flaw in everything. *Failures for Sale* should be on my signboard. I do not keep a shop; I keep a HumorousMuseum.’ I cast a smiling glance about my display, and then at her, and instantly became grave. ‘Strange, is it not,’ I added, ‘that a grown man and a soldier should be engaged upon such trash, and a sad heart produce anything so funny to look at?’

An unpleasant voice summoned her at this moment by the name of Flora, and she made a hasty purchase and rejoined her party.

A few days after she came again. But I must first tell you how she came to be so frequent. Her aunt was one of those terrible British old maids, of which the world has heard much; and having nothing whatever to do, and a word or two of French, she had taken what she called an *interest in the French prisoners*. A big, bustling, bold old lady, she flounced about our market-place with insufferable airs of patronage and condescension. She bought, indeed, with liberality, but her manner of studying us through a quizzing-glass, and playing cicerone to her followers, acquitted us of any gratitude. She had a tail behind her of heavy, obsequious old gentlemen, or dull, giggling misses, to whom she appeared to be an oracle. ‘This one can really carve prettily: is he not a quiz with his big whiskers?’ she would say. ‘And this one,’ indicating myself with her gold eye-glass, ‘is, I assure you, quite an oddity.’ The oddity, you may be certain, ground his teeth. She had a way of standing in our midst, nodding around, and addressing us in what she imagined to be French: ‘*Bienne, hommes*! *ça va bienne*?’ I took the freedom to reply in the same lingo: *Bienne, femme*! *ça va couci-couci tout d’même, la bourgeoise*!’ And at that, when we had all laughed with a little more heartiness than was entirely civil, ‘I told you he was quite an oddity!’ says she in triumph. Needless to say, these passages were before I had remarked the niece.

The aunt came on the day in question with a following rather more than usually large, which she manoeuvred to and fro about the market and lectured to at rather more than usual length, and with rather less than her accustomed tact. I kept my eyes down, but they were ever fixed in the same direction, quite in vain. The aunt came and went, and pulled us out, and showed us off, like caged monkeys; but the niece kept herself on the outskirts of the crowd and on the opposite side of the courtyard, and departed at last as she had come, without a sign. Closely as I had watched her, I could not say her eyes had ever rested on me for an instant; and my heart was overwhelmed with bitterness and blackness. I tore out her detested image; I felt I was done with her for ever; I laughed at myself savagely, because I had thought to please; when I lay down at night sleep forsook me, and I lay, and rolled, and gloated on her charms, and cursed her insensibility, for half the night. How trivial I thought her! and how trivial her sex! A man might be an angel or an Apollo, and a mustard-coloured coat would wholly blind them to his merits. I was a prisoner, a slave, a contemned and despicable being, the butt of her sniggering countrymen. I would take the lesson: no proud daughter of my foes should have the chance to mock at me again; none in the future should have the chance to think I had looked at her with admiration. You cannot imagine any one of a more resolute and independent spirit, or whose bosom was more wholly mailed with patriotic arrogance, than I. Before I dropped asleep, I had remembered all the infamies of Britain, and debited them in an overwhelming column to Flora.

The next day, as I sat in my place, I became conscious there was some one standing near; and behold, it was herself! I kept my seat, at first in the confusion of my mind, later on from policy; and she stood, and leaned a little over me, as in pity. She was very still and timid; her voice was low. Did I suffer in my captivity? she asked me. Had I to complain of any hardship?

‘Mademoiselle, I have not learned to complain,’ said I. ‘I am a soldier of Napoleon.’

She sighed. ‘At least you must regret *La France*,’ said she, and coloured a little as she pronounced the words, which she did with a pretty strangeness of accent.

‘What am I to say?’ I replied. ‘If you were carried from this country, for which you seem so wholly suited, where the very rains and winds seem to become you like ornaments, would you regret, do you think? We must surely all regret! the son to his mother, the man to his country; these are native feelings.’

‘You have a mother?’ she asked.

‘In heaven, mademoiselle,’ I answered. ‘She, and my father also, went by the same road to heaven as so many others of the fair and brave: they followed their queen upon the scaffold. So, you see, I am not so much to be pitied in my prison,’ I continued: ‘there are none to wait for me; I am alone in the world. ‘Tis a different case, for instance, with yon poor fellow in the cloth cap. His bed is next to mine, and in the night I hear him sobbing to himself. He has a tender character, full of tender and pretty sentiments; and in the dark at night, and sometimes by day when he can get me apart with him, he laments a mother and a sweetheart. Do you know what made him take me for a confidant?'

She parted her lips with a look, but did not speak. The look burned all through me with a sudden vital heat.

'Because I had once seen, in marching by, the belfry of his village!' I continued. 'The circumstance is quaint enough. It seems to bind up into one the whole bundle of those human instincts that make life beautiful, and people and places dear — and from which it would seem I am cut off!'

I rested my chin on my knee and looked before me on the ground. I had been talking until then to hold her; but I was now not sorry she should go: an impression is a thing so delicate to produce and so easy to overthrow! Presently she seemed to make an effort.

'I will take this toy,' she said, laid a five-and-sixpenny piece in my hand, and was gone ere I could thank her.

I retired to a place apart near the ramparts and behind a gun. The beauty, the expression of her eyes, the tear that had trembled there, the compassion in her voice, and a kind of wild elegance that consecrated the freedom of her movements, all combined to enslave my imagination and inflame my heart. What had she said? Nothing to signify; but her eyes had met mine, and the fire they had kindled burned inextinguishably in my veins. I loved her; and I did not fear to hope. Twice I had spoken with her; and in both interviews I had been well inspired, I had engaged her sympathies, I had found words that she must remember, that would ring in her ears at night upon her bed. What mattered if I were half shaved and my clothes a caricature? I was still a man, and I had drawn my image on her memory. I was still a man, and, as I trembled to realise, she was still a woman. Many waters cannot quench love; and love, which is the law of the world, was on my side. I closed my eyes, and she sprang up on the background of the darkness, more beautiful than in life. 'Ah!' thought I, 'and you too, my dear, you too must carry away with you a picture, that you are still to behold again and still to embellish. In the darkness of night, in the streets by day, still you are to have my voice and face, whispering, making love for me, encroaching on your shy heart. Shy as your heart is, *it* is lodged there — *I* am lodged there; let the hours do their office — let time continue to draw me ever in more lively, ever in more insidious colours.' And then I had a vision of myself, and burst out laughing.

A likely thing, indeed, that a beggar-man, a private soldier, a prisoner in a yellow travesty, was to awake the interest of this fair girl! I would not despair; but I saw the game must be played fine and close. It must be my policy to hold myself before her, always in a pathetic or pleasing attitude; never to alarm or startle her; to keep my own secret locked in my bosom like a story of disgrace, and let hers (if she could be induced to have one) grow at its own rate; to move just so fast, and not by a hair's-breadth any faster, than the inclination of her heart. I was the man, and yet I was passive, tied by the foot in prison. I could not go to her; I must cast a spell upon her at each visit, so that she should return to me; and this was a matter of nice management. I had done it the last time — it seemed impossible she should not come again after our interview; and for the next I had speedily ripened a fresh plan. A prisoner, if he has one great disability for a lover, has yet one considerable advantage: there is nothing to distract him, and he can spend all his hours ripening his love and preparing its manifestations. I had been then some days upon a piece of carving, — no less than the emblem of Scotland, the Lion Rampant. This I proceeded to finish with what skill I was possessed of; and when at last I could do no more to it (and, you may be sure, was already regretting I had done so much), added on the base the following dedication. —

À LA BELLE FLORA
le prisonnier reconnaissant
A. d. St. Y. d. K.

I put my heart into the carving of these letters. What was done with so much ardour, it seemed scarce possible that any should behold with indifference; and the initials would at least suggest to her my noble birth. I thought it better to suggest: I felt that mystery was my stock-in-trade; the contrast between my rank and manners, between my speech and my clothing, and the fact that she could only think of me by a combination of letters, must all tend to increase her interest and engage her heart.

This done, there was nothing left for me but to wait and to hope. And there is nothing further from my character: in love and in war, I am all for the forward movement; and these days of waiting made my purgatory. It is a fact that I loved her a great deal better at the end of them, for love comes, like bread, from a perpetual rehandling. And besides, I was fallen into a panic of fear. How, if she came no more, how was I to continue to endure my empty days? how was I to fall back and find my interest in the major's lessons, the lieutenant's chess, in a twopenny sale in the market, or a halfpenny addition to the prison fare?

Days went by, and weeks; I had not the courage to calculate, and to-day I have not the courage to remember; but at last she was there. At last I saw her approach me in the company of a boy about her own age, and whom I divined at once to be her brother.

I rose and bowed in silence.

‘This is my brother, Mr. Ronald Gilchrist,’ said she. ‘I have told him of your sufferings. He is so sorry for you!’

‘It is more than I have the right to ask,’ I replied; ‘but among gentlefolk these generous sentiments are natural. If your brother and I were to meet in the field, we should meet like tigers; but when he sees me here disarmed and helpless, he forgets his animosity.’ (At which, as I had ventured to expect, this beardless champion coloured to the ears for pleasure.) ‘Ah, my dear young lady,’ I continued, ‘there are many of your countrymen languishing in my country, even as I do here. I can but hope there is found some French lady to convey to each of them the priceless consolation of her sympathy. You have given me alms; and more than alms — hope; and while you were absent I was not forgetful. Suffer me to be able to tell myself that I have at least tried to make a return; and for the prisoner’s sake deign to accept this trifle.’

So saying, I offered her my lion, which she took, looked at in some embarrassment, and then, catching sight of the dedication, broke out with a cry.

‘Why, how did you know my name?’ she exclaimed.

‘When names are so appropriate, they should be easily guessed,’ said I, bowing. ‘But indeed, there was no magic in the matter. A lady called you by name on the day I found your handkerchief, and I was quick to remark and cherish it.’

‘It is very, very beautiful,’ said she, ‘and I shall be always proud of the inscription. — Come, Ronald, we must be going.’ She bowed to me as a lady bows to her equal, and passed on (I could have sworn) with a heightened colour.

I was overjoyed: my innocent ruse had succeeded; she had taken my gift without a hint of payment, and she would scarce sleep in peace till she had made it up to me. No greenhorn in matters of the heart, I was besides aware that I had now a resident ambassador at the court of my lady. The lion might be ill chiselled; it was mine. My hands had made and held it; my knife — or, to speak more by the mark, my rusty nail — had traced those letters; and simple as the words were, they would keep repeating to her that I was grateful and that I found her fair. The boy had looked like a gawky, and blushed at a compliment; I could see besides that he regarded me with considerable suspicion; yet he made so manly a figure of a lad, that I could not withhold from him my sympathy. And as for the impulse that had made her bring and introduce him, I could not sufficiently admire it. It seemed to me finer than wit, and more tender than a caress. It said (plain as language), ‘I do not and I cannot know you. Here is my brother — you can know him; this is the way to me —

follow it.’

CHAPTER II — A TALE OF A PAIR OF SCISSORS

I was still plunged in these thoughts when the bell was rung that discharged our visitors into the street. Our little market was no sooner closed than we were summoned to the distribution, and received our rations, which we were then allowed to eat according to fancy in any part of our quarters.

I have said the conduct of some of our visitors was unbearably offensive; it was possibly more so than they dreamed — as the sight-seers at a menagerie may offend in a thousand ways, and quite without meaning it, the noble and unfortunate animals behind the bars; and there is no doubt but some of my compatriots were susceptible beyond reason. Some of these old whiskerandos, originally peasants, trained since boyhood in victorious armies, and accustomed to move among subject and trembling populations, could ill brook their change of circumstance. There was one man of the name of Goguelat, a brute of the first water, who had enjoyed no touch of civilisation beyond the military discipline, and had risen by an extreme heroism of bravery to a grade for which he was otherwise unfitted — that of *maréchal des logis* in the 22nd of the line. In so far as a brute can be a good soldier, he was a good soldier; the Cross was on his breast, and gallantly earned; but in all things outside his line of duty the man was no other than a brawling, bruising ignorant pillar of low pothouses. As a gentleman by birth, and a scholar by taste and education, I was the type of all that he least understood and most detested; and the mere view of our visitors would leave him daily in a transport of annoyance, which he would make haste to wreak on the nearest victim, and too often on myself.

It was so now. Our rations were scarce served out, and I had just withdrawn into a corner of the yard, when I perceived him drawing near. He wore an air of hateful mirth; a set of young fools, among whom he passed for a wit, followed him with looks of expectation; and I saw I was about to be the object of some of his insufferable pleasantries. He took a place beside me, spread out his rations, drank to me derisively from his measure of prison beer, and began. What he said it would be impossible to print; but his admirers, who believed their wit to have surpassed himself, actually rolled among the gravel. For my part, I thought at first I should have died. I had not dreamed the wretch was so observant; but hate sharpens the ears, and he had counted our interviews and actually knew Flora by her name. Gradually my coolness returned to me, accompanied by a volume of living anger that surprised myself.

‘Are you nearly done?’ I asked. ‘Because if you are, I am about to say a word or two myself.’

‘Oh, fair play!’ said he. ‘Turn about! The Marquis of Carabas to the tribune.’

‘Very well,’ said I. ‘I have to inform you that I am a gentleman. You do not know what that means, hey? Well, I will tell you. It is a comical sort of animal; springs from another strange set of creatures they call ancestors; and, in common with toads and other vermin, has a thing that he calls feelings. The lion is a gentleman; he will not touch carrion. I am a gentleman, and I cannot bear to soil my fingers with such a lump of dirt. Sit still, Philippe Goguelat! sit still and do not say a word, or I shall know you are a coward; the eyes of our guards are upon us. Here is your health!’ said I, and pledged him in the prison beer. ‘You have chosen to speak in a certain way of a young child,’ I continued, ‘who might be your daughter, and who was giving alms to me and some others of us mendicants. If the Emperor’ — saluting — ’if my Emperor could hear you, he would pluck off the Cross from your gross body. I cannot do that; I cannot take away what His Majesty has given; but one thing I promise you — I promise you, Goguelat, you shall be dead to-night.’

I had borne so much from him in the past, I believe he thought there was no end to my forbearance, and he was at first amazed. But I have the pleasure to think that some of my expressions had pierced through his thick hide; and besides, the brute was truly a hero of valour, and loved fighting for itself. Whatever the cause, at least, he had soon pulled himself together, and took the thing (to do him justice) handsomely.

‘And I promise you, by the devil’s horns, that you shall have the chance!’ said he, and pledged me again; and again I did him scrupulous honour.

The news of this defiance spread from prisoner to prisoner with the speed of wings; every face was seen to be illuminated like those of the spectators at a horse-race; and indeed you must first have tasted the active life of a soldier, and then mouldered for a while in the tedium of a jail, in order to understand, perhaps even to excuse, the delight of our companions. Goguelat and I slept in the same squad, which greatly simplified the business; and a committee of honour was accordingly formed of our shed-mates. They chose for president a sergeant-major in the 4th Dragoons, a greybeard of the army, an excellent military subject, and a good man. He took the most serious view of his functions, visited us both, and reported our replies to the committee. Mine was of a decent firmness. I told him the young lady of whom Goguelat had spoken had on several occasions given me alms. I reminded him that, if we were now reduced to hold out our hands and sell pill-boxes for charity, it was something very new for soldiers of the Empire. We had all seen bandits standing at a corner of a wood truckling for copper halfpence, and after their benefactors were gone spitting out injuries and curses. ‘But,’ said I, ‘I trust that none of us will fall so low. As a Frenchman and a soldier, I owe that young child gratitude, and am bound to protect her character, and to support that of the army. You are my elder and my superior: tell me if I am not right.’

He was a quiet-mannered old fellow, and patted me with three fingers on the back. ‘*C’est bien, mon enfant,*’ says he, and returned to his committee.

Goguelat was no more accommodating than myself. ‘I do not like apologies nor those that make them,’ was his only answer. And there remained nothing but to arrange the details of the meeting. So far as regards place and time we had no choice; we must settle the dispute at night, in the dark, after a round had passed by, and in the open middle of the shed under which we slept. The question of arms was more obscure. We had a good many tools, indeed, which we employed in the manufacture of our toys; but they were none of them suited for a single combat between civilised men, and, being nondescript, it was found extremely hard to equalise the chances of the combatants. At length a pair of scissors was unscrewed; and a couple of tough wands being found in a corner of the courtyard, one blade of the scissors was lashed solidly to each with resined twine — the twine coming I know not whence, but the resin from the green pillars of the shed, which still sweated from the axe. It was a strange thing to feel in one’s hand this weapon, which was no heavier than a riding-rod, and which it was difficult to suppose would prove more dangerous. A general oath was administered and taken, that no one should interfere in the duel nor (suppose it to result seriously) betray the name of the survivor. And with that, all being then ready, we composed ourselves to await the moment.

The evening fell cloudy; not a star was to be seen when the first round of the night passed through our shed and wound off along the ramparts; and as we took our places, we could still hear, over the murmurs of the surrounding city, the sentries challenging its further passage. Leclos, the sergeant-major, set us in our stations, engaged our wands, and left us. To avoid blood-stained clothing, my adversary and I had stripped to the shoes; and the chill of the night enveloped our bodies like a wet sheet. The man was better at fencing than myself; he was vastly taller than I, being of a stature almost gigantic, and proportionately strong. In the inky blackness of the shed, it was impossible to see his eyes; and from the suppleness of the wands, I did not like to trust to a parade. I made up my mind accordingly to profit, if I might, by my defect; and as soon as the signal should be given, to throw myself down and lunge at the same moment. It was to play my life upon one card: should I not mortally wound him, no defence would be left me; what was yet more appalling, I thus ran the risk of bringing my own face against his scissor with the double force of our assaults, and my face and eyes are not that part of me that I would the most readily expose.

'*Allez*!' said the sergeant-major.

Both lunged in the same moment with an equal fury, and but for my manoeuvre both had certainly been spitted. As it was, he did no more than strike my shoulder, while my scissor plunged below the girdle into a mortal part; and that great bulk of a man, falling from his whole height, knocked me immediately senseless.

When I came to myself I was laid in my own sleeping-place, and could make out in the darkness the outline of perhaps a dozen heads crowded around me. I sat up. 'What is it?' I exclaimed.

'Hush!' said the sergeant-major. 'Blessed be God, all is well.' I felt him clasp my hand, and there were tears in his voice. ''Tis but a scratch, my child; here is papa, who is taking good care of you. Your shoulder is bound up; we have dressed you in your clothes again, and it will all be well.'

At this I began to remember. 'And Goguelat?' I gasped.

'He cannot bear to be moved; he has his bellyful; 'tis a bad business,' said the sergeant-major.

The idea of having killed a man with such an instrument as half a pair of scissors seemed to turn my stomach. I am sure I might have killed a dozen with a firelock, a sabre, a bayonet, or any accepted weapon, and been visited by no such sickness of remorse. And to this feeling every unusual circumstance of our rencounter, the darkness in which we had fought, our nakedness, even the resin on the twine, appeared to contribute. I ran to my fallen adversary, kneeled by him, and could only sob his name.

He bade me compose myself. 'You have given me the key of the fields, comrade,' said he. '*Sans rancune*!'

At this my horror redoubled. Here had we two expatriated Frenchmen engaged in an ill-regulated combat like the battles of beasts. Here was he, who had been all his life so great a ruffian, dying in a foreign land of this ignoble injury, and meeting death with something of the spirit of a Bayard. I insisted that the guards should be summoned and a doctor brought. 'It may still be possible to save him,' I cried.

The sergeant-major reminded me of our engagement. 'If you had been wounded,' said he, 'you must have lain there till the patrol came by and found you. It happens to be Goguelat — and so must he! Come, child, time to go to by-by.' And as I still resisted, 'Champdivers!' he said, 'this is weakness. You pain me.'

'Ay, off to your beds with you!' said Goguelat, and named us in a company with one of his jovial gross epithets.

Accordingly the squad lay down in the dark and simulated, what they certainly were far from experiencing, sleep. It was not yet late. The city, from far below, and all around us, sent up a sound of wheels and feet and lively voices. Yet awhile, and the curtain of the cloud was rent across, and in the space of sky between the eaves of the shed and the irregular outline of the ramparts a multitude of stars appeared. Meantime, in the midst of us lay Goguelat, and could not always withhold himself from groaning.

We heard the round far off; heard it draw slowly nearer. Last of all, it turned the corner and moved into our field of vision: two file of men and a corporal with a lantern, which he swung to and fro, so as to cast its light in the recesses of the yards and sheds.

'Hullo!' cried the corporal, pausing as he came by Goguelat.

He stooped with his lantern. All our hearts were flying.

'What devil's work is this?' he cried, and with a startling voice summoned the guard.

We were all afoot upon the instant; more lanterns and soldiers crowded in front of the shed; an officer elbowed his way in. In the midst was the big naked body, soiled with blood. Some one had covered him with his blanket; but as he lay there in agony, he had partly thrown it off.

'This is murder!' cried the officer. 'You wild beasts, you will hear of this to-morrow.'

As Goguelat was raised and laid upon a stretcher, he cried to us a cheerful and blasphemous farewell.

CHAPTER III — MAJOR CHEVENIX COMES INTO THE STORY, AND GOGUELAT GOES OUT

There was never any talk of a recovery, and no time was lost in getting the man's deposition. He gave but the one account of it: that he had committed suicide because he was sick of seeing so many Englishmen. The doctor vowed it was impossible, the nature and direction of the wound forbidding it. Goguelat replied that he was more ingenious than the other thought for, and had propped up the weapon in the ground and fallen on the point — 'just like Nebuchadnezzar,' he added, winking to the assistants. The doctor, who was a little, spruce, ruddy man of an impatient temper, pished and pshawed and swore over his patient. 'Nothing to be made of him!' he cried. 'A perfect heathen. If we could only find the weapon!' But the weapon had ceased to exist. A little resined twine was perhaps blowing about in the castle gutters; some bits of broken stick may have trailed in corners; and behold, in the pleasant air of the morning, a dandy prisoner trimming his nails with a pair of scissors!

Finding the wounded man so firm, you may be sure the authorities did not leave the rest of us in peace. No stone was left unturned. We were had in again and again to be examined, now singly, now in twos and threes. We were threatened with all sorts of impossible severities and tempted with all manner of improbable rewards. I suppose I was five times interrogated, and came off from each with flying colours. I am like old Souvaroff, I cannot understand a soldier being taken aback by any question; he should answer, as he marches on the fire, with an instant briskness and gaiety. I may have been short of bread, gold or grace; I was never yet found wanting in an answer. My comrades, if they were not all so ready, were none of them less staunch; and I may say here at once that the inquiry came to nothing at the time, and the death of Goguelat remained a mystery of the prison. Such were the veterans of France! And yet I should be disingenuous if I did not own this was a case apart; in ordinary circumstances, some one might have stumbled or been intimidated into an admission; and what bound us together with a closeness beyond that of mere comrades was a secret to which we were all committed and a design in which all were equally engaged. No need to inquire as to its nature: there is only one desire, and only one kind of design, that blooms in prisons. And the fact that our tunnel was near done supported and inspired us.

I came off in public, as I have said, with flying colours; the sittings of the court of inquiry died away like a tune that no one listens to;

and yet I was unmasked — I, whom my very adversary defended, as good as confessed, as good as told the nature of the quarrel, and by so doing prepared for myself in the future a most anxious, disagreeable adventure. It was the third morning after the duel, and Goguelat was still in life, when the time came round for me to give Major Chevenix a lesson. I was fond of this occupation; not that he paid me much — no more, indeed, than eighteenpence a month, the customary figure, being a miser in the grain; but because I liked his breakfasts and (to some extent) himself. At least, he was a man of education; and of the others with whom I had any opportunity of speech, those that would not have held a book upsidedown would have torn the pages out for pipe-lights. For I must repeat again that our body of prisoners was exceptional: there was in Edinburgh Castle none of that educational busyness that distinguished some of the other prisons, so that men entered them unable to read, and left them fit for high employments. Chevenix was handsome, and surprisingly young to be a major: six feet in his stockings, well set up, with regular features and very clear grey eyes. It was impossible to pick a fault in him, and yet the sum-total was displeasing. Perhaps he was too clean; he seemed to bear about with him the smell of soap. Cleanliness is good, but I cannot bear a man's nails to seem japanned. And certainly he was too self-possessed and cold. There was none of the fire of youth, none of the swiftness of the soldier, in this young officer. His kindness was cold, and cruel cold; his deliberation exasperating. And perhaps it was from this character, which is very much the opposite of my own, that even in these days, when he was of service to me, I approached him with suspicion and reserve.

I looked over his exercise in the usual form, and marked six faults.

'H'm. Six,' says he, looking at the paper. 'Very annoying! I can never get it right.'

'Oh, but you make excellent progress!' I said. I would not discourage him, you understand, but he was congenitally unable to learn French. Some fire, I think, is needful, and he had quenched his fire in soapsuds.

He put the exercise down, leaned his chin upon his hand, and looked at me with clear, severe eyes.

'I think we must have a little talk,' said he.

'I am entirely at your disposition,' I replied; but I quaked, for I knew what subject to expect.

'You have been some time giving me these lessons,' he went on, 'and I am tempted to think rather well of you. I believe you are a gentleman.'

'I have that honour, sir,' said I.

'You have seen me for the same period. I do not know how I strike you; but perhaps you will be prepared to believe that I also am a man of honour,' said he.

'I require no assurances; the thing is manifest,' and I bowed.

'Very well, then,' said he. 'What about this Goguelat?'

'You heard me yesterday before the court,' I began. 'I was awakened only — '

'Oh yes; I "heard you yesterday before the court," no doubt,' he interrupted, 'and I remember perfectly that you were "awakened only." I could repeat the most of it by rote, indeed. But do you suppose that I believed you for a moment?'

'Neither would you believe me if I were to repeat it here,' said I.

'I may be wrong — we shall soon see,' says he; 'but my impression is that you will not "repeat it here." My impression is that you have come into this room, and that you will tell me something before you go out.'

I shrugged my shoulders.

'Let me explain,' he continued. 'Your evidence, of course, is nonsense. I put it by, and the court put it by.'

'My compliments and thanks!' said I.

'You *must* know — that's the short and the long,' he proceeded. 'All of you in shed B are bound to know. And I want to ask you where is the common-sense of keeping up this farce, and maintaining this cock-and-bull story between friends. Come, come, my good fellow, own yourself beaten, and laugh at it yourself.'

'Well, I hear you, go ahead,' said I. 'You put your heart in it.'

He crossed his legs slowly. 'I can very well understand,' he began, 'that precautions have had to be taken. I dare say an oath was administered. I can comprehend that perfectly.' (He was watching me all the time with his cold, bright eyes.) 'And I can comprehend that, about an affair of honour, you would be very particular to keep it.'

'About an affair of honour?' I repeated, like a man quite puzzled.

'It was not an affair of honour, then?' he asked.

'What was not? I do not follow,' said I.

He gave no sign of impatience; simply sat awhile silent, and began again in the same placid and good-natured voice: 'The court and I were at one in setting aside your evidence. It could not deceive a child. But there was a difference between myself and the other officers, because *I knew my man* and they did not. They saw in you a common soldier, and I knew you for a gentleman. To them your evidence was a leash of lies, which they yawned to hear you telling. Now, I was asking myself, how far will a gentleman go? Not surely so far as to help hush a murder up? So that — when I heard you tell how you knew nothing of the matter, and were only awakened by the corporal, and all the rest of it — I translated your statements into something else. Now, Champdivers,' he cried, springing up lively and coming towards me with animation, 'I am going to tell you what that was, and you are going to help me to see justice done: how, I don't know, for of course you are under oath — but somehow. Mark what I'm going to say.'

At that moment he laid a heavy, hard grip upon my shoulder; and whether he said anything more or came to a full stop at once, I am sure I could not tell you to this day. For, as the devil would have it, the shoulder he laid hold of was the one Goguelat had pinked. The wound was but a scratch; it was healing with the first intention; but in the clutch of Major Chevenix it gave me agony. My head swam; the sweat poured off my face; I must have grown deadly pale.

He removed his hand as suddenly as he had laid it there. 'What is wrong with you?' said he.

'It is nothing,' said I. 'A qualm. It has gone by.'

'Are you sure?' said he. 'You are as white as a sheet.'

'Oh no, I assure you! Nothing whatever. I am my own man again,' I said, though I could scarce command my tongue.

'Well, shall I go on again?' says he. 'Can you follow me?'

'Oh, by all means!' said I, and mopped my streaming face upon my sleeve, for you may be sure in those days I had no handkerchief.

'If you are sure you can follow me. That was a very sudden and sharp seizure,' he said doubtfully. 'But if you are sure, all right, and here goes. An affair of honour among you fellows would, naturally, be a little difficult to carry out, perhaps it would be impossible to have it wholly regular. And yet a duel might be very irregular in form, and, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, loyal enough in effect. Do you take me? Now, as a gentleman and a soldier.'

His hand rose again at the words and hovered over me. I could bear no more, and winced away from him. 'No,' I cried, 'not that. Do not put your hand upon my shoulder. I cannot bear it. It is rheumatism,' I made haste to add. 'My shoulder is inflamed and very painful.'

He returned to his chair and deliberately lighted a cigar.

'I am sorry about your shoulder,' he said at last. 'Let me send for the doctor.'

'Not in the least,' said I. 'It is a trifle. I am quite used to it. It does not trouble me in the smallest. At any rate, I don't believe in doctors.'

'All right,' said he, and sat and smoked a good while in a silence which I would have given anything to break. 'Well,' he began presently, 'I believe there is nothing left for me to learn. I presume I may say that I know all.'

'About what?' said I boldly.

'About Goguelat,' said he.

'I beg your pardon. I cannot conceive,' said I.

'Oh,' says the major, 'the man fell in a duel, and by your hand! I am not an infant.'

'By no means,' said I. 'But you seem to me to be a good deal of a theorist.'

'Shall we test it?' he asked. 'The doctor is close by. If there is not an open wound on your shoulder, I am wrong. If there is — ' He waved his hand. 'But I advise you to think twice. There is a deuce of a nasty drawback to the experiment — that what might have remained private between us two becomes public property.'

'Oh, well!' said I, with a laugh, 'anything rather than a doctor! I cannot bear the breed.'

His last words had a good deal relieved me, but I was still far from comfortable.

Major Chevenix smoked awhile, looking now at his cigar ash, now at me. 'I'm a soldier myself,' he says presently, 'and I've been out in my time and hit my man. I don't want to run any one into a corner for an affair that was at all necessary or correct. At the same time, I want to know that much, and I'll take your word of honour for it. Otherwise, I shall be very sorry, but the doctor must be called in.'

'I neither admit anything nor deny anything,' I returned. 'But if this form of words will suffice you, here is what I say: I give you my parole, as a gentleman and a soldier, there has nothing taken place amongst us prisoners that was not honourable as the day.'

'All right,' says he. 'That was all I wanted. You can go now, Champdivers.'

And as I was going out he added, with a laugh: 'By the bye, I ought to apologise: I had no idea I was applying the torture!'

The same afternoon the doctor came into the courtyard with a piece of paper in his hand. He seemed hot and angry, and had certainly no mind to be polite.

'Here!' he cried. 'Which of you fellows knows any English? Oh!' — spying me — 'there you are, what's your name! *You'll* do. Tell these fellows that the other fellow's dying. He's booked; no use talking; I expect he'll go by evening. And tell them I don't envy the feelings of the fellow who spiked him. Tell them that first.'

I did so.

'Then you can tell 'em,' he resumed, 'that the fellow, Goggle — what's his name? — wants to see some of them before he gets his marching orders. If I got it right, he wants to kiss or embrace you, or some sickening stuff. Got that? Then here's a list he's had written, and you'd better read it out to them — I can't make head or tail of your beastly names — and they can answer *present*, and fall in against that wall.'

It was with a singular movement of incongruous feelings that I read the first name on the list. I had no wish to look again on my own handiwork; my flesh recoiled from the idea; and how could I be sure what reception he designed to give me? The cure was in my own hand; I could pass that first name over — the doctor would not know — and I might stay away. But to the subsequent great gladness of my heart, I did not dwell for an instant on the thought, walked over to the designated wall, faced about, read out the name 'Champdivers,' and answered myself with the word 'Present.'

There were some half dozen on the list, all told; and as soon as we were mustered, the doctor led the way to the hospital, and we followed after, like a fatigue party, in single file. At the door he paused, told us 'the fellow' would see each of us alone, and, as soon as I had explained that, sent me by myself into the ward. It was a small room, whitewashed; a south window stood open on a vast depth of air and a spacious and distant prospect; and from deep below, in the Grassmarket the voices of hawkers came up clear and far away. Hard by, on a little bed, lay Goguelat. The sunburn had not yet faded from his face, and the stamp of death was already there. There was something wild and unmannish in his smile, that took me by the throat; only death and love know or have ever seen it. And when he spoke, it seemed to shame his coarse talk.

He held out his arms as if to embrace me. I drew near with incredible shrinkings, and surrendered myself to his arms with overwhelming disgust. But he only drew my ear down to his lips.

'Trust me,' he whispered. '*Je suis bon bougre, moi.* I'll take it to hell with me, and tell the devil.'

Why should I go on to reproduce his grossness and trivialities? All that he thought, at that hour, was even noble, though he could not clothe it otherwise than in the language of a brutal farce. Presently he bade me call the doctor; and when that officer had come in, raised a little up in his bed, pointed first to himself and then to me, who stood weeping by his side, and several times repeated the expression, 'Frinds — frinds — dam frinds.'

To my great surprise, the doctor appeared very much affected. He nodded his little bob-wigged head at us, and said repeatedly, 'All right, Johnny — me comprong.'

Then Goguelat shook hands with me, embraced me again, and I went out of the room sobbing like an infant.

How often have I not seen it, that the most unpardonable fellows make the happiest exits! It is a fate we may well envy them. Goguelat was detested in life; in the last three days, by his admirable staunchness and consideration, he won every heart; and when word went about the prison the same evening that he was no more, the voice of conversation became hushed as in a house of mourning.

For myself I was like a man distracted; I cannot think what ailed me: when I awoke the following day, nothing remained of it; but that night I was filled with a gloomy fury of the nerves. I had killed him; he had done his utmost to protect me; I had seen him with that awful smile. And so illogical and useless is this sentiment of remorse, that I was ready, at a word or a look, to quarrel with somebody else. I presume the disposition of my mind was imprinted on my face; and when, a little after, I overtook, saluted and addressed the doctor, he looked on me with commiseration and surprise.

I had asked him if it was true.

'Yes,' he said, 'the fellow's gone.'

'Did he suffer much?' I asked.

'Devil a bit; passed away like a lamb,' said he. He looked on me a little, and I saw his hand go to his fob. 'Here, take that! no sense in fretting,' he said, and, putting a silver two-penny-bit in my hand, he left me.

I should have had that twopenny framed to hang upon the wall, for it was the man's one act of charity in all my knowledge of him. Instead of that, I stood looking at it in my hand and laughed out bitterly, as I realised his mistake; then went to the ramparts, and flung it far into the air like blood money. The night was falling; through an embrasure and across the gardened valley I saw the lamplighters hasting along Princes Street with ladder and lamp, and looked on moodily. As I was so standing a hand was laid upon my shoulder, and I turned about. It was Major Chevenix, dressed for the evening, and his neckcloth really admirably folded. I never denied the man could dress.

'Ah!' said he, 'I thought it was you, Champdivers. So he's gone?'

I nodded.

'Come, come,' said he, 'you must cheer up. Of course it's very distressing, very painful and all that. But do you know, it ain't such a bad thing either for you or me? What with his death and your visit to him I am entirely reassured.'

So I was to owe my life to Goguelat at every point.

'I had rather not discuss it,' said I.

'Well,' said he, 'one word more, and I'll agree to bury the subject. What did you fight about?'

'Oh, what do men ever fight about?' I cried.

'A lady?' said he.

I shrugged my shoulders.

'Deuce you did!' said he. 'I should scarce have thought it of him.'

And at this my ill-humour broke fairly out in words. 'He!' I cried. 'He never dared to address her — only to look at her and vomit his vile insults! She may have given him sixpence: if she did, it may take him to heaven yet!'

At this I became aware of his eyes set upon me with a considering look, and brought up sharply.

'Well, well,' said he. 'Good night to you, Champdivers. Come to me at breakfast-time to-morrow, and we'll talk of other subjects.'

I fully admit the man's conduct was not bad: in writing it down so long after the events I can even see that it was good.

CHAPTER IV — ST. IVES GETS A BUNDLE OF BANK NOTES

I was surprised one morning, shortly after, to find myself the object of marked consideration by a civilian and a stranger. This was a man of the middle age; he had a face of a mulberry colour, round black eyes, comical tufted eyebrows, and a protuberant forehead; and was dressed in clothes of a Quakerish cut. In spite of his plainness, he had that inscrutable air of a man well-to-do in his affairs. I conceived he had been some while observing me from a distance, for a sparrow sat betwixt us quite unalarmed on the breech of a piece of cannon. So soon as our eyes met, he drew near and addressed me in the French language, which he spoke with a good fluency but an abominable accent.

'I have the pleasure of addressing Monsieur le Vicomte Anne de Kéroual de Saint-Yves?' said he.

'Well,' said I, 'I do not call myself all that; but I have a right to, if I chose. In the meanwhile I call myself plain Champdivers, at your disposal. It was my mother's name, and good to go soldiering with.'

'I think not quite,' said he; 'for if I remember rightly, your mother also had the particle. Her name was Florimonde de Champdivers.'

'Right again!' said I, 'and I am extremely pleased to meet a gentleman so well informed in my quarterings. Is monsieur Born himself?' This I said with a great air of assumption, partly to conceal the degree of curiosity with which my visitor had inspired me, and in part because it struck me as highly incongruous and comical in my prison garb and on the lips of a private soldier.

He seemed to think so too, for he laughed.

'No, sir,' he returned, speaking this time in English; 'I am not "*born*," as you call it, and must content myself with *dying*, of which I am equally susceptible with the best of you. My name is Mr. Romaine — Daniel Romaine — a solicitor of London City, at your service; and, what will perhaps interest you more, I am here at the request of your great-uncle, the Count.'

'What!' I cried, 'does M. de Kéroual de St.-Yves remember the existence of such a person as myself, and will he deign to count kinship with a soldier of Napoleon?'

'You speak English well,' observed my visitor.

'It has been a second language to me from a child,' said I. 'I had an English nurse; my father spoke English with me; and I was finished by a countryman of yours and a dear friend of mine, a Mr. Vicary.'

A strong expression of interest came into the lawyer's face.

‘What!’ he cried, ‘you knew poor Vicary?’

‘For more than a year,’ said I; ‘and shared his hiding-place for many months.’

‘And I was his clerk, and have succeeded him in business,’ said he. ‘Excellent man! It was on the affairs of M. de Kéroual that he went to that accursed country, from which he was never destined to return. Do you chance to know his end, sir?’

‘I am sorry,’ said I, ‘I do. He perished miserably at the hands of a gang of banditti, such as we call *chauffeurs*. In a word, he was tortured, and died of it. See,’ I added, kicking off one shoe, for I had no stockings; ‘I was no more than a child, and see how they had begun to treat myself.’

He looked at the mark of my old burn with a certain shrinking. ‘Beastly people!’ I heard him mutter to himself.

‘The English may say so with a good grace,’ I observed politely.

Such speeches were the coin in which I paid my way among this credulous race. Ninety per cent. of our visitors would have accepted the remark as natural in itself and creditable to my powers of judgment, but it appeared my lawyer was more acute.

‘You are not entirely a fool, I perceive,’ said he.

‘No,’ said I; ‘not wholly.’

‘And yet it is well to beware of the ironical mood,’ he continued. ‘It is a dangerous instrument. Your great-uncle has, I believe, practised it very much, until it is now become a problem what he means.’

‘And that brings me back to what you will admit is a most natural inquiry,’ said I. ‘To what do I owe the pleasure of this visit? how did you recognise me? and how did you know I was here?’

Carefull separating his coat skirts, the lawyer took a seat beside me on the edge of the flags.

‘It is rather an odd story,’ says he, ‘and, with your leave, I’ll answer the second question first. It was from a certain resemblance you bear to your cousin, M. le Vicomte.’

‘I trust, sir, that I resemble him advantageously?’ said I.

‘I hasten to reassure you,’ was the reply: ‘you do. To my eyes, M. Alain de St.-Yves has scarce a pleasing exterior. And yet, when I knew you were here, and was actually looking for you — why, the likeness helped. As for how I came to know your whereabouts, by an odd enough chance, it is again M. Alain we have to thank. I should tell you, he has for some time made it his business to keep M. de Kéroual informed of your career; with what purpose I leave you to judge. When he first brought the news of your — that you were serving Buonaparte, it seemed it might be the death of the old gentleman, so hot was his resentment. But from one thing to another, matters have a little changed. Or I should rather say, not a little. We learned you were under orders for the Peninsula, to fight the English; then that you had been commissioned for a piece of bravery, and were again reduced to the ranks. And from one thing to another (as I say), M. de Kéroual became used to the idea that you were his kinsman and yet served with Buonaparte, and filled instead with wonder that he should have another kinsman who was so remarkably well informed of events in France. And it now became a very disagreeable question, whether the young gentleman was not a spy? In short, sir, in seeking to disserve you, he had accumulated against himself a load of suspicions.'

My visitor now paused, took snuff, and looked at me with an air of benevolence.

'Good God, sir!' says I, 'this is a curious story.'

'You will say so before I have done,' said he. 'For there have two events followed. The first of these was an encounter of M. de Kéroual and M. de Mauseant.'

'I know the man to my cost,' said I: 'it was through him I lost my commission.'

'Do you tell me so?' he cried. 'Why, here is news!'

'Oh, I cannot complain!' said I. 'I was in the wrong. I did it with my eyes open. If a man gets a prisoner to guard and lets him go, the least he can expect is to be degraded.'

'You will be paid for it,' said he. 'You did well for yourself and better for your king.'

'If I had thought I was injuring my emperor,' said I, 'I would have let M. de Mauseant burn in hell ere I had helped him, and be sure of that! I saw in him only a private person in a difficulty: I let him go in private charity; not even to profit myself will I suffer it to be misunderstood.'

'Well, well,' said the lawyer, 'no matter now. This is a foolish warmth — a very misplaced enthusiasm, believe me! The point of the story is that M. de Mauseant spoke of you with gratitude, and drew your character in such a manner as greatly to affect your uncle's views. Hard upon the back of which, in came your humble servant, and laid before him the direct proof of what we had been so long suspecting. There was no dubiety permitted. M. Alain's expensive way of life, his clothes and mistresses, his dicing and racehorses, were all explained: he was in the pay of Buonaparte, a hired spy, and a man that held the strings of what I can only call a convolution of extremely fishy enterprises. To do M. de Kéroual justice, he took it in the best way imaginable, destroyed the evidences of the one great-nephew's disgrace — and transferred his interest wholly to the other.'

'What am I to understand by that?' said I.

'I will tell you,' says he. 'There is a remarkable inconsistency in human nature which gentlemen of my cloth have a great deal of occasion to observe. Selfish persons can live without chick or child, they can live without all mankind except perhaps the barber and the apothecary; but when it comes to dying, they seem physically unable to die without an heir. You can apply this principle for yourself. Viscount Alain, though he scarce guesses it, is no longer in the field. Remains, Viscount Anne.'

'I see,' said I, 'you give a very unfavourable impression of my uncle, the Count.'

'I had not meant it,' said he. 'He has led a loose life — sadly loose — but he is a man it is impossible to know and not to admire; his courtesy is exquisite.'

'And so you think there is actually a chance for me?' I asked.

'Understand,' said he: 'in saying as much as I have done, I travel quite beyond my brief. I have been clothed with no capacity to talk of wills, or heritages, or your cousin. I was sent here to make but the one communication: that M. de Kéroual desires to meet his great-nephew.'

'Well,' said I, looking about me on the battlements by which we sat surrounded, 'this is a case in which Mahomet must certainly come to the mountain.'

'Pardon me,' said Mr. Romaine; 'you know already your uncle is an aged man; but I have not yet told you that he is quite broken up, and his death shortly looked for. No, no, there is no doubt about it — it is the mountain that must come to Mahomet.'

'From an Englishman, the remark is certainly significant,' said I; 'but you are of course, and by trade, a keeper of men's secrets, and I see you keep that of Cousin Alain, which is not the mark of a truculent patriotism, to say the least.'

'I am first of all the lawyer of your family!' says he.

'That being so,' said I, 'I can perhaps stretch a point myself. This rock is very high, and it is very steep; a man might come by a devil of a fall from almost any part of it, and yet I believe I have a pair of wings that might carry me just so far as to the bottom. Once at the bottom I am helpless.'

'And perhaps it is just then that I could step in,' returned the lawyer. 'Suppose by some contingency, at which I make no guess, and on which I offer no opinion — '

But here I interrupted him. 'One word ere you go further. I am under no parole,' said I.

'I understood so much,' he replied, 'although some of you French gentry find their word sit lightly on them.'

'Sir, I am not one of those,' said I.

'To do you plain justice, I do not think you one,' said he. 'Suppose yourself, then, set free and at the bottom of the rock,' he continued, 'although I may not be able to do much, I believe I can do something to help you on your road. In the first place I would carry this, whether in an inside pocket or my shoe.' And he passed me a bundle of bank notes.

'No harm in that,' said I, at once concealing them.

'In the second place,' he resumed, 'it is a great way from here to where your uncle lives — Amersham Place, not far from Dunstable; you have a great part of Britain to get through; and for the first stages, I must leave you to your own luck and ingenuity. I have no acquaintance here in Scotland, or at least' (with a grimace) 'no dishonest ones. But further to the south, about Wakefield, I am told there is a gentleman called Burchell Fenn, who is not so particular as some others, and might be willing to give you a cast forward. In fact, sir, I believe it's the man's trade: a piece of knowledge that burns my mouth. But that is what you get by meddling with rogues; and perhaps the biggest rogue now extant, M. de Saint-Yves, is your cousin, M. Alain.'

'If this be a man of my cousin's,' I observed, 'I am perhaps better to keep clear of him?'

'It was through some paper of your cousin's that we came across his trail,' replied the lawyer. 'But I am inclined to think, so far as anything is safe in such a nasty business, you might apply to the man Fenn. You might even, I think, use the Viscount's name; and the little trick of family resemblance might come in. How, for instance, if you were to call yourself his brother?'

'It might be done,' said I. 'But look here a moment? You propose to me a very difficult game: I have apparently a devil of an opponent in my cousin; and, being a prisoner of war, I can scarcely be said to hold good cards. For what stakes, then, am I playing?'

'They are very large,' said he. 'Your great-uncle is immensely rich — immensely rich. He was wise in time; he smelt the revolution long before; sold all that he could, and had all that was movable transported to England through my firm. There are considerable estates in England; Amersham Place itself is very fine; and he has much money, wisely invested. He lives, indeed, like a prince. And of what use is it to him? He has lost all that was worth living for — his family, his country; he has seen his king and queen murdered; he has seen all these miseries and infamies,' pursued the lawyer, with a rising inflection and a heightening colour; and then broke suddenly off, — 'In short, sir, he has seen all the advantages of that government for which his nephew carries arms, and he has the misfortune not to like them.'

'You speak with a bitterness that I suppose I must excuse,' said I;

‘yet which of us has the more reason to be bitter? This man, my uncle, M. de Kéroual, fled. My parents, who were less wise perhaps, remained. In the beginning, they were even republicans; to the end they could not be persuaded to despair of the people. It was a glorious folly, for which, as a son, I reverence them. First one and then the other perished. If I have any mark of a gentleman, all who taught me died upon the scaffold, and my last school of manners was the prison of the Abbaye. Do you think you can teach bitterness to a man with a history like mine?’

‘I have no wish to try,’ said he. ‘And yet there is one point I cannot understand: I cannot understand that one of your blood and experience should serve the Corsican. I cannot understand it: it seems as though everything generous in you must rise against that — domination.’

‘And perhaps,’ I retorted, ‘had your childhood passed among wolves, you would have been overjoyed yourself to see the Corsican Shepherd.’

‘Well, well,’ replied Mr. Romaine, ‘it may be. There are things that do not bear discussion.’

And with a wave of his hand he disappeared abruptly down a flight of steps and under the shadow of a ponderous arch.

CHAPTER V — ST. IVES IS SHOWN A HOUSE

The lawyer was scarce gone before I remembered many omissions; and chief among these, that I had neglected to get Mr. Burchell Fenn's address. Here was an essential point neglected; and I ran to the head of the stairs to find myself already too late. The lawyer was beyond my view; in the archway that led downward to the castle gate, only the red coat and the bright arms of a sentry glittered in the shadow; and I could but return to my place upon the ramparts.

I am not very sure that I was properly entitled to this corner. But I was a high favourite; not an officer, and scarce a private, in the castle would have turned me back, except upon a thing of moment; and whenever I desired to be solitary, I was suffered to sit here behind my piece of cannon unmolested. The cliff went down before me almost sheer, but mantled with a thicket of climbing trees; from farther down, an outwork raised its turret; and across the valley I had a view of that long terrace of Princes Street which serves as a promenade to the fashionable inhabitants of Edinburgh. A singularity in a military prison, that it should command a view on the chief thoroughfare!

It is not necessary that I should trouble you with the train of my reflections, which turned upon the interview I had just concluded and the hopes that were now opening before me. What is more essential, my eye (even while I thought) kept following the movement of the passengers on Princes Street, as they passed briskly to and fro — met, greeted, and bowed to each other — or entered and left the shops, which are in that quarter, and, for a town of the Britannic provinces, particularly fine. My mind being busy upon other things, the course of my eye was the more random; and it chanced that I followed, for some time, the advance of a young gentleman with a red head and a white great-coat, for whom I cared nothing at the moment, and of whom it is probable I shall be gathered to my fathers without learning more. He seemed to have a large acquaintance: his hat was for ever in his hand; and I daresay I had already observed him exchanging compliments with half a dozen, when he drew up at last before a young man and a young lady whose tall persons and gallant carriage I thought I recognised.

It was impossible at such a distance that I could be sure, but the thought was sufficient, and I craned out of the embrasure to follow them as long as possible. To think that such emotions, that such a concussion of the blood, may have been inspired by a chance resemblance, and that I may have stood and thrilled there for a total stranger! This distant view, at least, whether of Flora or of some one else, changed in a moment the course of my reflections. It was all very well, and it was highly needful, I should see my uncle; but an uncle, a great-uncle at that, and one whom I had never seen, leaves the imagination cold; and if I were to leave the castle, I might never again have the opportunity of finding Flora. The little impression I had made, even supposing I had made any, how soon it would die out! how soon I should sink to be a phantom memory, with which (in after days) she might amuse a husband and children! No, the impression must be clenched, the wax impressed with the seal, ere I left Edinburgh. And at this the two interests that were now contending in my bosom came together and became one. I wished to see Flora again; and I wanted some one to further me in my flight and to get me new clothes. The conclusion was apparent. Except for persons in the garrison itself, with whom it was a point of honour and military duty to retain me captive, I knew, in the whole country of Scotland, these two alone. If it were to be done at all, they must be my helpers. To tell them of my designed escape while I was still in bonds, would be to lay before them a most difficult choice. What they might do in such a case, I could not in the least be sure of, for (the same case arising) I was far from sure what I should do myself. It was plain I must escape first. When the harm was done, when I was no more than a poor wayside fugitive, I might apply to them with less offence and more security. To this end it became necessary that I should find out where they lived and how to reach it; and feeling a strong confidence that they would soon return to visit me, I prepared a series of baits with which to angle for my information. It will be seen the first was good enough.

Perhaps two days after, Master Ronald put in an appearance by himself. I had no hold upon the boy, and pretermitted my design till I should have laid court to him and engaged his interest. He was prodigiously embarrassed, not having previously addressed me otherwise than by a bow and blushes; and he advanced to me with an air of one stubbornly performing a duty, like a raw soldier under fire. I laid down my carving; greeted him with a good deal of formality, such as I thought he would enjoy; and finding him to remain silent, branched off into narratives of my campaigns such as Goguelat himself might have scrupled to endorse. He visibly thawed and brightened; drew more near to where I sat; forgot his timidity so far as to put many questions; and at last, with another blush, informed me he was himself expecting a commission.

‘Well,’ said I, ‘they are fine troops, your British troops in the Peninsula. A young gentleman of spirit may well be proud to be engaged at the head of such soldiers.’

‘I know that,’ he said; ‘I think of nothing else. I think shame to be dangling here at home and going through with this foolery of education, while others, no older than myself, are in the field.'

'I cannot blame you,' said I. 'I have felt the same myself.'

'There are — there are no troops, are there, quite so good as ours?' he asked.

'Well,' said I, 'there is a point about them: they have a defect, — they are not to be trusted in a retreat. I have seen them behave very ill in a retreat.'

'I believe that is our national character,' he said — God forgive him! — with an air of pride.

'I have seen your national character running away at least, and had the honour to run after it!' rose to my lips, but I was not so ill advised as to give it utterance. Every one should be flattered, but boys and women without stint; and I put in the rest of the afternoon narrating to him tales of British heroism, for which I should not like to engage that they were all true.

'I am quite surprised,' he said at last. 'People tell you the French are insincere. Now, I think your sincerity is beautiful. I think you have a noble character. I admire you very much. I am very grateful for your kindness to — to one so young,' and he offered me his hand.

'I shall see you again soon?' said I.

'Oh, now! Yes, very soon,' said he. 'I — I wish to tell you. I would not let Flora — Miss Gilchrist, I mean — come to-day. I wished to see more of you myself. I trust you are not offended: you know, one should be careful about strangers.'

I approved his caution, and he took himself away: leaving me in a mixture of contrarious feelings, part ashamed to have played on one so gullible, part raging that I should have burned so much incense before the vanity of England; yet, in the bottom of my soul, delighted to think I had made a friend — or, at least, begun to make a friend — of Flora's brother.

As I had half expected, both made their appearance the next day. I struck so fine a shade betwixt the pride that is allowed to soldiers and the sorrowful humility that befits a captive, that I declare, as I went to meet them, I might have afforded a subject for a painter. So much was high comedy, I must confess; but so soon as my eyes lighted full on her dark face and eloquent eyes, the blood leaped into my cheeks — and that was nature! I thanked them, but not the least with exultation; it was my cue to be mournful, and to take the pair of them as one.

'I have been thinking,' I said, 'you have been so good to me, both of you, stranger and prisoner as I am, that I have been thinking how I could testify to my gratitude. It may seem a strange subject for a confidence, but there is actually no one here, even of my comrades, that knows me by my name and title. By these I am called plain

Champdivers, a name to which I have a right, but not the name which I should bear, and which (but a little while ago) I must hide like a crime. Miss Flora, suffer me to present to you the Vicomte Anne de Kéroual de Saint-Yves, a private soldier.'

'I knew it!' cried the boy; 'I knew he was a noble!'

And I thought the eyes of Miss Flora said the same, but more persuasively. All through this interview she kept them on the ground, or only gave them to me for a moment at a time, and with a serious sweetness.

'You may conceive, my friends, that this is rather a painful confession,' I continued. 'To stand here before you, vanquished, a prisoner in a fortress, and take my own name upon my lips, is painful to the proud. And yet I wished that you should know me. Long after this, we may yet hear of one another — perhaps Mr. Gilchrist and myself in the field and from opposing camps — and it would be a pity if we heard and did not recognise.'

They were both moved; and began at once to press upon me offers of service, such as to lend me books, get me tobacco if I used it, and the like. This would have been all mighty welcome, before the tunnel was ready. Now it signified no more to me than to offer the transition I required.

'My dear friends,' I said — 'for you must allow me to call you that, who have no others within so many hundred leagues — perhaps you will think me fanciful and sentimental; and perhaps indeed I am; but there is one service that I would beg of you before all others. You see me set here on the top of this rock in the midst of your city. Even with what liberty I have, I have the opportunity to see a myriad roofs, and I dare to say, thirty leagues of sea and land. All this hostile! Under all these roofs my enemies dwell; wherever I see the smoke of a house rising, I must tell myself that some one sits before the chimney and reads with joy of our reverses. Pardon me, dear friends, I know that you must do the same, and I do not grudge at it! With you, it is all different. Show me your house then, were it only the chimney, or, if that be not visible, the quarter of the town in which it lies! So, when I look all about me, I shall be able to say: "*There is one house in which I am not quite unkindly thought of.*"'

Flora stood a moment.

'It is a pretty thought,' said she, 'and, as far as regards Ronald and myself, a true one. Come, I believe I can show you the very smoke out of our chimney.'

So saying, she carried me round the battlements towards the opposite or southern side of the fortress, and indeed to a bastion almost immediately overlooking the place of our projected flight. Thence we had a view of some foreshortened suburbs at our feet, and beyond of a green, open, and irregular country rising towards the Pentland Hills. The face of one of these summits (say two leagues from where we stood) is marked with a procession of white scars. And to this she directed my attention.

‘You see these marks?’ she said. ‘We call them the Seven Sisters. Follow a little lower with your eye, and you will see a fold of the hill, the tops of some trees, and a tail of smoke out of the midst of them. That is Swanston Cottage, where my brother and I are living with my aunt. If it gives you pleasure to see it, I am glad. We, too, can see the castle from a corner in the garden, and we go there in the morning often — do we not, Ronald? — and we think of you, M. de Saint-Yves; but I am afraid it does not altogether make us glad.’

‘Mademoiselle!’ said I, and indeed my voice was scarce under command, ‘if you knew how your generous words — how even the sight of you — relieved the horrors of this place, I believe, I hope, I know, you would be glad. I will come here daily and look at that dear chimney and these green hills, and bless you from the heart, and dedicate to you the prayers of this poor sinner. Ah! I do not say they can avail!’

‘Who can say that, M. de Saint-Yves?’ she said softly. ‘But I think it is time we should be going.’

‘High time,’ said Ronald, whom (to say the truth) I had a little forgotten.

On the way back, as I was laying myself out to recover lost ground with the youth, and to obliterate, if possible, the memory of my last and somewhat too fervent speech, who should come past us but the major? I had to stand aside and salute as he went by, but his eyes appeared entirely occupied with Flora.

‘Who is that man?’ she asked.

‘He is a friend of mine,’ said I. ‘I give him lessons in French, and he has been very kind to me.’

‘He stared,’ she said, — ’I do not say, rudely; but why should he stare?’

‘If you do not wish to be stared at, mademoiselle, suffer me to recommend a veil,’ said I.

She looked at me with what seemed anger. ‘I tell you the man stared,’ she said.

And Ronald added. ‘Oh, I don’t think he meant any harm. I suppose he was just surprised to see us walking about with a pr — - with M. Saint-Yves.’

But the next morning, when I went to Chevenix’s rooms, and after I had dutifully corrected his exercise — ’I compliment you on your taste,’ said he to me.

‘I beg your pardon?’ said I.

‘Oh no, I beg yours,’ said he. ‘You understand me perfectly, just as I do you.’

I murmured something about enigmas.

‘Well, shall I give you the key to the enigma?’ said he, leaning back. ‘That was the young lady whom Goguelat insulted and whom you avenged. I do not blame you. She is a heavenly creature.’

‘With all my heart, to the last of it!’ said I. ‘And to the first also, if it amuses you! You are become so very acute of late that I suppose you must have your own way.’

‘What is her name?’ he asked.

‘Now, really!’ said I. ‘Do you think it likely she has told me?’

‘I think it certain,’ said he.

I could not restrain my laughter. ‘Well, then, do you think it likely I would tell you?’ I cried.

‘Not a bit.’ said he. ‘But come, to our lesson!’

CHAPTER VI — THE ESCAPE

The time for our escape drew near, and the nearer it came the less we seemed to enjoy the prospect. There is but one side on which this castle can be left either with dignity or safety; but as there is the main gate and guard, and the chief street of the upper city, it is not to be thought of by escaping prisoners. In all other directions an abominable precipice surrounds it, down the face of which (if anywhere at all) we must regain our liberty. By our concurrent labours in many a dark night, working with the most anxious precautions against noise, we had made out to pierce below the curtain about the south-west corner, in a place they call the *Devil's Elbow*. I have never met that celebrity; nor (if the rest of him at all comes up to what they called his elbow) have I the least desire of his acquaintance. From the heel of the masonry, the rascally, breakneck precipice descended sheer among waste lands, scattered suburbs of the city, and houses in the building. I had never the heart to look for any length of time — the thought that I must make the descent in person some dark night robbing me of breath; and, indeed, on anybody not a seaman or a steeple-jack, the mere sight of the *Devil's Elbow* wrought like an emetic.

I don't know where the rope was got, and doubt if I much cared. It was not that which gravelled me, but whether, now that we had it, it would serve our turn. Its length, indeed, we made a shift to fathom out; but who was to tell us how that length compared with the way we had to go? Day after day, there would be always some of us stolen out to the *Devil's Elbow* and making estimates of the descent, whether by a bare guess or the dropping of stones. A private of pioneers remembered the formula for that — or else remembered part of it and obligingly invented the remainder. I had never any real confidence in that formula; and even had we got it from a book, there were difficulties in the way of the application that might have daunted Archimedes. We durst not drop any considerable pebble lest the sentinels should hear, and those that we dropped we could not hear ourselves. We had never a watch — or none that had a second-hand; and though every one of us could guess a second to a nicety, all somehow guessed it differently. In short, if any two set forth upon this enterprise, they invariably returned with two opinions, and often with a black eye in the bargain. I looked on upon these proceedings, although not without laughter, yet with impatience and disgust. I am one that cannot bear to see things botched or gone upon with ignorance; and the thought that some poor devil was to hazard his bones upon such premises, revolted me. Had I guessed the name of that unhappy first adventurer, my sentiments might have been livelier still.

The designation of this personage was indeed all that remained for us to do; and even in that we had advanced so far that the lot had fallen on Shed B. It had been determined to mingle the bitter and the sweet; and whoever went down first, the whole of his shed-mates were to follow next in order. This caused a good deal of joy in Shed B, and would have caused more if it had not still remained to choose our pioneer. In view of the ambiguity in which we lay as to the length of the rope and the height of the precipice — and that this gentleman was to climb down from fifty to seventy fathoms on a pitchy night, on a rope entirely free, and with not so much as an infant child to steady it at the bottom, a little backwardness was perhaps excusable. But it was, in our case, more than a little. The truth is, we were all womanish fellows about a height; and I have myself been put, more than once, *hors de combat* by a less affair than the rock of Edinburgh Castle.

We discussed it in the dark and between the passage of the rounds; and it was impossible for any body of men to show a less adventurous spirit. I am sure some of us, and myself first among the number, regretted Goguelat. Some were persuaded it was safe, and could prove the same by argument; but if they had good reasons why some one else should make the trial, they had better still why it should not be themselves. Others, again, condemned the whole idea as insane; among these, as ill-luck would have it, a seaman of the fleet; who was the most dispiriting of all. The height, he reminded us, was greater than the tallest ship's mast, the rope entirely free; and he as good as defied the boldest and strongest to succeed. We were relieved from this dead-lock by our sergeant-major of dragoons.

'Comrades,' said he, 'I believe I rank you all; and for that reason, if you really wish it, I will be the first myself. At the same time, you are to consider what the chances are that I may prove to be the last, as well. I am no longer young — I was sixty near a month ago. Since I have been a prisoner, I have made for myself a little *bedaine*. My arms are all gone to fat. And you must promise not to blame me, if I fall and play the devil with the whole thing.'

'We cannot hear of such a thing!' said I. 'M. Laclas is the oldest man here; and, as such, he should be the very last to offer. It is plain, we must draw lots.'

'No,' said M. Laclas; 'you put something else in my head! There is one here who owes a pretty candle to the others, for they have kept his secret. Besides, the rest of us are only rabble; and he is another affair altogether. Let Champdivers — let the noble go the first.'

I confess there was a notable pause before the noble in question got his voice. But there was no room for choice. I had been so ill-advised, when I first joined the regiment, as to take ground on my nobility. I had been often rallied on the matter in the ranks, and had passed under the by-names of *Monseigneur* and *the Marquis*. It was now needful I should justify myself and take a fair revenge.

Any little hesitation I may have felt passed entirely unnoticed, from the lucky incident of a round happening at that moment to go by. And during the interval of silence there occurred something that sent my blood to the boil. There was a private in our shed called Clausel, a man of a very ugly disposition. He had made one of the followers of Goguelat; but, whereas Goguelat had always a kind of monstrous gaiety about him, Clausel was no less morose than he was evil-minded. He was sometimes called *the General*, and sometimes by a name too ill-mannered for repetition. As we all sat listening, this man's hand was laid on my shoulder, and his voice whispered in my ear: 'If you don't go, I'll have you hanged, Marquis!'

As soon as the round was past — 'Certainly, gentlemen!' said I. 'I will give you a lead, with all the pleasure in the world. But, first of all, there is a hound here to be punished. M. Clausel has just insulted me, and dishonoured the French army; and I demand that he run the gauntlet of this shed.'

There was but one voice asking what he had done, and, as soon as I had told them, but one voice agreeing to the punishment. The General was, in consequence, extremely roughly handled, and the next day was congratulated by all who saw him on his *new decorations*. It was lucky for us that he was one of the prime movers and believers in our project of escape, or he had certainly revenged himself by a denunciation. As for his feelings towards myself, they appeared, by his looks, to surpass humanity; and I made up my mind to give him a wide berth in the future.

Had I been to go down that instant, I believe I could have carried it well. But it was already too late — the day was at hand. The rest had still to be summoned. Nor was this the extent of my misfortune; for the next night, and the night after, were adorned with a perfect galaxy of stars, and showed every cat that stirred in a quarter of a mile. During this interval, I have to direct your sympathies on the Vicomte de Saint-Yves! All addressed me softly, like folk round a sickbed. Our Italian corporal, who had got a dozen of oysters from a fishwife, laid them at my feet, as though I were a Pagan idol; and I have never since been wholly at my ease in the society of shellfish. He who was the best of our carvers brought me a snuff-box, which he had just completed, and which, while it was yet in hand, he had often declared he would not part with under fifteen dollars. I believe the piece was worth the money too! And yet the voice stuck in my throat with which I must thank him. I found myself, in a word, to be fed up like a prisoner in a camp of anthropophagi, and honoured like the sacrificial bull. And what with these annoyances, and the risky venture immediately ahead, I found my part a trying one to play.

It was a good deal of a relief when the third evening closed about the castle with volumes of sea-fog. The lights of Princes Street sometimes disappeared, sometimes blinked across at us no brighter than the eyes of cats; and five steps from one of the lanterns on the ramparts it was already groping dark. We made haste to lie down. Had our jailers been upon the watch, they must have observed our conversation to die out unusually soon. Yet I doubt if any of us slept. Each lay in his place, tortured at once with the hope of liberty and the fear of a hateful death. The guard call sounded; the hum of the town declined by little and little. On all sides of us, in their different quarters, we could hear the watchman cry the hours along the street. Often enough, during my stay in England, have I listened to these gruff or broken voices; or perhaps gone to my window when I lay sleepless, and watched the old gentleman hobble by upon the causeway with his cape and his cap, his hanger and his rattle. It was ever a thought with me how differently that cry would re-echo in the chamber of lovers, beside the bed of death, or in the condemned cell. I might be said to hear it that night myself in the condemned cell! At length a fellow with a voice like a bull's began to roar out in the opposite thoroughfare:

'Past yin o'cloak, and a dark, haary moarnin'.'

At which we were all silently afoot.

As I stole about the battlements towards the — gallows, I was about to write — the sergeant-major, perhaps doubtful of my resolution, kept close by me, and occasionally proffered the most indigestible reassurances in my ear. At last I could bear them no longer.

'Be so obliging as to let me be!' said I. 'I am neither a coward nor a fool. What do *you* know of whether the rope be long enough? But I shall know it in ten minutes!'

The good old fellow laughed in his moustache, and patted me.

It was all very well to show the disposition of my temper before a friend alone; before my assembled comrades the thing had to go handsomely. It was then my time to come on the stage; and I hope I took it handsomely.

'Now, gentlemen,' said I, 'if the rope is ready, here is the criminal!'

The tunnel was cleared, the stake driven, the rope extended. As I moved forward to the place, many of my comrades caught me by the hand and wrung it, an attention I could well have done without.

'Keep an eye on Clausel!' I whispered to Laclas; and with that, got down on my elbows and knees took the rope in both hands, and worked myself, feet foremost, through the tunnel. When the earth failed under my feet, I thought my heart would have stopped; and a moment after I was demeaning myself in mid-air like a drunken jumping-jack. I have never been a model of piety, but at this juncture prayers and a cold sweat burst from me simultaneously.

The line was knotted at intervals of eighteen inches; and to the inexpert it may seem as if it should have been even easy to descend. The trouble was, this devil of a piece of rope appeared to be inspired, not with life alone, but with a personal malignity against myself. It turned to the one side, paused for a moment, and then spun me like a toasting-jack to the other; slipped like an eel from the clasp of my feet; kept me all the time in the most outrageous fury of exertion; and dashed me at intervals against the face of the rock. I had no eyes to see with; and I doubt if there was anything to see but darkness. I must occasionally have caught a gasp of breath, but it was quite unconscious. And the whole forces of my mind were so consumed with losing hold and getting it again, that I could scarce have told whether I was going up or coming down.

Of a sudden I knocked against the cliff with such a thump as almost bereft me of my sense; and, as reason twinkled back, I was amazed to find that I was in a state of rest, that the face of the precipice here inclined outwards at an angle which relieved me almost wholly of the burthen of my own weight, and that one of my feet was safely planted on a ledge. I drew one of the sweetest breaths in my experience, hugged myself against the rope, and closed my eyes in a kind of ecstasy of relief. It occurred to me next to see how far I was advanced on my unlucky journey, a point on which I had not a shadow of a guess. I looked up: there was nothing above me but the blackness of the night and the fog. I craned timidly forward and looked down. There, upon a floor of darkness, I beheld a certain pattern of hazy lights, some of them aligned as in thoroughfares, others standing apart as in solitary houses; and before I could well realise it, or had in the least estimated my distance, a wave of nausea and vertigo warned me to lie back and close my eyes. In this situation I had really but the one wish, and that was: something else to think of! Strange to say, I got it: a veil was torn from my mind, and I saw what a fool I was — what fools we had all been — and that I had no business to be thus dangling between earth and heaven by my arms. The only thing to have done was to have attached me to a rope and lowered me, and I had never the wit to see it till that moment!

I filled my lungs, got a good hold on my rope, and once more launched myself on the descent. As it chanced, the worst of the danger was at an end, and I was so fortunate as to be never again exposed to any violent concussion. Soon after I must have passed within a little distance of a bush of wallflower, for the scent of it came over me with that impression of reality which characterises scents in darkness. This made me a second landmark, the ledge being my first. I began accordingly to compute intervals of time: so much to the ledge, so much again to the wallflower, so much more below. If I were not at the bottom of the rock, I calculated I must be near indeed to the end of the rope, and there was no doubt that I was not far from the end of my own resources. I began to be light-headed and to be tempted to let go, — now arguing that I was certainly arrived within a few feet of the level and could safely risk a fall, anon persuaded I was still close at the top and it was idle to continue longer on the rock. In the midst of which I came to a bearing on plain ground, and had nearly wept aloud. My hands were as good as flayed, my courage entirely exhausted, and, what with the long strain and the sudden relief, my limbs shook under me with more than the violence of ague, and I was glad to cling to the rope.

But this was no time to give way. I had (by God's single mercy) got myself alive out of that fortress; and now I had to try to get the others, my comrades. There was about a fathom of rope to spare; I got it by the end, and searched the whole ground thoroughly for anything to make it fast to. In vain: the ground was broken and stony, but there grew not there so much as a bush of furze.

'Now then,' thought I to myself, 'here begins a new lesson, and I believe it will prove richer than the first. I am not strong enough to keep this rope extended. If I do not keep it extended the next man will be dashed against the precipice. There is no reason why he should have my extravagant good luck. I see no reason why he should not fall — nor any place for him to fall on but my head.'

From where I was now standing there was occasionally visible, as the fog lightened, a lamp in one of the barrack windows, which gave me a measure of the height he had to fall and the horrid force that he must strike me with. What was yet worse, we had agreed to do without signals: every so many minutes by Laclas' watch another man was to be started from the battlements. Now, I had seemed to myself to be about half an hour in my descent, and it seemed near as long again that I waited, straining on the rope for my next comrade to begin. I began to be afraid that our conspiracy was out, that my friends were all secured, and that I should pass the remainder of the night, and be discovered in the morning, vainly clinging to the rope's end like a hooked fish upon an angle. I could not refrain, at this ridiculous image, from a chuckle of laughter. And the next moment I knew, by the jerking of the rope, that my friend had crawled out of the tunnel and was fairly launched on his descent. It appears it was the sailor who had insisted on succeeding me: as soon as my continued silence had assured him the rope was long enough, Gautier, for that was his name, had forgot his former arguments, and shown himself so extremely forward, that Laclas had given way. It was like the fellow, who had no harm in him beyond an instinctive selfishness. But he was like to have paid pretty dearly for the privilege. Do as I would, I could not keep the rope as I could have wished it; and he ended at last by falling on me from a height of several yards, so that we both rolled together on the ground. As soon as he could breathe he cursed me beyond belief, wept over his finger, which he had broken, and cursed me again. I bade him be still and think shame of himself to be so great a cry-baby. Did he not hear the round going by above? I asked; and who could tell but what the noise of his fall was already remarked, and the sentinels at the very moment leaning upon the battlements to listen?

The round, however, went by, and nothing was discovered; the third man came to the ground quite easily; the fourth was, of course, child's play; and before there were ten of us collected, it seemed to me that, without the least injustice to my comrades, I might proceed to take care of myself.

I knew their plan: they had a map and an almanack, and designed for Grangemouth, where they were to steal a ship. Suppose them to do so, I had no idea they were qualified to manage it after it was stolen. Their whole escape, indeed, was the most haphazard thing imaginable; only the impatience of captives and the ignorance of private soldiers would have entertained so misbegotten a device; and though I played the good comrade and worked with them upon the tunnel, but for the lawyer's message I should have let them go without me. Well, now they were beyond my help, as they had always been beyond my counselling; and, without word said or leave taken, I stole out of the little crowd. It is true I would rather have waited to shake hands with Laclas, but in the last man who had descended I thought I recognised Clausel, and since the scene in the shed my distrust of Clausel was perfect. I believed the man to be capable of any infamy, and events have since shown that I was right.

CHAPTER VII — SWANSTON COTTAGE

I had two views. The first was, naturally, to get clear of Edinburgh Castle and the town, to say nothing of my fellow-prisoners; the second to work to the southward so long as it was night, and be near Swanston Cottage by morning. What I should do there and then, I had no guess, and did not greatly care, being a devotee of a couple of divinities called Chance and Circumstance. Prepare, if possible; where it is impossible, work straight forward, and keep your eyes open and your tongue oiled. Wit and a good exterior — there is all life in a nutshell.

I had at first a rather chequered journey: got involved in gardens, butted into houses, and had even once the misfortune to awake a sleeping family, the father of which, as I suppose, menaced me from the window with a blunderbuss. Altogether, though I had been some time gone from my companions, I was still at no great distance, when a miserable accident put a period to the escape. Of a sudden the night was divided by a scream. This was followed by the sound of something falling, and that again by the report of a musket from the Castle battlements. It was strange to hear the alarm spread through the city. In the fortress drums were beat and a bell rung backward. On all hands the watchmen sprang their rattles. Even in that limbo or no-man's-land where I was wandering, lights were made in the houses; sashes were flung up; I could hear neighbouring families converse from window to window, and at length I was challenged myself.

'Wha's that?' cried a big voice.

I could see it proceeded from a big man in a big nightcap, leaning from a one-pair window; and as I was not yet abreast of his house, I judged it was more wise to answer. This was not the first time I had had to stake my fortunes on the goodness of my accent in a foreign tongue; and I have always found the moment inspiriting, as a gambler should. Pulling around me a sort of great-coat I had made of my blanket, to cover my sulphur-coloured livery, — 'A friend!' said I.

'What like's all this collieshangie?' said he.

I had never heard of a collieshangie in my days, but with the racket all about us in the city, I could have no doubt as to the man's meaning.

'I do not know, sir, really,' said I; 'but I suppose some of the prisoners will have escaped.'

'Bedamned!' says he.

'Oh, sir, they will be soon taken,' I replied: 'it has been found in time. Good morning, sir!'

'Ye walk late, sir?' he added.

‘Oh, surely not,’ said I, with a laugh. ‘Earlyish, if you like!’ which brought me finally beyond him, highly pleased with my success.

I was now come forth on a good thoroughfare, which led (as well as I could judge) in my direction. It brought me almost immediately through a piece of street, whence I could hear close by the springing of a watchman’s rattle, and where I suppose a sixth part of the windows would be open, and the people, in all sorts of night gear, talking with a kind of tragic gusto from one to another. Here, again, I must run the gauntlet of a half-dozen questions, the rattle all the while sounding nearer; but as I was not walking inordinately quick, as I spoke like a gentleman, and the lamps were too dim to show my dress, I carried it off once more. One person, indeed, inquired where I was off to at that hour.

I replied vaguely and cheerfully, and as I escaped at one end of this dangerous pass I could see the watchman’s lantern entering by the other. I was now safe on a dark country highway, out of sight of lights and out of the fear of watchmen. And yet I had not gone above a hundred yards before a fellow made an ugly rush at me from the roadside. I avoided him with a leap, and stood on guard, cursing my empty hands, wondering whether I had to do with an officer or a mere footpad, and scarce knowing which to wish. My assailant stood a little; in the thick darkness I could see him bob and sidle as though he were feinting at me for an advantageous onfall. Then he spoke.

‘My goo’ frien’,’ says he, and at the first word I pricked my ears, ‘my goo’ frien’, will you oblishe me with lil neshary infamation? Whish roa’ t’ Cramond?’

I laughed out clear and loud, stepped up to the convivialist, took him by the shoulders and faced him about. ‘My good friend,’ said I, ‘I believe I know what is best for you much better than yourself, and may God forgive you the fright you have given me! There, get you gone to Edinburgh!’ And I gave a shove, which he obeyed with the passive agility of a ball, and disappeared incontinently in the darkness down the road by which I had myself come.

Once clear of this foolish fellow, I went on again up a gradual hill, descended on the other side through the houses of a country village, and came at last to the bottom of the main ascent leading to the Pentlands and my destination. I was some way up when the fog began to lighten; a little farther, and I stepped by degrees into a clear starry night, and saw in front of me, and quite distinct, the summits of the Pentlands, and behind, the valley of the Forth and the city of my late captivity buried under a lake of vapour. I had but one encounter — that of a farm-cart, which I heard, from a great way ahead of me, creaking nearer in the night, and which passed me about the point of dawn like a thing seen in a dream, with two silent figures in the inside nodding to the horse's steps. I presume they were asleep; by the shawl about her head and shoulders, one of them should be a woman. Soon, by concurrent steps, the day began to break and the fog to subside and roll away. The east grew luminous and was barred with chilly colours, and the Castle on its rock, and the spires and chimneys of the upper town, took gradual shape, and arose, like islands, out of the receding cloud. All about me was still and sylvan; the road mounting and winding, with nowhere a sign of any passenger, the birds chirping, I suppose for warmth, the boughs of the trees knocking together, and the red leaves falling in the wind.

It was broad day, but still bitter cold and the sun not up, when I came in view of my destination. A single gable and chimney of the cottage peeped over the shoulder of the hill; not far off, and a trifle higher on the mountain, a tall old white-washed farmhouse stood among the trees, beside a falling brook; beyond were rough hills of pasture. I bethought me that shepherd folk were early risers, and if I were once seen skulking in that neighbourhood it might prove the ruin of my prospects; took advantage of a line of hedge, and worked myself up in its shadow till I was come under the garden wall of my friends' house. The cottage was a little quaint place of many roughcast gables and grey roofs. It had something the air of a rambling infinitesimal cathedral, the body of it rising in the midst two storeys high, with a steep-pitched roof, and sending out upon all hands (as it were chapter-houses, chapels, and transepts) one-storeyed and dwarfish projections. To add to this appearance, it was grotesquely decorated with crockets and gargoyles, ravished from some medieval church. The place seemed hidden away, being not only concealed in the trees of the garden, but, on the side on which I approached it, buried as high as the eaves by the rising of the ground. About the walls of the garden there went a line of well-grown elms and beeches, the first entirely bare, the last still pretty well covered with red leaves, and the centre was occupied with a thicket of laurel and holly, in which I could see arches cut and paths winding.

I was now within hail of my friends, and not much the better. The house appeared asleep; yet if I attempted to wake any one, I had no guarantee it might not prove either the aunt with the gold eyeglasses (whom I could only remember with trembling), or some ass of a servant-maid who should burst out screaming at sight of me. Higher up I could hear and see a shepherd shouting to his dogs and striding on the rough sides of the mountain, and it was clear I must get to cover without loss of time. No doubt the holly thickets would have proved a very suitable retreat, but there was mounted on the wall a sort of signboard not uncommon in the country of Great Britain, and very damping to the adventurous: Spring Guns and Man-Traps was the legend that it bore. I have learned since that these advertisements, three times out of four, were in the nature of Quaker guns on a disarmed battery, but I had not learned it then, and even so, the odds would not have been good enough. For a choice, I would a hundred times sooner be returned to Edinburgh Castle and my corner in the bastion, than to leave my foot in a steel trap or have to digest the contents of an automatic blunderbuss. There was but one chance left — that Ronald or Flora might be the first to come abroad; and in order to profit by this chance if it occurred, I got me on the cope of the wall in a place where it was screened by the thick branches of a beech, and sat there waiting.

As the day wore on, the sun came very pleasantly out. I had been awake all night, I had undergone the most violent agitations of mind and body, and it is not so much to be wondered at, as it was exceedingly unwise and foolhardy, that I should have dropped into a doze. From this I awakened to the characteristic sound of digging, looked down, and saw immediately below me the back view of a gardener in a stable waistcoat. Now he would appear steadily immersed in his business; anon, to my more immediate terror, he would straighten his back, stretch his arms, gaze about the otherwise deserted garden, and relish a deep pinch of snuff. It was my first thought to drop from the wall upon the other side. A glance sufficed to show me that even the way by which I had come was now cut off, and the field behind me already occupied by a couple of shepherds' assistants and a score or two of sheep. I have named the talismans on which I habitually depend, but here was a conjuncture in which both were wholly useless. The copestone of a wall arrayed with broken bottles is no favourable rostrum; and I might be as eloquent as Pitt, and as fascinating as Richelieu, and neither the gardener nor the shepherd lads would care a halfpenny. In short, there was no escape possible from my absurd position: there I must continue to sit until one or other of my neighbours should raise his eyes and give the signal for my capture.

The part of the wall on which (for my sins) I was posted could be scarce less than twelve feet high on the inside; the leaves of the beech which made a fashion of sheltering me were already partly fallen; and I was thus not only perilously exposed myself, but enabled to command some part of the garden walks and (under an evergreen arch) the front lawn and windows of the cottage. For long nothing stirred except my friend with the spade; then I heard the opening of a sash; and presently after saw Miss Flora appear in a morning wrapper and come strolling hitherward between the borders, pausing and visiting her flowers — herself as fair. *There* was a friend; *here*, immediately beneath me, an unknown quantity — the gardener: how to communicate with the one and not attract the notice of the other? To make a noise was out of the question; I dared scarce to breathe. I held myself ready to make a gesture as soon as she should look, and she looked in every possible direction but the one. She was interested in the vilest tuft of chickweed, she gazed at the summit of the mountain, she came even immediately below me and conversed on the most fastidious topics with the gardener; but to the top of that wall she would not dedicate a glance! At last she began to retrace her steps in the direction of the cottage; whereupon, becoming quite desperate, I broke off a piece of plaster, took a happy aim, and hit her with it in the nape of the neck. She clapped her hand to the place, turned about, looked on all sides for an explanation, and spying me (as indeed I was parting the branches to make it the more easy), half uttered and half swallowed down again a cry of surprise.

The infernal gardener was erect upon the instant. 'What's your wull, miss?' said he.

Her readiness amazed me. She had already turned and was gazing in the opposite direction. 'There's a child among the artichokes,' she said.

'The Plagues of Egyp'! *I'll* see to them!' cried the gardener truculently, and with a hurried waddle disappeared among the evergreens.

That moment she turned, she came running towards me, her arms stretched out, her face incarnadined for the one moment with heavenly blushes, the next pale as death. 'Monsieur de. Saint-Yves!' she said.

'My dear young lady,' I said, 'this is the damnedest liberty — I know it! But what else was I to do?'

'You have escaped?' said she.

'If you call this escape,' I replied.

'But you cannot possibly stop there!' she cried.

'I know it,' said I. 'And where am I to go?'

She struck her hands together. 'I have it!' she exclaimed. 'Come down by the beech trunk — you must leave no footprint in the border — quickly, before Robie can get back! I am the hen-wife here: I keep the key; you must go into the hen-house — for the moment.'

I was by her side at once. Both cast a hasty glance at the blank windows of the cottage and so much as was visible of the garden alleys; it seemed there was none to observe us. She caught me by the sleeve and ran. It was no time for compliments; hurry breathed upon our necks; and I ran along with her to the next corner of the garden, where a wired court and a board hovel standing in a grove of trees advertised my place of refuge. She thrust me in without a word; the bulk of the fowls were at the same time emitted; and I found myself the next moment locked in alone with half a dozen sitting hens. In the twilight of the place all fixed their eyes on me severely, and seemed to upbraid me with some crying impropriety. Doubtless the hen has always a puritanic appearance, although (in its own behaviour) I could never observe it to be more particular than its neighbours. But conceive a British hen!

CHAPTER VIII — THE HEN-HOUSE

I was half an hour at least in the society of these distressing bipeds, and alone with my own reflections and necessities. I was in great pain of my flayed hands, and had nothing to treat them with; I was hungry and thirsty, and had nothing to eat or to drink; I was thoroughly tired, and there was no place for me to sit. To be sure there was the floor, but nothing could be imagined less inviting.

At the sound of approaching footsteps, my good-humour was restored. The key rattled in the lock, and Master Ronald entered, closed the door behind him, and leaned his back to it.

'I say, you know!' he said, and shook a sullen young head.

'I know it's a liberty,' said I.

'It's infernally awkward: my position is infernally embarrassing,' said he.

'Well,' said I, 'and what do you think of mine?'

This seemed to pose him entirely, and he remained gazing upon me with a convincing air of youth and innocence. I could have laughed, but I was not so inhumane.

'I am in your hands,' said I, with a little gesture. 'You must do with me what you think right.'

'Ah, yes!' he cried: 'if I knew!'

'You see,' said I, 'it would be different if you had received your commission. Properly speaking, you are not yet a combatant; I have ceased to be one; and I think it arguable that we are just in the position of one ordinary gentleman to another, where friendship usually comes before the law. Observe, I only say *arguable*. For God's sake, don't think I wish to dictate an opinion. These are the sort of nasty little businesses, inseparable from war, which every gentleman must decide for himself. If I were in your place — '

'Ay, what would you do, then?' says he.

'Upon my word, I do not know,' said I. 'Hesitate, as you are doing, I believe.'

'I will tell you,' he said. 'I have a kinsman, and it is what *he* would think, that I am thinking. It is General Graham of Lynedoch — Sir Thomas Graham. I scarcely know him, but I believe I admire him more than I do God.'

'I admire him a good deal myself,' said I, 'and have good reason to. I have fought with him, been beaten, and run away. *Veni, victus sum, evasi.*'

'What!' he cried. 'You were at Barossa?'

'There and back, which many could not say,' said I. 'It was a pretty affair and a hot one, and the Spaniards behaved abominably, as they usually did in a pitched field; the Marshal Duke of Belluno made a fool of himself, and not for the first time; and your friend Sir Thomas had the best of it, so far as there was any best. He is a brave and ready officer.'

'Now, then, you will understand!' said the boy. 'I wish to please Sir Thomas: what would he do?'

'Well, I can tell you a story,' said I, 'a true one too, and about this very combat of Chiclana, or Barossa as you call it. I was in the Eighth of the Line; we lost the eagle of the First Battalion, more betoken, but it cost you dear. Well, we had repulsed more charges than I care to count, when your 87th Regiment came on at a foot's pace, very slow but very steady; in front of them a mounted officer, his hat in his hand, white-haired, and talking very quietly to the battalions. Our Major, Vigo-Roussillon, set spurs to his horse and galloped out to sabre him, but seeing him an old man, very handsome, and as composed as if he were in a coffee-house, lost heart and galloped back again. Only, you see, they had been very close together for the moment, and looked each other in the eyes. Soon after the Major was wounded, taken prisoner, and carried into Cadiz. One fine day they announced to him the visit of the General, Sir Thomas Graham. "Well, sir," said the General, taking him by the hand, "I think we were face to face upon the field." It was the white-haired officer!'

'Ah!' cried the boy, — his eyes were burning.

'Well, and here is the point,' I continued. 'Sir Thomas fed the Major from his own table from that day, and served him with six covers.'

'Yes, it is a beautiful — a beautiful story,' said Ronald. 'And yet somehow it is not the same — is it?'

'I admit it freely,' said I.

The boy stood awhile brooding. 'Well, I take my risk of it,' he cried. 'I believe it's treason to my sovereign — I believe there is an infamous punishment for such a crime — and yet I'm hanged if I can give you up.'

I was as much moved as he. 'I could almost beg you to do otherwise,' I said. 'I was a brute to come to you, a brute and a coward. You are a noble enemy; you will make a noble soldier.' And with rather a happy idea of a compliment for this warlike youth, I stood up straight and gave him the salute.

He was for a moment confused; his face flushed. 'Well, well, I must be getting you something to eat, but it will not be for six,' he added, with a smile: 'only what we can get smuggled out. There is my aunt in the road, you see,' and he locked me in again with the indignant hens.

I always smile when I recall that young fellow; and yet, if the reader were to smile also, I should feel ashamed. If my son shall be only like him when he comes to that age, it will be a brave day for me and not a bad one for his country.

At the same time I cannot pretend that I was sorry when his sister succeeded in his place. She brought me a few crusts of bread and a jug of milk, which she had handsomely laced with whisky after the Scottish manner.

‘I am so sorry,’ she said: ‘I dared not bring on anything more. We are so small a family, and my aunt keeps such an eye upon the servants. I have put some whisky in the milk — it is more wholesome so — and with eggs you will be able to make something of a meal. How many eggs will you be wanting to that milk? for I must be taking the others to my aunt — that is my excuse for being here. I should think three or four. Do you know how to beat them? or shall I do it?’

Willing to detain her a while longer in the hen-house, I displayed my bleeding palms; at which she cried aloud.

‘My dear Miss Flora, you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs,’ said I; ‘and it is no bagatelle to escape from Edinburgh Castle. One of us, I think, was even killed.’

‘And you are as white as a rag, too,’ she exclaimed, ‘and can hardly stand! Here is my shawl, sit down upon it here in the corner, and I will beat your eggs. See, I have brought a fork too; I should have been a good person to take care of Jacobites or Covenanters in old days! You shall have more to eat this evening; Ronald is to bring it you from town. We have money enough, although no food that we can call our own. Ah, if Ronald and I kept house, you should not be lying in this shed! He admires you so much.’

‘My dear friend,’ said I, ‘for God’s sake do not embarrass me with more alms. I loved to receive them from that hand, so long as they were needed; but they are so no more, and whatever else I may lack — and I lack everything — it is not money.’ I pulled out my sheaf of notes and detached the top one: it was written for ten pounds, and signed by that very famous individual, Abraham Newlands. ‘Oblige me, as you would like me to oblige your brother if the parts were reversed, and take this note for the expenses. I shall need not only food, but clothes.’

‘Lay it on the ground,’ said she. ‘I must not stop my beating.’

‘You are not offended?’ I exclaimed.

She answered me by a look that was a reward in itself, and seemed to imply the most heavenly offers for the future. There was in it a shadow of reproach, and such warmth of communicative cordiality as left me speechless. I watched her instead till her hens’ milk was ready.

‘Now,’ said she, ‘taste that.’

I did so, and swore it was nectar. She collected her eggs and crouched in front of me to watch me eat. There was about this tall young lady at the moment an air of motherliness delicious to behold. I am like the English general, and to this day I still wonder at my moderation.

'What sort of clothes will you be wanting?' said she.

'The clothes of a gentleman,' said I. 'Right or wrong, I think it is the part I am best qualified to play. Mr. St. Ives (for that's to be my name upon the journey) I conceive as rather a theatrical figure, and his make-up should be to match.'

'And yet there is a difficulty,' said she. 'If you got coarse clothes the fit would hardly matter. But the clothes of a fine gentleman — O, it is absolutely necessary that these should fit! And above all, with your' — she paused a moment — 'to our ideas somewhat noticeable manners.'

'Alas for my poor manners!' said I. 'But my dear friend Flora, these little noticeabilities are just what mankind has to suffer under. Yourself, you see, you're very noticeable even when you come in a crowd to visit poor prisoners in the Castle.'

I was afraid I should frighten my good angel visitant away, and without the smallest breath of pause went on to add a few directions as to stuffs and colours.

She opened big eyes upon me. 'O, Mr. St. Ives!' she cried — 'if that is to be your name — I do not say they would not be becoming; but for a journey, do you think they would be wise? I am afraid' — she gave a pretty break of laughter — 'I am afraid they would be daft-like!'

'Well, and am I not daft?' I asked her.

'I do begin to think you are,' said she.

'There it is, then!' said I. 'I have been long enough a figure of fun. Can you not feel with me that perhaps the bitterest thing in this captivity has been the clothes? Make me a captive — bind me with chains if you like — but let me be still myself. You do not know what it is to be a walking travesty — among foes,' I added bitterly.

'O, but you are too unjust!' she cried. 'You speak as though any one ever dreamed of laughing at you. But no one did. We were all pained to the heart. Even my aunt — though sometimes I do think she was not quite in good taste — you should have seen her and heard her at home! She took so much interest. Every patch in your clothes made us sorry; it should have been a sister's work.'

'That is what I never had — a sister,' said I. 'But since you say that I did not make you laugh — '

'O, Mr. St. Ives! never!' she exclaimed. 'Not for one moment. It was all too sad. To see a gentleman — '

'In the clothes of a harlequin, and begging?' I suggested.

‘To see a gentleman in distress, and nobly supporting it,’ she said.

‘And do you not understand, my fair foe,’ said I, ‘that even if all were as you say — even if you had thought my travesty were becoming — I should be only the more anxious, for my sake, for my country’s sake, and for the sake of your kindness, that you should see him whom you have helped as God meant him to be seen? that you should have something to remember him by at least more characteristic than a misfitting sulphur-yellow suit, and half a week’s beard?’

‘You think a great deal too much of clothes,’ she said. ‘I am not that kind of girl.’

‘And I am afraid I am that kind of man,’ said I. ‘But do not think of me too harshly for that. I talked just now of something to remember by. I have many of them myself, of these beautiful reminders, of these keepsakes, that I cannot be parted from until I lose memory and life. Many of them are great things, many of them are high virtues — charity, mercy, faith. But some of them are trivial enough. Miss Flora, do you remember the day that I first saw you, the day of the strong east wind? Miss Flora, shall I tell you what you wore?’

We had both risen to our feet, and she had her hand already on the door to go. Perhaps this attitude emboldened me to profit by the last seconds of our interview; and it certainly rendered her escape the more easy.

‘O, you are too romantic!’ she said, laughing; and with that my sun was blown out, my enchantress had fled away, and I was again left alone in the twilight with the lady hens.

CHAPTER IX — THREE IS COMPANY, AND FOUR NONE

The rest of the day I slept in the corner of the hen-house upon Flora’s shawl. Nor did I awake until a light shone suddenly in my eyes, and starting up with a gasp (for, indeed, at the moment I dreamed I was still swinging from the Castle battlements) I found Ronald bending over me with a lantern. It appeared it was past midnight, that I had slept about sixteen hours, and that Flora had returned her poultry to the shed and I had heard her not. I could not but wonder if she had stooped to look at me as I slept. The puritan hens now slept irremediably; and being cheered with the promise of supper I wished them an ironical good-night, and was lighted across the garden and noiselessly admitted to a bedroom on the ground floor of the cottage. There I found soap, water, razors — offered me diffidently by my beardless host — and an outfit of new clothes. To be shaved again without depending on the barber of the gaol was a source of a delicious, if a childish joy. My hair was sadly too long, but I was none so unwise as to make an attempt on it myself. And, indeed, I thought it did not wholly misbecome me as it was, being by nature curly. The clothes were about as good as I expected. The waistcoat was of toilenet, a pretty piece, the trousers of fine kerseymere, and the coat sat extraordinarily well. Altogether, when I beheld this changeling in the glass, I kissed my hand to him.

‘My dear fellow,’ said I, ‘have you no scent?’

‘Good God, no!’ cried Ronald. ‘What do you want with scent?’

‘Capital thing on a campaign,’ said I. ‘But I can do without.’

I was now led, with the same precautions against noise, into the little bow-windowed dining-room of the cottage. The shutters were up, the lamp guiltily turned low; the beautiful Flora greeted me in a whisper; and when I was set down to table, the pair proceeded to help me with precautions that might have seemed excessive in the Ear of Dionysius.

‘She sleeps up there,’ observed the boy, pointing to the ceiling; and the knowledge that I was so imminently near to the resting-place of that gold eyeglass touched even myself with some uneasiness.

Our excellent youth had imported from the city a meat pie, and I was glad to find it flanked with a decanter of really admirable wine of Oporto. While I ate, Ronald entertained me with the news of the city, which had naturally rung all day with our escape: troops and mounted messengers had followed each other forth at all hours and in all directions; but according to the last intelligence no recapture had been made. Opinion in town was very favourable to us: our courage was applauded, and many professed regret that our ultimate chance of escape should be so small. The man who had fallen was one Sombref, a peasant; he was one who slept in a different part of the Castle; and I was thus assured that the whole of my former companions had attained their liberty, and Shed A was untenanted.

From this we wandered insensibly into other topics. It is impossible to exaggerate the pleasure I took to be thus sitting at the same table with Flora, in the clothes of a gentleman, at liberty and in the full possession of my spirits and resources; of all of which I had need, because it was necessary that I should support at the same time two opposite characters, and at once play the cavalier and lively soldier for the eyes of Ronald, and to the ears of Flora maintain the same profound and sentimental note that I had already sounded. Certainly there are days when all goes well with a man; when his wit, his digestion, his mistress are in a conspiracy to spoil him, and even the weather smiles upon his wishes. I will only say of myself upon that evening that I surpassed my expectations, and was privileged to delight my hosts. Little by little they forgot their terrors and I my caution; until at last we were brought back to earth by a catastrophe that might very easily have been foreseen, but was not the less astonishing to us when it occurred.

I had filled all the glasses. ‘I have a toast to propose,’ I whispered, ‘or rather three, but all so inextricably interwoven that they will not bear dividing. I wish first to drink to the health of a brave and therefore a generous enemy. He found me disarmed, a fugitive and helpless. Like the lion, he disdained so poor a triumph; and when he might have vindicated an easy valour, he preferred to make a friend. I wish that we should next drink to a fairer and a more tender foe. She found me in prison; she cheered me with a priceless sympathy; what she has done since, I know she has done in mercy, and I only pray — I dare scarce hope — her mercy may prove to have been merciful. And I wish to conjoin with these, for the first, and perhaps the last time, the health — and I fear I may already say the memory — of one who has fought, not always without success, against the soldiers of your nation; but who came here, vanquished already, only to be vanquished again by the loyal hand of the one, by the unforgettable eyes of the other.’

It is to be feared I may have lent at times a certain resonancy to my voice; it is to be feared that Ronald, who was none the better for his own hospitality, may have set down his glass with something of a clang. Whatever may have been the cause, at least, I had scarce finished my compliment before we were aware of a thump upon the ceiling overhead. It was to be thought some very solid body had descended to the floor from the level (possibly) of a bed. I have never seen consternation painted in more lively colours than on the faces of my hosts. It was proposed to smuggle me forth into the garden, or to conceal my form under a horsehair sofa which stood against the wall. For the first expedient, as was now plain by the approaching footsteps, there was no longer time; from the second I recoiled with indignation.

‘My dear creatures,’ said I, ‘let us die, but do not let us be ridiculous.’

The words were still upon my lips when the door opened and my friend of the gold eyeglass appeared, a memorable figure, on the threshold. In one hand she bore a bedroom candlestick; in the other, with the steadiness of a dragoon, a horse-pistol. She was wound about in shawls which did not wholly conceal the candid fabric of her nightdress, and surmounted by a nightcap of portentous architecture. Thus accoutred, she made her entrance; laid down the candle and pistol, as no longer called for; looked about the room with a silence more eloquent than oaths; and then, in a thrilling voice — ’To whom have I the pleasure?’ she said, addressing me with a ghost of a bow.

‘Madam, I am charmed, I am sure,’ said I. ‘The story is a little long; and our meeting, however welcome, was for the moment entirely unexpected by myself. I am sure — ’ but here I found I was quite sure of nothing, and tried again. ‘I have the honour,’ I began, and found I had the honour to be only exceedingly confused. With that, I threw myself outright upon her mercy. ‘Madam, I must be more frank with you,’ I resumed. ‘You have already proved your charity and compassion for the French prisoners, I am one of these; and if my appearance be not too much changed, you may even yet recognise in me that *Oddity* who had the good fortune more than once to make you smile.’

Still gazing upon me through her glass, she uttered an uncompromising grunt; and then, turning to her niece — ’Flora,’ said she, ‘how comes he here?’

The culprits poured out for a while an antiphony of explanations, which died out at last in a miserable silence.

‘I think at least you might have told your aunt,’ she snorted.

‘Madam,’ I interposed, ‘they were about to do so. It is my fault if it be not done already. But I made it my prayer that your slumbers might be respected, and this necessary formula of my presentation should be delayed until to-morrow in the morning.’

The old lady regarded me with undissembled incredulity, to which I was able to find no better repartee than a profound and I trust graceful reverence.

‘French prisoners are very well in their place,’ she said, ‘but I cannot see that their place is in my private dining-room.’

‘Madam,’ said I, ‘I hope it may be said without offence, but (except the Castle of Edinburgh) I cannot think upon the spot from which I would so readily be absent.’

At this, to my relief, I thought I could perceive a vestige of a smile to steal upon that iron countenance and to be bitten immediately in.

‘And if it is a fair question, what do they call ye?’ she asked.

‘At your service, the Vicomte Anne de St.-Yves,’ said I.

‘Mosha the Viscount,’ said she, ‘I am afraid you do us plain people a great deal too much honour.’

‘My dear lady,’ said I, ‘let us be serious for a moment. What was I to do? Where was I to go? And how can you be angry with these benevolent children who took pity on one so unfortunate as myself? Your humble servant is no such terrific adventurer that you should come out against him with horse-pistol and’ — smiling — ’bedroom candlesticks. It is but a young gentleman in extreme distress, hunted upon every side, and asking no more than to escape from his pursuers. I know your character, I read it in your face’ — the heart trembled in my body as I said these daring words. ‘There are unhappy English prisoners in France at this day, perhaps at this hour. Perhaps at this hour they kneel as I do; they take the hand of her who might conceal and assist them; they press it to their lips as I do — ’

‘Here, here!’ cried the old lady, breaking from my solicitations. ‘Behave yourself before folk! Saw ever anyone the match of that? And on earth, my dears, what are we to do with him?’

‘Pack him off, my dear lady,’ said I: ‘pack off the impudent fellow double-quick! And if it may be, and if your good heart allows it, help him a little on the way he has to go.’

‘What’s this pie?’ she cried stridently. ‘Where is this pie from, Flora?’

No answer was vouchsafed by my unfortunate and (I may say) extinct accomplices.

‘Is that my port?’ she pursued. ‘Hough! Will somebody give me a glass of my port wine?’

I made haste to serve her.

She looked at me over the rim with an extraordinary expression. ‘I hope ye liked it?’ said she.

‘It is even a magnificent wine,’ said I.

‘Aweel, it was my father laid it down,’ said she. ‘There were few knew more about port wine than my father, God rest him!’ She settled herself in a chair with an alarming air of resolution. ‘And so there is some particular direction that you wish to go in?’ said she.

‘O,’ said I, following her example, ‘I am by no means such a vagrant as you suppose. I have good friends, if I could get to them, for which all I want is to be once clear of Scotland; and I have money for the road.’ And I produced my bundle.

‘English bank-notes?’ she said. ‘That’s not very handy for Scotland. It’s been some fool of an Englishman that’s given you these, I’m thinking. How much is it?’

‘I declare to heaven I never thought to count!’ I exclaimed. ‘But that is soon remedied.’

And I counted out ten notes of ten pound each, all in the name of Abraham Newlands, and five bills of country bankers for as many guineas.

‘One hundred and twenty six pound five,’ cried the old lady. ‘And you carry such a sum about you, and have not so much as counted it! If you are not a thief, you must allow you are very thief-like.’

‘And yet, madam, the money is legitimately mine,’ said I.

She took one of the bills and held it up. ‘Is there any probability, now, that this could be traced?’ she asked.

‘None, I should suppose; and if it were, it would be no matter,’ said I. ‘With your usual penetration, you guessed right. An Englishman brought it me. It reached me, through the hands of his English solicitor, from my great-uncle, the Comte de Kéroual de Saint-Yves, I believe the richest *émigré* in London.’

‘I can do no more than take your word for it,’ said she.

‘And I trust, madam, not less,’ said I.

‘Well,’ said she, ‘at this rate the matter may be feasible. I will cash one of these five-guinea bills, less the exchange, and give you silver and Scots notes to bear you as far as the border. Beyond that, Mosha the Viscount, you will have to depend upon yourself.’

I could not but express a civil hesitation as to whether the amount would suffice, in my case, for so long a journey.

‘Ay,’ said she, ‘but you havenae heard me out. For if you are not too fine a gentleman to travel with a pair of drovers, I believe I have found the very thing, and the Lord forgive me for a treasonable old wife! There are a couple stopping up by with the shepherd-man at the farm; to-morrow they will take the road for England, probably by skriegh of day — and in my opinion you had best be travelling with the stots,’ said she.

‘For Heaven’s sake do not suppose me to be so effeminate a character!’ I cried. ‘An old soldier of Napoleon is certainly beyond suspicion. But, dear lady, to what end? and how is the society of these excellent gentlemen supposed to help me?’

‘My dear sir,’ said she, ‘you do not at all understand your own predicament, and must just leave your matters in the hands of those who do. I dare say you have never even heard tell of the drove-roads or the drovers; and I am certainly not going to sit up all night to explain it to you. Suffice it, that it is me who is arranging this affair

— the more shame to me! — and that is the way ye have to go. Ronald,’ she continued, ‘away up-by to the shepherds; rowst them out of their beds, and make it perfectly distinct that Sim is not to leave till he has seen me.’

Ronald was nothing loath to escape from his aunt’s neighbourhood, and left the room and the cottage with a silent expedition that was more like flight than mere obedience. Meanwhile the old lady turned to her niece.

‘And I would like to know what we are to do with him the night!’ she cried.

‘Ronald and I meant to put him in the hen-house,’ said the encrimsoned Flora.

‘And I can tell you he is to go to no such a place,’ replied the aunt. ‘Hen-house, indeed! If a guest he is to be, he shall sleep in no mortal hen-house. Your room is the most fit, I think, if he will consent to occupy it on so great a suddenty. And as for you, Flora, you shall sleep with me.’

I could not help admiring the prudence and tact of this old dowager, and of course it was not for me to make objections. Ere I well knew how, I was alone with a flat candlestick, which is not the most sympathetic of companions, and stood studying the snuff in a frame of mind between triumph and chagrin. All had gone well with my flight: the masterful lady who had arrogated to herself the arrangement of the details gave me every confidence; and I saw myself already arriving at my uncle’s door. But, alas! it was another story with my love affair. I had seen and spoken with her alone; I had ventured boldly; I had been not ill received; I had seen her change colour, had enjoyed the undissembled kindness of her eyes; and now, in a moment, down comes upon the scene that apocalyptic figure with the nightcap and the horse-pistol, and with the very wind of her coming behold me separated from my love! Gratitude and admiration contended in my breast with the extreme of natural rancour. My appearance in her house at past midnight had an air (I could not disguise it from myself) that was insolent and underhand, and could not but minister to the worst suspicions. And the old lady had taken it well. Her generosity was no more to be called in question than her courage, and I was afraid that her intelligence would be found to match. Certainly, Miss Flora had to support some shrewd looks, and certainly she had been troubled. I could see but the one way before me: to profit by an excellent bed, to try to sleep soon, to be stirring early, and to hope for some renewed occasion in the morning. To have said so much and yet to say no more, to go out into the world upon so half-hearted a parting, was more than I could accept.

It is my belief that the benevolent fiend sat up all night to baulk me. She was at my bedside with a candle long ere day, roused me, laid out for me a damnable misfit of clothes, and bade me pack my own (which were wholly unsuited to the journey) in a bundle. Sore grudging, I arrayed myself in a suit of some country fabric, as delicate as sackcloth and about as becoming as a shroud; and, on coming forth, found the dragon had prepared for me a hearty breakfast. She took the head of the table, poured out the tea, and entertained me as I ate with a great deal of good sense and a conspicuous lack of charm. How often did I not regret the change! — how often compare her, and condemn her in the comparison, with her charming niece! But if my entertainer was not beautiful, she had certainly been busy in my interest. Already she was in communication with my destined fellow-travellers; and the device on which she had struck appeared entirely suitable. I was a young Englishman who had outrun the constable; warrants were out against me in Scotland, and it had become needful I should pass the border without loss of time, and privately.

‘I have given a very good account of you,’ said she, ‘which I hope you may justify. I told them there was nothing against you beyond the fact that you were put to the haw (if that is the right word) for debt.’

‘I pray God you have the expression incorrectly, ma’am,’ said I. ‘I do not give myself out for a person easily alarmed; but you must admit there is something barbarous and mediaeval in the sound well qualified to startle a poor foreigner.’

‘It is the name of a process in Scots Law, and need alarm no honest man,’ said she. ‘But you are a very idle-minded young gentleman; you must still have your joke, I see: I only hope you will have no cause to regret it.’

‘I pray you not to suppose, because I speak lightly, that I do not feel deeply,’ said I. ‘Your kindness has quite conquered me; I lay myself at your disposition, I beg you to believe, with real tenderness; I pray you to consider me from henceforth as the most devoted of your friends.’

‘Well, well,’ she said, ‘here comes your devoted friend the drover. I’m thinking he will be eager for the road; and I will not be easy myself till I see you well off the premises, and the dishes washed, before my servant-woman wakes. Praise God, we have gotten one that is a treasure at the sleeping!’

The morning was already beginning to be blue in the trees of the garden, and to put to shame the candle by which I had breakfasted. The lady rose from table, and I had no choice but to follow her example. All the time I was beating my brains for any means by which I should be able to get a word apart with Flora, or find the time to write her a billet. The windows had been open while I breakfasted, I suppose to ventilate the room from any traces of my passage there;

and, Master Ronald appearing on the front lawn, my ogre leaned forth to address him.

‘Ronald,’ she said, ‘wasn’t that Sim that went by the wall?’

I snatched my advantage. Right at her back there was pen, ink, and paper laid out. I wrote: ‘I love you’; and before I had time to write more, or so much as to blot what I had written, I was again under the guns of the gold eyeglasses.

‘It’s time,’ she began; and then, as she observed my occupation, ‘Umph!’ she broke off. ‘Ye have something to write?’ she demanded.

‘Some notes, madam,’ said I, bowing with alacrity.

‘Notes,’ she said; ‘or a note?’

‘There is doubtless some *finesse* of the English language that I do not comprehend,’ said I.

‘I’ll contrive, however, to make my meaning very plain to ye, Mosha le Viscount,’ she continued. ‘I suppose you desire to be considered a gentleman?’

‘Can you doubt it, madam?’ said I.

‘I doubt very much, at least, whether you go to the right way about it,’ she said. ‘You have come here to me, I cannot very well say how; I think you will admit you owe me some thanks, if it was only for the breakfast I made ye. But what are you to me? A waif young man, not so far to seek for looks and manners, with some English notes in your pocket and a price upon your head. I am a lady; I have been your hostess, with however little will; and I desire that this random acquaintance of yours with my family will cease and determine.’

I believe I must have coloured. ‘Madam,’ said I, ‘the notes are of no importance; and your least pleasure ought certainly to be my law. You have felt, and you have been pleased to express, a doubt of me. I tear them up.’ Which you may be sure I did thoroughly.

‘There’s a good lad!’ said the dragon, and immediately led the way to the front lawn.

The brother and sister were both waiting us here, and, as well as I could make out in the imperfect light, bore every appearance of having passed through a rather cruel experience. Ronald seemed ashamed to so much as catch my eye in the presence of his aunt, and was the picture of embarrassment. As for Flora, she had scarce the time to cast me one look before the dragon took her by the arm, and began to march across the garden in the extreme first glimmer of the dawn without exchanging speech. Ronald and I followed in equal silence.

There was a door in that same high wall on the top of which I had sat perched no longer gone than yesterday morning. This the old lady set open with a key; and on the other side we were aware of a rough-looking, thick-set man, leaning with his arms (through which was passed a formidable staff) on a dry-stone dyke. Him the old lady immediately addressed.

‘Sim,’ said she, ‘this is the young gentleman.’

Sim replied with an inarticulate grumble of sound, and a movement of one arm and his head, which did duty for a salutation.

‘Now, Mr. St. Ives,’ said the old lady, ‘it’s high time for you to be taking the road. But first of all let me give the change of your five-guinea bill. Here are four pounds of it in British Linen notes, and the balance in small silver, less sixpence. Some charge a shilling, I believe, but I have given you the benefit of the doubt. See and guide it with all the sense that you possess.’

‘And here, Mr. St. Ives,’ said Flora, speaking for the first time, ‘is a plaid which you will find quite necessary on so rough a journey. I hope you will take it from the hands of a Scotch friend,’ she added, and her voice trembled.

‘Genuine holly: I cut it myself,’ said Ronald, and gave me as good a cudgel as a man could wish for in a row.

The formality of these gifts, and the waiting figure of the driver, told me loudly that I must be gone. I dropped on one knee and bade farewell to the aunt, kissing her hand. I did the like — but with how different a passion! — to her niece; as for the boy, I took him to my arms and embraced him with a cordiality that seemed to strike him speechless. ‘Farewell!’ and ‘Farewell!’ I said. ‘I shall never forget my friends. Keep me sometimes in memory. Farewell!’ With that I turned my back and began to walk away; and had scarce done so, when I heard the door in the high wall close behind me. Of course this was the aunt’s doing; and of course, if I know anything of human character, she would not let me go without some tart expressions. I declare, even if I had heard them, I should not have minded in the least, for I was quite persuaded that, whatever admirers I might be leaving behind me in Swanston Cottage, the aunt was not the least sincere.

CHAPTER X — THE DROVERS

It took me a little effort to come abreast of my new companion; for though he walked with an ugly roll and no great appearance of speed, he could cover the around at a good rate when he wanted to. Each looked at the other: I with natural curiosity, he with a great appearance of distaste. I have heard since that his heart was entirely set against me; he had seen me kneel to the ladies, and diagnosed me for a 'gesterin' eediot.'

'So, ye're for England, are ye?' said he.

I told him yes.

'Weel, there's waur places, I believe,' was his reply; and he relapsed into a silence which was not broken during a quarter of an hour of steady walking.

This interval brought us to the foot of a bare green valley, which wound upwards and backwards among the hills. A little stream came down the midst and made a succession of clear pools; near by the lowest of which I was aware of a drove of shaggy cattle, and a man who seemed the very counterpart of Mr. Sim making a breakfast upon bread and cheese. This second drover (whose name proved to be Candlish) rose on our approach.

'Here's a mannie that's to gang through with us,' said Sim. 'It was the auld wife, Gilchrist, wanted it.'

'Aweel, aweel,' said the other; and presently, remembering his manners, and looking on me with a solemn grin, 'A fine day!' says he.

I agreed with him, and asked him how he did.

'Brawly,' was the reply; and without further civilities, the pair proceeded to get the cattle under way. This, as well as almost all the herding, was the work of a pair of comely and intelligent dogs, directed by Sim or Candlish in little more than monosyllables. Presently we were ascending the side of the mountain by a rude green track, whose presence I had not hitherto observed. A continual sound of munching and the crying of a great quantity of moor birds accompanied our progress, which the deliberate pace and perennial appetite of the cattle rendered wearisomely slow. In the midst my two conductors marched in a contented silence that I could not but admire. The more I looked at them, the more I was impressed by their absurd resemblance to each other. They were dressed in the same coarse homespun, carried similar sticks, were equally begrimed about the nose with snuff, and each wound in an identical plaid of what is called the shepherd's tartan. In a back view they might be described as indistinguishable; and even from the front they were much alike. An incredible coincidence of humours augmented the impression.

Thrice and four times I attempted to pave the way for some exchange of thought, sentiment, or — at the least of it — human words. An *Ay* or an *Nhm* was the sole return, and the topic died on the hill-side without echo. I can never deny that I was chagrined; and when, after a little more walking, Sim turned towards me and offered me a ram's horn of snuff, with the question 'Do ye use it?' I answered, with some animation, 'Faith, sir, I would use pepper to introduce a little cordiality.' But even this sally failed to reach, or at least failed to soften, my companions.

At this rate we came to the summit of a ridge, and saw the track descend in front of us abruptly into a desert vale, about a league in length, and closed at the farther end by no less barren hilltops. Upon this point of vantage Sim came to a halt, took off his hat, and mopped his brow.

'Weel,' he said, 'here we're at the top o' Howden.'

'The top o' Howden, sure eneuch,' said Candlish.

'Mr. St. Ivey, are ye dry?' said the first.

'Now, really,' said I, 'is not this Satan reproving sin?'

'What ails ye, man?' said he. 'I'm offerin' ye a dram.'

'Oh, if it be anything to drink,' said I, 'I am as dry as my neighbours.'

Whereupon Sim produced from the corner of his plaid a black bottle, and we all drank and pledged each other. I found these gentlemen followed upon such occasions an invariable etiquette, which you may be certain I made haste to imitate. Each wiped his mouth with the back of his left hand, held up the bottle in his right, remarked with emphasis, 'Here's to ye!' and swallowed as much of the spirit as his fancy prompted. This little ceremony, which was the nearest thing to manners I could perceive in either of my companions, was repeated at becoming intervals, generally after an ascent. Occasionally we shared a mouthful of ewe-milk cheese and an inglorious form of bread, which I understood (but am far from engaging my honour on the point) to be called 'shearer's bannock.' And that may be said to have concluded our whole active intercourse for the first day.

I had the more occasion to remark the extraordinarily desolate nature of that country, through which the drove road continued, hour after hour and even day after day, to wind. A continual succession of insignificant shaggy hills, divided by the course of ten thousand brooks, through which we had to wade, or by the side of which we encamped at night; infinite perspectives of heather, infinite quantities of moorfowl; here and there, by a stream side, small and pretty clumps of willows or the silver birch; here and there, the ruins of ancient and inconsiderable fortresses — made the unchanging characters of the scene. Occasionally, but only in the distance, we could perceive the smoke of a small town or of an isolated farmhouse or cottage on the moors; more often, a flock of sheep and its attendant shepherd, or a rude field of agriculture perhaps not yet harvested. With these alleviations, we might almost be said to pass through an unbroken desert — sure, one of the most impoverished in Europe; and when I recalled to mind that we were yet but a few leagues from the chief city (where the law courts sat every day with a press of business, soldiers garrisoned the castle, and men of admitted parts were carrying on the practice of letters and the investigations of science), it gave me a singular view of that poor, barren, and yet illustrious country through which I travelled. Still more, perhaps, did it commend the wisdom of Miss Gilchrist in sending me with these uncouth companions and by this unfrequented path.

My itinerary is by no means clear to me; the names and distances I never clearly knew, and have now wholly forgotten; and this is the more to be regretted as there is no doubt that, in the course of those days, I must have passed and camped among sites which have been rendered illustrious by the pen of Walter Scott. Nay, more, I am of opinion that I was still more favoured by fortune, and have actually met and spoken with that inimitable author. Our encounter was of a tall, stoutish, elderly gentleman, a little grizzled, and of a rugged but cheerful and engaging countenance. He sat on a hill pony, wrapped in a plaid over his green coat, and was accompanied by a horse-woman, his daughter, a young lady of the most charming appearance. They overtook us on a stretch of heath, reined up as they came alongside, and accompanied us for perhaps a quarter of an hour before they galloped off again across the hillsides to our left. Great was my amazement to find the unconquerable Mr. Sim thaw immediately on the accost of this strange gentleman, who hailed him with a ready familiarity, proceeded at once to discuss with him the trade of droving and the prices of cattle, and did not disdain to take a pinch from the inevitable ram's horn. Presently I was aware that the stranger's eye was directed on myself; and there ensued a conversation, some of which I could not help overhearing at the time, and the rest have pieced together more or less plausibly from the report of Sim.

'Surely that must be an *amateur drover* ye have gotten there?' the gentleman seems to have asked.

Sim replied, I was a young gentleman that had a reason of his own to travel privately.

'Well, well, ye must tell me nothing of that. I am in the law, you know, and *tace* is the Latin for a candle,' answered the gentleman. 'But I hope it's nothing bad.'

Sim told him it was no more than debt.

‘Oh, Lord, if that be all!’ cried the gentleman; and turning to myself, ‘Well, sir,’ he added, ‘I understand you are taking a tramp through our forest here for the pleasure of the thing?’

‘Why, yes, sir,’ said I; ‘and I must say I am very well entertained.’

‘I envy you,’ said he. ‘I have jogged many miles of it myself when I was younger. My youth lies buried about here under every heather-bush, like the soul of the licentiate Lucius. But you should have a guide. The pleasure of this country is much in the legends, which grow as plentiful as blackberries.’ And directing my attention to a little fragment of a broken wall no greater than a tombstone, he told me for an example a story of its earlier inhabitants. Years after it chanced that I was one day diverting myself with a Waverley Novel, when what should I come upon but the identical narrative of my green-coated gentleman upon the moors! In a moment the scene, the tones of his voice, his northern accent, and the very aspect of the earth and sky and temperature of the weather, flashed back into my mind with the reality of dreams. The unknown in the green-coat had been the Great Unknown! I had met Scott; I had heard a story from his lips; I should have been able to write, to claim acquaintance, to tell him that his legend still tingled in my ears. But the discovery came too late, and the great man had already succumbed under the load of his honours and misfortunes.

Presently, after giving us a cigar apiece, Scott bade us farewell and disappeared with his daughter over the hills. And when I applied to Sim for information, his answer of ‘The Shirra, man! A’body kens the Shirra!’ told me, unfortunately, nothing.

A more considerable adventure falls to be related. We were now near the border. We had travelled for long upon the track beaten and browsed by a million herds, our predecessors, and had seen no vestige of that traffic which had created it. It was early in the morning when we at last perceived, drawing near to the drove road, but still at a distance of about half a league, a second caravan, similar to but larger than our own. The liveliest excitement was at once exhibited by both my comrades. They climbed hillocks, they studied the approaching drove from under their hand, they consulted each other with an appearance of alarm that seemed to me extraordinary. I had learned by this time that their stand-off manners implied, at least, no active enmity; and I made bold to ask them what was wrong.

‘Bad yins,’ was Sim’s emphatic answer.

All day the dogs were kept unsparingly on the alert, and the drove pushed forward at a very unusual and seemingly unwelcome speed. All day Sim and Candlish, with a more than ordinary expenditure both of snuff and of words, continued to debate the position. It seems that they had recognised two of our neighbours on the road — one Faa, and another by the name of Gillies. Whether there was an old feud between them still unsettled I could never learn; but Sim and Candlish were prepared for every degree of fraud or violence at their hands. Candlish repeatedly congratulated himself on having left 'the watch at home with the mistress'; and Sim perpetually brandished his cudgel, and cursed his ill-fortune that it should be sprung.

'I willna care a damn to gie the daashed scoon'rel a fair clout wi' it,' he said. 'The daashed thing micht come sindry in ma hand.'

'Well, gentlemen,' said I, 'suppose they do come on, I think we can give a very good account of them.' And I made my piece of holly, Ronald's gift, the value of which I now appreciated, sing about my head.

'Ay, man? Are ye stench?' inquired Sim, with a gleam of approval in his wooden countenance.

The same evening, somewhat wearied with our day-long expedition, we encamped on a little verdant mound, from the midst of which there welled a spring of clear water scarce great enough to wash the hands in. We had made our meal and lain down, but were not yet asleep, when a growl from one of the collies set us on the alert. All three sat up, and on a second impulse all lay down again, but now with our cudgels ready. A man must be an alien and an outlaw, an old soldier and a young man in the bargain, to take adventure easily. With no idea as to the rights of the quarrel or the probable consequences of the encounter, I was as ready to take part with my two drovers, as ever to fall in line on the morning of a battle. Presently there leaped three men out of the heather; we had scarce time to get to our feet before we were assailed; and in a moment each one of us was engaged with an adversary whom the deepening twilight scarce permitted him to see. How the battle sped in other quarters I am in no position to describe. The rogue that fell to my share was exceedingly agile and expert with his weapon; had and held me at a disadvantage from the first assault; forced me to give ground continually, and at last, in mere self-defence, to let him have the point. It struck him in the throat, and he went down like a ninepin and moved no more.

It seemed this was the signal for the engagement to be discontinued. The other combatants separated at once; our foes were suffered, without molestation, to lift up and bear away their fallen comrade; so that I perceived this sort of war to be not wholly without laws of chivalry, and perhaps rather to partake of the character of a tournament than of a battle *à outrance*. There was no doubt, at least, that I was supposed to have pushed the affair too seriously. Our friends the enemy removed their wounded companion with undisguised consternation; and they were no sooner over the top of the brae, than Sim and Candlish roused up their wearied drove and set forth on a night march.

'I'm thinking Faa's unco bad,' said the one.

'Ay,' said the other, 'he lookit dooms gash.'

'He did that,' said the first.

And their weary silence fell upon them again.

Presently Sim turned to me. 'Ye're unco ready with the stick,' said he.

'Too ready, I'm afraid,' said I. 'I am afraid Mr. Faa (if that be his name) has got his gruel.'

'Weel, I wouldnae wonder,' replied Sim.

'And what is likely to happen?' I inquired.

'Aweel,' said Sim, snuffing profoundly, 'if I were to offer an opeenion, it would not be conscientious. For the plain fac' is, Mr. St. Ivy, that I div not ken. We have had crackit heids — and rowth of them — ere now; and we have had a broken leg or maybe twa; and the like of that we drover bodies make a kind of a practice like to keep among oursel's. But a corp we have none of us ever had to deal with, and I could set nae leemit to what Gillies micht consider proper in the affair. Forbye that, he would be in raither a hobble himsel', if he was to gang hame wantin' Faa. Folk are awfu' throng with their questions, and parteecularly when they're no wantit.'

'That's a fac',' said Candlish.

I considered this prospect ruefully; and then making the best of it, 'Upon all which accounts,' said I, 'the best will be to get across the border and there separate. If you are troubled, you can very truly put the blame upon your late companion; and if I am pursued, I must just try to keep out of the way.'

'Mr. St. Ivy,' said Sim, with something resembling enthusiasm, 'no' a word mair! I have met in wi' mony kinds o' gentry ere now; I hae seen o' them that was the tae thing, and I hae seen o' them that was the tither; but the wale of a gentleman like you I have no sae very frequently seen the bate of.'

Our night march was accordingly pursued with unremitting diligence. The stars paled, the east whitened, and we were still, both dogs and men, toiling after the wearied cattle. Again and again Sim and Candlish lamented the necessity: it was 'fair ruin on the bestial,' they declared; but the thought of a judge and a scaffold hunted them ever forward. I myself was not so much to be pitied. All that night, and during the whole of the little that remained before us of our conjunct journey, I enjoyed a new pleasure, the reward of my prowess, in the now loosened tongue of Mr. Sim. Candlish was still obdurately taciturn: it was the man's nature; but Sim, having finally appraised and approved me, displayed without reticence a rather garrulous habit of mind and a pretty talent for narration. The pair were old and close companions, co-existing in these endless moors in a brotherhood of silence such as I have heard attributed to the trappers of the west. It seems absurd to mention love in connection with so ugly and snuffy a couple; at least, their trust was absolute; and they entertained a surprising admiration for each other's qualities; Candlish exclaiming that Sim was 'grand company!' and Sim frequently assuring me in an aside that for 'a rale, auld, stench bitch, there was nae the bate of Candlish in braid Scotland.' The two dogs appeared to be entirely included in this family compact, and I remarked that their exploits and traits of character were constantly and minutely observed by the two masters. Dog stories particularly abounded with them; and not only the dogs of the present but those of the past contributed their quota. 'But that was naething,' Sim would begin: 'there was a herd in Manar, they ca'd him Tweedie — ye'll mind Tweedie, Can'lish?' 'Fine, that!' said Candlish. 'Aweel, Tweedie had a dog — ' The story I have forgotten; I dare say it was dull, and I suspect it was not true; but indeed, my travels with the drove rendered me indulgent, and perhaps even credulous, in the matter of dog stories. Beautiful, indefatigable beings! as I saw them at the end of a long day's journey frisking, barking, bounding, striking attitudes, slanting a bushy tail, manifestly playing to the spectator's eye, manifestly rejoicing in their grace and beauty — and turned to observe Sim and Candlish unornamentally plodding in the rear with the plaids about their bowed shoulders and the drop at their snuffy nose — I thought I would rather claim kinship with the dogs than with the men! My sympathy was unreturned; in their eyes I was a creature light as air; and they would scarce spare me the time for a perfunctory caress or perhaps a hasty lap of the wet tongue, ere they were back again in sedulous attendance on those dingy deities, their masters — and their masters, as like as not, damning their stupidity.

Altogether the last hours of our tramp were infinitely the most agreeable to me, and I believe to all of us; and by the time we came to separate, there had grown up a certain familiarity and mutual esteem that made the parting harder. It took place about four of the afternoon on a bare hillside from which I could see the ribbon of the great north road, henceforth to be my conductor. I asked what was to pay.

'Naething,' replied Sim.

'What in the name of folly is this?' I exclaimed. 'You have led me, you have fed me, you have filled me full of whisky, and now you will take nothing!'

'Ye see we indentit for that,' replied Sim.

'Indented?' I repeated; 'what does the man mean?'

‘Mr. St. Ivy,’ said Sim, ‘this is a maitter entirely between Candlish and me and the auld wife, Gilchrist. You had naething to say to it; weel, ye can have naething to do with it, then.’

‘My good man,’ said I, ‘I can allow myself to be placed in no such ridiculous position. Mrs. Gilchrist is nothing to me, and I refuse to be her debtor.’

‘I dinna exac’ly see what way ye’re gaun to help it,’ observed my drover.

‘By paying you here and now,’ said I.

‘There’s aye twa to a bargain, Mr. St. Ives,’ said he.

‘You mean that you will not take it?’ said I.

‘There or thereabout,’ said he. ‘Forbye, that it would set ye a heap better to keep your siller for them you awe it to. Ye’re young, Mr. St. Ivy, and thoughtless; but it’s my belief that, wi’ care and circumspection, ye may yet do credit to yoursel’. But just you bear this in mind: that him that *awes* siller should never *gie* siller.’

Well, what was there to say? I accepted his rebuke, and bidding the pair farewell, set off alone upon my southward way.

‘Mr. St. Ivy,’ was the last word of Sim, ‘I was never muckle ta’en up in Englishry; but I think that I really ought to say that ye seem to me to have the makings of quite a decent lad.’

CHAPTER XI — THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

It chanced that as I went down the hill these last words of my friend the drover echoed not unfruitfully in my head. I had never told these men the least particulars as to my race or fortune, as it was a part, and the best part, of their civility to ask no questions: yet they had dubbed me without hesitation English. Some strangeness in the accent they had doubtless thus explained. And it occurred to me, that if I could pass in Scotland for an Englishman, I might be able to reverse the process and pass in England for a Scot. I thought, if I was pushed to it, I could make a struggle to imitate the brogue; after my experience with Candlish and Sim, I had a rich provision of outlandish words at my command; and I felt I could tell the tale of Tweedie's dog so as to deceive a native. At the same time, I was afraid my name of St. Ives was scarcely suitable; till I remembered there was a town so called in the province of Cornwall, thought I might yet be glad to claim it for my place of origin, and decided for a Cornish family and a Scots education. For a trade, as I was equally ignorant of all, and as the most innocent might at any moment be the means of my exposure, it was best to pretend to none. And I dubbed myself a young gentleman of a sufficient fortune and an idle, curious habit of mind, rambling the country at my own charges, in quest of health, information, and merry adventures.

At Newcastle, which was the first town I reached, I completed my preparations for the part, before going to the inn, by the purchase of a knapsack and a pair of leathern gaiters. My plaid I continued to wear from sentiment. It was warm, useful to sleep in if I were again benighted, and I had discovered it to be not unbecoming for a man of gallant carriage. Thus equipped, I supported my character of the light-hearted pedestrian not amiss. Surprise was indeed expressed that I should have selected such a season of the year; but I pleaded some delays of business, and smilingly claimed to be an eccentric. The devil was in it, I would say, if any season of the year was not good enough for me; I was not made of sugar, I was no mollycoddle to be afraid of an ill-aired bed or a sprinkle of snow; and I would knock upon the table with my fist and call for t'other bottle, like the noisy and free-hearted young gentleman I was. It was my policy (if I may so express myself) to talk much and say little. At the inn tables, the country, the state of the roads, the business interest of those who sat down with me, and the course of public events, afforded me a considerable field in which I might discourse at large and still communicate no information about myself. There was no one with less air of reticence; I plunged into my company up to the neck; and I had a long cock-and-bull story of an aunt of mine which must have convinced the most suspicious of my innocence. ‘What!’ they would have said, ‘that young ass to be concealing anything! Why, he has deafened me with an aunt of his until my head aches. He only wants you should give him a line, and he would tell you his whole descent from Adam downward, and his whole private fortune to the last shilling.’ A responsible solid fellow was even so much moved by pity for my inexperience as to give me a word or two of good advice: that I was but a young man after all — I had at this time a deceptive air of youth that made me easily pass for one-and-twenty, and was, in the circumstances, worth a fortune — that the company at inns was very mingled, that I should do well to be more careful, and the like; to all which I made answer that I meant no harm myself and expected none from others, or the devil was in it. ‘You are one of those d — -d prudent fellows that I could never abide with,’ said I. ‘You are the kind of man that has a long head. That’s all the world, my dear sir: the long-heads and the short-horns! Now, I am a short-horn.’ ‘I doubt,’ says he, ‘that you will not go very far without getting sheared.’ I offered to bet with him on that, and he made off, shaking his head.

But my particular delight was to enlarge on politics and the war. None damned the French like me; none was more bitter against the Americans. And when the north-bound mail arrived, crowned with holly, and the coachman and guard hoarse with shouting victory, I went even so far as to entertain the company to a bowl of punch, which I compounded myself with no illiberal hand, and doled out to such sentiments as the following: —

‘Our glorious victory on the Nivelle’! ‘Lord Wellington, God bless him! and may victory ever attend upon his arms!’ and, ‘Soult, poor devil! and may he catch it again to the same tune!’

Never was oratory more applauded to the echo — never any one was more of the popular man than I. I promise you, we made a night of it. Some of the company supported each other, with the assistance of boots, to their respective bedchambers, while the rest slept on the field of glory where we had left them; and at the breakfast table the next morning there was an extraordinary assemblage of red eyes and shaking fists. I observed patriotism to burn much lower by daylight. Let no one blame me for insensibility to the reverses of France! God knows how my heart raged. How I longed to fall on that herd of swine and knock their heads together in the moment of their revelry! But you are to consider my own situation and its necessities; also a certain lightheartedness, eminently Gallic, which forms a leading trait in my character, and leads me to throw myself into new circumstances with the spirit of a schoolboy. It is possible that I sometimes allowed this impish humour to carry me further than good taste approves: and I was certainly punished for it once.

This was in the episcopal city of Durham. We sat down, a considerable company, to dinner, most of us fine old vatted English tories of that class which is often so enthusiastic as to be inarticulate. I took and held the lead from the beginning; and, the talk having turned on the French in the Peninsula, I gave them authentic details (on the authority of a cousin of mine, an ensign) of certain cannibal orgies in Galicia, in which no less a person than General Caffarelli had taken a part. I always disliked that commander, who once ordered me under arrest for insubordination; and it is possible that a spice of vengeance added to the rigour of my picture. I have forgotten the details; no doubt they were high-coloured. No doubt I rejoiced to fool these jolter-heads; and no doubt the sense of security that I drank from their dull, gasping faces encouraged me to proceed extremely far. And for my sins, there was one silent little man at table who took my story at the true value. It was from no sense of humour, to which he was quite dead. It was from no particular intelligence, for he had not any. The bond of sympathy, of all things in the world, had rendered him clairvoyant.

Dinner was no sooner done than I strolled forth into the streets with some design of viewing the cathedral; and the little man was silently at my heels. A few doors from the inn, in a dark place of the street, I was aware of a touch on my arm, turned suddenly, and found him looking up at me with eyes pathetically bright.

‘I beg your pardon, sir; but that story of yours was particularly rich. He — he! Particularly racy,’ said he. ‘I tell you, sir, I took you wholly! I *smoked* you! I believe you and I, sir, if we had a chance to talk, would find we had a good many opinions in common. Here is the “Blue Bell,” a very comfortable place. They draw good ale, sir. Would you be so condescending as to share a pot with me?’

There was something so ambiguous and secret in the little man’s perpetual signalling, that I confess my curiosity was much aroused. Blaming myself, even as I did so, for the indiscretion, I embraced his proposal, and we were soon face to face over a tankard of mulled ale. He lowered his voice to the least attenuation of a whisper.

‘Here, sir,’ said he, ‘is to the Great Man. I think you take me? No?’ He leaned forward till our noses touched. ‘Here is to the Emperor!’ said he.

I was extremely embarrassed, and, in spite of the creature’s innocent appearance, more than half alarmed. I thought him too ingenious, and, indeed, too daring for a spy. Yet if he were honest he must be a man of extraordinary indiscretion, and therefore very unfit to be encouraged by an escaped prisoner. I took a half course, accordingly

— accepted his toast in silence, and drank it without enthusiasm.

He proceeded to abound in the praises of Napoleon, such as I had never heard in France, or at least only on the lips of officials paid to offer them.

‘And this Caffarelli, now,’ he pursued: ‘he is a splendid fellow, too, is he not? I have not heard vastly much of him myself. No details, sir — no details! We labour under huge difficulties here as to unbiassed information.’

‘I believe I have heard the same complaint in other countries,’ I could not help remarking. ‘But as to Caffarelli, he is neither lame nor blind, he has two legs and a nose in the middle of his face. And I care as much about him as you care for the dead body of Mr. Perceval!’

He studied me with glowing eyes.

‘You cannot deceive me!’ he cried. ‘You have served under him. You are a Frenchman! I hold by the hand, at last, one of that noble race, the pioneers of the glorious principles of liberty and brotherhood. Hush! No, it is all right. I thought there had been somebody at the door. In this wretched, enslaved country we dare not even call our souls our own. The spy and the hangman, sir — the spy and the hangman! And yet there is a candle burning, too. The good leaven is working, sir — working underneath. Even in this town there are a few brave spirits, who meet every Wednesday. You must stay over a day or so, and join us. We do not use this house. Another, and a quieter. They draw fine ale, however — fair, mild ale. You will find yourself among friends, among brothers. You will hear some very daring sentiments expressed!’ he cried, expanding his small chest. ‘Monarchy, Christianity — all the trappings of a bloated past — the Free Confraternity of Durham and Tyneside deride.’

Here was a devil of a prospect for a gentleman whose whole design was to avoid observation! The Free Confraternity had no charms for me; daring sentiments were no part of my baggage; and I tried, instead, a little cold water.

‘You seem to forget, sir, that my Emperor has re-established Christianity,’ I observed.

‘Ah, sir, but that was policy!’ he exclaimed. ‘You do not understand Napoleon. I have followed his whole career. I can explain his policy from first to last. Now for instance in the Peninsula, on which you were so very amusing, if you will come to a friend’s house who has a map of Spain, I can make the whole course of the war quite clear to you, I venture to say, in half an hour.’

This was intolerable. Of the two extremes, I found I preferred the British tory; and, making an appointment for the morrow, I pleaded sudden headache, escaped to the inn, packed my knapsack, and fled, about nine at night, from this accursed neighbourhood. It was cold, starry, and clear, and the road dry, with a touch of frost. For all that, I had not the smallest intention to make a long stage of it; and about ten o'clock, spying on the right-hand side of the way the lighted windows of an alehouse, I determined to bait there for the night.

It was against my principle, which was to frequent only the dearest inns; and the misadventure that befell me was sufficient to make me more particular in the future. A large company was assembled in the parlour, which was heavy with clouds of tobacco smoke, and brightly lighted up by a roaring fire of coal. Hard by the chimney stood a vacant chair in what I thought an enviable situation, whether for warmth or the pleasure of society; and I was about to take it, when the nearest of the company stopped me with his hand.

'Beg thy pardon, sir,' said he; 'but that there chair belongs to a British soldier.'

A chorus of voices enforced and explained. It was one of Lord Wellington's heroes. He had been wounded under Rowland Hill. He was Colbourne's right-hand man. In short, this favoured individual appeared to have served with every separate corps, and under every individual general in the Peninsula. Of course I apologised. I had not known. The devil was in it if a soldier had not a right to the best in England. And with that sentiment, which was loudly applauded, I found a corner of a bench, and awaited, with some hopes of entertainment, the return of the hero. He proved, of course, to be a private soldier. I say of course, because no officer could possibly enjoy such heights of popularity. He had been wounded before San Sebastian, and still wore his arm in a sling. What was a great deal worse for him, every member of the company had been plying him with drink. His honest yokel's countenance blazed as if with fever, his eyes were glazed and looked the two ways, and his feet stumbled as, amidst a murmur of applause, he returned to the midst of his admirers.

Two minutes afterwards I was again posting in the dark along the highway; to explain which sudden movement of retreat I must trouble the reader with a reminiscence of my services.

I lay one night with the out-pickets in Castile. We were in close touch with the enemy; the usual orders had been issued against smoking, fires, and talk, and both armies lay as quiet as mice, when I saw the English sentinel opposite making a signal by holding up his musket. I repeated it, and we both crept together in the dry bed of a stream, which made the demarcation of the armies. It was wine he wanted, of which we had a good provision, and the English had quite run out. He gave me the money, and I, as was the custom, left him my firelock in pledge, and set off for the canteen. When I returned with a skin of wine, behold, it had pleased some uneasy devil of an

English officer to withdraw the outposts! Here was a situation with a vengeance, and I looked for nothing but ridicule in the present and punishment in the future. Doubtless our officers winked pretty hard at this interchange of courtesies, but doubtless it would be impossible to wink at so gross a fault, or rather so pitiable a misadventure as mine; and you are to conceive me wandering in the plains of Castile, benighted, charged with a wine-skin for which I had no use, and with no knowledge whatever of the whereabouts of my musket, beyond that it was somewhere in my Lord Wellington's army. But my Englishman was either a very honest fellow, or else extremely thirsty, and at last contrived to advertise me of his new position. Now, the English sentry in Castile, and the wounded hero in the Durham public-house, were one and the same person; and if he had been a little less drunk, or myself less lively in getting away, the travels of M. St. Ives might have come to an untimely end.

I suppose this woke me up; it stirred in me besides a spirit of opposition, and in spite of cold, darkness, the highwaymen and the footpads, I determined to walk right on till breakfast-time: a happy resolution, which enabled me to observe one of those traits of manners which at once depict a country and condemn it. It was near midnight when I saw, a great way ahead of me, the light of many torches; presently after, the sound of wheels reached me, and the slow tread of feet, and soon I had joined myself to the rear of a sordid, silent, and lugubrious procession, such as we see in dreams. Close on a hundred persons marched by torchlight in unbroken silence; in their midst a cart, and in the cart, on an inclined platform, the dead body of a man — the centre-piece of this solemnity, the hero whose obsequies we were come forth at this unusual hour to celebrate. It was but a plain, dingy old fellow of fifty or sixty, his throat cut, his shirt turned over as though to show the wound. Blue trousers and brown socks completed his attire, if we can talk so of the dead. He had a horrid look of a waxwork. In the tossing of the lights he seemed to make faces and mouths at us, to frown, and to be at times upon the point of speech. The cart, with this shabby and tragic freight, and surrounded by its silent escort and bright torches, continued for some distance to creak along the high-road, and I to follow it in amazement, which was soon exchanged for horror. At the corner of a lane the procession stopped, and, as the torches ranged themselves along the hedgerow-side, I became aware of a grave dug in the midst of the thoroughfare, and a provision of quicklime piled in the ditch. The cart was backed to the margin, the body slung off the platform and dumped into the grave with an irreverent roughness. A sharpened stake had hitherto served it for a pillow. It was now withdrawn, held in its place by several volunteers, and a fellow with a heavy mallet (the sound of which still haunts me at night) drove it home through the bosom of the corpse. The hole was filled with quicklime, and the bystanders, as if relieved of some oppression, broke at once into a sound of whispered speech.

My shirt stuck to me, my heart had almost ceased beating, and I found my tongue with difficulty.

'I beg your pardon,' I gasped to a neighbour, 'what is this? what has he done? is it allowed?'

'Why, where do you come from?' replied the man.

'I am a traveller, sir,' said I, 'and a total stranger in this part of the country. I had lost my way when I saw your torches, and came by chance on this — this incredible scene. Who was the man?'

'A suicide,' said he. 'Ay, he was a bad one, was Johnnie Green.'

It appeared this was a wretch who had committed many barbarous murders, and being at last upon the point of discovery fell of his own hand. And the nightmare at the crossroads was the regular punishment, according to the laws of England, for an act which the Romans honoured as a virtue! Whenever an Englishman begins to prate of civilisation (as, indeed, it's a defect they are rather prone to), I hear the measured blows of a mallet, see the bystanders crowd with torches about the grave, smile a little to myself in conscious superiority — and take a thimbleful of brandy for the stomach's sake.

I believe it must have been at my next stage, for I remember going to bed extremely early, that I came to the model of a good old-fashioned English inn, and was attended on by the picture of a pretty chambermaid. We had a good many pleasant passages as she waited table or warmed my bed for me with a devil of a brass warming pan, fully larger than herself; and as she was no less pert than she was pretty, she may be said to have given rather better than she took. I cannot tell why (unless it were for the sake of her saucy eyes), but I made her my confidante, told her I was attached to a young lady in Scotland, and received the encouragement of her sympathy, mingled and connected with a fair amount of rustic wit. While I slept the down-mail stopped for supper; it chanced that one of the passengers left behind a copy of the *Edinburgh Courant*, and the next morning my pretty chambermaid set the paper before me at breakfast, with the remark that there was some news from my lady-love. I took it eagerly, hoping to find some further word of our escape, in which I was disappointed; and I was about to lay it down, when my eye fell on a paragraph immediately concerning me. Faa was in hospital, grievously sick, and warrants were out for the arrest of Sim and Candlish. These two men had shown themselves very loyal to me. This trouble emerging, the least I could do was to be guided by a similar loyalty to them. Suppose my visit to my uncle crowned with some success, and my finances re-established, I determined I should immediately return to Edinburgh, put their case in the hands of a good lawyer, and await events. So my mind was very lightly made up to what proved a mighty serious matter. Candlish and Sim were all very well in their way, and I do sincerely trust I should have been at some pains to help them, had there been nothing else. But in truth my heart and my eyes were set on quite another matter, and I received the news of their tribulation almost with joy. That is never a bad wind that blows where we want to go, and you may be sure there was nothing unwelcome in a circumstance that carried me back to Edinburgh and Flora. From that hour I began to indulge myself with the making of imaginary scenes and interviews, in which I confounded the aunt, flattered Ronald, and now in the witty, now in the sentimental manner, declared my love and received the assurance of its return. By means of this exercise my resolution daily grew stronger, until at last I had piled together such a mass of obstinacy as it would have taken a cataclysm of nature to subvert.

‘Yes,’ said I to the chambermaid, ‘here is news of my lady-love indeed, and very good news too.’

All that day, in the teeth of a keen winter wind, I hugged myself in my plaid, and it was as though her arms were flung around me.

CHAPTER XII — I FOLLOW A COVERED CART NEARLY TO MY DESTINATION

At last I began to draw near, by reasonable stages, to the neighbourhood of Wakefield; and the name of Mr. Burchell Fenn came to the top in my memory. This was the gentleman (the reader may remember) who made a trade of forwarding the escape of French prisoners. How he did so: whether he had a sign-board, *Escapes forwarded, apply within*; what he charged for his services, or whether they were gratuitous and charitable, were all matters of which I was at once ignorant and extremely curious. Thanks to my proficiency in English, and Mr. Romaine's bank-notes, I was getting on swimmingly without him; but the trouble was that I could not be easy till I had come to the bottom of these mysteries, and it was my difficulty that I knew nothing of him beyond the name. I knew not his trade beyond that of Forwarder of Escapes — whether he lived in town or country, whether he were rich or poor, nor by what kind of address I was to gain his confidence. It would have a very bad appearance to go along the highwayside asking after a man of whom I could give so scanty an account; and I should look like a fool, indeed, if I were to present myself at his door and find the police in occupation! The interest of the conundrum, however, tempted me, and I turned aside from my direct road to pass by Wakefield; kept my ears pricked, as I went, for any mention of his name, and relied for the rest on my good fortune. If Luck (who must certainly be feminine) favoured me as far as to throw me in the man's way, I should owe the lady a candle; if not, I could very readily console myself. In this experimental humour, and with so little to help me, it was a miracle that I should have brought my enterprise to a good end; and there are several saints in the calendar who might be happy to exchange with St. Ives!

I had slept that night in a good inn at Wakefield, made my breakfast by candle-light with the passengers of an up-coach, and set off in a very ill temper with myself and my surroundings. It was still early; the air raw and cold; the sun low, and soon to disappear under a vast canopy of rain-clouds that had begun to assemble in the north-west, and from that quarter invaded the whole width of the heaven. Already the rain fell in crystal rods; already the whole face of the country sounded with the discharge of drains and ditches; and I looked forward to a day of downpour and the hell of wet clothes, in which particular I am as dainty as a cat. At a corner of the road, and by the last glint of the drowning sun, I spied a covered cart, of a kind that I thought I had never seen before, preceding me at the foot's pace of jaded horses. Anything is interesting to a pedestrian that can help him to forget the miseries of a day of rain; and I bettered my pace and gradually overtook the vehicle.

The nearer I came, the more it puzzled me. It was much such a cart as I am told the calico printers use, mounted on two wheels, and furnished with a seat in front for the driver. The interior closed with a door, and was of a bigness to contain a good load of calico, or (at a pinch and if it were necessary) four or five persons. But, indeed, if human beings were meant to travel there, they had my pity! They must travel in the dark, for there was no sign of a window; and they would be shaken all the way like a phial of doctor's stuff, for the cart was not only ungainly to look at — it was besides very imperfectly balanced on the one pair of wheels, and pitched unconscionably. Altogether, if I had any glancing idea that the cart was really a carriage, I had soon dismissed it; but I was still inquisitive as to what it should contain, and where it had come from. Wheels and horses were splashed with many different colours of mud, as though they had come far and across a considerable diversity of country. The driver continually and vainly plied his whip. It seemed to follow they had made a long, perhaps an all-night, stage; and that the driver, at that early hour of a little after eight in the morning, already felt himself belated. I looked for the name of the proprietor on the shaft, and started outright. Fortune had favoured the careless: it was Burchell Fenn!

'A wet morning, my man,' said I.

The driver, a loutish fellow, shock-headed and turnip-faced, returned not a word to my salutation, but savagely flogged his horses. The tired animals, who could scarce put the one foot before the other, paid no attention to his cruelty; and I continued without effort to maintain my position alongside, smiling to myself at the futility of his attempts, and at the same time pricked with curiosity as to why he made them. I made no such formidable a figure as that a man should flee when I accosted him; and my conscience not being entirely clear, I was more accustomed to be uneasy myself than to see others timid. Presently he desisted, and put back his whip in the holster with the air of a man vanquished.

'So you would run away from me?' said I. 'Come, come, that's not English.'

'Beg pardon, master: no offence meant,' he said, touching his hat.

'And none taken!' cried I. 'All I desire is a little gaiety by the way.'

I understood him to say he didn't 'take with gaiety.'

'Then I will try you with something else,' said I. 'Oh, I can be all things to all men, like the apostle! I dare to say I have travelled with heavier fellows than you in my time, and done famously well with them. Are you going home?'

'Yes, I'm a goin' home, I am,' he said.

'A very fortunate circumstance for me!' said I. 'At this rate we shall see a good deal of each other, going the same way; and, now I come to think of it, why should you not give me a cast? There is room beside you on the bench.'

With a sudden snatch, he carried the cart two yards into the roadway. The horses plunged and came to a stop. 'No, you don't!' he said, menacing me with the whip. 'None o' that with me.'

'None of what?' said I. 'I asked you for a lift, but I have no idea of taking one by force.'

'Well, I've got to take care of the cart and 'orses, I have,' says he. 'I don't take up with no runagate vagabones, you see, else.'

'I ought to thank you for your touching confidence,' said I, approaching carelessly nearer as I spoke. 'But I admit the road is solitary hereabouts, and no doubt an accident soon happens. Little fear of anything of the kind with you! I like you for it, like your prudence, like that pastoral shyness of disposition. But why not put it out of my power to hurt? Why not open the door and bestow me here in the box, or whatever you please to call it?' And I laid my hand demonstratively on the body of the cart.

He had been timorous before; but at this, he seemed to lose the power of speech a moment, and stared at me in a perfect enthusiasm of fear.

'Why not?' I continued. 'The idea is good. I should be safe in there if I were the monster Williams himself. The great thing is to have me under lock and key. For it does lock; it is locked now,' said I, trying the door. '*A propos*, what have you for a cargo? It must be precious.'

He found not a word to answer.

Rat-tat-tat, I went upon the door like a well-drilled footman.

'Any one at home?' I said, and stooped to listen.

There came out of the interior a stifled sneeze, the first of an uncontrollable paroxysm; another followed immediately on the heels of it; and then the driver turned with an oath, laid the lash upon the horses with so much energy that they found their heels again, and the whole equipage fled down the road at a gallop.

At the first sound of the sneeze, I had started back like a man shot. The next moment, a great light broke on my mind, and I understood. Here was the secret of Fenn's trade: this was how he forwarded the escape of prisoners, hawking them by night about the country in his covered cart. There had been Frenchmen close to me; he who had just sneezed was my countryman, my comrade, perhaps already my friend! I took to my heels in pursuit. 'Hold hard!' I shouted. 'Stop! It's all right! Stop!' But the driver only turned a white face on me for a moment, and redoubled his efforts, bending forward, plying his whip and crying to his horses; these lay themselves down to the gallop and beat the highway with flying hoofs; and the cart bounded after them among the ruts and fled in a halo of rain and spattering mud. But a minute since, and it had been trundling along like a lame cow; and now it was off as though drawn by Apollo's coursers. There is no telling what a man can do, until you frighten him!

It was as much as I could do myself, though I ran valiantly, to maintain my distance; and that (since I knew my countrymen so near) was become a chief point with me. A hundred yards farther on the cart whipped out of the high-road into a lane embowered with leafless trees, and became lost to view. When I saw it next, the driver had increased his advantage considerably, but all danger was at an end, and the horses had again declined into a hobbling walk. Persuaded that they could not escape me, I took my time, and recovered my breath as I followed them.

Presently the lane twisted at right angles, and showed me a gate and the beginning of a gravel sweep; and a little after, as I continued to advance, a red brick house about seventy years old, in a fine style of architecture, and presenting a front of many windows to a lawn and garden. Behind, I could see outhouses and the peaked roofs of stacks; and I judged that a manor-house had in some way declined to be the residence of a tenant-farmer, careless alike of appearances and substantial comfort. The marks of neglect were visible on every side, in flower-bushes straggling beyond the borders, in the ill-kept turf, and in the broken windows that were incongruously patched with paper or stuffed with rags. A thicket of trees, mostly evergreen, fenced the place round and secluded it from the eyes of prying neighbours. As I came in view of it, on that melancholy winter's morning, in the deluge of the falling rain, and with the wind that now rose in occasional gusts and hooted over the old chimneys, the cart had already drawn up at the front-door steps, and the driver was already in earnest discourse with Mr. Burchell Fenn. He was standing with his hands behind his back — a man of a gross, misbegotten face and body, dewlapped like a bull and red as a harvest moon; and in his jockey cap, blue coat and top boots, he had much the air of a good, solid tenant-farmer.

The pair continued to speak as I came up the approach, but received me at last in a sort of goggling silence. I had my hat in my hand.

'I have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Burchell Fenn?' said I.

'The same, sir,' replied Mr. Fenn, taking off his jockey cap in answer to my civility, but with the distant look and the tardy movements of one who continues to think of something else. 'And who may you be?' he asked.

'I shall tell you afterwards,' said I. 'Suffice it, in the meantime, that I come on business.'

He seemed to digest my answer laboriously, his mouth gaping, his little eyes never straying from my face.

'Suffer me to point out to you, sir,' I resumed, 'that this is a devil of a wet morning; and that the chimney corner, and possibly a glass of something hot, are clearly indicated.'

Indeed, the rain was now grown to be a deluge; the gutters of the house roared; the air was filled with the continuous, strident crash. The stolidity of his face, on which the rain streamed, was far from reassuring me. On the contrary, I was aware of a distinct qualm of apprehension, which was not at all lessened by a view of the driver, craning from his perch to observe us with the expression of a fascinated bird. So we stood silent, when the prisoner again began to sneeze from the body of the cart; and at the sound, prompt as a transformation, the driver had whipped up his horses and was shambling off round the corner of the house, and Mr. Fenn, recovering his wits with a gulp, had turned to the door behind him.

'Come in, come in, sir,' he said. 'I beg your pardon, sir; the lock goes a trifle hard.'

Indeed, it took him a surprising time to open the door, which was not only locked on the outside, but the lock seemed rebellious from disuse; and when at last he stood back and motioned me to enter before him, I was greeted on the threshold by that peculiar and convincing sound of the rain echoing over empty chambers. The entrance-hall, in which I now found myself, was of a good size and good proportions; potted plants occupied the corners; the paved floor was soiled with muddy footprints and encumbered with straw; on a mahogany hall-table, which was the only furniture, a candle had been stuck and suffered to burn down — plainly a long while ago, for the gutterings were green with mould. My mind, under these new impressions, worked with unusual vivacity. I was here shut off with Fenn and his hireling in a deserted house, a neglected garden, and a wood of evergreens: the most eligible theatre for a deed of darkness. There came to me a vision of two flagstones raised in the hall-floor, and the driver putting in the rainy afternoon over my grave, and the prospect displeased me extremely. I felt I had carried my pleasantry as far as was safe; I must lose no time in declaring my true character, and I was even choosing the words in which I was to begin, when the hall-door was slammed-to behind me with a bang, and I turned, dropping my stick as I did so, in time — and not any more than time — to save my life.

The surprise of the onslaught and the huge weight of my assailant gave him the advantage. He had a pistol in his right hand of a portentous size, which it took me all my strength to keep deflected. With his left arm he strained me to his bosom, so that I thought I must be crushed or stifled. His mouth was open, his face crimson, and he panted aloud with hard animal sounds. The affair was as brief as it was hot and sudden. The potations which had swelled and bloated his carcase had already weakened the springs of energy. One more huge effort, that came near to overpower me, and in which the pistol happily exploded, and I felt his grasp slacken and weakness come on his joints; his legs succumbed under his weight, and he grovelled on his knees on the stone floor. ‘Spare me!’ he gasped.

I had not only been abominably frightened; I was shocked besides: my delicacy was in arms, like a lady to whom violence should have been offered by a similar monster. I plucked myself from his horrid contact, I snatched the pistol — even discharged, it was a formidable weapon — and menaced him with the butt. ‘Spare you!’ I cried, ‘you beast!’

His voice died in his fat inwards, but his lips still vehemently framed the same words of supplication. My anger began to pass off, but not all my repugnance; the picture he made revolted me, and I was impatient to be spared the further view of it.

‘Here,’ said I, ‘stop this performance: it sickens me. I am not going to kill you, do you hear? I have need of you.’

A look of relief, that I could almost have called beautiful, dawned on his countenance. ‘Anything — anything you wish,’ said he.

Anything is a big word, and his use of it brought me for a moment to a stand. ‘Why, what do you mean?’ I asked. ‘Do you mean that you will blow the gaff on the whole business?’

He answered me Yes with eager asseverations.

‘I know Monsieur de Saint-Yves is in it; it was through his papers we traced you,’ I said. ‘Do you consent to make a clean breast of the others?’

‘I do — I will!’ he cried. ‘The ‘ole crew of ‘em; there’s good names among ‘em. I’ll be king’s evidence.’

‘So that all shall hang except yourself? You damned villain!’ I broke out. ‘Understand at once that I am no spy or thief-taker. I am a kinsman of Monsieur de St. Yves — here in his interest. Upon my word, you have put your foot in it prettily, Mr. Burchell Fenn! Come, stand up; don’t grovel there. Stand up, you lump of iniquity!’

He scrambled to his feet. He was utterly unmanned, or it might have gone hard with me yet; and I considered him hesitating, as, indeed, there was cause. The man was a double-dyed traitor: he had tried to murder me, and I had first baffled his endeavours and then exposed and insulted him. Was it wise to place myself any longer at his mercy? With his help I should doubtless travel more quickly;

doubtless also far less agreeably; and there was everything to show that it would be at a greater risk. In short, I should have washed my hands of him on the spot, but for the temptation of the French officers, whom I knew to be so near, and for whose society I felt so great and natural an impatience. If I was to see anything of my countrymen, it was clear I had first of all to make my peace with Mr. Fenn; and that was no easy matter. To make friends with any one implies concessions on both sides; and what could I concede? What could I say of him, but that he had proved himself a villain and a fool, and the worse man?

'Well,' said I, 'here has been rather a poor piece of business, which I dare say you can have no pleasure in calling to mind; and, to say truth, I would as readily forget it myself. Suppose we try. Take back your pistol, which smells very ill; put it in your pocket or wherever you had it concealed. There! Now let us meet for the first time. — Give you good morning, Mr. Fenn! I hope you do very well. I come on the recommendation of my kinsman, the Vicomte de St. Yves.'

'Do you mean it?' he cried. 'Do you mean you will pass over our little scrimmage?'

'Why, certainly!' said I. 'It shows you are a bold fellow, who may be trusted to forget the business when it comes to the point. There is nothing against you in the little scrimmage, unless that your courage is greater than your strength. You are not so young as you once were, that is all.'

'And I beg of you, sir, don't betray me to the Vis-count,' he pleaded. 'I'll not deny but what my 'eart failed me a trifle; but it was only a word, sir, what anybody might have said in the 'eat of the moment, and over with it.'

'Certainly,' said I. 'That is quite my own opinion.'

'The way I came to be anxious about the Vis-count,' he continued, 'is that I believe he might be induced to form an 'asty judgment. And the business, in a pecuniary point of view, is all that I could ask; only trying, sir — very trying. It's making an old man of me before my time. You might have observed yourself, sir, that I 'aven't got the knees I once 'ad. The knees and the breathing, there's where it takes me. But I'm very sure, sir, I address a gentleman as would be the last to make trouble between friends.'

'I am sure you do me no more than justice,' said I; 'and I shall think it quite unnecessary to dwell on any of these passing circumstances in my report to the Vicomte.'

'Which you do favour him (if you'll excuse me being so bold as to mention it) exac'ly!' said he. 'I should have known you anywheres. May I offer you a pot of 'ome-brewed ale, sir? By your leave! This way, if you please. I am 'eartily grateful — 'eartily pleased to be of any service to a gentleman like you, sir, which is related to the Viscount, and really a fambly of which you might well be proud! Take care of the step, sir. You have good news of 'is 'ealth, I trust? as well as that of Monseer the Count?'

God forgive me! the horrible fellow was still puffing and panting with the fury of his assault, and already he had fallen into an obsequious, wheedling familiarity like that of an old servant, — already he was flattering me on my family connections!

I followed him through the house into the stable-yard, where I observed the driver washing the cart in a shed. He must have heard the explosion of the pistol. He could not choose but hear it: the thing was shaped like a little blunderbuss, charged to the mouth, and made a report like a piece of field artillery. He had heard, he had paid no attention; and now, as we came forth by the back-door, he raised for a moment a pale and tell-tale face that was as direct as a confession. The rascal had expected to see Fenn come forth alone; he was waiting to be called on for that part of sexton, which I had already allotted to him in fancy.

I need not detain the reader very long with any description of my visit to the back-kitchen; of how we mulled our ale there, and mulled it very well; nor of how we sat talking, Fenn like an old, faithful, affectionate dependant, and I — well! I myself fallen into a mere admiration of so much impudence, that transcended words, and had very soon conquered animosity. I took a fancy to the man, he was so vast a humbug. I began to see a kind of beauty in him, his *aplomb* was so majestic. I never knew a rogue to cut so fat; his villainy was ample, like his belly, and I could scarce find it in my heart to hold him responsible for either. He was good enough to drop into the autobiographical; telling me how the farm, in spite of the war and the high prices, had proved a disappointment; how there was 'a sight of cold, wet land as you come along the 'igh-road'; how the winds and rains and the seasons had been misdirected, it seemed 'o' purpose'; how Mrs. Fenn had died — 'I lost her coming two year agone; a remarkable fine woman, my old girl, sir! if you'll excuse me,' he added, with a burst of humility. In short, he gave me an opportunity of studying John Bull, as I may say, stuffed naked — his greed, his usuriousness, his hypocrisy, his perfidy of the back-stairs, all swelled to the superlative — such as was well worth the little disarray and fluster of our passage in the hall.

CHAPTER XIII — I MEET TWO OF MY COUNTRYMEN

As soon as I judged it safe, and that was not before Burchell Fenn had talked himself back into his breath and a complete good humour, I proposed he should introduce me to the French officers, henceforth to become my fellow-passengers. There were two of them, it appeared, and my heart beat as I approached the door. The specimen of Perfidious Albion whom I had just been studying gave me the stronger zest for my fellow-countrymen. I could have embraced them; I could have wept on their necks. And all the time I was going to a disappointment.

It was in a spacious and low room, with an outlook on the court, that I found them bestowed. In the good days of that house the apartment had probably served as a library, for there were traces of shelves along the wainscot. Four or five mattresses lay on the floor in a corner, with a frowsy heap of bedding; near by was a basin and a cube of soap; a rude kitchen-table and some deal chairs stood together at the far end; and the room was illuminated by no less than four windows, and warmed by a little, crazy, sidelong grate, propped up with bricks in the vent of a hospitable chimney, in which a pile of coals smoked prodigiously and gave out a few starveling flames. An old, frail, white-haired officer sat in one of the chairs, which he had drawn close to this apology for a fire. He was wrapped in a camlet cloak, of which the collar was turned up, his knees touched the bars, his hands were spread in the very smoke, and yet he shivered for cold. The second — a big, florid, fine animal of a man, whose every gesture labelled him the cock of the walk and the admiration of the ladies — had apparently despaired of the fire, and now strode up and down, sneezing hard, bitterly blowing his nose, and proffering a continual stream of bluster, complaint, and barrack-room oaths.

Fenn showed me in with the brief form of introduction: 'Gentlemen all, this here's another fare!' and was gone again at once. The old man gave me but the one glance out of lack-lustre eyes; and even as he looked a shiver took him as sharp as a hiccough. But the other, who represented to admiration the picture of a Beau in a Catarrh, stared at me arrogantly.

'And who are you, sir?' he asked.

I made the military salute to my superiors.

'Champdivers, private, Eighth of the Line,' said I.

'Pretty business!' said he. 'And you are going on with us? Three in a cart, and a great trolloping private at that! And who is to pay for you, my fine fellow?' he inquired.

'If monsieur comes to that,' I answered civilly, 'who paid for him?'

'Oh, if you choose to play the wit!' said he, — and began to rail at large upon his destiny, the weather, the cold, the danger and the expense of the escape, and, above all, the cooking of the accursed English. It seemed to annoy him particularly that I should have joined their party. 'If you knew what you were doing, thirty thousand millions of pigs! you would keep yourself to yourself! The horses can't drag the cart; the roads are all ruts and swamps. No longer ago than last night the Colonel and I had to march half the way — thunder of God! — half the way to the knees in mud — and I with this infernal cold — and the danger of detection! Happily we met no one: a desert — a real desert — like the whole abominable country! Nothing to eat — no, sir, there is nothing to eat but raw cow and greens boiled in water — nor to drink but Worcestershire sauce! Now I, with my catarrh, I have no appetite; is it not so? Well, if I were in France, I should have a good soup with a crust in it, an omelette, a fowl in rice, a partridge in cabbages — things to tempt me, thunder of God! But here — day of God! — what a country! And cold, too! They talk about Russia — this is all the cold I want! And the people — look at them! What a race! Never any handsome men; never any fine officers!' — and he looked down complacently for a moment at his waist — 'And the women — what faggots! No, that is one point clear, I cannot stomach the English!'

There was something in this man so antipathetic to me, as sent the mustard into my nose. I can never bear your bucks and dandies, even when they are decent-looking and well dressed; and the Major — for that was his rank — was the image of a flunkey in good luck. Even to be in agreement with him, or to seem to be so, was more than I could make out to endure.

'You could scarce be expected to stomach them,' said I civilly, 'after having just digested your parole.'

He whipped round on his heel and turned on me a countenance which I dare say he imagined to be awful; but another fit of sneezing cut him off ere he could come the length of speech.

'I have not tried the dish myself,' I took the opportunity to add. 'It is said to be unpalatable. Did monsieur find it so?'

With surprising vivacity the Colonel woke from his lethargy. He was between us ere another word could pass.

'Shame, gentlemen!' he said. 'Is this a time for Frenchmen and fellow-soldiers to fall out? We are in the midst of our enemies; a quarrel, a loud word, may suffice to plunge us back into irretrievable distress. *Monsieur le Commandant*, you have been gravely offended. I make it my request, I make it my prayer — if need be, I give you my orders — that the matter shall stand by until we come safe to France. Then, if you please, I will serve you in any capacity. And for you, young man, you have shown all the cruelty and carelessness of youth. This gentleman is your superior; he is no longer young' — at which word you are to conceive the Major's face. 'It is admitted he has broken his parole. I know not his reason, and no more do you. It might be patriotism in this hour of our country's adversity, it might be humanity, necessity; you know not what in the least, and you permit yourself to reflect on his honour. To break parole may be a subject for pity and not derision. I have broken mine — I, a colonel of the Empire. And why? I have been years negotiating my exchange, and it cannot be managed; those who have influence at the Ministry of War continually rush in before me, and I have to wait, and my daughter at home is in a decline. I am going to see my daughter at last, and it is my only concern lest I should have delayed too long. She is ill, and very ill, — at death's door. Nothing is left me but my daughter, my Emperor, and my honour; and I give my honour, blame me for it who dare!'

At this my heart smote me.

'For God's sake,' I cried, 'think no more of what I have said! A parole? what is a parole against life and death and love? I ask your pardon; this gentleman's also. As long as I shall be with you, you shall not have cause to complain of me again. I pray God you will find your daughter alive and restored.'

'That is past praying for,' said the Colonel; and immediately the brief fire died out of him, and, returning to the hearth, he relapsed into his former abstraction.

But I was not so easy to compose. The knowledge of the poor gentleman's trouble, and the sight of his face, had filled me with the bitterness of remorse; and I insisted upon shaking hands with the Major (which he did with a very ill grace), and abounded in palinodes and apologies.

'After all,' said I, 'who am I to talk? I am in the luck to be a private soldier; I have no parole to give or to keep; once I am over the rampart, I am as free as air. I beg you to believe that I regret from my soul the use of these ungenerous expressions. Allow me . . . Is there no way in this damned house to attract attention? Where is this fellow, Fenn?'

I ran to one of the windows and threw it open. Fenn, who was at the moment passing below in the court, cast up his arms like one in despair, called to me to keep back, plunged into the house, and appeared next moment in the doorway of the chamber.

'Oh, sir!' says he, 'keep away from those there windows. A body might see you from the back lane.'

‘It is registered,’ said I. ‘Henceforward I will be a mouse for precaution and a ghost for invisibility. But in the meantime, for God’s sake, fetch us a bottle of brandy! Your room is as damp as the bottom of a well, and these gentlemen are perishing of cold.’

So soon as I had paid him (for everything, I found, must be paid in advance), I turned my attention to the fire, and whether because I threw greater energy into the business, or because the coals were now warmed and the time ripe, I soon started a blaze that made the chimney roar again. The shine of it, in that dark, rainy day, seemed to reanimate the Colonel like a blink of sun. With the outburst of the flames, besides, a draught was established, which immediately delivered us from the plague of smoke; and by the time Fenn returned, carrying a bottle under his arm and a single tumbler in his hand, there was already an air of gaiety in the room that did the heart good.

I poured out some of the brandy.

‘Colonel,’ said I, ‘I am a young man and a private soldier. I have not been long in this room, and already I have shown the petulance that belongs to the one character and the ill manners that you may look for in the other. Have the humanity to pass these slips over, and honour me so far as to accept this glass.’

‘My lad,’ says he, waking up and blinking at me with an air of suspicion, ‘are you sure you can afford it?’

I assured him I could.

‘I thank you, then: I am very cold.’ He took the glass out, and a little colour came in his face. ‘I thank you again,’ said he. ‘It goes to the heart.’

The Major, when I motioned him to help himself, did so with a good deal of liberality; continued to do so for the rest of the morning, now with some sort of apology, now with none at all; and the bottle began to look foolish before dinner was served. It was such a meal as he had himself predicted: beef, greens, potatoes, mustard in a teacup, and beer in a brown jug that was all over hounds, horses, and hunters, with a fox at the fat end and a gigantic John Bull — for all the world like Fenn — sitting in the midst in a bob-wig and smoking tobacco. The beer was a good brew, but not good enough for the Major; he laced it with brandy — for his cold, he said; and in this curative design the remainder of the bottle ebbed away. He called my attention repeatedly to the circumstance; helped me pointedly to the dregs, threw the bottle in the air and played tricks with it; and at last, having exhausted his ingenuity, and seeing me remain quite blind to every hint, he ordered and paid for another himself.

As for the Colonel, he ate nothing, sat sunk in a muse, and only awoke occasionally to a sense of where he was, and what he was supposed to be doing. On each of these occasions he showed a gratitude and kind courtesy that endeared him to me beyond expression. ‘Champdivers, my lad, your health!’ he would say. ‘The Major and I had a very arduous march last night, and I positively thought I should have eaten nothing, but your fortunate idea of the brandy has made quite a new man of me — quite a new man.’ And he would fall to with a great air of heartiness, cut himself a mouthful, and, before he had swallowed it, would have forgotten his dinner, his company, the place where he then was, and the escape he was engaged on, and become absorbed in the vision of a sick-room and a dying girl in France. The pathos of this continual preoccupation, in a man so old, sick, and over-weary, and whom I looked upon as a mere bundle of dying bones and death-pains, put me wholly from my victuals: it seemed there was an element of sin, a kind of rude bravado of youth, in the mere relishing of food at the same table with this tragic father; and though I was well enough used to the coarse, plain diet of the English, I ate scarce more than himself. Dinner was hardly over before he succumbed to a lethargic sleep; lying on one of the mattresses with his limbs relaxed, and his breath seemingly suspended — the very image of dissolution.

This left the Major and myself alone at the table. You must not suppose our *tête-à-tête* was long, but it was a lively period while it lasted. He drank like a fish or an Englishman; shouted, beat the table, roared out songs, quarrelled, made it up again, and at last tried to throw the dinner-plates through the window, a feat of which he was at that time quite incapable. For a party of fugitives, condemned to the most rigorous discretion, there was never seen so noisy a carnival; and through it all the Colonel continued to sleep like a child. Seeing the Major so well advanced, and no retreat possible, I made a fair wind of a foul one, keeping his glass full, pushing him with toasts; and sooner than I could have dared to hope, he became drowsy and incoherent. With the wrong-headedness of all such sots, he would not be persuaded to lie down upon one of the mattresses until I had stretched myself upon another. But the comedy was soon over; soon he slept the sleep of the just, and snored like a military music; and I might get up again and face (as best I could) the excessive tedium of the afternoon.

I had passed the night before in a good bed; I was denied the resource of slumber; and there was nothing open for me but to pace the apartment, maintain the fire, and brood on my position. I compared yesterday and to-day — the safety, comfort, jollity, open-air exercise and pleasant roadside inns of the one, with the tedium, anxiety, and discomfort of the other. I remembered that I was in the hands of Fenn, who could not be more false — though he might be more vindictive — than I fancied him. I looked forward to nights of pitching in the covered cart, and days of monotony in I knew not what hiding-places; and my heart failed me, and I was in two minds whether to slink off ere it was too late, and return to my former solitary way of travel. But the Colonel stood in the path. I had not seen much of him; but already I judged him a man of a childlike nature — with that sort of innocence and courtesy that, I think, is only to be found in old soldiers or old priests — and broken with years and sorrow. I could not turn my back on his distress; could not leave him alone with the selfish trooper who snored on the next mattress. 'Champdivers, my lad, your health!' said a voice in my ear, and stopped me — and there are few things I am more glad of in the retrospect than that it did.

It must have been about four in the afternoon — at least the rain had taken off, and the sun was setting with some wintry pomp — when the current of my reflections was effectually changed by the arrival of two visitors in a gig. They were farmers of the neighbourhood, I suppose — big, burly fellows in great-coats and top-boots, mightily flushed with liquor when they arrived, and, before they left, inimitably drunk. They stayed long in the kitchen with Burchell, drinking, shouting, singing, and keeping it up; and the sound of their merry minstrelsy kept me a kind of company. The night fell, and the shine of the fire brightened and blinked on the panelled wall. Our illuminated windows must have been visible not only from the back lane of which Fenn had spoken, but from the court where the farmers' gig awaited them. In the far end of the firelit room lay my companions, the one silent, the other clamorously noisy, the images of death and drunkenness. Little wonder if I were tempted to join in the choruses below, and sometimes could hardly refrain from laughter, and sometimes, I believe, from tears — so unmitigated was the tedium, so cruel the suspense, of this period.

At last, about six at night, I should fancy, the noisy minstrels appeared in the court, headed by Fenn with a lantern, and knocking together as they came. The visitors clambered noisily into the gig, one of them shook the reins, and they were snatched out of sight and hearing with a suddenness that partook of the nature of prodigy. I am well aware there is a Providence for drunken men, that holds the reins for them and presides over their troubles; doubtless he had his work cut out for him with this particular gigful! Fenn rescued his toes with an ejaculation from under the departing wheels, and turned at once with uncertain steps and devious lantern to the far end of the court. There, through the open doors of a coach-house, the shock-headed lad was already to be seen drawing forth the covered cart. If I wished any private talk with our host, it must be now or never.

Accordingly I groped my way downstairs, and came to him as he looked on at and lighted the harnessing of the horses.

‘The hour approaches when we have to part,’ said I; ‘and I shall be obliged if you will tell your servant to drop me at the nearest point for Dunstable. I am determined to go so far with our friends, Colonel X and Major Y, but my business is peremptory, and it takes me to the neighbourhood of Dunstable.’

Orders were given to my satisfaction, with an obsequiousness that seemed only inflamed by his potations.

CHAPTER XIV — TRAVELS OF THE COVERED CART

My companions were aroused with difficulty: the Colonel, poor old gentleman, to a sort of permanent dream, in which you could say of him only that he was very deaf and anxiously polite; the Major still maudlin drunk. We had a dish of tea by the fireside, and then issued like criminals into the scathing cold of the night. For the weather had in the meantime changed. Upon the cessation of the rain, a strict frost had succeeded. The moon, being young, was already near the zenith when we started, glittered everywhere on sheets of ice, and sparkled in ten thousand icicles. A more unpromising night for a journey it was hard to conceive. But in the course of the afternoon the horses had been well roughed; and King (for such was the name of the shock-headed lad) was very positive that he could drive us without misadventure. He was as good as his word; indeed, despite a gawky air, he was simply invaluable in his present employment, showing marked sagacity in all that concerned the care of horses, and guiding us by one short cut after another for days, and without a fault.

The interior of that engine of torture, the covered cart, was fitted with a bench, on which we took our places; the door was shut; in a moment, the night closed upon us solid and stifling; and we felt that we were being driven carefully out of the courtyard. Careful was the word all night, and it was an alleviation of our miseries that we did not often enjoy. In general, as we were driven the better part of the night and day, often at a pretty quick pace and always through a labyrinth of the most infamous country lanes and by-roads, we were so bruised upon the bench, so dashed against the top and sides of the cart, that we reached the end of a stage in truly pitiable case, sometimes flung ourselves down without the formality of eating, made but one sleep of it until the hour of departure returned, and were only properly awakened by the first jolt of the renewed journey. There were interruptions, at times, that we hailed as alleviations. At times the cart was bogged, once it was upset, and we must alight and lend the driver the assistance of our arms; at times, too (as on the occasion when I had first encountered it), the horses gave out, and we had to trail alongside in mud or frost until the first peep of daylight, or the approach to a hamlet or a high road, bade us disappear like ghosts into our prison.

The main roads of England are incomparable for excellence, of a beautiful smoothness, very ingeniously laid down, and so well kept that in most weathers you could take your dinner off any part of them without distaste. On them, to the note of the bugle, the mail did its sixty miles a day; innumerable chaises whisked after the bobbing postboys; or some young blood would flit by in a curricle and tandem, to the vast delight and danger of the lieges. On them, the slow-pacing waggons made a music of bells, and all day long the travellers on horse-back and the travellers on foot (like happy Mr. St. Ives so little a while before!) kept coming and going, and baiting and gaping at each other, as though a fair were due, and they were gathering to it from all England. No, nowhere in the world is travel so great a pleasure as in that country. But unhappily our one need was to be secret; and all this rapid and animated picture of the road swept quite apart from us, as we lumbered up hill and down dale, under hedge and over stone, among circuitous byways. Only twice did I receive, as it were, a whiff of the highway. The first reached my ears alone. I might have been anywhere. I only knew I was walking in the dark night and among ruts, when I heard very far off, over the silent country that surrounded us, the guard's horn wailing its signal to the next post-house for a change of horses. It was like the voice of the day heard in darkness, a voice of the world heard in prison, the note of a cock crowing in the mid-seas — in short, I cannot tell you what it was like, you will have to fancy for yourself — but I could have wept to hear it. Once we were belated: the cattle could hardly crawl, the day was at hand, it was a nipping, rigorous morning, King was lashing his horses, I was giving an arm to the old Colonel, and the Major was coughing in our rear. I must suppose that King was a thought careless, being nearly in desperation about his team, and, in spite of the cold morning, breathing hot with his exertions. We came, at last, a little before sunrise to the summit of a hill, and saw the high-road passing at right angles through an open country of meadows and hedgerow pollards; and not only the York mail, speeding smoothly at the gallop of the four horses, but a post-chaise besides, with the post-boy titupping briskly, and the traveller himself putting his head out of the window, but whether to breathe the dawn, or the better to observe the passage of the mail, I do not know. So that we enjoyed for an instant a picture of free life on the road, in its most luxurious forms of despatch and comfort. And thereafter, with a poignant feeling of contrast in our hearts, we must mount again into our wheeled dungeon.

We came to our stages at all sorts of odd hours, and they were in all kinds of odd places. I may say at once that my first experience was my best. Nowhere again were we so well entertained as at Burchell Fenn's. And this, I suppose, was natural, and indeed inevitable, in so long and secret a journey. The first stop, we lay six hours in a barn standing by itself in a poor, marshy orchard, and packed with hay; to make it more attractive, we were told it had been the scene of an abominable murder, and was now haunted. But the day was beginning to break, and our fatigue was too extreme for visionary terrors. The second or third, we alighted on a barren heath about midnight, built a fire to warm us under the shelter of some thorns, supped like beggars on bread and a piece of cold bacon, and slept like gipsies with our feet to the fire. In the meanwhile, King was gone with the cart, I know not where, to get a change of horses, and it was late in the dark morning when he returned and we were able to resume our journey. In the middle of another night, we came to a stop by an ancient, whitewashed cottage of two stories; a privet hedge surrounded it; the frosty moon shone blankly on the upper windows; but through those of the kitchen the firelight was seen glinting on the roof and reflected from the dishes on the wall. Here, after much hammering on the door, King managed to arouse an old crone from the chimney-corner chair, where she had been dozing in the watch; and we were had in, and entertained with a dish of hot tea. This old lady was an aunt of Burchell Fenn's — and an unwilling partner in his dangerous trade. Though the house stood solitary, and the hour was an unlikely one for any passenger upon the road, King and she conversed in whispers only. There was something dismal, something of the sick-room, in this perpetual, guarded sibilation. The apprehensions of our hostess insensibly communicated themselves to every one present. We ate like mice in a cat's ear; if one of us jingled a teaspoon, all would start; and when the hour came to take the road again, we drew a long breath of relief, and climbed to our places in the covered cart with a positive sense of escape. The most of our meals, however, were taken boldly at hedgerow alehouses, usually at untimely hours of the day, when the clients were in the field or the farmyard at labour. I shall have to tell presently of our last experience of the sort, and how unfortunately it miscarried; but as that was the signal for my separation from my fellow-travellers, I must first finish with them.

I had never any occasion to waver in my first judgment of the Colonel. The old gentleman seemed to me, and still seems in the retrospect, the salt of the earth. I had occasion to see him in the extremes of hardship, hunger and cold; he was dying, and he looked it; and yet I cannot remember any hasty, harsh, or impatient word to have fallen from his lips. On the contrary, he ever showed himself careful to please; and even if he rambled in his talk, rambled always gently — like a humane, half-witted old hero, true to his colours to the last. I would not dare to say how often he awoke suddenly from a lethargy, and told us again, as though we had never heard it, the story of how he had earned the cross, how it had been given him by the hand of the Emperor, and of the innocent — and, indeed, foolish —

sayings of his daughter when he returned with it on his bosom. He had another anecdote which he was very apt to give, by way of a rebuke, when the Major wearied us beyond endurance with dispraises of the English. This was an account of the *braves gens* with whom he had been boarding. True enough, he was a man so simple and grateful by nature, that the most common civilities were able to touch him to the heart, and would remain written in his memory; but from a thousand inconsiderable but conclusive indications, I gathered that this family had really loved him, and loaded him with kindness. They made a fire in his bedroom, which the sons and daughters tended with their own hands; letters from France were looked for with scarce more eagerness by himself than by these alien sympathisers; when they came, he would read them aloud in the parlour to the assembled family, translating as he went. The Colonel's English was elementary; his daughter not in the least likely to be an amusing correspondent; and, as I conceived these scenes in the parlour, I felt sure the interest centred in the Colonel himself, and I thought I could feel in my own heart that mixture of the ridiculous and the pathetic, the contest of tears and laughter, which must have shaken the bosoms of the family. Their kindness had continued till the end. It appears they were privy to his flight, the camlet cloak had been lined expressly for him, and he was the bearer of a letter from the daughter of the house to his own daughter in Paris. The last evening, when the time came to say good-night, it was tacitly known to all that they were to look upon his face no more. He rose, pleading fatigue, and turned to the daughter, who had been his chief ally: 'You will permit me, my dear — to an old and very unhappy soldier — and may God bless you for your goodness!' The girl threw her arms about his neck and sobbed upon his bosom; the lady of the house burst into tears; '*et je vous le jure, le père se mouchait*!' quoth the Colonel, twisting his moustaches with a cavalry air, and at the same time blinking the water from his eyes at the mere recollection.

It was a good thought to me that he had found these friends in captivity; that he had started on this fatal journey from so cordial a farewell. He had broken his parole for his daughter: that he should ever live to reach her sick-bed, that he could continue to endure to an end the hardships, the crushing fatigue, the savage cold, of our pilgrimage, I had early ceased to hope. I did for him what I was able, — nursed him, kept him covered, watched over his slumbers, sometimes held him in my arms at the rough places of the road. 'Champdivers,' he once said, 'you are like a son to me — like a son.' It is good to remember, though at the time it put me on the rack. All was to no purpose. Fast as we were travelling towards France, he was travelling faster still to another destination. Daily he grew weaker and more indifferent. An old rustic accent of Lower Normandy reappeared in his speech, from which it had long been banished, and grew stronger; old words of the *patois*, too: *Ouistreham*, *matrassé*, and others, the sense of which we were sometimes unable to guess. On the very last day he began again his eternal story of the cross and the Emperor. The Major, who was particularly ill, or at least particularly cross, uttered some angry words of protest. ‘*Pardonnez-moi, monsieur le commandant, mais c’est pour monsieur,*’ said the Colonel: ‘Monsieur has not yet heard the circumstance, and is good enough to feel an interest.’ Presently after, however, he began to lose the thread of his narrative; and at last: ‘*Qué que j’ai*? *Je m’embrouille*!’ says he, ‘*Suffit*: *s’m’a la donné, et Berthe en était bien contente*.’ It struck me as the falling of the curtain or the closing of the sepulchre doors.

Sure enough, in but a little while after, he fell into a sleep as gentle as an infant’s, which insensibly changed into the sleep of death. I had my arm about his body at the time and remarked nothing, unless it were that he once stretched himself a little, so kindly the end came to that disastrous life. It was only at our evening halt that the Major and I discovered we were travelling alone with the poor clay. That night we stole a spade from a field — I think near Market Bosworth — and a little farther on, in a wood of young oak trees and by the light of King’s lantern, we buried the old soldier of the Empire with both prayers and tears.

We had needs invent Heaven if it had not been revealed to us; there are some things that fall so bitterly ill on this side Time! As for the Major, I have long since forgiven him. He broke the news to the poor Colonel’s daughter; I am told he did it kindly; and sure, nobody could have done it without tears! His share of purgatory will be brief; and in this world, as I could not very well praise him, I have suppressed his name. The Colonel’s also, for the sake of his parole. *Requiescat.*

CHAPTER XV — THE ADVENTURE OF THE ATTORNEY'S CLERK

I have mentioned our usual course, which was to eat in inconsiderable wayside hostelries, known to King. It was a dangerous business; we went daily under fire to satisfy our appetite, and put our head in the loin's mouth for a piece of bread. Sometimes, to minimise the risk, we would all dismount before we came in view of the house, straggle in severally, and give what orders we pleased, like disconnected strangers. In like manner we departed, to find the cart at an appointed place, some half a mile beyond. The Colonel and the Major had each a word or two of English — God help their pronunciation! But they did well enough to order a rasher and a pot or call a reckoning; and, to say truth, these country folks did not give themselves the pains, and had scarce the knowledge, to be critical.

About nine or ten at night the pains of hunger and cold drove us to an alehouse in the flats of Bedfordshire, not far from Bedford itself. In the inn kitchen was a long, lean, characteristic-looking fellow of perhaps forty, dressed in black. He sat on a settle by the fireside, smoking a long pipe, such as they call a yard of clay. His hat and wig were hanged upon the knob behind him, his head as bald as a bladder of lard, and his expression very shrewd, cantankerous, and inquisitive. He seemed to value himself above his company, to give himself the airs of a man of the world among that rustic herd; which was often no more than his due; being, as I afterwards discovered, an attorney's clerk. I took upon myself the more ungrateful part of arriving last; and by the time I entered on the scene the Major was already served at a side table. Some general conversation must have passed, and I smelled danger in the air. The Major looked flustered, the attorney's clerk triumphant, and three or four peasants in smock-frocks (who sat about the fire to play chorus) had let their pipes go out.

'Give you good evening, sir!' said the attorney's clerk to me.

'The same to you, sir,' said I.

'I think this one will do,' quoth the clerk to the yokels with a wink; and then, as soon as I had given my order, 'Pray, sir, whither are you bound?' he added.

'Sir,' said I, 'I am not one of those who speak either of their business or their destination in houses of public entertainment.'

'A good answer,' said he, 'and an excellent principle. Sir, do you speak French?'

'Why, no, sir,' said I. 'A little Spanish at your service.'

'But you know the French accent, perhaps?' said the clerk.

'Well do I do that!' said I. 'The French accent? Why, I believe I can tell a Frenchman in ten words.'

'Here is a puzzle for you, then!' he said. 'I have no material doubt myself, but some of these gentlemen are more backward. The lack of education, you know. I make bold to say that a man cannot walk, cannot hear, and cannot see, without the blessings of education.'

He turned to the Major, whose food plainly stuck in his throat.

'Now, sir,' pursued the clerk, 'let me have the pleasure to hear your voice again. Where are you going, did you say?'

'Sare, I am go-ing to Lon-don,' said the Major.

I could have flung my plate at him to be such an ass, and to have so little a gift of languages where that was the essential.

'What think ye of that?' said the clerk. 'Is that French enough?'

'Good God!' cried I, leaping up like one who should suddenly perceive an acquaintance, 'is this you, Mr. Dubois? Why, who would have dreamed of encountering you so far from home?' As I spoke, I shook hands with the Major heartily; and turning to our tormentor, 'Oh, sir, you may be perfectly reassured! This is a very honest fellow, a late neighbour of mine in the city of Carlisle.'

I thought the attorney looked put out; I little knew the man!

'But he is French,' said he, 'for all that?'

'Ay, to be sure!' said I. 'A Frenchman of the emigration! None of your Buonaparte lot. I will warrant his views of politics to be as sound as your own.'

'What is a little strange,' said the clerk quietly, 'is that Mr. Dubois should deny it.'

I got it fair in the face, and took it smiling; but the shock was rude, and in the course of the next words I contrived to do what I have rarely done, and make a slip in my English. I kept my liberty and life by my proficiency all these months, and for once that I failed, it is not to be supposed that I would make a public exhibition of the details. Enough, that it was a very little error, and one that might have passed ninety-nine times in a hundred. But my limb of the law was as swift to pick it up as though he had been by trade a master of languages.

'Aha!' cries he; 'and you are French, too! Your tongue bewrays you. Two Frenchmen coming into an alehouse, severally and accidentally, not knowing each other, at ten of the clock at night, in the middle of Bedfordshire? No, sir, that shall not pass! You are all prisoners escaping, if you are nothing worse. Consider yourselves under arrest. I have to trouble you for your papers.'

'Where is your warrant, if you come to that?' said I. 'My papers! A likely thing that I would show my papers on the *ipse dixit* of an unknown fellow in a hedge alehouse!'

‘Would you resist the law?’ says he.

‘Not the law, sir!’ said I. ‘I hope I am too good a subject for that. But for a nameless fellow with a bald head and a pair of gingham small-clothes, why certainly! ‘Tis my birthright as an Englishman. Where’s *Magna Charta*, else?’

‘We will see about that,’ says he; and then, addressing the assistants, ‘where does the constable live?’

‘Lord love you, sir!’ cried the landlord, ‘what are you thinking of? The constable at past ten at night! Why, he’s abed and asleep, and good and drunk two hours agone!’

‘Ah that a’ be!’ came in chorus from the yokels.

The attorney’s clerk was put to a stand. He could not think of force; there was little sign of martial ardour about the landlord, and the peasants were indifferent — they only listened, and gaped, and now scratched a head, and now would get a light to their pipes from the embers on the hearth. On the other hand, the Major and I put a bold front on the business and defied him, not without some ground of law. In this state of matters he proposed I should go along with him to one Squire Merton, a great man of the neighbourhood, who was in the commission of the peace, the end of his avenue but three lanes away. I told him I would not stir a foot for him if it were to save his soul. Next he proposed I should stay all night where I was, and the constable could see to my affair in the morning, when he was sober. I replied I should go when and where I pleased; that we were lawful travellers in the fear of God and the king, and I for one would suffer myself to be stayed by nobody. At the same time, I was thinking the matter had lasted altogether too long, and I determined to bring it to an end at once.

‘See here,’ said I, getting up, for till now I had remained carelessly seated, ‘there’s only one way to decide a thing like this — only one way that’s right *English* — and that’s man to man. Take off your coat, sir, and these gentlemen shall see fair play.’ At this there came a look in his eye that I could not mistake. His education had been neglected in one essential and eminently British particular: he could not box. No more could I, you may say; but then I had the more impudence — and I had made the proposal.

‘He says I’m no Englishman, but the proof of the pudding is the eating of it,’ I continued. And here I stripped my coat and fell into the proper attitude, which was just about all I knew of this barbarian art. ‘Why, sir, you seem to me to hang back a little,’ said I. ‘Come, I’ll meet you; I’ll give you an appetiser — though hang me if I can understand the man that wants any enticement to hold up his hands.’ I drew a bank-note out of my fob and tossed it to the landlord. ‘There are the stakes,’ said I. ‘I’ll fight you for first blood, since you seem to make so much work about it. If you tap my claret first, there are five guineas for you, and I'll go with you to any squire you choose to mention. If I tap yours, you'll perhaps let on that I'm the better man, and allow me to go about my lawful business at my own time and convenience, by God; is that fair, my lads?' says I, appealing to the company.

'Ay, ay,' said the chorus of chawbacons; 'he can't say no fairer nor that, he can't. Take off thy coat master!'

The limb of the law was now on the wrong side of public opinion, and, what heartened me to go on, the position was rapidly changing in our favour. Already the Major was paying his shot to the very indifferent landlord, and I could see the white face of King at the back-door, making signals of haste.

'Oho!' quoth my enemy, 'you are as full of doubles as a fox, are you not? But I see through you; I see through and through you. You would change the venue, would you?'

'I may be transparent, sir,' says I, 'but if you'll do me the favour to stand up, you'll find I can hit dam hard.'

'Which is a point, if you will observe, that I had never called in question,' said he. 'Why, you ignorant clowns,' he proceeded, addressing the company, 'can't you see the fellow's gulling you before your eyes? Can't you see that he has changed the point upon me? I say he's a French prisoner, and he answers that he can box! What has that to do with it? I would not wonder but what he can dance, too — they're all dancing masters over there. I say, and I stick to it, that he's a Frenchy. He says he isn't. Well then, let him out with his papers, if he has them! If he had, would he not show them? If he had, would he not jump at the idea of going to Squire Merton, a man you all know? Now, you are all plain, straightforward Bedfordshire men, and I wouldn't ask a better lot to appeal to. You're not the kind to be talked over with any French gammon, and he's plenty of that. But let me tell him, he can take his pigs to another market; they'll never do here; they'll never go down in Bedfordshire. Why! look at the man! Look at his feet! Has anybody got a foot in the room like that? See how he stands! do any of you fellows stand like that? Does the landlord, there? Why, he has Frenchman wrote all over him, as big as a sign-post!'

This was all very well; and in a different scene I might even have been gratified by his remarks; but I saw clearly, if I were to allow him to talk, he might turn the tables on me altogether. He might not be much of a hand at boxing; but I was much mistaken, or he had studied forensic eloquence in a good school. In this predicament I could think of nothing more ingenious than to burst out of the house, under the pretext of an ungovernable rage. It was certainly not very ingenious

— it was elementary, but I had no choice.

‘You white-livered dog!’ I broke out. ‘Do you dare to tell me you’re an Englishman, and won’t fight? But I’ll stand no more of this! I leave this place, where I’ve been insulted! Here! what’s to pay? Pay yourself!’ I went on, offering the landlord a handful of silver, ‘and give me back my bank-note!’

The landlord, following his usual policy of obliging everybody, offered no opposition to my design. The position of my adversary was now thoroughly bad. He had lost my two companions. He was on the point of losing me also. There was plainly no hope of arousing the company to help; and watching him with a corner of my eye, I saw him hesitate for a moment. The next, he had taken down his hat and his wig, which was of black horsehair; and I saw him draw from behind the settle a vast hooded great-coat and a small valise. ‘The devil!’ thought I: ‘is the rascal going to follow me?’

I was scarce clear of the inn before the limb of the law was at my heels. I saw his face plain in the moonlight; and the most resolute purpose showed in it, along with an unmoved composure. A chill went over me. ‘This is no common adventure,’ thinks I to myself. ‘You have got hold of a man of character, St. Ives! A bite-hard, a bull-dog, a weasel is on your trail; and how are you to throw him off?’ Who was he? By some of his expressions I judged he was a hanger-on of courts. But in what character had he followed the assizes? As a simple spectator, as a lawyer’s clerk, as a criminal himself, or — last and worst supposition — as a Bow-street ‘runner’?

The cart would wait for me, perhaps, half a mile down our onward road, which I was already following. And I told myself that in a few minutes’ walking, Bow-street runner or not, I should have him at my mercy. And then reflection came to me in time. Of all things, one was out of the question. Upon no account must this obtrusive fellow see the cart. Until I had killed or shook him off, I was quite divorced from my companions — alone, in the midst of England, on a frosty by-way leading whither I knew not, with a sleuth-hound at my heels, and never a friend but the holly-stick!

We came at the same time to a crossing of lanes. The branch to the left was overhung with trees, deeply sunken and dark. Not a ray of moonlight penetrated its recesses; and I took it at a venture. The wretch followed my example in silence; and for some time we crunched together over frozen pools without a word. Then he found his voice, with a chuckle.

‘This is not the way to Mr. Merton’s,’ said he.

‘No?’ said I. ‘It is mine, however.’

‘And therefore mine,’ said he.

Again we fell silent; and we may thus have covered half a mile before the lane, taking a sudden turn, brought us forth again into the moonshine. With his hooded great-coat on his back, his valise in his hand, his black wig adjusted, and footing it on the ice with a sort of sober doggedness of manner, my enemy was changed almost beyond recognition: changed in everything but a certain dry, polemical, pedantic air, that spoke of a sedentary occupation and high stools. I observed, too, that his valise was heavy; and, putting this and that together, hit upon a plan.

‘A seasonable night, sir,’ said I. ‘What do you say to a bit of running? The frost has me by the toes.’

‘With all the pleasure in life,’ says he.

His voice seemed well assured, which pleased me little. However, there was nothing else to try, except violence, for which it would always be too soon. I took to my heels accordingly, he after me; and for some time the slapping of our feet on the hard road might have been heard a mile away. He had started a pace behind me, and he finished in the same position. For all his extra years and the weight of his valise, he had not lost a hair’s breadth. The devil might race him for me — I had enough of it!

And, besides, to run so fast was contrary to my interests. We could not run long without arriving somewhere. At any moment we might turn a corner and find ourselves at the lodge-gate of some Squire Merton, in the midst of a village whose constable was sober, or in the hands of a patrol. There was no help for it — I must finish with him on the spot, as long as it was possible. I looked about me, and the place seemed suitable; never a light, never a house — nothing but stubble-fields, fallows, and a few stunted trees. I stopped and eyed him in the moonlight with an angry stare.

‘Enough of this foolery!’ said I.

He had tamed, and now faced me full, very pale, but with no sign of shrinking.

‘I am quite of your opinion,’ said he. ‘You have tried me at the running; you can try me next at the high jump. It will be all the same. It must end the one way.’

I made my holly whistle about my head.

‘I believe you know what way!’ said I. ‘We are alone, it is night, and I am wholly resolved. Are you not frightened?’

‘No,’ he said, ‘not in the smallest. I do not box, sir; but I am not a coward, as you may have supposed. Perhaps it will simplify our relations if I tell you at the outset that I walk armed.’

Quick as lightning I made a feint at his head; as quickly he gave ground, and at the same time I saw a pistol glitter in his hand.

‘No more of that, Mr. French-Prisoner!’ he said. ‘It will do me no good to have your death at my door.’

‘Faith, nor me either!’ said I; and I lowered my stick and considered the man, not without a twinkle of admiration. ‘You see,’ I said, ‘there is one consideration that you appear to overlook: there are a great many chances that your pistol may miss fire.’

‘I have a pair,’ he returned. ‘Never travel without a brace of barkers.’

‘I make you my compliment,’ said I. ‘You are able to take care of yourself, and that is a good trait. But, my good man! let us look at this matter dispassionately. You are not a coward, and no more am I; we are both men of excellent sense; I have good reason, whatever it may be, to keep my concerns to myself and to walk alone. Now I put it to you pointedly, am I likely to stand it? Am I likely to put up with your continued and — excuse me — highly impudent *ingérence* into my private affairs?’

‘Another French word,’ says he composedly.

‘Oh! damn your French words!’ cried I. ‘You seem to be a Frenchman yourself!’

‘I have had many opportunities by which I have profited,’ he explained. ‘Few men are better acquainted with the similarities and differences, whether of idiom or accent, of the two languages.’

‘You are a pompous fellow, too!’ said I.

‘Oh, I can make distinctions, sir,’ says he. ‘I can talk with Bedfordshire peasants; and I can express myself becomingly, I hope, in the company of a gentleman of education like yourself.’

‘If you set up to be a gentleman — ’ I began.

‘Pardon me,’ he interrupted: ‘I make no such claim. I only see the nobility and gentry in the way of business. I am quite a plain person.’

‘For the Lord’s sake,’ I exclaimed, ‘set my mind at rest upon one point. In the name of mystery, who and what are you?’

‘I have no cause to be ashamed of my name, sir,’ said he, ‘nor yet my trade. I am Thomas Dudgeon, at your service, clerk to Mr. Daniel Romaine, solicitor of London; High Holborn is our address, sir.’

It was only by the ecstasy of the relief that I knew how horribly I had been frightened. I flung my stick on the road.

‘Romaine?’ I cried. ‘Daniel Romaine? An old hunks with a red face and a big head, and got up like a Quaker? My dear friend, to my arms!’

‘Keep back, I say!’ said Dudgeon weakly.

I would not listen to him. With the end of my own alarm, I felt as if I must infallibly be at the end of all dangers likewise; as if the pistol that he held in one hand were no more to be feared than the valise that he carried with the other, and now put up like a barrier against my advance.

‘Keep back, or I declare I will fire,’ he was crying. ‘Have a care, for

God’s sake! My pistol — ’

He might scream as be pleased. Willy nilly, I folded him to my breast, I pressed him there, I kissed his ugly mug as it had never been kissed before and would never be kissed again; and in the doing so knocked his wig awry and his hat off. He bleated in my embrace; so bleats the sheep in the arms of the butcher. The whole thing, on looking back, appears incomparably reckless and absurd; I no better than a madman for offering to advance on Dudgeon, and he no better than a fool for not shooting me while I was about it. But all’s well that ends well; or, as the people in these days kept singing and whistling on the streets: —

‘There’s a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft
And looks out for the life of poor Jack.’

‘There!’ said I, releasing him a little, but still keeping my hands on his shoulders, ‘*je vous ai bel et bien embrassé* — and, as you would say, there is another French word.’ With his wig over one eye, he looked incredibly rueful and put out. ‘Cheer up, Dudgeon; the ordeal is over, you shall be embraced no more. But do, first of all, for God’s-sake, put away your pistol; you handle it as if you were a cockatrice; some time or other, depend upon it, it will certainly go off. Here is your hat. No, let me put it on square, and the wig before it. Never suffer any stress of circumstances to come between you and the duty you owe to yourself. If you have nobody else to dress for, dress for God!

‘Put your wig straight
On your bald pate,
Keep your chin scraped,
And your figure draped.

Can you match me that? The whole duty of man in a quatrain! And remark, I do not set up to be a professional bard; these are the outpourings of a *dilettante*.’

‘But, my dear sir!’ he exclaimed.

‘But, my dear sir!’ I echoed, ‘I will allow no man to interrupt the flow of my ideas. Give me your opinion on my quatrain, or I vow we shall have a quarrel of it.’

‘Certainly you are quite an original,’ he said.

‘Quite,’ said I; ‘and I believe I have my counterpart before me.’

‘Well, for a choice,’ says he, smiling, ‘and whether for sense or poetry, give me

‘“Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow:
The rest is all but leather and prunello.”‘

‘Oh, but that’s not fair — that’s Pope! It’s not original, Dudgeon. Understand me,’ said I, wringing his breast-button, ‘the first duty of all poetry is to be mine, sir — mine. Inspiration now swells in my bosom, because — to tell you the plain truth, and descend a little in style — I am devilish relieved at the turn things have taken. So, I dare say, are you yourself, Dudgeon, if you would only allow it. And *à propos*, let me ask you a home question. Between friends, have you ever fired that pistol?'

'Why, yes, sir,' he replied. 'Twice — at hedgesparrows.'

'And you would have fired at me, you bloody-minded man?' I cried.

'If you go to that, you seemed mighty reckless with your stick,' said Dudgeon.

'Did I indeed? Well, well, 'tis all past history; ancient as King Pharamond — which is another French word, if you cared to accumulate more evidence,' says I. 'But happily we are now the best of friends, and have all our interests in common.'

'You go a little too fast, if you'll excuse me, Mr. — -: I do not know your name, that I am aware,' said Dudgeon.

'No, to be sure!' said I. 'Never heard of it!'

'A word of explanation — ' he began.

'No, Dudgeon!' I interrupted. 'Be practical; I know what you want, and the name of it is supper. *Rien ne creuse comme l'emotion*. I am hungry myself, and yet I am more accustomed to warlike palpitations than you, who are but a hunter of hedgesparrows. Let me look at your face critically: your bill of fare is three slices of cold rare roast beef, a Welsh rabbit, a pot of stout, and a glass or two of sound tawny port, old in bottle — the right milk of Englishmen.' Methought there seemed a brightening in his eye and a melting about his mouth at this enumeration.

'The night is young,' I continued; 'not much past eleven, for a wager. Where can we find a good inn? And remark that I say *good*, for the port must be up to the occasion — not a headache in a pipe of it.'

'Really, sir,' he said, smiling a little, 'you have a way of carrying things — '

'Will nothing make you stick to the subject?' I cried; 'you have the most irrelevant mind! How do you expect to rise in your profession? The inn?'

'Well, I will say you are a facetious gentleman!' said he. 'You must have your way, I see. We are not three miles from Bedford by this very road.'

'Done!' cried I. 'Bedford be it!'

I tucked his arm under mine, possessed myself of the valise, and walked him off unresisting. Presently we came to an open piece of country lying a thought downhill. The road was smooth and free of ice, the moonshine thin and bright over the meadows and the leafless trees. I was now honestly done with the purgatory of the covered cart; I was close to my great-uncle's; I had no more fear of Mr.

Dudgeon; which were all grounds enough for jollity. And I was aware, besides, of us two as of a pair of tiny and solitary dolls under the vast frosty cupola of the midnight; the rooms decked, the moon burnished, the least of the stars lighted, the floor swept and waxed, and nothing wanting but for the band to strike up and the dancing to begin. In the exhilaration of my heart I took the music on myself —

‘Merrily danced the Quaker’s wife,
And merrily danced the Quaker.’

I broke into that animated and appropriate air, clapped my arm about Dudgeon’s waist, and away down the hill at a dancing step! He hung back a little at the start, but the impulse of the tune, the night, and my example, were not to be resisted. A man made of putty must have danced, and even Dudgeon showed himself to be a human being. Higher and higher were the capers that we cut; the moon repeated in shadow our antic footsteps and gestures; and it came over my mind of a sudden — really like balm — what appearance of man I was dancing with, what a long bilious countenance he had shown under his shaven pate, and what a world of trouble the rascal had given me in the immediate past.

Presently we began to see the lights of Bedford. My Puritanic companion stopped and disengaged himself.

‘This is a trifle *infra dig.*, sir, is it not?’ said he. ‘A party might suppose we had been drinking.’

‘And so you shall be, Dudgeon,’ said I. ‘You shall not only be drinking, you old hypocrite, but you shall be drunk — dead drunk, sir — and the boots shall put you to bed! We’ll warn him when we go in. Never neglect a precaution; never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day!’

But he had no more frivolity to complain of. We finished our stage and came to the inn-door with decorum, to find the house still alight and in a bustle with many late arrivals; to give our orders with a prompt severity which ensured obedience, and to be served soon after at a side-table, close to the fire and in a blaze of candle-light, with such a meal as I had been dreaming of for days past. For days, you are to remember, I had been skulking in the covered cart, a prey to cold, hunger, and an accumulation of discomforts that might have daunted the most brave; and the white table napery, the bright crystal, the reverberation of the fire, the red curtains, the Turkey carpet, the portraits on the coffee-room wall, the placid faces of the two or three late guests who were silently prolonging the pleasures of digestion, and (last, but not by any means least) a glass of an excellent light dry port, put me in a humour only to be described as heavenly. The thought of the Colonel, of how he would have enjoyed this snug room and roaring fire, and of his cold grave in the wood by Market

Bosworth, lingered on my palate, *amari aliquid*, like an after-taste, but was not able — I say it with shame — entirely to dispel my self-complacency. After all, in this world every dog hangs by its own tail. I was a free adventurer, who had just brought to a successful end — or, at least, within view of it — an adventure very difficult and alarming; and I looked across at Mr. Dudgeon, as the port rose to his cheeks, and a smile, that was semi-confidential and a trifle foolish, began to play upon his leathery features, not only with composure, but with a suspicion of kindness. The rascal had been brave, a quality for which I would value the devil; and if he had been pertinacious in the beginning, he had more than made up for it before the end.

'And now, Dudgeon, to explain,' I began. 'I know your master, he knows me, and he knows and approves of my errand. So much I may tell you, that I am on my way to Amersham Place.'

'Oho!' quoth Dudgeon, 'I begin to see.'

'I am heartily glad of it,' said I, passing the bottle, 'because that is about all I can tell you. You must take my word for the remainder. Either believe me or don't. If you don't, let's take a chaise; you can carry me to-morrow to High Holborn, and confront me with Mr. Romaine; the result of which will be to set your mind at rest — and to make the holiest disorder in your master's plans. If I judge you aright (for I find you a shrewd fellow), this will not be at all to your mind. You know what a subordinate gets by officiousness; if I can trust my memory, old Romaine has not at all the face that I should care to see in anger; and I venture to predict surprising results upon your weekly salary — if you are paid by the week, that is. In short, let me go free, and 'tis an end of the matter; take me to London, and 'tis only a beginning — and, by my opinion, a beginning of troubles. You can take your choice.'

'And that is soon taken,' said he. 'Go to Amersham tomorrow, or go to the devil if you prefer — I wash my hands of you and the whole transaction. No, you don't find me putting my head in between Romaine and a client! A good man of business, sir, but hard as millstone grit. I might get the sack, and I shouldn't wonder! But, it's a pity, too,' he added, and sighed, shook his head, and took his glass off sadly.

'That reminds me,' said I. 'I have a great curiosity, and you can satisfy it. Why were you so forward to meddle with poor Mr. Dubois? Why did you transfer your attentions to me? And generally, what induced you to make yourself such a nuisance?'

He blushed deeply.

'Why, sir,' says he, 'there is such a thing as patriotism, I hope.'

CHAPTER XVI — THE HOME-COMING OF MR. ROWLEY'S VISCOUNT

By eight the next morning Dudgeon and I had made our parting. By that time we had grown to be extremely familiar; and I would very willingly have kept him by me, and even carried him to Amersham Place. But it appeared he was due at the public-house where we had met, on some affairs of my great-uncle the Count, who had an outlying estate in that part of the shire. If Dudgeon had had his way the night before, I should have been arrested on my uncle's land and by my uncle's agent, a culmination of ill-luck.

A little after noon I started, in a hired chaise, by way of Dunstable. The mere mention of the name Amersham Place made every one supple and smiling. It was plainly a great house, and my uncle lived there in style. The fame of it rose as we approached, like a chain of mountains; at Bedford they touched their caps, but in Dunstable they crawled upon their bellies. I thought the landlady would have kissed me; such a flutter of cordiality, such smiles, such affectionate attentions were called forth, and the good lady bustled on my service in such a pother of ringlets and with such a jingling of keys. 'You're probably expected, sir, at the Place? I do trust you may 'ave better accounts of his lordship's 'elth, sir. We understood that his lordship, Mosha de Carwell, was main bad. Ha, sir, we shall all feel his loss, poor, dear, noble gentleman; and I'm sure nobody more polite! They do say, sir, his wealth is enormous, and before the Revolution, quite a prince in his own country! But I beg your pardon, sir; 'ow I do run on, to be sure; and doubtless all beknown to you already! For you do resemble the family, sir. I should have known you anywheres by the likeness to the dear viscount. Ha, poor gentleman, he must 'ave a 'eavy 'eart these days.'

In the same place I saw out of the inn-windows a man-servant passing in the livery of my house, which you are to think I had never before seen worn, or not that I could remember. I had often enough, indeed, pictured myself advanced to be a Marshal, a Duke of the Empire, a Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, and some other kickshaws of the kind, with a perfect rout of flunkeys correctly dressed in my own colours. But it is one thing to imagine, and another to see; it would be one thing to have these liveries in a house of my own in Paris — it was quite another to find them flaunting in the heart of hostile England; and I fear I should have made a fool of myself, if the man had not been on the other side of the street, and I at a one-pane window. There was something illusory in this transplantation of the wealth and honours of a family, a thing by its nature so deeply rooted in the soil; something ghostly in this sense of home-coming so far from home.

From Dunstable I rolled away into a crescendo of similar impressions. There are certainly few things to be compared with these castles, or rather country seats, of the English nobility and gentry; nor anything at all to equal the servility of the population that dwells in their neighbourhood. Though I was but driving in a hired chaise, word of my destination seemed to have gone abroad, and the women curtseyed and the men louted to me by the wayside. As I came near, I began to appreciate the roots of this widespread respect. The look of my uncle's park wall, even from the outside, had something of a princely character; and when I came in view of the house itself, a sort of madness of vicarious vain-glory struck me dumb and kept me staring. It was about the size of the Tuileries. It faced due north; and the last rays of the sun, that was setting like a red-hot shot amidst a tumultuous gathering of snow clouds, were reflected on the endless rows of windows. A portico of Doric columns adorned the front, and would have done honour to a temple. The servant who received me at the door was civil to a fault — I had almost said, to offence; and the hall to which he admitted me through a pair of glass doors was warmed and already partly lighted by a liberal chimney heaped with the roots of beeches.

'Vicomte Anne de St. Yves,' said I, in answer to the man's question; whereupon he bowed before me lower still, and stepping upon one side introduced me to the truly awful presence of the major-domo. I have seen many dignitaries in my time, but none who quite equalled this eminent being; who was good enough to answer to the unassuming name of Dawson. From him I learned that my uncle was extremely low, a doctor in close attendance, Mr. Romaine expected at any moment, and that my cousin, the Vicomte de St. Yves, had been sent for the same morning.

'It was a sudden seizure, then?' I asked.

Well, he would scarcely go as far as that. It was a decline, a fading away, sir; but he was certainly took bad the day before, had sent for Mr. Romaine, and the major-domo had taken it on himself a little later to send word to the Viscount. 'It seemed to me, my lord,' said he, 'as if this was a time when all the fambly should be called together.'

I approved him with my lips, but not in my heart. Dawson was plainly in the interests of my cousin.

'And when can I expect to see my great-uncle, the Count?' said I.

In the evening, I was told; in the meantime he would show me to my room, which had been long prepared for me, and I should be expected to dine in about an hour with the doctor, if my lordship had no objections.

My lordship had not the faintest.

'At the same time,' I said, 'I have had an accident: I have unhappily lost my baggage, and am here in what I stand in. I don't know if the doctor be a formalist, but it is quite impossible I should appear at table as I ought.'

He begged me to be under no anxiety. 'We have been long expecting you,' said he. 'All is ready.'

Such I found to be the truth. A great room had been prepared for me; through the mullioned windows the last flicker of the winter sunset interchanged with the reverberation of a royal fire; the bed was open, a suit of evening clothes was airing before the blaze, and from the far corner a boy came forward with deprecatory smiles. The dream in which I had been moving seemed to have reached its pitch. I might have quitted this house and room only the night before; it was my own place that I had come to; and for the first time in my life I understood the force of the words home and welcome.

'This will be all as you would want, sir?' said Mr. Dawson. 'This 'ere boy, Rowley, we place entirely at your disposition. 'E's not exactly a trained vallet, but Mossho Powl, the Viscount's gentleman, 'ave give him the benefick of a few lessons, and it is 'oped that he may give sitisfection. Hanythink that you may require, if you will be so good as to mention the same to Rowley, I will make it my business myself, sir, to see you sitisfied.'

So saying, the eminent and already detested Mr. Dawson took his departure, and I was left alone with Rowley. A man who may be said to have wakened to consciousness in the prison of the Abbaye, among those ever graceful and ever tragic figures of the brave and fair, awaiting the hour of the guillotine and denuded of every comfort, I had never known the luxuries or the amenities of my rank in life. To be attended on by servants I had only been accustomed to in inns. My toilet had long been military, to a moment, at the note of a bugle, too often at a ditch-side. And it need not be wondered at if I looked on my new valet with a certain diffidence. But I remembered that if he was my first experience of a valet, I was his first trial as a master. Cheered by which consideration, I demanded my bath in a style of good assurance. There was a bathroom contiguous; in an incredibly short space of time the hot water was ready; and soon after, arrayed in a shawl dressing-gown, and in a luxury of contentment and comfort, I was reclined in an easy-chair before the mirror, while Rowley, with a mixture of pride and anxiety which I could well understand, laid out his razors.

'Hey, Rowley?' I asked, not quite resigned to go under fire with such an inexperienced commander. 'It's all right, is it? You feel pretty sure of your weapons?’

‘Yes, my lord,’ he replied. ‘It’s all right, I assure your lordship.’

‘I beg your pardon, Mr. Rowley, ‘but for the sake of shortness, would you mind not belording me in private?’ said I. ‘It will do very well if you call me Mr. Anne. It is the way of my country, as I dare say you know.’

Mr. Rowley looked blank.

‘But you’re just as much a Viscount as Mr. Powl’s, are you not?’ he said.

‘As Mr. Powl’s Viscount?’ said I, laughing. ‘Oh, keep your mind easy, Mr. Rowley’s is every bit as good. Only, you see, as I am of the younger line, I bear my Christian name along with the title. Alain is the *Viscount*; I am the *Viscount Anne*. And in giving me the name of Mr. Anne, I assure you you will be quite regular.’

‘Yes, Mr. Anne,’ said the docile youth. ‘But about the shaving, sir, you need be under no alarm. Mr. Powl says I ‘ave excellent dispositions.’

‘Mr. Powl?’ said I. ‘That doesn’t seem to me very like a French name.’

‘No, sir, indeed, my lord,’ said he, with a burst of confidence. ‘No, indeed, Mr. Anne, and it do not surely. I should say now, it was more like Mr. Pole.’

‘And Mr. Powl is the Viscount’s man?’

‘Yes, Mr. Anne,’ said he. ‘He ‘ave a hard billet, he do. The Viscount is a very particular gentleman. I don’t think as you’ll be, Mr. Anne?’ he added, with a confidential smile in the mirror.

He was about sixteen, well set up, with a pleasant, merry, freckled face, and a pair of dancing eyes. There was an air at once deprecatory and insinuating about the rascal that I thought I recognised. There came to me from my own boyhood memories of certain passionate admirations long passed away, and the objects of them long ago discredited or dead. I remembered how anxious I had been to serve those fleeting heroes, how readily I told myself I would have died for *them*, how much greater and handsomer than life they had appeared. And looking in the mirror, it seemed to me that I read the face of Rowley, like an echo or a ghost, by the light of my own youth. I have always contended (somewhat against the opinion of my friends) that I am first of all an economist; and the last thing that I would care to throw away is that very valuable piece of property — a boy’s hero-worship.

‘Why,’ said I, ‘you shave like an angel, Mr. Rowley!’

‘Thank you, my lord,’ says he. ‘Mr. Powl had no fear of me. You may be sure, sir, I should never ‘ave had this berth if I ‘adn’t ‘ave been up to Dick. We been expecting of you this month back. My eye! I never see such preparations. Every day the fires has been kep' up, the bed made, and all! As soon as it was known you were coming, sir, I got the appointment; and I've been up and down since then like a Jack-in-the-box. A wheel couldn't sound in the avenue but what I was at the window! I've had a many disappointments; but to-night, as soon as you stepped out of the shay, I knew it was my — it was you. Oh, you had been expected! Why, when I go down to supper, I'll be the 'ero of the servants' 'all: the 'ole of the staff is that curious!'

'Well,' said I, 'I hope you may be able to give a fair account of me — sober, steady, industrious, good-tempered, and with a first-rate character from my last place?'

He laughed an embarrassed laugh. 'Your hair curls beautiful,' he said, by way of changing the subject. 'The Viscount's the boy for curls, though; and the richness of it is, Mr. Powl tells me his don't curl no more than that much twine — by nature. Gettin' old, the Viscount is. He '*ave* gone the pace, 'aven't 'e, sir?'

'The fact is,' said I, 'that I know very little about him. Our family has been much divided, and I have been a soldier from a child.'

'A soldier, Mr. Anne, sir?' cried Rowley, with a sudden feverish animation. 'Was you ever wounded?'

It is contrary to my principles to discourage admiration for myself; and, slipping back the shoulder of the dressing-gown, I silently exhibited the scar which I had received in Edinburgh Castle. He looked at it with awe.

'Ah, well!' he continued, 'there's where the difference comes in! It's in the training. The other Viscount have been horse-racing, and dicing, and carrying on all his life. All right enough, no doubt; but what I do say is, that it don't lead to nothink. Whereas — '

'Whereas Mr. Rowley's?' I put in.

'My Viscount?' said he. 'Well, sir, I *did* say it; and now that I've seen you, I say it again!'

I could not refrain from smiling at this outburst, and the rascal caught me in the mirror and smiled to me again.

'I'd say it again, Mr. Hanne,' he said. 'I know which side my bread's buttered. I know when a gen'leman's a gen'leman. Mr. Powl can go to Putney with his one! Beg your pardon, Mr. Anne, for being so familiar,' said he, blushing suddenly scarlet. 'I was especially warned against it by Mr. Powl.'

'Discipline before all,' said I. 'Follow your front-rank man.

With that, we began to turn our attention to the clothes. I was amazed to find them fit so well: not *à la diable*, in the haphazard manner of a soldier's uniform or a ready-made suit; but with nicety, as a trained artist might rejoice to make them for a favourite subject.

''Tis extraordinary,' cried I: 'these things fit me perfectly.'

‘Indeed, Mr. Anne, you two be very much of a shape,’ said Rowley.

‘Who? What two?’ said I.

‘The Viscount,’ he said.

‘Damnation! Have I the man’s clothes on me, too?’ cried I.

But Rowley hastened to reassure me. On the first word of my coming, the Count had put the matter of my wardrobe in the hands of his own and my cousin’s tailors; and on the rumour of our resemblance, my clothes had been made to Alain’s measure.

‘But they were all made for you express, Mr. Anne. You may be certain the Count would never do nothing by ‘alf: fires kep’ burning; the finest of clothes ordered, I’m sure, and a body-servant being trained a-purpose.’

‘Well,’ said I, ‘it’s a good fire, and a good set-out of clothes; and what a valet, Mr. Rowley! And there’s one thing to be said for my cousin — I mean for Mr. Powl’s Viscount — he has a very fair figure.’

‘Oh, don’t you be took in, Mr. Anne,’ quoth the faithless Rowley: ‘he has to be hyked into a pair of stays to get them things on!’

‘Come, come, Mr. Rowley,’ said I, ‘this is telling tales out of school! Do not you be deceived. The greatest men of antiquity, including Caesar and Hannibal and Pope Joan, may have been very glad, at my time of life or Alain’s, to follow his example. ‘Tis a misfortune common to all; and really,’ said I, bowing to myself before the mirror like one who should dance the minuet, ‘when the result is so successful as this, who would do anything but applaud?’

My toilet concluded, I marched on to fresh surprises. My chamber, my new valet and my new clothes had been beyond hope: the dinner, the soup, the whole bill of fare was a revelation of the powers there are in man. I had not supposed it lay in the genius of any cook to create, out of common beef and mutton, things so different and dainty. The wine was of a piece, the doctor a most agreeable companion; nor could I help reflecting on the prospect that all this wealth, comfort and handsome profusion might still very possibly become mine. Here were a change indeed, from the common soldier and the camp kettle, the prisoner and his prison rations, the fugitive and the horrors of the covered cart!

CHAPTER XVII — THE DESPATCH-BOX

The doctor had scarce finished his meal before he hastened with an apology to attend upon his patient; and almost immediately after I was myself summoned and ushered up the great staircase and along interminable corridors to the bedside of my great-uncle the Count. You are to think that up to the present moment I had not set eyes on this formidable personage, only on the evidences of his wealth and kindness. You are to think besides that I had heard him miscalled and abused from my earliest childhood up. The first of the *émigrés* could never expect a good word in the society in which my father moved. Even yet the reports I received were of a doubtful nature; even Romaine had drawn of him no very amiable portrait; and as I was ushered into the room, it was a critical eye that I cast on my great-uncle. He lay propped on pillows in a little cot no greater than a camp-bed, not visibly breathing. He was about eighty years of age, and looked it; not that his face was much lined, but all the blood and colour seemed to have faded from his body, and even his eyes, which last he kept usually closed as though the light distressed him. There was an unspeakable degree of slyness in his expression, which kept me ill at ease; he seemed to lie there with his arms folded, like a spider waiting for prey. His speech was very deliberate and courteous, but scarce louder than a sigh.

‘I bid you welcome, *Monsieur le Vicomte Anne*,’ said he, looking at me hard with his pale eyes, but not moving on his pillows. ‘I have sent for you, and I thank you for the obliging expedition you have shown. It is my misfortune that I cannot rise to receive you. I trust you have been reasonably well entertained?’

‘*Monsieur mon oncle*,’ I said, bowing very low, ‘I am come at the summons of the head of my family.’

‘It is well,’ he said. ‘Be seated. I should be glad to hear some news — if that can be called news that is already twenty years old — of how I have the pleasure to see you here.’

By the coldness of his address, not more than by the nature of the times that he bade me recall, I was plunged in melancholy. I felt myself surrounded as with deserts of friendlessness, and the delight of my welcome was turned to ashes in my mouth.

‘That is soon told, *monseigneur*,’ said I. ‘I understand that I need tell you nothing of the end of my unhappy parents? It is only the story of the lost dog.’

‘You are right. I am sufficiently informed of that deplorable affair; it is painful to me. My nephew, your father, was a man who would not be advised,’ said he. ‘Tell me, if you please, simply of yourself.’

'I am afraid I must run the risk of harrowing your sensibility in the beginning,' said I, with a bitter smile, 'because my story begins at the foot of the guillotine. When the list came out that night, and her name was there, I was already old enough, not in years but in sad experience, to understand the extent of my misfortune. She — ' I paused. 'Enough that she arranged with a friend, Madame de Chasserades, that she should take charge of me, and by the favour of our jailers I was suffered to remain in the shelter of the *Abbaye*. That was my only refuge; there was no corner of France that I could rest the sole of my foot upon except the prison. Monsieur le Comte, you are as well aware as I can be what kind of a life that was, and how swiftly death smote in that society. I did not wait long before the name of Madame de Chasserades succeeded to that of my mother on the list. She passed me on to Madame de Noytot; she, in her turn, to Mademoiselle de Braye; and there were others. I was the one thing permanent; they were all transient as clouds; a day or two of their care, and then came the last farewell and — somewhere far off in that roaring Paris that surrounded us — the bloody scene. I was the cherished one, the last comfort, of these dying women. I have been in pitched fights, my lord, and I never knew such courage. It was all done smiling, in the tone of good society; *belle maman* was the name I was taught to give to each; and for a day or two the new "pretty mamma" would make much of me, show me off, teach me the minuet, and to say my prayers; and then, with a tender embrace, would go the way of her predecessors, smiling. There were some that wept too. There was a childhood! All the time Monsieur de Culemberg kept his eye on me, and would have had me out of the *Abbaye* and in his own protection, but my "pretty mammas" one after another resisted the idea. Where could I be safer? they argued; and what was to become of them without the darling of the prison? Well, it was soon shown how safe I was! The dreadful day of the massacre came; the prison was overrun; none paid attention to me, not even the last of my "pretty mammas," for she had met another fate. I was wandering distracted, when I was found by some one in the interests of Monsieur de Culemberg. I understand he was sent on purpose; I believe, in order to reach the interior of the prison, he had set his hand to nameless barbarities: such was the price paid for my worthless, whimpering little life! He gave me his hand; it was wet, and mine was reddened; he led me unresisting. I remember but the one circumstance of my flight — it was my last view of my last pretty mamma. Shall I describe it to you?' I asked the Count, with a sudden fierceness.

'Avoid unpleasant details,' observed my great-uncle gently.

At these words a sudden peace fell upon me. I had been angry with the man before; I had not sought to spare him; and now, in a moment, I saw that there was nothing to spare. Whether from natural heartlessness or extreme old age, the soul was not at home; and my benefactor, who had kept the fire lit in my room for a month past — my only relative except Alain, whom I knew already to be a hired spy — had trodden out the last sparks of hope and interest.

'Certainly,' said I; 'and, indeed, the day for them is nearly over. I was taken to Monsieur de Culemberg's, — I presume, sir, that you know the Abbe de Culemberg?'

He indicated assent without opening his eyes.

'He was a very brave and a very learned man — '

'And a very holy one,' said my uncle civilly.

'And a very holy one, as you observe,' I continued. 'He did an infinity of good, and through all the Terror kept himself from the guillotine. He brought me up, and gave me such education as I have. It was in his house in the country at Dammarie, near Melun, that I made the acquaintance of your agent, Mr. Vicary, who lay there in hiding, only to fall a victim at the last to a gang of *chauffeurs*.'

'That poor Mr. Vicary!' observed my uncle. 'He had been many times in my interests to France, and this was his first failure. *Quel charmant homme, n'est-ce pas*?'

'Infinitely so,' said I. 'But I would not willingly detain you any further with a story, the details of which it must naturally be more or less unpleasant for you to hear. Suffice it that, by M. de Culemberg's own advice, I said farewell at eighteen to that kind preceptor and his books, and entered the service of France; and have since then carried arms in such a manner as not to disgrace my family.'

'You narrate well; *vous aves la voix chaude*,' said my uncle, turning on his pillows as if to study me. 'I have a very good account of you by Monsieur de Mauseant, whom you helped in Spain. And you had some education from the Abbe de Culemberg, a man of a good house? Yes, you will do very well. You have a good manner and a handsome person, which hurts nothing. We are all handsome in the family; even I myself, I have had my successes, the memories of which still charm me. It is my intention, my nephew, to make of you my heir. I am not very well content with my other nephew, Monsieur le Vicomte: he has not been respectful, which is the flattery due to age. And there are other matters.'

I was half tempted to throw back in his face that inheritance so coldly offered. At the same time I had to consider that he was an old man, and, after all, my relation; and that I was a poor one, in considerable straits, with a hope at heart which that inheritance might yet enable me to realise. Nor could I forget that, however icy his manners, he had behaved to me from the first with the extreme of liberality and — I was about to write, kindness, but the word, in that connection, would not come. I really owed the man some measure of gratitude, which it would be an ill manner to repay if I were to insult him on his deathbed.

'Your will, monsieur, must ever be my rule,' said I, bowing.

'You have wit, *monsieur mon neveu,*' said he, 'the best wit — the wit of silence. Many might have deafened me with their gratitude. Gratitude!' he repeated, with a peculiar intonation, and lay and smiled to himself. 'But to approach what is more important. As a prisoner of war, will it be possible for you to be served heir to English estates? I have no idea: long as I have dwelt in England, I have never studied what they call their laws. On the other hand, how if Romaine should come too late? I have two pieces of business to be transacted — to die, and to make my will; and, however desirous I may be to serve you, I cannot postpone the first in favour of the second beyond a very few hours.'

'Well, sir, I must then contrive to be doing as I did before,' said I.

'Not so,' said the Count. 'I have an alternative. I have just drawn my balance at my banker's, a considerable sum, and I am now to place it in your hands. It will be so much for you and so much less — ' he paused, and smiled with an air of malignity that surprised me. 'But it is necessary it should be done before witnesses. *Monsieur le Vicomte* is of a particular disposition, and an unwitnessed donation may very easily be twisted into a theft.'

He touched a bell, which was answered by a man having the appearance of a confidential valet. To him he gave a key.

'Bring me the despatch-box that came yesterday, La Ferriere,' said he. 'You will at the same time present my compliments to Dr. Hunter and M. l'Abbe, and request them to step for a few moments to my room.'

The despatch-box proved to be rather a bulky piece of baggage, covered with Russia leather. Before the doctor and an excellent old smiling priest it was passed over into my hands with a very clear statement of the disposer's wishes; immediately after which, though the witnesses remained behind to draw up and sign a joint note of the transaction, Monsieur de Kéroual dismissed me to my own room, La Ferriere following with the invaluable box.

At my chamber door I took it from him with thanks, and entered alone. Everything had been already disposed for the night, the curtains drawn and the fire trimmed; and Rowley was still busy with my bedclothes. He turned round as I entered with a look of welcome that did my heart good. Indeed, I had never a much greater need of human sympathy, however trivial, than at that moment when I held a fortune in my arms. In my uncle's room I had breathed the very atmosphere of disenchantment. He had gorged my pockets; he had starved every dignified or affectionate sentiment of a man. I had received so chilling an impression of age and experience that the mere look of youth drew me to confide in Rowley: he was only a boy, his heart must beat yet, he must still retain some innocence and natural feelings, he could blurt out follies with his mouth, he was not a machine to utter perfect speech! At the same time, I was beginning to outgrow the painful impressions of my interview; my spirits were beginning to revive; and at the jolly, empty looks of Mr. Rowley, as he ran forward to relieve me of the box, St. Ives became himself again.

'Now, Rowley, don't be in a hurry,' said I. 'This is a momentous juncture. Man and boy, you have been in my service about three hours. You must already have observed that I am a gentleman of a somewhat morose disposition, and there is nothing that I more dislike than the smallest appearance of familiarity. Mr. Pole or Mr. Powl, probably in the spirit of prophecy, warned you against this danger.'

'Yes, Mr. Anne,' said Rowley blankly.

'Now there has just arisen one of those rare cases, in which I am willing to depart from my principles. My uncle has given me a box — what you would call a Christmas box. I don't know what's in it, and no more do you: perhaps I am an April fool, or perhaps I am already enormously wealthy; there might be five hundred pounds in this apparently harmless receptacle!'

'Lord, Mr. Anne!' cried Rowley.

'Now, Rowley, hold up your right hand and repeat the words of the oath after me,' said I, laying the despatch-box on the table. 'Strike me blue if I ever disclose to Mr. Powl, or Mr. Powl's Viscount, or anything that is Mr. Powl's, not to mention Mr. Dawson and the doctor, the treasures of the following despatch-box; and strike me sky-blue scarlet if I do not continually maintain, uphold, love, honour and obey, serve, and follow to the four corners of the earth and the waters that are under the earth, the hereinafter before-mentioned (only that I find I have neglected to mention him) Viscount Anne de Kéroual de St.-Yves, commonly known as Mr. Rowley's Viscount. So be it. Amen.'

He took the oath with the same exaggerated seriousness as I gave it to him.

'Now,' said I. 'Here is the key for you; I will hold the lid with both hands in the meanwhile.' He turned the key. 'Bring up all the candles in the room, and range them along-side. What is it to be? A live gorgon, a Jack-in-the-box, or a spring that fires a pistol? On your knees, sir, before the prodigy!'

So saying, I turned the despatch-box upside down upon the table. At sight of the heap of bank paper and gold that lay in front of us, between the candles, or rolled upon the floor alongside, I stood astonished.

‘O Lord!’ cried Mr. Rowley; ‘oh Lordy, Lordy, Lord!’ and he scrambled after the fallen guineas. ‘O my, Mr. Anne! what a sight o’ money! Why, it’s like a blessed story-book. It’s like the Forty Thieves.’

‘Now Rowley, let’s be cool, let’s be businesslike,’ said I. ‘Riches are deceitful, particularly when you haven’t counted them; and the first thing we have to do is to arrive at the amount of my — let me say, modest competency. If I’m not mistaken, I have enough here to keep you in gold buttons all the rest of your life. You collect the gold, and I’ll take the paper.’

Accordingly, down we sat together on the hearthrug, and for some time there was no sound but the creasing of bills and the jingling of guineas, broken occasionally by the exulting exclamations of Rowley. The arithmetical operation on which we were embarked took long, and it might have been tedious to others; not to me nor to my helper.

‘Ten thousand pounds!’ I announced at last.

‘Ten thousand!’ echoed Mr. Rowley.

And we gazed upon each other.

The greatness of this fortune took my breath away. With that sum in my hands, I need fear no enemies. People are arrested, in nine cases out of ten, not because the police are astute, but because they themselves run short of money; and I had here before me in the despatch-box a succession of devices and disguises that insured my liberty. Not only so; but, as I felt with a sudden and overpowering thrill, with ten thousand pounds in my hands I was become an eligible suitor. What advances I had made in the past, as a private soldier in a military prison, or a fugitive by the wayside, could only be qualified or, indeed, excused as acts of desperation. And now, I might come in by the front door; I might approach the dragon with a lawyer at my elbow, and rich settlements to offer. The poor French prisoner, Champdivers, might be in a perpetual danger of arrest; but the rich travelling Englishman, St.-Ives, in his post-chaise, with his despatch-box by his side, could smile at fate and laugh at locksmiths. I repeated the proverb, exulting, *Love laughs at locksmiths*! In a moment, by the mere coming of this money, my love had become possible — it had come near, it was under my hand — and it may be by one of the curiosities of human nature, but it burned that instant brighter.

‘Rowley,’ said I, ‘your Viscount is a made man.’

‘Why, we both are, sir,’ said Rowley.

‘Yes, both,’ said I; ‘and you shall dance at the wedding;’ and I flung at his head a bundle of bank notes, and had just followed it up with a handful of guineas, when the door opened, and Mr. Romaine appeared upon the threshold.

CHAPTER XVIII — MR. ROMAINE CALLS ME NAMES

Feeling very much of a fool to be thus taken by surprise, I scrambled to my feet and hastened to make my visitor welcome. He did not refuse me his hand; but he gave it with a coldness and distance for which I was quite unprepared, and his countenance, as he looked on me, was marked in a strong degree with concern and severity.

‘So, sir, I find you here?’ said he, in tones of little encouragement. ‘Is that you, George? You can run away; I have business with your master.’

He showed Rowley out, and locked the door behind him. Then he sat down in an armchair on one side of the fire, and looked at me with uncompromising sternness.

‘I am hesitating how to begin,’ said he. ‘In this singular labyrinth of blunders and difficulties that you have prepared for us, I am positively hesitating where to begin. It will perhaps be best that you should read, first of all, this paragraph.’ And he handed over to me a newspaper.

The paragraph in question was brief. It announced the recapture of one of the prisoners recently escaped from Edinburgh Castle; gave his name, Clausel, and added that he had entered into the particulars of the recent revolting murder in the Castle, and denounced the murderer: —

‘It is a common soldier called Champdivers, who had himself escaped, and is in all probability involved in the common fate of his comrades. In spite of the activity along all the Forth and the East Coast, nothing has yet been seen of the sloop which these desperadoes seized at Grangemouth, and it is now almost certain that they have found a watery grave.’

At the reading of this paragraph, my heart turned over. In a moment I saw my castle in the air ruined; myself changed from a mere military fugitive into a hunted murderer, fleeing from the gallows; my love, which had a moment since appeared so near to me, blotted from the field of possibility. Despair, which was my first sentiment, did not, however, endure for more than a moment. I saw that my companions had indeed succeeded in their unlikely design; and that I was supposed to have accompanied and perished along with them by shipwreck — a most probable ending to their enterprise. If they thought me at the bottom of the North Sea, I need not fear much vigilance on the streets of Edinburgh. Champdivers was wanted: what was to connect him with St. Ives? Major Chevenix would recognise me if he met me; that was beyond bargaining: he had seen me so often, his interest had been kindled to so high a point, that I could hope to deceive him by no stratagem of disguise. Well, even so; he would have a competition of testimony before him: he knew Clausel, he knew me, and I was sure he would decide for honour. At the same time the image of Flora shot up in my mind's eye with such a radiancy as fairly overwhelmed all other considerations; the blood sprang to every corner of my body, and I vowed I would see and win her, if it cost my neck.

'Very annoying, no doubt,' said I, as I returned the paper to Mr. Romaine.

'Is annoying your word for it?' said he.

'Exasperating, if you like,' I admitted.

'And true?' he inquired.

'Well, true in a sense,' said I. 'But perhaps I had better answer that question by putting you in possession of the facts?'

'I think so, indeed,' said he.

I narrated to him as much as seemed necessary of the quarrel, the duel, the death of Goguelat, and the character of Clausel. He heard me through in a forbidding silence, nor did he at all betray the nature of his sentiments, except that, at the episode of the scissors, I could observe his mulberry face to turn three shades paler.

'I suppose I may believe you?' said he, when I had done.

'Or else conclude this interview,' said I.

'Can you not understand that we are here discussing matters of the gravest import? Can you not understand that I feel myself weighed with a load of responsibility on your account — that you should take this occasion to air your fire-eating manners against your own attorney? There are serious hours in life, Mr. Anne,' he said severely. 'A capital charge, and that of a very brutal character and with singularly unpleasant details; the presence of the man Clausel, who (according to your account of it) is actuated by sentiments of real malignity, and prepared to swear black white; all the other witnesses scattered and perhaps drowned at sea; the natural prejudice against a Frenchman and a runaway prisoner: this makes a serious total for your lawyer to consider, and is by no means lessened by the incurable folly and levity of your own disposition.'

'I beg your pardon!' said I.

'Oh, my expressions have been selected with scrupulous accuracy,' he replied. 'How did I find you, sir, when I came to announce this catastrophe? You were sitting on the hearthrug playing, like a silly baby, with a servant, were you not, and the floor all scattered with gold and bank paper? There was a tableau for you! It was I who came, and you were lucky in that. It might have been any one — your cousin as well as another.'

'You have me there, sir,' I admitted. 'I had neglected all precautions, and you do right to be angry. *Apropos*, Mr. Romaine, how did you come yourself, and how long have you been in the house?' I added, surprised, on the retrospect, not to have heard him arrive.

'I drove up in a chaise and pair,' he returned. 'Any one might have heard me. But you were not listening, I suppose? being so extremely at your ease in the very house of your enemy, and under a capital charge! And I have been long enough here to do your business for you. Ah, yes, I did it, God forgive me! — did it before I so much as asked you the explanation of the paragraph. For some time back the will has been prepared; now it is signed; and your uncle has heard nothing of your recent piece of activity. Why? Well, I had no fancy to bother him on his death-bed: you might be innocent; and at bottom I preferred the murderer to the spy.'

No doubt of it but the man played a friendly part; no doubt also that, in his ill-temper and anxiety, he expressed himself unpalatably.

'You will perhaps find me over delicate,' said I. 'There is a word you employed — '

'I employ the words of my brief, sir,' he cried, striking with his hand on the newspaper. 'It is there in six letters. And do not be so certain — you have not stood your trial yet. It is an ugly affair, a fishy business. It is highly disagreeable. I would give my hand off — I mean I would give a hundred pound down, to have nothing to do with it. And, situated as we are, we must at once take action. There is here no choice. You must at once quit this country, and get to France, or Holland, or, indeed, to Madagascar.'

'There may be two words to that,' said I.

'Not so much as one syllable!' he retorted. 'Here is no room for argument. The case is nakedly plain. In the disgusting position in which you have found means to place yourself, all that is to be hoped for is delay. A time may come when we shall be able to do better. It cannot be now: now it would be the gibbet.'

'You labour under a false impression, Mr. Romaine,' said I. 'I have no impatience to figure in the dock. I am even as anxious as yourself to postpone my first appearance there. On the other hand, I have not the slightest intention of leaving this country, where I please myself extremely. I have a good address, a ready tongue, an English accent that passes, and, thanks to the generosity of my uncle, as much money as I want. It would be hard indeed if, with all these advantages, Mr. St. Ives should not be able to live quietly in a private lodging, while the authorities amuse themselves by looking for Champdivers. You forget, there is no connection between these two personages.'

‘And you forget your cousin,’ retorted Romaine. ‘There is the link. There is the tongue of the buckle. He knows you are Champdivers.’ He put up his hand as if to listen. ‘And, for a wager, here he is himself!’ he exclaimed.

As when a tailor takes a piece of goods upon his counter, and rends it across, there came to our ears from the avenue the long tearing sound of a chaise and four approaching at the top speed of the horses. And, looking out between the curtains, we beheld the lamps skimming on the smooth ascent.

‘Ay,’ said Romaine, wiping the window-pane that he might see more clearly. ‘Ay, that is he by the driving! So he squanders money along the king’s highway, the triple idiot! gorging every man he meets with gold for the pleasure of arriving — where? Ah, yes, where but a debtor’s jail, if not a criminal prison!’

‘Is he that kind of a man?’ I said, staring on these lamps as though I could decipher in them the secret of my cousin’s character.

‘You will find him a dangerous kind,’ answered the lawyer. ‘For you, these are the lights on a lee shore! I find I fall in a muse when I consider of him; what a formidable being he once was, and what a personable! and how near he draws to the moment that must break him utterly! we none of us like him here; we hate him, rather; and yet I have a sense — I don’t think at my time of life it can be pity — but a reluctance rather, to break anything so big and figurative, as though he were a big porcelain pot or a big picture of high price. Ay, there is what I was waiting for!’ he cried, as the lights of a second chaise swam in sight. ‘It is he beyond a doubt. The first was the signature and the next the flourish. Two chaises, the second following with the baggage, which is always copious and ponderous, and one of his valets: he cannot go a step without a valet.’

‘I hear you repeat the word big,’ said I. ‘But it cannot be that he is anything out of the way in stature.’

‘No,’ said the attorney. ‘About your height, as I guessed for the tailors, and I see nothing wrong with the result. But, somehow, he commands an atmosphere; he has a spacious manner; and he has kept up, all through life, such a volume of racket about his personality, with his chaises and his racers and his dicings, and I know not what — that somehow he imposes! It seems, when the farce is done, and he locked in Fleet prison — and nobody left but Buonaparte and Lord Wellington and the Hetman Platoff to make a work about — the world will be in a comparison quite tranquil. But this is beside the mark,’ he added, with an effort, turning again from the window. ‘We are now under fire, Mr. Anne, as you soldiers would say, and it is high time we should prepare to go into action. He must not see you; that would be fatal. All that he knows at present is that you resemble him, and that is much more than enough. If it were possible, it would be well he should not know you were in the house.'

'Quite impossible, depend upon it,' said I. 'Some of the servants are directly in his interests, perhaps in his pay: Dawson, for an example.'

'My own idea!' cried Romaine. 'And at least,' he added, as the first of the chaises drew up with a dash in front of the portico, 'it is now too late. Here he is.'

We stood listening, with a strange anxiety, to the various noises that awoke in the silent house: the sound of doors opening and closing, the sound of feet near at hand and farther off. It was plain the arrival of my cousin was a matter of moment, almost of parade, to the household. And suddenly, out of this confused and distant bustle, a rapid and light tread became distinguishable. We heard it come upstairs, draw near along the corridor, pause at the door, and a stealthy and hasty rapping succeeded.

'Mr. Anne — Mr. Anne, sir! Let me in!' said the voice of Rowley.

We admitted the lad, and locked the door again behind him.

'It's *him*, sir,' he panted. 'He've come.'

'You mean the Viscount?' said I. 'So we supposed. But come, Rowley — out with the rest of it! You have more to tell us, or your face belies you !'

'Mr. Anne, I do,' he said. 'Mr. Romaine, sir, you're a friend of his, ain't you?'

'Yes, George, I am a friend of his,' said Romaine, and, to my great surprise, laid his hand upon my shoulder.

'Well, it's this way,' said Rowley — 'Mr. Powl have been at me! It's to play the spy! I thought he was at it from the first! From the first I see what he was after — coming round and round, and hinting things! But to-night he outs with it plump! I'm to let him hear all what you're to do beforehand, he says; and he gave me this for an arnest' — holding up half a guinea; 'and I took it, so I did! Strike me sky-blue scarlet?' says he, adducing the words of the mock oath; and he looked askance at me as he did so.

I saw that he had forgotten himself, and that he knew it. The expression of his eye changed almost in the passing of the glance from the significant to the appealing — from the look of an accomplice to that of a culprit; and from that moment he became the model of a well-drilled valet.

'Sky-blue scarlet?' repeated the lawyer. 'Is the fool delirious?'

'No,' said I; 'he is only reminding me of something.'

'Well — and I believe the fellow will be faithful,' said Romaine. 'So you are a friend of Mr. Anne's' too?' he added to Rowley.

'If you please, sir,' said Rowley.

''Tis something sudden,' observed Romaine; 'but it may be genuine enough. I believe him to be honest. He comes of honest people. Well, George Rowley, you might embrace some early opportunity to earn that half-guinea, by telling Mr. Powl that your master will not leave here till noon to-morrow, if he go even then. Tell him there are a hundred things to be done here, and a hundred more that can only be done properly at my office in Holborn. Come to think of it — we had better see to that first of all,' he went on, unlocking the door. 'Get hold of Powl, and see. And be quick back, and clear me up this mess.'

Mr. Rowley was no sooner gone than the lawyer took a pinch of snuff, and regarded me with somewhat of a more genial expression.

'Sir,' said he, 'it is very fortunate for you that your face is so strong a letter of recommendation. Here am I, a tough old practitioner, mixing myself up with your very distressing business; and here is this farmer's lad, who has the wit to take a bribe and the loyalty to come and tell you of it — all, I take it, on the strength of your appearance. I wish I could imagine how it would impress a jury!' says he.

'And how it would affect the hangman, sir?' I asked

'*Absit omen*!' said Mr. Romaine devoutly.

We were just so far in our talk, when I heard a sound that brought my heart into my mouth: the sound of some one slyly trying the handle of the door. It had been preceded by no audible footstep. Since the departure of Rowley our wing of the house had been entirely silent. And we had every right to suppose ourselves alone, and to conclude that the new-comer, whoever he might be, was come on a clandestine, if not a hostile, errand.

'Who is there?' asked Romaine.

'It's only me, sir,' said the soft voice of Dawson. 'It's the Viscount, sir. He is very desirous to speak with you on business.'

'Tell him I shall come shortly, Dawson,' said the lawyer. 'I am at present engaged.'

'Thank you, sir!' said Dawson.

And we heard his feet draw off slowly along the corridor.

'Yes,' said Mr. Romaine, speaking low, and maintaining the attitude of one intently listening, 'there is another foot. I cannot be deceived!'

'I think there was indeed!' said I. 'And what troubles me — I am not sure that the other has gone entirely away. By the time it got the length of the head of the stair the tread was plainly single.'

'Ahem — blockaded?' asked the lawyer.

'A siege *en règle*!' I exclaimed.

'Let us come farther from the door,' said Romaine, 'and reconsider this damnable position. Without doubt, Alain was this moment at the door. He hoped to enter and get a view of you, as if by accident. Baffled in this, has he stayed himself, or has he planted Dawson here by way of sentinel?'

‘Himself, beyond a doubt,’ said I. ‘And yet to what end? He cannot think to pass the night there!’

‘If it were only possible to pay no heed!’ said Mr. Romaine. ‘But this is the accursed drawback of your position. We can do nothing openly. I must smuggle you out of this room and out of this house like seizable goods; and how am I to set about it with a sentinel planted at your very door?’

‘There is no good in being agitated,’ said I.

‘None at all,’ he acquiesced. ‘And, come to think of it, it is droll enough that I should have been that very moment commenting on your personal appearance, when your cousin came upon this mission. I was saying, if you remember, that your face was as good or better than a letter of recommendation. I wonder if M. Alain would be like the rest of us — I wonder what he would think of it?’

Mr. Romaine was sitting in a chair by the fire with his back to the windows, and I was myself kneeling on the hearthrug and beginning mechanically to pick up the scattered bills, when a honeyed voice joined suddenly in our conversation.

‘He thinks well of it, Mr. Romaine. He begs to join himself to that circle of admirers which you indicate to exist already.’

CHAPTER XIX — THE DEVIL AND ALL AT AMERSHAM PLACE

Never did two human creatures get to their feet with more alacrity than the lawyer and myself. We had locked and barred the main gates of the citadel; but unhappily we had left open the bath-room sally-port; and here we found the voice of the hostile trumpets sounding from within, and all our defences taken in reverse. I took but the time to whisper Mr. Romaine in the ear: 'Here is another tableau for you!' at which he looked at me a moment with a kind of pathos, as who should say, 'Don't hit a man when he's down.' Then I transferred my eyes to my enemy.

He had his hat on, a little on one side: it was a very tall hat, raked extremely, and had a narrow curling brim. His hair was all curled out in masses like an Italian mountebank — a most unpardonable fashion. He sported a huge tippeted overcoat of frieze, such as watchmen wear, only the inside was lined with costly furs, and he kept it half open to display the exquisite linen, the many-coloured waistcoat, and the profuse jewellery of watch-chains and brooches underneath. The leg and the ankle were turned to a miracle. It is out of the question that I should deny the resemblance altogether, since it has been remarked by so many different persons whom I cannot reasonably accuse of a conspiracy. As a matter of fact, I saw little of it and confessed to nothing. Certainly he was what some might call handsome, of a pictorial, exuberant style of beauty, all attitude, profile, and impudence: a man whom I could see in fancy parade on the grand stand at a race-meeting or swagger in Piccadilly, staring down the women, and stared at himself with admiration by the coal-porters. Of his frame of mind at that moment his face offered a lively if an unconscious picture. He was lividly pale, and his lip was caught up in a smile that could almost be called a snarl, of a sheer, arid malignity that appalled me and yet put me on my mettle for the encounter. He looked me up and down, then bowed and took off his hat to me.

'My cousin, I presume?' he said.

'I understand I have that honour,' I replied.

'The honour is mine,' said he, and his voice shook as he said it.

'I should make you welcome, I believe,' said I.

'Why?' he inquired. 'This poor house has been my home for longer than I care to claim. That you should already take upon yourself the duties of host here is to be at unnecessary pains. Believe me, that part would be more becomingly mine. And, by the way, I must not fail to offer you my little compliment. It is a gratifying surprise to meet you in the dress of a gentleman, and to see' — with a circular look upon the scattered bills — 'that your necessities have already been so liberally relieved.'

I bowed with a smile that was perhaps no less hateful than his own.

'There are so many necessities in this world,' said I. 'Charity has to choose. One gets relieved, and some other, no less indigent, perhaps indebted, must go wanting.'

'Malice is an engaging trait,' said he.

'And envy, I think?' was my reply.

He must have felt that he was not getting wholly the better of this passage at arms; perhaps even feared that he should lose command of his temper, which he reined in throughout the interview as with a red-hot curb, for he flung away from me at the word, and addressed the lawyer with insulting arrogance.

'Mr. Romaine,' he said, 'since when have you presumed to give orders in this house?'

'I am not prepared to admit that I have given any,' replied Romaine; 'certainly none that did not fall in the sphere of my responsibilities.'

'By whose orders, then, am I denied entrance to my uncle's room?' said my cousin.

'By the doctor's, sir,' replied Romaine; 'and I think even you will admit his faculty to give them.'

'Have a care, sir,' cried Alain. 'Do not be puffed up with your position. It is none so secure, Master Attorney. I should not wonder in the least if you were struck off the rolls for this night's work, and the next I should see of you were when I flung you alms at a pothouse door to mend your ragged elbows. The doctor's orders? But I believe I am not mistaken! You have to-night transacted business with the Count; and this needy young gentleman has enjoyed the privilege of still another interview, in which (as I am pleased to see) his dignity has not prevented his doing very well for himself. I wonder that you should care to prevaricate with me so idly.'

'I will confess so much,' said Mr. Romaine, 'if you call it prevarication. The order in question emanated from the Count himself. He does not wish to see you.'

'For which I must take the word of Mr. Daniel Romaine?' asked Alain.

'In default of any better,' said Romaine.

There was an instantaneous convulsion in my cousin's face, and I distinctly heard him gnash his teeth at this reply; but, to my surprise, he resumed in tones of almost good humour:

'Come, Mr. Romaine, do not let us be petty!' He drew in a chair and sat down. 'Understand you have stolen a march upon me. You have introduced your soldier of Napoleon, and (how, I cannot conceive) he has been apparently accepted with favour. I ask no better proof than the funds with which I find him literally surrounded — I presume in consequence of some extravagance of joy at the first sight of so much money. The odds are so far in your favour, but the match is not yet won. Questions will arise of undue influence, of sequestration, and the like: I have my witnesses ready. I tell it you cynically, for you cannot profit by the knowledge; and, if the worst come to the worst, I have good hopes of recovering my own and of ruining you.'

'You do what you please,' answered Romaine; 'but I give it you for a piece of good advice, you had best do nothing in the matter. You will only make yourself ridiculous; you will only squander money, of which you have none too much, and reap public mortification.'

'Ah, but there you make the common mistake, Mr. Romaine!' returned Alain. 'You despise your adversary. Consider, if you please, how very disagreeable I could make myself, if I chose. Consider the position of your *protégé* — an escaped prisoner! But I play a great game. I condemn such petty opportunities.'

At this Romaine and I exchanged a glance of triumph. It seemed manifest that Alain had as yet received no word of Clausel's recapture and denunciation. At the same moment the lawyer, thus relieved of the instancy of his fear, changed his tactics. With a great air of unconcern, he secured the newspaper, which still lay open before him on the table.

'I think, Monsieur Alain, that you labour under some illusion,' said he. 'Believe me, this is all beside the mark. You seem to be pointing to some compromise. Nothing is further from my views. You suspect me of an inclination to trifle with you, to conceal how things are going. I cannot, on the other hand, be too early or too explicit in giving you information which concerns you (I must say) capitally. Your great-uncle has to-night cancelled his will, and made a new one in favour of your cousin Anne. Nay, and you shall hear it from his own lips, if you choose! I will take so much upon me,' said the lawyer, rising. 'Follow me, if you please, gentlemen.'

Mr. Romaine led the way out of the room so briskly, and was so briskly followed by Alain, that I had hard ado to get the remainder of the money replaced and the despatch-box locked, and to overtake them, even by running ere they should be lost in that maze of corridors, my uncle's house. As it was, I went with a heart divided; and the thought of my treasure thus left unprotected, save by a paltry lid and lock that any one might break or pick open, put me in a perspiration whenever I had the time to remember it. The lawyer brought us to a room, begged us to be seated while he should hold a consultation with the doctor, and, slipping out of another door, left

Alain and myself closeted together.

Truly he had done nothing to ingratiate himself; his every word had been steeped in unfriendliness, envy, and that contempt which (as it is born of anger) it is possible to support without humiliation. On my part, I had been little more conciliating; and yet I began to be sorry for this man, hired spy as I knew him to be. It seemed to me less than decent that he should have been brought up in the expectation of this great inheritance, and now, at the eleventh hour, be tumbled forth out of the house door and left to himself, his poverty and his debts — those debts of which I had so ungallantly reminded him so short a time before. And we were scarce left alone ere I made haste to hang out a flag of truce.

‘My cousin,’ said I, ‘trust me, you will not find me inclined to be your enemy.’

He paused in front of me — for he had not accepted the lawyer’s invitation to be seated, but walked to and fro in the apartment — took a pinch of snuff, and looked at me while he was taking it with an air of much curiosity.

‘Is it even so?’ said he. ‘Am I so far favoured by fortune as to have your pity? Infinitely obliged, my cousin Anne! But these sentiments are not always reciprocal, and I warn you that the day when I set my foot on your neck, the spine shall break. Are you acquainted with the properties of the spine?’ he asked with an insolence beyond qualification.

It was too much. ‘I am acquainted also with the properties of a pair of pistols,’ said I, toising him.

‘No, no, no!’ says he, holding up his finger. ‘I will take my revenge how and when I please. We are enough of the same family to understand each other, perhaps; and the reason why I have not had you arrested on your arrival, why I had not a picket of soldiers in the first clump of evergreens, to await and prevent your coming — I, who knew all, before whom that pettifogger, Romaine, has been conspiring in broad daylight to supplant me — is simply this: that I had not made up my mind how I was to take my revenge.’

At that moment he was interrupted by the tolling of a bell. As we stood surprised and listening, it was succeeded by the sound of many feet trooping up the stairs and shuffling by the door of our room. Both, I believe, had a great curiosity to set it open, which each, owing to the presence of the other, resisted; and we waited instead in silence, and without moving, until Romaine returned and bade us to my uncle’s presence.

He led the way by a little crooked passage, which brought us out in the sick-room, and behind the bed. I believe I have forgotten to remark that the Count’s chamber was of considerable dimensions. We beheld it now crowded with the servants and dependants of the house, from the doctor and the priest to Mr. Dawson and the housekeeper, from Dawson down to Rowley and the last footman in white calves, the last plump chambermaid in her clean gown and cap, and the last ostler in a stable waiscoat. This large congregation of persons (and I was surprised to see how large it was) had the appearance, for the most part, of being ill at ease and heartily bewildered, standing on one foot, gaping like zanies, and those who were in the corners nudging each other and grinning aside. My uncle, on the other hand, who was raised higher than I had yet seen him on his pillows, wore an air of really imposing gravity. No sooner had we appeared behind him, than he lifted his voice to a good loudness, and addressed the assemblage.

‘I take you all to witness — can you hear me? — I take you all to witness that I recognise as my heir and representative this gentleman, whom most of you see for the first time, the Viscount Anne de St.-Yves, my nephew of the younger line. And I take you to witness at the same time that, for very good reasons known to myself, I have discarded and disinherited this other gentleman whom you all know, the Viscount de St.-Yves. I have also to explain the unusual trouble to which I have put you all — and, since your supper was not over, I fear I may even say annoyance. It has pleased M. Alain to make some threats of disputing my will, and to pretend that there are among your number certain estimable persons who may be trusted to swear as he shall direct them. It pleases me thus to put it out of his power and to stop the mouths of his false witnesses. I am infinitely obliged by your politeness, and I have the honour to wish you all a very good evening.’

As the servants, still greatly mystified, crowded out of the sickroom door, curtseying, pulling the forelock, scraping with the foot, and so on, according to their degree, I turned and stole a look at my cousin. He had borne this crushing public rebuke without change of countenance. He stood, now, very upright, with folded arms, and looking inscrutably at the roof of the apartment. I could not refuse him at that moment the tribute of my admiration. Still more so when, the last of the domestics having filed through the doorway and left us alone with my great-uncle and the lawyer, he took one step forward towards the bed, made a dignified reverence, and addressed the man who had just condemned him to ruin.

‘My lord,’ said he, ‘you are pleased to treat me in a manner which my gratitude, and your state, equally forbid me to call in question. It will be only necessary for me to call your attention to the length of time in which I have been taught to regard myself as your heir. In that position, I judged it only loyal to permit myself a certain scale of expenditure. If I am now to be cut off with a shilling as the reward of twenty years of service, I shall be left not only a beggar, but a bankrupt.'

Whether from the fatigue of his recent exertion, or by a well-inspired ingenuity of hate, my uncle had once more closed his eyes; nor did he open them now. 'Not with a shilling,' he contented himself with replying; and there stole, as he said it, a sort of smile over his face, that flickered there conspicuously for the least moment of time, and then faded and left behind the old impenetrable mask of years, cunning, and fatigue. There could be no mistake: my uncle enjoyed the situation as he had enjoyed few things in the last quarter of a century. The fires of life scarce survived in that frail body; but hatred, like some immortal quality, was still erect and unabated.

Nevertheless my cousin persevered.

'I speak at a disadvantage,' he resumed. 'My supplanter, with perhaps more wisdom than delicacy, remains in the room,' and he cast a glance at me that might have withered an oak tree.

I was only too willing to withdraw, and Romaine showed as much alacrity to make way for my departure. But my uncle was not to be moved. In the same breath of a voice, and still without opening his eyes, he bade me remain.

'It is well,' said Alain. 'I cannot then go on to remind you of the twenty years that have passed over our heads in England, and the services I may have rendered you in that time. It would be a position too odious. Your lordship knows me too well to suppose I could stoop to such ignominy. I must leave out all my defence — your lordship wills it so! I do not know what are my faults; I know only my punishment, and it is greater than I have the courage to face. My uncle, I implore your pity: pardon me so far; do not send me for life into a debtors' jail — a pauper debtor.'

'*Chat et vieux*, *pardonnez*?' said my uncle, quoting from La Fontaine; and then, opening a pale-blue eye full on Alain, he delivered with some emphasis:

'La jeunesse se flatte et croit tout obtenir;
La vieillesse est impitoyable.'

The blood leaped darkly into Alain's face. He turned to Romaine and me, and his eyes flashed.

'It is your turn now,' he said. 'At least it shall be prison for prison with the two viscounts.'

'Not so, Mr. Alain, by your leave,' said Romaine. 'There are a few formalities to be considered first.'

But Alain was already striding towards the door.

'Stop a moment, stop a moment!' cried Romaine. 'Remember your own counsel not to despise an adversary.'

Alain turned.

'If I do not despise I hate you!' he cried, giving a loose to his passion. 'Be warned of that, both of you.'

'I understand you to threaten Monsieur le Vicomte Anne,' said the lawyer. 'Do you know, I would not do that. I am afraid, I am very much afraid, if you were to do as you propose, you might drive me into extremes.'

'You have made me a beggar and a bankrupt,' said Alain. What extreme is left?'

'I scarce like to put a name upon it in this company,' replied Romaine. 'But there are worse things than even bankruptcy, and worse places than a debtors' jail.'

The words were so significantly said that there went a visible thrill through Alain; sudden as a sword-stroke, he fell pale again.

'I do not understand you,' said he.

'O yes, you do,' returned Romaine. 'I believe you understand me very well. You must not suppose that all this time, while you were so very busy, others were entirely idle. You must not fancy, because I am an Englishman, that I have not the intelligence to pursue an inquiry. Great as is my regard for the honour of your house, M. Alain de St.-Yves, if I hear of you moving directly or indirectly in this matter, I shall do my duty, let it cost what it will: that is, I shall communicate the real name of the Buonapartist spy who signs his letters *Rue Grégoire de Tours*.'

I confess my heart was already almost altogether on the side of my insulted and unhappy cousin; and if it had not been before, it must have been so now, so horrid was the shock with which he heard his infamy exposed. Speech was denied him; he carried his hand to his neckcloth; he staggered; I thought he must have fallen. I ran to help him, and at that he revived, recoiled before me, and stood there with arms stretched forth as if to preserve himself from the outrage of my touch.

'Hands off!' he somehow managed to articulate.

'You will now, I hope,' pursued the lawyer, without any change of voice, 'understand the position in which you are placed, and how delicately it behoves you to conduct yourself. Your arrest hangs, if I may so express myself, by a hair; and as you will be under the perpetual vigilance of myself and my agents, you must look to it narrowly that you walk straight. Upon the least dubiety, I will take action.' He snuffed, looking critically at the tortured man. 'And now let me remind you that your chaise is at the door. This interview is agitating to his lordship — it cannot be agreeable for you — and I suggest that it need not be further drawn out. It does not enter into the views of your uncle, the Count, that you should again sleep under this roof.'

As Alain turned and passed without a word or a sign from the apartment, I instantly followed. I suppose I must be at bottom possessed of some humanity; at least, this accumulated torture, this slow butchery of a man as by quarters of rock, had wholly changed my sympathies. At that moment I loathed both my uncle and the lawyer for their coldblooded cruelty.

Leaning over the banisters, I was but in time to hear his hasty footsteps in that hall that had been crowded with servants to honour his coming, and was now left empty against his friendless departure. A moment later, and the echoes rang, and the air whistled in my ears, as he slammed the door on his departing footsteps. The fury of the concussion gave me (had one been still wanted) a measure of the turmoil of his passions. In a sense, I felt with him; I felt how he would have gloried to slam that door on my uncle, the lawyer, myself, and the whole crowd of those who had been witnesses to his humiliation.

CHAPTER XX — AFTER THE STORM

No sooner was the house clear of my cousin than I began to reckon up, ruefully enough, the probable results of what had passed. Here were a number of pots broken, and it looked to me as if I should have to pay for all! Here had been this proud, mad beast goaded and baited both publicly and privately, till he could neither hear nor see nor reason; whereupon the gate had been set open, and he had been left free to go and contrive whatever vengeance he might find possible. I could not help thinking it was a pity that, whenever I myself was inclined to be upon my good behaviour, some friends of mine should always determine to play a piece of heroics and cast me for the hero — or the victim — which is very much the same. The first duty of heroics is to be of your own choosing. When they are not that, they are nothing. And I assure you, as I walked back to my own room, I was in no very complaisant humour: thought my uncle and Mr. Romaine to have played knuckle-bones with my life and prospects; cursed them for it roundly; had no wish more urgent than to avoid the pair of them; and was quite knocked out of time, as they say in the ring, to find myself confronted with the lawyer.

He stood on my hearthrug, leaning on the chimney-piece, with a gloomy, thoughtful brow, as I was pleased to see, and not in the least as though he were vain of the late proceedings.

'Well?' said I. 'You have done it now!'

'Is he gone?' he asked.

'He is gone,' said I. 'We shall have the devil to pay with him when he comes back.'

'You are right,' said the lawyer, 'and very little to pay him with but flams and fabrications, like to-night's.'

'To-night's?' I repeated.

'Ay, to-night's!' said he.

'To-night's *what*?' I cried.

'To-night's flams and fabrications.'

'God be good to me, sir,' said I, 'have I something more to admire in your conduct than ever *I* had suspected? You cannot think how you interest me! That it was severe, I knew; I had already chuckled over that. But that it should be false also! In what sense, dear sir?'

I believe I was extremely offensive as I put the question, but the lawyer paid no heed.

'False in all senses of the word,' he replied seriously. 'False in the sense that they were not true, and false in the sense that they were not real; false in the sense that I boasted, and in the sense that I lied. How can I arrest him? Your uncle burned the papers! I told you so — but doubtless you have forgotten — the day I first saw you in Edinburgh Castle. It was an act of generosity; I have seen many of these acts, and always regretted — always regretted! “That shall be his inheritance,” he said, as the papers burned; he did not mean that it should have proved so rich a one. How rich, time will tell.’

‘I beg your pardon a hundred thousand times, my dear sir, but it strikes me you have the impudence — in the circumstances, I may call it the indecency — to appear cast down?’

‘It is true,’ said he: ‘I am. I am cast down. I am literally cast down. I feel myself quite helpless against your cousin.’

‘Now, really!’ I asked. ‘Is this serious? And is it perhaps the reason why you have gorged the poor devil with every species of insult? and why you took such surprising pains to supply me with what I had so little need of — another enemy? That you were helpless against them? “Here is my last missile,” say you; “my ammunition is quite exhausted: just wait till I get the last in — it will irritate, it cannot hurt him. There — you see! — he is furious now, and I am quite helpless. One more prod, another kick: now he is a mere lunatic! Stand behind me; I am quite helpless!” Mr. Romaine, I am asking myself as to the background or motive of this singular jest, and whether the name of it should not be called treachery?’

‘I can scarce wonder,’ said he. ‘In truth it has been a singular business, and we are very fortunate to be out of it so well. Yet it was not treachery: no, no, Mr. Anne, it was not treachery; and if you will do me the favour to listen to me for the inside of a minute, I shall demonstrate the same to you beyond cavil.’ He seemed to wake up to his ordinary briskness. ‘You see the point?’ he began. ‘He had not yet read the newspaper, but who could tell when he might? He might have had that damned journal in his pocket, and how should we know? We were — I may say, we are — at the mercy of the merest twopenny accident.’

‘Why, true,’ said I: ‘I had not thought of that.’

‘I warrant you,’ cried Romaine, ‘you had supposed it was nothing to be the hero of an interesting notice in the journals! You had supposed, as like as not, it was a form of secrecy! But not so in the least. A part of England is already buzzing with the name of Champdivers; a day or two more and the mail will have carried it everywhere: so wonderful a machine is this of ours for disseminating intelligence! Think of it! When my father was born — but that is another story. To return: we had here the elements of such a combustion as I dread to think of — your cousin and the journal. Let him but glance an eye upon that column of print, and where were we? It is easy to ask; not so easy to answer, my young friend. And let me tell you, this sheet is the Viscount’s usual reading. It is my conviction he had it in his pocket.'

'I beg your pardon, sir,' said I. 'I have been unjust. I did not appreciate my danger.'

'I think you never do,' said he.

'But yet surely that public scene — ' I began.

'It was madness. I quite agree with you,' Mr. Romaine interrupted. 'But it was your uncle's orders, Mr. Anne, and what could I do? Tell him you were the murderer of Goguelat? I think not.'

'No, sure!' said I. 'That would but have been to make the trouble thicker. We were certainly in a very ill posture.'

'You do not yet appreciate how grave it was,' he replied. 'It was necessary for you that your cousin should go, and go at once. You yourself had to leave to-night under cover of darkness, and how could you have done that with the Viscount in the next room? He must go, then; he must leave without delay. And that was the difficulty.'

'Pardon me, Mr. Romaine, but could not my uncle have bidden him go?' I asked.

'Why, I see I must tell you that this is not so simple as it sounds,' he replied. 'You say this is your uncle's house, and so it is. But to all effects and purposes it is your cousin's also. He has rooms here; has had them coming on for thirty years now, and they are filled with a prodigious accumulation of trash — stays, I dare say, and powder-puffs, and such effeminate idiocy — to which none could dispute his title, even suppose any one wanted to. We had a perfect right to bid him go, and he had a perfect right to reply, "Yes, I will go, but not without my stays and cravats. I must first get together the nine-hundred-and-ninety-nine chestsfull of insufferable rubbish, that I have spent the last thirty years collecting — and may very well spend the next thirty hours a-packing of." And what should we have said to that?'

'By way of repartee?' I asked. 'Two tall footmen and a pair of crabtree cudgels, I suggest.'

'The Lord deliver me from the wisdom of laymen!' cried Romaine. 'Put myself in the wrong at the beginning of a lawsuit? No, indeed! There was but one thing to do, and I did it, and burned my last cartridge in the doing of it. I stunned him. And it gave us three hours, by which we should make haste to profit; for if there is one thing sure, it is that he will be up to time again to-morrow in the morning.'

'Well,' said I, 'I own myself an idiot. Well do they say, *an old soldier, an old innocent*! For I guessed nothing of all this.'

'And, guessing it, have you the same objections to leave England?' he inquired.

'The same,' said I.

‘It is indispensable,’ he objected.

‘And it cannot be,’ I replied. ‘Reason has nothing to say in the matter; and I must not let you squander any of yours. It will be enough to tell you this is an affair of the heart.’

‘Is it even so?’ quoth Romaine, nodding his head. ‘And I might have been sure of it. Place them in a hospital, put them in a jail in yellow overalls, do what you will, young Jessamy finds young Jenny. O, have it your own way; I am too old a hand to argue with young gentlemen who choose to fancy themselves in love; I have too much experience, thank you. Only, be sure that you appreciate what you risk: the prison, the dock, the gallows, and the halter — terribly vulgar circumstances, my young friend; grim, sordid, earnest; no poetry in that!’

‘And there I am warned,’ I returned gaily. ‘No man could be warned more finely or with a greater eloquence. And I am of the same opinion still. Until I have again seen that lady, nothing shall induce me to quit Great Britain. I have besides — ’

And here I came to a full stop. It was upon my tongue to have told him the story of the drovers, but at the first word of it my voice died in my throat. There might be a limit to the lawyer’s toleration, I reflected. I had not been so long in Britain altogether; for the most part of that time I had been by the heels in limbo in Edinburgh Castle; and already I had confessed to killing one man with a pair of scissors; and now I was to go on and plead guilty to having settled another with a holly stick! A wave of discretion went over me as cold and as deep as the sea.

‘In short, sir, this is a matter of feeling,’ I concluded, ‘and nothing will prevent my going to Edinburgh.’

If I had fired a pistol in his ear he could not have been more startled.

‘To Edinburgh?’ he repeated. ‘Edinburgh? where the very paving-stones know you!’

‘Then is the murder out!’ said I. ‘But, Mr. Romaine, is there not sometimes safety in boldness? Is it not a common-place of strategy to get where the enemy least expects you? And where would he expect me less?’

‘Faith, there is something in that, too!’ cried the lawyer. ‘Ay, certainly, a great deal in that. All the witnesses drowned but one, and he safe in prison; you yourself changed beyond recognition — let us hope — and walking the streets of the very town you have illustrated by your — well, your eccentricity! It is not badly combined, indeed!’

‘You approve it, then?’ said I.

‘O, approve!’ said he; ‘there is no question of approval. There is only one course which I could approve, and that were to escape to

France instanter.'

'You do not wholly disapprove, at least?' I substituted.

'Not wholly; and it would not matter if I did,' he replied. 'Go your own way; you are beyond argument. And I am not sure that you will run more danger by that course than by any other. Give the servants time to get to bed and fall asleep, then take a country cross-road and walk, as the rhyme has it, like blazes all night. In the morning take a chaise or take the mail at pleasure, and continue your journey with all the decorum and reserve of which you shall be found capable.'

'I am taking the picture in,' I said. 'Give me time. 'Tis the *tout ensemble* I must see: the whole as opposed to the details.'

'Mountebank!' he murmured.

'Yes, I have it now; and I see myself with a servant, and that servant is Rowley,' said I.

'So as to have one more link with your uncle?' suggested the lawyer. 'Very judicious!'

'And, pardon me, but that is what it is,' I exclaimed. 'Judicious is the word. I am not making a deception fit to last for thirty years; I do not found a palace in the living granite for the night. This is a shelter tent — a flying picture — seen, admired, and gone again in the wink of an eye. What is wanted, in short, is a *trompe-l'œil* that shall be good enough for twelve hours at an inn: is it not so?'

'It is, and the objection holds. Rowley is but another danger,' said Romaine.

'Rowley,' said I, 'will pass as a servant from a distance — as a creature seen poised on the dicky of a bowling chaise. He will pass at hand as a smart, civil fellow one meets in the inn corridor, and looks back at, and asks, and is told, "Gentleman's servant in Number 4." He will pass, in fact, all round, except with his personal friends! My dear sir, pray what do you expect? Of course if we meet my cousin, or if we meet anybody who took part in the judicious exhibition of this evening, we are lost; and who's denying it? To every disguise, however good and safe, there is always the weak point; you must always take (let us say — and to take a simile from your own waistcoat pocket) a snuff box-full of risk. You'll get it just as small with Rowley as with anybody else. And the long and short of it is, the lad's honest, he likes me, I trust him; he is my servant, or nobody.'

'He might not accept,' said Romaine.

'I bet you a thousand pounds he does!' cried I. 'But no matter; all you have to do is to send him out to-night on this cross-country business, and leave the thing to me. I tell you, he will be my servant, and I tell you, he will do well.'

I had crossed the room, and was already overhauling my wardrobe as I spoke.

‘Well,’ concluded the lawyer, with a shrug, ‘one risk with another: *à la guerre comme à la guerre*, as you would say. Let the brat come and be useful, at least.’ And he was about to ring the bell, when his eye was caught by my researches in the wardrobe. ‘Do not fall in love with these coats, waistcoats, cravats, and other panoply and accoutrements by which you are now surrounded. You must not run the post as a dandy. It is not the fashion, even.’

‘You are pleased to be facetious, sir,’ said I; ‘and not according to knowledge. These clothes are my life, they are my disguise; and since I can take but few of them, I were a fool indeed if I selected hastily! Will you understand, once and for all, what I am seeking? To be invisible, is the first point; the second, to be invisible in a post-chaise and with a servant. Can you not perceive the delicacy of the quest? Nothing must be too coarse, nothing too fine; *rien de voyant, rien qui détonne*; so that I may leave everywhere the inconspicuous image of a handsome young man of a good fortune travelling in proper style, whom the landlord will forget in twelve hours — and the chambermaid perhaps remember, God bless her! with a sigh. This is the very fine art of dress.’

‘I have practised it with success for fifty years,’ said Romaine, with a chuckle. ‘A black suit and a clean shirt is my infallible recipe.’

‘You surprise me; I did not think you would be shallow!’ said I, lingering between two coats. ‘Pray, Mr. Romaine, have I your head? or did you travel post and with a smartish servant?’

‘Neither, I admit,’ said he.

‘Which change the whole problem,’ I continued. ‘I have to dress for a smartish servant and a Russia leather despatch-box.’ That brought me to a stand. I came over and looked at the box with a moment’s hesitation. ‘Yes,’ I resumed. ‘Yes, and for the despatch-box! It looks moneyed and landed; it means I have a lawyer. It is an invaluable property. But I could have wished it to hold less money. The responsibility is crushing. Should I not do more wisely to take five hundred pounds, and intrust the remainder with you, Mr. Romaine?’

‘If you are sure you will not want it,’ answered Romaine.

‘I am far from sure of that,’ cried I. ‘In the first place, as a philosopher. This is the first time I have been at the head of a large sum, and it is conceivable — who knows himself? — that I may make it fly. In the second place, as a fugitive. Who knows what I may need? The whole of it may be inadequate. But I can always write for more.’

‘You do not understand,’ he replied. ‘I break off all communication with you here and now. You must give me a power of attorney ere you start to-night, and then be done with me trenchantly until better days.’

I believe I offered some objection.

'Think a little for once of me!' said Romaine. 'I must not have seen you before to-night. To-night we are to have had our only interview, and you are to have given me the power; and to-night I am to have lost sight of you again — I know not whither, you were upon business, it was none of my affairs to question you! And this, you are to remark, in the interests of your own safety much more than mine.'

'I am not even to write to you?' I said, a little bewildered.

'I believe I am cutting the last strand that connects you with common sense,' he replied. 'But that is the plain English of it. You are not even to write; and if you did, I would not answer.'

'A letter, however — ' I began.

'Listen to me,' interrupted Romaine. 'So soon as your cousin reads the paragraph, what will he do? Put the police upon looking into my correspondence! So soon as you write to me, in short, you write to Bow Street; and if you will take my advice, you will date that letter from France.'

'The devil!' said I, for I began suddenly to see that this might put me out of the way of my business.

'What is it now?' says he.

'There will be more to be done, then, before we can part,' I answered.

'I give you the whole night,' said he. 'So long as you are off ere daybreak, I am content.'

'In short, Mr. Romaine,' said I, 'I have had so much benefit of your advice and services that I am loth to sever the connection, and would even ask a substitute. I would be obliged for a letter of introduction to one of your own cloth in Edinburgh — an old man for choice, very experienced, very respectable, and very secret. Could you favour me with such a letter?'

'Why, no,' said he. 'Certainly not. I will do no such thing, indeed.'

'It would be a great favour, sir,' I pleaded.

'It would be an unpardonable blunder,' he replied. 'What? Give you a letter of introduction? and when the police come, I suppose, I must forget the circumstance? No, indeed. Talk of it no more.'

'You seem to be always in the right,' said I. 'The letter would be out of the question, I quite see that. But the lawyer's name might very well have dropped from you in the way of conversation; having heard him mentioned, I might profit by the circumstance to introduce myself; and in this way my business would be the better done, and you not in the least compromised.'

'What is this business?' said Romaine.

'I have not said that I had any,' I replied. 'It might arise. This is only a possibility that I must keep in view.'

‘Well,’ said he, with a gesture of the hands, ‘I mention Mr. Robbie; and let that be an end of it! — Or wait!’ he added, ‘I have it. Here is something that will serve you for an introduction, and cannot compromise me.’ And he wrote his name and the Edinburgh lawyer’s address on a piece of card and tossed it to me.

CHAPTER XXI — I BECOME THE OWNER OF A CLARET-COLOURED CHAISE

What with packing, signing papers, and partaking of an excellent cold supper in the lawyer's room, it was past two in the morning before we were ready for the road. Romaine himself let us out of a window in a part of the house known to Rowley: it appears it served as a kind of postern to the servants' hall, by which (when they were in the mind for a clandestine evening) they would come regularly in and out; and I remember very well the vinegar aspect of the lawyer on the receipt of this piece of information — how he pursed his lips, jutted his eyebrows, and kept repeating, 'This must be seen to, indeed! this shall be barred to-morrow in the morning!' In this preoccupation, I believe he took leave of me without observing it; our things were handed out; we heard the window shut behind us; and became instantly lost in a horrid intricacy of blackness and the shadow of woods.

A little wet snow kept sleepily falling, pausing, and falling again; it seemed perpetually beginning to snow and perpetually leaving off; and the darkness was intense. Time and again we walked into trees; time and again found ourselves adrift among garden borders or stuck like a ram in the thicket. Rowley had possessed himself of the matches, and he was neither to be terrified nor softened. 'No, I will not, Mr. Anne, sir,' he would reply. 'You know he tell me to wait till we were over the 'ill. It's only a little way now. Why, and I thought you was a soldier, too!' I was at least a very glad soldier when my valet consented at last to kindle a thieves' match. From this, we easily lit the lantern; and thenceforward, through a labyrinth of woodland paths, were conducted by its uneasy glimmer. Both booted and great-coated, with tall hats much of a shape, and laden with booty in the form of a despatch-box, a case of pistols, and two plump valises, I thought we had very much the look of a pair of brothers returning from the sack of Amersham Place.

We issued at last upon a country by-road where we might walk abreast and without precaution. It was nine miles to Aylesbury, our immediate destination; by a watch, which formed part of my new outfit, it should be about half-past three in the morning; and as we did not choose to arrive before daylight, time could not be said to press. I gave the order to march at ease.

'Now, Rowley,' said I, 'so far so good. You have come, in the most obliging manner in the world, to carry these valises. The question is, what next? What are we to do at Aylesbury? or, more particularly, what are you? Thence, I go on a journey. Are you to accompany me?'

He gave a little chuckle. ‘That’s all settled already, Mr. Anne, sir,’ he replied. ‘Why, I’ve got my things here in the valise — a half a dozen shirts and what not; I’m all ready, sir: just you lead on: *you’ll* see.’

‘The devil you have!’ said I. ‘You made pretty sure of your welcome.’

‘If you please, sir,’ said Rowley.

He looked up at me, in the light of the lantern, with a boyish shyness and triumph that awoke my conscience. I could never let this innocent involve himself in the perils and difficulties that beset my course, without some hint of warning, which it was a matter of extreme delicacy to make plain enough and not too plain.

‘No, no,’ said I; ‘you may think you have made a choice, but it was blindfold, and you must make it over again. The Count’s service is a good one; what are you leaving it for? Are you not throwing away the substance for the shadow? No, do not answer me yet. You imagine that I am a prosperous nobleman, just declared my uncle’s heir, on the threshold of the best of good fortune, and, from the point of view of a judicious servant, a jewel of a master to serve and stick to? Well, my boy, I am nothing of the kind, nothing of the kind.’

As I said the words, I came to a full stop and held up the lantern to his face. He stood before me, brilliantly illuminated on the background of impenetrable night and falling snow, stricken to stone between his double burden like an ass between two panniers, and gaping at me like a blunderbuss. I had never seen a face so predestined to be astonished, or so susceptible of rendering the emotion of surprise; and it tempted me as an open piano tempts the musician.

‘Nothing of the sort, Rowley,’ I continued, in a churchyard voice. ‘These are appearances, petty appearances. I am in peril, homeless, hunted. I count scarce any one in England who is not my enemy. From this hour I drop my name, my title; I become nameless; my name is proscribed. My liberty, my life, hang by a hair. The destiny which you will accept, if you go forth with me, is to be tracked by spies, to hide yourself under a false name, to follow the desperate pretences and perhaps share the fate of a murderer with a price upon his head.’

His face had been hitherto beyond expectation, passing from one depth to another of tragic astonishment, and really worth paying to see; but at this it suddenly cleared. ‘Oh, I ain’t afraid!’ he said; and then, choking into laughter, ‘why, I see it from the first!’

I could have beaten him. But I had so grossly overshot the mark that I suppose it took me two good miles of road and half an hour of elocution to persuade him I had been in earnest. In the course of which I became so interested in demonstrating my present danger that I forgot all about my future safety, and not only told him the story of Goguelat, but threw in the business of the drovers as well, and ended by blurting out that I was a soldier of Napoleon's and a prisoner of war.

This was far from my views when I began; and it is a common complaint of me that I have a long tongue. I believe it is a fault beloved by fortune. Which of you considerate fellows would have done a thing at once so foolhardy and so wise as to make a confidant of a boy in his teens, and positively smelling of the nursery? And when had I cause to repent it? There is none so apt as a boy to be the adviser of any man in difficulties such as mine. To the beginnings of virile common sense he adds the last lights of the child's imagination; and he can fling himself into business with that superior earnestness that properly belongs to play. And Rowley was a boy made to my hand. He had a high sense of romance, and a secret cultus for all soldiers and criminals. His travelling library consisted of a chap-book life of Wallace and some sixpenny parts of the 'Old Bailey Sessions Papers' by Gurney the shorthand writer; and the choice depicts his character to a hair. You can imagine how his new prospects brightened on a boy of this disposition. To be the servant and companion of a fugitive, a soldier, and a murderer, rolled in one — to live by stratagems, disguises, and false names, in an atmosphere of midnight and mystery so thick that you could cut it with a knife — was really, I believe, more dear to him than his meals, though he was a great trencherman, and something of a glutton besides. For myself, as the peg by which all this romantic business hung, I was simply idolised from that moment; and he would rather have sacrificed his hand than surrendered the privilege of serving me.

We arranged the terms of our campaign, trudging amicably in the snow, which now, with the approach of morning, began to fall to purpose. I chose the name of Ramornie, I imagine from its likeness to Romaine; Rowley, from an irresistible conversion of ideas, I dubbed Gammon. His distress was laughable to witness: his own choice of an unassuming nickname had been Claude Duval! We settled our procedure at the various inns where we should alight, rehearsed our little manners like a piece of drill until it seemed impossible we should ever be taken unprepared; and in all these dispositions, you maybe sure the despatch-box was not forgotten. Who was to pick it up, who was to set it down, who was to remain beside it, who was to sleep with it — there was no contingency omitted, all was gone into with the thoroughness of a drill-sergeant on the one hand and a child with a new plaything on the other.

'I say, wouldn't it look queer if you and me was to come to the post-house with all this luggage?’ said Rowley.

‘I dare say,’ I replied. ‘But what else is to be done?’

‘Well, now, sir — you hear me,’ says Rowley. ‘I think it would look more natural-like if you was to come to the post-house alone, and with nothing in your ‘ands — more like a gentleman, you know. And you might say that your servant and baggage was a-waiting for you up the road. I think I could manage, somehow, to make a shift with all them dratted things — leastways if you was to give me a ‘and up with them at the start.’

‘And I would see you far enough before I allowed you to try, Mr. Rowley!’ I cried. ‘Why, you would be quite defenceless! A footpad that was an infant child could rob you. And I should probably come driving by to find you in a ditch with your throat cut. But there is something in your idea, for all that; and I propose we put it in execution no farther forward than the next corner of a lane.’

Accordingly, instead of continuing to aim for Aylesbury, we headed by cross-roads for some point to the northward of it, whither I might assist Rowley with the baggage, and where I might leave him to await my return in the post-chaise.

It was snowing to purpose, the country all white, and ourselves walking snowdrifts, when the first glimmer of the morning showed us an inn upon the highwayside. Some distance off, under the shelter of a corner of the road and a clump of trees, I loaded Rowley with the whole of our possessions, and watched him till he staggered in safety into the doors of the *Green Dragon*, which was the sign of the house. Thence I walked briskly into Aylesbury, rejoicing in my freedom and the causeless good spirits that belong to a snowy morning; though, to be sure, long before I had arrived the snow had again ceased to fall, and the eaves of Aylesbury were smoking in the level sun. There was an accumulation of gigs and chaises in the yard, and a great bustle going forward in the coffee-room and about the doors of the inn. At these evidences of so much travel on the road I was seized with a misgiving lest it should be impossible to get horses, and I should be detained in the precarious neighbourhood of my cousin. Hungry as I was, I made my way first of all to the postmaster, where he stood — a big, athletic, horsey-looking man, blowing into a key in the corner of the yard.

On my making my modest request, he awoke from his indifference into what seemed passion.

‘A po’-shay and ‘osses!’ he cried. ‘Do I look as if I ‘ad a po’-shay and ‘osses? Damn me, if I ‘ave such a thing on the premises. I don’t *make* ‘osses and chaises — I ‘*ire* ‘em. You might be God Almighty!’ said he; and instantly, as if he had observed me for the first time, he broke off, and lowered his voice into the confidential. ‘Why, now that I see you are a gentleman,' said he, 'I'll tell you what! If you like to *buy*, I have the article to fit you. Second-'and shay by Lycett, of London. Latest style; good as new. Superior fittin's, net on the roof, baggage platform, pistol 'olsters — the most com-plete and the most gen-teel turn-out I ever see! The 'ole for seventy-five pound! It's as good as givin' her away!'

'Do you propose I should trundle it myself, like a hawker's barrow?' said I. 'Why, my good man, if I had to stop here, anyway, I should prefer to buy a house and garden!'

'Come and look at her!' he cried; and, with the word, links his arm in mine and carries me to the outhouse where the chaise was on view.

It was just the sort of chaise that I had dreamed of for my purpose: eminently rich, inconspicuous, and genteel; for, though I thought the postmaster no great authority, I was bound to agree with him so far. The body was painted a dark claret, and the wheels an invisible green. The lamp and glasses were bright as silver; and the whole equipage had an air of privacy and reserve that seemed to repel inquiry and disarm suspicion. With a servant like Rowley, and a chaise like this, I felt that I could go from the Land's End to John o' Groat's House amid a population of bowing ostlers. And I suppose I betrayed in my manner the degree in which the bargain tempted me.

'Come,' cried the postmaster — 'I'll make it seventy, to oblige a friend!'

'The point is: the horses,' said I.

'Well,' said he, consulting his watch, 'it's now gone the 'alf after eight. What time do you want her at the door?'

'Horses and all?' said I.

''Osses and all!' says he. 'One good turn deserves another. You give me seventy pound for the shay, and I'll 'oss it for you. I told you I didn't *make* 'osses; but I *can* make 'em, to oblige a friend.'

What would you have? It was not the wisest thing in the world to buy a chaise within a dozen miles of my uncle's house; but in this way I got my horses for the next stage. And by any other it appeared that I should have to wait. Accordingly I paid the money down — perhaps twenty pounds too much, though it was certainly a well-made and well-appointed vehicle — ordered it round in half an hour, and proceeded to refresh myself with breakfast.

The table to which I sat down occupied the recess of a bay-window, and commanded a view of the front of the inn, where I continued to be amused by the successive departures of travellers — the fussy and the offhand, the niggardly and the lavish — all exhibiting their different characters in that diagnostic moment of the farewell: some escorted to the stirrup or the chaise door by the chamberlain, the chambermaids and the waiters almost in a body, others moving off under a cloud, without human countenance. In the course of this I became interested in one for whom this ovation began to assume the proportions of a triumph; not only the under-servants, but the barmaid, the landlady, and my friend the postmaster himself, crowding about the steps to speed his departure. I was aware, at the same time, of a good deal of merriment, as though the traveller were a man of a ready wit, and not too dignified to air it in that society. I leaned forward with a lively curiosity; and the next moment I had blotted myself behind the teapot. The popular traveller had turned to wave a farewell; and behold! he was no other than my cousin Alain. It was a change of the sharpest from the angry, pallid man I had seen at Amersham Place. Ruddy to a fault, illuminated with vintages, crowned with his curls like Bacchus, he now stood before me for an instant, the perfect master of himself, smiling with airs of conscious popularity and insufferable condescension. He reminded me at once of a royal duke, or an actor turned a little elderly, and of a blatant bagman who should have been the illegitimate son of a gentleman. A moment after he was gliding noiselessly on the road to London.

I breathed again. I recognised, with heartfelt gratitude, how lucky I had been to go in by the stable-yard instead of the hostelry door, and what a fine occasion of meeting my cousin I had lost by the purchase of the claret-coloured chaise! The next moment I remembered that there was a waiter present. No doubt but he must have observed me when I crouched behind the breakfast equipage; no doubt but he must have commented on this unusual and undignified behaviour; and it was essential that I should do something to remove the impression.

‘Waiter!’ said I, ‘that was the nephew of Count Carwell that just drove off, wasn’t it?’

‘Yes, sir: Viscount Carwell we calls him,’ he replied.

‘Ah, I thought as much,’ said I. ‘Well, well, damn all these Frenchmen, say I!’

‘You may say so indeed, sir,’ said the waiter. ‘They ain’t not to say in the same field with our ‘ome-raised gentry.’

‘Nasty tempers?’ I suggested.

‘Beas’ly temper, sir, the Viscount ‘ave,’ said the waiter with feeling. ‘Why, no longer agone than this morning, he was sitting breakfasting and reading in his paper. I suppose, sir, he come on some pilitical information, or it might be about ‘orses, but he raps his ‘and upon the table sudden and calls for curacoa. It gave me quite a turn, it did; he did it that sudden and ‘ard. Now, sir, that may be manners in France, but hall I can say is, that I’m not used to it.’

‘Reading the paper, was he?’ said I. ‘What paper, eh?’

‘Here it is, sir,’ exclaimed the waiter. ‘Seems like as if he’d dropped it.’

And picking it off the floor he presented it to me.

I may say that I was quite prepared, that I already knew what to expect; but at sight of the cold print my heart stopped beating. There it was: the fulfilment of Romaine's apprehension was before me; the paper was laid open at the capture of Clausel. I felt as if I could take a little curacoa myself, but on second thoughts called for brandy. It was badly wanted; and suddenly I observed the waiter's eye to sparkle, as it were, with some recognition; made certain he had remarked the resemblance between me and Alain; and became aware — as by a revelation — of the fool's part I had been playing. For I had now managed to put my identification beyond a doubt, if Alain should choose to make his inquiries at Aylesbury; and, as if that were not enough, I had added, at an expense of seventy pounds, a clue by which he might follow me through the length and breadth of England, in the shape of the claret-coloured chaise! That elegant equipage (which I began to regard as little better than a claret-coloured anteroom to the hangman's cart) coming presently to the door, I left my breakfast in the middle and departed; posting to the north as diligently as my cousin Alain was posting to the south, and putting my trust (such as it was) in an opposite direction and equal speed.

CHAPTER XXII — CHARACTER AND ACQUIREMENTS OF MR. ROWLEY

I am not certain that I had ever really appreciated before that hour the extreme peril of the adventure on which I was embarked. The sight of my cousin, the look of his face — so handsome, so jovial at the first sight, and branded with so much malignity as you saw it on the second — with his hyperbolical curls in order, with his neckcloth tied as if for the conquests of love, setting forth (as I had no doubt in the world he was doing) to clap the Bow Street runners on my trail, and cover England with handbills, each dangerous as a loaded musket, convinced me for the first time that the affair was no less serious than death. I believe it came to a near touch whether I should not turn the horses' heads at the next stage and make directly for the coast. But I was now in the position of a man who should have thrown his gage into the den of lions; or, better still, like one who should have quarrelled overnight under the influence of wine, and now, at daylight, in a cold winter's morning, and humbly sober, must make good his words. It is not that I thought any the less, or any the less warmly, of Flora. But, as I smoked a grim segar that morning in a corner of the chaise, no doubt I considered, in the first place, that the letter-post had been invented, and admitted privately to myself, in the second, that it would have been highly possible to write her on a piece of paper, seal it, and send it skimming by the mail, instead of going personally into these egregious dangers, and through a country that I beheld crowded with gibbets and Bow Street officers. As for Sim and Candlish, I doubt if they crossed my mind.

At the Green Dragon Rowley was waiting on the doorsteps with the luggage, and really was bursting with unpalatable conversation.

'Who do you think we've 'ad 'ere, sir?' he began breathlessly, as the chaise drove off. 'Red Breasts'; and he nodded his head portentously.

'Red Breasts?' I repeated, for I stupidly did not understand at the moment an expression I had often heard.

'Ah!' said he. 'Red weskits. Runners. Bow Street runners. Two on' em, and one was Lavender himself! I hear the other say quite plain, "Now, Mr. Lavender, *if* you're ready." They was breakfasting as nigh me as I am to that postboy. They're all right; they ain't after us. It's a forger; and I didn't send them off on a false scent — O no! I thought there was no use in having them over our way; so I give them "very valuable information," Mr. Lavender said, and tipped me a tizzy for myself; and they're off to Luton. They showed me the 'andcuffs, too — the other one did — and he clicked the dratted things on my wrist;

and I tell you, I believe I nearly went off in a swound! There's something so beastly in the feel of them! Begging your pardon, Mr. Anne,' he added, with one of his delicious changes from the character of the confidential schoolboy into that of the trained, respectful servant.

Well, I must not be proud! I cannot say I found the subject of handcuffs to my fancy; and it was with more asperity than was needful that I reproved him for the slip about the name.

'Yes, Mr. Ramornie,' says he, touching his hat. 'Begging your pardon, Mr. Ramornie. But I've been very piticular, sir, up to now; and you may trust me to be very piticular in the future. It were only a slip, sir.'

'My good boy,' said I, with the most imposing severity, 'there must be no slips. Be so good as to remember that my life is at stake.'

I did not embrace the occasion of telling him how many I had made myself. It is my principle that an officer must never be wrong. I have seen two divisions beating their brains out for a fortnight against a worthless and quite impregnable castle in a pass: I knew we were only doing it for discipline, because the General had said so at first, and had not yet found any way out of his own words; and I highly admired his force of character, and throughout these operations thought my life exposed in a very good cause. With fools and children, which included Rowley, the necessity was even greater. I proposed to myself to be infallible; and even when he expressed some wonder at the purchase of the claret-coloured chaise, I put him promptly in his place. In our situation, I told him, everything had to be sacrificed to appearances; doubtless, in a hired chaise, we should have had more freedom, but look at the dignity! I was so positive, that I had sometimes almost convinced myself. Not for long, you may be certain! This detestable conveyance always appeared to me to be laden with Bow Street officers, and to have a placard upon the back of it publishing my name and crimes. If I had paid seventy pounds to get the thing, I should not have stuck at seven hundred to be safely rid of it.

And if the chaise was a danger, what an anxiety was the despatch-box and its golden cargo! I had never had a care but to draw my pay and spend it; I had lived happily in the regiment, as in my father's house, fed by the great Emperor's commissariat as by ubiquitous doves of Elijah — or, my faith! if anything went wrong with the commissariat, helping myself with the best grace in the world from the next peasant! And now I began to feel at the same time the burthen of riches and the fear of destitution. There were ten thousand pounds in the despatch-box, but I reckoned in French money, and had two hundred and fifty thousand agonies; I kept it under my hand all day, I dreamed of it at night. In the inns, I was afraid to go to dinner and afraid to go to sleep. When I walked up a hill I durst not leave the doors of the claret-coloured chaise. Sometimes I would change the disposition of the funds: there were days when I carried as much as five or six thousand pounds on my own person, and only the residue continued to voyage in the treasure-chest — days when I bulked all over like my cousin, crackled to a touch with bank paper, and had my pockets weighed to bursting-point with sovereigns. And there were other days when I wearied of the thing — or grew ashamed of it — and put all the money back where it had come from: there let it take its chance, like better people! In short, I set Rowley a poor example of consistency, and in philosophy, none at all.

Little he cared! All was one to him so long as he was amused, and I never knew any one amused more easily. He was thrillingly interested in life, travel, and his own melodramatic position. All day he would be looking from the chaise windows with ebullitions of gratified curiosity, that were sometimes justified and sometimes not, and that (taken altogether) it occasionally wearied me to be obliged to share. I can look at horses, and I can look at trees too, although not fond of it. But why should I look at a lame horse, or a tree that was like the letter Y? What exhilaration could I feel in viewing a cottage that was the same colour as 'the second from the miller's' in some place where I had never been, and of which I had not previously heard? I am ashamed to complain, but there were moments when my juvenile and confidential friend weighed heavy on my hands. His cackle was indeed almost continuous, but it was never unamiable. He showed an amiable curiosity when he was asking questions; an amiable guilelessness when he was conferring information. And both he did largely. I am in a position to write the biographies of Mr. Rowley, Mr. Rowley's father and mother, his Aunt Eliza, and the miller's dog; and nothing but pity for the reader, and some misgivings as to the law of copyright, prevail on me to withhold them.

A general design to mould himself upon my example became early apparent, and I had not the heart to check it. He began to mimic my carriage; he acquired, with servile accuracy, a little manner I had of shrugging the shoulders; and I may say it was by observing it in him that I first discovered it in myself. One day it came out by chance that I was of the Catholic religion. He became plunged in thought, at which I was gently glad. Then suddenly —

'Odd-rabbit it! I'll be Catholic too!' he broke out. 'You must teach me it, Mr. Anne — I mean, Ramornie.'

I dissuaded him: alleging that he would find me very imperfectly informed as to the grounds and doctrines of the Church, and that, after all, in the matter of religions, it was a very poor idea to change.

‘Of course, my Church is the best,’ said I; ‘but that is not the reason why I belong to it: I belong to it because it was the faith of my house. I wish to take my chances with my own people, and so should you. If it is a question of going to hell, go to hell like a gentleman with your ancestors.’

‘Well, it wasn’t that,’ he admitted. ‘I don’t know that I was exactly thinking of hell. Then there’s the inquisition, too. That’s rather a cawker, you know.’

‘And I don’t believe you were thinking of anything in the world,’ said I — which put a period to his respectable conversion.

He consoled himself by playing for awhile on a cheap flageolet, which was one of his diversions, and to which I owed many intervals of peace. When he first produced it, in the joints, from his pocket, he had the duplicity to ask me if I played upon it. I answered, no; and he put the instrument away with a sigh and the remark that he had thought I might. For some while he resisted the unspeakable temptation, his fingers visibly itching and twittering about his pocket, even his interest in the landscape and in sporadic anecdote entirely lost. Presently the pipe was in his hands again; he fitted, unfitted, refitted, and played upon it in dumb show for some time.

‘I play it myself a little,’ says he.

‘Do you?’ said I, and yawned.

And then he broke down.

‘Mr. Ramornie, if you please, would it disturb you, sir, if I was to play a chune?’ he pleaded. And from that hour, the tootling of the flageolet cheered our way.

He was particularly keen on the details of battles, single combats, incidents of scouting parties, and the like. These he would make haste to cap with some of the exploits of Wallace, the only hero with whom he had the least acquaintance. His enthusiasm was genuine and pretty. When he learned we were going to Scotland, ‘Well, then,’ he broke out, ‘I’ll see where Wallace lived!’ And presently after, he fell to moralising. ‘It’s a strange thing, sir,’ he began, ‘that I seem somehow to have always the wrong sow by the ear. I’m English after all, and I glory in it. My eye! don’t I, though! Let some of your Frenchies come over here to invade, and you’ll see whether or not! Oh, yes, I’m English to the backbone, I am. And yet look at me! I got hold of this ‘ere William Wallace and took to him right off; I never heard of such a man before! And then you came along, and I took to you. And both the two of you were my born enemies! I — I beg your pardon, Mr. Ramornie, but would you mind it very much if you didn’t go for to do anything against England’ — he brought the word out suddenly, like something hot — ’when I was along of you?’

I was more affected than I can tell.

‘Rowley,’ I said, ‘you need have no fear. By how much I love my own honour, by so much I will take care to protect yours. We are but fraternising at the outposts, as soldiers do. When the bugle calls, my boy, we must face each other, one for England, one for France, and may God defend the right!’

So I spoke at the moment; but for all my brave airs, the boy had wounded me in a vital quarter. His words continued to ring in my hearing. There was no remission all day of my remorseful thoughts; and that night (which we lay at Lichfield, I believe) there was no sleep for me in my bed. I put out the candle and lay down with a good resolution; and in a moment all was light about me like a theatre, and I saw myself upon the stage of it playing ignoble parts. I remembered France and my Emperor, now depending on the arbitrament of war, bent down, fighting on their knees and with their teeth against so many and such various assailants. And I burned with shame to be here in England, cherishing an English fortune, pursuing an English mistress, and not there, to handle a musket in my native fields, and to manure them with my body if I fell. I remembered that I belonged to France. All my fathers had fought for her, and some had died; the voice in my throat, the sight of my eyes, the tears that now sprang there, the whole man of me, was fashioned of French earth and born of a French mother; I had been tended and caressed by a succession of the daughters of France, the fairest, the most ill-starred; and I had fought and conquered shoulder to shoulder with her sons. A soldier, a noble, of the proudest and bravest race in Europe, it had been left to the prattle of a hobbledehoy lackey in an English chaise to recall me to the consciousness of duty.

When I saw how it was I did not lose time in indecision. The old classical conflict of love and honour being once fairly before me, it did not cost me a thought. I was a Saint-Yves de Kéroual; and I decided to strike off on the morrow for Wakefield and Burchell Fenn, and embark, as soon as it should be morally possible, for the succour of my downtrodden fatherland and my beleaguered Emperor. Pursuant on this resolve, I leaped from bed, made a light, and as the watchman was crying half-past two in the dark streets of Lichfield, sat down to pen a letter of farewell to Flora. And then — whether it was the sudden chill of the night, whether it came by association of ideas from the remembrance of Swanston Cottage I know not, but there appeared before me — to the barking of sheep-dogs — a couple of snuffy and shambling figures, each wrapped in a plaid, each armed with a rude staff; and I was immediately bowed down to have forgotten them so long, and of late to have thought of them so cavalierly.

Sure enough there was my errand! As a private person I was neither French nor English; I was something else first: a loyal gentleman, an honest man. Sim and Candlish must not be left to pay the penalty of my unfortunate blow. They held my honour tacitly pledged to succour them; and it is a sort of stoical refinement entirely foreign to my nature to set the political obligation above the personal and private. If France fell in the interval for the lack of Anne de St.-Yves, fall she must! But I was both surprised and humiliated to have had so plain a duty bound upon me for so long — and for so long to have neglected and forgotten it. I think any brave man will understand me when I say that I went to bed and to sleep with a conscience very much relieved, and woke again in the morning with a light heart. The very danger of the enterprise reassured me: to save Sim and Candlish (suppose the worst to come to the worst) it would be necessary for me to declare myself in a court of justice, with consequences which I did not dare to dwell upon; it could never be said that I had chosen the cheap and the easy — only that in a very perplexing competition of duties I had risked my life for the most immediate.

We resumed the journey with more diligence: thenceforward posted day and night; did not halt beyond what was necessary for meals; and the postillions were excited by gratuities, after the habit of my cousin Alain. For twopence I could have gone farther and taken four horses; so extreme was my haste, running as I was before the terrors of an awakened conscience. But I feared to be conspicuous. Even as it was, we attracted only too much attention, with our pair and that white elephant, the seventy-pounds-worth of claret-coloured chaise.

Meanwhile I was ashamed to look Rowley in the face. The young shaver had contrived to put me wholly in the wrong; he had cost me a night's rest and a severe and healthful humiliation; and I was grateful and embarrassed in his society. This would never do; it was contrary to all my ideas of discipline; if the officer has to blush before the private, or the master before the servant, nothing is left to hope for but discharge or death. I hit upon the idea of teaching him French; and accordingly, from Lichfield, I became the distracted master, and he the scholar — how shall I say? indefatigable, but uninspired. His interest never flagged. He would hear the same word twenty times with profound refreshment, mispronounce it in several different ways, and forget it again with magical celerity. Say it happened to be *stirrup*. 'No, I don't seem to remember that word, Mr. Anne,' he would say: 'it don't seem to stick to me, that word don't.' And then, when I had told it him again, '*Etrier*!' he would cry. 'To be sure! I had it on the tip of my tongue. *Eterier*!' (going wrong already, as if by a fatal instinct). 'What will I remember it by, now? Why, *interior*, to be sure! I'll remember it by its being something that ain't in the interior of a horse.' And when next I had occasion to ask him the French for stirrup, it was a toss-up whether he had forgotten all about it, or gave me *exterior* for an answer. He was never a hair discouraged. He seemed to consider that he was covering the ground at a normal rate. He came up smiling day after day. ‘Now, sir, shall we do our French?’ he would say; and I would put questions, and elicit copious commentary and explanation, but never the shadow of an answer. My hands fell to my sides; I could have wept to hear him. When I reflected that he had as yet learned nothing, and what a vast deal more there was for him to learn, the period of these lessons seemed to unroll before me vast as eternity, and I saw myself a teacher of a hundred, and Rowley a pupil of ninety, still hammering on the rudiments! The wretched boy, I should say, was quite unspoiled by the inevitable familiarities of the journey. He turned out at each stage the pink of serving-lads, deft, civil, prompt, attentive, touching his hat like an automaton, raising the status of Mr. Ramornie in the eyes of all the inn by his smiling service, and seeming capable of anything in the world but the one thing I had chosen — learning French!

CHAPTER XXIII — THE ADVENTURE OF THE RUNAWAY COUPLE

The country had for some time back been changing in character. By a thousand indications I could judge that I was again drawing near to Scotland. I saw it written in the face of the hills, in the growth of the trees, and in the glint of the waterbrooks that kept the high-road company. It might have occurred to me, also, that I was, at the same time, approaching a place of some fame in Britain — Gretna Green. Over these same leagues of road — which Rowley and I now traversed in the claret-coloured chaise, to the note of the flageolet and the French lesson — how many pairs of lovers had gone bowling northwards to the music of sixteen scampering horseshoes; and how many irate persons, parents, uncles, guardians, evicted rivals, had come tearing after, clapping the frequent red face to the chaise-window, lavishly shedding their gold about the post-houses, sedulously loading and re-loading, as they went, their avenging pistols! But I doubt if I had thought of it at all, before a wayside hazard swept me into the thick of an adventure of this nature; and I found myself playing providence with other people's lives, to my own admiration at the moment — and subsequently to my own brief but passionate regret.

At rather an ugly corner of an uphill reach I came on the wreck of a chaise lying on one side in the ditch, a man and a woman in animated discourse in the middle of the road, and the two postillions, each with his pair of horses, looking on and laughing from the saddle.

'Morning breezes! here's a smash!' cried Rowley, pocketing his flageolet in the middle of the *Tight Little Island*.

I was perhaps more conscious of the moral smash than the physical — more alive to broken hearts than to broken chaises; for, as plain as the sun at morning, there was a screw loose in this runaway match. It is always a bad sign when the lower classes laugh: their taste in humour is both poor and sinister; and for a man, running the posts with four horses, presumably with open pockets, and in the company of the most entrancing little creature conceivable, to have come down so far as to be laughed at by his own postillions, was only to be explained on the double hypothesis, that he was a fool and no gentleman.

I have said they were man and woman. I should have said man and child. She was certainly not more than seventeen, pretty as an angel, just plump enough to damn a saint, and dressed in various shades of blue, from her stockings to her saucy cap, in a kind of taking gamut, the top note of which she flung me in a beam from her too appreciative eye. There was no doubt about the case: I saw it all. From a boarding-school, a black-board, a piano, and Clementi's *Sonatinas*, the child had made a rash adventure upon life in the company of a half-bred hawbuck; and she was already not only regretting it, but expressing her regret with point and pungency.

As I alighted they both paused with that unmistakable air of being interrupted in a scene. I uncovered to the lady and placed my services at their disposal.

It was the man who answered. 'There's no use in shamming, sir,' said he. 'This lady and I have run away, and her father's after us: road to Gretna, sir. And here have these nincompoops spilt us in the ditch and smashed the chaise!'

'Very provoking,' said I.

'I don't know when I've been so provoked!' cried he, with a glance down the road, of mortal terror.

'The father is no doubt very much incensed?' I pursued civilly.

'O God!' cried the hawbuck. 'In short, you see, we must get out of this. And I'll tell you what — it may seem cool, but necessity has no law — if you would lend us your chaise to the next post-house, it would be the very thing, sir.'

'I confess it seems cool,' I replied.

'What's that you say, sir?' he snapped.

'I was agreeing with you,' said I. 'Yes, it does seem cool; and what is more to the point, it seems unnecessary. This thing can be arranged in a more satisfactory manner otherwise, I think. You can doubtless ride?'

This opened a door on the matter of their previous dispute, and the fellow appeared life-sized in his true colours. 'That's what I've been telling her: that, damn her! she must ride!' he broke out. 'And if the gentleman's of the same mind, why, damme, you shall!'

As he said so, he made a snatch at her wrist, which she evaded with horror.

I stepped between them.

'No, sir,' said I; 'the lady shall not.'

He turned on me raging. 'And who are you to interfere?' he roared.

'There is here no question of who I am,' I replied. 'I may be the devil or the Archbishop of Canterbury for what you know, or need know. The point is that I can help you — it appears that nobody else can; and I will tell you how I propose to do it. I will give the lady a seat in my chaise, if you will return the compliment by allowing my servant to ride one of your horses.'

I thought he would have sprung at my throat.

'You have always the alternative before you: to wait here for the arrival of papa,' I added.

And that settled him. He cast another haggard look down the road, and capitulated.

'I am sure, sir, the lady is very much obliged to you,' he said, with an ill grace.

I gave her my hand; she mounted like a bird into the chaise; Rowley, grinning from ear to ear, closed the door behind us; the two impudent rascals of post-boys cheered and laughed aloud as we drove off; and my own postillion urged his horses at once into a rattling trot. It was plain I was supposed by all to have done a very dashing act, and ravished the bride from the ravisher.

In the meantime I stole a look at the little lady. She was in a state of pitiable discomposure, and her arms shook on her lap in her black lace mittens.

'Madam — ' I began.

And she, in the same moment, finding her voice: 'O, what you must think of me!'

'Madam,' said I, 'what must any gentleman think when he sees youth, beauty and innocence in distress? I wish I could tell you that I was old enough to be your father; I think we must give that up,' I continued, with a smile. 'But I will tell you something about myself which ought to do as well, and to set that little heart at rest in my society. I am a lover. May I say it of myself — for I am not quite used to all the niceties of English — that I am a true lover? There is one whom I admire, adore, obey; she is no less good than she is beautiful; if she were here, she would take you to her arms: conceive that she has sent me — that she has said to me, "Go, be her knight!"'

'O, I know she must be sweet, I know she must be worthy of you!' cried the little lady. 'She would never forget female decorum — nor make the terrible *erratum* I've done!'

And at this she lifted up her voice and wept.

This did not forward matters: it was in vain that I begged her to be more composed and to tell me a plain, consecutive tale of her misadventures; but she continued instead to pour forth the most extraordinary mixture of the correct school miss and the poor untutored little piece of womanhood in a false position — of engrafted pedantry and incoherent nature.

'I am certain it must have been judicial blindness,' she sobbed. 'I can't think how I didn't see it, but I didn't; and he isn't, is he? And then a curtain rose . . . O, what a moment was that! But I knew at once that *you were*; you had but to appear from your carriage, and I knew it, O, she must be a fortunate young lady! And I have no fear with you, none — a perfect confidence.'

'Madam,' said I, 'a gentleman.'

‘That’s what I mean — a gentleman,’ she exclaimed. ‘And he — and that — *he* isn’t. O, how shall I dare meet father!’ And disclosing to me her tear-stained face, and opening her arms with a tragic gesture: ‘And I am quite disgraced before all the young ladies, my school-companions!’ she added.

‘O, not so bad as that!’ I cried. ‘Come, come, you exaggerate, my dear Miss — ? Excuse me if I am too familiar: I have not yet heard your name.’

‘My name is Dorothy Greensleeves, sir: why should I conceal it? I fear it will only serve to point an adage to future generations, and I had meant so differently! There was no young female in the county more emulous to be thought well of than I. And what a fall was there! O, dear me, what a wicked, piggish donkey of a girl I have made of myself, to be sure! And there is no hope! O, Mr. — ’

And at that she paused and asked my name.

I am not writing my eulogium for the Academy; I will admit it was unpardonably imbecile, but I told it her. If you had been there — and seen her, ravishingly pretty and little, a baby in years and mind — and heard her talking like a book, with so much of schoolroom propriety in her manner, with such an innocent despair in the matter — you would probably have told her yours. She repeated it after me.

‘I shall pray for you all my life,’ she said. ‘Every night, when I retire to rest, the last thing I shall do is to remember you by name.’

Presently I succeeded in winning from her her tale, which was much what I had anticipated: a tale of a schoolhouse, a walled garden, a fruit-tree that concealed a bench, an impudent raff posturing in church, an exchange of flowers and vows over the garden wall, a silly schoolmate for a confidante, a chaise and four, and the most immediate and perfect disenchantment on the part of the little lady. ‘And there is nothing to be done!’ she wailed in conclusion. ‘My error is irretrievable, I am quite forced to that conclusion. O, Monsieur de Saint-Yves! who would have thought that I could have been such a blind, wicked donkey!’

I should have said before — only that I really do not know when it came in — that we had been overtaken by the two post-boys, Rowley and Mr. Bellamy, which was the hawbuck’s name, bestriding the four post-horses; and that these formed a sort of cavalry escort, riding now before, now behind the chaise, and Bellamy occasionally posturing at the window and obliging us with some of his conversation. He was so ill-received that I declare I was tempted to pity him, remembering from what a height he had fallen, and how few hours ago it was since the lady had herself fled to his arms, all blushes and ardour. Well, these great strokes of fortune usually befall the unworthy, and Bellamy was now the legitimate object of my commiseration and the ridicule of his own post-boys!

‘Miss Dorothy,’ said I, ‘you wish to be delivered from this man?’

‘O, if it were possible!’ she cried. ‘But not by violence.’

‘Not in the least, ma’am,’ I replied. ‘The simplest thing in life. We are in a civilised country; the man’s a malefactor — ’

‘O, never!’ she cried. ‘Do not even dream it! With all his faults, I know he is not *that.*’

‘Anyway, he’s in the wrong in this affair — on the wrong side of the law, call it what you please,’ said I; and with that, our four horsemen having for the moment headed us by a considerable interval, I hailed my post-boy and inquired who was the nearest magistrate and where he lived. Archdeacon Clitheroe, he told me, a prodigious dignitary, and one who lived but a lane or two back, and at the distance of only a mile or two out of the direct road. I showed him the king’s medallion.

‘Take the lady there, and at full gallop,’ I cried.

‘Right, sir! Mind yourself,’ says the postillion.

And before I could have thought it possible, he had turned the carriage to the rightabout and we were galloping south.

Our outriders were quick to remark and imitate the manoeuvre, and came flying after us with a vast deal of indiscriminate shouting; so that the fine, sober picture of a carriage and escort, that we had presented but a moment back, was transformed in the twinkling of an eye into the image of a noisy fox-chase. The two postillions and my own saucy rogue were, of course, disinterested actors in the comedy; they rode for the mere sport, keeping in a body, their mouths full of laughter, waving their hats as they came on, and crying (as the fancy struck them) Tally-ho!’ ‘Stop, thief!’ ‘A highwayman! A highwayman!’ It was otherguess work with Bellamy. That gentleman no sooner observed our change of direction than he turned his horse with so much violence that the poor animal was almost cast upon its side, and launched her in immediate and desperate pursuit. As he approached I saw that his face was deadly white and that he carried a drawn pistol in his hand. I turned at once to the poor little bride that was to have been, and now was not to be; she, upon her side, deserting the other window, turned as if to meet me.

‘O, O, don’t let him kill me!’ she screamed.

‘Never fear,’ I replied.

Her face was distorted with terror. Her hands took hold upon me with the instinctive clutch of an infant. The chaise gave a flying lurch, which took the feet from under me and tumbled us anyhow upon the seat. And almost in the same moment the head of Bellamy appeared in the window which Missy had left free for him.

Conceive the situation! The little lady and I were falling — or had just fallen — backward on the seat, and offered to the eye a somewhat ambiguous picture. The chaise was speeding at a furious pace, and with the most violent leaps and lurches, along the highway. Into this bounding receptacle Bellamy interjected his head, his pistol arm, and his pistol; and since his own horse was travelling still faster than the chaise, he must withdraw all of them again in the inside of the fraction of a minute. He did so, but he left the charge of the pistol behind him — whether by design or accident I shall never know, and I dare say he has forgotten! Probably he had only meant to threaten, in hopes of causing us to arrest our flight. In the same moment came the explosion and a pitiful cry from Missy; and my gentleman, making certain he had struck her, went down the road pursued by the furies, turned at the first corner, took a flying leap over the thorn hedge, and disappeared across country in the least possible time.

Rowley was ready and eager to pursue; but I withheld him, thinking we were excellently quit of Mr. Bellamy, at no more cost than a scratch on the forearm and a bullet-hole in the left-hand claret-coloured panel. And accordingly, but now at a more decent pace, we proceeded on our way to Archdeacon Clitheroe's, Missy's gratitude and admiration were aroused to a high pitch by this dramatic scene, and what she was pleased to call my wound. She must dress it for me with her handkerchief, a service which she rendered me even with tears. I could well have spared them, not loving on the whole to be made ridiculous, and the injury being in the nature of a cat's scratch. Indeed, I would have suggested for her kind care rather the cure of my coat-sleeve, which had suffered worse in the encounter; but I was too wise to risk the anti-climax. That she had been rescued by a hero, that the hero should have been wounded in the affray, and his wound bandaged with her handkerchief (which it could not even bloody), ministered incredibly to the recovery of her self-respect; and I could hear her relate the incident to 'the young ladies, my school-companions,' in the most approved manner of Mrs. Radcliffe! To have insisted on the torn coat-sleeve would have been unmannerly, if not inhuman.

Presently the residence of the archdeacon began to heave in sight. A chaise and four smoking horses stood by the steps, and made way for us on our approach; and even as we alighted there appeared from the interior of the house a tall ecclesiastic, and beside him a little, headstrong, ruddy man, in a towering passion, and brandishing over his head a roll of paper. At sight of him Miss Dorothy flung herself on her knees with the most moving adjurations, calling him father, assuring him she was wholly cured and entirely repentant of her disobedience, and entreating forgiveness; and I soon saw that she need fear no great severity from Mr. Greensleeves, who showed himself extraordinarily fond, loud, greedy of caresses and prodigal of tears.

To give myself a countenance, as well as to have all ready for the road when I should find occasion, I turned to quit scores with Bellamy's two postillions. They had not the least claim on me, but one of which they were quite ignorant — that I was a fugitive. It is the worst feature of that false position that every gratuity becomes a case of conscience. You must not leave behind you any one discontented nor any one grateful. But the whole business had been such a 'hurrah-boys' from the beginning, and had gone off in the fifth act so like a melodrama, in explosions, reconciliations, and the rape of a post-horse, that it was plainly impossible to keep it covered. It was plain it would have to be talked over in all the inn-kitchens for thirty miles about, and likely for six months to come. It only remained for me, therefore, to settle on that gratuity which should be least conspicuous — so large that nobody could grumble, so small that nobody would be tempted to boast. My decision was hastily and nor wisely taken. The one fellow spat on his tip (so he called it) for luck; the other developing a sudden streak of piety, prayed God bless me with fervour. It seemed a demonstration was brewing, and I determined to be off at once. Bidding my own post-boy and Rowley be in readiness for an immediate start, I reascended the terrace and presented myself, hat in hand, before Mr. Greensleeves and the archdeacon.

'You will excuse me, I trust,' said I. 'I think shame to interrupt this agreeable scene of family effusion, which I have been privileged in some small degree to bring about.'

And at these words the storm broke.

'Small degree! small degree, sir!' cries the father; 'that shall not pass, Mr. St. Eaves! If I've got my darling back, and none the worse for that vagabone rascal, I know whom I have to thank. Shake hands with me — up to the elbows, sir! A Frenchman you may be, but you're one of the right breed, by God! And, by God, sir, you may have anything you care to ask of me, down to Dolly's hand, by God!'

All this he roared out in a voice surprisingly powerful from so small a person. Every word was thus audible to the servants, who had followed them out of the house and now congregated about us on the terrace, as well as to Rowley and the five postillions on the gravel sweep below. The sentiments expressed were popular; some ass, whom the devil moved to be my enemy, proposed three cheers, and they were given with a will. To hear my own name resounding amid acclamations in the hills of Westmorland was flattering, perhaps; but it was inconvenient at a moment when (as I was morally persuaded) police handbills were already speeding after me at the rate of a hundred miles a day.

Nor was that the end of it. The archdeacon must present his compliments, and pressed upon me some of his West India sherry, and I was carried into a vastly fine library, where I was presented to his lady wife. While we were at sherry in the library, ale was handed round upon the terrace. Speeches were made, hands were shaken, Missy (at her father's request) kissed me farewell, and the whole party reaccompanied me to the terrace, where they stood waving hats and handkerchiefs, and crying farewells to all the echoes of the mountains until the chaise had disappeared.

The echoes of the mountains were engaged in saying to me privately: 'You fool, you have done it now!'

'They do seem to have got 'old of your name, Mr. Anne,' said Rowley. 'It weren't my fault this time.'

'It was one of those accidents that can never be foreseen,' said I, affecting a dignity that I was far from feeling. 'Some one recognised me.'

'Which on 'em, Mr. Anne?' said the rascal.

'That is a senseless question; it can make no difference who it was,' I returned.

'No, nor that it can't!' cried Rowley. 'I say, Mr. Anne, sir, it's what you would call a jolly mess, ain't it? looks like "clean bowled-out in the middle stump," don't it?'

'I fail to understand you, Rowley.'

'Well, what I mean is, what are we to do about this one?' pointing to the postillion in front of us, as he alternately hid and revealed his patched breeches to the trot of his horse. 'He see you get in this morning under *Mr. Ramornie* — I was very piticular to *Mr. Ramornie* you, if you remember, sir — and he see you get in again under Mr. Saint Eaves, and whatever's he going to see you get out under? that's what worries me, sir. It don't seem to me like as if the position was what you call *stratetegic*!'

'*Parrrbleu*! will you let me be!' I cried. 'I have to think; you cannot imagine how your constant idiotic prattle annoys me.'

'Beg pardon, Mr. Anne,' said he; and the next moment, 'You wouldn't like for us to do our French now, would you, Mr. Anne?'

'Certainly not,' said I. 'Play upon your flageolet.'

The which he did with what seemed to me to be irony.

Conscience doth make cowards of us all! I was so downcast by my pitiful mismanagement of the morning's business that I shrank from the eye of my own hired infant, and read offensive meanings into his idle tootling.

I took off my coat, and set to mending it, soldier-fashion, with a needle and thread. There is nothing more conducive to thought, above all in arduous circumstances; and as I sewed, I gradually gained a clearness upon my affairs. I must be done with the claret-coloured chaise at once. It should be sold at the next stage for what it would bring. Rowley and I must take back to the road on our four feet, and after a decent interval of trudging, get places on some coach for Edinburgh again under new names! So much trouble and toil, so much extra risk and expense and loss of time, and all for a slip of the tongue to a little lady in blue!

CHAPTER XXIV — THE INN-KEEPER OF KIRKBY-LONSDALE

I had hitherto conceived and partly carried out an ideal that was dear to my heart. Rowley and I descended from our claret-coloured chaise, a couple of correctly dressed, brisk, bright-eyed young fellows, like a pair of aristocratic mice; attending singly to our own affairs, communicating solely with each other, and that with the niceties and civilities of drill. We would pass through the little crowd before the door with high-bred preoccupation, inoffensively haughty, after the best English pattern; and disappear within, followed by the envy and admiration of the bystanders, a model master and servant, point-device in every part. It was a heavy thought to me, as we drew up before the inn at Kirkby-Lonsdale, that this scene was now to be enacted for the last time. Alas! and had I known it, it was to go of with so inferior a grace!

I had been injudiciously liberal to the post-boys of the chaise and four. My own post-boy, he of the patched breeches, now stood before me, his eyes glittering with greed, his hand advanced. It was plain he anticipated something extraordinary by way of a *pourboire*; and considering the marches and counter-marches by which I had extended the stage, the military character of our affairs with Mr. Bellamy, and the bad example I had set before him at the archdeacon's, something exceptional was certainly to be done. But these are always nice questions, to a foreigner above all: a shade too little will suggest niggardliness, a shilling too much smells of hush-money. Fresh from the scene at the archdeacon's, and flushed by the idea that I was now nearly done with the responsibilities of the claret-coloured chaise, I put into his hands five guineas; and the amount served only to waken his cupidity.

'O, come, sir, you ain't going to fob me of with this? Why, I seen fire at your side!' he cried.

It would never do to give him more; I felt I should become the fable of Kirkby-Lonsdale if I did; and I looked him in the face, sternly but still smiling, and addressed him with a voice of uncompromising firmness.

'If you do not like it, give it back,' said I.

He pocketed the guineas with the quickness of a conjurer, and, like a base-born cockney as he was, fell instantly to casting dirt.

"Ave your own way of it, Mr. Ramornie — leastways Mr. St. Eaves, or whatever your blessed name may be. Look 'ere' — turning for sympathy to the stable-boys — 'this is a blessed business. Blessed ‘ard, I calls it. ‘Ere I takes up a blessed son of a pop-gun what calls hisself anything you care to mention, and turns out to be a blessed *mounseer* at the end of it! ‘Ere ‘ave I been drivin’ of him up and down all day, a-carrying off of gals, a-shootin’ of pistyils, and a-drinkin’ of sherry and hale; and wot does he up and give me but a blank, blank, blanketing blank!’

The fellow’s language had become too powerful for reproduction, and I passed it by.

Meanwhile I observed Rowley fretting visibly at the bit; another moment, and he would have added a last touch of the ridiculous to our arrival by coming to his hands with the postillion.

‘Rowley!’ cried I reprovingly.

Strictly it should have been Gammon; but in the hurry of the moment, my fault (I can only hope) passed unperceived. At the same time I caught the eye of the postmaster. He was long and lean, and brown and bilious; he had the drooping nose of the humourist, and the quick attention of a man of parts. He read my embarrassment in a glance, stepped instantly forward, sent the post-boy to the rightabout with half a word, and was back next moment at my side.

‘Dinner in a private room, sir? Very well. John, No. 4! What wine would you care to mention? Very well, sir. Will you please to order fresh horses? Not, sir? Very well.’

Each of these expressions was accompanied by something in the nature of a bow, and all were prefaced by something in the nature of a smile, which I could very well have done without. The man’s politeness was from the teeth outwards; behind and within, I was conscious of a perpetual scrutiny: the scene at his doorstep, the random confidences of the post-boy, had not been thrown away on this observer; and it was under a strong fear of coming trouble that I was shown at last into my private room. I was in half a mind to have put off the whole business. But the truth is, now my name had got abroad, my fear of the mail that was coming, and the handbills it should contain, had waxed inordinately, and I felt I could never eat a meal in peace till I had severed my connection with the claret-coloured chaise.

Accordingly, as soon as I had done with dinner, I sent my compliments to the landlord and requested he should take a glass of wine with me. He came; we exchanged the necessary civilities, and presently I approached my business.

‘By the bye,’ said I, ‘we had a brush down the road to-day. I dare say you may have heard of it?’

He nodded.

‘And I was so unlucky as to get a pistol ball in the panel of my chaise,’ I continued, ‘which makes it simply useless to me. Do you know any one likely to buy?'

'I can well understand that,' said the landlord, 'I was looking at it just now; it's as good as ruined, is that chaise. General rule, people don't like chaises with bullet-holes.'

'Too much *Romance of the Forest*?' I suggested, recalling my little friend of the morning, and what I was sure had been her favourite reading — Mrs. Radcliffe's novels.

'Just so,' said he. 'They may be right, they may be wrong; I'm not the judge. But I suppose it's natural, after all, for respectable people to like things respectable about them; not bullet-holes, nor puddles of blood, nor men with aliases.'

I took a glass of wine and held it up to the light to show that my hand was steady.

'Yes,' said I, 'I suppose so.'

'You have papers, of course, showing you are the proper owner?' he inquired.

'There is the bill, stamped and receipted,' said I, tossing it across to him.

He looked at it.

'This all you have?' he asked.

'It is enough, at least,' said I. 'It shows you where I bought and what I paid for it.'

'Well, I don't know,' he said. 'You want some paper of identification.'

'To identify the chaise?' I inquired.

'Not at all: to identify *you*,' said he.

'My good sir, remember yourself!' said I. 'The title-deeds of my estate are in that despatch-box; but you do not seriously suppose that I should allow you to examine them?'

'Well, you see, this paper proves that some Mr. Ramornie paid seventy guineas for a chaise,' said the fellow. 'That's all well and good; but who's to prove to me that you are Mr. Ramornie?'

'Fellow!' cried I.

'O, fellow as much as you please!' said he. 'Fellow, with all my heart! That changes nothing. I am fellow, of course — obtrusive fellow, impudent fellow, if you like — but who are you? I hear of you with two names; I hear of you running away with young ladies, and getting cheered for a Frenchman, which seems odd; and one thing I will go bail for, that you were in a blue fright when the post-boy began to tell tales at my door. In short, sir, you may be a very good gentleman; but I don't know enough about you, and I'll trouble you for your papers, or to go before a magistrate. Take your choice; if I'm not fine enough, I hope the magistrates are.'

'My good man,' I stammered, for though I had found my voice, I could scarce be said to have recovered my wits, 'this is most unusual, most rude. Is it the custom in Westmorland that gentlemen should be insulted?'

'That depends,' said he. 'When it's suspected that gentlemen are spies it *is* the custom; and a good custom, too. No no,' he broke out, perceiving me to make a movement. 'Both hands upon the table, my gentleman! I want no pistol balls in my chaise panels.'

'Surely, sir, you do me strange injustice!' said I, now the master of myself. 'You see me sitting here, a monument of tranquillity: pray may I help myself to wine without umbraging you?'

I took this attitude in sheer despair. I had no plan, no hope. The best I could imagine was to spin the business out some minutes longer, then capitulate. At least, I would not capituatle one moment too soon.

'Am I to take that for *no*?' he asked.

'Referring to your former obliging proposal?' said I. 'My good sir, you are to take it, as you say, for "No." Certainly I will not show you my deeds; certainly I will not rise from table and trundle out to see your magistrates. I have too much respect for my digestion, and too little curiosity in justices of the peace.'

He leaned forward, looked me nearly in the face, and reached out one hand to the bell-rope. 'See here, my fine fellow!' said he. 'Do you see that bell-rope? Let me tell you, there's a boy waiting below: one jingle, and he goes to fetch the constable.'

'Do you tell me so?' said I. 'Well, there's no accounting for tastes! I have a prejudice against the society of constables, but if it is your fancy to have one in for the dessert — ' I shrugged my shoulders lightly. 'Really, you know,' I added, 'this is vastly entertaining. I assure you, I am looking on, with all the interest of a man of the world, at the development of your highly original character.'

He continued to study my face without speech, his hand still on the button of the bell-rope, his eyes in mine; this was the decisive heat. My face seemed to myself to dislimn under his gaze, my expression to change, the smile (with which I had began) to degenerate into the grin of the man upon the rack. I was besides harassed with doubts. An innocent man, I argued, would have resented the fellow's impudence an hour ago; and by my continued endurance of the ordeal, I was simply signing and sealing my confession; in short, I had reached the end of my powers.

'Have you any objection to my putting my hands in my breeches pockets?' I inquired. 'Excuse me mentioning it, but you showed yourself so extremely nervous a moment back.' My voice was not all I could have wished, but it sufficed. I could hear it tremble, but the landlord apparently could not. He turned away and drew a long breath, and you may be sure I was quick to follow his example.

‘You’re a cool hand at least, and that’s the sort I like,’ said he. ‘Be you what you please, I’ll deal square. I’ll take the chaise for a hundred pound down, and throw the dinner in.’

‘I beg your pardon,’ I cried, wholly mystified by this form of words.

‘You pay me a hundred down,’ he repeated, ‘and I’ll take the chaise. It’s very little more than it cost,’ he added, with a grin, ‘and you know you must get it off your hands somehow.’

I do not know when I have been better entertained than by this impudent proposal. It was broadly funny, and I suppose the least tempting offer in the world. For all that, it came very welcome, for it gave me the occasion to laugh. This I did with the most complete abandonment, till the tears ran down my cheeks; and ever and again, as the fit abated, I would get another view of the landlord’s face, and go off into another paroxysm.

‘You droll creature, you will be the death of me yet!’ I cried, drying my eyes.

My friend was now wholly disconcerted; he knew not where to look, nor yet what to say; and began for the first time to conceive it possible he was mistaken.

‘You seem rather to enjoy a laugh, sir,’ said he.

‘O, yes! I am quite an original,’ I replied, and laughed again.

Presently, in a changed voice, he offered me twenty pounds for the chaise; I ran him up to twenty-five, and closed with the offer: indeed, I was glad to get anything; and if I haggled, it was not in the desire of gain, but with the view at any price of securing a safe retreat. For although hostilities were suspended, he was yet far from satisfied; and I could read his continued suspicions in the cloudy eye that still hovered about my face. At last they took shape in words.

‘This is all very well,’ says he: ‘you carry it off well; but for all that, I must do my duty.’

I had my strong effect in reserve; it was to burn my ships with a vengeance! I rose. ‘Leave the room,’ said I. ‘This is insuperable. Is the man mad?’ And then, as if already half-ashamed of my passion: ‘I can take a joke as well as any one,’ I added; ‘but this passes measure. Send my servant and the bill.’

When he had left me alone, I considered my own valour with amazement. I had insulted him; I had sent him away alone; now, if ever, he would take what was the only sensible resource, and fetch the constable. But there was something instinctively treacherous about the man which shrank from plain courses. And, with all his cleverness, he missed the occasion of fame. Rowley and I were suffered to walk out of his door, with all our baggage, on foot, with no destination named, except in the vague statement that we were come ‘to view the lakes’; and my friend only watched our departure with his chin in his hand, still moodily irresolute.

I think this one of my great successes. I was exposed, unmasked, summoned to do a perfectly natural act, which must prove my doom and which I had not the slightest pretext for refusing. I kept my head, stuck to my guns, and, against all likelihood, here I was once more at liberty and in the king's highway. This was a strong lesson never to despair; and, at the same time, how many hints to be cautious! and what a perplexed and dubious business the whole question of my escape now appeared! That I should have risked perishing upon a trumpery question of a *pourboire*, depicted in lively colours the perils that perpetually surrounded us. Though, to be sure, the initial mistake had been committed before that; and if I had not suffered myself to be drawn a little deep in confidences to the innocent Dolly, there need have been no tumble at the inn of Kirkby-Lonsdale. I took the lesson to heart, and promised myself in the future to be more reserved. It was none of my business to attend to broken chaises or shipwrecked travellers. I had my hands full of my own affairs; and my best defence would be a little more natural selfishness and a trifle less imbecile good-nature.

CHAPTER XXV — I MEET A CHEERFUL EXTRAVAGANT

I pass over the next fifty or sixty leagues of our journey without comment. The reader must be growing weary of scenes of travel; and for my own part I have no cause to recall these particular miles with any pleasure. We were mainly occupied with attempts to obliterate our trail, which (as the result showed) were far from successful; for, on my cousin following, he was able to run me home with the least possible loss of time, following the claret-coloured chaise to Kirkby-Lonsdale, where I think the landlord must have wept to learn what he had missed, and tracing us thereafter to the doors of the coach-office in Edinburgh without a single check. Fortune did not favour me, and why should I recapitulate the details of futile precautions which deceived nobody, and wearisome arts which proved to be artless?

The day was drawing to an end when Mr. Rowley and I bowled into Edinburgh to the stirring sound of the guard's bugle and the clattering team. I was here upon my field of battle; on the scene of my former captivity, escape and exploits; and in the same city with my love. My heart expanded; I have rarely felt more of a hero. All down the Bridges I sat by the driver with my arms folded and my face set, unflinchingly meeting every eye, and prepared every moment for a cry of recognition. Hundreds of the population were in the habit of visiting the Castle, where it was my practice (before the days of Flora) to make myself conspicuous among the prisoners; and I think it an extraordinary thing that I should have encountered so few to recognise me. But doubtless a clean chin is a disguise in itself; and the change is great from a suit of sulphur-yellow to fine linen, a well-fitting mouse-coloured great-coat furred in black, a pair of tight trousers of fashionable cut, and a hat of inimitable curl. After all, it was more likely that I should have recognised our visitors, than that they should have identified the modish gentleman with the miserable prisoner in the Castle.

I was glad to set foot on the flagstones, and to escape from the crowd that had assembled to receive the mail. Here we were, with but little daylight before us, and that on Saturday afternoon, the eve of the famous Scottish Sabbath, adrift in the New Town of Edinburgh, and overladen with baggage. We carried it ourselves. I would not take a cab, nor so much as hire a porter, who might afterwards serve as a link between my lodgings and the mail, and connect me again with the claret-coloured chaise and Aylesbury. For I was resolved to break the chain of evidence for good, and to begin life afresh (so far as regards caution) with a new character. The first step was to find lodgings, and to find them quickly. This was the more needful as Mr. Rowley and I, in our smart clothes and with our cumbrous burthen, made a noticeable appearance in the streets at that time of the day and in that quarter of the town, which was largely given up to fine folk, bucks and dandies and young ladies, or respectable professional men on their way home to dinner.

On the north side of St. James' Square I was so happy as to spy a bill in a third-floor window. I was equally indifferent to cost and convenience in my choice of a lodging — 'any port in a storm' was the principle on which I was prepared to act; and Rowley and I made at once for the common entrance and sealed the stair.

We were admitted by a very sour-looking female in bombazine. I gathered she had all her life been depressed by a series of bereavements, the last of which might very well have befallen her the day before; and I instinctively lowered my voice when I addressed her. She admitted she had rooms to let — even showed them to us — a sitting-room and bedroom in a *suite*, commanding a fine prospect to the Firth and Fifeshire, and in themselves well proportioned and comfortably furnished, with pictures on the wall, shells on the mantelpiece, and several books upon the table which I found afterwards to be all of a devotional character, and all presentation copies, 'to my Christian friend,' or 'to my devout acquaintance in the Lord, Bethiah McRankine.' Beyond this my 'Christian friend' could not be made to advance: no, not even to do that which seemed the most natural and pleasing thing in the world — I mean to name her price — but stood before us shaking her head, and at times mourning like the dove, the picture of depression and defence. She had a voice the most querulous I have ever heard, and with this she produced a whole regiment of difficulties and criticisms.

She could not promise an attendance.

'Well, madam,' said I, 'and what is my servant for?'

'Him?' she asked. 'Be gude to us! Is *he* your servant?'

'I am sorry, ma'am, he meets with your disapproval.'

'Na, I never said that. But he's young. He'll be a great breaker, I'm thinkin'. Ay! he'll be a great responsibeelity to ye, like. Does he attend to his releegion?'

'Yes, m'm,' returned Rowley, with admirable promptitude, and, immediately closing his eyes, as if from habit, repeated the following distich with more celerity than fervour: —

'Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
Bless the bed that I lie on!'

'Nhm!' said the lady, and maintained an awful silence.

'Well, ma'am,' said I, 'it seems we are never to hear the beginning of your terms, let alone the end of them. Come — a good movement! and let us be either off or on.’

She opened her lips slowly. ‘Ony raferences?’ she inquired, in a voice like a bell.

I opened my pocket-book and showed her a handful of bank bills. ‘I think, madam, that these are unexceptionable,’ said I.

‘Ye’ll be wantin’ breakfast late?’ was her reply.

‘Madam, we want breakfast at whatever hour it suits you to give it, from four in the morning till four in the afternoon!’ I cried. ‘Only tell us your figure, if your mouth be large enough to let it out!’

‘I couldnae give ye supper the nicht,’ came the echo.

‘We shall go out to supper, you incorrigible female!’ I vowed, between laughter and tears. ‘Here — this is going to end! I want you for a landlady — let me tell you that! — and I am going to have my way. You won’t tell me what you charge? Very well; I will do without! I can trust you! You don’t seem to know when you have a good lodger; but I know perfectly when I have an honest landlady! Rowley, unstrap the valises!’

Will it be credited? The monomaniac fell to rating me for my indiscretion! But the battle was over; these were her last guns, and more in the nature of a salute than of renewed hostilities. And presently she condescended on very moderate terms, and Rowley and I were able to escape in quest of supper. Much time had, however, been lost; the sun was long down, the lamps glimmered along the streets, and the voice of a watchman already resounded in the neighbouring Leith Road. On our first arrival I had observed a place of entertainment not far off, in a street behind the Register House. Thither we found our way, and sat down to a late dinner alone. But we had scarce given our orders before the door opened, and a tall young fellow entered with something of a lurch, looked about him, and approached the same table.

‘Give you good evening, most grave and reverend seniors!’ said he. ‘Will you permit a wanderer, a pilgrim — the pilgrim of love, in short — to come to temporary anchor under your lee? I care not who knows it, but I have a passionate aversion from the bestial practice of solitary feeding!’

‘You are welcome, sir,’ said I, ‘if I may take upon me so far to play the host in a public place.’

He looked startled, and fixed a hazy eye on me, as he sat down.

‘Sir,’ said he, ‘you are a man not without some tincture of letters, I perceive! What shall we drink, sir?’

I mentioned I had already called for a pot of porter.

‘A modest pot — the seasonable quencher?’ said he. ‘Well, I do not know but what I could look at a modest pot myself! I am, for the moment, in precarious health. Much study hath heated my brain, much walking wearied my — well, it seems to be more my eyes!'

'You have walked far, I dare say?' I suggested.

'Not so much far as often,' he replied. 'There is in this city — to which, I think, you are a stranger? Sir, to your very good health and our better acquaintance! — there is, in this city of Dunedin, a certain implication of streets which reflects the utmost credit on the designer and the publicans — at every hundred yards is seated the Judicious Tavern, so that persons of contemplative mind are secure, at moderate distances, of refreshment. I have been doing a trot in that favoured quarter, favoured by art and nature. A few chosen comrades — enemies of publicity and friends to wit and wine — obliged me with their society. "Along the cool, sequestered vale of Register Street we kept the uneven tenor of our way," sir.'

'It struck me, as you came in — ' I began.

'O, don't make any bones about it!' he interrupted. 'Of course it struck you! and let me tell you I was devilish lucky not to strike myself. When I entered this apartment I shone "with all the pomp and prodigality of brandy and water," as the poet Gray has in another place expressed it. Powerful bard, Gray! but a niminy-piminy creature, afraid of a petticoat and a bottle — not a man, sir, not a man! Excuse me for being so troublesome, but what the devil have I done with my fork? Thank you, I am sure. *Temulentia, quoad me ipsum, brevis colligo est.* I sit and eat, sir, in a London fog. I should bring a link-boy to table with me; and I would too, if the little brutes were only washed! I intend to found a Philanthropical Society for Washing the Deserving Poor and Shaving Soldiers. I am pleased to observe that, although not of an unmilitary bearing, you are apparently shaved. In my calendar of the virtues shaving comes next to drinking. A gentleman may be a low-minded ruffian without sixpence, but he will always be close shaved. See me, with the eye of fancy, in the chill hours of the morning, say about a quarter to twelve, noon — see me awake! First thing of all, without one thought of the plausible but unsatisfactory small beer, or the healthful though insipid soda-water, I take the deadly razor in my vacillating grasp; I proceed to skate upon the margin of eternity. Stimulating thought! I bleed, perhaps, but with medicable wounds. The stubble reaped, I pass out of my chamber, calm but triumphant. To employ a hackneyed phrase, I would not call Lord Wellington my uncle! I, too, have dared, perhaps bled, before the imminent deadly shaving-table.'

In this manner the bombastic fellow continued to entertain me all through dinner, and by a common error of drunkards, because he had been extremely talkative himself, leaped to the conclusion that he had chanced on very genial company. He told me his name, his address;

he begged we should meet again; finally he proposed that I should dine with him in the country at an early date.

'The dinner is official,' he explained. 'The office-bearers and Senatus of the University of Cramond — an educational institution in which I have the honour to be Professor of Nonsense — meet to do honour to our friend Icarus, at the old-established *howff,* Cramond Bridge. One place is vacant, fascinating stranger, — I offer it to you!'

'And who is your friend Icarus?' I asked,

'The aspiring son of Daedalus!' said he. 'Is it possible that you have never heard the name of Byfield?'

'Possible and true,' said I.

'And is fame so small a thing?' cried he. 'Byfield, sir, is an aeronaut. He apes the fame of a Lunardi, and is on the point of offering to the inhabitants — I beg your pardon, to the nobility and gentry of our neighbourhood — the spectacle of an ascension. As one of the gentry concerned I may be permitted to remark that I am unmoved. I care not a Tinker's Damn for his ascension. No more — I breathe it in your ear — does anybody else. The business is stale, sir, stale. Lunardi did it, and overdid it. A whimsical, fiddling, vain fellow, by all accounts — for I was at that time rocking in my cradle. But once was enough. If Lunardi went up and came down, there was the matter settled. We prefer to grant the point. We do not want to see the experiment repeated *ad nauseam* by Byfield, and Brown, and Butler, and Brodie, and Bottomley. Ah! if they would go up and *not* come down again! But this is by the question. The University of Cramond delights to honour merit in the man, sir, rather than utility in the profession; and Byfield, though an ignorant dog, is a sound reliable drinker, and really not amiss over his cups. Under the radiance of the kindly jar partiality might even credit him with wit.'

It will be seen afterwards that this was more my business than I thought it at the time. Indeed, I was impatient to be gone. Even as my friend maundered ahead a squall burst, the jaws of the rain were opened against the coffee-house windows, and at that inclement signal I remembered I was due elsewhere.

CHAPTER XXVI — THE COTTAGE AT NIGHT

At the door I was nearly blown back by the unbridled violence of the squall, and Rowley and I must shout our parting words. All the way along Princes Street (whither my way led) the wind hunted me behind and screamed in my ears. The city was flushed with bucketfuls of rain that tasted salt from the neighbouring ocean. It seemed to darken and lighten again in the vicissitudes of the gusts. Now you would say the lamps had been blown out from end to end of the long thoroughfare; now, in a lull, they would revive, re-multiply, shine again on the wet pavements, and make darkness sparingly visible.

By the time I had got to the corner of the Lothian Road there was a distinct improvement. For one thing, I had now my shoulder to the wind; for a second, I came in the lee of my old prison-house, the Castle; and, at any rate, the excessive fury of the blast was itself moderating. The thought of what errand I was on re-awoke within me, and I seemed to breast the rough weather with increasing ease. With such a destination, what mattered a little buffeting of wind or a sprinkle of cold water? I recalled Flora's image, I took her in fancy to my arms, and my heart throbbed. And the next moment I had recognised the inanity of that fool's paradise. If I could spy her taper as she went to bed, I might count myself lucky.

I had about two leagues before me of a road mostly uphill, and now deep in mire. So soon as I was clear of the last street lamp, darkness received me — a darkness only pointed by the lights of occasional rustic farms, where the dogs howled with uplifted heads as I went by. The wind continued to decline: it had been but a squall, not a tempest. The rain, on the other hand, settled into a steady deluge, which had soon drenched me thoroughly. I continued to tramp forward in the night, contending with gloomy thoughts and accompanied by the dismal ululation of the dogs. What ailed them that they should have been thus wakeful, and perceived the small sound of my steps amid the general reverberation of the rain, was more than I could fancy. I remembered tales with which I had been entertained in childhood. I told myself some murderer was going by, and the brutes perceived upon him the faint smell of blood; and the next moment, with a physical shock, I had applied the words to my own case!

Here was a dismal disposition for a lover. 'Was ever lady in this humour wooed?' I asked myself, and came near turning back. It is never wise to risk a critical interview when your spirits are depressed, your clothes muddy, and your hands wet! But the boisterous night was in itself favourable to my enterprise: now, or perhaps never, I might find some way to have an interview with Flora; and if I had one interview (wet clothes, low spirits and all), I told myself there would certainly be another.

Arrived in the cottage-garden I found the circumstances mighty inclement. From the round holes in the shutters of the parlour, shafts of candle-light streamed forth; elsewhere the darkness was complete. The trees, the thickets, were saturated; the lower parts of the garden turned into a morass. At intervals, when the wind broke forth again, there passed overhead a wild coil of clashing branches; and between whiles the whole enclosure continuously and stridently resounded with the rain. I advanced close to the window and contrived to read the face of my watch. It was half-past seven; they would not retire before ten, they might not before midnight, and the prospect was unpleasant. In a lull of the wind I could hear from the inside the voice of Flora reading aloud; the words of course inaudible — only a flow of undecipherable speech, quiet, cordial, colourless, more intimate and winning, more eloquent of her personality, but not less beautiful than song. And the next moment the clamour of a fresh squall broke out about the cottage; the voice was drowned in its bellowing, and I was glad to retreat from my dangerous post.

For three egregious hours I must now suffer the elements to do their worst upon me, and continue to hold my ground in patience. I recalled the least fortunate of my services in the field: being out-sentry of the pickets in weather no less vile, sometimes unsuppered and with nothing to look forward to by way of breakfast but musket-balls; and they seemed light in comparison. So strangely are we built: so much more strong is the love of woman than the mere love of life.

At last my patience was rewarded. The light disappeared from the parlour and reappeared a moment after in the room above. I was pretty well informed for the enterprise that lay before me. I knew the lair of the dragon — that which was just illuminated. I knew the bower of my Rosamond, and how excellently it was placed on the ground-level, round the flank of the cottage and out of earshot of her formidable aunt. Nothing was left but to apply my knowledge. I was then at the bottom of the garden, whether I had gone (Heaven save the mark!) for warmth, that I might walk to and fro unheard and keep myself from perishing. The night had fallen still, the wind ceased; the noise of the rain had much lightened, if it had not stopped, and was succeeded by the dripping of the garden trees. In the midst of this lull, and as I was already drawing near to the cottage, I was startled by the sound of a window-sash screaming in its channels; and a step or two beyond I became aware of a gush of light upon the darkness. It fell from Flora's window, which she had flung open on the night, and where she now sat, roseate and pensive, in the shine of two candles falling from behind, her tresses deeply embowering and shading her; the suspended comb still in one hand, the other idly clinging to the iron stanchions with which the window was barred.

Keeping to the turf, and favoured by the darkness of the night and the patter of the rain which was now returning, though without wind, I approached until I could almost have touched her. It seemed a grossness of which I was incapable to break up her reverie by speech. I stood and drank her in with my eyes; how the light made a glory in her hair, and (what I have always thought the most ravishing thing in nature) how the planes ran into each other, and were distinguished, and how the hues blended and varied, and were shaded off, between the cheek and neck. At first I was abashed: she wore her beauty like an immediate halo of refinement; she discouraged me like an angel, or what I suspect to be the next most discouraging, a modern lady. But as I continued to gaze, hope and life returned to me; I forgot my timidity, I forgot the sickening pack of wet clothes with which I stood burdened, I tingled with new blood.

Still unconscious of my presence, still gazing before her upon the illuminated image of the window, the straight shadows of the bars, the glinting of pebbles on the path, and the impenetrable night on the garden and the hills beyond it, she heaved a deep breath that struck upon my heart like an appeal.

‘Why does Miss Gilchrist sigh?’ I whispered. ‘Does she recall absent friends?’

She turned her head swiftly in my direction; it was the only sign of surprise she deigned to make. At the same time I stepped into the light and bowed profoundly.

‘You!’ she said. ‘Here?’

‘Yes, I am here,’ I replied. ‘I have come very far, it may be a hundred and fifty leagues, to see you. I have waited all this night in your garden. Will Miss Gilchrist not offer her hand — to a friend in trouble?’

She extended it between the bars, and I dropped upon one knee on the wet path and kissed it twice. At the second it was withdrawn suddenly, methought with more of a start than she had hitherto displayed. I regained my former attitude, and we were both silent awhile. My timidity returned on me tenfold. I looked in her face for any signals of anger, and seeing her eyes to waver and fall aside from mine, augured that all was well.

‘You must have been mad to come here!’ she broke out. ‘Of all places under heaven this is no place for you to come. And I was just thinking you were safe in France!’

‘You were thinking of me!’ I cried.

‘Mr. St. Ives, you cannot understand your danger,’ she replied. ‘I am sure of it, and yet I cannot find it in my heart to tell you. O, be persuaded, and go!'

'I believe I know the worst. But I was never one to set an undue value on life, the life that we share with beasts. My university has been in the wars, not a famous place of education, but one where a man learns to carry his life in his hand as lightly as a glove, and for his lady or his honour to lay it as lightly down. You appeal to my fears, and you do wrong. I have come to Scotland with my eyes quite open to see you and to speak with you — it may be for the last time. With my eyes quite open, I say; and if I did not hesitate at the beginning do you think that I would draw back now?'

'You do not know!' she cried, with rising agitation. 'This country, even this garden, is death to you. They all believe it; I am the only one that does not. If they hear you now, if they heard a whisper — I dread to think of it. O, go, go this instant. It is my prayer.'

'Dear lady, do not refuse me what I have come so far to seek; and remember that out of all the millions in England there is no other but yourself in whom I can dare confide. I have all the world against me; you are my only ally; and as I have to speak, you have to listen. All is true that they say of me, and all of it false at the same time. I did kill this man Goguelat — it was that you meant?'

She mutely signed to me that it was; she had become deadly pale.

'But I killed him in fair fight. Till then, I had never taken a life unless in battle, which is my trade. But I was grateful, I was on fire with gratitude, to one who had been good to me, who had been better to me than I could have dreamed of an angel, who had come into the darkness of my prison like sunrise. The man Goguelat insulted her. O, he had insulted me often, it was his favourite pastime, and he might insult me as he pleased — for who was I? But with that lady it was different. I could never forgive myself if I had let it pass. And we fought, and he fell, and I have no remorse.'

I waited anxiously for some reply. The worst was now out, and I knew that she had heard of it before; but it was impossible for me to go on with my narrative without some shadow of encouragement.

'You blame me?'

'No, not at all. It is a point I cannot speak on — I am only a girl. I am sure you were in the right: I have always said so — to Ronald. Not, of course, to my aunt. I am afraid I let her speak as she will. You must not think me a disloyal friend; and even with the Major — I did not tell you he had become quite a friend of ours — Major Chevenix, I mean — he has taken such a fancy to Ronald! It was he that brought the news to us of that hateful Clausel being captured, and all that he was saying. I was indignant with him. I said — I dare say I said too much — and I must say he was very good-natured. He said, "You and I, who are his friends, *know* that Champdivers is innocent. But what is the use of saying it?" All this was in the corner of the room in what they call an aside. And then he said, "Give me a chance to speak to you in private, I have much to tell you." And he did. And told me just what you did — that it was an affair of honour, and no blame attached to you. O, I must say I like that Major Chevenix!'

At this I was seized with a great pang of jealousy. I remembered the first time that he had seen her, the interest that he seemed immediately to conceive; and I could not but admire the dog for the use he had been ingenious enough to make of our acquaintance in order to supplant me. All is fair in love and war. For all that, I was now no less anxious to do the speaking myself than I had been before to hear Flora. At least, I could keep clear of the hateful image of Major Chevenix. Accordingly I burst at once on the narrative of my adventures. It was the same as you have read, but briefer, and told with a very different purpose. Now every incident had a particular bearing, every by-way branched off to Rome — and that was Flora.

When I had begun to speak I had kneeled upon the gravel withoutside the low window, rested my arms upon the sill, and lowered my voice to the most confidential whisper. Flora herself must kneel upon the other side, and this brought our heads upon a level with only the bars between us. So placed, so separated, it seemed that our proximity, and the continuous and low sounds of my pleading voice, worked progressively and powerfully on her heart, and perhaps not less so on my own. For these spells are double-edged. The silly birds may be charmed with the pipe of the fowler, which is but a tube of reeds. Not so with a bird of our own feather! As I went on, and my resolve strengthened, and my voice found new modulations, and our faces were drawn closer to the bars and to each other, not only she, but I, succumbed to the fascination, and were kindled by the charm. We make love, and thereby ourselves fall the deeper in it. It is with the heart only that one captures a heart.

'And now,' I continued, 'I will tell you what you can still do for me. I run a little risk just now, and you see for yourself how unavoidable it is for any man of honour. But if — but in case of the worst I do not choose to enrich either my enemies or the Prince Regent. I have here the bulk of what my uncle gave me. Eight thousand odd pounds. Will you take care of it for me? Do not think of it merely as money; take and keep it as a relic of your friend or some precious piece of him. I may have bitter need of it ere long. Do you know the old country story of the giant who gave his heart to his wife to keep for him, thinking it safer to repose on her loyalty than his own strength? Flora, I am the giant — a very little one: will you be the keeper of my life? It is my heart I offer you in this symbol. In the sight of God, if you will have it, I give you my name, I endow you with my money. If the worst come, if I may never hope to call you wife, let me at least think that you will use my uncle's legacy as my widow.'

'No, not that,' she said. 'Never that.'

'What then?' I said. 'What else, my angel? What are words to me? There is but one name that I care to know you by. Flora, my love!'

'Anne!' she said.

What sound is so full of music as one's own name uttered for the first time in the voice of her we love!

'My darling!' said I.

The jealous bars, set at the top and bottom in stone and lime, obstructed the rapture of the moment; but I took her to myself as wholly as they allowed. She did not shun my lips. My arms were wound round her body, which yielded itself generously to my embrace. As we so remained, entwined and yet severed, bruising our faces unconsciously on the cold bars, the irony of the universe — or as I prefer to say, envy of some of the gods — again stirred up the elements of that stormy night. The wind blew again in the tree-tops; a volley of cold sea-rain deluged the garden, and, as the deuce would have it, a gutter which had been hitherto choked up began suddenly to play upon my head and shoulders with the vivacity of a fountain. We parted with a shock; I sprang to my feet, and she to hers, as though we had been discovered. A moment after, but now both standing, we had again approached the window on either side.

'Flora,' I said, 'this is but a poor offer I can make you.'

She took my hand in hers and clasped it to her bosom.

'Rich enough for a queen!' she said, with a lift in her breathing that was more eloquent than words. 'Anne, my brave Anne! I would be glad to be your maidservant; I could envy that boy Rowley. But, no!' she broke off, 'I envy no one — I need not — I am yours.'

'Mine,' said I, 'for ever! By this and this, mine!'

'All of me,' she repeated. 'Altogether and forever!'

And if the god were envious, he must have seen with mortification how little he could do to mar the happiness of mortals. I stood in a mere waterspout; she herself was wet, not from my embrace only, but from the splashing of the storm. The candles had guttered out; we were in darkness. I could scarce see anything but the shining of her eyes in the dark room. To her I must have appeared as a silhouette, haloed by rain and the spouting of the ancient Gothic gutter above my head.

Presently we became more calm and confidential; and when that squall, which proved to be the last of the storm, had blown by, fell into a talk of ways and means. It seemed she knew Mr. Robbie, to whom I had been so slenderly accredited by Romaine — was even invited to his house for the evening of Monday, and gave me a sketch of the old gentleman's character which implied a great deal of penetration in herself, and proved of great use to me in the immediate sequel. It seemed he was an enthusiastic antiquary, and in particular a fanatic of heraldry. I heard it with delight, for I was myself, thanks to M. de Culemberg, fairly grounded in that science, and acquainted with the blazons of most families of note in Europe. And I had made up my mind — even as she spoke, it was my fixed determination, though I was a hundred miles from saying it — to meet Flora on Monday night as a fellow-guest in Mr. Robbie's house.

I gave her my money — it was, of course, only paper I had brought. I gave it her, to be her marriage-portion, I declared.

'Not so bad a marriage-portion for a private soldier,' I told her, laughing, as I passed it through the bars.

'O, Anne, and where am I to keep it?' she cried. 'If my aunt should find it! What would I say!'

'Next your heart,' I suggested.

'Then you will always be near your treasure,' she cried, 'for you are always there!'

We were interrupted by a sudden clearness that fell upon the night. The clouds dispersed; the stars shone in every part of the heavens; and, consulting my watch, I was startled to find it already hard on five in the morning.

CHAPTER XXVII — THE SABBATH DAY

It was indeed high time I should be gone from Swanston; but what I was to do in the meanwhile was another question. Rowley had received his orders last night: he was to say that I had met a friend, and Mrs. McRankine was not to expect me before morning. A good enough tale in itself; but the dreadful pickle I was in made it out of the question. I could not go home till I had found harbourage, a fire to dry my clothes at, and a bed where I might lie till they were ready.

Fortune favoured me again. I had scarce got to the top of the first hill when I spied a light on my left, about a furlong away. It might be a case of sickness; what else it was likely to be — in so rustic a neighbourhood, and at such an ungodly time of the morning — was beyond my fancy. A faint sound of singing became audible, and gradually swelled as I drew near, until at last I could make out the words, which were singularly appropriate both to the hour and to the condition of the singers. 'The cock may craw, the day may daw,' they sang; and sang it with such laxity both in time and tune, and such sentimental complaisance in the expression, as assured me they had got far into the third bottle at least.

I found a plain rustic cottage by the wayside, of the sort called double, with a signboard over the door; and, the lights within streaming forth and somewhat mitigating the darkness of the morning, I was enabled to decipher the inscription: 'The Hunters' Tryst, by Alexander Hendry. Porter Ales, and British Spirits. Beds.'

My first knock put a period to the music, and a voice challenged tipsily from within.

'Who goes there?' it said; and I replied, 'A lawful traveller.'

Immediately after, the door was unbarred by a company of the tallest lads my eyes had ever rested on, all astonishingly drunk and very decently dressed, and one (who was perhaps the drunkest of the lot) carrying a tallow candle, from which he impartially bedewed the clothes of the whole company. As soon as I saw them I could not help smiling to myself to remember the anxiety with which I had approached. They received me and my hastily-concocted story, that I had been walking from Peebles and had lost my way, with incoherent benignity; jostled me among them into the room where they had been sitting, a plain hedgerow alehouse parlour, with a roaring fire in the chimney and a prodigious number of empty bottles on the floor; and informed me that I was made, by this reception, a temporary member of the *Six-Feet-High Club*, an athletic society of young men in a good station, who made of the Hunters' Tryst a frequent resort. They told me I had intruded on an 'all-night sitting,' following upon an 'all-day

Saturday tramp' of forty miles; and that the members would all be up and 'as right as ninepence' for the noonday service at some neighbouring church — Collingwood, if memory serves me right. At this I could have laughed, but the moment seemed ill-chosen. For, though six feet was their standard, they all exceeded that measurement considerably; and I tasted again some of the sensations of childhood, as I looked up to all these lads from a lower plane, and wondered what they would do next. But the Six-Footers, if they were very drunk, proved no less kind. The landlord and servants of the Hunters' Tryst were in bed and asleep long ago. Whether by natural gift or acquired habit they could suffer pandemonium to reign all over the house, and yet lie ranked in the kitchen like Egyptian mummies, only that the sound of their snoring rose and fell ceaselessly like the drone of a bagpipe. Here the Six-Footers invaded them — in their citadel, so to speak; counted the bunks and the sleepers; proposed to put me in bed to one of the lasses, proposed to have one of the lasses out to make room for me, fell over chairs, and made noise enough to waken the dead: the whole illuminated by the same young torch-bearer, but now with two candles, and rapidly beginning to look like a man in a snowstorm. At last a bed was found for me, my clothes were hung out to dry before the parlour fire, and I was mercifully left to my repose.

I awoke about nine with the sun shining in my eyes. The landlord came at my summons, brought me my clothes dried and decently brushed, and gave me the good news that the Six-Feet-High Club were all abed and sleeping off their excesses. Where they were bestowed was a puzzle to me until (as I was strolling about the garden patch waiting for breakfast) I came on a barn door, and, looking in, saw all the red face mixed in the straw like plums in a cake. Quoth the stalwart maid who brought me my porridge and bade me 'eat them while they were hot,' 'Ay, they were a' on the ran-dan last nicht! Hout! they're fine lads, and they'll be nane the waur of it. Forby Farbes's coat. I dinna see wha's to get the creish off that!' she added, with a sigh; in which, identifying Forbes as the torch-bearer, I mentally joined.

It was a brave morning when I took the road; the sun shone, spring seemed in the air, it smelt like April or May, and some over-venturous birds sang in the coppices as I went by. I had plenty to think of, plenty to be grateful for, that gallant morning; and yet I had a twitter at my heart. To enter the city by daylight might be compared to marching on a battery; every face that I confronted would threaten me like the muzzle of a gun; and it came into my head suddenly with how much better a countenance I should be able to do it if I could but improvise a companion. Hard by Merchiston I was so fortunate as to observe a bulky gentleman in broadcloth and gaiters, stooping with his head almost between his knees, before a stone wall. Seizing occasion by the forelock, I drew up as I came alongside and inquired what he had found to interest him.

He turned upon me a countenance not much less broad than his back.

‘Why, sir,’ he replied, ‘I was even marvelling at my own indefeasible stupeedity: that I should walk this way every week of my life, weather permitting, and should never before have *notticed* that stone,’ touching it at the same time with a goodly oak staff.

I followed the indication. The stone, which had been built sideways into the wall, offered traces of heraldic sculpture. At once there came a wild idea into my mind: his appearance tallied with Flora’s description of Mr. Robbie; a knowledge of heraldry would go far to clinch the proof; and what could be more desirable than to scrape an informal acquaintance with the man whom I must approach next day with my tale of the drovers, and whom I yet wished to please? I stooped in turn.

‘A chevron,’ I said; ‘on a chief three mullets? Looks like Douglas, does it not?’

‘Yes, sir, it does; you are right,’ said he: ‘it *does* look like Douglas; though, without the tinctures, and the whole thing being so battered and broken up, who shall venture an opinion? But allow me to be more personal, sir. In these degenerate days I am astonished you should display so much proficiency.’

‘O, I was well grounded in my youth by an old gentleman, a friend of my family, and I may say my guardian,’ said I; ‘but I have forgotten it since. God forbid I should delude you into thinking me a herald, sir! I am only an ungrammatical amateur.’

‘And a little modesty does no harm even in a herald,’ says my new acquaintance graciously.

In short, we fell together on our onward way, and maintained very amicable discourse along what remained of the country road, past the suburbs, and on into the streets of the New Town, which was as deserted and silent as a city of the dead. The shops were closed, no vehicle ran, cats sported in the midst of the sunny causeway; and our steps and voices re-echoed from the quiet houses. It was the high-water, full and strange, of that weekly trance to which the city of Edinburgh is subjected: the apotheosis of the *Sawbath*; and I confess the spectacle wanted not grandeur, however much it may have lacked cheerfulness. There are few religious ceremonies more imposing. As we thus walked and talked in a public seclusion the bells broke out ringing through all the bounds of the city, and the streets began immediately to be thronged with decent church-goers.

‘Ah!’ said my companion, ‘there are the bells! Now, sir, as you are a stranger I must offer you the hospitality of my pew. I do not know whether you are at all used with our Scottish form; but in case you are not I will find your places for you; and Dr. Henry Gray, of St. Mary’s (under whom I sit), is as good a preacher as we have to show you.’

This put me in a quandary. It was a degree of risk I was scarce prepared for. Dozens of people, who might pass me by in the street with no more than a second look, would go on from the second to the third, and from that to a final recognition, if I were set before them, immobilised in a pew, during the whole time of service. An unlucky turn of the head would suffice to arrest their attention. ‘Who is that?’ they would think: ‘surely I should know him!’ and, a church being the place in all the world where one has least to think of, it was ten to one they would end by remembering me before the benediction. However, my mind was made up: I thanked my obliging friend, and placed myself at his disposal.

Our way now led us into the north-east quarter of the town, among pleasant new faubourgs, to a decent new church of a good size, where I was soon seated by the side of my good Samaritan, and looked upon by a whole congregation of menacing faces. At first the possibility of danger kept me awake; but by the time I had assured myself there was none to be apprehended, and the service was not in the least likely to be enlivened by the arrest of a French spy, I had to resign myself to the task of listening to Dr. Henry Gray.

As we moved out, after this ordeal was over, my friend was at once surrounded and claimed by his acquaintances of the congregation; and I was rejoiced to hear him addressed by the expected name of Robbie.

So soon as we were clear of the crowd — ’Mr. Robbie?’ said I, bowing.

‘The very same, sir,’ said he.

‘If I mistake not, a lawyer?’

‘A writer to His Majesty’s Signet, at your service.’

‘It seems we were predestined to be acquaintances!’ I exclaimed. ‘I have here a card in my pocket intended for you. It is from my family lawyer. It was his last word, as I was leaving, to ask to be remembered kindly, and to trust you would pass over so informal an introduction.’

And I offered him the card.

‘Ay, ay, my old friend Daniel!’ says he, looking on the card. ‘And how does my old friend Daniel?’

I gave a favourable view of Mr. Romaine’s health.

‘Well, this is certainly a whimsical incident,’ he continued. ‘And since we are thus met already — and so much to my advantage! — the simplest thing will be to prosecute the acquaintance instantly. Let me propose a snack between sermons, a bottle of my particular green seal — and when nobody is looking we can talk blazons, Mr. Ducie!' — which was the name I then used and had already incidentally mentioned, in the vain hope of provoking a return in kind.

'I beg your pardon, sir: do I understand you to invite me to your house?' said I.

'That was the idea I was trying to convey,' said he. 'We have the name of hospitable people up here, and I would like you to try mine.'

'Mr. Robbie, I shall hope to try it some day, but not yet,' I replied. 'I hope you will not misunderstand me. My business, which brings me to your city, is of a peculiar kind. Till you shall have heard it, and, indeed, till its issue is known, I should feel as if I had stolen your invitation.'

'Well, well,' said he, a little sobered, 'it must be as you wish, though you would hardly speak otherwise if you had committed homicide! Mine is the loss. I must eat alone; a very pernicious thing for a person of my habit of body, content myself with a pint of skinking claret, and meditate the discourse. But about this business of yours: if it is so particular as all that, it will doubtless admit of no delay.'

'I must confess, sir, it presses,' I acknowledged.

'Then, let us say to-morrow at half-past eight in the morning,' said he; 'and I hope, when your mind is at rest (and it does you much honour to take it as you do), that you will sit down with me to the postponed meal, not forgetting the bottle. You have my address?' he added, and gave it me — which was the only thing I wanted.

At last, at the level of York Place, we parted with mutual civilities, and I was free to pursue my way, through the mobs of people returning from church, to my lodgings in St. James' Square.

Almost at the house door whom should I overtake but my landlady in a dress of gorgeous severity, and dragging a prize in her wake: no less than Rowley, with the cockade in his hat, and a smart pair of tops to his boots! When I said he was in the lady's wake I spoke but in metaphor. As a matter of fact he was squiring her, with the utmost dignity, on his arm; and I followed them up the stairs, smiling to myself.

Both were quick to salute me as soon as I was perceived, and Mrs. McRankine inquired where I had been. I told her boastfully, giving her the name of the church and the divine, and ignorantly supposing I should have gained caste. But she soon opened my eyes. In the roots of the Scottish character there are knots and contortions that not only no stranger can understand, but no stranger can follow; he walks among explosives; and his best course is to throw himself upon their mercy — 'Just as I am, without one plea,' a citation from one of the lady's favourite hymns.

The sound she made was unmistakable in meaning, though it was impossible to be written down; and I at once executed the manoeuvre I have recommended.

‘You must remember I am a perfect stranger in your city,’ said I. ‘If I have done wrong, it was in mere ignorance, my dear lady; and this afternoon, if you will be so good as to take me, I shall accompany *you.*’

But she was not to be pacified at the moment, and departed to her own quarters murmuring.

‘Well, Rowley,’ said I; ‘and have you been to church?’

‘If you please, sir,’ he said.

‘Well, you have not been any less unlucky than I have,’ I returned. ‘And how did you get on with the Scottish form?’

‘Well, sir, it was pretty ‘ard, the form was, and reether narrow,’ he replied. ‘I don’t know w’y it is, but it seems to me like as if things were a good bit changed since William Wallace! That was a main queer church she took me to, Mr. Anne! I don’t know as I could have sat it out, if she ‘adn’t ‘a’ give me peppermints. She ain’t a bad one at bottom, the old girl; she do pounce a bit, and she do worry, but, law bless you, Mr. Anne, it ain’t nothink really — she don’t *mean* it. W’y, she was down on me like a ‘undredweight of bricks this morning. You see, last night she ‘ad me in to supper, and, I beg your pardon, sir, but I took the freedom of playing her a chune or two. She didn’t mind a bit; so this morning I began to play to myself, and she flounced in, and flew up, and carried on no end about Sunday!’

‘You see, Rowley,’ said I, ‘they’re all mad up here, and you have to humour them. See and don’t quarrel with Mrs. McRankine; and, above all, don’t argue with her, or you’ll get the worst of it. Whatever she says, touch your forelock and say, “If you please!” or “I beg pardon, ma’am.” And let me tell you one thing: I am sorry, but you have to go to church with her again this afternoon. That’s duty, my boy!’

As I had foreseen, the bells had scarce begun before Mrs. McRankine presented herself to be our escort, upon which I sprang up with readiness and offered her my arm. Rowley followed behind. I was beginning to grow accustomed to the risks of my stay in Edinburgh, and it even amused me to confront a new churchful. I confess the amusement did not last until the end; for if Dr. Gray were long, Mr. McCraw was not only longer, but more incoherent, and the matter of his sermon (which was a direct attack, apparently, on all the Churches of the world, my own among the number), where it had not the tonic quality of personal insult, rather inclined me to slumber. But I braced myself for my life, kept up Rowley with the end of a pin, and came through it awake, but no more.

Bethiah was quite conquered by this ‘mark of grace,’ though, I am afraid, she was also moved by more worldly considerations. The first is, the lady had not the least objection to go to church on the arm of an elegantly dressed young gentleman, and be followed by a spruce servant with a cockade in his hat. I could see it by the way she took possession of us, found us the places in the Bible, whispered to me the name of the minister, passed us lozenges, which I (for my part) handed on to Rowley, and at each fresh attention stole a little glance about the church to make sure she was observed. Rowley was a pretty boy; you will pardon me if I also remembered that I was a favourable-looking young man. When we grow elderly, how the room brightens, and begins to look as it ought to look, on the entrance of youth, grace, health, and comeliness! You do not want them for yourself, perhaps not even for your son, but you look on smiling; and when you recall their images — again, it is with a smile. I defy you to see or think of them and not smile with an infinite and intimate, but quite impersonal, pleasure. Well, either I know nothing of women, or that was the case with Bethiah McRankine. She had been to church with a cockade behind her, on the one hand; on the other, her house was brightened by the presence of a pair of good-looking young fellows of the other sex, who were always pleased and deferential in her society and accepted her views as final.

These were sentiments to be encouraged; and, on the way home from church — if church it could be called — I adopted a most insidious device to magnify her interest. I took her into the confidence, that is, of my love affair, and I had no sooner mentioned a young lady with whom my affections were engaged than she turned upon me a face of awful gravity.

‘Is she bonny?’ she inquired.

I gave her full assurances upon that.

‘To what denoamination does she beloang?’ came next, and was so unexpected as almost to deprive me of breath.

‘Upon my word, ma’am, I have never inquired,’ cried I; ‘I only know that she is a heartfelt Christian, and that is enough.’

‘Ay!’ she sighed, ‘if she has the root of the maitter! There’s a remnant practically in most of the denoaminations. There’s some in the McGlashanites, and some in the Glassites, and mony in the McMillanites, and there’s a leeven even in the Estayblishment.’

‘I have known some very good Papists even, if you go to that,’ said I.

‘Mr. Ducie, think shame to yoursel’!’ she cried.

‘Why, my dear madam! I only — ’ I began.

‘You shouldnae jest in sairious maitters,’ she interrupted.

On the whole, she entered into what I chose to tell her of our idyll with avidity, like a cat licking her whiskers over a dish of cream; and, strange to say — and so expansive a passion is that of love! — that I derived a perhaps equal satisfaction from confiding in that breast of iron. It made an immediate bond: from that hour we seemed to be welded into a family-party; and I had little difficulty in persuading her to join us and to preside over our tea-table. Surely there was never so ill-matched a trio as Rowley, Mrs. McRankine, and the Viscount Anne! But I am of the Apostle's way, with a difference: all things to all women! When I cannot please a woman, hang me in my cravat!

CHAPTER XXVIII — EVENTS OF MONDAY: THE LAWYER'S PARTY

By half-past eight o'clock on the next morning, I was ringing the bell of the lawyer's office in Castle Street, where I found him ensconced at a business table, in a room surrounded by several tiers of green tin cases. He greeted me like an old friend.

'Come away, sir, come away!' said he. 'Here is the dentist ready for you, and I think I can promise you that the operation will be practically painless.'

'I am not so sure of that, Mr. Robbie,' I replied, as I shook hands with him. 'But at least there shall be no time lost with me.'

I had to confess to having gone a-roving with a pair of drovers and their cattle, to having used a false name, to having murdered or half-murdered a fellow-creature in a scuffle on the moors, and to having suffered a couple of quite innocent men to lie some time in prison on a charge from which I could have immediately freed them. All this I gave him first of all, to be done with the worst of it; and all this he took with gravity, but without the least appearance of surprise.

'Now, sir,' I continued, 'I expect to have to pay for my unhappy frolic, but I would like very well if it could be managed without my personal appearance or even the mention of my real name. I had so much wisdom as to sail under false colours in this foolish jaunt of mine; my family would be extremely concerned if they had wind of it; but at the same time, if the case of this Faa has terminated fatally, and there are proceedings against Todd and Candlish, I am not going to stand by and see them vexed, far less punished; and I authorise you to give me up for trial if you think that best — or, if you think it unnecessary, in the meanwhile to make preparations for their defence. I hope, sir, that I am as little anxious to be Quixotic, as I am determined to be just.'

'Very fairly spoken,' said Mr. Robbie. 'It is not much in my line, as doubtless your friend, Mr. Romaine, will have told you. I rarely mix myself up with anything on the criminal side, or approaching it. However, for a young gentleman like you, I may stretch a point, and I dare say I may be able to accomplish more than perhaps another. I will go at once to the Procurator Fiscal's office and inquire.'

'Wait a moment, Mr. Robbie,' said I. 'You forget the chapter of expenses. I had thought, for a beginning, of placing a thousand pounds in your hands.'

'My dear sir, you will kindly wait until I render you my bill,' said Mr. Robbie severely.'

'It seemed to me,' I protested, 'that coming to you almost as a stranger, and placing in your hands a piece of business so contrary to your habits, some substantial guarantee of my good faith — '

'Not the way that we do business in Scotland, sir,' he interrupted, with an air of closing the dispute.

'And yet, Mr. Robbie,' I continued, 'I must ask you to allow me to proceed. I do not merely refer to the expenses of the case. I have my eye besides on Todd and Candlish. They are thoroughly deserving fellows; they have been subjected through me to a considerable term of imprisonment; and I suggest, sir, that you should not spare money for their indemnification. This will explain,' I added smiling, 'my offer of the thousand pounds. It was in the nature of a measure by which you should judge the scale on which I can afford to have this business carried through.'

'I take you perfectly, Mr. Ducie,' said he. 'But the sooner I am off, the better this affair is like to be guided. My clerk will show you into the waiting-room and give you the day's *Caledonian Mercury* and the last *Register* to amuse yourself with in the interval.'

I believe Mr. Robbie was at least three hours gone. I saw him descend from a cab at the door, and almost immediately after I was shown again into his study, where the solemnity of his manner led me to augur the worst. For some time he had the inhumanity to read me a lecture as to the incredible silliness, 'not to say immorality,' of my behaviour. 'I have the satisfaction in telling you my opinion, because it appears that you are going to get off scot free,' he continued, where, indeed, I thought he might have begun.

'The man, Faa, has been discharged cured; and the two men, Todd and Candlish, would have been leeberated lone ago if it had not been for their extraordinary loyalty to yourself, Mr. Ducie — or Mr. St. Ivey, as I believe I should now call you. Never a word would either of the two old fools volunteer that in any manner pointed at the existence of such a person; and when they were confronted with Faa's version of the affair, they gave accounts so entirely discrepant with their own former declarations, as well as with each other, that the Fiscal was quite nonplussed, and imaigined there was something behind it. You may believe I soon laughed him out of that! And I had the satisfaction of seeing your two friends set free, and very glad to be on the causeway again.'

'Oh, sir,' I cried, 'you should have brought them here.'

'No instructions, Mr. Ducie!' said he. 'How did I know you wished to renew an acquaintance which you had just terminated so fortunately? And, indeed, to be frank with you, I should have set my face against it, if you had! Let them go! They are paid and contented, and have the highest possible opinion of Mr. St. Ivey! When I gave them fifty pounds apiece — which was rather more than enough, Mr. Ducie, whatever you may think — the man Todd, who has the only tongue of the party, struck his staff on the ground. “Weel,” says he, “I aye said he was a gentleman!” “Man, Todd,” said I, “that was just what Mr St. Ivey said of yourself!”‘

‘So it was a case of “Compliments fly when gentlefolk meet.”‘

‘No, no, Mr. Ducie, man Todd and man Candlish are gone out of your life, and a good riddance! They are fine fellows in their way, but no proper associates for the like of yourself; and do you finally agree to be done with all eccentricity — take up with no more drovers, or tinkers, but enjoy the naitural pleesures for which your age, your wealth, your intelligence, and (if I may be allowed to say it) your appearance so completely fit you. And the first of these,’ quoth he, looking at his watch, ‘will be to step through to my dining-room and share a bachelor’s luncheon.’

Over the meal, which was good, Mr. Robbie continued to develop the same theme. ‘You’re, no doubt, what they call a dancing-man?’ said he. ‘Well, on Thursday night there is the Assembly Ball. You must certainly go there, and you must permit me besides to do the honours of the ceety and send you a ticket. I am a thorough believer in a young man being a young man — but no more drovers or rovers, if you love me! Talking of which puts me in mind that you may be short of partners at the Assembly — oh, I have been young myself! — and if ye care to come to anything so portentiously tedious as a tea-party at the house of a bachelor lawyer, consisting mainly of his nieces and nephews, and his grand-nieces and grand-nephews, and his wards, and generally the whole clan of the descendants of his clients, you might drop in to-night towards seven o’clock. I think I can show you one or two that are worth looking at, and you can dance with them later on at the Assembly.’

He proceeded to give me a sketch of one or two eligible young ladies’ whom I might expect to meet. ‘And then there’s my parteecular friend, Miss Flora,’ said he. ‘But I’ll make no attempt of a description. You shall see her for yourself.’

It will be readily supposed that I accepted his invitation; and returned home to make a toilette worthy of her I was to meet and the good news of which I was the bearer. The toilette, I have reason to believe, was a success. Mr. Rowley dismissed me with a farewell: ‘Crikey! Mr. Anne, but you do look prime!’ Even the stony Bethiah was — how shall I say? — dazzled, but scandalised, by my appearance; and while, of course, she deplored the vanity that led to it, she could not wholly prevent herself from admiring the result.

‘Ay, Mr. Ducie, this is a poor employment for a wayfaring Christian man!’ she said. ‘Wi’ Christ despised and rejectit in all pairts of the world and the flag of the Covenant flung doon, you will be muckle better on your knees! However, I'll have to confess that it sets you weel. And if it's the lassie ye're gaun to see the nicht, I suppose I'll just have to excuse ye! Bairns maun be bairns!' she said, with a sigh. 'I mind when Mr. McRankine came courtin', and that's lang by-gane — I mind I had a green gown, passementit, that was thocht to become me to admiration. I was nae just exactly what ye would ca' bonny; but I was pale, penetratin', and interestin'.' And she leaned over the stair-rail with a candle to watch my descent as long as it should be possible.

It was but a little party at Mr. Robbie's — by which, I do not so much mean that there were few people, for the rooms were crowded, as that there was very little attempted to entertain them. In one apartment there were tables set out, where the elders were solemnly engaged upon whist; in the other and larger one, a great number of youth of both sexes entertained themselves languidly, the ladies sitting upon chairs to be courted, the gentlemen standing about in various attitudes of insinuation or indifference. Conversation appeared the sole resource, except in so far as it was modified by a number of keepsakes and annuals which lay dispersed upon the tables, and of which the young beaux displayed the illustrations to the ladies. Mr. Robbie himself was customarily in the card-room; only now and again, when he cut out, he made an incursion among the young folks, and rolled about jovially from one to another, the very picture of the general uncle.

It chanced that Flora had met Mr. Robbie in the course of the afternoon. 'Now, Miss Flora,' he had said, 'come early, for I have a Phoenix to show you — one Mr. Ducie, a new client of mine that, I vow, I have fallen in love with'; and he was so good as to add a word or two on my appearance, from which Flora conceived a suspicion of the truth. She had come to the party, in consequence, on the knife-edge of anticipation and alarm; had chosen a place by the door, where I found her, on my arrival, surrounded by a posse of vapid youths; and, when I drew near, sprang up to meet me in the most natural manner in the world, and, obviously, with a prepared form of words.

'How do you do, Mr. Ducie?' she said. 'It is quite an age since I have seen you!'

'I have much to tell you, Miss Gilchrist,' I replied. 'May I sit down?'

For the artful girl, by sitting near the door, and the judicious use of her shawl, had contrived to keep a chair empty by her side.

She made room for me, as a matter of course, and the youths had the discretion to melt before us. As soon as I was once seated her fan flew out, and she whispered behind it:

'Are you mad?'

'Madly in love,' I replied; 'but in no other sense.'

'I have no patience! You cannot understand what I am suffering!' she said. 'What are you to say to Ronald, to Major Chevenix, to my aunt?'

Your aunt?' I cried, with a start. '*Peccavi*! is she here?'

'She is in the card-room at whist,' said Flora.

'Where she will probably stay all the evening?' I suggested.

'She may,' she admitted; 'she generally does!'

'Well, then, I must avoid the card-room,' said I, 'which is very much what I had counted upon doing. I did not come here to play cards, but to contemplate a certain young lady to my heart's content — if it can ever be contented! — and to tell her some good news.'

'But there are still Ronald and the Major!' she persisted. 'They are not card-room fixtures! Ronald will be coming and going. And as for Mr. Chevenix, he — '

'Always sits with Miss Flora?' I interrupted. 'And they talk of poor St. Ives? I had gathered as much, my dear; and Mr. Ducie has come to prevent it! But pray dismiss these fears! I mind no one but your aunt.'

'Why my aunt?'

'Because your aunt is a lady, my dear, and a very clever lady, and, like all clever ladies, a very rash lady,' said I. 'You can never count upon them, unless you are sure of getting them in a corner, as I have got you, and talking them over rationally, as I am just engaged on with yourself! It would be quite the same to your aunt to make the worst kind of a scandal, with an equal indifference to my danger and to the feelings of our good host!'

'Well,' she said, 'and what of Ronald, then? Do you think *he* is above making a scandal? You must know him very little!'

'On the other hand, it is my pretension that I know him very well!' I replied. 'I must speak to Ronald first — not Ronald to me — that is all!'

'Then, please, go and speak to him at once!' she pleaded. He is there — do you see? — at the upper end of the room, talking to that girl in pink.'

'And so lose this seat before I have told you my good news?' I exclaimed. 'Catch me! And, besides, my dear one, think a little of me and my good news! I thought the bearer of good news was always welcome! I hoped he might be a little welcome for himself! Consider! I have but one friend; and let me stay by her! And there is only one thing I care to hear; and let me hear it!'

'Oh, Anne,' she sighed, 'if I did not love you, why should I be so uneasy? I am turned into a coward, dear! Think, if it were the other way round — if you were quite safe and I was in, oh, such danger!'

She had no sooner said it than I was convicted of being a dullard. ‘God forgive me, dear!’ I made haste to reply. ‘I never saw before that there were two sides to this!’ And I told her my tale as briefly as I could, and rose to seek Ronald. ‘You see, my dear, you are obeyed,’ I said.

She gave me a look that was a reward in itself; and as I turned away from her, with a strong sense of turning away from the sun, I carried that look in my bosom like a caress. The girl in pink was an arch, ogling person, with a good deal of eyes and teeth, and a great play of shoulders and rattle of conversation. There could be no doubt, from Mr. Ronald’s attitude, that he worshipped the very chair she sat on. But I was quite ruthless. I laid my hand on his shoulder, as he was stooping over her like a hen over a chicken.

‘Excuse me for one moment, Mr. Gilchrist!’ said I.

He started and span about in answer to my touch, and exhibited a face of inarticulate wonder.

’Yes!’ I continued, ‘it is even myself! Pardon me for interrupting so agreeable a *tête-à-tête*, but you know, my good fellow, we owe a first duty to Mr. Robbie. It would never do to risk making a scene in the man’s drawing-room; so the first thing I had to attend to was to have you warned. The name I go by is Ducie, too, in case of accidents.’

‘I — I say, you know!’ cried Ronald. ‘Deuce take it, what are you doing here?’

‘Hush, hush!’ said I. ‘Not the place, my dear fellow — not the place. Come to my rooms, if you like, to-night after the party, or to-morrow in the morning, and we can talk it out over a segar. But here, you know, it really won’t do at all.’

Before he could collect his mind for an answer, I had given him my address in St. James Square, and had again mingled with the crowd. Alas! I was not fated to get back to Flora so easily! Mr. Robbie was in the path: he was insatiably loquacious; and as he continued to palaver I watched the insipid youths gather again about my idol, and cursed my fate and my host. He remembered suddenly that I was to attend the Assembly Ball on Thursday, and had only attended to-night by way of a preparative. This put it into his head to present me to another young lady; but I managed this interview with so much art that, while I was scrupulously polite and even cordial to the fair one, I contrived to keep Robbie beside me all the time and to leave along with him when the ordeal was over. We were just walking away arm in arm, when I spied my friend the Major approaching, stiff as a ramrod and, as usual, obtrusively clean.

‘Oh! there’s a man I want to know,’ said I, taking the bull by the horns. ‘Won’t you introduce me to Major Chevenix?’

‘At a word, my dear fellow,’ said Robbie; and ‘Major!’ he cried, ‘come here and let me present to you my friend Mr. Ducie, who desires the honour of your acquaintance.’

The Major flushed visibly, but otherwise preserved his composure. He bowed very low. ‘I’m not very sure,’ he said: ‘I have an idea we have met before?’

‘Informally,’ I said, returning his bow; ‘and I have long looked forward to the pleasure of regularising our acquaintance.’

‘You are very good, Mr. Ducie,’ he returned. ‘Perhaps you could aid my memory a little? Where was it that I had the pleasure?’

‘Oh, that would be telling tales out of school,’ said I, with a laugh, ‘and before my lawyer, too!’

‘I’ll wager,’ broke in Mr. Robbie, ‘that, when you knew my client, Chevenix — the past of our friend Mr. Ducie is an obscure chapter full of horrid secrets — I’ll wager, now, you knew him as St. Ivey,’ says he, nudging me violently.

‘I think not, sir,’ said the Major, with pinched lips.

‘Well, I wish he may prove all right!’ continued the lawyer, with certainly the worst-inspired jocularity in the world. ‘I know nothing by him! He may be a swell mobsman for me with his aliases. You must put your memory on the rack, Major, and when ye’ve remembered when and where ye met him, be sure ye tell me.’

‘I will not fail, sir,’ said Chevenix.

‘Seek to him!’ cried Robbie, waving his hand as he departed.

The Major, as soon as we were alone, turned upon me his impassive countenance.

‘Well,’ he said, ‘you have courage.’

‘It is undoubted as your honour, sir,’ I returned, bowing.

‘Did you expect to meet me, may I ask?’ said he.

‘You saw, at least, that I courted the presentation,’ said I.

‘And you were not afraid?’ said Chevenix.

‘I was perfectly at ease. I knew I was dealing with a gentleman. Be that your epitaph.’

‘Well, there are some other people looking for you,’ he said, ‘who will make no bones about the point of honour. The police, my dear sir, are simply agog about you.’

‘And I think that that was coarse,’ said I.

‘You have seen Miss Gilchrist?’ he inquired, changing the subject.

‘With whom, I am led to understand, we are on a footing of rivalry?’ I asked. ‘Yes, I have seen her.’

‘And I was just seeking her,’ he replied.

I was conscious of a certain thrill of temper; so, I suppose, was he. We looked each other up and down.

‘The situation is original,’ he resumed.

‘Quite,’ said I. ‘But let me tell you frankly you are blowing a cold coal. I owe you so much for your kindness to the prisoner Champdivers.'

'Meaning that the lady's affections are more advantageously disposed of?' he asked, with a sneer. 'Thank you, I am sure. And, since you have given me a lead, just hear a word of good advice in your turn. Is it fair, is it delicate, is it like a gentleman, to compromise the young lady by attentions which (as you know very well) can come to nothing?'

I was utterly unable to find words in answer.

'Excuse me if I cut this interview short,' he went on. 'It seems to me doomed to come to nothing, and there is more attractive metal.'

'Yes,' I replied, 'as you say, it cannot amount to much. You are impotent, bound hand and foot in honour. You know me to be a man falsely accused, and even if you did not know it, from your position as my rival you have only the choice to stand quite still or to be infamous.'

'I would not say that,' he returned, with another change of colour. 'I may hear it once too often.'

With which he moved off straight for where Flora was sitting amidst her court of vapid youths, and I had no choice but to follow him, a bad second, and reading myself, as I went, a sharp lesson on the command of temper.

It is a strange thing how young men in their teens go down at the mere wind of the coming of men of twenty-five and upwards! The vapid ones fled without thought of resistance before the Major and me; a few dallied awhile in the neighbourhood — so to speak, with their fingers in their mouths — but presently these also followed the rout, and we remained face to face before Flora. There was a draught in that corner by the door; she had thrown her pelisse over her bare arms and neck, and the dark fur of the trimming set them off. She shone by contrast; the light played on her smooth skin to admiration, and the colour changed in her excited face. For the least fraction of a second she looked from one to the other of her pair of rival swains, and seemed to hesitate. Then she addressed Chevenix: —

'You are coming to the Assembly, of course, Major Chevenix?' said she.

'I fear not; I fear I shall be otherwise engaged,' he replied. 'Even the pleasure of dancing with you, Miss Flora, must give way to duty.'

For awhile the talk ran harmlessly on the weather, and then branched off towards the war. It seemed to be by no one's fault; it was in the air, and had to come.

'Good news from the scene of operations,' said the Major.

'Good news while it lasts,' I said. 'But will Miss Gilchrist tell us her private thought upon the war? In her admiration for the victors, does not there mingle some pity for the vanquished?’

‘Indeed, sir,’ she said, with animation, ‘only too much of it! War is a subject that I do not think should be talked of to a girl. I am, I have to be — what do you call it? — a non-combatant? And to remind me of what others have to do and suffer: no, it is not fair!’

‘Miss Gilchrist has the tender female heart,’ said Chevenix.

‘Do not be too sure of that!’ she cried. ‘I would love to be allowed to fight myself!’

‘On which side?’ I asked.

‘Can you ask?’ she exclaimed. ‘I am a Scottish girl!’

‘She is a Scottish girl!’ repeated the Major, looking at me. ‘And no one grudges you her pity!’

‘And I glory in every grain of it she has to spare,’ said I. ‘Pity is akin to love.’

‘Well, and let us put that question to Miss Gilchrist. It is for her to decide, and for us to bow to the decision. Is pity, Miss Flora, or is admiration, nearest love?’

‘Oh come,’ said I, ‘let us be more concrete. Lay before the lady a complete case: describe your man, then I’ll describe *mine*, and Miss Flora shall decide.’

‘I think I see your meaning,’ said he, ‘and I’ll try. You think that pity — and the kindred sentiments — have the greatest power upon the heart. I think more nobly of women. To my view, the man they love will first of all command their respect; he will be steadfast — proud, if you please; dry, possibly — but of all things steadfast. They will look at him in doubt; at last they will see that stern face which he presents to all the rest of the world soften to them alone. First, trust, I say. It is so that a woman loves who is worthy of heroes.’

‘Your man is very ambitious, sir,’ said I, ‘and very much of a hero! Mine is a humbler, and, I would fain think, a more human dog. He is one with no particular trust in himself, with no superior steadfastness to be admired for, who sees a lady’s face, who hears her voice, and, without any phrase about the matter, falls in love. What does he ask for, then, but pity? — pity for his weakness, pity for his love, which is his life. You would make women always the inferiors, gaping up at your imaginary lover; he, like a marble statue, with his nose in the air! But God has been wiser than you; and the most steadfast of your heroes may prove human, after all. We appeal to the queen for judgment,’ I added, turning and bowing before Flora.

‘And how shall the queen judge?’ she asked. ‘I must give you an answer that is no answer at all. “The wind bloweth where it listeth”: she goes where her heart goes.’

Her face flushed as she said it; mine also, for I read in it a declaration, and my heart swelled for joy. But Chevenix grew pale.

‘You make of life a very dreadful kind of lottery, ma’am,’ said he. ‘But I will not despair. Honest and unornamental is still my choice.’

And I must say he looked extremely handsome and very amusingly like the marble statue with its nose in the air to which I had compared him.

‘I cannot imagine how we got upon this subject,’ said Flora.

‘Madame, it was through the war,’ replied Chevenix.

‘All roads lead to Rome,’ I commented. ‘What else would you expect Mr. Chevenix and myself to talk of?’

About this time I was conscious of a certain bustle and movement in the room behind me, but did not pay to it that degree of attention which perhaps would have been wise. There came a certain change in Flora’s face; she signalled repeatedly with her fan; her eyes appealed to me obsequiously; there could be no doubt that she wanted something — as well as I could make out, that I should go away and leave the field clear for my rival, which I had not the least idea of doing. At last she rose from her chair with impatience.

‘I think it time you were saying good-night, Mr Ducie!’ she said.

I could not in the least see why, and said so.

Whereupon she gave me this appalling answer, ‘My aunt is coming out of the card-room.’

In less time than it takes to tell, I had made my bow and my escape. Looking back from the doorway, I was privileged to see, for a moment, the august profile and gold eyeglasses of Miss Gilchrist issuing from the card-room; and the sight lent me wings. I stood not on the order of my going; and a moment after, I was on the pavement of Castle Street, and the lighted windows shone down on me, and were crossed by ironical shadows of those who had remained behind.

CHAPTER XXIX — EVENTS OF TUESDAY: THE TOILS CLOSING

This day began with a surprise. I found a letter on my breakfast-table addressed to Edward Ducie, Esquire; and at first I was startled beyond measure. 'Conscience doth make cowards of us all!' When I had opened it, it proved to be only a note from the lawyer, enclosing a card for the Assembly Ball on Thursday evening. Shortly after, as I was composing my mind with a segar at one of the windows of the sitting-room, and Rowley, having finished the light share of work that fell to him, sat not far off tootling with great spirit and a marked preference for the upper octave, Ronald was suddenly shown in. I got him a segar, drew in a chair to the side of the fire, and installed him there — I was going to say, at his ease, but no expression could be farther from the truth. He was plainly on pins and needles, did not know whether to take or to refuse the segar, and, after he had taken it, did not know whether to light or to return it. I saw he had something to say; I did not think it was his own something; and I was ready to offer a large bet it was really something of Major Chevenix's.

'Well, and so here you are!' I observed, with pointless cordiality, for I was bound I should do nothing to help him out. If he were, indeed, here running errands for my rival, he might have a fair field, but certainly no favour.

'The fact is,' he began, 'I would rather see you alone.'

'Why, certainly,' I replied. 'Rowley, you can step into the bedroom. My dear fellow,' I continued, 'this sounds serious. Nothing wrong, I trust.'

'Well, I'll be quite honest,' said he. 'I *am* a good deal bothered.'

'And I bet I know why!' I exclaimed. 'And I bet I can put you to rights, too!'

'What do you mean!' he asked.

'You must be hard up,' said I, 'and all I can say is, you've come to the right place. If you have the least use for a hundred pounds, or any such trifling sum as that, please mention it. It's here, quite at your service.'

'I am sure it is most kind of you,' said Ronald, 'and the truth is, though I can't think how you guessed it, that I really *am* a little behind board. But I haven't come to talk about that.'

'No, I dare say!' cried I. 'Not worth talking about! But remember, Ronald, you and I are on different sides of the business. Remember that you did me one of those services that make men friends for ever. And since I have had the fortune to come into a fair share of money, just oblige me, and consider so much of it as your own.'

'No,' he said, 'I couldn't take it; I couldn't, really. Besides, the fact is, I've come on a very different matter. It's about my sister, St. Ives,' and he shook his head menacingly at me.

'You're quite sure?' I persisted. 'It's here, at your service — up to five hundred pounds, if you like. Well, all right; only remember where it is, when you do want it.'

'Oh, please let me alone!' cried Ronald: 'I've come to say something unpleasant; and how on earth can I do it, if you don't give a fellow a chance? It's about my sister, as I said. You can see for yourself that it can't be allowed to go on. It's compromising; it don't lead to anything; and you're not the kind of man (you must feel it yourself) that I can allow my female relatives to have anything to do with. I hate saying this, St. Ives; it looks like hitting a man when he's down, you know; and I told the Major I very much disliked it from the first. However, it had to be said; and now it has been, and, between gentlemen, it shouldn't be necessary to refer to it again.'

'It's compromising; it doesn't lead to anything; not the kind of man,' I repeated thoughtfully. 'Yes, I believe I understand, and shall make haste to put myself *en règle*.' I stood up, and laid my segar down. 'Mr. Gilchrist,' said I, with a bow, 'in answer to your very natural observations, I beg to offer myself as a suitor for your sister's hand. I am a man of title, of which we think lightly in France, but of ancient lineage, which is everywhere prized. I can display thirty-two quarterings without a blot. My expectations are certainly above the average: I believe my uncle's income averages about thirty thousand pounds, though I admit I was not careful to inform myself. Put it anywhere between fifteen and fifty thousand; it is certainly not less.'

'All this is very easy to say,' said Ronald, with a pitying smile. 'Unfortunately, these things are in the air.'

'Pardon me, — in Buckinghamshire,' said I, smiling.

'Well, what I mean is, my dear St. Ives, that you *can't prove* them,' he continued. 'They might just as well not be: do you follow me? You can't bring us any third party to back you.'

'Oh, come!' cried I, springing up and hurrying to the table. 'You must excuse me!' I wrote Romaine's address. 'There is my reference, Mr. Gilchrist. Until you have written to him, and received his negative answer, I have a right to be treated, and I shall see that you treat me, as a gentleman.' He was brought up with a round turn at that.

'I beg your pardon, St. Ives,' said he. 'Believe me, I had no wish to be offensive. But there's the difficulty of this affair; I can't make any of my points without offence! You must excuse me, it's not my fault. But, at any rate, you must see for yourself this proposal of marriage is

— is merely impossible, my dear fellow. It’s nonsense! Our countries are at war; you are a prisoner.’

‘My ancestor of the time of the Ligue,’ I replied, ‘married a Huguenot lady out of the Saintonge, riding two hundred miles through an enemy’s country to bring off his bride; and it was a happy marriage.’

‘Well!’ he began; and then looked down into the fire, and became silent.

‘Well?’ I asked.

‘Well, there’s this business of — Goguelat,’ said he, still looking at the coals in the grate.

‘What!’ I exclaimed, starting in my chair. ‘What’s that you say?’

‘This business about Goguelat,’ he repeated.

‘Ronald,’ said I, ‘this is not your doing. These are not your own words. I know where they came from: a coward put them in your mouth.’

‘St. Ives!’ he cried, ‘why do you make it so hard for me? and where’s the use of insulting other people? The plain English is, that I can’t hear of any proposal of marriage from a man under a charge like that. You must see it for yourself, man! It’s the most absurd thing I ever heard of! And you go on forcing me to argue with you, too!’

‘Because I have had an affair of honour which terminated unhappily, you — a young soldier, or next-door to it — refuse my offer? Do I understand you aright?’ said I.

‘My dear fellow!’ he wailed, ‘of course you can twist my words, if you like. You *say* it was an affair of honour. Well, I can’t, of course, tell you that — I can’t — I mean, you must see that that’s just the point! Was it? I don’t know.’

‘I have the honour to inform you,’ said I.

‘Well, other people say the reverse, you see!’

‘They lie, Ronald, and I will prove it in time.’

‘The short and the long of it is, that any man who is so unfortunate as to have such things said about him is not the man to be my brother-in-law!’ he cried.

‘Do you know who will be my first witness at the court? Arthur Chevenix!’ said I.

‘I don’t care!’ he cried, rising from his chair and beginning to pace outrageously about the room. ‘What do you mean, St. Ives? What is this about? It’s like a dream, I declare! You made an offer, and I have refused it. I don’t like it, I don’t want it; and whatever I did, or didn’t, wouldn’t matter — my aunt wouldn’t bear of it anyway! Can’t you take your answer, man?’

‘You must remember, Ronald, that we are playing with edged tools,’ said I. ‘An offer of marriage is a delicate subject to handle. You have refused, and you have justified your refusal by several statements: first, that I was an impostor; second, that our countries were at war; and third — No, I will speak,' said I; 'you can answer when I have done, — and third, that I had dishonourably killed — or was said to have done so — the man Goguelat. Now, my dear fellow, these are very awkward grounds to be taking. From any one else's lips I need scarce tell you how I should resent them; but my hands are tied. I have so much gratitude to you, without talking of the love I bear your sister, that you insult me, when you do so, under the cover of a complete impunity. I must feel the pain — and I do feel it acutely — I can do nothing to protect myself.' He had been anxious enough to interrupt me in the beginning; but now, and after I had ceased, he stood a long while silent.

'St. Ives,' he said at last, 'I think I had better go away. This has been very irritating. I never at all meant to say anything of the kind, and I apologise to you. I have all the esteem for you that one gentleman should have for another. I only meant to tell you — to show you what had influenced my mind; and that, in short, the thing was impossible. One thing you may be quite sure of: I shall do nothing against you. Will you shake hands before I go away?' he blurted out.

'Yes,' said I, 'I agree with you — the interview has been irritating. Let bygones be bygones. Good-bye, Ronald.'

'Good-bye, St. Ives!' he returned. 'I'm heartily sorry.'

And with that he was gone.

The windows of my own sitting-room looked towards the north; but the entrance passage drew its light from the direction of the square. Hence I was able to observe Ronald's departure, his very disheartened gait, and the fact that he was joined, about half-way, by no less a man than Major Chevenix. At this, I could scarce keep from smiling; so unpalatable an interview must be before the pair of them, and I could hear their voices, clashing like crossed swords, in that eternal antiphony of 'I told you,' and 'I told you not.' Without doubt, they had gained very little by their visit; but then I had gained less than nothing, and had been bitterly dispirited into the bargain. Ronald had stuck to his guns and refused me to the last. It was no news; but, on the other hand, it could not be contorted into good news. I was now certain that during my temporary absence in France, all irons would be put into the fire, and the world turned upside down, to make Flora disown the obtrusive Frenchman and accept Chevenix. Without doubt she would resist these instances: but the thought of them did not please me, and I felt she should be warned and prepared for the battle.

It was no use to try and see her now, but I promised myself early that evening to return to Swanston. In the meantime I had to make all my preparations, and look the coming journey in the face. Here in Edinburgh I was within four miles of the sea, yet the business of approaching random fishermen with my hat in the one hand and a knife in the other, appeared so desperate, that I saw nothing for it but to retrace my steps over the northern counties, and knock a second time at the doors of Birchell Fenn. To do this, money would be necessary; and after leaving my paper in the hands of Flora I had still a balance of about fifteen hundred pounds. Or rather I may say I had them and I had them not; for after my luncheon with Mr. Robbie I had placed the amount, all but thirty pounds of change, in a bank in George Street, on a deposit receipt in the name of Mr. Rowley. This I had designed to be my gift to him, in case I must suddenly depart. But now, thinking better of the arrangement, I despatched my little man, cockade and all, to lift the fifteen hundred.

He was not long gone, and returned with a flushed face, and the deposit receipt still in his hand.

'No go, Mr. Anne,' says he.

'How's that?' I inquired,

'Well, sir, I found the place all right, and no mistake,' said he. 'But I tell you what gave me a blue fright! There was a customer standing by the door, and I reckonised him! Who do you think it was, Mr. Anne? W'y, that same Red-Breast — him I had breakfast with near Aylesbury.'

'You are sure you are not mistaken?' I asked.

'Certain sure,' he replied. 'Not Mr. Lavender, I don't mean, sir; I mean the other party. "Wot's he doing here?' says I. It don't look right."'

'Not by any means,' I agreed.

I walked to and fro in the apartment reflecting. This particular Bow Street runner might be here by accident; but it was to imagine a singular play of coincidence that he, who had met Rowley and spoken with him in the 'Green Dragon,' hard by Aylesbury, should be now in Scotland, where he could have no legitimate business, and by the doors of the bank where Rowley kept his account.

'Rowley,' said I, 'he didn't see you, did he?'

'Never a fear,' quoth Rowley. 'W'y Mr. Anne, sir, if he 'ad, you wouldn't have seen *me* any more! I ain't a hass, sir!'

'Well, my boy, you can put that receipt in your pocket. You'll have no more use for it till you're quite clear of me. Don't lose it, though; it's your share of the Christmas-box: fifteen hundred pounds all for yourself.'

'Begging your pardon, Mr. Anne, sir, but wot for!' said Rowley.

'To set up a public-house upon,' said I.

'If you'll excuse me, sir, I ain't got any call to set up a public-house, sir,' he replied stoutly. 'And I tell you wot, sir, it seems to me I'm reether young for the billet. I'm your body servant, Mr. Anne, or else I'm nothink.'

'Well, Rowley,' I said, 'I'll tell you what it's for. It's for the good service you have done me, of which I don't care — and don't dare — to speak. It's for your loyalty and cheerfulness, my dear boy. I had meant it for you; but to tell you the truth, it's past mending now — it has to be yours. Since that man is waiting by the bank, the money can't be touched until I'm gone.'

'Until you're gone, sir?' re-echoed Rowley. 'You don't go anywheres without me, I can tell you that, Mr. Anne, sir!'

'Yes, my boy,' said I, 'we are going to part very soon now; probably to-morrow. And it's for my sake, Rowley! Depend upon it, if there was any reason at all for that Bow Street man being at the bank, he was not there to look out for you. How they could have found out about the account so early is more than I can fathom; some strange coincidence must have played me false! But there the fact is; and Rowley, I'll not only have to say farewell to you presently, I'll have to ask you to stay indoors until I can say it. Remember, my boy, it's only so that you can serve me now.'

'W'y, sir, you say the word, and of course I'll do it!' he cried. '"Nothink by 'alves," is my motto! I'm your man, through thick and thin, live or die, I am!'

In the meantime there was nothing to be done till towards sunset. My only chance now was to come again as quickly as possible to speech of Flora, who was my only practicable banker; and not before evening was it worth while to think of that. I might compose myself as well as I was able over the *Caledonian Mercury*, with its ill news of the campaign of France and belated documents about the retreat from Russia; and, as I sat there by the fire, I was sometimes all awake with anger and mortification at what I was reading, and sometimes again I would be three parts asleep as I dozed over the barren items of home intelligence. 'Lately arrived' — this is what I suddenly stumbled on — 'at Dumbreck's Hotel, the Viscount of Saint-Yves.'

'Rowley,' said I.

'If you please, Mr. Anne, sir,' answered the obsequious, lowering his pipe.

'Come and look at this, my boy,' said I, holding out the paper.

'My crikey!' said he. 'That's 'im, sir, sure enough!'

'Sure enough, Rowley,' said I. 'He's on the trail. He has fairly caught up with us. He and this Bow Street man have come together, I would swear. And now here is the whole field, quarry, hounds and hunters, all together in this city of Edinburgh.'

'And wot are you goin' to do now, sir? Tell you wot, let me take it in ‘and, please! Gimme a minute, and I’ll disguise myself, and go out to this Dum — - to this hotel, leastways, sir — and see wot he’s up to. You put your trust in me, Mr. Anne: I’m fly, don’t you make no mistake about it. I’m all a-growing and a-blowing, I am.’

‘Not one foot of you,’ said I. ‘You are a prisoner, Rowley, and make up your mind to that. So am I, or next door to it. I showed it you for a caution; if you go on the streets, it spells death to me, Rowley.’

‘If you please, sir,’ says Rowley.

‘Come to think of it,’ I continued, ‘you must take a cold, or something. No good of awakening Mrs. McRankine’s suspicions.’

‘A cold?’ he cried, recovering immediately from his depression. ‘I can do it, Mr. Anne.’

And he proceeded to sneeze and cough and blow his nose, till I could not restrain myself from smiling.

‘Oh, I tell you, I know a lot of them dodges,’ he observed proudly.

‘Well, they come in very handy,’ said I.

‘I’d better go at once and show it to the old gal, ‘adn’t I?’ he asked.

I told him, by all means; and he was gone upon the instant, gleeful as though to a game of football.

I took up the paper and read carelessly on, my thoughts engaged with my immediate danger, till I struck on the next paragraph: —

‘In connection with the recent horrid murder in the Castle, we are desired to make public the following intelligence. The soldier, Champdivers, is supposed to be in the neighbourhood of this city. He is about the middle height or rather under, of a pleasing appearance and highly genteel address. When last heard of he wore a fashionable suit of pearl-grey, and boots with fawn-coloured tops. He is accompanied by a servant about sixteen years of age, speaks English without any accent, and passed under the *alias* of Ramornie. A reward is offered for his apprehension.’

In a moment I was in the next room, stripping from me the pearl-coloured suit!

I confess I was now a good deal agitated. It is difficult to watch the toils closing slowly and surely about you, and to retain your composure; and I was glad that Rowley was not present to spy on my confusion. I was flushed, my breath came thick; I cannot remember a time when I was more put out.

And yet I must wait and do nothing, and partake of my meals, and entertain the ever-garrulous Rowley, as though I were entirely my own man. And if I did not require to entertain Mrs. McRankine also, that was but another drop of bitterness in my cup! For what ailed my landlady, that she should hold herself so severely aloof, that she should refuse conversation, that her eyes should be reddened, that I should so continually hear the voice of her private supplications sounding through the house? I was much deceived, or she had read the insidious paragraph and recognised the comminated pearl-grey suit. I remember now a certain air with which she had laid the paper on my table, and a certain sniff, between sympathy and defiance, with which she had announced it: ‘There’s your *Mercury* for ye!’

In this direction, at least, I saw no pressing danger; her tragic countenance betokened agitation; it was plain she was wrestling with her conscience, and the battle still hung dubious. The question of what to do troubled me extremely. I could not venture to touch such an intricate and mysterious piece of machinery as my landlady’s spiritual nature: it might go off at a word, and in any direction, like a badly-made firework. And while I praised myself extremely for my wisdom in the past, that I had made so much a friend of her, I was all abroad as to my conduct in the present. There seemed an equal danger in pressing and in neglecting the accustomed marks of familiarity. The one extreme looked like impudence, and might annoy, the other was a practical confession of guilt. Altogether, it was a good hour for me when the dusk began to fall in earnest on the streets of Edinburgh, and the voice of an early watchman bade me set forth.

I reached the neighbourhood of the cottage before seven; and as I breasted the steep ascent which leads to the garden wall, I was struck with surprise to hear a dog. Dogs I had heard before, but only from the hamlet on the hillside above. Now, this dog was in the garden itself, where it roared aloud in paroxysms of fury, and I could hear it leaping and straining on the chain. I waited some while, until the brute’s fit of passion had roared itself out. Then, with the utmost precaution, I drew near again; and finally approached the garden wall. So soon as I had clapped my head above the level, however, the barking broke forth again with redoubled energy. Almost at the same time, the door of the cottage opened, and Ronald and the Major appeared upon the threshold with a lantern. As they so stood, they were almost immediately below me, strongly illuminated, and within easy earshot. The Major pacified the dog, who took instead to low, uneasy growling intermingled with occasional yelps.

‘Good thing I brought Towzer!’ said Chevenix.

‘Damn him, I wonder where he is!’ said Ronald; and he moved the lantern up and down, and turned the night into a shifting puzzle-work of gleam and shadow. ‘I think I’ll make a sally.’

‘I don’t think you will,’ replied Chevenix. ‘When I agreed to come out here and do sentry-go, it was on one condition, Master Ronald: don’t you forget that! Military discipline, my boy! Our beat is this path close about the house. Down, Towzer! good boy, good boy — gently, then!’ he went on, caressing his confounded monster.

‘To think! The beggar may be hearing us this minute!’ cried Ronald.

‘Nothing more probable,’ said the Major. ‘You there, St. Ives?’ he added, in a distinct but guarded voice. ‘I only want to tell you, you had better go home. Mr. Gilchrist and I take watch and watch.’

The game was up. ‘*Beaucoup de plaisir*!’ I replied, in the same tones. ‘*Il fait un peu froid pour veiller*; *gardez-vous des engelures*!’

I suppose it was done in a moment of ungovernable rage; but in spite of the excellent advice he had given to Ronald the moment before, Chevenix slipped the chain, and the dog sprang, straight as an arrow, up the bank. I stepped back, picked up a stone of about twelve pounds weight, and stood ready. With a bound the beast landed on the cope-stone of the wall; and, almost in the same instant, my missile caught him fair in the face. He gave a stifled cry, went tumbling back where he had come from, and I could hear the twelve-pounder accompany him in his fall. Chevenix, at the same moment, broke out in a roaring voice: ‘The hell-hound! If he’s killed my dog!’ and I judged, upon all grounds, it was as well to be off.

CHAPTER XXX — EVENTS OF WEDNESDAY; THE UNIVERSITY OF CRAMOND

I awoke to much diffidence, even to a feeling that might be called the beginnings of panic, and lay for hours in my bed considering the situation. Seek where I pleased, there was nothing to encourage me and plenty to appal. They kept a close watch about the cottage; they had a beast of a watch-dog — at least, unless I had settled it; and if I had, I knew its bereaved master would only watch the more indefatigably for the loss. In the pardonable ostentation of love I had given all the money I could spare to Flora; I had thought it glorious that the hunted exile should come down, like Jupiter, in a shower of gold, and pour thousands in the lap of the beloved. Then I had in an hour of arrant folly buried what remained to me in a bank in George Street. And now I must get back the one or the other; and which? and how?

As I tossed in my bed, I could see three possible courses, all extremely perilous. First, Rowley might have been mistaken; the bank might not be watched; it might still be possible for him to draw the money on the deposit receipt. Second, I might apply again to Robbie. Or, third, I might dare everything, go to the Assembly Ball, and speak with Flora under the eyes of all Edinburgh. This last alternative, involving as it did the most horrid risks, and the delay of forty-eight hours, I did but glance at with an averted head, and turned again to the consideration of the others. It was the likeliest thing in the world that Robbie had been warned to have no more to do with me. The whole policy of the Gilchrists was in the hands of Chevenix; and I thought this was a precaution so elementary that he was certain to have taken it. If he had not, of course I was all right: Robbie would manage to communicate with Flora; and by four o'clock I might be on the south road and, I was going to say, a free man. Lastly, I must assure myself with my own eyes whether the bank in George Street were beleaguered.

I called to Rowley and questioned him tightly as to the appearance of the Bow Street officer.

'What sort of looking man is he, Rowley?' I asked, as I began to dress.

'Wot sort of a looking man he is?' repeated Rowley. 'Well, I don't very well know wot you would say, Mr. Anne. He ain't a beauty, any'ow.'

'Is he tall?'

'Tall? Well, no, I shouldn't say *tall* Mr. Anne.'

'Well, then, is he short?'

'Short? No, I don't think I would say he was what you would call *short*. No, not piticular short, sir.'

'Then, I suppose, he must be about the middle height?'

'Well, you might say it, sir; but not remarkable so.'

I smothered an oath.

'Is he clean-shaved?' I tried him again.

'Clean-shaved?' he repeated, with the same air of anxious candour.

'Good heaven, man, don't repeat my words like a parrot!' I cried. 'Tell me what the man was like: it is of the first importance that I should be able to recognise him.'

'I'm trying to, Mr. Anne. But *clean-shaved*? I don't seem to rightly get hold of that p'int. Sometimes it might appear to me like as if he was; and sometimes like as if he wasn't. No, it wouldn't surprise me now if you was to tell me he 'ad a bit o' whisker.'

'Was the man red-faced?' I roared, dwelling on each syllable.

'I don't think you need go for to get cross about it, Mr. Anne!' said he. 'I'm tellin' you every blessed thing I see! Red-faced? Well, no, not as you would remark upon.'

A dreadful calm fell upon me.

'Was he anywise pale?' I asked.

'Well, it don't seem to me as though he were. But I tell you truly, I didn't take much heed to that.'

'Did he look like a drinking man?'

'Well, no. If you please, sir, he looked more like an eating one.'

'Oh, he was stout, was he?'

'No, sir. I couldn't go so far as that. No, he wasn't not to say *stout*. If anything, lean rather.'

I need not go on with the infuriating interview. It ended as it began, except that Rowley was in tears, and that I had acquired one fact. The man was drawn for me as being of any height you like to mention, and of any degree of corpulence or leanness; clean-shaved or not, as the case might be; the colour of his hair Rowley 'could not take it upon himself to put a name on'; that of his eyes he thought to have been blue — nay, it was the one point on which he attained to a kind of tearful certainty. 'I'll take my davy on it,' he asseverated. They proved to have been as black as sloes, very little and very near together. So much for the evidence of the artless! And the fact, or rather the facts, acquired? Well, they had to do not with the person but with his clothing. The man wore knee-breeches and white stockings; his coat was 'some kind of a lightish colour — or betwixt that and dark'; and he wore a 'mole-skin weskit.' As if this were not enough, he presently haled me from my breakfast in a prodigious flutter, and showed me an honest and rather venerable citizen passing in the Square.

‘That’s *him*, sir,’ he cried, ‘the very moral of him! Well, this one is better dressed, and p’r’aps a trifler taller; and in the face he don’t favour him noways at all, sir. No, not when I come to look again, ‘e don’t seem to favour him noways.’

‘Jackass!’ said I, and I think the greatest stickler for manners will admit the epithet to have been justified.

Meanwhile the appearance of my landlady added a great load of anxiety to what I already suffered. It was plain that she had not slept; equally plain that she had wept copiously. She sighed, she groaned, she drew in her breath, she shook her head, as she waited on table. In short, she seemed in so precarious a state, like a petard three times charged with hysteria, that I did not dare to address her; and stole out of the house on tiptoe, and actually ran downstairs, in the fear that she might call me back. It was plain that this degree of tension could not last long.

It was my first care to go to George Street, which I reached (by good luck) as a boy was taking down the bank shutters. A man was conversing with him; he had white stockings and a moleskin waistcoat, and was as ill-looking a rogue as you would want to see in a day’s journey. This seemed to agree fairly well with Rowley’s *signalement*: he had declared emphatically (if you remember), and had stuck to it besides, that the companion of the great Lavender was no beauty.

Thence I made my way to Mr. Robbie’s, where I rang the bell. A servant answered the summons, and told me the lawyer was engaged, as I had half expected.

‘Wha shall I say was callin’?’ she pursued; and when I had told her ‘Mr. Ducie,’ ‘I think this’ll be for you, then?’ she added, and handed me a letter from the hall table. It ran:

‘Dear Mr. Ducie,

‘My single advice to you is to leave *quam primum* for the South.

Yours, T. Robbie.’

That was short and sweet. It emphatically extinguished hope in one direction. No more was to be gotten of Robbie; and I wondered, from my heart, how much had been told him. Not too much, I hoped, for I liked the lawyer who had thus deserted me, and I placed a certain reliance in the discretion of Chevenix. He would not be merciful; on the other hand, I did not think he would be cruel without cause.

It was my next affair to go back along George Street, and assure myself whether the man in the moleskin vest was still on guard. There was no sign of him on the pavement. Spying the door of a common stair nearly opposite the bank, I took it in my head that this would be a good point of observation, crossed the street, entered with a businesslike air and fell immediately against the man in the moleskin vest. I stopped and apologised to him; he replied in an unmistakable English accent, thus putting the matter almost beyond doubt. After this encounter I must, of course, ascend to the top story, ring the bell of a suite of apartments, inquire for Mr. Vavasour, learn (with no great surprise) that he did not live there, come down again and, again politely saluting the man from Bow Street, make my escape at last into the street.

I was now driven back upon the Assembly Ball. Robbie had failed me. The bank was watched; it would never do to risk Rowley in that neighbourhood. All I could do was to wait until the morrow evening, and present myself at the Assembly, let it end as it might. But I must say I came to this decision with a good deal of genuine fright; and here I came for the first time to one of those places where my courage stuck. I do not mean that my courage boggled and made a bit of a bother over it, as it did over the escape from the Castle; I mean, stuck, like a stopped watch or a dead man. Certainly I would go to the ball; certainly I must see this morning about my clothes. That was all decided. But the most of the shops were on the other side of the valley, in the Old Town; and it was now my strange discovery that I was physically unable to cross the North Bridge! It was as though a precipice had stood between us, or the deep sea had intervened. Nearer to the Castle my legs refused to bear me.

I told myself this was mere superstition; I made wagers with myself — and gained them; I went down on the esplanade of Princes Street, walked and stood there, alone and conspicuous, looking across the garden at the old grey bastions of the fortress, where all these troubles had begun. I cocked my hat, set my hand on my hip, and swaggered on the pavement, confronting detection. And I found I could do all this with a sense of exhilaration that was not unpleasing, and with a certain *crânerie* of manner that raised me in my own esteem. And yet there was one thing I could not bring my mind to face up to, or my limbs to execute; and that was to cross the valley into the Old Town. It seemed to me I must be arrested immediately if I had done so; I must go straight into the twilight of a prison cell, and pass straight thence to the gross and final embraces of the nightcap and the halter. And yet it was from no reasoned fear of the consequences that I could not go. I was unable. My horse baulked, and there was an end!

My nerve was gone: here was a discovery for a man in such imminent peril, set down to so desperate a game, which I could only hope to win by continual luck and unflagging effrontery! The strain had been too long continued, and my nerve was gone. I fell into what they call panic fear, as I have seen soldiers do on the alarm of a night attack, and turned out of Princes Street at random as though the devil were at my heels. In St. Andrew Square, I remember vaguely hearing some one call out. I paid no heed, but pressed on blindly. A moment after, a hand fell heavily on my shoulder, and I thought I had fainted. Certainly the world went black about me for some seconds; and when that spasm passed I found myself standing face to face with the 'cheerful extravagant,' in what sort of disarray I really dare not imagine, dead white at least, shaking like an aspen, and mowing at the man with speechless lips. And this was the soldier of Napoleon, and the gentleman who intended going next night to an Assembly Ball! I am the more particular in telling of my breakdown, because it was my only experience of the sort; and it is a good tale for officers. I will allow no man to call me coward; I have made my proofs; few men more. And yet I (come of the best blood in France and inured to danger from a child) did, for some ten or twenty minutes, make this hideous exhibition of myself on the streets of the New Town of Edinburgh.

With my first available breath I begged his pardon. I was of an extremely nervous disposition, recently increased by late hours; I could not bear the slightest start.

He seemed much concerned. 'You must be in a devil of a state!' said he; 'though of course it was my fault — damnably silly, vulgar sort of thing to do! A thousand apologies! But you really must be run down; you should consult a medico. My dear sir, a hair of the dog that bit you is clearly indicated. A touch of Blue Ruin, now? Or, come: it's early, but is man the slave of hours? what do you say to a chop and a bottle in Dumbreck's Hotel?'

I refused all false comfort; but when he went on to remind me that this was the day when the University of Cramond met; and to propose a five-mile walk into the country and a dinner in the company of young asses like himself, I began to think otherwise. I had to wait until to-morrow evening, at any rate; this might serve as well as anything else to bridge the dreary hours. The country was the very place for me: and walking is an excellent sedative for the nerves. Remembering poor Rowley, feigning a cold in our lodgings and immediately under the guns of the formidable and now doubtful Bethiah, I asked if I might bring my servant. 'Poor devil! it is dull for him,' I explained.

'The merciful man is merciful to his ass,' observed my sententious friend. 'Bring him by all means!

"The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy;"

and I have no doubt the orphan boy can get some cold victuals in the kitchen, while the Senatus dines.'

Accordingly, being now quite recovered from my unmanly condition, except that nothing could yet induce me to cross the North Bridge, I arranged for my ball dress at a shop in Leith Street, where I was not served ill, cut out Rowley from his seclusion, and was ready along with him at the trysting-place, the corner of Duke Street and York Place, by a little after two. The University was represented in force: eleven persons, including ourselves, Byfield the aeronaut, and the tall lad, Forbes, whom I had met on the Sunday morning, bedewed with tallow, at the 'Hunters' Rest.' I was introduced; and we set off by way of Newhaven and the sea beach; at first through pleasant country roads, and afterwards along a succession of bays of a fairylike prettiness, to our destination — Cramond on the Almond — a little hamlet on a little river, embowered in woods, and looking forth over a great flat of quicksand to where a little islet stood planted in the sea. It was miniature scenery, but charming of its kind. The air of this good February afternoon was bracing, but not cold. All the way my companions were skylarking, jesting and making puns, and I felt as if a load had been taken off my lungs and spirits, and skylarked with the best of them.

Byfield I observed, because I had heard of him before, and seen his advertisements, not at all because I was disposed to feel interest in the man. He was dark and bilious and very silent; frigid in his manners, but burning internally with a great fire of excitement; and he was so good as to bestow a good deal of his company and conversation (such as it was) upon myself, who was not in the least grateful. If I had known how I was to be connected with him in the immediate future, I might have taken more pains.

In the hamlet of Cramond there is a hostelry of no very promising appearance, and here a room had been prepared for us, and we sat down to table.

'Here you will find no guttling or gormandising, no turtle or nightingales' tongues,' said the extravagant, whose name, by the way, was Dalmahoy. 'The device, sir, of the University of Cramond is Plain Living and High Drinking.'

Grace was said by the Professor of Divinity, in a macaronic Latin, which I could by no means follow, only I could hear it rhymed, and I guessed it to be more witty than reverent. After which the *Senatus Academicus* sat down to rough plenty in the shape of rizzar'd haddocks and mustard, a sheep's head, a haggis, and other delicacies of Scotland. The dinner was washed down with brown stout in bottle, and as soon as the cloth was removed, glasses, boiling water, sugar, and whisky were set out for the manufacture of toddy. I played a good knife and fork, did not shun the bowl, and took part, so far as I was able, in the continual fire of pleasantry with which the meal was seasoned. Greatly daring, I ventured, before all these Scotsmen, to tell

Sim's Tale of Tweedie's dog; and I was held to have done such extraordinary justice to the dialect, 'for a Southron,' that I was immediately voted into the Chair of Scots, and became, from that moment, a full member of the University of Cramond. A little after, I found myself entertaining them with a song; and a little after — perhaps a little in consequence — it occurred to me that I had had enough, and would be very well inspired to take French leave. It was not difficult to manage, for it was nobody's business to observe my movements, and conviviality had banished suspicion.

I got easily forth of the chamber, which reverberated with the voices of these merry and learned gentlemen, and breathed a long breath. I had passed an agreeable afternoon and evening, and I had apparently escaped scot free. Alas! when I looked into the kitchen, there was my monkey, drunk as a lord, toppling on the edge of the dresser, and performing on the flageolet to an audience of the house lasses and some neighbouring ploughmen.

I routed him promptly from his perch, stuck his hat on, put his instrument in his pocket, and set off with him for Edinburgh.

His limbs were of paper, his mind quite in abeyance; I must uphold and guide him, prevent his frantic dives, and set him continually on his legs again. At first he sang wildly, with occasional outbursts of causeless laughter. Gradually an inarticulate melancholy succeeded; he wept gently at times; would stop in the middle of the road, say firmly 'No, no, no,' and then fall on his back: or else address me solemnly as 'M'lord' and fall on his face by way of variety. I am afraid I was not always so gentle with the little pig as I might have been, but really the position was unbearable. We made no headway at all, and I suppose we were scarce gotten a mile away from Cramond, when the whole *Senatus Academicus* was heard hailing, and doubling the pace to overtake its.

Some of them were fairly presentable; and they were all Christian martyrs compared to Rowley; but they were in a frolicsome and rollicking humour that promised danger as we approached the town. They sang songs, they ran races, they fenced with their walking-sticks and umbrellas; and, in spite of this violent exercise, the fun grew only the more extravagant with the miles they traversed. Their drunkenness was deep-seated and permanent, like fire in a peat; or rather — to be quite just to them — it was not so much to be called drunkenness at all, as the effect of youth and high spirits — a fine night, and the night young, a good road under foot, and the world before you!

I had left them once somewhat unceremoniously; I could not attempt it a second time; and, burthened as I was with Mr. Rowley, I was really glad of assistance. But I saw the lamps of Edinburgh draw near on their hill-top with a good deal of uneasiness, which increased, after we had entered the lighted streets, to positive alarm. All the passers-by were addressed, some of them by name. A worthy man was stopped by Forbes. ‘Sir,’ said he, ‘in the name of the Senatus of the University of Cramond, I confer upon you the degree of LL.D.,’ and with the words he bonneted him. Conceive the predicament of St. Ives, committed to the society of these outrageous youths, in a town where the police and his cousin were both looking for him! So far, we had pursued our way unmolested, although raising a clamour fit to wake the dead; but at last, in Abercromby Place, I believe — at least it was a crescent of highly respectable houses fronting on a garden — Byfield and I, having fallen somewhat in the rear with Rowley, came to a simultaneous halt. Our ruffians were beginning to wrench off bells and door-plates!

‘Oh, I say!’ says Byfield, ‘this is too much of a good thing! Confound it, I’m a respectable man — a public character, by George! I can’t afford to get taken up by the police.’

‘My own case exactly,’ said I.

‘Here, let’s bilk them,’ said he.

And we turned back and took our way down hill again.

It was none too soon: voices and alarm bells sounded; watchmen here and there began to spring their rattles; it was plain the University of Cramond would soon be at blows with the police of Edinburgh! Byfield and I, running the semi-inanimate Rowley before us, made good despatch, and did not stop till we were several streets away, and the hubbub was already softened by distance.

‘Well, sir,’ said he, ‘we are well out of that! Did ever any one see such a pack of young barbarians?’

‘We are properly punished, Mr. Byfield; we had no business there,’ I replied.

‘No, indeed, sir, you may well say that! Outrageous! And my ascension announced for Friday, you know!’ cried the aeronaut. ‘A pretty scandal! Byfield the aeronaut at the police-court! Tut-tut! Will you be able to get your rascal home, sir? Allow me to offer you my card. I am staying at Walker and Poole’s Hotel, sir, where I should be pleased to see you.’

‘The pleasure would be mutual, sir,’ said I, but I must say my heart was not in my words, and as I watched Mr. Byfield departing I desired nothing less than to pursue the acquaintance

One more ordeal remained for me to pass. I carried my senseless load upstairs to our lodging, and was admitted by the landlady in a tall white nightcap and with an expression singularly grim. She lighted us into the sitting-room; where, when I had seated Rowley in a chair, she dropped me a cast-iron courtesy. I smelt gunpowder on the woman. Her voice, tottered with emotion.

‘I give ye nottice, Mr. Ducie,’ said she. ‘Dacent folks’ houses . . .’

And at that apparently temper cut off her utterance, and she took herself off without more words.

I looked about me at the room, the goggling Rowley, the extinguished fire; my mind reviewed the laughable incidents of the day and night; and I laughed out loud to myself — lonely and cheerless laughter!.......

[*At this point the Author’s* MS. *breaks off*]

The Unfinished Novels

Stevenson with his wife and household in Vailima, Samoa, 1890

HEATHERCAT

A FRAGMENT

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CHAPTER I

TRAQUAIRS OF MONTROYMONT

The period of this tale is in the heat of the *killing-time*; the scene laid for the most part in solitary hills and morasses, haunted only by the so-called Mountain Wanderers, the dragoons that came in chase of them, the women that wept on their dead bodies, and the wild birds of the moorland that have cried there since the beginning. It is a land of many rain-clouds; a land of much mute history, written there in pre-historic symbols. Strange green raths are to be seen commonly in the country, above all by the kirkyards; barrows of the dead, standing stones; beside these, the faint, durable footprints and handmarks of the Roman; and an antiquity older perhaps than any, and still living and active — a complete Celtic nomenclature and a scarce-mingled Celtic population. These rugged and grey hills were once included in the boundaries of the CaledonianForest. Merlin sat here below his apple-tree and lamented Gwendolen; here spoke with Kentigern; here fell into his enchanted trance. And the legend of his slumber seems to body forth the story of that Celtic race, deprived for so many centuries of their authentic speech, surviving with their ancestral inheritance of melancholy perversity and patient, unfortunate courage.

The Traquairs of Montroymont (*Mons Romanus*, as the erudite expound it) had long held their seat about the head-waters of the Dule and in the back parts of the moorland parish of Balweary. For two hundred years they had enjoyed in these upland quarters a certain decency (almost to be named distinction) of repute; and the annals of their house, or what is remembered of them, were obscure and bloody. Ninian Traquair was "cruallie slochtered" by the Crozers at the kirk-door of Balweary, anno 2. Francis killed Simon Ruthven of Drumshoreland, anno 0; bought letters of slayers at the widow and heir, and, by a barbarous form of compounding, married (without tocher) Simon's daughter Grizzel, which is the way the Traquairs and Ruthvens came first to an intermarriage. About the last Traquair and Ruthven marriage, it is the business of this book, among many other things, to tell.

The Traquairs were always strong for the Covenant; for the King also, but the Covenant first; and it began to be ill days for Montroymont when the Bishops came in and the dragoons at the heels of them. Ninian (then laird) was an anxious husband of himself and the property, as the times required, and it may be said of him, that he lost both. He was heavily suspected of the Pentland Hills rebellion.

When it came the length of Bothwell Brig, he stood his trial before the Secret Council, and was convicted of talking with some insurgents by the wayside, the subject of the conversation not very clearly appearing, and of the reset and maintenance of one Gale, a gardener man, who seen before Bothwell with a musket, and afterwards, for a continuance of months, delved the garden at Montroymont. Matters went very ill with Ninian at the Council; some of the lords were clear for treason; and even the boot was talked of. But he was spared that torture; and at last, having pretty good friendship among great men, he came off with a fine of seven thousand marks, that caused the estate to groan. In this case, as in so many others, it was the wife that made the trouble. She was a great keeper of conventicles; would ride ten miles to one, and when she was fined, rejoiced greatly to suffer for the Kirk; but it was rather her husband that suffered. She had their only son, Francis, baptized privately by the hands of Mr. Kidd; there was that much the more to pay for! She could neither be driven nor wiled into the parish kirk; as for taking the sacrament at the hands of any Episcopalian curate, and tenfold more at those of Curate Haddo, there was nothing further from her purposes; and Montroymont had to put his hand in his pocket month by month and year by year. Once, indeed, the little lady was cast in prison, and the laird, worthy, heavy, uninterested man, had to ride up and take her place; from which he was not discharged under nine months and a sharp fine. It scarce seemed she had any gratitude to him; she came out of gaol herself, and plunged immediately deeper in conventicles, resetting recusants, and all her old, expensive folly, only with greater vigour and openness, because Montroymont was safe in the Tolbooth and she had no witness to consider. When he was liberated and came back, with his fingers singed, in December 0, and late in the black night, my lady was from home. He came into the house at his alighting, with a riding-rod yet in his hand; and, on the servant-maid telling him, caught her by the scruff of the neck, beat her violently, flung her down in the passage-way, and went upstairs to his bed fasting and without a light. It was three in the morning when my lady returned from that conventicle, and, hearing of the assault (because the maid had sat up for her, weeping), went to their common chamber with a lantern in hand and stamping with her shoes so as to wake the dead; it was supposed, by those that heard her, from a design to have it out with the good man at once. The house-servants gathered on the stair, because it was a main interest with them to know which of these two was the better horse; and for the space of two hours they were heard to go at the matter, hammer and tongs. Montroymont alleged he was at the end of possibilities; it was no longer within his power to pay the annual rents; she had served him basely by keeping conventicles while he lay in prison for her sake; his friends were weary, and there was nothing else before him but the entire loss of the family lands, and to begin life again by the wayside as a common beggar. She took him up very sharp and high: called upon him, if he were a Christian? and which he most considered, the loss of a few dirty, miry glebes, or of his soul? Presently he was heard to weep, and my lady's voice to go on continually like a running burn, only the words indistinguishable; whereupon it was supposed a victory for her ladyship, and the domestics took themselves to bed. The next day Traquair appeared like a man who had gone under the harrows; and his lady wife thenceforward continued in her old course without the least deflection.

Thenceforward Ninian went on his way without complaint, and suffered his wife to go on hers without remonstrance. He still minded his estate, of which it might be said he took daily a fresh farewell, and counted it already lost; looking ruefully on the acres and the graves of his fathers, on the moorlands where the wildfowl consorted, the low, gurgling pool of the trout, and the high, windy place of the calling curlews — things that were yet his for the day and would be another's to-morrow; coming back again, and sitting ciphering till the dusk at his approaching ruin, which no device of arithmetic could postpone beyond a year or two. He was essentially the simple ancient man, the farmer and landholder; he would have been content to watch the seasons come and go, and his cattle increase, until the limit of age; he would have been content at any time to die, if he could have left the estates undiminished to an heir-male of his ancestors, that duty standing first in his instinctive calendar. And now he saw everywhere the image of the new proprietor come to meet him, and go sowing and reaping, or fowling for his pleasure on the red moors, or eating the very gooseberries in the Place garden; and saw always, on the other hand, the figure of Francis go forth, a beggar, into the broad world.

It was in vain the poor gentleman sought to moderate; took every test and took advantage of every indulgence; went and drank with the dragoons in Balweary; attended the communion and came regularly to the church to Curate Haddo, with his son beside him. The mad, raging, Presbyterian zealot of a wife at home made all of no avail; and indeed the house must have fallen years before if it had not been for the secret indulgence of the curate, who had a great sympathy with the laird, and winked hard at the doings in Montroymont. This curate was a man very ill reputed in the countryside, and indeed in all Scotland. "Infamous Haddo" is Shield's expression. But Patrick Walker is more copious. "Curate Hall Haddo," says he, *sub voce* Peden, "or *Hell* Haddo, as he was more justly to be called, a pokeful of old condemned errors and the filthy vile lusts of the flesh, a published whoremonger, a common gross drunkard, continually and godlessly scraping and skirling on a fiddle, continually breathing flames against the remnant of Israel. But the Lord put an end to his piping, and all these offences were composed into one bloody grave." No doubt this was written to excuse his slaughter; and I have never heard it claimed for Walker that he was either a just witness or an indulgent judge. At least, in a merely human character, Haddo comes off not wholly amiss in the matter of these Traquairs: not that he showed any graces of the Christian, but had a sort of Pagan decency, which might almost tempt one to be concerned about his sudden, violent, and unprepared fate.

CHAPTER II

FRANCIE

Francie was eleven years old, shy, secret, and rather childish of his age, though not backward in schooling, which had been pushed on far by a private governor, one M'Brair, a forfeited minister harboured in that capacity at Montroymont. The boy, already much employed in secret by his mother, was the most apt hand conceivable to run upon a message, to carry food to lurking fugitives, or to stand sentry on the skyline above a conventicle. It seemed no place on the moorlands was so naked but what he would find cover there; and as he knew every hag, boulder, and heather-bush in a circuit of seven miles about Montroymont, there was scarce any spot but what he could leave or approach it unseen. This dexterity had won him a reputation in that part of the country; and among the many children employed in these dangerous affairs, he passed under the by-name of Heathercat.

How much his father knew of this employment might be doubted. He took much forethought for the boy's future, seeing he was like to be left so poorly, and would sometimes assist at his lessons, sighing heavily, yawning deep, and now and again patting Francie on the shoulder if he seemed to be doing ill, by way of a private, kind encouragement. But a great part of the day was passed in aimless wanderings with his eyes sealed, or in his cabinet sitting bemused over the particulars of the coming bankruptcy; and the boy would be absent a dozen times for once that his father would observe it.

On 2nd of July 2 the boy had an errand from his mother, which must be kept private from all, the father included in the first of them. Crossing the braes, he hears the clatter of a horse's shoes, and claps down incontinent in a hag by the wayside. And presently he spied his father come riding from one direction, and Curate Haddo walking from another; and Montroymont leaning down from the saddle, and Haddo getting on his toes (for he was a little, ruddy, bald-pated man, more like a dwarf), they greeted kindly, and came to a halt within two fathoms of the child.

"Montroymont," the curate said, "the deil's in 't but I'll have to denunciate your leddy again."

"Deil's in 't indeed!" says the laird.

"Man! can ye no induce her to come to the kirk?" pursues Haddo; "or to a communion at the least of it? For the conventicles, let be! and the same for yon solemn fule, M'Brair: I can blink at them. But she's got to come to the kirk, Montroymont."

"Dinna speak of it," says the laird. "I can do nothing with her."

"Couldn't ye try the stick to her? it works wonders whiles," suggested Haddo. "No? I'm wae to hear it. And I suppose ye ken where you're going?"

"Fine!" said Montroymont. "Fine do I ken where: bankrup'cy and the Bass Rock!"

"Praise to my bones that I never married!" cried the curate. "Well, it's a grievous thing to me to see an auld house dung down that was here before Flodden Field. But naebody can say it was with my wish."

"No more they can, Haddo!" says the laird. "A good friend ye've been to me, first and last. I can give you that character with a clear conscience."

Whereupon they separated, and Montroymont rode briskly down into the DuleValley. But of the curate Francis was not to be quit so easily. He went on with his little, brisk steps to the corner of a dyke, and stopped and whistled and waved upon a lassie that was herding cattle there. This Janet M'Clour was a big lass, being taller than the curate; and what made her look the more so, she was kilted very high. It seemed for a while she would not come, and Francie heard her calling Haddo a "daft auld fule," and saw her running and dodging him among the whins and hags till he was fairly blown. But at the last he gets a bottle from his plaid-neuk and holds it up to her; whereupon she came at once into a composition, and the pair sat, drinking of the bottle, and daffing and laughing together, on a mound of heather. The boy had scarce heard of these vanities, or he might have been minded of a nymph and satyr, if anybody could have taken long-leggit Janet for a nymph. But they seemed to be huge friends, he thought; and was the more surprised, when the curate had taken his leave, to see the lassie fling stones after him with screeches of laughter, and Haddo turn about and caper, and shake his staff at her, and laugh louder than herself. A wonderful merry pair, they seemed; and when Francie had crawled out of the hag, he had a great deal to consider in his mind. It was possible they were all fallen in error about Mr. Haddo, he reflected, — having seen him so tender with Montroymont, and so kind and playful with the lass Janet; and he had a temptation to go out of his road and question her herself upon the matter. But he had a strong spirit of duty on him; and plodded on instead over the braes till he came near the House of Cairngorm. There, in a hollow place, by the burnside that was shaded by some birks, he was aware of a barefoot boy, perhaps a matter of three years older than himself. The two approached with the precautions of a pair of strange dogs, looking at each other queerly.

"It's ill weather on the hills," said the stranger, giving the watchword.

"For a season," said Francie, "but the Lord will appear."

"Richt," said the barefoot boy; "wha're ye frae?"

"The Leddy Montroymont," says Francie.

"Ha'e, then!" says the stranger, and handed him a folded paper, and they stood and looked at each other again. "It's unco' het," said the boy.

"Dooms het," says Francie.

"What do they ca' ye?" says the other.

"Francie," says he. "I'm young Montroymont. They ca' me Heathercat."

"I'm Jock Crozer," said the boy. And there was another pause, while each rolled a stone under his foot.

"Cast your jaiket and I'll fecht ye for a bawbee," cried the elder boy with sudden violence, and dramatically throwing back his jacket.

"Na, I have nae time the now," said Francie, with a sharp thrill of alarm, because Crozer was much the heavier boy.

"Ye're feared. Heathercat indeed!" said Crozer, for among this infantile army of spies and messengers, the fame of Crozer had gone forth and was resented by his rivals. And with that they separated.

On his way home Francie was a good deal occupied with the recollection of this untoward incident. The challenge had been fairly offered and basely refused: the tale would be carried all over the country, and the lustre of the name of Heathercat be dimmed. But the scene between Curate Haddo and Janet M'Clour had also given him much to think of: and he was still puzzling over the case of the curate, and why such ill words were said of him, and why, if he were so merry-spirited, he should yet preach so dry, when coming over a knowe, whom should he see but Janet, sitting with her back to him, minding her cattle! He was always a great child for secret, stealthy ways, having been employed by his mother on errands when the same was necessary; and he came behind the lass without her hearing.

"Jennet," says he.

"Keep me," cries Janet, springing up. "O, it's you, Maister Francie! Save us, what a fricht ye gied me."

"Ay, it's me," said Francie. "I've been thinking, Jennet; I saw you and the curate a while back — — "

"Brat!" cried Janet, and coloured up crimson; and the one moment made as if she would have stricken him with a ragged stick she had to chase her bestial with, and the next was begging and praying that he would mention it to none. It was "naebody's business, whatever," she said; "it would just start a clash in the country"; and there would be nothing left for her but to drown herself in Dule Water.

"Why?" says Francie.

The girl looked at him and grew scarlet again.

"And it isna that, anyway," continued Francie. "It was just that he seemed so good to ye — like our Father in heaven, I thought; and I thought that mebbe, perhaps, we had all been wrong about him from the first. But I'll have to tell Mr. M'Brair; I'm under a kind of a bargain to him to tell him all."

"Tell it to the divil if ye like for me!" cried the lass. "I've naething to be ashamed of. Tell M'Brair to mind his ain affairs," she cried again: "they'll be hot eneugh for him, if Haddie likes!" And so strode off, shoving her beasts before her, and ever and again looking back and crying angry words to the boy, where he stood mystified.

By the time he had got home his mind was made up that he would say nothing to his mother. My Lady Montroymont was in the keeping-room, reading a godly book; she was a wonderful frail little wife to make so much noise in the world and be able to steer about that patient sheep her husband; her eyes were like sloes, the fingers of her hands were like tobacco-pipe shanks, her mouth shut tight like a trap; and even when she was the most serious, and still more when she was angry, there hung about her face the terrifying semblance of a smile.

"Have ye gotten the billet, Francie?" said she; and when he had handed it over, and she had read and burned it, "Did you see anybody?" she asked.

"I saw the laird," said Francie.

"He didna see you, though?" asked his mother.

"Deil a fear," from Francie.

"Francie!" she cried. "What's that I hear? an aith? The Lord forgive me, have I broughten forth a brand for the burning, a fagot for hell-fire?"

"I'm very sorry, ma'am," said Francie. "I humbly beg the Lord's pardon, and yours, for my wickedness."

"H'm," grunted the lady. "Did ye see nobody else?"

"No, ma'am," said Francie, with the face of an angel, "except Jock Crozer, that gied me the billet."

"Jock Crozer!" cried the lady. "I'll Crozer them! Crozers indeed! What next? Are we to repose the lives of a suffering remnant in Crozers? The whole clan of them wants hanging, and if I had my way of it, they wouldna want it long. Are you aware, sir, that these Crozers killed your forebear at the kirk-door?"

"You see, he was bigger 'n me," said Francie.

"Jock Crozer!" continued the lady. "That'll be Clement's son, the biggest thief and reiver in the countryside. To trust a note to him! But I'll give the benefit of my opinions to Lady Whitecross when we two forgather. Let her look to herself! I have no patience with half-hearted carlines, that complies on the Lord's day morning with the kirk, and comes taigling the same night to the conventicle. The one or the other! is what I say: hell or heaven — Haddie's abominations or the pure word of God dreeping from the lips of Mr. Arnot,

"'Like honey from the honeycomb
That dreepeth, sweeter far.'"

My lady was now fairly launched, and that upon two congenial subjects: the deficiencies of the Lady Whitecross and the turpitudes of the whole Crozer race — which, indeed, had never been conspicuous for respectability. She pursued the pair of them for twenty minutes on the clock with wonderful animation and detail, something of the pulpit manner, and the spirit of one possessed. "O hellish compliance!" she exclaimed. "I would not suffer a complier to break bread with Christian folk. Of all the sins of this day there is not one so God-defying, so Christ-humiliating, as damnable compliance": the boy standing before her meanwhile, and brokenly pursuing other thoughts, mainly of Haddo and Janet, and Jock Crozer stripping off his jacket. And yet, with all his distraction, it might be argued that he heard too much: his father and himself being "compliers" — that is to say, attending the church of the parish as the law required.

Presently, the lady's passion beginning to decline, or her flux of ill words to be exhausted, she dismissed her audience. Francie bowed low, left the room, closed the door behind him: and then turned him about in the passage-way, and with a low voice, but a prodigious deal of sentiment, repeated the name of the evil one twenty times over, to the end of which, for the greater efficacy, he tacked on "damnable" and "hellish." *Fas est ab hoste doceri* — disrespect is made more pungent by quotation; and there is no doubt but he felt relieved, and went upstairs into his tutor's chamber with a quiet mind. M'Brair sat by the cheek of the peat-fire and shivered, for he had a quartan ague and this was his day. The great nightcap and plaid, the dark unshaven cheeks of the man, and the white, thin hands that held the plaid about his chittering body, made a sorrowful picture. But Francie knew and loved him; came straight in, nestled close to the refugee, and told his story. M'Brair had been at the College with Haddo; the Presbytery had licensed both on the same day; and at this tale, told with so much innocency by the boy, the heart of the tutor was commoved.

"Woe upon him! Woe upon that man!" he cried. "O the unfaithful shepherd! O the hireling and apostate minister! Make my matters hot for me? quo' she! the shameless limmer! And true it is, that he could repose me in that nasty, stinking hole, the Canongate Tolbooth, from which your mother drew me out — the Lord reward her for it! — or to that cold, unbieldy, marine place of the Bass Rock, which, with my delicate kist, would be fair ruin to me. But I will be valiant in my

Master’s service. I have a duty here: a duty to my God, to myself, and to Haddo: in His strength, I will perform it.”

Then he straitly discharged Francie to repeat the tale, and bade him in the future to avert his very eyes from the doings of the curate. “You must go to his place of idolatry; look upon him there!” says he, “but nowhere else. Avert your eyes, close your ears, pass him by like a three days’ corp. He is like that damnable monster Basiliscus, which defiles — yea, poisons! — by the sight.” — All which was hardly claratory to the boy’s mind.

Presently Montroymont came home, and called up the stairs to Francie. Traquair was a good shot and swordsman: and it was his pleasure to walk with his son over the braes of the moorfowl, or to teach him arms in the back court, when they made a mighty comely pair, the child being so lean, and light, and active, and the laird himself a man of a manly, pretty stature, his hair (the periwig being laid aside) showing already white with many anxieties, and his face of an even, flaccid red. But this day Francie’s heart was not in the fencing.

“Sir,” says he, suddenly lowering his point, “will ye tell me a thing if I was to ask it?”

“Ask away,” says the father.

“Well, it’s this,” said Francie: “Why do you and me comply if it’s so wicked?”

“Ay, ye have the cant of it too!” cried Montroymont. “But I’ll tell ye for all that. It’s to try and see if we can keep the rigging on this house, Francie. If she had her way, we would be beggar-folk, and hold our hands out by the wayside. When ye hear her — when ye hear folk,” he corrected himself briskly, “call me a coward, and one that betrayed the Lord, and I kenna what else, just mind it was to keep a bed to ye to sleep in and a bite for ye to eat. — On guard!” he cried, and the lesson proceeded again till they were called to supper.

“There’s another thing yet,” said Francie, stopping his father. “There’s another thing that I am not sure that I am very caring for. She — she sends me errands.”

“Obey her, then, as is your bounden duty,” said Traquair.

“Ay, but wait till I tell ye,” says the boy. “If I was to see you I was to hide.”

Montroymont sighed. “Well, and that’s good of her too,” said he. “The less that I ken of thir doings the better for me; and the best thing you can do is just to obey her, and see and be a good son to her, the same as ye are to me, Francie.”

At the tenderness of this expression the heart of Francie swelled within his bosom, and his remorse was poured out. “Faither!” he cried, “I said ‘deil’ to-day; many’s the time I said it, and *damnable* too, and *hellish*. I ken they’re all right; they’re beeblical. But I didna say them beeblically; I said them for sweir words — that’s the truth of it.”

“Hout, ye silly bairn!” said the father, “dinna do it nae mair, and come in by to your supper.” And he took the boy, and drew him close to him a moment, as they went through the door, with something very fond and secret, like a caress between a pair of lovers.

The next day M’Brair was abroad in the afternoon, and had a long advising with Janet on the braes where she herded cattle. What passed was never wholly known; but the lass wept bitterly, and fell on her knees to him among the whins. The same night, as soon as it was dark, he took the road again for Balweary. In the Kirkton, where the dragoons quartered, he saw many lights, and heard the noise of a ranting song and people laughing grossly, which was highly offensive to his mind. He gave it the wider berth, keeping among fields; and came down at last by the water-side, where the manse stands solitary between the river and the road. He tapped at the back door, and the old woman called upon him to come in, and guided him through the house to the study, as they still called it, though there was little enough study there in Haddo’s days, and more song-books than theology.

“Here’s yin to speak wi’ ye, Mr. Haddie!” cries the old wife.

And M’Brair, opening the door and entering, found the little, round, red man seated in one chair and his feet upon another. A clear fire and a tallow dip lighted him barely. He was taking tobacco in a pipe, and smiling to himself; and a brandy-bottle and glass, and his fiddle and bow, were beside him on the table.

“Hech, Patey M’Brair, is this you?” said he, a trifle tipsily. “Step in by, man, and have a drop brandy: for the stomach’s sake! Even the deil can quote Scripture — eh, Patey?”

“I will neither eat nor drink with you,” replied M’Brair. “I am come upon my Master’s errand! woe be upon me if I should anyways mince the same. Hall Haddo, I summon you to quit this kirk which you encumber.”

“Muckle obleeged!” says Haddo, winking.

“You and me have been to kirk and market together,” pursued M’Brair; “we have had blessed seasons in the kirk, we have sat in the same teaching-rooms and read in the same book; and I know you still retain for me some carnal kindness. It would be my shame if I denied it; I live here at your mercy and by your favour, and glory to acknowledge it. You have pity on my wretched body, which is but grass, and must soon be trodden under: but O, Haddo! how much greater is the yearning with which I yearn after and pity your immortal soul! Come now, let us reason together! I drop all points of controversy, weighty though these be; I take your defaced and damnified kirk on your own terms; and I ask you, Are you a worthy minister? The communion season approaches; how can you pronounce thir solemn words, ‘The elders will now bring forrit the elements,’ and not quail? A parishioner may be summoned to-night; you may have to rise from your miserable orgies; and I ask you, Haddo, what does your conscience tell you? Are you fit? Are you fit to smooth the pillow of a parting Christian? And if the summons should be for yourself, how then?”

Haddo was startled out of all composure and the better part of his temper. “What’s this of it?” he cried. “I’m no waur than my neebours. I never set up to be speeritual; I never did. I’m a plain, canty creature; godliness is cheerfulness, says I; give me my fiddle and a dram, and I wouldna hairm a flee.”

“And I repeat my question,” said M’Brair: “Are you fit — fit for this great charge? fit to carry and save souls?”

“Fit? Blethers! As fit ‘s yoursel’,” cried Haddo.

“Are you so great a self-deceiver?” said M’Brair. “Wretched man, trampler upon God’s covenants, crucifier of your Lord afresh. I will ding you to the earth with one word: How about the young woman, Janet M’Clour?”

“Weel, what about her? what do I ken?” cries Haddo. “M’Brair, ye daft auld wife, I tell ye as true ‘s truth, I never meddled her. It was just daffing, I tell ye: daffing, and nae mair: a piece of fun, like! I’m no’ denying but what I’m fond of fun, sma’ blame to me! But for onything sarious — hout, man, it might come to a deposeetion! I’ll sweir it to ye. Where’s a Bible, till you hear me sweir?”

“There is nae Bible in your study,” said M’Brair severely.

And Haddo, after a few distracted turns, was constrained to accept the fact.

“Weel, and suppose there isna?” he cried, stamping. “What mair can ye say of us, but just that I’m fond of my joke, and so ‘s she? I declare to God, by what I ken, she might be the Virgin Mary — if she would just keep clear of the dragoons. But me! na, deil haet o’ me!”

“She is penitent at least,” said M’Brair.

“Do you mean to actually up and tell me to my face that she accused me?” cried the curate.

“I canna just say that,” replied M’Brair. “But I rebuked her in the name of God, and she repented before me on her bended knees.”

“Weel, I daursay she’s been ower far wi’ the dragoons,” said Haddo. “I never denied that. I ken naething by it.”

“Man, you but show your nakedness the more plainly,” said M’Brair. “Poor, blind, besotted creature — and I see you stoytering on the brink of dissolution: your light out, and your hours numbered. Awake, man!" he shouted with a formidable voice, "awake, or it be ower late."

"Be damned if I stand this!" exclaimed Haddo, casting his tobacco-pipe violently on the table, where it was smashed in pieces. "Out of my house with ye, or I'll call for the dragoons."

"The speerit of the Lord is upon me," said M'Brair with solemn ecstasy. "I sist you to compear before the Great White Throne, and I warn you the summons shall be bloody and sudden."

And at this, with more agility than could have been expected, he got clear of the room and slammed the door behind him in the face of the pursuing curate. The next Lord's day the curate was ill, and the kirk closed, but for all his ill words, Mr. M'Brair abode unmolested in the house of Montroymont.

CHAPTER III

THE HILL-END OF DRUMLOWE

This was a bit of a steep broken hill that overlooked upon the west a moorish valley, full of ink-black pools. These presently drained into a burn that made off, with little noise and no celerity of pace, about the corner of the hill. On the far side the ground swelled into a bare heath, black with junipers, and spotted with the presence of the standing stones for which the place was famous. They were many in that part, shapeless, white with lichen — you would have said with age: and had made their abode there for untold centuries, since first the heathens shouted for their installation. The ancients had hallowed them to some ill religion, and their neighbourhood had long been avoided by the prudent before the fall of day; but of late, on the up-springing of new requirements, these lonely stones on the moor had again become a place of assembly. A watchful picket on the Hill-end commanded all the northern and eastern approaches; and such was the disposition of the ground, that by certain cunningly posted sentries the west also could be made secure against surprise: there was no place in the country where a conventicle could meet with more quiet of mind or a more certain retreat open, in the case of interference from the dragoons. The minister spoke from a knowe close to the edge of the ring, and poured out the words God gave him on the very threshold of the devils of yore. When they pitched a tent (which was often in wet weather, upon a communion occasion) it was rigged over the huge isolated pillar that had the name of Anes-Errand, none knew why. And the congregation sat partly clustered on the slope below, and partly among the idolatrous monoliths and on the turfy soil of the Ring itself. In truth the situation was well qualified to give a zest to Christian doctrines, had there been any wanted. But these congregations assembled under conditions at once so formidable and romantic as made a zealot of the most cold. They were the last of the faithful; God, who had averted His face from all other countries of the world, still leaned from heaven to observe, with swelling sympathy, the doings of His moorland remnant; Christ was by them with His eternal wounds, with dropping tears; the Holy Ghost (never perfectly realised nor firmly adopted by Protestant imaginations) was dimly supposed to be in the heart of each and on the lips of the minister. And over against them was the army of the hierarchies, from the men Charles and James Stuart, on to King Lewie and the Emperor; and the scarlet Pope, and the muckle black devil himself, peering out the red mouth of hell in an ecstasy of hate and hope. “One pull more!” he seemed to cry; “one pull more, and it’s done. There’s only Clydesdale and the Stewartry, and the three Bailiaries of Ayr, left for God.” And with such an august assistance of powers and principalities looking on at the last conflict of good and evil, it was scarce possible to spare a thought to those old, infirm, debile, *ab agendo* devils whose holy place they were now violating.

There might have been three hundred to four hundred present. At least there were three hundred horses tethered for the most part in the ring; though some of the hearers on the outskirts of the crowd stood with their bridles in their hand, ready to mount at the first signal. The circle of faces was strangely characteristic; long, serious, strongly marked, the tackle standing out in the lean brown cheeks, the mouth set and the eyes shining with a fierce enthusiasm; the shepherd, the labouring man, and the rarer laird, stood there in their broad blue bonnets or laced hats, and presenting an essential identity of type. From time to time a long-drawn groan of adhesion rose in this audience, and was propagated like a wave to the outskirts, and died away among the keepers of the horses. It had a name; it was called “a holy groan.”

A squall came up; a great volley of flying mist went out before it and whelmed the scene; the wind stormed with a sudden fierceness that carried away the minister’s voice and twitched his tails and made him stagger, and turned the congregation for a moment into a mere pother of blowing plaid-ends and prancing horses, and the rain followed and was dashed straight into their faces. Men and women panted aloud in the shock of that violent shower-bath; the teeth were bared along all the line in an involuntary grimace; plaids, mantles, and riding-coats were proved vain, and the worshippers felt the water stream on their naked flesh. The minister, reinforcing his great and shrill voice, continued to contend against and triumph over the rising of the squall and the dashing of the rain.

"In that day ye may go thirty mile and not hear a crawing cock," he said; "and fifty mile and not get a light to your pipe; and an hundred mile and not see a smoking house. For there'll be naething in all Scotland but deid men's banes and blackness, and the living anger of the Lord. O, where to find a bield — O sirs, where to find a bield from the wind of the Lord's anger? Do ye call *this* a wind? Bethankit! Sirs, this is but a temporary dispensation; this is but a puff of wind, this is but a spit of rain and by with it. Already there's a blue bow in the west, and the sun will take the crown of the causeway again, and your things'll be dried upon ye, and your flesh will be warm upon your bones. But O, sirs, sirs! for the day of the Lord's anger!"

His rhetoric was set forth with an ear-piercing elocution, and a voice that sometimes crashed like cannon. Such as it was, it was the gift of all hill-preachers, to a singular degree of likeness or identity. Their images scarce ranged beyond the red horizon of the moor and the rainy hill-top, the shepherd and his sheep, a fowling-piece, a spade, a pipe, a dunghill, a crowing cock, the shining and the withdrawal of the sun. An occasional pathos of simple humanity, and frequent patches of big Biblical words, relieved the homely tissue. It was a poetry apart; bleak, austere, but genuine, and redolent of the soil.

A little before the coming of the squall there was a different scene enacting at the outposts. For the most part, the sentinels were faithful to their important duty; the Hill-end of Drumlowe was known to be a safe meeting-place; and the out-pickets on this particular day had been somewhat lax from the beginning, and grew laxer during the inordinate length of the discourse. Francie lay there in his appointed hiding-hole, looking abroad between two whin-bushes. His view was across the course of the burn, then over a piece of plain moorland, to a gap between two hills; nothing moved but grouse, and some cattle who slowly traversed his field of view, heading northward: he heard the psalms, and sang words of his own to the savage and melancholy music; for he had his own design in hand, and terror and cowardice prevailed in his bosom alternately, like the hot and the cold fit of an ague. Courage was uppermost during the singing, which he accompanied through all its length with this impromptu strain:

"And I will ding Jock Crozer down
No later than the day."

Presently the voice of the preacher came to him in wafts, at the wind's will, as by the opening and shutting of a door; wild spasms of screaming, as of some undiscerned gigantic hill-bird stirred with inordinate passion, succeeded to intervals of silence; and Francie heard them with a critical ear. “Ay,” he thought at last, “he’ll do; he has the bit in his mou’ fairly.”

He had observed that his friend, or rather his enemy, Jock Crozer, had been established at a very critical part of the line of outposts; namely, where the burn issues by an abrupt gorge from the semicircle of high moors. If anything was calculated to nerve him to battle it was this. The post was important; next to the Hill-end itself, it might be called the key to the position; and it was where the cover was bad, and in which it was most natural to place a child. It should have been Heathercat’s; why had it been given to Crozer? An exquisite fear of what should be the answer passed through his marrow every time he faced the question. Was it possible that Crozer could have boasted? that there were rumours abroad to his — Heathercat’s — discredit? that his honour was publicly sullied? All the world went dark about him at the thought; he sank without a struggle into the midnight pool of despair; and every time he so sank, he brought back with him — not drowned heroism indeed, but half-drowned courage by the locks. His heart beat very slowly as he deserted his station, and began to crawl towards that of Crozer. Something pulled him back, and it was not the sense of duty, but a remembrance of Crozer’s build and hateful readiness of fist. Duty, as he conceived it, pointed him forward on the rueful path that he was travelling. Duty bade him redeem his name if he were able, at the risk of broken bones; and his bones and every tooth in his head ached by anticipation. An awful subsidiary fear whispered him that if he were hurt, he should disgrace himself by weeping. He consoled himself, boy-like, with the consideration that he was not yet committed; he could easily steal over unseen to Crozer’s post, and he had a continuous private idea that he would very probably steal back again. His course took him so near the minister that he could hear some of his words: “What news, minister, of Claver’se? He’s going round like a roaring rampaging lion....

THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

A FRAGMENT

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CHAPTER I

NANCE AT THE “GREEN DRAGON”

Nance Holdaway was on her knees before the fire blowing the green wood that voluminously smoked upon the dogs, and only now and then shot forth a smothered flame; her knees already ached and her eyes smarted, for she had been some while at this ungrateful task, but her mind was gone far away to meet the coming stranger. Now she met him in the wood, now at the castle gate, now in the kitchen by candle-light; each fresh presentment eclipsed the one before; a form so elegant, manners so sedate, a countenance so brave and comely, a voice so winning and resolute — sure such a man was never seen! The thick-coming fancies poured and brightened in her head like the smoke and flames upon the hearth.

Presently the heavy foot of her uncle Jonathan was heard upon the stair, and as he entered the room she bent the closer to her work. He glanced at the green fagots with a sneer, and looked askance at the bed and the white sheets, at the strip of carpet laid, like an island, on the great expanse of the stone floor, and at the broken glazing of the casement clumsily repaired with paper.

“Leave that fire a-be,” he cried. “What, have I toiled all my life to turn innkeeper at the hind end? Leave it a-be, I say.”

“La, uncle, it doesn’t burn a bit; it only smokes,” said Nance, looking up from her position.

“You are come of decent people of both sides,” returned the old man. “Who are you to blow the coals for any Robin-run-agate? Get up, get on your hood, make yourself useful, and be off to the ‘Green Dragon.’”

“I thought you was to go yourself,” Nance faltered.

“So did I,” quoth Jonathan; “but it appears I was mistook.”

The very excess of her eagerness alarmed her, and she began to hang back. “I think I would rather not, dear uncle,” she said. “Night is at hand, and I think, dear, I would rather not.”

“Now you look here,” replied Jonathan, “I have my lord’s orders, have I not? Little he gives me, but it’s all my livelihood. And do you fancy, if I disobey my lord, I’m likely to turn round for a lass like you? No, I’ve that hell-fire of pain in my old knee, I wouldn’t walk a mile, not for King George upon his bended knees.” And he walked to the window and looked down the steep scarp to where the river foamed in the bottom of the dell.

Nance stayed for no more bidding. In her own room, by the glimmer of the twilight, she washed her hands and pulled on her Sunday mittens; adjusted her black hood, and tied a dozen times its cherry ribbons; and in less than ten minutes, with a fluttering heart and excellently bright eyes, she passed forth under the arch and over the bridge, into the thickening shadows of the groves. A well-marked wheel-track conducted her. The wood, which upon both sides of the river dell was a mere scrambling thicket of hazel, hawthorn, and holly, boasted on the level of more considerable timber. Beeches came to a good growth, with here and there an oak; and the track now passed under a high arcade of branches, and now ran under the open sky in glades. As the girl proceeded these glades became more frequent, the trees began again to decline in size, and the wood to degenerate into furzy coverts. Last of all there was a fringe of elders; and beyond that the track came forth upon an open, rolling moorland, dotted with wind-bowed and scanty bushes, and all golden brown with the winter, like a grouse. Right over against the girl the last red embers of the sunset burned under horizontal clouds; the night fell clear and still and frosty, and the track in low and marshy passages began to crackle under foot with ice.

Some half a mile beyond the borders of the wood the lights of the “Green Dragon” hove in sight, and running close beside them, very faint in the dying dusk, the pale ribbon of the Great North Road. It was the back of the post-house that was presented to Nance Holdaway; and as she continued to draw near and the night to fall more completely, she became aware of an unusual brightness and bustle. A post-chaise stood in the yard, its lamps already lighted: light shone hospitably in the windows and from the open door; moving lights and shadows testified to the activity of servants bearing lanterns. The clank of pails, the stamping of hoofs on the firm causeway, the jingle of harness, and, last of all, the energetic hissing of a groom, began to fall upon her ear. By the stir you would have thought the mail was at the door, but it was still too early in the night. The down mail was not due at the “Green Dragon” for hard upon an hour; the up mail from Scotland not before two in the black morning.

Nance entered the yard somewhat dazzled. Sam, the tall ostler, was polishing a curb-chain with sand; the lantern at his feet letting up spouts of candle-light through the holes with which its conical roof was peppered.

“Hey, miss,” said he jocularly, “you won’t look at me any more, now you have gentry at the castle.”

Her cheeks burned with anger.

“That’s my lord’s chay,” the man continued, nodding at the chaise, “Lord Windermoor’s. Came all in a fluster — dinner, bowl of punch, and put the horses to. For all the world like a runaway match, my dear — bar the bride. He brought Mr. Archer in the chay with him."

"Is that Holdaway?" cried the landlord from the lighted entry, where he stood shading his eyes.

"Only me, sir," answered Nance.

"O, you, Miss Nance," he said. "Well, come in quick, my pretty. My lord is waiting for your uncle."

And he ushered Nance into a room cased with yellow wainscot and lighted by tall candles, where two gentlemen sat at a table finishing a bowl of punch. One of these was stout, elderly, and irascible, with a face like a full moon, well dyed with liquor, thick tremulous lips, a short, purple hand, in which he brandished a long pipe, and an abrupt and gobbling utterance. This was my Lord Windermoor. In his companion Nance beheld a younger man, tall, quiet, grave, demurely dressed, and wearing his own hair. Her glance but lighted on him, and she flushed, for in that second she made sure that she had twice betrayed herself — betrayed by the involuntary flash of her black eyes her secret impatience to behold this new companion, and, what was far worse, betrayed her disappointment in the realisation of her dreams. He, meanwhile, as if unconscious, continued to regard her with unmoved decorum.

"O, a man of wood," thought Nance.

"What — what?" said his lordship. "Who is this?"

"If you please, my lord, I am Holdaway's niece," replied Nance, with a curtsey.

"Should have been here himself," observed his lordship. "Well, you tell Holdaway that I'm aground, not a stiver — not a stiver. I'm running from the beagles — going abroad, tell Holdaway. And he need look for no more wages: glad of 'em myself, if I could get 'em. He can live in the castle if he likes, or go to the devil. O, and here is Mr. Archer; and I recommend him to take him in — a friend of mine — and Mr. Archer will pay, as I wrote. And I regard that in the light of a precious good thing for Holdaway, let me tell you, and a set-off against the wages."

"But O, my lord!" cried Nance, "we live upon the wages, and what are we to do without?"

"What am I to do? — what am I to do?" replied Lord Windermoor with some exasperation. "I have no wages. And there is Mr. Archer. And if Holdaway doesn't like it, he can go to the devil, and you with him! — and you with him!"

"And yet, my lord," said Mr. Archer, "these good people will have as keen a sense of loss as you or I; keener, perhaps, since they have done nothing to deserve it."

"Deserve it?" cried the peer. "What? What? If a rascally highwayman comes up to me with a confounded pistol, do you say that I've deserved it? How often am I to tell you, sir, that I was cheated — that I was cheated?"

"You are happy in the belief," returned Mr. Archer gravely.

"Archer, you would be the death of me!" exclaimed his lordship. "You know you're drunk; you know it, sir; and yet you can't get up a spark of animation."

"I have drunk fair, my lord," replied the younger man; "but I own I am conscious of no exhilaration."

"If you had as black a look-out as me, sir," cried the peer, "you would be very glad of a little innocent exhilaration, let me tell you. I am glad of it — glad of it, and I only wish I was drunker. For let me tell you it's a cruel hard thing upon a man of my time of life and my position, to be brought down to beggary because the world is full of thieves and rascals — thieves and rascals. What? For all I know, you may be a thief and a rascal yourself; and I would fight you for a pinch of snuff — a pinch of snuff," exclaimed his lordship.

Here Mr. Archer turned to Nance Holdaway with a pleasant smile, so full of sweetness, kindness, and composure that, at one bound, her dreams returned to her. "My good Miss Holdaway," said he, "if you are willing to show me the road, I am even eager to be gone. As for his lordship and myself, compose yourself; there is no fear; this is his lordship's way."

"What? what?" cried his lordship. "My way? Ish no such a thing, my way."

"Come, my lord," cried Archer; "you and I very thoroughly understand each other; and let me suggest, it is time that both of us were gone. The mail will soon be due. Here, then, my lord, I take my leave of you, with the most earnest assurance of my gratitude for the past, and a sincere offer of any services I may be able to render in the future."

"Archer," exclaimed Lord Windermoor, "I love you like a son. Le' 's have another bowl."

"My lord, for both our sakes, you will excuse me," replied Mr. Archer. "We both require caution; we must both, for some while at least, avoid the chance of a pursuit."

"Archer," quoth his lordship, "this is a rank ingratishood. What? I'm to go firing away in the dark in the cold po'chaise, and not so much as a game of écarté possible, unless I stop and play with the postillion, the postillion; and the whole country swarming with thieves and rascals and highwaymen."

"I beg your lordship's pardon," put in the landlord, who now appeared in the doorway to announce the chaise, "but this part of the North Road is known for safety. There has not been a robbery, to call a robbery, this five years' time. Further south, of course, it's nearer London, and another story," he added.

"Well, then, if that's so," concluded my lord, "le' 's have t' other bowl and a pack of cards."

"My lord, you forget," said Archer, "I might still gain; but it is hardly possible for me to lose."

"Think I'm a sharper?" inquired the peer. "Gen'leman's parole's all I ask."

But Mr. Archer was proof against these blandishments, and said farewell gravely enough to Lord Windermoor, shaking his hand and at the same time bowing very low. "You will never know," says he, "the service you have done me." And with that, and before my lord had finally taken up his meaning, he had slipped about the table, touched Nance lightly but imperiously on the arm, and left the room. In face of the outbreak of his lordship's lamentations she made haste to follow the truant.

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH MR. ARCHER IS INSTALLED

The chaise had been driven round to the front door; the courtyard lay all deserted, and only lit by a lantern set upon a window-sill. Through this Nance rapidly led the way, and began to ascend the swellings of the moor with a heart that somewhat fluttered in her bosom. She was not afraid, but in the course of these last passages with Lord Windermoor Mr. Archer had ascended to that pedestal on which her fancy waited to instal him. The reality, she felt, excelled her dreams, and this cold night walk was the first romantic incident in her experience.

It was the rule in these days to see gentlemen unsteady after dinner, yet Nance was both surprised and amused when her companion, who had spoken so soberly, began to stumble and waver by her side with the most airy divagations. Sometimes he would get so close to her that she must edge away; and at others lurch clear out of the track and plough among deep heather. His courtesy and gravity meanwhile remained unaltered. He asked her how far they had to go; whether the way lay all upon the moorland, and when he learned they had to pass a wood expressed his pleasure. "For," said he, "I am passionately fond of trees. Trees and fair lawns, if you consider of it rightly, are the ornaments of nature, as palaces and fine approaches — — " And here he stumbled into a patch of slough and nearly fell. The girl had hard work not to laugh, but at heart she was lost in admiration for one who talked so elegantly.

They had got to about a quarter of a mile from the "Green Dragon," and were near the summit of the rise, when a sudden rush of wheels arrested them. Turning and looking back, they saw the post-house, now much declined in brightness; and speeding away northward the two tremulous bright dots of my Lord Windermoor's chaise-lamps. Mr. Archer followed these yellow and unsteady stars until they dwindled into points and disappeared.

"There goes my only friend," he said. "Death has cut off those that loved me, and change of fortune estranged my flatterers; and but for you, poor bankrupt, my life is as lonely as this moor."

The tone of his voice affected both of them. They stood there on the side of the moor, and became thrillingly conscious of the void waste of the night, without a feature for the eye, and except for the fainting whisper of the carriage-wheels without a murmur for the ear. And instantly, like a mockery, there broke out, very far away, but clear and jolly, the note of the mail-guard’s horn. “Over the hills” was his air. It rose to the two watchers on the moor with the most cheerful sentiment of human company and travel, and at the same time in and around the “Green Dragon” it woke up a great bustle of lights running to and fro and clattering hoofs. Presently after, out of the darkness to southward, the mail grew near with a growing rumble. Its lamps were very large and bright, and threw their radiance forward in overlapping cones; the four cantering horses swarmed and steamed; the body of the coach followed like a great shadow; and this lit picture slid with a sort of ineffectual swiftness over the black field of night, and was eclipsed by the buildings of the “Green Dragon.”

Mr. Archer turned abruptly and resumed his former walk; only that he was now more steady, kept better alongside his young conductor, and had fallen into a silence broken by sighs. Nance waxed very pitiful over his fate, contrasting an imaginary past of courts and great society, and perhaps the King himself, with the tumbledown ruin in a wood to which she was now conducting him.

“You must try, sir, to keep your spirits up,” said she. “To be sure this is a great change for one like you; but who knows the future?”

Mr. Archer turned towards her in the darkness, and she could clearly perceive that he smiled upon her very kindly. “There spoke a sweet nature,” said he, “and I must thank you for these words. But I would not have you fancy that I regret the past for any happiness found in it, or that I fear the simplicity and hardship of the country. I am a man that has been much tossed about in life; now up, now down; and do you think that I shall not be able to support what you support — you who are kind, and therefore know how to feel pain; who are beautiful, and therefore hope; who are young, and therefore (or am I the more mistaken?) discontented?”

“Nay, sir, not that, at least,” said Nance; “not discontented. If I were to be discontented, how should I look those that have real sorrows in the face? I have faults enough, but not that fault; and I have my merits too, for I have a good opinion of myself. But for beauty, I am not so simple but that I can tell a banter from a compliment.”

“Nay, nay,” said Mr. Archer, “I had half forgotten; grief is selfish, and I was thinking of myself and not of you, or I had never blurted out so bold a piece of praise. ‘Tis the best proof of my sincerity. But come, now, I would lay a wager you are no coward?”

“Indeed, sir, I am not more afraid than another,” said Nance. “None of my blood are given to fear.”

“And you are honest?” he returned.

“I will answer for that,” said she.

“Well, then, to be brave, to be honest, to be kind, and to be contented, since you say you are so — is not that to fill up a great part of virtue?"

"I fear you are but a flatterer," said Nance, but she did not say it clearly, for what with bewilderment and satisfaction, her heart was quite oppressed.

There could be no harm, certainly, in these grave compliments; but yet they charmed and frightened her, and to find favour, for reasons however obscure, in the eyes of this elegant, serious, and most unfortunate young gentleman, was a giddy elevation, was almost an apotheosis, for a country maid.

But she was to be no more exercised; for Mr. Archer, disclaiming any thought of flattery, turned off to other subjects, and held her all through the wood in conversation, addressing her with an air of perfect sincerity, and listening to her answers with every mark of interest. Had open flattery continued, Nance would have soon found refuge in good sense; but the more subtle lure she could not suspect, much less avoid. It was the first time she had ever taken part in a conversation illuminated by any ideas. All was then true that she had heard and dreamed of gentlemen; they were a race apart, like deities knowing good and evil. And then there burst upon her soul a divine thought, hope's glorious sunrise: since she could understand, since it seemed that she too, even she, could interest this sorrowful Apollo, might she not learn? or was she not learning? Would not her soul awake and put forth wings? Was she not, in fact, an enchanted princess, waiting but a touch to become royal? She saw herself transformed, radiantly attired, but in the most exquisite taste: her face grown longer and more refined; her tint etherealised; and she heard herself with delighted wonder talking like a book.

Meanwhile they had arrived at where the track comes out above the river dell, and saw in front of them the castle, faintly shadowed on the night, covering with its broken battlements a bold projection of the bank, and showing at the extreme end, where were the habitable tower and wing, some crevices of candle-light. Hence she called loudly upon her uncle, and he was seen to issue, lantern in hand, from the tower door, and, where the ruins did not intervene, to pick his way over the swarded courtyard, avoiding treacherous cellars and winding among blocks of fallen masonry. The arch of the great gate was still entire, flanked by two tottering bastions, and it was here that Jonathan met them, standing at the edge of the bridge, bent somewhat forward, and blinking at them through the glow of his own lantern. Mr. Archer greeted him with civility; but the old man was in no humour of compliance. He guided the new-comer across the courtyard, looking sharply and quickly in his face, and grumbling all the time about the cold, and the discomfort and dilapidation of the castle. He was sure he hoped that Mr. Archer would like it; but in truth he could not think what brought him there. Doubtless he had a good reason — this with a look of cunning scrutiny — but, indeed, the place was quite unfit for any person of repute; he himself was eaten up with the rheumatics. It was the most rheumaticky place in England, and some fine day the whole habitable part (to call it habitable) would fetch away bodily and go down the slope into the river. He had seen the cracks widening; there was a plaguy issue in the bank below; he thought a spring was mining it; it might be to-morrow, it might be next day; but they were all sure of a come-down sooner or later. "And that is a poor death," said he, "for any one, let alone a gentleman, to have a whole old ruin dumped upon his belly. Have a care to your left there; these cellar vaults have all broke down, and the grass and hemlock hide 'em. Well, sir, here is welcome to you, such as it is, and wishing you well away."

And with that Jonathan ushered his guest through the tower door, and down three steps on the left hand into the kitchen or common room of the castle. It was a huge, low room, as large as a meadow, occupying the whole width of the habitable wing, with six barred windows looking on the court, and two into the river valley. A dresser, a table, and a few chairs stood dotted here and there upon the uneven flags. Under the great chimney a good fire burned in an iron fire-basket; a high old settee, rudely carved with figures and Gothic lettering, flanked it on either side; there was a hinge table and a stone bench in the chimney corner, and above the arch hung guns, axes, lanterns, and great sheaves of rusty keys.

Jonathan looked about him, holding up the lantern, and shrugged his shoulders, with a pitying grimace. "Here it is," he said. "See the damp on the floor, look at the moss; where there's moss you may be sure that it's rheumaticky. Try and get near that fire for to warm yourself; it'll blow the coat off your back. And with a young gentleman with a face like yours, as pale as a tallow-candle, I'd be afeard of a churchyard cough and a galloping decline," says Jonathan, naming the maladies with gloomy gusto, "or the cold might strike and turn your blood," he added.

Mr. Archer fairly laughed. "My good Mr. Holdaway," said he, "I was born with that same tallow-candle face, and the only fear that you inspire me with is the fear that I intrude unwelcomely upon your private hours. But I think I can promise you that I am very little troublesome, and I am inclined to hope that the terms which I can offer may still pay you the derangement."

"Yes, the terms," said Jonathan, "I was thinking of that. As you say, they are very small," and he shook his head.

"Unhappily, I can afford no more," said Mr. Archer. "But this we have arranged already," he added with a certain stiffness; "and as I am aware that Miss Holdaway has matter to communicate, I will, if you permit, retire at once. To-night I must bivouac; to-morrow my trunk is to follow from the ‘Dragon.’ So if you will show me to my room I shall wish you a good slumber and a better awakening.”

Jonathan silently gave the lantern to Nance, and she, turning and curtseying in the doorway, proceeded to conduct their guest up the broad winding staircase of the tower. He followed with a very brooding face.

“Alas!” cried Nance, as she entered the room, “your fire black out,” and, setting down the lantern, she clapped upon her knees before the chimney and began to rearrange the charred and still smouldering remains. Mr. Archer looked about the gaunt apartment with a sort of shudder. The great height, the bare stone, the shattered windows, the aspect of the uncurtained bed, with one of its four fluted columns broken short, all struck a chill upon his fancy. From this dismal survey his eyes returned to Nance crouching before the fire, the candle in one hand and artfully puffing at the embers; the flames as they broke forth played upon the soft outline of her cheek — she was alive and young, coloured with the bright hues of life, and a woman. He looked upon her, softening; and then sat down and continued to admire the picture.

“There, sir,” said she, getting upon her feet, “your fire is doing bravely now. Good-night.”

He rose and held out his hand. “Come,” said he, “you are my only friend in these parts, and you must shake hands.”

She brushed her hand upon her skirt and offered it, blushing.

“God bless you, my dear,” said he.

And then, when he was alone, he opened one of the windows, and stared down into the dark valley. A gentle wimpling of the river among stones ascended to his ear; the trees upon the other bank stood very black against the sky; farther away an owl was hooting. It was dreary and cold, and as he turned back to the hearth and the fine glow of fire, “Heavens!” said he to himself, “what an unfortunate destiny is mine!”

He went to bed, but sleep only visited his pillow in uneasy snatches. Outbreaks of loud speech came up the staircase; he heard the old stones of the castle crack in the frosty night with sharp reverberations, and the bed complained under his tossings. Lastly, far on into the morning, he awakened from a doze to hear, very far off, in the extreme and breathless quiet, a wailing flourish on the horn. The down mail was drawing near to the “Green Dragon.” He sat up in bed; the sound was tragical by distance, and the modulation appealed to his ear like human speech. It seemed to call upon him with a dreary insistence — to call him far away, to address him personally, and to have a meaning that he failed to seize. It was thus, at least, in this nodding castle, in a cold, miry woodland, and so far from men and society, that the traffic on the Great North Road spoke to him in the intervals of slumber.

CHAPTER III

JONATHAN HOLDAWAY

Nance descended the tower stair, pausing at every step. She was in no hurry to confront her uncle with bad news, and she must dwell a little longer on the rich note of Mr. Archer's voice, the charm of his kind words, and the beauty of his manner and person. But, once at the stair-foot, she threw aside the spell and recovered her sensible and workaday self.

Jonathan was seated in the middle of the settle, a mug of ale beside him, in the attitude of one prepared for trouble; but he did not speak, and suffered her to fetch her supper and eat of it, with a very excellent appetite, in silence. When she had done, she, too, drew a tankard of home-brewed, and came and planted herself in front of him upon the settle.

"Well?" said Jonathan.

"My lord has run away," said Nance.

"What?" cried the old man.

"Abroad," she continued; "run away from creditors. He said he had not a stiver, but he was drunk enough. He said you might live on in the castle, and Mr. Archer would pay you; but you was to look for no more wages, since he would be glad of them himself."

Jonathan's face contracted; the flush of a black, bilious anger mounted to the roots of his hair; he gave an inarticulate cry, leapt upon his feet, and began rapidly pacing the stone floor. At first he kept his hands behind his back in a tight knot; then he began to gesticulate as he turned.

"This man — this lord," he shouted, "who is he? He was born with a gold spoon in his mouth, and I with a dirty straw. He rolled in his coach when he was a baby. I have dug and toiled and laboured since I was that high — that high." And he shouted again. "I'm bent and broke, and full of pains. D'ye think I don't know the taste of sweat? Many's the gallon I've drunk of it — ay, in the midwinter, toiling like a slave. All through, what has my life been? Bend, bend, bend my old creaking back till it would ache like breaking; wade about in the foul mire, never a dry stitch; empty belly, sore hands, hat off to my Lord Redface; kicks and ha'pence; and now, here, at the hind end, when I'm worn to my poor bones, a kick and done with it." He walked a little while in silence, and then, extending his hand, "Now, you Nance Holdaway," says he, "you come of my blood, and you're a good girl.

When that man was a boy, I used to carry his gun for him. I carried the gun all day on my two feet, and many a stitch I had, and chewed a bullet for. He rode upon a horse, with feathers in his hat; but it was him that had the shots and took the game home. Did I complain? Not I. I knew my station. What did I ask, but just the chance to live and die honest? Nance Holdaway, don't let them deny it to me — don't let them do it. I've been as poor as Job, and as honest as the day, but now, my girl, you mark these words of mine, I'm getting tired of it."

"I wouldn't say such words, at least," said Nance.

"You wouldn't?" said the old man grimly. "Well, and did I when I was your age? Wait till your back's broke and your hands tremble, and your eyes fail, and you're weary of the battle and ask no more but to lie down in your bed and give the ghost up like an honest man; and then let there up and come some insolent, ungodly fellow — ah! if I had him in these hands! 'Where's my money that you gambled?' I should say. 'Where's my money that you drank and diced?' 'Thief!' is what I would say; 'Thief!'" he roared, "'Thief!'"

"Mr. Archer will hear you if you don't take care," said Nance, "and I would be ashamed, for one, that he should hear a brave, old, honest, hard-working man like Jonathan Holdaway talk nonsense like a boy."

"D'ye think I mind for Mr. Archer?" he cried shrilly, with a clack of laughter; and then he came close up to her, stooped down with his two palms upon his knees, and looked her in the eyes, with a strange hard expression, something like a smile. "Do I mind for God, my girl?" he said; "that's what it's come to be now, do I mind for God?"

"Uncle Jonathan," she said, getting up and taking him by the arm; "you sit down again, where you were sitting. There, sit still; I'll have no more of this; you'll do yourself a mischief. Come, take a drink of this good ale, and I'll warm a tankard for you. La, we'll pull through, you'll see. I'm young, as you say, and it's my turn to carry the bundle; and don't you worry your bile, or we'll have sickness, too, as well as sorrow."

"D'ye think that I'd forgotten you?" said Jonathan, with something like a groan; and thereupon his teeth clicked to, and he sat silent with the tankard in his hand and staring straight before him.

"Why," says Nance, setting on the ale to mull, "men are always children, they say, however old; and if ever I heard a thing like this, to set to and make yourself sick, just when the money's failing. Keep a good heart up; you haven't kept a good heart these seventy years, nigh hand, to break down about a pound or two. Here's this Mr. Archer come to lodge, that you disliked so much. Well, now you see it was a clear Providence. Come, let's think upon our mercies. And here is the ale mulling lovely; smell of it; I'll take a drop myself, it smells so sweet. And, Uncle Jonathan, you let me say one word. You've lost more than money before now; you lost my aunt, and bore it like a man. Bear this."

His face once more contracted; his fist doubled, and shot forth into the air, and trembled. "Let them look out!" he shouted. "Here, I warn all men; I've done with this foul kennel of knaves. Let them look out!"

"Hush, hush! for pity's sake," cried Nance.

And then all of a sudden he dropped his face into his hands, and broke out with a great hiccoughing dry sob that was horrible to hear. "O," he cried, "my God, if my son hadn't left me, if my Dick was here!" and the sobs shook him; Nance sitting still and watching him, with distress. "O, if he were here to help his father!" he went on again. "If I had a son like other fathers, he would save me now, when all is breaking down; O, he would save me! Ay, but where is he? Raking taverns, a thief perhaps. My curse be on him!" he added, rising again into wrath.

"Hush!" cried Nance, springing to her feet: "your boy, your dead wife's boy — Aunt Susan's baby that she loved — would you curse him? O, God forbid!"

The energy of her address surprised him from his mood. He looked upon her, tearless and confused. "Let me go to my bed," he said at last, and he rose, and, shaking as with ague, but quite silent, lighted his candle, and left the kitchen.

Poor Nance! the pleasant current of her dreams was all diverted. She beheld a golden city, where she aspired to dwell; she had spoken with a deity, and had told herself that she might rise to be his equal; and now the earthly ligaments that bound her down had been tightened. She was like a tree looking skyward, her roots were in the ground. It seemed to her a thing so coarse, so rustic, to be thus concerned about a loss in money; when Mr. Archer, fallen from the sky-level of counts and nobles, faced his changed destiny with so immovable a courage. To weary of honesty; that, at least, no one could do, but even to name it was already a disgrace; and she beheld in fancy her uncle, and the young lad, all laced and feathered, hand upon hip, bestriding his small horse. The opposition seemed to perpetuate itself from generation to generation; one side still doomed to the clumsy and the servile, the other born to beauty.

She thought of the golden zones in which gentlemen were bred, and figured with so excellent a grace; zones in which wisdom and smooth words, white linen and slim hands, were the mark of the desired inhabitants; where low temptations were unknown, and honesty no virtue, but a thing as natural as breathing.

CHAPTER IV

MINGLING THREADS

It was nearly seven before Mr. Archer left his apartment. On the landing he found another door beside his own opening on a roofless corridor, and presently he was walking on the top of the ruins. On one hand he could look down a good depth into the green courtyard; on the other his eye roved along the downward course of the river, the wet woods all smoking, the shadows long and blue, the mists golden and rosy in the sun, here and there the water flashing across an obstacle. His heart expanded and softened to a grateful melancholy, and with his eye fixed upon the distance, and no thought of present danger, he continued to stroll along the elevated and treacherous promenade.

A terror-stricken cry rose to him from the courtyard. He looked down, and saw in a glimpse Nance standing below with hands clasped in horror and his own foot trembling on the margin of a gulf. He recoiled and leant against a pillar, quaking from head to foot, and covering his face with his hands; and Nance had time to run round by the stair and rejoin him where he stood before he had changed a line of his position.

"Ah!" he cried, and clutched her wrist; "don't leave me. The place rocks; I have no head for altitudes."

"Sit down against that pillar," said Nance. "Don't you be afraid; I won't leave you, and don't look up or down: look straight at me. How white you are!"

"The gulf," he said, and closed his eyes again and shuddered.

"Why," said Nance, "what a poor climber you must be! That was where my cousin Dick used to get out of the castle after Uncle Jonathan had shut the gate. I've been down there myself with him helping me. I wouldn't try with you," she said, and laughed merrily.

The sound of her laughter was sincere and musical, and perhaps its beauty barbed the offence to Mr. Archer. The blood came into his face with a quick jet, and then left it paler than before. "It is a physical weakness," he said harshly, "and very droll, no doubt, but one that I can conquer on necessity. See, I am still shaking. Well, I advance to the battlements and look down. Show me your cousin's path."

"He would go sure-foot along that little ledge," said Nance, pointing as she spoke; "then out through the breach and down by yonder buttress. It is easier coming back, of course, because you see where you are going. From the buttress foot a sheep-walk goes along the scarp — see, you can follow it from here in the dry grass. And now, sir," she added, with a touch of womanly pity, "I would come away from here if I were you, for indeed you are not fit."

Sure enough Mr. Archer's pallor and agitation had continued to increase; his cheeks were deathly, his clenched fingers trembled pitifully. "The weakness is physical," he sighed, and had nearly fallen. Nance led him from the spot, and he was no sooner back in the tower-stair, than he fell heavily against the wall and put his arm across his eyes. A cup of brandy had to be brought him before he could descend to breakfast; and the perfection of Nance's dream was for the first time troubled.

Jonathan was waiting for them at table, with yellow, blood-shot eyes and a peculiar dusky complexion. He hardly waited till they found their seats, before, raising one hand, and stooping with his mouth above his plate, he put up a prayer for a blessing on the food and a spirit of gratitude in the eaters, and thereupon, and without more civility, fell to. But it was notable that he was no less speedily satisfied than he had been greedy to begin. He pushed his plate away and drummed upon the table.

"These are silly prayers," said he, "that they teach us. Eat and be thankful, that's no such wonder. Speak to me of starving — there's the touch. You're a man, they tell me, Mr. Archer, that has met with some reverses?"

"I have met with many," replied Mr. Archer.

"Ha!" said Jonathan. "None reckons but the last. Now, see; I tried to make this girl here understand me."

"Uncle," said Nance, "what should Mr. Archer care for your concerns? He hath troubles of his own, and came to be at peace, I think."

"I tried to make her understand me," repeated Jonathan doggedly; "and now I'll try you. Do you think this world is fair?"

"Fair and false!" quoth Mr. Archer.

The old man laughed immoderately. "Good," said he, "very good, but what I mean is this: do you know what it is to get up early and go to bed late, and never take so much as a holiday but four: and one of these your own marriage day, and the other three the funerals of folk you loved, and all that, to have a quiet old age in shelter, and bread for your old belly, and a bed to lay your crazy bones upon, with a clear conscience?"

"Sir," said Mr. Archer with an inclination of his head, "you portray a very brave existence."

"Well," continued Jonathan, "and in the end thieves deceive you, thieves rob and rook you, thieves turn you out in your old age and send you begging. What have you got for all your honesty? A fine return! You that might have stole scores of pounds, there you are out in the rain with your rheumatics!”

Mr. Archer had forgotten to eat; with his hand upon his chin he was studying the old man’s countenance. “And you conclude?” he asked.

“Conclude!” cried Jonathan. “I conclude I’ll be upsides with them.”

“Ay,” said the other, “we are all tempted to revenge.”

“You have lost money?” asked Jonathan.

“A great estate,” said Archer quietly.

“See now!” says Jonathan, “and where is it?”

“Nay, I sometimes think that every one has had his share of it but me,” was the reply. “All England hath paid his taxes with my patrimony: I was a sheep that left my wool on every briar.”

“And you sit down under that?” cried the old man. “Come now, Mr. Archer, you and me belong to different stations; and I know mine — no man better, — but since we have both been rooked, and are both sore with it, why, here’s my hand with a very good heart, and I ask for yours, and no offence, I hope.”

“There is surely no offence, my friend,” returned Mr. Archer, as they shook hands across the table; “for, believe me, my sympathies are quite acquired to you. This life is an arena where we fight with beasts; and, indeed,” he added, sighing, “I sometimes marvel why we go down to it unarmed.”

In the meanwhile a creaking of ungreased axles had been heard descending through the wood; and presently after, the door opened, and the tall ostler entered the kitchen carrying one end of Mr. Archer’s trunk. The other was carried by an aged beggar man of that district, known and welcome for some twenty miles about under the name of “Old Cumberland.” Each was soon perched upon a settle, with a cup of ale; and the ostler, who valued himself upon his affability, began to entertain the company, still with half an eye on Nance, to whom in gallant terms he expressly dedicated every sip of ale. First he told of the trouble they had to get his Lordship started in the chaise; and how he had dropped a rouleau of gold on the threshold, and the passage and doorstep had been strewn with guinea-pieces. At this old Jonathan looked at Mr. Archer. Next the visitor turned to news of a more thrilling character: how the down mail had been stopped again near Grantham by three men on horseback — a white and two bays; how they had handkerchiefs on their faces; how Tom the guard’s blunderbuss missed fire, but he swore he had winged one of them with a pistol; and how they had got clean away with seventy pounds in money, some valuable papers, and a watch or two.

“Brave! brave!” cried Jonathan in ecstasy. “Seventy pounds! O, it’s brave!"

"Well, I don't see the great bravery," observed the ostler, misapprehending him. "Three men, and you may call that three to one. I'll call it brave when some one stops the mail single-handed; that's a risk."

"And why should they hesitate?" inquired Mr. Archer. "The poor souls who are fallen to such a way of life, pray what have they to lose? If they get the money, well; but if a ball should put them from their troubles, why, so better."

"Well, sir," said the ostler, "I believe you'll find they won't agree with you. They count on a good fling, you see; or who would risk it? — And here's my best respects to you, Miss Nance."

"And I forgot the part of cowardice," resumed Mr. Archer. "All men fear."

"O, surely not!" cried Nance.

"All men," reiterated Mr. Archer.

"Ay, that's a true word," observed Old Cumberland, "and a thief, anyway, for it's a coward's trade."

"But these fellows, now," said Jonathan, with a curious, appealing manner — "these fellows with their seventy pounds! Perhaps, Mr. Archer, they were no true thieves after all, but just people who had been robbed and tried to get their own again. What was that you said, about all England and the taxes? One takes, another gives; why, that's almost fair. If I've been rooked and robbed, and the coat taken off my back, I call it almost fair to take another's."

"Ask Old Cumberland," observed the ostler; "you ask Old Cumberland, Miss Nance!" and he bestowed a wink upon his favoured fair one.

"Why that?" asked Jonathan.

"He had his coat taken — ay, and his shirt too," returned the ostler.

"Is that so?" cried Jonathan eagerly. "Was you robbed too?"

"That was I," replied Cumberland, "with a warrant! I was a well-to-do man when I was young."

"Ay! See that!" says Jonathan. "And you don't long for a revenge?"

"Eh! Not me!" answered the beggar. "It's too long ago. But if you'll give me another mug of your good ale, my pretty lady, I won't say no to that."

"And shalt have! And shalt have!" cried Jonathan. "Or brandy even, if you like it better."

And as Cumberland did like it better, and the ostler chimed in, the party pledged each other in a dram of brandy before separating.

As for Nance, she slipped forth into the ruins, partly to avoid the ostler's gallantries, partly to lament over the defects of Mr. Archer. Plainly, he was no hero. She pitied him; she began to feel a protecting interest mingle with and almost supersede her admiration, and was at the same time disappointed and yet drawn to him. She was, indeed, conscious of such unshaken fortitude in her own heart, that she was almost tempted by an occasion to be bold for two. She saw herself, in a brave attitude, shielding her imperfect hero from the world; and she saw, like a piece of heaven, his gratitude for her protection.

CHAPTER V

LIFE IN THE CASTLE

From that day forth the life of these three persons in the ruin ran very smoothly. Mr. Archer now sat by the fire with a book, and now passed whole days abroad, returning late, dead weary. His manner was a mask; but it was half transparent; through the even tenor of his gravity and courtesy profound revolutions of feeling were betrayed, seasons of numb despair, of restlessness, of aching temper. For days he would say nothing beyond his usual courtesies and solemn compliments; and then, all of a sudden, some fine evening beside the kitchen fire, he would fall into a vein of elegant gossip, tell of strange and interesting events, the secrets of families, brave deeds of war, the miraculous discovery of crime, the visitations of the dead. Nance and her uncle would sit till the small hours with eyes wide open: Jonathan applauding the unexpected incidents with many a slap of his big hand; Nance, perhaps, more pleased with the narrator's eloquence and wise reflections; and then, again, days would follow of abstraction, of listless humming, of frequent apologies and long hours of silence. Once only, and then after a week of unrelieved melancholy, he went over to the "Green Dragon," spent the afternoon with the landlord and a bowl of punch, and returned as on the first night, devious in step but courteous and unperturbed of speech.

If he seemed more natural and more at his ease it was when he found Nance alone; and, laying by some of his reserve, talked before her rather than to her of his destiny, character, and hopes. To Nance these interviews were but a doubtful privilege. At times he would seem to take a pleasure in her presence, to consult her gravely, to hear and to discuss her counsels; at times even, but these were rare and brief, he would talk of herself, praise the qualities that she possessed, touch indulgently on her defects, and lend her books to read and even examine her upon her reading; but far more often he would fall into a half unconsciousness, put her a question and then answer it himself, drop into the veiled tone of voice of one soliloquising, and leave her at last as though he had forgotten her existence. It was odd, too, that in all this random converse, not a fact of his past life, and scarce a name, should ever cross his lips. A profound reserve kept watch upon his most unguarded moments. He spoke continually of himself, indeed, but still in enigmas; a veiled prophet of egoism.

The base of Nance's feelings for Mr. Archer was admiration as for a superior being; and with this, his treatment, consciously or not, accorded happily. When he forgot her, she took the blame upon herself. His formal politeness was so exquisite that this essential brutality stood excused. His compliments, besides, were always grave and rational; he would offer reason for his praise, convict her of merit, and thus disarm suspicion. Nay, and the very hours when he forgot and remembered her alternately could by the ardent fallacies of youth be read in the light of an attention. She might be far from his confidence; but still she was nearer it than any one. He might ignore her presence, but yet he sought it.

Moreover, she, upon her side, was conscious of one point of superiority. Beside this rather dismal, rather effeminate man, who recoiled from a worm, who grew giddy on the castle wall, who bore so helplessly the weight of his misfortunes, she felt herself a head and shoulders taller in cheerful and sterling courage. She could walk head in air along the most precarious rafter; her hand feared neither the grossness nor the harshness of life's web, but was thrust cheerfully, if need were, into the briar bush, and could take hold of any crawling horror. Ruin was mining the walls of her cottage, as already it had mined and subverted Mr. Archer's palace. Well, she faced it with a bright countenance and a busy hand. She had got some washing, some rough seamstress work from the "Green Dragon," and from another neighbour ten miles away across the moor. At this she cheerfully laboured, and from that height she could afford to pity the useless talents and poor attitude of Mr. Archer. It did not change her admiration, but it made it bearable. He was above her in all ways; but she was above him in one. She kept it to herself, and hugged it. When, like all young creatures, she made long stories to justify, to nourish, and to forecast the course of her affection, it was this private superiority that made all rosy, that cut the knot, and that, at last, in some great situation, fetched to her knees the dazzling but imperfect hero. With this pretty exercise she beguiled the hours of labour, and consoled herself for Mr. Archer's bearing. Pity was her weapon and her weakness. To accept the loved one's faults, although it has an air of freedom, is to kiss the chain, and this pity it was which, lying nearer to her heart, lent the one element of true emotion to a fanciful and merely brain-sick love.

Thus it fell out one day that she had gone to the "Green Dragon" and brought back thence a letter to Mr. Archer. He, upon seeing it, winced like a man under the knife: pain, shame, sorrow, and the most trenchant edge of mortification cut into his heart and wrung the steady composure of his face.

"Dear heart! have you bad news?" she cried.

But he only replied by a gesture and fled to his room, and when, later on, she ventured to refer to it, he stopped her on the threshold, as if with words prepared beforehand. “There are some pains,” said he, “too acute for consolation, or I would bring them to my kind consoler. Let the memory of that letter, if you please, be buried.” And then as she continued to gaze at him, being, in spite of herself, pained by his elaborate phrase, doubtfully sincere in word and manner: “Let it be enough,” he added haughtily, “that if this matter wring my heart, it doth not touch my conscience. I am a man, I would have you to know, who suffers undeservedly.”

He had never spoken so directly: never with so convincing an emotion; and her heart thrilled for him. She could have taken his pains and died of them with joy.

Meanwhile she was left without support. Jonathan now swore by his lodger, and lived for him. He was a fine talker. He knew the finest sight of stories; he was a man and a gentleman, take him for all in all, and a perfect credit to Old England. Such were the old man’s declared sentiments, and sure enough he clung to Mr. Archer’s side, hung upon his utterance when he spoke, and watched him with unwearying interest when he was silent. And yet his feeling was not clear; in the partial wreck of his mind, which was leaning to decay, some afterthought was strongly present. As he gazed in Mr. Archer’s face a sudden brightness would kindle in his rheumy eyes, his eyebrows would lift as with a sudden thought, his mouth would open as though to speak, and close again on silence. Once or twice he even called Mr. Archer mysteriously forth into the dark courtyard, took him by the button, and laid a demonstrative finger on his chest; but there his ideas or his courage failed him; he would shufflingly excuse himself and return to his position by the fire without a word of explanation. “The good man was growing old,” said Mr. Archer with a suspicion of a shrug. But the good man had his idea, and even when he was alone the name of Mr. Archer fell from his lips continually in the course of mumbled and gesticulative conversation.

CHAPTER VI

THE BAD HALF-CROWN

However early Nance arose, and she was no sluggard, the old man, who had begun to outlive the earthly habit of slumber, would usually have been up long before, the fire would be burning brightly, and she would see him wandering among the ruins, lantern in hand, and talking assiduously to himself. One day, however, after he had returned late from the market town, she found that she had stolen a march upon that indefatigable early riser. The kitchen was all blackness. She crossed the castle-yard to the wood-cellar, her steps printing the thick hoarfrost. A scathing breeze blew out of the north-east and slowly carried a regiment of black and tattered clouds over the face of heaven, which was already kindled with the wild light of morning, but where she walked, in shelter of the ruins, the flame of her candle burned steady. The extreme cold smote upon her conscience. She could not bear to think this bitter business fell usually to the lot of one so old as Jonathan, and made desperate resolutions to be earlier in the future.

The fire was a good blaze before he entered, limping dismally into the kitchen. “Nance,” said he, “I be all knotted up with the rheumatics; will you rub me a bit?” She came and rubbed him where and how he bade her. “This is a cruel thing that old age should be rheumaticky,” said he. “When I was young I stood my turn of the teethache like a man! for why? because it couldn’t last for ever; but these rheumatics come to live and die with you. Your aunt was took before the time came; never had an ache to mention. Now I lie all night in my single bed and the blood never warms in me; this knee of mine it seems like lighted up with rheumatics; it seems as though you could see to sew by it; and all the strings of my old body ache, as if devils was pulling ‘em. Thank you kindly; that’s someways easier now, but an old man, my dear, has little to look for; it’s pain, pain, pain to the end of the business, and I’ll never be rightly warm again till I get under the sod,” he said, and looked down at her with a face so aged and weary that she had nearly wept.

“I lay awake all night,” he continued; “I do so mostly, and a long walk kills me. Eh, deary me, to think that life should run to such a puddle! And I remember long syne when I was strong, and the blood all hot and good about me, and I loved to run, too — deary me, to run! Well, that’s all by. You’d better pray to be took early, Nance, and not live on till you get to be like me, and are robbed in your grey old age, your cold, shivering, dark old age, that's like a winter's morning"; and he bitterly shuddered, spreading his hands before the fire.

"Come now," said Nance, "the more you say the less you'll like it, Uncle Jonathan; but if I were you I would be proud for to have lived all your days honest and beloved, and come near the end with your good name: isn't that a fine thing to be proud of? Mr. Archer was telling me in some strange land they used to run races each with a lighted candle, and the art was to keep the candle burning. Well, now, I thought that was like life; a man's good conscience is the flame he gets to carry, and if he comes to the winning-post with that still burning, why, take it how you will, the man's a hero — even if he was low-born like you and me."

"Did Mr. Archer tell you that?" asked Jonathan.

"No, dear," said she, "that's my own thought about it. He told me of the race. But see, now," she continued, putting on the porridge, "you say old age is a hard season, but so is youth. You're half out of the battle, I would say; you loved my aunt and got her, and buried her, and some of these days soon you'll go to meet her; and take her my love and tell her I tried to take good care of you; for so I do, Uncle Jonathan."

Jonathan struck with his fist upon the settle. "D'ye think I want to die, ye vixen?" he shouted. "I want to live ten hundred years."

This was a mystery beyond Nance's penetration, and she stared in wonder as she made the porridge.

"I want to live," he continued, "I want to live and to grow rich. I want to drive my carriage and to dice in hells and see the ring, I do. Is this a life that I lived? I want to be a rake, d'ye understand? I want to know what things are like. I don't want to die like a blind kitten, and me seventy-six."

"O fie!" said Nance.

The old man thrust out his jaw at her, with the grimace of an irreverent schoolboy. Upon that aged face it seemed a blasphemy. Then he took out of his bosom a long leather purse, and emptying its contents on the settle, began to count and recount the pieces, ringing and examining each, and suddenly he leapt like a young man. "What!" he screamed. "Bad? O Lord! I'm robbed again!" And falling on his knees before the settle he began to pour forth the most dreadful curses on the head of his deceiver. His eyes were shut, for to him this vile solemnity was prayer. He held up the bad half-crown in his right hand, as though he were displaying it to Heaven, and what increased the horror of the scene, the curses he invoked were those whose efficacy he had tasted — old age and poverty, rheumatism and an ungrateful son. Nance listened appalled; then she sprang forward and dragged down his arm and laid her hand upon his mouth.

"Whist!" she cried. "Whist ye, for God's sake! O my man, whist ye! If Heaven were to hear; if poor Aunt Susan were to hear! Think, she may be listening." And with the histrionism of strong emotion she pointed to a corner of the kitchen.

His eyes followed her finger. He looked there for a little, thinking, blinking; then he got stiffly to his feet and resumed his place upon the settle, the bad piece still in his hand. So he sat for some time, looking upon the half-crown, and now wondering to himself on the injustice and partiality of the law, now computing again and again the nature of his loss. So he was still sitting when Mr. Archer entered the kitchen. At this a light came into his face, and after some seconds of rumination he despatched Nance upon an errand.

"Mr. Archer," said he, as soon as they were alone together, "would you give me a guinea-piece for silver?"

"Why, sir, I believe I can," said Mr. Archer.

And the exchange was just effected when Nance re-entered the apartment. The blood shot into her face.

"What's to do here?" she asked rudely.

"Nothing, my dearie," said old Jonathan, with a touch of whine.

"What's to do?" she said again.

"Your uncle was but changing me a piece of gold," returned Mr. Archer.

"Let me see what he hath given you, Mr. Archer," replied the girl. "I had a bad piece, and I fear it is mixed up among the good."

"Well, well," replied Mr. Archer, smiling, "I must take the merchant's risk of it. The money is now mixed."

"I know my piece," quoth Nance. "Come, let me see your silver, Mr. Archer. If I have to get it by a theft I'll see that money," she cried.

"Nay, child, if you put as much passion to be honest as the world to steal, I must give way, though I betray myself," said Mr. Archer. "There it is as I received it."

Nance quickly found the bad half-crown.

"Give him another," she said, looking Jonathan in the face; and when that had been done, she walked over to the chimney and flung the guilty piece into the reddest of the fire. Its base constituents began immediately to run; even as she watched it the disc crumbled, and the lineaments of the King became confused. Jonathan, who had followed close behind, beheld these changes from over her shoulder, and his face darkened sorely.

"Now," said she, "come back to table, and to-day it is I that shall say grace, as I used to do in the old times, day about with Dick"; and covering her eyes with one hand, "O Lord," said she with deep emotion, "make us thankful; and, O Lord, deliver us from evil! For the love of the poor souls that watch for us in heaven, O deliver us from evil.”

CHAPTER VII

THE BLEACHING-GREEN

The year moved on to March; and March, though it blew bitter keen from the North Sea, yet blinked kindly between whiles on the river dell. The mire dried up in the closest covert; life ran in the bare branches, and the air of the afternoon would be suddenly sweet with the fragrance of new grass.

Above and below the castle the river crooked like the letter "S." The lower loop was to the left, and embraced the high and steep projection which was crowned by the ruins; the upper loop enclosed a lawny promontory, fringed by thorn and willow. It was easy to reach it from the castle side, for the river ran in this part very quietly among innumerable boulders and over dam-like walls of rock. The place was all enclosed, the wind a stranger, the turf smooth and solid; so it was chosen by Nance to be her bleaching-green.

One day she brought a bucketful of linen, and had but begun to wring and lay them out when Mr. Archer stepped from the thicket on the far side, drew very deliberately near, and sat down in silence on the grass. Nance looked up to greet him with a smile, but finding her smile was not returned, she fell into embarrassment and stuck the more busily to her employment. Man or woman, the whole world looks well at any work to which they are accustomed; but the girl was ashamed of what she did. She was ashamed, besides, of the sun-bonnet that so well became her, and ashamed of her bare arms, which were her greatest beauty.

"Nausicaa," said Mr. Archer at last, "I find you like Nausicaa."

"And who was she?" asked Nance, and laughed in spite of herself, an empty and embarrassed laugh, that sounded in Mr. Archer's ears, indeed, like music, but to her own like the last grossness of rusticity.

"She was a princess of the Grecian islands," he replied. "A king, being shipwrecked, found her washing by the shore. Certainly I, too, was shipwrecked," he continued, plucking at the grass. "There was never a more desperate castaway — to fall from polite life, fortune, a shrine of honour, a grateful conscience, duties willingly taken up and faithfully discharged; and to fall to this — idleness, poverty, inutility, remorse." He seemed to have forgotten her presence, but here he remembered her again. "Nance," said he, "would you have a man sit down and suffer or rise up and strive?"

"Nay," she said. "I would always rather see him doing."

“Ha!” said Mr. Archer, “but yet you speak from an imperfect knowledge. Conceive a man damned to a choice of only evil — misconduct upon either side, not a fault behind him, and yet naught before him but this choice of sins. How would you say then?”

“I would say that he was much deceived, Mr. Archer,” returned Nance. “I would say there was a third choice, and that the right one.”

“I tell you,” said Mr. Archer, “the man I have in view hath two ways open, and no more. One to wait, like a poor mewling baby, till Fate save or ruin him; the other to take his troubles in his hand, and to perish or be saved at once. It is no point of morals; both are wrong. Either way this step-child of Providence must fall; which shall he choose, by doing or not doing?”

“Fall, then, is what I would say,” replied Nance. “Fall where you will, but do it! For O, Mr. Archer,” she continued, stooping to her work, “you that are good and kind, and so wise, it doth sometimes go against my heart to see you live on here like a sheep in a turnip-field! If you were braver — — ” and here she paused, conscience-smitten.

“Do I, indeed, lack courage?” inquired Mr. Archer of himself. “Courage, the footstool of the virtues, upon which they stand? Courage, that a poor private carrying a musket has to spare of; that does not fail a weasel or a rat; that is a brutish faculty? I to fail there, I wonder? But what is courage, then? The constancy to endure oneself or to see others suffer? The itch of ill-advised activity: mere shuttle-wittedness, or to be still and patient? To inquire of the significance of words is to rob ourselves of what we seem to know, and yet, of all things, certainly to stand still is the least heroic. Nance,” he said, “did you ever hear of *Hamlet*?”

“Never,” said Nance.

“’Tis an old play,” returned Mr. Archer, “and frequently enacted. This while I have been talking Hamlet. You must know this Hamlet was a Prince among the Danes,” and he told her the play in a very good style, here and there quoting a verse or two with solemn emphasis.

“It is strange,” said Nance; “he was then a very poor creature?”

“That was what he could not tell,” said Mr. Archer. “Look at me, am I as poor a creature?”

She looked, and what she saw was the familiar thought of all her hours; the tall figure very plainly habited in black, the spotless ruffles, the slim hands; the long, well-shapen, serious, shaven face, the wide and somewhat thin-lipped mouth, the dark eyes that were so full of depth and change and colour. He was gazing at her with his brows a little knit, his chin upon one hand and that elbow resting on his knee.

“Ye look a man!” she cried, “ay, and should be a great one! The more shame to you to lie here idle like a dog before the fire.”

“My fair Holdaway,” quoth Mr. Archer, “you are much set on action. I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed.” He continued, looking at her with a half-absent fixity, “‘Tis a strange thing, certainly, that in my years of fortune I should never taste happiness, and now when I am broke, enjoy so much of it, for was I ever happier than to-day? Was the grass softer, the stream pleasanter in sound, the air milder, the heart more at peace? Why should I not sink? To dig — why, after all, it should be easy. To take a mate, too? Love is of all grades since Jupiter; love fails to none; and children” — but here he passed his hand suddenly over his eyes. “O fool and coward, fool and coward!” he said bitterly; “can you forget your fetters? You did not know that I was fettered, Nance?” he asked, again addressing her.

But Nance was somewhat sore. “I know you keep talking,” she said, and, turning half away from him, began to wring out a sheet across her shoulder. “I wonder you are not wearied of your voice. When the hands lie abed the tongue takes a walk.”

Mr. Archer laughed unpleasantly, rose and moved to the water’s edge. In this part the body of the river poured across a little narrow fell, ran some ten feet very smoothly over a bed of pebbles, then getting wind, as it were, of another shelf of rock which barred the channel, began, by imperceptible degrees, to separate towards either shore in dancing currents, and to leave the middle clear and stagnant. The set towards either side was nearly equal; about one half of the whole water plunged on the side of the castle, through a narrow gullet; about one half ran lipping past the margin of the green and slipped across a babbling rapid.

“Here,” said Mr. Archer, after he had looked for some time at the fine and shifting demarcation of these currents, “come here and see me try my fortune.”

“I am not like a man,” said Nance; “I have no time to waste.”

“Come here,” he said again. “I ask you seriously, Nance. We are not always childish when we seem so.”

She drew a little nearer.

“Now,” said he, “you see these two channels — choose one.”

“I’ll choose the nearest, to save time,” said Nance.

“Well, that shall be for action,” returned Mr. Archer. “And since I wish to have the odds against me, not only the other channel but yon stagnant water in the midst shall be for lying still. You see this?” he continued, pulling up a withered rush. “I break it in three. I shall put each separately at the top of the upper fall, and according as they go by your way or by the other I shall guide my life.”

“This is very silly,” said Nance, with a movement of her shoulders.

"I do not think it so," said Mr. Archer.

"And then," she resumed, "if you are to try your fortune, why not evenly?"

"Nay," returned Mr. Archer with a smile, "no man can put complete reliance in blind fate; he must still cog the dice."

By this time he had got upon the rock beside the upper fall, and, bidding her look out, dropped a piece of rush into the middle of the intake. The rusty fragment was sucked at once over the fall, came up again far on the right hand, leaned ever more and more in the same direction, and disappeared under the hanging grasses on the castle side.

"One," said Mr. Archer, "one for standing still."

But the next launch had a different fate, and after hanging for a while about the edge of the stagnant water, steadily approached the bleaching-green and danced down the rapid under Nance's eyes.

"One for me," she cried with some exultation; and then she observed that Mr. Archer had grown pale, and was kneeling on the rock, with his hand raised like a person petrified. "Why," said she, "you do not mind it, do you?"

"Does a man not mind a throw of dice by which a fortune hangs?" said Mr. Archer, rather hoarsely. "And this is more than fortune. Nance, if you have any kindness for my fate, put up a prayer before I launch the next one."

"A prayer," she cried, "about a game like this? I would not be so heathen."

"Well," said he, "then without," and he closed his eyes and dropped the piece of rush. This time there was no doubt. It went for the rapid as straight as any arrow.

"Action then!" said Mr. Archer, getting to his feet; "and then God forgive us," he added, almost to himself.

"God forgive us, indeed," cried Nance, "for wasting the good daylight! But come, Mr. Archer, if I see you look so serious I shall begin to think you was in earnest."

"Nay," he said, turning upon her suddenly, with a full smile; "but is not this good advice? I have consulted God and demigod; the nymph of the river, and what I far more admire and trust, my blue-eyed Minerva. Both have said the same. My own heart was telling it already. Action, then, be mine; and into the deep sea with all this paralysing casuistry. I am happy to-day for the first time."

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAIL GUARD

Somewhere about two in the morning a squall had burst upon the castle, a clap of screaming wind that made the towers rock, and a copious drift of rain that streamed from the windows. The wind soon blew itself out, but the day broke cloudy and dripping, and when the little party assembled at breakfast their humours appeared to have changed with the change of weather. Nance had been brooding on the scene at the river-side, applying it in various ways to her particular aspirations, and the result, which was hardly to her mind, had taken the colour out of her cheeks. Mr. Archer, too, was somewhat absent, his thoughts were of a mingled strain; and even upon his usually impassive countenance there were betrayed successive depths of depression and starts of exultation, which the girl translated in terms of her own hopes and fears. But Jonathan was the most altered: he was strangely silent, hardly passing a word, and watched Mr. Archer with an eager and furtive eye. It seemed as if the idea that had so long hovered before him had now taken a more solid shape, and, while it still attracted, somewhat alarmed his imagination.

At this rate, conversation languished into a silence which was only broken by the gentle and ghostly noises of the rain on the stone roof and about all that field of ruins; and they were all relieved when the note of a man whistling and the sound of approaching footsteps in the grassy court announced a visitor. It was the ostler from the "Green Dragon" bringing a letter for Mr. Archer. Nance saw her hero's face contract and then relax again at sight of it; and she thought that she knew why, for the sprawling, gross black characters of the address were easily distinguishable from the fine writing on the former letter that had so much disturbed him. He opened it and began to read; while the ostler sat down to table with a pot of ale, and proceeded to make himself agreeable after his fashion.

"Fine doings down our way, Miss Nance," said he. "I haven't been abed this blessed night."

Nance expressed a polite interest, but her eye was on Mr. Archer, who was reading his letter with a face of such extreme indifference that she was tempted to suspect him of assumption.

"Yes," continued the ostler, "not been the like of it this fifteen years: the North Mail stopped at the three stones."

Jonathan's cup was at his lip, but at this moment he choked with a great splutter; and Mr. Archer, as if startled by the noise, made so sudden a movement that one corner of the sheet tore off and stayed between his finger and thumb. It was some little time before the old man was sufficiently recovered to beg the ostler to go on, and he still kept coughing and crying and rubbing his eyes. Mr. Archer, on his side, laid the letter down, and, putting his hands in his pocket, listened gravely to the tale.

"Yes," resumed Sam, "the North Mail was stopped by a single horseman; dash my wig, but I admire him! There were four insides and two out, and poor Tom Oglethorpe, the guard. Tom showed himself a man; let fly his blunderbuss at him; had him covered, too, and could swear to that; but the Captain never let on, up with a pistol and fetched poor Tom a bullet through the body. Tom, he squelched upon the seat, all over blood. Up comes the Captain to the window. 'Oblige me,' says he, 'with what you have.' Would you believe it? Not a man says cheep! — not them. 'Thy hands over thy head.' Four watches, rings, snuff-boxes, seven-and-forty pounds overhead in gold. One Dicksee, a grazier, tries it on: gives him a guinea. 'Beg your pardon,' says the Captain, 'I think too highly of you to take it at your hand. I will not take less than ten from such a gentleman.' This Dicksee had his money in his stocking, but there was the pistol at his eye. Down he goes, offs with his stocking, and there was thirty golden guineas. 'Now,' says the Captain, 'you've tried it on with me, but I scorns the advantage. Ten I said,' he says, 'and ten I take.' So, dash my buttons, I call that man a man!" cried Sam in cordial admiration.

"Well, and then?" says Mr. Archer.

"Then," resumed Sam, "that old fat fagot Engleton, him as held the ribbons and drew up like a lamb when he was told to, picks up his cattle, and drives off again. Down they came to the 'Dragon,' all singing like as if they was scalded, and poor Tom saying nothing. You would 'a' thought they had all lost the King's crown to hear them. Down gets this Dicksee. 'Postmaster,' he says, taking him by the arm, 'this is a most abominable thing,' he says. Down gets a Major Clayton, and gets the old man by the other arm. 'We've been robbed,' he cries, 'robbed!' Down gets the others, and all around the old man telling their story, and what they had lost, and how they was all as good as ruined; till at last Old Engleton says, says he, 'How about Oglethorpe?' says he. 'Ay,' says the others, 'how about the guard?' Well, with that we bousted him down, as white as a rag and all blooded like a sop. I thought he was dead. Well, he ain't dead; but he's dying, I fancy."

"Did you say four watches?" said Jonathan.

"Four, I think. I wish it had been forty," cried Sam. "Such a party of soused herrings I never did see — not a man among them bar poor Tom. But us that are the servants on the road have all the risk and none of the profit."

"And this brave fellow," asked Mr. Archer, very quietly, "this Oglethorpe — how is he now?"

"Well, sir, with my respects, I take it he has a hole bang through him," said Sam. "The doctor hasn't been yet. He'd 'a' been bright and early if it had been a passenger. But, doctor or no, I'll make a good guess that Tom won't see to-morrow. He'll die on a Sunday, will poor Tom; and they do say that's fortunate."

"Did Tom see him that did it?" asked Jonathan.

"Well, he saw him," replied Sam, "but not to swear by. Said he was a very tall man, and very big, and had a 'ankerchief about his face, and a very quick shot, and sat his horse like a thorough gentleman, as he is."

"A gentleman!" cried Nance. "The dirty knave!"

"Well, I calls a man like that a gentleman," returned the ostler; "that's what I mean by a gentleman."

"You don't know much of them, then," said Nance. "A gentleman would scorn to stoop to such a thing. I call my uncle a better gentleman than any thief."

"And you would be right," said Mr. Archer.

"How many snuff-boxes did he get?" asked Jonathan.

"O, dang me if I know," said Sam; "I didn't take an inventory."

"I will go back with you, if you please," said Mr. Archer. "I should like to see poor Oglethorpe. He has behaved well."

"At your service, sir," said Sam, jumping to his feet. "I dare to say a gentleman like you would not forget a poor fellow like Tom — no, nor a plain man like me, sir, that went without his sleep to nurse him. And excuse me, sir," added Sam, "you won't forget about the letter neither?"

"Surely not," said Mr. Archer.

Oglethorpe lay in a low bed, one of several in a long garret of the inn. The rain soaked in places through the roof and fell in minute drops; there was but one small window; the beds were occupied by servants, the air of the garret was both close and chilly. Mr. Archer's heart sank at the threshold to see a man lying perhaps mortally hurt in so poor a sick-room, and as he drew near the low bed he took his hat off. The guard was a big, blowsy, innocent-looking soul with a thick lip and a broad nose, comically turned up; his cheeks were crimson, and when Mr. Archer laid a finger on his brow he found him burning with fever.

"I fear you suffer much," he said, with a catch in his voice, as he sat down on the bedside.

"I suppose I do, sir," returned Oglethorpe; "it is main sore."

"I am used to wounds and wounded men," returned the visitor. "I have been in the wars and nursed brave fellows before now; and, if you will suffer me, I propose to stay beside you till the doctor comes."

"It is very good of you, sir, I am sure," said Oglethorpe. "The trouble is they won't none of them let me drink."

"If you will not tell the doctor," said Mr. Archer, "I will give you some water. They say it is bad for a green wound, but in the Low Countries we all drank water when we found the chance, and I could never perceive we were the worse for it."

"Been wounded yourself, sir, perhaps?" called Oglethorpe.

"Twice," said Mr. Archer, "and was as proud of these hurts as any lady of her bracelets. 'Tis a fine thing to smart for one's duty; even in the pangs of it there is contentment."

"Ah, well!" replied the guard, "if you've been shot yourself, that explains. But as for contentment, why, sir, you see, it smarts, as you say. And then, I have a good wife, you see, and a bit of a brat — a little thing, so high."

"Don't move," said Mr. Archer.

"No, sir, I will not, and thank you kindly," said Oglethorpe. "At York they are. A very good lass is my wife — far too good for me. And the little rascal — well, I don't know how to say it, but he sort of comes round you. If I were to go, sir, it would be hard on my poor girl — main hard on her!"

"Ay, you must feel bitter hardly to the rogue that laid you here," said Archer.

"Why, no, sir, more against Engleton and the passengers," replied the guard. "He played his hand, if you come to look at it; and I wish he had shot worse, or me better. And yet I'll go to my grave but what I covered him," he cried. "It looks like witchcraft. I'll go to my grave but what he was drove full of slugs like a pepper-box."

"Quietly," said Mr. Archer, "you must not excite yourself. These deceptions are very usual in war; the eye, in the moment of alert, is hardly to be trusted, and when the smoke blows away you see the man you fired at, taking aim, it may be, at yourself. You should observe, too, that you were in the dark night, and somewhat dazzled by the lamps, and that the sudden stopping of the mail had jolted you. In such circumstances a man may miss, ay, even with a blunderbuss, and no blame attach to his marksmanship." ...

THE YOUNG CHEVALIER

A FRAGMENT

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CHAPTER I
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PROLOGUE

THE WINE-SELLER’S WIFE

There was a wine-seller’s shop, as you went down to the river in the city of the Anti-popes. There a man was served with good wine of the country and plain country fare; and the place being clean and quiet, with a prospect on the river, certain gentlemen who dwelt in that city in attendance on a great personage made it a practice (when they had any silver in their purses) to come and eat there and be private.

They called the wine-seller Paradou. He was built more like a bullock than a man, huge in bone and brawn, high in colour, and with a hand like a baby for size. Marie-Madeleine was the name of his wife; she was of Marseilles, a city of entrancing women, nor was any fairer than herself. She was tall, being almost of a height with Paradou; full-girdled, point-device in every form, with an exquisite delicacy in the face; her nose and nostrils a delight to look at from the fineness of the sculpture, her eyes inclined a hair’s-breadth inward, her colour between dark and fair, and laid on even like a flower’s. A faint rose dwelt in it, as though she had been found unawares bathing, and had blushed from head to foot. She was of a grave countenance, rarely smiling; yet it seemed to be written upon every part of her that she rejoiced in life. Her husband loved the heels of her feet and the knuckles of her fingers; he loved her like a glutton and a brute; his love hung about her like an atmosphere; one that came by chance into the wine-shop was aware of that passion; and it might be said that by the strength of it the woman had been drugged or spell-bound. She knew not if she loved or loathed him; he was always in her eyes like something monstrous, — monstrous in his love, monstrous in his person, horrific but imposing in his violence; and her sentiment swung back and forward from desire to sickness. But the mean, where it dwelt chiefly, was an apathetic fascination, partly of horror; as of Europa in mid ocean with her bull.

On the 10th November 9 there sat two of the foreign gentlemen in the wine-seller’s shop. They were both handsome men of a good presence, richly dressed. The first was swarthy and long and lean, with an alert, black look, and a mole upon his cheek. The other was more fair. He seemed very easy and sedate, and a little melancholy for so young a man, but his smile was charming. In his grey eyes there was much abstraction, as of one recalling fondly that which was past and lost. Yet there was strength and swiftness in his limbs; and his mouth set straight across his face, the under lip a thought upon side, like that of a man accustomed to resolve. These two talked together in a rude outlandish speech that no frequenter of that wine-shop understood. The swarthy man answered to the name of *Ballantrae*; he of the dreamy eyes was sometimes called *Balmile*, and sometimes *my Lord*, or *my Lord Gladsmuir*; but when the title was given him, he seemed to put it by as if in jesting, not without bitterness.

The mistral blew in the city. The first day of that wind, they say in the countries where its voice is heard, it blows away all the dust, the second all the stones, and the third it blows back others from the mountains. It was now come to the third day; outside the pebbles flew like hail, and the face of the river was puckered, and the very building-stones in the walls of houses seemed to be curdled, with the savage cold and fury of that continuous blast. It could be heard to hoot in all the chimneys of the city; it swept about the wine-shop, filling the room with eddies; the chill and gritty touch of it passed between the nearest clothes and the bare flesh; and the two gentlemen at the far table kept their mantles loose about their shoulders. The roughness of these outer hulls, for they were plain travellers' cloaks that had seen service, set the greater mark of richness on what showed below of their laced clothes; for the one was in scarlet and the other in violet and white, like men come from a scene of ceremony; as indeed they were.

It chanced that these fine clothes were not without their influence on the scene which followed, and which makes the prologue of our tale. For a long time Balmile was in the habit to come to the wine-shop and eat a meal or drink a measure of wine; sometimes with a comrade; more often alone, when he would sit and dream and drum upon the table, and the thoughts would show in the man's face in little glooms and lightenings, like the sun and the clouds upon a water. For a long time Marie-Madeleine had observed him apart. His sadness, the beauty of his smile when by any chance he remembered her existence and addressed her, the changes of his mind signalled forth by an abstruse play of feature, the mere fact that he was foreign and a thing detached from the local and the accustomed, insensibly attracted and affected her. Kindness was ready in her mind; it but lacked the touch of an occasion to effervesce and crystallise. Now Balmile had come hitherto in a very poor plain habit; and this day of the mistral, when his mantle was just open, and she saw beneath it the glancing of the violet and the velvet and the silver, and the clustering fineness of the lace, it seemed to set the man in a new light, with which he shone resplendent to her fancy.

The high inhuman note of the wind, the violence and continuity of its outpouring, and the fierce touch of it upon man's whole periphery, accelerated the functions of the mind. It set thoughts whirling, as it whirled the trees of the forest; it stirred them up in flights, as it stirred up the dust in chambers. As brief as sparks, the fancies glittered and succeeded each other in the mind of Marie-Madeleine; and the grave man with the smile, and the bright clothes under the plain mantle, haunted her with incongruous explanations. She considered him, the unknown, the speaker of an unknown tongue, the hero (as she placed him) of an unknown romance, the dweller upon unknown memories. She recalled him sitting there alone, so immersed, so stupefied; yet she was sure he was not stupid. She recalled one day when he had remained a long time motionless, with parted lips, like one in the act of starting up, his eyes fixed on vacancy. Any one else must have looked foolish; but not he. She tried to conceive what manner of memory had thus entranced him; she forged for him a past; she showed him to herself in every light of heroism and greatness and misfortune; she brooded with petulant intensity on all she knew and guessed of him. Yet, though she was already gone so deep, she was still unashamed, still unalarmed; her thoughts were still disinterested; she had still to reach the stage at which — beside the image of that other whom we love to contemplate and to adorn — we place the image of ourself and behold them together with delight.

She stood within the counter, her hands clasped behind her back, her shoulders pressed against the wall, her feet braced out. Her face was bright with the wind and her own thoughts; as a fire in a similar day of tempest glows and brightens on a hearth, so she seemed to glow, standing there, and to breathe out energy. It was the first time Ballantrae had visited that wine-seller's, the first time he had seen the wife; and his eyes were true to her.

"I perceive your reason for carrying me to this very draughty tavern," he said at last.

"I believe it is propinquity," returned Balmile.

"You play dark," said Ballantrae, "but have a care! Be more frank with me, or I will cut you out. I go through no form of qualifying my threat, which would be commonplace and not conscientious. There is only one point in these campaigns: that is the degree of admiration offered by the man; and to our hostess I am in a posture to make victorious love."

"If you think you have the time, or the game worth the candle," replied the other with a shrug.

"One would suppose you were never at the pains to observe her," said Ballantrae.

"I am not very observant," said Balmile. "She seems comely."

"You very dear and dull dog!" cried Ballantrae; "chastity is the most besotting of the virtues. Why, she has a look in her face beyond singing! I believe, if you was to push me hard, I might trace it home to a trifle of a squint. What matters? The height of beauty is in the touch that's wrong, that's the modulation in a tune. 'Tis the devil we all love; I owe many a conquest to my mole" — he touched it as he spoke with a smile, and his eyes glittered; — "we are all hunchbacks, and beauty is only that kind of deformity that I happen to admire. But come! Because you are chaste, for which I am sure I pay you my respects, that is no reason why you should be blind. Look at her, look at the delicious nose of her, look at her cheek, look at her ear, look at her hand and wrist — look at the whole baggage from heels to crown, and tell me if she wouldn't melt on a man's tongue."

As Ballantrae spoke, half jesting, half enthusiastic, Balmile was constrained to do as he was bidden. He looked at the woman, admired her excellences, and was at the same time ashamed for himself and his companion. So it befell that when Marie-Madeleine raised her eyes, she met those of the subject of her contemplations fixed directly on herself with a look that is unmistakable, the look of a person measuring and valuing another, — and, to clench the false impression, that his glance was instantly and guiltily withdrawn. The blood beat back upon her heart and leaped again; her obscure thoughts flashed clear before her; she flew in fancy straight to his arms like a wanton, and fled again on the instant like a nymph. And at that moment there chanced an interruption, which not only spared her embarrassment, but set the last consecration on her now articulate love.

Into the wine-shop there came a French gentleman, arrayed in the last refinement of the fashion, though a little tumbled by his passage in the wind. It was to be judged he had come from the same formal gathering at which the others had preceded him; and perhaps that he had gone there in the hope to meet with them, for he came up to Ballantrae with unceremonious eagerness.

"At last, here you are!" he cried in French. "I thought I was to miss you altogether."

The Scotsmen rose, and Ballantrae, after the first greetings, laid his hand on his companion's shoulder.

"My lord," said he, "allow me to present to you one of my best friends and one of our best soldiers, the Lord Viscount Gladsmuir."

The two bowed with the elaborate elegance of the period.

"*Monseigneur*," said Balmile, "*je n'ai pas la prétention de m'affubler d'un titre que la mauvaise fortune de mon roi ne me permet pas de porter comme il sied. Je m'appelle, pour vous servir, Blair de Balmile tout court.*" [My lord, I have not the effrontery to cumber myself with a title which the ill fortunes of my king will not suffer me to bear the way it should be. I call myself, at your service, plain Blair of Balmile.]

"*Monsieur le Vicomte ou monsieur Blèr' de Balmaïl,*" replied the newcomer, "*le nom n'y fait rien et l'on connaît vos beaux faits.*" [The name matters nothing, your gallant actions are known.]

A few more ceremonies, and these three, sitting down together to the table, called for wine. It was the happiness of Marie-Madeleine to wait unobserved upon the prince of her desires. She poured the wine, he drank of it; and that link between them seemed to her, for the moment, close as a caress. Though they lowered their tones, she surprised great names passing in their conversation, names of kings, the names of de Gesvre and Belle-Isle; and the man who dealt in these high matters, and she who was now coupled with him in her own thoughts, seemed to swim in mid air in a transfiguration. Love is a crude core, but it has singular and far-reaching fringes; in that passionate attraction for the stranger that now swayed and mastered her, his harsh incomprehensible language, and these names of grandees in his talk, were each an element.

The Frenchman stayed not long, but it was plain he left behind him matter of much interest to his companions; they spoke together earnestly, their heads down, the woman of the wine-shop totally forgotten; and they were still so occupied when Paradou returned.

This man's love was unsleeping. The even bluster of the mistral, with which he had been combating some hours, had not suspended, though it had embittered, that predominant passion. His first look was for his wife, a look of hope and suspicion, menace and humility and love, that made the over-blooming brute appear for the moment almost beautiful. She returned his glance, at first as though she knew him not, then with a swiftly waxing coldness of intent; and at last, without changing their direction, she had closed her eyes.

There passed across her mind during that period much that Paradou could not have understood had it been told to him in words: chiefly the sense of an enlightening contrast betwixt the man who talked of kings and the man who kept a wine-shop, betwixt the love she yearned for and that to which she had been long exposed like a victim bound upon the altar. There swelled upon her, swifter than the Rhone, a tide of abhorrence and disgust. She had succumbed to the monster, humbling herself below animals; and now she loved a hero, aspiring to the semi-divine. It was in the pang of that humiliating thought that she had closed her eyes.

Paradou — quick, as beasts are quick, to translate silence — felt the insult through his blood; his inarticulate soul bellowed within him for revenge. He glanced about the shop. He saw the two indifferent gentlemen deep in talk, and passed them over: his fancy flying not so high. There was but one other present, a country lout who stood swallowing his wine, equally unobserved by all and unobserving; to him he dealt a glance of murderous suspicion, and turned direct upon his wife. The wine-shop had lain hitherto, a space of shelter, the scene of a few ceremonial passages and some whispered conversation, in the howling river of the wind; the clock had not yet ticked a score of times since Paradou's appearance; and now, as he suddenly gave tongue, it seemed as though the mistral had entered at his heels.

"What ails you, woman?" he cried, smiting on the counter.

"Nothing ails me," she replied. It was strange; but she spoke and stood at that moment like a lady of degree, drawn upward by her aspirations.

"You speak to me, by God, as though you scorned me!" cried the husband.

The man's passion was always formidable; she had often looked on upon its violence with a thrill, it had been one ingredient in her fascination; and she was now surprised to behold him, as from afar off, gesticulating but impotent. His fury might be dangerous like a torrent or a gust of wind, but it was inhuman; it might be feared or braved, it should never be respected. And with that there came in her a sudden glow of courage and that readiness to die which attends so closely upon all strong passions.

"I do scorn you," she said.

"What is that?" he cried.

"I scorn you," she repeated, smiling.

"You love another man!" said he.

"With all my soul," was her reply.

The wine-seller roared aloud so that the house rang and shook with it.

"Is this the — — ?" he cried, using a foul word, common in the South; and he seized the young countryman and dashed him to the ground. There he lay for the least interval of time insensible; thence fled from the house, the most terrified person in the county. The heavy measure had escaped from his hands, splashing the wine high upon the wall. Paradou caught it. "And you?" he roared to his wife, giving her the same name in the feminine, and he aimed at her the deadly missile. She expected it, motionless, with radiant eyes.

But before it sped, Paradou was met by another adversary, and the unconscious rivals stood confronted. It was hard to say at that moment which appeared the more formidable. In Paradou, the whole muddy and truculent depths of the half-man were stirred to frenzy; the lust of destruction raged in him; there was not a feature in his face but it talked murder. Balmile had dropped his cloak: he shone out at once in his finery, and stood to his full stature; girt in mind and body; all his resources, all his temper, perfectly in command; in his face the light of battle. Neither spoke; there was no blow nor threat of one; it was war reduced to its last element, the spiritual; and the huge wine-seller slowly lowered his weapon. Balmile was a noble, he a commoner; Balmile exulted in an honourable cause. Paradou already perhaps began to be ashamed of his violence. Of a sudden, at least, the tortured brute turned and fled from the shop in the footsteps of his former victim, to whose continued flight his reappearance added wings.

So soon as Balmile appeared between her husband and herself, Marie-Madeleine transferred to him her eyes. It might be her last moment, and she fed upon that face; reading there inimitable courage and illimitable valour to protect. And when the momentary peril was gone by, and the champion turned a little awkwardly towards her whom he had rescued, it was to meet, and quail before, a gaze of admiration more distinct than words. He bowed, he stammered, his words failed him; he who had crossed the floor a moment ago, like a young god, to smite, returned like one discomfited; got somehow to his place by the table, muffled himself again in his discarded cloak, and for a last touch of the ridiculous, seeking for anything to restore his countenance, drank of the wine before him, deep as a porter after a heavy lift. It was little wonder if Ballantrae, reading the scene with malevolent eyes, laughed out loud and brief, and drank with raised glass, “To the champion of the Fair.”

Marie-Madeleine stood in her old place within the counter; she disdained the mocking laughter; it fell on her ears, but it did not reach her spirit. For her, the world of living persons was all resumed again into one pair, as in the days of Eden; there was but the one end in life, the one hope before her, the one thing needful, the one thing possible, — to be his.

CHAPTER I

THE PRINCE

That same night there was in the city of Avignon a young man in distress of mind. Now he sat, now walked in a high apartment, full of draughts and shadows. A single candle made the darkness visible; and the light scarce sufficed to show upon the wall, where they had been recently and rudely nailed, a few miniatures and a copper medal of the young man's head. The same was being sold that year in London, to admiring thousands. The original was fair; he had beautiful brown eyes, a beautiful bright open face; a little feminine, a little hard, a little weak; still full of the light of youth, but already beginning to be vulgarised; a sordid bloom come upon it, the lines coarsened with a touch of puffiness. He was dressed, as for a gala, in peach-colour and silver; his breast sparkled with stars and was bright with ribbons; for he had held a levee in the afternoon and received a distinguished personage incognito. Now he sat with a bowed head, now walked precipitately to and fro, now went and gazed from the uncurtained window, where the wind was still blowing, and the lights winked in the darkness.

The bells of Avignon rose into song as he was gazing; and the high notes and the deep tossed and drowned, boomed suddenly near or were suddenly swallowed up, in the current of the mistral. Tears sprang in the pale blue eyes; the expression of his face was changed to that of a more active misery; it seemed as if the voices of the bells reached, and touched and pained him, in a waste of vacancy where even pain was welcome. Outside in the night they continued to sound on, swelling and fainting; and the listener heard in his memory, as it were their harmonies, joy-bells clashing in a northern city, and the acclamations of a multitude, the cries of battle, the gross voices of cannon, the stridor of an animated life. And then all died away, and he stood face to face with himself in the waste of vacancy, and a horror came upon his mind, and a faintness on his brain, such as seizes men upon the brink of cliffs.

On the table, by the side of the candle, stood a tray of glasses, a bottle, and a silver bell. He went thither swiftly, then his hand lowered first above the bell, then settled on the bottle. Slowly he filled a glass, slowly drank it out; and, as a tide of animal warmth recomforted the recesses of his nature, stood there smiling at himself. He remembered he was young; the funeral curtains rose, and he saw his life shine and broaden and flow out majestically, like a river sunward. The smile still on his lips, he lit a second candle and a third; a fire stood ready built in a chimney, he lit that also; and the fir-cones and the gnarled olive billets were swift to break in flame and to crackle on the hearth, and the room brightened and enlarged about him like his hopes. To and fro, to and fro, he went, his hands lightly clasped, his breath deeply and pleasurably taken. Victory walked with him; he marched to crowns and empires among shouting followers; glory was his dress. And presently again the shadows closed upon the solitary. Under the gilt of flame and candle-light, the stone walls of the apartment showed down bare and cold; behind the depicted triumph loomed up the actual failure: defeat, the long distress of the flight, exile, despair, broken followers, mourning faces, empty pockets, friends estranged. The memory of his father rose in his mind: he, too, estranged and defied; despair sharpened into wrath. There was one who had led armies in the field, who had staked his life upon the family enterprise, a man of action and experience, of the open air, the camp, the court, the council-room; and he was to accept direction from an old, pompous gentleman in a home in Italy, and buzzed about by priests? A pretty king, if he had not a martial son to lean upon! A king at all?

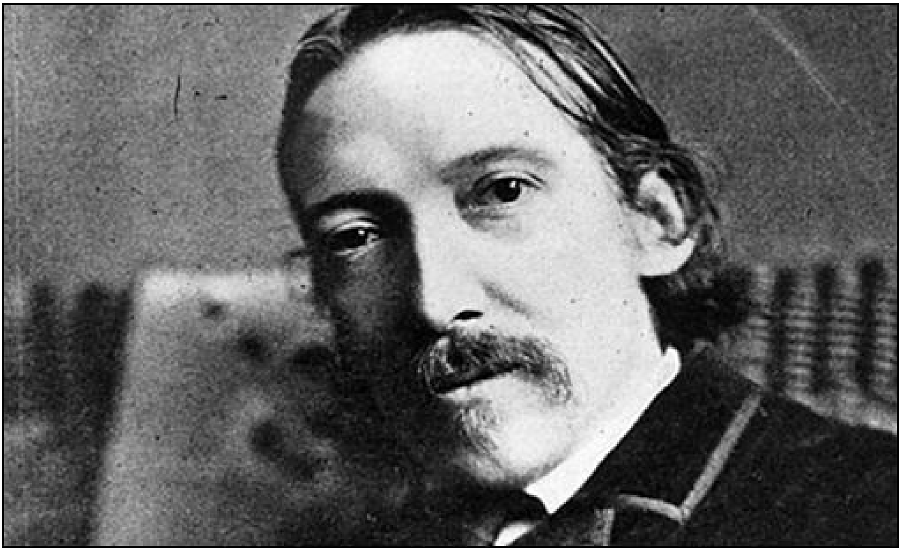
"There was a weaver (of all people) joined me at St. Ninians; he was more of a man than my papa!" he thought. "I saw him lie doubled in his blood and a grenadier below him — and he died for my papa! All died for him, or risked the dying, and I lay for him all those months in the rain and skulked in heather like a fox; and now he writes me his advice! calls me Carluccio — me, the man of the house, the only king in that king's race." He ground his teeth. "The only king in Europe! Who else? Who has done and suffered except me? who has lain and run and hidden with his faithful subjects, like a second Bruce? Not my accursed cousin, Louis of France at least, the lewd effeminate traitor!" And filling the glass to the brim, he drank a king's damnation. Ah, if he had the power of Louis, what a king were here!

The minutes followed each other into the past, and still he persevered in this debilitating cycle of emotions, still fed the fire of his excitement with driblets of Rhine wine: a boy at odds with life, a boy with a spark of the heroic, which he was now burning out and drowning down in futile reverie and solitary excess.

From two rooms beyond, the sudden sound of a raised voice attracted him.

"By....

The Short Story Collections



Stevenson, 1870

NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS

This collection of short stories, all previously published in magazines between 1877 and 1880, contains Stevenson's first published fiction. A few stories are considered by some critics to be his best work, as well as pioneering works in the English short story tradition.

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THE SUICIDE CLUB

STORY OF THE YOUNG MAN WITH THE CREAM TARTS

During his residence in London, the accomplished Prince Florizel of Bohemia gained the affection of all classes by the seduction of his manner and by a well-considered generosity. He was a remarkable man even by what was known of him; and that was but a small part of what he actually did. Although of a placid temper in ordinary circumstances, and accustomed to take the world with as much philosophy as any ploughman, the Prince of Bohemia was not without a taste for ways of life more adventurous and eccentric than that to which he was destined by his birth. Now and then, when he fell into a low humour, when there was no laughable play to witness in any of the London theatres, and when the season of the year was unsuitable to those field sports in which he excelled all competitors, he would summon his confidant and Master of the Horse, Colonel Geraldine, and bid him prepare himself against an evening ramble. The Master of the Horse was a young officer of a brave and even temerarious disposition. He greeted the news with delight, and hastened to make ready. Long practice and a varied acquaintance of life had given him a singular facility in disguise; he could adapt not only his face and bearing, but his voice and almost his thoughts, to those of any rank, character, or nation; and in this way he diverted attention from the Prince, and sometimes gained admission for the pair into strange societies. The civil authorities were never taken into the secret of these adventures; the imperturbable courage of the one and the ready invention and chivalrous devotion of the other had brought them through a score of dangerous passes; and they grew in confidence as time went on.

One evening in March they were driven by a sharp fall of sleet into an Oyster Bar in the immediate neighbourhood of Leicester Square. Colonel Geraldine was dressed and painted to represent a person connected with the Press in reduced circumstances; while the Prince had, as usual, travestied his appearance by the addition of false whiskers and a pair of large adhesive eyebrows. These lent him a shaggy and weather-beaten air, which, for one of his urbanity, formed the most impenetrable disguise. Thus equipped, the commander and his satellite sipped their brandy and soda in security.

The bar was full of guests, male and female; but though more than one of these offered to fall into talk with our adventurers, none of them promised to grow interesting upon a nearer acquaintance. There was nothing present but the lees of London and the commonplace of disrespectability; and the Prince had already fallen to yawning, and was beginning to grow weary of the whole excursion, when the swing doors were pushed violently open, and a young man, followed by a couple of commissionaires, entered the bar. Each of the commissionaires carried a large dish of cream tarts under a cover, which they at once removed; and the young man made the round of the company, and pressed these confections upon every one's acceptance with an exaggerated courtesy. Sometimes his offer was laughingly accepted; sometimes it was firmly, or even harshly, rejected. In these latter cases the new-comer always ate the tart himself, with some more or less humorous commentary.

At last he accosted Prince Florizel.

"Sir," said he, with a profound obeisance, proffering the tart at the same time between his thumb and forefinger, "will you so far honour an entire stranger? I can answer for the quality of the pastry, having eaten two dozen and three of them myself since five o'clock."

"I am in the habit," replied the Prince, "of looking not so much to the nature of a gift as to the spirit in which it is offered."

"The spirit, sir," returned the young man, with another bow, "is one of mockery."

"Mockery?" repeated Florizel. "And whom do you propose to mock?"

"I am not here to expound my philosophy," replied the other, "but to distribute these cream tarts. If I mention that I heartily include myself in the ridicule of the transaction, I hope you will consider honour satisfied and condescend. If not, you will constrain me to eat my twenty-eighth, and I own to being weary of the exercise."

"You touch me," said the Prince, "and I have all the will in the world to rescue you from this dilemma, but upon one condition. If my friend and I eat your cakes - for which we have neither of us any natural inclination - we shall expect you to join us at supper by way of recompense."

The young man seemed to reflect.

"I have still several dozen upon hand," he said at last; "and that will make it necessary for me to visit several more bars before my great affair is concluded. This will take some time; and if you are hungry - "

The Prince interrupted him with a polite gesture.

"My friend and I will accompany you," he said; "for we have already a deep interest in your very agreeable mode of passing an evening. And now that the preliminaries of peace are settled, allow me to sign the treaty for both."

And the Prince swallowed the tart with the best grace imaginable.

"It is delicious," said he.

"I perceive you are a connoisseur," replied the young man.

Colonel Geraldine likewise did honour to the pastry; and every one in that bar having now either accepted or refused his delicacies, the young man with the cream tarts led the way to another and similar establishment. The two commissionaires, who seemed to have grown accustomed to their absurd employment, followed immediately after; and the Prince and the Colonel brought up the rear, arm in arm, and smiling to each other as they went. In this order the company visited two other taverns, where scenes were enacted of a like nature to that already described - some refusing, some accepting, the favours of this vagabond hospitality, and the young man himself eating each rejected tart.

On leaving the third saloon the young man counted his store. There were but nine remaining, three in one tray and six in the other.

"Gentlemen," said he, addressing himself to his two new followers, "I am unwilling to delay your supper. I am positively sure you must be hungry. I feel that I owe you a special consideration. And on this great day for me, when I am closing a career of folly by my most conspicuously silly action, I wish to behave handsomely to all who give me countenance. Gentlemen, you shall wait no longer. Although my constitution is shattered by previous excesses, at the risk of my life I liquidate the suspensory condition."

With these words he crushed the nine remaining tarts into his mouth, and swallowed them at a single movement each. Then, turning to the commissionaires, he gave them a couple of sovereigns.

"I have to thank you," said be, "for your extraordinary patience."

And he dismissed them with a bow apiece. For some seconds he stood looking at the purse from which he had just paid his assistants, then, with a laugh, he tossed it into the middle of the street, and signified his readiness for supper.

In a small French restaurant in Soho, which had enjoyed an exaggerated reputation for some little while, but had already begun to be forgotten, and in a private room up two pair of stairs, the three companions made a very elegant supper, and drank three or four bottles of champagne, talking the while upon indifferent subjects. The young man was fluent and gay, but he laughed louder than was natural in a person of polite breeding; his hands trembled violently, and his voice took sudden and surprising inflections, which seemed to be independent of his will. The dessert had been cleared away, and all three had lighted their cigars, when the Prince addressed him in these words:-

"You will, I am sure, pardon my curiosity. What I have seen of you has greatly pleased but even more puzzled me. And though I should be loth to seem indiscreet, I must tell you that my friend and I are persons very well worthy to be entrusted with a secret. We have many of our own, which we are continually revealing to improper ears. And if, as I suppose, your story is a silly one, you need have no delicacy with us, who are two of the silliest men in England. My name is Godall, Theophilus Godall; my friend is Major Alfred Hammersmith - or at least, such is the name by which he chooses to be known. We pass our lives entirely in the search for extravagant adventures; and there is no extravagance with which we are not capable of sympathy."

"I like you, Mr. Godall," returned the young man; "you inspire me with a natural confidence; and I have not the slightest objection to your friend the Major, whom I take to be a nobleman in masquerade. At least, I am sure he is no soldier."

The Colonel smiled at this compliment to the perfection of his art; and the young man went on in a more animated manner.

"There is every reason why I should not tell you my story. Perhaps that is just the reason why I am going to do so. At least, you seem so well prepared to hear a tale of silliness that I cannot find it in my heart to disappoint you. My name, in spite of your example, I shall keep to myself. My age is not essential to the narrative. I am descended from my ancestors by ordinary generation, and from them I inherited the very eligible human tenement which I still occupy and a fortune of three hundred pounds a year. I suppose they also handed on to me a hare-brain humour, which it has been my chief delight to indulge. I received a good education. I can play the violin nearly well enough to earn money in the orchestra of a penny gaff, but not quite. The same remark applies to the flute and the French horn. I learned enough of whist to lose about a hundred a year at that scientific game. My acquaintance with French was sufficient to enable me to squander money in Paris with almost the same facility as in London. In short, I am a person full of manly accomplishments. I have had every sort of adventure, including a duel about nothing. Only two months ago I met a young lady exactly suited to my taste in mind and body; I found my heart melt; I saw that I had come upon my fate at last, and was in the way to fall in love. But when I came to reckon up what remained to me of my capital, I found it amounted to something less than four hundred pounds! I ask you fairly - can a man who respects himself fall in love on four hundred pounds? I concluded, certainly not; left the presence of my charmer, and slightly accelerating my usual rate of expenditure, came this morning to my last eighty pounds. This I divided into two equal parts; forty I reserved for a particular purpose; the remaining forty I was to dissipate before the night. I have passed a very entertaining day, and played many farces besides that of the cream tarts which procured me the advantage of your acquaintance; for I was determined, as I told you, to bring a foolish career to a still more foolish conclusion; and when you saw me throw my purse into the street, the forty pounds were at an end. Now you know me as well as I know myself: a fool, but consistent in his folly; and, as I will ask you to believe, neither a whimperer nor a coward."

From the whole tone of the young man's statement it was plain that he harboured very bitter and contemptuous thoughts about himself. His auditors were led to imagine that his love affair was nearer his heart than he admitted, and that he had a design on his own life. The farce of the cream tarts began to have very much the air of a tragedy in disguise.

"Why, is this not odd," broke out Geraldine, giving a look to Prince Florizel, "that we three fellows should have met by the merest accident in so large a wilderness as London, and should be so nearly in the same condition?"

"How?" cried the young man. "Are you, too, ruined? Is this supper a folly like my cream tarts? Has the devil brought three of his own together for a last carouse?"

"The devil, depend upon it, can sometimes do a very gentlemanly thing," returned Prince Florizel; "and I am so much touched by this coincidence, that, although we are not entirely in the same case, I am going to put an end to the disparity. Let your heroic treatment of the last cream tarts be my example."

So saying, the Prince drew out his purse and took from it a small bundle of bank-notes.

"You see, I was a week or so behind you, but I mean to catch you up and come neck and neck into the winning-post," he continued. "This," laying one of the notes upon the table, "will suffice for the bill. As for the rest - "

He tossed them into the fire, and they went up the chimney in a single blaze.

The young man tried to catch his arm, but as the table was between them his interference came too late.

"Unhappy man," he cried, "you should not have burned them all! You should have kept forty pounds."

"Forty pounds!" repeated the Prince. "Why, in heaven's name, forty pounds?"

"Why not eighty?" cried the Colonel; "for to my certain knowledge there must have been a hundred in the bundle."

"It was only forty pounds he needed," said the young man gloomily. "But without them there is no admission. The rule is strict.

Forty pounds for each. Accursed life, where a man cannot even die without money!"

The Prince and the Colonel exchanged glances. "Explain yourself," said the latter. "I have still a pocket-book tolerably well lined, and I need not say how readily I should share my wealth with Godall. But I must know to what end: you must certainly tell us what you mean."

The young man seemed to awaken; he looked uneasily from one to the other, and his face flushed deeply.

"You are not fooling me?" he asked. "You are indeed ruined men like me?"

"Indeed, I am for my part," replied the Colonel.

"And for mine," said the Prince, "I have given you proof. Who but a ruined man would throw his notes into the fire? The action speaks for itself."

"A ruined man - yes," returned the other suspiciously, "or else a millionaire."

"Enough, sir," said the Prince; "I have said so, and I am not accustomed to have my word remain in doubt."

"Ruined?" said the young man. "Are you ruined, like me? Are you, after a life of indulgence, come to such a pass that you can only indulge yourself in one thing more? Are you" - he kept lowering his voice as he went on - "are you going to give yourselves that last indulgence? Are you going to avoid the consequences of your folly by the one infallible and easy path? Are you going to give the slip to the sheriff's officers of conscience by the one open door?"

Suddenly he broke off and attempted to laugh.

"Here is your health!" he cried, emptying his glass, "and good night to you, my merry ruined men."

Colonel Geraldine caught him by the arm as he was about to rise.

"You lack confidence in us," he said, "and you are wrong. To all your questions I make answer in the affirmative. But I am not so timid, and can speak the Queen's English plainly. We too, like yourself, have had enough of life, and are determined to die. Sooner or later, alone or together, we meant to seek out death and beard him where he lies ready. Since we have met you, and your case is more pressing, let it be to-night - and at once - and, if you will, all three together. Such a penniless trio," he cried, "should go arm in arm into the halls of Pluto, and give each other some countenance among the shades!"

Geraldine had hit exactly on the manners and intonations that became the part he was playing. The Prince himself was disturbed, and looked over at his confidant with a shade of doubt. As for the young man, the flush came back darkly into his cheek, and his eyes threw out a spark of light.

"You are the men for me!" he cried, with an almost terrible gaiety. "Shake hands upon the bargain!" (his hand was cold and wet). "You little know in what a company you will begin the march! You little know in what a happy moment for yourselves you partook of my cream tarts! I am only a unit, but I am a unit in an army. I know Death's private door. I am one of his familiars, and can show you into eternity without ceremony and yet without scandal."

They called upon him eagerly to explain his meaning.

"Can you muster eighty pounds between you?" he demanded.

Geraldine ostentatiously consulted his pocket-book, and replied in the affirmative.

"Fortunate beings!" cried the young man. "Forty pounds is the entry money of the Suicide Club."

"The Suicide Club," said the Prince, "why, what the devil is that?"

"Listen," said the young man; "this is the age of conveniences, and I have to tell you of the last perfection of the sort. We have affairs in different places; and hence railways were invented. Railways separated us infallibly from our friends; and so telegraphs were made that we might communicate speedier at great distances. Even in hotels we have lifts to spare us a climb of some hundred steps. Now, we know that life is only a stage to play the fool upon as long as the part amuses us. There was one more convenience lacking to modern comfort; a decent, easy way to quit that stage; the back stairs to liberty; or, as I said this moment, Death's private door. This, my two fellow-rebels, is supplied by the Suicide Club. Do not suppose that you and I are alone, or even exceptional in the highly reasonable desire that we profess. A large number of our fellowmen, who have grown heartily sick of the performance in which they are expected to join daily and all their lives long, are only kept from flight by one or two considerations. Some have families who would be shocked, or even blamed, if the matter became public; others have a weakness at heart and recoil from the circumstances of death. That is, to some extent, my own experience. I cannot put a pistol to my head and draw the trigger; for something stronger than myself withholds the act; and although I loathe life, I have not strength enough in my body to take hold of death and be done with it. For such as I, and for all who desire to be out of the coil without posthumous scandal, the Suicide Club has been inaugurated. How this has been managed, what is its history, or what may be its ramifications in other lands, I am myself uninformed; and what I know of its constitution, I am not at liberty to communicate to you. To this extent, however, I am at your service. If you are truly tired of life, I will introduce you to-night to a meeting; and if not to-night, at least some time within the week, you will be easily relieved of your existences. It is now (consulting his watch) eleven; by half-past, at latest, we must leave this place; so that you have half-an-hour before you to consider my proposal. It is more serious than a cream tart," he added, with a smile; "and I suspect more palatable."

"More serious, certainly," returned Colonel Geraldine; "and as it is so much more so, will you allow me five minutes' speech in private with my friend, Mr. Godall?"

"It is only fair," answered the young man. "If you will permit, I will retire."

"You will be very obliging," said the Colonel.

As soon as the two were alone - "What," said Prince Florizel, "is the use of this confabulation, Geraldine? I see you are flurried, whereas my mind is very tranquilly made up. I will see the end of this."

"Your Highness," said the Colonel, turning pale; "let me ask you to consider the importance of your life, not only to your friends, but to the public interest. 'If not to-night,' said this madman; but supposing that to-night some irreparable disaster were to overtake your Highness's person, what, let me ask you, what would be my despair, and what the concern and disaster of a great nation?"

"I will see the end of this," repeated the Prince in his most deliberate tones; "and have the kindness, Colonel Geraldine, to remember and respect your word of honour as a gentleman. Under no circumstances, recollect, nor without my special authority, are you to betray the incognito under which I choose to go abroad. These were my commands, which I now reiterate. And now," he added, "let me ask you to call for the bill."

Colonel Geraldine bowed in submission; but he had a very white face as he summoned the young man of the cream tarts, and issued his directions to the waiter. The Prince preserved his undisturbed demeanour, and described a Palais Royal farce to the young suicide with great humour and gusto. He avoided the Colonel's appealing looks without ostentation, and selected another cheroot with more than usual care. Indeed, he was now the only man of the party who kept any command over his nerves.

The bill was discharged, the Prince giving the whole change of the note to the astonished waiter; and the three drove off in a four-wheeler. They were not long upon the way before the cab stopped at the entrance to a rather dark court. Here all descended.

After Geraldine had paid the fare, the young man turned, and addressed Prince Florizel as follows:-

"It is still time, Mr. Godall, to make good your escape into thraldom. And for you too, Major Hammersmith. Reflect well before you take another step; and if your hearts say no - here are the cross-roads."

"Lead on, sir," said the Prince. "I am not the man to go back from a thing once said."

"Your coolness does me good," replied their guide. "I have never seen any one so unmoved at this conjuncture; and yet you are not the first whom I have escorted to this door. More than one of my friends has preceded me, where I knew I must shortly follow. But this is of no interest to you. Wait me here for only a few moments; I shall return as soon as I have arranged the preliminaries of your introduction."

And with that the young man, waving his hand to his companions, turned into the court, entered a doorway and disappeared.

"Of all our follies," said Colonel Geraldine in a low voice, "this is the wildest and most dangerous."

"I perfectly believe so," returned the Prince.

"We have still," pursued the Colonel, "a moment to ourselves. Let me beseech your Highness to profit by the opportunity and retire. The consequences of this step are so dark, and may be so grave, that I feel myself justified in pushing a little farther than usual the liberty which your Highness is so condescending as to allow me in private."

"Am I to understand that Colonel Geraldine is afraid?" asked his Highness, taking his cheroot from his lips, and looking keenly into the other's face.

"My fear is certainly not personal," replied the other proudly; "of that your Highness may rest well assured."

"I had supposed as much," returned the Prince, with undisturbed good humour; "but I was unwilling to remind you of the difference in our stations. No more - no more," he added, seeing Geraldine about to apologise, "you stand excused."

And he smoked placidly, leaning against a railing, until the young man returned.

"Well," he asked, "has our reception been arranged?"

"Follow me," was the reply. "The President will see you in the cabinet. And let me warn you to be frank in your answers. I have stood your guarantee; but the club requires a searching inquiry before admission; for the indiscretion of a single member would lead to the dispersion of the whole society for ever."

The Prince and Geraldine put their heads together for a moment. "Bear me out in this," said the one; and "bear me out in that," said the other; and by boldly taking up the characters of men with whom both were acquainted, they had come to an agreement in a twinkling, and were ready to follow their guide into the President's cabinet.

There were no formidable obstacles to pass. The outer door stood open; the door of the cabinet was ajar; and there, in a small but very high apartment, the young man left them once more.

"He will be here immediately," he said, with a nod, as he disappeared.

Voices were audible in the cabinet through the folding doors which formed one end; and now and then the noise of a champagne cork, followed by a burst of laughter, intervened among the sounds of conversation. A single tall window looked out upon the river and the embankment; and by the disposition of the lights they judged themselves not far from Charing Cross station. The furniture was scanty, and the coverings worn to the thread; and there was nothing movable except a hand-bell in the centre of a round table, and the hats and coats of a considerable party hung round the wall on pegs.

"What sort of a den is this?" said Geraldine.

"That is what I have come to see," replied the Prince. "If they keep live devils on the premises, the thing may grow amusing."

Just then the folding door was opened no more than was necessary for the passage of a human body; and there entered at the same moment a louder buzz of talk, and the redoubtable President of the Suicide Club. The President was a man of fifty or upwards; large and rambling in his gait, with shaggy side whiskers, a bald top to his head, and a veiled grey eye, which now and then emitted a twinkle. His mouth, which embraced a large cigar, he kept continually screwing round and round and from side to side, as he looked sagaciously and coldly at the strangers. He was dressed in light tweeds, with his neck very open in a striped shirt collar; and carried a minute book under one arm.

"Good evening," said he, after he had closed the door behind him.

"I am told you wish to speak with me."

"We have a desire, sir, to join the Suicide Club," replied the

Colonel.

The President rolled his cigar about in his mouth. "What is that?" he said abruptly.

"Pardon me," returned the Colonel, "but I believe you are the person best qualified to give us information on that point."

"I?" cried the President. "A Suicide Club? Come, come! this is a frolic for All Fools' Day. I can make allowances for gentlemen who get merry in their liquor; but let there be an end to this."

"Call your Club what you will," said the Colonel, "you have some company behind these doors, and we insist on joining it."

"Sir," returned the President curtly, "you have made a mistake.

This is a private house, and you must leave it instantly."

The Prince had remained quietly in his seat throughout this little colloquy; but now, when the Colonel looked over to him, as much as to say, "Take your answer and come away, for God's sake!" he drew his cheroot from his mouth, and spoke -

"I have come here," said he, "upon the invitation of a friend of yours. He has doubtless informed you of my intention in thus intruding on your party. Let me remind you that a person in my circumstances has exceedingly little to bind him, and is not at all likely to tolerate much rudeness. I am a very quiet man, as a usual thing; but, my dear sir, you are either going to oblige me in the little matter of which you are aware, or you shall very bitterly repent that you ever admitted me to your ante-chamber."

The President laughed aloud.

"That is the way to speak," said he. "You are a man who is a man. You know the way to my heart, and can do what you like with me. Will you," he continued, addressing Geraldine, "will you step aside for a few minutes? I shall finish first with your companion, and some of the club's formalities require to be fulfilled in private."

With these words he opened the door of a small closet, into which he shut the Colonel.

"I believe in you," he said to Florizel, as soon as they were alone; "but are you sure of your friend?"

"Not so sure as I am of myself, though he has more cogent reasons," answered Florizel, "but sure enough to bring him here without alarm. He has had enough to cure the most tenacious man of life. He was cashiered the other day for cheating at cards."

"A good reason, I daresay," replied the President; "at least, we have another in the same case, and I feel sure of him. Have you also been in the Service, may I ask?"

"I have," was the reply; "but I was too lazy, I left it early."

"What is your reason for being tired of life?" pursued the President.

"The same, as near as I can make out," answered the Prince; "unadulterated laziness."

The President started. "D-n it," said he, "you must have something better than that."

"I have no more money," added Florizel. "That is also a vexation, without doubt. It brings my sense of idleness to an acute point."

The President rolled his cigar round in his mouth for some seconds, directing his gaze straight into the eyes of this unusual neophyte; but the Prince supported his scrutiny with unabashed good temper.

"If I had not a deal of experience," said the President at last, "I should turn you off. But I know the world; and this much any way, that the most frivolous excuses for a suicide are often the toughest to stand by. And when I downright like a man, as I do you, sir, I would rather strain the regulation than deny him."

The Prince and the Colonel, one after the other, were subjected to a long and particular interrogatory: the Prince alone; but Geraldine in the presence of the Prince, so that the President might observe the countenance of the one while the other was being warmly cross-examined. The result was satisfactory; and the President, after having booked a few details of each case, produced a form of oath to be accepted. Nothing could be conceived more passive than the obedience promised, or more stringent than the terms by which the juror bound himself. The man who forfeited a pledge so awful could scarcely have a rag of honour or any of the consolations of religion left to him. Florizel signed the document, but not without a shudder; the Colonel followed his example with an air of great depression. Then the President received the entry money; and without more ado, introduced the two friends into the smoking-room of the Suicide Club.

The smoking-room of the Suicide Club was the same height as the cabinet into which it opened, but much larger, and papered from top to bottom with an imitation of oak wainscot. A large and cheerful fire and a number of gas-jets illuminated the company. The Prince and his follower made the number up to eighteen. Most of the party were smoking, and drinking champagne; a feverish hilarity reigned, with sudden and rather ghastly pauses.

"Is this a full meeting?" asked the Prince.

"Middling," said the President. "By the way," he added, "if you have any money, it is usual to offer some champagne. It keeps up a good spirit, and is one of my own little perquisites."

"Hammersmith," said Florizel, "I may leave the champagne to you."

And with that he turned away and began to go round among the guests. Accustomed to play the host in the highest circles, he charmed and dominated all whom he approached; there was something at once winning and authoritative in his address; and his extraordinary coolness gave him yet another distinction in this half maniacal society. As he went from one to another he kept both his eyes and ears open, and soon began to gain a general idea of the people among whom he found himself. As in all other places of resort, one type predominated: people in the prime of youth, with every show of intelligence and sensibility in their appearance, but with little promise of strength or the quality that makes success. Few were much above thirty, and not a few were still in their teens. They stood, leaning on tables and shifting on their feet; sometimes they smoked extraordinarily fast, and sometimes they let their cigars go out; some talked well, but the conversation of others was plainly the result of nervous tension, and was equally without wit or purport. As each new bottle of champagne was opened, there was a manifest improvement in gaiety. Only two were seated - one in a chair in the recess of the window, with his head hanging and his hands plunged deep into his trouser pockets, pale, visibly moist with perspiration, saying never a word, a very wreck of soul and body; the other sat on the divan close by the chimney, and attracted notice by a trenchant dissimilarity from all the rest. He was probably upwards of forty, but he looked fully ten years older; and Florizel thought he had never seen a man more naturally hideous, nor one more ravaged by disease and ruinous excitements. He was no more than skin and bone, was partly paralysed, and wore spectacles of such unusual power, that his eyes appeared through the glasses greatly magnified and distorted in shape. Except the Prince and the President, he was the only person in the room who preserved the composure of ordinary life.

There was little decency among the members of the club. Some boasted of the disgraceful actions, the consequences of which had reduced them to seek refuge in death; and the others listened without disapproval. There was a tacit understanding against moral judgments; and whoever passed the club doors enjoyed already some of the immunities of the tomb. They drank to each other's memories, and to those of notable suicides in the past. They compared and developed their different views of death - some declaring that it was no more than blackness and cessation; others full of a hope that that very night they should be scaling the stars and commencing with the mighty dead.

"To the eternal memory of Baron Trenck, the type of suicides!" cried one. "He went out of a small cell into a smaller, that he might come forth again to freedom."

"For my part," said a second, "I wish no more than a bandage for my eyes and cotton for my ears. Only they have no cotton thick enough in this world."

A third was for reading the mysteries of life in a future state; and a fourth professed that he would never have joined the club, if he had not been induced to believe in Mr. Darwin.

"I could not bear," said this remarkable suicide, "to be descended from an ape."

Altogether, the Prince was disappointed by the bearing and conversation of the members.

"It does not seem to me," he thought, "a matter for so much disturbance. If a man has made up his mind to kill himself, let him do it, in God's name, like a gentleman. This flutter and big talk is out of place."

In the meanwhile Colonel Geraldine was a prey to the blackest apprehensions; the club and its rules were still a mystery, and he looked round the room for some one who should be able to set his mind at rest. In this survey his eye lighted on the paralytic person with the strong spectacles; and seeing him so exceedingly tranquil, he besought the President, who was going in and out of the room under a pressure of business, to present him to the gentleman on the divan.

The functionary explained the needlessness of all such formalities within the club, but nevertheless presented Mr. Hammersmith to Mr. Malthus.

Mr. Malthus looked at the Colonel curiously, and then requested him to take a seat upon his right.

"You are a new-comer," he said, "and wish information? You have come to the proper source. It is two years since I first visited this charming club."

The Colonel breathed again. If Mr. Malthus had frequented the place for two years there could be little danger for the Prince in a single evening. But Geraldine was none the less astonished, and began to suspect a mystification.

"What!" cried he, "two years! I thought - but indeed I see I have been made the subject of a pleasantry."

"By no means," replied Mr. Malthus mildly. "My case is peculiar. I am not, properly speaking, a suicide at all; but, as it were, an honorary member. I rarely visit the club twice in two months. My infirmity and the kindness of the President have procured me these little immunities, for which besides I pay at an advanced rate. Even as it is my luck has been extraordinary."

"I am afraid," said the Colonel, "that I must ask you to be more explicit. You must remember that I am still most imperfectly acquainted with the rules of the club."

"An ordinary member who comes here in search of death like yourself," replied the paralytic, "returns every evening until fortune favours him. He can even, if he is penniless, get board and lodging from the President: very fair, I believe, and clean, although, of course, not luxurious; that could hardly be, considering the exiguity (if I may so express myself) of the subscription. And then the President's company is a delicacy in itself."

"Indeed!" cried Geraldine, "he had not greatly prepossessed me."

"Ah!" said Mr. Malthus, "you do not know the man: the drollest fellow! What stories! What cynicism! He knows life to admiration and, between ourselves, is probably the most corrupt rogue in Christendom."

"And he also," asked the Colonel, "is a permanency - like yourself, if I may say so without offence?"

"Indeed, he is a permanency in a very different sense from me," replied Mr. Malthus. "I have hem graciously spared, but I must go at last. Now he never plays. He shuffles and deals for the club, and makes the necessary arrangements. That man, my dear Mr. Hammersmith, is the very soul of ingenuity. For three years he has pursued in London his useful and, I think I may add, his artistic calling; and not so much as a whisper of suspicion has been once aroused. I believe him myself to be inspired. You doubtless remember the celebrated case, six months ago, of the gentleman who was accidentally poisoned in a chemists shop? That was one of the least rich, one of the least racy, of his notions; but then, how simple! and how safe!"

"You astound me," said the Colonel. "Was that unfortunate gentleman one of the - " He was about to say "victims"; but bethinking himself in time, he substituted - "members of the club?"

In the same flash of thought, it occurred to him that Mr. Malthus himself had not at all spoken in the tone of one who is in love with death; and he added hurriedly:

"But I perceive I am still in the dark. You speak of shuffling and dealing; pray for what end? And since you seem rather unwilling to die than otherwise, I must own that I cannot conceive what brings you here at all."

"You say truly that you are in the dark," replied Mr. Malthus with more animation. "Why, my dear sir, this club is the temple of intoxication. If my enfeebled health could support the excitement more often, you may depend upon it I should be more often here. It requires all the sense of duty engendered by a long habit of ill- health and careful regimen, to keep me from excess in this, which is, I may say, my last dissipation. I have tried them all, sir," he went on, laying his hand on Geraldine's arm, "all without exception, and I declare to you, upon my honour, there is not one of them that has not been grossly and untruthfully overrated. People trifle with love. Now, I deny that love is a strong passion. Fear is the strong passion; it is with fear that you must trifle, if you wish to taste the intensest joys of living. Envy me - envy me, sir," he added with a chuckle, "I am a coward!"

Geraldine could scarcely repress a movement of repulsion for this deplorable wretch; but he commanded himself with an effort, and continued his inquiries.

"How, sir," he asked, "is the excitement so artfully prolonged? and where is there any element of uncertainty?"

"I must tell you how the victim for every evening is selected," returned Mr. Malthus; "and not only the victim, but another member, who is to be the instrument in the club's hands, and death's high priest for that occasion."

"Good God!" said the Colonel, "do they then kill each other?"

"The trouble of suicide is removed in that way," returned Malthus with a nod.

"Merciful heavens!" ejaculated the Colonel, "and may you - may I - may the - my friend I mean - may any of us be pitched upon this evening as the slayer of another man's body and immortal spirit? Can such things be possible among men born of women? Oh! infamy of infamies!"

He was about to rise in his horror, when he caught the Prince's eye.

It was fixed upon him from across the room with a frowning and angry stare. And in a moment Geraldine recovered his composure.

"After all," he added, "why not? And since you say the game is interesting, VOGUE LA GALERE - I follow the club!"

Mr. Malthus had keenly enjoyed the Colonel's amazement and disgust. He had the vanity of wickedness; and it pleased him to see another man give way to a generous movement, while he felt himself, in his entire corruption, superior to such emotions.

"You now, after your first moment of surprise," said he, "are in a position to appreciate the delights of our society. You can see how it combines the excitement of a gaming-table, a duel, and a Roman amphitheatre. The Pagans did well enough; I cordially admire the refinement of their minds; but it has been reserved for a Christian country to attain this extreme, this quintessence, this absolute of poignancy. You will understand how vapid are all amusements to a man who has acquired a taste for this one. The game we play," he continued, "is one of extreme simplicity. A full pack - but I perceive you are about to see the thing in progress. Will you lend me the help of your arm? I am unfortunately paralysed."

Indeed, just as Mr. Malthus was beginning his description, another pair of folding-doors was thrown open, and the whole club began to pass, not without some hurry, into the adjoining room. It was similar in every respect to the one from which it was entered, but somewhat differently furnished. The centre was occupied by a long green table, at which the President sat shuffling a pack of cards with great particularity. Even with the stick and the Colonel's arm, Mr. Malthus walked with so much difficulty that every one was seated before this pair and the Prince, who had waited for them, entered the apartment; and, in consequence, the three took seats close together at the lower end of the board.

"It is a pack of fifty-two," whispered Mr. Malthus. "Watch for the ace of spades, which is the sign of death, and the ace of clubs, which designates the official of the night. Happy, happy young men!" he added. "You have good eyes, and can follow the game. Alas! I cannot tell an ace from a deuce across the table."

And he proceeded to equip himself with a second pair of spectacles.

"I must at least watch the faces," he explained.

The Colonel rapidly informed his friend of all that he had learned from the honorary member, and of the horrible alternative that lay before them. The Prince was conscious of a deadly chill and a contraction about his heart; he swallowed with difficulty, and looked from side to side like a man in a maze.

"One bold stroke," whispered the Colonel, "and we may still escape."

But the suggestion recalled the Prince's spirits.

"Silence!" said be. "Let me see that you can play like a gentleman for any stake, however serious."

And he looked about him, once more to all appearance at his ease, although his heart beat thickly, and he was conscious of an unpleasant heat in his bosom. The members were all very quiet and intent; every one was pale, but none so pale as Mr. Malthus. His eyes protruded; his head kept nodding involuntarily upon his spine; his hands found their way, one after the other, to his mouth, where they made clutches at his tremulous and ashen lips. It was plain that the honorary member enjoyed his membership on very startling terms.

"Attention, gentlemen!" said the President.

And he began slowly dealing the cards about the table in the reverse direction, pausing until each man had shown his card. Nearly every one hesitated; and sometimes you would see a player's fingers stumble more than once before he could turn over the momentous slip of pasteboard. As the Prince's turn drew nearer, he was conscious of a growing and almost suffocating excitement; but he had somewhat of the gambler's nature, and recognised almost with astonishment, that there was a degree of pleasure in his sensations. The nine of clubs fell to his lot; the three of spades was dealt to Geraldine; and the queen of hearts to Mr. Malthus, who was unable to suppress a sob of relief. The young man of the cream tarts almost immediately afterwards turned over the ace of clubs, and remained frozen with horror, the card still resting on his finger; he had not come there to kill, but to be killed; and the Prince in his generous sympathy with his position almost forgot the peril that still hung over himself and his friend.

The deal was coming round again, and still Death's card had not come out. The players held their respiration, and only breathed by gasps. The Prince received another club; Geraldine had a diamond; but when Mr. Malthus turned up his card a horrible noise, like that of something breaking, issued from his mouth; and he rose from his seat and sat down again, with no sign of his paralysis. It was the ace of spades. The honorary member had trifled once too often with his terrors.

Conversation broke out again almost at once. The players relaxed their rigid attitudes, and began to rise from the table and stroll back by twos and threes into the smoking-room. The President stretched his arms and yawned, like a man who has finished his day's work. But Mr. Malthus sat in his place, with his head in his hands, and his hands upon the table, drunk and motionless - a thing stricken down.

The Prince and Geraldine made their escape at once. In the cold night air their horror of what they had witnessed was redoubled.

“Alas!” cried the Prince, “to be bound by an oath in such a matter! to allow this wholesale trade in murder to be continued with profit and impunity! If I but dared to forfeit my pledge!”

“That is impossible for your Highness,” replied the Colonel, “whose honour is the honour of Bohemia. But I dare, and may with propriety, forfeit mine.”

“Geraldine,” said the Prince, “if your honour suffers in any of the adventures into which you follow me, not only will I never pardon you, but - what I believe will much more sensibly affect you - I should never forgive myself.”

“I receive your Highness’s commands,” replied the Colonel. “Shall we go from this accursed spot?”

“Yes,” said the Prince. “Call a cab in Heaven’s name, and let me try to forget in slumber the memory of this night’s disgrace.”

But it was notable that he carefully read the name of the court before he left it.

The next morning, as soon as the Prince was stirring, Colonel Geraldine brought him a daily newspaper, with the following paragraph marked:-

“MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT. - This morning, about two o’clock, Mr. Bartholomew Malthus, of 16 Chepstow Place, Westbourne Grove, on his way home from a party at a friend’s house, fell over the upper parapet in Trafalgar Square, fracturing his skull and breaking a leg and an arm. Death was instantaneous. Mr. Malthus, accompanied by a friend, was engaged in looking for a cab at the time of the unfortunate occurrence. As Mr. Malthus was paralytic, it is thought that his fall may have been occasioned by another seizure. The unhappy gentleman was well known in the most respectable circles, and his loss will be widely and deeply deplored.”

“If ever a soul went straight to Hell,” said Geraldine solemnly, “it was that paralytic man’s.”

The Prince buried his face in his hands, and remained silent.

“I am almost rejoiced,” continued the Colonel, “to know that he is dead. But for our young man of the cream tarts I confess my heart bleeds.”

“Geraldine,” said the Prince, raising his face, “that unhappy lad was last night as innocent as you and I; and this morning the guilt of blood is on his soul. When I think of the President, my heart grows sick within me. I do not know how it shall be done, but I shall have that scoundrel at my mercy as there is a God in heaven. What an experience, what a lesson, was that game of cards!”

“One,” said the Colonel, “never to be repeated.”

The Prince remained so long without replying, that Geraldine grew alarmed.

"You cannot mean to return," he said. "You have suffered too much and seen too much horror already. The duties of your high position forbid the repetition of the hazard."

"There is much in what you say," replied Prince Florizel, "and I am not altogether pleased with my own determination. Alas! in the clothes of the greatest potentate, what is there but a man? I never felt my weakness more acutely than now, Geraldine, but it is stronger than I. Can I cease to interest myself in the fortunes of the unhappy young man who supped with us some hours ago? Can I leave the President to follow his nefarious career unwatched? Can I begin an adventure so entrancing, and not follow it to an end? No, Geraldine: you ask of the Prince more than the man is able to perform. To-night, once more, we take our places at the table of the Suicide Club."

Colonel Geraldine fell upon his knees.

"Will your Highness take my life?" he cried. "It is his - his freely; but do not, O do not! let him ask me to countenance so terrible a risk."

"Colonel Geraldine," replied the Prince, with some haughtiness of manner, "your life is absolutely your own. I only looked for obedience; and when that is unwillingly rendered, I shall look for that no longer. I add one word your: importunity in this affair has been sufficient."

The Master of the Horse regained his feet at once.

"Your Highness," he said, "may I be excused in my attendance this afternoon? I dare not, as an honourable man, venture a second time into that fatal house until I have perfectly ordered my affairs. Your Highness shall meet, I promise him, with no more opposition from the most devoted and grateful of his servants."

"My dear Geraldine," returned Prince Florizel, "I always regret when you oblige me to remember my rank. Dispose of your day as you think fit, but be here before eleven in the same disguise."

The club, on this second evening, was not so fully attended; and when Geraldine and the Prince arrived, there were not above half-a-dozen persons in the smoking-room. His Highness took the President aside and congratulated him warmly on the demise of Mr. Malthus.

"I like," he said, "to meet with capacity, and certainly find much of it in you. Your profession is of a very delicate nature, but I see you are well qualified to conduct it with success and secrecy."

The President was somewhat affected by these compliments from one of his Highness's superior bearing. He acknowledged them almost with humility.

"Poor Malthy!" he added, "I shall hardly know the club without him. The most of my patrons are boys, sir, and poetical boys, who are not much company for me. Not but what Malthy had some poetry, too; but it was of a kind that I could understand."

"I can readily imagine you should find yourself in sympathy with Mr. Malthus," returned the Prince. "He struck me as a man of a very original disposition."

The young man of the cream tarts was in the room, but painfully depressed and silent. His late companions sought in vain to lead him into conversation.

"How bitterly I wish," he cried, "that I had never brought you to this infamous abode! Begone, while you are clean-handed. If you could have heard the old man scream as he fell, and the noise of his bones upon the pavement! Wish me, if you have any kindness to so fallen a being - wish the ace of spades for me to-night!"

A few more members dropped in as the evening went on, but the club did not muster more than the devil's dozen when they took their places at the table. The Prince was again conscious of a certain joy in his alarms; but he was astonished to see Geraldine so much more self-possessed than on the night before.

"It is extraordinary," thought the Prince, "that a will, made or unmade, should so greatly influence a young man's spirit."

"Attention, gentlemen!" said the President, and he began to deal.

Three times the cards went all round the table, and neither of the marked cards had yet fallen from his hand. The excitement as he began the fourth distribution was overwhelming. There were just cards enough to go once more entirely round. The Prince, who sat second from the dealer's left, would receive, in the reverse mode of dealing practised at the club, the second last card. The third player turned up a black ace - it was the ace of clubs. The next received a diamond, the next a heart, and so on; but the ace of spades was still undelivered. At last, Geraldine, who sat upon the Prince's left, turned his card; it was an ace, but the ace of hearts.

When Prince Florizel saw his fate upon the table in front of him, his heart stood still. He was a brave man, but the sweat poured off his face. There were exactly fifty chances out of a hundred that he was doomed. He reversed the card; it was the ace of spades. A loud roaring filled his brain, and the table swam before his eyes. He heard the player on his right break into a fit of laughter that sounded between mirth and disappointment; he saw the company rapidly dispersing, but his mind was full of other thoughts. He recognised how foolish, how criminal, had been his conduct. In perfect health, in the prime of his years, the heir to a throne, he had gambled away his future and that of a brave and loyal country. "God," he cried, "God forgive me!" And with that, the confusion of his senses passed away, and he regained his self- possession in a moment.

To his surprise Geraldine had disappeared. There was no one in the card-room but his destined butcher consulting with the President, and the young man of the cream tarts, who slipped up to the Prince, and whispered in his ear:-

“I would give a million, if I had it, for your luck.”

His Highness could not help reflecting, as the young man departed, that he would have sold his opportunity for a much more moderate sum.

The whispered conference now came to an end. The holder of the ace of clubs left the room with a look of intelligence, and the President, approaching the unfortunate Prince, proffered him his hand.

“I am pleased to have met you, sir,” said he, “and pleased to have been in a position to do you this trifling service. At least, you cannot complain of delay. On the second evening - what a stroke of luck!”

The Prince endeavoured in vain to articulate something in response, but his mouth was dry and his tongue seemed paralysed.

“You feel a little sickish?” asked the President, with some show of solicitude. “Most gentlemen do. Will you take a little brandy?”

The Prince signified in the affirmative, and the other immediately filled some of the spirit into a tumbler.

“Poor old Malthy!” ejaculated the President, as the Prince drained the glass. “He drank near upon a pint, and little enough good it seemed to do him!”

“I am more amenable to treatment,” said the Prince, a good deal revived. “I am my own man again at once, as you perceive. And so, let me ask you, what are my directions?”

“You will proceed along the Strand in the direction of the City, and on the left-hand pavement, until you meet the gentleman who has just left the room. He will continue your instructions, and him you will have the kindness to obey; the authority of the club is vested in his person for the night. And now,” added the President, “I wish you a pleasant walk.”

Florizel acknowledged the salutation rather awkwardly, and took his leave. He passed through the smoking-room, where the bulk of the players were still consuming champagne, some of which he had himself ordered and paid for; and he was surprised to find himself cursing them in his heart. He put on his hat and greatcoat in the cabinet, and selected his umbrella from a corner. The familiarity of these acts, and the thought that he was about them for the last time, betrayed him into a fit of laughter which sounded unpleasantly in his own ears. He conceived a reluctance to leave the cabinet, and turned instead to the window. The sight of the lamps and the darkness recalled him to himself.

“Come, come, I must be a man,” he thought, “and tear myself away."

At the corner of Box Court three men fell upon Prince Florizel and he was unceremoniously thrust into a carriage, which at once drove rapidly away. There was already an occupant.

"Will your Highness pardon my zeal?" said a well known voice.

The Prince threw himself upon the Colonel's neck in a passion of relief.

"How can I ever thank you?" he cried. "And how was this effected?"

Although he had been willing to march upon his doom, he was overjoyed to yield to friendly violence, and return once more to life and hope.

"You can thank me effectually enough," replied the Colonel, "by avoiding all such dangers in the future. And as for your second question, all has been managed by the simplest means. I arranged this afternoon with a celebrated detective. Secrecy has been promised and paid for. Your own servants have been principally engaged in the affair. The house in Box Court has been surrounded since nightfall, and this, which is one of your own carriages, has been awaiting you for nearly an hour."

"And the miserable creature who was to have slain me - what of him?" inquired the Prince.

"He was pinioned as he left the club," replied the Colonel, "and now awaits your sentence at the Palace, where he will soon be joined by his accomplices."

"Geraldine," said the Prince, "you have saved me against my explicit orders, and you have done well. I owe you not only my life, but a lesson; and I should be unworthy of my rank if I did not show myself grateful to my teacher. Let it be yours to choose the manner."

There was a pause, during which the carriage continued to speed through the streets, and the two men were each buried in his own reflections. The silence was broken by Colonel Geraldine.

"Your Highness," said he, "has by this time a considerable body of prisoners. There is at least one criminal among the number to whom justice should be dealt. Our oath forbids us all recourse to law; and discretion would forbid it equally if the oath were loosened. May I inquire your Highness's intention?"

"It is decided," answered Florizel; "the President must fall in duel. It only remains to choose his adversary."

"Your Highness has permitted me to name my own recompense," said the Colonel. "Will he permit me to ask the appointment of my brother? It is an honourable post, but I dare assure your Highness that the lad will acquit himself with credit."

"You ask me an ungracious favour," said the Prince, "but I must refuse you nothing."

The Colonel kissed his hand with the greatest affection; and at that moment the carriage rolled under the archway of the Prince's splendid residence.

An hour after, Florizel in his official robes, and covered with all the orders of Bohemia, received the members of the Suicide Club.

"Foolish and wicked men," said he, "as many of you as have been driven into this strait by the lack of fortune shall receive employment and remuneration from my officers. Those who suffer under a sense of guilt must have recourse to a higher and more generous Potentate than I. I feel pity for all of you, deeper than you can imagine; to-morrow you shall tell me your stories; and as you answer more frankly, I shall be the more able to remedy your misfortunes. As for you," he added, turning to the President, "I should only offend a person of your parts by any offer of assistance; but I have instead a piece of diversion to propose to you. Here," laying his hand on the shoulder of Colonel Geraldine's young brother, "is an officer of mine who desires to make a little tour upon the Continent; and I ask you, as a favour, to accompany him on this excursion. Do you," he went on, changing his tone, "do you shoot well with the pistol? Because you may have need of that accomplishment. When two men go travelling together, it is best to be prepared for all. Let me add that, if by any chance you should lose young Mr. Geraldine upon the way, I shall always have another member of my household to place at your disposal; and I am known, Mr. President, to have long eyesight, and as long an arm."

With these words, said with much sternness, the Prince concluded his address. Next morning the members of the club were suitably provided for by his munificence, and the President set forth upon his travels, under the supervision of Mr. Geraldine, and a pair of faithful and adroit lackeys, well trained in the Prince's household. Not content with this, discreet agents were put in possession of the house in Box Court, and all letters or visitors for the Suicide Club or its officials were to be examined by Prince Florizel in person.

Here (says my Arabian author) ends THE STORY OF THE YOUNG MAN WITH

THE CREAM TARTS, who is now a comfortable householder in Wigmore

Street, Cavendish Square. The number, for obvious reasons, I
suppress. Those who care to pursue the adventures of Prince
Florizel and the President of the Suicide Club, may read the
HISTORY OF THE PHYSICIAN AND THE SARATOGA TRUNK.

STORY OF THE PHYSICIAN AND THE SARATOGA TRUNK

MR. SILAS Q. SCUDDAMORE was a young American of a simple and harmless disposition, which was the more to his credit as he came from New England - a quarter of the New World not precisely famous for those qualities. Although he was exceedingly rich, he kept a note of all his expenses in a little paper pocket-book; and he had chosen to study the attractions of Paris from the seventh story of what is called a furnished hotel, in the Latin Quarter. There was a great deal of habit in his penuriousness; and his virtue, which was very remarkable among his associates, was principally founded upon diffidence and youth.

The next room to his was inhabited by a lady, very attractive in her air and very elegant in toilette, whom, on his first arrival, he had taken for a Countess. In course of time he had learned that she was known by the name of Madame Zephyrine, and that whatever station she occupied in life it was not that of a person of title. Madame Zephyrine, probably in the hope of enchanting the young American, used to flaunt by him on the stairs with a civil inclination, a word of course, and a knock-down look out of her black eyes, and disappear in a rustle of silk, and with the revelation of an admirable foot and ankle. But these advances, so far from encouraging Mr. Scuddamore, plunged him into the depths of depression and bashfulness. She had come to him several times for a light, or to apologise for the imaginary depredations of her poodle; but his mouth was closed in the presence of so superior a being, his French promptly left him, and he could only stare and stammer until she was gone. The slenderness of their intercourse did not prevent him from throwing out insinuations of a very glorious order when he was safely alone with a few males.

The room on the other side of the American's - for there were three rooms on a floor in the hotel - was tenanted by an old English physician of rather doubtful reputation. Dr. Noel, for that was his name, had been forced to leave London, where he enjoyed a large and increasing practice; and it was hinted that the police had been the instigators of this change of scene. At least he, who had made something of a figure in earlier life, now dwelt in the Latin Quarter in great simplicity and solitude, and devoted much of his time to study. Mr. Scuddamore had made his acquaintance, and the pair would now and then dine together frugally in a restaurant across the street.

Silas Q. Scuddamore had many little vices of the more respectable order, and was not restrained by delicacy from indulging them in many rather doubtful ways. Chief among his foibles stood curiosity. He was a born gossip; and life, and especially those parts of it in which he had no experience, interested him to the degree of passion. He was a pert, invincible questioner, pushing his inquiries with equal pertinacity and indiscretion; he had been observed, when he took a letter to the post, to weigh it in his hand, to turn it over and over, and to study the address with care; and when he found a flaw in the partition between his room and Madame Zephyrine's, instead of filling it up, he enlarged and improved the opening, and made use of it as a spy-hole on his neighbour's affairs.

One day, in the end of March, his curiosity growing as it was indulged, he enlarged the hole a little further, so that he might command another corner of the room. That evening, when he went as usual to inspect Madame Zephyrine's movements, he was astonished to find the aperture obscured in an odd manner on the other side, and still more abashed when the obstacle was suddenly withdrawn and a titter of laughter reached his ears. Some of the plaster had evidently betrayed the secret of his spy-hole, and his neighbour had been returning the compliment in kind. Mr. Scuddamore was moved to a very acute feeling of annoyance; he condemned Madame Zephyrine unmercifully; he even blamed himself; but when he found, next day, that she had taken no means to baulk him of his favourite pastime, he continued to profit by her carelessness, and gratify his idle curiosity.

That next day Madame Zephyrine received a long visit from a tall, loosely-built man of fifty or upwards, whom Silas had not hitherto seen. His tweed suit and coloured shirt, no less than his shaggy side-whiskers, identified him as a Britisher, and his dull grey eye affected Silas with a sense of cold. He kept screwing his mouth from side to side and round and round during the whole colloquy, which was carried on in whispers. More than once it seemed to the young New Englander as if their gestures indicated his own apartment; but the only thing definite he could gather by the most scrupulous attention was this remark made by the Englishman in a somewhat higher key, as if in answer to some reluctance or opposition.

"I have studied his taste to a nicety, and I tell you again and again you are the only woman of the sort that I can lay my hands on."

In answer to this, Madame Zephyrine sighed, and appeared by a gesture to resign herself, like one yielding to unqualified authority.

That afternoon the observatory was finally blinded, a wardrobe having been drawn in front of it upon the other side; and while Silas was still lamenting over this misfortune, which he attributed to the Britisher's malign suggestion, the concierge brought him up a letter in a female handwriting. It was conceived in French of no very rigorous orthography, bore no signature, and in the most encouraging terms invited the young American to be present in a certain part of the Bullier Ball at eleven o'clock that night. Curiosity and timidity fought a long battle in his heart; sometimes he was all virtue, sometimes all fire and daring; and the result of it was that, long before ten, Mr. Silas Q. Scuddamore presented himself in unimpeachable attire at the door of the Bullier Ball Rooms, and paid his entry money with a sense of reckless devilry that was not without its charm.

It was Carnival time, and the Ball was very full and noisy. The lights and the crowd at first rather abashed our young adventurer, and then, mounting to his brain with a sort of intoxication, put him in possession of more than his own share of manhood. He felt ready to face the devil, and strutted in the ballroom with the swagger of a cavalier. While he was thus parading, he became aware of Madame Zephyrine and her Britisher in conference behind a pillar. The cat-like spirit of eaves-dropping overcame him at once. He stole nearer and nearer on the couple from behind, until he was within earshot.

“That is the man,” the Britisher was saying; “there - with the long blond hair - speaking to a girl in green.”

Silas identified a very handsome young fellow of small stature, who was plainly the object of this designation.

“It is well,” said Madame Zephyrine. “I shall do my utmost. But, remember, the best of us may fail in such a matter.”

“Tut!” returned her companion; “I answer for the result. Have I not chosen you from thirty? Go; but be wary of the Prince. I cannot think what cursed accident has brought him here to-night. As if there were not a dozen balls in Paris better worth his notice than this riot of students and counter-jumpers! See him where he sits, more like a reigning Emperor at home than a Prince upon his holidays!”

Silas was again lucky. He observed a person of rather a full build, strikingly handsome, and of a very stately and courteous demeanour, seated at table with another handsome young man, several years his junior, who addressed him with conspicuous deference. The name of Prince struck gratefully on Silas’s Republican hearing, and the aspect of the person to whom that name was applied exercised its usual charm upon his mind. He left Madame Zephyrine and her Englishman to take care of each other, and threading his way through the assembly, approached the table which the Prince and his confidant had honoured with their choice.

“I tell you, Geraldine,” the former was saying, “the action is madness. Yourself (I am glad to remember it) chose your brother for this perilous service, and you are bound in duty to have a guard upon his conduct. He has consented to delay so many days in Paris; that was already an imprudence, considering the character of the man he has to deal with; but now, when he is within eight-and- forty hours of his departure, when he is within two or three days of the decisive trial, I ask you, is this a place for him to spend his time? He should be in a gallery at practice; he should be sleeping long hours and taking moderate exercise on foot; he should be on a rigorous diet, without white wines or brandy. Does the dog imagine we are all playing comedy? The thing is deadly earnest, Geraldine.”

“I know the lad too well to interfere,” replied Colonel Geraldine, "and well enough not to be alarmed. He is more cautious than you fancy, and of an indomitable spirit. If it had been a woman I should not say so much, but I trust the President to him and the two valets without an instant's apprehension."

"I am gratified to hear you say so," replied the Prince; "but my mind is not at rest. These servants are well-trained spies, and already has not this miscreant succeeded three times in eluding their observation and spending several hours on end in private, and most likely dangerous, affairs? An amateur might have lost him by accident, but if Rudolph and Jerome were thrown off the scent, it must have been done on purpose, and by a man who had a cogent reason and exceptional resources."

"I believe the question is now one between my brother and myself," replied Geraldine, with a shade of offence in his tone.

"I permit it to be so, Colonel Geraldine," returned Prince Florizel. "Perhaps, for that very reason, you should be all the more ready to accept my counsels. But enough. That girl in yellow dances well."

And the talk veered into the ordinary topics of a Paris ballroom in the Carnival.

Silas remembered where he was, and that the hour was already near at hand when he ought to be upon the scene of his assignation. The more he reflected the less he liked the prospect, and as at that moment an eddy in the crowd began to draw him in the direction of the door, he suffered it to carry him away without resistance. The eddy stranded him in a corner under the gallery, where his ear was immediately struck with the voice of Madame Zephyrine. She was speaking in French with the young man of the blond locks who had been pointed out by the strange Britisher not half-an-hour before.

"I have a character at stake," she said, "or I would put no other condition than my heart recommends. But you have only to say so much to the porter, and he will let you go by without a word."

"But why this talk of debt?" objected her companion.

"Heavens!" said she, "do you think I do not understand my own hotel?"

And she went by, clinging affectionately to her companion's arm.

This put Silas in mind of his billet.

"Ten minutes hence," thought he, "and I may be walking with as beautiful a woman as that, and even better dressed - perhaps a real lady, possibly a woman or title."

And then he remembered the spelling, and was a little downcast.

"But it may have been written by her maid," he imagined.

The clock was only a few minutes from the hour, and this immediate proximity set his heart beating at a curious and rather disagreeable speed. He reflected with relief that he was in no way bound to put in an appearance. Virtue and cowardice were together, and he made once more for the door, but this time of his own accord, and battling against the stream of people which was now moving in a contrary direction. Perhaps this prolonged resistance wearied him, or perhaps he was in that frame of mind when merely to continue in the same determination for a certain number of minutes produces a reaction and a different purpose. Certainly, at least, he wheeled about for a third time, and did not stop until he had found a place of concealment within a few yards of the appointed place.

Here he went through an agony of spirit, in which he several times prayed to God for help, for Silas had been devoutly educated. He had now not the least inclination for the meeting; nothing kept him from flight but a silly fear lest he should be thought unmanly; but this was so powerful that it kept head against all other motives; and although it could not decide him to advance, prevented him from definitely running away. At last the clock indicated ten minutes past the hour. Young Scuddamore's spirit began to rise; he peered round the corner and saw no one at the place of meeting; doubtless his unknown correspondent had wearied and gone away. He became as bold as he had formerly been timid. It seemed to him that if he came at all to the appointment, however late, he was clear from the charge of cowardice. Nay, now he began to suspect a hoax, and actually complimented himself on his shrewdness in having suspected and outmanoeuvred his mystifiers. So very idle a thing is a boy's mind!

Armed with these reflections, he advanced boldly from his corner; but he had not taken above a couple of steps before a hand was laid upon his arm. He turned and beheld a lady cast in a very large mould and with somewhat stately features, but bearing no mark of severity in her looks.

"I see that you are a very self-confident lady-killer," said she; "for you make yourself expected. But I was determined to meet you. When a woman has once so far forgotten herself as to make the first advance, she has long ago left behind her all considerations of petty pride."

Silas was overwhelmed by the size and attractions of his correspondent and the suddenness with which she had fallen upon him. But she soon set him at his ease. She was very towardly and lenient in her behaviour; she led him on to make pleasantries, and then applauded him to the echo; and in a very short time, between blandishments and a liberal exhibition of warm brandy, she had not only induced him to fancy himself in love, but to declare his passion with the greatest vehemence.

"Alas!" she said; "I do not know whether I ought not to deplore this moment, great as is the pleasure you give me by your words. Hitherto

I was alone to suffer; now, poor boy, there will be two. I am not my own mistress. I dare not ask you to visit me at my own house, for I am watched by jealous eyes. Let me see," she added; "I am older than you, although so much weaker; and while I trust in your courage and determination, I must employ my own knowledge of the world for our mutual benefit. Where do you live?"

He told her that he lodged in a furnished hotel, and named the street and number.

She seemed to reflect for some minutes, with an effort of mind.

"I see," she said at last. "You will be faithful and obedient, will you not?"

Silas assured her eagerly of his fidelity.

"To-morrow night, then," she continued, with an encouraging smile, "you must remain at home all the evening; and if any friends should visit you, dismiss them at once on any pretext that most readily presents itself. Your door is probably shut by ten?" she asked.

"By eleven," answered Silas.

"At a quarter past eleven," pursued the lady, "leave the house. Merely cry for the door to be opened, and be sure you fall into no talk with the porter, as that might ruin everything. Go straight to the corner where the LuxembourgGardens join the Boulevard; there you will find me waiting you. I trust you to follow my advice from point to point: and remember, if you fail me in only one particular, you will bring the sharpest trouble on a woman whose only fault is to have seen and loved you."

"I cannot see the use of all these instructions," said Silas.

"I believe you are already beginning to treat me as a master," she cried, tapping him with her fan upon the arm. "Patience, patience! that should come in time. A woman loves to be obeyed at first, although afterwards she finds her pleasure in obeying. Do as I ask you, for Heaven's sake, or I will answer for nothing. Indeed, now I think of it," she added, with the manner of one who has just seen further into a difficulty, "I find a better plan of keeping importunate visitors away. Tell the porter to admit no one for you, except a person who may come that night to claim a debt; and speak with some feeling, as though you feared the interview, so that he may take your words in earnest."

"I think you may trust me to protect myself against intruders," he said, not without a little pique.

"That is how I should prefer the thing arranged," she answered coldly. "I know you men; you think nothing of a woman's reputation."

Silas blushed and somewhat hung his head; for the scheme he had in view had involved a little vain-glorying before his acquaintances.

"Above all," she added, "do not speak to the porter as you come out."

"And why?" said he. "Of all your instructions, that seems to me the least important."

"You at first doubted the wisdom of some of the others, which you now see to be very necessary," she replied. "Believe me, this also has its uses; in time you will see them; and what am I to think of your affection, if you refuse me such trifles at our first interview?"

Silas confounded himself in explanations and apologies; in the middle of these she looked up at the clock and clapped her hands together with a suppressed scream.

"Heavens!" she cried, "is it so late? I have not an instant to lose. Alas, we poor women, what slaves we are! What have I not risked for you already?"

And after repeating her directions, which she artfully combined with caresses and the most abandoned looks, she bade him farewell and disappeared among the crowd.

The whole of the next day Silas was filled with a sense of great importance; he was now sure she was a countess; and when evening came he minutely obeyed her orders and was at the corner of the LuxembourgGardens by the hour appointed. No one was there. He waited nearly half-an-hour, looking in the face of every one who passed or loitered near the spot; he even visited the neighbouring corners of the Boulevard and made a complete circuit of the garden railings; but there was no beautiful countess to throw herself into his arms. At last, and most reluctantly, he began to retrace his steps towards his hotel. On the way he remembered the words he had heard pass between Madame Zephyrine and the blond young man, and they gave him an indefinite uneasiness.

"It appears," he reflected, "that every one has to tell lies to our porter."

He rang the bell, the door opened before him, and the porter in his bed-clothes came to offer him a light.

"Has he gone?" inquired the porter.

"He? Whom do you mean?" asked Silas, somewhat sharply, for he was irritated by his disappointment.

"I did not notice him go out," continued the porter, "but I trust you paid him. We do not care, in this house, to have lodgers who cannot meet their liabilities."

"What the devil do you mean?" demanded Silas rudely. "I cannot understand a word of this farrago."

"The short blond young man who came for his debt," returned the other. "Him it is I mean. Who else should it be, when I had your orders to admit no one else?"

"Why, good God, of course he never came," retorted Silas.

“I believe what I believe,” returned the porter, putting his tongue into his cheek with a most roguish air.

“You are an insolent scoundrel,” cried Silas, and, feeling that he had made a ridiculous exhibition of asperity, and at the same time bewildered by a dozen alarms, he turned and began to run upstairs.

“Do you not want a light then?” cried the porter.

But Silas only hurried the faster, and did not pause until he had reached the seventh landing and stood in front of his own door. There he waited a moment to recover his breath, assailed by the worst forebodings and almost dreading to enter the room.

When at last he did so he was relieved to find it dark, and to all appearance, untenanted. He drew a long breath. Here he was, home again in safety, and this should be his last folly as certainly as it had been his first. The matches stood on a little table by the bed, and he began to grope his way in that direction. As he moved, his apprehensions grew upon him once more, and he was pleased, when his foot encountered an obstacle, to find it nothing more alarming than a chair. At last he touched curtains. From the position of the window, which was faintly visible, he knew he must be at the foot of the bed, and had only to feel his way along it in order to reach the table in question.

He lowered his hand, but what it touched was not simply a counterpane - it was a counterpane with something underneath it like the outline of a human leg. Silas withdrew his arm and stood a moment petrified.

“What, what,” he thought, “can this betoken?”

He listened intently, but there was no sound of breathing. Once more, with a great effort, he reached out the end of his finger to the spot he had already touched; but this time he leaped back half a yard, and stood shivering and fixed with terror. There was something in his bed. What it was he knew not, but there was something there.

It was some seconds before he could move. Then, guided by an instinct, he fell straight upon the matches, and keeping his back towards the bed lighted a candle. As soon as the flame had kindled, he turned slowly round and looked for what he feared to see. Sure enough, there was the worst of his imaginations realised. The coverlid was drawn carefully up over the pillow, but it moulded the outline of a human body lying motionless; and when he dashed forward and flung aside the sheets, he beheld the blond young man whom he had seen in the Bullier Ball the night before, his eyes open and without speculation, his face swollen and blackened, and a thin stream of blood trickling from his nostrils.

Silas uttered a long, tremulous wail, dropped the candle, and fell on his knees beside the bed.

Silas was awakened from the stupor into which his terrible discovery had plunged him by a prolonged but discreet tapping at the door. It took him some seconds to remember his position; and when he hastened to prevent anyone from entering it was already too late. Dr. Noel, in a tall night-cap, carrying a lamp which lighted up his long white countenance, sidling in his gait, and peering and cocking his head like some sort of bird, pushed the door slowly open, and advanced into the middle of the room.

"I thought I heard a cry," began the Doctor, "and fearing you might be unwell I did not hesitate to offer this intrusion."

Silas, with a flushed face and a fearful beating heart, kept between the Doctor and the bed; but he found no voice to answer.

"You are in the dark," pursued the Doctor; "and yet you have not even begun to prepare for rest. You will not easily persuade me against my own eyesight; and your face declares most eloquently that you require either a friend or a physician - which is it to be? Let me feel your pulse, for that is often a just reporter of the heart."

He advanced to Silas, who still retreated before him backwards, and sought to take him by the wrist; but the strain on the young American's nerves had become too great for endurance. He avoided the Doctor with a febrile movement, and, throwing himself upon the floor, burst into a flood of weeping.

As soon as Dr. Noel perceived the dead man in the bed his face darkened; and hurrying back to the door which he had left ajar, he hastily closed and double-locked it.

"Up!" he cried, addressing Silas in strident tones; "this is no time for weeping. What have you done? How came this body in your room? Speak freely to one who may be helpful. Do you imagine I would ruin you? Do you think this piece of dead flesh on your pillow can alter in any degree the sympathy with which you have inspired me? Credulous youth, the horror with which blind and unjust law regards an action never attaches to the doer in the eyes of those who love him; and if I saw the friend of my heart return to me out of seas of blood he would be in no way changed in my affection. Raise yourself," he said; "good and ill are a chimera; there is nought in life except destiny, and however you may be circumstanced there is one at your side who will help you to the last."

Thus encouraged, Silas gathered himself together, and in a broken voice, and helped out by the Doctor's interrogations, contrived at last to put him in possession of the facts. But the conversation between the Prince and Geraldine he altogether omitted, as he had understood little of its purport, and had no idea that it was in any way related to his own misadventure.

"Alas!" cried Dr. Noel, "I am much abused, or you have fallen innocently into the most dangerous hands in Europe. Poor boy, what a pit has been dug for your simplicity! into what a deadly peril have your unwary feet been conducted! This man," he said, "this Englishman, whom you twice saw, and whom I suspect to be the soul of the contrivance, can you describe him? Was he young or old? tall or short?"

But Silas, who, for all his curiosity, had not a seeing eye in his head, was able to supply nothing but meagre generalities, which it was impossible to recognise.

"I would have it a piece of education in all schools!" cried the Doctor angrily. "Where is the use of eyesight and articulate speech if a man cannot observe and recollect the features of his enemy? I, who know all the gangs of Europe, might have identified him, and gained new weapons for your defence. Cultivate this art in future, my poor boy; you may find it of momentous service."

"The future!" repeated Silas. "What future is there left for me except the gallows?"

"Youth is but a cowardly season," returned the Doctor; "and a man's own troubles look blacker than they are. I am old, and yet I never despair."

"Can I tell such a story to the police?" demanded Silas.

"Assuredly not," replied the Doctor. "From what I see already of the machination in which you have been involved, your case is desperate upon that side; and for the narrow eye of the authorities you are infallibly the guilty person. And remember that we only know a portion of the plot; and the same infamous contrivers have doubtless arranged many other circumstances which would be elicited by a police inquiry, and help to fix the guilt more certainly upon your innocence."

"I am then lost, indeed!" cried Silas.

"I have not said so," answered Dr. Noel "for I am a cautious man."

"But look at this!" objected Silas, pointing to the body. "Here is this object in my bed; not to be explained, not to be disposed of, not to be regarded without horror."

"Horror?" replied the Doctor. "No. When this sort of clock has run down, it is no more to me than an ingenious piece of mechanism, to be investigated with the bistoury. When blood is once cold and stagnant, it is no longer human blood; when flesh is once dead, it is no longer that flesh which we desire in our lovers and respect in our friends. The grace, the attraction, the terror, have all gone from it with the animating spirit. Accustom yourself to look upon it with composure; for if my scheme is practicable you will have to live some days in constant proximity to that which now so greatly horrifies you."

"Your scheme?" cried Silas. "What is that? Tell me speedily,

Doctor; for I have scarcely courage enough to continue to exist."

Without replying, Doctor Noel turned towards the bed, and proceeded to examine the corpse.

"Quite dead," he murmured. "Yes, as I had supposed, the pockets empty. Yes, and the name cut off the shirt. Their work has been done thoroughly and well. Fortunately, he is of small stature."

Silas followed these words with an extreme anxiety. At last the

Doctor, his autopsy completed, took a chair and addressed the young

American with a smile.

"Since I came into your room," said he, "although my ears and my tongue have been so busy, I have not suffered my eyes to remain idle. I noted a little while ago that you have there, in the corner, one of those monstrous constructions which your fellow- countrymen carry with them into all quarters of the globe - in a word, a Saratoga trunk. Until this moment I have never been able to conceive the utility of these erections; but then I began to have a glimmer. Whether it was for convenience in the slave trade, or to obviate the results of too ready an employment of the bowie- knife, I cannot bring myself to decide. But one thing I see plainly - the object of such a box is to contain a human body.

"Surely," cried Silas, "surely this is not a time for jesting."

"Although I may express myself with some degree of pleasantry," replied the Doctor, "the purport of my words is entirely serious. And the first thing we have to do, my young friend, is to empty your coffer of all that it contains."

Silas, obeying the authority of Doctor Noel, put himself at his disposition. The Saratoga trunk was soon gutted of its contents, which made a considerable litter on the floor; and then - Silas taking the heels and the Doctor supporting the shoulders - the body of the murdered man was carried from the bed, and, after some difficulty, doubled up and inserted whole into the empty box. With an effort on the part of both, the lid was forced down upon this unusual baggage, and the trunk was locked and corded by the Doctor's own hand, while Silas disposed of what had been taken out between the closet and a chest of drawers.

"Now," said the Doctor, "the first step has been taken on the way to your deliverance. To-morrow, or rather to-day, it must be your task to allay the suspicions of your porter, paying him all that you owe; while you may trust me to make the arrangements necessary to a safe conclusion. Meantime, follow me to my room, where I shall give you a safe and powerful opiate; for, whatever you do, you must have rest."

The next day was the longest in Silas's memory; it seemed as if it would never be done. He denied himself to his friends, and sat in a corner with his eyes fixed upon the Saratoga trunk in dismal contemplation. His own former indiscretions were now returned upon him in kind; for the observatory had been once more opened, and he was conscious of an almost continual study from Madame Zephyrine's apartment. So distressing did this become, that he was at last obliged to block up the spy-hole from his own side; and when he was thus secured from observation he spent a considerable portion of his time in contrite tears and prayer.

Late in the evening Dr. Noel entered the room carrying in his hand a pair of sealed envelopes without address, one somewhat bulky, and the other so slim as to seem without enclosure.

"Silas," he said, seating himself at the table, "the time has now come for me to explain my plan for your salvation. To-morrow morning, at an early hour, Prince Florizel of Bohemia returns to London, after having diverted himself for a few days with the Parisian Carnival. It was my fortune, a good while ago, to do Colonel Geraldine, his Master of the Horse, one of those services, so common in my profession, which are never forgotten upon either side. I have no need to explain to you the nature of the obligation under which he was laid; suffice it to say that I knew him ready to serve me in any practicable manner. Now, it was necessary for you to gain London with your trunk unopened. To this the Custom House seemed to oppose a fatal difficulty; but I bethought me that the baggage of so considerable a person as the Prince, is, as a matter of courtesy, passed without examination by the officers of Custom. I applied to Colonel Geraldine, and succeeded in obtaining a favourable answer. To-morrow, if you go before six to the hotel where the Prince lodges, your baggage will be passed over as a part of his, and you yourself will make the journey as a member of his suite."

"It seems to me, as you speak, that I have already seen both the Prince and Colonel Geraldine; I even overheard some of their conversation the other evening at the Bullier Ball."

"It is probable enough; for the Prince loves to mix with all societies," replied the Doctor. "Once arrived in London," he pursued, "your task is nearly ended. In this more bulky envelope I have given you a letter which I dare not address; but in the other you will find the designation of the house to which you must carry it along with your box, which will there be taken from you and not trouble you any more."

"Alas!" said Silas, "I have every wish to believe you; but how is it possible? You open up to me a bright prospect, but, I ask you, is my mind capable of receiving so unlikely a solution? Be more generous, and let me further understand your meaning."

The Doctor seemed painfully impressed.

"Boy," he answered, "you do not know how hard a thing you ask of me. But be it so. I am now inured to humiliation; and it would be strange if I refused you this, after having granted you so much. Know, then, that although I now make so quiet an appearance - frugal, solitary, addicted to study - when I was younger, my name was once a rallying-cry among the most astute and dangerous spirits of London; and while I was outwardly an object for respect and consideration, my true power resided in the most secret, terrible, and criminal relations. It is to one of the persons who then obeyed me that I now address myself to deliver you from your burden. They were men of many different nations and dexterities, all bound together by a formidable oath, and working to the same purposes; the trade of the association was in murder; and I who speak to you, innocent as I appear, was the chieftain of this redoubtable crew."

"What?" cried Silas. "A murderer? And one with whom murder was a trade? Can I take your hand? Ought I so much as to accept your services? Dark and criminal old man, would you make an accomplice of my youth and my distress?"

The Doctor bitterly laughed.

"You are difficult to please, Mr. Scuddamore," said he; "but I now offer you your choice of company between the murdered man and the murderer. If your conscience is too nice to accept my aid, say so, and I will immediately leave you. Thenceforward you can deal with your trunk and its belongings as best suits your upright conscience."

"I own myself wrong," replied Silas. "I should have remembered how generously you offered to shield me, even before I had convinced you of my innocence, and I continue to listen to your counsels with gratitude."

"That is well," returned the Doctor; "and I perceive you are beginning to learn some of the lessons of experience."

"At the same time," resumed the New-Englander, "as you confess yourself accustomed o this tragical business, and the people to whom you recommend me are your own former associates and friends, could you not yourself undertake the transport of the box, and rid me at once of its detested presence?"

"Upon my word," replied the Doctor, "I admire you cordially. If you do not think I have already meddled sufficiently in your concerns, believe me, from my heart I think the contrary. Take or leave my services as I offer them; and trouble me with no more words of gratitude, for I value your consideration even more lightly than I do your intellect. A time will come, if you should be spared to see a number of years in health of mind, when you will think differently of all this, and blush for your to-night's behaviour."

So saying, the Doctor arose from his chair, repeated his directions briefly and clearly, and departed from the room without permitting Silas any time to answer.

The next morning Silas presented himself at the hotel, where he was politely received by Colonel Geraldine, and relieved, from that moment, of all immediate alarm about his trunk and its grisly contents. The journey passed over without much incident, although the young man was horrified to overhear the sailors and railway porters complaining among themselves about the unusual weight of the Prince's baggage. Silas travelled in a carriage with the valets, for Prince Florizel chose to be alone with his Master of the Horse. On board the steamer, however, Silas attracted his Highness's attention by the melancholy of his air and attitude as he stood gazing at the pile of baggage; for he was still full of disquietude about the future.

"There is a young man," observed the Prince, "who must have some cause for sorrow."

"That," replied Geraldine, "is the American for whom I obtained permission to travel with your suite."

"You remind me that I have been remiss in courtesy," said Prince Florizel, and advancing to Silas, he addressed him with the most exquisite condescension in these words:- "I was charmed, young sir, to be able to gratify the desire you made known to me through Colonel Geraldine. Remember, if you please, that I shall be glad at any future time to lay you under a more serious obligation."

And he then put some questions as to the political condition of America, which Silas answered with sense and propriety.

"You are still a young man," said the Prince; "but I observe you to be very serious for your years. Perhaps you allow your attention to be too much occupied with grave studies. But, perhaps, on the other hand, I am myself indiscreet and touch upon a painful subject."

"I have certainly cause to be the most miserable of men," said Silas; "never has a more innocent person been more dismally abused."

"I will not ask you for your confidence," returned Prince Florizel. "But do not forget that Colonel Geraldine's recommendation is an unfailing passport; and that I am not only willing, but possibly more able than many others, to do you a service."

Silas was delighted with the amiability of this great personage; but his mind soon returned upon its gloomy preoccupations; for not even the favour of a Prince to a Republican can discharge a brooding spirit of its cares.

The train arrived at Charing Cross, where the officers of the Revenue respected the baggage of Prince Florizel in the usual manner. The most elegant equipages were in waiting; and Silas was driven, along with the rest, to the Prince's residence. There Colonel Geraldine sought him out, and expressed himself pleased to have been of any service to a friend of the physician's, for whom he professed a great consideration.

"I hope," he added, "that you will find none of your porcelain injured. Special orders were given along the line to deal tenderly with the Prince's effects."

And then, directing the servants to place one of the carriages at the young gentleman's disposal, and at once to charge the Saratoga trunk upon the dickey, the Colonel shook hands and excused himself on account of his occupations in the princely household.

Silas now broke the seal of the envelope containing the address, and directed the stately footman to drive him to Box Court, opening off the Strand. It seemed as if the place were not at all unknown to the man, for he looked startled and begged a repetition of the order. It was with a heart full of alarms, that Silas mounted into the luxurious vehicle, and was driven to his destination. The entrance to Box Court was too narrow for the passage of a coach; it was a mere footway between railings, with a post at either end. On one of these posts was seated a man, who at once jumped down and exchanged a friendly sign with the driver, while the footman opened the door and inquired of Silas whether he should take down the Saratoga trunk, and to what number it should be carried.

"If you please," said Silas. "To number three."

The footman and the man who had been sitting on the post, even with the aid of Silas himself, had hard work to carry in the trunk; and before it was deposited at the door of the house in question, the young American was horrified to find a score of loiterers looking on. But he knocked with as good a countenance as he could muster up, and presented the other envelope to him who opened.

"He is not at home," said he, "but if you will leave your letter and return to-morrow early, I shall be able to inform you whether and when he can receive your visit. Would you like to leave your box?" he added.

"Dearly," cried Silas; and the next moment he repented his precipitation, and declared, with equal emphasis, that he would rather carry the box along with him to the hotel.

The crowd jeered at his indecision and followed him to the carriage with insulting remarks; and Silas, covered with shame and terror, implored the servants to conduct him to some quiet and comfortable house of entertainment in the immediate neighbourhood.

The Prince's equipage deposited Silas at the Craven Hotel in Craven Street, and immediately drove away, leaving him alone with the servants of the inn. The only vacant room, it appeared, was a little den up four pairs of stairs, and looking towards the back. To this hermitage, with infinite trouble and complaint, a pair of stout porters carried the Saratoga trunk. It is needless to mention that Silas kept closely at their heels throughout the ascent, and had his heart in his mouth at every corner. A single false step, he reflected, and the box might go over the banisters and land its fatal contents, plainly discovered, on the pavement of the hall.

Arrived in the room, he sat down on the edge of his bed to recover from the agony that he had just endured; but he had hardly taken his position when he was recalled to a sense of his peril by the action of the boots, who had knelt beside the trunk, and was proceeding officiously to undo its elaborate fastenings.

“Let it be!” cried Silas. “I shall want nothing from it while I stay here.”

“You might have let it lie in the hall, then,” growled the man; “a thing as big and heavy as a church. What you have inside I cannot fancy. If it is all money, you are a richer man than me.”

“Money?” repeated Silas, in a sudden perturbation. “What do you mean by money? I have no money, and you are speaking like a fool.”

“All right, captain,” retorted the boots with a wink. “There’s nobody will touch your lordship’s money. I’m as safe as the bank,” he added; “but as the box is heavy, I shouldn’t mind drinking something to your lordship’s health.”

Silas pressed two Napoleons upon his acceptance, apologising, at the same time, for being obliged to trouble him with foreign money, and pleading his recent arrival for excuse. And the man, grumbling with even greater fervour, and looking contemptuously from the money in his hand to the Saratoga trunk and back again from the one to the other, at last consented to withdraw.

For nearly two days the dead body had been packed into Silas’s box; and as soon as he was alone the unfortunate New-Englander nosed all the cracks and openings with the most passionate attention. But the weather was cool, and the trunk still managed to contain his shocking secret.

He took a chair beside it, and buried his face in his hands, and his mind in the most profound reflection. If he were not speedily relieved, no question but he must be speedily discovered. Alone in a strange city, without friends or accomplices, if the Doctor’s introduction failed him, he was indubitably a lost New-Englander. He reflected pathetically over his ambitious designs for the future; he should not now become the hero and spokesman of his native place of Bangor, Maine; he should not, as he had fondly anticipated, move on from office to office, from honour to honour; he might as well divest himself at once of all hope of being acclaimed President of the United

States, and leaving behind him a statue, in the worst possible style of art, to adorn the Capitol at Washington. Here he was, chained to a dead Englishman doubled up inside a Saratoga trunk; whom he must get rid of, or perish from the rolls of national glory!

I should be afraid to chronicle the language employed by this young man to the Doctor, to the murdered man, to Madame Zephyrine, to the boots of the hotel, to the Prince's servants, and, in a word, to all who had been ever so remotely connected with his horrible misfortune.

He slunk down to dinner about seven at night; but the yellow coffee-room appalled him, the eyes of the other diners seemed to rest on his with suspicion, and his mind remained upstairs with the Saratoga trunk. When the waiter came to offer him cheese, his nerves were already so much on edge that he leaped half-way out of his chair and upset the remainder of a pint of ale upon the table- cloth.

The fellow offered to show him to the smoking-room when he had done; and although he would have much preferred to return at once to his perilous treasure, he had not the courage to refuse, and was shown downstairs to the black, gas-lit cellar, which formed, and possibly still forms, the divan of the Craven Hotel.

Two very sad betting men were playing billiards, attended by a moist, consumptive marker; and for the moment Silas imagined that these were the only occupants of the apartment. But at the next glance his eye fell upon a person smoking in the farthest corner, with lowered eyes and a most respectable and modest aspect. He knew at once that he had seen the face before; and, in spite of the entire change of clothes, recognised the man whom he had found seated on a post at the entrance to Box Court, and who had helped him to carry the trunk to and from the carriage. The New-Englander simply turned and ran, nor did he pause until he had locked and bolted himself into his bedroom.

There, all night long, a prey to the most terrible imaginations, he watched beside the fatal boxful of dead flesh. The suggestion of the boots that his trunk was full of gold inspired him with all manner of new terrors, if he so much as dared to close an eye; and the presence in the smoking-room, and under an obvious disguise, of the loiterer from Box Court convinced him that he was once more the centre of obscure machinations.

Midnight had sounded some time, when, impelled by uneasy suspicions, Silas opened his bedroom door and peered into the passage. It was dimly illuminated by a single jet of gas; and some distance off he perceived a man sleeping on the floor in the costume of an hotel under-servant. Silas drew near the man on tiptoe. He lay partly on his back, partly on his side, and his right forearm concealed his face from recognition. Suddenly, while the American was still bending over him, the sleeper removed his arm and opened his eyes, and Silas found himself once more face to face with the loiterer of Box Court.

"Good-night, sir," said the man, pleasantly.

But Silas was too profoundly moved to find an answer, and regained his room in silence.

Towards morning, worn out by apprehension, he fell asleep on his chair, with his head forward on the trunk. In spite of so constrained an attitude and such a grisly pillow, his slumber was sound and prolonged, and he was only awakened at a late hour and by a sharp tapping at the door.

He hurried to open, and found the boots without.

"You are the gentleman who called yesterday at Box Court?" he asked.

Silas, with a quaver, admitted that he had done so.

"Then this note is for you," added the servant, proffering a sealed envelope.

Silas tore it open, and found inside the words: "Twelve o'clock."

He was punctual to the hour; the trunk was carried before him by several stout servants; and he was himself ushered into a room, where a man sat warming himself before the fire with his back towards the door. The sound of so many persons entering and leaving, and the scraping of the trunk as it was deposited upon the bare boards, were alike unable to attract the notice of the occupant; and Silas stood waiting, in an agony of fear, until he should deign to recognise his presence.

Perhaps five minutes had elapsed before the man turned leisurely about, and disclosed the features of Prince Florizel of Bohemia.

"So, sir," he said, with great severity, "this is the manner in which you abuse my politeness. You join yourselves to persons of condition, I perceive, for no other purpose than to escape the consequences of your crimes; and I can readily understand your embarrassment when I addressed myself to you yesterday."

"Indeed," cried Silas, "I am innocent of everything except misfortune."

And in a hurried voice, and with the greatest ingenuousness, he recounted to the Prince the whole history of his calamity.

"I see I have been mistaken," said his Highness, when he had heard him to an end. "You are no other than a victim, and since I am not to punish you may be sure I shall do my utmost to help. And now," he continued, "to business. Open your box at once, and let me see what it contains."

Silas changed colour.

"I almost fear to look upon it," he exclaimed.

"Nay," replied the Prince, "have you not looked at it already? This is a form of sentimentality to be resisted. The sight of a sick man, whom we can still help, should appeal more directly to the feelings than that of a dead man who is equally beyond help or harm, love or hatred. Nerve yourself, Mr. Scuddamore," and then, seeing that Silas still hesitated, "I do not desire to give another name to my request," he added.

The young American awoke as if out of a dream, and with a shiver of repugnance addressed himself to loose the straps and open the lock of the Saratoga trunk. The Prince stood by, watching with a composed countenance and his hands behind his back. The body was quite stiff, and it cost Silas a great effort, both moral and physical, to dislodge it from its position, and discover the face.

Prince Florizel started back with an exclamation of painful surprise.

"Alas!" he cried, "you little know, Mr. Scuddamore, what a cruel gift you have brought me. This is a young man of my own suite, the brother of my trusted friend; and it was upon matters of my own service that he has thus perished at the hands of violent and treacherous men. Poor Geraldine," he went on, as if to himself, "in what words am I to tell you of your brother's fate? How can I excuse myself in your eyes, or in the eyes of God, for the presumptuous schemes that led him to this bloody and unnatural death? Ah, Florizel! Florizel! when will you learn the discretion that suits mortal life, and be no longer dazzled with the image of power at your disposal? Power!" he cried; "who is more powerless? I look upon this young man whom I have sacrificed, Mr. Scuddamore, and feel how small a thing it is to be a Prince."

Silas was moved at the sight of his emotion. He tried to murmur some consolatory words, and burst into tears.

The Prince, touched by his obvious intention, came up to him and took him by the hand.

"Command yourself," said he. "We have both much to learn, and we shall both be better men for to-day's meeting."

Silas thanked him in silence with an affectionate look.

"Write me the address of Doctor Noel on this piece of paper," continued the Prince, leading him towards the table; "and let me recommend you, when you are again in Paris, to avoid the society of that dangerous man. He has acted in this matter on a generous inspiration; that I must believe; had he been privy to young Geraldine's death he would never have despatched the body to the care of the actual criminal."

"The actual criminal!" repeated Silas in astonishment.

"Even so," returned the Prince. "This letter, which the disposition of

Almighty Providence has so strangely delivered into my hands, was addressed to no less a person than the criminal himself, the infamous President of the Suicide Club. Seek to pry no further in these perilous affairs, but content yourself with your own miraculous escape, and leave this house at once. I have pressing affairs, and must arrange at once about this poor clay, which was so lately a gallant and handsome youth."

Silas took a grateful and submissive leave of Prince Florizel, but he lingered in Box Court until he saw him depart in a splendid carriage on a visit to Colonel Henderson of the police. Republican as he was, the young American took off his hat with almost a sentiment of devotion to the retreating carriage. And the same night he started by rail on his return to Paris.

Here (observes my Arabian author) is the end of THE HISTORY OF THE PHYSICIAN AND THE SARATOGA TRUNK. Omitting some reflections on the power of Providence, highly pertinent in the original, but little suited to our occiddental taste, I shall only add that Mr. Scuddamore has already begun to mount the ladder of political fame, and by last advices was the Sheriff of his native town.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE HANSOM CABS

Lieutenant Brackenbury Rich had greatly distinguished himself in one of the lesser Indian hill wars. He it was who took the chieftain prisoner with his own hand; his gallantry was universally applauded; and when he came home, prostrated by an ugly sabre cut and a protracted jungle fever, society was prepared to welcome the Lieutenant as a celebrity of minor lustre. But his was a character remarkable for unaffected modesty; adventure was dear to his heart, but he cared little for adulation; and he waited at foreign watering-places and in Algiers until the fame of his exploits had run through its nine days' vitality and begun to be forgotten. He arrived in London at last, in the early season, with as little observation as he could desire; and as he was an orphan and had none but distant relatives who lived in the provinces, it was almost as a foreigner that he installed himself in the capital of the country for which he had shed his blood.

On the day following his arrival he dined alone at a military club. He shook hands with a few old comrades, and received their warm congratulations; but as one and all had some engagement for the evening, he found himself left entirely to his own resources. He was in dress, for he had entertained the notion of visiting a theatre. But the great city was new to him; he had gone from a provincial school to a military college, and thence direct to the Eastern Empire; and he promised himself a variety of delights in this world for exploration. Swinging his cane, he took his way westward. It was a mild evening, already dark, and now and then threatening rain. The succession of faces in the lamplight stirred the Lieutenant's imagination; and it seemed to him as if he could walk for ever in that stimulating city atmosphere and surrounded by the mystery of four million private lives. He glanced at the houses, and marvelled what was passing behind those warmly-lighted windows; he looked into face after face, and saw them each intent upon some unknown interest, criminal or kindly.

"They talk of war," he thought, "but this is the great battlefield of mankind."

And then he began to wonder that he should walk so long in this complicated scene, and not chance upon so much as the shadow of an adventure for himself.

"All in good time," he reflected. "I am still a stranger, and perhaps wear a strange air. But I must be drawn into the eddy before long."

The night was already well advanced when a plump of cold rain fell suddenly out of the darkness. Brackenbury paused under some trees, and as he did so he caught sight of a hansom cabman making him a sign that he was disengaged. The circumstance fell in so happily to the occasion that he at once raised his cane in answer, and had soon ensconced himself in the London gondola.

"Where to, sir?" asked the driver.

"Where you please," said Brackenbury.

And immediately, at a pace of surprising swiftness, the hansom drove off through the rain into a maze of villas. One villa was so like another, each with its front garden, and there was so little to distinguish the deserted lamp-lit streets and crescents through which the flying hansom took its way, that Brackenbury soon lost all idea of direction.

He would have been tempted to believe that the cabman was amusing himself by driving him round and round and in and out about a small quarter, but there was something business-like in the speed which convinced him of the contrary. The man had an object in view, he was hastening towards a definite end; and Brackenbury was at once astonished at the fellow's skill in picking a way through such a labyrinth, and a little concerned to imagine what was the occasion of his hurry. He had heard tales of strangers falling ill in London. Did the driver belong to some bloody and treacherous association? and was he himself being whirled to a murderous death?

The thought had scarcely presented itself, when the cab swung sharply round a corner and pulled up before the garden gate of a villa in a long and wide road. The house was brilliantly lighted up. Another hansom had just driven away, and Brackenbury could see a gentleman being admitted at the front door and received by several liveried servants. He was surprised that the cabman should have stopped so immediately in front of a house where a reception was being held; but he did not doubt it was the result of accident, and sat placidly smoking where he was, until he heard the trap thrown open over his head.

"Here we are, sir," said the driver.

"Here!" repeated Brackenbury. "Where?"

"You told me to take you where I pleased, sir," returned the man with a chuckle, "and here we are."

It struck Brackenbury that the voice was wonderfully smooth and courteous for a man in so inferior a position; he remembered the speed at which he had been driven; and now it occurred to him that the hansom was more luxuriously appointed than the common run of public conveyances.

"I must ask you to explain," said he. "Do you mean to turn me out into the rain? My good man, I suspect the choice is mine."

"The choice is certainly yours," replied the driver; "but when I tell you all, I believe I know how a gentleman of your figure will decide. There is a gentlemen's party in this house. I do not know whether the master be a stranger to London and without acquaintances of his own; or whether he is a man of odd notions. But certainly I was hired to kidnap single gentlemen in evening dress, as many as I pleased, but military officers by preference. You have simply to go in and say that Mr. Morris invited you."

"Are you Mr. Morris?" inquired the Lieutenant.

"Oh, no," replied the cabman. "Mr. Morris is the person of the house."

"It is not a common way of collecting guests," said Brackenbury: "but an eccentric man might very well indulge the whim without any intention to offend. And suppose that I refuse Mr. Morris's invitation," he went on, "what then?"

"My orders are to drive you back where I took you from," replied the man, "and set out to look for others up to midnight. Those who have no fancy for such an adventure, Mr. Morris said, were not the guests for him."

These words decided the Lieutenant on the spot.

"After all," he reflected, as he descended from the hansom, "I have not had long to wait for my adventure."

He had hardly found footing on the side-walk, and was still feeling in his pocket for the fare, when the cab swung about and drove off by the way it came at the former break-neck velocity. Brackenbury shouted after the man, who paid no heed, and continued to drive away; but the sound of his voice was overheard in the house, the door was again thrown open, emitting a flood of light upon the garden, and a servant ran down to meet him holding an umbrella.

"The cabman has been paid," observed the servant in a very civil tone; and he proceeded to escort Brackenbury along the path and up the steps. In the hall several other attendants relieved him of his hat, cane, and paletot, gave him a ticket with a number in return, and politely hurried him up a stair adorned with tropical flowers, to the door of an apartment on the first storey. Here a grave butler inquired his name, and announcing "Lieutenant Brackenbury Rich," ushered him into the drawing-room of the house.

A young man, slender and singularly handsome, came forward and greeted him with an air at once courtly and affectionate. Hundreds of candles, of the finest wax, lit up a room that was perfumed, like the staircase, with a profusion of rare and beautiful flowering shrubs. A side-table was loaded with tempting viands. Several servants went to and fro with fruits and goblets of champagne. The company was perhaps sixteen in number, all men, few beyond the prime of life, and with hardly an exception, of a dashing and capable exterior. They were divided into two groups, one about a roulette board, and the other surrounding a table at which one of their number held a bank of baccarat.

"I see," thought Brackenbury, "I am in a private gambling saloon, and the cabman was a tout."

His eye had embraced the details, and his mind formed the conclusion, while his host was still holding him by the hand; and to him his looks returned from this rapid survey. At a second view Mr. Morris surprised him still more than on the first. The easy elegance of his manners, the distinction, amiability, and courage that appeared upon his features, fitted very ill with the Lieutenant's preconceptions on the subject of the proprietor of a hell; and the tone of his conversation seemed to mark him out for a man of position and merit. Brackenbury found he had an instinctive liking for his entertainer; and though he chid himself for the weakness, he was unable to resist a sort of friendly attraction for Mr. Morris's person and character.

"I have heard of you, Lieutenant Rich," said Mr. Morris, lowering his tone; "and believe me I am gratified to make your acquaintance. Your looks accord with the reputation that has preceded you from India. And if you will forget for a while the irregularity of your presentation in my house, I shall feel it not only an honour, but a genuine pleasure besides. A man who makes a mouthful of barbarian cavaliers," he added with a laugh, "should not be appalled by a breach of etiquette, however serious."

And he led him towards the sideboard and pressed him to partake of some refreshment.

"Upon my word," the Lieutenant reflected, "this is one of the pleasantest fellows and, I do not doubt, one of the most agreeable societies in London."

He partook of some champagne, which he found excellent; and observing that many of the company were already smoking, he lit one of his own Manillas, and strolled up to the roulette board, where he sometimes made a stake and sometimes looked on smilingly on the fortune of others. It was while he was thus idling that he became aware of a sharp scrutiny to which the whole of the guests were subjected. Mr. Morris went here and there, ostensibly busied on hospitable concerns; but he had ever a shrewd glance at disposal; not a man of the party escaped his sudden, searching looks; he took stock of the bearing of heavy losers, he valued the amount of the stakes, he paused behind couples who were deep in conversation; and, in a word, there was hardly a characteristic of any one present but he seemed to catch and make a note of it. Brackenbury began to wonder if this were indeed a gambling hell: it had so much the air of a private inquisition. He followed Mr. Morris in all his movements; and although the man had a ready smile, he seemed to perceive, as it were under a mask, a haggard, careworn, and preoccupied spirit. The fellows around him laughed and made their game; but Brackenbury had lost interest in the guests.

"This Morris," thought he, "is no idler in the room. Some deep purpose inspires him; let it be mine to fathom it."

Now and then Mr. Morris would call one of his visitors aside; and after a brief colloquy in an ante-room, he would return alone, and the visitors in question reappeared no more. After a certain number of repetitions, this performance excited Brackenbury's curiosity to a high degree. He determined to be at the bottom of this minor mystery at once; and strolling into the ante-room, found a deep window recess concealed by curtains of the fashionable green. Here he hurriedly ensconced himself; nor had he to wait long before the sound of steps and voices drew near him from the principal apartment. Peering through the division, he saw Mr. Morris escorting a fat and ruddy personage, with somewhat the look of a commercial traveller, whom Brackenbury had already remarked for his coarse laugh and under-bred behaviour at the table. The pair halted immediately before the window, so that Brackenbury lost not a word of the following discourse:-

"I beg you a thousand pardons!" began Mr. Morris, with the most conciliatory manner; "and, if I appear rude, I am sure you will readily forgive me. In a place so great as London accidents must continually happen; and the best that we can hope is to remedy them with as small delay as possible. I will not deny that I fear you have made a mistake and honoured my poor house by inadvertence; for, to speak openly, I cannot at all remember your appearance. Let me put the question without unnecessary circumlocution - between gentlemen of honour a word will suffice - Under whose roof do you suppose yourself to be?"

"That of Mr. Morris," replied the other, with a prodigious display of confusion, which had been visibly growing upon him throughout the last few words.

"Mr. John or Mr. James Morris?" inquired the host.

"I really cannot tell you," returned the unfortunate guest. "I am not personally acquainted with the gentleman, any more than I am with yourself."

"I see," said Mr. Morris. "There is another person of the same name farther down the street; and I have no doubt the policeman will be able to supply you with his number. Believe me, I felicitate myself on the misunderstanding which has procured me the pleasure of your company for so long; and let me express a hope that we may meet again upon a more regular footing. Meantime, I would not for the world detain you longer from your friends. John," he added, raising his voice, "will you see that this gentleman finds his great-coat?"

And with the most agreeable air Mr. Morris escorted his visitor as far as the ante-room door, where he left him under conduct of the butler. As he passed the window, on his return to the drawing- room, Brackenbury could hear him utter a profound sigh, as though his mind was loaded with a great anxiety, and his nerves already fatigued with the task on which he was engaged.

For perhaps an hour the hansoms kept arriving with such frequency, that Mr. Morris had to receive a new guest for every old one that he sent away, and the company preserved its number undiminished. But towards the end of that time the arrivals grew few and far between, and at length ceased entirely, while the process of elimination was continued with unimpaired activity. The drawing- room began to look empty: the baccarat was discontinued for lack of a banker; more than one person said good-night of his own accord, and was suffered to depart without expostulation; and in the meanwhile Mr. Morris redoubled in agreeable attentions to those who stayed behind. He went from group to group and from person to person with looks of the readiest sympathy and the most pertinent and pleasing talk; he was not so much like a host as like a hostess, and there was a feminine coquetry and condescension in his manner which charmed the hearts of all.

As the guests grew thinner, Lieutenant Rich strolled for a moment out of the drawing-room into the hall in quest of fresher air. But he had no sooner passed the threshold of the ante-chamber than he was brought to a dead halt by a discovery of the most surprising nature. The flowering shrubs had disappeared from the staircase; three large furniture waggons stood before the garden gate; the servants were busy dismantling the house upon all sides; and some of them had already donned their great-coats and were preparing to depart. It was like the end of a country ball, where everything has been supplied by contract. Brackenbury had indeed some matter for reflection. First, the guests, who were no real guests after all, had been dismissed; and now the servants, who could hardly be genuine servants, were actively dispersing.

"“Was the whole establishment a sham?” he asked himself. “The mushroom of a single night which should disappear before morning?”

Watching a favourable opportunity, Brackenbury dashed upstairs to the highest regions of the house. It was as he had expected. He ran from room to room, and saw not a stick of furniture nor so much as a picture on the walls. Although the house had been painted and papered, it was not only uninhabited at present, but plainly had never been inhabited at all. The young officer remembered with astonishment its specious, settled, and hospitable air on his arrival

It was only at a prodigious cost that the imposture could have been carried out upon so great a scale.

Who, then, was Mr. Morris? What was his intention in thus playing the householder for a single night in the remote west of London? And why did he collect his visitors at hazard from the streets?

Brackenbury remembered that he had already delayed too long, and hastened to join the company. Many had left during his absence; and counting the Lieutenant and his host, there were not more than five persons in the drawing-room - recently so thronged. Mr. Morris greeted him, as he re-entered the apartment, with a smile, and immediately rose to his feet.

“It is now time, gentlemen,” said he, “to explain my purpose in decoying you from your amusements. I trust you did not find the evening hang very dully on your hands; but my object, I will confess it, was not to entertain your leisure, but to help myself in an unfortunate necessity. You are all gentlemen,” he continued, “your appearance does you that much justice, and I ask for no better security. Hence, I speak it without concealment, I ask you to render me a dangerous and delicate service; dangerous because you may run the hazard of your lives, and delicate because I must ask an absolute discretion upon all that you shall see or hear. From an utter stranger the request is almost comically extravagant; I am well aware of this; and I would add at once, if there be any one present who has heard enough, if there be one among the party who recoils from a dangerous confidence and a piece of Quixotic devotion to he knows not whom - here is my hand ready, and I shall wish him good-night and God-speed with all the sincerity in the world.”

A very tall, black man, with a heavy stoop, immediately responded to this appeal.

"I commend your frankness, Sir," said he; "and, for my part, I go. I make no reflections; but I cannot deny that you fill me with suspicious thoughts. I go myself, as I say; and perhaps you will think I have no right to add words to my example."

"On the contrary," replied Mr. Morris, "I am obliged to you for all you say. It would be impossible to exaggerate the gravity of my proposal."

"Well, gentlemen, what do you say?" said the tall man, addressing the others. "We have had our evening's frolic; shall we all go homeward peaceably in a body? You will think well of my suggestion in the morning, when you see the sun again in innocence and safety."

The speaker pronounced the last words with an intonation which added to their force; and his face wore a singular expression, full of gravity and significance. Another of the company rose hastily, and, with some appearance of alarm, prepared to take his leave. There were only two who held their ground, Brackenbury and an old red-nosed cavalry Major; but these two preserved a nonchalant demeanour, and, beyond a look of intelligence which they rapidly exchanged, appeared entirely foreign to the discussion that had just been terminated.

Mr. Morris conducted the deserters as far as the door, which he closed upon their heels; then he turned round, disclosing a countenance of mingled relief and animation, and addressed the two officers as follows.

"I have chosen my men like Joshua in the Bible," said Mr. Morris, "and I now believe I have the pick of London. Your appearance pleased my hansom cabmen; then it delighted me; I have watched your behaviour in a strange company, and under the most unusual circumstances: I have studied how you played and how you bore your losses; lastly, I have put you to the test of a staggering announcement, and you received it like an invitation to dinner. It is not for nothing," he cried, "that I have been for years the companion and the pupil of the bravest and wisest potentate in Europe."

"At the affair of Bunderchang," observed the Major, "I asked for twelve volunteers, and every trooper in the ranks replied to my appeal. But a gaming party is not the same thing as a regiment under fire. You may be pleased, I suppose, to have found two, and two who will not fail you at a push. As for the pair who ran away, I count them among the most pitiful hounds I ever met with. Lieutenant Rich," he added, addressing Brackenbury, "I have heard much of you of late; and I cannot doubt but you have also heard of me. I am Major O'Rooke."

And the veteran tendered his hand, which was red and tremulous, to the young Lieutenant.

"Who has not?" answered Brackenbury.

"When this little matter is settled," said Mr. Morris, "you will think I have sufficiently rewarded you; for I could offer neither a more valuable service than to make him acquainted with the other."

"And now," said Major O'Rooke, "is it a duel?"

"A duel after a fashion," replied Mr. Morris, "a duel with unknown and dangerous enemies, and, as I gravely fear, a duel to the death. I must ask you," he continued, "to call me Morris no longer; call me, if you please, Hammersmith; my real name, as well as that of another person to whom I hope to present you before long, you will gratify me by not asking and not seeking to discover for yourselves. Three days ago the person of whom I speak disappeared suddenly from home; and, until this morning, I received no hint of his situation. You will fancy my alarm when I tell you that he is engaged upon a work of private justice. Bound by an unhappy oath, too lightly sworn, he finds it necessary, without the help of law, to rid the earth of an insidious and bloody villain. Already two of our friends, and one of them my own born brother, have perished in the enterprise. He himself, or I am much deceived, is taken in the same fatal toils. But at least he still lives and still hopes, as this billet sufficiently proves."

And the speaker, no other than Colonel Geraldine, proffered a letter, thus conceived:-

"Major Hammersmith, - On Wednesday, at 3 A.M., you will be admitted by the small door to the gardens of Rochester House, Regent's Park, by a man who is entirely in my interest. I must request you not to fail me by a second. Pray bring my case of swords, and, if you can find them, one or two gentlemen of conduct and discretion to whom my person is unknown. My name must not be used in this affair.

T. GODALL."

"From his wisdom alone, if he had no other title," pursued Colonel Geraldine, when the others had each satisfied his curiosity, "my friend is a man whose directions should implicitly be followed. I need not tell you, therefore, that I have not so much as visited the neighbourhood of Rochester House; and that I am still as wholly in the dark as either of yourselves as to the nature of my friend's dilemma. I betook myself, as soon as I had received this order, to a furnishing contractor, and, in a few hours, the house in which we now are had assumed its late air of festival. My scheme was at least original; and I am far from regretting an action which has procured me the services of Major O'Rooke and Lieutenant Brackenbury Rich. But the servants in the street will have a strange awakening. The house which this evening was full of lights and visitors they will find uninhabited and for sale to-morrow morning. Thus even the most serious concerns," added the Colonel, "have a merry side."

"And let us add a merry ending," said Brackenbury.

The Colonel consulted his watch.

"It is now hard on two," he said. "We have an hour before us, and a swift cab is at the door. Tell me if I may count upon your help."

"During a long life," replied Major O'Rooke, "I never took back my hand from anything, nor so much as hedged a bet."

Brackenbury signified his readiness in the most becoming terms; and after they had drunk a glass or two of wine, the Colonel gave each of them a loaded revolver, and the three mounted into the cab and drove off for the address in question.

Rochester House was a magnificent residence on the banks of the canal. The large extent of the garden isolated it in an unusual degree from the annoyances of neighbourhood. It seemed the PARC AUX CERFS of some great nobleman or millionaire. As far as could be seen from the street, there was not a glimmer of light in any of the numerous windows of the mansion; and the place had a look of neglect, as though the master had been long from home.

The cab was discharged, and the three gentlemen were not long in discovering the small door, which was a sort of postern in a lane between two garden walls. It still wanted ten or fifteen minutes of the appointed time; the rain fell heavily, and the adventurers sheltered themselves below some pendant ivy, and spoke in low tones of the approaching trial.

Suddenly Geraldine raised his finger to command silence, and all three bent their hearing to the utmost. Through the continuous noise of the rain, the steps and voices of two men became audible from the other side of the wall; and, as they drew nearer, Brackenbury, whose sense of hearing was remarkably acute, could even distinguish some fragments of their talk.

"Is the grave dug?" asked one.

"It is," replied the other; "behind the laurel hedge. When the job is done, we can cover it with a pile of stakes."

The first speaker laughed, and the sound of his merriment was shocking to the listeners on the other side.

"In an hour from now," he said.

And by the sound of the steps it was obvious that the pair had separated, and were proceeding in contrary directions.

Almost immediately after the postern door was cautiously opened, a white face was protruded into the lane, and a hand was seen beckoning to the watchers. In dead silence the three passed the door, which was immediately locked behind them, and followed their guide through several garden alleys to the kitchen entrance of the house. A single candle burned in the great paved kitchen, which was destitute of the customary furniture; and as the party proceeded to ascend from thence by a flight of winding stairs, a prodigious noise of rats testified still more plainly to the dilapidation of the house.

Their conductor preceded them, carrying the candle. He was a lean man, much bent, but still agile; and he turned from time to time and admonished silence and caution by his gestures. Colonel Geraldine followed on his heels, the case of swords under one arm, and a pistol ready in the other. Brackenbury's heart beat thickly. He perceived that they were still in time; but he judged from the alacrity of the old man that the hour of action must be near at hand; and the circumstances of this adventure were so obscure and menacing, the place seemed so well chosen for the darkest acts, that an older man than Brackenbury might have been pardoned a measure of emotion as he closed the procession up the winding stair.

At the top the guide threw open a door and ushered the three officers before him into a small apartment, lighted by a smoky lamp and the glow of a modest fire. At the chimney corner sat a man in the early prime of life, and of a stout but courtly and commanding appearance. His attitude and expression were those of the most unmoved composure; he was smoking a cheroot with much enjoyment and deliberation, and on a table by his elbow stood a long glass of some effervescing beverage which diffused an agreeable odour through the room.

"Welcome," said he, extending his hand to Colonel Geraldine. "I knew I might count on your exactitude."

"On my devotion," replied the Colonel, with a bow.

"Present me to your friends," continued the first; and, when that ceremony had been performed, "I wish, gentlemen," he added, with the most exquisite affability, "that I could offer you a more cheerful programme; it is ungracious to inaugurate an acquaintance upon serious affairs; but the compulsion of events is stronger than the obligations of good-fellowship. I hope and believe you will be able to forgive me this unpleasant evening; and for men of your stamp it will be enough to know that you are conferring a considerable favour."

"Your Highness," said the Major, "must pardon my bluntness. I am unable to hide what I know. For some time back I have suspected Major Hammersmith, but Mr. Godall is unmistakable. To seek two men in London unacquainted with Prince Florizel of Bohemia was to ask too much at Fortune's hands."

"Prince Florizel!" cried Brackenbury in amazement.

And he gazed with the deepest interest on the features of the celebrated personage before him.

“I shall not lament the loss of my incognito,” remarked the Prince, “for it enables me to thank you with the more authority. You would have done as much for Mr. Godall, I feel sure, as for the Prince of Bohemia; but the latter can perhaps do more for you. The gain is mine,” he added, with a courteous gesture.

And the next moment he was conversing with the two officers about the Indian army and the native troops, a subject on which, as on all others, he had a remarkable fund of information and the soundest views.

There was something so striking in this man’s attitude at a moment of deadly peril that Brackenbury was overcome with respectful admiration; nor was he less sensible to the charm of his conversation or the surprising amenity of his address. Every gesture, every intonation, was not only noble in itself, but seemed to ennoble the fortunate mortal for whom it was intended; and Brackenbury confessed to himself with enthusiasm that this was a sovereign for whom a brave man might thankfully lay down his life.

Many minutes had thus passed, when the person who had introduced them into the house, and who had sat ever since in a corner, and with his watch in his hand, arose and whispered a word into the Prince’s ear.

“It is well, Dr. Noel,” replied Florizel, aloud; and then addressing the others, “You will excuse me, gentlemen,” he added, “if I have to leave you in the dark. The moment now approaches.”

Dr. Noel extinguished the lamp. A faint, grey light, premonitory of the dawn, illuminated the window, but was not sufficient to illuminate the room; and when the Prince rose to his feet, it was impossible to distinguish his features or to make a guess at the nature of the emotion which obviously affected him as he spoke. He moved towards the door, and placed himself at one side of it in an attitude of the wariest attention.

“You will have the kindness,” he said, “to maintain the strictest silence, and to conceal yourselves in the densest of the shadow.”

The three officers and the physician hastened to obey, and for nearly ten minutes the only sound in Rochester House was occasioned by the excursions of the rats behind the woodwork. At the end of that period, a loud creak of a hinge broke in with surprising distinctness on the silence; and shortly after, the watchers could distinguish a slow and cautious tread approaching up the kitchen stair. At every second step the intruder seemed to pause and lend an ear, and during these intervals, which seemed of an incalculable duration, a profound disquiet possessed the spirit of the listeners. Dr. Noel, accustomed as he was to dangerous emotions, suffered an almost pitiful physical prostration; his breath whistled in his lungs, his teeth grated one upon another, and his joints cracked aloud as he nervously shifted his position.

At last a hand was laid upon the door, and the bolt shot back with a slight report. There followed another pause, during which Brackenbury could see the Prince draw himself together noiselessly as if for some unusual exertion. Then the door opened, letting in a little more of the light of the morning; and the figure of a man appeared upon the threshold and stood motionless. He was tall, and carried a knife in his hand. Even in the twilight they could see his upper teeth bare and glistening, for his mouth was open like that of a hound about to leap. The man had evidently been over the head in water but a minute or two before; and even while he stood there the drops kept falling from his wet clothes and pattered on the floor.

The next moment he crossed the threshold. There was a leap, a stifled cry, an instantaneous struggle; and before Colonel Geraldine could spring to his aid, the Prince held the man disarmed and helpless, by the shoulders

“Dr. Noel,” he said, “you will be so good as to re-light the lamp.”

And relinquishing the charge of his prisoner to Geraldine and Brackenbury, he crossed the room and set his back against the chimney-piece. As soon as the lamp had kindled, the party beheld an unaccustomed sternness on the Prince’s features. It was no longer Florizel, the careless gentleman; it was the Prince of Bohemia, justly incensed and full of deadly purpose, who now raised his head and addressed the captive President of the Suicide Club.

“President,” he said, “you have laid your last snare, and your own feet are taken in it. The day is beginning; it is your last morning. You have just swum the Regent’s Canal; it is your last bathe in this world. Your old accomplice, Dr. Noel, so far from betraying me, has delivered you into my hands for judgment. And the grave you had dug for me this afternoon shall serve, in God’s almighty providence, to hide your own just doom from the curiosity of mankind. Kneel and pray, sir, if you have a mind that way; for your time is short, and God is weary of your iniquities.”

The President made no answer either by word or sign; but continued to hang his head and gaze sullenly on the floor, as though he were conscious of the Prince’s prolonged and unsparing regard.

“Gentlemen,” continued Florizel, resuming the ordinary tone of his conversation, “this is a fellow who has long eluded me, but whom, thanks to Dr. Noel, I now have tightly by the heels. To tell the story of his misdeeds would occupy more time than we can now afford; but if the canal had contained nothing but the blood of his victims, I believe the wretch would have been no drier than you see him. Even in an affair of this sort I desire to preserve the forms of honour. But I make you the judges, gentlemen - this is more an execution than a duel and to give the rogue his choice of weapons would be to push too far a point of etiquette. I cannot afford to lose my life in such a business," he continued, unlocking the case of swords; "and as a pistol-bullet travels so often on the wings of chance, and skill and courage may fall by the most trembling marksman, I have decided, and I feel sure you will approve my determination, to put this question to the touch of swords."

When Brackenbury and Major O'Rooke, to whom these remarks were particularly addressed, had each intimated his approval, "Quick, sir," added Prince Florizel to the President, "choose a blade and do not keep me waiting; I have an impatience to be done with you for ever."

For the first time since he was captured and disarmed the President raised his head, and it was plain that he began instantly to pluck up courage.

"Is it to be stand up?" he asked eagerly, "and between you and me?"

"I mean so far to honour you," replied the Prince.

"Oh, come!" cried the President. "With a fair field, who knows how things may happen? I must add that I consider it handsome behaviour on your Highness's part; and if the worst comes to the worst I shall die by one of the most gallant gentlemen in Europe."

And the President, liberated by those who had detained him, stepped up to the table and began, with minute attention, to select a sword. He was highly elated, and seemed to feel no doubt that he should issue victorious from the contest. The spectators grew alarmed in the face of so entire a confidence, and adjured Prince Florizel to reconsider his intention.

"It is but a farce," he answered; "and I think I can promise you, gentlemen, that it will not be long a-playing."

"Your Highness will be careful not to over-reach," said Colonel Geraldine.

"Geraldine," returned the Prince, "did you ever know me fail in a debt of honour? I owe you this man's death, and you shall have it."

The President at last satisfied himself with one of the rapiers, and signified his readiness by a gesture that was not devoid of a rude nobility. The nearness of peril, and the sense of courage, even to this obnoxious villain, lent an air of manhood and a certain grace.

The Prince helped himself at random to a sword.

"Colonel Geraldine and Doctor Noel," he said, "will have the goodness to await me in this room. I wish no personal friend of mine to be involved in this transaction. Major O'Rooke, you are a man of some years and a settled reputation - let me recommend the President to your good graces. Lieutenant Rich will be so good as lend me his attentions: a young man cannot have too much experience in such affairs."

"Your Highness," replied Brackenbury, "it is an honour I shall prize extremely."

"It is well," returned Prince Florizel; "I shall hope to stand your friend in more important circumstances."

And so saying he led the way out of the apartment and down the kitchen stairs.

The two men who were thus left alone threw open the window and leaned out, straining every sense to catch an indication of the tragical events that were about to follow. The rain was now over; day had almost come, and the birds were piping in the shrubbery and on the forest trees of the garden. The Prince and his companions were visible for a moment as they followed an alley between two flowering thickets; but at the first corner a clump of foliage intervened, and they were again concealed from view. This was all that the Colonel and the Physician had an opportunity to see, and the garden was so vast, and the place of combat evidently so remote from the house, that not even the noise of sword-play reached their ears.

"He has taken him towards the grave," said Dr. Noel, with a shudder.

"God," cried the Colonel, "God defend the right!"

And they awaited the event in silence, the Doctor shaking with fear, the Colonel in an agony of sweat. Many minutes must have elapsed, the day was sensibly broader, and the birds were singing more heartily in the garden before a sound of returning footsteps recalled their glances towards the door. It was the Prince and the two Indian officers who entered. God had defended the right.

"I am ashamed of my emotion," said Prince Florizel; "I feel it is a weakness unworthy of my station, but the continued existence of that hound of hell had begun to prey upon me like a disease, and his death has more refreshed me than a night of slumber. Look, Geraldine," he continued, throwing his sword upon the floor, "there is the blood of the man who killed your brother. It should be a welcome sight. And yet," he added, "see how strangely we men are made! my revenge is not yet five minutes old, and already I am beginning to ask myself if even revenge be attainable on this precarious stage of life. The ill he did, who can undo it? The career in which he amassed a huge fortune (for the house itself in which we stand belonged to him) - that career is now a part of the destiny of mankind for ever; and I might weary myself making thrusts in carte until the crack of judgment, and Geraldine's brother would be none the less dead, and a thousand other innocent persons would be none the less dishonoured and debauched! The existence of a man is so small a thing to take, so mighty a thing to employ! Alas!” he cried, “is there anything in life so disenchanting as attainment?”

“God’s justice has been done,” replied the Doctor. “So much I behold. The lesson, your Highness, has been a cruel one for me; and I await my own turn with deadly apprehension.”

“What was I saying?” cried the Prince. “I have punished, and here is the man beside us who can help me to undo. Ah, Dr. Noel! you and I have before us many a day of hard and honourable toil; and perhaps, before we have none, you may have more than redeemed your early errors.”

“And in the meantime,” said the Doctor, “let me go and bury my oldest friend.”

(And this, observes the erudite Arabian, is the fortunate conclusion of the tale. The Prince, it is superfluous to mention, forgot none of those who served him in this great exploit; and to this day his authority and influence help them forward in their public career, while his condescending friendship adds a charm to their private life. To collect, continues my author, all the strange events in which this Prince has played the part of Providence were to fill the habitable globe with books. But the stories which relate to the fortunes of THE RAJAH’S DIAMOND are of too entertaining a description, says he, to be omitted. Following prudently in the footsteps of this Oriental, we shall now begin the series to which he refers with the STORY OF THE BANDBOX.)

THE RAJAH’S DIAMOND

STORY OF THE BANDBOX

UP to the age of sixteen, at a private school and afterwards at one of those great institutions for which England is justly famous, Mr. Harry Hartley had received the ordinary education of a gentleman. At that period, he manifested a remarkable distaste for study; and his only surviving parent being both weak and ignorant, he was permitted thenceforward to spend his time in the attainment of petty and purely elegant accomplishments. Two years later, he was left an orphan and almost a beggar. For all active and industrious pursuits, Harry was unfitted alike by nature and training. He could sing romantic ditties, and accompany himself with discretion on the piano; he was a graceful although a timid cavalier; he had a pronounced taste for chess; and nature had sent him into the world with one of the most engaging exteriors that can well be fancied. Blond and pink, with dove’s eyes and a gentle smile, he had an air of agreeable tenderness and melancholy, and the most submissive and caressing manners. But when all is said, he was not the man to lead armaments of war, or direct the councils of a State.

A fortunate chance and some influence obtained for Harry, at the time of his bereavement, the position of private secretary to Major-General Sir Thomas Vandeleur, C.B. Sir Thomas was a man of sixty, loud-spoken, boisterous, and domineering. For some reason, some service the nature of which had been often whispered and repeatedly denied, the Rajah of Kashgar had presented this officer with the sixth known diamond of the world. The gift transformed General Vandeleur from a poor into a wealthy man, from an obscure and unpopular soldier into one of the lions of London society; the possessor of the Rajah’s Diamond was welcome in the most exclusive circles; and he had found a lady, young, beautiful, and well-born, who was willing to call the diamond hers even at the price of marriage with Sir Thomas Vandeleur. It was commonly said at the time that, as like draws to like, one jewel had attracted another; certainly Lady Vandeleur was not only a gem of the finest water in her own person, but she showed herself to the world in a very costly setting; and she was considered by many respectable authorities, as one among the three or four best dressed women in England.

Harry’s duty as secretary was not particularly onerous; but he had a dislike for all prolonged work; it gave him pain to ink his lingers; and the charms of Lady Vandeleur and her toilettes drew him often from the library to the boudoir. He had the prettiest ways among women, could talk fashions with enjoyment, and was never more happy than when criticising a shade of ribbon, or running on an errand to the milliner's. In short, Sir Thomas's correspondence fell into pitiful arrears, and my Lady had another lady's maid.

At last the General, who was one of the least patient of military commanders, arose from his place in a violent access of passion, and indicated to his secretary that he had no further need for his services, with one of those explanatory gestures which are most rarely employed between gentlemen. The door being unfortunately open, Mr. Hartley fell downstairs head foremost.

He arose somewhat hurt and very deeply aggrieved. The life in the General's house precisely suited him; he moved, on a more or less doubtful footing, in very genteel company, he did little, he ate of the best, and he had a lukewarm satisfaction in the presence of Lady Vandeleur, which, in his own heart, he dubbed by a more emphatic name.

Immediately after he had been outraged by the military foot, he hurried to the boudoir and recounted his sorrows.

"You know very well, my dear Harry," replied Lady Vandeleur, for she called him by name like a child or a domestic servant, "that you never by any chance do what the General tells you. No more do I, you may say. But that is different. A woman can earn her pardon for a good year of disobedience by a single adroit submission; and, besides, no one is married to his private secretary. I shall be sorry to lose you; but since you cannot stay longer in a house where you have been insulted, I shall wish you good-bye, and I promise you to make the General smart for his behaviour."

Harry's countenance fell; tears came into his eyes, and he gazed on

Lady Vandeleur with a tender reproach.

"My Lady," said he, "what is an insult? I should think little indeed of any one who could not forgive them by the score. But to leave one's friends; to tear up the bonds of affection - "

He was unable to continue, for his emotion choked him, and he began to weep.

Lady Vandeleur looked at him with a curious expression. "This little fool," she thought, "imagines himself to be in love with me. Why should he not become my servant instead of the General's? He is good-natured, obliging, and understands dress; and besides it will keep him out of mischief. He is positively too pretty to be unattached." That night she talked over the General, who was already somewhat ashamed of his vivacity; and Harry was transferred to the feminine department, where his life was little short of heavenly. He was always dressed with uncommon nicety, wore delicate flowers in his buttonhole, and could entertain a visitor with tact and pleasantry. He took a pride in servility to a beautiful woman; received Lady Vandeleur's commands as so many marks of favour; and was pleased to exhibit himself before other men, who derided and despised him, in his character of male lady's- maid and man milliner. Nor could he think enough of his existence from a moral point of view. Wickedness seemed to him an essentially male attribute, and to pass one's days with a delicate woman, and principally occupied about trimmings, was to inhabit an enchanted isle among the storms of life.

One fine morning he came into the drawing-room and began to arrange some music on the top of the piano. Lady Vandeleur, at the other end of the apartment, was speaking somewhat eagerly with her brother, Charlie Pendragon, an elderly young man, much broken with dissipation, and very lame of one foot. The private secretary, to whose entrance they paid no regard, could not avoid overhearing a part of their conversation.

"To-day or never," said the lady. "Once and for all, it shall be done to-day."

"To-day, if it must be," replied the brother, with a sigh. "But it is a false step, a ruinous step, Clara; and we shall live to repent it dismally."

Lady Vandeleur looked her brother steadily and somewhat strangely in the face.

"You forget," she said; "the man must die at last."

"Upon my word, Clara," said Pendragon, "I believe you are the most heartless rascal in England."

"You men," she returned, "are so coarsely built, that you can never appreciate a shade of meaning. You are yourselves rapacious, violent, immodest, careless of distinction; and yet the least thought for the future shocks you in a woman. I have no patience with such stuff. You would despise in a common banker the imbecility that you expect to find in us."

"You are very likely right," replied her brother; "you were always cleverer than I. And, anyway, you know my motto: The family before all."

"Yes, Charlie," she returned, taking his hand in hers, "I know your motto better than you know it yourself. 'And Clara before the family!' Is not that the second part of it? Indeed, you are the best of brothers, and I love you dearly."

Mr. Pendragon got up, looking a little confused by these family endearments.

"I had better not be seen," said he. "I understand my part to a miracle, and I'll keep an eye on the Tame Cat."

"Do," she replied. "He is an abject creature, and might ruin all."

She kissed the tips of her fingers to him daintily; and the brother withdrew by the boudoir and the back stair.

"Harry," said Lady Vandeleur, turning towards the secretary as soon as they were alone, "I have a commission for you this morning. But you shall take a cab; I cannot have my secretary freckled."

She spoke the last words with emphasis and a look of half-motherly pride that caused great contentment to poor Harry; and he professed himself charmed to find an opportunity of serving her.

"It is another of our great secrets," she went on archly, "and no one must know of it but my secretary and me. Sir Thomas would make the saddest disturbance; and if you only knew how weary I am of these scenes! Oh, Harry, Harry, can you explain to me what makes you men so violent and unjust? But, indeed, I know you cannot; you are the only man in the world who knows nothing of these shameful passions; you are so good, Harry, and so kind; you, at least, can be a woman's friend; and, do you know? I think you make the others more ugly by comparison."

"It is you," said Harry gallantly, "who are so kind to me. You treat me like - "

"Like a mother," interposed Lady Vandeleur; "I try to be a mother to you. Or, at least," she corrected herself with a smile, "almost a mother. I am afraid I am too young to be your mother really. Let us say a friend - a dear friend."

She paused long enough to let her words take effect in Harry's sentimental quarters, but not long enough to allow him a reply.

"But all this is beside our purpose," she resumed. "You will find a bandbox in the left-hand side of the oak wardrobe; it is underneath the pink slip that I wore on Wednesday with my Mechlin. You will take it immediately to this address," and she gave him a paper, "but do not, on any account, let it out of your hands until you have received a receipt written by myself. Do you understand? Answer, if you please - answer! This is extremely important, and I must ask you to pay some attention."

Harry pacified her by repeating her instructions perfectly; and she was just going to tell him more when General Vandeleur flung into the apartment, scarlet with anger, and holding a long and elaborate milliner's bill in his hand.

"Will you look at this, madam?" cried he. "Will you have the goodness to look at this document? I know well enough you married me for my money, and I hope I can make as great allowances as any other man in the service; but, as sure as God made me, I mean to put a period to this disreputable prodigality."

"Mr. Hartley," said Lady Vandeleur, "I think you understand what you have to do. May I ask you to see to it at once?"

"Stop," said the General, addressing Harry, "one word before you go." And then, turning again to Lady Vandeleur, "What is this precious fellow's errand?" he demanded. "I trust him no further than I do yourself, let me tell you. If he had as much as the rudiments of honesty, he would scorn to stay in this house; and what he does for his wages is a mystery to all the world. What is his errand, madam? and why are you hurrying him away?"

"I supposed you had something to say to me in private," replied the lady.

"You spoke about an errand," insisted the General. "Do not attempt to deceive me in my present state of temper. You certainly spoke about an errand."

"If you insist on making your servants privy to our humiliating dissensions," replied Lady Vandeleur, "perhaps I had better ask Mr. Hartley to sit down. No?" she continued; "then you may go, Mr. Hartley. I trust you may remember all that you have heard in this room; it may be useful to you."

Harry at once made his escape from the drawing-room; and as he ran upstairs he could hear the General's voice upraised in declamation, and the thin tones of Lady Vandeleur planting icy repartees at every opening. How cordially he admired the wife! How skilfully she could evade an awkward question! with what secure effrontery she repeated her instructions under the very guns of the enemy! and on the other hand, how he detested the husband!

There had been nothing unfamiliar in the morning's events, for he was continually in the habit of serving Lady Vandeleur on secret missions, principally connected with millinery. There was a skeleton in the house, as he well knew. The bottomless extravagance and the unknown liabilities of the wife had long since swallowed her own fortune, and threatened day by day to engulph that of the husband. Once or twice in every year exposure and ruin seemed imminent, and Harry kept trotting round to all sorts of furnishers' shops, telling small fibs, and paying small advances on the gross amount, until another term was tided over, and the lady and her faithful secretary breathed again. For Harry, in a double capacity, was heart and soul upon that side of the war: not only did he adore Lady Vandeleur and fear and dislike her husband, but he naturally sympathised with the love of finery, and his own single extravagance was at the tailor's.

He found the bandbox where it had been described, arranged his toilette with care, and left the house. The sun shone brightly; the distance he had to travel was considerable, and he remembered with dismay that the General's sudden irruption had prevented Lady Vandeleur from giving him money for a cab. On this sultry day there was every chance that his complexion would suffer severely; and to walk through so much of London with a bandbox on his arm was a humiliation almost insupportable to a youth of his character. He paused, and took counsel with himself. The Vandeleurs lived in Eaton Place; his destination was near Notting Hill; plainly, he might cross the Park by keeping well in the open and avoiding populous alleys; and he thanked his stars when he reflected that it was still comparatively early in the day.

Anxious to be rid of his incubus, he walked somewhat faster than his ordinary, and he was already some way through KensingtonGardens when, in a solitary spot among trees, he found himself confronted by the General.

“I beg your pardon, Sir Thomas,” observed Harry, politely falling on one side; for the other stood directly in his path.

“Where are you going, sir?” asked the General.

“I am taking a little walk among the trees,” replied the lad.

The General struck the bandbox with his cane.

“With that thing?” he cried; “you lie, sir, and you know you lie!”

“Indeed, Sir Thomas,” returned Harry, “I am not accustomed to be questioned in so high a key.”

“You do not understand your position,” said the General. “You are my servant, and a servant of whom I have conceived the most serious suspicions. How do I know but that your box is full of teaspoons?”

“It contains a silk hat belonging to a friend,” said Harry.

“Very well,” replied General Vandeleur. “Then I want to see your friend’s silk hat. I have,” he added grimly, “a singular curiosity for hats; and I believe you know me to be somewhat positive.”

“I beg your pardon, Sir Thomas, I am exceedingly grieved,” Harry apologised; “but indeed this is a private affair.”

The General caught him roughly by the shoulder with one hand, while he raised his cane in the most menacing manner with the other. Harry gave himself up for lost; but at the same moment Heaven vouchsafed him an unexpected defender in the person of Charlie Pendragon, who now strode forward from behind the trees.

“Come, come, General, hold your hand,” said he, “this is neither courteous nor manly.”

“Aha!” cried the General, wheeling round upon his new antagonist, “Mr. Pendragon! And do you suppose, Mr. Pendragon, that because I have had the misfortune to marry your sister, I shall suffer myself to be dogged and thwarted by a discredited and bankrupt libertine like you? My acquaintance with Lady Vandeleur, sir, has taken away all my appetite for the other members of her family.”

“And do you fancy, General Vandeleur,” retorted Charlie, “that because my sister has had the misfortune to marry you, she there and then forfeited her rights and privileges as a lady? I own, sir, that by that action she did as much as anybody could to derogate from her position; but to me she is still a Pendragon. I make it my business to protect her from ungentlemanly outrage, and if you were ten times her husband I would not permit her liberty to be restrained, nor her private messengers to be violently arrested."

"How is that, Mr. Hartley?" interrogated the General. "Mr. Pendragon is of my opinion, it appears. He too suspects that Lady Vandeleur has something to do with your friend's silk hat."

Charlie saw that he had committed an unpardonable blunder, which he hastened to repair.

"How, sir?" he cried; "I suspect, do you say? I suspect nothing. Only where I find strength abused and a man brutalising his inferiors, I take the liberty to interfere."

As he said these words he made a sign to Harry, which the latter was too dull or too much troubled to understand.

"In what way am I to construe your attitude, sir?" demanded Vandeleur.

"Why, sir, as you please," returned Pendragon.

The General once more raised his cane, and made a cut for Charlie's head; but the latter, lame foot and all, evaded the blow with his umbrella, ran in, and immediately closed with his formidable adversary.

"Run, Harry, run!" he cried; "run, you dolt! Harry stood petrified for a moment, watching the two men sway together in this fierce embrace; then he turned and took to his heels. When he cast a glance over his shoulder he saw the General prostrate under Charlie's knee, but still making desperate efforts to reverse the situation; and the Gardens seemed to have filled with people, who were running from all directions towards the scene of fight. This spectacle lent the secretary wings; and he did not relax his pace until he had gained the Bayswater road, and plunged at random into an unfrequented by-street.

To see two gentlemen of his acquaintance thus brutally mauling each other was deeply shocking to Harry. He desired to forget the sight; he desired, above all, to put as great a distance as possible between himself and General Vandeleur; and in his eagerness for this he forgot everything about his destination, and hurried before him headlong and trembling. When he remembered that Lady Vandeleur was the wife of one and the sister of the other of these gladiators, his heart was touched with sympathy for a woman so distressingly misplaced in life. Even his own situation in the General's household looked hardly so pleasing as usual in the light of these violent transactions.

He had walked some little distance, busied with these meditations, before a slight collision with another passenger reminded him of the bandbox on his arm.

"Heavens!" cried he, "where was my head? and whither have I wandered?"

Thereupon he consulted the envelope which Lady Vandeleur had given him. The address was there, but without a name. Harry was simply directed to ask for "the gentleman who expected a parcel from Lady Vandeleur," and if he were not at home to await his return. The gentleman, added the note, should present a receipt in the handwriting of the lady herself. All this seemed mightily mysterious, and Harry was above all astonished at the omission of the name and the formality of the receipt. He had thought little of this last when he heard it dropped in conversation; but reading it in cold blood, and taking it in connection with the other strange particulars, he became convinced that he was engaged in perilous affairs. For half a moment he had a doubt of Lady Vandeleur herself; for he found these obscure proceedings somewhat unworthy of so high a lady, and became more critical when her secrets were preserved against himself. But her empire over his spirit was too complete, he dismissed his suspicions, and blamed himself roundly for having so much as entertained them.

In one thing, however, his duty and interest, his generosity and his terrors, coincided - to get rid of the bandbox with the greatest possible despatch.

He accosted the first policeman and courteously inquired his way. It turned out that he was already not far from his destination, and a walk of a few minutes brought him to a small house in a lane, freshly painted, and kept with the most scrupulous attention. The knocker and bell-pull were highly polished; flowering pot-herbs garnished the sills of the different windows; and curtains of some rich material concealed the interior from the eyes of curious passengers. The place had an air of repose and secrecy; and Harry was so far caught with this spirit that he knocked with more than usual discretion, and was more than usually careful to remove all impurity from his boots.

A servant-maid of some personal attractions immediately opened the door, and seemed to regard the secretary with no unkind eyes.

"This is the parcel from Lady Vandeleur," said Harry.

"I know," replied the maid, with a nod. "But the gentleman is from home. Will you leave it with me?"

"I cannot," answered Harry. "I am directed not to part with it but upon a certain condition, and I must ask you, I am afraid, to let me wait."

"Well," said she, "I suppose I may let you wait. I am lonely enough, I can tell you, and you do not look as though you would eat a girl. But be sure and do not ask the gentleman's name, for that I am not to tell you."

“Do you say so?” cried Harry. “Why, how strange! But indeed for some time back I walk among surprises. One question I think I may surely ask without indiscretion: Is he the master of this house?”

“He is a lodger, and not eight days old at that,” returned the maid. “And now a question for a question: Do you know lady Vandeleur?”

“I am her private secretary,” replied Harry with a glow of modest pride.

“She is pretty, is she not?” pursued the servant.

“Oh, beautiful!” cried Harry; “wonderfully lovely, and not less good and kind!”

“You look kind enough yourself,” she retorted; “and I wager you are worth a dozen Lady Vandeleurs.”

Harry was properly scandalised.

“I!” he cried. “I am only a secretary!”

“Do you mean that for me?” said the girl. “Because I am only a housemaid, if you please.” And then, relenting at the sight of Harry’s obvious confusion, “I know you mean nothing of the sort,” she added; “and I like your looks; but I think nothing of your Lady Vandeleur. Oh, these mistresses!” she cried. “To send out a real gentleman like you - with a bandbox - in broad day!”

During this talk they had remained in their original positions - she on the doorstep, he on the side-walk, bareheaded for the sake of coolness, and with the bandbox on his arm. But upon this last speech Harry, who was unable to support such point-blank compliments to his appearance, nor the encouraging look with which they were accompanied, began to change his attitude, and glance from left to right in perturbation. In so doing he turned his face towards the lower end of the lane, and there, to his indescribable dismay, his eyes encountered those of General Vandeleur. The General, in a prodigious fluster of heat, hurry, and indignation, had been scouring the streets in chase of his brother-in-law; but so soon as he caught a glimpse of the delinquent secretary, his purpose changed, his anger flowed into a new channel, and he turned on his heel and came tearing up the lane with truculent gestures and vociferations.

Harry made but one bolt of it into the house, driving the maid before him; and the door was slammed in his pursuer’s countenance.

“Is there a bar? Will it lock?” asked Harry, while a salvo on the knocker made the house echo from wall to wall.

“Why, what is wrong with you?” asked the maid. “Is it this old gentleman?”

“If he gets hold of me,” whispered Harry, “I am as good as dead.
He has been pursuing me all day, carries a sword-stick, and is an
Indian military officer.”

“These are fine manners,” cried the maid. “And what, if you please, may be his name?"

"It is the General, my master," answered Harry. "He is after this bandbox."

"Did not I tell you?" cried the maid in triumph. "I told you I thought worse than nothing of your Lady Vandeleur; and if you had an eye in your head you might see what she is for yourself. An ungrateful minx, I will be bound for that!"

The General renewed his attack upon the knocker, and his passion growing with delay, began to kick and beat upon the panels of the door.

"It is lucky," observed the girl, "that I am alone in the house; your General may hammer until he is weary, and there is none to open for him. Follow me!"

So saying she led Harry into the kitchen, where she made him sit down, and stood by him herself in an affectionate attitude, with a hand upon his shoulder. The din at the door, so far from abating, continued to increase in volume, and at each blow the unhappy secretary was shaken to the heart.

"What is your name?" asked the girl.

"Harry Hartley," he replied.

"Mine," she went on, "is Prudence. Do you like it?"

"Very much," said Harry. "But hear for a moment how the General beats upon the door. He will certainly break it in, and then, in heaven's name, what have I to look for but death?"

"You put yourself very much about with no occasion," answered Prudence. "Let your General knock, he will do no more than blister his hands. Do you think I would keep you here if I were not sure to save you? Oh, no, I am a good friend to those that please me! and we have a back door upon another lane. But," she added, checking him, for he had got upon his feet immediately on this welcome news, "but I will not show where it is unless you kiss me. Will you, Harry?"

"That I will," he cried, remembering his gallantry, "not for your back door, but because you are good and pretty."

And he administered two or three cordial salutes, which were returned to him in kind.

Then Prudence led him to the back gate, and put her hand upon the key.

"Will you come and see me?" she asked.

"I will indeed," said Harry. "Do not I owe you my life?"

"And now," she added, opening the door, "run as hard as you can, for I shall let in the General."

Harry scarcely required this advice; fear had him by the forelock; and he addressed himself diligently to flight. A few steps, and he believed he would escape from his trials, and return to Lady

Vandeleur in honour and safety. But these few steps had not been taken before he heard a man's voice hailing him by name with many execrations, and, looking over his shoulder, he beheld Charlie Pendragon waving him with both arms to return. The shock of this new incident was so sudden and profound, and Harry was already worked into so high a state of nervous tension, that he could think of nothing better than to accelerate his pace, and continue running. He should certainly have remembered the scene in KensingtonGardens; he should certainly have concluded that, where the General was his enemy, Charlie Pendragon could be no other than a friend. But such was the fever and perturbation of his mind that he was struck by none of these considerations, and only continued to run the faster up the lane.

Charlie, by the sound of his voice and the vile terms that he hurled after the secretary, was obviously beside himself with rage. He, too, ran his very best; but, try as he might, the physical advantages were not upon his side, and his outcries and the fall of his lame foot on the macadam began to fall farther and farther into the wake.

Harry's hopes began once more to arise. The lane was both steep and narrow, but it was exceedingly solitary, bordered on either hand by garden walls, overhung with foliage; and, for as far as the fugitive could see in front of him, there was neither a creature moving nor an open door. Providence, weary of persecution, was now offering him an open field for his escape.

Alas! as he came abreast of a garden door under a tuft of chestnuts, it was suddenly drawn back, and he could see inside, upon a garden path, the figure of a butcher's boy with his tray upon his arm. He had hardly recognised the fact before he was some steps beyond upon the other side. But the fellow had had time to observe him; he was evidently much surprised to see a gentleman go by at so unusual a pace; and he came out into the lane and began to call after Harry with shouts of ironical encouragement.

His appearance gave a new idea to Charlie Pendragon, who, although he was now sadly out of breath, once more upraised his voice.

"Stop, thief!" he cried.

And immediately the butcher's boy had taken up the cry and joined in the pursuit.

This was a bitter moment for the hunted secretary. It is true that his terror enabled him once more to improve his pace, and gain with every step on his pursuers; but he was well aware that he was near the end of his resources, and should he meet any one coming the other way, his predicament in the narrow lane would be desperate indeed.

"I must find a place of concealment," he thought, "and that within the next few seconds, or all is over with me in this world."

Scarcely had the thought crossed his mind than the lane took a sudden turning; and he found himself hidden from his enemies. There are circumstances in which even the least energetic of mankind learn to behave with vigour and decision; and the most cautious forget their prudence and embrace foolhardy resolutions. This was one of those occasions for Harry Hartley; and those who knew him best would have been the most astonished at the lad's audacity. He stopped dead, flung the bandbox over a garden wall, and leaping upward with incredible agility and seizing the copestone with his hands, he tumbled headlong after it into the garden.

He came to himself a moment afterwards, seated in a border of small rosebushes. His hands and knees were cut and bleeding, for the wall had been protected against such an escalade by a liberal provision of old bottles; and he was conscious of a general dislocation and a painful swimming in the head. Facing him across the garden, which was in admirable order, and set with flowers of the most delicious perfume, he beheld the back of a house. It was of considerable extent, and plainly habitable; but, in odd contrast to the grounds, it was crazy, ill-kept, and of a mean appearance. On all other sides the circuit of the garden wall appeared unbroken.

He took in these features of the scene with mechanical glances, but his mind was still unable to piece together or draw a rational conclusion from what he saw. And when he heard footsteps advancing on the gravel, although he turned his eyes in that direction, it was with no thought either for defence or flight.

The new-comer was a large, coarse, and very sordid personage, in gardening clothes, and with a watering-pot in his left hand. One less confused would have been affected with some alarm at the sight of this man's huge proportions and black and lowering eyes. But Harry was too gravely shaken by his fall to be so much as terrified; and if he was unable to divert his glances from the gardener, he remained absolutely passive, and suffered him to draw near, to take him by the shoulder, and to plant him roughly on his feet, without a motion of resistance.

For a moment the two stared into each other's eyes, Harry fascinated, the man filled with wrath and a cruel, sneering humour.

"Who are you?" he demanded at last. "Who are you to come flying over my wall and break my GLOIRE DE DIJONS! What is your name?" he added, shaking him; "and what may be your business here?"

Harry could not as much as proffer a word in explanation.

But just at that moment Pendragon and the butcher's boy went clumping past, and the sound of their feet and their hoarse cries echoed loudly in the narrow lane. The gardener had received his answer; and he looked down into Harry's face with an obnoxious smile.

"A thief!" he said. "Upon my word, and a very good thing you must make of it; for I see you dressed like a gentleman from top to toe. Are you not ashamed to go about the world in such a trim, with honest folk, I dare say, glad to buy your cast-off finery second hand? Speak up, you dog," the man went on; "you can understand English, I suppose; and I mean to have a bit of talk with you before I march you to the station."

"Indeed, sir," said Harry, "this is all a dreadful misconception; and if you will go with me to Sir Thomas Vandeleur's in Eaton Place, I can promise that all will be made plain. The most upright person, as I now perceive, can be led into suspicious positions."

"My little man," replied the gardener, "I will go with you no farther than the station-house in the next street. The inspector, no doubt, will be glad to take a stroll with you as far as Eaton Place, and have a bit of afternoon tea with your great acquaintances. Or would you prefer to go direct to the Home Secretary? Sir Thomas Vandeleur, indeed! Perhaps you think I don't know a gentleman when I see one, from a common run-the-hedge like you? Clothes or no clothes, I can read you like a book. Here is a shirt that maybe cost as much as my Sunday hat; and that coat, I take it, has never seen the inside of Rag-fair, and then your boots - "

The man, whose eyes had fallen upon the ground, stopped short in his insulting commentary, and remained for a moment looking intently upon something at his feet. When he spoke his voice was strangely altered.

"What, in God's name," said he, "is all this?"

Harry, following the direction of the man's eyes, beheld a spectacle that struck him dumb with terror and amazement. In his fall he had descended vertically upon the bandbox and burst it open from end to end; thence a great treasure of diamonds had poured forth, and now lay abroad, part trodden in the soil, part scattered on the surface in regal and glittering profusion. There was a magnificent coronet which he had often admired on Lady Vandeleur; there were rings and brooches, ear-drops and bracelets, and even unset brilliants rolling here and there among the rosebushes like drops of morning dew. A princely fortune lay between the two men upon the ground - a fortune in the most inviting, solid, and durable form, capable of being carried in an apron, beautiful in itself, and scattering the sunlight in a million rainbow flashes.

"Good God!" said Harry, "I am lost!"

His mind raced backwards into the past with the incalculable velocity of thought, and he began to comprehend his day's adventures, to conceive them as a whole, and to recognise the sad imbroglio in which his own character and fortunes had become involved. He looked round him as if for help, but he was alone in the garden, with his scattered diamonds and his redoubtable interlocutor; and when he gave ear, there was no sound but the rustle of the leaves and the hurried pulsation of his heart. It was little wonder if the young man felt himself deserted by his spirits, and with a broken voice repeated his last ejaculation - “I am lost!”

The gardener peered in all directions with an air of guilt; but there was no face at any of the windows, and he seemed to breathe again.

“Pick up a heart,” he said, “you fool! The worst of it is done. Why could you not say at first there was enough for two? Two?” he repeated, “aye, and for two hundred! But come away from here, where we may be observed; and, for the love of wisdom, straighten out your hat and brush your clothes. You could not travel two steps the figure of fun you look just now.”

While Harry mechanically adopted these suggestions, the gardener, getting upon his knees, hastily drew together the scattered jewels and returned them to the bandbox. The touch of these costly crystals sent a shiver of emotion through the man’s stalwart frame; his face was transfigured, and his eyes shone with concupiscence; indeed it seemed as if he luxuriously prolonged his occupation, and dallied with every diamond that he handled. At last, however, it was done; and, concealing the bandbox in his smock, the gardener beckoned to Harry and preceded him in the direction of the house.

Near the door they were met by a young man evidently in holy orders, dark and strikingly handsome, with a look of mingled weakness and resolution, and very neatly attired after the manner of his caste. The gardener was plainly annoyed by this encounter; but he put as good a face upon it as he could, and accosted the clergyman with an obsequious and smiling air.

“Here is a fine afternoon, Mr. Rolles,” said he: “a fine afternoon, as sure as God made it! And here is a young friend of mine who had a fancy to look at my roses. I took the liberty to bring him in, for I thought none of the lodgers would object.”

“Speaking for myself,” replied the Reverend Mr. Rolles, “I do not; nor do I fancy any of the rest of us would be more difficult upon so small a matter. The garden is your own, Mr. Raeburn; we must none of us forget that; and because you give us liberty to walk there we should be indeed ungracious if we so far presumed upon your politeness as to interfere with the convenience of your friends. But, on second thoughts,” he added, “I believe that this gentleman and I have met before. Mr. Hartley, I think. I regret to observe that you have had a fall.”

And he offered his hand.

A sort of maiden dignity and a desire to delay as long as possible the necessity for explanation moved Harry to refuse this chance of help, and to deny his own identity. He chose the tender mercies of the gardener, who was at least unknown to him, rather than the curiosity and perhaps the doubts of an acquaintance.

"I fear there is some mistake," said he. "My name is Thomlinson and I am a friend of Mr. Raeburn's."

"Indeed?" said Mr. Rolles. "The likeness is amazing."

Mr. Raeburn, who had been upon thorns throughout this colloquy, now felt it high time to bring it to a period.

"I wish you a pleasant saunter, sir," said he.

And with that he dragged Harry after him into the house, and then into a chamber on the garden. His first care was to draw down the blind, for Mr. Rolles still remained where they had left him, in an attitude of perplexity and thought. Then he emptied the broken bandbox on the table, and stood before the treasure, thus fully displayed, with an expression of rapturous greed, and rubbing his hands upon his thighs. For Harry, the sight of the man's face under the influence of this base emotion, added another pang to those he was already suffering. It seemed incredible that, from his life of pure and delicate trifling, he should be plunged in a breath among sordid and criminal relations. He could reproach his conscience with no sinful act; and yet he was now suffering the punishment of sin in its most acute and cruel forms - the dread of punishment, the suspicions of the good, and the companionship and contamination of vile and brutal natures. He felt he could lay his life down with gladness to escape from the room and the society of Mr. Raeburn.

"And now," said the latter, after he had separated the jewels into two nearly equal parts, and drawn one of them nearer to himself; "and now," said he, "everything in this world has to be paid for, and some things sweetly. You must know, Mr. Hartley, if such be your name, that I am a man of a very easy temper, and good nature has been my stumbling-block from first to last. I could pocket the whole of these pretty pebbles, if I chose, and I should like to see you dare to say a word; but I think I must have taken a liking to you; for I declare I have not the heart to shave you so close. So, do you see, in pure kind feeling, I propose that we divide; and these," indicating the two heaps, "are the proportions that seem to me just and friendly. Do you see any objection, Mr. Hartley, may I ask? I am not the man to stick upon a brooch."

"But, sir," cried Harry, "what you propose to me is impossible. The jewels are not mine, and I cannot share what is another's, no matter with whom, nor in what proportions."

“They are not yours, are they not?” returned Raeburn. “And you could not share them with anybody, couldn’t you? Well now, that is what I call a pity; for here am I obliged to take you to the station. The police - think of that,” he continued; “think of the disgrace for your respectable parents; think,” he went on, taking Harry by the wrist; “think of the Colonies and the Day of Judgment.”

“I cannot help it,” wailed Harry. “It is not my fault. You will not come with me to Eaton Place?”

“No,” replied the man, “I will not, that is certain. And I mean to divide these playthings with you here.”

And so saying he applied a sudden and severe torsion to the lad’s wrist.

Harry could not suppress a scream, and the perspiration burst forth upon his face. Perhaps pain and terror quickened his intelligence, but certainly at that moment the whole business flashed across him in another light; and he saw that there was nothing for it but to accede to the ruffian’s proposal, and trust to find the house and force him to disgorge, under more favourable circumstances, and when he himself was clear from all suspicion.

“I agree,” he said.

“There is a lamb,” sneered the gardener. “I thought you would recognise your interests at last. This bandbox,” he continued, “I shall burn with my rubbish; it is a thing that curious folk might recognise; and as for you, scrape up your gaieties and put them in your pocket.”

Harry proceeded to obey, Raeburn watching him, and every now and again his greed rekindled by some bright scintillation, abstracting another jewel from the secretary’s share, and adding it to his own.

When this was finished, both proceeded to the front door, which Raeburn cautiously opened to observe the street. This was apparently clear of passengers; for he suddenly seized Harry by the nape of the neck, and holding his face downward so that he could see nothing but the roadway and the doorsteps of the houses, pushed him violently before him down one street and up another for the space of perhaps a minute and a half. Harry had counted three corners before the bully relaxed his grasp, and crying, “Now be off with you!” sent the lad flying head foremost with a well-directed and athletic kick.

When Harry gathered himself up, half-stunned and bleeding freely at the nose, Mr. Raeburn had entirely disappeared. For the first time, anger and pain so completely overcame the lad’s spirits that he burst into a fit of tears and remained sobbing in the middle of the road.

After he had thus somewhat assuaged his emotion, he began to look about him and read the names of the streets at whose intersection he had been deserted by the gardener. He was still in an unfrequented portion of West London, among villas and large gardens; but he could see some persons at a window who had evidently witnessed his misfortune; and almost immediately after a servant came running from the house and offered him a glass of water. At the same time, a dirty rogue, who had been slouching somewhere in the neighbourhood, drew near him from the other side.

"Poor fellow," said the maid, "how vilely you have been handled, to be sure! Why, your knees are all cut, and your clothes ruined! Do you know the wretch who used you so?"

"That I do!" cried Harry, who was somewhat refreshed by the water; "and shall run him home in spite of his precautions. He shall pay dearly for this day's work, I promise you."

"You had better come into the house and have yourself washed and brushed," continued the maid. "My mistress will make you welcome, never fear. And see, I will pick up your hat. Why, love of mercy!" she screamed, "if you have not dropped diamonds all over the street!"

Such was the case; a good half of what remained to him after the depredations of Mr. Raeburn, had been shaken out of his pockets by the summersault and once more lay glittering on the ground. He blessed his fortune that the maid had been so quick of eye; "there is nothing so bad but it might be worse," thought he; and the recovery of these few seemed to him almost as great an affair as the loss of all the rest. But, alas! as he stooped to pick up his treasures, the loiterer made a rapid onslaught, overset both Harry and the maid with a movement of his arms, swept up a double handful of the diamonds, and made off along the street with an amazing swiftness.

Harry, as soon as he could get upon his feet, gave chase to the miscreant with many cries, but the latter was too fleet of foot, and probably too well acquainted with the locality; for turn where the pursuer would he could find no traces of the fugitive.

In the deepest despondency, Harry revisited the scene of his mishap, where the maid, who was still waiting, very honestly returned him his hat and the remainder of the fallen diamonds. Harry thanked her from his heart, and being now in no humour for economy, made his way to the nearest cab-stand and set off for Eaton Place by coach.

The house, on his arrival, seemed in some confusion, as if a catastrophe had happened in the family; and the servants clustered together in the hall, and were unable, or perhaps not altogether anxious, to suppress their merriment at the tatterdemalion figure of the secretary. He passed them with as good an air of dignity as he could assume, and made directly for the boudoir. When he opened the door an astonishing and even menacing spectacle presented itself to his eyes; for he beheld the General and his wife and, of all people, Charlie Pendragon, closeted together and speaking with earnestness and gravity on some important subject. Harry saw at once that there was little left for him to explain - plenary confession had plainly been made to the General of the intended fraud upon his pocket, and the unfortunate miscarriage of the scheme; and they had all made common cause against a common danger.

"Thank Heaven!" cried Lady Vandeleur, "here he is! The bandbox, Harry - the bandbox!"

But Harry stood before them silent and downcast.

"Speak!" she cried. "Speak! Where is the bandbox?"

And the men, with threatening gestures, repeated the demand.

Harry drew a handful of jewels from his pocket. He was very white.

"This is all that remains," said he. "I declare before Heaven it was through no fault of mine; and if you will have patience, although some are lost, I am afraid, for ever, others, I am sure, may be still recovered."

"Alas!" cried Lady Vandeleur, "all our diamonds are gone, and I owe ninety thousand pounds for dress!"

"Madam," said the General, "you might have paved the gutter with your own trash; you might have made debts to fifty times the sum you mention; you might have robbed me of my mother's coronet and ring; and Nature might have still so far prevailed that I could have forgiven you at last. But, madam, you have taken the Rajah's Diamond - the Eye of Light, as the Orientals poetically termed it - the Pride of Kashgar! You have taken from me the Rajah's Diamond," he cried, raising his hands, "and all, madam, all is at an end between us!"

"Believe me, General Vandeleur," she replied, "that is one of the most agreeable speeches that ever I heard from your lips; and since we are to be ruined, I could almost welcome the change, if it delivers me from you. You have told me often enough that I married you for your money; let me tell you now that I always bitterly repented the bargain; and if you were still marriageable, and had a diamond bigger than your head, I should counsel even my maid against a union so uninviting and disastrous. As for you, Mr. Hartley," she continued, turning on the secretary, "you have sufficiently exhibited your valuable qualities in this house; we are now persuaded that you equally lack manhood, sense, and self- respect; and I can see only one course open for you - to withdraw instanter, and, if possible, return no more. For your wages you may rank as a creditor in my late husband's bankruptcy."

Harry had scarcely comprehended this insulting address before the General was down upon him with another.

"And in the meantime," said that personage, "follow me before the nearest Inspector of Police. You may impose upon a simple-minded soldier, sir, but the eye of the law will read your disreputable secret. If I must spend my old age in poverty through your underhand intriguing with my wife, I mean at least that you shall not remain unpunished for your pains; and God, sir, will deny me a very considerable satisfaction if you do not pick oakum from now until your dying day."

With that, the General dragged Harry from the apartment, and hurried him downstairs and along the street to the police-station of the district.

Here (says my Arabian author) ended this deplorable business of the bandbox. But to the unfortunate Secretary the whole affair was the beginning of a new and manlier life. The police were easily persuaded of his innocence; and, after he had given what help he could in the subsequent investigations, he was even complemented by one of the chiefs of the detective department on the probity and simplicity of his behaviour. Several persons interested themselves in one so unfortunate; and soon after he inherited a sum of money from a maiden aunt in Worcestershire. With this he married Prudence, and set sail for Bendigo, or according to another account, for Trincomalee, exceedingly content, and will the best of prospects.

STORY OF THE YOUNG MAN IN HOLY ORDERS

The Reverend Mr. Simon Rolles had distinguished himself in the Moral Sciences, and was more than usually proficient in the study of Divinity. His essay "On the Christian Doctrine of the Social Obligations" obtained for him, at the moment of its production, a certain celebrity in the University of Oxford; and it was understood in clerical and learned circles that young Mr. Rolles had in contemplation a considerable work - a folio, it was said - on the authority of the Fathers of the Church. These attainments, these ambitious designs, however, were far from helping him to any preferment; and he was still in quest of his first curacy when a chance ramble in that part of London, the peaceful and rich aspect of the garden, a desire for solitude and study, and the cheapness of the lodging, led him to take up his abode with Mr. Raeburn, the nurseryman of Stockdove Lane.

It was his habit every afternoon, after he had worked seven or eight hours on St. Ambrose or St. Chrysostom, to walk for a while in meditation among the roses. And this was usually one of the most productive moments of his day. But even a sincere appetite for thought, and the excitement of grave problems awaiting solution, are not always sufficient to preserve the mind of the philosopher against the petty shocks and contacts of the world. And when Mr. Rolles found General Vandeleur's secretary, ragged and bleeding, in the company of his landlord; when he saw both change colour and seek to avoid his questions; and, above all, when the former denied his own identity with the most unmoved assurance, he speedily forgot the

Saints and Fathers in the vulgar interest of curiosity.

"I cannot be mistaken," thought he. "That is Mr. Hartley beyond a doubt. How comes he in such a pickle? why does he deny his name? and what can be his business with that black-looking ruffian, my landlord?"

As he was thus reflecting, another peculiar circumstance attracted his attention. The face of Mr. Raeburn appeared at a low window next the door; and, as chance directed, his eyes met those of Mr. Rolles. The nurseryman seemed disconcerted, and even alarmed; and immediately after the blind of the apartment was pulled sharply down.

"This may all be very well," reflected Mr. Rolles; "it may be all excellently well; but I confess freely that I do not think so. Suspicious, underhand, untruthful, fearful of observation - I believe upon my soul," he thought, "the pair are plotting some disgraceful action."

The detective that there is in all of us awoke and became clamant in the bosom of Mr. Rolles; and with a brisk, eager step, that bore no resemblance to his usual gait, he proceeded to make the circuit of the garden. When he came to the scene of Harry's escalade, his eye was at once arrested by a broken rosebush and marks of trampling on the mould. He looked up, and saw scratches on the brick, and a rag of trouser floating from a broken bottle. This, then, was the mode of entrance chosen by Mr. Raeburn's particular friend! It was thus that General Vandeleur's secretary came to admire a flower-garden! The young clergyman whistled softly to himself as he stooped to examine the ground. He could make out where Harry had landed from his perilous leap; he recognised the flat foot of Mr. Raeburn where it had sunk deeply in the soil as he pulled up the Secretary by the collar; nay, on a closer inspection, he seemed to distinguish the marks of groping fingers, as though something had been spilt abroad and eagerly collected.

"Upon my word," he thought, "the thing grows vastly interesting."

And just then he caught sight of something almost entirely buried in the earth. In an instant he had disinterred a dainty morocco case, ornamented and clasped in gilt. It had been trodden heavily underfoot, and thus escaped the hurried search of Mr. Raeburn. Mr. Rolles opened the case, and drew a long breath of almost horrified astonishment; for there lay before him, in a cradle of green velvet, a diamond of prodigious magnitude and of the finest water. It was of the bigness of a duck's egg; beautifully shaped, and without a flaw; and as the sun shone upon it, it gave forth a lustre like that of electricity, and seemed to burn in his hand with a thousand internal fires.

He knew little of precious stones; but the Rajah's Diamond was a wonder that explained itself; a village child, if he found it, would run screaming for the nearest cottage; and a savage would prostrate himself in adoration before so imposing a fetish. The beauty of the stone flattered the young clergyman's eyes; the thought of its incalculable value overpowered his intellect. He knew that what he held in his hand was worth more than many years' purchase of an archiepiscopal see; that it would build cathedrals more stately than Ely or Cologne; that he who possessed it was set free for ever from the primal curse, and might follow his own inclinations without concern or hurry, without let or hindrance. And as he suddenly turned it, the rays leaped forth again with renewed brilliancy, and seemed to pierce his very heart.

Decisive actions are often taken in a moment and without any conscious deliverance from the rational parts of man. So it was now with Mr. Rolles. He glanced hurriedly round; beheld, like Mr. Raeburn before him, nothing but the sunlit flower-garden, the tall tree-tops, and the house with blinded windows; and in a trice he had shut the case, thrust it into his pocket, and was hastening to his study with the speed of guilt.

The Reverend Simon Rolles had stolen the Rajah's Diamond.

Early in the afternoon the police arrived with Harry Hartley. The nurseryman, who was beside himself with terror, readily discovered his hoard; and the jewels were identified and inventoried in the presence of the Secretary. As for Mr. Rolles, he showed himself in a most obliging temper, communicated what he knew with freedom, and professed regret that he could do no more to help the officers in their duty.

"Still," he added, "I suppose your business is nearly at an end."

"By no means," replied the man from Scotland Yard; and he narrated the second robbery of which Harry had been the immediate victim, and gave the young clergyman a description of the more important jewels that were still not found, dilating particularly on the Rajah's Diamond.

"It must be worth a fortune," observed Mr. Rolles.

"Ten fortunes - twenty fortunes," cried the officer.

"The more it is worth," remarked Simon shrewdly, "the more difficult it must be to sell. Such a thing has a physiognomy not to be disguised, and I should fancy a man might as easily negotiate St. Paul's Cathedral."

"Oh, truly!" said the officer; "but if the thief be a man of any intelligence, he will cut it into three or four, and there will be still enough to make him rich."

"Thank you," said the clergyman. "You cannot imagine how much your conversation interests me."

Whereupon the functionary admitted that they knew many strange things in his profession, and immediately after took his leave.

Mr. Rolles regained his apartment. It seemed smaller and barer than usual; the materials for his great work had never presented so little interest; and he looked upon his library with the eye of scorn. He took down, volume by volume, several Fathers of the Church, and glanced them through; but they contained nothing to his purpose.

"These old gentlemen," thought he, "are no doubt very valuable writers, but they seem to me conspicuously ignorant of life. Here am I, with learning enough to be a Bishop, and I positively do not know how to dispose of a stolen diamond. I glean a hint from a common policeman, and, with all my folios, I cannot so much as put it into execution. This inspires me with very low ideas of University training."

Herewith he kicked over his book-shelf and, putting on his hat, hastened from the house to the club of which he was a member. In such a place of mundane resort he hoped to find some man of good counsel and a shrewd experience in life. In the reading-room he saw many of the country clergy and an Archdeacon; there were three journalists and a writer upon the Higher Metaphysic, playing pool; and at dinner only the raff of ordinary club frequenters showed their commonplace and obliterated countenances. None of these, thought Mr. Rolles, would know more on dangerous topics than he knew himself; none of them were fit to give him guidance in his present strait. At length in the smoking-room, up many weary stairs, he hit upon a gentleman of somewhat portly build and dressed with conspicuous plainness. He was smoking a cigar and reading the FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW; his face was singularly free from all sign of preoccupation or fatigue; and there was something in his air which seemed to invite confidence and to expect submission. The more the young clergyman scrutinised his features, the more he was convinced that he had fallen on one capable of giving pertinent advice.

"Sir," said he, "you will excuse my abruptness; but I judge you from your appearance to be pre-eminently a man of the world."

"I have indeed considerable claims to that distinction," replied the stranger, laying aside his magazine with a look of mingled amusement and surprise.

"I, sir," continued the Curate, "am a recluse, a student, a creature of ink-bottles and patristic folios. A recent event has brought my folly vividly before my eyes, and I desire to instruct myself in life. By life," he added, "I do not mean Thackeray's novels; but the crimes and secret possibilities of our society, and the principles of wise conduct among exceptional events. I am a patient reader; can the thing be learnt in books?"

"You put me in a difficulty," said the stranger. "I confess I have no great notion of the use of books, except to amuse a railway journey; although, I believe, there are some very exact treatises on astronomy, the use of the globes, agriculture, and the art of making paper flowers. Upon the less apparent provinces of life I fear you will find nothing truthful. Yet stay," he added, "have you read Gaboriau?"

Mr. Rolles admitted he had never even heard the name.

"You may gather some notions from Gaboriau," resumed the stranger.

"He is at least suggestive; and as he is an author much studied by Prince Bismarck, you will, at the worst, lose your time in good society."

"Sir," said the Curate, "I am infinitely obliged by your politeness."

"You have already more than repaid me," returned the other.

"How?" inquired Simon.

"By the novelty of your request," replied the gentleman; and with a polite gesture, as though to ask permission, he resumed the study of the FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW.

On his way home Mr. Rolles purchased a work on precious stones and several of Gaboriau's novels. These last he eagerly skimmed until an advanced hour in the morning; but although they introduced him to many new ideas, he could nowhere discover what to do with a stolen diamond. He was annoyed, moreover, to find the information scattered amongst romantic story-telling, instead of soberly set forth after the manner of a manual; and he concluded that, even if the writer had thought much upon these subjects, he was totally lacking in educational method. For the character and attainments of Lecoq, however, he was unable to contain his admiration.

"He was truly a great creature," ruminated Mr. Rolles. "He knew the world as I know Paley's Evidences. There was nothing that he could not carry to a termination with his own hand, and against the largest odds. Heavens!" he broke out suddenly, "is not this the lesson? Must I not learn to cut diamonds for myself?"

It seemed to him as if he had sailed at once out of his perplexities; he remembered that he knew a jeweller, one B. Macculloch, in Edinburgh, who would be glad to put him in the way of the necessary training; a few months, perhaps a few years, of sordid toil, and he would be sufficiently expert to divide and sufficiently cunning to dispose with advantage of the Rajah's Diamond. That done, he might return to pursue his researches at leisure, a wealthy and luxurious student, envied and respected by all. Golden visions attended him through his slumber, and he awoke refreshed and light-hearted with the morning sun.

Mr. Raeburn's house was on that day to be closed by the police, and this afforded a pretext for his departure. He cheerfully prepared his baggage, transported it to King's Cross, where he left it in the cloak-room, and returned to the club to while away the afternoon and dine.

"If you dine here to-day, Rolles," observed an acquaintance, "you may see two of the most remarkable men in England - Prince Florizel of Bohemia, and old Jack Vandeleur."

"I have heard of the Prince," replied Mr. Rolles; "and General Vandeleur I have even met in society."

"General Vandeleur is an ass!" returned the other. "This is his brother John, the biggest adventurer, the best judge of precious stones, and one of the most acute diplomatists in Europe. Have you never heard of his duel with the Duc de Val d'Orge? of his exploits and atrocities when he was Dictator of Paraguay? of his dexterity in recovering Sir Samuel Levi's jewellery? nor of his services in the Indian Mutiny - services by which the Government profited, but which the Government dared not recognise? You make me wonder what we mean by fame, or even by infamy; for Jack Vandeleur has prodigious claims to both. Run downstairs," he continued, "take a table near them, and keep your ears open. You will hear some strange talk, or I am much misled."

"But how shall I know them?" inquired the clergyman.

"Know them!" cried his friend; "why, the Prince is the finest gentleman in Europe, the only living creature who looks like a king; and as for Jack Vandeleur, if you can imagine Ulysses at seventy years of age, and with a sabre-cut across his face, you have the man before you! Know them, indeed! Why, you could pick either of them out of a Derby day!"

Rolles eagerly hurried to the dining-room. It was as his friend had asserted; it was impossible to mistake the pair in question. Old John Vandeleur was of a remarkable force of body, and obviously broken to the most difficult exercises. He had neither the carriage of a swordsman, nor of a sailor, nor yet of one much inured to the saddle; but something made up of all these, and the result and expression of many different habits and dexterities. His features were bold and aquiline; his expression arrogant and predatory; his whole appearance that of a swift, violent, unscrupulous man of action; and his copious white hair and the deep sabre-cut that traversed his nose and temple added a note of savagery to a head already remarkable and menacing in itself.

In his companion, the Prince of Bohemia, Mr. Rolles was astonished to recognise the gentleman who had recommended him the study of Gaboriau. Doubtless Prince Florizel, who rarely visited the club, of which, as of most others, he was an honorary member, had been waiting for John Vandeleur when Simon accosted him on the previous evening.

The other diners had modestly retired into the angles of the room, and left the distinguished pair in a certain isolation, but the young clergyman was unrestrained by any sentiment of awe, and, marching boldly up, took his place at the nearest table.

The conversation was, indeed, new to the student's ears. The ex-Dictator of Paraguay stated many extraordinary experiences in different quarters of the world; and the Prince supplied a commentary which, to a man of thought, was even more interesting than the events themselves. Two forms of experience were thus brought together and laid before the young clergyman; and he did not know which to admire the most - the desperate actor or the skilled expert in life; the man who spoke boldly of his own deeds and perils, or the man who seemed, like a god, to know all things and to have suffered nothing. The manner of each aptly fitted with his part in the discourse. The Dictator indulged in brutalities alike of speech and gesture; his hand opened and shut and fell roughly on the table; and his voice was loud and heavy. The Prince, on the other hand, seemed the very type of urbane docility and quiet; the least movement, the least inflection, had with him a weightier significance than all the shouts and pantomime of his companion; and if ever, as must frequently have been the case, he described some experience personal to himself, it was so aptly dissimulated as to pass unnoticed with the rest.

At length the talk wandered on to the late robberies and the
Rajah's Diamond.

"That diamond would be better in the sea," observed Prince
Florizel.

"As a Vandeleur," replied the Dictator, "your Highness may imagine my dissent."

"I speak on grounds of public policy," pursued the Prince. "Jewels so valuable should be reserved for the collection of a Prince or the treasury of a great nation. To hand them about among the common sort of men is to set a price on Virtue's head; and if the Rajah of Kashgar - a Prince, I understand, of great enlightenment - desired vengeance upon the men of Europe, he could hardly have gone more efficaciously about his purpose than by sending us this apple of discord. There is no honesty too robust for such a trial. I myself, who have many duties and many privileges of my own - I myself, Mr. Vandeleur, could scarce handle the intoxicating crystal and be safe. As for you, who are a diamond hunter by taste and profession, I do not believe there is a crime in the calendar you would not perpetrate - I do not believe you have a friend in the world whom you would not eagerly betray - I do not know if you have a family, but if you have I declare you would sacrifice your children - and all this for what? Not to be richer, nor to have more comforts or more respect, but simply to call this diamond yours for a year or two until you die, and now and again to open a safe and look at it as one looks at a picture."

"It is true," replied Vandeleur. "I have hunted most things, from men and women down to mosquitos; I have dived for coral; I have followed both whales and tigers; and a diamond is the tallest quarry of the lot. It has beauty and worth; it alone can properly reward the ardours of the chase. At this moment, as your Highness may fancy, I am upon the trail; I have a sure knack, a wide experience; I know every stone of price in my brother's collection as a shepherd knows his sheep; and I wish I may die if I do not recover them every one!"

"Sir Thomas Vandeleur will have great cause to thank you," said the Prince.

"I am not so sure," returned the Dictator, with a laugh. "One of the Vandeleurs will. Thomas or John - Peter or Paul - we are all apostles."

"I did not catch your observation," said the Prince with some disgust.

And at the same moment the waiter informed Mr. Vandeleur that his cab was at the door.

Mr. Rolles glanced at the clock, and saw that he also must be moving; and the coincidence struck him sharply and unpleasantly, for he desired to see no more of the diamond hunter.

Much study having somewhat shaken the young man's nerves, he was in the habit of travelling in the most luxurious manner; and for the present journey he had taken a sofa in the sleeping carriage.

"You will be very comfortable," said the guard; "there is no one in your compartment, and only one old gentleman in the other end."

It was close upon the hour, and the tickets were being examined, when Mr. Rolles beheld this other fellow-passenger ushered by several porters into his place; certainly, there was not another man in the world whom he would not have preferred - for it was old John Vandeleur, the ex-Dictator.

The sleeping carriages on the Great Northern line were divided into three compartments - one at each end for travellers, and one in the centre fitted with the conveniences of a lavatory. A door running in grooves separated each of the others from the lavatory; but as there were neither bolts nor locks, the whole suite was practically common ground.

When Mr. Rolles had studied his position, he perceived himself without defence. If the Dictator chose to pay him a visit in the course of the night, he could do no less than receive it; he had no means of fortification, and lay open to attack as if he had been lying in the fields. This situation caused him some agony of mind. He recalled with alarm the boastful statements of his fellow- traveller across the dining-table, and the professions of immorality which he had heard him offering to the disgusted Prince. Some persons, he remembered to have read, are endowed with a singular quickness of perception for the neighbourhood of precious metals; through walls and even at considerable distances they are said to divine the presence of gold. Might it not be the same with diamonds? he wondered; and if so, who was more likely to enjoy this transcendental sense than the person who gloried in the appellation of the Diamond Hunter? From such a man he recognised that he had everything to fear, and longed eagerly for the arrival of the day.

In the meantime he neglected no precaution, concealed his diamond in the most internal pocket of a system of great-coats, and devoutly recommended himself to the care of Providence.

The train pursued its usual even and rapid course; and nearly half the journey had been accomplished before slumber began to triumph over uneasiness in the breast of Mr. Rolles. For some time he resisted its influence; but it grew upon him more and more, and a little before York he was fain to stretch himself upon one of the couches and suffer his eyes to close; and almost at the same instant consciousness deserted the young clergyman. His last thought was of his terrifying neighbour.

When he awoke it was still pitch dark, except for the flicker of the veiled lamp; and the continual roaring and oscillation testified to the unrelaxed velocity of the train. He sat upright in a panic, for he had been tormented by the most uneasy dreams; it was some seconds before he recovered his self-command; and even after he had resumed a recumbent attitude sleep continued to flee him, and he lay awake with his brain in a state of violent agitation, and his eyes fixed upon the lavatory door. He pulled his clerical felt hat over his brow still farther to shield him from the light; and he adopted the usual expedients, such as counting a thousand or banishing thought, by which experienced invalids are accustomed to woo the approach of sleep. In the case of Mr. Rolles they proved one and all vain; he was harassed by a dozen different anxieties - the old man in the other end of the carriage haunted him in the most alarming shapes; and in whatever attitude he chose to lie the diamond in his pocket occasioned him a sensible physical distress. It burned, it was too large, it bruised his ribs; and there were infinitesimal fractions of a second in which he had half a mind to throw it from the window.

While he was thus lying, a strange incident took place.

The sliding-door into the lavatory stirred a little, and then a little more, and was finally drawn back for the space of about twenty inches. The lamp in the lavatory was unshaded, and in the lighted aperture thus disclosed, Mr. Rolles could see the head of Mr.

Vandeleur in an attitude of deep attention. He was conscious that the gaze of the Dictator rested intently on his own face; and the instinct of self-preservation moved him to hold his breath, to refrain from the least movement, and keeping his eyes lowered, to watch his visitor from underneath the lashes. After about a moment, the head was withdrawn and the door of the lavatory replaced.

The Dictator had not come to attack, but to observe; his action was not that of a man threatening another, but that of a man who was himself threatened; if Mr. Rolles was afraid of him, it appeared that he, in his turn, was not quite easy on the score of Mr. Rolles. He had come, it would seem, to make sure that his only fellow-traveller was asleep; and, when satisfied on that point, he had at once withdrawn.

The clergyman leaped to his feet. The extreme of terror had given place to a reaction of foolhardy daring. He reflected that the rattle of the flying train concealed all other sounds, and determined, come what might, to return the visit he had just received. Divesting himself of his cloak, which might have interfered with the freedom of his action, he entered the lavatory and paused to listen. As he had expected, there was nothing to be heard above the roar of the train's progress; and laying his hand on the door at the farther side, he proceeded cautiously to draw it back for about six inches. Then he stopped, and could not contain an ejaculation of surprise.

John Vandeleur wore a fur travelling cap with lappets to protect his ears; and this may have combined with the sound of the express to keep him in ignorance of what was going forward. It is certain, at least, that he did not raise his head, but continued without interruption to pursue his strange employment. Between his feet stood an open hat-box; in one hand he held the sleeve of his sealskin great-coat; in the other a formidable knife, with which he had just slit up the lining of the sleeve. Mr. Rolles had read of persons carrying money in a belt; and as he had no acquaintance with any but cricket-belts, he had never been able rightly to conceive how this was managed. But here was a stranger thing before his eyes; for John Vandeleur, it appeared, carried diamonds in the lining of his sleeve; and even as the young clergyman gazed, he could see one glittering brilliant drop after another into the hat-box.

He stood riveted to the spot, following this unusual business with his eyes. The diamonds were, for the most part, small, and not easily distinguishable either in shape or fire. Suddenly the Dictator appeared to find a difficulty; he employed both hands and stooped over his task; but it was not until after considerable manoeuvring that he extricated a large tiara of diamonds from the lining, and held it up for some seconds' examination before he placed it with the others in the hat-box. The tiara was a ray of light to Mr. Rolles; he immediately recognised it for a part of the treasure stolen from Harry Hartley by the loiterer. There was no room for mistake; it was exactly as the detective had described it; there were the ruby stars, with a great emerald in the centre; there were the interlacing crescents; and there were the pear- shaped pendants, each a single stone, which gave a special value to Lady Vandeleur's tiara.

Mr. Rolles was hugely relieved. The Dictator was as deeply in the affair as he was; neither could tell tales upon the other. In the first glow of happiness, the clergyman suffered a deep sigh to escape him; and as his bosom had become choked and his throat dry during his previous suspense, the sigh was followed by a cough.

Mr. Vandeleur looked up; his face contracted with the blackest and most deadly passion; his eyes opened widely, and his under jaw dropped in an astonishment that was upon the brink of fury. By an instinctive movement he had covered the hat-box with the coat. For half a minute the two men stared upon each other in silence. It was not a long interval, but it sufficed for Mr. Rolles; he was one of those who think swiftly on dangerous occasions; he decided on a course of action of a singularly daring nature; and although he felt he was setting his life upon the hazard, he was the first to break silence.

"I beg your pardon," said he.

The Dictator shivered slightly, and when he spoke his voice was hoarse.

"What do you want here?" he asked.

"I take a particular interest in diamonds," replied Mr. Rolles, with an air of perfect self-possession. "Two connoisseurs should be acquainted. I have here a trifle of my own which may perhaps serve for an introduction."

And so saying, he quietly took the case from his pocket, showed the Rajah's Diamond to the Dictator for an instant, and replaced it in security.

"It was once your brother's," he added.

John Vandeleur continued to regard him with a look of almost painful amazement; but he neither spoke nor moved.

"I was pleased to observe," resumed the young man, "that we have gems from the same collection."

The Dictator's surprise overpowered him.

"I beg your pardon," he said; "I begin to perceive that I am growing old! I am positively not prepared for little incidents like this. But set my mind at rest upon one point: do my eyes deceive me, or are you indeed a parson?"

"I am in holy orders," answered Mr. Rolles.

"Well," cried the other, "as long as I live I will never hear another word against the cloth!"

"You flatter me," said Mr. Rolles.

"Pardon me," replied Vandeleur; "pardon me, young man. You are no coward, but it still remains to be seen whether you are not the worst of fools. Perhaps," he continued, leaning back upon his seat, "perhaps you would oblige me with a few particulars. I must suppose you had some object in the stupefying impudence of your proceedings, and I confess I have a curiosity to know it."

"It is very simple," replied the clergyman; "it proceeds from my great inexperience of life."

"I shall be glad to be persuaded," answered Vandeleur.

Whereupon Mr. Rolles told him the whole story of his connection with the Rajah's Diamond, from the time he found it in Raeburn's garden to the time when he left London in the Flying Scotchman. He added a brief sketch of his feelings and thoughts during the journey, and concluded in these words:-

"When I recognised the tiara I knew we were in the same attitude towards Society, and this inspired me with a hope, which I trust you will say was not ill-founded, that you might become in some sense my partner in the difficulties and, of course, the profits of my situation. To one of your special knowledge and obviously great experience the negotiation of the diamond would give but little trouble, while to me it was a matter of impossibility. On the other part, I judged that I might lose nearly as much by cutting the diamond, and that not improbably with an unskilful hand, as might enable me to pay you with proper generosity for your assistance. The subject was a delicate one to broach; and perhaps I fell short in delicacy. But I must ask you to remember that for me the situation was a new one, and I was entirely unacquainted with the etiquette in use. I believe without vanity that I could have married or baptized you in a very acceptable manner; but every man has his own aptitudes, and this sort of bargain was not among the list of my accomplishments."

"I do not wish to flatter you," replied Vandeleur; "but upon my word, you have an unusual disposition for a life of crime. You have more accomplishments than you imagine; and though I have encountered a number of rogues in different quarters of the world, I never met with one so unblushing as yourself. Cheer up, Mr. Rolles, you are in the right profession at last! As for helping you, you may command me as you will. I have only a day's business in Edinburgh on a little matter for my brother; and once that is concluded, I return to Paris, where I usually reside. If you please, you may accompany me thither. And before the end of a month I believe I shall have brought your little business to a satisfactory conclusion."

(At this point, contrary to all the canons of his art, our Arabian author breaks off the STORY OF THE YOUNG MAN IN HOLY

ORDERS. I regret and condemn such practices; but I must follow my original, and refer the reader for the conclusion of Mr. Rolles' adventures to the next number of the cycle, the STORY OF THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN BLINDS.)

STORY OF THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN BLINDS

Francis Scrymgeour, a clerk in the Bank of Scotland at Edinburgh, had attained the age of twenty-five in a sphere of quiet, creditable, and domestic life. His mother died while he was young; but his father, a man of sense and probity, had given him an excellent education at school, and brought him up at home to orderly and frugal habits. Francis, who was of a docile and affectionate disposition, profited by these advantages with zeal, and devoted himself heart and soul to his employment. A walk upon Saturday afternoon, an occasional dinner with members of his family, and a yearly tour of a fortnight in the Highlands or even on the continent of Europe, were his principal distractions, and, he grew rapidly in favour with his superiors, and enjoyed already a salary of nearly two hundred pounds a year, with the prospect of an ultimate advance to almost double that amount. Few young men were more contented, few more willing and laborious than Francis Scrymgeour. Sometimes at night, when he had read the daily paper, he would play upon the flute to amuse his father, for whose qualities he entertained a great respect.

One day he received a note from a well-known firm of Writers to the Signet, requesting the favour of an immediate interview with him. The letter was marked "Private and Confidential," and had been addressed to him at the bank, instead of at home - two unusual circumstances which made him obey the summons with the more alacrity. The senior member of the firm, a man of much austerity of manner, made him gravely welcome, requested him to take a seat, and proceeded to explain the matter in hand in the picked expressions of a veteran man of business. A person, who must remain nameless, but of whom the lawyer had every reason to think well - a man, in short, of some station in the country - desired to make Francis an annual allowance of five hundred pounds. The capital was to be placed under the control of the lawyer's firm and two trustees who must also remain anonymous. There were conditions annexed to this liberality, but he was of opinion that his new client would find nothing either excessive or dishonourable in the terms; and he repeated these two words with emphasis, as though he desired to commit himself to nothing more.

Francis asked their nature.

"The conditions," said the Writer to the Signet, "are, as I have twice remarked, neither dishonourable nor excessive. At the same time I cannot conceal from you that they are most unusual. Indeed, the whole case is very much out of our way; and I should certainly have refused it had it not been for the reputation of the gentleman who entrusted it to my care, and, let me add, Mr. Scrymgeour, the interest I have been led to take in yourself by many complimentary and, I have no doubt, well-deserved reports."

Francis entreated him to be more specific.

"You cannot picture my uneasiness as to these conditions," he said.

"They are two," replied the lawyer, "only two; and the sum, as you will remember, is five hundred a-year - and unburdened, I forgot to add, unburdened."

And the lawyer raised his eyebrows at him with solemn gusto.

"The first," he resumed, "is of remarkable simplicity. You must be in Paris by the afternoon of Sunday, the 15th; there you will find, at the box-office of the Comedie Francaise, a ticket for admission taken in your name and waiting you. You are requested to sit out the whole performance in the seat provided, and that is all."

"I should certainly have preferred a week-day," replied Francis. "

But, after all, once in a way - "

"And in Paris, my dear sir," added the lawyer soothingly. "I believe I am something of a precisian myself, but upon such a consideration, and in Paris, I should not hesitate an instant."

And the pair laughed pleasantly together.

"The other is of more importance," continued the Writer to the Signet. "It regards your marriage. My client, taking a deep interest in your welfare, desires to advise you absolutely in the choice of a wife. Absolutely, you understand," he repeated.

"Let us be more explicit, if you please," returned Francis. "Am I to marry any one, maid or widow, black or white, whom this invisible person chooses to propose?"

"I was to assure you that suitability of age and position should be a principle with your benefactor," replied the lawyer. "As to race, I confess the difficulty had not occurred to me, and I failed to inquire; but if you like I will make a note of it at once, and advise you on the earliest opportunity."

"Sir," said Francis, "it remains to be seen whether this whole affair is not a most unworthy fraud. The circumstances are inexplicable - I had almost said incredible; and until I see a little more daylight, and some plausible motive, I confess I should be very sorry to put a hand to the transaction. I appeal to you in this difficulty for information. I must learn what is at the bottom of it all. If you do not know, cannot guess, or are not at liberty to tell me, I shall take my hat and go back to my bank as came."

"I do not know," answered the lawyer, "but I have an excellent guess. Your father, and no one else, is at the root of this apparently unnatural business."

"My father!" cried Francis, in extreme disdain. "Worthy man, I know every thought of his mind, every penny of his fortune!"

"You misinterpret my words," said the lawyer. "I do not refer to Mr. Scrymgeour, senior; for he is not your father. When he and his wife came to Edinburgh, you were already nearly one year old, and you had not yet been three months in their care. The secret has been well kept; but such is the fact. Your father is unknown, and I say again that I believe him to be the original of the offers I am charged at present to transmit to you."

It would be impossible to exaggerate the astonishment of Francis Scrymgeour at this unexpected information. He pled this confusion to the lawyer.

"Sir," said he, "after a piece of news so startling, you must grant me some hours for thought. You shall know this evening what conclusion I have reached."

The lawyer commended his prudence; and Francis, excusing himself upon some pretext at the bank, took a long walk into the country, and fully considered the different steps and aspects of the case. A pleasant sense of his own importance rendered him the more deliberate: but the issue was from the first not doubtful. His whole carnal man leaned irresistibly towards the five hundred a year, and the strange conditions with which it was burdened; he discovered in his heart an invincible repugnance to the name of Scrymgeour, which he had never hitherto disliked; he began to despise the narrow and unromantic interests of his former life; and when once his mind was fairly made up, he walked with a new feeling of strength and freedom, and nourished himself with the gayest anticipations.

He said but a word to the lawyer, and immediately received a cheque for two quarters' arrears; for the allowance was ante-dated from the first of January. With this in his pocket, he walked home. The flat in Scotland Street looked mean in his eyes; his nostrils, for the first time, rebelled against the odour of broth; and he observed little defects of manner in his adoptive father which filled him with surprise and almost with disgust. The next day, he determined, should see him on his way to Paris.

In that city, where he arrived long before the appointed date, he put up at a modest hotel frequented by English and Italians, and devoted himself to improvement in the French tongue; for this purpose he had a master twice a week, entered into conversation with loiterers in the Champs Elysees, and nightly frequented the theatre. He had his whole toilette fashionably renewed; and was shaved and had his hair dressed every morning by a barber in a neighbouring street. This gave him something of a foreign air, and seemed to wipe off the reproach of his past years.

At length, on the Saturday afternoon, he betook himself to the box-office of the theatre in the Rue Richelieu. No sooner had he mentioned his name than the clerk produced the order in an envelope of which the address was scarcely dry.

“It has been taken this moment,” said the clerk.

“Indeed!” said Francis. “May I ask what the gentleman was like?”

“Your friend is easy to describe,” replied the official. “He is old and strong and beautiful, with white hair and a sabre-cut across his face. You cannot fail to recognise so marked a person.”

“No, indeed,” returned Francis; “and I thank you for your politeness.”

“He cannot yet be far distant,” added the clerk. “If you make haste you might still overtake him.”

Francis did not wait to be twice told; he ran precipitately from the theatre into the middle of the street and looked in all directions. More than one white-haired man was within sight; but though he overtook each of them in succession, all wanted the sabre-cut. For nearly half-an-hour he tried one street after another in the neighbourhood, until at length, recognising the folly of continued search, he started on a walk to compose his agitated feelings; for this proximity of an encounter with him to whom he could not doubt he owed the day had profoundly moved the young man.

It chanced that his way lay up the Rue Drouot and thence up the Rue des Martyrs; and chance, in this case, served him better than all the forethought in the world. For on the outer boulevard he saw two men in earnest colloquy upon a seat. One was dark, young, and handsome, secularly dressed, but with an indelible clerical stamp; the other answered in every particular to the description given him by the clerk. Francis felt his heart beat high in his bosom; he knew he was now about to hear the voice of his father; and making a wide circuit, he noiselessly took his place behind the couple in question, who were too much interested in their talk to observe much else. As Francis had expected, the conversation was conducted in the English language

“Your suspicions begin to annoy me, Rolles,” said the older man. “I tell you I am doing my utmost; a man cannot lay his hand on millions in a moment. Have I not taken you up, a mere stranger, out of pure good-will? Are you not living largely on my bounty?”

“On your advances, Mr. Vandeleur,” corrected the other.

“Advances, if you choose; and interest instead of goodwill, if you prefer it,” returned Vandeleur angrily. “I am not here to pick expressions. Business is business; and your business, let me remind you, is too muddy for such airs. Trust me, or leave me alone and find some one else; but let us have an end, for God’s sake, of your jeremiads."

"I am beginning to learn the world," replied the other, "and I see that you have every reason to play me false, and not one to deal honestly. I am not here to pick expressions either; you wish the diamond for yourself; you know you do - you dare not deny it. Have you not already forged my name, and searched my lodging in my absence? I understand the cause of your delays; you are lying in wait; you are the diamond hunter, forsooth; and sooner or later, by fair means or foul, you'll lay your hands upon it. I tell you, it must stop; push me much further and I promise you a surprise."

"It does not become you to use threats," returned Vandeleur. "Two can play at that. My brother is here in Paris; the police are on the alert; and if you persist in wearying me with your caterwauling, I will arrange a little astonishment for you, Mr. Rolles. But mine shall be once and for all. Do you understand, or would you prefer me to tell it you in Hebrew? There is an end to all things, and you have come to the end of my patience. Tuesday, at seven; not a day, not an hour sooner, not the least part of a second, if it were to save your life. And if you do not choose to wait, you may go to the bottomless pit for me, and welcome."

And so saying, the Dictator arose from the bench, and marched off in the direction of Montmartre, shaking his head and swinging his cane with a most furious air; while his companion remained where he was, in an attitude of great dejection.

Francis was at the pitch of surprise and horror; his sentiments had been shocked to the last degree; the hopeful tenderness with which he had taken his place upon the bench was transformed into repulsion and despair; old Mr. Scrymgeour, he reflected, was a far more kindly and creditable parent than this dangerous and violent intriguer; but he retained his presence of mind, and suffered not a moment to elapse before he was on the trail of the Dictator.

That gentleman's fury carried him forward at a brisk pace, and he was so completely occupied in his angry thoughts that he never so much as cast a look behind him till he reached his own door.

His house stood high up in the Rue Lepic, commanding a view of all Paris and enjoying the pure air of the heights. It was two storeys high, with green blinds and shutters; and all the windows looking on the street were hermetically closed. Tops of trees showed over the high garden wall, and the wall was protected by CHEVAUX-DE- FRISE. The Dictator paused a moment while he searched his pocket for a key; and then, opening a gate, disappeared within the enclosure.

Francis looked about him; the neighbourhood was very lonely, the house isolated in its garden. It seemed as if his observation must here come to an abrupt end. A second glance, however, showed him a tall house next door presenting a gable to the garden, and in this gable a single window. He passed to the front and saw a ticket offering unfurnished lodgings by the month; and, on inquiry, the room which commanded the Dictator's garden proved to be one of those to let. Francis did not hesitate a moment; he took the room, paid an advance upon the rent, and returned to his hotel to seek his baggage.

The old man with the sabre-cut might or might not be his father; he might or he might not be upon the true scent; but he was certainly on the edge of an exciting mystery, and he promised himself that he would not relax his observation until he had got to the bottom of the secret.

From the window of his new apartment Francis Scrymgeour commanded a complete view into the garden of the house with the green blinds. Immediately below him a very comely chestnut with wide boughs sheltered a pair of rustic tables where people might dine in the height of summer. On all sides save one a dense vegetation concealed the soil; but there, between the tables and the house, he saw a patch of gravel walk leading from the verandah to the garden-gate. Studying the place from between the boards of the Venetian shutters, which he durst not open for fear of attracting attention, Francis observed but little to indicate the manners of the inhabitants, and that little argued no more than a close reserve and a taste for solitude. The garden was conventual, the house had the air of a prison. The green blinds were all drawn down upon the outside; the door into the verandah was closed; the garden, as far as he could see it, was left entirely to itself in the evening sunshine. A modest curl of smoke from a single chimney alone testified to the presence of living people.

In order that he might not be entirely idle, and to give a certain colour to his way of life, Francis had purchased Euclid's Geometry in French, which he set himself to copy and translate on the top of his portmanteau and seated on the floor against the wall; for he was equally without chair or table. From time to time he would rise and cast a glance into the enclosure of the house with the green blinds; but the windows remained obstinately closed and the garden empty.

Only late in the evening did anything occur to reward his continued attention. Between nine and ten the sharp tinkle of a bell aroused him from a fit of dozing; and he sprang to his observatory in time to hear an important noise of locks being opened and bars removed, and to see Mr. Vandeleur, carrying a lantern and clothed in a flowing robe of black velvet with a skull-cap to match, issue from under the verandah and proceed leisurely towards the garden gate. The sound of bolts and bars was then repeated; and a moment after Francis perceived the Dictator escorting into the house, in the mobile light of the lantern, an individual of the lowest and most despicable appearance.

Half-an-hour afterwards the visitor was reconducted to the street; and Mr. Vandeleur, setting his light upon one of the rustic tables, finished a cigar with great deliberation under the foliage of the chestnut. Francis, peering through a clear space among the leaves, was able to follow his gestures as he threw away the ash or enjoyed a copious inhalation; and beheld a cloud upon the old man's brow and a forcible action of the lips, which testified to some deep and probably painful train of thought. The cigar was already almost at an end, when the voice of a young girl was heard suddenly crying the hour from the interior of the house.

"In a moment," replied John Vandeleur.

And, with that, he threw away the stump and, taking up the lantern, sailed away under the verandah for the night. As soon as the door was closed, absolute darkness fell upon the house; Francis might try his eyesight as much as he pleased, he could not detect so much as a single chink of light below a blind; and he concluded, with great good sense, that the bed-chambers were all upon the other side.

Early the next morning (for he was early awake after an uncomfortable night upon the floor), he saw cause to adopt a different explanation. The blinds rose, one after another, by means of a spring in the interior, and disclosed steel shutters such as we see on the front of shops; these in their turn were rolled up by a similar contrivance; and for the space of about an hour, the chambers were left open to the morning air. At the end of that time Mr. Vandeleur, with his own hand, once more closed the shutters and replaced the blinds from within.

While Francis was still marvelling at these precautions, the door opened and a young girl came forth to look about her in the garden. It was not two minutes before she re-entered the house, but even in that short time he saw enough to convince him that she possessed the most unusual attractions. His curiosity was not only highly excited by this incident, but his spirits were improved to a still more notable degree. The alarming manners and more than equivocal life of his father ceased from that moment to prey upon his mind; from that moment he embraced his new family with ardour; and whether the young lady should prove his sister or his wife, he felt convinced she was an angel in disguise. So much was this the case that he was seized with a sudden horror when he reflected how little he really knew, and how possible it was that he had followed the wrong person when he followed Mr. Vandeleur.

The porter, whom he consulted, could afford him little information; but, such as it was, it had a mysterious and questionable sound. The person next door was an English gentleman of extraordinary wealth, and proportionately eccentric in his tastes and habits. He possessed great collections, which he kept in the house beside him; and it was to protect these that he had fitted the place with steel shutters, elaborate fastenings, and CHEVAUX-DE-FRISE along the garden wall. He lived much alone, in spite of some strange visitors with whom, it seemed, he had business to transact; and there was no one else in the house, except Mademoiselle and an old woman servant

“Is Mademoiselle his daughter?” inquired Francis.

“Certainly,” replied the porter. “Mademoiselle is the daughter of the house; and strange it is to see how she is made to work. For all his riches, it is she who goes to market; and every day in the week you may see her going by with a basket on her arm.”

“And the collections?” asked the other.

“Sir,” said the man, “they are immensely valuable. More I cannot tell you. Since M. de Vandeleur’s arrival no one in the quarter has so much as passed the door.”

“Suppose not,” returned Francis, “you must surely have some notion what these famous galleries contain. Is it pictures, silks, statues, jewels, or what?”

“My faith, sir,” said the fellow with a shrug, “it might be carrots, and still I could not tell you. How should I know? The house is kept like a garrison, as you perceive.”

And then as Francis was returning disappointed to his room, the porter called him back.

“I have just remembered, sir,” said he. “M. de Vandeleur has been in all parts of the world, and I once heard the old woman declare that he had brought many diamonds back with him. If that be the truth, there must be a fine show behind those shutters.”

By an early hour on Sunday Francis was in his place at the theatre. The seat which had been taken for him was only two or three numbers from the left-hand side, and directly opposite one of the lower boxes. As the seat had been specially chosen there was doubtless something to be learned from its position; and he judged by an instinct that the box upon his right was, in some way or other, to be connected with the drama in which he ignorantly played a part. Indeed, it was so situated that its occupants could safely observe him from beginning to end of the piece, if they were so minded; while, profiting by the depth, they could screen themselves sufficiently well from any counter-examination on his side. He promised himself not to leave it for a moment out of sight; and whilst he scanned the rest of the theatre, or made a show of attending to the business of the stage, he always kept a corner of an eye upon the empty box.

The second act had been some time in progress, and was even drawing towards a close, when the door opened and two persons entered and ensconced themselves in the darkest of the shade. Francis could hardly control his emotion. It was Mr. Vandeleur and his daughter. The blood came and went in his arteries and veins with stunning activity; his ears sang; his head turned. He dared not look lest he should awake suspicion; his play-bill, which he kept reading from end to end and over and over again, turned from white to red before his eyes; and when he cast a glance upon the stage, it seemed incalculably far away, and he found the voices and gestures of the actors to the last degree impertinent and absurd.

From time to time he risked a momentary look in the direction which principally interested him; and once at least he felt certain that his eyes encountered those of the young girl. A shock passed over his body, and he saw all the colours of the rainbow. What would he not have given to overhear what passed between the Vandeleurs? What would he not have given for the courage to take up his opera- glass and steadily inspect their attitude and expression? There, for aught he knew, his whole life was being decided - and he not able to interfere, not able even to follow the debate, but condemned to sit and suffer where he was, in impotent anxiety.

At last the act came to an end. The curtain fell, and the people around him began to leave their places, for the interval. It was only natural that he should follow their example; and if he did so, it was not only natural but necessary that he should pass immediately in front of the box in question. Summoning all his courage, but keeping his eyes lowered, Francis drew near the spot. His progress was slow, for the old gentleman before him moved with incredible deliberation, wheezing as he went. What was he to do? Should he address the Vandeleurs by name as he went by? Should he take the flower from his button-hole and throw it into the box? Should he raise his face and direct one long and affectionate look upon the lady who was either his sister or his betrothed? As he found himself thus struggling among so many alternatives, he had a vision of his old equable existence in the bank, and was assailed by a thought of regret for the past.

By this time he had arrived directly opposite the box; and although he was still undetermined what to do or whether to do anything, he turned his head and lifted his eyes. No sooner had he done so than he uttered a cry of disappointment and remained rooted to the spot. The box was empty. During his slow advance Mr. Vandeleur and his daughter had quietly slipped away.

A polite person in his rear reminded him that he was stopping the path; and he moved on again with mechanical footsteps, and suffered the crowd to carry him unresisting out of the theatre. Once in the street, the pressure ceasing, he came to a halt, and the cool night air speedily restored him to the possession of his faculties. He was surprised to find that his head ached violently, and that he remembered not one word of the two acts which he had witnessed. As the excitement wore away, it was succeeded by an overweening appetite for sleep, and he hailed a cab and drove to his lodging in a state of extreme exhaustion and some disgust of life.

Next morning he lay in wait for Miss Vandeleur on her road to market, and by eight o'clock beheld her stepping down a lane. She was simply, and even poorly, attired; but in the carriage of her head and body there was something flexible and noble that would have lent distinction to the meanest toilette. Even her basket, so aptly did she carry it, became her like an ornament. It seemed to Francis, as he slipped into a doorway, that the sunshine followed and the shadows fled before her as she walked; and he was conscious, for the first time, of a bird singing in a cage above the lane.

He suffered her to pass the doorway, and then, coming forth once more, addressed her by name from behind. "Miss Vandeleur," said he.

She turned and, when she saw who he was, became deadly pale.

"Pardon me," he continued; "Heaven knows I had no will to startle you; and, indeed, there should be nothing startling in the presence of one who wishes you so well as I do. And, believe me, I am acting rather from necessity than choice. We have many things in common, and I am sadly in the dark. There is much that I should be doing, and my hands are tied. I do not know even what to feel, nor who are my friends and enemies."

She found her voice with an effort.

"I do not know who you are," she said.

"Ah, yes! Miss Vandeleur, you do," returned Francis "better than I do myself. Indeed, it is on that, above all, that I seek light. Tell me what you know," he pleaded. "Tell me who I am, who you are, and how our destinies are intermixed. Give me a little help with my life, Miss Vandeleur - only a word or two to guide me, only the name of my father, if you will - and I shall be grateful and content."

"I will not attempt to deceive you," she replied. "I know who you are, but I am not at liberty to say."

"Tell me, at least, that you have forgiven my presumption, and I shall wait with all the patience I have," he said. "If I am not to know, I must do without. It is cruel, but I can bear more upon a push. Only do not add to my troubles the thought that I have made an enemy of you."

"You did only what was natural," she said, "and I have nothing to forgive you. Farewell."

"Is it to be FAREWELL?" he asked.

"Nay, that I do not know myself," she answered. "Farewell for the present, if you like."

And with these words she was gone.

Francis returned to his lodging in a state of considerable commotion of mind. He made the most trifling progress with his Euclid for that forenoon, and was more often at the window than at his improvised writing-table. But beyond seeing the return of Miss Vandeleur, and the meeting between her and her father, who was smoking a Trichinopoli cigar in the verandah, there was nothing notable in the neighbourhood of the house with the green blinds before the time of the mid-day meal. The young man hastily allayed his appetite in a neighbouring restaurant, and returned with the speed of unallayed curiosity to the house in the Rue Lepic. A mounted servant was leading a saddle-horse to and fro before the garden wall; and the porter of Francis's lodging was smoking a pipe against the door-post, absorbed in contemplation of the livery and the steeds.

"Look!" he cried to the young man, "what fine cattle! what an elegant costume! They belong to the brother of M. de Vandeleur, who is now within upon a visit. He is a great man, a general, in your country; and you doubtless know him well by reputation."

"I confess," returned Francis, "that I have never heard of General Vandeleur before. We have many officers of that grade, and my pursuits have been exclusively civil."

"It is he," replied the porter, "who lost the great diamond of the

Indies. Of that at least you must have read often in the papers."

As soon as Francis could disengage himself from the porter he ran upstairs and hurried to the window. Immediately below the clear space in the chestnut leaves, the two gentlemen were seated in conversation over a cigar. The General, a red, military-looking man, offered some traces of a family resemblance to his brother; he had something of the same features, something, although very little, of the same free and powerful carriage; but he was older, smaller, and more common in air; his likeness was that of a caricature, and he seemed altogether a poor and debile being by the side of the Dictator.

They spoke in tones so low, leaning over the table with every appearance of interest, that Francis could catch no more than a word or two on an occasion. For as little as he heard, he was convinced that the conversation turned upon himself and his own career; several times the name of Scrymgeour reached his ear, for it was easy to distinguish, and still more frequently he fancied he could distinguish the name Francis.

At length the General, as if in a hot anger, broke forth into several violent exclamations.

"Francis Vandeleur!" he cried, accentuating the last word.

"Francis Vandeleur, I tell you."

The Dictator made a movement of his whole body, half affirmative, half contemptuous, but his answer was inaudible to the young man.

Was he the Francis Vandeleur in question? he wondered. Were they discussing the name under which he was to be married? Or was the whole affair a dream and a delusion of his own conceit and self-absorption?

After another interval of inaudible talk, dissension seemed again to arise between the couple underneath the chestnut, and again the General raised his voice angrily so as to be audible to Francis.

“My wife?” he cried. “I have done with my wife for good. I will not hear her name. I am sick of her very name.”

And he swore aloud and beat the table with his fist.

The Dictator appeared, by his gestures, to pacify him after a paternal fashion; and a little after he conducted him to the garden-gate. The pair shook hands affectionately enough; but as soon as the door had closed behind his visitor, John Vandeleur fell into a fit of laughter which sounded unkindly and even devilish in the ears of Francis Scrymgeour.

So another day had passed, and little more learnt. But the young man remembered that the morrow was Tuesday, and promised himself some curious discoveries; all might be well, or all might be ill; he was sure, at least, to glean some curious information, and, perhaps, by good luck, get at the heart of the mystery which surrounded his father and his family.

As the hour of the dinner drew near many preparations were made in the garden of the house with the green blinds. That table which was partly visible to Francis through the chestnut leaves was destined to serve as a sideboard, and carried relays of plates and the materials for salad: the other, which was almost entirely concealed, had been set apart for the diners, and Francis could catch glimpses of white cloth and silver plate.

Mr. Rolles arrived, punctual to the minute; he looked like a man upon his guard, and spoke low and sparingly. The Dictator, on the other hand, appeared to enjoy an unusual flow of spirits; his laugh, which was youthful and pleasant to hear, sounded frequently from the garden; by the modulation and the changes of his voice it was obvious that he told many droll stories and imitated the accents of a variety of different nations; and before he and the young clergyman had finished their vermouth all feeling of distrust was at an end, and they were talking together like a pair of school companions.

At length Miss Vandeleur made her appearance, carrying the soup-tureen. Mr. Rolles ran to offer her assistance which she laughingly refused; and there was an interchange of pleasantries among the trio which seemed to have reference to this primitive manner of waiting by one of the company.

“One is more at one’s ease,” Mr. Vandeleur was heard to declare.

Next moment they were all three in their places, and Francis could see as little as he could hear of what passed. But the dinner seemed to go merrily; there was a perpetual babble of voices and sound of knives and forks below the chestnut; and Francis, who had no more than a roll to gnaw, was affected with envy by the comfort and deliberation of the meal. The party lingered over one dish after another, and then over a delicate dessert, with a bottle of old wine carefully uncorked by the hand of the Dictator himself. As it began to grow dark a lamp was set upon the table and a couple of candles on the sideboard; for the night was perfectly pure, starry, and windless. Light overflowed besides from the door and window in the verandah, so that the garden was fairly illuminated and the leaves twinkled in the darkness.

For perhaps the tenth time Miss Vandeleur entered the house; and on this occasion she returned with the coffee-tray, which she placed upon the sideboard. At the same moment her father rose from his seat.

“The coffee is my province,” Francis heard him say.

And next moment he saw his supposed father standing by the sideboard in the light of the candles.

Talking over his shoulder all the while, Mr. Vandeleur poured out two cups of the brown stimulant, and then, by a rapid act of prestidigitation, emptied the contents of a tiny phial into the smaller of the two. The thing was so swiftly done that even Francis, who looked straight into his face, had hardly time to perceive the movement before it was completed. And next instant, and still laughing, Mr. Vandeleur had turned again towards the table with a cup in either hand.

“Ere we have done with this,” said he, “we may expect our famous Hebrew.”

It would be impossible to depict the confusion and distress of Francis Scrymgeour. He saw foul play going forward before his eyes, and he felt bound to interfere, but knew not how. It might be a mere pleasantry, and then how should he look if he were to offer an unnecessary warning? Or again, if it were serious, the criminal might be his own father, and then how should he not lament if he were to bring ruin on the author of his days? For the first time he became conscious of his own position as a spy. To wait inactive at such a juncture and with such a conflict of sentiments in his bosom was to suffer the most acute torture; he clung to the bars of the shutters, his heart beat fast and with irregularity, and he felt a strong sweat break forth upon his body.

Several minutes passed.

He seemed to perceive the conversation die away and grow less and less in vivacity and volume; but still no sign of any alarming or even notable event.

Suddenly the ring of a glass breaking was followed by a faint and dull sound, as of a person who should have fallen forward with his head upon the table. At the same moment a piercing scream rose from the garden.

“What have you done?” cried Miss Vandeleur. “He is dead!”

The Dictator replied in a violent whisper, so strong and sibilant that every word was audible to the watcher at the window.

“Silence!’ said Mr. Vandeleur; “the man is as well as I am. Take him by the heels whilst I carry him by the shoulders.”

Francis heard Miss Vandeleur break forth into a passion of tears.

“Do you hear what I say?” resumed the Dictator, in the same tones.

“Or do you wish to quarrel with me? I give you your choice, Miss Vandeleur.”

There was another pause, and the Dictator spoke again.

“Take that man by the heels,” he said. “I must have him brought into the house. If I were a little younger, I could help myself against the world. But now that years and dangers are upon me and my hands are weakened, I must turn to you for aid.”

“It is a crime,” replied the girl.

“I am your father,” said Mr. Vandeleur.

This appeal seemed to produce its effect. A scuffling noise followed upon the gravel, a chair was overset, and then Francis saw the father and daughter stagger across the walk and disappear under the verandah, bearing the inanimate body of Mr. Rolles embraced about the knees and shoulders. The young clergyman was limp and pallid, and his head rolled upon his shoulders at every step.

Was he alive or dead? Francis, in spite of the Dictator’s declaration, inclined to the latter view. A great crime had been committed; a great calamity had fallen upon the inhabitants of the house with the green blinds. To his surprise, Francis found all horror for the deed swallowed up in sorrow for a girl and an old man whom he judged to be in the height of peril. A tide of generous feeling swept into his heart; he, too, would help his father against man and mankind, against fate and justice; and casting open the shutters he closed his eyes and threw himself with out-stretched arms into the foliage of the chestnut.

Branch after branch slipped from his grasp or broke under his weight; then he caught a stalwart bough under his armpit, and hung suspended for a second; and then he let himself drop and fell heavily against the table. A cry of alarm from the house warned him that his entrance had not been effected unobserved. He recovered himself with a stagger, and in three bounds crossed the intervening space and stood before the door in the verandah.

In a small apartment, carpeted with matting and surrounded by glazed cabinets full of rare and costly curios, Mr. Vandeleur was stooping over the body of Mr. Rolles. He raised himself as Francis entered, and there was an instantaneous passage of hands. It was the business of a second; as fast as an eye can wink the thing was done; the young man had not the time to be sure, but it seemed to him as if the Dictator had taken something from the curate's breast, looked at it for the least fraction of time as it lay in his hand, and then suddenly and swiftly passed it to his daughter.

All this was over while Francis had still one foot upon the threshold, and the other raised in air. The next instant he was on his knees to Mr. Vandeleur.

"Father!" he cried. "Let me too help you. I will do what you wish and ask no questions; I will obey you with my life; treat me as a son, and you will find I have a son's devotion."

A deplorable explosion of oaths was the Dictator's first reply.

"Son and father?" he cried. "Father and son? What d-d unnatural comedy is all this? How do you come in my garden? What do you want? And who, in God's name, are you?"

Francis, with a stunned and shamefaced aspect, got upon his feet again, and stood in silence.

Then a light seemed to break upon Mr. Vandeleur, and he laughed aloud

"I see," cried he. "It is the Scrymgeour. Very well, Mr. Scrymgeour. Let me tell you in a few words how you stand. You have entered my private residence by force, or perhaps by fraud, but certainly with no encouragement from me; and you come at a moment of some annoyance, a guest having fainted at my table, to besiege me with your protestations. You are no son of mine. You are my brother's bastard by a fishwife, if you want to know. I regard you with an indifference closely bordering on aversion; and from what I now see of your conduct, I judge your mind to be exactly suitable to your exterior. I recommend you these mortifying reflections for your leisure; and, in the meantime, let me beseech you to rid us of your presence. If I were not occupied," added the Dictator, with a terrifying oath, "I should give you the unholiest drubbing ere you went!"

Francis listened in profound humiliation. He would have fled had it been possible; but as he had no means of leaving the residence into which he had so unfortunately penetrated, he could do no more than stand foolishly where he was.

It was Miss Vandeleur who broke the silence.

"Father," she said, "you speak in anger. Mr. Scrymgeour may have been mistaken, but he meant well and kindly."

"Thank you for speaking," returned the Dictator. "You remind me of some other observations which I hold it a point of honour to make to Mr. Scrymgeour. My brother," he continued, addressing the young man, "has been foolish enough to give you an allowance; he was foolish enough and presumptuous enough to propose a match between you and this young lady. You were exhibited to her two nights ago; and I rejoice to tell you that she rejected the idea with disgust. Let me add that I have considerable influence with your father; and it shall not be my fault if you are not beggared of your allowance and sent back to your scrivening ere the week be out."

The tones of the old man's voice were, if possible, more wounding than his language; Francis felt himself exposed to the most cruel, blighting, and unbearable contempt; his head turned, and he covered his face with his hands, uttering at the same time a tearless sob of agony. But Miss Vandeleur once again interfered in his behalf.

"Mr. Scrymgeour," she said, speaking in clear and even tones, "you must not be concerned at my father's harsh expressions. I felt no disgust for you; on the contrary, I asked an opportunity to make your better acquaintance. As for what has passed to-night, believe me it has filled my mind with both pity and esteem."

Just then Mr. Rolles made a convulsive movement with his arm, which convinced Francis that he was only drugged, and was beginning to throw off the influence of the opiate. Mr. Vandeleur stooped over him and examined his face for an instant.

"Come, come!" cried he, raising his head. "Let there be an end of this. And since you are so pleased with his conduct, Miss Vandeleur, take a candle and show the bastard out."

The young lady hastened to obey.

"Thank you," said Francis, as soon as he was alone with her in the garden. "I thank you from my soul. This has been the bitterest evening of my life, but it will have always one pleasant recollection."

"I spoke as I felt," she replied, "and in justice to you. It made my heart sorry that you should be so unkindly used."

By this time they had reached the garden gate; and Miss Vandeleur, having set the candle on the ground, was already unfastening the bolts.

"One word more," said Francis. "This is not for the last time - I shall see you again, shall I not?"

"Alas!" she answered. "You have heard my father. What can I do but obey?"

"Tell me at least that it is not with your consent," returned Francis; "tell me that you have no wish to see the last of me."

"Indeed," replied she, "I have none. You seem to me both brave and honest."

"Then," said Francis, "give me a keepsake."

She paused for a moment, with her hand upon the key; for the various bars and bolts were all undone, and there was nothing left but to open the lock.

"If I agree," she said, "will you promise to do as I tell you from point to point?"

"Can you ask?" replied Francis. "I would do so willingly on your bare word."

She turned the key and threw open the door.

"Be it so," said she. "You do not know what you ask, but be it so. Whatever you hear," she continued, "whatever happens, do not return to this house; hurry fast until you reach the lighted and populous quarters of the city; even there be upon your guard. You are in a greater danger than you fancy. Promise me you will not so much as look at my keepsake until you are in a place of safety."

"I promise," replied Francis.

She put something loosely wrapped in a handkerchief into the young man's hand; and at the same time, with more strength than he could have anticipated, she pushed him into the street.

"Now, run!" she cried.

He heard the door close behind him, and the noise of the bolts being replaced.

"My faith," said he, "since I have promised!"

And he took to his heels down the lane that leads into the Rue Ravignan.

He was not fifty paces from the house with the green blinds when the most diabolical outcry suddenly arose out of the stillness of the night. Mechanically he stood still; another passenger followed his example; in the neighbouring floors he saw people crowding to the windows; a conflagration could not have produced more disturbance in this empty quarter. And yet it seemed to be all the work of a single man, roaring between grief and rage, like a lioness robbed of her whelps; and Francis was surprised and alarmed to hear his own name shouted with English imprecations to the wind.

His first movement was to return to the house; his second, as he remembered Miss Vandeleur's advice, to continue his flight with greater expedition than before; and he was in the act of turning to put his thought in action, when the Dictator, bareheaded, bawling aloud, his white hair blowing about his head, shot past him like a ball out of the cannon's mouth, and went careering down the street.

"That was a close shave," thought Francis to himself. "What he wants with me, and why he should be so disturbed, I cannot think; but he is plainly not good company for the moment, and I cannot do better than follow Miss Vandeleur's advice."

So saying, he turned to retrace his steps, thinking to double and descend by the Rue Lepic itself while his pursuer should continue to follow after him on the other line of street. The plan was ill- devised: as a matter of fact, he should have taken his seat in the nearest cafe, and waited there until the first heat of the pursuit was over. But besides that Francis had no experience and little natural aptitude for the small war of private life, he was so unconscious of any evil on his part, that he saw nothing to fear beyond a disagreeable interview. And to disagreeable interviews he felt he had already served his apprenticeship that evening; nor could he suppose that Miss Vandeleur had left anything unsaid. Indeed, the young man was sore both in body and mind - the one was all bruised, the other was full of smarting arrows; and he owned to himself that Mr. Vandeleur was master of a very deadly tongue.

The thought of his bruises reminded him that he had not only come without a hat, but that his clothes had considerably suffered in his descent through the chestnut. At the first magazine he purchased a cheap wideawake, and had the disorder of his toilet summarily repaired. The keepsake, still rolled in the handkerchief, he thrust in the meanwhile into his trousers pocket.

Not many steps beyond the shop he was conscious of a sudden shock, a hand upon his throat, an infuriated face close to his own, and an open mouth bawling curses in his ear. The Dictator, having found no trace of his quarry, was returning by the other way. Francis was a stalwart young fellow; but he was no match for his adversary whether in strength or skill; and after a few ineffectual struggles he resigned himself entirely to his captor.

“What do you want with me?” said he.

“We will talk of that at home,” returned the Dictator grimly.

And he continued to march the young man up hill in the direction of the house with the green blinds.

But Francis, although he no longer struggled, was only waiting an opportunity to make a bold push for freedom. With a sudden jerk he left the collar of his coat in the hands of Mr. Vandeleur, and once more made off at his best speed in the direction of the Boulevards.

The tables were now turned. If the Dictator was the stronger, Francis, in the top of his youth, was the more fleet of foot, and he had soon effected his escape among the crowds. Relieved for a moment, but with a growing sentiment of alarm and wonder in his mind, be walked briskly until he debauched upon the Place de l’Opera, lit up like day with electric lamps.

“This, at least,” thought he, “should satisfy Miss Vandeleur.”

And turning to his right along the Boulevards, he entered the Cafe Americain and ordered some beer. It was both late and early for the majority of the frequenters of the establishment. Only two or three persons, all men, were dotted here and there at separate tables in the hall; and Francis was too much occupied by his own thoughts to observe their presence.

He drew the handkerchief from his pocket. The object wrapped in it proved to be a morocco case, clasped and ornamented in gilt, which opened by means of a spring, and disclosed to the horrified young man a diamond of monstrous bigness and extraordinary brilliancy. The circumstance was so inexplicable, the value of the stone was plainly so enormous, that Francis sat staring into the open casket without movement, without conscious thought, like a man stricken suddenly with idiocy.

A hand was laid upon his shoulder, lightly but firmly, and a quiet voice, which yet had in it the ring of command, uttered these words in his ear -

"Close the casket, and compose your face."

Looking up, he beheld a man, still young, of an urbane and tranquil presence, and dressed with rich simplicity. This personage had risen from a neighbouring table, and, bringing his glass with him, had taken a seat beside Francis.

"Close the casket," repeated the stranger, "and put it quietly back into your pocket, where I feel persuaded it should never have been. Try, if you please, to throw off your bewildered air, and act as though I were one of your acquaintances whom you had met by chance. So! Touch glasses with me. That is better. I fear, sir, you must be an amateur."

And the stranger pronounced these last words with a smile of peculiar meaning, leaned back in his seat and enjoyed a deep inhalation of tobacco.

"For God's sake," said Francis, "tell me who you are and what this means? Why I should obey your most unusual suggestions I am sure I know not; but the truth is, I have fallen this evening into so many perplexing adventures, and all I meet conduct themselves so strangely, that I think I must either have gone mad or wandered into another planet. Your face inspires me with confidence; you seem wise, good, and experienced; tell me, for heaven's sake, why you accost me in so odd a fashion?"

"All in due time," replied the stranger. "But I have the first hand, and you must begin by telling me how the Rajah's Diamond is in your possession."

"The Rajah's Diamond!" echoed Francis.

"I would not speak so loud, if I were you," returned the other. "But most certainly you have the Rajah's Diamond in your pocket. I have seen and handled it a score of times in Sir Thomas Vandeleur's collection."

"Sir Thomas Vandeleur! The General! My father!" cried Francis.

"Your father?" repeated the stranger. "I was not aware the General had any family."

"I am illegitimate, sir," replied Francis, with a flush.

The other bowed with gravity. It was a respectful bow, as of a man silently apologising to his equal; and Francis felt relieved and comforted, he scarce knew why. The society of this person did him good; he seemed to touch firm ground; a strong feeling of respect grew up in his bosom, and mechanically he removed his wideawake as though in the presence of a superior.

"I perceive," said the stranger, "that your adventures have not all been peaceful. Your collar is torn, your face is scratched, you have a cut upon your temple; you will, perhaps, pardon my curiosity when I ask you to explain how you came by these injuries, and how you happen to have stolen property to an enormous value in your pocket."

"I must differ from you!" returned Francis hotly. "I possess no stolen property. And if you refer to the diamond, it was given to me not an hour ago by Miss Vandeleur in the Rue Lepic."

"By Miss Vandeleur of the Rue Lepic!" repeated the other. "You interest me more than you suppose. Pray continue."

"Heavens!" cried Francis.

His memory had made a sudden bound. He had seen Mr. Vandeleur take an article from the breast of his drugged visitor, and that article, he was now persuaded, was a morocco case.

"You have a light?" inquired the stranger.

"Listen," replied Francis. "I know not who you are, but I believe you to be worthy of confidence and helpful; I find myself in strange waters; I must have counsel and support, and since you invite me I shall tell you all."

And he briefly recounted his experiences since the day when he was summoned from the bank by his lawyer.

"Yours is indeed a remarkable history," said the stranger, after the young man had made an end of his narrative; "and your position is full of difficulty and peril. Many would counsel you to seek out your father, and give the diamond to him; but I have other views. Waiter!" he cried.

The waiter drew near.

"Will you ask the manager to speak with me a moment?" said he; and Francis observed once more, both in his tone and manner, the evidence of a habit of command.

The waiter withdrew, and returned in a moment with manager, who bowed with obsequious respect.

"What," said he, "can I do to serve you?"

"Have the goodness," replied the stranger, indicating Francis, "to tell this gentleman my name."

"You have the honour, sir," said the functionary, addressing young Scrymgeour, "to occupy the same table with His Highness Prince Florizel of Bohemia."

Francis rose with precipitation, and made a grateful reverence to the Prince, who bade him resume his seat.

"I thank you," said Florizel, once more addressing the functionary; "I am sorry to have deranged you for so small a matter."

And he dismissed him with a movement of his hand.

"And now," added the Prince, turning to Francis, "give me the diamond."

Without a word the casket was handed over.

"You have done right," said Florizel, "your sentiments have properly inspired you, and you will live to be grateful for the misfortunes of to-night. A man, Mr. Scrymgeour, may fall into a thousand perplexities, but if his heart be upright and his intelligence unclouded, he will issue from them all without dishonour. Let your mind be at rest; your affairs are in my hand; and with the aid of heaven I am strong enough to bring them to a good end. Follow me, if you please, to my carriage."

So saying the Prince arose and, having left a piece of gold for the waiter, conducted the young man from the cafe and along the Boulevard to where an unpretentious brougham and a couple of servants out of livery awaited his arrival.

"This carriage," said he, "is at your disposal; collect your baggage as rapidly as you can make it convenient, and my servants will conduct you to a villa in the neighbourhood of Paris where you can wait in some degree of comfort until I have had time to arrange your situation. You will find there a pleasant garden, a library of good authors, a cook, a cellar, and some good cigars, which I recommend to your attention. Jerome," he added, turning to one of the servants, "you have heard what I say; I leave Mr. Scrymgeour in your charge; you will, I know, be careful of my friend."

Francis uttered some broken phrases of gratitude.

"It will be time enough to thank me," said the Prince, "when you are acknowledged by your father and married to Miss Vandeleur."

And with that the Prince turned away and strolled leisurely in the direction of Montmartre. He hailed the first passing cab, gave an address, and a quarter of an hour afterwards, having discharged the driver some distance lower, he was knocking at Mr. Vandeleur's garden gate.

It was opened with singular precautions by the Dictator in person.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"You must pardon me this late visit, Mr. Vandeleur," replied the

Prince.

"Your Highness is always welcome," returned Mr. Vandeleur, stepping back.

The Prince profited by the open space, and without waiting for his host walked right into the house and opened the door of the SALON. Two people were seated there; one was Miss Vandeleur, who bore the marks of weeping about her eyes, and was still shaken from time to time by a sob; in the other the Prince recognised the young man who had consulted him on literary matters about a month before, in a club smoking-room.

"Good evening, Miss Vandeleur," said Florizel; "you look fatigued. Mr. Rolles, I believe? I hope you have profited by the study of Gaboriau, Mr. Rolles."

But the young clergyman's temper was too much embittered for speech; and he contented himself with bowing stiffly, and continued to gnaw his lip.

"To what good wind," said Mr. Vandeleur, following his guest, "am I to attribute the honour of your Highness's presence?"

"I am come on business," returned the Prince; "on business with you; as soon as that is settled I shall request Mr. Rolles to accompany me for a walk. Mr. Rolles," he added with severity, "let me remind you that I have not yet sat down."

The clergyman sprang to his feet with an apology; whereupon the Prince took an armchair beside the table, handed his hat to Mr. Vandeleur, his cane to Mr. Rolles, and, leaving them standing and thus menially employed upon his service, spoke as follows:-

"I have come here, as I said, upon business; but, had I come looking for pleasure, I could not have been more displeased with my reception nor more dissatisfied with my company. You, sir," addressing Mr. Rolles, "you have treated your superior in station with discourtesy; you, Vandeleur, receive me with a smile, but you know right well that your hands are not yet cleansed from misconduct. I do not desire to be interrupted, sir," he added imperiously; "I am here to speak, and not to listen; and I have to ask you to hear me with respect, and to obey punctiliously. At the earliest possible date your daughter shall be married at the Embassy to my friend, Francis Scrymgeour, your brother's acknowledged son. You will oblige me by offering not less than ten thousand pounds dowry. For yourself, I will indicate to you in writing a mission of some importance in Siam which I destine to your care. And now, sir, you will answer me in two words whether or not you agree to these conditions."

"Your Highness will pardon me," said Mr. Vandeleur, "and permit me, with all respect, to submit to him two queries?"

"The permission is granted," replied the Prince.

"Your Highness," resumed the Dictator, "has called Mr. Scrymgeour his friend. Believe me, had I known he was thus honoured, I should have treated him with proportional respect."

"You interrogate adroitly," said the Prince; "but it will not serve your turn. You have my commands; if I had never seen that gentleman before to-night, it would not render them less absolute."

"Your Highness interprets my meaning with his usual subtlety," returned Vandeleur. "Once more: I have, unfortunately, put the police upon the track of Mr. Scrymgeour on a charge of theft; am I to withdraw or to uphold the accusation?"

"You will please yourself," replied Florizel. "The question is one between your conscience and the laws of this land. Give me my hat; and you, Mr. Rolles, give me my cane and follow me. Miss Vandeleur, I wish you good evening. I judge," he added to Vandeleur, "that your silence means unqualified assent."

"If I can do no better," replied the old man, "I shall submit; but

I warn you openly it shall not be without a struggle."

"You are old," said the Prince; "but years are disgraceful to the wicked. Your age is more unwise than the youth of others. Do not provoke me, or you may find me harder than you dream. This is the first time that I have fallen across your path in anger; take care that it be the last."

With these words, motioning the clergyman to follow, Florizel left the apartment and directed his steps towards the garden gate; and the Dictator, following with a candle, gave them light, and once more undid the elaborate fastenings with which he sought to protect himself from intrusion.

"Your daughter is no longer present," said the Prince, turning on the threshold. "Let me tell you that I understand your threats; and you have only to lift your hand to bring upon yourself sudden and irremediable ruin."

The Dictator made no reply; but as the Prince turned his back upon him in the lamplight he made a gesture full of menace and insane fury; and the next moment, slipping round a corner, he was running at full speed for the nearest cab-stand.

(Here, says my Arabian, the thread of events is finally diverted from THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN BLINDS. One more adventure, he adds, and we have done with THE RAJAH'S DIAMOND. That last link in the chain is known among the inhabitants of Bagdad by the name of THE ADVENTURE OF PRINCE FLORIZEL AND A DETECTIVE.)

THE ADVENTURE OF PRINCE FLORIZEL AND A DETECTIVE

Prince Florizel walked with Mr. Rolles to the door of a small hotel where the latter resided. They spoke much together, and the clergyman was more than once affected to tears by the mingled severity and tenderness of Florizel's reproaches.

"I have made ruin of my life," he said at last. "Help me; tell me what I am to do; I have, alas! neither the virtues of a priest nor the dexterity of a rogue."

"Now that you are humbled," said the Prince, "I command no longer; the repentant have to do with God and not with princes. But if you will let me advise you, go to Australia as a colonist, seek menial labour in the open air, and try to forget that you have ever been a clergyman, or that you ever set eyes on that accursed stone."

"Accurst indeed!" replied Mr. Rolles. "Where is it now? What further hurt is it not working for mankind?"

"It will do no more evil," returned the Prince. "It is here in my pocket. And this," he added kindly, "will show that I place some faith in your penitence, young as it is."

"Suffer me to touch your hand," pleaded Mr. Rolles.

"No," replied Prince Florizel, "not yet."

The tone in which he uttered these last words was eloquent in the ears of the young clergyman; and for some minutes after the Prince had turned away he stood on the threshold following with his eyes the retreating figure and invoking the blessing of heaven upon a man so excellent in counsel.

For several hours the Prince walked alone in unfrequented streets. His mind was full of concern; what to do with the diamond, whether to return it to its owner, whom he judged unworthy of this rare possession, or to take some sweeping and courageous measure and put it out of the reach of all mankind at once and for ever, was a problem too grave to be decided in a moment. The manner in which it had come into his hands appeared manifestly providential; and as he took out the jewel and looked at it under the street lamps, its size and surprising brilliancy inclined him more and more to think of it as of an unmixed and dangerous evil for the world.

"God help me!" he thought; "if I look at it much oftener, I shall begin to grow covetous myself."

At last, though still uncertain in his mind, he turned his steps towards the small but elegant mansion on the river-side which had belonged for centuries to his royal family. The arms of Bohemia are deeply graved over the door and upon the tall chimneys; passengers have a look into a green court set with the most costly flowers, and a stork, the only one in Paris, perches on the gable all day long and keeps a crowd before the house. Grave servants are seen passing to and fro within; and from time to time the great gate is thrown open and a carriage rolls below the arch. For many reasons this residence was especially dear to the heart of Prince Florizel; he never drew near to it without enjoying that sentiment of home-coming so rare in the lives of the great; and on the present evening he beheld its tall roof and mildly illuminated windows with unfeigned relief and satisfaction.

As he was approaching the postern door by which he always entered when alone, a man stepped forth from the shadow and presented himself with an obeisance in the Prince's path.

"I have the honour of addressing Prince Florizel of Bohemia?" said he.

"Such is my title," replied the Prince. "What do you want with me?"

"I am," said the man, "a detective, and I have to present your Highness with this billet from the Prefect of Police."

The Prince took the letter and glanced it through by the light of the street lamp. It was highly apologetic, but requested him to follow the bearer to the Prefecture without delay.

"In short," said Florizel, "I am arrested."

"Your Highness," replied the officer, "nothing, I am certain, could be further from the intention of the Prefect. You will observe that he has not granted a warrant. It is mere formality, or call it, if you prefer, an obligation that your Highness lays on the authorities."

"At the same time," asked the Prince, "if I were to refuse to follow you?"

"I will not conceal from your Highness that a considerable discretion has been granted me," replied the detective with a bow.

"Upon my word," cried Florizel, "your effrontery astounds me! Yourself, as an agent, I must pardon; but your superiors shall dearly smart for their misconduct. What, have you any idea, is the cause of this impolitic and unconstitutional act? You will observe that I have as yet neither refused nor consented, and much may depend on your prompt and ingenuous answer. Let me remind you, officer, that this is an affair of some gravity."

"Your Highness," said the detective humbly, "General Vandeleur and his brother have had the incredible presumption to accuse you of theft. The famous diamond, they declare, is in your hands. A word from you in denial will most amply satisfy the Prefect; nay, I go farther: if your Highness would so far honour a subaltern as to declare his ignorance of the matter even to myself, I should ask permission to retire upon the spot."

Florizel, up to the last moment, had regarded his adventure in the light of a trifle, only serious upon international considerations. At the name of Vandeleur the horrible truth broke upon him in a moment; he was not only arrested, but he was guilty. This was not only an annoying incident - it was a peril to his honour. What was he to say? What was he to do? The Rajah's Diamond was indeed an accursed stone; and it seemed as if he were to be the last victim to its influence.

One thing was certain. He could not give the required assurance to the detective. He must gain time.

His hesitation had not lasted a second.

"Be it so," said he, "let us walk together to the Prefecture."

The man once more bowed, and proceeded to follow Florizel at a respectful distance in the rear.

"Approach," said the Prince. "I am in a humour to talk, and, if I mistake not, now I look at you again, this is not the first time that we have met."

"I count it an honour," replied the officer, "that your Highness should recollect my face. It is eight years since I had the pleasure of an interview."

"To remember faces," returned Florizel, "is as much a part of my profession as it is of yours. Indeed, rightly looked upon, a Prince and a detective serve in the same corps. We are both combatants against crime; only mine is the more lucrative and yours the more dangerous rank, and there is a sense in which both may be made equally honourable to a good man. I had rather, strange as you may think it, be a detective of character and parts than a weak and ignoble sovereign."

The officer was overwhelmed.

"Your Highness returns good for evil," said he. "To an act of presumption he replies by the most amiable condescension."

"How do you know," replied Florizel, "that I am not seeking to corrupt you?"

"Heaven preserve me from the temptation!" cried the detective.

"I applaud your answer," returned the Prince. "It is that of a wise and honest man. The world is a great place and stocked with wealth and beauty, and there is no limit to the rewards that may be offered. Such an one who would refuse a million of money may sell his honour for an empire or the love of a woman; and I myself, who speak to you, have seen occasions so tempting, provocations so irresistible to the strength of human virtue, that I have been glad to tread in your steps and recommend myself to the grace of God. It is thus, thanks to that modest and becoming habit alone," he added, "that you and I can walk this town together with untarnished hearts."

"I had always heard that you were brave," replied the officer, "but I was not aware that you were wise and pious. You speak the truth, and you speak it with an accent that moves me to the heart. This world is indeed a place of trial."

"We are now," said Florizel, "in the middle of the bridge. Lean your elbows on the parapet and look over. As the water rushing below, so the passions and complications of life carry away the honesty of weak men. Let me tell you a story."

"I receive your Highness's commands," replied the man.

And, imitating the Prince, he leaned against the parapet, and disposed himself to listen. The city was already sunk in slumber; had it not been for the infinity of lights and the outline of buildings on the starry sky, they might have been alone beside some country river.

"An officer," began Prince Florizel, "a man of courage and conduct, who had already risen by merit to an eminent rank, and won not only admiration but respect, visited, in an unfortunate hour for his peace of mind, the collections of an Indian Prince. Here he beheld a diamond so extraordinary for size and beauty that from that instant he had only one desire in life: honour, reputation, friendship, the love of country, he was ready to sacrifice all for this lump of sparkling crystal. For three years he served this semi-barbarian potentate as Jacob served Laban; he falsified frontiers, he connived at murders, he unjustly condemned and executed a brother-officer who had the misfortune to displease the Rajah by some honest freedoms; lastly, at a time of great danger to his native land, he betrayed a body of his fellow-soldiers, and suffered them to be defeated and massacred by thousands. In the end, he had amassed a magnificent fortune, and brought home with him the coveted diamond.

"Years passed," continued the Prince, "and at length the diamond is accidentally lost. It falls into the hands of a simple and laborious youth, a student, a minister of God, just entering on a career of usefulness and even distinction. Upon him also the spell is cast; he deserts everything, his holy calling, his studies, and flees with the gem into a foreign country. The officer has a brother, an astute, daring, unscrupulous man, who learns the clergyman's secret. What does he do? Tell his brother, inform the police? No; upon this man also the Satanic charm has fallen; he must have the stone for himself. At the risk of murder, he drugs the young priest and seizes the prey. And now, by an accident which is not important to my moral, the jewel passes out of his custody into that of another, who, terrified at what he sees, gives it into the keeping of a man in high station and above reproach.

"The officer's name is Thomas Vandeleur," continued Florizel. "The stone is called the Rajah's Diamond. And" - suddenly opening his hand - "you behold it here before your eyes."

The officer started back with a cry.

"We have spoken of corruption," said the Prince. "To me this nugget of bright crystal is as loathsome as though it were crawling with the worms of death; it is as shocking as though it were compacted out of innocent blood. I see it here in my hand, and I know it is shining with hell-fire. I have told you but a hundredth part of its story; what passed in former ages, to what crimes and treacheries it incited men of yore, the imagination trembles to conceive; for years and years it has faithfully served the powers of hell; enough, I say, of blood, enough of disgrace, enough of broken lives and friendships; all things come to an end, the evil like the good; pestilence as well as beautiful music; and as for this diamond, God forgive me if I do wrong, but its empire ends to- night."

The Prince made a sudden movement with his hand, and the jewel, describing an arc of light, dived with a splash into the flowing river.

"Amen," said Florizel with gravity. "I have slain a cockatrice!"

"God pardon me!" cried the detective. "What have you done? I am a ruined man."

"I think," returned the Prince with a smile, "that many well-to-do people in this city might envy you your ruin."

"Alas! your Highness!" said the officer, "and you corrupt me after all?"

"It seems there was no help for it," replied Florizel. "And now let us go forward to the Prefecture."

Not long after, the marriage of Francis Scrymgeour and Miss Vandeleur was celebrated in great privacy; and the Prince acted on that occasion as groomsman. The two Vandeleurs surprised some rumour of what had happened to the diamond; and their vast diving operations on the River Seine are the wonder and amusement of the idle. It is true that through some miscalculation they have chosen the wrong branch of the river. As for the Prince, that sublime person, having now served his turn, may go, along with the ARABIAN AUTHOR, topsy-turvy into space. But if the reader insists on more specific information, I am happy to say that a recent revolution hurled him from the throne of Bohemia, in consequence of his continued absence and edifying neglect of public business; and that his Highness now keeps a cigar store in Rupert Street, much frequented by other foreign refugees. I go there from time to time to smoke and have a chat, and find him as great a creature as in the days of his prosperity; he has an Olympian air behind the counter; and although a sedentary life is beginning to tell upon his waistcoat, he is probably, take him for all in all, the handsomest tobacconist in London.

THE PAVILION ON THE LINKS

CHAPTER I - TELLS HOW I CAMPED IN GRADEN SEA-WOOD, AND BEHELD A LIGHT IN THE PAVILION

I was a great solitary when I was young. I made it my pride to keep aloof and suffice for my own entertainment; and I may say that I had neither friends nor acquaintances until I met that friend who became my wife and the mother of my children. With one man only was I on private terms; this was R. Northmour, Esquire, of Graden Easter, in Scotland. We had met at college; and though there was not much liking between us, nor even much intimacy, we were so nearly of a humour that we could associate with ease to both. Misanthropes, we believed ourselves to be; but I have thought since that we were only sulky fellows. It was scarcely a companionship, but a coexistence in unsociability. Northmour's exceptional violence of temper made it no easy affair for him to keep the peace with any one but me; and as he respected my silent ways, and let me come and go as I pleased, I could tolerate his presence without concern. I think we called each other friends.

When Northmour took his degree and I decided to leave the university without one, he invited me on a long visit to Graden Easter; and it was thus that I first became acquainted with the scene of my adventures. The mansion-house of Graden stood in a bleak stretch of country some three miles from the shore of the GermanOcean. It was as large as a barrack; and as it had been built of a soft stone, liable to consume in the eager air of the seaside, it was damp and draughty within and half ruinous without. It was impossible for two young men to lodge with comfort in such a dwelling. But there stood in the northern part of the estate, in a wilderness of links and blowing sand-hills, and between a plantation and the sea, a small Pavilion or Belvidere, of modern design, which was exactly suited to our wants; and in this hermitage, speaking little, reading much, and rarely associating except at meals, Northmour and I spent four tempestuous winter months. I might have stayed longer; but one March night there sprang up between us a dispute, which rendered my departure necessary. Northmour spoke hotly, I remember, and I suppose I must have made some tart rejoinder. He leaped from his chair and grappled me; I had to fight, without exaggeration, for my life; and it was only with a great effort that I mastered him, for he was near as strong in body as myself, and seemed filled with the devil. The next morning, we met on our usual terms; but I judged it more delicate to withdraw; nor did he attempt to dissuade me.

It was nine years before I revisited the neighbourhood. I travelled at that time with a tilt cart, a tent, and a cooking- stove, tramping all day beside the waggon, and at night, whenever it was possible, gipsying in a cove of the hills, or by the side of a wood. I believe I visited in this manner most of the wild and desolate regions both in England and Scotland; and, as I had neither friends nor relations, I was troubled with no correspondence, and had nothing in the nature of headquarters, unless it was the office of my solicitors, from whom I drew my income twice a year. It was a life in which I delighted; and I fully thought to have grown old upon the march, and at last died in a ditch.

It was my whole business to find desolate corners, where I could camp without the fear of interruption; and hence, being in another part of the same shire, I bethought me suddenly of the Pavilion on the Links. No thoroughfare passed within three miles of it. The nearest town, and that was but a fisher village, was at a distance of six or seven. For ten miles of length, and from a depth varying from three miles to half a mile, this belt of barren country lay along the sea. The beach, which was the natural approach, was full of quicksands. Indeed I may say there is hardly a better place of concealment in the United Kingdom. I determined to pass a week in the Sea-Wood of Graden Easter, and making a long stage, reached it about sundown on a wild September day.

The country, I have said, was mixed sand-hill and links; LINKS being a Scottish name for sand which has ceased drifting and become more or less solidly covered with turf. The Pavilion stood on an even space; a little behind it, the wood began in a hedge of elders huddled together by the wind; in front, a few tumbled sand-hills stood between it and the sea. An outcropping of rock had formed a bastion for the sand, so that there was here a promontory in the coast-line between two shallow bays; and just beyond the tides, the rock again cropped out and formed an islet of small dimensions but strikingly designed. The quicksands were of great extent at low water, and had an infamous reputation in the country. Close in shore, between the islet and the promontory, it was said they would swallow a man in four minutes and a half; but there may have been little ground for this precision. The district was alive with rabbits, and haunted by gulls which made a continual piping about the pavilion. On summer days the outlook was bright and even gladsome; but at sundown in September, with a high wind, and a heavy surf rolling in close along the links, the place told of nothing but dead mariners and sea disaster. A ship beating to windward on the horizon, and a huge truncheon of wreck half buried in the sands at my feet, completed the innuendo of the scene.

The pavilion - it had been built by the last proprietor, Northmour's uncle, a silly and prodigal virtuoso - presented little signs of age. It was two storeys in height, Italian in design, surrounded by a patch of garden in which nothing had prospered but a few coarse flowers; and looked, with its shuttered windows, not like a house that had been deserted, but like one that had never been tenanted by man. Northmour was plainly from home; whether, as usual, sulking in the cabin of his yacht, or in one of his fitful and extravagant appearances in the world of society, I had, of course, no means of guessing. The place had an air of solitude that daunted even a solitary like myself; the wind cried in the chimneys with a strange and wailing note; and it was with a sense of escape, as if I were going indoors, that I turned away and, driving my cart before me, entered the skirts of the wood.

The Sea-Wood of Graden had been planted to shelter the cultivated fields behind, and check the encroachments of the blowing sand. As you advanced into it from coastward, elders were succeeded by other hardy shrubs; but the timber was all stunted and bushy; it led a life of conflict; the trees were accustomed to swing there all night long in fierce winter tempests; and even in early spring, the leaves were already flying, and autumn was beginning, in this exposed plantation. Inland the ground rose into a little hill, which, along with the islet, served as a sailing mark for seamen. When the hill was open of the islet to the north, vessels must bear well to the eastward to clear Graden Ness and the Graden Bullers. In the lower ground, a streamlet ran among the trees, and, being dammed with dead leaves and clay of its own carrying, spread out every here and there, and lay in stagnant pools. One or two ruined cottages were dotted about the wood; and, according to Northmour, these were ecclesiastical foundations, and in their time had sheltered pious hermits.

I found a den, or small hollow, where there was a spring of pure water; and there, clearing away the brambles, I pitched the tent, and made a fire to cook my supper. My horse I picketed farther in the wood where there was a patch of sward. The banks of the den not only concealed the light of my fire, but sheltered me from the wind, which was cold as well as high.

The life I was leading made me both hardy and frugal. I never drank but water, and rarely ate anything more costly than oatmeal; and I required so little sleep, that, although I rose with the peep of day, I would often lie long awake in the dark or starry watches of the night. Thus in Graden Sea-Wood, although I fell thankfully asleep by eight in the evening I was awake again before eleven with a full possession of my faculties, and no sense of drowsiness or fatigue. I rose and sat by the fire, watching the trees and clouds tumultuously tossing and fleeing overhead, and hearkening to the wind and the rollers along the shore; till at length, growing weary of inaction, I quitted the den, and strolled towards the borders of the wood. A young moon, buried in mist, gave a faint illumination to my steps; and the light grew brighter as I walked forth into the links. At the same moment, the wind, smelling salt of the open ocean and carrying particles of sand, struck me with its full force, so that I had to bow my head.

When I raised it again to look about me, I was aware of a light in the pavilion. It was not stationary; but passed from one window to another, as though some one were reviewing the different apartments with a lamp or candle.

I watched it for some seconds in great surprise. When I had arrived in the afternoon the house had been plainly deserted; now it was as plainly occupied. It was my first idea that a gang of thieves might have broken in and be now ransacking Northmour's cupboards, which were many and not ill supplied. But what should bring thieves to Graden Easter? And, again, all the shutters had been thrown open, and it would have been more in the character of such gentry to close them. I dismissed the notion, and fell back upon another. Northmour himself must have arrived, and was now airing and inspecting the pavilion.

I have said that there was no real affection between this man and me; but, had I loved him like a brother, I was then so much more in love with solitude that I should none the less have shunned his company. As it was, I turned and ran for it; and it was with genuine satisfaction that I found myself safely back beside the fire. I had escaped an acquaintance; I should have one more night in comfort. In the morning, I might either slip away before Northmour was abroad, or pay him as short a visit as I chose.

But when morning came, I thought the situation so diverting that I forgot my shyness. Northmour was at my mercy; I arranged a good practical jest, though I knew well that my neighbour was not the man to jest with in security; and, chuckling beforehand over its success, took my place among the elders at the edge of the wood, whence I could command the door of the pavilion. The shutters were all once more closed, which I remember thinking odd; and the house, with its white walls and green venetians, looked spruce and habitable in the morning light. Hour after hour passed, and still no sign of Northmour. I knew him for a sluggard in the morning; but, as it drew on towards noon, I lost my patience. To say the truth, I had promised myself to break my fast in the pavilion, and hunger began to prick me sharply. It was a pity to let the opportunity go by without some cause for mirth; but the grosser appetite prevailed, and I relinquished my jest with regret, and sallied from the wood.

The appearance of the house affected me, as I drew near, with disquietude. It seemed unchanged since last evening; and I had expected it, I scarce knew why, to wear some external signs of habitation. But no: the windows were all closely shuttered, the chimneys breathed no smoke, and the front door itself was closely padlocked. Northmour, therefore, had entered by the back; this was the natural and, indeed, the necessary conclusion; and you may judge of my surprise when, on turning the house, I found the back door similarly secured.

My mind at once reverted to the original theory of thieves; and I blamed myself sharply for my last night's inaction. I examined all the windows on the lower storey, but none of them had been tampered with; I tried the padlocks, but they were both secure. It thus became a problem how the thieves, if thieves they were, had managed to enter the house. They must have got, I reasoned, upon the roof of the outhouse where Northmour used to keep his photographic battery; and from thence, either by the window of the study or that of my old bedroom, completed their burglarious entry.

I followed what I supposed was their example; and, getting on the roof, tried the shutters of each room. Both were secure; but I was not to be beaten; and, with a little force, one of them flew open, grazing, as it did so, the back of my hand. I remember, I put the wound to my mouth, and stood for perhaps half a minute licking it like a dog, and mechanically gazing behind me over the waste links and the sea; and, in that space of time, my eye made note of a large schooner yacht some miles to the north-east. Then I threw up the window and climbed in.

I went over the house, and nothing can express my mystification. There was no sign of disorder, but, on the contrary, the rooms were unusually clean and pleasant. I found fires laid, ready for lighting; three bedrooms prepared with a luxury quite foreign to Northmour's habits, and with water in the ewers and the beds turned down; a table set for three in the dining-room; and an ample supply of cold meats, game, and vegetables on the pantry shelves. There were guests expected, that was plain; but why guests, when Northmour hated society? And, above all, why was the house thus stealthily prepared at dead of night? and why were the shutters closed and the doors padlocked?

I effaced all traces of my visit, and came forth from the window feeling sobered and concerned.

The schooner yacht was still in the same place; and it flashed for a moment through my mind that this might be the RED EARL bringing the owner of the pavilion and his guests. But the vessel's head was set the other way.

CHAPTER II - TELLS OF THE NOCTURNAL LANDING FROM THE YACHT

I returned to the den to cook myself a meal, of which I stood in great need, as well as to care for my horse, whom I had somewhat neglected in the morning. From time to time I went down to the edge of the wood; but there was no change in the pavilion, and not a human creature was seen all day upon the links. The schooner in the offing was the one touch of life within my range of vision. She, apparently with no set object, stood off and on or lay to, hour after hour; but as the evening deepened, she drew steadily nearer. I became more convinced that she carried Northmour and his friends, and that they would probably come ashore after dark; not only because that was of a piece with the secrecy of the preparations, but because the tide would not have flowed sufficiently before eleven to cover Graden Floe and the other sea quags that fortified the shore against invaders.

All day the wind had been going down, and the sea along with it; but there was a return towards sunset of the heavy weather of the day before. The night set in pitch dark. The wind came off the sea in squalls, like the firing of a battery of cannon; now and then there was a flaw of rain, and the surf rolled heavier with the rising tide. I was down at my observatory among the elders, when a light was run up to the masthead of the schooner, and showed she was closer in than when I had last seen her by the dying daylight. I concluded that this must be a signal to Northmour's associates on shore; and, stepping forth into the links, looked around me for something in response.

A small footpath ran along the margin of the wood, and formed the most direct communication between the pavilion and the mansion-house; and, as I cast my eyes to that side, I saw a spark of light, not a quarter of a mile away, and rapidly approaching. From its uneven course it appeared to be the light of a lantern carried by a person who followed the windings of the path, and was often staggered and taken aback by the more violent squalls. I concealed myself once more among the elders, and waited eagerly for the newcomer's advance. It proved to be a woman; and, as she passed within half a rod of my ambush, I was able to recognise the features. The deaf and silent old dame, who had nursed Northmour in his childhood, was his associate in this underhand affair.

I followed her at a little distance, taking advantage of the innumerable heights and hollows, concealed by the darkness, and favoured not only by the nurse's deafness, but by the uproar of the wind and surf. She entered the pavilion, and, going at once to the upper storey, opened and set a light in one of the windows that looked towards the sea. Immediately afterwards the light at the schooner's masthead was run down and extinguished. Its purpose had been attained, and those on board were sure that they were expected. The old woman resumed her preparations; although the other shutters remained closed, I could see a glimmer going to and fro about the house; and a gush of sparks from one chimney after another soon told me that the fires were being kindled.

Northmour and his guests, I was now persuaded, would come ashore as soon as there was water on the floe. It was a wild night for boat service; and I felt some alarm mingle with my curiosity as I reflected on the danger of the landing. My old acquaintance, it was true, was the most eccentric of men; but the present eccentricity was both disquieting and lugubrious to consider. A variety of feelings thus led me towards the beach, where I lay flat on my face in a hollow within six feet of the track that led to the pavilion. Thence, I should have the satisfaction of recognising the arrivals, and, if they should prove to be acquaintances, greeting them as soon as they had landed.

Some time before eleven, while the tide was still dangerously low, a boat's lantern appeared close in shore; and, my attention being thus awakened, I could perceive another still far to seaward, violently tossed, and sometimes hidden by the billows. The weather, which was getting dirtier as the night went on, and the perilous situation of the yacht upon a lee shore, had probably driven them to attempt a landing at the earliest possible moment.

A little afterwards, four yachtsmen carrying a very heavy chest, and guided by a fifth with a lantern, passed close in front of me as I lay, and were admitted to the pavilion by the nurse. They returned to the beach, and passed me a second time with another chest, larger but apparently not so heavy as the first. A third time they made the transit; and on this occasion one of the yachtsmen carried a leather portmanteau, and the others a lady's trunk and carriage bag. My curiosity was sharply excited. If a woman were among the guests of Northmour, it would show a change in his habits and an apostasy from his pet theories of life, well calculated to fill me with surprise. When he and I dwelt there together, the pavilion had been a temple of misogyny. And now, one of the detested sex was to be installed under its roof. I remembered one or two particulars, a few notes of daintiness and almost of coquetry which had struck me the day before as I surveyed the preparations in the house; their purpose was now clear, and I thought myself dull not to have perceived it from the first.

While I was thus reflecting, a second lantern drew near me from the beach. It was carried by a yachtsman whom I had not yet seen, and who was conducting two other persons to the pavilion. These two persons were unquestionably the guests for whom the house was made ready; and, straining eye and ear, I set myself to watch them as they passed. One was an unusually tall man, in a travelling hat slouched over his eyes, and a highland cape closely buttoned and turned up so as to conceal his face. You could make out no more of him than that he was, as I have said, unusually tall, and walked feebly with a heavy stoop. By his side, and either clinging to him or giving him support - I could not make out which - was a young, tall, and slender figure of a woman. She was extremely pale; but in the light of the lantern her face was so marred by strong and changing shadows, that she might equally well have been as ugly as sin or as beautiful as I afterwards found her to be.

When they were just abreast of me, the girl made some remark which was drowned by the noise of the wind.

“Hush!” said her companion; and there was something in the tone with which the word was uttered that thrilled and rather shook my spirits. It seemed to breathe from a bosom labouring under the deadliest terror; I have never heard another syllable so expressive; and I still hear it again when I am feverish at night, and my mind runs upon old times. The man turned towards the girl as he spoke; I had a glimpse of much red beard and a nose which seemed to have been broken in youth; and his light eyes seemed shining in his face with some strong and unpleasant emotion.

But these two passed on and were admitted in their turn to the pavilion.

One by one, or in groups, the seamen returned to the beach. The wind brought me the sound of a rough voice crying, “Shove off!” Then, after a pause, another lantern drew near. It was Northmour alone.

My wife and I, a man and a woman, have often agreed to wonder how a person could be, at the same time, so handsome and so repulsive as Northmour. He had the appearance of a finished gentleman; his face bore every mark of intelligence and courage; but you had only to look at him, even in his most amiable moment, to see that he had the temper of a slaver captain. I never knew a character that was both explosive and revengeful to the same degree; he combined the vivacity of the south with the sustained and deadly hatreds of the north; and both traits were plainly written on his face, which was a sort of danger signal. In person he was tall, strong, and active; his hair and complexion very dark; his features handsomely designed, but spoiled by a menacing expression.

At that moment he was somewhat paler than by nature; he wore a heavy frown; and his lips worked, and he looked sharply round him as he walked, like a man besieged with apprehensions. And yet I thought he had a look of triumph underlying all, as though he had already done much, and was near the end of an achievement.

Partly from a scruple of delicacy - which I dare say came too late - partly from the pleasure of startling an acquaintance, I desired to make my presence known to him without delay.

I got suddenly to my feet, and stepped forward. “Northmour!” said I.

I have never had so shocking a surprise in all my days. He leaped on me without a word; something shone in his hand; and he struck for my heart with a dagger. At the same moment I knocked him head over heels. Whether it was my quickness, or his own uncertainty, I know not; but the blade only grazed my shoulder, while the hilt and his fist struck me violently on the mouth.

I fled, but not far. I had often and often observed the capabilities of the sand-hills for protracted ambush or stealthy advances and retreats; and, not ten yards from the scene of the scuffle, plumped down again upon the grass. The lantern had fallen and gone out. But what was my astonishment to see Northmour slip at a bound into the pavilion, and hear him bar the door behind him with a clang of iron!

He had not pursued me. He had run away. Northmour, whom I knew for the most implacable and daring of men, had run away! I could scarce believe my reason; and yet in this strange business, where all was incredible, there was nothing to make a work about in an incredibility more or less. For why was the pavilion secretly prepared? Why had Northmour landed with his guests at dead of night, in half a gale of wind, and with the floe scarce covered? Why had he sought to kill me? Had he not recognised my voice? I wondered. And, above all, how had he come to have a dagger ready in his hand? A dagger, or even a sharp knife, seemed out of keeping with the age in which we lived; and a gentleman landing from his yacht on the shore of his own estate, even although it was at night and with some mysterious circumstances, does not usually, as a matter of fact, walk thus prepared for deadly onslaught. The more I reflected, the further I felt at sea. I recapitulated the elements of mystery, counting them on my fingers: the pavilion secretly prepared for guests; the guests landed at the risk of their lives and to the imminent peril of the yacht; the guests, or at least one of them, in undisguised and seemingly causeless terror; Northmour with a naked weapon; Northmour stabbing his most intimate acquaintance at a word; last, and not least strange, Northmour fleeing from the man whom he had sought to murder, and barricading himself, like a hunted creature, behind the door of the pavilion. Here were at least six separate causes for extreme surprise; each part and parcel with the others, and forming all together one consistent story. I felt almost ashamed to believe my own senses.

As I thus stood, transfixed with wonder, I began to grow painfully conscious of the injuries I had received in the scuffle; skulked round among the sand-hills; and, by a devious path, regained the shelter of the wood. On the way, the old nurse passed again within several yards of me, still carrying her lantern, on the return journey to the mansion-house of Graden. This made a seventh suspicious feature in the case - Northmour and his guests, it appeared, were to cook and do the cleaning for themselves, while the old woman continued to inhabit the big empty barrack among the policies. There must surely be great cause for secrecy, when so many inconveniences were confronted to preserve it.

So thinking, I made my way to the den. For greater security, I trod out the embers of the fire, and lit my lantern to examine the wound upon my shoulder. It was a trifling hurt, although it bled somewhat freely, and I dressed it as well as I could (for its position made it difficult to reach) with some rag and cold water from the spring. While I was thus busied, I mentally declared war against Northmour and his mystery. I am not an angry man by nature, and I believe there was more curiosity than resentment in my heart. But war I certainly declared; and, by way of preparation, I got out my revolver, and, having drawn the charges, cleaned and reloaded it with scrupulous care. Next I became preoccupied about my horse. It might break loose, or fall to neighing, and so betray my camp in the Sea-Wood. I determined to rid myself of its neighbourhood; and long before dawn I was leading it over the links in the direction of the fisher village.

CHAPTER III - TELLS HOW I BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH MY WIFE

For two days I skulked round the pavilion, profiting by the uneven surface of the links. I became an adept in the necessary tactics. These low hillocks and shallow dells, running one into another, became a kind of cloak of darkness for my enthralling, but perhaps dishonourable, pursuit. Yet, in spite of this advantage, I could learn but little of Northmour or his guests.

Fresh provisions were brought under cover of darkness by the old woman from the mansion-house. Northmour, and the young lady, sometimes together, but more often singly, would walk for an hour or two at a time on the beach beside the quicksand. I could not but conclude that this promenade was chosen with an eye to secrecy; for the spot was open only to the seaward. But it suited me not less excellently; the highest and most accidented of the sand-hills immediately adjoined; and from these, lying flat in a hollow, I could overlook Northmour or the young lady as they walked.

The tall man seemed to have disappeared. Not only did he never cross the threshold, but he never so much as showed face at a window; or, at least, not so far as I could see; for I dared not creep forward beyond a certain distance in the day, since the upper floor commanded the bottoms of the links; and at night, when I could venture farther, the lower windows were barricaded as if to stand a siege. Sometimes I thought the tall man must be confined to bed, for I remembered the feebleness of his gait; and sometimes I thought he must have gone clear away, and that Northmour and the young lady remained alone together in the pavilion. The idea, even then, displeased me.

Whether or not this pair were man and wife, I had seen abundant reason to doubt the friendliness of their relation. Although I could hear nothing of what they said, and rarely so much as glean a decided expression on the face of either, there was a distance, almost a stiffness, in their bearing which showed them to be either unfamiliar or at enmity. The girl walked faster when she was with Northmour than when she was alone; and I conceived that any inclination between a man and a woman would rather delay than accelerate the step. Moreover, she kept a good yard free of him, and trailed her umbrella, as if it were a barrier, on the side between them. Northmour kept sidling closer; and, as the girl retired from his advance, their course lay at a sort of diagonal across the beach, and would have landed them in the surf had it been long enough continued. But, when this was imminent, the girl would unostentatiously change sides and put Northmour between her and the sea. I watched these manoeuvres, for my part, with high enjoyment and approval, and chuckled to myself at every move.

On the morning of the third day, she walked alone for some time, and I perceived, to my great concern, that she was more than once in tears. You will see that my heart was already interested more than I supposed. She had a firm yet airy motion of the body, and carried her head with unimaginable grace; every step was a thing to look at, and she seemed in my eyes to breathe sweetness and distinction.

The day was so agreeable, being calm and sunshiny, with a tranquil sea, and yet with a healthful piquancy and vigour in the air, that, contrary to custom, she was tempted forth a second time to walk. On this occasion she was accompanied by Northmour, and they had been but a short while on the beach, when I saw him take forcible possession of her hand. She struggled, and uttered a cry that was almost a scream. I sprang to my feet, unmindful of my strange position; but, ere I had taken a step, I saw Northmour bareheaded and bowing very low, as if to apologise; and dropped again at once into my ambush. A few words were interchanged; and then, with another bow, he left the beach to return to the pavilion. He passed not far from me, and I could see him, flushed and lowering, and cutting savagely with his cane among the grass. It was not without satisfaction that I recognised my own handiwork in a great cut under his right eye, and a considerable discolouration round the socket.

For some time the girl remained where he had left her, looking out past the islet and over the bright sea. Then with a start, as one who throws off preoccupation and puts energy again upon its mettle, she broke into a rapid and decisive walk. She also was much incensed by what had passed. She had forgotten where she was. And I beheld her walk straight into the borders of the quicksand where it is most abrupt and dangerous. Two or three steps farther and her life would have been in serious jeopardy, when I slid down the face of the sand-hill, which is there precipitous, and, running half-way forward, called to her to stop.

She did so, and turned round. There was not a tremor of fear in her behaviour, and she marched directly up to me like a queen. I was barefoot, and clad like a common sailor, save for an Egyptian scarf round my waist; and she probably took me at first for some one from the fisher village, straying after bait. As for her, when I thus saw her face to face, her eyes set steadily and imperiously upon mine, I was filled with admiration and astonishment, and thought her even more beautiful than I had looked to find her. Nor could I think enough of one who, acting with so much boldness, yet preserved a maidenly air that was both quaint and engaging; for my wife kept an old-fashioned precision of manner through all her admirable life - an excellent thing in woman, since it sets another value on her sweet familiarities.

“What does this mean?” she asked.

“You were walking,” I told her, “directly into Graden Floe.”

“You do not belong to these parts,” she said again. “You speak like an educated man.”

“I believe I have right to that name,” said I, “although in this disguise.”

But her woman’s eye had already detected the sash. “Oh!” she said; “your sash betrays you.”

“You have said the word BETRAY,” I resumed. “May I ask you not to betray me? I was obliged to disclose myself in your interest; but if Northmour learned my presence it might be worse than disagreeable for me.”

“Do you know,” she asked, “to whom you are speaking?”

“Not to Mr. Northmour’s wife?” I asked, by way of answer.

She shook her head. All this while she was studying my face with an embarrassing intentness. Then she broke out -

“You have an honest face. Be honest like your face, sir, and tell me what you want and what you are afraid of. Do you think I could hurt you? I believe you have far more power to injure me! And yet you do not look unkind. What do you mean - you, a gentleman - by skulking like a spy about this desolate place? Tell me,” she said, “who is it you hate?”

“I hate no one,” I answered; “and I fear no one face to face. My name is Cassilis - Frank Cassilis. I lead the life of a vagabond for my own good pleasure. I am one of Northmour's oldest friends; and three nights ago, when I addressed him on these links, he stabbed me in the shoulder with a knife."

"It was you!" she said.

"Why he did so," I continued, disregarding the interruption, "is more than I can guess, and more than I care to know. I have not many friends, nor am I very susceptible to friendship; but no man shall drive me from a place by terror. I had camped in Graden Sea- Wood ere he came; I camp in it still. If you think I mean harm to you or yours, madam, the remedy is in your hand. Tell him that my camp is in the Hemlock Den, and to-night he can stab me in safety while I sleep."

With this I doffed my cap to her, and scrambled up once more among the sand-hills. I do not know why, but I felt a prodigious sense of injustice, and felt like a hero and a martyr; while, as a matter of fact, I had not a word to say in my defence, nor so much as one plausible reason to offer for my conduct. I had stayed at Graden out of a curiosity natural enough, but undignified; and though there was another motive growing in along with the first, it was not one which, at that period, I could have properly explained to the lady of my heart.

Certainly, that night, I thought of no one else; and, though her whole conduct and position seemed suspicious, I could not find it in my heart to entertain a doubt of her integrity. I could have staked my life that she was clear of blame, and, though all was dark at the present, that the explanation of the mystery would show her part in these events to be both right and needful. It was true, let me cudgel my imagination as I pleased, that I could invent no theory of her relations to Northmour; but I felt none the less sure of my conclusion because it was founded on instinct in place of reason, and, as I may say, went to sleep that night with the thought of her under my pillow.

Next day she came out about the same hour alone, and, as soon as the sand-hills concealed her from the pavilion, drew nearer to the edge, and called me by name in guarded tones. I was astonished to observe that she was deadly pale, and seemingly under the influence of strong emotion.

"Mr. Cassilis!" she cried; "Mr. Cassilis!"

I appeared at once, and leaped down upon the beach. A remarkable air of relief overspread her countenance as soon as she saw me.

"Oh!" she cried, with a hoarse sound, like one whose bosom has been lightened of a weight. And then, "Thank God you are still safe!" she added; "I knew, if you were, you would be here." (Was not this strange? So swiftly and wisely does Nature prepare our hearts for these great life-long intimacies, that both my wife and I had been given a presentiment on this the second day of our acquaintance. I had even then hoped that she would seek me; she had felt sure that she would find me.) “Do not,” she went, on swiftly, “do not stay in this place. Promise me that you will sleep no longer in that wood. You do not know how I suffer; all last night I could not sleep for thinking of your peril.”

“Peril?” I repeated. “Peril from whom? From Northmour?”

“Not so,” she said. “Did you think I would tell him after what you said?”

“Not from Northmour?” I repeated. “Then how? From whom? I see none to be afraid of.”

“You must not ask me,” was her reply, “for I am not free to tell you. Only believe me, and go hence - believe me, and go away quickly, quickly, for your life!”

An appeal to his alarm is never a good plan to rid oneself of a spirited young man. My obstinacy was but increased by what she said, and I made it a point of honour to remain. And her solicitude for my safety still more confirmed me in the resolve.

“You must not think me inquisitive, madam,” I replied; “but, if Graden is so dangerous a place, you yourself perhaps remain here at some risk.”

She only looked at me reproachfully.

“You and your father - “ I resumed; but she interrupted me almost with a gasp.

“My father! How do you know that?” she cried.

“I saw you together when you landed,” was my answer; and I do not know why, but it seemed satisfactory to both of us, as indeed it was the truth. “But,” I continued, “you need have no fear from me. I see you have some reason to be secret, and, you may believe me, your secret is as safe with me as if I were in Graden Floe. I have scarce spoken to any one for years; my horse is my only companion, and even he, poor beast, is not beside me. You see, then, you may count on me for silence. So tell me the truth, my dear young lady, are you not in danger?”

“Mr. Northmour says you are an honourable man,” she returned, “and I believe it when I see you. I will tell you so much; you are right; we are in dreadful, dreadful danger, and you share it by remaining where you are.”

“Ah!” said I; “you have heard of me from Northmour? And he gives me a good character?”

“I asked him about you last night,” was her reply. “I pretended,” she hesitated, “I pretended to have met you long ago, and spoken to you of him. It was not true; but I could not help myself without betraying you, and you had put me in a difficulty. He praised you highly.”

“And - you may permit me one question - does this danger come from Northmour?” I asked.

“From Mr. Northmour?” she cried. “Oh no; he stays with us to share it.”

“While you propose that I should run away?” I said. “You do not rate me very high.”

“Why should you stay?” she asked. “You are no friend of ours.”

I know not what came over me, for I had not been conscious of a similar weakness since I was a child, but I was so mortified by this retort that my eyes pricked and filled with tears, as I continued to gaze upon her face.

“No, no,” she said, in a changed voice; “I did not mean the words unkindly.”

“It was I who offended,” I said; and I held out my hand with a look of appeal that somehow touched her, for she gave me hers at once, and even eagerly. I held it for awhile in mine, and gazed into her eyes. It was she who first tore her hand away, and, forgetting all about her request and the promise she had sought to extort, ran at the top of her speed, and without turning, till she was out of sight.

And then I knew that I loved her, and thought in my glad heart that she - she herself - was not indifferent to my suit. Many a time she has denied it in after days, but it was with a smiling and not a serious denial. For my part, I am sure our hands would not have lain so closely in each other if she had not begun to melt to me already. And, when all is said, it is no great contention, since, by her own avowal, she began to love me on the morrow.

And yet on the morrow very little took place. She came and called me down as on the day before, upbraided me for lingering at Graden, and, when she found I was still obdurate, began to ask me more particularly as to my arrival. I told her by what series of accidents I had come to witness their disembarkation, and how I had determined to remain, partly from the interest which had been wakened in me by Northmour’s guests, and partly because of his own murderous attack. As to the former, I fear I was disingenuous, and led her to regard herself as having been an attraction to me from the first moment that I saw her on the links. It relieves my heart to make this confession even now, when my wife is with God, and already knows all things, and the honesty of my purpose even in this; for while she lived, although it often pricked my conscience, I had never the hardihood to undeceive her. Even a little secret, in such a married life as ours, is like the rose-leaf which kept the Princess from her sleep.

From this the talk branched into other subjects, and I told her much about my lonely and wandering existence; she, for her part, giving ear, and saying little. Although we spoke very naturally, and latterly on topics that might seem indifferent, we were both sweetly agitated. Too soon it was time for her to go; and we separated, as if by mutual consent, without shaking hands, for both knew that, between us, it was no idle ceremony.

The next, and that was the fourth day of our acquaintance, we met in the same spot, but early in the morning, with much familiarity and yet much timidity on either side. When she had once more spoken about my danger - and that, I understood, was her excuse for coming - I, who had prepared a great deal of talk during the night, began to tell her how highly I valued her kind interest, and how no one had ever cared to hear about my life, nor had I ever cared to relate it, before yesterday. Suddenly she interrupted me, saying with vehemence -

"And yet, if you knew who I was, you would not so much as speak to me!"

I told her such a thought was madness, and, little as we had met, I counted her already a dear friend; but my protestations seemed only to make her more desperate.

"My father is in hiding!" she cried.

"My dear," I said, forgetting for the first time to add "young lady," "what do I care? If he were in hiding twenty times over, would it make one thought of change in you?"

"Ah, but the cause!" she cried, "the cause! It is - " she faltered for a second - "it is disgraceful to us!"

CHAPTER IV - TELLS IN WHAT A STARTLING MANNER I LEARNED THAT I WAS NOT ALONE IN GRADEN SEA-WOOD

This was my wife's story, as I drew it from her among tears and sobs. Her name was Clara Huddlestone: it sounded very beautiful in my ears; but not so beautiful as that other name of Clara Cassilis, which she wore during the longer and, I thank God, the happier portion of her life. Her father, Bernard Huddlestone, had been a private banker in a very large way of business. Many years before, his affairs becoming disordered, he had been led to try dangerous, and at last criminal, expedients to retrieve himself from ruin. All was in vain; he became more and more cruelly involved, and found his honour lost at the same moment with his fortune. About this period, Northmour had been courting his daughter with great assiduity, though with small encouragement; and to him, knowing him thus disposed in his favour, Bernard Huddlestone turned for help in his extremity. It was not merely ruin and dishonour, nor merely a legal condemnation, that the unhappy man had brought upon his head. It seems he could have gone to prison with a light heart. What he feared, what kept him awake at night or recalled him from slumber into frenzy, was some secret, sudden, and unlawful attempt upon his life. Hence, he desired to bury his existence and escape to one of the islands in the South Pacific, and it was in Northmour's yacht, the RED EARL, that he designed to go. The yacht picked them up clandestinely upon the coast of Wales, and had once more deposited them at Graden, till she could be refitted and provisioned for the longer voyage. Nor could Clara doubt that her hand had been stipulated as the price of passage. For, although Northmour was neither unkind nor even discourteous, he had shown himself in several instances somewhat overbold in speech and manner.

I listened, I need not say, with fixed attention, and put many questions as to the more mysterious part. It was in vain. She had no clear idea of what the blow was, nor of how it was expected to fall. Her father's alarm was unfeigned and physically prostrating, and he had thought more than once of making an unconditional surrender to the police. But the scheme was finally abandoned, for he was convinced that not even the strength of our English prisons could shelter him from his pursuers. He had had many affairs with Italy, and with Italians resident in London, in the later years of his business; and these last, as Clara fancied, were somehow connected with the doom that threatened him. He had shown great terror at the presence of an Italian seaman on board the RED EARL, and had bitterly and repeatedly accused Northmour in consequence. The latter had protested that Beppo (that was the seaman's name) was a capital fellow, and could be trusted to the death; but Mr. Huddlestone had continued ever since to declare that all was lost, that it was only a question of days, and that Beppo would be the ruin of him yet.

I regarded the whole story as the hallucination of a mind shaken by calamity. He had suffered heavy loss by his Italian transactions; and hence the sight of an Italian was hateful to him, and the principal part in his nightmare would naturally enough be played by one of that nation.

"What your father wants," I said, "is a good doctor and some calming medicine."

"But Mr. Northmour?" objected your mother. "He is untroubled by losses, and yet he shares in this terror."

I could not help laughing at what I considered her simplicity.

"My dear," said I, "you have told me yourself what reward he has to look for. All is fair in love, you must remember; and if Northmour foments your father's terrors, it is not at all because he is afraid of any Italian man, but simply because he is infatuated with a charming English woman."

She reminded me of his attack upon myself on the night of the disembarkation, and this I was unable to explain. In short, and from one thing to another, it was agreed between us, that I should set out at once for the fisher village, Graden Wester, as it was called, look up all the newspapers I could find, and see for myself if there seemed any basis of fact for these continued alarms. The next morning, at the same hour and place, I was to make my report to Clara. She said no more on that occasion about my departure; nor, indeed, did she make it a secret that she clung to the thought of my proximity as something helpful and pleasant; and, for my part, I could not have left her, if she had gone upon her knees to ask it.

I reached Graden Wester before ten in the forenoon; for in those days I was an excellent pedestrian, and the distance, as I think I have said, was little over seven miles; fine walking all the way upon the springy turf. The village is one of the bleakest on that coast, which is saying much: there is a church in a hollow; a miserable haven in the rocks, where many boats have been lost as they returned from fishing; two or three score of stone houses arranged along the beach and in two streets, one leading from the harbour, and another striking out from it at right angles; and, at the corner of these two, a very dark and cheerless tavern, by way of principal hotel.

I had dressed myself somewhat more suitably to my station in life, and at once called upon the minister in his little manse beside the graveyard. He knew me, although it was more than nine years since we had met; and when I told him that I had been long upon a walking tour, and was behind with the news, readily lent me an armful of newspapers, dating from a month back to the day before. With these I sought the tavern, and, ordering some breakfast, sat down to study the "Huddlestone Failure."

It had been, it appeared, a very flagrant case. Thousands of persons were reduced to poverty; and one in particular had blown out his brains as soon as payment was suspended. It was strange to myself that, while I read these details, I continued rather to sympathise with Mr. Huddlestone than with his victims; so complete already was the empire of my love for my wife. A price was naturally set upon the banker's head; and, as the case was inexcusable and the public indignation thoroughly aroused, the unusual figure of 750 pounds was offered for his capture. He was reported to have large sums of money in his possession. One day, he had been heard of in Spain; the next, there was sure intelligence that he was still lurking between Manchester and Liverpool, or along the border of Wales; and the day after, a telegram would announce his arrival in Cuba or Yucatan. But in all this there was no word of an Italian, nor any sign of mystery.

In the very last paper, however, there was one item not so clear. The accountants who were charged to verify the failure had, it seemed, come upon the traces of a very large number of thousands, which figured for some time in the transactions of the house of

Huddlestone; but which came from nowhere, and disappeared in the same mysterious fashion. It was only once referred to by name, and then under the initials “X. X.”; but it had plainly been floated for the first time into the business at a period of great depression some six years ago. The name of a distinguished Royal personage had been mentioned by rumour in connection with this sum. “The cowardly desperado” - such, I remember, was the editorial expression - was supposed to have escaped with a large part of this mysterious fund still in his possession.

I was still brooding over the fact, and trying to torture it into some connection with Mr. Huddlestone’s danger, when a man entered the tavern and asked for some bread and cheese with a decided foreign accent.

“SIETE ITALIANO?” said I.

“SI, SIGNOR,” was his reply.

I said it was unusually far north to find one of his compatriots; at which he shrugged his shoulders, and replied that a man would go anywhere to find work. What work he could hope to find at Graden Wester, I was totally unable to conceive; and the incident struck so unpleasantly upon my mind, that I asked the landlord, while he was counting me some change, whether he had ever before seen an Italian in the village. He said he had once seen some Norwegians, who had been shipwrecked on the other side of Graden Ness and rescued by the lifeboat from Cauldhaven.

“No!” said I; “but an Italian, like the man who has just had bread and cheese.”

“What?” cried he, “yon black-avised fellow wi’ the teeth? Was he an I-talian? Weel, yon’s the first that ever I saw, an’ I dare say he’s like to be the last.”

Even as he was speaking, I raised my eyes, and, casting a glance into the street, beheld three men in earnest conversation together, and not thirty yards away. One of them was my recent companion in the tavern parlour; the other two, by their handsome, sallow features and soft hats, should evidently belong to the same race. A crowd of village children stood around them, gesticulating and talking gibberish in imitation. The trio looked singularly foreign to the bleak dirty street in which they were standing, and the dark grey heaven that overspread them; and I confess my incredulity received at that moment a shock from which it never recovered. I might reason with myself as I pleased, but I could not argue down the effect of what I had seen, and I began to share in the Italian terror.

It was already drawing towards the close of the day before I had returned the newspapers at the manse, and got well forward on to the links on my way home. I shall never forget that walk. It grew very cold and boisterous; the wind sang in the short grass about my feet; thin rain showers came running on the gusts; and an immense mountain range of clouds began to arise out of the bosom of the sea. It would be hard to imagine a more dismal evening; and whether it was from these external influences, or because my nerves were already affected by what I had heard and seen, my thoughts were as gloomy as the weather.

The upper windows of the pavilion commanded a considerable spread of links in the direction of Graden Wester. To avoid observation, it was necessary to hug the beach until I had gained cover from the higher sand-hills on the little headland, when I might strike across, through the hollows, for the margin of the wood. The sun was about setting; the tide was low, and all the quicksands uncovered; and I was moving along, lost in unpleasant thought, when I was suddenly thunderstruck to perceive the prints of human feet. They ran parallel to my own course, but low down upon the beach instead of along the border of the turf; and, when I examined them, I saw at once, by the size and coarseness of the impression, that it was a stranger to me and to those in the pavilion who had recently passed that way. Not only so; but from the recklessness of the course which he had followed, steering near to the most formidable portions of the sand, he was as evidently a stranger to the country and to the ill-repute of Graden beach.

Step by step I followed the prints; until, a quarter of a mile farther, I beheld them die away into the south-eastern boundary of Graden Floe. There, whoever he was, the miserable man had perished. One or two gulls, who had, perhaps, seen him disappear, wheeled over his sepulchre with their usual melancholy piping. The sun had broken through the clouds by a last effort, and coloured the wide level of quicksands with a dusky purple. I stood for some time gazing at the spot, chilled and disheartened by my own reflections, and with a strong and commanding consciousness of death. I remember wondering how long the tragedy had taken, and whether his screams had been audible at the pavilion. And then, making a strong resolution, I was about to tear myself away, when a gust fiercer than usual fell upon this quarter of the beach, and I saw now, whirling high in air, now skimming lightly across the surface of the sands, a soft, black, felt hat, somewhat conical in shape, such as I had remarked already on the heads of the Italians.

I believe, but I am not sure, that I uttered a cry. The wind was driving the hat shoreward, and I ran round the border of the floe to be ready against its arrival. The gust fell, dropping the hat for a while upon the quicksand, and then, once more freshening, landed it a few yards from where I stood. I seized it with the interest you may imagine. It had seen some service; indeed, it was rustier than either of those I had seen that day upon the street. The lining was red, stamped with the name of the maker, which I have forgotten, and that of the place of manufacture, VENEDIG. This (it is not yet forgotten) was the name given by the Austrians to the beautiful city of Venice, then, and for long after, a part of their dominions.

The shock was complete. I saw imaginary Italians upon every side; and for the first, and, I may say, for the last time in my experience, became overpowered by what is called a panic terror. I knew nothing, that is, to be afraid of, and yet I admit that I was heartily afraid; and it was with a sensible reluctance that I returned to my exposed and solitary camp in the Sea-Wood.

There I ate some cold porridge which had been left over from the night before, for I was disinclined to make a fire; and, feeling strengthened and reassured, dismissed all these fanciful terrors from my mind, and lay down to sleep with composure.

How long I may have slept it is impossible for me to guess; but I was awakened at last by a sudden, blinding flash of light into my face. It woke me like a blow. In an instant I was upon my knees. But the light had gone as suddenly as it came. The darkness was intense. And, as it was blowing great guns from the sea and pouring with rain, the noises of the storm effectually concealed all others.

It was, I dare say, half a minute before I regained my self-possession. But for two circumstances, I should have thought I had been awakened by some new and vivid form of nightmare. First, the flap of my tent, which I had shut carefully when I retired, was now unfastened; and, second, I could still perceive, with a sharpness that excluded any theory of hallucination, the smell of hot metal and of burning oil. The conclusion was obvious. I had been wakened by some one flashing a bull’s-eye lantern in my face. It had been but a flash, and away. He had seen my face, and then gone. I asked myself the object of so strange a proceeding, and the answer came pat. The man, whoever he was, had thought to recognise me, and he had not. There was yet another question unresolved; and to this, I may say, I feared to give an answer; if he had recognised me, what would he have done?

My fears were immediately diverted from myself, for I saw that I had been visited in a mistake; and I became persuaded that some dreadful danger threatened the pavilion. It required some nerve to issue forth into the black and intricate thicket which surrounded and overhung the den; but I groped my way to the links, drenched with rain, beaten upon and deafened by the gusts, and fearing at every step to lay my hand upon some lurking adversary. The darkness was so complete that I might have been surrounded by an army and yet none the wiser, and the uproar of the gale so loud that my hearing was as useless as my sight.

For the rest of that night, which seemed interminably long, I patrolled the vicinity of the pavilion, without seeing a living creature or hearing any noise but the concert of the wind, the sea, and the rain. A light in the upper story filtered through a cranny of the shutter, and kept me company till the approach of dawn.

CHAPTER V - TELLS OF AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN NORTHMOUR, CLARA, AND MYSELF

With the first peep of day, I retired from the open to my old lair among the sand-hills, there to await the coming of my wife. The morning was grey, wild, and melancholy; the wind moderated before sunrise, and then went about, and blew in puffs from the shore; the sea began to go down, but the rain still fell without mercy. Over all the wilderness of links there was not a creature to be seen. Yet I felt sure the neighbourhood was alive with skulking foes. The light that had been so suddenly and surprisingly flashed upon my face as I lay sleeping, and the hat that had been blown ashore by the wind from over Graden Floe, were two speaking signals of the peril that environed Clara and the party in the pavilion.

It was, perhaps, half-past seven, or nearer eight, before I saw the door open, and that dear figure come towards me in the rain. I was waiting for her on the beach before she had crossed the sand-hills.

“I have had such trouble to come!” she cried. “They did not wish me to go walking in the rain.”

“Clara,” I said, “you are not frightened!”

“No,” said she, with a simplicity that filled my heart with confidence. For my wife was the bravest as well as the best of women; in my experience, I have not found the two go always together, but with her they did; and she combined the extreme of fortitude with the most endearing and beautiful virtues.

I told her what had happened; and, though her cheek grew visibly paler, she retained perfect control over her senses.

“You see now that I am safe,” said I, in conclusion. “They do not mean to harm me; for, had they chosen, I was a dead man last night.”

She laid her hand upon my arm.

“And I had no presentiment!” she cried.

Her accent thrilled me with delight. I put my arm about her, and strained her to my side; and, before either of us was aware, her hands were on my shoulders and my lips upon her mouth. Yet up to that moment no word of love had passed between us. To this day I remember the touch of her cheek, which was wet and cold with the rain; and many a time since, when she has been washing her face, I have kissed it again for the sake of that morning on the beach. Now that she is taken from me, and I finish my pilgrimage alone, I recall our old lovingkindnesses and the deep honesty and affection which united us, and my present loss seems but a trifle in comparison.

We may have thus stood for some seconds - for time passes quickly with lovers - before we were startled by a peal of laughter close at hand. It was not natural mirth, but seemed to be affected in order to conceal an angrier feeling. We both turned, though I still kept my left arm about Clara's waist; nor did she seek to withdraw herself; and there, a few paces off upon the beach, stood Northmour, his head lowered, his hands behind his back, his nostrils white with passion.

"Ah! Cassilis!" he said, as I disclosed my face.

"That same," said I; for I was not at all put about.

"And so, Miss Huddlestone," he continued slowly but savagely, "this is how you keep your faith to your father and to me? This is the value you set upon your father's life? And you are so infatuated with this young gentleman that you must brave ruin, and decency, and common human caution - "

"Miss Huddlestone - " I was beginning to interrupt him, when he, in his turn, cut in brutally -

"You hold your tongue," said he; "I am speaking to that girl."

"That girl, as you call her, is my wife," said I; and my wife only leaned a little nearer, so that I knew she had affirmed my words.

"Your what?" he cried. "You lie!"

"Northmour," I said, "we all know you have a bad temper, and I am the last man to be irritated by words. For all that, I propose that you speak lower, for I am convinced that we are not alone."

He looked round him, and it was plain my remark had in some degree sobered his passion. "What do you mean?" he asked.

I only said one word: "Italians."

He swore a round oath, and looked at us, from one to the other.

"Mr. Cassilis knows all that I know," said my wife.

"What I want to know," he broke out, "is where the devil Mr.
Cassilis comes from, and what the devil Mr. Cassilis is doing here.
You say you are married; that I do not believe. If you were,
Graden Floe would soon divorce you; four minutes and a half,
Cassilis. I keep my private cemetery for my friends."

"It took somewhat longer," said I, "for that Italian."

He looked at me for a moment half daunted, and then, almost civilly, asked me to tell my story. "You have too much the advantage of me, Cassilis," he added. I complied of course; and he listened, with several ejaculations, while I told him how I had come to Graden: that it was I whom he had tried to murder on the night of landing; and what I had subsequently seen and heard of the Italians.

"Well," said he, when I had done, "it is here at last; there is no mistake about that. And what, may I ask, do you propose to do?"

"I propose to stay with you and lend a hand," said I.

"You are a brave man," he returned, with a peculiar intonation.

"I am not afraid," said I.

"And so," he continued, "I am to understand that you two are married? And you stand up to it before my face, Miss Huddlestone?"

"We are not yet married," said Clara; "but we shall be as soon as we can."

"Bravo!" cried Northmour. "And the bargain? D-n it, you're not a fool, young woman; I may call a spade a spade with you. How about the bargain? You know as well as I do what your father's life depends upon. I have only to put my hands under my coat-tails and walk away, and his throat would he cut before the evening."

"Yes, Mr. Northmour," returned Clara, with great spirit; "but that is what you will never do. You made a bargain that was unworthy of a gentleman; but you are a gentleman for all that, and you will never desert a man whom you have begun to help."

"Aha!" said he. "You think I will give my yacht for nothing? You think I will risk my life and liberty for love of the old gentleman; and then, I suppose, be best man at the wedding, to wind up? Well," he added, with an odd smile, "perhaps you are not altogether wrong. But ask Cassilis here. HE knows me. Am I a man to trust? Am I safe and scrupulous? Am I kind?"

"I know you talk a great deal, and sometimes, I think, very foolishly," replied Clara, "but I know you are a gentleman, and I am not the least afraid."

He looked at her with a peculiar approval and admiration; then, turning to me, "Do you think I would give her up without a struggle, Frank?" said he. "I tell you plainly, you look out. The next time we come to blows - "

"Will make the third," I interrupted, smiling.

"Aye, true; so it will," he said. "I had forgotten. Well, the third time's lucky."

"The third time, you mean, you will have the crew of the RED EARL to help," I said.

"Do you hear him?" he asked, turning to my wife.

"I hear two men speaking like cowards," said she. "I should despise myself either to think or speak like that. And neither of you believe one word that you are saying, which makes it the more wicked and silly."

"She's a trump!" cried Northmour. "But she's not yet Mrs. Cassilis. I say no more. The present is not for me." Then my wife surprised me.

"I leave you here," she said suddenly. "My father has been too long alone. But remember this: you are to be friends, for you are both good friends to me."

She has since told me her reason for this step. As long as she remained, she declares that we two would have continued to quarrel; and I suppose that she was right, for when she was gone we fell at once into a sort of confidentiality.

Northmour stared after her as she went away over the sand-hill

"She is the only woman in the world!" he exclaimed with an oath.

"Look at her action."

I, for my part, leaped at this opportunity for a little further light.

"See here, Northmour," said I; "we are all in a tight place, are we not?"

"I believe you, my boy," he answered, looking me in the eyes, and with great emphasis. "We have all hell upon us, that's the truth. You may believe me or not, but I'm afraid of my life."

"Tell me one thing," said I. "What are they after, these Italians?

What do they want with Mr. Huddlestone?"

"Don't you know?" he cried. "The black old scamp had CARBONARO funds on a deposit - two hundred and eighty thousand; and of course he gambled it away on stocks. There was to have been a revolution in the Tridentino, or Parma; but the revolution is off, and the whole wasp's nest is after Huddlestone. We shall all be lucky if we can save our skins."

"The CARBONARI!" I exclaimed; "God help him indeed!"

"Amen!" said Northmour. "And now, look here: I have said that we are in a fix; and, frankly, I shall be glad of your help. If I can't save Huddlestone, I want at least to save the girl. Come and stay in the pavilion; and, there's my hand on it, I shall act as your friend until the old man is either clear or dead. But," he added, "once that is settled, you become my rival once again, and I warn you - mind yourself."

"Done!" said I; and we shook hands.

"And now let us go directly to the fort," said Northmour; and he began to lead the way through the rain.

CHAPTER VI - TELLS OF MY INTRODUCTION TO THE TALL MAN

We were admitted to the pavilion by Clara, and I was surprised by the completeness and security of the defences. A barricade of great strength, and yet easy to displace, supported the door against Any violence from without; and the shutters of the dining- room, into which I was led directly, and which was feebly illuminated by a lamp, were even more elaborately fortified. The panels were strengthened by bars and cross-bars; and these, in their turn, were kept in position by a system of braces and struts, some abutting on the floor, some on the roof, and others, in fine, against the opposite wall of the apartment. It was at once a solid and well-designed piece of carpentry; and I did not seek to conceal my admiration.

"I am the engineer," said Northmour. "You remember the planks in the garden? Behold them?"

"I did not know you had so many talents," said I.

"Are you armed?" he continued, pointing to an array of guns and pistols, all in admirable order, which stood in line against the wall or were displayed upon the sideboard.

"Thank you," I returned; "I have gone armed since our last encounter. But, to tell you the truth, I have had nothing to eat since early yesterday evening."

Northmour produced some cold meat, to which I eagerly set myself, and a bottle of good Burgundy, by which, wet as I was, I did not scruple to profit. I have always been an extreme temperance man on principle; but it is useless to push principle to excess, and on this occasion I believe that I finished three-quarters of the bottle. As I ate, I still continued to admire the preparations for defence.

"We could stand a siege," I said at length.

"Ye-es," drawled Northmour; "a very little one, per-haps. It is not so much the strength of the pavilion I misdoubt; it is the doubled anger that kills me. If we get to shooting, wild as the country is some one is sure to hear it, and then - why then it's the same thing, only different, as they say: caged by law, or killed by CARBONARI. There's the choice. It is a devilish bad thing to have the law against you in this world, and so I tell the old gentleman upstairs. He is quite of my way of thinking."

"Speaking of that," said I, "what kind of person is he?"

"Oh, he!" cried the other; "he's a rancid fellow, as far as he goes. I should like to have his neck wrung to-morrow by all the devils in Italy. I am not in this affair for him. You take me? I made a bargain for Missy's hand, and I mean to have it too."

"That by the way," said I. "I understand. But how will Mr.

Huddlestone take my intrusion?"

"Leave that to Clara," returned Northmour.

I could have struck him in the face for this coarse familiarity; but I respected the truce, as, I am bound to say, did Northmour, and so long as the danger continued not a cloud arose in our relation. I bear him this testimony with the most unfeigned satisfaction; nor am I without pride when I look back upon my own behaviour. For surely no two men were ever left in a position so invidious and irritating.

As soon as I had done eating, we proceeded to inspect the lower floor. Window by window we tried the different supports, now and then making an inconsiderable change; and the strokes of the hammer sounded with startling loudness through the house. I proposed, I remember, to make loop-holes; but he told me they were already made in the windows of the upper story. It was an anxious business this inspection, and left me down-hearted. There were two doors and five windows to protect, and, counting Clara, only four of us to defend them against an unknown number of foes. I communicated my doubts to Northmour, who assured me, with unmoved composure, that he entirely shared them.

"Before morning," said he, "we shall all be butchered and buried in Graden Floe. For me, that is written."

I could not help shuddering at the mention of the quicksand, but reminded Northmour that our enemies had spared me in the wood.

"Do not flatter yourself," said he. "Then you were not in the same boat with the old gentleman; now you are. It's the floe for all of us, mark my words."

I trembled for Clara; and just then her dear voice was heard calling us to come upstairs. Northmour showed me the way, and, when he had reached the landing, knocked at the door of what used to be called MY UNCLE'S BEDROOM, as the founder of the pavilion had designed it especially for himself.

"Come in, Northmour; come in, dear Mr. Cassilis," said a voice from within.

Pushing open the door, Northmour admitted me before him into the apartment. As I came in I could see the daughter slipping out by the side door into the study, which had been prepared as her bedroom. In the bed, which was drawn back against the wall, instead of standing, as I had last seen it, boldly across the window, sat Bernard Huddlestone, the defaulting banker. Little as I had seen of him by the shifting light of the lantern on the links, I had no difficulty in recognising him for the same. He had a long and sallow countenance, surrounded by a long red beard and side whiskers. His broken nose and high cheekbones gave him somewhat the air of a Kalmuck, and his light eyes shone with the excitement of a high fever. He wore a skull-cap of black silk; a huge Bible lay open before him on the bed, with a pair of gold spectacles in the place, and a pile of other books lay on the stand by his side. The green curtains lent a cadaverous shade to his cheek; and, as he sat propped on pillows, his great stature was painfully hunched, and his head protruded till it overhung his knees. I believe if he had not died otherwise, he must have fallen a victim to consumption in the course of but a very few weeks.

He held out to me a hand, long, thin, and disagreeably hairy.

"Come in, come in, Mr. Cassilis," said he. "Another protector - ahem! - another protector. Always welcome as a friend of my daughter's, Mr. Cassilis. How they have rallied about me, my daughter's friends! May God in heaven bless and reward them for it!"

I gave him my hand, of course, because I could not help it; but the sympathy I had been prepared to feel for Clara's father was immediately soured by his appearance, and the wheedling, unreal tones in which he spoke.

“Cassilis is a good man,” said Northmour; “worth ten.”

“So I hear,” cried Mr. Huddlestone eagerly “so my girl tells me. Ah, Mr. Cassilis, my sin has found me out, you see! I am very low, very low; but I hope equally penitent. We must all come to the throne of grace at last, Mr. Cassilis. For my part, I come late indeed; but with unfeigned humility, I trust.”

“Fiddle-de-dee!” said Northmour roughly.

“No, no, dear Northmour!” cried the banker. “You must not say that; you must not try to shake me. You forget, my dear, good boy, you forget I may be called this very night before my Maker.”

His excitement was pitiful to behold; and I felt myself grow indignant with Northmour, whose infidel opinions I well knew, and heartily derided, as he continued to taunt the poor sinner out of his humour of repentance.

“Pooh, my dear Huddlestone!” said he. “You do yourself injustice. You are a man of the world inside and out, and were up to all kinds of mischief before I was born. Your conscience is tanned like South American leather - only you forgot to tan your liver, and that, if you will believe me, is the seat of the annoyance.”

“Rogue, rogue! bad boy!” said Mr. Huddlestone, shaking his finger. “I am no precisian, if you come to that; I always hated a precisian; but I never lost hold of something better through it all. I have been a bad boy, Mr. Cassilis; I do not seek to deny that; but it was after my wife’s death, and you know, with a widower, it’s a different thing: sinful - I won’t say no; but there is a gradation, we shall hope. And talking of that - Hark!” he broke out suddenly, his hand raised, his fingers spread, his face racked with interest and terror. “Only the rain, bless God!” he added, after a pause, and with indescribable relief.

For some seconds he lay back among the pillows like a man near to fainting; then he gathered himself together, and, in somewhat tremulous tones, began once more to thank me for the share I was prepared to take in his defence.

“One question, sir,” said I, when he had paused. “Is it true that you have money with you?”

He seemed annoyed by the question, but admitted with reluctance that he had a little.

“Well,” I continued, “it is their money they are after, is it not?

Why not give it up to them?”

“Ah!” replied he, shaking his head, “I have tried that already, Mr. Cassilis; and alas that it should be so! but it is blood they want.”

“Huddlestone, that’s a little less than fair,” said Northmour. “You should mention that what you offered them was upwards of two hundred thousand short. The deficit is worth a reference; it is for what they call a cool sum, Frank. Then, you see, the fellows reason in their clear Italian way; and it seems to them, as indeed it seems to me, that they may just as well have both while they're about it - money and blood together, by George, and no more trouble for the extra pleasure."

"Is it in the pavilion?" I asked.

"It is; and I wish it were in the bottom of the sea instead," said Northmour; and then suddenly - "What are you making faces at me for?" he cried to Mr. Huddlestone, on whom I had unconsciously turned my back. "Do you think Cassilis would sell you?"

Mr. Huddlestone protested that nothing had been further from his mind.

"It is a good thing," retorted Northmour in his ugliest manner. "You might end by wearying us. What were you going to say?" he added, turning to me.

"I was going to propose an occupation for the afternoon," said I. "Let us carry that money out, piece by piece, and lay it down before the pavilion door. If the CARBONARI come, why, it's theirs at any rate."

"No, no," cried Mr. Huddlestone; "it does not, it cannot belong to them! It should be distributed PRO RATA among all my creditors."

"Come now, Huddlestone," said Northmour, "none of that."

"Well, but my daughter," moaned the wretched man.

"Your daughter will do well enough. Here are two suitors, Cassilis and I, neither of us beggars, between whom she has to choose. And as for yourself, to make an end of arguments, you have no right to a farthing, and, unless I'm much mistaken, you are going to die."

It was certainly very cruelly said; but Mr. Huddlestone was a man who attracted little sympathy; and, although I saw him wince and shudder, I mentally endorsed the rebuke; nay, I added a contribution of my own.

"Northmour and I," I said, "are willing enough to help you to save your life, but not to escape with stolen property."

He struggled for a while with himself, as though he were on the point of giving way to anger, but prudence had the best of the controversy.

"My dear boys," he said, "do with me or my money what you will. I leave all in your hands. Let me compose myself."

And so we left him, gladly enough I am sure. The last that I saw, he had once more taken up his great Bible, and with tremulous hands was adjusting his spectacles to read.

CHAPTER VII - TELLS HOW A WORD WAS CRIED THROUGH THE PAVILION WINDOW

The recollection of that afternoon will always be graven on my mind. Northmour and I were persuaded that an attack was imminent; and if it had been in our power to alter in any way the order of events, that power would have been used to precipitate rather than delay the critical moment. The worst was to be anticipated; yet we could conceive no extremity so miserable as the suspense we were now suffering. I have never been an eager, though always a great, reader; but I never knew books so insipid as those which I took up and cast aside that afternoon in the pavilion. Even talk became impossible, as the hours went on. One or other was always listening for some sound, or peering from an upstairs window over the links. And yet not a sign indicated the presence of our foes.

We debated over and over again my proposal with regard to the money; and had we been in complete possession of our faculties, I am sure we should have condemned it as unwise; but we were flustered with alarm, grasped at a straw, and determined, although it was as much as advertising Mr. Huddlestone's presence in the pavilion, to carry my proposal into effect.

The sum was part in specie, part in bank paper, and part in circular notes payable to the name of James Gregory. We took it out, counted it, enclosed it once more in a despatch-box belonging to Northmour, and prepared a letter in Italian which he tied to the handle. It was signed by both of us under oath, and declared that this was all the money which had escaped the failure of the house of Huddlestone. This was, perhaps, the maddest action ever perpetrated by two persons professing to be sane. Had the despatch-box fallen into other hands than those for which it was intended, we stood criminally convicted on our own written testimony; but, as I have said, we were neither of us in a condition to judge soberly, and had a thirst for action that drove us to do something, right or wrong, rather than endure the agony of waiting. Moreover, as we were both convinced that the hollows of the links were alive with hidden spies upon our movements, we hoped that our appearance with the box might lead to a parley, and, perhaps, a compromise.

It was nearly three when we issued from the pavilion. The rain had taken off; the sun shone quite cheerfully.

I have never seen the gulls fly so close about the house or approach so fearlessly to human beings. On the very doorstep one flapped heavily past our heads, and uttered its wild cry in my very ear.

"There is an omen for you," said Northmour, who like all freethinkers was much under the influence of superstition. "They think we are already dead."

I made some light rejoinder, but it was with half my heart; for the circumstance had impressed me.

A yard or two before the gate, on a patch of smooth turf, we set down the despatch-box; and Northmour waved a white handkerchief over his head. Nothing replied. We raised our voices, and cried aloud in Italian that we were there as ambassadors to arrange the quarrel; but the stillness remained unbroken save by the sea-gulls and the surf. I had a weight at my heart when we desisted; and I saw that even Northmour was unusually pale. He looked over his shoulder nervously, as though he feared that some one had crept between him and the pavilion door.

“By God,” he said in a whisper, “this is too much for me!”

I replied in the same key: “Suppose there should be none, after all!”

“Look there,” he returned, nodding with his head, as though he had been afraid to point.

I glanced in the direction indicated; and there, from the northern quarter of the Sea-Wood, beheld a thin column of smoke rising steadily against the now cloudless sky.

“Northmour,” I said (we still continued to talk in whispers), “it is not possible to endure this suspense. I prefer death fifty times over. Stay you here to watch the pavilion; I will go forward and make sure, if I have to walk right into their camp.”

He looked once again all round him with puckered eyes, and then nodded assentingly to my proposal.

My heart beat like a sledge-hammer as I set out walking rapidly in the direction of the smoke; and, though up to that moment I had felt chill and shivering, I was suddenly conscious of a glow of heat over all my body. The ground in this direction was very uneven; a hundred men might have lain hidden in as many square yards about my path. But I had not practised the business in vain, chose such routes as cut at the very root of concealment, and, by keeping along the most convenient ridges, commanded several hollows at a time. It was not long before I was rewarded for my caution. Coming suddenly on to a mound somewhat more elevated than the surrounding hummocks, I saw, not thirty yards away, a man bent almost double, and running as fast as his attitude permitted, along the bottom of a gully. I had dislodged one of the spies from his ambush. As soon as I sighted him, I called loudly both in English and Italian; and he, seeing concealment was no longer possible, straightened himself out, leaped from the gully, and made off as straight as an arrow for the borders of the wood.

It was none of my business to pursue; I had learned what I wanted - that we were beleaguered and watched in the pavilion; and I returned at once, and walking as nearly as possible in my old footsteps, to where Northmour awaited me beside the despatch-box. He was even paler than when I had left him, and his voice shook a little.

"Could you see what he was like?" he asked.

"He kept his back turned," I replied.

"Let us get into the house, Frank. I don't think I'm a coward, but I can stand no more of this," he whispered.

All was still and sunshiny about the pavilion as we turned to re-enter it; even the gulls had flown in a wider circuit, and were seen flickering along the beach and sand-hills; and this loneliness terrified me more than a regiment under arms. It was not until the door was barricaded that I could draw a full inspiration and relieve the weight that lay upon my bosom. Northmour and I exchanged a steady glance; and I suppose each made his own reflections on the white and startled aspect of the other.

"You were right," I said. "All is over. Shake hands, old man, for the last time."

"Yes," replied he, "I will shake hands; for, as sure as I am here, I bear no malice. But, remember, if, by some impossible accident, we should give the slip to these blackguards, I'll take the upper hand of you by fair or foul."

"Oh," said I, "you weary me!"

He seemed hurt, and walked away in silence to the foot of the stairs, where he paused.

"You do not understand," said he. "I am not a swindler, and I guard myself; that is all. It may weary you or not, Mr. Cassilis, I do not care a rush; I speak for my own satisfaction, and not for your amusement. You had better go upstairs and court the girl; for my part, I stay here."

"And I stay with you," I returned. "Do you think I would steal a march, even with your permission?"

"Frank," he said, smiling, "it's a pity you are an ass, for you have the makings of a man. I think I must be FEY to-day; you cannot irritate me even when you try. Do you know," he continued softly, "I think we are the two most miserable men in England, you and I? we have got on to thirty without wife or child, or so much as a shop to look after - poor, pitiful, lost devils, both! And now we clash about a girl! As if there were not several millions in the United Kingdom! Ah, Frank, Frank, the one who loses this throw, be it you or me, he has my pity! It were better for him - how does the Bible say? - that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the depth of the sea. Let us take a drink," he concluded suddenly, but without any levity of tone.

I was touched by his words, and consented. He sat down on the table in the dining-room, and held up the glass of sherry to his eye.

"If you beat me, Frank," he said, "I shall take to drink. What will you do, if it goes the other way?"

"God knows," I returned.

“Well,” said he, “here is a toast in the meantime: ‘ITALIA IRREDENTA!’“

The remainder of the day was passed in the same dreadful tedium and suspense. I laid the table for dinner, while Northmour and Clara prepared the meal together in the kitchen. I could hear their talk as I went to and fro, and was surprised to find it ran all the time upon myself. Northmour again bracketed us together, and rallied Clara on a choice of husbands; but he continued to speak of me with some feeling, and uttered nothing to my prejudice unless he included himself in the condemnation. This awakened a sense of gratitude in my heart, which combined with the immediateness of our peril to fill my eyes with tears. After all, I thought - and perhaps the thought was laughably vain - we were here three very noble human beings to perish in defence of a thieving banker.

Before we sat down to table, I looked forth from an upstairs window. The day was beginning to decline; the links were utterly deserted; the despatch-box still lay untouched where we had left it hours before.

Mr. Huddlestone, in a long yellow dressing-gown, took one end of the table, Clara the other; while Northmour and I faced each other from the sides. The lamp was brightly trimmed; the wine was good; the viands, although mostly cold, excellent of their sort. We seemed to have agreed tacitly; all reference to the impending catastrophe was carefully avoided; and, considering our tragic circumstances, we made a merrier party than could have been expected. From time to time, it is true, Northmour or I would rise from table and make a round of the defences; and, on each of these occasions, Mr. Huddlestone was recalled to a sense of his tragic predicament, glanced up with ghastly eyes, and bore for an instant on his countenance the stamp of terror. But he hastened to empty his glass, wiped his forehead with his handkerchief, and joined again in the conversation.

I was astonished at the wit and information he displayed. Mr. Huddlestone’s was certainly no ordinary character; he had read and observed for himself; his gifts were sound; and, though I could never have learned to love the man, I began to understand his success in business, and the great respect in which he had been held before his failure. He had, above all, the talent of society; and though I never heard him speak but on this one and most unfavourable occasion, I set him down among the most brilliant conversationalists I ever met.

He was relating with great gusto, and seemingly no feeling of shame, the manoeuvres of a scoundrelly commission merchant whom he had known and studied in his youth, and we were all listening with an odd mixture of mirth and embarrassment when our little party was brought abruptly to an end in the most startling manner.

A noise like that of a wet finger on the window-pane interrupted Mr. Huddlestone's tale; and in an instant we were all four as white as paper, and sat tongue-tied and motionless round the table.

"A snail," I said at last; for I had heard that these animals make a noise somewhat similar in character.

"Snail be d-d!" said Northmour. "Hush!"

The same sound was repeated twice at regular intervals; and then a formidable voice shouted through the shutters the Italian word "TRADITORE!"

Mr. Huddlestone threw his head in the air; his eyelids quivered; next moment he fell insensible below the table. Northmour and I had each run to the armoury and seized a gun. Clara was on her feet with her hand at her throat.

So we stood waiting, for we thought the hour of attack was certainly come; but second passed after second, and all but the surf remained silent in the neighbourhood of the pavilion.

"Quick," said Northmour; "upstairs with him before they come."

CHAPTER VIII - TELLS THE LAST OF THE TALL MAN

Somehow or other, by hook and crook, and between the three of us, we got Bernard Huddlestone bundled upstairs and laid upon the bed in MY UNCLE'S ROOM. During the whole process, which was rough enough, he gave no sign of consciousness, and he remained, as we had thrown him, without changing the position of a finger. His daughter opened his shirt and began to wet his head and bosom; while Northmour and I ran to the window. The weather continued clear; the moon, which was now about full, had risen and shed a very clear light upon the links; yet, strain our eyes as we might, we could distinguish nothing moving. A few dark spots, more or less, on the uneven expanse were not to be identified; they might be crouching men, they might be shadows; it was impossible to be sure.

"Thank God," said Northmour, "Aggie is not coming to-night."

Aggie was the name of the old nurse; he had not thought of her till now; but that he should think of her at all, was a trait that surprised me in the man.

We were again reduced to waiting. Northmour went to the fireplace and spread his hands before the red embers, as if he were cold. I followed him mechanically with my eyes, and in so doing turned my back upon the window. At that moment a very faint report was audible from without, and a ball shivered a pane of glass, and buried itself in the shutter two inches from my head. I heard Clara scream; and though I whipped instantly out of range and into a corner, she was there, so to speak, before me, beseeching to know if I were hurt. I felt that I could stand to be shot at every day and all day long, with such marks of solicitude for a reward; and I continued to reassure her, with the tenderest caresses and in complete forgetfulness of our situation, till the voice of Northmour recalled me to myself.

“An air-gun,” he said. “They wish to make no noise.”

I put Clara aside, and looked at him. He was standing with his back to the fire and his hands clasped behind him; and I knew by the black look on his face, that passion was boiling within. I had seen just such a look before he attacked me, that March night, in the adjoining chamber; and, though I could make every allowance for his anger, I confess I trembled for the consequences. He gazed straight before him; but he could see us with the tail of his eye, and his temper kept rising like a gale of wind. With regular battle awaiting us outside, this prospect of an internecine strife within the walls began to daunt me.

Suddenly, as I was thus closely watching his expression and prepared against the worst, I saw a change, a flash, a look of relief, upon his face. He took up the lamp which stood beside him on the table, and turned to us with an air of some excitement.

“There is one point that we must know,” said he. “Are they going to butcher the lot of us, or only Huddlestone? Did they take you for him, or fire at you for your own BEAUX YEUX?”

“They took me for him, for certain,” I replied. “I am near as tall, and my head is fair.”

“I am going to make sure,” returned Northmour; and he stepped up to the window, holding the lamp above his head, and stood there, quietly affronting death, for half a minute.

Clara sought to rush forward and pull him from the place of danger; but I had the pardonable selfishness to hold her back by force.

“Yes,” said Northmour, turning coolly from the window; “it’s only Huddlestone they want.”

“Oh, Mr. Northmour!” cried Clara; but found no more to add; the temerity she had just witnessed seeming beyond the reach of words.

He, on his part, looked at me, cocking his head, with a fire of triumph in his eyes; and I understood at once that he had thus hazarded his life, merely to attract Clara’s notice, and depose me from my position as the hero of the hour. He snapped his fingers.

“The fire is only beginning,” said he. “When they warm up to their work, they won’t be so particular.”

A voice was now heard hailing us from the entrance. From the window we could see the figure of a man in the moonlight; he stood motionless, his face uplifted to ours, and a rag of something white on his extended arm; and as we looked right down upon him, though he was a good many yards distant on the links, we could see the moonlight glitter on his eyes.

He opened his lips again, and spoke for some minutes on end, in a key so loud that he might have been heard in every corner of the pavilion, and as far away as the borders of the wood. It was the same voice that had already shouted "TRADITORE!" through the shutters of the dining-room; this time it made a complete and clear statement. If the traitor "Oddlestone" were given up, all others should be spared; if not, no one should escape to tell the tale.

"Well, Huddlestone, what do you say to that?" asked Northmour, turning to the bed.

Up to that moment the banker had given no sign of life, and I, at least, had supposed him to be still lying in a faint; but he replied at once, and in such tones as I have never heard elsewhere, save from a delirious patient, adjured and besought us not to desert him. It was the most hideous and abject performance that my imagination can conceive.

"Enough," cried Northmour; and then he threw open the window, leaned out into the night, and in a tone of exultation, and with a total forgetfulness of what was due to the presence of a lady, poured out upon the ambassador a string of the most abominable raillery both in English and Italian, and bade him be gone where he had come from. I believe that nothing so delighted Northmour at that moment as the thought that we must all infallibly perish before the night was out.

Meantime the Italian put his flag of truce into his pocket, and disappeared, at a leisurely pace, among the sand-hills.

"They make honourable war," said Northmour. "They are all gentlemen and soldiers. For the credit of the thing, I wish we could change sides - you and I, Frank, and you too, Missy, my darling - and leave that being on the bed to some one else. Tut! Don't look shocked! We are all going post to what they call eternity, and may as well be above-board while there's time. As far as I'm concerned, if I could first strangle Huddlestone and then get Clara in my arms, I could die with some pride and satisfaction. And as it is, by God, I'll have a kiss!"

Before I could do anything to interfere, he had rudely embraced and repeatedly kissed the resisting girl. Next moment I had pulled him away with fury, and flung him heavily against the wall. He laughed loud and long, and I feared his wits had given way under the strain; for even in the best of days he had been a sparing and a quiet laugher.

"Now, Frank," said he, when his mirth was somewhat appeased, "it's your turn. Here's my hand. Good-bye; farewell!" Then, seeing me stand rigid and indignant, and holding Clara to my side - "Man!" he broke out, "are you angry? Did you think we were going to die with all the airs and graces of society? I took a kiss; I'm glad I had it; and now you can take another if you like, and square accounts."

I turned from him with a feeling of contempt which I did not seek to dissemble.

"As you please," said he. "You've been a prig in life; a prig you'll die."

And with that he sat down in a chair, a rifle over his knee, and amused himself with snapping the lock; but I could see that his ebullition of light spirits (the only one I ever knew him to display) had already come to an end, and was succeeded by a sullen, scowling humour.

All this time our assailants might have been entering the house, and we been none the wiser; we had in truth almost forgotten the danger that so imminently overhung our days. But just then Mr. Huddlestone uttered a cry, and leaped from the bed.

I asked him what was wrong.

"Fire!" he cried. "They have set the house on fire!"

Northmour was on his feet in an instant, and he and I ran through the door of communication with the study. The room was illuminated by a red and angry light. Almost at the moment of our entrance, a tower of flame arose in front of the window, and, with a tingling report, a pane fell inwards on the carpet. They had set fire to the lean-to outhouse, where Northmour used to nurse his negatives.

"Hot work," said Northmour. "Let us try in your old room."

We ran thither in a breath, threw up the casement, and looked forth. Along the whole back wall of the pavilion piles of fuel had been arranged and kindled; and it is probable they had been drenched with mineral oil, for, in spite of the morning's rain, they all burned bravely. The fire had taken a firm hold already on the outhouse, which blazed higher and higher every moment; the back door was in the centre of a red-hot bonfire; the eaves we could see, as we looked upward, were already smouldering, for the roof overhung, and was supported by considerable beams of wood. At the same time, hot, pungent, and choking volumes of smoke began to fill the house. There was not a human being to be seen to right or left.

"Ah, well!" said Northmour, "here's the end, thank God."

And we returned to MY UNCLE'S ROOM. Mr. Huddlestone was putting on his boots, still violently trembling, but with an air of determination such as I had not hitherto observed. Clara stood close by him, with her cloak in both hands ready to throw about her shoulders, and a strange look in her eyes, as if she were half hopeful, half doubtful of her father.

"Well, boys and girls," said Northmour, "how about a sally? The oven is heating; it is not good to stay here and be baked; and, for my part, I want to come to my hands with them, and be done."

"There is nothing else left," I replied.

And both Clara and Mr. Huddlestone, though with a very different intonation, added, "Nothing."

As we went downstairs the heat was excessive, and the roaring of the fire filled our ears; and we had scarce reached the passage before the stairs window fell in, a branch of flame shot brandishing through the aperture, and the interior of the pavilion became lit up with that dreadful and fluctuating glare. At the same moment we heard the fall of something heavy and inelastic in the upper story. The whole pavilion, it was plain, had gone alight like a box of matches, and now not only flamed sky-high to land and sea, but threatened with every moment to crumble and fall in about our ears.

Northmour and I cocked our revolvers. Mr. Huddlestone, who had already refused a firearm, put us behind him with a manner of command.

“Let Clara open the door,” said he. “So, if they fire a volley, she will be protected. And in the meantime stand behind me. I am the scapegoat; my sins have found me out.”

I heard him, as I stood breathless by his shoulder, with my pistol ready, pattering off prayers in a tremulous, rapid whisper; and I confess, horrid as the thought may seem, I despised him for thinking of supplications in a moment so critical and thrilling. In the meantime, Clara, who was dead white but still possessed her faculties, had displaced the barricade from the front door. Another moment, and she had pulled it open. Firelight and moonlight illuminated the links with confused and changeful lustre, and far away against the sky we could see a long trail of glowing smoke.

Mr. Huddlestone, filled for the moment with a strength greater than his own, struck Northmour and myself a back-hander in the chest; and while we were thus for the moment incapacitated from action, lifting his arms above his head like one about to dive, he ran straight forward out of the pavilion.

“Here am!” he cried - “Huddlestone! Kill me, and spare the others!”

His sudden appearance daunted, I suppose, our hidden enemies; for Northmour and I had time to recover, to seize Clara between us, one by each arm, and to rush forth to his assistance, ere anything further had taken place. But scarce had we passed the threshold when there came near a dozen reports and flashes from every direction among the hollows of the links. Mr. Huddlestone staggered, uttered a weird and freezing cry, threw up his arms over his head, and fell backward on the turf.

“TRADITORE! TRADITORE!” cried the invisible avengers.

And just then, a part of the roof of the pavilion fell in, so rapid was the progress of the fire. A loud, vague, and horrible noise accompanied the collapse, and a vast volume of flame went soaring up to heaven. It must have been visible at that moment from twenty miles out at sea, from the shore at Graden Wester, and far inland from the peak of Graystiel, the most eastern summit of the Caulder Hills.

Bernard Huddlestone, although God knows what were his obsequies, had a fine pyre at the moment of his death.

CHAPTER IX - TELLS HOW NORTHMOUR CARRIED OUT HIS THREAT

I should have the greatest difficulty to tell you what followed next after this tragic circumstance. It is all to me, as I look back upon it, mixed, strenuous, and ineffectual, like the struggles of a sleeper in a nightmare. Clara, I remember, uttered a broken sigh and would have fallen forward to earth, had not Northmour and I supported her insensible body. I do not think we were attacked; I do not remember even to have seen an assailant; and I believe we deserted Mr. Huddlestone without a glance. I only remember running like a man in a panic, now carrying Clara altogether in my own arms, now sharing her weight with Northmour, now scuffling confusedly for the possession of that dear burden. Why we should have made for my camp in the Hemlock Den, or how we reached it, are points lost for ever to my recollection. The first moment at which I became definitely sure, Clara had been suffered to fall against the outside of my little tent, Northmour and I were tumbling together on the ground, and he, with contained ferocity, was striking for my head with the butt of his revolver. He had already twice wounded me on the scalp; and it is to the consequent loss of blood that I am tempted to attribute the sudden clearness of my mind.

I caught him by the wrist.

“Northmour,” I remember saying, “you can kill me afterwards. Let us first attend to Clara.”

He was at that moment uppermost. Scarcely had the words passed my lips, when he had leaped to his feet and ran towards the tent; and the next moment, he was straining Clara to his heart and covering her unconscious hands and face with his caresses.

“Shame!” I cried. “Shame to you, Northmour!”

And, giddy though I still was, I struck him repeatedly upon the head and shoulders.

He relinquished his grasp, and faced me in the broken moonlight.

“I had you under, and I let you go,” said he; “and now you strike me! Coward!”

“You are the coward,” I retorted. “Did she wish your kisses while she was still sensible of what she wanted? Not she! And now she may be dying; and you waste this precious time, and abuse her helplessness. Stand aside, and let me help her.”

He confronted me for a moment, white and menacing; then suddenly he stepped aside.

“Help her then,” said he.

I threw myself on my knees beside her, and loosened, as well as I was able, her dress and corset; but while I was thus engaged, a grasp descended on my shoulder.

"Keep your hands of her," said Northmour fiercely. "Do you think I have no blood in my veins?"

"Northmour," I cried, "if you will neither help her yourself, nor let me do so, do you know that I shall have to kill you?"

"That is better!" he cried. "Let her die also, where's the harm?

Step aside from that girl! and stand up to fight"

"You will observe," said I, half rising, "that I have not kissed her yet."

"I dare you to," he cried.

I do not know what possessed me; it was one of the things I am most ashamed of in my life, though, as my wife used to say, I knew that my kisses would be always welcome were she dead or living; down I fell again upon my knees, parted the hair from her forehead, and, with the dearest respect, laid my lips for a moment on that cold brow. It was such a caress as a father might have given; it was such a one as was not unbecoming from a man soon to die to a woman already dead.

"And now," said I, "I am at your service, Mr. Northmour."

But I saw, to my surprise, that he had turned his back upon me.

"Do you hear?" I asked.

"Yes," said he, "I do. If you wish to fight, I am ready. If not, go on and save Clara. All is one to me."

I did not wait to be twice bidden; but, stooping again over Clara, continued my efforts to revive her. She still lay white and lifeless; I began to fear that her sweet spirit had indeed fled beyond recall, and horror and a sense of utter desolation seized upon my heart. I called her by name with the most endearing inflections; I chafed and beat her hands; now I laid her head low, now supported it against my knee; but all seemed to be in vain, and the lids still lay heavy on her eyes.

"Northmour," I said, "there is my hat. For God's sake bring some water from the spring."

Almost in a moment he was by my side with the water. "I have brought it in my own," he said. "You do not grudge me the privilege?"

"Northmour," I was beginning to say, as I laved her head and breast; but he interrupted me savagely.

"Oh, you hush up!" he said. "The best thing you can do is to say nothing."

I had certainly no desire to talk, my mind being swallowed up in concern for my dear love and her condition; so I continued in silence to do my best towards her recovery, and, when the hat was empty, returned it to him, with one word - "More." He had, perhaps, gone several times upon this errand, when Clara reopened her eyes.

"Now," said he, "since she is better, you can spare me, can you not? I wish you a good night, Mr. Cassilis."

And with that he was gone among the thicket. I made a fire, for I had now no fear of the Italians, who had even spared all the little possessions left in my encampment; and, broken as she was by the excitement and the hideous catastrophe of the evening, I managed, in one way or another - by persuasion, encouragement, warmth, and such simple remedies as I could lay my hand on - to bring her back to some composure of mind and strength of body.

Day had already come, when a sharp "Hist!" sounded from the thicket. I started from the ground; but the voice of Northmour was heard adding, in the most tranquil tones: "Come here, Cassilis, and alone; I want to show you something."

I consulted Clara with my eyes, and, receiving her tacit permission, left her alone, and clambered out of the den. At some distance of I saw Northmour leaning against an elder; and, as soon as he perceived me, he began walking seaward. I had almost overtaken him as he reached the outskirts of the wood.

"Look," said he, pausing.

A couple of steps more brought me out of the foliage. The light of the morning lay cold and clear over that well-known scene. The pavilion was but a blackened wreck; the roof had fallen in, one of the gables had fallen out; and, far and near, the face of the links was cicatrised with little patches of burnt furze. Thick smoke still went straight upwards in the windless air of the morning, and a great pile of ardent cinders filled the bare walls of the house, like coals in an open grate. Close by the islet a schooner yacht lay to, and a well-manned boat was pulling vigorously for the shore.

"The RED EARL!" I cried. "The RED EARL twelve hours too late!"

"Feel in your pocket, Frank. Are you armed?" asked Northmour.

I obeyed him, and I think I must have become deadly pale. My revolver had been taken from me.

"You see I have you in my power," he continued. "I disarmed you last night while you were nursing Clara; but this morning - here - take your pistol. No thanks!" he cried, holding up his hand. "I do not like them; that is the only way you can annoy me now."

He began to walk forward across the links to meet the boat, and I followed a step or two behind. In front of the pavilion I paused to see where Mr. Huddlestone had fallen; but there was no sign of him, nor so much as a trace of blood.

"Graden Floe," said Northmour.

He continued to advance till we had come to the head of the beach.

"No farther, please," said he. "Would you like to take her to Graden House?"

“Thank you,” replied I; “I shall try to get her to the minister’s at Graden Wester.”

The prow of the boat here grated on the beach, and a sailor jumped ashore with a line in his hand.

“Wait a minute, lads!” cried Northmour; and then lower and to my private ear: “You had better say nothing of all this to her,” he added.

“On the contrary!” I broke out, “she shall know everything that I can tell.”

“You do not understand,” he returned, with an air of great dignity. “It will be nothing to her; she expects it of me. Good-bye!” he added, with a nod.

I offered him my hand.

“Excuse me,” said he. “It’s small, I know; but I can’t push things quite so far as that. I don’t wish any sentimental business, to sit by your hearth a white-haired wanderer, and all that. Quite the contrary: I hope to God I shall never again clap eyes on either one of you.”

“Well, God bless you, Northmour!” I said heartily.

“Oh, yes,” he returned.

He walked down the beach; and the man who was ashore gave him an arm on board, and then shoved off and leaped into the bows himself. Northmour took the tiller; the boat rose to the waves, and the oars between the thole-pins sounded crisp and measured in the morning air.

They were not yet half-way to the RED EARL, and I was still watching their progress, when the sun rose out of the sea.

One word more, and my story is done. Years after, Northmour was killed fighting under the colours of Garibaldi for the liberation of the Tyrol.

A LODGING FOR THE NIGHT - A STORY OF FRANCIS VILLON

It was late in November 1456. The snow fell over Paris with rigorous, relentless persistence; sometimes the wind made a sally and scattered it in flying vortices; sometimes there was a lull, and flake after flake descended out of the black night air, silent, circuitous, interminable. To poor people, looking up under moist eyebrows, it seemed a wonder where it all came from. Master Francis Villon had propounded an alternative that afternoon, at a tavern window: was it only Pagan Jupiter plucking geese upon Olympus? or were the holy angels moulting? He was only a poor Master of Arts, he went on; and as the question somewhat touched upon divinity, he durst not venture to conclude. A silly old priest from Montargis, who was among the company, treated the young rascal to a bottle of wine in honour of the jest and the grimaces with which it was accompanied, and swore on his own white beard that he had been just such another irreverent dog when he was Villon's age.

The air was raw and pointed, but not far below freezing; and the flakes were large, damp, and adhesive. The whole city was sheeted up. An army might have marched from end to end and not a footfall given the alarm. If there were any belated birds in heaven, they saw the island like a large white patch, and the bridges like slim white spars, on the black ground of the river. High up overhead the snow settled among the tracery of the cathedral towers. Many a niche was drifted full; many a statue wore a long white bonnet on its grotesque or sainted head. The gargoyles had been transformed into great false noses, drooping towards the point. The crockets were like upright pillows swollen on one side. In the intervals of the wind, there was a dull sound of dripping about the precincts of the church.

The cemetery of St. John had taken its own share of the snow. All the graves were decently covered; tall white housetops stood around in grave array; worthy burghers were long ago in bed, benightcapped like their domiciles; there was no light in all the neighbourhood but a little peep from a lamp that hung swinging in the church choir, and tossed the shadows to and fro in time to its oscillations. The clock was hard on ten when the patrol went by with halberds and a lantern, beating their hands; and they saw nothing suspicious about the cemetery of St. John.

Yet there was a small house, backed up against the cemetery wall, which was still awake, and awake to evil purpose, in that snoring district. There was not much to betray it from without; only a stream of warm vapour from the chimney-top, a patch where the snow melted on the roof, and a few half-obliterated footprints at the door. But within, behind the shuttered windows, Master Francis Villon the poet, and some of the thievish crew with whom he consorted, were keeping the night alive and passing round the bottle.

A great pile of living embers diffused a strong and ruddy glow from the arched chimney. Before this straddled Dom Nicolas, the Picardy monk, with his skirts picked up and his fat legs bared to the comfortable warmth. His dilated shadow cut the room in half; and the firelight only escaped on either side of his broad person, and in a little pool between his outspread feet. His face had the beery, bruised appearance of the continual drinker's; it was covered with a network of congested veins, purple in ordinary circumstances, but now pale violet, for even with his back to the fire the cold pinched him on the other side. His cowl had half fallen back, and made a strange excrescence on either side of his bull neck. So he straddled, grumbling, and cut the room in half with the shadow of his portly frame.

On the right, Villon and Guy Tabary were huddled together over a scrap of parchment; Villon making a ballade which he was to call the "Ballade of Roast Fish," and Tabary spluttering admiration at his shoulder. The poet was a rag of a man, dark, little, and lean, with hollow cheeks and thin black locks. He carried his four-and- twenty years with feverish animation. Greed had made folds about his eyes, evil smiles had puckered his mouth. The wolf and pig struggled together in his face. It was an eloquent, sharp, ugly, earthly countenance. His hands were small and prehensile, with fingers knotted like a cord; and they were continually flickering in front of him in violent and expressive pantomime. As for Tabary, a broad, complacent, admiring imbecility breathed from his squash nose and slobbering lips: he had become a thief, just as he might have become the most decent of burgesses, by the imperious chance that rules the lives of human geese and human donkeys.

At the monk's other hand, Montigny and Thevenin Pensete played a game of chance. About the first there clung some flavour of good birth and training, as about a fallen angel; something long, lithe, and courtly in the person; something aquiline and darkling in the face. Thevenin, poor soul, was in great feather: he had done a good stroke of knavery that afternoon in the Faubourg St. Jacques, and all night he had been gaining from Montigny. A flat smile illuminated his face; his bald head shone rosily in a garland of red curls; his little protuberant stomach shook with silent chucklings as he swept in his gains.

"Doubles or quits?" said Thevenin. Montigny nodded grimly.

"Some may prefer to dine in state," wrote Villon, "On bread and cheese on silver plate. Or - or - help me out, Guido!"

Tabary giggled.

"Or parsley on a golden dish," scribbled the poet.

The wind was freshening without; it drove the snow before it, and sometimes raised its voice in a victorious whoop, and made sepulchral grumblings in the chimney. The cold was growing sharper an the night went on. Villon, protruding his lips, imitated the gust with something between a whistle and a groan. It was an eerie, uncomfortable talent of the poet's, much detested by the Picardy monk.

"Can't you hear it rattle in the gibbet?" said Villon. "They are all dancing the devil's jig on nothing, up there. You may dance, my gallants, you'll be none the warmer! Whew! what a gust! Down went somebody just now! A medlar the fewer on the three-legged medlar-tree! - I say, Dom Nicolas, it'll be cold to-night on the St. Denis Road?" he asked.

Dom Nicolas winked both his big eyes, and seemed to choke upon his Adam's apple. Montfaucon, the great grisly Paris gibbet, stood hard by the St. Denis Road, and the pleasantry touched him on the raw. As for Tabary, he laughed immoderately over the medlars; he had never heard anything more light-hearted; and he held his sides and crowed. Villon fetched him a fillip on the nose, which turned his mirth into an attack of coughing.

"Oh, stop that row," said Villon, "and think of rhymes to 'fish'."

"Doubles or quits," said Montigny doggedly.

"With all my heart," quoth Thevenin.

"Is there any more in that bottle?" asked the monk.

"Open another," said Villon. "How do you ever hope to fill that big hogshead, your body, with little things like bottles? And how do you expect to get to heaven? How many angels, do you fancy, can be spared to carry up a single monk from Picardy? Or do you think yourself another Elias - and they'll send the coach for you?"

"HOMINIBUS IMPOSSIBILE," replied the monk, as he filled his glass.

Tabary was in ecstasies.

Villon filliped his nose again.

"Laugh at my jokes, if you like," he said.

"It was very good," objected Tabary.

Villon made a face at him. "Think of rhymes to 'fish'," he said. "What have you to do with Latin? You'll wish you knew none of it at the great assizes, when the devil calls for Guido Tabary, clericus - the devil with the hump-back and red-hot finger-nails. Talking of the devil," he added in a whisper, "look at Montigny!"

All three peered covertly at the gamester. He did not seem to be enjoying his luck. His mouth was a little to a side; one nostril nearly shut, and the other much inflated. The black dog was on his back, as people say, in terrifying nursery metaphor; and he breathed hard under the gruesome burden.

"He looks as if he could knife him," whispered Tabary, with round eyes.

The monk shuddered, and turned his face and spread his open hands to the red embers. It was the cold that thus affected Dom Nicolas, and not any excess of moral sensibility

"Come now," said Villon - "about this ballade. How does it run so far?" And beating time with his hand, he read it aloud to Tabary.

They were interrupted at the fourth rhyme by a brief and fatal movement among the gamesters. The round was completed, and Thevenin was just opening his mouth to claim another victory, when Montigny leaped up, swift as an adder, and stabbed him to the heart. The blow took effect before he had time to utter a cry, before he had time to move. A tremor or two convulsed his frame; his hands opened and shut, his heels rattled on the floor; then his head rolled backward over one shoulder with the eyes wide open; and Thevenin Pensete's spirit had returned to Him who made it.

Everyone sprang to his feet; but the business was over in two twos. The four living fellows looked at each other in rather a ghastly fashion; the dead man contemplating a corner of the roof with a singular and ugly leer.

"My God!" said Tabary; and he began to pray in Latin.

Villon broke out into hysterical laughter. He came a step forward and ducked a ridiculous bow at Thevenin, and laughed still louder. Then he sat down suddenly, all of a heap, upon a stool, and continued laughing bitterly as though he would shake himself to pieces.

Montigny recovered his composure first.

"Let's see what he has about him," he remarked; and he picked the dead man's pockets with a practised hand, and divided the money into four equal portions on the table. "There's for you," he said.

The monk received his share with a deep sigh, and a single stealthy glance at the dead Thevenin, who was beginning to sink into himself and topple sideways of the chair.

"We're all in for it," cried Villon, swallowing his mirth. "It's a hanging job for every man jack of us that's here - not to speak of those who aren't." He made a shocking gesture in the air with his raised right hand, and put out his tongue and threw his head on one side, so as to counterfeit the appearance of one who has been hanged. Then he pocketed his share of the spoil, and executed a shuffle with his feet as if to restore the circulation.

Tabary was the last to help himself; he made a dash at the money, and retired to the other end of the apartment.

Montigny stuck Thevenin upright in the chair, and drew out the dagger, which was followed by a jet of blood.

"You fellows had better be moving," he said, as he wiped the blade on his victim's doublet.

"I think we had," returned Villon with a gulp. "Damn his fat head!" he broke out. "It sticks in my throat like phlegm. What right has a man to have red hair when he is dead?" And he fell all of a heap again upon the stool, and fairly covered his face with his hands.

Montigny and Dom Nicolas laughed aloud, even Tabary feebly chiming in.

"Cry baby," said the monk.

"I always said he was a woman," added Montigny with a sneer. "Sit up, can't you?" he went on, giving another shake to the murdered body. "Tread out that fire, Nick!"

But Nick was better employed; he was quietly taking Villon's purse, as the poet sat, limp and trembling, on the stool where he had been making a ballade not three minutes before. Montigny and Tabary dumbly demanded a share of the booty, which the monk silently promised as he passed the little bag into the bosom of his gown. In many ways an artistic nature unfits a man for practical existence.

No sooner had the theft been accomplished than Villon shook himself, jumped to his feet, and began helping to scatter and extinguish the embers. Meanwhile Montigny opened the door and cautiously peered into the street. The coast was clear; there was no meddlesome patrol in sight. Still it was judged wiser to slip out severally; and as Villon was himself in a hurry to escape from the neighbourhood of the dead Thevenin, and the rest were in a still greater hurry to get rid of him before he should discover the loss of his money, he was the first by general consent to issue forth into the street.

The wind had triumphed and swept all the clouds from heaven. Only a few vapours, as thin as moonlight, fleeting rapidly across the stars. It was bitter cold; and by a common optical effect, things seemed almost more definite than in the broadest daylight. The sleeping city was absolutely still: a company of white hoods, a field full of little Alps, below the twinkling stars. Villon cursed his fortune. Would it were still snowing! Now, wherever he went, he left an indelible trail behind him on the glittering streets; wherever he went he was still tethered to the house by the cemetery of St. John; wherever he went he must weave, with his own plodding feet, the rope that bound him to the crime and would bind him to the gallows. The leer of the dead man came back to him with a new significance. He snapped his fingers as if to pluck up his own spirits, and choosing a street at random, stepped boldly forward in the snow.

Two things preoccupied him as he went: the aspect of the gallows at Montfaucon in this bright windy phase of the night's existence, for one; and for another, the look of the dead man with his bald head and garland of red curls. Both struck cold upon his heart, and he kept quickening his pace as if he could escape from unpleasant thoughts by mere fleetness of foot. Sometimes he looked back over his shoulder with a sudden nervous jerk; but he was the only moving thing in the white streets, except when the wind swooped round a corner and threw up the snow, which was beginning to freeze, in spouts of glittering dust.

Suddenly he saw, a long way before him, a black clump and a couple of lanterns. The clump was in motion, and the lanterns swung as though carried by men walking. It was a patrol. And though it was merely crossing his line of march, he judged it wiser to get out of eyeshot as speedily as he could. He was not in the humour to be challenged, and he was conscious of making a very conspicuous mark upon the snow. Just on his left hand there stood a great hotel, with some turrets and a large porch before the door; it was half- ruinous, he remembered, and had long stood empty; and so he made three steps of it and jumped into the shelter of the porch. It was pretty dark inside, after the glimmer of the snowy streets, and he was groping forward with outspread hands, when he stumbled over some substance which offered an indescribable mixture of resistances, hard and soft, firm and loose. His heart gave a leap, and he sprang two steps back and stared dreadfully at the obstacle. Then he gave a little laugh of relief. It was only a woman, and she dead. He knelt beside her to make sure upon this latter point. She was freezing cold, and rigid like a stick. A little ragged finery fluttered in the wind about her hair, and her cheeks had been heavily rouged that same afternoon. Her pockets were quite empty; but in her stocking, underneath the garter, Villon found two of the small coins that went by the name of whites. It was little enough; but it was always something; and the poet was moved with a deep sense of pathos that she should have died before she had spent her money. That seemed to him a dark and pitiable mystery; and he looked from the coins in his hand to the dead woman, and back again to the coins, shaking his head over the riddle of man's life. Henry V. of England, dying at Vincennes just after he had conquered France, and this poor jade cut off by a cold draught in a great man's doorway, before she had time to spend her couple of whites - it seemed a cruel way to carry on the world. Two whites would have taken such a little while to squander; and yet it would have been one more good taste in the mouth, one more smack of the lips, before the devil got the soul, and the body was left to birds and vermin. He would like to use all his tallow before the light was blown out and the lantern broken.

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, he was feeling, half mechanically, for his purse. Suddenly his heart stopped beating; a feeling of cold scales passed up the back of his legs, and a cold blow seemed to fall upon his scalp. He stood petrified for a moment; then he felt again with one feverish movement; and then his loss burst upon him, and he was covered at once with perspiration. To spendthrifts money is so living and actual - it is such a thin veil between them and their pleasures! There is only one limit to their fortune - that of time; and a spendthrift with only a few crowns is the Emperor of Rome until they are spent. For such a person to lose his money is to suffer the most shocking reverse, and fall from heaven to hell, from all to nothing, in a breath. And all the more if he has put his head in the halter for it; if he may be hanged to-morrow for that same purse, so dearly earned, so foolishly departed! Villon stood and cursed; he threw the two whites into the street; he shook his fist at heaven; he stamped, and was not horrified to find himself trampling the poor corpse. Then he began rapidly to retrace his steps towards the house beside the cemetery. He had forgotten all fear of the patrol, which was long gone by at any rate, and had no idea but that of his lost purse. It was in vain that he looked right and left upon the snow: nothing was to be seen. He had not dropped it in the streets. Had it fallen in the house? He would have liked dearly to go in and see; but the idea of the grisly occupant unmanned him. And he saw besides, as he drew near, that their efforts to put out the fire had been unsuccessful; on the contrary, it had broken into a blaze, and a changeful light played in the chinks of door and window, and revived his terror for the authorities and Paris gibbet.

He returned to the hotel with the porch, and groped about upon the snow for the money he had thrown away in his childish passion. But he could only find one white; the other had probably struck sideways and sunk deeply in. With a single white in his pocket, all his projects for a rousing night in some wild tavern vanished utterly away. And it was not only pleasure that fled laughing from his grasp; positive discomfort, positive pain, attacked him as he stood ruefully before the porch. His perspiration had dried upon him; and though the wind had now fallen, a binding frost was setting in stronger with every hour, and be felt benumbed and sick at heart. What was to be done? Late as was the hour, improbable as was success, he would try the house of his adopted father, the chaplain of St. Benoit.

He ran there all the way, and knocked timidly. There was no answer. He knocked again and again, taking heart with every stroke; and at last steps were heard approaching from within. A barred wicket fell open in the iron-studded door, and emitted a gush of yellow light.

“Hold up your face to the wicket,” said the chaplain from within.

“It’s only me,” whimpered Villon.

“Oh, it’s only you, is it?” returned the chaplain; and he cursed him with foul unpriestly oaths for disturbing him at such an hour, and bade him be off to hell, where he came from.

“My hands are blue to the wrist,” pleaded Villon; “my feet are dead and full of twinges; my nose aches with the sharp air; the cold lies at my heart. I may be dead before morning. Only this once, father, and before God I will never ask again!”

“You should have come earlier,” said the ecclesiastic coolly. “Young men require a lesson now and then.” He shut the wicket and retired deliberately into the interior of the house.

Villon was beside himself; he beat upon the door with his hands and feet, and shouted hoarsely after the chaplain.

“Wormy old fox!” he cried. “If I had my hand under your twist, I would send you flying headlong into the bottomless pit.”

A door shut in the interior, faintly audible to the poet down long passages. He passed his hand over his mouth with an oath. And then the humour of the situation struck him, and he laughed and looked lightly up to heaven, where the stars seemed to be winking over his discomfiture.

What was to be done? It looked very like a night in the frosty streets. The idea of the dead woman popped into his imagination, and gave him a hearty fright; what had happened to her in the early night might very well happen to him before morning. And he so young! and with such immense possibilities of disorderly amusement before him! He felt quite pathetic over the notion of his own fate, as if it had been some one else’s, and made a little imaginative vignette of the scene in the morning when they should find his body.

He passed all his chances under review, turning the white between his thumb and forefinger. Unfortunately he was on bad terms with some old friends who would once have taken pity on him in such a plight. He had lampooned them in verses, he had beaten and cheated them; and yet now, when he was in so close a pinch, he thought there was at least one who might perhaps relent. It was a chance. It was worth trying at least, and he would go and see.

On the way, two little accidents happened to him which coloured his musings in a very different manner. For, first, he fell in with the track of a patrol, and walked in it for some hundred yards, although it lay out of his direction. And this spirited him up; at least he had confused his trail; for he was still possessed with the idea of people tracking him all about Paris over the snow, and collaring him next morning before he was awake. The other matter affected him very differently. He passed a street corner, where, not so long before, a woman and her child had been devoured by wolves. This was just the kind of weather, he reflected, when wolves might take it into their heads to enter Paris again; and a lone man in these deserted streets would run the chance of something worse than a mere scare. He stopped and looked upon the place with an unpleasant interest - it was a centre where several lanes intersected each other; and he looked down them all one after another, and held his breath to listen, lest he should detect some galloping black things on the snow or hear the sound of howling between him and the river. He remembered his mother telling him the story and pointing out the spot, while he was yet a child. His mother! If he only knew where she lived, he might make sure at least of shelter. He determined he would inquire upon the morrow; nay, he would go and see her too, poor old girl! So thinking, he arrived at his destination - his last hope for the night.

The house was quite dark, like its neighbours; and yet after a few taps, he heard a movement overhead, a door opening, and a cautious voice asking who was there. The poet named himself in a loud whisper, and waited, not without come trepidation, the result. Nor had he to wait long. A window was suddenly opened, and a pailful of slops splashed down upon the doorstep. Villon had not been unprepared for something of the sort, and had put himself as much in shelter as the nature of the porch admitted; but for all that, he was deplorably drenched below the waist. His hose began to freeze almost at once. Death from cold and exposure stared him in the face; he remembered he was of phthisical tendency, and began coughing tentatively. But the gravity of the danger steadied his nerves. He stopped a few hundred yards from the door where he had been so rudely used, and reflected with his finger to his nose. He could only see one way of getting a lodging, and that was to take it. He had noticed a house not far away, which looked as if it might be easily broken into, and thither he betook himself promptly, entertaining himself on the way with the idea of a room still hot, with a table still loaded with the remains of supper, where he might pass the rest of the black hours, and whence he should issue, on the morrow, with an armful of valuable plate. He even considered on what viands and what wines he should prefer; and as he was calling the roll of his favourite dainties, roast fish presented itself to his mind with an odd mixture of amusement and horror.

“I shall never finish that ballade,” he thought to himself; and then, with another shudder at the recollection, “Oh, damn his fat head!” he repeated fervently, and spat upon the snow.

The house in question looked dark at first sight; but as Villon made a preliminary inspection in search of the handiest point of attack, a little twinkle of light caught his eye from behind a curtained window.

"The devil!" he thought. "People awake! Some student or some saint, confound the crew! Can't they get drunk and lie in bed snoring like their neighbours? What's the good of curfew, and poor devils of bell-ringers jumping at a rope's end in bell-towers? What's the use of day, if people sit up all night? The gripes to them!" He grinned as he saw where his logic was leading him. "Every man to his business, after all," added he, "and if they're awake, by the Lord, I may come by a supper honestly for this once, and cheat the devil."

He went boldly to the door and knocked with an assured hand. On both previous occasions, he had knocked timidly and with some dread of attracting notice; but now when he had just discarded the thought of a burglarious entry, knocking at a door seemed a mighty simple and innocent proceeding. The sound of his blows echoed through the house with thin, phantasmal reverberations, as though it were quite empty; but these had scarcely died away before a measured tread drew near, a couple of bolts were withdrawn, and one wing was opened broadly, as though no guile or fear of guile were known to those within. A tall figure of a man, muscular and spare, but a little bent, confronted Villon. The head was massive in bulk, but finely sculptured; the nose blunt at the bottom, but refining upward to where it joined a pair of strong and honest eyebrows; the mouth and eyes surrounded with delicate markings, and the whole face based upon a thick white beard, boldly and squarely trimmed. Seen as it was by the light of a flickering hand-lamp, it looked perhaps nobler than it had a right to do; but it was a fine face, honourable rather than intelligent, strong, simple, and righteous.

"You knock late, sir," said the old man in resonant, courteous tones.

Villon cringed, and brought up many servile words of apology; at a crisis of this sort, the beggar was uppermost in him, and the man of genius hid his head with confusion.

"You are cold," repeated the old man, "and hungry? Well, step in."

And he ordered him into the house with a noble enough gesture.

"Some great seigneur," thought Villon, as his host, setting down the lamp on the flagged pavement of the entry, shot the bolts once more into their places.

"You will pardon me if I go in front," he said, when this was done; and he preceded the poet upstairs into a large apartment, warmed with a pan of charcoal and lit by a great lamp hanging from the roof. It was very bare of furniture: only some gold plate on a sideboard; some folios; and a stand of armour between the windows. Some smart tapestry hung upon the walls, representing the crucifixion of our Lord in one piece, and in another a scene of shepherds and shepherdesses by a running stream. Over the chimney was a shield of arms.

"Will you seat yourself," said the old man, "and forgive me if I leave you? I am alone in my house to-night, and if you are to eat I must forage for you myself."

No sooner was his host gone than Villon leaped from the chair on which he had just seated himself, and began examining the room, with the stealth and passion of a cat. He weighed the gold flagons in his hand, opened all the folios, and investigated the arms upon the shield, and the stuff with which the seats were lined. He raised the window curtains, and saw that the windows were set with rich stained glass in figures, so far as he could see, of martial import. Then he stood in the middle of the room, drew a long breath, and retaining it with puffed cheeks, looked round and round him, turning on his heels, as if to impress every feature of the apartment on his memory.

"Seven pieces of plate," he said. "If there had been ten, I would have risked it. A fine house, and a fine old master, so help me all the saints!"

And just then, hearing the old man's tread returning along the corridor, he stole back to his chair, and began humbly toasting his wet legs before the charcoal pan.

His entertainer had a plate of meat in one hand and a jug of wine in the other. He set down the plate upon the table, motioning Villon to draw in his chair, and going to the sideboard, brought back two goblets, which he filled.

"I drink to your better fortune," he said, gravely touching

Villon's cup with his own.

"To our better acquaintance," said the poet, growing bold. A mere man of the people would have been awed by the courtesy of the old seigneur, but Villon was hardened in that matter; he had made mirth for great lords before now, and found them as black rascals as himself. And so he devoted himself to the viands with a ravenous gusto, while the old man, leaning backward, watched him with steady, curious eyes.

"You have blood on your shoulder, my man," he said. Montigny must have laid his wet right hand upon him as he left the house. He cursed Montigny in his heart.

"It was none of my shedding," he stammered.

"I had not supposed so," returned his host quietly.

"A brawl?"

"Well, something of that sort," Villon admitted with a quaver.

"Perhaps a fellow murdered?"

"Oh no, not murdered," said the poet, more and more confused. "It was all fair play - murdered by accident. I had no hand in it, God strike me dead!" he added fervently.

"One rogue the fewer, I dare say," observed the master of the house.

"You may dare to say that," agreed Villon, infinitely relieved. "As big a rogue as there is between here and Jerusalem. He turned up his toes like a lamb. But it was a nasty thing to look at. I dare say you've seen dead men in your time, my lord?" he added, glancing at the armour.

"Many," said the old man. "I have followed the wars, as you imagine."

Villon laid down his knife and fork, which he had just taken up again.

"Were any of them bald?" he asked.

"Oh yes, and with hair as white as mine."

"I don't think I should mind the white so much," said Villon. "His was red." And he had a return of his shuddering and tendency to laughter, which he drowned with a great draught of wine. "I'm a little put out when I think of it," he went on. "I knew him - damn him! And then the cold gives a man fancies - or the fancies give a man cold, I don't know which."

"Have you any money?" asked the old man.

"I have one white," returned the poet, laughing. "I got it out of a dead jade's stocking in a porch. She was as dead as Caesar, poor wench, and as cold as a church, with bits of ribbon sticking in her hair. This is a hard world in winter for wolves and wenches and poor rogues like me."

"I," said the old man, "am Enguerrand de la Feuillee, seigneur de Brisetout, bailly du Patatrac. Who and what may you be?"

Villon rose and made a suitable reverence. "I am called Francis Villon," he said, "a poor Master of Arts of this university. I know some Latin, and a deal of vice. I can make chansons, ballades, lais, virelais, and roundels, and I am very fond of wine. I was born in a garret, and I shall not improbably die upon the gallows. I may add, my lord, that from this night forward I am your lordship's very obsequious servant to command."

"No servant of mine," said the knight; "my guest for this evening, and no more."

"A very grateful guest," said Villon politely; and he drank in dumb show to his entertainer.

"You are shrewd," began the old man, tapping his forehead, "very shrewd; you have learning; you are a clerk; and yet you take a small piece of money off a dead woman in the street. Is it not a kind of theft?"

"It is a kind of theft much practised in the wars, my lord."

"The wars are the field of honour," returned the old man proudly. "There a man plays his life upon the cast; he fights in the name of his lord the king, his Lord God, and all their lordships the holy saints and angels."

"Put it," said Villon, "that I were really a thief, should I not play my life also, and against heavier odds?"

"For gain, but not for honour."

"Gain?" repeated Villon with a shrug. "Gain! The poor fellow wants supper, and takes it. So does the soldier in a campaign. Why, what are all these requisitions we hear so much about? If they are not gain to those who take them, they are loss enough to the others. The men-at-arms drink by a good fire, while the burgher bites his nails to buy them wine and wood. I have seen a good many ploughmen swinging on trees about the country, ay, I have seen thirty on one elm, and a very poor figure they made; and when I asked some one how all these came to be hanged, I was told it was because they could not scrape together enough crowns to satisfy the men-at-arms."

"These things are a necessity of war, which the low-born must endure with constancy. It is true that some captains drive over hard; there are spirits in every rank not easily moved by pity; and indeed many follow arms who are no better than brigands."

"You see," said the poet, "you cannot separate the soldier from the brigand; and what is a thief but an isolated brigand with circumspect manners? I steal a couple of mutton chops, without so much as disturbing people's sleep; the farmer grumbles a bit, but sups none the less wholesomely on what remains. You come up blowing gloriously on a trumpet, take away the whole sheep, and beat the farmer pitifully into the bargain. I have no trumpet; I am only Tom, Dick, or Harry; I am a rogue and a dog, and hanging's too good for me - with all my heart; but just you ask the farmer which of us he prefers, just find out which of us he lies awake to curse on cold nights."

"Look at us two," said his lordship. "I am old, strong, and honoured. If I were turned from my house to-morrow, hundreds would be proud to shelter me. Poor people would go out and pass the night in the streets with their children, if I merely hinted that I wished to be alone. And I find you up, wandering homeless, and picking farthings off dead women by the wayside! I fear no man and nothing; I have seen you tremble and lose countenance at a word. I wait God's summons contentedly in my own house, or, if it please the king to call me out again, upon the field of battle. You look for the gallows; a rough, swift death, without hope or honour. Is there no difference between these two?"

"As far as to the moon," Villon acquiesced. "But if I had been born lord of Brisetout, and you had been the poor scholar Francis, would the difference have been any the less? Should not I have been warming my knees at this charcoal pan, and would not you have been groping for farthings in the snow? Should not I have been the soldier, and you the thief?”

“A thief!” cried the old man. “I a thief! If you understood your words, you would repent them.”

Villon turned out his hands with a gesture of inimitable impudence. “If your lordship had done me the honour to follow my argument!” he said.

“I do you too much honour in submitting to your presence,” said the knight. “Learn to curb your tongue when you speak with old and honourable men, or some one hastier than I may reprove you in a sharper fashion.” And he rose and paced the lower end of the apartment, struggling with anger and antipathy. Villon surreptitiously refilled his cup, and settled himself more comfortably in the chair, crossing his knees and leaning his head upon one hand and the elbow against the back of the chair. He was now replete and warm; and he was in nowise frightened for his host, having gauged him as justly as was possible between two such different characters. The night was far spent, and in a very comfortable fashion after all; and he felt morally certain of a safe departure on the morrow.

“Tell me one thing,” said the old man, pausing in his walk. “Are you really a thief?”

“I claim the sacred rights of hospitality,” returned the poet. “My lord, I am.”

“You are very young,” the knight continued.

“I should never have been so old,” replied Villon, showing his fingers, “if I had not helped myself with these ten talents. They have been my nursing mothers and my nursing fathers.”

“You may still repent and change.”

“I repent daily,” said the poet. “There are few people more given to repentance than poor Francis. As for change, let somebody change my circumstances. A man must continue to eat, if it were only that he may continue to repent.”

“The change must begin in the heart,” returned the old man solemnly.

“My dear lord,” answered Villon, “do you really fancy that I steal for pleasure? I hate stealing, like any other piece of work or of danger. My teeth chatter when I see a gallows. But I must eat, I must drink, I must mix in society of some sort. What the devil! Man is not a solitary animal - CUI DEUS FAEMINAM TRADIT. Make me king’s pantler - make me abbot of St. Denis; make me bailly of the Patatrac; and then I shall be changed indeed. But as long as you leave me the poor scholar Francis Villon, without a farthing, why, of course, I remain the same.”

“The grace of God is all-powerful.”

“I should be a heretic to question it,” said Francis. “It has made you lord of Brisetout and bailly of the Patatrac; it has given me nothing but the quick wits under my hat and these ten toes upon my hands. May I help myself to wine? I thank you respectfully. By God's grace, you have a very superior vintage."

The lord of Brisetout walked to and fro with his hands behind his back. Perhaps he was not yet quite settled in his mind about the parallel between thieves and soldiers; perhaps Villon had interested him by some cross-thread of sympathy; perhaps his wits were simply muddled by so much unfamiliar reasoning; but whatever the cause, he somehow yearned to convert the young man to a better way of thinking, and could not make up his mind to drive him forth again into the street.

"There is something more than I can understand in this," he said at length. "Your mouth is full of subtleties, and the devil has led you very far astray; but the devil is only a very weak spirit before God's truth, and all his subtleties vanish at a word of true honour, like darkness at morning. Listen to me once more. I learned long ago that a gentleman should live chivalrously and lovingly to God, and the king, and his lady; and though I have seen many strange things done, I have still striven to command my ways upon that rule. It is not only written in all noble histories, but in every man's heart, if he will take care to read. You speak of food and wine, and I know very well that hunger is a difficult trial to endure; but you do not speak of other wants; you say nothing of honour, of faith to God and other men, of courtesy, of love without reproach. It may be that I am not very wise - and yet I think I am - but you seem to me like one who has lost his way and made a great error in life. You are attending to the little wants, and you have totally forgotten the great and only real ones, like a man who should be doctoring a toothache on the Judgment Day. For such things as honour and love and faith are not only nobler than food and drink, but indeed I think that we desire them more, and suffer more sharply for their absence. I speak to you as I think you will most easily understand me. Are you not, while careful to fill your belly, disregarding another appetite in your heart, which spoils the pleasure of your life and keeps you continually wretched?"

Villon was sensibly nettled under all this sermonising. "You think I have no sense of honour!" he cried. "I'm poor enough, God knows! It's hard to see rich people with their gloves, and you blowing in your hands. An empty belly is a bitter thing, although you speak so lightly of it. If you had had as many as I, perhaps you would change your tune. Any way I'm a thief - make the most of that - but I'm not a devil from hell, God strike me dead. I would have you to know I've an honour of my own, as good as yours, though I don't prate about it all day long, as if it was a God's miracle to have any. It seems quite natural to me; I keep it in its box till it's wanted. Why now, look you here, how long have I been in this room with you? Did you not tell me you were alone in the house? Look at your gold plate! You're strong, if you like, but you're old and unarmed, and I have my knife. What did I want but a jerk of the elbow and here would have been you with the cold steel in your bowels, and there would have been me, linking in the streets, with an armful of gold cups! Did you suppose I hadn't wit enough to see that? And I scorned the action. There are your damned goblets, as safe as in a church; there are you, with your heart ticking as good as new; and here am I, ready to go out again as poor as I came in, with my one white that you threw in my teeth! And you think I have no sense of honour - God strike me dead!"

The old man stretched out his right arm. "I will tell you what you are," he said. "You are a rogue, my man, an impudent and a black-hearted rogue and vagabond. I have passed an hour with you. Oh! believe me, I feel myself disgraced! And you have eaten and drunk at my table. But now I am sick at your presence; the day has come, and the night-bird should be off to his roost. Will you go before, or after?"

"Which you please," returned the poet, rising. "I believe you to be strictly honourable." He thoughtfully emptied his cup. "I wish I could add you were intelligent," he went on, knocking on his head with his knuckles. "Age, age! the brains stiff and rheumatic."

The old man preceded him from a point of self-respect; Villon followed, whistling, with his thumbs in his girdle.

"God pity you," said the lord of Brisetout at the door.

"Good-bye, papa," returned Villon with a yawn. "Many thanks for the cold mutton."

The door closed behind him. The dawn was breaking over the white roofs. A chill, uncomfortable morning ushered in the day. Villon stood and heartily stretched himself in the middle of the road.

"A very dull old gentleman," he thought. "I wonder what his goblets may be worth."

THE SIRE DE MALETROIT'S DOOR

Denis de Beaulieu was not yet two-and-twenty, but he counted himself a grown man, and a very accomplished cavalier into the bargain. Lads were early formed in that rough, warfaring epoch; and when one has been in a pitched battle and a dozen raids, has killed one's man in an honourable fashion, and knows a thing or two of strategy and mankind, a certain swagger in the gait is surely to be pardoned. He had put up his horse with due care, and supped with due deliberation; and then, in a very agreeable frame of mind, went out to pay a visit in the grey of the evening. It was not a very wise proceeding on the young man's part. He would have done better to remain beside the fire or go decently to bed. For the town was full of the troops of Burgundy and England under a mixed command; and though Denis was there on safe-conduct, his safe- conduct was like to serve him little on a chance encounter.

It was September 1429; the weather had fallen sharp; a flighty piping wind, laden with showers, beat about the township; and the dead leaves ran riot along the streets. Here and there a window was already lighted up; and the noise of men-at-arms making merry over supper within, came forth in fits and was swallowed up and carried away by the wind. The night fell swiftly; the flag of England, fluttering on the spire-top, grew ever fainter and fainter against the flying clouds - a black speck like a swallow in the tumultuous, leaden chaos of the sky. As the night fell the wind rose, and began to hoot under archways and roar amid the tree-tops in the valley below the town.

Denis de Beaulieu walked fast and was soon knocking at his friend's door; but though he promised himself to stay only a little while and make an early return, his welcome was so pleasant, and he found so much to delay him, that it was already long past midnight before he said good-bye upon the threshold. The wind had fallen again in the meanwhile; the night was as black as the grave; not a star, nor a glimmer of moonshine, slipped through the canopy of cloud. Denis was ill-acquainted with the intricate lanes of Chateau Landon; even by daylight he had found some trouble in picking his way; and in this absolute darkness he soon lost it altogether. He was certain of one thing only - to keep mounting the hill; for his friend's house lay at the lower end, or tail, of Chateau Landon, while the inn was up at the head, under the great church spire. With this clue to go upon he stumbled and groped forward, now breathing more freely in open places where there was a good slice of sky overhead, now feeling along the wall in stifling closes. It is an eerie and mysterious position to be thus submerged in opaque blackness in an almost unknown town. The silence is terrifying in its possibilities. The touch of cold window bars to the exploring hand startles the man like the touch of a toad; the inequalities of the pavement shake his heart into his mouth; a piece of denser darkness threatens an ambuscade or a chasm in the pathway; and where the air is brighter, the houses put on strange and bewildering appearances, as if to lead him farther from his way. For Denis, who had to regain his inn without attracting notice, there was real danger as well as mere discomfort in the walk; and he went warily and boldly at once, and at every corner paused to make an observation.

He had been for some time threading a lane so narrow that he could touch a wall with either hand, when it began to open out and go sharply downward. Plainly this lay no longer in the direction of his inn; but the hope of a little more light tempted him forward to reconnoitre. The lane ended in a terrace with a bartizan wall, which gave an out-look between high houses, as out of an embrasure, into the valley lying dark and formless several hundred feet below. Denis looked down, and could discern a few tree-tops waving and a single speck of brightness where the river ran across a weir. The weather was clearing up, and the sky had lightened, so as to show the outline of the heavier clouds and the dark margin of the hills. By the uncertain glimmer, the house on his left hand should be a place of some pretensions; it was surmounted by several pinnacles and turret-tops; the round stern of a chapel, with a fringe of flying buttresses, projected boldly from the main block; and the door was sheltered under a deep porch carved with figures and overhung by two long gargoyles. The windows of the chapel gleamed through their intricate tracery with a light as of many tapers, and threw out the buttresses and the peaked roof in a more intense blackness against the sky. It was plainly the hotel of some great family of the neighbourhood; and as it reminded Denis of a town house of his own at Bourges, he stood for some time gazing up at it and mentally gauging the skill of the architects and the consideration of the two families.

There seemed to be no issue to the terrace but the lane by which he had reached it; he could only retrace his steps, but he had gained some notion of his whereabouts, and hoped by this means to hit the main thoroughfare and speedily regain the inn. He was reckoning without that chapter of accidents which was to make this night memorable above all others in his career; for he had not gone back above a hundred yards before he saw a light coming to meet him, and heard loud voices speaking together in the echoing narrows of the lane. It was a party of men-at-arms going the night round with torches. Denis assured himself that they had all been making free with the wine-bowl, and were in no mood to be particular about safe-conducts or the niceties of chivalrous war. It was as like as not that they would kill him like a dog and leave him where he fell. The situation was inspiriting but nervous. Their own torches would conceal him from sight, he reflected; and he hoped that they would drown the noise of his footsteps with their own empty voices. If he were but fleet and silent, he might evade their notice altogether.

Unfortunately, as he turned to beat a retreat, his foot rolled upon a pebble; he fell against the wall with an ejaculation, and his sword rang loudly on the stones. Two or three voices demanded who went there - some in French, some in English; but Denis made no reply, and ran the faster down the lane. Once upon the terrace, he paused to look back. They still kept calling after him, and just then began to double the pace in pursuit, with a considerable clank of armour, and great tossing of the torchlight to and fro in the narrow jaws of the passage.

Denis cast a look around and darted into the porch. There he might escape observation, or - if that were too much to expect - was in a capital posture whether for parley or defence. So thinking, he drew his sword and tried to set his back against the door. To his surprise, it yielded behind his weight; and though he turned in a moment, continued to swing back on oiled and noiseless hinges, until it stood wide open on a black interior. When things fall out opportunely for the person concerned, he is not apt to be critical about the how or why, his own immediate personal convenience seeming a sufficient reason for the strangest oddities and resolutions in our sublunary things; and so Denis, without a moment's hesitation, stepped within and partly closed the door behind him to conceal his place of refuge. Nothing was further from his thoughts than to close it altogether; but for some inexplicable reason - perhaps by a spring or a weight - the ponderous mass of oak whipped itself out of his fingers and clanked to, with a formidable rumble and a noise like the falling of an automatic bar.

The round, at that very moment, debauched upon the terrace and proceeded to summon him with shouts and curses. He heard them ferreting in the dark corners; the stock of a lance even rattled along the outer surface of the door behind which he stood; but these gentlemen were in too high a humour to be long delayed, and soon made off down a corkscrew pathway which had escaped Denis's observation, and passed out of sight and hearing along the battlements of the town.

Denis breathed again. He gave them a few minutes' grace for fear of accidents, and then groped about for some means of opening the door and slipping forth again. The inner surface was quite smooth, not a handle, not a moulding, not a projection of any sort. He got his finger-nails round the edges and pulled, but the mass was immovable. He shook it, it was as firm as a rock. Denis de Beaulieu frowned and gave vent to a little noiseless whistle. What ailed the door? he wondered. Why was it open? How came it to shut so easily and so effectually after him? There was something obscure and underhand about all this, that was little to the young man's fancy. It looked like a snare; and yet who could suppose a snare in such a quiet by-street and in a house of so prosperous and even noble an exterior? And yet - snare or no snare, intentionally or unintentionally - here he was, prettily trapped; and for the life of him he could see no way out of it again. The darkness began to weigh upon him. He gave ear; all was silent without, but within and close by he seemed to catch a faint sighing, a faint sobbing rustle, a little stealthy creak - as though many persons were at his side, holding themselves quite still, and governing even their respiration with the extreme of slyness. The idea went to his vitals with a shock, and he faced about suddenly as if to defend his life. Then, for the first time, he became aware of a light about the level of his eyes and at some distance in the interior of the house - a vertical thread of light, widening towards the bottom, such as might escape between two wings of arras over a doorway. To see anything was a relief to Denis; it was like a piece of solid ground to a man labouring in a morass; his mind seized upon it with avidity; and he stood staring at it and trying to piece together some logical conception of his surroundings. Plainly there was a flight of steps ascending from his own level to that of this illuminated doorway; and indeed he thought he could make out another thread of light, as fine as a needle and as faint as phosphorescence, which might very well be reflected along the polished wood of a handrail. Since he had begun to suspect that he was not alone, his heart had continued to beat with smothering violence, and an intolerable desire for action of any sort had possessed itself of his spirit. He was in deadly peril, he believed. What could be more natural than to mount the staircase, lift the curtain, and confront his difficulty at once? At least he would be dealing with something tangible; at least he would be no longer in the dark. He stepped slowly forward with outstretched hands, until his foot struck the bottom step; then he rapidly scaled the stairs, stood for a moment to compose his expression, lifted the arras and went in.

He found himself in a large apartment of polished stone. There were three doors; one on each of three sides; all similarly curtained with tapestry. The fourth side was occupied by two large windows and a great stone chimney-piece, carved with the arms of the Maletroits. Denis recognised the bearings, and was gratified to find himself in such good hands. The room was strongly illuminated; but it contained little furniture except a heavy table and a chair or two, the hearth was innocent of fire, and the pavement was but sparsely strewn with rushes clearly many days old.

On a high chair beside the chimney, and directly facing Denis as he entered, sat a little old gentleman in a fur tippet. He sat with his legs crossed and his hands folded, and a cup of spiced wine stood by his elbow on a bracket on the wall. His countenance had a strongly masculine cast; not properly human, but such as we see in the bull, the goat, or the domestic boar; something equivocal and wheedling, something greedy, brutal, and dangerous. The upper lip was inordinately full, as though swollen by a blow or a toothache; and the smile, the peaked eyebrows, and the small, strong eyes were quaintly and almost comically evil in expression. Beautiful white hair hung straight all round his head, like a saint's, and fell in a single curl upon the tippet. His beard and moustache were the pink of venerable sweetness. Age, probably in consequence of inordinate precautions, had left no mark upon his hands; and the Maletroit hand was famous. It would be difficult to imagine anything at once so fleshy and so delicate in design; the taper, sensual fingers were like those of one of Leonardo's women; the fork of the thumb made a dimpled protuberance when closed; the nails were perfectly shaped, and of a dead, surprising whiteness. It rendered his aspect tenfold more redoubtable, that a man with hands like these should keep them devoutly folded in his lap like a virgin martyr - that a man with so intense and startling an expression of face should sit patiently on his seat and contemplate people with an unwinking stare, like a god, or a god's statue. His quiescence seemed ironical and treacherous, it fitted so poorly with his looks.

Such was Alain, Sire de Maletroit.

Denis and he looked silently at each other for a second or two.

"Pray step in," said the Sire de Maletroit. "I have been expecting you all the evening."

He had not risen, but he accompanied his words with a smile and a slight but courteous inclination of the head. Partly from the smile, partly from the strange musical murmur with which the Sire prefaced his observation, Denis felt a strong shudder of disgust go through his marrow. And what with disgust and honest confusion of mind, he could scarcely get words together in reply.

"I fear," he said, "that this is a double accident. I am not the person you suppose me. It seems you were looking for a visit; but for my part, nothing was further from my thoughts - nothing could be more contrary to my wishes - than this intrusion."

"Well, well," replied the old gentleman indulgently, "here you are, which is the main point. Seat yourself, my friend, and put yourself entirely at your ease. We shall arrange our little affairs presently."

Denis perceived that the matter was still complicated with some misconception, and he hastened to continue his explanations.

“Your door . . . “ he began.

“About my door?” asked the other, raising his peaked eyebrows. “A little piece of ingenuity.” And he shrugged his shoulders. “A hospitable fancy! By your own account, you were not desirous of making my acquaintance. We old people look for such reluctance now and then; and when it touches our honour, we cast about until we find some way of overcoming it. You arrive uninvited, but believe me, very welcome.”

“You persist in error, sir,” said Denis. “There can be no question between you and me. I am a stranger in this countryside. My name is Denis, damoiseau de Beaulieu. If you see me in your house, it is only - “

“My young friend,” interrupted the other, “you will permit me to have my own ideas on that subject. They probably differ from yours at the present moment,” he added with a leer, “but time will show which of us is in the right.”

Denis was convinced he had to do with a lunatic. He seated himself with a shrug, content to wait the upshot; and a pause ensued, during which he thought he could distinguish a hurried gabbling as of prayer from behind the arras immediately opposite him. Sometimes there seemed to be but one person engaged, sometimes two; and the vehemence of the voice, low as it was, seemed to indicate either great haste or an agony of spirit. It occurred to him that this piece of tapestry covered the entrance to the chapel he had noticed from without.

The old gentleman meanwhile surveyed Denis from head to foot with a smile, and from time to time emitted little noises like a bird or a mouse, which seemed to indicate a high degree of satisfaction. This state of matters became rapidly insupportable; and Denis, to put an end to it, remarked politely that the wind had gone down.

The old gentleman fell into a fit of silent laughter, so prolonged and violent that he became quite red in the face. Denis got upon his feet at once, and put on his hat with a flourish.

“Sir,” he said, “if you are in your wits, you have affronted me grossly. If you are out of them, I flatter myself I can find better employment for my brains than to talk with lunatics. My conscience is clear; you have made a fool of me from the first moment; you have refused to hear my explanations; and now there is no power under God will make me stay here any longer; and if I cannot make my way out in a more decent fashion, I will hack your door in pieces with my sword.”

The Sire de Maletroit raised his right hand and wagged it at Denis with the fore and little fingers extended.

“My dear nephew,” he said, “sit down.”

“Nephew!” retorted Denis, “you lie in your throat;” and he snapped his fingers in his face.

“Sit down, you rogue!” cried the old gentleman, in a sudden, harsh voice, like the barking of a dog. “Do you fancy,” he went on, “that when I had made my little contrivance for the door I had stopped short with that? If you prefer to be bound hand and foot till your bones ache, rise and try to go away. If you choose to remain a free young buck, agreeably conversing with an old gentleman - why, sit where you are in peace, and God be with you.”

“Do you mean I am a prisoner?” demanded Denis.

“I state the facts,” replied the other. “I would rather leave the conclusion to yourself.”

Denis sat down again. Externally he managed to keep pretty calm; but within, he was now boiling with anger, now chilled with apprehension. He no longer felt convinced that he was dealing with a madman. And if the old gentleman was sane, what, in God’s name, had he to look for? What absurd or tragical adventure had befallen him? What countenance was he to assume?

While he was thus unpleasantly reflecting, the arras that overhung the chapel door was raised, and a tall priest in his robes came forth and, giving a long, keen stare at Denis, said something in an undertone to Sire de Maletroit.

“She is in a better frame of spirit?” asked the latter.

“She is more resigned, messire,” replied the priest.

“Now the Lord help her, she is hard to please!” sneered the old gentleman. “A likely stripling - not ill-born - and of her own choosing, too? Why, what more would the jade have?”

“The situation is not usual for a young damsel,” said the other, “and somewhat trying to her blushes.”

“She should have thought of that before she began the dance. It was none of my choosing, God knows that: but since she is in it, by our Lady, she shall carry it to the end.” And then addressing Denis, “Monsieur de Beaulieu,” he asked, “may I present you to my niece? She has been waiting your arrival, I may say, with even greater impatience than myself.”

Denis had resigned himself with a good grace - all he desired was to know the worst of it as speedily as possible; so he rose at once, and bowed in acquiescence. The Sire de Maletroit followed his example and limped, with the assistance of the chaplain’s arm, towards the chapel door. The priest pulled aside the arras, and all three entered. The building had considerable architectural pretensions. A light groining sprang from six stout columns, and hung down in two rich pendants from the centre of the vault. The place terminated behind the altar in a round end, embossed and honeycombed with a superfluity of ornament in relief, and pierced by many little windows shaped like stars, trefoils, or wheels. These windows were imperfectly glazed, so that the night air circulated freely in the chapel. The tapers, of which there must have been half a hundred burning on the altar, were unmercifully blown about; and the light went through many different phases of brilliancy and semi-eclipse. On the steps in front of the altar knelt a young girl richly attired as a bride. A chill settled over Denis as he observed her costume; he fought with desperate energy against the conclusion that was being thrust upon his mind; it could not - it should not - be as he feared.

“Blanche,” said the Sire, in his most flute-like tones, “I have brought a friend to see you, my little girl; turn round and give him your pretty hand. It is good to be devout; but it is necessary to be polite, my niece.”

The girl rose to her feet and turned towards the new comers. She moved all of a piece; and shame and exhaustion were expressed in every line of her fresh young body; and she held her head down and kept her eyes upon the pavement, as she came slowly forward. In the course of her advance, her eyes fell upon Denis de Beaulieu’s feet - feet of which he was justly vain, be it remarked, and wore in the most elegant accoutrement even while travelling. She paused - started, as if his yellow boots had conveyed some shocking meaning - and glanced suddenly up into the wearer’s countenance. Their eyes met; shame gave place to horror and terror in her looks; the blood left her lips; with a piercing scream she covered her face with her hands and sank upon the chapel floor.

“That is not the man!” she cried. “My uncle, that in not the man!”

The Sire de Maletroit chirped agreeably. “Of course not,” he said; “I expected as much. It was so unfortunate you could not remember his name.”

“Indeed,” she cried, “indeed, I have never seen this person till this moment - I have never so much as set eyes upon him - I never wish to see him again. Sir,” she said, turning to Denis, “if you are a gentleman, you will bear me out. Have I ever seen you - have you ever seen me - before this accursed hour?”

“To speak for myself, I have never had that pleasure,” answered the young man. “This is the first time, messire, that I have met with your engaging niece.”

The old gentleman shrugged his shoulders.

“I am distressed to hear it,” he said. “But it is never too late to begin. I had little more acquaintance with my own late lady ere I married her; which proves,” he added with a grimace, “that these impromptu marriages may often produce an excellent understanding in the long-run. As the bridegroom is to have a voice in the matter, I will give him two hours to make up for lost time before we proceed with the ceremony." And he turned towards the door, followed by the clergyman.

The girl was on her feet in a moment. "My uncle, you cannot be in earnest," she said. "I declare before God I will stab myself rather than be forced on that young man. The heart rises at it; God forbids such marriages; you dishonour your white hair. Oh, my uncle, pity me! There is not a woman in all the world but would prefer death to such a nuptial. Is it possible," she added, faltering - "is it possible that you do not believe me - that you still think this" - and she pointed at Denis with a tremor of anger and contempt - "that you still think THIS to be the man?"

"Frankly," said the old gentleman, pausing on the threshold, "I do. But let me explain to you once for all, Blanche de Maletroit, my way of thinking about this affair. When you took it into your head to dishonour my family and the name that I have borne, in peace and war, for more than three-score years, you forfeited, not only the right to question my designs, but that of looking me in the face. If your father had been alive, he would have spat on you and turned you out of doors. His was the hand of iron. You may bless your God you have only to deal with the hand of velvet, mademoiselle. It was my duty to get you married without delay. Out of pure goodwill, I have tried to find your own gallant for you. And I believe I have succeeded. But before God and all the holy angels, Blanche de Maletroit, if I have not, I care not one jack-straw. So let me recommend you to be polite to our young friend; for upon my word, your next groom may be less appetising."

And with that he went out, with the chaplain at his heels; and the arras fell behind the pair.

The girl turned upon Denis with flashing eyes.

"And what, sir," she demanded, "may be the meaning of all this?"

"God knows," returned Denis gloomily. "I am a prisoner in this house, which seems full of mad people. More I know not; and nothing do I understand."

"And pray how came you here?" she asked.

He told her as briefly as he could. "For the rest," he added, "perhaps you will follow my example, and tell me the answer to all these riddles, and what, in God's name, is like to be the end of it."

She stood silent for a little, and he could see her lips tremble and her tearless eyes burn with a feverish lustre. Then she pressed her forehead in both hands.

"Alas, how my head aches!" she said wearily - "to say nothing of my poor heart! But it is due to you to know my story, unmaidenly as it must seem. I am called Blanche de Maletroit; I have been without father or mother for - oh! for as long as I can recollect, and indeed I have been most unhappy all my life. Three months ago a young captain began to stand near me every day in church. I could see that I pleased him; I am much to blame, but I was so glad that any one should love me; and when he passed me a letter, I took it home with me and read it with great pleasure. Since that time he has written many. He was so anxious to speak with me, poor fellow! and kept asking me to leave the door open some evening that we might have two words upon the stair. For he knew how much my uncle trusted me." She gave something like a sob at that, and it was a moment before she could go on. "My uncle is a hard man, but he is very shrewd," she said at last. "He has performed many feats in war, and was a great person at court, and much trusted by Queen Isabeau in old days. How he came to suspect me I cannot tell; but it is hard to keep anything from his knowledge; and this morning, as we came from mass, he took my hand in his, forced it open, and read my little billet, walking by my side all the while. When he had finished, he gave it back to me with great politeness. It contained another request to have the door left open; and this has been the ruin of us all. My uncle kept me strictly in my room until evening, and then ordered me to dress myself as you see me - a hard mockery for a young girl, do you not think so? I suppose, when he could not prevail with me to tell him the young captain's name, he must have laid a trap for him: into which, alas! you have fallen in the anger of God. I looked for much confusion; for how could I tell whether he was willing to take me for his wife on these sharp terms? He might have been trifling with me from the first; or I might have made myself too cheap in his eyes. But truly I had not looked for such a shameful punishment as this! I could not think that God would let a girl be so disgraced before a young man. And now I have told you all; and I can scarcely hope that you will not despise me."

Denis made her a respectful inclination.

"Madam," he said, "you have honoured me by your confidence. It remains for me to prove that I am not unworthy of the honour. Is Messire de Maletroit at hand?"

"I believe he is writing in the salle without," she answered.

"May I lead you thither, madam?" asked Denis, offering his hand with his most courtly bearing.

She accepted it; and the pair passed out of the chapel, Blanche in a very drooping and shamefast condition, but Denis strutting and ruffling in the consciousness of a mission, and the boyish certainty of accomplishing it with honour.

The Sire de Maletroit rose to meet them with an ironical obeisance.

"Sir," said Denis, with the grandest possible air, "I believe I am to have some say in the matter of this marriage; and let me tell you at once, I will be no party to forcing the inclination of this young lady. Had it been freely offered to me, I should have been proud to accept her hand, for I perceive she is as good as she is beautiful; but as things are, I have now the honour, messire, of refusing."

Blanche looked at him with gratitude in her eyes; but the old gentleman only smiled and smiled, until his smile grew positively sickening to Denis.

"I am afraid," he said, "Monsieur de Beaulieu, that you do not perfectly understand the choice I have to offer you. Follow me, I beseech you, to this window." And he led the way to one of the large windows which stood open on the night. "You observe," he went on, "there is an iron ring in the upper masonry, and reeved through that, a very efficacious rope. Now, mark my words; if you should find your disinclination to my niece's person insurmountable, I shall have you hanged out of this window before sunrise. I shall only proceed to such an extremity with the greatest regret, you may believe me. For it is not at all your death that I desire, but my niece's establishment in life. At the same time, it must come to that if you prove obstinate. Your family, Monsieur de Beaulieu, is very well in its way; but if you sprang from Charlemagne, you should not refuse the hand of a Maletroit with impunity - not if she had been as common as the Paris road - not if she were as hideous as the gargoyle over my door. Neither my niece nor you, nor my own private feelings, move me at all in this matter. The honour of my house has been compromised; I believe you to be the guilty person; at least you are now in the secret; and you can hardly wonder if I request you to wipe out the stain. If you will not, your blood be on your own head! It will be no great satisfaction to me to have your interesting relics kicking their heels in the breeze below my windows; but half a loaf is better than no bread, and if I cannot cure the dishonour, I shall at least stop the scandal."

There was a pause.

"I believe there are other ways of settling such imbroglios among gentlemen," said Denis. "You wear a sword, and I hear you have used it with distinction."

The Sire de Maletroit made a signal to the chaplain, who crossed the room with long silent strides and raised the arras over the third of the three doors. It was only a moment before he let it fall again; but Denis had time to see a dusky passage full of armed men.

"When I was a little younger, I should have been delighted to honour you, Monsieur de Beaulieu," said Sire Alain; "but I am now too old. Faithful retainers are the sinews of age, and I must employ the strength I have. This is one of the hardest things to swallow as a man grows up in years; but with a little patience, even this becomes habitual. You and the lady seem to prefer the salle for what remains of your two hours; and as I have no desire to cross your preference, I shall resign it to your use with all the pleasure in the world. No haste!" he added, holding up his hand, as he saw a dangerous look come into Denis de Beaulieu's face. "If your mind revolts against hanging, it will be time enough two hours hence to throw yourself out of the window or upon the pikes of my retainers. Two hours of life are always two hours. A great many things may turn up in even as little a while as that. And, besides, if I understand her appearance, my niece has still something to say to you. You will not disfigure your last hours by a want of politeness to a lady?"

Denis looked at Blanche, and she made him an imploring gesture.

It is likely that the old gentleman was hugely pleased at this symptom of an understanding; for he smiled on both, and added sweetly: "If you will give me your word of honour, Monsieur de Beaulieu, to await my return at the end of the two hours before attempting anything desperate, I shall withdraw my retainers, and let you speak in greater privacy with mademoiselle."

Denis again glanced at the girl, who seemed to beseech him to agree.

"I give you my word of honour," he said.

Messire de Maletroit bowed, and proceeded to limp about the apartment, clearing his throat the while with that odd musical chirp which had already grown so irritating in the ears of Denis de Beaulieu. He first possessed himself of some papers which lay upon the table; then he went to the mouth of the passage and appeared to give an order to the men behind the arras; and lastly he hobbled out through the door by which Denis had come in, turning upon the threshold to address a last smiling bow to the young couple, and followed by the chaplain with a hand-lamp.

No sooner were they alone than Blanche advanced towards Denis with her hands extended. Her face was flushed and excited, and her eyes shone with tears.

"You shall not die!" she cried, "you shall marry me after all."

"You seem to think, madam," replied Denis, "that I stand much in fear of death."

"Oh no, no," she said, "I see you are no poltroon. It is for my own sake - I could not bear to have you slain for such a scruple."

"I am afraid," returned Denis, "that you underrate the difficulty, madam. What you may be too generous to refuse, I may be too proud to accept. In a moment of noble feeling towards me, you forgot what you perhaps owe to others."

He had the decency to keep his eyes upon the floor as he said this, and after he had finished, so as not to spy upon her confusion. She stood silent for a moment, then walked suddenly away, and falling on her uncle's chair, fairly burst out sobbing. Denis was in the acme of embarrassment. He looked round, as if to seek for inspiration, and seeing a stool, plumped down upon it for something to do. There he sat, playing with the guard of his rapier, and wishing himself dead a thousand times over, and buried in the nastiest kitchen-heap in France. His eyes wandered round the apartment, but found nothing to arrest them. There were such wide spaces between the furniture, the light fell so baldly and cheerlessly over all, the dark outside air looked in so coldly through the windows, that he thought he had never seen a church so vast, nor a tomb so melancholy. The regular sobs of Blanche de Maletroit measured out the time like the ticking of a clock. He read the device upon the shield over and over again, until his eyes became obscured; he stared into shadowy corners until he imagined they were swarming with horrible animals; and every now and again he awoke with a start, to remember that his last two hours were running, and death was on the march.

Oftener and oftener, as the time went on, did his glance settle on the girl herself. Her face was bowed forward and covered with her hands, and she was shaken at intervals by the convulsive hiccup of grief. Even thus she was not an unpleasant object to dwell upon, so plump and yet so fine, with a warm brown skin, and the most beautiful hair, Denis thought, in the whole world of womankind. Her hands were like her uncle's; but they were more in place at the end of her young arms, and looked infinitely soft and caressing. He remembered how her blue eyes had shone upon him, full of anger, pity, and innocence. And the more he dwelt on her perfections, the uglier death looked, and the more deeply was he smitten with penitence at her continued tears. Now he felt that no man could have the courage to leave a world which contained so beautiful a creature; and now he would have given forty minutes of his last hour to have unsaid his cruel speech.

Suddenly a hoarse and ragged peal of cockcrow rose to their ears from the dark valley below the windows. And this shattering noise in the silence of all around was like a light in a dark place, and shook them both out of their reflections.

"Alas, can I do nothing to help you?" she said, looking up.

"Madam," replied Denis, with a fine irrelevancy, "if I have said anything to wound you, believe me, it was for your own sake and not for mine."

She thanked him with a tearful look.

"I feel your position cruelly," he went on. "The world has been bitter hard on you. Your uncle is a disgrace to mankind. Believe me, madam, there is no young gentleman in all France but would be glad of my opportunity, to die in doing you a momentary service."

"I know already that you can be very brave and generous," she answered. "What I WANT to know is whether I can serve you - now or afterwards," she added, with a quaver.

"Most certainly," he answered with a smile. "Let me sit beside you as if I were a friend, instead of a foolish intruder; try to forget how awkwardly we are placed to one another; make my last moments go pleasantly; and you will do me the chief service possible."

"You are very gallant," she added, with a yet deeper sadness . . . "very gallant . . . and it somehow pains me. But draw nearer, if you please; and if you find anything to say to me, you will at least make certain of a very friendly listener. Ah! Monsieur de Beaulieu," she broke forth - "ah! Monsieur de Beaulieu, how can I look you in the face?" And she fell to weeping again with a renewed effusion.

"Madam," said Denis, taking her hand in both of his, "reflect on the little time I have before me, and the great bitterness into which I am cast by the sight of your distress. Spare me, in my last moments, the spectacle of what I cannot cure even with the sacrifice of my life."

"I am very selfish," answered Blanche. "I will be braver, Monsieur de Beaulieu, for your sake. But think if I can do you no kindness in the future - if you have no friends to whom I could carry your adieux. Charge me as heavily as you can; every burden will lighten, by so little, the invaluable gratitude I owe you. Put it in my power to do something more for you than weep."

"My mother is married again, and has a young family to care for. My brother Guichard will inherit my fiefs; and if I am not in error, that will content him amply for my death. Life is a little vapour that passeth away, as we are told by those in holy orders. When a man is in a fair way and sees all life open in front of him, he seems to himself to make a very important figure in the world. His horse whinnies to him; the trumpets blow and the girls look out of window as he rides into town before his company; he receives many assurances of trust and regard - sometimes by express in a letter - sometimes face to face, with persons of great consequence falling on his neck. It is not wonderful if his head is turned for a time. But once he is dead, were he as brave as Hercules or as wise as Solomon, he is soon forgotten. It is not ten years since my father fell, with many other knights around him, in a very fierce encounter, and I do not think that any one of them, nor so much as the name of the fight, is now remembered. No, no, madam, the nearer you come to it, you see that death is a dark and dusty corner, where a man gets into his tomb and has the door shut after him till the judgment day. I have few friends just now, and once I am dead I shall have none."

"Ah, Monsieur de Beaulieu!" she exclaimed, "you forget Blanche de Maletroit."

"You have a sweet nature, madam, and you are pleased to estimate a little service far beyond its worth."

"It is not that," she answered. "You mistake me if you think I am so easily touched by my own concerns. I say so, because you are the noblest man I have ever met; because I recognise in you a spirit that would have made even a common person famous in the land."

"And yet here I die in a mouse-trap - with no more noise about it than my own squeaking," answered he.

A look of pain crossed her face, and she was silent for a little while. Then a fight came into her eyes, and with a smile she spoke again.

"I cannot have my champion think meanly of himself. Any one who gives his life for another will be met in Paradise by all the heralds and angels of the Lord God. And you have no such cause to hang your head. For . . . Pray, do you think me beautiful?" she asked, with a deep flush.

"Indeed, madam, I do," he said.

"I am glad of that," she answered heartily. "Do you think there are many men in France who have been asked in marriage by a beautiful maiden - with her own lips - and who have refused her to her face? I know you men would half despise such a triumph; but believe me, we women know more of what is precious in love. There is nothing that should set a person higher in his own esteem; and we women would prize nothing more dearly."

"You are very good," he said; "but you cannot make me forget that I was asked in pity and not for love."

"I am not so sure of that," she replied, holding down her head. "Hear me to an end, Monsieur de Beaulieu. I know how you must despise me; I feel you are right to do so; I am too poor a creature to occupy one thought of your mind, although, alas! you must die for me this morning. But when I asked you to marry me, indeed, and indeed, it was because I respected and admired you, and loved you with my whole soul, from the very moment that you took my part against my uncle. If you had seen yourself, and how noble you looked, you would pity rather than despise me. And now," she went on, hurriedly checking him with her hand, "although I have laid aside all reserve and told you so much, remember that I know your sentiments towards me already. I would not, believe me, being nobly born, weary you with importunities into consent. I too have a pride of my own: and I declare before the holy mother of God, if you should now go back from your word already given, I would no more marry you than I would marry my uncle's groom."

Denis smiled a little bitterly.

"It is a small love," he said, "that shies at a little pride."

She made no answer, although she probably had her own thoughts.

"Come hither to the window," he said, with a sigh. "Here is the dawn."

And indeed the dawn was already beginning. The hollow of the sky was full of essential daylight, colourless and clean; and the valley underneath was flooded with a grey reflection. A few thin vapours clung in the coves of the forest or lay along the winding course of the river. The scene disengaged a surprising effect of stillness, which was hardly interrupted when the cocks began once more to crow among the steadings. Perhaps the same fellow who had made so horrid a clangour in the darkness not half-an-hour before, now sent up the merriest cheer to greet the coming day. A little wind went bustling and eddying among the tree-tops underneath the windows. And still the daylight kept flooding insensibly out of the east, which was soon to grow incandescent and cast up that red- hot cannon-ball, the rising sun.

Denis looked out over all this with a bit of a shiver. He had taken her hand, and retained it in his almost unconsciously.

"Has the day begun already?" she said; and then, illogically enough: "the night has been so long! Alas, what shall we say to my uncle when he returns?"

"What you will," said Denis, and he pressed her fingers in his.

She was silent.

"Blanche," he said, with a swift, uncertain, passionate utterance, "you have seen whether I fear death. You must know well enough that I would as gladly leap out of that window into the empty air as lay a finger on you without your free and full consent. But if you care for me at all do not let me lose my life in a misapprehension; for I love you better than the whole world; and though I will die for you blithely, it would be like all the joys of Paradise to live on and spend my life in your service."

As he stopped speaking, a bell began to ring loudly in the interior of the house; and a clatter of armour in the corridor showed that the retainers were returning to their post, and the two hours were at an end.

"After all that you have heard?" she whispered, leaning towards him with her lips and eyes.

"I have heard nothing," he replied.

"The captain's name was Florimond de Champdivers," she said in his ear.

"I did not hear it," he answered, taking her supple body in his arms and covering her wet face with kisses.

A melodious chirping was audible behind, followed by a beautiful chuckle, and the voice of Messire de Maletroit wished his new nephew a good morning.

PROVIDENCE AND THE GUITAR

CHAPTER I

Monsieur Leon Berthelini had a great care of his appearance, and sedulously suited his deportment to the costume of the hour. He affected something Spanish in his air, and something of the bandit, with a flavour of Rembrandt at home. In person he was decidedly small and inclined to be stout; his face was the picture of good humour; his dark eyes, which were very expressive, told of a kind heart, a brisk, merry nature, and the most indefatigable spirits. If he had worn the clothes of the period you would have set him down for a hitherto undiscovered hybrid between the barber, the innkeeper, and the affable dispensing chemist. But in the outrageous bravery of velvet jacket and flapped hat, with trousers that were more accurately described as fleshings, a white handkerchief cavalierly knotted at his neck, a shock of Olympian curls upon his brow, and his feet shod through all weathers in the slenderest of Moliere shoes - you had but to look at him and you knew you were in the presence of a Great Creature. When he wore an overcoat he scorned to pass the sleeves; a single button held it round his shoulders; it was tossed backwards after the manner of a cloak, and carried with the gait and presence of an Almaviva. I am of opinion that M. Berthelini was nearing forty. But he had a boy’s heart, gloried in his finery, and walked through life like a child in a perpetual dramatic performance. If he were not Almaviva after all, it was not for lack of making believe. And he enjoyed the artist’s compensation. If he were not really Almaviva, he was sometimes just as happy as though he were.

I have seen him, at moments when he has fancied himself alone with his Maker, adopt so gay and chivalrous a bearing, and represent his own part with so much warmth and conscience, that the illusion became catching, and I believed implicitly in the Great Creature’s pose.

But, alas! life cannot be entirely conducted on these principles; man cannot live by Almavivery alone; and the Great Creature, having failed upon several theatres, was obliged to step down every evening from his heights, and sing from half-a-dozen to a dozen comic songs, twang a guitar, keep a country audience in good humour, and preside finally over the mysteries of a tombola.

Madame Berthelini, who was art and part with him in these undignified labours, had perhaps a higher position in the scale of beings, and enjoyed a natural dignity of her own. But her heart was not any more rightly placed, for that would have been impossible; and she had acquired a little air of melancholy, attractive enough in its way, but not good to see like the wholesome, sky-scraping, boyish spirits of her lord.

He, indeed, swam like a kite on a fair wind, high above earthly troubles. Detonations of temper were not unfrequent in the zones he travelled; but sulky fogs and tearful depressions were there alike unknown. A well-delivered blow upon a table, or a noble attitude, imitated from Melingne or Frederic, relieved his irritation like a vengeance. Though the heaven had fallen, if he had played his part with propriety, Berthelini had been content! And the man's atmosphere, if not his example, reacted on his wife; for the couple doated on each other, and although you would have thought they walked in different worlds, yet continued to walk hand in hand.

It chanced one day that Monsieur and Madame Berthelini descended with two boxes and a guitar in a fat case at the station of the little town of Castel-le-Gachis, and the omnibus carried them with their effects to the Hotel of the Black Head. This was a dismal, conventual building in a narrow street, capable of standing siege when once the gates were shut, and smelling strangely in the interior of straw and chocolate and old feminine apparel. Berthelini paused upon the threshold with a painful premonition. In some former state, it seemed to him, he had visited a hostelry that smelt not otherwise, and been ill received.

The landlord, a tragic person in a large felt hat, rose from a business table under the key-rack, and came forward, removing his hat with both hands as he did so.

"Sir, I salute you. May I inquire what is your charge for artists?" inquired Berthelini, with a courtesy at once splendid and insinuating.

"For artists?" said the landlord. His countenance fell and the smile of welcome disappeared. "Oh, artists!" he added brutally; "four francs a day." And he turned his back upon these inconsiderable customers.

A commercial traveller is received, he also, upon a reduction - yet is he welcome, yet can he command the fatted calf; but an artist, had he the manners of an Almaviva, were he dressed like Solomon in all his glory, is received like a dog and served like a timid lady travelling alone.

Accustomed as he was to the rubs of his profession, Berthelini was unpleasantly affected by the landlord's manner.

"Elvira," said he to his wife, "mark my words: Castel-le-Gachis is a tragic folly."

"Wait till we see what we take," replied Elvira.

"We shall take nothing," returned Berthelini; "we shall feed upon insults. I have an eye, Elvira: I have a spirit of divination; and this place is accursed. The landlord has been discourteous, the Commissary will be brutal, the audience will be sordid and uproarious, and you will take a cold upon your throat. We have been besotted enough to come; the die is cast - it will be a second Sedan."

Sedan was a town hateful to the Berthelinis, not only from patriotism (for they were French, and answered after the flesh to the somewhat homely name of Duval), but because it had been the scene of their most sad reverses. In that place they had lain three weeks in pawn for their hotel bill, and had it not been for a surprising stroke of fortune they might have been lying there in pawn until this day. To mention the name of Sedan was for the Berthelinis to dip the brush in earthquake and eclipse. Count Almaviva slouched his hat with a gesture expressive of despair, and even Elvira felt as if ill-fortune had been personally invoked.

"Let us ask for breakfast," said she, with a woman's tact.

The Commissary of Police of Castel-le-Gachis was a large red Commissary, pimpled, and subject to a strong cutaneous transpiration. I have repeated the name of his office because he was so very much more a Commissary than a man. The spirit of his dignity had entered into him. He carried his corporation as if it were something official. Whenever he insulted a common citizen it seemed to him as if he were adroitly flattering the Government by a side wind; in default of dignity he was brutal from an overweening sense of duty. His office was a den, whence passers-by could hear rude accents laying down, not the law, but the good pleasure of the Commissary.

Six several times in the course of the day did M. Berthelini hurry thither in quest of the requisite permission for his evening's entertainment; six several times he found the official was abroad. Leon Berthelini began to grow quite a familiar figure in the streets of Castel-le-Gachis; he became a local celebrity, and was pointed out as "the man who was looking for the Commissary." Idle children attached themselves to his footsteps, and trotted after him back and forward between the hotel and the office. Leon might try as he liked; he might roll cigarettes, he might straddle, he might cock his hat at a dozen different jaunty inclinations - the part of Almaviva was, under the circumstances, difficult to play.

As he passed the market-place upon the seventh excursion the Commissary was pointed out to him, where he stood, with his waistcoat unbuttoned and his hands behind his back, to superintend the sale and measurement of butter. Berthelini threaded his way through the market stalls and baskets, and accosted the dignitary with a bow which was a triumph of the histrionic art.

"I have the honour," he asked, "of meeting M. le Commissaire?"

The Commissary was affected by the nobility of his address. He excelled Leon in the depth if not in the airy grace of his salutation.

"The honour," said he, "is mine!"

"I am," continued the strolling-player, "I am, sir, an artist, and I have permitted myself to interrupt you on an affair of business. To-night I give a trifling musical entertainment at the Cafe of the Triumphs of the Plough - permit me to offer you this little programme - and I have come to ask you for the necessary authorisation."

At the word "artist," the Commissary had replaced his hat with the air of a person who, having condescended too far, should suddenly remember the duties of his rank.

"Go, go," said he, "I am busy - I am measuring butter."

"Heathen Jew!" thought Leon. "Permit me, sir," he resumed aloud.

"I have gone six times already - "

"Put up your bills if you choose," interrupted the Commissary. "In an hour or so I will examine your papers at the office. But now go; I am busy."

"Measuring butter!" thought Berthelini. "Oh, France, and it is for this that we made '93!"

The preparations were soon made; the bills posted, programmes laid on the dinner-table of every hotel in the town, and a stage erected at one end of the Cafe of the Triumphs of the Plough; but when Leon returned to the office, the Commissary was once more abroad.

"He is like Madame Benoiton," thought Leon, "Fichu Commissaire!"

And just then he met the man face to face.

"Here, sir," said he, "are my papers. Will you be pleased to verify?"

But the Commissary was now intent upon dinner.

"No use," he replied, "no use; I am busy; I am quite satisfied.

Give your entertainment."

And he hurried on.

"Fichu Commissaire!" thought Leon.

CHAPTER II

The audience was pretty large; and the proprietor of the cafe made a good thing of it in beer. But the Berthelinis exerted themselves in vain.

Leon was radiant in velveteen; he had a rakish way of smoking a cigarette between his songs that was worth money in itself; he underlined his comic points, so that the dullest numskull in Castel-le-Gachis had a notion when to laugh; and he handled his guitar in a manner worthy of himself. Indeed his play with that instrument was as good as a whole romantic drama; it was so dashing, so florid, and so cavalier.

Elvira, on the other hand, sang her patriotic and romantic songs with more than usual expression; her voice had charm and plangency; and as Leon looked at her, in her low-bodied maroon dress, with her arms bare to the shoulder, and a red flower set provocatively in her corset, he repeated to himself for the many hundredth time that she was one of the loveliest creatures in the world of women.

Alas! when she went round with the tambourine, the golden youth of Castel-le-Gachis turned from her coldly. Here and there a single halfpenny was forthcoming; the net result of a collection never exceeded half a franc; and the Maire himself, after seven different applications, had contributed exactly twopence. A certain chill began to settle upon the artists themselves; it seemed as if they were singing to slugs; Apollo himself might have lost heart with such an audience. The Berthelinis struggled against the impression; they put their back into their work, they sang loud and louder, the guitar twanged like a living thing; and at last Leon arose in his might, and burst with inimitable conviction into his great song, “Y a des honnetes gens partout!” Never had he given more proof of his artistic mastery; it was his intimate, indefeasible conviction that Castel-le-Gachis formed an exception to the law he was now lyrically proclaiming, and was peopled exclusively by thieves and bullies; and yet, as I say, he flung it down like a challenge, he trolled it forth like an article of faith; and his face so beamed the while that you would have thought he must make converts of the benches.

He was at the top of his register, with his head thrown back and his mouth open, when the door was thrown violently open, and a pair of new comers marched noisily into the cafe. It was the Commissary, followed by the Garde Champetre.

The undaunted Berthelini still continued to proclaim, “Y a des honnetes gens partout!” But now the sentiment produced an audible titter among the audience. Berthelini wondered why; he did not know the antecedents of the Garde Champetre; he had never heard of a little story about postage stamps. But the public knew all about the postage stamps and enjoyed the coincidence hugely.

The Commissary planted himself upon a vacant chair with somewhat the air of Cromwell visiting the Rump, and spoke in occasional whispers to the Garde Champetre, who remained respectfully standing at his back. The eyes of both were directed upon Berthelini, who persisted in his statement.

“Y a des honnetes gens partout,” he was just chanting for the twentieth time; when up got the Commissary upon his feet and waved brutally to the singer with his cane.

“Is it me you want?” inquired Leon, stopping in his song.

“It is you,” replied the potentate.

“Fichu Commissaire!” thought Leon, and he descended from the stage and made his way to the functionary.

“How does it happen, sir,” said the Commissary, swelling in person, “that I find you mountebanking in a public cafe without my permission?"

"Without?" cried the indignant Leon. "Permit me to remind you - "

"Come, come, sir!" said the Commissary, "I desire no explanations."

"I care nothing about what you desire," returned the singer. "I choose to give them, and I will not be gagged. I am an artist, sir, a distinction that you cannot comprehend. I received your permission and stand here upon the strength of it; interfere with me who dare."

"You have not got my signature, I tell you," cried the Commissary. "Show me my signature! Where is my signature?"

That was just the question; where was his signature? Leon recognised that he was in a hole; but his spirit rose with the occasion, and he blustered nobly, tossing back his curls. The Commissary played up to him in the character of tyrant; and as the one leaned farther forward, the other leaned farther back - majesty confronting fury. The audience had transferred their attention to this new performance, and listened with that silent gravity common to all Frenchmen in the neighbourhood of the Police. Elvira had sat down, she was used to these distractions, and it was rather melancholy than fear that now oppressed her.

"Another word," cried the Commissary, "and I arrest you."

"Arrest me?" shouted Leon. "I defy you!"

"I am the Commissary of Police,' said the official.

Leon commanded his feelings, and replied, with great delicacy of innuendo -

"So it would appear."

The point was too refined for Castel-le-Gachis; it did not raise a smile; and as for the Commissary, he simply bade the singer follow him to his office, and directed his proud footsteps towards the door. There was nothing for it but to obey. Leon did so with a proper pantomime of indifference, but it was a leek to eat, and there was no denying it.

The Maire had slipped out and was already waiting at the Commissary's door. Now the Maire, in France, is the refuge of the oppressed. He stands between his people and the boisterous rigours of the Police. He can sometimes understand what is said to him; he is not always puffed up beyond measure by his dignity. 'Tis a thing worth the knowledge of travellers. When all seems over, and a man has made up his mind to injustice, he has still, like the heroes of romance, a little bugle at his belt whereon to blow; and the Maire, a comfortable DEUS EX MACHINA, may still descend to deliver him from the minions of the law. The Maire of Castel-le- Gachis, although inaccessible to the charms of music as retailed by the Berthelinis, had no hesitation whatever as to the rights of the matter. He instantly fell foul of the Commissary in very high terms, and the Commissary, pricked by this humiliation, accepted battle on the point of fact. The argument lasted some little while with varying success, until at length victory inclined so plainly to the Commissary's side that the Maire was fain to reassert himself by an exercise of authority. He had been out-argued, but he was still the Maire. And so, turning from his interlocutor, he briefly but kindly recommended Leon to get back instanter to his concert.

"It is already growing late," he added.

Leon did not wait to be told twice. He returned to the Cafe of the Triumphs of the Plough with all expedition. Alas! the audience had melted away during his absence; Elvira was sitting in a very disconsolate attitude on the guitar-box; she had watched the company dispersing by twos and threes, and the prolonged spectacle had somewhat overwhelmed her spirits. Each man, she reflected, retired with a certain proportion of her earnings in his pocket, and she saw to-night's board and to-morrow's railway expenses, and finally even to-morrow's dinner, walk one after another out of the cafe door and disappear into the night.

"What was it?" she asked languidly. But Leon did not answer. He was looking round him on the scene of defeat. Scarce a score of listeners remained, and these of the least promising sort. The minute hand of the clock was already climbing upward towards eleven.

"It's a lost battle," said he, and then taking up the money-box he turned it out. "Three francs seventy-five!" he cried, "as against four of board and six of railway fares; and no time for the tombola! Elvira, this is Waterloo." And he sat down and passed both hands desperately among his curls. "O Fichu Commissaire!" he cried, "Fichu Commissaire!"

"Let us get the things together and be off," returned Elvira. "We might try another song, but there is not six halfpence in the room."

"Six halfpence?" cried Leon, "six hundred thousand devils! There is not a human creature in the town - nothing but pigs and dogs and commissaires! Pray heaven, we get safe to bed."

"Don't imagine things!" exclaimed Elvira, with a shudder.

And with that they set to work on their preparations. The tobacco-jar, the cigarette-holder, the three papers of shirt-studs, which were to have been the prices of the tombola had the tombola come off, were made into a bundle with the music; the guitar was stowed into the fat guitar-case; and Elvira having thrown a thin shawl about her neck and shoulders, the pair issued from the cafe and set off for the Black Head.

As they crossed the market-place the church bell rang out eleven.

It was a dark, mild night, and there was no one in the streets.

"It is all very fine," said Leon; "but I have a presentiment. The night is not yet done."

CHAPTER III

The “Black Head” presented not a single chink of light upon the street, and the carriage gate was closed.

“This is unprecedented,” observed Leon. “An inn closed by five minutes after eleven! And there were several commercial travellers in the cafe up to a late hour. Elvira, my heart misgives me. Let us ring the bell.”

The bell had a potent note; and being swung under the arch it filled the house from top to bottom with surly, clanging reverberations. The sound accentuated the conventual appearance of the building; a wintry sentiment, a thought of prayer and mortification, took hold upon Elvira’s mind; and, as for Leon, he seemed to be reading the stage directions for a lugubrious fifth act.

“This is your fault,” said Elvira: “this is what comes of fancying things!”

Again Leon pulled the bell-rope; again the solemn tocsin awoke the echoes of the inn; and ere they had died away, a light glimmered in the carriage entrance, and a powerful voice was heard upraised and tremulous with wrath.

“What’s all this?” cried the tragic host through the spars of the gate. “Hard upon twelve, and you come clamouring like Prussians at the door of a respectable hotel? Oh!” he cried, “I know you now! Common singers! People in trouble with the police! And you present yourselves at midnight like lords and ladies? Be off with you!”

“You will permit me to remind you,” replied Leon, in thrilling tones, “that I am a guest in your house, that I am properly inscribed, and that I have deposited baggage to the value of four hundred francs.”

“You cannot get in at this hour,” returned the man. “This is no thieves’ tavern, for mohocks and night rakes and organ-grinders.”

“Brute!” cried Elvira, for the organ-grinders touched her home.

“Then I demand my baggage,” said Leon, with unabated dignity.

“I know nothing of your baggage,” replied the landlord.

“You detain my baggage? You dare to detain my baggage?” cried the singer.

“Who are you?” returned the landlord. “It is dark - I cannot recognise you.”

“Very well, then - you detain my baggage,” concluded Leon. “You shall smart for this. I will weary out your life with persecutions; I will drag you from court to court; if there is justice to be had in France, it shall be rendered between you and me. And I will make you a by-word - I will put you in a song - a scurrilous song - an indecent song - a popular song - which the boys shall sing to you in the street, and come and howl through these spars at mid-night!”

He had gone on raising his voice at every phrase, for all the while the landlord was very placidly retiring; and now, when the last glimmer of light had vanished from the arch, and the last footstep died away in the interior, Leon turned to his wife with a heroic countenance.

"Elvira," said he, "I have now a duty in life. I shall destroy that man as Eugene Sue destroyed the concierge. Let us come at once to the Gendarmerie and begin our vengeance."

He picked up the guitar-case, which had been propped against the wall, and they set forth through the silent and ill-lighted town with burning hearts.

The Gendarmerie was concealed beside the telegraph office at the bottom of a vast court, which was partly laid out in gardens; and here all the shepherds of the public lay locked in grateful sleep. It took a deal of knocking to waken one; and he, when he came at last to the door, could find no other remark but that "it was none of his business." Leon reasoned with him, threatened him, besought him; "here," he said, "was Madame Berthelini in evening dress - a delicate woman - in an interesting condition" - the last was thrown in, I fancy, for effect; and to all this the man-at-arms made the same answer:

"It is none of my business," said he.

"Very well," said Leon, "then we shall go to the Commissary." Thither they went; the office was closed and dark; but the house was close by, and Leon was soon swinging the bell like a madman. The Commissary's wife appeared at a window. She was a thread-paper creature, and informed them that the Commissary had not yet come home.

"Is he at the Maire's?" demanded Leon.

She thought that was not unlikely.

"Where is the Maire's house?" he asked.

And she gave him some rather vague information on that point.

"Stay you here, Elvira," said Leon, "lest I should miss him by the way. If, when I return, I find you here no longer, I shall follow at once to the Black Head."

And he set out to find the Maire's. It took him some ten minutes wandering among blind lanes, and when he arrived it was already half-an-hour past midnight. A long white garden wall overhung by some thick chestnuts, a door with a letter-box, and an iron bell- pull, that was all that could be seen of the Maire's domicile. Leon took the bell-pull in both hands, and danced furiously upon the side-walk. The bell itself was just upon the other side of the wall, it responded to his activity, and scattered an alarming clangour far and wide into the night.

A window was thrown open in a house across the street, and a voice inquired the cause of this untimely uproar.

“I wish the Maire,” said Leon.

“He has been in bed this hour,” returned the voice.

“He must get up again,” retorted Leon, and he was for tackling the bell-pull once more.

“You will never make him hear,” responded the voice. “The garden is of great extent, the house is at the farther end, and both the Maire and his housekeeper are deaf.”

“Aha!” said Leon, pausing. “The Maire is deaf, is he? That explains.” And he thought of the evening’s concert with a momentary feeling of relief. “Ah!” he continued, “and so the Maire is deaf, and the garden vast, and the house at the far end?”

“And you might ring all night,” added the voice, “and be none the better for it. You would only keep me awake.”

“Thank you, neighbour,” replied the singer. “You shall sleep.”

And he made off again at his best pace for the Commissary’s.

Elvira was still walking to and fro before the door.

“He has not come?” asked Leon.

“Not he,” she replied.

“Good,” returned Leon. “I am sure our man’s inside. Let me see the guitar-case. I shall lay this siege in form, Elvira; I am angry; I am indignant; I am truculently inclined; but I thank my Maker I have still a sense of fun. The unjust judge shall be importuned in a serenade, Elvira. Set him up - and set him up.”

He had the case opened by this time, struck a few chords, and fell into an attitude which was irresistibly Spanish.

“Now,” he continued, “feel your voice. Are you ready? Follow me!”

The guitar twanged, and the two voices upraised, in harmony and with a startling loudness, the chorus of a song of old Beranger’s:-

“Commissaire! Commissaire!
Colin bat sa menagere.”

The stones of Castel-le-Gachis thrilled at this audacious innovation. Hitherto had the night been sacred to repose and nightcaps; and now what was this? Window after window was opened; matches scratched, and candles began to flicker; swollen sleepy faces peered forth into the starlight. There were the two figures before the Commissary’s house, each bolt upright, with head thrown back and eyes interrogating the starry heavens; the guitar wailed, shouted, and reverberated like half an orchestra; and the voices, with a crisp and spirited delivery, hurled the appropriate burden at the Commissary’s window. All the echoes repeated the functionary’s name. It was more like an entr’acte in a farce of Moliere’s than a passage of real life in Castel-le-Gachis.

The Commissary, if he was not the first, was not the last of the neighbours to yield to the influence of music, and furiously throw open the window of his bedroom. He was beside himself with rage. He leaned far over the window-sill, raying and gesticulating; the tassel of his white night-cap danced like a thing of life: he opened his mouth to dimensions hitherto unprecedented, and yet his voice, instead of escaping from it in a roar, came forth shrill and choked and tottering. A little more serenading, and it was clear he would be better acquainted with the apoplexy.

I scorn to reproduce his language; he touched upon too many serious topics by the way for a quiet story-teller. Although he was known for a man who was prompt with his tongue, and had a power of strong expression at command, he excelled himself so remarkably this night that one maiden lady, who had got out of bed like the rest to hear the serenade, was obliged to shut her window at the second clause. Even what she had heard disquieted her conscience; and next day she said she scarcely reckoned as a maiden lady any longer.

Leon tried to explain his predicament, but he received nothing but threats of arrest by way of answer.

"If I come down to you!" cried the Commissary.

"Aye," said Leon, "do!"

"I will not!" cried the Commissary.

"You dare not!" answered Leon.

At that the Commissary closed his window.

"All is over," said the singer. "The serenade was perhaps ill- judged. These boors have no sense of humour."

"Let us get away from here," said Elvira, with a shiver. "All these people looking - it is so rude and so brutal." And then giving way once more to passion - "Brutes!" she cried aloud to the candle-lit spectators - "brutes! brutes! brutes!"

"Sauve qui peut," said Leon. "You have done it now!"

And taking the guitar in one hand and the case in the other, he led the way with something too precipitate to be merely called precipitation from the scene of this absurd adventure.

CHAPTER IV

To the west of Castel-le-Gachis four rows of venerable lime-trees formed, in this starry night, a twilit avenue with two side aisles of pitch darkness. Here and there stone benches were disposed between the trunks. There was not a breath of wind; a heavy atmosphere of perfume hung about the alleys; and every leaf stood stock-still upon its twig. Hither, after vainly knocking at an inn or two, the Berthelinis came at length to pass the night. After an amiable contention, Leon insisted on giving his coat to Elvira, and they sat down together on the first bench in silence. Leon made a cigarette, which he smoked to an end, looking up into the trees, and, beyond them, at the constellations, of which he tried vainly to recall the names. The silence was broken by the church bell; it rang the four quarters on a light and tinkling measure; then followed a single deep stroke that died slowly away with a thrill; and stillness resumed its empire.

"One," said Leon. "Four hours till daylight. It is warm; it is starry; I have matches and tobacco. Do not let us exaggerate, Elvira - the experience is positively charming. I feel a glow within me; I am born again. This is the poetry of life. Think of Cooper's novels, my dear."

"Leon," she said fiercely, "how can you talk such wicked, infamous nonsense? To pass all night out-of-doors - it is like a nightmare! We shall die."

"You suffer yourself to be led away," he replied soothingly. "It is not unpleasant here; only you brood. Come, now, let us repeat a scene. Shall we try Alceste and Celimene? No? Or a passage from the 'Two Orphans'? Come, now, it will occupy your mind; I will play up to you as I never have played before; I feel art moving in my bones."

"Hold your tongue," she cried, "or you will drive me mad! Will nothing solemnise you - not even this hideous situation?"

"Oh, hideous!" objected Leon. "Hideous is not the word. Why, where would you be? 'Dites, la jeune belle, ou voulez-vous aller?'" he carolled. "Well, now," he went on, opening the guitar- case, "there's another idea for you - sing. Sing 'Dites, la jeune belle!' It will compose your spirits, Elvira, I am sure."

And without waiting an answer he began to strum the symphony. The first chords awoke a young man who was lying asleep upon a neighbouring bench.

"Hullo!" cried the young man, "who are you?"

"Under which king, Bezonian?" declaimed the artist. "Speak or die!"

Or if it was not exactly that, it was something to much the same purpose from a French tragedy.

The young man drew near in the twilight. He was a tall, powerful, gentlemanly fellow, with a somewhat puffy face, dressed in a grey tweed suit, with a deer-stalker hat of the same material; and as he now came forward he carried a knapsack slung upon one arm.

"Are you camping out here too?" he asked, with a strong English accent. "I'm not sorry for company."

Leon explained their misadventure; and the other told them that he was a Cambridge undergraduate on a walking tour, that he had run short of money, could no longer pay for his night's lodging, had already been camping out for two nights, and feared he should require to continue the same manoeuvre for at least two nights more.

"Luckily, it's jolly weather," he concluded.

"You hear that, Elvira," said Leon. "Madame Berthelini," he went on, "is ridiculously affected by this trifling occurrence. For my part, I find it romantic and far from uncomfortable; or at least," he added, shifting on the stone bench, "not quite so uncomfortable as might have been expected. But pray be seated."

"Yes," returned the undergraduate, sitting down, "it's rather nice than otherwise when once you're used to it; only it's devilish difficult to get washed. I like the fresh air and these stars and things."

"Aha!" said Leon, "Monsieur is an artist."

"An artist?" returned the other, with a blank stare. "Not if I know it!"

"Pardon me," said the actor. "What you said this moment about the orbs of heaven - "

"Oh, nonsense!" cried the Englishman. "A fellow may admire the stars and be anything he likes."

"You have an artist's nature, however, Mr.- I beg your pardon; may I, without indiscretion, inquire your name?" asked Leon.

"My name is Stubbs," replied the Englishman.

"I thank you," returned Leon. "Mine is Berthelini - Leon Berthelini, ex-artist of the theatres of Montrouge, Belleville, and Montmartre. Humble as you see me, I have created with applause more than one important ROLE. The Press were unanimous in praise of my Howling Devil of the Mountains, in the piece of the same name. Madame, whom I now present to you, is herself an artist, and I must not omit to state, a better artist than her husband. She also is a creator; she created nearly twenty successful songs at one of the principal Parisian music-halls. But, to continue, I was saying you had an artist's nature, Monsieur Stubbs, and you must permit me to be a judge in such a question. I trust you will not falsify your instincts; let me beseech you to follow the career of an artist."

"Thank you," returned Stubbs, with a chuckle. "I'm going to be a banker."

"No," said Leon, "do not say so. Not that. A man with such a nature as yours should not derogate so far. What are a few privations here and there, so long as you are working for a high and noble goal?"

"This fellow's mad," thought Stubbs; "but the woman's rather pretty, and he's not bad fun himself, if you come to that." What he said was different. "I thought you said you were an actor?"

"I certainly did so," replied Leon. "I am one, or, alas! I was."

"And so you want me to be an actor, do you?" continued the undergraduate. "Why, man, I could never so much as learn the stuff; my memory's like a sieve; and as for acting, I've no more idea than a cat."

"The stage is not the only course," said Leon. "Be a sculptor, be a dancer, be a poet or a novelist; follow your heart, in short, and do some thorough work before you die."

"And do you call all these things ART?" inquired Stubbs.

"Why, certainly!" returned Leon. "Are they not all branches?"

“Oh! I didn’t know,” replied the Englishman. “I thought an artist meant a fellow who painted.”

The singer stared at him in some surprise.

“It is the difference of language,” he said at last. “This Tower of Babel, when shall we have paid for it? If I could speak English you would follow me more readily.”

“Between you and me, I don’t believe I should,” replied the other. “You seem to have thought a devil of a lot about this business. For my part, I admire the stars, and like to have them shining - it’s so cheery - but hang me if I had an idea it had anything to do with art! It’s not in my line, you see. I’m not intellectual; I have no end of trouble to scrape through my exams., I can tell you! But I’m not a bad sort at bottom,” he added, seeing his interlocutor looked distressed even in the dim starshine, “and I rather like the play, and music, and guitars, and things.”

Leon had a perception that the understanding was incomplete. He changed the subject.

“And so you travel on foot?” he continued. “How romantic! How courageous! And how are you pleased with my land? How does the scenery affect you among these wild hills of ours?”

“Well, the fact is,” began Stubbs - he was about to say that he didn’t care for scenery, which was not at all true, being, on the contrary, only an athletic undergraduate pretension; but he had begun to suspect that Berthelini liked a different sort of meat, and substituted something else - “The fact is, I think it jolly. They told me it was no good up here; even the guide-book said so; but I don’t know what they meant. I think it is deuced pretty - upon my word, I do.”

At this moment, in the most unexpected manner, Elvira burst into tears.

“My voice!” she cried. “Leon, if I stay here longer I shall lose my voice!”

“You shall not stay another moment,” cried the actor. “If I have to beat in a door, if I have to burn the town, I shall find you shelter.”

With that he replaced the guitar, and comforting her with some caresses, drew her arm through his.

“Monsieur Stubbs,” said he, taking of his hat, “the reception I offer you is rather problematical; but let me beseech you to give us the pleasure of your society. You are a little embarrassed for the moment; you must, indeed, permit me to advance what may be necessary. I ask it as a favour; we must not part so soon after having met so strangely.”

“Oh, come, you know,” said Stubbs, “I can’t let a fellow like you -

“ And there he paused, feeling somehow or other on a wrong tack.

“I do not wish to employ menaces,” continued Leon, with a smile; “but if you refuse, indeed I shall not take it kindly.”

"I don't quite see my way out of it," thought the undergraduate; and then, after a pause, he said, aloud and ungraciously enough, "All right. I - I'm very much obliged, of course." And he proceeded to follow them, thinking in his heart, "But it's bad form, all the same, to force an obligation on a fellow."

CHAPTER V

Leon strode ahead as if he knew exactly where he was going; the sobs of Madame were still faintly audible, and no one uttered a word. A dog barked furiously in a courtyard as they went by; then the church clock struck two, and many domestic clocks followed or preceded it in piping tones. And just then Berthelini spied a light. It burned in a small house on the outskirts of the town, and thither the party now directed their steps.

"It is always a chance," said Leon.

The house in question stood back from the street behind an open space, part garden, part turnip-field; and several outhouses stood forward from either wing at right angles to the front. One of these had recently undergone some change. An enormous window, looking towards the north, had been effected in the wall and roof, and Leon began to hope it was a studio.

"If it's only a painter," he said with a chuckle, "ten to one we get as good a welcome as we want."

"I thought painters were principally poor," said Stubbs.

"Ah!" cried Leon, "you do not know the world as I do. The poorer the better for us!"

And the trio advanced into the turnip-field.

The light was in the ground floor; as one window was brightly illuminated and two others more faintly, it might be supposed that there was a single lamp in one corner of a large apartment; and a certain tremulousness and temporary dwindling showed that a live fire contributed to the effect. The sound of a voice now became audible; and the trespassers paused to listen. It was pitched in a high, angry key, but had still a good, full, and masculine note in it. The utterance was voluble, too voluble even to be quite distinct; a stream of words, rising and falling, with ever and again a phrase thrown out by itself, as if the speaker reckoned on its virtue.

Suddenly another voice joined in. This time it was a woman's; and if the man were angry, the woman was incensed to the degree of fury. There was that absolutely blank composure known to suffering males; that colourless unnatural speech which shows a spirit accurately balanced between homicide and hysterics; the tone in which the best of women sometimes utter words worse than death to those most dear to them. If Abstract Bones-and-Sepulchre were to be endowed with the gift of speech, thus, and not otherwise, would it discourse. Leon was a brave man, and I fear he was somewhat sceptically given (he had been educated in a Papistical country), but the habit of childhood prevailed, and he crossed himself devoutly. He had met several women in his career. It was obvious that his instinct had not deceived him, for the male voice broke forth instantly in a towering passion.

The undergraduate, who had not understood the significance of the woman's contribution, pricked up his ears at the change upon the man.

"There's going to be a free fight," he opined.

There was another retort from the woman, still calm but a little higher.

"Hysterics?" asked Leon of his wife. "Is that the stage direction?"

"How should I know?" returned Elvira, somewhat tartly.

"Oh, woman, woman!" said Leon, beginning to open the guitar-case. "It is one of the burdens of my life, Monsieur Stubbs; they support each other; they always pretend there is no system; they say it's nature. Even Madame Berthelini, who is a dramatic artist!"

"You are heartless, Leon," said Elvira; "that woman is in trouble."

"And the man, my angel?" inquired Berthelini, passing the ribbon of his guitar. "And the man, M'AMOUR?"

"He is a man," she answered.

"You hear that?" said Leon to Stubbs. "It is not too late for you. Mark the intonation. And now," he continued, "what are we to give them?"

"Are you going to sing?" asked Stubbs.

"I am a troubadour," replied Leon. "I claim a welcome by and for my art. If I were a banker could I do as much?"

"Well, you wouldn't need, you know," answered the undergraduate.

"Egad," said Leon, "but that's true. Elvira, that is true."

"Of course it is," she replied. "Did you not know it?"

"My dear," answered Leon impressively, "I know nothing but what is agreeable. Even my knowledge of life is a work of art superiorly composed. But what are we to give them? It should be something appropriate."

Visions of "Let dogs delight" passed through the undergraduate's mind; but it occurred to him that the poetry was English and that he did not know the air. Hence he contributed no suggestion.

"Something about our houselessness," said Elvira.

"I have it," cried Leon. And he broke forth into a song of Pierre
Dupont's:-

"Savez-vous ou gite,
Mai, ce joli mois?"

Elvira joined in; so did Stubbs, with a good ear and voice, but an imperfect acquaintance with the music. Leon and the guitar were equal to the situation. The actor dispensed his throat-notes with prodigality and enthusiasm; and, as he looked up to heaven in his heroic way, tossing the black ringlets, it seemed to him that the very stars contributed a dumb applause to his efforts, and the universe lent him its silence for a chorus. That is one of the best features of the heavenly bodies, that they belong to everybody in particular; and a man like Leon, a chronic Endymion who managed to get along without encouragement, is always the world's centre for himself.

He alone - and it is to be noted, he was the worst singer of the three - took the music seriously to heart, and judged the serenade from a high artistic point of view. Elvira, on the other hand, was preoccupied about their reception; and, as for Stubbs, he considered the whole affair in the light of a broad joke.

"Know you the lair of May, the lovely month?" went the three voices in the turnip-field.

The inhabitants were plainly fluttered; the light moved to and fro, strengthening in one window, paling in another; and then the door was thrown open, and a man in a blouse appeared on the threshold carrying a lamp. He was a powerful young fellow, with bewildered hair and beard, wearing his neck open; his blouse was stained with oil-colours in a harlequinesque disorder; and there was something rural in the droop and bagginess of his belted trousers.

From immediately behind him, and indeed over his shoulder, a woman's face looked out into the darkness; it was pale and a little weary, although still young; it wore a dwindling, disappearing prettiness, soon to be quite gone, and the expression was both gentle and sour, and reminded one faintly of the taste of certain drugs. For all that, it was not a face to dislike; when the prettiness had vanished, it seemed as if a certain pale beauty might step in to take its place; and as both the mildness and the asperity were characters of youth, it might be hoped that, with years, both would merge into a constant, brave, and not unkindly temper.

"What is all this?" cried the man.

CHAPTER VI

Leon had his hat in his hand at once. He came forward with his customary grace; it was a moment which would have earned him a round of cheering on the stage. Elvira and Stubbs advanced behind him, like a couple of Admetus's sheep following the god Apollo.

"Sir," said Leon, "the hour is unpardonably late, and our little serenade has the air of an impertinence. Believe me, sir, it is an appeal. Monsieur is an artist, I perceive. We are here three artists benighted and without shelter, one a woman - a delicate woman - in evening dress - in an interesting situation. This will not fail to touch the woman's heart of Madame, whom I perceive indistinctly behind Monsieur her husband, and whose face speaks eloquently of a well-regulated mind. Ah! Monsieur, Madame - one generous movement, and you make three people happy! Two or three hours beside your fire - I ask it of Monsieur in the name of Art - I ask it of Madame by the sanctity of womanhood."

The two, as by a tacit consent, drew back from the door.

"Come in," said the man.

"Entrez, Madame," said the woman.

The door opened directly upon the kitchen of the house, which was to all appearance the only sitting-room. The furniture was both plain and scanty; but there were one or two landscapes on the wall handsomely framed, as if they had already visited the committee-rooms of an exhibition and been thence extruded. Leon walked up to the pictures and represented the part of a connoisseur before each in turn, with his usual dramatic insight and force. The master of the house, as if irresistibly attracted, followed him from canvas to canvas with the lamp. Elvira was led directly to the fire, where she proceeded to warm herself, while Stubbs stood in the middle of the floor and followed the proceedings of Leon with mild astonishment in his eyes.

"You should see them by daylight," said the artist.

"I promise myself that pleasure," said Leon. "You possess, sir, if you will permit me an observation, the art of composition to a T."

"You are very good," returned the other. "But should you not draw nearer to the fire?"

"With all my heart," said Leon.

And the whole party was soon gathered at the table over a hasty and not an elegant cold supper, washed down with the least of small wines. Nobody liked the meal, but nobody complained; they put a good face upon it, one and all, and made a great clattering of knives and forks. To see Leon eating a single cold sausage was to see a triumph; by the time he had done he had got through as much pantomime as would have sufficed for a baron of beef, and he had the relaxed expression of the over-eaten.

As Elvira had naturally taken a place by the side of Leon, and Stubbs as naturally, although I believe unconsciously, by the side of Elvira, the host and hostess were left together. Yet it was to be noted that they never addressed a word to each other, nor so much as suffered their eyes to meet. The interrupted skirmish still survived in ill-feeling; and the instant the guests departed it would break forth again as bitterly as ever. The talk wandered from this to that subject - for with one accord the party had declared it was too late to go to bed; but those two never relaxed towards each other; Goneril and Regan in a sisterly tiff were not more bent on enmity.

It chanced that Elvira was so much tired by all the little excitements of the night, that for once she laid aside her company manners, which were both easy and correct, and in the most natural manner in the world leaned her head on Leon's shoulder. At the same time, fatigue suggesting tenderness, she locked the fingers of her right hand into those of her husband's left; and, half closing her eyes, dozed off into a golden borderland between sleep and waking. But all the time she was not aware of what was passing, and saw the painter's wife studying her with looks between contempt and envy.

It occurred to Leon that his constitution demanded the use of some tobacco; and he undid his fingers from Elvira's in order to roll a cigarette. It was gently done, and he took care that his indulgence should in no other way disturb his wife's position. But it seemed to catch the eye of the painter's wife with a special significancy. She looked straight before her for an instant, and then, with a swift and stealthy movement, took hold of her husband's hand below the table. Alas! she might have spared herself the dexterity. For the poor fellow was so overcome by this caress that he stopped with his mouth open in the middle of a word, and by the expression of his face plainly declared to all the company that his thoughts had been diverted into softer channels.

If it had not been rather amiable, it would have been absurdly droll. His wife at once withdrew her touch; but it was plain she had to exert some force. Thereupon the young man coloured and looked for a moment beautiful.

Leon and Elvira both observed the byplay, and a shock passed from one to the other; for they were inveterate match-makers, especially between those who were already married.

"I beg your pardon," said Leon suddenly. "I see no use in pretending. Before we came in here we heard sounds indicating - if I may so express myself - an imperfect harmony."

"Sir - " began the man.

But the woman was beforehand.

"It is quite true," she said. "I see no cause to be ashamed. If my husband is mad I shall at least do my utmost to prevent the consequences. Picture to yourself, Monsieur and Madame," she went on, for she passed Stubbs over, "that this wretched person - a dauber, an incompetent, not fit to be a sign-painter - receives this morning an admirable offer from an uncle - an uncle of my own, my mother's brother, and tenderly beloved - of a clerkship with nearly a hundred and fifty pounds a year, and that he - picture to yourself! - he refuses it! Why? For the sake of Art, he says. Look at his art, I say - look at it! Is it fit to be seen? Ask him - is it fit to be sold? And it is for this, Monsieur and Madame, that he condemns me to the most deplorable existence, without luxuries, without comforts, in a vile suburb of a country town. O non!" she cried, "non - je ne me tairai pas - c'est plus fort que moi! I take these gentlemen and this lady for judges - is this kind? is it decent? is it manly? Do I not deserve better at his hands after having married him and" - (a visible hitch) - "done everything in the world to please him."

I doubt if there were ever a more embarrassed company at a table; every one looked like a fool; and the husband like the biggest.

"The art of Monsieur, however," said Elvira, breaking the silence, "is not wanting in distinction."

"It has this distinction," said the wife, "that nobody will buy it."

"I should have supposed a clerkship - " began Stubbs.

"Art is Art," swept in Leon. "I salute Art. It is the beautiful, the divine; it is the spirit of the world, and the pride of life. But - " And the actor paused.

"A clerkship - " began Stubbs.

"I'll tell you what it is," said the painter. "I am an artist, and as this gentleman says, Art is this and the other; but of course, if my wife is going to make my life a piece of perdition all day long, I prefer to go and drown myself out of hand."

"Go!" said his wife. "I should like to see you!"

"I was going to say," resumed Stubbs, "that a fellow may be a clerk and paint almost as much as he likes. I know a fellow in a bank who makes capital water-colour sketches; he even sold one for seven-and-six."

To both the women this seemed a plank of safety; each hopefully interrogated the countenance of her lord; even Elvira, an artist herself! - but indeed there must be something permanently mercantile in the female nature. The two men exchanged a glance; it was tragic; not otherwise might two philosophers salute, as at the end of a laborious life each recognised that he was still a mystery to his disciples.

Leon arose.

"Art is Art," he repeated sadly. "It is not water-colour sketches, nor practising on a piano. It is a life to be lived."

"And in the meantime people starve!" observed the woman of the house. "If that's a life, it is not one for me."

"I'll tell you what," burst forth Leon; "you, Madame, go into another room and talk it over with my wife; and I'll stay here and talk it over with your husband. It may come to nothing, but let's try."

"I am very willing," replied the young woman; and she proceeded to light a candle. "This way if you please." And she led Elvira upstairs into a bedroom. "The fact is," said she, sitting down, "that my husband cannot paint."

"No more can mine act," replied Elvira.

"I should have thought he could," returned the other; "he seems clever."

"He is so, and the best of men besides," said Elvira; "but he cannot act."

"At least he is not a sheer humbug like mine; he can at least sing."

"You mistake Leon," returned his wife warmly. "He does not even pretend to sing; he has too fine a taste; he does so for a living. And, believe me, neither of the men are humbugs. They are people with a mission - which they cannot carry out."

"Humbug or not," replied the other, "you came very near passing the night in the fields; and, for my part, I live in terror of starvation. I should think it was a man's mission to think twice about his wife. But it appears not. Nothing is their mission but to play the fool. Oh!" she broke out, "is it not something dreary to think of that man of mine? If he could only do it, who would care? But no - not he - no more than I can!"

"Have you any children?" asked Elvira.

"No; but then I may."

"Children change so much," said Elvira, with a sigh.

And just then from the room below there flew up a sudden snapping chord on the guitar; one followed after another; then the voice of Leon joined in; and there was an air being played and sung that stopped the speech of the two women. The wife of the painter stood like a person transfixed; Elvira, looking into her eyes, could see all manner of beautiful memories and kind thoughts that were passing in and out of her soul with every note; it was a piece of her youth that went before her; a green French plain, the smell of apple-flowers, the far and shining ringlets of a river, and the words and presence of love.

"Leon has hit the nail," thought Elvira to herself. "I wonder how."

The how was plain enough. Leon had asked the painter if there were no air connected with courtship and pleasant times; and having learnt what he wished, and allowed an interval to pass, he had soared forth into

"O mon amante,
O mon desir,
Sachons cueillir
L'heure charmante!"

"Pardon me, Madame," said the painter's wife, "your husband sings admirably well."

"He sings that with some feeling," replied Elvira, critically, although she was a little moved herself, for the song cut both ways in the upper chamber; "but it is as an actor and not as a musician."

"Life is very sad," said the other; "it so wastes away under one's fingers."

"I have not found it so," replied Elvira. "I think the good parts of it last and grow greater every day."

"Frankly, how would you advise me?"

"Frankly, I would let my husband do what he wished. He is obviously a very loving painter; you have not yet tried him as a clerk. And you know - if it were only as the possible father of your children - it is as well to keep him at his best."

"He is an excellent fellow," said the wife.

They kept it up till sunrise with music and all manner of good fellowship; and at sunrise, while the sky was still temperate and clear, they separated on the threshold with a thousand excellent wishes for each other's welfare. Castel-le-Gachis was beginning to send up its smoke against the golden East; and the church bell was ringing six.

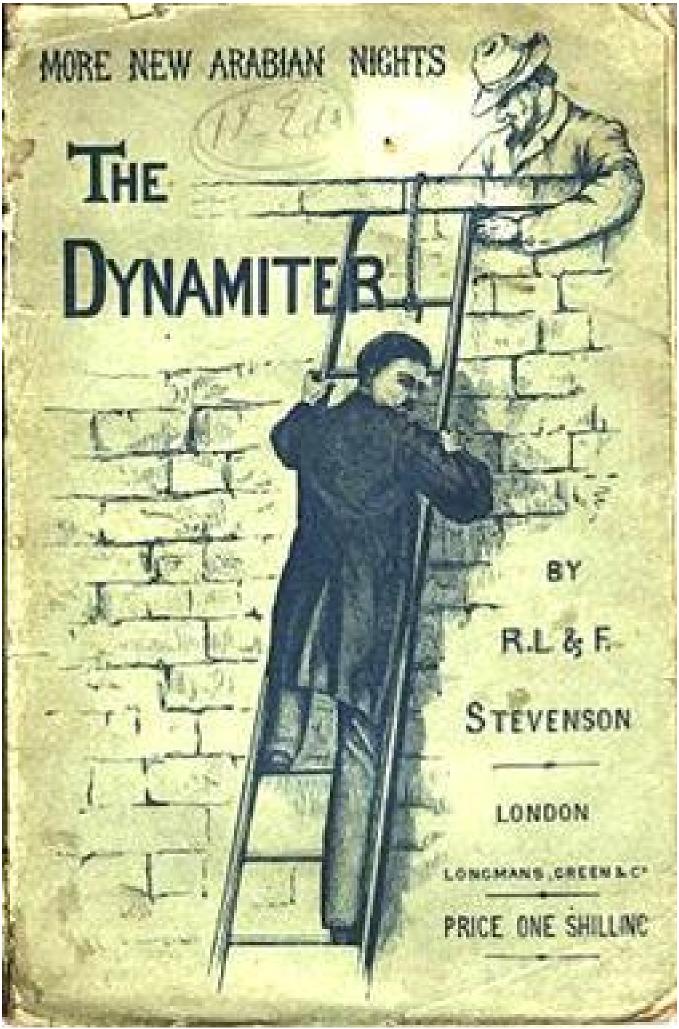
"My guitar is a familiar spirit," said Leon, as he and Elvira took the nearest way towards the inn, "it resuscitated a Commissary, created an English tourist, and reconciled a man and wife."

Stubbs, on his part, went off into the morning with reflections of his own.

"They are all mad," thought he, "all mad - but wonderfully decent."

MORE NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS - THE DYNAMITER

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON and FANNY VAN de GRIFT STEVENSON



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LONGMANS, GREEN & Co

PRICE ONE SHILLING

The first edition

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A NOTE FOR THE READER

It is within the bounds of possibility that you may take up this volume, and yet be unacquainted with its predecessor: the first series of New Arabian Nights. The loss is yours — and mine; or to be more exact, my publishers'. But if you are thus unlucky, the least I can do is to pass you a hint. When you shall find a reference in the following pages to one Theophilus Godall of the Bohemian Cigar Divan in Rupert Street, Soho, you must be prepared to recognise, under his features, no less a person than Prince Florizel of Bohemia, formerly one of the magnates of Europe, now dethroned, exiled, impoverished, and embarked in the tobacco trade.

R. L. S.

PROLOGUE OF THE CIGAR DIVAN

In the city of encounters, the Bagdad of the West, and, to be more precise, on the broad northern pavement of Leicester Square, two young men of five- or six-and-twenty met after years of separation. The first, who was of a very smooth address and clothed in the best fashion, hesitated to recognise the pinched and shabby air of his companion.

'What!' he cried, 'Paul Somerset!'

'I am indeed Paul Somerset,' returned the other, 'or what remains of him after a well-deserved experience of poverty and law. But in you, Challoner, I can perceive no change; and time may be said, without hyperbole, to write no wrinkle on your azure brow.'

'All,' replied Challoner, 'is not gold that glitters. But we are here in an ill posture for confidences, and interrupt the movement of these ladies. Let us, if you please, find a more private corner.'

'If you will allow me to guide you,' replied Somerset, 'I will offer you the best cigar in London.'

And taking the arm of his companion, he led him in silence and at a brisk pace to the door of a quiet establishment in Rupert Street, Soho. The entrance was adorned with one of those gigantic Highlanders of wood which have almost risen to the standing of antiquities; and across the window-glass, which sheltered the usual display of pipes, tobacco, and cigars, there ran the gilded legend: 'Bohemian Cigar Divan, by T. Godall.' The interior of the shop was small, but commodious and ornate; the salesman grave, smiling, and urbane; and the two young men, each puffing a select regalia, had soon taken their places on a sofa of mouse-coloured plush and proceeded to exchange their stories.

'I am now,' said Somerset, 'a barrister; but Providence and the attorneys have hitherto denied me the opportunity to shine. A select society at the Cheshire Cheese engaged my evenings; my afternoons, as Mr. Godall could testify, have been generally passed in this divan; and my mornings, I have taken the precaution to abbreviate by not rising before twelve. At this rate, my little patrimony was very rapidly, and I am proud to remember, most agreeably expended. Since then a gentleman, who has really nothing else to recommend him beyond the fact of being my maternal uncle, deals me the small sum of ten shillings a week; and if you behold me once more revisiting the glimpses of the street lamps in my favourite quarter, you will readily divine that I have come into a fortune.'

'I should not have supposed so,' replied Challoner. 'But doubtless I met you on the way to your tailors.'

‘It is a visit that I purpose to delay,’ returned Somerset, with a smile. ‘My fortune has definite limits. It consists, or rather this morning it consisted, of one hundred pounds.’

‘That is certainly odd,’ said Challoner; ‘yes, certainly the coincidence is strange. I am myself reduced to the same margin.’

‘You!’ cried Somerset. ‘And yet Solomon in all his glory — ’

‘Such is the fact. I am, dear boy, on my last legs,’ said Challoner. ‘Besides the clothes in which you see me, I have scarcely a decent trouser in my wardrobe; and if I knew how, I would this instant set about some sort of work or commerce. With a hundred pounds for capital, a man should push his way.’

‘It may be,’ returned Somerset; ‘but what to do with mine is more than I can fancy. Mr. Godall,’ he added, addressing the salesman, ‘you are a man who knows the world: what can a young fellow of reasonable education do with a hundred pounds?’

‘It depends,’ replied the salesman, withdrawing his cheroot. ‘The power of money is an article of faith in which I profess myself a sceptic. A hundred pounds will with difficulty support you for a year; with somewhat more difficulty you may spend it in a night; and without any difficulty at all you may lose it in five minutes on the Stock Exchange. If you are of that stamp of man that rises, a penny would be as useful; if you belong to those that fall, a penny would be no more useless. When I was myself thrown unexpectedly upon the world, it was my fortune to possess an art: I knew a good cigar. Do you know nothing, Mr. Somerset?’

‘Not even law,’ was the reply.

‘The answer is worthy of a sage,’ returned Mr. Godall. ‘And you, sir,’ he continued, turning to Challoner, ‘as the friend of Mr. Somerset, may I be allowed to address you the same question?’

‘Well,’ replied Challoner, ‘I play a fair hand at whist.’

‘How many persons are there in London,’ returned the salesman, ‘who have two-and-thirty teeth? Believe me, young gentleman, there are more still who play a fair hand at whist. Whist, sir, is wide as the world; ‘tis an accomplishment like breathing. I once knew a youth who announced that he was studying to be Chancellor of England; the design was certainly ambitious; but I find it less excessive than that of the man who aspires to make a livelihood by whist.’

‘Dear me,’ said Challoner, ‘I am afraid I shall have to fall to be a working man.’

‘Fall to be a working man?’ echoed Mr. Godall. ‘Suppose a rural dean to be unfrocked, does he fall to be a major? suppose a captain were cashiered, would he fall to be a puisne judge? The ignorance of your middle class surprises me. Outside itself, it thinks the world to lie quite ignorant and equal, sunk in a common degradation; but to the eye of the observer, all ranks are seen to stand in ordered hierarchies, and each adorned with its particular aptitudes and knowledge. By the defects of your education you are more disqualified to be a working man than to be the ruler of an empire. The gulf, sir, is below; and the true learned arts — those which alone are safe from the competition of insurgent laymen — are those which give his title to the artisan.'

'This is a very pompous fellow,' said Challoner, in the ear of his companion.

'He is immense,' said Somerset.

Just then the door of the divan was opened, and a third young fellow made his appearance, and rather bashfully requested some tobacco. He was younger than the others; and, in a somewhat meaningless and altogether English way, he was a handsome lad. When he had been served, and had lighted his pipe and taken his place upon the sofa, he recalled himself to Challoner by the name of Desborough.

'Desborough, to be sure,' cried Challoner. 'Well, Desborough, and what do you do?'

'The fact is,' said Desborough, 'that I am doing nothing.'

'A private fortune possibly?' inquired the other.

'Well, no,' replied Desborough, rather sulkily. 'The fact is that I am waiting for something to turn up.'

'All in the same boat!' cried Somerset. 'And have you, too, one hundred pounds?'

'Worse luck,' said Mr. Desborough.

'This is a very pathetic sight, Mr. Godall,' said Somerset: 'Three futiles.'

'A character of this crowded age,' returned the salesman.

'Sir,' said Somerset, 'I deny that the age is crowded; I will admit one fact, and one fact only: that I am futile, that he is futile, and that we are all three as futile as the devil. What am I? I have smattered law, smattered letters, smattered geography, smattered mathematics; I have even a working knowledge of judicial astrology; and here I stand, all London roaring by at the street's end, as impotent as any baby. I have a prodigious contempt for my maternal uncle; but without him, it is idle to deny it, I should simply resolve into my elements like an unstable mixture. I begin to perceive that it is necessary to know some one thing to the bottom — were it only literature. And yet, sir, the man of the world is a great feature of this age; he is possessed of an extraordinary mass and variety of knowledge; he is everywhere at home; he has seen life in all its phases; and it is impossible but that this great habit of existence should bear fruit. I count myself a man of the world, accomplished, *cap-à-pie*. So do you, Challoner. And you,

Mr. Desborough?'

'Oh yes,' returned the young man.

'Well then, Mr. Godall, here we stand, three men of the world, without a trade to cover us, but planted at the strategic centre of the universe (for so you will allow me to call Rupert Street), in the midst of the chief mass of people, and within ear-shot of the most continuous chink of money on the surface of the globe. Sir, as civilised men, what do we do? I will show you. You take in a paper?'

'I take,' said Mr. Godall solemnly, 'the best paper in the world, the *Standard*.'

'Good,' resumed Somerset. 'I now hold it in my hand, the voice of the world, a telephone repeating all men's wants. I open it, and where my eye first falls — well, no, not Morrison's Pills — but here, sure enough, and but a little above, I find the joint that I was seeking; here is the weak spot in the armour of society. Here is a want, a plaint, an offer of substantial gratitude: "*Two hundred Pounds Reward.* — The above reward will be paid to any person giving information as to the identity and whereabouts of a man observed yesterday in the neighbourhood of the GreenPark. He was over six feet in height, with shoulders disproportionately broad, close shaved, with black moustaches, and wearing a sealskin great-coat." There, gentlemen, our fortune, if not made, is founded.'

'Do you then propose, dear boy, that we should turn detectives?' inquired Challoner.

'Do I propose it? No, sir,' cried Somerset. 'It is reason, destiny, the plain face of the world, that commands and imposes it. Here all our merits tell; our manners, habit of the world, powers of conversation, vast stores of unconnected knowledge, all that we are and have builds up the character of the complete detective. It is, in short, the only profession for a gentleman.'

'The proposition is perhaps excessive,' replied Challoner; 'for hitherto I own I have regarded it as of all dirty, sneaking, and ungentlemanly trades, the least and lowest.'

'To defend society?' asked Somerset; 'to stake one's life for others? to deracinate occult and powerful evil? I appeal to Mr. Godall. He, at least, as a philosophic looker-on at life, will spit upon such philistine opinions. He knows that the policeman, as he is called upon continually to face greater odds, and that both worse equipped and for a better cause, is in form and essence a more noble hero than the soldier. Do you, by any chance, deceive yourself into supposing that a general would either ask or expect, from the best army ever marshalled, and on the most momentous battle-field, the conduct of a common constable at Peckham Rye?'

'I did not understand we were to join the force,' said Challoner.

‘Nor shall we. These are the hands; but here — here, sir, is the head,’ cried Somerset. ‘Enough; it is decreed. We shall hunt down this miscreant in the sealskin coat.’

‘Suppose that we agreed,’ retorted Challoner, ‘you have no plan, no knowledge; you know not where to seek for a beginning.’

‘Challoner!’ cried Somerset, ‘is it possible that you hold the doctrine of Free Will? And are you devoid of any tincture of philosophy, that you should harp on such exploded fallacies? Chance, the blind Madonna of the Pagan, rules this terrestrial bustle; and in Chance I place my sole reliance. Chance has brought us three together; when we next separate and go forth our several ways, Chance will continually drag before our careless eyes a thousand eloquent clues, not to this mystery only, but to the countless mysteries by which we live surrounded. Then comes the part of the man of the world, of the detective born and bred. This clue, which the whole town beholds without comprehension, swift as a cat, he leaps upon it, makes it his, follows it with craft and passion, and from one trifling circumstance divines a world.’

‘Just so,’ said Challoner; ‘and I am delighted that you should recognise these virtues in yourself. But in the meanwhile, dear boy, I own myself incapable of joining. I was neither born nor bred as a detective, but as a placable and very thirsty gentleman; and, for my part, I begin to weary for a drink. As for clues and adventures, the only adventure that is ever likely to occur to me will be an adventure with a bailiff.’

‘Now there is the fallacy,’ cried Somerset. ‘There I catch the secret of your futility in life. The world teems and bubbles with adventure; it besieges you along the street: hands waving out of windows, swindlers coming up and swearing they knew you when you were abroad, affable and doubtful people of all sorts and conditions begging and truckling for your notice. But not you: you turn away, you walk your seedy mill round, you must go the dullest way. Now here, I beg of you, the next adventure that offers itself, embrace it in with both your arms; whatever it looks, grimy or romantic, grasp it. I will do the like; the devil is in it, but at least we shall have fun; and each in turn we shall narrate the story of our fortunes to my philosophic friend of the divan, the great Godall, now hearing me with inward joy. Come, is it a bargain? Will you, indeed, both promise to welcome every chance that offers, to plunge boldly into every opening, and, keeping the eye wary and the head composed, to study and piece together all that happens? Come, promise: let me open to you the doors of the great profession of intrigue.’

‘It is not much in my way,’ said Challoner, ‘but, since you make a point of it, amen.’

‘I don’t mind promising,’ said Desborough, ‘but nothing will happen to me.’

‘O faithless ones!’ cried Somerset. ‘But at least I have your promises; and Godall, I perceive, is transported with delight.’

‘I promise myself at least much pleasure from your various narratives,’ said the salesman, with the customary calm polish of his manner.

‘And now, gentlemen,’ concluded Somerset, ‘let us separate. I hasten to put myself in fortune’s way. Hark how, in this quiet corner, London roars like the noise of battle; four million destinies are here concentred; and in the strong panoply of one hundred pounds, payable to the bearer, I am about to plunge into that web.’

CHALLONER’S ADVENTURE

THE SQUIRE OF DAMES

Mr. Edward Challoner had set up lodgings in the suburb of Putney, where he enjoyed a parlour and bedroom and the sincere esteem of the people of the house. To this remote home he found himself, at a very early hour in the morning of the next day, condemned to set forth on foot. He was a young man of a portly habit; no lover of the exercises of the body; bland, sedentary, patient of delay, a prop of omnibuses. In happier days he would have chartered a cab; but these luxuries were now denied him; and with what courage he could muster he addressed himself to walk.

It was then the height of the season and the summer; the weather was serene and cloudless; and as he paced under the blinded houses and along the vacant streets, the chill of the dawn had fled, and some of the warmth and all the brightness of the July day already shone upon the city. He walked at first in a profound abstraction, bitterly reviewing and repenting his performances at whist; but as he advanced into the labyrinth of the south-west, his ear was gradually mastered by the silence. Street after street looked down upon his solitary figure, house after house echoed upon his passage with a ghostly jar, shop after shop displayed its shuttered front and its commercial legend; and meanwhile he steered his course, under day’s effulgent dome and through this encampment of diurnal sleepers, lonely as a ship.

‘Here,’ he reflected, ‘if I were like my scatter-brained companion, here were indeed the scene where I might look for an adventure. Here, in broad day, the streets are secret as in the blackest night of January, and in the midst of some four million sleepers, solitary as the woods of Yucatan. If I but raise my voice I could summon up the number of an army, and yet the grave is not more silent than this city of sleep.’

He was still following these quaint and serious musings when he came into a street of more mingled ingredients than was common in the quarter. Here, on the one hand, framed in walls and the green tops of trees, were several of those discreet, *bijou* residences on which propriety is apt to look askance. Here, too, were many of the brick-fronted barracks of the poor; a plaster cow, perhaps, serving as ensign to a dairy, or a ticket announcing the business of the mangler. Before one such house, that stood a little separate among walled gardens, a cat was playing with a straw, and Challoner paused a moment, looking on this sleek and solitary creature, who seemed an emblem of the neighbouring peace. With the cessation of the sound of his own steps the silence fell dead; the house stood smokeless: the blinds down, the whole machinery of life arrested; and it seemed to Challoner that he should hear the breathing of the sleepers.

As he so stood, he was startled by a dull and jarring detonation from within. This was followed by a monstrous hissing and simmering as from a kettle of the bigness of St. Paul's; and at the same time from every chink of door and window spirted an ill-smelling vapour. The cat disappeared with a cry. Within the lodging-house feet pounded on the stairs; the door flew back, emitting clouds of smoke; and two men and an elegantly dressed young lady tumbled forth into the street and fled without a word. The hissing had already ceased, the smoke was melting in the air, the whole event had come and gone as in a dream, and still Challoner was rooted to the spot. At last his reason and his fear awoke together, and with the most unwonted energy he fell to running.

Little by little this first dash relaxed, and presently he had resumed his sober gait and begun to piece together, out of the confused report of his senses, some theory of the occurrence. But the occasion of the sounds and stench that had so suddenly assailed him, and the strange conjunction of fugitives whom he had seen to issue from the house, were mysteries beyond his plummet. With an obscure awe he considered them in his mind, continuing, meanwhile, to thread the web of streets, and once more alone in morning sunshine.

In his first retreat he had entirely wandered; and now, steering vaguely west, it was his luck to light upon an unpretending street, which presently widened so as to admit a strip of gardens in the midst. Here was quite a stir of birds; even at that hour, the shadow of the leaves was grateful; instead of the burnt atmosphere of cities, there was something brisk and rural in the air; and Challoner paced forward, his eyes upon the pavement and his mind running upon distant scenes, till he was recalled, upon a sudden, by a wall that blocked his further progress. This street, whose name I have forgotten, is no thoroughfare.

He was not the first who had wandered there that morning; for as he raised his eyes with an agreeable deliberation, they alighted on the figure of a girl, in whom he was struck to recognise the third of the incongruous fugitives. She had run there, seemingly, blindfold; the wall had checked her career: and being entirely wearied, she had sunk upon the ground beside the garden railings, soiling her dress among the summer dust. Each saw the other in the same instant of time; and she, with one wild look, sprang to her feet and began to hurry from the scene.

Challoner was doubly startled to meet once more the heroine of his adventure, and to observe the fear with which she shunned him. Pity and alarm, in nearly equal forces, contested the possession of his mind; and yet, in spite of both, he saw himself condemned to follow in the lady's wake. He did so gingerly, as fearing to increase her terrors; but, tread as lightly as he might, his footfalls eloquently echoed in the empty street. Their sound appeared to strike in her some strong emotion; for scarce had he begun to follow ere she paused. A second time she addressed herself to flight; and a second time she paused. Then she turned about, and with doubtful steps and the most attractive appearance of timidity, drew near to the young man. He on his side continued to advance with similar signals of distress and bashfulness. At length, when they were but some steps apart, he saw her eyes brim over, and she reached out both her hands in eloquent appeal.

'Are you an English gentleman?' she cried.

The unhappy Challoner regarded her with consternation. He was the spirit of fine courtesy, and would have blushed to fail in his devoirs to any lady; but, in the other scale, he was a man averse from amorous adventures. He looked east and west; but the houses that looked down upon this interview remained inexorably shut; and he saw himself, though in the full glare of the day's eye, cut off from any human intervention. His looks returned at last upon the suppliant. He remarked with irritation that she was charming both in face and figure, elegantly dressed and gloved; a lady undeniable; the picture of distress and innocence; weeping and lost in the city of diurnal sleep.

'Madam,' he said, 'I protest you have no cause to fear intrusion; and if I have appeared to follow you, the fault is in this street, which has deceived us both.' An unmistakable relief appeared upon the lady's face. 'I might have guessed it!' she exclaimed. 'Thank you a thousand times! But at this hour, in this appalling silence, and among all these staring windows, I am lost in terrors — oh, lost in them!' she cried, her face blanching at the words. 'I beg you to lend me your arm,' she added with the loveliest, suppliant inflection. 'I dare not go alone; my nerve is gone — I had a shock, oh, what a shock! I beg of you to be my escort.'

'My dear madam,' responded Challoner heavily, 'my arm is at your service.'

'She took it and clung to it for a moment, struggling with her sobs; and the next, with feverish hurry, began to lead him in the direction of the city. One thing was plain, among so much that was obscure: it was plain her fears were genuine. Still, as she went, she spied around as if for dangers; and now she would shiver like a person in a chill, and now clutch his arm in hers. To Challoner her terror was at once repugnant and infectious; it gained and mastered, while it still offended him; and he wailed in spirit and longed for release.

‘Madam,’ he said at last, ‘I am, of course, charmed to be of use to any lady; but I confess I was bound in a direction opposite to that you follow, and a word of explanation — ’

‘Hush!’ she sobbed, ‘not here — not here!’

The blood of Challoner ran cold. He might have thought the lady mad; but his memory was charged with more perilous stuff; and in view of the detonation, the smoke and the flight of the ill-assorted trio, his mind was lost among mysteries. So they continued to thread the maze of streets in silence, with the speed of a guilty flight, and both thrilling with incommunicable terrors. In time, however, and above all by their quick pace of walking, the pair began to rise to firmer spirits; the lady ceased to peer about the corners; and Challoner, emboldened by the resonant tread and distant figure of a constable, returned to the charge with more of spirit and directness.

‘I thought,’ said he, in the tone of conversation, ‘that I had indistinctly perceived you leaving a villa in the company of two gentlemen.’

‘Oh!’ she said, ‘you need not fear to wound me by the truth. You saw me flee from a common lodging-house, and my companions were not gentlemen. In such a case, the best of compliments is to be frank.’

‘I thought,’ resumed Challoner, encouraged as much as he was surprised by the spirit of her reply, ‘to have perceived, besides, a certain odour. A noise, too — I do not know to what I should compare it — ’

‘Silence!’ she cried. ‘You do not know the danger you invoke. Wait, only wait; and as soon as we have left those streets, and got beyond the reach of listeners, all shall be explained. Meanwhile, avoid the topic. What a sight is this sleeping city!’ she exclaimed; and then, with a most thrilling voice, ‘“Dear God,” she quoted, “the very houses seem asleep, and all that mighty heart is lying still.”‘

‘I perceive, madam,’ said he, ‘you are a reader.’

‘I am more than that,’ she answered, with a sigh. ‘I am a girl condemned to thoughts beyond her age; and so untoward is my fate, that this walk upon the arm of a stranger is like an interlude of peace.’

They had come by this time to the neighbourhood of the Victoria Station and here, at a street corner, the young lady paused, withdrew her arm from Challoner’s, and looked up and down as though in pain or indecision. Then, with a lovely change of countenance, and laying her gloved hand upon his arm —

‘What you already think of me,’ she said, ‘I tremble to conceive; yet I must here condemn myself still further. Here I must leave you, and here I beseech you to wait for my return. Do not attempt to follow me or spy upon my actions. Suspend yet awhile your judgment of a girl as innocent as your own sister; and do not, above all, desert me. Stranger as you are, I have none else to look to. You see me in sorrow and great fear; you are a gentleman, courteous and kind: and when I beg for a few minutes' patience, I make sure beforehand you will not deny me.'

Challoner grudgingly promised; and the young lady, with a grateful eye-shot, vanished round the corner. But the force of her appeal had been a little blunted; for the young man was not only destitute of sisters, but of any female relative nearer than a great-aunt in Wales. Now he was alone, besides, the spell that he had hitherto obeyed began to weaken; he considered his behaviour with a sneer; and plucking up the spirit of revolt, he started in pursuit. The reader, if he has ever plied the fascinating trade of the noctambulist, will not be unaware that, in the neighbourhood of the great railway centres, certain early taverns inaugurate the business of the day. It was into one of these that Challoner, coming round the corner of the block, beheld his charming companion disappear. To say he was surprised were inexact, for he had long since left that sentiment behind him. Acute disgust and disappointment seized upon his soul; and with silent oaths, he damned this commonplace enchantress. She had scarce been gone a second, ere the swing-doors reopened, and she appeared again in company with a young man of mean and slouching attire. For some five or six exchanges they conversed together with an animated air; then the fellow shouldered again into the tap; and the young lady, with something swifter than a walk, retraced her steps towards Challoner. He saw her coming, a miracle of grace; her ankle, as she hurried, flashing from her dress; her movements eloquent of speed and youth; and though he still entertained some thoughts of flight, they grew miserably fainter as the distance lessened. Against mere beauty he was proof: it was her unmistakable gentility that now robbed him of the courage of his cowardice. With a proved adventuress he had acted strictly on his right; with one who, in spite of all, he could not quite deny to be a lady, he found himself disarmed. At the very corner from whence he had spied upon her interview, she came upon him, still transfixed, and — 'Ah!' she cried, with a bright flush of colour. 'Ah! Ungenerous!'

The sharpness of the attack somewhat restored the Squire of Dames to the possession of himself.

'Madam,' he returned, with a fair show of stoutness, 'I do not think that hitherto you can complain of any lack of generosity; I have suffered myself to be led over a considerable portion of the metropolis; and if I now request you to discharge me of my office of protector, you have friends at hand who will be glad of the succession.'

She stood a moment dumb.

‘It is well,’ she said. ‘Go! go, and may God help me! You have seen me — me, an innocent girl! fleeing from a dire catastrophe and haunted by sinister men; and neither pity, curiosity, nor honour move you to await my explanation or to help in my distress. Go!’ she repeated. ‘I am lost indeed.’ And with a passionate gesture she turned and fled along the street.

Challoner observed her retreat and disappear, an almost intolerable sense of guilt contending with the profound sense that he was being gulled. She was no sooner gone than the first of these feelings took the upper hand; he felt, if he had done her less than justice, that his conduct was a perfect model of the ungracious; the cultured tone of her voice, her choice of language, and the elegant decorum of her movements, cried out aloud against a harsh construction; and between penitence and curiosity he began slowly to follow in her wake. At the corner he had her once more full in view. Her speed was failing like a stricken bird’s. Even as he looked, she threw her arm out gropingly, and fell and leaned against the wall. At the spectacle, Challoner’s fortitude gave way. In a few strides he overtook her and, for the first time removing his hat, assured her in the most moving terms of his entire respect and firm desire to help her. He spoke at first unheeded; but gradually it appeared that she began to comprehend his words; she moved a little, and drew herself upright; and finally, as with a sudden movement of forgiveness, turned on the young man a countenance in which reproach and gratitude were mingled. ‘Ah, madam,’ he cried, ‘use me as you will!’ And once more, but now with a great air of deference, he offered her the conduct of his arm. She took it with a sigh that struck him to the heart; and they began once more to trace the deserted streets. But now her steps, as though exhausted by emotion, began to linger on the way; she leaned the more heavily upon his arm; and he, like the parent bird, stooped fondly above his drooping convoy. Her physical distress was not accompanied by any failing of her spirits; and hearing her strike so soon into a playful and charming vein of talk, Challoner could not sufficiently admire the elasticity of his companion’s nature. ‘Let me forget,’ she had said, ‘for one half hour, let me forget;’ and sure enough, with the very word, her sorrows appeared to be forgotten. Before every house she paused, invented a name for the proprietor, and sketched his character: here lived the old general whom she was to marry on the fifth of the next month, there was the mansion of the rich widow who had set her heart on Challoner; and though she still hung wearily on the young man’s arm, her laughter sounded low and pleasant in his ears. ‘Ah,’ she sighed, by way of commentary, ‘in such a life as mine I must seize tight hold of any happiness that I can find.’

When they arrived, in this leisurely manner, at the head of Grosvenor Place, the gates of the park were opening and the bedraggled company of night-walkers were being at last admitted into that paradise of lawns. Challoner and his companion followed the movement, and walked for awhile in silence in that tatterdemalion crowd; but as one after another, weary with the night's patrolling of the city pavement, sank upon the benches or wandered into separate paths, the vast extent of the park had soon utterly swallowed up the last of these intruders; and the pair proceeded on their way alone in the grateful quiet of the morning.

Presently they came in sight of a bench, standing very open on a mound of turf. The young lady looked about her with relief.

'Here,' she said, 'here at last we are secure from listeners. Here, then, you shall learn and judge my history. I could not bear that we should part, and that you should still suppose your kindness squandered upon one who was unworthy.'

Thereupon she sat down upon the bench, and motioning Challoner to take a place immediately beside her, began in the following words, and with the greatest appearance of enjoyment, to narrate the story of her life.

STORY OF THE DESTROYING ANGEL

My father was a native of England, son of a cadet of a great, ancient, but untitled family; and by some event, fault or misfortune, he was driven to flee from the land of his birth and to lay aside the name of his ancestors. He sought the States; and instead of lingering in effeminate cities, pushed at once into the far West with an exploring party of frontiersmen. He was no ordinary traveller; for he was not only brave and impetuous by character, but learned in many sciences, and above all in botany, which he particularly loved. Thus it fell that, before many months, Fremont himself, the nominal leader of the troop, courted and bowed to his opinion.

They had pushed, as I have said, into the still unknown regions of the West. For some time they followed the track of Mormon caravans, guiding themselves in that vast and melancholy desert by the skeletons of men and animals. Then they inclined their route a little to the north, and, losing even these dire memorials, came into a country of forbidding stillness.

I have often heard my father dwell upon the features of that ride: rock, cliff, and barren moor alternated; the streams were very far between; and neither beast nor bird disturbed the solitude. On the fortieth day they had already run so short of food that it was judged advisable to call a halt and scatter upon all sides to hunt. A great fire was built, that its smoke might serve to rally them; and each man of the party mounted and struck off at a venture into the surrounding desert.

My father rode for many hours with a steep range of cliffs upon the one hand, very black and horrible; and upon the other an unwatered vale dotted with boulders like the site of some subverted city. At length he found the slot of a great animal, and from the claw-marks and the hair among the brush, judged that he was on the track of a cinnamon bear of most unusual size. He quickened the pace of his steed, and still following the quarry, came at last to the division of two watersheds. On the far side the country was exceeding intricate and difficult, heaped with boulders, and dotted here and there with a few pines, which seemed to indicate the neighbourhood of water. Here, then, he picketed his horse, and relying on his trusty rifle, advanced alone into that wilderness.

Presently, in the great silence that reigned, he was aware of the sound of running water to his right; and leaning in that direction, was rewarded by a scene of natural wonder and human pathos strangely intermixed. The stream ran at the bottom of a narrow and winding passage, whose wall-like sides of rock were sometimes for miles together unscalable by man. The water, when the stream was swelled with rains, must have filled it from side to side; the sun's rays only plumbed it in the hour of noon; the wind, in that narrow and damp funnel, blew tempestuously. And yet, in the bottom of this den, immediately below my father's eyes as he leaned over the margin of the cliff, a party of some half a hundred men, women, and children lay scattered uneasily among the rocks. They lay some upon their backs, some prone, and not one stirring; their upturned faces seemed all of an extraordinary paleness and emaciation; and from time to time, above the washing of the stream, a faint sound of moaning mounted to my father's ears.

While he thus looked, an old man got staggering to his feet, unwound his blanket, and laid it, with great gentleness, on a young girl who sat hard by propped against a rock. The girl did not seem to be conscious of the act; and the old man, after having looked upon her with the most engaging pity, returned to his former bed and lay down again uncovered on the turf. But the scene had not passed without observation even in that starving camp. From the very outskirts of the party, a man with a white beard and seemingly of venerable years, rose upon his knees, and came crawling stealthily among the sleepers towards the girl; and judge of my father's indignation, when he beheld this cowardly miscreant strip from her both the coverings and return with them to his original position. Here he lay down for a while below his spoils, and, as my father imagined, feigned to be asleep; but presently he had raised himself again upon one elbow, looked with sharp scrutiny at his companions, and then swiftly carried his hand into his bosom and thence to his mouth. By the movement of his jaws he must be eating; in that camp of famine he had reserved a store of nourishment; and while his companions lay in the stupor of approaching death, secretly restored his powers.

My father was so incensed at what he saw that he raised his rifle; and but for an accident, he has often declared, he would have shot the fellow dead upon the spot. How different would then have been my history! But it was not to be: even as he raised the barrel, his eye lighted on the bear, as it crawled along a ledge some way below him; and ceding to the hunters instinct, it was at the brute, not at the man, that he discharged his piece. The bear leaped and fell into a pool of the river; the canyon re-echoed the report; and in a moment the camp was afoot. With cries that were scarce human, stumbling, falling and throwing each other down, these starving people rushed upon the quarry; and before my father, climbing down by the ledge, had time to reach the level of the stream, many were already satisfying their hunger on the raw flesh, and a fire was being built by the more dainty.

His arrival was for some time unremarked. He stood in the midst of these tottering and clay-faced marionettes; he was surrounded by their cries; but their whole soul was fixed on the dead carcass; even those who were too weak to move, lay, half-turned over, with their eyes riveted upon the bear; and my father, seeing himself stand as though invisible in the thick of this dreary hubbub, was seized with a desire to weep. A touch upon the arm restrained him. Turning about, he found himself face to face with the old man he had so nearly killed; and yet, at the second glance, recognised him for no old man at all, but one in the full strength of his years, and of a strong, speaking, and intellectual countenance stigmatised by weariness and famine. He beckoned my father near the cliff, and there, in the most private whisper, begged for brandy. My father looked at him with scorn: 'You remind me,' he said, 'of a neglected duty. Here is my flask; it contains enough, I trust, to revive the women of your party; and I will begin with her whom I saw you robbing of her blankets.' And with that, not heeding his appeals, my father turned his back upon the egoist.

The girl still lay reclined against the rock; she lay too far sunk in the first stage of death to have observed the bustle round her couch; but when my father had raised her head, put the flask to her lips, and forced or aided her to swallow some drops of the restorative, she opened her languid eyes and smiled upon him faintly. Never was there a smile of a more touching sweetness; never were eyes more deeply violet, more honestly eloquent of the soul! I speak with knowledge, for these were the same eyes that smiled upon me in the cradle. From her who was to be his wife, my father, still jealously watched and followed by the man with the grey beard, carried his attentions to all the women of the party, and gave the last drainings of his flask to those among the men who seemed in the most need.

'Is there none left? not a drop for me?' said the man with the beard.

'Not one drop,' replied my father; 'and if you find yourself in want, let me counsel you to put your hand into the pocket of your coat.'

'Ah!' cried the other, 'you misjudge me. You think me one who clings to life for selfish and commonplace considerations. But let me tell you, that were all this caravan to perish, the world would but be lightened of a weight. These are but human insects, pullulating, thick as May-flies, in the slums of European cities, whom I myself have plucked from degradation and misery, from the dung-heap and gin-palace door. And you compare their lives with mine!'

'You are then a Mormon missionary?' asked my father.

'Oh!' cried the man, with a strange smile, 'a Mormon missionary if you will! I value not the title. Were I no more than that, I could have died without a murmur. But with my life as a physician is bound up the knowledge of great secrets and the future of man. This it was, when we missed the caravan, tried for a short cut and wandered to this desolate ravine, that ate into my soul, and, in five days, has changed my beard from ebony to silver.'

'And you are a physician,' mused my father, looking on his face, 'bound by oath to succour man in his distresses.'

'Sir,' returned the Mormon, 'my name is Grierson: you will hear that name again; and you will then understand that my duty was not to this caravan of paupers, but to mankind at large.'

My father turned to the remainder of the party, who were now sufficiently revived to hear; told them that he would set off at once to bring help from his own party; 'and,' he added, 'if you be again reduced to such extremities, look round you, and you will see the earth strewn with assistance. Here, for instance, growing on the under side of fissures in this cliff, you will perceive a yellow moss. Trust me, it is both edible and excellent.'

'Ha!' said Doctor Grierson, 'you know botany!'

'Not I alone,' returned my father, lowering his voice; 'for see where these have been scraped away. Am I right? Was that your secret store?'

My father's comrades, he found, when he returned to the signal-fire, had made a good day's hunting. They were thus the more easily persuaded to extend assistance to the Mormon caravan; and the next day beheld both parties on the march for the frontiers of Utah. The distance to be traversed was not great; but the nature of the country, and the difficulty of procuring food, extended the time to nearly three weeks; and my father had thus ample leisure to know and appreciate the girl whom he had succoured. I will call my mother Lucy. Her family name I am not at liberty to mention; it is one you would know well. By what series of undeserved calamities this innocent flower of maidenhood, lovely, refined by education, ennobled by the finest taste, was thus cast among the horrors of a Mormon caravan, I must not stay to tell you. Let it suffice, that even in these untoward circumstances, she found a heart worthy of her own. The ardour of attachment which united my father and mother was perhaps partly due to the strange manner of their meeting; it knew, at least, no bounds either divine or human; my father, for her sake, determined to renounce his ambitions and abjure his faith; and a week had not yet passed upon the march before he had resigned from his party, accepted the Mormon doctrine, and received the promise of my mother's hand on the arrival of the party at Salt Lake.

The marriage took place, and I was its only offspring. My father prospered exceedingly in his affairs, remained faithful to my mother; and though you may wonder to hear it, I believe there were few happier homes in any country than that in which I saw the light and grew to girlhood. We were, indeed, and in spite of all our wealth, avoided as heretics and half-believers by the more precise and pious of the faithful: Young himself, that formidable tyrant, was known to look askance upon my father's riches; but of this I had no guess. I dwelt, indeed, under the Mormon system, with perfect innocence and faith. Some of our friends had many wives; but such was the custom; and why should it surprise me more than marriage itself? From time to time one of our rich acquaintances would disappear, his family be broken up, his wives and houses shared among the elders of the Church, and his memory only recalled with bated breath and dreadful headshakings. When I had been very still, and my presence perhaps was forgotten, some such topic would arise among my elders by the evening fire; I would see them draw the closer together and look behind them with scared eyes; and I might gather from their whisperings how some one, rich, honoured, healthy, and in the prime of his days, some one, perhaps, who had taken me on his knees a week before, had in one hour been spirited from home and family, and vanished like an image from a mirror, leaving not a print behind. It was terrible, indeed; but so was death, the universal law. And even if the talk should wax still bolder, full of ominous silences and nods, and I should hear named in a whisper the Destroying Angels, how was a child to understand these mysteries? I heard of a Destroying Angel as some more happy child might hear in England of a bishop or a rural dean, with vague respect and without the wish for further information. Life anywhere, in society as in nature, rests upon dread foundations; I beheld safe roads, a garden blooming in the desert, pious people crowding to worship; I was aware of my parents' tenderness and all the harmless luxuries of my existence; and why should I pry beneath this honest seeming surface for the mysteries on which it stood?

We dwelt originally in the city; but at an early date we moved to a beautiful house in a green dingle, musical with splashing water, and surrounded on almost every side by twenty miles of poisonous and rocky desert. The city was thirty miles away; there was but one road, which went no further than my father's door; the rest were bridle-tracks impassable in winter; and we thus dwelt in a solitude inconceivable to the European. Our only neighbour was Dr. Grierson. To my young eyes, after the hair-oiled, chin-bearded elders of the city, and the ill-favoured and mentally stunted women of their harems, there was something agreeable in the correct manner, the fine bearing, the thin white hair and beard, and the piercing looks of the old doctor. Yet, though he was almost our only visitor, I never wholly overcame a sense of fear in his presence; and this disquietude was rather fed by the awful solitude in which he lived and the obscurity that hung about his occupations. His house was but a mile or two from ours, but very differently placed. It stood overlooking the road on the summit of a steep slope, and planted close against a range of overhanging bluffs. Nature, you would say, had here desired to imitate the works of man; for the slope was even, like the glacis of a fort, and the cliffs of a constant height, like the ramparts of a city. Not even spring could change one feature of that desolate scene; and the windows looked down across a plain, snowy with alkali, to ranges of cold stone sierras on the north. Twice or thrice I remember passing within view of this forbidding residence; and seeing it always shuttered, smokeless, and deserted, I remarked to my parents that some day it would certainly be robbed.

‘Ah, no,’ said my father, ‘never robbed;’ and I observed a strange conviction in his tone.

At last, and not long before the blow fell on my unhappy family, I chanced to see the doctor’s house in a new light. My father was ill; my mother confined to his bedside; and I was suffered to go, under the charge of our driver, to the lonely house some twenty miles away, where our packages were left for us. The horse cast a shoe; night overtook us halfway home; and it was well on for three in the morning when the driver and I, alone in a light waggon, came to that part of the road which ran below the doctor’s house. The moon swam clear; the cliffs and mountains in this strong light lay utterly deserted; but the house, from its station on the top of the long slope and close under the bluff, not only shone abroad from every window like a place of festival, but from the great chimney at the west end poured forth a coil of smoke so thick and so voluminous, that it hung for miles along the windless night air, and its shadow lay far abroad in the moonlight upon the glittering alkali. As we continued to draw near, besides, a regular and panting throb began to divide the silence. First it seemed to me like the beating of a heart; and next it put into my mind the thought of some giant, smothered under mountains and still, with incalculable effort, fetching breath. I had heard of the railway, though I had not seen it, and I turned to ask the driver if this resembled it. But some look in his eye, some pallor, whether of fear or moonlight on his face, caused the words to die upon my lips. We continued, therefore, to advance in silence, till we were close below the lighted house; when suddenly, without one premonitory rustle, there burst forth a report of such a bigness that it shook the earth and set the echoes of the mountains thundering from cliff to cliff. A pillar of amber flame leaped from the chimney-top and fell in multitudes of sparks; and at the same time the lights in the windows turned for one instant ruby red and then expired. The driver had checked his horse instinctively, and the echoes were still rumbling farther off among the mountains, when there broke from the now darkened interior a series of yells — whether of man or woman it was impossible to guess — the door flew open, and there ran forth into the moonlight, at the top of the long slope, a figure clad in white, which began to dance and leap and throw itself down, and roll as if in agony, before the house. I could no more restrain my cries; the driver laid his lash about the horse’s flank, and we fled up the rough track at the peril of our lives; and did not draw rein till, turning the corner of the mountain, we beheld my father’s ranch and deep, green groves and gardens, sleeping in the tranquil light.

This was the one adventure of my life, until my father had climbed to the very topmost point of material prosperity, and I myself had reached the age of seventeen. I was still innocent and merry like a child; tended my garden or ran upon the hills in glad simplicity; gave not a thought to coquetry or to material cares; and if my eye rested on my own image in a mirror or some sylvan spring, it was to seek and recognise the features of my parents. But the fears which had long pressed on others were now to be laid on my youth. I had thrown myself, one sultry, cloudy afternoon, on a divan; the windows stood open on the verandah, where my mother sat with her embroidery; and when my father joined her from the garden, their conversation, clearly audible to me, was of so startling a nature that it held me enthralled where I lay.

‘The blow has come,’ my father said, after a long pause.

I could hear my mother start and turn, but in words she made no reply.

‘Yes,’ continued my father, ‘I have received to-day a list of all that I possess; of all, I say; of what I have lent privately to men whose lips are sealed with terror; of what I have buried with my own hand on the bare mountain, when there was not a bird in heaven. Does the air, then, carry secrets? Are the hills of glass? Do the stones we tread upon preserve the footprint to betray us? Oh, Lucy, Lucy, that we should have come to such a country!’

‘But this,’ returned my mother, ‘is no very new or very threatening event. You are accused of some concealment. You will pay more taxes in the future, and be mulcted in a fine. It is disquieting, indeed, to find our acts so spied upon, and the most private known. But is this new? Have we not long feared and suspected every blade of grass?’

‘Ay, and our shadows!’ cried my father. ‘But all this is nothing. Here is the letter that accompanied the list.’

I heard my mother turn the pages, and she was some time silent.

‘I see,’ she said at last; and then, with the tone of one reading: ‘“From a believer so largely blessed by Providence with this world’s goods,”‘ she continued, ‘“the Church awaits in confidence some signal mark of piety." There lies the sting. Am I not right? These are the words you fear?'

'These are the words,' replied my father. 'Lucy, you remember Priestley? Two days before he disappeared, he carried me to the summit of an isolated butte; we could see around us for ten miles; sure, if in any quarter of this land a man were safe from spies, it were in such a station; but it was in the very ague-fit of terror that he told me, and that I heard, his story. He had received a letter such as this; and he submitted to my approval an answer, in which he offered to resign a third of his possessions. I conjured him, as he valued life, to raise his offering; and, before we parted, he had doubled the amount. Well, two days later he was gone — gone from the chief street of the city in the hour of noon — and gone for ever. O God!' cried my father, 'by what art do they thus spirit out of life the solid body? What death do they command that leaves no traces? that this material structure, these strong arms, this skeleton that can resist the grave for centuries, should be thus reft in a moment from the world of sense? A horror dwells in that thought more awful than mere death.'

'Is there no hope in Grierson?' asked my mother.

'Dismiss the thought,' replied my father. 'He now knows all that I can teach, and will do naught to save me. His power, besides, is small, his own danger not improbably more imminent than mine; for he, too, lives apart; he leaves his wives neglected and unwatched; he is openly cited for an unbeliever; and unless he buys security at a more awful price — but no; I will not believe it: I have no love for him, but I will not believe it.'

'Believe what?' asked my mother; and then, with a change of note, 'But oh, what matters it?' she cried. 'Abimelech, there is but one way open: we must fly!'

'It is in vain,' returned my father. 'I should but involve you in my fate. To leave this land is hopeless: we are closed in it as men are closed in life; and there is no issue but the grave.'

'We can but die then,' replied my mother. 'Let us at least die together. Let not Asenath and myself survive you. Think to what a fate we should be doomed!'

My father was unable to resist her tender violence; and though I could see he nourished not one spark of hope, he consented to desert his whole estate, beyond some hundreds of dollars that he had by him at the moment, and to flee that night, which promised to be dark and cloudy. As soon as the servants were asleep, he was to load two mules with provisions; two others were to carry my mother and myself; and, striking through the mountains by an unfrequented trail, we were to make a fair stroke for liberty and life. As soon as they had thus decided, I showed myself at the window, and, owning that I had heard all, assured them that they could rely on my prudence and devotion. I had no fear, indeed, but to show myself unworthy of my birth; I held my life in my hand without alarm; and when my father, weeping upon my neck, had blessed Heaven for the courage of his child, it was with a sentiment of pride and some of the joy that warriors take in war, that I began to look forward to the perils of our flight.

Before midnight, under an obscure and starless heaven, we had left far behind us the plantations of the valley, and were mounting a certain canyon in the hills, narrow, encumbered with great rocks, and echoing with the roar of a tumultuous torrent. Cascade after cascade thundered and hung up its flag of whiteness in the night, or fanned our faces with the wet wind of its descent. The trail was breakneck, and led to famine-guarded deserts; it had been long since deserted for more practicable routes; and it was now a part of the world untrod from year to year by human footing. Judge of our dismay, when turning suddenly an angle of the cliffs, we found a bright bonfire blazing by itself under an impending rock; and on the face of the rock, drawn very rudely with charred wood, the great Open Eye which is the emblem of the Mormon faith. We looked upon each other in the firelight; my mother broke into a passion of tears; but not a word was said. The mules were turned about; and leaving that great eye to guard the lonely canyon, we retraced our steps in silence. Day had not yet broken ere we were once more at home, condemned beyond reprieve.

What answer my father sent I was not told; but two days later, a little before sundown, I saw a plain, honest-looking man ride slowly up the road in a great pother of dust. He was clad in homespun, with a broad straw hat; wore a patriarchal beard; and had an air of a simple rustic farmer, that was, in my eyes, very reassuring. He was, indeed, a very honest man and pious Mormon; with no liking for his errand, though neither he nor any one in Utah dared to disobey; and it was with every mark of diffidence that he had had himself announced as Mr. Aspinwall, and entered the room where our unhappy family was gathered. My mother and me, he awkwardly enough dismissed; and as soon as he was alone with my father laid before him a blank signature of President Young's, and offered him a choice of services: either to set out as a missionary to the tribes about the White Sea, or to join the next day, with a party of Destroying Angels, in the massacre of sixty German immigrants. The last, of course, my father could not entertain, and the first he regarded as a pretext: even if he could consent to leave his wife defenceless, and to collect fresh victims for the tyranny under which he was himself oppressed, he felt sure he would never be suffered to return. He refused both; and Aspinwall, he said, betrayed sincere emotion, part religious, at the spectacle of such disobedience, but part human, in pity for my father and his family. He besought him to reconsider his decision; and at length, finding he could not prevail, gave him till the moon rose to settle his affairs, and say farewell to wife and daughter. 'For,' said he, 'then, at the latest, you must ride with me.'

I dare not dwell upon the hours that followed: they fled all too fast; and presently the moon out-topped the eastern range, and my father and Mr. Aspinwall set forth, side by side, on their nocturnal journey. My mother, though still bearing an heroic countenance, had hastened to shut herself in her apartment, thenceforward solitary; and I, alone in the dark house, and consumed by grief and apprehension, made haste to saddle my Indian pony, to ride up to the corner of the mountain, and to enjoy one farewell sight of my departing father. The two men had set forth at a deliberate pace; nor was I long behind them, when I reached the point of view. I was the more amazed to see no moving creature in the landscape. The moon, as the saying is, shone bright as day; and nowhere, under the whole arch of night, was there a growing tree, a bush, a farm, a patch of tillage, or any evidence of man, but one. From the corner where I stood, a rugged bastion of the line of bluffs concealed the doctor's house; and across the top of that projection the soft night wind carried and unwound about the hills a coil of sable smoke. What fuel could produce a vapour so sluggish to dissipate in that dry air, or what furnace pour it forth so copiously, I was unable to conceive; but I knew well enough that it came from the doctor's chimney; I saw well enough that my father had already disappeared; and in despite of reason, I connected in my mind the loss of that dear protector with the ribbon of foul smoke that trailed along the mountains.

Days passed, and still my mother and I waited in vain for news; a week went by, a second followed, but we heard no word of the father and husband. As smoke dissipates, as the image glides from the mirror, so in the ten or twenty minutes that I had spent in getting my horse and following upon his trail, had that strong and brave man vanished out of life. Hope, if any hope we had, fled with every hour; the worst was now certain for my father, the worst was to be dreaded for his defenceless family. Without weakness, with a desperate calm at which I marvel when I look back upon it, the widow and the orphan awaited the event. On the last day of the third week we rose in the morning to find ourselves alone in the house, alone, so far as we searched, on the estate; all our attendants, with one accord, had fled: and as we knew them to be gratefully devoted, we drew the darkest intimations from their flight. The day passed, indeed, without event; but in the fall of the evening we were called at last into the verandah by the approaching clink of horse's hoofs.

The doctor, mounted on an Indian pony, rode into the garden, dismounted, and saluted us. He seemed much more bent, and his hair more silvery than ever; but his demeanour was composed, serious, and not unkind.

'Madam,' said he, 'I am come upon a weighty errand; and I would have you recognise it as an effect of kindness in the President, that he should send as his ambassador your only neighbour and your husband's oldest friend in Utah.'

'Sir,' said my mother, 'I have but one concern, one thought. You know well what it is. Speak: my husband?'

'Madam,' returned the doctor, taking a chair on the verandah, 'if you were a silly child, my position would now be painfully embarrassing. You are, on the other hand, a woman of great intelligence and fortitude: you have, by my forethought, been allowed three weeks to draw your own conclusions and to accept the inevitable. Farther words from me are, I conceive, superfluous.'

My mother was as pale as death, and trembled like a reed; I gave her my hand, and she kept it in the folds of her dress and wrung it till I could have cried aloud. 'Then, sir,' said she at last, 'you speak to deaf ears. If this be indeed so, what have I to do with errands? What do I ask of Heaven but to die?'

'Come,' said the doctor, 'command yourself. I bid you dismiss all thoughts of your late husband, and bring a clear mind to bear upon your own future and the fate of that young girl.'

'You bid me dismiss — ' began my mother. 'Then you know!' she cried.

'I know,' replied the doctor.

'You know?' broke out the poor woman. 'Then it was you who did the deed! I tear off the mask, and with dread and loathing see you as you are — you, whom the poor fugitive beholds in nightmares, and awakes raving — you, the Destroying Angel!'

'Well, madam, and what then?' returned the doctor. 'Have not my fate and yours been similar? Are we not both immured in this strong prison of Utah? Have you not tried to flee, and did not the Open Eye confront you in the canyon? Who can escape the watch of that unsleeping eye of Utah? Not I, at least. Horrible tasks have, indeed, been laid upon me; and the most ungrateful was the last; but had I refused my offices, would that have spared your husband? You know well it would not. I, too, had perished along with him; nor would I have been able to alleviate his last moments, nor could I to-day have stood between his family and the hand of Brigham Young.'

'Ah!' cried I, 'and could you purchase life by such concessions?'

'Young lady,' answered the doctor, 'I both could and did; and you will live to thank me for that baseness. You have a spirit, Asenath, that it pleases me to recognise. But we waste time. Mr. Fonblanque's estate reverts, as you doubtless imagine, to the Church; but some part of it has been reserved for him who is to marry the family; and that person, I should perhaps tell you without more delay, is no other than myself.'

At this odious proposal my mother and I cried out aloud, and clung together like lost souls.

'It is as I supposed,' resumed the doctor, with the same measured utterance. 'You recoil from this arrangement. Do you expect me to convince you? You know very well that I have never held the Mormon view of women. Absorbed in the most arduous studies, I have left the slatterns whom they call my wives to scratch and quarrel among themselves; of me, they have had nothing but my purse; such was not the union I desired, even if I had the leisure to pursue it. No: you need not, madam, and my old friend' — and here the doctor rose and bowed with something of gallantry — 'you need not apprehend my importunities. On the contrary, I am rejoiced to read in you a Roman spirit; and if I am obliged to bid you follow me at once, and that in the name, not of my wish, but of my orders, I hope it will be found that we are of a common mind.'

So, bidding us dress for the road, he took a lamp (for the night had now fallen) and set off to the stable to prepare our horses.

'What does it mean? — what will become of us?' I cried.

'Not that, at least,' replied my mother, shuddering. 'So far we can trust him. I seem to read among his words a certain tragic promise. Asenath, if I leave you, if I die, you will not forget your miserable parents?'

Thereupon we fell to cross-purposes: I beseeching her to explain her words; she putting me by, and continuing to recommend the doctor for a friend. 'The doctor!' I cried at last; 'the man who killed my father?'

'Nay,' said she, 'let us be just. I do believe before, Heaven, he played the friendliest part. And he alone, Asenath, can protect you in this land of death.'

At this the doctor returned, leading our two horses; and when we were all in the saddle, he bade me ride on before, as he had matter to discuss with Mrs. Fonblanque. They came at a foot's pace, eagerly conversing in a whisper; and presently after the moon rose and showed them looking eagerly in each other's faces as they went, my mother laying her hand upon the doctor's arm, and the doctor himself, against his usual custom, making vigorous gestures of protest or asseveration.

At the foot of the track which ascended the talus of the mountain to his door, the doctor overtook me at a trot.

‘Here,’ he said, ‘we shall dismount; and as your mother prefers to be alone, you and I shall walk together to my house.’

‘Shall I see her again?’ I asked.

‘I give you my word,’ he said, and helped me to alight. ‘We leave the horses here,’ he added. ‘There are no thieves in this stone wilderness.’

The track mounted gradually, keeping the house in view. The windows were once more bright; the chimney once more vomited smoke; but the most absolute silence reigned, and, but for the figure of my mother very slowly following in our wake, I felt convinced there was no human soul within a range of miles. At the thought, I looked upon the doctor, gravely walking by my side, with his bowed shoulders and white hair, and then once more at his house, lit up and pouring smoke like some industrious factory. And then my curiosity broke forth. ‘In Heaven’s name,’ I cried, ‘what do you make in this inhuman desert?’

He looked at me with a peculiar smile, and answered with an evasion —

‘This is not the first time,’ said he, ‘that you have seen my furnaces alight. One morning, in the small hours, I saw you driving past; a delicate experiment miscarried; and I cannot acquit myself of having startled either your driver or the horse that drew you.’

‘What!’ cried I, beholding again in fancy the antics of the figure, ‘could that be you?’

‘It was I,’ he replied; ‘but do not fancy that I was mad. I was in agony. I had been scalded cruelly.’

We were now near the house, which, unlike the ordinary houses of the country, was built of hewn stone and very solid. Stone, too, was its foundation, stone its background. Not a blade of grass sprouted among the broken mineral about the walls, not a flower adorned the windows. Over the door, by way of sole adornment, the Mormon Eye was rudely sculptured; I had been brought up to view that emblem from my childhood; but since the night of our escape, it had acquired a new significance, and set me shrinking. The smoke rolled voluminously from the chimney top, its edges ruddy with the fire; and from the far corner of the building, near the ground, angry puffs of steam shone snow-white in the moon and vanished.

The doctor opened the door and paused upon the threshold. ‘You ask me what I make here,’ he observed. ‘Two things: Life and Death.’ And he motioned me to enter.

‘I shall await my mother,’ said I.

‘Child,’ he replied, ‘look at me: am I not old and broken? Of us two, which is the stronger, the young maiden or the withered man?’

I bowed, and passing by him, entered a vestibule or kitchen, lit by a good fire and a shaded reading-lamp. It was furnished only with a dresser, a rude table, and some wooden benches; and on one of these the doctor motioned me to take a seat; and passing by another door into the interior of the house, he left me to myself. Presently I heard the jar of iron from the far end of the building; and this was followed by the same throbbing noise that had startled me in the valley, but now so near at hand as to be menacing by loudness, and even to shake the house with every recurrence of the stroke. I had scarce time to master my alarm when the doctor returned, and almost in the same moment my mother appeared upon the threshold. But how am I to describe to you the peace and ravishment of that face? Years seemed to have passed over her head during that brief ride, and left her younger and fairer; her eyes shone, her smile went to my heart; she seemed no more a woman but the angel of ecstatic tenderness. I ran to her in a kind of terror; but she shrank a little back and laid her finger on her lips, with something arch and yet unearthly. To the doctor, on the contrary, she reached out her hand as to a friend and helper; and so strange was the scene that I forgot to be offended.

'Lucy,' said the doctor, 'all is prepared. Will you go alone, or shall your daughter follow us?'

'Let Asenath come,' she answered, 'dear Asenath! At this hour, when I am purified of fear and sorrow, and already survive myself and my affections, it is for your sake, and not for mine, that I desire her presence. Were she shut out, dear friend, it is to be feared she might misjudge your kindness.'

'Mother,' I cried wildly, 'mother, what is this?'

But my mother, with her radiant smile, said only 'Hush!' as though I were a child again, and tossing in some fever-fit; and the doctor bade me be silent and trouble her no more. 'You have made a choice,' he continued, addressing my mother, 'that has often strangely tempted me. The two extremes: all, or else nothing; never, or this very hour upon the clock — these have been my incongruous desires. But to accept the middle term, to be content with a half-gift, to flicker awhile and to burn out — never for an hour, never since I was born, has satisfied the appetite of my ambition.' He looked upon my mother fixedly, much of admiration and some touch of envy in his eyes; then, with a profound sigh, he led the way into the inner room.

It was very long. From end to end it was lit up by many lamps, which by the changeful colour of their light, and by the incessant snapping sounds with which they burned, I have since divined to be electric. At the extreme end an open door gave us a glimpse into what must have been a lean-to shed beside the chimney; and this, in strong contrast to the room, was painted with a red reverberation as from furnace-doors. The walls were lined with books and glazed cases, the tables crowded with the implements of chemical research; great glass accumulators glittered in the light; and through a hole in the gable near the shed door, a heavy driving-belt entered the apartment and ran overhead upon steel pulleys, with clumsy activity and many ghostly and fluttering sounds. In one corner I perceived a chair resting upon crystal feet, and curiously wreathed with wire. To this my mother advanced with a decisive swiftness.

'Is this it?' she asked.

The doctor bowed in silence.

'Asenath,' said my mother, 'in this sad end of my life I have found one helper. Look upon him: it is Doctor Grierson. Be not, oh my daughter, be not ungrateful to that friend!'

She sate upon the chair, and took in her hands the globes that terminated the arms.

'Am I right?' she asked, and looked upon the doctor with such a radiancy of face that I trembled for her reason. Once more the doctor bowed, but this time leaning hard against the wall. He must have touched a spring. The least shock agitated my mother where she sat; the least passing jar appeared to cross her features; and she sank back in the chair like one resigned to weariness. I was at her knees that moment; but her hands fell loosely in my grasp; her face, still beatified with the same touching smile, sank forward on her bosom: her spirit had for ever fled.

I do not know how long may have elapsed before, raising for a moment my tearful face, I met the doctor's eyes. They rested upon mine with such a depth of scrutiny, pity, and interest, that even from the freshness of my sorrow, I was startled into attention.

'Enough,' he said, 'to lamentation. Your mother went to death as to a bridal, dying where her husband died. It is time, Asenath, to think of the survivors. Follow me to the next room.'

I followed him, like a person in a dream; he made me sit by the fire, he gave me wine to drink; and then, pacing the stone floor, he thus began to address me —

'You are now, my child, alone in the world, and under the immediate watch of Brigham Young. It would be your lot, in ordinary circumstances, to become the fiftieth bride of some ignoble elder, or by particular fortune, as fortune is counted in this land, to find favour in the eyes of the President himself. Such a fate for a girl like you were worse than death; better to die as your mother died than to sink daily deeper in the mire of this pit of woman's degradation. But is escape conceivable? Your father tried; and you beheld yourself with what security his jailers acted, and how a dumb drawing on a rock was counted a sufficient sentry over the avenues of freedom. Where your father failed, will you be wiser or more fortunate? or are you, too, helpless in the toils?’

I had followed his words with changing emotion, but now I believed I understood.

‘I see,’ I cried; ‘you judge me rightly. I must follow where my parents led; and oh! I am not only willing, I am eager!’

‘No,’ replied the doctor, ‘not death for you. The flawed vessel we may break, but not the perfect. No, your mother cherished a different hope, and so do I. I see,’ he cried, ‘the girl develop to the completed woman, the plan reach fulfilment, the promise — ay, outdone! I could not bear to arrest so lively, so comely a process. It was your mother’s thought,’ he added, with a change of tone, ‘that I should marry you myself.’ I fear I must have shown a perfect horror of aversion from this fate, for he made haste to quiet me. ‘Reassure yourself, Asenath,’ he resumed. ‘Old as I am, I have not forgotten the tumultuous fancies of youth. I have passed my days, indeed, in laboratories; but in all my vigils I have not forgotten the tune of a young pulse. Age asks with timidity to be spared intolerable pain; youth, taking fortune by the beard, demands joy like a right. These things I have not forgotten; none, rather, has more keenly felt, none more jealously considered them; I have but postponed them to their day. See, then: you stand without support; the only friend left to you, this old investigator, old in cunning, young in sympathy. Answer me but one question: Are you free from the entanglement of what the world calls love? Do you still command your heart and purposes? or are you fallen in some bond-slavery of the eye and ear?’

I answered him in broken words; my heart, I think I must have told him, lay with my dead parents.

‘It is enough,’ he said. ‘It has been my fate to be called on often, too often, for those services of which we spoke to-night; none in Utah could carry them so well to a conclusion; hence there has fallen into my hands a certain share of influence which I now lay at your service, partly for the sake of my dead friends, your parents; partly for the interest I bear you in your own right. I shall send you to England, to the great city of London, there to await the bridegroom I have selected. He shall be a son of mine, a young man suitable in age and not grossly deficient in that quality of beauty that your years demand. Since your heart is free, you may well pledge me the sole promise that I ask in return for much expense and still more danger: to await the arrival of that bridegroom with the delicacy of a wife.’

I sat awhile stunned. The doctor’s marriages, I remembered to have heard, had been unfruitful; and this added perplexity to my distress. But I was alone, as he had said, alone in that dark land; the thought of escape, of any equal marriage, was already enough to revive in me some dawn of hope; and in what words I know not, I accepted the proposal.

He seemed more moved by my consent than I could reasonably have looked for. ‘You shall see,’ he cried; ‘you shall judge for yourself.’ And hurrying to the next room he returned with a small portrait somewhat coarsely done in oils. It showed a man in the dress of nearly forty years before, young indeed, but still recognisable to be the doctor. ‘Do you like it?’ he asked. ‘That is myself when I was young. My — my boy will be like that, like but nobler; with such health as angels might condescend to envy; and a man of mind, Asenath, of commanding mind. That should be a man, I think; that should be one among ten thousand. A man like that — one to combine the passions of youth with the restraint, the force, the dignity of age — one to fill all the parts and faculties, one to be man’s epitome — say, will that not satisfy the needs of an ambitious girl? Say, is not that enough?’ And as he held the picture close before my eyes, his hands shook.

I told him briefly I would ask no better, for I was transpierced with this display of fatherly emotion; but even as I said the words, the most insolent revolt surged through my arteries. I held him in horror, him, his portrait, and his son; and had there been any choice but death or a Mormon marriage, I declare before Heaven I had embraced it.

‘It is well,’ he replied, ‘and I had rightly counted on your spirit. Eat, then, for you have far to go.’ So saying, he set meat before me; and while I was endeavouring to obey, he left the room and returned with an armful of coarse raiment. ‘There,’ said he, ‘is your disguise. I leave you to your toilet.’

The clothes had probably belonged to a somewhat lubberly boy of fifteen; and they hung about me like a sack, and cruelly hampered my movements. But what filled me with uncontrollable shudderings, was the problem of their origin and the fate of the lad to whom they had belonged. I had scarcely effected the exchange when the doctor returned, opened a back window, helped me out into the narrow space between the house and the overhanging bluffs, and showed me a ladder of iron footholds mortised in the rock. ‘Mount,’ he said, ‘swiftly. When you are at the summit, walk, so far as you are able, in the shadow of the smoke. The smoke will bring you, sooner or later, to a canyon; follow that down, and you will find a man with two horses. Him you will implicitly obey. And remember, silence! That machinery, which I now put in motion for your service, may by one word be turned against you. Go; Heaven prosper you!’

The ascent was easy. Arrived at the top of the cliff, I saw before me on the other side a vast and gradual declivity of stone, lying bare to the moon and the surrounding mountains. Nowhere was any vantage or concealment; and knowing how these deserts were beset with spies, I made haste to veil my movements under the blowing trail of smoke. Sometimes it swam high, rising on the night wind, and I had no more substantial curtain than its moon-thrown shadow; sometimes again it crawled upon the earth, and I would walk in it, no higher than to my shoulders, like some mountain fog. But, one way or another, the smoke of that ill-omened furnace protected the first steps of my escape, and led me unobserved to the canyon.

There, sure enough, I found a taciturn and sombre man beside a pair of saddle-horses; and thenceforward, all night long, we wandered in silence by the most occult and dangerous paths among the mountains. A little before the dayspring we took refuge in a wet and gusty cavern at the bottom of a gorge; lay there all day concealed; and the next night, before the glow had faded out of the west, resumed our wanderings. About noon we stopped again, in a lawn upon a little river, where was a screen of bushes; and here my guide, handing me a bundle from his pack, bade me change my dress once more. The bundle contained clothing of my own, taken from our house, with such necessaries as a comb and soap. I made my toilet by the mirror of a quiet pool; and as I was so doing, and smiling with some complacency to see myself restored to my own image, the mountains rang with a scream of far more than human piercingness; and while I still stood astonished, there sprang up and swiftly increased a storm of the most awful and earth-rending sounds. Shall I own to you, that I fell upon my face and shrieked? And yet this was but the overland train winding among the near mountains: the very means of my salvation: the strong wings that were to carry me from Utah!

When I was dressed, the guide gave me a bag, which contained, he said, both money and papers; and telling me that I was already over the borders in the territory of Wyoming, bade me follow the stream until I reached the railway station, half a mile below. ‘Here,’ he added, ‘is your ticket as far as Council Bluffs. The East express will pass in a few hours.’ With that, he took both horses, and, without further words or any salutation, rode off by the way that we had come.

Three hours afterwards, I was seated on the end platform of the train as it swept eastward through the gorges and thundered in tunnels of the mountain. The change of scene, the sense of escape, the still throbbing terror of pursuit — above all, the astounding magic of my new conveyance, kept me from any logical or melancholy thought. I had gone to the doctor’s house two nights before prepared to die, prepared for worse than death; what had passed, terrible although it was, looked almost bright compared to my anticipations; and it was not till I had slept a full night in the flying palace car, that I awoke to the sense of my irreparable loss and to some reasonable alarm about the future. In this mood, I examined the contents of the bag. It was well supplied with gold; it contained tickets and complete directions for my journey as far as Liverpool, and a long letter from the doctor, supplying me with a fictitious name and story, recommending the most guarded silence, and bidding me to await faithfully the coming of his son. All then had been arranged beforehand: he had counted upon my consent, and what was tenfold worse, upon my mother's voluntary death. My horror of my only friend, my aversion for this son who was to marry me, my revolt against the whole current and conditions of my life, were now complete. I was sitting stupefied by my distress and helplessness, when, to my joy, a very pleasant lady offered me her conversation. I clutched at the relief; and I was soon glibly telling her the story in the doctor's letter: how I was a Miss Gould, of Nevada City, going to England to an uncle, what money I had, what family, my age, and so forth, until I had exhausted my instructions, and, as the lady still continued to ply me with questions, began to embroider on my own account. This soon carried one of my inexperience beyond her depth; and I had already remarked a shadow on the lady's face, when a gentleman drew near and very civilly addressed me.

'Miss Gould, I believe?' said he; and then, excusing himself to the lady by the authority of my guardian, drew me to the fore platform of the Pullman car. 'Miss Gould,' he said in my ear, 'is it possible that you suppose yourself in safety? Let me completely undeceive you. One more such indiscretion and you return to Utah. And, in the meanwhile, if this woman should again address you, you are to reply with these words: "Madam, I do not like you, and I will be obliged if you will suffer me to choose my own associates."'

Alas, I had to do as I was bid; this lady, to whom I already felt myself drawn with the strongest cords of sympathy, I dismissed with insult; and thenceforward, through all that day, I sat in silence, gazing on the bare plains and swallowing my tears. Let that suffice: it was the pattern of my journey. Whether on the train, at the hotels, or on board the ocean steamer, I never exchanged a friendly word with any fellow-traveller but I was certain to be interrupted. In every place, on every side, the most unlikely persons, man or woman, rich or poor, became protectors to forward me upon my journey, or spies to observe and regulate my conduct. Thus I crossed the States, thus passed the ocean, the Mormon Eye still following my movements; and when at length a cab had set me down before that London lodging-house from which you saw me flee this morning, I had already ceased to struggle and ceased to hope.

The landlady, like every one else through all that journey, was expecting my arrival. A fire was lighted in my room, which looked upon the garden; there were books on the table, clothes in the drawers; and there (I had almost said with contentment, and certainly with resignation) I saw month follow month over my head. At times my landlady took me for a walk or an excursion, but she would never suffer me to leave the house alone; and I, seeing that she also lived under the shadow of that widespread Mormon terror, felt too much pity to resist. To the child born on Mormon soil, as to the man who accepts the engagements of a secret order, no escape is possible; so I had clearly read, and I was thankful even for this respite. Meanwhile, I tried honestly to prepare my mind for my approaching nuptials. The day drew near when my bridegroom was to visit me, and gratitude and fear alike obliged me to consent. A son of Doctor Grierson's, be he what he pleased, must still be young, and it was even probable he should be handsome; on more than that, I felt I dared not reckon; and in moulding my mind towards consent I dwelt the more carefully on these physical attractions which I felt I might expect, and averted my eyes from moral or intellectual considerations. We have a great power upon our spirits; and as time passed I worked myself into a frame of acquiescence, nay, and I began to grow impatient for the hour. At night sleep forsook me; I sat all day by the fire, absorbed in dreams, conjuring up the features of my husband, and anticipating in fancy the touch of his hand and the sound of his voice. In the dead level and solitude of my existence, this was the one eastern window and the one door of hope. At last, I had so cultivated and prepared my will, that I began to be besieged with fears upon the other side. How if it was I that did not please? How if this unseen lover should turn from me with disaffection? And now I spent hours before the glass, studying and judging my attractions, and was never weary of changing my dress or ordering my hair.

When the day came I was long about my toilet; but at last, with a sort of hopeful desperation, I had to own that I could do no more, and must now stand or fall by nature. My occupation ended, I fell a prey to the most sickening impatience, mingled with alarms; giving ear to the swelling rumour of the streets, and at each change of sound or silence, starting, shrinking, and colouring to the brow. Love is not to be prepared, I know, without some knowledge of the object; and yet, when the cab at last rattled to the door and I heard my visitor mount the stairs, such was the tumult of hopes in my poor bosom that love itself might have been proud to own their parentage. The door opened, and it was Doctor Grierson that appeared. I believe I must have screamed aloud, and I know, at least, that I fell fainting to the floor.

When I came to myself he was standing over me, counting my pulse. 'I have startled you,' he said. 'A difficulty unforeseen — the impossibility of obtaining a certain drug in its full purity — has forced me to resort to London unprepared. I regret that I should have shown myself once more without those poor attractions which are much, perhaps, to you, but to me are no more considerable than rain that falls into the sea. Youth is but a state, as passing as that syncope from which you are but just awakened, and, if there be truth in science, as easy to recall; for I find, Asenath, that I must now take you for my confidant. Since my first years, I have devoted every hour and act of life to one ambitious task; and the time of my success is at hand. In these new countries, where I was so long content to stay, I collected indispensable ingredients; I have fortified myself on every side from the possibility of error; what was a dream now takes the substance of reality; and when I offered you a son of mine I did so in a figure. That son — that husband, Asenath, is myself — not as you now behold me, but restored to the first energy of youth. You think me mad? It is the customary attitude of ignorance. I will not argue; I will leave facts to speak. When you behold me purified, invigorated, renewed, restamped in the original image — when you recognise in me (what I shall be) the first perfect expression of the powers of mankind — I shall be able to laugh with a better grace at your passing and natural incredulity. To what can you aspire — fame, riches, power, the charm of youth, the dear-bought wisdom of age — that I shall not be able to afford you in perfection? Do not deceive yourself. I already excel you in every human gift but one: when that gift also has been restored to me you will recognise your master.'

Hereupon, consulting his watch, he told me he must now leave me to myself; and bidding me consult reason, and not girlish fancies, he withdrew. I had not the courage to move; the night fell and found me still where he had laid me during my faint, my face buried in my hands, my soul drowned in the darkest apprehensions. Late in the evening he returned, carrying a candle, and, with a certain irritable tremor, bade me rise and sup. 'Is it possible,' he added, 'that I have been deceived in your courage? A cowardly girl is no fit mate for me.'

I flung myself before him on my knees, and with floods of tears besought him to release me from this engagement, assuring him that my cowardice was abject, and that in every point of intellect and character I was his hopeless and derisible inferior.

'Why, certainly,' he replied. 'I know you better than yourself; and I am well enough acquainted with human nature to understand this scene. It is addressed to me,' he added with a smile, 'in my character of the still untransformed. But do not alarm yourself about the future. Let me but attain my end, and not you only, Asenath, but every woman on the face of the earth becomes my willing slave.'

Thereupon he obliged me to rise and eat; sat down with me to table;

helped and entertained me with the attentions of a fashionable host; and it was not till a late hour, that, bidding me courteously good-night, he once more left me alone to my misery.

In all this talk of an elixir and the restoration of his youth, I scarce knew from which hypothesis I should the more eagerly recoil. If his hopes reposed on any base of fact, if indeed, by some abhorrent miracle, he should discard his age, death were my only refuge from that most unnatural, that most ungodly union. If, on the other hand, these dreams were merely lunatic, the madness of a life waxed suddenly acute, my pity would become a load almost as heavy to bear as my revolt against the marriage. So passed the night, in alternations of rebellion and despair, of hate and pity; and with the next morning I was only to comprehend more fully my enslaved position. For though he appeared with a very tranquil countenance, he had no sooner observed the marks of grief upon my brow than an answering darkness gathered on his own. 'Asenath.' he said, 'you owe me much already; with one finger I still hold you suspended over death; my life is full of labour and anxiety; and I choose,' said he, with a remarkable accent of command, 'that you shall greet me with a pleasant face.' He never needed to repeat the recommendation; from that day forward I was always ready to receive him with apparent cheerfulness; and he rewarded me with a good deal of his company, and almost more than I could bear of his confidence. He had set up a laboratory in the back part of the house, where he toiled day and night at his elixir, and he would come thence to visit me in my parlour: now with passing humours of discouragement; now, and far more often, radiant with hope. It was impossible to see so much of him, and not to recognise that the sands of his life were running low; and yet all the time he would be laying out vast fields of future, and planning, with all the confidence of youth, the most unbounded schemes of pleasure and ambition. How I replied I know not; but I found a voice and words to answer, even while I wept and raged to hear him.

A week ago the doctor entered my room with the marks of great exhilaration contending with pitiful bodily weakness. 'Asenath,' said he, 'I have now obtained the last ingredient. In one week from now the perilous moment of the last projection will draw nigh. You have once before assisted, although unconsciously, at the failure of a similar experiment. It was the elixir which so terribly exploded one night when you were passing my house; and it is idle to deny that the conduct of so delicate a process, among the million jars and trepidations of so great a city, presents a certain element of danger. From this point of view, I cannot but regret the perfect stillness of my house among the deserts; but, on the other hand, I have succeeded in proving that the singularly unstable equilibrium of the elixir, at the moment of projection, is due rather to the impurity than to the nature of the ingredients; and as all are now of an equal and exquisite nicety, I have little fear for the result. In a week then from to-day, my dear Asenath, this period of trial will be ended.' And he smiled upon me in a manner unusually paternal.

I smiled back with my lips, but at my heart there raged the blackest and most unbridled terror. What if he failed? And oh, tenfold worse! what if he succeeded? What detested and unnatural changeling would appear before me to claim my hand? And could there, I asked myself with a dreadful sinking, be any truth in his boasts of an assured victory over my reluctance? I knew him, indeed, to be masterful, to lead my life at a sign. Suppose, then, this experiment to succeed; suppose him to return to me, hideously restored, like a vampire in a legend; and suppose that, by some devilish fascination . . . My head turned; all former fears deserted me: and I felt I could embrace the worst in preference to this.

My mind was instantly made up. The doctor's presence in London was justified by the affairs of the Mormon polity. Often, in our conversation, he would gloat over the details of that great organisation, which he feared even while yet he wielded it; and would remind me, that even in the humming labyrinth of London, we were still visible to that unsleeping eye in Utah. His visitors, indeed, who were of every sort, from the missionary to the destroying angel, and seemed to belong to every rank of life, had, up to that moment, filled me with unmixed repulsion and alarm. I knew that if my secret were to reach the ear of any leader my fate were sealed beyond redemption; and yet in my present pass of horror and despair, it was to these very men that I turned for help. I waylaid upon the stair one of the Mormon missionaries, a man of a low class, but not inaccessible to pity; told him I scarce remember what elaborate fable to explain my application; and by his intermediacy entered into correspondence with my father's family. They recognised my claim for help, and on this very day I was to begin my escape.

Last night I sat up fully dressed, awaiting the result of the doctor's labours, and prepared against the worst. The nights at this season and in this northern latitude are short; and I had soon the company of the returning daylight. The silence in and around the house was only broken by the movements of the doctor in the laboratory; to these I listened, watch in hand, awaiting the hour of my escape, and yet consumed by anxiety about the strange experiment that was going forward overhead. Indeed, now that I was conscious of some protection for myself, my sympathies had turned more directly to the doctor's side; I caught myself even praying for his success; and when some hours ago a low, peculiar cry reached my ears from the laboratory, I could no longer control my impatience, but mounted the stairs and opened the door.

The doctor was standing in the middle of the room; in his hand a large, round-bellied, crystal flask, some three parts full of a bright amber-coloured liquid; on his face a rapture of gratitude and joy unspeakable. As he saw me he raised the flask at arm's length. 'Victory!' he cried. 'Victory, Asenath!' And then — whether the flask escaped his trembling fingers, or whether the explosion were spontaneous, I cannot tell — enough that we were thrown, I against the door-post, the doctor into the corner of the room; enough that we were shaken to the soul by the same explosion that must have startled you upon the street; and that, in the brief space of an indistinguishable instant, there remained nothing of the labours of the doctor's lifetime but a few shards of broken crystal and those voluminous and ill-smelling vapours that pursued me in my flight.

THE SQUIRE OF DAMES (Concluded)

What with the lady’s animated manner and dramatic conduct of her voice, Challoner had thrilled to every incident with genuine emotion. His fancy, which was not perhaps of a very lively character, applauded both the matter and the style; but the more judicial functions of his mind refused assent. It was an excellent story; and it might be true, but he believed it was not. Miss Fonblanque was a lady, and it was doubtless possible for a lady to wander from the truth; but how was a gentleman to tell her so? His spirits for some time had been sinking, but they now fell to zero; and long after her voice had died away he still sat with a troubled and averted countenance, and could find no form of words to thank her for her narrative. His mind, indeed, was empty of everything beyond a dull longing for escape. From this pause, which grew the more embarrassing with every second, he was roused by the sudden laughter of the lady. His vanity was alarmed; he turned and faced her; their eyes met; and he caught from hers a spark of such frank merriment as put him instantly at ease.

‘You certainly,’ he said, ‘appear to bear your calamities with excellent spirit.’

‘Do I not?’ she cried, and fell once more into delicious laughter. But from this access she more speedily recovered. ‘This is all very well,’ said she, nodding at him gravely, ‘but I am still in a most distressing situation, from which, if you deny me your help, I shall find it difficult indeed to free myself.’

At this mention of help Challoner fell back to his original gloom.

‘My sympathies are much engaged with you,’ he said, ‘and I should be delighted, I am sure. But our position is most unusual; and circumstances over which I have, I can assure you, no control, deprive me of the power — the pleasure — Unless, indeed,’ he added, somewhat brightening at the thought, ‘I were to recommend you to the care of the police?’

She laid her hand upon his arm and looked hard into his eyes; and he saw with wonder that, for the first time since the moment of their meeting, every trace of colour had faded from her cheek.

‘Do so,’ she said, ‘and — weigh my words well — you kill me as certainly as with a knife.’

‘God bless me!’ exclaimed Challoner.

‘Oh,’ she cried, ‘I can see you disbelieve my story and make light of the perils that surround me; but who are you to judge? My family share my apprehensions; they help me in secret; and you saw yourself by what an emissary, and in what a place, they have chosen to supply me with the funds for my escape. I admit that you are brave and clever and have impressed me most favourably; but how are you to prefer your opinion before that of my uncle, an ex-minister of state, a man with the ear of the Queen, and of a long political experience? If I am mad, is he? And you must allow me, besides, a special claim upon your help. Strange as you may think my story, you know that much of it is true; and if you who heard the explosion and saw the Mormon at Victoria, refuse to credit and assist me, to whom am I to turn?'

'He gave you money then?' asked Challoner, who had been dwelling singly on that fact.

'I begin to interest you,' she cried. 'But, frankly, you are condemned to help me. If the service I had to ask of you were serious, were suspicious, were even unusual, I should say no more. But what is it? To take a pleasure trip (for which, if you will suffer me, I propose to pay) and to carry from one lady to another a sum of money! What can be more simple?'

'Is the sum,' asked Challoner, 'considerable?'

She produced a packet from her bosom; and observing that she had not yet found time to make the count, tore open the cover and spread upon her knees a considerable number of Bank of England notes. It took some time to make the reckoning, for the notes were of every degree of value; but at last, and counting a few loose sovereigns, she made out the sum to be a little under £710 sterling. The sight of so much money worked an immediate revolution in the mind of Challoner.

'And you propose, madam,' he cried, 'to intrust that money to a perfect stranger?'

'Ah!' said she, with a charming smile, 'but I no longer regard you as a stranger.'

'Madam,' said Challoner, 'I perceive I must make you a confession. Although of a very good family — through my mother, indeed, a lineal descendant of the patriot Bruce — I dare not conceal from you that my affairs are deeply, very deeply involved. I am in debt; my pockets are practically empty; and, in short, I am fallen to that state when a considerable sum of money would prove to many men an irresistible temptation.'

'Do you not see,' returned the young lady, 'that by these words you have removed my last hesitation? Take them.' And she thrust the notes into the young man's hand.

He sat so long, holding them, like a baby at the font, that Miss Fonblanque once more bubbled into laughter.

'Pray,' she said, 'hesitate no further; put them in your pocket; and to relieve our position of any shadow of embarrassment, tell me by what name I am to address my knight-errant, for I find myself reduced to the awkwardness of the pronoun.’

Had borrowing been in question, the wisdom of our ancestors had come lightly to the young man’s aid; but upon what pretext could he refuse so generous a trust? Upon none he saw, that was not unpardonably wounding; and the bright eyes and the high spirits of his companion had already made a breach in the rampart of Challoner’s caution. The whole thing, he reasoned, might be a mere mystification, which it were the height of solemn folly to resent. On the other hand, the explosion, the interview at the public-house, and the very money in his hands, seemed to prove beyond denial the existence of some serious danger; and if that were so, could he desert her? There was a choice of risks: the risk of behaving with extraordinary incivility and unhandsomeness to a lady, and the risk of going on a fool’s errand. The story seemed false; but then the money was undeniable. The whole circumstances were questionable and obscure; but the lady was charming, and had the speech and manners of society. While he still hung in the wind, a recollection returned upon his mind with some of the dignity of prophecy. Had he not promised Somerset to break with the traditions of the commonplace, and to accept the first adventure offered? Well, here was the adventure.

He thrust the money into his pocket.

‘My name is Challoner,’ said he.

‘Mr. Challoner,’ she replied, ‘you have come very generously to my aid when all was against me. Though I am myself a very humble person, my family commands great interest; and I do not think you will repent this handsome action.’

Challoner flushed with pleasure.

‘I imagine that, perhaps, a consulship,’ she added, her eyes dwelling on him with a judicial admiration, ‘a consulship in some great town or capital — or else — But we waste time; let us set about the work of my delivery.’

She took his arm with a frank confidence that went to his heart; and once more laying by all serious thoughts, she entertained him, as they crossed the park, with her agreeable gaiety of mind. Near the Marble Arch they found a hansom, which rapidly conveyed them to the terminus at Euston Square; and here, in the hotel, they sat down to an excellent breakfast. The young lady’s first step was to call for writing materials and write, upon one corner of the table, a hasty note; still, as she did so, glancing with smiles at her companion. ‘Here,’ said she, ‘here is the letter which will introduce you to my cousin.’ She began to fold the paper. ‘My cousin, although I have never seen her, has the character of a very charming woman and a recognised beauty; of that I know nothing, but at least she has been very kind to me; so has my lord her father; so have you — kinder than all — kinder than I can bear to think of.' She said this with unusual emotion; and, at the same time, sealed the envelope. 'Ah!' she cried, 'I have shut my letter! It is not quite courteous; and yet, as between friends, it is perhaps better so. I introduce you, after all, into a family secret; and though you and I are already old comrades, you are still unknown to my uncle. You go then to this address, Richard Street, Glasgow; go, please, as soon as you arrive; and give this letter with your own hands into those of Miss Fonblanque, for that is the name by which she is to pass. When we next meet, you will tell me what you think of her,' she added, with a touch of the provocative.

'Ah,' said Challoner, almost tenderly, 'she can be nothing to me.'

'You do not know,' replied the young lady, with a sigh. 'By-the-bye, I had forgotten — it is very childish, and I am almost ashamed to mention it — but when you see Miss Fonblanque, you will have to make yourself a little ridiculous; and I am sure the part in no way suits you. We had agreed upon a watchword. You will have to address an earl's daughter in these words: "*Nigger, nigger, never die*;" but reassure yourself,' she added, laughing, 'for the fair patrician will at once finish the quotation. Come now, say your lesson.'

'"Nigger, nigger, never die,"' repeated Challoner, with undisguised reluctance.

Miss Fonblanque went into fits of laughter. 'Excellent,' said she, 'it will be the most humorous scene.' And she laughed again.

'And what will be the counterword?' asked Challoner stiffly.

'I will not tell you till the last moment,' said she; 'for I perceive you are growing too imperious.'

Breakfast over, she accompanied the young man to the platform, bought him the *Graphic*, the *Athenæum*, and a paper-cutter, and stood on the step conversing till the whistle sounded. Then she put her head into the carriage. '*Black face and shining eye*!' she whispered, and instantly leaped down upon the platform, with a thrill of gay and musical laughter. As the train steamed out of the great arch of glass, the sound of that laughter still rang in the young man's ears.

Challoner's position was too unusual to be long welcome to his mind. He found himself projected the whole length of England, on a mission beset with obscure and ridiculous circumstances, and yet, by the trust he had accepted, irrevocably bound to persevere. How easy it appeared, in the retrospect, to have refused the whole proposal, returned the money, and gone forth again upon his own affairs, a free and happy man! And it was now impossible: the enchantress who had held him with her eye had now disappeared, taking his honour in pledge; and as she had failed to leave him an address, he was denied even the inglorious safety of retreat. To use the paper-knife, or even to read the periodicals with which she had presented him, was to renew the bitterness of his remorse; and as he was alone in the compartment, he passed the day staring at the landscape in impotent repentance, and long before he was landed on the platform of St. Enoch's, had fallen to the lowest and coldest zones of self-contempt.

As he was hungry, and elegant in his habits, he would have preferred to dine and to remove the stains of travel; but the words of the young lady, and his own impatient eagerness, would suffer no delay. In the late, luminous, and lamp-starred dusk of the summer evening, he accordingly set forward with brisk steps.

The street to which he was directed had first seen the day in the character of a row of small suburban villas on a hillside; but the extension of the city had long since, and on every hand, surrounded it with miles of streets. From the top of the hill a range of very tall buildings, densely inhabited by the poorest classes of the population and variegated by drying-poles from every second window, overplumbed the villas and their little gardens like a sea-board cliff. But still, under the grime of years of city smoke, these antiquated cottages, with their venetian blinds and rural porticoes, retained a somewhat melancholy savour of the past.

The street when Challoner entered it was perfectly deserted. From hard by, indeed, the sound of a thousand footfalls filled the ear; but in Richard Street itself there was neither light nor sound of human habitation. The appearance of the neighbourhood weighed heavily on the mind of the young man; once more, as in the streets of London, he was impressed with the sense of city deserts; and as he approached the number indicated, and somewhat falteringly rang the bell, his heart sank within him.

The bell was ancient, like the house; it had a thin and garrulous note; and it was some time before it ceased to sound from the rear quarters of the building. Following upon this an inner door was stealthily opened, and careful and catlike steps drew near along the hall. Challoner, supposing he was to be instantly admitted, produced his letter, and, as well as he was able, prepared a smiling face. To his indescribable surprise, however, the footsteps ceased, and then, after a pause and with the like stealthiness, withdrew once more, and died away in the interior of the house. A second time the young man rang violently at the bell; a second time, to his keen hearkening, a certain bustle of discreet footing moved upon the hollow boards of the old villa; and again the fainthearted garrison only drew near to retreat. The cup of the visitor's endurance was now full to overflowing; and, committing the whole family of Fonblanque to every mood and shade of condemnation, he turned upon his heel and redescended the steps. Perhaps the mover in the house was watching from a window, and plucked up courage at the sight of this desistance; or perhaps, where he lurked trembling in the back parts of the villa, reason in its own right had conquered his alarms. Challoner, at least, had scarce set foot upon the pavement when he was arrested by the sound of the withdrawal of an inner bolt; one followed another, rattling in their sockets; the key turned harshly in the lock; the door opened; and there appeared upon the threshold a man of a very stalwart figure in his shirt sleeves. He was a person neither of great manly beauty nor of a refined exterior; he was not the man, in ordinary moods, to attract the eyes of the observer; but as he now stood in the doorway, he was marked so legibly with the extreme passion of terror that Challoner stood wonder-struck. For a fraction of a minute they gazed upon each other in silence; and then the man of the house, with ashen lips and gasping voice, inquired the business of his visitor. Challoner replied, in tones from which he strove to banish his surprise, that he was the bearer of a letter to a certain Miss Fonblanque. At this name, as at a talisman, the man fell back and impatiently invited him to enter; and no sooner had the adventurer crossed the threshold, than the door was closed behind him and his retreat cut off.

It was already long past eight at night; and though the late twilight of the north still lingered in the streets, in the passage it was already groping dark. The man led Challoner directly to a parlour looking on the garden to the back. Here he had apparently been supping; for by the light of a tallow dip the table was seen to be covered with a napkin, and set out with a quart of bottled ale and the heel of a Gouda cheese. The room, on the other hand, was furnished with faded solidity, and the walls were lined with scholarly and costly volumes in glazed cases. The house must have been taken furnished; for it had no congruity with this man of the shirt sleeves and the mean supper. As for the earl's daughter, the earl and the visionary consulships in foreign cities, they had long ago begun to fade in Challoner's imagination. Like Doctor Grierson and the Mormon angels, they were plainly woven of the stuff of dreams. Not an illusion remained to the knight-errant; not a hope was left him, but to be speedily relieved from this disreputable business.

The man had continued to regard his visitor with undisguised anxiety, and began once more to press him for his errand.

'I am here,' said Challoner, 'simply to do a service between two ladies; and I must ask you, without further delay, to summon Miss Fonblanque, into whose hands alone I am authorised to deliver the letter that I bear.'

A growing wonder began to mingle on the man's face with the lines of solicitude. 'I am Miss Fonblanque,' he said; and then, perceiving the effect of this communication, 'Good God!' he cried, 'what are you staring at? I tell you, I am Miss Fonblanque.'

Seeing the speaker wore a chin-beard of considerable length, and the remainder of his face was blue with shaving, Challoner could only suppose himself the subject of a jest. He was no longer under the spell of the young lady's presence; and with men, and above all with his inferiors, he was capable of some display of spirit.

'Sir,' said he, pretty roundly, 'I have put myself to great inconvenience for persons of whom I know too little, and I begin to be weary of the business. Either you shall immediately summon Miss Fonblanque, or I leave this house and put myself under the direction of the police.'

'This is horrible!' exclaimed the man. 'I declare before Heaven I am the person meant, but how shall I convince you? It must have been Clara, I perceive, that sent you on this errand — a madwoman, who jests with the most deadly interests; and here we are incapable, perhaps, of an agreement, and Heaven knows what may depend on our delay!'

He spoke with a really startling earnestness; and at the same time there flashed upon the mind of Challoner the ridiculous jingle which was to serve as password. 'This may, perhaps, assist you,' he said, and then, with some embarrassment, '"Nigger, nigger, never die."'

A light of relief broke upon the troubled countenance of the man with the chin-beard. '"Black face and shining eye" — give me the letter,' he panted, in one gasp.

'Well,' said Challoner, though still with some reluctance, 'I suppose I must regard you as the proper recipient; and though I may justly complain of the spirit in which I have been treated, I am only too glad to be done with all responsibility. Here it is,' and he produced the envelope.

The man leaped upon it like a beast, and with hands that trembled in a manner painful to behold, tore it open and unfolded the letter. As he read, terror seemed to mount upon him to the pitch of nightmare. He struck one hand upon his brow, while with the other, as if unconsciously, he crumpled the paper to a ball. 'My gracious powers!' he cried; and then, dashing to the window, which stood open on the garden, he clapped forth his head and shoulders, and whistled long and shrill. Challoner fell back into a corner, and resolutely grasping his staff, prepared for the most desperate events; but the thoughts of the man with the chin-beard were far removed from violence. Turning again into the room, and once more beholding his visitor, whom he appeared to have forgotten, he fairly danced with trepidation. 'Impossible!' he cried. 'Oh, quite impossible! O Lord, I have lost my head.' And then, once more striking his hand upon his brow, 'The money!' he exclaimed. 'Give me the money.'

'My good friend,' replied Challoner, 'this is a very painful exhibition; and until I see you reasonably master of yourself, I decline to proceed with any business.'

'You are quite right,' said the man. 'I am of a very nervous habit; a long course of the dumb ague has undermined my constitution. But I know you have money; it may be still the saving of me; and oh, dear young gentleman, in pity's name be expeditious!' Challoner, sincerely uneasy as he was, could scarce refrain from laughter; but he was himself in a hurry to be gone, and without more delay produced the money. 'You will find the sum, I trust, correct,' he observed 'and let me ask you to give me a receipt.'

But the man heeded him not. He seized the money, and disregarding the sovereigns that rolled loose upon the floor, thrust the bundle of notes into his pocket.

'A receipt,' repeated Challoner, with some asperity. 'I insist on a receipt.'

'Receipt?' repeated the man, a little wildly. 'A receipt? Immediately! Await me here.'

Challoner, in reply, begged the gentleman to lose no unnecessary time, as he was himself desirous of catching a particular train.

'Ah, by God, and so am I!' exclaimed the man with the chin-beard; and with that he was gone out of the room, and had rattled upstairs, four at a time, to the upper story of the villa.

'This is certainly a most amazing business,' thought Challoner; 'certainly a most disquieting affair; and I cannot conceal from myself that I have become mixed up with either lunatics or malefactors. I may truly thank my stars that I am so nearly and so creditably done with it.' Thus thinking, and perhaps remembering the episode of the whistle, he turned to the open window. The garden was still faintly clear; he could distinguish the stairs and terraces with which the small domain had been adorned by former owners, and the blackened bushes and dead trees that had once afforded shelter to the country birds; beyond these he saw the strong retaining wall, some thirty feet in height, which enclosed the garden to the back; and again above that, the pile of dingy buildings rearing its frontage high into the night. A peculiar object lying stretched upon the lawn for some time baffled his eyesight; but at length he had made it out to be a long ladder, or series of ladders bound into one; and he was still wondering of what service so great an instrument could be in such a scant enclosure, when he was recalled to himself by the noise of some one running violently down the stairs. This was followed by the sudden, clamorous banging of the house door; and that again, by rapid and retreating footsteps in the street.

Challoner sprang into the passage. He ran from room to room, upstairs and downstairs; and in that old dingy and worm-eaten house, he found himself alone. Only in one apartment, looking to the front, were there any traces of the late inhabitant: a bed that had been recently slept in and not made, a chest of drawers disordered by a hasty search, and on the floor a roll of crumpled paper. This he picked up. The light in this upper story looking to the front was considerably brighter than in the parlour; and he was able to make out that the paper bore the mark of the hotel at Euston, and even, by peering closely, to decipher the following lines in a very elegant and careful female hand:

'Dear M'Guire, — It is certain your retreat is known. We have just had another failure, clockwork thirty hours too soon, with the usual humiliating result. Zero is quite disheartened. We are all scattered, and I could find no one but the *solemn ass* who brings you this and the money. I would love to see your meeting. — Ever yours,

Shining Eye.'

Challoner was stricken to the heart. He perceived by what facility, by what unmanly fear of ridicule, he had been brought down to be the gull of this intriguer; and his wrath flowed forth in almost equal measure against himself, against the woman, and against Somerset, whose idle counsels had impelled him to embark on that adventure. At the same time a great and troubled curiosity, and a certain chill of fear, possessed his spirit. The conduct of the man with the chin-beard, the terms of the letter, and the explosion of the early morning, fitted together like parts in some obscure and mischievous imbroglio. Evil was certainly afoot; evil, secrecy, terror, and falsehood were the conditions and the passions of the people among whom he had begun to move, like a blind puppet; and he who began as a puppet, his experience told him, was often doomed to perish as a victim.

From the stupor of deep thought into which he had glided with the letter in his hand, he was awakened by the clatter of the bell. He glanced from the window; and, conceive his horror and surprise when he beheld, clustered on the steps, in the front garden and on the pavement of the street, a formidable posse of police! He started to the full possession of his powers and courage. Escape, and escape at any cost, was the one idea that possessed him. Swiftly and silently he redescended the creaking stairs; he was already in the passage when a second and more imperious summons from the door awoke the echoes of the empty house; nor had the bell ceased to jangle before he had bestridden the window-sill of the parlour and was lowering himself into the garden. His coat was hooked upon the iron flower-basket; for a moment he hung dependent heels and head below; and then, with the noise of rending cloth, and followed by several pots, he dropped upon the sod. Once more the bell was rung, and now with furious and repeated peals. The desperate Challoner turned his eyes on every side. They fell upon the ladder, and he ran to it, and with strenuous but unavailing effort sought to raise it from the ground. Suddenly the weight, which was thus resisting his whole strength, began to lighten in his hands; the ladder, like a thing of life, reared its bulk from off the sod; and Challoner, leaping back with a cry of almost superstitious terror, beheld the whole structure mount, foot by foot, against the face of the retaining wall. At the same time, two heads were dimly visible above the parapet, and he was hailed by a guarded whistle. Something in its modulation recalled, like an echo, the whistle of the man with the chin-beard.

Had he chanced upon a means of escape prepared beforehand by those very miscreants whose messenger and gull he had become? Was this, indeed, a means of safety, or but the starting-point of further complication and disaster? He paused not to reflect. Scarce was the ladder reared to its full length than he had sprung already on the rounds; hand over hand, swift as an ape, he scaled the tottering stairway. Strong arms received, embraced, and helped him; he was lifted and set once more upon the earth; and with the spasm of his alarm yet unsubsided, found himself in the company of two rough-looking men, in the paved back yard of one of the tall houses that crowned the summit of the hill. Meanwhile, from below, the note of the bell had been succeeded by the sound of vigorous and redoubling blows.

‘Are you all out?’ asked one of his companions; and, as soon as he had babbled an answer in the affirmative, the rope was cut from the top round, and the ladder thrust roughly back into the garden, where it fell and broke with clattering reverberations. Its fall was hailed with many broken cries; for the whole of Richard Street was now in high emotion, the people crowding to the windows or clambering on the garden walls. The same man who had already addressed Challoner seized him by the arm; whisked him through the basement of the house and across the street upon the other side; and before the unfortunate adventurer had time to realise his situation, a door was opened, and he was thrust into a low and dark compartment.

‘Bedad,’ observed his guide, ‘there was no time to lose. Is M’Guire gone, or was it you that whistled?

‘M’Guire is gone,’ said Challoner.

The guide now struck a light. ‘Ah,’ said he, ‘this will never do. You dare not go upon the streets in such a figure. Wait quietly here and I will bring you something decent.’

With that the man was gone, and Challoner, his attention thus rudely awakened, began ruefully to consider the havoc that had been worked in his attire. His hat was gone; his trousers were cruelly ripped; and the best part of one tail of his very elegant frockcoat had been left hanging from the iron crockets of the window. He had scarce had time to measure these disasters when his host re-entered the apartment and proceeded, without a word, to envelop the refined and urbane Challoner in a long ulster of the cheapest material, and of a pattern so gross and vulgar that his spirit sickened at the sight. This calumnious disguise was crowned and completed by a soft felt hat of the Tyrolese design, and several sizes too small. At another moment Challoner would simply have refused to issue forth upon the world thus travestied; but the desire to escape from Glasgow was now too strongly and too exclusively impressed upon his mind. With one haggard glance at the spotted tails of his new coat, he inquired what was to pay for this accoutrement. The man assured him that the whole expense was easily met from funds in his possession, and begged him, instead of wasting time, to make his best speed out of the neighbourhood.

The young man was not loath to take the hint. True to his usual courtesy, he thanked the speaker and complimented him upon his taste in greatcoats; and leaving the man somewhat abashed by these remarks and the manner of their delivery, he hurried forth into the lamplit city. The last train was gone ere, after many deviations, he had reached the terminus. Attired as he was he dared not present himself at any reputable inn; and he felt keenly that the unassuming dignity of his demeanour would serve to attract attention, perhaps mirth and possibly suspicion, in any humbler hostelry. He was thus condemned to pass the solemn and uneventful hours of a whole night in pacing the streets of Glasgow; supperless; a figure of fun for all beholders; waiting the dawn, with hope indeed, but with unconquerable shrinkings; and above all things, filled with a profound sense of the folly and weakness of his conduct. It may be conceived with what curses he assailed the memory of the fair narrator of Hyde Park; her parting laughter rang in his ears all night with damning mockery and iteration; and when he could spare a thought from this chief artificer of his confusion, it was to expend his wrath on Somerset and the career of the amateur detective. With the coming of day, he found in a shy milk-shop the means to appease his hunger. There were still many hours to wait before the departure of the South express; these he passed wandering with indescribable fatigue in the obscurer by-streets of the city; and at length slipped quietly into the station and took his place in the darkest corner of a third-class carriage. Here, all day long, he jolted on the bare boards, distressed by heat and continually reawakened from uneasy slumbers. By the half return ticket in his purse, he was entitled to make the journey on the easy cushions and with the ample space of the first-class; but alas!

in his absurd attire, he durst not, for decency, commingle with his equals; and this small annoyance, coming last in such a series of disasters, cut him to the heart.

That night, when, in his Putney lodging, he reviewed the expense, anxiety, and weariness of his adventure; when he beheld the ruins of his last good trousers and his last presentable coat; and above all, when his eye by any chance alighted on the Tyrolese hat or the degrading ulster, his heart would overflow with bitterness, and it was only by a serious call on his philosophy that he maintained the dignity of his demeanour.

SOMERSET’S ADVENTURE

THE SUPERFLUOUS MANSION

Mr. Paul Somerset was a young gentleman of a lively and fiery imagination, with very small capacity for action. He was one who lived exclusively in dreams and in the future: the creature of his own theories, and an actor in his own romances. From the cigar divan he proceeded to parade the streets, still heated with the fire of his eloquence, and scouting upon every side for the offer of some fortunate adventure. In the continual stream of passers-by, on the sealed fronts of houses, on the posters that covered the hoardings, and in every lineament and throb of the great city, he saw a mysterious and hopeful hieroglyph. But although the elements of adventure were streaming by him as thick as drops of water in the Thames, it was in vain that, now with a beseeching, now with something of a braggadocio air, he courted and provoked the notice of the passengers; in vain that, putting fortune to the touch, he even thrust himself into the way and came into direct collision with those of the more promising demeanour. Persons brimful of secrets, persons pining for affection, persons perishing for lack of help or counsel, he was sure he could perceive on every side; but by some contrariety of fortune, each passed upon his way without remarking the young gentleman, and went farther (surely to fare worse!) in quest of the confidant, the friend, or the adviser. To thousands he must have turned an appealing countenance, and yet not one regarded him.

A light dinner, eaten to the accompaniment of his impetuous aspirations, broke in upon the series of his attempts on fortune; and when he returned to the task, the lamps were already lighted, and the nocturnal crowd was dense upon the pavement. Before a certain restaurant, whose name will readily occur to any student of our Babylon, people were already packed so closely that passage had grown difficult; and Somerset, standing in the kennel, watched, with a hope that was beginning to grow somewhat weary, the faces and the manners of the crowd. Suddenly he was startled by a gentle touch upon the shoulder, and facing about, he was aware of a very plain and elegant brougham, drawn by a pair of powerful horses, and driven by a man in sober livery. There were no arms upon the panel; the window was open, but the interior was obscure; the driver yawned behind his palm; and the young man was already beginning to suppose himself the dupe of his own fancy, when a hand, no larger than a child’s and smoothly gloved in white, appeared in a corner of the window and privily beckoned him to approach. He did so, and looked in. The carriage was occupied by a single small and very dainty figure, swathed head and shoulders in impenetrable folds of white lace; and a voice, speaking low and silvery, addressed him in these words —

‘Open the door and get in.’

‘It must be,’ thought the young man with an almost unbearable thrill, ‘it must be that duchess at last!’ Yet, although the moment was one to which he had long looked forward, it was with a certain share of alarm that he opened the door, and, mounting into the brougham, took his seat beside the lady of the lace. Whether or no she had touched a spring, or given some other signal, the young man had hardly closed the door before the carriage, with considerable swiftness, and with a very luxurious and easy movement on its springs, turned and began to drive towards the west.

Somerset, as I have written, was not unprepared; it had long been his particular pleasure to rehearse his conduct in the most unlikely situations; and this, among others, of the patrician ravisher, was one he had familiarly studied. Strange as it may seem, however, he could find no apposite remark; and as the lady, on her side, vouchsafed no further sign, they continued to drive in silence through the streets. Except for alternate flashes from the passing lamps, the carriage was plunged in obscurity; and beyond the fact that the fittings were luxurious, and that the lady was singularly small and slender in person, and, all but one gloved hand, still swathed in her costly veil, the young man could decipher no detail of an inspiring nature. The suspense began to grow unbearable. Twice he cleared his throat, and twice the whole resources of the language failed him. In similar scenes, when he had forecast them on the theatre of fancy, his presence of mind had always been complete, his eloquence remarkable; and at this disparity between the rehearsal and the performance, he began to be seized with a panic of apprehension. Here, on the very threshold of adventure, suppose him ignominiously to fail; suppose that after ten, twenty, or sixty seconds of still uninterrupted silence, the lady should touch the check-string and re-deposit him, weighed and found wanting, on the common street! Thousands of persons of no mind at all, he reasoned, would be found more equal to the part; could, that very instant, by some decisive step, prove the lady’s choice to have been well inspired, and put a stop to this intolerable silence.

His eye, at this point, lighted on the hand. It was better to fall by desperate councils than to continue as he was; and with one tremulous swoop he pounced on the gloved fingers and drew them to himself. One overt step, it had appeared to him, would dissolve the spell of his embarrassment; in act, he found it otherwise: he found himself no less incapable of speech or further progress; and with the lady’s hand in his, sat helpless. But worse was in store. A peculiar quivering began to agitate the form of his companion; the hand that lay unresistingly in Somerset's trembled as with ague; and presently there broke forth, in the shadow of the carriage, the bubbling and musical sound of laughter, resisted but triumphant. The young man dropped his prize; had it been possible, he would have bounded from the carriage. The lady, meanwhile, lying back upon the cushions, passed on from trill to trill of the most heartfelt, high-pitched, clear and fairy-sounding merriment.

'You must not be offended,' she said at last, catching an opportunity between two paroxysms. 'If you have been mistaken in the warmth of your attentions, the fault is solely mine; it does not flow from your presumption, but from my eccentric manner of recruiting friends; and, believe me, I am the last person in the world to think the worse of a young man for showing spirit. As for to-night, it is my intention to entertain you to a little supper; and if I shall continue to be as much pleased with your manners as I was taken with your face, I may perhaps end by making you an advantageous offer.'

Somerset sought in vain to find some form of answer, but his discomfiture had been too recent and complete.

'Come,' returned the lady, 'we must have no display of temper; that is for me the one disqualifying fault; and as I perceive we are drawing near our destination, I shall ask you to descend and offer me your arm.'

Indeed, at that very moment the carriage drew up before a stately and severe mansion in a spacious square; and Somerset, who was possessed of an excellent temper, with the best grace in the world assisted the lady to alight. The door was opened by an old woman of a grim appearance, who ushered the pair into a dining-room somewhat dimly lighted, but already laid for supper, and occupied by a prodigious company of large and valuable cats. Here, as soon as they were alone, the lady divested herself of the lace in which she was enfolded; and Somerset was relieved to find, that although still bearing the traces of great beauty, and still distinguished by the fire and colour of her eye, her hair was of a silvery whiteness and her face lined with years.

'And now, *mon preux*,' said the old lady, nodding at him with a quaint gaiety, 'you perceive that I am no longer in my first youth. You will soon find that I am all the better company for that.'

As she spoke, the maid re-entered the apartment with a light but tasteful supper. They sat down, accordingly, to table, the cats with savage pantomime surrounding the old lady's chair; and what with the excellence of the meal and the gaiety of his entertainer, Somerset was soon completely at his ease. When they had well eaten and drunk, the old lady leaned back in her chair, and taking a cat upon her lap, subjected her guest to a prolonged but evidently mirthful scrutiny.

‘I fear, madam,’ said Somerset, ‘that my manners have not risen to the height of your preconceived opinion.’

‘My dear young man,’ she replied, ‘you were never more mistaken in your life. I find you charming, and you may very well have lighted on a fairy godmother. I am not one of those who are given to change their opinions, and short of substantial demerit, those who have once gained my favour continue to enjoy it; but I have a singular swiftness of decision, read my fellow men and women with a glance, and have acted throughout life on first impressions. Yours, as I tell you, has been favourable; and if, as I suppose, you are a young fellow of somewhat idle habits, I think it not improbable that we may strike a bargain.’

‘Ah, madam,’ returned Somerset, ‘you have divined my situation. I am a man of birth, parts, and breeding; excellent company, or at least so I find myself; but by a peculiar iniquity of fate, destitute alike of trade or money. I was, indeed, this evening upon the quest of an adventure, resolved to close with any offer of interest, emolument, or pleasure; and your summons, which I profess I am still at some loss to understand, jumped naturally with the inclination of my mind. Call it, if you will, impudence; I am here, at least, prepared for any proposition you can find it in your heart to make, and resolutely determined to accept.’

‘You express yourself very well,’ replied the old lady, ‘and are certainly a droll and curious young man. I should not care to affirm that you were sane, for I have never found any one entirely so besides myself; but at least the nature of your madness entertains me, and I will reward you with some description of my character and life.’

Thereupon the old lady, still fondling the cat upon her lap, proceeded to narrate the following particulars.

NARRATIVE OF THE SPIRITED OLD LADY

I was the eldest daughter of the Reverend Bernard Fanshawe, who held a valuable living in the diocese of Bath and Wells. Our family, a very large one, was noted for a sprightly and incisive wit, and came of a good old stock where beauty was an heirloom. In Christian grace of character we were unhappily deficient. From my earliest years I saw and deplored the defects of those relatives whose age and position should have enabled them to conquer my esteem; and while I was yet a child, my father married a second wife, in whom (strange to say) the Fanshawe failings were exaggerated to a monstrous and almost laughable degree. Whatever may be said against me, it cannot be denied I was a pattern daughter; but it was in vain that, with the most touching patience, I submitted to my stepmother's demands; and from the hour she entered my father's house, I may say that I met with nothing but injustice and ingratitude.

I stood not alone, however, in the sweetness of my disposition; for one other of the family besides myself was free from any violence of character. Before I had reached the age of sixteen, this cousin, John by name, had conceived for me a sincere but silent passion; and although the poor lad was too timid to hint at the nature of his feelings, I had soon divined and begun to share them. For some days I pondered on the odd situation created for me by the bashfulness of my admirer; and at length, perceiving that he began, in his distress, rather to avoid than seek my company, I determined to take the matter into my own hands. Finding him alone in a retired part of the rectory garden, I told him that I had divined his amiable secret, that I knew with what disfavour our union was sure to be regarded; and that, under the circumstances, I was prepared to flee with him at once. Poor John was literally paralysed with joy; such was the force of his emotions, that he could find no words in which to thank me; and that I, seeing him thus helpless, was obliged to arrange, myself, the details of our flight, and of the stolen marriage which was immediately to crown it. John had been at that time projecting a visit to the metropolis. In this I bade him persevere, and promised on the following day to join him at the Tavistock Hotel.

True, on my side, to every detail of our arrangement, I arose, on the day in question, before the servants, packed a few necessaries in a bag, took with me the little money I possessed, and bade farewell for ever to the rectory. I walked with good spirits to a town some thirty miles from home, and was set down the next morning in this great city of London. As I walked from the coach-office to the hotel, I could not help exulting in the pleasant change that had befallen me; beholding, meanwhile, with innocent delight, the traffic of the streets, and depicting, in all the colours of fancy, the reception that awaited me from John. But alas! when I inquired for Mr. Fanshawe, the porter assured me there was no such gentleman among the guests. By what channel our secret had leaked out, or what pressure had been brought to bear on the too facile John, I could never fathom. Enough that my family had triumphed; that I found myself alone in London, tender in years, smarting under the most sensible mortification, and by every sentiment of pride and self-respect debarred for ever from my father's house.

I rose under the blow, and found lodgings in the neighbourhood of Euston Road, where, for the first time in my life, I tasted the joys of independence. Three days afterwards, an advertisement in the *Times* directed me to the office of a solicitor whom I knew to be in my father's confidence. There I was given the promise of a very moderate allowance, and a distinct intimation that I must never look to be received at home. I could not but resent so cruel a desertion, and I told the lawyer it was a meeting I desired as little as themselves. He smiled at my courageous spirit, paid me the first quarter of my income, and gave me the remainder of my personal effects, which had been sent to me, under his care, in a couple of rather ponderous boxes. With these I returned in triumph to my lodgings, more content with my position than I should have thought possible a week before, and fully determined to make the best of the future.

All went well for several months; and, indeed, it was my own fault alone that ended this pleasant and secluded episode of life. I have, I must confess, the fatal trick of spoiling my inferiors. My landlady, to whom I had as usual been overkind, impertinently called me in fault for some particular too small to mention; and I, annoyed that I had allowed her the freedom upon which she thus presumed, ordered her to leave my presence. She stood a moment dumb, and then, recalling her self-possession, 'Your bill,' said she, 'shall be ready this evening, and to-morrow, madam, you shall leave my house. See,' she added, 'that you are able to pay what you owe me; for if I do not receive the uttermost farthing, no box of yours shall pass my threshold.'

I was confounded at her audacity, but as a whole quarter's income was due to me, not otherwise affected by the threat. That afternoon, as I left the solicitor's door, carrying in one hand, and done up in a paper parcel, the whole amount of my fortune, there befell me one of those decisive incidents that sometimes shape a life. The lawyer's office was situate in a street that opened at the upper end upon the Strand, and was closed at the lower, at the time of which I speak, by a row of iron railings looking on the Thames. Down this street, then, I beheld my stepmother advancing to meet me, and doubtless bound to the very house I had just left. She was attended by a maid whose face was new to me, but her own was too clearly printed on my memory; and the sight of it, even from a distance, filled me with generous indignation. Flight was impossible. There was nothing left but to retreat against the railing, and with my back turned to the street, pretend to be admiring the barges on the river or the chimneys of transpontine London.

I was still so standing, and had not yet fully mastered the turbulence of my emotions, when a voice at my elbow addressed me with a trivial question. It was the maid whom my stepmother, with characteristic hardness, had left to await her on the street, while she transacted her business with the family solicitor. The girl did not know who I was; the opportunity too golden to be lost; and I was soon hearing the latest news of my father's rectory and parish. It did not surprise me to find that she detested her employers; and yet the terms in which she spoke of them were hard to bear, hard to let pass unchallenged. I heard them, however, without dissent, for my self-command is wonderful; and we might have parted as we met, had she not proceeded, in an evil hour, to criticise the rector's missing daughter, and with the most shocking perversions, to narrate the story of her flight. My nature is so essentially generous that I can never pause to reason. I flung up my hand sharply, by way, as well as I remember, of indignant protest; and, in the act, the packet slipped from my fingers, glanced between the railings, and fell and sunk in the river. I stood a moment petrified, and then, struck by the drollery of the incident, gave way to peals of laughter. I was still laughing when my stepmother reappeared, and the maid, who doubtless considered me insane, ran off to join her; nor had I yet recovered my gravity when I presented myself before the lawyer to solicit a fresh advance. His answer made me serious enough, for it was a flat refusal; and it was not until I had besought him even with tears, that he consented to lend me ten pounds from his own pocket. 'I am a poor man,' said he, 'and you must look for nothing farther at my hands.'

The landlady met me at the door. 'Here, madam,' said she, with a curtsey insolently low, 'here is my bill. Would it inconvenience you to settle it at once?'

'You shall be paid, madam,' said I, 'in the morning, in the proper course.' And I took the paper with a very high air, but inwardly quaking.

I had no sooner looked at it than I perceived myself to be lost. I had been short of money and had allowed my debt to mount; and it had now reached the sum, which I shall never forget, of twelve pounds thirteen and fourpence halfpenny. All evening I sat by the fire considering my situation. I could not pay the bill; my landlady would not suffer me to remove my boxes; and without either baggage or money, how was I to find another lodging? For three months, unless I could invent some remedy, I was condemned to be without a roof and without a penny. It can surprise no one that I decided on immediate flight; but even here I was confronted by a difficulty, for I had no sooner packed my boxes than I found I was not strong enough to move, far less to carry them.

In this strait I did not hesitate a moment, but throwing on a shawl and bonnet, and covering my face with a thick veil, I betook myself to that great bazaar of dangerous and smiling chances, the pavement of the city. It was already late at night, and the weather being wet and windy, there were few abroad besides policemen. These, on my present mission, I had wit enough to know for enemies; and wherever I perceived their moving lanterns, I made haste to turn aside and choose another thoroughfare. A few miserable women still walked the pavement; here and there were young fellows returning drunk, or ruffians of the lowest class lurking in the mouths of alleys; but of any one to whom I might appeal in my distress, I began almost to despair.

At last, at the corner of a street, I ran into the arms of one who was evidently a gentleman, and who, in all his appointments, from his furred great-coat to the fine cigar which he was smoking, comfortably breathed of wealth. Much as my face has changed from its original beauty, I still retain (or so I tell myself) some traces of the youthful lightness of my figure. Even veiled as I then was, I could perceive the gentleman was struck by my appearance: and this emboldened me for my adventure.

‘Sir,’ said I, with a quickly beating heart, ‘sir, are you one in whom a lady can confide?’

‘Why, my dear,’ said he, removing his cigar, ‘that depends on circumstances. If you will raise your veil — ’

‘Sir,’ I interrupted, ‘let there be no mistake. I ask you, as a gentleman, to serve me, but I offer no reward.’

‘That is frank,’ said he; ‘but hardly tempting. And what, may I inquire, is the nature of the service?’

But I knew well enough it was not my interest to tell him on so short an interview. ‘If you will accompany me,’ said I, ‘to a house not far from here, you can see for yourself.’

He looked at me awhile with hesitating eyes; and then, tossing away his cigar, which was not yet a quarter smoked, ‘Here goes!’ said he, and with perfect politeness offered me his arm. I was wise enough to take it; to prolong our walk as far as possible, by more than one excursion from the shortest line; and to beguile the way with that sort of conversation which should prove to him indubitably from what station in society I sprang. By the time we reached the door of my lodging, I felt sure I had confirmed his interest, and might venture, before I turned the pass-key, to beseech him to moderate his voice and to tread softly. He promised to obey me: and I admitted him into the passage and thence into my sitting-room, which was fortunately next the door.

'And now,' said he, when with trembling fingers I had lighted a candle, 'what is the meaning of all this?'

'I wish you,' said I, speaking with great difficulty, 'to help me out with these boxes — and I wish nobody to know.'

He took up the candle. 'And I wish to see your face,' said he.

I turned back my veil without a word, and looked at him with every appearance of resolve that I could summon up. For some time he gazed into my face, still holding up the candle. 'Well,' said he at last, 'and where do you wish them taken?'

I knew that I had gained my point; and it was with a tremor in my voice that I replied. 'I had thought we might carry them between us to the corner of Euston Road,' said I, 'where, even at this late hour, we may still find a cab.'

'Very good,' was his reply; and he immediately hoisted the heavier of my trunks upon his shoulder, and taking one handle of the second, signed to me to help him at the other end. In this order we made good our retreat from the house, and without the least adventure, drew pretty near to the corner of Euston Road. Before a house, where there was a light still burning, my companion paused. 'Let us here,' said he, 'set down our boxes, while we go forward to the end of the street in quest of a cab. By doing so, we can still keep an eye upon their safety, and we avoid the very extraordinary figure we should otherwise present — a young man, a young lady, and a mass of baggage, standing castaway at midnight on the streets of London.' So it was done, and the event proved him to be wise; for long before there was any word of a cab, a policeman appeared upon the scene, turned upon us the full glare of his lantern, and hung suspiciously behind us in a doorway.

'There seem to be no cabs about, policeman,' said my champion, with affected cheerfulness. But the constable's answer was ungracious; and as for the offer of a cigar, with which this rebuff was most unwisely followed up, he refused it point-blank, and without the least civility. The young gentleman looked at me with a warning grimace, and there we continued to stand, on the edge of the pavement, in the beating rain, and with the policeman still silently watching our movements from the doorway.

At last, and after a delay that seemed interminable, a four-wheeler appeared lumbering along in the mud, and was instantly hailed by my companion. 'Just pull up here, will you?' he cried. 'We have some baggage up the street.’

And now came the hitch of our adventure; for when the policeman, still closely following us, beheld my two boxes lying in the rain, he arose from mere suspicion to a kind of certitude of something evil. The light in the house had been extinguished; the whole frontage of the street was dark; there was nothing to explain the presence of these unguarded trunks; and no two innocent people were ever, I believe, detected in such questionable circumstances.

‘Where have these things come from?’ asked the policeman, flashing his light full into my champion’s face.

‘Why, from that house, of course,’ replied the young gentleman, hastily shouldering a trunk.

The policeman whistled and turned to look at the dark windows; he then took a step towards the door, as though to knock, a course which had infallibly proved our ruin; but seeing us already hurrying down the street under our double burthen, thought better or worse of it, and followed in our wake.

‘For God’s sake,’ whispered my companion, ‘tell me where to drive to.’

‘Anywhere,’ I replied with anguish. ‘I have no idea. Anywhere you like.’

Thus it befell that, when the boxes had been stowed, and I had already entered the cab, my deliverer called out in clear tones the address of the house in which we are now seated. The policeman, I could see, was staggered. This neighbourhood, so retired, so aristocratic, was far from what he had expected. For all that, he took the number of the cab, and spoke for a few seconds and with a decided manner in the cabman’s ear.

‘What can he have said?’ I gasped, as soon as the cab had rolled away.

‘I can very well imagine,’ replied my champion; ‘and I can assure you that you are now condemned to go where I have said; for, should we attempt to change our destination by the way, the jarvey will drive us straight to a police-office. Let me compliment you on your nerves,’ he added. ‘I have had, I believe, the most horrible fright of my existence.’

But my nerves, which he so much misjudged, were in so strange a disarray that speech was now become impossible; and we made the drive thenceforward in unbroken silence. When we arrived before the door of our destination, the young gentleman alighted, opened it with a pass-key like one who was at home, bade the driver carry the trunks into the hall, and dismissed him with a handsome fee. He then led me into this dining-room, looking nearly as you behold it, but with certain marks of bachelor occupancy, and hastened to pour out a glass of wine, which he insisted on my drinking. As soon as I could find my voice, ‘In God’s name,’ I cried, ‘where am I?’

He told me I was in his house, where I was very welcome, and had no more urgent business than to rest myself and recover my spirits. As he spoke he offered me another glass of wine, of which, indeed, I stood in great want, for I was faint, and inclined to be hysterical. Then he sat down beside the fire, lit another cigar, and for some time observed me curiously in silence.

‘And now,’ said he, ‘that you have somewhat restored yourself, will you be kind enough to tell me in what sort of crime I have become a partner? Are you murderer, smuggler, thief, or only the harmless and domestic moonlight flitter?’

I had been already shocked by his lighting a cigar without permission, for I had not forgotten the one he threw away on our first meeting; and now, at these explicit insults, I resolved at once to reconquer his esteem. The judgment of the world I have consistently despised, but I had already begun to set a certain value on the good opinion of my entertainer. Beginning with a note of pathos, but soon brightening into my habitual vivacity and humour, I rapidly narrated the circumstances of my birth, my flight, and subsequent misfortunes. He heard me to an end in silence, gravely smoking. ‘Miss Fanshawe,’ said he, when I had done, ‘you are a very comical and most enchanting creature; and I can see nothing for it but that I should return to-morrow morning and satisfy your landlady’s demands.’

‘You strangely misinterpret my confidence,’ was my reply; ‘and if you had at all appreciated my character, you would understand that I can take no money at your hands.’

‘Your landlady will doubtless not be so particular,’ he returned; ‘nor do I at all despair of persuading even your unconquerable self. I desire you to examine me with critical indulgence. My name is Henry Luxmore, Lord Southwark’s second son. I possess nine thousand a year, the house in which we are now sitting, and seven others in the best neighbourhoods in town. I do not believe I am repulsive to the eye, and as for my character, you have seen me under trial. I think you simply the most original of created beings; I need not tell you what you know very well, that you are ravishingly pretty; and I have nothing more to add, except that, foolish as it may appear, I am already head over heels in love with you.’

‘Sir,’ said I, ‘I am prepared to be misjudged; but while I continue to accept your hospitality that fact alone should be enough to protect me from insult.’

‘Pardon me,’ said he: ‘I offer you marriage.’ And leaning back in his chair he replaced his cigar between his lips.

I own I was confounded by an offer, not only so unprepared, but couched in terms so singular. But he knew very well how to obtain his purposes, for he was not only handsome in person, but his very coolness had a charm; and to make a long story short, a fortnight later I became the wife of the Honourable Henry Luxmore.

For nearly twenty years I now led a life of almost perfect quiet. My Henry had his weaknesses; I was twice driven to flee from his roof, but not for long; for though he was easily over-excited, his nature was placable below the surface, and with all his faults, I loved him tenderly. At last he was taken from me; and such is the power of self-deception, and so strange are the whims of the dying, he actually assured me, with his latest breath, that he forgave the violence of my temper!

There was but one pledge of the marriage, my daughter Clara. She had, indeed, inherited a shadow of her father's failing; but in all things else, unless my partial eyes deceived me, she derived her qualities from me, and might be called my moral image. On my side, whatever else I may have done amiss, as a mother I was above reproach. Here, then, was surely every promise for the future; here, at last, was a relation in which I might hope to taste repose. But it was not to be. You will hardly credit me when I inform you that she ran away from home; yet such was the case. Some whim about oppressed nationalities — Ireland, Poland, and the like — has turned her brain; and if you should anywhere encounter a young lady (I must say, of remarkable attractions) answering to the name of Luxmore, Lake, or Fonblanque (for I am told she uses these indifferently, as well as many others), tell her, from me, that I forgive her cruelty, and though I will never more behold her face, I am at any time prepared to make her a liberal allowance.

On the death of Mr. Luxmore, I sought oblivion in the details of business. I believe I have mentioned that seven mansions, besides this, formed part of Mr. Luxmore's property: I have found them seven white elephants. The greed of tenants, the dishonesty of solicitors, and the incapacity that sits upon the bench, have combined together to make these houses the burthen of my life. I had no sooner, indeed, begun to look into these matters for myself, than I discovered so many injustices and met with so much studied incivility, that I was plunged into a long series of lawsuits, some of which are pending to this day. You must have heard my name already; I am the Mrs. Luxmore of the Law Reports: a strange destiny, indeed, for one born with an almost cowardly desire for peace! But I am of the stamp of those who, when they have once begun a task, will rather die than leave their duty unfulfilled. I have met with every obstacle: insolence and ingratitude from my own lawyers; in my adversaries, that fault of obstinacy which is to me perhaps the most distasteful in the calendar; from the bench, civility indeed — always, I must allow, civility — but never a spark of independence, never that knowledge of the law and love of justice which we have a right to look for in a judge, the most august of human officers. And still, against all these odds, I have undissuadably persevered.

It was after the loss of one of my innumerable cases (a subject on which I will not dwell) that it occurred to me to make a melancholy pilgrimage to my various houses. Four were at that time tenantless and closed, like pillars of salt, commemorating the corruption of the age and the decline of private virtue. Three were occupied by persons who had wearied me by every conceivable unjust demand and legal subterfuge — persons whom, at that very hour, I was moving heaven and earth to turn into the street. This was perhaps the sadder spectacle of the two; and my heart grew hot within me to behold them occupying, in my very teeth, and with an insolent ostentation, these handsome structures which were as much mine as the flesh upon my body.

One more house remained for me to visit, that in which we now are. I had let it (for at that period I lodged in a hotel, the life that I have always preferred) to a Colonel Geraldine, a gentleman attached to Prince Florizel of Bohemia, whom you must certainly have heard of; and I had supposed, from the character and position of my tenant, that here, at least, I was safe against annoyance. What was my surprise to find this house also shuttered and apparently deserted! I will not deny that I was offended; I conceived that a house, like a yacht, was better to be kept in commission; and I promised myself to bring the matter before my solicitor the following morning. Meanwhile the sight recalled my fancy naturally to the past; and yielding to the tender influence of sentiment, I sat down opposite the door upon the garden parapet. It was August, and a sultry afternoon, but that spot is sheltered, as you may observe by daylight, under the branches of a spreading chestnut; the square, too, was deserted; there was a sound of distant music in the air; and all combined to plunge me into that most agreeable of states, which is neither happiness nor sorrow, but shares the poignancy of both.

From this I was recalled by the arrival of a large van, very handsomely appointed, drawn by valuable horses, mounted by several men of an appearance more than decent, and bearing on its panels, instead of a trader's name, a coat-of-arms too modest to be deciphered from where I sat. It drew up before my house, the door of which was immediately opened by one of the men. His companions — I counted seven of them in all — proceeded, with disciplined activity, to take from the van and carry into the house a variety of hampers, bottle-baskets, and boxes, such as are designed for plate and napery. The windows of the dining-room were thrown widely open, as though to air it; and I saw some of those within laying the table for a meal. Plainly, I concluded, my tenant was about to return; and while still determined to submit to no aggression on my rights, I was gratified by the number and discipline of his attendants, and the quiet profusion that appeared to reign in his establishment. I was still so thinking when, to my extreme surprise, the windows and shutters of the dining-room were once more closed; the men began to reappear from the interior and resume their stations on the van; the last closed the door behind his exit; the van drove away; and the house was once more left to itself, looking blindly on the square with shuttered windows, as though the whole affair had been a vision.

It was no vision, however; for, as I rose to my feet, and thus brought my eyes a little nearer to the level of the fanlight over the door, I saw that, though the day had still some hours to run, the hall lamps had been lighted and left burning. Plainly, then, guests were expected, and were not expected before night. For whom, I asked myself with indignation, were such secret preparations likely to be made? Although no prude, I am a woman of decided views upon morality; if my house, to which my husband had brought me, was to serve in the character of a *petite maison*, I saw myself forced, however unwillingly, into a new course of litigation; and, determined to return and know the worst, I hastened to my hotel for dinner.

I was at my post by ten. The night was clear and quiet; the moon rode very high and put the lamps to shame; and the shadow below the chestnut was black as ink. Here, then, I ensconced myself on the low parapet, with my back against the railings, face to face with the moonlit front of my old home, and ruminating gently on the past. Time fled; eleven struck on all the city clocks; and presently after I was aware of the approach of a gentleman of stately and agreeable demeanour. He was smoking as he walked; his light paletôt, which was open, did not conceal his evening clothes; and he bore himself with a serious grace that immediately awakened my attention. Before the door of this house he took a pass-key from his pocket, quietly admitted himself, and disappeared into the lamplit hall.

He was scarcely gone when I observed another and a much younger man approaching hastily from the opposite side of the square. Considering the season of the year and the genial mildness of the night, he was somewhat closely muffled up; and as he came, for all his hurry, he kept looking nervously behind him. Arrived before my door, he halted and set one foot upon the step, as though about to enter; then, with a sudden change, he turned and began to hurry away; halted a second time, as if in painful indecision; and lastly, with a violent gesture, wheeled about, returned straight to the door, and rapped upon the knocker. He was almost immediately admitted by the first arrival.

My curiosity was now broad awake. I made myself as small as I could in the very densest of the shadow, and waited for the sequel. Nor had I long to wait. From the same side of the square a second young man made his appearance, walking slowly and softly, and like the first, muffled to the nose. Before the house he paused, looked all about him with a swift and comprehensive glance; and seeing the square lie empty in the moon and lamplight, leaned far across the area railings and appeared to listen to what was passing in the house. From the dining-room there came the report of a champagne cork, and following upon that, the sound of rich and manly laughter. The listener took heart of grace, produced a key, unlocked the area gate, shut it noiselessly behind him, and descended the stair. Just when his head had reached the level of the pavement, he turned half round and once more raked the square with a suspicious eyeshot. The mufflings had fallen lower round his neck; the moon shone full upon him; and I was startled to observe the pallor and passionate agitation of his face.

I could remain no longer passive. Persuaded that something deadly was afoot, I crossed the roadway and drew near the area railings. There was no one below; the man must therefore have entered the house, with what purpose I dreaded to imagine. I have at no part of my career lacked courage; and now, finding the area gate was merely laid to, I pushed it gently open and descended the stairs. The kitchen door of the house, like the area gate, was closed but not fastened. It flashed upon me that the criminal was thus preparing his escape; and the thought, as it confirmed the worst of my suspicions, lent me new resolve. I entered the house; and being now quite reckless of my life, I shut and locked the door.

From the dining-room above I could hear the pleasant tones of a voice in easy conversation. On the ground floor all was not only profoundly silent, but the darkness seemed to weigh upon my eyes. Here, then, I stood for some time, having thrust myself uncalled into the utmost peril, and being destitute of any power to help or interfere. Nor will I deny that fear had begun already to assail me, when I became aware, all at once and as though by some immediate but silent incandescence, of a certain glimmering of light upon the passage floor. Towards this I groped my way with infinite precaution; and having come at length as far as the angle of the corridor, beheld the door of the butler's pantry standing just ajar and a narrow thread of brightness falling from the chink. Creeping still closer, I put my eye to the aperture. The man sat within upon a chair, listening, I could see, with the most rapt attention. On a table before him he had laid a watch, a pair of steel revolvers, and a bull's-eye lantern. For one second many contradictory theories and projects whirled together in my head; the next, I had slammed the door and turned the key upon the malefactor. Surprised at my own decision, I stood and panted, leaning on the wall. From within the pantry not a sound was to be heard; the man, whatever he was, had accepted his fate without a struggle, and now, as I hugged myself to fancy, sat frozen with terror and looking for the worst to follow. I promised myself that he should not be disappointed; and the better to complete my task, I turned to ascend the stairs.

The situation, as I groped my way to the first floor, appealed to me suddenly by my strong sense of humour. Here was I, the owner of the house, burglariously present in its walls; and there, in the dining-room, were two gentlemen, unknown to me, seated complacently at supper, and only saved by my promptitude from some surprising or deadly interruption. It were strange if I could not manage to extract the matter of amusement from so unusual a situation.

Behind this dining-room, there is a small apartment intended for a library. It was to this that I cautiously groped my way; and you will see how fortune had exactly served me. The weather, I have said, was sultry; in order to ventilate the dining-room and yet preserve the uninhabited appearance of the mansion to the front, the window of the library had been widely opened, and the door of communication between the two apartments left ajar. To this interval I now applied my eye.

Wax tapers, set in silver candlesticks, shed their chastened brightness on the damask of the tablecloth and the remains of a cold collation of the rarest delicacy. The two gentlemen had finished supper, and were now trifling with cigars and maraschino; while in a silver spirit lamp, coffee of the most captivating fragrance was preparing in the fashion of the East. The elder of the two, he who had first arrived, was placed directly facing me; the other was set on his left hand. Both, like the man in the butler’s pantry, seemed to be intently listening; and on the face of the second I thought I could perceive the marks of fear. Oddly enough, however, when they came to speak, the parts were found to be reversed.

‘I assure you,’ said the elder gentleman, ‘I not only heard the slamming of a door, but the sound of very guarded footsteps.’

‘Your highness was certainly deceived,’ replied the other. ‘I am endowed with the acutest hearing, and I can swear that not a mouse has rustled.’ Yet the pallor and contraction of his features were in total discord with the tenor of his words.

His highness (whom, of course, I readily divined to be Prince Florizel) looked at his companion for the least fraction of a second; and though nothing shook the easy quiet of his attitude, I could see that he was far from being duped. ‘It is well,’ said he; ‘let us dismiss the topic. And now, sir, that I have very freely explained the sentiments by which I am directed, let me ask you, according to your promise, to imitate my frankness.’

‘I have heard you,’ replied the other, ‘with great interest.’

‘With singular patience,’ said the prince politely.

‘Ay, your highness, and with unlooked-for sympathy,’ returned the young man. ‘I know not how to tell the change that has befallen me. You have, I must suppose, a charm, to which even your enemies are subject.’ He looked at the clock on the mantelpiece and visibly blanched. ‘So late!’ he cried. ‘Your highness — God knows I am now speaking from the heart — before it be too late, leave this house!’

The prince glanced once more at his companion, and then very deliberately shook the ash from his cigar. ‘That is a strange remark,’ said he; ‘and *á propos de bottes*, I never continue a cigar when once the ash is fallen; the spell breaks, the soul of the flavour flies away, and there remains but the dead body of tobacco; and I make it a rule to throw away that husk and choose another.’ He suited the action to the words.

‘Do not trifle with my appeal,’ resumed the young man, in tones that trembled with emotion. ‘It is made at the price of my honour and to the peril of my life. Go — go now! lose not a moment; and if you have any kindness for a young man, miserably deceived indeed, but not devoid of better sentiments, look not behind you as you leave.’

‘Sir,’ said the prince, ‘I am here upon your honour; assure you upon mine that I shall continue to rely upon that safeguard. The coffee is ready; I must again trouble you, I fear.’ And with a courteous movement of the hand, he seemed to invite his companion to pour out the coffee.

The unhappy young man rose from his seat. ‘I appeal to you,’ he cried, ‘by every holy sentiment, in mercy to me, if not in pity to yourself, begone before it is too late.’

‘Sir,’ replied the prince, ‘I am not readily accessible to fear; and if there is one defect to which I must plead guilty, it is that of a curious disposition. You go the wrong way about to make me leave this house, in which I play the part of your entertainer; and, suffer me to add, young man, if any peril threaten us, it was of your contriving, not of mine.’

‘Alas, you do not know to what you condemn me,’ cried the other. ‘But I at least will have no hand in it.’ With these words he carried his hand to his pocket, hastily swallowed the contents of a phial, and, with the very act, reeled back and fell across his chair upon the floor. The prince left his place and came and stood above him, where he lay convulsed upon the carpet. ‘Poor moth!’ I heard his highness murmur. ‘Alas, poor moth! must we again inquire which is the more fatal — weakness or wickedness? And can a sympathy with ideas, surely not ignoble in themselves, conduct a man to this dishonourable death?’

By this time I had pushed the door open and walked into the room. ‘Your highness,’ said I, ‘this is no time for moralising; with a little promptness we may save this creature’s life; and as for the other, he need cause you no concern, for I have him safely under lock and key.’

The prince had turned about upon my entrance, and regarded me certainly with no alarm, but with a profundity of wonder which almost robbed me of my self-possession. ‘My dear madam,’ he cried at last, ‘and who the devil are you?’

I was already on the floor beside the dying man. I had, of course, no idea with what drug he had attempted his life, and I was forced to try him with a variety of antidotes. Here were both oil and vinegar, for the prince had done the young man the honour of compounding for him one of his celebrated salads; and of each of these I administered from a quarter to half a pint, with no apparent efficacy. I next plied him with the hot coffee, of which there may have been near upon a quart.

‘Have you no milk?’ I inquired.

‘I fear, madam, that milk has been omitted,’ returned the prince.

‘Salt, then,’ said I; ‘salt is a revulsive. Pass the salt.’

‘And possibly the mustard?’ asked his highness, as he offered me the contents of the various salt-cellars poured together on a plate.

‘Ah,’ cried I, ‘the thought is excellent! Mix me about half a pint of mustard, drinkably dilute.’

Whether it was the salt or the mustard, or the mere combination of so many subversive agents, as soon as the last had been poured over his throat, the young sufferer obtained relief.

‘There!’ I exclaimed, with natural triumph, ‘I have saved a life!’

‘And yet, madam,’ returned the prince, ‘your mercy may be cruelty disguised. Where the honour is lost, it is, at least, superfluous to prolong the life.’

‘If you had led a life as changeable as mine, your highness,’ I replied, ‘you would hold a very different opinion. For my part, and after whatever extremity of misfortune or disgrace, I should still count to-morrow worth a trial.’

‘You speak as a lady, madam,’ said the prince; ‘and for such you speak the truth. But to men there is permitted such a field of license, and the good behaviour asked of them is at once so easy and so little, that to fail in that is to fall beyond the reach of pardon. But will you suffer me to repeat a question, put to you at first, I am afraid, with some defect of courtesy; and to ask you once more, who you are and how I have the honour of your company?'

'I am the proprietor of the house in which we stand,' said I.

'And still I am at fault,' returned the prince.

But at that moment the timepiece on the mantel-shelf began to strike the hour of twelve; and the young man, raising himself upon one elbow, with an expression of despair and horror that I have never seen excelled, cried lamentably, 'Midnight! oh, just God!' We stood frozen to our places, while the tingling hammer of the timepiece measured the remaining strokes; nor had we yet stirred, so tragic had been the tones of the young man, when the various bells of London began in turn to declare the hour. The timepiece was inaudible beyond the walls of the chamber where we stood; but the second pulsation of Big Ben had scarcely throbbed into the night, before a sharp detonation rang about the house. The prince sprang for the door by which I had entered; but quick as he was, I yet contrived to intercept him.

'Are you armed?' I cried.

'No, madam,' replied he. 'You remind me appositely; I will take the poker.'

'The man below,' said I, 'has two revolvers. Would you confront him at such odds?'

He paused, as though staggered in his purpose.

'And yet, madam,' said he, 'we cannot continue to remain in ignorance of what has passed.'

'No!' cried I. 'And who proposes it? I am as curious as yourself, but let us rather send for the police; or, if your highness dreads a scandal, for some of your own servants.'

'Nay, madam,' he replied, smiling, 'for so brave a lady, you surprise me. Would you have me, then, send others where I fear to go myself?'

'You are perfectly right,' said I, 'and I was entirely wrong. Go, in God's name, and I will hold the candle!'

Together, therefore, we descended to the lower story, he carrying the poker, I the light; and together we approached and opened the door of the butler's pantry. In some sort, I believe, I was prepared for the spectacle that met our eyes; I was prepared, that is, to find the villain dead, but the rude details of such a violent suicide I was unable to endure. The prince, unshaken by horror as he had remained unshaken by alarm, assisted me with the most respectful gallantry to regain the dining-room.

There we found our patient, still, indeed, deadly pale, but vastly recovered and already seated on a chair. He held out both his hands with a most pitiful gesture of interrogation.

'He is dead,' said the prince.

'Alas!' cried the young man, 'and it should be I! What do I do, thus lingering on the stage I have disgraced, while he, my sure comrade, blameworthy indeed for much, but yet the soul of fidelity, has judged and slain himself for an involuntary fault? Ah, sir,' said he, 'and you too, madam, without whose cruel help I should be now beyond the reach of my accusing conscience, you behold in me the victim equally of my own faults and virtues. I was born a hater of injustice; from my most tender years my blood boiled against heaven when I beheld the sick, and against men when I witnessed the sorrows of the poor; the pauper's crust stuck in my throat when I sat down to eat my dainties, and the cripple child has set me weeping. What was there in that but what was noble? and yet observe to what a fall these thoughts have led me! Year after year this passion for the lost besieged me closer. What hope was there in kings? what hope in these well-feathered classes that now roll in money? I had observed the course of history; I knew the burgess, our ruler of to-day, to be base, cowardly, and dull; I saw him, in every age, combine to pull down that which was immediately above and to prey upon those that were below; his dulness, I knew, would ultimately bring about his ruin; I knew his days were numbered, and yet how was I to wait? how was I to let the poor child shiver in the rain? The better days, indeed, were coming, but the child would die before that. Alas, your highness, in surely no ungenerous impatience I enrolled myself among the enemies of this unjust and doomed society; in surely no unnatural desire to keep the fires of my philanthropy alight, I bound myself by an irrevocable oath.

'That oath is all my history. To give freedom to posterity I had forsworn my own. I must attend upon every signal; and soon my father complained of my irregular hours and turned me from his house. I was engaged in betrothal to an honest girl; from her also I had to part, for she was too shrewd to credit my inventions and too innocent to be entrusted with the truth. Behold me, then, alone with conspirators! Alas! as the years went on, my illusions left me. Surrounded as I was by the fervent disciples and apologists of revolution, I beheld them daily advance in confidence and desperation; I beheld myself, upon the other hand, and with an almost equal regularity, decline in faith. I had sacrificed all to further that cause in which I still believed; and daily I began to grow in doubts if we were advancing it indeed. Horrible was the society with which we warred, but our own means were not less horrible.

'I will not dwell upon my sufferings; I will not pause to tell you how, when I beheld young men still free and happy, married, fathers of children, cheerfully toiling at their work, my heart reproached me with the greatness and vanity of my unhappy sacrifice. I will not describe to you how, worn by poverty, poor lodging, scanty food, and an unquiet conscience, my health began to fail, and in the long nights, as I wandered bedless in the rainy streets, the most cruel sufferings of the body were added to the tortures of my mind. These things are not personal to me; they are common to all unfortunates in my position. An oath, so light a thing to swear, so grave a thing to break: an oath, taken in the heat of youth, repented with what sobbings of the heart, but yet in vain repented, as the years go on: an oath, that was once the very utterance of the truth of God, but that falls to be the symbol of a meaningless and empty slavery; such is the yoke that many young men joyfully assume, and under whose dead weight they live to suffer worse than death.

‘It is not that I was patient. I have begged to be released; but I knew too much, and I was still refused. I have fled; ay, and for the time successfully. I reached Paris. I found a lodging in the Rue St. Jacques, almost opposite the Val de Grâce. My room was mean and bare, but the sun looked into it towards evening; it commanded a peep of a green garden; a bird hung by a neighbour’s window and made the morning beautiful; and I, who was sick, might lie in bed and rest myself: I, who was in full revolt against the principles that I had served, was now no longer at the beck of the council, and was no longer charged with shameful and revolting tasks. Oh! what an interval of peace was that! I still dream, at times, that I can hear the note of my neighbour’s bird.

‘My money was running out, and it became necessary that I should find employment. Scarcely had I been three days upon the search, ere I thought that I was being followed. I made certain of the features of the man, which were quite strange to me, and turned into a small café, where I whiled away an hour, pretending to read the papers, but inwardly convulsed with terror. When I came forth again into the street, it was quite empty, and I breathed again; but alas, I had not turned three corners, when I once more observed the human hound pursuing me. Not an hour was to be lost; timely submission might yet preserve a life which otherwise was forfeit and dishonoured; and I fled, with what speed you may conceive, to the Paris agency of the society I served.

‘My submission was accepted. I took up once more the hated burthen of that life; once more I was at the call of men whom I despised and hated, while yet I envied and admired them. They at least were wholehearted in the things they purposed; but I, who had once been such as they, had fallen from the brightness of my faith, and now laboured, like a hireling, for the wages of a loathed existence. Ay, sir, to that I was condemned; I obeyed to continue to live, and lived but to obey.

‘The last charge that was laid upon me was the one which has to-night so tragically ended. Boldly telling who I was, I was to request from your highness, on behalf of my society, a private audience, where it was designed to murder you. If one thing remained to me of my old convictions, it was the hate of kings; and when this task was offered me, I took it gladly. Alas, sir, you triumphed. As we supped, you gained upon my heart. Your character, your talents, your designs for our unhappy country, all had been misrepresented. I began to forget you were a prince; I began, all too feelingly, to remember that you were a man. As I saw the hour approach, I suffered agonies untold; and when, at last, we heard the slamming of the door which announced in my unwilling ears the arrival of the partner of my crime, you will bear me out with what instancy I besought you to depart. You would not, alas! and what could I? Kill you, I could not; my heart revolted, my hand turned back from such a deed. Yet it was impossible that I should suffer you to stay; for when the hour struck and my companion came, true to his appointment, and he, at least, true to our design, I could neither suffer you to be killed nor yet him to be arrested. From such a tragic passage, death, and death alone, could save me; and it is no fault of mine if I continue to exist.

'But you, madam,' continued the young man, addressing himself more directly to myself, 'were doubtless born to save the prince and to confound our purposes. My life you have prolonged; and by turning the key on my companion, you have made me the author of his death. He heard the hour strike; he was impotent to help; and thinking himself forfeit to honour, thinking that I should fall alone upon his highness and perish for lack of his support, he has turned his pistol on himself.'

'You are right,' said Prince Florizel: 'it was in no ungenerous spirit that you brought these burthens on yourself; and when I see you so nobly to blame, so tragically punished, I stand like one reproved. For is it not strange, madam, that you and I, by practising accepted and inconsiderable virtues, and commonplace but still unpardonable faults, should stand here, in the sight of God, with what we call clean hands and quiet consciences; while this poor youth, for an error that I could almost envy him, should be sunk beyond the reach of hope?

'Sir,' resumed the prince, turning to the young man, 'I cannot help you; my help would but unchain the thunderbolt that overhangs you; and I can but leave you free.'

'And, sir,' said I, 'as this house belongs to me, I will ask you to have the kindness to remove the body. You and your conspirators, it appears to me, can hardly in civility do less.'

'It shall be done,' said the young man, with a dismal accent.

'And you, dear madam,' said the prince, 'you, to whom I owe my life, how can I serve you?'

'Your highness,' I said, 'to be very plain, this is my favourite house, being not only a valuable property, but endeared to me by various associations. I have endless troubles with tenants of the ordinary class: and at first applauded my good fortune when I found one of the station of your Master of the Horse. I now begin to think otherwise: dangers set a siege about great personages; and I do not wish my tenement to share these risks. Procure me the resiliation of the lease, and I shall feel myself your debtor.'

'I must tell you, madam,' replied his highness, 'that Colonel Geraldine is but a cloak for myself; and I should be sorry indeed to think myself so unacceptable a tenant.'

'Your highness,' said I, 'I have conceived a sincere admiration for your character; but on the subject of house property, I cannot allow the interference of my feelings. I will, however, to prove to you that there is nothing personal in my request, here solemnly engage my word that I will never put another tenant in this house.'

'Madam,' said Florizel, 'you plead your cause too charmingly to be refused.'

Thereupon we all three withdrew. The young man, still reeling in his walk, departed by himself to seek the assistance of his fellow-conspirators; and the prince, with the most attentive gallantry, lent me his escort to the door of my hotel. The next day, the lease was cancelled; nor from that hour to this, though sometimes regretting my engagement, have I suffered a tenant in this house.

THE SUPERFLUOUS MANSION (Continued).

As soon as the old lady had finished her relation, Somerset made haste to offer her his compliments.

‘Madam,’ said he, ‘your story is not only entertaining but instructive; and you have told it with infinite vivacity. I was much affected towards the end, as I held at one time very liberal opinions, and should certainly have joined a secret society if I had been able to find one. But the whole tale came home to me; and I was the better able to feel for you in your various perplexities, as I am myself of somewhat hasty temper.’

‘I do not understand you,’ said Mrs. Luxmore, with some marks of irritation. ‘You must have strangely misinterpreted what I have told you. You fill me with surprise.’

Somerset, alarmed by the old lady’s change of tone and manner, hurried to recant.

‘Dear Mrs. Luxmore,’ said he, ‘you certainly misconstrue my remark. As a man of somewhat fiery humour, my conscience repeatedly pricked me when I heard what you had suffered at the hands of persons similarly constituted.’

‘Oh, very well indeed,’ replied the old lady; ‘and a very proper spirit. I regret that I have met with it so rarely.’

‘But in all this,’ resumed the young man, ‘I perceive nothing that concerns myself.’

‘I am about to come to that,’ she returned. ‘And you have already before you, in the pledge I gave Prince Florizel, one of the elements of the affair. I am a woman of the nomadic sort, and when I have no case before the courts I make it a habit to visit continental spas: not that I have ever been ill; but then I am no longer young, and I am always happy in a crowd. Well, to come more shortly to the point, I am now on the wing for Evian; this incubus of a house, which I must leave behind and dare not let, hangs heavily upon my hands; and I propose to rid myself of that concern, and do you a very good turn into the bargain, by lending you the mansion, with all its fittings, as it stands. The idea was sudden; it appealed to me as humorous: and I am sure it will cause my relatives, if they should ever hear of it, the keenest possible chagrin. Here, then, is the key; and when you return at two to-morrow afternoon, you will find neither me nor my cats to disturb you in your new possession.’

So saying, the old lady arose, as if to dismiss her visitor; but Somerset, looking somewhat blankly on the key, began to protest.

‘Dear Mrs. Luxmore,’ said he, ‘this is a most unusual proposal. You know nothing of me, beyond the fact that I displayed both impudence and timidity. I may be the worst kind of scoundrel; I may sell your furniture — '

'You may blow up the house with gunpowder, for what I care!' cried Mrs. Luxmore. 'It is in vain to reason. Such is the force of my character that, when I have one idea clearly in my head, I do not care two straws for any side consideration. It amuses me to do it, and let that suffice. On your side, you may do what you please — let apartments, or keep a private hotel; on mine, I promise you a full month's warning before I return, and I never fail religiously to keep my promises.'

The young man was about to renew his protest, when he observed a sudden and significant change in the old lady's countenance.

'If I thought you capable of disrespect!' she cried.

'Madam,' said Somerset, with the extreme fervour of asseveration, 'madam, I accept. I beg you to understand that I accept with joy and gratitude.'

'Ah well,' returned Mrs. Luxmore, 'if I am mistaken, let it pass. And now, since all is comfortably settled, I wish you a good-night.'

Thereupon, as if to leave him no room for repentance, she hurried Somerset out of the front door, and left him standing, key in hand, upon the pavement.

The next day, about the hour appointed, the young man found his way to the square, which I will here call Golden Square, though that was not its name. What to expect, he knew not; for a man may live in dreams, and yet be unprepared for their realisation. It was already with a certain pang of surprise that he beheld the mansion, standing in the eye of day, a solid among solids. The key, upon trial, readily opened the front door; he entered that great house, a privileged burglar; and, escorted by the echoes of desertion, rapidly reviewed the empty chambers. Cats, servant, old lady, the very marks of habitation, like writing on a slate, had been in these few hours obliterated. He wandered from floor to floor, and found the house of great extent; the kitchen offices commodious and well appointed; the rooms many and large; and the drawing-room, in particular, an apartment of princely size and tasteful decoration. Although the day without was warm, genial, and sunny, with a ruffling wind from the quarter of Torquay, a chill, as it were, of suspended animation inhabited the house. Dust and shadows met the eye; and but for the ominous procession of the echoes, and the rumour of the wind among the garden trees, the ear of the young man was stretched in vain.

Behind the dining-room, that pleasant library, referred to by the old lady in her tale, looked upon the flat roofs and netted cupolas of the kitchen quarters; and on a second visit, this room appeared to greet him with a smiling countenance. He might as well, he thought, avoid the expense of lodging: the library, fitted with an iron bedstead which he had remarked, in one of the upper chambers, would serve his purpose for the night; while in the dining-room, which was large, airy, and lightsome, looking on the square and garden, he might very agreeably pass his days, cook his meals, and study to bring himself to some proficiency in that art of painting which he had recently determined to adopt. It did not take him long to make the change: he had soon returned to the mansion with his modest kit; and the cabman who brought him was readily induced, by the young man's pleasant manner and a small gratuity, to assist him in the installation of the iron bed. By six in the evening, when Somerset went forth to dine, he was able to look back upon the mansion with a sense of pride and property. Four-square it stood, of an imposing frontage, and flanked on either side by family hatchments. His eye, from where he stood whistling in the key, with his back to the garden railings, reposed on every feature of reality; and yet his own possession seemed as flimsy as a dream.

In the course of a few days, the genteel inhabitants of the square began to remark the customs of their neighbour. The sight of a young gentleman discussing a clay pipe, about four o'clock of the afternoon, in the drawing-room balcony of so discreet a mansion; and perhaps still more, his periodical excursion to a decent tavern in the neighbourhood, and his unabashed return, nursing the full tankard: had presently raised to a high pitch the interest and indignation of the liveried servants of the square. The disfavour of some of these gentlemen at first proceeded to the length of insult; but Somerset knew how to be affable with any class of men; and a few rude words merrily accepted, and a few glasses amicably shared, gained for him the right of toleration.

The young man had embraced the art of Raphael, partly from a notion of its ease, partly from an inborn distrust of offices. He scorned to bear the yoke of any regular schooling; and proceeded to turn one half of the dining-room into a studio for the reproduction of still life. There he amassed a variety of objects, indiscriminately chosen from the kitchen, the drawing-room, and the back garden; and there spent his days in smiling assiduity. Meantime, the great bulk of empty building overhead lay, like a load, upon his imagination. To hold so great a stake and to do nothing, argued some defect of energy; and he at length determined to act upon the hint given by Mrs. Luxmore herself, and to stick, with wafers, in the window of the dining-room, a small handbill announcing furnished lodgings. At half-past six of a fine July morning, he affixed the bill, and went forth into the square to study the result. It seemed, to his eye, promising and unpretentious; and he returned to the drawing-room balcony, to consider, over a studious pipe, the knotty problem of how much he was to charge.

Thereupon he somewhat relaxed in his devotion to the art of painting. Indeed, from that time forth, he would spend the best part of the day in the front balcony, like the attentive angler poring on his float; and the better to support the tedium, he would frequently console himself with his clay pipe. On several occasions, passers-by appeared to be arrested by the ticket, and on several others ladies and gentlemen drove to the very doorstep by the carriageful; but it appeared there was something repulsive in the appearance of the house; for with one accord, they would cast but one look upward, and hastily resume their onward progress or direct the driver to proceed. Somerset had thus the mortification of actually meeting the eye of a large number of lodging-seekers; and though he hastened to withdraw his pipe, and to compose his features to an air of invitation, he was never rewarded by so much as an inquiry. 'Can there,' he thought, 'be anything repellent in myself?' But a candid examination in one of the pier-glasses of the drawing-room led him to dismiss the fear.

Something, however, was amiss. His vast and accurate calculations on the fly-leaves of books, or on the backs of playbills, appeared to have been an idle sacrifice of time. By these, he had variously computed the weekly takings of the house, from sums as modest as five-and-twenty shillings, up to the more majestic figure of a hundred pounds; and yet, in despite of the very elements of arithmetic, here he was making literally nothing.

This incongruity impressed him deeply and occupied his thoughtful leisure on the balcony; and at last it seemed to him that he had detected the error of his method. 'This,' he reflected, 'is an age of generous display: the age of the sandwich-man, of Griffiths, of Pears' legendary soap, and of Eno's fruit salt, which, by sheer brass and notoriety, and the most disgusting pictures I ever remember to have seen, has overlaid that comforter of my childhood, Lamplough's pyretic saline. Lamplough was genteel, Eno was omnipresent; Lamplough was trite, Eno original and abominably vulgar; and here have I, a man of some pretensions to knowledge of the world, contented myself with half a sheet of note-paper, a few cold words which do not directly address the imagination, and the adornment (if adornment it may be called) of four red wafers! Am I, then, to sink with Lamplough, or to soar with Eno? Am I to adopt that modesty which is doubtless becoming in a duke? or to take hold of the red facts of life with the emphasis of the tradesman and the poet?'

Pursuant upon these meditations, he procured several sheets of the very largest size of drawing-paper; and laying forth his paints, proceeded to compose an ensign that might attract the eye, and at the same time, in his own phrase, directly address the imagination of the passenger. Something taking in the way of colour, a good, savoury choice of words, and a realistic design setting forth the life a lodger might expect to lead within the walls of that palace of delight: these, he perceived, must be the elements of his advertisement. It was possible, upon the one hand, to depict the sober pleasures of domestic life, the evening fire, blond-headed urchins and the hissing urn; but on the other, it was possible (and he almost felt as if it were more suited to his muse) to set forth the charms of an existence somewhat wider in its range or, boldly say, the paradise of the Mohammedan. So long did the artist waver between these two views, that, before he arrived at a conclusion, he had finally conceived and completed both designs. With the proverbially tender heart of the parent, he found himself unable to sacrifice either of these offsprings of his art; and decided to expose them on alternate days. ‘In this way,’ he thought, ‘I shall address myself indifferently to all classes of the world.’

The tossing of a penny decided the only remaining point; and the more imaginative canvas received the suffrages of fortune, and appeared first in the window of the mansion. It was of a high fancy, the legend eloquently writ, the scheme of colour taking and bold; and but for the imperfection of the artist’s drawing, it might have been taken for a model of its kind. As it was, however, when viewed from his favourite point against the garden railings, and with some touch of distance, it caused a pleasurable rising of the artist’s heart. ‘I have thrown away,’ he ejaculated, ‘an invaluable motive; and this shall be the subject of my first academy picture.’

The fate of neither of these works was equal to its merit. A crowd would certainly, from time to time, collect before the area-railings; but they came to jeer and not to speculate; and those who pushed their inquiries further, were too plainly animated by the spirit of derision. The racier of the two cartoons displayed, indeed, no symptom of attractive merit; and though it had a certain share of that success called scandalous, failed utterly of its effect. On the day, however, of the second appearance of the companion work, a real inquirer did actually present himself before the eyes of Somerset.

This was a gentlemanly man, with some marks of recent merriment, and his voice under inadequate control.

‘I beg your pardon,’ said he, ‘but what is the meaning of your extraordinary bill?’

‘I beg yours,’ returned Somerset hotly. ‘Its meaning is sufficiently explicit.’ And being now, from dire experience, fearful of ridicule, he was preparing to close the door, when the gentleman thrust his cane into the aperture.

‘Not so fast, I beg of you,’ said he. ‘If you really let apartments, here is a possible tenant at your door; and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see the accommodation and to learn your terms.'

His heart joyously beating, Somerset admitted the visitor, showed him over the various apartments, and, with some return of his persuasive eloquence, expounded their attractions. The gentleman was particularly pleased by the elegant proportions of the drawing-room.

'This,' he said, 'would suit me very well. What, may I ask, would be your terms a week, for this floor and the one above it?'

'I was thinking,' returned Somerset, 'of a hundred pounds.'

'Surely not,' exclaimed the gentleman.

'Well, then,' returned Somerset, 'fifty.'

The gentleman regarded him with an air of some amazement. 'You seem to be strangely elastic in your demands,' said he. 'What if I were to proceed on your own principle of division, and offer twenty-five?'

'Done!' cried Somerset; and then, overcome by a sudden embarrassment, 'You see,' he added apologetically, 'it is all found money for me.'

'Really?' said the stranger, looking at him all the while with growing wonder. 'Without extras, then?'

'I — I suppose so,' stammered the keeper of the lodging-house.

'Service included?' pursued the gentleman.

'Service?' cried Somerset. 'Do you mean that you expect me to empty your slops?'

The gentleman regarded him with a very friendly interest. 'My dear fellow,' said he, 'if you take my advice, you will give up this business.' And thereupon he resumed his hat and took himself away.

This smarting disappointment produced a strong effect on the artist of the cartoons; and he began with shame to eat up his rosier illusions. First one and then the other of his great works was condemned, withdrawn from exhibition, and relegated, as a mere wall-picture, to the decoration of the dining-room. Their place was taken by a replica of the original wafered announcement, to which, in particularly large letters, he had added the pithy rubric: '*No service.*' Meanwhile he had fallen into something as nearly bordering on low spirits as was consistent with his disposition; depressed, at once by the failure of his scheme, the laughable turn of his late interview, and the judicial blindness of the public to the merit of the twin cartoons.

Perhaps a week had passed before he was again startled by the note of the knocker. A gentleman of a somewhat foreign and somewhat military air, yet closely shaven and wearing a soft hat, desired in the politest terms to visit the apartments. He had (he explained) a friend, a gentleman in tender health, desirous of a sedate and solitary life, apart from interruptions and the noises of the common lodging-house. 'The unusual clause,' he continued, 'in your announcement, particularly struck me. "This," I said, "is the place for Mr. Jones." You are yourself, sir, a professional gentleman?' concluded the visitor, looking keenly in Somerset's face.

'I am an artist,' replied the young man lightly.

'And these,' observed the other, taking a side glance through the open door of the dining-room, which they were then passing, 'these are some of your works. Very remarkable.' And he again and still more sharply peered into the countenance of the young man.

Somerset, unable to suppress a blush, made the more haste to lead his visitor upstairs and to display the apartments.

'Excellent,' observed the stranger, as he looked from one of the back windows. 'Is that a mews behind, sir? Very good. Well, sir: see here. My friend will take your drawing-room floor; he will sleep in the back drawing-room; his nurse, an excellent Irish widow, will attend on all his wants and occupy a garret; he will pay you the round sum of ten dollars a week; and you, on your part, will engage to receive no other lodger? I think that fair.'

Somerset had scarcely words in which to clothe his gratitude and joy.

'Agreed,' said the other; 'and to spare you trouble, my friend will bring some men with him to make the changes. You will find him a retiring inmate, sir; receives but few, and rarely leaves the house, except at night.'

'Since I have been in this house,' returned Somerset, 'I have myself, unless it were to fetch beer, rarely gone abroad except in the evening. But a man,' he added, 'must have some amusement.'

An hour was then agreed on; the gentleman departed; and Somerset sat down to compute in English money the value of the figure named. The result of this investigation filled him with amazement and disgust; but it was now too late; nothing remained but to endure; and he awaited the arrival of his tenant, still trying, by various arithmetical expedients, to obtain a more favourable quotation for the dollar. With the approach of dusk, however, his impatience drove him once more to the front balcony. The night fell, mild and airless; the lamps shone around the central darkness of the garden; and through the tall grove of trees that intervened, many warmly illuminated windows on the farther side of the square, told their tale of white napery, choice wine, and genial hospitality. The stars were already thickening overhead, when the young man's eyes alighted on a procession of three four-wheelers, coasting round the garden railing and bound for the SuperfluousMansion. They were laden with formidable boxes; moved in a military order, one following another; and, by the extreme slowness of their advance, inspired Somerset with the most serious ideas of his tenant's malady.

By the time he had the door open, the cabs had drawn up beside the pavement; and from the two first, there had alighted the military gentleman of the morning and two very stalwart porters. These proceeded instantly to take possession of the house; with their own hands, and firmly rejecting Somerset's assistance, they carried in the various crates and boxes; with their own hands dismounted and transferred to the back drawing-room the bed in which the tenant was to sleep; and it was not until the bustle of arrival had subsided, and the arrangements were complete, that there descended, from the third of the three vehicles, a gentleman of great stature and broad shoulders, leaning on the shoulder of a woman in a widow's dress, and himself covered by a long cloak and muffled in a coloured comforter.

Somerset had but a glimpse of him in passing; he was soon shut into the back drawing-room; the other men departed; silence redescended on the house; and had not the nurse appeared a little before half-past ten, and, with a strong brogue, asked if there were a decent public-house in the neighbourhood, Somerset might have still supposed himself to be alone in the Superfluous Mansion.

Day followed day; and still the young man had never come by speech or sight of his mysterious lodger. The doors of the drawing-room flat were never open; and although Somerset could hear him moving to and fro, the tall man had never quitted the privacy of his apartments. Visitors, indeed, arrived; sometimes in the dusk, sometimes at intempestuous hours of night or morning; men, for the most part; some meanly attired, some decently; some loud, some cringing; and yet all, in the eyes of Somerset, displeasing. A certain air of fear and secrecy was common to them all; they were all voluble, he thought, and ill at ease; even the military gentleman proved, on a closer inspection, to be no gentleman at all; and as for the doctor who attended the sick man, his manners were not suggestive of a university career. The nurse, again, was scarcely a desirable house-fellow. Since her arrival, the fall of whisky in the young man's private bottle was much accelerated; and though never communicative, she was at times unpleasantly familiar. When asked about the patient's health, she would dolorously shake her head, and declare that the poor gentleman was in a pitiful condition.

Yet somehow Somerset had early begun to entertain the notion that his complaint was other than bodily. The ill-looking birds that gathered to the house, the strange noises that sounded from the drawing-room in the dead hours of night, the careless attendance and intemperate habits of the nurse, the entire absence of correspondence, the entire seclusion of Mr. Jones himself, whose face, up to that hour, he could not have sworn to in a court of justice — all weighed unpleasantly upon the young man’s mind. A sense of something evil, irregular and underhand, haunted and depressed him; and this uneasy sentiment was the more firmly rooted in his mind, when, in the fulness of time, he had an opportunity of observing the features of his tenant. It fell in this way. The young landlord was awakened about four in the morning by a noise in the hall. Leaping to his feet, and opening the door of the library, he saw the tall man, candle in hand, in earnest conversation with the gentleman who had taken the rooms. The faces of both were strongly illuminated; and in that of his tenant, Somerset could perceive none of the marks of disease, but every sign of health, energy, and resolution. While he was still looking, the visitor took his departure; and the invalid, having carefully fastened the front door, sprang upstairs without a trace of lassitude.

That night upon his pillow, Somerset began to kindle once more into the hot fit of the detective fever; and the next morning resumed the practice of his art with careless hand and an abstracted mind. The day was destined to be fertile in surprises; nor had he long been seated at the easel ere the first of these occurred. A cab laden with baggage drew up before the door; and Mrs. Luxmore in person rapidly mounted the steps and began to pound upon the knocker. Somerset hastened to attend the summons.

‘My dear fellow,’ she said, with the utmost gaiety, ‘here I come dropping from the moon. I am delighted to find you faithful; and I have no doubt you will be equally pleased to be restored to liberty.’

Somerset could find no words, whether of protest or welcome; and the spirited old lady pushed briskly by him and paused on the threshold of the dining-room. The sight that met her eyes was one well calculated to inspire astonishment. The mantelpiece was arrayed with saucepans and empty bottles; on the fire some chops were frying; the floor was littered from end to end with books, clothes, walking-canes and the materials of the painter’s craft; but what far outstripped the other wonders of the place was the corner which had been arranged for the study of still-life. This formed a sort of rockery; conspicuous upon which, according to the principles of the art of composition, a cabbage was relieved against a copper kettle, and both contrasted with the mail of a boiled lobster.

‘My gracious goodness!’ cried the lady of the house; and then, turning in wrath on the young man, ‘From what rank in life are you sprung?’ she demanded. ‘You have the exterior of a gentleman; but from the astonishing evidences before me, I should say you can only be a greengrocer’s man. Pray, gather up your vegetables, and let me see no more of you.’

‘Madam,’ babbled Somerset, ‘you promised me a month’s warning.’

‘That was under a misapprehension,’ returned the old lady. ‘I now give you warning to leave at once.’

‘Madam,’ said the young man, ‘I wish I could; and indeed, as far as I am concerned, it might be done. But then, my lodger!’

‘Your lodger?’ echoed Mrs. Luxmore.

‘My lodger: why should I deny it?’ returned Somerset. ‘He is only by the week.’

The old lady sat down upon a chair. ‘You have a lodger? — you?’ she cried. ‘And pray, how did you get him?’

‘By advertisement,’ replied the young man. ‘O madam, I have not lived unobservantly. I adopted’ — his eyes involuntarily shifted to the cartoons — ’I adopted every method.’

Her eyes had followed his; for the first time in Somerset’s experience, she produced a double eye-glass; and as soon as the full merit of the works had flashed upon her, she gave way to peal after peal of her trilling and soprano laughter.

‘Oh, I think you are perfectly delicious!’ she cried. ‘I do hope you had them in the window. M’Pherson,’ she continued, crying to her maid, who had been all this time grimly waiting in the hall, ‘I lunch with Mr. Somerset. Take the cellar key and bring some wine.’

In this gay humour she continued throughout the luncheon; presented Somerset with a couple of dozen of wine, which she made M’Pherson bring up from the cellar — ’as a present, my dear,’ she said, with another burst of tearful merriment, ‘for your charming pictures, which you must be sure to leave me when you go;’ and finally, protesting that she dared not spoil the absurdest houseful of madmen in the whole of London, departed (as she vaguely phrased it) for the continent of Europe.

She was no sooner gone, than Somerset encountered in the corridor the Irish nurse; sober, to all appearance, and yet a prey to singularly strong emotion. It was made to appear, from her account, that Mr. Jones had already suffered acutely in his health from Mrs. Luxmore’s visit, and that nothing short of a full explanation could allay the invalid’s uneasiness. Somerset, somewhat staring, told what he thought fit of the affair.

‘Is that all?’ cried the woman. ‘As God sees you, is that all?’

‘My good woman,’ said the young man, ‘I have no idea what you can be driving at. Suppose the lady were my friend’s wife, suppose she were my fairy godmother, suppose she were the Queen of Portugal; and how should that affect yourself or Mr. Jones?’

‘Blessed Mary!’ cried the nurse, ‘it’s he that will be glad to hear it!’

And immediately she fled upstairs.

Somerset, on his part, returned to the dining-room, and with a very thoughtful brow and ruminating many theories, disposed of the remainder of the bottle. It was port; and port is a wine, sole among its equals and superiors, that can in some degree support the competition of tobacco. Sipping, smoking, and theorising, Somerset moved on from suspicion to suspicion, from resolve to resolve, still growing braver and rosier as the bottle ebbed. He was a sceptic, none prouder of the name; he had no horror at command, whether for crimes or vices, but beheld and embraced the world, with an immoral approbation, the frequent consequence of youth and health. At the same time, he felt convinced that he dwelt under the same roof with secret malefactors; and the unregenerate instinct of the chase impelled him to severity. The bottle had run low; the summer sun had finally withdrawn; and at the same moment, night and the pangs of hunger recalled him from his dreams.

He went forth, and dined in the Criterion: a dinner in consonance, not so much with his purse, as with the admirable wine he had discussed. What with one thing and another, it was long past midnight when he returned home. A cab was at the door; and entering the hall, Somerset found himself face to face with one of the most regular of the few who visited Mr. Jones: a man of powerful figure, strong lineaments, and a chin-beard in the American fashion. This person was carrying on one shoulder a black portmanteau, seemingly of considerable weight. That he should find a visitor removing baggage in the dead of night, recalled some odd stories to the young man's memory; he had heard of lodgers who thus gradually drained away, not only their own effects, but the very furniture and fittings of the house that sheltered them; and now, in a mood between pleasantry and suspicion, and aping the manner of a drunkard, he roughly bumped against the man with the chin-beard and knocked the portmanteau from his shoulder to the floor. With a face struck suddenly as white as paper, the man with the chin-beard called lamentably on the name of his maker, and fell in a mere heap on the mat at the foot of the stairs. At the same time, though only for a single instant, the heads of the sick lodger and the Irish nurse popped out like rabbits over the banisters of the first floor; and on both the same scare and pallor were apparent.

The sight of this incredible emotion turned Somerset to stone, and he continued speechless, while the man gathered himself together, and, with the help of the handrail and audibly thanking God, scrambled once more upon his feet.

'What in Heaven's name ails you?' gasped the young man as soon as he could find words and utterance.

'Have you a drop of brandy?' returned the other. 'I am sick.'

Somerset administered two drams, one after the other, to the man with the chin-beard; who then, somewhat restored, began to confound himself in apologies for what he called his miserable nervousness, the result, he said, of a long course of dumb ague; and having taken leave with a hand that still sweated and trembled, he gingerly resumed his burthen and departed.

Somerset retired to bed but not to sleep. What, he asked himself, had been the contents of the black portmanteau? Stolen goods? the carcase of one murdered? or — and at the thought he sat upright in bed — an infernal machine? He took a solemn vow that he would set these doubts at rest; and with the next morning, installed himself beside the dining-room window, vigilant with eye; and ear, to await and profit by the earliest opportunity.

The hours went heavily by. Within the house there was no circumstance of novelty; unless it might be that the nurse more frequently made little journeys round the corner of the square, and before afternoon was somewhat loose of speech and gait. A little after six, however, there came round the corner of the gardens a very handsome and elegantly dressed young woman, who paused a little way off, and for some time, and with frequent sighs, contemplated the front of the Superfluous Mansion. It was not the first time that she had thus stood afar and looked upon it, like our common parents at the gates of Eden; and the young man had already had occasion to remark the lively slimness of her carriage, and had already been the butt of a chance arrow from her eye. He hailed her coming, then, with pleasant feelings, and moved a little nearer to the window to enjoy the sight. What was his surprise, however, when, as if with a sensible effort, she drew near, mounted the steps and tapped discreetly at the door! He made haste to get before the Irish nurse, who was not improbably asleep, and had the satisfaction to receive this gracious visitor in person.

She inquired for Mr. Jones; and then, without transition, asked the young man if he were the person of the house (and at the words, he thought he could perceive her to be smiling), 'because,' she added, 'if you are, I should like to see some of the other rooms.' Somerset told her he was under an engagement to receive no other lodgers; but she assured him that would be no matter, as these were friends of Mr. Jones's. 'And,' she continued, moving suddenly to the dining-room door, 'let us begin here.' Somerset was too late to prevent her entering, and perhaps he lacked the courage to essay. 'Ah!' she cried, 'how changed it is!'

'Madam,' cried the young man, 'since your entrance, it is I who have the right to say so.'

She received this inane compliment with a demure and conscious droop of the eyelids, and gracefully steering her dress among the mingled litter, now with a smile, now with a sigh, reviewed the wonders of the two apartments. She gazed upon the cartoons with sparkling eyes, and a heightened colour, and in a somewhat breathless voice, expressed a high opinion of their merits. She praised the effective disposition of the rockery, and in the bedroom, of which Somerset had vainly endeavoured to defend the entry, she fairly broke forth in admiration. ‘How simple and manly!’ she cried: ‘none of that effeminacy of neatness, which is so detestable in a man!’ Hard upon this, telling him, before he had time to reply, that she very well knew her way, and would trouble him no further, she took her leave with an engaging smile, and ascended the staircase alone.

For more than an hour the young lady remained closeted with Mr. Jones; and at the end of that time, the night being now come completely, they left the house in company. This was the first time since the arrival of his lodger, that Somerset had found himself alone with the Irish widow; and without the loss of any more time than was required by decency, he stepped to the foot of the stairs and hailed her by her name. She came instantly, wreathed in weak smiles and with a nodding head; and when the young man politely offered to introduce her to the treasures of his art, she swore that nothing could afford her greater pleasure, for, though she had never crossed the threshold, she had frequently observed his beautiful pictures through the door. On entering the dining-room, the sight of a bottle and two glasses prepared her to be a gentle critic; and as soon as the pictures had been viewed and praised, she was easily persuaded to join the painter in a single glass. ‘Here,’ she said, ‘are my respects; and a pleasure it is, in this horrible house, to see a gentleman like yourself, so affable and free, and a very nice painter, I am sure.’ One glass so agreeably prefaced, was sure to lead to the acceptance of a second; at the third, Somerset was free to cease from the affectation of keeping her company; and as for the fourth, she asked it of her own accord. ‘For indeed,’ said she, ‘what with all these clocks and chemicals, without a drop of the creature life would be impossible entirely. And you seen yourself that even M’Guire was glad to beg for it. And even himself, when he is downhearted with all these cruel disappointments, though as temperate a man as any child, will be sometimes crying for a glass of it. And I’ll thank you for a thimbleful to settle what I got.’ Soon after, she began with tears to narrate the deathbed dispositions and lament the trifling assets of her husband. Then she declared she heard ‘the master’ calling her, rose to her feet, made but one lurch of it into the still-life rockery, and with her head upon the lobster, fell into stertorous slumbers.

Somerset mounted at once to the first story, and opened the door of the drawing-room, which was brilliantly lit by several lamps. It was a great apartment; looking on the square with three tall windows, and joined by a pair of ample folding-doors to the next room; elegant in proportion, papered in sea-green, furnished in velvet of a delicate blue, and adorned with a majestic mantelpiece of variously tinted marbles. Such was the room that Somerset remembered; that which he now beheld was changed in almost every feature: the furniture covered with a figured chintz; the walls hung with a rhubarb-coloured paper, and diversified by the curtained recesses for no less than seven windows. It seemed to himself that he must have entered, without observing the transition, into the adjoining house. Presently from these more specious changes, his eye condescended to the many curious objects with which the floor was littered. Here were the locks of dismounted pistols; clocks and clockwork in every stage of demolition, some still busily ticking, some reduced to their dainty elements; a great company of carboys, jars and bottles; a carpenter's bench and a laboratory-table.

The back drawing-room, to which Somerset proceeded, had likewise undergone a change. It was transformed to the exact appearance of a common lodging-house bedroom; a bed with green curtains occupied one corner; and the window was blocked by the regulation table and mirror. The door of a small closet here attracted the young man's attention; and striking a vesta, he opened it and entered. On a table several wigs and beards were lying spread; about the walls hung an incongruous display of suits and overcoats; and conspicuous among the last the young man observed a large overall of the most costly sealskin. In a flash his mind reverted to the advertisement in the *Standard* newspaper. The great height of his lodger, the disproportionate breadth of his shoulders, and the strange particulars of his instalment, all pointed to the same conclusion.

The vesta had now burned to his fingers; and taking the coat upon his arm, Somerset hastily returned to the lighted drawing-room. There, with a mixture of fear and admiration, he pored upon its goodly proportions and the regularity and softness of the pile. The sight of a large pier-glass put another fancy in his head. He donned the fur-coat; and standing before the mirror in an attitude suggestive of a Russian prince, he thrust his hands into the ample pockets. There his fingers encountered a folded journal. He drew it out, and recognised the type and paper of the *Standard*; and at the same instant, his eyes alighted on the offer of two hundred pounds. Plainly then, his lodger, now no longer mysterious, had laid aside his coat on the very day of the appearance of the advertisement.

He was thus standing, the tell-tale coat upon his back, the incriminating paper in his hand, when the door opened and the tall lodger, with a firm but somewhat pallid face, stepped into the room and closed the door again behind him. For some time, the two looked upon each other in perfect silence; then Mr. Jones moved forward to the table, took a seat, and still without once changing the direction of his eyes, addressed the young man.

'You are right,' he said. 'It is for me the blood money is offered. And now what will you do?'

It was a question to which Somerset was far from being able to reply. Taken as he was at unawares, masquerading in the man's own coat, and surrounded by a whole arsenal of diabolical explosives, the keeper of the lodging-house was silenced.

'Yes,' resumed the other, 'I am he. I am that man, whom with impotent hate and fear, they still hunt from den to den, from disguise to disguise. Yes, my landlord, you have it in your power, if you be poor, to lay the basis of your fortune; if you be unknown, to capture honour at one snatch. You have hocussed an innocent widow; and I find you here in my apartment, for whose use I pay you in stamped money, searching my wardrobe, and your hand — shame, sir! — your hand in my very pocket. You can now complete the cycle of your ignominious acts, by what will be at once the simplest, the safest, and the most remunerative.' The speaker paused as if to emphasise his words; and then, with a great change of tone and manner, thus resumed: 'And yet, sir, when I look upon your face, I feel certain that I cannot be deceived: certain that in spite of all, I have the honour and pleasure of speaking to a gentleman. Take off my coat, sir — which but cumbers you. Divest yourself of this confusion: that which is but thought upon, thank God, need be no burthen to the conscience; we have all harboured guilty thoughts: and if it flashed into your mind to sell my flesh and blood, my anguish in the dock, and the sweat of my death agony — it was a thought, dear sir, you were as incapable of acting on, as I of any further question of your honour.' At these words, the speaker, with a very open, smiling countenance, like a forgiving father, offered Somerset his hand.

It was not in the young man's nature to refuse forgiveness or dissect generosity. He instantly, and almost without thought, accepted the proffered grasp.

'And now,' resumed the lodger, 'now that I hold in mine your loyal hand, I lay by my apprehensions, I dismiss suspicion, I go further — by an effort of will, I banish the memory of what is past. How you came here, I care not: enough that you are here — as my guest. Sit ye down; and let us, with your good permission, improve acquaintance over a glass of excellent whisky.'

So speaking, he produced glasses and a bottle: and the pair pledged each other in silence.

'Confess,' observed the smiling host, 'you were surprised at the appearance of the room.'

‘I was indeed,’ said Somerset; ‘nor can I imagine the purpose of these changes.’

‘These,’ replied the conspirator, ‘are the devices by which I continue to exist. Conceive me now, accused before one of your unjust tribunals; conceive the various witnesses appearing, and the singular variety of their reports! One will have visited me in this drawing-room as it originally stood; a second finds it as it is to-night; and to-morrow or next day, all may have been changed. If you love romance (as artists do), few lives are more romantic than that of the obscure individual now addressing you. Obscure yet famous. Mine is an anonymous, infernal glory. By infamous means, I work towards my bright purpose. I found the liberty and peace of a poor country, desperately abused; the future smiles upon that land; yet, in the meantime, I lead the existence of a hunted brute, work towards appalling ends, and practice hell’s dexterities.’

Somerset, glass in hand, contemplated the strange fanatic before him, and listened to his heated rhapsody, with indescribable bewilderment. He looked him in the face with curious particularity; saw there the marks of education; and wondered the more profoundly.

‘Sir,’ he said — ’for I know not whether I should still address you as Mr. Jones — ’

‘Jones, Breitman, Higginbotham, Pumpernickel, Daviot, Henderland, by all or any of these you may address me,’ said the plotter; ‘for all I have at some time borne. Yet that which I most prize, that which is most feared, hated, and obeyed, is not a name to be found in your directories; it is not a name current in post-offices or banks; and, indeed, like the celebrated clan M’Gregor, I may justly describe myself as being nameless by day. But,’ he continued, rising to his feet, ‘by night, and among my desperate followers, I am the redoubted Zero.’

Somerset was unacquainted with the name, but he politely expressed surprise and gratification. ‘I am to understand,’ he continued, ‘that, under this alias, you follow the profession of a dynamiter?’

The plotter had resumed his seat and now replenished the glasses.

‘I do,’ he said. ‘In this dark period of time, a star — the star of dynamite — has risen for the oppressed; and among those who practise its use, so thick beset with dangers and attended by such incredible difficulties and disappointments, few have been more assiduous, and not many — ’ He paused, and a shade of embarrassment appeared upon his face — ’not many have been more successful than myself.’

‘I can imagine,’ observed Somerset, ‘that, from the sweeping consequences looked for, the career is not devoid of interest. You have, besides, some of the entertainment of the game of hide and seek. But it would still seem to me — I speak as a layman — that nothing could be simpler or safer than to deposit an infernal machine and retire to an adjacent county to await the painful consequences.'

'You speak, indeed,' returned the plotter, with some evidence of warmth, 'you speak, indeed, most ignorantly. Do you make nothing, then, of such a peril as we share this moment? Do you think it nothing to occupy a house like this one, mined, menaced, and, in a word, literally tottering to its fall?'

'Good God!' ejaculated Somerset.

'And when you speak of ease,' pursued Zero, 'in this age of scientific studies, you fill me with surprise. Are you not aware that chemicals are proverbially fickle as woman, and clockwork as capricious as the very devil? Do you see upon my brow these furrows of anxiety? Do you observe the silver threads that mingle with my hair? Clockwork, clockwork has stamped them on my brow — chemicals have sprinkled them upon my locks! No, Mr. Somerset,' he resumed, after a moment's pause, his voice still quivering with sensibility, 'you must not suppose the dynamiter's life to be all gold. On the contrary, you cannot picture to yourself the bloodshot vigils and the staggering disappointments of a life like mine. I have toiled (let us say) for months, up early and down late; my bag is ready, my clock set; a daring agent has hurried with white face to deposit the instrument of ruin; we await the fall of England, the massacre of thousands, the yell of fear and execration; and lo! a snap like that of a child's pistol, an offensive smell, and the entire loss of so much time and plant! If,' he concluded, musingly, 'we had been merely able to recover the lost bags, I believe with but a touch or two, I could have remedied the peccant engine. But what with the loss of plant and the almost insuperable scientific difficulties of the task, our friends in France are almost ready to desert the chosen medium. They propose, instead, to break up the drainage system of cities and sweep off whole populations with the devastating typhoid pestilence: a tempting and a scientific project: a process, indiscriminate indeed, but of idyllical simplicity. I recognise its elegance; but, sir, I have something of the poet in my nature; something, possibly, of the tribune. And, for my small part, I shall remain devoted to that more emphatic, more striking, and (if you please) more popular method, of the explosive bomb. Yes,' he cried, with unshaken hope, 'I will still continue, and, I feel it in my bosom, I shall yet succeed.'

'Two things I remark,' said Somerset. 'The first somewhat staggers me. Have you, then — in all this course of life, which you have sketched so vividly — have you not once succeeded?'

'Pardon me,' said Zero. 'I have had one success. You behold in me the author of the outrage of Red Lion Court.'

'But if I remember right,' objected Somerset, 'the thing was a *fiasco*. A scavenger's barrow and some copies of the *Weekly Budget* — these were the only victims.'

'You will pardon me again,' returned Zero with positive asperity: 'a child was injured.'

'And that fitly brings me to my second point,' said Somerset. 'For I observed you to employ the word "indiscriminate." Now, surely, a scavenger's barrow and a child (if child there were) represent the very acme and top pin-point of indiscriminate, and, pardon me, of ineffectual reprisal.'

'Did I employ the word?' asked Zero. 'Well, I will not defend it. But for efficiency, you touch on graver matters; and before entering upon so vast a subject, permit me once more to fill our glasses. Disputation is dry work,' he added, with a charming gaiety of manner.

Once more accordingly the pair pledged each other in a stalwart grog; and Zero, leaning back with an air of some complacency, proceeded more largely to develop his opinions.

'The indiscriminate?' he began. 'War, my dear sir, is indiscriminate. War spares not the child; it spares not the barrow of the harmless scavenger. No more,' he concluded, beaming, 'no more do I. Whatever may strike fear, whatever may confound or paralyse the activities of the guilty nation, barrow or child, imperial Parliament or excursion steamer, is welcome to my simple plans. You are not,' he inquired, with a shade of sympathetic interest, 'you are not, I trust, a believer?'

'Sir, I believe in nothing,' said the young man.

'You are then,' replied Zero, 'in a position to grasp my argument. We agree that humanity is the object, the glorious triumph of humanity; and being pledged to labour for that end, and face to face with the banded opposition of kings, parliaments, churches, and the members of the force, who am I — who are we, dear sir — to affect a nicety about the tools employed? You might, perhaps, expect us to attack the Queen, the sinister Gladstone, the rigid Derby, or the dexterous Granville; but there you would be in error. Our appeal is to the body of the people; it is these that we would touch and interest. Now, sir, have you observed the English housemaid?'

'I should think I had,' cried Somerset.

'From a man of taste and a votary of art, I had expected it,' returned the conspirator politely. 'A type apart; a very charming figure; and thoroughly adapted to our ends. The neat cap, the clean print, the comely person, the engaging manner; her position between classes, parents in one, employers in another; the probability that she will have at least one sweet-heart, whose feelings we shall address: — yes, I have a leaning — call it, if you will, a weakness — for the housemaid. Not that I would be understood to despise the nurse. For the child is a very interesting feature: I have long since marked out the child as the sensitive point in society.' He wagged his head, with a wise, pensive smile. 'And talking, sir, of children and of the perils of our trade, let me now narrate to you a little incident of an explosive bomb, that fell out some weeks ago under my own observation. It fell out thus.'

And Zero, leaning back in his chair, narrated the following simple tale.

ZERO'S TALE OF THE EXPLOSIVE BOMB

I dined by appointment with one of our most trusted agents, in a private chamber at St. James's Hall. You have seen the man: it was M'Guire, the most chivalrous of creatures, but not himself expert in our contrivances. Hence the necessity of our meeting; for I need not remind you what enormous issues depend upon the nice adjustment of the engine. I set our little petard for half an hour, the scene of action being hard by; and the better to avert miscarriage, employed a device, a recent invention of my own, by which the opening of the Gladstone bag in which the bomb was carried, should instantly determine the explosion. M'Guire was somewhat dashed by this arrangement, which was new to him: and pointed out, with excellent, clear good sense, that should he be arrested, it would probably involve him in the fall of our opponents. But I was not to be moved, made a strong appeal to his patriotism, gave him a good glass of whisky, and despatched him on his glorious errand.

Our objective was the effigy of Shakespeare in Leicester Square: a spot, I think, admirably chosen; not only for the sake of the dramatist, still very foolishly claimed as a glory by the English race, in spite of his disgusting political opinions; but from the fact that the seats in the immediate neighbourhood are often thronged by children, errand-boys, unfortunate young ladies of the poorer class and infirm old men — all classes making a direct appeal to public pity, and therefore suitable with our designs. As M'Guire drew near his heart was inflamed by the most noble sentiment of triumph. Never had he seen the garden so crowded; children, still stumbling in the impotence of youth, ran to and fro, shouting and playing, round the pedestal; an old, sick pensioner sat upon the nearest bench, a medal on his breast, a stick with which he walked (for he was disabled by wounds) reclining on his knee. Guilty England would thus be stabbed in the most delicate quarters; the moment had, indeed, been well selected; and M'Guire, with a radiant provision of the event, drew merrily nearer. Suddenly his eye alighted on the burly form of a policeman, standing hard by the effigy in an attitude of watch. My bold companion paused; he looked about him closely; here and there, at different points of the enclosure, other men stood or loitered, affecting an abstraction, feigning to gaze upon the shrubs, feigning to talk, feigning to be weary and to rest upon the benches. M'Guire was no child in these affairs; he instantly divined one of the plots of the Machiavellian Gladstone.

A chief difficulty with which we have to deal, is a certain nervousness in the subaltern branches of the corps; as the hour of some design draws near, these chicken-souled conspirators appear to suffer some revulsion of intent; and frequently despatch to the authorities, not indeed specific denunciations, but vague anonymous warnings. But for this purely accidental circumstance, England had long ago been an historical expression. On the receipt of such a letter, the Government lay a trap for their adversaries, and surround the threatened spot with hirelings. My blood sometimes boils in my veins, when I consider the case of those who sell themselves for money in such a cause. True, thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we patriots receive a very comfortable stipend; I myself, of course, touch a salary which puts me quite beyond the reach of any peddling, mercenary thoughts; M'Guire, again, ere he joined our ranks, was on the brink of starving, and now, thank God! receives a decent income. That is as it should be; the patriot must not be diverted from his task by any base consideration; and the distinction between our position and that of the police is too obvious to be stated.

Plainly, however, our Leicester Square design had been divulged; the Government had craftily filled the place with minions; even the pensioner was not improbably a hireling in disguise; and our emissary, without other aid or protection than the simple apparatus in his bag, found himself confronted by force; brutal force; that strong hand which was a character of the ages of oppression. Should he venture to deposit the machine, it was almost certain that he would be observed and arrested; a cry would arise; and there was just a fear that the police might not be present in sufficient force, to protect him from the savagery of the mob. The scheme must be delayed. He stood with his bag on his arm, pretending to survey the front of the Alhambra, when there flashed into his mind a thought to appal the bravest. The machine was set; at the appointed hour, it must explode; and how, in the interval, was he to be rid of it?

Put yourself, I beseech you, into the body of that patriot. There he was, friendless and helpless; a man in the very flower of life, for he is not yet forty; with long years of happiness before him; and now condemned, in one moment, to a cruel and revolting death by dynamite! The square, he said, went round him like a thaumatrope; he saw the Alhambra leap into the air like a balloon; and reeled against the railing. It is probable he fainted.

When he came to himself, a constable had him by the arm.

'My God!' he cried.

'You seem to be unwell, sir,' said the hireling.

'I feel better now,' cried poor M'Guire: and with uneven steps, for the pavement of the square seemed to lurch and reel under his footing, he fled from the scene of this disaster. Fled? Alas, from what was he fleeing? Did he not carry that from which he fled along with him? and had he the wings of the eagle, had he the swiftness of the ocean winds, could he have been rapt into the uttermost quarters of the earth, how should he escape the ruin that he carried? We have heard of living men who have been fettered to the dead; the grievance, soberly considered, is no more than sentimental; the case is but a flea-bite to that of him who should be linked, like poor M'Guire, to an explosive bomb.

A thought struck him in Green Street, like a dart through his liver: suppose it were the hour already. He stopped as though he had been shot, and plucked his watch out. There was a howling in his ears, as loud as a winter tempest; his sight was now obscured as if by a cloud, now, as by a lightning flash, would show him the very dust upon the street. But so brief were these intervals of vision, and so violently did the watch vibrate in his hands, that it was impossible to distinguish the numbers on the dial. He covered his eyes for a few seconds; and in that space, it seemed to him that he had fallen to be a man of ninety. When he looked again, the watch-plate had grown legible: he had twenty minutes. Twenty minutes, and no plan!

Green Street, at that time, was very empty; and he now observed a little girl of about six drawing near to him, and as she came, kicking in front of her, as children will, a piece of wood. She sang, too; and something in her accent recalling him to the past, produced a sudden clearness in his mind. Here was a God-sent opportunity!

'My dear,' said he, 'would you like a present of a pretty bag?'

The child cried aloud with joy and put out her hands to take it. She had looked first at the bag, like a true child; but most unfortunately, before she had yet received the fatal gift, her eyes fell directly on M'Guire; and no sooner had she seen the poor gentleman's face, than she screamed out and leaped backward, as though she had seen the devil. Almost at the same moment a woman appeared upon the threshold of a neighbouring shop, and called upon the child in anger. 'Come here, colleen,' she said, 'and don't be plaguing the poor old gentleman!' With that she re-entered the house, and the child followed her, sobbing aloud.

With the loss of this hope M'Guire's reason swooned within him. When next he awoke to consciousness, he was standing before St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, wavering like a drunken man; the passers-by regarding him with eyes in which he read, as in a glass, an image of the terror and horror that dwelt within his own.

'I am afraid you are very ill, sir,' observed a woman, stopping and gazing hard in his face. 'Can I do anything to help you?'

'Ill?' said M'Guire. 'O God!' And then, recovering some shadow of his self-command, 'Chronic, madam,' said he: 'a long course of the dumb ague. But since you are so compassionate — an errand that I lack the strength to carry out,' he gasped — 'this bag to Portman Square. Oh, compassionate woman, as you hope to be saved, as you are a mother, in the name of your babes that wait to welcome you at home, oh, take this bag to Portman Square! I have a mother, too,' he added, with a broken voice. 'Number 19, Portman Square.'

I suppose he had expressed himself with too much energy of voice; for the woman was plainly taken with a certain fear of him. 'Poor gentleman!' said she. 'If I were you, I would go home.' And she left him standing there in his distress.

'Home!' thought M'Guire, 'what a derision!' What home was there for him, the victim of philanthropy? He thought of his old mother, of his happy youth; of the hideous, rending pang of the explosion; of the possibility that he might not be killed, that he might be cruelly mangled, crippled for life, condemned to lifelong pains, blinded perhaps, and almost surely deafened. Ah, you spoke lightly of the dynamiter's peril; but even waiving death, have you realised what it is for a fine, brave young man of forty, to be smitten suddenly with deafness, cut off from all the music of life, and from the voice of friendship, and love? How little do we realise the sufferings of others! Even your brutal Government, in the heyday of its lust for cruelty, though it scruples not to hound the patriot with spies, to pack the corrupt jury, to bribe the hangman, and to erect the infamous gallows, would hesitate to inflict so horrible a doom: not, I am well aware, from virtue, not from philanthropy, but with the fear before it of the withering scorn of the good.

But I wander from M'Guire. From this dread glance into the past and future, his thoughts returned at a bound upon the present. How had he wandered there? and how long — oh, heavens! how long had he been about it? He pulled out his watch; and found that but three minutes had elapsed. It seemed too bright a thing to be believed. He glanced at the church clock; and sure enough, it marked an hour four minutes faster than the watch.

Of all that he endured, M'Guire declares that pang was the most desolate. Till then, he had had one friend, one counsellor, in whom he plenarily trusted; by whose advertisement, he numbered the minutes that remained to him of life; on whose sure testimony, he could tell when the time was come to risk the last adventure, to cast the bag away from him, and take to flight. And now in what was he to place reliance? His watch was slow; it might be losing time; if so, in what degree? What limit could he set to its derangement? and how much was it possible for a watch to lose in thirty minutes? Five? ten? fifteen? It might be so; already, it seemed years since he had left St. James's Hall on this so promising enterprise; at any moment, then, the blow was to be looked for.

In the face of this new distress, the wild disorder of his pulses settled down; and a broken weariness succeeded, as though he had lived for centuries and for centuries been dead. The buildings and the people in the street became incredibly small, and far-away, and bright; London sounded in his ears stilly, like a whisper; and the rattle of the cab that nearly charged him down, was like a sound from Africa. Meanwhile, he was conscious of a strange abstraction from himself; and heard and felt his footfalls on the ground, as those of a very old, small, debile and tragically fortuned man, whom he sincerely pitied.

As he was thus moving forward past the National Gallery, in a medium, it seemed, of greater rarity and quiet than ordinary air, there slipped into his mind the recollection of a certain entry in Whitcomb Street hard by, where he might perhaps lay down his tragic cargo unremarked. Thither, then, he bent his steps, seeming, as he went, to float above the pavement; and there, in the mouth of the entry, he found a man in a sleeved waistcoat, gravely chewing a straw. He passed him by, and twice patrolled the entry, scouting for the barest chance; but the man had faced about and continued to observe him curiously.

Another hope was gone. M'Guire reissued from the entry, still followed by the wondering eyes of the man in the sleeved waistcoat. He once more consulted his watch: there were but fourteen minutes left to him. At that, it seemed as if a sudden, genial heat were spread about his brain; for a second or two, he saw the world as red as blood; and thereafter entered into a complete possession of himself, with an incredible cheerfulness of spirits, prompting him to sing and chuckle as he walked. And yet this mirth seemed to belong to things external; and within, like a black and leaden-heavy kernel, he was conscious of the weight upon his soul.

I care for nobody, no, not I,
And nobody cares for me,

he sang, and laughed at the appropriate burthen, so that the passengers stared upon him on the street. And still the warmth seemed to increase and to become more genial. What was life? he considered, and what he, M'Guire? What even Erin, our green Erin? All seemed so incalculably little that he smiled as he looked down upon it. He would have given years, had he possessed them, for a glass of spirits; but time failed, and he must deny himself this last indulgence.

At the corner of the Haymarket, he very jauntily hailed a hansom cab; jumped in; bade the fellow drive him to a part of the Embankment, which he named; and as soon as the vehicle was in motion, concealed the bag as completely as he could under the vantage of the apron, and once more drew out his watch. So he rode for five interminable minutes, his heart in his mouth at every jolt, scarce able to possess his terrors, yet fearing to wake the attention of the driver by too obvious a change of plan, and willing, if possible, to leave him time to forget the Gladstone bag.

At length, at the head of some stairs on the Embankment, he hailed; the cab was stopped; and he alighted — with how glad a heart! He thrust his hand into his pocket. All was now over; he had saved his life; nor that alone, but he had engineered a striking act of dynamite; for what could be more pictorial, what more effective, than the explosion of a hansom cab, as it sped rapidly along the streets of London. He felt in one pocket; then in another. The most crushing seizure of despair descended on his soul; and struck into abject dumbness, he stared upon the driver. He had not one penny.

‘Hillo,’ said the driver, ‘don’t seem well.’

‘Lost my money,’ said M’Guire, in tones so faint and strange that they surprised his hearing.

The man looked through the trap. ‘I dessay,’ said he: ‘you’ve left your bag.’

M’Guire half unconsciously fetched it out; and looking on that black continent at arm’s length, withered inwardly and felt his features sharpen as with mortal sickness.

‘This is not mine,’ said he. ‘Your last fare must have left it. You had better take it to the station.’

‘Now look here,’ returned the cabman: ‘are you off your chump? or am I?’

‘Well, then, I’ll tell you what,’ exclaimed M’Guire; ‘you take it for your fare!’

‘Oh, I dessay,’ replied the driver. ‘Anything else? What’s *in* your bag? Open it, and let me see.’

‘No, no,’ returned M’Guire. ‘Oh no, not that. It’s a surprise; it’s prepared expressly: a surprise for honest cabmen.’

‘No, you don’t,’ said the man, alighting from his perch, and coming very close to the unhappy patriot. ‘You’re either going to pay my fare, or get in again and drive to the office.’

It was at this supreme hour of his distress, that M’Guire spied the stout figure of one Godall, a tobacconist of Rupert Street, drawing near along the Embankment. The man was not unknown to him; he had bought of his wares, and heard him quoted for the soul of liberality; and such was now the nearness of his peril, that even at such a straw of hope, he clutched with gratitude.

‘Thank God!’ he cried. ‘Here comes a friend of mine. I’ll borrow.’ And he dashed to meet the tradesman. ‘Sir,’ said he, ‘Mr. Godall, I have dealt with you — you doubtless know my face — calamities for which I cannot blame myself have overwhelmed me. Oh, sir, for the love of innocence, for the sake of the bonds of humanity, and as you hope for mercy at the throne of grace, lend me two-and-six!'

'I do not recognise your face,' replied Mr. Godall; 'but I remember the cut of your beard, which I have the misfortune to dislike. Here, sir, is a sovereign; which I very willingly advance to you, on the single condition that you shave your chin.'

M'Guire grasped the coin without a word; cast it to the cabman, calling out to him to keep the change; bounded down the steps, flung the bag far forth into the river, and fell headlong after it. He was plucked from a watery grave, it is believed, by the hands of Mr. Godall. Even as he was being hoisted dripping to the shore, a dull and choked explosion shook the solid masonry of the Embankment, and far out in the river a momentary fountain rose and disappeared.

Somerset in vain strove to attach a meaning to these words. He had, in the meanwhile, applied himself assiduously to the flagon; the plotter began to melt in twain, and seemed to expand and hover on his seat; and with a vague sense of nightmare, the young man rose unsteadily to his feet, and, refusing the proffer of a third grog, insisted that the hour was late and he must positively get to bed.

'Dear me,' observed Zero, 'I find you very temperate. But I will not be oppressive. Suffice it that we are now fast friends; and, my dear landlord, *au revoir*!'

So saying the plotter once more shook hands; and with the politest ceremonies, and some necessary guidance, conducted the bewildered young gentleman to the top of the stair.

Precisely, how he got to bed, was a point on which Somerset remained in utter darkness; but the next morning when, at a blow, he started broad awake, there fell upon his mind a perfect hurricane of horror and wonder. That he should have suffered himself to be led into the semblance of intimacy with such a man as his abominable lodger, appeared, in the cold light of day, a mystery of human weakness. True, he was caught in a situation that might have tested the aplomb of Talleyrand. That was perhaps a palliation; but it was no excuse. For so wholesale a capitulation of principle, for such a fall into criminal familiarity, no excuse indeed was possible; nor any remedy, but to withdraw at once from the relation.

As soon as he was dressed, he hurried upstairs, determined on a rupture. Zero hailed him with the warmth of an old friend.

'Come in,' he cried, 'dear Mr. Somerset! Come in, sit down, and, without ceremony, join me at my morning meal.'

'Sir,' said Somerset, 'you must permit me first to disengage my honour. Last night, I was surprised into a certain appearance of complicity; but once for all, let me inform you that I regard you and your machinations \with unmingled horror and disgust, and I will leave no stone unturned to crush your vile conspiracy.'

'My dear fellow,' replied Zero, with an air of some complacency, 'I am well accustomed to these human weaknesses. Disgust? I have felt it myself; it speedily wears off. I think none the worse, I think the more of you, for this engaging frankness. And in the meanwhile, what are you to do? You find yourself, if I interpret rightly, in very much the same situation as Charles the Second (possibly the least degraded of your British sovereigns) when he was taken into the confidence of the thief. To denounce me, is out of the question; and what else can you attempt? No, dear Mr. Somerset, your hands are tied; and you find yourself condemned, under pain of behaving like a cad, to be that same charming and intellectual companion who delighted me last night.’

‘At least,’ cried Somerset, ‘I can, and do, order you to leave this house.’

‘Ah!’ cried the plotter, ‘but there I fail to follow you. You may, if you please, enact the part of Judas; but if, as I suppose, you recoil from that extremity of meanness, I am, on my side, far too intelligent to leave these lodgings, in which I please myself exceedingly, and from which you lack the power to drive me. No, no, dear sir; here I am, and here I propose to stay.’

‘I repeat,’ cried Somerset, beside himself with a sense of his own weakness, ‘I repeat that I give you warning. I am the master of this house; and I emphatically give you warning.’

‘A week’s warning?’ said the imperturbable conspirator. ‘Very well: we will talk of it a week from now. That is arranged; and in the meanwhile, I observe my breakfast growing cold. Do, dear Mr. Somerset, since you find yourself condemned, for a week at least, to the society of a very interesting character, display some of that open favour, some of that interest in life’s obscurer sides, which stamp the character of the true artist. Hang me, if you will, to-morrow; but to-day show yourself divested of the scruples of the burgess, and sit down pleasantly to share my meal.’

‘Man!’ cried Somerset, ‘do you understand my sentiments?’

‘Certainly,’ replied Zero; ‘and I respect them! Would you be outdone in such a contest? will you alone be partial? and in this nineteenth century, cannot two gentlemen of education agree to differ on a point of politics? Come, sir: all your hard words have left me smiling; judge then, which of us is the philosopher!’

Somerset was a young man of a very tolerant disposition and by nature easily amenable to sophistry. He threw up his hands with a gesture of despair, and took the seat to which the conspirator invited him. The meal was excellent; the host not only affable, but primed with curious information. He seemed, indeed, like one who had too long endured the torture of silence, to exult in the most wholesale disclosures. The interest of what he had to tell was great; his character, besides, developed step by step; and Somerset, as the time fled, not only outgrew some of the discomfort of his false position, but began to regard the conspirator with a familiarity that verged upon contempt. In any circumstances, he had a singular inability to leave the society in which he found himself; company, even if distasteful, held him captive like a limed sparrow; and on this occasion, he suffered hour to follow hour, was easily persuaded to sit down once more to table, and did not even attempt to withdraw till, on the approach of evening, Zero, with many apologies, dismissed his guest. His fellow-conspirators, the dynamiter handsomely explained, as they were unacquainted with the sterling qualities of the young man, would be alarmed at the sight of a strange face.

As soon as he was alone, Somerset fell back upon the humour of the morning. He raged at the thought of his facility; he paced the dining-room, forming the sternest resolutions for the future; he wrung the hand which had been dishonoured by the touch of an assassin; and among all these whirling thoughts, there flashed in from time to time, and ever with a chill of fear, the thought of the confounded ingredients with which the house was stored. A powder magazine seemed a secure smoking-room alongside of the SuperfluousMansion.

He sought refuge in flight, in locomotion, in the flowing bowl. As long as the bars were open, he travelled from one to another, seeking light, safety, and the companionship of human faces; when these resources failed him, he fell back on the belated baked-potato man; and at length, still pacing the streets, he was goaded to fraternise with the police. Alas, with what a sense of guilt he conversed with these guardians of the law; how gladly had he wept upon their ample bosoms; and how the secret fluttered to his lips and was still denied an exit! Fatigue began at last to triumph over remorse; and about the hour of the first milkman, he returned to the door of the mansion; looked at it with a horrid expectation, as though it should have burst that instant into flames; drew out his key, and when his foot already rested on the steps, once more lost heart and fled for repose to the grisly shelter of a coffee-shop.

It was on the stroke of noon when he awoke. Dismally searching in his pockets, he found himself reduced to half-a-crown; and when he had paid the price of his distasteful couch, saw himself obliged to return to the SuperfluousMansion. He sneaked into the hall and stole on tiptoe to the cupboard where he kept his money. Yet half a minute, he told himself, and he would be free for days from his obseding lodger, and might decide at leisure on the course he should pursue. But fate had otherwise designed: there came a tap at the door and Zero entered.

‘Have I caught you?’ he cried, with innocent gaiety. ‘Dear fellow, I was growing quite impatient.’ And on the speaker’s somewhat stolid face, there came a glow of genuine affection. ‘I am so long unused to have a friend,’ he continued, ‘that I begin to be afraid I may prove jealous.’ And he wrung the hand of his landlord.

Somerset was, of all men, least fit to deal with such a greeting. To reject these kind advances was beyond his strength. That he could not return cordiality for cordiality, was already almost more than he could carry. That inequality between kind sentiments which, to generous characters, will always seem to be a sort of guilt, oppressed him to the ground; and he stammered vague and lying words.

‘That is all right,’ cried Zero — ’that is as it should be — say no more! I had a vague alarm; I feared you had deserted me; but I now own that fear to have been unworthy, and apologise. To doubt of your forgiveness were to repeat my sin. Come, then; dinner waits; join me again and tell me your adventures of the night.’

Kindness still sealed the lips of Somerset; and he suffered himself once more to be set down to table with his innocent and criminal acquaintance. Once more, the plotter plunged up to the neck in damaging disclosures: now it would be the name and biography of an individual, now the address of some important centre, that rose, as if by accident, upon his lips; and each word was like another turn of the thumbscrew to his unhappy guest. Finally, the course of Zero’s bland monologue led him to the young lady of two days ago: that young lady, who had flashed on Somerset for so brief a while but with so conquering a charm; and whose engaging grace, communicative eyes, and admirable conduct of the sweeping skirt, remained imprinted on his memory.

‘You saw her?’ said Zero. ‘Beautiful, is she not? She, too, is one of ours: a true enthusiast: nervous, perhaps, in presence of the chemicals; but in matters of intrigue, the very soul of skill and daring. Lake, Fonblanque, de Marly, Valdevia, such are some of the names that she employs; her true name — but there, perhaps, I go too far. Suffice it, that it is to her I owe my present lodging, and, dear Somerset, the pleasure of your acquaintance. It appears she knew the house. You see dear fellow, I make no concealment: all that you can care to hear, I tell you openly.’

‘For God’s sake,’ cried the wretched Somerset, ‘hold your tongue! You cannot imagine how you torture me!’

A shade of serious discomposure crossed the open countenance of Zero.

‘There are times,’ he said, ‘when I begin to fancy that you do not like me. Why, why, dear Somerset, this lack of cordiality? I am depressed; the touchstone of my life draws near; and if I fail’ — he gloomily nodded — ’from all the height of my ambitious schemes, I fall, dear boy, into contempt. These are grave thoughts, and you may judge my need of your delightful company. Innocent prattler, you relieve the weight of my concerns. And yet . . . and yet . . .’ The speaker pushed away his plate, and rose from table. ‘Follow me,’ said he, ‘follow me. My mood is on; I must have air, I must behold the plain of battle.’

So saying, he led the way hurriedly to the top flat of the mansion, and thence, by ladder and trap, to a certain leaded platform, sheltered at one end by a great stalk of chimneys and occupying the actual summit of the roof. On both sides, it bordered, without parapet or rail, on the incline of slates; and, northward above all, commanded an extensive view of housetops, and rising through the smoke, the distant spires of churches.

‘Here,’ cried Zero, ‘you behold this field of city, rich, crowded, laughing with the spoil of continents; but soon, how soon, to be laid low! Some day, some night, from this coign of vantage, you shall perhaps be startled by the detonation of the judgment gun — not sharp and empty like the crack of cannon, but deep-mouthed and unctuously solemn. Instantly thereafter, you shall behold the flames break forth. Ay,’ he cried, stretching forth his hand, ‘ay, that will be a day of retribution. Then shall the pallid constable flee side by side with the detected thief. Blaze!’ he cried, ‘blaze, derided city! Fall, flatulent monarchy, fall like Dagon!’

With these words his foot slipped upon the lead; and but for Somerset’s quickness, he had been instantly precipitated into space. Pale as a sheet, and limp as a pocket-handkerchief, he was dragged from the edge of downfall by one arm; helped, or rather carried, down the ladder; and deposited in safety on the attic landing. Here he began to come to himself, wiped his brow, and at length, seizing Somerset’s hand in both of his, began to utter his acknowledgments.

‘This seals it,’ said he. ‘Ours is a life and death connection. You have plucked me from the jaws of death; and if I were before attracted by your character, judge now of the ardour of my gratitude and love! But I perceive I am still greatly shaken. Lend me, I beseech you, lend me your arm as far as my apartment.’

A dram of spirits restored the plotter to something of his customary self-possession; and he was standing, glass in hand and genially convalescent, when his eye was attracted by the dejection of the unfortunate young man.

‘Good heavens, dear Somerset,’ he cried, ‘what ails you? Let me offer you a touch of spirits.’

But Somerset had fallen below the reach of this material comfort.

‘Let me be,’ he said. ‘I am lost; you have caught me in the toils. Up to this moment, I have lived all my life in the most reckless manner, and done exactly what I pleased, with the most perfect innocence. And now — what am I? Are you so blind and wooden that you do not see the loathing you inspire me with? Is it possible you can suppose me willing to continue to exist upon such terms? To think,’ he cried, ‘that a young man, guilty of no fault on earth but amiability, should find himself involved in such a damned imbroglio!’ And placing his knuckles in his eyes, Somerset rolled upon the sofa.

‘My God,’ said Zero, ‘is this possible? And I so filled with tenderness and interest! Can it be, dear Somerset, that you are under the empire of these out-worn scruples? or that you judge a patriot by the morality of the religious tract? I thought you were a good agnostic.'

'Mr. Jones,' said Somerset, 'it is in vain to argue. I boast myself a total disbeliever, not only in revealed religion, but in the data, method, and conclusions of the whole of ethics. Well! what matters it? what signifies a form of words? I regard you as a reptile, whom I would rejoice, whom I long, to stamp under my heel. You would blow up others? Well then, understand: I want, with every circumstance of infamy and agony, to blow up you!'

'Somerset, Somerset!' said Zero, turning very pale, 'this is wrong; this is very wrong. You pain, you wound me, Somerset.'

'Give me a match!' cried Somerset wildly. 'Let me set fire to this incomparable monster! Let me perish with him in his fall!'

'For God's sake,' cried Zero, clutching hold of the young man, 'for God's sake command yourself! We stand upon the brink; death yawns around us; a man — a stranger in this foreign land — one whom you have called your friend — '

'Silence!' cried Somerset, 'you are no friend, no friend of mine. I look on you with loathing, like a toad: my flesh creeps with physical repulsion; my soul revolts against the sight of you.'

Zero burst into tears. 'Alas!' he sobbed, 'this snaps the last link that bound me to humanity. My friend disowns — he insults me. I am indeed accurst.'

Somerset stood for an instant staggered by this sudden change of front. The next moment, with a despairing gesture, he fled from the room and from the house. The first dash of his escape carried him hard upon half-way to the next police-office: but presently began to droop; and before he reached the house of lawful intervention, he fell once more among doubtful counsels. Was he an agnostic? had he a right to act? Away with such nonsense, and let Zero perish! ran his thoughts. And then again: had he not promised, had he not shaken hands and broken bread? and that with open eyes? and if so how could he take action, and not forfeit honour? But honour? what was honour? A figment, which, in the hot pursuit of crime, he ought to dash aside. Ay, but crime? A figment, too, which his enfranchised intellect discarded. All day, he wandered in the parks, a prey to whirling thoughts; all night, patrolled the city; and at the peep of day he sat down by the wayside in the neighbourhood of Peckham and bitterly wept. His gods had fallen. He who had chosen the broad, daylit, unencumbered paths of universal scepticism, found himself still the bondslave of honour. He who had accepted life from a point of view as lofty as the predatory eagle's, though with no design to prey;

he who had clearly recognised the common moral basis of war, of commercial competition, and of crime; he who was prepared to help the escaping murderer or to embrace the impenitent thief, found, to the overthrow of all his logic, that he objected to the use of dynamite. The dawn crept among the sleeping villas and over the smokeless fields of city; and still the unfortunate sceptic sobbed over his fall from consistency.

At length, he rose and took the rising sun to witness. 'There is no question as to fact,' he cried; 'right and wrong are but figments and the shadow of a word; but for all that, there are certain things that I cannot do, and there are certain others that I will not stand.' Thereupon he decided to return to make one last effort of persuasion, and, if he could not prevail on Zero to desist from his infernal trade, throw delicacy to the winds, give the plotter an hour's start, and denounce him to the police. Fast as he went, being winged by this resolution, it was already well on in the morning when he came in sight of the SuperfluousMansion. Tripping down the steps, was the young lady of the various aliases; and he was surprised to see upon her countenance the marks of anger and concern.

'Madam,' he began, yielding to impulse and with no clear knowledge of what he was to add.

But at the sound of his voice she seemed to experience a shock of fear or horror; started back; lowered her veil with a sudden movement; and fled, without turning, from the square.

Here then, we step aside a moment from following the fortunes of Somerset, and proceed to relate the strange and romantic episode of The Brown Box.

DESBOROUGH'S ADVENTURE

THE BROWN BOX

Mr. Harry Desborough lodged in the fine and grave old quarter of Bloomsbury, roared about on every side by the high tides of London, but itself rejoicing in romantic silences and city peace. It was in Queen Square that he had pitched his tent, next door to the Children's Hospital, on your left hand as you go north: Queen Square, sacred to humane and liberal arts, whence homes were made beautiful, where the poor were taught, where the sparrows were plentiful and loud, and where groups of patient little ones would hover all day long before the hospital, if by chance they might kiss their hand or speak a word to their sick brother at the window. Desborough's room was on the first floor and fronted to the square; but he enjoyed besides, a right by which he often profited, to sit and smoke upon a terrace at the back, which looked down upon a fine forest of back gardens, and was in turn commanded by the windows of an empty room.

On the afternoon of a warm day, Desborough sauntered forth upon this terrace, somewhat out of hope and heart, for he had been now some weeks on the vain quest of situations, and prepared for melancholy and tobacco. Here, at least, he told himself that he would be alone; for, like most youths, who are neither rich, nor witty, nor successful, he rather shunned than courted the society of other men. Even as he expressed the thought, his eye alighted on the window of the room that looked upon the terrace; and to his surprise and annoyance, he beheld it curtained with a silken hanging. It was like his luck, he thought; his privacy was gone, he could no longer brood and sigh unwatched, he could no longer suffer his discouragement to find a vent in words or soothe himself with sentimental whistling; and in the irritation of the moment, he struck his pipe upon the rail with unnecessary force. It was an old, sweet, seasoned briar-root, glossy and dark with long employment, and justly dear to his fancy. What, then, was his chagrin, when the head snapped from the stem, leaped airily in space, and fell and disappeared among the lilacs of the garden?

He threw himself savagely into the garden chair, pulled out the story-paper which he had brought with him to read, tore off a fragment of the last sheet, which contains only the answers to correspondents, and set himself to roll a cigarette. He was no master of the art; again and again, the paper broke between his fingers and the tobacco showered upon the ground; and he was already on the point of angry resignation, when the window swung slowly inward, the silken curtain was thrust aside, and a lady, somewhat strangely attired, stepped forth upon the terrace.

'Señorito,' said she, and there was a rich thrill in her voice, like an organ note, 'Señorito, you are in difficulties. Suffer me to come to your assistance.'

With the words, she took the paper and tobacco from his unresisting hands; and with a facility that, in Desborough's eyes, seemed magical, rolled and presented him a cigarette. He took it, still seated, still without a word; staring with all his eyes upon that apparition. Her face was warm and rich in colour; in shape, it was that piquant triangle, so innocently sly, so saucily attractive, so rare in our more northern climates; her eyes were large, starry, and visited by changing lights; her hair was partly covered by a lace mantilla, through which her arms, bare to the shoulder, gleamed white; her figure, full and soft in all the womanly contours, was yet alive and active, light with excess of life, and slender by grace of some divine proportion.

'You do not like my cigarrito, Señor?' she asked. 'Yet it is better made than yours.' At that she laughed, and her laughter trilled in his ear like music; but the next moment her face fell. 'I see,' she cried. 'It is my manner that repels you. I am too constrained, too cold. I am not,' she added, with a more engaging air, 'I am not the simple English maiden I appear.'

'Oh!' murmured Harry, filled with inexpressible thoughts.

'In my own dear land,' she pursued, 'things are differently ordered. There, I must own, a girl is bound by many and rigorous restrictions; little is permitted her; she learns to be distant, she learns to appear forbidding. But here, in free England — oh, glorious liberty!' she cried, and threw up her arms with a gesture of inimitable grace — 'here there are no fetters; here the woman may dare to be herself entirely, and the men, the chivalrous men — is it not written on the very shield of your nation, *honi soit*? Ah, it is hard for me to learn, hard for me to dare to be myself. You must not judge me yet awhile; I shall end by conquering this stiffness, I shall end by growing English. Do I speak the language well?'

'Perfectly — oh, perfectly!' said Harry, with a fervency of conviction worthy of a graver subject.

'Ah, then,' she said, 'I shall soon learn; English blood ran in my father's veins; and I have had the advantage of some training in your expressive tongue. If I speak already without accent, with my thorough English appearance, there is nothing left to change except my manners.'

'Oh no,' said Desborough. 'Oh pray not! I — madam — '

'I am,' interrupted the lady, 'the Señorita Teresa Valdevia. The evening air grows chill. Adios, Señorito.' And before Harry could stammer out a word, she had disappeared into her room.

He stood transfixed, the cigarette still unlighted in his hand. His thoughts had soared above tobacco, and still recalled and beautified the image of his new acquaintance. Her voice re-echoed in his memory; her eyes, of which he could not tell the colour, haunted his soul. The clouds had risen at her coming, and he beheld a new-created world. What she was, he could not fancy, but he adored her. Her age, he durst not estimate; fearing to find her older than himself, and thinking sacrilege to couple that fair favour with the thought of mortal changes. As for her character, beauty to the young is always good. So the poor lad lingered late upon the terrace, stealing timid glances at the curtained window, sighing to the gold laburnums, rapt into the country of romance; and when at length he entered and sat down to dine, on cold boiled mutton and a pint of ale, he feasted on the food of gods.

Next day when he returned to the terrace, the window was a little ajar, and he enjoyed a view of the lady's shoulder, as she sat patiently sewing and all unconscious of his presence. On the next, he had scarce appeared when the window opened, and the Señorita tripped forth into the sunlight, in a morning disorder, delicately neat, and yet somehow foreign, tropical, and strange. In one hand she held a packet.

'Will you try,' she said, 'some of my father's tobacco — from dear Cuba? There, as I suppose you know, all smoke, ladies as well as gentlemen. So you need not fear to annoy me. The fragrance will remind me of home. My home, Señor, was by the sea.' And as she uttered these few words, Desborough, for the first time in his life, realised the poetry of the great deep. 'Awake or asleep, I dream of it: dear home, dear Cuba!'

'But some day,' said Desborough, with an inward pang, 'some day you will return?'

'Never!' she cried; 'ah, never, in Heaven's name!'

'Are you then resident for life in England?' he inquired, with a strange lightening of spirit.

'You ask too much, for you ask more than I know,' she answered sadly; and then, resuming her gaiety of manner: 'But you have not tried my Cuban tobacco,' she said.

'Señorita,' said he, shyly abashed by some shadow of coquetry in her manner, 'whatever comes to me — you — I mean,' he concluded, deeply flushing, 'that I have no doubt the tobacco is delightful.'

'Ah, Señor,' she said, with almost mournful gravity, 'you seemed so simple and good, and already you are trying to pay compliments — and besides,' she added, brightening, with a quick upward glance, into a smile, 'you do it so badly! English gentlemen, I used to hear, could be fast friends, respectful, honest friends; could be companions, comforters, if the need arose, or champions, and yet never encroach. Do not seek to please me by copying the graces of my countrymen. Be yourself: the frank, kindly, honest English gentleman that I have heard of since my childhood and still longed to meet.'

Harry, much bewildered, and far from clear as to the manners of the Cuban gentlemen, strenuously disclaimed the thought of plagiarism.

'Your national seriousness of bearing best becomes you, Señor,' said the lady. 'See!' marking a line with her dainty, slippered foot, 'thus far it shall be common ground; there, at my window-sill, begins the scientific frontier. If you choose, you may drive me to my forts; but if, on the other hand, we are to be real English friends, I may join you here when I am not too sad; or, when I am yet more graciously inclined, you may draw your chair beside the window and teach me English customs, while I work. You will find me an apt scholar, for my heart is in the task.' She laid her hand lightly upon Harry's arm, and looked into his eyes. 'Do you know,' said she, 'I am emboldened to believe that I have already caught something of your English aplomb? Do you not perceive a change, Señor? Slight, perhaps, but still a change? Is my deportment not more open, more free, more like that of the dear "British Miss" than when you saw me first?' She gave a radiant smile; withdrew her hand from Harry's arm; and before the young man could formulate in words the eloquent emotions that ran riot through his brain — with an 'Adios, Señor: good-night, my English friend,' she vanished from his sight behind the curtain.

The next day Harry consumed an ounce of tobacco in vain upon the neutral terrace; neither sight nor sound rewarded him, and the dinner-hour summoned him at length from the scene of disappointment. On the next it rained; but nothing, neither business nor weather, neither prospective poverty nor present hardship, could now divert the young man from the service of his lady; and wrapt in a long ulster, with the collar raised, he took his stand against the balustrade, awaiting fortune, the picture of damp and discomfort to the eye, but glowing inwardly with tender and delightful ardours. Presently the window opened, and the fair Cuban, with a smile imperfectly dissembled, appeared upon the sill.

'Come here,' she said, 'here, beside my window. The small verandah gives a belt of shelter.' And she graciously handed him a folding-chair.

As he sat down, visibly aglow with shyness and delight, a certain bulkiness in his pocket reminded him that he was not come empty-handed.

'I have taken the liberty,' said he, 'of bringing you a little book. I thought of you, when I observed it on the stall, because I saw it was in

Spanish. The man assured me it was by one of the best authors, and quite proper.' As he spoke, he placed the little volume in her hand. Her eyes fell as she turned the pages, and a flush rose and died again upon her cheeks, as deep as it was fleeting. 'You are angry,' he cried in agony. 'I have presumed.'

'No, Señor, it is not that,' returned the lady. 'I — ' and a flood of colour once more mounted to her brow — 'I am confused and ashamed because I have deceived you. Spanish,' she began, and paused — 'Spanish is, of course, my native tongue,' she resumed, as though suddenly taking courage; 'and this should certainly put the highest value on your thoughtful present; but alas, sir, of what use is it to me? And how shall I confess to you the truth — the humiliating truth — that I cannot read?'

As Harry's eyes met hers in undisguised amazement, the fair Cuban seemed to shrink before his gaze. 'Read?' repeated Harry. 'You!'

She pushed the window still more widely open with a large and noble gesture. 'Enter, Señor,' said she. 'The time has come to which I have long looked forward, not without alarm; when I must either fear to lose your friendship, or tell you without disguise the story of my life.'

It was with a sentiment bordering on devotion, that Harry passed the window. A semi-barbarous delight in form and colour had presided over the studied disorder of the room in which he found himself. It was filled with dainty stuffs, furs and rugs and scarves of brilliant hues, and set with elegant and curious trifles-fans on the mantelshelf, an antique lamp upon a bracket, and on the table a silver-mounted bowl of cocoa-nut about half full of unset jewels. The fair Cuban, herself a gem of colour and the fit masterpiece for that rich frame, motioned Harry to a seat, and sinking herself into another, thus began her history.

STORY OF THE FAIR CUBAN

I am not what I seem. My father drew his descent, on the one hand, from grandees of Spain, and on the other, through the maternal line, from the patriot Bruce. My mother, too, was the descendant of a line of kings; but, alas! these kings were African. She was fair as the day: fairer than I, for I inherited a darker strain of blood from the veins of my European father; her mind was noble, her manners queenly and accomplished; and seeing her more than the equal of her neighbours, and surrounded by the most considerate affection and respect, I grew up to adore her, and when the time came, received her last sigh upon my lips, still ignorant that she was a slave, and alas! my father's mistress. Her death, which befell me in my sixteenth year, was the first sorrow I had known: it left our home bereaved of its attractions, cast a shade of melancholy on my youth, and wrought in my father a tragic and durable change. Months went by; with the elasticity of my years, I regained some of the simple mirth that had before distinguished me; the plantation smiled with fresh crops; the negroes on the estate had already forgotten my mother and transferred their simple obedience to myself; but still the cloud only darkened on the brows of Señor Valdevia. His absences from home had been frequent even in the old days, for he did business in precious gems in the city of Havana; they now became almost continuous; and when he returned, it was but for the night and with the manner of a man crushed down by adverse fortune.

The place where I was born and passed my days was an isle set in the Caribbean Sea, some half-hour's rowing from the coasts of Cuba. It was steep, rugged, and, except for my father's family and plantation, uninhabited and left to nature. The house, a low building surrounded by spacious verandahs, stood upon a rise of ground and looked across the sea to Cuba. The breezes blew about it gratefully, fanned us as we lay swinging in our silken hammocks, and tossed the boughs and flowers of the magnolia. Behind and to the left, the quarter of the negroes and the waving fields of the plantation covered an eighth part of the surface of the isle. On the right and closely bordering on the garden, lay a vast and deadly swamp, densely covered with wood, breathing fever, dotted with profound sloughs, and inhabited by poisonous oysters, man-eating crabs, snakes, alligators, and sickly fishes. Into the recesses of that jungle, none could penetrate but those of African descent; an invisible, unconquerable foe lay there in wait for the European; and the air was death.

One morning (from which I must date the beginning of my ruinous misfortune) I left my room a little after day, for in that warm climate all are early risers, and found not a servant to attend upon my wants. I made the circuit of the house, still calling: and my surprise had almost changed into alarm, when coming at last into a large verandahed court, I found it thronged with negroes. Even then, even when I was amongst them, not one turned or paid the least regard to my arrival. They had eyes and ears for but one person: a woman, richly and tastefully attired; of elegant carriage, and a musical speech; not so much old in years, as worn and marred by self-indulgence: her face, which was still attractive, stamped with the most cruel passions, her eye burning with the greed of evil. It was not from her appearance, I believe, but from some emanation of her soul, that I recoiled in a kind of fainting terror; as we hear of plants that blight and snakes that fascinate, the woman shocked and daunted me. But I was of a brave nature; trod the weakness down; and forcing my way through the slaves, who fell back before me in embarrassment, as though in the presence of rival mistresses, I asked, in imperious tones: 'Who is this person?'

A slave girl, to whom I had been kind, whispered in my ear to have a care, for that was Madam Mendizabal; but the name was new to me.

In the meanwhile the woman, applying a pair of glasses to her eyes, studied me with insolent particularity from head to foot.

'Young woman,' said she, at last, 'I have had a great experience in refractory servants, and take a pride in breaking them. You really tempt me; and if I had not other affairs, and these of more importance, on my hand, I should certainly buy you at your father's sale.'

'Madam — ' I began, but my voice failed me.

'Is it possible that you do not know your position?' she returned, with a hateful laugh. 'How comical! Positively, I must buy her. Accomplishments, I suppose?' she added, turning to the servants.

Several assured her that the young mistress had been brought up like any lady, for so it seemed in their inexperience.

'She would do very well for my place of business in Havana,' said the Señora Mendizabal, once more studying me through her glasses; 'and I should take a pleasure,' she pursued, more directly addressing myself, 'in bringing you acquainted with a whip.' And she smiled at me with a savoury lust of cruelty upon her face.

At this, I found expression. Calling by name upon the servants, I bade them turn this woman from the house, fetch her to the boat, and set her back upon the mainland. But with one voice, they protested that they durst not obey, coming close about me, pleading and beseeching me to be more wise; and, when I insisted, rising higher in passion and speaking of this foul intruder in the terms she had deserved, they fell back from me as from one who had blasphemed. A superstitious reverence plainly encircled the stranger; I could read it in their changed demeanour, and in the paleness that prevailed upon the natural colour of their faces; and their fear perhaps reacted on myself. I looked again at Madam Mendizabal. She stood perfectly composed, watching my face through her glasses with a smile of scorn; and at the sight of her assured superiority to all my threats, a cry broke from my lips, a cry of rage, fear, and despair, and I fled from the verandah and the house.

I ran I knew not where, but it was towards the beach. As I went, my head whirled; so strange, so sudden, were these events and insults. Who was she? what, in Heaven's name, the power she wielded over my obedient negroes? Why had she addressed me as a slave? why spoken of my father's sale? To all these tumultuary questions I could find no answer; and in the turmoil of my mind, nothing was plain except the hateful leering image of the woman.

I was still running, mad with fear and anger, when I saw my father coming to meet me from the landing-place; and with a cry that I thought would have killed me, leaped into his arms and broke into a passion of sobs and tears upon his bosom. He made me sit down below a tall palmetto that grew not far off; comforted me, but with some abstraction in his voice; and as soon as I regained the least command upon my feelings, asked me, not without harshness, what this grief betokened. I was surprised by his tone into a still greater measure of composure; and in firm tones, though still interrupted by sobs, I told him there was a stranger in the island, at which I thought he started and turned pale; that the servants would not obey me; that the stranger's name was Madam Mendizabal, and, at that, he seemed to me both troubled and relieved; that she had insulted me, treated me as a slave (and here my father's brow began to darken), threatened to buy me at a sale, and questioned my own servants before my face; and that, at last, finding myself quite helpless and exposed to these intolerable liberties, I had fled from the house in terror, indignation, and amazement.

'Teresa,' said my father, with singular gravity of voice, 'I must make to-day a call upon your courage; much must be told you, there is much that you must do to help me; and my daughter must prove herself a woman by her spirit. As for this Mendizabal, what shall I say? or how am I to tell you what she is? Twenty years ago, she was the loveliest of slaves; to-day she is what you see her — prematurely old, disgraced by the practice of every vice and every nefarious industry, but free, rich, married, they say, to some reputable man, whom may Heaven assist! and exercising among her ancient mates, the slaves of Cuba, an influence as unbounded as its reason is mysterious. Horrible rites, it is supposed, cement her empire: the rites of Hoodoo. Be that as it may, I would have you dismiss the thought of this incomparable witch; it is not from her that danger threatens us; and into her hands, I make bold to promise, you shall never fall.’

‘Father!’ I cried. ‘Fall? Was there any truth, then, in her words? Am I — O father, tell me plain; I can bear anything but this suspense.’

‘I will tell you,’ he replied, with merciful bluntness. ‘Your mother was a slave; it was my design, so soon as I had saved a competence, to sail to the free land of Britain, where the law would suffer me to marry her: a design too long procrastinated; for death, at the last moment, intervened. You will now understand the heaviness with which your mother’s memory hangs about my neck.’

I cried out aloud, in pity for my parents; and in seeking to console the survivor, I forgot myself.

‘It matters not,’ resumed my father. ‘What I have left undone can never be repaired, and I must bear the penalty of my remorse. But, Teresa, with so cutting a reminder of the evils of delay, I set myself at once to do what was still possible: to liberate yourself.’

I began to break forth in thanks, but he checked me with a sombre roughness.

‘Your mother’s illness,’ he resumed, ‘had engaged too great a portion of my time; my business in the city had lain too long at the mercy of ignorant underlings; my head, my taste, my unequalled knowledge of the more precious stones, that art by which I can distinguish, even on the darkest night, a sapphire from a ruby, and tell at a glance in what quarter of the earth a gem was disinterred — all these had been too long absent from the conduct of affairs. Teresa, I was insolvent.’

‘What matters that?’ I cried. ‘What matters poverty, if we be left together with our love and sacred memories?’

‘You do not comprehend,’ he said gloomily. ‘Slave, as you are, young — alas! scarce more than child! — accomplished, beautiful with the most touching beauty, innocent as an angel — all these qualities that should disarm the very wolves and crocodiles, are, in the eyes of those to whom I stand indebted, commodities to buy and sell. You are a chattel; a marketable thing; and worth — heavens, that I should say such words! — worth money. Do you begin to see? If I were to give you freedom, I should defraud my creditors; the manumission would be certainly annulled; you would be still a slave, and I a criminal.’

I caught his hand in mine, kissed it, and moaned in pity for myself, in sympathy for my father.

‘How I have toiled,’ he continued, ‘how I have dared and striven to repair my losses, Heaven has beheld and will remember. Its blessing was denied to my endeavours, or, as I please myself by thinking, but delayed to descend upon my daughter's head. At length, all hope was at an end; I was ruined beyond retrieve; a heavy debt fell due upon the morrow, which I could not meet; I should be declared a bankrupt, and my goods, my lands, my jewels that I so much loved, my slaves whom I have spoiled and rendered happy, and oh! tenfold worse, you, my beloved daughter, would be sold and pass into the hands of ignorant and greedy traffickers. Too long, I saw, had I accepted and profited by this great crime of slavery; but was my daughter, my innocent unsullied daughter, was *she* to pay the price? I cried out — no! — I took Heaven to witness my temptation; I caught up this bag and fled. Close upon my track are the pursuers; perhaps to-night, perhaps to-morrow, they will land upon this isle, sacred to the memory of the dear soul that bore you, to consign your father to an ignominious prison, and yourself to slavery and dishonour. We have not many hours before us. Off the north coast of our isle, by strange good fortune, an English yacht has for some days been hovering. It belongs to Sir George Greville, whom I slightly know, to whom ere now I have rendered unusual services, and who will not refuse to help in our escape. Or if he did, if his gratitude were in default, I have the power to force him. For what does it mean, my child — what means this Englishman, who hangs for years upon the shores of Cuba, and returns from every trip with new and valuable gems?'

'He may have found a mine,' I hazarded.

'So he declares,' returned my father; 'but the strange gift I have received from nature, easily transpierced the fable. He brought me diamonds only, which I bought, at first, in innocence; at a second glance, I started; for of these stones, my child, some had first seen the day in Africa, some in Brazil; while others, from their peculiar water and rude workmanship, I divined to be the spoil of ancient temples. Thus put upon the scent, I made inquiries. Oh, he is cunning, but I was cunninger than he. He visited, I found, the shop of every jeweller in town; to one he came with rubies, to one with emeralds, to one with precious beryl; to all, with this same story of the mine. But in what mine, what rich epitome of the earth's surface, were there conjoined the rubies of Ispahan, the pearls of Coromandel, and the diamonds of Golconda? No, child, that man, for all his yacht and title, that man must fear and must obey me. To-night, then, as soon as it is dark, we must take our way through the swamp by the path which I shall presently show you; thence, across the highlands of the isle, a track is blazed, which shall conduct us to the haven on the north; and close by the yacht is riding. Should my pursuers come before the hour at which I look to see them, they will still arrive too late; a trusty man attends on the mainland; as soon as they appear, we shall behold, if it be dark, the redness of a fire, if it be day, a pillar of smoke, on the opposing headland; and thus warned, we shall have time to put the swamp between ourselves and danger. Meantime, I would conceal this bag; I would, before all things, be seen to arrive at the house with empty hands; a blabbing slave might else undo us. For see!' he added; and holding up the bag, which he had already shown me, he poured into my lap a shower of unmounted jewels, brighter than flowers, of every size and colour, and catching, as they fell, upon a million dainty facets, the ardour of the sun.

I could not restrain a cry of admiration.

'Even in your ignorant eyes,' pursued my father, 'they command respect. Yet what are they but pebbles, passive to the tool, cold as death? Ingrate!' he cried. 'Each one of these — miracles of nature's patience, conceived out of the dust in centuries of microscopical activity, each one is, for you and me, a year of life, liberty, and mutual affection. How, then, should I cherish them! and why do I delay to place them beyond reach! Teresa, follow me.'

He rose to his feet, and led me to the borders of the great jungle, where they overhung, in a wall of poisonous and dusky foliage, the declivity of the hill on which my father's house stood planted. For some while he skirted, with attentive eyes, the margin of the thicket. Then, seeming to recognise some mark, for his countenance became immediately lightened of a load of thought, he paused and addressed me. 'Here,' said he, 'is the entrance of the secret path that I have mentioned, and here you shall await me. I but pass some hundreds of yards into the swamp to bury my poor treasure; as soon as that is safe, I will return.' It was in vain that I sought to dissuade him, urging the dangers of the place; in vain that I begged to be allowed to follow, pleading the black blood that I now knew to circulate in my veins: to all my appeals he turned a deaf ear, and, bending back a portion of the screen of bushes, disappeared into the pestilential silence of the swamp.

At the end of a full hour, the bushes were once more thrust aside; and my father stepped from out the thicket, and paused and almost staggered in the first shock of the blinding sunlight. His face was of a singular dusky red; and yet for all the heat of the tropical noon, he did not seem to sweat.

'You are tired,' I cried, springing to meet him. 'You are ill.'

'I am tired,' he replied; 'the air in that jungle stifles one; my eyes, besides, have grown accustomed to its gloom, and the strong sunshine pierces them like knives. A moment, Teresa, give me but a moment. All shall yet be well. I have buried the hoard under a cypress, immediately beyond the bayou, on the left-hand margin of the path; beautiful, bright things, they now lie whelmed in slime; you shall find them there, if needful. But come, let us to the house; it is time to eat against our journey of the night: to eat and then to sleep, my poor Teresa: then to sleep.' And he looked upon me out of bloodshot eyes, shaking his head as if in pity.

We went hurriedly, for he kept murmuring that he had been gone too long, and that the servants might suspect; passed through the airy stretch of the verandah; and came at length into the grateful twilight of the shuttered house. The meal was spread; the house servants, already informed by the boatmen of the master's return, were all back at their posts, and terrified, as I could see, to face me. My father still murmuring of haste with weary and feverish pertinacity, I hurried at once to take my place at table; but I had no sooner left his arm than he paused and thrust forth both his hands with a strange gesture of groping. 'How is this?' he cried, in a sharp, unhuman voice. 'Am I blind?' I ran to him and tried to lead him to the table; but he resisted and stood stiffly where he was, opening and shutting his jaws, as if in a painful effort after breath. Then suddenly he raised both hands to his temples, cried out, 'My head, my head!' and reeled and fell against the wall.

I knew too well what it must be. I turned and begged the servants to relieve him. But they, with one accord, denied the possibility of hope; the master had gone into the swamp, they said, the master must die; all help was idle. Why should I dwell upon his sufferings? I had him carried to a bed, and watched beside him. He lay still, and at times ground his teeth, and talked at times unintelligibly, only that one word of hurry, hurry, coming distinctly to my ears, and telling me that, even in the last struggle with the powers of death, his mind was still tortured by his daughter's peril. The sun had gone down, the darkness had fallen, when I perceived that I was alone on this unhappy earth. What thought had I of flight, of safety, of the impending dangers of my situation? Beside the body of my last friend, I had forgotten all except the natural pangs of my bereavement.

The sun was some four hours above the eastern line, when I was recalled to a knowledge of the things of earth, by the entrance of the slave-girl to whom I have already referred. The poor soul was indeed devotedly attached to me; and it was with streaming tears that she broke to me the import of her coming. With the first light of dawn a boat had reached our landing-place, and set on shore upon our isle (till now so fortunate) a party of officers bearing a warrant to arrest my father's person, and a man of a gross body and low manners, who declared the island, the plantation, and all its human chattels, to be now his own. 'I think,' said my slave-girl, 'he must be a politician or some very powerful sorcerer; for Madam Mendizabal had no sooner seen them coming, than she took to the woods.'

‘Fool,’ said I, ‘it was the officers she feared; and at any rate why does that beldam still dare to pollute the island with her presence? And O Cora,’ I exclaimed, remembering my grief, ‘what matter all these troubles to an orphan?’

‘Mistress,’ said she, ‘I must remind you of two things. Never speak as you do now of Madam Mendizabal; or never to a person of colour; for she is the most powerful woman in this world, and her real name even, if one durst pronounce it, were a spell to raise the dead. And whatever you do, speak no more of her to your unhappy Cora; for though it is possible she may be afraid of the police (and indeed I think that I have heard she is in hiding), and though I know that you will laugh and not believe, yet it is true, and proved, and known that she hears every word that people utter in this whole vast world; and your poor Cora is already deep enough in her black books. She looks at me, mistress, till my blood turns ice. That is the first I had to say; and now for the second: do, pray, for Heaven’s sake, bear in mind that you are no longer the poor Señor’s daughter. He is gone, dear gentleman; and now you are no more than a common slave-girl like myself. The man to whom you belong calls for you; oh, my dear mistress, go at once! With your youth and beauty, you may still, if you are winning and obedient, secure yourself an easy life.’

For a moment I looked on the creature with the indignation you may conceive; the next, it was gone: she did but speak after her kind, as the bird sings or cattle bellow. ‘Go,’ said I. ‘Go, Cora. I thank you for your kind intentions. Leave me alone one moment with my dead father; and tell this man that I will come at once.’

She went: and I, turning to the bed of death, addressed to those deaf ears the last appeal and defence of my beleaguered innocence. ‘Father,’ I said, ‘it was your last thought, even in the pangs of dissolution, that your daughter should escape disgrace. Here, at your side, I swear to you that purpose shall be carried out; by what means, I know not; by crime, if need be; and Heaven forgive both you and me and our oppressors, and Heaven help my helplessness!’ Thereupon I felt strengthened as by long repose; stepped to the mirror, ay, even in that chamber of the dead; hastily arranged my hair, refreshed my tear-worn eyes, breathed a dumb farewell to the originator of my days and sorrows; and composing my features to a smile, went forth to meet my master.

He was in a great, hot bustle, reviewing that house, once ours, to which he had but now succeeded; a corpulent, sanguine man of middle age, sensual, vulgar, humorous, and, if I judged rightly, not ill-disposed by nature. But the sparkle that came into his eye as he observed me enter, warned me to expect the worst.

‘Is this your late mistress?’ he inquired of the slaves; and when he had learnt it was so, instantly dismissed them. ‘Now, my dear,’ said he, ‘I am a plain man: none of your damned Spaniards, but a true blue, hard-working, honest Englishman. My name is Caulder.’

‘Thank you, sir,’ said I, and curtsied very smartly as I had seen the servants.

‘Come,’ said he, ‘this is better than I had expected; and if you choose to be dutiful in the station to which it has pleased God to call you, you will find me a very kind old fellow. I like your looks,’ he added, calling me by my name, which he scandalously mispronounced. ‘Is your hair all your own?’ he then inquired with a certain sharpness, and coming up to me, as though I were a horse, he grossly satisfied his doubts. I was all one flame from head to foot, but I contained my righteous anger and submitted. ‘That is very well,’ he continued, chucking me good humouredly under the chin. ‘You will have no cause to regret coming to old Caulder, eh? But that is by the way. What is more to the point is this: your late master was a most dishonest rogue, and levanted with some valuable property that belonged of rights to me. Now, considering your relation to him, I regard you as the likeliest person to know what has become of it; and I warn you, before you answer, that my whole future kindness will depend upon your honesty. I am an honest man myself, and expect the same in my servants.’

‘Do you mean the jewels?’ said I, sinking my voice into a whisper.

‘That is just precisely what I do,’ said he, and chuckled.

‘Hush!’ said I.

‘Hush?’ he repeated. ‘And why hush? I am on my own place, I would have you to know, and surrounded by my own lawful servants.’

‘Are the officers gone?’ I asked; and oh! how my hopes hung upon the answer!

‘They are,’ said he, looking somewhat disconcerted. ‘Why do you ask?’

‘I wish you had kept them,’ I answered, solemnly enough, although my heart at that same moment leaped with exultation. ‘Master, I must not conceal from you the truth. The servants on this estate are in a dangerous condition, and mutiny has long been brewing.’

‘Why,’ he cried, ‘I never saw a milder-looking lot of niggers in my life.’ But for all that he turned somewhat pale.

‘Did they tell you,’ I continued, ‘that Madam Mendizabal is on the island? that, since her coming, they obey none but her? that if, this morning, they have received you with even decent civility, it was only by her orders — issued with what after-thought I leave you to consider?’

‘Madam Jezebel?’ said he. ‘Well, she is a dangerous devil; the police are after her, besides, for a whole series of murders; but after all, what then? To be sure, she has a great influence with you coloured folk. But what in fortune's name can be her errand here?'

'The jewels,' I replied. 'Ah, sir, had you seen that treasure, sapphire and emerald and opal, and the golden topaz, and rubies red as the sunset — of what incalculable worth, of what unequalled beauty to the eye! — had you seen it, as I have, and alas! as *she* has — you would understand and tremble at your danger.'

'She has seen them!' he cried, and I could see by his face, that my audacity was justified by its success.

I caught his hand in mine. 'My master,' said I, 'I am now yours; it is my duty, it should be my pleasure, to defend your interests and life. Hear my advice, then; and, I conjure you, be guided by my prudence. Follow me privily; let none see where we are going; I will lead you to the place where the treasure has been buried; that once disinterred, let us make straight for the boat, escape to the mainland, and not return to this dangerous isle without the countenance of soldiers.'

What free man in a free land would have credited so sudden a devotion? But this oppressor, through the very arts and sophistries he had abused, to quiet the rebellion of his conscience and to convince himself that slavery was natural, fell like a child into the trap I laid for him. He praised and thanked me; told me I had all the qualities he valued in a servant; and when he had questioned me further as to the nature and value of the treasure, and I had once more artfully inflamed his greed, bade me without delay proceed to carry out my plan of action.

From a shed in the garden, I took a pick and shovel; and thence, by devious paths among the magnolias, led my master to the entrance of the swamp. I walked first, carrying, as I was now in duty bound, the tools, and glancing continually behind me, lest we should be spied upon and followed. When we were come as far as the beginning of the path, it flashed into my mind I had forgotten meat; and leaving Mr. Caulder in the shadow of a tree, I returned alone to the house for a basket of provisions. Were they for him? I asked myself. And a voice within me answered, No. While we were face to face, while I still saw before my eyes the man to whom I belonged as the hand belongs to the body, my indignation held me bravely up. But now that I was alone, I conceived a sickness at myself and my designs that I could scarce endure; I longed to throw myself at his feet, avow my intended treachery, and warn him from that pestilential swamp, to which I was decoying him to die; but my vow to my dead father, my duty to my innocent youth, prevailed upon these scruples; and though my face was pale and must have reflected the horror that oppressed my spirits, it was with a firm step that I returned to the borders of the swamp, and with smiling lips that I bade him rise and follow me.

The path on which we now entered was cut, like a tunnel, through the living jungle. On either hand and overhead, the mass of foliage was continuously joined; the day sparingly filtered through the depth of super-impending wood; and the air was hot like steam, and heady with vegetable odours, and lay like a load upon the lungs and brain. Underfoot, a great depth of mould received our silent footprints; on each side, mimosas, as tall as a man, shrank from my passing skirts with a continuous hissing rustle; and but for these sentient vegetables, all in that den of pestilence was motionless and noiseless.

We had gone but a little way in, when Mr. Caulder was seized with sudden nausea, and must sit down a moment on the path. My heart yearned, as I beheld him; and I seriously begged the doomed mortal to return upon his steps. What were a few jewels in the scales with life? I asked. But no, he said; that witch Madam Jezebel would find them out; he was an honest man, and would not stand to be defrauded, and so forth, panting the while, like a sick dog. Presently he got to his feet again, protesting he had conquered his uneasiness; but as we again began to go forward, I saw in his changed countenance, the first approaches of death.

‘Master,’ said I, ‘you look pale, deathly pale; your pallor fills me with dread. Your eyes are bloodshot; they are red like the rubies that we seek.’

‘Wench,’ he cried, ‘look before you; look at your steps. I declare to Heaven, if you annoy me once again by looking back, I shall remind you of the change in your position.’

A little after, I observed a worm upon the ground, and told, in a whisper, that its touch was death. Presently a great green serpent, vivid as the grass in spring, wound rapidly across the path; and once again I paused and looked back at my companion, with a horror in my eyes. ‘The coffin snake,’ said I, ‘the snake that dogs its victim like a hound.’

But he was not to be dissuaded. ‘I am an old traveller,’ said he. ‘This is a foul jungle indeed; but we shall soon be at an end.’

‘Ay,’ said I, looking at him, with a strange smile, ‘what end?’

Thereupon he laughed again and again, but not very heartily; and then, perceiving that the path began to widen and grow higher, ‘There!’ said he. ‘What did I tell you? We are past the worst.’

Indeed, we had now come to the bayou, which was in that place very narrow and bridged across by a fallen trunk; but on either hand we could see it broaden out, under a cavern of great arms of trees and hanging creepers: sluggish, putrid, of a horrible and sickly stench, floated on by the flat heads of alligators, and its banks alive with scarlet crabs.

‘If we fall from that unsteady bridge,’ said I, ‘see, where the caiman lies ready to devour us! If, by the least divergence from the path, we should be snared in a morass, see, where those myriads of scarlet vermin scour the border of the thicket! Once helpless, how they would swarm together to the assault! What could man do against a thousand of such mailed assailants? And what a death were that, to perish alive under their claws.'

'Are you mad, girl?' he cried. 'I bid you be silent and lead on.'

Again I looked upon him, half relenting; and at that he raised the stick that was in his hand and cruelly struck me on the face. 'Lead on!' he cried again. 'Must I be all day, catching my death in this vile slough, and all for a prating slave-girl?'

I took the blow in silence, I took it smiling; but the blood welled back upon my heart. Something, I know not what, fell at that moment with a dull plunge in the waters of the lagoon, and I told myself it was my pity that had fallen.

On the farther side, to which we now hastily scrambled, the wood was not so dense, the web of creepers not so solidly convolved. It was possible, here and there, to mark a patch of somewhat brighter daylight, or to distinguish, through the lighter web of parasites, the proportions of some soaring tree. The cypress on the left stood very visibly forth, upon the edge of such a clearing; the path in that place widened broadly; and there was a patch of open ground, beset with horrible ant-heaps, thick with their artificers. I laid down the tools and basket by the cypress root, where they were instantly blackened over with the crawling ants; and looked once more in the face of my unconscious victim. Mosquitoes and foul flies wove so close a veil between us that his features were obscured; and the sound of their flight was like the turning of a mighty wheel.

'Here,' I said, 'is the spot. I cannot dig, for I have not learned to use such instruments; but, for your own sake, I beseech you to be swift in what you do.'

He had sunk once more upon the ground, panting like a fish; and I saw rising in his face the same dusky flush that had mantled on my father's. 'I feel ill,' he gasped, 'horribly ill; the swamp turns around me; the drone of these carrion flies confounds me. Have you not wine?'

I gave him a glass, and he drank greedily. 'It is for you to think,' said I, 'if you should further persevere. The swamp has an ill name.' And at the word I ominously nodded.

'Give me the pick,' said he. 'Where are the jewels buried?'

I told him vaguely; and in the sweltering heat and closeness, and dim twilight of the jungle, he began to wield the pickaxe, swinging it overhead with the vigour of a healthy man. At first, there broke forth upon him a strong sweat, that made his face to shine, and in which the greedy insects settled thickly.

‘To sweat in such a place,’ said I. ‘O master, is this wise? Fever is drunk in through open pores.’

‘What do you mean?’ he screamed, pausing with the pick buried in the soil. ‘Do you seek to drive me mad? Do you think I do not understand the danger that I run?’

‘That is all I want,’ said I: ‘I only wish you to be swift.’ And then, my mind flitting to my father’s deathbed, I began to murmur, scarce above my breath, the same vain repetition of words, ‘Hurry, hurry, hurry.’

Presently, to my surprise, the treasure-seeker took them up; and while he still wielded the pick, but now with staggering and uncertain blows, repeated to himself, as it were the burthen of a song, ‘Hurry, hurry, hurry;’ and then again, ‘There is no time to lose; the marsh has an ill name, ill name;’ and then back to ‘Hurry, hurry, hurry,’ with a dreadful, mechanical, hurried, and yet wearied utterance, as a sick man rolls upon his pillow. The sweat had disappeared; he was now dry, but all that I could see of him, of the same dull brick red. Presently his pick unearthed the bag of jewels; but he did not observe it, and continued hewing at the soil.

‘Master,’ said I, ‘there is the treasure.’ He seemed to waken from a dream. ‘Where?’ he cried; and then, seeing it before his eyes, ‘Can this be possible?’ he added. ‘I must be light-headed. Girl,’ he cried suddenly, with the same screaming tone of voice that I had once before observed, ‘what is wrong? is this swamp accursed?’

‘It is a grave,’ I answered. ‘You will not go out alive; and as for me, my life is in God’s hands.’

He fell upon the ground like a man struck by a blow, but whether from the effect of my words, or from sudden seizure of the malady, I cannot tell. Pretty soon, he raised his head. ‘You have brought me here to die,’ he said; ‘at the risk of your own days, you have condemned me. Why?’

‘To save my honour,’ I replied. ‘Bear me out that I have warned you. Greed of these pebbles, and not I, has been your undoer.’

He took out his revolver and handed it to me. ‘You see,’ he said, ‘I could have killed you even yet. But I am dying, as you say; nothing could save me; and my bill is long enough already. Dear me, dear me,’ he said, looking in my face with a curious, puzzled, and pathetic look, like a dull child at school, ‘if there be a judgment afterwards, my bill is long enough.’

At that, I broke into a passion of weeping, crawled at his feet, kissed his hands, begged his forgiveness, put the pistol back into his grasp and besought him to avenge his death; for indeed, if with my life I could have bought back his, I had not balanced at the cost. But he was determined, the poor soul, that I should yet more bitterly regret my act.

'I have nothing to forgive,' said he. 'Dear heaven, what a thing is an old fool! I thought, upon my word, you had taken quite a fancy to me.'

He was seized, at the same time, with a dreadful, swimming dizziness, clung to me like a child, and called upon the name of some woman. Presently this spasm, which I watched with choking tears, lessened and died away; and he came again to the full possession of his mind. 'I must write my will,' he said. 'Get out my pocket-book.' I did so, and he wrote hurriedly on one page with a pencil. 'Do not let my son know,' he said; 'he is a cruel dog, is my son Philip; do not let him know how you have paid me out;' and then all of a sudden, 'God,' he cried, 'I am blind,' and clapped both hands before his eyes; and then again, and in a groaning whisper, 'Don't leave me to the crabs!' I swore I would be true to him so long as a pulse stirred; and I redeemed my promise. I sat there and watched him, as I had watched my father, but with what different, with what appalling thoughts! Through the long afternoon, he gradually sank. All that while, I fought an uphill battle to shield him from the swarms of ants and the clouds of mosquitoes: the prisoner of my crime. The night fell, the roar of insects instantly redoubled in the dark arcades of the swamp; and still I was not sure that he had breathed his last. At length, the flesh of his hand, which I yet held in mine, grew chill between my fingers, and I knew that I was free.

I took his pocket-book and the revolver, being resolved rather to die than to be captured, and laden besides with the basket and the bag of gems, set forward towards the north. The swamp, at that hour of the night, was filled with a continuous din: animals and insects of all kinds, and all inimical to life, contributing their parts. Yet in the midst of this turmoil of sound, I walked as though my eyes were bandaged, beholding nothing. The soil sank under my foot, with a horrid, slippery consistence, as though I were walking among toads; the touch of the thick wall of foliage, by which alone I guided myself, affrighted me like the touch of serpents; the darkness checked my breathing like a gag; indeed, I have never suffered such extremes of fear as during that nocturnal walk, nor have I ever known a more sensible relief than when I found the path beginning to mount and to grow firmer under foot, and saw, although still some way in front of me, the silver brightness of the moon.

Presently, I had crossed the last of the jungle, and come forth amongst noble and lofty woods, clean rock, the clean, dry dust, the aromatic smell of mountain plants that had been baked all day in sunlight, and the expressive silence of the night. My negro blood had carried me unhurt across that reeking and pestiferous morass; by mere good fortune, I had escaped the crawling and stinging vermin with which it was alive; and I had now before me the easier portion of my enterprise, to cross the isle and to make good my arrival at the haven and my acceptance on the English yacht. It was impossible by night to follow such a track as my father had described; and I was casting about for any landmark, and, in my ignorance, vainly consulting the disposition of the stars, when there fell upon my ear, from somewhere far in front, the sound of many voices hurriedly singing.

I scarce knew upon what grounds I acted; but I shaped my steps in the direction of that sound; and in a quarter of an hour's walking, came unperceived to the margin of an open glade. It was lighted by the strong moon and by the flames of a fire. In the midst, there stood a little low and rude building, surmounted by a cross: a chapel, as I then remembered to have heard, long since desecrated and given over to the rites of Hoodoo. Hard by the steps of entrance was a black mass, continually agitated and stirring to and fro as if with inarticulate life; and this I presently perceived to be a heap of cocks, hares, dogs, and other birds and animals, still struggling, but helplessly tethered and cruelly tossed one upon another. Both the fire and the chapel were surrounded by a ring of kneeling Africans, both men and women. Now they would raise their palms half-closed to heaven, with a peculiar, passionate gesture of supplication; now they would bow their heads and spread their hands before them on the ground. As the double movement passed and repassed along the line, the heads kept rising and falling, like waves upon the sea; and still, as if in time to these gesticulations, the hurried chant continued. I stood spellbound, knowing that my life depended by a hair, knowing that I had stumbled on a celebration of the rites of Hoodoo.

Presently, the door of the chapel opened, and there came forth a tall negro, entirely nude, and bearing in his hand the sacrificial knife. He was followed by an apparition still more strange and shocking: Madam Mendizabal, naked also, and carrying in both hands and raised to the level of her face, an open basket of wicker. It was filled with coiling snakes; and these, as she stood there with the uplifted basket, shot through the osier grating and curled about her arms. At the sight of this, the fervour of the crowd seemed to swell suddenly higher; and the chant rose in pitch and grew more irregular in time and accent. Then, at a sign from the tall negro, where he stood, motionless and smiling, in the moon and firelight, the singing died away, and there began the second stage of this barbarous and bloody celebration. From different parts of the ring, one after another, man or woman, ran forth into the midst; ducked, with that same gesture of the thrown-up hand, before the priestess and her snakes; and with various adjurations, uttered aloud the blackest wishes of the heart. Death and disease were the favours usually invoked: the death or the disease of enemies or rivals; some calling down these plagues upon the nearest of their own blood, and one, to whom I swear I had been never less than kind, invoking them upon myself. At each petition, the tall negro, still smiling, picked up some bird or animal from the heaving mass upon his left, slew it with the knife, and tossed its body on the ground. At length, it seemed, it reached the turn of the high-priestess. She set down the basket on the steps, moved into the centre of the ring, grovelled in the dust before the reptiles, and still grovelling lifted up her voice, between speech and singing, and with so great, with so insane a fervour of excitement, as struck a sort of horror through my blood.

'Power,' she began, 'whose name we do not utter; power that is neither good nor evil, but below them both; stronger than good, greater than evil — all my life long I have adored and served thee. Who has shed blood upon thine altars? whose voice is broken with the singing of thy praises? whose limbs are faint before their age with leaping in thy revels? Who has slain the child of her body? I,' she cried, 'I, Metamnbogu! By my own name, I name myself. I tear away the veil. I would be served or perish. Hear me, slime of the fat swamp, blackness of the thunder, venom of the serpent's udder — hear or slay me! I would have two things, O shapeless one, O horror of emptiness — two things, or die! The blood of my white-faced husband; oh! give me that; he is the enemy of Hoodoo; give me his blood! And yet another, O racer of the blind winds, O germinator in the ruins of the dead, O root of life, root of corruption! I grow old, I grow hideous; I am known, I am hunted for my life: let thy servant then lay by this outworn body; let thy chief priestess turn again to the blossom of her days, and be a girl once more, and the desired of all men, even as in the past! And, O lord and master, as I here ask a marvel not yet wrought since we were torn from the old land, have I not prepared the sacrifice in which thy soul delighteth — the kid without the horns?'

Even as she uttered the words, there was a great rumour of joy through all the circle of worshippers; it rose, and fell, and rose again; and swelled at last into rapture, when the tall negro, who had stepped an instant into the chapel, reappeared before the door, carrying in his arms the body of the slave-girl, Cora. I know not if I saw what followed. When next my mind awoke to a clear knowledge, Cora was laid upon the steps before the serpents; the negro with the knife stood over her; the knife rose; and at this I screamed out in my great horror, bidding them, in God's name, to pause.

A stillness fell upon the mob of cannibals. A moment more, and they must have thrown off this stupor, and I infallibly have perished. But Heaven had designed to save me. The silence of these wretched men was not yet broken, when there arose, in the empty night, a sound louder than the roar of any European tempest, swifter to travel than the wings of any Eastern wind. Blackness engulfed the world; blackness, stabbed across from every side by intricate and blinding lightning. Almost in the same second, at one world-swallowing stride, the heart of the tornado reached the clearing. I heard an agonising crash, and the light of my reason was overwhelmed.

When I recovered consciousness, the day was come. I was unhurt; the trees close about me had not lost a bough; and I might have thought at first that the tornado was a feature in a dream. It was otherwise indeed; for when I looked abroad, I perceived I had escaped destruction by a hand's-breadth. Right through the forest, which here covered hill and dale, the storm had ploughed a lane of ruin. On either hand, the trees waved uninjured in the air of the morning; but in the forthright course of its advance, the hurricane had left no trophy standing. Everything, in that line, tree, man, or animal, the desecrated chapel and the votaries of Hoodoo, had been subverted and destroyed in that brief spasm of anger of the powers of air. Everything, but a yard or two beyond the line of its passage, humble flower, lofty tree, and the poor vulnerable maid who now knelt to pay her gratitude to heaven, awoke unharmed in the crystal purity and peace of the new day.

To move by the path of the tornado was a thing impossible to man, so wildly were the wrecks of the tall forest piled together by that fugitive convulsion. I crossed it indeed; with such labour and patience, with so many dangerous slips and falls, as left me, at the further side, bankrupt alike of strength and courage. There I sat down awhile to recruit my forces; and as I ate (how should I bless the kindliness of Heaven!) my eye, flitting to and fro in the colonnade of the great trees, alighted on a trunk that had been blazed. Yes, by the directing hand of Providence, I had been conducted to the very track I was to follow. With what a light heart I now set forth, and walking with how glad a step, traversed the uplands of the isle!

It was hard upon the hour of noon, when I came, all tattered and wayworn, to the summit of a steep descent, and looked below me on the sea. About all the coast, the surf, roused by the tornado of the night, beat with a particular fury and made a fringe of snow. Close at my feet, I saw a haven, set in precipitous and palm-crowned bluffs of rock. Just outside, a ship was heaving on the surge, so trimly sparred, so glossily painted, so elegant and point-device in every feature, that my heart was seized with admiration. The English colours blew from her masthead; and from my high station, I caught glimpses of her snowy planking, as she rolled on the uneven deep, and saw the sun glitter on the brass of her deck furniture. There, then, was my ship of refuge; and of all my difficulties only one remained: to get on board of her.

Half an hour later, I issued at last out of the woods on the margin of a cove, into whose jaws the tossing and blue billows entered, and along whose shores they broke with a surprising loudness. A wooded promontory hid the yacht; and I had walked some distance round the beach, in what appeared to be a virgin solitude, when my eye fell on a boat, drawn into a natural harbour, where it rocked in safety, but deserted. I looked about for those who should have manned her; and presently, in the immediate entrance of the wood, spied the red embers of a fire, and, stretched around in various attitudes, a party of slumbering mariners. To these I drew near: most were black, a few white; but all were dressed with the conspicuous decency of yachtsmen; and one, from his peaked cap and glittering buttons, I rightly divined to be an officer. Him, then, I touched upon the shoulder. He started up; the sharpness of his movement woke the rest; and they all stared upon me in surprise.

‘What do you want?’ inquired the officer.

‘To go on board the yacht,’ I answered.

I thought they all seemed disconcerted at this; and the officer, with something of sharpness, asked me who I was. Now I had determined to conceal my name until I met Sir George; and the first name that rose to my lips was that of the Señora Mendizabal. At the word, there went a shock about the little party of seamen; the negroes stared at me with indescribable eagerness, the whites themselves with something of a scared surprise; and instantly the spirit of mischief prompted me to add, ‘And if the name is new to your ears, call me Metamnbogu.’

I had never seen an effect so wonderful. The negroes threw their hands into the air, with the same gesture I remarked the night before about the Hoodoo camp-fire; first one, and then another, ran forward and kneeled down and kissed the skirts of my torn dress; and when the white officer broke out swearing and calling to know if they were mad, the coloured seamen took him by the shoulders, dragged him on one side till they were out of hearing, and surrounded him with open mouths and extravagant pantomime. The officer seemed to struggle hard; he laughed aloud, and I saw him make gestures of dissent and protest; but in the end, whether overcome by reason or simply weary of resistance, he gave in — approached me civilly enough, but with something of a sneering manner underneath — and touching his cap, ‘My lady,’ said he, ‘if that is what you are, the boat is ready.’

My reception on board the *Nemorosa* (for so the yacht was named) partook of the same mingled nature. We were scarcely within hail of that great and elegant fabric, where she lay rolling gunwale under and churning the blue sea to snow, before the bulwarks were lined with the heads of a great crowd of seamen, black, white, and yellow; and these and the few who manned the boat began exchanging shouts in some *lingua franca* incomprehensible to me. All eyes were directed on the passenger; and once more I saw the negroes toss up their hands to heaven, but now as if with passionate wonder and delight.

At the head of the gangway, I was received by another officer, a gentlemanly man with blond and bushy whiskers; and to him I addressed my demand to see Sir George.

'But this is not — ' he cried, and paused.

'I know it,' returned the other officer, who had brought me from the shore. 'But what the devil can we do? Look at all the niggers!'

I followed his direction; and as my eye lighted upon each, the poor ignorant Africans ducked, and bowed, and threw their hands into the air, as though in the presence of a creature half divine. Apparently the officer with the whiskers had instantly come round to the opinion of his subaltern; for he now addressed me with every signal of respect.

'Sir George is at the island, my lady,' said he: 'for which, with your ladyship's permission, I shall immediately make all sail. The cabins are prepared. Steward, take Lady Greville below.'

Under this new name, then, and so captivated by surprise that I could neither think nor speak, I was ushered into a spacious and airy cabin, hung about with weapons and surrounded by divans. The steward asked for my commands; but I was by this time so wearied, bewildered, and disturbed, that I could only wave him to leave me to myself, and sink upon a pile of cushions. Presently, by the changed motion of the ship, I knew her to be under way; my thoughts, so far from clarifying, grew the more distracted and confused; dreams began to mingle and confound them; and at length, by insensible transition, I sank into a dreamless slumber.

When I awoke, the day and night had passed, and it was once more morning. The world on which I reopened my eyes swam strangely up and down; the jewels in the bag that lay beside me chinked together ceaselessly; the clock and the barometer wagged to and fro like pendulums; and overhead, seamen were singing out at their work, and coils of rope clattering and thumping on the deck. Yet it was long before I had divined that I was at sea; long before I had recalled, one after another, the tragical, mysterious, and inexplicable events that had brought me where was.

When I had done so, I thrust the jewels, which I was surprised to find had been respected, into the bosom of my dress; and seeing a silver bell hard by upon a table, rang it loudly. The steward instantly appeared; I asked for food; and he proceeded to lay the table, regarding me the while with a disquieting and pertinacious scrutiny. To relieve myself of my embarrassment, I asked him, with as fair a show of ease as I could muster, if it were usual for yachts to carry so numerous a crew?

'Madam,' said he, 'I know not who you are, nor what mad fancy has induced you to usurp a name and an appalling destiny that are not yours. I warn you from the soul. No sooner arrived at the island — '

At this moment he was interrupted by the whiskered officer, who had entered unperceived behind him, and now laid a hand upon his shoulder. The sudden pallor, the deadly and sick fear, that was imprinted on the steward's face, formed a startling addition to his words.

'Parker!' said the officer, and pointed towards the door.

'Yes, Mr. Kentish,' said the steward. 'For God's sake, Mr. Kentish!' And vanished, with a white face, from the cabin.

Thereupon the officer bade me sit down, and began to help me, and join in the meal. 'I fill your ladyship's glass,' said he, and handed me a tumbler of neat rum.

'Sir,' cried I, 'do you expect me to drink this?'

He laughed heartily. 'Your ladyship is so much changed,' said he, 'that I no longer expect any one thing more than any other.'

Immediately after, a white seaman entered the cabin, saluted both Mr. Kentish and myself, and informed the officer there was a sail in sight, which was bound to pass us very close, and that Mr. Harland was in doubt about the colours.

'Being so near the island?' asked Mr. Kentish.

'That was what Mr. Harland said, sir,' returned the sailor, with a scrape.

'Better not, I think,' said Mr. Kentish. 'My compliments to Mr. Harland; and if she seem a lively boat, give her the stars and stripes; but if she be dull, and we can easily outsail her, show John Dutchman. That is always another word for incivility at sea; so we can disregard a hail or a flag of distress, without attracting notice.'

As soon as the sailor had gone on deck, I turned to the officer in wonder. 'Mr. Kentish, if that be your name,' said I, 'are you ashamed of your own colours?'

'Your ladyship refers to the *Jolly Roger*?' he inquired, with perfect gravity; and immediately after, went into peals of laughter. 'Pardon me,' said he; 'but here for the first time I recognise your ladyship's impetuosity.' Nor, try as I pleased, could I extract from him any explanation of this mystery, but only oily and commonplace evasion.

While we were thus occupied, the movement of the *Nemorosa* gradually became less violent; its speed at the same time diminished;

and presently after, with a sullen plunge, the anchor was discharged into the sea. Kentish immediately rose, offered his arm, and conducted me on deck; where I found we were lying in a roadstead among many low and rocky islets, hovered about by an innumerable cloud of sea-fowl. Immediately under our board, a somewhat larger isle was green with trees, set with a few low buildings and approached by a pier of very crazy workmanship; and a little inshore of us, a smaller vessel lay at anchor.

I had scarce time to glance to the four quarters, ere a boat was lowered. I was handed in, Kentish took place beside me, and we pulled briskly to the pier. A crowd of villainous, armed loiterers, both black and white, looked on upon our landing; and again the word passed about among the negroes, and again I was received with prostrations and the same gesture of the flung-up hand. By this, what with the appearance of these men, and the lawless, sea-girt spot in which I found myself, my courage began a little to decline, and clinging to the arm of Mr. Kentish, I begged him to tell me what it meant?

'Nay, madam,' he returned, '*you* know.' And leading me smartly through the crowd, which continued to follow at a considerable distance, and at which he still kept looking back, I thought, with apprehension, he brought me to a low house that stood alone in an encumbered yard, opened the door, and begged me to enter.

'But why?' said I. 'I demand to see Sir George.'

'Madam,' returned Mr. Kentish, looking suddenly as black as thunder, 'to drop all fence, I know neither who nor what you are; beyond the fact that you are not the person whose name you have assumed. But be what you please, spy, ghost, devil, or most ill-judging jester, if you do not immediately enter that house, I will cut you to the earth.' And even as he spoke, he threw an uneasy glance behind him at the following crowd of blacks.

I did not wait to be twice threatened; I obeyed at once, and with a palpitating heart; and the next moment, the door was locked from the outside and the key withdrawn. The interior was long, low, and quite unfurnished, but filled, almost from end to end, with sugar-cane, tar-barrels, old tarry rope, and other incongruous and highly inflammable material; and not only was the door locked, but the solitary window barred with iron.

I was by this time so exceedingly bewildered and afraid, that I would have given years of my life to be once more the slave of Mr. Caulder. I still stood, with my hands clasped, the image of despair, looking about me on the lumber of the room or raising my eyes to heaven; when there appeared outside the window bars, the face of a very black negro, who signed to me imperiously to draw near. I did so, and he instantly, and with every mark of fervour, addressed me a long speech in some unknown and barbarous tongue.

'I declare,' I cried, clasping my brow, 'I do not understand one syllable.'

'Not?' he said in Spanish. 'Great, great, are the powers of Hoodoo! Her very mind is changed! But, O chief priestess, why have you suffered yourself to be shut into this cage? why did you not call your slaves at once to your defence? Do you not see that all has been prepared to murder you? at a spark, this flimsy house will go in flames; and alas! who shall then be the chief priestess? and what shall be the profit of the miracle?'

'Heavens!' cried I, 'can I not see Sir George? I must, I must, come by speech of him. Oh, bring me to Sir George!' And, my terror fairly mastering my courage, I fell upon my knees and began to pray to all the saints.

'Lordy!' cried the negro, 'here they come!' And his black head was instantly withdrawn from the window.

'I never heard such nonsense in my life,' exclaimed a voice.

'Why, so we all say, Sir George,' replied the voice of Mr. Kentish. 'But put yourself in our place. The niggers were near two to one. And upon my word, if you'll excuse me, sir, considering the notion they have taken in their heads, I regard it as precious fortunate for all of us that the mistake occurred.'

'This is no question of fortune, sir,' returned Sir George. 'It is a question of my orders, and you may take my word for it, Kentish, either Harland, or yourself, or Parker — or, by George, all three of you! — shall swing for this affair. These are my sentiments. Give me the key and be off.'

Immediately after, the key turned in the lock; and there appeared upon the threshold a gentleman, between forty and fifty, with a very open countenance, and of a stout and personable figure.

'My dear young lady,' said he, 'who the devil may you be?'

I told him all my story in one rush of words. He heard me, from the first, with an amazement you can scarcely picture, but when I came to the death of the Señora Mendizabal in the tornado, he fairly leaped into the air.

'My dear child,' he cried, clasping me in his arms, 'excuse a man who might be your father! This is the best news I ever had since I was born; for that hag of a mulatto was no less a person than my wife.' He sat down upon a tar-barrel, as if unmanned by joy. 'Dear me,' said he, 'I declare this tempts me to believe in Providence. And what,' he added, 'can I do for you?'

'Sir George,' said I, 'I am already rich: all that I ask is your protection.'

‘Understand one thing,’ he said, with great energy. ‘I will never marry.’

‘I had not ventured to propose it,’ I exclaimed, unable to restrain my mirth; ‘I only seek to be conveyed to England, the natural home of the escaped slave.’

‘Well,’ returned Sir George, ‘frankly I owe you something for this exhilarating news; besides, your father was of use to me. Now, I have made a small competence in business — a jewel mine, a sort of naval agency, et cætera, and I am on the point of breaking up my company, and retiring to my place in Devonshire to pass a plain old age, unmarried. One good turn deserves another: if you swear to hold your tongue about this island, these little bonfire arrangements, and the whole episode of my unfortunate marriage, why, I’ll carry you home aboard the *Nemorosa*.’ I eagerly accepted his conditions.

‘One thing more,’ said he. ‘My late wife was some sort of a sorceress among the blacks; and they are all persuaded she has come alive again in your agreeable person. Now, you will have the goodness to keep up that fancy, if you please; and to swear to them, on the authority of Hoodoo or whatever his name may be, that I am from this moment quite a sacred character.’

‘I swear it,’ said I, ‘by my father’s memory; and that is a vow that I will never break.’

‘I have considerably better hold on you than any oath,’ returned Sir George, with a chuckle; ‘for you are not only an escaped slave, but have, by your own account, a considerable amount of stolen property.’

I was struck dumb; I saw it was too true; in a glance, I recognised that these jewels were no longer mine; with similar quickness, I decided they should be restored, ay, if it cost me the liberty that I had just regained. Forgetful of all else, forgetful of Sir George, who sat and watched me with a smile, I drew out Mr. Caulder’s pocket-book and turned to the page on which the dying man had scrawled his testament. How shall I describe the agony of happiness and remorse with which I read it! for my victim had not only set me free, but bequeathed to me the bag of jewels.

My plain tale draws towards a close. Sir George and I, in my character of his rejuvenated wife, displayed ourselves arm-in-arm among the negroes, and were cheered and followed to the place of embarkation. There, Sir George, turning about, made a speech to his old companions, in which he thanked and bade them farewell with a very manly spirit; and towards the end of which he fell on some expressions which I still remember. ‘If any of you gentry lose your money,’ he said, ‘take care you do not come to me; for in the first place, I shall do my best to have you murdered; and if that fails, I hand you over to the law. Blackmail won’t do for me. I’ll rather risk all upon a cast, than be pulled to pieces by degrees. I'll rather be found out and hang, than give a doit to one man-jack of you.' That same night we got under way and crossed to the port of New Orleans, whence, as a sacred trust, I sent the pocket-book to Mr. Caulder's son. In a week's time, the men were all paid off; new hands were shipped; and the *Nemorosa* weighed her anchor for Old England.

A more delightful voyage it were hard to fancy. Sir George, of course, was not a conscientious man; but he had an unaffected gaiety of character that naturally endeared him to the young; and it was interesting to hear him lay out his projects for the future, when he should be returned to Parliament, and place at the service of the nation his experience of marine affairs. I asked him, if his notion of piracy upon a private yacht were not original. But he told me, no. 'A yacht, Miss Valdevia,' he observed, 'is a chartered nuisance. Who smuggles? Who robs the salmon rivers of the West of Scotland? Who cruelly beats the keepers if they dare to intervene? The crews and the proprietors of yachts. All I have done is to extend the line a trifle, and if you ask me for my unbiassed opinion, I do not suppose that I am in the least alone.'

In short, we were the best of friends, and lived like father and daughter; though I still withheld from him, of course, that respect which is only due to moral excellence.

We were still some days' sail from England, when Sir George obtained, from an outward-bound ship, a packet of newspapers; and from that fatal hour my misfortunes recommenced. He sat, the same evening, in the cabin, reading the news, and making savoury comments on the decline of England and the poor condition of the navy, when I suddenly observed him to change countenance.

'Hullo!' said he, 'this is bad; this is deuced bad, Miss Valdevia. You would not listen to sound sense, you would send that pocket-book to that man Caulder's son.'

'Sir George,' said I, 'it was my duty.'

'You are prettily paid for it, at least,' says he; 'and much as I regret it, I, for one, am done with you. This fellow Caulder demands your extradition.'

'But a slave,' I returned, 'is safe in England.'

'Yes, by George!' replied the baronet; 'but it's not a slave, Miss Valdevia, it's a thief that he demands. He has quietly destroyed the will; and now accuses you of robbing your father's bankrupt estate of jewels to the value of a hundred thousand pounds.'

I was so much overcome by indignation at this hateful charge and concern for my unhappy fate that the genial baronet made haste to put me more at ease.

'Do not be cast down,' said he. 'Of course, I wash my hands of you myself. A man in my position — baronet, old family, and all that — cannot possibly be too particular about the company he keeps. But I am a deuced good-humoured old boy, let me tell you, when not ruffled; and I will do the best I can to put you right. I will lend you a trifle of ready money, give you the address of an excellent lawyer in London, and find a way to set you on shore unsuspected.'

He was in every particular as good as his word. Four days later, the *Nemorosa* sounded her way, under the cloak of a dark night, into a certain haven of the coast of England; and a boat, rowing with muffled oars, set me ashore upon the beach within a stone's throw of a railway station. Thither, guided by Sir George's directions, I groped a devious way; and finding a bench upon the platform, sat me down, wrapped in a man's fur great-coat, to await the coming of the day. It was still dark when a light was struck behind one of the windows of the building; nor had the east begun to kindle to the warmer colours of the dawn, before a porter carrying a lantern, issued from the door and found himself face to face with the unfortunate Teresa. He looked all about him; in the grey twilight of the dawn, the haven was seen to lie deserted, and the yacht had long since disappeared.

'Who are you?' he cried.

'I am a traveller,' said I.

'And where do you come from?' he asked.

'I am going by the first train to London,' I replied.

In such manner, like a ghost or a new creation, was Teresa with her bag of jewels landed on the shores of England; in this silent fashion, without history or name, she took her place among the millions of a new country.

Since then, I have lived by the expedients of my lawyer, lying concealed in quiet lodgings, dogged by the spies of Cuba, and not knowing at what hour my liberty and honour may be lost.

The effect of this tale on the mind of Harry Desborough was instant and convincing. The Fair Cuban had been already the loveliest, she now became, in his eyes, the most romantic, the most innocent, and the most unhappy of her sex. He was bereft of words to utter what he felt: what pity, what admiration, what youthful envy of a career so vivid and adventurous. 'O madam!' he began; and finding no language adequate to that apostrophe, caught up her hand and wrung it in his own. 'Count upon me,' he added, with bewildered fervour; and getting somehow or other out of the apartment and from the circle of that radiant sorceress, he found himself in the strange out-of-doors, beholding dull houses, wondering at dull passers-by, a fallen angel. She had smiled upon him as he left, and with how significant, how beautiful a smile! The memory lingered in his heart; and when he found his way to a certain restaurant where music was performed, flutes (as it were of Paradise) accompanied his meal. The strings went to the melody of that parting smile; they paraphrased and glossed it in the sense that he desired; and for the first time in his plain and somewhat dreary life, he perceived himself to have a taste for music.

The next day, and the next, his meditations moved to that delectable air. Now he saw her, and was favoured; now saw her not at all; now saw her and was put by. The fall of her foot upon the stair entranced him; the books that he sought out and read were books on Cuba, and spoke of her indirectly; nay, and in the very landlady's parlour, he found one that told of precisely such a hurricane, and, down to the smallest detail, confirmed (had confirmation been required) the truth of her recital. Presently he began to fall into that prettiest mood of a young love, in which the lover scorns himself for his presumption. Who was he, the dull one, the commonplace unemployed, the man without adventure, the impure, the untruthful, to aspire to such a creature made of fire and air, and hallowed and adorned by such incomparable passages of life? What should he do, to be more worthy? by what devotion, call down the notice of these eyes to so terrene a being as himself?

He betook himself, thereupon, to the rural privacy of the square, where, being a lad of a kind heart, he had made himself a circle of acquaintances among its shy frequenters, the half-domestic cats and the visitors that hung before the windows of the Children's Hospital. There he walked, considering the depth of his demerit and the height of the adored one's super-excellence; now lighting upon earth to say a pleasant word to the brother of some infant invalid; now, with a great heave of breath, remembering the queen of women, and the sunshine of his life.

What was he to do? Teresa, he had observed, was in the habit of leaving the house towards afternoon: she might, perchance, run danger from some Cuban emissary, when the presence of a friend might turn the balance in her favour: how, then, if he should follow her? To offer his company would seem like an intrusion; to dog her openly were a manifest impertinence; he saw himself reduced to a more stealthy part, which, though in some ways distasteful to his mind, he did not doubt that he could practise with the skill of a detective.

The next day he proceeded to put his plan in action. At the corner of Tottenham Court Road, however, the Señorita suddenly turned back, and met him face to face, with every mark of pleasure and surprise.

‘Ah, Señor, I am sometimes fortunate!’ she cried. ‘I was looking for a messenger;’ and with the sweetest of smiles, she despatched him to the East End of London, to an address which he was unable to find. This was a bitter pill to the knight-errant; but when he returned at night, worn out with fruitless wandering and dismayed by his *fiasco*, the lady received him with a friendly gaiety, protesting that all was for the best, since she had changed her mind and long since repented of her message.

Next day he resumed his labours, glowing with pity and courage, and determined to protect Teresa with his life. But a painful shock awaited him. In the narrow and silent Hanway Street, she turned suddenly about and addressed him with a manner and a light in her eyes that were new to the young man’s experience.

‘Do I understand that you follow me, Señor?’ she cried. ‘Are these the manners of the English gentleman?’

Harry confounded himself in the most abject apologies and prayers to be forgiven, vowed to offend no more, and was at length dismissed, crestfallen and heavy of heart. The check was final; he gave up that road to service; and began once more to hang about the square or on the terrace, filled with remorse and love, admirable and idiotic, a fit object for the scorn and envy of older men. In these idle hours, while he was courting fortune for a sight of the beloved, it fell out naturally that he should observe the manners and appearance of such as came about the house. One person alone was the occasional visitor of the young lady: a man of considerable stature, and distinguished only by the doubtful ornament of a chin-beard in the style of an American deacon. Something in his appearance grated upon Harry; this distaste grew upon him in the course of days; and when at length he mustered courage to inquire of the Fair Cuban who this was, he was yet more dismayed by her reply.

‘That gentleman,’ said she, a smile struggling to her face, ‘that gentleman, I will not attempt to conceal from you, desires my hand in marriage, and presses me with the most respectful ardour. Alas, what am I to say? I, the forlorn Teresa, how shall I refuse or accept such protestations?'

Harry feared to say more; a horrid pang of jealousy transfixed him; and he had scarce the strength of mind to take his leave with decency. In the solitude of his own chamber, he gave way to every manifestation of despair. He passionately adored the Señorita; but it was not only the thought of her possible union with another that distressed his soul, it was the indefeasible conviction that her suitor was unworthy. To a duke, a bishop, a victorious general, or any man adorned with obvious qualities, he had resigned her with a sort of bitter joy; he saw himself follow the wedding party from a great way off; he saw himself return to the poor house, then robbed of its jewel; and while he could have wept for his despair, he felt he could support it nobly. But this affair looked otherwise. The man was patently no gentleman; he had a startled, skulking, guilty bearing; his nails were black, his eyes evasive; his love perhaps was a pretext; he was perhaps, under this deep disguise, a Cuban emissary!

Harry swore that he would satisfy these doubts; and the next evening, about the hour of the usual visit, he posted himself at a spot whence his eye commanded the three issues of the square.

Presently after, a four-wheeler rumbled to the door, and the man with the chin-beard alighted, paid off the cabman, and was seen by Harry to enter the house with a brown box hoisted on his back. Half an hour later, he came forth again without the box, and struck eastward at a rapid walk; and Desborough, with the same skill and caution that he had displayed in following Teresa, proceeded to dog the steps of her admirer. The man began to loiter, studying with apparent interest the wares of the small fruiterer or tobacconist; twice he returned hurriedly upon his former course; and then, as though he had suddenly conquered a moment's hesitation, once more set forth with resolute and swift steps in the direction of Lincoln's Inn. At length, in a deserted by-street, he turned; and coming up to Harry with a countenance which seemed to have become older and whiter, inquired with some severity of speech if he had not had the pleasure of seeing the gentleman before.

'You have, sir,' said Harry, somewhat abashed, but with a good show of stoutness; 'and I will not deny that I was following you on purpose. Doubtless,' he added, for he supposed that all men's minds must still be running on Teresa, 'you can divine my reason.'

At these words, the man with the chin-beard was seized with a palsied tremor. He seemed, for some seconds, to seek the utterance which his fear denied him; and then whipping sharply about, he took to his heels at the most furious speed of running.

Harry was at first so taken aback that he neglected to pursue; and by the time he had recovered his wits, his best expedition was only rewarded by a glimpse of the man with the chin-beard mounting into a hansom, which immediately after disappeared into the moving crowds of Holborn.

Puzzled and dismayed by this unusual behaviour, Harry returned to the house in Queen Square, and ventured for the first time to knock at the fair Cuban's door. She bade him enter, and he found her kneeling with rather a disconsolate air beside a brown wooden trunk.

'Señorita,' he broke out, 'I doubt whether that man's character is what he wishes you to believe. His manner, when he found, and indeed when I admitted that I was following him, was not the manner of an honest man.'

'Oh!' she cried, throwing up her hands as in desperation, 'Don Quixote, Don Quixote, have you again been tilting against windmills?' And then, with a laugh, 'Poor soul!' she added, 'how you must have terrified him! For know that the Cuban authorities are here, and your poor Teresa may soon be hunted down. Even yon humble clerk from my solicitor's office may find himself at any moment the quarry of armed spies.'

'A humble clerk!' cried Harry, 'why, you told me yourself that he wished to marry you!'

'I thought you English like what you call a joke,' replied the lady calmly. 'As a matter of fact, he is my lawyer's clerk, and has been here to-night charged with disastrous news. I am in sore straits, Señor Harry. Will you help me?'

At this most welcome word, the young man's heart exulted; and in the hope, pride, and self-esteem that kindled with the very thought of service, he forgot to dwell upon the lady's jest. 'Can you ask?' he cried. 'What is there that I can do? Only tell me that.'

With signs of an emotion that was certainly unfeigned, the fair Cuban laid her hand upon the box. 'This box,' she said, 'contains my jewels, papers, and clothes; all, in a word, that still connects me with Cuba and my dreadful past. They must now be smuggled out of England; or, by the opinion of my lawyer, I am lost beyond remedy. To-morrow, on board the Irish packet, a sure hand awaits the box: the problem still unsolved, is to find some one to carry it as far as Holyhead, to see it placed on board the steamer, and instantly return to town. Will you be he? Will you leave to-morrow by the first train, punctually obey orders, bear still in mind that you are surrounded by Cuban spies; and without so much as a look behind you, or a single movement to betray your interest, leave the box where you have put it and come straight on shore? Will you do this, and so save your friend?'

'I do not clearly understand . . .' began Harry.

'No more do I,' replied the Cuban. 'It is not necessary that we should, so long as we obey the lawyer's orders.'

'Señorita,' returned Harry gravely, 'I think this, of course, a very little thing to do for you, when I would willingly do all. But suffer me to say one word. If London is unsafe for your treasures, it cannot long be safe for you; and indeed, if I at all fathom the plan of your solicitor, I fear I may find you already fled on my return. I am not considered clever, and can only speak out plainly what is in my heart: that I love you, and that I cannot bear to lose all knowledge of you. I hope no more than to be your servant; I ask no more than just that I shall hear of you. Oh, promise me so much!'

'You shall,' she said, after a pause. 'I promise you, you shall.' But though she spoke with earnestness, the marks of great embarrassment and a strong conflict of emotions appeared upon her face.

'I wish to tell you,' resumed Desborough, 'in case of accidents. . . .'

'Accidents!' she cried: 'why do you say that?'

'I do not know,' said he, 'you may be gone before my return, and we may not meet again for long. And so I wished you to know this: That since the day you gave me the cigarette, you have never once, not once, been absent from my mind; and if it will in any way serve you, you may crumple me up like that piece of paper, and throw me on the fire. I would love to die for you.'

'Go!' she said. 'Go now at once. My brain is in a whirl. I scarce know what we are talking. Go; and good-night; and oh, may you come safe!'

Once back in his own room a fearful joy possessed the young man's mind; and as he recalled her face struck suddenly white and the broken utterance of her last words, his heart at once exulted and misgave him. Love had indeed looked upon him with a tragic mask; and yet what mattered, since at least it was love — since at least she was commoved at their division? He got to bed with these parti-coloured thoughts; passed from one dream to another all night long, the white face of Teresa still haunting him, wrung with unspoken thoughts; and in the grey of the dawn, leaped suddenly out of bed, in a kind of horror. It was already time for him to rise. He dressed, made his breakfast on cold food that had been laid for him the night before; and went down to the room of his idol for the box. The door was open; a strange disorder reigned within; the furniture all pushed aside, and the centre of the room left bare of impediment, as though for the pacing of a creature with a tortured mind. There lay the box, however, and upon the lid a paper with these words: 'Harry, I hope to be back before you go. Teresa.'

He sat down to wait, laying his watch before him on the table. She had called him Harry: that should be enough, he thought, to fill the day with sunshine; and yet somehow the sight of that disordered room still poisoned his enjoyment. The door of the bed-chamber stood gaping open; and though he turned aside his eyes as from a sacrilege, he could not but observe the bed had not been slept in. He was still pondering what this should mean, still trying to convince himself that all was well, when the moving needle of his watch summoned him to set forth without delay. He was before all things a man of his word; ran round to Southampton Row to fetch a cab; and taking the box on the front seat, drove off towards the terminus.

The streets were scarcely awake; there was little to amuse the eye; and the young man's attention centred on the dumb companion of his drive. A card was nailed upon one side, bearing the superscription: 'Miss Doolan, passenger to Dublin. Glass. With care.' He thought with a sentimental shock that the fair idol of his heart was perhaps driven to adopt the name of Doolan; and as he still studied the card, he was aware of a deadly, black depression settling steadily upon his spirits. It was in vain for him to contend against the tide; in vain that he shook himself or tried to whistle: the sense of some impending blow was not to be averted. He looked out; in the long, empty streets, the cab pursued its way without a trace of any follower. He gave ear; and over and above the jolting of the wheels upon the road, he was conscious of a certain regular and quiet sound that seemed to issue from the box. He put his ear to the cover; at one moment, he seemed to perceive a delicate ticking: the next, the sound was gone, nor could his closest hearkening recapture it. He laughed at himself; but still the gloom continued; and it was with more than the common relief of an arrival, that he leaped from the cab before the station.

Probably enough on purpose, Teresa had named an hour some thirty minutes earlier than needful; and when Harry had given the box into the charge of a porter, who sat it on a truck, he proceeded briskly to pace the platform. Presently the bookstall opened; and the young man was looking at the books when he was seized by the arm. He turned, and, though she was closely veiled, at once recognised the Fair Cuban.

'Where is it?' she asked; and the sound of her voice surprised him.

'It?' he said. 'What?'

'The box. Have it put on a cab instantly. I am in fearful haste.'

He hurried to obey, marvelling at these changes, but not daring to trouble her with questions; and when the cab had been brought round, and the box mounted on the front, she passed a little way off upon the pavement and beckoned him to follow.

'Now,' said she, still in those mechanical and hushed tones that had at first affected him, ‘you must go on to Holyhead alone; go on board the steamer; and if you see a man in tartan trousers and a pink scarf, say to him that all has been put off: if not,’ she added, with a sobbing sigh, ‘it does not matter. So, good-bye.’

‘Teresa,’ said Harry, ‘get into your cab, and I will go along with you. You are in some distress, perhaps some danger; and till I know the whole, not even you can make me leave you.’

‘You will not?’ she asked. ‘O Harry, it were better!’

‘I will not,’ said Harry stoutly.

She looked at him for a moment through her veil; took his hand suddenly and sharply, but more as if in fear than tenderness; and still holding him, walked to the cab-door.

‘Where are we to drive?’ asked Harry.

‘Home, quickly,’ she answered; ‘double fare!’ And as soon as they had both mounted to their places, the vehicle crazily trundled from the station.

Teresa leaned back in a corner. The whole way Harry could perceive her tears to flow under her veil; but she vouchsafed no explanation. At the door of the house in Queen Square, both alighted; and the cabman lowered the box, which Harry, glad to display his strength, received upon his shoulders.

‘Let the man take it,’ she whispered. ‘Let the man take it.’

‘I will do no such thing,’ said Harry cheerfully; and having paid the fare, he followed Teresa through the door which she had opened with her key. The landlady and maid were gone upon their morning errands; the house was empty and still; and as the rattling of the cab died away down Gloucester Street, and Harry continued to ascend the stair with his burthen, he heard close against his shoulders the same faint and muffled ticking as before. The lady, still preceding him, opened the door of her room, and helped him to lower the box tenderly in the corner by the window.

‘And now,’ said Harry, ‘what is wrong?’

‘You will not go away?’ she cried, with a sudden break in her voice and beating her hands together in the very agony of impatience. ‘O Harry, Harry, go away! Oh, go, and leave me to the fate that I deserve!’

‘The fate?’ repeated Harry. ‘What is this?’

‘No fate,’ she resumed. ‘I do not know what I am saying. But I wish to be alone. You may come back this evening, Harry; come again when you like; but leave me now, only leave me now!’ And then suddenly, ‘I have an errand,’ she exclaimed; ‘you cannot refuse me that!’

‘No,’ replied Harry, ‘you have no errand. You are in grief or danger. Lift your veil and tell me what it is.’

‘Then,’ she said, with a sudden composure, ‘you leave but one course open to me.’ And raising the veil, she showed him a countenance from which every trace of colour had fled, eyes marred with weeping, and a brow on which resolve had conquered fear. ‘Harry,’ she began, ‘I am not what I seem.’

‘You have told me that before,’ said Harry, ‘several times.’

‘O Harry, Harry,’ she cried, ‘how you shame me! But this is the God’s truth. I am a dangerous and wicked girl. My name is Clara Luxmore. I was never nearer Cuba than Penzance. From first to last I have cheated and played with you. And what I am I dare not even name to you in words. Indeed, until to-day, until the sleepless watches of last night, I never grasped the depth and foulness of my guilt.’

The young man looked upon her aghast. Then a generous current poured along his veins. ‘That is all one,’ he said. ‘If you be all you say, you have the greater need of me.’

‘Is it possible,’ she exclaimed, ‘that I have schemed in vain? And will nothing drive you from this house of death?’

‘Of death?’ he echoed.

‘Death!’ she cried: ‘death! In that box that you have dragged about London and carried on your defenceless shoulders, sleep, at the trigger’s mercy, the destroying energies of dynamite.’

‘My God!’ cried Harry.

‘Ah!’ she continued wildly, ‘will you flee now? At any moment you may hear the click that sounds the ruin of this building. I was sure M’Guire was wrong; this morning, before day, I flew to Zero; he confirmed my fears; I beheld you, my beloved Harry, fall a victim to my own contrivances. I knew then I loved you — Harry, will you go now? Will you not spare me this unwilling crime?’

Harry remained speechless, his eyes fixed upon the box: at last he turned to her.

‘Is it,’ he asked hoarsely, ‘an infernal machine?’

Her lips formed the word ‘Yes,’ which her voice refused to utter.

With fearful curiosity, he drew near and bent above the box; in that still chamber, the ticking was distinctly audible; and at the measured sound, the blood flowed back upon his heart.

‘For whom?’ he asked.

‘What matters it,’ she cried, seizing him by the arm. ‘If you may still be saved, what matter questions?’

‘God in heaven!’ cried Harry. ‘And the Children’s Hospital! At whatever cost, this damned contrivance must be stopped!’

‘It cannot,’ she gasped. ‘The power of man cannot avert the blow. But you, Harry — you, my beloved — you may still — ’

And then from the box that lay so quietly in the corner, a sudden catch was audible, like the catch of a clock before it strikes the hour. For one second the two stared at each other with lifted brows and stony eyes. Then Harry, throwing one arm over his face, with the other clutched the girl to his breast and staggered against the wall.

A dull and startling thud resounded through the room; their eyes blinked against the coming horror; and still clinging together like drowning people, they fell to the floor. Then followed a prolonged and strident hissing as from the indignant pit; an offensive stench seized them by the throat; the room was filled with dense and choking fumes.

Presently these began a little to disperse: and when at length they drew themselves, all limp and shaken, to a sitting posture, the first object that greeted their vision was the box reposing uninjured in its corner, but still leaking little wreaths of vapour round the lid.

‘Oh, poor Zero!’ cried the girl, with a strange sobbing laugh. ‘Alas, poor Zero! This will break his heart!’

Somerset ran straight upstairs; the door of the drawing-room, contrary to all custom, was unlocked; and bursting in, the young man found Zero seated on a sofa in an attitude of singular dejection. Close beside him stood an untasted grog, the mark of strong preoccupation. The room besides was in confusion: boxes had been tumbled to and fro; the floor was strewn with keys and other implements; and in the midst of this disorder lay a lady's glove.

'I have come,' cried Somerset, 'to make an end of this. Either you will instantly abandon all your schemes, or (cost what it may) I will denounce you to the police.'

'Ah!' replied Zero, slowly shaking his head. 'You are too late, dear fellow! I am already at the end of all my hopes, and fallen to be a laughing-stock and mockery. My reading,' he added, with a gentle despondency of manner, 'has not been much among romances; yet I recall from one a phrase that depicts my present state with critical exactitude; and you behold me sitting here "like a burst drum."'

'What has befallen you?' cried Somerset.

'My last batch,' returned the plotter wearily, 'like all the others, is a hollow mockery and a fraud. In vain do I combine the elements; in vain adjust the springs; and I have now arrived at such a pitch of disconsideration that (except yourself, dear fellow) I do not know a soul that I can face. My subordinates themselves have turned upon me. What language have I heard to-day, what illiberality of sentiment, what pungency of expression! She came once; I could have pardoned that, for she was moved; but she returned, returned to announce to me this crushing blow; and, Somerset, she was very inhumane. Yes, dear fellow, I have drunk a bitter cup; the speech of females is remarkable for . . . well, well! Denounce me, if you will; you but denounce the dead. I am extinct. It is strange how, at this supreme crisis of my life, I should be haunted by quotations from works of an inexact and even fanciful description; but here,' he added, 'is another: "Othello's occupation's gone." Yes, dear Somerset, it is gone; I am no more a dynamiter; and how, I ask you, after having tasted of these joys, am I to condescend to a less glorious life?'

'I cannot describe how you relieve me,' returned Somerset, sitting down on one of several boxes that had been drawn out into the middle of the floor. 'I had conceived a sort of maudlin toleration for your character; I have a great distaste, besides, for anything in the nature of a duty; and upon both grounds, your news delights me. But I seem to perceive,' he added, 'a certain sound of ticking in this box.'

'Yes,' replied Zero, with the same slow weariness of manner, 'I have set several of them going.'

'My God!' cried Somerset, bounding to his feet.

'Machines?'

'Machines!' returned the plotter bitterly. 'Machines indeed! I blush to be their author. Alas!' he said, burying his face in his hands, 'that I should live to say it!'

'Madman!' cried Somerset, shaking him by the arm. 'What am I to understand? Have you, indeed, set these diabolical contrivances in motion? and do we stay here to be blown up?'

'"Hoist with his own petard?"' returned the plotter musingly. 'One more quotation: strange! But indeed my brain is struck with numbness. Yes, dear boy, I have, as you say, put my contrivance in motion. The one on which you are sitting, I have timed for half an hour. Yon other — '

'Half an hour! — ' echoed Somerset, dancing with trepidation. 'Merciful Heavens, in half an hour?'

'Dear fellow, why so much excitement?' inquired Zero. 'My dynamite is not more dangerous than toffy; had I an only child, I would give it him to play with. You see this brick?' he continued, lifting a cake of the infernal compound from the laboratory-table. 'At a touch it should explode, and that with such unconquerable energy as should bestrew the square with ruins. Well now, behold! I dash it on the floor.'

Somerset sprang forward, and with the strength of the very ecstasy of terror, wrested the brick from his possession. 'Heavens!' he cried, wiping his brow; and then with more care than ever mother handled her first-born withal, gingerly transported the explosive to the far end of the apartment: the plotter, his arms once more fallen to his side, dispiritedly watching him.

'It was entirely harmless,' he sighed. 'They describe it as burning like tobacco.'

'In the name of fortune,' cried Somerset, 'what have I done to you, or what have you done to yourself, that you should persist in this insane behaviour? If not for your own sake, then for mine, let us depart from this doomed house, where I profess I have not the heart to leave you; and then, if you will take my advice, and if your determination be sincere, you will instantly quit this city, where no further occupation can detain you.'

'Such, dear fellow, was my own design,' replied the plotter. 'I have, as you observe, no further business here; and once I have packed a little bag, I shall ask you to share a frugal meal, to go with me as far as to the station, and see the last of a broken-hearted man. And yet,' he added, looking on the boxes with a lingering regret, 'I should have liked to make quite certain. I cannot but suspect my underlings of some mismanagement; it may be fond, but yet I cherish that idea: it may be the weakness of a man of science, but yet,' he cried, rising into some energy, 'I will never, I cannot if I try, believe that my poor dynamite has had fair usage!'

'Five minutes!' said Somerset, glancing with horror at the timepiece. 'If you do not instantly buckle to your bag, I leave you.'

'A few necessaries,' returned Zero, 'only a few necessaries, dear Somerset, and you behold me ready.'

He passed into the bedroom, and after an interval which seemed to draw out into eternity for his unfortunate companion, he returned, bearing in his hand an open Gladstone bag. His movements were still horribly deliberate, and his eyes lingered gloatingly on his dear boxes, as he moved to and fro about the drawing-room, gathering a few small trifles. Last of all, he lifted one of the squares of dynamite.

'Put that down!' cried Somerset. 'If what you say be true, you have no call to load yourself with that ungodly contraband.'

'Merely a curiosity, dear boy,' he said persuasively, and slipped the brick into his bag; 'merely a memento of the past — ah, happy past, bright past! You will not take a touch of spirits? no? I find you very abstemious. Well,' he added, 'if you have really no curiosity to await the event — '

'I!' cried Somerset. 'My blood boils to get away.'

'Well, then,' said Zero, 'I am ready; I would I could say, willing; but thus to leave the scene of my sublime endeavours — '

Without further parley, Somerset seized him by the arm, and dragged him downstairs; the hall-door shut with a clang on the deserted mansion; and still towing his laggardly companion, the young man sped across the square in the Oxford Street direction. They had not yet passed the corner of the garden, when they were arrested by a dull thud of an extraordinary amplitude of sound, accompanied and followed by a shattering *fracas*. Somerset turned in time to see the mansion rend in twain, vomit forth flames and smoke, and instantly collapse into its cellars. At the same moment, he was thrown violently to the ground. His first glance was towards Zero. The plotter had but reeled against the garden rail; he stood there, the Gladstone bag clasped tight upon his heart, his whole face radiant with relief and gratitude; and the young man heard him murmur to himself: '*Nunc dimittis, nunc dimittis*!'

The consternation of the populace was indescribable; the whole of Golden Square was alive with men, women, and children, running wildly to and fro, and like rabbits in a warren, dashing in and out of the house doors. And under favour of this confusion, Somerset dragged away the lingering plotter.

'It was grand,' he continued to murmur: 'it was indescribably grand. Ah, green Erin, green Erin, what a day of glory! and oh, my calumniated dynamite, how triumphantly hast thou prevailed!'

Suddenly a shade crossed his face; and pausing in the middle of the footway, he consulted the dial of his watch.

'Good God!' he cried, 'how mortifying! seven minutes too early! The dynamite surpassed my hopes; but the clockwork, fickle clockwork, has once more betrayed me. Alas, can there be no success unmixed with failure? and must even this red-letter day be chequered by a shadow?'

'Incomparable ass!' said Somerset, 'what have you done? Blown up the house of an unoffending old lady, and the whole earthly property of the only person who is fool enough to befriend you!'

'You do not understand these matters,' replied Zero, with an air of great dignity. 'This will shake England to the heart. Gladstone, the truculent old man, will quail before the pointing finger of revenge. And now that my dynamite is proved effective — '

'Heavens, you remind me!' ejaculated Somerset. 'That brick in your bag must be instantly disposed of. But how? If we could throw it in the river — '

'A torpedo,' cried Zero, brightening, 'a torpedo in the Thames! Superb, dear fellow! I recognise in you the marks of an accomplished anarch.'

'True!' returned Somerset. 'It cannot so be done; and there is no help but you must carry it away with you. Come on, then, and let me at once consign you to a train.'

'Nay, nay, dear boy,' protested Zero. 'There is now no call for me to leave. My character is now reinstated; my fame brightens; this is the best thing I have done yet; and I see from here the ovations that await the author of the Golden Square Atrocity.'

'My young friend,' returned the other, 'I give you your choice. I will either see you safe on board a train or safe in gaol.'

'Somerset, this is unlike you!' said the chymist. 'You surprise me, Somerset.'

'I shall considerably more surprise you at the next police office,' returned Somerset, with something bordering on rage. 'For on one point my mind is settled: either I see you packed off to America, brick and all, or else you dine in prison.'

'You have perhaps neglected one point,' returned the unoffended Zero: 'for, speaking as a philosopher, I fail to see what means you can employ to force me. The will, my dear fellow — '

'Now, see here,' interrupted Somerset. 'You are ignorant of anything but science, which I can never regard as being truly knowledge; I, sir, have studied life; and allow me to inform you that I have but to raise my hand and voice — here in this street — and the mob — '

'Good God in heaven, Somerset,' cried Zero, turning deadly white and stopping in his walk, 'great God in heaven, what words are these? Oh, not in jest, not even in jest, should they be used! The brutal mob, the savage passions . . . Somerset, for God's sake, a public-house!'

Somerset considered him with freshly awakened curiosity. 'This is very interesting,' said he. 'You recoil from such a death?'

'Who would not?' asked the plotter.

'And to be blown up by dynamite,' inquired the young man, 'doubtless strikes you as a form of euthanasia?'

'Pardon me,' returned Zero: 'I own, and since I have braved it daily in my professional career, I own it even with pride: it is a death unusually distasteful to the mind of man.'

'One more question,' said Somerset: 'you object to Lynch Law? why?'

'It is assassination,' said the plotter calmly, but with eyebrows a little lifted, as in wonder at the question.

'Shake hands with me,' cried Somerset. 'Thank God, I have now no ill-feeling left; and though you cannot conceive how I burn to see you on the gallows, I can quite contentedly assist at your departure.'

'I do not very clearly take your meaning,' said Zero, 'but I am sure you mean kindly. As to my departure, there is another point to be considered. I have neglected to supply myself with funds; my little all has perished in what history will love to relate under the name of the Golden Square Atrocity; and without what is coarsely if vigorously called stamps, you must be well aware it is impossible for me to pass the ocean.'

'For me,' said Somerset, 'you have now ceased to be a man. You have no more claim upon me than a door scraper; but the touching confusion of your mind disarms me from extremities. Until to-day, I always thought stupidity was funny; I now know otherwise; and when I look upon your idiot face, laughter rises within me like a deadly sickness, and the tears spring up into my eyes as bitter as blood. What should this portend? I begin to doubt; I am losing faith in scepticism. Is it possible,' he cried, in a kind of horror of himself — 'is it conceivable that I believe in right and wrong? Already I have found myself, with incredulous surprise, to be the victim of a prejudice of personal honour. And must this change proceed? Have you robbed me of my youth? Must I fall, at my time of life, into the Common Banker? But why should I address that head of wood? Let this suffice. I dare not let you stay among women and children; I lack the courage to denounce you, if by any means I may avoid it; you have no money: well then, take mine, and go; and if ever I behold your face after to-day, that day will be your last.’

‘Under the circumstances,’ replied Zero, ‘I scarce see my way to refuse your offer. Your expressions may pain, they cannot surprise me; I am aware our point of view requires a little training, a little moral hygiene, if I may so express it; and one of the points that has always charmed me in your character is this delightful frankness. As for the small advance, it shall be remitted you from Philadelphia.’

‘It shall not,’ said Somerset.

‘Dear fellow, you do not understand,’ returned the plotter. ‘I shall now be received with fresh confidence by my superiors; and my experiments will be no longer hampered by pitiful conditions of the purse.’

‘What I am now about, sir, is a crime,’ replied Somerset; ‘and were you to roll in wealth like Vanderbilt, I should scorn to be reimbursed of money I had so scandalously misapplied. Take it, and keep it. By George, sir, three days of you have transformed me to an ancient Roman.’

With these words, Somerset hailed a passing hansom; and the pair were driven rapidly to the railway terminus. There, an oath having been exacted, the money changed hands.

‘And now,’ said Somerset, ‘I have bought back my honour with every penny I possess. And I thank God, though there is nothing before me but starvation, I am free from all entanglement with Mr. Zero Pumpernickel Jones.’

‘To starve?’ cried Zero. ‘Dear fellow, I cannot endure the thought.’

‘Take your ticket!’ returned Somerset.

‘I think you display temper,’ said Zero.

‘Take your ticket,’ reiterated the young man.

‘Well,’ said the plotter, as he returned, ticket in hand, ‘your attitude is so strange and painful, that I scarce know if I should ask you to shake hands.’

‘As a man, no,’ replied Somerset; ‘but I have no objection to shake hands with you, as I might with a pump-well that ran poison or bell-fire.’

‘This is a very cold parting,’ sighed the dynamiter; and still followed by Somerset, he began to descend the platform. This was now bustling with passengers; the train for Liverpool was just about to start, another had but recently arrived; and the double tide made movement difficult. As the pair reached the neighbourhood of the bookstall, however, they came into an open space; and here the attention of the plotter was attracted by a *Standard* broadside bearing the words: ‘Second Edition: Explosion in Golden Square.’ His eye lighted; groping in his pocket for the necessary coin, he sprang forward — his bag knocked sharply on the corner of the stall — and instantly, with a formidable report, the dynamite exploded. When the smoke cleared away the stall was seen much shattered, and the stall keeper running forth in terror from the ruins; but of the Irish patriot or the Gladstone bag no adequate remains were to be found.

In the first scramble of the alarm, Somerset made good his escape, and came out upon the Euston Road, his head spinning, his body sick with hunger, and his pockets destitute of coin. Yet as he continued to walk the pavements, he wondered to find in his heart a sort of peaceful exultation, a great content, a sense, as it were, of divine presence and the kindliness of fate; and he was able to tell himself that even if the worst befell, he could now starve with a certain comfort since Zero was expunged.

Late in the afternoon, he found himself at the door of Mr. Godall's shop; and being quite unmanned by his long fast, and scarce considering what he did, he opened the glass door and entered.

'Ha!' said Mr. Godall, 'Mr. Somerset! Well, have you met with an adventure? Have you the promised story? Sit down, if you please; suffer me to choose you a cigar of my own special brand; and reward me with a narrative in your best style.'

'I must not take a cigar,' said Somerset.

'Indeed!' said Mr. Godall. 'But now I come to look at you more closely, I perceive that you are changed. My poor boy, I hope there is nothing wrong?'

Somerset burst into tears.

EPILOGUE OF THE CIGAR DIVAN

On a certain day of lashing rain in the December of last year, and between the hours of nine and ten in the morning, Mr. Edward Challoner pioneered himself under an umbrella to the door of the Cigar Divan in Rupert Street. It was a place he had visited but once before: the memory of what had followed on that visit and the fear of Somerset having prevented his return. Even now, he looked in before he entered; but the shop was free of customers.

The young man behind the counter was so intently writing in a penny version-book, that he paid no heed to Challoner's arrival. On a second glance, it seemed to the latter that he recognised him.

'By Jove,' he thought, 'unquestionably Somerset!'

And though this was the very man he had been so sedulously careful to avoid, his unexplained position at the receipt of custom changed distaste to curiosity.

'"Or opulent rotunda strike the sky,"' said the shopman to himself, in the tone of one considering a verse. 'I suppose it would be too much to say "orotunda," and yet how noble it were! "Or opulent orotunda strike the sky." But that is the bitterness of arts; you see a good effect, and some nonsense about sense continually intervenes.'

'Somerset, my dear fellow,' said Challoner, 'is this a masquerade?'

'What? Challoner!' cried the shopman. 'I am delighted to see you. One moment, till I finish the octave of my sonnet: only the octave.' And with a friendly waggle of the hand, he once more buried himself in the commerce of the Muses. 'I say,' he said presently, looking up, 'you seem in wonderful preservation: how about the hundred pounds?'

'I have made a small inheritance from a great aunt in Wales,' replied Challoner modestly.

'Ah,' said Somerset, 'I very much doubt the legitimacy of inheritance. The State, in my view, should collar it. I am now going through a stage of socialism and poetry,' he added apologetically, as one who spoke of a course of medicinal waters.

'And are you really the person of the — establishment?' inquired Challoner, deftly evading the word 'shop.'

'A vendor, sir, a vendor,' returned the other, pocketing his poesy. 'I help old Happy and Glorious. Can I offer you a weed?'

'Well, I scarcely like . . . ' began Challoner.

'Nonsense, my dear fellow,' cried the shopman. 'We are very proud of the business; and the old man, let me inform you, besides being the most egregious of created beings from the point of view of ethics, is literally sprung from the loins of kings. "*De Godall je suis le fervent.*" There is only one Godall. — By the way,' he added, as Challoner lit his cigar, 'how did you get on with the detective trade?'

‘I did not try,’ said Challoner curtly.

‘Ah, well, I did,’ returned Somerset, ‘and made the most incomparable mess of it: lost all my money and fairly covered myself with odium and ridicule. There is more in that business, Challoner, than meets the eye; there is more, in fact, in all businesses. You must believe in them, or get up the belief that you believe. Hence,’ he added, ‘the recognised inferiority of the plumber, for no one could believe in plumbing.’

‘*A propos*,’ asked Challoner, ‘do you still paint?’

‘Not now,’ replied Paul; ‘but I think of taking up the violin.’

Challoner’s eye, which had been somewhat restless since the trade of the detective had been named, now rested for a moment on the columns of the morning paper, where it lay spread upon the counter.

‘By Jove,’ he cried, ‘that’s odd!’

‘What is odd?’ asked Paul.

‘Oh, nothing,’ returned the other: ‘only I once met a person called M’Guire.’

‘So did I!’ cried Somerset. ‘Is there anything about him?’

Challoner read as follows: ‘*Mysterious death in Stepney*. An inquest was held yesterday on the body of Patrick M’Guire, described as a carpenter. Doctor Dovering stated that he had for some time treated the deceased as a dispensary patient, for sleeplessness, loss of appetite, and nervous depression. There was no cause of death to be found. He would say the deceased had sunk. Deceased was not a temperate man, which doubtless accelerated death. Deceased complained of dumb ague, but witness had never been able to detect any positive disease. He did not know that he had any family. He regarded him as a person of unsound intellect, who believed himself a member and the victim of some secret society. If he were to hazard an opinion, he would say deceased had died of fear.’

‘And the doctor would be right,’ cried Somerset; ‘and my dear Challoner, I am so relieved to hear of his demise, that I will — Well, after all,’ he added, ‘poor devil, he was well served.’

The door at this moment opened, and Desborough appeared upon the threshold. He was wrapped in a long waterproof, imperfectly supplied with buttons; his boots were full of water, his hat greasy with service; and yet he wore the air of one exceeding well content with life. He was hailed by the two others with exclamations of surprise and welcome.

‘And did you try the detective business?’ inquired Paul.

‘No,’ returned Harry. ‘Oh yes, by the way, I did though: twice, and got caught out both times. But I thought I should find my — my wife here?’ he added, with a kind of proud confusion.

‘What? are you married?’ cried Somerset.

'Oh yes,' said Harry, 'quite a long time: a month at least.'

'Money?' asked Challoner.

'That's the worst of it,' Desborough admitted. 'We are deadly hard up. But the Pri — - Mr. Godall is going to do something for us. That is what brings us here.'

'Who was Mrs. Desborough?' said Challoner, in the tone of a man of society.

'She was a Miss Luxmore,' returned Harry. 'You fellows will be sure to like her, for she is much cleverer than I. She tells wonderful stories, too; better than a book.'

And just then the door opened, and Mrs. Desborough entered. Somerset cried out aloud to recognise the young lady of the SuperfluousMansion, and Challoner fell back a step and dropped his cigar as he beheld the sorceress of Chelsea.

'What!' cried Harry, 'do you both know my wife?'

'I believe I have seen her,' said Somerset, a little wildly.

'I think I have met the gentleman,' said Mrs. Desborough sweetly; 'but I cannot imagine where it was.'

'Oh no,' cried Somerset fervently: 'I have no notion — I cannot conceive — where it could have been. Indeed,' he continued, growing in emphasis, 'I think it highly probable that it's a mistake.'

'And you, Challoner?' asked Harry, 'you seemed to recognise her too.'

'These are both friends of yours, Harry?' said the lady. 'Delighted, I am sure. I do not remember to have met Mr. Challoner.'

Challoner was very red in the face, perhaps from having groped after his cigar. 'I do not remember to have had the pleasure,' he responded huskily.

'Well, and Mr. Godall?' asked Mrs. Desborough.

'Are you the lady that has an appointment with old — ' began Somerset, and paused blushing. 'Because if so,' he resumed, 'I was to announce you at once.'

And the shopman raised a curtain, opened a door, and passed into a small pavilion which had been added to the back of the house. On the roof, the rain resounded musically. The walls were lined with maps and prints and a few works of reference. Upon a table was a large-scale map of Egypt and the Soudan, and another of Tonkin, on which, by the aid of coloured pins, the progress of the different wars was being followed day by day. A light, refreshing odour of the most delicate tobacco hung upon the air; and a fire, not of foul coal, but of clear-flaming resinous billets, chattered upon silver dogs. In this elegant and plain apartment, Mr. Godall sat in a morning muse, placidly gazing at the fire and hearkening to the rain upon the roof.

'Ha, my dear Mr. Somerset,' said he, 'and have you since last night adopted any fresh political principle?'

'The lady, sir,' said Somerset, with another blush.

'You have seen her, I believe?' returned Mr. Godall; and on Somerset's replying in the affirmative, 'You will excuse me, my dear sir,' he resumed, 'if I offer you a hint. I think it not improbable this lady may desire entirely to forget the past. From one gentleman to another, no more words are necessary.'

A moment after, he had received Mrs. Desborough with that grave and touching urbanity that so well became him.

'I am pleased, madam, to welcome you to my poor house,' he said; 'and shall be still more so, if what were else a barren courtesy and a pleasure personal to myself, shall prove to be of serious benefit to you and Mr. Desborough.'

'Your Highness,' replied Clara, 'I must begin with thanks; it is like what I have heard of you, that you should thus take up the case of the unfortunate; and as for my Harry, he is worthy of all that you can do.' She paused.

'But for yourself?' suggested Mr. Godall — 'it was thus you were about to continue, I believe.'

'You take the words out of my mouth,' she said. 'For myself, it is different.'

'I am not here to be a judge of men,' replied the Prince; 'still less of women. I am now a private person like yourself and many million others; but I am one who still fights upon the side of quiet. Now, madam, you know better than I, and God better than you, what you have done to mankind in the past; I pause not to inquire; it is with the future I concern myself, it is for the future I demand security. I would not willingly put arms into the hands of a disloyal combatant; and I dare not restore to wealth one of the levyers of a private and a barbarous war. I speak with some severity, and yet I pick my terms. I tell myself continually that you are a woman; and a voice continually reminds me of the children whose lives and limbs you have endangered. A woman,' he repeated solemnly — 'and children. Possibly, madam, when you are yourself a mother, you will feel the bite of that antithesis: possibly when you kneel at night beside a cradle, a fear will fall upon you, heavier than any shame; and when your child lies in the pain and danger of disease, you shall hesitate to kneel before your Maker.'

'You look at the fault,' she said, 'and not at the excuse. Has your own heart never leaped within you at some story of oppression? But, alas, no! for you were born upon a throne.'

'I was born of woman,' said the Prince; 'I came forth from my mother's agony, helpless as a wren, like other nurselings. This, which you forgot, I have still faithfully remembered. Is it not one of your

English poets, that looked abroad upon the earth and saw vast circumvallations, innumerable troops manoeuvring, warships at sea and a great dust of battles on shore; and casting anxiously about for what should be the cause of so many and painful preparations, spied at last, in the centre of all, a mother and her babe? These, madam, are my politics; and the verses, which are by Mr. Coventry Patmore, I have caused to be translated into the Bohemian tongue. Yes, these are my politics: to change what we can, to better what we can; but still to bear in mind that man is but a devil weakly fettered by some generous beliefs and impositions, and for no word however nobly sounding, and no cause however just and pious, to relax the stricture of these bonds.'

There was a silence of a moment.

'I fear, madam,' resumed the Prince, 'that I but weary you. My views are formal like myself; and like myself, they also begin to grow old. But I must still trouble you for some reply.'

'I can say but one thing,' said Mrs. Desborough: 'I love my husband.'

'It is a good answer,' returned the Prince; 'and you name a good influence, but one that need not be conterminous with life.'

'I will not play at pride with such a man as you,' she answered. 'What do you ask of me? not protestations, I am sure. What shall I say? I have done much that I cannot defend and that I would not do again. Can I say more? Yes: I can say this: I never abused myself with the muddle-headed fairy tales of politics. I was at least prepared to meet reprisals. While I was levying war myself — or levying murder, if you choose the plainer term — I never accused my adversaries of assassination. I never felt or feigned a righteous horror, when a price was put upon my life by those whom I attacked. I never called the policeman a hireling. I may have been a criminal, in short; but I never was a fool.'

'Enough, madam,' returned the Prince: 'more than enough! Your words are most reviving to my spirits; for in this age, when even the assassin is a sentimentalist, there is no virtue greater in my eyes than intellectual clarity. Suffer me, then, to ask you to retire; for by the signal of that bell, I perceive my old friend, your mother, to be close at hand. With her I promise you to do my utmost.'

And as Mrs. Desborough returned to the Divan, the Prince, opening a door upon the other side, admitted Mrs. Luxmore.

'Madam and my very good friend,' said he, 'is my face so much changed that you no longer recognise Prince Florizel in Mr. Godall?'

'To be sure!' she cried, looking at him through her glasses. 'I have always regarded your Highness as a perfect man; and in your altered circumstances, of which I have already heard with deep regret, I will beg you to consider my respect increased instead of lessened.'

'I have found it so,' returned the Prince, 'with every class of my acquaintance. But, madam, I pray you to be seated. My business is of a delicate order, and regards your daughter.'

'In that case,' said Mrs. Luxmore, 'you may save yourself the trouble of speaking, for I have fully made up my mind to have nothing to do with her. I will not hear one word in her defence; but as I value nothing so particularly as the virtue of justice, I think it my duty to explain to you the grounds of my complaint. She deserted me, her natural protector; for years, she has consorted with the most disreputable persons; and to fill the cup of her offence, she has recently married. I refuse to see her, or the being to whom she has linked herself. One hundred and twenty pounds a year, I have always offered her: I offer it again. It is what I had myself when I was her age.'

'Very well, madam,' said the Prince; 'and be that so! But to touch upon another matter: what was the income of the Reverend Bernard Fanshawe?'

'My father?' asked the spirited old lady. 'I believe he had seven hundred pounds in the year.'

'You were one, I think, of several?' pursued the Prince.

'Of four,' was the reply. 'We were four daughters; and painful as the admission is to make, a more detestable family could scarce be found in England.'

'Dear me!' said the Prince. 'And you, madam, have an income of eight thousand?'

'Not more than five,' returned the old lady; 'but where on earth are you conducting me?'

'To an allowance of one thousand pounds a year,' replied Florizel, smiling. 'For I must not suffer you to take your father for a rule. He was poor, you are rich. He had many calls upon his poverty: there are none upon your wealth. And indeed, madam, if you will let me touch this matter with a needle, there is but one point in common to your two positions: that each had a daughter more remarkable for liveliness than duty.'

'I have been entrapped into this house,' said the old lady, getting to her feet. 'But it shall not avail. Not all the tobacconists in Europe . . .'

'Ah, madam,' interrupted Florizel, 'before what is referred to as my fall, you had not used such language! And since you so much object to the simple industry by which I live, let me give you a friendly hint. If you will not consent to support your daughter, I shall be constrained to place that lady behind my counter, where I doubt not she would prove a great attraction; and your son-in-law shall have a livery and run the errands. With such young blood my business might be doubled, and I might be bound in common gratitude to place the name of Luxmore beside that of Godall.'

'Your Highness,' said the old lady, 'I have been very rude, and you are very cunning. I suppose the minx is on the premises. Produce her.'

'Let us rather observe them unperceived,' said the Prince; and so saying he rose and quietly drew back the curtain.

Mrs. Desborough sat with her back to them on a chair; Somerset and Harry were hanging on her words with extraordinary interest; Challoner, alleging some affair, had long ago withdrawn from the detested neighbourhood of the enchantress.

'At that moment,' Mrs. Desborough was saying, 'Mr Gladstone detected the features of his cowardly assailant. A cry rose to his lips: a cry of mingled triumph . . .'

'That is Mr. Somerset!' interrupted the spirited old lady, in the highest note of her register. 'Mr. Somerset, what have you done with my house-property?'

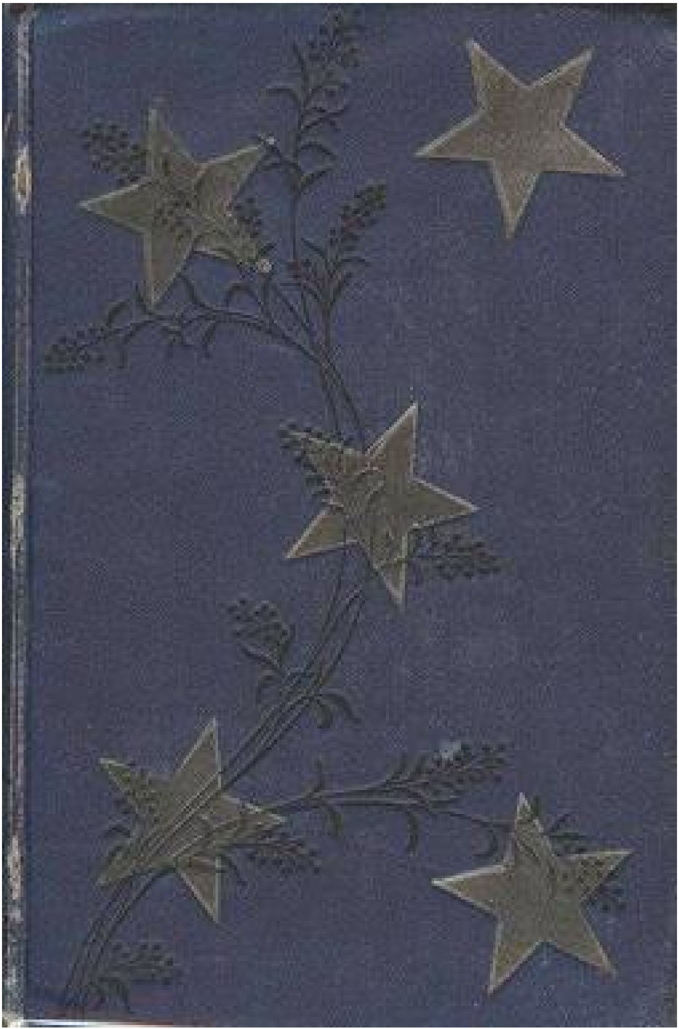
'Madam,' said the Prince, 'let it be mine to give the explanation; and in the meanwhile, welcome your daughter.'

'Well, Clara, how do you do?' said Mrs. Luxmore. 'It appears I am to give you an allowance. So much the better for you. As for Mr. Somerset, I am very ready to have an explanation; for the whole affair, though costly, was eminently humorous. And at any rate,' she added, nodding to Paul, 'he is a young gentleman for whom I have a great affection, and his pictures were the funniest I ever saw.'

'I have ordered a collation,' said the Prince. 'Mr. Somerset, as these are all your friends, I propose, if you please, that you should join them at table. I will take the shop.'

THE MERRY MEN AND OTHER TALES AND FABLES

This collection of short stories was first published in 1893 and contains some of Stevenson’s last finished works before he died the following year.



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Dedication

My dear Lady Taylor,
To your name, if I wrote on brass, I could add nothing; it has been already written higher than I could dream to reach, by a strong and dear hand; and if I now dedicate to you these tales, it is not as the writer who brings you his work, but as the friend who would remind you of his affection.
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

THE MERRY MEN

CHAPTER I. EILEAN AROS.

It was a beautiful morning in the late July when I set forth on foot for the last time for Aros. A boat had put me ashore the night before at Grisapol; I had such breakfast as the little inn afforded, and, leaving all my baggage till I had an occasion to come round for it by sea, struck right across the promontory with a cheerful heart.

I was far from being a native of these parts, springing, as I did, from an unmixed lowland stock. But an uncle of mine, Gordon Darnaway, after a poor, rough youth, and some years at sea, had married a young wife in the islands; Mary Maclean she was called, the last of her family; and when she died in giving birth to a daughter, Aros, the sea-girt farm, had remained in his possession. It brought him in nothing but the means of life, as I was well aware; but he was a man whom ill-fortune had pursued; he feared, cumbered as he was with the young child, to make a fresh adventure upon life; and remained in Aros, biting his nails at destiny. Years passed over his head in that isolation, and brought neither help nor contentment. Meantime our family was dying out in the lowlands; there is little luck for any of that race; and perhaps my father was the luckiest of all, for not only was he one of the last to die, but he left a son to his name and a little money to support it. I was a student of Edinburgh University, living well enough at my own charges, but without kith or kin; when some news of me found its way to Uncle Gordon on the Ross of Grisapol; and he, as he was a man who held blood thicker than water, wrote to me the day he heard of my existence, and taught me to count Aros as my home. Thus it was that I came to spend my vacations in that part of the country, so far from all society and comfort, between the codfish and the moorcocks; and thus it was that now, when I had done with my classes, I was returning thither with so light a heart that July day.

The Ross, as we call it, is a promontory neither wide nor high, but as rough as God made it to this day; the deep sea on either hand of it, full of rugged isles and reefs most perilous to seamen — all overlooked from the eastward by some very high cliffs and the great peals of Ben Kyaw. *The Mountain of the Mist*, they say the words signify in the Gaelic tongue; and it is well named. For that hill-top, which is more than three thousand feet in height, catches all the clouds that come blowing from the seaward; and, indeed, I used often to think that it must make them for itself; since when all heaven was clear to the sea level, there would ever be a streamer on Ben Kyaw. It brought water, too, and was mossy to the top in consequence. I have seen us sitting in broad sunshine on the Ross, and the rain falling black like crape upon the mountain. But the wetness of it made it often appear more beautiful to my eyes; for when the sun struck upon the hill sides, there were many wet rocks and watercourses that shone like jewels even as far as Aros, fifteen miles away.

The road that I followed was a cattle-track. It twisted so as nearly to double the length of my journey; it went over rough boulders so that a man had to leap from one to another, and through soft bottoms where the moss came nearly to the knee. There was no cultivation anywhere, and not one house in the ten miles from Grisapol to Aros. Houses of course there were — three at least; but they lay so far on the one side or the other that no stranger could have found them from the track. A large part of the Ross is covered with big granite rocks, some of them larger than a two-roomed house, one beside another, with fern and deep heather in between them where the vipers breed. Anyway the wind was, it was always sea air, as salt as on a ship; the gulls were as free as moorfowl over all the Ross; and whenever the way rose a little, your eye would kindle with the brightness of the sea. From the very midst of the land, on a day of wind and a high spring, I have heard the Roost roaring, like a battle where it runs by Aros, and the great and fearful voices of the breakers that we call the Merry Men.

Aros itself — Aros Jay, I have heard the natives call it, and they say it means *the House of God* — Aros itself was not properly a piece of the Ross, nor was it quite an islet. It formed the south-west corner of the land, fitted close to it, and was in one place only separated from the coast by a little gut of the sea, not forty feet across the narrowest. When the tide was full, this was clear and still, like a pool on a land river; only there was a difference in the weeds and fishes, and the water itself was green instead of brown; but when the tide went out, in the bottom of the ebb, there was a day or two in every month when you could pass dryshod from Aros to the mainland. There was some good pasture, where my uncle fed the sheep he lived on; perhaps the feed was better because the ground rose higher on the islet than the main level of the Ross, but this I am not skilled enough to settle. The house was a good one for that country, two storeys high. It looked westward over a bay, with a pier hard by for a boat, and from the door you could watch the vapours blowing on Ben Kyaw.

On all this part of the coast, and especially near Aros, these great granite rocks that I have spoken of go down together in troops into the sea, like cattle on a summer's day. There they stand, for all the world like their neighbours ashore; only the salt water sobbing between them instead of the quiet earth, and clots of sea-pink blooming on their sides instead of heather; and the great sea conger to wreathe about the base of them instead of the poisonous viper of the land. On calm days you can go wandering between them in a boat for hours, echoes following you about the labyrinth; but when the sea is up, Heaven help the man that hears that cauldron boiling.

Off the south-west end of Aros these blocks are very many, and much greater in size. Indeed, they must grow monstrously bigger out to sea, for there must be ten sea miles of open water sown with them as thick as a country place with houses, some standing thirty feet above the tides, some covered, but all perilous to ships; so that on a clear, westerly blowing day, I have counted, from the top of Aros, the great rollers breaking white and heavy over as many as six-and-forty buried reefs. But it is nearer in shore that the danger is worst; for the tide, here running like a mill race, makes a long belt of broken water — a *Roost* we call it — at the tail of the land. I have often been out there in a dead calm at the slack of the tide; and a strange place it is, with the sea swirling and combing up and boiling like the cauldrons of a linn, and now and again a little dancing mutter of sound as though the *Roost* were talking to itself. But when the tide begins to run again, and above all in heavy weather, there is no man could take a boat within half a mile of it, nor a ship afloat that could either steer or live in such a place. You can hear the roaring of it six miles away. At the seaward end there comes the strongest of the bubble; and it's here that these big breakers dance together — the dance of death, it may be called — that have got the name, in these parts, of the Merry Men. I have heard it said that they run fifty feet high; but that must be the green water only, for the spray runs twice as high as that. Whether they got the name from their movements, which are swift and antic, or from the shouting they make about the turn of the tide, so that all Aros shakes with it, is more than I can tell.

The truth is, that in a south-westerly wind, that part of our archipelago is no better than a trap. If a ship got through the reefs, and weathered the Merry Men, it would be to come ashore on the south coast of Aros, in Sandag Bay, where so many dismal things befell our family, as I propose to tell. The thought of all these dangers, in the place I knew so long, makes me particularly welcome the works now going forward to set lights upon the headlands and buoys along the channels of our iron-bound, inhospitable islands.

The country people had many a story about Aros, as I used to hear from my uncle's man, Rorie, an old servant of the Macleans, who had transferred his services without afterthought on the occasion of the marriage. There was some tale of an unlucky creature, a sea-kelpie, that dwelt and did business in some fearful manner of his own among the boiling breakers of the Roost. A mermaid had once met a piper on Sandag beach, and there sang to him a long, bright midsummer's night, so that in the morning he was found stricken crazy, and from thenceforward, till the day he died, said only one form of words; what they were in the original Gaelic I cannot tell, but they were thus translated: ‘Ah, the sweet singing out of the sea.’ Seals that haunted on that coast have been known to speak to man in his own tongue, presaging great disasters. It was here that a certain saint first landed on his voyage out of Ireland to convert the Hebrideans. And, indeed, I think he had some claim to be called saint; for, with the boats of that past age, to make so rough a passage, and land on such a ticklish coast, was surely not far short of the miraculous. It was to him, or to some of his monkish underlings who had a cell there, that the islet owes its holy and beautiful name, the House of God.

Among these old wives’ stories there was one which I was inclined to hear with more credulity. As I was told, in that tempest which scattered the ships of the Invincible Armada over all the north and west of Scotland, one great vessel came ashore on Aros, and before the eyes of some solitary people on a hill-top, went down in a moment with all hands, her colours flying even as she sank. There was some likelihood in this tale; for another of that fleet lay sunk on the north side, twenty miles from Grisapol. It was told, I thought, with more detail and gravity than its companion stories, and there was one particularity which went far to convince me of its truth: the name, that is, of the ship was still remembered, and sounded, in my ears, Spanishly. The *Espirito Santo* they called it, a great ship of many decks of guns, laden with treasure and grandees of Spain, and fierce soldadoes, that now lay fathom deep to all eternity, done with her wars and voyages, in Sandag bay, upon the west of Aros. No more salvos of ordnance for that tall ship, the ‘Holy Spirit,’ no more fair winds or happy ventures; only to rot there deep in the sea-tangle and hear the shoutings of the Merry Men as the tide ran high about the island. It was a strange thought to me first and last, and only grew stranger as I learned the more of Spain, from which she had set sail with so proud a company, and King Philip, the wealthy king, that sent her on that voyage.

And now I must tell you, as I walked from Grisapol that day, the *Espirito Santo* was very much in my reflections. I had been favourably remarked by our then Principal in Edinburgh College, that famous writer, Dr. Robertson, and by him had been set to work on some papers of an ancient date to rearrange and sift of what was worthless; and in one of these, to my great wonder, I found a note of this very ship, the *Espirito Santo*, with her captain’s name, and how she carried a great part of the Spaniard’s treasure, and had been lost upon the Ross of Grisapol; but in what particular spot, the wild tribes of that place and period would give no information to the king’s inquiries.

Putting one thing with another, and taking our island tradition together with this note of old King Jamie's perquisitions after wealth, it had come strongly on my mind that the spot for which he sought in vain could be no other than the small bay of Sandag on my uncle's land; and being a fellow of a mechanical turn, I had ever since been plotting how to weigh that good ship up again with all her ingots, ounces, and doubloons, and bring back our house of Darnaway to its long-forgotten dignity and wealth.

This was a design of which I soon had reason to repent. My mind was sharply turned on different reflections; and since I became the witness of a strange judgment of God's, the thought of dead men's treasures has been intolerable to my conscience. But even at that time I must acquit myself of sordid greed; for if I desired riches, it was not for their own sake, but for the sake of a person who was dear to my heart — my uncle's daughter, Mary Ellen. She had been educated well, and had been a time to school upon the mainland; which, poor girl, she would have been happier without. For Aros was no place for her, with old Rorie the servant, and her father, who was one of the unhappiest men in Scotland, plainly bred up in a country place among Cameronians, long a skipper sailing out of the Clyde about the islands, and now, with infinite discontent, managing his sheep and a little 'long shore fishing for the necessary bread. If it was sometimes weariful to me, who was there but a month or two, you may fancy what it was to her who dwelt in that same desert all the year round, with the sheep and flying sea-gulls, and the Merry Men singing and dancing in the Roost!

CHAPTER II. WHAT THE WRECK HAD BROUGHT TO AROS.

It was half-flood when I got the length of Aros; and there was nothing for it but to stand on the far shore and whistle for Rorie with the boat. I had no need to repeat the signal. At the first sound, Mary was at the door flying a handkerchief by way of answer, and the old long-legged serving-man was shambling down the gravel to the pier. For all his hurry, it took him a long while to pull across the bay; and I observed him several times to pause, go into the stern, and look over curiously into the wake. As he came nearer, he seemed to me aged and haggard, and I thought he avoided my eye. The coble had been repaired, with two new thwarts and several patches of some rare and beautiful foreign wood, the name of it unknown to me.

'Why, Rorie,' said I, as we began the return voyage, 'this is fine wood. How came you by that?'

'It will be hard to cheesel,' Rorie opined reluctantly; and just then, dropping the oars, he made another of those dives into the stern which I had remarked as he came across to fetch me, and, leaning his hand on my shoulder, stared with an awful look into the waters of the bay.

‘What is wrong?’ I asked, a good deal startled.

‘It will be a great feesh,’ said the old man, returning to his oars; and nothing more could I get out of him, but strange glances and an ominous nodding of the head. In spite of myself, I was infected with a measure of uneasiness; I turned also, and studied the wake. The water was still and transparent, but, out here in the middle of the bay, exceeding deep. For some time I could see naught; but at last it did seem to me as if something dark — a great fish, or perhaps only a shadow — followed studiously in the track of the moving coble. And then I remembered one of Rorie’s superstitions: how in a ferry in Morven, in some great, exterminating feud among the clans; a fish, the like of it unknown in all our waters, followed for some years the passage of the ferry-boat, until no man dared to make the crossing.

‘He will be waiting for the right man,’ said Rorie.

Mary met me on the beach, and led me up the brae and into the house of Aros. Outside and inside there were many changes. The garden was fenced with the same wood that I had noted in the boat; there were chairs in the kitchen covered with strange brocade; curtains of brocade hung from the window; a clock stood silent on the dresser; a lamp of brass was swinging from the roof; the table was set for dinner with the finest of linen and silver; and all these new riches were displayed in the plain old kitchen that I knew so well, with the high-backed settle, and the stools, and the closet bed for Rorie; with the wide chimney the sun shone into, and the clear-smouldering peats; with the pipes on the mantelshelf and the three-cornered spittoons, filled with sea-shells instead of sand, on the floor; with the bare stone walls and the bare wooden floor, and the three patchwork rugs that were of yore its sole adornment — poor man’s patchwork, the like of it unknown in cities, woven with homespun, and Sunday black, and sea-cloth polished on the bench of rowing. The room, like the house, had been a sort of wonder in that country-side, it was so neat and habitable; and to see it now, shamed by these incongruous additions, filled me with indignation and a kind of anger. In view of the errand I had come upon to Aros, the feeling was baseless and unjust; but it burned high, at the first moment, in my heart.

‘Mary, girl,’ said I, ‘this is the place I had learned to call my home, and I do not know it.’

‘It is my home by nature, not by the learning,’ she replied; ‘the place I was born and the place I’m like to die in; and I neither like these changes, nor the way they came, nor that which came with them. I would have liked better, under God’s pleasure, they had gone down into the sea, and the Merry Men were dancing on them now.’

Mary was always serious; it was perhaps the only trait that she shared with her father; but the tone with which she uttered these words was even graver than of custom.

‘Ay,’ said I, ‘I feared it came by wreck, and that’s by death; yet when my father died, I took his goods without remorse.’

‘Your father died a clean strae death, as the folk say,’ said Mary.

‘True,’ I returned; ‘and a wreck is like a judgment. What was she called?’

‘They ca’d her the *Christ-Anna,*’ said a voice behind me; and, turning round, I saw my uncle standing in the doorway.

He was a sour, small, bilious man, with a long face and very dark eyes; fifty-six years old, sound and active in body, and with an air somewhat between that of a shepherd and that of a man following the sea. He never laughed, that I heard; read long at the Bible; prayed much, like the Cameronians he had been brought up among; and indeed, in many ways, used to remind me of one of the hill-preachers in the killing times before the Revolution. But he never got much comfort, nor even, as I used to think, much guidance, by his piety. He had his black fits when he was afraid of hell; but he had led a rough life, to which he would look back with envy, and was still a rough, cold, gloomy man.

As he came in at the door out of the sunlight, with his bonnet on his head and a pipe hanging in his button-hole, he seemed, like Rorie, to have grown older and paler, the lines were deeplier ploughed upon his face, and the whites of his eyes were yellow, like old stained ivory, or the bones of the dead.

‘Ay’ he repeated, dwelling upon the first part of the word, ‘the *Christ-Anna*. It’s an awfu’ name.’

I made him my salutations, and complimented him upon his look of health; for I feared he had perhaps been ill.

‘I’m in the body,’ he replied, ungraciously enough; ‘aye in the body and the sins of the body, like yoursel’. Denner,’ he said abruptly to Mary, and then ran on to me: ‘They’re grand braws, thir that we hae gotten, are they no? Yon’s a bonny knock , but it’ll no gang; and the napery’s by ordnar. Bonny, bairnly braws; it’s for the like o’ them folk sells the peace of God that passeth understanding; it’s for the like o’ them, an’ maybe no even sae muckle worth, folk daunton God to His face and burn in muckle hell; and it’s for that reason the Scripture ca’s them, as I read the passage, the accursed thing. Mary, ye girzie,’ he interrupted himself to cry with some asperity, ‘what for hae ye no put out the twa candlesticks?’

‘Why should we need them at high noon?’ she asked.

But my uncle was not to be turned from his idea. ‘We’ll bruik them while we may,’ he said; and so two massive candlesticks of wrought silver were added to the table equipage, already so unsuited to that rough sea-side farm.

'She cam' ashore Februar' 10, about ten at nicht,' he went on to me. 'There was nae wind, and a sair run o' sea; and she was in the sook o' the Roost, as I jaloose. We had seen her a' day, Rorie and me, beating to the wind. She wasnae a handy craft, I'm thinking, that *Christ-Anna*; for she would neither steer nor stey wi' them. A sair day they had of it; their hands was never aff the sheets, and it perishin' cauld — ower cauld to snaw; and aye they would get a bit nip o' wind, and awa' again, to pit the emp'y hope into them. Eh, man! but they had a sair day for the last o't! He would have had a prood, prood heart that won ashore upon the back o' that.'

'And were all lost?' I cried. 'God held them!'

'Wheesht!' he said sternly. 'Nane shall pray for the deid on my hearth-stane.'

I disclaimed a Popish sense for my ejaculation; and he seemed to accept my disclaimer with unusual facility, and ran on once more upon what had evidently become a favourite subject.

'We fand her in Sandag Bay, Rorie an' me, and a' thae braws in the inside of her. There's a kittle bit, ye see, about Sandag; whiles the sook rins strong for the Merry Men; an' whiles again, when the tide's makin' hard an' ye can hear the Roost blawin' at the far-end of Aros, there comes a back-spang of current straucht into Sandag Bay. Weel, there's the thing that got the grip on the *Christ-Anna*. She but to have come in ram-stam an' stern forrit; for the bows of her are aften under, and the back-side of her is clear at hie-water o' neaps. But, man! the dunt that she cam doon wi' when she struck! Lord save us a'! but it's an unco life to be a sailor — a cauld, wanchancy life. Mony's the gliff I got mysel' in the great deep; and why the Lord should hae made yon unco water is mair than ever I could win to understand. He made the vales and the pastures, the bonny green yaird, the halesome, canty land —

And now they shout and sing to Thee,
For Thou hast made them glad,

as the Psalms say in the metrical version. No that I would preen my faith to that clink neither; but it's bonny, and easier to mind. "Who go to sea in ships," they hae't again —

And in
Great waters trading be,
Within the deep these men God's works
And His great wonders see.

Weel, it's easy sayin' sae. Maybe Dauvit wasnae very weel acquant wi' the sea. But, troth, if it wasnae prentit in the Bible, I wad whiles be temp'it to think it wasnae the Lord, but the muckle, black deil that made the sea. There's naething good comes oot o't but the fish; an' the spentacle o' God riding on the tempest, to be shure, whilk would be what Dauvit was likely ettling at. But, man, they were sair wonders that God showed to the *Christ-Anna* — wonders, do I ca' them? Judgments, rather: judgments in the mirk nicht among the draygons o' the deep. And their souls — to think o' that — their souls, man, maybe no prepared! The sea — a muckle yett to hell!'

I observed, as my uncle spoke, that his voice was unnaturally moved and his manner unwontedly demonstrative. He leaned forward at these last words, for example, and touched me on the knee with his spread fingers, looking up into my face with a certain pallor, and I could see that his eyes shone with a deep-seated fire, and that the lines about his mouth were drawn and tremulous.

Even the entrance of Rorie, and the beginning of our meal, did not detach him from his train of thought beyond a moment. He condescended, indeed, to ask me some questions as to my success at college, but I thought it was with half his mind; and even in his extempore grace, which was, as usual, long and wandering, I could find the trace of his preoccupation, praying, as he did, that God would 'remember in mercy fower puir, feckless, fiddling, sinful creatures here by their lee-lane beside the great and dowie waters.'

Soon there came an interchange of speeches between him and Rorie.

'Was it there?' asked my uncle.

'Ou, ay!' said Rorie.

I observed that they both spoke in a manner of aside, and with some show of embarrassment, and that Mary herself appeared to colour, and looked down on her plate. Partly to show my knowledge, and so relieve the party from an awkward strain, partly because I was curious, I pursued the subject.

'You mean the fish?' I asked.

'Whatten fish?' cried my uncle. 'Fish, quo' he! Fish! Your een are fu' o' fatness, man; your heid dozened wi' carnal leir. Fish! it's a bogle!'

He spoke with great vehemence, as though angry; and perhaps I was not very willing to be put down so shortly, for young men are disputatious. At least I remember I retorted hotly, crying out upon childish superstitions.

'And ye come frae the College!' sneered Uncle Gordon. 'Gude kens what they learn folk there; it's no muckle service onyway. Do ye think, man, that there's naething in a' yon saut wilderness o' a world oot wast there, wi' the sea grasses growin', an' the sea beasts fechtin', an' the sun glintin' down into it, day by day? Na; the sea's like the land, but fearsomer. If there's folk ashore, there's folk in the sea — deid they may be, but they're folk whatever; and as for deils, there's nane that's like the sea deils. There's no sae muckle harm in the land deils, when a's said and done. Lang syne, when I was a callant in the south country, I mind there was an auld, bald bogle in the Peewie Moss. I got a glisk o' him mysel', sittin' on his hunkers in a hag, as gray's a tombstane. An', troth, he was a fearsome-like taed. But he steered naebody. Nae doobt, if ane that was a reprobate, ane the Lord hated, had gane by there wi' his sin still upon his stamach, nae doobt the creature would hae lowped upo' the likes o' him. But there's deils in the deep sea would yoke on a communicant! Eh, sirs, if ye had gane doon wi' the puir lads in the *Christ-Anna*, ye would ken by now the mercy o' the seas. If ye had sailed it for as lang as me, ye would hate the thocht of it as I do. If ye had but used the een God gave ye, ye would hae learned the wickedness o' that fause, saut, cauld, bullering creature, and of a' that's in it by the Lord's permission: labsters an' partans, an' sic like, howking in the deid; muckle, gutsy, blawing whales; an' fish — the hale clan o' them — cauld-wamed, blind-eed uncanny ferlies. O, sirs,' he cried, 'the horror — the horror o' the sea!'

We were all somewhat staggered by this outburst; and the speaker himself, after that last hoarse apostrophe, appeared to sink gloomily into his own thoughts. But Rorie, who was greedy of superstitious lore, recalled him to the subject by a question.

'You will not ever have seen a teevil of the sea?' he asked.

'No clearly,' replied the other. 'I misdoobt if a mere man could see ane clearly and conteenue in the body. I hae sailed wi' a lad — they ca'd him Sandy Gabart; he saw ane, shure eneueh, an' shure eneueh it was the end of him. We were seeven days oot frae the Clyde — a sair wark we had had — gaun north wi' seeds an' braws an' things for the Macleod. We had got in ower near under the Cutchull'ns, an' had just gane about by soa, an' were off on a lang tack, we thocht would maybe hauld as far's Copnahow. I mind the nicht weel; a mune smoored wi' mist; a fine gaun breeze upon the water, but no steedy; an' — what nane o' us likit to hear — anither wund gurlin' owerheid, amang thae fearsome, auld stane craigs o' the Cutchull'ns. Weel, Sandy was forrit wi' the jib sheet; we couldnae see him for the mains'l, that had just begude to draw, when a' at ance he gied a skirl. I luffed for my life, for I thocht we were ower near Soa; but na, it wasnae that, it was puir Sandy Gabart's deid skreigh, or near hand, for he was deid in half an hour. A't he could tell was that a sea deil, or sea bogle, or sea spenster, or sic-like, had clum up by the bowsprit, an' gi'en him ae cauld, uncanny look. An', or the life was oot o' Sandy's body, we kent weel what the thing betokened, and why the wund gurled in the taps o' the Cutchull'ns; for doon it cam' — a wund do I ca' it! it was the wund o' the Lord's anger — an' a' that nicht we foucht like men dementit, and the niest that we kenned we were ashore in Loch Uskevagh, an' the cocks were crawin' in Benbecula.'

'It will have been a merman,' Rorie said.

'A merman!' screamed my uncle with immeasurable scorn. 'Auld wives' clavers! There's nae sic things as mermen.'

'But what was the creature like?' I asked.

'What like was it? Gude forbid that we suld ken what like it was! It had a kind of a heid upon it — man could say nae mair.'

Then Rorie, smarting under the affront, told several tales of mermen, mermaids, and sea-horses that had come ashore upon the islands and attacked the crews of boats upon the sea; and my uncle, in spite of his incredulity, listened with uneasy interest.

'Aweel, aweel,' he said, 'it may be sae; I may be wrang; but I find nae word o' mermen in the Scriptures.'

'And you will find nae word of Aros Roost, maybe,' objected Rorie, and his argument appeared to carry weight.

When dinner was over, my uncle carried me forth with him to a bank behind the house. It was a very hot and quiet afternoon; scarce a ripple anywhere upon the sea, nor any voice but the familiar voice of sheep and gulls; and perhaps in consequence of this repose in nature, my kinsman showed himself more rational and tranquil than before. He spoke evenly and almost cheerfully of my career, with every now and then a reference to the lost ship or the treasures it had brought to Aros. For my part, I listened to him in a sort of trance, gazing with all my heart on that remembered scene, and drinking gladly the sea-air and the smoke of peats that had been lit by Mary.

Perhaps an hour had passed when my uncle, who had all the while been covertly gazing on the surface of the little bay, rose to his feet and bade me follow his example. Now I should say that the great run of tide at the south-west end of Aros exercises a perturbing influence round all the coast. In Sandag Bay, to the south, a strong current runs at certain periods of the flood and ebb respectively; but in this northern bay — Aros Bay, as it is called — where the house stands and on which my uncle was now gazing, the only sign of disturbance is towards the end of the ebb, and even then it is too slight to be remarkable. When there is any swell, nothing can be seen at all; but when it is calm, as it often is, there appear certain strange, undecipherable marks — sea-runes, as we may name them — on the glassy surface of the bay. The like is common in a thousand places on the coast; and many a boy must have amused himself as I did, seeking to read in them some reference to himself or those he loved. It was to these marks that my uncle now directed my attention, struggling, as he did so, with an evident reluctance.

'Do ye see yon scart upo' the water?' he inquired; 'yon ane wast the gray stane? Ay? Weel, it'll no be like a letter, wull it?'

'Certainly it is,' I replied. 'I have often remarked it. It is like a C.'

He heaved a sigh as if heavily disappointed with my answer, and then added below his breath: 'Ay, for the *Christ-Anna*.'

'I used to suppose, sir, it was for myself,' said I; 'for my name is Charles.'

'And so ye saw't afore?', he ran on, not heeding my remark. 'Weel, weel, but that's unco strange. Maybe, it's been there waitin', as a man wad say, through a' the weary ages. Man, but that's awfu'.' And then, breaking off: 'Ye'll no see anither, will ye?' he asked.

'Yes,' said I. 'I see another very plainly, near the Ross side, where the road comes down — an M.'

'An M,' he repeated very low; and then, again after another pause: 'An' what wad ye make o' that?' he inquired.

'I had always thought it to mean Mary, sir,' I answered, growing somewhat red, convinced as I was in my own mind that I was on the threshold of a decisive explanation.

But we were each following his own train of thought to the exclusion of the other's. My uncle once more paid no attention to my words; only hung his head and held his peace; and I might have been led to fancy that he had not heard me, if his next speech had not contained a kind of echo from my own.

'I would say naething o' thae clavers to Mary,' he observed, and began to walk forward.

There is a belt of turf along the side of Aros Bay, where walking is easy; and it was along this that I silently followed my silent kinsman. I was perhaps a little disappointed at having lost so good an opportunity to declare my love; but I was at the same time far more deeply exercised at the change that had befallen my uncle. He was never an ordinary, never, in the strict sense, an amiable, man; but there was nothing in even the worst that I had known of him before, to prepare me for so strange a transformation. It was impossible to close the eyes against one fact; that he had, as the saying goes, something on his mind; and as I mentally ran over the different words which might be represented by the letter M — misery, mercy, marriage, money, and the like — I was arrested with a sort of start by the word murder. I was still considering the ugly sound and fatal meaning of the word, when the direction of our walk brought us to a point from which a view was to be had to either side, back towards Aros Bay and homestead, and forward on the ocean, dotted to the north with isles, and lying to the southward blue and open to the sky. There my guide came to a halt, and stood staring for awhile on that expanse. Then he turned to me and laid a hand on my arm.

'Ye think there's naething there?' he said, pointing with his pipe;

and then cried out aloud, with a kind of exultation: 'I'll tell ye, man! The deid are down there — thick like rattons!'

He turned at once, and, without another word, we retraced our steps to the house of Aros.

I was eager to be alone with Mary; yet it was not till after supper, and then but for a short while, that I could have a word with her. I lost no time beating about the bush, but spoke out plainly what was on my mind.

'Mary,' I said, 'I have not come to Aros without a hope. If that should prove well founded, we may all leave and go somewhere else, secure of daily bread and comfort; secure, perhaps, of something far beyond that, which it would seem extravagant in me to promise. But there's a hope that lies nearer to my heart than money.' And at that I paused. 'You can guess fine what that is, Mary,' I said. She looked away from me in silence, and that was small encouragement, but I was not to be put off. 'All my days I have thought the world of you,' I continued; 'the time goes on and I think always the more of you; I could not think to be happy or hearty in my life without you: you are the apple of my eye.' Still she looked away, and said never a word; but I thought I saw that her hands shook. 'Mary,' I cried in fear, 'do ye no like me?'

'O, Charlie man,' she said, 'is this a time to speak of it? Let me be, a while; let me be the way I am; it'll not be you that loses by the waiting!'

I made out by her voice that she was nearly weeping, and this put me out of any thought but to compose her. 'Mary Ellen,' I said, 'say no more; I did not come to trouble you: your way shall be mine, and your time too; and you have told me all I wanted. Only just this one thing more: what ails you?'

She owned it was her father, but would enter into no particulars, only shook her head, and said he was not well and not like himself, and it was a great pity. She knew nothing of the wreck. 'I havenae been near it,' said she. 'What for would I go near it, Charlie lad? The poor souls are gone to their account long syne; and I would just have wished they had ta'en their gear with them — poor souls!'

This was scarcely any great encouragement for me to tell her of the *Espirito Santo*; yet I did so, and at the very first word she cried out in surprise. 'There was a man at Grisapol,' she said, 'in the month of May — a little, yellow, black-avised body, they tell me, with gold rings upon his fingers, and a beard; and he was speiring high and low for that same ship.'

It was towards the end of April that I had been given these papers to sort out by Dr. Robertson: and it came suddenly back upon my mind that they were thus prepared for a Spanish historian, or a man calling himself such, who had come with high recommendations to the Principal, on a mission of inquiry as to the dispersion of the great Armada. Putting one thing with another, I fancied that the visitor 'with the gold rings upon his fingers' might be the same with Dr. Robertson's historian from Madrid. If that were so, he would be more likely after treasure for himself than information for a learned society. I made up my mind, I should lose no time over my undertaking; and if the ship lay sunk in Sandag Bay, as perhaps both he and I supposed, it should not be for the advantage of this ringed adventurer, but for Mary and myself, and for the good, old, honest, kindly family of the Darnaways.

CHAPTER III. LAND AND SEA IN SANDAG BAY.

I was early afoot next morning; and as soon as I had a bite to eat, set forth upon a tour of exploration. Something in my heart distinctly told me that I should find the ship of the Armada; and although I did not give way entirely to such hopeful thoughts, I was still very light in spirits and walked upon air. Aros is a very rough islet, its surface strewn with great rocks and shaggy with fernland heather; and my way lay almost north and south across the highest knoll; and though the whole distance was inside of two miles it took more time and exertion than four upon a level road. Upon the summit, I paused. Although not very high — not three hundred feet, as I think — it yet outtops all the neighbouring lowlands of the Ross, and commands a great view of sea and islands. The sun, which had been up some time, was already hot upon my neck; the air was listless and thundery, although purely clear; away over the north-west, where the isles lie thickliest congregated, some half-a-dozen small and ragged clouds hung together in a covey; and the head of Ben Kyaw wore, not merely a few streamers, but a solid hood of vapour. There was a threat in the weather. The sea, it is true, was smooth like glass: even the Roost was but a seam on that wide mirror, and the Merry Men no more than caps of foam; but to my eye and ear, so long familiar with these places, the sea also seemed to lie uneasily; a sound of it, like a long sigh, mounted to me where I stood; and, quiet as it was, the Roost itself appeared to be revolving mischief. For I ought to say that all we dwellers in these parts attributed, if not prescience, at least a quality of warning, to that strange and dangerous creature of the tides.

I hurried on, then, with the greater speed, and had soon descended the slope of Aros to the part that we call Sandag Bay. It is a pretty large piece of water compared with the size of the isle; well sheltered from all but the prevailing wind; sandy and shoal and bounded by low sand-hills to the west, but to the eastward lying several fathoms deep along a ledge of rocks. It is upon that side that, at a certain time each flood, the current mentioned by my uncle sets so strong into the bay; a little later, when the Roost begins to work higher, an undertow runs still more strongly in the reverse direction; and it is the action of this last, as I suppose, that has scoured that part so deep. Nothing is to be seen out of Sandag Bay, but one small segment of the horizon and, in heavy weather, the breakers flying high over a deep sea reef.

From half-way down the hill, I had perceived the wreck of February last, a brig of considerable tonnage, lying, with her back broken, high and dry on the east corner of the sands; and I was making directly towards it, and already almost on the margin of the turf, when my eyes were suddenly arrested by a spot, cleared of fern and heather, and marked by one of those long, low, and almost human-looking mounds that we see so commonly in graveyards. I stopped like a man shot. Nothing had been said to me of any dead man or interment on the island; Rorie, Mary, and my uncle had all equally held their peace; of her at least, I was certain that she must be ignorant; and yet here, before my eyes, was proof indubitable of the fact. Here was a grave; and I had to ask myself, with a chill, what manner of man lay there in his last sleep, awaiting the signal of the Lord in that solitary, sea-beat resting-place? My mind supplied no answer but what I feared to entertain. Shipwrecked, at least, he must have been; perhaps, like the old Armada mariners, from some far and rich land over-sea; or perhaps one of my own race, perishing within eyesight of the smoke of home. I stood awhile uncovered by his side, and I could have desired that it had lain in our religion to put up some prayer for that unhappy stranger, or, in the old classic way, outwardly to honour his misfortune. I knew, although his bones lay there, a part of Aros, till the trumpet sounded, his imperishable soul was forth and far away, among the raptures of the everlasting Sabbath or the pangs of hell; and yet my mind misgave me even with a fear, that perhaps he was near me where I stood, guarding his sepulchre, and lingering on the scene of his unhappy fate.

Certainly it was with a spirit somewhat over-shadowed that I turned away from the grave to the hardly less melancholy spectacle of the wreck. Her stem was above the first arc of the flood; she was broken in two a little abaft the foremast — though indeed she had none, both masts having broken short in her disaster; and as the pitch of the beach was very sharp and sudden, and the bows lay many feet below the stern, the fracture gaped widely open, and you could see right through her poor hull upon the farther side. Her name was much defaced, and I could not make out clearly whether she was called *Christiania*, after the Norwegian city, or *Christiana*, after the good woman, Christian's wife, in that old book the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' By her build she was a foreign ship, but I was not certain of her nationality. She had been painted green, but the colour was faded and weathered, and the paint peeling off in strips. The wreck of the mainmast lay alongside, half buried in sand. She was a forlorn sight, indeed, and I could not look without emotion at the bits of rope that still hung about her, so often handled of yore by shouting seamen; or the little scuttle where they had passed up and down to their affairs; or that poor noseless angel of a figure-head that had dipped into so many running billows.

I do not know whether it came most from the ship or from the grave, but I fell into some melancholy scruples, as I stood there, leaning with one hand against the battered timbers. The homelessness of men and even of inanimate vessels, cast away upon strange shores, came strongly in upon my mind. To make a profit of such pitiful misadventures seemed an unmanly and a sordid act; and I began to think of my then quest as of something sacrilegious in its nature. But when I remembered Mary, I took heart again. My uncle would never consent to an imprudent marriage, nor would she, as I was persuaded, wed without his full approval. It behoved me, then, to be up and doing for my wife; and I thought with a laugh how long it was since that great sea-castle, the *Espirito Santo,* had left her bones in Sandag Bay, and how weak it would be to consider rights so long extinguished and misfortunes so long forgotten in the process of time.

I had my theory of where to seek for her remains. The set of the current and the soundings both pointed to the east side of the bay under the ledge of rocks. If she had been lost in Sandag Bay, and if, after these centuries, any portion of her held together, it was there that I should find it. The water deepens, as I have said, with great rapidity, and even close along-side the rocks several fathoms may be found. As I walked upon the edge I could see far and wide over the sandy bottom of the bay; the sun shone clear and green and steady in the deeps; the bay seemed rather like a great transparent crystal, as one sees them in a lapidary's shop; there was naught to show that it was water but an internal trembling, a hovering within of sun-glints and netted shadows, and now and then a faint lap and a dying bubble round the edge. The shadows of the rocks lay out for some distance at their feet, so that my own shadow, moving, pausing, and stooping on the top of that, reached sometimes half across the bay. It was above all in this belt of shadows that I hunted for the *Espirito Santo*; since it was there the undertow ran strongest, whether in or out. Cool as the whole water seemed this broiling day, it looked, in that part, yet cooler, and had a mysterious invitation for the eyes. Peer as I pleased, however, I could see nothing but a few fishes or a bush of sea-tangle, and here and there a lump of rock that had fallen from above and now lay separate on the sandy floor. Twice did I pass from one end to the other of the rocks, and in the whole distance I could see nothing of the wreck, nor any place but one where it was possible for it to be. This was a large terrace in five fathoms of water, raised off the surface of the sand to a considerable height, and looking from above like a mere outgrowth of the rocks on which I walked. It was one mass of great sea-tangles like a grove, which prevented me judging of its nature, but in shape and size it bore some likeness to a vessel's hull. At least it was my best chance. If the *Espirito Santo* lay not there under the tangles, it lay nowhere at all in Sandag Bay; and I prepared to put the question to the proof, once and for all, and either go back to Aros a rich man or cured for ever of my dreams of wealth.

I stripped to the skin, and stood on the extreme margin with my hands clasped, irresolute. The bay at that time was utterly quiet; there was no sound but from a school of porpoises somewhere out of sight behind the point; yet a certain fear withheld me on the threshold of my venture. Sad sea-feelings, scraps of my uncle's superstitions, thoughts of the dead, of the grave, of the old broken ships, drifted through my mind. But the strong sun upon my shoulders warmed me to the heart, and I stooped forward and plunged into the sea.

It was all that I could do to catch a trail of the sea-tangle that grew so thickly on the terrace; but once so far anchored I secured myself by grasping a whole armful of these thick and slimy stalks, and, planting my feet against the edge, I looked around me. On all sides the clear sand stretched forth unbroken; it came to the foot of the rocks, scoured into the likeness of an alley in a garden by the action of the tides; and before me, for as far as I could see, nothing was visible but the same many-folded sand upon the sun-bright bottom of the bay. Yet the terrace to which I was then holding was as thick with strong sea-growths as a tuft of heather, and the cliff from which it bulged hung draped below the water-line with brown lianas. In this complexity of forms, all swaying together in the current, things were hard to be distinguished; and I was still uncertain whether my feet were pressed upon the natural rock or upon the timbers of the Armada treasure-ship, when the whole tuft of tangle came away in my hand, and in an instant I was on the surface, and the shores of the bay and the bright water swam before my eyes in a glory of crimson.

I clambered back upon the rocks, and threw the plant of tangle at my feet. Something at the same moment rang sharply, like a falling coin. I stooped, and there, sure enough, crusted with the red rust, there lay an iron shoe-buckle. The sight of this poor human relic thrilled me to the heart, but not with hope nor fear, only with a desolate melancholy. I held it in my hand, and the thought of its owner appeared before me like the presence of an actual man. His weather-beaten face, his sailor's hands, his sea-voice hoarse with singing at the capstan, the very foot that had once worn that buckle and trod so much along the swerving decks — the whole human fact of him, as a creature like myself, with hair and blood and seeing eyes, haunted me in that sunny, solitary place, not like a spectre, but like some friend whom I had basely injured. Was the great treasure ship indeed below there, with her guns and chain and treasure, as she had sailed from Spain; her decks a garden for the seaweed, her cabin a breeding place for fish, soundless but for the dredging water, motionless but for the waving of the tangle upon her battlements — that old, populous, sea-riding castle, now a reef in Sandag Bay? Or, as I thought it likelier, was this a waif from the disaster of the foreign brig — was this shoe-buckle bought but the other day and worn by a man of my own period in the world's history, hearing the same news from day to day, thinking the same thoughts, praying, perhaps, in the same temple with myself? However it was, I was assailed with dreary thoughts; my uncle's words, 'the dead are down there,' echoed in my ears; and though I determined to dive once more, it was with a strong repugnance that I stepped forward to the margin of the rocks.

A great change passed at that moment over the appearance of the bay. It was no more that clear, visible interior, like a house roofed with glass, where the green, submarine sunshine slept so stilly. A breeze, I suppose, had flawed the surface, and a sort of trouble and blackness filled its bosom, where flashes of light and clouds of shadow tossed confusedly together. Even the terrace below obscurely rocked and quivered. It seemed a graver thing to venture on this place of ambushes; and when I leaped into the sea the second time it was with a quaking in my soul.

I secured myself as at first, and groped among the waving tangle. All that met my touch was cold and soft and gluey. The thicket was alive with crabs and lobsters, trundling to and fro lopsidedly, and I had to harden my heart against the horror of their carrion neighbourhood. On all sides I could feel the grain and the clefts of hard, living stone; no planks, no iron, not a sign of any wreck; the *Espirito Santo* was not there. I remember I had almost a sense of relief in my disappointment, and I was about ready to leave go, when something happened that sent me to the surface with my heart in my mouth. I had already stayed somewhat late over my explorations; the current was freshening with the change of the tide, and Sandag Bay was no longer a safe place for a single swimmer. Well, just at the last moment there came a sudden flush of current, dredging through the tangles like a wave. I lost one hold, was flung sprawling on my side, and, instinctively grasping for a fresh support, my fingers closed on something hard and cold. I think I knew at that moment what it was. At least I instantly left hold of the tangle, leaped for the surface, and clambered out next moment on the friendly rocks with the bone of a man's leg in my grasp.

Mankind is a material creature, slow to think and dull to perceive connections. The grave, the wreck of the brig, and the rusty shoe-buckle were surely plain advertisements. A child might have read their dismal story, and yet it was not until I touched that actual piece of mankind that the full horror of the charnel ocean burst upon my spirit. I laid the bone beside the buckle, picked up my clothes, and ran as I was along the rocks towards the human shore. I could not be far enough from the spot; no fortune was vast enough to tempt me back again. The bones of the drowned dead should henceforth roll undisturbed by me, whether on tangle or minted gold. But as soon as I trod the good earth again, and had covered my nakedness against the sun, I knelt down over against the ruins of the brig, and out of the fulness of my heart prayed long and passionately for all poor souls upon the sea. A generous prayer is never presented in vain; the petition may be refused, but the petitioner is always, I believe, rewarded by some gracious visitation. The horror, at least, was lifted from my mind; I could look with calm of spirit on that great bright creature, God's ocean; and as I set off homeward up the rough sides of Aros, nothing remained of my concern beyond a deep determination to meddle no more with the spoils of wrecked vessels or the treasures of the dead.

I was already some way up the hill before I paused to breathe and look behind me. The sight that met my eyes was doubly strange.

For, first, the storm that I had foreseen was now advancing with almost tropical rapidity. The whole surface of the sea had been dulled from its conspicuous brightness to an ugly hue of corrugated lead; already in the distance the white waves, the 'skipper's daughters,' had begun to flee before a breeze that was still insensible on Aros; and already along the curve of Sandag Bay there was a splashing run of sea that I could hear from where I stood. The change upon the sky was even more remarkable. There had begun to arise out of the south-west a huge and solid continent of scowling cloud; here and there, through rents in its contexture, the sun still poured a sheaf of spreading rays; and here and there, from all its edges, vast inky streamers lay forth along the yet unclouded sky. The menace was express and imminent. Even as I gazed, the sun was blotted out. At any moment the tempest might fall upon Aros in its might.

The suddenness of this change of weather so fixed my eyes on heaven that it was some seconds before they alighted on the bay, mapped out below my feet, and robbed a moment later of the sun. The knoll which I had just surmounted overflanked a little amphitheatre of lower hillocks sloping towards the sea, and beyond that the yellow arc of beach and the whole extent of Sandag Bay. It was a scene on which I had often looked down, but where I had never before beheld a human figure. I had but just turned my back upon it and left it empty, and my wonder may be fancied when I saw a boat and several men in that deserted spot. The boat was lying by the rocks. A pair of fellows, bareheaded, with their sleeves rolled up, and one with a boathook, kept her with difficulty to her moorings for the current was growing brisker every moment. A little way off upon the ledge two men in black clothes, whom I judged to be superior in rank, laid their heads together over some task which at first I did not understand, but a second after I had made it out — they were taking bearings with the compass; and just then I saw one of them unroll a sheet of paper and lay his finger down, as though identifying features in a map. Meanwhile a third was walking to and fro, polling among the rocks and peering over the edge into the water. While I was still watching them with the stupefaction of surprise, my mind hardly yet able to work on what my eyes reported, this third person suddenly stooped and summoned his companions with a cry so loud that it reached my ears upon the hill. The others ran to him, even dropping the compass in their hurry, and I could see the bone and the shoe-buckle going from hand to hand, causing the most unusual gesticulations of surprise and interest. Just then I could hear the seamen crying from the boat, and saw them point westward to that cloud continent which was ever the more rapidly unfurling its blackness over heaven. The others seemed to consult; but the danger was too pressing to be braved, and they bundled into the boat carrying my relies with them, and set forth out of the bay with all speed of oars.

I made no more ado about the matter, but turned and ran for the house. Whoever these men were, it was fit my uncle should be instantly informed. It was not then altogether too late in the day for a descent of the Jacobites; and may be Prince Charlie, whom I knew my uncle to detest, was one of the three superiors whom I had seen upon the rock. Yet as I ran, leaping from rock to rock, and turned the matter loosely in my mind, this theory grew ever the longer the less welcome to my reason. The compass, the map, the interest awakened by the buckle, and the conduct of that one among the strangers who had looked so often below him in the water, all seemed to point to a different explanation of their presence on that outlying, obscure islet of the western sea. The Madrid historian, the search instituted by Dr. Robertson, the bearded stranger with the rings, my own fruitless search that very morning in the deep water of Sandag Bay, ran together, piece by piece, in my memory, and I made sure that these strangers must be Spaniards in quest of ancient treasure and the lost ship of the Armada. But the people living in outlying islands, such as

Aros, are answerable for their own security; there is none near by to protect or even to help them; and the presence in such a spot of a crew of foreign adventurers — poor, greedy, and most likely lawless — filled me with apprehensions for my uncle's money, and even for the safety of his daughter. I was still wondering how we were to get rid of them when I came, all breathless, to the top of Aros. The whole world was shadowed over; only in the extreme east, on a hill of the mainland, one last gleam of sunshine lingered like a jewel; rain had begun to fall, not heavily, but in great drops; the sea was rising with each moment, and already a band of white encircled Aros and the nearer coasts of Grisapol. The boat was still pulling seaward, but I now became aware of what had been hidden from me lower down — a large, heavily sparred, handsome schooner, lying to at the south end of Aros. Since I had not seen her in the morning when I had looked around so closely at the signs of the weather, and upon these lone waters where a sail was rarely visible, it was clear she must have lain last night behind the uninhabited Eilean Gour, and this proved conclusively that she was manned by strangers to our coast, for that anchorage, though good enough to look at, is little better than a trap for ships. With such ignorant sailors upon so wild a coast, the coming gale was not unlikely to bring death upon its wings.

CHAPTER IV. THE GALE.

I found my uncle at the gable end, watching the signs of the weather, with a pipe in his fingers.

'Uncle,' said I, 'there were men ashore at Sandag Bay — '

I had no time to go further; indeed, I not only forgot my words, but even my weariness, so strange was the effect on Uncle Gordon. He dropped his pipe and fell back against the end of the house with his jaw fallen, his eyes staring, and his long face as white as paper. We must have looked at one another silently for a quarter of a minute, before he made answer in this extraordinary fashion: 'Had he a hair kep on?'

I knew as well as if I had been there that the man who now lay buried at Sandag had worn a hairy cap, and that he had come ashore alive. For the first and only time I lost toleration for the man who was my benefactor and the father of the woman I hoped to call my wife.

'These were living men,' said I, 'perhaps Jacobites, perhaps the French, perhaps pirates, perhaps adventurers come here to seek the Spanish treasure ship; but, whatever they may be, dangerous at least to your daughter and my cousin. As for your own guilty terrors, man, the dead sleeps well where you have laid him. I stood this morning by his grave; he will not wake before the trump of doom.'

My kinsman looked upon me, blinking, while I spoke; then he fixed his eyes for a little on the ground, and pulled his fingers foolishly; but it was plain that he was past the power of speech.

‘Come,’ said I. ‘You must think for others. You must come up the hill with me, and see this ship.’

He obeyed without a word or a look, following slowly after my impatient strides. The spring seemed to have gone out of his body, and he scrambled heavily up and down the rocks, instead of leaping, as he was wont, from one to another. Nor could I, for all my cries, induce him to make better haste. Only once he replied to me complainingly, and like one in bodily pain: ‘Ay, ay, man, I’m coming.’ Long before we had reached the top, I had no other thought for him but pity. If the crime had been monstrous the punishment was in proportion.

At last we emerged above the sky-line of the hill, and could see around us. All was black and stormy to the eye; the last gleam of sun had vanished; a wind had sprung up, not yet high, but gusty and unsteady to the point; the rain, on the other hand, had ceased. Short as was the interval, the sea already ran vastly higher than when I had stood there last; already it had begun to break over some of the outward reefs, and already it moaned aloud in the sea-caves of Aros. I looked, at first, in vain for the schooner.

‘There she is,’ I said at last. But her new position, and the course she was now lying, puzzled me. ‘They cannot mean to beat to sea,’ I cried.

‘That’s what they mean,’ said my uncle, with something like joy; and just then the schooner went about and stood upon another tack, which put the question beyond the reach of doubt. These strangers, seeing a gale on hand, had thought first of sea-room. With the wind that threatened, in these reef-sown waters and contending against so violent a stream of tide, their course was certain death.

‘Good God!’ said I, ‘they are all lost.’

‘Ay,’ returned my uncle, ‘a’ — a’ lost. They hadnae a chance but to rin for Kyle Dona. The gate they’re gaun the noo, they couldnae win through an the muckle deil were there to pilot them. Eh, man,’ he continued, touching me on the sleeve, ‘it’s a braw nicht for a shipwreck! Twa in ae twalmonth! Eh, but the Merry Men’ll dance bonny!’

I looked at him, and it was then that I began to fancy him no longer in his right mind. He was peering up to me, as if for sympathy, a timid joy in his eyes. All that had passed between us was already forgotten in the prospect of this fresh disaster.

‘If it were not too late,’ I cried with indignation, ‘I would take the coble and go out to warn them.’

‘Na, na,’ he protested, ‘ye maunnae interfere; ye maunnae meddle wi’ the like o’ that. It’s His’ — doffing his bonnet — ’His wull. And, eh, man! but it's a braw nicht for't!'

Something like fear began to creep into my soul and, reminding him that I had not yet dined, I proposed we should return to the house. But no; nothing would tear him from his place of outlook.

'I maun see the hail thing, man, Cherlie,' he explained — and then as the schooner went about a second time, 'Eh, but they han'le her bonny!' he cried. 'The *Christ-Anna* was naething to this.'

Already the men on board the schooner must have begun to realise some part, but not yet the twentieth, of the dangers that environed their doomed ship. At every lull of the capricious wind they must have seen how fast the current swept them back. Each tack was made shorter, as they saw how little it prevailed. Every moment the rising swell began to boom and foam upon another sunken reef; and ever and again a breaker would fall in sounding ruin under the very bows of her, and the brown reef and streaming tangle appear in the hollow of the wave. I tell you, they had to stand to their tackle: there was no idle men aboard that ship, God knows. It was upon the progress of a scene so horrible to any human-hearted man that my misguided uncle now pored and gloated like a connoisseur. As I turned to go down the hill, he was lying on his belly on the summit, with his hands stretched forth and clutching in the heather. He seemed rejuvenated, mind and body.

When I got back to the house already dismally affected, I was still more sadly downcast at the sight of Mary. She had her sleeves rolled up over her strong arms, and was quietly making bread. I got a bannock from the dresser and sat down to eat it in silence.

'Are ye wearied, lad?' she asked after a while.

'I am not so much wearied, Mary,' I replied, getting on my feet, 'as I am weary of delay, and perhaps of Aros too. You know me well enough to judge me fairly, say what I like. Well, Mary, you may be sure of this: you had better be anywhere but here.'

'I'll be sure of one thing,' she returned: 'I'll be where my duty is.'

'You forget, you have a duty to yourself,' I said.

'Ay, man?' she replied, pounding at the dough; 'will you have found that in the Bible, now?'

'Mary,' I said solemnly, 'you must not laugh at me just now. God knows I am in no heart for laughing. If we could get your father with us, it would be best; but with him or without him, I want you far away from here, my girl; for your own sake, and for mine, ay, and for your father's too, I want you far — far away from here. I came with other thoughts; I came here as a man comes home; now it is all changed, and I have no desire nor hope but to flee — for that's the word — flee, like a bird out of the fowler's snare, from this accursed island.'

She had stopped her work by this time.

'And do you think, now,' said she, 'do you think, now, I have neither eyes nor ears? Do ye think I havenae broken my heart to have these braws (as he calls them, God forgive him!) thrown into the sea? Do ye think I have lived with him, day in, day out, and not seen what you saw in an hour or two? No,' she said, 'I know there's wrong in it; what wrong, I neither know nor want to know. There was never an ill thing made better by meddling, that I could hear of. But, my lad, you must never ask me to leave my father. While the breath is in his body, I'll be with him. And he's not long for here, either: that I can tell you, Charlie — he's not long for here. The mark is on his brow; and better so — maybe better so.'

I was a while silent, not knowing what to say; and when I roused my head at last to speak, she got before me.

'Charlie,' she said, 'what's right for me, neednae be right for you. There's sin upon this house and trouble; you are a stranger; take your things upon your back and go your ways to better places and to better folk, and if you were ever minded to come back, though it were twenty years syne, you would find me aye waiting.'

'Mary Ellen,' I said, 'I asked you to be my wife, and you said as good as yes. That's done for good. Wherever you are, I am; as I shall answer to my God.'

As I said the words, the wind suddenly burst out raving, and then seemed to stand still and shudder round the house of Aros. It was the first squall, or prologue, of the coming tempest, and as we started and looked about us, we found that a gloom, like the approach of evening, had settled round the house.

'God pity all poor folks at sea!' she said. 'We'll see no more of my father till the morrow's morning.'

And then she told me, as we sat by the fire and hearkened to the rising gusts, of how this change had fallen upon my uncle. All last winter he had been dark and fitful in his mind. Whenever the Roost ran high, or, as Mary said, whenever the Merry Men were dancing, he would lie out for hours together on the Head, if it were at night, or on the top of Aros by day, watching the tumult of the sea, and sweeping the horizon for a sail. After February the tenth, when the wealth-bringing wreck was cast ashore at Sandag, he had been at first unnaturally gay, and his excitement had never fallen in degree, but only changed in kind from dark to darker. He neglected his work, and kept Rorie idle. They two would speak together by the hour at the gable end, in guarded tones and with an air of secrecy and almost of guilt; and if she questioned either, as at first she sometimes did, her inquiries were put aside with confusion. Since Rorie had first remarked the fish that hung about the ferry, his master had never set foot but once upon the mainland of the Ross. That once — it was in the height of the springs — he had passed dryshod while the tide was out; but, having lingered overlong on the far side, found himself cut off from Aros by the returning waters. It was with a shriek of agony that he had leaped across the gut, and he had reached home thereafter in a fever-fit of fear. A fear of the sea, a constant haunting thought of the sea, appeared in his talk and devotions, and even in his looks when he was silent.

Rorie alone came in to supper; but a little later my uncle appeared, took a bottle under his arm, put some bread in his pocket, and set forth again to his outlook, followed this time by Rorie. I heard that the schooner was losing ground, but the crew were still fighting every inch with hopeless ingenuity and course; and the news filled my mind with blackness.

A little after sundown the full fury of the gale broke forth, such a gale as I have never seen in summer, nor, seeing how swiftly it had come, even in winter. Mary and I sat in silence, the house quaking overhead, the tempest howling without, the fire between us sputtering with raindrops. Our thoughts were far away with the poor fellows on the schooner, or my not less unhappy uncle, houseless on the promontory; and yet ever and again we were startled back to ourselves, when the wind would rise and strike the gable like a solid body, or suddenly fall and draw away, so that the fire leaped into flame and our hearts bounded in our sides. Now the storm in its might would seize and shake the four corners of the roof, roaring like Leviathan in anger. Anon, in a lull, cold eddies of tempest moved shudderingly in the room, lifting the hair upon our heads and passing between us as we sat. And again the wind would break forth in a chorus of melancholy sounds, hooting low in the chimney, wailing with flutelike softness round the house.

It was perhaps eight o'clock when Rorie came in and pulled me mysteriously to the door. My uncle, it appeared, had frightened even his constant comrade; and Rorie, uneasy at his extravagance, prayed me to come out and share the watch. I hastened to do as I was asked; the more readily as, what with fear and horror, and the electrical tension of the night, I was myself restless and disposed for action. I told Mary to be under no alarm, for I should be a safeguard on her father; and wrapping myself warmly in a plaid, I followed Rorie into the open air.

The night, though we were so little past midsummer, was as dark as January. Intervals of a groping twilight alternated with spells of utter blackness; and it was impossible to trace the reason of these changes in the flying horror of the sky. The wind blew the breath out of a man's nostrils; all heaven seemed to thunder overhead like one huge sail; and when there fell a momentary lull on Aros, we could hear the gusts dismally sweeping in the distance. Over all the lowlands of the Ross, the wind must have blown as fierce as on the open sea; and God only knows the uproar that was raging around the head of Ben Kyaw. Sheets of mingled spray and rain were driven in our faces. All round the isle of Aros the surf, with an incessant, hammering thunder, beat upon the reefs and beaches. Now louder in one place, now lower in another, like the combinations of orchestral music, the constant mass of sound was hardly varied for a moment. And loud above all this hurly-burly I could hear the changeful voices of the Roost and the intermittent roaring of the Merry Men. At that hour, there flashed into my mind the reason of the name that they were called. For the noise of them seemed almost mirthful, as it out-topped the other noises of the night; or if not mirthful, yet instinct with a portentous joviality. Nay, and it seemed even human. As when savage men have drunk away their reason, and, discarding speech, bawl together in their madness by the hour; so, to my ears, these deadly breakers shouted by Aros in the night.

Arm in arm, and staggering against the wind, Rorie and I won every yard of ground with conscious effort. We slipped on the wet sod, we fell together sprawling on the rocks. Bruised, drenched, beaten, and breathless, it must have taken us near half an hour to get from the house down to the Head that overlooks the Roost. There, it seemed, was my uncle's favourite observatory. Right in the face of it, where the cliff is highest and most sheer, a hump of earth, like a parapet, makes a place of shelter from the common winds, where a man may sit in quiet and see the tide and the mad billows contending at his feet. As he might look down from the window of a house upon some street disturbance, so, from this post, he looks down upon the tumbling of the Merry Men. On such a night, of course, he peers upon a world of blackness, where the waters wheel and boil, where the waves joust together with the noise of an explosion, and the foam towers and vanishes in the twinkling of an eye. Never before had I seen the Merry Men thus violent. The fury, height, and transiency of their spoutings was a thing to be seen and not recounted. High over our heads on the cliff rose their white columns in the darkness; and the same instant, like phantoms, they were gone. Sometimes three at a time would thus aspire and vanish; sometimes a gust took them, and the spray would fall about us, heavy as a wave. And yet the spectacle was rather maddening in its levity than impressive by its force. Thought was beaten down by the confounding uproar — a gleeful vacancy possessed the brains of men, a state akin to madness; and I found myself at times following the dance of the Merry Men as it were a tune upon a jigging instrument.

I first caught sight of my uncle when we were still some yards away in one of the flying glimpses of twilight that chequered the pitch darkness of the night. He was standing up behind the parapet, his head thrown back and the bottle to his mouth. As he put it down, he saw and recognised us with a toss of one hand fleeringly above his head.

'Has he been drinking?' shouted I to Rorie.

'He will aye be drunk when the wind blaws,' returned Rorie in the same high key, and it was all that I could do to hear him.

'Then — was he so — in February?' I inquired.

Rorie's 'Ay' was a cause of joy to me. The murder, then, had not sprung in cold blood from calculation; it was an act of madness no more to be condemned than to be pardoned. My uncle was a dangerous madman, if you will, but he was not cruel and base as I had feared. Yet what a scene for a carouse, what an incredible vice, was this that the poor man had chosen! I have always thought drunkenness a wild and almost fearful pleasure, rather demoniacal than human; but drunkenness, out here in the roaring blackness, on the edge of a cliff above that hell of waters, the man's head spinning like the Roost, his foot tottering on the edge of death, his ear watching for the signs of ship-wreck, surely that, if it were credible in any one, was morally impossible in a man like my uncle, whose mind was set upon a damnatory creed and haunted by the darkest superstitions. Yet so it was; and, as we reached the bight of shelter and could breathe again, I saw the man's eyes shining in the night with an unholy glimmer.

'Eh, Charlie, man, it's grand!' he cried. 'See to them!' he continued, dragging me to the edge of the abyss from whence arose that deafening clamour and those clouds of spray; 'see to them dancin', man! Is that no wicked?'

He pronounced the word with gusto, and I thought it suited with the scene.

'They're yowlin' for thon schooner,' he went on, his thin, insane voice clearly audible in the shelter of the bank, 'an' she's comin' aye nearer, aye nearer, aye nearer an' nearer an' nearer; an' they ken't, the folk kens it, they ken wool it's by wi' them. Charlie, lad, they're a' drunk in yon schooner, a' dozened wi' drink. They were a' drunk in the *Christ-Anna*, at the hinder end. There's nane could droon at sea wantin' the brandy. Hoot awa, what do you ken?' with a sudden blast of anger. 'I tell ye, it cannae be; they droon withoot it. Ha'e,' holding out the bottle, 'tak' a sowp.'

I was about to refuse, but Rorie touched me as if in warning; and indeed I had already thought better of the movement. I took the bottle, therefore, and not only drank freely myself, but contrived to spill even more as I was doing so. It was pure spirit, and almost strangled me to swallow. My kinsman did not observe the loss, but, once more throwing back his head, drained the remainder to the dregs. Then, with a loud laugh, he cast the bottle forth among the Merry Men, who seemed to leap up, shouting to receive it.

‘Ha’e, bairns!’ he cried, ‘there’s your han’sel. Ye’ll get bonnier nor that, or morning.’

Suddenly, out in the black night before us, and not two hundred yards away, we heard, at a moment when the wind was silent, the clear note of a human voice. Instantly the wind swept howling down upon the Head, and the Roost bellowed, and churned, and danced with a new fury. But we had heard the sound, and we knew, with agony, that this was the doomed ship now close on ruin, and that what we had heard was the voice of her master issuing his last command. Crouching together on the edge, we waited, straining every sense, for the inevitable end. It was long, however, and to us it seemed like ages, ere the schooner suddenly appeared for one brief instant, relieved against a tower of glimmering foam. I still see her reefed mainsail flapping loose, as the boom fell heavily across the deck; I still see the black outline of the hull, and still think I can distinguish the figure of a man stretched upon the tiller. Yet the whole sight we had of her passed swifter than lightning; the very wave that disclosed her fell burying her for ever; the mingled cry of many voices at the point of death rose and was quenched in the roaring of the Merry Men. And with that the tragedy was at an end. The strong ship, with all her gear, and the lamp perhaps still burning in the cabin, the lives of so many men, precious surely to others, dear, at least, as heaven to themselves, had all, in that one moment, gone down into the surging waters. They were gone like a dream. And the wind still ran and shouted, and the senseless waters in the Roost still leaped and tumbled as before.

How long we lay there together, we three, speechless and motionless, is more than I can tell, but it must have been for long. At length, one by one, and almost mechanically, we crawled back into the shelter of the bank. As I lay against the parapet, wholly wretched and not entirely master of my mind, I could hear my kinsman maundering to himself in an altered and melancholy mood. Now he would repeat to himself with maudlin iteration, ‘Sic a fecht as they had — sic a sair fecht as they had, puir lads, puir lads!’ and anon he would bewail that ‘a’ the gear was as gude’s tint,’ because the ship had gone down among the Merry Men instead of stranding on the shore; and throughout, the name — the *Christ-Anna* — would come and go in his divagations, pronounced with shuddering awe. The storm all this time was rapidly abating. In half an hour the wind had fallen to a breeze, and the change was accompanied or caused by a heavy, cold, and plumping rain. I must then have fallen asleep, and when I came to myself, drenched, stiff, and unrefreshed, day had already broken, grey, wet, discomfortable day; the wind blew in faint and shifting capfuls, the tide was out, the Roost was at its lowest, and only the strong beating surf round all the coasts of Aros remained to witness of the furies of the night.

CHAPTER V. A MAN OUT OF THE SEA.

Rorie set out for the house in search of warmth and breakfast; but my uncle was bent upon examining the shores of Aros, and I felt it a part of duty to accompany him throughout. He was now docile and quiet, but tremulous and weak in mind and body; and it was with the eagerness of a child that he pursued his exploration. He climbed far down upon the rocks; on the beaches, he pursued the retreating breakers. The merest broken plank or rag of cordage was a treasure in his eyes to be secured at the peril of his life. To see him, with weak and stumbling footsteps, expose himself to the pursuit of the surf, or the snares and pitfalls of the weedy rock, kept me in a perpetual terror. My arm was ready to support him, my hand clutched him by the skirt, I helped him to draw his pitiful discoveries beyond the reach of the returning wave; a nurse accompanying a child of seven would have had no different experience.

Yet, weakened as he was by the reaction from his madness of the night before, the passions that smouldered in his nature were those of a strong man. His terror of the sea, although conquered for the moment, was still undiminished; had the sea been a lake of living flames, he could not have shrunk more panically from its touch; and once, when his foot slipped and he plunged to the midleg into a pool of water, the shriek that came up out of his soul was like the cry of death. He sat still for a while, panting like a dog, after that; but his desire for the spoils of shipwreck triumphed once more over his fears; once more he tottered among the curded foam; once more he crawled upon the rocks among the bursting bubbles; once more his whole heart seemed to be set on driftwood, fit, if it was fit for anything, to throw upon the fire. Pleased as he was with what he found, he still incessantly grumbled at his ill-fortune.

‘Aros,’ he said, ‘is no a place for wrecks ava’ — no ava’. A’ the years I’ve dwalt here, this ane maks the second; and the best o’ the gear clean tint!’

‘Uncle,’ said I, for we were now on a stretch of open sand, where there was nothing to divert his mind, ‘I saw you last night, as I never thought to see you — you were drunk.’

‘Na, na,’ he said, ‘no as bad as that. I had been drinking, though. And to tell ye the God’s truth, it’s a thing I cannae mend. There’s nae soberer man than me in my ordnar; but when I hear the wind blaw in my lug, it's my belief that I gang gyte.'

'You are a religious man,' I replied, 'and this is sin'.

'Ou,' he returned, 'if it wasnae sin, I dinnae ken that I would care for't. Ye see, man, it's defiance. There's a sair spang o' the auld sin o' the warld in you sea; it's an unchristian business at the best o't; an' whiles when it gets up, an' the wind skreights — the wind an' her are a kind of sib, I'm thinkin' — an' thae Merry Men, the daft callants, blawin' and lauchin', and puir souls in the deid thraws warstlin' the leelang nicht wi' their bit ships — weel, it comes ower me like a glamour. I'm a deil, I ken't. But I think naething o' the puir sailor lads; I'm wi' the sea, I'm just like ane o' her ain Merry Men.'

I thought I should touch him in a joint of his harness. I turned me towards the sea; the surf was running gaily, wave after wave, with their manes blowing behind them, riding one after another up the beach, towering, curving, falling one upon another on the trampled sand. Without, the salt air, the scared gulls, the widespread army of the sea-chargers, neighing to each other, as they gathered together to the assault of Aros; and close before us, that line on the flat sands that, with all their number and their fury, they might never pass.

'Thus far shalt thou go,' said I, 'and no farther.' And then I quoted as solemnly as I was able a verse that I had often before fitted to the chorus of the breakers: —

But yet the Lord that is on high,
Is more of might by far,
Than noise of many waters is,
As great sea billows are.

'Ay,' said my kinsinan, 'at the hinder end, the Lord will triumph; I dinnae misdoobt that. But here on earth, even silly men-folk daur Him to His face. It is nae wise; I am nae sayin' that it's wise; but it's the pride of the eye, and it's the lust o' life, an' it's the wale o' pleesures.'

I said no more, for we had now begun to cross a neck of land that lay between us and Sandag; and I withheld my last appeal to the man's better reason till we should stand upon the spot associated with his crime. Nor did he pursue the subject; but he walked beside me with a firmer step. The call that I had made upon his mind acted like a stimulant, and I could see that he had forgotten his search for worthless jetsam, in a profound, gloomy, and yet stirring train of thought. In three or four minutes we had topped the brae and begun to go down upon Sandag. The wreck had been roughly handled by the sea; the stem had been spun round and dragged a little lower down; and perhaps the stern had been forced a little higher, for the two parts now lay entirely separate on the beach. When we came to the grave I stopped, uncovered my head in the thick rain, and, looking my kinsman in the face, addressed him.

'A man,' said I, 'was in God's providence suffered to escape from mortal dangers; he was poor, he was naked, he was wet, he was weary, he was a stranger; he had every claim upon the bowels of your compassion; it may be that he was the salt of the earth, holy, helpful, and kind; it may be he was a man laden with iniquities to whom death was the beginning of torment. I ask you in the sight of heaven: Gordon Darnaway, where is the man for whom Christ died?'

He started visibly at the last words; but there came no answer, and his face expressed no feeling but a vague alarm.

'You were my father's brother,' I continued; 'You, have taught me to count your house as if it were my father's house; and we are both sinful men walking before the Lord among the sins and dangers of this life. It is by our evil that God leads us into good; we sin, I dare not say by His temptation, but I must say with His consent; and to any but the brutish man his sins are the beginning of wisdom. God has warned you by this crime; He warns you still by the bloody grave between our feet; and if there shall follow no repentance, no improvement, no return to Him, what can we look for but the following of some memorable judgment?'

Even as I spoke the words, the eyes of my uncle wandered from my face. A change fell upon his looks that cannot be described; his features seemed to dwindle in size, the colour faded from his cheeks, one hand rose waveringly and pointed over my shoulder into the distance, and the oft-repeated name fell once more from his lips: 'The *Christ-Anna*!'

I turned; and if I was not appalled to the same degree, as I return thanks to Heaven that I had not the cause, I was still startled by the sight that met my eyes. The form of a man stood upright on the cabin-hutch of the wrecked ship; his back was towards us; he appeared to be scanning the offing with shaded eyes, and his figure was relieved to its full height, which was plainly very great, against the sea and sky. I have said a thousand times that I am not superstitious; but at that moment, with my mind running upon death and sin, the unexplained appearance of a stranger on that sea-girt, solitary island filled me with a surprise that bordered close on terror. It seemed scarce possible that any human soul should have come ashore alive in such a sea as had rated last night along the coasts of Aros; and the only vessel within miles had gone down before our eyes among the Merry Men. I was assailed with doubts that made suspense unbearable, and, to put the matter to the touch at once, stepped forward and hailed the figure like a ship.

He turned about, and I thought he started to behold us. At this my courage instantly revived, and I called and signed to him to draw near, and he, on his part, dropped immediately to the sands, and began slowly to approach, with many stops and hesitations. At each repeated mark of the man's uneasiness I grew the more confident myself; and I advanced another step, encouraging him as I did so with my head and hand. It was plain the castaway had heard indifferent accounts of our island hospitality; and indeed, about this time, the people farther north had a sorry reputation.

'Why,' I said, 'the man is black!'

And just at that moment, in a voice that I could scarce have recognised, my kinsman began swearing and praying in a mingled stream. I looked at him; he had fallen on his knees, his face was agonised; at each step of the castaway's the pitch of his voice rose, the volubility of his utterance and the fervour of his language redoubled. I call it prayer, for it was addressed to God; but surely no such ranting incongruities were ever before addressed to the Creator by a creature: surely if prayer can be a sin, this mad harangue was sinful. I ran to my kinsman, I seized him by the shoulders, I dragged him to his feet.

'Silence, man,' said I, 'respect your God in words, if not in action. Here, on the very scene of your transgressions, He sends you an occasion of atonement. Forward and embrace it; welcome like a father yon creature who comes trembling to your mercy.'

With that, I tried to force him towards the black; but he felled me to the ground, burst from my grasp, leaving the shoulder of his jacket, and fled up the hillside towards the top of Aros like a deer. I staggered to my feet again, bruised and somewhat stunned; the negro had paused in surprise, perhaps in terror, some halfway between me and the wreck; my uncle was already far away, bounding from rock to rock; and I thus found myself torn for a time between two duties. But I judged, and I pray Heaven that I judged rightly, in favour of the poor wretch upon the sands; his misfortune was at least not plainly of his own creation; it was one, besides, that I could certainly relieve; and I had begun by that time to regard my uncle as an incurable and dismal lunatic. I advanced accordingly towards the black, who now awaited my approach with folded arms, like one prepared for either destiny. As I came nearer, he reached forth his hand with a great gesture, such as I had seen from the pulpit, and spoke to me in something of a pulpit voice, but not a word was comprehensible. I tried him first in English, then in Gaelic, both in vain; so that it was clear we must rely upon the tongue of looks and gestures. Thereupon I signed to him to follow me, which he did readily and with a grave obeisance like a fallen king; all the while there had come no shade of alteration in his face, neither of anxiety while he was still waiting, nor of relief now that he was reassured; if he were a slave, as I supposed, I could not but judge he must have fallen from some high place in his own country, and fallen as he was, I could not but admire his bearing. As we passed the grave, I paused and raised my hands and eyes to heaven in token of respect and sorrow for the dead; and he, as if in answer, bowed low and spread his hands abroad; it was a strange motion, but done like a thing of common custom; and I supposed it was ceremonial in the land from which he came. At the same time he pointed to my uncle, whom we could just see perched upon a knoll, and touched his head to indicate that he was mad.

We took the long way round the shore, for I feared to excite my uncle if we struck across the island; and as we walked, I had time enough to mature the little dramatic exhibition by which I hoped to satisfy my doubts. Accordingly, pausing on a rock, I proceeded to imitate before the negro the action of the man whom I had seen the day before taking bearings with the compass at Sandag. He understood me at once, and, taking the imitation out of my hands, showed me where the boat was, pointed out seaward as if to indicate the position of the schooner, and then down along the edge of the rock with the words ‘Espirito Santo,’ strangely pronounced, but clear enough for recognition. I had thus been right in my conjecture; the pretended historical inquiry had been but a cloak for treasure-hunting; the man who had played on Dr. Robertson was the same as the foreigner who visited Grisapol in spring, and now, with many others, lay dead under the Roost of Aros: there had their greed brought them, there should their bones be tossed for evermore. In the meantime the black continued his imitation of the scene, now looking up skyward as though watching the approach of the storm now, in the character of a seaman, waving the rest to come aboard; now as an officer, running along the rock and entering the boat; and anon bending over imaginary oars with the air of a hurried boatman; but all with the same solemnity of manner, so that I was never even moved to smile. Lastly, he indicated to me, by a pantomime not to be described in words, how he himself had gone up to examine the stranded wreck, and, to his grief and indignation, had been deserted by his comrades; and thereupon folded his arms once more, and stooped his head, like one accepting fate.

The mystery of his presence being thus solved for me, I explained to him by means of a sketch the fate of the vessel and of all aboard her. He showed no surprise nor sorrow, and, with a sudden lifting of his open hand, seemed to dismiss his former friends or masters (whichever they had been) into God’s pleasure. Respect came upon me and grew stronger, the more I observed him; I saw he had a powerful mind and a sober and severe character, such as I loved to commune with; and before we reached the house of Aros I had almost forgotten, and wholly forgiven him, his uncanny colour.

To Mary I told all that had passed without suppression, though I own my heart failed me; but I did wrong to doubt her sense of justice.

'You did the right,' she said. 'God's will be done.' And she set out meat for us at once.

As soon as I was satisfied, I bade Rorie keep an eye upon the castaway, who was still eating, and set forth again myself to find my uncle. I had not gone far before I saw him sitting in the same place, upon the very topmost knoll, and seemingly in the same attitude as when I had last observed him. From that point, as I have said, the most of Aros and the neighbouring Ross would be spread below him like a map; and it was plain that he kept a bright look-out in all directions, for my head had scarcely risen above the summit of the first ascent before he had leaped to his feet and turned as if to face me. I hailed him at once, as well as I was able, in the same tones and words as I had often used before, when I had come to summon him to dinner. He made not so much as a movement in reply. I passed on a little farther, and again tried parley, with the same result. But when I began a second time to advance, his insane fears blazed up again, and still in dead silence, but with incredible speed, he began to flee from before me along the rocky summit of the hill. An hour before, he had been dead weary, and I had been comparatively active. But now his strength was recruited by the fervour of insanity, and it would have been vain for me to dream of pursuit. Nay, the very attempt, I thought, might have inflamed his terrors, and thus increased the miseries of our position. And I had nothing left but to turn homeward and make my sad report to Mary.

She heard it, as she had heard the first, with a concerned composure, and, bidding me lie down and take that rest of which I stood so much in need, set forth herself in quest of her misguided father. At that age it would have been a strange thing that put me from either meat or sleep; I slept long and deep; and it was already long past noon before I awoke and came downstairs into the kitchen. Mary, Rorie, and the black castaway were seated about the fire in silence; and I could see that Mary had been weeping. There was cause enough, as I soon learned, for tears. First she, and then Rorie, had been forth to seek my uncle; each in turn had found him perched upon the hill-top, and from each in turn he had silently and swiftly fled. Rorie had tried to chase him, but in vain; madness lent a new vigour to his bounds; he sprang from rock to rock over the widest gullies; he scoured like the wind along the hill-tops; he doubled and twisted like a hare before the dogs; and Rorie at length gave in; and the last that he saw, my uncle was seated as before upon the crest of Aros. Even during the hottest excitement of the chase, even when the fleet-footed servant had come, for a moment, very near to capture him, the poor lunatic had uttered not a sound. He fled, and he was silent, like a beast; and this silence had terrified his pursuer.

There was something heart-breaking in the situation. How to capture the madman, how to feed him in the meanwhile, and what to do with him when he was captured, were the three difficulties that we had to solve.

'The black,' said I, 'is the cause of this attack. It may even be his presence in the house that keeps my uncle on the hill. We have done the fair thing; he has been fed and warmed under this roof; now I propose that Rorie put him across the bay in the coble, and take him through the Ross as far as Grisapol.'

In this proposal Mary heartily concurred; and bidding the black follow us, we all three descended to the pier. Certainly, Heaven's will was declared against Gordon Darnaway; a thing had happened, never paralleled before in Aros; during the storm, the coble had broken loose, and, striking on the rough splinters of the pier, now lay in four feet of water with one side stove in. Three days of work at least would be required to make her float. But I was not to be beaten. I led the whole party round to where the gut was narrowest, swam to the other side, and called to the black to follow me. He signed, with the same clearness and quiet as before, that he knew not the art; and there was truth apparent in his signals, it would have occurred to none of us to doubt his truth; and that hope being over, we must all go back even as we came to the house of Aros, the negro walking in our midst without embarrassment.

All we could do that day was to make one more attempt to communicate with the unhappy madman. Again he was visible on his perch; again he fled in silence. But food and a great cloak were at least left for his comfort; the rain, besides, had cleared away, and the night promised to be even warm. We might compose ourselves, we thought, until the morrow; rest was the chief requisite, that we might be strengthened for unusual exertions; and as none cared to talk, we separated at an early hour.

I lay long awake, planning a campaign for the morrow. I was to place the black on the side of Sandag, whence he should head my uncle towards the house; Rorie in the west, I on the east, were to complete the cordon, as best we might. It seemed to me, the more I recalled the configuration of the island, that it should be possible, though hard, to force him down upon the low ground along Aros Bay; and once there, even with the strength of his madness, ultimate escape was hardly to be feared. It was on his terror of the black that I relied; for I made sure, however he might run, it would not be in the direction of the man whom he supposed to have returned from the dead, and thus one point of the compass at least would be secure.

When at length I fell asleep, it was to be awakened shortly after by a dream of wrecks, black men, and submarine adventure; and I found myself so shaken and fevered that I arose, descended the stair, and stepped out before the house. Within, Rorie and the black were asleep together in the kitchen; outside was a wonderful clear night of stars, with here and there a cloud still hanging, last stragglers of the tempest. It was near the top of the flood, and the Merry Men were roaring in the windless quiet of the night. Never, not even in the height of the tempest, had I heard their song with greater awe. Now, when the winds were gathered home, when the deep was dandling itself back into its summer slumber, and when the stars rained their gentle light over land and sea, the voice of these tide-breakers was still raised for havoc. They seemed, indeed, to be a part of the world's evil and the tragic side of life. Nor were their meaningless vociferations the only sounds that broke the silence of the night. For I could hear, now shrill and thrilling and now almost drowned, the note of a human voice that accompanied the uproar of the Roost. I knew it for my kinsman's; and a great fear fell upon me of God's judgments, and the evil in the world. I went back again into the darkness of the house as into a place of shelter, and lay long upon my bed, pondering these mysteries.

It was late when I again woke, and I leaped into my clothes and hurried to the kitchen. No one was there; Rorie and the black had both stealthily departed long before; and my heart stood still at the discovery. I could rely on Rorie's heart, but I placed no trust in his discretion. If he had thus set out without a word, he was plainly bent upon some service to my uncle. But what service could he hope to render even alone, far less in the company of the man in whom my uncle found his fears incarnated? Even if I were not already too late to prevent some deadly mischief, it was plain I must delay no longer. With the thought I was out of the house; and often as I have run on the rough sides of Aros, I never ran as I did that fatal morning. I do not believe I put twelve minutes to the whole ascent.

My uncle was gone from his perch. The basket had indeed been torn open and the meat scattered on the turf; but, as we found afterwards, no mouthful had been tasted; and there was not another trace of human existence in that wide field of view. Day had already filled the clear heavens; the sun already lighted in a rosy bloom upon the crest of Ben Kyaw; but all below me the rude knolls of Aros and the shield of sea lay steeped in the clear darkling twilight of the dawn.

'Rorie!' I cried; and again 'Rorie!' My voice died in the silence, but there came no answer back. If there were indeed an enterprise afoot to catch my uncle, it was plainly not in fleetness of foot, but in dexterity of stalking, that the hunters placed their trust. I ran on farther, keeping the higher spurs, and looking right and left, nor did I pause again till I was on the mount above Sandag. I could see the wreck, the uncovered belt of sand, the waves idly beating, the long ledge of rocks, and on either hand the tumbled knolls, boulders, and gullies of the island. But still no human thing.

At a stride the sunshine fell on Aros, and the shadows and colours leaped into being. Not half a moment later, below me to the west, sheep began to scatter as in a panic. There came a cry. I saw my uncle running. I saw the black jump up in hot pursuit; and before I had time to understand, Rorie also had appeared, calling directions in Gaelic as to a dog herding sheep.

I took to my heels to interfere, and perhaps I had done better to have waited where I was, for I was the means of cutting off the madman's last escape. There was nothing before him from that moment but the grave, the wreck, and the sea in Sandag Bay. And yet Heaven knows that what I did was for the best.

My uncle Gordon saw in what direction, horrible to him, the chase was driving him. He doubled, darting to the right and left; but high as the fever ran in his veins, the black was still the swifter. Turn where he would, he was still forestalled, still driven toward the scene of his crime. Suddenly he began to shriek aloud, so that the coast re-echoed; and now both I and Rorie were calling on the black to stop. But all was vain, for it was written otherwise. The pursuer still ran, the chase still sped before him screaming; they avoided the grave, and skimmed close past the timbers of the wreck; in a breath they had cleared the sand; and still my kinsman did not pause, but dashed straight into the surf; and the black, now almost within reach, still followed swiftly behind him. Rorie and I both stopped, for the thing was now beyond the hands of men, and these were the decrees of God that came to pass before our eyes. There was never a sharper ending. On that steep beach they were beyond their depth at a bound; neither could swim; the black rose once for a moment with a throttling cry; but the current had them, racing seaward; and if ever they came up again, which God alone can tell, it would be ten minutes after, at the far end of Aros Roost, where the seabirds hover fishing.

WILL O’ THE MILL.

CHAPTER I. THE PLAIN AND THE STARS.

The Mill here Will lived with his adopted parents stood in a falling valley between pinewoods and great mountains. Above, hill after hill, soared upwards until they soared out of the depth of the hardiest timber, and stood naked against the sky. Some way up, a long grey village lay like a seam or a ray of vapour on a wooded hillside; and when the wind was favourable, the sound of the church bells would drop down, thin and silvery, to Will. Below, the valley grew ever steeper and steeper, and at the same time widened out on either hand; and from an eminence beside the mill it was possible to see its whole length and away beyond it over a wide plain, where the river turned and shone, and moved on from city to city on its voyage towards the sea. It chanced that over this valley there lay a pass into a neighbouring kingdom; so that, quiet and rural as it was, the road that ran along beside the river was a high thoroughfare between two splendid and powerful societies. All through the summer, travelling-carriages came crawling up, or went plunging briskly downwards past the mill; and as it happened that the other side was very much easier of ascent, the path was not much frequented, except by people going in one direction; and of all the carriages that Will saw go by, five-sixths were plunging briskly downwards and only one-sixth crawling up. Much more was this the case with foot-passengers. All the light-footed tourists, all the pedlars laden with strange wares, were tending downward like the river that accompanied their path. Nor was this all; for when Will was yet a child a disastrous war arose over a great part of the world. The newspapers were full of defeats and victories, the earth rang with cavalry hoofs, and often for days together and for miles around the coil of battle terrified good people from their labours in the field. Of all this, nothing was heard for a long time in the valley; but at last one of the commanders pushed an army over the pass by forced marches, and for three days horse and foot, cannon and tumbril, drum and standard, kept pouring downward past the mill. All day the child stood and watched them on their passage — the rhythmical stride, the pale, unshaven faces tanned about the eyes, the discoloured regimentals and the tattered flags, filled him with a sense of weariness, pity, and wonder; and all night long, after he was in bed, he could hear the cannon pounding and the feet trampling, and the great armament sweeping onward and downward past the mill. No one in the valley ever heard the fate of the expedition, for they lay out of the way of gossip in those troublous times; but Will saw one thing plainly, that not a man returned. Whither had they all gone? Whither went all the tourists and pedlars with strange wares? whither all the brisk barouches with servants in the dicky? whither the water of the stream, ever coursing downward and ever renewed from above? Even the wind blew oftener down the valley, and carried the dead leaves along with it in the fall. It seemed like a great conspiracy of things animate and inanimate; they all went downward, fleetly and gaily downward, and only he, it seemed, remained behind, like a stock upon the wayside. It sometimes made him glad when he noticed how the fishes kept their heads up stream. They, at least, stood faithfully by him, while all else were posting downward to the unknown world.

One evening he asked the miller where the river went.

'It goes down the valley,' answered he, 'and turns a power of mills — six score mills, they say, from here to Unterdeck — and is none the wearier after all. And then it goes out into the lowlands, and waters the great corn country, and runs through a sight of fine cities (so they say) where kings live all alone in great palaces, with a sentry walling up and down before the door. And it goes under bridges with stone men upon them, looking down and smiling so curious it the water, and living folks leaning their elbows on the wall and looking over too. And then it goes on and on, and down through marshes and sands, until at last it falls into the sea, where the ships are that bring parrots and tobacco from the Indies. Ay, it has a long trot before it as it goes singing over our weir, bless its heart!'

'And what is the sea?' asked Will.

'The sea!' cried the miller. 'Lord help us all, it is the greatest thing God made! That is where all the water in the world runs down into a great salt lake. There it lies, as flat as my hand and as innocent-like as a child; but they do say when the wind blows it gets up into water-mountains bigger than any of ours, and swallows down great ships bigger than our mill, and makes such a roaring that you can hear it miles away upon the land. There are great fish in it five times bigger than a bull, and one old serpent as lone as our river and as old as all the world, with whiskers like a man, and a crown of silver on her head.'

Will thought he had never heard anything like this, and he kept on asking question after question about the world that lay away down the river, with all its perils and marvels, until the old miller became quite interested himself, and at last took him by the hand and led him to the hilltop that overlooks the valley and the plain. The sun was near setting, and hung low down in a cloudless sky. Everything was defined and glorified in golden light. Will had never seen so great an expanse of country in his life; he stood and gazed with all his eyes.

He could see the cities, and the woods and fields, and the bright curves of the river, and far away to where the rim of the plain trenched along the shining heavens. An over-mastering emotion seized upon the boy, soul and body; his heart beat so thickly that he could not breathe; the scene swam before his eyes; the sun seemed to wheel round and round, and throw off, as it turned, strange shapes which disappeared with the rapidity of thought, and were succeeded by others. Will covered his face with his hands, and burst into a violent fit of tears; and the poor miller, sadly disappointed and perplexed, saw nothing better for it than to take him up in his arms and carry him home in silence.

From that day forward Will was full of new hopes and longings. Something kept tugging at his heart-strings; the running water carried his desires along with it as he dreamed over its fleeting surface; the wind, as it ran over innumerable tree-tops, hailed him with encouraging words; branches beckoned downward; the open road, as it shouldered round the angles and went turning and vanishing fast and faster down the valley, tortured him with its solicitations. He spent long whiles on the eminence, looking down the rivershed and abroad on the fat lowlands, and watched the clouds that travelled forth upon the sluggish wind and trailed their purple shadows on the plain; or he would linger by the wayside, and follow the carriages with his eyes as they rattled downward by the river. It did not matter what it was; everything that went that way, were it cloud or carriage, bird or brown water in the stream, he felt his heart flow out after it in an ecstasy of longing.

We are told by men of science that all the ventures of mariners on the sea, all that counter-marching of tribes and races that confounds old history with its dust and rumour, sprang from nothing more abstruse than the laws of supply and demand, and a certain natural instinct for cheap rations. To any one thinking deeply, this will seem a dull and pitiful explanation. The tribes that came swarming out of the North and East, if they were indeed pressed onward from behind by others, were drawn at the same time by the magnetic influence of the South and West. The fame of other lands had reached them; the name of the eternal city rang in their ears; they were not colonists, but pilgrims; they travelled towards wine and gold and sunshine, but their hearts were set on something higher. That divine unrest, that old stinging trouble of humanity that makes all high achievements and all miserable failure, the same that spread wings with Icarus, the same that sent Columbus into the desolate Atlantic, inspired and supported these barbarians on their perilous march. There is one legend which profoundly represents their spirit, of how a flying party of these wanderers encountered a very old man shod with iron. The old man asked them whither they were going; and they answered with one voice: ‘To the Eternal City!’ He looked upon them gravely. ‘I have sought it,’ he said, ‘over the most part of the world. Three such pairs as I now carry on my feet have I worn out upon this pilgrimage, and now the fourth is growing slender underneath my steps. And all this while I have not found the city.’ And he turned and went his own way alone, leaving them astonished.

And yet this would scarcely parallel the intensity of Will’s feeling for the plain. If he could only go far enough out there, he felt as if his eyesight would be purged and clarified, as if his hearing would grow more delicate, and his very breath would come and go with luxury. He was transplanted and withering where he was; he lay in a strange country and was sick for home. Bit by bit, he pieced together broken notions of the world below: of the river, ever moving and growing until it sailed forth into the majestic ocean; of the cities, full of brisk and beautiful people, playing fountains, bands of music and marble palaces, and lighted up at night from end to end with artificial stars of gold; of the great churches, wise universities, brave armies, and untold money lying stored in vaults; of the high-flying vice that moved in the sunshine, and the stealth and swiftness of midnight murder. I have said he was sick as if for home: the figure halts. He was like some one lying in twilit, formless preexistence, and stretching out his hands lovingly towards many-coloured, many-sounding life. It was no wonder he was unhappy, he would go and tell the fish: they were made for their life, wished for no more than worms and running water, and a hole below a falling bank; but he was differently designed, full of desires and aspirations, itching at the fingers, lusting with the eyes, whom the whole variegated world could not satisfy with aspects. The true life, the true bright sunshine, lay far out upon the plain. And O! to see this sunlight once before he died! to move with a jocund spirit in a golden land! to hear the trained singers and sweet church bells, and see the holiday gardens! ‘And O fish!’ he would cry, ‘if you would only turn your noses down stream, you could swim so easily into the fabled waters and see the vast ships passing over your head like clouds, and hear the great water-hills making music over you all day long!’ But the fish kept looking patiently in their own direction, until Will hardly knew whether to laugh or cry.

Hitherto the traffic on the road had passed by Will, like something seen in a picture: he had perhaps exchanged salutations with a tourist, or caught sight of an old gentleman in a travelling cap at a carriage window; but for the most part it had been a mere symbol, which he contemplated from apart and with something of a superstitious feeling. A time came at last when this was to be changed. The miller, who was a greedy man in his way, and never forewent an opportunity of honest profit, turned the mill-house into a little wayside inn, and, several pieces of good fortune falling in opportunely, built stables and got the position of post master on the road. It now became Will's duty to wait upon people, as they sat to break their fasts in the little arbour at the top of the mill garden; and you may be sure that he kept his ears open, and learned many new things about the outside world as he brought the omelette or the wine. Nay, he would often get into conversation with single guests, and by adroit questions and polite attention, not only gratify his own curiosity, but win the goodwill of the travellers. Many complimented the old couple on their serving-boy; and a professor was eager to take him away with him, and have him properly educated in the plain. The miller and his wife were mightily astonished and even more pleased. They thought it a very good thing that they should have opened their inn. 'You see,' the old man would remark, 'he has a kind of talent for a publican; he never would have made anything else!' And so life wagged on in the valley, with high satisfaction to all concerned but Will. Every carriage that left the inn-door seemed to take a part of him away with it; and when people jestingly offered him a lift, he could with difficulty command his emotion. Night after night he would dream that he was awakened by flustered servants, and that a splendid equipage waited at the door to carry him down into the plain; night after night; until the dream, which had seemed all jollity to him at first, began to take on a colour of gravity, and the nocturnal summons and waiting equipage occupied a place in his mind as something to be both feared and hoped for.

One day, when Will was about sixteen, a fat young man arrived at sunset to pass the night. He was a contented-looking fellow, with a jolly eye, and carried a knapsack. While dinner was preparing, he sat in the arbour to read a book; but as soon as he had begun to observe Will, the book was laid aside; he was plainly one of those who prefer living people to people made of ink and paper. Will, on his part, although he had not been much interested in the stranger at first sight, soon began to take a great deal of pleasure in his talk, which was full of good nature and good sense, and at last conceived a great respect for his character and wisdom. They sat far into the night; and about two in the morning Will opened his heart to the young man, and told him how he longed to leave the valley and what bright hopes he had connected with the cities of the plain. The young man whistled, and then broke into a smile.

'My young friend,' he remarked, 'you are a very curious little fellow to be sure, and wish a great many things which you will never get. Why, you would feel quite ashamed if you knew how the little fellows in these fairy cities of yours are all after the same sort of nonsense, and keep breaking their hearts to get up into the mountains. And let me tell you, those who go down into the plains are a very short while there before they wish themselves heartily back again. The air is not so light nor so pure; nor is the sun any brighter. As for the beautiful men and women, you would see many of them in rags and many of them deformed with horrible disorders; and a city is so hard a place for people who are poor and sensitive that many choose to die by their own hand.'

'You must think me very simple,' answered Will. 'Although I have never been out of this valley, believe me, I have used my eyes. I know how one thing lives on another; for instance, how the fish hangs in the eddy to catch his fellows; and the shepherd, who makes so pretty a picture carrying home the lamb, is only carrying it home for dinner. I do not expect to find all things right in your cities. That is not what troubles me; it might have been that once upon a time; but although I live here always, I have asked many questions and learned a great deal in these last years, and certainly enough to cure me of my old fancies. But you would not have me die like a dog and not see all that is to be seen, and do all that a man can do, let it be good or evil? you would not have me spend all my days between this road here and the river, and not so much as make a motion to be up and live my life? — I would rather die out of hand,' he cried, 'than linger on as I am doing.'

'Thousands of people,' said the young man, 'live and die like you, and are none the less happy.'

'Ah!' said Will, 'if there are thousands who would like, why should not one of them have my place?'

It was quite dark; there was a hanging lamp in the arbour which lit up the table and the faces of the speakers; and along the arch, the leaves upon the trellis stood out illuminated against the night sky, a pattern of transparent green upon a dusky purple. The fat young man rose, and, taking Will by the arm, led him out under the open heavens.

'Did you ever look at the stars?' he asked, pointing upwards.

'Often and often,' answered Will.

'And do you know what they are?'

'I have fancied many things.'

'They are worlds like ours,' said the young man. 'Some of them less; many of them a million times greater; and some of the least sparkles that you see are not only worlds, but whole clusters of worlds turning about each other in the midst of space. We do not know what there may be in any of them; perhaps the answer to all our difficulties or the cure of all our sufferings: and yet we can never reach them; not all the skill of the craftiest of men can fit out a ship for the nearest of these our neighbours, nor would the life of the most aged suffice for such a journey. When a great battle has been lost or a dear friend is dead, when we are hipped or in high spirits, there they are unweariedly shining overhead. We may stand down here, a whole army of us together, and shout until we break our hearts, and not a whisper reaches them. We may climb the highest mountain, and we are no nearer them. All we can do is to stand down here in the garden and take off our hats; the starshine lights upon our heads, and where mine is a little bald, I dare say you can see it glisten in the darkness. The mountain and the mouse. That is like to be all we shall ever have to do with Arcturus or Aldebaran. Can you apply a parable?' he added, laying his hand upon Will's shoulder. 'It is not the same thing as a reason, but usually vastly more convincing.'

Will hung his head a little, and then raised it once more to heaven. The stars seemed to expand and emit a sharper brilliancy; and as he kept turning his eyes higher and higher, they seemed to increase in multitude under his gaze.

'I see,' he said, turning to the young man. 'We are in a rat-trap.'

'Something of that size. Did you ever see a squirrel turning in a cage? and another squirrel sitting philosophically over his nuts? I needn't ask you which of them looked more of a fool.'

CHAPTER II. THE PARSON'S MARJORY.

After some years the old people died, both in one winter, very carefully tended by their adopted son, and very quietly mourned when they were gone. People who had heard of his roving fancies supposed he would hasten to sell the property, and go down the river to push his fortunes. But there was never any sign of such in intention on the part of Will. On the contrary, he had the inn set on a better footing, and hired a couple of servants to assist him in carrying it on; and there he settled down, a kind, talkative, inscrutable young man, six feet three in his stockings, with an iron constitution and a friendly voice. He soon began to take rank in the district as a bit of an oddity: it was not much to be wondered at from the first, for he was always full of notions, and kept calling the plainest common-sense in question; but what most raised the report upon him was the odd circumstance of his courtship with the parson's Marjory.

The parson's Marjory was a lass about nineteen, when Will would be about thirty; well enough looking, and much better educated than any other girl in that part of the country, as became her parentage. She held her head very high, and had already refused several offers of marriage with a grand air, which had got her hard names among the neighbours. For all that she was a good girl, and one that would have made any man well contented.

Will had never seen much of her; for although the church and parsonage were only two miles from his own door, he was never known to go there but on Sundays. It chanced, however, that the parsonage fell into disrepair, and had to be dismantled; and the parson and his daughter took lodgings for a month or so, on very much reduced terms, at Will's inn. Now, what with the inn, and the mill, and the old miller's savings, our friend was a man of substance; and besides that, he had a name for good temper and shrewdness, which make a capital portion in marriage; and so it was currently gossiped, among their ill-wishers, that the parson and his daughter had not chosen their temporary lodging with their eyes shut. Will was about the last man in the world to be cajoled or frightened into marriage. You had only to look into his eyes, limpid and still like pools of water, and yet with a sort of clear light that seemed to come from within, and you would understand at once that here was one who knew his own mind, and would stand to it immovably. Marjory herself was no weakling by her looks, with strong, steady eyes and a resolute and quiet bearing. It might be a question whether she was not Will's match in stedfastness, after all, or which of them would rule the roast in marriage. But Marjory had never given it a thought, and accompanied her father with the most unshaken innocence and unconcern.

The season was still so early that Will's customers were few and far between; but the lilacs were already flowering, and the weather was so mild that the party took dinner under the trellice, with the noise of the river in their ears and the woods ringing about them with the songs of birds. Will soon began to take a particular pleasure in these dinners. The parson was rather a dull companion, with a habit of dozing at table; but nothing rude or cruel ever fell from his lips. And as for the parson's daughter, she suited her surroundings with the best grace imaginable; and whatever she said seemed so pat and pretty that Will conceived a great idea of her talents. He could see her face, as she leaned forward, against a background of rising pinewoods; her eyes shone peaceably; the light lay around her hair like a kerchief; something that was hardly a smile rippled her pale cheeks, and Will could not contain himself from gazing on her in an agreeable dismay. She looked, even in her quietest moments, so complete in herself, and so quick with life down to her finger tips and the very skirts of her dress, that the remainder of created things became no more than a blot by comparison; and if Will glanced away from her to her surroundings, the trees looked inanimate and senseless, the clouds hung in heaven like dead things, and even the mountain tops were disenchanted. The whole valley could not compare in looks with this one girl.

Will was always observant in the society of his fellow-creatures; but his observation became almost painfully eager in the case of Marjory.

He listened to all she uttered, and read her eyes, at the same time, for the unspoken commentary. Many kind, simple, and sincere speeches found an echo in his heart. He became conscious of a soul beautifully poised upon itself, nothing doubting, nothing desiring, clothed in peace. It was not possible to separate her thoughts from her appearance. The turn of her wrist, the still sound of her voice, the light in her eyes, the lines of her body, fell in tune with her grave and gentle words, like the accompaniment that sustains and harmonises the voice of the singer. Her influence was one thing, not to be divided or discussed, only to be felt with gratitude and joy. To Will, her presence recalled something of his childhood, and the thought of her took its place in his mind beside that of dawn, of running water, and of the earliest violets and lilacs. It is the property of things seen for the first time, or for the first time after long, like the flowers in spring, to reawaken in us the sharp edge of sense and that impression of mystic strangeness which otherwise passes out of life with the coming of years; but the sight of a loved face is what renews a man's character from the fountain upwards.

One day after dinner Will took a stroll among the firs; a grave beatitude possessed him from top to toe, and he kept smiling to himself and the landscape as he went. The river ran between the stepping-stones with a pretty wimple; a bird sang loudly in the wood; the hill-tops looked immeasurably high, and as he glanced at them from time to time seemed to contemplate his movements with a beneficent but awful curiosity. His way took him to the eminence which overlooked the plain; and there he sat down upon a stone, and fell into deep and pleasant thought. The plain lay abroad with its cities and silver river; everything was asleep, except a great eddy of birds which kept rising and falling and going round and round in the blue air. He repeated Marjory's name aloud, and the sound of it gratified his ear. He shut his eyes, and her image sprang up before him, quietly luminous and attended with good thoughts. The river might run for ever; the birds fly higher and higher till they touched the stars. He saw it was empty bustle after all; for here, without stirring a feet, waiting patiently in his own narrow valley, he also had attained the better sunlight.

The next day Will made a sort of declaration across the dinner-table, while the parson was filling his pipe.

'Miss Marjory,' he said, 'I never knew any one I liked so well as you. I am mostly a cold, unkindly sort of man; not from want of heart, but out of strangeness in my way of thinking; and people seem far away from me. 'Tis as if there were a circle round me, which kept every one out but you; I can hear the others talking and laughing; but you come quite close. Maybe, this is disagreeable to you?' he asked.

Marjory made no answer.

‘Speak up, girl,’ said the parson.

‘Nay, now,’ returned Will, ‘I wouldn’t press her, parson. I feel tongue-tied myself, who am not used to it; and she’s a woman, and little more than a child, when all is said. But for my part, as far as I can understand what people mean by it, I fancy I must be what they call in love. I do not wish to be held as committing myself; for I may be wrong; but that is how I believe things are with me. And if Miss Marjory should feel any otherwise on her part, mayhap she would be so kind as shake her head.’

Marjory was silent, and gave no sign that she had heard.

‘How is that, parson?’ asked Will.

‘The girl must speak,’ replied the parson, laying down his pipe. ‘Here’s our neighbour who says he loves you, Madge. Do you love him, ay or no?’

‘I think I do,’ said Marjory, faintly.

‘Well then, that’s all that could be wished!’ cried Will, heartily. And he took her hand across the table, and held it a moment in both of his with great satisfaction.

‘You must marry,’ observed the parson, replacing his pipe in his mouth.

‘Is that the right thing to do, think you?’ demanded Will.

‘It is indispensable,’ said the parson.

‘Very well,’ replied the wooer.

Two or three days passed away with great delight to Will, although a bystander might scarce have found it out. He continued to take his meals opposite Marjory, and to talk with her and gaze upon her in her father’s presence; but he made no attempt to see her alone, nor in any other way changed his conduct towards her from what it had been since the beginning. Perhaps the girl was a little disappointed, and perhaps not unjustly; and yet if it had been enough to be always in the thoughts of another person, and so pervade and alter his whole life, she might have been thoroughly contented. For she was never out of Will’s mind for an instant. He sat over the stream, and watched the dust of the eddy, and the poised fish, and straining weeds; he wandered out alone into the purple even, with all the blackbirds piping round him in the wood; he rose early in the morning, and saw the sky turn from grey to gold, and the light leap upon the hill-tops; and all the while he kept wondering if he had never seen such things before, or how it was that they should look so different now. The sound of his own mill-wheel, or of the wind among the trees, confounded and charmed his heart. The most enchanting thoughts presented themselves unbidden in his mind. He was so happy that he could not sleep at night, and so restless, that he could hardly sit still out of her company. And yet it seemed as if he avoided her rather than sought her out.

One day, as he was coming home from a ramble, Will found Marjory in the garden picking flowers, and as he came up with her, slackened his pace and continued walking by her side.

‘You like flowers?’ he said.

‘Indeed I love them dearly,’ she replied. ‘Do you?’

‘Why, no,’ said he, ‘not so much. They are a very small affair, when all is done. I can fancy people caring for them greatly, but not doing as you are just now.’

‘How?’ she asked, pausing and looking up at him.

‘Plucking them,’ said he. ‘They are a deal better off where they are, and look a deal prettier, if you go to that.’

‘I wish to have them for my own,’ she answered, ‘to carry them near my heart, and keep them in my room. They tempt me when they grow here; they seem to say, “Come and do something with us;” but once I have cut them and put them by, the charm is laid, and I can look at them with quite an easy heart.’

‘You wish to possess them,’ replied Will, ‘in order to think no more about them. It’s a bit like killing the goose with the golden eggs. It’s a bit like what I wished to do when I was a boy. Because I had a fancy for looking out over the plain, I wished to go down there — where I couldn’t look out over it any longer. Was not that fine reasoning? Dear, dear, if they only thought of it, all the world would do like me; and you would let your flowers alone, just as I stay up here in the mountains.’ Suddenly he broke off sharp. ‘By the Lord!’ he cried. And when she asked him what was wrong, he turned the question off and walked away into the house with rather a humorous expression of face.

He was silent at table; and after the night hid fallen and the stars had come out overhead, he walked up and down for hours in the courtyard and garden with an uneven pace. There was still a light in the window of Marjory’s room: one little oblong patch of orange in a world of dark blue hills and silver starlight. Will’s mind ran a great deal on the window; but his thoughts were not very lover-like. ‘There she is in her room,’ he thought, ‘and there are the stars overhead: — a blessing upon both!’ Both were good influences in his life; both soothed and braced him in his profound contentment with the world. And what more should he desire with either? The fat young man and his councils were so present to his mind, that he threw back his head, and, putting his hands before his mouth, shouted aloud to the populous heavens. Whether from the position of his head or the sudden strain of the exertion, he seemed to see a momentary shock among the stars, and a diffusion of frosty light pass from one to another along the sky. At the same instant, a corner of the blind was lifted and lowered again at once. He laughed a loud ho-ho! ‘One and another!’ thought Will. ‘The stars tremble, and the blind goes up. Why, before Heaven, what a great magician I must be! Now if I were only a fool, should not I be in a pretty way?’ And he went off to bed, chuckling to himself: ‘If I were only a fool!’

The next morning, pretty early, he saw her once more in the garden, and sought her out.

‘I have been thinking about getting married,’ he began abruptly; ‘and after having turned it all over, I have made up my mind it’s not worthwhile.’

She turned upon him for a single moment; but his radiant, kindly appearance would, under the circumstances, have disconcerted an angel, and she looked down again upon the ground in silence. He could see her tremble.

‘I hope you don’t mind,’ he went on, a little taken aback. ‘You ought not. I have turned it all over, and upon my soul there’s nothing in it. We should never be one whit nearer than we are just now, and, if I am a wise man, nothing like so happy.’

‘It is unnecessary to go round about with me,’ she said. ‘I very well remember that you refused to commit yourself; and now that I see you were mistaken, and in reality have never cared for me, I can only feel sad that I have been so far misled.’

‘I ask your pardon,’ said Will stoutly; ‘you do not understand my meaning. As to whether I have ever loved you or not, I must leave that to others. But for one thing, my feeling is not changed; and for another, you may make it your boast that you have made my whole life and character something different from what they were. I mean what I say; no less. I do not think getting married is worth while. I would rather you went on living with your father, so that I could walk over and see you once, or maybe twice a week, as people go to church, and then we should both be all the happier between whiles. That’s my notion. But I’ll marry you if you will,’ he added.

‘Do you know that you are insulting me?’ she broke out.

‘Not I, Marjory,’ said he; ‘if there is anything in a clear conscience, not I. I offer all my heart’s best affection; you can take it or want it, though I suspect it’s beyond either your power or mine to change what has once been done, and set me fancy-free. I’ll marry you, if you like; but I tell you again and again, it’s not worth while, and we had best stay friends. Though I am a quiet man I have noticed a heap of things in my life. Trust in me, and take things as I propose; or, if you don’t like that, say the word, and I’ll marry you out of hand.’

There was a considerable pause, and Will, who began to feel uneasy, began to grow angry in consequence.

‘It seems you are too proud to say your mind,’ he said. ‘Believe me that’s a pity. A clean shrift makes simple living. Can a man be more downright or honourable, to a woman than I have been? I have said my say, and given you your choice. Do you want me to marry you? or will you take my friendship, as I think best? or have you had enough of me for good? Speak out for the dear God’s sake! You know your father told you a girl should speak her mind in these affairs.’

She seemed to recover herself at that, turned without a word, walked rapidly through the garden, and disappeared into the house, leaving Will in some confusion as to the result. He walked up and down the garden, whistling softly to himself. Sometimes he stopped and contemplated the sky and hill-tops; sometimes he went down to the tail of the weir and sat there, looking foolishly in the water. All this dubiety and perturbation was so foreign to his nature and the life which he had resolutely chosen for himself, that he began to regret Marjory’s arrival. ‘After all,’ he thought, ‘I was as happy as a man need be. I could come down here and watch my fishes all day long if I wanted: I was as settled and contented as my old mill.’

Marjory came down to dinner, looking very trim and quiet; and no sooner were all three at table than she made her father a speech, with her eyes fixed upon her plate, but showing no other sign of embarrassment or distress.

‘Father,’ she began, ‘Mr. Will and I have been talking things over. We see that we have each made a mistake about our feelings, and he has agreed, at my request, to give up all idea of marriage, and be no more than my very good friend, as in the past. You see, there is no shadow of a quarrel, and indeed I hope we shall see a great deal of him in the future, for his visits will always be welcome in our house. Of course, father, you will know best, but perhaps we should do better to leave Mr. Will’s house for the present. I believe, after what has passed, we should hardly be agreeable inmates for some days.’

Will, who had commanded himself with difficulty from the first, broke out upon this into an inarticulate noise, and raised one hand with an appearance of real dismay, as if he were about to interfere and contradict. But she checked him at once looking up at him with a swift glance and an angry flush upon her cheek.

‘You will perhaps have the good grace,’ she said, ‘to let me explain these matters for myself.’

Will was put entirely out of countenance by her expression and the ring of her voice. He held his peace, concluding that there were some things about this girl beyond his comprehension, in which he was exactly right.

The poor parson was quite crestfallen. He tried to prove that this was no more than a true lovers’ tiff, which would pass off before night; and when he was dislodged from that position, he went on to argue that where there was no quarrel there could be no call for a separation; for the good man liked both his entertainment and his host. It was curious to see how the girl managed them, saying little all the time, and that very quietly, and yet twisting them round her finger and insensibly leading them wherever she would by feminine tact and generalship. It scarcely seemed to have been her doing — it seemed as if things had merely so fallen out — that she and her father took their departure that same afternoon in a farm-cart, and went farther down the valley, to wait, until their own house was ready for them, in another hamlet. But Will had been observing closely, and was well aware of her dexterity and resolution. When he found himself alone he had a great many curious matters to turn over in his mind. He was very sad and solitary, to begin with. All the interest had gone out of his life, and he might look up at the stars as long as he pleased, he somehow failed to find support or consolation. And then he was in such a turmoil of spirit about Marjory. He had been puzzled and irritated at her behaviour, and yet he could not keep himself from admiring it. He thought he recognised a fine, perverse angel in that still soul which he had never hitherto suspected; and though he saw it was an influence that would fit but ill with his own life of artificial calm, he could not keep himself from ardently desiring to possess it. Like a man who has lived among shadows and now meets the sun, he was both pained and delighted.

As the days went forward he passed from one extreme to another; now pluming himself on the strength of his determination, now despising his timid and silly caution. The former was, perhaps, the true thought of his heart, and represented the regular tenor of the man's reflections; but the latter burst forth from time to time with an unruly violence, and then he would forget all consideration, and go up and down his house and garden or walk among the fir-woods like one who is beside himself with remorse. To equable, steady-minded Will this state of matters was intolerable; and he determined, at whatever cost, to bring it to an end. So, one warm summer afternoon he put on his best clothes, took a thorn switch in his hand, and set out down the valley by the river. As soon as he had taken his determination, he had regained at a bound his customary peace of heart, and he enjoyed the bright weather and the variety of the scene without any admixture of alarm or unpleasant eagerness. It was nearly the same to him how the matter turned out. If she accepted him he would have to marry her this time, which perhaps was, all for the best. If she refused him, he would have done his utmost, and might follow his own way in the future with an untroubled conscience. He hoped, on the whole, she would refuse him; and then, again, as he saw the brown roof which sheltered her, peeping through some willows at an angle of the stream, he was half inclined to reverse the wish, and more than half ashamed of himself for this infirmity of purpose.

Marjory seemed glad to see him, and gave him her hand without affectation or delay.

‘I have been thinking about this marriage,’ he began.

‘So have I,’ she answered. ‘And I respect you more and more for a very wise man. You understood me better than I understood myself; and I am now quite certain that things are all for the best as they are.’

‘At the same time — ,’ ventured Will.

‘You must be tired,’ she interrupted. ‘Take a seat and let me fetch you a glass of wine. The afternoon is so warm; and I wish you not to be displeased with your visit. You must come quite often; once a week, if you can spare the time; I am always so glad to see my friends.’

‘O, very well,’ thought Will to himself. ‘It appears I was right after all.’ And he paid a very agreeable visit, walked home again in capital spirits, and gave himself no further concern about the matter.

For nearly three years Will and Marjory continued on these terms, seeing each other once or twice a week without any word of love between them; and for all that time I believe Will was nearly as happy as a man can be. He rather stinted himself the pleasure of seeing her; and he would often walk half-way over to the parsonage, and then back again, as if to whet his appetite. Indeed there was one corner of the road, whence he could see the church-spire wedged into a crevice of the valley between sloping firwoods, with a triangular snatch of plain by way of background, which he greatly affected as a place to sit and moralise in before returning homewards; and the peasants got so much into the habit of finding him there in the twilight that they gave it the name of ‘Will o’ the Mill’s Corner.’

At the end of the three years Marjory played him a sad trick by suddenly marrying somebody else. Will kept his countenance bravely, and merely remarked that, for as little as he knew of women, he had acted very prudently in not marrying her himself three years before. She plainly knew very little of her own mind, and, in spite of a deceptive manner, was as fickle and flighty as the rest of them. He had to congratulate himself on an escape, he said, and would take a higher opinion of his own wisdom in consequence. But at heart, he was reasonably displeased, moped a good deal for a month or two, and fell away in flesh, to the astonishment of his serving-lads.

It was perhaps a year after this marriage that Will was awakened late one night by the sound of a horse galloping on the road, followed by precipitate knocking at the inn-door. He opened his window and saw a farm servant, mounted and holding a led horse by the bridle, who told him to make what haste he could and go along with him; for Marjory was dying, and had sent urgently to fetch him to her bedside. Will was no horseman, and made so little speed upon the way that the poor young wife was very near her end before he arrived. But they had some minutes' talk in private, and he was present and wept very bitterly while she breathed her last.

CHAPTER III. DEATH

Year after year went away into nothing, with great explosions and outcries in the cities on the plain: red revolt springing up and being suppressed in blood, battle swaying hither and thither, patient astronomers in observatory towers picking out and christening new stars, plays being performed in lighted theatres, people being carried into hospital on stretchers, and all the usual turmoil and agitation of men's lives in crowded centres. Up in Will's valley only the winds and seasons made an epoch; the fish hung in the swift stream, the birds circled overhead, the pine-tops rustled underneath the stars, the tall hills stood over all; and Will went to and fro, minding his wayside inn, until the snow began to thicken on his head. His heart was young and vigorous; and if his pulses kept a sober time, they still beat strong and steady in his wrists. He carried a ruddy stain on either cheek, like a ripe apple; he stooped a little, but his step was still firm; and his sinewy hands were reached out to all men with a friendly pressure. His face was covered with those wrinkles which are got in open air, and which rightly looked at, are no more than a sort of permanent sunburning; such wrinkles heighten the stupidity of stupid faces; but to a person like Will, with his clear eyes and smiling mouth, only give another charm by testifying to a simple and easy life. His talk was full of wise sayings. He had a taste for other people; and other people had a taste for him. When the valley was full of tourists in the season, there were merry nights in Will's arbour; and his views, which seemed whimsical to his neighbours, were often enough admired by learned people out of towns and colleges. Indeed, he had a very noble old age, and grew daily better known; so that his fame was heard of in the cities of the plain; and young men who had been summer travellers spoke together in *cafés* of Will o' the Mill and his rough philosophy. Many and many an invitation, you may be sure, he had; but nothing could tempt him from his upland valley. He would shake his head and smile over his tobacco-pipe with a deal of meaning. 'You come too late,' he would answer. 'I am a dead man now: I have lived and died already. Fifty years ago you would have brought my heart into my mouth; and now you do not even tempt me. But that is the object of long living, that man should cease to care about life.' And again: 'There is only one difference between a long life and a good dinner: that, in the dinner, the sweets come last.' Or once more: 'When I was a boy, I was a bit puzzled, and hardly knew whether it was myself or the world that was curious and worth looking into. Now, I know it is myself, and stick to that.'

He never showed any symptom of frailty, but kept stalwart and firm to the last; but they say he grew less talkative towards the end, and would listen to other people by the hour in an amused and sympathetic silence. Only, when he did speak, it was more to the point and more charged with old experience. He drank a bottle of wine gladly; above all, at sunset on the hill-top or quite late at night under the stars in the arbour. The sight of something attractive and unatttainable seasoned his enjoyment, he would say; and he professed he had lived long enough to admire a candle all the more when he could compare it with a planet.

One night, in his seventy-second year, he awoke in bed in such uneasiness of body and mind that he arose and dressed himself and went out to meditate in the arbour. It was pitch dark, without a star; the river was swollen, and the wet woods and meadows loaded the air with perfume. It had thundered during the day, and it promised more thunder for the morrow. A murky, stifling night for a man of seventy-two! Whether it was the weather or the wakefulness, or some little touch of fever in his old limbs, Will's mind was besieged by tumultuous and crying memories. His boyhood, the night with the fat young man, the death of his adopted parents, the summer days with Marjory, and many of those small circumstances, which seem nothing to another, and are yet the very gist of a man's own life to himself — things seen, words heard, looks misconstrued — arose from their forgotten corners and usurped his attention. The dead themselves were with him, not merely taking part in this thin show of memory that defiled before his brain, but revisiting his bodily senses as they do in profound and vivid dreams. The fat young man leaned his elbows on the table opposite; Marjory came and went with an apronful of flowers between the garden and the arbour; he could hear the old parson knocking out his pipe or blowing his resonant nose. The tide of his consciousness ebbed and flowed: he was sometimes half-asleep and drowned in his recollections of the past; and sometimes he was broad awake, wondering at himself. But about the middle of the night he was startled by the voice of the dead miller calling to him out of the house as he used to do on the arrival of custom. The hallucination was so perfect that Will sprang from his seat and stood listening for the summons to be repeated; and as he listened he became conscious of another noise besides the brawling of the river and the ringing in his feverish ears. It was like the stir of horses and the creaking of harness, as though a carriage with an impatient team had been brought up upon the road before the courtyard gate. At such an hour, upon this rough and dangerous pass, the supposition was no better than absurd; and Will dismissed it from his mind, and resumed his seat upon the arbour chair; and sleep closed over him again like running water. He was once again awakened by the dead miller's call, thinner and more spectral than before; and once again he heard the noise of an equipage upon the road. And so thrice and four times, the same dream, or the same fancy, presented itself to his senses: until at length, smiling to himself as when one humours a nervous child, he proceeded towards the gate to set his uncertainty at rest.

From the arbour to the gate was no great distance, and yet it took Will some time; it seemed as if the dead thickened around him in the court, and crossed his path at every step. For, first, he was suddenly surprised by an overpowering sweetness of heliotropes; it was as if his garden had been planted with this flower from end to end, and the hot, damp night had drawn forth all their perfumes in a breath. Now the heliotrope had been Marjory's favourite flower, and since her death not one of them had ever been planted in Will's ground.

'I must be going crazy,' he thought. 'Poor Marjory and her heliotropes!'

And with that he raised his eyes towards the window that had once been hers. If he had been bewildered before, he was now almost terrified; for there was a light in the room; the window was an orange oblong as of yore; and the corner of the blind was lifted and let fall as on the night when he stood and shouted to the stars in his perplexity. The illusion only endured an instant; but it left him somewhat unmanned, rubbing his eyes and staring at the outline of the house and the black night behind it. While he thus stood, and it seemed as if he must have stood there quite a long time, there came a renewal of the noises on the road: and he turned in time to meet a stranger, who was advancing to meet him across the court. There was something like the outline of a great carriage discernible on the road behind the stranger, and, above that, a few black pine-tops, like so many plumes.

'Master Will?' asked the new-comer, in brief military fashion.

'That same, sir,' answered Will. 'Can I do anything to serve you?'

'I have heard you much spoken of, Master Will,' returned the other; 'much spoken of, and well. And though I have both hands full of business, I wish to drink a bottle of wine with you in your arbour. Before I go, I shall introduce myself.'

Will led the way to the trellis, and got a lamp lighted and a bottle uncorked. He was not altogether unused to such complimentary interviews, and hoped little enough from this one, being schooled by many disappointments. A sort of cloud had settled on his wits and prevented him from remembering the strangeness of the hour. He moved like a person in his sleep; and it seemed as if the lamp caught fire and the bottle came uncorked with the facility of thought. Still, he had some curiosity about the appearance of his visitor, and tried in vain to turn the light into his face; either he handled the lamp clumsily, or there was a dimness over his eyes; but he could make out little more than a shadow at table with him. He stared and stared at this shadow, as he wiped out the glasses, and began to feel cold and strange about the heart. The silence weighed upon him, for he could hear nothing now, not even the river, but the drumming of his own arteries in his ears.

‘Here’s to you,’ said the stranger, roughly.

‘Here is my service, sir,’ replied Will, sipping his wine, which somehow tasted oddly.

‘I understand you are a very positive fellow,’ pursued the stranger.

Will made answer with a smile of some satisfaction and a little nod.

‘So am I,’ continued the other; ‘and it is the delight of my heart to tramp on people’s corns. I will have nobody positive but myself; not one. I have crossed the whims, in my time, of kings and generals and great artists. And what would you say,’ he went on, ‘if I had come up here on purpose to cross yours?’

Will had it on his tongue to make a sharp rejoinder; but the politeness of an old innkeeper prevailed; and he held his peace and made answer with a civil gesture of the hand.

‘I have,’ said the stranger. ‘And if I did not hold you in a particular esteem, I should make no words about the matter. It appears you pride yourself on staying where you are. You mean to stick by your inn. Now I mean you shall come for a turn with me in my barouche; and before this bottle’s empty, so you shall.’

‘That would be an odd thing, to be sure,’ replied Will, with a chuckle. ‘Why, sir, I have grown here like an old oak-tree; the Devil himself could hardly root me up: and for all I perceive you are a very entertaining old gentleman, I would wager you another bottle you lose your pains with me.’

The dimness of Will’s eyesight had been increasing all this while; but he was somehow conscious of a sharp and chilling scrutiny which irritated and yet overmastered him.

‘You need not think,’ he broke out suddenly, in an explosive, febrile manner that startled and alarmed himself, ‘that I am a stay-at-home, because I fear anything under God. God knows I am tired enough of it all; and when the time comes for a longer journey than ever you dream of, I reckon I shall find myself prepared.’

The stranger emptied his glass and pushed it away from him. He looked down for a little, and then, leaning over the table, tapped Will three times upon the forearm with a single finger. ‘The time has come!’ he said solemnly.

An ugly thrill spread from the spot he touched. The tones of his voice were dull and startling, and echoed strangely in Will's heart.

'I beg your pardon,' he said, with some discomposure. 'What do you mean?'

'Look at me, and you will find your eyesight swim. Raise your hand; it is dead-heavy. This is your last bottle of wine, Master Will, and your last night upon the earth.'

'You are a doctor?' quavered Will.

'The best that ever was,' replied the other; 'for I cure both mind and body with the same prescription. I take away all plain and I forgive all sins; and where my patients have gone wrong in life, I smooth out all complications and set them free again upon their feet.'

'I have no need of you,' said Will.

'A time comes for all men, Master Will,' replied the doctor, 'when the helm is taken out of their hands. For you, because you were prudent and quiet, it has been long of coming, and you have had long to discipline yourself for its reception. You have seen what is to be seen about your mill; you have sat close all your days like a hare in its form; but now that is at an end; and,' added the doctor, getting on his feet, 'you must arise and come with me.'

'You are a strange physician,' said Will, looking steadfastly upon his guest.

'I am a natural law,' he replied, 'and people call me Death.'

'Why did you not tell me so at first?' cried Will. 'I have been waiting for you these many years. Give me your hand, and welcome.'

'Lean upon my arm,' said the stranger, 'for already your strength abates. Lean on me as heavily as you need; for though I am old, I am very strong. It is but three steps to my carriage, and there all your trouble ends. Why, Will,' he added, 'I have been yearning for you as if you were my own son; and of all the men that ever I came for in my long days, I have come for you most gladly. I am caustic, and sometimes offend people at first sight; but I am a good friend at heart to such as you.'

'Since Marjory was taken,' returned Will, 'I declare before God you were the only friend I had to look for.' So the pair went arm-in-arm across the courtyard.

One of the servants awoke about this time and heard the noise of horses pawing before he dropped asleep again; all down the valley that night there was a rushing as of a smooth and steady wind descending towards the plain; and when the world rose next morning, sure enough Will o' the Mill had gone at last upon his travels.

MARKHEIM

'Yes,' said the dealer, 'our windfalls are of various kinds. Some customers are ignorant, and then I touch a dividend on my superior knowledge. Some are dishonest,' and here he held up the candle, so that the light fell strongly on his visitor, 'and in that case,' he continued, 'I profit by my virtue.'

Markheim had but just entered from the daylight streets, and his eyes had not yet grown familiar with the mingled shine and darkness in the shop. At these pointed words, and before the near presence of the flame, he blinked painfully and looked aside.

The dealer chuckled. 'You come to me on Christmas Day,' he resumed, 'when you know that I am alone in my house, put up my shutters, and make a point of refusing business. Well, you will have to pay for that; you will have to pay for my loss of time, when I should be balancing my books; you will have to pay, besides, for a kind of manner that I remark in you to-day very strongly. I am the essence of discretion, and ask no awkward questions; but when a customer cannot look me in the eye, he has to pay for it.' The dealer once more chuckled; and then, changing to his usual business voice, though still with a note of irony, 'You can give, as usual, a clear account of how you came into the possession of the object?' he continued. 'Still your uncle's cabinet? A remarkable collector, sir!'

And the little pale, round-shouldered dealer stood almost on tip-toe, looking over the top of his gold spectacles, and nodding his head with every mark of disbelief. Markheim returned his gaze with one of infinite pity, and a touch of horror.

'This time,' said he, 'you are in error. I have not come to sell, but to buy. I have no curios to dispose of; my uncle's cabinet is bare to the wainscot; even were it still intact, I have done well on the Stock Exchange, and should more likely add to it than otherwise, and my errand to-day is simplicity itself. I seek a Christmas present for a lady,' he continued, waxing more fluent as he struck into the speech he had prepared; 'and certainly I owe you every excuse for thus disturbing you upon so small a matter. But the thing was neglected yesterday; I must produce my little compliment at dinner; and, as you very well know, a rich marriage is not a thing to be neglected.'

There followed a pause, during which the dealer seemed to weigh this statement incredulously. The ticking of many clocks among the curious lumber of the shop, and the faint rushing of the cabs in a near thoroughfare, filled up the interval of silence.

'Well, sir,' said the dealer, 'be it so. You are an old customer after all; and if, as you say, you have the chance of a good marriage, far be it from me to be an obstacle. Here is a nice thing for a lady now,' he went on, 'this hand glass — fifteenth century, warranted; comes from a good collection, too; but I reserve the name, in the interests of my customer, who was just like yourself, my dear sir, the nephew and sole heir of a remarkable collector.'

The dealer, while he thus ran on in his dry and biting voice, had stooped to take the object from its place; and, as he had done so, a shock had passed through Markheim, a start both of hand and foot, a sudden leap of many tumultuous passions to the face. It passed as swiftly as it came, and left no trace beyond a certain trembling of the hand that now received the glass.

'A glass,' he said hoarsely, and then paused, and repeated it more clearly. 'A glass? For Christmas? Surely not?'

'And why not?' cried the dealer. 'Why not a glass?'

Markheim was looking upon him with an indefinable expression. 'You ask me why not?' he said. 'Why, look here — look in it — look at yourself! Do you like to see it? No! nor I — nor any man.'

The little man had jumped back when Markheim had so suddenly confronted him with the mirror; but now, perceiving there was nothing worse on hand, he chuckled. 'Your future lady, sir, must be pretty hard favoured,' said he.

'I ask you,' said Markheim, 'for a Christmas present, and you give me this — this damned reminder of years, and sins and follies — this hand-conscience! Did you mean it? Had you a thought in your mind? Tell me. It will be better for you if you do. Come, tell me about yourself. I hazard a guess now, that you are in secret a very charitable man?'

The dealer looked closely at his companion. It was very odd, Markheim did not appear to be laughing; there was something in his face like an eager sparkle of hope, but nothing of mirth.

'What are you driving at?' the dealer asked.

'Not charitable?' returned the other, gloomily. Not charitable; not pious; not scrupulous; unloving, unbeloved; a hand to get money, a safe to keep it. Is that all? Dear God, man, is that all?'

'I will tell you what it is,' began the dealer, with some sharpness, and then broke off again into a chuckle. 'But I see this is a love match of yours, and you have been drinking the lady's health.'

'Ah!' cried Markheim, with a strange curiosity. 'Ah, have you been in love? Tell me about that.'

'I,' cried the dealer. 'I in love! I never had the time, nor have I the time to-day for all this nonsense. Will you take the glass?'

'Where is the hurry?' returned Markheim. 'It is very pleasant to stand here talking; and life is so short and insecure that I would not hurry away from any pleasure — no, not even from so mild a one as this. We should rather cling, cling to what little we can get, like a man at a cliff's edge. Every second is a cliff, if you think upon it — a cliff a mile high — high enough, if we fall, to dash us out of every feature of humanity. Hence it is best to talk pleasantly. Let us talk of each other: why should we wear this mask? Let us be confidential.

Who knows, we might become friends?'

'I have just one word to say to you,' said the dealer. 'Either make your purchase, or walk out of my shop!'

'True true,' said Markheim. 'Enough, fooling. To business. Show me something else.'

The dealer stooped once more, this time to replace the glass upon the shelf, his thin blond hair falling over his eyes as he did so. Markheim moved a little nearer, with one hand in the pocket of his greatcoat; he drew himself up and filled his lungs; at the same time many different emotions were depicted together on his face — terror, horror, and resolve, fascination and a physical repulsion; and through a haggard lift of his upper lip, his teeth looked out.

'This, perhaps, may suit,' observed the dealer: and then, as he began to re-arise, Markheim bounded from behind upon his victim. The long, skewerlike dagger flashed and fell. The dealer struggled like a hen, striking his temple on the shelf, and then tumbled on the floor in a heap.

Time had some score of small voices in that shop, some stately and slow as was becoming to their great age; others garrulous and hurried. All these told out the seconds in an intricate, chorus of tickings. Then the passage of a lad's feet, heavily running on the pavement, broke in upon these smaller voices and startled Markheim into the consciousness of his surroundings. He looked about him awfully. The candle stood on the counter, its flame solemnly wagging in a draught; and by that inconsiderable movement, the whole room was filled with noiseless bustle and kept heaving like a sea: the tall shadows nodding, the gross blots of darkness swelling and dwindling as with respiration, the faces of the portraits and the china gods changing and wavering like images in water. The inner door stood ajar, and peered into that leaguer of shadows with a long slit of daylight like a pointing finger.

From these fear-stricken rovings, Markheim's eyes returned to the body of his victim, where it lay both humped and sprawling, incredibly small and strangely meaner than in life. In these poor, miserly clothes, in that ungainly attitude, the dealer lay like so much sawdust. Markheim had feared to see it, and, lo! it was nothing. And yet, as he gazed, this bundle of old clothes and pool of blood began to find eloquent voices. There it must lie; there was none to work the cunning hinges or direct the miracle of locomotion — there it must lie till it was found. Found! ay, and then? Then would this dead flesh lift up a cry that would ring over England, and fill the world with the echoes of pursuit. Ay, dead or not, this was still the enemy. 'Time was that when the brains were out,' he thought; and the first word struck into his mind. Time, now that the deed was accomplished —

time, which had closed for the victim, had become instant and momentous for the slayer.

The thought was yet in his mind, when, first one and then another, with every variety of pace and voice — one deep as the bell from a cathedral turret, another ringing on its treble notes the prelude of a waltz-the clocks began to strike the hour of three in the afternoon.

The sudden outbreak of so many tongues in that dumb chamber staggered him. He began to bestir himself, going to and fro with the candle, beleaguered by moving shadows, and startled to the soul by chance reflections. In many rich mirrors, some of home design, some from Venice or Amsterdam, he saw his face repeated and repeated, as it were an army of spies; his own eyes met and detected him; and the sound of his own steps, lightly as they fell, vexed the surrounding quiet. And still, as he continued to fill his pockets, his mind accused him with a sickening iteration, of the thousand faults of his design. He should have chosen a more quiet hour; he should have prepared an alibi; he should not have used a knife; he should have been more cautious, and only bound and gagged the dealer, and not killed him; he should have been more bold, and killed the servant also; he should have done all things otherwise: poignant regrets, weary, incessant toiling of the mind to change what was unchangeable, to plan what was now useless, to be the architect of the irrevocable past. Meanwhile, and behind all this activity, brute terrors, like the scurrying of rats in a deserted attic, filled the more remote chambers of his brain with riot; the hand of the constable would fall heavy on his shoulder, and his nerves would jerk like a hooked fish; or he beheld, in galloping defile, the dock, the prison, the gallows, and the black coffin.

Terror of the people in the street sat down before his mind like a besieging army. It was impossible, he thought, but that some rumour of the struggle must have reached their ears and set on edge their curiosity; and now, in all the neighbouring houses, he divined them sitting motionless and with uplifted ear — solitary people, condemned to spend Christmas dwelling alone on memories of the past, and now startingly recalled from that tender exercise; happy family parties struck into silence round the table, the mother still with raised finger: every degree and age and humour, but all, by their own hearths, prying and hearkening and weaving the rope that was to hang him. Sometimes it seemed to him he could not move too softly; the clink of the tall Bohemian goblets rang out loudly like a bell; and alarmed by the bigness of the ticking, he was tempted to stop the clocks. And then, again, with a swift transition of his terrors, the very silence of the place appeared a source of peril, and a thing to strike and freeze the passer-by; and he would step more boldly, and bustle aloud among the contents of the shop, and imitate, with elaborate bravado, the movements of a busy man at ease in his own house.

But he was now so pulled about by different alarms that, while one portion of his mind was still alert and cunning, another trembled on the brink of lunacy. One hallucination in particular took a strong hold on his credulity. The neighbour hearkening with white face beside his window, the passer-by arrested by a horrible surmise on the pavement — these could at worst suspect, they could not know; through the brick walls and shuttered windows only sounds could penetrate. But here, within the house, was he alone? He knew he was; he had watched the servant set forth sweet-hearting, in her poor best, 'out for the day' written in every ribbon and smile. Yes, he was alone, of course; and yet, in the bulk of empty house above him, he could surely hear a stir of delicate footing — he was surely conscious, inexplicably conscious of some presence. Ay, surely; to every room and corner of the house his imagination followed it; and now it was a faceless thing, and yet had eyes to see with; and again it was a shadow of himself; and yet again behold the image of the dead dealer, reinspired with cunning and hatred.

At times, with a strong effort, he would glance at the open door which still seemed to repel his eyes. The house was tall, the skylight small and dirty, the day blind with fog; and the light that filtered down to the ground story was exceedingly faint, and showed dimly on the threshold of the shop. And yet, in that strip of doubtful brightness, did there not hang wavering a shadow?

Suddenly, from the street outside, a very jovial gentleman began to beat with a staff on the shop-door, accompanying his blows with shouts and railleries in which the dealer was continually called upon by name. Markheim, smitten into ice, glanced at the dead man. But no! he lay quite still; he was fled away far beyond earshot of these blows and shoutings; he was sunk beneath seas of silence; and his name, which would once have caught his notice above the howling of a storm, had become an empty sound. And presently the jovial gentleman desisted from his knocking, and departed.

Here was a broad hint to hurry what remained to be done, to get forth from this accusing neighbourhood, to plunge into a bath of London multitudes, and to reach, on the other side of day, that haven of safety and apparent innocence — his bed. One visitor had come: at any moment another might follow and be more obstinate. To have done the deed, and yet not to reap the profit, would be too abhorrent a failure. The money, that was now Markheim's concern; and as a means to that, the keys.

He glanced over his shoulder at the open door, where the shadow was still lingering and shivering; and with no conscious repugnance of the mind, yet with a tremor of the belly, he drew near the body of his victim. The human character had quite departed. Like a suit half-stuffed with bran, the limbs lay scattered, the trunk doubled, on the floor; and yet the thing repelled him. Although so dingy and inconsiderable to the eye, he feared it might have more significance to the touch. He took the body by the shoulders, and turned it on its back. It was strangely light and supple, and the limbs, as if they had been broken, fell into the oddest postures. The face was robbed of all expression; but it was as pale as wax, and shockingly smeared with blood about one temple. That was, for Markheim, the one displeasing circumstance. It carried him back, upon the instant, to a certain fair-day in a fishers' village: a gray day, a piping wind, a crowd upon the street, the blare of brasses, the booming of drums, the nasal voice of a ballad singer; and a boy going to and fro, buried over head in the crowd and divided between interest and fear, until, coming out upon the chief place of concourse, he beheld a booth and a great screen with pictures, dismally designed, garishly coloured: Brown-rigg with her apprentice; the Mannings with their murdered guest; Weare in the death-grip of Thurtell; and a score besides of famous crimes. The thing was as clear as an illusion; he was once again that little boy; he was looking once again, and with the same sense of physical revolt, at these vile pictures; he was still stunned by the thumping of the drums. A bar of that day's music returned upon his memory; and at that, for the first time, a qualm came over him, a breath of nausea, a sudden weakness of the joints, which he must instantly resist and conquer.

He judged it more prudent to confront than to flee from these considerations; looking the more hardily in the dead face, bending his mind to realise the nature and greatness of his crime. So little a while ago that face had moved with every change of sentiment, that pale mouth had spoken, that body had been all on fire with governable energies; and now, and by his act, that piece of life had been arrested, as the horologist, with interjected finger, arrests the beating of the clock. So he reasoned in vain; he could rise to no more remorseful consciousness; the same heart which had shuddered before the painted effigies of crime, looked on its reality unmoved. At best, he felt a gleam of pity for one who had been endowed in vain with all those faculties that can make the world a garden of enchantment, one who had never lived and who was now dead. But of penitence, no, not a tremor.

With that, shaking himself clear of these considerations, he found the keys and advanced towards the open door of the shop. Outside, it had begun to rain smartly; and the sound of the shower upon the roof had banished silence. Like some dripping cavern, the chambers of the house were haunted by an incessant echoing, which filled the ear and mingled with the ticking of the clocks. And, as Markheim approached the door, he seemed to hear, in answer to his own cautious tread, the steps of another foot withdrawing up the stair. The shadow still palpitated loosely on the threshold. He threw a ton's weight of resolve upon his muscles, and drew back the door.

The faint, foggy daylight glimmered dimly on the bare floor and stairs; on the bright suit of armour posted, halbert in hand, upon the landing; and on the dark wood-carvings, and framed pictures that hung against the yellow panels of the wainscot. So loud was the beating of the rain through all the house that, in Markheim's ears, it began to be distinguished into many different sounds. Footsteps and sighs, the tread of regiments marching in the distance, the chink of money in the counting, and the creaking of doors held stealthily ajar, appeared to mingle with the patter of the drops upon the cupola and the gushing of the water in the pipes. The sense that he was not alone grew upon him to the verge of madness. On every side he was haunted and begirt by presences. He heard them moving in the upper chambers; from the shop, he heard the dead man getting to his legs; and as he began with a great effort to mount the stairs, feet fled quietly before him and followed stealthily behind. If he were but deaf, he thought, how tranquilly he would possess his soul! And then again, and hearkening with ever fresh attention, he blessed himself for that unresting sense which held the outposts and stood a trusty sentinel upon his life. His head turned continually on his neck; his eyes, which seemed starting from their orbits, scouted on every side, and on every side were half-rewarded as with the tail of something nameless vanishing. The four-and-twenty steps to the first floor were four-and-twenty agonies.

On that first storey, the doors stood ajar, three of them like three ambushes, shaking his nerves like the throats of cannon. He could never again, he felt, be sufficiently immured and fortified from men's observing eyes, he longed to be home, girt in by walls, buried among bedclothes, and invisible to all but God. And at that thought he wondered a little, recollecting tales of other murderers and the fear they were said to entertain of heavenly avengers. It was not so, at least, with him. He feared the laws of nature, lest, in their callous and immutable procedure, they should preserve some damning evidence of his crime. He feared tenfold more, with a slavish, superstitions terror, some scission in the continuity of man's experience, some wilful illegality of nature. He played a game of skill, depending on the rules, calculating consequence from cause; and what if nature, as the defeated tyrant overthrew the chess-board, should break the mould of their succession? The like had befallen Napoleon (so writers said) when the winter changed the time of its appearance. The like might befall Markheim: the solid walls might become transparent and reveal his doings like those of bees in a glass hive; the stout planks might yield under his foot like quicksands and detain him in their clutch; ay, and there were soberer accidents that might destroy him: if, for instance, the house should fall and imprison him beside the body of his victim; or the house next door should fly on fire, and the firemen invade him from all sides. These things he feared; and, in a sense, these things might be called the hands of God reached forth against sin. But about God himself he was at ease; his act was doubtless exceptional, but so were his excuses, which God knew; it was there, and not among men, that he felt sure of justice.

When he had got safe into the drawing-room, and shut the door behind him, he was aware of a respite from alarms. The room was quite dismantled, uncarpeted besides, and strewn with packing cases and incongruous furniture; several great pier-glasses, in which he beheld himself at various angles, like an actor on a stage; many pictures, framed and unframed, standing, with their faces to the wall; a fine Sheraton sideboard, a cabinet of marquetry, and a great old bed, with tapestry hangings. The windows opened to the floor; but by great good fortune the lower part of the shutters had been closed, and this concealed him from the neighbours. Here, then, Markheim drew in a packing case before the cabinet, and began to search among the keys. It was a long business, for there were many; and it was irksome, besides; for, after all, there might be nothing in the cabinet, and time was on the wing. But the closeness of the occupation sobered him. With the tail of his eye he saw the door — even glanced at it from time to time directly, like a besieged commander pleased to verify the good estate of his defences. But in truth he was at peace. The rain falling in the street sounded natural and pleasant. Presently, on the other side, the notes of a piano were wakened to the music of a hymn, and the voices of many children took up the air and words. How stately, how comfortable was the melody! How fresh the youthful voices! Markheim gave ear to it smilingly, as he sorted out the keys; and his mind was thronged with answerable ideas and images; church-going children and the pealing of the high organ; children afield, bathers by the brookside, ramblers on the brambly common, kite-flyers in the windy and cloud-navigated sky; and then, at another cadence of the hymn, back again to church, and the somnolence of summer Sundays, and the high genteel voice of the parson (which he smiled a little to recall) and the painted Jacobean tombs, and the dim lettering of the Ten Commandments in the chancel.

And as he sat thus, at once busy and absent, he was startled to his feet. A flash of ice, a flash of fire, a bursting gush of blood, went over him, and then he stood transfixed and thrilling. A step mounted the stair slowly and steadily, and presently a hand was laid upon the knob, and the lock clicked, and the door opened.

Fear held Markheim in a vice. What to expect he knew not, whether the dead man walking, or the official ministers of human justice, or some chance witness blindly stumbling in to consign him to the gallows. But when a face was thrust into the aperture, glanced round the room, looked at him, nodded and smiled as if in friendly recognition, and then withdrew again, and the door closed behind it, his fear broke loose from his control in a hoarse cry. At the sound of this the visitant returned.

'Did you call me?' he asked, pleasantly, and with that he entered the room and closed the door behind him.

Markheim stood and gazed at him with all his eyes. Perhaps there was a film upon his sight, but the outlines of the new comer seemed to change and waver like those of the idols in the wavering candle-light of the shop; and at times he thought he knew him; and at times he thought he bore a likeness to himself; and always, like a lump of living terror, there lay in his bosom the conviction that this thing was not of the earth and not of God.

And yet the creature had a strange air of the commonplace, as he stood looking on Markheim with a smile; and when he added: 'You are looking for the money, I believe?' it was in the tones of everyday politeness.

Markheim made no answer.

'I should warn you,' resumed the other, 'that the maid has left her sweetheart earlier than usual and will soon be here. If Mr. Markheim be found in this house, I need not describe to him the consequences.'

'You know me?' cried the murderer.

The visitor smiled. 'You have long been a favourite of mine,' he said; 'and I have long observed and often sought to help you.'

'What are you?' cried Markheim: 'the devil?'

'What I may be,' returned the other, 'cannot affect the service I propose to render you.'

'It can,' cried Markheim; 'it does! Be helped by you? No, never; not by you! You do not know me yet; thank God, you do not know me!'

'I know you,' replied the visitant, with a sort of kind severity or rather firmness. 'I know you to the soul.'

'Know me!' cried Markheim. 'Who can do so? My life is but a travesty and slander on myself. I have lived to belie my nature. All men do; all men are better than this disguise that grows about and stifles them. You see each dragged away by life, like one whom bravos have seized and muffled in a cloak. If they had their own control — if you could see their faces, they would be altogether different, they would shine out for heroes and saints! I am worse than most; myself is more overlaid; my excuse is known to me and God. But, had I the time, I could disclose myself.'

'To me?' inquired the visitant.

'To you before all,' returned the murderer. 'I supposed you were intelligent. I thought — since you exist — you would prove a reader of the heart. And yet you would propose to judge me by my acts! Think of it; my acts! I was born and I have lived in a land of giants; giants have dragged me by the wrists since I was born out of my mother — the giants of circumstance. And you would judge me by my acts! But can you not look within? Can you not understand that evil is hateful to me? Can you not see within me the clear writing of conscience, never blurred by any wilful sophistry, although too often disregarded? Can you not read me for a thing that surely must be common as humanity — the unwilling sinner?'

'All this is very feelingly expressed,' was the reply, 'but it regards me not. These points of consistency are beyond my province, and I care not in the least by what compulsion you may have been dragged away, so as you are but carried in the right direction. But time flies; the servant delays, looking in the faces of the crowd and at the pictures on the hoardings, but still she keeps moving nearer; and remember, it is as if the gallows itself was striding towards you through the Christmas streets! Shall I help you; I, who know all? Shall I tell you where to find the money?'

'For what price?' asked Markheim.

'I offer you the service for a Christmas gift,' returned the other.

Markheim could not refrain from smiling with a kind of bitter triumph. 'No,' said he, 'I will take nothing at your hands; if I were dying of thirst, and it was your hand that put the pitcher to my lips, I should find the courage to refuse. It may be credulous, but I will do nothing to commit myself to evil.'

'I have no objection to a death-bed repentance,' observed the visitant.

'Because you disbelieve their efficacy!' Markheim cried.

'I do not say so,' returned the other; 'but I look on these things from a different side, and when the life is done my interest falls. The man has lived to serve me, to spread black looks under colour of religion, or to sow tares in the wheat-field, as you do, in a course of weak compliance with desire. Now that he draws so near to his deliverance, he can add but one act of service — to repent, to die smiling, and thus to build up in confidence and hope the more timorous of my surviving followers. I am not so hard a master. Try me. Accept my help. Please yourself in life as you have done hitherto; please yourself more amply, spread your elbows at the board; and when the night begins to fall and the curtains to be drawn, I tell you, for your greater comfort, that you will find it even easy to compound your quarrel with your conscience, and to make a truckling peace with God. I came but now from such a deathbed, and the room was full of sincere mourners, listening to the man's last words: and when I looked into that face, which had been set as a flint against mercy, I found it smiling with hope.'

'And do you, then, suppose me such a creature?' asked Markheim. 'Do you think I have no more generous aspirations than to sin, and sin, and sin, and, at the last, sneak into heaven? My heart rises at the thought. Is this, then, your experience of mankind? or is it because you find me with red hands that you presume such baseness? and is this crime of murder indeed so impious as to dry up the very springs of good?'

'Murder is to me no special category,' replied the other. 'All sins are murder, even as all life is war. I behold your race, like starving mariners on a raft, plucking crusts out of the hands of famine and feeding on each other's lives. I follow sins beyond the moment of their acting; I find in all that the last consequence is death; and to my eyes, the pretty maid who thwarts her mother with such taking graces on a question of a ball, drips no less visibly with human gore than such a murderer as yourself. Do I say that I follow sins? I follow virtues also; they differ not by the thickness of a nail, they are both scythes for the reaping angel of Death. Evil, for which I live, consists not in action but in character. The bad man is dear to me; not the bad act, whose fruits, if we could follow them far enough down the hurtling cataract of the ages, might yet be found more blessed than those of the rarest virtues. And it is not because you have killed a dealer, but because you are Markheim, that I offer to forward your escape.'

'I will lay my heart open to you,' answered Markheim. 'This crime on which you find me is my last. On my way to it I have learned many lessons; itself is a lesson, a momentous lesson. Hitherto I have been driven with revolt to what I would not; I was a bond-slave to poverty, driven and scourged. There are robust virtues that can stand in these temptations; mine was not so: I had a thirst of pleasure. But to-day, and out of this deed, I pluck both warning and riches — both the power and a fresh resolve to be myself. I become in all things a free actor in the world; I begin to see myself all changed, these hands the agents of good, this heart at peace. Something comes over me out of the past; something of what I have dreamed on Sabbath evenings to the sound of the church organ, of what I forecast when I shed tears over noble books, or talked, an innocent child, with my mother. There lies my life; I have wandered a few years, but now I see once more my city of destination.'

'You are to use this money on the Stock Exchange, I think?' remarked the visitor; 'and there, if I mistake not, you have already lost some thousands?'

'Ah,' said Markheim, 'but this time I have a sure thing.'

'This time, again, you will lose,' replied the visitor quietly.

'Ah, but I keep back the half!' cried Markheim.

'That also you will lose,' said the other.

The sweat started upon Markheim's brow. 'Well, then, what matter?' he exclaimed. 'Say it be lost, say I am plunged again in poverty, shall one part of me, and that the worse, continue until the end to override the better? Evil and good run strong in me, haling me both ways. I do not love the one thing, I love all. I can conceive great deeds, renunciations, martyrdoms; and though I be fallen to such a crime as murder, pity is no stranger to my thoughts. I pity the poor; who knows their trials better than myself? I pity and help them; I prize love, I love honest laughter; there is no good thing nor true thing on earth but I love it from my heart. And are my vices only to direct my life, and my virtues to lie without effect, like some passive lumber of the mind? Not so; good, also, is a spring of acts.'

But the visitant raised his finger. 'For six-and-thirty years that you have been in this world,' said be, 'through many changes of fortune and varieties of humour, I have watched you steadily fall. Fifteen years ago you would have started at a theft. Three years back you would have blenched at the name of murder. Is there any crime, is there any cruelty or meanness, from which you still recoil? — five years from now I shall detect you in the fact! Downward, downward, lies your way; nor can anything but death avail to stop you.'

'It is true,' Markheim said huskily, 'I have in some degree complied with evil. But it is so with all: the very saints, in the mere exercise of living, grow less dainty, and take on the tone of their surroundings.'

'I will propound to you one simple question,' said the other; 'and as you answer, I shall read to you your moral horoscope. You have grown in many things more lax; possibly you do right to be so — and at any account, it is the same with all men. But granting that, are you in any one particular, however trifling, more difficult to please with your own conduct, or do you go in all things with a looser rein?'

'In any one?' repeated Markheim, with an anguish of consideration. 'No,' he added, with despair, 'in none! I have gone down in all.'

'Then,' said the visitor, 'content yourself with what you are, for you will never change; and the words of your part on this stage are irrevocably written down.'

Markheim stood for a long while silent, and indeed it was the visitor who first broke the silence. 'That being so,' he said, 'shall I show you the money?'

'And grace?' cried Markheim.

'Have you not tried it?' returned the other. 'Two or three years ago, did I not see you on the platform of revival meetings, and was not your voice the loudest in the hymn?'

'It is true,' said Markheim; 'and I see clearly what remains for me by way of duty. I thank you for these lessons from my soul; my eyes are opened, and I behold myself at last for what I am.'

At this moment, the sharp note of the door-bell rang through the house; and the visitant, as though this were some concerted signal for which he had been waiting, changed at once in his demeanour.

'The maid!' he cried. 'She has returned, as I forewarned you, and there is now before you one more difficult passage. Her master, you must say, is ill; you must let her in, with an assured but rather serious countenance — no smiles, no overacting, and I promise you success! Once the girl within, and the door closed, the same dexterity that has already rid you of the dealer will relieve you of this last danger in your path. Thenceforward you have the whole evening — the whole night, if needful — to ransack the treasures of the house and to make good your safety. This is help that comes to you with the mask of danger. Up!' he cried; 'up, friend; your life hangs trembling in the scales: up, and act!'

Markheim steadily regarded his counsellor. 'If I be condemned to evil acts,' he said, 'there is still one door of freedom open — I can cease from action. If my life be an ill thing, I can lay it down. Though I be, as you say truly, at the beck of every small temptation, I can yet, by one decisive gesture, place myself beyond the reach of all. My love of good is damned to barrenness; it may, and let it be! But I have still my hatred of evil; and from that, to your galling disappointment, you shall see that I can draw both energy and courage.'

The features of the visitor began to undergo a wonderful and lovely change: they brightened and softened with a tender triumph, and, even as they brightened, faded and dislimned. But Markheim did not pause to watch or understand the transformation. He opened the door and went downstairs very slowly, thinking to himself. His past went soberly before him; he beheld it as it was, ugly and strenuous like a dream, random as chance-medley — a scene of defeat. Life, as he thus reviewed it, tempted him no longer; but on the further side he perceived a quiet haven for his bark. He paused in the passage, and looked into the shop, where the candle still burned by the dead body. It was strangely silent. Thoughts of the dealer swarmed into his mind, as he stood gazing. And then the bell once more broke out into impatient clamour.

He confronted the maid upon the threshold with something like a smile.

‘You had better go for the police,’ said he: ‘I have killed your master.’

THRAWN JANET

The Reverend Murdoch Soulis was long minister of the moorland parish of Balweary, in the vale of Dule. A severe, bleak-faced old man, dreadful to his hearers, he dwelt in the last years of his life, without relative or servant or any human company, in the small and lonely manse under the Hanging Shaw. In spite of the iron composure of his features, his eye was wild, scared, and uncertain; and when he dwelt, in private admonitions, on the future of the impenitent, it seemed as if his eye pierced through the storms of time to the terrors of eternity. Many young persons, coming to prepare themselves against the season of the Holy Communion, were dreadfully affected by his talk. He had a sermon on lst Peter, v. and 8th, ‘The devil as a roaring lion,’ on the Sunday after every seventeenth of August, and he was accustomed to surpass himself upon that text both by the appalling nature of the matter and the terror of his bearing in the pulpit. The children were frightened into fits, and the old looked more than usually oracular, and were, all that day, full of those hints that Hamlet deprecated. The manse itself, where it stood by the water of Dule among some thick trees, with the Shaw overhanging it on the one side, and on the other many cold, moorish hilltops rising towards the sky, had begun, at a very early period of Mr. Soulis’s ministry, to be avoided in the dusk hours by all who valued themselves upon their prudence; and guidmen sitting at the clachan alehouse shook their heads together at the thought of passing late by that uncanny neighbourhood. There was one spot, to be more particular, which was regarded with especial awe. The manse stood between the high road and the water of Dule, with a gable to each; its back was towards the kirk-town of Balweary, nearly half a mile away; in front of it, a bare garden, hedged with thorn, occupied the land between the river and the road. The house was two stories high, with two large rooms on each. It opened not directly on the garden, but on a causewayed path, or passage, giving on the road on the one hand, and closed on the other by the tall willows and elders that bordered on the stream. And it was this strip of causeway that enjoyed among the young parishioners of Balweary so infamous a reputation. The minister walked there often after dark, sometimes groaning aloud in the instancy of his unspoken prayers; and when he was from home, and the manse door was locked, the more daring schoolboys ventured, with beating hearts, to ‘follow my leader’ across that legendary spot.

This atmosphere of terror, surrounding, as it did, a man of God of spotless character and orthodoxy, was a common cause of wonder and subject of inquiry among the few strangers who were led by chance or business into that unknown, outlying country. But many even of the people of the parish were ignorant of the strange events which had marked the first year of Mr. Soulis's ministrations; and among those who were better informed, some were naturally reticent, and others shy of that particular topic. Now and again, only, one of the older folk would warm into courage over his third tumbler, and recount the cause of the minister's strange looks and solitary life.

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Fifty years syne, when Mr. Soulis cam first into Ba'weary, he was still a young man — a callant, the folk said — fu' o' book learnin' and grand at the exposition, but, as was natural in sae young a man, wi' nae leevin' experience in religion. The younger sort were greatly taken wi' his gifts and his gab; but auld, concerned, serious men and women were moved even to prayer for the young man, whom they took to be a self-deceiver, and the parish that was like to be sae ill-supplied. It was before the days o' the moderates — weary fa' them; but ill things are like guid — they baith come bit by bit, a pickle at a time; and there were folk even then that said the Lord had left the college professors to their ain devices, an' the lads that went to study wi' them wad hae done mair and better sittin' in a peat-bog, like their forbears of the persecution, wi' a Bible under their oxter and a speerit o' prayer in their heart. There was nae doubt, onyway, but that Mr. Soulis had been ower lang at the college. He was careful and troubled for mony things besides the ae thing needful. He had a feck o' books wi' him — mair than had ever been seen before in a' that presbytery; and a sair wark the carrier had wi' them, for they were a' like to have smoored in the Deil's Hag between this and Kilmackerlie. They were books o' divinity, to be sure, or so they ca'd them; but the serious were o' opinion there was little service for sae mony, when the hail o' God's Word would gang in the neuk of a plaid. Then he wad sit half the day and half the nicht forbye, which was scant decent — writin', nae less; and first, they were feared he wad read his sermons; and syne it proved he was writin' a book himsel', which was surely no fittin' for ane of his years an' sma' experience.

Onyway it behoved him to get an auld, decent wife to keep the manse for him an' see to his bit denners; and he was recommended to an auld limmer — Janet M'Clour, they ca'd her — and sae far left to himsel' as to be ower persuaded. There was mony advised him to the contrar, for Janet was mair than suspeckit by the best folk in Ba'weary. Lang or that, she had had a wean to a dragoon; she hadnae come forrit for maybe thretty year; and bairns had seen her mumblin' to hersel' up on Key's Loan in the gloamin', whilk was an unco time an' place for a God-fearin' woman. Howsoever, it was the laird himsel' that had first tauld the minister o' Janet; and in thae days he wad have gane a far gate to pleesure the laird. When folk tauld him that Janet was sib to the deil, it was a' superstition by his way of it; an' when they cast up the Bible to him an' the witch of Endor, he wad threep it doun their thrapples that thir days were a' gane by, and the deil was mercifully restrained.

Weel, when it got about the clachan that Janet M'Clour was to be servant at the manse, the folk were fair mad wi' her an' him thegether; and some o' the guidwives had nae better to dae than get round her door cheeks and chairge her wi' a' that was ken't again her, frae the sodger's bairn to John Tamson's twa kye. She was nae great speaker; folk usually let her gang her ain gate, an' she let them gang theirs, wi', neither Fair-guid-een nor Fair-guid-day; but when she buckled to, she had a tongue to deave the miller. Up she got, an' there wasnae an auld story in Ba'weary but she gart somebody lowp for it that day; they couldnae say ae thing but she could say twa to it; till, at the hinder end, the guidwives up and claught haud of her, and clawed the coats aff her back, and pu'd her doun the clachan to the water o' Dule, to see if she were a witch or no, soum or droun. The carline skirled till ye could hear her at the Hangin' Shaw, and she focht like ten; there was mony a guidwife bure the mark of her neist day an' mony a lang day after; and just in the hettest o' the collieshangie, wha suld come up (for his sins) but the new minister.

'Women,' said he (and he had a grand voice), 'I charge you in the Lord's name to let her go.'

Janet ran to him — she was fair wud wi' terror — an' clang to him, an' prayed him, for Christ's sake, save her frae the cummers; an' they, for their pairt, tauld him a' that was ken't, and maybe mair.

'Woman,' says he to Janet, 'is this true?'

'As the Lord sees me,' says she, 'as the Lord made me, no a word o't. Forbye the bairn,' says she, 'I've been a decent woman a' my days.'

'Will you,' says Mr. Soulis, 'in the name of God, and before me, His unworthy minister, renounce the devil and his works?'

Weel, it wad appear that when he askit that, she gave a girn that fairly frichtit them that saw her, an' they could hear her teeth play dirl thegether in her chafts; but there was naething for it but the ae way or the ither; an' Janet lifted up her hand and renounced the deil before them a'.

'And now,' says Mr. Soulis to the guidwives, 'home with ye, one and all, and pray to God for His forgiveness.'

And he gied Janet his arm, though she had little on her but a sark, and took her up the clachan to her ain door like a leddy of the land; an' her scrieghin' and laughin' as was a scandal to be heard.

There were mony grave folk lang ower their prayers that nicht; but when the morn cam' there was sic a fear fell upon a' Ba'weary that the bairns hid theirsels, and even the men folk stood and keekit frae their doors. For there was Janet comin' doun the clachan — her or her likeness, nane could tell — wi' her neck thrawn, and her heid on ae side, like a body that has been hangit, and a girn on her face like an unstreakit corp. By an' by they got used wi' it, and even speered at her to ken what was wrang; but frae that day forth she couldnae speak like a Christian woman, but slavered and played click wi' her teeth like a pair o' shears; and frae that day forth the name o' God cam never on her lips. Whiles she wad try to say it, but it michtnae be. Them that kenned best said least; but they never gied that Thing the name o' Janet M'Clour; for the auld Janet, by their way o't, was in muckle hell that day. But the minister was neither to haud nor to bind; he preached about naething but the folk's cruelty that had gi'en her a stroke of the palsy; he skelpt the bairns that meddled her; and he had her up to the manse that same nicht, and dwalled there a' his lane wi' her under the Hangin' Shaw.

Weel, time gaed by: and the idler sort commenced to think mair lichtly o' that black business. The minister was weel thocht o'; he was aye late at the writing, folk wad see his can'le doon by the Dule water after twal' at e'en; and he seemed pleased wi' himsel' and upsitten as at first, though a' body could see that he was dwining. As for Janet she cam an' she gaed; if she didnae speak muckle afore, it was reason she should speak less then; she meddled naebody; but she was an eldritch thing to see, an' nane wad hae mistrysted wi' her for Ba'weary glebe.

About the end o' July there cam' a spell o' weather, the like o't never was in that country side; it was lown an' het an' heartless; the herds couldnae win up the Black Hill, the bairns were ower weariet to play; an' yet it was gousty too, wi' claps o' het wund that rumm'led in the glens, and bits o' shouers that slockened naething. We aye thocht it but to thun'er on the morn; but the morn cam, an' the morn's morning, and it was aye the same uncanny weather, sair on folks and bestial. Of a' that were the waur, nane suffered like Mr. Soulis; he could neither sleep nor eat, he tauld his elders; an' when he wasnae writin' at his weary book, he wad be stravaguin' ower a' the countryside like a man possessed, when a' body else was blythe to keep caller ben the house.

Abune Hangin' Shaw, in the bield o' the Black Hill, there's a bit enclosed grund wi' an iron yett; and it seems, in the auld days, that was the kirkyaird o' Ba'weary, and consecrated by the Papists before the blessed licht shone upon the kingdom. It was a great howff o' Mr. Soulis's, onyway; there he would sit an' consider his sermons; and indeed it's a bieldy bit. Weel, as he cam ower the wast end o' the

Black Hill, ae day, he saw first twa, an syne fower, an' syne seeven corbie craws fleein' round an' round abune the auld kirkyaird. They flew laigh and heavy, an' squawked to ither as they gaed; and it was clear to Mr. Soulis that something had put them frae their ordinar. He wasnae easy fleyed, an' gaed straucht up to the wa's; an' what suld he find there but a man, or the appearance of a man, sittin' in the inside upon a grave. He was of a great stature, an' black as hell, and his e'en were singular to see. Mr. Soulis had heard tell o' black men, mony's the time; but there was something unco about this black man that daunted him. Het as he was, he took a kind o' cauld grue in the marrow o' his banes; but up he spak for a' that; an' says he: 'My friend, are you a stranger in this place?' The black man answered never a word; he got upon his feet, an' begude to hirsle to the wa' on the far side; but he aye lookit at the minister; an' the minister stood an' lookit back; till a' in a meenute the black man was ower the wa' an' rinnin' for the bield o' the trees. Mr. Soulis, he hardly kenned why, ran after him; but he was sair forjaskit wi' his walk an' the het, unhalesome weather; and rin as he likit, he got nae mair than a glisk o' the black man amang the birks, till he won doun to the foot o' the hill-side, an' there he saw him ance mair, gaun, hap, step, an' lowp, ower Dule water to the manse.

Mr. Soulis wasnae weel pleased that this fearsome gangrel suld mak' sae free wi' Ba'weary manse; an' he ran the harder, an', wet shoon, ower the burn, an' up the walk; but the deil a black man was there to see. He stepped out upon the road, but there was naebody there; he gaed a' ower the gairden, but na, nae black man. At the hinder end, and a bit feared as was but natural, he lifted the hasp and into the manse; and there was Janet M'Clour before his een, wi' her thrawn craig, and nane sae pleased to see him. And he aye minded sinsyne, when first he set his een upon her, he had the same cauld and deidly grue.

'Janet,' says he, 'have you seen a black man?'

'A black man?' quo' she. 'Save us a'! Ye're no wise, minister. There's nae black man in a Ba'weary.'

But she didnae speak plain, ye maun understand; but yam-yammered, like a powney wi' the bit in its moo.

'Weel,' says he, 'Janet, if there was nae black man, I have spoken with the Accuser of the Brethren.'

And he sat down like ane wi' a fever, an' his teeth chittered in his heid.

'Hoots,' says she, 'think shame to yoursel', minister;' an' gied him a drap brandy that she keept aye by her.

Syne Mr. Soulis gaed into his study amang a' his books. It's a lang, laigh, mirk chalmer, perishin' cauld in winter, an' no very dry even in the tap o' the simmer, for the manse stands near the burn. Sae doun he sat, and thocht of a' that had come an' gane since he was in Ba'weary, an' his hame, an' the days when he was a bairn an' ran daffin' on the braes; and that black man aye ran in his heid like the ower-come of a sang. Aye the mair he thocht, the mair he thocht o' the black man. He tried the prayer, an' the words wouldnae come to him; an' he tried, they say, to write at his book, but he could nae mak' nae mair o' that. There was whiles he thocht the black man was at his oxter, an' the swat stood upon him cauld as well-water; and there was other whiles, when he cam to himsel' like a christened bairn and minded naething.

The upshot was that he gaed to the window an' stood glowrin' at Dule water. The trees are unco thick, an' the water lies deep an' black under the manse; an' there was Janct washin' the cla'es wi' her coats kilted. She had her back to the minister, an' he, for his pairt, hardly kenned what he was lookin' at. Syne she turned round, an' shawed her face; Mr. Soulis had the same cauld grue as twice that day afore, an' it was borne in upon him what folk said, that Janet was deid lang syne, an' this was a bogle in her clay-cauld flesh. He drew back a pickle and he scanned her narrowly. She was tramp-trampin' in the cla'es, croonin' to hersel'; and eh! Gude guide us, but it was a fearsome face. Whiles she sang louder, but there was nae man born o' woman that could tell the words o' her sang; an' whiles she lookit side-lang doun, but there was naething there for her to look at. There gaed a scunner through the flesh upon his banes; and that was Heeven's advertisement. But Mr. Soulis just blamed himsel', he said, to think sae ill of a puir, auld afflicted wife that hadnae a freend forbye himsel'; an' he put up a bit prayer for him and her, an' drank a little caller water — for his heart rose again the meat — an' gaed up to his naked bed in the gloaming.

That was a nicht that has never been forgotten in Ba'weary, the nicht o' the seeventeenth of August, seventeen hun'er' an twal'. It had been het afore, as I hae said, but that nicht it was hetter than ever. The sun gaed doun amang unco-lookin' clouds; it fell as mirk as the pit; no a star, no a breath o' wund; ye couldnae see your han' afore your face, and even the auld folk cuist the covers frae their beds and lay pechin' for their breath. Wi' a' that he had upon his mind, it was gey and unlikely Mr. Soulis wad get muckle sleep. He lay an' he tummled; the gude, caller bed that he got into brunt his very banes; whiles he slept, and whiles he waukened; whiles he heard the time o' nicht, and whiles a tyke yowlin' up the muir, as if somebody was deid; whiles he thocht he heard bogles claverin' in his lug, an' whiles he saw spunkies in the room. He behoved, he judged, to be sick; an' sick he was — little he jaloosed the sickness.

At the hinder end, he got a clearness in his mind, sat up in his sark on the bed-side, and fell thinkin' ance mair o' the black man an' Janet. He couldnae weel tell how — maybe it was the cauld to his feet — but it cam' in upon him wi' a spate that there was some connection between thir twa, an' that either or baith o' them were bogles. And just at that moment, in Janet's room, which was neist to his, there cam' a stramp o' feet as if men were wars'lin', an' then a loud bang; an' then a wund gaed reishling round the fower quarters of the house; an' then a' was aince mair as seelent as the grave.

Mr. Soulis was feared for neither man nor deevil. He got his tinder-box, an' lit a can'le, an' made three steps o't ower to Janet's door. It was on the hasp, an' he pushed it open, an' keeked bauldly in. It was a big room, as big as the minister's ain, an' plenished wi' grand, auld, solid gear, for he had naething else. There was a fower-posted bed wi' auld tapestry; and a braw cabinet of aik, that was fu' o' the minister's divinity books, an' put there to be out o' the gate; an' a wheen duds o' Janet's lying here and there about the floor. But nae Janet could Mr. Soulis see; nor ony sign of a contention. In he gaed (an' there's few that wad ha'e followed him) an' lookit a' round, an' listened. But there was naethin' to be heard, neither inside the manse nor in a' Ba'weary parish, an' naethin' to be seen but the muckle shadows turnin' round the can'le. An' then a' at aince, the minister's heart played dunt an' stood stock-still; an' a cauld wund blew amang the hairs o' his heid. Whaten a weary sicht was that for the puir man's een! For there was Janat hangin' frae a nail beside the auld aik cabinet: her heid aye lay on her shoother, her een were steeked, the tongue projekit frae her mouth, and her heels were twa feet clear abune the floor.

'God forgive us all!' thocht Mr. Soulis; 'poor Janet's dead.'

He cam' a step nearer to the corp; an' then his heart fair whammled in his inside. For by what cantrip it wad ill-beseem a man to judge, she was hingin' frae a single nail an' by a single wursted thread for darnin' hose.

It's an awfu' thing to be your lane at nicht wi' siccan prodigies o' darkness; but Mr. Soulis was strong in the Lord. He turned an' gaed his ways oot o' that room, and lockit the door ahint him; and step by step, doon the stairs, as heavy as leed; and set doon the can'le on the table at the stairfoot. He couldnae pray, he couldnae think, he was dreepin' wi' caul' swat, an' naething could he hear but the dunt-dunt-duntin' o' his ain heart. He micht maybe have stood there an hour, or maybe twa, he minded sae little; when a' o' a sudden, he heard a laigh, uncanny steer upstairs; a foot gaed to an' fro in the cha'mer whaur the corp was hingin'; syne the door was opened, though he minded weel that he had lockit it; an' syne there was a step upon the landin’, an’ it seemed to him as if the corp was lookin’ ower the rail and doun upon him whaur he stood.

He took up the can’le again (for he couldnae want the licht), and as saftly as ever he could, gaed straucht out o’ the manse an’ to the far end o’ the causeway. It was aye pit-mirk; the flame o’ the can’le, when he set it on the grund, brunt steedy and clear as in a room; naething moved, but the Dule water seepin’ and sabbin’ doon the glen, an’ yon unhaly footstep that cam’ ploddin doun the stairs inside the manse. He kenned the foot over weel, for it was Janet’s; and at ilka step that cam’ a wee thing nearer, the cauld got deeper in his vitals. He commanded his soul to Him that made an’ keepit him; ‘and O Lord,’ said he, ‘give me strength this night to war against the powers of evil.’

By this time the foot was comin’ through the passage for the door; he could hear a hand skirt alang the wa’, as if the fearsome thing was feelin’ for its way. The saughs tossed an’ maned thegether, a lang sigh cam’ ower the hills, the flame o’ the can’le was blawn aboot; an’ there stood the corp of Thrawn Janet, wi’ her grogram goun an’ her black mutch, wi’ the heid aye upon the shouther, an’ the girn still upon the face o’t — leevin’, ye wad hae said — deid, as Mr. Soulis weel kenned — upon the threshold o’ the manse.

It’s a strange thing that the saul of man should be that thirled into his perishable body; but the minister saw that, an’ his heart didnae break.

She didnae stand there lang; she began to move again an’ cam’ slowly towards Mr. Soulis whaur he stood under the saughs. A’ the life o’ his body, a’ the strength o’ his speerit, were glowerin’ frae his een. It seemed she was gaun to speak, but wanted words, an’ made a sign wi’ the left hand. There cam’ a clap o’ wund, like a cat’s fuff; oot gaed the can’le, the saughs skrieghed like folk; an’ Mr. Soulis kenned that, live or die, this was the end o’t.

‘Witch, beldame, devil!’ he cried, ‘I charge you, by the power of God, begone — if you be dead, to the grave — if you be damned, to hell.’

An’ at that moment the Lord’s ain hand out o’ the Heevens struck the Horror whaur it stood; the auld, deid, desecrated corp o’ the witch-wife, sae lang keepit frae the grave and hirsled round by deils, lowed up like a brunstane spunk and fell in ashes to the grund; the thunder followed, peal on dirling peal, the rairing rain upon the back o’ that; and Mr. Soulis lowped through the garden hedge, and ran, wi’ skelloch upon skelloch, for the clachan.

That same mornin’, John Christie saw the Black Man pass the Muckle Cairn as it was chappin’ six; before eicht, he gaed by the change-house at Knockdow; an’ no lang after, Sandy M’Lellan saw him gaun linkin' doun the braes frae Kilmackerlie. There's little doubt but it was him that dwalled sae lang in Janet's body; but he was awa' at last; and sinsyne the deil has never fashed us in Ba'weary.

But it was a sair dispensation for the minister; lang, lang he lay ravin' in his bed; and frae that hour to this, he was the man ye ken the day.

OLALLA

'Now,' said the doctor, 'my part is done, and, I may say, with some vanity, well done. It remains only to get you out of this cold and poisonous city, and to give you two months of a pure air and an easy conscience. The last is your affair. To the first I think I can help you. It fells indeed rather oddly; it was but the other day the Padre came in from the country; and as he and I are old friends, although of contrary professions, he applied to me in a matter of distress among some of his parishioners. This was a family — but you are ignorant of Spain, and even the names of our grandees are hardly known to you; suffice it, then, that they were once great people, and are now fallen to the brink of destitution. Nothing now belongs to them but the residencia, and certain leagues of desert mountain, in the greater part of which not even a goat could support life. But the house is a fine old place, and stands at a great height among the hills, and most salubriously; and I had no sooner heard my friend's tale, than I remembered you. I told him I had a wounded officer, wounded in the good cause, who was now able to make a change; and I proposed that his friends should take you for a lodger. Instantly the Padre's face grew dark, as I had maliciously foreseen it would. It was out of the question, he said. Then let them starve, said I, for I have no sympathy with tatterdemalion pride. There-upon we separated, not very content with one another; but yesterday, to my wonder, the Padre returned and made a submission: the difficulty, he said, he had found upon enquiry to be less than he had feared; or, in other words, these proud people had put their pride in their pocket. I closed with the offer; and, subject to your approval, I have taken rooms for you in the residencia. The air of these mountains will renew your blood; and the quiet in which you will there live is worth all the medicines in the world.'

'Doctor,' said I, 'you have been throughout my good angel, and your advice is a command. But tell me, if you please, something of the family with which I am to reside.'

'I am coming to that,' replied my friend; 'and, indeed, there is a difficulty in the way. These beggars are, as I have said, of very high descent and swollen with the most baseless vanity; they have lived for some generations in a growing isolation, drawing away, on either hand, from the rich who had now become too high for them, and from the poor, whom they still regarded as too low; and even to-day, when poverty forces them to unfasten their door to a guest, they cannot do so without a most ungracious stipulation. You are to remain, they say, a stranger; they will give you attendance, but they refuse from the first the idea of the smallest intimacy.'

I will not deny that I was piqued, and perhaps the feeling strengthened my desire to go, for I was confident that I could break down that barrier if I desired. 'There is nothing offensive in such a stipulation,' said I; 'and I even sympathise with the feeling that inspired it.'

'It is true they have never seen you,' returned the doctor politely; 'and if they knew you were the handsomest and the most pleasant man that ever came from England (where I am told that handsome men are common, but pleasant ones not so much so), they would doubtless make you welcome with a better grace. But since you take the thing so well, it matters not. To me, indeed, it seems discourteous. But you will find yourself the gainer. The family will not much tempt you. A mother, a son, and a daughter; an old woman said to be halfwitted, a country lout, and a country girl, who stands very high with her confessor, and is, therefore,' chuckled the physician, 'most likely plain; there is not much in that to attract the fancy of a dashing officer.'

'And yet you say they are high-born,' I objected.

'Well, as to that, I should distinguish,' returned the doctor. 'The mother is; not so the children. The mother was the last representative of a princely stock, degenerate both in parts and fortune. Her father was not only poor, he was mad: and the girl ran wild about the residencia till his death. Then, much of the fortune having died with him, and the family being quite extinct, the girl ran wilder than ever, until at last she married, Heaven knows whom, a muleteer some say, others a smuggler; while there are some who uphold there was no marriage at all, and that Felipe and Olalla are bastards. The union, such as it was, was tragically dissolved some years ago; but they live in such seclusion, and the country at that time was in so much disorder, that the precise manner of the man's end is known only to the priest — if even to him.'

'I begin to think I shall have strange experiences,' said I.

'I would not romance, if I were you,' replied the doctor; 'you will find, I fear, a very grovelling and commonplace reality. Felipe, for instance, I have seen. And what am I to say? He is very rustic, very cunning, very loutish, and, I should say, an innocent; the others are probably to match. No, no, senor commandante, you must seek congenial society among the great sights of our mountains; and in these at least, if you are at all a lover of the works of nature, I promise you will not be disappointed.'

The next day Felipe came for me in a rough country cart, drawn by a mule; and a little before the stroke of noon, after I had said farewell to the doctor, the innkeeper, and different good souls who had befriended me during my sickness, we set forth out of the city by the Eastern gate, and began to ascend into the Sierra. I had been so long a prisoner, since I was left behind for dying after the loss of the convoy, that the mere smell of the earth set me smiling. The country through which we went was wild and rocky, partially covered with rough woods, now of the cork-tree, and now of the great Spanish chestnut, and frequently intersected by the beds of mountain torrents. The sun shone, the wind rustled joyously; and we had advanced some miles, and the city had already shrunk into an inconsiderable knoll upon the plain behind us, before my attention began to be diverted to the companion of my drive. To the eye, he seemed but a diminutive, loutish, well-made country lad, such as the doctor had described, mighty quick and active, but devoid of any culture; and this first impression was with most observers final. What began to strike me was his familiar, chattering talk; so strangely inconsistent with the terms on which I was to be received; and partly from his imperfect enunciation, partly from the sprightly incoherence of the matter, so very difficult to follow clearly without an effort of the mind. It is true I had before talked with persons of a similar mental constitution; persons who seemed to live (as he did) by the senses, taken and possessed by the visual object of the moment and unable to discharge their minds of that impression. His seemed to me (as I sat, distantly giving ear) a kind of conversation proper to drivers, who pass much of their time in a great vacancy of the intellect and threading the sights of a familiar country. But this was not the case of Felipe; by his own account, he was a home-keeper; ‘I wish I was there now,’ he said; and then, spying a tree by the wayside, he broke off to tell me that he had once seen a crow among its branches.

‘A crow?’ I repeated, struck by the ineptitude of the remark, and thinking I had heard imperfectly.

But by this time he was already filled with a new idea; hearkening with a rapt intentness, his head on one side, his face puckered; and he struck me rudely, to make me hold my peace. Then he smiled and shook his head.

‘What did you hear?’ I asked.

‘O, it is all right,’ he said; and began encouraging his mule with cries that echoed unhumanly up the mountain walls.

I looked at him more closely. He was superlatively well-built, light, and lithe and strong; he was well-featured; his yellow eyes were very large, though, perhaps, not very expressive; take him altogether, he was a pleasant-looking lad, and I had no fault to find with him, beyond that he was of a dusky hue, and inclined to hairyness; two characteristics that I disliked. It was his mind that puzzled, and yet attracted me. The doctor’s phrase — an innocent — came back to me;

and I was wondering if that were, after all, the true description, when the road began to go down into the narrow and naked chasm of a torrent. The waters thundered tumultuously in the bottom; and the ravine was filled full of the sound, the thin spray, and the claps of wind, that accompanied their descent. The scene was certainly impressive; but the road was in that part very securely walled in; the mule went steadily forward; and I was astonished to perceive the paleness of terror in the face of my companion. The voice of that wild river was inconstant, now sinking lower as if in weariness, now doubling its hoarse tones; momentary freshets seemed to swell its volume, sweeping down the gorge, raving and booming against the barrier walls; and I observed it was at each of these accessions to the clamour, that my driver more particularly winced and blanched. Some thoughts of Scottish superstition and the river Kelpie, passed across my mind; I wondered if perchance the like were prevalent in that part of Spain; and turning to Felipe, sought to draw him out.

'What is the matter?' I asked.

'O, I am afraid,' he replied.

'Of what are you afraid?' I returned. 'This seems one of the safest places on this very dangerous road.'

'It makes a noise,' he said, with a simplicity of awe that set my doubts at rest.

The lad was but a child in intellect; his mind was like his body, active and swift, but stunted in development; and I began from that time forth to regard him with a measure of pity, and to listen at first with indulgence, and at last even with pleasure, to his disjointed babble.

By about four in the afternoon we had crossed the summit of the mountain line, said farewell to the western sunshine, and began to go down upon the other side, skirting the edge of many ravines and moving through the shadow of dusky woods. There rose upon all sides the voice of falling water, not condensed and formidable as in the gorge of the river, but scattered and sounding gaily and musically from glen to glen. Here, too, the spirits of my driver mended, and he began to sing aloud in a falsetto voice, and with a singular bluntness of musical perception, never true either to melody or key, but wandering at will, and yet somehow with an effect that was natural and pleasing, like that of the of birds. As the dusk increased, I fell more and more under the spell of this artless warbling, listening and waiting for some articulate air, and still disappointed; and when at last I asked him what it was he sang — 'O,' cried he, 'I am just singing!' Above all, I was taken with a trick he had of unweariedly repeating the same note at little intervals; it was not so monotonous as you would think, or, at least, not disagreeable; and it seemed to breathe a wonderful contentment with what is, such as we love to fancy in the attitude of trees, or the quiescence of a pool.

Night had fallen dark before we came out upon a plateau, and drew up a little after, before a certain lump of superior blackness which I could only conjecture to be the residencia. Here, my guide, getting down from the cart, hooted and whistled for a long time in vain; until at last an old peasant man came towards us from somewhere in the surrounding dark, carrying a candle in his hand. By the light of this I was able to perceive a great arched doorway of a Moorish character: it was closed by iron-studded gates, in one of the leaves of which Felipe opened a wicket. The peasant carried off the cart to some out-building; but my guide and I passed through the wicket, which was closed again behind us; and by the glimmer of the candle, passed through a court, up a stone stair, along a section of an open gallery, and up more stairs again, until we came at last to the door of a great and somewhat bare apartment. This room, which I understood was to be mine, was pierced by three windows, lined with some lustrous wood disposed in panels, and carpeted with the skins of many savage animals. A bright fire burned in the chimney, and shed abroad a changeful flicker; close up to the blaze there was drawn a table, laid for supper; and in the far end a bed stood ready. I was pleased by these preparations, and said so to Felipe; and he, with the same simplicity of disposition that I held already remarked in him, warmly re-echoed my praises. 'A fine room,' he said; 'a very fine room. And fire, too; fire is good; it melts out the pleasure in your bones. And the bed,' he continued, carrying over the candle in that direction — 'see what fine sheets — how soft, how smooth, smooth;' and he passed his hand again and again over their texture, and then laid down his head and rubbed his cheeks among them with a grossness of content that somehow offended me. I took the candle from his hand (for I feared he would set the bed on fire) and walked back to the supper-table, where, perceiving a measure of wine, I poured out a cup and called to him to come and drink of it. He started to his feet at once and ran to me with a strong expression of hope; but when he saw the wine, he visibly shuddered.

'Oh, no,' he said, 'not that; that is for you. I hate it.'

'Very well, Senor,' said I; 'then I will drink to your good health, and to the prosperity of your house and family. Speaking of which,' I added, after I had drunk, 'shall I not have the pleasure of laying my salutations in person at the feet of the Senora, your mother?'

But at these words all the childishness passed out of his face, and was succeeded by a look of indescribable cunning and secrecy. He backed away from me at the same time, as though I were an animal about to leap or some dangerous fellow with a weapon, and when he had got near the door, glowered at me sullenly with contracted pupils. ‘No,’ he said at last, and the next moment was gone noiselessly out of the room; and I heard his footing die away downstairs as light as rainfall, and silence closed over the house.

After I had supped I drew up the table nearer to the bed and began to prepare for rest; but in the new position of the light, I was struck by a picture on the wall. It represented a woman, still young. To judge by her costume and the mellow unity which reigned over the canvas, she had long been dead; to judge by the vivacity of the attitude, the eyes and the features, I might have been beholding in a mirror the image of life. Her figure was very slim and strong, and of a just proportion; red tresses lay like a crown over her brow; her eyes, of a very golden brown, held mine with a look; and her face, which was perfectly shaped, was yet marred by a cruel, sullen, and sensual expression. Something in both face and figure, something exquisitely intangible, like the echo of an echo, suggested the features and bearing of my guide; and I stood awhile, unpleasantly attracted and wondering at the oddity of the resemblance. The common, carnal stock of that race, which had been originally designed for such high dames as the one now looking on me from the canvas, had fallen to baser uses, wearing country clothes, sitting on the shaft and holding the reins of a mule cart, to bring home a lodger. Perhaps an actual link subsisted; perhaps some scruple of the delicate flesh that was once clothed upon with the satin and brocade of the dead lady, now winced at the rude contact of Felipe’s frieze.

The first light of the morning shone full upon the portrait, and, as I lay awake, my eyes continued to dwell upon it with growing complacency; its beauty crept about my heart insidiously, silencing my scruples one after another; and while I knew that to love such a woman were to sign and seal one’s own sentence of degeneration, I still knew that, if she were alive, I should love her. Day after day the double knowledge of her wickedness and of my weakness grew clearer. She came to be the heroine of many day-dreams, in which her eyes led on to, and sufficiently rewarded, crimes. She cast a dark shadow on my fancy; and when I was out in the free air of heaven, taking vigorous exercise and healthily renewing the current of my blood, it was often a glad thought to me that my enchantress was safe in the grave, her wand of beauty broken, her lips closed in silence, her philtre spilt. And yet I had a half-lingering terror that she might not be dead after all, but re-arisen in the body of some descendant.

Felipe served my meals in my own apartment; and his resemblance to the portrait haunted me. At times it was not; at times, upon some change of attitude or flash of expression, it would leap out upon me like a ghost. It was above all in his ill tempers that the likeness triumphed. He certainly liked me; he was proud of my notice, which he sought to engage by many simple and childlike devices; he loved to sit close before my fire, talking his broken talk or singing his odd, endless, wordless songs, and sometimes drawing his hand over my clothes with an affectionate manner of caressing that never failed to cause in me an embarrassment of which I was ashamed. But for all that, he was capable of flashes of causeless anger and fits of sturdy sullenness. At a word of reproof, I have seen him upset the dish of which I was about to eat, and this not surreptitiously, but with defiance; and similarly at a hint of inquisition. I was not unnaturally curious, being in a strange place and surrounded by string people; but at the shadow of a question, he shrank back, lowering and dangerous. Then it was that, for a fraction of a second, this rough lad might have been the brother of the lady in the frame. But these humours were swift to pass; and the resemblance died along with them.

In these first days I saw nothing of any one but Felipe, unless the portrait is to be counted; and since the lad was plainly of weak mind, and had moments of passion, it may be wondered that I bore his dangerous neighbourhood with equanimity. As a matter of fact, it was for some time irksome; but it happened before long that I obtained over him so complete a mastery as set my disquietude at rest.

It fell in this way. He was by nature slothful, and much of a vagabond, and yet he kept by the house, and not only waited upon my wants, but laboured every day in the garden or small farm to the south of the residencia. Here he would be joined by the peasant whom I had seen on the night of my arrival, and who dwelt at the far end of the enclosure, about half a mile away, in a rude out-house; but it was plain to me that, of these two, it was Felipe who did most; and though I would sometimes see him throw down his spade and go to sleep among the very plants he had been digging, his constancy and energy were admirable in themselves, and still more so since I was well assured they were foreign to his disposition and the fruit of an ungrateful effort. But while I admired, I wondered what had called forth in a lad so shuttle-witted this enduring sense of duty. How was it sustained? I asked myself, and to what length did it prevail over his instincts? The priest was possibly his inspirer; but the priest came one day to the residencia. I saw him both come and go after an interval of close upon an hour, from a knoll where I was sketching, and all that time Felipe continued to labour undisturbed in the garden.

At last, in a very unworthy spirit, I determined to debauch the lad from his good resolutions, and, way-laying him at the gate, easily pursuaded him to join me in a ramble. It was a fine day, and the woods to which I led him were green and pleasant and sweet-smelling and alive with the hum of insects. Here he discovered himself in a fresh character, mounting up to heights of gaiety that abashed me, and displaying an energy and grace of movement that delighted the eye. He leaped, he ran round me in mere glee; he would stop, and look and listen, and seem to drink in the world like a cordial; and then he would suddenly spring into a tree with one bound, and hang and gambol there like one at home. Little as he said to me, and that of not much import, I have rarely enjoyed more stirring company; the sight of his delight was a continual feast; the speed and accuracy of his movements pleased me to the heart; and I might have been so thoughtlessly unkind as to make a habit of these wants, had not chance prepared a very rude conclusion to my pleasure. By some swiftness or dexterity the lad captured a squirrel in a tree top. He was then some way ahead of me, but I saw him drop to the ground and crouch there, crying aloud for pleasure like a child. The sound stirred my sympathies, it was so fresh and innocent; but as I bettered my pace to draw near, the cry of the squirrel knocked upon my heart. I have heard and seen much of the cruelty of lads, and above all of peasants; but what I now beheld struck me into a passion of anger. I thrust the fellow aside, plucked the poor brute out of his hands, and with swift mercy killed it. Then I turned upon the torturer, spoke to him long out of the heat of my indignation, calling him names at which he seemed to wither; and at length, pointing toward the residencia, bade him begone and leave me, for I chose to walk with men, not with vermin. He fell upon his knees, and, the words coming to him with more cleanness than usual, poured out a stream of the most touching supplications, begging me in mercy to forgive him, to forget what he had done, to look to the future. ‘O, I try so hard,’ he said. ‘O, commandante, bear with Felipe this once; he will never be a brute again!’ Thereupon, much more affected than I cared to show, I suffered myself to be persuaded, and at last shook hands with him and made it up. But the squirrel, by way of penance, I made him bury; speaking of the poor thing’s beauty, telling him what pains it had suffered, and how base a thing was the abuse of strength. ‘See, Felipe,’ said I, ‘you are strong indeed; but in my hands you are as helpless as that poor thing of the trees. Give me your hand in mine. You cannot remove it. Now suppose that I were cruel like you, and took a pleasure in pain. I only tighten my hold, and see how you suffer.’ He screamed aloud, his face stricken ashy and dotted with needle points of sweat; and when I set him free, he fell to the earth and nursed his hand and moaned over it like a baby. But he took the lesson in good part; and whether from that, or from what I had said to him, or the higher notion he now had of my bodily strength, his original affection was changed into a dog-like, adoring fidelity.

Meanwhile I gained rapidly in health. The residencia stood on the crown of a stony plateau; on every side the mountains hemmed it about; only from the roof, where was a bartizan, there might be seen between two peaks, a small segment of plain, blue with extreme distance. The air in these altitudes moved freely and largely; great clouds congregated there, and were broken up by the wind and left in tatters on the hilltops; a hoarse, and yet faint rumbling of torrents rose from all round; and one could there study all the ruder and more ancient characters of nature in something of their pristine force. I delighted from the first in the vigorous scenery and changeful weather; nor less in the antique and dilapidated mansion where I dwelt. This was a large oblong, flanked at two opposite corners by bastion-like projections, one of which commanded the door, while both were loopholed for musketry. The lower storey was, besides, naked of windows, so that the building, if garrisoned, could not be carried without artillery. It enclosed an open court planted with pomegranate trees. From this a broad flight of marble stairs ascended to an open gallery, running all round and resting, towards the court, on slender pillars. Thence again, several enclosed stairs led to the upper storeys of the house, which were thus broken up into distinct divisions. The windows, both within and without, were closely shuttered; some of the stone-work in the upper parts had fallen; the roof, in one place, had been wrecked in one of the flurries of wind which were common in these mountains; and the whole house, in the strong, beating sunlight, and standing out above a grove of stunted cork-trees, thickly laden and discoloured with dust, looked like the sleeping palace of the legend. The court, in particular, seemed the very home of slumber. A hoarse cooing of doves haunted about the eaves; the winds were excluded, but when they blew outside, the mountain dust fell here as thick as rain, and veiled the red bloom of the pomegranates; shuttered windows and the closed doors of numerous cellars, and the vacant, arches of the gallery, enclosed it; and all day long the sun made broken profiles on the four sides, and paraded the shadow of the pillars on the gallery floor. At the ground level there was, however, a certain pillared recess, which bore the marks of human habitation. Though it was open in front upon the court, it was yet provided with a chimney, where a wood fire would he always prettily blazing; and the tile floor was littered with the skins of animals.

It was in this place that I first saw my hostess. She had drawn one of the skins forward and sat in the sun, leaning against a pillar. It was her dress that struck me first of all, for it was rich and brightly coloured, and shone out in that dusty courtyard with something of the same relief as the flowers of the pomegranates. At a second look it was her beauty of person that took hold of me. As she sat back —

watching me, I thought, though with invisible eyes — and wearing at the same time an expression of almost imbecile good-humour and contentment, she showed a perfectness of feature and a quiet nobility of attitude that were beyond a statue's. I took off my hat to her in passing, and her face puckered with suspicion as swiftly and lightly as a pool ruffles in the breeze; but she paid no heed to my courtesy. I went forth on my customary walk a trifle daunted, her idol-like impassivity haunting me; and when I returned, although she was still in much the same posture, I was half surprised to see that she had moved as far as the next pillar, following the sunshine. This time, however, she addressed me with some trivial salutation, civilly enough conceived, and uttered in the same deep-chested, and yet indistinct and lisping tones, that had already baffled the utmost niceness of my hearing from her son. I answered rather at a venture; for not only did I fail to take her meaning with precision, but the sudden disclosure of her eyes disturbed me. They were unusually large, the iris golden like Felipe's, but the pupil at that moment so distended that they seemed almost black; and what affected me was not so much their size as (what was perhaps its consequence) the singular insignificance of their regard. A look more blankly stupid I have never met. My eyes dropped before it even as I spoke, and I went on my way upstairs to my own room, at once baffled and embarrassed. Yet, when I came there and saw the face of the portrait, I was again reminded of the miracle of family descent. My hostess was, indeed, both older and fuller in person; her eyes were of a different colour; her face, besides, was not only free from the ill-significance that offended and attracted me in the painting; it was devoid of either good or bad — a moral blank expressing literally naught. And yet there was a likeness, not so much speaking as immanent, not so much in any particular feature as upon the whole. It should seem, I thought, as if when the master set his signature to that grave canvas, he had not only caught the image of one smiling and false-eyed woman, but stamped the essential quality of a race.

From that day forth, whether I came or went, I was sure to find the Senora seated in the sun against a pillar, or stretched on a rug before the fire; only at times she would shift her station to the top round of the stone staircase, where she lay with the same nonchalance right across my path. In all these days, I never knew her to display the least spark of energy beyond what she expended in brushing and re-brushing her copious copper-coloured hair, or in lisping out, in the rich and broken hoarseness of her voice, her customary idle salutations to myself. These, I think, were her two chief pleasures, beyond that of mere quiescence. She seemed always proud of her remarks, as though they had been witticisms: and, indeed, though they were empty enough, like the conversation of many respectable persons, and turned on a very narrow range of subjects, they were never meaningless or incoherent; nay, they had a certain beauty of their own, breathing, as they did, of her entire contentment. Now she would speak of the warmth, in which (like her son) she greatly delighted; now of the flowers of the pomegranate trees, and now of the white doves and long-winged swallows that fanned the air of the court. The birds excited her. As they raked the eaves in their swift flight, or skimmed sidelong past her with a rush of wind, she would sometimes stir, and sit a little up, and seem to awaken from her doze of satisfaction. But for the rest of her days she lay luxuriously folded on herself and sunk in sloth and pleasure. Her invincible content at first annoyed me, but I came gradually to find repose in the spectacle, until at last it grew to be my habit to sit down beside her four times in the day, both coming and going, and to talk with her sleepily, I scarce knew of what. I had come to like her dull, almost animal neighbourhood; her beauty and her stupidity soothed and amused me. I began to find a kind of transcendental good sense in her remarks, and her unfathomable good nature moved me to admiration and envy. The liking was returned; she enjoyed my presence half-unconsciously, as a man in deep meditation may enjoy the babbling of a brook. I can scarce say she brightened when I came, for satisfaction was written on her face eternally, as on some foolish statue's; but I was made conscious of her pleasure by some more intimate communication than the sight. And one day, as I set within reach of her on the marble step, she suddenly shot forth one of her hands and patted mine. The thing was done, and she was back in her accustomed attitude, before my mind had received intelligence of the caress; and when I turned to look her in the face I could perceive no answerable sentiment. It was plain she attached no moment to the act, and I blamed myself for my own more uneasy consciousness.

The sight and (if I may so call it) the acquaintance of the mother confirmed the view I had already taken of the son. The family blood had been impoverished, perhaps by long inbreeding, which I knew to be a common error among the proud and the exclusive. No decline, indeed, was to be traced in the body, which had been handed down unimpaired in shapeliness and strength; and the faces of to-day were struck as sharply from the mint, as the face of two centuries ago that smiled upon me from the portrait. But the intelligence (that more precious heirloom) was degenerate; the treasure of ancestral memory ran low; and it had required the potent, plebeian crossing of a muleteer or mountain contrabandista to raise, what approached hebetude in the mother, into the active oddity of the son. Yet of the two, it was the mother I preferred. Of Felipe, vengeful and placable, full of starts and shyings, inconstant as a hare, I could even conceive as a creature possibly noxious. Of the mother I had no thoughts but those of kindness. And indeed, as spectators are apt ignorantly to take sides, I grew something of a partisan in the enmity which I perceived to smoulder between them. True, it seemed mostly on the mother's part. She would sometimes draw in her breath as he came near, and the pupils of her vacant eyes would contract as if with horror or fear. Her emotions, such as they were, were much upon the surface and readily shared; and this latent repulsion occupied my mind, and kept me wondering on what grounds it rested, and whether the son was certainly in fault.

I had been about ten days in the residencia, when there sprang up a high and harsh wind, carrying clouds of dust. It came out of malarious lowlands, and over several snowy sierras. The nerves of those on whom it blew were strung and jangled; their eyes smarted with the dust; their legs ached under the burthen of their body; and the touch of one hand upon another grew to be odious. The wind, besides, came down the gullies of the hills and stormed about the house with a great, hollow buzzing and whistling that was wearisome to the ear and dismally depressing to the mind. It did not so much blow in gusts as with the steady sweep of a waterfall, so that there was no remission of discomfort while it blew. But higher upon the mountain, it was probably of a more variable strength, with accesses of fury; for there came down at times a far-off wailing, infinitely grievous to hear; and at times, on one of the high shelves or terraces, there would start up, and then disperse, a tower of dust, like the smoke of in explosion.

I no sooner awoke in bed than I was conscious of the nervous tension and depression of the weather, and the effect grew stronger as the day proceeded. It was in vain that I resisted; in vain that I set forth upon my customary morning's walk; the irrational, unchanging fury of the storm had soon beat down my strength and wrecked my temper; and I returned to the residencia, glowing with dry heat, and foul and gritty with dust. The court had a forlorn appearance; now and then a glimmer of sun fled over it; now and then the wind swooped down upon the pomegranates, and scattered the blossoms, and set the window shutters clapping on the wall. In the recess the Senora was pacing to and fro with a flushed countenance and bright eyes; I thought, too, she was speaking to herself, like one in anger. But when I addressed her with my customary salutation, she only replied by a sharp gesture and continued her walk. The weather had distempered even this impassive creature; and as I went on upstairs I was the less ashamed of my own discomposure.

All day the wind continued; and I sat in my room and made a feint of reading, or walked up and down, and listened to the riot overhead. Night fell, and I had not so much as a candle. I began to long for some society, and stole down to the court. It was now plunged in the blue of the first darkness; but the recess was redly lighted by the fire. The wood had been piled high, and was crowned by a shock of flames, which the draught of the chimney brandished to and fro. In this strong and shaken brightness the Senora continued pacing from wall to wall with disconnected gestures, clasping her hands, stretching forth her arms, throwing back her head as in appeal to heaven. In these disordered movements the beauty and grace of the woman showed more clearly; but there was a light in her eye that struck on me unpleasantly; and when I had looked on awhile in silence, and seemingly unobserved, I turned tail as I had come, and groped my way back again to my own chamber.

By the time Felipe brought my supper and lights, my nerve was utterly gone; and, had the lad been such as I was used to seeing him, I should have kept him (even by force had that been necessary) to take off the edge from my distasteful solitude. But on Felipe, also, the wind had exercised its influence. He had been feverish all day; now that the night had come he was fallen into a low and tremulous humour that reacted on my own. The sight of his scared face, his starts and pallors and sudden harkenings, unstrung me; and when he dropped and broke a dish, I fairly leaped out of my seat.

‘I think we are all mad to-day,’ said I, affecting to laugh.

‘It is the black wind,’ he replied dolefully. ‘You feel as if you must do something, and you don’t know what it is.’

I noted the aptness of the description; but, indeed, Felipe had sometimes a strange felicity in rendering into words the sensations of the body. ‘And your mother, too,’ said I; ‘she seems to feel this weather much. Do you not fear she may be unwell?’

He stared at me a little, and then said, ‘No,’ almost defiantly; and the next moment, carrying his hand to his brow, cried out lamentably on the wind and the noise that made his head go round like a millwheel. ‘Who can be well?’ he cried; and, indeed, I could only echo his question, for I was disturbed enough myself.

I went to bed early, wearied with day-long restlessness, but the poisonous nature of the wind, and its ungodly and unintermittent uproar, would not suffer me to sleep. I lay there and tossed, my nerves and senses on the stretch. At times I would doze, dream horribly, and wake again; and these snatches of oblivion confused me as to time. But it must have been late on in the night, when I was suddenly startled by an outbreak of pitiable and hateful cries. I leaped from my bed, supposing I had dreamed; but the cries still continued to fill the house, cries of pain, I thought, but certainly of rage also, and so savage and discordant that they shocked the heart. It was no illusion; some living thing, some lunatic or some wild animal, was being foully tortured. The thought of Felipe and the squirrel flashed into my mind, and I ran to the door, but it had been locked from the outside; and I might shake it as I pleased, I was a fast prisoner. Still the cries continued. Now they would dwindle down into a moaning that seemed to be articulate, and at these times I made sure they must be human; and again they would break forth and fill the house with ravings worthy of hell. I stood at the door and gave ear to them, till at, last they died away. Long after that, I still lingered and still continued to hear them mingle in fancy with the storming of the wind; and when at last I crept to my bed, it was with a deadly sickness and a blackness of horror on my heart.

It was little wonder if I slept no more. Why had I been locked in? What had passed? Who was the author of these indescribable and shocking cries? A human being? It was inconceivable. A beast? The cries were scarce quite bestial; and what animal, short of a lion or a tiger, could thus shake the solid walls of the residencia? And while I was thus turning over the elements of the mystery, it came into my mind that I had not yet set eyes upon the daughter of the house. What was more probable than that the daughter of the Senora, and the sister of Felipe, should be herself insane? Or, what more likely than that these ignorant and half-witted people should seek to manage an afflicted kinswoman by violence? Here was a solution; and yet when I called to mind the cries (which I never did without a shuddering chill) it seemed altogether insufficient: not even cruelty could wring such cries from madness. But of one thing I was sure: I could not live in a house where such a thing was half conceivable, and not probe the matter home and, if necessary, interfere.

The next day came, the wind had blown itself out, and there was nothing to remind me of the business of the night. Felipe came to my bedside with obvious cheerfulness; as I passed through the court, the Senora was sunning herself with her accustomed immobility; and when I issued from the gateway, I found the whole face of nature austerely smiling, the heavens of a cold blue, and sown with great cloud islands, and the mountain-sides mapped forth into provinces of light and shadow. A short walk restored me to myself, and renewed within me the resolve to plumb this mystery; and when, from the vantage of my knoll, I had seen Felipe pass forth to his labours in the garden, I returned at once to the residencia to put my design in practice. The Senora appeared plunged in slumber; I stood awhile and marked her, but she did not stir; even if my design were indiscreet, I had little to fear from such a guardian; and turning away, I mounted to the gallery and began my exploration of the house.

All morning I went from one door to another, and entered spacious and faded chambers, some rudely shuttered, some receiving their full charge of daylight, all empty and unhomely. It was a rich house, on which Time had breathed his tarnish and dust had scattered disillusion. The spider swung there; the bloated tarantula scampered on the cornices; ants had their crowded highways on the floor of halls of audience; the big and foul fly, that lives on carrion and is often the messenger of death, had set up his nest in the rotten woodwork, and buzzed heavily about the rooms. Here and there a stool or two, a couch, a bed, or a great carved chair remained behind, like islets on the bare floors, to testify of man's bygone habitation; and everywhere the walls were set with the portraits of the dead. I could judge, by these decaying effigies, in the house of what a great and what a handsome race I was then wandering. Many of the men wore orders on their breasts and had the port of noble offices; the women were all richly attired; the canvases most of them by famous hands. But it was not so much these evidences of greatness that took hold upon my mind, even contrasted, as they were, with the present depopulation and decay of that great house. It was rather the parable of family life that I read in this succession of fair faces and shapely bodies. Never before had I so realised the miracle of the continued race, the creation and recreation, the weaving and changing and handing down of fleshly elements. That a child should be born of its mother, that it should grow and clothe itself (we know not how) with humanity, and put on inherited looks, and turn its head with the manner of one ascendant, and offer its hand with the gesture of another, are wonders dulled for us by repetition. But in the singular unity of look, in the common features and common bearing, of all these painted generations on the walls of the residencia, the miracle started out and looked me in the face. And an ancient mirror falling opportunely in my way, I stood and read my own features a long while, tracing out on either hand the filaments of descent and the bonds that knit me with my family.

At last, in the course of these investigations, I opened the door of a chamber that bore the marks of habitation. It was of large proportions and faced to the north, where the mountains were most wildly figured. The embers of a fire smouldered and smoked upon the hearth, to which a chair had been drawn close. And yet the aspect of the chamber was ascetic to the degree of sternness; the chair was uncushioned; the floor and walls were naked; and beyond the books which lay here and there in some confusion, there was no instrument of either work or pleasure. The sight of books in the house of such a family exceedingly amazed me; and I began with a great hurry, and in momentary fear of interruption, to go from one to another and hastily inspect their character. They were of all sorts, devotional, historical, and scientific, but mostly of a great age and in the Latin tongue. Some I could see to bear the marks of constant study; others had been torn across and tossed aside as if in petulance or disapproval. Lastly, as I cruised about that empty chamber, I espied some papers written upon with pencil on a table near the window. An unthinking curiosity led me to take one up. It bore a copy of verses, very roughly metred in the original Spanish, and which I may render somewhat thus —

Pleasure approached with pain and shame,
Grief with a wreath of lilies came.
Pleasure showed the lovely sun;
Jesu dear, how sweet it shone!
Grief with her worn hand pointed on,
Jesu dear, to thee!

Shame and confusion at once fell on me; and, laying down the paper, I beat an immediate retreat from the apartment. Neither Felipe nor his mother could have read the books nor written these rough but feeling verses. It was plain I had stumbled with sacrilegious feet into the room of the daughter of the house. God knows, my own heart most sharply punished me for my indiscretion. The thought that I had thus secretly pushed my way into the confidence of a girl so strangely situated, and the fear that she might somehow come to hear of it, oppressed me like guilt. I blamed myself besides for my suspicions of the night before; wondered that I should ever have attributed those shocking cries to one of whom I now conceived as of a saint, spectral of mien, wasted with maceration, bound up in the practices of a mechanical devotion, and dwelling in a great isolation of soul with her incongruous relatives; and as I leaned on the balustrade of the gallery and looked down into the bright close of pomegranates and at the gaily dressed and somnolent woman, who just then stretched herself and delicately licked her lips as in the very sensuality of sloth, my mind swiftly compared the scene with the cold chamber looking northward on the mountains, where the daughter dwelt.

That same afternoon, as I sat upon my knoll, I saw the Padre enter the gates of the residencia. The revelation of the daughter's character had struck home to my fancy, and almost blotted out the horrors of the night before; but at sight of this worthy man the memory revived. I descended, then, from the knoll, and making a circuit among the woods, posted myself by the wayside to await his passage. As soon as he appeared I stepped forth and introduced myself as the lodger of the residencia. He had a very strong, honest countenance, on which it was easy to read the mingled emotions with which he regarded me, as a foreigner, a heretic, and yet one who had been wounded for the good cause. Of the family at the residencia he spoke with reserve, and yet with respect. I mentioned that I had not yet seen the daughter, whereupon he remarked that that was as it should be, and looked at me a little askance. Lastly, I plucked up courage to refer to the cries that had disturbed me in the night. He heard me out in silence, and then stopped and partly turned about, as though to mark beyond doubt that he was dismissing me.

‘Do you take tobacco powder?’ said he, offering his snuff-box; and then, when I had refused, ‘I am an old man,’ he added, ‘and I may be allowed to remind you that you are a guest.’

‘I have, then, your authority,’ I returned, firmly enough, although I flushed at the implied reproof, ‘to let things take their course, and not to interfere?’

He said ‘yes,’ and with a somewhat uneasy salute turned and left me where I was. But he had done two things: he had set my conscience at rest, and he had awakened my delicacy. I made a great effort, once more dismissed the recollections of the night, and fell once more to brooding on my saintly poetess. At the same time, I could not quite forget that I had been locked in, and that night when Felipe brought me my supper I attacked him warily on both points of interest.

‘I never see your sister,’ said I casually.

‘Oh, no,’ said he; ‘she is a good, good girl,’ and his mind instantly veered to something else.

‘Your sister is pious, I suppose?’ I asked in the next pause.

‘Oh!’ he cried, joining his hands with extreme fervour, ‘a saint; it is she that keeps me up.’

‘You are very fortunate,’ said I, ‘for the most of us, I am afraid, and myself among the number, are better at going down.’

‘Senor,’ said Felipe earnestly, ‘I would not say that. You should not tempt your angel. If one goes down, where is he to stop?’

‘Why, Felipe,’ said I, ‘I had no guess you were a preacher, and I may say a good one; but I suppose that is your sister’s doing?’

He nodded at me with round eyes.

‘Well, then,’ I continued, ‘she has doubtless reproved you for your sin of cruelty?’

‘Twelve times!’ he cried; for this was the phrase by which the odd creature expressed the sense of frequency. ‘And I told her you had done so — I remembered that,’ he added proudly — ’and she was pleased.’

‘Then, Felipe,’ said I, ‘what were those cries that I heard last night? for surely they were cries of some creature in suffering.’

‘The wind,’ returned Felipe, looking in the fire.

I took his hand in mine, at which, thinking it to be a caress, he smiled with a brightness of pleasure that came near disarming my resolve. But I trod the weakness down. ‘The wind,’ I repeated; ‘and yet I think it was this hand,' holding it up, 'that had first locked me in.' The lad shook visibly, but answered never a word. 'Well,' said I, 'I am a stranger and a guest. It is not my part either to meddle or to judge in your affairs; in these you shall take your sister's counsel, which I cannot doubt to be excellent. But in so far as concerns my own I will be no man's prisoner, and I demand that key.' Half an hour later my door was suddenly thrown open, and the key tossed ringing on the floor.

A day or two after I came in from a walk a little before the point of noon. The Senora was lying lapped in slumber on the threshold of the recess; the pigeons dozed below the eaves like snowdrifts; the house was under a deep spell of noontide quiet; and only a wandering and gentle wind from the mountain stole round the galleries, rustled among the pomegranates, and pleasantly stirred the shadows. Something in the stillness moved me to imitation, and I went very lightly across the court and up the marble staircase. My foot was on the topmost round, when a door opened, and I found myself face to face with Olalla. Surprise transfixed me; her loveliness struck to my heart; she glowed in the deep shadow of the gallery, a gem of colour; her eyes took hold upon mine and clung there, and bound us together like the joining of hands; and the moments we thus stood face to face, drinking each other in, were sacramental and the wedding of souls. I know not how long it was before I awoke out of a deep trance, and, hastily bowing, passed on into the upper stair. She did not move, but followed me with her great, thirsting eyes; and as I passed out of sight it seemed to me as if she paled and faded.

In my own room, I opened the window and looked out, and could not think what change had come upon that austere field of mountains that it should thus sing and shine under the lofty heaven. I had seen her — Olalla! And the stone crags answered, Olalla! and the dumb, unfathomable azure answered, Olalla! The pale saint of my dreams had vanished for ever; and in her place I beheld this maiden on whom God had lavished the richest colours and the most exuberant energies of life, whom he had made active as a deer, slender as a reed, and in whose great eyes he had lighted the torches of the soul. The thrill of her young life, strung like a wild animal's, had entered into me; the force of soul that had looked out from her eyes and conquered mine, mantled about my heart and sprang to my lips in singing. She passed through my veins: she was one with me.

I will not say that this enthusiasm declined; rather my soul held out in its ecstasy as in a strong castle, and was there besieged by cold and sorrowful considerations. I could not doubt but that I loved her at first sight, and already with a quivering ardour that was strange to my experience. What then was to follow? She was the child of an afflicted house, the Senora's daughter, the sister of Felipe; she bore it even in her beauty. She had the lightness and swiftness of the one, swift as an arrow, light as dew; like the other, she shone on the pale background of the world with the brilliancy of flowers. I could not call by the name of brother that half-witted lad, nor by the name of mother that immovable and lovely thing of flesh, whose silly eyes and perpetual simper now recurred to my mind like something hateful. And if I could not marry, what then? She was helplessly unprotected; her eyes, in that single and long glance which had been all our intercourse, had confessed a weakness equal to my own; but in my heart I knew her for the student of the cold northern chamber, and the writer of the sorrowful lines; and this was a knowledge to disarm a brute. To flee was more than I could find courage for; but I registered a vow of unsleeping circumspection.

As I turned from the window, my eyes alighted on the portrait. It had fallen dead, like a candle after sunrise; it followed me with eyes of paint. I knew it to be like, and marvelled at the tenacity of type in that declining race; but the likeness was swallowed up in difference. I remembered how it had seemed to me a thing unapproachable in the life, a creature rather of the painter's craft than of the modesty of nature, and I marvelled at the thought, and exulted in the image of Olalla. Beauty I had seen before, and not been charmed, and I had been often drawn to women, who were not beautiful except to me; but in Olalla all that I desired and had not dared to imagine was united.

I did not see her the next day, and my heart ached and my eyes longed for her, as men long for morning. But the day after, when I returned, about my usual hour, she was once more on the gallery, and our looks once more met and embraced. I would have spoken, I would have drawn near to her; but strongly as she plucked at my heart, drawing me like a magnet, something yet more imperious withheld me; and I could only bow and pass by; and she, leaving my salutation unanswered, only followed me with her noble eyes.

I had now her image by rote, and as I conned the traits in memory it seemed as if I read her very heart. She was dressed with something of her mother's coquetry, and love of positive colour. Her robe, which I know she must have made with her own hands, clung about her with a cunning grace. After the fashion of that country, besides, her bodice stood open in the middle, in a long slit, and here, in spite of the poverty of the house, a gold coin, hanging by a ribbon, lay on her brown bosom. These were proofs, had any been needed, of her inborn delight in life and her own loveliness. On the other hand, in her eyes that hung upon mine, I could read depth beyond depth of passion and sadness, lights of poetry and hope, blacknesses of despair, and thoughts that were above the earth. It was a lovely body, but the inmate, the soul, was more than worthy of that lodging. Should I leave this incomparable flower to wither unseen on these rough mountains? Should I despise the great gift offered me in the eloquent silence of her eyes? Here was a soul immured; should I not burst its prison? All side considerations fell off from me; were she the child of Herod I swore I should make her mine; and that very evening I set myself, with a mingled sense of treachery and disgrace, to captivate the brother. Perhaps I read him with more favourable eyes, perhaps the thought of his sister always summoned up the better qualities of that imperfect soul; but he had never seemed to me so amiable, and his very likeness to Olalla, while it annoyed, yet softened me.

A third day passed in vain — an empty desert of hours. I would not lose a chance, and loitered all afternoon in the court where (to give myself a countenance) I spoke more than usual with the Senora. God knows it was with a most tender and sincere interest that I now studied her; and even as for Felipe, so now for the mother, I was conscious of a growing warmth of toleration. And yet I wondered. Even while I spoke with her, she would doze off into a little sleep, and presently awake again without embarrassment; and this composure staggered me. And again, as I marked her make infinitesimal changes in her posture, savouring and lingering on the bodily pleasure of the movement, I was driven to wonder at this depth of passive sensuality. She lived in her body; and her consciousness was all sunk into and disseminated through her members, where it luxuriously dwelt. Lastly, I could not grow accustomed to her eyes. Each time she turned on me these great beautiful and meaningless orbs, wide open to the day, but closed against human inquiry — each time I had occasion to observe the lively changes of her pupils which expanded and contracted in a breath — I know not what it was came over me, I can find no name for the mingled feeling of disappointment, annoyance, and distaste that jarred along my nerves. I tried her on a variety of subjects, equally in vain; and at last led the talk to her daughter. But even there she proved indifferent; said she was pretty, which (as with children) was her highest word of commendation, but was plainly incapable of any higher thought; and when I remarked that Olalla seemed silent, merely yawned in my face and replied that speech was of no great use when you had nothing to say. ‘People speak much, very much,’ she added, looking at me with expanded pupils; and then again yawned and again showed me a mouth that was as dainty as a toy. This time I took the hint, and, leaving her to her repose, went up into my own chamber to sit by the open window, looking on the hills and not beholding them, sunk in lustrous and deep dreams, and hearkening in fancy to the note of a voice that I had never heard.

I awoke on the fifth morning with a brightness of anticipation that seemed to challenge fate. I was sure of myself, light of heart and foot, and resolved to put my love incontinently to the touch of knowledge. It should lie no longer under the bonds of silence, a dumb thing, living by the eye only, like the love of beasts; but should now put on the spirit, and enter upon the joys of the complete human intimacy. I thought of it with wild hopes, like a voyager to El Dorado; into that unknown and lovely country of her soul, I no longer trembled to adventure. Yet when I did indeed encounter her, the same force of passion descended on me and at once submerged my mind; speech seemed to drop away from me like a childish habit; and I but drew near to her as the giddy man draws near to the margin of a gulf. She drew back from me a little as I came; but her eyes did not waver from mine, and these lured me forward. At last, when I was already within reach of her, I stopped. Words were denied me; if I advanced I could but clasp her to my heart in silence; and all that was sane in me, all that was still unconquered, revolted against the thought of such an accost. So we stood for a second, all our life in our eyes, exchanging salvos of attraction and yet each resisting; and then, with a great effort of the will, and conscious at the same time of a sudden bitterness of disappointment, I turned and went away in the same silence.

What power lay upon me that I could not speak? And she, why was she also silent? Why did she draw away before me dumbly, with fascinated eyes? Was this love? or was it a mere brute attraction, mindless and inevitable, like that of the magnet for the steel? We had never spoken, we were wholly strangers: and yet an influence, strong as the grasp of a giant, swept us silently together. On my side, it filled me with impatience; and yet I was sure that she was worthy; I had seen her books, read her verses, and thus, in a sense, divined the soul of my mistress. But on her side, it struck me almost cold. Of me, she knew nothing but my bodily favour; she was drawn to me as stones fall to the earth; the laws that rule the earth conducted her, unconsenting, to my arms; and I drew back at the thought of such a bridal, and began to be jealous for myself. It was not thus that I desired to be loved. And then I began to fall into a great pity for the girl herself. I thought how sharp must be her mortification, that she, the student, the recluse, Felipe's saintly monitress, should have thus confessed an overweening weakness for a man with whom she had never exchanged a word. And at the coming of pity, all other thoughts were swallowed up; and I longed only to find and console and reassure her; to tell her how wholly her love was returned on my side, and how her choice, even if blindly made, was not unworthy.

The next day it was glorious weather; depth upon depth of blue over-canopied the mountains; the sun shone wide; and the wind in the trees and the many falling torrents in the mountains filled the air with delicate and haunting music. Yet I was prostrated with sadness. My heart wept for the sight of Olalla, as a child weeps for its mother. I sat down on a boulder on the verge of the low cliffs that bound the plateau to the north. Thence I looked down into the wooded valley of a stream, where no foot came. In the mood I was in, it was even touching to behold the place untenanted; it lacked Olalla; and I thought of the delight and glory of a life passed wholly with her in that strong air, and among these rugged and lovely surroundings, at first with a whimpering sentiment, and then again with such a fiery joy that I seemed to grow in strength and stature, like a Samson.

And then suddenly I was aware of Olalla drawing near. She appeared out of a grove of cork-trees, and came straight towards me; and I stood up and waited. She seemed in her walking a creature of such life and fire and lightness as amazed me; yet she came quietly and slowly. Her energy was in the slowness; but for inimitable strength, I felt she would have run, she would have flown to me. Still, as she approached, she kept her eyes lowered to the ground; and when she had drawn quite near, it was without one glance that she addressed me. At the first note of her voice I started. It was for this I had been waiting; this was the last test of my love. And lo, her enunciation was precise and clear, not lisping and incomplete like that of her family; and the voice, though deeper than usual with women, was still both youthful and womanly. She spoke in a rich chord; golden contralto strains mingled with hoarseness, as the red threads were mingled with the brown among her tresses. It was not only a voice that spoke to my heart directly; but it spoke to me of her. And yet her words immediately plunged me back upon despair.

‘You will go away,’ she said, ‘to-day.’

Her example broke the bonds of my speech; I felt as lightened of a weight, or as if a spell had been dissolved. I know not in what words I answered; but, standing before her on the cliffs, I poured out the whole ardour of my love, telling her that I lived upon the thought of her, slept only to dream of her loveliness, and would gladly forswear my country, my language, and my friends, to live for ever by her side. And then, strongly commanding myself, I changed the note; I reassured, I comforted her; I told her I had divined in her a pious and heroic spirit, with which I was worthy to sympathise, and which I longed to share and lighten. ‘Nature,’ I told her, ‘was the voice of God, which men disobey at peril; and if we were thus humbly drawn together, ay, even as by a miracle of love, it must imply a divine fitness in our souls; we must be made,’ I said — ’made for one another. We should be mad rebels,’ I cried out — ’mad rebels against God, not to obey this instinct.’

She shook her head. ‘You will go to-day,’ she repeated, and then with a gesture, and in a sudden, sharp note — ’no, not to-day,’ she cried, ‘to-morrow!’

But at this sign of relenting, power came in upon me in a tide. I stretched out my arms and called upon her name; and she leaped to me and clung to me. The hills rocked about us, the earth quailed; a shock as of a blow went through me and left me blind and dizzy. And the next moment she had thrust me back, broken rudely from my arms, and fled with the speed of a deer among the cork-trees.

I stood and shouted to the mountains; I turned and went back towards the residencia, waltzing upon air. She sent me away, and yet I had but to call upon her name and she came to me. These were but the weaknesses of girls, from which even she, the strangest of her sex, was not exempted. Go? Not I, Olalla — O, not I, Olalla, my Olalla! A bird sang near by; and in that season, birds were rare. It bade me be of good cheer. And once more the whole countenance of nature, from the ponderous and stable mountains down to the lightest leaf and the smallest darting fly in the shadow of the groves, began to stir before me and to put on the lineaments of life and wear a face of awful joy. The sunshine struck upon the hills, strong as a hammer on the anvil, and the hills shook; the earth, under that vigorous insulation, yielded up heady scents; the woods smouldered in the blaze. I felt the thrill of travail and delight run through the earth. Something elemental, something rude, violent, and savage, in the love that sang in my heart, was like a key to nature’s secrets; and the very stones that rattled under my feet appeared alive and friendly. Olalla! Her touch had quickened, and renewed, and strung me up to the old pitch of concert with the rugged earth, to a swelling of the soul that men learn to forget in their polite assemblies. Love burned in me like rage; tenderness waxed fierce; I hated, I adored, I pitied, I revered her with ecstasy. She seemed the link that bound me in with dead things on the one hand, and with our pure and pitying God upon the other: a thing brutal and divine, and akin at once to the innocence and to the unbridled forces of the earth.

My head thus reeling, I came into the courtyard of the residencia, and the sight of the mother struck me like a revelation. She sat there, all sloth and contentment, blinking under the strong sunshine, branded with a passive enjoyment, a creature set quite apart, before whom my ardour fell away like a thing ashamed. I stopped a moment, and, commanding such shaken tones as I was able, said a word or two. She looked at me with her unfathomable kindness; her voice in reply sounded vaguely out of the realm of peace in which she slumbered, and there fell on my mind, for the first time, a sense of respect for one so uniformly innocent and happy, and I passed on in a kind of wonder at myself, that I should be so much disquieted.

On my table there lay a piece of the same yellow paper I had seen in the north room; it was written on with pencil in the same hand, Olalla's hand, and I picked it up with a sudden sinking of alarm, and read, 'If you have any kindness for Olalla, if you have any chivalry for a creature sorely wrought, go from here to-day; in pity, in honour, for the sake of Him who died, I supplicate that you shall go.' I looked at this awhile in mere stupidity, then I began to awaken to a weariness and horror of life; the sunshine darkened outside on the bare hills, and I began to shake like a man in terror. The vacancy thus suddenly opened in my life unmanned me like a physical void. It was not my heart, it was not my happiness, it was life itself that was involved. I could not lose her. I said so, and stood repeating it. And then, like one in a dream, I moved to the window, put forth my hand to open the casement, and thrust it through the pane. The blood spurted from my wrist; and with an instantaneous quietude and command of myself, I pressed my thumb on the little leaping fountain, and reflected what to do. In that empty room there was nothing to my purpose; I felt, besides, that I required assistance. There shot into my mind a hope that Olalla herself might be my helper, and I turned and went down stairs, still keeping my thumb upon the wound.

There was no sign of either Olalla or Felipe, and I addressed myself to the recess, whither the Senora had now drawn quite back and sat dozing close before the fire, for no degree of heat appeared too much for her.

'Pardon me,' said I, 'if I disturb you, but I must apply to you for help.'

She looked up sleepily and asked me what it was, and with the very words I thought she drew in her breath with a widening of the nostrils and seemed to come suddenly and fully alive.

'I have cut myself,' I said, 'and rather badly. See!' And I held out my two hands from which the blood was oozing and dripping.

Her great eyes opened wide, the pupils shrank into points; a veil seemed to fall from her face, and leave it sharply expressive and yet inscrutable. And as I still stood, marvelling a little at her disturbance, she came swiftly up to me, and stooped and caught me by the hand; and the next moment my hand was at her mouth, and she had bitten me to the bone. The pang of the bite, the sudden spurting of blood, and the monstrous horror of the act, flashed through me all in one, and I beat her back; and she sprang at me again and again, with bestial cries, cries that I recognised, such cries as had awakened me on the night of the high wind. Her strength was like that of madness; mine was rapidly ebbing with the loss of blood; my mind besides was whirling with the abhorrent strangeness of the onslaught, and I was already forced against the wall, when Olalla ran betwixt us, and Felipe, following at a bound, pinned down his mother on the floor.

A trance-like weakness fell upon me; I saw, heard, and felt, but I was incapable of movement. I heard the struggle roll to and fro upon the floor, the yells of that catamount ringing up to Heaven as she strove to reach me. I felt Olalla clasp me in her arms, her hair falling on my face, and, with the strength of a man, raise and half drag, half carry me upstairs into my own room, where she cast me down upon the bed. Then I saw her hasten to the door and lock it, and stand an instant listening to the savage cries that shook the residencia. And then, swift and light as a thought, she was again beside me, binding up my hand, laying it in her bosom, moaning and mourning over it with dove-like sounds. They were not words that came to her, they were sounds more beautiful than speech, infinitely touching, infinitely tender; and yet as I lay there, a thought stung to my heart, a thought wounded me like a sword, a thought, like a worm in a flower, profaned the holiness of my love. Yes, they were beautiful sounds, and they were inspired by human tenderness; but was their beauty human?

All day I lay there. For a long time the cries of that nameless female thing, as she struggled with her half-witted whelp, resounded through the house, and pierced me with despairing sorrow and disgust. They were the death-cry of my love; my love was murdered; was not only dead, but an offence to me; and yet, think as I pleased, feel as I must, it still swelled within me like a storm of sweetness, and my heart melted at her looks and touch. This horror that had sprung out, this doubt upon Olalla, this savage and bestial strain that ran not only through the whole behaviour of her family, but found a place in the very foundations and story of our love — though it appalled, though it shocked and sickened me, was yet not of power to break the knot of my infatuation.

When the cries had ceased, there came a scraping at the door, by which I knew Felipe was without; and Olalla went and spoke to him — I know not what. With that exception, she stayed close beside me, now kneeling by my bed and fervently praying, now sitting with her eyes upon mine. So then, for these six hours I drank in her beauty, and silently perused the story in her face. I saw the golden coin hover on her breaths; I saw her eyes darken and brighter, and still speak no language but that of an unfathomable kindness; I saw the faultless face, and, through the robe, the lines of the faultless body. Night came at last, and in the growing darkness of the chamber, the sight of her slowly melted; but even then the touch of her smooth hand lingered in mine and talked with me. To lie thus in deadly weakness and drink in the traits of the beloved, is to reawake to love from whatever shock of disillusion. I reasoned with myself; and I shut my eyes on horrors, and again I was very bold to accept the worst. What mattered it, if that imperious sentiment survived; if her eyes still beckoned and attached me; if now, even as before, every fibre of my dull body yearned and turned to her? Late on in the night some strength revived in me, and I spoke: —

‘Olalla,’ I said, ‘nothing matters; I ask nothing; I am content; I love you.’

She knelt down awhile and prayed, and I devoutly respected her devotions. The moon had begun to shine in upon one side of each of the three windows, and make a misty clearness in the room, by which I saw her indistinctly. When she rearose she made the sign of the cross.

‘It is for me to speak,’ she said, ‘and for you to listen. I know; you can but guess. I prayed, how I prayed for you to leave this place. I begged it of you, and I know you would have granted me even this; or if not, O let me think so!’

‘I love you,’ I said.

‘And yet you have lived in the world,’ she said; after a pause, ‘you are a man and wise; and I am but a child. Forgive me, if I seem to teach, who am as ignorant as the trees of the mountain; but those who learn much do but skim the face of knowledge; they seize the laws, they conceive the dignity of the design — the horror of the living fact fades from their memory. It is we who sit at home with evil who remember, I think, and are warned and pity. Go, rather, go now, and keep me in mind. So I shall have a life in the cherished places of your memory: a life as much my own, as that which I lead in this body.’

‘I love you,’ I said once more; and reaching out my weak hand, took hers, and carried it to my lips, and kissed it. Nor did she resist, but winced a little; and I could see her look upon me with a frown that was not unkindly, only sad and baffled. And then it seemed she made a call upon her resolution; plucked my hand towards her, herself at the same time leaning somewhat forward, and laid it on the beating of her heart. ‘There,’ she cried, ‘you feel the very footfall of my life. It only moves for you; it is yours. But is it even mine? It is mine indeed to offer you, as I might take the coin from my neck, as I might break a live branch from a tree, and give it you. And yet not mine! I dwell, or I think I dwell (if I exist at all), somewhere apart, an impotent prisoner, and carried about and deafened by a mob that I disown. This capsule, such as throbs against the sides of animals, knows you at a touch for its master; ay, it loves you! But my soul, does my soul? I think not; I know not, fearing to ask. Yet when you spoke to me your words were of the soul; it is of the soul that you ask — it is only from the soul that you would take me.’

‘Olalla,’ I said, ‘the soul and the body are one, and mostly so in love. What the body chooses, the soul loves; where the body clings, the soul cleaves; body for body, soul to soul, they come together at God’s signal; and the lower part (if we can call aught low) is only the footstool and foundation of the highest.’

‘Have you,’ she said, ‘seen the portraits in the house of my fathers? Have you looked at my mother or at Felipe? Have your eyes never rested on that picture that hangs by your bed? She who sat for it died ages ago; and she did evil in her life. But, look-again: there is my hand to the least line, there are my eyes and my hair. What is mine, then, and what am I? If not a curve in this poor body of mine (which you love, and for the sake of which you dotingly dream that you love me) not a gesture that I can frame, not a tone of my voice, not any look from my eyes, no, not even now when I speak to him I love, but has belonged to others? Others, ages dead, have wooed other men with my eyes; other men have heard the pleading of the same voice that now sounds in your ears. The hands of the dead are in my bosom; they move me, they pluck me, they guide me; I am a puppet at their command; and I but reinform features and attributes that have long been laid aside from evil in the quiet of the grave. Is it me you love, friend? or the race that made me? The girl who does not know and cannot answer for the least portion of herself? or the stream of which she is a transitory eddy, the tree of which she is the passing fruit? The race exists; it is old, it is ever young, it carries its eternal destiny in its bosom; upon it, like waves upon the sea, individual succeeds to individual, mocked with a semblance of self-control, but they are nothing. We speak of the soul, but the soul is in the race.’

‘You fret against the common law,’ I said. ‘You rebel against the voice of God, which he has made so winning to convince, so imperious to command. Hear it, and how it speaks between us! Your hand clings to mine, your heart leaps at my touch, the unknown elements of which we are compounded awake and run together at a look; the clay of the earth remembers its independent life and yearns to join us; we are drawn together as the stars are turned about in space, or as the tides ebb and flow, by things older and greater than we ourselves.’

‘Alas!’ she said, ‘what can I say to you? My fathers, eight hundred years ago, ruled all this province: they were wise, great, cunning, and cruel; they were a picked race of the Spanish; their flags led in war; the king called them his cousin; the people, when the rope was slung for them or when they returned and found their hovels smoking, blasphemed their name. Presently a change began. Man has risen; if he has sprung from the brutes, he can descend again to the same level. The breath of weariness blew on their humanity and the cords relaxed; they began to go down; their minds fell on sleep, their passions awoke in gusts, heady and senseless like the wind in the gutters of the mountains; beauty was still handed down, but no longer the guiding wit nor the human heart; the seed passed on, it was wrapped in flesh, the flesh covered the bones, but they were the bones and the flesh of brutes, and their mind was as the mind of flies. I speak to you as I dare; but you have seen for yourself how the wheel has gone backward with my doomed race. I stand, as it were, upon a little rising ground in this desperate descent, and see both before and behind, both what we have lost and to what we are condemned to go farther downward. And shall I — I that dwell apart in the house of the dead, my body, loathing its ways — shall I repeat the spell? Shall I bind another spirit, reluctant as my own, into this bewitched and tempest-broken tenement that I now suffer in? Shall I hand down this cursed vessel of humanity, charge it with fresh life as with fresh poison, and dash it, like a fire, in the faces of posterity? But my vow has been given; the race shall cease from off the earth. At this hour my brother is making ready; his foot will soon be on the stair; and you will go with him and pass out of my sight for ever. Think of me sometimes as one to whom the lesson of life was very harshly told, but who heard it with courage; as one who loved you indeed, but who hated herself so deeply that her love was hateful to her; as one who sent you away and yet would have longed to keep you for ever; who had no dearer hope than to forget you, and no greater fear than to be forgotten.'

She had drawn towards the door as she spoke, her rich voice sounding softer and farther away; and with the last word she was gone, and I lay alone in the moonlit chamber. What I might have done had not I lain bound by my extreme weakness, I know not; but as it was there fell upon me a great and blank despair. It was not long before there shone in at the door the ruddy glimmer of a lantern, and Felipe coming, charged me without a word upon his shoulders, and carried me down to the great gate, where the cart was waiting. In the moonlight the hills stood out sharply, as if they were of cardboard; on the glimmering surface of the plateau, and from among the low trees which swung together and sparkled in the wind, the great black cube of the residencia stood out bulkily, its mass only broken by three dimly lighted windows in the northern front above the gate. They were Olalla's windows, and as the cart jolted onwards I kept my eyes fixed upon them till, where the road dipped into a valley, they were lost to my view forever. Felipe walked in silence beside the shafts, but from time to time he would cheek the mule and seem to look back upon me; and at length drew quite near and laid his hand upon my head. There was such kindness in the touch, and such a simplicity, as of the brutes, that tears broke from me like the bursting of an artery.

'Felipe,' I said, 'take me where they will ask no questions.'

He said never a word, but he turned his mule about, end for end, retraced some part of the way we had gone, and, striking into another path, led me to the mountain village, which was, as we say in Scotland, the kirkton of that thinly peopled district. Some broken memories dwell in my mind of the day breaking over the plain, of the cart stopping, of arms that helped me down, of a bare room into which I was carried, and of a swoon that fell upon me like sleep.

The next day and the days following the old priest was often at my side with his snuff-box and prayer book, and after a while, when I began to pick up strength, he told me that I was now on a fair way to recovery, and must as soon as possible hurry my departure; whereupon, without naming any reason, he took snuff and looked at me sideways. I did not affect ignorance; I knew he must have seen Olalla. 'Sir,' said I, 'you know that I do not ask in wantonness. What of that family?'

He said they were very unfortunate; that it seemed a declining race, and that they were very poor and had been much neglected.

'But she has not,' I said. 'Thanks, doubtless, to yourself, she is instructed and wise beyond the use of women.'

'Yes,' he said; 'the Senorita is well-informed. But the family has been neglected.'

'The mother?' I queried.

'Yes, the mother too,' said the Padre, taking snuff. 'But Felipe is a well-intentioned lad.'

'The mother is odd?' I asked.

'Very odd,' replied the priest.

'I think, sir, we beat about the bush,' said I. 'You must know more of my affairs than you allow. You must know my curiosity to be justified on many grounds. Will you not be frank with me?'

'My son,' said the old gentleman, 'I will be very frank with you on matters within my competence; on those of which I know nothing it does not require much discretion to be silent. I will not fence with you, I take your meaning perfectly; and what can I say, but that we are all in God's hands, and that His ways are not as our ways? I have even advised with my superiors in the church, but they, too, were dumb. It is a great mystery.'

'Is she mad?' I asked.

'I will answer you according to my belief. She is not,' returned the Padre, 'or she was not. When she was young — God help me, I fear I neglected that wild lamb — she was surely sane; and yet, although it did not run to such heights, the same strain was already notable; it had been so before her in her father, ay, and before him, and this inclined me, perhaps, to think too lightly of it. But these things go on growing, not only in the individual but in the race.'

'When she was young,' I began, and my voice failed me for a moment, and it was only with a great effort that I was able to add, 'was she like Olalla?'

'Now God forbid!' exclaimed the Padre. 'God forbid that any man should think so slightingly of my favourite penitent. No, no; the Senorita (but for her beauty, which I wish most honestly she had less of) has not a hair's resemblance to what her mother was at the same age. I could not bear to have you think so; though, Heaven knows, it were, perhaps, better that you should.'

At this, I raised myself in bed, and opened my heart to the old man; telling him of our love and of her decision, owning my own horrors, my own passing fancies, but telling him that these were at an end; and with something more than a purely formal submission, appealing to his judgment.

He heard me very patiently and without surprise; and when I had done, he sat for some time silent. Then he began: 'The church,' and instantly broke off again to apologise. 'I had forgotten, my child, that you were not a Christian,' said he. 'And indeed, upon a point so highly unusual, even the church can scarce be said to have decided. But would you have my opinion? The Senorita is, in a matter of this kind, the best judge; I would accept her judgment.'

On the back of that he went away, nor was he thenceforward so assiduous in his visits; indeed, even when I began to get about again, he plainly feared and deprecated my society, not as in distaste but much as a man might be disposed to flee from the riddling sphynx. The villagers, too, avoided me; they were unwilling to be my guides upon the mountain. I thought they looked at me askance, and I made sure that the more superstitious crossed themselves on my approach. At first I set this down to my heretical opinions; but it began at length to dawn upon me that if I was thus redoubted it was because I had stayed at the residencia. All men despise the savage notions of such peasantry; and yet I was conscious of a chill shadow that seemed to fall and dwell upon my love. It did not conquer, but I may not deify that it restrained my ardour.

Some miles westward of the village there was a gap in the sierra, from which the eye plunged direct upon the residencia; and thither it became my daily habit to repair. A wood crowned the summit; and just where the pathway issued from its fringes, it was overhung by a considerable shelf of rock, and that, in its turn, was surmounted by a crucifix of the size of life and more than usually painful in design. This was my perch; thence, day after day, I looked down upon the plateau, and the great old house, and could see Felipe, no bigger than a fly, going to and fro about the garden. Sometimes mists would draw across the view, and be broken up again by mountain winds; sometimes the plain slumbered below me in unbroken sunshine; it would sometimes be all blotted out by rain. This distant post, these interrupted sights of the place where my life had been so strangely changed, suited the indecision of my humour. I passed whole days there, debating with myself the various elements of our position; now leaning to the suggestions of love, now giving an ear to prudence, and in the end halting irresolute between the two.

One day, as I was sitting on my rock, there came by that way a somewhat gaunt peasant wrapped in a mantle. He was a stranger, and plainly did not know me even by repute; for, instead of keeping the other side, he drew near and sat down beside me, and we had soon fallen in talk. Among other things he told me he had been a muleteer, and in former years had much frequented these mountains; later on, he had followed the army with his mules, had realised a competence, and was now living retired with his family.

'Do you know that house?' I inquired, at last, pointing to the residencia, for I readily wearied of any talk that kept me from the thought of Olalla.

He looked at me darkly and crossed himself.

'Too well,' he said, 'it was there that one of my comrades sold himself to Satan; the Virgin shield us from temptations! He has paid the price; he is now burning in the reddest place in Hell!'

A fear came upon me; I could answer nothing; and presently the man resumed, as if to himself: 'Yes,' he said, 'O yes, I know it. I have passed its doors. There was snow upon the pass, the wind was driving it; sure enough there was death that night upon the mountains, but there was worse beside the hearth. I took him by the arm, Senor, and dragged him to the gate; I conjured him, by all he loved and respected, to go forth with me; I went on my knees before him in the snow; and I could see he was moved by my entreaty. And just then she came out on the gallery, and called him by his name; and he turned, and there was she standing with a lamp in her hand and smiling on him to come back. I cried out aloud to God, and threw my arms about him, but he put me by, and left me alone. He had made his choice; God help us. I would pray for him, but to what end? there are sins that not even the Pope can loose.'

'And your friend,' I asked, 'what became of him?'

'Nay, God knows,' said the muleteer. 'If all be true that we hear, his end was like his sin, a thing to raise the hair.'

'Do you mean that he was killed?' I asked.

'Sure enough, he was killed,' returned the man. 'But how? Ay, how? But these are things that it is sin to speak of.'

‘The people of that house . . . ‘ I began.

But he interrupted me with a savage outburst. ‘The people?’ he cried. ‘What people? There are neither men nor women in that house of Satan’s! What? have you lived here so long, and never heard?’ And here he put his mouth to my ear and whispered, as if even the fowls of the mountain might have over-heard and been stricken with horror.

What he told me was not true, nor was it even original; being, indeed, but a new edition, vamped up again by village ignorance and superstition, of stories nearly as ancient as the race of man. It was rather the application that appalled me. In the old days, he said, the church would have burned out that nest of basilisks; but the arm of the church was now shortened; his friend Miguel had been unpunished by the hands of men, and left to the more awful judgment of an offended God. This was wrong; but it should be so no more. The Padre was sunk in age; he was even bewitched himself; but the eyes of his flock were now awake to their own danger; and some day — ay, and before long — the smoke of that house should go up to heaven.

He left me filled with horror and fear. Which way to turn I knew not; whether first to warn the Padre, or to carry my ill-news direct to the threatened inhabitants of the residencia. Fate was to decide for me; for, while I was still hesitating, I beheld the veiled figure of a woman drawing near to me up the pathway. No veil could deceive my penetration; by every line and every movement I recognised Olalla; and keeping hidden behind a corner of the rock, I suffered her to gain the summit. Then I came forward. She knew me and paused, but did not speak; I, too, remained silent; and we continued for some time to gaze upon each other with a passionate sadness.

‘I thought you had gone,’ she said at length. ‘It is all that you can do for me — to go. It is all I ever asked of you. And you still stay. But do you know, that every day heaps up the peril of death, not only on your head, but on ours? A report has gone about the mountain; it is thought you love me, and the people will not suffer it.’

I saw she was already informed of her danger, and I rejoiced at it. ‘Olalla,’ I said, ‘I am ready to go this day, this very hour, but not alone.’

She stepped aside and knelt down before the crucifix to pray, and I stood by and looked now at her and now at the object of her adoration, now at the living figure of the penitent, and now at the ghastly, daubed countenance, the painted wounds, and the projected ribs of the image. The silence was only broken by the wailing of some large birds that circled sidelong, as if in surprise or alarm, about the summit of the hills. Presently Olalla rose again, turned towards me, raised her veil, and, still leaning with one hand on the shaft of the crucifix, looked upon me with a pale and sorrowful countenance.

‘I have laid my hand upon the cross,’ she said. ‘The Padre says you are no Christian; but look up for a moment with my eyes, and behold the face of the Man of Sorrows. We are all such as He was — the inheritors of sin; we must all bear and expiate a past which was not ours; there is in all of us — ay, even in me — a sparkle of the divine. Like Him, we must endure for a little while, until morning returns bringing peace. Suffer me to pass on upon my way alone; it is thus that I shall be least lonely, counting for my friend Him who is the friend of all the distressed; it is thus that I shall be the most happy, having taken my farewell of earthly happiness, and willingly accepted sorrow for my portion.’

I looked at the face of the crucifix, and, though I was no friend to images, and despised that imitative and grimacing art of which it was a rude example, some sense of what the thing implied was carried home to my intelligence. The face looked down upon me with a painful and deadly contraction; but the rays of a glory encircled it, and reminded me that the sacrifice was voluntary. It stood there, crowning the rock, as it still stands on so many highway sides, vainly preaching to passers-by, an emblem of sad and noble truths; that pleasure is not an end, but an accident; that pain is the choice of the magnanimous; that it is best to suffer all things and do well. I turned and went down the mountain in silence; and when I looked back for the last time before the wood closed about my path, I saw Olalla still leaning on the crucifix.

THE TREASURE OF FRANCHARD.

CHAPTER I. BY THE DYING MOUNTEBANK.

They had sent for the doctor from Bourron before six. About eight some villagers came round for the performance, and were told how matters stood. It seemed a liberty for a mountebank to fall ill like real people, and they made off again in dudgeon. By ten Madame Tentaillon was gravely alarmed, and had sent down the street for Doctor Desprez.

The Doctor was at work over his manuscripts in one corner of the little dining-room, and his wife was asleep over the fire in another, when the messenger arrived.

‘Sapristi!’ said the Doctor, ‘you should have sent for me before. It was a case for hurry.’ And he followed the messenger as he was, in his slippers and skull-cap.

The inn was not thirty yards away, but the messenger did not stop there; he went in at one door and out by another into the court, and then led the way by a flight of steps beside the stable, to the loft where the mountebank lay sick. If Doctor Desprez were to live a thousand years, he would never forget his arrival in that room; for not only was the scene picturesque, but the moment made a date in his existence. We reckon our lives, I hardly know why, from the date of our first sorry appearance in society, as if from a first humiliation; for no actor can come upon the stage with a worse grace. Not to go further back, which would be judged too curious, there are subsequently many moving and decisive accidents in the lives of all, which would make as logical a period as this of birth. And here, for instance, Doctor Desprez, a man past forty, who had made what is called a failure in life, and was moreover married, found himself at a new point of departure when he opened the door of the loft above Tentaillon’s stable.

It was a large place, lighted only by a single candle set upon the floor. The mountebank lay on his back upon a pallet; a large man, with a Quixotic nose inflamed with drinking. Madame Tentaillon stooped over him, applying a hot water and mustard embrocation to his feet; and on a chair close by sat a little fellow of eleven or twelve, with his feet dangling. These three were the only occupants, except the shadows. But the shadows were a company in themselves; the extent of the room exaggerated them to a gigantic size, and from the low position of the candle the light struck upwards and produced deformed foreshortenings. The mountebank’s profile was enlarged upon the wall in caricature, and it was strange to see his nose shorten and lengthen as the flame was blown about by draughts. As for Madame Tentaillon, her shadow was no more than a gross hump of shoulders, with now and again a hemisphere of head. The chair legs were spindled out as long as stilts, and the boy set perched atop of them, like a cloud, in the corner of the roof.

It was the boy who took the Doctor's fancy. He had a great arched skull, the forehead and the hands of a musician, and a pair of haunting eyes. It was not merely that these eyes were large, or steady, or the softest ruddy brown. There was a look in them, besides, which thrilled the Doctor, and made him half uneasy. He was sure he had seen such a look before, and yet he could not remember how or where. It was as if this boy, who was quite a stranger to him, had the eyes of an old friend or an old enemy. And the boy would give him no peace; he seemed profoundly indifferent to what was going on, or rather abstracted from it in a superior contemplation, beating gently with his feet against the bars of the chair, and holding his hands folded on his lap. But, for all that, his eyes kept following the Doctor about the room with a thoughtful fixity of gaze. Desprez could not tell whether he was fascinating the boy, or the boy was fascinating him. He busied himself over the sick man: he put questions, he felt the pulse, he jested, he grew a little hot and swore: and still, whenever he looked round, there were the brown eyes waiting for his with the same inquiring, melancholy gaze.

At last the Doctor hit on the solution at a leap. He remembered the look now. The little fellow, although he was as straight as a dart, had the eyes that go usually with a crooked back; he was not at all deformed, and yet a deformed person seemed to be looking at you from below his brows. The Doctor drew a long breath, he was so much relieved to find a theory (for he loved theories) and to explain away his interest.

For all that, he despatched the invalid with unusual haste, and, still kneeling with one knee on the floor, turned a little round and looked the boy over at his leisure. The boy was not in the least put out, but looked placidly back at the Doctor.

'Is this your father?' asked Desprez.

'Oh, no,' returned the boy; 'my master.'

'Are you fond of him?' continued the Doctor.

'No, sir,' said the boy.

Madame Tentaillon and Desprez exchanged expressive glances.

'That is bad, my man,' resumed the latter, with a shade of sternness. 'Every one should be fond of the dying, or conceal their sentiments; and your master here is dying. If I have watched a bird a little while stealing my cherries, I have a thought of disappointment when he flies away over my garden wall, and I see him steer for the forest and vanish. How much more a creature such as this, so strong, so astute, so richly endowed with faculties! When I think that, in a few hours, the speech will be silenced, the breath extinct, and even the shadow vanished from the wall, I who never saw him, this lady who knew him only as a guest, are touched with some affection.'

The boy was silent for a little, and appeared to be reflecting.

'You did not know him,' he replied at last, 'he was a bad man.'

'He is a little pagan,' said the landlady. 'For that matter, they are all the same, these mountebanks, tumblers, artists, and what not. They have no interior.'

But the Doctor was still scrutinising the little pagan, his eyebrows knotted and uplifted.

'What is your name?' he asked.

'Jean-Marie,' said the lad.

Desprez leaped upon him with one of his sudden flashes of excitement, and felt his head all over from an ethnological point of view.

'Celtic, Celtic!' he said.

'Celtic!' cried Madame Tentaillon, who had perhaps confounded the word with hydrocephalous. 'Poor lad! is it dangerous?'

'That depends,' returned the Doctor grimly. And then once more addressing the boy: 'And what do you do for your living, Jean-Marie?' he inquired.

'I tumble,' was the answer.

'So! Tumble?' repeated Desprez. 'Probably healthful. I hazard the guess, Madame Tentaillon, that tumbling is a healthful way of life. And have you never done anything else but tumble?'

'Before I learned that, I used to steal,' answered Jean-Marie gravely.

'Upon my word!' cried the doctor. 'You are a nice little man for your age. Madame, when my *confrère* comes from Bourron, you will communicate my unfavourable opinion. I leave the case in his hands; but of course, on any alarming symptom, above all if there should be a sign of rally, do not hesitate to knock me up. I am a doctor no longer, I thank God; but I have been one. Good night, madame. Good sleep to you, Jean-Marie.'

CHAPTER II. MORNING TALK

Doctor Desprez always rose early. Before the smoke arose, before the first cart rattled over the bridge to the day's labour in the fields, he was to be found wandering in his garden. Now he would pick a bunch of grapes; now he would eat a big pear under the trellice; now he would draw all sorts of fancies on the path with the end of his cane; now he would go down and watch the river running endlessly past the timber landing-place at which he moored his boat. There was no time, he used to say, for making theories like the early morning. 'I rise earlier than any one else in the village,' he once boasted. 'It is a fair consequence that I know more and wish to do less with my knowledge.'

The Doctor was a connoisseur of sunrises, and loved a good theatrical effect to usher in the day. He had a theory of dew, by which he could predict the weather. Indeed, most things served him to that end: the sound of the bells from all the neighbouring villages, the smell of the forest, the visits and the behaviour of both birds and fishes, the look of the plants in his garden, the disposition of cloud, the colour of the light, and last, although not least, the arsenal of meteorological instruments in a louvre-boarded hutch upon the lawn. Ever since he had settled at Gretz, he had been growing more and more into the local meteorologist, the unpaid champion of the local climate. He thought at first there was no place so healthful in the arrondissement. By the end of the second year, he protested there was none so wholesome in the whole department. And for some time before he met Jean-Marie he had been prepared to challenge all France and the better part of Europe for a rival to his chosen spot.

'Doctor,' he would say — 'doctor is a foul word. It should not be used to ladies. It implies disease. I remark it, as a flaw in our civilisation, that we have not the proper horror of disease. Now I, for my part, have washed my hands of it; I have renounced my laureation; I am no doctor; I am only a worshipper of the true goddess Hygieia. Ah, believe me, it is she who has the cestus! And here, in this exiguous hamlet, has she placed her shrine: here she dwells and lavishes her gifts; here I walk with her in the early morning, and she shows me how strong she has made the peasants, how fruitful she has made the fields, how the trees grow up tall and comely under her eyes, and the fishes in the river become clean and agile at her presence. — Rheumatism!' he would cry, on some malapert interruption, 'O, yes, I believe we do have a little rheumatism. That could hardly be avoided, you know, on a river. And of course the place stands a little low; and the meadows are marshy, there's no doubt. But, my dear sir, look at Bourron! Bourron stands high. Bourron is close to the forest; plenty of ozone there, you would say. Well, compared with Gretz, Bourron is a perfect shambles.'

The morning after he had been summoned to the dying mountebank, the Doctor visited the wharf at the tail of his garden, and had a long look at the running water. This he called prayer; but whether his adorations were addressed to the goddess Hygieia or some more orthodox deity, never plainly appeared. For he had uttered doubtful oracles, sometimes declaring that a river was the type of bodily health, sometimes extolling it as the great moral preacher, continually preaching peace, continuity, and diligence to man's tormented spirits. After he had watched a mile or so of the clear water running by before his eyes, seen a fish or two come to the surface with a gleam of silver, and sufficiently admired the long shadows of the trees falling half across the river from the opposite bank, with patches of moving sunlight in between, he strolled once more up the garden and through his house into the street, feeling cool and renovated.

The sound of his feet upon the causeway began the business of the day; for the village was still sound asleep. The church tower looked very airy in the sunlight; a few birds that turned about it, seemed to swim in an atmosphere of more than usual rarity; and the Doctor, walking in long transparent shadows, filled his lungs amply, and proclaimed himself well contented with the morning.

On one of the posts before Tentaillon's carriage entry he espied a little dark figure perched in a meditative attitude, and immediately recognised Jean-Marie.

'Aha!' he said, stopping before him humorously, with a hand on either knee. 'So we rise early in the morning, do we? It appears to me that we have all the vices of a philosopher.'

The boy got to his feet and made a grave salutation.

'And how is our patient?' asked Desprez.

It appeared the patient was about the same.

'And why do you rise early in the morning?' he pursued.

Jean-Marie, after a long silence, professed that he hardly knew.

'You hardly know?' repeated Desprez. 'We hardly know anything, my man, until we try to learn. Interrogate your consciousness. Come, push me this inquiry home. Do you like it?'

'Yes,' said the boy slowly; 'yes, I like it.'

'And why do you like it?' continued the Doctor. '(We are now pursuing the Socratic method.) Why do you like it?'

'It is quiet,' answered Jean-Marie; 'and I have nothing to do; and then I feel as if I were good.'

Doctor Desprez took a seat on the post at the opposite side. He was beginning to take an interest in the talk, for the boy plainly thought before he spoke, and tried to answer truly. ‘It appears you have a taste for feeling good,’ said the Doctor. ‘Now, there you puzzle me extremely; for I thought you said you were a thief; and the two are incompatible.’

‘Is it very bad to steal?’ asked Jean-Marie.

‘Such is the general opinion, little boy,’ replied the Doctor.

‘No; but I mean as I stole,’ explained the other. ‘For I had no choice. I think it is surely right to have bread; it must be right to have bread, there comes so plain a want of it. And then they beat me cruelly if I returned with nothing,’ he added. ‘I was not ignorant of right and wrong; for before that I had been well taught by a priest, who was very kind to me.’ (The Doctor made a horrible grimace at the word ‘priest.’) ‘But it seemed to me, when one had nothing to eat and was beaten, it was a different affair. I would not have stolen for tartlets, I believe; but any one would steal for baker’s bread.’

‘And so I suppose,’ said the Doctor, with a rising sneer, ‘you prayed God to forgive you, and explained the case to Him at length.’

‘Why, sir?’ asked Jean-Marie. ‘I do not see.’

‘Your priest would see, however,’ retorted Desprez.

‘Would he?’ asked the boy, troubled for the first time. ‘I should have thought God would have known.’

‘Eh?’ snarled the Doctor.

‘I should have thought God would have understood me,’ replied the other. ‘You do not, I see; but then it was God that made me think so, was it not?’

‘Little boy, little boy,’ said Dr. Desprez, ‘I told you already you had the vices of philosophy; if you display the virtues also, I must go. I am a student of the blessed laws of health, an observer of plain and temperate nature in her common walks; and I cannot preserve my equanimity in presence of a monster. Do you understand?’

‘No, sir,’ said the boy.

‘I will make my meaning clear to you,’ replied the doctor. ‘Look there at the sky — behind the belfry first, where it is so light, and then up and up, turning your chin back, right to the top of the dome, where it is already as blue as at noon. Is not that a beautiful colour? Does it not please the heart? We have seen it all our lives, until it has grown in with our familiar thoughts. Now,’ changing his tone, ‘suppose that sky to become suddenly of a live and fiery amber, like the colour of clear coals, and growing scarlet towards the top — I do not say it would be any the less beautiful; but would you like it as well?’

‘I suppose not,’ answered Jean-Marie.

‘Neither do I like you,’ returned the Doctor, roughly. ‘I hate all odd people, and you are the most curious little boy in all the world.’

Jean-Marie seemed to ponder for a while, and then he raised his head again and looked over at the Doctor with an air of candid inquiry. ‘But are not you a very curious gentleman?’ he asked.

The Doctor threw away his stick, bounded on the boy, clasped him to his bosom, and kissed him on both cheeks. ‘Admirable, admirable imp!’ he cried. ‘What a morning, what an hour for a theorist of forty-two! No,’ he continued, apostrophising heaven, ‘I did not know such boys existed; I was ignorant they made them so; I had doubted of my race; and now! It is like,’ he added, picking up his stick, ‘like a lovers’ meeting. I have bruised my favourite staff in that moment of enthusiasm. The injury, however, is not grave.’ He caught the boy looking at him in obvious wonder, embarrassment, and alarm. ‘Hullo!’ said he, ‘why do you look at me like that? Egad, I believe the boy despises me. Do you despise me, boy?’

‘O, no,’ replied Jean-Marie, seriously; ‘only I do not understand.’

‘You must excuse me, sir,’ returned the Doctor, with gravity; ‘I am still so young. O, hang him!’ he added to himself. And he took his seat again and observed the boy sardonically. ‘He has spoiled the quiet of my morning,’ thought he. ‘I shall be nervous all day, and have a febricule when I digest. Let me compose myself.’ And so he dismissed his pre-occupations by an effort of the will which he had long practised, and let his soul roam abroad in the contemplation of the morning. He inhaled the air, tasting it critically as a connoisseur tastes a vintage, and prolonging the expiration with hygienic gusto. He counted the little flecks of cloud along the sky. He followed the movements of the birds round the church tower — making long sweeps, hanging poised, or turning airy somersaults in fancy, and beating the wind with imaginary pinions. And in this way he regained peace of mind and animal composure, conscious of his limbs, conscious of the sight of his eyes, conscious that the air had a cool taste, like a fruit, at the top of his throat; and at last, in complete abstraction, he began to sing. The Doctor had but one air — , ‘Malbrouck s’en va-t-en guerre;’ even with that he was on terms of mere politeness; and his musical exploits were always reserved for moments when he was alone and entirely happy.

He was recalled to earth rudely by a pained expression on the boy’s face. ‘What do you think of my singing?’ he inquired, stopping in the middle of a note; and then, after he had waited some little while and received no answer, ‘What do you think of my singing?’ he repeated, imperiously.

‘I do not like it,’ faltered Jean-Marie.

‘Oh, come!’ cried the Doctor. ‘Possibly you are a performer yourself?’

‘I sing better than that,’ replied the boy.

The Doctor eyed him for some seconds in stupefaction. He was aware that he was angry, and blushed for himself in consequence, which made him angrier. ‘If this is how you address your master!’ he said at last, with a shrug and a flourish of his arms.

‘I do not speak to him at all,’ returned the boy. ‘I do not like him.’

‘Then you like me?’ snapped Doctor Desprez, with unusual eagerness.

‘I do not know,’ answered Jean-Marie.

The Doctor rose. ‘I shall wish you a good morning,’ he said. ‘You are too much for me. Perhaps you have blood in your veins, perhaps celestial ichor, or perhaps you circulate nothing more gross than respirable air; but of one thing I am inexpugnably assured: — that you are no human being. No, boy’ — shaking his stick at him — ’you are not a human being. Write, write it in your memory — ”I am not a human being — I have no pretension to be a human being — I am a dive, a dream, an angel, an acrostic, an illusion — what you please, but not a human being.” And so accept my humble salutations and farewell!’

And with that the Doctor made off along the street in some emotion, and the boy stood, mentally gaping, where he left him.

CHAPTER III. THE ADOPTION.

Madame Desprez, who answered to the Christian name of Anastasie, presented an agreeable type of her sex; exceedingly wholesome to look upon, a stout *brune*, with cool smooth cheeks, steady, dark eyes, and hands that neither art nor nature could improve. She was the sort of person over whom adversity passes like a summer cloud; she might, in the worst of conjunctions, knit her brows into one vertical furrow for a moment, but the next it would be gone. She had much of the placidity of a contented nun; with little of her piety, however; for Anastasie was of a very mundane nature, fond of oysters and old wine, and somewhat bold pleasantries, and devoted to her husband for her own sake rather than for his. She was imperturbably good-natured, but had no idea of self-sacrifice. To live in that pleasant old house, with a green garden behind and bright flowers about the window, to eat and drink of the best, to gossip with a neighbour for a quarter of an hour, never to wear stays or a dress except when she went to Fontainebleau shopping, to be kept in a continual supply of racy novels, and to be married to Doctor Desprez and have no ground of jealousy, filled the cup of her nature to the brim. Those who had known the Doctor in bachelor days, when he had aired quite as many theories, but of a different order, attributed his present philosophy to the study of Anastasie. It was her brute enjoyment that he rationalised and perhaps vainly imitated.

Madame Desprez was an artist in the kitchen, and made coffee to a nicety. She had a knack of tidiness, with which she had infected the Doctor; everything was in its place; everything capable of polish shone gloriously; and dust was a thing banished from her empire. Aline, their single servant, had no other business in the world but to scour and burnish. So Doctor Desprez lived in his house like a fatted calf, warmed and cosseted to his heart's content.

The midday meal was excellent. There was a ripe melon, a fish from the river in a memorable Bearnaise sauce, a fat fowl in a fricassee, and a dish of asparagus, followed by some fruit. The Doctor drank half a bottle *plus* one glass, the wife half a bottle *minus* the same quantity, which was a marital privilege, of an excellent Côte-Rôtie, seven years old. Then the coffee was brought, and a flask of Chartreuse for madame, for the Doctor despised and distrusted such decoctions; and then Aline left the wedded pair to the pleasures of memory and digestion.

'It is a very fortunate circumstance, my cherished one,' observed the Doctor — 'this coffee is adorable — a very fortunate circumstance upon the whole — Anastasie, I beseech you, go without that poison for to-day; only one day, and you will feel the benefit, I pledge my reputation.'

'What is this fortunate circumstance, my friend?' inquired Anastasie, not heeding his protest, which was of daily recurrence.

'That we have no children, my beautiful,' replied the Doctor. 'I think of it more and more as the years go on, and with more and more gratitude towards the Power that dispenses such afflictions. Your health, my darling, my studious quiet, our little kitchen delicacies, how they would all have suffered, how they would all have been sacrificed! And for what? Children are the last word of human imperfection. Health flees before their face. They cry, my dear; they put vexatious questions; they demand to be fed, to be washed, to be educated, to have their noses blown; and then, when the time comes, they break our hearts, as I break this piece of sugar. A pair of professed egoists, like you and me, should avoid offspring, like an infidelity.'

'Indeed!' said she; and she laughed. 'Now, that is like you — to take credit for the thing you could not help.'

'My dear,' returned the Doctor, solemnly, 'we might have adopted.'

'Never!' cried madame. 'Never, Doctor, with my consent. If the child were my own flesh and blood, I would not say no. But to take another person's indiscretion on my shoulders, my dear friend, I have too much sense.'

'Precisely,' replied the Doctor. 'We both had. And I am all the better pleased with our wisdom, because — because — ' He looked at her sharply.

'Because what?' she asked, with a faint premonition of danger.

'Because I have found the right person,' said the Doctor firmly, 'and shall adopt him this afternoon.'

Anastasie looked at him out of a mist. 'You have lost your reason,' she said; and there was a clang in her voice that seemed to threaten trouble.

'Not so, my dear,' he replied; 'I retain its complete exercise. To the proof: instead of attempting to cloak my inconsistency, I have, by way of preparing you, thrown it into strong relief. You will there, I think, recognise the philosopher who has the ecstasy to call you wife. The fact is, I have been reckoning all this while without an accident. I never thought to find a son of my own. Now, last night, I found one. Do not unnecessarily alarm yourself, my dear; he is not a drop of blood to me that I know. It is his mind, darling, his mind that calls me father.'

'His mind!' she repeated with a titter between scorn and hysterics. 'His mind, indeed! Henri, is this an idiotic pleasantry, or are you mad? His mind! And what of my mind?'

‘Truly,’ replied the Doctor with a shrug, ‘you have your finger on the hitch. He will be strikingly antipathetic to my ever beautiful Anastasie. She will never understand him; he will never understand her. You married the animal side of my nature, dear and it is on the spiritual side that I find my affinity for Jean-Marie. So much so, that, to be perfectly frank, I stand in some awe of him myself. You will easily perceive that I am announcing a calamity for you. Do not,’ he broke out in tones of real solicitude — ’do not give way to tears after a meal, Anastasie. You will certainly give yourself a false digestion.’

Anastasie controlled herself. ‘You know how willing I am to humour you,’ she said, ‘in all reasonable matters. But on this point — ’

‘My dear love,’ interrupted the Doctor, eager to prevent a refusal, ‘who wished to leave Paris? Who made me give up cards, and the opera, and the boulevard, and my social relations, and all that was my life before I knew you? Have I been faithful? Have I been obedient? Have I not borne my doom with cheerfulness? In all honesty, Anastasie, have I not a right to a stipulation on my side? I have, and you know it. I stipulate my son.’

Anastasie was aware of defeat; she struck her colours instantly. ‘You will break my heart,’ she sighed.

‘Not in the least,’ said he. ‘You will feel a trifling inconvenience for a month, just as I did when I was first brought to this vile hamlet; then your admirable sense and temper will prevail, and I see you already as content as ever, and making your husband the happiest of men.’

‘You know I can refuse you nothing,’ she said, with a last flicker of resistance; ‘nothing that will make you truly happier. But will this? Are you sure, my husband? Last night, you say, you found him! He may be the worst of humbugs.’

‘I think not,’ replied the Doctor. ‘But do not suppose me so unwary as to adopt him out of hand. I am, I flatter myself, a finished man of the world; I have had all possibilities in view; my plan is contrived to meet them all. I take the lad as stable boy. If he pilfer, if he grumble, if he desire to change, I shall see I was mistaken; I shall recognise him for no son of mine, and send him tramping.’

‘You will never do so when the time comes,’ said his wife; ‘I know your good heart.’

She reached out her hand to him, with a sigh; the Doctor smiled as he took it and carried it to his lips; he had gained his point with greater ease than he had dared to hope; for perhaps the twentieth time he had proved the efficacy of his trusty argument, his Excalibur, the hint of a return to Paris. Six months in the capital, for a man of the Doctor’s antecedents and relations, implied no less a calamity than total ruin. Anastasie had saved the remainder of his fortune by keeping him strictly in the country. The very name of Paris put her in a blue fear; and she would have allowed her husband to keep a menagerie in the back garden, let alone adopting a stable-boy, rather than permit the question of return to be discussed.

About four of the afternoon, the mountebank rendered up his ghost; he had never been conscious since his seizure. Doctor Desprez was present at his last passage, and declared the farce over. Then he took Jean-Marie by the shoulder and led him out into the inn garden where there was a convenient bench beside the river. Here he sat him down and made the boy place himself on his left.

‘Jean-Marie,’ he said very gravely, ‘this world is exceedingly vast; and even France, which is only a small corner of it, is a great place for a little lad like you. Unfortunately it is full of eager, shouldering people moving on; and there are very few bakers’ shops for so many eaters. Your master is dead; you are not fit to gain a living by yourself; you do not wish to steal? No. Your situation then is undesirable; it is, for the moment, critical. On the other hand, you behold in me a man not old, though elderly, still enjoying the youth of the heart and the intelligence; a man of instruction; easily situated in this world’s affairs; keeping a good table: — a man, neither as friend nor host, to be despised. I offer you your food and clothes, and to teach you lessons in the evening, which will be infinitely more to the purpose for a lad of your stamp than those of all the priests in Europe. I propose no wages, but if ever you take a thought to leave me, the door shall be open, and I will give you a hundred francs to start the world upon. In return, I have an old horse and chaise, which you would very speedily learn to clean and keep in order. Do not hurry yourself to answer, and take it or leave it as you judge aright. Only remember this, that I am no sentimentalist or charitable person, but a man who lives rigorously to himself; and that if I make the proposal, it is for my own ends — it is because I perceive clearly an advantage to myself. And now, reflect.’

‘I shall be very glad. I do not see what else I can do. I thank you, sir, most kindly, and I will try to be useful,’ said the boy.

‘Thank you,’ said the Doctor warmly, rising at the same time and wiping his brow, for he had suffered agonies while the thing hung in the wind. A refusal, after the scene at noon, would have placed him in a ridiculous light before Anastasie. ‘How hot and heavy is the evening, to be sure! I have always had a fancy to be a fish in summer, Jean-Marie, here in the Loing beside Gretz. I should lie under a water-lily and listen to the bells, which must sound most delicately down below. That would be a life — do you not think so too?’

‘Yes,’ said Jean-Marie.

‘Thank God you have imagination!’ cried the Doctor, embracing the boy with his usual effusive warmth, though it was a proceeding that seemed to disconcert the sufferer almost as much as if he had been an English schoolboy of the same age. ‘And now,’ he added, ‘I will take you to my wife.’

Madame Desprez sat in the dining-room in a cool wrapper. All the blinds were down, and the tile floor had been recently sprinkled with water; her eyes were half shut, but she affected to be reading a novel as the they entered. Though she was a bustling woman, she enjoyed repose between whiles and had a remarkable appetite for sleep.

The Doctor went through a solemn form of introduction, adding, for the benefit of both parties, ‘You must try to like each other for my sake.’

‘He is very pretty,’ said Anastasie. ‘Will you kiss me, my pretty little fellow?’

The Doctor was furious, and dragged her into the passage. ‘Are you a fool, Anastasie?’ he said. ‘What is all this I hear about the tact of women? Heaven knows, I have not met with it in my experience. You address my little philosopher as if he were an infant. He must be spoken to with more respect, I tell you; he must not be kissed and Georgy-porgy’d like an ordinary child.’

‘I only did it to please you, I am sure,’ replied Anastasie; ‘but I will try to do better.’

The Doctor apologised for his warmth. ‘But I do wish him,’ he continued, ‘to feel at home among us. And really your conduct was so idiotic, my cherished one, and so utterly and distantly out of place, that a saint might have been pardoned a little vehemence in disapproval. Do, do try — if it is possible for a woman to understand young people — but of course it is not, and I waste my breath. Hold your tongue as much as possible at least, and observe my conduct narrowly; it will serve you for a model.’

Anastasie did as she was bidden, and considered the Doctor’s behaviour. She observed that he embraced the boy three times in the course of the evening, and managed generally to confound and abash the little fellow out of speech and appetite. But she had the true womanly heroism in little affairs. Not only did she refrain from the cheap revenge of exposing the Doctor’s errors to himself, but she did her best to remove their ill-effect on Jean-Marie. When Desprez went out for his last breath of air before retiring for the night, she came over to the boy’s side and took his hand.

‘You must not be surprised nor frightened by my husband’s manners,’ she said. ‘He is the kindest of men, but so clever that he is sometimes difficult to understand. You will soon grow used to him, and then you will love him, for that nobody can help. As for me, you may be sure, I shall try to make you happy, and will not bother you at all. I think we should be excellent friends, you and I. I am not clever, but I am very good-natured. Will you give me a kiss?'

He held up his face, and she took him in her arms and then began to cry. The woman had spoken in complaisance; but she had warmed to her own words, and tenderness followed. The Doctor, entering, found them enlaced: he concluded that his wife was in fault; and he was just beginning, in an awful voice, 'Anastasie — ,' when she looked up at him, smiling, with an upraised finger; and he held his peace, wondering, while she led the boy to his attic.

CHAPTER IV. THE EDUCATION OF A PHILOSOPHER.

The installation of the adopted stable-boy was thus happily effected, and the wheels of life continued to run smoothly in the Doctor's house. Jean-Marie did his horse and carriage duty in the morning; sometimes helped in the housework; sometimes walked abroad with the Doctor, to drink wisdom from the fountain-head; and was introduced at night to the sciences and the dead tongues. He retained his singular placidity of mind and manner; he was rarely in fault; but he made only a very partial progress in his studies, and remained much of a stranger in the family.

The Doctor was a pattern of regularity. All forenoon he worked on his great book, the 'Comparative Pharmacopoeia, or Historical Dictionary of all Medicines,' which as yet consisted principally of slips of paper and pins. When finished, it was to fill many personable volumes, and to combine antiquarian interest with professional utility. But the Doctor was studious of literary graces and the picturesque; an anecdote, a touch of manners, a moral qualification, or a sounding epithet was sure to be preferred before a piece of science; a little more, and he would have written the 'Comparative Pharmacopoeia' in verse! The article 'Mummia,' for instance, was already complete, though the remainder of the work had not progressed beyond the letter A. It was exceedingly copious and entertaining, written with quaintness and colour, exact, erudite, a literary article; but it would hardly have afforded guidance to a practising physician of to-day. The feminine good sense of his wife had led her to point this out with uncompromising sincerity; for the Dictionary was duly read aloud to her, betwixt sleep and waning, as it proceeded towards an infinitely distant completion; and the Doctor was a little sore on the subject of mummies, and sometimes resented an allusion with asperity.

After the midday meal and a proper period of digestion, he walked, sometimes alone, sometimes accompanied by Jean-Marie; for madame would have preferred any hardship rather than walk.

She was, as I have said, a very busy person, continually occupied about material comforts, and ready to drop asleep over a novel the instant she was disengaged. This was the less objectionable, as she never snored or grew distempered in complexion when she slept. On the contrary, she looked the very picture of luxurious and appetising ease, and woke without a start to the perfect possession of her faculties. I am afraid she was greatly an animal, but she was a very nice animal to have about. In this way, she had little to do with Jean-Marie; but the sympathy which had been established between them on the first night remained unbroken; they held occasional conversations, mostly on household matters; to the extreme disappointment of the Doctor, they occasionally sallied off together to that temple of debasing superstition, the village church; madame and he, both in their Sunday's best, drove twice a month to Fontainebleau and returned laden with purchases; and in short, although the Doctor still continued to regard them as irreconcilably anti-pathetic, their relation was as intimate, friendly, and confidential as their natures suffered.

I fear, however, that in her heart of hearts, madame kindly despised and pitied the boy. She had no admiration for his class of virtues; she liked a smart, polite, forward, roguish sort of boy, cap in hand, light of foot, meeting the eye; she liked volubility, charm, a little vice — the promise of a second Doctor Desprez. And it was her indefeasible belief that Jean-Marie was dull. 'Poor dear boy,' she had said once, 'how sad it is that he should be so stupid!' She had never repeated that remark, for the Doctor had raged like a wild bull, denouncing the brutal bluntness of her mind, bemoaning his own fate to be so unequally mated with an ass, and, what touched Anastasie more nearly, menacing the table china by the fury of his gesticulations. But she adhered silently to her opinion; and when Jean-Marie was sitting, stolid, blank, but not unhappy, over his unfinished tasks, she would snatch her opportunity in the Doctor's absence, go over to him, put her arms about his neck, lay her cheek to his, and communicate her sympathy with his distress. 'Do not mind,' she would say; 'I, too, am not at all clever, and I can assure you that it makes no difference in life.'

The Doctor's view was naturally different. That gentleman never wearied of the sound of his own voice, which was, to say the truth, agreeable enough to hear. He now had a listener, who was not so cynically indifferent as Anastasie, and who sometimes put him on his mettle by the most relevant objections. Besides, was he not educating the boy? And education, philosophers are agreed, is the most philosophical of duties. What can be more heavenly to poor mankind than to have one's hobby grow into a duty to the State? Then, indeed, do the ways of life become ways of pleasantness. Never had the Doctor seen reason to be more content with his endowments. Philosophy flowed smoothly from his lips. He was so agile a dialectician that he could trace his nonsense, when challenged, back to some root in sense, and prove it to be a sort of flower upon his system. He slipped out of antinomies like a fish, and left his disciple marvelling at the rabbi's depth.

Moreover, deep down in his heart the Doctor was disappointed with the ill-success of his more formal education. A boy, chosen by so acute an observer for his aptitude, and guided along the path of learning by so philosophic an instructor, was bound, by the nature of the universe, to make a more obvious and lasting advance. Now Jean-Marie was slow in all things, impenetrable in others; and his power of forgetting was fully on a level with his power to learn. Therefore the Doctor cherished his peripatetic lectures, to which the boy attended, which he generally appeared to enjoy, and by which he often profited.

Many and many were the talks they had together; and health and moderation proved the subject of the Doctor's divagations. To these he lovingly returned.

'I lead you,' he would say, 'by the green pastures. My system, my beliefs, my medicines, are resumed in one phrase — to avoid excess. Blessed nature, healthy, temperate nature, abhors and exterminates excess. Human law, in this matter, imitates at a great distance her provisions; and we must strive to supplement the efforts of the law. Yes, boy, we must be a law to ourselves and for ourselves and for our neighbours — lex armata — armed, emphatic, tyrannous law. If you see a crapulous human ruin snuffing, dash from him his box! The judge, though in a way an admission of disease, is less offensive to me than either the doctor or the priest. Above all the doctor — the doctor and the purulent trash and garbage of his pharmacopoeia! Pure air — from the neighbourhood of a pinetum for the sake of the turpentine — unadulterated wine, and the reflections of an unsophisticated spirit in the presence of the works of nature — these, my boy, are the best medical appliances and the best religious comforts. Devote yourself to these. Hark! there are the bells of Bourron (the wind is in the north, it will be fair). How clear and airy is the sound! The nerves are harmonised and quieted; the mind attuned to silence; and observe how easily and regularly beats the heart! Your unenlightened doctor would see nothing in these sensations; and yet you yourself perceive they are a part of health. — Did you remember your cinchona this morning? Good. Cinchona also is a work of nature; it is, after all, only the bark of a tree which we might gather for ourselves if we lived in the locality. — What a world is this! Though a professed atheist, I delight to bear my testimony to the world. Look at the gratuitous remedies and pleasures that surround our path! The river runs by the garden end, our bath, our fishpond, our natural system of drainage. There is a well in the court which sends up sparkling water from the earth's very heart, clean, cool, and, with a little wine, most wholesome. The district is notorious for its salubrity; rheumatism is the only prevalent complaint, and I myself have never had a touch of it. I tell you — and my opinion is based upon the coldest, clearest processes of reason — if I, if you, desired to leave this home of pleasures, it would be the duty, it would be the privilege, of our best friend to prevent us with a pistol bullet.'

One beautiful June day they sat upon the hill outside the village. The river, as blue as heaven, shone here and there among the foliage. The indefatigable birds turned and flickered about Gretz church tower. A healthy wind blew from over the forest, and the sound of innumerable thousands of tree-tops and innumerable millions on millions of green leaves was abroad in the air, and filled the ear with something between whispered speech and singing. It seemed as if every blade of grass must hide a cigale; and the fields rang merrily with their music, jingling far and near as with the sleigh-bells of the fairy queen. From their station on the slope the eye embraced a large space of poplar'd plain upon the one hand, the waving hill-tops of the forest on the other, and Gretz itself in the middle, a handful of roofs. Under the bestriding arch of the blue heavens, the place seemed dwindled to a toy. It seemed incredible that people dwelt, and could find room to turn or air to breathe, in such a corner of the world. The thought came home to the boy, perhaps for the first time, and he gave it words.

'How small it looks!' he sighed.

'Ay,' replied the Doctor, 'small enough now. Yet it was once a walled city; thriving, full of furred burgesses and men in armour, humming with affairs; — with tall spires, for aught that I know, and portly towers along the battlements. A thousand chimneys ceased smoking at the curfew bell. There were gibbets at the gate as thick as scarecrows. In time of war, the assault swarmed against it with ladders, the arrows fell like leaves, the defenders sallied hotly over the drawbridge, each side uttered its cry as they plied their weapons. Do you know that the walls extended as far as the Commanderie? Tradition so reports. Alas, what a long way off is all this confusion — nothing left of it but my quiet words spoken in your ear — and the town itself shrunk to the hamlet underneath us! By-and-by came the English wars — you shall hear more of the English, a stupid people, who sometimes blundered into good — and Gretz was taken, sacked, and burned. It is the history of many towns; but Gretz never rose again; it was never rebuilt; its ruins were a quarry to serve the growth of rivals; and the stones of Gretz are now erect along the streets of Nemours. It gratifies me that our old house was the first to rise after the calamity; when the town had come to an end, it inaugurated the hamlet.'

'I, too, am glad of that,' said Jean-Marie.

'It should be the temple of the humbler virtues,' responded the Doctor with a savoury gusto. 'Perhaps one of the reasons why I love my little hamlet as I do, is that we have a similar history, she and I. Have I told you that I was once rich?'

'I do not think so,' answered Jean-Marie. 'I do not think I should have forgotten. I am sorry you should have lost your fortune.'

'Sorry?' cried the Doctor. 'Why, I find I have scarce begun your education after all. Listen to me! Would you rather live in the old Gretz or in the new, free from the alarms of war, with the green country at the door, without noise, passports, the exactions of the soldiery, or the jangle of the curfew-bell to send us off to bed by sundown?'

'I suppose I should prefer the new,' replied the boy.

'Precisely,' returned the Doctor; 'so do I. And, in the same way, I prefer my present moderate fortune to my former wealth. Golden mediocrity! cried the adorable ancients; and I subscribe to their enthusiasm. Have I not good wine, good food, good air, the fields and the forest for my walk, a house, an admirable wife, a boy whom I protest I cherish like a son? Now, if I were still rich, I should indubitably make my residence in Paris — you know Paris — Paris and Paradise are not convertible terms. This pleasant noise of the wind streaming among leaves changed into the grinding Babel of the street, the stupid glare of plaster substituted for this quiet pattern of greens and greys, the nerves shattered, the digestion falsified — picture the fall! Already you perceive the consequences; the mind is stimulated, the heart steps to a different measure, and the man is himself no longer. I have passionately studied myself — the true business of philosophy. I know my character as the musician knows the ventages of his flute. Should I return to Paris, I should ruin myself gambling; nay, I go further — I should break the heart of my Anastasie with infidelities.'

This was too much for Jean-Marie. That a place should so transform the most excellent of men transcended his belief. Paris, he protested, was even an agreeable place of residence. 'Nor when I lived in that city did I feel much difference,' he pleaded.

'What!' cried the Doctor. 'Did you not steal when you were there?'

But the boy could never be brought to see that he had done anything wrong when he stole. Nor, indeed, did the Doctor think he had; but that gentleman was never very scrupulous when in want of a retort.

'And now,' he concluded, 'do you begin to understand? My only friends were those who ruined me. Gretz has been my academy, my sanatorium, my heaven of innocent pleasures. If millions are offered me, I wave them back: *Retro, Sathanas*! — Evil one, begone! Fix your mind on my example; despise riches, avoid the debasing influence of cities. Hygiene — hygiene and mediocrity of fortune — these be your watchwords during life!'

The Doctor's system of hygiene strikingly coincided with his tastes; and his picture of the perfect life was a faithful description of the one he was leading at the time. But it is easy to convince a boy, whom you supply with all the facts for the discussion. And besides, there was one thing admirable in the philosophy, and that was the enthusiasm of the philosopher. There was never any one more vigorously determined to be pleased; and if he was not a great logician, and so had no right to convince the intellect, he was certainly something of a poet, and had a fascination to seduce the heart. What he could not achieve in his customary humour of a radiant admiration of himself and his circumstances, he sometimes effected in his fits of gloom.

'Boy,' he would say, 'avoid me to-day. If I were superstitious, I should even beg for an interest in your prayers. I am in the black fit; the evil spirit of King Saul, the hag of the merchant Abudah, the personal devil of the mediæval monk, is with me — is in me,' tapping on his breast. 'The vices of my nature are now uppermost; innocent pleasures woo me in vain; I long for Paris, for my wallowing in the mire. See,' he would continue, producing a handful of silver, 'I denude myself, I am not to be trusted with the price of a fare. Take it, keep it for me, squander it on deleterious candy, throw it in the deepest of the river — I will homologate your action. Save me from that part of myself which I disown. If you see me falter, do not hesitate; if necessary, wreck the train! I speak, of course, by a parable. Any extremity were better than for me to reach Paris alive.'

Doubtless the Doctor enjoyed these little scenes, as a variation in his part; they represented the Byronic element in the somewhat artificial poetry of his existence; but to the boy, though he was dimly aware of their theatricality, they represented more. The Doctor made perhaps too little, the boy possibly too much, of the reality and gravity of these temptations.

One day a great light shone for Jean-Marie. 'Could not riches be used well?' he asked.

'In theory, yes,' replied the Doctor. 'But it is found in experience that no one does so. All the world imagine they will be exceptional when they grow wealthy; but possession is debasing, new desires spring up; and the silly taste for ostentation eats out the heart of pleasure.'

'Then you might be better if you had less,' said the boy.

'Certainly not,' replied the Doctor; but his voice quavered as he spoke.

'Why?' demanded pitiless innocence.

Doctor Desprez saw all the colours of the rainbow in a moment; the stable universe appeared to be about capsizing with him. 'Because,' said he — affecting deliberation after an obvious pause — 'because I have formed my life for my present income. It is not good for men of my years to be violently dissevered from their habits.’

That was a sharp brush. The Doctor breathed hard, and fell into taciturnity for the afternoon. As for the boy, he was delighted with the resolution of his doubts; even wondered that he had not foreseen the obvious and conclusive answer. His faith in the Doctor was a stout piece of goods. Desprez was inclined to be a sheet in the wind’s eye after dinner, especially after Rhone wine, his favourite weakness. He would then remark on the warmth of his feeling for Anastasie, and with inflamed cheeks and a loose, flustered smile, debate upon all sorts of topics, and be feebly and indiscreetly witty. But the adopted stable-boy would not permit himself to entertain a doubt that savoured of ingratitude. It is quite true that a man may be a second father to you, and yet take too much to drink; but the best natures are ever slow to accept such truths.

The Doctor thoroughly possessed his heart, but perhaps he exaggerated his influence over his mind. Certainly Jean-Marie adopted some of his master’s opinions, but I have yet to learn that he ever surrendered one of his own. Convictions existed in him by divine right; they were virgin, unwrought, the brute metal of decision. He could add others indeed, but he could not put away; neither did he care if they were perfectly agreed among themselves; and his spiritual pleasures had nothing to do with turning them over or justifying them in words. Words were with him a mere accomplishment, like dancing. When he was by himself, his pleasures were almost vegetable. He would slip into the woods towards Acheres, and sit in the mouth of a cave among grey birches. His soul stared straight out of his eyes; he did not move or think; sunlight, thin shadows moving in the wind, the edge of firs against the sky, occupied and bound his faculties. He was pure unity, a spirit wholly abstracted. A single mood filled him, to which all the objects of sense contributed, as the colours of the spectrum merge and disappear in white light.

So while the Doctor made himself drunk with words, the adopted stable-boy bemused himself with silence.

CHAPTER V. TREASURE TROVE.

The Doctor’s carriage was a two-wheeled gig with a hood; a kind of vehicle in much favour among country doctors. On how many roads has one not seen it, a great way off between the poplars! — in how many village streets, tied to a gate-post! This sort of chariot is affected — particularly at the trot — by a kind of pitching movement to and fro across the axle, which well entitles it to the style of a Noddy. The hood describes a considerable arc against the landscape, with a solemnly absurd effect on the contemplative pedestrian. To ride in such a carriage cannot be numbered among the things that appertain to glory; but I have no doubt it may be useful in liver complaint. Thence, perhaps, its wide popularity among physicians.

One morning early, Jean-Marie led forth the Doctor’s noddy, opened the gate, and mounted to the driving-seat. The Doctor followed, arrayed from top to toe in spotless linen, armed with an immense flesh-coloured umbrella, and girt with a botanical case on a baldric; and the equipage drove off smartly in a breeze of its own provocation. They were bound for Franchard, to collect plants, with an eye to the ‘Comparative Pharmacopoeia.’

A little rattling on the open roads, and they came to the borders of the forest and struck into an unfrequented track; the noddy yawed softly over the sand, with an accompaniment of snapping twigs. There was a great, green, softly murmuring cloud of congregated foliage overhead. In the arcades of the forest the air retained the freshness of the night. The athletic bearing of the trees, each carrying its leafy mountain, pleased the mind like so many statues; and the lines of the trunk led the eye admiringly upward to where the extreme leaves sparkled in a patch of azure. Squirrels leaped in mid air. It was a proper spot for a devotee of the goddess Hygieia.

‘Have you been to Franchard, Jean-Marie?’ inquired the Doctor. ‘I fancy not.’

‘Never,’ replied the boy.

‘It is ruin in a gorge,’ continued Desprez, adopting his expository voice; ‘the ruin of a hermitage and chapel. History tells us much of Franchard; how the recluse was often slain by robbers; how he lived on a most insufficient diet; how he was expected to pass his days in prayer. A letter is preserved, addressed to one of these solitaries by the superior of his order, full of admirable hygienic advice; bidding him go from his book to praying, and so back again, for variety’s sake, and when he was weary of both to stroll about his garden and observe the honey bees. It is to this day my own system. You must often have remarked me leaving the “Pharmacopoeia” — often even in the middle of a phrase — to come forth into the sun and air. I admire the writer of that letter from my heart; he was a man of thought on the most important subjects. But, indeed, had I lived in the Middle Ages (I am heartily glad that I did not) I should have been an eremite myself — if I had not been a professed buffoon, that is. These were the only philosophical lives yet open: laughter or prayer; sneers, we might say, and tears. Until the sun of the Positive arose, the wise man had to make his choice between these two.'

'I have been a buffoon, of course,' observed Jean-Marie.

'I cannot imagine you to have excelled in your profession,' said the Doctor, admiring the boy's gravity. 'Do you ever laugh?'

'Oh, yes,' replied the other. 'I laugh often. I am very fond of jokes.'

'Singular being!' said Desprez. 'But I divagate (I perceive in a thousand ways that I grow old). Franchard was at length destroyed in the English wars, the same that levelled Gretz. But — here is the point — the hermits (for there were already more than one) had foreseen the danger and carefully concealed the sacrificial vessels. These vessels were of monstrous value, Jean-Marie — monstrous value — priceless, we may say; exquisitely worked, of exquisite material. And now, mark me, they have never been found. In the reign of Louis Quatorze some fellows were digging hard by the ruins. Suddenly — tock! — the spade hit upon an obstacle. Imagine the men fooling one to another; imagine how their hearts bounded, how their colour came and went. It was a coffer, and in Franchard the place of buried treasure! They tore it open like famished beasts. Alas! it was not the treasure; only some priestly robes, which, at the touch of the eating air, fell upon themselves and instantly wasted into dust. The perspiration of these good fellows turned cold upon them, Jean-Marie. I will pledge my reputation, if there was anything like a cutting wind, one or other had a pneumonia for his trouble.'

'I should like to have seen them turning into dust,' said Jean-Marie. 'Otherwise, I should not have cared so greatly.'

'You have no imagination,' cried the Doctor. 'Picture to yourself the scene. Dwell on the idea — a great treasure lying in the earth for centuries: the material for a giddy, copious, opulent existence not employed; dresses and exquisite pictures unseen; the swiftest galloping horses not stirring a hoof, arrested by a spell; women with the beautiful faculty of smiles, not smiling; cards, dice, opera singing, orchestras, castles, beautiful parks and gardens, big ships with a tower of sailcloth, all lying unborn in a coffin — and the stupid trees growing overhead in the sunlight, year after year. The thought drives one frantic.'

'It is only money,' replied Jean-Marie. 'It would do harm.'

'O, come!' cried Desprez, 'that is philosophy; it is all very fine, but not to the point just now. And besides, it is not “only money,” as you call it; there are works of art in the question; the vessels were carved. You speak like a child. You weary me exceedingly, quoting my words out of all logical connection, like a parroquet.’

‘And at any rate, we have nothing to do with it,’ returned the boy submissively.

They struck the Route Ronde at that moment; and the sudden change to the rattling causeway combined, with the Doctor’s irritation, to keep him silent. The noddy jigged along; the trees went by, looking on silently, as if they had something on their minds. The Quadrilateral was passed; then came Franchard. They put up the horse at the little solitary inn, and went forth strolling. The gorge was dyed deeply with heather; the rocks and birches standing luminous in the sun. A great humming of bees about the flowers disposed Jean-Marie to sleep, and he sat down against a clump of heather, while the Doctor went briskly to and fro, with quick turns, culling his simples.

The boy’s head had fallen a little forward, his eyes were closed, his fingers had fallen lax about his knees, when a sudden cry called him to his feet. It was a strange sound, thin and brief; it fell dead, and silence returned as though it had never been interrupted. He had not recognised the Doctor’s voice; but, as there was no one else in all the valley, it was plainly the Doctor who had given utterance to the sound. He looked right and left, and there was Desprez, standing in a niche between two boulders, and looking round on his adopted son with a countenance as white as paper.

‘A viper!’ cried Jean-Marie, running towards him. ‘A viper! You are bitten!’

The Doctor came down heavily out of the cleft, and, advanced in silence to meet the boy, whom he took roughly by the shoulder.

‘I have found it,’ he said, with a gasp.

‘A plant?’ asked Jean-Marie.

Desprez had a fit of unnatural gaiety, which the rocks took up and mimicked. ‘A plant!’ he repeated scornfully. ‘Well — yes — a plant. And here,’ he added suddenly, showing his right hand, which he had hitherto concealed behind his back — ’here is one of the bulbs.’

Jean-Marie saw a dirty platter, coated with earth.

‘That?’ said he. ‘It is a plate!’

‘It is a coach and horses,’ cried the Doctor. ‘Boy,’ he continued, growing warmer, ‘I plucked away a great pad of moss from between these boulders, and disclosed a crevice; and when I looked in, what do you suppose I saw? I saw a house in Paris with a court and garden, I saw my wife shining with diamonds, I saw myself a deputy, I saw you — well, I — I saw your future,’ he concluded, rather feebly. ‘I have just discovered America,’ he added.

'But what is it?' asked the boy.

'The Treasure of Franchard,' cried the Doctor; and, throwing his brown straw hat upon the ground, he whooped like an Indian and sprang upon Jean-Marie, whom he suffocated with embraces and bedewed with tears. Then he flung himself down among the heather and once more laughed until the valley rang.

But the boy had now an interest of his own, a boy's interest. No sooner was he released from the Doctor's accolade than he ran to the boulders, sprang into the niche, and, thrusting his hand into the crevice, drew forth one after another, encrusted with the earth of ages, the flagons, candlesticks, and patens of the hermitage of Franchard. A casket came last, tightly shut and very heavy.

'O what fun!' he cried.

But when he looked back at the Doctor, who had followed close behind and was silently observing, the words died from his lips. Desprez was once more the colour of ashes; his lip worked and trembled; a sort of bestial greed possessed him.

'This is childish,' he said. 'We lose precious time. Back to the inn, harness the trap, and bring it to yon bank. Run for your life, and remember — not one whisper. I stay here to watch.'

Jean-Marie did as he was bid, though not without surprise. The noddy was brought round to the spot indicated; and the two gradually transported the treasure from its place of concealment to the boot below the driving seat. Once it was all stored the Doctor recovered his gaiety.

'I pay my grateful duties to the genius of this dell,' he said. 'O, for a live coal, a heifer, and a jar of country wine! I am in the vein for sacrifice, for a superb libation. Well, and why not? We are at Franchard. English pale ale is to be had — not classical, indeed, but excellent. Boy, we shall drink ale.'

'But I thought it was so unwholesome,' said Jean-Marie, 'and very dear besides.'

'Fiddle-de-dee!' exclaimed the Doctor gaily. 'To the inn!'

And he stepped into the noddy, tossing his head, with an elastic, youthful air. The horse was turned, and in a few seconds they drew up beside the palings of the inn garden.

'Here,' said Desprez — 'here, near the table, so that we may keep an eye upon things.'

They tied the horse, and entered the garden, the Doctor singing, now in fantastic high notes, now producing deep reverberations from his chest. He took a seat, rapped loudly on the table, assailed the waiter with witticisms; and when the bottle of Bass was at length produced, far more charged with gas than the most delirious champagne, he filled out a long glassful of froth and pushed it over to

Jean-Marie. ‘Drink,’ he said; ‘drink deep.’

‘I would rather not,’ faltered the boy, true to his training.

‘What?’ thundered Desprez.

‘I am afraid of it,’ said Jean-Marie: ‘my stomach — ’

‘Take it or leave it,’ interrupted Desprez fiercely; ‘but understand it once for all — there is nothing so contemptible as a precisian.’

Here was a new lesson! The boy sat bemused, looking at the glass but not tasting it, while the Doctor emptied and refilled his own, at first with clouded brow, but gradually yielding to the sun, the heady, prickling beverage, and his own predisposition to be happy.

‘Once in a way,’ he said at last, by way of a concession to the boy’s more rigorous attitude, ‘once in a way, and at so critical a moment, this ale is a nectar for the gods. The habit, indeed, is debasing; wine, the juice of the grape, is the true drink of the Frenchman, as I have often had occasion to point out; and I do not know that I can blame you for refusing this outlandish stimulant. You can have some wine and cakes. Is the bottle empty? Well, we will not be proud; we will have pity on your glass.’

The beer being done, the Doctor chafed bitterly while Jean-Marie finished his cakes. ‘I burn to be gone,’ he said, looking at his watch. ‘Good God, how slow you eat!’ And yet to eat slowly was his own particular prescription, the main secret of longevity!

His martyrdom, however, reached an end at last; the pair resumed their places in the buggy, and Desprez, leaning luxuriously back, announced his intention of proceeding to Fontainebleau.

‘To Fontainebleau?’ repeated Jean-Marie.

‘My words are always measured,’ said the Doctor. ‘On!’

The Doctor was driven through the glades of paradise; the air, the light, the shining leaves, the very movements of the vehicle, seemed to fall in tune with his golden meditations; with his head thrown back, he dreamed a series of sunny visions, ale and pleasure dancing in his veins. At last he spoke.

‘I shall telegraph for Casimir,’ he said. ‘Good Casimir! a fellow of the lower order of intelligence, Jean-Marie, distinctly not creative, not poetic; and yet he will repay your study; his fortune is vast, and is entirely due to his own exertions. He is the very fellow to help us to dispose of our trinkets, find us a suitable house in Paris, and manage the details of our installation. Admirable Casimir, one of my oldest comrades! It was on his advice, I may add, that I invested my little fortune in Turkish bonds; when we have added these spoils of the mediæval church to our stake in the Mahometan empire, little boy, we shall positively roll among doubloons, positively roll! Beautiful forest,’ he cried, ‘farewell! Though called to other scenes, I will not forget thee. Thy name is graven in my heart. Under the influence of prosperity I become dithyrambic, Jean-Marie. Such is the impulse of the natural soul; such was the constitution of primæval man. And I — well, I will not refuse the credit — I have preserved my youth like a virginity; another, who should have led the same snoozing, countryfied existence for these years, another had become rusted, become stereotype; but I, I praise my happy constitution, retain the spring unbroken. Fresh opulence and a new sphere of duties find me unabated in ardour and only more mature by knowledge. For this prospective change, Jean-Marie — it may probably have shocked you. Tell me now, did it not strike you as an inconsistency? Confess — it is useless to dissemble — it pained you?'

'Yes,' said the boy.

'You see,' returned the Doctor, with sublime fatuity, 'I read your thoughts! Nor am I surprised — your education is not yet complete; the higher duties of men have not been yet presented to you fully. A hint — till we have leisure — must suffice. Now that I am once more in possession of a modest competence; now that I have so long prepared myself in silent meditation, it becomes my superior duty to proceed to Paris. My scientific training, my undoubted command of language, mark me out for the service of my country. Modesty in such a case would be a snare. If sin were a philosophical expression, I should call it sinful. A man must not deny his manifest abilities, for that is to evade his obligations. I must be up and doing; I must be no skulker in life's battle.'

So he rattled on, copiously greasing the joint of his inconsistency with words; while the boy listened silently, his eyes fixed on the horse, his mind seething. It was all lost eloquence; no array of words could unsettle a belief of Jean-Marie's; and he drove into Fontainebleau filled with pity, horror, indignation, and despair.

In the town Jean-Marie was kept a fixture on the driving-seat, to guard the treasure; while the Doctor, with a singular, slightly tipsy airiness of manner, fluttered in and out of cafés, where he shook hands with garrison officers, and mixed an absinthe with the nicety of old experience; in and out of shops, from which he returned laden with costly fruits, real turtle, a magnificent piece of silk for his wife, a preposterous cane for himself, and a kepi of the newest fashion for the boy; in and out of the telegraph office, whence he despatched his telegram, and where three hours later he received an answer promising a visit on the morrow; and generally pervaded Fontainebleau with the first fine aroma of his divine good humour.

The sun was very low when they set forth again; the shadows of the forest trees extended across the broad white road that led them home; the penetrating odour of the evening wood had already arisen, like a cloud of incense, from that broad field of tree-tops; and even in the streets of the town, where the air had been baked all day between white walls, it came in whiffs and pulses, like a distant music. Half-way home, the last gold flicker vanished from a great oak upon the left; and when they came forth beyond the borders of the wood, the plain was already sunken in pearly greyness, and a great, pale moon came swinging skyward through the filmy poplars.

The Doctor sang, the Doctor whistled, the Doctor talked. He spoke of the woods, and the wars, and the deposition of dew; he brightened and babbled of Paris; he soared into cloudy bombast on the glories of the political arena. All was to be changed; as the day departed, it took with it the vestiges of an outworn existence, and to-morrow's sun was to inaugurate the new. 'Enough,' he cried, 'of this life of maceration!' His wife (still beautiful, or he was sadly partial) was to be no longer buried; she should now shine before society. Jean-Marie would find the world at his feet; the roads open to success, wealth, honour, and post-humous renown. 'And O, by the way,' said he, 'for God's sake keep your tongue quiet! You are, of course, a very silent fellow; it is a quality I gladly recognise in you — silence, golden silence! But this is a matter of gravity. No word must get abroad; none but the good Casimir is to be trusted; we shall probably dispose of the vessels in England.'

'But are they not even ours?' the boy said, almost with a sob — it was the only time he had spoken.

'Ours in this sense, that they are nobody else's,' replied the Doctor. 'But the State would have some claim. If they were stolen, for instance, we should be unable to demand their restitution; we should have no title; we should be unable even to communicate with the police. Such is the monstrous condition of the law. It is a mere instance of what remains to be done, of the injustices that may yet be righted by an ardent, active, and philosophical deputy.'

Jean-Marie put his faith in Madame Desprez; and as they drove forward down the road from Bourron, between the rustling poplars, he prayed in his teeth, and whipped up the horse to an unusual speed. Surely, as soon as they arrived, madame would assert her character, and bring this waking nightmare to an end.

Their entrance into Gretz was heralded and accompanied by a most furious barking; all the dogs in the village seemed to smell the treasure in the noddy. But there was no one in the street, save three lounging landscape painters at Tentaillon's door. Jean-Marie opened the green gate and led in the horse and carriage; and almost at the same moment Madame Desprez came to the kitchen threshold with a lighted lantern; for the moon was not yet high enough to clear the garden walls.

'Close the gates, Jean-Marie!' cried the Doctor, somewhat unsteadily alighting. ‘Anastasie, where is Aline?’

‘She has gone to Montereau to see her parents,’ said madame.

‘All is for the best!’ exclaimed the Doctor fervently. ‘Here, quick, come near to me; I do not wish to speak too loud,’ he continued. ‘Darling, we are wealthy!’

‘Wealthy!’ repeated the wife.

‘I have found the treasure of Franchard,’ replied her husband. ‘See, here are the first fruits; a pineapple, a dress for my ever-beautiful — it will suit her — trust a husband’s, trust a lover’s, taste! Embrace me, darling! This grimy episode is over; the butterfly unfolds its painted wings. To-morrow Casimir will come; in a week we may be in Paris — happy at last! You shall have diamonds. Jean-Marie, take it out of the boot, with religious care, and bring it piece by piece into the dining-room. We shall have plate at table! Darling, hasten and prepare this turtle; it will be a whet — it will be an addition to our meagre ordinary. I myself will proceed to the cellar. We shall have a bottle of that little Beaujolais you like, and finish with the Hermitage; there are still three bottles left. Worthy wine for a worthy occasion.’

‘But, my husband; you put me in a whirl,’ she cried. ‘I do not comprehend.’

‘The turtle, my adored, the turtle!’ cried the doctor; and he pushed her towards the kitchen, lantern and all.

Jean-Marie stood dumfounded. He had pictured to himself a different scene — a more immediate protest, and his hope began to dwindle on the spot.

The Doctor was everywhere, a little doubtful on his legs, perhaps, and now and then taking the wall with his shoulder; for it was long since he had tasted absinthe, and he was even then reflecting that the absinthe had been a misconception. Not that he regretted excess on such a glorious day, but he made a mental memorandum to beware; he must not, a second time, become the victim of a deleterious habit. He had his wine out of the cellar in a twinkling; he arranged the sacrificial vessels, some on the white table-cloth, some on the sideboard, still crusted with historic earth. He was in and out of the kitchen, plying Anastasie with vermouth, heating her with glimpses of the future, estimating their new wealth at ever larger figures; and before they sat down to supper, the lady’s virtue had melted in the fire of his enthusiasm, her timidity had disappeared; she, too, had begun to speak disparagingly of the life at Gretz; and as she took her place and helped the soup, her eyes shone with the glitter of prospective diamonds.

All through the meal, she and the Doctor made and unmade fairy plans. They bobbed and bowed and pledged each other. Their faces ran over with smiles; their eyes scattered sparkles, as they projected the Doctor's political honours and the lady's drawing-room ovations.

'But you will not be a Red!' cried Anastasie.

'I am Left Centre to the core,' replied the Doctor.

'Madame Gastein will present us — we shall find ourselves forgotten,' said the lady.

'Never,' protested the Doctor. 'Beauty and talent leave a mark.'

'I have positively forgotten how to dress,' she sighed.

'Darling, you make me blush,' cried he. 'Yours has been a tragic marriage!'

'But your success — to see you appreciated, honoured, your name in all the papers, that will be more than pleasure — it will be heaven!' she cried.

'And once a week,' said the Doctor, archly scanning the syllables, 'once a week — one good little game of baccarat?'

'Only once a week?' she questioned, threatening him with a finger.

'I swear it by my political honour,' cried he.

'I spoil you,' she said, and gave him her hand.

He covered it with kisses.

Jean-Marie escaped into the night. The moon swung high over Gretz. He went down to the garden end and sat on the jetty. The river ran by with eddies of oily silver, and a low, monotonous song. Faint veils of mist moved among the poplars on the farther side. The reeds were quietly nodding. A hundred times already had the boy sat, on such a night, and watched the streaming river with untroubled fancy. And this perhaps was to be the last. He was to leave this familiar hamlet, this green, rustling country, this bright and quiet stream; he was to pass into the great city; his dear lady mistress was to move bedizened in saloons; his good, garrulous, kind-hearted master to become a brawling deputy; and both be lost for ever to Jean-Marie and their better selves. He knew his own defects; he knew he must sink into less and less consideration in the turmoil of a city life, sink more and more from the child into the servant. And he began dimly to believe the Doctor's prophecies of evil. He could see a change in both. His generous incredulity failed him for this once; a child must have perceived that the Hermitage had completed what the absinthe had begun. If this were the first day, what would be the last? 'If necessary, wreck the train,' thought he, remembering the Doctor's parable. He looked round on the delightful scene; he drank deep of the charmed night air, laden with the scent of hay. 'If necessary, wreck the train,' he repeated. And he rose and returned to the house.

CHAPTER VI. A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION, IN TWO PARTS.

The next morning there was a most unusual outcry, in the Doctor’s house. The last thing before going to bed, the Doctor had locked up some valuables in the dining-room cupboard; and behold, when he rose again, as he did about four o’clock, the cupboard had been broken open, and the valuables in question had disappeared. Madame and Jean-Marie were summoned from their rooms, and appeared in hasty toilets; they found the Doctor raving, calling the heavens to witness and avenge his injury, pacing the room bare-footed, with the tails of his night-shirt flirting as he turned.

‘Gone!’ he said; ‘the things are gone, the fortune gone! We are paupers once more. Boy! what do you know of this? Speak up, sir, speak up. Do you know of it? Where are they?’ He had him by the arm, shaking him like a bag, and the boy’s words, if he had any, were jolted forth in inarticulate murmurs. The Doctor, with a revulsion from his own violence, set him down again. He observed Anastasie in tears. ‘Anastasie,’ he said, in quite an altered voice, ‘compose yourself, command your feelings. I would not have you give way to passion like the vulgar. This — this trifling accident must be lived down. Jean-Marie, bring me my smaller medicine chest. A gentle laxative is indicated.’

And he dosed the family all round, leading the way himself with a double quantity. The wretched Anastasie, who had never been ill in the whole course of her existence, and whose soul recoiled from remedies, wept floods of tears as she sipped, and shuddered, and protested, and then was bullied and shouted at until she sipped again. As for Jean-Marie, he took his portion down with stoicism.

‘I have given him a less amount,’ observed the Doctor, ‘his youth protecting him against emotion. And now that we have thus parried any morbid consequences, let us reason.’

‘I am so cold,’ wailed Anastasie.

‘Cold!’ cried the Doctor. ‘I give thanks to God that I am made of fierier material. Why, madam, a blow like this would set a frog into a transpiration. If you are cold, you can retire; and, by the way, you might throw me down my trousers. It is chilly for the legs.’

‘Oh, no!’ protested Anastasie; ‘I will stay with you.’

‘Nay, madam, you shall not suffer for your devotion,’ said the Doctor. ‘I will myself fetch you a shawl.’ And he went upstairs and returned more fully clad and with an armful of wraps for the shivering Anastasie. ‘And now,’ he resumed, ‘to investigate this crime. Let us proceed by induction. Anastasie, do you know anything that can help us?’ Anastasie knew nothing. ‘Or you, Jean-Marie?’

‘Not I,’ replied the boy steadily.

‘Good,’ returned the Doctor. ‘We shall now turn our attention to the material evidences. (I was born to be a detective; I have the eye and the systematic spirit.) First, violence has been employed. The door was broken open; and it may be observed, in passing, that the lock was dear indeed at what I paid for it: a crow to pluck with Master Goguelat. Second, here is the instrument employed, one of our own table-knives, one of our best, my dear; which seems to indicate no preparation on the part of the gang — if gang it was. Thirdly, I observe that nothing has been removed except the Franchard dishes and the casket; our own silver has been minutely respected. This is wily; it shows intelligence, a knowledge of the code, a desire to avoid legal consequences. I argue from this fact that the gang numbers persons of respectability — outward, of course, and merely outward, as the robbery proves. But I argue, second, that we must have been observed at Franchard itself by some occult observer, and dogged throughout the day with a skill and patience that I venture to qualify as consummate. No ordinary man, no occasional criminal, would have shown himself capable of this combination. We have in our neighbourhood, it is far from improbable, a retired bandit of the highest order of intelligence.’

‘Good heaven!’ cried the horrified Anastasie. ‘Henri, how can you?’

‘My cherished one, this is a process of induction,’ said the Doctor. ‘If any of my steps are unsound, correct me. You are silent? Then do not, I beseech you, be so vulgarly illogical as to revolt from my conclusion. We have now arrived,’ he resumed, ‘at some idea of the composition of the gang — for I incline to the hypothesis of more than one — and we now leave this room, which can disclose no more, and turn our attention to the court and garden. (Jean-Marie, I trust you are observantly following my various steps; this is an excellent piece of education for you.) Come with me to the door. No steps on the court; it is unfortunate our court should be paved. On what small matters hang the destiny of these delicate investigations! Hey! What have we here? I have led on to the very spot,’ he said, standing grandly backward and indicating the green gate. ‘An escalade, as you can now see for yourselves, has taken place.’

Sure enough, the green paint was in several places scratched and broken; and one of the panels preserved the print of a nailed shoe. The foot had slipped, however, and it was difficult to estimate the size of the shoe, and impossible to distinguish the pattern of the nails.

‘The whole robbery,’ concluded the Doctor, ‘step by step, has been reconstituted. Inductive science can no further go.’

‘It is wonderful,’ said his wife. ‘You should indeed have been a detective, Henri. I had no idea of your talents.’

‘My dear,’ replied Desprez, condescendingly, ‘a man of scientific imagination combines the lesser faculties; he is a detective just as he is a publicist or a general; these are but local applications of his special talent. But now,’ he continued, ‘would you have me go further? Would you have me lay my finger on the culprits — or rather, for I cannot promise quite so much, point out to you the very house where they consort? It may be a satisfaction, at least it is all we are likely to get, since we are denied the remedy of law. I reach the further stage in this way. In order to fill my outline of the robbery, I require a man likely to be in the forest idling, I require a man of education, I require a man superior to considerations of morality. The three requisites all centre in Tentaillon’s boarders. They are painters, therefore they are continually lounging in the forest. They are painters, therefore they are not unlikely to have some smattering of education. Lastly, because they are painters, they are probably immoral. And this I prove in two ways. First, painting is an art which merely addresses the eye; it does not in any particular exercise the moral sense. And second, painting, in common with all the other arts, implies the dangerous quality of imagination. A man of imagination is never moral; he outsoars literal demarcations and reviews life under too many shifting lights to rest content with the invidious distinctions of the law!’

‘But you always say — at least, so I understood you’ — said madame, ‘that these lads display no imagination whatever.’

‘My dear, they displayed imagination, and of a very fantastic order, too,’ returned the Doctor, ‘when they embraced their beggarly profession. Besides — and this is an argument exactly suited to your intellectual level — many of them are English and American. Where else should we expect to find a thief? — And now you had better get your coffee. Because we have lost a treasure, there is no reason for starving. For my part, I shall break my fast with white wine. I feel unaccountably heated and thirsty to-day. I can only attribute it to the shock of the discovery. And yet, you will bear me out, I supported the emotion nobly.’

The Doctor had now talked himself back into an admirable humour; and as he sat in the arbour and slowly imbibed a large allowance of white wine and picked a little bread and cheese with no very impetuous appetite, if a third of his meditations ran upon the missing treasure, the other two-thirds were more pleasingly busied in the retrospect of his detective skill.

About eleven Casimir arrived; he had caught an early train to Fontainebleau, and driven over to save time; and now his cab was stabled at Tentaillon’s, and he remarked, studying his watch, that he could spare an hour and a half. He was much the man of business, decisively spoken, given to frowning in an intellectual manner. Anastasie's born brother, he did not waste much sentiment on the lady, gave her an English family kiss, and demanded a meal without delay.

'You can tell me your story while we eat,' he observed. 'Anything good to-day, Stasie?'

He was promised something good. The trio sat down to table in the arbour, Jean-Marie waiting as well as eating, and the Doctor recounted what had happened in his richest narrative manner. Casimir heard it with explosions of laughter.

'What a streak of luck for you, my good brother,' he observed, when the tale was over. 'If you had gone to Paris, you would have played dick-duck-drake with the whole consignment in three months. Your own would have followed; and you would have come to me in a procession like the last time. But I give you warning — Stasie may weep and Henri ratiocinate — it will not serve you twice. Your next collapse will be fatal. I thought I had told you so, Stasie? Hey? No sense?'

The Doctor winced and looked furtively at Jean-Marie; but the boy seemed apathetic.

'And then again,' broke out Casimir, 'what children you are — vicious children, my faith! How could you tell the value of this trash? It might have been worth nothing, or next door.'

'Pardon me,' said the Doctor. 'You have your usual flow of spirits, I perceive, but even less than your usual deliberation. I am not entirely ignorant of these matters.'

'Not entirely ignorant of anything ever I heard of,' interrupted Casimir, bowing, and raising his glass with a sort of pert politeness.

'At least,' resumed the Doctor, 'I gave my mind to the subject — that you may be willing to believe — and I estimated that our capital would be doubled.' And he described the nature of the find.

'My word of honour!' said Casimir, 'I half believe you! But much would depend on the quality of the gold.'

'The quality, my dear Casimir, was — ' And the Doctor, in default of language, kissed his finger-tips.

'I would not take your word for it, my good friend,' retorted the man of business. 'You are a man of very rosy views. But this robbery,' he continued — 'this robbery is an odd thing. Of course I pass over your nonsense about gangs and landscape-painters. For me, that is a dream. Who was in the house last night?'

'None but ourselves,' replied the Doctor.

'And this young gentleman?' asked Casimir, jerking a nod in the direction of Jean-Marie.

'He too' — the Doctor bowed.

‘Well; and if it is a fair question, who is he?’ pursued the brother-in-law.

‘Jean-Marie,’ answered the Doctor, ‘combines the functions of a son and stable-boy. He began as the latter, but he rose rapidly to the more honourable rank in our affections. He is, I may say, the greatest comfort in our lives.’

‘Ha!’ said Casimir. ‘And previous to becoming one of you?’

‘Jean-Marie has lived a remarkable existence; his experience his been eminently formative,’ replied Desprez. ‘If I had had to choose an education for my son, I should have chosen such another. Beginning life with mountebanks and thieves, passing onward to the society and friendship of philosophers, he may be said to have skimmed the volume of human life.’

‘Thieves?’ repeated the brother-in-law, with a meditative air.

The Doctor could have bitten his tongue out. He foresaw what was coming, and prepared his mind for a vigorous defence.

‘Did you ever steal yourself?’ asked Casimir, turning suddenly on Jean-Marie, and for the first time employing a single eyeglass which hung round his neck.

‘Yes, sir,’ replied the boy, with a deep blush.

Casimir turned to the others with pursed lips, and nodded to them meaningly. ‘Hey?’ said he; ‘how is that?’

‘Jean-Marie is a teller of the truth,’ returned the Doctor, throwing out his bust.

‘He has never told a lie,’ added madame. ‘He is the best of boys.’

‘Never told a lie, has he not?’ reflected Casimir. ‘Strange, very strange. Give me your attention, my young friend,’ he continued. ‘You knew about this treasure?’

‘He helped to bring it home,’ interposed the Doctor.

‘Desprez, I ask you nothing but to hold your tongue,’ returned Casimir. ‘I mean to question this stable-boy of yours; and if you are so certain of his innocence, you can afford to let him answer for himself. Now, sir,’ he resumed, pointing his eyeglass straight at Jean-Marie. ‘You knew it could be stolen with impunity? You knew you could not be prosecuted? Come! Did you, or did you not?’

‘I did,’ answered Jean-Marie, in a miserable whisper. He sat there changing colour like a revolving pharos, twisting his fingers hysterically, swallowing air, the picture of guilt.

‘You knew where it was put?’ resumed the inquisitor.

‘Yes,’ from Jean-Marie.

‘You say you have been a thief before,’ continued Casimir. ‘Now how am I to know that you are not one still? I suppose you could climb the green gate?’

‘Yes,’ still lower, from the culprit.

‘Well, then, it was you who stole these things. You know it, and you dare not deny it. Look me in the face! Raise your sneak’s eyes, and answer!’

But in place of anything of that sort Jean-Marie broke into a dismal howl and fled from the arbour. Anastasie, as she pursued to capture and reassure the victim, found time to send one Parthian arrow — ’Casimir, you are a brute!’

‘My brother,’ said Desprez, with the greatest dignity, ‘you take upon yourself a licence — ’

‘Desprez,’ interrupted Casimir, ‘for Heaven’s sake be a man of the world. You telegraph me to leave my business and come down here on yours. I come, I ask the business, you say “Find me this thief!” Well, I find him; I say “There he is!” You need not like it, but you have no manner of right to take offence.’

‘Well,’ returned the Doctor, ‘I grant that; I will even thank you for your mistaken zeal. But your hypothesis was so extravagantly monstrous — ’

‘Look here,’ interrupted Casimir; ‘was it you or Stasie?’

‘Certainly not,’ answered the Doctor.

‘Very well; then it was the boy. Say no more about it,’ said the brother-in-law, and he produced his cigar-case.

‘I will say this much more,’ returned Desprez: ‘if that boy came and told me so himself, I should not believe him; and if I did believe him, so implicit is my trust, I should conclude that he had acted for the best.’

‘Well, well,’ said Casimir, indulgently. ‘Have you a light? I must be going. And by the way, I wish you would let me sell your Turks for you. I always told you, it meant smash. I tell you so again. Indeed, it was partly that that brought me down. You never acknowledge my letters — a most unpardonable habit.’

‘My good brother,’ replied the Doctor blandly, ‘I have never denied your ability in business; but I can perceive your limitations.’

‘Egad, my friend, I can return the compliment,’ observed the man of business. ‘Your limitation is to be downright irrational.’

‘Observe the relative position,’ returned the Doctor with a smile. ‘It is your attitude to believe through thick and thin in one man’s judgment — your own. I follow the same opinion, but critically and with open eyes. Which is the more irrational? — I leave it to yourself.’

‘O, my dear fellow!’ cried Casimir, ‘stick to your Turks, stick to your stable-boy, go to the devil in general in your own way and be done with it. But don’t ratiocinate with me — I cannot bear it. And so, ta-ta. I might as well have stayed away for any good I’ve done. Say good-bye from me to Stasie, and to the sullen hang-dog of a stable-boy, if you insist on it; I'm off.'

And Casimir departed. The Doctor, that night, dissected his character before Anastasie. 'One thing, my beautiful,' he said, 'he has learned one thing from his lifelong acquaintance with your husband: the word *ratiocinate*. It shines in his vocabulary, like a jewel in a muck-heap. And, even so, he continually misapplies it. For you must have observed he uses it as a sort of taunt, in the sense of to *ergotise*, implying, as it were — the poor, dear fellow! — a vein of sophistry. As for his cruelty to Jean-Marie, it must be forgiven him — it is not his nature, it is the nature of his life. A man who deals with money, my dear, is a man lost.'

With Jean-Marie the process of reconciliation had been somewhat slow. At first he was inconsolable, insisted on leaving the family, went from paroxysm to paroxysm of tears; and it was only after Anastasie had been closeted for an hour with him, alone, that she came forth, sought out the Doctor, and, with tears in her eyes, acquainted that gentleman with what had passed.

'At first, my husband, he would hear of nothing,' she said. 'Imagine! if he had left us! what would the treasure be to that? Horrible treasure, it has brought all this about! At last, after he has sobbed his very heart out, he agrees to stay on a condition — we are not to mention this matter, this infamous suspicion, not even to mention the robbery. On that agreement only, the poor, cruel boy will consent to remain among his friends.'

'But this inhibition,' said the Doctor, 'this embargo — it cannot possibly apply to me?'

'To all of us,' Anastasie assured him.

'My cherished one,' Desprez protested, 'you must have misunderstood. It cannot apply to me. He would naturally come to me.'

'Henri,' she said, 'it does; I swear to you it does.'

'This is a painful, a very painful circumstance,' the Doctor said, looking a little black. 'I cannot affect, Anastasie, to be anything but justly wounded. I feel this, I feel it, my wife, acutely.'

'I knew you would,' she said. 'But if you had seen his distress! We must make allowances, we must sacrifice our feelings.'

'I trust, my dear, you have never found me averse to sacrifices,' returned the Doctor very stiffly.

'And you will let me go and tell him that you have agreed? It will be like your noble nature,' she cried.

So it would, he perceived — it would be like his noble nature! Up jumped his spirits, triumphant at the thought. 'Go, darling,' he said nobly, 'reassure him. The subject is buried; more — I make an effort, I have accustomed my will to these exertions — and it is forgotten.'

A little after, but still with swollen eyes and looking mortally sheepish, Jean-Marie reappeared and went ostentatiously about his business. He was the only unhappy member of the party that sat down that night to supper. As for the Doctor, he was radiant. He thus sang the requiem of the treasure: —

‘This has been, on the whole, a most amusing episode,’ he said. ‘We are not a penny the worse — nay, we are immensely gainers. Our philosophy has been exercised; some of the turtle is still left — the most wholesome of delicacies; I have my staff, Anastasie has her new dress, Jean-Marie is the proud possessor of a fashionable kepi. Besides, we had a glass of Hermitage last night; the glow still suffuses my memory. I was growing positively niggardly with that Hermitage, positively niggardly. Let me take the hint: we had one bottle to celebrate the appearance of our visionary fortune; let us have a second to console us for its occultation. The third I hereby dedicate to Jean-Marie’s wedding breakfast.’

CHAPTER VII. THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF DESPREZ.

The Doctor's house has not yet received the compliment of a description, and it is now high time that the omission were supplied, for the house is itself an actor in the story, and one whose part is nearly at an end. Two stories in height, walls of a warm yellow, tiles of an ancient ruddy brown diversified with moss and lichen, it stood with one wall to the street in the angle of the Doctor's property. It was roomy, draughty, and inconvenient. The large rafters were here and there engraven with rude marks and patterns; the handrail of the stair was carved in countrified arabesque; a stout timber pillar, which did duty to support the dining-room roof, bore mysterious characters on its darker side, runes, according to the Doctor; nor did he fail, when he ran over the legendary history of the house and its possessors, to dwell upon the Scandinavian scholar who had left them. Floors, doors, and rafters made a great variety of angles; every room had a particular inclination; the gable had tilted towards the garden, after the manner of a leaning tower, and one of the former proprietors had buttressed the building from that side with a great strut of wood, like the derrick of a crane. Altogether, it had many marks of ruin; it was a house for the rats to desert; and nothing but its excellent brightness — the window-glass polished and shining, the paint well scoured, the brasses radiant, the very prop all wreathed about with climbing flowers — nothing but its air of a well-tended, smiling veteran, sitting, crutch and all, in the sunny corner of a garden, marked it as a house for comfortable people to inhabit. In poor or idle management it would soon have hurried into the blackguard stages of decay. As it was, the whole family loved it, and the Doctor was never better inspired than when he narrated its imaginary story and drew the character of its successive masters, from the Hebrew merchant who had re-edified its walls after the sack of the town, and past the mysterious engraver of the runes, down to the long-headed, dirty-handed boor from whom he had himself acquired it at a ruinous expense. As for any alarm about its security, the idea had never presented itself. What had stood four centuries might well endure a little longer.

Indeed, in this particular winter, after the finding and losing of the treasure, the Desprez' had an anxiety of a very different order, and one which lay nearer their hearts. Jean-Marie was plainly not himself. He had fits of hectic activity, when he made unusual exertions to please, spoke more and faster, and redoubled in attention to his lessons. But these were interrupted by spells of melancholia and brooding silence, when the boy was little better than unbearable.

‘Silence,’ the Doctor moralised — ’you see, Anastasie, what comes of silence. Had the boy properly unbosomed himself, the little disappointment about the treasure, the little annoyance about Casimir’s incivility, would long ago have been forgotten. As it is, they prey upon him like a disease. He loses flesh, his appetite is variable and, on the whole, impaired. I keep him on the strictest regimen, I exhibit the most powerful tonics; both in vain.’

‘Don’t you think you drug him too much?’ asked madame, with an irrepressible shudder.

‘Drug?’ cried the Doctor; ‘I drug? Anastasie, you are mad!’

Time went on, and the boy’s health still slowly declined. The Doctor blamed the weather, which was cold and boisterous. He called in his *confrère* from Bourron, took a fancy for him, magnified his capacity, and was pretty soon under treatment himself — it scarcely appeared for what complaint. He and Jean-Marie had each medicine to take at different periods of the day. The Doctor used to lie in wait for the exact moment, watch in hand. ‘There is nothing like regularity,’ he would say, fill out the doses, and dilate on the virtues of the draught; and if the boy seemed none the better, the Doctor was not at all the worse.

Gunpowder Day, the boy was particularly low. It was scowling, squally weather. Huge broken companies of cloud sailed swiftly overhead; raking gleams of sunlight swept the village, and were followed by intervals of darkness and white, flying rain. At times the wind lifted up its voice and bellowed. The trees were all scourging themselves along the meadows, the last leaves flying like dust.

The Doctor, between the boy and the weather, was in his element; he had a theory to prove. He sat with his watch out and a barometer in front of him, waiting for the squalls and noting their effect upon the human pulse. ‘For the true philosopher,’ he remarked delightedly, ‘every fact in nature is a toy.’ A letter came to him; but, as its arrival coincided with the approach of another gust, he merely crammed it into his pocket, gave the time to Jean-Marie, and the next moment they were both counting their pulses as if for a wager.

At nightfall the wind rose into a tempest. It besieged the hamlet, apparently from every side, as if with batteries of cannon; the houses shook and groaned; live coals were blown upon the floor. The uproar and terror of the night kept people long awake, sitting with pallid faces giving ear.

It was twelve before the Desprez family retired. By half-past one, when the storm was already somewhat past its height, the Doctor was awakened from a troubled slumber, and sat up. A noise still rang in his ears, but whether of this world or the world of dreams he was not certain. Another clap of wind followed. It was accompanied by a sickening movement of the whole house, and in the subsequent lull Desprez could hear the tiles pouring like a cataract into the loft above his head. He plucked Anastasie bodily out of bed.

‘Run!’ he cried, thrusting some wearing apparel into her hands; ‘the house is falling! To the garden!’

She did not pause to be twice bidden; she was down the stair in an instant. She had never before suspected herself of such activity. The Doctor meanwhile, with the speed of a piece of pantomime business, and undeterred by broken shins, proceeded to rout out Jean-Marie, tore Aline from her virgin slumbers, seized her by the hand, and tumbled downstairs and into the garden, with the girl tumbling behind him, still not half awake.

The fugitives rendezvous’d in the arbour by some common instinct. Then came a bull’s-eye flash of struggling moonshine, which disclosed their four figures standing huddled from the wind in a raffle of flying drapery, and not without a considerable need for more. At the humiliating spectacle Anastasie clutched her nightdress desperately about her and burst loudly into tears. The Doctor flew to console her; but she elbowed him away. She suspected everybody of being the general public, and thought the darkness was alive with eyes.

Another gleam and another violent gust arrived together; the house was seen to rock on its foundation, and, just as the light was once more eclipsed, a crash which triumphed over the shouting of the wind announced its fall, and for a moment the whole garden was alive with skipping tiles and brickbats. One such missile grazed the Doctor’s ear; another descended on the bare foot of Aline, who instantly made night hideous with her shrieks.

By this time the hamlet was alarmed, lights flashed from the windows, hails reached the party, and the Doctor answered, nobly contending against Aline and the tempest. But this prospect of help only awakened Anastasie to a more active stage of terror.

‘Henri, people will be coming,’ she screamed in her husband’s ear.

‘I trust so,’ he replied.

‘They cannot. I would rather die,’ she wailed.

‘My dear,’ said the Doctor reprovingly, ‘you are excited. I gave you some clothes. What have you done with them?’

‘Oh, I don’t know — I must have thrown them away! Where are they?’ she sobbed.

Desprez groped about in the darkness. ‘Admirable!’ he remarked; ‘my grey velveteen trousers! This will exactly meet your necessities.’

‘Give them to me!’ she cried fiercely; but as soon as she had them in her hands her mood appeared to alter — she stood silent for a moment, and then pressed the garment back upon the Doctor. ‘Give it to Aline,’ she said — ’poor girl.’

'Nonsense!' said the Doctor. 'Aline does not know what she is about. Aline is beside herself with terror; and at any rate, she is a peasant. Now I am really concerned at this exposure for a person of your housekeeping habits; my solicitude and your fantastic modesty both point to the same remedy — the pantaloons.' He held them ready.

'It is impossible. You do not understand,' she said with dignity.

By this time rescue was at hand. It had been found impracticable to enter by the street, for the gate was blocked with masonry, and the nodding ruin still threatened further avalanches. But between the Doctor's garden and the one on the right hand there was that very picturesque contrivance — a common well; the door on the Desprez' side had chanced to be unbolted, and now, through the arched aperture a man's bearded face and an arm supporting a lantern were introduced into the world of windy darkness, where Anastasie concealed her woes. The light struck here and there among the tossing apple boughs, it glinted on the grass; but the lantern and the glowing face became the centre of the world. Anastasie crouched back from the intrusion.

'This way!' shouted the man. 'Are you all safe?' Aline, still screaming, ran to the new comer, and was presently hauled head-foremost through the wall.

'Now, Anastasie, come on; it is your turn,' said the husband.

'I cannot,' she replied.

'Are we all to die of exposure, madame?' thundered Doctor Desprez.

'You can go!' she cried. 'Oh, go, go away! I can stay here; I am quite warm.'

The Doctor took her by the shoulders with an oath.

'Stop!' she screamed. 'I will put them on.'

She took the detested lendings in her hand once more; but her repulsion was stronger than shame. 'Never!' she cried, shuddering, and flung them far away into the night.

Next moment the Doctor had whirled her to the well. The man was there and the lantern; Anastasie closed her eyes and appeared to herself to be about to die. How she was transported through the arch she knew not; but once on the other side she was received by the neighbour's wife, and enveloped in a friendly blanket.

Beds were made ready for the two women, clothes of very various sizes for the Doctor and Jean-Marie; and for the remainder of the night, while madame dozed in and out on the borderland of hysterics, her husband sat beside the fire and held forth to the admiring neighbours. He showed them, at length, the causes of the accident; for years, he explained, the fall had been impending; one sign had followed another, the joints had opened, the plaster had cracked, the old walls bowed inward; last, not three weeks ago, the cellar door had begun to work with difficulty in its grooves. ‘The cellar!’ he said, gravely shaking his head over a glass of mulled wine. ‘That reminds me of my poor vintages. By a manifest providence the Hermitage was nearly at an end. One bottle — I lose but one bottle of that incomparable wine. It had been set apart against Jean-Marie’s wedding. Well, I must lay down some more; it will be an interest in life. I am, however, a man somewhat advanced in years. My great work is now buried in the fall of my humble roof; it will never be completed — my name will have been writ in water. And yet you find me calm — I would say cheerful. Can your priest do more?’

By the first glimpse of day the party sallied forth from the fireside into the street. The wind had fallen, but still charioted a world of troubled clouds; the air bit like frost; and the party, as they stood about the ruins in the rainy twilight of the morning, beat upon their breasts and blew into their hands for warmth. The house had entirely fallen, the walls outward, the roof in; it was a mere heap of rubbish, with here and there a forlorn spear of broken rafter. A sentinel was placed over the ruins to protect the property, and the party adjourned to Tentaillon’s to break their fast at the Doctor’s expense. The bottle circulated somewhat freely; and before they left the table it had begun to snow.

For three days the snow continued to fall, and the ruins, covered with tarpaulin and watched by sentries, were left undisturbed. The Desprez’ meanwhile had taken up their abode at Tentaillon’s. Madame spent her time in the kitchen, concocting little delicacies, with the admiring aid of Madame Tentaillon, or sitting by the fire in thoughtful abstraction. The fall of the house affected her wonderfully little; that blow had been parried by another; and in her mind she was continually fighting over again the battle of the trousers. Had she done right? Had she done wrong? And now she would applaud her determination; and anon, with a horrid flush of unavailing penitence, she would regret the trousers. No juncture in her life had so much exercised her judgment. In the meantime the Doctor had become vastly pleased with his situation. Two of the summer boarders still lingered behind the rest, prisoners for lack of a remittance; they were both English, but one of them spoke French pretty fluently, and was, besides, a humorous, agile-minded fellow, with whom the Doctor could reason by the hour, secure of comprehension. Many were the glasses they emptied, many the topics they discussed.

‘Anastasie,’ the Doctor said on the third morning, ‘take an example from your husband, from Jean-Marie! The excitement has done more for the boy than all my tonics, he takes his turn as sentry with positive gusto. As for me, you behold me. I have made friends with the

Egyptians; and my Pharaoh is, I swear it, a most agreeable companion. You alone are hipped. About a house — a few dresses? What are they in comparison to the “Pharmacopoeia” — the labour of years lying buried below stones and sticks in this depressing hamlet? The snow falls; I shake it from my cloak! Imitate me. Our income will be impaired, I grant it, since we must rebuild; but moderation, patience, and philosophy will gather about the hearth. In the meanwhile, the Tentaillons are obliging; the table, with your additions, will pass; only the wine is execrable — well, I shall send for some to-day. My Pharaoh will be gratified to drink a decent glass; aha! and I shall see if he possesses that acme of organisation — a palate. If he has a palate, he is perfect.’

‘Henri,’ she said, shaking her head, ‘you are a man; you cannot understand my feelings; no woman could shake off the memory of so public a humiliation.’ The Doctor could not restrain a titter. ‘Pardon me, darling,’ he said; ‘but really, to the philosophical intelligence, the incident appears so small a trifle. You looked extremely well — ’

‘Henri!’ she cried.

‘Well, well, I will say no more,’ he replied. ‘Though, to be sure, if you had consented to indue — *À propos*,’ he broke off, ‘and my trousers! They are lying in the snow — my favourite trousers!’ And he dashed in quest of Jean-Marie.

Two hours afterwards the boy returned to the inn with a spade under one arm and a curious sop of clothing under the other.

The Doctor ruefully took it in his hands. ‘They have been!’ he said. ‘Their tense is past. Excellent pantaloons, you are no more! Stay, something in the pocket,’ and he produced a piece of paper. ‘A letter! ay, now I mind me; it was received on the morning of the gale, when I was absorbed in delicate investigations. It is still legible. From poor, dear Casimir! It is as well,’ he chuckled, ‘that I have educated him to patience. Poor Casimir and his correspondence — his infinitesimal, timorous, idiotic correspondence!’

He had by this time cautiously unfolded the wet letter; but, as he bent himself to decipher the writing, a cloud descended on his brow.

‘*Bigre*!’ he cried, with a galvanic start.

And then the letter was whipped into the fire, and the Doctor’s cap was on his head in the turn of a hand.

‘Ten minutes! I can catch it, if I run,’ he cried. ‘It is always late. I go to Paris. I shall telegraph.’

‘Henri! what is wrong?’ cried his wife.

‘Ottoman Bonds!’ came from the disappearing Doctor; and Anastasie and Jean-Marie were left face to face with the wet trousers. Desprez had gone to Paris, for the second time in seven years; he had gone to Paris with a pair of wooden shoes, a knitted spencer, a black blouse, a country nightcap, and twenty francs in his pocket. The fall of the house was but a secondary marvel; the whole world might have fallen and scarce left his family more petrified.

CHAPTER VIII. THE WAGES OF PHILOSOPHY.

On the morning of the next day, the Doctor, a mere spectre of himself, was brought back in the custody of Casimir. They found Anastasie and the boy sitting together by the fire; and Desprez, who had exchanged his toilette for a ready-made rig-out of poor materials, waved his hand as he entered, and sank speechless on the nearest chair. Madame turned direct to Casimir.

'What is wrong?' she cried.

'Well,' replied Casimir, 'what have I told you all along? It has come. It is a clean shave, this time; so you may as well bear up and make the best of it. House down, too, eh? Bad luck, upon my soul.'

'Are we — are we — ruined?' she gasped.

The Doctor stretched out his arms to her. 'Ruined,' he replied, 'you are ruined by your sinister husband.'

Casimir observed the consequent embrace through his eyeglass; then he turned to Jean-Marie. 'You hear?' he said. 'They are ruined; no more pickings, no more house, no more fat cutlets. It strikes me, my friend, that you had best be packing; the present speculation is about worked out.' And he nodded to him meaningly.

'Never!' cried Desprez, springing up. 'Jean-Marie, if you prefer to leave me, now that I am poor, you can go; you shall receive your hundred francs, if so much remains to me. But if you will consent to stay' — the Doctor wept a little — 'Casimir offers me a place — as clerk,' he resumed. 'The emoluments are slender, but they will be enough for three. It is too much already to have lost my fortune; must I lose my son?'

Jean-Marie sobbed bitterly, but without a word.

'I don't like boys who cry,' observed Casimir. 'This one is always crying. Here! you clear out of this for a little; I have business with your master and mistress, and these domestic feelings may be settled after I am gone. March!' and he held the door open.

Jean-Marie slunk out, like a detected thief.

By twelve they were all at table but Jean-Marie.

'Hey?' said Casimir. 'Gone, you see. Took the hint at once.'

'I do not, I confess,' said Desprez, 'I do not seek to excuse his absence. It speaks a want of heart that disappoints me sorely.'

'Want of manners,' corrected Casimir. 'Heart, he never had. Why, Desprez, for a clever fellow, you are the most gullible mortal in creation. Your ignorance of human nature and human business is beyond belief. You are swindled by heathen Turks, swindled by vagabond children, swindled right and left, upstairs and downstairs. I think it must be your imagination. I thank my stars I have none.'

‘Pardon me,’ replied Desprez, still humbly, but with a return of spirit at sight of a distinction to be drawn; ‘pardon me, Casimir. You possess, even to an eminent degree, the commercial imagination. It was the lack of that in me — it appears it is my weak point — that has led to these repeated shocks. By the commercial imagination the financier forecasts the destiny of his investments, marks the falling house — ’

‘Egad,’ interrupted Casimir: ‘our friend the stable-boy appears to have his share of it.’

The Doctor was silenced; and the meal was continued and finished principally to the tune of the brother-in-law’s not very consolatory conversation. He entirely ignored the two young English painters, turning a blind eyeglass to their salutations, and continuing his remarks as if he were alone in the bosom of his family; and with every second word he ripped another stitch out of the air balloon of Desprez’s vanity. By the time coffee was over the poor Doctor was as limp as a napkin.

‘Let us go and see the ruins,’ said Casimir.

They strolled forth into the street. The fall of the house, like the loss of a front tooth, had quite transformed the village. Through the gap the eye commanded a great stretch of open snowy country, and the place shrank in comparison. It was like a room with an open door. The sentinel stood by the green gate, looking very red and cold, but he had a pleasant word for the Doctor and his wealthy kinsman.

Casimir looked at the mound of ruins, he tried the quality of the tarpaulin. ‘H’m,’ he said, ‘I hope the cellar arch has stood. If it has, my good brother, I will give you a good price for the wines.’

‘We shall start digging to-morrow,’ said the sentry. ‘There is no more fear of snow.’

‘My friend,’ returned Casimir sententiously, ‘you had better wait till you get paid.’

The Doctor winced, and began dragging his offensive brother-in-law towards Tentaillon’s. In the house there would be fewer auditors, and these already in the secret of his fall.

‘Hullo!’ cried Casimir, ‘there goes the stable-boy with his luggage; no, egad, he is taking it into the inn.’

And sure enough, Jean-Marie was seen to cross the snowy street and enter Tentaillon’s, staggering under a large hamper.

The Doctor stopped with a sudden, wild hope.

‘What can he have?’ he said. ‘Let us go and see.’ And he hurried on.

‘His luggage, to be sure,’ answered Casimir. ‘He is on the move — thanks to the commercial imagination.’

‘I have not seen that hamper for — for ever so long,’ remarked the

Doctor.

‘Nor will you see it much longer,’ chuckled Casimir; ‘unless, indeed, we interfere. And by the way, I insist on an examination.’

‘You will not require,’ said Desprez, positively with a sob; and, casting a moist, triumphant glance at Casimir, he began to run.

‘What the devil is up with him, I wonder?’ Casimir reflected; and then, curiosity taking the upper hand, he followed the Doctor’s example and took to his heels.

The hamper was so heavy and large, and Jean-Marie himself so little and so weary, that it had taken him a great while to bundle it upstairs to the Desprez’ private room; and he had just set it down on the floor in front of Anastasie, when the Doctor arrived, and was closely followed by the man of business. Boy and hamper were both in a most sorry plight; for the one had passed four months underground in a certain cave on the way to Acheres, and the other had run about five miles as hard as his legs would carry him, half that distance under a staggering weight.

‘Jean-Marie,’ cried the Doctor, in a voice that was only too seraphic to be called hysterical, ‘is it — ? It is!’ he cried. ‘O, my son, my son!’ And he sat down upon the hamper and sobbed like a little child.

‘You will not go to Paris now,’ said Jean-Marie sheepishly.

‘Casimir,’ said Desprez, raising his wet face, ‘do you see that boy, that angel boy? He is the thief; he took the treasure from a man unfit to be entrusted with its use; he brings it back to me when I am sobered and humbled. These, Casimir, are the Fruits of my Teaching, and this moment is the Reward of my Life.’

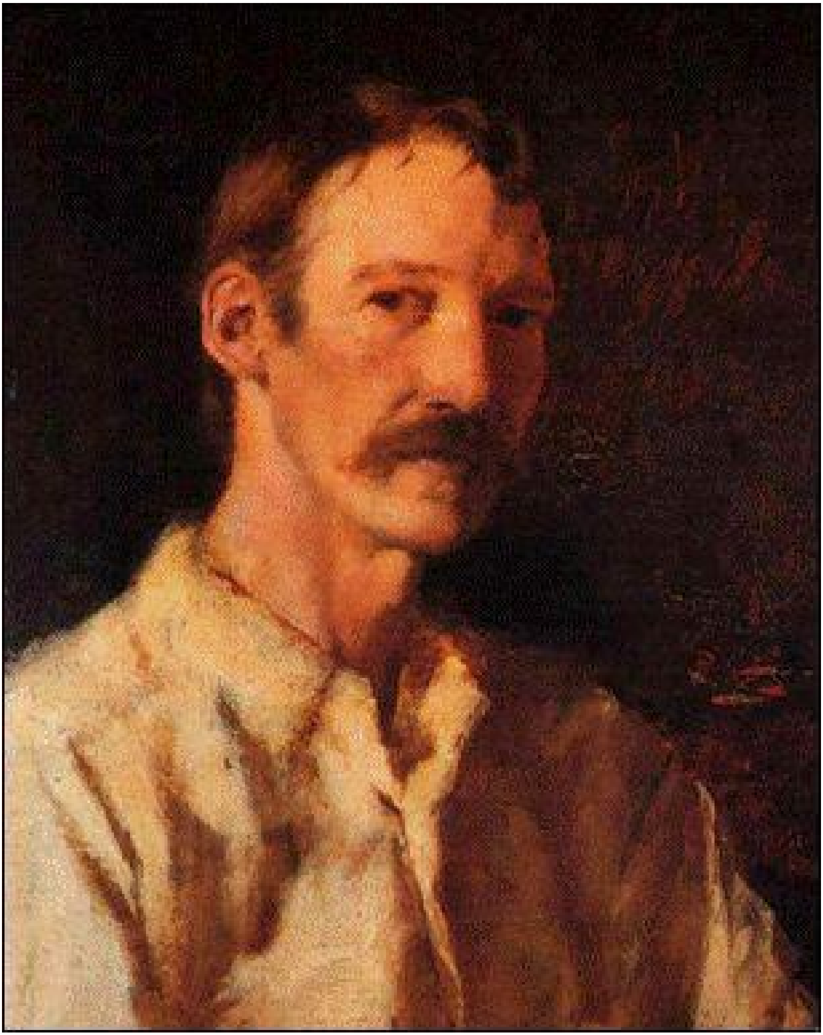
‘*Tiens*,’ said Casimir.

ISLAND NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS

OR

SOUTH SEA TALES

This collection of short stories was first published in 1893 and contains some of Stevenson's final works before he died in 1894.



Stevenson, 1892

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THE BEACH OF FALESÁ.

CHAPTER I. A SOUTH SEA BRIDAL.

I saw that island first when it was neither night nor morning. The moon was to the west, setting, but still broad and bright. To the east, and right amidships of the dawn, which was all pink, the daystar sparkled like a diamond. The land breeze blew in our faces, and smelt strong of wild lime and vanilla: other things besides, but these were the most plain; and the chill of it set me sneezing. I should say I had been for years on a low island near the line, living for the most part solitary among natives. Here was a fresh experience: even the tongue would be quite strange to me; and the look of these woods and mountains, and the rare smell of them, renewed my blood.

The captain blew out the binnacle lamp.

“There!” said he, “there goes a bit of smoke, Mr. Wiltshire, behind the break of the reef. That’s Falesá, where your station is, the last village to the east; nobody lives to windward — I don’t know why. Take my glass, and you can make the houses out.”

I took the glass; and the shores leaped nearer, and I saw the tangle of the woods and the breach of the surf, and the brown roofs and the black insides of houses peeped among the trees.

“Do you catch a bit of white there to the east’ard?” the captain continued. “That’s your house. Coral built, stands high, verandah you could walk on three abreast; best station in the South Pacific. When old Adams saw it, he took and shook me by the hand. ‘I’ve dropped into a soft thing here,’ says he. — ’So you have,’ says I, ‘and time too!’ Poor Johnny! I never saw him again but the once, and then he had changed his tune — couldn’t get on with the natives, or the whites, or something; and the next time we came round there he was dead and buried. I took and put up a bit of a stick to him: ‘John Adams, *obit* eighteen and sixty-eight. Go thou and do likewise.’ I missed that man. I never could see much harm in Johnny.”

“What did he die of?” I inquired.

“Some kind of sickness,” says the captain. “It appears it took him sudden. Seems he got up in the night, and filled up on Pain-Killer and Kennedy’s Discovery. No go: he was booked beyond Kennedy. Then he had tried to open a case of gin. No go again: not strong enough. Then he must have turned to and run out on the verandah, and capsized over the rail. When they found him, the next day, he was clean crazy — carried on all the time about somebody watering his copra. Poor John!”

“Was it thought to be the island?” I asked.

“Well, it was thought to be the island, or the trouble, or something,” he replied. “I never could hear but what it was a healthy place. Our last man, Vigours, never turned a hair. He left because of the beach — said he was afraid of Black Jack and Case and Whistling Jimmie, who was still alive at the time, but got drowned soon afterward when drunk. As for old Captain Randall, he’s been here any time since eighteen-forty, forty-five. I never could see much harm in Billy, nor much change. Seems as if he might live to be Old Kafoozleum. No, I guess it’s healthy.”

“There’s a boat coming now,” said I. “She’s right in the pass; looks to be a sixteen-foot whale; two white men in the stern sheets.”

“That’s the boat that drowned Whistling Jimmie!” cried the Captain; “let’s see the glass. Yes, that’s Case, sure enough, and the darkie. They’ve got a gallows bad reputation, but you know what a place the beach is for talking. My belief, that Whistling Jimmie was the worst of the trouble; and he’s gone to glory, you see. What’ll you bet they ain’t after gin? Lay you five to two they take six cases.”

When these two traders came aboard I was pleased with the looks of them at once, or, rather, with the looks of both, and the speech of one. I was sick for white neighbours after my four years at the line, which I always counted years of prison; getting tabooed, and going down to the Speak House to see and get it taken off; buying gin and going on a break, and then repenting; sitting in the house at night with the lamp for company; or walking on the beach and wondering what kind of a fool to call myself for being where I was. There were no other whites upon my island, and when I sailed to the next, rough customers made the most of the society. Now to see these two when they came aboard was a pleasure. One was a negro, to be sure; but they were both rigged out smart in striped pyjamas and straw hats, and Case would have passed muster in a city. He was yellow and smallish, had a hawk’s nose to his face, pale eyes, and his beard trimmed with scissors. No man knew his country, beyond he was of English speech; and it was clear he came of a good family and was splendidly educated. He was accomplished too; played the accordion first-rate; and give him a piece of string or a cork or a pack of cards, and he could show you tricks equal to any professional. He could speak, when he chose, fit for a drawing-room; and when he chose he could blaspheme worse than a Yankee boatswain, and talk smart to sicken a Kanaka. The way he thought would pay best at the moment, that was Case’s way, and it always seemed to come natural, and like as if he was born to it. He had the courage of a lion and the cunning of a rat; and if he’s not in hell to-day, there’s no such place. I know but one good point to the man: that he was fond of his wife, and kind to her. She was a Samoa woman, and dyed her hair red, Samoa style; and when he came to die (as I have to tell of) they found one strange thing — that he had made a will, like a Christian, and the widow got the lot: all his, they said, and all Black Jack's, and the most of Billy Randall's in the bargain, for it was Case that kept the books. So she went off home in the schooner *Manu'a*, and does the lady to this day in her own place.

But of all this on that first morning I knew no more than a fly. Case used me like a gentleman and like a friend, made me welcome to Falesá, and put his services at my disposal, which was the more helpful from my ignorance of the native. All the better part of the day we sat drinking better acquaintance in the cabin, and I never heard a man talk more to the point. There was no smarter trader, and none dodgier, in the islands. I thought Falesá seemed to be the right kind of a place; and the more I drank the lighter my heart. Our last trader had fled the place at half an hour's notice, taking a chance passage in a labour ship from up west. The captain, when he came, had found the station closed, the keys left with the native pastor, and a letter from the runaway, confessing he was fairly frightened of his life. Since then the firm had not been represented, and of course there was no cargo. The wind, besides, was fair, the captain hoped he could make his next island by dawn, with a good tide, and the business of landing my trade was gone about lively. There was no call for me to fool with it, Case said; nobody would touch my things, everyone was honest in Falesá, only about chickens or an odd knife or an odd stick of tobacco; and the best I could do was to sit quiet till the vessel left, then come straight to his house, see old Captain Randall, the father of the beach, take pot-luck, and go home to sleep when it got dark. So it was high noon, and the schooner was under way before I set my foot on shore at Falesá.

I had a glass or two on board; I was just off a long cruise, and the ground heaved under me like a ship's deck. The world was like all new painted; my foot went along to music; Falesá might have been Fiddler's Green, if there is such a place, and more's the pity if there isn't! It was good to foot the grass, to look aloft at the green mountains, to see the men with their green wreaths and the women in their bright dresses, red and blue. On we went, in the strong sun and the cool shadow, liking both; and all the children in the town came trotting after with their shaven heads and their brown bodies, and raising a thin kind of a cheer in our wake, like crowing poultry.

"By-the-bye," says Case, "we must get you a wife."

"That's so," said I; "I had forgotten."

There was a crowd of girls about us, and I pulled myself up and looked among them like a Bashaw. They were all dressed out for the sake of the ship being in; and the women of Falesá are a handsome lot to see. If they have a fault, they are a trifle broad in the beam; and I was just thinking so when Case touched me.

"That's pretty," says he.

I saw one coming on the other side alone. She had been fishing; all she wore was a chemise, and it was wetted through. She was young and very slender for an island maid, with a long face, a high forehead, and a shy, strange, blindish look, between a cat's and a baby's.

"Who's she?" said I. "She'll do."

"That's Uma," said Case, and he called her up and spoke to her in the native. I didn't know what he said; but when he was in the midst she looked up at me quick and timid, like a child dodging a blow, then down again, and presently smiled. She had a wide mouth, the lips and the chin cut like any statue's; and the smile came out for a moment and was gone. Then she stood with her head bent, and heard Case to an end, spoke back in the pretty Polynesian voice, looking him full in the face, heard him again in answer, and then with an obeisance started off. I had just a share of the bow, but never another shot of her eye, and there was no more word of smiling.

"I guess it's all right," said Case. "I guess you can have her. I'll make it square with the old lady. You can have your pick of the lot for a plug of tobacco," he added, sneering.

I suppose it was the smile stuck in my memory, for I spoke back sharp. "She doesn't look that sort," I cried.

"I don't know that she is," said Case. "I believe she's as right as the mail. Keeps to herself, don't go round with the gang, and that. O no, don't you misunderstand me — Uma's on the square." He spoke eager, I thought, and that surprised and pleased me. "Indeed," he went on, "I shouldn't make so sure of getting her, only she cottoned to the cut of your jib. All you have to do is to keep dark and let me work the mother my own way; and I'll bring the girl round to the captain's for the marriage."

I didn't care for the word marriage, and I said so.

"Oh, there's nothing to hurt in the marriage," says he. "Black Jack's the chaplain."

By this time we had come in view of the house of these three white men; for a negro is counted a white man, and so is a Chinese! a strange idea, but common in the islands. It was a board house with a strip of rickety verandah. The store was to the front, with a counter, scales, and the poorest possible display of trade: a case or two of tinned meats; a barrel of hard bread; a few bolts of cotton stuff, not to be compared with mine; the only thing well represented being the contraband, firearms and liquor. "If these are my only rivals," thinks I, "I should do well in Falesá." Indeed, there was only the one way they could touch me, and that was with the guns and drink.

In the back room was old Captain Randall, squatting on the floor native fashion, fat and pale, naked to the waist, grey as a badger, and his eyes set with drink. His body was covered with grey hair and crawled over by flies; one was in the corner of his eye — he never heeded; and the mosquitoes hummed about the man like bees. Any clean-minded man would have had the creature out at once and buried him; and to see him, and think he was seventy, and remember he had once commanded a ship, and come ashore in his smart togs, and talked big in bars and consulates, and sat in club verandahs, turned me sick and sober.

He tried to get up when I came in, but that was hopeless; so he reached me a hand instead, and stumbled out some salutation.

“Papa’s pretty full this morning,” observed Case. “We’ve had an epidemic here; and Captain Randall takes gin for a prophylactic — don’t you, Papa?”

“Never took such a thing in my life!” cried the captain indignantly. “Take gin for my health’s sake, Mr. Wha’s-ever-your-name — ’s a precautionary measure.”

“That’s all right, Papa,” said Case. “But you’ll have to brace up. There’s going to be a marriage — Mr. Wiltshire here is going to get spliced.”

The old man asked to whom.

“To Uma,” said Case.

“Uma!” cried the captain. “Wha’s he want Uma for? ‘s he come here for his health, anyway? Wha’ ‘n hell’s he want Uma for?”

“Dry up, Papa,” said Case. “‘Tain’t you that’s to marry her. I guess you’re not her godfather and godmother. I guess Mr. Wiltshire’s going to please himself.”

With that he made an excuse to me that he must move about the marriage, and left me alone with the poor wretch that was his partner and (to speak truth) his gull. Trade and station belonged both to Randall; Case and the negro were parasites; they crawled and fed upon him like the flies, he none the wiser. Indeed, I have no harm to say of Billy Randall beyond the fact that my gorge rose at him, and the time I now passed in his company was like a nightmare.

The room was stifling hot and full of flies; for the house was dirty and low and small, and stood in a bad place, behind the village, in the borders of the bush, and sheltered from the trade. The three men’s beds were on the floor, and a litter of pans and dishes. There was no standing furniture; Randall, when he was violent, tearing it to laths. There I sat and had a meal which was served us by Case’s wife; and there I was entertained all day by that remains of man, his tongue stumbling among low old jokes and long old stories, and his own wheezy laughter always ready, so that he had no sense of my depression. He was nipping gin all the while. Sometimes he fell asleep, and awoke again, whimpering and shivering, and every now and again he would ask me why I wanted to marry Uma. "My friend," I was telling myself all day, "you must not come to be an old gentleman like this."

It might be four in the afternoon, perhaps, when the back door was thrust slowly open, and a strange old native woman crawled into the house almost on her belly. She was swathed in black stuff to her heels; her hair was grey in swatches; her face was tattooed, which was not the practice in that island; her eyes big and bright and crazy. These she fixed upon me with a rapt expression that I saw to be part acting. She said no plain word, but smacked and mumbled with her lips, and hummed aloud, like a child over its Christmas pudding. She came straight across the house, heading for me, and, as soon as she was alongside, caught up my hand and purred and crooned over it like a great cat. From this she slipped into a kind of song.

"Who the devil's this?" cried I, for the thing startled me.

"It's Fa'avao," says Randall; and I saw he had hitched along the floor into the farthest corner.

"You ain't afraid of her?" I cried.

"Me 'fraid!" cried the captain. "My dear friend, I defy her! I don't let her put her foot in here, only I suppose 's different to-day, for the marriage. 's Uma's mother."

"Well, suppose it is; what's she carrying on about?" I asked, more irritated, perhaps more frightened, than I cared to show; and the captain told me she was making up a quantity of poetry in my praise because I was to marry Uma. "All right, old lady," says I, with rather a failure of a laugh, "anything to oblige. But when you're done with my hand, you might let me know."

She did as though she understood; the song rose into a cry, and stopped; the woman crouched out of the house the same way that she came in, and must have plunged straight into the bush, for when I followed her to the door she had already vanished.

"These are rum manners," said I.

"'s a rum crowd," said the captain, and, to my surprise, he made the sign of the cross on his bare bosom.

"Hillo!" says I, "are you a Papist?"

He repudiated the idea with contempt. "Hard-shell Baptis'," said he. "But, my dear friend, the Papists got some good ideas too; and tha' 's one of 'em. You take my advice, and whenever you come across Uma or Fa'avao or Vigours, or any of that crowd, you take a leaf out o' the priests, and do what I do. Savvy?" says he, repeated the sign, and winked his dim eye at me. "No, *sir*!" he broke out again, “no Papists here!” and for a long time entertained me with his religious opinions.

I must have been taken with Uma from the first, or I should certainly have fled from that house, and got into the clean air, and the clean sea, or some convenient river — though, it’s true, I was committed to Case; and, besides, I could never have held my head up in that island if I had run from a girl upon my wedding-night.

The sun was down, the sky all on fire, and the lamp had been some time lighted, when Case came back with Uma and the negro. She was dressed and scented; her kilt was of fine tapa, looking richer in the folds than any silk; her bust, which was of the colour of dark honey, she wore bare only for some half a dozen necklaces of seeds and flowers; and behind her ears and in her hair she had the scarlet flowers of the hibiscus. She showed the best bearing for a bride conceivable, serious and still; and I thought shame to stand up with her in that mean house and before that grinning negro. I thought shame, I say; for the mountebank was dressed with a big paper collar, the book he made believe to read from was an odd volume of a novel, and the words of his service not fit to be set down. My conscience smote me when we joined hands; and when she got her certificate I was tempted to throw up the bargain and confess. Here is the document. It was Case that wrote it, signatures and all, in a leaf out of the ledger: —

This is to certify that Uma, daughter of Fa’avao of Falesá, Island of — -, is illegally married to Mr. John Wiltshire for one week, and Mr. John Wiltshire is at liberty to send her to hell when he pleases.

John Blackamoar.
Chaplain to the hulks.

Extracted from the Register
by William T. Randall,
Master Mariner.

A nice paper to put in a girl’s hand and see her hide away like gold. A man might easily feel cheap for less. But it was the practice in these parts, and (as I told myself) not the least the fault of us white men, but of the missionaries. If they had let the natives be, I had never needed this deception, but taken all the wives I wished, and left them when I pleased, with a clear conscience.

The more ashamed I was, the more hurry I was in to be gone; and our desires thus jumping together, I made the less remark of a change in the traders. Case had been all eagerness to keep me; now, as though he had attained a purpose, he seemed all eagerness to have me go. Uma, he said, could show me to my house, and the three bade us farewell indoors.

The night was nearly come; the village smelt of trees and flowers and the sea and bread-fruit-cooking; there came a fine roll of sea from the reef, and from a distance, among the woods and houses, many pretty sounds of men and children. It did me good to breathe free air; it did me good to be done with the captain and see, instead, the creature at my side. I felt for all the world as though she were some girl at home in the Old Country, and, forgetting myself for the minute, took her hand to walk with. Her fingers nestled into mine, I heard her breathe deep and quick, and all at once she caught my hand to her face and pressed it there. “You good!” she cried, and ran ahead of me, and stopped and looked back and smiled, and ran ahead of me again, thus guiding me through the edge of the bush, and by a quiet way to my own house.

The truth is, Case had done the courting for me in style — told her I was mad to have her, and cared nothing for the consequence; and the poor soul, knowing that which I was still ignorant of, believed it, every word, and had her head nigh turned with vanity and gratitude. Now, of all this I had no guess; I was one of those most opposed to any nonsense about native women, having seen so many whites eaten up by their wives’ relatives, and made fools of in the bargain; and I told myself I must make a stand at once, and bring her to her bearings. But she looked so quaint and pretty as she ran away and then awaited me, and the thing was done so like a child or a kind dog, that the best I could do was just to follow her whenever she went on, to listen for the fall of her bare feet, and to watch in the dusk for the shining of her body. And there was another thought came in my head. She played kitten with me now when we were alone; but in the house she had carried it the way a countess might, so proud and humble. And what with her dress — for all there was so little of it, and that native enough — what with her fine tapa and fine scents, and her red flowers and seeds, that were quite as bright as jewels, only larger — it came over me she was a kind of countess really, dressed to hear great singers at a concert, and no even mate for a poor trader like myself.

She was the first in the house; and while I was still without I saw a match flash and the lamplight kindle in the windows. The station was a wonderful fine place, coral built, with quite a wide verandah, and the main room high and wide. My chests and cases had been piled in, and made rather of a mess; and there, in the thick of the confusion, stood Uma by the table, awaiting me. Her shadow went all the way up behind her into the hollow of the iron roof; she stood against it bright, the lamplight shining on her skin. I stopped in the door, and she looked at me, not speaking, with eyes that were eager and yet daunted; then she touched herself on the bosom.

“Me — your wifie,” she said. It had never taken me like that before;

but the want of her took and shook all through me, like the wind in the luff of a sail.

I could not speak if I had wanted; and if I could, I would not. I was ashamed to be so much moved about a native, ashamed of the marriage too, and the certificate she had treasured in her kilt; and I turned aside and made believe to rummage among my cases. The first thing I lighted on was a case of gin, the only one that I had brought; and, partly for the girl's sake, and partly for horror of the recollections of old Randall, took a sudden resolve. I prized the lid off. One by one I drew the bottles with a pocket corkscrew, and sent Uma out to pour the stuff from the verandah.

She came back after the last, and looked at me puzzled like.

"No good," said I, for I was now a little better master of my tongue. "Man he drink, he no good."

She agreed with this, but kept considering. "Why you bring him?" she asked presently. "Suppose you no want drink, you no bring him, I think."

"That's all right," said I. "One time I want drink too much; now no want. You see, I no savvy I get one little wifie. Suppose I drink gin, my little wifie he 'fraid."

To speak to her kindly was about more than I was fit for; I had made my vow I would never let on to weakness with a native, and I had nothing for it but to stop.

She stood looking gravely down at me where I sat by the open case. "I think you good man," she said. And suddenly she had fallen before me on the floor. "I belong you all-e-same pig!" she cried.

CHAPTER II. THE BAN.

I came on the verandah just before the sun rose on the morrow. My house was the last on the east; there was a cape of woods and cliffs behind that hid the sunrise. To the west, a swift cold river ran down, and beyond was the green of the village, dotted with cocoa-palms and breadfruits and houses. The shutters were some of them down and some open; I saw the mosquito bars still stretched, with shadows of people new-awakened sitting up inside; and all over the green others were stalking silent, wrapped in their many-coloured sleeping clothes like Bedouins in Bible pictures. It was mortal still and solemn and chilly, and the light of the dawn on the lagoon was like the shining of a fire.

But the thing that troubled me was nearer hand. Some dozen young men and children made a piece of a half-circle, flanking my house: the river divided them, some were on the near side, some on the far, and one on a boulder in the midst; and they all sat silent, wrapped in their sheets, and stared at me and my house as straight as pointer dogs. I thought it strange as I went out. When I had bathed and come back again, and found them all there, and two or three more along with them, I thought it stranger still. What could they see to gaze at in my house, I wondered, and went in.

But the thought of these starers stuck in my mind, and presently I came out again. The sun was now up, but it was still behind the cape of woods. Say a quarter of an hour had come and gone. The crowd was greatly increased, the far bank of the river was lined for quite a way — perhaps thirty grown folk, and of children twice as many, some standing, some squatted on the ground, and all staring at my house. I have seen a house in a SouthSea village thus surrounded, but then a trader was thrashing his wife inside, and she singing out. Here was nothing: the stove was alight, the smoke going up in a Christian manner; all was shipshape and Bristol fashion. To be sure, there was a stranger come, but they had a chance to see that stranger yesterday, and took it quiet enough. What ailed them now? I leaned my arms on the rail and stared back. Devil a wink they had in them! Now and then I could see the children chatter, but they spoke so low not even the hum of their speaking came my length. The rest were like graven images: they stared at me, dumb and sorrowful, with their bright eyes; and it came upon me things would look not much different if I were on the platform of the gallows, and these good folk had come to see me hanged.

I felt I was getting daunted, and began to be afraid I looked it, which would never do. Up I stood, made believe to stretch myself, came down the verandah stair, and strolled towards the river. There went a short buzz from one to the other, like what you hear in theatres when the curtain goes up; and some of the nearest gave back the matter of a pace. I saw a girl lay one hand on a young man and make a gesture upward with the other; at the same time she said something in the native with a gasping voice. Three little boys sat beside my path, where, I must pass within three feet of them. Wrapped in their sheets, with their shaved heads and bits of top-knots, and queer faces, they looked like figures on a chimney-piece. Awhile they sat their ground, solemn as judges. I came up hand over fist, doing my five knots, like a man that meant business; and I thought I saw a sort of a wink and gulp in the three faces. Then one jumped up (he was the farthest off) and ran for his mammy. The other two, trying to follow suit, got foul, came to ground together bawling, wriggled right out of their sheets mother-naked, and in a moment there were all three of them scampering for their lives and singing out like pigs. The natives, who would never let a joke slip, even at a burial, laughed and let up, as short as a dog's bark.

They say it scares a man to be alone. No such thing. What scares him in the dark or the high bush is that he can't make sure, and there might be an army at his elbow. What scares him worst is to be right in the midst of a crowd, and have no guess of what they're driving at. When that laugh stopped, I stopped too. The boys had not yet made their offing, they were still on the full stretch going the one way, when I had already gone about ship and was sheering off the other. Like a fool I had come out, doing my five knots; like a fool I went back again. It must have been the funniest thing to see, and what knocked me silly, this time no one laughed; only one old woman gave a kind of pious moan, the way you have heard Dissenters in their chapels at the sermon.

"I never saw such fools of Kanakas as your people here," I said once to Uma, glancing out of the window at the starers.

"Savvy nothing," says Uma, with a kind of disgusted air that she was good at.

And that was all the talk we had upon the matter, for I was put out, and Uma took the thing so much as a matter of course that I was fairly ashamed.

All day, off and on, now fewer and now more, the fools sat about the west end of my house and across the river, waiting for the show, whatever that was — fire to come down from heaven, I suppose, and consume me, bones and baggage. But by evening, like real islanders, they had wearied of the business, and got away, and had a dance instead in the big house of the village, where I heard them singing and clapping hands till, maybe, ten at night, and the next day it seemed they had forgotten I existed. If fire had come down from heaven or the earth opened and swallowed me, there would have been nobody to see the sport or take the lesson, or whatever you like to call it. But I was to find they hadn't forgot either, and kept an eye lifting for phenomena over my way.

I was hard at it both these days getting my trade in order and taking stock of what Vigours had left. This was a job that made me pretty sick, and kept me from thinking on much else. Ben had taken stock the trip before — I knew I could trust Ben — but it was plain somebody had been making free in the meantime. I found I was out by what might easily cover six months' salary and profit, and I could have kicked myself all round the village to have been such a blamed ass, sitting boozing with that Case instead of attending to my own affairs and taking stock.

However, there's no use crying over spilt milk. It was done now, and couldn't be undone. All I could do was to get what was left of it, and my new stuff (my own choice) in order, to go round and get after the rats and cockroaches, and to fix up that store regular Sydney style. A fine show I made of it; and the third morning when I had lit my pipe and stood in the door-way and looked in, and turned and looked far up the mountain and saw the cocoanuts waving and posted up the tons of copra, and over the village green and saw the island dandies and reckoned up the yards of print they wanted for their kilts and dresses, I felt as if I was in the right place to make a fortune, and go home again and start a public-house. There was I, sitting in that verandah, in as handsome a piece of scenery as you could find, a splendid sun, and a fine fresh healthy trade that stirred up a man's blood like sea-bathing; and the whole thing was clean gone from me, and I was dreaming England, which is, after all, a nasty, cold, muddy hole, with not enough light to see to read by; and dreaming the looks of my public, by a cant of a broad high-road like an avenue, and with the sign on a green tree.

So much for the morning, but the day passed and the devil anyone looked near me, and from all I knew of natives in other islands I thought this strange. People laughed a little at our firm and their fine stations, and at this station of Falesá in particular; all the copra in the district wouldn't pay for it (I had heard them say) in fifty years, which I supposed was an exaggeration. But when the day went, and no business came at all, I began to get downhearted; and, about three in the afternoon, I went out for a stroll to cheer me up. On the green I saw a white man coming with a cassock on, by which and by the face of him I knew he was a priest. He was a good-natured old soul to look at, gone a little grizzled, and so dirty you could have written with him on a piece of paper.

"Good day, sir," said I.

He answered me eagerly in native.

"Don't you speak any English?" said I.

"French," says he.

"Well," said I, "I'm sorry, but I can't do anything there."

He tried me awhile in the French, and then again in native, which he seemed to think was the best chance. I made out he was after more than passing the time of day with me, but had something to communicate, and I listened the harder. I heard the names of Adams and Case and of Randall — Randall the oftenest — and the word "poison," or something like it, and a native word that he said very often. I went home, repeating it to myself.

"What does fussy-ocky mean?" I asked of Uma, for that was as near as I could come to it.

"Make dead," said she.

"The devil it does!" says I. "Did ever you hear that Case had poisoned Johnnie Adams?"

"Every man he savvy that," says Uma, scornful-like. "Give him white sand — bad sand. He got the bottle still. Suppose he give you gin, you no take him."

Now I had heard much the same sort of story in other islands, and the same white powder always to the front, which made me think the less of it. For all that, I went over to Randall's place to see what I could pick up, and found Case on the doorstep, cleaning a gun.

"Good shooting here?" says I.

"A 1," says he. "The bush is full of all kinds of birds. I wish copra was as plenty," says he — I thought, slyly — "but there don't seem anything doing."

I could see Black Jack in the store, serving a customer.

"That looks like business, though," said I.

"That's the first sale we've made in three weeks," said he.

"You don't tell me?" says I. "Three weeks? Well, well."

"If you don't believe me," he cries, a little hot, "you can go and look at the copra-house. It's half empty to this blessed hour."

"I shouldn't be much the better for that, you see," says I. "For all I can tell, it might have been whole empty yesterday."

"That's so," says he, with a bit of a laugh.

"By-the-bye," I said, "what sort of a party is that priest? Seems rather a friendly sort."

At this Case laughed right out loud. "Ah!" says he, "I see what ails you now. Galuchet's been at you." — *Father Galoshes* was the name he went by most, but Case always gave it the French quirk, which was another reason we had for thinking him above the common.

"Yes, I have seen him," I says. "I made out he didn't think much of your Captain Randall."

"That he don't!" says Case. "It was the trouble about poor Adams. The last day, when he lay dying, there was young Buncombe round. Ever met Buncombe?"

I told him no.

"He's a cure, is Buncombe!" laughs Case. "Well, Buncombe took it in his head that, as there was no other clergyman about, bar Kanaka pastors, we ought to call in Father Galuchet, and have the old man administered and take the sacrament. It was all the same to me, you may suppose; but I said I thought Adams was the fellow to consult. He was jawing away about watered copra and a sight of foolery. 'Look here,' I said, 'you're pretty sick. Would you like to see Galoshes?' He sat right up on his elbow. 'Get the priest,' says he, 'get the priest; don't let me die here like a dog!' He spoke kind of fierce and eager, but sensible enough. There was nothing to say against that, so we sent and asked Galuchet if he would come. You bet he would. He jumped in his dirty linen at the thought of it. But we had reckoned without Papa. He's a hard-shell Baptist, is Papa; no Papists need apply. And he took and locked the door. Buncombe told him he was bigoted, and I thought he would have had a fit. 'Bigoted!' he says. 'Me bigoted? Have I lived to hear it from a jackanapes like you?' And he made for Buncombe, and I had to hold them apart; and there was Adams in the middle, gone luny again, and carrying on about copra like a born fool. It was good as the play, and I was about knocked out of time with laughing, when all of a sudden Adams sat up, clapped his hands to his chest, and went into the horrors. He died hard, did John Adams," says Case, with a kind of a sudden sternness.

"And what became of the priest?" I asked.

"The priest?" says Case. "O! he was hammering on the door outside, and crying on the natives to come and beat it in, and singing out it was a soul he wished to save, and that. He was in a rare taking, was the priest. But what would you have? Johnny had slipped his cable; no more Johnny in the market; and the administration racket clean played out. Next thing, word came to Randall the priest was praying upon Johnny's grave. Papa was pretty full, and got a club, and lit out straight for the place, and there was Galoshes on his knees, and a lot of natives looking on. You wouldn't think Papa cared — that much about anything, unless it was liquor; but he and the priest stuck to it two hours, slanging each other in native, and every time Galoshes tried to kneel down Papa went for him with the club. There never were such larks in Falesá. The end of it was that Captain Randall knocked over with some kind of a fit or stroke, and the priest got in his goods after all. But he was the angriest priest you ever heard of, and complained to the chiefs about the outrage, as he called it. That was no account, for our chiefs are Protestant here; and, anyway, he had been making trouble about the drum for morning school, and they were glad to give him a wipe. Now he swears old Randall gave Adams poison or something, and when the two meet they grin at each other like baboons."

He told this story as natural as could be, and like a man that enjoyed the fun; though, now I come to think of it after so long, it seems rather a sickening yarn. However, Case never set up to be soft, only to be square and hearty, and a man all round; and, to tell the truth, he puzzled me entirely.

I went home and asked Uma if she were a Popey, which I had made out to be the native word for Catholics.

"*E le ai*!" says she. She always used the native when she meant "no" more than usually strong, and, indeed, there's more of it. "No good Popey," she added.

Then I asked her about Adams and the priest, and she told me much the same yarn in her own way. So that I was left not much farther on, but inclined, upon the whole, to think the bottom of the matter was the row about the sacrament, and the poisoning only talk.

The next day was a Sunday, when there was no business to be looked for. Uma asked me in the morning if I was going to "pray"; I told her she bet not, and she stopped home herself with no more words. I thought this seemed unlike a native, and a native woman, and a woman that had new clothes to show off; however, it suited me to the ground, and I made the less of it. The queer thing was that I came next door to going to church after all, a thing I'm little likely to forget. I had turned out for a stroll, and heard the hymn tune up. You know how it is. If you hear folk singing, it seems to draw you; and pretty soon I found myself alongside the church. It was a little long low place, coral built, rounded off at both ends like a whale-boat, a big native roof on the top of it, windows without sashes and doorways without doors. I stuck my head into one of the windows, and the sight was so new to me — for things went quite different in the islands I was acquainted with — that I stayed and looked on. The congregation sat on the floor on mats, the women on one side, the men on the other, all rigged out to kill — the women with dresses and trade hats, the men in white jackets and shirts. The hymn was over; the pastor, a big buck Kanaka, was in the pulpit, preaching for his life; and by the way he wagged his hand, and worked his voice, and made his points, and seemed to argue with the folk, I made out he was a gun at the business. Well, he looked up suddenly and caught my eye, and I give you my word he staggered in the pulpit; his eyes bulged out of his head, his hand rose and pointed at me like as if against his will, and the sermon stopped right there.

It isn't a fine thing to say for yourself, but I ran away; and if the same kind of a shock was given me, I should run away again to-morrow. To see that palavering Kanaka struck all of a heap at the mere sight of me gave me a feeling as if the bottom had dropped out of the world. I went right home, and stayed there, and said nothing. You might think I would tell Uma, but that was against my system. You might have thought I would have gone over and consulted Case; but the truth was I was ashamed to speak of such a thing, I thought everyone would blurt out laughing in my face. So I held my tongue, and thought all the more; and the more I thought, the less I liked the business.

By Monday night I got it clearly in my head I must be tabooed. A new store to stand open two days in a village and not a man or woman come to see the trade was past believing.

"Uma," said I, "I think I'm tabooed."

"I think so," said she.

I thought awhile whether I should ask her more, but it's a bad idea to set natives up with any notion of consulting them, so I went to Case. It was dark, and he was sitting alone, as he did mostly, smoking on the stairs.

"Case," said I, "here's a queer thing. I'm tabooed."

"O, fudge!" says he; "'tain't the practice in these islands."

"That may be, or it mayn't," said I. "It's the practice where I was before. You can bet I know what it's like; and I tell it you for a fact, I'm tabooed."

"Well," said he, "what have you been doing?"

"That's what I want to find out," said I.

"O, you can't be," said he; "it ain't possible. However, I'll tell you what I'll do. Just to put your mind at rest, I'll go round and find out for sure. Just you waltz in and talk to Papa."

"Thank you," I said, "I'd rather stay right out here on the verandah. Your house is so close."

"I'll call Papa out here, then," says he.

"My dear fellow," I says, "I wish you wouldn't. The fact is, I don't take to Mr. Randall."

Case laughed, took a lantern from the store, and set out into the village. He was gone perhaps a quarter of an hour, and he looked mighty serious when he came back.

"Well," said he, clapping down the lantern on the verandah steps, "I would never have believed it. I don't know where the impudence of these Kanakas 'll go next; they seem to have lost all idea of respect for whites. What we want is a man-of-war — a German, if we could — they know how to manage Kanakas."

"I *am* tabooed, then?" I cried.

“Something of the sort,” said he. “It’s the worst thing of the kind I’ve heard of yet. But I’ll stand by you, Wiltshire, man to man. You come round here to-morrow about nine, and we’ll have it out with the chiefs. They’re afraid of me, or they used to be; but their heads are so big by now, I don’t know what to think. Understand me, Wiltshire; I don’t count this your quarrel,” he went on, with a great deal of resolution, “I count it all of our quarrel, I count it the White Man’s Quarrel, and I’ll stand to it through thick and thin, and there’s my hand on it.”

“Have you found out what’s the reason?” I asked.

“Not yet,” said Case. “But we’ll fix them down to-morrow.”

Altogether I was pretty well pleased with his attitude, and almost more the next day, when we met to go before the chiefs, to see him so stern and resolved. The chiefs awaited us in one of their big oval houses, which was marked out to us from a long way off by the crowd about the eaves, a hundred strong if there was one — men, women, and children. Many of the men were on their way to work and wore green wreaths, and it put me in thoughts of the 1st of May at home. This crowd opened and buzzed about the pair of us as we went in, with a sudden angry animation. Five chiefs were there; four mighty stately men, the fifth old and puckered. They sat on mats in their white kilts and jackets; they had fans in their hands, like fine ladies; and two of the younger ones wore Catholic medals, which gave me matter of reflection. Our place was set, and the mats laid for us over against these grandees, on the near side of the house; the midst was empty; the crowd, close at our backs, murmured and craned and jostled to look on, and the shadows of them tossed in front of us on the clean pebbles of the floor. I was just a hair put out by the excitement of the commons, but the quiet civil appearance of the chiefs reassured me, all the more when their spokesman began and made a long speech in a low tone of voice, sometimes waving his hand towards Case, sometimes toward me, and sometimes knocking with his knuckles on the mat. One thing was clear: there was no sign of anger in the chiefs.

“What’s he been saying?” I asked, when he had done.

“O, just that they’re glad to see you, and they understand by me you wish to make some kind of complaint, and you’re to fire away, and they’ll do the square thing.”

“It took a precious long time to say that,” said I.

“O, the rest was sawder and *bonjour* and that,” said Case. “You know what Kanakas are.”

“Well, they don’t get much *bonjour* out of me,” said I. “You tell them who I am. I’m a white man, and a British subject, and no end of a big chief at home; and I’ve come here to do them good, and bring them civilisation; and no sooner have I got my trade sorted out than they go and taboo me, and no one dare come near my place! Tell them I don't mean to fly in the face of anything legal; and if what they want's a present, I'll do what's fair. I don't blame any man looking out for himself, tell them, for that's human nature; but if they think they're going to come any of their native ideas over me, they'll find themselves mistaken. And tell them plain that I demand the reason of this treatment as a white man and a British subject."

That was my speech. I know how to deal with Kanakas: give them plain sense and fair dealing, and — I'll do them that much justice — they knuckle under every time. They haven't any real government or any real law, that's what you've got to knock into their heads; and even if they had, it would be a good joke if it was to apply to a white man. It would be a strange thing if we came all this way and couldn't do what we pleased. The mere idea has always put my monkey up, and I rapped my speech out pretty big. Then Case translated it — or made believe to, rather — and the first chief replied, and then a second, and a third, all in the same style, easy and genteel, but solemn underneath. Once a question was put to Case, and he answered it, and all hands (both chiefs and commons) laughed out aloud, and looked at me. Last of all, the puckered old fellow and the big young chief that spoke first started in to put Case through a kind of catechism. Sometimes I made out that Case was trying to fence, and they stuck to him like hounds, and the sweat ran down his face, which was no very pleasant sight to me, and at some of his answers the crowd moaned and murmured, which was a worse hearing. It's a cruel shame I knew no native, for (as I now believe) they were asking Case about my marriage, and he must have had a tough job of it to clear his feet. But leave Case alone; he had the brains to run a parliament.

"Well, is that all?" I asked, when a pause came.

"Come along," says he, mopping his face; "I'll tell you outside."

"Do you mean they won't take the taboo off?" I cried.

"It's something queer," said he. "I'll tell you outside. Better come away."

"I won't take it at their hands," cried I. "I ain't that kind of a man. You don't find me turn my back on a parcel of Kanakas."

"You'd better," said Case.

He looked at me with a signal in his eye; and the five chiefs looked at me civilly enough, but kind of pointed; and the people looked at me and craned and jostled. I remembered the folks that watched my house, and how the pastor had jumped in his pulpit at the bare sight of me; and the whole business seemed so out of the way that I rose and followed Case. The crowd opened again to let us through, but wider than before, the children on the skirts running and singing out, and as we two white men walked away they all stood and watched us.

"And now," said I, "what is all this about?"

"The truth is I can't rightly make it out myself. They have a down on you," says Case.

"Taboo a man because they have a down on him!" I cried. "I never heard the like."

"It's worse than that, you see," said Case. "You ain't tabooed — I told you that couldn't be. The people won't go near you, Wiltshire, and there's where it is."

"They won't go near me? What do you mean by that? Why won't they go near me?" I cried.

Case hesitated. "Seems they're frightened," says he, in a low, voice.

I stopped dead short. "Frightened?" I repeated. "Are you gone crazy, Case? What are they frightened of?"

"I wish I could make out," Case answered, shaking his head. "Appears like one of their tomfool superstitions. That's what I don't cotton to," he said. "It's like the business about Vigours."

"I'd like to know what you mean by that, and I'll trouble you to tell me," says I.

"Well, you know, Vigours lit out and left all standing," said he. "It was some superstition business — I never got the hang of it but it began to look bad before the end."

"I've heard a different story about that," said I, "and I had better tell you so. I heard he ran away because of you."

"O! well, I suppose he was ashamed to tell the truth," says Case; "I guess he thought it silly. And it's a fact that I packed him off. 'What would you do, old man?' says he. 'Get,' says I, 'and not think twice about it.' I was the gladdest kind of man to see him clear away. It ain't my notion to turn my back on a mate when he's in a tight place, but there was that much trouble in the village that I couldn't see where it might likely end. I was a fool to be so much about with Vigours. They cast it up to me to-day. Didn't you hear Maea — that's the young chief, the big one — ripping out about 'Vika'? That was him they were after. They don't seem to forget it, somehow."

"This is all very well," said I, "but it don't tell me what's wrong; it don't tell me what they're afraid of — what their idea is."

"Well, I wish I knew," said Case. "I can't say fairer than that."

"You might have asked, I think," says I.

"And so I did," says he. "But you must have seen for yourself, unless you're blind, that the asking got the other way. I'll go as far as I dare for another white man; but when I find I'm in the scrape myself, I think first of my own bacon. The loss of me is I'm too good-natured. And I'll take the freedom of telling you you show a queer kind of gratitude to a man who's got into all this mess along of your affairs."

"There's a thing I am thinking of," said I. "You were a fool to be so much about with Vigours. One comfort, you haven't been much about with me. I notice you've never been inside my house. Own up now; you had word of this before?"

"It's a fact I haven't been," said he. "It was an oversight, and I am sorry for it, Wiltshire. But about coming now, I'll be quite plain."

"You mean you won't?" I asked.

"Awfully sorry, old man, but that's the size of it," says Case.

"In short, you're afraid?" says I.

"In short, I'm afraid," says he.

"And I'm still to be tabooed for nothing?" I asked

"I tell you you're not tabooed," said he. "The Kanakas won't go near you, that's all. And who's to make 'em? We traders have a lot of gall, I must say; we make these poor Kanakas take back their laws, and take up their taboos, and that, whenever it happens to suit us. But you don't mean to say you expect a law obliging people to deal in your store whether they want to or not? You don't mean to tell me you've got the gall for that? And if you had, it would be a queer thing to propose to me. I would just like to point out to you, Wiltshire, that I'm a trader myself."

"I don't think I would talk of gall if I was you," said I. "Here's about what it comes to, as well as I can make out: None of the people are to trade with me, and they're all to trade with you. You're to have the copra, and I'm to go to the devil and shake myself. And I don't know any native, and you're the only man here worth mention that speaks English, and you have the gall to up and hint to me my life's in danger, and all you've got to tell me is you don't know why!"

"Well, it *is* all I have to tell you," said he. "I don't know — I wish I did."

"And so you turn your back and leave me to myself! Is that the position?" says I.

"If you like to put it nasty," says he. "I don't put it so. I say merely, 'I'm going to keep clear of you; or, if I don't, I'll get in danger for myself.'"

"Well," says I, "you're a nice kind of a white man!"

"O, I understand; you're riled," said he. "I would be myself. I can make excuses."

"All right," I said, "go and make excuses somewhere else. Here's my way, there's yours!"

With that we parted, and I went straight home, in a hot temper, and found Uma trying on a lot of trade goods like a baby.

"Here," I said, "you quit that foolery! Here's a pretty mess to have made, as if I wasn't bothered enough anyway! And I thought I told you to get dinner!”

And then I believe I gave her a bit of the rough side of my tongue, as she deserved. She stood up at once, like a sentry to his officer; for I must say she was always well brought up, and had a great respect for whites.

“And now,” says I, “you belong round here, you’re bound to understand this. What am I tabooed for, anyway? Or, if I ain’t tabooed, what makes the folks afraid of me?”

She stood and looked at me with eyes like saucers.

“You no savvy?” she gasps at last.

“No,” said I. “How would you expect me to? We don’t have any such craziness where I come from.”

“Ese no tell you?” she asked again.

(*Ese* was the name the natives had for Case; it may mean foreign, or extraordinary; or it might mean a mummy apple; but most like it was only his own name misheard and put in a Kanaka spelling.)

“Not much,” said I.

“D-n Ese!” she cried.

You might think it funny to hear this Kanaka girl come out with a big swear. No such thing. There was no swearing in her — no, nor anger; she was beyond anger, and meant the word simple and serious. She stood there straight as she said it. I cannot justly say that I ever saw a woman look like that before or after, and it struck me mum. Then she made a kind of an obeisance, but it was the proudest kind, and threw her hands out open.

“I ‘shamed,” she said. “I think you savvy. Ese he tell me you savvy, he tell me you no mind, tell me you love me too much. Taboo belong me,” she said, touching herself on the bosom, as she had done upon our wedding-night. “Now I go ‘way, taboo he go ‘way too. Then you get too much copra. You like more better, I think. *Tofâ, alii,*” says she in the native — ”Farewell, chief!”

“Hold on!” I cried. “Don’t be in such a hurry.”

She looked at me sidelong with a smile. “You see, you get copra,” she said, the same as you might offer candies to a child.

“Uma,” said I, “hear reason. I didn’t know, and that’s a fact; and Case seems to have played it pretty mean upon the pair of us. But I do know now, and I don’t mind; I love you too much. You no go ‘way, you no leave me, I too much sorry.”

“You no love, me,” she cried, “you talk me bad words!” And she threw herself in a corner of the floor, and began to cry.

Well, I’m no scholar, but I wasn’t born yesterday, and I thought the worst of that trouble was over. However, there she lay — her back turned, her face to the wall — and shook with sobbing like a little child, so that her feet jumped with it. It’s strange how it hits a man when he's in love; for there's no use mincing things — Kanaka and all, I was in love with her, or just as good. I tried to take her hand, but she would none of that. "Uma," I said, "there's no sense in carrying on like this. I want you stop here, I want my little wifie, I tell you true."

"No tell me true," she sobbed.

"All right," says I, "I'll wait till you're through with this." And I sat right down beside her on the floor, and set to smooth her hair with my hand. At first she wriggled away when I touched her; then she seemed to notice me no more; then her sobs grew gradually less, and presently stopped; and the next thing I knew, she raised her face to mime.

"You tell me true? You like me stop?" she asked.

"Uma," I said, "I would rather have you than all the copra in the South Seas," which was a very big expression, and the strangest thing was that I meant it.

She threw her arms about me, sprang close up, and pressed her face to mine in the island way of kissing, so that I was all wetted with her tears, and my heart went out to her wholly. I never had anything so near me as this little brown bit of a girl. Many things went together, and all helped to turn my head. She was pretty enough to eat; it seemed she was my only friend in that queer place; I was ashamed that I had spoken rough to her: and she was a woman, and my wife, and a kind of a baby besides that I was sorry for; and the salt of her tears was in my mouth. And I forgot Case and the natives; and I forgot that I knew nothing of the story, or only remembered it to banish the remembrance; and I forgot that I was to get no copra, and so could make no livelihood; and I forgot my employers, and the strange kind of service I was doing them, when I preferred my fancy to their business; and I forgot even that Uma was no true wife of mine, but just a maid beguiled, and that in a pretty shabby style. But that is to look too far on. I will come to that part of it next.

It was late before we thought of getting dinner. The stove was out, and gone stone-cold; but we fired up after a while, and cooked each a dish, helping and hindering each other, and making a play of it like children. I was so greedy of her nearness that I sat down to dinner with my lass upon my knee, made sure of her with one hand, and ate with the other. Ay, and more than that. She was the worst cook I suppose God made; the things she set her hand to it would have sickened an honest horse to eat of; yet I made my meal that day on Uma's cookery, and can never call to mind to have been better pleased.

I didn't pretend to myself, and I didn't pretend to her. I saw I was clean gone; and if she was to make a fool of me, she must. And I suppose it was this that set her talking, for now she made sure that we were friends. A lot she told me, sitting in my lap and eating my dish, as I ate hers, from foolery — a lot about herself and her mother and Case, all which would be very tedious, and fill sheets if I set it down in Beach de Mar, but which I must give a hint of in plain English, and one thing about myself which had a very big effect on my concerns, as you are soon to hear.

It seems she was born in one of the Line Islands; had been only two or three years in these parts, where she had come with a white man, who was married to her mother and then died; and only the one year in Falesá. Before that they had been a good deal on the move, trekking about after the white man, who was one of those rolling stones that keep going round after a soft job. They talk about looking for gold at the end of a rainbow; but if a man wants an employment that'll last him till he dies, let him start out on the soft-job hunt. There's meat and drink in it too, and beer and skittles, for you never hear of them starving, and rarely see them sober; and as for steady sport, cock-fighting isn't in the same county with it. Anyway, this beachcomber carried the woman and her daughter all over the shop, but mostly to out-of-the-way islands, where there were no police, and he thought, perhaps, the soft job hung out. I've my own view of this old party; but I was just as glad he had kept Uma clear of Apia and Papeete and these flash towns. At last he struck Fale-alii on this island, got some trade — the Lord knows how! — muddled it all away in the usual style, and died worth next to nothing, bar a bit of land at Falesá that he had got for a bad debt, which was what put it in the minds of the mother and daughter to come there and live. It seems Case encouraged them all he could, and helped to get their house built. He was very kind those days, and gave Uma trade, and there is no doubt he had his eye on her from the beginning. However, they had scarce settled, when up turned a young man, a native, and wanted to marry her. He was a small chief, and had some fine mats and old songs in his family, and was "very pretty," Uma said; and, altogether, it was an extraordinary match for a penniless girl and an out-islander.

At the first word of this I got downright sick with jealousy.

"And you mean to say you would have married him?" I cried.

"*Ioe*, yes," said she. "I like too much!"

"Well!" I said. "And suppose I had come round after?"

"I like you more better now," said she. "But, suppose I marry Ioane, I one good wife. I no common Kanaka. Good girl!" says she.

Well, I had to be pleased with that; but I promise you I didn't care about the business one little bit. And I liked the end of that yarn no better than the beginning. For it seems this proposal of marriage was the start of all the trouble. It seems, before that, Uma and her mother had been looked down upon, of course, for kinless folk and out-islanders, but nothing to hurt; and, even when Ioane came forward, there was less trouble at first than might have been looked for. And then, all of a sudden, about six months before my coming, Ioane backed out and left that part of the island, and from that day to this Uma and her mother had found themselves alone. None called at their house, none spoke to them on the roads. If they went to church, the other women drew their mats away and left them in a clear place by themselves. It was a regular excommunication, like what you read of in the Middle Ages; and the cause or sense of it beyond guessing. It was some *tala pepelo*, Uma said, some lie, some calumny; and all she knew of it was that the girls who had been jealous of her luck with Ioane used to twit her with his desertion, and cry out, when they met her alone in the woods, that she would never be married. "They tell me no man he marry me. He too much 'fraid," she said.

The only soul that came about them after this desertion was Master Case. Even he was chary of showing himself, and turned up mostly by night; and pretty soon he began to table his cards and make up to Uma. I was still sore about Ioane, and when Case turned up in the same line of business I cut up downright rough.

"Well," I said, sneering, "and I suppose you thought Case 'very pretty' and 'liked too much'?"

"Now you talk silly," said she. "White man, he come here, I marry him all-e-same Kanaka; very well then, he marry me all-e-same white woman. Suppose he no marry, he go 'way, woman he stop. All-e-same thief, empty hand, Tonga-heart — no can love! Now you come marry me. You big heart — you no 'shamed island-girl. That thing I love you for too much. I proud."

I don't know that ever I felt sicker all the days of my life. I laid down my fork, and I put away "the island-girl"; I didn't seem somehow to have any use for either, and I went and walked up and down in the house, and Uma followed me with her eyes, for she was troubled, and small wonder! But troubled was no word for it with me. I so wanted, and so feared, to make a clean breast of the sweep that I had been.

And just then there came a sound of singing out of the sea; it sprang up suddenly clear and near, as the boat turned the headland, and Uma, running to the window, cried out it was "Misi" come upon his rounds.

I thought it was a strange thing I should be glad to have a missionary; but, if it was strange, it was still true.

"Uma," said I, "you stop here in this room, and don't budge a foot out of it till I come back."

CHAPTER III. THE MISSIONARY.

As I came out on the verandah, the mission-boat was shooting for the mouth of the river. She was a long whale-boat painted white; a bit of an awning astern; a native pastor crouched on the wedge of the poop, steering; some four-and-twenty paddles flashing and dipping, true to the boat-song; and the missionary under the awning, in his white clothes, reading in a book, and set him up! It was pretty to see and hear; there's no smarter sight in the islands than a missionary boat with a good crew and a good pipe to them; and I considered it for half a minute, with a bit of envy perhaps, and then strolled down towards the river.

From the opposite side there was another man aiming for the same place, but he ran and got there first. It was Case; doubtless his idea was to keep me apart from the missionary, who might serve me as interpreter; but my mind was upon other things. I was thinking how he had jockeyed us about the marriage, and tried his hand on Uma before; and at the sight of him rage flew into my nostrils.

"Get out of that, you low, swindling thief!" I cried.

"What's that you say?" says he.

I gave him the word again, and rammed it down with a good oath. "And if ever I catch you within six fathoms of my house," I cried, "I'll clap a bullet in your measly carcase."

"You must do as you like about your house," said he, "where I told you I have no thought of going; but this is a public place."

"It's a place where I have private business," said I. "I have no idea of a hound like you eavesdropping, and I give you notice to clear out."

"I don't take it, though," says Case.

"I'll show you, then," said I.

"We'll have to see about that," said he.

He was quick with his hands, but he had neither the height nor the weight, being a flimsy creature alongside a man like me, and, besides, I was blazing to that height of wrath that I could have bit into a chisel. I gave him first the one and then the other, so that I could hear his head rattle and crack, and he went down straight.

"Have you had enough?" cried I. But he only looked up white and blank, and the blood spread upon his face like wine upon a napkin. "Have you had enough?" I cried again. "Speak up, and don't lie malingering there, or I'll take my feet to you."

He sat up at that, and held his head — by the look of him you could see it was spinning — and the blood poured on his pyjamas.

"I've had enough for this time," says he, and he got up staggering, and went off by the way that he had come.

The boat was close in; I saw the missionary had laid his book to one side, and I smiled to myself. "He'll know I'm a man, anyway," thinks I.

This was the first time, in all my years in the Pacific, I had ever exchanged two words with any missionary, let alone asked one for a favour. I didn't like the lot, no trader does; they look down upon us, and make no concealment; and, besides, they're partly Kanakaised, and suck up with natives instead of with other white men like themselves. I had on a rig of clean striped pyjamas — for, of course, I had dressed decent to go before the chiefs; but when I saw the missionary step out of this boat in the regular uniform, white duck clothes, pith helmet, white shirt and tie, and yellow boots to his feet, I could have bunged stones at him. As he came nearer, queering me pretty curious (because of the fight, I suppose), I saw he looked mortal sick, for the truth was he had a fever on, and had just had a chill in the boat.

"Mr. Tarleton, I believe?" says I, for I had got his name.

"And you, I suppose, are the new trader?" says he.

"I want to tell you first that I don't hold with missions," I went on, "and that I think you and the likes of you do a sight of harm, filling up the natives with old wives' tales and bumptiousness."

"You are perfectly entitled to your opinions," says he, looking a bit ugly, "but I have no call to hear them."

"It so happens that you've got to hear them," I said. "I'm no missionary, nor missionary lover; I'm no Kanaka, nor favourer of Kanakas — I'm just a trader; I'm just a common, low-down, God-damned white man and British subject, the sort you would like to wipe your boots on. I hope that's plain!"

"Yes, my man," said he. "It's more plain than creditable. When you are sober, you'll be sorry for this."

He tried to pass on, but I stopped him with my hand. The Kanakas were beginning to growl. Guess they didn't like my tone, for I spoke to that man as free as I would to you.

"Now, you can't say I've deceived you," said I, "and I can go on. I want a service — I want two services, in fact; and, if you care to give me them, I'll perhaps take more stock in what you call your Christianity."

He was silent for a moment. Then he smiled. "You are rather a strange sort of man," says he.

"I'm the sort of man God made me," says I. "I don't set up to be a gentleman," I said.

"I am not quite so sure," said he. "And what can I do for you, Mr. — ?"

"Wiltshire," I says, "though I'm mostly called Welsher; but Wiltshire is the way it's spelt, if the people on the beach could only get their tongues about it. And what do I want? Well, I'll tell you the first thing. I'm what you call a sinner — what I call a sweep — and I want you to help me make it up to a person I've deceived."

He turned and spoke to his crew in the native. "And now I am at your service," said he, "but only for the time my crew are dining. I must be much farther down the coast before night. I was delayed at Papa-Malulu till this morning, and I have an engagement in Fale-alii to-morrow night."

I led the way to my house in silence, and rather pleased with myself for the way I had managed the talk, for I like a man to keep his self-respect.

"I was sorry to see you fighting," says he.

"O, that's part of the yarn I want to tell you," I said. "That's service number two. After you've heard it you'll let me know whether you're sorry or not."

We walked right in through the store, and I was surprised to find Uma had cleared away the dinner things. This was so unlike her ways that I saw she had done it out of gratitude, and liked her the better. She and Mr. Tarleton called each other by name, and he was very civil to her seemingly. But I thought little of that; they can always find civility for a Kanaka, it's us white men they lord it over. Besides, I didn't want much Tarleton just them. I was going to do my pitch.

"Uma," said I, "give us your marriage certificate." She looked put out. "Come," said I, "you can trust me. Hand it up."

She had it about her person, as usual; I believe she thought it was a pass to heaven, and if she died without having it handy she would go to hell. I couldn't see where she put it the first time, I couldn't see now where she took it from; it seemed to jump into her hand like that Blavatsky business in the papers. But it's the same way with all island women, and I guess they're taught it when young.

"Now," said I, with the certificate in my hand, "I was married to this girl by Black Jack the negro. The certificate was wrote by Case, and it's a dandy piece of literature, I promise you. Since then I've found that there's a kind of cry in the place against this wife of mine, and so long as I keep her I cannot trade. Now, what would any man do in my place, if he was a man?" I said. "The first thing he would do is this, I guess." And I took and tore up the certificate and bunged the pieces on the floor.

"*Aué*!" cried Uma, and began to clap her hands; but I caught one of them in mine.

"And the second thing that he would do," said I, "if he was what I would call a man and you would call a man, Mr. Tarleton, is to bring the girl right before you or any other missionary, and to up and say: 'I was wrong married to this wife of mine, but I think a heap of her, and now I want to be married to her right.' Fire away, Mr. Tarleton. And I guess you'd better do it in native; it'll please the old lady," I said, giving her the proper name of a man's wife upon the spot.

So we had in two of the crew for to witness, and were spliced in our own house; and the parson prayed a good bit, I must say — but not so long as some — and shook hands with the pair of us.

"Mr. Wiltshire," he says, when he had made out the lines and packed off the witnesses, "I have to thank you for a very lively pleasure. I have rarely performed the marriage ceremony with more grateful emotions."

That was what you would call talking. He was going on, besides, with more of it, and I was ready for as much taffy as he had in stock, for I felt good. But Uma had been taken up with something half through the marriage, and cut straight in.

"How your hand he get hurt?" she asked.

"You ask Case's head, old lady," says I.

She jumped with joy, and sang out.

"You haven't made much of a Christian of this one," says I to Mr. Tarleton.

"We didn't think her one of our worst," says he, "when she was at Fale-alii; and if Uma bears malice I shall be tempted to fancy she has good cause."

"Well, there we are at service number two," said I. "I want to tell you our yarn, and see if you can let a little daylight in."

"Is it long?" he asked.

"Yes," I cried; "it's a goodish bit of a yarn!"

"Well, I'll give you all the time I can spare," says he, looking at his watch. "But I must tell you fairly, I haven't eaten since five this morning, and, unless you can let me have something I am not likely to eat again before seven or eight to-night."

"By God, we'll give you dinner!" I cried.

I was a little caught up at my swearing, just when all was going straight; and so was the missionary, I suppose, but he made believe to look out of the window, and thanked us.

So we ran him up a bit of a meal. I was bound to let the old lady have a hand in it, to show off, so I deputised her to brew the tea. I don't think I ever met such tea as she turned out. But that was not the worst, for she got round with the salt-box, which she considered an extra European touch, and turned my stew into sea-water. Altogether, Mr. Tarleton had a devil of a dinner of it; but he had plenty entertainment by the way, for all the while that we were cooking, and afterwards, when he was making believe to eat, I kept posting him up on Master Case and the beach of Falesá, and he putting questions that showed he was following close.

"Well," said he at last, "I am afraid you have a dangerous enemy. This man Case is very clever and seems really wicked. I must tell you I have had my eye on him for nearly a year, and have rather had the worst of our encounters. About the time when the last representative of your firm ran so suddenly away, I had a letter from Namu, the native pastor, begging me to come to Falesá at my earliest convenience, as his flock were all 'adopting Catholic practices.' I had great confidence in Namu; I fear it only shows how easily we are deceived. No one could hear him preach and not be persuaded he was a man of extraordinary parts. All our islanders easily acquire a kind of eloquence, and can roll out and illustrate, with a great deal of vigour and fancy, second-hand sermons; but Namu's sermons are his own, and I cannot deny that I have found them means of grace. Moreover, he has a keen curiosity in secular things, does not fear work, is clever at carpentering, and has made himself so much respected among the neighbouring pastors that we call him, in a jest which is half serious, the Bishop of the East. In short, I was proud of the man; all the more puzzled by his letter, and took an occasion to come this way. The morning before my arrival, Vigours had been sent on board the *Lion*, and Namu was perfectly at his ease, apparently ashamed of his letter, and quite unwilling to explain it. This, of course, I could not allow, and he ended by confessing that he had been much concerned to find his people using the sign of the cross, but since he had learned the explanation his mind was satisfied. For Vigours had the Evil Eye, a common thing in a country of Europe called Italy, where men were often struck dead by that kind of devil, and it appeared the sign of the cross was a charm against its power.

"'And I explain it, Misi,' said Namu, 'in this way: The country in Europe is a Popey country, and the devil of the Evil Eye may be a Catholic devil, or, at least, used to Catholic ways. So then I reasoned thus: if this sign of the cross were used in a Popey manner it would be sinful, but when it is used only to protect men from a devil, which is a thing harmless in itself, the sign too must be, as a bottle is neither good nor bad, harmless. For the sign is neither good nor bad. But if the bottle be full of gin, the gin is bad; and if the sign be made in idolatry bad, so is the idolatry.' And, very like a native pastor, he had a text apposite about the casting out of devils.

"'And who has been telling you about the Evil Eye?' I asked.

"He admitted it was Case. Now, I am afraid you will think me very narrow, Mr. Wiltshire, but I must tell you I was displeased, and cannot think a trader at all a good man to advise or have an influence upon my pastors. And, besides, there had been some flying talk in the country of old Adams and his being poisoned, to which I had paid no great heed; but it came back to me at the moment.

"'And is this Case a man of a sanctified life?' I asked.

"He admitted he was not; for, though he did not drink, he was profligate with women, and had no religion.

"'Then,' said I, 'I think the less you have to do with him the better.'

"But it is not easy to have the last word with a man like Namu. He was ready in a moment with an illustration. 'Misi,' said he, 'you have told me there were wise men, not pastors, not even holy, who knew many things useful to be taught — about trees for instance, and beasts, and to print books, and about the stones that are burned to make knives of. Such men teach you in your college, and you learn from them, but take care not to learn to be unholy. Misi, Case is my college.'

"I knew not what to say. Mr. Vigours had evidently been driven out of Falesá by the machinations of Case and with something not very unlike the collusion of my pastor. I called to mind it was Namu who had reassured me about Adams and traced the rumour to the ill-will of the priest. And I saw I must inform myself more thoroughly from an impartial source. There is an old rascal of a chief here, Faiaso, whom I dare say you saw to-day at the council; he has been all his life turbulent and sly, a great fomenter of rebellions, and a thorn in the side of the mission and the island. For all that he is very shrewd, and, except in politics or about his own misdemeanours, a teller of the truth. I went to his house, told him what I had heard, and besought him to be frank. I do not think I had ever a more painful interview. Perhaps you will understand me, Mr. Wiltshire, if I tell you that I am perfectly serious in these old wives' tales with which you reproached me, and as anxious to do well for these islands as you can be to please and to protect your pretty wife. And you are to remember that I thought Namu a paragon, and was proud of the man as one of the first ripe fruits of the mission. And now I was informed that he had fallen in a sort of dependence upon Case. The beginning of it was not corrupt; it began, doubtless, in fear and respect, produced by trickery and pretence; but I was shocked to find that another element had been lately added, that Namu helped himself in the store, and was believed to be deep in Case's debt. Whatever the trader said, that Namu believed with trembling. He was not alone in this; many in the village lived in a similar subjection; but Namu's case was the most influential, it was through Namu Case had wrought most evil; and with a certain following among the chiefs, and the pastor in his pocket, the man was as good as master of the village. You know something of Vigours and Adams, but perhaps you have never heard of old Underhill, Adams' predecessor. He was a quiet, mild old fellow, I remember, and we were told he had died suddenly: white men die very suddenly in

Falesá. The truth, as I now heard it, made my blood run cold. It seems he was struck with a general palsy, all of him dead but one eye, which he continually winked. Word was started that the helpless old man was now a devil, and this vile fellow Case worked upon the natives' fears, which he professed to share, and pretended he durst not go into the house alone. At last a grave was dug, and the living body buried at the far end of the village. Namu, my pastor, whom I had helped to educate, offered up a prayer at the hateful scene.

"I felt myself in a very difficult position. Perhaps it was my duty to have denounced Namu and had him deposed. Perhaps I think so now, but at the time it seemed less clear. He had a great influence, it might prove greater than mine. The natives are prone to superstition; perhaps by stirring them up I might but ingrain and spread these dangerous fancies. And Namu besides, apart from this novel and accursed influence, was a good pastor, an able man, and spiritually minded. Where should I look for a better? How was I to find as good? At that moment, with Namu's failure fresh in my view, the work of my life appeared a mockery; hope was dead in me. I would rather repair such tools as I had than go abroad in quest of others that must certainly prove worse; and a scandal is, at the best, a thing to be avoided when humanly possible. Right or wrong, then, I determined on a quiet course. All that night I denounced and reasoned with the erring pastor, twitted him with his ignorance and want of faith, twitted him with his wretched attitude, making clean the outside of the cup and platter, callously helping at a murder, childishly flying in excitement about a few childish, unnecessary, and inconvenient gestures; and long before day I had him on his knees and bathed in the tears of what seemed a genuine repentance. On Sunday I took the pulpit in the morning, and preached from First Kings, nineteenth, on the fire, the earthquake, and the voice, distinguishing the true spiritual power, and referring with such plainness as I dared to recent events in Falesá. The effect produced was great, and it was much increased when Namu rose in his turn and confessed that he had been wanting in faith and conduct, and was convinced of sin. So far, then, all was well; but there was one unfortunate circumstance. It was nearing the time of our 'May' in the island, when the native contributions to the missions are received; it fell in my duty to make a notification on the subject, and this gave my enemy his chance, by which he was not slow to profit.

"News of the whole proceedings must have been carried to Case as soon as church was over, and the same afternoon he made an occasion to meet me in the midst of the village. He came up with so much intentness and animosity that I felt it would be damaging to avoid him.

"'So,' says he, in native, 'here is the holy man. He has been preaching against me, but that was not in his heart. He has been preaching upon the love of God; but that was not in his heart, it was between his teeth. Will you know what was in his heart?' — cries he. 'I will show it you!' And, making a snatch at my head, he made believe to pluck out a dollar, and held it in the air.

"There went that rumour through the crowd with which Polynesians receive a prodigy. As for myself, I stood amazed. The thing was a common conjuring trick which I have seen performed at home a score of times; but how was I to convince the villagers of that? I wished I had learned legerdemain instead of Hebrew, that I might have paid the fellow out with his own coin. But there I was; I could not stand there silent, and the best I could find to say was weak.

"'I will trouble you not to lay hands on me again,' said I.

"'I have no such thought,' said he, 'nor will I deprive you of your dollar. Here it is,' he said, and flung it at my feet. I am told it lay where it fell three days."

"I must say it was well played, said I.

"O! he is clever," said Mr. Tarleton, "and you can now see for yourself how dangerous. He was a party to the horrid death of the paralytic; he is accused of poisoning Adams; he drove Vigours out of the place by lies that might have led to murder; and there is no question but he has now made up his mind to rid himself of you. How he means to try we have no guess; only be sure, it's something new. There is no end to his readiness and invention."

"He gives himself a sight of trouble," says I. "And after all, what for?"

"Why, how many tons of copra may they make in this district?" asked the missionary.

"I daresay as much as sixty tons," says I.

"And what is the profit to the local trader?" he asked.

"You may call it, three pounds," said I.

"Then you can reckon for yourself how much he does it for," said Mr. Tarleton. "But the more important thing is to defeat him. It is clear he spread some report against Uma, in order to isolate and have his wicked will of her. Failing of that, and seeing a new rival come upon the scene, he used her in a different way. Now, the first point to find out is about Namu. Uma, when people began to leave you and your mother alone, what did Namu do?"

"Stop away all-e-same," says Uma.

"I fear the dog has returned to his vomit," said Mr. Tarleton. "And now what am I to do for you? I will speak to Namu, I will warn him he is observed; it will be strange if he allow anything to go on amiss when he is put upon his guard. At the same time, this precaution may fail, and then you must turn elsewhere. You have two people at hand to whom you might apply. There is, first of all, the priest, who might protect you by the Catholic interest; they are a wretchedly small body, but they count two chiefs. And then there is old Faiaso. Ah! if it had been some years ago you would have needed no one else; but his influence is much reduced, it has gone into Maea's hands, and Maea, I fear, is one of Case's jackals. In fine, if the worst comes to the worst, you must send up or come yourself to Fale-alii, and, though I am not due at this end of the island for a month, I will just see what can be done."

So Mr. Tarleton said farewell; and half an hour later the crew were singing and the paddles flashing in the missionary-boat.

CHAPTER IV. DEVIL-WORK.

Near a month went by without much doing. The same night of our marriage Galoshes called round, and made himself mighty civil, and got into a habit of dropping in about dark and smoking his pipe with the family. He could talk to Uma, of course, and started to teach me native and French at the same time. He was a kind old buffer, though the dirtiest you would wish to see, and he muddled me up with foreign languages worse than the tower of Babel.

That was one employment we had, and it made me feel less lonesome; but there was no profit in the thing, for though the priest came and sat and yarned, none of his folks could be enticed into my store; and if it hadn't been for the other occupation I struck out, there wouldn't have been a pound of copra in the house. This was the idea: Fa'avao (Uma's mother) had a score of bearing trees. Of course we could get no labour, being all as good as tabooed, and the two women and I turned to and made copra with our own hands. It was copra to make your mouth water when it was done — I never understood how much the natives cheated me till I had made that four hundred pounds of my own hand — and it weighed so light I felt inclined to take and water it myself.

When we were at the job a good many Kanakas used to put in the best of the day looking on, and once that nigger turned up. He stood back with the natives and laughed and did the big don and the funny dog, till I began to get riled.

"Here, you nigger!" says I.

"I don't address myself to you, Sah," says the nigger. "Only speak to gen'le'um."

"I know," says I, "but it happens I was addressing myself to you, Mr. Black Jack. And all I want to know is just this: did you see Case's figurehead about a week ago?"

"No, Sah," says he.

"That's all right, then," says I; "for I'll show you the own brother to it, only black, in the inside of about two minutes."

And I began to walk towards him, quite slow, and my hands down; only there was trouble in my eye, if anybody took the pains to look.

"You're a low, obstropulous fellow, Sah," says he.

"You bet!" says I.

By that time he thought I was about as near as convenient, and lit out so it would have done your heart good to see him travel. And that was all I saw of that precious gang until what I am about to tell you.

It was one of my chief employments these days to go pot-hunting in the woods, which I found (as Case had told me) very rich in game. I have spoken of the cape which shut up the village and my station from the east. A path went about the end of it, and led into the next bay. A strong wind blew here daily, and as the line of the barrier reef stopped at the end of the cape, a heavy surf ran on the shores of the bay. A little cliffy hill cut the valley in two parts, and stood close on the beach; and at high water the sea broke right on the face of it, so that all passage was stopped. Woody mountains hemmed the place all round; the barrier to the east was particularly steep and leafy, the lower parts of it, along the sea, falling in sheer black cliffs streaked with cinnabar; the upper part lumpy with the tops of the great trees. Some of the trees were bright green, and some red, and the sand of the beach as black as your shoes. Many birds hovered round the bay, some of them snow-white; and the flying-fox (or vampire) flew there in broad daylight, gnashing its teeth.

For a long while I came as far as this shooting, and went no farther. There was no sign of any path beyond, and the cocoa-palms in the front of the foot of the valley were the last this way. For the whole "eye" of the island, as natives call the windward end, lay desert. From Falesá round about to Papa-malulu, there was neither house, nor man, nor planted fruit-tree; and the reef being mostly absent, and the shores bluff, the sea beat direct among crags, and there was scarce a landing-place.

I should tell you that after I began to go in the woods, although no one offered to come near my store, I found people willing enough to pass the time of day with me where nobody could see them; and as I had begun to pick up native, and most of them had a word or two of English, I began to hold little odds and ends of conversation, not to much purpose to be sure, but they took off the worst of the feeling, for it's a miserable thing to be made a leper of.

It chanced one day towards the end of the month, that I was sitting in this bay in the edge of the bush, looking east, with a Kanaka. I had given him a fill of tobacco, and we were making out to talk as best we could; indeed, he had more English than most.

I asked him if there was no road going eastward.

"One time one road," said he. "Now he dead."

"Nobody he go there?" I asked.

"No good," said he. "Too much devil he stop there."

"Oho!" says I, "got-um plenty devil, that bush?"

"Man devil, woman devil; too much devil," said my friend. "Stop there all-e-time. Man he go there, no come back."

I thought if this fellow was so well posted on devils and spoke of them so free, which is not common, I had better fish for a little information about myself and Uma.

"You think me one devil?" I asked.

"No think devil," said he soothingly. "Think all-e-same fool."

"Uma, she devil?" I asked again.

"No, no; no devil. Devil stop bush," said the young man.

I was looking in front of me across the bay, and I saw the hanging front of the woods pushed suddenly open, and Case, with a gun in his hand, step forth into the sunshine on the black beach. He was got up in light pyjamas, near white, his gun sparkled, he looked mighty conspicuous; and the land-crabs scuttled from all round him to their holes.

"Hullo, my friend!" says I, "you no talk all-e-same true. Ese he go, he come back."

"Ese no all-e-same; Ese *Tiapolo*," says my friend; and, with a "Good-bye," slunk off among the trees.

I watched Case all round the beach, where the tide was low; and let him pass me on the homeward way to Falesá. He was in deep thought, and the birds seemed to know it, trotting quite near him on the sand, or wheeling and calling in his ears. When he passed me I could see by the working of his lips that he was talking to himself, and what pleased me mightily, he had still my trade mark on his brow, I tell you the plain truth: I had a mind to give him a gunful in his ugly mug, but I thought better of it.

All this time, and all the time I was following home, I kept repeating that native word, which I remembered by "Polly, put the kettle on and make us all some tea," tea-a-pollo.

"Uma," says I, when I got back, "what does *Tiapolo* mean?"

"Devil," says she.

"I thought *aitu* was the word for that," I said.

"*Aitu* 'nother kind of devil," said she; "stop bush, eat Kanaka. Tiapolo big chief devil, stop home; all-e-same Christian devil."

"Well then," said I, "I'm no farther forward. How can Case be Tiapolo?"

"No all-e-same," said she. "Ese belong Tiapolo; Tiapolo too much like; Ese all-e-same his son. Suppose Ese he wish something, Tiapolo he make him."

"That's mighty convenient for Ese," says I. "And what kind of things does he make for him?"

Well, out came a rigmarole of all sorts of stories, many of which (like the dollar he took from Mr. Tarleton's head) were plain enough to me, but others I could make nothing of; and the thing that most surprised the Kanakas was what surprised me least — namely, that he would go in the desert among all the *aitus*. Some of the boldest, however, had accompanied him, and had heard him speak with the dead and give them orders, and, safe in his protection, had returned unscathed. Some said he had a church there, where he worshipped

Tiapolo, and Tiapolo appeared to him; others swore that there was no sorcery at all, that he performed his miracles by the power of prayer, and the church was no church, but a prison, in which he had confined a dangerous *aitu*. Namu had been in the bush with him once, and returned glorifying God for these wonders. Altogether, I began to have a glimmer of the man's position, and the means by which he had acquired it, and, though I saw he was a tough nut to crack, I was noways cast down.

"Very well," said I, "I'll have a look at Master Case's place of worship myself, and we'll see about the glorifying."

At this Uma fell in a terrible taking; if I went in the high bush I should never return; none could go there but by the protection of Tiapolo.

"I'll chance it on God's," said I. "I'm a good sort of a fellow, Uma, as fellows go, and I guess God'll con me through."

She was silent for a while. "I think," said she, mighty solemn — and then, presently — "Victoreea, he big chief?"

"You bet!" said I.

"He like you too much?" she asked again.

I told her, with a grin, I believed the old lady was rather partial to me.

"All right," said she. "Victoreea he big chief, like you too much. No can help you here in Falesá; no can do — too far off. Maea he small chief — stop here. Suppose he like you — make you all right. All-e-same God and Tiapolo. God he big chief — got too much work. Tiapolo he small chief — he like too much make-see, work very hard."

"I'll have to hand you over to Mr. Tarleton," said I. "Your theology's out of its bearings, Uma."

However, we stuck to this business all the evening, and, with the stories she told me of the desert and its dangers, she came near frightening herself into a fit. I don't remember half a quarter of them, of course, for I paid little heed; but two come back to me kind of clear.

About six miles up the coast there is a sheltered cove they call *Fanga-anaana* — "the haven full of caves." I've seen it from the sea myself, as near as I could get my boys to venture in; and it's a little strip of yellow sand. Black cliffs overhang it, full of the black mouths of caves; great trees overhang the cliffs, and dangle-down lianas; and in one place, about the middle, a big brook pours over in a cascade. Well, there was a boat going by here, with six young men of Falesá, "all very pretty," Uma said, which was the loss of them. It blew strong, there was a heavy head sea, and by the time they opened Fanga-anaana, and saw the white cascade and the shady beach, they were all tired and thirsty, and their water had run out. One proposed to land and get a drink, and, being reckless fellows, they were all of the same mind except the youngest. Lotu was his name; he was a very good young gentleman, and very wise; and he held out that they were crazy, telling them the place was given over to spirits and devils and the dead, and there were no living folk nearer than six miles the one way, and maybe twelve the other. But they laughed at his words, and, being five to one, pulled in, beached the boat, and landed. It was a wonderful pleasant place, Lotu said, and the water excellent. They walked round the beach, but could see nowhere any way to mount the cliffs, which made them easier in their mind; and at last they sat down to make a meal on the food they had brought with them. They were scarce set, when there came out of the mouth of one of the black caves six of the most beautiful ladies ever seen: they had flowers in their hair, and the most beautiful breasts, and necklaces of scarlet seeds; and began to jest with these young gentlemen, and the young gentlemen to jest back with them, all but Lotu. As for Lotu, he saw there could be no living woman in such a place, and ran, and flung himself in the bottom of the boat, and covered his face, and prayed. All the time the business lasted Lotu made one clean break of prayer, and that was all he knew of it, until his friends came back, and made him sit up, and they put to sea again out of the bay, which was now quite desert, and no word of the six ladies. But, what frightened Lotu most, not one of the five remembered anything of what had passed, but they were all like drunken men, and sang and laughed in the boat, and skylarked. The wind freshened and came squally, and the sea rose extraordinary high; it was such weather as any man in the islands would have turned his back to and fled home to Falesá; but these five were like crazy folk, and cracked on all sail and drove their boat into the seas. Lotu went to the bailing; none of the others thought to help him, but sang and skylarked and carried on, and spoke singular things beyond a man's comprehension, and laughed out loud when they said them. So the rest of the day Lotu bailed for his life in the bottom of the boat, and was all drenched with sweat and cold sea-water; and none heeded him. Against all expectation, they came safe in a dreadful tempest to Papa-malulu, where the palms were singing out, and the cocoa-nuts flying like cannon-balls about the village green; and the same night the five young gentlemen sickened, and spoke never a reasonable word until they died.

"And do you mean to tell me you can swallow a yarn like that?" I asked.

She told me the thing was well known, and with handsome young men alone it was even common; but this was the only case where five had been slain the same day and in a company by the love of the women-devils; and it had made a great stir in the island, and she would be crazy if she doubted.

"Well, anyway," says I, "you needn't be frightened about me. I've no use for the women-devils. You're all the women I want, and all the devil too, old lady."

To this she answered there were other sorts, and she had seen one with her own eyes. She had gone one day alone to the next bay, and, perhaps, got too near the margin of the bad place. The boughs of the high bush overshadowed her from the cant of the hill, but she herself was outside on a flat place, very stony and growing full of young mummy-apples four and five feet high. It was a dark day in the rainy season, and now there came squalls that tore off the leaves and sent them flying, and now it was all still as in a house. It was in one of these still times that a whole gang of birds and flying foxes came pegging out of the bush like creatures frightened. Presently after she heard a rustle nearer hand, and saw, coming out of the margin of the trees, among the mummy-apples, the appearance of a lean grey old boar. It seemed to think as it came, like a person; and all of a sudden, as she looked at it coming, she was aware it was no boar but a thing that was a man with a man's thoughts. At that she ran, and the pig after her, and as the pig ran it holla'd aloud, so that the place rang with it.

"I wish I had been there with my gun," said I. "I guess that pig would have holla'd so as to surprise himself."

But she told me a gun was of no use with the like of these, which were the spirits of the dead.

Well, this kind of talk put in the evening, which was the best of it; but of course it didn't change my notion, and the next day, with my gun and a good knife, I set off upon a voyage of discovery. I made, as near as I could, for the place where I had seen Case come out; for if it was true he had some kind of establishment in the bush I reckoned I should find a path. The beginning of the desert was marked off by a wall, to call it so, for it was more of a long mound of stones. They say it reaches right across the island, but how they know it is another question, for I doubt if anyone has made the journey in a hundred years, the natives sticking chiefly to the sea and their little colonies along the coast, and that part being mortal high and steep and full of cliffs. Up to the west side of the wall, the ground has been cleared, and there are cocoa palms and mummy-apples and guavas, and lots of sensitive plants. Just across, the bush begins outright; high bush at that, trees going up like the masts of ships, and ropes of liana hanging down like a ship's rigging, and nasty orchids growing in the forks like funguses. The ground where there was no underwood looked to be a heap of boulders. I saw many green pigeons which I might have shot, only I was there with a different idea. A number of butterflies flopped up and down along the ground like dead leaves; sometimes I would hear a bird calling, sometimes the wind overhead, and always the sea along the coast.

But the queerness of the place it's more difficult to tell of, unless to one who has been alone in the high bush himself. The brightest kind of a day it is always dim down there. A man can see to the end of nothing; whichever way he looks the wood shuts up, one bough folding with another like the fingers of your hand; and whenever he listens he hears always something new — men talking, children laughing, the strokes of an axe a far way ahead of him, and sometimes a sort of a quick, stealthy scurry near at hand that makes him jump and look to his weapons. It's all very well for him to tell himself that he's alone, bar trees and birds; he can't make out to believe it; whichever way he turns the whole place seems to be alive and looking on. Don't think it was Uma's yarns that put me out; I don't value native talk a fourpenny-piece; it's a thing that's natural in the bush, and that's the end of it.

As I got near the top of the hill, for the ground of the wood goes up in this place steep as a ladder, the wind began to sound straight on, and the leaves to toss and switch open and let in the sun. This suited me better; it was the same noise all the time, and nothing to startle. Well, I had got to a place where there was an underwood of what they call wild cocoanut — mighty pretty with its scarlet fruit — when there came a sound of singing in the wind that I thought I had never heard the like of. It was all very fine to tell myself it was the branches; I knew better. It was all very fine to tell myself it was a bird; I knew never a bird that sang like that. It rose and swelled, and died away and swelled again; and now I thought it was like someone weeping, only prettier; and now I thought it was like harps; and there was one thing I made sure of, it was a sight too sweet to be wholesome in a place like that. You may laugh if you like; but I declare I called to mind the six young ladies that came, with their scarlet necklaces, out of the cave at Fanga-anaana, and wondered if they sang like that. We laugh at the natives and their superstitions; but see how many traders take them up, splendidly educated white men, that have been book-keepers (some of them) and clerks in the old country. It's my belief a superstition grows up in a place like the different kind of weeds; and as I stood there and listened to that wailing I twittered in my shoes.

You may call me a coward to be frightened; I thought myself brave enough to go on ahead. But I went mighty carefully, with my gun cocked, spying all about me like a hunter, fully expecting to see a handsome young woman sitting somewhere in the bush, and fully determined (if I did) to try her with a charge of duck-shot. And sure enough, I had not gone far when I met with a queer thing. The wind came on the top of the wood in a strong puff, the leaves in front of me burst open, and I saw for a second something hanging in a tree. It was gone in a wink, the puff blowing by and the leaves closing. I tell you the truth: I had made up my mind to see an *aitu*; and if the thing had looked like a pig or a woman, it wouldn't have given me the same turn. The trouble was that it seemed kind of square, and the idea of a square thing that was alive and sang knocked me sick and silly. I must have stood quite a while; and I made pretty certain it was right out of the same tree that the singing came. Then I began to come to myself a bit.

"Well," says I, "if this is really so, if this is a place where there are square things that sing, I'm gone up anyway. Let's have my fun for my money."

But I thought I might as well take the off chance of a prayer being any good; so I plumped on my knees and prayed out loud; and all the time I was praying the strange sounds came out of the tree, and went up and down, and changed, for all the world like music, only you could see it wasn't human — there was nothing there that you could whistle.

As soon as I had made an end in proper style, I laid down my gun, stuck my knife between my teeth, walked right up to that tree, and began to climb. I tell you my heart was like ice. But presently, as I went up, I caught another glimpse of the thing, and that relieved me, for I thought it seemed like a box; and when I had got right up to it I near fell out of the tree with laughing.

A box it was, sure enough, and a candle-box at that, with the brand upon the side of it; and it had banjo strings stretched so as to sound when the wind blew. I believe they call the thing a Tyrolean harp, whatever that may mean.

"Well, Mr. Case," said I, "you've frightened me once, but I defy you to frighten me again," I says, and slipped down the tree, and set out again to find my enemy's head office, which I guessed would not be far away.

The undergrowth was thick in this part; I couldn't see before my nose, and must burst my way through by main force and ply the knife as I went, slicing the cords of the lianas and slashing down whole trees at a blow. I call them trees for the bigness, but in truth they were just big weeds, and sappy to cut through like carrot. From all this crowd and kind of vegetation, I was just thinking to myself, the place might have once been cleared, when I came on my nose over a pile of stones, and saw in a moment it was some kind of a work of man. The Lord knows when it was made or when deserted, for this part of the island has lain undisturbed since long before the whites came. A few steps beyond I hit into the path I had been always looking for. It was narrow, but well beaten, and I saw that Case had plenty of disciples. It seems, indeed, it was a piece of fashionable boldness to venture up here with the trader, and a young man scarce reckoned himself grown till he had got his breech tattooed, for one thing, and seen Case's devils for another. This is mighty like Kanakas; but, if you look at it another way, it's mighty like white folks too.

A bit along the path I was brought to a clear stand, and had to rub my eyes. There was a wall in front of me, the path passing it by a gap; it was tumbledown and plainly very old, but built of big stones very well laid; and there is no native alive to-day upon that island that could dream of such a piece of building. Along all the top of it was a line of queer figures, idols or scarecrows, or what not. They had carved and painted faces ugly to view, their eyes and teeth were of shell, their hair and their bright clothes blew in the wind, and some of them worked with the tugging. There are islands up west where they make these kind of figures till to-day; but if ever they were made in this island, the practice and the very recollection of it are now long forgotten. And the singular thing was that all these bogies were as fresh as toys out of a shop.

Then it came in my mind that Case had let out to me the first day that he was a good forger of island curiosities, a thing by which so many traders turn an honest penny. And with that I saw the whole business, and how this display served the man a double purpose: first of all, to season his curiosities, and then to frighten those that came to visit him.

But I should tell you (what made the thing more curious) that all the time the Tyrolean harps were harping round me in the trees, and even while I looked, a green-and-yellow bird (that, I suppose, was building) began to tear the hair off the head of one of the figures.

A little farther on I found the best curiosity of the museum. The first I saw of it was a longish mound of earth with a twist to it. Digging off the earth with my hands, I found underneath tarpaulin stretched on boards, so that this was plainly the roof of a cellar. It stood right on the top of the hill, and the entrance was on the far side, between two rocks, like the entrance to a cave. I went as far in as the bend, and, looking round the corner, saw a shining face. It was big and ugly, like a pantomime mask, and the brightness of it waxed and dwindled, and at times it smoked.

"Oho!" says I, "luminous paint!"

And I must say I rather admired the man's ingenuity. With a box of tools and a few mighty simple contrivances he had made out to have a devil of a temple. Any poor Kanaka brought up here in the dark, with the harps whining all round him, and shown that smoking face in the bottom of a hole, would make no kind of doubt but he had seen and heard enough devils for a lifetime. It's easy to find out what Kanakas think. Just go back to yourself any way round from ten to fifteen years old, and there's an average Kanaka. There are some pious, just as there are pious boys; and the most of them, like the boys again, are middling honest and yet think it rather larks to steal, and are easy scared and rather like to be so. I remember a boy I was at school with at home who played the Case business. He didn't know anything, that boy; he couldn't do anything; he had no luminous paint and no Tyrolean harps; he just boldly said he was a sorcerer, and frightened us out of our boots, and we loved it. And then it came in my mind how the master had once flogged that boy, and the surprise we were all in to see the sorcerer catch it and bum like anybody else. Thinks I to myself, "I must find some way of fixing it so for Master Case." And the next moment I had my idea.

I went back by the path, which, when once you had found it, was quite plain and easy walking; and when I stepped out on the black sands, who should I see but Master Case himself. I cocked my gun and held it handy, and we marched up and passed without a word, each keeping the tail of his eye on the other; and no sooner had we passed than we each wheeled round like fellows drilling, and stood face to face. We had each taken the same notion in his head, you see, that the other fellow might give him the load of his gun in the stern.

"You've shot nothing," says Case.

"I'm not on the shoot to-day," said I.

"Well, the devil go with you for me," says he.

"The same to you," says I.

But we stuck just the way we were; no fear of either of us moving.

Case laughed. "We can't stop here all day, though," said he.

"Don't let me detain you," says I.

He laughed again. "Look here, Wiltshire, do you think me a fool?" he asked.

"More of a knave, if you want to know," says I.

"Well, do you think it would better me to shoot you here, on this open beach?" said he. "Because I don't. Folks come fishing every day. There may be a score of them up the valley now, making copra; there might be half a dozen on the hill behind you, after pigeons; they might be watching us this minute, and I shouldn't wonder. I give you my word I don't want to shoot you. Why should I? You don't hinder me any. You haven't got one pound of copra but what you made with your own hands, like a negro slave. You're vegetating — that's what I call it — and I don't care where you vegetate, nor yet how long. Give me your word you don't mean to shoot me, and I'll give you a lead and walk away."

"Well," said I, "You're frank and pleasant, ain't you? And I'll be the same. I don't mean to shoot you to-day. Why should I? This business is beginning; it ain't done yet, Mr. Case. I've given you one turn already; I can see the marks of my knuckles on your head to this blooming hour, and I've more cooking for you. I'm not a paralee, like Underhill. My name ain't Adams, and it ain't Vigours; and I mean to show you that you've met your match."

"This is a silly way to talk," said he. "This is not the talk to make me move on with."

"All right," said I, "stay where you are. I ain't in any hurry, and you know it. I can put in a day on this beach and never mind. I ain't got any copra to bother with. I ain't got any luminous paint to see to."

I was sorry I said that last, but it whipped out before I knew. I could see it took the wind out of his sails, and he stood and stared at me with his brow drawn up. Then I suppose he made up his mind he must get to the bottom of this.

"I take you at your word," says he, and turned his back, and walked right into the devil's bush.

I let him go, of course, for I had passed my word. But I watched him as long as he was in sight, and after he was gone lit out for cover as lively as you would want to see, and went the rest of the way home under the bush, for I didn't trust him sixpence-worth. One thing I saw, I had been ass enough to give him warning, and that which I meant to do I must do at once.

You would think I had had about enough excitement for one morning, but there was another turn waiting me. As soon as I got far enough round the cape to see my house I made out there were strangers there; a little farther, and no doubt about it. There was a couple of armed sentinels squatting at my door. I could only suppose the trouble about Uma must have come to a head, and the station been seized. For aught I could think, Uma was taken up already, and these armed men were waiting to do the like with me.

However, as I came nearer, which I did at top speed, I saw there was a third native sitting on the verandah like a guest, and Uma was talking with him like a hostess. Nearer still I made out it was the big young chief, Maea, and that he was smiling away and smoking. And what was he smoking? None of your European cigarettes fit for a cat, not even the genuine big, knock-me-down native article that a fellow can really put in the time with if his pipe is broke — but a cigar, and one of my Mexicans at that, that I could swear to. At sight of this my heart started beating, and I took a wild hope in my head that the trouble was over, and Maea had come round.

Uma pointed me out to him as I came up, and he met me at the head of my own stairs like a thorough gentleman.

"Vilivili," said he, which was the best they could make of my name, "I pleased."

There is no doubt when an island chief wants to be civil he can do it. I saw the way things were from the word go. There was no call for Uma to say to me: “He no ‘fraid Ese now, come bring copra.” I tell you I shook hands with that Kanaka like as if he was the best white man in Europe.

The fact was, Case and he had got after the same girl; or Maea suspected it, and concluded to make hay of the trader on the chance. He had dressed himself up, got a couple of his retainers cleaned and armed to kind of make the thing more public, and, just waiting till Case was clear of the village, came round to put the whole of his business my way. He was rich as well as powerful. I suppose that man was worth fifty thousand nuts per annum. I gave him the price of the beach and a quarter cent better, and as for credit, I would have advanced him the inside of the store and the fittings besides, I was so pleased to see him. I must say he bought like a gentleman: rice and tins and biscuits enough for a week’s feast, and stuffs by the bolt. He was agreeable besides; he had plenty fun to him; and we cracked jests together, mostly through the interpreter, because he had mighty little English, and my native was still off colour. One thing I made out: he could never really have thought much harm of Uma; he could never have been really frightened, and must just have made believe from dodginess, and because he thought Case had a strong pull in the village and could help him on.

This set me thinking that both he and I were in a tightish place. What he had done was to fly in the face of the whole village, and the thing might cost him his authority. More than that, after my talk with Case on the beach, I thought it might very well cost me my life. Case had as good as said he would pot me if ever I got any copra; he would come home to find the best business in the village had changed hands; and the best thing I thought I could do was to get in first with the potting.

“See here, Uma,” says I, “tell him I’m sorry I made him wait, but I was up looking at Case’s Tiapolo store in the bush.”

“He want savvy if you no ‘fraid?” translated Uma.

I laughed out. “Not much!” says I. “Tell him the place is a blooming toy-shop! Tell him in England we give these things to the kids to play with.”

“He want savvy if you hear devil sing?” she asked next.

“Look here,” I said, “I can’t do it now because I’ve got no banjo-strings in stock; but the next time the ship comes round I’ll have one of these same contraptions right here in my verandah, and he can see for himself how much devil there is to it. Tell him, as soon as I can get the strings I’ll make one for his picaninnies. The name of the concern is a Tyrolean harp; and you can tell him the name means in

English that nobody but dam-fools give a cent for it."

This time he was so pleased he had to try his English again. "You talk true?" says he.

"Rather!" said I. "Talk all-e-same Bible. Bring out a Bible here, Uma, if you've got such a thing, and I'll kiss it. Or, I'll tell you what's better still," says I, taking a header, "ask him if he's afraid to go up there himself by day."

It appeared he wasn't; he could venture as far as that by day and in company.

"That's the ticket, then!" said I. "Tell him the man's a fraud and the place foolishness, and if he'll go up there to-morrow he'll see all that's left of it. But tell him this, Uma, and mind he understands it: If he gets talking, it's bound to come to Case, and I'm a dead man! I'm playing his game, tell him, and if he says one word my blood will be at his door and be the damnation of him here and after."

She told him, and he shook hands with me up to the hilt, and, says he: "No talk. Go up to-morrow. You my friend?"

"No sir," says I, "no such foolishness. I've come here to trade, tell him, and not to make friends. But, as to Case, I'll send that man to glory!"

So off Maea went, pretty well pleased, as I could see.

CHAPTER V. NIGHT IN THE BUSH.

Well, I was committed now; Tiapolo had to be smashed up before next day, and my hands were pretty full, not only with preparations, but with argument. My house was like a mechanics' debating society: Uma was so made up that I shouldn't go into the bush by night, or that, if I did, I was never to come back again. You know her style of arguing: you've had a specimen about Queen Victoria and the devil; and I leave you to fancy if I was tired of it before dark.

At last I had a good idea. What was the use of casting my pearls before her? I thought; some of her own chopped hay would be likelier to do the business.

"I'll tell you what, then," said I. "You fish out your Bible, and I'll take that up along with me. That'll make me right."

She swore a Bible was no use.

"That's just your Kanaka ignorance," said I. "Bring the Bible out."

She brought it, and I turned to the title-page, where I thought there would likely be some English, and so there was. "There!" said I. "Look at that! '*London: Printed for the British and Foreign Bible Society, Blackfriars*,' and the date, which I can't read, owing to its being in these X's. There's no devil in hell can look near the Bible Society, Blackfriars. Why, you silly!" I said, "how do you suppose we get along with our own *aitus* at home? All Bible Society!"

"I think you no got any," said she. "White man, he tell me you no got."

"Sounds likely, don't it?" I asked. "Why would these islands all be chock full of them and none in Europe?"

"Well, you no got breadfruit," said she.

I could have torn my hair. "Now look here, old lady," said I, "you dry up, for I'm tired of you. I'll take the Bible, which'll put me as straight as the mail, and that's the last word I've got to say."

The night fell extraordinary dark, clouds coming up with sundown and overspreading all; not a star showed; there was only an end of a moon, and that not due before the small hours. Round the village, what with the lights and the fires in the open houses, and the torches of many fishers moving on the reef, it kept as gay as an illumination; but the sea and the mountains and woods were all clean gone. I suppose it might be eight o'clock when I took the road, laden like a donkey. First there was that Bible, a book as big as your head, which I had let myself in for by my own tomfoolery. Then there was my gun, and knife, and lantern, and patent matches, all necessary. And then there was the real plant of the affair in hand, a mortal weight of gunpowder, a pair of dynamite fishing-bombs, and two or three pieces of slow match that I had hauled out of the tin cases and spliced together the best way I could; for the match was only trade stuff, and a man would be crazy that trusted it. Altogether, you see, I had the materials of a pretty good blow-up! Expense was nothing to me; I wanted that thing done right.

As long as I was in the open, and had the lamp in my house to steer by, I did well. But when I got to the path, it fell so dark I could make no headway, walking into trees and swearing there, like a man looking for the matches in his bed-room. I knew it was risky to light up, for my lantern would be visible all the way to the point of the cape, and as no one went there after dark, it would be talked about, and come to Case's ears. But what was I to do? I had either to give the business over and lose caste with Maea, or light up, take my chance, and get through the thing the smartest I was able.

As long as I was on the path I walked hard, but when I came to the black beach I had to run. For the tide was now nearly flowed; and to get through with my powder dry between the surf and the steep hill, took all the quickness I possessed. As it was, even, the wash caught me to the knees, and I came near falling on a stone. All this time the hurry I was in, and the free air and smell of the sea, kept my spirits lively; but when I was once in the bush and began to climb the path I took it easier. The fearsomeness of the wood had been a good bit rubbed off for me by Master Case's banjo-strings and graven images, yet I thought it was a dreary walk, and guessed, when the disciples went up there, they must be badly scared. The light of the lantern, striking among all these trunks and forked branches and twisted rope-ends of lianas, made the whole place, or all that you could see of it, a kind of a puzzle of turning shadows. They came to meet you, solid and quick like giants, and then span off and vanished; they hove up over your head like clubs, and flew away into the night like birds. The floor of the bush glimmered with dead wood, the way the match-box used to shine after you had struck a lucifer. Big, cold drops fell on me from the branches overhead like sweat. There was no wind to mention; only a little icy breath of a land-breeze that stirred nothing; and the harps were silent.

The first landfall I made was when I got through the bush of wild cocoanuts, and came in view of the bogies on the wall. Mighty queer they looked by the shining of the lantern, with their painted faces and shell eyes, and their clothes and their hair hanging. One after another I pulled them all up and piled them in a bundle on the cellar roof, so as they might go to glory with the rest. Then I chose a place behind one of the big stones at the entrance, buried my powder and the two shells, and arranged my match along the passage. And then I had a look at the smoking head, just for good-bye. It was doing fine.

"Cheer up," says I. "You're booked."

It was my first idea to light up and be getting homeward; for the darkness and the glimmer of the dead wood and the shadows of the lantern made me lonely. But I knew where one of the harps hung; it seemed a pity it shouldn't go with the rest; and at the same time I couldn't help letting on to myself that I was mortal tired of my employment, and would like best to be at home and have the door shut. I stepped out of the cellar and argued it fore and back. There was a sound of the sea far down below me on the coast; nearer hand not a leaf stirred; I might have been the only living creature this side of Cape Horn. Well, as I stood there thinking, it seemed the bush woke and became full of little noises. Little noises they were, and nothing to hurt — a bit of a crackle, a bit of a rush — but the breath jumped right out of me and my throat went as dry as a biscuit. It wasn't Case I was afraid of, which would have been common-sense; I never thought of Case; what took me, as sharp as the colic, was the old wives' tales, the devil-women and the man-pigs. It was the toss of a penny whether I should run: but I got a purchase on myself, and stepped out, and held up the lantern (like a fool) and looked all round.

In the direction of the village and the path there was nothing to be seen; but when I turned inland it's a wonder to me I didn't drop. There, coming right up out of the desert and the bad bush — there, sure enough, was a devil-woman, just as the way I had figured she would look. I saw the light shine on her bare arms and her bright eyes, and there went out of me a yell so big that I thought it was my death.

"Ah! No sing out!" says the devil-woman, in a kind of a high whisper. "Why you talk big voice? Put out light! Ese he come."

"My God Almighty, Uma, is that you?" says I.

"*Ioe*," says she. "I come quick. Ese here soon."

"You come alone?" I asked. "You no 'fraid?"

"Ah, too much 'fraid!" she whispered, clutching me. "I think die."

"Well," says I, with a kind of a weak grin, "I'm not the one to laugh at you, Mrs. Wiltshire, for I'm about the worst scared man in the South Pacific myself."

She told me in two words what brought her. I was scarce gone, it seems, when Fa'avao came in, and the old woman had met Black Jack running as hard as he was fit from our house to Case's. Uma neither spoke nor stopped, but lit right out to come and warn me. She was so close at my heels that the lantern was her guide across the beach, and afterwards, by the glimmer of it in the trees, she got her line up hill. It was only when I had got to the top or was in the cellar that she wandered Lord knows where! and lost a sight of precious time, afraid to call out lest Case was at the heels of her, and falling in the bush, so that she was all knocked and bruised. That must have been when she got too far to the southward, and how she came to take me in the flank at last and frighten me beyond what I've got the words to tell of.

Well, anything was better than a devil-woman, but I thought her yarn serious enough. Black Jack had no call to be about my house, unless he was set there to watch; and it looked to me as if my tomfool word about the paint, and perhaps some chatter of Maea's, had got us all in a clove hitch. One thing was clear: Uma and I were here for the night; we daren't try to go home before day, and even then it would be safer to strike round up the mountain and come in by the back of the village, or we might walk into an ambuscade. It was plain, too, that the mine should be sprung immediately, or Case might be in time to stop it.

I marched into the tunnel, Uma keeping tight hold of me, opened my lantern and lit the match. The first length of it burned like a spill of paper, and I stood stupid, watching it burn, and thinking we were going aloft with Tiapolo, which was none of my views. The second took to a better rate, though faster than I cared about; and at that I got my wits again, hauled Uma clear of the passage, blew out and dropped the lantern, and the pair of us groped our way into the bush until I thought it might be safe, and lay down together by a tree.

"Old lady," I said, "I won't forget this night. You're a trump, and that's what's wrong with you."

She humped herself close up to me. She had run out the way she was, with nothing on her but her kilt; and she was all wet with the dews and the sea on the black beach, and shook straight on with cold and the terror of the dark and the devils.

"Too much 'fraid," was all she said.

The far side of Case's hill goes down near as steep as a precipice into the next valley. We were on the very edge of it, and I could see the dead wood shine and hear the sea sound far below. I didn't care about the position, which left me no retreat, but I was afraid to change. Then I saw I had made a worse mistake about the lantern, which I should have left lighted, so that I could have had a crack at Case when he stepped into the shine of it. And even if I hadn't had the wit to do that, it seemed a senseless thing to leave the good lantern to blow up with the graven images. The thing belonged to me, after all, and was worth money, and might come in handy. If I could have trusted the match, I might have run in still and rescued it. But who was going to trust the match? You know what trade is. The stuff was good enough for Kanakas to go fishing with, where they've got to look lively anyway, and the most they risk is only to have their hand blown off. But for anyone that wanted to fool around a blow-up like mine that match was rubbish.

Altogether the best I could do was to lie still, see my shot-gun handy, and wait for the explosion. But it was a solemn kind of a business. The blackness of the night was like solid; the only thing you could see was the nasty bogy glimmer of the dead wood, and that showed you nothing but itself; and as for sounds, I stretched my ears till I thought I could have heard the match burn in the tunnel, and that bush was as silent as a coffin. Now and then there was a bit of a crack; but whether it was near or far, whether it was Case stubbing his toes within a few yards of me, or a tree breaking miles away, I knew no more than the babe unborn.

And then, all of a sudden, Vesuvius went off. It was a long time coming; but when it came (though I say it that shouldn't) no man could ask to see a better. At first it was just a son of a gun of a row, and a spout of fire, and the wood lighted up so that you could see to read. And then the trouble began. Uma and I were half buried under a wagonful of earth, and glad it was no worse, for one of the rocks at the entrance of the tunnel was fired clean into the air, fell within a couple of fathoms of where we lay, and bounded over the edge of the hill, and went pounding down into the next valley. I saw I had rather undercalculated our distance, or over-done the dynamite and powder, which you please.

And presently I saw I had made another slip. The noise of the thing began to die off, shaking the island; the dazzle was over; and yet the night didn't come back the way I expected. For the whole wood was scattered with red coals and brands from the explosion; they were all round me on the flat; some had fallen below in the valley, and some stuck and flared in the tree-tops. I had no fear of fire, for these forests are too wet to kindle. But the trouble was that the place was all lit up-not very bright, but good enough to get a shot by; and the way the coals were scattered, it was just as likely Case might have the advantage as myself. I looked all round for his white face, you may be sure; but there was not a sign of him. As for Uma, the life seemed to have been knocked right out of her by the bang and blaze of it.

There was one bad point in my game. One of the blessed graven images had come down all afire, hair and clothes and body, not four yards away from me. I cast a mighty noticing glance all round; there was still no Case, and I made up my mind I must get rid of that burning stick before he came, or I should be shot there like a dog.

It was my first idea to have crawled, and then I thought speed was the main thing, and stood half up to make a rush. The same moment from somewhere between me and the sea there came a flash and a report, and a rifle bullet screeched in my ear. I swung straight round and up with my gun, but the brute had a Winchester, and before I could as much as see him his second shot knocked me over like a ninepin. I seemed to fly in the air, then came down by the run and lay half a minute, silly; and then I found my hands empty, and my gun had flown over my head as I fell. It makes a man mighty wide awake to be in the kind of box that I was in. I scarcely knew where I was hurt, or whether I was hurt or not, but turned right over on my face to crawl after my weapon. Unless you have tried to get about with a smashed leg you don't know what pain is, and I let out a howl like a bullock's.

This was the unluckiest noise that ever I made in my life. Up to then Uma had stuck to her tree like a sensible woman, knowing she would be only in the way; but as soon as she heard me sing out, she ran forward. The Winchester cracked again, and down she went.

I had sat up, leg and all, to stop her; but when I saw her tumble I clapped down again where I was, lay still, and felt the handle of my knife. I had been scurried and put out before. No more of that for me. He had knocked over my girl, I had got to fix him for it; and I lay there and gritted my teeth, and footed up the chances. My leg was broke, my gun was gone. Case had still ten shots in his Winchester. It looked a kind of hopeless business. But I never despaired nor thought upon despairing: that man had got to go.

For a goodish bit not one of us let on. Then I heard Case begin to move nearer in the bush, but mighty careful. The image had burned out; there were only a few coals left here and there, and the wood was main dark, but had a kind of a low glow in it like a fire on its last legs. It was by this that I made out Case's head looking at me over a big tuft of ferns, and at the same time the brute saw me and shouldered his Winchester. I lay quite still, and as good as looked into the barrel: it was my last chance, but I thought my heart would have come right out of its bearings. Then he fired. Lucky for me it was no shot-gun, for the bullet struck within an inch of me and knocked the dirt in my eyes.

Just you try and see if you can lie quiet, and let a man take a sitting shot at you and miss you by a hair. But I did, and lucky too. A while Case stood with the Winchester at the port-arms; then he gave a little laugh to himself, and stepped round the ferns.

"Laugh!" thought I. "If you had the wit of a louse you would be praying!"

I was all as taut as a ship's hawser or the spring of a watch, and as soon as he came within reach of me I had him by the ankle, plucked the feet right out from under him, laid him out, and was upon the top of him, broken leg and all, before he breathed. His Winchester had gone the same road as my shot-gun; it was nothing to me — I defied him now. I'm a pretty strong man anyway, but I never knew what strength was till I got hold of Case. He was knocked out of time by the rattle he came down with, and threw up his hands together, more like a frightened woman, so that I caught both of them with my left. This wakened him up, and he fastened his teeth in my forearm like a weasel. Much I cared. My leg gave me all the pain I had any use for, and I drew my knife and got it in the place.

“Now,” said I, “I’ve got you; and you’re gone up, and a good job too! Do you feel the point of that? That’s for Underhill! And there’s for Adams! And now here’s for Uma, and that’s going to knock your blooming soul right out of you!”

With that I gave him the cold steel for all I was worth. His body kicked under me like a spring sofa; he gave a dreadful kind of a long moan, and lay still.

“I wonder if you’re dead? I hope so!” I thought, for my head was swimming. But I wasn’t going to take chances; I had his own example too close before me for that; and I tried to draw the knife out to give it him again. The blood came over my hands, I remember, hot as tea; and with that I fainted clean away, and fell with my head on the man’s mouth.

When I came to myself it was pitch dark; the cinders had burned out; there was nothing to be seen but the shine of the dead wood, and I couldn’t remember where I was nor why I was in such pain nor what I was all wetted with. Then it came back, and the first thing I attended to was to give him the knife again a half-a-dozen times up to the handle. I believe he was dead already, but it did him no harm and did me good.

“I bet you’re dead now,” I said, and then I called to Uma.

Nothing answered, and I made a move to go and grope for her, fouled my broken leg, and fainted again.

When I came to myself the second time the clouds had all cleared away, except a few that sailed there, white as cotton. The moon was up — a tropic moon. The moon at home turns a wood black, but even this old butt-end of a one showed up that forest, as green as by day. The night birds — or, rather, they’re a kind of early morning bird — sang out with their long, falling notes like nightingales. And I could see the dead man, that I was still half resting on, looking right up into the sky with his open eyes, no paler than when he was alive; and a little way off Uma tumbled on her side. I got over to her the best way I was able, and when I got there she was broad awake, and crying and sobbing to herself with no more noise than an insect. It appears she was afraid to cry out loud, because of the *aitus*. Altogether she was not much hurt, but scared beyond belief; she had come to her senses a long while ago, cried out to me, heard nothing in reply, made out we were both dead, and had lain there ever since, afraid to budge a finger. The ball had ploughed up her shoulder, and she had lost a main quantity of blood; but I soon had that tied up the way it ought to be with the tail of my shirt and a scarf I had on, got her head on my sound knee and my back against a trunk, and settled down to wait for morning. Uma was for neither use nor ornament, and could only clutch hold of me and shake and cry. I don't suppose there was ever anybody worse scared, and, to do her justice, she had had a lively night of it. As for me, I was in a good bit of pain and fever, but not so bad when I sat still; and every time I looked over to Case I could have sung and whistled. Talk about meat and drink! To see that man lying there dead as a herring filled me full.

The night birds stopped after a while; and then the light began to change, the east came orange, the whole wood began to whirr with singing like a musical box, and there was the broad day.

I didn't expect Maea for a long while yet; and, indeed, I thought there was an off-chance he might go back on the whole idea and not come at all. I was the better pleased when, about an hour after daylight, I heard sticks smashing and a lot of Kanakas laughing, and singing out to keep their courage up. Uma sat up quite brisk at the first word of it; and presently we saw a party come stringing out of the path, Maea in front, and behind him a white man in a pith helmet. It was Mr. Tarleton, who had turned up late last night in Falesá, having left his boat and walked the last stage with a lantern.

They buried Case upon the field of glory, right in the hole where he had kept the smoking head. I waited till the thing was done; and Mr. Tarleton prayed, which I thought tomfoolery, but I'm bound to say he gave a pretty sick view of the dear departed's prospects, and seemed to have his own ideas of hell. I had it out with him afterwards, told him he had scamped his duty, and what he had ought to have done was to up like a man and tell the Kanakas plainly Case was damned, and a good riddance; but I never could get him to see it my way. Then they made me a litter of poles and carried me down to the station. Mr. Tarleton set my leg, and made a regular missionary splice of it, so that I limp to this day. That done, he took down my evidence, and Uma's, and Maea's, wrote it all out fine, and had us sign it; and then he got the chiefs and marched over to Papa Randall's to seize Case's papers.

All they found was a bit of a diary, kept for a good many years, and all about the price of copra, and chickens being stolen, and that; and the books of the business and the will I told you of in the beginning, by both of which the whole thing (stock, lock, and barrel) appeared to belong to the Samoa woman. It was I that bought her out at a mighty reasonable figure, for she was in a hurry to get home. As for Randall and the black, they had to tramp; got into some kind of a station on the Papa-malulu side; did very bad business, for the truth is neither of the pair was fit for it, and lived mostly on fish, which was the means of Randall's death. It seems there was a nice shoal in one day, and papa went after them with the dynamite; either the match burned too fast, or papa was full, or both, but the shell went off (in the usual way) before he threw it, and where was papa's hand? Well, there's nothing to hurt in that; the islands up north are all full of one-handed men, like the parties in the "Arabian Nights"; but either Randall was too old, or he drank too much, and the short and the long of it was that he died. Pretty soon after, the nigger was turned out of the island for stealing from white men, and went off to the west, where he found men of his own colour, in case he liked that, and the men of his own colour took and ate him at some kind of a corroborree, and I'm sure I hope he was to their fancy!

So there was I, left alone in my glory at Falesá; and when the schooner came round I filled her up, and gave her a deck-cargo half as high as the house. I must say Mr. Tarleton did the right thing by us; but he took a meanish kind of a revenge.

"Now, Mr. Wiltshire," said he, "I've put you all square with everybody here. It wasn't difficult to do, Case being gone; but I have done it, and given my pledge besides that you will deal fairly with the natives. I must ask you to keep my word."

Well, so I did. I used to be bothered about my balances, but I reasoned it out this way: We all have queerish balances; and the natives all know it, and water their copra in a proportion so that it's fair all round; but the truth is, it did use to bother me, and, though I did well in Falesá, I was half glad when the firm moved me on to another station, where I was under no kind of a pledge and could look my balances in the face.

As for the old lady, you know her as well as I do. She's only the one fault. If you don't keep your eye lifting she would give away the roof off the station. Well, it seems it's natural in Kanakas. She's turned a powerful big woman now, and could throw a London bobby over her shoulder. But that's natural in Kanakas too, and there's no manner of doubt that she's an A 1 wife.

Mr. Tarleton's gone home, his trick being over. He was the best missionary I ever struck, and now, it seems, he's parsonising down Somerset way. Well, that's best for him; he'll have no Kanakas there to get luny over.

My public-house? Not a bit of it, nor ever likely. I'm stuck here, I fancy. I don't like to leave the kids, you see: and — there's no use talking — they're better here than what they would be in a white man's country, though Ben took the eldest up to Auckland, where he's being schooled with the best. But what bothers me is the girls. They're only half-castes, of course; I know that as well as you do, and there's nobody thinks less of half-castes than I do; but they're mine, and about all I've got. I can't reconcile my mind to their taking up with Kanakas, and I'd like to know where I'm to find the whites?

THE BOTTLE IMP.

Note. — Any student of that very unliterary product, the English drama of the early part of the century, will here recognise the name and the root idea of a piece once rendered popular by the redoubtable O. Smith. The root idea is there and identical, and yet I hope I have made it a new thing. And the fact that the tale has been designed and written for a Polynesian audience may lend it some extraneous interest nearer home. — R. L. S.

There was a man of the Island of Hawaii, whom I shall call Keawe; for the truth is, he still lives, and his name must be kept secret; but the place of his birth was not far from Honaunau, where the bones of Keawe the Great lie hidden in a cave. This man was poor, brave, and active; he could read and write like a schoolmaster; he was a first-rate mariner besides, sailed for some time in the island steamers, and steered a whaleboat on the Hamakua coast. At length it came in Keawe's mind to have a sight of the great world and foreign cities, and he shipped on a vessel bound to San Francisco.

This is a fine town, with a fine harbour, and rich people uncountable; and, in particular, there is one hill which is covered with palaces. Upon this hill Keawe was one day taking a walk with his pocket full of money, viewing the great houses upon either hand with pleasure, "What fine houses these are!" he was thinking, "and how happy must those people be who dwell in them, and take no care for the morrow!" The thought was in his mind when he came abreast of a house that was smaller than some others, but all finished and beautified like a toy; the steps of that house shone like silver, and the borders of the garden bloomed like garlands, and the windows were bright like diamond; and Keawe stopped and wondered at the excellence of all he saw. So stopping, he was aware of a man that looked forth upon him through a window so clear that Keawe could see him as you see a fish in a pool upon the reef. The man was elderly, with a bald head and a black beard; and his face was heavy with sorrow, and he bitterly sighed. And the truth of it is, that as Keawe looked in upon the man, and the man looked out upon Keawe, each envied the other.

All of a sudden, the man smiled and nodded, and beckoned Keawe to enter, and met him at the door of the house.

"This is a fine house of mine," said the man, and bitterly sighed. "Would you not care to view the chambers?"

So he led Keawe all over it, from the cellar to the roof, and there was nothing there that was not perfect of its kind, and Keawe was astonished.

"Truly," said Keawe, "this is a beautiful house; if I lived in the like of it, I should be laughing all day long. How comes it, then, that you should be sighing?"

"There is no reason," said the man, "why you should not have a house in all points similar to this, and finer, if you wish. You have some money, I suppose?"

"I have fifty dollars," said Keawe; "but a house like this will cost more than fifty dollars."

The man made a computation. "I am sorry you have no more," said he, "for it may raise you trouble in the future; but it shall be yours at fifty dollars."

"The house?" asked Keawe.

"No, not the house," replied the man; "but the bottle. For, I must tell you, although I appear to you so rich and fortunate, all my fortune, and this house itself and its garden, came out of a bottle not much bigger than a pint. This is it."

And he opened a lockfast place, and took out a round-bellied bottle with a long neck; the glass of it was white like milk, with changing rainbow colours in the grain. Withinsides something obscurely moved, like a shadow and a fire.

"This is the bottle," said the man; and, when Keawe laughed, "You do not believe me?" he added. "Try, then, for yourself. See if you can break it."

So Keawe took the bottle up and dashed it on the floor till he was weary; but it jumped on the floor like a child's ball, and was not injured.

"This is a strange thing," said Keawe. "For by the touch of it, as well as by the look, the bottle should be of glass."

"Of glass it is," replied the man, sighing more heavily than ever; "but the glass of it was tempered in the flames of hell. An imp lives in it, and that is the shadow we behold there moving: or so I suppose. If any man buy this bottle the imp is at his command; all that he desires — love, fame, money, houses like this house, ay, or a city like this city — all are his at the word uttered. Napoleon had this bottle, and by it he grew to be the king of the world; but he sold it at the last, and fell. Captain Cook had this bottle, and by it he found his way to so many islands; but he, too, sold it, and was slain upon Hawaii. For, once it is sold, the power goes and the protection; and unless a man remain content with what he has, ill will befall him."

"And yet you talk of selling it yourself?" Keawe said.

"I have all I wish, and I am growing elderly," replied the man. "There is one thing the imp cannot do — he cannot prolong life; and, it would not be fair to conceal from you, there is a drawback to the bottle; for if a man die before he sells it, he must burn in hell forever."

"To be sure, that is a drawback and no mistake," cried Keawe. "I would not meddle with the thing. I can do without a house, thank God; but there is one thing I could not be doing with one particle, and that is to be damned."

"Dear me, you must not run away with things," returned the man. "All you have to do is to use the power of the imp in moderation, and then sell it to someone else, as I do to you, and finish your life in comfort."

"Well, I observe two things," said Keawe. "All the time you keep sighing like a maid in love, that is one; and, for the other, you sell this bottle very cheap."

"I have told you already why I sigh," said the man. "It is because I fear my health is breaking up; and, as you said yourself, to die and go to the devil is a pity for anyone. As for why I sell so cheap, I must explain to you there is a peculiarity about the bottle. Long ago, when the devil brought it first upon earth, it was extremely expensive, and was sold first of all to Prester John for many millions of dollars; but it cannot be sold at all, unless sold at a loss. If you sell it for as much as you paid for it, back it comes to you again like a homing pigeon. It follows that the price has kept falling in these centuries, and the bottle is now remarkably cheap. I bought it myself from one of my great neighbours on this hill, and the price I paid was only ninety dollars. I could sell it for as high as eighty-nine dollars and ninety-nine cents, but not a penny dearer, or back the thing must come to me. Now, about this there are two bothers. First, when you offer a bottle so singular for eighty odd dollars, people suppose you to be jesting. And second — but there is no hurry about that — and I need not go into it. Only remember it must be coined money that you sell it for."

"How am I to know that this is all true?" asked Keawe.

"Some of it you can try at once," replied the man. "Give me your fifty dollars, take the bottle, and wish your fifty dollars back into your pocket. If that does not happen, I pledge you my honour I will cry off the bargain and restore your money."

"You are not deceiving me?" said Keawe.

The man bound himself with a great oath.

"Well, I will risk that much," said Keawe, "for that can do no harm." And he paid over his money to the man, and the man handed him the bottle.

"Imp of the bottle," said Keawe, "I want my fifty dollars back." And sure enough he had scarce said the word before his pocket was as heavy as ever.

"To be sure this is a wonderful bottle," said Keawe.

"And now good-morning to you, my fine fellow, and the devil go with you for me!" said the man.

"Hold on," said Keawe, "I don't want any more of this fun. Here, take your bottle back."

"You have bought it for less than I paid for it," replied the man, rubbing his hands. "It is yours now; and, for my part, I am only concerned to see the back of you." And with that he rang for his Chinese servant, and had Keawe shown out of the house.

Now, when Keawe was in the street, with the bottle under his arm, he began to think. "If all is true about this bottle, I may have made a losing bargain," thinks he. "But perhaps the man was only fooling me." The first thing he did was to count his money; the sum was exact — forty-nine dollars American money, and one Chili piece. "That looks like the truth," said Keawe. "Now I will try another part."

The streets in that part of the city were as clean as a ship's decks, and though it was noon, there were no passengers. Keawe set the bottle in the gutter and walked away. Twice he looked back, and there was the milky, round-bellied bottle where he left it. A third time he looked back, and turned a corner; but he had scarce done so, when something knocked upon his elbow, and behold! it was the long neck sticking up; and as for the round belly, it was jammed into the pocket of his pilot-coat.

"And that looks like the truth," said Keawe.

The next thing he did was to buy a cork-screw in a shop, and go apart into a secret place in the fields. And there he tried to draw the cork, but as often as he put the screw in, out it came again, and the cork as whole as ever.

"This is some new sort of cork," said Keawe, and all at once he began to shake and sweat, for he was afraid of that bottle.

On his way back to the port-side, he saw a shop where a man sold shells and clubs from the wild islands, old heathen deities, old coined money, pictures from China and Japan, and all manner of things that sailors bring in their sea-chests. And here he had an idea. So he went in and offered the bottle for a hundred dollars. The man of the shop laughed at him at the first, and offered him five; but, indeed, it was a curious bottle — such glass was never blown in any human glassworks, so prettily the colours shone under the milky white, and so strangely the shadow hovered in the midst; so, after he had disputed awhile after the manner of his kind, the shop-man gave Keawe sixty silver dollars for the thing, and set it on a shelf in the midst of his window.

"Now," said Keawe, "I have sold that for sixty which I bought for fifty — or, to say truth, a little less, because one of my dollars was from Chili. Now I shall know the truth upon another point."

So he went back on board his ship, and, when he opened his chest, there was the bottle, and had come more quickly than himself. Now

Keawe had a mate on board whose name was Lopaka.

"What ails you?" said Lopaka, "that you stare in your chest?"

They were alone in the ship's forecastle, and Keawe bound him to secrecy, and told all.

"This is a very strange affair," said Lopaka; "and I fear you will be in trouble about this bottle. But there is one point very clear — that you are sure of the trouble, and you had better have the profit in the bargain. Make up your mind what you want with it; give the order, and if it is done as you desire, I will buy the bottle myself; for I have an idea of my own to get a schooner, and go trading through the islands."

"That is not my idea," said Keawe; "but to have a beautiful house and garden on the Kona Coast, where I was born, the sun shining in at the door, flowers in the garden, glass in the windows, pictures on the walls, and toys and fine carpets on the tables, for all the world like the house I was in this day — only a storey higher, and with balconies all about like the King's palace; and to live there without care and make merry with my friends and relatives."

"Well," said Lopaka, "let us carry it back with us to Hawaii; and if all comes true, as you suppose, I will buy the bottle, as I said, and ask a schooner."

Upon that they were agreed, and it was not long before the ship returned to Honolulu, carrying Keawe and Lopaka, and the bottle. They were scarce come ashore when they met a friend upon the beach, who began at once to condole with Keawe.

"I do not know what I am to be condoled about," said Keawe.

"Is it possible you have not heard," said the friend, "your uncle — that good old man — is dead, and your cousin — that beautiful boy — was drowned at sea?"

Keawe was filled with sorrow, and, beginning to weep and to lament, he forgot about the bottle. But Lopaka was thinking to himself, and presently, when Keawe's grief was a little abated, "I have been thinking," said Lopaka. "Had not your uncle lands in Hawaii, in the district of Kau?"

"No," said Keawe, "not in Kau; they are on the mountain-side — a little way south of Hookena."

"These lands will now be yours?" asked Lopaka.

"And so they will," says Keawe, and began again to lament for his relatives.

"No," said Lopaka, "do not lament at present. I have a thought in my mind. How if this should be the doing of the bottle? For here is the place ready for your house."

"If this be so," cried Keawe, "it is a very ill way to serve me by killing my relatives. But it may be, indeed; for it was in just such a station that I saw the house with my mind's eye."

"The house, however, is not yet built," said Lopaka.

"No, nor like to be!" said Keawe; "for though my uncle has some coffee and ava and bananas, it will not be more than will keep me in comfort; and the rest of that land is the black lava."

"Let us go to the lawyer," said Lopaka; "I have still this idea in my mind."

Now, when they came to the lawyer's, it appeared Keawe's uncle had grown monstrous rich in the last days, and there was a fund of money.

"And here is the money for the house!" cried Lopaka.

"If you are thinking of a new house," said the lawyer, "here is the card of a new architect, of whom they tell me great things."

"Better and better!" cried Lopaka. "Here is all made plain for us. Let us continue to obey orders."

So they went to the architect, and he had drawings of houses on his table.

"You want something out of the way," said the architect. "How do you like this?" and he handed a drawing to Keawe.

Now, when Keawe set eyes on the drawing, he cried out aloud, for it was the picture of his thought exactly drawn.

"I am in for this house," thought he. "Little as I like the way it comes to me, I am in for it now, and I may as well take the good along with the evil."

So he told the architect all that he wished, and how he would have that house furnished, and about the pictures on the wall and the knick-knacks on the tables; and he asked the man plainly for how much he would undertake the whole affair.

The architect put many questions, and took his pen and made a computation; and when he had done he named the very sum that Keawe had inherited.

Lopaka and Keawe looked at one another and nodded.

"It is quite clear," thought Keawe, "that I am to have this house, whether or no. It comes from the devil, and I fear I will get little good by that; and of one thing I am sure, I will make no more wishes as long as I have this bottle. But with the house I am saddled, and I may as well take the good along with the evil."

So he made his terms with the architect, and they signed a paper; and Keawe and Lopaka took ship again and sailed to Australia; for it was concluded between them they should not interfere at all, but leave the architect and the bottle imp to build and to adorn that house at their own pleasure.

The voyage was a good voyage, only all the time Keawe was holding in his breath, for he had sworn he would utter no more wishes, and take no more favours from the devil. The time was up when they got back. The architect told them that the house was ready, and Keawe and Lopaka took a passage in the *Hall*, and went down Kona way to view the house, and see if all had been done fitly according to the thought that was in Keawe's mind.

Now the house stood on the mountain side, visible to ships. Above, the forest ran up into the clouds of rain; below, the black lava fell in cliffs, where the kings of old lay buried. A garden bloomed about that house with every hue of flowers; and there was an orchard of papaia on the one hand and an orchard of breadfruit on the other, and right in front, toward the sea, a ship's mast had been rigged up and bore a flag. As for the house, it was three storeys high, with great chambers and broad balconies on each. The windows were of glass, so excellent that it was as clear as water and as bright as day. All manner of furniture adorned the chambers. Pictures hung upon the wall in golden frames: pictures of ships, and men fighting, and of the most beautiful women, and of singular places; nowhere in the world are there pictures of so bright a colour as those Keawe found hanging in his house. As for the knick-knacks, they were extraordinary fine; chiming clocks and musical boxes, little men with nodding heads, books filled with pictures, weapons of price from all quarters of the world, and the most elegant puzzles to entertain the leisure of a solitary man. And as no one would care to live in such chambers, only to walk through and view them, the balconies were made so broad that a whole town might have lived upon them in delight; and Keawe knew not which to prefer, whether the back porch, where you got the land breeze, and looked upon the orchards and the flowers, or the front balcony, where you could drink the wind of the sea, and look down the steep wall of the mountain and see the *Hall* going by once a week or so between Hookena and the hills of Pele, or the schooners plying up the coast for wood and ava and bananas.

When they had viewed all, Keawe and Lopaka sat on the porch.

"Well," asked Lopaka, "is it all as you designed?"

"Words cannot utter it," said Keawe. "It is better than I dreamed, and I am sick with satisfaction."

"There is but one thing to consider," said Lopaka; "all this may be quite natural, and the bottle imp have nothing whatever to say to it. If I were to buy the bottle, and got no schooner after all, I should have put my hand in the fire for nothing. I gave you my word, I know; but yet I think you would not grudge me one more proof."

"I have sworn I would take no more favours," said Keawe. "I have gone already deep enough."

"This is no favour I am thinking of," replied Lopaka. "It is only to see the imp himself. There is nothing to be gained by that, and so nothing to be ashamed of; and yet, if I once saw him, I should be sure of the whole matter. So indulge me so far, and let me see the imp; and, after that, here is the money in my hand, and I will buy it."

"There is only one thing I am afraid of," said Keawe. "The imp may be very ugly to view; and if you once set eyes upon him you might be very undesirous of the bottle."

"I am a man of my word," said Lopaka. "And here is the money betwixt us."

"Very well," replied Keawe. "I have a curiosity myself. So come, let us have one look at you, Mr. Imp."

Now as soon as that was said, the imp looked out of the bottle, and in again, swift as a lizard; and there sat Keawe and Lopaka turned to stone. The night had quite come, before either found a thought to say or voice to say it with; and then Lopaka pushed the money over and took the bottle.

"I am a man of my word," said he, "and had need to be so, or I would not touch this bottle with my foot. Well, I shall get my schooner and a dollar or two for my pocket; and then I will be rid of this devil as fast as I can. For to tell you the plain truth, the look of him has cast me down."

"Lopaka," said Keawe, "do not you think any worse of me than you can help; I know it is night, and the roads bad, and the pass by the tombs an ill place to go by so late, but I declare since I have seen that little face, I cannot eat or sleep or pray till it is gone from me. I will give you a lantern and a basket to put the bottle in, and any picture or fine thing in all my house that takes your fancy; — and be gone at once, and go sleep at Hookena with Nahinu."

"Keawe," said Lopaka, "many a man would take this ill; above all, when I am doing you a turn so friendly, as to keep my word and buy the bottle; and for that matter, the night and the dark, and the way by the tombs, must be all tenfold more dangerous to a man with such a sin upon his conscience, and such a bottle under his arm. But for my part, I am so extremely terrified myself, I have not the heart to blame you. Here I go then; and I pray God you may be happy in your house, and I fortunate with my schooner, and both get to heaven in the end in spite of the devil and his bottle."

So Lopaka went down the mountain; and Keawe stood in his front balcony, and listened to the clink of the horse's shoes, and watched the lantern go shining down the path, and along the cliff of caves where the old dead are buried; and all the time he trembled and clasped his hands, and prayed for his friend, and gave glory to God that he himself was escaped out of that trouble.

But the next day came very brightly, and that new house of his was so delightful to behold that he forgot his terrors. One day followed another, and Keawe dwelt there in perpetual joy. He had his place on the back porch; it was there he ate and lived, and read the stories in the Honolulu newspapers; but when anyone came by they would go in and view the chambers and the pictures. And the fame of the house went far and wide; it was called *Ka-Hale Nui* — the Great House — in all Kona; and sometimes the Bright House, for Keawe kept a Chinaman, who was all day dusting and furbishing; and the glass, and the gilt, and the fine stuffs, and the pictures, shone as bright as the morning. As for Keawe himself, he could not walk in the chambers without singing, his heart was so enlarged; and when ships sailed by upon the sea, he would fly his colours on the mast.

So time went by, until one day Keawe went upon a visit as far as Kailua to certain of his friends. There he was well feasted; and left as soon as he could the next morning, and rode hard, for he was impatient to behold his beautiful house; and, besides, the night then coming on was the night in which the dead of old days go abroad in the sides of Kona; and having already meddled with the devil, he was the more chary of meeting with the dead. A little beyond Honaunau, looking far ahead, he was aware of a woman bathing in the edge of the sea; and she seemed a well-grown girl, but he thought no more of it. Then he saw her white shift flutter as she put it on, and then her red holoku; and by the time he came abreast of her she was done with her toilet, and had come up from the sea, and stood by the track-side in her red holoku, and she was all freshened with the bath, and her eyes shone and were kind. Now Keawe no sooner beheld her than he drew rein.

“I thought I knew everyone in this country,” said he. “How comes it that I do not know you?”

“I am Kokua, daughter of Kiano,” said the girl, “and I have just returned from Oahu. Who are you?”

“I will tell you who I am in a little,” said Keawe, dismounting from his horse, “but not now. For I have a thought in my mind, and if you knew who I was, you might have heard of me, and would not give me a true answer. But tell me, first of all, one thing: Are you married?”

At this Kokua laughed out aloud. “It is you who ask questions,” she said. “Are you married yourself?”

“Indeed, Kokua, I am not,” replied Keawe, “and never thought to be until this hour. But here is the plain truth. I have met you here at the roadside, and I saw your eyes, which are like the stars, and my heart went to you as swift as a bird. And so now, if you want none of me, say so, and I will go on to my own place; but if you think me no worse than any other young man, say so, too, and I will turn aside to your father’s for the night, and to-morrow I will talk with the good man.”

Kokua said never a word, but she looked at the sea and laughed.

"Kokua," said Keawe, "if you say nothing, I will take that for the good answer; so let us be stepping to your father's door."

She went on ahead of him, still without speech; only sometimes she glanced back and glanced away again, and she kept the strings of her hat in her mouth.

Now, when they had come to the door, Kiano came out on his verandah, and cried out and welcomed Keawe by name. At that the girl looked over, for the fame of the great house had come to her ears; and, to be sure, it was a great temptation. All that evening they were very merry together; and the girl was as bold as brass under the eyes of her parents, and made a mock of Keawe, for she had a quick wit. The next day he had a word with Kiano, and found the girl alone.

"Kokua," said he, "you made a mock of me all the evening; and it is still time to bid me go. I would not tell you who I was, because I have so fine a house, and I feared you would think too much of that house and too little of the man that loves you. Now you know all, and if you wish to have seen the last of me, say so at once."

"No," said Kokua; but this time she did not laugh, nor did Keawe ask for more.

This was the wooing of Keawe; things had gone quickly; but so an arrow goes, and the ball of a rifle swifter still, and yet both may strike the target. Things had gone fast, but they had gone far also, and the thought of Keawe rang in the maiden's head; she heard his voice in the breach of the surf upon the lava, and for this young man that she had seen but twice she would have left father and mother and her native islands. As for Keawe himself, his horse flew up the path of the mountain under the cliff of tombs, and the sound of the hoofs, and the sound of Keawe singing to himself for pleasure, echoed in the caverns of the dead. He came to the Bright House, and still he was singing. He sat and ate in the broad balcony, and the Chinaman wondered at his master, to hear how he sang between the mouthfuls. The sun went down into the sea, and the night came; and Keawe walked the balconies by lamplight, high on the mountains, and the voice of his singing startled men on ships.

"Here am I now upon my high place," he said to himself. "Life may be no better; this is the mountain top; and all shelves about me toward the worse. For the first time I will light up the chambers, and bathe in my fine bath with the hot water and the cold, and sleep alone in the bed of my bridal chamber."

So the Chinaman had word, and he must rise from sleep and light the furnaces; and as he wrought below, beside the boilers, he heard his master singing and rejoicing above him in the lighted chambers. When the water began to be hot the Chinaman cried to his master; and Keawe went into the bathroom; and the Chinaman heard him sing as he filled the marble basin; and heard him sing, and the singing broken, as he undressed; until of a sudden, the song ceased. The Chinaman listened, and listened; he called up the house to Keawe to ask if all were well, and Keawe answered him "Yes," and bade him go to bed; but there was no more singing in the Bright House; and all night long, the Chinaman heard his master's feet go round and round the balconies without repose.

Now the truth of it was this: as Keawe undressed for his bath, he spied upon his flesh a patch like a patch of lichen on a rock, and it was then that he stopped singing. For he knew the likeness of that patch, and knew that he was fallen in the Chinese Evil.

Now, it is a sad thing for any man to fall into this sickness. And it would be a sad thing for anyone to leave a house so beautiful and so commodious, and depart from all his friends to the north coast of Molokai between the mighty cliff and the sea-breakers. But what was that to the case of the man Keawe, he who had met his love but yesterday, and won her but that morning, and now saw all his hopes break, in a moment, like a piece of glass?

Awhile he sat upon the edge of the bath; then sprang, with a cry, and ran outside; and to and fro, to and fro, along the balcony, like one despairing.

"Very willingly could I leave Hawaii, the home of my fathers," Keawe was thinking. "Very lightly could I leave my house, the high-placed, the many-windowed, here upon the mountains. Very bravely could I go to Molokai, to Kalaupapa by the cliffs, to live with the smitten and to sleep there, far from my fathers. But what wrong have I done, what sin lies upon my soul, that I should have encountered Kokua coming cool from the sea-water in the evening? Kokua, the soul ensnarer! Kokua, the light of my life! Her may I never wed, her may I look upon no longer, her may I no more handle with my loving hand; and it is for this, it is for you, O Kokua! that I pour my lamentations!"

Now you are to observe what sort of a man Keawe was, for he might have dwelt there in the Bright House for years, and no one been the wiser of his sickness; but he reckoned nothing of that, if he must lose Kokua. And again, he might have wed Kokua even as he was; and so many would have done, because they have the souls of pigs; but Keawe loved the maid manfully, and he would do her no hurt and bring her in no danger.

A little beyond the midst of the night, there came in his mind the recollection of that bottle. He went round to the back porch, and called to memory the day when the devil had looked forth; and at the thought ice ran in his veins.

"A dreadful thing is the bottle," thought Keawe, "and dreadful is the imp, and it is a dreadful thing to risk the flames of hell. But what other hope have I to cure my sickness or to wed Kokua? What!" he thought, "would I beard the devil once, only to get me a house, and not face him again to win Kokua?"

Thereupon he called to mind it was the next day the *Hall* went by on her return to Honolulu. "There must I go first," he thought, "and see Lopaka. For the best hope that I have now is to find that same bottle I was so pleased to be rid of."

Never a wink could he sleep; the food stuck in his throat; but he sent a letter to Kiano, and about the time when the steamer would be coming, rode down beside the cliff of the tombs. It rained; his horse went heavily; he looked up at the black mouths of the caves, and he envied the dead that slept there and were done with trouble; and called to mind how he had galloped by the day before, and was astonished. So he came down to Hookena, and there was all the country gathered for the steamer as usual. In the shed before the store they sat and jested and passed the news; but there was no matter of speech in Keawe's bosom, and he sat in their midst and looked without on the rain falling on the houses, and the surf beating among the rocks, and the sighs arose in his throat.

"Keawe of the Bright House is out of spirits," said one to another. Indeed, and so he was, and little wonder.

Then the *Hall* came, and the whaleboat carried him on board. The after-part of the ship was full of Haoles who had been to visit the volcano, as their custom is; and the midst was crowded with Kanakas, and the forepart with wild bulls from Hilo and horses from Kau; but Keawe sat apart from all in his sorrow, and watched for the house of Kiano. There it sat, low upon the shore in the black rocks, and shaded by the cocoa palms, and there by the door was a red holoku, no greater than a fly, and going to and fro with a fly's busyness. "Ah, queen of my heart," he cried, "I'll venture my dear soul to win you!"

Soon after, darkness fell, and the cabins were lit up, and the Haoles sat and played at the cards and drank whiskey as their custom is; but Keawe walked the deck all night; and all the next day, as they steamed under the lee of Maui or of Molokai, he was still pacing to and fro like a wild animal in a menagerie.

Towards evening they passed Diamond Head, and came to the pier of Honolulu. Keawe stepped out among the crowd and began to ask for Lopaka. It seemed he had become the owner of a schooner — none better in the islands — and was gone upon an adventure as far as Pola-Pola or Kahiki; so there was no help to be looked for from Lopaka. Keawe called to mind a friend of his, a lawyer in the town (I must not tell his name), and inquired of him. They said he was grown suddenly rich, and had a fine new house upon Waikiki shore; and this put a thought in Keawe's head, and he called a hack and drove to the lawyer's house.

The house was all brand new, and the trees in the garden no greater than walking-sticks, and the lawyer, when he came, had the air of a man well pleased.

"What can I do to serve you?" said the lawyer.

"You are a friend of Lopaka's," replied Keawe, "and Lopaka purchased from me a certain piece of goods that I thought you might enable me to trace."

The lawyer's face became very dark. "I do not profess to misunderstand you, Mr. Keawe," said he, "though this is an ugly business to be stirring in. You may be sure I know nothing, but yet I have a guess, and if you would apply in a certain quarter I think you might have news."

And he named the name of a man, which, again, I had better not repeat. So it was for days, and Keawe went from one to another, finding everywhere new clothes and carriages, and fine new houses and men everywhere in great contentment, although, to be sure, when he hinted at his business their faces would cloud over.

"No doubt I am upon the track," thought Keawe. "These new clothes and carriages are all the gifts of the little imp, and these glad faces are the faces of men who have taken their profit and got rid of the accursed thing in safety. When I see pale cheeks and hear sighing, I shall know that I am near the bottle."

So it befell at last that he was recommended to a Haole in Beritania Street. When he came to the door, about the hour of the evening meal, there were the usual marks of the new house, and the young garden, and the electric light shining in the windows; but when the owner came, a shock of hope and fear ran through Keawe; for here was a young man, white as a corpse, and black about the eyes, the hair shedding from his head, and such a look in his countenance as a man may have when he is waiting for the gallows.

"Here it is, to be sure," thought Keawe, and so with this man he noways veiled his errand. "I am come to buy the bottle," said he.

At the word, the young Haole of Beritania Street reeled against the wall.

"The bottle!" he gasped. "To buy the bottle!" Then he seemed to choke, and seizing Keawe by the arm carried him into a room and poured out wine in two glasses.

"Here is my respects," said Keawe, who had been much about with Haoles in his time. "Yes," he added, "I am come to buy the bottle. What is the price by now?"

At that word the young man let his glass slip through his fingers, and looked upon Keawe like a ghost.

"The price," says he; "the price! You do not know the price?"

"It is for that I am asking you," returned Keawe. "But why are you so much concerned? Is there anything wrong about the price?"

"It has dropped a great deal in value since your time, Mr. Keawe," said the young man stammering.

"Well, well, I shall have the less to pay for it," says Keawe. "How much did it cost you?"

The young man was as white as a sheet. "Two cents," said he.

"What?" cried Keawe, "two cents? Why, then, you can only sell it for one. And he who buys it — " The words died upon Keawe's tongue; he who bought it could never sell it again, the bottle and the bottle imp must abide with him until he died, and when he died must carry him to the red end of hell.

The young man of Beritania Street fell upon his knees. "For God's sake buy it!" he cried. "You can have all my fortune in the bargain. I was mad when I bought it at that price. I had embezzled money at my store; I was lost else; I must have gone to jail."

"Poor creature," said Keawe, "you would risk your soul upon so desperate an adventure, and to avoid the proper punishment of your own disgrace; and you think I could hesitate with love in front of me. Give me the bottle, and the change which I make sure you have all ready. Here is a five-cent piece."

It was as Keawe supposed; the young man had the change ready in a drawer; the bottle changed hands, and Keawe's fingers were no sooner clasped upon the stalk than he had breathed his wish to be a clean man. And, sure enough, when he got home to his room, and stripped himself before a glass, his flesh was whole like an infant's. And here was the strange thing: he had no sooner seen this miracle, than his mind was changed within him, and he cared naught for the Chinese Evil, and little enough for Kokua; and had but the one thought, that here he was bound to the bottle imp for time and for eternity, and had no better hope but to be a cinder for ever in the flames of hell. Away ahead of him he saw them blaze with his mind's eye, and his soul shrank, and darkness fell upon the light.

When Keawe came to himself a little, he was aware it was the night when the band played at the hotel. Thither he went, because he feared to be alone; and there, among happy faces, walked to and fro, and heard the tunes go up and down, and saw Berger beat the measure, and all the while he heard the flames crackle, and saw the red fire burning in the bottomless pit. Of a sudden the band played *Hiki-ao-ao*; that was a song that he had sung with Kokua, and at the strain courage returned to him.

"It is done now," he thought, "and once more let me take the good along with the evil."

So it befell that he returned to Hawaii by the first steamer, and as soon as it could be managed he was wedded to Kokua, and carried her up the mountain side to the Bright House.

Now it was so with these two, that when they were together, Keawe's heart was stilled; but so soon as he was alone he fell into a brooding horror, and heard the flames crackle, and saw the red fire burn in the bottomless pit. The girl, indeed, had come to him wholly; her heart leapt in her side at sight of him, her hand clung to his; and she was so fashioned from the hair upon her head to the nails upon her toes that none could see her without joy. She was pleasant in her nature. She had the good word always. Full of song she was, and went to and fro in the Bright House, the brightest thing in its three storeys, carolling like the birds. And Keawe beheld and heard her with delight, and then must shrink upon one side, and weep and groan to think upon the price that he had paid for her; and then he must dry his eyes, and wash his face, and go and sit with her on the broad balconies, joining in her songs, and, with a sick spirit, answering her smiles.

There came a day when her feet began to be heavy and her songs more rare; and now it was not Keawe only that would weep apart, but each would sunder from the other and sit in opposite balconies with the whole width of the Bright House betwixt. Keawe was so sunk in his despair, he scarce observed the change, and was only glad he had more hours to sit alone and brood upon his destiny, and was not so frequently condemned to pull a smiling face on a sick heart. But one day, coming softly through the house, he heard the sound of a child sobbing, and there was Kokua rolling her face upon the balcony floor, and weeping like the lost.

"You do well to weep in this house, Kokua," he said. "And yet I would give the head off my body that you (at least) might have been happy."

"Happy!" she cried. "Keawe, when you lived alone in your Bright House, you were the word of the island for a happy man; laughter and song were in your mouth, and your face was as bright as the sunrise. Then you wedded poor Kokua; and the good God knows what is amiss in her — but from that day you have not smiled. Oh!" she cried, "what ails me? I thought I was pretty, and I knew I loved him. What ails me that I throw this cloud upon my husband?"

"Poor Kokua," said Keawe. He sat down by her side, and sought to take her hand; but that she plucked away. "Poor Kokua," he said, again. "My poor child — my pretty. And I had thought all this while to spare you! Well, you shall know all. Then, at least, you will pity poor Keawe; then you will understand how much he loved you in the past — that he dared hell for your possession — and how much he loves you still (the poor condemned one), that he can yet call up a smile when he beholds you."

With that, he told her all, even from the beginning.

"You have done this for me?" she cried "Ah, well, then what do I care!" — and she clasped and wept upon him.

"Ah, child!" said Keawe, "and yet, when I consider of the fire of hell, I care a good deal!"

"Never tell me," said she; "no man can be lost because he loved Kokua, and no other fault. I tell you, Keawe, I shall save you with these hands, or perish in your company. What! you loved me, and gave your soul, and you think I will not die to save you in return?"

"Ah, my dear! you might die a hundred times, and what difference would that make?" he cried, "except to leave me lonely till the time comes of my damnation?"

"You know nothing," said she. "I was educated in a school in Honolulu; I am no common girl. And I tell you, I shall save my lover. What is this you say about a cent? But all the world is not American. In England they have a piece they call a farthing, which is about half a cent. Ah! sorrow!" she cried, "that makes it scarcely better, for the buyer must be lost, and we shall find none so brave as my Keawe! But, then, there is France; they have a small coin there which they call a centime, and these go five to the cent or there-about. We could not do better. Come, Keawe, let us go to the French islands; let us go to Tahiti, as fast as ships can bear us. There we have four centimes, three centimes, two centimes, one centime; four possible sales to come and go on; and two of us to push the bargain. Come, my Keawe! kiss me, and banish care. Kokua will defend you."

"Gift of God!" he cried. "I cannot think that God will punish me for desiring aught so good! Be it as you will, then; take me where you please: I put my life and my salvation in your hands."

Early the next day Kokua was about her preparations. She took Keawe's chest that he went with sailoring; and first she put the bottle in a corner; and then packed it with the richest of their clothes and the bravest of the knick-knacks in the house. "For," said she, "we must seem to be rich folks, or who will believe in the bottle?" All the time of her preparation she was as gay as a bird; only when she looked upon Keawe, the tears would spring in her eye, and she must run and kiss him. As for Keawe, a weight was off his soul; now that he had his secret shared, and some hope in front of him, he seemed like a new man, his feet went lightly on the earth, and his breath was good to him again. Yet was terror still at his elbow; and ever and again, as the wind blows out a taper, hope died in him, and he saw the flames toss and the red fire burn in hell.

It was given out in the country they were gone pleasuring to the

States, which was thought a strange thing, and yet not so strange as the truth, if any could have guessed it. So they went to Honolulu in the *Hall*, and thence in the *Umatilla* to San Francisco with a crowd of Haoles, and at San Francisco took their passage by the mail brigantine, the *Tropic Bird*, for Papeete, the chief place of the French in the south islands. Thither they came, after a pleasant voyage, on a fair day of the Trade Wind, and saw the reef with the surf breaking, and Motuiti with its palms, and the schooner riding within-side, and the white houses of the town low down along the shore among green trees, and overhead the mountains and the clouds of Tahiti, the wise island.

It was judged the most wise to hire a house, which they did accordingly, opposite the British Consul's, to make a great parade of money, and themselves conspicuous with carriages and horses. This it was very easy to do, so long as they had the bottle in their possession; for Kokua was more bold than Keawe, and, whenever she had a mind, called on the imp for twenty or a hundred dollars. At this rate they soon grew to be remarked in the town; and the strangers from Hawaii, their riding and their driving, the fine holokus and the rich lace of Kokua, became the matter of much talk.

They got on well after the first with the Tahitian language, which is indeed like to the Hawaiian, with a change of certain letters; and as soon as they had any freedom of speech, began to push the bottle. You are to consider it was not an easy subject to introduce; it was not easy to persuade people you were in earnest, when you offered to sell them for four centimes the spring of health and riches inexhaustible. It was necessary besides to explain the dangers of the bottle; and either people disbelieved the whole thing and laughed, or they thought the more of the darker part, became overcast with gravity, and drew away from Keawe and Kokua, as from persons who had dealings with the devil. So far from gaining ground, these two began to find they were avoided in the town; the children ran away from them screaming, a thing intolerable to Kokua; Catholics crossed themselves as they went by; and all persons began with one accord to disengage themselves from their advances.

Depression fell upon their spirits. They would sit at night in their new house, after a day's weariness, and not exchange one word, or the silence would be broken by Kokua bursting suddenly into sobs. Sometimes they would pray together; sometimes they would have the bottle out upon the floor, and sit all evening watching how the shadow hovered in the midst. At such times they would be afraid to go to rest. It was long ere slumber came to them, and, if either dozed off, it would be to wake and find the other silently weeping in the dark, or, perhaps, to wake alone, the other having fled from the house and the neighbourhood of that bottle, to pace under the bananas in the little garden, or to wander on the beach by moonlight.

One night it was so when Kokua awoke. Keawe was gone. She felt in the bed and his place was cold. Then fear fell upon her, and she sat up in bed. A little moonshine filtered through the shutters. The room was bright, and she could spy the bottle on the floor. Outside it blew high, the great trees of the avenue cried aloud, and the fallen leaves rattled in the verandah. In the midst of this Kokua was aware of another sound; whether of a beast or of a man she could scarce tell, but it was as sad as death, and cut her to the soul. Softly she arose, set the door ajar, and looked forth into the moonlit yard. There, under the bananas, lay Keawe, his mouth in the dust, and as he lay he moaned.

It was Kokua's first thought to run forward and console him; her second potently withheld her. Keawe had borne himself before his wife like a brave man; it became her little in the hour of weakness to intrude upon his shame. With the thought she drew back into the house.

"Heaven!" she thought, "how careless have I been — how weak! It is he, not I, that stands in this eternal peril; it was he, not I, that took the curse upon his soul. It is for my sake, and for the love of a creature of so little worth and such poor help, that he now beholds so close to him the flames of hell — ay, and smells the smoke of it, lying without there in the wind and moonlight. Am I so dull of spirit that never till now I have surmised my duty, or have I seen it before and turned aside? But now, at least, I take up my soul in both the hands of my affection; now I say farewell to the white steps of heaven and the waiting faces of my friends. A love for a love, and let mine be equalled with Keawe's! A soul for a soul, and be it mine to perish!"

She was a deft woman with her hands, and was soon apparelled. She took in her hands the change — the precious centimes they kept ever at their side; for this coin is little used, and they had made provision at a Government office. When she was forth in the avenue clouds came on the wind, and the moon was blackened. The town slept, and she knew not whither to turn till she heard one coughing in the shadow of the trees.

"Old man," said Kokua, "what do you here abroad in the cold night?"

The old man could scarce express himself for coughing, but she made out that he was old and poor, and a stranger in the island.

"Will you do me a service?" said Kokua. "As one stranger to another, and as an old man to a young woman, will you help a daughter of Hawaii?"

"Ah," said the old man. "So you are the witch from the eight islands, and even my old soul you seek to entangle. But I have heard of you, and defy your wickedness."

"Sit down here," said Kokua, "and let me tell you a tale." And she told him the story of Keawe from the beginning to the end.

"And now," said she, "I am his wife, whom he bought with his soul's welfare. And what should I do? If I went to him myself and offered to buy it, he would refuse. But if you go, he will sell it eagerly; I will await you here; you will buy it for four centimes, and I will buy it again for three. And the Lord strengthen a poor girl!"

"If you meant falsely," said the old man, "I think God would strike you dead."

"He would!" cried Kokua. "Be sure he would. I could not be so treacherous — God would not suffer it."

"Give me the four centimes and await me here," said the old man.

Now, when Kokua stood alone in the street, her spirit died. The wind roared in the trees, and it seemed to her the rushing of the flames of hell; the shadows tossed in the light of the street lamp, and they seemed to her the snatching hands of evil ones. If she had had the strength, she must have run away, and if she had had the breath she must have screamed aloud; but, in truth, she could do neither, and stood and trembled in the avenue, like an affrighted child.

Then she saw the old man returning, and he had the bottle in his hand.

"I have done your bidding," said he. "I left your husband weeping like a child; to-night he will sleep easy." And he held the bottle forth.

"Before you give it me," Kokua panted, "take the good with the evil — ask to be delivered from your cough."

"I am an old man," replied the other, "and too near the gate of the grave to take a favour from the devil. But what is this? Why do you not take the bottle? Do you hesitate?"

"Not hesitate!" cried Kokua. "I am only weak. Give me a moment. It is my hand resists, my flesh shrinks back from the accursed thing. One moment only!"

The old man looked upon Kokua kindly. "Poor child!" said he, "you fear; your soul misgives you. Well, let me keep it. I am old, and can never more be happy in this world, and as for the next — "

"Give it me!" gasped Kokua. "There is your money. Do you think I am so base as that? Give me the bottle."

"God bless you, child," said the old man.

Kokua concealed the bottle under her holoku, said farewell to the old man, and walked off along the avenue, she cared not whither. For all roads were now the same to her, and led equally to hell. Sometimes she walked, and sometimes ran; sometimes she screamed out loud in the night, and sometimes lay by the wayside in the dust and wept. All that she had heard of hell came back to her; she saw the flames blaze, and she smelt the smoke, and her flesh withered on the coals.

Near day she came to her mind again, and returned to the house. It was even as the old man said — Keawe slumbered like a child. Kokua stood and gazed upon his face.

"Now, my husband," said she, "it is your turn to sleep. When you wake it will be your turn to sing and laugh. But for poor Kokua, alas! that meant no evil — for poor Kokua no more sleep, no more singing, no more delight, whether in earth or heaven."

With that she lay down in the bed by his side, and her misery was so extreme that she fell in a deep slumber instantly.

Late in the morning her husband woke her and gave her the good news. It seemed he was silly with delight, for he paid no heed to her distress, ill though she dissembled it. The words stuck in her mouth, it mattered not; Keawe did the speaking. She ate not a bite, but who was to observe it? for Keawe cleared the dish. Kokua saw and heard him, like some strange thing in a dream; there were times when she forgot or doubted, and put her hands to her brow; to know herself doomed and hear her husband babble, seemed so monstrous.

All the while Keawe was eating and talking, and planning the time of their return, and thanking her for saving him, and fondling her, and calling her the true helper after all. He laughed at the old man that was fool enough to buy that bottle.

"A worthy old man he seemed," Keawe said. "But no one can judge by appearances. For why did the old reprobate require the bottle?"

"My husband," said Kokua, humbly, "his purpose may have been good."

Keawe laughed like an angry man.

"Fiddle-de-dee!" cried Keawe. "An old rogue, I tell you; and an old ass to boot. For the bottle was hard enough to sell at four centimes; and at three it will be quite impossible. The margin is not broad enough, the thing begins to smell of scorching — brrr!" said he, and shuddered. "It is true I bought it myself at a cent, when I knew not there were smaller coins. I was a fool for my pains; there will never be found another: and whoever has that bottle now will carry it to the pit."

"O my husband!" said Kokua. "Is it not a terrible thing to save oneself by the eternal ruin of another? It seems to me I could not laugh. I would be humbled. I would be filled with melancholy. I would pray for the poor holder."

Then Keawe, because he felt the truth of what she said, grew the more angry. "Heighty-teighty!" cried he. "You may be filled with melancholy if you please. It is not the mind of a good wife. If you thought at all of me, you would sit shamed."

Thereupon he went out, and Kokua was alone.

What chance had she to sell that bottle at two centimes? None, she perceived. And if she had any, here was her husband hurrying her away to a country where there was nothing lower than a cent. And here — on the morrow of her sacrifice — was her husband leaving her and blaming her.

She would not even try to profit by what time she had, but sat in the house, and now had the bottle out and viewed it with unutterable fear, and now, with loathing, hid it out of sight.

By-and-by, Keawe came back, and would have her take a drive.

"My husband, I am ill," she said. "I am out of heart. Excuse me, I can take no pleasure."

Then was Keawe more wroth than ever. With her, because he thought she was brooding over the case of the old man; and with himself, because he thought she was right, and was ashamed to be so happy.

"This is your truth," cried he, "and this your affection! Your husband is just saved from eternal ruin, which he encountered for the love of you — and you can take no pleasure! Kokua, you have a disloyal heart."

He went forth again furious, and wandered in the town all day. He met friends, and drank with them; they hired a carriage and drove into the country, and there drank again. All the time Keawe was ill at ease, because he was taking this pastime while his wife was sad, and because he knew in his heart that she was more right than he; and the knowledge made him drink the deeper.

Now there was an old brutal Haole drinking with him, one that had been a boatswain of a whaler, a runaway, a digger in gold mines, a convict in prisons. He had a low mind and a foul mouth; he loved to drink and to see others drunken; and he pressed the glass upon Keawe. Soon there was no more money in the company.

"Here, you!" says the boatswain, "you are rich, you have been always saying. You have a bottle or some foolishness."

"Yes," says Keawe, "I am rich; I will go back and get some money from my wife, who keeps it."

"That's a bad idea, mate," said the boatswain. "Never you trust a petticoat with dollars. They're all as false as water; you keep an eye on her."

Now, this word struck in Keawe's mind; for he was muddled with what he had been drinking.

"I should not wonder but she was false, indeed," thought he. "Why else should she be so cast down at my release? But I will show her I am not the man to be fooled. I will catch her in the act."

Accordingly, when they were back in town, Keawe bade the boatswain wait for him at the corner, by the old calaboose, and went forward up the avenue alone to the door of his house. The night had come again; there was a light within, but never a sound; and Keawe crept about the corner, opened the back door softly, and looked in.

There was Kokua on the floor, the lamp at her side; before her was a milk-white bottle, with a round belly and a long neck; and as she viewed it, Kokua wrung her hands.

A long time Keawe stood and looked in the doorway. At first he was struck stupid; and then fear fell upon him that the bargain had been made amiss, and the bottle had come back to him as it came at San Francisco; and at that his knees were loosened, and the fumes of the wine departed from his head like mists off a river in the morning. And then he had another thought; and it was a strange one, that made his cheeks to burn.

"I must make sure of this," thought he.

So he closed the door, and went softly round the corner again, and then came noisily in, as though he were but now returned. And, lo! by the time he opened the front door no bottle was to be seen; and Kokua sat in a chair and started up like one awakened out of sleep.

"I have been drinking all day and making merry," said Keawe. "I have been with good companions, and now I only come back for money, and return to drink and carouse with them again."

Both his face and voice were as stern as judgment, but Kokua was too troubled to observe.

"You do well to use your own, my husband," said she, and her words trembled.

"O, I do well in all things," said Keawe, and he went straight to the chest and took out money. But he looked besides in the corner where they kept the bottle, and there was no bottle there.

At that the chest heaved upon the floor like a sea-billow, and the house span about him like a wreath of smoke, for he saw he was lost now, and there was no escape. "It is what I feared," he thought. "It is she who has bought it."

And then he came to himself a little and rose up; but the sweat streamed on his face as thick as the rain and as cold as the well-water.

"Kokua," said he, "I said to you to-day what ill became me. Now I return to carouse with my jolly companions," and at that he laughed a little quietly. "I will take more pleasure in the cup if you forgive me."

She clasped his knees in a moment; she kissed his knees with flowing tears.

"O," she cried, "I asked but a kind word!"

"Let us never one think hardly of the other," said Keawe, and was gone out of the house.

Now, the money that Keawe had taken was only some of that store of centime pieces they had laid in at their arrival. It was very sure he had no mind to be drinking. His wife had given her soul for him, now he must give his for hers; no other thought was in the world with him.

At the corner, by the old calaboose, there was the boatswain waiting.

"My wife has the bottle," said Keawe, "and, unless you help me to recover it, there can be no more money and no more liquor to-night."

"You do not mean to say you are serious about that bottle?" cried the boatswain.

"There is the lamp," said Keawe. "Do I look as if I was jesting?"

"That is so," said the boatswain. "You look as serious as a ghost."

"Well, then," said Keawe, "here are two centimes; you must go to my wife in the house, and offer her these for the bottle, which (if I am not much mistaken) she will give you instantly. Bring it to me here, and I will buy it back from you for one; for that is the law with this bottle, that it still must be sold for a less sum. But whatever you do, never breathe a word to her that you have come from me."

"Mate, I wonder are you making a fool of me?" asked the boatswain.

"It will do you no harm if I am," returned Keawe.

"That is so, mate," said the boatswain.

"And if you doubt me," added Keawe, "you can try. As soon as you are clear of the house, wish to have your pocket full of money, or a bottle of the best rum, or what you please, and you will see the virtue of the thing."

"Very well, Kanaka," says the boatswain. "I will try; but if you are having your fun out of me, I will take my fun out of you with a belaying pin."

So the whaler-man went off up the avenue; and Keawe stood and waited. It was near the same spot where Kokua had waited the night before; but Keawe was more resolved, and never faltered in his purpose; only his soul was bitter with despair.

It seemed a long time he had to wait before he heard a voice singing in the darkness of the avenue. He knew the voice to be the boatswain's; but it was strange how drunken it appeared upon a sudden.

Next, the man himself came stumbling into the light of the lamp. He had the devil's bottle buttoned in his coat; another bottle was in his hand; and even as he came in view he raised it to his mouth and drank.

"You have it," said Keawe. "I see that."

"Hands off!" cried the boatswain, jumping back. "Take a step near me, and I'll smash your mouth. You thought you could make a cat's-paw of me, did you?"

"What do you mean?" cried Keawe.

"Mean?" cried the boatswain. "This is a pretty good bottle, this is; that's what I mean. How I got it for two centimes I can't make out; but I'm sure you shan't have it for one."

"You mean you won't sell?" gasped Keawe.

"No, *sir*!" cried the boatswain. "But I'll give you a drink of the rum, if you like."

"I tell you," said Keawe, "the man who has that bottle goes to hell."

"I reckon I'm going anyway," returned the sailor; "and this bottle's the best thing to go with I've struck yet. No, sir!" he cried again, "this is my bottle now, and you can go and fish for another."

"Can this be true?" Keawe cried. "For your own sake, I beseech you, sell it me!"

"I don't value any of your talk," replied the boatswain. "You thought I was a flat; now you see I'm not; and there's an end. If you won't have a swallow of the rum, I'll have one myself. Here's your health, and good-night to you!"

So off he went down the avenue towards town, and there goes the bottle out of the story.

But Keawe ran to Kokua light as the wind; and great was their joy that night; and great, since then, has been the peace of all their days in the Bright House.

THE ISLE OF VOICES.

Keola was married with Lehua, daughter of Kalamake, the wise man of Molokai, and he kept his dwelling with the father of his wife. There was no man more cunning than that prophet; he read the stars, he could divine by the bodies of the dead, and by the means of evil creatures: he could go alone into the highest parts of the mountain, into the region of the hobgoblins, and there he would lay snares to entrap the spirits of the ancient.

For this reason no man was more consulted in all the Kingdom of Hawaii. Prudent people bought, and sold, and married, and laid out their lives by his counsels; and the King had him twice to Kona to seek the treasures of Kamehameha. Neither was any man more feared: of his enemies, some had dwindled in sickness by the virtue of his incantations, and some had been spirited away, the life and the clay both, so that folk looked in vain for so much as a bone of their bodies. It was rumoured that he had the art or the gift of the old heroes. Men had seen him at night upon the mountains, stepping from one cliff to the next; they had seen him walking in the high forest, and his head and shoulders were above the trees.

This Kalamake was a strange man to see. He was come of the best blood in Molokai and Maui, of a pure descent; and yet he was more white to look upon than any foreigner: his hair the colour of dry grass, and his eyes red and very blind, so that “Blind as Kalamake, that can see across to-morrow,” was a byword in the islands.

Of all these doings of his father-in-law, Keola knew a little by the common repute, a little more he suspected, and the rest he ignored. But there was one thing troubled him. Kalamake was a man that spared for nothing, whether to eat or to drink, or to wear; and for all he paid in bright new dollars. “Bright as Kalamake’s dollars,” was another saying in the Eight Isles. Yet he neither sold, nor planted, nor took hire — only now and then from his sorceries — and there was no source conceivable for so much silver coin.

It chanced one day Keola’s wife was gone upon a visit to Kaunakakai, on the lee side of the island, and the men were forth at the sea-fishing. But Keola was an idle dog, and he lay in the verandah and watched the surf beat on the shore and the birds fly about the cliff. It was a chief thought with him always — the thought of the bright dollars. When he lay down to bed he would be wondering why they were so many, and when he woke at morn he would be wondering why they were all new; and the thing was never absent from his mind. But this day of all days he made sure in his heart of some discovery. For it seems he had observed the place where

Kalamake kept his treasure, which was a lock-fast desk against the parlour wall, under the print of Kamehameha the Fifth, and a photograph of Queen Victoria with her crown; and it seems again that, no later than the night before, he found occasion to look in, and behold! the bag lay there empty. And this was the day of the steamer; he could see her smoke off Kalaupapa; and she must soon arrive with a month's goods, tinned salmon and gin, and all manner of rare luxuries for Kalamake.

"Now if he can pay for his goods to-day," Keola thought, "I shall know for certain that the man is a warlock, and the dollars come out of the Devil's pocket."

While he was so thinking, there was his father-in-law behind him, looking vexed.

"Is that the steamer?" he asked.

"Yes," said Keola. "She has but to call at Pelekunu, and then she will be here."

"There is no help for it then," returned Kalamake, "and I must take you in my confidence, Keola, for the lack of anyone better. Come here within the house."

So they stepped together into the parlour, which was a very fine room, papered and hung with prints, and furnished with a rocking-chair, and a table and a sofa in the European style. There was a shelf of books besides, and a family Bible in the midst of the table, and the lock-fast writing desk against the wall; so that anyone could see it was the house of a man of substance.

Kalamake made Keola close the shutters of the windows, while he himself locked all the doors and set open the lid of the desk. From this he brought forth a pair of necklaces hung with charms and shells, a bundle of dried herbs, and the dried leaves of trees, and a green branch of palm.

"What I am about," said he, "is a thing beyond wonder. The men of old were wise; they wrought marvels, and this among the rest; but that was at night, in the dark, under the fit stars and in the desert. The same will I do here in my own house and under the plain eye of day."

So saying, he put the bible under the cushion of the sofa so that it was all covered, brought out from the same place a mat of a wonderfully fine texture, and heaped the herbs and leaves on sand in a tin pan. And then he and Keola put on the necklaces and took their stand upon the opposite corners of the mat.

"The time comes," said the warlock; "be not afraid."

With that he set flame to the herbs, and began to mutter and wave the branch of palm. At first the light was dim because of the closed shutters; but the herbs caught strongly afire, and the flames beat upon

Keola, and the room glowed with the burning; and next the smoke rose and made his head swim and his eyes darken, and the sound of Kalamake muttering ran in his ears. And suddenly, to the mat on which they were standing came a snatch or twitch, that seemed to be more swift than lightning. In the same wink the room was gone and the house, the breath all beaten from Keola's body. Volumes of light rolled upon his eyes and head, and he found himself transported to a beach of the sea under a strong sun, with a great surf roaring: he and the warlock standing there on the same mat, speechless, gasping and grasping at one another, and passing their hands before their eyes.

"What was this?" cried Keola, who came to himself the first, because he was the younger. "The pang of it was like death."

"It matters not," panted Kalamake. "It is now done."

"And, in the name of God, where are we?" cried Keola.

"That is not the question," replied the sorcerer. "Being here, we have matter in our hands, and that we must attend to. Go, while I recover my breath, into the borders of the wood, and bring me the leaves of such and such a herb, and such and such a tree, which you will find to grow there plentifully — three handfuls of each. And be speedy. We must be home again before the steamer comes; it would seem strange if we had disappeared." And he sat on the sand and panted.

Keola went up the beach, which was of shining sand and coral, strewn with singular shells; and he thought in his heart —

"How do I not know this beach? I will come here again and gather shells."

In front of him was a line of palms against the sky; not like the palms of the EightIslands, but tall and fresh and beautiful, and hanging out withered fans like gold among the green, and he thought in his heart —

"It is strange I should not have found this grove. I will come here again, when it is warm, to sleep." And he thought, "How warm it has grown suddenly!" For it was winter in Hawaii, and the day had been chill. And he thought also, "Where are the grey mountains? And where is the high cliff with the hanging forest and the wheeling birds?" And the more he considered, the less he might conceive in what quarter of the islands he was fallen.

In the border of the grove, where it met the beach, the herb was growing, but the tree further back. Now, as Keola went toward the tree, he was aware of a young woman who had nothing on her body but a belt of leaves.

"Well!" thought Keola, "they are not very particular about their dress in this part of the country." And he paused, supposing she would observe him and escape; and seeing that she still looked before her, stood and hummed aloud. Up she leaped at the sound. Her face was ashen; she looked this way and that, and her mouth gaped with the terror of her soul. But it was a strange thing that her eyes did not rest upon Keola.

"Good day," said he. "You need not be so frightened; I will not eat you." And he had scarce opened his mouth before the young woman fled into the bush.

"These are strange manners," thought Keola. And, not thinking what he did, ran after her.

As she ran, the girl kept crying in some speech that was not practised in Hawaii, yet some of the words were the same, and he knew she kept calling and warning others. And presently he saw more people running — men, women and children, one with another, all running and crying like people at a fire. And with that he began to grow afraid himself, and returned to Kalamake bringing the leaves. Him he told what he had seen.

"You must pay no heed," said Kalamake. "All this is like a dream and shadows. All will disappear and be forgotten."

"It seemed none saw me," said Keola.

"And none did," replied the sorcerer. "We walk here in the broad sun invisible by reason of these charms. Yet they hear us; and therefore it is well to speak softly, as I do."

With that he made a circle round the mat with stones, and in the midst he set the leaves.

"It will be your part," said he, "to keep the leaves alight, and feed the fire slowly. While they blaze (which is but for a little moment) I must do my errand; and before the ashes blacken, the same power that brought us carries us away. Be ready now with the match; and do you call me in good time lest the flames burn out and I be left."

As soon as the leaves caught, the sorcerer leaped like a deer out of the circle, and began to race along the beach like a hound that has been bathing. As he ran, he kept stooping to snatch shells; and it seemed to Keola that they glittered as he took them. The leaves blazed with a clear flame that consumed them swiftly; and presently Keola had but a handful left, and the sorcerer was far off, running and stopping.

"Back!" cried Keola. "Back! The leaves are near done."

At that Kalamake turned, and if he had run before, now he flew. But fast as he ran, the leaves burned faster. The flame was ready to expire when, with a great leap, he bounded on the mat. The wind of his leaping blew it out; and with that the beach was gone, and the sun and the sea, and they stood once more in the dimness of the shuttered parlour, and were once more shaken and blinded; and on the mat betwixt them lay a pile of shining dollars. Keola ran to the shutters;

and there was the steamer tossing in the swell close in.

The same night Kalamake took his son-in-law apart, and gave him five dollars in his hand.

"Keola," said he, "if you are a wise man (which I am doubtful of) you will think you slept this afternoon on the verandah, and dreamed as you were sleeping. I am a man of few words, and I have for my helpers people of short memories."

Never a word more said Kalamake, nor referred again to that affair. But it ran all the while in Keola's head — if he were lazy before, he would now do nothing.

"Why should I work," thought he, "when I have a father-in-law who makes dollars of sea-shells?"

Presently his share was spent. He spent it all upon fine clothes. And then he was sorry:

"For," thought he, "I had done better to have bought a concertina, with which I might have entertained myself all day long." And then he began to grow vexed with Kalamake.

"This man has the soul of a dog," thought he. "He can gather dollars when he pleases on the beach, and he leaves me to pine for a concertina! Let him beware: I am no child, I am as cunning as he, and hold his secret." With that he spoke to his wife Lehua, and complained of her father's manners.

"I would let my father be," said Lehua. "He is a dangerous man to cross."

"I care that for him!" cried Keola; and snapped his fingers. "I have him by the nose. I can make him do what I please." And he told Lehua the story.

But she shook her head.

"You may do what you like," said she; "but as sure as you thwart my father, you will be no more heard of. Think of this person, and that person; think of Hua, who was a noble of the House of Representatives, and went to Honolulu every year; and not a bone or a hair of him was found. Remember Kamau, and how he wasted to a thread, so that his wife lifted him with one hand. Keola, you are a baby in my father's hands; he will take you with his thumb and finger and eat you like a shrimp."

Now Keola was truly afraid of Kalamake, but he was vain too; and these words of his wife's incensed him.

"Very well," said he, "if that is what you think of me, I will show how much you are deceived." And he went straight to where his father-in-law was sitting in the parlour.

"Kalamake," said he, "I want a concertina."

"Do you, indeed?" said Kalamake.

"Yes," said he, "and I may as well tell you plainly, I mean to have it. A man who picks up dollars on the beach can certainly afford a concertina."

"I had no idea you had so much spirit," replied the sorcerer. "I thought you were a timid, useless lad, and I cannot describe how much pleased I am to find I was mistaken. Now I begin to think I may have found an assistant and successor in my difficult business. A concertina? You shall have the best in Honolulu. And to-night, as soon as it is dark, you and I will go and find the money."

"Shall we return to the beach?" asked Keola.

"No, no!" replied Kalamake; "you must begin to learn more of my secrets. Last time I taught you to pick shells; this time I shall teach you to catch fish. Are you strong enough to launch Pili's boat?"

"I think I am," returned Keola. "But why should we not take your own, which is afloat already?"

"I have a reason which you will understand thoroughly before to-morrow," said Kalamake. "Pili's boat is the better suited for my purpose. So, if you please, let us meet there as soon as it is dark; and in the meanwhile, let us keep our own counsel, for there is no cause to let the family into our business."

Honey is not more sweet than was the voice of Kalamake, and Keola could scarce contain his satisfaction.

"I might have had my concertina weeks ago," thought he, "and there is nothing needed in this world but a little courage."

Presently after he spied Lehua weeping, and was half in a mind to tell her all was well.

"But no," thinks he; "I shall wait till I can show her the concertina; we shall see what the chit will do then. Perhaps she will understand in the future that her husband is a man of some intelligence."

As soon as it was dark father and son-in-law launched Pili's boat and set the sail. There was a great sea, and it blew strong from the leeward; but the boat was swift and light and dry, and skimmed the waves. The wizard had a lantern, which he lit and held with his finger through the ring; and the two sat in the stern and smoked cigars, of which Kalamake had always a provision, and spoke like friends of magic and the great sums of money which they could make by its exercise, and what they should buy first, and what second; and Kalamake talked like a father.

Presently he looked all about, and above him at the stars, and back at the island, which was already three parts sunk under the sea, and he seemed to consider ripely his position.

"Look!" says he, "there is Molokai already far behind us, and Maui like a cloud; and by the bearing of these three stars I know I am come where I desire. This part of the sea is called the Sea of the Dead. It is in this place extraordinarily deep, and the floor is all covered with the bones of men, and in the holes of this part gods and goblins keep their habitation. The flow of the sea is to the north, stronger than a shark can swim, and any man who shall here be thrown out of a ship it bears away like a wild horse into the uttermost ocean. Presently he is spent and goes down, and his bones are scattered with the rest, and the gods devour his spirit."

Fear came on Keola at the words, and he looked, and by the light of the stars and the lantern, the warlock seemed to change.

"What ails you?" cried Keola, quick and sharp.

"It is not I who am ailing," said the wizard; "but there is one here very sick."

With that he changed his grasp upon the lantern, and, behold I as he drew his finger from the ring, the finger stuck and the ring was burst, and his hand was grown to be of the bigness of three.

At that sight Keola screamed and covered his face.

But Kalamake held up the lantern. "Look rather at my face!" said he — and his head was huge as a barrel; and still he grew and grew as a cloud grows on a mountain, and Keola sat before him screaming, and the boat raced on the great seas.

"And now," said the wizard, "what do you think about that concertina? and are you sure you would not rather have a flute? No?" says he; "that is well, for I do not like my family to be changeable of purpose. But I begin to think I had better get out of this paltry boat, for my bulk swells to a very unusual degree, and if we are not the more careful, she will presently be swamped."

With that he threw his legs over the side. Even as he did so, the greatness of the man grew thirty-fold and forty-fold as swift as sight or thinking, so that he stood in the deep seas to the armpits, and his head and shoulders rose like a high isle, and the swell beat and burst upon his bosom, as it beats and breaks against a cliff. The boat ran still to the north, but he reached out his hand, and took the gunwale by the finger and thumb, and broke the side like a biscuit, and Keola was spilled into the sea. And the pieces of the boat the sorcerer crushed in the hollow of his hand and flung miles away into the night.

"Excuse me taking the lantern," said he; "for I have a long wade before me, and the land is far, and the bottom of the sea uneven, and I feel the bones under my toes."

And he turned and went off walking with great strides; and as often as Keola sank in the trough he could see him no longer; but as often as he was heaved upon the crest, there he was striding and dwindling, and he held the lamp high over his head, and the waves broke white about him as he went.

Since first the islands were fished out of the sea, there was never a man so terrified as this Keola. He swam indeed, but he swam as puppies swim when they are cast in to drown, and knew not wherefore. He could but think of the hugeness of the swelling of the warlock, of that face which was great as a mountain, of those shoulders that were broad as an isle, and of the seas that beat on them in vain. He thought, too, of the concertina, and shame took hold upon him; and of the dead men's bones, and fear shook him.

Of a sudden he was aware of something dark against the stars that tossed, and a light below, and a brightness of the cloven sea; and he heard speech of men. He cried out aloud and a voice answered; and in a twinkling the bows of a ship hung above him on a wave like a thing balanced, and swooped down. He caught with his two hands in the chains of her, and the next moment was buried in the rushing seas, and the next hauled on board by seamen.

They gave him gin and biscuit and dry clothes, and asked him how he came where they found him, and whether the light which they had seen was the lighthouse, Lae o Ka Laau. But Keola knew white men are like children and only believe their own stories; so about himself he told them what he pleased, and as for the light (which was Kalamake's lantern) he vowed he had seen none.

This ship was a schooner bound for Honolulu, and then to trade in the low islands; and by a very good chance for Keola she had lost a man off the bowsprit in a squall. It was no use talking. Keola durst not stay in the EightIslands. Word goes so quickly, and all men are so fond to talk and carry news, that if he hid in the north end of Kauai or in the south end of Kau, the wizard would have wind of it before a month, and he must perish. So he did what seemed the most prudent, and shipped sailor in the place of the man who had been drowned.

In some ways the ship was a good place. The food was extraordinarily rich and plenty, with biscuits and salt beef every day, and pea-soup and puddings made of flour and suet twice a week, so that Keola grew fat. The captain also was a good man, and the crew no worse than other whites. The trouble was the mate, who was the most difficult man to please Keola had ever met with, and beat and cursed him daily, both for what he did and what he did not. The blows that he dealt were very sore, for he was strong; and the words he used were very unpalatable, for Keola was come of a good family and accustomed to respect. And what was the worst of all, whenever Keola found a chance to sleep, there was the mate awake and stirring him up with a rope's end. Keola saw it would never do; and he made up his mind to run away.

They were about a month out from Honolulu when they made the land. It was a fine starry night, the sea was smooth as well as the sky fair; it blew a steady trade; and there was the island on their weather bow, a ribbon of palm trees lying flat along the sea. The captain and the mate looked at it with the night glass, and named the name of it, and talked of it, beside the wheel where Keola was steering. It seemed it was an isle where no traders came. By the captain's way, it was an isle besides where no man dwelt; but the mate thought otherwise.

"I don't give a cent for the directory," said he, "I've been past here one night in the schooner *Eugenie*; it was just such a night as this; they were fishing with torches, and the beach was thick with lights like a town."

"Well, well," says the captain, "its steep-to, that's the great point; and there ain't any outlying dangers by the chart, so we'll just hug the lee side of it. Keep her romping full, don't I tell you!" he cried to Keola, who was listening so hard that he forgot to steer.

And the mate cursed him, and swore that Kanaka was for no use in the world, and if he got started after him with a belaying pin, it would be a cold day for Keola.

And so the captain and mate lay down on the house together, and Keola was left to himself.

"This island will do very well for me," he thought; "if no traders deal there, the mate will never come. And as for Kalamake, it is not possible he can ever get as far as this."

With that he kept edging the schooner nearer in. He had to do this quietly, for it was the trouble with these white men, and above all with the mate, that you could never be sure of them; they would all be sleeping sound, or else pretending, and if a sail shook, they would jump to their feet and fall on you with a rope's end. So Keola edged her up little by little, and kept all drawing. And presently the land was close on board, and the sound of the sea on the sides of it grew loud.

With that, the mate sat up suddenly upon the house.

"What are you doing?" he roars. "You'll have the ship ashore!"

And he made one bound for Keola, and Keola made another clean over the rail and plump into the starry sea. When he came up again, the schooner had payed off on her true course, and the mate stood by the wheel himself, and Keola heard him cursing. The sea was smooth under the lee of the island; it was warm besides, and Keola had his sailor's knife, so he had no fear of sharks. A little way before him the trees stopped; there was a break in the line of the land like the mouth of a harbour; and the tide, which was then flowing, took him up and carried him through. One minute he was without, and the next within: had floated there in a wide shallow water, bright with ten thousand stars, and all about him was the ring of the land, with its string of palm trees. And he was amazed, because this was a kind of island he had never heard of.

The time of Keola in that place was in two periods — the period when he was alone, and the period when he was there with the tribe. At first he sought everywhere and found no man; only some houses standing in a hamlet, and the marks of fires. But the ashes of the fires were cold and the rains had washed them away; and the winds had blown, and some of the huts were overthrown. It was here he took his dwelling, and he made a fire drill, and a shell hook, and fished and cooked his fish, and climbed after green cocoanuts, the juice of which he drank, for in all the isle there was no water. The days were long to him, and the nights terrifying. He made a lamp of cocoa-shell, and drew the oil of the ripe nuts, and made a wick of fibre; and when evening came he closed up his hut, and lit his lamp, and lay and trembled till morning. Many a time he thought in his heart he would have been better in the bottom of the sea, his bones rolling there with the others.

All this while he kept by the inside of the island, for the huts were on the shore of the lagoon, and it was there the palms grew best, and the lagoon itself abounded with good fish. And to the outer slide he went once only, and he looked but the once at the beach of the ocean, and came away shaking. For the look of it, with its bright sand, and strewn shells, and strong sun and surf, went sore against his inclination.

“It cannot be,” he thought, “and yet it is very like. And how do I know? These white men, although they pretend to know where they are sailing, must take their chance like other people. So that after all we may have sailed in a circle, and I may be quite near to Molokai, and this may be the very beach where my father-in-law gathers his dollars.”

So after that he was prudent, and kept to the land side.

It was perhaps a month later, when the people of the place arrived — the fill of six great boats. They were a fine race of men, and spoke a tongue that sounded very different from the tongue of Hawaii, but so many of the words were the same that it was not difficult to understand. The men besides were very courteous, and the women very towardly; and they made Keola welcome, and built him a house, and gave him a wife; and what surprised him the most, he was never sent to work with the young men.

And now Keola had three periods. First he had a period of being very sad, and then he had a period when he was pretty merry. Last of all came the third, when he was the most terrified man in the four oceans.

The cause of the first period was the girl he had to wife. He was in doubt about the island, and he might have been in doubt about the speech, of which he had heard so little when he came there with the wizard on the mat. But about his wife there was no mistake conceivable, for she was the same girl that ran from him crying in the wood. So he had sailed all this way, and might as well have stayed in Molokai; and had left home and wife and all his friends for no other cause but to escape his enemy, and the place he had come to was that wizard's hunting ground, and the shore where he walked invisible. It was at this period when he kept the most close to the lagoon side, and as far as he dared, abode in the cover of his hut.

The cause of the second period was talk he heard from his wife and the chief islanders. Keola himself said little. He was never so sure of his new friends, for he judged they were too civil to be wholesome, and since he had grown better acquainted with his father-in-law the man had grown more cautious. So he told them nothing of himself, but only his name and descent, and that he came from the EightIslands, and what fine islands they were; and about the king's palace in Honolulu, and how he was a chief friend of the king and the missionaries. But he put many questions and learned much. The island where he was was called the Isle of Voices; it belonged to the tribe, but they made their home upon another, three hours' sail to the southward. There they lived and had their permanent houses, and it was a rich island, where were eggs and chickens and pigs, and ships came trading with rum and tobacco. It was there the schooner had gone after Keola deserted; there, too, the mate had died, like the fool of a white man as he was. It seems, when the ship came, it was the beginning of the sickly season in that isle, when the fish of the lagoon are poisonous, and all who eat of them swell up and die. The mate was told of it; he saw the boats preparing, because in that season the people leave that island and sail to the Isle of Voices; but he was a fool of a white man, who would believe no stories but his own, and he caught one of these fish, cooked it and ate it, and swelled up and died, which was good news to Keola. As for the Isle of Voices, it lay solitary the most part of the year; only now and then a boat's crew came for copra, and in the bad season, when the fish at the main isle were poisonous, the tribe dwelt there in a body. It had its name from a marvel, for it seemed the seaside of it was all beset with invisible devils; day and night you heard them talking one with another in strange tongues; day and night little fires blazed up and were extinguished on the beach; and what was the cause of these doings no man might conceive. Keola asked them if it were the same in their own island where they stayed, and they told him no, not there; nor yet in any other of some hundred isles that lay all about them in that sea; but it was a thing peculiar to the Isle of Voices. They told him also that these fires and voices were ever on the seaside and in the seaward fringes of the wood, and a man might dwell by the lagoon two thousand years (if he could live so long) and never be any way troubled; and even on the seaside the devils did no harm if let alone. Only once a chief had cast a spear at one of the voices, and the same night he fell out of a cocoanut palm and was killed.

Keola thought a good bit with himself. He saw he would be all right when the tribe returned to the main island, and right enough where he was, if he kept by the lagoon, yet he had a mind to make things righter if he could. So he told the high chief he had once been in an isle that was pestered the same way, and the folk had found a means to cure that trouble.

"There was a tree growing in the bush there," says he, "and it seems these devils came to get the leaves of it. So the people of the isle cut down the tree wherever it was found, and the devils came no more."

They asked what kind of tree this was, and he showed them the tree of which Kalamake burned the leaves. They found it hard to believe, yet the idea tickled them. Night after night the old men debated it in their councils, but the high chief (though he was a brave man) was afraid of the matter, and reminded them daily of the chief who cast a spear against the voices and was killed, and the thought of that brought all to a stand again.

Though he could not yet bring about the destruction of the trees, Keola was well enough pleased, and began to look about him and take pleasure in his days; and, among other things, he was the kinder to his wife, so that the girl began to love him greatly. One day he came to the hut, and she lay on the ground lamenting.

"Why," said Keola, "what is wrong with you now?"

She declared it was nothing.

The same night she woke him. The lamp burned very low, but he saw by her face she was in sorrow.

"Keola," she said, "put your ear to my mouth that I may whisper, for no one must hear us. Two days before the boats begin to be got ready, go you to the sea-side of the isle and lie in a thicket. We shall choose that place before-hand, you and I; and hide food; and every night I shall come near by there singing. So when a night comes and you do not hear me, you shall know we are clean gone out of the island, and you may come forth again in safety."

The soul of Keola died within him.

"What is this?" he cried. "I cannot live among devils. I will not be left behind upon this isle. I am dying to leave it."

"You will never leave it alive, my poor Keola," said the girl; "for to tell you the truth, my people are eaters of men; but this they keep secret. And the reason they will kill you before we leave is because in our island ships come, and Donat-Kimaran comes and talks for the French, and there is a white trader there in a house with a verandah, and a catechist. Oh, that is a fine place indeed! The trader has barrels filled with flour, and a French warship once came in the lagoon and gave everybody wine and biscuit. Ah, my poor Keola, I wish I could take you there, for great is my love to you, and it is the finest place in the seas except Papeete."

So now Keola was the most terrified man in the four oceans. He had heard tell of eaters of men in the south islands, and the thing had always been a fear to him; and here it was knocking at his door. He had heard besides, by travellers, of their practices, and how when they are in a mind to eat a man, they cherish and fondle him like a mother with a favourite baby. And he saw this must be his own case; and that was why he had been housed, and fed, and wived, and liberated from all work; and why the old men and the chiefs discoursed with him like a person of weight. So he lay on his bed and railed upon his destiny; and the flesh curdled on his bones.

The next day the people of the tribe were very civil, as their way was. They were elegant speakers, and they made beautiful poetry, and jested at meals, so that a missionary must have died laughing. It was little enough Keola cared for their fine ways; all he saw was the white teeth shining in their mouths, and his gorge rose at the sight; and when they were done eating, he went and lay in the bush like a dead man.

The next day it was the same, and then his wife followed him.

"Keola," she said, "if you do not eat, I tell you plainly you will be killed and cooked to-morrow. Some of the old chiefs are murmuring already. They think you are fallen sick and must lose flesh."

With that Keola got to his feet, and anger burned in him.

"It is little I care one way or the other," said he. "I am between the devil and the deep sea. Since die I must, let me die the quickest way; and since I must be eaten at the best of it, let me rather be eaten by hobgoblins than by men. Farewell," said he, and he left her standing, and walked to the sea-side of that island.

It was all bare in the strong sun; there was no sign of man, only the beach was trodden, and all about him as he went, the voices talked and whispered, and the little fires sprang up and burned down. All tongues of the earth were spoken there; the French, the Dutch, the Russian, the Tamil, the Chinese. Whatever land knew sorcery, there were some of its people whispering in Keola's ear. That beach was thick as a cried fair, yet no man seen; and as he walked he saw the shells vanish before him, and no man to pick them up. I think the devil would have been afraid to be alone in such a company; but Keola was past fear and courted death. When the fires sprang up, he charged for them like a bull. Bodiless voices called to and fro; unseen hands poured sand upon the flames; and they were gone from the beach before he reached them.

"It is plain Kalamake is not here," he thought, "or I must have been killed long since."

With that he sat him down in the margin of the wood, for he was tired, and put his chin upon his hands. The business before his eyes continued: the beach babbled with voices, and the fires sprang up and sank, and the shells vanished and were renewed again even while he looked.

"It was a by-day when I was here before," he thought, "for it was nothing to this."

And his head was dizzy with the thought of these millions and millions of dollars, and all these hundreds and hundreds of persons culling them upon the beach and flying in the air higher and swifter than eagles.

"And to think how they have fooled me with their talk of mints," says he, "and that money was made there, when it is clear that all the new coin in all the world is gathered on these sands! But I will know better the next time!" said he.

And at last, he knew not very well how or when, sleep feel on Keola, and he forgot the island and all his sorrows.

Early the next day, before the sun was yet up, a bustle woke him. He awoke in fear, for he thought the tribe had caught him napping: but it was no such matter. Only, on the beach in front of him, the bodiless voices called and shouted one upon another, and it seemed they all passed and swept beside him up the coast of the island.

"What is afoot now?" thinks Keola. And it was plain to him it was something beyond ordinary, for the fires were not lighted nor the shells taken, but the bodiless voices kept posting up the beach, and hailing and dying away; and others following, and by the sound of them these wizards should be angry.

"It is not me they are angry at," thought Keola, "for they pass me close."

As when hounds go by, or horses in a race, or city folk coursing to a fire, and all men join and follow after, so it was now with Keola; and he knew not what he did, nor why he did it, but there, lo and behold! he was running with the voices.

So he turned one point of the island, and this brought him in view of a second; and there he remembered the wizard trees to have been growing by the score together in a wood. From this point there went up a hubbub of men crying not to be described; and by the sound of them, those that he ran with shaped their course for the same quarter. A little nearer, and there began to mingle with the outcry the crash of many axes. And at this a thought came at last into his mind that the high chief had consented; that the men of the tribe had set-to cutting down these trees; that word had gone about the isle from sorcerer to sorcerer, and these were all now assembling to defend their trees. Desire of strange things swept him on. He posted with the voices, crossed the beach, and came into the borders of the wood, and stood astonished. One tree had fallen, others were part hewed away. There was the tribe clustered. They were back to back, and bodies lay, and blood flowed among their feet. The hue of fear was on all their faces; their voices went up to heaven shrill as a weasel's cry.

Have you seen a child when he is all alone and has a wooden sword, and fights, leaping and hewing with the empty air? Even so the man-eaters huddled back to back, and heaved up their axes, and laid on, and screamed as they laid on, and behold! no man to contend with them! only here and there Keola saw an axe swinging over against them without hands; and time and again a man of the tribe would fall before it, clove in twain or burst asunder, and his soul sped howling.

For awhile Keola looked upon this prodigy like one that dreams, and then fear took him by the midst as sharp as death, that he should behold such doings. Even in that same flash the high chief of the clan espied him standing, and pointed and called out his name. Thereat the whole tribe saw him also, and their eyes flashed, and their teeth clashed.

"I am too long here," thought Keola, and ran further out of the wood and down the beach, not caring whither.

"Keola!" said, a voice close by upon the empty sand.

"Lehua! is that you?" he cried, and gasped, and looked in vain for her; but by the eyesight he was stark alone.

"I saw you pass before," the voice answered: "but you would not hear me. Quick! get the leaves and the herbs, and let us free."

"You are there with the mat?" he asked.

"Here, at your side;" said she. And he felt her arms about him. "Quick! the leaves and the herbs, before my father can get back!"

So Keola ran for his life, and fetched the wizard fuel; and Lehua guided him back, and set his feet upon the mat, and made the fire. All the time of its burning, the sound of the battle towered out of the wood; the wizards and the man-eaters hard at fight; the wizards, the viewless ones, roaring out aloud like bulls upon a mountain, and the men of the tribe replying shrill and savage out of the terror of their souls. And all the time of the burning, Keola stood there and listened, and shook, and watched how the unseen hands of Lehua poured the leaves. She poured them fast, and the flame burned high, and scorched Keola's hands; and she speeded and blew the burning with her breath. The last leaf was eaten, the flame fell, and the shock followed, and there were Keola and Lehua in the room at home.

Now, when Keola could see his wife at last he was mighty pleased, and he was mighty pleased to be home again in Molokai and sit down beside a bowl of poi — for they make no poi on board ships, and there was none in the Isle of Voices — and he was out of the body with pleasure to be clean escaped out of the hands of the eaters of men. But there was another matter not so clear, and Lehua and Keola talked of it all night and were troubled. There was Kalamake left upon the isle. If, by the blessing of God, he could but stick there, all were well; but should he escape and return to Molokai, it would be an ill day for his daughter and her husband. They spoke of his gift of swelling, and whether he could wade that distance in the seas. But Keola knew by this time where that island was — and that is to say, in the Low or Dangerous Archipelago. So they fetched the atlas and looked upon the distance in the map, and by what they could make of it, it seemed a far way for an old gentleman to walk. Still, it would not do to make too sure of a warlock like Kalamake, and they determined at last to take counsel of a white missionary.

So the first one that came by, Keola told him everything. And the missionary was very sharp on him for taking the second wife in the low island; but for all the rest, he vowed he could make neither head nor tail of it.

“However,” says he, “if you think this money of your father’s ill gotten, my advice to you would be, give some of it to the lepers and some to the missionary fund. And as for this extraordinary rigmarole, you cannot do better than keep it to yourselves.”

But he warned the police at Honolulu that, by all he could make out, Kalamake and Keola had been coining false money, and it would not be amiss to watch them.

Keola and Lehua took his advice, and gave many dollars to the lepers and the fund. And no doubt the advice must have been good, for from that day to this, Kalamake has never more been heard of. But whether he was slain in the battle by the trees, or whether he is still kicking his heels upon the Isle of Voices, who shall say?

FABLES

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THE PERSONS OF THE TALE.

After the 32nd chapter of *Treasure Island*, two of the puppets strolled out to have a pipe before business should begin again, and met in an open place not far from the story.

"Good-morning, Cap'n," said the first, with a man-o'-war salute, and a beaming countenance.

"Ah, Silver!" grunted the other. "You're in a bad way, Silver."

"Now, Cap'n Smollett," remonstrated Silver, "dooty is dooty, as I knows, and none better; but we're off dooty now; and I can't see no call to keep up the morality business."

"You're a damned rogue, my man," said the Captain.

"Come, come, Cap'n, be just," returned the other. "There's no call to be angry with me in earnest. I'm on'y a chara'ter in a sea story. I don't really exist."

"Well, I don't really exist either," says the Captain, "which seems to meet that."

"I wouldn't set no limits to what a virtuous chara'ter might consider argument," responded Silver. "But I'm the villain of this tale, I am; and speaking as one sea-faring man to another, what I want to know is, what's the odds?"

"Were you never taught your catechism?" said the Captain. "Don't you know there's such a thing as an Author?"

"Such a thing as a Author?" returned John, derisively. "And who better'n me? And the p'int is, if the Author made you, he made Long John, and he made Hands, and Pew, and George Merry — not that George is up to much, for he's little more'n a name; and he made Flint, what there is of him; and he made this here mutiny, you keep such a work about; and he had Tom Redruth shot; and — well, if that's a Author, give me Pew!"

"Don't you believe in a future state?" said Smollett. "Do you think there's nothing but the present story-paper?"

"I don't rightly know for that," said Silver; "and I don't see what it's got to do with it, anyway. What I know is this: if there is sich a thing as a Author, I'm his favourite chara'ter. He does me fathoms better'n he does you — fathoms, he does. And he likes doing me. He keeps me on deck mostly all the time, crutch and all; and he leaves you measling in the hold, where nobody can't see you, nor wants to, and you may lay to that! If there is a Author, by thunder, but he's on my side, and you may lay to it!"

"I see he's giving you a long rope," said the Captain. "But that can't change a man's convictions. I know the Author respects me; I feel it in my bones; when you and I had that talk at the blockhouse door, who do you think he was for, my man?”

“And don’t he respect me?” cried Silver. “Ah, you should ‘a’ heard me putting down my mutiny, George Merry and Morgan and that lot, no longer ago’n last chapter; you’d heard something then! You’d ‘a’ seen what the Author thinks o’ me! But come now, do you consider yourself a virtuous chara’ter clean through?”

“God forbid!” said Captain Smollett, solemnly. “I am a man that tries to do his duty, and makes a mess of it as often as not. I’m not a very popular man at home, Silver, I’m afraid!” and the Captain sighed.

“Ah,” says Silver. “Then how about this sequel of yours? Are you to be Cap’n Smollett just the same as ever, and not very popular at home, says you? And if so, why, it’s *Treasure Island* over again, by thunder; and I’ll be Long John, and Pew’ll be Pew, and we’ll have another mutiny, as like as not. Or are you to be somebody else? And if so, why, what the better are you? and what the worse am I?”

“Why, look here, my man,” returned the Captain, “I can’t understand how this story comes about at all, can I? I can’t see how you and I, who don’t exist, should get to speaking here, and smoke our pipes for all the world like reality? Very well, then, who am I to pipe up with my opinions? I know the Author’s on the side of good; he tells me so, it runs out of his pen as he writes. Well, that’s all I need to know; I’ll take my chance upon the rest.”

“It’s a fact he seemed to be against George Merry,” Silver admitted, musingly. “But George is little more’n a name at the best of it,” he added, brightening. “And to get into soundings for once. What is this good? I made a mutiny, and I been a gentleman o’ fortune; well, but by all stories, you ain’t no such saint. I’m a man that keeps company very easy; even by your own account, you ain’t, and to my certain knowledge you’re a devil to haze. Which is which? Which is good, and which bad? Ah, you tell me that! Here we are in stays, and you may lay to it!”

“We’re none of us perfect,” replied the Captain. “That’s a fact of religion, my man. All I can say is, I try to do my duty; and if you try to do yours, I can’t compliment you on your success.”

“And so you was the judge, was you?” said Silver, derisively.

“I would be both judge and hangman for you, my man, and never turn a hair,” returned the Captain. “But I get beyond that: it mayn’t be sound theology, but it’s common sense, that what is good is useful too — or there and thereabout, for I don’t set up to be a thinker. Now, where would a story go to if there were no virtuous characters?”

“If you go to that,” replied Silver, “where would a story begin, if there wasn’t no villains?”

“Well, that’s pretty much my thought,” said Captain Smollett. “The Author has to get a story; that’s what he wants; and to get a story, and to have a man like the doctor (say) given a proper chance, he has to put in men like you and Hands. But he's on the right side; and you mind your eye! You're not through this story yet; there's trouble coming for you."

"What'll you bet?" asked John.

"Much I care if there ain't," returned the Captain. "I'm glad enough to be Alexander Smollett, bad as he is; and I thank my stars upon my knees that I'm not Silver. But there's the ink-bottle opening. To quarters!"

And indeed the Author was just then beginning to write the words:

Chapter XXXIII.

THE SINKING SHIP.

“Sir,” said the first lieutenant, bursting into the Captain’s cabin, “the ship is going down.”

“Very well, Mr. Spoker,” said the Captain; “but that is no reason for going about half-shaved. Exercise your mind a moment, Mr. Spoker, and you will see that to the philosophic eye there is nothing new in our position: the ship (if she is to go down at all) may be said to have been going down since she was launched.”

“She is settling fast,” said the first lieutenant, as he returned from shaving.

“Fast, Mr. Spoker?” asked the Captain. “The expression is a strange one, for time (if you will think of it) is only relative.”

“Sir,” said the lieutenant, “I think it is scarcely worth while to embark in such a discussion when we shall all be in Davy Jones’s Locker in ten minutes.”

“By parity of reasoning,” returned the Captain gently, “it would never be worth while to begin any inquiry of importance; the odds are always overwhelming that we must die before we shall have brought it to an end. You have not considered, Mr. Spoker, the situation of man,” said the Captain, smiling, and shaking his head.

“I am much more engaged in considering the position of the ship,” said Mr. Spoker.

“Spoken like a good officer,” replied the Captain, laying his hand on the lieutenant’s shoulder.

On deck they found the men had broken into the spirit-room, and were fast getting drunk.

“My men,” said the Captain, “there is no sense in this. The ship is going down, you will tell me, in ten minutes: well, and what then? To the philosophic eye, there is nothing new in our position. All our lives long, we may have been about to break a blood-vessel or to be struck by lightning, not merely in ten minutes, but in ten seconds; and that has not prevented us from eating dinner, no, nor from putting money in the Savings Bank. I assure you, with my hand on my heart, I fail to comprehend your attitude.”

The men were already too far gone to pay much heed.

“This is a very painful sight, Mr. Spoker,” said the Captain.

“And yet to the philosophic eye, or whatever it is,” replied the first lieutenant, “they may be said to have been getting drunk since they came aboard.”

“I do not know if you always follow my thought, Mr. Spoker,” returned the Captain gently. “But let us proceed.”

In the powder magazine they found an old salt smoking his pipe.

“Good God,” cried the Captain, “what are you about?”

“Well, sir,” said the old salt, apologetically, “they told me as she were going down.”

“And suppose she were?” said the Captain. “To the philosophic eye, there would be nothing new in our position. Life, my old shipmate, life, at any moment and in any view, is as dangerous as a sinking ship; and yet it is man’s handsome fashion to carry umbrellas, to wear indiarubber over-shoes, to begin vast works, and to conduct himself in every way as if he might hope to be eternal. And for my own poor part I should despise the man who, even on board a sinking ship, should omit to take a pill or to wind up his watch. That, my friend, would not be the human attitude.”

“I beg pardon, sir,” said Mr. Spoker. “But what is precisely the difference between shaving in a sinking ship and smoking in a powder magazine?”

“Or doing anything at all in any conceivable circumstances?” cried the Captain. “Perfectly conclusive; give me a cigar!”

Two minutes afterwards the ship blew up with a glorious detonation.

THE TWO MATCHES.

One day there was a traveller in the woods in California, in the dry season, when the Trades were blowing strong. He had ridden a long way, and he was tired and hungry, and dismounted from his horse to smoke a pipe. But when he felt in his pocket he found but two matches. He struck the first, and it would not light.

"Here is a pretty state of things!" said the traveller. "Dying for a smoke; only one match left; and that certain to miss fire! Was there ever a creature so unfortunate? And yet," thought the traveller, "suppose I light this match, and smoke my pipe, and shake out the dottle here in the grass — the grass might catch on fire, for it is dry like tinder; and while I snatch out the flames in front, they might evade and run behind me, and seize upon yon bush of poison oak; before I could reach it, that would have blazed up; over the bush I see a pine tree hung with moss; that too would fly in fire upon the instant to its topmost bough; and the flame of that long torch — how would the trade wind take and brandish that through the inflammable forest! I hear this dell roar in a moment with the joint voice of wind and fire, I see myself gallop for my soul, and the flying conflagration chase and outflank me through the hills; I see this pleasant forest burn for days, and the cattle roasted, and the springs dried up, and the farmer ruined, and his children cast upon the world. What a world hangs upon this moment!"

With that he struck the match, and it missed fire.

"Thank God!" said the traveller, and put his pipe in his pocket.

THE SICK MAN AND THE FIREMAN.

There was once a sick man in a burning house, to whom there entered a fireman.

"Do not save me," said the sick man. "Save those who are strong."

"Will you kindly tell me why?" inquired the fireman, for he was a civil fellow.

"Nothing could possibly be fairer," said the sick man. "The strong should be preferred in all cases, because they are of more service in the world."

The fireman pondered a while, for he was a man of some philosophy. "Granted," said he at last, as apart of the roof fell in; "but for the sake of conversation, what would you lay down as the proper service of the strong?"

"Nothing can possibly be easier," returned the sick man; "the proper service of the strong is to help the weak."

Again the fireman reflected, for there was nothing hasty about this excellent creature. "I could forgive you being sick," he said at last, as a portion of the wall fell out, "but I cannot bear your being such a fool." And with that he heaved up his fireman's axe, for he was eminently just, and clove the sick man to the bed.

THE DEVIL AND THE INNKEEPER.

Once upon a time the devil stayed at an inn, where no one knew him, for they were people whose education had been neglected. He was bent on mischief, and for a time kept everybody by the ears. But at last the innkeeper set a watch upon the devil and took him in the fact.

The innkeeper got a rope's end.

"Now I am going to thrash you," said the innkeeper.

"You have no right to be angry with me," said the devil. "I am only the devil, and it is my nature to do wrong."

"Is that so?" asked the innkeeper.

"Fact, I assure you," said the devil.

"You really cannot help doing ill?" asked the innkeeper.

"Not in the smallest," said the devil; "it would be useless cruelty to thrash a thing like me."

"It would indeed," said the innkeeper.

And he made a noose and hanged the devil.

"There!" said the innkeeper.

THE PENITENT

A man met a lad weeping. “What do you weep for?” he asked.

“I am weeping for my sins,” said the lad.

“You must have little to do,” said the man.

The next day they met again. Once more the lad was weeping. “Why do you weep now?” asked the man.

“I am weeping because I have nothing to eat,” said the lad.

“I thought it would come to that,” said the man.

THE YELLOW PAINT.

In a certain city there lived a physician who sold yellow paint. This was of so singular a virtue that whoso was bedaubed with it from head to heel was set free from the dangers of life, and the bondage of sin, and the fear of death for ever. So the physician said in his prospectus; and so said all the citizens in the city; and there was nothing more urgent in men's hearts than to be properly painted themselves, and nothing they took more delight in than to see others painted. There was in the same city a young man of a very good family but of a somewhat reckless life, who had reached the age of manhood, and would have nothing to say to the paint: "To-morrow was soon enough," said he; and when the morrow came he would still put it off. She might have continued to do until his death; only, he had a friend of about his own age and much of his own manners; and this youth, taking a walk in the public street, with not one fleck of paint upon his body, was suddenly run down by a water-cart and cut off in the heyday of his nakedness. This shook the other to the soul; so that I never beheld a man more earnest to be painted; and on the very same evening, in the presence of all his family, to appropriate music, and himself weeping aloud, he received three complete coats and a touch of varnish on the top. The physician (who was himself affected even to tears) protested he had never done a job so thorough.

Some two months afterwards, the young man was carried on a stretcher to the physician's house.

"What is the meaning of this?" he cried, as soon as the door was opened. "I was to be set free from all the dangers of life; and here have I been run down by that self-same water-cart, and my leg is broken."

"Dear me!" said the physician. "This is very sad. But I perceive I must explain to you the action of my paint. A broken bone is a mighty small affair at the worst of it; and it belongs to a class of accident to which my paint is quite inapplicable. Sin, my dear young friend, sin is the sole calamity that a wise man should apprehend; it is against sin that I have fitted you out; and when you come to be tempted, you will give me news of my paint."

"Oh!" said the young man, "I did not understand that, and it seems rather disappointing. But I have no doubt all is for the best; and in the meanwhile, I shall be obliged to you if you will set my leg."

"That is none of my business," said the physician; "but if your bearers will carry you round the corner to the surgeon's, I feel sure he will afford relief."

Some three years later, the young man came running to the physician's house in a great perturbation. "What is the meaning of this?" he cried. "Here was I to be set free from the bondage of sin; and I have just committed forgery, arson and murder."

"Dear me," said the physician. "This is very serious. Off with your clothes at once." And as soon as the young man had stripped, he examined him from head to foot. "No," he cried with great relief, "there is not a flake broken. Cheer up, my young friend, your paint is as good as new."

"Good God!" cried the young man, "and what then can be the use of it?"

"Why," said the physician, "I perceive I must explain to you the nature of the action of my paint. It does not exactly prevent sin; it extenuates instead the painful consequences. It is not so much for this world, as for the next; it is not against life; in short, it is against death that I have fitted you out. And when you come to die, you will give me news of my paint."

"Oh!" cried the young man, "I had not understood that, and it seems a little disappointing. But there is no doubt all is for the best: and in the meanwhile, I shall be obliged if you will help me to undo the evil I have brought on innocent persons."

"That is none of my business," said the physician; "but if you will go round the corner to the police office, I feel sure it will afford you relief to give yourself up."

Six weeks later, the physician was called to the town gaol.

"What is the meaning of this?" cried the young man. "Here am I literally crusted with your paint; and I have broken my leg, and committed all the crimes in the calendar, and must be hanged to-morrow; and am in the meanwhile in a fear so extreme that I lack words to picture it."

"Dear me," said the physician. "This is really amazing. Well, well; perhaps, if you had not been painted, you would have been more frightened still."

THE HOUSE OF ELD.

So soon as the child began to speak, the gyve was riveted; and the boys and girls limped about their play like convicts. Doubtless it was more pitiable to see and more painful to bear in youth; but even the grown folk, besides being very unhandy on their feet, were often sick with ulcers.

About the time when Jack was ten years old, many strangers began to journey through that country. These he beheld going lightly by on the long roads, and the thing amazed him. "I wonder how it comes," he asked, "that all these strangers are so quick afoot, and we must drag about our fetter?"

"My dear boy," said his uncle, the catechist, "do not complain about your fetter, for it is the only thing that makes life worth living. None are happy, none are good, none are respectable, that are not gyved like us. And I must tell you, besides, it is very dangerous talk. If you grumble of your iron, you will have no luck; if ever you take it off, you will be instantly smitten by a thunderbolt."

"Are there no thunderbolts for these strangers?" asked Jack.

"Jupiter is longsuffering to the benighted," returned the catechist.

"Upon my word, I could wish I had been less fortunate," said Jack. "For if I had been born benighted, I might now be going free; and it cannot be denied the iron is inconvenient, and the ulcer hurts."

"Ah!" cried his uncle, "do not envy the heathen! Theirs is a sad lot! Ah, poor souls, if they but knew the joys of being fettered! Poor souls, my heart yearns for them. But the truth is they are vile, odious, insolent, ill-conditioned, stinking brutes, not truly human — for what is a man without a fetter? — and you cannot be too particular not to touch or speak with them."

After this talk, the child would never pass one of the unfettered on the road but what he spat at him and called him names, which was the practice of the children in that part.

It chanced one day, when he was fifteen, he went into the woods, and the ulcer pained him. It was a fair day, with a blue sky; all the birds were singing; but Jack nursed his foot. Presently, another song began; it sounded like the singing of a person, only far more gay; at the same time there was a beating on the earth. Jack put aside the leaves; and there was a lad of his own village, leaping, and dancing and singing to himself in a green dell; and on the grass beside him lay the dancer's iron.

"Oh!" cried Jack, "you have your fetter off!"

"For God's sake, don't tell your uncle!" cried the lad.

"If you fear my uncle," returned Jack "why do you not fear the thunderbolt"?

"That is only an old wives' tale," said the other. "It is only told to children. Scores of us come here among the woods and dance for nights together, and are none the worse."

This put Jack in a thousand new thoughts. He was a grave lad; he had no mind to dance himself; he wore his fetter manfully, and tended his ulcer without complaint. But he loved the less to be deceived or to see others cheated. He began to lie in wait for heathen travellers, at covert parts of the road, and in the dusk of the day, so that he might speak with them unseen; and these were greatly taken with their wayside questioner, and told him things of weight. The wearing of gyves (they said) was no command of Jupiter's. It was the contrivance of a white-faced thing, a sorcerer, that dwelt in that country in the Wood of Eld. He was one like Glaucus that could change his shape, yet he could be always told; for when he was crossed, he gobbled like a turkey. He had three lives; but the third smiting would make an end of him indeed; and with that his house of sorcery would vanish, the gyves fall, and the villagers take hands and dance like children.

"And in your country?" Jack would ask.

But at this the travellers, with one accord, would put him off; until Jack began to suppose there was no land entirely happy. Or, if there were, it must be one that kept its folk at home; which was natural enough.

But the case of the gyves weighed upon him. The sight of the children limping stuck in his eyes; the groans of such as dressed their ulcers haunted him. And it came at last in his mind that he was born to free them.

There was in that village a sword of heavenly forgery, beaten upon Vulcan's anvil. It was never used but in the temple, and then the flat of it only; and it hung on a nail by the catechist's chimney. Early one night, Jack rose, and took the sword, and was gone out of the house and the village in the darkness.

All night he walked at a venture; and when day came, he met strangers going to the fields. Then he asked after the Wood of Eld and the house of sorcery; and one said north, and one south; until Jack saw that they deceived him. So then, when he asked his way of any man, he showed the bright sword naked; and at that the gyve on the man's ankle rang, and answered in his stead; and the word was still *Straight on*. But the man, when his gyve spoke, spat and struck at Jack, and threw stones at him as he went away; so that his head was broken.

So he came to that wood, and entered in, and he was aware of a house in a low place, where funguses grew, and the trees met, and the steaming of the marsh arose about it like a smoke. It was a fine house, and a very rambling; some parts of it were ancient like the hills, and some but of yesterday, and none finished; and all the ends of it were open, so that you could go in from every side. Yet it was in good repair, and all the chimneys smoked.

Jack went in through the gable; and there was one room after another, all bare, but all furnished in part, so that a man could dwell there; and in each there was a fire burning, where a man could warm himself, and a table spread where he might eat. But Jack saw nowhere any living creature; only the bodies of some stuffed.

“This is a hospitable house,” said Jack; “but the ground must be quaggy underneath, for at every step the building quakes.”

He had gone some time in the house, when he began to be hungry. Then he looked at the food, and at first he was afraid; but he bared the sword, and by the shining of the sword, it seemed the food was honest. So he took the courage to sit down and eat, and he was refreshed in mind and body.

“This is strange,” thought he, “that in the house of sorcery there should be food so wholesome.”

As he was yet eating, there came into that room the appearance of his uncle, and Jack was afraid because he had taken the sword. But his uncle was never more kind, and sat down to meat with him, and praised him because he had taken the sword. Never had these two been more pleasantly together, and Jack was full of love to the man.

“It was very well done,” said his uncle, “to take the sword and come yourself into the House of Eld; a good thought and a brave deed. But now you are satisfied; and we may go home to dinner arm in arm.”

“Oh, dear, no!” said Jack. “I am not satisfied yet.”

“How!” cried his uncle. “Are you not warmed by the fire? Does not this food sustain you?”

“I see the food to be wholesome,” said Jack; “and still it is no proof that a man should wear a gyve on his right leg.”

Now at this the appearance of his uncle gobbled like a turkey.

“Jupiter!” cried Jack, “is this the sorcerer?”

His hand held back and his heart failed him for the love he bore his uncle; but he heaved up the sword and smote the appearance on the head; and it cried out aloud with the voice of his uncle; and fell to the ground; and a little bloodless white thing fled from the room.

The cry rang in Jack’s ears, and his knees smote together, and conscience cried upon him; and yet he was strengthened, and there woke in his bones the lust of that enchanter’s blood. “If the gyves are to fall,” said he, “I must go through with this, and when I get home I shall find my uncle dancing.”

So he went on after the bloodless thing. In the way, he met the appearance of his father; and his father was incensed, and railed upon him, and called to him upon his duty, and bade him be home, while there was yet time. “For you can still,” said he, “be home by sunset; and then all will be forgiven.”

“God knows,” said Jack, “I fear your anger; but yet your anger does not prove that a man should wear a gyve on his right leg.”

And at that the appearance of his father gobbled like a turkey.

“Ah, heaven,” cried Jack, “the sorcerer again!”

The blood ran backward in his body and his joints rebelled against him for the love he bore his father; but he heaved up the sword, and plunged it in the heart of the appearance; and the appearance cried out aloud with the voice of his father; and fell to the ground; and a little bloodless white thing fled from the room.

The cry rang in Jack’s ears, and his soul was darkened; but now rage came to him. “I have done what I dare not think upon,” said he. “I will go to an end with it, or perish. And when I get home, I pray God this may be a dream, and I may find my father dancing.”

So he went on after the bloodless thing that had escaped; and in the way he met the appearance of his mother, and she wept. “What have you done?” she cried. “What is this that you have done? Oh, come home (where you may be by bedtime) ere you do more ill to me and mine; for it is enough to smite my brother and your father.”

“Dear mother, it is not these that I have smitten,” said Jack; “it was but the enchanter in their shape. And even if I had, it would not prove that a man should wear a gyve on his right leg.”

And at this the appearance gobbled like a turkey.

He never knew how he did that; but he swung the sword on the one side, and clove the appearance through the midst; and it cried out aloud with the voice of his mother; and fell to the ground; and with the fall of it, the house was gone from over Jack’s head, and he stood alone in the woods, and the gyve was loosened from his leg.

“Well,” said he, “the enchanter is now dead, and the fetter gone.” But the cries rang in his soul, and the day was like night to him. “This has been a sore business,” said he. “Let me get forth out of the wood, and see the good that I have done to others.”

He thought to leave the fetter where it lay, but when he turned to go, his mind was otherwise. So he stooped and put the gyve in his bosom; and the rough iron galled him as he went, and his bosom bled.

Now when he was forth of the wood upon the highway, he met folk returning from the field; and those he met had no fetter on the right leg, but, behold! they had one upon the left. Jack asked them what it signified; and they said, “that was the new wear, for the old was found to be a superstition”. Then he looked at them nearly; and there was a new ulcer on the left ankle, and the old one on the right was not yet healed.

“Now, may God forgive me!” cried Jack. “I would I were well home.”

And when he was home, there lay his uncle smitten on the head, and his father pierced through the heart, and his mother cloven through the midst. And he sat in the lone house and wept beside the bodies.

MORAL.

Old is the tree and the fruit good,
Very old and thick the wood.
Woodman, is your courage stout?
Beware! the root is wrapped about
Your mother's heart, your father's bones;
And like the mandrake comes with groans.

THE FOUR REFORMERS.

Four reformers met under a bramble bush. They were all agreed the world must be changed. “We must abolish property,” said one.

“We must abolish marriage,” said the second.

“We must abolish God,” said the third.

“I wish we could abolish work,” said the fourth.

“Do not let us get beyond practical politics,” said the first. “The first thing is to reduce men to a common level.”

“The first thing,” said the second, “is to give freedom to the sexes.”

“The first thing,” said the third, “is to find out how to do it.”

“The first step,” said the first, “is to abolish the Bible.”

“The first thing,” said the second, “is to abolish the laws.”

“The first thing,” said the third, “is to abolish mankind.”

THE MAN AND HIS FRIEND.

A man quarrelled with his friend.

“I have been much deceived in you,” said the man.

And the friend made a face at him and went away.

A little after, they both died, and came together before the great white Justice of the Peace. It began to look black for the friend, but the man for a while had a clear character and was getting in good spirits.

“I find here some record of a quarrel,” said the justice, looking in his notes. “Which of you was in the wrong?”

“He was,” said the man. “He spoke ill of me behind my back.”

“Did he so?” said the justice. “And pray how did he speak about your neighbours?”

“Oh, he had always a nasty tongue,” said the man.

“And you chose him for your friend?” cried the justice. “My good fellow, we have no use here for fools.”

So the man was cast in the pit, and the friend laughed out aloud in the dark and remained to be tried on other charges.

THE READER.

"I never read such an impious book," said the reader, throwing it on the floor.

"You need not hurt me," said the book; "you will only get less for me second hand, and I did not write myself."

"That is true," said the reader. "My quarrel is with your author."

"Ah, well," said the book, "you need not buy his rant."

"That is true," said the reader. "But I thought him such a cheerful writer."

"I find him so," said the book.

"You must be differently made from me," said the reader.

"Let me tell you a fable," said the book. "There were two men wrecked upon a desert island; one of them made believe he was at home, the other admitted — "

"Oh, I know your kind of fable," said the reader. "They both died."

"And so they did," said the book. "No doubt of that. And everybody else."

"That is true," said the reader. "Push it a little further for this once. And when they were all dead?"

"They were in God's hands, the same as before," said the book.

"Not much to boast of, by your account," cried the reader.

"Who is impious now?" said the book.

And the reader put him on the fire.

The coward crouches from the rod,
And loathes the iron face of God.

THE CITIZEN AND THE TRAVELLER.

“Look round you,” said the citizen. “This is the largest market in the world.”

“Oh, surely not,” said the traveller.

“Well, perhaps not the largest,” said the citizen, “but much the best.”

“You are certainly wrong there,” said the traveller. “I can tell you . . .”

They buried the stranger at the dusk.

THE DISTINGUISHED STRANGER.

Once upon a time there came to this earth a visitor from a neighbouring planet. And he was met at the place of his descent by a great philosopher, who was to show him everything.

First of all they came through a wood, and the stranger looked upon the trees. “Whom have we here?” said he.

“These are only vegetables,” said the philosopher. “They are alive, but not at all interesting.”

“I don’t know about that,” said the stranger. “They seem to have very good manners. Do they never speak?”

“They lack the gift,” said the philosopher.

“Yet I think I hear them sing,” said the other.

“That is only the wind among the leaves,” said the philosopher. “I will explain to you the theory of winds: it is very interesting.”

“Well,” said the stranger, “I wish I knew what they are thinking.”

“They cannot think,” said the philosopher.

“I don’t know about that,” returned the stranger: and then, laying his hand upon a trunk: “I like these people,” said he.

“They are not people at all,” said the philosopher. “Come along.”

Next they came through a meadow where there were cows.

“These are very dirty people,” said the stranger.

“They are not people at all,” said the philosopher; and he explained what a cow is in scientific words which I have forgotten.

“That is all one to me,” said the stranger. “But why do they never look up?”

“Because they are graminivorous,” said the philosopher; “and to live upon grass, which is not highly nutritious, requires so close an attention to business that they have no time to think, or speak, or look at the scenery, or keep themselves clean.”

“Well,” said the stranger, “that is one way to live, no doubt. But I prefer the people with the green heads.”

Next they came into a city, and the streets were full of men and women.

“These are very odd people,” said the stranger.

“They are the people of the greatest nation in the world,” said the philosopher.

“Are they indeed?” said the stranger. “They scarcely look so.”

THE CART-HORSES AND THE SADDLE-HORSE.

Two cart-horses, a gelding and a mare, were brought to Samoa, and put in the same field with a saddle-horse to run free on the island. They were rather afraid to go near him, for they saw he was a saddle-horse, and supposed he would not speak to them. Now the saddle-horse had never seen creatures so big. “These must be great chiefs,” thought he, and he approached them civilly. “Lady and gentleman,” said he, “I understand you are from the colonies. I offer you my affectionate compliments, and make you heartily welcome to the islands.”

The colonials looked at him askance, and consulted with each other.

“Who can he be?” said the gelding.

“He seems suspiciously civil,” said the mare.

“I do not think he can be much account,” said the gelding.

“Depend upon it he is only a Kanaka,” said the mare.

Then they turned to him.

“Go to the devil!” said the gelding.

“I wonder at your impudence, speaking to persons of our quality!” cried the mare.

The saddle-horse went away by himself. “I was right,” said he, “they are great chiefs.”

THE TADPOLE AND THE FROG.

“Be ashamed of yourself,” said the frog.
“When I was a tadpole, I had no tail.”
“Just what I thought!” said the tadpole.
“You never were a tadpole.”

SOMETHING IN IT.

The natives told him many tales. In particular, they warned him of the house of yellow reeds tied with black sinnet, how any one who touched it became instantly the prey of Akaänga, and was handed on to him by Miru the ruddy, and hocussed with the kava of the dead, and baked in the ovens and eaten by the eaters of the dead.

“There is nothing in it,” said the missionary.

There was a bay upon that island, a very fair bay to look upon; but, by the native saying, it was death to bathe there. “There is nothing in that,” said the missionary; and he came to the bay, and went swimming. Presently an eddy took him and bore him towards the reef. “Oho!” thought the missionary, “it seems there is something in it after all.” And he swam the harder, but the eddy carried him away. “I do not care about this eddy,” said the missionary; and even as he said it, he was aware of a house raised on piles above the sea; it was built of yellow reeds, one reed joined with another, and the whole bound with black sinnet; a ladder led to the door, and all about the house hung calabashes. He had never seen such a house, nor yet such calabashes; and the eddy set for the ladder. “This is singular,” said the missionary, “but there can be nothing in it.” And he laid hold of the ladder and went up. It was a fine house; but there was no man there; and when the missionary looked back he saw no island, only the heaving of the sea. “It is strange about the island,” said the missionary, “but who’s afraid? my stories are the true ones.” And he laid hold of a calabash, for he was one that loved curiosities. Now he had no sooner laid hand upon the calabash than that which he handled, and that which he saw and stood on, burst like a bubble and was gone; and night closed upon him, and the waters, and the meshes of the net; and he wallowed there like a fish.

“A body would think there was something in this,” said the missionary. “But if these tales are true, I wonder what about my tales!”

Now the flaming of Akaänga’s torch drew near in the night; and the misshapen hands groped in the meshes of the net; and they took the missionary between the finger and the thumb, and bore him dripping in the night and silence to the place of the ovens of Miru. And there was Miru, ruddy in the glow of the ovens; and there sat her four daughters, and made the kava of the dead; and there sat the comers out of the islands of the living, dripping and lamenting.

This was a dread place to reach for any of the sons of men. But of all who ever came there, the missionary was the most concerned; and, to make things worse, the person next him was a convert of his own.

"Aha," said the convert, "so you are here like your neighbours? And how about all your stories?"

"It seems," said the missionary, with bursting tears, "that there was nothing in them."

By this the kava of the dead was ready, and the daughters of Miru began to intone in the old manner of singing. "Gone are the green islands and the bright sea, the sun and the moon and the forty million stars, and life and love and hope. Henceforth is no more, only to sit in the night and silence, and see your friends devoured; for life is a deceit, and the bandage is taken from your eyes."

Now when the singing was done, one of the daughters came with the bowl. Desire of that kava rose in the missionary's bosom; he lusted for it like a swimmer for the land, or a bridegroom for his bride; and he reached out his hand, and took the bowl, and would have drunk. And then he remembered, and put it back.

"Drink!" sang the daughter of Miru.

"There is no kava like the kava of the dead, and to drink of it once is the reward of living."

"I thank you. It smells excellent," said the missionary. "But I am a blue-ribbon man myself; and though I am aware there is a difference of opinion even in our own confession, I have always held kava to be excluded."

"What!" cried the convert. "Are you going to respect a taboo at a time like this? And you were always so opposed to taboos when you were alive!"

"To other people's," said the missionary. "Never to my own."

"But yours have all proved wrong," said the convert.

"It looks like it," said the missionary, "and I can't help that. No reason why I should break my word."

"I never heard the like of this!" cried the daughter of Miru. "Pray, what do you expect to gain?"

"That is not the point," said the missionary. "I took this pledge for others, I am not going to break it for myself."

The daughter of Miru was puzzled; she came and told her mother, and Miru was vexed; and they went and told Akaänga. "I don't know what to do about this," said Akaänga; and he came and reasoned with the missionary.

"But there *is* such a thing as right and wrong," said the missionary; "and your ovens cannot alter that."

"Give the kava to the rest," said Akaänga to the daughters of Miru. "I must get rid of this sea-lawyer instantly, or worse will come of it."

The next moment the missionary came up in the midst of the sea, and there before him were the palm trees of the island. He swam to the shore gladly, and landed. Much matter of thought was in that missionary's mind.

"I seem to have been misinformed upon some points," said he. "Perhaps there is not much in it, as I supposed; but there is something in it after all. Let me be glad of that."

And he rang the bell for service.

MORAL.

The sticks break, the stones crumble,
The eternal altars tilt and tumble,
Sanctions and tales dislimn like mist
About the amazed evangelist.
He stands unshook from age to youth
Upon one pin-point of the truth.

FAITH, HALF FAITH AND NO FAITH AT ALL.

In the ancient days there went three men upon pilgrimage; one was a priest, and one was a virtuous person, and the third was an old rover with his axe.

As they went, the priest spoke about the grounds of faith.

“We find the proofs of our religion in the works of nature,” said he, and beat his breast.

“That is true,” said the virtuous person.

“The peacock has a scrannel voice,” said the priest, “as has been laid down always in our books. How cheering!” he cried, in a voice like one that wept. “How comforting!”

“I require no such proofs,” said the virtuous person.

“Then you have no reasonable faith,” said the priest.

“Great is the right, and shall prevail!” cried the virtuous person. “There is loyalty in my soul; be sure, there is loyalty in the mind of Odin.”

“These are but playings upon words,” returned the priest. “A sackful of such trash is nothing to the peacock.”

Just then they passed a country farm, where there was a peacock seated on a rail; and the bird opened its mouth and sang with the voice of a nightingale.

“Where are you now?” asked the virtuous person. “And yet this shakes not me! Great is the truth, and shall prevail!”

“The devil fly away with that peacock!” said the priest; and he was downcast for a mile or two.

But presently they came to a shrine, where a Fakeer performed miracles.

“Ah!” said the priest, “here are the true grounds of faith. The peacock was but an adminicle. This is the base of our religion.”

And he beat upon his breast, and groaned like one with colic.

“Now to me,” said the virtuous person, “all this is as little to the purpose as the peacock. I believe because I see the right is great and must prevail; and this Fakeer might carry on with his conjuring tricks till doomsday, and it would not play bluff upon a man like me.”

Now at this the Fakeer was so much incensed that his hand trembled; and, lo! in the midst of a miracle the cards fell from up his sleeve.

“Where are you now?” asked the virtuous person. “And yet it shakes not me!”

“The devil fly away with the Fakeer!” cried the priest. “I really do not see the good of going on with this pilgrimage.”

“Cheer up!” cried the virtuous person. “Great is the right, and shall prevail!”

“If you are quite sure it will prevail,” says the priest.

“I pledge my word for that,” said the virtuous person.

So the other began to go on again with a better heart.

At last one came running, and told them all was lost: that the powers of darkness had besieged the HeavenlyMansions, that Odin was to die, and evil triumph.

“I have been grossly deceived,” cried the virtuous person.

“All is lost now,” said the priest.

“I wonder if it is too late to make it up with the devil?” said the virtuous person.

“Oh, I hope not,” said the priest. “And at any rate we can but try. But what are you doing with your axe?” says he to the rover.

“I am off to die with Odin,” said the rover.

THE TOUCHSTONE.

The King was a man that stood well before the world; his smile was sweet as clover, but his soul withinsides was as little as a pea. He had two sons; and the younger son was a boy after his heart, but the elder was one whom he feared. It befell one morning that the drum sounded in the dun before it was yet day; and the King rode with his two sons, and a brave array behind them. They rode two hours, and came to the foot of a brown mountain that was very steep.

"Where do we ride?" said the elder son.

"Across this brown mountain," said the King, and smiled to himself.

"My father knows what he is doing," said the younger son.

And they rode two hours more, and came to the sides of a black river that was wondrous deep.

"And where do we ride?" asked the elder son.

"Over this black river," said the King, and smiled to himself.

"My father knows what he is doing," said the younger son.

And they rode all that day, and about the time of the sunsetting came to the side of a lake, where was a great dun.

"It is here we ride," said the King; "to a King's house, and a priest's, and a house where you will learn much."

At the gates of the dun, the King who was a priest met them; and he was a grave man, and beside him stood his daughter, and she was as fair as the morn, and one that smiled and looked down.

"These are my two sons," said the first King.

"And here is my daughter," said the King who was a priest.

"She is a wonderful fine maid," said the first King, "and I like her manner of smiling,"

"They are wonderful well-grown lads," said the second, "and I like their gravity."

And then the two Kings looked at each other, and said, "The thing may come about".

And in the meanwhile the two lads looked upon the maid, and the one grew pale and the other red; and the maid looked upon the ground smiling.

"Here is the maid that I shall marry," said the elder. "For I think she smiled upon me."

But the younger plucked his father by the sleeve. "Father," said he, "a word in your ear. If I find favour in your sight, might not I wed this maid, for I think she smiles upon me?"

"A word in yours," said the King his father. "Waiting is good hunting, and when the teeth are shut the tongue is at home."

Now they were come into the dun, and feasted; and this was a great house, so that the lads were astonished; and the King that was a priest sat at the end of the board and was silent, so that the lads were filled with reverence; and the maid served them smiling with downcast eyes, so that their hearts were enlarged.

Before it was day, the elder son arose, and he found the maid at her weaving, for she was a diligent girl. "Maid," quoth he, "I would fain marry you."

"You must speak with my father," said she, and she looked upon the ground smiling, and became like the rose.

"Her heart is with me," said the elder son, and he went down to the lake and sang.

A little after came the younger son. "Maid," quoth he, "if our fathers were agreed, I would like well to marry you."

"You can speak to my father," said she; and looked upon the ground, and smiled and grew like the rose.

"She is a dutiful daughter," said the younger son, "she will make an obedient wife." And then he thought, "What shall I do?" and he remembered the King her father was a priest; so he went into the temple, and sacrificed a weasel and a hare.

Presently the news got about; and the two lads and the first King were called into the presence of the King who was a priest, where he sat upon the high seat.

"Little I reck of gear," said the King who was a priest, "and little of power. For we live here among the shadow of things, and the heart is sick of seeing them. And we stay here in the wind like raiment drying, and the heart is weary of the wind. But one thing I love, and that is truth; and for one thing will I give my daughter, and that is the trial stone. For in the light of that stone the seeming goes, and the being shows, and all things besides are worthless. Therefore, lads, if ye would wed my daughter, out foot, and bring me the stone of touch, for that is the price of her."

"A word in your ear," said the younger son to his father. "I think we do very well without this stone."

"A word in yours," said the father. "I am of your way of thinking; but when the teeth are shut the tongue is at home." And he smiled to the King that was a priest.

But the elder son got to his feet, and called the King that was a priest by the name of father. "For whether I marry the maid or no, I will call you by that word for the love of your wisdom; and even now I will ride forth and search the world for the stone of touch." So he said farewell, and rode into the world.

"I think I will go, too," said the younger son, "if I can have your leave. For my heart goes out to the maid."

"You will ride home with me," said his father.

So they rode home, and when they came to the dun, the King had his son into his treasury. “Here,” said he, “is the touchstone which shows truth; for there is no truth but plain truth; and if you will look in this, you will see yourself as you are.”

And the younger son looked in it, and saw his face as it were the face of a beardless youth, and he was well enough pleased; for the thing was a piece of a mirror.

“Here is no such great thing to make a work about,” said he; “but if it will get me the maid I shall never complain. But what a fool is my brother to ride into the world, and the thing all the while at home!”

So they rode back to the other dun, and showed the mirror to the King that was a priest; and when he had looked in it, and seen himself like a King, and his house like a King’s house, and all things like themselves, he cried out and blessed God. “For now I know,” said he, “there is no truth but the plain truth; and I am a King indeed, although my heart misgave me.” And he pulled down his temple, and built a new one; and then the younger son was married to the maid.

In the meantime the elder son rode into the world to find the touchstone of the trial of truth; and whenever he came to a place of habitation, he would ask the men if they had heard of it. And in every place the men answered: “Not only have we heard of it, but we alone, of all men, possess the thing itself, and it hangs in the side of our chimney to this day”. Then would the elder son be glad, and beg for a sight of it. And sometimes it would be a piece of mirror, that showed the seeming of things; and then he would say, “This can never be, for there should be more than seeming”. And sometimes it would be a lump of coal, which showed nothing; and then he would say, “This can never be, for at least there is the seeming”. And sometimes it would be a touchstone indeed, beautiful in hue, adorned with polishing, the light inhabiting its sides; and when he found this, he would beg the thing, and the persons of that place would give it him, for all men were very generous of that gift; so that at the last he had his wallet full of them, and they chinked together when he rode; and when he halted by the side of the way he would take them out and try them, till his head turned like the sails upon a windmill.

“A murrain upon this business!” said the elder son, “for I perceive no end to it. Here I have the red, and here the blue and the green; and to me they seem all excellent, and yet shame each other. A murrain on the trade! If it were not for the King that is a priest and whom I have called my father, and if it were not for the fair maid of the dun that makes my mouth to sing and my heart enlarge, I would even tumble them all into the salt sea, and go home and be a King like other folk.”

But he was like the hunter that has seen a stag upon a mountain, so that the night may fall, and the fire be kindled, and the lights shine in his house; but desire of that stag is single in his bosom.

Now after many years the elder son came upon the sides of the salt sea; and it was night, and a savage place, and the clamour of the sea was loud. There he was aware of a house, and a man that sat there by the light of a candle, for he had no fire. Now the elder son came in to him, and the man gave him water to drink, for he had no bread; and wagged his head when he was spoken to, for he had no words.

"Have you the touchstone of truth?" asked the elder son and when the man had wagged his head, "I might have known that," cried the elder son. "I have here a wallet full of them!" And with that he laughed, although his heart was weary.

And with that the man laughed too, and with the fuff of his laughter the candle went out.

"Sleep," said the man, "for now I think you have come far enough; and your quest is ended, and my candle is out."

Now when the morning came, the man gave him a clear pebble in his hand, and it had no beauty and no colour; and the elder son looked upon it scornfully and shook his head; and he went away, for it seemed a small affair to him.

All that day he rode, and his mind was quiet, and the desire of the chase allayed. "How if this poor pebble be the touchstone, after all?" said he: and he got down from his horse, and emptied forth his wallet by the side of the way. Now, in the light of each other, all the touchstones lost their hue and fire, and withered like stars at morning; but in the light of the pebble, their beauty remained, only the pebble was the most bright. And the elder son smote upon his brow. "How if this be the truth?" he cried, "that all are a little true?" And he took the pebble, and turned its light upon the heavens, and they deepened about him like the pit; and he turned it on the hills, and the hills were cold and rugged, but life ran in their sides so that his own life bounded; and he turned it on the dust, and he beheld the dust with joy and terror; and he turned it on himself, and kneeled down and prayed.

"Now, thanks be to God," said the elder son, "I have found the touchstone; and now I may turn my reins, and ride home to the King and to the maid of the dun that makes my mouth to sing and my heart enlarge."

Now when he came to the dun, he saw children playing by the gate where the King had met him in the old days; and this stayed his pleasure, for he thought in his heart, "It is here my children should be playing". And when he came into the hall, there was his brother on the high seat and the maid beside him; and at that his anger rose, for he thought in his heart, "It is I that should be sitting there, and the maid beside me”.

“Who are you?” said his brother. “And what make you in the dun?”

“I am your elder brother,” he replied. “And I am come to marry the maid, for I have brought the touchstone of truth.”

Then the younger brother laughed aloud. “Why,” said he, “I found the touchstone years ago, and married the maid, and there are our children playing at the gate.”

Now at this the elder brother grew as gray as the dawn. “I pray you have dealt justly,” said he, “for I perceive my life is lost.”

“Justly?” quoth the younger brother. “It becomes you ill, that are a restless man and a runagate, to doubt my justice, or the King my father’s, that are sedentary folk and known in the land.”

“Nay,” said the elder brother, “you have all else, have patience also; and suffer me to say the world is full of touchstones, and it appears not easily which is true.”

“I have no shame of mine,” said the younger brother. “There it is, and look in it.”

So the elder brother looked in the mirror, and he was sore amazed; for he was an old man, and his hair was white upon his head; and he sat down in the hall and wept aloud.

“Now,” said the younger brother, “see what a fool’s part you have played, that ran over all the world to seek what was lying in our father’s treasury, and came back an old carle for the dogs to bark at, and without chick or child. And I that was dutiful and wise sit here crowned with virtues and pleasures, and happy in the light of my hearth.”

“Methinks you have a cruel tongue,” said the elder brother; and he pulled out the clear pebble and turned its light on his brother; and behold the man was lying, his soul was shrunk into the smallness of a pea, and his heart was a bag of little fears like scorpions, and love was dead in his bosom. And at that the elder brother cried out aloud, and turned the light of the pebble on the maid, and, lo! she was but a mask of a woman, and withinside’s she was quite dead, and she smiled as a clock ticks, and knew not wherefore.

“Oh, well,” said the elder brother, “I perceive there is both good and bad. So fare ye all as well as ye may in the dun; but I will go forth into the world with my pebble in my pocket.”

THE POOR THING.

There was a man in the islands who fished for his bare bellyful, and took his life in his hands to go forth upon the sea between four planks. But though he had much ado, he was merry of heart; and the gulls heard him laugh when the spray met him. And though he had little lore, he was sound of spirit; and when the fish came to his hook in the mid-waters, he blessed God without weighing. He was bitter poor in goods and bitter ugly of countenance, and he had no wife.

It fell in the time of the fishing that the man awoke in his house about the midst of the afternoon. The fire burned in the midst, and the smoke went up and the sun came down by the chimney. And the man was aware of the likeness of one that warmed his hands at the red peats.

“I greet you,” said the man, “in the name of God.”

“I greet you,” said he that warmed his hands, “but not in the name of God, for I am none of His; nor in the name of Hell, for I am not of Hell. For I am but a bloodless thing, less than wind and lighter than a sound, and the wind goes through me like a net, and I am broken by a sound and shaken by the cold.”

“Be plain with me,” said the man, “and tell me your name and of your nature.”

“My name,” quoth the other, “is not yet named, and my nature not yet sure. For I am part of a man; and I was a part of your fathers, and went out to fish and fight with them in the ancient days. But now is my turn not yet come; and I wait until you have a wife, and then shall I be in your son, and a brave part of him, rejoicing manfully to launch the boat into the surf, skilful to direct the helm, and a man of might where the ring closes and the blows are going.”

“This is a marvellous thing to hear,” said the man; “and if you are indeed to be my son, I fear it will go ill with you; for I am bitter poor in goods and bitter ugly in face, and I shall never get me a wife if I live to the age of eagles.”

“All this hate I come to remedy, my Father,” said the Poor Thing; “for we must go this night to the little isle of sheep, where our fathers lie in the dead-cairn, and to-morrow to the Earl’s Hall, and there shall you find a wife by my providing.”

So the man rose and put forth his boat at the time of the sunsetting; and the Poor Thing sat in the prow, and the spray blew through his bones like snow, and the wind whistled in his teeth, and the boat dipped not with the weight of him.

“I am fearful to see you, my son,” said the man. “For methinks you are no thing of God.”

"It is only the wind that whistles in my teeth," said the Poor Thing, "and there is no life in me to keep it out."

So they came to the little isle of sheep, where the surf burst all about it in the midst of the sea, and it was all green with bracken, and all wet with dew, and the moon enlightened it. They ran the boat into a cove, and set foot to land; and the man came heavily behind among the rocks in the deepness of the bracken, but the Poor Thing went before him like a smoke in the light of the moon. So they came to the dead-cairn, and they laid their ears to the stones; and the dead complained withinsides like a swarm of bees: "Time was that marrow was in our bones, and strength in our sinews; and the thoughts of our head were clothed upon with acts and the words of men. But now are we broken in sunder, and the bonds of our bones are loosed, and our thoughts lie in the dust."

Then said the Poor Thing: "Charge them that they give you the virtue they withheld".

And the man said: "Bones of my fathers, greeting! for I am sprung of your loins. And now, behold, I break open the piled stones of your cairn, and I let in the noon between your ribs. Count it well done, for it was to be; and give me what I come seeking in the name of blood and in the name of God."

And the spirits of the dead stirred in the cairn like ants; and they spoke: "You have broken the roof of our cairn and let in the noon between our ribs; and you have the strength of the still-living. But what virtue have we? what power? or what jewel here in the dust with us, that any living man should covet or receive it? for we are less than nothing. But we tell you one thing, speaking with many voices like bees, that the way is plain before all like the grooves of launching: So forth into life and fear not, for so did we all in the ancient ages." And their voices passed away like an eddy in a river.

"Now," said the Poor Thing, "they have told you a lesson, but make them give you a gift. Stoop your hand among the bones without drawback, and you shall find their treasure."

So the man stooped his hand, and the dead laid hold upon it many and faint like ants; but he shook them off, and behold, what he brought up in his hand was the shoe of a horse, and it was rusty.

"It is a thing of no price," quoth the man, "for it is rusty."

"We shall see that," said the Poor Thing; "for in my thought it is a good thing to do what our fathers did, and to keep what they kept without question. And in my thought one thing is as good as another in this world; and a shoe of a horse will do."

Now they got into their boat with the horseshoe, and when the dawn was come they were aware of the smoke of the Earl's town and the bells of the Kirk that beat. So they set foot to shore; and the man went up to the market among the fishers over against the palace and the Kirk; and he was bitter poor and bitter ugly, and he had never a fish to sell, but only a shoe of a horse in his creel, and it rusty.

"Now," said the Poor Thing, "do so and so, and you shall find a wife and I a mother."

It befell that the Earl's daughter came forth to go into the Kirk upon her prayers; and when she saw the poor man stand in the market with only the shoe of a horse, and it rusty, it came in her mind it should be a thing of price.

"What is that?" quoth she.

"It is a shoe of a horse," said the man.

"And what is the use of it?" quoth the Earl's daughter.

"It is for no use," said the man.

"I may not believe that," said she; "else why should you carry it?"

"I do so," said he, "because it was so my fathers did in the ancient ages; and I have neither a better reason nor a worse."

Now the Earl's daughter could not find it in her mind to believe him. "Come," quoth she, "sell me this, for I am sure it is a thing of price."

"Nay," said the man, "the thing is not for sale."

"What!" cried the Earl's daughter. "Then what make you here in the town's market, with the thing in your creel and nought beside?"

"I sit here," says the man, "to get me a wife."

"There is no sense in any of these answers," thought the Earl's daughter; "and I could find it in my heart to weep."

By came the Earl upon that; and she called him and told him all. And when he had heard, he was of his daughter's mind that this should be a thing of virtue; and charged the man to set a price upon the thing, or else be hanged upon the gallows; and that was near at hand, so that the man could see it.

"The way of life is straight like the grooves of launching," quoth the man. "And if I am to be hanged let me be hanged."

"Why!" cried the Earl, "will you set your neck against a shoe of a horse, and it rusty?"

"In my thought," said the man, "one thing is as good as another in this world and a shoe of a horse will do."

"This can never be," thought the Earl; and he stood and looked upon the man, and bit his beard.

And the man looked up at him and smiled. "It was so my fathers did in the ancient ages," quoth he to the Earl, "and I have neither a better reason nor a worse."

"There is no sense in any of this," thought the Earl, "and I must be growing old." So he had his daughter on one side, and says he: "Many suitors have you denied, my child. But here is a very strange matter that a man should cling so to a shoe of a horse, and it rusty; and that he should offer it like a thing on sale, and yet not sell it; and that he should sit there seeking a wife. If I come not to the bottom of this thing, I shall have no more pleasure in bread; and I can see no way, but either I should hang or you should marry him."

"By my troth, but he is bitter ugly," said the Earl's daughter. "How if the gallows be so near at hand?"

"It was not so," said the Earl, "that my fathers did in the ancient ages. I am like the man, and can give you neither a better reason nor a worse. But do you, prithee, speak with him again."

So the Earl's daughter spoke to the man. "If you were not so bitter ugly," quoth she, "my father the Earl would have us marry."

"Bitter ugly am I," said the man, "and you as fair as May. Bitter ugly I am, and what of that? It was so my fathers — "

"In the name of God," said the Earl's daughter, "let your fathers be!"

"If I had done that," said the man, "you had never been chaffering with me here in the market, nor your father the Earl watching with the end of his eye."

"But come," quoth the Earl's daughter, "this is a very strange thing, that you would have me wed for a shoe of a horse, and it rusty."

"In my thought," quoth the man, "one thing is as good — "

"Oh, spare me that," said the Earl's daughter, "and tell me why I should marry."

"Listen and look," said the man.

Now the wind blew through the Poor Thing like an infant crying, so that her heart was melted; and her eyes were unsealed, and she was aware of the thing as it were a babe unmothered, and she took it to her arms, and it melted in her arms like the air.

"Come," said the man, "behold a vision of our children, the busy hearth, and the white heads. And let that suffice, for it is all God offers."

"I have no delight in it," said she; but with that she sighed.

"The ways of life are straight like the grooves of launching," said the man; and he took her by the hand.

"And what shall we do with the horseshoe?" quoth she.

"I will give it to your father," said the man; "and he can make a kirk and a mill of it for me."

It came to pass in time that the Poor Thing was born; but memory of these matters slept within him, and he knew not that which he had done. But he was a part of the eldest son; rejoicing manfully to launch the boat into the surf, skilful to direct the helm, and a man of might where the ring closes and the blows are going.

THE SONG OF THE MORROW.

The King of Duntrine had a daughter when he was old, and she was the fairest King's daughter between two seas; her hair was like spun gold, and her eyes like pools in a river; and the King gave her a castle upon the sea beach, with a terrace, and a court of the hewn stone, and four towers at the four corners. Here she dwelt and grew up, and had no care for the morrow, and no power upon the hour, after the manner of simple men.

It befell that she walked one day by the beach of the sea, when it was autumn, and the wind blew from the place of rains; and upon the one hand of her the sea beat, and upon the other the dead leaves ran. This was the loneliest beach between two seas, and strange things had been done there in the ancient ages. Now the King's daughter was aware of a crone that sat upon the beach. The sea foam ran to her feet, and the dead leaves swarmed about her back, and the rags blew about her face in the blowing of the wind.

"Now," said the King's daughter, and she named a holy name, "this is the most unhappy old crone between two seas."

"Daughter of a King," said the crone, "you dwell in a stone house, and your hair is like the gold: but what is your profit? Life is not long, nor lives strong; and you live after the way of simple men, and have no thought for the morrow and no power upon the hour."

"Thought for the morrow, that I have," said the King's daughter; "but power upon the hour, that have I not." And she mused with herself.

Then the crone smote her lean hands one within the other, and laughed like a sea-gull. "Home!" cried she. "O daughter of a King, home to your stone house; for the longing is come upon you now, nor can you live any more after the manner of simple men. Home, and toil and suffer, till the gift come that will make you bare, and till the man come that will bring you care."

The King's daughter made no more ado, but she turned about and went home to her house in silence. And when she was come into her chamber she called for her nurse.

"Nurse," said the King's daughter, "thought is come upon me for the morrow, so that I can live no more after the manner of simple men. Tell me what I must do that I may have power upon the hour."

Then the nurse moaned like a snow wind. "Alas!" said she, "that this thing should be; but the thought is gone into your marrow, nor is there any cure against the thought. Be it so, then, even as you will; though power is less than weakness, power shall you have; and though the thought is colder than winter, yet shall you think it to an end."

So the King's daughter sat in her vaulted chamber in the masoned house, and she thought upon the thought. Nine years she sat; and the sea beat upon the terrace, and the gulls cried about the turrets, and wind crooned in the chimneys of the house. Nine years she came not abroad, nor tasted the clean air, neither saw God's sky. Nine years she sat and looked neither to the right nor to the left, nor heard speech of any one, but thought upon the thought of the morrow. And her nurse fed her in silence, and she took of the food with her left hand, and ate it without grace.

Now when the nine years were out, it fell dusk in the autumn, and there came a sound in the wind like a sound of piping. At that the nurse lifted up her finger in the vaulted house.

"I hear a sound in the wind," said she, "that is like the sound of piping."

"It is but a little sound," said the King's daughter, "but yet is it sound enough for me."

So they went down in the dusk to the doors of the house, and along the beach of the sea. And the waves beat upon the one hand, and upon the other the dead leaves ran; and the clouds raced in the sky, and the gulls flew widdershins. And when they came to that part of the beach where strange things had been done in the ancient ages, lo, there was the crone, and she was dancing widdershins.

"What makes you dance widdershins, old crone?" said the King's daughter; "here upon the bleak beach, between the waves and the dead leaves?"

"I hear a sound in the wind that is like a sound of piping," quoth she. "And it is for that that I dance widdershins. For the gift comes that will make you bare, and the man comes that must bring you care. But for me the morrow is come that I have thought upon, and the hour of my power."

"How comes it, crone," said the King's daughter, "that you waver like a rag, and pale like a dead leaf before my eyes?"

"Because the morrow has come that I have thought upon, and the hour of my power," said the crone; and she fell on the beach, and, lo! she was but stalks of the sea tangle, and dust of the sea sand, and the sand lice hopped upon the place of her.

"This is the strangest thing that befell between two seas," said the King's daughter of Duntrine.

But the nurse broke out and moaned like an autumn gale. "I am weary of the wind," quoth she; and she bewailed her day.

The King's daughter was aware of a man upon the beach; he went hooded so that none might perceive his face, and a pipe was underneath his arm. The sound of his pipe was like singing wasps, and like the wind that sings in windlestraw; and it took hold upon men’s ears like the crying of gulls.

“Are you the comer?” quoth the King’s daughter of Duntrine.

“I am the corner,” said he, “and these are the pipes that a man may hear, and I have power upon the hour, and this is the song of the morrow.” And he piped the song of the morrow, and it was as long as years; and the nurse wept out aloud at the hearing of it.

“This is true,” said the King’s daughter, “that you pipe the song of the morrow; but that ye have power upon the hour, how may I know that? Show me a marvel here upon the beach, between the waves and the dead leaves.”

And the man said, “Upon whom?”

“Here is my nurse,” quoth the King’s daughter. “She is weary of the wind. Show me a good marvel upon her.”

And, lo! the nurse fell upon the beach as it were two handfuls of dead leaves, and the wind whirled them widdershins, and the sand lice hopped between.

“It is true,” said the King’s daughter of Duntrine, “you are the comer, and you have power upon the hour. Come with me to my stone house.”

So they went by the sea margin, and the man piped the song of the morrow, and the leaves followed behind them as they went.

Then they sat down together; and the sea beat on the terrace, and the gulls cried about the towers, and the wind crooned in the chimneys of the house. Nine years they sat, and every year when it fell autumn, the man said, “This is the hour, and I have power in it”; and the daughter of the King said, “Nay, but pipe me the song of the morrow”. And he piped it, and it was long like years.

Now when the nine years were gone, the King’s daughter of Duntrine got her to her feet, like one that remembers; and she looked about her in the masoned house; and all her servants were gone; only the man that piped sat upon the terrace with the hand upon his face; and as he piped the leaves ran about the terrace and the sea beat along the wall. Then she cried to him with a great voice, “This is the hour, and let me see the power in it”. And with that the wind blew off the hood from the man’s face, and, lo! there was no man there, only the clothes and the hood and the pipes tumbled one upon another in a corner of the terrace, and the dead leaves ran over them.

And the King’s daughter of Duntrine got her to that part of the beach where strange things had been done in the ancient ages; and there she sat her down. The sea foam ran to her feet, and the dead leaves swarmed about her back, and the veil blew about her face in the blowing of the wind. And when she lifted up her eyes, there was the daughter of a King come walking on the beach. Her hair was like the spun gold, and her eyes like pools in a river, and she had no thought for the morrow and no power upon the hour, after the manner of simple men.

TALES AND FANTASIES

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THE MISADVENTURES OF JOHN NICHOLSON

CHAPTER I - IN WHICH JOHN SOWS THE WIND

JOHN VAREY NICHOLSON was stupid; yet, stupider men than he are now sprawling in Parliament, and lauding themselves as the authors of their own distinction. He was of a fat habit, even from boyhood, and inclined to a cheerful and cursory reading of the face of life; and possibly this attitude of mind was the original cause of his misfortunes. Beyond this hint philosophy is silent on his career, and superstition steps in with the more ready explanation that he was detested of the gods.

His father - that iron gentleman - had long ago enthroned himself on the heights of the Disruption Principles. What these are (and in spite of their grim name they are quite innocent) no array of terms would render thinkable to the merely English intelligence; but to the Scot they often prove unctuously nourishing, and Mr. Nicholson found in them the milk of lions. About the period when the churches convene at Edinburgh in their annual assemblies, he was to be seen descending the Mound in the company of divers red-headed clergymen: these voluble, he only contributing oracular nods, brief negatives, and the austere spectacle of his stretched upper lip. The names of Candlish and Begg were frequent in these interviews, and occasionally the talk ran on the Residuary Establishment and the doings of one Lee. A stranger to the tight little theological kingdom of Scotland might have listened and gathered literally nothing. And Mr. Nicholson (who was not a dull man) knew this, and raged at it. He knew there was a vast world outside, to whom Disruption Principles were as the chatter of tree-top apes; the paper brought him chill whiffs from it; he had met Englishmen who had asked lightly if he did not belong to the Church of Scotland, and then had failed to be much interested by his elucidation of that nice point; it was an evil, wild, rebellious world, lying sunk in DOZENEDNESS, for nothing short of a Scots word will paint this Scotsman's feelings. And when he entered into his own house in Randolph Crescent (south side), and shut the door behind him, his heart swelled with security. Here, at least, was a citadel impregnable by right-hand defections or left-hand extremes. Here was a family where prayers came at the same hour, where the Sabbath literature was unimpeachably selected, where the guest who should have leaned to any false opinion was instantly set down, and over which there reigned all week, and grew denser on Sundays, a silence that was agreeable to his ear, and a gloom that he found comfortable.

Mrs. Nicholson had died about thirty, and left him with three children: a daughter two years, and a son about eight years younger than John; and John himself, the unlucky bearer of a name infamous in English history. The daughter, Maria, was a good girl - dutiful, pious, dull, but so easily startled that to speak to her was quite a perilous enterprise. ‘I don’t think I care to talk about that, if you please,’ she would say, and strike the boldest speechless by her unmistakable pain; this upon all topics - dress, pleasure, morality, politics, in which the formula was changed to ‘my papa thinks otherwise,’ and even religion, unless it was approached with a particular whining tone of voice. Alexander, the younger brother, was sickly, clever, fond of books and drawing, and full of satirical remarks. In the midst of these, imagine that natural, clumsy, unintelligent, and mirthful animal, John; mighty well-behaved in comparison with other lads, although not up to the mark of the house in Randolph Crescent; full of a sort of blundering affection, full of caresses, which were never very warmly received; full of sudden and loud laughter which rang out in that still house like curses. Mr. Nicholson himself had a great fund of humour, of the Scots order - intellectual, turning on the observation of men; his own character, for instance - if he could have seen it in another - would have been a rare feast to him; but his son’s empty guffaws over a broken plate, and empty, almost light-hearted remarks, struck him with pain as the indices of a weak mind.

Outside the family John had early attached himself (much as a dog may follow a marquis) to the steps of Alan Houston, a lad about a year older than himself, idle, a trifle wild, the heir to a good estate which was still in the hands of a rigorous trustee, and so royally content with himself that he took John’s devotion as a thing of course. The intimacy was gall to Mr. Nicholson; it took his son from the house, and he was a jealous parent; it kept him from the office, and he was a martinet; lastly, Mr. Nicholson was ambitious for his family (in which, and the Disruption Principles, he entirely lived), and he hated to see a son of his play second fiddle to an idler. After some hesitation, he ordered that the friendship should cease - an unfair command, though seemingly inspired by the spirit of prophecy; and John, saying nothing, continued to disobey the order under the rose.

John was nearly nineteen when he was one day dismissed rather earlier than usual from his father’s office, where he was studying the practice of the law. It was Saturday; and except that he had a matter of four hundred pounds in his pocket which it was his duty to hand over to the British Linen Company’s Bank, he had the whole afternoon at his disposal. He went by Princes Street enjoying the mild sunshine, and the little thrill of easterly wind that tossed the flags along that terrace of palaces, and tumbled the green trees in the garden. The band was playing down in the valley under the castle; and when it came to the turn of the pipers, he heard their wild sounds with a stirring of the blood. Something distantly martial woke in him; and he thought of Miss Mackenzie, whom he was to meet that day at dinner.

Now, it is undeniable that he should have gone directly to the bank, but right in the way stood the billiard-room of the hotel where Alan was almost certain to be found; and the temptation proved too strong. He entered the billiard-room, and was instantly greeted by his friend, cue in hand.

'Nicholson,' said he, 'I want you to lend me a pound or two till Monday.'

'You've come to the right shop, haven't you?' returned John.
'I have twopence.'

'Nonsense,' said Alan. 'You can get some. Go and borrow at your tailor's; they all do it. Or I'll tell you what: pop your watch.'

'Oh, yes, I dare say,' said John. 'And how about my father?'

'How is he to know? He doesn't wind it up for you at night, does he?' inquired Alan, at which John guffawed. 'No, seriously; I am in a fix,' continued the tempter. 'I have lost some money to a man here. I'll give it you to-night, and you can get the heir-loom out again on Monday. Come; it's a small service, after all. I would do a good deal more for you.'

Whereupon John went forth, and pawned his gold watch under the assumed name of John Froggs, 85 Pleasance. But the nervousness that assailed him at the door of that inglorious haunt - a pawnshop - and the effort necessary to invent the pseudonym (which, somehow, seemed to him a necessary part of the procedure), had taken more time than he imagined: and when he returned to the billiard-room with the spoils, the bank had already closed its doors.

This was a shrewd knock. 'A piece of business had been neglected.' He heard these words in his father's trenchant voice, and trembled, and then dodged the thought. After all, who was to know? He must carry four hundred pounds about with him till Monday, when the neglect could be surreptitiously repaired; and meanwhile, he was free to pass the afternoon on the encircling divan of the billiard-room, smoking his pipe, sipping a pint of ale, and enjoying to the masthead the modest pleasures of admiration.

None can admire like a young man. Of all youth's passions and pleasures, this is the most common and least alloyed; and every flash of Alan's black eyes; every aspect of his curly head; every graceful reach, every easy, stand-off attitude of waiting; ay, and down to his shirt-sleeves and wrist-links, were seen by John through a luxurious glory. He valued himself by the possession of that royal friend, hugged himself upon the thought, and swam in warm azure; his own defects, like vanquished difficulties, becoming things on which to plume himself. Only when he thought of Miss Mackenzie there fell upon his mind a shadow of regret; that young lady was worthy of better things than plain John Nicholson, still known among schoolmates by the derisive name of 'Fatty'; and he felt, if he could chalk a cue, or stand at ease, with such a careless grace as Alan, he could approach the object of his sentiments with a less crushing sense of inferiority.

Before they parted, Alan made a proposal that was startling in the extreme. He would be at Colette's that night about twelve, he said. Why should not John come there and get the money? To go to Colette's was to see life, indeed; it was wrong; it was against the laws; it partook, in a very dingy manner, of adventure. Were it known, it was the sort of exploit that disconsidered a young man for good with the more serious classes, but gave him a standing with the riotous. And yet Colette's was not a hell; it could not come, without vaulting hyperbole, under the rubric of a gilded saloon; and, if it was a sin to go there, the sin was merely local and municipal. Colette (whose name I do not know how to spell, for I was never in epistolary communication with that hospitable outlaw) was simply an unlicensed publican, who gave suppers after eleven at night, the Edinburgh hour of closing. If you belonged to a club, you could get a much better supper at the same hour, and lose not a jot in public esteem. But if you lacked that qualification, and were an hungered, or inclined toward conviviality at unlawful hours, Colette's was your only port. You were very ill-supplied. The company was not recruited from the Senate or the Church, though the Bar was very well represented on the only occasion on which I flew in the face of my country's laws, and, taking my reputation in my hand, penetrated into that grim supper- house. And Colette's frequenters, thrillingly conscious of wrong-doing and 'that two-handed engine (the policeman) at the door,' were perhaps inclined to somewhat feverish excess. But the place was in no sense a very bad one; and it is somewhat strange to me, at this distance of time, how it had acquired its dangerous repute.

In precisely the same spirit as a man may debate a project to ascend the Matterhorn or to cross Africa, John considered Alan's proposal, and, greatly daring, accepted it. As he walked home, the thoughts of this excursion out of the safe places of life into the wild and arduous, stirred and struggled in his imagination with the image of Miss Mackenzie - incongruous and yet kindred thoughts, for did not each imply unusual tightening of the pegs of resolution? did not each woo him forth and warn him back again into himself?

Between these two considerations, at least, he was more than usually moved; and when he got to Randolph Crescent, he quite forgot the four hundred pounds in the inner pocket of his greatcoat, hung up the coat, with its rich freight, upon his particular pin of the hatstand; and in the very action sealed his doom.

CHAPTER II - IN WHICH JOHN REAPS THE WHIRLWIND

ABOUT half-past ten it was John's brave good fortune to offer his arm to Miss Mackenzie, and escort her home. The night was chill and starry; all the way eastward the trees of the different gardens rustled and looked black. Up the stone gully of Leith Walk, when they came to cross it, the breeze made a rush and set the flames of the street-lamps quavering; and when at last they had mounted to the Royal Terrace, where Captain Mackenzie lived, a great salt freshness came in their faces from the sea. These phases of the walk remained written on John's memory, each emphasised by the touch of that light hand on his arm; and behind all these aspects of the nocturnal city he saw, in his mind's-eye, a picture of the lighted drawing-room at home where he had sat talking with Flora; and his father, from the other end, had looked on with a kind and ironical smile. John had read the significance of that smile, which might have escaped a stranger. Mr. Nicholson had remarked his son's entanglement with satisfaction, tinged by humour; and his smile, if it still was a thought contemptuous, had implied consent.

At the captain's door the girl held out her hand, with a certain emphasis; and John took it and kept it a little longer, and said, 'Good-night, Flora, dear,' and was instantly thrown into much fear by his presumption. But she only laughed, ran up the steps, and rang the bell; and while she was waiting for the door to open, kept close in the porch, and talked to him from that point as out of a fortification. She had a knitted shawl over her head; her blue Highland eyes took the light from the neighbouring street-lamp and sparkled; and when the door opened and closed upon her, John felt cruelly alone.

He proceeded slowly back along the terrace in a tender glow; and when he came to GreensideChurch, he halted in a doubtful mind. Over the crown of the Calton Hill, to his left, lay the way to Colette's, where Alan would soon be looking for his arrival, and where he would now have no more consented to go than he would have wilfully wallowed in a bog; the touch of the girl's hand on his sleeve, and the kindly light in his father's eyes, both loudly forbidding. But right before him was the way home, which pointed only to bed, a place of little ease for one whose fancy was strung to the lyrical pitch, and whose not very ardent heart was just then tumultuously moved. The hilltop, the cool air of the night, the company of the great monuments, the sight of the city under his feet, with its hills and valleys and crossing files of lamps, drew him by all he had of the poetic, and he turned that way; and by that quite innocent deflection, ripened the crop of his venial errors for the sickle of destiny.

On a seat on the hill above Greenside he sat for perhaps half an hour, looking down upon the lamps of Edinburgh, and up at the lamps of heaven. Wonderful were the resolves he formed; beautiful and kindly were the vistas of future life that sped before him. He uttered to himself the name of Flora in so many touching and dramatic keys, that he became at length fairly melted with tenderness, and could have sung aloud. At that juncture a certain creasing in his greatcoat caught his ear. He put his hand into his pocket, pulled forth the envelope that held the money, and sat stupefied. The Calton Hill, about this period, had an ill name of nights; and to be sitting there with four hundred pounds that did not belong to him was hardly wise. He looked up. There was a man in a very bad hat a little on one side of him, apparently looking at the scenery; from a little on the other a second night- walker was drawing very quietly near. Up jumped John. The envelope fell from his hands; he stooped to get it, and at the same moment both men ran in and closed with him.

A little after, he got to his feet very sore and shaken, the poorer by a purse which contained exactly one penny postage- stamp, by a cambric handkerchief, and by the all-important envelope.

Here was a young man on whom, at the highest point of lovely exaltation, there had fallen a blow too sharp to be supported alone; and not many hundred yards away his greatest friend was sitting at supper - ay, and even expecting him. Was it not in the nature of man that he should run there? He went in quest of sympathy - in quest of that droll article that we all suppose ourselves to want when in a strait, and have agreed to call advice; and he went, besides, with vague but rather splendid expectations of relief. Alan was rich, or would be so when he came of age. By a stroke of the pen he might remedy this misfortune, and avert that dreaded interview with Mr. Nicholson, from which John now shrunk in imagination as the hand draws back from fire.

Close under the Calton Hill there runs a certain narrow avenue, part street, part by-road. The head of it faces the doors of the prison; its tail descends into the sunless slums of the Low Calton. On one hand it is overhung by the crags of the hill, on the other by an old graveyard. Between these two the roadway runs in a trench, sparsely lighted at night, sparsely frequented by day, and bordered, when it was cleared the place of tombs, by dingy and ambiguous houses. One of these was the house of Colette; and at his door our ill- starred John was presently beating for admittance. In an evil hour he satisfied the jealous inquiries of the contraband hotel-keeper; in an evil hour he penetrated into the somewhat unsavoury interior. Alan, to be sure, was there, seated in a room lighted by noisy gas-jets, beside a dirty table-cloth, engaged on a coarse meal, and in the company of several tipsy members of the junior bar. But Alan was not sober; he had lost a thousand pounds upon a horse- race, had received the news at dinner-time, and was now, in default of any possible means of extrication, drowning the memory of his predicament. He to help John! The thing was impossible; he couldn't help himself.

'If you have a beast of a father,' said he, 'I can tell you I have a brute of a trustee.'

'I'm not going to hear my father called a beast,' said John with a beating heart, feeling that he risked the last sound rivet of the chain that bound him to life.

But Alan was quite good-natured.

'All right, old fellow,' said he. 'Mos' respec'able man your father.' And he introduced his friend to his companions as 'old Nicholson the what-d'ye-call-um's son.'

John sat in dumb agony. Colette's foul walls and maculate table-linen, and even down to Colette's villainous casters, seemed like objects in a nightmare. And just then there came a knock and a scurrying; the police, so lamentably absent from the Calton Hill, appeared upon the scene; and the party, taken FLAGRANTE DELICTO, with their glasses at their elbow, were seized, marched up to the police office, and all duly summoned to appear as witnesses in the consequent case against that arch-shebeener, Colette.

It was a sorrowful and a mightily sobered company that came forth again. The vague terror of public opinion weighed generally on them all; but there were private and particular horrors on the minds of individuals. Alan stood in dread of his trustee, already sorely tried. One of the group was the son of a country minister, another of a judge; John, the unhappiest of all, had David Nicholson to father, the idea of facing whom on such a scandalous subject was physically sickening. They stood awhile consulting under the buttresses of Saint Giles; thence they adjourned to the lodgings of one of the number in North Castle Street, where (for that matter) they might have had quite as good a supper, and far better drink, than in the dangerous paradise from which they had been routed. There, over an almost tearful glass, they debated their position. Each explained he had the world to lose if the affair went on, and he appeared as a witness. It was remarkable what bright prospects were just then in the very act of opening before each of that little company of youths, and what pious consideration for the feelings of their families began now to well from them. Each, moreover, was in an odd state of destitution. Not one could bear his share of the fine; not one but evinced a wonderful twinkle of hope that each of the others (in succession) was the very man who could step in to make good the deficit. One took a high hand; he could not pay his share; if it went to a trial, he should bolt; he had always felt the English Bar to be his true sphere. Another branched out into touching details about his family, and was not listened to. John, in the midst of this disorderly competition of poverty and meanness, sat stunned, contemplating the mountain bulk of his misfortunes.

At last, upon a pledge that each should apply to his family with a common frankness, this convention of unhappy young asses broke up, went down the common stair, and in the grey of the spring morning, with the streets lying dead empty all about them, the lamps burning on into the daylight in diminished lustre, and the birds beginning to sound premonitory notes from the groves of the town gardens, went each his own way with bowed head and echoing footfall.

The rooks were awake in Randolph Crescent; but the windows looked down, discreetly blinded, on the return of the prodigal. John's pass-key was a recent privilege; this was the first time it had been used; and, oh! with what a sickening sense of his unworthiness he now inserted it into the well-oiled lock and entered that citadel of the proprieties! All slept; the gas in the hall had been left faintly burning to light his return; a dreadful stillness reigned, broken by the deep ticking of the eight-day clock. He put the gas out, and sat on a chair in the hall, waiting and counting the minutes, longing for any human countenance. But when at last he heard the alarm spring its rattle in the lower story, and the servants begin to be about, he instantly lost heart, and fled to his own room, where he threw himself upon the bed.

CHAPTER III - IN WHICH JOHN ENJOYS THE HARVEST HOME

SHORTLY after breakfast, at which he assisted with a highly tragical countenance, John sought his father where he sat, presumably in religious meditation, on the Sabbath mornings. The old gentleman looked up with that sour, inquisitive expression that came so near to smiling and was so different in effect.

‘This is a time when I do not like to be disturbed,’ he said.

‘I know that,’ returned John; ‘but I have - I want - I’ve made a dreadful mess of it,’ he broke out, and turned to the window.

Mr. Nicholson sat silent for an appreciable time, while his unhappy son surveyed the poles in the back green, and a certain yellow cat that was perched upon the wall. Despair sat upon John as he gazed; and he raged to think of the dreadful series of his misdeeds, and the essential innocence that lay behind them.

‘Well,’ said the father, with an obvious effort, but in very quiet tones, ‘what is it?’

‘Maclean gave me four hundred pounds to put in the bank, sir,’ began John; ‘and I’m sorry to say that I’ve been robbed of it!’

‘Robbed of it?’ cried Mr. Nicholson, with a strong rising inflection. ‘Robbed? Be careful what you say, John!’

‘I can’t say anything else, sir; I was just robbed of it,’ said John, in desperation, sullenly.

‘And where and when did this extraordinary event take place?’ inquired the father.

‘On the Calton Hill about twelve last night.’

‘The Calton Hill?’ repeated Mr. Nicholson. ‘And what were you doing there at such a time of the night?’

‘Nothing, sir,’ says John.

Mr. Nicholson drew in his breath.

‘And how came the money in your hands at twelve last night?’ he asked, sharply.

‘I neglected that piece of business,’ said John, anticipating comment; and then in his own dialect: ‘I clean forgot all about it.’

‘Well,’ said his father, ‘it’s a most extraordinary story.
Have you communicated with the police?’

‘I have,’ answered poor John, the blood leaping to his face. ‘They think they know the men that did it. I dare say the money will be recovered, if that was all,’ said he, with a desperate indifference, which his father set down to levity; but which sprung from the consciousness of worse behind.

‘Your mother’s watch, too?’ asked Mr. Nicholson.

‘Oh, the watch is all right!’ cried John. ‘At least, I mean I was coming to the watch - the fact is, I am ashamed to say, I - I had pawned the watch before. Here is the ticket; they didn't find that; the watch can be redeemed; they don't sell pledges.' The lad panted out these phrases, one after another, like minute guns; but at the last word, which rang in that stately chamber like an oath, his heart failed him utterly; and the dreaded silence settled on father and son.

It was broken by Mr. Nicholson picking up the pawn-ticket: 'John Froggs, 85 Pleasance,' he read; and then turning upon John, with a brief flash of passion and disgust, 'Who is John Froggs?' he cried.

'Nobody,' said John. 'It was just a name.'

'An ALIAS,' his father commented.

'Oh! I think scarcely quite that,' said the culprit; 'it's a form, they all do it, the man seemed to understand, we had a great deal of fun over the name - '

He paused at that, for he saw his father wince at the picture like a man physically struck; and again there was silence.

'I do not think,' said Mr. Nicholson, at last, 'that I am an ungenerous father. I have never grudged you money within reason, for any avowable purpose; you had just to come to me and speak. And now I find that you have forgotten all decency and all natural feeling, and actually pawned - pawned - your mother's watch. You must have had some temptation; I will do you the justice to suppose it was a strong one. What did you want with this money?'

'I would rather not tell you, sir,' said John. 'It will only make you angry.'

'I will not be fenced with,' cried his father. 'There must be an end of disingenuous answers. What did you want with this money?'

'To lend it to Houston, sir,' says John.

'I thought I had forbidden you to speak to that young man?' asked the father.

'Yes, sir,' said John; 'but I only met him.'

'Where?' came the deadly question.

And 'In a billiard-room' was the damning answer. Thus, had John's single departure from the truth brought instant punishment. For no other purpose but to see Alan would he have entered a billiard-room; but he had desired to palliate the fact of his disobedience, and now it appeared that he frequented these disreputable haunts upon his own account.

Once more Mr. Nicholson digested the vile tidings in silence, and when John stole a glance at his father's countenance, he was abashed to see the marks of suffering.

'Well,' said the old gentleman, at last, 'I cannot pretend not to be simply bowed down. I rose this morning what the world calls a happy man - happy, at least, in a son of whom I thought I could be reasonably proud - ‘

But it was beyond human nature to endure this longer, and John interrupted almost with a scream. ‘Oh, wheest!’ he cried, ‘that’s not all, that’s not the worst of it - it’s nothing! How could I tell you were proud of me? Oh! I wish, I wish that I had known; but you always said I was such a disgrace! And the dreadful thing is this: we were all taken up last night, and we have to pay Colette’s fine among the six, or we’ll be had up for evidence - shebeening it is. They made me swear to tell you; but for my part,’ he cried, bursting into tears, ‘I just wish that I was dead!’ And he fell on his knees before a chair and hid his face.

Whether his father spoke, or whether he remained long in the room or at once departed, are points lost to history. A horrid turmoil of mind and body; bursting sobs; broken, vanishing thoughts, now of indignation, now of remorse; broken elementary whiffs of consciousness, of the smell of the horse-hair on the chair bottom, of the jangling of church bells that now began to make day horrible throughout the confines of the city, of the hard floor that bruised his knees, of the taste of tears that found their way into his mouth: for a period of time, the duration of which I cannot guess, while I refuse to dwell longer on its agony, these were the whole of God’s world for John Nicholson.

When at last, as by the touching of a spring, he returned again to clearness of consciousness and even a measure of composure, the bells had but just done ringing, and the Sabbath silence was still marred by the patter of belated feet. By the clock above the fire, as well as by these more speaking signs, the service had not long begun; and the unhappy sinner, if his father had really gone to church, might count on near two hours of only comparative unhappiness. With his father, the superlative degree returned infallibly. He knew it by every shrinking fibre in his body, he knew it by the sudden dizzy whirling of his brain, at the mere thought of that calamity. An hour and a half, perhaps an hour and three-quarters, if the doctor was long-winded, and then would begin again that active agony from which, even in the dull ache of the present, he shrunk as from the bite of fire. He saw, in a vision, the family pew, the somnolent cushions, the Bibles, the psalm-books, Maria with her smelling-salts, his father sitting spectacled and critical; and at once he was struck with indignation, not unjustly. It was inhuman to go off to church, and leave a sinner in suspense, unpunished, unforgiven. And at the very touch of criticism, the paternal sanctity was lessened; yet the paternal terror only grew; and the two strands of feeling pushed him in the same direction.

And suddenly there came upon him a mad fear lest his father should have locked him in. The notion had no ground in sense; it was probably no more than a reminiscence of similar calamities in childhood, for his father's room had always been the chamber of inquisition and the scene of punishment; but it stuck so rigorously in his mind that he must instantly approach the door and prove its untruth. As he went, he struck upon a drawer left open in the business table. It was the money-drawer, a measure of his father's disarray: the money-drawer - perhaps a pointing providence! Who is to decide, when even divines differ between a providence and a temptation? or who, sitting calmly under his own vine, is to pass a judgment on the doings of a poor, hunted dog, slavishly afraid, slavishly rebellious, like John Nicholson on that particular Sunday? His hand was in the drawer, almost before his mind had conceived the hope; and rising to his new situation, he wrote, sitting in his father's chair and using his father's blotting-pad, his pitiful apology and farewell:-

'MY DEAR FATHER, - I have taken the money, but I will pay it back as soon as I am able. You will never hear of me again. I did not mean any harm by anything, so I hope you will try and forgive me. I wish you would say good-bye to Alexander and Maria, but not if you don't want to. I could not wait to see you, really. Please try to forgive me. Your affectionate son,

JOHN NICHOLSON.'

The coins abstracted and the missive written, he could not be gone too soon from the scene of these transgressions; and remembering how his father had once returned from church, on some slight illness, in the middle of the second psalm, he durst not even make a packet of a change of clothes. Attired as he was, he slipped from the paternal doors, and found himself in the cool spring air, the thin spring sunshine, and the great Sabbath quiet of the city, which was now only pointed by the cawing of the rooks. There was not a soul in Randolph Crescent, nor a soul in Queensferry Street; in this outdoor privacy and the sense of escape, John took heart again; and with a pathetic sense of leave-taking, he even ventured up the lane and stood awhile, a strange peri at the gates of a quaint paradise, by the west end of St. George's Church. They were singing within; and by a strange chance, the tune was 'St. George's, Edinburgh,' which bears the name, and was first sung in the choir of that church. 'Who is this King of Glory?' went the voices from within; and, to John, this was like the end of all Christian observances, for he was now to be a wild man like Ishmael, and his life was to be cast in homeless places and with godless people.

It was thus, with no rising sense of the adventurous, but in mere desolation and despair, that he turned his back on his native city, and set out on foot for California, with a more immediate eye to Glasgow.

CHAPTER IV - THE SECOND SOWING

IT is no part of mine to narrate the adventures of John Nicholson, which were many, but simply his more momentous misadventures, which were more than he desired, and, by human standards, more than he deserved; how he reached California, how he was rooked, and robbed, and beaten, and starved; how he was at last taken up by charitable folk, restored to some degree of self-complacency, and installed as a clerk in a bank in San Francisco, it would take too long to tell; nor in these episodes were there any marks of the peculiar Nicholsonic destiny, for they were just such matters as befell some thousands of other young adventurers in the same days and places. But once posted in the bank, he fell for a time into a high degree of good fortune, which, as it was only a longer way about to fresh disaster, it behooves me to explain.

It was his luck to meet a young man in what is technically called a 'dive,' and thanks to his monthly wages, to extricate this new acquaintance from a position of present disgrace and possible danger in the future. This young man was the nephew of one of the Nob Hill magnates, who run the San Francisco Stock Exchange, much as more humble adventurers, in the corner of some public park at home, may be seen to perform the simple artifice of pea and thimble: for their own profit, that is to say, and the discouragement of public gambling. It was thus in his power - and, as he was of grateful temper, it was among the things that he desired - to put John in the way of growing rich; and thus, without thought or industry, or so much as even understanding the game at which he played, but by simply buying and selling what he was told to buy and sell, that plaything of fortune was presently at the head of between eleven and twelve thousand pounds, or, as he reckoned it, of upward of sixty thousand dollars.

How he had come to deserve this wealth, any more than how he had formerly earned disgrace at home, was a problem beyond the reach of his philosophy. It was true that he had been industrious at the bank, but no more so than the cashier, who had seven small children and was visibly sinking in decline. Nor was the step which had determined his advance - a visit to a dive with a month's wages in his pocket - an act of such transcendent virtue, or even wisdom, as to seem to merit the favour of the gods. From some sense of this, and of the dizzy see-saw - heaven-high, hell-deep - on which men sit clutching; or perhaps fearing that the sources of his fortune might be insidiously traced to some root in the field of petty cash; he stuck to his work, said not a word of his new circumstances, and kept his account with a bank in a different quarter of the town. The concealment, innocent as it seems, was the first step in the second tragicomedy of John's existence.

Meanwhile, he had never written home. Whether from diffidence or shame, or a touch of anger, or mere procrastination, or because (as we have seen) he had no skill in literary arts, or because (as I am sometimes tempted to suppose) there is a law in human nature that prevents young men - not otherwise beasts - from the performance of this simple act of piety - months and years had gone by, and John had never written. The habit of not writing, indeed, was already fixed before he had begun to come into his fortune; and it was only the difficulty of breaking this long silence that withheld him from an instant restitution of the money he had stolen or (as he preferred to call it) borrowed. In vain he sat before paper, attending on inspiration; that heavenly nymph, beyond suggesting the words 'my dear father,' remained obstinately silent; and presently John would crumple up the sheet and decide, as soon as he had 'a good chance,' to carry the money home in person. And this delay, which is indefensible, was his second step into the snares of fortune.

Ten years had passed, and John was drawing near to thirty. He had kept the promise of his boyhood, and was now of a lusty frame, verging toward corpulence; good features, good eyes, a genial manner, a ready laugh, a long pair of sandy whiskers, a dash of an American accent, a close familiarity with the great American joke, and a certain likeness to a R- y-l P-rs-n-ge, who shall remain nameless for me, made up the man's externals as he could be viewed in society. Inwardly, in spite of his gross body and highly masculine whiskers, he was more like a maiden lady than a man of twenty-nine.

It chanced one day, as he was strolling down Market Street on the eve of his fortnight's holiday, that his eye was caught by certain railway bills, and in very idleness of mind he calculated that he might be home for Christmas if he started on the morrow. The fancy thrilled him with desire, and in one moment he decided he would go.

There was much to be done: his portmanteau to be packed, a credit to be got from the bank where he was a wealthy customer, and certain offices to be transacted for that other bank in which he was an humble clerk; and it chanced, in conformity with human nature, that out of all this business it was the last that came to be neglected. Night found him, not only equipped with money of his own, but once more (as on that former occasion) saddled with a considerable sum of other people's.

Now it chanced there lived in the same boarding-house a fellow-clerk of his, an honest fellow, with what is called a weakness for drink - though it might, in this case, have been called a strength, for the victim had been drunk for weeks together without the briefest intermission. To this unfortunate John intrusted a letter with an inclosure of bonds, addressed to the bank manager. Even as he did so he thought he perceived a certain haziness of eye and speech in his trustee; but he was too hopeful to be stayed, silenced the voice of warning in his bosom, and with one and the same gesture committed the money to the clerk, and himself into the hands of destiny.

I dwell, even at the risk of tedium, on John's minutest errors, his case being so perplexing to the moralist; but we have done with them now, the roll is closed, the reader has the worst of our poor hero, and I leave him to judge for himself whether he or John has been the less deserving. Henceforth we have to follow the spectacle of a man who was a mere whip-top for calamity; on whose unmerited misadventures not even the humourist can look without pity, and not even the philosopher without alarm.

That same night the clerk entered upon a bout of drunkenness so consistent as to surprise even his intimate acquaintance. He was speedily ejected from the boarding-house; deposited his portmanteau with a perfect stranger, who did not even catch his name; wandered he knew not where, and was at last hove-to, all standing, in a hospital at Sacramento. There, under the impenetrable ALIAS of the number of his bed, the crapulous being lay for some more days unconscious of all things, and of one thing in particular: that the police were after him. Two months had come and gone before the convalescent in the Sacramento hospital was identified with Kirkman, the absconding San Francisco clerk; even then, there must elapse nearly a fortnight more till the perfect stranger could be hunted up, the portmanteau recovered, and John's letter carried at length to its destination, the seal still unbroken, the inclosure still intact.

Meanwhile, John had gone upon his holidays without a word, which was irregular; and there had disappeared with him a certain sum of money, which was out of all bounds of palliation. But he was known to be careless, and believed to be honest; the manager besides had a regard for him; and little was said, although something was no doubt thought, until the fortnight was finally at an end, and the time had come for John to reappear. Then, indeed, the affair began to look black; and when inquiries were made, and the penniless clerk was found to have amassed thousands of dollars, and kept them secretly in a rival establishment, the stoutest of his friends abandoned him, the books were overhauled for traces of ancient and artful fraud, and though none were found, there still prevailed a general impression of loss. The telegraph was set in motion; and the correspondent of the bank in Edinburgh, for which place it was understood that John had armed himself with extensive credits, was warned to communicate with the police.

Now this correspondent was a friend of Mr. Nicholson's; he was well acquainted with the tale of John's calamitous disappearance from Edinburgh; and putting one thing with another, hasted with the first word of this scandal, not to the police, but to his friend. The old gentleman had long regarded his son as one dead; John's place had been taken, the memory of his faults had already fallen to be one of those old aches, which awaken again indeed upon occasion, but which we can always vanquish by an effort of the will; and to have the long lost resuscitated in a fresh disgrace was doubly bitter.

'Macewen,' said the old man, 'this must be hushed up, if possible. If I give you a cheek for this sum, about which they are certain, could you take it on yourself to let the matter rest?'

'I will,' said Macewen. 'I will take the risk of it.'

'You understand,' resumed Mr. Nicholson, speaking precisely, but with ashen lips, 'I do this for my family, not for that unhappy young man. If it should turn out that these suspicions are correct, and he has embezzled large sums, he must lie on his bed as he has made it.' And then looking up at Macewen with a nod, and one of his strange smiles: 'Good- bye,' said he, and Macewen, perceiving the case to be too grave for consolation, took himself off, and blessed God on his way home that he was childless.

CHAPTER V - THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN

BY a little after noon on the eve of Christmas, John had left his portmanteau in the cloak-room, and stepped forth into Princes Street with a wonderful expansion of the soul, such as men enjoy on the completion of long-nourished schemes. He was at home again, incognito and rich; presently he could enter his father's house by means of the pass-key, which he had piously preserved through all his wanderings; he would throw down the borrowed money; there would be a reconciliation, the details of which he frequently arranged; and he saw himself, during the next month, made welcome in many stately houses at many frigid dinner-parties, taking his share in the conversation with the freedom of the man and the traveller, and laying down the law upon finance with the authority of the successful investor. But this programme was not to be begun before evening - not till just before dinner, indeed, at which meal the reassembled family were to sit roseate, and the best wine, the modern fatted calf, should flow for the prodigal's return.

Meanwhile he walked familiar streets, merry reminiscences crowding round him, sad ones also, both with the same surprising pathos. The keen frosty air; the low, rosy, wintry sun; the castle, hailing him like an old acquaintance; the names of friends on door-plates; the sight of friends whom he seemed to recognise, and whom he eagerly avoided, in the streets; the pleasant chant of the north-country accent; the dome of St. George's reminding him of his last penitential moments in the lane, and of that King of Glory whose name had echoed ever since in the saddest corner of his memory; and the gutters where he had learned to slide, and the shop where he had bought his skates, and the stones on which he had trod, and the railings in which he had rattled his clachan as he went to school; and all those thousand and one nameless particulars, which the eye sees without noting, which the memory keeps indeed yet without knowing, and which, taken one with another, build up for us the aspect of the place that we call home: all these besieged him, as he went, with both delight and sadness.

His first visit was for Houston, who had a house on Regent Terrace, kept for him in old days by an aunt. The door was opened (to his surprise) upon the chain, and a voice asked him from within what he wanted.

'I want Mr. Houston - Mr. Alan Houston,' said he.

'And who are ye?' said the voice.

'This is most extraordinary,' thought John; and then aloud he told his name.

‘No’ young Mr. John?’ cried the voice, with a sudden increase of Scotch accent, testifying to a friendlier feeling.

‘The very same,’ said John.

And the old butler removed his defences, remarking only ‘I thocht ye were that man.’ But his master was not there; he was staying, it appeared, at the house in Murrayfield; and though the butler would have been glad enough to have taken his place and given all the news of the family, John, struck with a little chill, was eager to be gone. Only, the door was scarce closed again, before he regretted that he had not asked about ‘that man.’

He was to pay no more visits till he had seen his father and made all well at home; Alan had been the only possible exception, and John had not time to go as far as Murrayfield. But here he was on Regent Terrace; there was nothing to prevent him going round the end of the hill, and looking from without on the Mackenzies’ house. As he went, he reflected that Flora must now be a woman of near his own age, and it was within the bounds of possibility that she was married; but this dishonourable doubt he dammed down.

There was the house, sure enough; but the door was of another colour, and what was this - two door-plates? He drew nearer; the top one bore, with dignified simplicity, the words, ‘Mr. Proudfoot’; the lower one was more explicit, and informed the passer-by that here was likewise the abode of ‘Mr. J. A. Dunlop Proudfoot, Advocate.’ The Proudfoots must be rich, for no advocate could look to have much business in so remote a quarter; and John hated them for their wealth and for their name, and for the sake of the house they desecrated with their presence. He remembered a Proudfoot he had seen at school, not known: a little, whey-faced urchin, the despicable member of some lower class. Could it be this abortion that had climbed to be an advocate, and now lived in the birthplace of Flora and the home of John’s tenderest memories? The chill that had first seized upon him when he heard of Houston’s absence deepened and struck inward. For a moment, as he stood under the doors of that estranged house, and looked east and west along the solitary pavement of the Royal Terrace, where not a cat was stirring, the sense of solitude and desolation took him by the throat, and he wished himself in San Francisco.

And then the figure he made, with his decent portliness, his whiskers, the money in his purse, the excellent cigar that he now lighted, recurred to his mind in consolatory comparison with that of a certain maddened lad who, on a certain spring Sunday ten years before, and in the hour of church-time silence, had stolen from that city by the Glasgow road. In the face of these changes, it were impious to doubt fortune’s kindness. All would be well yet; the Mackenzies would be found, Flora, younger and lovelier and kinder than before; Alan would be found, and would have so nicely discriminated his behaviour as to have grown, on the one hand, into a valued friend of Mr. Nicholson's, and to have remained, upon the other, of that exact shade of joviality which John desired in his companions. And so, once more, John fell to work discounting the delightful future: his first appearance in the family pew; his first visit to his uncle Greig, who thought himself so great a financier, and on whose purblind Edinburgh eyes John was to let in the dazzling daylight of the West; and the details in general of that unrivalled transformation scene, in which he was to display to all Edinburgh a portly and successful gentleman in the shoes of the derided fugitive.

The time began to draw near when his father would have returned from the office, and it would be the prodigal's cue to enter. He strolled westward by Albany Street, facing the sunset embers, pleased, he knew not why, to move in that cold air and indigo twilight, starred with street-lamps. But there was one more disenchantment waiting him by the way.

At the corner of Pitt Street he paused to light a fresh cigar; the vesta threw, as he did so, a strong light upon his features, and a man of about his own age stopped at sight of it.

'I think your name must be Nicholson,' said the stranger.

It was too late to avoid recognition; and besides, as John was now actually on the way home, it hardly mattered, and he gave way to the impulse of his nature.

'Great Scott!' he cried, 'Beatson!' and shook hands with warmth. It scarce seemed he was repaid in kind.

'So you're home again?' said Beatson. 'Where have you been all this long time?'

'In the States,' said John - 'California. I've made my pile though; and it suddenly struck me it would be a noble scheme to come home for Christmas.'

'I see,' said Beatson. 'Well, I hope we'll see something of you now you're here.'

'Oh, I guess so,' said John, a little frozen.

'Well, ta-ta,' concluded Beatson, and he shook hands again and went.

This was a cruel first experience. It was idle to blink facts: here was John home again, and Beatson - Old Beatson - did not care a rush. He recalled Old Beatson in the past - that merry and affectionate lad - and their joint adventures and mishaps, the window they had broken with a catapult in India Place, the escalade of the castle rock, and many another inestimable bond of friendship; and his hurt surprise grew deeper. Well, after all, it was only on a man's own family that he could count; blood was thicker than water, he remembered; and the net result of this encounter was to bring him to the doorstep of his father's house, with tenderer and softer feelings.

The night had come; the fanlight over the door shone bright; the two windows of the dining-room where the cloth was being laid, and the three windows of the drawing-room where Maria would be waiting dinner, glowed softlier through yellow blinds. It was like a vision of the past. All this time of his absence life had gone forward with an equal foot, and the fires and the gas had been lighted, and the meals spread, at the accustomed hours. At the accustomed hour, too, the bell had sounded thrice to call the family to worship. And at the thought, a pang of regret for his demerit seized him; he remembered the things that were good and that he had neglected, and the things that were evil and that he had loved; and it was with a prayer upon his lips that he mounted the steps and thrust the key into the key-hole.

He stepped into the lighted hall, shut the door softly behind him, and stood there fixed in wonder. No surprise of strangeness could equal the surprise of that complete familiarity. There was the bust of Chalmers near the stair- railings, there was the clothes-brush in the accustomed place; and there, on the hat-stand, hung hats and coats that must surely be the same as he remembered. Ten years dropped from his life, as a pin may slip between the fingers; and the ocean and the mountains, and the mines, and crowded marts and mingled races of San Francisco, and his own fortune and his own disgrace, became, for that one moment, the figures of a dream that was over.

He took off his hat, and moved mechanically toward the stand; and there he found a small change that was a great one to him. The pin that had been his from boyhood, where he had flung his balmoral when he loitered home from the Academy, and his first hat when he came briskly back from college or the office - his pin was occupied. 'They might have at least respected my pin!' he thought, and he was moved as by a slight, and began at once to recollect that he was here an interloper, in a strange house, which he had entered almost by a burglary, and where at any moment he might be scandalously challenged.

He moved at once, his hat still in his hand, to the door of his father's room, opened it, and entered. Mr. Nicholson sat in the same place and posture as on that last Sunday morning; only he was older, and greyer, and sterner; and as he now glanced up and caught the eye of his son, a strange commotion and a dark flush sprung into his face.

'Father,' said John, steadily, and even cheerfully, for this was a moment against which he was long ago prepared, 'father, here I am, and here is the money that I took from you. I have come back to ask your forgiveness, and to stay Christmas with you and the children.'

‘Keep your money,’ said the father, ‘and go!’

‘Father!’ cried John; ‘for God’s sake don’t receive me this way. I’ve come for - ‘

‘Understand me,’ interrupted Mr. Nicholson; ‘you are no son of mine; and in the sight of God, I wash my hands of you. One last thing I will tell you; one warning I will give you; all is discovered, and you are being hunted for your crimes; if you are still at large it is thanks to me; but I have done all that I mean to do; and from this time forth I would not raise one finger - not one finger - to save you from the gallows! And now,’ with a low voice of absolute authority, and a single weighty gesture of the finger, ‘and now - go!’

CHAPTER VI - THE HOUSE AT MURRAYFIELD

How John passed the evening, in what windy confusion of mind, in what squalls of anger and lulls of sick collapse, in what pacing of streets and plunging into public-houses, it would profit little to relate. His misery, if it were not progressive, yet tended in no way to diminish; for in proportion as grief and indignation abated, fear began to take their place. At first, his father's menacing words lay by in some safe drawer of memory, biding their hour. At first, John was all thwarted affection and blighted hope; next bludgeoned vanity raised its head again, with twenty mortal gashes: and the father was disowned even as he had disowned the son. What was this regular course of life, that John should have admired it? what were these clock-work virtues, from which love was absent? Kindness was the test, kindness the aim and soul; and judged by such a standard, the discarded prodigal - now rapidly drowning his sorrows and his reason in successive drams - was a creature of a lovelier morality than his self-righteous father. Yes, he was the better man; he felt it, glowed with the consciousness, and entering a public-house at the corner of Howard Place (whither he had somehow wandered) he pledged his own virtues in a glass - perhaps the fourth since his dismissal. Of that he knew nothing, keeping no account of what he did or where he went; and in the general crashing hurry of his nerves, unconscious of the approach of intoxication. Indeed, it is a question whether he were really growing intoxicated, or whether at first the spirits did not even sober him. For it was even as he drained this last glass that his father's ambiguous and menacing words - popping from their hiding- place in memory - startled him like a hand laid upon his shoulder. 'Crimes, hunted, the gallows.' They were ugly words; in the ears of an innocent man, perhaps all the uglier; for if some judicial error were in act against him, who should set a limit to its grossness or to how far it might be pushed? Not John, indeed; he was no believer in the powers of innocence, his cursed experience pointing in quite other ways; and his fears, once wakened, grew with every hour and hunted him about the city streets.

It was, perhaps, nearly nine at night; he had eaten nothing since lunch, he had drunk a good deal, and he was exhausted by emotion, when the thought of Houston came into his head. He turned, not merely to the man as a friend, but to his house as a place of refuge. The danger that threatened him was still so vague that he knew neither what to fear nor where he might expect it; but this much at least seemed undeniable, that a private house was safer than a public inn. Moved by these counsels, he turned at once to the Caledonian

Station, passed (not without alarm) into the bright lights of the approach, redeemed his portmanteau from the cloak-room, and was soon whirling in a cab along the Glasgow Road. The change of movement and position, the sight of the lamps twinkling to the rear, and the smell of damp and mould and rotten straw which clung about the vehicle, wrought in him strange alternations of lucidity and mortal giddiness.

‘I have been drinking,’ he discovered; ‘I must go straight to bed, and sleep.’ And he thanked Heaven for the drowsiness that came upon his mind in waves.

From one of these spells he was wakened by the stoppage of the cab; and, getting down, found himself in quite a country road, the last lamp of the suburb shining some way below, and the high walls of a garden rising before him in the dark. The Lodge (as the place was named), stood, indeed, very solitary. To the south it adjoined another house, but standing in so large a garden as to be well out of cry; on all other sides, open fields stretched upward to the woods of Corstorphine Hill, or backward to the dells of Ravelston, or downward toward the valley of the Leith. The effect of seclusion was aided by the great height of the garden walls, which were, indeed, conventual, and, as John had tested in former days, defied the climbing schoolboy. The lamp of the cab threw a gleam upon the door and the not brilliant handle of the bell.

‘Shall I ring for ye?’ said the cabman, who had descended from his perch, and was slapping his chest, for the night was bitter.

‘I wish you would,’ said John, putting his hand to his brow in one of his accesses of giddiness.

The man pulled at the handle, and the clanking of the bell replied from further in the garden; twice and thrice he did it, with sufficient intervals; in the great frosty silence of the night the sounds fell sharp and small.

‘Does he expect ye?’ asked the driver, with that manner of familiar interest that well became his port-wine face; and when John had told him no, ‘Well, then,’ said the cabman, ‘if ye’ll tak’ my advice of it, we’ll just gang back. And that’s disinterested, mind ye, for my stables are in the Glesgie Road.’

‘The servants must hear,’ said John.

‘Hout!’ said the driver. ‘He keeps no servants here, man. They’re a’ in the town house; I drive him often; it’s just a kind of a hermitage, this.’

‘Give me the bell,’ said John; and he plucked at it like a man desperate.

The clamour had not yet subsided before they heard steps upon the gravel, and a voice of singular nervous irritability cried to them through the door, 'Who are you, and what do you want?'

'Alan,' said John, 'it's me - it's Fatty - John, you know. I'm just come home, and I've come to stay with you.'

There was no reply for a moment, and then the door was opened.

'Get the portmanteau down,' said John to the driver.

'Do nothing of the kind,' said Alan; and then to John, 'Come in here a moment. I want to speak to you.'

John entered the garden, and the door was closed behind him. A candle stood on the gravel walk, winking a little in the draughts; it threw inconstant sparkles on the clumped holly, struck the light and darkness to and fro like a veil on Alan's features, and sent his shadow hovering behind him. All beyond was inscrutable; and John's dizzy brain rocked with the shadow. Yet even so, it struck him that Alan was pale, and his voice, when he spoke, unnatural.

'What brings you here to-night?' he began. 'I don't want, God knows, to seem unfriendly; but I cannot take you in, Nicholson; I cannot do it.'

'Alan,' said John, 'you've just got to! You don't know the mess I'm in; the governor's turned me out, and I daren't show my face in an inn, because they're down on me for murder or something!'

'For what?' cried Alan, starting.

'Murder, I believe,' says John.

'Murder!' repeated Alan, and passed his hand over his eyes. 'What was that you were saying?' he asked again.

'That they were down on me,' said John. 'I'm accused of murder, by what I can make out; and I've really had a dreadful day of it, Alan, and I can't sleep on the roadside on a night like this - at least, not with a portmanteau,' he pleaded.

'Hush!' said Alan, with his head on one side; and then, 'Did you hear nothing?' he asked.

'No,' said John, thrilling, he knew not why, with communicated terror. 'No, I heard nothing; why?' And then, as there was no answer, he reverted to his pleading: 'But I say, Alan, you've just got to take me in. I'll go right away to bed if you have anything to do. I seem to have been drinking; I was that knocked over. I wouldn't turn you away, Alan, if you were down on your luck.'

'No?' returned Alan. 'Neither will you, then. Come and let's get your portmanteau.'

The cabman was paid, and drove off down the long, lamp- lighted hill, and the two friends stood on the side-walk beside the portmanteau till the last rumble of the wheels had died in silence. It seemed to John as though Alan attached importance to this departure of the cab; and John, who was in no state to criticise, shared profoundly in the feeling.

When the stillness was once more perfect, Alan shouldered the portmanteau, carried it in, and shut and locked the garden door; and then, once more, abstraction seemed to fall upon him, and he stood with his hand on the key, until the cold began to nibble at John's fingers.

'Why are we standing here?' asked John.

'Eh?' said Alan, blankly.

'Why, man, you don't seem yourself,' said the other.

'No, I'm not myself,' said Alan; and he sat down on the portmanteau and put his face in his hands.

John stood beside him swaying a little, and looking about him at the swaying shadows, the flitting sparkles, and the steady stars overhead, until the windless cold began to touch him through his clothes on the bare skin. Even in his bemused intelligence, wonder began to awake.

'I say, let's come on to the house,' he said at last.

'Yes, let's come on to the house,' repeated Alan.

And he rose at once, reshouldered the portmanteau, and taking the candle in his other hand, moved forward to the Lodge. This was a long, low building, smothered in creepers; and now, except for some chinks of light between the dining-room shutters, it was plunged in darkness and silence.

In the hall Alan lighted another candle, gave it to John, and opened the door of a bedroom.

'Here,' said he; 'go to bed. Don't mind me, John. You'll be sorry for me when you know.'

'Wait a bit,' returned John; 'I've got so cold with all that standing about. Let's go into the dining-room a minute. Just one glass to warm me, Alan.'

On the table in the hall stood a glass, and a bottle with a whisky label on a tray. It was plain the bottle had been just opened, for the cork and corkscrew lay beside it.

'Take that,' said Alan, passing John the whisky, and then with a certain roughness pushed his friend into the bedroom, and closed the door behind him.

John stood amazed; then he shook the bottle, and, to his further wonder, found it partly empty. Three or four glasses were gone. Alan must have uncorked a bottle of whisky and drank three or four glasses one after the other, without sitting down, for there was no chair, and that in his own cold lobby on this freezing night! It fully explained his eccentricities, John reflected sagely, as he mixed himself a grog. Poor Alan! He was drunk; and what a dreadful thing was drink, and what a slave to it poor Alan was, to drink in this unsociable, uncomfortable fashion! The man who would drink alone, except for health's sake - as

John was now doing - was a man utterly lost. He took the grog out, and felt hazier, but warmer. It was hard work opening the portmanteau and finding his night things; and before he was undressed, the cold had struck home to him once more. ‘Well,’ said he; ‘just a drop more. There’s no sense in getting ill with all this other trouble.’ And presently dreamless slumber buried him.

When John awoke it was day. The low winter sun was already in the heavens, but his watch had stopped, and it was impossible to tell the hour exactly. Ten, he guessed it, and made haste to dress, dismal reflections crowding on his mind. But it was less from terror than from regret that he now suffered; and with his regret there were mingled cutting pangs of penitence. There had fallen upon him a blow, cruel, indeed, but yet only the punishment of old misdoing; and he had rebelled and plunged into fresh sin. The rod had been used to chasten, and he had bit the chastening fingers. His father was right; John had justified him; John was no guest for decent people’s houses, and no fit associate for decent people’s children. And had a broader hint been needed, there was the case of his old friend. John was no drunkard, though he could at times exceed; and the picture of Houston drinking neat spirits at his hall-table struck him with something like disgust. He hung back from meeting his old friend. He could have wished he had not come to him; and yet, even now, where else was he to turn?

These musings occupied him while he dressed, and accompanied him into the lobby of the house. The door stood open on the garden; doubtless, Alan had stepped forth; and John did as he supposed his friend had done. The ground was hard as iron, the frost still rigorous; as he brushed among the hollies, icicles jingled and glittered in their fall; and wherever he went, a volley of eager sparrows followed him. Here were Christmas weather and Christmas morning duly met, to the delight of children. This was the day of reunited families, the day to which he had so long looked forward, thinking to awake in his own bed in Randolph Crescent, reconciled with all men and repeating the footprints of his youth; and here he was alone, pacing the alleys of a wintry garden and filled with penitential thoughts.

And that reminded him: why was he alone? and where was Alan? The thought of the festal morning and the due salutations reawakened his desire for his friend, and he began to call for him by name. As the sound of his voice died away, he was aware of the greatness of the silence that environed him. But for the twittering of the sparrows and the crunching of his own feet upon the frozen snow, the whole windless world of air hung over him entranced, and the stillness weighed upon his mind with a horror of solitude.

Still calling at intervals, but now with a moderated voice, he made the hasty circuit of the garden, and finding neither man nor trace of man in all its evergreen coverts, turned at last to the house. About the house the silence seemed to deepen strangely. The door, indeed, stood open as before; but the windows were still shuttered, the chimneys breathed no stain into the bright air, there sounded abroad none of that low stir (perhaps audible rather to the ear of the spirit than to the ear of the flesh) by which a house announces and betrays its human lodgers. And yet Alan must be there - Alan locked in drunken slumbers, forgetful of the return of day, of the holy season, and of the friend whom he had so coldly received and was now so churlishly neglecting. John's disgust redoubled at the thought, but hunger was beginning to grow stronger than repulsion, and as a step to breakfast, if nothing else, he must find and arouse this sleeper.

He made the circuit of the bedroom quarters. All, until he came to Alan's chamber, were locked from without, and bore the marks of a prolonged disuse. But Alan's was a room in commission, filled with clothes, knickknacks, letters, books, and the conveniences of a solitary man. The fire had been lighted; but it had long ago burned out, and the ashes were stone cold. The bed had been made, but it had not been slept in.

Worse and worse, then; Alan must have fallen where he sat, and now sprawled brutishly, no doubt, upon the dining-room floor.

The dining-room was a very long apartment, and was reached through a passage; so that John, upon his entrance, brought but little light with him, and must move toward the windows with spread arms, groping and knocking on the furniture. Suddenly he tripped and fell his length over a prostrate body. It was what he had looked for, yet it shocked him; and he marvelled that so rough an impact should not have kicked a groan out of the drunkard. Men had killed themselves ere now in such excesses, a dreary and degraded end that made John shudder. What if Alan were dead? There would be a Christmas-day!

By this, John had his hand upon the shutters, and flinging them back, beheld once again the blessed face of the day. Even by that light the room had a discomfortable air. The chairs were scattered, and one had been overthrown; the table-cloth, laid as if for dinner, was twitched upon one side, and some of the dishes had fallen to the floor. Behind the table lay the drunkard, still unaroused, only one foot visible to John.

But now that light was in the room, the worst seemed over; it was a disgusting business, but not more than disgusting; and it was with no great apprehension that John proceeded to make the circuit of the table: his last comparatively tranquil moment for that day. No sooner had he turned the corner, no sooner had his eyes alighted on the body, than he gave a smothered, breathless cry, and fled out of the room and out of the house.

It was not Alan who lay there, but a man well up in years, of stern countenance and iron-grey locks; and it was no drunkard, for the body lay in a black pool of blood, and the open eyes stared upon the ceiling.

To and fro walked John before the door. The extreme sharpness of the air acted on his nerves like an astringent, and braced them swiftly. Presently, he not relaxing in his disordered walk, the images began to come clearer and stay longer in his fancy; and next the power of thought came back to him, and the horror and danger of his situation rooted him to the ground.

He grasped his forehead, and staring on one spot of gravel, pieced together what he knew and what he suspected. Alan had murdered some one: possibly 'that man' against whom the butler chained the door in Regent Terrace; possibly another; some one at least: a human soul, whom it was death to slay and whose blood lay spilled upon the floor. This was the reason of the whisky drinking in the passage, of his unwillingness to welcome John, of his strange behaviour and bewildered words; this was why he had started at and harped upon the name of murder; this was why he had stood and hearkened, or sat and covered his eyes, in the black night. And now he was gone, now he had basely fled; and to all his perplexities and dangers John stood heir.

'Let me think - let me think,' he said, aloud, impatiently, even pleadingly, as if to some merciless interrupter. In the turmoil of his wits, a thousand hints and hopes and threats and terrors dinning continuously in his ears, he was like one plunged in the hubbub of a crowd. How was he to remember - he, who had not a thought to spare - that he was himself the author, as well as the theatre, of so much confusion? But in hours of trial the junto of man's nature is dissolved, and anarchy succeeds.

It was plain he must stay no longer where he was, for here was a new Judicial Error in the very making. It was not so plain where he must go, for the old Judicial Error, vague as a cloud, appeared to fill the habitable world; whatever it might be, it watched for him, full-grown, in Edinburgh; it must have had its birth in San Francisco; it stood guard, no doubt, like a dragon, at the bank where he should cash his credit; and though there were doubtless many other places, who should say in which of them it was not ambushed? No, he could not tell where he was to go; he must not lose time on these insolubilities. Let him go back to the beginning. It was plain he must stay no longer where he was. It was plain, too, that he must not flee as he was, for he could not carry his portmanteau, and to flee and leave it was to plunge deeper in the mire. He must go, leave the house unguarded, find a cab, and return - return after an absence? Had he courage for that?

And just then he spied a stain about a hand's-breadth on his trouser-leg, and reached his finger down to touch it. The finger was stained red: it was blood; he stared upon it with disgust, and awe, and terror, and in the sharpness of the new sensation, fell instantly to act.

He cleansed his finger in the snow, returned into the house, drew near with hushed footsteps to the dining-room door, and shut and locked it. Then he breathed a little freer, for here at least was an oaken barrier between himself and what he feared. Next, he hastened to his room, tore off the spotted trousers which seemed in his eyes a link to bind him to the gallows, flung them in a corner, donned another pair, breathlessly crammed his night things into his portmanteau, locked it, swung it with an effort from the ground, and with a rush of relief, came forth again under the open heavens.

The portmanteau, being of occidental build, was no feather- weight; it had distressed the powerful Alan; and as for John, he was crushed under its bulk, and the sweat broke upon him thickly. Twice he must set it down to rest before he reached the gate; and when he had come so far, he must do as Alan did, and take his seat upon one corner. Here then, he sat a while and panted; but now his thoughts were sensibly lightened; now, with the trunk standing just inside the door, some part of his dissociation from the house of crime had been effected, and the cabman need not pass the garden wall. It was wonderful how that relieved him; for the house, in his eyes, was a place to strike the most cursory beholder with suspicion, as though the very windows had cried murder.

But there was to be no remission of the strokes of fate. As he thus sat, taking breath in the shadow of the wall and hopped about by sparrows, it chanced that his eye roved to the fastening of the door; and what he saw plucked him to his feet. The thing locked with a spring; once the door was closed, the bolt shut of itself; and without a key, there was no means of entering from without.

He saw himself obliged to one of two distasteful and perilous alternatives; either to shut the door altogether and set his portmanteau out upon the wayside, a wonder to all beholders; or to leave the door ajar, so that any thievish tramp or holiday schoolboy might stray in and stumble on the grisly secret. To the last, as the least desperate, his mind inclined; but he must first insure himself that he was unobserved. He peered out, and down the long road; it lay dead empty. He went to the corner of the by-road that comes by way of Dean; there also not a passenger was stirring. Plainly it was, now or never, the high tide of his affairs; and he drew the door as close as he durst, slipped a pebble in the chink, and made off downhill to find a cab.

Half-way down a gate opened, and a troop of Christmas children sallied forth in the most cheerful humour, followed more soberly by a smiling mother.

‘And this is Christmas-day!’ thought John; and could have laughed aloud in tragic bitterness of heart.

CHAPTER VII - A TRAGI-COMEDY IN A CAB

In front of Donaldson’s Hospital, John counted it good fortune to perceive a cab a great way of, and by much shouting and waving of his arm, to catch the notice of the driver. He counted it good fortune, for the time was long to him till he should have done for ever with the Lodge; and the further he must go to find a cab, the greater the chance that the inevitable discovery had taken place, and that he should return to find the garden full of angry neighbours. Yet when the vehicle drew up he was sensibly chagrined to recognise the port-wine cabman of the night before. ‘Here,’ he could not but reflect, ‘here is another link in the Judicial Error.’

The driver, on the other hand, was pleased to drop again upon so liberal a fare; and as he was a man - the reader must already have perceived - of easy, not to say familiar, manners, he dropped at once into a vein of friendly talk, commenting on the weather, on the sacred season, which struck him chiefly in the light of a day of liberal gratuities, on the chance which had reunited him to a pleasing customer, and on the fact that John had been (as he was pleased to call it) visibly ‘on the randan’ the night before.

‘And ye look dreidful bad the-day, sir, I must say that,’ he continued. ‘There’s nothing like a dram for ye - if ye’ll take my advice of it; and bein’ as it’s Christmas, I’m no’ saying,’ he added, with a fatherly smile, ‘but what I would join ye mysel’.’

John had listened with a sick heart.

‘I’ll give you a dram when we’ve got through,’ said he, affecting a sprightliness which sat on him most unhandsomely, ‘and not a drop till then. Business first, and pleasure afterward.’

With this promise the jarvey was prevailed upon to clamber to his place and drive, with hideous deliberation, to the door of the Lodge. There were no signs as yet of any public emotion; only, two men stood not far off in talk, and their presence, seen from afar, set John’s pulses buzzing. He might have spared himself his fright, for the pair were lost in some dispute of a theological complexion, and with lengthened upper lip and enumerating fingers, pursued the matter of their difference, and paid no heed to John.

But the cabman proved a thorn in the flesh.

Nothing would keep him on his perch; he must clamber down, comment upon the pebble in the door (which he regarded as an ingenious but unsafe device), help John with the portmanteau, and enliven matters with a flow of speech, and especially of questions, which I thus condense:-

‘He’ll no’ be here himsel’, will he? No? Well, he’s an eccentric man -

a fair oddity - if ye ken the expression. Great trouble with his tenants, they tell me. I've driven the fam'ly for years. I drove a cab at his father's waddin'. What'll your name be? - I should ken your face. Baigrey, ye say? There were Baigreys about Gilmerton; ye'll be one of that lot? Then this'll be a friend's portmantie, like? Why? Because the name upon it's Nucholson! Oh, if ye're in a hurry, that's another job. Waverley Brig? Are ye for away?'

So the friendly toper prated and questioned and kept John's heart in a flutter. But to this also, as to other evils under the sun, there came a period; and the victim of circumstances began at last to rumble toward the railway terminus at WaverleyBridge. During the transit, he sat with raised glasses in the frosty chill and mouldy fetor of his chariot, and glanced out sidelong on the holiday face of things, the shuttered shops, and the crowds along the pavement, much as the rider in the Tyburn cart may have observed the concourse gathering to his execution.

At the station his spirits rose again; another stage of his escape was fortunately ended - he began to spy blue water. He called a railway porter, and bade him carry the portmanteau to the cloak-room: not that he had any notion of delay; flight, instant flight was his design, no matter whither; but he had determined to dismiss the cabman ere he named, or even chose, his destination, thus possibly balking the Judicial Error of another link. This was his cunning aim, and now with one foot on the roadway, and one still on the coach-step, he made haste to put the thing in practice, and plunged his hand into his trousers pocket.

There was nothing there!

Oh yes; this time he was to blame. He should have remembered, and when he deserted his blood-stained pantaloons, he should not have deserted along with them his purse. Make the most of his error, and then compare it with the punishment! Conceive his new position, for I lack words to picture it; conceive him condemned to return to that house, from the very thought of which his soul revolted, and once more to expose himself to capture on the very scene of the misdeed: conceive him linked to the mouldy cab and the familiar cabman. John cursed the cabman silently, and then it occurred to him that he must stop the incarceration of his portmanteau; that, at least, he must keep close at hand, and he turned to recall the porter. But his reflections, brief as they had appeared, must have occupied him longer than he supposed, and there was the man already returning with the receipt.

Well, that was settled; he had lost his portmanteau also; for the sixpence with which he had paid the Murrayfield Toll was one that had strayed alone into his waistcoat pocket, and unless he once more successfully achieved the adventure of the house of crime, his portmanteau lay in the cloakroom in eternal pawn, for lack of a penny fee. And then he remembered the porter, who stood suggestively attentive, words of gratitude hanging on his lips.

John hunted right and left; he found a coin - prayed God that it was a sovereign - drew it out, beheld a halfpenny, and offered it to the porter.

The man's jaw dropped.

'It's only a halfpenny!' he said, startled out of railway decency.

'I know that,' said John, piteously.

And here the porter recovered the dignity of man.

'Thank you, sir,' said he, and would have returned the base gratuity. But John, too, would none of it; and as they struggled, who must join in but the cabman?

'Hoots, Mr. Baigrey,' said he, 'you surely forget what day it is!'

'I tell you I have no change!' cried John.

'Well,' said the driver, 'and what then? I would rather give a man a shillin' on a day like this than put him off with a derision like a bawbee. I'm surprised at the like of you, Mr. Baigrey!'

'My name is not Baigrey!' broke out John, in mere childish temper and distress.

'Ye told me it was yoursel',' said the cabman.

'I know I did; and what the devil right had you to ask?' cried the unhappy one.

'Oh, very well,' said the driver. 'I know my place, if you know yours - if you know yours!' he repeated, as one who should imply grave doubt; and muttered inarticulate thunders, in which the grand old name of gentleman was taken seemingly in vain.

Oh to have been able to discharge this monster, whom John now perceived, with tardy clear-sightedness, to have begun betimes the festivities of Christmas! But far from any such ray of consolation visiting the lost, he stood bare of help and helpers, his portmanteau sequestered in one place, his money deserted in another and guarded by a corpse; himself, so sedulous of privacy, the cynosure of all men's eyes about the station; and, as if these were not enough mischances, he was now fallen in ill-blood with the beast to whom his poverty had linked him! In ill-blood, as he reflected dismally, with the witness who perhaps might hang or save him! There was no time to be lost; he durst not linger any longer in that public spot; and whether he had recourse to dignity or conciliation, the remedy must be applied at once. Some happily surviving element of manhood moved him to the former.

'Let us have no more of this,' said he, his foot once more upon the step. 'Go back to where we came from.'

He had avoided the name of any destination, for there was now quite a little band of railway folk about the cab, and he still kept an eye upon the court of justice, and laboured to avoid concentric evidence. But here again the fatal jarvey out-manoeuvred him.

‘Back to the Ludge?’ cried he, in shrill tones of protest.

‘Drive on at once!’ roared John, and slammed the door behind him, so that the crazy chariot rocked and jingled.

Forth trundled the cab into the Christmas streets, the fare within plunged in the blackness of a despair that neighboured on unconsciousness, the driver on the box digesting his rebuke and his customer’s duplicity. I would not be thought to put the pair in competition; John’s case was out of all parallel. But the cabman, too, is worth the sympathy of the judicious; for he was a fellow of genuine kindliness and a high sense of personal dignity incensed by drink; and his advances had been cruelly and publicly rebuffed. As he drove, therefore, he counted his wrongs, and thirsted for sympathy and drink. Now, it chanced he had a friend, a publican in Queensferry Street, from whom, in view of the sacredness of the occasion, he thought he might extract a dram. Queensferry Street lies something off the direct road to Murrayfield. But then there is the hilly cross-road that passes by the valley of the Leith and the DeanCemetery; and Queensferry Street is on the way to that. What was to hinder the cabman, since his horse was dumb, from choosing the cross-road, and calling on his friend in passing? So it was decided; and the charioteer, already somewhat mollified, turned aside his horse to the right.

John, meanwhile, sat collapsed, his chin sunk upon his chest, his mind in abeyance. The smell of the cab was still faintly present to his senses, and a certain leaden chill about his feet, all else had disappeared in one vast oppression of calamity and physical faintness. It was drawing on to noon - two-and-twenty hours since he had broken bread; in the interval, he had suffered tortures of sorrow and alarm, and been partly tipsy; and though it was impossible to say he slept, yet when the cab stopped and the cabman thrust his head into the window, his attention had to be recalled from depths of vacancy.

‘If you’ll no’ STAND me a dram,’ said the driver, with a well-merited severity of tone and manner, ‘I dare say ye’ll have no objection to my taking one mysel’?’

‘Yes - no - do what you like,’ returned John; and then, as he watched his tormentor mount the stairs and enter the whisky- shop, there floated into his mind a sense as of something long ago familiar. At that he started fully awake, and stared at the shop-fronts. Yes, he knew them; but when? and how? Long since, he thought; and then, casting his eye through the front glass, which had been recently occluded by the figure of the jarvey, he beheld the tree-tops of the rookery in Randolph Crescent. He was close to home - home, where he had thought, at that hour, to be sitting in the well-remembered drawing-room in friendly converse; and, instead - !

It was his first impulse to drop into the bottom of the cab; his next, to cover his face with his hands. So he sat, while the cabman toasted the publican, and the publican toasted the cabman, and both reviewed the affairs of the nation; so he still sat, when his master condescended to return, and drive off at last down-hill, along the curve of Lynedoch Place; but even so sitting, as he passed the end of his father's street, he took one glance from between shielding fingers, and beheld a doctor's carriage at the door.

'Well, just so,' thought he; 'I'll have killed my father!
And this is Christmas-day!'

If Mr. Nicholson died, it was down this same road he must journey to the grave; and down this road, on the same errand, his wife had preceded him years before; and many other leading citizens, with the proper trappings and attendance of the end. And now, in that frosty, ill-smelling, straw- carpeted, and ragged-cushioned cab, with his breath congealing on the glasses, where else was John himself advancing to?

The thought stirred his imagination, which began to manufacture many thousand pictures, bright and fleeting, like the shapes in a kaleidoscope; and now he saw himself, ruddy and comfortered, sliding in the gutter; and, again, a little woe-begone, bored urchin tricked forth in crape and weepers, descending this same hill at the foot's pace of mourning coaches, his mother's body just preceding him; and yet again, his fancy, running far in front, showed him his destination - now standing solitary in the low sunshine, with the sparrows hopping on the threshold and the dead man within staring at the roof - and now, with a sudden change, thronged about with white-faced, hand-uplifting neighbours, and doctor bursting through their midst and fixing his stethoscope as he went, the policeman shaking a sagacious head beside the body. It was to this he feared that he was driving; in the midst of this he saw himself arrive, heard himself stammer faint explanations, and felt the hand of the constable upon his shoulder. Heavens! how he wished he had played the manlier part; how he despised himself that he had fled that fatal neighbourhood when all was quiet, and should now be tamely travelling back when it was thronging with avengers!

Any strong degree of passion lends, even to the dullest, the forces of the imagination. And so now as he dwelt on what was probably awaiting him at the end of this distressful drive - John, who saw things little, remembered them less, and could not have described them at all, beheld in his mind's-eye the garden of the Lodge, detailed as in a map; he went to and fro in it, feeding his terrors; he saw the hollies, the snowy borders, the paths where he had sought Alan, the high, conventual walls, the shut door - what! was the door shut? Ay, truly, he had shut it - shut in his money, his escape, his future life - shut it with these hands, and none could now open it! He heard the snap of the spring-lock like something bursting in his brain, and sat astonied.

And then he woke again, terror jarring through his vitals. This was no time to be idle; he must be up and doing, he must think. Once at the end of this ridiculous cruise, once at the Lodge door, there would be nothing for it but to turn the cab and trundle back again. Why, then, go so far? why add another feature of suspicion to a case already so suggestive? why not turn at once? It was easy to say, turn; but whither? He had nowhere now to go to; he could never - he saw it in letters of blood - he could never pay that cab; he was saddled with that cab for ever. Oh that cab! his soul yearned and burned, and his bowels sounded to be rid of it. He forgot all other cares. He must first quit himself of this ill-smelling vehicle and of the human beast that guided it - first do that; do that, at least; do that at once.

And just then the cab suddenly stopped, and there was his persecutor rapping on the front glass. John let it down, and beheld the port-wine countenance inflamed with intellectual triumph.

‘I ken wha ye are!’ cried the husky voice. ‘I mind ye now. Ye’re a Nucholson. I drove ye to Hermiston to a Christmas party, and ye came back on the box, and I let ye drive.’

It is a fact. John knew the man; they had been even friends. His enemy, he now remembered, was a fellow of great good nature - endless good nature - with a boy; why not with a man? Why not appeal to his better side? He grasped at the new hope.

‘Great Scott! and so you did,’ he cried, as if in a transport of delight, his voice sounding false in his own ears. ‘Well, if that’s so, I’ve something to say to you. I’ll just get out, I guess. Where are we, any way?’

The driver had fluttered his ticket in the eyes of the branch-toll keeper, and they were now brought to on the highest and most solitary part of the by-road. On the left, a row of fieldside trees beshaded it; on the right, it was bordered by naked fallows, undulating down-hill to the Queensferry Road; in front, Corstorphine Hill raised its snow-bedabbled, darkling woods against the sky. John looked all about him, drinking the clear air like wine; then his eyes returned to the cabman’s face as he sat, not ungleefully, awaiting John’s communication, with the air of one looking to be tipped.

The features of that face were hard to read, drink had so swollen them, drink had so painted them, in tints that varied from brick-red to mulberry. The small grey eyes blinked, the lips moved, with greed;

greed was the ruling passion; and though there was some good nature, some genuine kindliness, a true human touch, in the old toper, his greed was now so set afire by hope, that all other traits of character lay dormant. He sat there a monument of gluttonous desire.

John's heart slowly fell. He had opened his lips, but he stood there and uttered nought. He sounded the well of his courage, and it was dry. He groped in his treasury of words, and it was vacant. A devil of dumbness had him by the throat; the devil of terror babbled in his ears; and suddenly, without a word uttered, with no conscious purpose formed in his will, John whipped about, tumbled over the roadside wall, and began running for his life across the fallows.

He had not gone far, he was not past the midst of the first afield, when his whole brain thundered within him, 'Fool! You have your watch!' The shock stopped him, and he faced once more toward the cab. The driver was leaning over the wall, brandishing his whip, his face empurpled, roaring like a bull. And John saw (or thought) that he had lost the chance. No watch would pacify the man's resentment now; he would cry for vengeance also. John would be had under the eye of the police; his tale would be unfolded, his secret plumbed, his destiny would close on him at last, and for ever.

He uttered a deep sigh; and just as the cabman, taking heart of grace, was beginning at last to scale the wall, his defaulting customer fell again to running, and disappeared into the further fields.

CHAPTER VIII - SINGULAR INSTANCE OF THE UTILITY OF PASS-KEYS

WHERE he ran at first, John never very clearly knew; nor yet how long a time elapsed ere he found himself in the by-road near the lodge of Ravelston, propped against the wall, his lungs heaving like bellows, his legs leaden-heavy, his mind possessed by one sole desire - to lie down and be unseen. He remembered the thick coverts round the quarry-hole pond, an untrodden corner of the world where he might surely find concealment till the night should fall. Thither he passed down the lane; and when he came there, behold! he had forgotten the frost, and the pond was alive with young people skating, and the pond-side coverts were thick with lookers- on. He looked on a while himself. There was one tall, graceful maiden, skating hand in hand with a youth, on whom she bestowed her bright eyes perhaps too patently; and it was strange with what anger John beheld her. He could have broken forth in curses; he could have stood there, like a mortified tramp, and shaken his fist and vented his gall upon her by the hour - or so he thought; and the next moment his heart bled for the girl. 'Poor creature, it's little she knows!' he sighed. 'Let her enjoy herself while she can!' But was it possible, when Flora used to smile at him on the Braid ponds, she could have looked so fulsome to a sick-hearted bystander?

The thought of one quarry, in his frozen wits, suggested another; and he plodded off toward Craigleith. A wind had sprung up out of the north-west; it was cruel keen, it dried him like a fire, and racked his finger-joints. It brought clouds, too; pale, swift, hurrying clouds, that blotted heaven and shed gloom upon the earth. He scrambled up among the hazelled rubbish heaps that surround the caldron of the quarry, and lay flat upon the stones. The wind searched close along the earth, the stones were cutting and icy, the bare hazels wailed about him; and soon the air of the afternoon began to be vocal with those strange and dismal harpings that herald snow. Pain and misery turned in John's limbs to a harrowing impatience and blind desire of change; now he would roll in his harsh lair, and when the flints abraded him, was almost pleased; now he would crawl to the edge of the huge pit and look dizzily down. He saw the spiral of the descending roadway, the steep crags, the clinging bushes, the peppering of snow-wreaths, and far down in the bottom, the diminished crane. Here, no doubt, was a way to end it. But it somehow did not take his fancy.

And suddenly he was aware that he was hungry; ay, even through the tortures of the cold, even through the frosts of despair, a gross, desperate longing after food, no matter what, no matter how, began to wake and spur him. Suppose he pawned his watch? But no, on Christmas-day - this was Christmas-day! - the pawnshop would be closed. Suppose he went to the public-house close by at Blackhall, and offered the watch, which was worth ten pounds, in payment for a meal of bread and cheese? The incongruity was too remarkable; the good folks would either put him to the door, or only let him in to send for the police. He turned his pockets out one after another; some San Francisco tram-car checks, one cigar, no lights, the pass-key to his father's house, a pocket- handkerchief, with just a touch of scent: no, money could be raised on none of these. There was nothing for it but to starve; and after all, what mattered it? That also was a door of exit.

He crept close among the bushes, the wind playing round him like a lash; his clothes seemed thin as paper, his joints burned, his skin curdled on his bones. He had a vision of a high-lying cattle-drive in California, and the bed of a dried stream with one muddy pool, by which the vaqueros had encamped: splendid sun over all, the big bonfire blazing, the strips of cow browning and smoking on a skewer of wood; how warm it was, how savoury the steam of scorching meat! And then again he remembered his manifold calamities, and burrowed and wallowed in the sense of his disgrace and shame. And next he was entering Frank's restaurant in Montgomery Street, San Francisco; he had ordered a pan-stew and venison chops, of which he was immoderately fond, and as he sat waiting, Munroe, the good attendant, brought him a whisky punch; he saw the strawberries float on the delectable cup, he heard the ice chink about the straws. And then he woke again to his detested fate, and found himself sitting, humped together, in a windy combe of quarry refuse - darkness thick about him, thin flakes of snow flying here and there like rags of paper, and the strong shuddering of his body clashing his teeth like a hiccough.

We have seen John in nothing but the stormiest condition; we have seen him reckless, desperate, tried beyond his moderate powers; of his daily self, cheerful, regular, not unthrifty, we have seen nothing; and it may thus be a surprise to the reader to learn that he was studiously careful of his health. This favourite preoccupation now awoke. If he were to sit there and die of cold, there would be mighty little gained; better the police cell and the chances of a jury trial, than the miserable certainty of death at a dyke-side before the next winter's dawn, or death a little later in the gas- lighted wards of an infirmary.

He rose on aching legs, and stumbled here and there among the rubbish heaps, still circumvented by the yawning crater of the quarry; or perhaps he only thought so, for the darkness was already dense, the snow was growing thicker, and he moved like a blind man, and with a blind man's terrors. At last he climbed a fence, thinking to drop into the road, and found himself staggering, instead, among the iron furrows of a ploughland, endless, it seemed, as a whole county. And next he was in a wood, beating among young trees; and then he was aware of a house with many lighted windows, Christmas carriages waiting at the doors, and Christmas drivers (for Christmas has a double edge) becoming swiftly hooded with snow. From this glimpse of human cheerfulness, he fled like Cain; wandered in the night, unpiloted, careless of whither he went; fell, and lay, and then rose again and wandered further; and at last, like a transformation scene, behold him in the lighted jaws of the city, staring at a lamp which had already donned the tilted night-cap of the snow. It came thickly now, a 'Feeding Storm'; and while he yet stood blinking at the lamp, his feet were buried. He remembered something like it in the past, a street-lamp crowned and caked upon the windward side with snow, the wind uttering its mournful hoot, himself looking on, even as now; but the cold had struck too sharply on his wits, and memory failed him as to the date and sequel of the reminiscence.

His next conscious moment was on the Dean Bridge; but whether he was John Nicholson of a bank in a California street, or some former John, a clerk in his father's office, he had now clean forgotten. Another blank, and he was thrusting his pass-key into the door-lock of his father's house.

Hours must have passed. Whether crouched on the cold stones or wandering in the fields among the snow, was more than he could tell; but hours had passed. The finger of the hall clock was close on twelve; a narrow peep of gas in the hall- lamp shed shadows; and the door of the back room - his father's room - was open and emitted a warm light. At so late an hour, all this was strange; the lights should have been out, the doors locked, the good folk safe in bed. He marvelled at the irregularity, leaning on the hall-table; and marvelled to himself there; and thawed and grew once more hungry, in the warmer air of the house.

The clock uttered its premonitory catch; in five minutes Christmas-day would be among the days of the past - Christmas! - what a Christmas! Well, there was no use waiting; he had come into that house, he scarce knew how; if they were to thrust him forth again, it had best be done at once; and he moved to the door of the back room and entered.

Oh, well, then he was insane, as he had long believed.

There, in his father's room, at midnight, the fire was roaring and the gas blazing; the papers, the sacred papers - to lay a hand on which was criminal - had all been taken off and piled along the floor; a cloth was spread, and a supper laid, upon the business table; and in his father's chair a woman, habited like a nun, sat eating. As he appeared in the doorway, the nun rose, gave a low cry, and stood staring. She was a large woman, strong, calm, a little masculine, her features marked with courage and good sense; and as John blinked back at her, a faint resemblance dodged about his memory, as when a tune haunts us, and yet will not be recalled.

'Why, it's John!' cried the nun.

'I dare say I'm mad,' said John, unconsciously following King Lear; 'but, upon my word, I do believe you're Flora.'

'Of course I am,' replied she.

And yet it is not Flora at all, thought John; Flora was slender, and timid, and of changing colour, and dewy-eyed; and had Flora such an Edinburgh accent? But he said none of these things, which was perhaps as well. What he said was, 'Then why are you a nun?'

'Such nonsense!' said Flora. 'I'm a sick-nurse; and I am here nursing your sister, with whom, between you and me, there is precious little the matter. But that is not the question. The point is: How do you come here? and are you not ashamed to show yourself?'

'Flora,' said John, sepulchrally, 'I haven't eaten anything for three days. Or, at least, I don't know what day it is; but I guess I'm starving.'

'You unhappy man!' she cried. 'Here, sit down and eat my supper; and I'll just run upstairs and see my patient; not but what I doubt she's fast asleep, for Maria is a MALADE IMAGINAIRE.'

With this specimen of the French, not of Stratford-atte-Bowe, but of a finishing establishment in Moray Place, she left John alone in his father's sanctum. He fell at once upon the food; and it is to be supposed that Flora had found her patient wakeful, and been detained with some details of nursing, for he had time to make a full end of all there was to eat, and not only to empty the teapot, but to fill it again from a kettle that was fitfully singing on his father's fire. Then he sat torpid, and pleased, and bewildered; his misfortunes were then half forgotten; his mind considering, not without regret, this unsentimental return to his old love.

He was thus engaged, when that bustling woman noiselessly re-entered.

'Have you eaten?' said she. 'Then tell me all about it.'

It was a long and (as the reader knows) a pitiful story; but Flora heard it with compressed lips. She was lost in none of those questionings of human destiny that have, from time to time, arrested the flight of my own pen; for women, such as she, are no philosophers, and behold the concrete only. And women, such as she, are very hard on the imperfect man.

'Very well,' said she, when he had done; 'then down upon your knees at once, and beg God's forgiveness.'

And the great baby plumped upon his knees, and did as he was bid; and none the worse for that! But while he was heartily enough requesting forgiveness on general principles, the rational side of him distinguished, and wondered if, perhaps, the apology were not due upon the other part. And when he rose again from that becoming exercise, he first eyed the face of his old love doubtfully, and then, taking heart, uttered his protest.

'I must say, Flora,' said he, 'in all this business, I can see very little fault of mine.'

'If you had written home,' replied the lady, 'there would have been none of it. If you had even gone to Murrayfield reasonably sober, you would never have slept there, and the worst would not have happened. Besides, the whole thing began years ago. You got into trouble, and when your father, honest man, was disappointed, you took the pet, or got afraid, and ran away from punishment. Well, you've had your own way of it, John, and I don't suppose you like it.'

'I sometimes fancy I'm not much better than a fool,' sighed John.

'My dear John,' said she, 'not much!'

He looked at her, and his eye fell. A certain anger rose within him; here was a Flora he disowned; she was hard; she was of a set colour; a settled, mature, undecorative manner; plain of speech, plain of habit - he had come near saying, plain of face. And this changeling called herself by the same name as the many-coloured, clinging maid of yore; she of the frequent laughter, and the many sighs, and the kind, stolen glances. And to make all worse, she took the upper hand with him, which (as John well knew) was not the true relation of the sexes. He steeled his heart against this sick-nurse.

'And how do you come to be here?' he asked.

She told him how she had nursed her father in his long illness, and when he died, and she was left alone, had taken to nurse others, partly from habit, partly to be of some service in the world; partly, it might be, for amusement. 'There's no accounting for taste,' said she. And she told him how she went largely to the houses of old friends, as the need arose; and how she was thus doubly welcome as an old friend first, and then as an experienced nurse, to whom doctors would confide the gravest cases.

'And, indeed, it's a mere farce my being here for poor Maria,' she continued; 'but your father takes her ailments to heart, and I cannot always be refusing him. We are great friends, your father and I; he was very kind to me long ago - ten years ago.

A strange stir came in John's heart. All this while had he been thinking only of himself? All this while, why had he not written to Flora? In penitential tenderness, he took her hand, and, to his awe and trouble, it remained in his, compliant. A voice told him this was Flora, after all - told him so quietly, yet with a thrill of singing.

‘And you never married?’ said he.

‘No, John; I never married,’ she replied.

The hall clock striking two recalled them to the sense of time.

‘And now,’ said she, ‘you have been fed and warmed, and I have heard your story, and now it’s high time to call your brother.’

‘Oh!’ cried John, chap-fallen; ‘do you think that absolutely necessary?’

‘I can’t keep you here; I am a stranger,’ said she. ‘Do you want to run away again? I thought you had enough of that.’

He bowed his head under the reproof. She despised him, he reflected, as he sat once more alone; a monstrous thing for a woman to despise a man; and strangest of all, she seemed to like him. Would his brother despise him, too? And would his brother like him?

And presently the brother appeared, under Flora’s escort; and, standing afar off beside the doorway, eyed the hero of this tale.

‘So this is you?’ he said, at length.

‘Yes, Alick, it’s me - it’s John,’ replied the elder brother, feebly.

‘And how did you get in here?’ inquired the younger.

‘Oh, I had my pass-key,’ says John.

‘The deuce you had!’ said Alexander. ‘Ah, you lived in a better world! There are no pass-keys going now.’

‘Well, father was always averse to them,’ sighed John. And the conversation then broke down, and the brothers looked askance at one another in silence.

‘Well, and what the devil are we to do?’ said Alexander. ‘I suppose if the authorities got wind of you, you would be taken up?’

‘It depends on whether they’ve found the body or not,’ returned John. ‘And then there’s that cabman, to be sure!’

‘Oh, bother the body!’ said Alexander. ‘I mean about the other thing. That’s serious.’

‘Is that what my father spoke about?’ asked John. ‘I don’t even know what it is.’

‘About your robbing your bank in California, of course,’ replied Alexander.

It was plain, from Flora’s face, that this was the first she had heard of it; it was plainer still, from John’s, that he was innocent.

‘I!’ he exclaimed. ‘I rob my bank! My God! Flora, this is too much; even you must allow that.’

‘Meaning you didn’t?’ asked Alexander.

‘I never robbed a soul in all my days,’ cried John: ‘except my father, if you call that robbery; and I brought him back the money in this room, and he wouldn’t even take it!’

'Look here, John,' said his brother, 'let us have no misunderstanding upon this. Macewen saw my father; he told him a bank you had worked for in San Francisco was wiring over the habitable globe to have you collared - that it was supposed you had nailed thousands; and it was dead certain you had nailed three hundred. So Macewen said, and I wish you would be careful how you answer. I may tell you also, that your father paid the three hundred on the spot.'

'Three hundred?' repeated John. 'Three hundred pounds, you mean? That's fifteen hundred dollars. Why, then, it's Kirkman!' he broke out. 'Thank Heaven! I can explain all that. I gave them to Kirkman to pay for me the night before I left - fifteen hundred dollars, and a letter to the manager. What do they suppose I would steal fifteen hundred dollars for? I'm rich; I struck it rich in stocks. It's the silliest stuff I ever heard of. All that's needful is to cable to the manager: Kirkman has the fifteen hundred - find Kirkman. He was a fellow-clerk of mine, and a hard case; but to do him justice, I didn't think he was as hard as this.'

'And what do you say to that, Alick?' asked Flora.

'I say the cablegram shall go to-night!' cried Alexander, with energy. 'Answer prepaid, too. If this can be cleared away - and upon my word I do believe it can - we shall all be able to hold up our heads again. Here, you John, you stick down the address of your bank manager. You, Flora, you can pack John into my bed, for which I have no further use to- night. As for me, I am off to the post-office, and thence to the High Street about the dead body. The police ought to know, you see, and they ought to know through John; and I can tell them some rigmarole about my brother being a man of highly nervous organisation, and the rest of it. And then, I'll tell you what, John - did you notice the name upon the cab?'

John gave the name of the driver, which, as I have not been able to command the vehicle, I here suppress.

'Well,' resumed Alexander, 'I'll call round at their place before I come back, and pay your shot for you. In that way, before breakfast-time, you'll be as good as new.'

John murmured inarticulate thanks. To see his brother thus energetic in his service moved him beyond expression; if he could not utter what he felt, he showed it legibly in his face; and Alexander read it there, and liked it the better in that dumb delivery.

'But there's one thing,' said the latter, 'cablegrams are dear; and I dare say you remember enough of the governor to guess the state of my finances.'

'The trouble is,' said John, 'that all my stamps are in that beastly house.'

'All your what?' asked Alexander.

‘Stamps - money,’ explained John. ‘It’s an American expression; I’m afraid I contracted one or two.’

‘I have some,’ said Flora. ‘I have a pound note upstairs.’

‘My dear Flora,’ returned Alexander, ‘a pound note won’t see us very far; and besides, this is my father’s business, and I shall be very much surprised if it isn’t my father who pays for it.’

‘I would not apply to him yet; I do not think that can be wise,’ objected Flora.

‘You have a very imperfect idea of my resources, and not at all of my effrontery,’ replied Alexander. ‘Please observe.’

He put John from his way, chose a stout knife among the supper things, and with surprising quickness broke into his father’s drawer.

‘There’s nothing easier when you come to try,’ he observed, pocketing the money.

‘I wish you had not done that,’ said Flora. ‘You will never hear the last of it.’

‘Oh, I don’t know,’ returned the young man; ‘the governor is human after all. And now, John, let me see your famous pass- key. Get into bed, and don’t move for any one till I come back. They won’t mind you not answering when they knock; I generally don’t myself.’

CHAPTER IX - IN WHICH MR. NICHOLSON ACCEPTS THE PRINCIPLE OF AN ALLOWANCE

IN spite of the horrors of the day and the tea-drinking of the night, John slept the sleep of infancy. He was awakened by the maid, as it might have been ten years ago, tapping at the door. The winter sunrise was painting the east; and as the window was to the back of the house, it shone into the room with many strange colours of refracted light. Without, the houses were all cleanly roofed with snow; the garden walls were coped with it a foot in height; the greens lay glittering. Yet strange as snow had grown to John during his years upon the Bay of San Francisco, it was what he saw within that most affected him. For it was to his own room that Alexander had been promoted; there was the old paper with the device of flowers, in which a cunning fancy might yet detect the face of Skinny Jim, of the Academy, John's former dominie; there was the old chest of drawers; there were the chairs - one, two, three - three as before. Only the carpet was new, and the litter of Alexander's clothes and books and drawing materials, and a pencil-drawing on the wall, which (in John's eyes) appeared a marvel of proficiency.

He was thus lying, and looking, and dreaming, hanging, as it were, between two epochs of his life, when Alexander came to the door, and made his presence known in a loud whisper. John let him in, and jumped back into the warm bed.

'Well, John,' said Alexander, 'the cablegram is sent in your name, and twenty words of answer paid. I have been to the cab office and paid your cab, even saw the old gentleman himself, and properly apologised. He was mighty placable, and indicated his belief you had been drinking. Then I knocked up old Macewen out of bed, and explained affairs to him as he sat and shivered in a dressing-gown. And before that I had been to the High Street, where they have heard nothing of your dead body, so that I incline to the idea that you dreamed it.'

'Catch me!' said John.

'Well, the police never do know anything,' assented Alexander; 'and at any rate, they have despatched a man to inquire and to recover your trousers and your money, so that really your bill is now fairly clean; and I see but one lion in your path - the governor.'

'I'll be turned out again, you'll see,' said John, dismally.

'I don't imagine so,' returned the other; 'not if you do what Flora and I have arranged; and your business now is to dress, and lose no time about it. Is your watch right? Well, you have a quarter of an hour. By five minutes before the half- hour you must be at table, in your old seat, under Uncle Duthie's picture. Flora will be there to keep you countenance; and we shall see what we shall see.'

'Wouldn't it be wiser for me to stay in bed?' said John.

'If you mean to manage your own concerns, you can do precisely what you like,' replied Alexander; 'but if you are not in your place five minutes before the half-hour I wash my hands of you, for one.'

And thereupon he departed. He had spoken warmly, but the truth is, his heart was somewhat troubled. And as he hung over the balusters, watching for his father to appear, he had hard ado to keep himself braced for the encounter that must follow.

'If he takes it well, I shall be lucky,' he reflected.

'If he takes it ill, why it'll be a herring across John's tracks, and perhaps all for the best. He's a confounded muff, this brother of mine, but he seems a decent soul.'

At that stage a door opened below with a certain emphasis, and Mr. Nicholson was seen solemnly to descend the stairs, and pass into his own apartment. Alexander followed, quaking inwardly, but with a steady face. He knocked, was bidden to enter, and found his father standing in front of the forced drawer, to which he pointed as he spoke.

'This is a most extraordinary thing,' said he; 'I have been robbed!'

'I was afraid you would notice it,' observed his son; 'it made such a beastly hash of the table.'

'You were afraid I would notice it?' repeated Mr. Nicholson.
'And, pray, what may that mean?'

'That I was a thief, sir,' returned Alexander. 'I took all the money in case the servants should get hold of it; and here is the change, and a note of my expenditure. You were gone to bed, you see, and I did not feel at liberty to knock you up; but I think when you have heard the circumstances, you will do me justice. The fact is, I have reason to believe there has been some dreadful error about my brother John; the sooner it can be cleared up the better for all parties; it was a piece of business, sir - and so I took it, and decided, on my own responsibility, to send a telegram to San Francisco. Thanks to my quickness we may hear to-night. There appears to be no doubt, sir, that John has been abominably used.'

'When did this take place?' asked the father.

'Last night, sir, after you were asleep,' was the reply.

'It's most extraordinary,' said Mr. Nicholson. 'Do you mean to say you have been out all night?'

'All night, as you say, sir. I have been to the telegraph and the police office, and Mr. Macewen's. Oh, I had my hands full,' said Alexander.

'Very irregular,' said the father. 'You think of no one but yourself.'

‘I do not see that I have much to gain in bringing back my elder brother,’ returned Alexander, shrewdly.

The answer pleased the old man; he smiled. ‘Well, well, I will go into this after breakfast,’ said he.

‘I’m sorry about the table,’ said the son.

‘The table is a small matter; I think nothing of that,’ said the father.

‘It’s another example,’ continued the son, ‘of the awkwardness of a man having no money of his own. If I had a proper allowance, like other fellows of my age, this would have been quite unnecessary.’

‘A proper allowance!’ repeated his father, in tones of blighting sarcasm, for the expression was not new to him. ‘I have never grudged you money for any proper purpose.’

‘No doubt, no doubt,’ said Alexander, ‘but then you see you aren’t always on the spot to have the thing explained to you. Last night, for instance - ‘

‘You could have wakened me last night,’ interrupted his father.

‘Was it not some similar affair that first got John into a mess?’ asked the son, skilfully evading the point.

But the father was not less adroit. ‘And pray, sir, how did you come and go out of the house?’ he asked.

‘I forgot to lock the door, it seems,’ replied Alexander.

‘I have had cause to complain of that too often,’ said Mr. Nicholson. ‘But still I do not understand. Did you keep the servants up?’

‘I propose to go into all that at length after breakfast,’ returned Alexander. ‘There is the half-hour going; we must not keep Miss Mackenzie waiting.’

And greatly daring, he opened the door.

Even Alexander, who, it must have been perceived was on terms of comparative freedom with his parent - even Alexander had never before dared to cut short an interview in this high- handed fashion. But the truth is, the very mass of his son’s delinquencies daunted the old gentleman. He was like the man with the cart of apples - this was beyond him! That Alexander should have spoiled his table, taken his money, stayed out all night, and then coolly acknowledged all, was something undreamed of in the Nicholsonian philosophy, and transcended comment. The return of the change, which the old gentleman still carried in his hand, had been a feature of imposing impudence; it had dealt him a staggering blow. Then there was the reference to John’s original flight - a subject which he always kept resolutely curtained in his own mind; for he was a man who loved to have made no mistakes, and when he feared he might have made one kept the papers sealed. In view of all these surprises and reminders, and of his son’s composed and masterful demeanour, there began to creep on Mr. Nicholson a sickly misgiving. He seemed beyond his depth; if he did or said anything, he might come to regret it. The young man, besides, as he had pointed out himself, was playing a generous part. And if wrong had been done - and done to one who was, after, and in spite of, all, a Nicholson - it should certainly be righted.

All things considered, monstrous as it was to be cut short in his inquiries, the old gentleman submitted, pocketed the change, and followed his son into the dining-room. During these few steps he once more mentally revolted, and once more, and this time finally, laid down his arms: a still, small voice in his bosom having informed him authentically of a piece of news; that he was afraid of Alexander. The strange thing was that he was pleased to be afraid of him. He was proud of his son; he might be proud of him; the boy had character and grit, and knew what he was doing.

These were his reflections as he turned the corner of the dining-room door. Miss Mackenzie was in the place of honour, conjuring with a tea-pot and a cosy; and, behold! there was another person present, a large, portly, whiskered man of a very comfortable and respectable air, who now rose from his seat and came forward, holding out his hand.

'Good-morning, father,' said he.

Of the contention of feeling that ran high in Mr. Nicholson's starched bosom, no outward sign was visible; nor did he delay long to make a choice of conduct. Yet in that interval he had reviewed a great field of possibilities both past and future; whether it was possible he had not been perfectly wise in his treatment of John; whether it was possible that John was innocent; whether, if he turned John out a second time, as his outraged authority suggested, it was possible to avoid a scandal; and whether, if he went to that extremity, it was possible that Alexander might rebel.

'Hum!' said Mr. Nicholson, and put his hand, limp and dead, into John's.

And then, in an embarrassed silence, all took their places; and even the paper - from which it was the old gentleman's habit to suck mortification daily, as he marked the decline of our institutions - even the paper lay furled by his side.

But presently Flora came to the rescue. She slid into the silence with a technicality, asking if John still took his old inordinate amount of sugar. Thence it was but a step to the burning question of the day; and in tones a little shaken, she commented on the interval since she had last made tea for the prodigal, and congratulated him on his return. And then addressing Mr. Nicholson, she congratulated him also in a manner that defied his ill-humour; and from that launched into the tale of John's misadventures, not without some suitable suppressions.

Gradually Alexander joined; between them, whether he would or no, they forced a word or two from John; and these fell so tremulously, and spoke so eloquently of a mind oppressed with dread, that Mr. Nicholson relented. At length even he contributed a question: and before the meal was at an end all four were talking even freely.

Prayers followed, with the servants gaping at this new-comer whom no one had admitted; and after prayers there came that moment on the clock which was the signal for Mr. Nicholson's departure.

'John,' said he, 'of course you will stay here. Be very careful not to excite Maria, if Miss Mackenzie thinks it desirable that you should see her. Alexander, I wish to speak with you alone.' And then, when they were both in the back room: 'You need not come to the office to-day,' said he; 'you can stay and amuse your brother, and I think it would be respectful to call on Uncle Greig. And by the bye' (this spoken with a certain- dare we say? - bashfulness), 'I agree to concede the principle of an allowance; and I will consult with Doctor Durie, who is quite a man of the world and has sons of his own, as to the amount. And, my fine fellow, you may consider yourself in luck!' he added, with a smile.

'Thank you,' said Alexander.

Before noon a detective had restored to John his money, and brought news, sad enough in truth, but perhaps the least sad possible. Alan had been found in his own house in Regent Terrace, under care of the terrified butler. He was quite mad, and instead of going to prison, had gone to Morningside Asylum. The murdered man, it appeared, was an evicted tenant who had for nearly a year pursued his late landlord with threats and insults; and beyond this, the cause and details of the tragedy were lost.

When Mr. Nicholson returned from dinner they were able to put a despatch into his hands: 'John V. Nicholson, Randolph Crescent, Edinburgh. - Kirkham has disappeared; police looking for him. All understood. Keep mind quite easy. - Austin.' Having had this explained to him, the old gentleman took down the cellar key and departed for two bottles of the 1820 port. Uncle Greig dined there that day, and Cousin Robina, and, by an odd chance, Mr. Macewen; and the presence of these strangers relieved what might have been otherwise a somewhat strained relation. Ere they departed, the family was welded once more into a fair semblance of unity.

In the end of April John led Flora - or, as more descriptive, Flora led John - to the altar, if altar that may be called which was indeed the drawing-room mantel-piece in Mr. Nicholson's house, with the Reverend Dr. Durie posted on the hearthrug in the guise of Hymen's priest.

The last I saw of them, on a recent visit to the north, was at a dinner-party in the house of my old friend Gellatly Macbride; and after we had, in classic phrase, ‘rejoined the ladies,’ I had an opportunity to overhear Flora conversing with another married woman on the much canvassed matter of a husband’s tobacco.

‘Oh yes!’ said she; ‘I only allow Mr. Nicholson four cigars a day. Three he smokes at fixed times - after a meal, you know, my dear; and the fourth he can take when he likes with any friend.’

‘Bravo!’ thought I to myself; ‘this is the wife for my friend John!’

THE BODY-SNATCHER

EVERY night in the year, four of us sat in the small parlour of the George at Debenham - the undertaker, and the landlord, and Fettes, and myself. Sometimes there would be more; but blow high, blow low, come rain or snow or frost, we four would be each planted in his own particular arm-chair. Fettes was an old drunken Scotchman, a man of education obviously, and a man of some property, since he lived in idleness. He had come to Debenham years ago, while still young, and by a mere continuance of living had grown to be an adopted townsman. His blue camlet cloak was a local antiquity, like the church-spire. His place in the parlour at the George, his absence from church, his old, crapulous, disreputable vices, were all things of course in Debenham. He had some vague Radical opinions and some fleeting infidelities, which he would now and again set forth and emphasise with tottering slaps upon the table. He drank rum - five glasses regularly every evening; and for the greater portion of his nightly visit to the George sat, with his glass in his right hand, in a state of melancholy alcoholic saturation. We called him the Doctor, for he was supposed to have some special knowledge of medicine, and had been known, upon a pinch, to set a fracture or reduce a dislocation; but beyond these slight particulars, we had no knowledge of his character and antecedents.

One dark winter night - it had struck nine some time before the landlord joined us - there was a sick man in the George, a great neighbouring proprietor suddenly struck down with apoplexy on his way to Parliament; and the great man's still greater London doctor had been telegraphed to his bedside. It was the first time that such a thing had happened in Debenham, for the railway was but newly open, and we were all proportionately moved by the occurrence.

'He's come,' said the landlord, after he had filled and lighted his pipe.

'He?' said I. 'Who? - not the doctor?'

'Himself,' replied our host.

'What is his name?'

'Doctor Macfarlane,' said the landlord.

Fettes was far through his third tumbler, stupidly fuddled, now nodding over, now staring mazily around him; but at the last word he seemed to awaken, and repeated the name 'Macfarlane' twice, quietly enough the first time, but with sudden emotion at the second.

'Yes,' said the landlord, 'that's his name, Doctor Wolfe Macfarlane.'

Fettes became instantly sober; his eyes awoke, his voice became clear, loud, and steady, his language forcible and earnest. We were all startled by the transformation, as if a man had risen from the dead.

‘I beg your pardon,’ he said, ‘I am afraid I have not been paying much attention to your talk. Who is this Wolfe Macfarlane?’ And then, when he had heard the landlord out, ‘It cannot be, it cannot be,’ he added; ‘and yet I would like well to see him face to face.’

‘Do you know him, Doctor?’ asked the undertaker, with a gasp.

‘God forbid!’ was the reply. ‘And yet the name is a strange one; it were too much to fancy two. Tell me, landlord, is he old?’

‘Well,’ said the host, ‘he’s not a young man, to be sure, and his hair is white; but he looks younger than you.’

‘He is older, though; years older. But,’ with a slap upon the table, ‘it’s the rum you see in my face - rum and sin. This man, perhaps, may have an easy conscience and a good digestion. Conscience! Hear me speak. You would think I was some good, old, decent Christian, would you not? But no, not I; I never canted. Voltaire might have canted if he’d stood in my shoes; but the brains’ - with a rattling fillip on his bald head - ‘the brains were clear and active, and I saw and made no deductions.’

‘If you know this doctor,’ I ventured to remark, after a somewhat awful pause, ‘I should gather that you do not share the landlord’s good opinion.’

Fettes paid no regard to me.

‘Yes,’ he said, with sudden decision, ‘I must see him face to face.’

There was another pause, and then a door was closed rather sharply on the first floor, and a step was heard upon the stair.

‘That’s the doctor,’ cried the landlord. ‘Look sharp, and you can catch him.’

It was but two steps from the small parlour to the door of the old George Inn; the wide oak staircase landed almost in the street; there was room for a Turkey rug and nothing more between the threshold and the last round of the descent; but this little space was every evening brilliantly lit up, not only by the light upon the stair and the great signal-lamp below the sign, but by the warm radiance of the bar-room window. The George thus brightly advertised itself to passers-by in the cold street. Fettes walked steadily to the spot, and we, who were hanging behind, beheld the two men meet, as one of them had phrased it, face to face. Dr. Macfarlane was alert and vigorous. His white hair set off his pale and placid, although energetic, countenance. He was richly dressed in the finest of broadcloth and the whitest of linen, with a great gold watch-chain, and studs and spectacles of the same precious material. He wore a broad- folded tie, white and speckled with lilac, and he carried on his arm a comfortable driving-coat of fur. There was no doubt but he became his years, breathing, as he did, of wealth and consideration; and it was a surprising contrast to see our parlour sot - bald, dirty, pimpled, and robed in his old camlet cloak - confront him at the bottom of the stairs.

'Macfarlane!' he said somewhat loudly, more like a herald than a friend.

The great doctor pulled up short on the fourth step, as though the familiarity of the address surprised and somewhat shocked his dignity.

'Toddy Macfarlane!' repeated Fettes.

The London man almost staggered. He stared for the swiftest of seconds at the man before him, glanced behind him with a sort of scare, and then in a startled whisper, 'Fettes!' he said, 'You!'

'Ay,' said the other, 'me! Did you think I was dead too? We are not so easy shut of our acquaintance.'

'Hush, hush!' exclaimed the doctor. 'Hush, hush! this meeting is so unexpected - I can see you are unmanned. I hardly knew you, I confess, at first; but I am overjoyed - overjoyed to have this opportunity. For the present it must be how-d'ye-do and good-bye in one, for my fly is waiting, and I must not fail the train; but you shall - let me see - yes - you shall give me your address, and you can count on early news of me. We must do something for you, Fettes. I fear you are out at elbows; but we must see to that for auld lang syne, as once we sang at suppers.'

'Money!' cried Fettes; 'money from you! The money that I had from you is lying where I cast it in the rain.'

Dr. Macfarlane had talked himself into some measure of superiority and confidence, but the uncommon energy of this refusal cast him back into his first confusion.

A horrible, ugly look came and went across his almost venerable countenance. 'My dear fellow,' he said, 'be it as you please; my last thought is to offend you. I would intrude on none. I will leave you my address, however - '

'I do not wish it - I do not wish to know the roof that shelters you,' interrupted the other. 'I heard your name; I feared it might be you; I wished to know if, after all, there were a God; I know now that there is none. Begone!'

He still stood in the middle of the rug, between the stair and doorway; and the great London physician, in order to escape, would be forced to step to one side. It was plain that he hesitated before the thought of this humiliation. White as he was, there was a dangerous glitter in his spectacles; but while he still paused uncertain, he became aware that the driver of his fly was peering in from the street at this unusual scene and caught a glimpse at the same time of our little body from the parlour, huddled by the corner of the bar. The presence of so many witnesses decided him at once to flee. He crouched together, brushing on the wainscot, and made a dart like a serpent, striking for the door. But his tribulation was not yet entirely at an end, for even as he was passing Fettes clutched him by the arm and these words came in a whisper, and yet painfully distinct, 'Have you seen it again?'

The great rich London doctor cried out aloud with a sharp, throttling cry; he dashed his questioner across the open space, and, with his hands over his head, fled out of the door like a detected thief. Before it had occurred to one of us to make a movement the fly was already rattling toward the station. The scene was over like a dream, but the dream had left proofs and traces of its passage. Next day the servant found the fine gold spectacles broken on the threshold, and that very night we were all standing breathless by the bar- room window, and Fettes at our side, sober, pale, and resolute in look.

'God protect us, Mr. Fettes!' said the landlord, coming first into possession of his customary senses. 'What in the universe is all this? These are strange things you have been saying.'

Fettes turned toward us; he looked us each in succession in the face. 'See if you can hold your tongues,' said he. 'That man Macfarlane is not safe to cross; those that have done so already have repented it too late.'

And then, without so much as finishing his third glass, far less waiting for the other two, he bade us good-bye and went forth, under the lamp of the hotel, into the black night.

We three turned to our places in the parlour, with the big red fire and four clear candles; and as we recapitulated what had passed, the first chill of our surprise soon changed into a glow of curiosity. We sat late; it was the latest session I have known in the old George. Each man, before we parted, had his theory that he was bound to prove; and none of us had any nearer business in this world than to track out the past of our condemned companion, and surprise the secret that he shared with the great London doctor. It is no great boast, but I believe I was a better hand at worming out a story than either of my fellows at the George; and perhaps there is now no other man alive who could narrate to you the following foul and unnatural events.

In his young days Fettes studied medicine in the schools of Edinburgh. He had talent of a kind, the talent that picks up swiftly what it hears and readily retails it for its own. He worked little at home; but he was civil, attentive, and intelligent in the presence of his masters. They soon picked him out as a lad who listened closely and remembered well; nay, strange as it seemed to me when I first heard it, he was in those days well favoured, and pleased by his exterior. There was, at that period, a certain extramural teacher of anatomy, whom I shall here designate by the letter K. His name was subsequently too well known. The man who bore it skulked through the streets of Edinburgh in disguise, while the mob that applauded at the execution of Burke called loudly for the blood of his employer. But Mr. K- was then at the top of his vogue; he enjoyed a popularity due partly to his own talent and address, partly to the incapacity of his rival, the university professor. The students, at least, swore by his name, and Fettes believed himself, and was believed by others, to have laid the foundations of success when he had acquired the favour of this meteorically famous man. Mr. K- was a BON VIVANT as well as an accomplished teacher; he liked a sly illusion no less than a careful preparation. In both capacities Fettes enjoyed and deserved his notice, and by the second year of his attendance he held the half-regular position of second demonstrator or sub- assistant in his class.

In this capacity the charge of the theatre and lecture-room devolved in particular upon his shoulders. He had to answer for the cleanliness of the premises and the conduct of the other students, and it was a part of his duty to supply, receive, and divide the various subjects. It was with a view to this last - at that time very delicate - affair that he was lodged by Mr. K- in the same wynd, and at last in the same building, with the dissecting-rooms. Here, after a night of turbulent pleasures, his hand still tottering, his sight still misty and confused, he would be called out of bed in the black hours before the winter dawn by the unclean and desperate interlopers who supplied the table. He would open the door to these men, since infamous throughout the land. He would help them with their tragic burden, pay them their sordid price, and remain alone, when they were gone, with the unfriendly relics of humanity. From such a scene he would return to snatch another hour or two of slumber, to repair the abuses of the night, and refresh himself for the labours of the day.

Few lads could have been more insensible to the impressions of a life thus passed among the ensigns of mortality. His mind was closed against all general considerations. He was incapable of interest in the fate and fortunes of another, the slave of his own desires and low ambitions. Cold, light, and selfish in the last resort, he had that modicum of prudence, miscalled morality, which keeps a man from inconvenient drunkenness or punishable theft. He coveted, besides, a measure of consideration from his masters and his fellow-pupils, and he had no desire to fail conspicuously in the external parts of life. Thus he made it his pleasure to gain some distinction in his studies, and day after day rendered unimpeachable eye-service to his employer, Mr. K-. For his day of work he indemnified himself by nights of roaring, blackguardly enjoyment; and when that balance had been struck, the organ that he called his conscience declared itself content.

The supply of subjects was a continual trouble to him as well as to his master. In that large and busy class, the raw material of the anatomists kept perpetually running out; and the business thus rendered necessary was not only unpleasant in itself, but threatened dangerous consequences to all who were concerned. It was the policy of Mr. K- to ask no questions in his dealings with the trade. 'They bring the body, and we pay the price,' he used to say, dwelling on the alliteration - 'QUID PRO QUO.' And, again, and somewhat profanely, 'Ask no questions,' he would tell his assistants, 'for conscience' sake.' There was no understanding that the subjects were provided by the crime of murder. Had that idea been broached to him in words, he would have recoiled in horror; but the lightness of his speech upon so grave a matter was, in itself, an offence against good manners, and a temptation to the men with whom he dealt. Fettes, for instance, had often remarked to himself upon the singular freshness of the bodies. He had been struck again and again by the hang-dog, abominable looks of the ruffians who came to him before the dawn; and putting things together clearly in his private thoughts, he perhaps attributed a meaning too immoral and too categorical to the unguarded counsels of his master. He understood his duty, in short, to have three branches: to take what was brought, to pay the price, and to avert the eye from any evidence of crime.

One November morning this policy of silence was put sharply to the test. He had been awake all night with a racking toothache - pacing his room like a caged beast or throwing himself in fury on his bed - and had fallen at last into that profound, uneasy slumber that so often follows on a night of pain, when he was awakened by the third or fourth angry repetition of the concerted signal. There was a thin, bright moonshine; it was bitter cold, windy, and frosty; the town had not yet awakened, but an indefinable stir already preluded the noise and business of the day. The ghouls had come later than usual, and they seemed more than usually eager to be gone. Fettes, sick with sleep, lighted them upstairs. He heard their grumbling Irish voices through a dream; and as they stripped the sack from their sad merchandise he leaned dozing, with his shoulder propped against the wall; he had to shake himself to find the men their money. As he did so his eyes lighted on the dead face. He started; he took two steps nearer, with the candle raised.

'God Almighty!' he cried. 'That is Jane Galbraith!'

The men answered nothing, but they shuffled nearer the door.

'I know her, I tell you,' he continued. 'She was alive and hearty yesterday. It's impossible she can be dead; it's impossible you should have got this body fairly.'

'Sure, sir, you're mistaken entirely,' said one of the men.

But the other looked Fettes darkly in the eyes, and demanded the money on the spot.

It was impossible to misconceive the threat or to exaggerate the danger. The lad's heart failed him. He stammered some excuses, counted out the sum, and saw his hateful visitors depart. No sooner were they gone than he hastened to confirm his doubts. By a dozen unquestionable marks he identified the girl he had jested with the day before. He saw, with horror, marks upon her body that might well betoken violence. A panic seized him, and he took refuge in his room. There he reflected at length over the discovery that he had made; considered soberly the bearing of Mr. K-'s instructions and the danger to himself of interference in so serious a business, and at last, in sore perplexity, determined to wait for the advice of his immediate superior, the class assistant.

This was a young doctor, Wolfe Macfarlane, a high favourite among all the reckless students, clever, dissipated, and unscrupulous to the last degree. He had travelled and studied abroad. His manners were agreeable and a little forward. He was an authority on the stage, skilful on the ice or the links with skate or golf-club; he dressed with nice audacity, and, to put the finishing touch upon his glory, he kept a gig and a strong trotting-horse. With Fettes he was on terms of intimacy; indeed, their relative positions called for some community of life; and when subjects were scarce the pair would drive far into the country in Macfarlane's gig, visit and desecrate some lonely graveyard, and return before dawn with their booty to the door of the dissecting-room.

On that particular morning Macfarlane arrived somewhat earlier than his wont. Fettes heard him, and met him on the stairs, told him his story, and showed him the cause of his alarm. Macfarlane examined the marks on her body.

'Yes,' he said with a nod, 'it looks fishy.'

'Well, what should I do?' asked Fettes.

'Do?' repeated the other. 'Do you want to do anything? Least said soonest mended, I should say.'

'Some one else might recognise her,' objected Fettes. 'She was as well known as the Castle Rock.'

'We'll hope not,' said Macfarlane, 'and if anybody does - well, you didn't, don't you see, and there's an end. The fact is, this has been going on too long. Stir up the mud, and you'll get K- into the most unholy trouble; you'll be in a shocking box yourself. So will I, if you come to that. I should like to know how any one of us would look, or what the devil we should have to say for ourselves, in any Christian witness-box. For me, you know there's one thing certain - that, practically speaking, all our subjects have been murdered.'

‘Macfarlane!’ cried Fettes.

‘Come now!’ sneered the other. ‘As if you hadn’t suspected it yourself!’

‘Suspecting is one thing - ‘

‘And proof another. Yes, I know; and I’m as sorry as you are this should have come here,’ tapping the body with his cane. ‘The next best thing for me is not to recognise it; and,’ he added coolly, ‘I don’t. You may, if you please. I don’t dictate, but I think a man of the world would do as I do; and I may add, I fancy that is what K- would look for at our hands. The question is, Why did he choose us two for his assistants? And I answer, because he didn’t want old wives.’

This was the tone of all others to affect the mind of a lad like Fettes. He agreed to imitate Macfarlane. The body of the unfortunate girl was duly dissected, and no one remarked or appeared to recognise her.

One afternoon, when his day’s work was over, Fettes dropped into a popular tavern and found Macfarlane sitting with a stranger. This was a small man, very pale and dark, with coal-black eyes. The cut of his features gave a promise of intellect and refinement which was but feebly realised in his manners, for he proved, upon a nearer acquaintance, coarse, vulgar, and stupid. He exercised, however, a very remarkable control over Macfarlane; issued orders like the Great Bashaw; became inflamed at the least discussion or delay, and commented rudely on the servility with which he was obeyed. This most offensive person took a fancy to Fettes on the spot, plied him with drinks, and honoured him with unusual confidences on his past career. If a tenth part of what he confessed were true, he was a very loathsome rogue; and the lad’s vanity was tickled by the attention of so experienced a man.

‘I’m a pretty bad fellow myself,’ the stranger remarked, ‘but Macfarlane is the boy - Toddy Macfarlane I call him. Toddy, order your friend another glass.’ Or it might be, ‘Toddy, you jump up and shut the door.’ ‘Toddy hates me,’ he said again. ‘Oh yes, Toddy, you do!’

‘Don’t you call me that confounded name,’ growled Macfarlane.

‘Hear him! Did you ever see the lads play knife? He would like to do that all over my body,’ remarked the stranger.

‘We medicals have a better way than that,’ said Fettes.
‘When we dislike a dead friend of ours, we dissect him.’

Macfarlane looked up sharply, as though this jest were scarcely to his mind.

The afternoon passed. Gray, for that was the stranger’s name, invited Fettes to join them at dinner, ordered a feast so sumptuous that the tavern was thrown into commotion, and when all was done commanded Macfarlane to settle the bill. It was late before they separated; the man Gray was incapably drunk. Macfarlane, sobered by his fury, chewed the cud of the money he had been forced to squander and the slights he had been obliged to swallow. Fettes, with various liquors singing in his head, returned home with devious footsteps and a mind entirely in abeyance. Next day Macfarlane was absent from the class, and Fettes smiled to himself as he imagined him still squiring the intolerable Gray from tavern to tavern. As soon as the hour of liberty had struck he posted from place to place in quest of his last night's companions. He could find them, however, nowhere; so returned early to his rooms, went early to bed, and slept the sleep of the just.

At four in the morning he was awakened by the well-known signal. Descending to the door, he was filled with astonishment to find Macfarlane with his gig, and in the gig one of those long and ghastly packages with which he was so well acquainted.

'What?' he cried. 'Have you been out alone? How did you manage?'

But Macfarlane silenced him roughly, bidding him turn to business. When they had got the body upstairs and laid it on the table, Macfarlane made at first as if he were going away. Then he paused and seemed to hesitate; and then, 'You had better look at the face,' said he, in tones of some constraint. 'You had better,' he repeated, as Fettes only stared at him in wonder.

'But where, and how, and when did you come by it?' cried the other.

'Look at the face,' was the only answer.

Fettes was staggered; strange doubts assailed him. He looked from the young doctor to the body, and then back again. At last, with a start, he did as he was bidden. He had almost expected the sight that met his eyes, and yet the shock was cruel. To see, fixed in the rigidity of death and naked on that coarse layer of sackcloth, the man whom he had left well clad and full of meat and sin upon the threshold of a tavern, awoke, even in the thoughtless Fettes, some of the terrors of the conscience. It was a CRAS TIBI which re-echoed in his soul, that two whom he had known should have come to lie upon these icy tables. Yet these were only secondary thoughts. His first concern regarded Wolfe. Unprepared for a challenge so momentous, he knew not how to look his comrade in the face. He durst not meet his eye, and he had neither words nor voice at his command.

It was Macfarlane himself who made the first advance. He came up quietly behind and laid his hand gently but firmly on the other's shoulder.

'Richardson,' said he, 'may have the head.'

Now Richardson was a student who had long been anxious for that portion of the human subject to dissect. There was no answer, and the murderer resumed: ‘Talking of business, you must pay me; your accounts, you see, must tally.’

Fettes found a voice, the ghost of his own: ‘Pay you!’ he cried. ‘Pay you for that?’

‘Why, yes, of course you must. By all means and on every possible account, you must,’ returned the other. ‘I dare not give it for nothing, you dare not take it for nothing; it would compromise us both. This is another case like Jane Galbraith’s. The more things are wrong the more we must act as if all were right. Where does old K- keep his money?’

‘There,’ answered Fettes hoarsely, pointing to a cupboard in the corner.

‘Give me the key, then,’ said the other, calmly, holding out his hand.

There was an instant’s hesitation, and the die was cast. Macfarlane could not suppress a nervous twitch, the infinitesimal mark of an immense relief, as he felt the key between his fingers. He opened the cupboard, brought out pen and ink and a paper-book that stood in one compartment, and separated from the funds in a drawer a sum suitable to the occasion.

‘Now, look here,’ he said, ‘there is the payment made - first proof of your good faith: first step to your security. You have now to clinch it by a second. Enter the payment in your book, and then you for your part may defy the devil.’

The next few seconds were for Fettes an agony of thought; but in balancing his terrors it was the most immediate that triumphed. Any future difficulty seemed almost welcome if he could avoid a present quarrel with Macfarlane. He set down the candle which he had been carrying all this time, and with a steady hand entered the date, the nature, and the amount of the transaction.

‘And now,’ said Macfarlane, ‘it’s only fair that you should pocket the lucre. I’ve had my share already. By the bye, when a man of the world falls into a bit of luck, has a few shillings extra in his pocket - I’m ashamed to speak of it, but there’s a rule of conduct in the case. No treating, no purchase of expensive class-books, no squaring of old debts; borrow, don’t lend.’

‘Macfarlane,’ began Fettes, still somewhat hoarsely, ‘I have put my neck in a halter to oblige you.’

‘To oblige me?’ cried Wolfe. ‘Oh, come! You did, as near as I can see the matter, what you downright had to do in self- defence. Suppose I got into trouble, where would you be? This second little matter flows clearly from the first. Mr. Gray is the continuation of Miss Galbraith. You can’t begin and then stop. If you begin, you must keep on beginning; that’s the truth. No rest for the wicked.’

A horrible sense of blackness and the treachery of fate seized hold upon the soul of the unhappy student.

'My God!' he cried, 'but what have I done? and when did I begin? To be made a class assistant - in the name of reason, where's the harm in that? Service wanted the position; Service might have got it. Would HE have been where I am now?'

'My dear fellow,' said Macfarlane, 'what a boy you are! What harm HAS come to you? What harm CAN come to you if you hold your tongue? Why, man, do you know what this life is? There are two squads of us - the lions and the lambs. If you're a lamb, you'll come to lie upon these tables like Gray or Jane Galbraith; if you're a lion, you'll live and drive a horse like me, like K-, like all the world with any wit or courage. You're staggered at the first. But look at K-! My dear fellow, you're clever, you have pluck. I like you, and K- likes you. You were born to lead the hunt; and I tell you, on my honour and my experience of life, three days from now you'll laugh at all these scarecrows like a High School boy at a farce.'

And with that Macfarlane took his departure and drove off up the wynd in his gig to get under cover before daylight. Fettes was thus left alone with his regrets. He saw the miserable peril in which he stood involved. He saw, with inexpressible dismay, that there was no limit to his weakness, and that, from concession to concession, he had fallen from the arbiter of Macfarlane's destiny to his paid and helpless accomplice. He would have given the world to have been a little braver at the time, but it did not occur to him that he might still be brave. The secret of Jane Galbraith and the cursed entry in the day-book closed his mouth.

Hours passed; the class began to arrive; the members of the unhappy Gray were dealt out to one and to another, and received without remark. Richardson was made happy with the head; and before the hour of freedom rang Fettes trembled with exultation to perceive how far they had already gone toward safety.

For two days he continued to watch, with increasing joy, the dreadful process of disguise.

On the third day Macfarlane made his appearance. He had been ill, he said; but he made up for lost time by the energy with which he directed the students. To Richardson in particular he extended the most valuable assistance and advice, and that student, encouraged by the praise of the demonstrator, burned high with ambitious hopes, and saw the medal already in his grasp.

Before the week was out Macfarlane's prophecy had been fulfilled. Fettes had outlived his terrors and had forgotten his baseness. He began to plume himself upon his courage, and had so arranged the story in his mind that he could look back on these events with an unhealthy pride. Of his accomplice he saw but little. They met, of course, in the business of the class; they received their orders together from Mr. K-. At times they had a word or two in private, and Macfarlane was from first to last particularly kind and jovial. But it was plain that he avoided any reference to their common secret; and even when Fettes whispered to him that he had cast in his lot with the lions and foresworn the lambs, he only signed to him smilingly to hold his peace.

At length an occasion arose which threw the pair once more into a closer union. Mr. K- was again short of subjects; pupils were eager, and it was a part of this teacher's pretensions to be always well supplied. At the same time there came the news of a burial in the rustic graveyard of Glencorse. Time has little changed the place in question. It stood then, as now, upon a cross road, out of call of human habitations, and buried fathom deep in the foliage of six cedar trees. The cries of the sheep upon the neighbouring hills, the streamlets upon either hand, one loudly singing among pebbles, the other dripping furtively from pond to pond, the stir of the wind in mountainous old flowering chestnuts, and once in seven days the voice of the bell and the old tunes of the precentor, were the only sounds that disturbed the silence around the rural church. The Resurrection Man - to use a byname of the period - was not to be deterred by any of the sanctities of customary piety. It was part of his trade to despise and desecrate the scrolls and trumpets of old tombs, the paths worn by the feet of worshippers and mourners, and the offerings and the inscriptions of bereaved affection. To rustic neighbourhoods, where love is more than commonly tenacious, and where some bonds of blood or fellowship unite the entire society of a parish, the body-snatcher, far from being repelled by natural respect, was attracted by the ease and safety of the task. To bodies that had been laid in earth, in joyful expectation of a far different awakening, there came that hasty, lamp-lit, terror-haunted resurrection of the spade and mattock. The coffin was forced, the cerements torn, and the melancholy relics, clad in sackcloth, after being rattled for hours on moonless byways, were at length exposed to uttermost indignities before a class of gaping boys.

Somewhat as two vultures may swoop upon a dying lamb, Fettes and Macfarlane were to be let loose upon a grave in that green and quiet resting-place. The wife of a farmer, a woman who had lived for sixty years, and been known for nothing but good butter and a godly conversation, was to be rooted from her grave at midnight and carried, dead and naked, to that far-away city that she had always honoured with her Sunday's best; the place beside her family was to be empty till the crack of doom; her innocent and almost venerable members to be exposed to that last curiosity of the anatomist.

Late one afternoon the pair set forth, well wrapped in cloaks and furnished with a formidable bottle. It rained without remission - a cold, dense, lashing rain. Now and again there blew a puff of wind, but these sheets of falling water kept it down. Bottle and all, it was a sad and silent drive as far as Penicuik, where they were to spend the evening. They stopped once, to hide their implements in a thick bush not far from the churchyard, and once again at the Fisher's Tryst, to have a toast before the kitchen fire and vary their nips of whisky with a glass of ale. When they reached their journey's end the gig was housed, the horse was fed and comforted, and the two young doctors in a private room sat down to the best dinner and the best wine the house afforded. The lights, the fire, the beating rain upon the window, the cold, incongruous work that lay before them, added zest to their enjoyment of the meal. With every glass their cordiality increased. Soon Macfarlane handed a little pile of gold to his companion.

'A compliment,' he said. 'Between friends these little d-d accommodations ought to fly like pipe-lights.'

Fettes pocketed the money, and applauded the sentiment to the echo. 'You are a philosopher,' he cried. 'I was an ass till I knew you. You and K- between you, by the Lord Harry! but you'll make a man of me.'

'Of course we shall,' applauded Macfarlane. 'A man? I tell you, it required a man to back me up the other morning. There are some big, brawling, forty-year-old cowards who would have turned sick at the look of the d-d thing; but not you - you kept your head. I watched you.'

'Well, and why not?' Fettes thus vaunted himself. 'It was no affair of mine. There was nothing to gain on the one side but disturbance, and on the other I could count on your gratitude, don't you see?' And he slapped his pocket till the gold pieces rang.

Macfarlane somehow felt a certain touch of alarm at these unpleasant words. He may have regretted that he had taught his young companion so successfully, but he had no time to interfere, for the other noisily continued in this boastful strain:-

'The great thing is not to be afraid. Now, between you and me, I don't want to hang - that's practical; but for all cant, Macfarlane, I was born with a contempt. Hell, God, Devil, right, wrong, sin, crime, and all the old gallery of curiosities - they may frighten boys, but men of the world, like you and me, despise them. Here's to the memory of Gray!'

It was by this time growing somewhat late. The gig, according to order, was brought round to the door with both lamps brightly shining, and the young men had to pay their bill and take the road.

They announced that they were bound for Peebles, and drove in that direction till they were clear of the last houses of the town; then, extinguishing the lamps, returned upon their course, and followed a by-road toward Glencorse. There was no sound but that of their own passage, and the incessant, strident pouring of the rain. It was pitch dark; here and there a white gate or a white stone in the wall guided them for a short space across the night; but for the most part it was at a foot pace, and almost groping, that they picked their way through that resonant blackness to their solemn and isolated destination. In the sunken woods that traverse the neighbourhood of the burying- ground the last glimmer failed them, and it became necessary to kindle a match and re-illumine one of the lanterns of the gig. Thus, under the dripping trees, and environed by huge and moving shadows, they reached the scene of their unhallowed labours.

They were both experienced in such affairs, and powerful with the spade; and they had scarce been twenty minutes at their task before they were rewarded by a dull rattle on the coffin lid. At the same moment Macfarlane, having hurt his hand upon a stone, flung it carelessly above his head. The grave, in which they now stood almost to the shoulders, was close to the edge of the plateau of the graveyard; and the gig lamp had been propped, the better to illuminate their labours, against a tree, and on the immediate verge of the steep bank descending to the stream. Chance had taken a sure aim with the stone. Then came a clang of broken glass; night fell upon them; sounds alternately dull and ringing announced the bounding of the lantern down the bank, and its occasional collision with the trees. A stone or two, which it had dislodged in its descent, rattled behind it into the profundities of the glen; and then silence, like night, resumed its sway; and they might bend their hearing to its utmost pitch, but naught was to be heard except the rain, now marching to the wind, now steadily falling over miles of open country.

They were so nearly at an end of their abhorred task that they judged it wisest to complete it in the dark. The coffin was exhumed and broken open; the body inserted in the dripping sack and carried between them to the gig; one mounted to keep it in its place, and the other, taking the horse by the mouth, groped along by wall and bush until they reached the wider road by the Fisher’s Tryst. Here was a faint, diffused radiancy, which they hailed like daylight; by that they pushed the horse to a good pace and began to rattle along merrily in the direction of the town.

They had both been wetted to the skin during their operations, and now, as the gig jumped among the deep ruts, the thing that stood propped between them fell now upon one and now upon the other. At every repetition of the horrid contact each instinctively repelled it with the greater haste; and the process, natural although it was, began to tell upon the nerves of the companions. Macfarlane made some ill-favoured jest about the farmer's wife, but it came hollowly from his lips, and was allowed to drop in silence. Still their unnatural burden bumped from side to side; and now the head would be laid, as if in confidence, upon their shoulders, and now the drenching sack-cloth would flap icily about their faces. A creeping chill began to possess the soul of Fettes. He peered at the bundle, and it seemed somehow larger than at first. All over the country-side, and from every degree of distance, the farm dogs accompanied their passage with tragic ululations; and it grew and grew upon his mind that some unnatural miracle had been accomplished, that some nameless change had befallen the dead body, and that it was in fear of their unholy burden that the dogs were howling.

'For God's sake,' said he, making a great effort to arrive at speech, 'for God's sake, let's have a light!'

Seemingly Macfarlane was affected in the same direction; for, though he made no reply, he stopped the horse, passed the reins to his companion, got down, and proceeded to kindle the remaining lamp. They had by that time got no farther than the cross-road down to Auchenclinny. The rain still poured as though the deluge were returning, and it was no easy matter to make a light in such a world of wet and darkness. When at last the flickering blue flame had been transferred to the wick and began to expand and clarify, and shed a wide circle of misty brightness round the gig, it became possible for the two young men to see each other and the thing they had along with them. The rain had moulded the rough sacking to the outlines of the body underneath; the head was distinct from the trunk, the shoulders plainly modelled; something at once spectral and human riveted their eyes upon the ghastly comrade of their drive.

For some time Macfarlane stood motionless, holding up the lamp. A nameless dread was swathed, like a wet sheet, about the body, and tightened the white skin upon the face of Fettes; a fear that was meaningless, a horror of what could not be, kept mounting to his brain. Another beat of the watch, and he had spoken. But his comrade forestalled him.

'That is not a woman,' said Macfarlane, in a hushed voice.

'It was a woman when we put her in,' whispered Fettes.

'Hold that lamp,' said the other. 'I must see her face.'

And as Fettes took the lamp his companion untied the fastenings of the sack and drew down the cover from the head. The light fell very clear upon the dark, well-moulded features and smooth-shaven cheeks of a too familiar countenance, often beheld in dreams of both of these young men. A wild yell rang up into the night; each leaped from his own side into the roadway: the lamp fell, broke, and was extinguished; and the horse, terrified by this unusual commotion, bounded and went off toward Edinburgh at a gallop, bearing along with it, sole occupant of the gig, the body of the dead and long-dissected Gray.

THE STORY OF A LIE

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCES THE ADMIRAL

WHEN Dick Naseby was in Paris he made some odd acquaintances; for he was one of those who have ears to hear, and can use their eyes no less than their intelligence. He made as many thoughts as Stuart Mill; but his philosophy concerned flesh and blood, and was experimental as to its method. He was a type-hunter among mankind. He despised small game and insignificant personalities, whether in the shape of dukes or bagmen, letting them go by like sea-weed; but show him a refined or powerful face, let him hear a plangent or a penetrating voice, fish for him with a living look in some one's eye, a passionate gesture, a meaning and ambiguous smile, and his mind was instantaneously awakened. 'There was a man, there was a woman,' he seemed to say, and he stood up to the task of comprehension with the delight of an artist in his art.

And indeed, rightly considered, this interest of his was an artistic interest. There is no science in the personal study of human nature. All comprehension is creation; the woman I love is somewhat of my handiwork; and the great lover, like the great painter, is he that can so embellish his subject as to make her more than human, whilst yet by a cunning art he has so based his apotheosis on the nature of the case that the woman can go on being a true woman, and give her character free play, and show littleness, or cherish spite, or be greedy of common pleasures, and he continue to worship without a thought of incongruity. To love a character is only the heroic way of understanding it. When we love, by some noble method of our own or some nobility of mien or nature in the other, we apprehend the loved one by what is noblest in ourselves. When we are merely studying an eccentricity, the method of our study is but a series of allowances. To begin to understand is to begin to sympathise; for comprehension comes only when we have stated another's faults and virtues in terms of our own. Hence the proverbial toleration of artists for their own evil creations. Hence, too, it came about that Dick Naseby, a high-minded creature, and as scrupulous and brave a gentleman as you would want to meet, held in a sort of affection the various human creeping things whom he had met and studied.

One of these was Mr. Peter Van Tromp, an English-speaking, two-legged animal of the international genus, and by profession of general and more than equivocal utility. Years before he had been a painter of some standing in a colony, and portraits signed 'Van Tromp' had celebrated the greatness of colonial governors and judges. In those days he had been married, and driven his wife and infant daughter in a pony trap. What were the steps of his declension? No one exactly knew. Here he was at least, and had been any time these past ten years, a sort of dismal parasite upon the foreigner in Paris.

It would be hazardous to specify his exact industry. Coarsely followed, it would have merited a name grown somewhat unfamiliar to our ears. Followed as he followed it, with a skilful reticence, in a kind of social chiaroscuro, it was still possible for the polite to call him a professional painter. His lair was in the Grand Hotel and the gaudiest cafes. There he might be seen jotting off a sketch with an air of some inspiration; and he was always affable, and one of the easiest of men to fall in talk withal. A conversation usually ripened into a peculiar sort of intimacy, and it was extraordinary how many little services Van Tromp contrived to render in the course of six-and-thirty hours. He occupied a position between a friend and a courier, which made him worse than embarrassing to repay. But those whom he obliged could always buy one of his villainous little pictures, or, where the favours had been prolonged and more than usually delicate, might order and pay for a large canvas, with perfect certainty that they would hear no more of the transaction.

Among resident artists he enjoyed celebrity of a non- professional sort. He had spent more money - no less than three individual fortunes, it was whispered - than any of his associates could ever hope to gain. Apart from his colonial career, he had been to Greece in a brigantine with four brass carronades; he had travelled Europe in a chaise and four, drawing bridle at the palace-doors of German princes; queens of song and dance had followed him like sheep and paid his tailor’s bills. And to behold him now, seeking small loans with plaintive condescension, sponging for breakfast on an art-student of nineteen, a fallen Don Juan who had neglected to die at the propitious hour, had a colour of romance for young imaginations. His name and his bright past, seen through the prism of whispered gossip, had gained him the nickname of THE ADMIRAL.

Dick found him one day at the receipt of custom, rapidly painting a pair of hens and a cock in a little water-colour sketching box, and now and then glancing at the ceiling like a man who should seek inspiration from the muse. Dick thought it remarkable that a painter should choose to work over an absinthe in a public cafe, and looked the man over. The aged rakishness of his appearance was set off by a youthful costume; he had disreputable grey hair and a disreputable sore, red nose; but the coat and the gesture, the outworks of the man, were still designed for show. Dick came up to his table and inquired if he might look at what the gentleman was doing. No one was so delighted as the Admiral.

‘A bit of a thing,’ said he. ‘I just dash them off like that. I - I dash them off,’ he added with a gesture.

‘Quite so,’ said Dick, who was appalled by the feebleness of the production.

‘Understand me,’ continued Van Tromp; ‘I am a man of the world. And yet - once an artist always an artist. All of a sudden a thought takes me in the street; I become its prey: it’s like a pretty woman; no use to struggle; I must - dash it off.’

‘I see,’ said Dick.

‘Yes,’ pursued the painter; ‘it all comes easily, easily to me; it is not my business; it’s a pleasure. Life is my business - life - this great city, Paris - Paris after dark - its lights, its gardens, its odd corners. Aha!’ he cried, ‘to be young again! The heart is young, but the heels are leaden. A poor, mean business, to grow old! Nothing remains but the COUP D’OEIL, the contemplative man’s enjoyment, Mr. - ,’ and he paused for the name.

‘Naseby,’ returned Dick.

The other treated him at once to an exciting beverage, and expatiated on the pleasure of meeting a compatriot in a foreign land; to hear him, you would have thought they had encountered in Central Africa. Dick had never found any one take a fancy to him so readily, nor show it in an easier or less offensive manner. He seemed tickled with him as an elderly fellow about town might be tickled by a pleasant and witty lad; he indicated that he was no precision, but in his wildest times had never been such a blade as he thought Dick. Dick protested, but in vain. This manner of carrying an intimacy at the bayonet’s point was Van Tromp’s stock-in- trade. With an older man he insinuated himself; with youth he imposed himself, and in the same breath imposed an ideal on his victim, who saw that he must work up to it or lose the esteem of this old and vicious patron. And what young man can bear to lose a character for vice?

At last, as it grew towards dinner-time, ‘Do you know Paris?’ asked Van Tromp.

‘Not so well as you, I am convinced,’ said Dick.

‘And so am I,’ returned Van Tromp gaily. ‘Paris! My young friend - you will allow me? - when you know Paris as I do, you will have seen Strange Things. I say no more; all I say is, Strange Things. We are men of the world, you and I, and in Paris, in the heart of civilised existence. This is an opportunity, Mr. Naseby. Let us dine. Let me show you where to dine.’

Dick consented. On the way to dinner the Admiral showed him where to buy gloves, and made him buy them; where to buy cigars, and made him buy a vast store, some of which he obligingly accepted.

At the restaurant he showed him what to order, with surprising consequences in the bill. What he made that night by his percentages it would be hard to estimate. And all the while Dick smilingly consented, understanding well that he was being done, but taking his losses in the pursuit of character as a hunter sacrifices his dogs. As for the Strange Things, the reader will be relieved to hear that they were no stranger than might have been expected, and he may find things quite as strange without the expense of a Van Tromp for guide. Yet he was a guide of no mean order, who made up for the poverty of what he had to show by a copious, imaginative commentary.

‘And such,’ said he, with a hiccup, ‘such is Paris.’

‘Pooh!’ said Dick, who was tired of the performance.

The Admiral hung an ear, and looked up sidelong with a glimmer of suspicion.

‘Good night,’ said Dick; ‘I’m tired.’

‘So English!’ cried Van Tromp, clutching him by the hand. ‘So English! So BLASE! Such a charming companion! Let me see you home.’

‘Look here,’ returned Dick, ‘I have said good night, and now I’m going. You’re an amusing old boy: I like you, in a sense; but here’s an end of it for to-night. Not another cigar, not another grog, not another percentage out of me.’

‘I beg your pardon!’ cried the Admiral with dignity.

‘Tut, man!’ said Dick; ‘you’re not offended; you’re a man of the world, I thought. I’ve been studying you, and it’s over. Have I not paid for the lesson? AU REVOIR.’

Van Tromp laughed gaily, shook hands up to the elbows, hoped cordially they would meet again and that often, but looked after Dick as he departed with a tremor of indignation. After that they two not unfrequently fell in each other’s way, and Dick would often treat the old boy to breakfast on a moderate scale and in a restaurant of his own selection. Often, too, he would lend Van Tromp the matter of a pound, in view of that gentleman’s contemplated departure for Australia; there would be a scene of farewell almost touching in character, and a week or a month later they would meet on the same boulevard without surprise or embarrassment. And in the meantime Dick learned more about his acquaintance on all sides: heard of his yacht, his chaise and four, his brief season of celebrity amid a more confiding population, his daughter, of whom he loved to whimper in his cups, his sponging, parasitical, nameless way of life; and with each new detail something that was not merely interest nor yet altogether affection grew up in his mind towards this disreputable stepson of the arts. Ere he left Paris Van Tromp was one of those whom he entertained to a farewell supper; and the old gentleman made the speech of the evening, and then fell below the table, weeping, smiling, paralysed.

CHAPTER II - A LETTER TO THE PAPERS

OLD Mr. Naseby had the sturdy, untutored nature of the upper middle class. The universe seemed plain to him. ‘The thing’s right,’ he would say, or ‘the thing’s wrong’; and there was an end of it. There was a contained, prophetic energy in his utterances, even on the slightest affairs; he SAW the damned thing; if you did not, it must be from perversity of will; and this sent the blood to his head. Apart from this, which made him an exacting companion, he was one of the most upright, hot-tempered, hot-headed old gentlemen in England. Florid, with white hair, the face of an old Jupiter, and the figure of an old fox-hunter, he enlivened the vale of Thyme from end to end on his big, cantering chestnut.

He had a hearty respect for Dick as a lad of parts. Dick had a respect for his father as the best of men, tempered by the politic revolt of a youth who has to see to his own independence. Whenever the pair argued, they came to an open rupture; and arguments were frequent, for they were both positive, and both loved the work of the intelligence. It was a treat to hear Mr. Naseby defending the Church of England in a volley of oaths, or supporting ascetic morals with an enthusiasm not entirely innocent of port wine. Dick used to wax indignant, and none the less so because, as his father was a skilful disputant, he found himself not seldom in the wrong. On these occasions, he would redouble in energy, and declare that black was white, and blue yellow, with much conviction and heat of manner; but in the morning such a licence of debate weighed upon him like a crime, and he would seek out his father, where he walked before breakfast on a terrace overlooking all the vale of Thyme.

‘I have to apologise, sir, for last night - ‘ he would begin.

‘Of course you have,’ the old gentleman would cut in cheerfully. ‘You spoke like a fool. Say no more about it.’

‘You do not understand me, sir. I refer to a particular point. I confess there is much force in your argument from the doctrine of possibilities.’

‘Of course there is,’ returned his father. ‘Come down and look at the stables. Only,’ he would add, ‘bear this in mind, and do remember that a man of my age and experience knows more about what he is saying than a raw boy.’

He would utter the word ‘boy’ even more offensively than the average of fathers, and the light way in which he accepted these apologies cut Richard to the heart. The latter drew slighting comparisons, and remembered that he was the only one who ever apologised. This gave him a high station in his own esteem, and thus contributed indirectly to his better behaviour; for he was scrupulous as well as high-spirited, and prided himself on nothing more than on a just submission.

So things went on until the famous occasion when Mr. Naseby, becoming engrossed in securing the election of a sound party candidate to Parliament, wrote a flaming letter to the papers. The letter had about every demerit of party letters in general; it was expressed with the energy of a believer; it was personal; it was a little more than half unfair, and about a quarter untrue. The old man did not mean to say what was untrue, you may be sure; but he had rashly picked up gossip, as his prejudice suggested, and now rashly launched it on the public with the sanction of his name.

‘The Liberal candidate,’ he concluded, ‘is thus a public turncoat. Is that the sort of man we want? He has been given the lie, and has swallowed the insult. Is that the sort of man we want? I answer No! With all the force of my conviction, I answer, NO!’

And then he signed and dated the letter with an amateur’s pride, and looked to be famous by the morrow.

Dick, who had heard nothing of the matter, was up first on that inauspicious day, and took the journal to an arbour in the garden. He found his father’s manifesto in one column; and in another a leading article. ‘No one that we are aware of,’ ran the article, ‘had consulted Mr. Naseby on the subject, but if he had been appealed to by the whole body of electors, his letter would be none the less ungenerous and unjust to Mr. Dalton. We do not choose to give the lie to Mr. Naseby, for we are too well aware of the consequences; but we shall venture instead to print the facts of both cases referred to by this red-hot partisan in another portion of our issue. Mr. Naseby is of course a large proprietor in our neighbourhood; but fidelity to facts, decent feeling, and English grammar, are all of them qualities more important than the possession of land. Mr. - is doubtless a great man; in his large gardens and that half-mile of greenhouses, where he has probably ripened his intellect and temper, he may say what he will to his hired vassals, but (as the Scotch say) -

here He mauna think to domineer.

‘Liberalism,’ continued the anonymous journalist, ‘is of too free and sound a growth,’ etc.

Richard Naseby read the whole thing from beginning to end; and a crushing shame fell upon his spirit. His father had played the fool; he had gone out noisily to war, and come back with confusion. The moment that his trumpets sounded, he had been disgracefully unhorsed. There was no question as to the facts; they were one and all against the Squire. Richard would have given his ears to have suppressed the issue; but as that could not be done, he had his horse saddled, and furnishing himself with a convenient staff, rode off at once to Thymebury.

The editor was at breakfast in a large, sad apartment. The absence of furniture, the extreme meanness of the meal, and the haggard, bright-eyed, consumptive look of the culprit, unmanned our hero; but he clung to his stick, and was stout and warlike.

‘You wrote the article in this morning’s paper?’ he demanded.

‘You are young Mr. Naseby? I PUBLISHED it,’ replied the editor, rising.

‘My father is an old man,’ said Richard; and then with an outburst, ‘And a damned sight finer fellow than either you or Dalton!’ He stopped and swallowed; he was determined that all should go with regularity. ‘I have but one question to put to you, sir,’ he resumed. ‘Granted that my father was misinformed, would it not have been more decent to withhold the letter and communicate with him in private?’

‘Believe me,’ returned the editor, ‘that alternative was not open to me. Mr. Naseby told me in a note that he had sent his letter to three other journals, and in fact threatened me with what he called exposure if I kept it back from mine. I am really concerned at what has happened; I sympathise and approve of your emotion, young gentleman; but the attack on Mr. Dalton was gross, very gross, and I had no choice but to offer him my columns to reply. Party has its duties, sir,’ added the scribe, kindling, as one who should propose a sentiment; ‘and the attack was gross.’

Richard stood for half a minute digesting the answer; and then the god of fair play came upper-most in his heart, and murmuring ‘Good morning,’ he made his escape into the street.

His horse was not hurried on the way home, and he was late for breakfast. The Squire was standing with his back to the fire in a state bordering on apoplexy, his fingers violently knitted under his coat tails. As Richard came in, he opened and shut his mouth like a cod-fish, and his eyes protruded.

‘Have you seen that, sir?’ he cried, nodding towards the paper.

‘Yes, sir,’ said Richard.

‘Oh, you’ve read it, have you?’

‘Yes, I have read it,’ replied Richard, looking at his foot.

‘Well,’ demanded the old gentleman, ‘and what have you to say to it, sir?’

‘You seem to have been misinformed,’ said Dick.

‘Well? What then? Is your mind so sterile, sir? Have you not a word of comment? no proposal?’

‘I fear, sir, you must apologise to Mr. Dalton. It would be more handsome, indeed it would be only just, and a free acknowledgment would go far - ‘ Richard paused, no language appearing delicate enough to suit the case.

‘That is a suggestion which should have come from me, sir,’ roared the father. ‘It is out of place upon your lips. It is not the thought of a loyal son. Why, sir, if my father had been plunged in such deplorable circumstances, I should have thrashed the editor of that vile sheet within an inch of his life. I should have thrashed the man, sir. It would have been the action of an ass; but it would have shown that I had the blood and the natural affections of a man. Son? You are no son, no son of mine, sir!’

‘Sir!’ said Dick.

‘I’ll tell you what you are, sir,’ pursued the Squire. ‘You’re a Benthamite. I disown you. Your mother would have died for shame; there was no modern cant about your mother; she thought - she said to me, sir - I’m glad she’s in her grave, Dick Naseby. Misinformed! Misinformed, sir? Have you no loyalty, no spring, no natural affections? Are you clockwork, hey? Away! This is no place for you. Away!’ (waving his hands in the air). ‘Go away! Leave me!’

At this moment Dick beat a retreat in a disarray of nerves, a whistling and clamour of his own arteries, and in short in such a final bodily disorder as made him alike incapable of speech or hearing. And in the midst of all this turmoil, a sense of unpardonable injustice remained graven in his memory.

CHAPTER III - IN THE ADMIRAL’S NAME

THERE was no return to the subject. Dick and his father were henceforth on terms of coldness. The upright old gentleman grew more upright when he met his son, buckrammed with immortal anger; he asked after Dick’s health, and discussed the weather and the crops with an appalling courtesy; his pronunciation was POINT-DE-VICE, his voice was distant, distinct, and sometimes almost trembling with suppressed indignation.

As for Dick, it seemed to him as if his life had come abruptly to an end. He came out of his theories and clevernesses; his premature man-of-the-worldness, on which he had prided himself on his travels, ‘shrank like a thing ashamed’ before this real sorrow. Pride, wounded honour, pity and respect tussled together daily in his heart; and now he was within an ace of throwing himself upon his father’s mercy, and now of slipping forth at night and coming back no more to Naseby House. He suffered from the sight of his father, nay, even from the neighbourhood of this familiar valley, where every corner had its legend, and he was besieged with memories of childhood. If he fled into a new land, and among none but strangers, he might escape his destiny, who knew? and begin again light-heartedly. From that chief peak of the hills, that now and then, like an uplifted finger, shone in an arrow of sunlight through the broken clouds, the shepherd in clear weather might perceive the shining of the sea. There, he thought, was hope. But his heart failed him when he saw the Squire; and he remained. His fate was not that of the voyager by sea and land; he was to travel in the spirit, and begin his journey sooner than he supposed.

For it chanced one day that his walk led him into a portion of the uplands which was almost unknown to him. Scrambling through some rough woods, he came out upon a moorland reaching towards the hills. A few lofty Scotch firs grew hard by upon a knoll; a clear fountain near the foot of the knoll sent up a miniature streamlet which meandered in the heather. A shower had just skimmed by, but now the sun shone brightly, and the air smelt of the pines and the grass. On a stone under the trees sat a young lady sketching. We have learned to think of women in a sort of symbolic transfiguration, based on clothes; and one of the readiest ways in which we conceive our mistress is as a composite thing, principally petticoats. But humanity has triumphed over clothes; the look, the touch of a dress has become alive; and the woman who stitched herself into these material integuments has now permeated right through and gone out to the tip of her skirt. It was only a black dress that caught Dick Naseby’s eye; but it took possession of his mind, and all other thoughts departed. He drew near, and the girl turned round. Her face startled him; it was a face he wanted; and he took it in at once like breathing air.

‘I beg your pardon,’ he said, taking off his hat, ‘you are sketching.’

‘Oh!’ she exclaimed, ‘for my own amusement. I despise the thing.’

‘Ten to one, you do yourself injustice,’ returned Dick. ‘Besides, it’s a freemasonry. I sketch myself, and you know what that implies.’

‘No. What?’ she asked.

‘Two things,’ he answered. ‘First, that I am no very difficult critic; and second, that I have a right to see your picture.’

She covered the block with both her hands. ‘Oh no,’ she said; ‘I am ashamed.’

‘Indeed, I might give you a hint,’ said Dick. ‘Although no artist myself, I have known many; in Paris I had many for friends, and used to prowl among studios.’

‘In Paris?’ she cried, with a leap of light into her eyes.
‘Did you ever meet Mr. Van Tromp?’

‘I? Yes. Why, you’re not the Admiral’s daughter, are you?’

‘The Admiral? Do they call him that?’ she cried. ‘Oh, how nice, how nice of them! It is the younger men who call him so, is it not?’

‘Yes,’ said Dick, somewhat heavily.

‘You can understand now,’ she said, with an unspeakable accent of contented noble-minded pride, ‘why it is I do not choose to show my sketch. Van Tromp’s daughter! The Admiral’s daughter! I delight in that name. The Admiral! And so you know my father?’

‘Well,’ said Dick, ‘I met him often; we were even intimate.
He may have mentioned my name - Naseby.’

‘He writes so little. He is so busy, so devoted to his art! I have had a half wish,’ she added laughing, ‘that my father was a plainer man, whom I could help - to whom I could be a credit; but only sometimes, you know, and with only half my heart. For a great painter! You have seen his works?’

‘I have seen some of them,’ returned Dick; ‘they - they are very nice.’

She laughed aloud. ‘Nice?’ she repeated. ‘I see you don’t care much for art.’

‘Not much,’ he admitted; ‘but I know that many people are glad to buy Mr. Van Tromp’s pictures.’

‘Call him the Admiral!’ she cried. ‘It sounds kindly and familiar; and I like to think that he is appreciated and looked up to by young painters. He has not always been appreciated; he had a cruel life for many years; and when I think’ - there were tears in her eyes - ‘when I think of that, I feel incline to be a fool,’ she broke off. ‘And now I shall go home. You have filled me full of happiness; for think, Mr. Naseby, I have not seen my father since I was six years old; and yet he is in my thoughts all day! You must come and call on me; my aunt will be delighted, I am sure; and then you will tell me all - all about my father, will you not?'

Dick helped her to get her sketching traps together; and when all was ready, she gave Dick her hand and a frank return of pressure.

'You are my father's friend,' she said; 'we shall be great friends too. You must come and see me soon.'

Then she was gone down the hillside at a run; and Dick stood by himself in a state of some bewilderment and even distress. There were elements of laughter in the business; but the black dress, and the face that belonged to it, and the hand that he had held in his, inclined him to a serious view. What was he, under the circumstances, called upon to do? Perhaps to avoid the girl? Well, he would think about that. Perhaps to break the truth to her? Why, ten to one, such was her infatuation, he would fail. Perhaps to keep up the illusion, to colour the raw facts; to help her to false ideas, while yet not plainly stating falsehoods? Well, he would see about that; he would also see about avoiding the girl. He saw about this last so well, that the next afternoon beheld him on his way to visit her.

In the meantime the girl had gone straight home, light as a bird, tremulous with joy, to the little cottage where she lived alone with a maiden aunt; and to that lady, a grim, sixty years old Scotchwoman, with a nodding head, communicated news of her encounter and invitation.

'A friend of his?' cried the aunt. 'What like is he? What did ye say was his name?'

She was dead silent, and stared at the old woman darkling. Then very slowly, 'I said he was my father's friend; I have invited him to my house, and come he shall,' she said; and with that she walked off to her room, where she sat staring at the wall all the evening. Miss M'Glashan, for that was the aunt's name, read a large bible in the kitchen with some of the joys of martyrdom.

It was perhaps half-past three when Dick presented himself, rather scrupulously dressed, before the cottage door; he knocked, and a voice bade him enter. The kitchen, which opened directly off the garden, was somewhat darkened by foliage; but he could see her as she approached from the far end to meet him. This second sight of her surprised him. Her strong black brows spoke of temper easily aroused and hard to quiet; her mouth was small, nervous and weak; there was something dangerous and sulky underlying, in her nature, much that was honest, compassionate, and even noble.

'My father's name,' she said, 'has made you very welcome.'

And she gave him her hand, with a sort of curtsy. It was a pretty greeting, although somewhat mannered; and Dick felt himself among the gods. She led him through the kitchen to a parlour, and presented him to Miss M'Glashan.

'Esther,' said the aunt, 'see and make Mr. Naseby his tea.'

And as soon as the girl was gone upon this hospitable intent, the old woman crossed the room and came quite near to Dick as if in menace.

'Ye know that man?' she asked in an imperious whisper.

'Mr. Van Tromp?' said Dick. 'Yes, I know him.'

'Well, and what brings ye here?' she said. 'I couldn't save the mother - her that's dead - but the bairn!' She had a note in her voice that filled poor Dick with consternation. 'Man,' she went on, 'what is it now? Is it money?'

'My dear lady,' said Dick, 'I think you misinterpret my position. I am young Mr. Naseby of Naseby House. My acquaintance with Mr. Van Tromp is really very slender; I am only afraid that Miss Van Tromp has exaggerated our intimacy in her own imagination. I know positively nothing of his private affairs, and do not care to know. I met him casually in Paris - that is all.'

Miss M'Glashan drew along breath. 'In Paris?' she said. 'Well, and what do you think of him? - what do ye think of him?' she repeated, with a different scansion, as Richard, who had not much taste for such a question, kept her waiting for an answer.

'I found him a very agreeable companion,' he said.

'Ay,' said she, 'did ye! And how does he win his bread?'

'I fancy,' he gasped, 'that Mr. Van Tromp has many generous friends.'

'I'll warrant!' she sneered; and before Dick could find more to say, she was gone from the room.

Esther returned with the tea-things, and sat down.

'Now,' she said cosily, 'tell me all about my father.'

'He' - stammered Dick, 'he is a very agreeable companion.'

'I shall begin to think it is more than you are, Mr. Naseby,' she said, with a laugh. 'I am his daughter, you forget. Begin at the beginning, and tell me all you have seen of him, all he said and all you answered. You must have met somewhere; begin with that.'

So with that he began: how he had found the Admiral painting in a cafe; how his art so possessed him that he could not wait till he got home to - well, to dash off his idea; how (this in reply to a question) his idea consisted of a cock crowing and two hens eating corn; how he was fond of cocks and hens; how this did not lead him to neglect more ambitious forms of art; how he had a picture in his studio of a Greek subject which was said to be remarkable from several points of view; how no one had seen it nor knew the precise site of the studio in which it was being vigorously though secretly confected; how (in answer to a suggestion) this shyness was common to the Admiral, Michelangelo, and others; how they (Dick and Van Tromp) had struck up an acquaintance at once, and dined together that same night; how he (the Admiral) had once given money to a beggar; how he spoke with effusion of his little daughter; how he had once borrowed money to send her a doll - a trait worthy of Newton, she being then in her nineteenth year at least; how, if the doll never arrived (which it appeared it never did), the trait was only more characteristic of the highest order of creative intellect; how he was - no, not beautiful - striking, yes, Dick would go so far, decidedly striking in appearance; how his boots were made to lace and his coat was black, not cut-away, a frock; and so on, and so on by the yard. It was astonishing how few lies were necessary. After all, people exaggerated the difficulty of life. A little steering, just a touch of the rudder now and then, and with a willing listener there is no limit to the domain of equivocal speech. Sometimes Miss M'Glashan made a freezing sojourn in the parlour; and then the task seemed unaccountably more difficult; but to Esther, who was all eyes and ears, her face alight with interest, his stream of language flowed without break or stumble, and his mind was ever fertile in ingenious evasions and -

What an afternoon it was for Esther!

'Ah!' she said at last, 'it's good to hear all this! My aunt, you should know, is narrow and too religious; she cannot understand an artist's life. It does not frighten me,' she added grandly; 'I am an artist's daughter.'

With that speech, Dick consoled himself for his imposture; she was not deceived so grossly after all; and then if a fraud, was not the fraud piety itself? - and what could be more obligatory than to keep alive in the heart of a daughter that filial trust and honour which, even although misplaced, became her like a jewel of the mind? There might be another thought, a shade of cowardice, a selfish desire to please; poor Dick was merely human; and what would you have had him do?

CHAPTER IV - ESTHER ON THE FILIAL RELATION

A MONTH later Dick and Esther met at the stile beside the cross roads; had there been any one to see them but the birds and summer insects, it would have been remarked that they met after a different fashion from the day before. Dick took her in his arms, and their lips were set together for a long while. Then he held her at arm's-length, and they looked straight into each other's eyes.

'Esther!' he said; you should have heard his voice!

'Dick!' said she.

'My darling!'

It was some time before they started for their walk; he kept an arm about her, and their sides were close together as they walked; the sun, the birds, the west wind running among the trees, a pressure, a look, the grasp tightening round a single finger, these things stood them in lieu of thought and filled their hearts with joy. The path they were following led them through a wood of pine-trees carpeted with heather and blue-berry, and upon this pleasant carpet, Dick, not without some seriousness, made her sit down.

'Esther!' he began, 'there is something you ought to know. You know my father is a rich man, and you would think, now that we love each other, we might marry when we pleased. But I fear, darling, we may have long to wait, and shall want all our courage.'

'I have courage for anything,' she said, 'I have all I want; with you and my father, I am so well off, and waiting is made so happy, that I could wait a lifetime and not weary.'

He had a sharp pang at the mention of the Admiral. 'Hear me out,' he continued. 'I ought to have told you this before; but it is a thought I shrink from; if it were possible, I should not tell you even now. My poor father and I are scarce on speaking terms.'

'Your father,' she repeated, turning pale.

'It must sound strange to you; but yet I cannot think I am to blame,' he said. 'I will tell you how it happened.'

'Oh Dick!' she said, when she had heard him to an end, 'how brave you are, and how proud. Yet I would not be proud with a father. I would tell him all.'

'What!' cried Dick, 'go in months after, and brag that I had meant to thrash the man, and then didn't. And why? Because my father had made a bigger ass of himself than I supposed. My dear, that's nonsense.'

She winced at his words and drew away. 'But when that is all he asks,' she pleaded. 'If he only knew that you had felt that impulse, it would make him so proud and happy. He would see you were his own son after all, and had the same thoughts and the same chivalry of spirit. And then you did yourself injustice when you spoke just now. It was because the editor was weak and poor and excused himself, that you repented your first determination. Had he been a big red man, with whiskers, you would have beaten him - you know you would - if Mr. Naseby had been ten times more committed. Do you think, if you can tell it to me, and I understand at once, that it would be more difficult to tell it to your own father, or that he would not be more ready to sympathise with you than I am? And I love you, Dick; but then he is your father.'

'My dear,' said Dick, desperately, 'you do not understand; you do not know what it is to be treated with daily want of comprehension and daily small injustices, through childhood and boyhood and manhood, until you despair of a hearing, until the thing rides you like a nightmare, until you almost hate the sight of the man you love, and who's your father after all. In short, Esther, you don't know what it is to have a father, and that's what blinds you.'

'I see,' she said musingly, 'you mean that I am fortunate in my father. But I am not so fortunate after all; you forget, I do not know him; it is you who know him; he is already more your father than mine.' And here she took his hand. Dick's heart had grown as cold as ice. 'But I am sorry for you, too,' she continued, 'it must be very sad and lonely.'

'You misunderstand me,' said Dick, chokingly. 'My father is the best man I know in all this world; he is worth a hundred of me, only he doesn't understand me, and he can't be made to.'

There was a silence for a while. 'Dick,' she began again, 'I am going to ask a favour, it's the first since you said you loved me. May I see your father - see him pass, I mean, where he will not observe me?'

'Why?' asked Dick.

'It is a fancy; you forget, I am romantic about fathers.'

The hint was enough for Dick; he consented with haste, and full of hang-dog penitence and disgust, took her down by a backway and planted her in the shrubbery, whence she might see the Squire ride by to dinner. There they both sat silent, but holding hands, for nearly half an hour. At last the trotting of a horse sounded in the distance, the park gates opened with a clang, and then Mr. Naseby appeared, with stooping shoulders and a heavy, bilious countenance, languidly rising to the trot. Esther recognised him at once; she had often seen him before, though with her huge indifference for all that lay outside the circle of her love, she had never so much as wondered who he was; but now she recognised him, and found him ten years older, leaden and springless, and stamped by an abiding sorrow.

'Oh Dick, Dick!' she said, and the tears began to shine upon her face as she hid it in his bosom; his own fell thickly too. They had a sad walk home, and that night, full of love and good counsel, Dick exerted every art to please his father, to convince him of his respect and affection, to heal up this breach of kindness, and reunite two hearts. But alas! the Squire was sick and peevish; he had been all day glooming over Dick’s estrangement - for so he put it to himself, and now with growls, cold words, and the cold shoulder, he beat off all advances, and entrenched himself in a just resentment.

CHAPTER V - THE PRODIGAL FATHER MAKES HIS DEBUT AT HOME

THAT took place upon a Tuesday. On the Thursday following, as Dick was walking by appointment, earlier than usual, in the direction of the cottage, he was appalled to meet in the lane a fly from Thymebury, containing the human form of Miss M'Glashan. The lady did not deign to remark him in her passage; her face was suffused with tears, and expressed much concern for the packages by which she was surrounded. He stood still, and asked himself what this circumstance might portend. It was so beautiful a day that he was loth to forecast evil, yet something must perforce have happened at the cottage, and that of a decisive nature; for here was Miss M'Glashan on her travels, with a small patrimony in brown paper parcels, and the old lady's bearing implied hot battle and unqualified defeat. Was the house to be closed against him? Was Esther left alone, or had some new protector made his appearance from among the millions of Europe? It is the character of love to loathe the near relatives of the loved one; chapters in the history of the human race have justified this feeling, and the conduct of uncles, in particular, has frequently met with censure from the independent novelist. Miss M'Glashan was now seen in the rosy colours of regret; whoever succeeded her, Dick felt the change would be for the worse. He hurried forward in this spirit; his anxiety grew upon him with every step; as he entered the garden a voice fell upon his ear, and he was once more arrested, not this time by doubt, but by indubitable certainty of ill.

The thunderbolt had fallen; the Admiral was here.

Dick would have retreated, in the panic terror of the moment; but Esther kept a bright look-out when her lover was expected. In a twinkling she was by his side, brimful of news and pleasure, too glad to notice his embarrassment, and in one of those golden transports of exultation which transcend not only words but caresses. She took him by the end of the fingers (reaching forward to take them, for her great preoccupation was to save time), she drew him towards her, pushed him past her in the door, and planted him face to face with Mr. Van Tromp, in a suit of French country velveteens and with a remarkable carbuncle on his nose. Then, as though this was the end of what she could endure in the way of joy, Esther turned and ran out of the room.

The two men remained looking at each other with some confusion on both sides. Van Tromp was naturally the first to recover; he put out his hand with a fine gesture.

'And you know my little lass, my Esther?' he said. 'This is pleasant; this is what I have conceived of home. A strange word for the old rover; but we all have a taste for home and the home-like, disguise it how we may. It has brought me here, Mr. Naseby,' he concluded, with an intonation that would have made his fortune on the stage, so just, so sad, so dignified, so like a man of the world and a philosopher, 'and you see a man who is content.'

'I see,' said Dick.

'Sit down,' continued the parasite, setting the example. 'Fortune has gone against me. (I am just sirrupping a little brandy - after my journey.) I was going down, Mr. Naseby; between you and me, I was DECAVE; I borrowed fifty francs, smuggled my valise past the concierge - a work of considerable tact - and here I am!'

'Yes,' said Dick; 'and here you are.' He was quite idiotic.

Esther, at this moment, re-entered the room.

'Are you glad to see him?' she whispered in his ear, the pleasure in her voice almost bursting through the whisper into song.

'Oh yes,' said Dick, 'very.'

'I knew you would be,' she replied; 'I told him how you loved him.'

'Help yourself,' said the Admiral, 'help yourself; and let us drink to a new existence.'

'To a new existence,' repeated Dick; and he raised the tumbler to his lips, but set it down untasted. He had had enough of novelties for one day.

Esther was sitting on a stool beside her father's feet, holding her knees in her arms, and looking with pride from one to the other of her two visitors. Her eyes were so bright that you were never sure if there were tears in them or not; little voluptuous shivers ran about her body; sometimes she nestled her chin into her throat, sometimes threw back her head, with ecstasy; in a word, she was in that state when it is said of people that they cannot contain themselves for happiness. It would be hard to exaggerate the agony of Richard.

And, in the meantime, Van Tromp ran on interminably.

'I never forget a friend,' said he, 'nor yet an enemy: of the latter, I never had but two - myself and the public; and I fancy I have had my vengeance pretty freely out of both.' He chuckled. 'But those days are done. Van Tromp is no more. He was a man who had successes; I believe you knew I had successes - to which we shall refer no farther,' pulling down his neckcloth with a smile. 'That man exists no more: by an exercise of will I have destroyed him. There is something like it in the poets. First, a brilliant and conspicuous career - the observed, I may say, of all observers, including the bum-bailie: and then, presto! a quiet, sly, old, rustic BONHOMME, cultivating roses. In Paris, Mr. Naseby - '

'Call him Richard, father,' said Esther.

'Richard, if he will allow me. Indeed, we are old friends, and now near neighbours; and, A PROPOS, how are we off for neighbours, Richard? The cottage stands, I think, upon your father's land - a family which I respect - and the wood, I understand, is Lord Trevanion's. Not that I care; I am an old Bohemian. I have cut society with a cut direct; I cut it when I was prosperous, and now I reap my reward, and can cut it with dignity in my declension. These are our little AMOURS PROPRES, my daughter: your father must respect himself. Thank you, yes; just a leetle, leetle, tiny - thanks, thanks; you spoil me. But, as I was saying, Richard, or was about to say, my daughter has been allowed to rust; her aunt was a mere duenna; hence, in parenthesis, Richard, her distrust of me; my nature and that of the duenna are poles asunder - poles! But, now that I am here, now that I have given up the fight, and live henceforth for one only of my works - I have the modesty to say it is my best - my daughter - well, we shall put all that to rights. The neighbours, Richard?'

Dick was understood to say that there were many good families in the Vale of Thyme.

'You shall introduce us,' said the Admiral.

Dick's shirt was wet; he made a lumbering excuse to go; which Esther explained to herself by a fear of intrusion, and so set down to the merit side of Dick's account, while she proceeded to detain him.

'Before our walk?' she cried. 'Never! I must have my walk.'

'Let us all go,' said the Admiral, rising.

'You do not know that you are wanted,' she cried, leaning on his shoulder with a caress. 'I might wish to speak to my old friend about my new father. But you shall come to-day, you shall do all you want; I have set my heart on spoiling you.'

'I will just take ONE drop more,' said the Admiral, stooping to help himself to brandy. 'It is surprising how this journey has fatigued me. But I am growing old, I am growing old, I am growing old, and - I regret to add - bald.'

He cocked a white wide-awake coquettishly upon his head - the habit of the lady-killer clung to him; and Esther had already thrown on her hat, and was ready, while he was still studying the result in a mirror: the carbuncle had somewhat painfully arrested his attention.

'We are papa now; we must be respectable,' he said to Dick, in explanation of his dandyism: and then he went to a bundle and chose himself a staff. Where were the elegant canes of his Parisian epoch? This was a support for age, and designed for rustic scenes. Dick began to see and appreciate the man's enjoyment in a new part, when he saw how carefully he had 'made it up.' He had invented a gait for this first country stroll with his daughter, which was admirably in key. He walked with fatigue, he leaned upon the staff; he looked round him with a sad, smiling sympathy on all that he beheld; he even asked the name of a plant, and rallied himself gently for an old town bird, ignorant of nature. ‘This country life will make me young again,’ he sighed. They reached the top of the hill towards the first hour of evening; the sun was descending heaven, the colour had all drawn into the west; the hills were modelled in their least contour by the soft, slanting shine; and the wide moorlands, veined with glens and hazelwoods, ran west and north in a hazy glory of light. Then the painter wakened in Van Tromp.

‘Gad, Dick,’ he cried, ‘what value!’

An ode in four hundred lines would not have seemed so touching to Esther; her eyes filled with happy tears; yes, here was the father of whom she had dreamed, whom Dick had described; simple, enthusiastic, unworldly, kind, a painter at heart, and a fine gentleman in manner.

And just then the Admiral perceived a house by the wayside, and something depending over the house door which might be construed as a sign by the hopeful and thirsty.

‘Is that,’ he asked, pointing with his stick, ‘an inn?’

There was a marked change in his voice, as though he attached importance to the inquiry: Esther listened, hoping she should hear wit or wisdom.

Dick said it was.

‘You know it?’ inquired the Admiral.

‘I have passed it a hundred times, but that is all,’ replied Dick.

‘Ah,’ said Van Tromp, with a smile, and shaking his head; ‘you are not an old campaigner; you have the world to learn. Now I, you see, find an inn so very near my own home, and my first thought is my neighbours. I shall go forward and make my neighbours’ acquaintance; no, you needn’t come; I shall not be a moment.’

And he walked off briskly towards the inn, leaving Dick alone with Esther on the road.

‘Dick,’ she exclaimed, ‘I am so glad to get a word with you; I am so happy, I have such a thousand things to say; and I want you to do me a favour. Imagine, he has come without a paint-box, without an easel; and I want him to have all. I want you to get them for me in Thymebury. You saw, this moment, how his heart turned to painting. They can’t live without it,’ she added; meaning perhaps Van Tromp and Michel Angelo.

Up to that moment, she had observed nothing amiss in Dick’s behaviour. She was too happy to be curious; and his silence, in presence of the great and good being whom she called her father, had seemed both natural and praiseworthy. But now that they were alone, she became conscious of a barrier between her lover and herself, and alarm sprang up in her heart.

‘Dick,’ she cried, ‘you don’t love me.’

‘I do that,’ he said heartily.

‘But you are unhappy; you are strange; you - you are not glad to see my father,’ she concluded, with a break in her voice.

‘Esther,’ he said, ‘I tell you that I love you; if you love me, you know what that means, and that all I wish is to see you happy. Do you think I cannot enjoy your pleasures? Esther, I do. If I am uneasy, if I am alarmed, if - . Oh, believe me, try and believe in me,’ he cried, giving up argument with perhaps a happy inspiration.

But the girl’s suspicions were aroused; and though she pressed the matter no farther (indeed, her father was already seen returning), it by no means left her thoughts. At one moment she simply resented the selfishness of a man who had obtruded his dark looks and passionate language on her joy; for there is nothing that a woman can less easily forgive than the language of a passion which, even if only for the moment, she does not share. At another, she suspected him of jealousy against her father; and for that, although she could see excuses for it, she yet despised him. And at least, in one way or the other, here was the dangerous beginning of a separation between two hearts. Esther found herself at variance with her sweetest friend; she could no longer look into his heart and find it written with the same language as her own; she could no longer think of him as the sun which radiated happiness upon her life, for she had turned to him once, and he had breathed upon her black and chilly, radiated blackness and frost. To put the whole matter in a word, she was beginning, although ever so slightly, to fall out of love.

CHAPTER VI - THE PRODIGAL FATHER GOES ON FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

WE will not follow all the steps of the Admiral's return and installation, but hurry forward towards the catastrophe, merely chronicling by the way a few salient incidents, wherein we must rely entirely upon the evidence of Richard, for Esther to this day has never opened her mouth upon this trying passage of her life, and as for the Admiral - well, that naval officer, although still alive, and now more suitably installed in a seaport town where he has a telescope and a flag in his front garden, is incapable of throwing the slightest gleam of light upon the affair. Often and often has he remarked to the present writer: 'If I know what it was all about, sir, I'll be - ' in short, be what I hope he will not. And then he will look across at his daughter's portrait, a photograph, shake his head with an amused appearance, and mix himself another grog by way of consolation. Once I heard him go farther, and express his feelings with regard to Esther in a single but eloquent word. 'A minx, sir,' he said, not in anger, rather in amusement: and he cordially drank her health upon the back of it. His worst enemy must admit him to be a man without malice; he never bore a grudge in his life, lacking the necessary taste and industry of attention.

Yet it was during this obscure period that the drama was really performed; and its scene was in the heart of Esther, shut away from all eyes. Had this warm, upright, sullen girl been differently used by destiny, had events come upon her even in a different succession, for some things lead easily to others, the whole course of this tale would have been changed, and Esther never would have run away. As it was, through a series of acts and words of which we know but few, and a series of thoughts which any one may imagine for himself, she was awakened in four days from the dream of a life.

The first tangible cause of disenchantment was when Dick brought home a painter's arsenal on Friday evening. The Admiral was in the chimney-corner, once more 'sirrupping' some brandy and water, and Esther sat at the table at work. They both came forward to greet the new arrival; and the girl, relieving him of his monstrous burthen, proceeded to display her offerings to her father. Van Tromp's countenance fell several degrees; he became quite querulous.

'God bless me,' he said; and then, 'I must really ask you not to interfere, child,' in a tone of undisguised hostility.

'Father,' she said, 'forgive me; I knew you had given up your art - '

'Oh yes!' cried the Admiral; 'I've done with it to the judgment-day!'

'Pardon me again,' she said firmly, 'but I do not, I cannot think that you are right in this. Suppose the world is unjust, suppose that no one understands you, you have still a duty to yourself. And, oh, don't spoil the pleasure of your coming home to me; show me that you can be my father and yet not neglect your destiny. I am not like some daughters; I will not be jealous of your art, and I will try to understand it.'

The situation was odiously farcical. Richard groaned under it; he longed to leap forward and denounce the humbug. And the humbug himself? Do you fancy he was easier in his mind? I am sure, on the other hand, that he was acutely miserable; and he betrayed his sufferings by a perfectly silly and undignified access of temper, during which he broke his pipe in several pieces, threw his brandy and water in the fire, and employed words which were very plain although the drift of them was somewhat vague. It was of very brief duration. Van Tromp was himself again, and in a most delightful humour within three minutes of the first explosion.

'I am an old fool,' he said frankly. 'I was spoiled when a child. As for you, Esther, you take after your mother; you have a morbid sense of duty, particularly for others; strive against it, my dear - strive against it. And as for the pigments, well, I'll use them, some of these days; and to show that I'm in earnest, I'll get Dick here to prepare a canvas.'

Dick was put to this menial task forthwith, the Admiral not even watching how he did, but quite occupied with another grog and a pleasant vein of talk.

A little after Esther arose, and making some pretext, good or bad, went off to bed. Dick was left hobbled by the canvas, and was subjected to Van Tromp for about an hour.

The next day, Saturday, it is believed that little intercourse took place between Esther and her father; but towards the afternoon Dick met the latter returning from the direction of the inn, where he had struck up quite a friendship with the landlord. Dick wondered who paid for these excursions, and at the thought that the reprobate must get his pocket money where he got his board and lodging, from poor Esther's generosity, he had it almost in his heart to knock the old gentleman down. He, on his part, was full of airs and graces and geniality.

'Dear Dick,' he said, taking his arm, 'this is neighbourly of you; it shows your tact to meet me when I had a wish for you. I am in pleasant spirits; and it is then that I desire a friend.'

'I am glad to hear you are so happy,' retorted Dick bitterly.
'There's certainly not much to trouble YOU.'

'No,' assented the Admiral, 'not much. I got out of it in time; and here - well, here everything pleases me. I am plain in my tastes. 'A PROPOS, you have never asked me how I liked my daughter?'

‘No,’ said Dick roundly; ‘I certainly have not.’

‘Meaning you will not. And why, Dick? She is my daughter, of course; but then I am a man of the world and a man of taste, and perfectly qualified to give an opinion with impartiality - yes, Dick, with impartiality. Frankly, I am not disappointed in her. She has good looks; she has them from her mother. So I may say I CHOSE her looks. She is devoted, quite devoted to me - ‘

‘She is the best woman in the world!’ broke out Dick.

‘Dick,’ cried the Admiral, stopping short; ‘I have been expecting this. Let us - let us go back to the “Trevanion Arms” and talk this matter out over a bottle.’

‘Certainly not,’ went Dick. ‘You have had far too much already.’

The parasite was on the point of resenting this; but a look at Dick’s face, and some recollection of the terms on which they had stood in Paris, came to the aid of his wisdom and restrained him.

‘As you please,’ he said; ‘although I don’t know what you mean - nor care. But let us walk, if you prefer it. You are still a young man; when you are my age - But, however, to continue. You please me, Dick; you have pleased me from the first; and to say truth, Esther is a trifle fantastic, and will be better when she is married. She has means of her own, as of course you are aware. They come, like the looks, from her poor, dear, good creature of a mother. She was blessed in her mother. I mean she shall be blessed in her husband, and you are the man, Dick, you and not another. This very night I will sound her affections.’

Dick stood aghast.

‘Mr. Van Tromp, I implore you,’ he said; ‘do what you please with yourself, but, for God’s sake, let your daughter alone.’

‘It is my duty,’ replied the Admiral, ‘and between ourselves, you rogue, my inclination too. I am as matchmaking as a dowager. It will be more discreet for you to stay away to- night. Farewell. You leave your case in good hands; I have the tact of these little matters by heart; it is not my first attempt.’

All arguments were in vain; the old rascal stuck to his point; nor did Richard conceal from himself how seriously this might injure his prospects, and he fought hard. Once there came a glimmer of hope. The Admiral again proposed an adjournment to the ‘Trevanion Arms,’ and when Dick had once more refused, it hung for a moment in the balance whether or not the old toper would return there by himself. Had he done so, of course Dick could have taken to his heels, and warned Esther of what was coming, and of how it had begun. But the Admiral, after a pause, decided for the brandy at home, and made off in that direction.

We have no details of the sounding.

Next day the Admiral was observed in the parish church, very properly dressed. He found the places, and joined in response and hymn, as to the manner born; and his appearance, as he intended it should, attracted some attention among the worshippers. Old Naseby, for instance, had observed him.

‘There was a drunken-looking blackguard opposite us in church,’ he said to his son as they drove home; ‘do you know who he was?’

‘Some fellow - Van Tromp, I believe,’ said Dick.

‘A foreigner, too!’ observed the Squire.

Dick could not sufficiently congratulate himself on the escape he had effected. Had the Admiral met him with his father, what would have been the result? And could such a catastrophe be long postponed? It seemed to him as if the storm were nearly ripe; and it was so more nearly than he thought.

He did not go to the cottage in the afternoon, withheld by fear and shame; but when dinner was over at Naseby House, and the Squire had gone off into a comfortable doze, Dick slipped out of the room, and ran across country, in part to save time, in part to save his own courage from growing cold; for he now hated the notion of the cottage or the Admiral, and if he did not hate, at least feared to think of Esther. He had no clue to her reflections; but he could not conceal from his own heart that he must have sunk in her esteem, and the spectacle of her infatuation galled him like an insult.

He knocked and was admitted. The room looked very much as on his last visit, with Esther at the table and Van Tromp beside the fire; but the expression of the two faces told a very different story. The girl was paler than usual; her eyes were dark, the colour seemed to have faded from round about them, and her swiftest glance was as intent as a stare. The appearance of the Admiral, on the other hand, was rosy, and flabby, and moist; his jowl hung over his shirt collar, his smile was loose and wandering, and he had so far relaxed the natural control of his eyes, that one of them was aimed inward, as if to watch the growth of the carbuncle. We are warned against bad judgments; but the Admiral was certainly not sober. He made no attempt to rise when Richard entered, but waved his pipe flightily in the air, and gave a leer of welcome. Esther took as little notice of him as might be.

‘Aha! Dick!’ cried the painter. ‘I’ve been to church; I have, upon my word. And I saw you there, though you didn’t see me. And I saw a devilish pretty woman, by Gad. If it were not for this baldness, and a kind of crapulous air I can’t disguise from myself - if it weren’t for this and that and t’other thing - I - I’ve forgot what I was saying. Not that that matters, I’ve heaps of things to say. I’m in a communicative vein to-night. I’ll let out all my cats, even unto seventy times seven. I’m in what I call THE stage, and all I desire is a listener, although he were deaf, to be as happy as Nebuchadnezzar.’

Of the two hours which followed upon this it is unnecessary to give more than a sketch. The Admiral was extremely silly, now and then amusing, and never really offensive. It was plain that he kept in view the presence of his daughter, and chose subjects and a character of language that should not offend a lady. On almost any other occasion Dick would have enjoyed the scene. Van Tromp's egotism, flown with drink, struck a pitch above mere vanity. He became candid and explanatory; sought to take his auditors entirely into his confidence, and tell them his inmost conviction about himself. Between his self-knowledge, which was considerable, and his vanity, which was immense, he had created a strange hybrid animal, and called it by his own name. How he would plume his feathers over virtues which would have gladdened the heart of Caesar or St. Paul; and anon, complete his own portrait with one of those touches of pitiless realism which the satirist so often seeks in vain.

'Now, there's Dick,' he said, 'he's shrewd; he saw through me the first time we met, and told me so - told me so to my face, which I had the virtue to keep. I bear you no malice for it, Dick; you were right; I am a humbug.'

You may fancy how Esther quailed at this new feature of the meeting between her two idols.

And then, again, in a parenthesis:-

'That,' said Van Tromp, 'was when I had to paint those dirty daubs of mine.'

And a little further on, laughingly said perhaps, but yet with an air of truth:-

'I never had the slightest hesitation in sponging upon any human creature.'

Thereupon Dick got up.

'I think perhaps,' he said, 'we had better all be thinking of going to bed.' And he smiled with a feeble and deprecatory smile.

'Not at all,' cried the Admiral, 'I know a trick worth two of that. Puss here,' indicating his daughter, 'shall go to bed; and you and I will keep it up till all's blue.'

Thereupon Esther arose in sullen glory. She had sat and listened for two mortal hours while her idol defiled himself and sneered away his godhead. One by one, her illusions had departed. And now he wished to order her to bed in her own house! now he called her Puss! now, even as he uttered the words, toppling on his chair, he broke the stem of his tobacco-pipe in three! Never did the sheep turn upon her shearer with a more commanding front. Her voice was calm, her enunciation a little slow, but perfectly distinct, and she stood before him as she spoke, in the simplest and most maidenly attitude.

'No,' she said, 'Mr. Naseby will have the goodness to go home at once, and you will go to bed.’

The broken fragments of pipe fell from the Admiral’s fingers; he seemed by his countenance to have lived too long in a world unworthy of him; but it is an odd circumstance, he attempted no reply, and sat thunderstruck, with open mouth.

Dick she motioned sharply towards the door, and he could only obey her. In the porch, finding she was close behind him, he ventured to pause and whisper, ‘You have done right.’

‘I have done as I pleased,’ she said. ‘Can he paint?’

‘Many people like his paintings,’ returned Dick, in stifled tones; ‘I never did; I never said I did,’ he added, fiercely defending himself before he was attacked.

‘I ask you if he can paint. I will not be put off. CAN he paint?’ she repeated.

‘No,’ said Dick.

‘Does he even like it?’

‘Not now, I believe.’

‘And he is drunk?’ - she leaned upon the word with hatred.

‘He has been drinking.’

‘Go,’ she said, and was turning to re-enter the house when another thought arrested her. ‘Meet me to-morrow morning at the stile,’ she said.

‘I will,’ replied Dick.

And then the door closed behind her, and Dick was alone in the darkness. There was still a chink of light above the sill, a warm, mild glow behind the window; the roof of the cottage and some of the banks and hazels were defined in denser darkness against the sky; but all else was formless, breathless, and noiseless like the pit. Dick remained as she had left him, standing squarely upon one foot and resting only on the toe of the other, and as he stood he listened with his soul. The sound of a chair pushed sharply over the floor startled his heart into his mouth; but the silence which had thus been disturbed settled back again at once upon the cottage and its vicinity. What took place during this interval is a secret from the world of men; but when it was over the voice of Esther spoke evenly and without interruption for perhaps half a minute, and as soon as that ceased heavy and uncertain footfalls crossed the parlour and mounted lurching up the stairs. The girl had tamed her father, Van Tromp had gone obediently to bed: so much was obvious to the watcher in the road. And yet he still waited, straining his ears, and with terror and sickness at his heart; for if Esther had followed her father, if she had even made one movement in this great conspiracy of men and nature to be still, Dick must have had instant knowledge of it from his station before the door; and if she had not moved, must she not have fainted?

or might she not be dead?

He could hear the cottage clock deliberately measure out the seconds; time stood still with him; an almost superstitious terror took command of his faculties; at last, he could bear no more, and, springing through the little garden in two bounds, he put his face against the window. The blind, which had not been drawn fully down, left an open chink about an inch in height along the bottom of the glass, and the whole parlour was thus exposed to Dick's investigation. Esther sat upright at the table, her head resting on her hand, her eyes fixed upon the candle. Her brows were slightly bent, her mouth slightly open; her whole attitude so still and settled that Dick could hardly fancy that she breathed. She had not stirred at the sound of Dick's arrival. Soon after, making a considerable disturbance amid the vast silence of the night, the clock lifted up its voice, whined for a while like a partridge, and then eleven times hooted like a cuckoo. Still Esther continued immovable and gazed upon the candle. Midnight followed, and then one of the morning; and still she had not stirred, nor had Richard Naseby dared to quit the window. And then, about half-past one, the candle she had been thus intently watching flared up into a last blaze of paper, and she leaped to her feet with an ejaculation, looked about her once, blew out the light, turned round, and was heard rapidly mounting the staircase in the dark.

Dick was left once more alone to darkness and to that dulled and dogged state of mind when a man thinks that Misery must now have done her worst, and is almost glad to think so. He turned and walked slowly towards the stile; she had told him no hour, and he was determined, whenever she came, that she should find him waiting. As he got there the day began to dawn, and he leaned over a hurdle and beheld the shadows flee away. Up went the sun at last out of a bank of clouds that were already disbanding in the east; a herald wind had already sprung up to sweep the leafy earth and scatter the congregated dewdrops. 'Alas!' thought Dick Naseby, 'how can any other day come so distastefully to me?' He still wanted his experience of the morrow.

CHAPTER VII - THE ELOPEMENT

IT was probably on the stroke of ten, and Dick had been half asleep for some time against the bank, when Esther came up the road carrying a bundle. Some kind of instinct, or perhaps the distant light footfalls, recalled him, while she was still a good way off, to the possession of his faculties, and he half raised himself and blinked upon the world. It took him some time to recollect his thoughts. He had awakened with a certain blank and childish sense of pleasure, like a man who had received a legacy overnight; but this feeling gradually died away, and was then suddenly and stunningly succeeded by a conviction of the truth. The whole story of the past night sprang into his mind with every detail, as by an exercise of the direct and speedy sense of sight, and he arose from the ditch and, with rueful courage, went to meet his love.

She came up to him walking steady and fast, her face still pale, but to all appearance perfectly composed; and she showed neither surprise, relief, nor pleasure at finding her lover on the spot. Nor did she offer him her hand.

'Here I am,' said he.

'Yes,' she replied; and then, without a pause or any change of voice, 'I want you to take me away,' she added.

'Away?' he repeated. 'How? Where?'

'To-day,' she said. 'I do not care where it is, but I want you to take me away.'

'For how long? I do not understand,' gasped Dick.

'I shall never come back here any more,' was all she answered.

Wild words uttered, as these were, with perfect quiet of manner and voice, exercise a double influence on the hearer's mind. Dick was confounded; he recovered from astonishment only to fall into doubt and alarm. He looked upon her frozen attitude, so discouraging for a lover to behold, and recoiled from the thoughts which it suggested.

'To me?' he asked. 'Are you coming to me, Esther?'

'I want you to take me away,' she repeated with weary impatience. 'Take me away - take me away from here.'

The situation was not sufficiently defined. Dick asked himself with concern whether she were altogether in her right wits. To take her away, to marry her, to work off his hands for her support, Dick was content to do all this; yet he required some show of love upon her part. He was not one of those tough-hided and small-hearted males who would marry their love at the point of the bayonet rather than not marry her at all. He desired that a woman should come to his arms with an attractive willingness, if not with ardour. And Esther's bearing was more that of despair than that of love. It chilled him and taught him wisdom.

‘Dearest,’ he urged, ‘tell me what you wish, and you shall have it; tell me your thoughts, and then I can advise you. But to go from here without a plan, without forethought, in the heat of a moment, is madder than madness, and can help nothing. I am not speaking like a man, but I speak the truth; and I tell you again, the thing’s absurd, and wrong, and hurtful.’

She looked at him with a lowering, languid look of wrath.

‘So you will not take me?’ she said. ‘Well, I will go alone.’

And she began to step forward on her way. But he threw himself before her.

‘Esther, Esther!’ he cried.

‘Let me go - don’t touch me - what right have you to interfere? Who are you, to touch me?’ she flashed out, shrill with anger.

Then, being made bold by her violence, he took her firmly, almost roughly, by the arm, and held her while he spoke.

‘You know well who I am, and what I am, and that I love you. You say I will not help you; but your heart knows the contrary. It is you who will not help me; for you will not tell me what you want. You see - or you could see, if you took the pains to look - how I have waited here all night to be ready at your service. I only asked information; I only urged you to consider; and I still urge and beg you to think better of your fancies. But if your mind is made up, so be it; I will beg no longer; I give you my orders; and I will not allow - not allow you to go hence alone.’

She looked at him for awhile with cold, unkind scrutiny like one who tries the temper of a tool.

‘Well, take me away, then,’ she said with a sigh.

‘Good,’ said Dick. ‘Come with me to the stables; there we shall get the pony-trap and drive to the junction. To-night you shall be in London. I am yours so wholly that no words can make me more so; and, besides, you know it, and the words are needless. May God help me to be good to you, Esther - may God help me! for I see that you will not.’

So, without more speech, they set out together, and were already got some distance from the spot, ere he observed that she was still carrying the hand-bag. She gave it up to him, passively, but when he offered her his arm, merely shook her head and pursed up her lips. The sun shone clearly and pleasantly; the wind was fresh and brisk upon their faces, and smelt racily of woods and meadows. As they went down into the valley of the Thyme, the babble of the stream rose into the air like a perennial laughter. On the far-away hills, sun-burst and shadow raced along the slopes and leaped from peak to peak.

Earth, air and water, each seemed in better health and had more of the shrewd salt of life in them than upon ordinary mornings; and from east to west, from the lowest glen to the height of heaven, from every look and touch and scent, a human creature could gather the most encouraging intelligence as to the durability and spirit of the universe.

Through all this walked Esther, picking her small steps like a bird, but silent and with a cloud under her thick eyebrows. She seemed insensible, not only of nature, but of the presence of her companion. She was altogether engrossed in herself, and looked neither to right nor to left, but straight before her on the road. When they came to the bridge, however, she halted, leaned on the parapet, and stared for a moment at the clear, brown pool, and swift, transient snowdrift of the rapids.

'I am going to drink,' she said; and descended the winding footpath to the margin.

There she drank greedily in her hands and washed her temples with water. The coolness seemed to break, for an instant, the spell that lay upon her; for, instead of hastening forward again in her dull, indefatigable tramp, she stood still where she was, for near a minute, looking straight before her. And Dick, from above on the bridge where he stood to watch her, saw a strange, equivocal smile dawn slowly on her face and pass away again at once and suddenly, leaving her as grave as ever; and the sense of distance, which it is so cruel for a lover to endure, pressed with every moment more heavily on her companion. Her thoughts were all secret; her heart was locked and bolted; and he stood without, vainly wooing her with his eves.

'Do you feel better?' asked Dick, as she at last rejoined him; and after the constraint of so long a silence, his voice sounded foreign to his own ears.

She looked at him for an appreciable fraction of a minute ere she answered, and when she did, it was in the monosyllable - 'Yes.'

Dick's solicitude was nipped and frosted. His words died away on his tongue. Even his eyes, despairing of encouragement, ceased to attend on hers. And they went on in silence through Kirton hamlet, where an old man followed them with his eyes, and perhaps envied them their youth and love; and across the Ivy beck where the mill was splashing and grumbling low thunder to itself in the chequered shadow of the dell, and the miller before the door was beating flour from his hands as he whistled a modulation; and up by the high spinney, whence they saw the mountains upon either hand; and down the hill again to the back courts and offices of Naseby House. Esther had kept ahead all the way, and Dick plodded obediently in her wake; but as they neared the stables, he pushed on and took the lead. He would have preferred her to await him in the road while he went on and brought the carriage back, but after so many repulses and rebuffs he lacked courage to offer the suggestion. Perhaps, too, he felt it wiser to keep his convoy within sight. So they entered the yard in Indian file, like a tramp and his wife.

The grooms eyebrows rose as he received the order for the pony-phaeton, and kept rising during all his preparations. Esther stood bolt upright and looked steadily at some chickens in the corner of the yard. Master Richard himself, thought the groom, was not in his ordinary; for in truth, he carried the hand-bag like a talisman, and either stood listless, or set off suddenly walking in one direction after another with brisk, decisive footsteps. Moreover he had apparently neglected to wash his hands, and bore the air of one returning from a prolonged nutting ramble. Upon the groom's countenance there began to grow up an expression as of one about to whistle. And hardly had the carriage turned the corner and rattled into the high road with this inexplicable pair, than the whistle broke forth - prolonged, and low and tremulous; and the groom, already so far relieved, vented the rest of his surprise in one simple English word, friendly to the mouth of Jack-tar and the sooty pitman, and hurried to spread the news round the servants' hall of Naseby House. Luncheon would be on the table in little beyond an hour; and the Squire, on sitting down, would hardly fail to ask for Master Richard. Hence, as the intelligent reader can foresee, this groom has a part to play in the imbroglio.

Meantime, Dick had been thinking deeply and bitterly. It seemed to him as if his love had gone from him, indeed, yet gone but a little way; as if he needed but to find the right touch or intonation, and her heart would recognise him and be melted. Yet he durst not open his mouth, and drove in silence till they had passed the main park-gates and turned into the cross-cut lane along the wall. Then it seemed to him as if it must be now, or never.

'Can't you see you are killing me?' he cried. 'Speak to me, look at me, treat me like a human man.'

She turned slowly and looked him in the face with eyes that seemed kinder. He dropped the reins and caught her hand, and she made no resistance, although her touch was unresponsive. But when, throwing one arm round her waist, he sought to kiss her lips, not like a lover indeed, not because he wanted to do so, but as a desperate man who puts his fortunes to the touch, she drew away from him, with a knot in her forehead, backed and shied about fiercely with her head, and pushed him from her with her hand. Then there was no room left for doubt, and Dick saw, as clear as sunlight, that she had a distaste or nourished a grudge against him.

'Then you don't love me?' he said, drawing back from her, he also, as though her touch had burnt him; and then, as she made no answer, he repeated with another intonation, imperious and yet still pathetic, ‘You don’t love me, DO you, DO you?’

‘I don’t know,’ she replied. ‘Why do you ask me? Oh, how should I know? It has all been lies together - lies, and lies, and lies!’

He cried her name sharply, like a man who has taken a physical hurt, and that was the last word that either of them spoke until they reached Thymebury Junction.

This was a station isolated in the midst of moorlands, yet lying on the great up line to London. The nearest town, Thymebury itself, was seven miles distant along the branch they call the Vale of Thyme Railway. It was now nearly half an hour past noon, the down train had just gone by, and there would be no more traffic at the junction until half-past three, when the local train comes in to meet the up express at a quarter before four. The stationmaster had already gone off to his garden, which was half a mile away in a hollow of the moor; a porter, who was just leaving, took charge of the phaeton, and promised to return it before night to Naseby House; only a deaf, snuffy, and stern old man remained to play propriety for Dick and Esther.

Before the phaeton had driven off, the girl had entered the station and seated herself upon a bench. The endless, empty moorlands stretched before her, entirely unenclosed, and with no boundary but the horizon. Two lines of rails, a waggon shed, and a few telegraph posts, alone diversified the outlook. As for sounds, the silence was unbroken save by the chant of the telegraph wires and the crying of the plovers on the waste. With the approach of midday the wind had more and more fallen, it was now sweltering hot and the air trembled in the sunshine.

Dick paused for an instant on the threshold of the platform. Then, in two steps, he was by her side and speaking almost with a sob.

‘Esther,’ he said, ‘have pity on me. What have I done? Can you not forgive me? Esther, you loved me once - can you not love me still?’

‘How can I tell you? How am I to know?’ she answered. ‘You are all a lie to me - all a lie from first to last. You were laughing at my folly, playing with me like a child, at the very time when you declared you loved me. Which was true? was any of it true? or was it all, all a mockery? I am weary trying to find out. And you say I loved you; I loved my father’s friend. I never loved, I never heard of, you, until that man came home and I began to find myself deceived. Give me back my father, be what you were before, and you may talk of love indeed!’

‘Then you cannot forgive me - cannot?’ he asked.

‘I have nothing to forgive,’ she answered. ‘You do not understand.’

‘Is that your last word, Esther?’ said he, very white, and biting his lip to keep it still.

‘Yes, that is my last word,’ replied she.

‘Then we are here on false pretences, and we stay here no longer,’ he said. ‘Had you still loved me, right or wrong, I should have taken you away, because then I could have made you happy. But as it is - I must speak plainly - what you propose is degrading to you, and an insult to me, and a rank unkindness to your father. Your father may be this or that, but you should use him like a fellow-creature.’

‘What do you mean?’ she flashed. ‘I leave him my house and all my money; it is more than he deserves. I wonder you dare speak to me about that man. And besides, it is all he cares for; let him take it, and let me never hear from him again.’

‘I thought you romantic about fathers,’ he said.

‘Is that a taunt?’ she demanded.

‘No,’ he replied, ‘it is an argument. No one can make you like him, but don’t disgrace him in his own eyes. He is old, Esther, old and broken down. Even I am sorry for him, and he has been the loss of all I cared for. Write to your aunt; when I see her answer you can leave quietly and naturally, and I will take you to your aunt’s door. But in the meantime you must go home. You have no money, and so you are helpless, and must do as I tell you; and believe me, Esther, I do all for your good, and your good only, so God help me.’

She had put her hand into her pocket and withdrawn it empty.

‘I counted upon you,’ she wailed.

‘You counted rightly then,’ he retorted. ‘I will not, to please you for a moment, make both of us unhappy for our lives; and since I cannot marry you, we have only been too long away, and must go home at once.’

‘Dick,’ she cried suddenly, ‘perhaps I might - perhaps in time - perhaps - ‘

‘There is no perhaps about the matter,’ interrupted Dick. ‘I must go and bring the phaeton.’ And with that he strode from the station, all in a glow of passion and virtue. Esther, whose eyes had come alive and her cheeks flushed during these last words, relapsed in a second into a state of petrifaction. She remained without motion during his absence, and when he returned suffered herself to be put back into the phaeton, and driven off on the return journey like an idiot or a tired child. Compared with what she was now, her condition of the morning seemed positively natural. She sat white and cold and silent, and there was no speculation in her eyes. Poor Dick flailed and flailed at the pony, and once tried to whistle, but his courage was going down; huge clouds of despair gathered together in his soul, and from time to time their darkness was divided by a piercing flash of longing and regret. He had lost his love - he had lost his love for good.

The pony was tired, and the hills very long and steep, and the air sultrier than ever, for now the breeze began to fail entirely. It seemed as if this miserable drive would never be done, as if poor Dick would never be able to go away and be comfortably wretched by himself; for all his desire was to escape from her presence and the reproach of her averted looks. He had lost his love, he thought - he had lost his love for good.

They were already not far from the cottage, when his heart again faltered and he appealed to her once more, speaking low and eagerly in broken phrases.

‘I cannot live without your love,’ he concluded.

‘I do not understand what you mean,’ she replied, and I believe with perfect truth.

‘Then,’ said he, wounded to the quick, ‘your aunt might come and fetch you herself. Of course you can command me as you please. But I think it would be better so.’

‘Oh yes,’ she said wearily, ‘better so.’

This was the only exchange of words between them till about four o’clock; the phaeton, mounting the lane, ‘opened out’ the cottage between the leafy banks. Thin smoke went straight up from the chimney; the flowers in the garden, the hawthorn in the lane, hung down their heads in the heat; the stillness was broken only by the sound of hoofs. For right before the gate a livery servant rode slowly up and down, leading a saddle horse. And in this last Dick shuddered to identify his father’s chestnut.

Alas! poor Richard, what should this portend?

The servant, as in duty bound, dismounted and took the phaeton into his keeping; yet Dick thought he touched his hat to him with something of a grin. Esther, passive as ever, was helped out and crossed the garden with a slow and mechanical gait; and Dick, following close behind her, heard from within the cottage his father’s voice upraised in an anathema, and the shriller tones of the Admiral responding in the key of war.

CHAPTER VIII - BATTLE ROYAL

SQUIRE NASEBY, on sitting down to lunch, had inquired for Dick, whom he had not seen since the day before at dinner; and the servant answering awkwardly that Master Richard had come back but had gone out again with the pony phaeton, his suspicions became aroused, and he cross-questioned the man until the whole was out. It appeared from this report that Dick had been going about for nearly a month with a girl in the Vale - a Miss Van Tromp; that she lived near Lord Trevanion's upper wood; that recently Miss Van Tromp's papa had returned home from foreign parts after a prolonged absence; that this papa was an old gentleman, very chatty and free with his money in the public-house - whereupon Mr. Naseby's face became encrimsoned; that the papa, furthermore, was said to be an admiral - whereupon Mr. Naseby spat out a whistle brief and fierce as an oath; that Master Dick seemed very friendly with the papa - 'God help him!' said Mr. Naseby; that last night Master Dick had not come in, and to- day he had driven away in the phaeton with the young lady -

'Young woman,' corrected Mr. Naseby.

'Yes, sir,' said the man, who had been unwilling enough to gossip from the first, and was now cowed by the effect of his communications on the master. 'Young woman, sir!'

'Had they luggage?' demanded the Squire.

'Yes, sir.'

Mr. Naseby was silent for a moment, struggling to keep down his emotion, and he mastered it so far as to mount into the sarcastic vein, when he was in the nearest danger of melting into the sorrowful.

'And was this - this Van Dunk with them?' he asked, dwelling scornfully upon the name.

The servant believed not, and being eager to shift the responsibility of speech to other shoulders, suggested that perhaps the master had better inquire further from George the stableman in person.

'Tell him to saddle the chestnut and come with me. He can take the gray gelding; for we may ride fast. And then you can take away this trash,' added Mr. Naseby, pointing to the luncheon; and he arose, lordly in his anger, and marched forth upon the terrace to await his horse.

There Dick's old nurse shrunk up to him, for the news went like wildfire over Naseby House, and timidly expressed a hope that there was nothing much amiss with the young master.

'I'll pull him through,' the Squire said grimly, as though he meant to pull him through a threshing-mill; 'I'll save him from this gang; God help him with the next! He has a taste for low company, and no natural affections to steady him. His father was no society for him; he must go fuddling with a Dutchman, Nance, and now he's caught. Let us pray he'll take the lesson,' he added more gravely, 'but youth is here to make troubles, and age to pull them out again.'

Nance whimpered and recalled several episodes of Dick's childhood, which moved Mr. Naseby to blow his nose and shake her hard by the hand; and then, the horse arriving opportunely, to get himself without delay into the saddle and canter off.

He rode straight, hot spur, to Thymebury, where, as was to be expected, he could glean no tidings of the runaways. They had not been seen at the George; they had not been seen at the station. The shadow darkened on Mr. Naseby's face; the junction did not occur to him; his last hope was for Van Tromp's cottage; thither he bade George guide him, and thither he followed, nursing grief, anxiety, and indignation in his heart.

'Here it is, sir,' said George stopping.

'What! on my own land!' he cried. 'How's this? I let this place to somebody - M'Whirter or M'Glashan.'

'Miss M'Glashan was the young lady's aunt, sir, I believe,' returned George.

'Ay - dummies,' said the Squire. 'I shall whistle for my rent too. Here, take my horse.'

The Admiral, this hot afternoon, was sitting by the window with a long glass. He already knew the Squire by sight, and now, seeing him dismount before the cottage and come striding through the garden, concluded without doubt he was there to ask for Esther's hand.

'This is why the girl is not yet home,' he thought: 'a very suitable delicacy on young Naseby's part.'

And he composed himself with some pomp, answered the loud rattle of the riding-whip upon the door with a dulcet invitation to enter, and coming forward with a bow and a smile, 'Mr. Naseby, I believe,' said he.

The Squire came armed for battle; took in his man from top to toe in one rapid and scornful glance, and decided on a course at once. He must let the fellow see that he understood him.

'You are Mr. Van Tromp?' he returned roughly, and without taking any notice of the proffered hand.

'The same, sir,' replied the Admiral. 'Pray be seated.'

'No sir,' said the Squire, point-blank, 'I will not be seated. I am told that you are an admiral,' he added.

'No sir, I am not an admiral,' returned Van Tromp, who now began to grow nettled and enter into the spirit of the interview.

'Then why do you call yourself one, sir?'

'I have to ask your pardon, I do not,' says Van Tromp, as grand as the Pope.

But nothing was of avail against the Squire.

'You sail under false colours from beginning to end,' he said. 'Your very house was taken under a sham name.'

'It is not my house. I am my daughter's guest,' replied the Admiral. 'If it WERE my house - '

'Well?' said the Squire, 'what then? hey?'

The Admiral looked at him nobly, but was silent.

'Look here,' said Mr. Naseby, 'this intimidation is a waste of time; it is thrown away on me, sir; it will not succeed with me. I will not permit you even to gain time by your fencing. Now, sir, I presume you understand what brings me here.'

'I am entirely at a loss to account for your intrusion,' bows and waves Van Tromp.

'I will try to tell you then. I come here as a father' - down came the riding-whip upon the table - 'I have right and justice upon my side. I understand your calculations, but you calculated without me. I am a man of the world, and I see through you and your manoeuvres. I am dealing now with a conspiracy - I stigmatise it as such, and I will expose it and crush it. And now I order you to tell me how far things have gone, and whither you have smuggled my unhappy son.'

'My God, sir!' Van Tromp broke out, 'I have had about enough of this. Your son? God knows where he is for me! What the devil have I to do with your son? My daughter is out, for the matter of that; I might ask you where she was, and what would you say to that? But this is all midsummer madness. Name your business distinctly, and be off.'

'How often am I to tell you?' cried the Squire. 'Where did your daughter take my son to-day in that cursed pony carriage?'

'In a pony carriage?' repeated Van Tromp.

'Yes, sir - with luggage.'

'Luggage?' - Van Tromp had turned a little pale.

'Luggage, I said - luggage!' shouted Naseby. 'You may spare me this dissimulation. Where's my son. You are speaking to a father, sir, a father.'

'But, sir, if this be true,' out came Van Tromp in a new key, 'it is I who have an explanation to demand?'

'Precisely. There is the conspiracy,' retorted Naseby. 'Oh!' he added, 'I am a man of the world. I can see through and through you.'

Van Tromp began to understand.

'You speak a great deal about being a father, Mr. Naseby,' said he; 'I believe you forget that the appellation is common to both of us. I am at a loss to figure to myself, however dimly, how any man - I have not said any gentleman - could so brazenly insult another as you have been insulting me since you entered this house. For the first time I appreciate your base insinuations, and I despise them and you. You were, I am told, a manufacturer; I am an artist; I have seen better days; I have moved in societies where you would not be received, and dined where you would be glad to pay a pound to see me dining. The so-called aristocracy of wealth, sir, I despise. I refuse to help you; I refuse to be helped by you. There lies the door.'

And the Admiral stood forth in a halo.

It was then that Dick entered. He had been waiting in the porch for some time back, and Esther had been listlessly standing by his side. He had put out his hand to bar her entrance, and she had submitted without surprise; and though she seemed to listen, she scarcely appeared to comprehend. Dick, on his part, was as white as a sheet; his eyes burned and his lips trembled with anger as he thrust the door suddenly open, introduced Esther with ceremonious gallantry, and stood forward and knocked his hat firmer on his head like a man about to leap.

'What is all this?' he demanded.

'Is this your father, Mr. Naseby?' inquired the Admiral.

'It is,' said the young man.

'I make you my compliments,' returned Van Tromp.

'Dick!' cried his father, suddenly breaking forth, 'it is not too late, is it? I have come here in time to save you. Come, come away with me - come away from this place.'

And he fawned upon Dick with his hands.

'Keep your hands off me,' cried Dick, not meaning unkindness, but because his nerves were shattered by so many successive miseries.

'No, no,' said the old man, 'don't repulse your father, Dick, when he has come here to save you. Don't repulse me, my boy. Perhaps I have not been kind to you, not quite considerate, too harsh; my boy, it was not for want of love. Think of old times. I was kind to you then, was I not? When you were a child, and your mother was with us.' Mr. Naseby was interrupted by a sort of sob. Dick stood looking at him in a maze. 'Come away,' pursued the father in a whisper; 'you need not be afraid of any consequences. I am a man of the world, Dick; and she can have no claim on you - no claim, I tell you; and we'll be handsome too, Dick - we'll give them a good round figure, father and daughter, and there's an end.'

He had been trying to get Dick towards the door, but the latter stood off.

'You had better take care, sir, how you insult that lady,' said the son, as black as night.

'You would not choose between your father and your mistress?' said the father.

'What do you call her, sir?' cried Dick, high and clear.

Forbearance and patience were not among Mr. Naseby's qualities.

'I called her your mistress,' he shouted, 'and I might have called her a - '

'That is an unmanly lie,' replied Dick, slowly.

'Dick!' cried the father, 'Dick!'

'I do not care,' said the son, strengthening himself against his own heart; 'I - I have said it, and it is the truth.'

There was a pause.

'Dick,' said the old man at last, in a voice that was shaken as by a gale of wind, 'I am going. I leave you with your friends, sir - with your friends. I came to serve you, and now I go away a broken man. For years I have seen this coming, and now it has come. You never loved me. Now you have been the death of me. You may boast of that. Now I leave you. God pardon you.'

With that he was gone; and the three who remained together heard his horse's hoofs descend the lane. Esther had not made a sign throughout the interview, and still kept silence now that it was over; but the Admiral, who had once or twice moved forward and drawn back again, now advanced for good.

'You are a man of spirit, sir,' said he to Dick; 'but though I am no friend to parental interference, I will say that you were heavy on the governor.' Then he added with a chuckle: 'You began, Richard, with a silver spoon, and here you are in the water like the rest. Work, work, nothing like work. You have parts, you have manners; why, with application you may die a millionaire!' Dick shook himself. He took Esther by the hand, looking at her mournfully.

'Then this is farewell,' he said.

'Yes,' she answered. There was no tone in her voice, and she did not return his gaze.

'For ever,' added Dick.

'For ever,' she repeated mechanically.

'I have had hard measure,' he continued. 'In time I believe I could have shown you I was worthy, and there was no time long enough to show how much I loved you. But it was not to be. I have lost all.'

He relinquished her hand, still looking at her, and she turned to leave the room.

'Why, what in fortune's name is the meaning of all this?' cried Van Tromp. 'Esther come back!'

'Let her go,' said Dick, and he watched her disappear with strangely mingled feelings. For he had fallen into that stage when men have the vertigo of misfortune, court the strokes of destiny, and rush towards anything decisive, that it may free them from suspense though at the cost of ruin. It is one of the many minor forms of suicide.

'She did not love me,' he said, turning to her father.

'I feared as much,' said he, 'when I sounded her. Poor Dick, poor Dick. And yet I believe I am as much cut up as you are. I was born to see others happy.'

'You forget,' returned Dick, with something like a sneer, 'that I am now a pauper.'

Van Tromp snapped his fingers.

'Tut!' said he; 'Esther has plenty for us all.'

Dick looked at him with some wonder. It had never dawned upon him that this shiftless, thriftless, worthless, sponging parasite was yet, after and in spite of all, not mercenary in the issue of his thoughts; yet so it was.

'Now,' said Dick, 'I must go.'

'Go?' cried Van Tromp. 'Where? Not one foot, Mr. Richard Naseby. Here you shall stay in the meantime! and - well, and do something practical - advertise for a situation as private secretary - and when you have it, go and welcome. But in the meantime, sir, no false pride; we must stay with our friends; we must sponge a while on Papa Van Tromp, who has sponged so often upon us.'

'By God,' cried Dick, 'I believe you are the best of the lot.'

'Dick, my boy,' replied the Admiral, winking, 'you mark me, I am not the worst.'

'Then why,' began Dick, and then paused. 'But Esther,' he began again, once more to interrupt himself. 'The fact is, Admiral,' he came out with it roundly now, 'your daughter wished to run away from you to-day, and I only brought her back with difficulty.'

'In the pony carriage?' asked the Admiral, with the silliness of extreme surprise.

'Yes,' Dick answered.

'Why, what the devil was she running away from?'

Dick found the question unusually hard to answer.

'Why,' said he, 'you know, you're a bit of a rip.'

'I behave to that girl, sir, like an archdeacon,' replied Van Tromp warmly.

'Well - excuse me - but you know you drink,' insisted Dick.

'I know that I was a sheet in the wind's eye, sir, once - once only, since I reached this place,' retorted the Admiral. 'And even then I was fit for any drawing-room. I should like you to tell me how many fathers, lay and clerical, go upstairs every day with a face like a lobster and cod's eyes - and are dull, upon the back of it - not even mirth for the money! No, if that's what she runs for, all I say is, let her run.'

'You see,' Dick tried it again, 'she has fancies - '

'Confound her fancies!' cried Van Tromp. 'I used her kindly; she had her own way; I was her father. Besides I had taken quite a liking to the girl, and meant to stay with her for good. But I tell you what it is, Dick, since she has trifled with you - Oh, yes, she did though! - and since her old papa's not good enough for her - the devil take her, say I.'

'You will be kind to her at least?' said Dick.

'I never was unkind to a living soul,' replied the Admiral. 'Firm I can be, but not unkind.'

'Well,' said Dick, offering his hand, 'God bless you, and farewell.'

The Admiral swore by all his gods he should not go. 'Dick,' he said, 'You are a selfish dog; you forget your old Admiral. You wouldn't leave him alone, would you?'

It was useless to remind him that the house was not his to dispose of, that being a class of considerations to which his intelligence was closed; so Dick tore himself off by force, and, shouting a good-bye, made off along the lane to Thymebury.

CHAPTER IX - IN WHICH THE LIBERAL EDITOR RE-APPEARS AS 'DEUS EX MACHINA'

IT was perhaps a week later, as old Mr. Naseby sat brooding in his study, that there was shown in upon him, on urgent business, a little hectic gentleman shabbily attired.

'I have to ask pardon for this intrusion, Mr. Naseby,' he said; 'but I come here to perform a duty. My card has been sent in, but perhaps you may not know, what it does not tell you, that I am the editor of the THYMEBURY STAR.'

Mr. Naseby looked up, indignant.

'I cannot fancy,' he said, 'that we have much in common to discuss.'

'I have only a word to say - one piece of information to communicate. Some months ago, we had - you will pardon my referring to it, it is absolutely necessary - but we had an unfortunate difference as to facts.'

'Have you come to apologise?' asked the Squire, sternly.

'No, sir; to mention a circumstance. On the morning in question, your son, Mr. Richard Naseby - '

'I do not permit his name to be mentioned.'

'You will, however, permit me,' replied the Editor.

'You are cruel,' said the Squire. He was right, he was a broken man.

Then the Editor described Dick's warning visit; and how he had seen in the lad's eye that there was a thrashing in the wind, and had escaped through pity only - so the Editor put it - 'through pity only sir. And oh, sir,' he went on, 'if you had seen him speaking up for you, I am sure you would have been proud of your son. I know I admired the lad myself, and indeed that's what brings me here.'

'I have misjudged him,' said the Squire. 'Do you know where he is?'

'Yes, sir, he lies sick at Thymebury.'

'You can take me to him?'

'I can.'

'I pray God he may forgive me,' said the father.

And he and the Editor made post-haste for the country town.

Next day the report went abroad that Mr. Richard was reconciled to his father and had been taken home to Naseby House. He was still ailing, it was said, and the Squire nursed him like the proverbial woman. Rumour, in this instance, did no more than justice to the truth; and over the sickbed many confidences were exchanged, and clouds that had been growing for years passed away in a few hours, and as fond mankind loves to hope, for ever. Many long talks had been fruitless in external action, though fruitful for the understanding of the pair; but at last, one showery Tuesday, the Squire might have been observed upon his way to the cottage in the lane.

The old gentleman had arranged his features with a view to self-command, rather than external cheerfulness; and he entered the cottage on his visit of conciliation with the bearing of a clergyman come to announce a death.

The Admiral and his daughter were both within, and both looked upon their visitor with more surprise than favour.

'Sir,' said he to Van Tromp, 'I am told I have done you much injustice.'

There came a little sound in Esther's throat, and she put her hand suddenly to her heart.

'You have, sir; and the acknowledgment suffices,' replied the Admiral. 'I am prepared, sir, to be easy with you, since I hear you have made it up with my friend Dick. But let me remind you that you owe some apologies to this young lady also.'

'I shall have the temerity to ask for more than her forgiveness,' said the Squire. 'Miss Van Tromp,' he continued, 'once I was in great distress, and knew nothing of you or your character; but I believe you will pardon a few rough words to an old man who asks forgiveness from his heart. I have heard much of you since then; for you have a fervent advocate in my house. I believe you will understand that I speak of my son. He is, I regret to say, very far from well; he does not pick up as the doctors had expected; he has a great deal upon his mind, and, to tell you the truth, my girl, if you won't help us, I am afraid I shall lose him. Come now, forgive him! I was angry with him once myself, and I found I was in the wrong. This is only a misunderstanding, like the other, believe me; and with one kind movement, you may give happiness to him, and to me, and to yourself.'

Esther made a movement towards the door, but long before she reached it she had broken forth sobbing.

'It is all right,' said the Admiral; 'I understand the sex.
Let me make you my compliments, Mr. Naseby.'

The Squire was too much relieved to be angry.

'My dear,' said he to Esther, 'you must not agitate yourself.'

'She had better go up and see him right away,' suggested Van
Tromp.

'I had not ventured to propose it,' replied the Squire. 'LES
CONVENANCES, I believe - '

'JE M'EN FICHE,' cried the Admiral, snapping his fingers.
'She shall go and see my friend Dick. Run and get ready,
Esther.'

Esther obeyed.

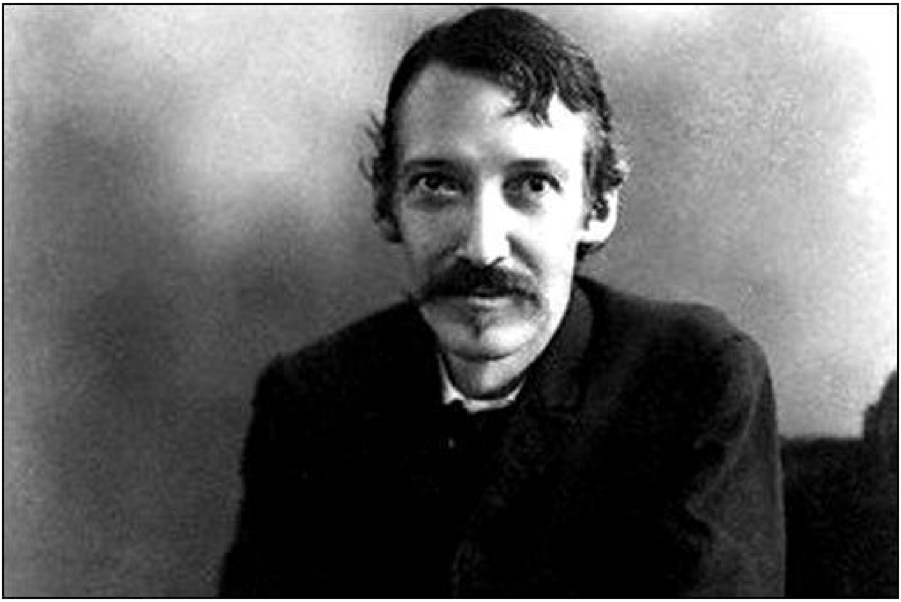
'She has not - has not run away again?' inquired Mr. Naseby, as soon as she was gone.

‘No,’ said Van Tromp, ‘not again. She is a devilish odd girl though, mind you that.’

‘But I cannot stomach the man with the carbuncles,’ thought the Squire.

And this is why there is a new household and a brand-new baby in Naseby Dower House; and why the great Van Tromp lives in pleasant style upon the shores of England; and why twenty-six individual copies of the THYMEBURY STAR are received daily at the door of Naseby Ho

The Short Stories



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THE PAVILION ON THE LINKS
A LODGING FOR THE NIGHT - A STORY OF FRANCIS VILLON
THE SIRE DE MALETROIT’S DOOR
PROLOGUE OF THE CIGAR DIVAN
CHALLONER’S ADVENTURE
STORY OF THE DESTROYING ANGEL
THE SQUIRE OF DAMES (Concluded)
SOMERSET’S ADVENTURE
NARRATIVE OF THE SPIRITED OLD LADY
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THE TREASURE OF FRANCHARD.
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THE MAN AND HIS FRIEND.
THE READER.
THE CITIZEN AND THE TRAVELLER.
THE DISTINGUISHED STRANGER.
THE CART-HORSES AND THE SADDLE-HORSE.
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SOMETHING IN IT.
FAITH, HALF FAITH AND NO FAITH AT ALL.
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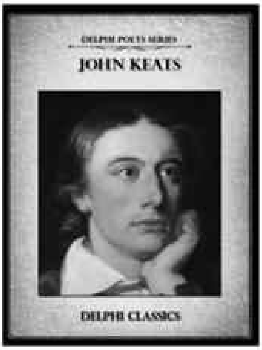
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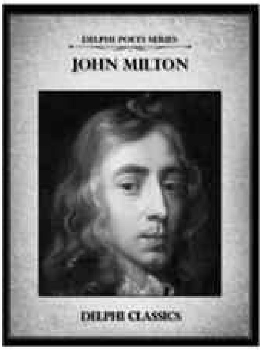
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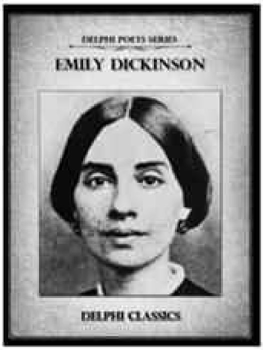
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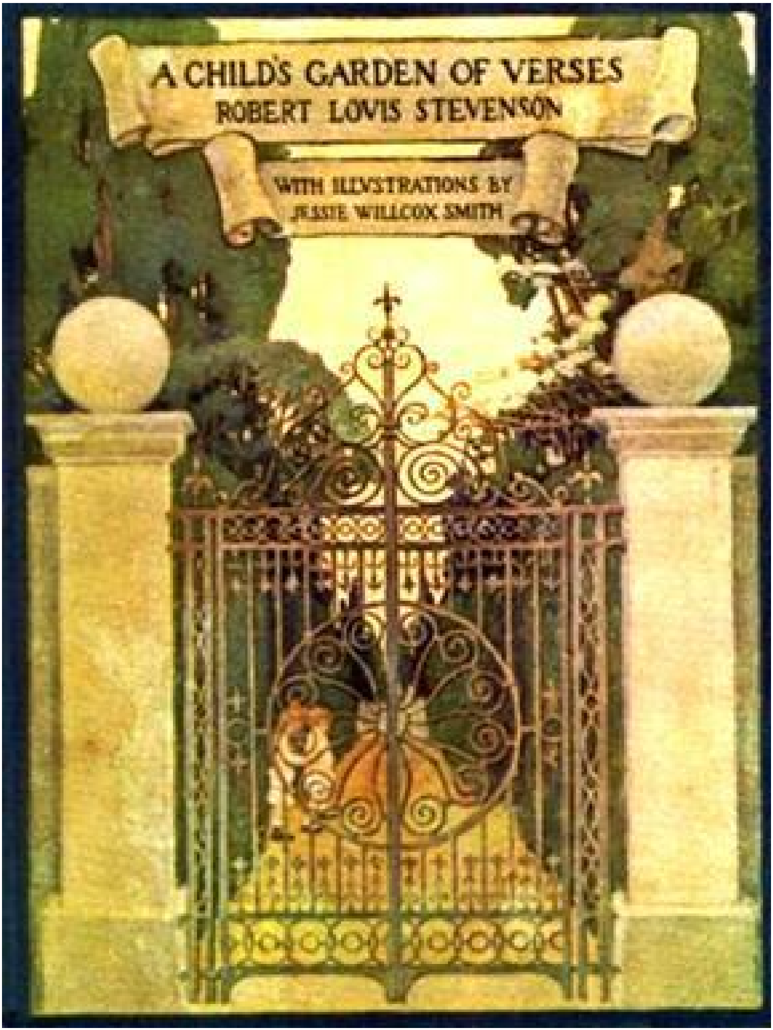
A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES
ROBERT LOVIS STEVENSON
WITH ILLVSTRATIONS BY
JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH

The first illustrated edition

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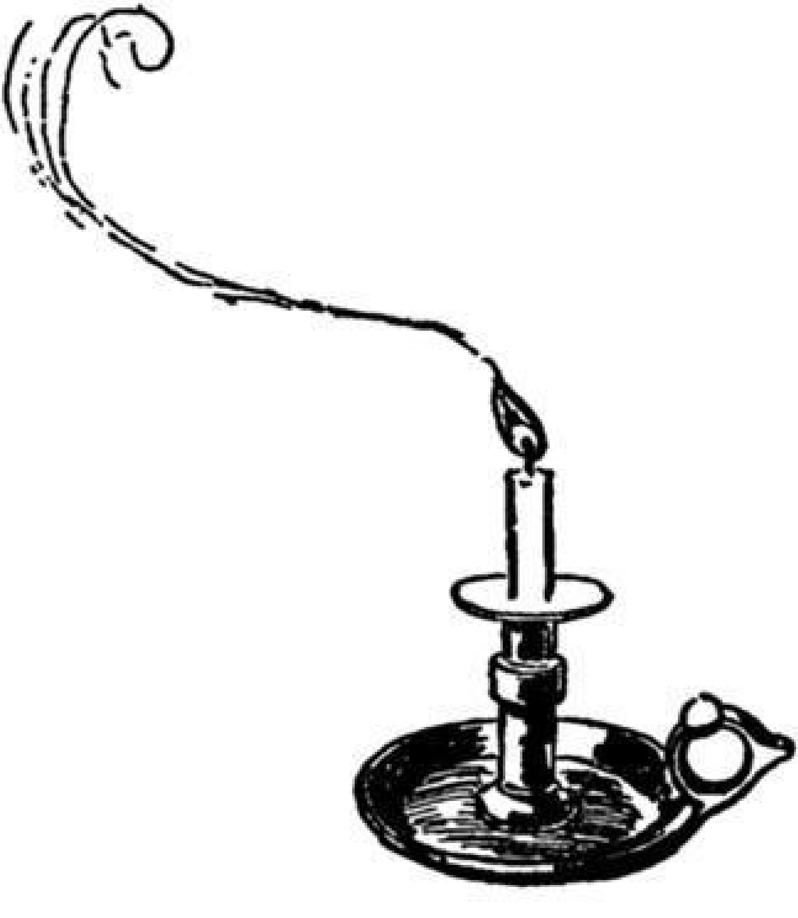
TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM

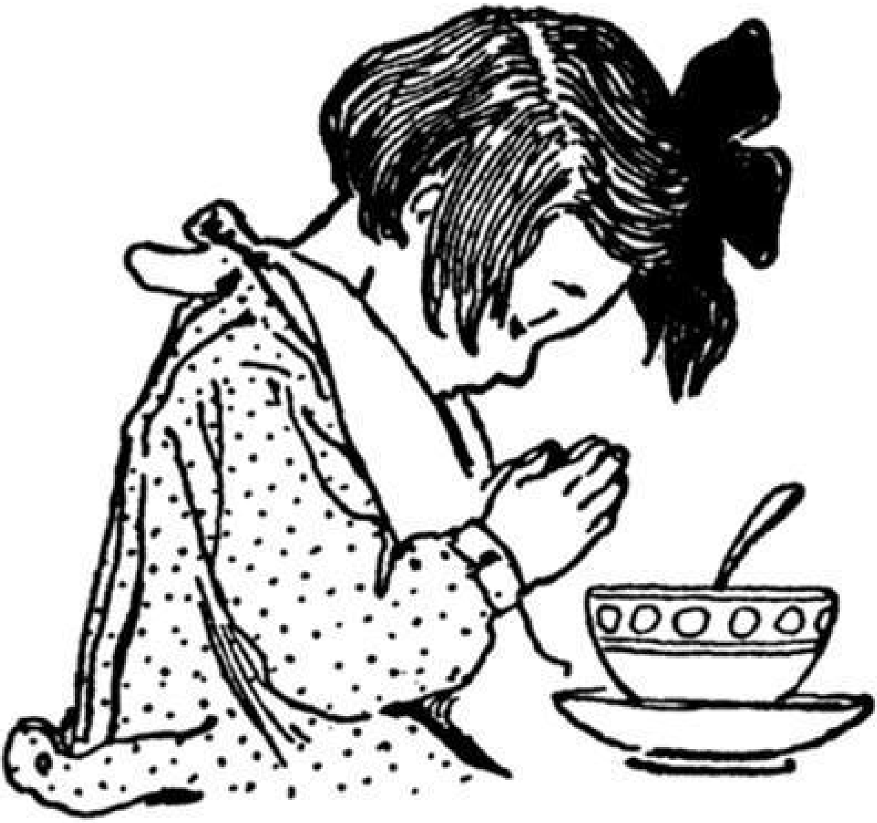
FROM HER BOY
For the long nights you lay awake
And watched for my unworthy sake:
For your most comfortable hand
That led me through the uneven land:
For all the story-books you read:
For all the pains you comforted:
For all you pitied, all you bore,
In sad and happy days of yore: —
My second Mother, my first Wife,
The angel of my infant life —
From the sick child, now well and old,
Take, nurse, the little book you hold!

And grant it, Heaven, that all who read
May find as dear a nurse at need,
And every child who lists my rhyme,
In the bright, fireside, nursery clime,
May hear it in as kind a voice
As made my childish days rejoice!
R. L. S.

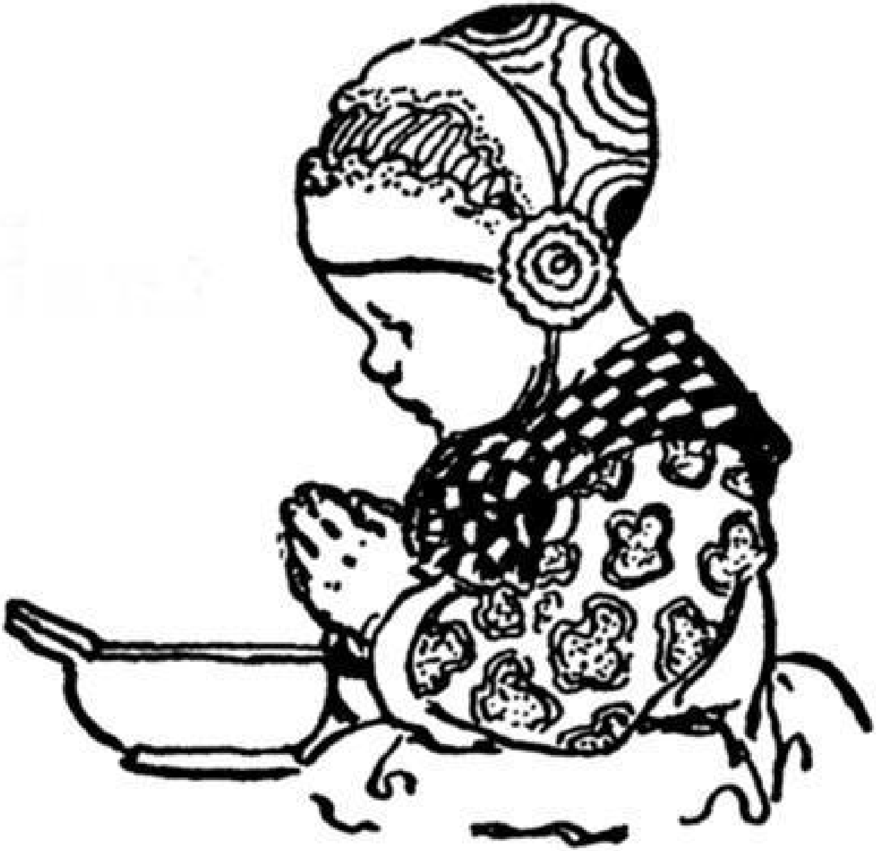


BED IN SUMMER

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.
I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.
And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?



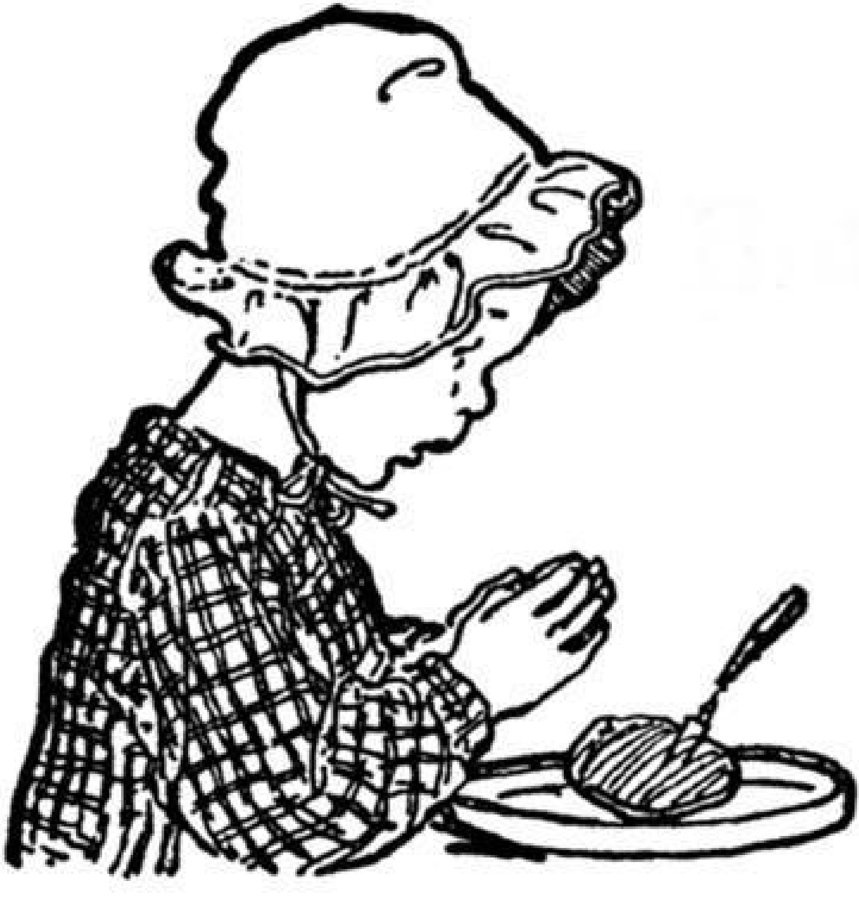
Mary



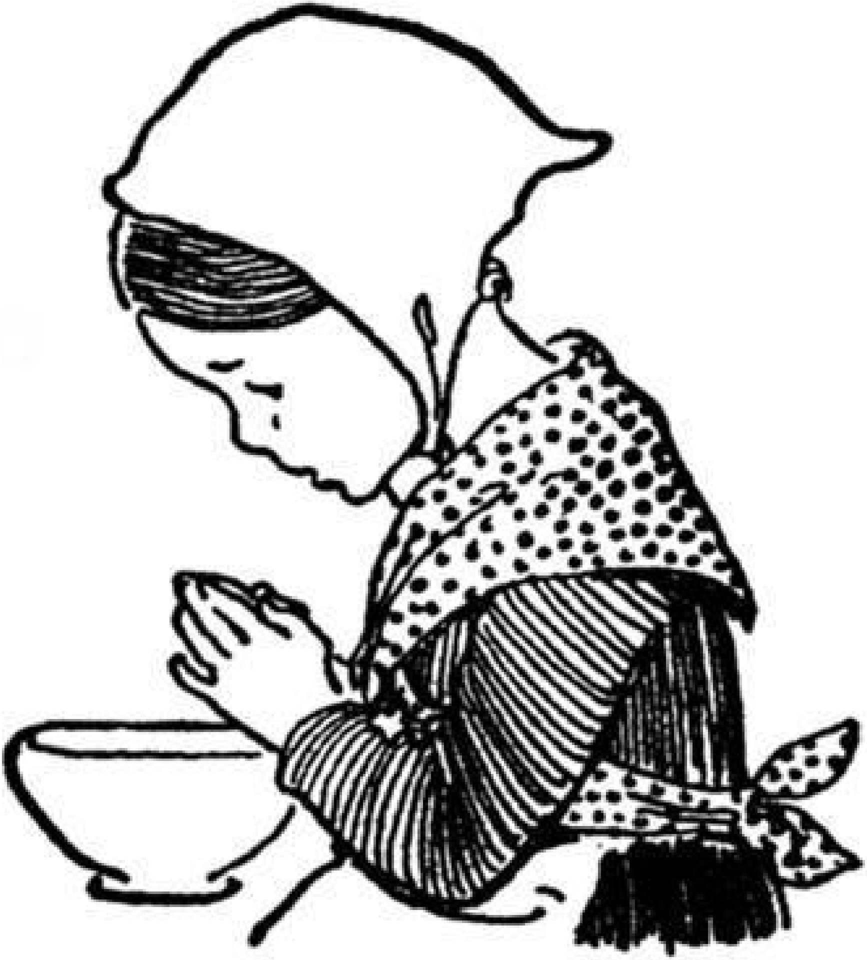
Hans

A THOUGHT

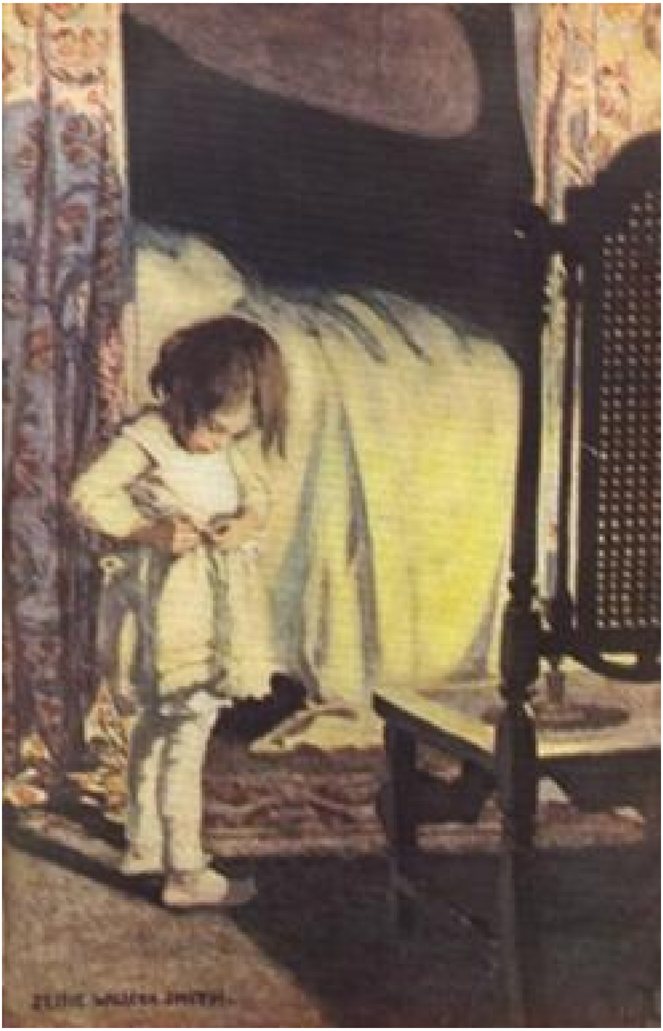
It is very nice to think
The world is full of meat and drink,
With little children saying grace
In every Christian kind of place.



Biddy



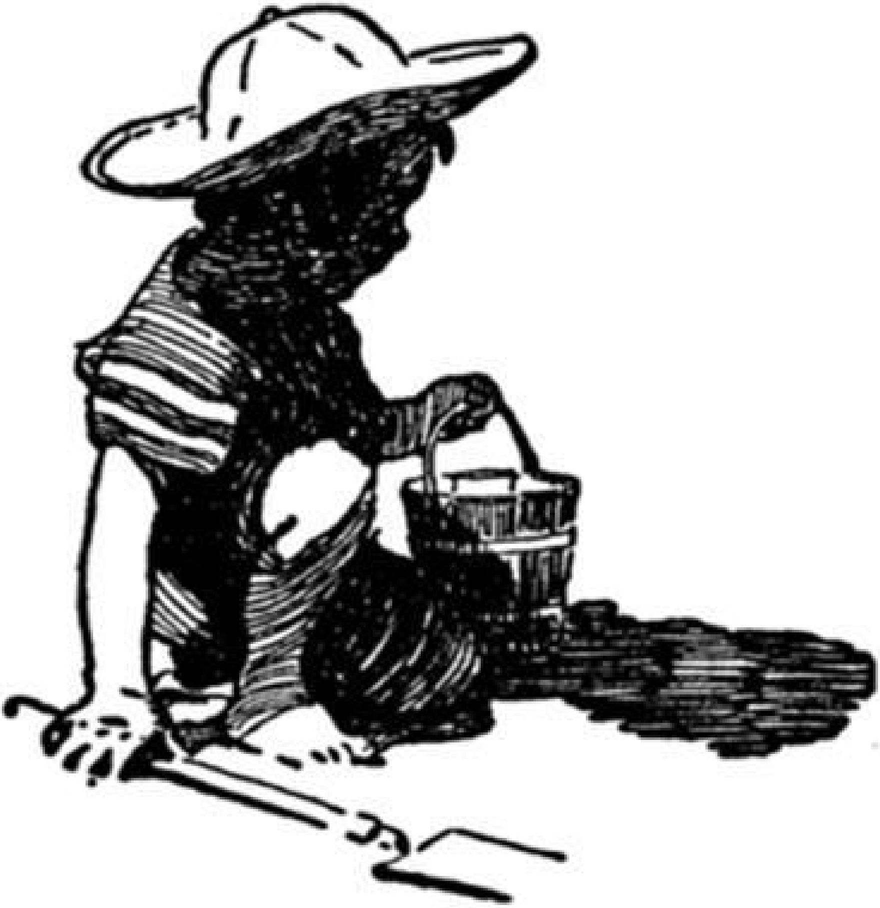
Fifine


JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH

BED IN SUMMER

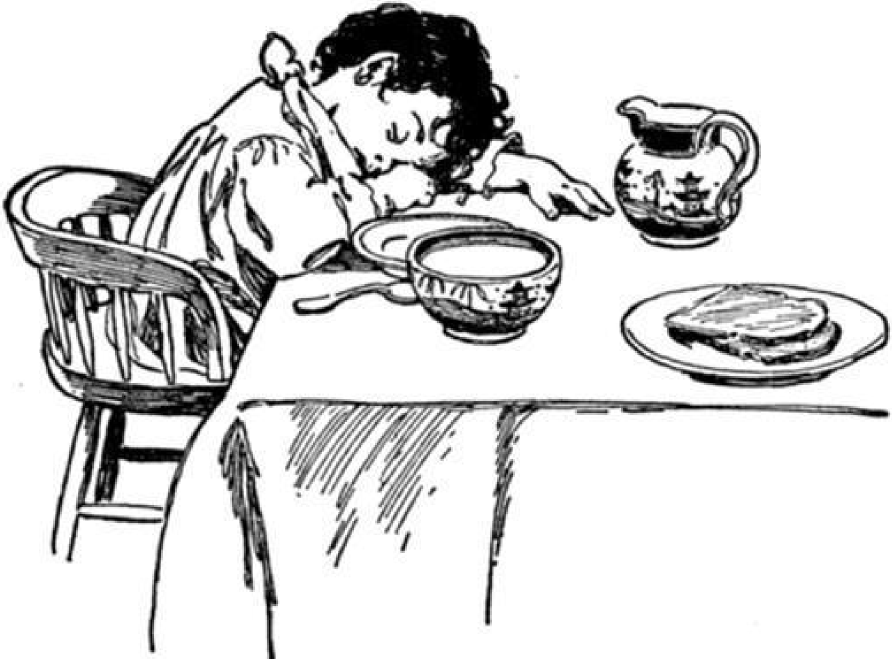
AT THE SEA-SIDE

When I was down beside the sea
A wooden spade they gave to me
To dig the sandy shore.
My holes were empty like a cup.
In every hole the sea came up,
Till it could come no more.



YOUNG NIGHT-THOUGHT

All night long and every night,
When my mama puts out the light,
I see the people marching by,
As plain as day, before my eye.
Armies and emperors and kings,
All carrying different kinds of things,
And marching in so grand a way,
You never saw the like by day.
So fine a show was never seen
At the great circus on the green;
For every kind of beast and man
Is marching in that caravan.
At first they move a little slow,
But still the faster on they go,
And still beside them close I keep
Until we reach the town of Sleep.



WHOLE DUTY OF CHILDREN

A child should always say what’s true
And speak when he is spoken to,
And behave mannerly at table;
At least as far as he is able.

RAIN

The rain is raining all around,
It falls on field and tree,
It rains on the umbrellas here,
And on the ships at sea.

PIRATE STORY

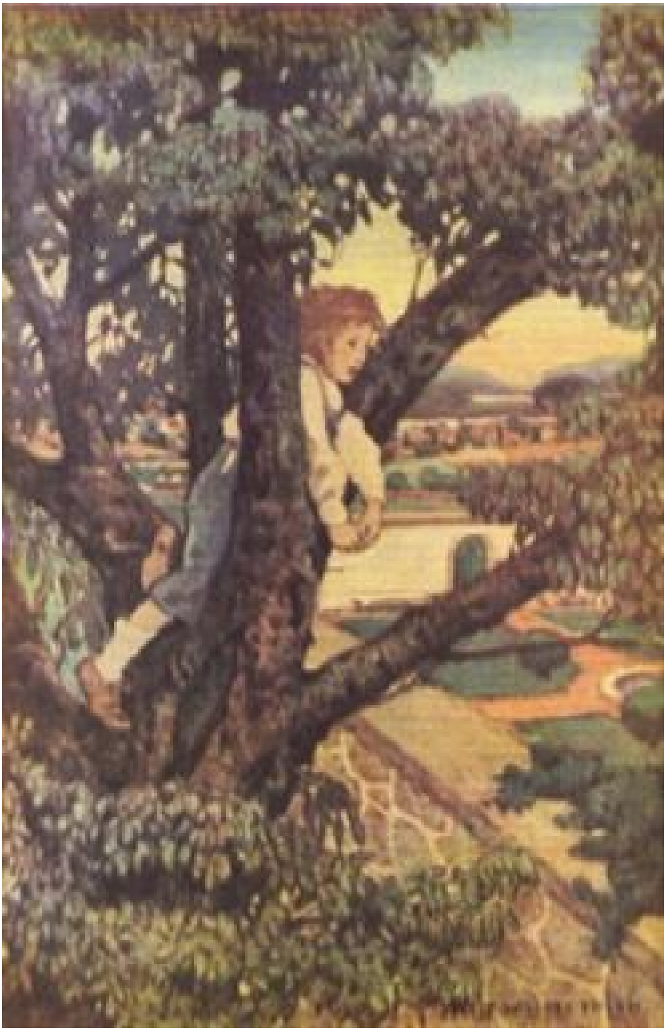
Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,
Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.
Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,
And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are at sea.
Where shall we adventure, to-day that we’re afloat,
Wary of the weather and steering by a star?
Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,
To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?
Hi! but here’s a squadron a-rowing on the sea —
Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!
Quick, and we’ll escape them, they’re as mad as they can be,
The wicket is the harbour and the garden is the shore.

FOREIGN LANDS

Up into the cherry tree
Who should climb but little me?
I held the trunk with both my hands
And looked abroad on foreign lands.
I saw the next door garden lie,
Adorned with flowers, before my eye,
And many pleasant places more
That I had never seen before.
I saw the dimpling river pass
And be the sky's blue looking-glass;
The dusty roads go up and down
With people tramping in to town.
If I could find a higher tree
Farther and farther I should see,
To where the grown-up river slips
Into the sea among the ships,
To where the roads on either hand
Lead onward into fairy land,
Where all the children dine at five,
And all the playthings come alive.

WINDY NIGHTS

Whenever the moon and stars are set,
Whenever the wind is high,
All night long in the dark and wet,
A man goes riding by.
Late in the night when the fires are out,
Why does he gallop and gallop about?
Whenever the trees are crying aloud,
And ships are tossed at sea,
By, on the highway, low and loud,
By at the gallop goes he.
By at the gallop he goes, and then
By he comes back at the gallop again.



FOREIGN LANDS

TRAVEL

I should like to rise and go
Where the golden apples grow; —
Where below another sky
Parrot islands anchored lie,
And, watched by cockatoos and goats,
Lonely Crusoes building boats; —
Where in sunshine reaching out
Eastern cities, miles about,
Are with mosque and minaret
Among sandy gardens set,
And the rich goods from near and far
Hang for sale in the bazaar; —
Where the Great Wall round China goes,
And on one side the desert blows,
And with bell and voice and drum,
Cities on the other hum; —
Where are forests, hot as fire,
Wide as England, tall as a spire,
Full of apes and cocoa-nuts
And the negro hunters’ huts; —
Where the knotty crocodile
Lies and blinks in the Nile,
And the red flamingo flies
Hunting fish before his eyes; —
Where in jungles, near and far,
Man-devouring tigers are,
Lying close and giving ear
Lest the hunt be drawing near,

Or a comer-by be seen
Swinging in a palanquin; —
Where among the desert sands
Some deserted city stands,
All its children, sweep and prince,
Grown to manhood ages since,
Not a foot in street or house,
Not a stir of child or mouse,
And when kindly falls the night,
In all the town no spark of light.
There I’ll come when I’m a man
With a camel caravan;
Light a fire in the gloom
Of some dusty dining-room;

See the pictures on the walls,
Heroes, fights, and festivals;
And in a corner find the toys
Of the old Egyptian boys.

SINGING

Of speckled eggs the birdie sings
And nests among the trees;
The sailor sings of ropes and things
In ships upon the seas.
The children sing in far Japan,
The children sing in Spain;
The organ with the organ man
Is singing in the rain.

LOOKING FORWARD

When I am grown to man’s estate
I shall be very proud and great,
And tell the other girls and boys
Not to meddle with my toys.

A GOOD PLAY

We built a ship upon the stairs
All made of the back-bedroom chairs,
And filled it full of sofa pillows
To go a-sailing on the billows.
We took a saw and several nails,
And water in the nursery pails;
And Tom said, “Let us also take
An apple and a slice of cake;” —
Which was enough for Tom and me
To go a-sailing on, till tea.
We sailed along for days and days
And had the very best of plays;
But Tom fell out and hurt his knee,
So there was no one left but me.

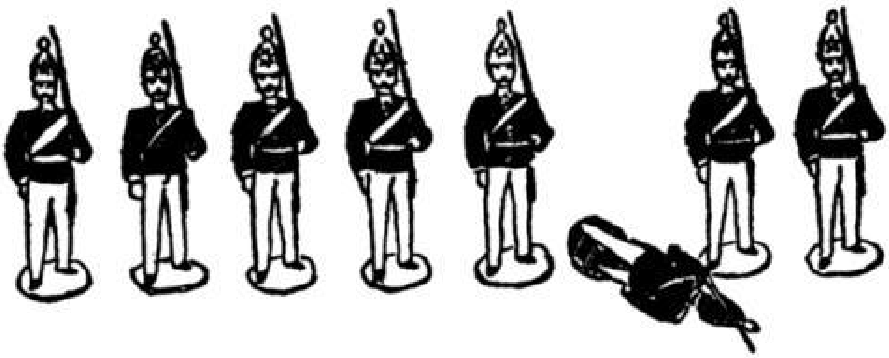
WHERE GO THE BOATS?

Dark brown is the river,
Golden is the sand.
It flows along for ever,
With trees on either hand.
Green leaves a-floating,
Castles of the foam,
Boats of mine a-boating —
Where will all come home?
On goes the river
And out past the mill,
Away down the valley,
Away down the hill.

Away down the river,
A hundred miles or more,
Other little children
Shall bring my boats ashore.

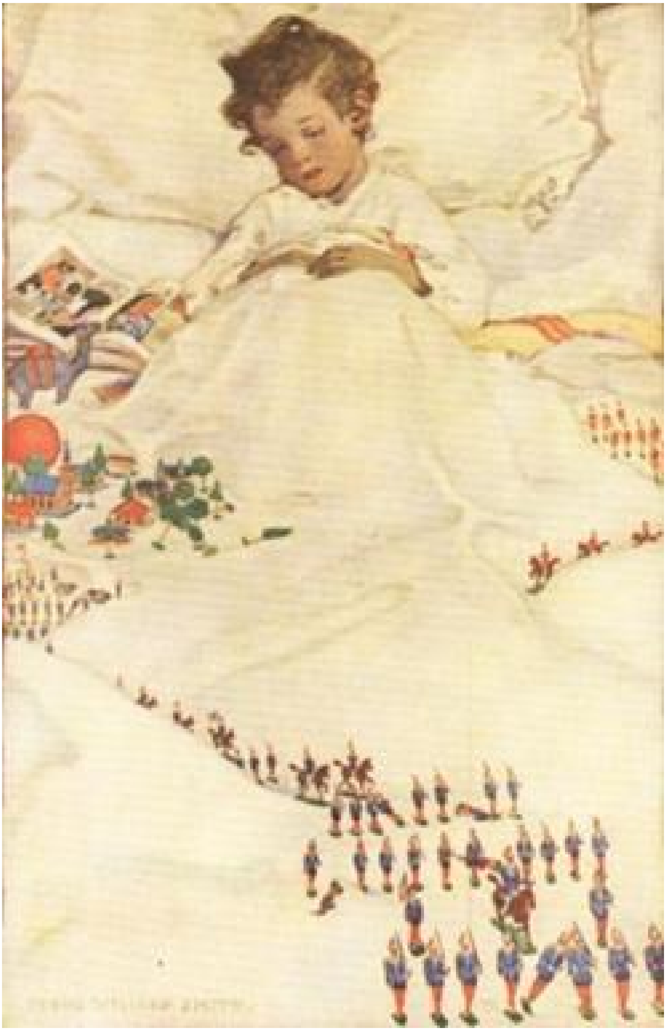
AUNTIE'S SKIRTS

Whenever Auntie moves around,
Her dresses make a curious sound,
They trail behind her up the floor,
And trundle after through the door.



THE LAND OF COUNTERPANE

When I was sick and lay a-bed,
I had two pillows at my head,
And all my toys beside me lay
To keep me happy all the day.
And sometimes for an hour or so
I watched my leaden soldiers go,
With different uniforms and drills,
Among the bed-clothes, through the hills;
And sometimes sent my ships in fleets
All up and down among the sheets;
Or brought my trees and houses out,
And planted cities all about.
I was the giant great and still
That sits upon the pillow-hill,
And sees before him, dale and plain,
The pleasant land of counterpane.



THE LAND OF COUNTERPANE

THE LAND OF NOD

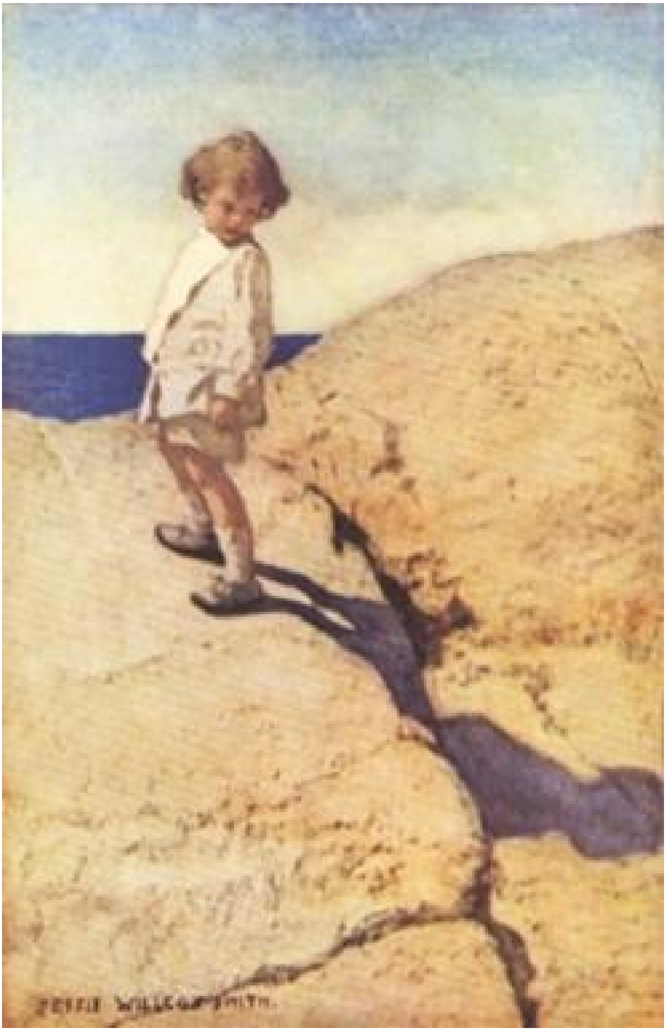
From breakfast on through all the day
At home among my friends I stay,
But every night I go abroad
Afar into the land of Nod.
All by myself I have to go,
With none to tell me what to do —
All alone beside the streams
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

The strangest things are there for me,
Both things to eat and things to see,
And many frightening sights abroad
Till morning in the land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way,
I never can get back by day,
Nor can remember plain and clear
The curious music that I hear.

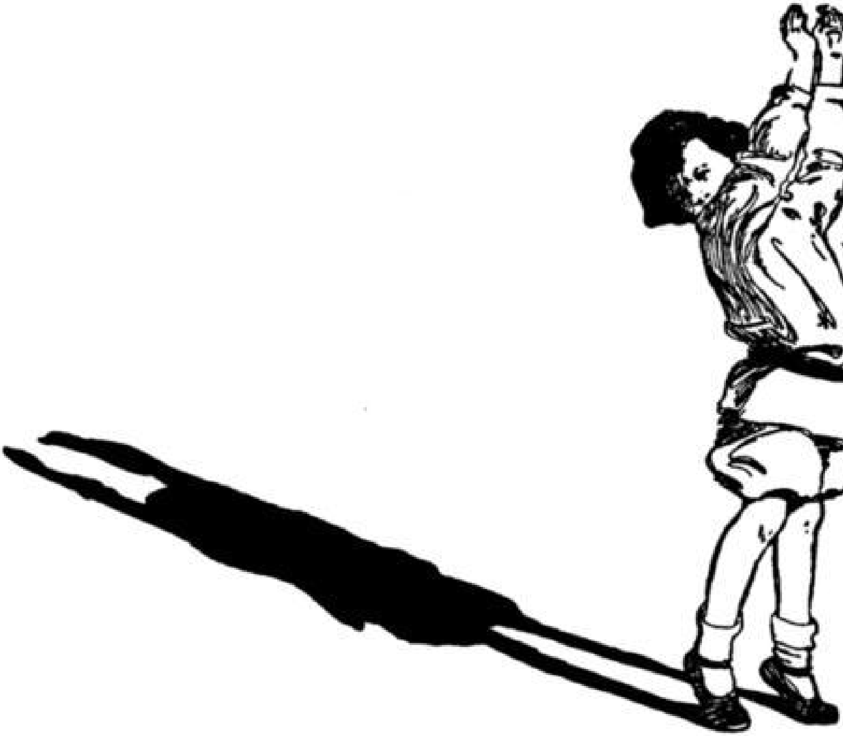
MY SHADOW

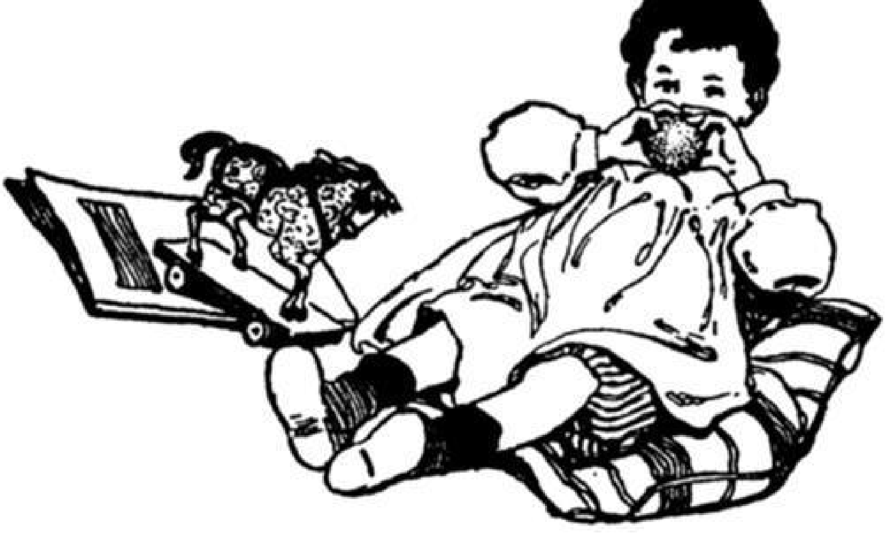
I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.
The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow —
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there’s none of him at all.
He hasn’t got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he’s a coward you can see;
I’d think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!



MY SHADOW

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.





SYSTEM

Every night my prayers I say,
And get my dinner every day;
And every day that I've been good,
I get an orange after food.
The child that is not clean and neat,
With lots of toys and things to eat,
He is a naughty child, I'm sure —
Or else his dear papa is poor.

A GOOD BOY

I woke before the morning, I was happy all the day,
I never said an ugly word, but smiled and stuck to play.
And now at last the sun is going down behind the wood,
And I am very happy, for I know that I’ve been good.
My bed is waiting cool and fresh, with linen smooth and fair
And I must be off to sleepsin-by, and not forget my prayer.
I know that, till to-morrow I shall see the sun arise,
No ugly dream shall fright my mind, no ugly sight my eyes.
But slumber hold me tightly till I waken in the dawn,
And hear the thrushes singing in the lilacs round the lawn.

ESCAPE AT BEDTIME

The lights from the parlour and kitchen shone out
Through the blinds and the windows and bars;
And high overhead and all moving about,
There were thousands of millions of stars.
There ne’er were such thousands of leaves on a tree,
Nor of people in church or the Park,
As the crowds of the stars that looked down upon me,
And that glittered and winked in the dark.
The Dog, and the Plough, and the Hunter, and all,
And the star of the sailor, and Mars,
These shone in the sky, and the pail by the wall
Would be half full of water and stars.
They saw me at last, and they chased me with cries,
And they soon had me packed into bed;
But the glory kept shining and bright in my eyes,
And the stars going round in my head.

MARCHING SONG

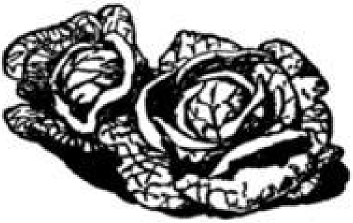
Bring the comb and play upon it!
Marching, here we come!
Willie cocks his highland bonnet,
Johnnie beats the drum.
Mary Jane commands the party,
Peter leads the rear;
Feet in time, alert and hearty,
Each a Grenadier!
All in the most martial manner
Marching double-quick;
While the napkin, like a banner,
Waves upon the stick!
Here’s enough of fame and pillage,
Great commander Jane!
Now that we’ve been round the village,
Let’s go home again.

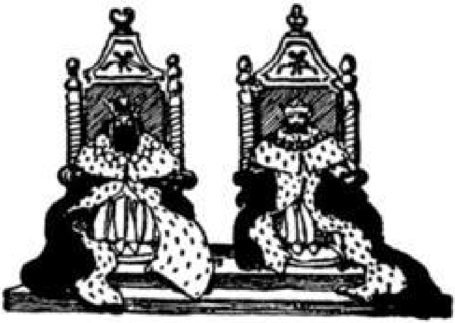
THE COW

The friendly cow all red and white,
I love with all my heart:
She gives me cream with all her might,
To eat with apple-tart.
She wanders lowing here and there,
And yet she cannot stray,
All in the pleasant open air,
The pleasant light of day;
And blown by all the winds that pass
And wet with all the showers,
She walks among the meadow grass
And eats the meadow flowers.

HAPPY THOUGHT

The world is so full of a number of things,
I’m sure we should all be as happy as kings.





THE WIND

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass —
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!
I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid.
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all —
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!
O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?
Are you a beast of field and tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

KEEPSAKE MILL

Over the borders, a sin without pardon,
Breaking the branches and crawling below,
Out through the breach in the wall of the garden,
Down by the banks of the river, we go.
Here is the mill with the humming of thunder,
Here is the weir with the wonder of foam,
Here is the sluice with the race running under —
Marvellous places, though handy to home!
Sounds of the village grow stiller and stiller,
Stiller the note of the birds on the hill;
Dusty and dim are the eyes of the miller,
Deaf are his ears with the moil of the mill.
Years may go by, and the wheel in the river
Wheel as it wheels for us, children, to-day,
Wheel and keep roaring and foaming for ever
Long after all of the boys are away.
Home from the Indies and home from the ocean,
Heroes and soldiers we all shall come home;
Still we shall find the old mill wheel in motion,
Turning and churning that river to foam.

You with the bean that I gave when we quarrelled,
I with your marble of Saturday last,
Honoured and old and all gaily apparelled,
Here we shall meet and remember the past.

MALT

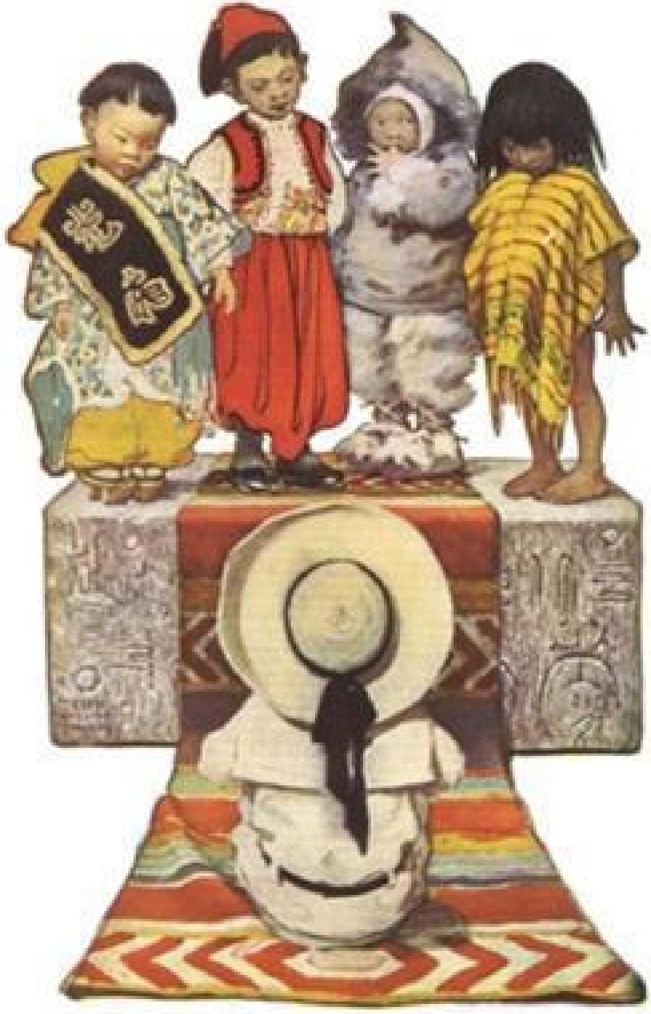
GOOD AND BAD CHILDREN

Children, you are very little,
And your bones are very brittle;
If you would grow great and stately,
You must try to walk sedately.
You must still be bright and quiet,
And content with simple diet;
And remain, through all bewild'ring,
Innocent and honest children.
Happy hearts and happy faces,
Happy play in grassy places —
That was how, in ancient ages,
Children grew to kings and sages.

But the unkind and the unruly,
And the sort who eat unduly,
They must never hope for glory —
Theirs is quite a different story!
Cruel children, crying babies,
All grew up as geese and gabies,
Hated, as their age increases,
By their nephews and their nieces.

FOREIGN CHILDREN

Little Indian, Sioux or Crow,
Little frosty Eskimo,
Little Turk or Japanee,
Oh! don’t you wish that you were me?
You have seen the scarlet trees
And the lions over seas;
You have eaten ostrich eggs,
And turned the turtles off their legs.
Such a life is very fine,
But it’s not so nice as mine:
You must often, as you trod,
Have wearied *not* to be abroad.
You have curious things to eat,
I am fed on proper meat;
You must dwell beyond the foam,
But I am safe and live at home.
Little Indian, Sioux or Crow,
Little frosty Eskimo,
Little Turk or Japanee,
Oh! don’t you wish that you were me?



FOREIGN CHILDREN

THE SUN TRAVELS

The sun is not a-bed, when I
At night upon my pillow lie;
Still round the earth his way he takes,
And morning after morning makes.
While here at home, in shining day,
We round the sunny garden play,
Each little Indian sleepy-head
Is being kissed and put to bed.
And when at eve I rise from tea,
Day dawns beyond the Atlantic Sea;
And all the children in the West
Are getting up and being dressed.

THE LAMPLIGHTER

My tea is nearly ready and the sun has left the sky.
It’s time to take the window to see Leerie going by;
For every night at teatime and before you take your seat,
With lantern and with ladder he comes posting up the street.

Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to sea,
And my papa’s a banker and as rich as he can be;
But I, when I am stronger and can choose what I’m to do,
O Leerie, I’ll go round at night and light the lamps with you!
For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door,
And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so many more;
And oh! before you hurry by with ladder and with light;
O Leerie, see a little child and nod to him tonight!

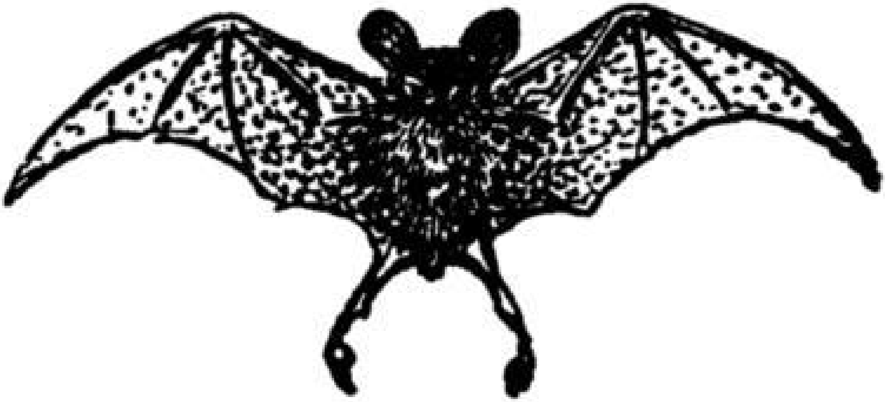
MY BED IS A BOAT

My bed is like a little boat;
Nurse helps me in when I embark;
She girds me in my sailor’s coat
And starts me in the dark.
At night, I go on board and say
Good-night to all my friends on shore;
I shut my eyes and sail away
And see and hear no more.
And sometimes things to bed I take,
As prudent sailors have to do;
Perhaps a slice of wedding-cake,
Perhaps a toy or two.

All night across the dark we steer;
But when the day returns at last,
Safe in my room, beside the pier,
I find my vessel fast.

THE MOON

The moon has a face like the clock in the hall;
She shines on thieves on the garden wall,
On streets and field and harbour quays,
And birdies asleep in the forks of the trees.
The squalling cat and the squeaking mouse,
The howling dog by the door of the house,
The bat that lies in bed at noon,
All love to be out by the light of the moon.
But all of the things that belong to the day
Cuddle to sleep to be out of her way;
And flowers and children close their eyes
Till up in the morning the sun shall arise.

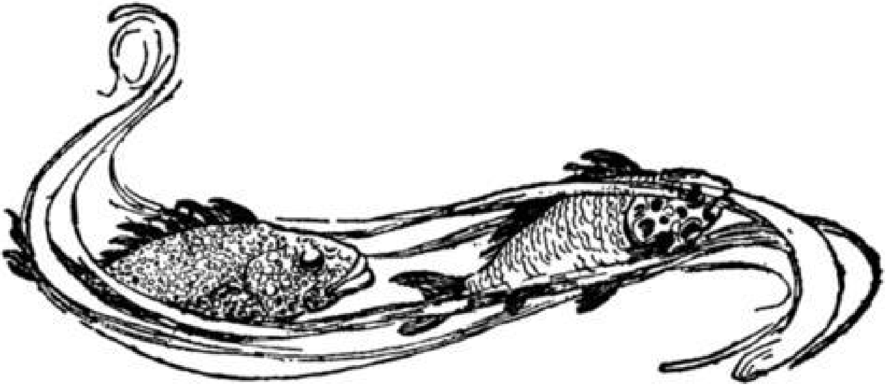


THE SWING

How do you like to go up in a swing,
Up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing
Ever a child can do!
Up in the air and over the wall,
Till I can see so wide,
Rivers and trees and cattle and all
Over the countryside —
Till I look down on the garden green,
Down on the roof so brown —
Up in the air I go flying again,
Up in the air and down!

TIME TO RISE

A birdie with a yellow bill
Hopped upon the window sill,
Cocked his shining eye and said:
“Ain’t you ‘shamed, you sleepy-head!”



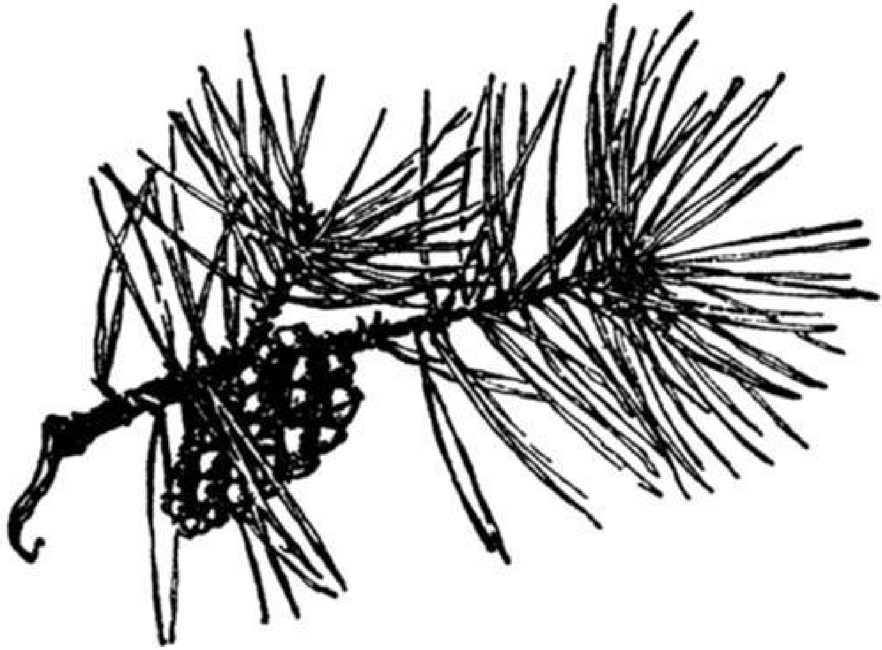
LOOKING-GLASS RIVER

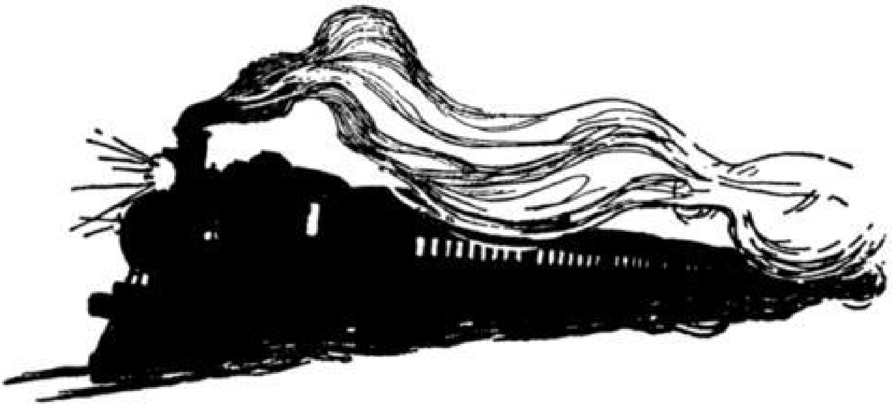
Smooth it glides upon its travel,
Here a wimple, there a gleam —
O the clean gravel!
O the smooth stream!
Sailing blossoms, silver fishes,
Paven pools as clear as air —
How a child wishes
To live down there!
We can see our coloured faces
Floating on the shaken pool
Down in cool places,
Dim and very cool;
Till a wind or water wrinkle,
Dipping marten, plumping trout,
Spreads in a twinkle
And blots all out.

See the rings pursue each other;
All below grows black as night,
Just as if mother
Had blown out the light!
Patience, children, just a minute —
See the spreading circles die;
The stream and all in it
Will clear by-and-by.

FAIRY BREAD

Come up here, O dusty feet!
Here is fairy bread to eat.
Here in my retiring room,
Children, you may dine
On the golden smell of broom
And the shade of pine;
And when you have eaten well,
Fairy stories hear and tell.





FROM A RAILWAY CARRIAGE

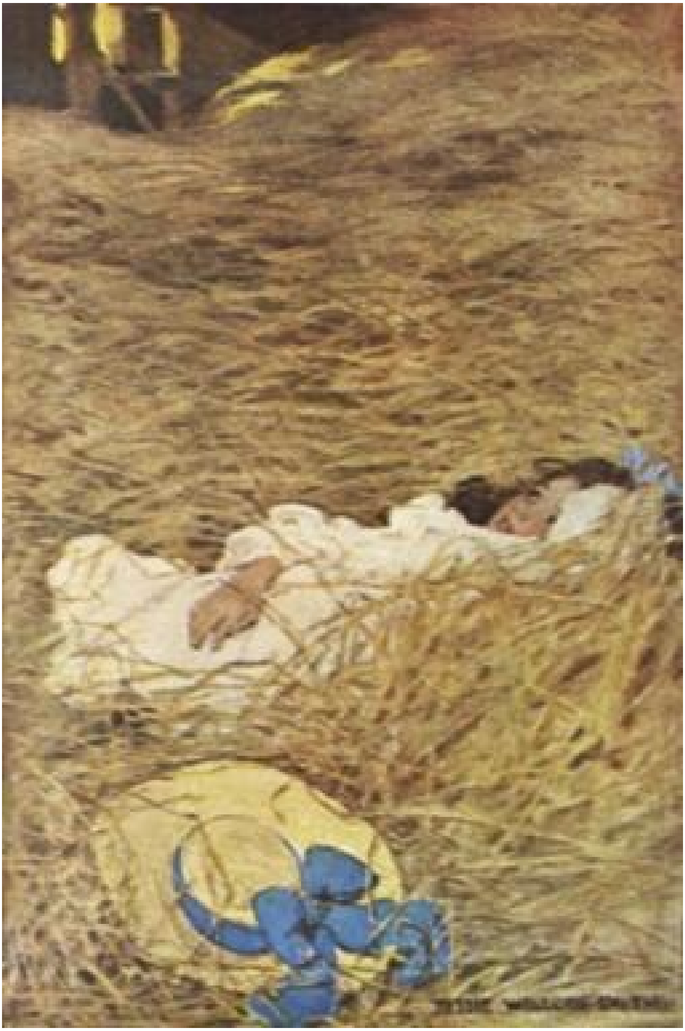
Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.
Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
And there is the green for stringing the daisies
Here is a cart run away in the road
Lumping along with man and load;
And here is a mill, and there is a river:
Each a glimpse and gone for ever!

WINTER-TIME

Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,
A blood-red orange, sets again.
Before the stars have left the skies,
At morning in the dark I rise;
And shivering in my nakedness,
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.
Close by the jolly fire I sit
To warm my frozen bones a bit;
Or with a reindeer-sled, explore
The colder countries round the door.
When to go out, my nurse doth wrap
Me in my comforter and cap;
The cold wind burns my face, and blows
Its frosty pepper up my nose.
Black are my steps on silver sod;
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;
And tree and house, and hill and lake,
Are frosted like a wedding-cake.

THE HAYLOFT

Through all the pleasant meadow-side
The grass grew shoulder-high,
Till the shining scythes went far and wide
And cut it down to dry.
Those green and sweetly smelling crops
They led in waggons home;
And they piled them here in mountain tops
For mountaineers to roam.
Here is Mount Clear, Mount Rusty-Nail,
Mount Eagle and Mount High; —
The mice that in these mountains dwell,
No happier are than I!
Oh, what a joy to clamber there,
Oh, what a place for play,
With the sweet, the dim, the dusty air,
The happy hills of hay!


JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH

THE HAYLOFT

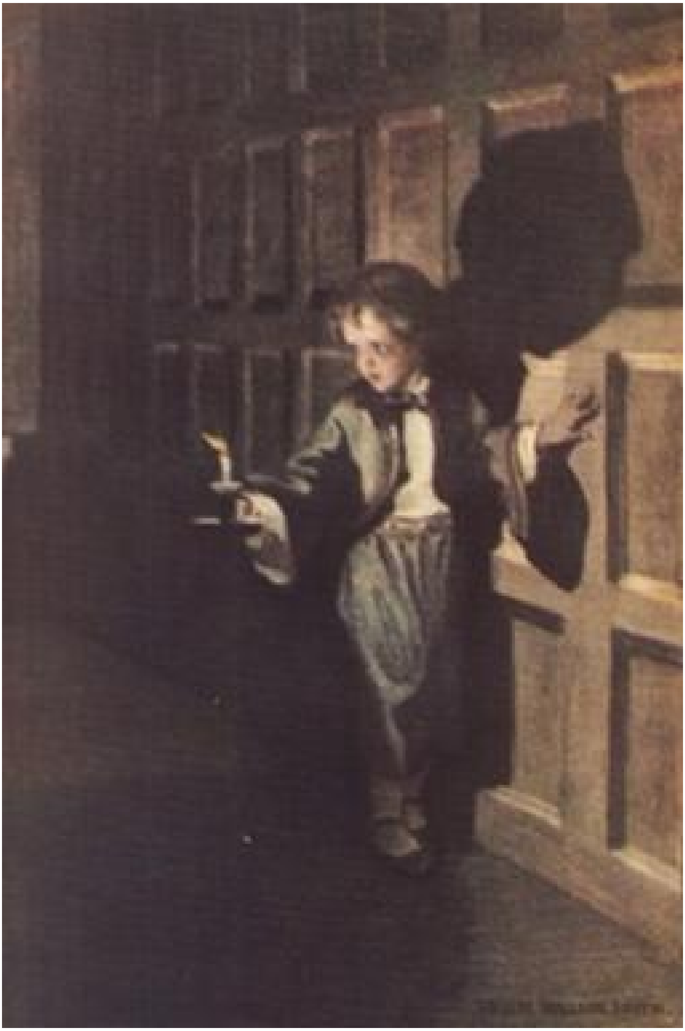
FAREWELL TO THE FARM

The coach is at the door at last;
The eager children, mounting fast
And kissing hands, in chorus sing:
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!
To house and garden, field and lawn,
The meadow-gates we swang upon,
To pump and stable, tree and swing,
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!
And fare you well for evermore,
O ladder at the hayloft door,
O hayloft where the cobwebs cling,
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!
Crack goes the whip, and off we go;
The trees and houses smaller grow;
Last, round the woody turn we swing:
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!

NORTH-WEST PASSAGE

1. Good-night

When the bright lamp is carried in,
The sunless hours again begin;
O’er all without, in field and lane,
The haunted night returns again.
Now we behold the embers flee
About the firelit hearth; and see
Our faces painted as we pass,
Like pictures, on the window-glass.
Must we to bed indeed? Well then,
Let us arise and go like men,
And face with an undaunted tread
The long black passage up to bed.



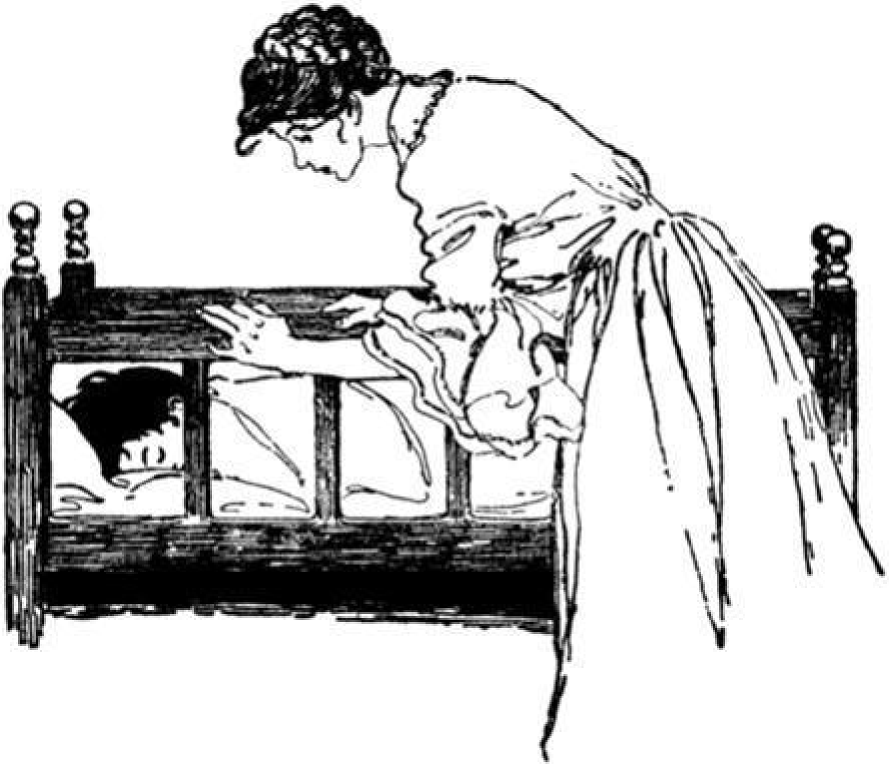
NORTH-WEST PASSAGE

Farewell, O brother, sister, sire!
O pleasant party round the fire!
The songs you sing, the tales you tell,
Till far to-morrow, fare ye well!

2. Shadow March

All round the house is the jet-black night;
It stares through the window-pane;
It crawls in the corners, hiding from the light,
And it moves with the moving flame.
Now my little heart goes a-beating like a drum,
With the breath of the Bogie in my hair;
And all round the candle the crooked shadows come,
And go marching along up the stair.

The shadow of the balusters, the shadow of the lamp,
The shadow of the child that goes to bed —
All the wicked shadows coming, tramp, tramp, tramp,
With the black night overhead.



3. In Port

Last, to the chamber where I lie
My fearful footsteps patter nigh,
And come from out the cold and gloom
Into my warm and cheerful room.

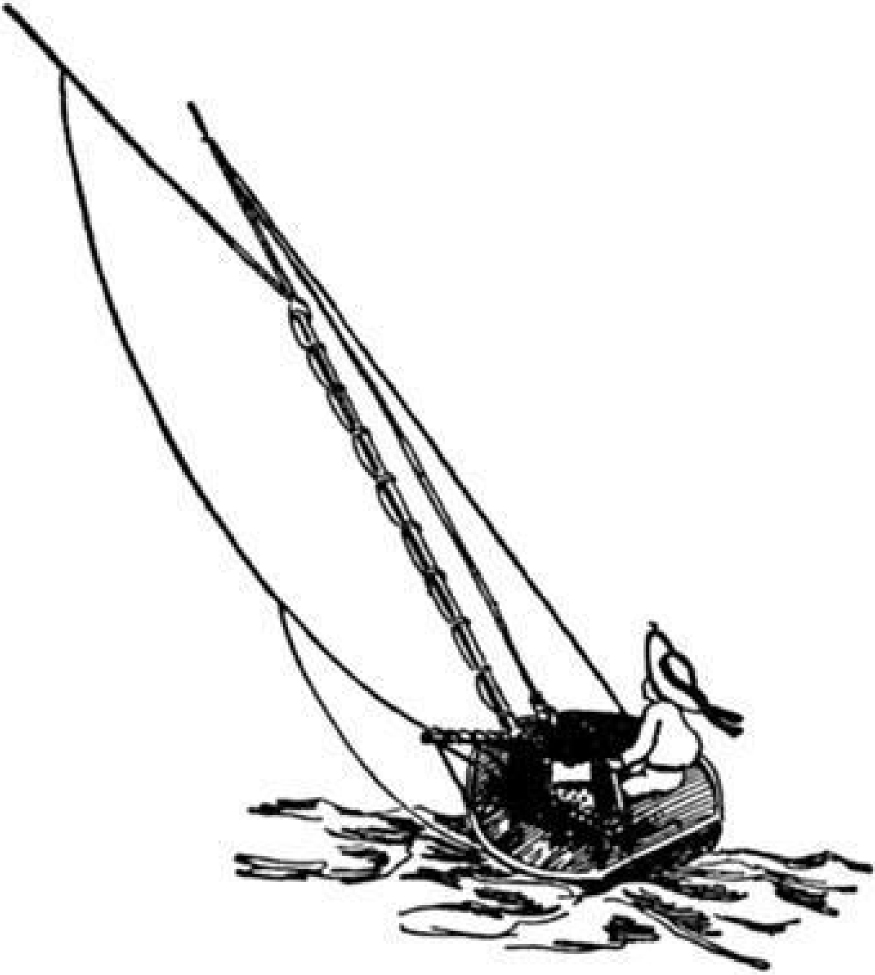
There, safe arrived, we turn about
To keep the coming shadows out,
And close the happy door at last
On all the perils that we past.
Then, when mamma goes by to bed,
She shall come in with tip-toe tread,
And see me lying warm and fast
And in the Land of Nod at last.

THE CHILD ALONE

THE UNSEEN PLAYMATE

When children are playing alone on the green,
In comes the playmate that never was seen.
When children are happy and lonely and good,
The Friend of the Children comes out of the wood.
Nobody heard him and nobody saw,
His is a picture you never could draw,
But he's sure to be present, abroad or at home,
When children are happy and playing alone.
He lies in the laurels, he runs on the grass,
He sings when you tinkle the musical glass;
Whene'er you are happy and cannot tell why,
The Friend of the Children is sure to be by!

He loves to be little, he hates to be big,
'Tis he that inhabits the caves that you dig;
'Tis he when you play with your soldiers of tin
That sides with the Frenchmen and never can win.
'Tis he, when at night you go off to your bed,
Bids you go to your sleep and not trouble your head;
For wherever they're lying, in cupboard or shelf,
'Tis he will take care of your playthings himself!



MY SHIP AND I

O it's I that am the captain of a tidy little ship,
Of a ship that goes a-sailing on the pond;
And my ship it keeps a-turning all around and all about;
But when I'm a little older, I shall find the secret out
How to send my vessel sailing on beyond.
For I mean to grow as little as the dolly at the helm,
And the dolly I intend to come alive;
And with him beside to help me, it's a-sailing I shall go,
It's a-sailing on the water, when the jolly breezes blow
And the vessel goes a divie-divie-dive.

O it's then you'll see me sailing through the rushes and the reeds,
And you'll hear the water singing at the prow;
For beside the dolly sailor, I'm to voyage and explore,
To land upon the island where no dolly was before,
And to fire the penny cannon in the bow.

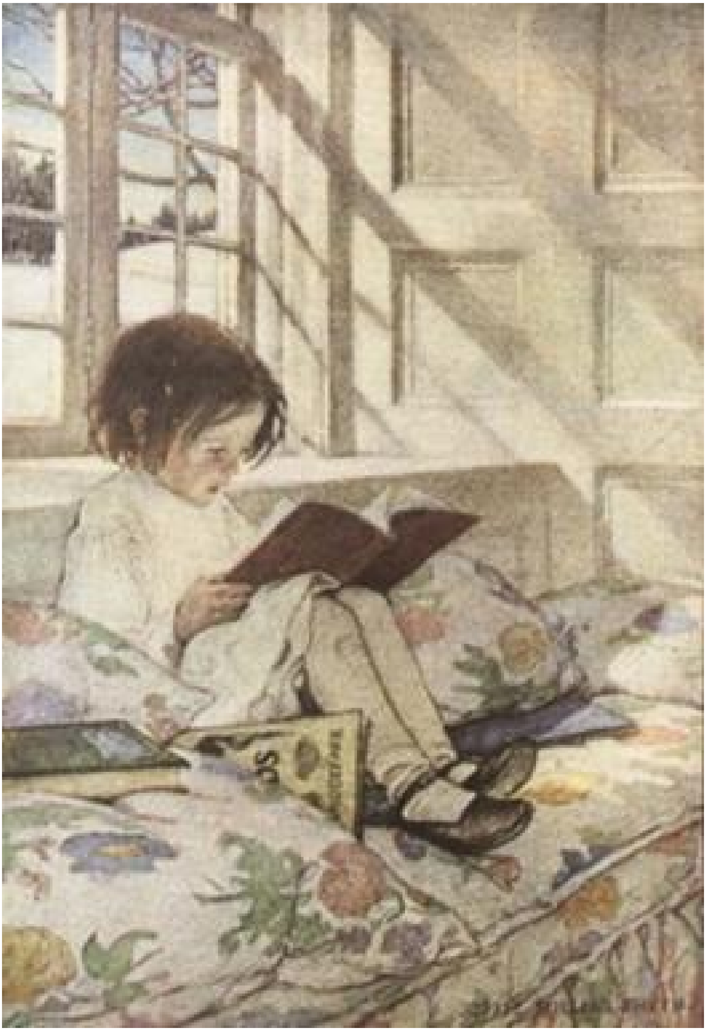
MY KINGDOM

Down by a shining water well
I found a very little dell,
No higher than my head.
The heather and the gorse about
In summer bloom were coming out,
Some yellow and some red.

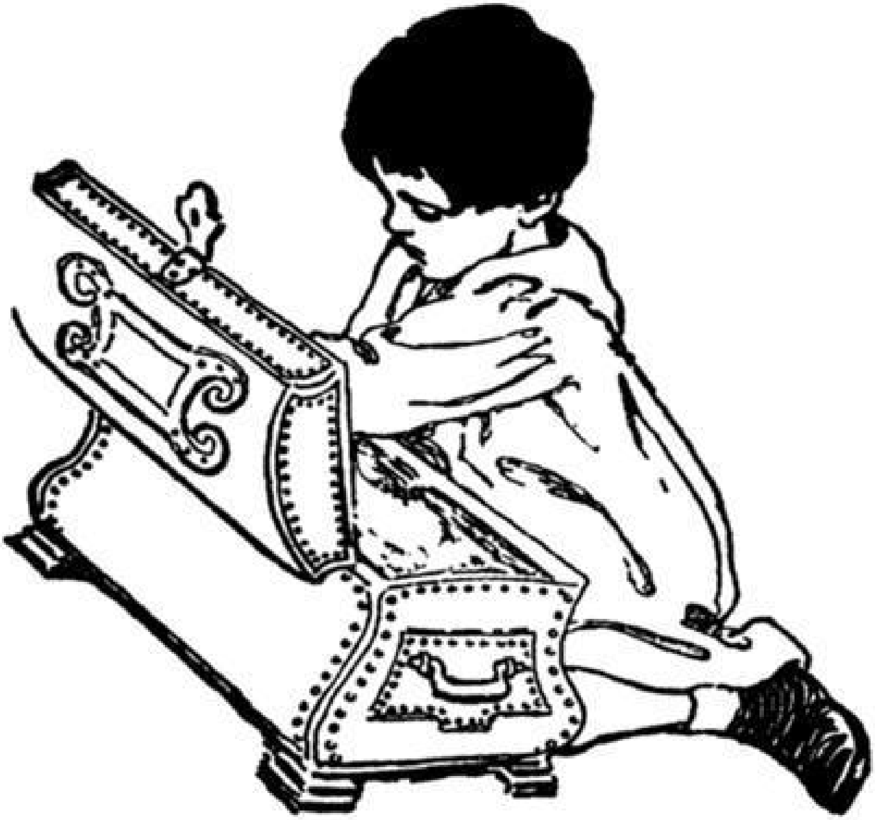
I called the little pool a sea;
The little hills were big to me;
For I am very small.
I made a boat, I made a town,
I searched the caverns up and down,
And named them one and all.
And all about was mine, I said,
The little sparrows overhead,
The little minnows too.
This was the world and I was king;
For me the bees came by to sing,
For me the swallows flew.
I played there were no deeper seas,
Nor any wider plains than these,
Nor other kings than me.
At last I heard my mother call
Out from the house at evenfall,
To call me home to tea.
And I must rise and leave my dell,
And leave my dimpled water well,
And leave my heather blooms.
Alas! and as my home I neared,
How very big my nurse appeared.
How great and cool the rooms!

PICTURE-BOOKS IN WINTER

Summer fading, winter comes —
Frosty mornings, tingling thumbs,
Window robins, winter rooks,
And the picture story-books.
Water now is turned to stone
Nurse and I can walk upon;
Still we find the flowing brooks
In the picture story-books.
All the pretty things put by,
Wait upon the children’s eye,
Sheep and shepherds, trees and crooks,
In the picture story-books.
We may see how all things are,
Seas and cities, near and far,
And the flying fairies’ looks,
In the picture story-books.
How am I to sing your praise,
Happy chimney-corner days,
Sitting safe in nursery nooks,
Reading picture story-books?



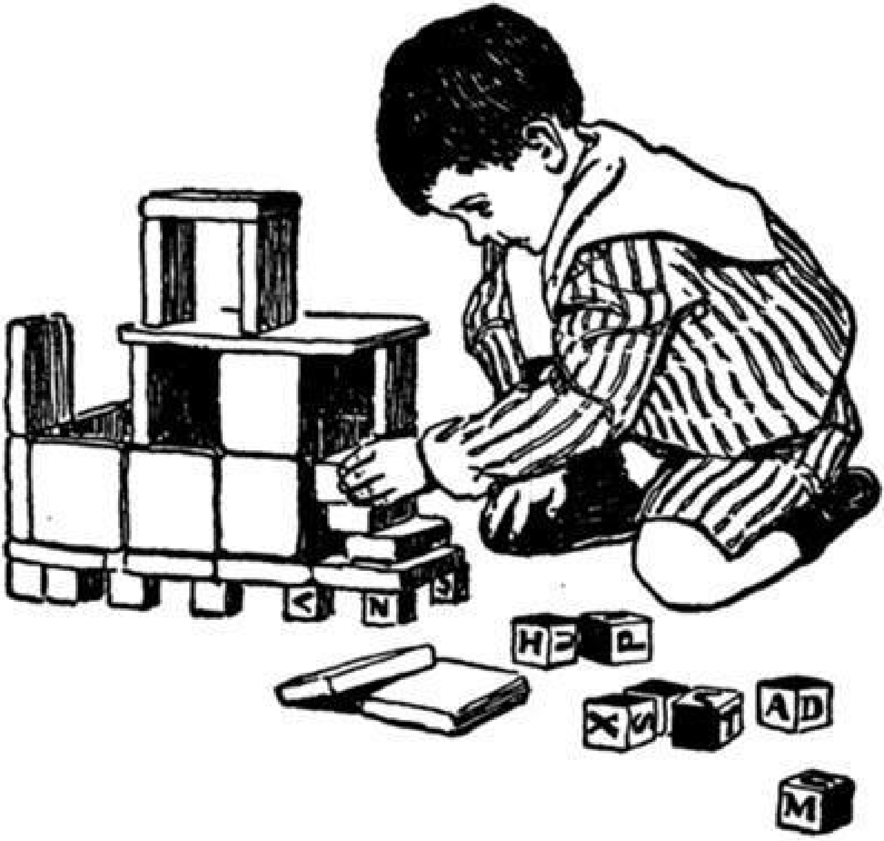
PICTURE-BOOKS IN WINTER



MY TREASURES

These nuts, that I keep in the back of the nest
Where all my lead soldiers are lying at rest,
Were gathered in autumn by nursie and me
In a wood with a well by the side of the sea.
This whistle we made (and how clearly it sounds!)
By the side of a field at the end of the grounds.
Of a branch of a plane, with a knife of my own,
It was nursie who made it, and nursie alone!
The stone, with the white and the yellow and grey,
We discovered I cannot tell *how* far away;
And I carried it back although weary and cold,
For though father denies it, I'm sure it is gold.

But of all my treasures the last is the king,
For there's very few children possess such a thing;
And that is a chisel, both handle and blade,
Which a man who was really a carpenter made.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BLOCK CITY

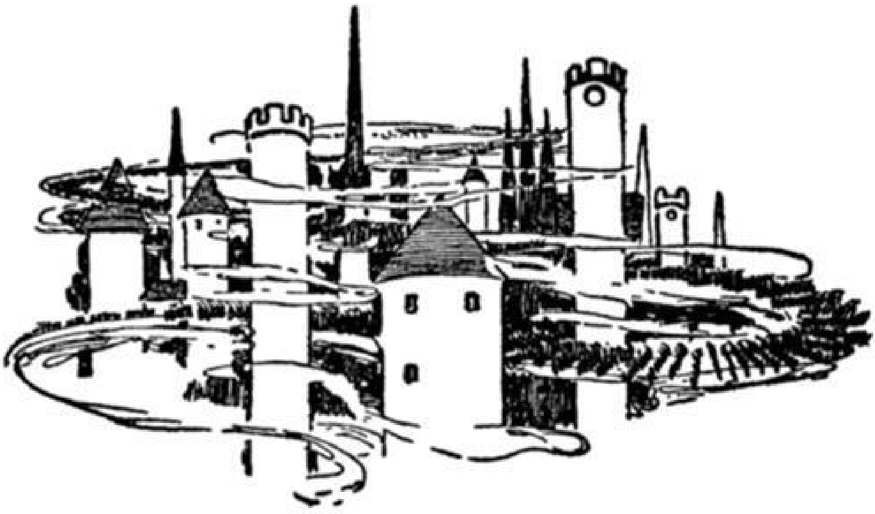
What are you able to build with your blocks?
Castles and palaces, temples and docks.
Rain may keep raining, and others go roam,
But I can be happy and building at home.
Let the sofa be mountains, the carpet be sea,
There I'll establish a city for me:
A kirk and a mill and a palace beside,
And a harbour as well where my vessels may ride.
Great is the palace with pillar and wall,
A sort of a tower on the top of it all,
And steps coming down in an orderly way
To where my toy vessels lie safe in the bay.

This one is sailing and that one is moored:
Hark to the song of the sailors on board!
And see, on the steps of my palace, the kings
Coming and going with presents and things!
Now I have done with it, down let it go!
All in a moment the town is laid low.
Block upon block lying scattered and free,
What is there left of my town by the sea?
Yet as I saw it, I see it again,
The kirk and the palace, the ships and the men,
And as long as I live and where'er I may be,
I'll always remember my town by the sea.

THE LAND OF STORY-BOOKS

At evening when the lamp is lit,
Around the fire my parents sit;
They sit at home and talk and sing,
And do not play at anything.
Now, with my little gun, I crawl
All in the dark along the wall,
And follow round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.
There, in the night, where none can spy,
All in my hunter's camp I lie,
And play at books that I have read
Till it is time to go to bed.
These are the hills, these are the woods,
These are my starry solitudes;
And there the river by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away
As if in firelit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.
So, when my nurse comes in for me,
Home I return across the sea,
And go to bed with backward looks
At my dear land of Story-books.



ARMIES IN THE FIRE

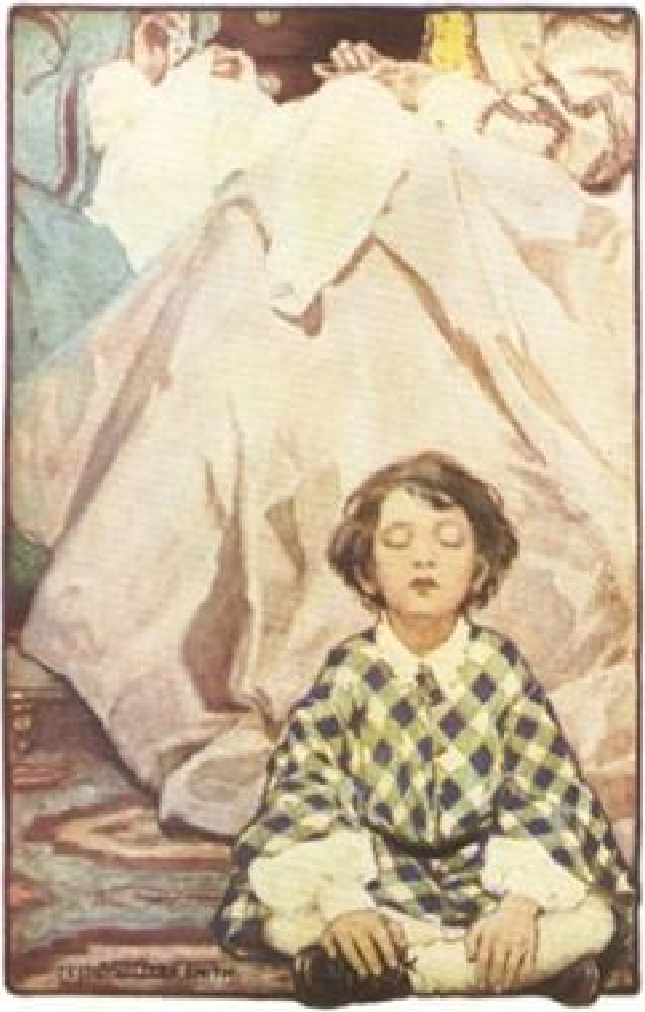
The lamps now glitter down the street;
Faintly sound the falling feet;
And the blue even slowly falls
About the garden trees and walls.
Now in the falling of the gloom
The red fire paints the empty room:
And warmly on the roof it looks,
And flickers on the backs of books.
Armies march by tower and spire
Of cities blazing, in the fire; —
Till as I gaze with staring eyes,
The armies fade, the lustre dies.
Then once again the glow returns;
Again the phantom city burns;
And down the red-hot valley, lo!
The phantom armies marching go!

Blinking embers, tell me true
Where are those armies marching to,
And what the burning city is
That crumbles in your furnaces!

THE LITTLE LAND

When at home alone I sit,
And am very tired of it,
I have just to shut my eyes
To go sailing through the skies —
To go sailing far away
To the pleasant Land of Play;
To the fairy land afar
Where the Little People are;
Where the clover-tops are trees,
And the rain-pools are the seas,
And the leaves, like little ships,
Sail about on tiny trips;
And above the daisy tree
Through the grasses,
High o'erhead the Bumble Bee
Hums and passes.
In that forest to and fro
I can wander, I can go;
See the spider and the fly,
And the ants go marching by,
Carrying parcels with their feet
Down the green and grassy street.
I can in the sorrel sit
Where the ladybird alit.
I can climb the jointed grass
And on high
See the greater swallows pass
In the sky,
And the round sun rolling by
Heeding no such things as I.
Through that forest I can pass
Till, as in a looking-glass,
Humming fly and daisy tree
And my tiny self I see,
Painted very clear and neat
On the rain-pool at my feet.
Should a leaflet come to land
Drifting near to where I stand,
Straight I'll board that tiny boat
Round the rain-pool sea to float.

Little thoughtful creatures sit
On the grassy coasts of it;
Little things with lovely eyes
See me sailing with surprise.
Some are clad in armour green —
(These have sure to battle been!) —
Some are pied with ev’ry hue,
Black and crimson, gold and blue;
Some have wings and swift are gone; —
But they all look kindly on.



THE LITTLE LAND

When my eyes I once again
Open, and see all things plain:
High bare walls, great bare floor;

Great big knobs on drawer and door;
Great big people perched on chairs,
Stitching tucks and mending tears,
Each a hill that I could climb,
And talking nonsense all the time —
O dear me,
That I could be
A sailor on the rain-pool sea,
A climber in the clover tree,
And just come back, a sleepy-head,
Late at night to go to bed.

GARDEN DAYS

NIGHT AND DAY

When the golden day is done,
Through the closing portal,
Child and garden, flower and sun,
Vanish all things mortal.
As the blinding shadows fall
As the rays diminish,
Under evening’s cloak, they all
Roll away and vanish.
Garden darkened, daisy shut,
Child in bed, they slumber —
Glow-worm in the highway rut,
Mice among the lumber.
In the darkness houses shine,
Parents move with candles;
Till on all, the night divine
Turns the bedroom handles.

Till at last the day begins
In the east a-breaking,
In the hedges and the whins
Sleeping birds a-waking.
In the darkness shapes of things,
Houses, trees and hedges,
Clearer grow; and sparrow’s wings
Beat on window ledges.
These shall wake the yawning maid;
She the door shall open —
Finding dew on garden glade
And the morning broken.
There my garden grows again
Green and rosy painted,
As at eve behind the pane
From my eyes it fainted.
Just as it was shut away,
Toy-like, in the even,
Here I see it glow with day
Under glowing heaven.
Every path and every plot,
Every bush of roses,
Every blue forget-me-not
Where the dew reposes.

"Up!" they cry, "the day is come
On the smiling valleys:
We have beat the morning drum;
Playmate, join your allies!"

NEST EGGS

Birds all the sunny day
Flutter and quarrel
Here in the arbour-like
Tent of the laurel.
Here in the fork
The brown nest is seated;
Four little blue eggs
The mother keeps heated.
While we stand watching her
Staring like gabies,
Safe in each egg are the
Bird’s little babies.
Soon the frail eggs they shall
Chip, and upspringing
Make all the April woods
Merry with singing.

Younger than we are,
O children, and frailer,
Soon in blue air they’ll be,
Singer and sailor.
We, so much older,
Taller and stronger,
We shall look down on the
Birdies no longer.
They shall go flying
With musical speeches
High over head in the
Tops of the beeches.
In spite of our wisdom
And sensible talking,
We on our feet must go
Plodding and walking.

THE FLOWERS

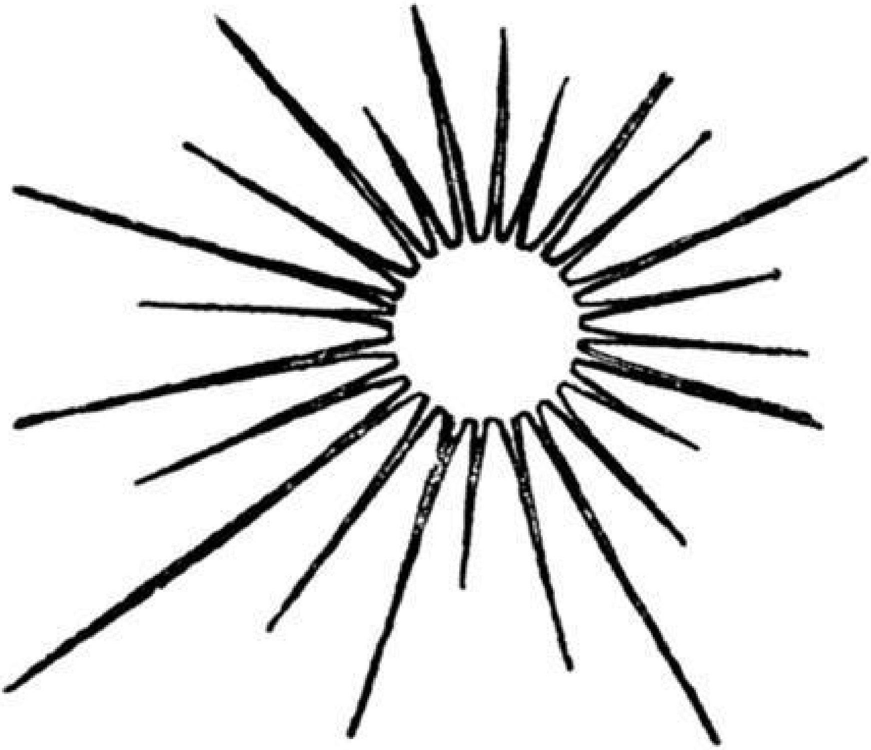
All the names I know from nurse:
Gardener’s garters, Shepherd’s purse,
Bachelor’s buttons, Lady’s smock,
And the Lady Hollyhock.
Fairy places, fairy things,
Fairy woods where the wild bee wings,
Tiny trees for tiny dames —
These must all be fairy names!
Tiny woods below whose boughs
Shady fairies weave a house;
Tiny tree-tops, rose or thyme,
Where the braver fairies climb!

THE FLOWERS

Fair are grown-up people’s trees,
But the fairest woods are these;
Where, if I were not so tall,
I should live for good and all.

SUMMER SUN

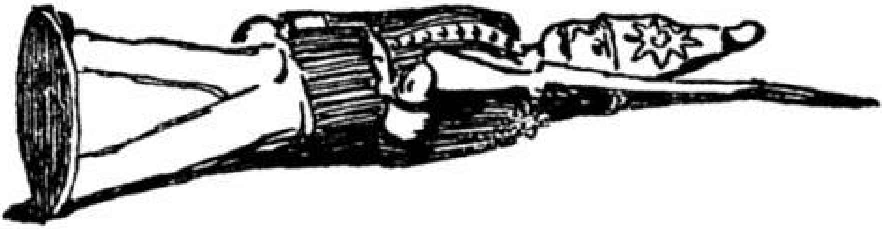
Great is the sun, and wide he goes
Through empty heaven without repose;
And in the blue and glowing days
More thick than rain he showers his rays.
Though closer still the blinds we pull
To keep the shady parlour cool,
Yet he will find a chink or two
To slip his golden fingers through.
The dusty attic spider-clad
He, through the keyhole, maketh glad;
And through the broken edge of tiles
Into the laddered hay-loft smiles.
Meantime his golden face around
He bares to all the garden ground,
And sheds a warm and glittering look
Among the ivy’s inmost nook.
Above the hills, along the blue,
Round the bright air with footing true,
To please the child, to paint the rose,
The gardener of the World, he goes.



THE DUMB SOLDIER

When the grass was closely mown,
Walking on the lawn alone,
In the turf a hole I found,
And hid a soldier underground.
Spring and daisies came apace;
Grasses hide my hiding place;
Grasses run like a green sea
O’er the lawn up to my knee.
Under grass alone he lies,
Looking up with leaden eyes,
Scarlet coat and pointed gun,
To the stars and to the sun.
When the grass is ripe like grain,
When the scythe is stoned again,
When the lawn is shaven clear,
Then my hole shall reappear.
I shall find him, never fear,
I shall find my grenadier;
But for all that’s gone and come,
I shall find my soldier dumb.
He has lived, a little thing,
In the grassy woods of spring;
Done, if he could tell me true,
Just as I should like to do.

He has seen the starry hours
And the springing of the flowers;
And the fairy things that pass
In the forests of the grass.
In the silence he has heard
Talking bee and ladybird,
And the butterfly has flown
O’er him as he lay alone.
Not a word will he disclose,
Not a word of all he knows.
I must lay him on the shelf,
And make up the tale myself.



AUTUMN FIRES

In the other gardens
And all up the vale,
From the autumn bonfires
See the smoke trail!
Pleasant summer over
And all the summer flowers,
The red fire blazes,
The grey smoke towers.
Sing a song of seasons!
Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall!

THE GARDENER

The gardener does not love to talk,
He makes me keep the gravel walk;
And when he puts his tools away,
He locks the door and takes the key.
Away behind the currant row,
Where no one else but cook may go,
Far in the plots, I see him dig,
Old and serious, brown and big.
He digs the flowers, green, red, and blue,
Nor wishes to be spoken to.
He digs the flowers and cuts the hay,
And never seems to want to play.

Silly gardener! summer goes,
And winter comes with pinching toes,
When in the garden bare and brown
You must lay your barrow down.
Well now, and while the summer stays,
To profit by these garden days
O how much wiser you would be
To play at Indian wars with me!

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Dear Uncle Jim, this garden ground
That now you smoke your pipe around.
Has seen immortal actions done
And valiant battles lost and won.
Here we had best on tip-toe tread,
While I for safety march ahead,
For this is that enchanted ground
Where all who loiter slumber sound.

Here is the sea, here is the sand,
Here is simple Shepherd’s Land,
Here are the fairy hollyhocks,
And there are Ali Baba’s rocks.
But yonder, see! apart and high,
Frozen Siberia lies; where I,
With Robert Bruce and William Tell,
Was bound by an enchanter’s spell.

ENVOYS

TO WILLIE AND HENRIETTA

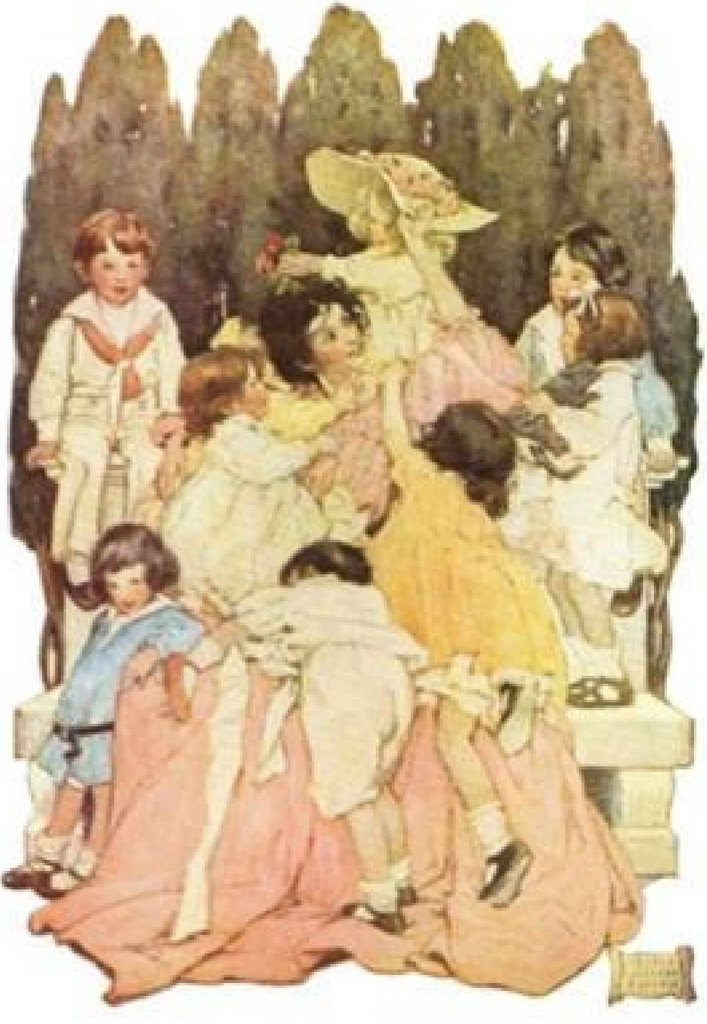
If two may read aright
These rhymes of old delight
And house and garden play,
You too, my cousins, and you only, may.
You in a garden green
With me were king and queen,
Were hunter, soldier, tar,
And all the thousand things that children are.
Now in the elders' seat
We rest with quiet feet,
And from the window-bay
We watch the children, our successors, play.
"Time was," the golden head
Irrevocably said;
But time which none can bind,
While flowing fast away, leaves love behind.

TO MY MOTHER

You too, my mother, read my rhymes
For love of unforgotten times,
And you may chance to hear once more
The little feet along the floor.

TO AUNTIE

Chief of our aunts — not only I,
But all your dozen of nurselings cry —
What did the other children do?
And what were childhood, wanting you?



TO AUNTIE

TO MINNIE

The red room with the giant bed
Where none but elders laid their head;
The little room where you and I
Did for awhile together lie
And, simple suitor, I your hand
In decent marriage did demand;
The great day nursery, best of all,
With pictures pasted on the wall
And leaves upon the blind
A pleasant room wherein to wake
And hear the leafy garden shake
And rustle in the wind —
And pleasant there to lie in bed
And see the pictures overhead —
The wars about Sebastopol,
The grinning guns along the wall,
The daring escalade,
The plunging ships, the bleating sheep,
The happy children ankle-deep
And laughing as they wade;
All these are vanished clean away,
And the old manse is changed to-day;
It wears an altered face

And shields a stranger race.
The river, on from mill to mill,
Flows past our childhood's garden still;
But ah! we children never more
Shall watch it from the water-door.
Below the yew — it still is there —
Our phantom voices haunt the air
As we were still at play,
And I can hear them call and say:
"*How far is it to Babylon?*"

Ah, far enough, my dear,
Far, far enough from here —
Yet you have farther gone!
"*Can I get there by candlelight?*"
So goes the old refrain.
I do not know — perchance you might —

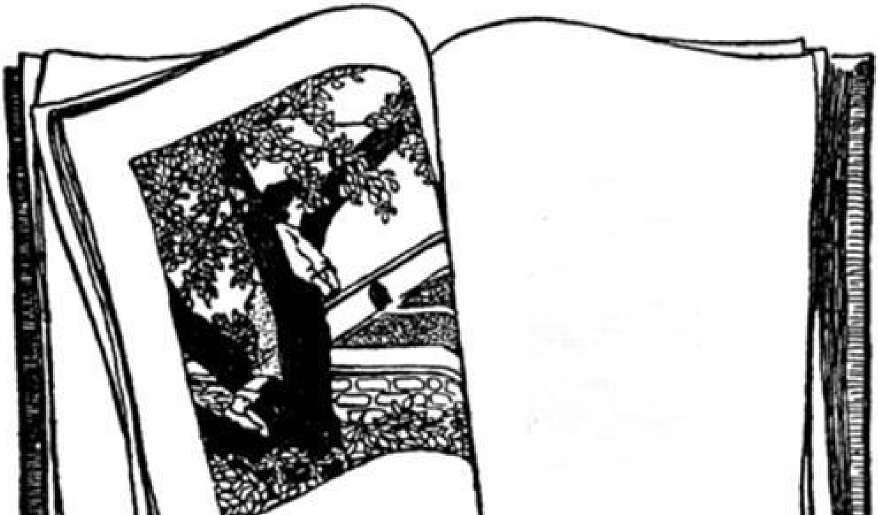
But only, children, hear it right,
Ah, never to return again!
The eternal dawn, beyond a doubt,
Shall break on hill and plain,
And put all stars and candles out
Ere we be young again.

To you in distant India, these
I send across the seas,
Nor count it far across.
For which of us forgets
The Indian cabinets,
The bones of antelope, the wings of albatross,
The pied and painted birds and beans,
The junks and bangles, beads and screens,
The gods and sacred bells,
And the loud-humming, twisting shells!
The level of the parlour floor
Was honest, homely, Scottish shore;
But when we climbed upon a chair,
Behold the gorgeous East was there!
Be this a fable; and behold
Me in the parlour as of old,
And Minnie just above me set
In the quaint Indian cabinet!
Smiling and kind, you grace a shelf
Too high for me to reach myself.
Reach down a hand, my dear, and take
These rhymes for old acquaintance’ sake!

TO MY NAME-CHILD

1
Some day soon this rhyming volume, if you learn with proper speed,
Little Louis Sanchez, will be given you to read.
Then shall you discover, that your name was printed down
By the English printers, long before, in London town.
In the great and busy city where the East and West are met,
All the little letters did the English printer set;
While you thought of nothing, and were still too young to play,
Foreign people thought of you in places far away.
Ay, and while you slept, a baby, over all the English lands
Other little children took the volume in their hands;
Other children questioned, in their homes across the seas:
Who was little Louis, won't you tell us, mother, please?

2
Now that you have spelt your lesson, lay it down and go and play,
Seeking shells and seaweed on the sands of Monterey,
Watching all the mighty whalebones, lying buried by the breeze,
Tiny sandpipers, and the huge Pacific seas.
And remember in your playing, as the sea-fog rolls to you,
Long ere you could read it, how I told you what to do;
And that while you thought of no one, nearly half the world away
Some one thought of Louis on the beach of Monterey!



TO ANY READER

As from the house your mother sees
You playing round the garden trees,
So you may see, if you will look
Through the windows of this book,
Another child, far, far away,
And in another garden, play.
But do not think you can at all,
By knocking on the window, call
That child to hear you. He intent
Is all on his play-business bent.
He does not hear; he will not look,
Nor yet be lured out of this book.
For, long ago, the truth to say,
He has grown up and gone away,
And it is but a child of air
That lingers in the garden there.

UNDERWOODS

Of all my verse, like not a single line;
But like my title, for it is not mine.
That title from a better man I stole;
Ah, how much better, had I stol’n the whole!

This collection of poems was published in 1887 and comprises two books, Book I with 38 poems in English, Book II with 16 poems in Scots.

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DEDICATION

There are men and classes of men that stand above the common herd: the soldier, the sailor, and the shepherd not unfrequently; the artist rarely; rarelier still, the clergyman; the physician almost as a rule. He is the flower (such as it is) of our civilisation; and when that stage of man is done with, and only remembered to be marvelled at in history, he will be thought to have shared as little as any in the defects of the period, and most notably exhibited the virtues of the race. Generosity he has, such as is possible to those who practise an art, never to those who drive a trade; discretion, tested by a hundred secrets; tact, tried in a thousand embarrassments; and, what are more important, Heraclean cheerfulness and courage. So it is that he brings air and cheer into the sickroom, and often enough, though not so often as he wishes, brings healing.

Gratitude is but a lame sentiment; thanks, when they are expressed, are often more embarrassing than welcome; and yet I must set forth mine to a few out of many doctors who have brought me comfort and help: to Dr. Willey of San Francisco, whose kindness to a stranger it must be as grateful to him, as it is touching to me, to remember; to Dr. Karl Ruedi of Davos, the good genius of the English in his frosty mountains; to Dr. Herbert of Paris, whom I knew only for a week, and to Dr. Caissot of Montpellier, whom I knew only for ten days, and who have yet written their names deeply in my memory; to Dr. Brandt of Royat; to Dr. Wakefield of Nice; to Dr. Chepmell, whose visits make it a pleasure to be ill; to Dr. Horace Dobell, so wise in counsel; to Sir Andrew Clark, so unwearied in kindness; and to that wise youth, my uncle, Dr. Balfour.

I forget as many as I remember; and I ask both to pardon me, these for silence, those for inadequate speech. But one name I have kept on purpose to the last, because it is a household word with me, and because if I had not received favours from so many hands and in so many quarters of the world, it should have stood upon this page alone: that of my friend Thomas Bodley Scott of Bournemouth. Will he accept this, although shared among so many, for a dedication to himself? and when next my ill-fortune (which has thus its pleasant side) brings him hurrying to me when he would fain sit down to meat or lie down to rest, will he care to remember that he takes this trouble for one who is not fool enough to be ungrateful?

R. L. S.

BOOK I

IN ENGLISH

I

ENVOY

Go, little book, and wish to all
Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,
A bin of wine, a spice of wit,
A house with lawns enclosing it,
A living river by the door,
A nightingale in the sycamore!

II

A SONG OF THE ROAD

The gauger walked with willing foot,
And aye the gauger played the flute;
And what should Master Gauger play
But *Over the hills and far away*?
Whene’er I buckle on my pack
And foot it gaily in the track,
O pleasant gauger, long since dead,
I hear you fluting on ahead.
You go with me the selfsame way —
The selfsame air for me you play;
For I do think and so do you
It is the tune to travel to.

For who would gravely set his face
To go to this or t’other place?
There’s nothing under heav’n so blue
That’s fairly worth the travelling to.
On every hand the roads begin,
And people walk with zeal therein;
But wheresoe’er the highways tend,
Be sure there’s nothing at the end.
Then follow you, wherever hie
The travelling mountains of the sky.

Or let the streams in civil mode
Direct your choice upon a road;
For one and all, or high or low,
Will lead you where you wish to go;
And one and all go night and day
Over the hills and far away!
Forest of Montargis, .

III

THE CANOE SPEAKS

On the great streams the ships may go
About men's business to and fro.
But I, the egg-shell pinnace, sleep
On crystal waters ankle-deep:
I, whose diminutive design,
Of sweeter cedar, pithier pine,
Is fashioned on so frail a mould,
A hand may launch, a hand withhold:

I, rather, with the leaping trout
Wind, among lilies, in and out;
I, the unnamed, inviolate,
Green, rustic rivers navigate;
My dipping paddle scarcely shakes
The berry in the bramble-brakes;
Still forth on my green way I wend
Beside the cottage garden-end;
And by the nested angler fare,
And take the lovers unaware.
By willow wood and water-wheel
Speedily fleets my touching keel;
By all retired and shady spots
Where prosper dim forget-me-nots;
By meadows where at afternoon
The growing maidens troop in June
To loose their girdles on the grass.
Ah! speedier than before the glass
The backward toilet goes; and swift
As swallows quiver, robe and shift
And the rough country stockings lie
Around each young divinity.
When, following the recondite brook,

Sudden upon this scene I look,
And light with unfamiliar face
On chaste Diana’s bathing-place,
Loud ring the hills about and all
The shallows are abandoned....

IV

It is the season now to go
About the country high and low,
Among the lilacs hand in hand,
And two by two in fairyland.
The brooding boy, the sighing maid,
Wholly fain and half afraid,
Now meet along the hazel’d brook
To pass and linger, pause and look.
A year ago, and blithely paired,
Their rough-and-tumble play they shared;
They kissed and quarrelled, laughed and cried,
A year ago at Eastertide.
With bursting heart, with fiery face,
She strove against him in the race;
He unabashed her garter saw,
That now would touch her skirts with awe.
Now by the stile ablaze she stops,
And his demurer eyes he drops;
Now they exchange averted sighs
Or stand and marry silent eyes.
And he to her a hero is
And sweeter she than primroses;
Their common silence dearer far
Than nightingale and mavis are.
Now when they sever wedded hands,
Joy trembles in their bosom-strands
And lovely laughter leaps and falls
Upon their lips in madrigals.

V

THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

A naked house, a naked moor,
A shivering pool before the door,

A garden bare of flowers and fruit
And poplars at the garden foot:
Such is the place that I live in,
Bleak without and bare within.
Yet shall your ragged moor receive
The incomparable pomp of eve,
And the cold glories of the dawn
Behind your shivering trees be drawn;
And when the wind from place to place
Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,
Your garden gloom and gleam again,
With leaping sun, with glancing rain.
Here shall the wizard moon ascend
The heavens, in the crimson end
Of day’s declining splendour; here
The army of the stars appear.
The neighbour hollows, dry or wet,
Spring shall with tender flowers beset;
And oft the morning muser see
Larks rising from the broomy lea,
And every fairy wheel and thread
Of cobweb, dew-bediamonded.
When daisies go, shall winter-time
Silver the simple grass with rime;
Autumnal frosts enchant the pool
And make the cart-ruts beautiful;
And when snow-bright the moor expands,
How shall your children clap their hands!

To make this earth, our hermitage,
A cheerful and a changeful page,
God’s bright and intricate device
Of days and seasons doth suffice.

VI

A VISIT FROM THE SEA

Far from the loud sea beaches
Where he goes fishing and crying,
Here in the inland garden
Why is the sea-gull flying?
Here are no fish to dive for;
Here is the corn and lea;

Here are the green trees rustling.
Hie away home to sea!
Fresh is the river water
And quiet among the rushes;
This is no home for the sea-gull,
But for the rooks and thrushes.
Pity the bird that has wandered!
Pity the sailor ashore!
Hurry him home to the ocean,
Let him come here no more!
High on the sea-cliff ledges
The white gulls are trooping and crying,
Here among rooks and roses,
Why is the sea-gull flying?

VII

TO A GARDENER

Friend, in my mountain-side demesne,
My plain-beholding, rosy, green
And linnet-haunted garden-ground,
Let still the esculents abound.
Let first the onion flourish there,
Rose among roots, the maiden-fair,
Wine-scented and poetic soul
Of the capacious salad-bowl.
Let thyme the mountaineer (to dress
The tinier birds) and wading cress,
The lover of the shallow brook,
From all my plots and borders look.
Nor crisp and ruddy radish, nor
Pease-cods for the child’s pinafore
Be lacking; nor of salad clan
The last and least that ever ran
About great nature’s garden-beds.
Nor thence be missed the speary heads
Of artichoke; nor thence the bean
That gathered innocent and green
Outsavours the belauded pea.
These tend, I prithee; and for me,
Thy most long-suffering master, bring
In April, when the linnets sing

And the days lengthen more and more,
At sundown to the garden door.
And I, being provided thus,
Shall, with superb asparagus,
A book, a taper, and a cup
Of country wine, divinely sup.
La Solitude, Hyères.

VIII

TO MINNIE

(WITH A HAND-GLASS)

A picture-frame for you to fill,
A paltry setting for your face,
A thing that has no worth until
You lend it something of your grace,
I send (unhappy I that sing
Laid by a while upon the shelf)
Because I would not send a thing
Less charming than you are yourself.
And happier than I, alas!
(Dumb thing, I envy its delight)
‘Twill wish you well, the looking-glass,
And look you in the face to-night.
.

IX

TO K. de M.

A lover of the moorland bare
And honest country winds you were;
The silver-skimming rain you took;
And love the floodings of the brook,
Dew, frost and mountains, fire and seas,
Tumultuary silences,
Winds that in darkness fifed a tune,
And the high-riding, virgin moon.

And as the berry, pale and sharp,
Springs on some ditch’s counterscarp
In our ungenial, native north —
You put your frosted wildings forth,
And on the heath, afar from man,
A strong and bitter virgin ran.
The berry ripened keeps the rude
And racy flavour of the wood.
And you that loved the empty plain
All redolent of wind and rain,
Around you still the curlew sings —
The freshness of the weather clings —
The maiden jewels of the rain

Sit in your dabbled locks again.

X

TO N. V. de G. S.

The unfathomable sea, and time, and tears,
The deeds of heroes and the crimes of kings
Dispart us; and the river of events
Has, for an age of years, to east and west
More widely borne our cradles. Thou to me
Art foreign, as when seamen at the dawn
Descry a land far off, and know not which.
So I approach uncertain; so I cruise
Round thy mysterious islet, and behold
Surf and great mountains and loud river-bars,
And from the shore hear inland voices call.
Strange is the seaman's heart; he hopes, he fears;
Draws closer and sweeps wider from that coast;
Last, his rent sail refits, and to the deep
His shattered prow uncomforted puts back.

Yet as he goes he ponders at the helm
Of that bright island; where he feared to touch,
His spirit re-adventures; and for years,
Where by his wife he slumbers safe at home,
Thoughts of that land revisit him; he sees
The eternal mountains beckon, and awakes
Yearning for that far home that might have been.

XI

TO WILL. H. LOW

Youth now flees on feathered foot,
Faint and fainter sounds the flute,
Rarer songs of gods; and still
Somewhere on the sunny hill,
Or along the winding stream,
Through the willows, flits a dream;
Flits but shows a smiling face,
Flees, but with so quaint a grace,
None can choose to stay at home,
All must follow, all must roam.

This is unborn beauty: she
Now in air floats high and free.
Takes the sun and makes the blue; —
Late with stooping pinion flew
Raking hedgerow trees, and wet
Her wing in silver streams, and set
Shining foot on temple roof:
Now again she flies aloof,
Coasting mountain clouds and kiss't
By the evening's amethyst.
In wet wood and miry lane,
Still we pant and pound in vain;

Still with leaden foot we chase
Waning pinion, fainting face;
Still with grey hair we stumble on,
Till, behold, the vision gone!
Where hath fleeting beauty led?
To the doorway of the dead.
Life is over, life was gay:
We have come the primrose way.

XII

TO MRS. WILL. H. LOW

Even in the bluest noonday of July,
There could not run the smallest breath of wind
But all the quarter sounded like a wood;
And in the chequered silence and above
The hum of city cabs that sought the Bois,
Suburban ashes shivered into song.
A patter and a chatter and a chirp
And a long dying hiss — it was as though
Starched old brocaded dames through all the house
Had trailed a strident skirt, or the whole sky
Even in a wink had over-brimmed in rain.
Hark, in these shady parlours, how it talks
Of the near Autumn, how the smitten ash
Trembles and augurs floods! O not too long
In these inconstant latitudes delay,
O not too late from the unbeloved north
Trim your escape! For soon shall this low roof
Resound indeed with rain, soon shall your eyes

Search the foul garden, search the darkened rooms,
Nor find one jewel but the blazing log.
 Rue Vernier, Paris.

XIII

TO H. F. BROWN

(WRITTEN DURING A DANGEROUS SICKNESS)

I sit and wait a pair of oars
On cis-Elysian river-shores.
Where the immortal dead have sate,
‘Tis mine to sit and meditate;
To re-ascend life’s rivulet,
Without remorse, without regret;
And sing my *Alma Genetrix*
Among the willows of the Styx.
And lo, as my serener soul
Did these unhappy shores patrol,
And wait with an attentive ear
The coming of the gondolier,
Your fire-surviving roll I took,
Your spirited and happy book;
Whereon, despite my frowning fate,
It did my soul so recreate
That all my fancies fled away
On a Venetian holiday.
Now, thanks to your triumphant care,
Your pages clear as April air,
The sails, the bells, the birds, I know,
And the far-off Friulan snow;
The land and sea, the sun and shade,
And the blue even lamp-inlaid.

For this, for these, for all, O friend,
For your whole book from end to end —
For Paron Piero’s mutton-ham —
I your defaulting debtor am.
Perchance, reviving, yet may I
To your sea-paven city hie,
And in a *felze* some day yet
Light at your pipe my cigarette.

XIV

TO ANDREW LANG

Dear Andrew, with the brindled hair,
Who glory to have thrown in air,
High over arm, the trembling reed,
By Ale and Kail, by Till and Tweed:
An equal craft of hand you show
The pen to guide, the fly to throw:
I count you happy-starred; for God,
When He with inkpot and with rod
Endowed you, bade your fortune lead
For ever by the crooks of Tweed,
For ever by the woods of song
And lands that to the Muse belong;
Or if in peopled streets, or in
The abhorred pedantic sanhedrin,
It should be yours to wander, still
Airs of the morn, airs of the hill,
The plovery Forest and the seas
That break about the Hebrides,
Should follow over field and plain
And find you at the window-pane;

And you again see hill and peel,
And the bright springs gush at your heel.
So went the fiat forth, and so
Garrulous like a brook you go,
With sound of happy mirth and sheen
Of daylight — whether by the green
You fare that moment, or the grey;
Whether you dwell in March or May;
Or whether treat of reels and rods
Or of the old unhappy gods:
Still like a brook your page has shone,
And your ink sings of Helicon.

XV

ET TU IN ARCADIA VIXISTI

(TO R. A. M. S.)

In ancient tales, O friend, thy spirit dwelt;
There, from of old, thy childhood passed; and there
High expectation, high delights and deeds,
Thy fluttering heart with hope and terror moved.
And thou hast heard of yore the Blatant Beast,
And Roland’s horn, and that war-scattering shout
Of all-unarmed Achilles, ægis-crowned.
And perilous lands thou sawest, sounding shores
And seas and forests drear, island and dale
And mountain dark. For thou with Tristram rod’st
Or Bedevere, in farthest Lyonesse.
Thou hadst a booth in Samarcand, whereat
Side-looking Magians trafficked; thence, by night,
An Afreet snatched thee, and with wings upbore
Beyond the Aral Mount; or, hoping gain,
Thou, with a jar of money, didst embark

For Balsorah by sea. But chiefly thou
In that clear air took’st life; in Arcady
The haunted, land of song; and by the wells
Where most the gods frequent. There Chiron old,
In the Pelethronian antre, taught thee lore;
The plants he taught, and by the shining stars
In forests dim to steer. There hast thou seen
Immortal Pan dance secret in a glade,
And, dancing, roll his eyes; these, where they fell,
Shed glee, and through the congregated oaks
A flying horror winged; while all the earth
To the god’s pregnant footing thrilled within.
Or whiles, beside the sobbing stream, he breathed,
In his clutched pipe unformed and wizard strains
Divine yet brutal; which the forest heard,
And thou, with awe; and far upon the plain
The unthinking ploughman started and gave ear.
Now things there are that, upon him who sees,
A strong vocation lay; and strains there are
That whoso hears shall hear for evermore.
For evermore thou hear’st immortal Pan
And those melodious godheads, ever young

And ever quiring, on the mountains old.
What was this earth, child of the gods, to thee?
Forth from thy dreamland thou, a dreamer, cam’st
And in thine ears the olden music rang,
And in thy mind the doings of the dead,
And those heroic ages long forgot.
To a so fallen earth, alas! too late,
Alas! in evil days, thy steps return,
To list at noon for nightingales, to grow
A dweller on the beach till Argo come
That came long since, a lingerer by the pool
Where that desirèd angel bathes no more.

As when the Indian to Dakota comes,
Or farthest Idaho, and where he dwelt,
He with his clan, a humming city finds;
Thereon a while, amazed, he stares, and then
To right and leftward, like a questing dog,
Seeks first the ancestral altars, then the hearth
Long cold with rains, and where old terror lodged,
And where the dead: so thee undying Hope,
With all her pack, hunts screaming through the years:
Here, there, thou fleeëst; but nor here nor there
The pleasant gods abide, the glory dwells.
That, that was not Apollo, not the god.
This was not Venus, though she Venus seemed
A moment. And though fair yon river move,
She, all the way, from disenchanted fount
To seas unhallowed runs; the gods forsook
Long since her trembling rushes; from her plains
Disconsolate, long since adventure fled;
And now although the inviting river flows,
And every poplared cape, and every bend
Or willowy islet, win upon thy soul
And to thy hopeful shallop whisper speed;
Yet hope not thou at all; hope is no more;
And O, long since the golden groves are dead
The faëry cities vanished from the land!

XVI

TO W.E. HENLEY

The year runs through her phases; rain and sun,

Spring-time and summer pass; winter succeeds;
But one pale season rules the house of death.
Cold falls the imprisoned daylight; fell disease

By each lean pallet squats, and pain and sleep
Toss gaping on the pillows.
But O thou!
Uprise and take thy pipe. Bid music flow,
Strains by good thoughts attended, like the spring
The swallows follow over land and sea.
Pain sleeps at once; at once, with open eyes,
Dozing despair awakes. The shepherd sees
His flock come bleating home; the seaman hears
Once more the cordage rattle. Airs of home!
Youth, love, and roses blossom; the gaunt ward
Dislimns and disappears, and, opening out,
Shows brooks and forests, and the blue beyond
Of mountains.
Small the pipe; but O! do thou,
Peak-faced and suffering piper, blow therein
The dirge of heroes dead; and to these sick,
These dying, sound the triumph over death.
Behold! each greatly breathes; each tastes a joy
Unknown before, in dying; for each knows
A hero dies with him — though unfulfilled,
Yet conquering truly — and not dies in vain.
So is pain cheered, death comforted; the house
Of sorrow smiles to listen. Once again —
O thou, Orpheus and Heracles, the bard
And the deliverer, touch the stops again!

XVII

HENRY JAMES

Who comes to-night? We ope the doors in vain.
Who comes? My bursting walls, can you contain
The presences that now together throng
Your narrow entry, as with flowers and song,

As with the air of life, the breath of talk?
Lo, how these fair immaculate women walk
Behind their jocund maker; and we see
Slighted *De Mauves*, and that far different she,

Gressie, the trivial sphynx; and to our feast
Daisy and *Barb* and *Chancellor* (she not least!)
With all their silken, all their airy kin,
Do like unbidden angels enter in.
But he, attended by these shining names,
Comes (best of all) himself — our welcome James.

XVIII

THE MIRROR SPEAKS

Where the bells peal far at sea
Cunning fingers fashioned me.
There on palace walls I hung
While that Consuelo sung;
But I heard, though I listened well,
Never a note, never a trill,
Never a beat of the chiming bell.
There I hung and looked, and there
In my grey face, faces fair
Shone from under shining hair.
Well I saw the poising head,
But the lips moved and nothing said;
And when lights were in the hall,
Silent moved the dancers all.
So a while I glowed, and then
Fell on dusty days and men;
Long I slumbered packed in straw,
Long I none but dealers saw;
Till before my silent eye
One that sees came passing by.

Now with an outlandish grace,
To the sparkling fire I face
In the blue room at Skerryvore;
Where I wait until the door
Open, and the Prince of Men,
Henry James, shall come again.

XIX

KATHARINE

We see you as we see a face

That trembles in a forest place
Upon the mirror of a pool
For ever quiet, clear, and cool;
And, in the wayward glass, appears
To hover between smiles and tears,
Elfin and human, airy and true,
And backed by the reflected blue.

XX

TO F. J. S.

I read, dear friend, in your dear face
Your life's tale told with perfect grace;
The river of your life I trace
Up the sun-chequered, devious bed
To the far-distant fountain-head.
Not one quick beat of your warm heart,
Nor thought that came to you apart,
Pleasure nor pity, love nor pain
Nor sorrow, has gone by in vain;

But as some lone, wood-wandering child
Brings home with him at evening mild
The thorns and flowers of all the wild,
From your whole life, O fair and true,
Your flowers and thorns you bring with you!

XXI

REQUIEM

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.
This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.
Hyères, *May* .

XXII

THE CELESTIAL SURGEON

If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books, and my food, and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain: —
Lord, Thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake;

Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
Choose Thou, before that spirit die,
A piercing pain, a killing sin,
And to my dead heart run them in!

XXIII

OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS

Out of the sun, out of the blast,
Out of the world, alone I passed
Across the moor and through the wood
To where the monastery stood.
There neither lute nor breathing fife,
Nor rumour of the world of life,
Nor confidences low and dear,
Shall strike the meditative ear.
Aloof, unhelpful, and unkind,
The prisoners of the iron mind,
Where nothing speaks except the bell,
The unfraternal brothers dwell.
Poor passionate men, still clothed afresh
With agonising folds of flesh;
Whom the clear eyes solicit still
To some bold output of the will,
While fairy Fancy far before
And musing Memory-Hold-the-door
Now to heroic death invite
And now uncurtain fresh delight:
O, little boots it thus to dwell
On the remote unneighboured hill!

O to be up and doing, O
Unfearing and unshamed to go

In all the uproar and the press
About my human business!
My undissuaded heart I hear
Whisper courage in my ear.
With voiceless calls, the ancient earth
Summons me to a daily birth.
Thou, O my love, ye, O my friends —
The gist of life, the end of ends —
To laugh, to love, to live, to die,
Ye call me by the ear and eye!
Forth from the casemate, on the plain
Where honour has the world to gain,
Pour forth and bravely do your part,
O knights of the unshielded heart!
Forth and for ever forward! — out
From prudent turret and redoubt,
And in the mellay charge amain,
To fall but yet to rise again!
Captive? ah, still, to honour bright,
A captive soldier of the right!
Or free and fighting, good with ill?
Unconquering but unconquered still!
And ye, O brethren, what if God,
When from Heav'n's top He spies abroad,
And sees on this tormented stage
The noble war of mankind rage:
What if His vivifying eye,
O monks, should pass your corner by?
For still the Lord is Lord of might;
In deeds, in deeds, He takes delight;
The plough, the spear, the laden barks,
The field, the founded city, marks;
He marks the smiler of the streets,
The singer upon garden seats;

He sees the climber in the rocks:
To Him, the shepherd folds his flocks.
For those He loves that underprop
With daily virtues Heaven's top,
And bear the falling sky with ease,
Unfrowning caryatides.

Those He approves that ply the trade,
That rock the child, that wed the maid,
That with weak virtues, weaker hands,
Sow gladness on the peopled lands.
And still with laughter, song and shout,
Spin the great wheel of earth about.
But ye? — O ye who linger still
Here in your fortress on the hill,
With placid face, with tranquil breath,
The unsought volunteers of death,
Our cheerful General on high
With careless looks may pass you by.

XXIV

Not yet, my soul, these friendly fields desert,
Where thou with grass, and rivers, and the breeze,
And the bright face of day, thy dalliance hadst;
Where to thine ear first sang the enraptured birds;
Where love and thou that lasting bargain made.
The ship rides trimmed, and from the eternal shore
Thou hearest airy voices; but not yet
Depart, my soul, not yet a while depart.
Freedom is far, rest far. Thou art with life
Too closely woven, nerve with nerve entwined;
Service still craving service, love for love,
Love for dear love, still suppliant with tears.

Alas, not yet thy human task is done!
A bond at birth is forged; a debt doth lie
Immortal on mortality. It grows —
By vast rebound it grows, unceasing growth;
Gift upon gift, alms upon alms, upreared,
From man, from God, from nature, till the soul
At that so huge indulgence stands amazed.
Leave not, my soul, the unfoughten field, nor leave
Thy debts dishonoured, nor thy place desert
Without due service rendered. For thy life,
Up, spirit, and defend that fort of clay,
Thy body, now beleaguered; whether soon
Or late she fall; whether to-day thy friends
Bewail thee dead, or, after years, a man
Grown old in honour and the friend of peace.
Contend, my soul, for moments and for hours;
Each is with service pregnant; each reclaimed

Is as a kingdom conquered, where to reign.
As when a captain rallies to the fight
His scattered legions, and beats ruin back,
He, on the field, encamps, well pleased in mind.
Yet surely him shall fortune overtake,
Him smite in turn, headlong his ensigns drive;
And that dear land, now safe, to-morrow fall.
But he, unthinking, in the present good
Solely delights, and all the camps rejoice.

XXV

It is not yours, O mother, to complain,
Not, mother, yours to weep,
Though nevermore your son again
Shall to your bosom creep,
Though nevermore again you watch your baby sleep.

Though in the greener paths of earth,
Mother and child, no more
We wander; and no more the birth
Of me whom once you bore
Seems still the brave reward that once it seemed of yore;
Though as all passes, day and night,
The seasons and the years,
From you, O mother, this delight,
This also disappears —
Some profit yet survives of all your pangs and tears.
The child, the seed, the grain of corn,
The acorn on the hill,
Each for some separate end is born
In season fit, and still
Each must in strength arise to work the almighty will.
So from the hearth the children flee,
By that almighty hand
Austerely led; so one by sea
Goes forth, and one by land;
Nor aught of all man’s sons escapes from that command.
So from the sally each obeys
The unseen almighty nod;
So till the ending all their ways
Blindfolded loth have trod:
Nor knew their task at all, but were the tools of God.
And as the fervent smith of yore
Beat out the glowing blade,

Nor wielded in the front of war
The weapons that he made,
But in the tower at home still plied his ringing trade;

So like a sword the son shall roam
On nobler missions sent;
And as the smith remained at home
In peaceful turret pent,
So sits the while at home the mother well content.

XXVI

THE SICK CHILD

CHILD
O Mother, lay your hand on my brow!
O mother, mother, where am I now?
Why is the room so gaunt and great?
Why am I lying awake so late?
MOTHER
Fear not at all: the night is still.
Nothing is here that means you ill —
Nothing but lamps the whole town through,
And never a child awake but you.
CHILD
Mother, mother, speak low in my ear,
Some of the things are so great and near,
Some are so small and far away,
I have a fear that I cannot say.
What have I done, and what do I fear,
And why are you crying, mother dear?
MOTHER
Out in the city, sounds begin,
Thank the kind God, the carts come in!
An hour or two more, and God is so kind,
The day shall be blue in the window-blind,
Then shall my child go sweetly asleep,
And dream of the birds and the hills of sheep.

XXVII

IN MEMORIAM F.A.S.

Yet, O stricken heart, remember, O remember
How of human days he lived the better part.
April came to bloom and never dim December
Breathed its killing chills upon the head or heart.
Doomed to know not Winter, only Spring, a being
Trod the flowery April blithely for a while,
Took his fill of music, joy of thought and seeing,
Came and stayed and went, nor ever ceased to smile.
Came and stayed and went, and now when all is finished,
You alone have crossed the melancholy stream,
Yours the pang, but his, O his, the undiminished
Undecaying gladness, undeparted dream.
All that life contains of torture, toil, and treason,
Shame, dishonour, death, to him were but a name.
Here, a boy, he dwelt through all the singing season,
And ere the day of sorrow departed as he came.
Davos, .

XXVIII

TO MY FATHER

Peace and her huge invasion to these shores
Puts daily home; innumerable sails
Dawn on the far horizon and draw near;
Innumerable loves, uncounted hopes
To our wild coasts, not darkling now, approach:

Not now obscure, since thou and thine are there,
And bright on the lone isle, the foundered reef,
The long, resounding foreland, Pharos stands.
These are thy works, O father, these thy crown;
Whether on high the air be pure, they shine
Along the yellowing sunset, and all night
Among the unnumbered stars of God they shine;
Or whether fogs arise and far and wide
The low sea-level drown — each finds a tongue
And all night long the tolling bell resounds:
So shine, so toll, till night be overpast,
Till the stars vanish, till the sun return,
And in the haven rides the fleet secure.
In the first hour, the seaman in his skiff
Moves through the unmoving bay, to where the town
Its earliest smoke into the air upbreathes,

And the rough hazels climb along the beach.
To the tugged oar the distant echo speaks.
The ship lies resting, where by reef and roost
Thou and thy lights have led her like a child.
This hast thou done, and I — can I be base?
I must arise, O father, and to port
Some lost, complaining seaman pilot home.

XXIX

IN THE STATES

With half a heart I wander here
As from an age gone by
A brother — yet though young in years,
An elder brother, I.

You speak another tongue than mine,
Though both were English born.
I towards the night of time decline
You mount into the morn.
Youth shall grow great and strong and free,
But age must still decay:
To-morrow for the States, — for me,
England and Yesterday.
San Francisco.

XXX

A PORTRAIT

I am a kind of farthing dip,
Unfriendly to the nose and eyes;
A blue-behinded ape, I skip
Upon the trees of Paradise.
At mankind’s feast, I take my place
In solemn, sanctimonious state,
And have the air of saying grace
While I defile the dinner-plate.
I am “the smiler with the knife,”
The battener upon garbage, I —
Dear Heaven, with such a rancid life
Were it not better far to die?
Yet still, about the human pale,

I love to scamper, love to race,
To swing by my irreverent tail
All over the most holy place;

And when at length, some golden day,
The unfailing sportsman, aiming at,
Shall bag, me — all the world shall say:
Thank God, and there's an end of that!

XXXI
Sing clearlier, Muse, or evermore be still,
Sing truer or no longer sing!
No more the voice of melancholy Jaques
To wake a weeping echo in the hill;
But as the boy, the pirate of the spring,
From the green elm a living linnet takes,
One natural verse recapture — then be still.

XXXII

A CAMP

The bed was made, the room was fit,
By punctual eve the stars were lit;
The air was still, the water ran,
No need was there for maid or man,
When we put up, my ass and I,
At God's green caravanserai.

XXXIII

THE COUNTRY OF THE CAMISARDS

We travelled in the print of olden wars;
Yet all the land was green;
And love we found, and peace,
Where fire and war had been.

They pass and smile, the children of the sword —
No more the sword they wield;
And O, how deep the corn
Along the battlefield!

XXXIV

SKERRYVORE

For love of lovely words, and for the sake
Of those, my kinsmen and my countrymen,
Who early and late in the windy ocean toiled
To plant a star for seamen, where was then
The surfy haunt of seals and cormorants:
I, on the lintel of this cot, inscribe
The name of a strong tower.

XXXV

SKERRYVORE

THE PARALLEL

Here all is sunny, and when the truant gull
Skims the green level of the lawn, his wing
Dispetals roses; here the house is framed
Of kneaded brick and the plumed mountain pine,
Such clay as artists fashion and such wood
As the tree-climbing urchin breaks. But there
Eternal granite hewn from the living isle
And dowelled with brute iron, rears a tower
That from its wet foundation to its crown
Of glittering glass, stands, in the sweep of winds,
Immovable, immortal, eminent.

XXXVI
My house, I say. But hark to the sunny doves
That make my roof the arena of their loves,
That gyre about the gable all day long
And fill the chimneys with their murmurous song:
Our house, they say; and *mine*, the cat declares
And spreads his golden fleece upon the chairs;
And *mine* the dog, and rises stiff with wrath
If any alien foot profane the path.
So too the buck that trimmed my terraces,
Our whilome gardener, called the garden his;
Who now, deposed, surveys my plain abode
And his late kingdom, only from the road.

XXXVII
My body which my dungeon is,
And yet my parks and palaces: —
Which is so great that there I go
All the day long to and fro,
And when the night begins to fall
Throw down my bed and sleep, while all
The building hums with wakefulness —
Even as a child of savages
When evening takes her on her way
(She having roamed a summer’s day

Along the mountain-sides and scalp),
Sleeps in an antre of that alp: —
Which is so broad and high that there,
As in the topless fields of air,
My fancy soars like to a kite
And faints in the blue infinite: —
Which is so strong, my strongest throes
And the rough world’s besieging blows

Not break it, and so weak withal,
Death ebbs and flows in its loose wall
As the green sea in fishers’ nets,
And tops its topmost parapets: —
Which is so wholly mine that I
Can wield its whole artillery,
And mine so little, that my soul
Dwells in perpetual control,
And I but think and speak and do
As my dead fathers move me to: —
If this born body of my bones
The beggared soul so barely owns,
What money passed from hand to hand,
What creeping custom of the land,
What deed of author or assign,
Can make a house a thing of mine?

XXXVIII

Say not of me that weakly I declined
The labours of my sires, and fled the sea,
The towers we founded and the lamps we lit,
To play at home with paper like a child.
But rather say: *In the afternoon of time*
A strenuous family dusted from its hands
The sand of granite, and beholding far
Along the sounding coast its pyramids
And tall memorials catch the dying sun,
Smiled well content, and to this childish task
Around the fire addressed its evening hours.

BOOK II

IN SCOTS

TABLE OF COMMON SCOTTISH VOWEL SOUNDS

ae
ai } = open A *as in* rare.
a’
au
aw } = AW *as in* law.
ea = open E *as in* mere, but this with exceptions, as heather = heather, wean = wain, lear = lair.
ee
ei
ie } = open E *as in* mere.
oa = open O *as in* more.
ou = doubled O *as in* poor.
ow = OW *as in* bower.
u = doubled O *as in* poor.
ui *or* ü before R = (say roughly) open A *as in* rare.
ui *or* ü before any other consonant = (say roughly) close I *as in* grin.
y = open I *as in* kite.
i = pretty nearly what you please, much as in English, Heaven guide the reader through that labyrinth! But in Scots it dodges usually from the short I, *as in* grin, to the open E *as in* mere. Find and blind, I may remark, are pronounced to rhyme with the preterite of grin.

I

THE MAKER TO POSTERITY

Far ‘yont amang the years to be,
When a’ we think, an’ a’ we see,
An’ a’ we luve, ‘s been dung ajee
By time’s rouch shouther,
An’ what was richt and wrang for me
Lies mangled throu’ther,
It’s possible — it’s hardly mair —

That some ane, ripin' after lear —
Some auld professor or young heir,
If still there's either —
May find an' read me, an' be sair
Perplexed, puir brither!
"What tongue does your auld bookie speak?"
He'll speir; an' I, his mou' to steik:
"No' bein' fit to write in Greek,
I wrote in Lallan,
Dear to my heart as the peat-reek,
Auld as Tantallon.
"Few spak it than, an' noo there's nane.
My puir auld sangs lie a' their lane,
Their sense, that aince was braw an' plain,
Tint a'thegither,
Like runes upon a standin' stane
Amang the heather.

"But think not you the brae to speel;
You, tae, maun chow the bitter peel;
For a' your lear, for a' your skeel,
Ye're nane sae lucky;
An' things are mebbe waur than weel
For you, my buckie.
"The hale concern (baith hens an' eggs,
Baith books an' writers, stars an' clegs)
Noo stachers upon lowsent legs
An' wears awa';
The tack o' mankind, near the dregs,
Rins unco law.
"Your book, that in some braw new tongue
Ye wrote or prentit, preached or sung,
Will still be just a bairn, an' young
In fame an' years,
Whan the hale planet's guts are dung
About your ears;
"An' you, sair gruppin' to a spar
Or whammled wi' some bleezin' star,
Cryin' to ken whaur deil ye are,
Hame, France, or Flanders —
Whang sindry like a railway car
An' flie in danders."

II

ILLE TERRARUM

Frae nirly, nippin', Eas'lan' breeze,
Frae Norlan' snaw, an' haar o' seas,
Weel happit in your gairden trees,
A bonny bit,
Atween the muckle Pentland's knees,
Secure ye sit.

Beeches an' aiks entwine their theek,
An' firs, a stench, auld-farrant clique.
A simmer day, your chimleys reek,
Couthy and bien;
An' here an' there your windies keek
Amang the green.
A pickle plats an' paths an' posies,
A wheen auld gillyflowers an' roses:
A ring o' wa's the hale encloses
Frae sheep or men:
An' there the auld housie beeks an' dozes,
A' by her lane.
The gairdner crooks his weary back
A' day in the pitaty-track,
Or mebbe stops a while to crack
Wi' Jane the cook,
Or at some buss, worm-eaten-black,
To gie a look.
Frae the high hills the curlew ca's;
The sheep gang baaing by the wa's;
Or whiles a clan o' roosty craws
Cangle thegither;
The wild bees seek the gairden raws,
Weariet wi' heather.
Or in the gloamin' douce an' grey
The sweet-throat mavis tunes her lay;
The herd comes linkin' doun the brae;
An' by degrees
The muckle siller müne maks way
Amang the trees.

Here aft hae I, wi' sober heart,
For meditation sat apairt,
When orra loves or kittle art
Perplexed my mind;

Here socht a balm for ilka smart
O’ humankind.
Here aft, weel neukit by my lane,
Wi’ Horace, or perhaps Montaigne,
The mornin’ hours hae come an’ gane
Abüne my heid —
I wadna gi’en a chucky-stane
For a’ I’d read.
But noo the auld city, street by street,
An’ winter fu’ o’ snaw an’ sleet,
A while shut in my gangrel feet
An’ goavin’ mettle;
Noo is the soopit ingle sweet,
An’ liltin’ kettle.
An’ noo the winter winds complain;
Cauld lies the glaur in ilka lane;
On draigled hizzie, tautit wean
An’ drucken lads,
In the mirk nicht, the winter rain
Dribbles an’ blads.
Whan bugles frae the Castle rock,
An’ beaten drums wi’ dowie shock,
Wauken, at cauld-rife sax o’clock,
My chitterin’ frame,
I mind me on the kintry cock,
The kintry hame.

I mind me on yon bonny bield;
An’ Fancy traivels far afield
To gaither a’ that gairdens yield
O’ sun an’ Simmer:
To hearten up a dowie chield,
Fancy’s the limmer!

III
When aince Aprile has fairly come,
An’ birds may bigg in winter’s lum,
An’ pleesure’s spreid for a’ and some
O’ whatna state,
Love, wi’ her auld recruitin’ drum,
Than taks the gate.
The heart plays dunt wi’ main an’ micht;
The lasses’ een are a’ sae bricht,
Their dresses are sae braw an’ ticht,

The bonny birdies! —
Puir winter virtue at the sicht
Gangs heels ower hurdies.
An’ aye as love frae land to land
Tirls the drum wi’ eident hand,
A’ men collect at her command,
Toun-bred or land’art,
An’ follow in a denty band
Her gaucy standart.
An’ I, wha sang o’ rain an’ snaw,
An’ weary winter weel awa’,
Noo busk me in a jacket braw,
An’ tak my place
I’ the ram-stam, harum-scarum raw,
Wi’ smilin’ face.

IV

A MILE AN’ A BITTOCK

A mile an’ a bittock, a mile or twa,
Abüne the burn, ayont the law,
Davie an’ Donal’ an’ Cherlie an’ a’,
An’ the müne was shinin’ clearly!
Ane went hame wi’ the ither, an’ then
The ither went hame wi’ the ither twa men,
An’ baith wad return him the service again,
An’ the müne was shinin’ clearly!
The clocks were chappin’ in house an’ ha’,
Eleeven, twal an’ ane an’ twa;
An’ the guidman’s face was turnt to the wa’
An’ the müne was shinin’ clearly!
A wind got up frae affa the sea,
It blew the stars as clear’s could be,
It blew in the een of a’ o’ the three,
An’ the müne was shinin’ clearly!
Noo, Davie was first to get sleep in his head,
“The best o’ frien’s maun twine,” he said;
“I’m weariet, an’ here I’m awa’ to my bed.”
An’ the müne was shinin’ clearly!
Twa o’ them walkin’ an’ crackin’ their lane,
The mornin’ licht cam grey an’ plain,
An’ the birds they yammert on stick an’ stane,

An’ the müne was shinin’ clearly!
O years ayont, O years awa’,
My lads, ye’ll mind whate’er befa’ —
My lads, ye’ll mind on the bield o’ the law,
When the müne was shinin’ clearly.

V

A LOWDEN SABBATH MORN

The clinkum-clank o’ Sabbath bells
Noo to the hoastin’ rookery swells,
Noo faintin’ laigh in shady dells,
Sounds far an’ near,
An’ through the simmer kintry tells
Its tale o’ cheer.
An’ noo, to that melodious play,
A’ deidly awn the quiet sway —
A’ ken their solemn holiday,
Bestial an’ human,
The singin’ lintie on the brae,
The restin’ plou’man.
He, mair than a’ the lave o’ men,
His week completit joys to ken;
Half-dressed, he daunders out an’ in,
Perplext wi’ leisure;
An’ his raxt limbs he’ll rax again
Wi’ painfü’ pleesure.
The steerin’ mither strang afit
Noo shoos the bairnies but a bit;
Noo cries them ben, their Sinday shüit
To scart upon them,
Or sweeties in their pooch to pit,
Wi’ blessin’s on them.
The lasses, clean frae tap to taes,
Are busked in crunklin’ underclaes;
The gartened hose, the weel-fllled stays,
The nakit shift,
A’ bleached on bonny greens for days,
An’ white’s the drift.

An’ noo to face the kirkward mile:
The guidman’s hat o’ dacent style,

The blackit shoon we noo maun fyle
As white's the miller:
A waefü' peety tae, to spile
The warth o' siller.
Our Marg'et, aye sae keen to crack,
Douce-stappin' in the stoury track,
Her emeralt goun a' kiltit back
Frae snawy coats,
White-ankled, leads the kirkward pack
Wi' Dauvit Groats.
A thocht ahint, in runkled breeks,
A' spiled wi' lyin' by for weeks,
The guidman follows closs, an' cleiks
The sonsie missis;
His sarious face at aince bespeaks
The day that this is.
And aye an' while we nearer draw
To whaur the kirkton lies alaw,
Mair neebours, comin' saft an' slaw
Frae here an' there,
The thicker thrang the gate an' caw
The stour in air.
But hark! the bells frae nearer clang;
To rowst the slaw their sides they bang;
An' see! black coats a'ready thrang
The green kirkyaird;
And at the yett, the chestnuts spang
That brocht the laird.

The solemn elders at the plate
Stand drinkin' deep the pride o' state:
The practised hands as gash an' great
As Lords o' Session;
The later named, a wee thing blate
In their expression.
The prentit stanes that mark the deid,
Wi' lengthened lip, the sarious read;
Syne wag a moraleesin' heid,
An' then an' there
Their hirplin' practice an' their creed
Try hard to square.
It's here our Merren lang has lain,
A wee bewast the table-stane;
An' yon's the grave o' Sandy Blane;

An’ further ower,
The mither’s brithers, dacent men!
Lie a’ the fower.
Here the guidman sall bide awee
To dwall amang the deid; to see
Auld faces clear in fancy’s e’e;
Belike to hear
Auld voices fa’in’ saft an’ slee
On fancy’s ear.
Thus, on the day o’ solemn things,
The bell that in the steeple swings
To fauld a scaittered faim’ly rings
Its walcome screed;
An’ just a wee thing nearer brings
The quick an’ deid.

But noo the bell is ringin’ in;
To tak their places, folk begin;
The minister himsel’ will shüne
Be up the gate,
Filled fu’ wi’ clavers about sin
An’ man’s estate.
The tünes are up — *French*, to be shüre,
The faithfü’ *French*, an’ twa-three mair;
The auld prezentor, hoastin’ sair,
Wales out the portions,
An’ yirks the tüne into the air
Wi’ queer contortions.
Follows the prayer, the readin’ next,
An’ than the fisslin’ for the text —
The twa-three last to find it, vext
But kind o’ proud;
An’ than the peppermints are raxed,
An’ southernwood.
For noo’s the time whan pows are seen
Nid-noddin’ like a mandareen;
When tenty mithers stap a preen
In sleepin’ weans;
An’ nearly half the parochine
Forget their pains.
There’s just a waukrif twa or three:
Thrawn commentautors sweer to ‘gree,
Weans glowrin’ at the bumlin’ bee
On windie-glasses,

Or lads that tak a keek a-glee
At sonsie lasses.

Himsel', meanwhile, frae whaur he cocks
An' bobs belaw the soundin'-box,
The treasures of his words unlocks
Wi' prodigality,
An' deals some unco dingin' knocks
To infidality.
Wi' sappy unction, hoo he burkes
The hopes o' men that trust in works,
Expounds the fau'ts o' ither kirks,
An' shaws the best o' them
No' muckle better than mere Turks,
When a's confessed o' them.
Bethankit! what a bonny creed!
What mair would ony Christian need? —
The braw words rummle ower his heid,
Nor steer the sleeper;
An' in their restin' graves, the deid
Sleep aye the deeper.

Note. — It may be guessed by some that I had a certain parish in my eye, and this makes it proper I should add a word of disclamation. In my time there have been two ministers in that parish. Of the first I have a special reason to speak well, even had there been any to think ill. The second I have often met in private and long (in the due phrase) "sat under" in his church, and neither here nor there have I heard an unkind or ugly word upon his lips. The preacher of the text had thus no original in that particular parish; but when I was a boy, he might have been observed in many others; he was then (like the schoolmaster) abroad; and by recent advices, it would seem he has not yet entirely disappeared. — [R. L. S.]

VI

THE SPAEWIFE

O, I wad like to ken — to the beggar-wife says I —
Why chops are guid to brander and nane sae guid to fry.
An' siller, that's sae braw to keep, is brawer still to gi'e.
— *It's gey an' easy speirin'*, says the beggar-wife to me.
O, I wad like to ken — to the beggar-wife says I —

Hoo a’ things come to be whaur we find them when we try.
The lassies in their claes an’ the fishes in the sea.
— *It’s gey an’ easy speirin’*, says the beggar-wife to me.
O’ I wad like to ken — to the beggar-wife says I —
Why lads are a’ to sell an’ lasses a’ to buy;
An’ naebody for dacency but barely twa or three.
— *It’s gey an’ easy speirin’*, says the beggar-wife to me.
O, I wad like to ken — to the beggar-wife says I —
Gin death’s as shüre to men as killin’ is to kye,
Why God has filled the yearth sae fu’ o’ tasty things to pree.
— *It’s gey an’ easy speirin’*, says the beggar-wife to me.
O, I wad like to ken — to the beggar-wife says I —
The reason o’ the cause an’ the wherefore o’ the why,
Wi’ mony anither riddle brings the tear into my e’e.
— *It’s gey an’ easy speirin’*, says the beggar-wife to me.

VII

THE BLAST —

It’s rainin’. Weet’s the gairden sod,
Weet the lang roads whaur gangrels plod —
A maist unceevil thing o’ God
In mid July —
If ye’ll just curse the sneckdraw, dod!
An’ sae wull I!

He’s a braw place in Heev’n, ye ken,
An’ lea’s us puir, forjaskit men
Clamjamfried in the but and ben
He ca’s the earth —
A wee bit inconvenient den
No muckle worth;
An’ whiles, at orra times, keeks out,
Sees what puir mankind are about;
An’ if He can, I’ve little doubt,
Upsets their plans;
He hates a’ mankind, brainch and root,
An’ a’ that’s man’s.
An’ whiles, whan they tak’ heart again,
An’ life i’ the sun looks braw an’ plain,
Doun comes a jaw o’ droukin’ rain
Upon their honours —
God sends a spate out ower the plain,

Or mebbe thun’ers.
Lord safe us, life’s an unco thing!
Simmer and Winter, Yule an’ Spring,
The damned, dour-heartit seasons bring
A feck o’ trouble.
I wadna try ‘t to be a king —
No, nor for double.
But since we’re in it, willy-nilly,
We maun be watchfü’, wise an’ skilly,
An’ no’ mind ony ither billy,
Lassie nor God.
But drink — that’s my best counsel till ‘e;
Sae tak’ the nod.

VIII

THE COUNTERBLAST —

My bonny man, the warld, it’s true,
Was made for neither me nor you;
It’s just a place to warstle through,
As Job confessed o’t;
And aye the best that we’ll can do
Is mak’ the best o’t.
There’s rowth o’ wrang, I’m free to say:
The simmer brunt, the winter blae,
The face of earth a’ fyled wi’ clay
An’ dour wi’ chuckies,
An’ life a rough an’ land’art play
For country buckies.
An’ food’s anither name for clart;
An’ beasts an’ brambles bite an’ scart;
An’ what would WE be like, my heart!
If bared o’ claethin’?
— Aweel, I canna mend your cart:
It’s that or naethin’.
A feck o’ folk frae first to last
Have through this queer experience passed;
Twa-three, I ken, just damn an’ blast
The hale transaction;
But twa-three ithers, east an’ wast,
Fand satisfaction.
Whaur braid the briery muirs expand,

A waefü' an' a weary land,
The bumble-bees, a gowden band,
Are blithely hingin';
An' there the canty wanderer fand
The laverock singin'.

Trout in the burn grow great as herr'n';
The simple sheep can find their fair'n';
The winds blaws clean about the cairn
Wi' caller air;
The muircock an' the barefit bairn
Are happy there.
Sic-like the howes o' life to some:
Green loans whaur they ne'er fash their thumb,
But mark the muckle winds that come,
Soopin' an' cool,
Or hear the powrin' burnie drum
In the shilfa's pool.
The evil wi' the guid they tak';
They ca' a grey thing grey, no' black;
To a steigh brae a stubborn back
Addressin' daily;
An' up the rude, unbieldy track
O' life, gang gaily.
What you would like's a palace ha',
Or Sinday parlour dink an' braw
Wi' a' things ordered in a raw
By denty leddies.
Weel, then, ye canna hae't: that's a'
That to be said is.
An' since at life ye've ta'en the grue,
An' winna blithely hirsle through,
Ye've fund the very thing to do —
That's to drink speerit;
An' shüne we'll hear the last o' you —
An' blithe to hear it!

The shoon ye coft, the life ye lead,
Ithers will heir when aince ye're deid;
They'll heir your tasteless bite o' breid,
An' find it sappy;
They'll to your dulefü' house succeed,
An' there be happy.
As whan a glum an' fractious wean

Has sat an' sullened by his lane
Till, wi' a rowstin' skelp, he's ta'en
An' shoo'd to bed — —
The ither bairns a' fa' to play'n',
As gleg's a gled.

IX

THE COUNTERBLAST IRONICAL

It's strange that God should fash to frame
The yearth and lift sae hie,
An' clean forget to explain the same
To a gentleman like me.
Thae gusty, donnered ither folk,
Their weird they weel may dree;
But why present a pig in a poke
To a gentleman like me?
Thae ither folk their parritch eat
An' sup their sugared tea;
But the mind is no' to be wyled wi' meat
Wi' a gentleman like me.
Thae ither folk, they court their joes
At gloamin' on the lea;
But they're made of a commoner clay, I suppose,
Than a gentleman like me.

Thae ither folk, for richt or wrang,
They suffer, bleed, or dee;
But a' thir things are an emp'y sang
To a gentleman like me.
It's a different thing that I demand,
Tho' humble as can be —
A statement fair in my Maker's hand
To a gentleman like me:
A clear account writ fair an' broad,
An' a plain apologie;
Or the deevil a ceevil word to God
From a gentleman like me.

X

THEIR LAUREATE TO AN ACADEMY CLASS DINNER CLUB

Dear Thamson class, whaure’er I gang
It aye comes ower me wi’ a spang:
“Lordsake! thae Thamson lads — (deil hang
Or else Lord mend them!) —
An’ that wanchancy annual sang
I ne’er can send them!”
Straucht, at the name, a trusty tyke,
My conscience girrs ahint the dyke;
Straucht on my hinderlands I fyke
To find a rhyme t’ ye;
Pleased — although mebbe no’ pleased-like —
To gie my time t’ ye.

“*Weel,*” an’ says you, wi’ heavin’ breist,
“Sae far, sae guid, but what’s the neist?
Yearly we gather to the feast,
A’ hopefü’ men —
Yearly we skelloch ‘Hang the beast —
Nae sang again!’”
My lads, an’ what am I to say?
Ye shürely ken the Muse’s way:
Yestreen, as gleg’s a tyke — the day,
Thrawn like a cuddy:
Her conduc’, that to her’s a play,
Deith to a body.
Aft whan I sat an’ made my mane,
Aft whan I laboured burd-alane
Fishin’ for rhymes an’ findin’ nane,
Or nane were fit for ye —
Ye judged me cauld’s a chucky-stane —
No car’n’ a bit for ye!
But saw ye ne’er some pingein’ bairn
As weak as a pitaty-par’n’ —
Less üsed wi’ guidin’ horse-shoe aim
Than steerin’ crowdie —
Packed aff his lane, by moss an’ cairn,
To ca’ the howdie.
Wae’s me, for the puir callant than!

He wambles like a poke o' bran,
An' the lowse rein, as hard's he can,
Pu's, trem'lin' handit;
Till, blaff! upon his hinderlan'
Behauld him landit.

Sic-like — I awn the weary fac' —
Whan on my muse the gate I tak',
An' see her gleed e'e raxin' back
To keek ahint her; —
To me, the brig o' Heev'n gangs black
As blackest winter.
"Lordsake! we're aff," thinks I, *"but whaur?*
On what abhorred an' whinny scaur,
Or whammled in what sea o' glaur,
Will she desert me?
An' will she just disgrace? or waur —
Will she no' hurt me?"
Kittle the quære! But at least
The day I've backed the fashious beast,
While she, wi' mony a spang an' reist,
Flang heels ower bonnet;
An' a' triumphant — for your feast,
Hae! there's your sonnet!

XI

EMBRO HIE KIRK

The Lord Himsel' in former days
Waled out the proper tunes for praise
An' named the proper kind o' claes
For folk to preach in:
Preceese and in the chief o' ways
Important teachin'.
He ordered a' things late and air';
He ordered folk to stand at prayer
(Although I canna just mind where
He gave the warnin'),
An' pit pomatum on their hair
On Sabbath mornin'.

The hale o' life by His commands
Was ordered to a body's hands;

But see! this *corpus juris* stands
By a’ forgotten;
An’ God’s religion in a’ lands
Is deid an’ rotten.
While thus the lave o’ mankind’s lost,
O’ Scotland still God maks His boast —
Puir Scotland, on whase barren coast
A score or twa
Auld wives wi’ mutches an’ a hoast
Still keep His law.
In Scotland, a wheen canty, plain,
Douce, kintry-leevin’ folk retain
The Truth — or did so aince — alane
Of a’ men leevin’;
An’ noo just twa o’ them remain —
Just Begg an’ Niven.
For noo, unfaithfü’ to the Lord,
Auld Scotland joins the rebel horde;
Her human hymn-books on the board
She noo displays:
An’ Embro Hie Kirk’s been restored
In popish ways.
O *punctum temporis* for action
To a’ o’ the reformin’ faction,
If yet, by ony act or paction,
Thocht, word, or sermon,
This dark an’ damnable transaction
Micht yet determine!

For see — as Doctor Begg explains —
Hoo easy ‘t’s düne! a pickle weans,
Wha in the Hie Street gaither stanes
By his instruction,
The uncovenantit, pentit panes
Ding to destruction.
Up, Niven, or ower late — an’ dash
Laigh in the glaur that carnal hash;
Let spires and pews wi’ gran’ stramash
Thegither fa’;
The rumlin’ kist o’ whustles smash
In pieces sma’.
Noo choose ye out a walie hammer;
About the knottit buttress clam’er;
Alang the steep roof stoyt an’ stammer,

A gate mischancy;
On the aul’ spire, the bells’ hie cha’mer,
Dance your bit dancie.
Ding, devel, dunt, destroy, an’ ruin,
Wi’ carnal stanes the square bestrewn’,
Till your loud chaps frae Kyle to Fruin,
Frae Hell to Heeven,
Tell the guid wark that baith are doin’ —
Baith Begg an’ Niven.

XII

THE SCOTSMAN'S RETURN FROM ABROAD

IN A LETTER FROM MR. THOMSON TO MR. JOHNSTONE

In mony a foreign pairt I've been,
An' mony an unco ferlie seen,
Since, Mr. Johnstone, you and I,
Last walkit upon Cocklerye.

Wi' gleg, observant een, I pass't
By sea an' land, through East an' Wast,
And still in ilka age an' station
Saw naething but abomination.
In thir uncovenantit lands
The gangrel Scot uplifts his hands
At lack of a' sectarian füsh'n,
An' cauld religious destitütion.
He rins, puir man, frae place to place,
Tries a' their graceless means o' grace,
Preacher on preacher, kirk on kirk —
This yin a stot an' thon a stirk —
A bletherin' clan, no warth a preen.
As bad as Smith of Aiberdeen!
At last, across the weary faem,
Frae far, outlandish pairts I came.
On ilka side o' me I fand
Fresh tokens o' my native land.
Wi' whatna joy I hailed them a' —
The hill-taps standin' raw by raw,
The public-house, the Hielan' birks,
And a' the bonny U.P. kirks!
But maistly thee, the bluid o' Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk to John o' Groats!
The king o' drinks, as I conceive it,
Talisker, Isla, or Glenlivet!
For after years wi' a pockmantie
Frae Zanzibar to Alicante,
In mony a fash and sair affliction
I gie't as my sincere conviction —
Of a' their foreign tricks an' pliskies,
I maist abominate their whiskies.

Nae doot, themsel’s, they ken it weel,
An’ wi’ a hash o’ leemon peel,

And ice an’ siccan filth, they ettle
The stawsome kind o’ goo to settle
Sic wersh apothecary’s broos wi’
As Scotsmen scorn to fyle their moo’s wi’.
An’, man, I was a blithe hame-comer
Whan first I syndit out my rummer.
Ye should hae seen me then, wi’ care
The less important pairts prepare;
Syne, weel contentit wi’ it a’,
Pour in the speerits wi’ a jaw!
I didna drink, I didna speak, —
I only snowkit up the reek.
I was sae pleased therein to paidle,
I sat an’ plowtered wi’ my ladle.
An’ blithe was I, the morrow’s morn,
To daunder through the stookit corn,
And after a’ my strange mishanters
Sit doun amang my ain dissenters
An’, man, it was a joy to me
The pu’pit an’ the pews to see,
The pennies dirlin’ in the plate,
The elders lookin’ on in state;
An’ ‘mang the first, as it befell,
Wha should I see, sir, but yoursel’!
I was, and I will no’ deny it,
At the first gliff a hantle tryit
To see yoursel’ in sic a station —
It seemed a doubtfü’ dispensation.
The feelin’ was a mere digression;
For shüne I understood the session,
An’ mindin’ Aiken an’ M’Neil,
I wondered they had düne sae weel.
I saw I had mysel’ to blame;
For had I but remained at hame,

Aiblins — though no ava’ deservin’ ‘t —
They micht hae named your humble servant.
The kirk was filled, the door was steiked;
Up to the pu’pit aince I keeked;
I was mair pleased than I can tell —
It was the minister himsel’!

Proud, proud was I to see his face,
After sae lang awa’ frae grace.
Pleased as I was, I’m no’ denyin’
Some maitters were not edifyin’;
For first I fand — an’ here was news! —
Mere hymn-books cockin’ in the pews —
A humanised abomination,
Unfit for ony congregation.
Syne, while I still was on the tenter,
I scunnered at the new prezentor;
I thocht him gesterin’ an’ cauld —
A sair declension frae the auld.
Syne, as though a’ the faith was wreckit,
The prayer was not what I’d exspeckit.
Himsel’, as it appeared to me,
Was no’ the man he üsed to be.
But just as I was growin’ vext
He waled a maist judeecious text,
An’, launchin’ into his prelections,
Swoopt, wi’ a skirl, on a’ defections.
O what a gale was on my speerit
To hear the p’ints o’ doctrine clearit,
And a’ the horrors o’ damnation
Set furth wi’ faithfü’ ministration!
Nae shauchlin’ testimony here —
We were a’ damned, an’ that was clear.
I owned, wi’ gratitude an’ wonder,
He was a pleesure to sit under.

XIII

Late in the nicht in bed I lay,
The winds were at their weary play,
An’ tirlin’ wa’s an’ skirlin’ wae
Through Heev’n they battered; —
On-ding o’ hail, on-blaff o’ spray,
The tempest blattered.
The masoned house it dinled through;
It dung the ship, it cowped the coo;
The rankit aiks it overthrew,
Had braved a’ weathers;
The strang sea-gleds it took an’ blew
Awa’ like feethers.
The thrawes o’ fear on a’ were shed,

An’ the hair rose, an’ slumber fled,
An’ lichts were lit an’ prayers were said
Through a’ the kintry;
An’ the cauld terror clum in bed
Wi’ a’ an’ sindry.
To hear in the pit-mirk on hie
The brangled collieshangie flie,
The warl’, they thocht, wi’ land an’ sea,
Itsel’ wad cowpit;
An’ for auld airn, the smashed débris
By God be rowpit.
Meanwhile frae far Aldeboran
To folks wi’ talescopes in han’,
O’ ships that cowpit, winds that ran,
Nae sign was seen,
But the wee warl’ in sunshine span
As bricht’s a preen.

I, tae, by God’s especial grace,
Dwall denty in a bieldy place,
Wi’ hosened feet, wi’ shaven face,
Wi’ dacent mainners:
A grand example to the race
O’ tautit sinners!
The wind may blaw, the heathen rage,
The deil may start on the rampage; —
The sick in bed, the thief in cage —
What’s a’ to me?
Cosh in my house, a sober sage,
I sit an’ see.
An’ whiles the bluid spangs to my bree,
To lie sae saft, to live sae free,
While better men maun do an’ die
In unco places.
“*Whaur’s God?*” I cry, an’ “*Whae is me
To hae sic graces?*”
I mind the fecht the sailors keep,
But fire or can’le, rest or sleep,
In darkness an’ the muckle deep;
An’ mind beside
The herd that on the hills o’ sheep
Has wandered wide.
I mind me on the hoastin’ weans —
The penny joes on causey-stanes —

The auld folk wi’ the crazy banes,
Baith auld an’ puir,
That aye maun thole the winds an’ rains
An’ labour sair.

An’ whiles I’m kind o’ pleased a blink,
An’ kind o’ fleyed forby, to think,
For a’ my rowth o’ meat an’ drink
An’ waste o’ crumb,
I’ll mebbe have to thole wi’ skink
In Kingdom Come.
For God whan jowes the Judgment bell
Wi’ His ain Hand, His Leevin’ Sel’,
Sall ryve the guid (as Prophets tell)
Frae them that had it;
And in the reamin’ pat o’ Hell,
The rich be scaddit.
O Lord, if this indeed be sae,
Let daw’ that sair an’ happy day!
Again the warl’, grawn auld an’ grey,
Up wi’ your aixe!
An’ let the puir enjoy their play —
I’ll thole my paiks.

XIV

MY CONSCIENCE!

Of a’ the ills that flesh can fear,
The loss o’ frien’s, the lack o’ gear,
A yowlin’ tyke, a glandered mear,
A lassie’s nonsense —
There’s just ae thing I canna bear,
An’ that’s my conscience.
Whan day (an’ a’ excüse) has gane,
An’ wark is düne, and duty’s plain,
An’ to my chalmer a’ my lane
I creep apairt,
My conscience! hoo the yammerin’ pain
Stends to my heart!

A’ day wi’ various ends in view,
The hairsts o’ time I had to pu’,
An’ made a hash wad staw a soo,

Let be a man! —
My conscience! whan my han’s were fu’,
Whaur were ye than?
An’ there were a’ the lures o’ life,
There pleesure skirlin’ on the fife,
There anger, wi’ the hotchin’ knife
Ground shairp in Hell —
My conscience! — you that’s like a wife! —
Whaur was yoursel’?
I ken it fine: just waitin’ here,
To gar the evil waur appear,
To clart the guid, confüse the clear,
Misca’ the great,
My conscience! an’ to raise a steer
Whan a’s ower late.
Sic-like, some tyke grawn auld and blind,
Whan thieves brok’ through the gear to p’ind,
Has lain his dozened length an’ grinned
At the disaster;
An’ the morn’s mornin’, wud’s the wind,
Yokes on his master.

XV

TO DOCTOR JOHN BROWN

Whan the dear doctor, dear to a’,
Was still among us here belaw,
I set my pipes his praise to blaw
Wi’ a’ my speerit;
But noo, dear doctor! he’s awa’
An’ ne’er can hear it.
By Lyne and Tyne, by Thames and Tees,
By a’ the various river Dee’s,
In Mars and Manors ‘yont the seas
Or here at hame,
Whaure’er there’s kindly folk to please,
They ken your name.
They ken your name, they ken your tyke,
They ken the honey from your byke;
But mebbe after a’ your fyke,
(The trüth to tell)
It’s just your honest Rab they like,

An’ no’ yoursel’.
As at the gowff, some canny play’r
Should tee a common ba’ wi’ care —
Should flourish and deleever fair
His souple shintie —
An’ the ba’ rise into the air,
A leevin’ lintie:
Sae in the game we writers play,
There comes to some a bonny day,
When a dear ferlie shall repay
Their years o’ strife,
An’ like your Rab, their things o’ clay
Spreid wings o’ life.

Ye scarce deserved it, I’m afraid —
You that had never learned the trade,
But just some idle mornin’ strayed
Into the schüle,
An’ picked the fiddle up an’ played
Like Neil himsel’.
Your e’e was gleg, your fingers dink;
Ye didna fash yoursel’ to think,
But wove, as fast as puss can link,
Your denty wab: —
Ye stapped your pen into the ink,
An’ there was Rab!
Sinsyne, whaure’er your fortune lay
By dowie den, by canty brae,
Simmer an’ winter, nicht an’ day,
Rab was aye wi’ ye;
An’ a’ the folk on a’ the way
Were blithe to see ye.
O sir, the gods are kind indeed,
An’ hauld ye for an honoured heid,
That for a wee bit clarkit screed
Sae weel reward ye,
An’ lend — puir Rabbie bein’ deid —
His ghaist to guard ye.
For though, whaure’er yoursel’ may be,
We’ve just to turn an’ glisk a wee,
An’ Rab at heel we’re shüre to see
Wi’ gladsome caper: —
The bogle of a bogle, he —
A ghaist o’ paper!

And as the auld-farrant hero sees
In Hell a bogle Hercules,
Pit there the lesser deid to please,
While he himsel'
Dwalls wi' the muckle gods at ease
Far raised frae Hell:
Sae the true Rabbie far has gane
On kindlier business o' his ain
Wi' aulder frien's; an' his breist-bane
An' stumpie tailie,
He birstles at a new hearth-stane
By James and Ailie.

XVI

It's an owercome sooth for age an' youth,
And it brooks wi' nae denial,
That the dearest friends are the auldest friends,
And the young are just on trial.
There's a rival bauld wi' young an' auld,
And it's him that has bereft me;
For the sürest friends are the auldest friends,
And the maist o' mine's hae left me.
There are kind hearts still, for friends to fill
And fools to take and break them;
But the nearest friends are the auldest friends,
And the grave's the place to seek them.

BALLADS

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THE SONG OF RAHÉRO: A LEGEND OF TAHITI

TO
ORI A ORI
Ori, my brother in the island mode,
In every tongue and meaning much my friend,
This story of your country and your clan,
In your loved house, your too much honoured guest,
I made in English. Take it, being done;
And let me sign it with the name you gave.
TERIITERA.

I

THE SLAYING OF TÁMATÉA

It fell in the days of old, as the men of Taiárapu tell,
A youth went forth to the fishing, and fortune favoured him well.
Támatéa his name: gullible, simple, and kind.
Comely of countenance, nimble of body, empty of mind,
His mother ruled him and loved him beyond the wont of a wife,
Serving the lad for eyes and living herself in his life.
Alone from the sea and the fishing came Támatéa the fair,
Urging his boat to the beach, and the mother awaited him there.
— ”Long may you live!” said she. “Your fishing has sped to a wish.
And now let us choose for the king the fairest of all your fish.
For fear inhabits the palace and grudging grows in the land,
Marked is the sluggardly foot and marked the niggardly hand,
The hours and the miles are counted, the tributes numbered and weighed,
And woe to him that comes short, and woe to him that delayed!”

So spoke on the beach the mother, and counselled the wiser thing.
For Rahéro stirred in the country and secretly mined the king.
Nor were the signals wanting of how the leaven wrought,
In the cords of obedience loosed and the tributes grudgingly brought.
And when last to the temple of Oro the boat with the victim sped,
And the priest uncovered the basket and looked on the face of the dead,
Trembling fell upon all at sight of an ominous thing,
For there was the aito dead, and he of the house of the king.
So spake on the beach the mother, matter worthy of note,
And wattled a basket well, and chose a fish from the boat;
And Támatéa the pliable shouldered the basket and went,
And travelled, and sang as he travelled, a lad that was well content.
Still the way of his going was round by the roaring coast,
Where the ring of the reef is broke and the trades run riot the most.
On his left, with smoke as of battle, the billows battered the land;
Unscalable, turreted mountains rose on the inner hand.
And cape, and village, and river, and vale, and mountain above,
Each had a name in the land for men to remember and love;
And never the name of a place, but lo! a song in its praise:
Ancient and unforgotten, songs of the earlier days
That the elders taught to the young, and at night, in the full of the moon,
Garlanded boys and maidens sang together in tune.

Támatéa the placable went with a lingering foot;
He sang as loud as a bird, he whistled hoarse as a flute;
He broiled in the sun, he breathed in the grateful shadow of trees,
In the icy stream of the rivers he waded over the knees;
And still in his empty mind crowded, a thousand-fold,
The deeds of the strong and the songs of the cunning heroes of old.
And now was he come to a place Taiárapu honoured the most,
Where a silent valley of woods debouched on the noisy coast,
Spewing a level river. There was a haunt of Pai.
There, in his potent youth, when his parents drove him to die,
Honoura lived like a beast, lacking the lamp and the fire,
Washed by the rains of the trade and clotting his hair in the mire;
And there, so mighty his hands, he bent the tree to his foot —
So keen the spur of his hunger, he plucked it naked of fruit.
There, as she pondered the clouds for the shadow of coming ills,
Ahupu, the woman of song, walked on high on the hills.
Of these was Rahéro sprung, a man of a godly race;
And inherited cunning of spirit, and beauty of body and face.
Of yore in his youth, as an aito, Rahéro wandered the land,
Delighting maids with his tongue, smiting men with his hand.
Famous he was in his youth; but before the midst of his life
Paused, and fashioned a song of farewell to glory and strife.

House of mine (it went), *house upon the sea,*
Belov’d of all my fathers, more belov’d by me!
Vale of the strong Honoura, deep ravine of Pai,
Again in your woody summits I hear the trade-wind cry.
House of mine, in your walls, strong sounds the sea,
Of all sounds on earth, dearest sound to me.
I have heard the applause of men, I have heard it arise and die:
Sweeter now in my house I hear the trade-wind cry.
These were the words of his singing, other the thought of his heart;
For secret desire of glory vexed him, dwelling apart.
Lazy and crafty he was, and loved to lie in the sun,
And loved the cackle of talk and the true word uttered in fun;
Lazy he was, his roof was ragged, his table was lean,
And the fish swam safe in his sea, and he gathered the near and the green.
He sat in his house and laughed, but he loathed the king of the land,
And he uttered the grudging word under the covering hand.
Treason spread from his door; and he looked for a day to come,
A day of the crowding people, a day of the summoning drum,
When the vote should be taken, the king be driven forth in disgrace,

And Rahéro, the laughing and lazy, sit and rule in his place.
Here Támatéa came, and beheld the house on the brook;
And Rahéro was there by the way and covered an oven to cook.

Naked he was to the loins, but the tattoo covered the lack,
And the sun and the shadow of palms dappled his muscular back.
Swiftly he lifted his head at the fall of the coming feet,
And the water sprang in his mouth with a sudden desire of meat:
For he marked the basket carried, covered from flies and the sun;
And Rahéro buried his fire, but the meat in his house was done.
Forth he stepped; and took, and delayed the boy, by the hand;
And vaunted the joys of meat and the ancient ways of the land:
— ”Our sires of old in Taiárapu, they that created the race,
Ate ever with eager hand, nor regarded season or place,
Ate in the boat at the oar, on the way afoot; and at night
Arose in the midst of dreams to rummage the house for a bite.
It is good for the youth in his turn to follow the way of the sire;
And behold how fitting the time! for here do I cover my fire.”
— ”I see the fire for the cooking, but never the meat to cook,”
Said Támatéa. — ”Tut!” said Rahéro. “Here in the brook,
And there in the tumbling sea, the fishes are thick as flies,
Hungry like healthy men, and like pigs for savour and size:
Crayfish crowding the river, sea-fish thronging the sea.”
— ”Well, it may be,” says the other, “and yet be nothing to me.
Fain would I eat, but alas! I have needful matter in hand,
Since I carry my tribute of fish to the jealous king of the land.”

Now at the word a light sprang in Rahéro’s eyes.
“I will gain me a dinner,” thought he, “and lend the king a surprise.”
And he took the lad by the arm, as they stood by the side of the track,
And smiled, and rallied, and flattered, and pushed him forward and back.
It was “You that sing like a bird, I never have heard you sing,”
And “The lads when I was a lad were none so feared of a king.
And of what account is an hour, when the heart is empty of guile?
But come, and sit in the house and laugh with the women awhile;
And I will but drop my hook, and behold! the dinner made.”
So Támatéa the pliable hung up his fish in the shade
On a tree by the side of the way; and Rahéro carried him in,
Smiling as smiles the fowler when flutters the bird to the gin,
And chose him a shining hook, and viewed it with sedulous eye,
And breathed and burnished it well on the brawn of his naked thigh,
And set a mat for the gull, and bade him be merry and bide,
Like a man concerned for his guest, and the fishing, and nothing

beside.
Now when Rahéro was forth, he paused and hearkened, and heard
The gull jest in the house and the women laugh at his word;

And stealthily crossed to the side of the way, to the shady place
Where the basket hung on a mango; and craft transfigured his face.
Deftly he opened the basket, and took of the fat of the fish,
The cut of kings and chieftains, enough for a goodly dish.
This he wrapped in a leaf, set on the fire to cook,
And buried; and next the marred remains of the tribute he took,
And doubled and packed them well, and covered the basket close.
— ”There is a buffet, my king,” quoth he, “and a nauseous dose!” —
And hung the basket again in the shade, in a cloud of flies;
— ”And there is a sauce to your dinner, king of the crafty eyes!”
Soon as the oven was open, the fish smelt excellent good.
In the shade, by the house of Rahéro, down they sat to their food,
And cleared the leaves, in silence, or uttered a jest and laughed
And raising the cocoa-nut bowls, buried their faces and quaffed.
But chiefly in silence they ate; and soon as the meal was done,
Rahéro feigned to remember and measured the hour by the sun
And “Támatéa,” quoth he, “it is time to be jogging, my lad.”
So Támatéa arose, doing ever the thing he was bade,
And carelessly shouldered the basket, and kindly saluted his host;
And again the way of his going was round by the roaring coast.

Long he went; and at length was aware of a pleasant green,
And the stems and shadows of palms, and roofs of lodges between.
There sate, in the door of his palace, the king on a kingly seat,
And aitos stood armed around, and the yottowas sat at his feet.
But fear was a worm in his heart: fear darted his eyes;
And he probed men’s faces for treasons and pondered their speech for lies.
To him came Támatéa, the basket slung in his hand,
And paid him the due obeisance standing as vassals stand.
In silence hearkened the king, and closed the eyes in his face,
Harbouring odious thoughts and the baseless fears of the base;
In silence accepted the gift and sent the giver away.
So Támatéa departed, turning his back on the day.
And lo! as the king sat brooding, a rumour rose in the crowd;
The yottowas nudged and whispered, the commons murmured aloud;
Tittering fell upon all at sight of the impudent thing,
At the sight of a gift unroyal flung in the face of a king.
And the face of the king turned white and red with anger and shame
In their midst; and the heart in his body was water and then was

flame;
Till of a sudden, turning, he gripped an aito hard,
A youth that stood with his ómare, one of the daily guard,
And spat in his ear a command, and pointed and uttered a name,
And hid in the shade of the house his impotent anger and shame.

Now Támatéa the fool was far on his homeward way,
The rising night in his face, behind him the dying day.
Rahéro saw him go by, and the heart of Rahéro was glad,
Devising shame to the king and nowise harm to the lad;
And all that dwelt by the way saw and saluted him well,
For he had the face of a friend and the news of the town to tell;
And pleased with the notice of folk, and pleased that his journey was done,
Támatéa drew homeward, turning his back to the sun.
And now was the hour of the bath in Taiárapu: far and near
The lovely laughter of bathers rose and delighted his ear.
Night massed in the valleys; the sun on the mountain coast
Struck, end-long; and above the clouds embattled their host,
And glowed and gloomed on the heights; and the heads of the palms were gems,
And far to the rising eve extended the shade of their stems;
And the shadow of Támatéa hovered already at home.
And sudden the sound of one coming and running light as the foam
Struck on his ear; and he turned, and lo! a man on his track,
Girded and armed with an ómare, following hard at his back.
At a bound the man was upon him; — and, or ever a word was said,
The loaded end of the ómare fell and laid him dead.

II

THE VENGING OF TÁMATÉA

Thus was Rahéro's treason; thus and no further it sped.
The king sat safe in his place and a kindly fool was dead.
But the mother of Támatéa arose with death in her eyes.
All night long, and the next, Taiárapu rang with her cries.
As when a babe in the wood turns with a chill of doubt
And perceives nor home, nor friends, for the trees have closed her about,
The mountain rings and her breast is torn with the voice of despair:
So the lion-like woman idly wearied the air
For a while, and pierced men's hearing in vain, and wounded their

hearts.
But as when the weather changes at sea, in dangerous parts,
And sudden the hurricane wrack unrolls up the front of the sky,
At once the ship lies idle, the sails hang silent on high,
The breath of the wind that blew is blown out like the flame of a lamp,
And the silent armies of death draw near with inaudible tramp:
So sudden, the voice of her weeping ceased; in silence she rose
And passed from the house of her sorrow, a woman clothed with repose,
Carrying death in her breast and sharpening death in her hand.
Hither she went and thither in all the coasts of the land.
They tell that she feared not to slumber alone, in the dead of night,
In accursed places; beheld, unblenched, the ribbon of light

Spin from temple to temple; guided the perilous skiff,
Abhorred not the paths of the mountain and trod the verge of the cliff;
From end to end of the island, thought not the distance long,
But forth from king to king carried the tale of her wrong.
To king after king, as they sat in the palace door, she came,
Claiming kinship, declaiming verses, naming her name
And the names of all of her fathers; and still, with a heart on the rack,
Jested to capture a hearing and laughed when they jested back;
So would deceive them a while, and change and return in a breath,
And on all the men of Vaiau imprecate instant death;
And tempt her kings — for Vaiau was a rich and prosperous land,
And flatter — for who would attempt it but warriors mighty of hand?
And change in a breath again and rise in a strain of song,
Invoking the beaten drums, beholding the fall of the strong,
Calling the fowls of the air to come and feast on the dead.
And they held the chin in silence, and heard her, and shook the head;
For they knew the men of Taiárapu famous in battle and feast,
Marvellous eaters and smiters: the men of Vaiau not least.
To the land of the Námunu-úra, to Paea, at length she came,
To men who were foes to the Tevas and hated their race and name.
There was she well received, and spoke with Hiopa the king.
And Hiopa listened, and weighed, and wisely considered the thing.

“Here in the back of the isle we dwell in a sheltered place,”
Quoth he to the woman, “in quiet, a weak and peaceable race.
But far in the teeth of the wind lofty Taiárapu lies;
Strong blows the wind of the trade on its seaward face, and cries
Aloud in the top of arduous mountains, and utters its song
In green continuous forests. Strong is the wind, and strong

And fruitful and hardy the race, famous in battle and feast,
Marvellous eaters and smiters: the men of Vaiau not least.
Now hearken to me, my daughter, and hear a word of the wise:
How a strength goes linked with a weakness, two by two, like the eyes.
They can wield the ómare well and cast the javelin far;
Yet are they greedy and weak as the swine and the children are.
Plant we, then, here at Paea a garden of excellent fruits;
Plant we bananas and kava and taro, the king of roots;
Let the pigs in Paea be tapu and no man fish for a year;
And of all the meat in Tahiti gather we threefold here.
So shall the fame of our plenty fill the island and so,
At last, on the tongue of rumour, go where we wish it to go.
Then shall the pigs of Taiárapu raise their snouts in the air;
But we sit quiet and wait, as the fowler sits by the snare,
And tranquilly fold our hands, till the pigs come nosing the food:
But meanwhile build us a house of Trotéa, the stubborn wood,

Bind it with incombustible thongs, set a roof to the room,
Too strong for the hands of a man to dissever or fire to consume;
And there, when the pigs come trotting, there shall the feast be spread,
There shall the eye of the morn enlighten the feasters dead.
So be it done; for I have a heart that pities your state,
And Nateva and Námunu-úra are fire and water for hate.”
All was done as he said, and the gardens prospered; and now
The fame of their plenty went out, and word of it came to Vaiau.
For the men of Námunu-úra sailed, to the windward far,
Lay in the offing by south where the towns of the Tevas are,
And cast overboard of their plenty; and lo! at the Tevas’ feet
The surf on all the beaches tumbled treasures of meat.
In the salt of the sea, a harvest tossed with the refluent foam;
And the children gleaned it in playing, and ate and carried it home;
And the elders stared and debated, and wondered and passed the jest,
But whenever a guest came by eagerly questioned the guest;
And little by little, from one to another, the word went round:
“In all the borders of Paea the victual rots on the ground,
And swine are plenty as rats. And now, when they fare to the sea,
The men of the Námunu-úra glean from under the tree
And load the canoe to the gunwale with all that is toothsome to eat;
And all day long on the sea the jaws are crushing the meat,

The steersman eats at the helm, the rowers munch at the oar,
And at length, when their bellies are full, overboard with the store!”

Now was the word made true, and soon as the bait was bare,
All the pigs of Taiárapu raised their snouts in the air.
Songs were recited, and kinship was counted, and tales were told
How war had severed of late but peace had cemented of old
The clans of the island. “To war,” said they, “now set we an end,
And hie to the Námunu-úra even as a friend to a friend.”
So judged, and a day was named; and soon as the morning broke,
Canoes were thrust in the sea, and the houses emptied of folk.
Strong blew the wind of the south, the wind that gathers the clan;
Along all the line of the reef the clamorous surges ran;
And the clouds were piled on the top of the island mountain-high,
A mountain throned on a mountain. The fleet of canoes swept by
In the midst, on the green lagoon, with a crew released from care,
Sailing an even water, breathing a summer air,
Cheered by a cloudless sun; and ever to left and right,
Bursting surge on the reef, drenching storms on the height.
So the folk of Vaiau sailed and were glad all day,
Coasting the palm-tree cape and crossing the populous bay
By all the towns of the Tevas; and still as they bowled along,
Boat would answer to boat with jest and laughter and song,

And the people of all the towns trooped to the sides of the sea,
And gazed from under the hand or sprang aloft on the tree
Hailing and cheering. Time failed them for more to do;
The holiday village careened to the wind, and was gone from view
Swift as a passing bird; and ever as onward it bore,
Like the cry of the passing bird, bequeathed its song to the shore —
Desirable laughter of maids and the cry of delight of the child.
And the gazer, left behind, stared at the wake and smiled.
By all the towns of the Tevas they went, and Pápara last,
The home of the chief, the place of muster in war; and passed
The march of the lands of the clan, to the lands of an alien folk.
And there, from the dusk of the shoreside palms, a column of smoke
Mounted and wavered and died in the gold of the setting sun,
“Paea!” they cried. “It is Paea.” And so was the voyage done.
In the early fall of the night Hiopa came to the shore,
And beheld and counted the comers, and lo, they were forty score;
The pelting feet of the babes that ran already and played,
The clean-lipped smile of the boy, the slender breasts of the maid,
And mighty limbs of women, stalwart mothers of men.
The sires stood forth unabashed; but a little back from his ken

Clustered the scarcely nubile, the lads and maids, in a ring,
Fain of each other, afraid of themselves, aware of the king

And aping behaviour, but clinging together with hands and eyes,
With looks that were kind like kisses, and laughter tender as sighs.
There, too, the grandsire stood, raising his silver crest,
And the impotent hands of a suckling groped in his barren breast.
The childhood of love, the pair well married, the innocent brood,
The tale of the generations repeated and ever renewed —
Hiopa beheld them together, all the ages of man,
And a moment shook in his purpose.
But these were the foes of his clan,
And he trod upon pity, and came, and civilly greeted the king,
And gravely entreated Rahéro; and for all that could fight or sing,
And claimed a name in the land, had fitting phrases of praise:
But with all who were well-descended he spoke of the ancient days.
And "'Tis true," said he, "that in Paea the victual rots on the ground;
But, friends, your number is many; and pigs must be hunted and found,
And the lads must troop to the mountains to bring the féis down,
And around the bowls of the kava cluster the maids of the town.
So, for to-night, sleep here; but king, common, and priest
To-morrow, in order due, shall sit with me in the feast."

Sleepless the live-long night, Hiopa's followers toiled.
The pigs screamed and were slaughtered; the spars of the guest-house oiled,
The leaves spread on the floor. In many a mountain glen
The moon drew shadows of trees on the naked bodies of men
Plucking and bearing fruits; and in all the bounds of the town
Red glowed the cocoa-nut fires, and were buried and trodden down.
Thus did seven of the yottowas toil with their tale of the clan,
But the eighth wrought with his lads, hid from the sight of man.
In the deeps of the woods they laboured, piling the fuel high
In fagots, the load of a man, fuel seasoned and dry,
Thirsty to seize upon fire and apt to blurt into flame.
And now was the day of the feast. The forests, as morning came,
Tossed in the wind, and the peaks quaked in the blaze of the day —
And the cocoa-nuts showered on the ground, rebounding and rolling away:
A glorious morn for a feast, a famous wind for a fire.
To the hall of feasting Hiopa led them, mother and sire
And maid and babe in a tale, the whole of the holiday throng.
Smiling they came, garlanded green, not dreaming of wrong;
And for every three, a pig, tenderly cooked in the ground,
Waited; and féi, the staff of life, heaped in a mound
For each where he sat; — for each, bananas roasted and raw

Piled with a bountiful hand, as for horses hay and straw
Are stacked in a stable; and fish, the food of desire,

And plentiful vessels of sauce, and bread-fruit gilt in the fire; —
And kava was common as water. Feasts have there been ere now,
And many, but never a feast like that of the folk of Vaiau.
All day long they ate with the resolute greed of brutes,
And turned from the pigs to the fish, and again from the fish to the fruits,
And emptied the vessels of sauce, and drank of the kava deep;
Till the young lay stupid as stones, and the strongest nodded to sleep.
Sleep that was mighty as death and blind as a moonless night
Tethered them hand and foot; and their souls were drowned, and the light
Was cloaked from their eyes. Senseless together, the old and the young,
The fighter deadly to smite and the prater cunning of tongue,
The woman wedded and fruitful, inured to the pangs of birth,
And the maid that knew not of kisses, blindly sprawled on the earth.
From the hall Hiopa the king and his chiefs came stealthily forth.
Already the sun hung low and enlightened the peaks of the north;
But the wind was stubborn to die and blew as it blows at morn,
Showering the nuts in the dusk, and e’en as a banner is torn,
High on the peaks of the island, shattered the mountain cloud.
And now at once, at a signal, a silent, emulous crowd

Set hands to the work of death, hurrying to and fro,
Like ants, to furnish the fagots, building them broad and low,
And piling them high and higher around the walls of the hall.
Silence persisted within, for sleep lay heavy on all
But the mother of Támatéa stood at Hiopa’s side,
And shook for terror and joy like a girl that is a bride,
Night fell on the toilers, and first Hiopa the wise
Made the round of the hose, visiting all with his eyes;
And all was piled to the eaves, and fuel blockaded the door;
And within, in the house beleaguered, slumbered the forty score.
Then was an aito despatched and came with fire in his hand,
And Hiopa took it. — ”Within,” said he, “is the life of a land;
And behold! I breathe on the coal, I breathe on the dales of the east,
And silence falls on forest and shore; the voice of the feast
Is quenched, and the smoke of cooking; the roof-tree decays and falls
On the empty lodge, and the winds subvert deserted walls.”
Therewithal, to the fuel, he laid the glowing coal;
And the redness ran in the mass and burrowed within like a mole,

And copious smoke was conceived. But, as when a dam is to burst,
The water lips it and crosses in silver trickles at first,
And then, of a sudden, whelms and bears it away forthright;
So now, in a moment, the flame sprang and towered in the night,

And wrestled and roared in the wind, and high over house and tree,
Stood, like a streaming torch, enlightening land and sea.
But the mother of Támatéa threw her arms abroad,
“Pyre of my son,” she shouted, “debited vengeance of God,
Late, late, I behold you, yet I behold you at last,
And glory, beholding! For now are the days of my agony past,
The lust that famished my soul now eats and drinks its desire,
And they that encompassed my son shrivel alive in the fire.
Tenfold precious the vengeance that comes after lingering years!
Ye quenched the voice of my singer? — hark, in your dying ears,
The song of the conflagration! Ye left me a widow alone?
— Behold, the whole of your race consumes, sinew and bone
And torturing flesh together: man, mother, and maid
Heaped in a common shambles; and already, borne by the trade,
The smoke of your dissolution darkens the stars of night.”
Thus she spoke, and her stature grew in the people’s sight.

III

RAHÉRO

Rahéro was there in the hall asleep: beside him his wife,
Comely, a mirthful woman, one that delighted in life;
And a girl that was ripe for marriage, shy and sly as a mouse;
And a boy, a climber of trees: all the hopes of his house.
Unwary, with open hands, he slept in the midst of his folk,
And dreamed that he heard a voice crying without, and awoke,
Leaping blindly afoot like one from a dream that he fears.
A hellish glow and clouds were about him; — it roared in his ears
Like the sound of the cataract fall that plunges sudden and steep;
And Rahéro swayed as he stood, and his reason was still asleep.
Now the flame struck hard on the house, wind-wielded, a fracturing blow,
And the end of the roof was burst and fell on the sleepers below;
And the lofty hall, and the feast, and the prostrate bodies of folk,
Shone red in his eyes a moment, and then were swallowed of smoke.
In the mind of Rahéro clearness came; and he opened his throat;
And as when a squall comes sudden, the straining sail of a boat

Thunders aloud and bursts, so thundered the voice of the man.
— ”The wind and the rain!” he shouted, the mustering word of the clan,
And “Up!” and “To arms, men of Vaiau!” But silence replied,
Or only the voice of the gusts of the fire, and nothing beside.
Rahéro stooped and groped. He handled his womankind,
But the fumes of the fire and the kava had quenched the life of their mind,
And they lay like pillars prone; and his hand encountered the boy,
And there sprang in the gloom of his soul a sudden lightning of joy.
“Him can I save!” he thought, “if I were speedy enough.”
And he loosened the cloth from his loins, and swaddled the child in the stuff:
And about the strength of his neck he knotted the burden well.
There where the roof had fallen, it roared like the mouth of hell.
Thither Rahéro went, stumbling on senseless folk,
And grappled a post of the house, and began to climb in the smoke:
The last alive of Vaiau; and the son borne by the sire.
The post glowed in the grain with ulcers of eating fire,
And the fire bit to the blood and mangled his hands and thighs;
And the fumes sang in his head like wine and stung in his eyes;
And still he climbed, and came to the top, the place of proof,
And thrust a hand through the flame, and clambered alive on the roof.

But even as he did so, the wind, in a garment of flames and pain,
Wrapped him from head to heel; and the waistcloth parted in twain;
And the living fruit of his loins dropped in the fire below.
About the blazing feast-house clustered the eyes of the foe,
Watching, hand upon weapon, lest ever a soul should flee,
Shading the brow from the glare, straining the neck to see.
Only, to leeward, the flames in the wind swept far and wide,
And the forest sputtered on fire; and there might no man abide.
Thither Rahéro crept, and dropped from the burning eaves,
And crouching low to the ground, in a treble covert of leaves
And fire and volleying smoke, ran for the life of his soul
Unseen; and behind him under a furnace of ardent coal,
Cairned with a wonder of flame, and blotting the night with smoke,
Blazed and were smelted together the bones of all his folk.
He fled unguided at first; but hearing the breakers roar,
Thitherward shaped his way, and came at length to the shore.
Sound-limbed he was: dry-eyed; but smarted in every part;
And the mighty cage of his ribs heaved on his straining heart
With sorrow and rage. And “Fools!” he cried, “fools of Vaiau,

Heads of swine — gluttons — Alas! and where are they now?
Those that I played with, those that nursed me, those that I nursed?
God, and I outliving them! I, the least and the worst —

I, that thought myself crafty, snared by this herd of swine,
In the tortures of hell and desolate, stripped of all that was mine:
All! — my friends and my fathers — the silver heads of yore
That trooped to the council, the children that ran to the open door
Crying with innocent voices and clasping a father's knees!
And mine, my wife — my daughter — my sturdy climber of trees,
Ah, never to climb again!"
Thus in the dusk of the night
(For clouds rolled in the sky and the moon was swallowed from sight),
Pacing and gnawing his fists, Rahéro raged by the shore.
Vengeance: that must be his. But much was to do before;
And first a single life to be snatched from a deadly place,
A life, the root of revenge, surviving plant of the race:
And next the race to be raised anew, and the lands of the clan
Repeopled. So Rahéro designed, a prudent man
Even in wrath, and turned for the means of revenge and escape:
A boat to be seized by stealth, a wife to be taken by rape.
Still was the dark lagoon; beyond on the coral wall,
He saw the breakers shine, he heard them bellow and fall.
Alone, on the top of the reef, a man with a flaming brand
Walked, gazing and pausing, a fish-spear poised in his hand.
The foam boiled to his calf when the mightier breakers came,
And the torch shed in the wind scattering tufts of flame
Afar on the dark lagoon a canoe lay idly at wait:
A figure dimly guiding it: surely the fisherman's mate.

Rahéro saw and he smiled. He straightened his mighty thews:
Naked, with never a weapon, and covered with scorch and bruise,
He straightened his arms, he filled the void of his body with breath,
And, strong as the wind in his manhood, doomed the fisher to death.
Silent he entered the water, and silently swam, and came
There where the fisher walked, holding on high the flame.
Loud on the pier of the reef volleyed the breach of the sea;
And hard at the back of the man, Rahéro crept to his knee
On the coral, and suddenly sprang and seized him, the elder hand
Clutching the joint of his throat, the other snatching the brand
Ere it had time to fall, and holding it steady and high.
Strong was the fisher, brave, and swift of mind and of eye —
Strongly he threw in the clutch; but Rahéro resisted the strain,
And jerked, and the spine of life snapped with a crack in twain,

And the man came slack in his hands and tumbled a lump at his feet.
One moment: and there, on the reef, where the breakers whitened and beat,
Rahéro was standing alone, glowing, and scorched and bare,
A victor unknown of any, raising the torch in the air.
But once he drank of his breath, and instantly set him to fish
Like a man intent upon supper at home and a savoury dish.

For what should the woman have seen? A man with a torch — and then
A moment's blur of the eyes — and a man with a torch again.
And the torch had scarcely been shaken. "Ah, surely," Rahéro said,
"She will deem it a trick of the eyes, a fancy born in the head;
But time must be given the fool to nourish a fool's belief."
So for a while, a sedulous fisher, he walked the reef,
Pausing at times and gazing, striking at times with the spear:
— Lastly, uttered the call; and even as the boat drew near,
Like a man that was done with its use, tossed the torch in the sea.
Lightly he leaped on the boat beside the woman; and she
Lightly addressed him, and yielded the paddle and place to sit;
For now the torch was extinguished the night was black as the pit.
Rahéro set him to row, never a word he spoke,
And the boat sang in the water urged by his vigorous stroke.
— "What ails you?" the woman asked, "and why did you drop the brand?
We have only to kindle another as soon as we come to land."
Never a word Rahéro replied, but urged the canoe.
And a chill fell on the woman. — "Atta! speak! is it you?
Speak! Why are you silent? Why do you bend aside?
Wherefore steer to the seaward?" thus she panted and cried.
Never a word from the oarsman, toiling there in the dark;
But right for a gate of the reef he silently headed the bark,

And wielding the single paddle with passionate sweep on sweep,
Drove her, the little fitted, forth on the open deep.
And fear, there where she sat, froze the woman to stone:
Not fear of the crazy boat and the weltering deep alone;
But a keener fear of the night, the dark, and the ghostly hour,
And the thing that drove the canoe with more than a mortal's power
And more than a mortal's boldness. For much she knew of the dead
That haunt and fish upon reefs, toiling, like men, for bread,
And traffic with human fishers, or slay them and take their ware,
Till the hour when the star of the dead goes down, and the morning air

Blows, and the cocks are singing on shore. And surely she knew
The speechless thing at her side belonged to the grave.
It blew
All night from the south; all night, Rahéro contended and kept
The prow to the cresting sea; and, silent as though she slept,
The woman huddled and quaked. And now was the peep of day.
High and long on their left the mountainous island lay;
And over the peaks of Taiárapu arrows of sunlight struck.
On shore the birds were beginning to sing: the ghostly ruck
Of the buried had long ago returned to the covered grave;
And here on the sea, the woman, waxing suddenly brave,
Turned her swiftly about and looked in the face of the man.
And sure he was none that she knew, none of her country or clan:

A stranger, mother-naked, and marred with the marks of fire,
But comely and great of stature, a man to obey and admire.
And Rahéro regarded her also, fixed, with a frowning face,
Judging the woman's fitness to mother a warlike race.
Broad of shoulder, ample of girdle, long in the thigh,
Deep of bosom she was, and bravely supported his eye.
"Woman," said he, "last night the men of your folk —
Man, woman, and maid, smothered my race in smoke.
It was done like cowards; and I, a mighty man of my hands,
Escaped, a single life; and now to the empty lands
And smokeless hearths of my people, sail, with yourself, alone.
Before your mother was born, the die of to-day was thrown
And you selected: — your husband, vainly striving, to fall
Broken between these hands: — yourself to be severed from all,
The places, the people, you love — home, kindred, and clan —
And to dwell in a desert and bear the babes of a kinless man."

THE FEAST OF FAMINE

MARQUESAN MANNERS

I

THE PRIEST'S VIGIL

In all the land of the tribe was neither fish nor fruit,
And the deepest pit of popoi stood empty to the foot.
The clans upon the left and the clans upon the right
Now oiled their carven maces and scoured their daggers bright;
They gat them to the thicket, to the deepest of the shade,
And lay with sleepless eyes in the deadly ambuscade.
And oft in the starry even the song of morning rose,
What time the oven smoked in the country of their foes;
For oft to loving hearts, and waiting ears and sight,
The lads that went to forage returned not with the night.
Now first the children sickened, and then the women paled,
And the great arms of the warrior no more for war availed.
Hushed was the deep drum, discarded was the dance;
And those that met the priest now glanced at him askance.
The priest was a man of years, his eyes were ruby-red,
He neither feared the dark nor the terrors of the dead,
He knew the songs of races, the names of ancient date;
And the beard upon his bosom would have bought the chief's estate.
He dwelt in a high-built lodge, hard by the roaring shore,
Raised on a noble terrace and with tikis at the door.
Within it was full of riches, for he served his nation well,
And full of the sound of breakers, like the hollow of a shell.
For weeks he let them perish, gave never a helping sign,
But sat on his oiled platform to commune with the divine,

But sat on his high terrace, with the tikis by his side,
And stared on the blue ocean, like a parrot, ruby-eyed.
Dawn as yellow as sulphur leaped on the mountain height:
Out on the round of the sea the gems of the morning light,
Up from the round of the sea the streamers of the sun; —
But down in the depths of the valley the day was not begun.
In the blue of the woody twilight burned red the cocoa-husk,
And the women and men of the clan went forth to bathe in the dusk,
A word that began to go round, a word, a whisper, a start:
Hope that leaped in the bosom, fear that knocked on the heart:
"See, the priest is not risen — look, for his door is fast!
He is going to name the victims; he is going to help us at last."
Thrice rose the sun to noon; and ever, like one of the dead,
The priest lay still in his house, with the roar of the sea in his head;
There was never a foot on the floor, there was never a whisper of speech;
Only the leering tikis stared on the blinding beach.

Again were the mountains fired, again the morning broke;
And all the houses lay still, but the house of the priest awoke.
Close in their covering roofs lay and trembled the clan,
But the aged, red-eyed priest ran forth like a lunatic man;
And the village panted to see him in the jewels of death again,
In the silver beards of the old and the hair of women slain.

Frenzy shook in his limbs, frenzy shone in his eyes,
And still and again as he ran, the valley rang with his cries.
All day long in the land, by cliff and thicket and den,
He ran his lunatic rounds, and howled for the flesh of men;
All day long he ate not, nor ever drank of the brook;
And all day long in their houses the people listened and shook —
All day long in their houses they listened with bated breath,
And never a soul went forth, for the sight of the priest was death.
Three were the days of his running, as the gods appointed of yore,
Two the nights of his sleeping alone in the place of gore:
The drunken slumber of frenzy twice he drank to the lees,
On the sacred stones of the High-place under the sacred trees;
With a lamp at his ashen head he lay in the place of the feast,
And the sacred leaves of the banyan rustled around the priest.
Last, when the stated even fell upon terrace and tree,
And the shade of the lofty island lay leagues away to sea,
And all the valleys of verdure were heavy with manna and musk,
The wreck of the red-eyed priest came gasping home in the dusk.
He reeled across the village, he staggered along the shore,
And between the leering tikis crept groping through his door.
There went a stir through the lodges, the voice of speech awoke;
Once more from the builded platforms arose the evening smoke.

And those who were mighty in war, and those renowned for an art
Sat in their stated seats and talked of the morrow apart.

II

THE LOVERS

Hark! away in the woods — for the ears of love are sharp —
Stealthily, quietly touched, the note of the one-stringed harp.
In the lighted house of her father, why should Taheia start?
Taheia heavy of hair, Taheia tender of heart,
Taheia the well-descended, a bountiful dealer in love,
Nimble of foot like the deer, and kind of eye like the dove?
Sly and shy as a cat, with never a change of face,

Taheia slips to the door, like one that would breathe a space;
Saunters and pauses, and looks at the stars, and lists to the seas;
Then sudden and swift as a cat, she plunges under the trees.
Swift as a cat she runs, with her garment gathered high,
Leaping, nimble of foot, running, certain of eye;
And ever to guide her way over the smooth and the sharp,
Ever nearer and nearer the note of the one-stringed harp;
Till at length, in a glade of the wood, with a naked mountain above,
The sound of the harp thrown down, and she in the arms of her love.
“Rua,” — ”Taheia,” they cry — ”my heart, my soul, and my eyes,”
And clasp and sunder and kiss, with lovely laughter and sighs,

“Rua!” — ”Taheia, my love,” — ”Rua, star of my night,
Clasp me, hold me, and love me, single spring of delight.”
And Rua folded her close, he folded her near and long,
The living knit to the living, and sang the lover’s song:
Night, night it is, night upon the palms.
Night, night it is, the land-wind has blown.
Starry, starry night, over deep and height;
Love, love in the valley, love all alone.
“Taheia, heavy of hair, a foolish thing have we done,
To bind what gods have sundered unkindly into one.
Why should a lowly lover have touched Taheia’s skirt,
Taheia the well-descended, and Rua child of the dirt?”
— ”On high with the haka-ikis my father sits in state,
Ten times fifty kinsmen salute him in the gate;
Round all his martial body, and in bands across his face,
The marks of the tattooer proclaim his lofty place.
I too, in the hands of the cunning, in the sacred cabin of palm,
Have shrunk like the mimosa, and bleated like the lamb;
Round half my tender body, that none shall clasp but you,
For a crest and a fair adornment go dainty lines of blue.
Love, love, beloved Rua, love levels all degrees,
And the well-tattooed Taheia clings panting to your knees.”
— ”Taheia, song of the morning, how long is the longest love?
A cry, a clasp of the hands, a star that falls from above!
Ever at morn in the blue, and at night when all is black,
Ever it skulks and trembles with the hunter, Death, on its track.

Hear me, Taheia, death! For to-morrow the priest shall awake,
And the names be named of the victims to bleed for the nation’s sake;
And first of the numbered many that shall be slain ere noon,
Rua the child of the dirt, Rua the kinless loon.
For him shall the drum be beat, for him be raised the song,

For him to the sacred High-place the chanting people throng,
For him the oven smoke as for a speechless beast,
And the sire of my Taheia come greedy to the feast.”
“Rua, be silent, spare me. Taheia closes her ears.
Pity my yearning heart, pity my girlish years!
Flee from the cruel hands, flee from the knife and coal,
Lie hid in the deeps of the woods, Rua, sire of my soul!”
“Whither to flee, Taheia, whither in all of the land?
The fires of the bloody kitchen are kindled on every hand;
On every hand in the isle a hungry whetting of teeth,
Eyes in the trees above, arms in the brush beneath.
Patience to lie in wait, cunning to follow the sleuth,
Abroad the foes I have fought, and at home the friends of my youth.”
“Love, love, beloved Rua, love has a clearer eye,
Hence from the arms of love you go not forth to die.
There, where the broken mountain drops sheer into the glen,
There shall you find a hold from the boldest hunter of men;
There, in the deep recess, where the sun falls only at noon,
And only once in the night enters the light of the moon,

Nor ever a sound but of birds, or the rain when it falls with a shout;
For death and the fear of death beleaguer the valley about.
Tapu it is, but the gods will surely pardon despair;
Tapu, but what of that? If Rua can only dare.
Tapu and tapu and tapu, I know they are every one right;
But the god of every tapu is not always quick to smite.
Lie secret there, my Rua, in the arms of awful gods,
Sleep in the shade of the trees on the couch of the kindly sods,
Sleep and dream of Taheia, Taheia will wake for you;
And whenever the land-wind blows and the woods are heavy with dew,
Alone through the horror of night, with food for the soul of her love,
Taheia the undissuaded will hurry true as the dove.”
“Taheia, the pit of the night crawls with treacherous things,
Spirits of ultimate air and the evil souls of things;
The souls of the dead, the stranglers, that perch in the trees of the wood,
Waiters for all things human, haters of evil and good.”
“Rua, behold me, kiss me, look in my eyes and read;
Are these the eyes of a maid that would leave her lover in need?
Brave in the eye of day, my father ruled in the fight;
The child of his loins, Taheia, will play the man in the night.”
So it was spoken, and so agreed, and Taheia arose
And smiled in the stars and was gone, swift as the swallow goes;

And Rua stood on the hill, and sighed, and followed her flight,
And there were the lodges below, each with its door alight;

From folk that sat on the terrace and drew out the even long
Sudden crowings of laughter, monotonous drone of song;
The quiet passage of souls over his head in the trees;
And from all around the haven the crumbling thunder of seas.
“Farewell, my home,” said Rua. “Farewell, O quiet seat!
To-morrow in all your valleys the drum of death shall beat.”

III

THE FEAST

Dawn as yellow as sulphur leaped on the naked peak,
And all the village was stirring, for now was the priest to speak.
Forth on his terrace he came, and sat with the chief in talk;
His lips were blackened with fever, his cheeks were whiter than chalk;
Fever clutched at his hands, fever nodded his head,
But, quiet and steady and cruel, his eyes shone ruby-red.
In the earliest rays of the sun the chief rose up content;
Braves were summoned, and drummers; messengers came and went;
Braves ran to their lodges; weapons were snatched from the wall;
The commons herded together, and fear was over them all.
Festival dresses they wore, but the tongue was dry in their mouth,
And the blinking eyes in their faces skirted from north to south.

Now to the sacred enclosure gathered the greatest and least,
And from under the shade of the banyan arose the voice of the feast,
The frenzied roll of the drum, and a swift monotonous song.
Higher the sun swam up; the trade-wind level and strong
Awoke in the tops of the palms and rattled the fans aloud,
And over the garlanded heads and shining robes of the crowd
Tossed the spiders of shadow, scattered the jewels of sun.
Forty the tale of the drums, and the forty throbbed like one;
A thousand hearts in the crowd, and the even chorus of song,
Swift as the feet of a runner, trampled a thousand strong.
And the old men leered at the ovens and licked their lips for the food;
And the women stared at the lads, and laughed and looked to the wood.
As when the sweltering baker, at night, when the city is dead,
Alone in the trough of labour treads and fashions the bread;
So in the heat, and the reek, and the touch of woman and man,
The naked spirit of evil kneaded the hearts of the clan.

Now cold was at many a heart, and shaking in many a seat;
For there were the empty baskets, but who was to furnish the meat?
For here was the nation assembled, and there were the ovens anigh,
And out of a thousand singers nine were numbered to die.

Till, of a sudden, a shock, a mace in the air, a yell,
And, struck in the edge of the crowd, the first of the victims fell.
Terror and horrible glee divided the shrinking clan,
Terror of what was to follow, glee for a diet of man.
Frenzy hurried the chant, frenzy rattled the drums;
The nobles, high on the terrace, greedily mouthed their thumbs;
And once and again and again, in the ignorant crowd below,
Once and again and again descended the murderous blow.
Now smoked the oven, and now, with the cutting lip of a shell,
A butcher of ninety winters jointed the bodies well.
Unto the carven lodge, silent, in order due,
The grandees of the nation one after one withdrew;
And a line of laden bearers brought to the terrace foot,
On poles across their shoulders, the last reserve of fruit.
The victims bled for the nobles in the old appointed way;
The fruit was spread for the commons, for all should eat to-day.
And now was the kava brewed, and now the cocoa ran,
Now was the hour of the dance for child and woman and man;
And mirth was in every heart and a garland on every head,
And all was well with the living and well with the eight who were dead.
Only the chiefs and the priest talked and consulted a while:
“To-morrow,” they said, and “To-morrow,” and nodded and seemed to smile:
“Rua the child of dirt, the creature of common clay,
Rua must die to-morrow, since Rua is gone to-day.”

Out of the groves of the valley, where clear the blackbirds sang,
Sheer from the trees of the valley the face of the mountain sprang;
Sheer and bare it rose, unscalable barricade,
Beaten and blown against by the generous draught of the trade.
Dawn on its fluted brow painted rainbow light,
Close on its pinnacled crown trembled the stars at night.
Here and there in a cleft clustered contorted trees,
Or the silver beard of a stream hung and swung in the breeze,
High overhead, with a cry, the torrents leaped for the main,
And silently sprinkled below in thin perennial rain.
Dark in the staring noon, dark was Rua’s ravine,
Damp and cold was the air, and the face of the cliffs was green.

Here, in the rocky pit, accursed already of old,
On a stone in the midst of a river, Rua sat and was cold.
“Valley of mid-day shadows, valley of silent falls,”
Rua sang, and his voice went hollow about the walls,
“Valley of shadow and rock, a doleful prison to me,
What is the life you can give to a child of the sun and the sea?”
And Rua arose and came to the open mouth of the glen,
Whence he beheld the woods, and the sea, and houses of men.
Wide blew the riotous trade, and smelt in his nostrils good;
It bowed the boats on the bay, and tore and divided the wood;
It smote and sundered the groves as Moses smote with the rod,
And the streamers of all the trees blew like banners abroad;

And ever and on, in a lull, the trade-wind brought him along
A far-off patter of drums and a far-off whisper of song.
Swift as the swallow’s wings, the diligent hands on the drum
Fluttered and hurried and throbbed. “Ah, woe that I hear you come,”
Rua cried in his grief, “a sorrowful sound to me,
Mounting far and faint from the resonant shore of the sea!
Woe in the song! for the grave breathes in the singers’ breath,
And I hear in the tramp of the drums the beat of the heart of death.
Home of my youth! no more through all the length of the years,
No more to the place of the echoes of early laughter and tears,
No more shall Rua return; no more as the evening ends,
To crowded eyes of welcome, to the reaching hands of friends.”
All day long from the High-place the drums and the singing came,
And the even fell, and the sun went down, a wheel of flame;
And night came gleaning the shadows and hushing the sounds of the wood;
And silence slept on all, where Rua sorrowed and stood.
But still from the shore of the bay the sound of the festival rang,
And still the crowd in the High-place danced and shouted and sang.
Now over all the isle terror was breathed abroad
Of shadowy hands from the trees and shadowy snares in the sod;

And before the nostrils of night, the shuddering hunter of men
Hurried, with beard on shoulder, back to his lighted den.
“Taheia, here to my side!” — ”Rua, my Rua, you!”
And cold from the clutch of terror, cold with the damp of the dew,
Taheia, heavy of hair, leaped through the dark to his arms;
Taheia leaped to his clasp, and was folded in from alarms.
“Rua, beloved, here, see what your love has brought;
Coming — alas! returning — swift as the shuttle of thought;
Returning, alas! for to-night, with the beaten drum and the voice,

In the shine of many torches must the sleepless clan rejoice;
And Taheia the well-descended, the daughter of chief and priest,
Taheia must sit in her place in the crowded bench of the feast.”
So it was spoken; and she, girding her garment high,
Fled and was swallowed of woods, swift as the sight of an eye.
Night over isle and sea rolled her curtain of stars,
Then a trouble awoke in the air, the east was banded with bars;
Dawn as yellow as sulphur leaped on the mountain height;
Dawn, in the deepest glen, fell a wonder of light;
High and clear stood the palms in the eye of the brightening east,
And lo! from the sides of the sea the broken sound of the feast!

As, when in days of summer, through open windows, the fly
Swift as a breeze and loud as a trump goes by,
But when frosts in the field have pinched the wintering mouse,
Blindly noses and buzzes and hums in the firelit house:
So the sound of the feast gallantly trampled at night,
So it staggered and drooped, and droned in the morning light.

IV

THE RAID

It chanced that as Rua sat in the valley of silent falls
He heard a calling of doves from high on the cliffy walls.
Fire had fashioned of yore, and time had broken, the rocks;
There were rooting crannies for trees and nesting-places for flocks;
And he saw on the top of the cliffs, looking up from the pit of the shade,
A flicker of wings and sunshine, and trees that swung in the trade.
“The trees swing in the trade,” quoth Rua, doubtful of words,
“And the sun stares from the sky, but what should trouble the birds?”
Up from the shade he gazed, where high the parapet shone,
And he was aware of a ledge and of things that moved thereon.
“What manner of things are these? Are they spirits abroad by day?
Or the foes of my clan that are come, bringing death by a perilous way?”

The valley was gouged like a vessel, and round like the vessel’s lip,
With a cape of the side of the hill thrust forth like the bows of a ship.
On the top of the face of the cape a volley of sun struck fair,
And the cape overhung like a chin a gulf of sunless air.
“Silence, heart! What is that? — that, which flickered and shone,
Into the sun for an instant, and in an instant gone?

Was it a warrior's plume, a warrior's girdle of hair?
Swung in the loop of a rope, is he making a bridge of the air?"
Once and again Rua saw, in the trenchant edge of the sky,
The giddy conjuring done. And then, in the blink of an eye,
A scream caught in with the breath, a whirling packet of limbs,
A lump that dived in the gulf, more swift than a dolphin swims;
And there was a lump at his feet, and eyes were alive in the lump.
Sick was the soul of Rua, ambushed close in a clump;
Sick of soul he drew near, making his courage stout;
And he looked in the face of the thing, and the life of the thing went out.
And he gazed on the tattooed limbs, and, behold, he knew the man:
Hoka, a chief of the Vais, the truculent foe of his clan:
Hoka a moment since that stepped in the loop of the rope,
Filled with the lust of war, and alive with courage and hope.
Again to the giddy cornice Rua lifted his eyes,
And again beheld men passing in the armpit of the skies.

"Foes of my race!" cried Rua, "the mouth of Rua is true:
Never a shark in the deep is nobler of soul than you.
There was never a nobler foray, never a bolder plan;
Never a dizzier path was trod by the children of man;
And Rua, your evil-doer through all the days of his years,
Counts it honour to hate you, honour to fall by your spears."
And Rua straightened his back. "O Vais, a scheme for a scheme!"
Cried Rua and turned and descended the turbulent stair of the stream,
Leaping from rock to rock as the water-wagtail at home
Flits through resonant valleys and skims by boulder and foam.
And Rua burst from the glen and leaped on the shore of the brook,
And straight for the roofs of the clan his vigorous way he took.
Swift were the heels of his flight, and loud behind as he went
Rattled the leaping stones on the line of his long descent.
And ever he thought as he ran, and caught at his gasping breath,
"O the fool of a Rua, Rua that runs to his death!
But the right is the right," thought Rua, and ran like the wind on the foam,
"The right is the right for ever, and home for ever home.
For what though the oven smoke? And what though I die ere morn?
There was I nourished and tended, and there was Taheia born."
Noon was high on the High-place, the second noon of the feast;
And heat and shameful slumber weighed on people and priest;

And the heart drudged slow in bodies heavy with monstrous meals;
And the senseless limbs were scattered abroad like spokes of wheels;

And crapulous women sat and stared at the stones anigh
With a bestial droop of the lip and a swinish rheum in the eye.
As about the dome of the bees in the time for the drones to fall,
The dead and the maimed are scattered, and lie, and stagger, and crawl;
So on the grades of the terrace, in the ardent eye of the day,
The half-awake and the sleepers clustered and crawled and lay;
And loud as the dome of the bees, in the time of a swarming horde,
A horror of many insects hung in the air and roared.
Rua looked and wondered; he said to himself in his heart:
“Poor are the pleasures of life, and death is the better part.”
But lo! on the higher benches a cluster of tranquil folk
Sat by themselves, nor raised their serious eyes, nor spoke:
Women with robes unruffled and garlands duly arranged,
Gazing far from the feast with faces of people estranged;
And quiet amongst the quiet, and fairer than all the fair,
Taheia, the well-descended, Taheia, heavy of hair.
And the soul of Rua awoke, courage enlightened his eyes
And he uttered a summoning shout and called on the clan to rise.
Over against him at once, in the spotted shade of the trees,
Owlish and blinking creatures scrambled to hands and knees;

On the grades of the sacred terrace, the driveller woke to fear,
And the hand of the ham-drooped warrior brandished a wavering spear.
And Rua folded his arms, and scorn discovered his teeth;
Above the war-crowd gibbered, and Rua stood smiling beneath.
Thick, like leaves in the autumn, faint, like April sleet,
Missiles from tremulous hands quivered around his feet;
And Taheia leaped from her place; and the priest, the ruby-eyed,
Ran to the front of the terrace, and brandished his arms and cried:
“Hold, O fools, he brings tidings!” and “Hold, ‘tis the love of my heart!”
Till lo! in front of the terrace, Rua pierced with a dart.
Taheia cherished his head, and the aged priest stood by,
And gazed with eyes of ruby at Rua’s darkening eye.
“Taheia, here is the end, I die a death for a man.
I have given the life of my soul to save an unsavable clan.
See them, the drooping of hams! behold me the blinking crew;
Fifty spears they cast, and one of fifty true!
And you, O priest, the foreteller, foretell for yourself if you can,
Foretell the hour of the day when the Vais shall burst on your clan!
By the head of the tapu cleft, with death and fire in their hand,
Thick and silent like ants, the warriors swarm in the land.”

And they tell that when next the sun had climbed to the noonday skies,
It shone on the smoke of feasting in the country of the Vais.

TICONDEROGA

A LEGEND OF THE WEST HIGHLANDS

TICONDEROGA

This is the tale of the man
Who heard a word in the night
In the land of the heathery hills,
In the days of the feud and the fight.
By the sides of the rainy sea,
Where never a stranger came,
On the awful lips of the dead,
He heard the outlandish name.
It sang in his sleeping ears,
It hummed in his waking head:
The name — Ticonderoga,
The utterance of the dead.

I

THE SAYING OF THE NAME

On the loch-sides of Appin,
When the mist blew from the sea,
A Stewart stood with a Cameron:
An angry man was he.
The blood beat in his ears,
The blood ran hot to his head,
The mist blew from the sea,
And there was the Cameron dead.
“O, what have I done to my friend,
O, what have I done to mysel’,

That he should be cold and dead,
And I in the danger of all?

“Nothing but danger about me,
Danger behind and before,
Death at wait in the heather
In Appin and Mamore,
Hate at all of the ferries,
And death at each of the fords,
Camerons priming gun-locks
And Camerons sharpening swords.”
But this was a man of counsel,
This was a man of a score,
There dwelt no pawkier Stewart
In Appin or Mamore.
He looked on the blowing mist,
He looked on the awful dead,
And there came a smile on his face
And there slipped a thought in his head.
Out over cairn and moss,
Out over scrog and scaur,
He ran as runs the clansman
That bears the cross of war.
His heart beat in his body,
His hair clove to his face,
When he came at last in the gloaming
To the dead man’s brother’s place.
The east was white with the moon,
The west with the sun was red,
And there, in the house-doorway,
Stood the brother of the dead.
“I have slain a man to my danger,
I have slain a man to my death.
I put my soul in your hands,”
The panting Stewart saith.

“I lay it bare in your hands,
For I know your hands are leal;
And be you my targe and bulwark
From the bullet and the steel.”
Then up and spoke the Cameron,
And gave him his hand again:
“There shall never a man in Scotland
Set faith in me in vain;

And whatever man you have slaughtered,
Of whatever name or line,
By my sword and yonder mountain,
I make your quarrel mine.
I bid you in to my fireside,
I share with you house and hall;
It stands upon my honour
To see you safe from all."
It fell in the time of midnight,
When the fox barked in the den,
And the plaids were over the faces
In all the houses of men,
That as the living Cameron
Lay sleepless on his bed,
Out of the night and the other world,
Came in to him the dead.
"My blood is on the heather,
My bones are on the hill;
There is joy in the home of ravens
That the young shall eat their fill.
My blood is poured in the dust,
My soul is spilled in the air;
And the man that has undone me
Sleeps in my brother's care."

"I'm wae for your death, my brother,
But if all of my house were dead,
I couldna withdraw the plighted hand,
Nor break the word once said."
"O, what shall I say to our father,
In the place to which I fare?
O, what shall I say to our mother,
Who greets to see me there?
And to all the kindly Camerons
That have lived and died long-syne —
Is this the word you send them,
Fause-hearted brother mine?"
"It's neither fear nor duty,
It's neither quick nor dead,
Shall gar me withdraw the plighted hand,
Or break the word once said."
Thrice in the time of midnight,
When the fox barked in the den,
And the plaids were over the faces

In all the houses of men,
Thrice as the living Cameron
Lay sleepless on his bed,
Out of the night and the other world
Came in to him the dead,
And cried to him for vengeance
On the man that laid him low;
And thrice the living Cameron
Told the dead Cameron, no.
“Thrice have you seen me, brother,
But now shall see me no more,
Till you meet your angry fathers
Upon the farther shore.

Thrice have I spoken, and now,
Before the cock be heard,
I take my leave for ever
With the naming of a word.
It shall sing in your sleeping ears,
It shall hum in your waking head,
The name — Ticonderoga,
And the warning of the dead.”
Now when the night was over
And the time of people’s fears,
The Cameron walked abroad,
And the word was in his ears.
“Many a name I know,
But never a name like this;
O, where shall I find a skilly man
Shall tell me what it is?”
With many a man he counselled
Of high and low degree,
With the herdsman on the mountains
And the fishers of the sea.
And he came and went unweary,
And read the books of yore,
And the runes that were written of old
On stones upon the moor.
And many a name he was told,
But never the name of his fears —
Never, in east or west,
The name that rang in his ears:
Names of men and of clans;
Names for the grass and the tree,

For the smallest tarn in the mountains,
The smallest reef in the sea:
Names for the high and low,
The names of the craig and the flat;
But in all the land of Scotland,
Never a name like that.

II

THE SEEKING OF THE NAME

And now there was speech in the south,
And a man of the south that was wise,
A periwig'd lord of London,
Called on the clans to rise.
And the riders rode, and the summons
Came to the western shore,
To the land of the sea and the heather,
To Appin and Mamore.
It called on all to gather
From every scrog and scaur,
That loved their fathers' tartan
And the ancient game of war.
And down the watery valley
And up the windy hill,
Once more, as in the olden,
The pipes were sounding shrill;
Again in Highland sunshine
The naked steel was bright;
And the lads, once more in tartan,
Went forth again to fight.
"O, why should I dwell here
With a weird upon my life,
When the clansmen shout for battle
And the war-swords clash in strife?
I canna joy at feast,
I canna sleep in bed,
For the wonder of the word
And the warning of the dead.
It sings in my sleeping ears,
It hums in my waking head,

The name — Ticonderoga,

The utterance of the dead.
Then up, and with the fighting men
To march away from here,
Till the cry of the great war-pipe
Shall drown it in my ear!”
Where flew King George’s ensign
The plaided soldiers went:
They drew the sword in Germany,
In Flanders pitched the tent.
The bells of foreign cities
Rang far across the plain:
They passed the happy Rhine,
They drank the rapid Main.
Through Asiatic jungles
The Tartans filed their way,
And the neighing of the war-pipes
Struck terror in Cathay.
“Many a name have I heard,” he thought,
“In all the tongues of men,
Full many a name both here and there,
Full many both now and then.
When I was at home in my father’s house,
In the land of the naked knee,
Between the eagles that fly in the lift
And the herrings that swim in the sea,
And now that I am a captain-man
With a braw cockade in my hat —
Many a name have I heard,” he thought,
“But never a name like that.”

III

THE PLACE OF THE NAME

There fell a war in a woody place,
Lay far across the sea,
A war of the march in the mirk midnight
And the shot from behind the tree,
The shaven head and the painted face,
The silent foot in the wood,
In the land of a strange, outlandish tongue
That was hard to be understood.
It fell about the gloaming,

The general stood with his staff,
He stood and he looked east and west
With little mind to laugh.
“Far have I been, and much have I seen,
And kennt both gain and loss,
But here we have woods on every hand
And a kittle water to cross.
Far have I been, and much have I seen,
But never the beat of this;
And there’s one must go down to that water-side
To see how deep it is.”
It fell in the dusk of the night
When unco things betide,
The skilly captain, the Cameron,
Went down to that waterside.
Canny and soft the captain went;
And a man of the woody land,
With the shaven head and the painted face,
Went down at his right hand.
It fell in the quiet night,
There was never a sound to ken;
But all of the woods to the right and the left
Lay filled with the painted men.

“Far have I been, and much have I seen,
Both as a man and boy,
But never have I set forth a foot,
On so perilous an employ.”
It fell in the dusk of the night
When unco things betide,
That he was aware of a captain-man
Drew near to the water-side.
He was aware of his coming
Down in the gloaming alone;
And he looked in the face of the man,
And lo! the face was his own.
“This is my weird,” he said,
“And now I ken the worst;
For many shall fall the morn,
But I shall fall with the first.
O, you of the outland tongue,
You of the painted face,
This is the place of my death;
Can you tell me the name of the place?”

“Since the Frenchmen have been here
They have called it Sault-Marie;
But that is a name for priests,
And not for you and me.
It went by another word,”
Quoth he of the shaven head:
“It was called Ticonderoga
In the days of the great dead.”
And it fell on the morrow’s morning,
In the fiercest of the fight,
That the Cameron bit the dust
As he foretold at night;
And far from the hills of heather,
Far from the isles of the sea,
He sleeps in the place of the name
As it was doomed to be.

HEATHER ALE

A GALLOWAY LEGEND

From the bonny bells of heather
They brewed a drink long-syne,
Was sweeter far than honey,
Was stronger far than wine.
They brewed it and they drank it,
And lay in a blessed swound
For days and days together
In their dwellings underground.
There rose a king in Scotland,
A fell man to his foes,
He smote the Picts in battle,
He hunted them like roes.
Over miles of the red mountain
He hunted as they fled,
And strewed the dwarfish bodies
Of the dying and the dead.
Summer came in the country,
Red was the heather bell;
But the manner of the brewing
Was none alive to tell.
In the graves that were like children's
On many a mountain head,
The Brewsters of the Heather
Lay numbered with the dead.
The king in the red moorland
Rode on a summer's day;
And the bees hummed, and the curlews
Cried beside the way.

The king rode, and was angry,
Black was his brow and pale,
To rule in a land of heather
And lack the Heather Ale.
It fortuned that his vassals,
Riding free on the heath,
Came on a stone that was fallen
And vermin hid beneath.
Rudely plucked from their hiding,

Never a word they spoke:
A son and his aged father —
Last of the dwarfish folk.
The king sat high on his charger,
He looked on the little men;
And the dwarfish and swarthy couple
Looked at the king again.
Down by the shore he had them;
And there on the giddy brink —
“I will give you life, ye vermin,
For the secret of the drink.”
There stood the son and father;
And they looked high and low;
The heather was red around them,
The sea rumbled below.
And up and spoke the father,
Shrill was his voice to hear:
“I have a word in private,
A word for the royal ear.
“Life is dear to the aged,
And honour a little thing;
I would gladly sell the secret,”
Quoth the Pict to the king.

His voice was small as a sparrow’s,
And shrill and wonderful clear;
“I would gladly sell my secret,
Only my son I fear.
“For life is a little matter,
And death is nought to the young;
And I dare not sell my honour
Under the eye of my son.
Take *him*, O king, and bind him,
And cast him far in the deep:
And it’s I will tell the secret,
That I have sworn to keep.”
They took the son and bound him,
Neck and heels in a thong,
And a lad took him and swung him,
And flung him far and strong,
And the sea swallowed his body,
Like that of a child of ten; —
And there on the cliff stood the father,
Last of the dwarfish men.

“True was the word I told you:
Only my son I feared;
For I doubt the sapling courage
That goes without the beard.
But now in vain is the torture,
Fire shall never avail;
Here dies in my bosom
The secret of Heather Ale.”

CHRISTMAS AT SEA

The sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce could stand;
The wind was a nor’-wester, blowing squally off the sea;
And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lee.
They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day;
But ‘twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.
We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,
And we gave her the maintops’l, and stood by to go about.
All day we tacked and tacked between the South Head and the North;
All day we hauled the frozen sheets, and got no further forth;
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,
For very life and nature we tacked from head to head.
We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-race roared;
But every tack we made we brought the North Head close aboard:
So’s we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers running high,
And the coastguard in his garden, with his glass against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam;
The good red fires were burning bright in every ‘long-shore home;
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volleyed out;
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went about.
The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty jovial cheer;
For it’s just that I should tell you how (of all days in the year)
This day of our adversity was blessèd Christmas morn,
And the house above the coastguard’s was the house where I was born.
O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces there,
My mother’s silver spectacles, my father’s silver hair;
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely elves,
Go dancing round the china-plates that stand upon the shelves.
And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was of me,
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went to sea;
And O the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind of way,
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessèd Christmas Day.
They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.
“All hands to loose topgallant sails,” I heard the captain call.
“By the Lord, she’ll never stand it,” our first mate, Jackson, cried.
... “It’s the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson,” he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails were new and good,
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though she understood,
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,
We cleared the weary headland, and passed below the light.
And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on board but me,
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea;
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the cold,
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were growing old.

SONGS OF TRAVEL AND OTHER VERSES

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SONGS OF TRAVEL

I

THE VAGABOND

(TO AN AIR OF SCHUBERT)
Give to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above
And the byway nigh me.
Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river —
There’s the life for a man like me,
There’s the life for ever.
Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o’er me;
Give the face of earth around
And the road before me.
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above
And the road below me.
Or let autumn fall on me
Where afield I linger,
Silencing the bird on tree,
Biting the blue finger.
White as meal the frosty field —
Warm the fireside haven —
Not to autumn will I yield,
Not to winter even!

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o’er me;
Give the face of earth around,
And the road before me.
Wealth I ask not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me.
All I ask, the heaven above
And the road below me.

II

YOUTH AND LOVE — I

Once only by the garden gate
Our lips were joined and parted.
I must fulfil an empty fate
And travel the uncharted.
Hail and farewell! I must arise,
Leave here the fatted cattle,
And paint on foreign lands and skies
My Odyssey of battle.
The untented Kosmos my abode,
I pass, a wilful stranger:
My mistress still the open road
And the bright eyes of danger.
Come ill or well, the cross, the crown,
The rainbow or the thunder,
I fling my soul and body down
For God to plough them under.

III

YOUTH AND LOVE — II

To the heart of youth the world is a highwayside.
Passing for ever, he fares; and on either hand,
Deep in the gardens golden pavilions hide,
Nestle in orchard bloom, and far on the level land
Call him with lighted lamp in the eventide.
Thick as the stars at night when the moon is down,
Pleasures assail him. He to his nobler fate
Fares; and but waves a hand as he passes on,
Cries but a wayside word to her at the garden gate,
Sings but a boyish stave and his face is gone.

IV
In dreams, unhappy, I behold you stand
As heretofore:
The unremembered tokens in your hand
Avail no more.
No more the morning glow, no more the grace,
Enshrines, endears.
Cold beats the light of time upon your face
And shows your tears.

He came and went. Perchance you wept a while
And then forgot.
Ah, me! but he that left you with a smile
Forgets you not.

V

She rested by the Broken Brook,
She drank of Weary Well,
She moved beyond my lingering look,
Ah, whither none can tell!
She came, she went. In other lands,
Perchance in fairer skies,
Her hands shall cling with other hands,
Her eyes to other eyes.
She vanished. In the sounding town,
Will she remember too?
Will she recall the eyes of brown
As I recall the blue?

VI

The infinite shining heavens
Rose and I saw in the night
Uncountable angel stars
Showering sorrow and light.
I saw them distant as heaven,
Dumb and shining and dead,
And the idle stars of the night
Were dearer to me than bread.
Night after night in my sorrow
The stars stood over the sea,
Till lo! I looked in the dusk
And a star had come down to me.

VII

Plain as the glistering planets shine
When winds have cleaned the skies,
Her love appeared, appealed for mine
And wantoned in her eyes.
Clear as the shining tapers burned
On Cytherea’s shrine,
Those brimming, lustrous beauties turned,
And called and conquered mine.

The beacon-lamp that Hero lit
No fairer shone on sea,
No plainlier summoned will and wit,
Than hers encouraged me.
I thrilled to feel her influence near,
I struck my flag at sight.
Her starry silence smote my ear
Like sudden drums at night.
I ran as, at the cannon's roar,
The troops the ramparts man —
As in the holy house of yore
The willing Eli ran.
Here, lady, lo! that servant stands
You picked from passing men,
And should you need nor heart nor hands
He bows and goes again.

VIII

To you, let snow and roses
And golden locks belong.
These are the world's enslavers,
Let these delight the throng.
For her of duskier lustre
Whose favour still I wear,
The snow be in her kirtle,
The rose be in her hair!
The hue of highland rivers
Careering, full and cool,
From sable on to golden,
From rapid on to pool —
The hue of heather-honey,
The hue of honey-bees,
Shall tinge her golden shoulder,
Shall gild her tawny knees.

IX

Let Beauty awake in the morn from beautiful dreams,
Beauty awake from rest!
Let Beauty awake
For Beauty's sake
In the hour when the birds awake in the brake
And the stars are bright in the west!
Let Beauty awake in the eve from the slumber of day,

Awake in the crimson eve!
In the day’s dusk end
When the shades ascend,
Let her wake to the kiss of a tender friend
To render again and receive!

X

I know not how it is with you —
I love the first and last,
The whole field of the present view,
The whole flow of the past.
One tittle of the things that are,
Nor you should change nor I —
One pebble in our path — one star
In all our heaven of sky.
Our lives, and every day and hour,
One symphony appear:
One road, one garden — every flower
And every bramble dear.

XI

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.
I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.
And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

XII

WE HAVE LOVED OF YORE

(TO AN AIR OF DIABELLI)

Berried brake and reedy island,
Heaven below, and only heaven above,
Through the sky’s inverted azure

Softly swam the boat that bore our love.
Bright were your eyes as the day;
Bright ran the stream,
Bright hung the sky above.
Days of April, airs of Eden,
How the glory died through golden hours,
And the shining moon arising,
How the boat drew homeward filled with flowers!
Bright were your eyes in the night:
We have lived, my love —
O, we have loved, my love.
Frost has bound our flowing river,
Snow has whitened all our island brake,
And beside the winter fagot
Joan and Darby doze and dream and wake.
Still, in the river of dreams,
Swims the boat of love —
Hark! chimes the falling oar!
And again in winter evens
When on firelight dreaming fancy feeds,
In those ears of agèd lovers
Love's own river warbles in the reeds.
Love still the past, O my love!
We have lived of yore,
O, we have loved of yore.

XIII

MATER TRIUMPHANS

Son of my woman's body, you go, to the drum and fife,
To taste the colour of love and the other side of life —
From out of the dainty the rude, the strong from out of the frail,
Eternally through the ages from the female comes the male.
The ten fingers and toes, and the shell-like nail on each,
The eyes blind as gems and the tongue attempting speech;
Impotent hands in my bosom, and yet they shall wield the sword!
Drugged with slumber and milk, you wait the day of the Lord.
Infant bridegroom, uncrowned king, unanointed priest,
Soldier, lover, explorer, I see you nuzzle the breast.
You that grope in my bosom shall load the ladies with rings,
You, that came forth through the doors, shall burst the doors of kings.

XIV

Bright is the ring of words
When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs
When the singer sings them.

Still they are carolled and said —
On wings they are carried —
After the singer is dead
And the maker buried.
Low as the singer lies
In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
The swains together.
And when the west is red
With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings
And the maid remembers.

XV

In the highlands, in the country places,
Where the old plain men have rosy faces,
And the young fair maidens
Quiet eyes;
Where essential silence cheers and blesses,
And for ever in the hill-recesses
Her more lovely music
Broods and dies.
O to mount again where erst I haunted;
Where the old red hills are bird-enchanted,
And the low green meadows
Bright with sward;
And when even dies, the million-tinted,
And the night has come, and planets glinted,
Lo, the valley hollow
Lamp-bestarred!

O to dream, O to awake and wander
There, and with delight to take and render,
Through the trance of silence,
Quiet breath;
Lo! for there, among the flowers and grasses,
Only the mightier movement sounds and passes;
Only winds and rivers,

Life and death.

XVI

TO THE TUNE OF WANDERING WILLIE

Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?
Hunger my driver, I go where I must.
Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather;
Thick drives the rain, and my roof is in the dust.
Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree,
The true word of welcome was spoken in the door —
Dear days of old, with the faces in the firelight,
Kind folks of old, you come again no more.
Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,
Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.
Fire and the windows bright glittered on the moorland;
Song, tuneful song, built a palace in the wild.
Now, when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,
Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is cold.
Lone let it stand, now the friends are all departed,
The kind hearts, the true hearts, that loved the place of old.
Spring shall come, come again, calling up the moor-fowl,
Spring shall bring the sun and rain, bring the bees and flowers;
Red shall the heather bloom over hill and valley,
Soft flow the stream through the even-flowing hours;

Fair the day shine as it shone on my childhood —
Fair shine the day on the house with open door;
Birds come and cry there and twitter in the chimney —
But I go for ever and come again no more.

XVII

WINTER

In rigorous hours, when down the iron lane
The redbreast looks in vain
For hips and haws,
Lo, shining flowers upon my window-pane
The silver pencil of the winter draws.
When all the snowy hill
And the bare woods are still;
When snipes are silent in the frozen bogs,

And all the garden garth is whelmed in mire,
Lo, by the hearth, the laughter of the logs —
More fair than roses, lo, the flowers of fire!
Saranac Lake.

XVIII
The stormy evening closes now in vain,
Loud wails the wind and beats the driving rain,
While here in sheltered house
With fire-ypainted walls,
I hear the wind abroad,
I hark the calling squalls —
“Blow, blow,” I cry, “you burst your cheeks in vain!
Blow, blow,” I cry, “my love is home again!”

Yon ship you chase perchance but yesternight
Bore still the precious freight of my delight,
That here in sheltered house
With fire-ypainted walls,
Now hears the wind abroad,
Now harks the calling squalls.
“Blow, blow,” I cry, “in vain you rouse the sea,
My rescued sailor shares the fire with me!”

XIX

TO DR. HAKE

(ON RECEIVING A COPY OF VERSES)
In the belovèd hour that ushers day,
In the pure dew, under the breaking grey,
One bird, ere yet the woodland quires awake,
With brief réveillé summons all the brake:
Chirp, *chirp*, it goes; nor waits an answer long;
And that small signal fills the grove with song.
Thus on my pipe I breathed a strain or two;
It scarce was music, but ‘twas all I knew.
It was not music, for I lacked the art,
Yet what but frozen music filled my heart?
Chirp, *chirp*, I went, nor hoped a nobler strain;
But Heaven decreed I should not pipe in vain,
For, lo! not far from there, in secret dale,
All silent, sat an ancient nightingale.
My sparrow notes he heard; thereat awoke;

And with a tide of song his silence broke.

XX

TO — —

I knew thee strong and quiet like the hills;
I knew thee apt to pity, brave to endure,
In peace or war a Roman full equipt;
And just I knew thee, like the fabled kings
Who by the loud sea-shore gave judgment forth,
From dawn to eve, bearded and few of words.
What, what, was I to honour thee? A child;
A youth in ardour but a child in strength,
Who after virtue’s golden chariot-wheels
Runs ever panting, nor attains the goal.
So thought I, and was sorrowful at heart.
Since then my steps have visited that flood
Along whose shore the numerous footfalls cease,
The voices and the tears of life expire.
Thither the prints go down, the hero’s way
Trod large upon the sand, the trembling maid’s:
Nimrod that wound his trumpet in the wood,
And the poor, dreaming child, hunter of flowers,
That here his hunting closes with the great:
So one and all go down, nor aught returns.
For thee, for us, the sacred river waits,
For me, the unworthy, thee, the perfect friend;
There Blame desists, there his unfaltering dogs
He from the chase recalls, and homeward rides;
Yet Praise and Love pass over and go in.
So when, beside that margin, I discard
My more than mortal weakness, and with thee
Through that still land unfearing I advance;
If then at all we keep the touch of joy,
Thou shalt rejoice to find me altered — I,
O Felix, to behold thee still unchanged.

XXI

The morning drum-call on my eager ear
Thrills unforgotten yet; the morning dew
Lies yet undried along my field of noon.
But now I pause at whiles in what I do,

And count the bell, and tremble lest I hear
(My work untrimmed) the sunset gun too soon.

XXII
I have trod the upward and the downward slope;
I have endured and done in days before;
I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope;
And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.

XXIII
He hears with gladdened heart the thunder
Peal, and loves the falling dew;
He knows the earth above and under —
Sits and is content to view.
He sits beside the dying ember,
God for hope and man for friend,
Content to see, glad to remember,
Expectant of the certain end.

XXIV
Farewell, fair day and fading light!
The clay-born here, with westward sight,
Marks the huge sun now downward soar.
Farewell. We twain shall meet no more.

Farewell. I watch with bursting sigh
My late contemned occasion die.
I linger useless in my tent:
Farewell, fair day, so foully spent!
Farewell, fair day. If any God
At all consider this poor clod,
He who the fair occasion sent
Prepared and placed the impediment.
Let Him diviner vengeance take —
Give me to sleep, give me to wake
Girded and shod, and bid me play
The hero in the coming day!

XXV

IF THIS WERE FAITH

God, if this were enough,
That I see things bare to the buff

And up to the buttocks in mire;
That I ask nor hope nor hire,
Nut in the husk,
Nor dawn beyond the dusk,
Nor life beyond death:
God, if this were faith?
Having felt Thy wind in my face
Spit sorrow and disgrace,
Having seen Thine evil doom
In Golgotha and Khartoum,
And the brutes, the work of Thine hands,
Fill with injustice lands
And stain with blood the sea:
If still in my veins the glee

Of the black night and the sun
And the lost battle, run:
If, an adept,
The iniquitous lists I still accept
With joy, and joy to endure and be withstood,
And still to battle and perish for a dream of good:
God, if that were enough?
If to feel in the ink of the slough,
And the sink of the mire,
Veins of glory and fire
Run through and transpierce and transpire,
And a secret purpose of glory in every part,
And the answering glory of battle fill my heart;
To thrill with the joy of girded men,
To go on for ever and fail and go on again,
And be mauled to the earth and arise,
And contend for the shade of a word and a thing not seen with the eyes:
With the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night
That somehow the right is the right
And the smooth shall bloom from the rough:
Lord, if that were enough?

XXVI

MY WIFE

Trusty, dusky, vivid, true,
With eyes of gold and bramble-dew,

Steel-true and blade-straight,
The great artificer
Made my mate.

Honour, anger, valour, fire;
A love that life could never tire,
Death quench or evil stir,
The mighty master
Gave to her.
Teacher, tender, comrade, wife,
A fellow-farer true through life,
Heart-whole and soul-free
The august father
Gave to me.

XXVII

TO THE MUSE

Resign the rhapsody, the dream,
To men of larger reach;
Be ours the quest of a plain theme,
The piety of speech.
As monkish scribes from morning break
Toiled till the close of light,
Nor thought a day too long to make
One line or letter bright:
We also with an ardent mind,
Time, wealth, and fame forgot,
Our glory in our patience find
And skim, and skim the pot:
Till last, when round the house we hear
The evensong of birds,
One corner of blue heaven appear
In our clear well of words.

Leave, leave it then, muse of my heart!
Sans finish and sans frame,
Leave unadorned by needless art
The picture as it came.

XXVIII

TO AN ISLAND PRINCESS

Since long ago, a child at home,
I read and longed to rise and roam,
Where'er I went, whate'er I willed,
One promised land my fancy filled.
Hence the long roads my home I made;
Tossed much in ships; have often laid
Below the uncurtained sky my head,
Rain-deluged and wind-buffeted:
And many a thousand hills I crossed
And corners turned — Love's labour lost,
Till, Lady, to your isle of sun
I came not hoping; and, like one
Snatched out of blindness, rubbed my eyes,
And hailed my promised land with cries.
Yes, Lady, here I was at last;
Here found I all I had forecast:
The long roll of the sapphire sea
That keeps the land's virginity;
The stalwart giants of the wood
Laden with toys and flowers and food;
The precious forest pouring out
To compass the whole town about;
The town itself with streets of lawn,
Loved of the moon, blessed by the dawn,
Where the brown children all the day,
Keep up a ceaseless noise of play,

Play in the sun, play in the rain,
Nor ever quarrel or complain; —
And late at night, in the woods of fruit,
Hark I do you hear the passing flute?
I threw one look to either hand,
And knew I was in Fairyland.
And yet one point of being so
I lacked. For, Lady (as you know),
Whoever by his might of hand
Won entrance into Fairyland,
Found always with admiring eyes
A Fairy princess kind and wise.
It was not long I waited; soon
Upon my threshold, in broad noon,
Gracious and helpful, wise and good,
The Fairy Princess Moë stood.

Tantira, Tahiti, *Nov.* , .

This is the same Princess Moë whose charms of person and disposition have been recorded by the late Lord Pembroke in “South Sea Bubbles,” and by M. Pierre Loti in the “Mariage de Loti.”

XXIX

TO KALAKAUA

(WITH A PRESENT OF A PEARL)

The Silver Ship, my King — that was her name
In the bright islands whence your fathers came —
The Silver Ship, at rest from winds and tides,
Below your palace in your harbour rides:
And the seafarers, sitting safe on shore,
Like eager merchants count their treasures o’er.

One gift they find, one strange and lovely thing,
Now doubly precious since it pleased a king.
The right, my liege, is ancient as the lyre
For bards to give to kings what kings admire.
‘Tis mine to offer for Apollo’s sake;
And since the gift is fitting, yours to take.
To golden hands the golden pearl I bring:
The ocean jewel to the island king.
Honolulu, *Feb.* , .

The yacht *Casco* had been so called by the people of Fakarava in Tahiti.

XXX

TO PRINCESS KAIULANI

[Written in April to Kaiulani in the April of her age; and at Waikiki, within easy walk of Kaiulani’s banyan! When she comes to my land and her father’s, and the rain beats upon the window (as I fear it will), let her look at this page; it will be like a weed gathered and pressed at home; and she will remember her own islands, and the shadow of the mighty tree; and she will hear the peacocks screaming in the dusk and the wind blowing in the palms; and she will think of her father sitting there alone. — R. L. S.]

Forth from her land to mine she goes,

The island maid, the island rose,
Light of heart and bright of face:
The daughter of a double race.
Her islands here, in Southern sun,
Shall mourn their Kaiulani gone,
And I, in her dear banyan shade,
Look vainly for my little maid.
But our Scots islands far away
Shall glitter with unwonted day,
And cast for once their tempests by
To smile in Kaiulani’s eye.
Honolulu.

XXXI

TO MOTHER MARYANNE

To see the infinite pity of this place,
The mangled limb, the devastated face,
The innocent sufferer smiling at the rod —
A fool were tempted to deny his God.
He sees, he shrinks. But if he gaze again,
Lo, beauty springing from the breast of pain;
He marks the sisters on the mournful shores;
And even a fool is silent and adores.
Guest House, Kalawao, Molokai.

XXXII

IN MEMORIAM E.H.

I knew a silver head was bright beyond compare,
I knew a queen of toil with a crown of silver hair.
Garland of valour and sorrow, of beauty and renown,
Life, that honours the brave, crowned her himself with the crown.
The beauties of youth are frail, but this was a jewel of age.
Life, that delights in the brave, gave it himself for a gage.
Fair was the crown to behold, and beauty its poorest part —
At once the scar of the wound and the order pinned on the heart.
The beauties of man are frail, and the silver lies in the dust,
And the queen that we call to mind sleeps with the brave and the just;

Sleeps with the weary at length; but, honoured and ever fair,

Shines in the eye of the mind the crown of the silver hair.
Honolulu.

XXXIII

TO MY WIFE

(A FRAGMENT)
Long must elapse ere you behold again
Green forest frame the entry of the lane —
The wild lane with the bramble and the briar,
The year-old cart-tracks perfect in the mire,
The wayside smoke, perchance, the dwarfish huts,
And ramblers’ donkey drinking from the ruts: —
Long ere you trace how deviously it leads,
Back from man’s chimneys and the bleating meads
To the woodland shadow, to the silvan hush,
When but the brooklet chuckles in the brush —
Back from the sun and bustle of the vale
To where the great voice of the nightingale
Fills all the forest like a single room,
And all the banks smell of the golden broom;
So wander on until the eve descends,
And back returning to your firelit friends,
You see the rosy sun, despoiled of light,
Hung, caught in thickets, like a schoolboy’s kite.
Here from the sea the unfruitful sun shall rise,
Bathe the bare deck and blind the unshielded eyes;
The allotted hours aloft shall wheel in vain
And in the unpregnant ocean plunge again.
Assault of squalls that mock the watchful guard,
And pluck the bursting canvas from the yard,

And senseless clamour of the calm, at night
Must mar your slumbers. By the plunging light,
In beetle-haunted, most unwomanly bower
Of the wild-swerving cabin, hour by hour….
Schooner *Equator*.

XXXIV

TO MY OLD FAMILIARS

Do you remember — can we e’er forget? —

How, in the coiled perplexities of youth,
In our wild climate, in our scowling town,
We gloomed and shivered, sorrowed, sobbed and feared?
The belching winter wind, the missile rain,
The rare and welcome silence of the snows,
The laggard morn, the haggard day, the night,
The grimy spell of the nocturnal town,
Do you remember? — Ah, could one forget!
As when the fevered sick that all night long
Listed the wind intone, and hear at last
The ever-welcome voice of chanticleer
Sing in the bitter hour before the dawn, —
With sudden ardour, these desire the day:
So sang in the gloom of youth the bird of hope;
So we, exulting, hearkened and desired.
For lo! as in the palace porch of life
We huddled with chimeras, from within —
How sweet to hear! — the music swelled and fell,
And through the breach of the revolving doors
What dreams of splendour blinded us and fled!
I have since then contended and rejoiced;
Amid the glories of the house of life
Profoundly entered, and the shrine beheld:
Yet when the lamp from my expiring eyes

Shall dwindle and recede, the voice of love
Fall insignificant on my closing ears,
What sound shall come but the old cry of the wind
In our inclement city? what return
But the image of the emptiness of youth,
Filled with the sound of footsteps and that voice
Of discontent and rapture and despair?
So, as in darkness, from the magic lamp,
The momentary pictures gleam and fade
And perish, and the night resurges — these
Shall I remember, and then all forget.
Apemama.

XXXV

The tropics vanish, and meseems that I,
From Halkerside, from topmost Allermuir,
Or steep Caerketton, dreaming gaze again.
Far set in fields and woods, the town I see
Spring gallant from the shallows of her smoke,

Cragged, spired, and turreted, her virgin fort
Beflagged. About, on seaward-drooping hills,
New folds of city glitter. Last, the Forth
Wheels ample waters set with sacred isles,
And populous Fife smokes with a score of towns.
There, on the sunny frontage of a hill,
Hard by the house of kings, repose the dead,
My dead, the ready and the strong of word.
Their works, the salt-encrusted, still survive;
The sea bombards their founded towers; the night
Thrills pierced with their strong lamps. The artificers,
One after one, here in this grated cell,
Where the rain erases and the rust consumes,
Fell upon lasting silence. Continents
And continental oceans intervene;

A sea uncharted, on a lampless isle,
Environs and confines their wandering child
In vain. The voice of generations dead
Summons me, sitting distant, to arise,
My numerous footsteps nimbly to retrace,
And, all mutation over, stretch me down
In that denoted city of the dead.
Apemama.

XXXVI

TO S. C.

I heard the pulse of the besieging sea
Throb far away all night. I heard the wind
Fly crying and convulse tumultuous palms.
I rose and strolled. The isle was all bright sand,
And flailing fans and shadows of the palm;
The heaven all moon and wind and the blind vault;
The keenest planet slain, for Venus slept.
The king, my neighbour, with his host of wives,
Slept in the precinct of the palisade;
Where single, in the wind, under the moon,
Among the slumbering cabins, blazed a fire,
Sole street-lamp and the only sentinel.
To other lands and nights my fancy turned —
To London first, and chiefly to your house,
The many-pillared and the well-beloved.

There yearning fancy lighted; there again
In the upper room I lay, and heard far off
The unsleeping city murmur like a shell;
The muffled tramp of the Museum guard
Once more went by me; I beheld again
Lamps vainly brighten the dispeopled street;
Again I longed for the returning morn,
The awaking traffic, the bestirring birds,
The consentaneous trill of tiny song

That weaves round monumental cornices
A passing charm of beauty. Most of all,
For your light foot I wearied, and your knock
That was the glad réveillé of my day.
Lo, now, when to your task in the great house
At morning through the portico you pass,
One moment glance, where by the pillared wall
Far-voyaging island gods, begrimed with smoke,
Sit now unworshipped, the rude monument
Of faiths forgot and races undivined;
Sit now disconsolate, remembering well
The priest, the victim, and the songful crowd,
The blaze of the blue noon, and that huge voice,
Incessant, of the breakers on the shore.
As far as these from their ancestral shrine,
So far, so foreign, your divided friends
Wander, estranged in body, not in mind.
Apemama.

XXXVII

THE HOUSE OF TEMBINOKA

[At my departure from the island of Apemama, for which you will look in vain in most atlases, the King and I agreed, since we both set up to be in the poetical way, that we should celebrate our separation in verse. Whether or not his Majesty has been true to his bargain, the laggard posts of the Pacific may perhaps inform me in six months, perhaps not before a year. The following lines represent my part of the contract, and it is hoped, by their pictures of strange manners, they may entertain a civilised audience. Nothing throughout has been invented or exaggerated; the lady herein referred to as the author’s muse has confined herself to stringing into rhyme facts or legends that I saw or heard during two months’ residence upon the island. — R. L.

S.]
ENVOI
Let us, who part like brothers, part like bards;
And you in your tongue and measure, I in mine,
Our now division duly solemnise.
Unlike the strains, and yet the theme is one:

The strains unlike, and how unlike their fate!
You to the blinding palace-yard shall call
The prefect of the singers, and to him,
Listening devout, your valedictory verse
Deliver; he, his attribute fulfilled,
To the island chorus hand your measures on,
Wed now with harmony: so them, at last,
Night after night, in the open hall of dance,
Shall thirty matted men, to the clapped hand,
Intone and bray and bark. Unfortunate!
Paper and print alone shall honour mine.

THE SONG

Let now the King his ear arouse
And toss the bosky ringlets from his brows,
The while, our bond to implement,
My muse relates and praises his descent.

I
Bride of the shark, her valour first I sing
Who on the lone seas quickened of a King.
She, from the shore and puny homes of men,
Beyond the climber's sea-discerning ken,
Swam, led by omens; and devoid of fear,
Beheld her monstrous paramour draw near.
She gazed; all round her to the heavenly pale,
The simple sea was void of isle or sail —
Sole overhead the unsparing sun was reared —
When the deep bubbled and the brute appeared.
But she, secure in the decrees of fate,
Made strong her bosom and received the mate,

And, men declare, from that marine embrace
Conceived the virtues of a stronger race.

II
Her stern descendant next I praise,
Survivor of a thousand frays: —
In the hall of tongues who ruled the throng;
Led and was trusted by the strong;
And when spears were in the wood,
Like a tower of vantage stood: —
Whom, not till seventy years had sped,
Unscarred of breast, erect of head,
Still light of step, still bright of look,
The hunter, Death, had overtook.

III
His sons, the brothers twain, I sing.
Of whom the elder reigned a King.
No Childeric he, yet much declined
From his rude sire’s imperious mind,
Until his day came when he died,
He lived, he reigned, he versified.
But chiefly him I celebrate
That was the pillar of the state,
Ruled, wise of word and bold of mien,
The peaceful and the warlike scene;
And played alike the leader’s part
In lawful and unlawful art.
His soldiers with emboldened ears
Heard him laugh among the spears.
He could deduce from age to age
The web of island parentage;
Best lay the rhyme, best lead the dance,
For any festal circumstance:

And fitly fashion oar and boat,
A palace or an armour coat.
None more availed than he to raise
The strong, suffumigating blaze,
Or knot the wizard leaf: none more,
Upon the untrodden windward shore
Of the isle, beside the beating main,
To cure the sickly and constrain,
With muttered words and waving rods,
The gibbering and the whistling gods.
But he, though thus with hand and head
He ruled, commanded, charmed, and led,

And thus in virtue and in might
Towered to contemporary sight —
Still in fraternal faith and love,
Remained below to reach above,
Gave and obeyed the apt command,
Pilot and vassal of the land.

IV
My Tembinok’ from men like these
Inherited his palaces,
His right to rule, his powers of mind,
His cocoa-islands sea-enshrined.
Stern bearer of the sword and whip,
A master passed in mastership,
He learned, without the spur of need,
To write, to cipher, and to read;
From all that touch on his prone shore
Augments his treasury of lore,
Eager in age as erst in youth
To catch an art, to learn a truth,
To paint on the internal page
A clearer picture of the age.

His age, you say? But ah, not so!
In his lone isle of long ago,
A royal Lady of Shalott,
Sea-sundered, he beholds it not;
He only hears it far away.
The stress of equatorial day
He suffers; he records the while
The vapid annals of the isle;
Slaves bring him praise of his renown,
Or cackle of the palm-tree town;
The rarer ship and the rare boat
He marks; and only hears remote,
Where thrones and fortunes rise and reel,
The thunder of the turning wheel.

V
For the unexpected tears he shed
At my departing, may his lion head
Not whiten, his revolving years
No fresh occasion minister of tears;
At book or cards, at work or sport,

Him may the breeze across the palace court
For ever fan; and swelling near
For ever the loud song divert his ear.
Schooner *Equator*, at Sea.

XXXVIII

THE WOODMAN

In all the grove, nor stream nor bird
Nor aught beside my blows was heard,
And the woods wore their noonday dress —
The glory of their silentness.

From the island summit to the seas,
Trees mounted, and trees drooped, and trees
Groped upward in the gaps. The green
Inarboured talus and ravine
By fathoms. By the multitude,
The rugged columns of the wood
And bunches of the branches stood:
Thick as a mob, deep as a sea,
And silent as eternity.
With lowered axe, with backward head,
Late from this scene my labourer fled,
And with a ravelled tale to tell,
Returned. Some denizen of hell,
Dead man or disinvested god,
Had close behind him peered and trod,
And triumphed when he turned to flee.
How different fell the lines with me!
Whose eye explored the dim arcade
Impatient of the uncoming shade —
Shy elf, or dryad pale and cold,
Or mystic lingerer from of old:
Vainly. The fair and stately things,
Impassive as departed kings,
All still in the wood's stillness stood,
And dumb. The rooted multitude
Nodded and brooded, bloomed and dreamed,
Unmeaning, undivined. It seemed
No other art, no hope, they knew,
Than clutch the earth and seek the blue.
'Mid vegetable king and priest

And stripling, I (the only beast)
Was at the beast's work, killing; hewed
The stubborn roots across, bestrewed
The glebe with the dislustred leaves,
And bade the saplings fall in sheaves;

Bursting across the tangled math
A ruin that I called a path,
A Golgotha that, later on,
When rains had watered, and suns shone,
And seeds enriched the place, should bear
And be called garden. Here and there,
I spied and plucked by the green hair
A foe more resolute to live,
The toothed and killing sensitive.
He, semi-conscious, fled the attack;
He shrank and tucked his branches back;
And straining by his anchor strand,
Captured and scratched the rooting hand.
I saw him crouch, I felt him bite;
And straight my eyes were touched with sight.
I saw the wood for what it was;
The lost and the victorious cause;
The deadly battle pitched in line,
Saw silent weapons cross and shine:
Silent defeat, silent assault,
A battle and a burial vault.
Thick round me in the teeming mud
Briar and fern strove to the blood.
The hooked liana in his gin
Noosed his reluctant neighbours in:
There the green murderer throve and spread,
Upon his smothering victims fed,
And wantoned on his climbing coil.
Contending roots fought for the soil
Like frightened demons: with despair
Competing branches pushed for air.
Green conquerors from overhead
Bestrode the bodies of their dead;
The Caesars of the silvan field,
Unused to fail, foredoomed to yield:

For in the groins of branches, lo!
The cancers of the orchid grow.

Silent as in the listed ring
Two chartered wrestlers strain and cling,
Dumb as by yellow Hooghly's side
The suffocating captives died:
So hushed the woodland warfare goes
Unceasing; and the silent foes
Grapple and smother, strain and clasp
Without a cry, without a gasp.
Here also sound Thy fans, O God,
Here too Thy banners move abroad:
Forest and city, sea and shore,
And the whole earth, Thy threshing-floor!
The drums of war, the drums of peace,
Roll through our cities without cease,
And all the iron halls of life
Ring with the unremitting strife.
The common lot we scarce perceive.
Crowds perish, we nor mark nor grieve:
The bugle calls — we mourn a few!
What corporal's guard at Waterloo?
What scanty hundreds more or less
In the man-devouring Wilderness?
What handful bled on Delhi ridge?
— See, rather, London, on thy bridge
The pale battalions trample by,
Resolved to slay, resigned to die.
Count, rather, all the maimed and dead
In the unbrotherly war of bread.
See, rather, under sultrier skies
What vegetable Londons rise,
And teem, and suffer without sound.
Or in your tranquil garden ground,
Contented, in the falling gloom,
Saunter and see the roses bloom.

That these might live, what thousands died!
All day the cruel hoe was plied;
The ambulance barrow rolled all day;
Your wife, the tender, kind, and gay,
Donned her long gauntlets, caught the spud
And bathed in vegetable blood;
And the long massacre now at end,
See! where the lazy coils ascend,
See, where the bonfire sputters red

At even, for the innocent dead.
Why prate of peace? when, warriors all,
We clank in harness into hall,
And ever bare upon the board
Lies the necessary sword.
In the green field or quiet street,
Besieged we sleep, beleaguered eat;
Labour by day and wake o' nights,
In war with rival appetites.
The rose on roses feeds; the lark
On larks. The sedentary clerk
All morning with a diligent pen
Murders the babes of other men;
And like the beasts of wood and park,
Protects his whelps, defends his den.
Unshamed the narrow aim I hold;
I feed my sheep, patrol my fold;
Breathe war on wolves and rival flocks,
A pious outlaw on the rocks
Of God and morning; and when time
Shall bow, or rivals break me, climb
Where no undubbed civilian dares,
In my war harness, the loud stairs
Of honour; and my conqueror
Hail me a warrior fallen in war.
Vailima.

XXXIX

TROPIC RAIN

As the single pang of the blow, when the metal is mingled well,
Rings and lives and resounds in all the bounds of the bell,
So the thunder above spoke with a single tongue,
So in the heart of the mountain the sound of it rumbled and clung.
Sudden the thunder was drowned — quenched was the levin light —
And the angel-spirit of rain laughed out loud in the night.
Loud as the maddened river raves in the cloven glen,
Angel of rain! you laughed and leaped on the roofs of men;
And the sleepers sprang in their beds, and joyed and feared as you fell.
You struck, and my cabin quailed; the roof of it roared like a bell.
You spoke, and at once the mountain shouted and shook with brooks.
You ceased, and the day returned, rosy, with virgin looks.

And methought that beauty and terror are only one, not two;
And the world has room for love, and death, and thunder, and dew;
And all the sinews of hell slumber in summer air;
And the face of God is a rock, but the face of the rock is fair.

Beneficent streams of tears flow at the finger of pain;
And out of the cloud that smites, beneficent rivers of rain.
Vailima.

XL

AN END OF TRAVEL

Let now your soul in this substantial world
Some anchor strike. Be here the body moored; —
This spectacle immutably from now
The picture in your eye; and when time strikes,
And the green scene goes on the instant blind —
The ultimate helpers, where your horse to-day
Conveyed you dreaming, bear your body dead.
Vailima.

XLI
We uncommiserate pass into the night
From the loud banquet, and departing leave
A tremor in men's memories, faint and sweet
And frail as music. Features of our face,
The tones of the voice, the touch of the loved hand,
Perish and vanish, one by one, from earth:
Meanwhile, in the hall of song, the multitude
Applauds the new performer. One, perchance,
One ultimate survivor lingers on,
And smiles, and to his ancient heart recalls
The long forgotten. Ere the morrow die,
He too, returning, through the curtain comes,
And the new age forgets us and goes on.

XLII
Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.
Mull was astern, Rum on the port,

Eigg on the starboard bow;
Glory of youth glowed in his soul:
Where is that glory now?
Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.
Give me again all that was there,
Give me the sun that shone!
Give me the eyes, give me the soul,
Give me the lad that's gone!
Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.
Billow and breeze, islands and seas,
Mountains of rain and sun,
All that was good, all that was fair,
All that was me is gone.

XLIII

TO S.R. CROCKETT

(ON RECEIVING A DEDICATION)

Blows the wind to-day, and the sun and the rain are flying,
Blows the wind on the moors to-day and now,
Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying,
My heart remembers how!
Grey recumbent tombs of the dead in desert places,
Standing-stones on the vacant wine-red moor,
Hills of sheep, and the homes of the silent vanished races,
And winds, austere and pure:
Be it granted me to behold you again in dying,
Hills of home! and to hear again the call;
Hear about the graves of the martyrs the peewees crying,
And hear no more at all.
Vailima.

XLIV

EVENSONG

The embers of the day are red
Beyond the murky hill.
The kitchen smokes: the bed
In the darkling house is spread:
The great sky darkens overhead,

And the great woods are shrill.
So far have I been led,
Lord, by Thy will:
So far I have followed, Lord, and wondered still.
The breeze from the embalmèd land
Blows sudden toward the shore,
And claps my cottage door.
I hear the signal, Lord — I understand.
The night at Thy command
Comes. I will eat and sleep and will not question more.
Vailima.

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A FAMILIAR EPISTLE

Blame me not that this epistle
Is the first you have from me;
Idleness hath held me fettered;
But at last the times are bettered,
And once more I wet my whistle
Here in France beside the sea.
All the green and idle weather,
I have had in sun and shower
Such an easy, warm subsistence,
Such an indolent existence,
I should find it hard to sever
Day from day and hour from hour.
Many a tract-provided ranter
May upbraid me, dark and sour,
Many a bland Utilitarian,
Or excited Millenarian,
— ”*Pereunt et imputantur*” —
You must speak to every hour.
But (the very term’s deception)
You at least, my Friend, will see
That in sunny grassy meadows,
Trailed across by moving shadows,
To be actively receptive
Is as much as man can be.

He that all the winter grapples
Difficulties — thrust and ward —
Needs to cheer him thro’ his duty
Memories of sun and beauty,
Orchards with the russet apples
Lying scattered on the sward.
Many such I keep in prison,
Keep them here at heart unseen,
Till my muse again rehearses
Long years hence, and in my verses
You shall meet them re-arisen,
Ever comely, ever green.
You know how they never perish,
How, in time of later art,
Memories consecrate and sweeten

Those defaced and tempest-beaten
Flowers of former years we cherish
Half a life, against our heart.
Most, those love-fruits withered greenly,
Those frail, sickly amourettes, —
How they brighten with the distance,
Take new strength and new existence,
Till we see them sitting queenly
Crowned and courted by regrets!
All that loveliest and best is,
Aureole-fashion round their head,
They that looked in life but plainly,
How they stir our spirits vainly
When they come to us, Alcestis —
Like returning from the dead!

Not the old love but another,
Bright she comes at memory's call,
Our forgotten vows reviving
To a newer, livelier living,
As the dead child to the mother
Seems the fairest child of all.
Thus our Goethe, sacred master,
Travelling backward thro' his youth,
Surely wandered wrong in trying
To renew the old, undying
Loves that cling in memory faster
Than they ever lived in truth.
Boulogne-sur-Mer, *September* .

II

RONDELS

Far have you come, my lady, from the town,
And far from all your sorrows, if you please,
To smell the good sea-winds and hear the seas,
And in green meadows lay your body down.
To find your pale face grow from pale to brown,
Your sad eyes growing brighter by degrees;
Far have you come, my lady, from the town,
And far from all your sorrows, if you please.
Here in this seaboard land of old renown,

In meadow grass go wading to the knees;
Bathe your whole soul a while in simple ease;
There is no sorrow but the sea can drown;
Far have you come, my lady, from the town.

Nous n'irons plus au bois
We'll walk the woods no more,
But stay beside the fire,
To weep for old desire
And things that are no more.
The woods are spoiled and hoar,
The ways are full of mire;
We'll walk the woods no more,
But stay beside the fire.
We loved, in days of yore,
Love, laughter, and the lyre.
Ah God, but death is dire,
And death is at the door —
We'll walk the woods no more.
Château Renard, *August* .

Since I am sworn to live my life
And not to keep an easy heart,
Some men may sit and drink apart,
I bear a banner in the strife.
Some can take quiet thought to wife,
I am all day at *tierce* and *carte*,
Since I am sworn to live my life
And not to keep an easy heart.
I follow gaily to the fife,
Leave Wisdom bowed above a chart,
And Prudence brawing in the mart,
And dare Misfortune to the knife,
Since I am sworn to live my life.

OF HIS PITIABLE TRANSFORMATION

I who was young so long,

Young and alert and gay,
Now that my hair is grey,
Begin to change my song.
Now I know right from wrong,
Now I know *pay* and *pray*,
I who was young so long,
Young and alert and gay.
Now I follow the throng,
Walk in the beaten way,
Hear what the elders say,
And own that I was wrong —
I who was young so long.
.

III

EPISTLE TO CHARLES BAXTER

Noo lyart leaves blaw ower the green,
Red are the bonny woods o' Dean,
An' here we're back in Embro, freen',
To pass the winter.
Whilk noo, wi' frosts afore, draws in,
An' snaws ahint her.
I've seen 's hae days to fricht us a',
The Pentlands poothered weel wi' snaw,
The ways half-smoored wi' liquid thaw,
An' half-congealin',
The snell an' scowtherin' norther blaw
Frae blae Brunteelan'.

I've seen 's been unco sweir to sally,
And at the door-cheeks daff an' dally,
Seen 's daidle thus an' shilly-shally
For near a minute —
Sae cauld the wind blew up the valley,
The deil was in it! —
Syne spread the silk an' tak the gate,
In blast an' blaudin', rain, deil hae 't!
The hale toon glintin', stane an' slate,
Wi' cauld an' weet,
An' to the Court, gin we 'se be late,
Bicker oor feet.
And at the Court, tae, aft I saw

Whaur Advocates by twa an’ twa
Gang gesterin’ end to end the ha’
In weeg an’ goon,
To crack o’ what ye wull but Law
The hale forenoon.
That muckle ha’, maist like a kirk,
I’ve kent at braid mid-day sae mirk
Ye’d seen white weegs an’ faces lurk
Like ghaists frae Hell,
But whether Christian ghaists or Turk,
Deil ane could tell.
The three fires lunted in the gloom,
The wind blew like the blast o’ doom,
The rain upo’ the roof abune
Played Peter Dick —
Ye wad nae’d licht enough i’ the room
Your teeth to pick!

But, freend, ye ken how me an’ you,
The ling-lang lanely winter through,
Keep’d a guid speerit up, an’ true
To lore Horatian,
We aye the ither bottle drew
To inclination.
Sae let us in the comin’ days
Stand sicker on our auncient ways —
The strauchtest road in a’ the maze
Since Eve ate apples;
An’ let the winter weet our cla’es —
We’ll weet oor thrapples.
Edinburgh, *October* .

IV

THE SUSQUEHANNAH AND THE DELAWARE

Of where or how, I nothing know;
And why, I do not care;
Enough if, even so,
My travelling eyes, my travelling mind can go
By flood and field and hill, by wood and meadow fair,
Beside the Susquehannah and along the Delaware.
I think, I hope, I dream no more
The dreams of otherwhere,

The cherished thoughts of yore;
I have been changed from what I was before;
And drunk too deep perchance the lotus of the air,
Beside the Susquehannah and along the Delaware.

Unweary, God me yet shall bring
To lands of brighter air,
Where I, now half a king,
Shall with enfranchised spirit loudlier sing,
And wear a bolder front than that which now I wear
Beside the Susquehannah and along the Delaware.
August .

V

EPISTLE TO ALBERT DEW-SMITH

Figure me to yourself, I pray —
A man of my peculiar cut —
Apart from dancing and deray,
Into an Alpine valley shut;
Shut in a kind of damned Hotel,
Discountenanced by God and man;
The food? — Sir, you would do as well
To cram your belly full of bran.
The company? Alas, the day
That I should dwell with such a crew,
With devil anything to say,
Nor any one to say it to!
The place? Although they call it Platz,
I will be bold and state my view;
It's not a place at all — and that's
The bottom verity, my Dew.

There are, as I will not deny,
Innumerable inns; a road;
Several Alps indifferent high;
The snow's inviolable abode;
Eleven English parsons, all
Entirely inoffensive; four
True human beings — what I call
Human — the deuce a cipher more;
A climate of surprising worth;
Innumerable dogs that bark;

Some air, some weather, and some earth;
A native race — God save the mark! —
A race that works, yet cannot work,
Yodels, but cannot yodel right,
Such as, unhelp'd, with rusty dirk,
I vow that I could wholly smite.
A river that from morn to night
Down all the valley plays the fool;
Not once she pauses in her flight,
Nor knows the comfort of a pool;
But still keeps up, by straight or bend,
The selfsame pace she hath begun —
Still hurry, hurry, to the end —
Good God, is that the way to run?
If I a river were, I hope
That I should better realise
The opportunities and scope
Of that romantic enterprise.

I should not ape the merely strange,
But aim besides at the divine;
And continuity and change
I still should labour to combine.
Here should I gallop down the race,
Here charge the sterling like a bull;
There, as a man might wipe his face,
Lie, pleased and panting, in a pool.
But what, my Dew, in idle mood,
What prate I, minding not my debt?
What do I talk of bad or good?
The best is still a cigarette.
Me whether evil fate assault,
Or smiling providences crown —
Whether on high the eternal vault
Be blue, or crash with thunder down —
I judge the best, whate'er befall,
Is still to sit on one's behind,
And, having duly moistened all,
Smoke with an unperturbed mind.
Davos, *November* .

"The whole front of the house was lighted, and there were pipes and fiddles, and as much dancing and deray within as used to be in Sir Robert's house at Pace and Yule, and such high seasons." — See

“Wandering Willie’s Tale” in “Redgauntlet,” borrowed perhaps from “Christ’s Kirk of the Green.”

In architecture, a series of piles to defend the pier of a bridge.

VI

ALCAICS TO HORATIO F. BROWN

Brave lads in olden musical centuries,
Sang, night by night, adorable choruses,
Sat late by alehouse doors in April
Chaunting in joy as the moon was rising:

Moon-seen and merry, under the trellises,
Flush-faced they played with old polysyllables;
Spring scents inspired, old wine diluted;
Love and Apollo were there to chorus.
Now these, the songs, remain to eternity,
Those, only those, the bountiful choristers
Gone — those are gone, those unremembered
Sleep and are silent in earth for ever.
So man himself appears and evanishes,
So smiles and goes; as wanderers halting at
Some green-embowered house, play their music,
Play and are gone on the windy highway;
Yet dwells the strain enshrined in the memory
Long after they departed eternally,
Forth-faring tow’rd far mountain summits,
Cities of men on the sounding Ocean.
Youth sang the song in years immemorial;
Brave chanticleer, he sang and was beautiful;
Bird-haunted, green tree-tops in springtime
Heard and were pleased by the voice of singing;
Youth goes, and leaves behind him a prodigy —
Songs sent by thee afar from Venetian
Sea-grey lagunes, sea-paven highways,
Dear to me here in my Alpine exile.
Davos, *Spring* .

VII

A LYTLE JAPE OF TUSHERIE

By A. Tusher
The pleasant river gushes
Among the meadows green;
At home the author tushes;
For him it flows unseen.
The Birds among the Bushes
May wanton on the spray;
But vain for him who tushes
The brightness of the day!
The frog among the rushes
Sits singing in the blue.
By ‘r la’kin! but these tushes
Are wearisome to do!
The task entirely crushes
The spirit of the bard:
God pity him who tushes —
His task is very hard.
The filthy gutter slushes,
The clouds are full of rain,
But doomed is he who tushes
To tush and tush again.
At morn with his hair-brushes,
Still “tush” he says and weeps;
At night again he tushes,
And tushes till he sleeps.

And when at length he pushes
Beyond the river dark —
‘Las, to the man who tushes,
“Tush” shall be God’s remark!
Hyères, *May* .

VIII

TO VIRGIL AND DORA WILLIAMS

Here, from the forelands of the tideless sea,
Behold and take my offering unadorned.
In the Pacific air it sprang; it grew
Among the silence of the Alpine air;
In Scottish heather blossomed; and at last
By that unshapen sapphire, in whose face
Spain, Italy, France, Algiers, and Tunis view
Their introverted mountains, came to fruit.

Back now, my Booklet! on the diving ship,
And posting on the rails, to home return, —
Home, and the friends whose honouring name you bear.
Hyères, .

IX

BURLESQUE SONNET

TO ÆNEAS WILLIAM MACKINTOSH

Thee, Mackintosh, artificer of light,
Thee, the lone smoker hails! the student, thee;
Thee, oft upon the ungovernable sea,
The seaman, conscious of approaching night;
Thou, with industrious fingers, hast outright
Mastered that art, of other arts the key,
That bids thick night before the morning flee,
And lingering day retains for mortal sight.

O Promethean workman, thee I hail,
Thee hallowed, thee unparalleled, thee bold
To affront the reign of sleep and darkness old,
Thee William, thee Æneas, thee I sing;
Thee by the glimmering taper clear and pale,
Of light, and light’s purveyance, hail, the king.

X

THE FINE PACIFIC ISLANDS

(HEARD IN A PUBLIC-HOUSE AT ROTHERHITHE)

The jolly English Yellowboy
Is a ‘ansome coin when new,
The Yankee Double-eagle
Is large enough for two.
O, these may do for seaport towns,
For cities these may do;
But the dibbs that takes the Hislands
Are the dollars of Peru:
O, the fine Pacific Hislands,
O, the dollars of Peru!
It’s there we buy the cocoanuts
Mast ‘eaded in the blue;

It’s there we trap the lasses
All waiting for the crew;
It’s there we buy the trader’s rum
What bores a seaman through....
In the fine Pacific Hislands
With the dollars of Peru:
In the fine Pacific Hislands
With the dollars of Peru!

Now, messmates, when my watch is up,
And I am quite broached to,
I’ll give a tip to ‘Evving
Of the ‘ansome thing to do:
Let ‘em just refit this sailor-man
And launch him off anew
To cruise among the Hislands
With the dollars of Peru:
In the fine Pacific Hislands
With the dollars of Peru!
Tahiti, *August* .

XI

AULD REEKIE

When chitterin’ cauld the day sall daw,
Loud may your bonny bugles blaw
And loud your drums may beat.
Hie owre the land at evenfa’
Your lamps may glitter raw by raw,
Along the gowsty street.
I gang nae mair where ance I gaed,
By Brunston, Fairmileheid, or Braid;
But far frae Kirk and Tron.
O still ayont the muckle sea,
Still are ye dear, and dear to me,
Auld Reekie, still and on!

XII

THE LESSON OF THE MASTER

TO HENRY JAMES

Adela, Adela, Adela Chart,
What have you done to my elderly heart?
Of all the ladies of paper and ink
I count you the paragon, call you the pink.
The word of your brother depicts you in part:
“You raving maniac!” Adela Chart;
But in all the asylums that cumber the ground,
So delightful a maniac was ne’er to be found.
I pore on you, dote on you, clasp you to heart,
I laud, love, and laugh at you, Adela Chart,
And thank my dear maker the while I admire
That I can be neither your husband nor sire.
Your husband’s, your sire’s, were a difficult part;
You’re a byway to suicide, Adela Chart;
But to read of, depicted by exquisite James,
O, sure you’re the flower and quintessence of dames.
Vailima, *October* .

XIII

THE CONSECRATION OF BRAILLE

TO MRS. A. BAKER

I was a barren tree before,
I blew a quenchèd coal,
I could not, on their midnight shore,
The lonely blind console.

A moment, lend your hand, I bring
My sheaf for you to bind,
And you can teach my words to sing
In the darkness of the blind.
Vailima, *December* .

XIV

SONG

Light foot and tight foot,
And green grass spread,
Early in the morning,
But hope is on ahead.
Brief day and bright day,
And sunset red,

Early in the evening,
The stars are overhead.

THE LIGHT-KEEPER

I
The brilliant kernel of the night,
The flaming lightroom circles me:
I sit within a blaze of light
Held high above the dusky sea.
Far off the surf doth break and roar
Along bleak miles of moonlit shore,
Where through the tides the tumbling wave
Falls in an avalanche of foam
And drives its churnèd waters home
Up many an undercliff and cave.
The clear bell chimes: the clockworks strain:
The turning lenses flash and pass,
Frame turning within glittering frame
With frosty gleam of moving glass:
Unseen by me, each dusky hour
The sea-waves welter up the tower
Or in the ebb subside again;
And ever and anon all night,
Drawn from afar by charm of light,
A sea-bird beats against the pane.
And lastly when dawn ends the night
And belts the semi-orb of sea,
The tall, pale pharos in the light
Looks white and spectral as may be.

The early ebb is out: the green
Straight belt of sea-weed now is seen,
That round the basement of the tower
Marks out the interspace of tide;
And watching men are heavy-eyed,
And sleepless lips are dry and sour.
The night is over like a dream:
The sea-birds cry and dip themselves;
And in the early sunlight, steam
The newly-bared and dripping shelves,
Around whose verge the glassy wave
With lisping wash is heard to lave;
While, on the white tower lifted high,
With yellow light in faded glass
The circling lenses flash and pass,

And sickly shine against the sky.
1869.

II

As the steady lenses circle
With a frosty gleam of glass;
And the clear bell chimes,
And the oil brims over the lip of the burner,
Quiet and still at his desk,
The lonely light-keeper
Holds his vigil.
Lured from afar,
The bewildered sea-gull beats
Dully against the lantern;
Yet he stirs not, lifts not his head
From the desk where he reads,
Lifts not his eyes to see
The chill blind circle of night
Watching him through the panes.

This is his country's guardian,
The outmost sentry of peace.
This is the man,
Who gives up all that is lovely in living
For the means to live.
Poetry cunningly gilds
The life of the Light-Keeper,
Held on high in the blackness
In the burning kernel of night.
The seaman sees and blesses him;
The Poet, deep in a sonnet,
Numbers his inky fingers
Fitly to praise him:
Only we behold him,
Sitting, patient and stolid,
Martyr to a salary.
1870.

The Poems

Stevenson's childhood home, 17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF POEMS

TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM
A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES
BED IN SUMMER
A THOUGHT
AT THE SEA-SIDE
YOUNG NIGHT-THOUGHT
WHOLE DUTY OF CHILDREN
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TO N. V. de G. S.
TO WILL. H. LOW
TO MRS. WILL. H. LOW
TO H. F. BROWN

TO ANDREW LANG
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THE SCOTSMAN’S RETURN FROM ABROAD
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MY CONSCIENCE!
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THE SLAYING OF TÁMATÉA
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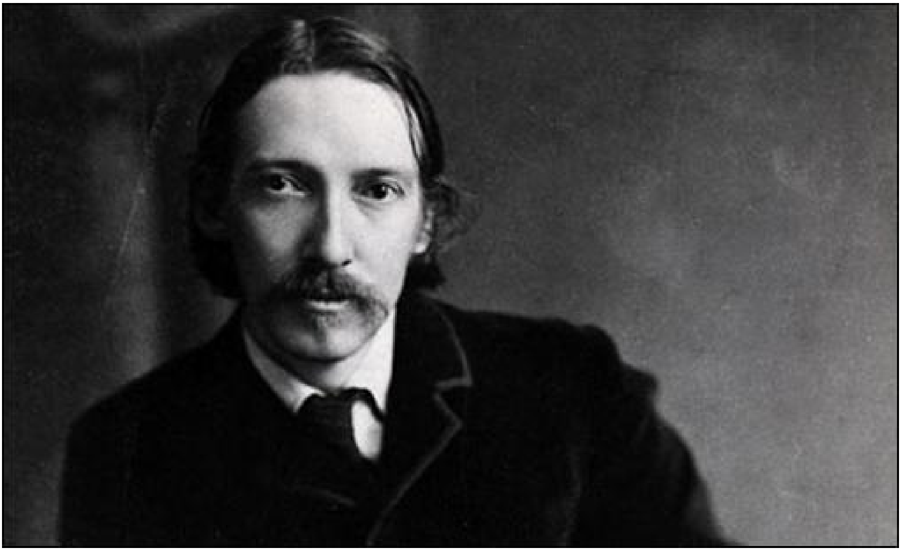
The Plays

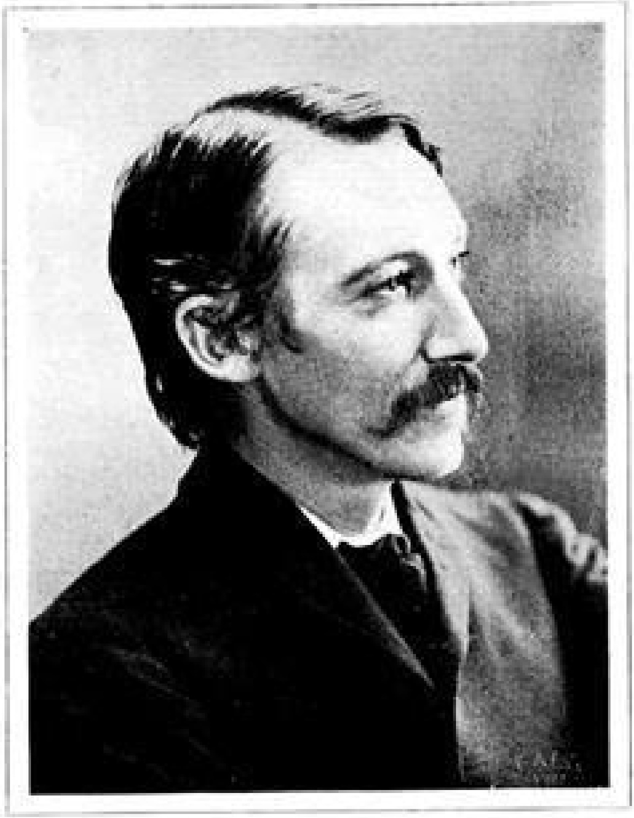


DEACON BRODIE

OR

THE DOUBLE LIFE

A MELODRAMA IN FIVE ACTS AND EIGHT TABLEAUX



Yours very truly

Robert Louis Stevenson

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SCENE VI
SCENE VII

PERSONS REPRESENTED

William Brodie, Deacon of the Wrights, Housebreaker and Master Carpenter
Old Brodie, the Deacon’s Father
William Lawson, Procurator-Fiscal, the Deacon’s Uncle
Andrew Ainslie,
Humphrey Moore,
George Smith,
Robbers in the Deacon’s Gang
CaptainRivers, an English Highwayman
Hunt, a Bow Street Runner
A Doctor
Walter Leslie
Mary Brodie, the Deacon’s Sister
Jean Watt, the Deacon’s Mistress
Vagabonds, Officers of the Watch, Men-servants

The Scene is laid in Edinburgh. The Time is towards the close of the Eighteenth Century. The Action, some fifty hours long, begins at eight p.m. on Saturday and ends before midnight on Monday

DEACON BRODIE
OR THE DOUBLE LIFE

ACT I

TABLEAU I

The Double Life

The Stage represents a room in the Deacon's house, furnished partly as a sitting-, partly as a bed-room, in the style of an easy burgess of about 1780. C., a door; L.C., second and smaller door; R.C., practicable window; L., alcove, supposed to contain bed; at the back, a clothes-press and a corner cupboard containing bottles, etc.

Mary Brodie at needlework; Old Brodie, a paralytic, in wheeled chair, at the fireside, L.

SCENE I

To these, Leslie, C.

Leslie. May I come in, Mary?

Mary. Why not?

Leslie. I scarce knew where to find you.

Mary. The dad and I must have a corner, must we not? So when my brother's friends are in the parlour he allows us to sit in his room. 'Tis a great favour, I can tell you; the place is sacred.

Leslie. Are you sure that "sacred" is strong enough?

Mary. You are satirical!

Leslie. I? And with regard to the Deacon? Believe me, I am not so ill-advised. You have trained me well, and I feel by him as solemnly as a true-born Brodie.

Mary. And now you are impertinent! Do you mean to go any further? We are a fighting race, we Brodies. O, you may laugh, sir! But 'tis no child's play to jest us on our Deacon, or, for that matter, on our Deacon's chamber either. It was his father's before him: he works in it by day and sleeps in it by night; and scarce anything it contains but is the labour of his hands. Do you see this table, Walter? He made it while he was yet a 'prentice. I remember how I used to sit and watch him at his work. It would be grand, I thought, to be able to do as he did, and handle edge-tools without cutting my fingers, and getting my ears pulled for a meddlesome minx! He used to give me his mallet to keep and his nails to hold; and didn't I fly when he called for them! and wasn't I proud to be ordered about with them! And then, you know, there is the tall cabinet yonder; that it was that proved him the first of Edinburgh joiners, and worthy to be their Deacon and their head. And the father's chair, and the sister's work-box, and the dear dead mother's footstool — what are they all but proofs of the Deacon's skill, and tokens of the Deacon's care for those about him?

Leslie. I am all penitence. Forgive me this last time, and I promise you I never will again.

Mary. Candidly, now, do you think you deserve forgiveness?

Leslie. Candidly, I do not.

Mary. Then I suppose you must have it. What have you done with Willie and my uncle?

Leslie. I left them talking deeply. The dear old Procurator has not much thought just now for anything but those mysterious burglaries — —

Mary. I know! — —

Leslie. Still, all of him that is not magistrate and official is politician and citizen; and he has been striving his hardest to undermine the Deacon's principles, and win the Deacon's vote and interest.

Mary. They are worth having, are they not?

Leslie. The Procurator seems to think that having them makes the difference between winning and losing.

Mary. Did he say so? You may rely upon it that he knows. There are not many in Edinburgh who can match with our Will.

Leslie. There shall be as many as you please, and not one more.

Mary. How I should like to have heard you! What did uncle say? Did he speak of the Town Council again? Did he tell Will what a wonderful Bailie he would make? O, why did you come away?

Leslie. I could not pretend to listen any longer. The election is months off yet; and if it were not — if it were tramping up-stairs this moment — drums, flags, cockades, guineas, candidates, and all! — how should I care for it? What are Whig and Tory to me?

Mary. O, fie on you! It is for every man to concern himself in the common weal. Mr. Leslie — Leslie of the Craig! — should know that much at least.

Leslie. And be a politician like the Deacon! All in good time, but not now. I hearkened while I could, and when I could no more I slipped out and followed my heart. I hoped I should be welcome.

Mary. I suppose you mean to be unkind.

Leslie. Tit for tat. Did you not ask me why I came away? And is it usual for a young lady to say "Mr." to the man she means to marry?

Mary. That is for the young lady to decide, sir.

Leslie. And against that judgment there shall be no appeal?

Mary. O, if you mean to argue! — —

Leslie. I do not mean to argue. I am content to love and be loved. I think I am the happiest man in the world.

Mary. That is as it should be; for I am the happiest girl.

Leslie. Why not say the happiest wife? I have your word, and you have mine. Is not that enough?

Mary. Have you so soon forgotten? Did I not tell you how it must be as my brother wills? I can do only as he bids me.

Leslie. Then you have not spoken as you promised?

Mary. I have been too happy to speak.

Leslie. I am his friend. Precious as you are, he will trust you to me. He has but to know how I love you, Mary, and how your life is all in your love of me, to give us his blessing with a full heart.

Mary. I am sure of him. It is that which makes my happiness complete. Even to our marriage I should find it hard to say "Yes" when he said "No."

Leslie. Your father is trying to speak. I'll wager he echoes you.

Mary (*to Old Brodie*). My poor dearie! Do you want to say anything to me? No? Is it to Mr. Leslie, then?

Leslie. I am listening, Mr. Brodie.

Mary. What is it, daddie?

Old Brodie. My son — the Deacon — Deacon Brodie — the first at school.

Leslie. I know it, Mr. Brodie. Was I not the last in the same class? (*To Mary.*) But he seems to have forgotten us.

Mary. O, yes! his mind is wellnigh gone. He will sit for hours as you see him, and never speak nor stir but at the touch of Will's hand or the sound of Will's name.

Leslie. It is so good to sit beside you. By and by it will always be like this. You will not let me speak to the Deacon? You are fast set upon speaking yourself? I could be so eloquent, Mary — I would touch him. I cannot tell you how I fear to trust my happiness to any one else — even to you.

Mary. He must hear of my good fortune from none but me. And, besides, you do not understand. We are not like other families, we Brodies. We are so clannish, we hold so close together.

Leslie. You Brodies, and your Deacon!

Old Brodie. Deacon of his craft, sir — Deacon of the Wrights — my son! If his mother — his mother — had but lived to see!

Mary. You hear how he runs on. A word about my brother and he catches it. 'Tis as if he were awake in his poor blind way to all the Deacon's care for him and all the Deacon's kindness to me. I believe he only lives in the thought of the Deacon. There, it is not so long since I was one with him. But indeed I think we are all Deacon-mad, we Brodies. — Are we not, daddie dear?

Brodie (*without, and entering*). You are a mighty magistrate, Procurator, but you seem to have met your match.

SCENE II

To these, Brodie and Lawson

Mary (*curtseying*). So, uncle! you have honoured us at last.

Lawson. *Quam primum*, my dear, *quam primum*.

Brodie. Well, father, do you know me? (*He sits beside his father, and takes his hand.*)

(Old Brodie. William — ay — Deacon. Greater man — than — his father.

Brodie. You see, Procurator, the news is as fresh to him as it was five years ago. He was struck down before he got the Deaconship, and lives his lost life in mine.

Lawson. Ay, I mind. He was aye ettling after a bit handle to his name. He was kind of hurt when first they made me Procurator.)

Mary. And what have you been talking of?

Lawson. Just o' thae robberies, Mary. Baith as a burgher and a Crown offeecial, I tak' the maist absorbing interest in thae robberies.

Leslie. Egad, Procurator, and so do I.

Brodie (*with a quick look at Leslie*). A dilettante interest, doubtless! See what it is to be idle.

Leslie. 'Faith, Brodie, I hardly know how to style it.

Brodie. At any rate, 'tis not the interest of a victim, or we should certainly have known of it before; nor a practical tool-mongering interest, like my own; nor an interest professional and official, like the Procurator's. You can answer for that, I suppose?

Leslie. I think I can; if for no more. It's an interest of my own, you see, and is best described as indescribable, and of no manner of moment to anybody. (It will take no hurt if we put off its discussion till a month of Sundays.)

Brodie. You are more fortunate than you deserve. What do you say, Procurator?

Lawson. Ay is he! There's no' a house in Edinburgh safe. The law is clean helpless, clean helpless! A week syne it was auld Andra Simpson's in the Lawn-market. Then, naething would set the catamarans but to forgather privily wi' the Provost's ain butler, and tak' unto themselves the Provost's ain plate. And the day, information was laid down before me offeecially that the limmers had made infraction, *vi et clam*, into Leddy Mar'get Dalziel's, and left her leddyship wi' no' sae muckle's a spune to sup her parritch wi'. It's unbelievable, it's awful, it's anti-christian!

Mary. If you only knew them, uncle, what an example you would make! But, tell me, is it not strange that men should dare such things, in the midst of a city, and nothing, nothing be known of them —

nothing at all?

Leslie. Little, indeed! But we do know that there are several in the gang, and that one at least is an unrivalled workman.

Lawson. Ye're right, sir; ye're vera right, Mr. Leslie. It had been deponed to me offeecially that no' a tradesman — no' the Deacon here himsel' — could have made a cleaner job wi' Andra Simpson's shutters. And as for the lock o' the bank — but that's an auld sang.

Brodie. I think you believe too much, Procurator. Rumour's an ignorant jade, I tell you. I've had occasion to see some little of their handiwork — broken cabinets, broken shutters, broken doors — and I find them bunglers. Why, I could do it better myself.

Leslie. Gad, Brodie, you and I might go into partnership. I back myself to watch outside, and I suppose you could do the work of skill within?

Brodie. An opposition company? Leslie, your mind is full of good things. Suppose we begin to-night, and give the Procurator's house the honours of our innocence?

Mary. You could do anything, you two!

Lawson. Onyway, Deacon, ye'd put your ill-gotten gains to a right use; they might come by the wind, but they wouldna gang wi' the water; and that's aye a *solatium*, as we say. If I am to be robbit, I would like to be robbit wi' decent folk; and no' think o' my bonnie clean siller dirling among jads and dicers. 'Faith, William, the mair I think on't, the mair I'm o' Mr. Leslie's mind. Come the night, or come the morn, and I'se gie ye my free permission, and lend ye a hand in at the window forbye!

Brodie. Come, come, Procurator, lead not our poor clay into temptation. (*Leslie and Mary talk apart.*)

Lawson. I'm no muckle afraid for your puir clay, as ye ca't. But hark i' your ear: ye're likely, joking apart, to be gey and sune in partnership wi' Mr. Leslie. He and Mary are gey and pack, a'body can see that.

Brodie. "Daffin, and want o' wit" — you know the rest.

Lawson. *Vidi, scivi, et audivi*, as we say in a Sasine, William.) Man, because my wig's pouthered do you think I havena a green heart? I was aince a lad mysel', and I ken fine by the glint o' the e'e when a lad's fain and a lassie's willing. And, man, it's the town's talk; *communis error fit jus*, ye ken.

Old Brodie. Oh!

Lawson. See, ye're hurting your faither's hand.

Brodie. Dear dad, it is not good to have an ill-tempered son.

Lawson. What the deevil ails ye at the match? 'Od man, he has a nice bit divot o' Fife corn-land, I can tell ye, and some Bordeaux wine in his cellar! But I needna speak o' the Bordeaux; ye'll ken the smack o't as weel's I do mysel'; onyway it's grand wine. *Tantum et tale.* I tell ye the *pro's*, find you the *con.'s*, if ye're able.

Brodie. (I am sorry, Procurator, but I must be short with you.) You are talking in the air, as lawyers will. I prefer to drop the subject (and it will displease me if you return to it in my hearing).

Leslie. At four o'clock to-morrow? At my house? (*To Mary.*)

Mary. As soon as church is done. (*Exit Mary.*)

Lawson. Ye needna be sae high and mighty, onyway.

Brodie. I ask your pardon, Procurator. But we Brodies — you know our failings! (A bad temper and a humour of privacy.)

Lawson. Weel, I maun be about my business. But I could tak' a doch-an-dorach, William; *superflua non nocent*, as we say; an extra dram hurts naebody, Mr. Leslie.

Brodie (*with bottle and glasses*). Here's your old friend, Procurator. Help yourself, Leslie. O no, thank you, not any for me. You strong people have the advantage of me there. With my attacks, you know, I must always live a bit of a hermit's life.

Lawson. 'Od, man, that's fine; that's health o' mind and body. Mr. Leslie, here's to you, sir. 'Od, it's harder to end than to begin with stuff like that.

SCENE III

To these, Smith and Jean, C.

Smith. Is the king of the castle in, please?

Lawson (*aside*). Lord’s sake, it’s Smith!

Brodie (*to Smith*). I beg your pardon?

Smith. I beg yours, sir. If you please, sir, is Mr. Brodie at home, sir?

Brodie. What do you want with him, my man?

Smith. I’ve a message for him, sir; a job of work, sir.

Brodie (*to Smith; referring to Jean*). And who is this?

Jean. I am here for the Procurator, about my rent. There’s nae offence, I hope, sir.

Lawson. It’s just an honest wife I let a flat to in Libberton’s Wynd. It’ll be for the rent?

Jean. Just that, sir.

Lawson. Weel, ye can just bide here a wee, and I’ll step down the road to my office wi’ ye. (*Exeunt Brodie, Lawson, Leslie, C.*)

SCENE IV

Smith, Jean Watt, Old Brodie

Smith (*bowing them out*). Your humble and most devoted servant, George Smith, Esquire. And so this is the garding, is it? And this is the style of horticulture? Ha, it is! (*At the mirror.*) In that case George's mother bids him bind his hair. (*Kisses his hand.*) My dearest Duchess — — (*To Jean.*) I say, Jean, there's a good deal of difference between this sort of thing and the way we does it in Libberton's Wynd.

Jean. I daursay. And what wad ye expeck?

Smith. Ah, Jean, if you'd cast affection's glance on this poor but honest soger! George Lord S. is not the nobleman to cut the object of his flame before the giddy throng; nor to keep her boxed up in an old mouse-trap, while he himself is revelling in purple splendours like these. He didn't know you, Jean: he was afraid to. Do you call that a man? Try a man that is.

Jean. Geordie Smith, ye ken vera weel I'll tak' nane o' that sort o' talk frae you. And what kind o' a man are you to even yoursel' to the likes o' him? He's a gentleman.

Smith. Ah, ain't he, just! And don't he live up to it? I say, Jean, feel of this chair.

Jean. My! look at yon bed!

Smith. The carpet too! Axminster, by the bones of Oliver Cromwell!

Jean. What a expense!

Smith. Hey, brandy! The deuce of the grape! Have a toothful, Mrs. Watt. (*Sings* —

"Says Bacchus to Venus:
There's brandy between us,
And the cradle of love is the bowl, the bowl!")

Jean. Nane for me, I thank ye, Mr. Smith.

Smith. What brings the man from stuff like this to rotgut and spittoons at Mother Clarke's? But ah, George, you was born for a higher spear! And so was you, Mrs. Watt, though I say it that shouldn't. (*Seeing Old Brodie for the first time.*) Hullo! it's a man!

Jean. Thonder in the chair. (*They go to look at him, their backs to the door.*)

Smith. Is he alive?

Jean. I think there's something wrong with him.

Smith. And how was you to-morrow, my valued old gentleman, eh?

Jean. Dinna mak' a mock o' him, Geordie.

Old Brodie. My son — the Deacon — Deacon of his trade.

Jean. He'll be his feyther. (*Hunt appears at door C., and stands looking *on.*)

Smith. The Deacon’s old man! Well, he couldn’t expect to have his quiver full of sich, could he, Jean? (*To Old Brodie.*) Ah, my Christian soldier, if you had, the world would have been more variegated. Mrs. Deakin (*to Jean*), let me introduce you to your dear papa.

Jean. Think shame to yoursel’! This is the Deacon’s house; you and me shouldna be here by rights; and if we are, it’s the least we can do to behave dacent. (This is no’ the way ye’ll mak’ me like ye.)

Smith. All right, Duchess. Don’t be angry.

SCENE V

To these, Hunt, C. (*He steals down, and claps each one suddenly on the shoulder.*)

Hunt. Is there a gentleman here by the name of Mr. Procurator-Fiscal?

Smith (*pulling himself together*). D — n it, Jerry, what do you mean by startling an old customer like that?

Hunt. What, my brave 'un? You're the very party I was looking for!

Smith. There's nothing out against me this time?

Hunt. I'll take odds there is. But it ain't in my hands. (*To Old Brodie.*) You'll excuse me, old gentleman?

Smith. Ah, well, if it's all in the way of friendship!... I say, Jean (you and me had best be on the toddle). We shall be late for church.

Hunt. Lady, George?

Smith. It's a — — yes, it's a lady. Come along, Jean.

Hunt. A Mrs. Deacon, I believe. (That was the name, I think?) Won't Mrs. Deacon let me have a queer at her phiz?

Jean (*unmuffling*). I've naething to be ashamed of. My name's Mistress Watt; I'm weel kennt at the Wyndheid; there's naething again' me.

Hunt. No, to be sure there ain't; and why clap on the blinkers, my dear? You that has a face like a rose, and with a cove like Jerry Hunt, that might be your born father? (But all this don't tell me about Mr. Procurator-Fiscal.)

Smith (*in an agony*). Jean, Jean, we shall be late. (*Going with attempted swagger.*) Well, ta-ta, Jerry.

SCENE VI

To these, C., Brodie and Lawson (greatcoat, muffler, lantern)

Lawson (*from the door*). Come your ways, Mistress Watt.

Jean. That's the Fiscal himsel'.

Hunt. Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, I believe?

Lawson. That's me. Who'll you be?

Hunt. Hunt the Runner, sir; Hunt from Bow Street; English warrant.

Lawson. There's a place for a' things, officer. Come your ways to my office with me and this guid wife.

Brodie (*aside to Jean, as she passes with a curtsey*). How dare you be here? (*Aloud to Smith.*) Wait you here, my man.

Smith. If you please, sir. (*Brodie goes out, C.*)

SCENE VII

Brodie, Smith

Brodie. What the devil brings you here?

Smith. Confound it, Deakin! Not rusty?

Brodie. (And not you only: Jean too! Are you mad?

Smith. Why, you don't mean to say, Deakin, that you have been stodged by G. Smith, Esquire? Plummy old George?)

Brodie. There was my uncle the Procurator — —

Smith. The Fiscal? He don't count.

Brodie. What d'ye mean?

Smith. Well, Deakin, since Fiscal Lawson's Nunkey Lawson, and it's all in the family way, I don't mind telling you that Nunkey Lawson's a customer of George's. We give Nunkey Lawson a good deal of brandy — G. S. and Co.'s celebrated Nantz.

Brodie. What! does he buy that smuggled trash of yours?

Smith. Well, we don't call it smuggled in the trade, Deakin. It's a wink and King George's picter between G. S. and the Nunks.

Brodie. Gad! that's worth knowing. O Procurator, Procurator, is there no such thing as virtue? (*Allons!* It's enough to cure a man of vice for this world and the other.) But hark you hither, Smith; this is all damned well in its way, but it don't explain what brings you here.

Smith. I've trapped a pigeon for you.

Brodie. Can't you pluck him yourself?

Smith. Not me. He's too flash in the feather for a simple nobleman like George Lord Smith. It's the great Capting Starlight, fresh in from York. (He's exercised his noble art all the way from here to London. "Stand and deliver, stap my vitals!") And the North Road is no bad lay, Deakin.

Brodie. Flush?

Smith (*mimicking*). "Three graziers, split me! A mail, stap my vitals! and seven demned farmers, by the Lard — — "

Brodie. By Gad!

Smith. Good for trade, ain't it? And we thought, Deakin, the Badger and me, that coins being ever on the vanish, and you not over sweet on them there lovely little locks at Leslie's, and them there bigger and uglier marine stores at the Excise Office....

Brodie (*impassible*). Go on.

Smith. Worse luck!... We thought, me and the Badger, you know, that maybe you'd like to exercise your *h*elbow with our free and galliant horseman.

Brodie. The old move, I presume? The double set of dice?

Smith. That's the rig, Deakin. What you drop on the square you pick

up again on the cross. (Just as you did with G. S. and Co.'s own agent and correspondent, the Admiral from Nantz.) You always was a neat hand with the bones, Deakin.
Brodie. The usual terms, I suppose?
Smith. The old discount, Deakin. Ten in the pound for you, and the rest for your jolly companions every one. (*That's* the way *we* does it!)
Brodie. Who has the dice?
Smith. Our mutual friend, the Candleworm.
Brodie. You mean Ainslie? — We trust that creature too much, Geordie.

Smith. He's all right, Marquis. He wouldn't lay a finger on his own mother. Why, he's no more guile in him than a set of sheep's trotters.
(Brodie. You think so? Then see he don't cheat you over the dice, and give you light for loaded. See to that George, see to that; and you may count the Captain as bare as his last grazier.
Smith. The Black Flag for ever! George'll trot him round to Mother Clarke's in two twos.) How long'll you be?
Brodie. The time to lock up and go to bed, and I'll be with you. Can you find your way out?
Smith. Bloom on, my Sweet William, in peaceful array. Ta-ta.

SCENE VIII

Brodie, Old Brodie; to whom, Mary

Mary. O Willie, I am glad you did not go with them. I have something to tell you. If you knew how happy I am, you would clap your hands, Will. But come, sit you down there, and be my good big brother, and I will kneel here and take your hand. We must keep close to dad, and then he will feel happiness in the air. The poor old love, if we could only tell him. But I sometimes think his heart has gone to heaven already, and takes a part in all our joys and sorrows; and it is only his poor body that remains here, helpless and ignorant. Come, Will, sit you down, and ask me questions — or guess — that will be better, guess.

Brodie. Not to-night, Mary; not to-night. I have other fish to fry, and they won't wait.

Mary. Not one minute for your sister? One little minute for your little sister?

Brodie. Minutes are precious, Mary. I have to work for all of us, and the clock is always busy. They are waiting for me even now. Help me with the dad's chair. And then to bed, and dream happy things. And to-morrow morning I will hear your news — your good news; it must be good, you look so proud and glad. But to-night it cannot be.

Mary. I hate your business — I hate all business. To think of chairs, and tables, and foot-rules, all dead and wooden — and cold pieces of money with the King's ugly head on them; and here is your sister, your pretty sister, if you please, with something to tell, which she would not tell you for the world, and would give the world to have you guess, and you won't? — Not you! For business! Fie, Deacon Brodie! But I'm too happy to find fault with you!

Brodie. "And me a Deacon," as the Procurator would say.

Mary. No such thing, sir! I am not a bit afraid of you — nor a bit angry neither. Give me a kiss, and promise me hours and hours to-morrow morning?

Brodie. All day long to-morrow, if you like.

Mary. Business or none?

Brodie. Business or none, little sister! I'll make time, I promise you; and there's another kiss for surety. Come along. (*They proceed to push out the chair, L.C.*) The wine and wisdom of this evening have given me one of my headaches, and I'm in haste for bed. You'll be good, won't you, and see they make no noise, and let me sleep my fill to-morrow morning till I wake?

Mary. Poor Will! How selfish I must have seemed! You should have told me sooner, and I wouldn't have worried you. Come along. (*She* *goes out, pushing chair.*)

SCENE IX

Brodie
(*He closes, locks, and double-bolts the doors*)
Brodie. Now for one of the Deacon’s headaches! Rogues all, rogues all! (*Goes to clothes-press and proceeds to change his coat.*) On with the new coat and into the new life! Down with the Deacon and up with the robber! (*Changing neck-band and ruffles.*) Eh God! how still the house is! There’s something in hypocrisy after all. If we were as good as we seem, what would the world be? (The city has its vizard on, and we — at night we are our naked selves. Trysts are keeping, bottles cracking, knives are stripping; and here is Deacon Brodie flaming forth the man of men he is!) — How still it is!... My father and Mary — Well! the day for them, the night for me; the grimy cynical night that makes all cats grey, and all honesties of one complexion. Shall a man not have *half* a life of his own? — not eight hours out of twenty-four? (Eight shall he have should he dare the pit of Tophet.) (*Takes out money.*) Where’s the blunt? I must be cool to-night, or ... steady, Deacon, you must win; damn you, you must! You must win back the dowry that you’ve stolen, and marry your sister, and pay your debts, and gull the world a little longer! (*As he blows out the lights.*) The Deacon’s going to bed — the poor sick Deacon! *Allons!* (*Throws up the window and looks out.*) Only the stars to see me! (*Addressing the bed.*) Lie there, Deacon! sleep and be well to-morrow. As for me, I’m a man once more till morning. (*Gets out of the window.*)

TABLEAU II

Hunt The Runner
The Scene represents the Procurator’s Office

SCENE I

Lawson, Hunt

Lawson (*entering*). Step your way in, Officer. (*At wing.*) Mr. Carfrae, give a chair to yon decent wife that cam' in wi' me. Nae news?

A Voice without. Naething, sir.

Lawson (*sitting*). Weel, Officer, and what can I do for you?

Hunt. Well, sir, as I was saying, I've an English warrant for the apprehension of one Jemmy Rivers, *alias* Captain Starlight, now at large within your jurisdiction.

Lawson. That'll be the highwayman?

Hunt. That same, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal. The Captain's given me a hard hunt of it this time. I dropped on his marks at Huntingdon, but he was away North, and I had to up and after him. I heard of him all along the York road, for he's a light hand on the pad, has Jemmy, and leaves his mark. I missed him at York by four-and-twenty hours, and lost him for as much more. Then I picked him up again at Carlisle, and we made a race of it for the Border; but he'd a better nag, and was best up in the road; so I had to wait till I ran him to earth in Edinburgh here and could get a new warrant. So here I am, sir. They told me you were an active sort of gentleman, and I'm an active man myself. And Sir John Fielding, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, he's an active gentleman likewise, though he's blind as a *h*image, and he desired his compliments to you (sir, and said that between us he thought we'd do the trick).

Lawson. Ay, he'll be a fine man, Sir John. Hand me owre your papers, Hunt, and you'll have your new warrant *quam primum*. And see here, Hunt, ye'll aiblins have a while to yoursel', and an active man, as ye say ye are, should aye be grinding grist. We're sair forfeuchen wi' our burglaries. *Non constat de personÃ¢.* We canna get a grip o' the delinquents. Here is the *Hue and Cry*. Ye see there is a guid two hundred pounds for ye.

Hunt. Well, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal (I ain't a rich man, and two hundred's two hundred. Thereby, sir), I don't mind telling you I've had a bit of a worry at it already. You see, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, I had to look into a ken to-night about the Captain, and an old cock always likes to be sure of his walk; so I got one of your Scots officers — him as was so polite as to show me round to Mr. Brodie's — to give me full particulars about the 'ouse, and the flash companions that use it. In his list I drop on the names of two old lambs of my own; and I put it to you, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, as a gentleman as knows the world, if what's a black sheep in London is likely or not to be keeping school in Edinburgh?

Lawson. *Coelum non animum.* A just observe.

Hunt. I'll give it a thought, sir, and see if I can't kill two birds with one stone. Talking of which, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, I'd like to have a bit of a confab with that nice young woman as came to pay her rent.

Lawson. Hunt, that's a very decent woman.

Hunt. And a very decent woman may have mighty queer pals, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal. Lord love you, sir, I don't know what the profession would do without 'em!

Lawson. Ye're vera richt, Hunt. An active and a watchful officer, I'll send her in till ye.

SCENE II

Hunt (*solus*). Two hundred pounds reward. Curious thing. One burglary after another, and these Scots blockheads without a man to show for it. Jock runs east, and Sawney cuts west; everything's at a deadlock and they go on calling themselves thief-catchers! (By Jingo, I'll show them how we do it down South! Well, I've worn out a good deal of saddle-leather over Jemmy Rivers; but here's for new breeches if you like.) Let's have another queer at the list. (*Reads.*) "Humphrey Moore, otherwise Badger; aged forty, thick-set, dark, close-cropped; has been a prize-fighter; no apparent occupation." Badger's an old friend of mine. "George Smith, otherwise the Dook, otherwise Jingling Geordie; red-haired and curly, slight, flash; an old thimble-rig; has been a stroller; suspected of smuggling; an associate of loose women." G. S., Esquire, is another of my flock. "Andrew Ainslie, otherwise Slink Ainslie; aged thirty-five; thin, white-faced, lank-haired; no occupation; has been in trouble for reset of theft and subornation of youth; might be useful as King's evidence." That's an acquaintance to make. "Jock Hamilton otherwise Sweepie," and so on. ("Willie M'Glashan," hum — yes, and so on, and so on.) Ha! here's the man I want. "William Brodie, Deacon of the Wrights, about thirty; tall, slim, dark; wears his own hair; is often at Clarke's, but seemingly for purposes of amusement only; (is nephew to the Procurator-Fiscal; is commercially sound, but has of late (it is supposed) been short of cash; has lost much at cock-fighting;) is proud, clever, of good repute, but is fond of adventures and secrecy, and keeps low company." Now, here's what I ask myself: here's this list of the family party that drop into Mother Clarke's; it's been in the hands of these nincompoops for weeks, and I'm the first to cry Queer Street! Two well-known cracksmen, Badger and the Dook! why, there's Jack in the Orchard at once. This here topsawyer work they talk about, of course that's a chalk above Badger and the Dook. But how about our Mohock-tradesman? "Purposes of amusement!" What next? Deacon of the Wrights? and Wright in their damned lingo means a kind of carpenter, I fancy? Why, damme, it's the man's trade! I'll look you up, Mr. William Brodie, Deacon of the Wrights. As sure as my name's Jerry Hunt, I wouldn't take one-ninety-nine in gold for my chance of that 'ere two hundred!

SCENE III

Hunt; to him, Jean

Hunt. Well, my dear, and how about your gentleman friend now? How about Deacon Brodie?

Jean. I dinna ken your name, sir, nor yet whae ye are; but this is a very poor employ for ony gentleman — it sets ill wi' ony gentleman to cast my shame in my teeth.

Hunt. Lord love you, my dear, that ain't my line of country. Suppose you're not married and churched a hundred thousand times, what odds to Jerry Hunt? Jerry, my Pamela Prue, is a cove as might be your parent; a cove renowned for the ladies' friend (and he's dead certain to be on your side). What I can't get over is this: here's this Mr. Deacon Brodie doing the genteel at home, and leaving a nice young 'oman like you — as a cove may say — to take it out on cold potatoes. That's what I can't get over, Mrs. Watt. I'm a family man myself; and I can't get over it.

Jean. And whae said that to ye? They lee'd whatever. I get naething but guid by him; and I had nae richt to gang to his house; and O, I just ken I've been the ruin of him!

Hunt. Don't you take on, Mrs. Watt. Why, now I hear you piping up for him, I begin to think a lot of him myself. I like a cove to be open-handed and free.

Jean. Weel, sir, and he's a' that.

Hunt. Well, that shows what a wicked world this is. Why, they told me — — . Well, well, "here's the open 'and and the 'appy 'art." And how much, my dear — speaking as a family man — now, how much might your gentleman friend stand you in the course of a year?

Jean. What's your wull?

Hunt. That's a mighty fancy shawl, Mrs. Watt. (I should like to take its next-door neighbour to Mrs. Hunt in King Street, Common Garden.) What's about the figure?

Jean. It's paid for. Ye can sweir to that.

Hunt. Yes, my dear, and so is King George's crown; but I don't know what it cost, and I don't know where the blunt came from to pay for it.

Jean. I'm thinking ye'll be a vera clever gentleman.

Hunt. So I am, my dear; and I like you none the worse for being artful yourself. But between friends now, and speaking as a family man — —

Jean. I'll be wishin' ye a fine nicht. (*Curtsies and goes out.*)

SCENE IV

Hunt (*solus*)
Hunt. Ah! that’s it, is it? “My fancy man’s my ‘ole delight,” as we say in Bow Street. But which *is* the fancy man? George the Dook, or William the Deacon? One or both? (*He winks solemnly.*) Well, Jerry, my boy, here’s your work cut out for you; but if you took one-nine-five for that ere little two hundred you’d be a disgrace to the profession.

TABLEAU III
Mother Clarke’s
The Stage represents a room of coarse and sordid appearance: settles, spittoons, etc.; sanded floor. A large table at back, where Ainslie, Hamilton, and others are playing cards and quarrelling. In front, L. and R., smaller tables, at one of which are Brodie and Moore, drinking. Mrs. Clarke and women serving.

SCENE I

Moore. You’ve got the devil’s own luck, Deacon, that’s what you’ve got.
Brodie. Luck! Don’t talk of luck to a man like me! Why not say I’ve the devil’s own judgment? Men of my stamp don’t risk — they plan, Badger; they plan, and leave chance to such cattle as you (and Jingling Geordie. They make opportunities before they take them).
Moore. You’re artful, ain’t you?
Brodie. Should I be here else? When I leave my house I leave an *alibi* behind me. I’m ill — ill with a jumping headache, and the fiend’s own temper. I’m sick in bed this minute, and they’re all going about with the fear of death on them lest they should disturb the poor sick Deacon. (My bedroom door is barred and bolted like the bank — you remember! — and all the while the window’s open, and the Deacon’s over the hills and far away. What do you think of me?)

Moore. I’ve seen your sort before, I have.
Brodie. Not you. As for Leslie’s — —
Moore. That was a nick above you.
Brodie. Ay was it. He wellnigh took me red-handed; and that was better luck than I deserved. If I’d not been drunk and in my tantrums, you’d never have got my hand within a thousand years of such a job.
Moore. Why not? You’re the King of the Cracksmen, ain’t you?
Brodie. Why not! He asks me why not! Gods what a brain it is! Hark ye, Badger, it’s all very well to be King of the Cracksmen, as you call it; but however respectable he may have the misfortune to be, one’s friend is one’s friend, and as such must be severely let alone. What! shall there be no more honour among thieves than there is honesty among politicians? Why, man, if under heaven there were but one poor lock unpicked, and that the lock of one whose claret you’ve drunk, and who has babbled of woman across your own mahogany — that lock, sir, were entirely sacred. Sacred as the Kirk of Scotland; sacred as King George upon his throne; sacred as the memory of Bruce and Bannockburn.
Moore. O, rot! I ain’t a parson, I ain’t; I never had no college education. Business is business. That’s wot’s the matter with me.
Brodie. Ay, so we said when you lost that fight with Newcastle Jemmy, and sent us home all poor men. That was a nick above *you*.
Moore. Newcastle Jemmy! Muck: that’s my opinion of him: muck. I’ll mop the floor up with him any day, if so be as you or any on ‘em ‘ll make it worth my while. If not, muck! That’s my motto. Wot I now ses is, about that ‘ere crib at Leslie’s, wos I right, I ses? or wos I wrong?

That's wot's the matter with you.

Brodie. You are both right and wrong. You dared me to do it. I was drunk; I was upon my mettle; and I as good as did it. More than that, blackguardly as it was, I enjoyed the doing. He is my friend. He had dined with me that day, and I felt like a man in a story. I climbed his wall, I crawled along his pantry roof, I mounted his window-sill. That one turn of my wrist — you know it! — and the casement was open. It was as dark as the pit, and I thought I'd won my wager, when, phewt! down went something inside, and down went somebody with it. I made one leap, and was off like a rocket. It was my poor friend in person; and if he'd caught and passed me on to the watchman under the window, I should have felt no viler rogue than I feel just now.

Moore. I s'pose he knows you pretty well by this time?

Brodie. 'Tis the worst of friendship. Here, Kirsty, fill these glasses. Moore, here's better luck — and a more honourable plant! — next time.

Moore. Deacon, I looks towards you. But it looks thundering like rotten eggs, don't it?

Brodie. I think not. I was masked, for one thing, and for another I was as quick as lightning. He suspects me so little that he dined with me this very afternoon.

Moore. Anyway, you ain't game to try it on again, I'll lay odds on that. Once bit, twice shy. That's your motto.

Brodie. Right again. I'll put my *alibi* to a better use. And, Badger, one word in your ear: there's no Newcastle Jemmy about *me*. Drop the subject, and for good, or I shall drop you. (*He rises, and walks backwards and forwards, a little unsteadily; then returns, and sits, L., as before.*)

SCENE II

To these, Hunt, disguised
He is disguised as a “flying stationer” with a patch over his eye. He sits at table opposite Brodie’s, and is served with bread and cheese and beer.

Hamilton (*from behind*). The deevil tak’ the cairts!
Ainslie. Hoot, man, dinna blame the cairts.
Moore. Look here, Deacon, I mean business, I do. (*Hunt looks up at the name of “Deacon.”*)
Brodie. Gad, Badger, I never meet you that you do not. (You have a set of the most commercial intentions!) You make me blush.
Moore. That’s all blazing fine, that is! But wot I ses is, wot about the chips? That’s what I ses. I’m after that thundering old Excise Office, I am. That’s my motto.
Brodie. ‘Tis a very good motto, and at your lips, Badger, it kind of warms my heart. But it’s not mine.
Moore. Muck! why not?
Brodie. ‘Tis too big and too dangerous. I shirk King George; he has a fat pocket, but he has a long arm. (You pilfer sixpence from him, and it’s three hundred reward for you, and a hue and cry from Tophet to the stars.) It ceases to be business; it turns politics, and I’m not a politician, Mr. Moore. (*Rising.*) I’m only Deacon Brodie.
Moore. All right. I can wait.
Brodie (*seeing Hunt*). Ha, a new face — and with a patch! (There’s nothing under heaven I like so dearly as a new face with a patch.) Who the devil, sir, are you that own it? And where did you get it? And how much will you take for it second-hand?
Hunt. Well, sir, to tell you the truth — (*Brodie bows*) — it’s not for sale. But it’s my own, and I’ll drink your honour’s health in anything.
Brodie. An Englishman, too! Badger, behold a countryman. What are you, and what part of southern Scotland do you come from?
Hunt. Well, your honour, to tell you the honest truth — —
Brodie (*bowing*). Your obleeged!
Hunt. I knows a gentleman when I sees him, your honour (and, to tell your honour the truth — —
Brodie. *Je vous baise les mains!* [*Bowing.*])
Hunt. A gentleman is a gentleman, your honour (is always a gentleman, and to tell you the honest truth) —
Brodie. Great heavens! answer in three words, and be hanged to you! What are you, and where are you from?
Hunt. A patter-cove from Seven Dials.
Brodie. Is it possible? All my life long have I been pining to meet with

a patter-cove from Seven Dials! Embrace me, at a distance. (A patter-cove from Seven Dials!) Go, fill yourself as drunk as you dare, at my expense. Anything he likes, Mrs. Clarke. He's a patter-cove from Seven Dials. Hillo! what's all this?

Ainslie. Dod, I'm for nae mair! (*At back, and rising.*)

Players. Sit down, Ainslie. — Sit down, Andra. — Ma revenge!

Ainslie. Na, na, I'm for canny goin'. (*Coming forward with bottle.*) Deacon, let's see your gless.

Brodie. Not an inch of it.

Moore. No rotten shirking, Deacon!

(Ainslie. I'm sayin', man, let's see your gless.

Brodie. Go to the deuce!)

Ainslie. But I'm sayin' — —

Brodie. Haven't I to play to-night?

Ainslie. But, man, ye'll drink to bonnie Jean Watt?

Brodie. Ay, I'll follow you there. *Ã€ la reine de mes amours!* (*Drinks.*) What fiend put this in your way, you hound? You've filled me with raw stuff. By the muckle deil! — —

Moore. Don't hit him, Deacon; tell his mother.

Hunt (*aside*). Oho!

SCENE III

To these, Smith, Rivers

Smith. Where's my beloved? Deakin, my beauty, where are you? Come to the arms of George, and let him introduce you. Capting Starlight Rivers! Capting, the Deakin: Deakin, the Capting. An English nobleman on the grand tour, to open his mind, by the Lard!

Rivers. Stupendiously pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr. Deaking, split me!

Brodie. We don't often see England's heroes our way, Captain, but when we do, we make them infernally welcome.

Rivers. Prettily put, sink me! (A demned genteel sentiment, stap my vitals!)

Brodie. O Captain! you flatter me. (We Scotsmen have our qualities, I suppose, but we are but rough and ready at the best. There's nothing like your Englishman for genuine distinction. He is nearer France than we are, and smells of his neighbourhood. That d — — d thing, the *je ne sais quoi*, too! Lard, Lard, split me! stap my vitals! O such manners are pure, pure, pure. They are, by the shade of Claude Duval!)

Rivers. Mr. Deakin, Mr. Deakin (this is passatively too much). What will you sip? Give it the *h*anar of a neam.

Brodie. By these most *h*anarable hands now, Captain, you shall not. On such an occasion I could play host with Lucifer himself. Here, Clarke, Mother Midnight! Down with you, Captain (*forcing him boisterously into a chair*). I don't know if you can lie, but, sink me! you shall sit. (*Drinking, etc., in dumb-show.*)

Moore (*aside to Smith*). We've nobbled him, Geordie!

Smith (*aside to Moore*). As neat as ninepence! He's taking it down like mother's milk. But there'll be wigs on the green to-morrow, Badger! It'll be twopence and toddle with George Smith.

Moore. O, muck! Who's afraid of him? (*To Ainslie.*) Hang on, Slinkie.

Hunt (*who is feigning drunkenness, and has overheard; aside*). By Jingo!

Rivers. Will you sneeze, Mr. Deakin, sir?

Brodie. Thanks; I have all the vices, Captain. You must send me some of your rappee. It is passatively perfect.

Rivers. Mr. Deakin, I do myself the *h*anar of a sip to you.

Brodie. Topsy-turvy with the can!

Moore (*aside to Smith*). That made him wink.

Brodie. Your high and mighty hand, my Captain! Shall we dice — dice — dice? (*Dumb-show between them.*)

Ainslie (*aside to Moore*). I'm sayin' — — ?

Moore. What's up now?

Ainslie. I'm no' to gie him the coggit dice?

Moore. The square ones, rot you! Ain't he got to lose every brass farden?
Ainslie. What'll like be my share?
Moore. You mucking well leave that to me.
Rivers. Well, Mr. Deakin, if you passatively will have me shake a *h*elbow — —
Brodie. Where are the bones, Ainslie? Where are the dice, Lord George? (*Ainslie gives the dice and dice-box to Brodie; and privately a second pair of dice.*) Old Fortune's counters; the bonnie money-catching, money-breeding bones! Hark to their dry music! Scotland against England! Sit round, you tame devils, and put your coins on me!
Smith. Easy does it, my lord of high degree! Keep cool.
Brodie. Cool's the word, Captain — a cool twenty on the first?
Rivers. Done and done. (*They play.*)
Hunt (*aside to Moore, a little drunk*). Ain't that 'ere Scots gentleman, your friend, too drunk to play, sir?
Moore. You hold your jaw; that's what's the matter with you.
Ainslie. He's waur nor he looks. He's knockit the box aff the table.
Smith (*picking up box*). That's the way *we* does it. Ten to one and no takers!
Brodie. Deuces again! More liquor, Mother Clarke!
Smith. Hooray, our side! (*Pouring out.*) George and his pal for ever!
Brodie. Deuces again, by heaven! Another?
Rivers. Done!
Brodie. Ten more; money's made to go. On with you!
Rivers. Sixes.
Brodie. Deuce-ace. Death and judgment! Double or quits?
Rivers. Drive on! Sixes.
Smith. Fire away, brave boys. (*To Moore.*) It's Tally-ho-the-Grinder, Hump!
Brodie. Treys! Death and the pit! How much have you got there?
Rivers. A cool forty-five.
Brodie. I play you thrice the lot.
Rivers. Who's afraid?
Smith. Stand by, Badger!
Rivers. Cinq-ace.
Brodie. My turn now. (*He juggles in and uses the second pair of dice.*) Aces! Aces again! What's this? (*Picking up dice.*) Sold!... You play false, you hound!

Rivers. You lie!
Brodie. In your teeth. (*Overturns table, and goes for him.*)
Moore. Here, none o' that. (*They hold him back. Struggle.*)

Smith. Hold on, Deacon!

Brodie. Let me go. Hands off, I say! I'll not touch him. (*Stands weighing dice in his hand.*) But as for that thieving whinger, Ainslie, I'll cut his throat between this dark and to-morrow's. To the bone. (*Addressing the company.*) Rogues, rogues, rogues! (*Singing without.*) Ha! what's that?

Ainslie. It's the psalm-singing up by at the Holy Weaver's. And, O Deacon, if ye're a Christian man — —

The Psalm without: —

"Lord, who shall stand, if Thou, O Lord,
Should'st mark iniquity?
But yet with Thee forgiveness is,
That fear'd Thou mayest be."

Brodie. I think I'll go. "My son the Deacon was aye regular at kirk." If the old man could see his son, the Deacon! I think I'll — — . Ay, who *shall* stand? There's the rub! And forgiveness, too? There's a long word for you! I learnt it all lang syne, and now ... hell and ruin are on either hand of me, and the devil has me by the leg. "My son, the Deacon...!" Eh, God! but there's no fool like an old fool! (*Becoming conscious of the others.*) Rogues!

Smith. Take my arm, Deacon.

Brodie. Down, dog, down! (Stay and be drunk with your equals.) Gentlemen and ladies, I have already cursed you pretty heavily. Let me do myself the pleasure of wishing you — a very — good evening. (*As he goes out, Hunt, who has been staggering about in the crowd, falls on a settle, as about to sleep.*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT

ACT II

TABLEAU IV

Evil and Good

The Stage represents the Deacon’s workshop; benches, shavings, tools, boards, and so forth. Doors, C., on the street, and L., into the house. Without, church bells; not a chime, but a slow, broken tocsin.

SCENE I

Brodie (*solus*). My head! my head! It's the sickness of the grave. And those bells go on!... go on ... inexorable as death and judgment. (There they go; the trumpets of respectability, sounding encouragement to the world to do and spare not, and not to be found out. Found out! And to those who are they toll as when a man goes to the gallows.) Turn where I will are pitfalls hell-deep. Mary and her dowry; Jean and her child — my child; the dirty scoundrel Moore; my uncle and his trust; perhaps the man from Bow Street. Debt, vice, cruelty, dishonour, crime; the whole canting, lying, double-dealing, beastly business! "My son the Deacon — Deacon of the Wrights!" My thoughts sicken at it. (O, the Deacon, the Deacon! Where's a hat for the Deacon, where's a hat for the Deacon's headache? (*Searching.*) This place is a piggery. To be respectable and not to find one's hat.)

SCENE II

To him, Jean, a baby in her shawl, C.

Jean (*who has entered silently during the Deacon's last words*). It's me, Wullie.

Brodie (*turning upon her*). What! You here again? (you again!)

Jean. Deacon, I'm unco vexed.

Brodie. Do you know what you do? Do you know what you risk? (Is there nothing — nothing! — will make you spare me this idiotic, wanton persecution?)

Jean. I was wrong to come yestreen; I ken that fine. But the day it's different; I but to come the day, Deacon, though I ken fine it's the Sabbath, and I think shame to be seen upon the streets.

Brodie. See here, Jean. You must go now. I'll come to you to-night; I swear that. But now I'm for the road.

Jean. No' till you've heard me, William Brodie. Do ye think I came to pleasure mysel', where I'm no' wanted? I've a pride o' my ain.

Brodie. Jean, I am going now. If you please to stay on alone, in this house of mine, where I wish I could say you are welcome, stay. (*Going.*)

Jean. It's the man frae Bow Street.

Brodie. Bow Street?

Jean. I thocht ye would hear me. Ye think little o' me; but it's mebbe a braw thing for you that I think sae muckle o' William Brodie ... ill as it sets me.

Brodie. (You don't know what is on my mind, Jennie, else you would forgive me.) Bow Street?

Jean. It's the man Hunt: him that was here yestreen for the Fiscal.

Brodie. Hunt?

Jean. He kens a hantle. He.... Ye maunna be angered wi' me, Wullie! I said what I shouldna.

Brodie. Said? Said what?

Jean. Just that ye were a guid frien' to me. He made believe he was awfu' sorry for me, because ye gied me nae siller; and I said, "Wha tellt him that?" and that he lee'd.

Brodie. God knows he did! What next?

Jean. He was that soft-spoken, butter wouldna melt in his mouth; and he keept aye harp, harpin'; but after that let-out, he got neither black nor white frae me. Just that ae word and nae mair; and at the hinder end he just speired straucht out, whaur it was ye got your siller frae.

Brodie. Where I got my siller?

Jean. Ay, that was it. "You ken," says he.

Brodie. Did he? and what said you?
Jean. I couldna think on naething, but just that he was a gey and clever gentleman.
Brodie. You should have said I was in trade, and had a good business. That's what you should have said. That's what you would have said had you been worth your salt. But it's blunder, blunder, outside and in (upstairs, down-stairs, and in my lady's chamber). You women! Did he see Smith?
Jean. Ay, and kennt him.
Brodie. Damnation! — — No, I'm not angry with you, but you see what I've to endure for you. Don't cry. (Here's the devil at the door, and we must bar him out as best we can.)
Jean. God's truth, ye are nae vexed wi' me?
Brodie. God's truth, I am grateful to you. How is the child? Well? That's right. (*Peeping.*) Poor wee laddie! He's like you, Jean.
Jean. I thocht he was liker you.
Brodie. Is he? Perhaps he is. Ah, Jeannie, you must see and make him a better man than his father.
Jean. Eh man, Deacon, the proud wumman I'll be gin he's only half sae guid.

Brodie. Well, well, if I win through this, we'll see what we can dae for him between us. (*Leading her out, C.*) And now; go — go — go.
Lawson (*without L.*). I ken the way, I ken the way.
Jean (*starting to door*). It's the Fiscal; I'm awa. (Brodie, L.)

SCENE III

To these, Lawson, L.

Lawson. A braw day this, William. (*Seeing Jean.*) Eh. Mistress Watt? And what'll have brocht you here?

Brodie (*seated on bench*). Something, uncle, she lost last night, and she thinks that something she lost is here. *VoilÃ* .

Lawson. Why are ye no' at the kirk, woman? Do ye gang to the kirk?

Jean. I'm mebbe no' what ye would just ca' reg'lar. Ye see, Fiscal, it's the wean.

Lawson. A bairn's an excuse; I ken that fine, Mistress Watt. But bairn or nane, my woman, ye should be at the kirk. Awa' wi' ye! Hear to the bells; they're ringing in. (*Jean curtsies to both, and goes out C. The bells, which have been ringing quicker, cease.*)

SCENE IV

Lawson (*to Brodie, returning C. from door*). *Mulier formosa superne*, William: a braw lass and a decent woman forbye.

Brodie. I'm no judge, Procurator, but I'll take your word for it. Is she not a tenant of yours?

Lawson. Ay, ay; a bit house on my land in Libberton's Wynd. Her man's awa, puir body; or they tell me sae; and I'm concerned for her (she's unco bonnie to be left her lane). But it sets me brawly to be finding faut wi' the puir lass, and me an elder, and should be at the plate. (There'll be twa words about this in the Kirk Session.) However, it's nane of my business that brings me, or I should tak' the mair shame to mysel.' Na, sir, it's for you; it's your business keeps me frae the kirk.

Brodie. My business, Procurator? I rejoice to see it in such excellent hands.

Lawson. Ye see, it's this way. I had a crack wi' the laddie Leslie, *inter pocula* (he took a stirrup-cup wi' me), and he tells me he has askit Mary, and she was to speak to ye hersel'. O, ye needna look sae gash. Did she speak? and what'll you have said to her?

Brodie. She has not spoken; I have said nothing; and I believe I asked you to avoid the subject.

Lawson. Ay, I made a note o' that observation, William (and assoilzied mysel'). Mary's a guid lass, and I'm her uncle, and I'm here to be answered. Is it to be ay or no?

Brodie. It's to be no. This marriage must be quashed; and hark ye, Procurator, you must help me.

Lawson. Me? ye're daft! And what for why?

Brodie. Because I've spent the trust-money, and I can't refund it.

Lawson. Ye reprobate deevil!

Brodie. Have a care, Procurator. No wry words!

Lawson. Do you say it to my face, sir? Dod, sir, I'm the Crown Prosecutor.

Brodie. Right. The Prosecutor for the Crown. And where did you get your brandy?

Lawson. Eh?

Brodie. Your brandy! Your brandy, man! Where do you get your brandy? And you a Crown official and an elder!

Lawson. Whaur the deevil did ye hear that?

Brodie. Rogues all! Rogues all, Procurator!

Lawson. Ay, ay. Lord save us! Guidsake, to think o' that noo!... Can ye give me some o' that Cognac? I'm ... I'm sort o' shaken, William, I'm sort o’ shaken. Thank you, William! (*Looking piteously at glass.*) *Nunc est bibendum.* (*Drinks.*) Troth, I’m set ajee a bit. Wha the deevil tauld ye?

Brodie. Ask no questions, brother. We are a pair.

Lawson. Pair, indeed! Pair, William Brodie! Upon my saul, sir, ye’re a brazen-faced man that durst say it to my face! Tak’ you care, my bonnie young man, that your craig doesna feel the wecht o’ your hurdies. Keep the plainstanes side o’ the gallows. *Via trita, via tuta*, William Brodie!

Brodie. And the brandy, Procurator? and the brandy?

Lawson. Ay ... weel ... be’t sae! Let the brandy bide, man, let the brandy bide! But for you and the trust-money ... damned! It’s felony. *Tutor in rem suam*, ye ken, *tutor in rem suam*. But O man, Deacon, whaur is the siller?

Brodie. It’s gone — O how the devil should I know? But it’ll never come back.

Lawson. Dear, dear! A’ gone to the winds o’ heaven! Sae ye’re an extravagant dog, too. *Prodigus et furiosus!* And that puir lass — eh, Deacon, man, that puir lass! I mind her such a bonnie bairn.

Brodie (*stopping his ears*). Brandy, brandy, brandy, brandy, brandy!

Lawson. William Brodie, mony’s the long day that I’ve believed in you; prood, prood was I to be the Deacon’s uncle; and a sore hearing have I had of it the day. That’s past; that’s past like Flodden Field; it’s an auld sang noo, and I’m an aulder man than when I crossed your door. But mark ye this — mark ye this, William Brodie, I may be no’ sae guid’s I should be; but there’s no’ a saul between the east sea and the wast can lift his een to God that made him, and say I wranged him as ye wrang that lassie. I bless God, William Brodie — ay, though he was like my brother — I bless God that he that got ye has the hand of death upon his hearing, and can win into his grave a happier man than me. And ye speak to me, sir? Think shame — think shame upon your heart!

Brodie. Rogues all!

Lawson. You’re the son of my sister, William Brodie. Mair than that I stop not to inquire. If the siller is spent, and the honour tint — Lord help us, and the honour tint! — sae be it, I maun bow the head. Ruin shallna come by me. Na, and I’ll say mair, William; we have a’ our weary sins upon our backs, and maybe I have mair than mony. But, man, if ye could bring *half* the jointure ... (*potius quam pereas*) ... for your mither’s son? Na? You couldna bring the half? Weel, weel, it’s a sair heart I have this day, a sair heart and a weary. If I were a better man mysel’ ... but there, there, it’s a sair heart that I have gotten. And the Lord kens I’ll help ye if I can. (*Potius quam pereas.*) (*He goes out.*)

SCENE V

Brodie. Sore hearing, does he say? My hand's wet. But it's victory. Shall it be go? or stay? (I should show them all I can, or they may pry closer than they ought.) Shall I have it out and be done with it? To see Mary at once (to carry bastion after bastion at the charge) — there were the true safety after all! Hurry — hurry's the road to silence now. Let them once get tattling in their parlours, and it's death to me. For I'm in a cruel corner now. I'm down, and I shall get my kicking soon and soon enough. I began it in the lust of life, in a hey-day of mystery and adventure. I felt it great to be a bolder, craftier rogue than the drowsy citizen that called himself my fellow-man. (It was meat and drink to know him in the hollow of my hand, hoarding that I and mine might squander, pinching that we might wax fat.) It was in the laughter of my heart that I tip-toed into his greasy privacy. I forced the strong-box at his ear while he sprawled beside his wife. He was my butt, my ape, my jumping-jack. And now ... O fool, fool! (Duped by such knaves as are a shame to knavery, crime's rabble, hell's tatterdemalions!) Shorn to the quick! Rooked to my vitals! And I must thieve for my daily bread like any crawling blackguard in the gutter. And my sister ... my kind, innocent sister! She will come smiling to me with her poor little love-story, and I must break her heart. Broken hearts, broken lives!... I should have died before.

SCENE VI

Brodie, Mary

Mary (*tapping without*). Can I come in, Will?

Brodie. O yes, come in, come in! (*Mary enters.*) I wanted to be quiet, but it doesn't matter, I see. You women are all the same.

Mary. O no, Will, they're not all so happy, and they're not all Brodies. But I'll be a woman in one thing. For I've come to claim your promise, dear; and I'm going to be petted and comforted and made much of, although I don't need it, and.... Why, Will, what's wrong with you? You look ... I don't know what you look like.

Brodie. O nothing! A splitting head and an aching heart. Well! you've come to speak to me. Speak up. What is it? Come, girl! What is it? Can't you speak?

Mary. Why, Will, what is the matter?

Brodie. I thought you had come to tell me something. Here I am. For God's sake out with it, and don't stand beating about the bush.

Mary. O be kind, be kind to me.

Brodie. Kind? I am kind. I'm only ill and worried, can't you see? Whimpering? I knew it! Sit down, you goose! Where do you women get your tears?

Mary. Why are you so cross with me? O, Will, you have forgot your sister! Remember, dear, that I have nobody but you. It's your own fault, Will, if you've taught me to come to you for kindness, for I always found it. And I mean you shall be kind to me again. I know you will, for this is my great need, and the day I've missed my mother sorest. Just a nice look, dear, and a soft tone in your voice, to give me courage, for I can tell you nothing till I know that you're my own brother once again.

Brodie. If you'd take a hint, you'd put it off until to-morrow. But I suppose you won't. On, then, I'm listening. I'm listening!

Mary. Mr. Leslie has asked me to be his wife.

Brodie. He has, has he?

Mary. And I have consented.

Brodie. And...?

Mary. You can say that to me? And that is all you have to say?

Brodie. O no, not all.

Mary. Speak out, sir. I am not afraid.

Brodie. I suppose you want my consent?

Mary. Can you ask?

Brodie. I didn't know. You seem to have got on pretty well without it so far.

Mary. O shame on you! shame on you!

Brodie. Perhaps you may be able to do without it altogether. I hope so. For you'll never have it.... Mary! ... I hate to see you look like that. If I could say anything else, believe me, I would say it. But I have said all; every word is spoken; there's the end.

Mary. It shall not be the end. You owe me explanation; and I'll have it.

Brodie. Isn't my "No" enough, Mary?

Mary. It might be enough for me; but it is not, and it cannot be, enough for him. He has asked me to be his wife; he tells me his happiness is in my hands — poor hands, but they shall not fail him, if my poor heart should break! If he has chosen and set his hopes upon me, of all women in the world, I shall find courage somewhere to be worthy of the choice. And I dare you to leave this room until you tell me all your thoughts — until you prove that this is good and right.

Brodie. Good and right? They are strange words, Mary. I mind the time when it was good and right to be your father's daughter and your brother's sister.... Now!...

Mary. Have I changed? Not even in thought. My father, Walter says, shall live and die with us. He shall only have gained another son. And you — you know what he thinks of you; you know what I would do for you.

Brodie. Give him up.

Mary. I have told you: not without a reason.

Brodie. You must.

Mary. I will not.

Brodie. What if I told you that you could only compass your happiness and his at the price of my ruin?

Mary. Your ruin?

Brodie. Even so.

Mary. Ruin!

Brodie. It has an ugly sound, has it not?

Mary. O Willie, what have you done? What have you done? What have you done?

Brodie. I cannot tell you, Mary. But you may trust me. You must give up this Leslie ... and at once. It is to save me.

Mary. I would die for you, dear; you know that. But I cannot be false to him. Even for you, I cannot be false to him.

Brodie. We shall see. Let me take you to your room. Come. And, remember, it is for your brother's sake. It is to save me.

Mary. I am a true Brodie. Give me time, and you shall not find me wanting. But it is all so sudden ... so strange and dreadful! You will give me time, will you not? I am only a woman, and.... O my poor Walter! It will break his heart! It will break his heart! (*A knock.*)

Brodie. You hear!

Mary. Yes, yes. Forgive me. I am going. I will go. It is to save you, is it not? To save you. Walter … Mr. Leslie … O Deacon, Deacon, God forgive you! (*She goes out.*)

Brodie. Amen. But will He?

SCENE VII

Brodie, Hunt

Hunt (*hat in hand*). Mr. Deacon Brodie, I believe?

Brodie. I am he, Mr — — ?

Hunt. Hunt, sir: an officer from Sir John Fielding of Bow Street.

Brodie. There can be no better passport than the name. In what can I serve you?

Hunt. You'll excuse me, Mr. Deacon.

Brodie. Your duty excuses you, Mr. Hunt.

Hunt. Your obedient. The fact is, Mr. Deacon (we in the office see a good deal of the lives of private parties; and I needn't tell a gentleman of your experience it's part of our duty to hold our tongues. Now), it comes to our knowledge that you are a trifle jokieous. Of course I know there ain't any harm in that. I've been young myself, Mr. Deacon, and speaking — —

Brodie. O, but pardon me, Mr. Hunt, I am not going to discuss my private character with you.

Hunt. To be sure you ain't. (And do I blame you? Not me.) But, speaking as one man of the world to another, you naturally see a great deal of bad company.

Brodie. Not half so much as you do. But I see what you're driving at; and if I can illuminate the course of justice, you may command me. (*He sits, and motions Hunt to do likewise.*)

Hunt. I was dead sure of it: and 'and upon 'art, Mr. Deacon, I thank you. Now — (*consulting pocket-book*) — did you ever meet a certain George Smith?

Brodie. The fellow they call Jingling Geordie? (*Hunt nods.*) Yes.

Hunt. Bad character?

Brodie. Let us say … disreputable.

Hunt. Any means of livelihood?

Brodie. I really cannot pretend to guess. I have met the creature at cock-fights (which, as you know, are my weakness). Perhaps he bets.

Hunt. (Mr. Deacon, from what I know of the gentleman, I should say that if he don't — if he ain't open to any mortal thing — he ain't the man I mean.) He used to be about with a man called Badger Moore.

Brodie. The boxer?

Hunt. That's him. Know anything of him?

Brodie. Not much. I lost five pieces on him in a fight; and I fear he sold his backers.

Hunt. Speaking as one admirer of the noble art to another, Mr. Deacon, the losers always do. I suppose the Badger cock-fights like the rest of us?

Brodie. I have met him in the pit.

Hunt. Well, it’s a pretty sport. I’m as partial to a main as anybody.

Brodie. It’s not an elegant taste, Mr. Hunt.

Hunt. It costs as much as though it was. And that reminds me, speaking as one sportsman to another, Mr. Deacon, I was sorry to hear that you’ve been dropping a hatful of money lately.

Brodie. You are very good.

Hunt. Four hundred in three months, they tell me.

Brodie. Ah!

Hunt. So they say, sir.

Brodie. They have a perfect right to say so, Mr. Hunt.

Hunt. And you to do the other thing? Well, I’m a good hand at keeping close myself.

Brodie. I am not consulting you, Mr. Hunt; ‘tis you who are consulting me. And if there is nothing else (*rising*) in which I can pretend to serve you...?

Hunt (*rising*). That’s about all, sir, unless you can put me on to anything good in the way of heckle and spur? I’d try to look in.

Brodie. O come, Mr. Hunt, if you have nothing to do, frankly and flatly I have. This is not the day for such a conversation; and so good-bye to you. (*A knocking, C.*)

Hunt. Servant, Mr. Deacon. (*Smith and Moore, without waiting to be answered, open and enter, C. They are well into the room before they observe Hunt.*) (Talk of the devil, sir!)

Brodie. What brings you here? (*Smith and Moore, confounded by the officer’s presence, slouch together to right of door. Hunt, stopping as he goes out, contemplates the pair, sarcastically. This is supported by Moore with sullen bravado; by Smith with cringing airiness.*)

Hunt (*digging Smith in the ribs*). Why, you are the very parties I was looking for! (*He goes out, C.*)

SCENE VIII

Brodie, Moore, Smith

Moore. Wot was that cove here about?

Brodie (*with folded arms, half-sitting on bench*). He was here about you.

Smith (*still quite discountenanced*). About us? Scissors! And what did you tell him?

Brodie (*same attitude*). I spoke of you as I have found you. (I told him you were a disreputable hound, and that Moore had crossed a fight.) I told him you were a drunken ass, and Moore an incompetent and dishonest boxer.

Moore. Look here, Deacon! Wot's up? Wot I ses is, if a cove's got any thundering grudge agin a cove, why can't he spit it out, I ses.

Brodie. Here are my answers. (*Producing purse and dice.*) These are both too light. This purse is empty, these dice are not loaded. Is it indiscretion to inquire how you share? Equal with the Captain, I presume?

Smith. It's as easy as my eye, Deakin. Slink Ainslie got letting the merry glass go round, and didn't know the right bones from the wrong. That's *h*all.

Brodie. (What clumsy liars you are!

Smith. In boyhood's hour, Deakin, he were called Old Truthful. Little did he think — —)

Brodie. What is your errand?

Moore. Business.

Smith. After the melancholy games of last night, Deakin, which no one deplores so much as George Smith, we thought we'd trot round — didn't us, Hump? — and see how you and your bankers was a-getting on.

Brodie. Will you tell me your errand?

Moore. You're dry, ain't you?

Brodie. Am I?

Moore. We ain't none of us got a stiver, that's wot's the matter with us.

Brodie. Is it?

Moore. Ay, strike me, it is! And wot we've got to do is to put up the Excise.

Smith. It's the last plant in the shrubbery, Deakin, and it's breaking George the gardener's heart, it is. We really must!

Brodie. Must we?

Moore. Must's the thundering word. I mean business, I do.

Brodie. That's lucky. I don't.

Moore. O, you don’t, don’t you?

Brodie. I do not.

Moore. Then p’raps you’ll tell us wot you thundering well do?

Brodie. What do I mean? I mean that you and that merry-andrew shall walk out of this room and this house. Do you suppose, you blockheads, that I am blind? I’m the Deacon, am I not? I’ve been your king and your commander. I’ve led you and fed you and thought for you with this head. And you think to steal a march upon a man like me? I see you through and through (I know you like the clock); I read your thoughts like print. Brodie, you thought, has money, and won’t do the job. Therefore, you thought, we must rook him to the heart. And therefore, you put up your idiot cockney. And now you come round, and dictate, and think sure of your Excise? Sure? Are you sure I’ll let you pack with a whole skin? By my soul, but I’ve a mind to pistol you like dogs. Out of this! Out, I say, and soil my home no more.

Moore (*sitting*). Now look ‘ere. Mr. bloody Deacon Brodie, you see this ‘ere chair of yours, don’t you? Wot I ses to you is, Here I am, I ses, and here I mean to stick. That’s my motto. Who the devil are you to do the high and mighty? You make all you can out of us, don’t you? and when one of your plants goes cross, you order us out of the ken? Muck! That’s wot I think of you. Muck! Don’t you get coming the nob over me, Mr. Deacon Brodie, or I’ll smash you.

Brodie. You will?

Moore. Ay will I. If I thundering well swing for it. And as for clearing out? Muck! Here I am, and here I stick. Clear out? You try it on. I’m a man, I am.

Brodie. This is plain speaking.

Moore. Plain? Wot about your father as can’t walk? Wot about your fine-madam sister? Wot about the stone-jug, and the dock, and the rope in the open street? Is that plain? If it ain’t, you let me know, and I’ll spit it out so as it’ll raise the roof of this ‘ere ken. Plain! I’m that cove’s master, and I’ll make it plain enough for him.

Brodie. What do you want of me?

Moore. Wot do I want of you? Now you speak sense. Leslie’s is wot I want of you. The Excise is wot I want of you. Leslie’s to-night and the Excise to-morrow. That’s wot I want of you, and wot I thundering well mean to get.

Brodie. Damn you!

Moore. Amen. But you’ve got your orders.

Brodie (*with pistol*). Orders? hey? orders?

Smith (*between them*). Deacon, Deacon! — Badger, are you mad?

Moore. Muck! That’s my motto. Wot I ses is, Has he got his orders or has he not? That’s wot’s the matter with him.

Smith. Deacon, half a tick. Humphrey, I'm only a light weight, and you fight at twelve stone ten, but I'm damned if I'm going to stand still and see you hitting a pal when he's down.
Moore. Muck! That's wot I think of you.

Smith. He's a cut above us, ain't he? He never sold his backers, did he? We couldn't have done without him, could we? You dry up about his old man, and his sister; and don't go on hitting a pal when he's knocked out of time and cannot hit back, for, damme, I will not stand it.
Moore. Amen to you. But I'm cock of this here thundering walk, and that cove's got his orders.
Brodie (*putting pistol on bench*). I give in. I will do your work for you once more. Leslie's to-night and the Excise to-morrow. If that is enough, if you have no more ... orders, you may count it as done.
Moore. Fen larks. No rotten shirking, mind.
Brodie. I have passed you my word. And now you have said what you came to say, you must go. I have business here; but two hours hence I am at your ... orders. Where shall I await you?
Moore. What about that woman's place of yours?
Brodie. Your will is my law.
Moore. That's good enough. Now, Dook.
Smith. Bye-bye, my William. Don't forget.

SCENE IX

Brodie. Trust me. No man forgets his vice, you dogs, or forgives it either. It must be done: Leslie’s to-night and the Excise to-morrow. It shall be done. This settles it. They used to fetch and carry for me, and now … I’ve licked their boots, have I? I’m their man, their tool, their chattel. It’s the bottom rung of the ladder of shame. I sound with my foot, and there’s nothing underneath but the black emptiness of damnation. Ah, Deacon, Deacon, and so this is where you’ve been travelling all these years; and it’s for this that you learned French! The gallows … God help me, it begins to dog me like my shadow. *There’s* a step to take! And the jerk upon your spine! How’s a man to die with a night-cap on? I’ve done with this. Over yonder, across the great ocean, is a new land, with new characters, and perhaps new lives. The sun shines, and the bells ring, and it’s a place where men live gladly; and the Deacon himself can walk without terror, and begin again like a new-born child. It must be good to see day again and not to fear; it must be good to be one’s self with all men. Happy like a child, wise like a man, free like God’s angels … should I work these hands off and eat crusts, there were a life to make me young and good again. And it’s only over the sea! O man, you have been blind, and now your eyes are opened. It was half a life’s nightmare, and now you are awake. Up, Deacon, up, it’s hope that’s at the window! Mary! Mary! Mary!

SCENE X

Brodie, Mary, Old Brodie

Brodie has fallen into a chair, with his face upon the table. Enter Mary, by the side door, pushing her father's chair. She is supposed to have advanced far enough for stage purposes before Brodie is aware of her. He starts up and runs to her.

Brodie. Look up, my lass, look up, and be a woman! I.... O, kiss me, Mary! give me a kiss for my good news.

Mary. Good news, Will? Is it changed?

Brodie. Changed? Why, the world's a different colour! It was night, and now it's broad day, and I trust myself again. You must wait, dear, wait, and I must work and work; and before the week is out, as sure as God sees me, I'll have made you happy. O you may think me broken, hounds, but the Deacon's not the man to be run down; trust him, he shall turn a corner yet, and leave you snarling! And you, Poll, you. I've done nothing for you yet; but, please God, I'll make your life a life of gold; and wherever I am, I'll have a part in your happiness, and you'll know it, by heaven! and bless me.

Mary. O Willie, look at him; I think he hears you, and is trying to be glad with us.

Old Brodie. My son — Deacon — better man than I was.

Brodie. O, for God's sake, hear him!

Mary. He is quite happy, Will, and so am I ... so am I.

Brodie. Hear me, Mary. This is a big moment in our two lives. I swear to you by the father here between us that it shall not be fault of mine if this thing fails; if this ship founders you have set your hopes in. I swear it by our father; I swear it by God's judgments.

Mary. I want no oaths, Will.

Brodie. No, but I do. And prayers, Mary, prayers. Pray night and day upon your knees. I must move mountains.

Old Brodie. A wise son maketh — maketh — —

Brodie. A glad father? And does your son, the Deacon, make you glad? O heaven of heavens, if I were a good man!

END OF THE SECOND ACT

ACT III

TABLEAU V

King’s Evidence

The Stage represents a public place in Edinburgh

SCENE I

Jean, Smith, and Moore
They loiter in L., and stand looking about as for somebody not there. Smith is hat in hand to Jean; Moore as usual

Moore. Wot did I tell you? Is he ‘ere or ain’t he? Now then. Slink by name and Slink by nature, that’s wot’s the matter with him.
Jean. He’ll no’ be lang; he’s regular enough, if that was a’.
Moore. I’d regular him; I’d break his back.
Smith. Badger, you brute, you hang on to the lessons of your dancing-master. None but the genteel deserves the fair; does they, Duchess?
Moore. O rot! Did I insult the blowen? Wot’s the matter with me is Slink Ainslie.
Smith. All right, old Crossed-in-love. Give him forty winks, and he’ll turn up as fresh as clean sawdust and as respectable as a new Bible.
Moore. That’s right enough; but I ain’t a-going to stand here all day for him. I’m for a drop of something short, I am. You tell him I showed you that (*showing his doubled fist*). That’s wot’s the matter with him. (*He lurches out, R.*)

SCENE II

Smith and Jean, to whom Hunt and afterwards Moore
Smith (*critically*). No, Duchess, he has not good manners.
Jean. Ay, he's an impident man.
Smith. So he is, Jean; and for the matter of that he ain't the only one.
Jean. Geordie, I want nae mair o' your nonsense, mind.
Smith. There's our old particular the Deacon, now. Why is he ashamed of a lovely woman? That's not my idea of the Young Chevalier, Jean. If I had luck, we should be married, and retired to our estates in the country, shouldn't us? and go to church and be happy, like the nobility and gentry.
Jean. Geordie Smith, div ye mean ye'd mairry me?
Smith. Mean it? What else has ever been the 'umble petition of your honest but well-meaning friend, Roman, and fellow-countryman? I know the Deacon's your man, and I know he's a cut above G. S.; but he won't last, Jean, and I shall.
Jean. Ay, I'm muckle ta'en up wi' him; wha could help it?
Smith. Well, and my sort don't grow on apple-trees, either.
Jean. Ye're a fine, cracky, neebourly body, Geordie, if ye wad just let me be.
Smith. I know I ain't a Scotsman born.
Jean. I dinna think sae muckle the waur o' ye even for that; if ye would just let me be.
Hunt (*entering behind, aside*). (Are they thick? Anyhow, it's a second chance.)
Smith. But he won't last, Jean; and when he leaves you, you come to me. Is that your taste in pastry? That's the kind of *h*article that I present!

Hunt (*surprising them as in Tableau I*). Why, you're the very parties I was looking for!
Jean. Mercy me!
Smith. Damn it, Jerry, this is unkind.
Hunt. (Now this is what I call a picter of good fortune.) Ain't it strange I should have dropped across you comfortable and promiscuous like this?
Jean (*stolidly*). I hope ye're middling weel, Mr. Hunt? (*Going.*) Mr. Smith!
Smith. Mrs. Watt, ma'am! (*Going.*)
Hunt. Hold hard, George. Speaking as one lady's man to another, turn about's fair play. You've had your confab, and now I'm going to have mine. (Not that I've done with you; you stand by and wait.) Ladies

first, George, ladies first; that's the size of it. (*To Jean, aside.*) Now, Mrs. Watt, I take it you ain't a natural fool?

Jean. And thank ye kindly, Mr. Hunt.

Smith (*interfering*). Jean...!

Hunt (*keeping him off*). Half a tick, George. (*To Jean.*) Mrs. Watt, I've a warrant in my pocket. One, two, three: will you peach?

Jean. Whatten kind of a word'll that be?

Smith. Mum it is, Jean!

Hunt. *When* you've done dancing, George! (*To Jean.*) It ain't a pretty expression, my dear, I own it. "Will you blow the gaff?" is perhaps more tenderer.

Jean. I think ye've a real strange way o' expressin' yoursel'.

Hunt (*to Jean*). I can't waste time on you, my girl. It's now or never. Will you turn King's evidence?

Jean. I think ye'll have made a mistake, like.

Hunt. Well, I'm...! (*Separating them.*) (No, not yet; don't push me.) George's turn now. (*To George.*) George, I've a warrant in my pocket.

Smith. As per usual, Jerry?

Hunt. Now I want King's evidence.

Smith. Ah! so you came a cropper with *her*, Jerry. Pride had a fall.

Hunt. A free pardon and fifty shiners down.

Smith. A free pardon, Jerry?

Hunt. Don't I tell you so?

Smith. And fifty down? fifty?

Hunt. On the nail.

Smith. So you came a cropper with her, and then you tried it on with me?

Hunt. I suppose you mean you're a born idiot?

Smith. What I mean is, Jerry, that you've broke my heart. I used to look up to you like a party might to Julius CÃ¦sar. One more of boyhood's dreams gone pop! (*Enter Moore, L.*)

Hunt (*to both*). Come, then, I'll take the pair, and be damned to you. Free pardon to both, fifty down and the Deacon out of the way. I don't care for you commoners, it's the Deacon I want.

Jean (*looking off stolidly*). I think the kirks are scalin'. There seems to be mair people in the streets.

Hunt. O, that's the way, is it? Do you know that I can hang you, my woman, and your fancy man as well?

Jean. I daur say ye would like fine to, Mr. Hunt; and here's my service to you. (*Going.*)

Hunt. George, don't you be a tomfool, anyway. Think of the blowen here, and have brains for two.

Smith (*going*). Ah, Jerry, if you knew anything, how different you would talk! (*They go off together, R.*)

SCENE III

Hunt, Moore

Hunt. Half a tick, Badger. You're a man of parts, you are; you're solid, you're a true-born Englishman; you ain't a Jerry-go-Nimble like him. Do you know what your pal the Deacon's worth to you? Fifty golden Georges and a free pardon. No questions asked and no receipts demanded. What do you say? Is it a deal?

Moore (*as to himself*). Muck! (*He goes out, R.*)

SCENE IV

Hunt, to whom Ainslie

Hunt (*looking after them ruefully*). And these were the very parties I was looking for! (Ah, Jerry, Jerry, if they knew this at the office!) Well, the market price of that ‘ere two hundred is a trifle on the decline and fall. (*Looking L.*) Hullo! (*Slapping his thigh.*) Send me victorious! It’s King’s evidence on two legs. (*Advancing with great cordiality to meet Ainslie, who enters L.*) And so your name’s Andrew Ainslie, is it? As I was saying, you’re the very party I was looking for. Ain’t it strange, now, that I should have dropped across you comfortable and promiscuous like this?

Ainslie. I dinna ken wha ye are, and I’m ill for my bed.

Hunt. Let your bed wait, Andrew. I want a little chat with you; just a quiet little sociable wheeze. Just about our friends, you know. About Badger Moore, and George the Dook, and Jemmy Rivers, and Deacon Brodie, Andrew. Particularly Deacon Brodie.

Ainslie. They’re nae frien’s o’ mine, mister. I ken naething an’ naebody. An’ noo I’ll get to my bed, wulln’t I?

Hunt. We’re going to have our little talk out first. After that perhaps I’ll let you go, and perhaps I won’t. It all depends on how we get along together. Now, in a general way, Andrew, and speaking of a man as you find him, I’m all for peace and quietness myself. That’s my usual game, Andrew, but when I do make a dust I’m considered by my friends to be rather a good hand at it. So don’t you tread upon the worm.

Ainslie. But I’m sayin’ — —

Hunt. You leave that to me, Andrew. You shall do your pitch presently. I’m first on the ground, and I lead off. With a question, Andrew. Did you ever hear in your life of such a natural curiosity as a Bow Street Runner?

Ainslie. Aiblins ay an’ aiblins no.

Hunt. “Aiblins ay an’ aiblins no.” Very good indeed, Andrew. Now, I’ll ask you another: Did you ever see a Bow Street Runner, Andrew? With the naked eye, so to speak?

Ainslie. What’s your wull?

Hunt. Artful bird! Now since we’re getting on so cosy and so free, I’ll ask you another, Andrew: Should you like to see a Bow Street Runner? (*Producing staff.*) ‘Cos, if so, you’ve only got to cast your eyes on me. Do you queer the red weskit, Andrew? Pretty colour, ain’t it? So nice and warm for the winter too. (*Ainslie dives, Hunt collars him.*) No, you don’t. Not this time. Run away like that before we’ve finished our little conversation? You’re a nice young man, you are. Suppose we introduce our wrists into these here darbies? Now we shall get along cosier and freer than ever. Want to lie down, do you? All right! anything to oblige.

Ainslie (*grovelling*). It wasna me, it wasna me. It's bad companions; I've been lost wi' bad companions an' the drink. An' O mister, ye'll be a kind gentleman to a puir lad, and me sae weak, and fair rotten wi' the drink an' that. Ye've a bonnie kind heart, my dear, dear gentleman; ye wadna hang sitchan a thing as me. I'm no' fit to hang. They ca' me the Cannleworm! An' I'll dae somethin' for ye, wulln't I? An' ye'll can hang the ithers?

Hunt. I thought I hadn't mistook my man. Now you look here, Andrew Ainslie, you're a bad lot. I've evidence to hang you fifty times over. But the Deacon is my mark. Will you peach, or won't you? You blow the gaff, and I'll pull you through. You don't, and I'll scrag you as sure as my name's Jerry Hunt.

Ainslie. I'll dae onything. It's the hanging fleys me. I'll dae onything, onything no' to hang.

Hunt. Don't lie crawling there, but get up and answer me like a man. Ain't this Deacon Brodie the fine workman that's been doing all these tip-topping burglaries?

Ainslie. It's him, mister; it's him. That's the man. Ye're in the very bit. Deacon Brodie. I'll can tak' ye to his very door.

Hunt. How do you know?

Ainslie. I gi'ed him a han' wi' them a'. It was him an' Badger Moore and Geordie Smith; an' they gart me gang wi' them whether or no: I'm that weak, and whiles I'm donner'd wi' the drink. But I ken a' an' I'll tell a'. And O kind gentleman, you'll speak to their lordships for me, and I'll no be hangit ... I'll no be hangit, wull I?

Hunt. But you shared, didn't you? I wonder what share they thought you worth. How much did you get for last night's performance down at Mother Clarke's?

Ainslie. Just five pund, mister. Five pund. As sure's deith it wadna be a penny mair. No' but I askit mair: I did that; I'll no' deny it, mister. But Badger kickit me, an' Geordie, he said a bad sweir, an' made he'd cut the liver out o' me, an' catch fish wi't. It's been that way frae the first: an aith an' a bawbee was aye guid eneuch for puir Andra.

Hunt. Well, and why did they do it? I saw Jemmy dance a hornpipe on the table, and booze the company all round, when the Deacon was gone. What made you cross the fight, and play booty with your own man?

Ainslie. Just to make him rob the Excise, mister. They're wicked, wicked men.

Hunt. And is he right for it?

Ainslie. Ay is he.

Hunt. By Jingo! When’s it for?

Ainslie. Dear, kind gentleman, I dinna rightly ken: the Deacon’s that sair angered wi’ me. I’m to get my orders frae Geordie the nicht.

Hunt. O, you’re to get your orders from Geordie, are you? Now look here, Ainslie. You know me. I’m Hunt the Runner: I put Jemmy Rivers in the jug this morning; I’ve got you this evening. I mean to wind up with the Deacon. You understand? All right. Then just you listen. I’m going to take these here bracelets off, and send you home to that celebrated bed of yours. Only, as soon as you’ve seen the Dook you come straight round to me at Mr. Procurator-Fiscal’s, and let me know the Dook’s views. One word, mind, and … cl’k! It’s a bargain?

Ainslie.. Never you fear that. I’ll tak’ my bannet an’ come straucht to ye. Eh God, I’m glad it’s nae mair nor that to start wi’. An’ may the Lord bless ye, dear, kind gentleman, for your kindness! May the Lord bless ye!

Hunt. You pad the hoof.

Ainslie (*going out*). An’ so I wull, wulln’t I not? An’ bless, bless ye while there’s breath in my body, wulln’t I not?

Hunt (*solus*). You’re a nice young man, Andrew Ainslie. Jemmy Rivers and the Deacon in two days! By Jingo! (*He dances an instant gravely, whistling to himself.*) Jerry, that ‘ere little two hundred of ours is as safe as the bank.

TABLEAU VI

Unmasked

The Stage represents a room in Leslie’s house. A practicable window, C., through which a band of strong moonlight falls into the room. Near the window a strong-box. A practicable door in wing, L. Candlelight

SCENE I

Leslie, Lawson, Mary, seated. Brodie at back, walking between the windows and the strong-box

Lawson. Weel, weel, weel, weel, nae doubt.
Leslie. Mr. Lawson, I am perfectly satisfied with Brodie's word; I will wait gladly.
Lawson. I have nothing to say against that.
Brodie (*behind Lawson*). Nor for it.
Lawson. For it? for it, William? Ye're perfectly richt there. (*To Leslie.*) Just you do what William tells you; ye canna do better than that.
Mary. Dear uncle, I see you are vexed; but Will and I are perfectly agreed on the best course. Walter and I are young. O, we can wait; we can trust each other.
Brodie (*from behind*). Leslie, do you think it safe to keep this strong-box in your room?
Leslie. It does not trouble me.
Brodie. I would not. 'Tis close to the window.
Leslie. It's on the right side of it.
Brodie. I give you my advice: I would not.
Lawson. He may be right there too, Mr. Leslie.
Brodie. I give him fair warning: it's not safe.
Leslie. I have a different treasure to concern myself about; if all goes right with that I shall be well contented.

Mary. Walter!
Lawson. Ay, bairns, ye speak for your age.
Leslie. Surely, sir, for every age: the ties of blood, of love, of friendship, these are life's essence.
Mary. And for no one is it truer than my uncle. If he live to be a thousand, he will still be young in heart, full of love, full of trust.
Lawson. Ah, lassie, it's a wicked world.
Mary. Yes, you are out of sorts to-day; we know that.
Leslie. Admitted that you know more of life, sir; admitted (if you please) that the world is wicked; yet you do not lose trust in those you love.
Lawson. Weel ... ye get gliffs, ye ken.
Leslie. I suppose so. We can all be shaken for a time; but not, I think, in our friends. We are not deceived in them; in the few that we admit into our hearts.
Mary. Never in these.
Leslie. We know these (*to Brodie*), and we think the world of them.

Brodie (*at back*). We are more acquainted with each other's tailors, believe me. You, Leslie, are a very pleasant creature. My uncle Lawson is the Procurator-Fiscal. I — what am I? I am the Deacon of the Wrights; my ruffles are generally clean; and you think the world of me. Bravo!

Leslie. Ay, and I think the world of you.

Brodie (*at back, pointing to Lawson*). Ask him.

Lawson. Hoot-toot. A wheen nonsense: an honest man's an honest man, and a randy thief's a randy thief, and neither mair nor less. Mary, my lamb, it's time you were hame, and had your beauty sleep.

Mary. Do you not come with us?

Lawson. I gang the ither gate, my lamb. (*Leslie helps Mary on with her cloak, and they say farewell at back. Brodie, for the first time, comes front with Lawson.*) Sae ye've consented?

Brodie. As you see.

Lawson. Ye'll can pay it back?

Brodie. I will.

Lawson. And how? That's what I'm wonderin' to mysel'.

Brodie. Ay, God knows that.

Mary. Come, Will.

SCENE II

Leslie, Lawson (*wrapping up*)

Leslie. I wonder what ails Brodie?

Lawson. How should I ken? What should I ken that ails him?

Leslie. He seemed angry even with you.

Lawson (*impatient*). Hoot awa'!

Leslie. Of course, I know. But you see, on the very day when our engagement is announced, even the best of men may be susceptible. You yourself seem not quite pleased.

Lawson (*with great irritation*). I'm perfectly pleased. I'm perfectly delighted. If I werena an auld man, I'd be just beside mysel' wi' happiness.

Leslie. Well, I only fancied ...

Lawson. Ye had nae possible excuse to fancy. Fancy? Perfect trash and nonsense. Look at yersel'. Ye look like a ghaist, ye're white-like, ye're black aboot the een; and do you find me deavin' ye wi' fancies? Or William Brodie either? I'll say that for him.

Leslie. 'Tis not sorrow that alters my complexion; I've something else on hand. Come, I'll tell you, under seal. I've not been in bed till daylight for a week.

Lawson. Weel, there's nae sense in the like o' that.

Leslie. Gad, but there is, though. Why, Procurator, this is town's business; this is a municipal affair; I'm a public character. Why? Ah, here's a nut for the Crown Prosecutor! I'm a bit of a party to a robbery.

Lawson. Guid guide us, man, what d'ye mean?

Leslie. You shall hear. A week ago to-night I was passing through this very room without a candle on my way to bed, when ... what should I see but a masked man fumbling at that window! How he did the Lord knows. I suspect, Procurator, it was not the first he'd tried ... for he opened it as handily as his own front door.

Lawson. Preserve me! Another of thae robberies!

Leslie. That's it. And, of course, I tried to seize him. But the rascal was too quick. He was down and away in an instant. You never saw a thing so daring and adroit.

Lawson. Is that a'? Ye're a bauld lad, I'll say that for ye. I'm glad it wasna waur.

Leslie. Yes, that's all plain sailing. But here's the hitch. Why didn't I tell the Procurator-Fiscal? You never thought of that.

Lawson. No, man. Why?

Leslie. Aha! There's the riddle. Will you guess? No?... I thought I knew the man.

Lawson. What d’ye say?
Leslie. I thought I knew him.
Lawson. Wha was’t?
Leslie. Ah, there you go beyond me. That I cannot tell.
Lawson. As God sees ye, laddie, are ye speaking truth?
Leslie. Well ... of course!
Lawson. The haill truth?
Leslie. All of it. Why not?
Lawson. Man, I’d a kind o’ gliff.
Leslie. Why, what were you afraid of? Had you a suspicion?
Lawson. Me? Me a suspicion? Ye’re daft, sir; and me the Crown offeecial!... Eh, man, I’m a’ shakin’ ... And sae ye thocht ye kennt him?

Leslie. I did that. And what’s more, I’ve sat every night in case of his return. I promise you, Procurator, he shall not slip me twice. Meanwhile, I’m worried and put out. You understand how such a fancy will upset a man. I’m uneasy with my friends and on bad terms with my own conscience. I keep watching, spying, comparing, putting two and two together, and hunting for resemblances until my head goes round. It’s like a puzzle in a dream. Only yesterday I thought I had him. And who d’you think it was?
Lawson. Wha? Wha was’t? Speak, Mr. Leslie, speak. I’m an auld man: dinna forget that.
Leslie. I name no names. It would be unjust to him; and, upon my word, it was so silly it would be unfair to me. However, here I sit, night after night. I mean him to come back; come back he shall; and I’ll tell you who he was next morning.
Lawson. Let sleeping dogs lie, Mr. Leslie; ye dinna ken what ye micht see. And then, leave him alane, he’ll come nae mair. And sitting up a’ nicht ... it’s a *factum imprestabile,* as we say: a thing impossible to man. Gang ye to your bed, like a guid laddie, and sleep lang and soundly, and bonnie, bonnie dreams to ye! (*Without.*) Let sleeping dogs lie, and gang ye to your bed.

SCENE III

Leslie (*calling*). In good time, never fear! (*He carefully bolts and chains the door.*) The old gentleman seems upset. What for, I wonder? Has he had a masked visitor? Why not? It's the fashion. Out with the lights. (*Blows out the candles. The stage is only lighted by the moon through the window.*) He is sure to come one night or other. He must come. Right or wrong, I feel it in the air. Man, but I know you, I know you somewhere. That trick of the shoulders, the hang of the clothes — whose are they? Where have I seen them? And then, that single look of the eye, that one glance about the room as the window opened ... it is almost friendly; I have caught it over the glass's rim! If it should be ... his? No, his it is not.

Watchman (*without*). Past ten o'clock, and a fine moonlight night.

Another (*further away*). Past ten o'clock, and all's well.

Leslie. Past ten? Ah, there's a long night before you and me, watchmen. Heavens, what a trade! But it will be something to laugh over with Mary and ... with him! Damn it, the delusion is too strong for me. It's a thing to be ashamed of. "We Brodies": how she says it! "We Brodies and our Deacon": what a pride she takes in it, and how good it sounds to me! "Deacon of his craft, sir, Deacon of the ..." (*Brodie, masked, appears without at the window, which he proceeds to force.*) Ha! I knew he'd come. I was sure of it. (*He crouches near and nearer to the window, keeping in the shade.*) And I know you too. I swear I know you.

SCENE IV

Brodie, Leslie

Brodie enters by the window with assurance and ease, closes it silently and proceeds to traverse the room. As he moves, Leslie leaps upon and grapples him.

Leslie. Take off that mask!
Brodie. Hands off!
Leslie. Take off that mask!

Brodie. Leave go, by God, leave go!
Leslie. Take it off!
Brodie (*overpowered*). Leslie....
Leslie. Ah! you know me! (*Succeeds in tearing off the mask.*) Brodie!
Brodie (*in the moonlight*). Brodie.
Leslie. You ... you, Brodie, you!
Brodie. Brodie, sir, Brodie, as you see.
Leslie. What does it mean? What does it mean? My God! Were you here before? Is this the second time? Are you a thief, man? are you a thief? Speak, speak, or I'll kill you.
Brodie. I am a thief.
Leslie. And my friend, my own friend, and ... Mary, Mary!... Deacon, Deacon, for God's sake, no!
Brodie. God help me!
Leslie. "We Brodies! We Brodies!"
Brodie. Leslie — —
Leslie. Stand off! Don't touch me! You're a thief!
Brodie. Leslie, Leslie — —
Leslie. A thief's sister! Why are you here? why are you here? Tell me! Why do you not speak? Man, I know you of old. Are you Brodie, and have nothing to say?
Brodie. To say? Not much — God help me! — and commonplace, commonplace like sin. I was honest once; I made a false step; I couldn't retrace it; and ... that is all.
Leslie. You have forgot the bad companions!
Brodie. I did forget them. They were there.
Leslie. Commonplace! Commonplace! Do you speak to me, do you reason with me, do you make excuses? You — a man found out, shamed, a liar, a thief — a man that's killed me, killed this heart in my body; and you speak! What am I to do? I hold your life in my hand; have you thought of that? What am I to do?

Brodie. Do what you please; you have me trapped. (*Jean Watt is heard singing without two bars of "Wanderin' Willie," by way of signal.*)

Leslie. What is that?

Brodie. A signal.

Leslie. What does it mean?

Brodie. Danger to me: there is some one coming.

Leslie. Danger to you?

Brodie. Some one is coming. What are you going to do with me? (*A knock at the door.*)

Leslie (*after a pause*). Sit down. (*Knocking.*)

Brodie. What are you going to do with me?

Leslie. Sit down. (*Brodie sits in darkest part of stage. Leslie opens door and admits Lawson. Door open till end of Act.*)

SCENE V

Brodie, Lawson, Leslie

Lawson. This is an unco' time to come to your door; but eh, laddie, I couldna bear to think o' ye sittin' yer lane in the dark.

Leslie. It was very good of you.

Lawson. I'm no' very fond of playing hidee in the dark mysel': and noo that I'm here — —

Leslie. I will give you a light. (*He lights the candles. Lights up.*)

Lawson. God A'michty! William Brodie!

Leslie. Yes, Brodie was good enough to watch with me.

Lawson. But he gaed awa' ... I dinna see ... an' Lord be guid to us, the window's open!

Leslie. A trap we laid for them: a device of Brodie's.

Brodie (*to Lawson*). Set a thief to catch a thief. (*Passing to Leslie, aside.*) Walter Leslie, God will reward. (*Jean signals again.*)

Lawson. I dinna like that singin' at siccan a time o' the nicht.

Brodie. I must go.

Lawson. Not one foot o' ye. I'm ower glad to find ye in guid hands. Ay, ye dinna ken how glad.

Brodie (*aside to Leslie*). Get me out of this. There's a man there will stick at nothing.

Leslie. Mr. Lawson, Brodie has done his shift. Why should we keep him? (*Jean appears at the door, and signs to Brodie.*)

Lawson. Hoots! this is my trade. That's a bit o' "Wanderin' Willie." I've had it before me in precognitions; that same stave has been used for a signal by some o' the very warst o' them.

Brodie (*aside to Leslie*). Get me out of this. I'll never forget to-night. (*Jean at door again.*)

Leslie. Well, good-night, Brodie. When shall we meet again?

Lawson. Not one foot o' him. (*Jean at door.*) I tell you, Mr. Leslie — —

SCENE VI

To these, Jean

Jean (*from the door*). Wullie, Wullie!

Lawson. Guid guide us, Mrs. Watt! A dacent wumman like yoursel'! Whatten a time o' nicht is this to come to folks' doors?

Jean (*to Brodie*). Hawks, Wullie, hawks!

Brodie. I suppose you know what you've done, Jean?

Jean. I *had* to come, Wullie; he wadna wait another minit. He wad have come himsel'.

Brodie. This is my mistress.

Lawson. William, dinna tell me nae mair.

Brodie. I have told you so much. You may as well know all. That good man knows it already. Have you issued a warrant for me ... yet?

Lawson. No, no, man: not another word.

Brodie (*pointing to the window*). That is my work. I am the man. Have you drawn the warrant?

Lawson (*breaking down*). Your father's son!

Leslie (*to Lawson*). My good friend! Brodie, you might have spared the old man this.

Brodie. I might have spared him years ago; and you and my sister, and myself. I might ... would God I had! (*Weeping himself.*) Don't weep, my good old friend; I was lost long since; don't think of me; don't pity me; don't shame me with your pity! I began this when I was a boy. I bound the millstone round my neck; (it is irrevocable now), and you must all suffer ... all suffer for me!... (for this suffering remnant of what was once a man). O God, that I can have fallen to stand here as I do now. My friend lying to save me from the gallows; my second father weeping tears of blood for my disgrace! And all for what? Ay what? Because I had an open hand, because I was a selfish dog, because I loved this woman.

Jean. O Wullie, and she lo'ed ye weel! But come near me nae mair, come near me nae mair, my man; keep wi' your ain folks ... your ain dacent folks.

Lawson. Mistress Watt, ye shall sit rent free as lang's there's breath in William Lawson's body.

Leslie. You can do one thing still ... for Mary's sake. You can save yourself; you must fly.

Brodie. It is my purpose; the day after to-morrow. It cannot be before. Then I will fly; and O, as God sees me, I will strive to make a new and a better life, and to be worthy of your friendship, and of your tears ... your tears. And to be worthy of you, too, Jean; for I see now that the bandage has fallen from my eyes; I see myself, O how unworthy even of you!

Leslie. Why not to-night?
Brodie. It cannot be before. There are many considerations. I must find money.
Jean. Leave me, and the wean. Dinna fash yoursel’ for us.
Leslie (*opening the strong-box and pouring gold upon the table*). Take this and go at once.
Brodie. Not that … not the money that I came to steal!
Lawson. Tak’ it, William; I’ll pay him.
Brodie. It is in vain. I cannot leave till I have said. There is a man; I must obey him. If I slip my chain till he has done with me, the hue and cry will blaze about the country; every outport will be shut; I shall return to the gallows. He is a man that will stick at nothing.

SCENE VII

To these, Moore

Moore. Are you coming?

Brodie. I am coming.

Moore (*appearing in the door*). Do you want us all to get thundering well scragged?

Brodie (*going*). There is my master.

END OF THE THIRD ACT

ACT IV

TABLEAU VII

The Robbery

The Stage represents the outside of the Excise Office in Chessel's Court. At the back, L.C., an archway opening on the High Street. The door of the Excise in wing, R.; the opposite side of the stage is lumbered with barrels, packing-cases, etc. Moonlight; the Excise Office casts a shadow over half the stage. A clock strikes the hour. A round of the City Guard, with halberts, lanterns, etc., enters and goes out again by the arch, after having examined the fastenings of the great door and the lumber on the left. Cry without in the High Court: "Ten by the bell and a fine clear night." *Then enter cautiously by the arch, Smith and Moore, with Ainslie loaded with tools*

SCENE I

Smith, Moore, Ainslie
Smith (*entering first*). Come on, coast clear.
Moore (*after they have come to the front*). Ain't he turned up yet?
Smith (*to Ainslie*). Now, Maggot! The fishing's a-going to begin.
Ainslie. Dinna cangle, Geordie. My back's fair broke.
Moore. O, muck! Hand out them pieces.
Smith. All right, Humptious! (*To Ainslie.*) You're a nice old sort for a rag-and-bone man: can't hold a bag open! (*Taking out tools.*) Here they was. Here are the bunchums, one and two; and jolly old keys was they. Here's the picklocks, crowbars, and here's Lord George's pet bull's-eye, his old and valued friend, the Cracksman's Treasure!

Moore. Just like you. Forgot the rotten centre-bit.
Smith. That's all you know. Here she is, bless her! Portrait of George as a gay *h*ironmonger.
Moore. O, rot! Hand it over, and keep yourself out of that there thundering moonlight.
Smith (*lighting lantern*). All right, old mumble-peg. Don't you get carried away by the fire of old Rome. That's your motto. Here are the tools, a perfect picter of the sublime and beautiful; and all I hope is that our friend and pitcher, the Deakin, will make a better job of it than he did last night. If he don't, I shall retire from the business — that's all; and it'll be George and his little wife and a black footman till death do us part.
Moore. O, muck! You're all jaw like a sheep's jimmy. That's my opinion of you. When did you see him last?
Smith. This morning; and he looked as if he was rehearsing for his own epitaph. I never see such a change in a man. I gave him the office for to-night; and was he grateful? Did he weep upon my faithful bosom? No; he smiled upon me like a portrait of the dear departed. I see his 'art was far away; and it broke my own to look at him.
Moore. Muck! Wot I ses is, if a cove's got that much of the nob about him, wot's the good of his working single-handed? That's wot's the matter with him.
Smith. Well, old Father Christmas, he ain't single-handed to-night, is he?
Moore. No, he ain't; he's got a man with him to-night.
Smith. Pardon me, Romeo: two men, I think?
Moore. A man wot means business. If I'd 'a' bin with him last night, it ain't psalm-singin' would have got us off. Psalm-singin'? Muck! Let 'em try it on with me.

Ainslie. Losh me, I heard a noise. (*Alarm; they crouch into the shadow and listen.*)

Smith. All serene. (*To Ainslie.*) Am I to cut that liver out of you? Now, am I? (*A whistle.*) ‘St! here we are. (*Whistles a modulation, which is answered.*)

SCENE II

To these, Brodie

Moore. Waiting for you, Deacon.

Brodie. I see. Everything ready?

Smith. All a-growing and a-blowing.

Brodie. Give me the light. (*Briefly examines tools and door with bull's-eye.*) You, George, stand by, and hand up the pieces. Ainslie, take the glim. Moore, out and watch.

Moore. I didn't come here to do sentry-go, I didn't.

Brodie. You came here to do as I tell you. (*Moore goes up slowly.*) Second bunch, George. I know the lock. Steady with the glim. (*At work.*) No good. Give me the centre-bit.

Smith. Right. (*Work continues. Ainslie drops lantern.*)

Brodie. Curse you! (*Throttling and kicking him.*) You shake, and you shake, and you can't even hold a light for your betters. Hey?

Ainslie. Eh, Deacon, Deacon....

Smith. Now, Ghost! (*With lantern.*)

Brodie. 'St, Moore!

Moore. Wot's the row?

Brodie. Take you the light.

Moore (*to Ainslie*). Wo' j' yer shakin' at? (*Kicks him.*)

Brodie (*to Ainslie*). Go you, and see if you're good at keeping watch. Inside the arch. And if you let a footfall past, I'll break your back. (*Ainslie retires.*) Steady with the light. (*At work with centre-bit.*) Hand up number four, George. (*At work with picklock.*) That has it.

Smith. Well done, our side.

Brodie. Now the crowbar! (*At work.*) That's it. Put down the glim, Badger, and help at the wrench. Your whole weight, men! Put your backs to it! (*While they work at the bar, Brodie stands by, dusting his hands with a pocket-handkerchief. As the door opens.*) *VoilÃ !* In with you.

Moore (*entering with light*). Mucking fine work too, Deacon!

Brodie. Take up the irons, George.

Smith. How about the P(h)antom?

Brodie. Leave him to me. I'll give him a look. (*Enters office.*)

Smith (*following*). Houp-lÃ !

SCENE III

Ainslie; afterwards Brodie; afterwards Hunt and Officers

Ainslie. Ca' ye that mainners? Ye're grand gentry by your way o't! Eh sirs, my hench! Ay, that was the Badger. Man, but ye'll look bonnie hangin'! (*A faint whistle.*) Lord's sake, what's thon? Ay, it'll be Hunt an' his lads. (*Whistle repeated.*) Losh me, what gars him whustle, whustle? Does he think me deaf? (*Goes up. Brodie enters from office, stands an instant, and sees him making a signal through the arch.*)

Brodie. Rats! Rats! (*Hides L. among lumber. Enter noiselessly through arch Hunt and Officers.*)

Hunt. Birds caught?

Ainslie. They're a' ben the house, mister.

Hunt. All three?

Ainslie. The haill set, mister.

Brodie. Liar!

Hunt. Mum, lads, and follow me. (*Exit, with his men, into office. Brodie seen with dagger.*)

Hunt (*within*). In the King's name!

Moore (*within*). Muck!

Smith (*within*). Go it, Badger.

Hunt (*within*). Take 'em alive, boys!

Ainslie. Eh, but that's awfu'. (*The Deacon leaps out, and stabs him. He falls without a cry.*)

Brodie. Saved! (*He goes out by the arch.*)

SCENE IV

Hunt and Officers; with Smith and Moore handcuffed. Signs of a severe struggle

Hunt (*entering*). Bring 'em along, lads! (*Looking at prisoners with lantern.*) Pleased to see you again, Badger. And you too, George. But I'd rather have seen your principal. Where's he got to?

Moore. To hell, I hope.

Hunt. Always the same pretty flow of language, I see, Hump. (*Looking at burglary with lantern.*) A very tidy piece of work, Dook; very tidy! Much too good for you. Smacks of a fine tradesman. It *was* the Deacon, I suppose?

Smith. You ought to know G.S. better by this time, Jerry.

Hunt. All right, your Grace: we'll talk it over with the Deacon himself. Where's the jackal? Here, you, Ainslie! Where are you? By Jingo, I thought as much. Stabbed to the heart and dead as a herring!

Smith. Bravo!

Hunt. More of the Deacon's work, I guess? Does him credit too, don't it, Badger?

Moore. Muck. Was that the thundering cove that peached?

Hunt. That was the thundering cove.

Moore. And is he corpsed?

Hunt. I should just about reckon he was.

Moore. Then, damme, I don't mind swinging!

Hunt. We'll talk about that presently. M'Intyre and Stewart, you get a stretcher, and take that rubbish to the office. Pick it up; it's only a dead informer. Hand these two gentlemen over to Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, with Mr. Jerry Hunt's compliments. Johnstone and Syme, you come along with me. I'll bring the Deacon round myself.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT

ACT V

TABLEAU VIII

The Open Door

The Stage represents the Deacon's room, as in Tableau I. Firelight. Stage dark. A pause. Then knocking at the door, C. Cries without of "Willie!" "Mr. Brodie!" The door is burst open

SCENE I

Doctor, Mary, a Maidservant with lights

Doctor. The apartment is unoccupied.

Mary. Dead, and he not here!

Doctor. The bed has not been slept in. The counterpane is not turned down.

Mary. It is not true; it cannot be true.

Doctor. My dear young lady, you must have misunderstood your brother's language.

Mary. O no; that I did not. That I am sure I did not.

Doctor (*looking at door*). The strange thing is ... the bolt.

Servant. It's unco strange.

Doctor. Well, we have acted for the best.

Servant. Sir, I dinna think this should gang nae further.

Doctor. The secret is in our keeping. Affliction is enough without scandal.

Mary. Kind heaven, what does it mean?

Doctor. I think there is no more to be done.

Mary. I am here alone, Doctor; you pass my uncle's door?

Doctor. The Procurator-Fiscal? I shall make it my devoir. Expect him soon. (*Goes out with Maid.*)

Mary (*hastily searches the room*). No, he is not there. She was right! O father, you can never know, praise God!

SCENE II

Mary, to whom Jean and afterwards Leslie
Jean (*at door*). Mistress ...!
Mary. Ah! Who is there? Who are you?
Jean. Is he no’ hame yet? I’m aye waitin’ on him.
Mary. Waiting for him? Do you know the Deacon? You?
Jean. I maun see him. Eh, lassie, it’s life and death.
Mary. Death ... O my heart!
Jean. I maun see him, bonnie leddie. I’m a puir body, and no’ fit to be seen speakin’ wi’ the likes o’ you. But O lass, ye are the Deacon’s sister, and ye hae the Deacon’s een, and for the love of the dear kind Lord, let’s in and hae a word wi’ him ere it be ower late. I’m bringin’ siller.
Mary. Siller? You? For him? O father, father, if you could hear! What are you? What are you ... to him?
Jean. I’ll be the best frien’ ‘at ever he had; for, O dear leddie, I wad gie my bluid to help him.
Mary. And the ... the child?
Jean. The bairn?
Mary. Nothing! O nothing! I am in trouble, and I know not what I say. And I cannot help you; I cannot help you if I would. He is not here; and I believe he was; and ill ... ill; and he is not — he is ... O, I think I shall lose my mind!
Jean. Ay, it’s unco business.

Mary. His father is dead within there ... dead, I tell you ... dead!
Jean. It’s mebbe just as weel.
Mary. Well? Well? Has it come to this? O Walter, Walter! come back to me, or I shall die. (*Leslie enters, C.*)
Leslie. Mary, Mary! I hoped to have spared you this. (*To Jean.*) What — you? Is he not here?
Jean. I’m aye waitin’ on him.
Leslie. What has become of him? Is he mad? Where is he?
Jean. The Lord A’michty kens, Mr. Leslie. But I maun find him; I maun find him.

SCENE III

Mary, Leslie

Mary. O Walter, Walter! What does it mean?

Leslie. You have been a brave girl all your life, Mary; you must lean on me … you must trust in me … and be a brave girl till the end.

Mary. Who is she? What does she want with *him*? And he … where is he? Do you know that my father is dead, and the Deacon not here? Where has he gone? He may be dead, too. Father, brother … O God, it is more than I can bear!

Leslie. Mary, my dear, dear girl … when will you be my wife?

Mary. O, do not speak … not speak … of it to-night. Not to-night! O, not to-night!

Leslie. I know, I know, dear heart! And do you think that I, whom you have chosen, I whose whole life is in your love — do you think that I would press you now if there were not good cause?

Mary. Good cause! Something has happened. Something has happened … to him! Walter…! Is he … dead?

Leslie. There are worse things in the world than death. There is … O Mary, he is your brother!

Mary. What?… Dishonour!… The Deacon!… My God!

Leslie. My wife, my wife!

Mary. No, no! Keep away from me. Don't touch me. I'm not fit … not fit to be near you. What has he done? I am his sister. Tell me the worst. Tell me the worst at once.

Leslie. That, if God wills, dear, you shall never know. Whatever it be, think that I knew it all, and only loved you better; think that your true husband is with you, and you are not to bear it alone.

Mary. My husband?… Never.

Leslie. Mary…!

Mary. You forget, you forget what I am. I am his sister. I owe him a lifetime of happiness and love; I owe him even you. And whatever his fault, however ruinous his disgrace, he is my brother — my own brother — and my place is still with him.

Leslie. Your place is with me — is with your husband. With me, with me; and for his sake most of all. What can you do for him alone? how can you help him alone? It wrings my heart to think how little. But together is different. Together…! Join my strength, my will, my courage to your own, and together we may save him.

Mary. All that is over. Once I was blessed among women. I was my father's daughter, my brother loved me, I lived to be your wife. Now…! My father is dead, my brother is shamed; and you … O how could I face the world, how could I endure myself, if I preferred my happiness to your honour?

Leslie. What is my honour but your happiness? In what else does it consist? Is it in denying me my heart? is it in visiting another's sin upon the innocent? Could I do that, and be my mother's son? Could I do that, and bear my father's name? Could I do that, and have ever been found worthy of you?

Mary. It is my duty ... my duty. Why will you make it so hard for me? So hard, Walter, so hard!

Leslie. Do I pursue you only for your good fortune, your beauty, the credit of your friends, your family's good name? That were not love, and I love you. I love you, dearest, I love you. Friend, father, brother, husband ... I must be all these to you. I am a man who can love well.

Mary. Silence ... in pity! I cannot ... O, I cannot bear it.

Leslie. And say it was I who had fallen. Say I had played my neck and lost it ... that I were pushed by the law to the last limits of ignominy and despair. Whose love would sanctify my gaol to me? whose pity would shine upon me in the dock? whose prayers would accompany me to the gallows? Whose but yours? Yours!... And you would entreat me — me! — to do what you shrink from even in thought, what you would die ere you attempted in deed!

Mary. Walter ... on my knees ... no more, no more!

Leslie. My wife! my wife! Here on my heart! It is I that must kneel ... I that must kneel to you.

Mary. Dearest!... Husband! You forgive him? O, you forgive him?

Leslie. He is my brother now. Let me take you to our father. Come.

SCENE IV

After a pause, Brodie through the window
Brodie. Saved! And the *alibi*! Man, but you’ve been near it this time — near the rope, near the rope. Ah, boy, it was your neck, your neck you fought for. They were closing hell-doors upon me, swift as the wind, when I slipped through and shot for heaven! Saved! The dog that sold me, I settled him; and the other dogs are staunch. Man, but your *alibi* will stand! Is the window fast? The neighbours must not see the Deacon, the poor, sick Deacon, up and stirring at this time o’ night. Ay, the good old room in the good, cosy old house ... and the rat a dead rat, and all saved. (*He lights the candles.*) Your hand shakes, sir? Fie! And you saved, and snug and sick in your bed, and *it* but a dead rat after all? (*He takes off his hanger and lays it on the table.*) Ay, it was a near touch. Will it come to the dock? If it does! You’ve a tongue and you’ve a head, and you’ve an *alibi*; and your *alibi* will stand. (*He takes off his coat, takes out the dagger, and with a gesture of striking.*) Home! He fell without a sob. “He breaketh them against the bosses of His buckler!” (*Lays the dagger on the table.*) Your *alibi* ... ah, Deacon, that’s your life!... your *alibi*, your *alibi*. (*He takes up a candle and turns towards the door.*) O!... Open, open, open! Judgment of God, the door is open!

SCENE V

Brodie, Mary
Brodie. Did you open the door?
Mary. I did.
Brodie. You ... you opened the door?

Mary. I did open it.
Brodie. Were you ... alone?
Mary. I was not. The servant was with me; and the doctor.
Brodie. O ... the servant ... and the doctor. Very true. Then it's all over the town by now. The servant and the doctor. The doctor? What doctor? Why the doctor?
Mary. My father is dead. O Will, where have you been?
Brodie. Your father is dead. O yes! He's dead, is he? Dead. Quite right. Quite right.... How did you open the door? It's strange. I bolted it.
Mary. We could not help it, Will, now could we? The doctor forced it. He had to, had he not?
Brodie. The doctor forced it? The doctor? Was he here? He forced it? He?
Mary. We did it for the best; it was I who did it ... I, your own sister. And O Will, my Willie, where have you been? You have not been in any harm, any danger?
Brodie. Danger? O, my young lady, you have taken care of that. It's not danger now, it's death. Death? Ah! Death! Death! Death! (*Clutching the table. Then recovering as from a dream.*) Death? Did you say my father was dead? My father? O my God, my poor old father! Is he dead, Mary? Have I lost him? is he gone? O, Mary dear, and to think of where his son was!
Mary. Dearest, he is in heaven.
Brodie. Did he suffer?
Mary. He died like a child. Your name ... it was his last.
Brodie. My name? Mine? O Mary, if he had known! He knows now. He knows; he sees us now ... sees me! Ay, and sees you left — how lonely!
Mary. Not so, dear; not while you live. Wherever you are, I shall not be alone, so you live.

Brodie. While I live? I? The old house is ruined, and the old master dead, and I!... O Mary, try and believe I did not mean that it should come to this; try and believe that I was only weak at first. At first? And now! The good old man dead, the kind sister ruined, the innocent boy fallen, fallen.... You will be quite alone; all your old friends, all the old faces, gone into darkness. The night (*with a gesture*) ... it waits for me. You will be quite alone.

Mary. The night!

Brodie. Mary, you must hear. How am I to tell her, and the old man just dead! Mary, I was the boy you knew; I loved pleasure, I was weak; I have fallen ... low ... lower than you think. A beginning is so small a thing! I never dreamed it would come to this ... this hideous last night.

Mary. Willie, you must tell me, dear. I must have the truth ... the kind truth ... at once ... in pity.

Brodie. Crime. I have fallen. Crime.

Mary. Crime?

Brodie. Don't shrink from me. Miserable dog that I am, selfish hound that has dragged you to this misery ... you and all that loved him ... think only of my torments, think only of my penitence, don't shrink from me.

Mary. I do not care to hear, I do not wish, I do not mind; you are my brother. What do I care? How can I help you?

Brodie. Help? help *me*? You would not speak of it, not wish it, if you knew. My kind good sister, my little playmate, my sweet friend! Was I ever unkind to you till yesterday? Not openly unkind? You'll say that when I am gone.

Mary. If you have done wrong, what do I care? If you have failed, does it change my twenty years of love and worship? Never!

Brodie. Yet I must make her understand...!

Mary. I am your true sister, dear. I cannot fail, I will never leave you, I will never blame you. Come! (*Goes to embrace.*)

Brodie (*recoiling*). No, don't touch me, not a finger, not that, anything but that!

Mary. Willie, Willie!

Brodie (*taking the bloody dagger from the table*). See, do you understand that?

Mary. Ah! What, what is it!

Brodie. Blood. I have killed a man.

Mary. You?...

Brodie. I am a murderer; I was a thief before. Your brother ... the old man's only son!

Mary. Walter, Walter, come to me!

Brodie. Now you see that I must die; now you see that I stand upon the grave's edge, all my lost life behind me, like a horror to think upon, like a frenzy, like a dream that is past. And you, you are alone. Father, brother, they are gone from you; one to heaven, one...!

Mary. Hush, dear, hush! Kneel, pray; it is not too late to repent. Think of our father, dear; repent. (*She weeps, straining to his bosom.*) O Willie, my darling boy, repent and join us.

SCENE VI

To these, Lawson, Leslie, Jean
Lawson. She kens a’, thank the guid Lord!
Brodie (*to Mary*). I know you forgive me now; I ask no more. That is a good man. (*To Leslie.*) Will you take her from my hands? (*Leslie takes Mary.*) Jean, are ye here to see the end?
Jean. Eh man, can ye no’ fly? Could ye no’ say that it was me?

Brodie. No, Jean, this is where it ends. Uncle, this is where it ends. And to think that not an hour ago I still had hopes! Hopes! Ay, not an hour ago I thought of a new life. You were not forgotten, Jean. Leslie, you must try to forgive me … you too!
Leslie. You are her brother.
Brodie (*to Lawson*). And you.
Lawson. My name-child and my sister’s bairn.
Brodie. You won’t forget Jean, will you? nor the child?
Lawson. That I will not.
Mary. O Willie, nor I.

SCENE VII

To these, Hunt

Hunt. The game's up, Deacon. I'll trouble you to come along with me.

Brodie (*behind the table*). One moment, officer: I have a word to say before witnesses ere I go. In all this there is but one man guilty; and that man is I. None else has sinned; none else must suffer. This poor woman (*pointing to Jean*) I have used; she never understood. Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, that is my dying confession. (*He snatches his hanger from the table, and rushes upon Hunt, who parries, and runs him through. He reels across the stage and falls.*) The new life … the new life! (*He dies.*)

CURTAIN

BEAU AUSTIN

DEDICATED
WITH
ADMIRATION AND RESPECT
TO
GEORGE MEREDITH
BOURNEMOUTH,
1st October, 1884

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The Time is 1820. The Scene is laid at Tunbridge Wells. The Action occupies a space of ten hours.

PROLOGUE

“To all and singular,” as Dryden says,
We bring a fancy of those Georgian days,
Whose style still breathed a faint and fine perfume
Of old-world courtliness and old-world bloom:
When speech was elegant and talk was fit,
For slang had not been canonised as wit;
When manners reigned, when breeding had the wall,
And Women — yes! — were ladies first of all;
When Grace was conscious of its gracefulness,
And man — though Man! — was not ashamed to dress.
A brave formality, a measured ease,
Were his — and hers — whose effort was to please.
And to excel in pleasing was to reign,
And, if you sighed, never to sigh in vain.
But then, as now — it may be, something more —
Woman and man were human to the core.
The hearts that throbbed behind that quaint attire
Burned with a plenitude of essential fire.
They too could risk, they also could rebel.
They could love wisely — they could love too well.
In that great duel of Sex, that ancient strife
Which is the very central fact of life,
They could — and did — engage it breath for breath,
They could — and did — get wounded unto death.
As at all times since time for us began
Woman was truly woman, man was man.
And joy and sorrow were as much at home
In trifling Tunbridge as in mighty Rome.
Dead — dead and done with! Swift from shine to shade
The roaring generations flit and fade.
To this one, fading, flitting, like the rest,
We come to proffer — be it worst or best —
A sketch, a shadow, of one brave old time;
A hint of what it might have held sublime;
A dream, an idyll, call it what you will,
Of man still Man, and woman — Woman still!
W. E. H.

BEAU AUSTIN

Musical Induction: “Lascia ch’io pianga” (*Rinaldo*), Handel

ACT I

The Stage represents Miss Foster's apartments at the Wells. Doors, L. and C.; a window, L.C., looking on the street; a table, R., laid for breakfast

SCENE I

Barbara; to her, Miss Foster

Barbara (*out of window*). Mr. Menteith! Mr. Menteith! Mr. Menteith! — Drat his old head! Will nothing make him hear? — Mr. Menteith!

Miss Foster (*entering*). Barbara! this is incredible: after all my lessons, to be leaning from the window, and calling (for unless my ears deceived me, you were positively calling!) into the street.

Barbara. Well, madam, just wait until you hear who it was. I declare it was much more for Miss Dorothy and yourself than for me; and if it was a little countrified, I had a good excuse.

Miss Foster. Nonsense, child! At least, who was it?

Barbara. Miss Evelina, I was sure you would ask. Well, what do you think? I was looking out of the window at the barber's opposite — —

Miss Foster. Of which I entirely disapprove — —

Barbara. And first there came out two of the most beautiful — the Royal livery, madam!

Miss Foster. Of course, of course: the Duke of York arrived last night. I trust you did not hail the Duke's footmen?

Barbara. O no, madam, it was after they were gone. Then, who should come out — but you'll never guess!

Miss Foster. I shall certainly not try.

Barbara. Mr. Menteith himself!

Miss Foster. Why, child, I never heard of him.

Barbara. O madam, not the Beau's own gentleman?

Miss Foster. Mr. Austin's servant. No? Is it possible? By that, George Austin must be here.

Barbara. No doubt of that, madam; they're never far apart. He came out feeling his chin, madam, so; and a packet of letters under his arm, so; and he had the Beau's own walk to that degree you couldn't tell his back from his master's.

Miss Foster. My dear Barbara, you too frequently forget yourself. A young woman in your position must beware of levity.

Barbara. Madam, I know it; but la, what are you to make of me? Look at the time and trouble dear Miss Dorothy was always taking — she that trained up everybody — and see what's come of it: Barbara Ridley I was, and Barbara Ridley I am; and I don't do with fashionable ways — I can't do with them; and indeed, Miss Evelina, I do sometimes wish we were all back again on Edenside, and Mr. Anthony a boy again, and dear Miss Dorothy her old self, galloping the bay mare along the moor, and taking care of all of us as if she was our mother, bless her heart!

Miss Foster. Miss Dorothy herself, child? Well, now you mention it, Tunbridge of late has scarcely seemed to suit her constitution. She falls away, has not a word to throw at a dog, and is ridiculously pale. Well, now Mr. Austin has returned, after six months of infidelity, to the dear Wells, we shall all, I hope, be brightened up. Has the mail come?

Barbara. That it has, madam, and the sight of Mr. Menteith put it clean out of my head. (*With letters.*) Four for you, Miss Evelina, two for me, and only one for Miss Dorothy. Miss Dorothy seems quite neglected, does she not? Six months ago, it was a different story.

Miss Foster. Well, and that's true, Barbara, and I had not remarked it. I must take her seriously to task. No young lady in her position should neglect her correspondence. (*Opening a letter.*) Here's from that dear ridiculous boy, the Cornet, announcing his arrival for to-day.

Barbara. O madam, will he come in his red coat?

Miss Foster. I could not conceive him missing such a chance. Youth, child, is always vain, and Mr. Anthony is unusually young.

Barbara. La, madam, he can't help that.

Miss Foster. My child, I am not so sure. Mr. Anthony is a great concern to me. He was orphaned, to be sure, at ten years old; and ever since he has been only as it were his sister's son. Dorothy did everything for him: more indeed than I thought quite ladylike, but I suppose I begin to be old-fashioned. See how she worked and slaved — yes, slaved! — for him: teaching him herself, with what pains and patience she only could reveal, and learning that she might be able; and see what he is now: a gentleman, of course, but, to be frank, a very commonplace one: not what I had hoped of Dorothy's brother; not what I had dreamed of the heir of two families — Musgrave and Foster, child! Well, he may now meet Mr. Austin. He requires a Mr. Austin to embellish and correct his manners. (*Opening another letter.*) Why, Barbara, Mr. John Scrope and Miss Kate Dacre are to be married!

Barbara. La, madam, how nice!

Miss Foster. They are: as I'm a sinful woman. And when will you be married, Barbara? and when dear Dorothy? I hate to see old maids a-making.

Barbara. La, Miss Evelina, there's no harm in an old maid.

Miss Foster. You speak like a fool, child: sour grapes are all very well, but it's a woman's business to be married. As for Dorothy, she is five-and-twenty, and she breaks my heart. Such a match, too! Ten thousand to her fortune, the best blood in the north, a most advantageous person, all the graces, the finest sensibility, excellent judgment, the Foster walk; and all these go positively a-begging! The men seem stricken with blindness. Why, child, when I came out (and I was the dear girl's image!) I had more swains at my feet in a fortnight than our Dorothy in — — O, I cannot fathom it: it must be the girl's own fault.

Barbara. Why, madam, I did think it was a case with Mr. Austin.

Miss Foster. With Mr. Austin? why, how very rustic! The attentions of a gentleman like Mr. Austin, child, are not supposed to lead to matrimony. He is a feature of society: an ornament: a personage: a private gentleman by birth, but a kind of king by habit and reputation. What woman could he marry? Those to whom he might properly aspire are all too far below him. I have known George Austin too long, child, and I understand that the very greatness of his success condemns him to remain unmarried.

Barbara. Sure, madam, that must be tiresome for him.

Miss Foster. Some day, child, you will know better than to think so. George Austin, as I conceive him, and as he is regarded by the world, is one of the triumphs of the other sex. I walked my first minuet with him: I wouldn't tell you the year, child, for worlds; but it was soon after his famous encounter with Colonel Villiers. He had killed his man, he wore pink and silver, was most elegantly pale, and the most ravishing creature!

Barbara. Well, madam, I believe that: he is the most beautiful gentleman still.

SCENE II

To these, Dorothy, L.

Dorothy (*entering*). Good-morning, aunt! Is there anything for me? (*She goes eagerly to table and looks at letters.*)

Miss Foster. Good-morrow, niece. Breakfast, Barbara.

Dorothy (*with letter unopened*). Nothing.

Miss Foster. And what do you call that, my dear? (*Sitting.*) Is John Fenwick nobody?

Dorothy (*looking at letter*). From John? O yes, so it is. (*Lays letter down unopened, and sits to breakfast, Barbara waiting.*)

Miss Foster (*to Barbara, with plate*). Thanks, child; now you may give me some tea. Dolly, I must insist on your eating a good breakfast: I cannot away with your pale cheeks and that Patience-on-a-Monument kind of look. (Toast, Barbara!) At Edenside you ate and drank and looked like Hebe. What have you done with your appetite?

Dorothy. I don't know, aunt, I'm sure.

Miss Foster. Then consider, please, and recover it as soon as you can: to a young lady in your position a good appetite is an attraction — almost a virtue. Do you know that your brother arrives this morning?

Dorothy. Dear Anthony! Where is his letter, Aunt Evelina? I am pleased that he should leave London and its perils, if only for a day.

Miss Foster. My dear, there are moments when you positively amaze me. (Barbara, some *pÃ¢tÃ©*, if you please!) I beg you not to be a prude. All women, of course, are virtuous; but a prude is something I regard with abhorrence. The Cornet is seeing life, which is exactly what he wanted. You brought him up surprisingly well; I have always admired you for it; but let us admit — as women of the world, my dear — it was no upbringing for a man. You and that fine solemn fellow, John Fenwick, led a life that was positively no better than the Middle Ages; and between the two of you poor Anthony (who, I am sure, was a most passive creature!) was so packed with principle and admonition that I vow and declare he reminded me of Issachar stooping between his two burdens. It was high time for him to be done with your apron-string, my dear: he has all his wild oats to sow; and that is an occupation which it is unwise to defer too long. By the bye, have you heard the news? The Duke of York has done us a service for which I was unprepared. (More tea, Barbara!) George Austin, bringing the prince in his train, is with us once more.

Dorothy. I knew he was coming.

Miss Foster. You knew, child? and did not tell? You are a public criminal.

Dorothy. I did not think it mattered, Aunt Evelina.

Miss Foster. O do not make-believe. I am in love with him myself, and have been any time since Nelson and the Nile. As for you, Dolly, since he went away six months ago, you have been positively in the megrims. I shall date your loss of appetite from George Austin's vanishing. No, my dear, our family require entertainment: we must have wit about us, and beauty, and the *bel air*.
Barbara. Well, Miss Dorothy, perhaps it's out of my place: but I do hope Mr. Austin will come: I should love to have him see my necklace on.
Dorothy. Necklace? what necklace? Did he give you a necklace?
Barbara. Yes, indeed, Miss, that he did; the very same day he drove you in his curricle to Penshurst. You remember, Miss, I couldn't go.

Dorothy. I remember.
Miss Foster. And so do I. I had a touch of ... Foster in the blood: the family gout, dears!... And you, you ungrateful nymph, had him a whole day to yourself, and not a word to tell me when you returned.
Dorothy. I remember. (*Rising.*) Is that the necklace, Barbara? It does not suit you. Give it me.
Barbara. La, Miss Dorothy, I wouldn't for the world.
Dorothy. Come, give it me. I want it. Thank you: you shall have my birthday pearls instead.
Miss Foster. Why, Dolly, I believe you're jealous of the maid. Foster, Foster: always a Foster trick to wear the willow in anger.
Dorothy. I do not think, madam, that I am of a jealous habit.
Miss Foster. O, the personage is your excuse! And I can tell you, child, that when George Austin was playing Florizel to the Duchess's Perdita, all the maids in England fell a prey to green-eyed melancholy. It was the *ton*, you see: not to pine for that Sylvander was to resign from good society.
Dorothy. Aunt Evelina, stop; I cannot endure to hear you. What is he after all but just Beau Austin? What has he done — with half a century of good health, what has he done that is either memorable or worthy? Diced and danced and set fashions; vanquished in a drawing-room, fought for a word; what else? As if these were the meaning of life! Do not make me think so poorly of all of us women. Sure, we can rise to admire a better kind of man than Mr. Austin. We are not all to be snared with the eye, dear aunt; and those that are — O! I know not whether I more hate or pity them.
Miss Foster. You will give me leave, my niece: such talk is neither becoming in a young lady nor creditable to your understanding. The world was made a great while before Miss Dorothy Musgrave; and you will do much better to ripen your opinions, and in the meantime read your letter, which I perceive you have not opened. (*Dorothy opens*

and reads letter.) Barbara, child, you should not listen at table.

Barbara. Sure, madam, I hope I know my place.

Miss Foster. Then do not do it again.

Dorothy. Poor John Fenwick! he coming here!

Miss Foster. Well, and why not? Dorothy, my darling child, you give me pain. You never had but one chance, let me tell you pointedly; and that was John Fenwick. If I were you, I would not let my vanity so blind me. This is not the way to marry.

Dorothy. Dear aunt, I shall never marry.

Miss Foster. A fiddlestick's end! every one must marry. (*Rising.*) Are you for the Pantiles?

Dorothy. Not to-day, dear.

Miss Foster. Well, well! have your wish, Dolorosa. — Barbara, attend and dress me.

SCENE III

Dorothy. How she tortures me, poor aunt, my poor blind aunt; and I — I could break her heart with a word. That she should see nothing, know nothing — there's where it kills. O, it is more than I can bear ... and yet, how much less than I deserve! Mad girl, of what do I complain? that this dear innocent woman still believes me good, still pierces me to the soul with trustfulness. Alas, and were it otherwise, were her dear eyes opened to the truth, what were left me but death? — He, too — she must still be praising him, and every word is a lash upon my conscience. If I could die of my secret: if I could cease — but one moment cease — this living lie; if I could sleep and forget and be at rest! — Poor John! (*reading the letter*) he at least is guiltless; and yet for my fault he too must suffer, he too must bear part in my shame. Poor John Fenwick! Has he come back with the old story: with what might have been, perhaps, had we stayed by Edenside? Eden? yes, my Eden, from which I fell. O, my old north country, my old river — the river of my innocence, the old country of my hopes — how could I endure to look on you now? And how to meet John? — John, with the old love on his lips, the old, honest, innocent, faithful heart! There was a Dorothy once who was not unfit to ride with him, her heart as light as his, her life as clear as the bright rivers we forded; he called her his Diana, he crowned her so with rowan. Where is that Dorothy now? that Diana? she that was everything to John? For O, I did him good; I know I did him good; I will still believe I did him good: I made him honest and kind and a true man; alas, and could not guide myself! And now, how will he despise me! For he shall know; if I die, he shall know all; I could not live, and not be true with him. (*She takes out the necklace and looks at it.*) That he should have bought me from my maid! George, George, that you should have stooped to this! Basely as you have used me, this is the basest. Perish the witness. (*She treads the trinket under foot.*) Break, break like my heart, break like my hopes, perish like my good name!

SCENE IV

To her, Fenwick, C.

Fenwick (*after a pause*). Is this how you receive me, Dorothy? Am I not welcome? — Shall I go then?

Dorothy (*running to him, with hands outstretched*). O no, John, not for me. (*Turning and pointing to the necklace.*) But you find me changed.

Fenwick (*with a movement towards the necklace*). This?

Dorothy. No, no, let it lie. That is a trinket — broken. But the old Dorothy is dead.

Fenwick. Dead, dear? Not to me.

Dorothy. Dead to you — dead to all men.

Fenwick. Dorothy, I loved you as a boy. There is not a meadow on Edenside but is dear to me for your sake, not a cottage but recalls your goodness, not a rock nor a tree but brings back something of the best and brightest youth man ever had. You were my teacher and my queen; I walked with you, I talked with you, I rode with you; I lived in your shadow; I saw with your eyes. You will never know, dear Dorothy, what you were to the dull boy you bore with; you will never know with what romance you filled my life, with what devotion, with what tenderness and honour. At night I lay awake and worshipped you; in my dreams I saw you, and you loved me; and you remember, when we told each other stories — you have not forgotten, dearest — that Princess Hawthorn that was still the heroine of mine: who was she? I was not bold enough to tell, but she was you! You, my virgin huntress, my Diana, my queen.

Dorothy. O silence, silence — pity!

Fenwick. No, dear; neither for your sake nor mine will I be silenced. I have begun; I must go on and finish, and put fortune to the touch. It was from you I learned honour, duty, piety, and love. I am as you made me, and I exist but to reverence and serve you. Why else have I come here, the length of England, my heart burning higher every mile, my very horse a clog to me? — why, but to ask you for my wife? Dorothy, you will not deny me?

Dorothy. You have not asked me about this broken trinket?

Fenwick. Why should I ask? I love you.

Dorothy. Yet I must tell you. Sit down. (*She picks up the necklace, and stands looking at it. Then, breaking down.*) O John, John, it's long since I left home.

Fenwick. Too long, dear love. The very trees will welcome you.

Dorothy. Ay, John, but I no longer love you. The old Dorothy is dead, God pardon her!

Fenwick. Dorothy, who is the man?

Dorothy. O poor Dorothy! O poor dead Dorothy! John, you found me breaking this: me, your Diana of the Fells, the Diana of your old romance by Edenside. Diana — O what a name for me! Do you see this trinket? It is a chapter in my life. A chapter, do I say? my whole life, for there is none to follow. John, you must bear with me, you must help me. I have that to tell — there is a secret — I have a secret, John — O, for God's sake, understand. That Diana you revered — O John, John, you must never speak of love to me again.

Fenwick. What do you say? How dare you?

Dorothy. John, it is the truth. Your Diana, even she, she whom you believed in, she who so believed in herself, came out into the world only to be broken. I met, here at the Wells, a man — why should I tell you his name? I met him, and I loved him. My heart was all his own; yet he was not content with that: he must intrigue to catch me, he must bribe my maid with this. (*Throws the necklace on the table.*) Did he love me? Well, John, he said he did; and be it so! He loved, he betrayed, and he has left me.

Fenwick. Betrayed?

Dorothy. Ay, even so; I was betrayed. The fault was mine that I forgot our innocent youth, and your honest love.

Fenwick. Dorothy, O Dorothy!

Dorothy. Yours is the pain; but, O John, think it is for your good. Think in England how many true maids may be waiting for your love, how many that can bring you a whole heart, and be a noble mother to your children, while your poor Diana, at the first touch, has proved all frailty. Go, go and be happy, and let me be patient. I have sinned.

Fenwick. By God, I'll have his blood.

Dorothy. Stop! I love him. (*Between Fenwick and door, C.*)

Fenwick. What do I care? I loved you too. Little he thought of that, little either of you thought of that. His blood — I'll have his blood!

Dorothy. You shall never know his name.

Fenwick. Know it? Do you think I cannot guess? Do you think I had not heard he followed you? Do you think I had not suffered — O, suffered! George Austin is the man. Dear shall he pay it!

Dorothy (*at his feet*). Pity me; spare me; spare your Dorothy! I love him — love him — love him!

Fenwick. Dorothy, you have robbed me of my happiness, and now you would rob me of my revenge.

Dorothy. I know it; and shall I ask, and you not grant?

Fenwick (*raising her*). No, Dorothy, you shall ask nothing, nothing in vain from me. You ask his life; I give it you, as I would give you my soul; as I would give you my life, if I had any left. My life is done; you have taken it. Not a hope, not an end; not even revenge. (*He sits.*)

Dorothy, you see your work.
Dorothy. O God, forgive me!
Fenwick. Ay, Dorothy, He will, as I do.
Dorothy. As you do? Do you forgive me, John?
Fenwick. Ay, more than that, poor soul. I said my life was done, I was wrong; I have still a duty. It is not in vain you taught me; I shall still prove to you that it was not in vain. You shall soon find that I am no backward friend. Farewell.

Musical Induction: “The Lass of Richmond Hill”

ACT II

The Stage represents George Austin's dressing-room. Elaborate toilet-table, R., with chair; a cheval-glass so arranged as to correspond with glass on table. Breakfast-table, L., front. Door, L. The Beau is discovered at table in dressing-gown, trifling with correspondence. Menteith is frothing chocolate

SCENE I

Austin, Menteith

Menteith. At the barber's, Mr. George, I had the pleasure of meeting two of the Dook's gentlemen.

Austin. Well, and was his Royal Highness satisfied with his quarters?

Menteith. Quite so, Mr. George. Delighted, I believe.

Austin. I am rejoiced to hear it. I wish I could say I was as pleased with my journey, Menteith. This is the first time I ever came to the Wells in another person's carriage; Duke or not, it shall be the last, Menteith.

Menteith. Ah, Mr. George, no wonder. And how many times have we made that journey back and forth?

Austin. Enough to make us older than we look.

Menteith. To be sure, Mr. George, you do wear well.

Austin. *We* wear well, Menteith.

Menteith. I hear, Mr. George, that Miss Musgrave is of the company.

Austin. Is she so? Well, well! well, well!

Menteith. I've not seen the young lady myself, Mr. George; but the barber tells me she's looking poorly.

Austin. Poorly?

Menteith. Yes, Mr. George, poorly was his word.

Austin. Well, Menteith, I am truly sorry. She is not the first.

Menteith. Yes, Mr. George.

(*A bell. Menteith goes out and re-enters with card.*)

Austin (*with card*). Whom have we here? Anthony Musgrave?

Menteith. A fine young man, Mr. George; and with a look of the young lady, but not so gentlemanly.

Austin. You have an eye, you have an eye. Let him in.

SCENE II

Austin, Menteith, Anthony

Austin. I am charmed to have this opportunity, Mr. Musgrave. You belong to my old corps, I think? And how does my good friend, Sir Frederick? I had his line; but, like all my old comrades, he thinks last about himself, and gives me not of his news.

Anthony. I protest, sir, this is a very proud moment. Your name is still remembered in the regiment. (*Austin bows.*) The Colonel — he keeps his health, sir, considering his age (*Austin bows again and looks at Menteith*) — tells us young men you were a devil of a fellow in your time.

Austin. I believe I was — in my time. Menteith, give Mr. Musgrave a dish of chocolate. So, sir, we see you at the Wells.

Anthony. I have but just alighted. I had but one thought, sir: to pay my respects to Mr. Austin. I have not yet kissed my aunt and sister.

Austin. In my time — to which you refer — the ladies had come first.

Anthony. The women? I take you, sir. But then, you see, a man's relatives don't count. And besides, Mr. Austin, between men of the world, I am fairly running away from the sex: I am positively in flight. Little Hortense of the Opera; you know; she sent her love to you. She's mad about me, I think. You never saw a creature so fond.

Austin. Well, well, child! you are better here. In my time — to which you have referred — I knew the lady. Does she wear well?

Anthony. I beg your pardon, sir!

Austin. No offence, child, no offence. She was a very lively creature. But you neglect your chocolate, I see?

Anthony. We don't patronise it, Mr. Austin; we haven't for some years: the service has quite changed since your time. You'd be surprised.

Austin. Doubtless. I am.

Anthony. I assure you, sir, I and Jack Bosbury of the Fifty-second — —

Austin. The Hampshire Bosburys?

Anthony. I do not know exactly, sir. I believe he is related.

Austin. Or perhaps — I remember a Mr. Bosbury, a cutter of coats. I have the vanity to believe I formed his business.

Anthony. I — I hope not, sir. But as I was saying, I and this Jack Bosbury, and the Brummagem Bantam — a very pretty light-weight, sir — drank seven bottles of Burgundy to the three of us inside the eighty minutes. Jack, sir, was a little cut; but me and the Bantam went out and finished the evening on hot gin. Life, sir, life! Tom Cribb was with us. He spoke of you, too, Tom did: said you'd given him a wrinkle for his second fight with the black man. No, sir, I assure you,

you're not forgotten.
Austin (*bows*). I am pleased to learn it. In my time, I had an esteem for Mr. Cribb.

Anthony. O come, sir! but your time cannot be said to be over.
Austin. Menteith, you hear!
Menteith. Yes, Mr. George.
Anthony. The Colonel told me that you liked to shake an elbow. Your big main, sir, with Lord Wensleydale, is often talked about. I hope I may have the occasion to sit down with you. I shall count it an honour, I assure you.
Austin. But would your aunt, my very good friend, approve?
Anthony. Why, sir, you do not suppose I am in leading-strings?
Austin. You forget, child: a family must hang together. When I was young — in my time — I was alone; and what I did concerned myself. But a youth who has — as I think you have — a family of ladies to protect, must watch his honour, child, and preserve his fortune.... You have no commands from Sir Frederick?
Anthony. None, sir, none.
Austin. Shall I find you this noon upon the Pantiles?... I shall be charmed. Commend me to your aunt and your fair sister. Menteith?
Menteith. Yes, Mr. George. (*Shows Anthony out.*)

SCENE III

Austin, Menteith, returning
Austin. Was I ever like that, Menteith?
Menteith. No, Mr. George, you was always a gentleman.
Austin. Youth, my good fellow, youth.
Menteith. Quite so, Mr. George.
Austin. Well, Menteith, we cannot make nor mend. We cannot play the jockey with Time. Age is the test; of wine, Menteith, and men.

Menteith. Me and you and the old Hermitage, Mr. George, he-he!
Austin. And the best of these, the Hermitage. But come: we lose our day. Help me off with this.
(*Menteith takes off Austin's dressing-gown; Austin passes R. to dressing-table, and takes up first cravat.*)
Austin. Will the hair do, Menteith?
Menteith. Never saw it lay better, Mr. George. (*Austin proceeds to wind first cravat. A bell: exit Menteith. Austin drops first cravat in basket and takes second.*)
Austin (*winding and singing*) —
"I'd crowns resign
To call her mine,
Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill!"
(*Second cravat a failure. Re-enter Menteith with card.*) Fenwick? of Allonby Shaw? A good family, Menteith, but I don't know the gentleman. (*Lays down card, and takes up third cravat.*) Send him away with every consideration.
Menteith. To be sure, Mr. George. (*He goes out. Third cravat a success. Re-enter Menteith.*) He says, Mr. George, that he has an errand from Miss Musgrave.
Austin (*with waistcoat*). Show him in, Menteith, at once. (*Singing and fitting waistcoat at glass*) —
"I'd crowns resign
To call her mine,
Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill!"

SCENE IV

Austin, R. To him, Menteith and Fenwick

Menteith (*announcing*). Mr. Fenwick, Mr. George.

Austin. At the name of Miss Musgrave, my doors fly always open.

Fenwick. I believe, sir, you are acquainted with my cousin, Richard Gaunt?

Austin. The county member? An old and good friend. But you need not go so far afield: I know your good house of Allonby Shaw since the days of the Black Knight. We are, in fact, and at a very royal distance, cousins.

Fenwick. I desired, sir, from the nature of my business, that you should recognise me for a gentleman.

Austin. The preliminary, sir, is somewhat grave.

Fenwick. My business is both grave and delicate.

Austin. Menteith, my good fellow. (*Exit Menteith.*) Mr. Fenwick, honour me so far as to be seated. (*They sit.*) I await your pleasure.

Fenwick. Briefly, sir, I am come, not without hope, to appeal to your good heart.

Austin. From Miss Musgrave?

Fenwick. No, sir, I abused her name, and am here upon my own authority. Upon me the consequence.

Austin. Proceed.

Fenwick. Mr. Austin, Dorothy Musgrave is the oldest and dearest of my friends; is the lady whom for ten years it has been my hope to make my wife. She has shown me reason to discard that hope for another: that I may call her Mrs. Austin.

Austin. In the best interests of the lady (*rising*) I question if you have been well inspired. You are aware, sir, that from such interference there is but one issue: to whom shall I address my friend?

Fenwick. Mr. Austin, I am here to throw myself upon your mercy. Strange as my errand is, it will seem yet more strange to you that I came prepared to accept at your hands any extremity of dishonour and not fight. The lady whom it is my boast to serve has honoured me with her commands. These are my law, and by these your life is sacred.

Austin. Then, sir (*with his hand upon the bell*), this conversation becomes impossible. You have me at too gross a disadvantage; and, as you are a gentleman and respect another, I would suggest that you retire.

Fenwick. Sir, you speak of disadvantage; think of mine. All my life long, with all the forces of my nature, I have loved this lady. I came here to implore her to be my wife, to be my queen; my saint she had been always! She was too noble to deceive me. She told me what you know. I will not conceal that my first mood was of anger: I would have killed you like a dog. But, Mr. Austin — bear with me a while — I, on the threshold of my life, who have made no figure in the world, nor ever shall now, who had but one treasure, and have lost it — if I, abandoning revenge, trampling upon jealousy, can supplicate you to complete my misfortune — O Mr. Austin! you who have lived, you whose gallantry is beyond the insolence of a suspicion, you who are a man crowned and acclaimed, who are loved, and loved by such a woman — you who excel me in every point of advantage, will you suffer me to surpass you in generosity?

Austin. You speak from the heart. (*Sits.*) What do you want with me?

Fenwick. Marry her.

Austin. Mr. Fenwick, I am the older man. I have seen much of life, much of society, much of love. When I was young, it was expected of a gentleman to be ready with his hat to a lady, ready with his sword to a man; to honour his word and his king; to be courteous with his equals, generous to his dependants, helpful and trusty in friendship. But it was not asked of us to be quixotic. If I had married every lady by whom it is my fortune — not my merit — to have been distinguished, the Wells would scarce be spacious enough for my establishment. You see, sir, that while I respect your emotion, I am myself conducted by experience. And besides, Mr. Fenwick, is not love a warfare? has it not rules? have not our fair antagonists their tactics, their weapons, their place of arms? and is there not a touch of — pardon me the word! of silliness in one who, having fought and having vanquished, sounds a parley, and capitulates to his own prisoner? Had the lady chosen, had the fortune of war been other, 'tis like she had been Mrs. Austin. Now!... You know the world.

Fenwick. I know, sir, that the world contains much cowardice. To find Mr. Austin afraid to do the right, this surprises me.

Austin. Afraid, child?

Fenwick. Yes, sir, afraid. You know her, you know if she be worthy; and you answer me with — the world: the world which has been at your feet: the world which Mr. Austin knows so well how to value and is so able to rule.

Austin. I have lived long enough, Mr. Fenwick, to recognise that the world is a great power. It can make; but it can break.

Fenwick. Sir, suffer me: you spoke but now of friendship, and spoke warmly. Have you forgotten Colonel Villiers?

Austin. Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Fenwick, you forget what I have suffered.

Fenwick. O sir, I know you loved him. And yet, for a random word you quarrelled; friendship was weighed in vain against the world's code of honour; you fought, and your friend fell. I have heard from

others how he lay long in agony, and how you watched and nursed him, and it was in your embrace he died. In God's name, have you forgotten that? Was not this sacrifice enough, or must the world, once again, step between Mr. Austin and his generous heart?
Austin. Good God, sir, I believe you are in the right; I believe, upon my soul I believe, there is something in what you say.

Fenwick. Something, Mr. Austin? O credit me, the whole difference betwixt good and evil.
Austin. Nay, nay, but there you go too far. There are many kinds of good; honour is a diamond cut in a thousand facets, and with the true fire in each. Thus, and with all our differences, Mr. Fenwick, you and I can still respect, we can still admire each other.
Fenwick. Bear with me still, sir, if I ask you what is the end of life but to excel in generosity? To pity the weak, to comfort the afflicted, to right where we have wronged, to be brave in reparation — these noble elements you have; for of what besides is the fabric of your dealing with Colonel Villiers? That is man's chivalry to man. Yet to a suffering woman — a woman feeble, betrayed, unconsoled — you deny your clemency, you refuse your aid, you proffer injustice for atonement. Nay, you are so disloyal to yourself that you can choose to be ungenerous and unkind. Where, sir, is the honour? What facet of the diamond is that?
Austin. You forget, sir, you forget. But go on.
Fenwick. O sir, not I — not I but yourself forgets: George Austin forgets George Austin. A woman loved by him, betrayed by him, abandoned by him — that woman suffers; and a point of honour keeps him from his place at her feet. She has played and lost, and the world is with him if he deign to exact the stakes. Is that the Mr. Austin whom Miss Musgrave honoured with her trust? Then, sir, how miserably was she deceived!
Austin. Child — child — —
Fenwick. Mr. Austin, still bear with me, still follow me. O sir, will you not picture that dear lady's life? Her years how few, her error thus irreparable, what henceforth can be her portion but remorse, the consciousness of self-abasement, the shame of knowing that her trust was ill-bestowed? To think of it: this was a queen among women; and this — this is George Austin's work! Sir, let me touch your heart: let me prevail with you to feel that 'tis impossible.
Austin. I am a gentleman. What do you ask of me?
Fenwick. To be the man she loved: to be clement where the world would have you triumph, to be of equal generosity with the vanquished, to be worthy of her sacrifice and of yourself.
Austin. Mr. Fenwick, your reproof is harsh — —

Fenwick (*interrupting him*). O sir, be just, be just! — —

Austin. But it is merited, and I thank you for its utterance. You tell me that the true victory comes when the fight is won: that our foe is never so noble nor so dangerous as when she is fallen, that the crowning triumph is that we celebrate over our conquering selves. Sir, you are right. Kindness, ay, kindness, after all. And with age, to become clement. Yes, ambition first; then, the rounded vanity — victory still novel; and last, as you say, the royal mood of the mature man; to abdicate for others.... Sir, you touched me hard about my dead friend; still harder about my living duty; and I am not so young but I can take a lesson. There is my hand upon it: she shall be my wife.

Fenwick. Ah, Mr. Austin, I was sure of it.

Austin. Then, sir, you were vastly mistaken. There is nothing of Beau Austin here. I have simply, my dear child, sate at the feet of Mr. Fenwick.

Fenwick. Ah, sir, your heart was counsellor enough.

Austin. Pardon me. I am vain enough to be the judge: there are but two people in the world who could have wrought this change: yourself and that dear lady. (*Touches bell.*) Suffer me to dismiss you. One instant of toilet, and I follow. Will you do me the honour to go before, and announce my approach? (*Enter Menteith.*)

Fenwick. Sir, if my admiration — —

Austin. Dear child, the admiration is the other way. (*Embraces him. Menteith shows him out.*)

SCENE V

Austin. Upon my word, I think the world is getting better. We were none of us young men like that — in my time — to quote my future brother. (*He sits down before the mirror.*) Well, here ends Beau Austin. Paris, Rome, Vienna, London — victor everywhere: and now he must leave his bones in Tunbridge Wells. (*Looks at his leg.*) Poor Dolly Musgrave! a good girl after all, and will make me a good wife; none better. The last — of how many? — ay, and the best! Walks like Hebe. But still, here ends Beau Austin. Perhaps it's time. Poor Dolly — was she looking poorly? She shall have her wish. Well, we grow older, but we grow no worse.

SCENE VI

Austin, Menteith

Austin. Menteith, I am going to be married.

Menteith. Well, Mr. George, but I am pleased to hear it. Miss Musgrave is a most elegant lady.

Austin. Ay, Mr. Menteith; and who told you the lady's name?

Menteith. Mr. George, you was always a gentleman.

Austin. You mean I wasn't always? Old boy, you are in the right. This shall be a good change for both you and me. We have lived too long like a brace of truants: now is the time to draw about the fire. How much is left of the old Hermitage?

Menteith. Hard upon thirty dozen, Mr. George, and not a bad cork in the bin.

Austin. And a mistress, Menteith, that's worthy of that wine.

Menteith. Mr. George, sir, she's worthy of you.

Austin. Gad, I believe it. (*Shakes hands with him.*)

Menteith (*breaking down*). Mr. George, you've been a damned good master to me, and I've been a damned good servant to you; we've been proud of each other from the first; but if you'll excuse my plainness, Mr. George, I never liked you better than to-day.

Austin. Cheer up, old boy, the best is yet to come. Get out the tongs, and curl me like a bridegroom. (*Sits before dressing-glass; Menteith produces curling-irons and plies them. Austin sings*) —

"I'd crowns resign
To call her mine,
Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill!"

Musical Induction: The "Minuet" from *Don Giovanni*

ACT III

The Stage represents Miss Foster's lodging as in Act I

SCENE I

Dorothy, R., at tambour; Anthony, C., bestriding chair; Miss Foster, L.C.

Anthony. Yes, ma'am, I like my regiment: we are all gentlemen, from old Fred downwards, and all of a good family. Indeed, so are all my friends, except one tailor sort of fellow, Bosbury. But I'm done with him. I assure you, Aunt Evelina, we are Corinthian to the last degree. I wouldn't shock you ladies for the world — —

Miss Foster. Don't mind me, my dear; go on.

Anthony. Really, ma'am, you must pardon me: I trust I understand what topics are to be avoided among females — and before my sister, too! A girl of her age!

Dorothy. Why, you dear, silly fellow, I'm old enough to be your mother.

Anthony. My dear Dolly, you do not understand; you are not a man of the world. But, as I was going on to say, there is no more spicy regiment in the service.

Miss Foster. I am not surprised that it maintains its old reputation. You know, my dear (*to Dorothy*), it was George Austin's regiment.

Dorothy. Was it, aunt?

Anthony. Beau Austin? Yes, it was; and a precious dust they make about him still — a parcel of old frumps! That's why I went to see him. But he's quite extinct: he couldn't be Corinthian if he tried.

Miss Foster. I am afraid that even at your age George Austin held a very different position from the distinguished Anthony Musgrave.

Anthony. Come, ma'am, I take that unkindly. Of course I know what you're at: of course the old put cut no end of a dash with the Duchess.

Miss Foster. My dear child, I was thinking of no such thing; *that* was immoral.

Anthony. Then you mean that affair at Brighton: when he cut the Prince about Perdita Robinson.

Miss Foster. No, I had forgotten it.

Anthony. O, well, I know — that duel! But look here, Aunt Evelina, I don't think you'd be much gratified after all if I were to be broke for killing my commanding officer about a quarrel at cards.

Dorothy. Nobody asks you, Anthony, to imitate Mr. Austin. I trust you will set yourself a better model. But you may choose a worse. With all his faults, and all his enemies, Mr. Austin is a pattern gentleman. You would not ask a man to be braver, and there are few so generous. I cannot bear to hear him called in fault by one so young. Better judges, dear, are better pleased.

Anthony. Hey-day! what's this?

Miss Foster. Why, Dolly, this is April and May. You surprise me.

Dorothy. I am afraid, indeed, madam, that you have much to suffer from my caprice. (*She goes out, L.*)

SCENE II

Anthony, Miss Foster

Anthony. What is the meaning of all this, ma'am? I don't like it.

Miss Foster. Nothing, child, that I know. You spoke of Mr. Austin, our dear friend, like a groom; and she, like any lady of taste, took arms in his defence.

Anthony. No, ma'am, that won't do. I know the sex. You mark my words, the girl has some confounded nonsense in her head, and wants looking after.

Miss Foster. In my presence, Anthony, I shall ask you to speak of Dorothy with greater respect. With your permission, your sister and I will continue to direct our own affairs. When we require the interference of so young and confident a champion, you shall know. (*Curtsies, kisses her hand and goes out, L.*)

SCENE III

Anthony. Upon my word, I think Aunt Evelina one of the most uncivil old women in the world. Nine weeks ago I came of age; and they still treat me like a boy. I'm a recognised Corinthian, too: take my liquor with old Fred, and go round with the Brummagem Bantam and Jack Bosb — — .... O, damn Jack Bosbury. If his father was a tailor, he shall fight me for his ungentlemanly conduct. However, that's all one. What I want is to make Aunt Evelina understand that I'm not the man to be put down by an old maid who's been brought up in a work-basket, begad! I've had nothing but rebuffs all day. It's very remarkable. There was that man Austin, to begin with. I'll be hanged if I can stand him. I hear too much of him; and if I can only get a good excuse to put him to the door, I believe it would give Dorothy and all of us a kind of a position. After all, he's not a man to visit in the house of ladies: not when I'm away, at least. Nothing in it, of course; but is he a man whose visits I can sanction?

SCENE IV

Anthony, Barbara
Barbara. Please, Mr. Anthony, Miss Foster said I was to show your room.
Anthony. Ah! Baby? Now, you come here. You're a girl of sense, I know.
Barbara. La, Mr. Anthony, I hope I'm nothing of the kind.
Anthony. Come, come! that's not the tone I want: I'm serious. Does this man Austin come much about the house?
Barbara. O Mr. Anthony, for shame! Why don't you ask Miss Foster?
Anthony. Now I wish you to understand: I'm the head of this family. It's my business to look after my sister's reputation, and my aunt's too, begad! That's what I'm here for: I'm their natural protector. And what I want you, Barbara Ridley, to understand — you whose fathers have served my fathers — is just simply this: if you've any common gratitude, you're bound to help me in the work. Now, Barbara, you know me, and you know my Aunt Evelina. She's a good enough woman; I'm the first to say so. But who is she to take care of a young girl? She's ignorant of the world to that degree she believes in Beau Austin! Now you and I, Bab, who are not so high and dry, see through and through him; we know that a man like that is no fit company for any inexperienced girl.

Barbara. O Mr. Anthony, don't say that. (*Weeping.*)
Anthony. Hullo! what's wrong?
Barbara. Nothing that I know of. O Mr. Anthony, I don't think there can be anything.
Anthony. Think? Don't think? What's this?
Barbara. O sir! I don't know, and yet I don't like it. Here's my beautiful necklace all broke to bits: she took it off my very neck, and gave me her birthday pearls instead; and I found it afterwards on the table, all smashed to pieces; and all she wanted it for was to take and break it. Why that? It frightens me, Mr. Anthony, it frightens me.
Anthony (*with necklace*). This? What has this trumpery to do with us?
Barbara. He gave it me: that's why she broke it.
Anthony. He? Who?
Barbara. Mr. Austin did; and I do believe I should not have taken it, Mr. Anthony, but I thought no harm, upon my word of honour. He was always here; that was six months ago; and indeed, indeed, I thought they were to marry. How would I think else with a born lady like Miss Dorothy?
Anthony. Why, Barbara, God help us all, what's this? You don't mean

to say that there was — —

Barbara. Here it is, as true as true: they were going for a jaunt; and Miss Foster had her gout; and I was to go with them; and he told me to make-believe I was ill; and I did; and I stayed at home; and he gave me that necklace; and they went away together; and, O dear! I wish I'd never been born.

Anthony. Together? he and Dolly? Good Lord! my sister! And since then?

Barbara. We haven't seen him from that day to this, the wicked villain; and, Mr. Anthony, he hasn't so much as written the poor dear a word.

Anthony. Bab, Bab, Bab, this is a devil of a bad business; this is a cruel, bad business, Baby; cruel upon me, cruel upon all of us; a family like mine. I'm a young man, Barbara, to have this delicate affair to manage; but, thank God, I'm Musgrave to the bone. He bribed a servant-maid, did he? I keep his bribe; it's mine now: dear bought, by George! He shall have it in his teeth. Shot Colonel Villiers, did he? we'll see how he faces Anthony Musgrave. You're a good girl, Barbara; so far you've served the family. You leave this to me. And, hark ye, dry your eyes and hold your tongue: I'll have no scandal raised by you.

Barbara. I do hope, sir, you won't use me against Miss Dorothy.

Anthony. That's my affair; your business is to hold your tongue. Miss Dorothy has made her bed and must lie on it. Here's Jack Fenwick. You can go.

SCENE V

Anthony, Fenwick

Anthony. Jack Fenwick, is that you? Come here, my boy. Jack, you've given me many a thrashing, and I deserved 'em; and I'll not see you made a fool of now. George Austin is a damned villain, and Dorothy Musgrave is no girl for you to marry: God help me that I should have to say it.

Fenwick. Good God, who told *you*?

Anthony. Ay, Jack; it's hard on me, Jack. But you'll stand my friend in spite of this, and you'll take my message to the man, won't you? For it's got to come to blood, Jack: there's no way out of that. And perhaps your poor friend will fall, Jack; think of that: like Villiers. And all for an unworthy sister.

Fenwick. Now, Anthony Musgrave, I give you fair warning; see you take it: one more word against your sister, and we quarrel.

Anthony. You let it slip yourself, Jack: you know yourself she's not a virtuous girl.

Fenwick. What do you know of virtue, whose whole boast is to be vicious? How dare you draw conclusions? Dolt and puppy! you can no more comprehend that angel's excellences than she can stoop to believe in your vices. And you talk morality? Anthony, I'm a man who has been somewhat roughly tried: take care.

Anthony. You don't seem able to grasp the situation, Jack. It's very remarkable; I'm the girl's natural protector; and you should buckle-to and help, like a friend of the family. And instead of that, begad! you turn on me like all the rest.

Fenwick. Now mark me fairly: Mr. Austin follows at my heels; he comes to offer marriage to your sister — that is all you know, and all you shall know; and if by any misplaced insolence of yours this marriage should miscarry, you have to answer, not to Mr. Austin only, but to me.

Anthony. It's all a most discreditable business, and I don't see how you propose to better it by cutting my throat. Of course, if he's going to marry her, it's a different thing, but I don't believe he is, or he'd have asked me. You think me a fool? Well, see they marry, or they'll find me a dangerous fool.

SCENE VI

To these, Austin, Barbara announcing

Barbara. Mr. Austin. (*She shows Austin in, and retires.*)

Austin. You will do me the justice to acknowledge, Mr. Fenwick, that I have been not long delayed by my devotion to the Graces.

Anthony. So, sir, I find you in my house — —

Austin. And charmed to meet you again. It went against my conscience to separate so soon. Youth, Mr. Musgrave, is to us older men a perpetual refreshment.

Anthony. You came here, sir, I suppose, upon some errand?

Austin. My errand, Mr. Musgrave, is to your fair sister. Beauty, as you know, comes before valour.

Anthony. In my own house, and about my own sister, I presume I have the right to ask for something more explicit.

Austin. The right, my dear sir, is beyond question; but it is one, as you were going on to observe, on which no gentleman insists.

Fenwick. Anthony, my good fellow, I think we had better go.

Anthony. I have asked a question.

Austin. Which I was charmed to answer, but which, on repetition, might begin to grow distasteful.

Anthony. In my own house — —

Fenwick. For God's sake, Anthony!

Austin. In your aunt's house, young gentleman, I shall be careful to refrain from criticism. I am come upon a visit to a lady: that visit I shall pay; when you desire (if it be possible that you desire it) to resume this singular conversation, select some fitter place. Mr. Fenwick, this afternoon, may I present you to his Royal Highness?

Anthony. Why, sir, I believe you must have misconceived me. I have no wish to offend: at least at present.

Austin. Enough, sir. I was persuaded I had heard amiss. I trust we shall be friends.

Fenwick. Come, Anthony, come: here is your sister. (*As Fenwick and Anthony go out, C., enter Dorothy, L.*)

SCENE VII

Austin, Dorothy

Dorothy. I am told, Mr. Austin, that you wish to see me.

Austin. Madam, can you doubt of that desire? can you question my sincerity?

Dorothy. Sir, between you and me these compliments are worse than idle: they are unkind. Sure, we are alone!

Austin. I find you in an hour of cruelty, I fear. Yet you have condescended to receive this poor offender; and, having done so much, you will not refuse to give him audience.

Dorothy. You shall have no cause, sir, to complain of me. I listen.

Austin. My fair friend, I have sent myself — a poor ambassador — to plead for your forgiveness. I have been too long absent; too long, I would fain hope, madam, for you; too long for my honour and my love. I am no longer, madam, in my first youth; but I may say that I am not unknown. My fortune, originally small, has not suffered from my husbandry. I have excellent health, an excellent temper, and the purest ardour of affection for your person. I found not on my merits, but on your indulgence. Miss Musgrave, will you honour me with your hand in marriage?

Dorothy. Mr. Austin, if I thought basely of marriage, I should perhaps accept your offer. There was a time, indeed, when it would have made me proudest among women. I was the more deceived, and have to thank you for a salutary lesson. You chose to count me as a cipher in your rolls of conquest; for six months you left me to my fate; and you come here to-day — prompted, I doubt not, by an honourable impulse — to offer this tardy reparation. No; it is too late.

Austin. Do you refuse?

Dorothy. Yours is the blame; we are no longer equal. You have robbed me of the right to marry any one but you; and do you think me, then, so poor in spirit as to accept a husband on compulsion?

Austin. Dorothy, you loved me once.

Dorothy. Ay, you will never guess how much: you will never live to understand how ignominious a defeat that conquest was. I loved and trusted you: I judged you by myself; think, then, of my humiliation, when, at the touch of trial, all your qualities proved false, and I beheld you the slave of the meanest vanity — selfish, untrue, base! Think, sir, what a humbling of my pride to have been thus deceived; to have taken for my idol such a commonplace imposture as yourself; to have loved — yes, loved — such a shadow, such a mockery of man. And now I am unworthy to be the wife of any gentleman; and you — look me in the face, George — are you worthy to be my husband?

Austin. No, Dorothy, I am not. I was a vain fool; I blundered away the most precious opportunity; and my regret will be lifelong. Do me the justice to accept this full confession of my fault. I am here to-day to own and to repair it.

Dorothy. Repair it? Sir, you condescend too far.

Austin. I perceive with shame how grievously I had misjudged you. But now, Dorothy, believe me, my eyes are opened. I plead with you, not as my equal, but as one in all ways better than myself. I admire you, not in that trivial sense in which we men are wont to speak of women, but as God's work: as a wise mind, a noble soul, and a most generous heart, from whose society I have all to gain, all to learn. Dorothy, in one word, I love you.

Dorothy. And what, sir, has wrought this transformation? You knew me of old, or thought you knew me? Is it in six months of selfish absence that your mind has changed? When did that change begin? A week ago? Sure, you would have written! To-day? Sir, if this offer be anything more than fresh offence, I have a right to be enlightened.

Austin. Madam, I foresaw this question. So be it: I respect, and I will not deceive you. But give me, first of all, a moment for defence. There are few men of my habits and position who would have done as I have done: sate at the feet of a young boy, accepted his lessons, gone upon his errand: fewer still, who would thus, at the crisis of a love, risk the whole fortune of the soul — love, gratitude, even respect. Yet more than that! For conceive how I respect you, if I, whose lifelong trade has been flattery, stand before you and make the plain confession of a truth that must not only lower me, but deeply wound yourself.

Dorothy. What means — — ?

Austin. Young Fenwick, my rival for your heart, he it was that sent me.

Dorothy. He? O disgrace! He sent you! That was what he meant? Am I fallen so low? Am I your common talk among men? Did you dice for me? Did he kneel? O John, John, how could you! And you, Mr. Austin, whither have you brought me down? shame heaping upon shame — to what end! O, to what end?

Austin. Madam, you wound me: you look wilfully amiss. Sure, any lady in the land might well be proud to be loved as you are loved, with such nobility as Mr. Fenwick's, with such humility as mine. I came, indeed, in pity, in good-nature, what you will. (See, dearest lady, with what honesty I speak: if I win you, it shall be with the unblemished truth.) All that is gone. Pity? it is myself I pity. I offer you not love — I am not worthy. I ask, I beseech of you: suffer me to wait upon you like a servant, to serve you with my rank, my name, the whole devotion of my life. I am a gentleman — ay, in spite of my fault — an upright gentleman; and I swear to you that you shall order your life and mine at your free will. Dorothy, at your feet, in remorse, in respect, in love — O such love as I have never felt, such love as I derided — I implore, I conjure you to be mine!

Dorothy. Too late! too late.

Austin. No, no; not too late: not too late for penitence, not too late for love.

Dorothy. Which do you propose? that I should abuse your compassion, or reward your treachery? George Austin, I have been your mistress, and I will never be your wife.

Austin. Child, dear child, I have not told you all: there is worse still: your brother knows; the boy as good as told me. Dorothy, this is scandal at the door — O let that move you: for that, if not for my sake, for that, if not for love, trust me, trust me again.

Dorothy. I am so much the more your victim: that is all, and shall that change my heart? The sin must have its wages. This, too, was done long ago: when you stooped to lie to me. The shame is still mine, the fault still yours.

Austin. Child, child, you kill me: you will not understand. Can you not see? the lad will force me to a duel.

Dorothy. And you will kill him? Shame after shame, threat upon threat. Marry me, or you are dishonoured; marry me, or your brother dies: and this is man's honour! But my honour and my pride are different. I will encounter all misfortune sooner than degrade myself by an unfaithful marriage. How should I kneel before the altar, and vow to reverence as my husband you, you who deceived me as my lover?

Austin. Dorothy, you misjudge me cruelly; I have deserved it. You will not take me for your husband; why should I wonder? You are right. I have indeed filled your life with calamity: the wages, ay, the wages, of my sin are heavy upon you. But I have one more thing to ask of your pity; and O remember, child, who it is that asks it: a man guilty in your sight, void of excuse, but old, and very proud, and most unused to supplication. Dorothy Musgrave, will you forgive George Austin?

Dorothy. O George!

Austin. It is the old name: that is all I ask, and more than I deserve. I shall remember, often remember, how and where it was bestowed upon me for the last time. I thank you, Dorothy, from my heart; a heart, child, that has been too long silent, but is not too old, I thank God! not yet too old to learn a lesson and to accept a reproof. I will not keep you longer: I will go — I am so bankrupt in credit that I dare not ask you to believe in how much sorrow. But, Dorothy, my acts will speak for me with more persuasion. If it be in my power, you shall suffer no more through me: I will avoid your brother; I will leave this place, I will leave England, to-morrow; you shall be no longer tortured with the neighbourhood of your ungenerous lover. Dorothy, farewell!

SCENE VIII

Dorothy; to whom, Anthony, L.
Dorothy (*on her knees and reaching with her hands*). George, George! (*Enter Anthony.*)
Anthony. Ha! what are you crying for?
Dorothy. Nothing, dear. (*Rising.*)
Anthony. Is Austin going to marry you?
Dorothy. I shall never marry.
Anthony. I thought as much. You should have come to me.
Dorothy. I know, dear, I know; but there was nothing to come about.

Anthony. It's a lie. You have disgraced the family. You went to John Fenwick: see what he has made of it. But I will have you righted: it shall be atoned in the man's blood.
Dorothy. Anthony! And if I had refused him?
Anthony. You? refuse George Austin? You never had the chance.
Dorothy. I have refused him.
Anthony. Dorothy, you lie. You would shield your lover; but this concerns not you only: it strikes my honour and my father's honour.
Dorothy. I have refused him — refused him, I tell you — refused him. The blame is mine; are you so mad and wicked that you will not see?
Anthony. I see this: that man must die.
Dorothy. He? never! You forget, you forget whom you defy; you run upon your death.
Anthony. Ah, my girl, you should have thought of that before. It is too late now.
Dorothy. Anthony, if I beg you — Anthony, I have tried to be a good sister; I brought you up, dear, nursed you when you were sick, fought for you, hoped for you, loved you — think of it, think of the dear past, think of our home and the happy winter nights, the castles in the fire, the long shining future, the love that was to forgive and suffer always — O you will spare, you will spare me this.
Anthony. I will tell you what I will do, Dolly: I will do just what you taught me — my duty: that, and nothing else.
Dorothy. O Anthony, you also, you to strike me! Heavens, shall I kill them — I — I, that love them, kill them! Miserable, sinful girl! George, George, thank God, you will be far away! O go, George, go at once!
Anthony. He goes, the coward! Ay, is this more of your contrivance? Madam, you make me blush. But to-day at least I know where I can find him. This afternoon, on the Pantiles, he must dance attendance on the Duke of York. Already he must be there; and there he is at my

mercy.

Dorothy. Thank God, you are deceived: he will not fight. He promised me that; thank God, I have his promise for that.

Anthony. Promise! Do you see this? (*producing necklace*) the thing he bribed your maid with? I shall dash it in his teeth before the Duke and before all Tunbridge. Promise, you poor fool? what promise holds against a blow? Get to your knees and pray for him; for, by the God above, if he has any blood in his body, one of us shall die before to-night. (*He goes out.*)

Dorothy. Anthony, Anthony!... O my God, George will kill him.

(Music: “ChÃ¨ farÃ²” as the drop falls.)

Musical Induction: “Gavotte,” *IphigÃ©nie en Aulide*, Gluck

ACT IV

The Stage represents the Pantiles: the alleys fronting the spectators in parallel lines. At the back, a stand of musicians, from which the “Gavotte” is repeated on muted strings. The music continues nearly through Scene I. Visitors walking to and fro beneath the limes. A seat in front, L.

SCENE I

Miss Foster, Barbara, Menteith; Visitors

Miss Foster (*entering; escorted by Menteith, and followed by Barbara*). And so, Menteith, here you are once more. And vastly pleased I am to see you, my good fellow, not only for your own sake, but because you harbinger the Beau. (*Sits, L., Menteith standing over her.*)

Menteith. Honoured madam, I have had the pleasure to serve Mr. George for more than thirty years. This is a privilege — a very great privilege. I have beheld him in the first societies, moving among the first rank of personages; and none, madam, none outshone him.

Barbara. I assure you, madam, when Mr. Menteith took me to the play, he talked so much of Mr. Austin that I couldn't hear a word of Mr. Kean.

Miss Foster. Well, well, and very right. That was the old school of service, Barbara, which you would do well to imitate. — This is a child, Menteith, that I am trying to form.

Menteith. Quite so, madam.

Miss Foster. And are we soon to see our princely guest, Menteith?

Menteith. His Royal Highness, madam? I believe I may say quite so. Mr. George will receive our gallant prince upon the Pantiles (*looking at his watch*) in, I should say, a matter of twelve minutes from now. Such, madam, is Mr. George's order of the day.

Barbara. I beg your pardon, madam, I am sure, but are we really to see one of His Majesty's own brothers? That will be pure! O madam, this is better than Carlisle.

Miss Foster. The wood-note wild: a loyal Cumbrian, Menteith.

Menteith. Eh? Quite so, madam.

Miss Foster. When she has seen as much of the Royal Family as you, my good fellow, she will find it vastly less entertaining.

Menteith. Yes, madam, indeed; in these distinguished circles life is but a slavery. None of the best set would relish Tunbridge without Mr. George; Tunbridge and Mr. George (if you'll excuse my plainness, madam) are in a manner of speaking identified; and indeed it was the Dook's desire alone that brought us here.

Barbara. What? the Duke? O dear! was it for that?

Menteith. Though, to be sure, madam, Mr. George would always be charmed to find himself (*bowing*) among so many admired members of his own set.

Miss Foster. Upon my word, Menteith, Mr. Austin is as fortunate in his servant as his reputation.

Menteith. Quite so, madam. But let me observe that the opportunities I have had of acquiring a knowledge of Mr. George's character have been positively unrivalled. Nobody knows Mr. George like his old attendant. The goodness of that gentleman — but, madam, you will soon be equally fortunate, if, as I understand, it is to be a match.

Miss Foster. I hope, Menteith, you are not taking leave of your senses. Is it possible you mean my niece?

Menteith. Madam, I have the honour to congratulate you. I put a second curl in Mr. George’s hair on purpose.

SCENE II

To these, Austin. Menteith falls back, and Austin takes his place in front of Miss Foster, his attitude a counterpart of Menteith's

Austin. Madam, I hasten to present my homage.

Miss Foster. A truce to compliments; Menteith, your charming fellow there, has set me positively crazy. Dear George Austin, is it true? Can it be true?

Austin. Madam, if he has been praising your niece he has been well inspired. If he was speaking, as I spoke an hour ago myself, I wish, Miss Foster, that he had held his tongue. I have indeed offered myself to Miss Dorothy, and she, with the most excellent reason, has refused me.

Miss Foster. Is it possible? why, my dear George Austin, … then I suppose it is John Fenwick after all?

Austin. Not one of us is worthy.

Miss Foster. This is the most amazing circumstance. You take my breath away. My niece refuse George Austin? why, I give you my word, I thought she had adored you. A perfect scandal: it positively must not get abroad.

Austin. Madam, for that young lady I have a singular regard. Judge me as tenderly as you can, and set it down, if you must, to an old man's vanity — for, Evelina, we are no longer in the heyday of our youth — judge me as you will: I should prefer to have it known.

Miss Foster. Can you? George Austin, you? My youth was nothing; I was a failure; but for you? no, George, you never can, you never must be old. You are the triumph of my generation, George, and of our old friendship too. Think of my first dance and my first partner. And to have this story — no, I could not bear to have it told of you.

Austin. Madam, there are some ladies over whom it is a boast to have prevailed; there are others whom it is a glory to have loved. And I am so vain, dear Evelina, that even thus I am proud to link my name with that of Dorothy Musgrave.

Miss Foster. George, you are changed. I would not know you.

Austin. I scarce know myself. But pardon me, dear friend (*taking out his watch*), in less than four minutes our illustrious guest will descend amongst us; and I observe Mr. Fenwick, with whom I have a pressing business. Suffer me, dear Evelina! — —

SCENE III

To these, Fenwick. Miss Foster remains seated, L. Austin goes R. to Fenwick, whom he salutes with great respect

Austin. Mr. Fenwick, I have played and lost. That noble lady, justly incensed at my misconduct, has condemned me. Under the burden of such a loss, may I console myself with the esteem of Mr. Fenwick?

Fenwick. She refused you? Pardon me, sir, but was the fault not yours?

Austin. Perhaps to my shame, I am no novice, Mr. Fenwick; but I have never felt nor striven as to-day. I went upon your errand; but, you may trust me, sir, before I had done I found it was my own. Until to-day I never rightly valued her; sure, she is fit to be a queen. I have a remorse here at my heart to which I am a stranger. O! that was a brave life, that was a great heart that I have ruined.

Fenwick. Ay, sir, indeed.

Austin. But, sir, it is not to lament the irretrievable that I intrude myself upon your leisure. There is something to be done, to save, at least to spare, that lady. You did not fail to observe the brother?

Fenwick. No, sir, he knows all; and being both intemperate and ignorant — —

Austin. Surely. I know. I have to ask you then to find what friends you can among this company; and if you have none, to make them. Let everybody hear the news. Tell it (if I may offer the suggestion) with humour: how Mr. Austin, somewhat upon the wane, but still filled with sufficiency, gloriously presumed and was most ingloriously set down by a young lady from the north: the lady's name a secret, which you will permit to be divined. The laugh — the position of the hero — will make it circulate; — you perceive I am in earnest; — and in this way I believe our young friend will find himself forestalled.

Fenwick. Mr. Austin, I would not have dared to ask so much of you; I will go further: were the positions changed, I should fear to follow your example.

Austin. Child, child, you could not afford it.

SCENE IV

To these, the Royal Duke, C.; then, immediately, Anthony, L. Fenwick crosses to Miss Foster, R. Austin accosts the Duke, C., in dumb show; the muted strings take up a new air, Mozart's "Anglaise"; couples passing under the limes, and forming a group behind Austin and the Duke. Anthony in front, L., watches Austin, who, as he turns from the Duke, sees him, and comes forward with extended hand

Austin. Dear child, let me present you to his Royal Highness.
Anthony (*with necklace*). Mr. Austin, do you recognise the bribe you gave my sister's maid?
Austin. Hush, sir, hush! you forget the presence of the Duke.
Anthony. Mr. Austin, you are a coward and a scoundrel.
Austin. My child, you will regret these words: I refuse your quarrel.
Anthony. You do? Take that. (*He strikes Austin on the mouth. At the moment of the blow — —*)

SCENE V

To these, Dorothy, L. U. E. Dorothy, unseen by Austin, shrieks. Sensation. Music stops. Tableau

Austin (*recovering his composure*). Your Royal Highness, suffer me to excuse the disrespect of this young gentleman. He has so much apology, and I have, I hope, so good a credit, as incline me to accept this blow. But I must beg of your Highness, and, gentlemen, all of you here present, to bear with me while I will explain what is too capable of misconstruction. I am the rejected suitor of this young gentleman's sister; of Miss Dorothy Musgrave: a lady whom I singularly honour and esteem; a word from whom (if I could hope that word) would fill my life with happiness. I was not worthy of that lady; when I was defeated in fair field, I presumed to make advances through her maid. See in how laughable a manner fate repaid me! The waiting-girl derided, the mistress denied, and now comes in this very ardent champion who publicly insults me. My vanity is cured; you will judge it right, I am persuaded, all of you, that I should accept my proper punishment in silence; you, my Lord Duke, to pardon this young gentleman; and you, Mr. Musgrave, to spare me further provocation, which I am determined to ignore.

Dorothy (*rushing forward, falling at Austin's knees, and seizing his hand*). George, George, it was for me. My hero! take me! What you will!

Austin (*in an agony*). My dear creature, remember that we are in public. (*Raising her.*) Your Royal Highness, may I present you Mrs. George Frederick Austin? (*The curtain falls on a few bars of "The Lass of Richmond Hill."*)

ADMIRAL GUINEA

DEDICATED
WITH AFFECTION AND ESTEEM TO
ANDREW LANG
BY THE SURVIVORS OF
THE *WALRUS*

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PERSONS REPRESENTED

John Gaunt, called “Admiral Guinea,” once Captain of the Slaver *Arethusa*
Arethusa Gaunt, his Daughter
David Pew, a Blind Beggar, once Boatswain of the *Arethusa*
Kit French, a Privateersman
Mrs. Drake, Landlady of the “Admiral Benbow” Inn
The Scene is laid in the neighbourhood of Barnstaple.
The Time is about the year 0. The Action
occupies part of a day and night

ADMIRAL GUINEA

ACT I

The Stage represents a room in Admiral Guinea's house: fireplace, armchair, and table with Bible, L., towards the front; door C., with window on each side, the window on the R. practicable; doors R. and L., back; corner cupboard, a brass-strapped sea-chest fixed to the wall and floor, R.; cutlasses, telescopes, sextant, quadrant, a calendar, and several maps upon the wall; a ship clock; three wooden chairs; a dresser against wall, R.C.; on the chimney-piece the model of a brig and several shells. The centre bare of furniture. Through the windows and the door, which is open, green trees and a small field of sea

SCENE I

Arethusa is discovered, dusting

Arethusa. Ten months and a week to-day! Now for a new mark. Since the last, the sun has set and risen over the fields and the pleasant trees at home, and on Kit's lone ship and the empty sea. Perhaps it blew, perhaps rained; (*at the chart*) perhaps he was far up here to the nor'ard, where the icebergs sail; perhaps at anchor among these wild islands of the snakes and buccaneers. O, you big chart, if I could see him sailing on you! North and South Atlantic; such a weary sight of water and no land; never an island for the poor lad to land upon. But still God's there. (*She takes down the telescope to dust it.*) Father's spy-glass again; and my poor Kit perhaps with such another, sweeping the great deep!

SCENE II

Arethusa; to her, Kit, C. He enters on tiptoe, and she does not see or hear him.

Arethusa (*dusting telescope*). At sea they have less dust at least: that's so much comfort.

Kit. Sweetheart, ahoy!

Arethusa. Kit!

Kit. Arethusa!

Arethusa. My Kit! Home again — O my love! — home again to me!

Kit. As straight as wind and tide could carry me!

Arethusa. O Kit, my dearest. O Kit — O! O!

Kit. Hey? Steady, lass: steady, I say. For goodness' sake, ease it off.

Arethusa. I will, Kit — I will. But you came so sudden.

Kit. I thought ten months of it about preparation enough.

Arethusa. Ten months and a week; you haven't counted the days as I have. Another day gone, and one day nearer to Kit: that has been my almanac. How brown you are! how handsome!

Kit. A pity you can't see yourself! Well, no, I'll never be handsome: brown I may be, never handsome. But I'm better than that, if the proverb's true; for I'm ten hundred thousand fathoms deep in love. I bring you a faithful sailor. What! you don't think much of that for a curiosity? Well, that's so: you're right; the rarity is in the girl that's worth it ten times over. Faithful? I couldn't help it if I tried! No, sweetheart, and I fear nothing: I don't know what fear is, but just of losing you. (*Starting.*) Lord, that's not the Admiral?

Arethusa. Aha, Mr. Dreadnought! you see you fear my father.

Kit. That I do. But, thank goodness, it's nobody. Kiss me: no, I won't kiss you: kiss *me*. I'll give you a present for that. See!

Arethusa. A wedding-ring!

Kit. My mother's. Will you take it?

Arethusa. Yes, will I — and give myself for it.

Kit. Ah, if we could only count upon your father! He's a man every inch of him; but he can't endure Kit French.

Arethusa. He hasn't learned to know you, Kit, as I have, nor yet do you know him. He seems hard and violent; at heart he is only a man overwhelmed with sorrow. Why else, when he looks at me and does not know that I observe him, should his face change, and fill with such tenderness, that I could weep to see him? Why, when he walks in his sleep, as he does almost every night, his eyes open and beholding nothing, why should he cry so pitifully on my mother's name? Ah, if you could hear him then, you would say yourself: Here is a man that has loved; here is a man that will be kind to lovers.

Kit. Is that so? Ay, it's a hard thing to lose your wife; ay, that must cut the heart indeed. But for all that, my lass, your father is keen for the doubloons.

Arethusa. Right, Kit: and small blame to him. There is only one way to be honest, and the name of that is thrift.

Kit. Well, and that's my motto. I've left the ship; no more letters of marque for me. Good-bye to Kit French, privateersman's mate; and how-d'ye-do to Christopher, the coasting skipper. I've seen the very boat for me: I've enough to buy her, too; and to furnish a good house, and keep a shot in the locker for bad luck. So far, there's nothing to gainsay. So far it's hopeful enough; but still there's Admiral Guinea, you know — and the plain truth is that I'm afraid of him.

Arethusa. Admiral Guinea? Now, Kit, if you are to be true lover of mine, you shall not use that name. His name is Captain Gaunt. As for fearing him, Kit French, you're not the man for me, if you fear anything but sin. He's a stern man because he's in the right.

Kit. He is a man of God; I am what he calls a child of perdition. I was a privateersman — serving my country, I say; but he calls it pirate. He is thrifty and sober; he has a treasure, they say, and it lies so near his heart that he tumbles up in his sleep to stand watch over it. What has a harum-scarum dog like me to expect from a man like him? He won't see I'm starving for a chance to mend. "Mend," he'll say; "I'll be shot if you mend at the expense of my daughter"; and the worst of it is, you see, he'll be right.

Arethusa. Kit, if you dare to say that faint-hearted word again, I'll take my ring off. What are we for but to grow better or grow worse? Do you think Arethusa French will be the same as Arethusa Gaunt?

Kit. I don't want her better.

Arethusa. Ah, but she shall be!

Kit. Hark, here he is! By George, it's neck or nothing now. Stand by to back me up.

SCENE III

To these, Gaunt, C.

Kit (*with Arethusa's hand*). Captain Gaunt, I have come to ask you for your daughter.

Gaunt. Hum. (*He sits in his chair, L.*)

Kit. I love her, and she loves me, sir. I've left the privateering. I've enough to set me up and buy a tidy sloop — Jack Lee's; you know the boat, Captain; clinker built, not four years old, eighty tons burthen, steers like a child. I've put my mother's ring on Arethusa's finger; and if you'll give us your blessing, I'll engage to turn over a new leaf, and make her a good husband.

Gaunt. In whose strength, Christopher French?

Kit. In the strength of my good, honest love for her: as you did for her mother, and my father for mine. And you know, Captain, a man can't command the wind; but (excuse me, sir) he can always lie the best course possible, and that's what I'll do, so God help me.

Gaunt. Arethusa, you at least are the child of many prayers; your eyes have been unsealed; and to you the world stands naked, a morning watch for duration, a thing spun of cobwebs for solidity. In the presence of an angry God, I ask you: Have you heard this man?

Arethusa. Father, I know Kit, and I love him.

Gaunt. I say it solemnly, this is no Christian union. To you, Christopher French, I will speak nothing of eternal truths: I will speak to you the language of this world. You have been trained among sinners who gloried in their sin: in your whole life you never saved one farthing; and now, when your pockets are full, you think you can begin, poor dupe, in your own strength. You are a roysterer, a jovial companion; you mean no harm — you are nobody's enemy but your own. No doubt you tell this girl of mine, and no doubt you tell yourself, that you can change. Christopher, speaking under correction, I defy you! You ask me for this child of many supplications, for this brand plucked from the burning: I look at you: I read you through and through; and I tell you — no! (*Striking table with his fist.*)

Kit. Captain Gaunt, if you mean that I am not worthy of her, I'm the first to say so. But, if you'll excuse me, sir, I'm a young man, and young men are no better'n they ought to be; it's known; they're all like that; and what's their chance? To be married to a girl like this! And would you refuse it to me? Why, sir, you yourself, when you came courting, you were young and rough; and yet I'll make bold to say that Mrs. Gaunt was a happy woman, and the saving of yourself into the bargain. Well, now, Captain Gaunt, will you deny another man, and that man a sailor, the very salvation that you had yourself?

Gaunt. Salvation, Christopher French, is from above.

Kit. Well, sir, that is so; but there's means, too; and what means so strong as the wife a man has to strive and toil for, and that bears the punishment whenever he goes wrong? Now, sir, I've spoke with your old shipmates in the Guinea trade. Hard as nails, they said, and true as the compass: as rough as a slaver, but as just as a judge. Well, sir, you hear me plead: I ask you for my chance; don't you deny it to me.

Gaunt. You speak of me? In the true balances we both weigh nothing. But two things I know: the depth of iniquity, how foul it is; and the agony with which a man repents. Not until seven devils were cast out of me did I awake; each rent me as it passed. Ay, that was repentance. Christopher, Christopher, you have sailed before the wind since first you weighed your anchor, and now you think to sail upon a bow-line? You do not know your ship, young man: you will go to le'ward like a sheet of paper; I tell you so that know — I tell you so that have tried, and failed, and wrestled in the sweat of prayer, and at last, at last, have tasted grace. But, meanwhile, no flesh and blood of mine shall lie at the mercy of such a wretch as I was then, or as you are this day. I could not own the deed before the face of heaven, if I sanctioned this unequal yoke. Arethusa, pluck off that ring from off your finger. Christopher French, take it, and go hence.

Kit. Arethusa, what do you say?

Arethusa. O Kit, you know my heart. But he is alone, and I am his only comfort; and I owe all to him; and shall I not obey my father? But, Kit, if you will let me, I will keep your ring. Go, Kit; go, and prove to my father that he was mistaken; go and win me. And O, Kit, if ever you should weary, come to me — no, do not come! but send a word — and I shall know all, and you shall have your ring. (*Gaunt opens his Bible and begins to read.*)

Kit. Don't say that, don't say such things to me; I sink or swim with you. (*To Gaunt.*) Old man, you've struck me hard; give me a good word to go with. Name your time; I'll stand the test. Give me a spark of hope, and I'll fight through for it. Say just this — "Prove I was mistaken," and by George, I'll prove it.

Gaunt (*looking up*). I make no such compacts. Go, and swear not at all.

Arethusa. Go, Kit! I keep the ring.

SCENE IV

Arethusa, Gaunt

Arethusa. Father, what have we done that you should be so cruel?

Gaunt (*laying down Bible, and rising*). Do you call me cruel? You speak after the flesh. I have done you this day a service that you will live to bless me for upon your knees.

Arethusa. He loves me, and I love him: you can never alter that; do what you will, father, that can never change. I love him, I believe in him, I will be true to him.

Gaunt. Arethusa, you are the sole thing death has left me on this earth; and I must watch over your carnal happiness and your eternal weal. You do not know what this implies to me. Your mother — my Hester — tongue cannot tell, nor heart conceive the pangs she suffered. If it lies in me, your life shall not be lost on that same reef of an ungodly husband. (*Goes out, C.*)

SCENE V

Arethusa. I thought the time dragged long and weary when I knew that Kit was homeward bound, all the white sails a-blowing out towards England, and my Kit's face turned this way! (*She begins to dust.*) Sure, if my mother were here she would understand and help us; she would understand a young maid's heart, though her own had never an ache; and she would love my Kit. (*Putting back the telescope.*) To think she died: husband and child — and so much love — she was taken from them all. Ah, there is no parting but the grave! And Kit and I both live, and both love each other; and here am I cast down? O, Arethusa, shame! And your love home from the deep seas, and loving you still; and the sun shining; and the world all full of hope? O, Hope, you're a good word!

SCENE VI

Arethusa; to her, Pew

Pew (*singing without*) —

“Time for us to go!
Time for us to go!
And we’ll keep the brig three p’ints away,
For it’s time for us to go.”

Arethusa. Who comes here? a seaman by his song, and father out! (*She tries the air.*) “Time for us to go!” It sounds a wild kind of song. (*Tap-tap; Pew passes the window.*) O, what a face — and blind!

Pew (*entering*). Kind Christian friends, take pity on a poor blind mariner, as lost his precious sight in the defence of his native country, England, and God bless King George!

Arethusa. What can I do for you, sailor?

Pew. Good Christian lady, help a poor blind mariner to a mouthful of meat. I’ve served His Majesty in every quarter of the globe; I’ve spoke with ‘Awke and glorious Anson, as I might with you: and I’ve tramped it all night long upon my sinful feet, and with a empty belly.

Arethusa. You shall not ask bread and be denied by a sailor’s daughter and a sailor’s sweetheart; and when my father returns he shall give you something to set you on your road.

Pew. Kind and lovely lady, do you tell me that you are in a manner of speaking alone? or do my ears deceive a poor blind seaman?

Arethusa. I live here with my father, and my father is abroad.

Pew. Dear, beautiful, Christian lady, tell a poor blind man your honoured name, that he may remember it in his poor blind prayers.

Arethusa. Sailor, I am Arethusa Gaunt.

Pew. Sweet lady, answer a poor blind man one other question: Are you in a manner of speaking related to Cap’n John Gaunt? Cap’n John as in the ebony trade were known as Admiral Guinea?

Arethusa. Captain John Gaunt is my father.

Pew (*dropping the blind man’s whine*). Lord, think of that now! They told me this was where he lived, and so it is. And here’s old Pew, old David Pew, as was the Admiral’s own bo’sun, colloguing in his old commander’s parlour, with his old commander’s gal (*seizes Arethusa*). Ah, and a bouncer you are, and no mistake.

Arethusa. Let me go! how dare you?

Pew. Lord love you, don’t you struggle, now, don’t you. (*She escapes into front R. corner, where he keeps her imprisoned.*) Ah, well, we’ll get you again, my lovely woman. What a arm you’ve got — great god of love — and a face like a peach! I’m a judge, I am. (*She tries to escape;*

he stops her.) No, you don't; O, I can hear a flea jump! (But it's here where I miss my deadlights. Poor old Pew; him as the ladies always would have for their fancy man and take no denial; here you are with your commander's daughter close aboard, and you can't so much as guess the colour of her lovely eyes. [*Singing*] —

"Be they black like ebony,
Or be they blue like to the sky."

Black like the Admiral's? or blue like his poor dear wife's? Ah, I was fond of that there woman, I was; the Admiral was jealous of me.) Arethusa, my dear, — my heart, what a 'and and arm you *have* got; I'll dream o' that 'and and arm, I will! — but as I was a-saying, does the Admiral ever in a manner of speaking refer to his old bo'sun David Pew? him as he fell out with about the black woman at Lagos, and almost slashed the shoulder off of him one morning before breakfast?

Arethusa. You leave this house.

Pew. Hey? (*he closes and seizes her again*). Don't you fight, my lovely one: now don't make old blind Pew forget his manners before a female. What! you will? Stop that, or I'll have the arm right out of your body. (*He gives her arm a wrench.*)

Arethusa. O! help, help!

Pew. Stash your patter, damn you. (*Arethusa gives in.*) Ah, I thought it: Pew's way, Pew's way. Now look you here, my lovely woman. If you sling in another word that isn't in answer to my questions, I'll pull your j'ints out one by one. Where's the Commander?

Arethusa. I have said: he is abroad.

Pew. When's he coming aboard again?

Arethusa. At any moment.

Pew. Does he keep his strength?

Arethusa. You'll see when he returns. (*He wrenches her arm again.*) Ah!

Pew. Is he still on piety?

Arethusa. O, he is a Christian man!

Pew. A Christian man, is he? Where does he keep his rum?

Arethusa. Nay, you shall steal nothing by my help.

Pew. No more I shall (*becoming amorous*). You're a lovely woman, that's what you are; how would you like old Pew for a sweetheart, hey? He's blind, is Pew, but strong as a lion; and the sex is his 'ole delight. Ah, them beautiful, beautiful lips! A kiss! Come!

Arethusa. Leave go, leave go!

Pew. Hey? you would?

Arethusa. Ah! (*She thrusts him down, and escapes to door, R.*)

SCENE VII

Pew (*picking himself up*). Ah, she's a bouncer, she is! Where's my stick? That's the sort of female for David Pew. Didn't she fight? and didn't she struggle? and shouldn't I like to twist her lovely neck for her? Pew's way with 'em all: the prettier they was, the uglier he were to 'em. Pew's way: a way he had with him; and a damned good way too. (*Listens at L. door.*) That's her bedroom, I reckon; and she's double-locked herself in. Good again: it's a crying mercy the Admiral didn't come in. But you always loses your 'ed, Pew, with a female: that's what charms 'em. — Now for business. The front door. No bar; on'y a big lock (*trying keys from his pocket*). Key one; no go. Key two; no go. Key three; ah, that does it. Ah! (*feeling key*) him with the three wards and the little 'un: good again! Now if I could only find a mate in this rotten country 'amlick: one to be eyes to me; I can steer, but I can't conn myself, worse luck! If I could only find a mate. And to-night about three bells in the middle watch, old Pew will take a little cruise, and lay aboard his ancient friend the Admiral; or, barring that, the Admiral's old sea-chest — the chest he kept the shiners in aboard the brig. Where is it, I wonder? in his berth, or in the cabin here? It's big enough, and the brass bands is plain to feel by. (*Searching about with stick.*) Dresser — chair (*knocking his head on the cupboard*). Ah! — O, corner cupboard. Admiral's chair — Admiral's table — Admiral's — hey! what's this? — a book — sheepskin — smells like a 'oly Bible. Chair (*his stick just avoids the chest*). No sea-chest. I must have a mate to see for me, to see for old Pew: him as had eyes like a eagle! Meanwhile, rum. Corner cupboard, of course (*tap-tapping*). Rum — rum — rum. Hey? (*He listens.*) Footsteps. Is it the Admiral? (*With the whine.*) Kind Christian friends — —

SCENE VIII

Pew; to him, Gaunt

Gaunt. What brings you here?

Pew. Cap’n, do my ears deceive me? or is this my old commander?

Gaunt. My name is John Gaunt. Who are you, my man, and what’s your business?

Pew. Here’s the facks, so help me. A lovely female in this house was Christian enough to pity the poor blind; and lo and be’old! who should she turn out to be but my old commander’s daughter! “My dear,” says I to her, “I was the Admiral’s own particular bo’sun.” — ”La, sailor,” she says to me, “how glad he’ll be to see you!” — ”Ah,” says I, “won’t he just — that’s all.” — ”I’ll go and fetch him,” she says; “you make yourself at ‘ome.” And off she went; and, Commander, here I am.

Gaunt (*sitting down*). Well.

Pew. Well, Cap’n?

Gaunt. What do you want?

Pew. Well, Admiral, in a general way, what I want in a manner of speaking is money and rum. (*A pause.*)

Gaunt. David Pew, I have known you a long time.

Pew. And so you have; aboard the old *Arethusa*; and you don’t seem that cheered up as I’d looked for, with a old shipmate dropping in, one as has been seeking you two years and more — and blind at that. Don’t you remember the old chantie? —

“Time for us to go,
Time for us to go,
And when we’d clapped the hatches on,
‘Twas time for us to go.”

What a note you had to sing, what a swaller for a pannikin of rum, and what a fist for the shiners. Ah, Cap’n, they didn’t call you Admiral Guinea for nothing. I can see that old sea-chest of yours — her with the brass bands, where you kept your gold dust and doubloons: you know! — I can see her as well this minute as though you and me was still at it playing pÅt on the lid of her.... You don’t say nothing, Cap’n?... Well, here it is: I want money and I want rum. You don’t know what it is to want rum, you don’t: it gets to that p’int that you would kill a ‘ole ship’s company for just one guttle of it. What? Admiral Guinea, my old Commander, go back on poor old Pew? and him high and dry? (Not you! When we had words over the negro lass at Lagos, what did you do? fair dealings was your word: fair as between man and man; and we had it out with p’int and edge on Lagos sands. And you’re not going back on your word to me, now I’m old and blind! No, no! belay that, I say. Give me the old motto: Fair dealings, as between man and man.)

Gaunt. David Pew, it were better for you that you were sunk in fifty fathom. I know your life; and first and last, it is one broadside of wickedness. You were a porter in a school, and beat a boy to death; you ran for it, turned slaver, and shipped with me, a green hand. Ay, that was the craft for you; that was the right craft, and I was the right captain; there was none worse that sailed to Guinea. Well, what came of that? In five years' time you made yourself the terror and abhorrence of your messmates. The worst hands detested you; your captain — that was me, John Gaunt, the chief of sinners — cast you out for a Jonah. (Who was it stabbed the Portuguese and made off inland with his miserable wife? Who, raging drunk on rum, clapped fire to the baracoons and burned the poor soulless creatures in their chains?) Ay, you were a scandal to the Guinea coast, from Lagos down to Calabar; and when at last I sent you ashore, a marooned man — your shipmates, devils as they were, cheering and rejoicing to be quit of you — by heaven, it was a ton's weight off the brig!

Pew. Cap'n Gaunt, Cap'n Gaunt, these are ugly words.

Gaunt. What next? You shipped with Flint the Pirate. What you did then I know not; the deep seas have kept the secret; kept it, ay, and will keep against the Great Day. God smote you with blindness, but you heeded not the sign. That was His last mercy; look for no more. To your knees, man, and repent. Pray for a new heart; flush out your sins with tears; flee while you may from the terrors of the wrath to come.

Pew. Now, I want this clear: Do I understand that you're going back on me, and you'll see me damned first?

Gaunt. Of me you shall have neither money nor strong drink: not a guinea to spend in riot; not a drop to fire your heart with devilry.

Pew. Cap'n, do you think it wise to quarrel with me? I put it to you now, Cap'n, fairly, as between man and man — do you think it wise?

Gaunt. I fear nothing. My feet are on the Rock. Be-gone! (*He opens the Bible and begins to read.*)

Pew (*after a pause*). Well, Cap'n, you know best, no doubt; and David Pew's about the last man, though I says it, to up and thwart an old Commander. You've been 'ard on David Pew, Cap'n: 'ard on the poor blind; but you'll live to regret it — ah, my Christian friend, you'll live to eat them words up. But there's no malice here: that ain't Pew's way; here's a sailor's hand upon it.... You don't say nothing? (*Gaunt turns a page.*) Ah, reading, was you? Reading, by thunder! Well, here's my respecks. (*Singing*) —

"Time for us to go,
Time for us to go,
When the money's out, and the liquor's done,

Why, it’s time for us to go.”

(*He goes tapping up to door, turns on the threshold, and listens. Gaunt turns a page. Pew, with a grimace, strikes his hand upon the pocket with the keys, and goes.*)

ACT II

The Stage represents the parlour of the "Admiral Benbow" inn. Fireplace, R., with high-backed settles on each side; in front of these, and facing the audience, R., a small table laid with a cloth. Tables, L., with glasses, pipes, etc. Broadside ballads on the wall. Outer door of inn, with half-door in L., corner back; door, R., beyond the fireplace; window with red half-curtains; spittoons; candles on both the front tables; night without

SCENE I

Pew; afterwards Mrs. Drake, out and in.
Pew (*entering*). Kind Christian friends — — (*listening, then dropping the whine*). Hey? nobody! Hey? A grog-shop not two cable-lengths from the Admiral's back-door, and the Admiral not there? I never knew a seaman brought so low: he ain't but the bones of the man he used to be. Bear away for the New Jerusalem, and this is what you run aground on, is it? Good again; but it ain't Pew's way; Pew's way is rum. — Sanded floor. Rum is his word, and rum his motion. — Settle — chimbly — settle again — spittoon — table rigged for supper. Table — glass. (*Drinks heeltap.*) Brandy and water; and not enough of it to wet your eye; damn all greediness, I say. Pot (*drinks*), small beer — a drink that I ab'or like bilge! What I want is rum. (*Calling and rapping with stick on table.*) Halloa, there! House, ahoy!
Mrs. Drake (*without*). Coming, sir, coming. (*She enters, R.*) What can I do — — ? (*Seeing Pew.*) Well, I never did! Now, beggar-man, what's for you?

Pew. Rum, ma'am, rum; and a bit o' supper.
Mrs. Drake. And a bed to follow, I shouldn't wonder!
Pew. *And* a bed to follow: *if* you please.
Mrs. Drake. This is the "Admiral Benbow," a respectable house, and receives none but decent company; and I'll ask you to go somewhere else, for I don't like the looks of you.
Pew. Turn me away? Why, Lord love you, I'm David Pew — old David Pew — him as was Benbow's own particular cox'n. You wouldn't turn away old Pew from the sign of his late commander's 'ed? Ah, my British female, you'd have used me different if you'd seen me in the fight! (There laid old Benbow, both his legs shot off, in a basket, and the blessed spy-glass at his eye to that same hour: a picter, ma'am, of naval daring: when a round shot come, and took and knocked a bucketful of shivers right into my poor daylights. "Damme," says the Admiral, "is that old Pew, *my* old Pew?" he says. — "It's old Pew, sir," says the first lootenant, "worse luck," he says. — "Then damme," says Admiral Benbow, "if that's how they serve a lion-'arted seaman, damme if I care to live," he says; and, ma'am, he laid down his spy-glass.)
Mrs. Drake. Blind man, I don't fancy you, and that's the truth; and I'll thank you to take yourself off.
Pew. Thirty years have I fought for country and king, and now in my blind old age I'm to be sent packing from a measly public-'ouse? Mark ye, ma'am, if I go, you take the consequences. Is this a inn? Or hain't

it? If it is a inn, then by act of parleyment, I'm free to sling my 'ammick. Don't you forget: this is a act of parleyment job, this is. You look out.

Mrs. Drake. Why, what's to do with the man and his acts of parliament? I don't want to fly in the face of an act of parliament, not I. If what you say is true — —

Pew. True? If there's anything truer than a act of parleyment — Ah! you ask the beak. True? I've that in my 'art as makes me wish it wasn't.

Mrs. Drake. I don't like to risk it. I don't like your looks, and you're more sea-lawyer than seaman to my mind. But I'll tell you what: if you can pay, you can stay. So there.

Pew. No chink, no drink? That's your motto, is it? Well, that's sense. Now, look here, ma'am, I ain't beautiful like you; but I'm good, and I'll give you warrant for it. Get me a noggin of rum, and suthin' to scoff, and a penny pipe, and a half-a-foot of baccy; and there's a guinea for the reckoning. There's plenty more in the locker; so bear a hand, and be smart. I don't like waiting; it ain't my way. (*Exit Mrs. Drake, R. Pew sits at the table, R. The settle conceals him from the upper part of the stage.*)

Mrs. Drake (*re-entering*). Here's the rum, sailor.

Pew (*drinks*). Ah, rum! That's my sheet-anchor; rum and the blessed Gospel. Don't you forget that, ma'am: rum and the Gospel is old Pew's sheet-anchor. You can take for another while you're about it; and, I say, short reckonings make long friends, hey? Where's my change?

Mrs. Drake. I'm counting it now. There, there it is, and thank you for your custom. (*She goes out, R.*)

Pew (*calling after her*). Don't thank me, ma'am; thank the act of parleyment! Rum, fourpence; two penny pieces and a Willi'm-and-Mary tizzy makes a shilling; and a spade half-guinea is eleven and six (*re-enter Mrs. Drake with supper, pipe, etc.*); and a blessed majesty George the First crown-piece makes sixteen and six; and two shilling bits is eighteen and six; and a new half-crown makes — no it don't! O no! Old Pew's too smart a hand to be bammed with a soft tusheroon.

Mrs. Drake (*changing piece*). I'm sure I didn't know it, sailor.

Pew (*trying new coin between his teeth*). In course you didn't, my dear; but I did, and I thought I'd mention it. Is that my supper, hey? Do my nose deceive me? (*Sniffing and feeling.*) Cold duck? sage and onions? a round of double Gloster? and that noggin o' rum? Why, I declare if I'd stayed and took pot-luck with my old commander, Cap'n John Gaunt, he couldn't have beat this little spread, as I've got by act of parleyment.

Mrs. Drake (*at knitting*). Do you know the captain, sailor?

Pew. Know him? I was that man's bo'sun, ma'am. In the Guinea trade, we was known as “Pew’s Cap’n” and “Gaunt’s Bo’sun,” one for the other like. We was like two brothers, ma’am. And a excellent cold duck, to be sure; and the rum lovely.

Mrs. Drake. If you know John Gaunt, you know his daughter Arethusa.

Pew. What? Arethusa? Know her, says you? know her? Why, Lord love you, I was her godfather. (“Pew,” says Jack Gaunt to me, “Pew,” he says, “you’re a man,” he says; “I like a man to be a man,” says he, “and damme,” he says, “I like *you*; and sink me,” says he, “if you don’t promise and vow in the name of that new-born babe,” he says, “why, damme, Pew,” says he, “you’re not the man I take you for.”) Yes, ma’am, I named that female; with my own ‘ands I did; Arethusa I named her; that was the name I give her; so now you know if I speak true. And if you’ll be as good as get me another noggin of rum, why, we’ll drink her ‘elth with three times three. (*Exit Mrs. Drake; Pew eating; Mrs. Drake re-entering with rum.*)

Mrs. Drake. If what you say be true, sailor (and I don’t say it isn’t, mind!), it’s strange that Arethusa and that godly man her father have never so much as spoke your name.

Pew. Why, that’s so! And why, says you? Why, when I dropped in and paid my respecks this morning, do you think she knew me? No more’n a babe unborn! Why, ma’am, when I promised and vowed for her, I was the picter of a man-o’war’s man, I was: eye like a eagle; walked the deck in a hornpipe, foot up and foot down; v’ice as mellow as rum; ‘and upon ‘art, and all the females took dead aback at the first sight, Lord bless ‘em! Know me? Not likely. And as for me, when I found her such a lovely woman — by the feel of her ‘and and arm! — you might have knocked me down with a feather. But here’s where it is, you see: when you’ve been knocking about on blue water for a matter of two and forty year, shipwrecked here, and blown up there, and everywhere out of luck, and given over for dead by all your messmates and relations, why, what it amounts to is this: nobody knows you, and you hardly knows yourself, and there you are; and I’ll trouble you for another noggin of rum.

Mrs. Drake. I think you’ve had enough.

Pew. I don’t; so bear a hand. (*Exit Mrs. Drake; Pew empties the glass.*) Rum, ah, rum, you’re a lovely creature; they haven’t never done you justice. (*Proceeds to fill and light pipe; re-enter Mrs. Drake with rum.*) And now, ma’am, since you’re so genteel and amicable-like, what about my old commander? Is he, in a manner of speaking, on half pay? or is he living on his fortune, like a gentleman slaver ought?

Mrs. Drake. Well, sailor, people talk, you know.

Pew. I know, ma’am; I’d have been rolling in my coach, if they’d have held their tongues.

Mrs. Drake. And they do say that Captain Gaunt, for so pious a man, is little better than a miser.

Pew. Don't say it, ma'am; not to old Pew. Ah, how often have I up and strove with him! "Cap'n, live it down," says I. "Ah, Pew," says he, "you're a better man than I am," he says; "but damme," he says, "money," he says, "is like rum to me." (*Insinuating.*) And what about a old sea-chest, hey? a old sea-chest, strapped with brass bands?

Mrs. Drake. Why, that'll be the chest in his parlour, where he has it bolted to the wall, as I've seen with my own eyes; and so might you, if you had eyes to see with.

Pew. No, ma'am, that ain't good enough; you don't bam old Pew. You never was in that parlour in your life.

Mrs. Drake. I never was! Well, I declare!

Pew. Well, then, if you was, where's the chest? Beside the chimbley, hey? (*Winking.*) Beside the table with the 'oly Bible?

Mrs. Drake. No, sailor, you don't get any information out of me.

Pew. What, ma'am? Not to old Pew? Why, my god-child showed it me herself, and I told her where she'd find my name — P, E, W, Pew — cut out on the stern of it; and sure enough she did. Why, ma'am, it was his old money-box when he was in the Guinea trade; and they do say he keeps the rhino in it still.

Mrs. Drake. No, sailor, nothing out of me! And if you want to know, you can ask the Admiral himself! (*She crosses, L.*)

Pew. Hey? Old girl fly? Then I reckon I must have a mate, if it was the parish bull.

SCENE II

To these, Kit, a little drunk
Kit (*looking in over half-door*). Mrs. Drake! Mother! Where are you? Come and welcome the prodigal!
Mrs. Drake (*coming forward to meet him as he enters;* Pew *remains concealed by the settle, smoking, drinking, and listening*). Lord bless us and save us, if it ain't my boy! Give us a kiss.

Kit. That I will, and twenty if you like, old girl. (*Kisses her.*)
Mrs. Drake. O Kit, Kit, you've been at those other houses, where the stuff they give you, my dear, it is poison for a dog.
Kit. Round with friends, mother: only round with friends.
Mrs. Drake. Well, anyway, you'll take a glass just to settle it from me. (*She brings the bottle and fills for him.*) There, that's pure; that'll do you no harm. But O, Kit, Kit, I thought you were done with all this Jack-a-shoring.
Kit. What cheer, mother? I'm only a sheet in the wind; and who's the worse for it but me?
Mrs. Drake. Ah, and that dear young lady; and her waiting and keeping single these two years for the love of you!
Kit. She, mother? she's heart of oak, she's true as steel, and good as gold; and she has my ring on her finger, too. But where's the use? The Admiral won't look at me.
Mrs. Drake. Why not? You're as good a man as him any day.
Kit. Am I? He says I'm a devil, and swears that none of his flesh and blood — that's what he said, mother! — should lie at my mercy. That's what cuts me. If it wasn't for the good stuff I've been taking aboard, and the jolly companions I've been seeing it out with, I'd just go and make a hole in the water, and be done with it, I would, by George!
Mrs. Drake. That's like you men. Ah, we know you, we that keeps a public-house — we know you, good and bad: you go off on a frolic and forget; and you never think of the women that sit crying at home.
Kit. Crying? Arethusa cry? Why, dame, she's the bravest-hearted girl in all broad England! Here, fill the glass! I'll win her yet. I drink to her; here's to her bright eyes, and here's to the blessed feet she walks upon!
Pew (*looking round the corner of the settle*). Spoke like a gallant seaman, every inch. Shipmate, I'm a man as has suffered, and I'd like to shake your fist, and drink a can of flip with you.
Kit (*coming down*). Hullo, my hearty! who the devil are you? Who's this, mother?

Mrs. Drake. Nay, I know nothing about him. (*She goes out, R.*)

Pew. Cap'n, I'm a brother seaman, and my name is Pew, old David Pew, as you may have heard of in your time, he having sailed along of 'Awke and glorious Benbow, and a right-'and man to both.

Kit. Benbow? Steady, mate! D'ye mean to say you went to sea before you were born?

Pew. See now! The sign of this here inn was running in my 'ed, I reckon. Benbow, says you? no, not likely! Anson, I mean; Anson and Sir Edward 'Awke: that's the pair: I was their right-'and man.

Kit. Well, mate, you may be all that, and more; but you're a rum 'un to look at, anyhow.

Pew. Right you are, and so I am. But what is looks? It's the 'art that does it: the 'art is the seaman's star; and here's old David Pew's a matter of fifty years at sea, but tough and sound as the British Constitootion.

Kit. You're right there, Pew. Shake hands upon it. And you're a man they're down upon, just like myself, I see. We're a pair of plain, good-hearted, jolly tars; and all these 'longshore fellows cock a lip at us, by George. What cheer, mate?

Arethusa (*without*). Mrs. Drake! Mrs. Drake!

Pew. What, a female? hey? a female? Board her, board her, mate! I'm dark. (*He retires again behind, to table, R., behind settle.*)

Arethusa (*without*). Mrs. Drake!

Mrs. Drake (*re-entering and running to door*). Here I am, my dear; come in.

SCENE III

To these, Arethusa

Arethusa. Ah, Kit, I've found you. I thought you would lodge with Mrs. Drake.

Kit. What? are you looking for your consort? Whistle, I'm your dog; I'll come to you. I've been toasting you fathom deep, my beauty; and with every glass I love you dearer.

Arethusa. Now, Kit, if you want to please my father, this is not the way. Perhaps he thinks too much of the guineas: well, gather them — if you think me worth the price. Go you to your sloop, clinker built, eighty tons burthen — you see I remember. Skipper Kit! I don't deny I like a man of spirit; but if you care to please Captain Gaunt, keep out of taverns; and if you could carry yourself a bit more — more elderly!

Kit. Can I? Would I? Ah, just couldn't and just won't I, then!

Mrs. Drake. I hope, madam, you don't refer to my house; a publican I may be, but tavern is a word that I don't hold with; and here there's no bad drink, and no loose company; and as for my blessedest Kit, I declare I love him like my own.

Arethusa. Why, who could help it, Mrs. Drake?

Kit. Arethusa, you're an angel. Do I want to please Captain Gaunt? Why, that's as much as ask whether I love you. (I don't deny that his words cut me; for they did. But as for wanting to please him, if he was deep as the blue Atlantic, I would beat it out. And elderly, too? Aha, you witch, you're wise! Elderly? You've set the course; you leave me alone to steer it. Matrimony's my port, and love is my cargo.) That's a likely question, ain't it, Mrs. Drake? Do I want to please him! Elderly, says you? Why, see here: Fill up my glass, and I'll drink to Arethusa on my knees.

Arethusa. Why, you stupid boy, do you think that would please him?

Kit. On my knees I'll drink it! (*As he kneels and drains the glass, Gaunt enters, and he scrambles to his feet.*)

SCENE IV

To these, Gaunt

Gaunt. Arethusa, this is no place for you.

Arethusa. No, father.

Gaunt. I wish you had been spared this sight; but look at him, child, since you are here; look at God's image, so debased. And you, young man (*to Kit*), you have proved that I was right. Are you the husband for this innocent maid?

Kit. Captain Gaunt, I have a word to say to you. Terror is your last word; you're bitter hard upon poor sinners, bitter hard and black — you that were a sinner yourself. These are not the true colours; don't deceive yourself; you're out of your course.

Gaunt. Heaven forbid that I should be hard, Christopher. It is not I; it's God's law that is of iron. Think! if the blow were to fall now, some cord to snap within you, some enemy to plunge a knife into your heart; this room, with its poor taper light, to vanish; this world to disappear like a drowning man into the great ocean; and you, your brain still whirling, to be snatched into the presence of the Eternal Judge: Christopher French, what answer would you make? For these gifts wasted, for this rich mercy scorned, for these high-handed bravings of your better angel — what have you to say?

Kit. Well, sir, I want my word with you, and by your leave I'll have it out.

Arethusa. Kit, for pity's sake!

Kit. Arethusa, I don't speak to you, my dear: you've got my ring, and I know what that means. The man I speak to is Captain Gaunt. I came to-day as happy a man as ever stepped, and with as fair a lookout. What did you care? what was your reply? None of your flesh and blood, you said, should lie at the mercy of a wretch like me! Am I not flesh and blood that you should trample on me like that? Is that charity, to stamp the hope out of a poor soul?

Gaunt. You speak wildly; or the devil of drink that is in you speaks instead.

Kit. You think me drunk; well, so I am, and whose fault is it but yours? It was I that drank; but you take your share of it, Captain Gaunt: you it was that filled the can.

Gaunt. Christopher French, I spoke but for your good, your good and hers. "Woe unto him" — these are the dreadful words — "by whom offences shall come: it were better — — " Christopher, I can but pray for both of us.

Kit. Prayers? Now I tell you freely, Captain Gaunt, I don't value your prayers. Deeds are what I ask; kind deeds and words — that's the true-blue piety: to hope the best and do the best, and speak the kindest. As for you, you insult me to my face; and then you'll pray for me? What's that? Insult behind my back is what I call it! No, sir; you're out of the courses; you're no good man to my view, be you who you may.

Mrs. Drake. O Christopher! To Captain Gaunt?

Arethusa. Father, father, come away!

Kit. Ah, you see? She suffers too; we all suffer. You spoke just now of a devil; well, I'll tell you the devil you have: the devil of judging others. And as for me, I'll get as drunk as Bacchus.

Gaunt. Come! (*Exit, with Arethusa.*)

SCENE V

Pew, Mrs. Drake, Kit

Pew. (*coming out and waving his pipe*). Commander, shake! Hooray for old England! If there's anything in the world that goes to old Pew's 'art, it's argyment. Commander, you handled him like a babby, kept the weather gauge, and hulled him every shot. Commander, give it a name, and let that name be rum!

Kit. Ay, rum's the sailor's fancy. Mrs. Drake, a bottle and clean glasses.

Mrs. Drake. Kit French, I wouldn't. Think better of it, there's a dear! And that sweet girl just gone!

Pew. Ma'am, I'm not a 'ard man; I'm not the man to up and force a act of parleyment upon a helpless female. But you see here: Pew's friends is sacred. Here's my friend here, a perfeck seaman, and a man with a 'ed upon his shoulders, and a man that, damme, I admire. He give you a order, ma'am — march!

Mrs. Drake. Kit, don't you listen to that blind man; he's the devil wrote upon his face.

Pew. Don't you insinuate against my friend. *He* ain't a child, I hope? *he* knows his business? Don't you get trying to go a-lowering of my friend in his own esteem.

Mrs. Drake. Well, I'll bring it, Kit; but it's against the grain. (*Exit.*)

Kit. I say, old boy, come to think of it, why should we? It's been glasses round with me all day. I've got my cargo.

Pew. You? and you just argy'd the 'ed off of Admiral Guinea? O stash that! *I* stand treat, if it comes to that!

Kit. What! Do I meet with a blind seaman and not stand him? That's not the man I am!

Mrs. Drake (*re-entering with bottle and glasses*). There!

Pew. Easy does it, ma'am.

Kit. Mrs. Drake, you had better trot.

Mrs. Drake. Yes, I'll trot; and I'll trot with a sick heart, Kit French, to leave you drinking your wits away with that low blind man. For a low man you are — a low blind man — and your clothes they would disgrace a scarecrow. I'll go to my bed, Kit; and O, dear boy, go soon to yours — the old room, you know; it's ready for you — and go soon and sleep it off; for you know, dear, they, one and all, regret it in the morning; thirty years I've kept this house, and one and all they did regret it, dear.

Pew. Come now, you walk!

Mrs. Drake. O, it's not for your bidding. You a seaman? The ship for you to sail in is the hangman's cart. — Good-night, Kit, dear, and better company. (*Exit.*)

SCENE VI

Pew, Kit

They sit at the other table, L.

Pew. Commander, here's *her* 'ealth!

Kit. Ay, that's the line: *her* health! But that old woman there is a good old woman, Pew.

Pew. So she is, Commander. But there's no woman understands a seaman; now you and me, being both bred to it, we splice by natur'. As for A. G., if argyment can win her, why, she's yours. If I'd a-had your 'ed for argyment, damme, I'd a-been a Admiral, I would! And if argyment won't win her, well, see here, you put your trust in David Pew.

Kit. David Pew, I don't know who are you, David Pew; I never heard of you; I don't seem able to clearly see you. Mrs. Drake, she's a smart old woman, Pew, and she says you've the devil in your face.

Pew. Ah, and why, says you? Because I up and put her in her place, when she forgot herself to you, Commander.

Kit. Well, Pew, that's so; you stood by me like a man. Shake hands, Pew; and we'll make a night of it, or we'll know why, old boy!

Pew. That's my way. That's Pew's way, that is. That's Pew's way all over. Commander, excuse the liberty; but when I was your age, making allowance for a lowlier station and less 'ed for argyment, I was as like you as two peas. I know it by the v'ice. (*Sings*) —

"We hadn't been three days at sea before we saw a sail,
So we clapped on every stitch would stand, although it blew a gale,
And we walked along full fourteen knots, for the barkie she did know,
As well as ever a soul on board, 'twas time for us to go."

Chorus, Cap'n!

Pew *and* Kit (*in chorus*) —

"Time for us to go,
Time for us to go,
As well as ever a soul on board
'Twas time for us to go."

Pew (*sings*) —

"We carried away the royal yard, and the stunsail boom was gone;
Says the skipper, 'They may go or stand, I'm damned if I don't crack on;
So the weather braces we'll round in, and the trysail set also,
And we'll keep the brig three p'ints away, for it's time for us to go."

Give it mouth, Commander!

Pew *and* Kit (*in chorus*) —

"Time for us to go,

Time for us to go,
And we'll keep the brig three p'ints away,
For it's time for us to go."

Pew. I ain't sung like that since I sang to Admiral 'Awke, the night before I lost my eyes, I ain't. "Sink me!" says he, says Admiral 'Awke, my old commander (*touching his hat*), "sink me!" he says, "if that ain't 'art-of-oak," he says: "'art-of-oak," says he, "and a pipe like a bloody blackbird!" Commander, here's my respecks, and the devil fly away with Admiral Guinea!

Kit. I say, Pew, how's this? How do you know about Admiral Guinea? I say, Pew, I begin to think you know too much.

Pew. I ax your pardon; but as a man with a 'ed for argyment — and that's your best p'int o' sailing, Commander; intelleck is your best p'int — as a man with a 'ed for argyment, how do I make it out?

Kit. Aha, you're a sly dog, you're a deep dog, Pew; but you can't get the weather of Kit French. How do I make it out? I'll tell you. I make it out like this: Your name's Pew, ain't it? Very well. And you know Admiral Guinea, and that's his name, eh? Very well. Then you're Pew; and the Admiral's the Admiral; and you know the Admiral; and by George, that's all. Hey? Drink about, boys, drink about!

Pew. Lord love you, if I'd a-had a 'ed like yours! Why, the Admiral was my first cap'n. I was that man's bo'sun, I was, aboard the *Arethusa*; and we was like two brothers. Did you never hear of Guinea-land and the black ivory business? (*Sings*) —

"A quick run to the south we had, and when we made the Bight,
We kept the offing all day long and crossed the Bar at night.
Six hundred niggers in the hold and seventy we did stow,
And when we clapped the hatches on, 'twas time for us to go."

Lay forward, lads!

Kit *and* Pew (*in chorus*) —

"Time for us to go," etc.

Kit. I say, Pew, I like you; you're a damned ugly dog; but I like you. But look ye here, Pew: fair does it, you know, or we part company this minute. If you and the Ad — — the Admirable were like brothers on the Guinea coast, why aren't you like brothers here?

Pew. Ah, *I* see you coming. What a 'ed! what a 'ed! Since Pew is a friend of the family, says you, why didn't he sail in and bear a hand, says you, when you was knocking the Admiral's ship about his ears in argyment?

Kit. Well, Pew, now you put a name to it, why not?

Pew. Ah, why not? There I recko'nise you. Well, see here: argyment's my weakness, in a manner of speaking; I wouldn't a-borne down and spiled sport not for gold untold, no, not for rum, I wouldn't! And besides, Commander, I put it to you as between man and man, would it have been seaman-like to let on and show myself to a old shipmate, when he was yard-arm to yard-arm with a craft not half his metal, and getting blown out of water every broadside? Would it have been ‘ansome? I put it to you, as between man and man.

Kit. Pew, I may have gifts; but I never thought of that. Why, no: not seaman-like. Pew, you’ve a heart, that’s what I like you for.

Pew. Ah, that I have: you’ll see. I wanted — now you follow me — I wanted to keep square with Admiral Guinea. Why? says you. Well, put it that I know a fine young fellow when I sees him; and put it that I wish him well; and put it, for the sake of argyment, that the father of that lovely female’s in my power. Aha? Pew’s power! Why, in my ‘ands he’s like this pocket ‘andke’cher. Now, brave boy, do you see?

Kit. No, Pew, my head’s gone; I don’t see.

Pew. Why, cheer up, Commander! You want to marry this lovely female?

Kit. Ay, that I do; but I’m not fit for her, Pew; I’m a drunken dog, and I’m not fit for her.

Pew. Now, Cap’n, you’ll allow a old seaman to be judge: one as sailed with ‘Awke and blessed Benb — — with ‘Awke and noble Anson. You’ve been open and above-board with me, and I’ll do the same by you: it being the case that you’re hard hit about a lovely woman, which many a time and oft it has happened to old Pew; and him with a feeling ‘art that bleeds for you, Commander; why, look here: I’m that girl’s godfather; promised and vowed for her, I did; and I like you; and you’re the man for her; and, by the living Jacob, you shall splice!

Kit. David Pew, do you mean what you say?

Pew. Do I mean what I say? Does David Pew? Ask Admiral ‘Awke! Ask old Admiral Byng in his coffin, where I laid him with these ‘ands! Pew does, is what those naval commanders would reply. Mean it? I reckon so.

Kit. Then, shake hands. You’re an honest man, Pew — old Pew! — and I’ll make your fortune. But there’s something else, if I could keep the run of it. Oh, ah! But *can* you? That’s the point. Can you? don’t you see?

Pew. Can I? You leave that to me; I’ll bring you to your moorings; I’m the man that can, and I’m him that will. But only, look here, let’s understand each other. You’re a bold blade, ain’t you? You won’t stick at a trifle for a lovely female? You’ll back me up? You’re a man, ain’t you? a man, and you’ll see me through and through it, hey? Come; is that so? Are you fair and square and stick at nothing?

Kit. Me, Pew? I’ll go through fire and water.

Pew. I’ll risk it. Well, then, see here, my son: another swallow and we jog.

Kit. No, not to-night, Pew, not to-night!

Pew. Commander, in a manner of speaking, wherefore?

Kit. Wherefore, Pew? 'Cause why, Pew? 'Cause I'm drunk, and be damned to you!

Pew. Commander, I ax your pardon; but, saving your presence, that's a lie. What? drunk? a man with a 'ed for argyment like that? Just you get up, and steady yourself on your two pins, and you'll be as right as ninepence.

Kit. Pew, before we budge, let me shake your flipper again. You're heart of oak, Pew, sure enough; and if you can bring the Adam — Admirable about, why, damme, I'll make your fortune! How you're going to do it, I don't know; but I'll stand by; and I know you'll do it if anybody can. But I'm drunk, Pew, you can't deny that; I'm as drunk as a Plymouth fiddler, Pew; and how you're going to do it is a mystery to me.

Pew. Ah, you leave that to me. All I want is what I've got: your promise to stand by and bear a hand (*producing a dark lantern*). Now, here, you see, is my little glim; it ain't for me, because I'm blind, worse luck! and the day and night is the blessed same to David Pew. But you watch. You put the candle near me. Here's what there ain't many blind men could do, take the pick o' them! (*lighting a screw of paper, and with that, the lantern*). Hey? That's it. Hey? Go and pity the poor blind!

Kit (*while Pew blows out the candles*). But I say, Pew, what do you want with it?

Pew. To see by, my son. (*He shuts the lantern and puts it in his pocket. Stage quite dark. Moonlight at window.*) All ship-shape? No sparks about? No? Come, then, lean on me and heave ahead for the lovely female. (*Singing sotto voce*) —

"Time for us to go,
Time for us to go,
And when we'd clapped the hatches on,
'Twas time for us to go."

ACT III

The Stage represents the Admiral’s house, as in Act I. Gaunt, seated, is reading aloud; Arethusa sits at his feet. Candles

SCENE I

Arethusa, Gaunt

Gaunt (*reading*). "And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." (*He closes the book.*) Amen.

Arethusa. Amen. Father, there spoke my heart.

Gaunt. Arethusa, the Lord in His mercy has seen right to vex us with trials of many kinds. It is a little matter to endure the pangs of the flesh, the smart of wounds, the passion of hunger and thirst, the heaviness of disease; and in this world I have learned to take thought for nothing save the quiet of your soul. It is through our affections that we are smitten with the true pain, even the pain that kills.

Arethusa. And yet this pain is our natural lot. Father, I fear to boast, but I know that I can bear it. Let my life, then, flow like common lives, each pain rewarded with some pleasure, each pleasure linked with some pain: nothing pure whether for good or evil: and my husband, like myself and all the rest of us, only a poor, kind-hearted sinner, striving for the better part. What more could any woman ask?

Gaunt. Child, child, your words are like a sword. What would she ask? Look upon me whom, in the earthly sense, you are commanded to respect. Look upon me: do I bear a mark? is there any outward sign to bid a woman avoid and flee from me?

Arethusa. I see nothing but the face I love.

Gaunt. There is none: nor yet on the young man Christopher, whose words still haunt and upbraid me. Yes, I am hard; I was born hard, born a tyrant, born to be what I was, a slaver captain. But to-night, and to save you, I will pluck my heart out of my bosom. You shall know what makes me what I am; you shall hear, out of my own life, why I dread and deprecate this marriage. Child, do you remember your mother?

Arethusa. Remember her? Ah, if she had been here to-day!

Gaunt. It is thirteen years since she departed, and took with her the whole sunshine of my life. Do you remember the manner of her departure? You were a child, and cannot; but I can and do. Remember? shall I ever forget? Here or hereafter, ever forget! Ten years she was my wife, and ten years she lay a-dying. Arethusa, she was a saint on earth; and it was I that killed her.

Arethusa. Killed her? my mother? You?

Gaunt. Not with my hand; for I loved her. I would not have hurt one hair upon her head. But she got her death by me, as sure as by a blow.

Arethusa. I understand — I can see; you brood on trifles, misunderstandings, unkindnesses you think them; though my mother never knew of them, or never gave them a second thought. It is natural when death has come between.

Gaunt. I married her from Falmouth. She was comely as the roe; I see her still — her dove's eyes and her Smile! I was older than she; and I had a name for hardness, a hard and wicked man; but she loved me — my Hester! — and she took me as I was. O how I repaid her trust! Well, our child was born to us; and we named her after the brig I had built and sailed, the old craft whose likeness — older than you, girl — stands there above our heads. And so far, that was happiness. But she yearned for my salvation; and it was there I thwarted her. My sins were a burden upon her spirit, a shame to her in this world, her terror in the world to come. She talked much and often of my leaving the devil's trade I sailed in. She had a tender and a Christian heart, and she would weep and pray for the poor heathen creatures that I bought and sold and shipped in misery, till my conscience grew hot within me. I've put on my hat, and gone out and made oath that my next cargo should be my last; but it never was, that oath was never kept. So I sailed again and again for the Guinea coast, until the trip came that was to be my last indeed. Well, it fell out that we had good luck trading, and I stowed the brig with these poor heathen as full as she would hold. We had a fair run westward till we were past the line; but one night the wind rose, and there came a hurricane, and for seven days we were tossed on the deep seas, in the hardest straits, and every hand on deck. For several days they were battened down: all that time we heard their cries and lamentations, but worse at the beginning; and when at last, and near dead myself, I crept below — O, some they were starved, some smothered, some dead of broken limbs; and the hold was like a lazar-house in the time of the anger of the Lord!

Arethusa. O!

Gaunt. It was two hundred and five that we threw overboard: two hundred and five lost souls that I had hurried to their doom. I had many die with me before; but not like that — not such a massacre as that; and I stood dumb before the sight. For I saw I was their murderer — body and soul their murderer and, Arethusa, my Hester knew it. That was her death-stroke: it felled her. She had long been dying slowly; but from the hour she heard that story, the garment of the flesh began to waste and perish, the fountains of her life dried up; she faded before my face; and in two months from my landing — O Hester, Hester, would God I had died for thee!

Arethusa. Mother! O poor soul! O poor father! O father, it was hard on you.

Gaunt. The night she died, she lay there, in her bed. She took my hand. “I am going,” she said, “to heaven. For Christ’s sake,” she said, “come after me, and bring my little maid. I’ll be waiting and wearying till you come”; and she kissed my hand, the hand that killed her. At that I broke out, calling on her to stop, for it was more than I could bear. But no, she said she must still tell me of my sins, and how the thought of them had bowed down her life. “And O!” she said, “if I couldn’t prevail on you alive, let my death.”... Well, then, she died. What have I done since then? I’ve laid my course for Hester. Sin, temptation, pleasure, all this poor shadow of a world, I saw them not; I saw my Hester waiting, waiting and wearying. I have made my election sure; my sins I have cast them out. Hester, Hester, I will come to you, poor waiting one; and I’ll bring your little maid: ay, dearest soul, I’ll bring your little maid safe with me!

Arethusa. O teach me how! Show me the way! only show me. — O mother, mother! — If it were paved with fire, show me the way, and I will walk it barefoot!

Gaunt. They call me a miser. They say that in this sea-chest of mine I hoard my gold. (*He passes R. to chest, takes out key and unlocks it.*) They think my treasure and my very soul are locked up here. They speak after the flesh, but they are right. See!

Arethusa. Her watch? the wedding ring? O father, forgive me!

Gaunt. Ay, her watch that counted the hours when I was away; they were few and sorrowful, my Hester’s hours; and this poor contrivance numbered them. The ring — with that I married her. This chain, it’s of Guinea gold; I brought it home for her, the year before we married, and she wore it to her wedding. It was a vanity: they are all vanities; but they are the treasure of my soul. Below here, see, her wedding dress. Ay, the watch has stopped: dead, dead. And I know that my Hester died of me; and day and night, asleep and awake, my soul abides in her remembrance.

Arethusa. And you come in your sleep to look at them. O, poor father! I understand — I understand you now.

Gaunt. In my sleep? Ay? do I so? My Hester!

Arethusa. And why, why did you not tell me? I thought — I was like the rest! — I feared you were a miser. O, you should have told me; I should have been so proud — so proud and happy. I knew you loved her; but not this, not this.

Gaunt. Why should I have spoken? It was all between my Hester and me.

Arethusa. Father, may I speak? May I tell you what my heart tells me? You do not understand about my mother. You loved her — O, as few men can love. And she loved you: think how she loved you! In this world, you know — you have told me — there is nothing perfect. All we men and women have our sins; and they are a pain to those that love us, and the deeper the love, the crueller the pain. That is life; and it is life we ask, not heaven; and what matter for the pain, if only the love holds on? Her love held: then she was happy. Her love was immortal; and when she died, her one grief was to be parted from you, her one hope to welcome you again.

Gaunt. And you, Arethusa: I was to bring her little maid.

Arethusa. God bless her, yes, and me! But, father, can you not see that she was blessed among women?

Gaunt. Child, child, you speak in ignorance; you touch upon griefs you cannot fathom.

Arethusa. No, dearest, no. She loved you, loved you and died of it. Why else do women live? What would I ask but just to love my Kit, and die for him, and look down from heaven, and see him keep my memory holy and live the nobler for my sake?

Gaunt. Ay, do you so love him?

Arethusa. Even as my mother loved my father.

Gaunt. Ay? Then we will see. What right have I — — You are your mother's child: better, tenderer, wiser than I. Let us seek guidance in prayer. Good-night, my little maid.

Arethusa. O father, I know you at last.

SCENE II

Gaunt and Arethusa go out L., carrying the candles. Stage dark. A distant clock chimes the quarters, and strikes one. Then the tap-tapping of Pew's stick is heard without; the key is put into the lock; and enter Pew, C.; he pockets key, and is followed by Kit, with dark lantern

Pew. Quiet, you lubber! Can't you foot it soft, you that has daylights and a glim?

Kit. All right, old boy. How the devil did we get through the door? Shall I knock him up?

Pew. Stow your gab (*seizing his wrist*). Under your breath!

Kit. Avast that! You're a savage dog, aren't you?

Pew. Turn on that glim.

Kit. It's as right as a trivet, Pew. What next? By George, Pew, I'll make your fortune.

Pew. Here, now, look round this room, and sharp. D'ye see a old sea-chest?

Kit. See it, Pew? why, d'ye think I'm blind?

Pew. Take me across, and let me feel of her. Mum; catch my hand. Ah, that's her (*feeling the chest*), that's the Golden Mary. Now, see here, my bo, if you've the pluck of a weevil in a biscuit, this girl is yours; if you hain't, and think to sheer off, I'm blind, but I'm deadly.

Kit. You'll keep a civil tongue in your head all the same. I'll take threats from nobody, blind or not. Let's knock up the Admiral and be done with it. What I want is to get rid of this dark lantern. It makes me feel like a housebreaker, by George.

Pew (*seated on chest*). You follow this. I'm sick of drinking bilge, when I might be rolling in my coach, and I'm dog-sick of Jack Gaunt. Who's he to be wallowing in gold, when a better man is groping crusts in the gutter and spunging for rum? Now, here, in this blasted chest, is the gold to make men of us for life: gold, ay, gobs of it; and writin's too — things that if I had the proof of 'em I'd hold Jack Gaunt to the grindstone till his face was flat. I'd have done it single-handed; but I'm blind, worse luck: I'm all in the damned dark here, poking with a stick — Lord, burn up with lime the eyes that saw it! That's why I raked up you. Come, out with your iron, and prise the lid off. You shall touch your snack, and have the wench for nothing; ay, and fling her in the street, when done.

Kit. So you brought me here to steal, did you?

Pew. Ay did I; and you shall. I'm a biter: I bring blood.

Kit. Now, Pew, you came here on my promise, or I'd kill you like a rat. As it is, out of that door! One, two, three (*drawing his cutlass*), and off!

Pew (*leaping at his throat and with a great voice*). Help! murder! thieves!

SCENE III

To these, Arethusa, Gaunt, with lights. Stage light, Pew has Kit down, and is throttling him

Pew. I've got him, Cap'n. What, kill my old commander, and rob him of his blessed child? Not with old Pew!

Gaunt. Get up, David; can't you see you're killing him? Unhand, I say.

Arethusa. In heaven's name, who is it?

Pew. It's a damned villain, my pretty; and his name, to the best of my belief, is French.

Arethusa. Kit? Kit French? Never.

Kit (*rising*). He's done for me. (*Falls on chest.*)

Pew. Don't you take on about him, ducky; he ain't worth it. Cap'n Gaunt, I took him and I give him up. You was 'ard on me this morning, Cap'n: this is my way — Pew's way, this is — of paying of you out.

Arethusa. Father, this is the blind man that came while you were abroad. Sure you'll not listen to *him*. And you, Kit, you, what is this?

Kit. Captain Gaunt, that blind devil has half-throttled me. He brought me here — I can't speak — he has almost killed me — and I'd been drinking too.

Gaunt. And you, David Pew, what do you say?

Pew. Cap'n, the rights of it is this. Me and that young man there was partaking in a friendly drop of rum at the "Admiral Benbow" inn; and I'd just proposed his blessed Majesty, when the young man he ups and says to me: "Pew," he says, "I like you, Pew: you're a true seaman," he says; "and I'm one as sticks at nothing; and damme, Pew," he says, "I'll make your fortune." (Can he deny as them was his words? Look at him, you as has eyes: no, he cannot. "Come along of me," he says, "and, damme, I'll make your fortune.") Well, Cap'n, he lights a dark lantern (which you'll find it somewhere on the floor, I reckon), and out we goes, me follerin' his lead, as I thought was 'art-of-oak and a true-blue mariner; and the next I knows is, here we was in here, and him a-askin' me to 'old the glim, while he prised the lid off of your old sea-chest with his cutlass.

Gaunt. The chest? (*He leaps, R., and examines chest.*) Ah!

Pew. Leastways, I was to 'elp him, by his account of it, while he nailed the rhino, and then took and carried off that lovely maid of yours; for a lovely maid she is, and one as touched old Pew's 'art. Cap'n, when I 'eard that, my blood biled. "Young man," I says, "you don't know David Pew," I says; and with that I ups and does my dooty by him, cutlass and all, like a lion-'arted seaman, though blind. (And then in comes you, and I gives him up: as you know for a fack is true, and I'll subscribe at the Assizes. And that, if you was to cut me into junks, is the truth, the 'ole truth, and nothing but the truth, world without end, so help me, amen; and if you'll 'and me over the 'oly Bible, me not having such a thing about me at the moment, why, I'll put a oath upon it like a man.)

Arethusa. Father, have you heard?

Gaunt. I know this man, Arethusa, and the truth is not in him.

Arethusa. Well, and why do we wait? We know Kit, do we not?

Kit. Ay, Captain, you know the pair of us, and you can see his face and mine.

Gaunt. Christopher, the facts are all against you. I find you here in my house at midnight: you who at least had eyes to see, and must have known whither you were going. It was this man, not you, who called me up: and when I came in, it was he who was uppermost and who gave you up to justice. This unsheathed cutlass is yours; there hangs the scabbard, empty; and as for the dark lantern, of what use is light to the blind? and who could have trimmed and lighted it but you?

Pew. Ah, Cap'n, what a 'ed for argyment!

Kit. And now, sir, now that you have spoken, I claim the liberty to speak on my side.

Gaunt. Not so. I will first have done with this man. David Pew, it were too simple to believe your story as you tell it; but I can find no testimony against you. From whatever reason, assuredly you have done me service. Here are five guineas to set you on your way. Begone at once; and while it is yet time, think upon your repentance.

Pew. Cap'n, here's my respecks. You've turned a pious man, Cap'n; it does my 'art good to 'ear you. But you ain't the only one. O no! I came about and paid off on the other tack before you, I reckon: you ask the Chaplain of the Fleet else, as called me on the quarter-deck before old Admiral 'Awke himself (*touching his hat*), my old commander. ("David Pew," he says, "five-and-thirty year have I been in this trade, man and boy," that chaplain says, "and damme, Pew," says he, "if ever I seen the seaman that could rattle off his catechism within fifty mile of you. Here's five guineas out of my own pocket," he says; "and what's more to the p'int," he says, "I'll speak to my reverend brother-in-law, the Bishop of Dover," he says; "and if ever you leave the sea, and wants a place as beadle, why, damme," says he, "you go to him, for you're the man for him and him for you.")

Gaunt. David Pew, you never set your foot on a King's ship in all your life. There lies the road.

Pew. Ah, you was always a 'ard man, Cap'n, and a 'ard man to believe, like Didymus the 'Ebrew prophet. But it's time for me to go, and I'll be going. My service to you, Cap'n: and I kiss my 'and to that lovely female. (*Singing*) —

“Time for us to go,
Time for us to go,
And when we’d clapped the hatches on,
‘Twas time for us to go.”

SCENE IV

Kit, Arethusa, Gaunt
Arethusa. Now, Kit?
Kit. Well, sir, and now?
Gaunt. I find you here in my house at this untimely and unseemly hour; I find you there in company with one who, to my assured knowledge, should long since have swung in the wind at Execution Dock. What brought you? Why did you open my door while I slept to such a companion? Christopher French, I have two treasures. One (*laying his hand on Arethusa's shoulder*) I know you covet: Christopher, is this your love?
Kit. Sir, I have been fooled and trapped. That man declared he knew you, declared he could make you change your mind about our marriage. I was drunk, sir, and I believed him: heaven knows I am sober now, and can see my folly; but I believed him then, and followed him. He brought me here, he told me your chest was full of gold that would make men of us for life. At that I saw my fault, sir, and drew my cutlass; and he, in the wink of an eye, roared out for help, leaped at my throat like a weasel, and had me rolling on the floor. He was quick, and I, as I tell you, sir, was off my balance.
Gaunt. Is this man, Pew, your enemy?
Kit. No, sir; I never saw him till to-night.

Gaunt. Then, if you must stand the justice of your country, come to the proof with a better plea. What? lantern and cutlass yours; you the one that knew the house; you the one that saw; you the one overtaken and denounced; and you spin me a galley yarn like that? If that is all your defence, you'll hang, sir, hang.
Arethusa. Ah!... Father, I give him up: I will never see him, never speak to him, never think of him again; I take him from my heart; I give myself wholly up to you and to my mother; I will obey you in every point — O, not at a word merely — at a finger raised! I will do all this; I will do anything — anything you bid me; I swear it in the face of heaven. Only — Kit! I love him, father, I love him. Let him go.
Gaunt. Go?
Arethusa. You let the other. Open the door again for my sake, father — in my mother's name — O, open the door and let him go.
Kit. Let me go? My girl, if you had cast me out this morning, good and well: I would have left you, though it broke my heart. But it's a changed story now; now I'm down on my luck, and you come and stab me from behind. I ask no favour, and I'll take none; I stand here on my innocence, and God helping me I'll clear my good name, and get

your love again, if it’s love worth having. Now, Captain Gaunt, I’ve said my say, and you may do your pleasure. I am my father’s son, and I never feared to face the truth.

Gaunt. You have spoken like a man, French, and you may go. I leave you free.

Kit. Nay, sir, not so: not with my will. I’m accused and counted guilty; the proofs are against me; the girl I love has turned upon me. I’ll accept no mercy at your hands. Captain Gaunt, I am your prisoner.

Arethusa. Kit, dear Kit — —

Gaunt. Silence! Young man, I have offered you liberty without bond or condition. You refuse. You shall be judged. Meanwhile (*opening the door, R.*), you will go in here. I keep your cutlass. The night brings counsel: to-morrow shall decide. (*He locks Kit in, leaving the key in the door.*)

SCENE V

Gaunt, Arethusa, afterwards Pew

Arethusa. Father, you believe in him; you do; I know you do.

Gaunt. Child, I am not given to be hasty. I will pray and sleep upon this matter. (*A knocking at the door, C.*) Who knocks so late? (*He opens.*)

Pew (*entering*). Cap'n, shall I fetch the constable?

Gaunt. No.

Pew. No? Have ye killed him?

Gaunt. My man, I'll see you into the road. (*He takes Pew by the arm, and goes out with him.*)

SCENE VI

Arethusa
Arethusa. (*Listens; then running to door, R.*) Kit — dearest Kit! wait! I will come to you soon. (*Gaunt re-enters, C., as the drop falls.*)

ACT IV

The Stage represents the Admiral's house, as in Acts I. and III. A chair, L., in front. As the curtain rises, the Stage is dark. Enter Arethusa, L., with candle; she lights another; and passes to door, R., which she unbolts. Stage light

SCENE I

Arethusa, Kit

Arethusa. Come, dear Kit, come!

Kit. Well, I'm here.

Arethusa. O Kit, you are not angry with me.

Kit. Have I reason to be pleased?

Arethusa. Kit, I was wrong. Forgive me.

Kit. O yes. I forgive you. I suppose you meant it kindly; but there are some kindnesses a man would rather die than take a gift of. When a man is accused, Arethusa, it is not that he fears the gallows — it's the shame that cuts him. At such a time as that, the way to help was to stand to your belief. You should have nailed my colours to the mast, not spoke of striking them. If I were to be hanged to-morrow, and your love there, and a free pardon and a dukedom on the other side — which would I choose?

Arethusa. Kit, you must judge me fairly. It was not my life that was at stake, it was yours. Had it been mine — mine, Kit — what had you done, then?

Kit. I am a downright fool; I saw it inside out. Why, give you up, by George!

Arethusa. Ah, you see! Now you understand. It was all pure love. When he said that word — O! death and that disgrace!... But I know my father. He fears nothing so much as the goodness of his heart; and yet it conquers. He would pray, he said; and to-night, and by the kindness of his voice, I knew he was convinced already. All that is wanted is that you should forgive me.

Kit. Arethusa, if you looked at me like that I'd forgive you piracy on the high seas. I was only sulky; I was boxed up there in the black dark, and couldn't see my hand. It made me pity that blind man, by George.

Arethusa. O, that blind man! The fiend! He came back, Kit: did you hear him? he thought we had killed you — you!

Kit. Well, well, it serves me right for keeping company with such a swab.

Arethusa. One thing puzzles me: how did you get in? I saw my father lock the door.

Kit. Ah, how? That's just it. I was a sheet in the wind, you see. How did we? He did it somehow.... By George, he had a key! He can get in again.

Arethusa. Again? that man!

Kit. Ay can he! Again! When he likes!

Arethusa. Kit, I am afraid. O Kit, he will kill my father.

Kit. Afraid. I'm glad of that. Now, you'll see I'm worth my salt at something. Ten to one he's back to Mrs. Drake's. I'll after, and lay him aboard.

Arethusa. O Kit, he is too strong for you.

Kit. Arethusa, that's below the belt! Never you fear; I'll give a good account of him.

Arethusa (*taking cutlass from wall*). You'll be none the worse for this, dear.

Kit. That's so (*making cuts*). All the same, I'm half ashamed to draw on a blind man; it's too much odds. (*He leans suddenly against the table.*) Ah!

Arethusa. Kit! are you ill?

Kit. My head's like a humming top; it serves me right for drinking.

Arethusa. Oh, and the blind man! (*She runs, L., to the corner cupboard, brings a bottle and glass, and fills and offers glass.*) Here, lad, drink that.

Kit. To you! That's better. (*Bottle and glass remain on Gaunt's table.*)

Arethusa. Suppose you miss him?

Kit. Miss him! The road is straight; and I can hear the tap-tapping of that stick a mile away.

Arethusa (*listening*). 'St! my father stirring in his room!

Kit. Let me get clear; tell him why when I'm gone. The door — — ?

Arethusa. Locked!

Kit. The window!

Arethusa. Quick, quick! (*She unfastens R. window, by which Kit goes out.*)

SCENE II

Arethusa, Gaunt entering L.

Arethusa. Father, Kit is gone.... He is asleep.

Gaunt. Waiting, waiting and wearying. The years, they go so heavily, my Hester still waiting! (*He goes R. to chest, which he opens.*) That is your chain; it's of Guinea gold; I brought it you from Guinea. (*Taking out chain.*) You liked it once; it pleased you long ago; O, why not now — why will you not be happy now?... I swear this is my last voyage; see, I lay my hand upon the Holy Book and swear it. One more venture — for the child's sake, Hester; you don't think upon your little maid.

Arethusa. Ah, for my sake, it was for my sake!

Gaunt. Ten days out from Lagos. That's a strange sunset, Mr. Yeo. All hands shorten sail! Lay aloft there, look smart!... What's that? Only the negroes in the hold.... Mr. Yeo, she can't live long at this; I have a wife and child in Barnstaple.... Christ, what a sea! Hold on, for God's sake — hold on fore and aft! Great God! (*as though the sea were making a breach over the ship at the moment*).

Arethusa. O!

Gaunt. They seem quieter down below there.... No water — no light — no air — seven days battened down, and the seas mountain high, and the ship labouring hell-deep! Two hundred and five, two hundred and five, two hundred and five — all to eternal torture!

Arethusa. O pity him, pity him! Let him sleep, let him forget! Let her prayers avail in heaven, and let him rest!

Gaunt. Hester, no, don't smile at me. Rather tears! I have seen you weep — often, often; two hundred and five times. Two hundred and five! (*With ring.*) Hester, here is your ring (*he tries to put the ring on his finger*). How comes it in my hand? Not fallen off again? O no, impossible! it was made smaller, dear, it can't have fallen off! Ah, you waste away. You must live, you must, for the dear child's sake, for mine, Hester, for mine! Ah, the child. Yes. Who am I to judge? Poor Kit French! And she, your little maid, she's like you, Hester, and she will save him! How should a man be saved without a wife?

Arethusa. O father, if you could but hear me thank and bless you! (*The tapping of Pew's stick is heard approaching. Gaunt passes L. front and sits.*)

Gaunt (*beginning to count the taps*). One — two — two hundred and five — —

Arethusa (*listening*). God help me, the blind man! (*She runs to door, C.; the key is put into the lock from without, and the door opens.*)

SCENE III

Arethusa (at back of stage by the door); Gaunt (front L.); to these, Pew, C.

Pew (*sotto voce*). All snug. (*Coming down.*) So that was you, my young friend Christopher, as shot by me on the road; and so you was hot foot after old Pew? Christopher, my young friend, I reckon I'll have the bowels out of that chest, and I reckon, you'll be lagged and scragged for it. (*At these words Arethusa locks the door, and takes the key.*) What's that? All still. There's something wrong about this room. Pew, my 'art of oak, you're queer to-night; brace up and carry on. Where's the tool? (*Producing knife.*) Ah, here she is; and now for the chest; and the gold; and rum — rum — rum. What! Open?... old clothes, by God!... He's done me; he's been before me; he's bolted with the swag; that's why he ran: Lord wither and waste him forty year for it! O Christopher, if I had my fingers on your throat! Why didn't I strangle the soul out of him? I heard the breath squeak in his weasand; and Jack Gaunt pulled me off. Ah, Jack, that's another I owe you. My pious friend, if I was God Almighty for five minutes! (*Gaunt rises and begins to pace the stage like a quarter-deck, L.*) What's that? A man's walk. He don't see me, thank the blessed dark! But it's time to slip, my bo. (*He gropes his way stealthily till he comes to Gaunt's table, where he burns his hand in the candle.*) A candle — lighted — then it's bright as day! Lord God, doesn't he see me? It's the horrors come alive. (*Gaunt draws near and turns away.*) I'll go mad, mad! (*He gropes to the door, stopping and starting.*) Door. (*His voice rising for the first time, sharp with terror.*) Locked? Key gone? Trapped! Keep off — keep off of me — keep away! (*Sotto voce again.*) Keep your head, Lord have mercy, keep your head. I'm wet with sweat. What devil's den is this? I must out — out! (*He shakes the door vehemently.*) No? Knife it is, then — knife — knife — knife! (*He moves with the knife raised towards* Gaunt, *intently listening and changing his direction as* Gaunt *changes his position on the stage.*)

Arethusa (*rushing to intercept him*). Father, father, wake!

Gaunt. Hester, Hester! (*He turns, in time to see Arethusa grapple Pew in the centre of the stage, and Pew force her down.*)

Arethusa. Kit! Kit!

Pew (*with the knife raised*). Pew's way!

SCENE IV

To these, Kit

(*He leaps through window, R., and cuts Pew down. At the same moment, Gaunt, who has been staring helplessly at his daughter's peril, fully awakes.*)

Gaunt. Death and blood! (*Kit, helping Arethusa, has let fall the cutlass. Gaunt picks it up and runs on Pew.*) Damned mutineer, I'll have your heart out! (*He stops, stands staring, drops cutlass, falls upon his knees.*) God forgive me! Ah, foul sins, would you blaze forth again? Lord, close your ears! Hester, Hester, hear me not! Shall all these years and tears be unavailing?

Arethusa. Father, I am not hurt.

Gaunt. Ay, daughter, but my soul — my lost soul!

Pew (*rising on his elbow*). Rum? You've done me. For God's sake, rum. (*Arethusa pours out a glass, which Kit gives to him.*) Rum? This ain't rum; it's fire! (*With great excitement.*) What's this? I don't like rum? (*Feebly.*) Ay, then, I'm a dead man, and give me water.

Gaunt. Now even his sins desert him.

Pew (*drinking water*). Jack Gaunt, you've always been my rock ahead. It's thanks to you I've got my papers, and this time I'm shipped for Fiddler's Green. Admiral, we ain't like to meet again, and I'll give you a toast; Here's Fiddler's Green, and damn all lubbers! (*Seizing Gaunt's arm.*) I say — fair dealings, Jack! — none of that heaven business: Fiddler's Green's my port, now, ain't it?

Gaunt. David, you've hove short up, and God forbid that I deceive you. Pray, man, pray; for in the place to which you are bound there is no mercy and no hope.

Pew. Ay, my lass, you're black, but your blood's red, and I'm all a-muck with it. Pass the rum, and be damned to you (*Trying to sing*) —

"Time for us to go,
Time for us — — "

(*He dies.*)

Gaunt. But for the grace of God, there lies John Gaunt! Christopher, you have saved my child; and *I*, I, that was blinded with self-righteousness, have fallen. Take her, Christopher; but O, walk humbly!

MACAIRE

A MELODRAMATIC FARCE
IN THREE ACTS

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Robert Macaire
Bertrand
Dumont, Landlord of the “Auberge des Adrets”
Charles, a Gendarme, Dumont’s supposed Son
Goriot
The Marquis, Charles’s Father
The Brigadier of Gendarmerie
The Curate
The Notary
A Waiter
Ernestine, Goriot’s Daughter
Aline
Maids, Peasants (*Male and Female*), Gendarmes
The Scene is laid in the Courtyard of the “Auberge des Adrets,”
on the frontier of France and Savoy. The time **1820**. The
Action occupies an interval of from twelve to fourteen
hours; from four in the afternoon till about
five in the morning

Note. — *The time between the acts should be as brief as possible, and the piece played, where it is merely comic, in a vein of patter*

MACAIRE

ACT I

The Stage represents the courtyard of the "Auberge des Adrets." It is surrounded by the buildings of the inn, with a gallery on the first story, approached, C., by a straight flight of stairs. L.C., the entrance doorway. A little in front of this, a small grated office, containing business table, brass-bound cabinet, and portable cash-box. In front, R. and L., tables and benches; one, L., partially laid for a considerable party

SCENE I

Aline and Maids; to whom, Fiddlers; afterwards Dumont and Charles. As the curtain rises, the sound of the violins is heard approaching. Aline and the inn servants, who are discovered laying the table, dance up to door L.C., to meet the Fiddlers, who enter likewise dancing to their own music. Air: "Haste to the Wedding." The Fiddlers exeunt playing into house, R.U.E. Aline and Maids dance back to table, which they proceed to arrange

Aline. Well, give me fiddles: fiddles and a wedding feast. It tickles your heart till your heels make a runaway match of it. I don't mind extra work, I don't, so long as there's fun about it. Hand me up that pile of plates. The quinces there, before the bride. Stick a pink in the Notary's glass: that's the girl he's courting.

Dumont (*entering; with Charles*). Good girls, good girls! Charles, in ten minutes from now what happy faces will smile around that board!

Charles. Sir, my good fortune is complete; and most of all in this, that my happiness has made my father happy.

Dumont. Your father? Ah, well, upon that point we shall have more to say.

Charles. What more remains that has not been said already? For surely, sir, there are few sons more fortunate in their father: and, since you approve of this marriage, may I not conceive you to be in that sense fortunate in your son?

Dumont. Dear boy, there is always a variety of considerations. But the moment is ill chosen for dispute; to-night, at least, let our felicity be unalloyed. (*Looking off L.C.*) Our guests arrive: here is our good Curate, and here our cheerful Notary.

Charles. His old infirmity, I fear.

Dumont. But, Charles — dear boy! — at your wedding feast! I should have taken it unneighbourly had he come strictly sober.

SCENE II

To these, by the door L.C., the Curate and the Notary arm in arm; the latter owl-like and titubant

Curate. Peace be on this house!

Notary (*singing*). “Prove an excuse for the glass.”

Dumont. Welcome, excellent neighbours! The Church and the Law.

Curate. And you, Charles, let me hope your feelings are in solemn congruence with this momentous step.

Notary (*digging Charles in the ribs*). Married? Lovely bride? Prove an excuse!

Dumont (*to Curate*). I fear our friend? perhaps? as usual? eh?

Curate. Possibly; I had not yet observed it.

Dumont. Well, well, his heart is good.

Curate. He doubtless meant it kindly.

Notary. Where’s Aline?

Aline. Coming, sir! (*Notary makes for her.*)

Curate (*capturing him*). You will infallibly expose yourself to misconstruction. (*To Charles.*) Where is your commanding officer?

Charles. Why, sir, we have quite an alert. Information has been received from Lyons that the notorious malefactor, Robert Macaire, has broken prison, and the Brigadier is now scouring the country in his pursuit. I myself am instructed to watch the visitors to our house.

Dumont. That will do, Charles: you may go. (*Exit Charles.*) You have considered the case I laid before you?

Notary. Considered a case?

Dumont. Yes, yes. Charles, you know, Charles. Can he marry? under these untoward and peculiar circumstances, can he marry?

Notary. Now, lemme tell you: marriage is a contract to which there are two constracting parties. That being clear, I am prepared to argue categorically that your son Charles — who, it appears, is not your son Charles — I am prepared to argue that one party to a contract being null and void, the other party to a contract cannot by law oblige or constrain the first party to constract or bind himself to any contract, except the other party be able to see his way clearly to constract himself with him. I donno if I make myself clear?

Dumont. No.

Notary. Now, lemme tell you: by applying justice of peace might possibly afford relief.

Dumont. But how?

Notary. Ay, there's the rub.

Dumont. But what am I to do? He's not my son, I tell you: Charles is not my son.

Notary. I know.

Dumont. Perhaps a glass of wine would clear him?

Notary. That's what I want. (*They go out, L.U.E.*)

Aline. And now, if you've done deranging my table, to the cellar for the wine, the whole pack of you. (*Manet sola, considering table.*) There! it's like a garden. If I had as sweet a table for my wedding, I would marry the Notary.

SCENE III

The Stage remains vacant. Enter, by door L.C., Macaire, followed by Bertrand with the bundle; in the traditional costume

Macaire. Good! No police!

Bertrand (*looking off L.C.*). Sold again!

Macaire. This is a favoured spot, Bertrand: ten minutes from the frontier: ten minutes from escape. Blessings on that frontier line! The criminal hops across, and lo! the reputable man. (*Reading.*) "'Auberge des Adrets,' by John Paul Dumont." A table set for company; this is fate: Bertrand, are we the first arrivals? An office; a cabinet; a cash-box — aha! and a cash-box, golden within. A money-box is like a Quaker beauty: demure without, but what a figure of a woman! Outside gallery: an architectural feature I approve; I count it a convenience both for love and war; the troubadour — twang-twang; the craftsmen — — (*Makes as if turning key.*) The kitchen window: humming with cookery; truffles, before Jove! I was born for truffles. Cock your hat: meat, wine, rest, and occupation; men to gull, women to fool, and still the door open, the great unbolted door of the frontier!

Bertrand. Macaire, I'm hungry.

Macaire. Bertrand, excuse me, you are a sensualist. I should have left you in the stone-yard at Lyons, and written no passport but my own. Your soul is incorporate with your stomach. Am I not hungry too? My body, thanks to immortal Jupiter, is but the boy that holds the kite-string; my aspirations and designs swim like the kite sky-high, and overlook an empire.

Bertrand. If I could get a full meal and a pound in my pocket I would hold my tongue.

Macaire. Dreams, dreams! We are what we are; and what are we? Who are you? who cares? Who am I? myself? What do we come from? an accident. What's a mother? an old woman. A father? the gentleman who beats her. What is crime? discovery. Virtue? opportunity.

Politics? a pretext. Affection? an affectation. Morality? an affair of latitude. Punishment? this side the frontier. Reward? the other. Property? plunder. Business? other people's money — not mine, by God! and the end of life to live till we are hanged.

Bertrand. Macaire, I came into this place with my tail between my legs already, and hungry besides; and then you get to flourishing, and it depresses me worse than the chaplain in the gaol.

Macaire. What is a chaplain? A man they pay to say what you don't want to hear.

Bertrand. And who are you after all? and what right have you to talk like that? By what I can hear, you've been the best part of your life in quod; and as for me, since I've followed you, what sort of luck have I had? Sold again! A boose, a blue fright, two years' hard, and the police hot-foot after us even now.

Macaire. What is life? A boose and the police.

Bertrand. Of course, I know you're clever; I admire you down to the ground, and I'll starve without you. But I can't stand it, and I'm off. Good-bye: good luck to you, old man! and if you want the bundle — —

Macaire. I am a gentleman of a mild disposition, and, I thank my Maker, elegant manners; but rather than be betrayed by such a thing as you are, with the courage of a hare, and the manners, by the Lord Harry, of a jumping-jack — — (*He shows his knife.*)

Bertrand. Put it up, put it up: I'll do what you want.

Macaire. What is obedience? fear. So march straight, or look for mischief. It's not *bon ton*, I know, and far from friendly. But what is friendship? convenience. But we lose time in this amiable dalliance. Come, now, an effort of deportment: the head thrown back, a jaunty carriage of the leg; crook gracefully the elbow. Thus. 'Tis better. (*Calling.*) House, house here!

Bertrand. Are you mad? We haven't a brass farthing.

Macaire. Now! — But before we leave!

SCENE IV

To these, Dumont

Dumont. Gentlemen, what can a plain man do for your service?

Macaire. My good man, in a roadside inn one cannot look for the impossible. Give one what small wine and what country fare you can produce.

Dumont. Gentlemen, you come here upon a most auspicious day, a red-letter day for me and my poor house, when all are welcome. Suffer me, with all delicacy, to inquire if you are not in somewhat narrow circumstances?

Macaire. My good creature, you are strangely in error; one is rolling in gold.

Bertrand. And very hungry.

Dumont. Dear me, and on this happy occasion I had registered a vow that every poor traveller should have his keep for nothing, and a pound in his pocket to help him on his journey.

Aside.

Macaire. A pound in his pocket?

Bertrand. Keep for nothing?

Macaire. Bitten!

Bertrand. Sold again!

Dumont. I will send you what we have: poor fare, perhaps, for gentlemen like you.

SCENE V

Macaire, Bertrand; afterwards Charles, who appears on the gallery and comes down

Bertrand. I told you so. Why will you fly so high?

Macaire. Bertrand, don’t crush me. A pound: a fortune! With a pound to start upon — two pounds, for I’d have borrowed yours — three months from now I might have been driving in my barouche, with you behind it, Bertrand, in a tasteful livery.

Bertrand (*seeing Charles*). Lord, a policeman!

Macaire. Steady! What is a policeman? Justice’s blind eye. (*To Charles.*) I think, sir, you are in the force?

Charles. I am, sir, and it was in that character — —

Macaire. Ah, sir, a fine service!

Charles. It is, sir, and if your papers — —

Macaire. You become your uniform. Have you a mother? Ah, well, well!

Charles. My duty, sir — —

Macaire. They tell me one Macaire — is not that his name, Bertrand? — has broken gaol at Lyons?

Charles. He has, sir, and it is precisely for that reason —

Macaire. Well, good-bye. (*Shaking Charles by the hand and leading him towards the door, L.U.E.*) Sweet spot, sweet spot. The scenery is.... (*kisses his finger-tips. Exit Charles.*) And now, what is a policeman?

Bertrand. A bobby.

SCENE VI

Macaire, Bertrand; to whom, Aline with tray; and afterwards Maids

Aline (*entering with tray and proceeding to lay table, L.*). My men, you are in better luck than usual. It isn't every day you go shares in a wedding feast.

Macaire. A wedding? Ah, and you're the bride.

Aline. What makes you fancy that?

Macaire. Heavens, am I blind?

Aline. Well, then, I wish I was.

Macaire. I take you at the word: have me.

Aline. You will never be hanged for modesty.

Macaire. Modesty is for the poor: when one is rich and nobly born, 'tis but a clog. I love you. What is your name?

Aline. Guess again, and you'll guess wrong. (*Enter the other servants with wine baskets.*) Here, set the wine down. No, that is the old Burgundy for the wedding party. These gentlemen must put up with a different bin. (*Setting wine before Macaire and Bertrand, who are at table, L.*)

Macaire (*drinking*). Vinegar, by the supreme Jove!

Bertrand. Sold again!

Macaire. Now, Bertrand, mark me. (*Before the servants he exchanges the bottle for the one in front of Dumont's place at the head of the other table.*) Was it well done?

Bertrand. Immense.

Macaire (*emptying his glass into Bertrand's*). There, Bertrand, you may finish that. Ha! music?

SCENE VII

To these, from the inn, L.U.E., Dumont, Charles, the Curate, the Notary jigging; from the inn, R.U.E., Fiddlers playing and dancing; and through door, L.C., Goriot, Ernestine, Peasants, dancing likewise. Air: “Haste to the Wedding.” As the parties meet, the music ceases

Dumont. Welcome, neighbours! welcome, friends! Ernestine, here is my Charles, no longer mine. A thousand welcomes. O, the gay day! O, the auspicious wedding! (*Charles, Ernestine, Dumont, Goriot, Curate, and Notary sit to the wedding feast; Peasants, Fiddlers, and Maids, grouped at back drinking from the barrel.*) O, I must have all happy around me.

Goriot. Then help the soup.

Dumont. Give me leave: I must have all happy. Shall these poor gentlemen upon a day like this drink ordinary wine? Not so; I shall drink it. (*To Macaire, who is just about to fill his glass.*) Don’t touch it, sir! Aline, give me that gentleman’s bottle and take him mine: with old Dumont’s compliments.

Macaire. What?

Bertrand. Change the bottle?

Aside. Macaire. Bitten!

Bertrand. Sold again!

Dumont. Yes, all shall be happy.

Goriot. I tell ‘ee, help the soup!

Dumont (*begins to help soup. Then, dropping ladle*). One word: a matter of detail; Charles is not my son. (*All exclaim.*) O no, he is not my son. Perhaps I should have mentioned it before.

Charles. I am not your son, sir?

Dumont. O no, far from it.

Goriot. Then who the devil's son be he?

Dumont. O, I don't know. It's an odd tale, a romantic tale: it may amuse you. It was twenty years ago, when I kept the "Golden Head" at Lyons; Charles was left upon my doorstep in a covered basket, with sufficient money to support the child till he should come of age. There was no mark upon the linen, nor any clue but one: an unsigned letter from the father of the child, which he strictly charged me to preserve. It was to prove his identity; he, of course, would know the contents, and he only; so I keep it safe in the third compartment of my cash-box, with the ten thousand francs I've saved for his dowry. Here is the key; it's a patent key. To-day the poor boy is twenty-one, to-morrow to be married. I did perhaps hope the father would appear; there was a Marquis coming; he wrote me for a room; I gave him the best, Number Thirteen, which you have all heard of; I did hope it might be he, for a Marquis, you know, is always genteel. But no, you see. As for me, I take all to witness I'm as innocent of him as the babe unborn.

Macaire. Ahem! I think you said the linen bore an M?

Dumont. Pardon me; the markings were cut off.

Macaire. True. The basket white, I think?

Dumont. Brown, brown.

Macaire. Ah! brown — a whitey-brown.

Goriot. I tell 'ee what, Dumont, this is all very well; but in that case, I'll be danged if he gets my daater. (*General consternation.*)

Dumont. O Goriot, let's have happy faces!

Goriot. Happy faces be danged! I want to marry my daater; I want your son. But who be this? I don't know, and you don't know, and he don't know. He may be anybody; by Jarge, he may be nobody! (*Exclamations.*)

Curate. The situation is crepuscular.

Ernestine. Father, and Mr. Dumont (and you, too, Charles), I wish to say one word. You gave us leave to fall in love; we fell in love; and as for me, my father, I will either marry Charles or die a maid.

Charles. And you, sir, would you rob me in one day of both a father and a wife?

Dumont (*weeping*). Happy faces, happy faces!

Goriot. I know nothing about robbery; but she cannot marry without my consent, and that she cannot get.

Dumont *Together*. O dear, O dear!

Aline. What, spoil the wedding?

Ernestine. O father!

Charles. Sir, sir, you would not — —

Goriot (*exasperated*). I wun't, and what's more I shan't.

Notary. I donno if I make myself clear.

Dumont. Goriot, do let's have happy faces!

Goriot. Fudge! Fudge!! Fudge!!!

Curate. Possibly on application to this conscientious jurist, light may be obtained.

All. The Notary; yes, yes; the Notary!

Dumont. Now, how about this marriage?

Notary. Marriage is a contract, to which there are two constracting parties, John Doe and Richard Roe. I donno if I make myself clear?

Aline. Poor lamb!

Curate. Silence, my friend; you will expose yourself to misconstruction.

Macaire (*taking the stage*). As an entire stranger in this painful scene, will you permit a gentleman and a traveller to interject one word? There sits the young man, full, I am sure, of pleasing qualities; here the young maiden, by her own confession bashfully consenting to the match; there sits that dear old gentleman, a lover of bright faces like myself, his own now dimmed with sorrow; and here — (may I be allowed to add?) — here sits this noble Roman, a father like myself, and like myself the slave of duty. Last you have me — Baron Henri-FrÃ©dÃ©ric de Latour de Main de la Tonnerre de Brest, the man of the world and the man of delicacy. I find you all — permit me the expression — gravelled. A marriage and an obstacle. Now, what is marriage? The union of two souls, and, what is possibly more romantic, the fusion of two dowries. What is an obstacle? the devil. And this obstacle? to me, as a man of family, the obstacle seems grave; but to me, as a man and a brother, what is it but a word? O my friend (*to Goriot*), you whom I single out as the victim of the same noble failings with myself of pride of birth, of pride of honesty — O my friend, reflect. Go now apart with your dishevelled daughter, your tearful son-in-law, and let their plaints constrain you. Believe me, when you come to die, you will recall with pride this amiable weakness.

Goriot. I shan't, and what's more I wun't. (*Charles and Ernestine lead him up stage, protesting. All rise except Notary.*)

Dumont (*front R., shaking hands with Macaire*). Sir, you have a noble nature. (*Macaire picks his pocket.*) Dear, me, dear me, and you are rich.

Macaire. I own, sir, I deceived you: I feared some wounding offer, and my pride replied. But to be quite frank with you, you behold me here, the Baron Henri-FrÃ©dÃ©ric de Latour de Main de la Tonnerre de Brest, and between my simple manhood and the infinite, these rags are all.

Dumont. Dear me, and with this noble pride, my gratitude is useless. For I, too, have delicacy. I understand you could not stoop to take a gift.

Macaire. A gift? a small one? never!

Dumont. And I will never wound you by the offer.

Macaire. *Aside.* Bitten!

Bertrand. Sold again!

Goriot (*taking the stage*). But, look ‘ee here, he can’t marry.

Together. Hey?

Dumont. Ah!

Aline. Heyday!

Curate. Wherefore?

Ernestine. O!

Charles. Ah!

Goriot. Not without his veyther’s consent! And he hasn’t got it; and what’s more, he can’t get it: and what’s more, he hasn’t got a veyther to get it from. It’s the law of France.

Aline. Then the law of France ought to be ashamed of itself.

Ernestine. O, couldn’t we ask the Notary again?

Curate. Indubitably you may ask him.

Together. Can’t they marry?

Dumont. Can’t he marry?

Aline. Can’t she marry?

Ernestine. Can’t we marry?

Charles. Can’t I marry?

Goriot. Bain’t I right?

Notary. Constracting parties.

Curate. Possibly to-morrow at an early hour he may be more perspicuous.

Goriot. Ay, before he've time to get at it.

Notary. Unoffending jurisconsult overtaken by sorrow. Possibly by applying justice of peace might afford relief.

Together Macaire. Bravo!

Dumont. Excellent!

Charles. Let's go at once!

Aline. The very thing!

Ernestine. Yes, this minute!

Goriot. I'll go. I don't mind getting advice, but I wun't take it.

Macaire. My friends, one word: I perceive by your downcast looks that you have not recognised the true nature of your responsibility as citizens of time. What is care? impiety. Joy? the whole duty of man. Here is an opportunity of duty it were sinful to forego. With a word, I could lighten your hearts; but I prefer to quicken your heels, and send you forth on your ingenuous errand with happy faces and smiling thoughts, the physicians of your own recovery. Fiddlers, to your catgut! Up, Bertrand, and show them how one foots it in society; forward, girls, and choose me every one the lad she loves; Dumont, benign old man, lead forth our blushing Curate; and you, O bride, embrace the uniform of your beloved, and help us dance in your wedding-day. (*Dance, in the course of which Macaire picks Dumont's pocket of his keys, selects the key of the cash-box, and returns the others to his pocket. In the end, all dance out; the wedding-party, headed by Fiddlers, L.C.; the Maids and Aline into the inn, R.U.E. Manet, Bertrand and Macaire.*)

SCENE VIII

Macaire, Bertrand, who instantly takes a bottle from the wedding-table, and sits with it, L.

Macaire. Bertrand, there's a devil of a want of a father here.

Bertrand. Ay, if we only knew where to find him.

Macaire. Bertrand, look at me: I am Macaire; I am that father.

Bertrand. You, Macaire? — you a father?

Macaire. Not yet, but in five minutes. I am capable of anything. (*Producing key.*) What think you of this?

Bertrand. That? Is it a key?

Macaire. Ay, boy, and what besides? my diploma of respectability, my patent of fatherhood. I prigged it — in the ardour of the dance I prigged it; I change it beyond recognition, thus (*twists the handle of the key*); and now...? Where is my long-lost child? produce my young policeman, show me my gallant boy.

Bertrand. I don't understand.

Macaire. Dear innocence, how should you? Your brains are in your fists. Go and keep watch. (*He goes into the office and returns with the cash-box.*) Keep watch, I say.

Bertrand. Where?

Macaire. Everywhere. (*He opens box.*)

Bertrand. Gold.

Macaire. Hands off! Keep watch. (*Bertrand at back of stage.*) Beat slower, my paternal heart! The third compartment! let me see.

Bertrand. S'st! (*Macaire shuts box.*) No: false alarm.

Macaire. The third compartment. Ay, here t — —

Bertrand. S’st! (*Same business.*) No: fire away.

Macaire. The third compartment: it must be this.

Bertrand. S’st. (*Macaire keeps box open, watching Bertrand.*) All serene: it’s the wind.

Macaire. Now, see here! (*He darts his knife into the stage.*) I will either be backed as a man should be, or from this minute out I’ll work alone. Do you understand? I said alone.

Bertrand. For the Lord’s sake, Macaire! — —

Macaire. Ay, here it is. (*Reading letter.*) “Preserve this letter secretly; its terms are known only to you and me; hence when the time comes, I shall repeat them, and my son will recognise his father.” Signed: “Your Unknown Benefactor.” (*He hums it over twice and replaces it. Then, fingering the gold.*) Gold! The yellow enchantress, happiness ready-made and laughing in my face! Gold: what is gold? The world; the term of ills; the empery of all; the multitudinous babble of the ‘Change, the sailing from all ports of freighted argosies; music, wine, a palace; the doors of the bright theatre, the key of consciences, and — love’s — love’s whistle! All this below my itching fingers; and to set this by, turn a deaf ear upon the siren present, and condescend once more, naked, into the ring with fortune — Macaire, how few would do it! But you, Macaire, you are compacted of more subtile clay. No cheap immediate pilfering: no retail trade of petty larceny; but swoop at the heart of the position, and clutch all!

Bertrand (*at his shoulder*). Halves!

Macaire. Halves? (*He locks the box.*) Bertrand, I am a father. (*Replaces box in office.*)

Bertrand (*looking after him*). Well, I — am — damned!

DROP

ACT II

When the curtain rises, the night has come. A hanging cluster of lighted lamps over each table, R. and L. Macaire, R., smoking a cigarette; Bertrand, L., with a churchwarden: each with bottle and glass

SCENE I

Macaire, Bertrand

Macaire. Bertrand, I am content: a child might play with me. Does your pipe draw well?

Bertrand. Like a factory chimney. This is my notion of life: liquor, a chair, a table to put my feet on, a fine clean pipe, and no police.

Macaire. Bertrand, do you see these changing exhalations do you see these blue rings and spirals, weaving their dance, like a round of fairies, on the footless air?

Bertrand. I see ‘em right enough.

Macaire. Man of little vision, expound me these meteors! What do they signify, O wooden-head? Clod, of what do they consist?

Bertrand. Damned bad tobacco.

Macaire. I will give you a little course of science. Everything, Bertrand (much as it may surprise you), has three states: a vapour, a liquid, a solid. These are fortune in the vapour: these are ideas. What are ideas? the protoplasm of wealth. To your head — which, by the way, is solid, Bertrand — what are they but foul air? To mine, to my prehensile and constructive intellects, see, as I grasp and work them, to what lineaments of the future they transform themselves: a palace, a barouche, a pair of luminous footmen, plate, wine, respect, and to be honest!

Bertrand. But what’s the sense in honesty?

Macaire. The sense? You see me: Macaire: elegant, immoral, invincible in cunning; well, Bertrand, much as it may surprise you, I am simply damned by my dishonesty.

Bertrand. No!

Macaire. The honest man, Bertrand, that’s God’s noblest work. He carries the bag, my boy. Would you have me define honesty? the strategic point for theft. Bertrand, if I’d three hundred a year, I’d be honest to-morrow.

Bertrand. Ah! don’t you wish you may get it!

Macaire. Bertrand, I will bet you my head against your own — the longest odds I can imagine — that with honesty for my spring-board, I leap through history like a paper hoop, and come out among posterity heroic and immortal.

SCENE II

To these, all the former characters, less the Notary. The fiddles are heard without playing dolefully. Air: “O dear, what can the matter be?” in time to which the procession enters

Macaire. Well, friends, what cheer?

Aline. *Together.* No wedding, no wedding!

Goriot. I told ‘ee he can’t, and ‘ee can’t.

Dumont. Dear, dear me!

Ernestine. They won’t let us marry.

Charles. No wife, no father, no nothing!

Curate. The facts have justified the worst anticipations of our absent friend, the Notary.

Macaire. I perceive I must reveal myself.

Dumont. God bless me, no!

Macaire. My friends, I had meant to preserve a strict incognito, for I was ashamed (I own it!) of this poor accoutrement; but when I see a face that I can render happy, say, my old Dumont, should I hesitate to work the change? Hear me, then, and you (*to the others*) prepare a smiling countenance. (*Repeating.*) “Preserve this letter secretly; its terms are known only to you and me: hence when the time comes, I shall repeat them, and my son will recognise his father. — Your Unknown Benefactor.”

Dumont. The words! the letter! Charles, alas! it is your father!

Charles. Good Lord! (*General consternation.*)

Bertrand (*aside; smiting his brow*). I see it now; sublime!

Curate. A highly singular eventuality.

Goriot. Him? O well, then, I wun't. (*Goes up.*)

Macaire. Charles, to my arms! (*Business.*) Ernestine, your second father waits to welcome you. (*Business.*) Goriot, noble old man, I grasp your hand. (*He doesn't.*) And you, Dumont, how shall your unknown benefactor thank you for your kindness to his boy? (*A dead pause.*) Charles, to my arms!

Charles. My father, you are still something of a stranger. I hope — er — in the course of time — I hope that may be somewhat mended. But I confess that I have so long regarded Mr. Dumont — —

Macaire. Love him still, dear boy, love him still. I have not returned to be a burden on your heart, nor much, comparatively, on your pocket. A place by the fire, dear boy, a crust for my friend, Bertrand. (*A dead pause.*) Ah, well, this is a different home-coming from that I fancied when I left the letter: I dreamed to grow rich. Charles, you remind me of your sainted mother.

Charles. I trust, sir, you do not think yourself less welcome for your poverty.

Macaire. Nay, nay — more welcome, more welcome. O, I know your — (*business*) backs! Besides, my poverty is noble. Political.... Dumont, what are your politics?

Dumont. A plain old republican, my lord.

Macaire. And yours, my good Goriot?

Goriot. I be a royalist, I be, and so be my daater.

Macaire. How strange is the coincidence! The party that I sought to found combined the peculiarities of both; a patriotic enterprise in which I fell. This humble fellow ... have I introduced him? You behold in us the embodiment of aristocracy and democracy. Bertrand, shake hands with my family. (*Bertrand is rebuffed by one and the other in dead silence.*)

Bertrand. Sold again!

Macaire. Charles, to my arms! (*Business.*)

Ernestine. Well, but now that he has a father of some kind, cannot the marriage go on?

Macaire. Angel, this very night: I burn to take my grandchild on my knees.

Goriot. Be you that young man's veyther?

Macaire. Ay, and what a father!

Goriot. Then all I've got to say is, I shan't and I wun't.

Macaire. Ah, friends, friends, what a satisfaction it is, what a sight is virtue! I came among you in this poor attire to test you; how nobly have you borne the test! But my disguise begins to irk me: who will lend me a good suit? (*Business.*)

SCENE III

To these, the Marquis, L.C.

Marquis. Is this the house of John Paul Dumont, once of Lyons?

Dumont. It is, sir, and I am he, at your disposal.

Marquis. I am the Marquis Villers-Cotterets de la ChertÃ© de MÃ©doc. (*Sensation.*)

Marcaire. Marquis, delighted, I am sure.

Marquis (*to Dumont*). I come, as you perceive, unfollowed; my errand, therefore, is discreet. I come (*producing notes from breast-pocket*) equipped with thirty thousand francs; my errand, therefore, must be generous. Can you not guess?

Dumont. Not I, my lord.

Marquis (*repeating*). “Preserve this letter,” etc.

Marcaire. Bitten!

Bertrand. Sold again! (*Aside.*) (*A pause.*)

Aline. Well, I never did!

Dumont. Two fathers!

Marquis. Two? Impossible.

Dumont. Not at all. This is the other.

Marquis. This man?

Marcaire. This is the man, my lord; here stands the father. Charles, to my arms! (*Charles backs.*)

Dumont. He knew the letter.

Marquis. Well, so did I.

Curate. The judgment of Solomon.

Goriot. What did I tell ‘ee? he can’t marry.

Ernestine. Couldn’t they both consent?

Marquis. But he’s my living image.

Marcaire. Mine, Marquis, mine.

Marquis. My figure, I think?

Marcaire. Ah, Charles, Charles!

Curate. We used to think his physiognomy resembled Dumont’s.

Dumont. Come to look at him, he’s really like Goriot.

Ernestine. O papa, I hope he’s not my brother.

Goriot. What be talking of? I tell ‘ee, he’s like our Curate.

Charles. Gentlemen, my head aches.

Marquis. I have it: the involuntary voice of nature, at me, my son.

Macaire. Nay, Charles, but look at me.

Charles. Gentlemen, I am unconscious of the smallest natural inclination for either.

Marquis. Another thought: what was his mother’s name?

Macaire. What was the name of his mother by you?

Marquis. Sir, you are silenced.

Macaire. Silenced by honour. I had rather lose my boy than compromise his sainted mother.

Marquis. A thought; twins might explain it: had you not two foundlings?

Dumont. Nay, sir, one only; and, judging by the miseries of this evening, I should say, thank God!

Macaire. My friends, leave me alone with the Marquis. It is only a father that can understand a father's heart. Bertrand, follow the members of my family. (*They troop out, L.U.E. and R.U.E., the fiddlers playing. Air: "O dear, what can the matter be?"*)

SCENE IV

Macaire, Marquis

Marquis. Well, sir?

Macaire. My lord, I feel for you. (*Business. They sit, R.*)

Marquis. And now, sir?

Macaire. The bond that joins us is remarkable and touching.

Marquis. Well, sir?

Macaire (*touching him on the breast*). You have there thirty thousand francs.

Marquis. Well, sir?

Macaire. I was but thinking of the inequalities of life, my lord: that I, who, for all you know, may be the father of your son, should have nothing; and that you, who, for all I know, may be the father of mine, should be literally bulging with bank notes.... Where do you keep them at night?

Marquis. Under my pillow. I think it rather ingenious.

Macaire. Admirably so. I applaud the device.

Marquis. Well, sir?

Macaire. Do you snuff, my lord?

Marquis. No, sir, I do not.

Macaire. My lord, I am a poor man.

Marquis. Well, sir? and what of that?

Macaire. The affections, my lord, are priceless. Money will not buy them; or, at least, it takes a great deal.

Marquis. Sir, your sentiments do you honour.

Macaire. My lord, you are rich.

Marquis. Well, sir?

Macaire. Now follow me, I beseech you. Here am I, my lord; and there, if I may so express myself, are you. Each has a father's heart, and there we are equal; each claims yon interesting lad, and there again we are on a par. But, my lord — and here we come to the inequality, and what I consider the unfairness of the thing — you have thirty thousand francs, and I, my lord, have not a rap. You mark me! not a rap, my lord! My lord, put yourself in my position; consider what must be my feelings, my desires; and — hey?

Marquis. I fail to grasp....

Macaire (*with irritation*). My dear man, there is the door of the house; here am I; there (*touching Marquis on the breast*) are thirty thousand francs. Well, now?

Marquis. I give you my word of honour, sir, I gather nothing; my mind is quite unused to such prolonged exertion. If the boy be yours, he is not mine; if he be mine, he is not yours; and if he is neither of ours, or both of ours ... in short, my mind....

Macaire. My lord, will you lay those thirty thousand francs upon the table?

Marquis. I fail to grasp ... but if it will in any way oblige you.... (*Does so.*)

Marcaire. Now, my lord, follow me: I take them up; you see? I put them in my pocket; you follow me? This is my hat; here is my stick; and here is my — my friend's bundle.

Marquis. But that is my cloak.

Marcaire. Precisely. Now, my lord, one more effort of your lordship's mind. If I were to go out of that door, with the full intention — follow me close — the full intention of never being heard of more, what would you do?

Marquis. I! — send for the police.

Marcaire. Take your money! (*Dashing down the notes.*) Man, if I met you in a lane! (*He drops his head upon the table.*)

Marquis. The poor soul is insane. The other man, whom I suppose to be his keeper, is very much to blame.

Marcaire (*raising his head*). I have a light! (*To Marquis.*) With invincible oafishness, my lord, I cannot struggle. I pass you by; I leave you gaping by the wayside; I blush to have a share in the progeny of such an owl. Off, off, and send the tapster!

Marquis. Poor fellow! (*Exit.*)

SCENE V

Marcaire, to whom Bertrand. Afterwards Dumont

Bertrand. Well?

Marcaire. Bitten!

Bertrand. Sold again!

Marcaire. Had he the wit of a lucifer-match! But what can gods or men against stupidity? Still, I have a trick. Where is that damned old man?

Dumont (*entering*). I hear you want me.

Marcaire. Ah, my good old Dumont, this is very sad.

Dumont. Dear me, what is wrong?

Marcaire. Dumont, you had a dowry for my son?

Dumont. I had; I have: ten thousand francs.

Marcaire. It's a poor thing, but it must do. Dumont, I bury my old hopes, my old paternal tenderness.

Dumont. What? is he not your son?

Marcaire. Pardon me, my friend. The Marquis claims my boy. I will not seek to deny that he attempted to corrupt me, or that I spurned his gold. It was thirty thousand.

Dumont. Noble soul!

Marcaire. One has a heart.... He spoke, Dumont, that proud noble spoke, of the advantages to our beloved Charles; and in my father's heart a voice arose, louder than thunder. Dumont, was I unselfish? The voice said no; the voice, Dumont, up and told me to begone.

Dumont. To begone? to go?

Marcaire. To begone, Dumont, and to go. Both, Dumont. To leave my son to marry, and be rich and happy as the son of another; to creep forth myself, old, penniless, broken-hearted, exposed to the inclemencies of heaven and the rebuffs of the police.

Dumont. This is what I had looked for at your hands. Noble, noble man!

Marcaire. One has a heart … and yet, Dumont, it can hardly have escaped your penetration that if I were to shift from this hostelry without a farthing and leave my offspring to wallow — literally — among millions, I should play the part of little better than an ass.

Dumont. But I had thought … I had fancied.…

Marcaire. No, Dumont, you had not; do not seek to impose upon my simplicity. What you did think was this, Dumont: for the sake of this noble father, for the sake of this son whom he denies for his own interest — I mean, for his interest — no, I mean, for his own — well, anyway, in order to keep up the general atmosphere of sacrifice and nobility, I must hand over this dowry to the Baron Henri-FrÃ©dÃ©ric de Latour de Main de la Tonnerre de Brest.

Together: each shaking him by the hand.

Dumont. Noble, O noble!

Bertrand. Beautiful, O beautiful!

Dumont. Now Charles is rich he needs it not. For whom could it more fittingly be set aside than for his noble father? I will give it you at once.

Bertrand. At once, at once!

Macaire (*aside to Bertrand*). Hang on. (*Aloud.*) Charles, Charles, my lost boy! (*He falls weeping at L. table. Dumont enters the office and brings down cash-box to table R. He feels in all his pockets: Bertrand from behind him making signs to Macaire, which the latter does not see.*)

Dumont. That's strange. I can't find the key. It's a patent key.

Bertrand (*behind Dumont, making signs to Macaire*). The key, he can't find the key.

Macaire. O, yes, I remember. I heard it drop. (*Drops key.*) And here it is before my eyes.

Dumont. That? That’s yours. I saw it drop.

Macaire. I give you my word of honour I heard it fall five minutes back.

Dumont. But I saw it.

Macaire. Impossible. It must be yours.

Dumont. It is like mine, indeed. How came it in your pocket?

Macaire. Bitten! (*Aside.*)

Bertrand. Sold again! (*Aside*) ... You forget, Baron, it’s the key of my valise; I gave it you to keep in consequence of the hole in my pocket.

Macaire. True, true; and that explains.

Dumont. O, that explains. Now, all we have to do is to find mine. It’s a patent key. You heard it drop.

Macaire. Distinctly.

Bertrand. So I did: distinctly.

Dumont. Here, Aline, Babette, Goriot, Curate, Charles, everybody, come here and look for my key!

SCENE VI

To these, with candles, all the former characters, except Fiddlers, Peasants, and Notary. They hunt for the key

Dumont. It’s bound to be here. We all heard it drop.

Marquis (*with Bertrand’s bundle*). Is this it?

All (*with fury*). No.

Bertrand. Hands off, that’s my luggage. (*Hunt resumed.*)

Dumont. I heard it drop, as plain as ever I heard anything.

Marquis. By the way (*all start up*), what are we looking for?

All (*with fury*). O!!

Dumont. Will you have the kindness to find my key? (*Hunt resumed.*)

Curate. What description of a key — —

Dumont. A patent, patent, patent, patent key!

Macaire. I have it. Here it is!

All (*with relief*). Ah!!

Dumont. That? What do you mean? That’s yours.

Macaire. Pardon me.

Dumont. It is.

Macaire. It isn’t.

Dumont. I tell you it is: look at that twisted handle.

Macaire. It can’t be mine, and so it must be yours.

Dumont. It is NOT. Feel in your pockets. (*To the others.*) Will you have the kindness to find my patent key?

All. O!! (*Hunt resumed.*)

Macaire. Ah, well, you’re right. (*He slips key into Dumont’s pocket.*) An idea: suppose you felt in your pocket?

All (*rising*). Yes! Suppose you did!

Dumont. I will not feel in my pockets. How could it be there? It’s a patent key. This is more than any man can bear. First, Charles is one man’s son, and then he’s another’s, and then he’s nobody’s, and be damned to him! And then there’s my key lost; and then there’s your key! What is your key? Where is your key? Where isn’t it? And why is it like mine, only mine’s a patent? The long and short of it is this: that I’m going to bed, and that you’re all going to bed, and that I refuse to hear another word upon the subject or upon any subject. There!

Aside.
Macaire. Bitten!

Bertrand. Sold again!

(*Aline and Maids extinguish hanging lamps over tables, R. and L. Stage lighted only by guests’ candles.*)

Charles. But, sir, I cannot decently retire to rest till I embrace my honoured parent. Which is it to be?

Macaire. Charles, to my — —

Dumont. Embrace neither of them; embrace nobody; there has been too much of this sickening folly. To bed!!! (*Exit violently R.U.E. All the characters troop slowly upstairs, talking in dumb show. Bertrand and Macaire remain in front C., watching them go.*)

Bertrand. Sold again, captain?

Macaire. Ay, they will have it.

Bertrand. It? What?

Macaire. The worst, Bertrand. What is man? — a beast of prey. An hour ago, and I'd have taken a crust and gone in peace. But no: they would trick and juggle, curse them: they would wriggle and cheat! Well, I accept the challenge: war to the knife.

Bertrand. Murder?

Macaire. What is murder? A legal term for a man dying. Call it Fate, and that's philosophy; call me Providence, and you talk religion. Die? Why, that is what man is made for; we are full of mortal parts; we are all as good as dead already, we hang so close upon the brink: touch a button, and the strongest falls in dissolution. Now, see how easy: I take you — — (*grappling him*).

Bertrand. Macaire — O no!

Macaire. Fool! Would I harm a fly, when I had nothing to gain? As the butcher with the sheep, I kill to live; and where is the difference between man and mutton? pride and a tailor's bill. Murder? I know who made that name — a man crouching from the knife! Selfishness made it — the aggregated egotism called society; but I meet that with a selfishness as great. Has he money? Have I none — great powers, none? Well, then, I fatten and manure my life with his.

Bertrand. You frighten me. Who is it?

Macaire. Mark well. (*The Marquis opens the door of Number Thirteen, and the rest, clustering round, bid him good-night. As they begin to disperse along the gallery he enters and shuts the door.*) Out, out, brief candle! That man is doomed.

DROP

ACT III

As the curtain rises, the Stage is dark and empty. Enter Macaire, L.U.E., with lantern. He looks about

SCENE I

Macaire, Bertrand

Macaire (*calling off*). S’st!

Bertrand (*entering L.U.E.*). It’s creeping dark.

Macaire. Blinding dark; and a good job.

Bertrand. Macaire, I’m cold; my very hair’s cold.

Macaire. Work, work will warm you: to your keys.

Bertrand. No, Macaire, it’s a horror. You’ll not kill him; let’s have no bloodshed.

Macaire. None: it spoils your clothes. Now, see: you have keys and you have experience: up that stair and pick me the lock of that man’s door. Pick me the lock of that man’s door.

Bertrand. May I take the light?

Macaire. You may not. Go. (*Bertrand mounts the stairs and is seen picking the lock of Number Thirteen.*) The earth spins eastward, and the day is at the door. Yet half an hour of covert, and the sun will be afoot, the discoverer, the great policeman. Yet half an hour of night, the good, hiding, practicable night; and lo! at a touch the gas-jet of the universe turned on; and up with the sun gets the providence of honest people, puts off his nightcap, throws up his window, stares out of house — and the rogue must skulk again till dusk. Yet half an hour and, Macaire, you shall be safe and rich. If yon fool — my fool — would but miscarry, if the dolt within would hear and leap upon him, I could intervene, kill both, by heaven — both! — cry murder with the best, and at one stroke reap honour and gold. For, Bertrand dead — —

Bertrand (*from above*). S’st, Macaire.

Macaire. Is it done, dear boy? Come down. (*Bertrand descends.*) Sit down beside this light: this is your ring of safety, budge not beyond — the night is crowded with hobgoblins. See ghosts and tremble like a jelly if you must; but remember men are my concern; and at the creak of a man's foot, hist! (*Sharpening his knife upon his sleeve.*) What is a knife? A plain man's sword.

Bertrand. Not the knife, Macaire; O, not the knife.

Macaire. My name is Self-Defence. (*He goes upstairs and enters Number Thirteen.*)

Bertrand. He's in. I hear a board creak. What a night, what a night! Will he hear him? O Lord, my poor Macaire! I hear nothing, nothing. The night's as empty as a dream: he must hear him; he cannot help but hear him; and then — O Macaire, Macaire, come back to me. It's death, and it's death, and it's death. Red, red: a corpse. Macaire to kill, Macaire to die? I'd rather starve, I'd rather perish, than either: I'm not fit, I'm not fit for either! Why, how's this? I want to cry. (*A stroke, and a groan from above.*) God Almighty, one of them's gone! (*He falls with his head on table, R. Macaire appears at the top of the stairs, descends, comes airily forward and touches him on the shoulder. Bertrand, with a cry, turns, and falls upon his neck.*) O, O, and I thought I had lost him. (*Day breaking.*)

Macaire. The contrary, dear boy. (*He produces notes.*)

Bertrand. What was it like?

Macaire. Like? Nothing. A little blood, a dead man.

Bertrand. Blood!... Dead! (*He falls at table sobbing. Macaire divides the notes into two parts; on the smaller he wipes the bloody knife, and folding the stains inward, thrusts the notes into Bertrand's face.*)

Macaire. What is life without the pleasures of the table?

Bertrand (*taking and pocketing notes*). Macaire, I can't get over it.

Macaire. My mark is the frontier, and at top speed. Don't hang your jaw at me. Up, up, at the double; pick me that cash-box; and let's get the damned house fairly cleared.

Bertrand. I can't. Did he bleed much?

Macaire. Bleed? Must I bleed you? To work, or I'm dangerous.

Bertrand. It's all right, Macaire; I'm going.

Macaire. Better so: an old friend is nearly sacred. (*Full daylight: lights up. Macaire blows out lantern.*)

Bertrand. Where's the key?

Macaire. Key? I tell you to pick it.

Bertrand (*with the box*). But it's a patent lock. Where is the key? You had it.

Macaire. Will you pick that lock?

Bertrand. I can't; it's a patent. Where's the key?

Macaire. If you will have it, I put it back in that old ass's pocket.

Bertrand. Bitten, I think. (*Macaire dancing mad.*)

SCENE II

To these, Dumont

Dumont. Ah, friends, up so early? Catching the worm, catching the worm?

Macaire. Good morning, good morning!

Both sitting on the table, and dismounting box.

Bertrand. Early birds, early birds.

Dumont. By the way, very remarkable thing: I found that key.

Macaire. No!

Bertrand. O!

Dumont. Perhaps a still more remarkable thing: it was my key that had the twisted handle.

Macaire. I told you so.

Dumont. Now, what we have to do is to get the cash-box. Hallo! what's that you're sitting on?

Bertrand. Nothing.

Macaire. The table! I beg your pardon.

Dumont. Why, it's my cash-box!

Maciare. Why, so it is!

Dumont. It's very singular.

Macaire. Diabolishly singular.

Bertrand. Early worms, early worms!

Dumont (*blowing in key*). Well, I suppose you are still willing to begone?

Macaire. More than willing, my dear soul: pressed, I may say, for time; for though it had quite escaped my memory, I have an appointment in Turin with a lady of title.

Dumont (*at box*). It's very odd. (*Blows in key.*) It's a singular thing (*blowing*), key won't turn. It's a patent. Someone must have tampered with the lock (*blowing*). It's strangely singular, it's singularly singular! I've shown this key to commercial gentlemen all the way from Paris: they never saw a better key! (*more business*). Well, (*giving it up and looking reproachfully on key*,) that's pretty singular.

Macaire. Let me try. (*He tries, and flings down the key with a curse.*) Bitten!

Bertrand. Sold again!

Dumont (*picking up key*). It's a patent key.

Macaire (*to Bertrand*). The game's up: we must save the swag. (*To Dumont.*) Sir, since your key, on which I invoke the blight of Egypt, has once more defaulted, my feelings are unequal to a repetition of yesterday's distress, and I shall simply pad the hoof. From Turin you shall receive the address of my banker, and may prosperity attend your ventures. (*To Bertrand.*) Now, boy! (*To Dumont.*) Embrace my fatherless child! farewell! (*Macaire and Bertrand turn to go off, and are met in the door by the Gendarmes.*)

SCENE III

To these, the Brigadier and Gendarmes

Brigadier. Let no man leave the house.

Aside. Macaire. Bitten!

Bertrand. Sold again!

Dumont. Welcome, old friend!

Brigadier. It is not the friend that comes; it is the Brigadier. Summon your guests; I must investigate their passports. I am in pursuit of a notorious malefactor, Robert Macaire.

Dumont. But I was led to believe that both Macaire and his accomplice had been arrested and condemned.

Brigadier. They were, but they have once more escaped for the moment, and justice is indefatigable. (*He sits at table, R.*) Dumont, a bottle of white wine.

Macaire (*to Dumont*). My excellent friend, I will discharge your commission, and return with all speed. (*Going.*)

Brigadier. Halt!

Macaire (*returning: as if he saw Brigadier for the first time*). Ha! a member of the force? Charmed, I'm sure. But you misconceive me: I return, at once, and my friend remains behind to answer for me.

Brigadier. Justice is insensible to friendship. I shall deal with you in due time. Dumont, that bottle.

Macaire. Sir, my friend and I, who are students of character, would grasp the opportunity to share and — may one add? — to pay the bottle. Dumont, three!

Bertrand. For God's sake! (*Enter Aline and Maids.*)

Macaire. My friend is an author: so, in a humbler way, am I. Your knowledge of the criminal classes naturally tempts one to pursue so interesting an acquaintance.

Brigadier. Justice is impartial. Gentlemen, your health.

Macaire. Will not these brave fellows join us?

Brigadier. They are on duty; but what matters?

Macaire. My dear sir, what is duty? duty is my eye.

Brigadier (*solemnly*). And Betty Martin. (*Gendarmes sit at table.*)

Macaire (*to Bertrand*). Dear friend, sit down.

Bertrand (*sitting down*). O Lord!

Brigadier (*to Macaire*). You seem to be a gentleman of considerable intelligence.

Macaire. I fear, sir, you flatter. One has lived, one has loved, and one remembers: that is all. One's "Lives of Celebrated Criminals" has met with a certain success, and one is ever in quest of fresh material.

Dumont. By the way, a singular thing about my patent key.

Brigadier. This gentleman is speaking.

Macaire. Excellent Dumont! he means no harm. This Macaire is not personally known to you?

Brigadier. Are you connected with justice?

Macaire. Ah, sir, justice is a point above a poor author.

Brigadier (*with glass*). Justice is the very devil.

Macaire. My dear sir, my friend and I, I regret to say, have an appointment in Lyons, or I could spend my life in this society. Charge your glasses: one hour to madness and to joy! What is to-morrow? the enemy of to-day. Wine? the bath of life. One moment: I find I have forgotten my watch. (*He makes for the door.*)

Brigadier. Halt!

Macaire. Sir, what is this jest?

Brigadier. Sentry at the door. Your passports.

Macaire. My good man, with all the pleasure in life. (*Gives papers. The Brigadier puts on spectacles and examines them.*)

Bertrand (*rising and passing round to Macaire's other side*). It's life and death: they must soon find it.

Macaire (*aside*). Don't I know? My heart's like fire in my body.

Brigadier. Your name is?

Macaire. It is; one's name is not unknown.

Brigadier. Justice exacts your name.

Macaire. Henri-FrÃ©dÃ©ric de Latour de Main de la Tonnerre de Brest.

Brigadier. Your profession?

Macaire. Gentleman.

Brigadier. No, but what is your trade?

Macaire. I am an analytical chemist.

Brigadier. Justice is inscrutable. Your papers are in order. (*To Bertrand.*) Now, sir, and yours?

Bertrand. I feel kind of ill.

Macaire. Bertrand, this gentleman addresses you. He is not one of us; in other scenes, in the gay and giddy world of fashion, one is his superior. But to-day he represents the majesty of law; and as a citizen it is one's pride to do him honour.

Brigadier. Those are my sentiments.

Bertrand. I beg your pardon, I — — (*Gives papers.*)

Brigadier. Your name?

Bertrand. Napoleon.

Brigadier. What? In your passport it is written Bertrand.

Bertrand. It’s this way: I was born Bertrand, and then I took the name of Napoleon, and I mostly always call myself either Napoleon or Bertrand.

Brigadier. The truth is always best. Your profession?

Bertrand. I am an orphan.

Brigadier. What the devil! (*To Macaire.*) Is your friend an idiot?

Macaire. Pardon me, he is a poet.

Brigadier. Poetry is a great hindrance to the ends of justice. Well, take your papers.

Macaire. Then we may go?

SCENE IV

To these, Charles, who is seen on the gallery going to the door of Number Thirteen. Afterwards all the characters but the Notary and the Marquis.

Brigadier. One glass more. (*Bertrand touches Macaire, and points to Charles, who enters Number Thirteen.*)

Macaire. No more, no more, no more.

Brigadier (*rising and taking Macaire by the arm*). I stipulate.

Macaire. Engagement in Turin!

Brigadier. Turin?

Macaire. Lyons, Lyons!

Bertrand. For God's sake ...

Brigadier. Well, good-bye!

Macaire. Good-bye, good — —

Charles (*from within*). Murder! Help! (*Appearing.*) Help here! The Marquis is murdered.

Brigadier. Stand to the door. A man up there. (*A Gendarme hurries up staircase into Number Thirteen, Charles following him. Enter on both sides of gallery the remaining characters of the piece, except the Notary and the Marquis.*)

Aside. Macaire. Bitten, by God!

Bertrand. Lost!

Brigadier (*to Dumont*). John Paul Dumont, I arrest you.

Dumont. Do your duty, officer. I can answer for myself and my own people.

Brigadier. Yes, but these strangers?

Dumont. They are strangers to me.

Macaire. I am an honest man: I stand upon my rights: search me; or search this person, of whom I know too little. (*Smiting his brow.*) By heaven, I see it all! This morning — — (*To Bertrand.*) How, sir, did you dare to flaunt your booty in my very face? (*To Brigadier.*) He showed me notes; he was up ere day; search him, and you'll find. There stands the murderer.

Bertrand. O, Macaire! (*He is seized and searched and the notes are found.*)

Brigadier. There is blood upon the notes. Handcuffs. (*Macaire edging towards the door.*)

Bertrand. Macaire, you may as well take the bundle. (*Macaire is stopped by sentry, and comes front, R.*)

Charles (*re-appearing*). Stop, I know the truth. (*He comes down.*) Brigadier, my father is not dead. He is not even dangerously hurt. He has spoken. There is the would-be assassin.

Macaire. Hell! (*He darts across to the staircase, and turns on the second step, flashing out the knife.*) Back, hounds! (*He springs up the stair, and confronts them from the top.*) Fools, I am Robert Macaire! (*As Macaire turns to flee, he is met by the Gendarme coming out of Number Thirteen; he stands an instant checked, is shot from the stage, and falls headlong backward down the stair. Bertrand, with a cry, breaks from the Gendarmes, kneels at his side, and raises his head.*)

Bertrand. Macaire, Macaire, forgive me. I didn't blab; you know I didn't blab.

Macaire. Sold again, old boy. Sold for the last time; at least, the last time this side death. Death — — what is death? (*He dies.*)

Curtain

THE CHARITY BAZAAR

AN ALLEGORICAL DIALOGUE

Dramatis Personae
The Ingenuous Public
His Wife
The Tout

THE CHARITY BAZAAR

The Tout, in an allegorical costume, holding a silver trumpet in his right hand, is discovered on the steps in front of the Bazaar. He sounds a preliminary flourish.

The Tout. — Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the honour to announce a sale of many interesting, beautiful, rare, quaint, comical, and necessary articles. Here you will find objects of taste, such as Babies' Shoes, Children's Petticoats, and Shetland Wool Cravats; objects of general usefulness, such as Tea-cosies, Bangles, Brahmin Beads, and Madras Baskets; and objects of imperious necessity, such as Pen-wipers, Indian Figures carefully repaired with glue, and Sealed Envelopes, containing a surprise. And all this is not to be sold by your common Shopkeepers, intent on small and legitimate profits, but by Ladies and Gentlemen, who would as soon think of picking your pocket of a cotton handkerchief as of selling a single one of these many interesting, beautiful, rare, quaint, comical, and necessary articles at less than twice its market value. (*He sounds another flourish.*) 214

The Wife. — This seems a very fair-spoken young man.

The Ingenuous Public (*addressing the Tout*). — Sir, I am a man of simple and untutored mind; but I apprehend that this sale, of which you give us so glowing a description, is neither more nor less than a Charity Bazaar?

The Tout. — Sir, your penetration has not deceived you.

The Ingenuous Public. — Into which you seek to entice unwary passengers?

The Tout. — Such is my office.

The Ingenuous Public. — But is not a Charity Bazaar, Sir, a place where, for ulterior purposes, amateur goods are sold at a price above their market value?

The Tout. — I perceive you are no novice. Let us sit down, all three, upon the doorsteps, and reason this matter at length. The position is a little conspicuous, but airy and convenient.

(*The Tout seats himself on the second step, the Ingenuous Public and his Wife to right and left of him, one step below.*)

The Tout. — Shopping is one of the dearest pleasures of the human heart.

The Wife. — Indeed, Sir, and that it is.

The Tout. — The choice of articles, apart from their usefulness, is an appetising occupation, and to exchange bald, uniform shillings for a fine big, figurative knick-knack, such as a windmill, a gross of green spectacles, or a cocked hat, gives us a direct and emphatic sense of gain. We have had many shillings before, as good as these; but this is the first time we have possessed a windmill. Upon these principles of human nature, Sir, is based the theory of the Charity Bazaar. People were doubtless charitably disposed. The problem was to make the exercise of charity entertaining in itself — you follow me, Madam? — and in the Charity Bazaar a satisfactory solution was attained. The act of giving away money for charitable purposes is, 215 by this admirable invention, transformed into an amusement, and puts on the externals of profitable commerce. You play at shopping a while; and in order to keep up the illusion, sham goods do actually change hands. Thus, under the similitude of a game, I have seen children confronted with the horrors of arithmetic, and even taught to gargle.

The Ingenuous Public. — You expound this subject very magisterially, Sir. But tell me, would it not be possible to carry this element of play still further? and after I had remained a proper time in the Bazaar, and negotiated a sufficient number of sham bargains, would it not be possible to return me my money in the hall?

The Tout. — I question whether that would not impair the humour of the situation. And besides, my dear Sir, the pith of the whole device is to take that money from you.

The Ingenuous Public. — True. But at least the Bazaar might take back the tea-cosies and pen-wipers.

The Tout. — I have no doubt, if you were to ask it handsomely, that you would be so far accommodated. Still it is out of the theory. The sham goods, for which, believe me, I readily understand your disaffection — the sham goods are well adapted for their purpose. Your lady wife will lay these tea-cosies and pen-wipers aside in a safe place, until she is asked to contribute to another Charity Bazaar. There the tea-cosies and pen-wipers will be once more charitably sold. The new purchasers, in their turn, will accurately imitate the dispositions of your lady wife. In short, Sir, the whole affair is a cycle of operations. The tea-cosies and pen-wipers are merely counters; they come off and on again like a stage army; and year after year people pretend to buy and pretend to sell them, with a vivacity that seems to indicate a talent for the stage. But in the course of these illusory manœuvres, a great deal of money is given in charity, and that in a picturesque, bustling, and agreeable manner. If you have to travel 216 somewhere on business, you would choose the prettiest route, and desire pleasant companions by the way. And why not show the same spirit in giving alms?

The Ingenuous Public. — Sir, I am profoundly indebted to you for all you have said. I am, Sir, your absolute convert.

The Wife. — Let us lose no time, but enter the Charity Bazaar.

The Ingenuous Public. — Yes; let us enter the Charity Bazaar.

Both (*singing*). — Let us enter, let us enter, let us enter, Let us enter the Charity Bazaar!

(*An interval is supposed to elapse. The Ingenuous Public and his Wife are discovered issuing from the Charity Bazaar.*)

The Wife. — How fortunate you should have brought your cheque-book!

The Ingenuous Public. — Well, fortunate in a sense. (*Addressing the Tout.*) — Sir, I shall send a van in the course of the afternoon for the little articles I have purchased. I shall not say good-bye; because I shall probably take a lift in the front seat, not from any solicitude, believe me, about the little articles, but as the last opportunity I may have for some time of enjoying the costly entertainment of a drive.

The Scene Closes

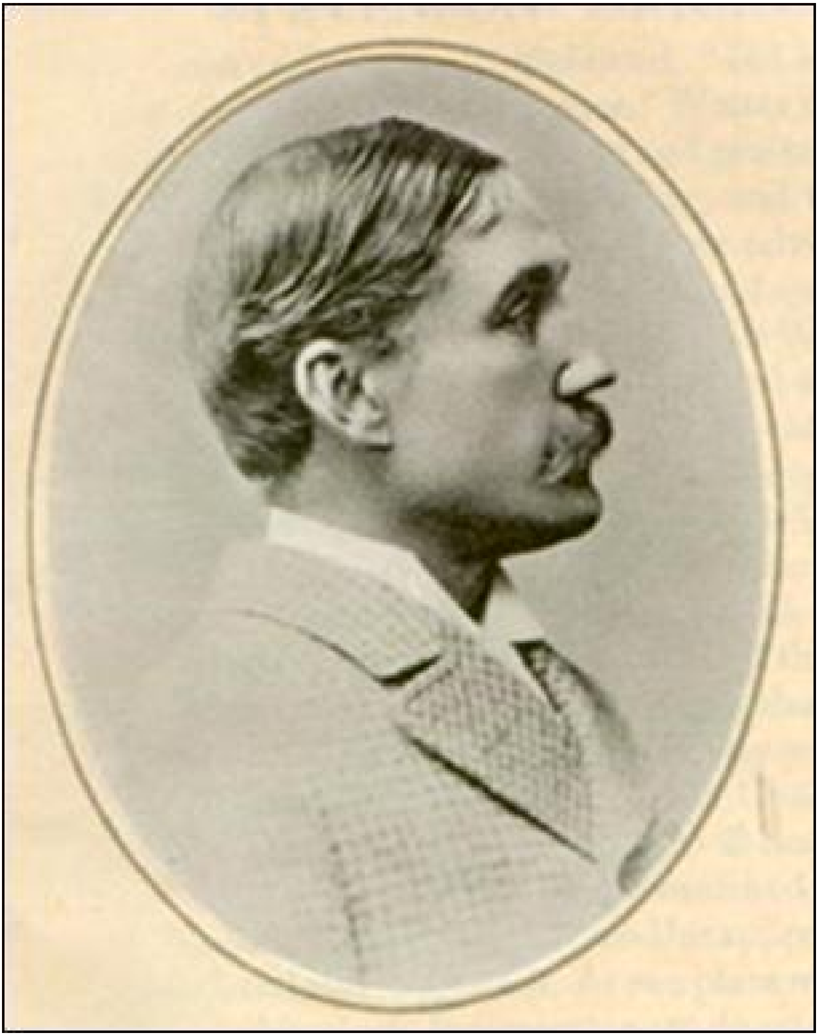
The Travel Writing

Stevenson with his wife and friends, Butaritari, 1889

AN INLAND VOYAGE

“Thus sang they in the English boat.”
MARVELL.

First published in 1878, this travelogue about a canoeing trip through Europe in 1876 is Stevenson’s earliest work. Stevenson undertook the voyage with his friend and fellow Scot Sir Walter Grindlay Simpson, and they travelled mostly along the Oise River from Belgium into France. Their route has now become popular for modern travellers, re-enacting Stevenson’s famous journey.



Sir Walter Grindlay Simpson – Stevenson's friend and travelling companion

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DEDICATION

TO

SIR WALTER GRINDLAY SIMPSON, BART.

My dear "Cigarette,"

It was enough that you should have shared so liberally in the rains and portages of our voyage; that you should have had so hard a paddle to recover the derelict "Arethusa" on the flooded Oise: and that you should thenceforth have piloted a mere wreck of mankind to Origny Sainte-Benoîte and a supper so eagerly desired. It was perhaps more than enough, as you once somewhat piteously complained, that I should have set down all the strong language to you, and kept the appropriate reflections for myself. I could not in decency expose you to share the disgrace of another and more public shipwreck. But now that this voyage of ours is going into a cheap edition, that peril, we shall hope, is at an end, and I may put your name on the burgee.

But I cannot pause till I have lamented the fate of our two ships. That, sir, was not a fortunate day when we projected the possession of a canal barge; it was not a fortunate day when we shared our daydream with the most hopeful of daydreamers. For a while, indeed, the world looked smilingly. The barge was procured and christened, and as the "Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne," lay for some months, the admired of all admirers, in a pleasant river and under the walls of an ancient town. M. Mattras, the accomplished carpenter of Moret, had made her a centre of emulous labour; and you will not have forgotten the amount of sweet champagne consumed in the inn at the bridge end, to give zeal to the workmen and speed to the work. On the financial aspect I wouldnot willingly dwell. The "Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne" rotted in the stream where she was beautified. She felt not the impulse of the breeze; she was never harnessed to the patent track-horse. And when at length she was sold, by the indignant carpenter of Moret, there were sold along with her the "Arethusa" and the "Cigarette", she of cedar, she, as we knew so keenly on a portage, of solid-hearted English oak. Now these historic vessels fly the tricolour and are known by new and alien names.

R. L. S.

AN INLAND VOYAGE

ANTWERP TO BOOM

We made a great stir in Antwerp Docks. A stevedore and a lot of dock porters took up the two canoes, and ran with them for the slip. A crowd of children followed cheering. The *Cigarette* went off in a splash and a bubble of small breaking water. Next moment the *Arethusa* was after her. A steamer was coming down, men on the paddle-box shouted hoarse warnings, the stevedore and his porters were bawling from the quay. But in a stroke or two the canoes were away out in the middle of the Scheldt, and all steamers, and stevedores, and other long-shore vanities were left behind.

The sun shone brightly; the tide was making — four jolly miles an hour; the wind blew steadily, with occasional squalls. For my part, I had never been in a canoe under sail in my life; and my first experiment out in the middle of this big river was not made without some trepidation. What would happen when the wind first caught my little canvas? I suppose it was almost as trying a venture into the regions of the unknown as to publish a first book, or to marry. But my doubts were not of long duration; and in five minutes you will not be surprised to learn that I had tied my sheet.

I own I was a little struck by this circumstance myself; of course, in company with the rest of my fellow-men, I had always tied the sheet in a sailing-boat; but in so little and crank a concern as a canoe, and with these charging squalls, I was not prepared to find myself follow the same principle; and it inspired me with some contemptuous views of our regard for life. It is certainly easier to smoke with the sheet fastened; but I had never before weighed a comfortable pipe of tobacco against an obvious risk, and gravely elected for the comfortable pipe. It is a commonplace, that we cannot answer for ourselves before we have been tried. But it is not so common a reflection, and surely more consoling, that we usually find ourselves a great deal braver and better than we thought. I believe this is every one's experience: but an apprehension that they may belie themselves in the future prevents mankind from trumpeting this cheerful sentiment abroad. I wish sincerely, for it would have saved me much trouble, there had been some one to put me in a good heart about life when I was younger; to tell me how dangers are most portentous on a distant sight; and how the good in a man's spirit will not suffer itself to be overlaid, and rarely or never deserts him in the hour of need. But we are all for tootling on the sentimental flute in literature; and not a man among us will go to the head of the march to sound the heady drums.

It was agreeable upon the river. A barge or two went past laden with hay. Reeds and willows bordered the stream; and cattle and grey venerable horses came and hung their mild heads over the embankment. Here and there was a pleasant village among trees, with a noisy shipping-yard; here and there a villa in a lawn. The wind served us well up the Scheldt and thereafter up the Rupel, and we were running pretty free when we began to sight the brickyards of Boom, lying for a long way on the right bank of the river. The left bank was still green and pastoral, with alleys of trees along the embankment, and here and there a flight of steps to serve a ferry, where perhaps there sat a woman with her elbows on her knees, or an old gentleman with a staff and silver spectacles. But Boom and its brickyards grew smokier and shabbier with every minute; until a great church with a clock, and a wooden bridge over the river, indicated the central quarters of the town.

Boom is not a nice place, and is only remarkable for one thing: that the majority of the inhabitants have a private opinion that they can speak English, which is not justified by fact. This gave a kind of haziness to our intercourse. As for the Hôtel de la Navigation, I think it is the worst feature of the place. It boasts of a sanded parlour, with a bar at one end, looking on the street; and another sanded parlour, darker and colder, with an empty bird-cage and a tricolor subscription box by way of sole adornment, where we made shift to dine in the company of three uncommunicative engineer apprentices and a silent bagman. The food, as usual in Belgium, was of a nondescript occasional character; indeed, I have never been able to detect anything in the nature of a meal among this pleasing people; they seem to peck and trifle with viands all day long in an amateur spirit: tentatively French, truly German, and somehow falling between the two.

The empty bird-cage, swept and garnished, and with no trace of the old piping favourite, save where two wires had been pushed apart to hold its lump of sugar, carried with it a sort of graveyard cheer. The engineer apprentices would have nothing to say to us, nor indeed to the bagman; but talked low and sparingly to one another, or raked us in the gaslight with a gleam of spectacles. For though handsome lads, they were all (in the Scots phrase) barnacled.

There was an English maid in the hotel, who had been long enough out of England to pick up all sorts of funny foreign idioms, and all sorts of curious foreign ways, which need not here be specified. She spoke to us very fluently in her jargon, asked us information as to the manners of the present day in England, and obligingly corrected us when we attempted to answer. But as we were dealing with a woman, perhaps our information was not so much thrown away as it appeared. The sex likes to pick up knowledge and yet preserve its superiority. It is good policy, and almost necessary in the circumstances. If a man finds a woman admire him, were it only for his acquaintance with geography, he will begin at once to build upon the admiration. It is only by unintermittent snubbing that the pretty ones can keep us in our place. Men, as Miss Howe or Miss Harlowe would have said, “are such *encroachers.*” For my part, I am body and soul with the women; and after a well-married couple, there is nothing so beautiful in the world as the myth of the divine huntress. It is no use for a man to take to the woods; we know him; St. Anthony tried the same thing long ago, and had a pitiful time of it by all accounts. But there is this about some women, which overtops the best gymnosophist among men, that they suffice to themselves, and can walk in a high and cold zone without the countenance of any trousered being. I declare, although the reverse of a professed ascetic, I am more obliged to women for this ideal than I should be to the majority of them, or indeed to any but one, for a spontaneous kiss. There is nothing so encouraging as the spectacle of self-sufficiency. And when I think of the slim and lovely maidens, running the woods all night to the note of Diana’s horn; moving among the old oaks, as fancy-free as they; things of the forest and the starlight, not touched by the commotion of man’s hot and turbid life — although there are plenty other ideals that I should prefer — I find my heart beat at the thought of this one. ‘Tis to fail in life, but to fail with what a grace! That is not lost which is not regretted. And where — here slips out the male — where would be much of the glory of inspiring love, if there were no contempt to overcome?

ON THE WILLEBROEK CANAL

Next morning, when we set forth on the Willebroek Canal, the rain began heavy and chill. The water of the canal stood at about the drinking temperature of tea; and under this cold aspersion the surface was covered with steam. The exhilaration of departure, and the easy motion of the boats under each stroke of the paddles, supported us through this misfortune while it lasted; and when the cloud passed and the sun came out again, our spirits went up above the range of stay-at-home humours. A good breeze rustled and shivered in the rows of trees that bordered the canal. The leaves flickered in and out of the light in tumultuous masses. It seemed sailing weather to eye and ear; but down between the banks, the wind reached us only in faint and desultory puffs. There was hardly enough to steer by. Progress was intermittent and unsatisfactory. A jocular person, of marine antecedents, hailed us from the tow-path with a "*C'est vite, mais c'est long.*"

The canal was busy enough. Every now and then we met or overtook a long string of boats, with great green tillers; high sterns with a window on either side of the rudder, and perhaps a jug or a flower-pot in one of the windows; a dinghy following behind; a woman busied about the day's dinner, and a handful of children. These barges were all tied one behind the other with tow ropes, to the number of twenty-five or thirty; and the line was headed and kept in motion by a steamer of strange construction. It had neither paddle-wheel nor screw; but by some gear not rightly comprehensible to the unmechanical mind, it fetched up over its bow a small bright chain which lay along the bottom of the canal, and paying it out again over the stern, dragged itself forward, link by link, with its whole retinue of loaded skows. Until one had found out the key to the enigma, there was something solemn and uncomfortable in the progress of one of these trains, as it moved gently along the water with nothing to mark its advance but an eddy alongside dying away into the wake.

Of all the creatures of commercial enterprise, a canal barge is by far the most delightful to consider. It may spread its sails, and then you see it sailing high above the tree-tops and the windmill, sailing on the aqueduct, sailing through the green corn-lands: the most picturesque of things amphibious. Or the horse plods along at a foot-pace, as if there were no such thing as business in the world; and the man dreaming at the tiller sees the same spire on the horizon all day long. It is a mystery how things ever get to their destination at this rate; and to see the barges waiting their turn at a lock affords a fine lesson of how easily the world may be taken. There should be many contented spirits on board, for such a life is both to travel and to stay at home.

The chimney smokes for dinner as you go along; the banks of the canal slowly unroll their scenery to contemplative eyes; the barge floats by great forests and through great cities with their public buildings and their lamps at night; and for the barge, in his floating home, "travelling abed," it is merely as if he were listening to another man's story or turning the leaves of a picture-book in which he had no concern. He may take his afternoon walk in some foreign country on the banks of the canal, and then come home to dinner at his own fireside.

There is not enough exercise in such a life for any high measure of health; but a high measure of health is only necessary for unhealthy people. The slug of a fellow, who is never ill nor well, has a quiet time of it in life, and dies all the easier.

I am sure I would rather be a barge than occupy any position under heaven that required attendance at an office. There are few callings, I should say, where a man gives up less of his liberty in return for regular meals. The barge is on shipboard — he is master in his own ship — he can land whenever he will — he can never be kept beating off a lee-shore a whole frosty night when the sheets are as hard as iron; and, so far as I can make out, time stands as nearly still with him as is compatible with the return of bed-time or the dinner-hour. It is not easy to see why a barge should ever die.

Half-way between Willebroek and Villevorde, in a beautiful reach of canal like a squire's avenue, we went ashore to lunch. There were two eggs, a junk of bread, and a bottle of wine on board the *Arethusa*; and two eggs and an Etna cooking apparatus on board the *Cigarette.* The master of the latter boat smashed one of the eggs in the course of disembarkation; but observing pleasantly that it might still be cooked *à la papier*, he dropped it into the Etna, in its covering of Flemish newspaper. We landed in a blink of fine weather; but we had not been two minutes ashore before the wind freshened into half a gale, and the rain began to patter on our shoulders. We sat as close about the Etna as we could. The spirits burned with great ostentation; the grass caught flame every minute or two, and had to be trodden out; and before long, there were several burnt fingers of the party. But the solid quantity of cookery accomplished was out of proportion with so much display; and when we desisted, after two applications of the fire, the sound egg was little more than loo-warm; and as for *à la papier*, it was a cold and sordid *fricassée* of printer's ink and broken egg-shell. We made shift to roast the other two, by putting them close to the burning spirits; and that with better success. And then we uncorked the bottle of wine, and sat down in a ditch with our canoe aprons over our knees. It rained smartly. Discomfort, when it is honestly uncomfortable and makes no nauseous pretensions to the contrary, is a vastly humorous business; and people well steeped and stupefied in the open air are in a good vein for laughter. From this point of view, even egg *à la papier* offered by way of food may pass muster as a sort of accessory to the fun. But this manner of jest, although it may be taken in good part, does not invite repetition; and from that time forward, the Etna voyaged like a gentleman in the locker of the *Cigarette.*

It is almost unnecessary to mention that when lunch was over and we got aboard again and made sail, the wind promptly died away. The rest of the journey to Villevorde, we still spread our canvas to the unfavouring air; and with now and then a puff, and now and then a spell of paddling, drifted along from lock to lock, between the orderly trees.

It was a fine, green, fat landscape; or rather a mere green water-lane, going on from village to village. Things had a settled look, as in places long lived in. Crop-headed children spat upon us from the bridges as we went below, with a true conservative feeling. But even more conservative were the fishermen, intent upon their floats, who let us go by without one glance. They perched upon sterlings and buttresses and along the slope of the embankment, gently occupied. They were indifferent, like pieces of dead nature. They did not move any more than if they had been fishing in an old Dutch print. The leaves fluttered, the water lapped, but they continued in one stay like so many churches established by law. You might have trepanned every one of their innocent heads, and found no more than so much coiled fishing-line below their skulls. I do not care for your stalwart fellows in india-rubber stockings breasting up mountain torrents with a salmon rod; but I do dearly love the class of man who plies his unfruitful art, for ever and a day, by still and depopulated waters.

At the last lock, just beyond Villevorde, there was a lock-mistress who spoke French comprehensibly, and told us we were still a couple of leagues from Brussels. At the same place the rain began again. It fell in straight, parallel lines; and the surface of the canal was thrown up into an infinity of little crystal fountains. There were no beds to be had in the neighbourhood. Nothing for it but to lay the sails aside and address ourselves to steady paddling in the rain.

Beautiful country houses, with clocks and long lines of shuttered windows, and fine old trees standing in groves and avenues, gave a rich and sombre aspect in the rain and the deepening dusk to the shores of the canal. I seem to have seen something of the same effect in engravings: opulent landscapes, deserted and overhung with the passage of storm. And throughout we had the escort of a hooded cart, which trotted shabbily along the tow-path, and kept at an almost uniform distance in our wake.

THE ROYAL SPORT NAUTIQUE

The rain took off near Laeken. But the sun was already down; the air was chill; and we had scarcely a dry stitch between the pair of us. Nay, now we found ourselves near the end of the Allée Verte, and on the very threshold of Brussels, we were confronted by a serious difficulty. The shores were closely lined by canal boats waiting their turn at the lock. Nowhere was there any convenient landing-place; nowhere so much as a stable-yard to leave the canoes in for the night. We scrambled ashore and entered an *estaminet* where some sorry fellows were drinking with the landlord. The landlord was pretty round with us; he knew of no coach-house or stable-yard, nothing of the sort; and seeing we had come with no mind to drink, he did not conceal his impatience to be rid of us. One of the sorry fellows came to the rescue. Somewhere in the corner of the basin there was a slip, he informed us, and something else besides, not very clearly defined by him, but hopefully construed by his hearers.

Sure enough there was the slip in the corner of the basin, and at the top of it two nice-looking lads in boating clothes. The *Arethusa* addressed himself to these. One of them said there would be no difficulty about a night's lodging for our boats; and the other, taking a cigarette from his lips, inquired if they were made by Searle and Son. The name was quite an introduction. Half a dozen other young men came out of a boat-house bearing the superscription ROYAL SPORT NAUTIQUE, and joined in the talk. They were all very polite, voluble, and enthusiastic; and their discourse was interlarded with English boating terms, and the names of English boat-builders and English clubs. I do not know, to my shame, any spot in my native land where I should have been so warmly received by the same number of people. We were English boating-men, and the Belgian boating-men fell upon our necks. I wonder if French Huguenots were as cordially greeted by English Protestants when they came across the Channel out of great tribulation. But, after all, what religion knits people so closely as a common sport?

The canoes were carried into the boat-house; they were washed down for us by the Club servants, the sails were hung out to dry, and everything made as snug and tidy as a picture. And in the meanwhile we were led upstairs by our new-found brethren, for so more than one of them stated the relationship, and made free of their lavatory. This one lent us soap, that one a towel, a third and fourth helped us to undo our bags. And all the time such questions, such assurances of respect and sympathy! I declare I never knew what glory was before.

"Yes, yes; the *Royal Sport Nautique* is the oldest club in Belgium."

"We number two hundred."

"We" — this is not a substantive speech, but an abstract of many speeches, the impression left upon my mind after a great deal of talk; and very youthful, pleasant, natural, and patriotic it seems to me to be — "We have gained all races, except those where we were cheated by the French."

"You must leave all your wet things to be dried."

"O! *entre frères!* In any boat-house in England we should find the same." (I cordially hope they might.)

"*En Angleterre, vous employez des sliding-seats, n'est-ce pas?*"

"We are all employed in commerce during the day; but in the evening, *voyez-vous, nous sommes sèrieux.*"

These were the words. They were all employed over the frivolous mercantile concerns of Belgium during the day; but in the evening they found some hours for the serious concerns of life. I may have a wrong idea of wisdom, but I think that was a very wise remark. People connected with literature and philosophy are busy all their days in getting rid of second-hand notions and false standards. It is their profession, in the sweat of their brows, by dogged thinking, to recover their old fresh view of life, and distinguish what they really and originally like, from what they have only learned to tolerate perforce. And these Royal Nautical Sportsmen had the distinction still quite legible in their hearts. They had still those clean perceptions of what is nice and nasty, what is interesting and what is dull, which envious old gentlemen refer to as illusions. The nightmare illusion of middle age, the bear's hug of custom gradually squeezing the life out of a man's soul, had not yet begun for these happy-starred young Belgians. They still knew that the interest they took in their business was a trifling affair compared to their spontaneous, long-suffering affection for nautical sports. To know what you prefer, instead of humbly saying Amen to what the world tells you you ought to prefer, is to have kept your soul alive. Such a man may be generous; he may be honest in something more than the commercial sense; he may love his friends with an elective, personal sympathy, and not accept them as an adjunct of the station to which he has been called. He may be a man, in short, acting on his own instincts, keeping in his own shape that God made him in; and not a mere crank in the social engine-house, welded on principles that he does not understand, and for purposes that he does not care for.

For will any one dare to tell me that business is more entertaining than fooling among boats? He must have never seen a boat, or never seen an office, who says so. And for certain the one is a great deal better for the health. There should be nothing so much a man's business as his amusements. Nothing but money-grubbing can be put forward to the contrary; no one but

Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell
From Heaven,

durst risk a word in answer. It is but a lying cant that would represent the merchant and the banker as people disinterestedly toiling for mankind, and then most useful when they are most absorbed in their transactions; for the man is more important than his services. And when my Royal Nautical Sportsman shall have so far fallen from his hopeful youth that he cannot pluck up an enthusiasm over anything but his ledger, I venture to doubt whether he will be near so nice a fellow, and whether he would welcome, with so good a grace, a couple of drenched Englishmen paddling into Brussels in the dusk.

When we had changed our wet clothes and drunk a glass of pale ale to the Club's prosperity, one of their number escorted us to an hotel. He would not join us at our dinner, but he had no objection to a glass of wine. Enthusiasm is very wearing; and I begin to understand why prophets were unpopular in Judea, where they were best known. For three stricken hours did this excellent young man sit beside us to dilate on boats and boat-races; and before he left, he was kind enough to order our bedroom candles.

We endeavoured now and again to change the subject; but the diversion did not last a moment: the Royal Nautical Sportsman bridled, shied, answered the question, and then breasted once more into the swelling tide of his subject. I call it his subject; but I think it was he who was subjected. The *Arethusa*, who holds all racing as a creature of the devil, found himself in a pitiful dilemma. He durst not own his ignorance, for the honour of Old England, and spoke away about English clubs and English oarsmen whose fame had never before come to his ears. Several times, and, once above all, on the question of sliding-seats, he was within an ace of exposure. As for the *Cigarette*, who has rowed races in the heat of his blood, but now disowns these slips of his wanton youth, his case was still more desperate; for the Royal Nautical proposed that he should take an oar in one of their eights on the morrow, to compare the English with the Belgian stroke. I could see my friend perspiring in his chair whenever that particular topic came up. And there was yet another proposal which had the same effect on both of us. It appeared that the champion canoeist of Europe (as well as most other champions) was a Royal Nautical Sportsman. And if we would only wait until the Sunday, this infernal paddler would be so condescending as to accompany us on our next stage. Neither of us had the least desire to drive the coursers of the sun against Apollo.

When the young man was gone, we countermanded our candles, and ordered some brandy and water. The great billows had gone over our head. The Royal Nautical Sportsmen were as nice young fellows as a man would wish to see, but they were a trifle too young and a thought too nautical for us. We began to see that we were old and cynical; we liked ease and the agreeable rambling of the human mind about this and the other subject; we did not want to disgrace our native land by messing an eight, or toiling pitifully in the wake of the champion canoeist. In short, we had recourse to flight. It seemed ungrateful, but we tried to make that good on a card loaded with sincere compliments. And indeed it was no time for scruples; we seemed to feel the hot breath of the champion on our necks.

AT MAUBEUGE

Partly from the terror we had of our good friends the Royal Nauticals, partly from the fact that there were no fewer than fifty-five locks between Brussels and Charleroi, we concluded that we should travel by train across the frontier, boats and all. Fifty-five locks in a day's journey was pretty well tantamount to trudging the whole distance on foot, with the canoes upon our shoulders, an object of astonishment to the trees on the canal side, and of honest derision to all right-thinking children.

To pass the frontier even in a train is a difficult matter for the *Arethusa.* He is somehow or other a marked man for the official eye. Wherever he journeys there are the officers gathered together. Treaties are solemnly signed, foreign ministers, ambassadors, and consuls sit throned in state from China to Peru, and the Union Jack flutters on all the winds of heaven. Under these safeguards, portly clergymen, schoolmistresses, gentlemen in grey tweed suits, and all the ruck and rabble of British touristry pour unhindered, "Murray" in hand, over the railways of the Continent, and yet the slim person of the *Arethusa* is taken in the meshes, while these great fish go on their way rejoicing. If he travels without a passport, he is cast, without any figure about the matter, into noisome dungeons: if his papers are in order, he is suffered to go his way indeed, but not until he has been humiliated by a general incredulity. He is a born British subject, yet he has never succeeded in persuading a single official of his nationality. He flatters himself he is indifferent honest; yet he is rarely taken for anything better than a spy, and there is no absurd and disreputable means of livelihood but has been attributed to him in some heat of official or popular distrust....

For the life of me I cannot understand it. I, too, have been knolled to church, and sat at good men's feasts; but I bear no mark of it. I am as strange as a Jack Indian to their official spectacles. I might come from any part of the globe, it seems, except from where I do. My ancestors have laboured in vain, and the glorious Constitution cannot protect me in my walks abroad. It is a great thing, believe me, to present a good normal type of the nation you belong to.

Nobody else was asked for his papers on the way to Maubeuge; but I was, and although I clung to my rights, I had to choose at last between accepting the humiliation and being left behind by the train. I was sorry to give way; but I wanted to get to Maubeuge.

Maubeuge is a fortified town, with a very good inn, the *Grand Cerf.* It seemed to be inhabited principally by soldiers and bagmen; at least, these were all that we saw, except the hotel servants. We had to stay there some time, for the canoes were in no hurry to follow us, and at last stuck hopelessly in the custom-house until we went back to liberate them. There was nothing to do, nothing to see. We had good meals, which was a great matter; but that was all.

The *Cigarette* was nearly taken up upon a charge of drawing the fortifications: a feat of which he was hopelessly incapable. And besides, as I suppose each belligerent nation has a plan of the other's fortified places already, these precautions are of the nature of shutting the stable door after the steed is away. But I have no doubt they help to keep up a good spirit at home. It is a great thing if you can persuade people that they are somehow or other partakers in a mystery. It makes them feel bigger. Even the Freemasons, who have been shown up to satiety, preserve a kind of pride; and not a grocer among them, however honest, harmless, and empty-headed he may feel himself to be at bottom, but comes home from one of their *cœnacula* with a portentous significance for himself.

It is an odd thing, how happily two people, if there are two, can live in a place where they have no acquaintance. I think the spectacle of a whole life in which you have no part paralysis personal desire. You are content to become a mere spectator. The baker stands in his door; the colonel with his three medals goes by to the *café* at night; the troops drum and trumpet and man the ramparts, as bold as so many lions. It would task language to say how placidly you behold all this. In a place where you have taken some root, you are provoked out of your indifference; you have a hand in the game; your friends are fighting with the army. But in a strange town, not small enough to grow too soon familiar, nor so large as to have laid itself out for travellers, you stand so far apart from the business that you positively forget it would be possible to go nearer; you have so little human interest around you, that you do not remember yourself to be a man. Perhaps, in a very short time, you would be one no longer. Gymnosophists go into a wood, with all nature seething around them, with romance on every side; it would be much more to the purpose if they took up their abode in a dull country town, where they should see just so much of humanity as to keep them from desiring more, and only the stale externals of man's life. These externals are as dead to us as so many formalities, and speak a dead language in our eyes and ears. They have no more meaning than an oath or a salutation. We are so much accustomed to see married couples going to church of a Sunday that we have clean forgotten what they represent; and novelists are driven to rehabilitate adultery, no less, when they wish to show us what a beautiful thing it is for a man and a woman to live for each other.

One person in Maubeuge, however, showed me something more than his outside. That was the driver of the hotel omnibus: a mean enough looking little man, as well as I can remember; but with a spark of something human in his soul. He had heard of our little journey, and came to me at once in envious sympathy. How he longed to travel! he told me. How he longed to be somewhere else, and see the round world before he went into the grave! "Here I am," said he. "I drive to the station. Well. And then I drive back again to the hotel. And so on every day, and all the week round. My God, is that life?" I could not say I thought it was — for him. He pressed me to tell him where I had been, and where I hoped to go; and as he listened, I declare the fellow sighed. Might not this have been a brave African traveller, or gone to the Indies after Drake? But it is an evil age for the gypsily inclined among men. He who can sit squarest on a three-legged stool, he it is who has the wealth and glory.

I wonder if my friend is still driving the omnibus for the *Grand Cerf*? Not very likely, I believe; for I think he was on the eve of mutiny when we passed through, and perhaps our passage determined him for good. Better a thousand times that he should be a tramp, and mend pots and pans by the wayside, and sleep under trees, and see the dawn and the sunset every day above a new horizon. I think I hear you say that it is a respectable position to drive an omnibus? Very well. What right has he, who likes it not, to keep those who would like it dearly out of this respectable position? Suppose a dish were not to my taste, and you told me that it was a favourite amongst the rest of the company, what should I conclude from that? Not to finish the dish against my stomach, I suppose.

Respectability is a very good thing in its way, but it does not rise superior to all considerations. I would not for a moment venture to hint that it was a matter of taste; but I think I will go as far as this: that if a position is admittedly unkind, uncomfortable, unnecessary, and superfluously useless, although it were as respectable as the Church of England, the sooner a man is out of it, the better for himself, and all concerned.

ON THE SAMBRE CANALISED - TO QUARTES

About three in the afternoon the whole establishment of the *Grand Cerf* accompanied us to the water's edge. The man of the omnibus was there with haggard eyes. Poor cage-bird! Do I not remember the time when I myself haunted the station, to watch train after train carry its complement of freemen into the night, and read the names of distant places on the time-bills with indescribable longings?

We were not clear of the fortifications before the rain began. The wind was contrary, and blew in furious gusts; nor were the aspects of nature any more clement than the doings of the sky. For we passed through a stretch of blighted country, sparsely covered with brush, but handsomely enough diversified with factory chimneys. We landed in a soiled meadow among some pollards, and there smoked a pipe in a flaw of fair weather. But the wind blew so hard, we could get little else to smoke. There were no natural objects in the neighbourhood, but some sordid workshops. A group of children headed by a tall girl stood and watched us from a little distance all the time we stayed. I heartily wonder what they thought of us.

At Hautmont, the lock was almost impassable; the landing-place being steep and high, and the launch at a long distance. Near a dozen grimy workmen lent us a hand. They refused any reward; and, what is much better, refused it handsomely, without conveying any sense of insult. "It is a way we have in our countryside," said they. And a very becoming way it is. In Scotland, where also you will get services for nothing, the good people reject your money as if you had been trying to corrupt a voter. When people take the trouble to do dignified acts, it is worth while to take a little more, and allow the dignity to be common to all concerned. But in our brave Saxon countries, where we plod threescore years and ten in the mud, and the wind keeps singing in our ears from birth to burial, we do our good and bad with a high hand, and almost offensively; and make even our alms a witness-bearing and an act of war against the wrong.

After Hautmont, the sun came forth again and the wind went down; and a little paddling took us beyond the ironworks and through a delectable land. The river wound among low hills, so that sometimes the sun was at our backs, and sometimes it stood right ahead, and the river before us was one sheet of intolerable glory. On either hand, meadows and orchards bordered, with a margin of sedge and water flowers, upon the river. The hedges were of great height, woven about the trunks of hedgerow elms; and the fields, as they were often very small, looked like a series of bowers along the stream. There was never any prospect; sometimes a hill-top with its trees would look over the nearest hedgerow, just to make a middle distance for the sky; but that was all. The heaven was bare of clouds. The atmosphere, after the rain, was of enchanting purity. The river doubled among the hillocks, a shining strip of mirror glass; and the dip of the paddles set the flowers shaking along the brink.

In the meadows wandered black and white cattle fantastically marked. One beast, with a white head and the rest of the body glossy black, came to the edge to drink, and stood gravely twitching his ears at me as I went by, like some sort of preposterous clergyman in a play. A moment after I heard a loud plunge, and, turning my head, saw the clergyman struggling to shore. The bank had given way under his feet.

Besides the cattle, we saw no living things except a few birds and a great many fishermen. These sat along the edges of the meadows, sometimes with one rod, sometimes with as many as half a score. They seemed stupefied with contentment; and when we induced them to exchange a few words with us about the weather, their voices sounded quiet and far away. There was a strange diversity of opinion among them as to the kind of fish for which they set their lures; although they were all agreed in this, that the river was abundantly supplied. Where it was plain that no two of them had ever caught the same kind of fish, we could not help suspecting that perhaps not any one of them had ever caught a fish at all. I hope, since the afternoon was so lovely, that they were one and all rewarded; and that a silver booty went home in every basket for the pot. Some of my friends would cry shame on me for this; but I prefer a man, were he only an angler, to the bravest pair of gills in all God's waters. I do not affect fishes unless when cooked in sauce; whereas an angler is an important piece of river scenery, and hence deserves some recognition among canoeists. He can always tell you where you are after a mild fashion; and his quiet presence serves to accentuate the solitude and stillness, and remind you of the glittering citizens below your boat.

The Sambre turned so industriously to and fro among his little hills, that it was past six before we drew near the lock at Quartes. There were some children on the tow-path, with whom the *Cigarette* fell into a chaffing talk as they ran along beside us. It was in vain that I warned him. In vain I told him, in English, that boys were the most dangerous creatures; and if once you began with them, it was safe to end in a shower of stones. For my own part, whenever anything was addressed to me, I smiled gently and shook my head as though I were an inoffensive person inadequately acquainted with French. For indeed I have had such experience at home, that I would sooner meet many wild animals than a troop of healthy urchins.

But I was doing injustice to these peaceable young Hainaulters. When the *Cigarette* went off to make inquiries, I got out upon the bank to smoke a pipe and superintend the boats, and became at once the centre of much amiable curiosity. The children had been joined by this time by a young woman and a mild lad who had lost an arm; and this gave me more security. When I let slip my first word or so in French, a little girl nodded her head with a comical grown-up air. “Ah, you see,” she said, “he understands well enough now; he was just making believe.” And the little group laughed together very good-naturedly.

They were much impressed when they heard we came from England; and the little girl proffered the information that England was an island “and a far way from here — *bien loin d’ici.*”

“Ay, you may say that, — a far way from here,” said the lad with one arm.

I was as nearly home-sick as ever I was in my life; they seemed to make it such an incalculable distance to the place where I first saw the day.

They admired the canoes very much. And I observed one piece of delicacy in these children, which is worthy of record. They had been deafening us for the last hundred yards with petitions for a sail; ay, and they deafened us to the same tune next morning when we came to start; but then, when the canoes were lying empty, there was no word of any such petition. Delicacy? or perhaps a bit of fear for the water in so crank a vessel? I hate cynicism a great deal worse than I do the devil; unless perhaps the two were the same thing! And yet ‘tis a good tonic; the cold tub and bath-towel of the sentiments; and positively necessary to life in cases of advanced sensibility.

From the boats they turned to my costume. They could not make enough of my red sash; and my knife filled them with awe.

“They make them like that in England,” said the boy with one arm. I was glad he did not know how badly we make them in England nowadays. “They are for people who go away to sea,” he added, “and to defend one’s life against great fish.”

I felt I was becoming a more and more romantic figure to the little group at every word. And so I suppose I was. Even my pipe, although it was an ordinary French clay, pretty well “trousered,” as they call it, would have a rarity in their eyes, as a thing coming from so far away. And if my feathers were not very fine in themselves, they were all from over seas. One thing in my outfit, however, tickled them out of all politeness; and that was the bemired condition of my canvas shoes. I suppose they were sure the mud at any rate was a home product. The little girl (who was the genius of the party) displayed her own sabots in competition; and I wish you could have seen how gracefully and merrily she did it.

The young woman’s milk-can, a great amphora of hammered brass, stood some way off upon the sward. I was glad of an opportunity to divert public attention from myself, and return some of the compliments I had received. So I admired it cordially both for form and colour, telling them, and very truly, that it was as beautiful as gold. They were not surprised. The things were plainly the boast of the countryside. And the children expatiated on the costliness of these amphorae, which sell sometimes as high as thirty francs apiece; told me how they were carried on donkeys, one on either side of the saddle, a brave caparison in themselves; and how they were to be seen all over the district, and at the larger farms in great number and of great size.

PONT-SUR-SAMBRE - WE ARE PEDLARS

The *Cigarette* returned with good news. There were beds to be had some ten minutes' walk from where we were, at a place called Pont. We stowed the canoes in a granary, and asked among the children for a guide. The circle at once widened round us, and our offers of reward were received in dispiriting silence. We were plainly a pair of Bluebeards to the children; they might speak to us in public places, and where they had the advantage of numbers; but it was another thing to venture off alone with two uncouth and legendary characters, who had dropped from the clouds upon their hamlet this quiet afternoon, sashed and be-knived, and with a flavour of great voyages. The owner of the granary came to our assistance, singled out one little fellow and threatened him with corporalities; or I suspect we should have had to find the way for ourselves. As it was, he was more frightened at the granary man than the strangers, having perhaps had some experience of the former. But I fancy his little heart must have been going at a fine rate; for he kept trotting at a respectful distance in front, and looking back at us with scared eyes. Not otherwise may the children of the young world have guided Jove or one of his Olympian compeers on an adventure.

A miry lane led us up from Quartes with its church and bickering windmill. The hinds were trudging homewards from the fields. A brisk little woman passed us by. She was seated across a donkey between a pair of glittering milk-cans; and, as she went, she kicked jauntily with her heels upon the donkey's side, and scattered shrill remarks among the wayfarers. It was notable that none of the tired men took the trouble to reply. Our conductor soon led us out of the lane and across country. The sun had gone down, but the west in front of us was one lake of level gold. The path wandered a while in the open, and then passed under a trellis like a bower indefinitely prolonged. On either hand were shadowy orchards; cottages lay low among the leaves, and sent their smoke to heaven; every here and there, in an opening, appeared the great gold face of the west.

I never saw the *Cigarette* in such an idyllic frame of mind. He waxed positively lyrical in praise of country scenes. I was little less exhilarated myself; the mild air of the evening, the shadows, the rich lights and the silence, made a symphonious accompaniment about our walk; and we both determined to avoid towns for the future and sleep in hamlets.

At last the path went between two houses, and turned the party out into a wide muddy high-road, bordered, as far as the eye could reach on either hand, by an unsightly village. The houses stood well back, leaving a ribbon of waste land on either side of the road, where there were stacks of firewood, carts, barrows, rubbish-heaps, and a little doubtful grass. Away on the left, a gaunt tower stood in the middle of the street. What it had been in past ages I know not: probably a hold in time of war; but nowadays it bore an illegible dial-plate in its upper parts, and near the bottom an iron letter-box.

The inn to which we had been recommended at Quartes was full, or else the landlady did not like our looks. I ought to say, that with our long, damp india-rubber bags, we presented rather a doubtful type of civilization: like rag-and-bone men, the *Cigarette* imagined. “These gentlemen are pedlars? — *Ces messieurs sont des marchands?*” — asked the landlady. And then, without waiting for an answer, which I suppose she thought superfluous in so plain a case, recommended us to a butcher who lived hard by the tower, and took in travellers to lodge.

Thither went we. But the butcher was flitting, and all his beds were taken down. Or else he didn’t like our look. As a parting shot, we had “These gentlemen are pedlars?”

It began to grow dark in earnest. We could no longer distinguish the faces of the people who passed us by with an inarticulate good-evening. And the householders of Pont seemed very economical with their oil; for we saw not a single window lighted in all that long village. I believe it is the longest village in the world; but I daresay in our predicament every pace counted three times over. We were much cast down when we came to the last auberge; and looking in at the dark door, asked timidly if we could sleep there for the night. A female voice assented in no very friendly tones. We clapped the bags down and found our way to chairs.

The place was in total darkness, save a red glow in the chinks and ventilators of the stove. But now the landlady lit a lamp to see her new guests; I suppose the darkness was what saved us another expulsion; for I cannot say she looked gratified at our appearance. We were in a large bare apartment, adorned with two allegorical prints of Music and Painting, and a copy of the law against public drunkenness. On one side, there was a bit of a bar, with some half-a-dozen bottles. Two labourers sat waiting supper, in attitudes of extreme weariness; a plain-looking lass bustled about with a sleepy child of two; and the landlady began to derange the pots upon the stove and set some beefsteak to grill.

“These gentlemen are pedlars?” she asked sharply. And that was all the conversation forthcoming. We began to think we might be pedlars after all. I never knew a population with so narrow a range of conjecture as the innkeepers of Pont-sur-Sambre. But manners and bearing have not a wider currency than bank-notes. You have only to get far enough out of your beat, and all your accomplished airs will go for nothing. These Hainaulters could see no difference between us and the average pedlar. Indeed, we had some grounds for reflection while the steak was getting ready, to see how perfectly they accepted us at their own valuation, and how our best politeness and best efforts at entertainment seemed to fit quite suitably with the character of packmen. At least it seemed a good account of the profession in France, that even before such judges we could not beat them at our own weapons.

At last we were called to table. The two hinds (and one of them looked sadly worn and white in the face, as though sick with over-work and under-feeding) supped off a single plate of some sort of bread-berry, some potatoes in their jackets, a small cup of coffee sweetened with sugar-candy, and one tumbler of swipes. The landlady, her son, and the lass aforesaid, took the same. Our meal was quite a banquet by comparison. We had some beefsteak, not so tender as it might have been, some of the potatoes, some cheese, an extra glass of the swipes, and white sugar in our coffee.

You see what it is to be a gentleman — I beg your pardon, what it is to be a pedlar. It had not before occurred to me that a pedlar was a great man in a labourer's alehouse; but now that I had to enact the part for an evening I found that so it was. He has in his hedge quarters somewhat the same pre-eminency as the man who takes a private parlour in a hotel. The more you look into it, the more infinite are the class distinctions among men; and possibly, by a happy dispensation, there is no one at all at the bottom of the scale; no one but can find some superiority over somebody else, to keep up his pride withal.

We were displeased enough with our fare. Particularly the *Cigarette*, for I tried to make believe that I was amused with the adventure, tough beefsteak and all. According to the Lucretian maxim, our steak should have been flavoured by the look of the other people's bread-berry. But we did not find it so in practice. You may have a head-knowledge that other people live more poorly than yourself, but it is not agreeable — I was going to say, it is against the etiquette of the universe — to sit at the same table and pick your own superior diet from among their crusts. I had not seen such a thing done since the greedy boy at school with his birthday cake. It was odious enough to witness, I could remember; and I had never thought to play the part myself. But there again you see what it is to be a pedlar.

There is no doubt that the poorer classes in our country are much more charitably disposed than their superiors in wealth. And I fancy it must arise a great deal from the comparative indistinction of the easy and the not so easy in these ranks. A workman or a pedlar cannot shutter himself off from his less comfortable neighbours. If he treats himself to a luxury he must do it in the face of a dozen who cannot. And what should more directly lead to charitable thoughts?... Thus the poor man, camping out in life, sees it as it is, and knows that every mouthful he puts in his belly has been wrenched out of the fingers of the hungry.

But at a certain stage of prosperity, as in a balloon ascent, the fortunate person passes through a zone of clouds, and sublunary matters are thenceforward hidden from his view. He sees nothing but the heavenly bodies, all in admirable order, and positively as good as new. He finds himself surrounded in the most touching manner by the attentions of Providence, and compares himself involuntarily with the lilies and the skylarks. He does not precisely sing, of course; but then he looks so unassuming in his open landau! If all the world dined at one table, this philosophy would meet with some rude knocks.

PONT-SUR-SAMBRE - THE TRAVELLING MERCHANT

Like the lackeys in Molière's farce, when the true nobleman broke in on their high life below stairs, we were destined to be confronted with a real pedlar. To make the lesson still more poignant for fallen gentlemen like us, he was a pedlar of infinitely more consideration than the sort of scurvy fellows we were taken for: like a lion among mice, or a ship of war bearing down upon two cock-boats. Indeed, he did not deserve the name of pedlar at all: he was a travelling merchant.

I suppose it was about half-past eight when this worthy, Monsieur Hector Gilliard of Maubeuge, turned up at the alehouse door in a tilt cart drawn by a donkey, and cried cheerily on the inhabitants. He was a lean, nervous flibbertigibbet of a man, with something the look of an actor, and something the look of a horse-jockey. He had evidently prospered without any of the favours of education; for he adhered with stern simplicity to the masculine gender, and in the course of the evening passed off some fancy futures in a very florid style of architecture. With him came his wife, a comely young woman with her hair tied in a yellow kerchief, and their son, a little fellow of four, in a blouse and military *képi*. It was notable that the child was many degrees better dressed than either of the parents. We were informed he was already at a boarding-school; but the holidays having just commenced, he was off to spend them with his parents on a cruise. An enchanting holiday occupation, was it not, to travel all day with father and mother in the tilt cart full of countless treasures; the green country rattling by on either side, and the children in all the villages contemplating him with envy and wonder? It is better fun, during the holidays, to be the son of a travelling merchant than son and heir to the greatest cotton-spinner in creation. And as for being a reigning prince — indeed I never saw one if it was not Master Gilliard!

While M. Hector and the son of the house were putting up the donkey, and getting all the valuables under lock and key, the landlady warmed up the remains of our beefsteak, and fried the cold potatoes in slices, and Madame Gilliard set herself to waken the boy, who had come far that day, and was peevish and dazzled by the light. He was no sooner awake than he began to prepare himself for supper by eating galette, unripe pears, and cold potatoes — with, so far as I could judge, positive benefit to his appetite.

The landlady, fired with motherly emulation, awoke her own little girl; and the two children were confronted. Master Gilliard looked at her for a moment, very much as a dog looks at his own reflection in a mirror before he turns away. He was at that time absorbed in the galette. His mother seemed crestfallen that he should display so little inclination towards the other sex; and expressed her disappointment with some candour and a very proper reference to the influence of years.

Sure enough a time will come when he will pay more attention to the girls, and think a great deal less of his mother: let us hope she will like it as well as she seemed to fancy. But it is odd enough: the very women who profess most contempt for mankind as a sex, seem to find even its ugliest particulars rather lively and high-minded in their own sons.

The little girl looked longer and with more interest, probably because she was in her own house, while he was a traveller and accustomed to strange sights. And besides there was no galette in the case with her.

All the time of supper, there was nothing spoken of but my young lord. The two parents were both absurdly fond of their child. Monsieur kept insisting on his sagacity: how he knew all the children at school by name; and when this utterly failed on trial, how he was cautious and exact to a strange degree, and, if asked anything, he would sit and think — and think, and if he did not know it, “my faith, he wouldn’t tell you at all — *ma foi, il ne vous le dira pas*”: which is certainly a very high degree of caution. At intervals, M. Hector would appeal to his wife, with his mouth full of beefsteak, as to the little fellow’s age at such or such a time when he had said or done something memorable; and I noticed that Madame usually pooh-poohed these inquiries. She herself was not boastful in her vein, but she never had her fill of caressing the child; and she seemed to take a gentle pleasure in recalling all that was fortunate in his little existence. No schoolboy could have talked more of the holidays which were just beginning and less of the black school-time which must inevitably follow after. She showed, with a pride perhaps partly mercantile in origin, his pockets preposterously swollen with tops and whistles and string. When she called at a house in the way of business, it appeared he kept her company; and whenever a sale was made, received a sou out of the profit. Indeed they spoiled him vastly, these two good people. But they had an eye to his manners for all that, and reproved him for some little faults in breeding, which occurred from time to time during supper.

On the whole, I was not much hurt at being taken for a pedlar. I might think that I ate with greater delicacy, or that my mistakes in French belonged to a different order; but it was plain that these distinctions would be thrown away upon the landlady and the two labourers. In all essential things we and the Gilliards cut very much the same figure in the alehouse kitchen. M. Hector was more at home, indeed, and took a higher tone with the world; but that was explicable on the ground of his driving a donkey-cart, while we poor bodies tramped afoot. I daresay the rest of the company thought us dying with envy, though in no ill sense, to be as far up in the profession as the new arrival.

And of one thing I am sure: that every one thawed and became more humanized and conversible as soon as these innocent people appeared upon the scene. I would not very readily trust the travelling merchant with any extravagant sum of money; but I am sure his heart was in the right place. In this mixed world, if you can find one or two sensible places in a man — above all, if you should find a whole family living together on such pleasant terms, — you may surely be satisfied, and take the rest for granted; or, what is a great deal better, boldly make up your mind that you can do perfectly well without the rest, and that ten thousand bad traits cannot make a single good one any the less good.

It was getting late. M. Hector lit a stable lantern and went off to his cart for some arrangements; and my young gentleman proceeded to divest himself of the better part of his raiment, and play gymnastics on his mother's lap, and thence on to the floor, with accompaniment of laughter.

"Are you going to sleep alone?" asked the servant lass.

"There's little fear of that," says Master Gilliard.

"You sleep alone at school," objected his mother. "Come, come, you must be a man."

But he protested that school was a different matter from the holidays; that there were dormitories at school; and silenced the discussion with kisses: his mother smiling, no one better pleased than she.

There certainly was, as he phrased it, very little fear that he should sleep alone; for there was but one bed for the trio. We, on our part, had firmly protested against one man's accommodation for two; and we had a double-bedded pen in the loft of the house, furnished, beside the beds, with exactly three hat-pegs and one table. There was not so much as a glass of water. But the window would open, by good fortune.

Some time before I fell asleep the loft was full of the sound of mighty snoring: the Gilliards, and the labourers, and the people of the inn, all at it, I suppose, with one consent. The young moon outside shone very clearly over Pont-sur-Sambre, and down upon the alehouse where all we pedlars were abed.

ON THE SAMBRE CANALISED TO LANDRECIES

In the morning, when we came downstairs, the landlady pointed out to us two pails of water behind the street-door. “*Voilà de l’eau pour vous débarbouiller*,” says she. And so there we made a shift to wash ourselves, while Madame Gilliard brushed the family boots on the outer doorstep, and M. Hector, whistling cheerily, arranged some small goods for the day’s campaign in a portable chest of drawers, which formed a part of his baggage. Meanwhile the child was letting off Waterloo crackers all over the floor.

I wonder, by-the-bye, what they call Waterloo crackers in France; perhaps Austerlitz crackers. There is a great deal in the point of view. Do you remember the Frenchman who, travelling by way of Southampton, was put down in Waterloo Station, and had to drive across Waterloo Bridge? He had a mind to go home again, it seems.

Pont itself is on the river, but whereas it is ten minutes’ walk from Quartes by dry land, it is six weary kilomètres by water. We left our bags at the inn, and walked to our canoes through the wet orchards unencumbered. Some of the children were there to see us off, but we were no longer the mysterious beings of the night before. A departure is much less romantic than an unexplained arrival in the golden evening. Although we might be greatly taken at a ghost’s first appearance, we should behold him vanish with comparative equanimity.

The good folk of the inn at Pont, when we called there for the bags, were overcome with marveling. At sight of these two dainty little boats, with a fluttering Union Jack on each, and all the varnish shining from the sponge, they began to perceive that they had entertained angels unawares. The landlady stood upon the bridge, probably lamenting she had charged so little; the son ran to and fro, and called out the neighbours to enjoy the sight; and we paddled away from quite a crowd of rapt observers. These gentlemen pedlars, indeed! Now you see their quality too late.

The whole day was showery, with occasional drenching plumps. We were soaked to the skin, then partially dried in the sun, then soaked once more. But there were some calm intervals, and one notably, when we were skirting the forest of Mormal, a sinister name to the ear, but a place most gratifying to sight and smell. It looked solemn along the riverside, drooping its boughs into the water, and piling them up aloft into a wall of leaves. What is a forest but a city of nature’s own, full of hardy and innocuous living things, where there is nothing dead and nothing made with the hands, but the citizens themselves are the houses and public monuments? There is nothing so much alive, and yet so quiet, as a woodland; and a pair of people, swinging past in canoes, feel very small and bustling by comparison.

And surely of all smells in the world, the smell of many trees is the sweetest and most fortifying. The sea has a rude, pistolling sort of odour, that takes you in the nostrils like snuff, and carries with it a fine sentiment of open water and tall ships; but the smell of a forest, which comes nearest to this in tonic quality, surpasses it by many degrees in the quality of softness. Again, the smell of the sea has little variety, but the smell of a forest is infinitely changeful; it varies with the hour of the day, not in strength merely, but in character; and the different sorts of trees, as you go from one zone of the wood to another, seem to live among different kinds of atmosphere. Usually the resin of the fir predominates. But some woods are more coquettish in their habits; and the breath of the forest of Mormal, as it came aboard upon us that showery afternoon, was perfumed with nothing less delicate than sweetbrier.

I wish our way had always lain among woods. Trees are the most civil society. An old oak that has been growing where he stands since before the Reformation, taller than many spires, more stately than the greater part of mountains, and yet a living thing, liable to sicknesses and death, like you and me: is not that in itself a speaking lesson in history? But acres on acres full of such patriarchs contiguously rooted, their green tops billowing in the wind, their stalwart younglings pushing up about their knees: a whole forest, healthy and beautiful, giving colour to the light, giving perfume to the air: what is this but the most imposing piece in nature's repertory? Heine wished to lie like Merlin under the oaks of Broceliande. I should not be satisfied with one tree; but if the wood grew together like a banyan grove, I would be buried under the tap-root of the whole; my parts should circulate from oak to oak; and my consciousness should be diffused abroad in all the forest, and give a common heart to that assembly of green spires, so that it also might rejoice in its own loveliness and dignity. I think I feel a thousand squirrels leaping from bough to bough in my vast mausoleum; and the birds and the winds merrily coursing over its uneven, leafy surface.

Alas! the forest of Mormal is only a little bit of a wood, and it was but for a little way that we skirted by its boundaries. And the rest of the time the rain kept coming in squirts and the wind in squalls, until one's heart grew weary of such fitful, scolding weather. It was odd how the showers began when we had to carry the boats over a lock, and must expose our legs. They always did. This is a sort of thing that readily begets a personal feeling against nature. There seems no reason why the shower should not come five minutes before or five minutes after, unless you suppose an intention to affront you. The

Cigarette had a mackintosh which put him more or less above these contrarieties. But I had to bear the brunt uncovered. I began to remember that nature was a woman. My companion, in a rosier temper, listened with great satisfaction to my Jeremiads, and ironically concurred. He instanced, as a cognate matter, the action of the tides, “which,” said he, “was altogether designed for the confusion of canoeists, except in so far as it was calculated to minister to a barren vanity on the part of the moon.”

At the last lock, some little way out of Landrecies, I refused to go any farther; and sat in a drift of rain by the side of the bank to have a reviving pipe. A vivacious old man, whom I take to have been the devil, drew near and questioned me about our journey. In the fullness of my heart I laid bare our plans before him. He said it was the silliest enterprise that ever he heard of. Why, did I not know, he asked me, that it was nothing but locks, locks, locks, the whole way? not to mention that, at this season of the year, we should find the Oise quite dry? “Get into a train, my little young man,” said he, “and go you away home to your parents.” I was so astounded at the man’s malice that I could only stare at him in silence. A tree would never have spoken to me like this. At last I got out with some words. We had come from Antwerp already, I told him, which was a good long way; and we should do the rest in spite of him. Yes, I said, if there were no other reason, I would do it now, just because he had dared to say we could not. The pleasant old gentleman looked at me sneeringly, made an allusion to my canoe, and marched off, waggling his head.

I was still inwardly fuming, when up came a pair of young fellows, who imagined I was the *Cigarette’s* servant, on a comparison, I suppose, of my bare jersey with the other’s mackintosh, and asked me many questions about my place and my master’s character. I said he was a good enough fellow, but had this absurd voyage on the head. “O no, no,” said one, “you must not say that; it is not absurd; it is very courageous of him.” I believe these were a couple of angels sent to give me heart again. It was truly fortifying to reproduce all the old man’s insinuations, as if they were original to me in my character of a malcontent footman, and have them brushed away like so many flies by these admirable young men.

When I recounted this affair to the *Cigarette*, “They must have a curious idea of how English servants behave,” says he, dryly, “for you treated me like a brute beast at the lock.”

I was a good deal mortified; but my temper had suffered, it is a fact.

AT LANDRECIES

At Landrecies the rain still fell and the wind still blew; but we found a double-bedded room with plenty of furniture, real water-jugs with real water in them, and dinner: a real dinner, not innocent of real wine. After having been a pedlar for one night, and a butt for the elements during the whole of the next day, these comfortable circumstances fell on my heart like sunshine. There was an English fruiterer at dinner, travelling with a Belgian fruiterer; in the evening at the *café* we watched our compatriot drop a good deal of money at corks, and I don't know why, but this pleased us.

It turned out we were to see more of Landrecies than we expected; for the weather next day was simply bedlamite. It is not the place one would have chosen for a day's rest; for it consists almost entirely of fortifications. Within the ramparts a few blocks of houses, a long row of barracks, and a church, figure, with what countenance they may, as the town. There seems to be no trade; and a shopkeeper from whom I bought a sixpenny flint-and-steel was so much affected that he filled my pockets with spare flints into the bargain. The only public buildings that had any interest for us were the hotel and the *café*. But we visited the church. There lies Marshal Clarke. But as neither of us had ever heard of that military hero, we bore the associations of the spot with fortitude.

In all garrison towns, guard-calls and *réveilles*, and such like, make a fine romantic interlude in civic business. Bugles, and drums, and fifes are of themselves most excellent things in nature; and when they carry the mind to marching armies, and the picturesque vicissitudes of war, they stir up something proud in the heart. But in a shadow of a town like Landrecies, with little else moving, these points of war made a proportionate commotion. Indeed, they were the only things to remember. It was just the place to hear the round going by at night in the darkness, with the solid tramp of men marching, and the startling reverberations of the drum. It reminded you that even this place was a point in the great warfaring system of Europe, and might on some future day be ringed about with cannon smoke and thunder, and make itself a name among strong towns.

The drum, at any rate, from its martial voice and notable physiological effect — nay, even from its cumbrous and comical shape, — stands alone among the instruments of noise. And if it be true, as I have heard it said, that drums are covered with asses' skin, what a picturesque irony is there in that! As if this long-suffering animal's hide had not been sufficiently belaboured during life, now by

Lyonnese costermongers, now by presumptuous Hebrew prophets, it must be stripped from his poor hinder quarters after death, stretched on a drum, and beaten night after night round the streets of every garrison town in Europe. And up the heights of Alma and Spicheren, and wherever death has his red flag a-flying, and sounds his own potent tuck upon the cannons, there also must the drummer-boy, hurrying with white face over fallen comrades, batter and bemaul this slip of skin from the loins of peaceable donkeys.

Generally a man is never more uselessly employed than when he is at this trick of bastinadoing asses' hide. We know what effect it has in life, and how your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating. But in this state of mummy and melancholy survival of itself, when the hollow skin reverberates to the drummer's wrist, and each dub-a-dub goes direct to a man's heart, and puts madness there, and that disposition of the pulses which we, in our big way of talking nickname Heroism: — is there not something in the nature of a revenge upon the donkey's persecutors? Of old, he might say, you drubbed me up hill and down dale, and I must endure; but now that I am dead, those dull thwacks that were scarcely audible in country lanes have become stirring music in front of the brigade; and for every blow that you lay on my old great-coat you will see a comrade stumble and fall.

Not long after the drums had passed the *café* the *Cigarette* and the *Arethusa* began to grow sleepy, and set out for the hotel, which was only a door or two away. But although we had been somewhat indifferent to Landrecies, Landrecies had not been indifferent to us. All day, we learned, people had been running out between the squalls to visit our two boats. Hundreds of persons, so said report, although it fitted ill with our idea of the town — hundreds of persons had inspected them where they lay in a coal-shed. We were becoming lions in Landrecies, who had been only pedlars the night before in Pont.

And now, when we left the *café*, we were pursued and overtaken at the hotel door by no less a person than the *Juge de Paix*: a functionary, as far as I can make out, of the character of a Scots Sheriff-Substitute. He gave us his card and invited us to sup with him on the spot, very neatly, very gracefully, as Frenchmen can do these things. It was for the credit of Landrecies, said he; and although we knew very well how little credit we could do the place, we must have been churlish fellows to refuse an invitation so politely introduced.

The house of the Judge was close by; it was a well-appointed bachelor's establishment, with a curious collection of old brass warming-pans upon the walls. Some of these were most elaborately carved. It seemed a picturesque idea for a collector. You could not help thinking how many nightcaps had wagged over these warming-pans in past generations; what jests may have been made and kisses taken, while they were in service; and how often they had been uselessly paraded in the bed of death. If they could only speak, at what absurd, indecorous, and tragical scenes had they not been present!

The wine was excellent. When we made the Judge our compliments upon a bottle, “I do not give it you as my worst,” said he. I wonder when Englishmen will learn these hospitable graces. They are worth learning; they set off life, and make ordinary moments ornamental.

There were two other Landrecienses present. One was the collector of something or other, I forget what; the other, we were told, was the principal notary of the place. So it happened that we all five more or less followed the law. At this rate, the talk was pretty certain to become technical. The *Cigarette* expounded the Poor Laws very magisterially. And a little later I found myself laying down the Scots Law of Illegitimacy, of which I am glad to say I know nothing. The collector and the notary, who were both married men, accused the Judge, who was a bachelor, of having started the subject. He deprecated the charge, with a conscious, pleased air, just like all the men I have ever seen, be they French or English. How strange that we should all, in our unguarded moments, rather like to be thought a bit of a rogue with the women!

As the evening went on, the wine grew more to my taste; the spirits proved better than the wine; the company was genial. This was the highest water mark of popular favour on the whole cruise. After all, being in a Judge’s house, was there not something semi-official in the tribute? And so, remembering what a great country France is, we did full justice to our entertainment. Landrecies had been a long while asleep before we returned to the hotel; and the sentries on the ramparts were already looking for daybreak.

SAMBRE AND OISE CANAL

CANAL BOATS

Next day we made a late start in the rain. The Judge politely escorted us to the end of the lock under an umbrella. We had now brought ourselves to a pitch of humility in the matter of weather not often attained except in the Scottish Highlands. A rag of blue sky or a glimpse of sunshine set our hearts singing; and when the rain was not heavy, we counted the day almost fair.

Long lines of barges lay one after another along the canal, many of them looking mighty spruce and ship-shape in their jerkin of Archangel tar picked out with white and green. Some carried gay iron railings, and quite a parterre of flower-pots. Children played on the decks, as heedless of the rain as if they had been brought up on Loch Carron side; men fished over the gunwale, some of them under umbrellas; women did their washing; and every barge boasted its mongrel cur by way of watch-dog. Each one barked furiously at the canoes, running alongside until he had got to the end of his own ship, and so passing on the word to the dog aboard the next. We must have seen something like a hundred of these embarkations in the course of that day's paddle, ranged one after another like the houses in a street; and from not one of them were we disappointed of this accompaniment. It was like visiting a menagerie, the *Cigarette* remarked.

These little cities by the canal side had a very odd effect upon the mind. They seemed, with their flower-pots and smoking chimneys, their washings and dinners, a rooted piece of nature in the scene; and yet if only the canal below were to open, one junk after another would hoist sail or harness horses and swim away into all parts of France; and the impromptu hamlet would separate, house by house, to the four winds. The children who played together to-day by the Sambre and Oise Canal, each at his own father's threshold, when and where might they next meet?

For some time past the subject of barges had occupied a great deal of our talk, and we had projected an old age on the canals of Europe. It was to be the most leisurely of progresses, now on a swift river at the tail of a steam-boat, now waiting horses for days together on some inconsiderable junction. We should be seen pottering on deck in all the dignity of years, our white beards falling into our laps. We were ever to be busied among paint-pots; so that there should be no white fresher, and no green more emerald than ours, in all the navy of the canals. There should be books in the cabin, and tobacco-jars, and some old Burgundy as red as a November sunset and as odorous as a violet in April. There should be a flageolet, whence the *Cigarette*, with cunning touch, should draw melting music under the stars; or perhaps, laying that aside, upraise his voice — somewhat thinner than of yore, and with here and there a quaver, or call it a natural grace-note — in rich and solemn psalmody.

All this, simmering in my mind, set me wishing to go aboard one of these ideal houses of lounging, I had plenty to choose from, as I coasted one after another, and the dogs bayed at me for a vagrant. At last I saw a nice old man and his wife looking at me with some interest, so I gave them good-day and pulled up alongside. I began with a remark upon their dog, which had somewhat the look of a pointer; thence I slid into a compliment on Madame's flowers, and thence into a word in praise of their way of life.

If you ventured on such an experiment in England you would get a slap in the face at once. The life would be shown to be a vile one, not without a side shot at your better fortune. Now, what I like so much in France is the clear unflinching recognition by everybody of his own luck. They all know on which side their bread is buttered, and take a pleasure in showing it to others, which is surely the better part of religion. And they scorn to make a poor mouth over their poverty, which I take to be the better part of manliness. I have heard a woman, in quite a better position at home, with a good bit of money in hand, refer to her own child with a horrid whine as "a poor man's child." I would not say such a thing to the Duke of Westminster. And the French are full of this spirit of independence. Perhaps it is the result of republican institutions, as they call them. Much more likely it is because there are so few people really poor that the whiners are not enough to keep each other in countenance.

The people on the barge were delighted to hear that I admired their state. They understood perfectly well, they told me, how Monsieur envied them. Without doubt Monsieur was rich; and in that case he might make a canal boat as pretty as a villa — *joli comme un château.* And with that they invited me on board their own water villa. They apologized for their cabin; they had not been rich enough to make it as it ought to be.

"The fire should have been here, at this side," explained the husband. "Then one might have a writing-table in the middle — books — and" (comprehensively) "all. It would be quite coquettish — *ça serait tout-à-fait coquet.*" And he looked about him as though the improvements were already made. It was plainly not the first time that he had thus beautified his cabin in imagination; and when next he makes a hit, I should expect to see the writing-table in the middle.

Madame had three birds in a cage. They were no great thing, she explained. Fine birds were so dear. They had sought to get a *Hollandais* last winter in Rouen (Rouen? thought I; and is this whole mansion, with its dogs and birds and smoking chimneys, so far a traveller as that? and as homely an object among the cliffs and orchards of the Seine as on the green plains of Sambre?) — they had sought to get a *Hollandais* last winter in Rouen; but these cost fifteen francs apiece — picture it — fifteen francs!

"*Pour un tout petit oiseau* — For quite a little bird," added the husband.

As I continued to admire, the apologetics died away, and the good people began to brag of their barge, and their happy condition in life, as if they had been Emperor and Empress of the Indies. It was, in the Scots phrase, a good hearing, and put me in good humour with the world. If people knew what an inspiriting thing it is to hear a man boasting, so long as he boasts of what he really has, I believe they would do it more freely and with a better grace.

They began to ask about our voyage. You should have seen how they sympathized. They seemed half ready to give up their barge and follow us. But these *canaletti* are only gypsies semi-domesticated. The semi-domestication came out in rather a pretty form. Suddenly Madame's brow darkened. "*Cependant,*" she began, and then stopped; and then began again by asking me if I were single.

"Yes," said I.

"And your friend who went by just now?"

He also was unmarried.

O then — all was well. She could not have wives left alone at home; but since there were no wives in the question, we were doing the best we could.

"To see about one in the world," said the husband, "*il n'y a que ça* — there is nothing else worth while. A man, look you, who sticks in his own village like a bear," he went on, " — very well, he sees nothing. And then death is the end of all. And he has seen nothing."

Madame reminded her husband of an Englishman who had come up this canal in a steamer.

"Perhaps Mr. Moens in the *Ytene,*" I suggested.

"That's it," assented the husband. "He had his wife and family with him, and servants. He came ashore at all the locks and asked the name of the villages, whether from boatmen or lock-keepers; and then he wrote, wrote them down. Oh, he wrote enormously! I suppose it was a wager."

A wager was a common enough explanation for our own exploits, but it seemed an original reason for taking notes.

THE OISE IN FLOOD

Before nine next morning the two canoes were installed on a light country cart at Étreux: and we were soon following them along the side of a pleasant valley full of hop-gardens and poplars. Agreeable villages lay here and there on the slope of the hill; notably, Tupigny, with the hop-poles hanging their garlands in the very street, and the houses clustered with grapes. There was a faint enthusiasm on our passage; weavers put their heads to the windows; children cried out in ecstasy at sight of the two "boaties" — *barquettes*; and bloused pedestrians, who were acquainted with our charioteer, jested with him on the nature of his freight.

We had a shower or two, but light and flying. The air was clean and sweet among all these green fields and green things growing. There was not a touch of autumn in the weather. And when, at Vadencourt, we launched from a little lawn opposite a mill, the sun broke forth and set all the leaves shining in the valley of the Oise.

The river was swollen with the long rains. From Vadencourt all the way to Origny, it ran with ever-quickening speed, taking fresh heart at each mile, and racing as though it already smelt the sea. The water was yellow and turbulent, swung with an angry eddy among half-submerged willows, and made an angry clatter along stony shores. The course kept turning and turning in a narrow and well-timbered valley. Now the river would approach the side, and run griding along the chalky base of the hill, and show us a few open colza-fields among the trees. Now it would skirt the garden-walls of houses, where we might catch a glimpse through a doorway, and see a priest pacing in the chequered sunlight. Again, the foliage closed so thickly in front that there seemed to be no issue; only a thicket of willows, overtopped by elms and poplars, under which the river ran flush and fleet, and where a kingfisher flew past like a piece of the blue sky. On these different manifestations the sun poured its clear and catholic looks. The shadows lay as solid on the swift surface of the stream as on the stable meadows. The light sparkled golden in the dancing poplar leaves, and brought the hills in communion with our eyes. And all the while the river never stopped running or took breath; and the reeds along the whole valley stood shivering from top to toe.

There should be some myth (but if there is, I know it not) founded on the shivering of the reeds. There are not many things in nature more striking to man's eye. It is such an eloquent pantomime of terror; and to see such a number of terrified creatures taking sanctuary in every nook along the shore is enough to infect a silly human with alarm. Perhaps they are only a-cold, and no wonder, standing waist-deep in the stream. Or perhaps they have never got accustomed to the speed and fury of the river's flux, or the miracle of its continuous body. Pan once played upon their forefathers; and so, by the hands of his river, he still plays upon these later generations down all the valley of the Oise; and plays the same air, both sweet and shrill, to tell us of the beauty and the terror of the world.

The canoe was like a leaf in the current. It took it up and shook it, and carried it masterfully away, like a Centaur carrying off a nymph. To keep some command on our direction required hard and diligent plying of the paddle. The river was in such a hurry for the sea! Every drop of water ran in a panic, like as many people in a frightened crowd. But what crowd was ever so numerous, or so single-minded? All the objects of sight went by at a dance measure; the eyesight raced with the racing river; the exigencies of every moment kept the pegs screwed so tight that our being quivered like a well-tuned instrument, and the blood shook oft its lethargy, and trotted through all the highways and byways of the veins and arteries, and in and out of the heart, as if circulation were but a holiday journey, and not the daily moil of threescore years and ten. The reeds might nod their heads in warning, and with tremulous gestures tell how the river was as cruel as it was strong and cold, and how death lurked in the eddy underneath the willows. But the reeds had to stand where they were, and those who stand still are always timid advisers. As for us, we could have shouted aloud. If this lively and beautiful river were, indeed, a thing of death's contrivance, the old ashen rogue had famously outwitted himself with us. I was living three to the minute. I was scoring points against him every stroke of my paddle, every turn of the stream, I have rarely had better profit of my life.

For I think we may look upon our little private war with death somewhat in this light. If a man knows he will sooner or later be robbed upon a journey, he will have a bottle of the best in every inn, and look upon all his extravagances as so much gained upon the thieves. And, above all, where instead of simply spending, he makes a profitable investment for some of his money, when it will be out of risk of loss. So every bit of brisk living, and, above all, when it is healthful, is just so much gained upon the wholesale filcher, death. We shall have the less in our pockets, the more in our stomach, when he cries stand and deliver. A swift stream is a favourite artifice of his, and one that brings him in a comfortable thing per annum; but when he and I come to settle our accounts, I shall whistle in his face for these hours upon the upper Oise.

Towards afternoon we got fairly drunken with the sunshine and the exhilaration of the pace. We could no longer contain ourselves and our content. The canoes were too small for us; we must be out and stretch ourselves on shore. And so in a green meadow we bestowed our limbs on the grass, and smoked deifying tobacco and proclaimed the world excellent. It was the last good hour of the day, and I dwell upon it with extreme complacency.

On one side of the valley, high up on the chalky summit of the hill, a ploughman with his team appeared and disappeared at regular intervals. At each revelation he stood still for a few seconds against the sky: for all the world (as the *Cigarette* declared) like a toy Burns who should have just ploughed up the Mountain Daisy. He was the only living thing within view, unless we are to count the river.

On the other side of the valley a group of red roofs and a belfry showed among the foliage. Thence some inspired bell-ringer made the afternoon musical on a chime of bells. There was something very sweet and taking in the air he played; and we thought we had never heard bells speak so intelligibly or sing so melodiously as these. It must have been to some such measure that the spinners and the young maids sang “Come away, Death,” in the Shakespearian Illyria. There is so often a threatening note, something blatant and metallic, in the voice of bells, that I believe we have fully more pain than pleasure from hearing them; but these, as they sounded abroad, now high, now low, now with a plaintive cadence that caught the ear like the burthen of a popular song, were always moderate and tunable, and seemed to fall in with the spirit of still, rustic places, like the noise of a waterfall or the babble of a rookery in spring. I could have asked the bell-ringer for his blessing, good, sedate old man, who swung the rope so gently to the time of his meditations. I could have blessed the priest or the heritors, or whoever may be concerned with such affairs in France, who had left these sweet old bells to gladden the afternoon, and not held meetings, and made collections, and had their names repeatedly printed in the local paper, to rig up a peal of brand-new, brazen, Birmingham-hearted substitutes, who should bombard their sides to the provocation of a brand-new bell-ringer, and fill the echoes of the valley with terror and riot.

At last the bells ceased, and with their note the sun withdrew. The piece was at an end; shadow and silence possessed the valley of the Oise. We took to the paddle with glad hearts, like people who have sat out a noble performance and returned to work. The river was more dangerous here; it ran swifter, the eddies were more sudden and violent. All the way down we had had our fill of difficulties. Sometimes it was a weir which could be shot, sometimes one so shallow and full of stakes that we must withdraw the boats from the water and carry them round. But the chief sort of obstacle was a consequence of the late high winds. Every two or three hundred yards a tree had fallen across the river, and usually involved more than another in its fall. Often there was free water at the end, and we could steer round the leafy promontory and hear the water sucking and bubbling among the twigs. Often, again, when the tree reached from bank to bank, there was room by lying close to shoot through underneath, canoe and all. Sometimes it was necessary to get out upon the trunk itself and pull the boats across; and sometimes, when the stream was too impetuous for this, there was nothing for it but to land and "carry over." This made a fine series of accidents in the day's career, and kept us aware of ourselves.

Shortly after our re-embarkation, while I was leading by a long way, and still full of a noble, exulting spirit in honour of the sun, the swift pace, and the church bells, the river made one of its leonine pounces round a corner, and I was aware of another fallen tree within a stone-cast. I had my back-board down in a trice, and aimed for a place where the trunk seemed high enough above the water, and the branches not too thick to let me slip below. When a man has just vowed eternal brotherhood with the universe, he is not in a temper to take great determinations coolly, and this, which might have been a very important determination for me, had not been taken under a happy star. The tree caught me about the chest, and while I was yet struggling to make less of myself and get through, the river took the matter out of my hands, and bereaved me of my boat. The *Arethusa* swung round broadside on, leaned over, ejected so much of me as still remained on board, and, thus disencumbered, whipped under the tree, righted, and went merrily away down stream.

I do not know how long it was before I scrambled on to the tree to which I was left clinging, but it was longer than I cared about. My thoughts were of a grave and almost sombre character, but I still clung to my paddle. The stream ran away with my heels as fast as I could pull up my shoulders, and I seemed, by the weight, to have all the water of the Oise in my trousers-pockets. You can never know, till you try it, what a dead pull a river makes against a man. Death himself had me by the heels, for this was his last ambuscado, and he must now join personally in the fray. And still I held to my paddle. At last I dragged myself on to my stomach on the trunk, and lay there a breathless sop, with a mingled sense of humour and injustice. A poor figure I must have presented to Burns upon the hill-top with his team. But there was the paddle in my hand. On my tomb, if ever I have one, I mean to get these words inscribed: "He clung to his paddle."

The *Cigarette* had gone past a while before; for, as I might have observed, if I had been a little less pleased with the universe at the moment, there was a clear way round the tree-top at the farther side. He had offered his services to haul me out, but as I was then already on my elbows I had declined and sent him down stream after the truant *Arethusa.* The stream was too rapid for a man to mount with one canoe, let alone two, upon his hands. So I crawled along the trunk to shore, and proceeded down the meadows by the riverside. I was so cold that my heart was sore. I had now an idea of my own why the reeds so bitterly shivered. I could have given any of them a lesson. The *Cigarette* remarked facetiously that he thought I was "taking exercise" as I drew near, until he made out for certain that I was only twittering with cold. I had a rub down with a towel, and donned a dry suit from the india-rubber bag. But I was not my own man again for the rest of the voyage. I had a queasy sense that I wore my last dry clothes upon my body. The struggle had tired me; and perhaps, whether I knew it or not, I was a little dashed in spirit. The devouring element in the universe had leaped out against me, in this green valley quickened by a running stream. The bells were all very pretty in their way, but I had heard some of the hollow notes of Pan's music. Would the wicked river drag me down by the heels, indeed? and look so beautiful all the time? Nature's good-humour was only skin-deep after all.

There was still a long way to go by the winding course of the stream, and darkness had fallen, and a late bell was ringing in Origny Sainte-Benoîte, when we arrived.

ORIGNY SAINTE-BENOÎTE – A BY-DAY

The next day was Sunday, and the church bells had little rest; indeed, I do not think I remember anywhere else so great a choice of services as were here offered to the devout. And while the bells made merry in the sunshine, all the world with his dog was out shooting among the beets and colza.

In the morning a hawker and his wife went down the street at a foot-pace, singing to a very slow, lamentable music, "*O France, mes amours.*" It brought everybody to the door; and when our landlady called in the man to buy the words, he had not a copy of them left. She was not the first nor the second who had been taken with the song. There is something very pathetic in the love of the French people, since the war, for dismal patriotic music-making. I have watched a forester from Alsace while someone was singing "*Les malheurs de la France,*" at a baptismal party in the neighbourhood of Fontainebleau. He arose from the table and took his son aside, close by where I was standing. "Listen, listen," he said, bearing on the boy's shoulder, "and remember this, my son." A little after he went out into the garden suddenly, and I could hear him sobbing in the darkness.

The humiliation of their arms and the loss of Alsace and Lorraine made a sore pull on the endurance of this sensitive people; and their hearts are still hot, not so much against Germany as against the Empire. In what other country will you find a patriotic ditty bring all the world into the street? But affliction heightens love; and we shall never know we are Englishmen until we have lost India. Independent America is still the cross of my existence; I cannot think of Farmer George without abhorrence; and I never feel more warmly to my own land than when I see the Stars and Stripes, and remember what our empire might have been.

The hawker's little book, which I purchased, was a curious mixture. Side by side with the flippant, rowdy nonsense of the Paris music-halls, there were many pastoral pieces, not without a touch of poetry, I thought, and instinct with the brave independence of the poorer class in France. There you might read how the wood-cutter gloried in his axe, and the gardener scorned to be ashamed of his spade. It was not very well written, this poetry of labour, but the pluck of the sentiment redeemed what was weak or wordy in the expression. The martial and the patriotic pieces, on the other hand, were tearful, womanish productions one and all. The poet had passed under the Caudine Forks; he sang for an army visiting the tomb of its old renown, with arms reversed; and sang not of victory, but of death. There was a number in the hawker's collection called "Conscrits

Français," which may rank among the most dissuasive war-lyrics on record. It would not be possible to fight at all in such a spirit. The bravest conscript would turn pale if such a ditty were struck up beside him on the morning of battle; and whole regiments would pile their arms to its tune.

If Fletcher of Saltoun is in the right about the influence of national songs, you would say France was come to a poor pass. But the thing will work its own cure, and a sound-hearted and courageous people weary at length of sniveling over their disasters. Already Paul Déroulède has written some manly military verses. There is not much of the trumpet-note in them, perhaps, to stir a man's heart in his bosom; they lack the lyrical elation, and move slowly; but they are written in a grave, honourable, stoical spirit, which should carry soldiers far in a good cause. One feels as if one would like to trust Déroulède with something. It will be happy if he can so far inoculate his fellow-countrymen that they may be trusted with their own future. And in the meantime, here is an antidote to "French Conscripts" and much other doleful versification.

We had left the boats over-night in the custody of one whom we shall call Carnival. I did not properly catch his name, and perhaps that was not unfortunate for him, as I am not in a position to hand him down with honour to posterity. To this person's premises we strolled in the course of the day, and found quite a little deputation inspecting the canoes. There was a stout gentleman with a knowledge of the river, which he seemed eager to impart. There was a very elegant young gentleman in a black coat, with a smattering of English, who led the talk at once to the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race. And then there were three handsome girls from fifteen to twenty; and an old gentleman in a blouse, with no teeth to speak of, and a strong country accent. Quite the pick of Origny, I should suppose.

The *Cigarette* had some mysteries to perform with his rigging in the coach-house, so I was left to do the parade single-handed. I found myself very much of a hero whether I would or not. The girls were full of little shudderings over the dangers of our journey. And I thought it would be ungallant not to take my cue from the ladies. My mishap of yesterday, told in an off-hand way, produced a deep sensation. It was Othello over again, with no less than three Desdemonas and a sprinkling of sympathetic senators in the background. Never were the canoes more flattered, or flattered more adroitly.

"It is like a violin!" cried one of the girls in an ecstasy.

"I thank you for the word, mademoiselle," said I. "All the more since there are people who call out to me that it is like a coffin."

"Oh I but it is really like a violin. It is finished like a violin," she went on.

“And polished like a violin,” added a senator.

“One has only to stretch the cords,” concluded another, “and then tum-tumty-tum” — he imitated the result with spirit.

Was not this a graceful little ovation? Where this people finds the secret of its pretty speeches, I cannot imagine; unless the secret should be no other than a sincere desire to please! But then no disgrace is attached in France to saying a thing neatly; whereas in England to talk like a book is to give in one’s resignation to society.

The old gentleman in the blouse stole into the coach-house, and somewhat irrelevantly informed the *Cigarette* that he was the father of the three girls and four more: quite an exploit for a Frenchman.

“You are very fortunate,” answered the *Cigarette* politely.

And the old gentleman, having apparently gained his point, stole away again.

We all got very friendly together. The girls proposed to start with us on the morrow, if you please! And, jesting apart, every one was anxious to know the hour of our departure. Now, when you are going to crawl into your canoe from a bad launch, a crowd, however friendly, is undesirable; and so we told them not before twelve, and mentally determined to be off by ten at latest.

Towards evening we went abroad again to post some letters. It was cool and pleasant; the long village was quite empty, except for one or two urchins who followed us as they might have followed a menagerie; the hills and the tree-tops looked in from all sides through the clear air; and the bells were chiming for yet another service.

Suddenly we sighted the three girls standing, with a fourth sister, in front of a shop on the wide selvage of the roadway. We had been very merry with them a little while ago, to be sure. But what was the etiquette of Origny? Had it been a country road, of course we should have spoken to them; but here, under the eyes of all the gossips, ought we to do even as much as bow? I consulted the *Cigarette.*

“Look,” said he.

I looked. There were the four girls on the same spot; but now four backs were turned to us, very upright and conscious. Corporal Modesty had given the word of command, and the well-disciplined picket had gone right-about-face like a single person. They maintained this formation all the while we were in sight; but we heard them tittering among themselves, and the girl whom we had not met laughed with open mouth, and even looked over her shoulder at the enemy. I wonder was it altogether modesty after all? or in part a sort of country provocation?

As we were returning to the inn, we beheld something floating in the ample field of golden evening sky, above the chalk cliffs and the trees that grow along their summit. It was too high up, too large, and too steady for a kite; and as it was dark, it could not be a star. For although a star were as black as ink and as rugged as a walnut, so amply does the sun bathe heaven with radiance, that it would sparkle like a point of light for us. The village was dotted with people with their heads in air; and the children were in a bustle all along the street and far up the straight road that climbs the hill, where we could still see them running in loose knots. It was a balloon, we learned, which had left St. Quentin at half-past five that evening. Mighty composedly the majority of the grown people took it. But we were English, and were soon running up the hill with the best. Being travellers ourselves in a small way, we would fain have seen these other travellers alight.

The spectacle was over by the time we gained the top of the hill. All the gold had withered out of the sky, and the balloon had disappeared. Whither? I ask myself; caught up into the seventh heaven? or come safely to land somewhere in that blue uneven distance, into which the roadway dipped and melted before our eyes? Probably the aeronauts were already warming themselves at a farm chimney, for they say it is cold in these unhomely regions of the air. The night fell swiftly. Roadside trees and disappointed sightseers, returning though the meadows, stood out in black against a margin of low red sunset. It was cheerfuller to face the other way, and so down the hill we went, with a full moon, the colour of a melon, swinging high above the wooded valley, and the white cliffs behind us faintly reddened by the fire of the chalk kilns.

The lamps were lighted, and the salads were being made in Origny Sainte-Benoîte by the river.

ORIGNY SAINTE-BENOÎTE THE COMPANY AT TABLE

Although we came late for dinner, the company at table treated us to sparkling wine. “That is how we are in France,” said one. “Those who sit down with us are our friends.” And the rest applauded.

They were three altogether, and an odd trio to pass the Sunday with.

Two of them were guests like ourselves, both men of the north. One ruddy, and of a full habit of body, with copious black hair and beard, the intrepid hunter of France, who thought nothing so small, not even a lark or a minnow, but he might vindicate his prowess by its capture. For such a great, healthy man, his hair flourishing like Samson’s, his arteries running buckets of red blood, to boast of these infinitesimal exploits, produced a feeling of disproportion in the world, as when a steam-hammer is set to cracking nuts. The other was a quiet, subdued person, blond and lymphatic and sad, with something the look of a Dane: “*Tristes têtes de Danois!*” as Gaston Lafenestre used to say.

I must not let that name go by without a word for the best of all good fellows now gone down into the dust. We shall never again see Gaston in his forest costume — he was Gaston with all the world, in affection, not in disrespect — nor hear him wake the echoes of Fontainebleau with the woodland horn. Never again shall his kind smile put peace among all races of artistic men, and make the Englishman at home in France. Never more shall the sheep, who were not more innocent at heart than he, sit all unconsciously for his industrious pencil. He died too early, at the very moment when he was beginning to put forth fresh sprouts, and blossom into something worthy of himself; and yet none who knew him will think he lived in vain. I never knew a man so little, for whom yet I had so much affection; and I find it a good test of others, how much they had learned to understand and value him. His was indeed a good influence in life while he was still among us; he had a fresh laugh, it did you good to see him; and however sad he may have been at heart, he always bore a bold and cheerful countenance, and took fortune’s worst as it were the showers of spring. But now his mother sits alone by the side of Fontainebleau woods, where he gathered mushrooms in his hardy and penurious youth.

Many of his pictures found their way across the Channel: besides those which were stolen, when a dastardly Yankee left him alone in London with two English pence, and perhaps twice as many words of English. If any one who reads these lines should have a scene of sheep, in the manner of Jacques, with this fine creature’s signature, let him tell himself that one of the kindest and bravest of men has lent a hand to decorate his lodging. There may be better pictures in the National Gallery; but not a painter among the generations had a better heart. Precious in the sight of the Lord of humanity, the Psalms tell us, is the death of his saints. It had need to be precious; for it is very costly, when by the stroke, a mother is left desolate, and the peace-maker, and *peace-looker*, of a whole society is laid in the ground with Caesar and the Twelve Apostles.

There is something lacking among the oaks of Fontainebleau; and when the dessert comes in at Barbizon, people look to the door for a figure that is gone.

The third of our companions at Origny was no less a person than the landlady's husband: not properly the landlord, since he worked himself in a factory during the day, and came to his own house at evening as a guest: a man worn to skin and bone by perpetual excitement, with baldish head, sharp features, and swift, shining eyes. On Saturday, describing some paltry adventure at a duck-hunt, he broke a plate into a score of fragments. Whenever he made a remark, he would look all round the table with his chin raised, and a spark of green light in either eye, seeking approval. His wife appeared now and again in the doorway of the room, where she was superintending dinner, with a "Henri, you forget yourself," or a "Henri, you can surely talk without making such a noise." Indeed, that was what the honest fellow could not do. On the most trifling matter his eyes kindled, his fist visited the table, and his voice rolled abroad in changeful thunder. I never saw such a petard of a man; I think the devil was in him. He had two favourite expressions — "it is logical," or illogical, as the case might be; and this other, thrown out with a certain bravado, as a man might unfurl a banner, at the beginning of many a long and sonorous story: "I am a proletarian, you see." Indeed, we saw it very well. God forbid that ever I should find him handling a gun in Paris streets! That will not be a good moment for the general public.

I thought his two phrases very much represented the good and evil of his class, and to some extent of his country. It is a strong thing to say what one is, and not be ashamed of it; even although it be in doubtful taste to repeat the statement too often in one evening. I should not admire it in a duke, of course; but as times go, the trait is honourable in a workman. On the other hand, it is not at all a strong thing to put one's reliance upon logic; and our own logic particularly, for it is generally wrong. We never know where we are to end, if once we begin following words or doctors. There is an upright stock in a man's own heart, that is trustier than any syllogism; and the eyes, and the sympathies and appetites, know a thing or two that have never yet been stated in controversy. Reasons are as plentiful as blackberries; and, like fisticuffs, they serve impartially with all sides. Doctrines do not stand or fall by their proofs, and are only logical in so far as they are cleverly put. An able controversialist no more than an able general demonstrates the justice of his cause. But France is all gone wandering after one or two big words; it will take some time before they can be satisfied that they are no more than words, however big; and when once that is done, they will perhaps find logic less diverting.

The conversation opened with details of the day's shooting. When all the sportsmen of a village shoot over the village territory *pro indiviso*, it is plain that many questions of etiquette and priority must arise.

"Here now," cried the landlord, brandishing a plate, "here is a field of beet-root. Well. Here am I then. I advance, do I not? *Eh bien! sacristi,*" and the statement, waxing louder, rolls off into a reverberation of oaths, the speaker glaring about for sympathy, and everybody nodding his head to him in the name of peace.

The ruddy Northman told some tales of his own prowess in keeping order: notably one of a Marquis.

"Marquis," I said, "if you take another step I fire upon you. You have committed a dirtiness, Marquis."

Whereupon, it appeared, the Marquis touched his cap and withdrew.

The landlord applauded noisily. "It was well done," he said. "He did all that he could. He admitted he was wrong." And then oath upon oath. He was no marquis-lover either, but he had a sense of justice in him, this proletarian host of ours.

From the matter of hunting, the talk veered into a general comparison of Paris and the country. The proletarian beat the table like a drum in praise of Paris. "What is Paris? Paris is the cream of France. There are no Parisians: it is you and I and everybody who are Parisians. A man has eighty chances per cent to get on in the world in Paris." And he drew a vivid sketch of the workman in a den no bigger than a dog-hutch, making articles that were to go all over the world. "*Eh bien, quoi, c'est magnifique, ça!*" cried he.

The sad Northman interfered in praise of a peasant's life; he thought Paris bad for men and women; "centralization," said he — —

But the landlord was at his throat in a moment. It was all logical, he showed him, and all magnificent. "What a spectacle! What a glance for an eye!" And the dishes reeled upon the table under a cannonade of blows.

Seeking to make peace, I threw in a word in praise of the liberty of opinion in France. I could hardly have shot more amiss. There was an instant silence, and a great wagging of significant heads. They did not fancy the subject, it was plain; but they gave me to understand that the sad Northman was a martyr on account of his views. “Ask him a bit,” said they. “Just ask him.”

“Yes, sir,” said he, in his quiet way, answering me, although I had not spoken, “I am afraid there is less liberty of opinion in France than you may imagine.” And with that he dropped his eyes, and seemed to consider the subject at an end.

Our curiosity was mightily excited at this. How, or why, or when, was this lymphatic bagman martyred? We concluded at once it was on some religious question, and brushed up our memories of the Inquisition, which were principally drawn from Poe’s horrid story, and the sermon in “Tristram Shandy,” I believe.

On the morrow we had an opportunity of going further into the question; for when we rose very early to avoid a sympathizing deputation at our departure, we found the hero up before us. He was breaking his fast on white wine and raw onions, in order to keep up the character of martyr, I conclude. We had a long conversation, and made out what we wanted in spite of his reserve. But here was a truly curious circumstance. It seems possible for two Scotsmen and a Frenchman to discuss during a long half-hour, and each nationality have a different idea in view throughout. It was not till the very end that we discovered his heresy had been political, or that he suspected our mistake. The terms and spirit in which he spoke of his political beliefs were, in our eyes, suited to religious beliefs. And *vice versa.*

Nothing could be more characteristic of the two countries. Politics are the religion of France; as Nanty Ewart would have said, “A d — — d bad religion”; while we, at home, keep most of our bitterness for little differences about a hymn-book, or a Hebrew word which perhaps neither of the parties can translate. And perhaps the misconception is typical of many others that may never be cleared up: not only between people of different race, but between those of different sex.

As for our friend’s martyrdom, he was a Communist, or perhaps only a Communard, which is a very different thing; and had lost one or more situations in consequence. I think he had also been rejected in marriage; but perhaps he had a sentimental way of considering business which deceived me. He was a mild, gentle creature, anyway; and I hope he has got a better situation, and married a more suitable wife since then.

Carnival notoriously cheated us at first. Finding us easy in our ways, he regretted having let us oil so cheaply; and taking me aside, told me a cock-and-bull story with the moral of another five francs for the narrator. The thing was palpably absurd; but I paid up, and at once dropped all friendliness of manner, and kept him in his place as an inferior with freezing British dignity. He saw in a moment that he had gone too far, and killed a willing horse; his face fell; I am sure he would have refunded if he could only have thought of a decent pretext. He wished me to drink with him, but I would none of his drinks. He grew pathetically tender in his professions; but I walked beside him in silence or answered him in stately courtesies; and when we got to the landing-place, passed the word in English slang to the *Cigarette.*

In spite of the false scent we had thrown out the day before, there must have been fifty people about the bridge. We were as pleasant as we could be with all but Carnival. We said good-bye, shaking hands with the old gentleman who knew the river and the young gentleman who had a smattering of English; but never a word for Carnival. Poor Carnival! here was a humiliation. He who had been so much identified with the canoes, who had given orders in our name, who had shown off the boats and even the boatmen like a private exhibition of his own, to be now so publicly shamed by the lions of his caravan! I never saw anybody look more crestfallen than he. He hung in the background, coming timidly forward ever and again as he thought he saw some symptom of a relenting humour, and falling hurriedly back when he encountered a cold stare. Let us hope it will be a lesson to him.

I would not have mentioned Carnival's peccadillo had not the thing been so uncommon in France. This, for instance, was the only case of dishonesty or even sharp practice in our whole voyage. We talk very much about our honesty in England. It is a good rule to be on your guard wherever you hear great professions about a very little piece of virtue. If the English could only hear how they are spoken of abroad they might confine themselves for a while to remedying the fact; and perhaps even when that was done, give us fewer of their airs.

The young ladies, the graces of Origny, were not present at our start, but when we got round to the second bridge, behold, it was black with sightseers! We were loudly cheered, and for a good way below young lads and lasses ran along the bank, still cheering. What with current and paddling, we were flashing along like swallows. It was no joke to keep up with us upon the woody shore. But the girls picked up their skirts as if they were sure they had good ankles, and followed until their breath was out. The last to weary were the three graces and a couple of companions; and just as they too had had enough, the foremost of the three leaped upon a tree-stump and kissed her hand to the canoeists. Not Diana herself, although this was more of a Venus after all, could have done a graceful thing more gracefully. “Come back again!” she cried; and all the others echoed her; and the hills about Origny repeated the words, “Come back.” But the river had us round an angle in a twinkling, and we were alone with the green trees and running water.

Come back? There is no coming back, young ladies, on the impetuous stream of life.

“The merchant bows unto the seaman’s star,
The ploughman from the sun his season takes.”

And we must all set our pocket-watches by the clock of fate. There is a headlong, forthright tide, that bears away man with his fancies like a straw, and runs fast in time and space. It is full of curves like this, your winding river of the Oise; and lingers and returns in pleasant pastorals; and yet, rightly thought upon, never returns at all. For though it should revisit the same acre of meadow in the same hour, it will have made an ample sweep between-whiles; many little streams will have fallen in; many exhalations risen towards the sun; and even although it were the same acre, it will no more be the same river of Oise. And thus, O graces of Origny, although the wandering fortune of my life should carry me back again to where you await death’s whistle by the river, that will not be the old I who walks the street; and those wives and mothers, say, will those be you?

There was never any mistake about the Oise, as a matter of fact. In these upper reaches it was still in a prodigious hurry for the sea. It ran so fast and merrily, through all the windings of its channel, that I strained my thumb, fighting with the rapids, and had to paddle all the rest of the way with one hand turned up. Sometimes it had to serve mills; and being still a little river, ran very dry and shallow in the meanwhile. We had to put our legs out of the boat, and shove ourselves off the sand of the bottom with our feet. And still it went on its way singing among the poplars, and making a green valley in the world. After a good woman, and a good book, and tobacco, there is nothing so agreeable on earth as a river. I forgave it its attempt on my life; which was after all one part owing to the unruly winds of heaven that had blown down the tree, one part to my own mismanagement, and only a third part to the river itself, and that not out of malice, but from its great preoccupation over its business of getting to the sea. A difficult business, too; for the detours it had to make are not to be counted. The geographers seem to have given up the attempt; for I found no map represent the infinite contortion of its course. A fact will say more than any of them. After we had been some hours, three if I mistake not, flitting by the trees at this smooth, break-neck gallop, when we came upon a hamlet and asked where we were, we had got no farther than four kilometres (say two miles and a half) from Origny. If it were not for the honour of the thing (in the Scots saying), we might almost as well have been standing still.

We lunched on a meadow inside a parallelogram of poplars. The leaves danced and prattled in the wind all round about us. The river hurried on meanwhile, and seemed to chide at our delay. Little we cared. The river knew where it was going; not so we: the less our hurry, where we found good quarters and a pleasant theatre for a pipe. At that hour, stockbrokers were shouting in Paris Bourse for two or three per cent.; but we minded them as little as the sliding stream, and sacrificed a hecatomb of minutes to the gods of tobacco and digestion. Hurry is the resource of the faithless. Where a man can trust his own heart, and those of his friends, to-morrow is as good as to-day. And if he die in the meanwhile, why then, there he dies, and the question is solved.

We had to take to the canal in the course of the afternoon; because, where it crossed the river, there was, not a bridge, but a siphon. If it had not been for an excited fellow on the bank, we should have paddled right into the siphon, and thenceforward not paddled any more. We met a man, a gentleman, on the tow-path, who was much interested in our cruise. And I was witness to a strange seizure of lying suffered by the *Cigarette*: who, because his knife came from Norway, narrated all sorts of adventures in that country, where he has never been. He was quite feverish at the end, and pleaded demoniacal possession.

Moy (pronounce Moÿ) was a pleasant little village, gathered round a château in a moat. The air was perfumed with hemp from neighbouring fields. At the Golden Sheep we found excellent entertainment. German shells from the siege of La Fère, Nürnberg figures, gold-fish in a bowl, and all manner of knick-knacks, embellished the public room. The landlady was a stout, plain, short-sighted, motherly body, with something not far short of a genius for cookery. She had a guess of her excellence herself. After every dish was sent in, she would come and look on at the dinner for a while, with puckered, blinking eyes. “*C’est bon, n’est-ce pas?*” she would say; and when she had received a proper answer, she disappeared into the kitchen. That common French dish, partridge and cabbages, became a new thing in my eyes at the Golden Sheep; and many subsequent dinners have bitterly disappointed me in consequence. Sweet was our rest in the Golden Sheep at Moy.

LA FÈRE OF CURSED MEMORY

We lingered in Moy a good part of the day, for we were fond of being philosophical, and scorned long journeys and early starts on principle. The place, moreover, invited to repose. People in elaborate shooting costumes sallied from the château with guns and game-bags; and this was a pleasure in itself, to remain behind while these elegant pleasure-seekers took the first of the morning. In this way, all the world may be an aristocrat, and play the duke among marquises, and the reigning monarch among dukes, if he will only outvie them in tranquility. An imperturbable demeanour comes from perfect patience. Quiet minds cannot be perplexed or frightened, but go on in fortune or misfortune at their own private pace, like a clock during a thunderstorm.

We made a very short day of it to La Fère; but the dusk was falling, and a small rain had begun before we stowed the boats. La Fère is a fortified town in a plain, and has two belts of rampart. Between the first and the second extends a region of waste land and cultivated patches. Here and there along the wayside were posters forbidding trespass in the name of military engineering. At last, a second gateway admitted us to the town itself. Lighted windows looked gladsome, whiffs of comfortable cookery came abroad upon the air. The town was full of the military reserve, out for the French Autumn Manoeuvres, and the reservists walked speedily and wore their formidable great-coats. It was a fine night to be within doors over dinner, and hear the rain upon the windows.

The *Cigarette* and I could not sufficiently congratulate each other on the prospect, for we had been told there was a capital inn at La Fère. Such a dinner as we were going to eat! such beds as we were to sleep in! — and all the while the rain raining on houseless folk over all the poplared countryside! It made our mouths water. The inn bore the name of some woodland animal, stag, or hart, or hind, I forget which. But I shall never forget how spacious and how eminently habitable it looked as we drew near. The carriage entry was lighted up, not by intention, but from the mere superfluity of fire and candle in the house. A rattle of many dishes came to our ears; we sighted a great field of tablecloth; the kitchen glowed like a forge and smelt like a garden of things to eat.

Into this, the inmost shrine and physiological heart of a hostelry, with all its furnaces in action, and all its dressers charged with viands, you are now to suppose us making our triumphal entry, a pair of damp rag-and-bone men, each with a limp india-rubber bag upon his arm. I do not believe I have a sound view of that kitchen; I saw it through a sort of glory: but it seemed to me crowded with the snowy caps of cookmen, who all turned round from their saucepans and looked at us with surprise. There was no doubt about the landlady, however: there she was, heading her army, a flushed, angry woman, full of affairs. Her I asked politely — too politely, thinks the *Cigarette* — if we could have beds: she surveying us coldly from head to foot.

"You will find beds in the suburb," she remarked. "We are too busy for the like of you."

If we could make an entrance, change our clothes, and order a bottle of wine, I felt sure we could put things right; so said I: "If we cannot sleep, we may at least dine," — and was for depositing my bag.

What a terrible convulsion of nature was that which followed in the landlady's face! She made a run at us, and stamped her foot.

"Out with you — out of the door!" she screeched. "*Sortez! sortez! sortez par la porte!*"

I do not know how it happened, but next moment we were out in the rain and darkness, and I was cursing before the carriage entry like a disappointed mendicant. Where were the boating men of Belgium? where the Judge and his good wines? and where the graces of Origny? Black, black was the night after the firelit kitchen; but what was that to the blackness in our heart? This was not the first time that I have been refused a lodging. Often and often have I planned what I should do if such a misadventure happened to me again. And nothing is easier to plan. But to put in execution, with the heart boiling at the indignity? Try it; try it only once; and tell me what you did.

It is all very fine to talk about tramps and morality. Six hours of police surveillance (such as I have had), or one brutal rejection from an inn-door, change your views upon the subject like a course of lectures. As long as you keep in the upper regions, with all the world bowing to you as you go, social arrangements have a very handsome air; but once get under the wheels, and you wish society were at the devil. I will give most respectable men a fortnight of such a life, and then I will offer them twopence for what remains of their morality.

For my part, when I was turned out of the Stag, or the Hind, or whatever it was, I would have set the temple of Diana on fire if it had been handy. There was no crime complete enough to express my disapproval of human institutions. As for the *Cigarette*, I never knew a man so altered. "We have been taken for pedlars again," said he. "Good God, what it must be to be a pedlar in reality!" He particularized a complaint for every joint in the landlady's body. Timon was a philanthropist alongside of him. And then, when he was at the top of his maledictory bent, he would suddenly break away and begin whimperingly to commiserate the poor. "I hope to God," he said, — and I trust the prayer was answered, — ”that I shall never be uncivil to a pedlar.” Was this the imperturbable *Cigarette*? This, this was he. O change beyond report, thought, or belief!

Meantime the heaven wept upon our heads; and the windows grew brighter as the night increased in darkness. We trudged in and out of La Fère streets; we saw shops, and private houses where people were copiously dining; we saw stables where carters’ nags had plenty of fodder and clean straw; we saw no end of reservists, who were very sorry for themselves this wet night, I doubt not, and yearned for their country homes; but had they not each man his place in La Fère barracks? And we, what had we?

There seemed to be no other inn in the whole town. People gave us directions, which we followed as best we could, generally with the effect of bringing us out again upon the scene of our disgrace. We were very sad people indeed by the time we had gone all over La Fère; and the *Cigarette* had already made up his mind to lie under a poplar and sup off a loaf of bread. But right at the other end, the house next the town-gate was full of light and bustle. “*Bazin, aubergiste, loge à pied*,” was the sign. “*À la Croix de Malte.*” There were we received.

The room was full of noisy reservists drinking and smoking; and we were very glad indeed when the drums and bugles began to go about the streets, and one and all had to snatch shakoes and be off for the barracks.

Bazin was a tall man, running to fat: soft-spoken, with a delicate, gentle face. We asked him to share our wine; but he excused himself, having pledged reservists all day long. This was a very different type of the workman-innkeeper from the bawling disputatious fellow at Origny. He also loved Paris, where he had worked as a decorative painter in his youth. There were such opportunities for self-instruction there, he said. And if any one has read Zola’s description of the workman’s marriage-party visiting the Louvre, they would do well to have heard Bazin by way of antidote. He had delighted in the museums in his youth. “One sees there little miracles of work,” he said; “that is what makes a good workman; it kindles a spark.” We asked him how he managed in La Fère. “I am married,” he said, “and I have my pretty children. But frankly, it is no life at all. From morning to night I pledge a pack of good enough fellows who know nothing.”

It faired as the night went on, and the moon came out of the clouds. We sat in front of the door, talking softly with Bazin. At the guardhouse opposite, the guard was being for ever turned out, as trains of field artillery kept clanking in out of the night, or patrols of horsemen trotted by in their cloaks. Madame Bazin came out after a while; she was tired with her day’s work, I suppose; and she nestled up to her husband and laid her head upon his breast. He had his arm about her, and kept gently patting her on the shoulder. I think Bazin was right, and he was really married. Of how few people can the same be said!

Little did the Bazins know how much they served us. We were charged for candles, for food and drink, and for the beds we slept in. But there was nothing in the bill for the husband's pleasant talk; nor for the pretty spectacle of their married life. And there was yet another item uncharged. For these people's politeness really set us up again in our own esteem. We had a thirst for consideration; the sense of insult was still hot in our spirits; and civil usage seemed to restore us to our position in the world.

How little we pay our way in life! Although we have our purses continually in our hand, the better part of service goes still unrewarded. But I like to fancy that a grateful spirit gives as good as it gets. Perhaps the Bazins knew how much I liked them? perhaps they also were healed of some slights by the thanks that I gave them in my manner?

DOWN THE OISE THROUGH THE GOLDEN VALLEY

Below La Fère the river runs through a piece of open pastoral country; green, opulent, loved by breeders; called the Golden Valley. In wide sweeps, and with a swift and equable gallop, the ceaseless stream of water visits and makes green the fields. Kine, and horses, and little humorous donkeys, browse together in the meadows, and come down in troops to the riverside to drink. They make a strange feature in the landscape; above all when they are startled, and you see them galloping to and fro with their incongruous forms and faces. It gives a feeling as of great, unfenced pampas, and the herds of wandering nations. There were hills in the distance upon either hand; and on one side, the river sometimes bordered on the wooded spurs of Coucy and St. Gobain.

The artillery were practicing at La Fère, and soon the cannon of heaven joined in that loud play. Two continents of cloud met and exchanged salvos overhead; while all round the horizon we could see sunshine and clear air upon the hills. What with the guns and the thunder, the herds were all frightened in the Golden Valley. We could see them tossing their heads, and running to and fro in timorous indecision; and when they had made up their minds, and the donkey followed the horse, and the cow was after the donkey, we could hear their hooves thundering abroad over the meadows. It had a martial sound, like cavalry charges. And altogether, as far as the ears are concerned, we had a very rousing battle-piece performed for our amusement.

At last the guns and the thunder dropped off; the sun shone on the wet meadows; the air was scented with the breath of rejoicing trees and grass; and the river kept unweariedly carrying us on at its best pace. There was a manufacturing district about Chauny, and after that the banks grew so high that they hid the adjacent country, and we could see nothing but clay sides, and one willow after another. Only, here and there, we passed by a village or a ferry, and some wondering child upon the bank would stare after us until we turned the corner. I daresay we continued to paddle in that child's dreams for many a night after.

Sun and shower alternated like day and night, making the hours longer by their variety. When the showers were heavy, I could feel each drop striking through my jersey to my warm skin; and the accumulation of small shocks put me nearly beside myself. I decided I should buy a mackintosh at Noyon. It is nothing to get wet; but the misery of these individual pricks of cold all over my body at the same instant of time made me flail the water with my paddle like a madman. The *Cigarette* was greatly amused by these ebullitions. It gave him something else to look at besides clay banks and willows.

All the time, the river stole away like a thief in straight places, or swung round corners with an eddy; the willows nodded, and were undermined all day long; the clay banks tumbled in; the Oise, which had been so many centuries making the Golden Valley, seemed to have changed its fancy, and to be bent upon undoing its performance. What a number of things a river does, by simply following Gravity in the innocence of its heart!

NOYON CATHEDRAL

Noyon stands about a mile from the river, in a little plain surrounded by wooded hills, and entirely covers an eminence with its tile roofs, surmounted by a long, straight-backed cathedral with two stiff towers. As we got into the town, the tile roofs seemed to tumble uphill one upon another, in the oddest disorder; but for all their scrambling, they did not attain above the knees of the cathedral, which stood, upright and solemn, over all. As the streets drew near to this presiding genius, through the market-place under the Hôtel de Ville, they grew emptier and more composed. Blank walls and shuttered windows were turned to the great edifice, and grass grew on the white causeway. “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” The Hôtel du Nord, nevertheless, lights its secular tapers within a stone-cast of the church; and we had the superb east-end before our eyes all morning from the window of our bedroom. I have seldom looked on the east-end of a church with more complete sympathy. As it flanges out in three wide terraces and settles down broadly on the earth, it looks like the poop of some great old battle-ship. Hollow-backed buttresses carry vases, which figure for the stern lanterns. There is a roll in the ground, and the towers just appear above the pitch of the roof, as though the good ship were bowing lazily over an Atlantic swell. At any moment it might be a hundred feet away from you, climbing the next billow. At any moment a window might open, and some old admiral thrust forth a cocked hat, and proceed to take an observation. The old admirals sail the sea no longer; the old ships of battle are all broken up, and live only in pictures; but this, that was a church before ever they were thought upon, is still a church, and makes as brave an appearance by the Oise. The cathedral and the river are probably the two oldest things for miles around; and certainly they have both a grand old age.

The Sacristan took us to the top of one of the towers, and showed us the five bells hanging in their loft. From above, the town was a tessellated pavement of roofs and gardens; the old line of rampart was plainly traceable; and the Sacristan pointed out to us, far across the plain, in a bit of gleaming sky between two clouds, the towers of Château Coucy.

I find I never weary of great churches. It is my favourite kind of mountain scenery. Mankind was never so happily inspired as when it made a cathedral: a thing as single and specious as a statue to the first glance, and yet, on examination, as lively and interesting as a forest in detail. The height of spires cannot be taken by trigonometry; they measure absurdly short, but how tall they are to the admiring eye! And where we have so many elegant proportions, growing one out of the other, and all together into one, it seems as if proportion transcended itself, and became something different and more imposing. I could never fathom how a man dares to lift up his voice to preach in a cathedral. What is he to say that will not be an anti-climax? For though I have heard a considerable variety of sermons, I never yet heard one that was so expressive as a cathedral. 'Tis the best preacher itself, and preaches day and night; not only telling you of man's art and aspirations in the past, but convicting your own soul of ardent sympathies; or rather, like all good preachers, it sets you preaching to yourself; — and every man is his own doctor of divinity in the last resort.

As I sat outside of the hotel in the course of the afternoon, the sweet groaning thunder of the organ floated out of the church like a summons. I was not averse, liking the theatre so well, to sit out an act or two of the play, but I could never rightly make out the nature of the service I beheld. Four or five priests and as many choristers were singing *Miserere* before the high altar when I went in. There was no congregation but a few old women on chairs and old men kneeling on the pavement. After a while a long train of young girls, walking two and two, each with a lighted taper in her hand, and all dressed in black with a white veil, came from behind the altar, and began to descend the nave; the four first carrying a Virgin and child upon a table. The priests and choristers arose from their knees and followed after, singing "Ave Mary" as they went. In this order they made the circuit of the cathedral, passing twice before me where I leaned against a pillar. The priest who seemed of most consequence was a strange, down-looking old man. He kept mumbling prayers with his lips; but as he looked upon me darkling, it did not seem as if prayer were uppermost in his heart. Two others, who bore the burthen of the chant, were stout, brutal, military-looking men of forty, with bold, over-fed eyes; they sang with some lustiness, and trolled forth "Ave Mary" like a garrison catch. The little girls were timid and grave. As they footed slowly up the aisle, each one took a moment's glance at the Englishman; and the big nun who played marshal fairly stared him out of countenance. As for the choristers, from first to last they misbehaved as only boys can misbehave; and cruelly marred the performance with their antics.

I understood a great deal of the spirit of what went on. Indeed it would be difficult not to understand the *Miserere*, which I take to be the composition of an atheist. If it ever be a good thing to take such despondency to heart, the *Miserere* is the right music, and a cathedral a fit scene. So far I am at one with the Catholics: — an odd name for them, after all? But why, in God’s name, these holiday choristers? why these priests who steal wandering looks about the congregation while they feign to be at prayer? why this fat nun, who rudely arranges her procession and shakes delinquent virgins by the elbow? why this spitting, and snuffing, and forgetting of keys, and the thousand and one little misadventures that disturb a frame of mind laboriously edified with chants and organings? In any playhouse reverend fathers may see what can be done with a little art, and how, to move high sentiments, it is necessary to drill the supernumeraries and have every stool in its proper place.

One other circumstance distressed me. I could bear a *Miserere* myself, having had a good deal of open-air exercise of late; but I wished the old people somewhere else. It was neither the right sort of music nor the right sort of divinity for men and women who have come through most accidents by this time, and probably have an opinion of their own upon the tragic element in life. A person up in years can generally do his own *Miserere* for himself; although I notice that such an one often prefers *Jubilate Deo* for his ordinary singing. On the whole, the most religious exercise for the aged is probably to recall their own experience; so many friends dead, so many hopes disappointed, so many slips and stumbles, and withal so many bright days and smiling providences; there is surely the matter of a very eloquent sermon in all this.

On the whole, I was greatly solemnized. In the little pictorial map of our whole Inland Voyage, which my fancy still preserves, and sometimes unrolls for the amusement of odd moments, Noyon cathedral figures on a most preposterous scale, and must be nearly as large as a department. I can still see the faces of the priests as if they were at my elbow, and hear *Ave Maria, ora pro nobis*, sounding through the church. All Noyon is blotted out for me by these superior memories; and I do not care to say more about the place. It was but a stack of brown roofs at the best, where I believe people live very reputably in a quiet way; but the shadow of the church falls upon it when the sun is low, and the five bells are heard in all quarters, telling that the organ has begun. If ever I join the Church of Rome, I shall stipulate to be Bishop of Noyon on the Oise.

DOWN THE OISE TO COMPIÈGNE

The most patient people grow weary at last with being continually wetted with rain; except of course in the Scottish Highlands, where there are not enough fine intervals to point the difference. That was like to be our case, the day we left Noyon. I remember nothing of the voyage; it was nothing but clay banks and willows, and rain; incessant, pitiless, beating rain; until we stopped to lunch at a little inn at Pimprez, where the canal ran very near the river. We were so sadly drenched that the landlady lit a few sticks in the chimney for our comfort; there we sat in a steam of vapour, lamenting our concerns. The husband donned a game-bag and strode out to shoot; the wife sat in a far corner watching us. I think we were worth looking at. We grumbled over the misfortune of La Fère; we forecast other La Fères in the future; — although things went better with the *Cigarette* for spokesman; he had more aplomb altogether than I; and a dull, positive way of approaching a landlady that carried off the india-rubber bags. Talking of La Fère put us talking of the reservists.

“Reservery,” said he, “seems a pretty mean way to spend one’s autumn holiday.”

“About as mean,” returned I dejectedly, “as canoeing.”

“These gentlemen travel for their pleasure?” asked the landlady, with unconscious irony.

It was too much. The scales fell from our eyes. Another wet day, it was determined, and we put the boats into the train.

The weather took the hint. That was our last wetting. The afternoon faired up: grand clouds still voyaged in the sky, but now singly, and with a depth of blue around their path; and a sunset in the daintiest rose and gold inaugurated a thick night of stars and a month of unbroken weather. At the same time, the river began to give us a better outlook into the country. The banks were not so high, the willows disappeared from along the margin, and pleasant hills stood all along its course and marked their profile on the sky.

In a little while the canal, coming to its last lock, began to discharge its water-houses on the Oise; so that we had no lack of company to fear. Here were all our old friends; the *Deo Gratias* of Condé and the *Four Sons of Aymon* journeyed cheerily down stream along with us; we exchanged waterside pleasantries with the steersman perched among the lumber, or the driver hoarse with bawling to his horses; and the children came and looked over the side as we paddled by. We had never known all this while how much we missed them; but it gave us a fillip to see the smoke from their chimneys.

A little below this junction we made another meeting of yet more account. For there we were joined by the Aìsne, already a far-travelled river and fresh out of Champagne. Here ended the adolescence of the Oise; this was his marriage-day; thenceforward he had a stately, brimming march, conscious of his own dignity and sundry dams. He became a tranquil feature in the scene. The trees and towns saw themselves in him, as in a mirror. He carried the canoes lightly on his broad breast; there was no need to work hard against an eddy: but idleness became the order of the day, and mere straightforward dipping of the paddle, now on this side, now on that, without intelligence or effort. Truly we were coming into halcyon weather upon all accounts, and were floated towards the sea like gentlemen.

We made Compiègne as the sun was going down: a fine profile of a town above the river. Over the bridge, a regiment was parading to the drum. People loitered on the quay, some fishing, some looking idly at the stream. And as the two boats shot in along the water, we could see them pointing them out and speaking one to another. We landed at a floating lavatory, where the washerwomen were still beating the clothes.

AT COMPIÈGNE

We put up at a big, bustling hotel in Compiègne, where nobody observed our presence.

Reservery and general *militarismus* (as the Germans call it) were rampant. A camp of conical white tents without the town looked like a leaf out of a picture Bible; sword-belts decorated the walls of the *cafés*, and the streets kept sounding all day long with military music. It was not possible to be an Englishman and avoid a feeling of elation; for the men who followed the drums were small, and walked shabbily. Each man inclined at his own angle, and jolted to his own convenience, as he went. There was nothing of the superb gait with which a regiment of tall Highlanders moves behind its music, solemn and inevitable, like a natural phenomenon. Who that has seen it can forget the drum-major pacing in front, the drummers' tiger-skins, the pipers' swinging plaids, the strange elastic rhythm of the whole regiment footing it in time — and the bang of the drum, when the brasses cease, and the shrill pipes take up the martial story in their place?

A girl, at school in France, began to describe one of our regiments on parade to her French schoolmates, and as she went on, she told me, the recollection grew so vivid, she became so proud to be the countrywoman of such soldiers, and so sorry to be in another country, that her voice failed her and she burst into tears. I have never forgotten that girl; and I think she very nearly deserves a statue. To call her a young lady, with all its niminy associations, would be to offer her an insult. She may rest assured of one thing: although she never should marry a heroic general, never see any great or immediate result of her life, she will not have lived in vain for her native land.

But though French soldiers show to ill advantage on parade, on the march they are gay, alert, and willing like a troop of fox-hunters. I remember once seeing a company pass through the forest of Fontainebleau, on the Chailly road, between the Bas Bréau and the Reine Blanche. One fellow walked a little before the rest, and sang a loud, audacious marching song. The rest bestirred their feet, and even swung their muskets in time. A young officer on horseback had hard ado to keep his countenance at the words. You never saw anything so cheerful and spontaneous as their gait; schoolboys do not look more eagerly at hare and hounds; and you would have thought it impossible to tire such willing marchers.

My great delight in Compiègne was the town-hall. I doted upon the town-hall. It is a monument of Gothic insecurity, all turreted, and gargoyled, and slashed, and bedizened with half a score of architectural fancies. Some of the niches are gilt and painted; and in a great square panel in the centre, in black relief on a gilt ground, Louis XII. rides upon a pacing horse, with hand on hip and head thrown back. There is royal arrogance in every line of him; the stirruped foot projects insolently from the frame; the eye is hard and proud; the very horse seems to be treading with gratification over prostrate serfs, and to have the breath of the trumpet in his nostrils. So rides for ever, on the front of the town-hall, the good king Louis XII., the father of his people.

Over the king's head, in the tall centre turret, appears the dial of a clock; and high above that, three little mechanical figures, each one with a hammer in his hand, whose business it is to chime out the hours and halves and quarters for the burgesses of Compiègne. The centre figure has a gilt breast-plate; the two others wear gilt trunk-hose; and they all three have elegant, flapping hats like cavaliers. As the quarter approaches, they turn their heads and look knowingly one to the other; and then, *kling* go the three hammers on three little bells below. The hour follows, deep and sonorous, from the interior of the tower; and the gilded gentlemen rest from their labours with contentment.

I had a great deal of healthy pleasure from their manoeuvres, and took good care to miss as few performances as possible; and I found that even the *Cigarette*, while he pretended to despise my enthusiasm, was more or less a devotee himself. There is something highly absurd in the exposition of such toys to the outrages of winter on a housetop. They would be more in keeping in a glass case before a Nürnberg clock. Above all, at night, when the children are abed, and even grown people are snoring under quilts, does it not seem impertinent to leave these ginger-bread figures winking and tinkling to the stars and the rolling moon? The gargoyles may fitly enough twist their ape-like heads; fitly enough may the potentate bestride his charger, like a centurion in an old German print of the *Via Dolorosa*; but the toys should be put away in a box among some cotton, until the sun rises, and the children are abroad again to be amused.

In Compiègne post-office a great packet of letters awaited us; and the authorities were, for this occasion only, so polite as to hand them over upon application.

In some ways, our journey may be said to end with this letter-bag at Compiègne. The spell was broken. We had partly come home from that moment.

No one should have any correspondence on a journey; it is bad enough to have to write, but the receipt of letters is the death of all holiday feeling.

“Out of my country and myself I go.” I wish to take a dive among new conditions for a while, as into another element. I have nothing to do with my friends or my affections for the time; when I came away, I left my heart at home in a desk, or sent it forward with my portmanteau to await me at my destination. After my journey is over, I shall not fail to read your admirable letters with the attention they deserve. But I have paid all this money, look you, and paddled all these strokes, for no other purpose than to be abroad; and yet you keep me at home with your perpetual communications. You tug the string, and I feel that I am a tethered bird. You pursue me all over Europe with the little vexations that I came away to avoid. There is no discharge in the war of life, I am well aware; but shall there not be so much as a week’s furlough?

We were up by six, the day we were to leave. They had taken so little note of us that I hardly thought they would have condescended on a bill. But they did, with some smart particulars too, and we paid in a civilized manner to an uninterested clerk, and went out of that hotel, with the india-rubber bags, unremarked. No one cared to know about us. It is not possible to rise before a village; but Compiègne was so grown a town, that it took its ease in the morning, and we were up and away while it was still in dressing-gown and slippers. The streets were left to people washing doorsteps; nobody was in full dress but the cavaliers upon the town-hall; they were all washed with dew, spruce in their gilding, and full of intelligence and a sense of professional responsibility. *Kling* went they on the bells for the half-past six as we went by. I took it kindly of them to make me this parting compliment; they never were in better form, not even at noon upon a Sunday.

There was no one to see us off but the early washerwomen — early and late — who were already beating the linen in their floating lavatory on the river. They were very merry and matutinal in their ways; plunged their arms boldly in, and seemed not to feel the shock. It would be dispiriting to me, this early beginning and first cold dabble of a most dispiriting day’s work. But I believe they would have been as unwilling to change days with us as we could be to change with them. They crowded to the door to watch us paddle away into the thin sunny mists upon the river; and shouted heartily alter us till we were through the bridge.

CHANGED TIMES

There is a sense in which those mists never rose from off our journey; and from that time forth they lie very densely in my note-book. As long as the Oise was a small rural river, it took us near by people's doors, and we could hold a conversation with natives in the riparian fields. But now that it had grown so wide, the life along shore passed us by at a distance. It was the same difference as between a great public highway and a country by-path that wanders in and out of cottage gardens. We now lay in towns, where nobody troubled us with questions; we had floated into civilized life, where people pass without salutation. In sparsely inhabited places, we make all we can of each encounter; but when it comes to a city, we keep to ourselves, and never speak unless we have trodden on a man's toes. In these waters we were no longer strange birds, and nobody supposed we had travelled farther than from the last town. I remember, when we came into L'Isle Adam, for instance, how we met dozens of pleasure-boats outing it for the afternoon, and there was nothing to distinguish the true voyager from the amateur, except, perhaps, the filthy condition of my sail. The company in one boat actually thought they recognized me for a neighbour. Was there ever anything more wounding? All the romance had come down to that. Now, on the upper Oise, where nothing sailed as a general thing but fish, a pair of canoeists could not be thus vulgarly explained away; we were strange and picturesque intruders; and out of people's wonder sprang a sort of light and passing intimacy all along our route. There is nothing but tit-for-tat in this world, though sometimes it be a little difficult to trace: for the scores are older than we ourselves, and there has never yet been a settling-day since things were. You get entertainment pretty much in proportion as you give. As long as we were a sort of odd wanderers, to be stared at and followed like a quack doctor or a caravan, we had no want of amusement in return; but as soon as we sank into commonplace ourselves, all whom we met were similarly disenchanted. And here is one reason of a dozen, why the world is dull to dull persons.

In our earlier adventures there was generally something to do, and that quickened us. Even the showers of rain had a revivifying effect, and shook up the brain from torpor. But now, when the river no longer ran in a proper sense, only glided seaward with an even, outright, but imperceptible speed, and when the sky smiled upon us day after day without variety, we began to slip into that golden doze of the mind which follows upon much exercise in the open air. I have stupefied myself in this way more than once; indeed, I dearly love the feeling; but I never had it to the same degree as when paddling down the Oise. It was the apotheosis of stupidity.

We ceased reading entirely. Sometimes when I found a new paper, I took a particular pleasure in reading a single number of the current novel; but I never could bear more than three installments; and even the second was a disappointment. As soon as the tale became in any way perspicuous, it lost all merit in my eyes; only a single scene, or, as is the way with these *feuilletons*, half a scene, without antecedent or consequence, like a piece of a dream, had the knack of fixing my interest. The less I saw of the novel, the better I liked it: a pregnant reflection. But for the most part, as I said, we neither of us read anything in the world, and employed the very little while we were awake between bed and dinner in poring upon maps. I have always been fond of maps, and can voyage in an atlas with the greatest enjoyment. The names of places are singularly inviting; the contour of coasts and rivers is enthralling to the eye; and to hit, in a map, upon some place you have heard of before makes history a new possession. But we thumbed our charts on these evenings with the blankest unconcern. We cared not a fraction for this place or that. We stared at the sheet as children listen to their rattle; and read the names of towns or villages to forget them again at once. We had no romance in the matter; there was nobody so fancy-free. If you had taken the maps away while we were studying them most intently, it is a fair bet whether we might not have continued to study the table with the same delight.

About one thing we were mightily taken up, and that was eating. I think I made a god of my belly. I remember dwelling in imagination upon this or that dish till my mouth watered; and long before we got in for the night my appetite was a clamant, instant annoyance. Sometimes we paddled alongside for a while, and whetted each other with gastronomical fancies as we went. Cake and sherry, a homely refection, but not within reach upon the Oise, trotted through my head for many a mile; and once, as we were approaching Verberie, the *Cigarette* brought my heart into my mouth by the suggestion of oyster patties and Sauterne.

I suppose none of us recognise the great part that is played in life by eating and drinking. The appetite is so imperious that we can stomach the least interesting viands, and pass off a dinner-hour thankfully enough on bread and water; just as there are men who must read something, if it were only “Bradshaw’s Guide.” But there is a romance about the matter after all. Probably the table has more devotees than love; and I am sure that food is much more generally entertaining than scenery. Do you give in, as Walt Whitman would say, that you are any the less immortal for that? The true materialism is to be ashamed of what we are. To detect the flavour of aean olive is no less a piece of human perfection than to find beauty in the colours of the sunset.

Canoeing was easy work. To dip the paddle at the proper inclination, now right, now left; to keep the head down stream; to empty the little pool that gathered in the lap of the apron; to screw up the eyes against the glittering sparkles of sun upon the water; or now and again to pass below the whistling tow-rope of the *Deo Gratias* of Condé, or the *Four Sons of Aymon* — there was not much art in that; certain silly muscles managed it between sleep and waking; and meanwhile the brain had a whole holiday, and went to sleep. We took in, at a glance, the larger features of the scene; and beheld, with half an eye, bloused fishers and dabbling washerwomen on the bank. Now and again we might be half-wakened by some church spire, by a leaping fish, or by a trail of river grass that clung about the paddle and had to be plucked off and thrown away. But these luminous intervals were only partially luminous. A little more of us was called into action, but never the whole. The central bureau of nerves, what in some moods we call Ourselves, enjoyed its holiday without disturbance, like a Government office. The great wheels of intelligence turned idly in the head, like fly-wheels, grinding no grist. I have gone on for half an hour at a time, counting my strokes and forgetting the hundreds. I flatter myself the beasts that perish could not underbid that, as a low form of consciousness. And what a pleasure it was! What a hearty, tolerant temper did it bring about! There is nothing captious about a man who has attained to this, the one possible apotheosis in life, the Apotheosis of Stupidity; and he begins to feel dignified and longaevous like a tree.

There was one odd piece of practical metaphysics which accompanied what I may call the depth, if I must not call it the intensity, of my abstraction. What philosophers call *me* and *not-me, ego* and *non ego*, preoccupied me whether I would or no. There was less *me* and more *not-me* than I was accustomed to expect. I looked on upon somebody else, who managed the paddling; I was aware of somebody else's feet against the stretcher; my own body seemed to have no more intimate relation to me than the canoe, or the river, or the river banks. Nor this alone: something inside my mind, a part of my brain, a province of my proper being, had thrown off allegiance and set up for itself, or perhaps for the somebody else who did the paddling. I had dwindled into quite a little thing in a corner of myself. I was isolated in my own skull. Thoughts presented themselves unbidden; they were not my thoughts, they were plainly some one else's; and I considered them like a part of the landscape. I take it, in short, that I was about as near Nirvana as would be convenient in practical life; and if this be so, I make the Buddhists my sincere compliments; ‘tis an agreeable state, not very consistent with mental brilliancy, not exactly profitable in a money point of view, but very calm, golden, and incurious, and one that sets a man superior to alarms. It may be best figured by supposing yourself to get dead drunk, and yet keep sober to enjoy it. I have a notion that open-air labourers must spend a large portion of their days in this ecstatic stupor, which explains their high composure and endurance. A pity to go to the expense of laudanum, when here is a better paradise for nothing!

This frame of mind was the great exploit of our voyage, take it all in all. It was the farthest piece of travel accomplished. Indeed, it lies so far from beaten paths of language, that I despair of getting the reader into sympathy with the smiling, complacent idiocy of my condition; when ideas came and went like motes in a sunbeam; when trees and church spires along the bank surged up, from time to time into my notice, like solid objects through a rolling cloudland; when the rhythmical swish of boat and paddle in the water became a cradle-song to lull my thoughts asleep; when a piece of mud on the deck was sometimes an intolerable eyesore, and sometimes quite a companion for me, and the object of pleased consideration; — and all the time, with the river running and the shores changing upon either hand, I kept counting my strokes and forgetting the hundreds, the happiest animal in France.

DOWN THE OISE CHURCH INTERIORS

We made our first stage below Compiègne to Pont Sainte Maxence. I was abroad a little after six the next morning. The air was biting, and smelt of frost. In an open place a score of women wrangled together over the day's market; and the noise of their negotiation sounded thin and querulous like that of sparrows on a winter's morning. The rare passengers blew into their hands, and shuffled in their wooden shoes to set the blood agog. The streets were full of icy shadow, although the chimneys were smoking overhead in golden sunshine. If you wake early enough at this season of the year, you may get up in December to break your fast in June.

I found my way to the church; for there is always something to see about a church, whether living worshipers or dead men's tombs; you find there the deadliest earnest, and the hollowest deceit; and even where it is not a piece of history, it will be certain to leak out some contemporary gossip. It was scarcely so cold in the church as it was without, but it looked colder. The white nave was positively arctic to the eye; and the tawdriness of a continental altar looked more forlorn than usual in the solitude and the bleak air. Two priests sat in the chancel, reading and waiting penitents; and out in the nave, one very old woman was engaged in her devotions. It was a wonder how she was able to pass her beads when healthy young people were breathing in their palms and slapping their chest; but though this concerned me, I was yet more dispirited by the nature of her exercises. She went from chair to chair, from altar to altar, circumnavigating the church. To each shrine she dedicated an equal number of beads and an equal length of time. Like a prudent capitalist with a somewhat cynical view of the commercial prospect, she desired to place her supplications in a great variety of heavenly securities. She would risk nothing on the credit of any single intercessor. Out of the whole company of saints and angels, not one but was to suppose himself her champion-elect against the Great Assize! I could only think of it as a dull, transparent jugglery, based upon unconscious unbelief.

She was as dead an old woman as ever I saw; no more than bone and parchment, curiously put together. Her eyes, with which she interrogated mine, were vacant of sense. It depends on what you call seeing, whether you might not call her blind. Perhaps she had known love: perhaps borne children, suckled them and given them pet names. But now that was all gone by, and had left her neither happier nor wiser; and the best she could do with her mornings was to come up here into the cold church and juggle for a slice of heaven. It was not without a gulp that I escaped into the streets and the keen morning air. Morning? why, how tired of it she would be before night! and if she did not sleep, how then? It is fortunate that not many of us are brought up publicly to justify our lives at the bar of threescore years and ten; fortunate that such a number are knocked opportunely on the head in what they call the flower of their years, and go away to suffer for their follies in private somewhere else. Otherwise, between sick children and discontented old folk, we might be put out of all conceit of life.

I had need of all my cerebral hygiene during that day's paddle: the old devotee stuck in my throat sorely. But I was soon in the seventh heaven of stupidity; and knew nothing but that somebody was paddling a canoe, while I was counting his strokes, and forgetting the hundreds. I used sometimes to be afraid I should remember the hundreds; which would have made a toil of a pleasure; but the terror was chimerical, they went out of my mind by enchantment, and I knew no more than the man in the moon about my only occupation.

At Creil, where we stopped to lunch, we left the canoes in another floating lavatory, which, as it was high noon, was packed with washerwomen, red-handed and loud-voiced; and they and their broad jokes are about all I remember of the place. I could look up my history-books, if you were very anxious, and tell you a date or two; for it figured rather largely in the English wars. But I prefer to mention a girls' boarding-school, which had an interest for us because it was a girls' boarding-school, and because we imagined we had rather an interest for it. At least — there were the girls about the garden; and here were we on the river; and there was more than one handkerchief waved as we went by. It caused quite a stir in my heart; and yet how we should have wearied and despised each other, these girls and I, if we had been introduced at a croquet party! But this is a fashion I love: to kiss the hand or wave a handkerchief to people I shall never see again, to play with possibility, and knock in a peg for fancy to hang upon. It gives the traveller a jog, reminds him that he is not a traveller everywhere, and that his journey is no more than a siesta by the way on the real march of life.

The church at Creil was a nondescript place in the inside, splashed with gaudy lights from the windows, and picked out with medallions of the Dolorous Way. But there was one oddity, in the way of an *ex voto*, which pleased me hugely: a faithful model of a canal boat, swung from the vault, with a written aspiration that God should conduct the *Saint Nicolas* of Creil to a good haven. The thing was neatly executed, and would have made the delight of a party of boys on the waterside. But what tickled me was the gravity of the peril to be conjured. You might hang up the model of a sea-going ship, and welcome: one that is to plough a furrow round the world, and visit the tropic or the frosty poles, runs dangers that are well worth a candle and a mass. But the *Saint Nicolas* of Creil, which was to be tugged for some ten years by patient draught-horses, in a weedy canal, with the poplars chattering overhead, and the skipper whistling at the tiller; which was to do all its errands in green inland places, and never get out of sight of a village belfry in all its cruising; why, you would have thought if anything could be done without the intervention of Providence, it would be that! But perhaps the skipper was a humorist: or perhaps a prophet, reminding people of the seriousness of life by this preposterous token.

At Creil, as at Noyon, Saint Joseph seemed a favourite saint on the score of punctuality. Day and hour can be specified; and grateful people do not fail to specify them on a votive tablet, when prayers have been punctually and neatly answered. Whenever time is a consideration, Saint Joseph is the proper intermediary. I took a sort of pleasure in observing the vogue he had in France, for the good man plays a very small part in my religion at home. Yet I could not help fearing that, where the Saint is so much commended for exactitude, he will be expected to be very grateful for his tablet.

This is foolishness to us Protestants; and not of great importance anyway. Whether people's gratitude for the good gifts that come to them be wisely conceived or dutifully expressed is a secondary matter after all, so long as they feel gratitude. The true ignorance is when a man does not know that he has received a good gift, or begins to imagine that he has got it for himself. The self-made man is the funniest wind-bag after all! There is a marked difference between decreeing light in chaos, and lighting the gas in a metropolitan back-parlour with a box of patent matches; and do what we will, there is always something made to our hand, if it were only our fingers.

But there was something worse than foolishness placarded in Creil Church. The Association of the Living Rosary (of which I had never previously heard) is responsible for that. This Association was founded, according to the printed advertisement, by a brief of Pope Gregory Sixteenth, on the 17th of January, 1832: according to a coloured bas-relief, it seems to have been founded, sometime or other, by the Virgin giving one rosary to Saint Dominic, and the Infant Saviour giving another to Saint Catharine of Siena. Pope Gregory is not so imposing, but he is nearer hand. I could not distinctly make out whether the Association was entirely devotional, or had an eye to good works; at least it is highly organized: the names of fourteen matrons and misses were filled in for each week of the month as associates, with one other, generally a married woman, at the top for *zélatrice*: the leader of the band. Indulgences, plenary and partial, follow on the performance of the duties of the Association. "The partial indulgences are attached to the recitation of the rosary." On "the recitation of the required *dizaine*," a partial indulgence promptly follows. When people serve the kingdom of heaven with a pass-book in their hands, I should always be afraid lest they should carry the same commercial spirit into their dealings with their fellow-men, which would make a sad and sordid business of this life.

There is one more article, however, of happier import. "All these indulgences," it appeared, "are applicable to souls in purgatory." For God's sake, ye ladies of Creil, apply them all to the souls in purgatory without delay! Burns would take no hire for his last songs, preferring to serve his country out of unmixed love. Suppose you were to imitate the exciseman, mesdames, and even if the souls in purgatory were not greatly bettered, some souls in Creil upon the Oise would find themselves none the worse either here or hereafter.

I cannot help wondering, as I transcribe these notes, whether a Protestant born and bred is in a fit state to understand these signs, and do them what justice they deserve; and I cannot help answering that he is not. They cannot look so merely ugly and mean to the faithful as they do to me. I see that as clearly as a proposition in Euclid. For these believers are neither weak nor wicked. They can put up their tablet commending Saint Joseph for his despatch, as if he were still a village carpenter; they can "recite the required *dizaine*," and metaphorically pocket the indulgence, as if they had done a job for Heaven; and then they can go out and look down unabashed upon this wonderful river flowing by, and up without confusion at the pin-point stars, which are themselves great worlds full of flowing rivers greater than the Oise. I see it as plainly, I say, as a proposition in Euclid, that my Protestant mind has missed the point, and that there goes with these deformities some higher and more religious spirit than I dream.

I wonder if other people would make the same allowances for me! Like the ladies of Creil, having recited my rosary of toleration, I look for my indulgence on the spot.

PRÉCY AND THE MARIONNETTES

We made Précy about sundown. The plain is rich with tufts of poplar. In a wide, luminous curve, the Oise lay under the hillside. A faint mist began to rise and confound the different distances together. There was not a sound audible but that of the sheep-bells in some meadows by the river, and the creaking of a cart down the long road that descends the hill. The villas in their gardens, the shops along the street, all seemed to have been deserted the day before, and I felt inclined to walk discreetly as one feels in a silent forest. All of a sudden we came round a corner, and there, in a little green round the church, was a bevy of girls in Parisian costumes playing croquet. Their laughter, and the hollow sound of ball and mallet, made a cheery stir in the neighbourhood; and the look of these slim figures, all corseted and ribboned, produced an answerable disturbance in our hearts. We were within sniff of Paris, it seemed. And here were females of our own species playing croquet, just as if Précy had been a place in real life, instead of a stage in the fairyland of travel. For, to be frank, the peasant woman is scarcely to be counted as a woman at all, and after having passed by such a succession of people in petticoats digging and hoeing and making dinner, this company of coquettes under arms made quite a surprising feature in the landscape, and convinced us at once of being fallible males.

The inn at Précy is the worst inn in France. Not even in Scotland have I found worse fare. It was kept by a brother and sister, neither of whom was out of their teens. The sister, so to speak, prepared a meal for us, and the brother, who had been tippling, came in and brought with him a tipsy butcher, to entertain us as we ate. We found pieces of loo-warm pork among the salad, and pieces of unknown yielding substance in the *ragoût.* The butcher entertained us with pictures of Parisian life, with which he professed himself well acquainted; the brother sitting the while on the edge of the billiard table, toppling precariously, and sucking the stump of a cigar. In the midst of these diversions, bang went a drum past the house, and a hoarse voice began issuing a proclamation. It was a man with marionnettes announcing a performance for that evening.

He had set up his caravan and lighted his candles on another part of the girls’ croquet-green, under one of those open sheds which are so common in France to shelter markets; and he and his wife, by the time we strolled up there, were trying to keep order with the audience.

It was the most absurd contention. The show-people had set out a certain number of benches, and all who sat upon them were to pay a couple of sous for the accommodation. They were always quite full — a bumper house — as long as nothing was going forward; but let the show-woman appear with an eye to a collection, and at the first rattle of her tambourine the audience slipped off the seats, and stood round on the outside with their hands in their pockets. It certainly would have tried an angel's temper. The showman roared from the proscenium; he had been all over France, and nowhere, nowhere, "not even on the borders of Germany," had he met with such misconduct. Such thieves and rogues and rascals, as he called them! And every now and again the wife issued on another round, and added her shrill quota to the tirade. I remarked here, as elsewhere, how far more copious is the female mind in the material of insult. The audience laughed in high good-humour over the man's declamations, but they bridled and cried aloud under the woman's pungent sallies. She picked out the sore points. She had the honour of the village at her mercy. Voices answered her angrily out of the crowd, and received a smarting retort for their trouble. A couple of old ladies beside me, who had duly paid for their seats, waxed very red and indignant, and discoursed to each other audibly about the impudence of these mountebanks; but as soon as the show-woman caught a whisper of this, she was down upon them with a swoop: if mesdames could persuade their neighbours to act with common honesty, the mountebanks, she assured them, would be polite enough: mesdames had probably had their bowl of soup, and perhaps a glass of wine that evening; the mountebanks also had a taste for soup, and did not choose to have their little earnings stolen from them before their eyes. Once, things came as far as a brief personal encounter between the showman and some lads, in which the former went down as readily as one of his own marionnettes to a peal of jeering laughter.

I was a good deal astonished at this scene, because I am pretty well acquainted with the ways of French strollers, more or less artistic; and have always found them singularly pleasing. Any stroller must be dear to the right-thinking heart; if it were only as a living protest against offices and the mercantile spirit, and as something to remind us that life is not by necessity the kind of thing we generally make it. Even a German band, if you see it leaving town in the early morning for a campaign in country places, among trees and meadows, has a romantic flavour for the imagination. There is nobody, under thirty, so dead but his heart will stir a little at sight of a gypsies' camp. "We are not cotton-spinners all" — or, at least, not all through. There is some life in humanity yet: and youth will now and again find a brave word to say in dispraise of riches, and throw up a situation to go strolling with a knapsack.

An Englishman has always special facilities for intercourse with

French gymnasts; for England is the natural home of gymnasts. This or that fellow, in his tights and spangles, is sure to know a word or two of English, to have drunk English *aff-'n'-aff*, and perhaps performed in an English music-hall. He is a countryman of mine by profession. He leaps, like the Belgian boating men, to the notion that I must be an athlete myself.

But the gymnast is not my favourite; he has little or no tincture of the artist in his composition; his soul is small and pedestrian, for the most part, since his profession makes no call upon it, and does not accustom him to high ideas. But if a man is only so much of an actor that he can stumble through a farce, he is made free of a new order of thoughts. He has something else to think about beside the money-box. He has a pride of his own, and, what is of far more importance, he has an aim before him that he can never quite attain. He has gone upon a pilgrimage that will last him his life long, because there is no end to it short of perfection. He will better upon himself a little day by day; or even if he has given up the attempt, he will always remember that once upon a time he had conceived this high ideal, that once upon a time he had fallen in love with a star. "'Tis better to have loved and lost." Although the moon should have nothing to say to Endymion, although he should settle down with Audrey and feed pigs, do you not think he would move with a better grace, and cherish higher thoughts to the end? The lout he meets at church never had a fancy above Audrey's snood; but there is a reminiscence in Endymion's heart that, like a spice, keeps it fresh and haughty.

To be even one of the outskirters of art leaves a fine stamp on a man's countenance. I remember once dining with a party in the inn at Château Landon. Most of them were unmistakable bagmen; others well-to-do peasantry; but there was one young fellow in a blouse, whose face stood out from among the rest surprisingly. It looked more finished; more of the spirit looked out through it; it had a living, expressive air, and you could see that his eyes took things in. My companion and I wondered greatly who and what he could be. It was fair-time in Château Landon, and when we went along to the booths we had our question answered; for there was our friend busily fiddling for the peasants to caper to. He was a wandering violinist.

A troop of strollers once came to the inn where I was staying, in the Department of Seine et Marne. There was a father and mother; two daughters, brazen, blowsy hussies, who sang and acted, without an idea of how to set about either; and a dark young man, like a tutor, a recalcitrant house-painter, who sang and acted not amiss. The mother was the genius of the party, so far as genius can be spoken of with regard to such a pack of incompetent humbugs; and her husband could not find words to express his admiration for her comic countryman. “You should see my old woman,” said he, and nodded his beery countenance. One night they performed in the stable-yard, with flaring lamps — a wretched exhibition, coldly looked upon by a village audience. Next night, as soon as the lamps were lighted, there came a plump of rain, and they had to sweep away their baggage as fast as possible, and make off to the barn where they harboured, cold, wet, and supperless. In the morning, a dear friend of mine, who has as warm a heart for strollers as I have myself, made a little collection, and sent it by my hands to comfort them for their disappointment. I gave it to the father; he thanked me cordially, and we drank a cup together in the kitchen, talking of roads, and audiences, and hard times.

When I was going, up got my old stroller, and off with his hat. “I am afraid,” said he, “that Monsieur will think me altogether a beggar; but I have another demand to make upon him.” I began to hate him on the spot. “We play again to-night,” he went on. “Of course, I shall refuse to accept any more money from Monsieur and his friends, who have been already so liberal. But our programme of to-night is something truly creditable; and I cling to the idea that Monsieur will honour us with his presence.” And then, with a shrug and a smile: “Monsieur understands — the vanity of an artist!” Save the mark! The vanity of an artist! That is the kind of thing that reconciles me to life: a ragged, tippling, incompetent old rogue, with the manners of a gentleman, and the vanity of an artist, to keep up his self-respect!

But the man after my own heart is M. de Vauversin. It is nearly two years since I saw him first, and indeed I hope I may see him often again. Here is his first programme, as I found it on the breakfast-table, and have kept it ever since as a relic of bright days: —

“Mesdames et Messieurs,

Mademoiselle Ferrario et M. de Vauversin auront l’honneur de chanter ce soir les morceaux suivants.

Mademoiselle Ferrario chantera — Mignon — Oiseaux légers — France — Des Français dorment là — Le château bleu — Où voulez-vous aller?

M. de Vauversin — Madame Fountaine et M. Robinet — Les plongeurs à cheval — Le mari mécontent — Tais-toi, gamin — Mon voisin l’original — Heureux comme ça — Comme on est trompé.”

They made a stage at one end of the *salle-à-manger.* And what a sight it was to see M. de Vauversin, with a cigarette in his mouth, twanging a guitar, and following Mademoiselle Ferrario’s eyes with the obedient, kindly look of a dog! The entertainment wound up with a tombola, or auction of lottery tickets: an admirable amusement, with all the excitement of gambling, and no hope of gain to make you ashamed of your eagerness; for there all is loss; you make haste to be out of pocket; it is a competition who shall lose most money for the benefit of M. de Vauversin and Mademoiselle Ferrario.

M. de Vauversin is a small man, with a great head of black hair, a vivacious and engaging air, and a smile that would be delightful if he had better teeth. He was once an actor in the Châtelet; but he contracted a nervous affection from the heat and glare of the footlights, which unfitted him for the stage. At this crisis Mademoiselle Ferrario, otherwise Mademoiselle Rita of the Alcazar, agreed to share his wandering fortunes. "I could never forget the generosity of that lady," said he. He wears trousers so tight that it has long been a problem to all who knew him how he manages to get in and out of them. He sketches a little in water-colours; he writes verses; he is the most patient of fishermen, and spent long days at the bottom of the inn-garden fruitlessly dabbling a line in the clear river.

You should hear him recounting his experiences over a bottle of wine; such a pleasant vein of talk as he has, with a ready smile at his own mishaps, and every now and then a sudden gravity, like a man who should hear the surf roar while he was telling the perils of the deep. For it was no longer ago than last night, perhaps, that the receipts only amounted to a franc and a half, to cover three francs of railway fare and two of board and lodging. The Maire, a man worth a million of money, sat in the front seat, repeatedly applauding Mlle. Ferrario, and yet gave no more than three *sous* the whole evening. Local authorities look with such an evil eye upon the strolling artist. Alas! I know it well, who have been myself taken for one, and pitilessly incarcerated on the strength of the misapprehension. Once M. de Vauversin visited a commissary of police for permission to sing. The commissary, who was smoking at his ease, politely doffed his hat upon the singer's entrance. "Mr. Commissary," he began, "I am an artist." And on went the commissary's hat again. No courtesy for the companions of Apollo! "They are as degraded as that," said M. de Vauversin, with a sweep of his cigarette.

But what pleased me most was one outbreak of his, when we had been talking all the evening of the rubs, indignities, and pinchings of his wandering life. Someone said, it would be better to have a million of money down, and Mlle. Ferrario admitted that she would prefer that mightily. "*Eh bien, moi non*; — not I," cried De Vauversin, striking the table with his hand. "If anyone is a failure in the world, is it not I? I had an art, in which I have done things well — as well as some — better perhaps than others; and now it is closed against me. I must go about the country gathering coppers and singing nonsense. Do you think I regret my life? Do you think I would rather be a fat burgess, like a calf? Not I! I have had moments when I have been applauded on the boards: I think nothing of that; but I have known in my own mind sometimes, when I had not a clap from the whole house, that I had found a true intonation, or an exact and speaking gesture; and then, messieurs, I have known what pleasure was, what it was to do a thing well, what it was to be an artist. And to know what art is, is to have an interest for ever, such as no burgess can find in his petty concerns. *Tenez, messieurs, je vais vous le dire* — it is like a religion."

Such, making some allowance for the tricks of memory and the inaccuracies of translation, was the profession of faith of M. de Vauversin. I have given him his own name, lest any other wanderer should come across him, with his guitar and cigarette, and Mademoiselle Ferrario; for should not all the world delight to honour this unfortunate and loyal follower of the Muses? May Apollo send him rhymes hitherto undreamed of; may the river be no longer scanty of her silver fishes to his lure; may the cold not pinch him on long winter rides, nor the village jack-in-office affront him with unseemly manners; and may he never miss Mademoiselle Ferrario from his side, to follow with his dutiful eyes and accompany on the guitar!

The marionnettes made a very dismal entertainment. They performed a piece, called *Pyramus and Thisbe*, in five mortal acts, and all written in Alexandrines fully as long as the performers. One marionnette was the king; another the wicked counselor; a third, credited with exceptional beauty, represented Thisbe; and then there were guards, and obdurate fathers, and walking gentlemen. Nothing particular took place during the two or three acts that I sat out; but you will be pleased to learn that the unities were properly respected, and the whole piece, with one exception, moved in harmony with classical rules. That exception was the comic countryman, a lean marionnette in wooden shoes, who spoke in prose and in a broad *patois* much appreciated by the audience. He took unconstitutional liberties with the person of his sovereign; kicked his fellow-marionnettes in the mouth with his wooden shoes, and whenever none of the versifying suitors were about, made love to Thisbe on his own account in comic prose.

This fellow's evolutions, and the little prologue, in which the showman made a humorous eulogium of his troop, praising their indifference to applause and hisses, and their single devotion to their art, were the only circumstances in the whole affair that you could fancy would so much as raise a smile. But the villagers of Précy seemed delighted. Indeed, so long as a thing is an exhibition, and you pay to see it, it is nearly certain to amuse. If we were charged so much a head for sunsets, or if God sent round a drum before the hawthorns came in flower, what a work should we not make about their beauty! But these things, like good companions, stupid people early cease to observe; and the Abstract Bagman tittups past in his spring gig, and is positively not aware of the flowers along the lane, or the scenery of the weather overhead.

BACK TO THE WORLD

Of the next two days' sail little remains in my mind, and nothing whatever in my note-book. The river streamed on steadily through pleasant riverside landscapes. Washerwomen in blue dresses, fishers in blue blouses, diversified the green banks; and the relation of the two colours was like that of the flower and the leaf in the forget-me-not. A symphony in forget-me-not; I think Théophile Gautier might thus have characterized that two days' panorama. The sky was blue and cloudless, and the sliding surface of the river held up, in smooth places, a mirror to the heaven and the shores. The washerwomen hailed us laughingly, and the noise of trees and water made an accompaniment to our dozing thoughts, as we fleeted down the stream.

The great volume, the indefatigable purpose of the river, held the mind in chain. It seemed now so sure of its end, so strong and easy in its gait, like a grown man full of determination. The surf was roaring for it on the sands of Havre.

For my own part, slipping along this moving thoroughfare in my fiddle-case of a canoe, I also was beginning to grow aweary for my ocean. To the civilized man, there must come, sooner or later, a desire for civilization. I was weary of dipping the paddle; I was weary of living on the skirts of life; I wished to be in the thick of it once more; I wished to get to work; I wished to meet people who understood my own speech, and could meet with me on equal terms, as a man and no longer as a curiosity.

And so a letter at Pontoise decided us, and we drew up our keels for the last time out of that river of Oise that had faithfully piloted them, through rain and sunshine, for so long. For so many miles had this fleet and footless beast of burthen charioted our fortunes, that we turned our back upon it with a sense of separation. We had made a long détour out of the world, but now we were back in the familiar places, where life itself makes all the running, and we are carried to meet adventure without a stroke of the paddle. Now we were to return, like the voyager in the play, and see what rearrangements fortune had perfected the while in our surroundings; what surprises stood ready made for us at home; and whither and how far the world had voyaged in our absence. You may paddle all day long; but it is when you come back at nightfall, and look in at the familiar room, that you find Love or Death awaiting you beside the stove; and the most beautiful adventures are not those we go to seek.

EPILOGUE

The country where they journeyed, that green, breezy valley of the Loing, is one very attractive to cheerful and solitary people. The weather was superb; all night it thundered and lightened, and the rain fell in sheets; by day, the heavens were cloudless, the sun fervent, the air vigorous and pure. They walked separate; the *Cigarette* plodding behind with some philosophy, the lean *Arethusa* posting on ahead. Thus each enjoyed his own reflections by the way; each had perhaps time to tire of them before he met his comrade at the designated inn; and the pleasures of society and solitude combined to fill the day. The *Arethusa* carried in his knapsack the works of Charles of Orleans, and employed some of the hours of travel in the concoction of English roundels. In this path he must thus have preceded Mr. Lang, Mr. Dobson, Mr. Henley, and all contemporary roundeleers; but, for good reasons, he will be the last to publish the result. The *Cigarette* walked burthened with a volume of Michelet. And both these books, it will be seen, played a part in the subsequent adventure.

The *Arethusa* was unwisely dressed. He is no precisian in attire; but by all accounts he was never so ill-inspired as on that tramp; having set forth, indeed, upon a moment's notice, from the most unfashionable spot in Europe, Barbizon. On his head he wore a smoking-cap of Indian work, the gold lace pitifully frayed and tarnished. A flannel shirt of an agreeable dark hue, which the satirical called black; a light tweed coat made by a good English tailor; ready-made cheap linen trousers and leathern gaiters completed his array. In person, he is exceptionally lean; and his face is not, like those of happier mortals, a certificate. For years he could not pass a frontier, or visit a bank, without suspicion; the police everywhere, but in his native city, looked askance upon him; and (although I am sure it will not be credited) he is actually denied admittance to the casino of Monte Carlo. If you will imagine him dressed as above, stooping under his knapsack, walking nearly five miles an hour with the folds of the ready-made trousers fluttering about his spindle shanks, and still looking eagerly round him as if in terror of pursuit — the figure, when realised, is far from reassuring. When Villon journeyed (perhaps by the same pleasant valley) to his exile at Roussillon, I wonder if he had not something of the same appearance. Something of the same preoccupation he had beyond a doubt, for he too must have tinkered verses as he walked, with more success than his successor. And if he had anything like the same inspiring weather, the same nights of uproar, men in armour rolling and resounding down the stairs of heaven, the rain hissing on the village streets, the wild bull's-eye of the storm flashing all night long into the bare inn-chamber — the same sweet return of day, the same unfathomable blue of noon, the same high-coloured, halcyon eves — and above all, if he had anything like as good a comrade, anything like as keen a relish for what he saw, and what he ate, and the rivers that he bathed in, and the rubbish that he wrote, I would exchange estates to-day with the poor exile, and count myself a gainer.

But there was another point of similarity between the two journeys, for which the *Arethusa* was to pay dear: both were gone upon in days of incomplete security. It was not long after the Franco-Prussian war. Swiftly as men forget, that countryside was still alive with tales of uhlans and outlying sentries, and hairbreadth 'scapes from the ignominious cord, and pleasant momentary friendships between invader and invaded. A year, at the most two years, later you might have tramped all that country over and not heard one anecdote. And a year or two later, you would — if you were a rather ill-looking young man in nondescript array — have gone your rounds in greater safety; for along with more interesting matter, the Prussian spy would have somewhat faded from men's imaginations.

For all that, our voyager had got beyond Château Renard before he was conscious of arousing wonder. On the road between that place and Châtillon-sur-Loing, however, he encountered a rural postman; they fell together in talk, and spoke of a variety of subjects; but through one and all, the postman was still visibly preoccupied, and his eyes were faithful to the *Arethusa's* knapsack. At last, with mysterious roguishness, he inquired what it contained, and on being answered, shook his head with kindly incredulity. "*Non,*" said he, "*non, vous avez des portraits.*" And then with a languishing appeal, "*Voyons*, show me the portraits!" It was some little time before the *Arethusa*, with a shout of laughter, recognized his drift. By portraits he meant indecent photographs; and in the *Arethusa*, an austere and rising author, he thought to have identified a pornographic *colporteur*. When country-folk in France have made up their minds as to a person's calling, argument is fruitless. Along all the rest of the way, the postman piped and fluted meltingly to get a sight of the collection; now he would upbraid, now he would reason — "*Voyons*, I will tell nobody"; then he tried corruption, and insisted on paying for a glass of wine; and at last, when their ways separated — "*Non,*" said he, "*ce n'est pas bien de votre part. O non, ce n'est pas bien.*" And shaking his head with quite a sentimental sense of injury, he departed unrefreshed.

On certain little difficulties encountered by the *Arethusa* at Châtillon-sur-Loing, I have not space to dwell; another Châtillon, of grislier memory, looms too near at hand. But the next day, in a certain hamlet called La Jussière, he stopped to drink a glass of syrup in a very poor, bare drinking-shop. The hostess, a comely woman, suckling a child, examined the traveller with kindly and pitying eyes. “You are not of this Department?” she asked. The *Arethusa* told her he was English. “Ah!” she said, surprised. “We have no English. We have many Italians, however, and they do very well; they do not complain of the people of hereabouts. An Englishman may do very well also; it will be something new.” Here was a dark saying, over which the *Arethusa* pondered as he drank his grenadine; but when he rose and asked what was to pay, the light came upon him in a flash. “*O, pour vous*,” replied the landlady, “a halfpenny!” *Pour vous*? By heaven, she took him for a beggar! He paid his halfpenny, feeling that it were ungracious to correct her. But when he was forth again upon the road, he became vexed in spirit. The conscience is no gentleman, he is a rabbinical fellow; and his conscience told him he had stolen the syrup.

That night the travellers slept in Gien; the next day they passed the river and set forth (severally, as their custom was) on a short stage through the green plain upon the Berry side, to Châtillon-sur-Loire. It was the first day of the shooting; and the air rang with the report of fire-arms and the admiring cries of sportsmen. Overhead the birds were in consternation, wheeling in clouds, settling and re-arising. And yet with all this bustle on either hand, the road itself lay solitary. The *Arethusa* smoked a pipe beside a milestone, and I remember he laid down very exactly all he was to do at Châtillon: how he was to enjoy a cold plunge, to change his shirt, and to await the *Cigarette’s* arrival, in sublime inaction, by the margin of the Loire. Fired by these ideas, he pushed the more rapidly forward, and came, early in the afternoon, and in a breathing heat, to the entering-in of that ill-fated town. Childe Roland to the dark tower came.

A polite gendarme threw his shadow on the path.

“*Monsieur est voyageur*?” he asked.

And the *Arethusa*, strong in his innocence, forgetful of his vile attire, replied — I had almost said with gaiety: “So it would appear.”

“His papers are in order?” said the gendarme. And when the *Arethusa*, with a slight change of voice, admitted he had none, he was informed (politely enough) that he must appear before the Commissary.

The Commissary sat at a table in his bedroom, stripped to the shirt and trousers, but still copiously perspiring; and when he turned upon the prisoner a large meaningless countenance, that was (like Bardolph’s) “all whelks and bubuckles,” the dullest might have been prepared for grief. Here was a stupid man, sleepy with the heat and fretful at the interruption, whom neither appeal nor argument could reach.

The Commissary: “You have no papers?”

The Arethusa: “Not here.”

The Commissary: “Why?”

The Arethusa: “I have left them behind in my valise.”

The Commissary: “You know, however, that it is forbidden to circulate without papers?”

The Arethusa: “Pardon me: I am convinced of the contrary. I am here on my rights as an English subject by international treaty.”

The Commissary (*with scorn*): “You call yourself an Englishman?”

The Arethusa: “I do.”

The Commissary: “Humph. — What is your trade?”

The Arethusa: “I am a Scottish Advocate.”

The Commissary (*with singular annoyance*): “A Scottish Advocate! Do you then pretend to support yourself by that in this Department?”

The *Arethusa* modestly disclaimed the pretension. The Commissary had scored a point.

The Commissary: “Why, then, do you travel?”

The Arethusa: “I travel for pleasure.”

The Commissary (pointing to the knapsack, and with sublime incredulity): “*Avec ça? Voyez-vous, je suis un homme intelligent!*” (With that? Look here, I am a person of intelligence!)

The culprit remaining silent under this home-thrust, the Commissary relished his triumph for a while, and then demanded (like the postman, but with what different expectations!) to see the contents of the knapsack. And here the *Arethusa*, not yet sufficiently awake to his position, fell into a grave mistake. There was little or no furniture in the room except the Commissary’s chair and table; and to facilitate matters, the *Arethusa* (with all the innocence on earth) leant the knapsack on a corner of the bed. The Commissary fairly bounded from his seat; his face and neck flushed past purple, almost into blue; and he screamed to lay the desecrating object on the floor.

The knapsack proved to contain a change of shirts, of shoes, of socks, and of linen trousers, a small dressing-case, a piece of soap in one of the shoes, two volumes of the *Collection Jannet* lettered “Poésies de Charles d’Orleans,” a map, and a version-book containing divers notes in prose and the remarkable English roundels of the voyager, still to this day unpublished: the Commissary of Châtillon is the only living man who has clapped an eye on these artistic trifles. He turned the assortment over with a contumelious finger; it was plain from his daintiness that he regarded the *Arethusa* and all his belongings as the very temple of infection. Still there was nothing suspicious about the map, nothing really criminal except the roundels; as for Charles of Orleans, to the ignorant mind of the prisoner, he seemed as good as a certificate; and it was supposed the farce was nearly over.

The inquisitor resumed his seat.

The Commissary (after a pause): "*Eh bien, je vais vous dire ce que vous êtes. Vous êtes allemand el vous venez chanter à la foire.*" (Well, then, I will tell you what you are. You are a German, and have come to sing at the fair.)

The Arethusa: "Would you like to hear me sing? I believe I could convince you of the contrary."

The Commissary: "*Pas de plaisanterie, monsieur*!"

The Arethusa: "Well, sir, oblige me at least by looking at this book. Here, I open it with my eyes shut. Read one of these songs — read this one — and tell me, you who are a man of intelligence, if it would be possible to sing it at a fair?"

The Commissary (critically): "*Mais oui. Tres bien.*"

The Arethusa: "*Comment, monsieur*! What! But do you not observe it is antique? It is difficult to understand, even for you and me; but for the audience at a fair, it would be meaningless."

The Commissary (*taking a pen*): "*Enfin, il faut en finir.* What is your name?"

The Arethusa (*speaking with the swallowing vivacity of the English*): "Robert-Louis-Stev'ns'n."

The Commissary (*aghast*): "*Hé! Quoi*?"

The Arethusa (*perceiving and improving his advantage*): "Rob'rt-Lou's-Stev'ns'n."

The Commissary (*after several conflicts with his pen*): "*Eh bien, il faut se passer du nom. Ça ne s'écrit pas.*" (Well, we must do without the name: it is unspellable.)

The above is a rough summary of this momentous conversation, in which I have been chiefly careful to preserve the plums of the Commissary; but the remainder of the scene, perhaps because of his rising anger, has left but little definite in the memory of the *Arethusa.* The Commissary was not, I think, a practiced literary man; no sooner, at least, had he taken pen in hand and embarked on the composition of the *procès-verbal,* than he became distinctly more uncivil, and began to show a predilection for that simplest of all forms of repartee: "You lie." Several times the *Arethusa* let it pass, and then suddenly flared up, refused to accept more insults or to answer further questions, defied the Commissary to do his worst, and promised him, if he did, that he should bitterly repent it. Perhaps if he had worn this proud front from the first, instead of beginning with a sense of entertainment and then going on to argue, the thing might have turned otherwise; for even at this eleventh hour the Commissary was visibly staggered. But it was too late; he had been challenged; the *procès-verbal* was begun; and he again squared his elbows over his writing, and the *Arethusa* was led forth a prisoner.

A step or two down the hot road stood the gendarmerie. Thither was our unfortunate conducted, and there he was bidden to empty forth the contents of his pockets. A handkerchief, a pen, a pencil, a pipe and tobacco, matches, and some ten francs of change: that was all. Not a file, not a cipher, not a scrap of writing whether to identify or to condemn. The very gendarme was appalled before such destitution.

"I regret," he said, "that I arrested you, for I see that you are no *voyou.*" And he promised him every indulgence.

The *Arethusa,* thus encouraged, asked for his pipe. That he was told was impossible, but if he chewed, he might have some tobacco. He did not chew, however, and asked instead to have his handkerchief.

"*Non,*" said the gendarme. "*Nous avons eu des histoires de gens qui se sont pendus.*" (No, we have had histories of people who hanged themselves.)

"What!" cried the *Arethusa.* "And is it for that you refuse me my handkerchief? But see how much more easily I could hang myself in my trousers!"

The man was struck by the novelty of the idea, but he stuck to his colours, and only continued to repeat vague offers of service.

"At least," said the *Arethusa*, "be sure that you arrest my comrade; he will follow me ere long on the same road, and you can tell him by the sack upon his shoulders."

This promised, the prisoner was led round into the back court of the building, a cellar door was opened, he was motioned down the stair, and bolts grated and chains clanged behind his descending person.

The philosophic and still more the imaginative mind is apt to suppose itself prepared for any mortal accident. Prison, among other ills, was one that had been often faced by the undaunted *Arethusa.* Even as he went down the stairs, he was telling himself that here was a famous occasion for a roundel, and that like the committed linnets of the tuneful cavalier, he too would make his prison musical. I will tell the truth at once: the roundel was never written, or it should be printed in this place, to raise a smile. Two reasons interfered: the first moral, the second physical.

It is one of the curiosities of human nature, that although all men are liars, they can none of them bear to be told so of themselves. To get and take the lie with equanimity is a stretch beyond the stoic; and the *Arethusa*, who had been surfeited upon that insult, was blazing inwardly with a white heat of smothered wrath. But the physical had also its part. The cellar in which he was confined was some feet underground, and it was only lighted by an unglazed, narrow aperture high up in the wall, and smothered in the leaves of a green vine. The walls were of naked masonry, the floor of bare earth; by way of furniture there was an earthenware basin, a water-jug, and a wooden bedstead with a blue-grey cloak for bedding. To be taken from the hot air of a summer's afternoon, the reverberation of the road and the stir of rapid exercise, and plunged into the gloom and damp of this receptacle for vagabonds, struck an instant chill upon the *Arethusa's* blood. Now see in how small a matter a hardship may consist: the floor was exceedingly uneven under foot, with the very spade-marks, I suppose, of the labourers who dug the foundations of the barrack; and what with the poor twilight and the irregular surface, walking was impossible. The caged author resisted for a good while, but the chill of the place struck deeper and deeper; and at length, with such reluctance as you may fancy, he was driven to climb upon the bed and wrap himself in the public covering. There, then, he lay upon the verge of shivering, plunged in semi-darkness, wound in a garment whose touch he dreaded like the plague, and (in a spirit far removed from resignation) telling the roll of the insults he had just received. These are not circumstances favourable to the muse.

Meantime (to look at the upper surface where the sun was still shining and the guns of sportsmen were still noisy through the tufted plain) the *Cigarette* was drawing near at his more philosophic pace. In those days of liberty and health he was the constant partner of the *Arethusa*, and had ample opportunity to share in that gentleman's disfavour with the police. Many a bitter bowl had he partaken of with that disastrous comrade. He was himself a man born to float easily through life, his face and manner artfully recommending him to all. There was but one suspicious circumstance he could not carry off, and that was his companion. He will not readily forget the Commissary in what is ironically called the free town of Frankfort-on-the-Main; nor the Franco-Belgian frontier; nor the inn at La Fère; last, but not least, he is pretty certain to remember Châtillon-sur-Loire.

At the town entry, the gendarme culled him like a wayside flower; and a moment later two persons in a high state of surprise were confronted in the Commissary's office. For if the *Cigarette* was surprised to be arrested, the Commissary was no less taken aback by the appearance and appointments of his captive. Here was a man about whom there could be no mistake: a man of an unquestionable and unassailable manner, in apple-pie order, dressed not with neatness merely but elegance, ready with his passport at a word, and well supplied with money: a man the Commissary would have doffed his hat to on chance upon the highway; and this *beau cavalier* unblushingly claimed the *Arethusa* for his comrade! The conclusion of the interview was foregone; of its humours I remember only one. "Baronet?" demanded the magistrate, glancing up from the passport. "*Alors, monsieur, vous êtes le fils d'un baron?*" And when the *Cigarette* (his one mistake throughout the interview) denied the soft impeachment, "*Alors,*" from the Commissary, "*ce n'est pas voire passeport!*" But these were ineffectual thunders; he never dreamed of laying hands upon the *Cigarette*; presently he fell into a mood of unrestrained admiration, gloating over the contents of the knapsack, commending our friend's tailor. Ah! what an honoured guest was the Commissary entertaining! What suitable clothes he wore for the warm weather! What beautiful maps, what an attractive work of history he carried in his knapsack! You are to understand there was now but one point of difference between them: what was to be done with the *Arethusa*? the *Cigarette* demanding his release, the Commissary still claiming him as the dungeon's own. Now it chanced that the *Cigarette* had passed some years of his life in Egypt, where he had made acquaintance with two very bad things, cholera morbus and pashas; and in the eye of the Commissary, as he fingered the volume of Michelet, it seemed to our traveller there was something Turkish. I pass over this lightly; it is highly possible there was some misunderstanding, highly possible that the Commissary (charmed with his visitor) supposed the attraction to be mutual, and took for an act of growing friendship what the *Cigarette* himself regarded as a bribe. And at any rate, was there ever a bribe more singular than an odd volume of Michelet's history! The work was promised him for the morrow, before our departure; and presently after, either because he had his price, or to show that he was not the man to be behind in friendly offices, "*Eh bien,*" he said, "*je suppose qu'il faut lâcher votre camarade.*" And he tore up that feast of humour, the unfinished *procès-verbal.* Ah, if he had only torn up instead the *Arethusa's* roundels! There are many works burnt at Alexandria, there are many treasured in the British Museum, that I could better spare than the *procès-verbal* of Châtillon. Poor bubuckled Commissary! I begin to be sorry that he never had his Michelet: perceiving in him fine human traits, a broad-based stupidity, a gusto in his magisterial functions, a taste for letters, a ready admiration for the admirable. And if he did not admire the *Arethusa*, he was not alone in that.

To the imprisoned one, shivering under the public covering, there came suddenly a noise of bolts and chains. He sprang to his feet, ready to welcome a companion in calamity; and instead of that, the door was flung wide, the friendly gendarme appeared above in the strong daylight, and with a magnificent gesture (being probably a student of the drama) — "*Vous êtes libre*!" he said. None too soon for the *Arethusa.* I doubt if he had been half an hour imprisoned; but by the watch in a man's brain (which was the only watch he carried) he should have been eight times longer; and he passed forth with ecstasy up the cellar stairs into the healing warmth of the afternoon sun; and the breath of the earth came as sweet as a cow's into his nostril; and he heard again (and could have laughed for pleasure) the concord of delicate noises that we call the hum of life.

And here it might be thought that my history ended; but not so, this was an act-drop and not the curtain. Upon what followed in front of the barrack, since there was a lady in the case, I scruple to expatiate. The wife of the Maréchal-des-logis was a handsome woman, and yet the *Arethusa* was not sorry to be gone from her society. Something of her image, cool as a peach on that hot afternoon, still lingers in his memory: yet more of her conversation. "You have there a very fine parlour," said the poor gentleman. "Ah!" said Madame la Maréchale (des-logis), "you are very well acquainted with such parlours!" And you should have seen with what a hard and scornful eye she measured the vagabond before her! I do not think he ever hated the Commissary; but before that interview was at an end, he hated Madame la Maréchale. His passion (as I am led to understand by one who was present) stood confessed in a burning eye, a pale cheek, and a trembling utterance; Madame, meanwhile tasting the joys of the matador, goading him with barbed words and staring him coldly down.

It was certainly good to be away from this lady, and better still to sit down to an excellent dinner in the inn. Here, too, the despised travellers scraped acquaintance with their next neighbour, a gentleman of these parts, returned from the day's sport, who had the good taste to find pleasure in their society. The dinner at an end, the gentleman proposed the acquaintance should be ripened in the *café*.

The *café* was crowded with sportsmen conclamantly explaining to each other and the world the smallness of their bags. About the centre of the room the *Cigarette* and the *Arethusa* sat with their new acquaintance; a trio very well pleased, for the travellers (after their late experience) were greedy of consideration, and their sportsman rejoiced in a pair of patient listeners. Suddenly the glass door flew open with a crash; the Maréchal-des-logis appeared in the interval, gorgeously belted and befrogged, entered with salutation, strode up the room with a clang of spurs and weapons, and disappeared through a door at the far end. Close at his heels followed the *Arethusa's* gendarme of the afternoon, imitating, with a nice shade of difference, the imperial bearing of his chief; only, as he passed, he struck lightly with his open hand on the shoulder of his late captive, and with that ringing, dramatic utterance of which he had the secret — "*Suivez!*" said he.

The arrest of the members, the oath of the Tennis Court, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Mark Antony's oration, all the brave scenes of history, I conceive as having been not unlike that evening in the *café* at Châtillon. Terror breathed upon the assembly. A moment later, when the *Arethusa* had followed his recaptors into the farther part of the house, the *Cigarette* found himself alone with his coffee in a ring of empty chairs and tables, all the lusty sportsmen huddled into corners, all their clamorous voices hushed in whispering, all their eyes shooting at him furtively as at a leper.

And the *Arethusa*? Well, he had a long, sometimes a trying, interview in the back kitchen. The Maréchal-des-logis, who was a very handsome man, and I believe both intelligent and honest, had no clear opinion on the case. He thought the Commissary had done wrong, but he did not wish to get his subordinates into trouble; and he proposed this, that, and the other, to all of which the *Arethusa* (with a growing sense of his position) demurred.

“In short,” suggested the *Arethusa*, “you want to wash your hands of further responsibility? Well, then, let me go to Paris.”

The Maréchal-des-logis looked at his watch.

“You may leave,” said he, “by the ten o’clock train for Paris.”

And at noon the next day the travellers were telling their misadventure in the dining-room at Siron’s.

TRAVELS WITH A DONKEY IN THE CEVENNES

One of Stevenson's earliest published works, this book is now considered to be a classic of travel literature. At the time of publication, Stevenson was in his late twenties and still dependent on his parents. He wrote this travel book to raise money so he could be with the woman he loved, as well as to feed his passion for travel and adventure.

Travels with a Donkey in Cevennes recounts Stevenson's twelve day 120-mile solo hiking journey through the sparsely populated and impoverished areas of the Cévennes mountains in south-central France in 1878. The character of Modestine, a stubborn, manipulative donkey he could never quite get the better of, is one of the work's most popular and humorous features.

The beautiful Cevennes area, France

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FAREWELL, MODESTINE!

My dear Sidney Colvin,

The journey which this little book is to describe was very agreeable and fortunate for me. After an uncouth beginning, I had the best of luck to the end. But we are all travellers in what John Bunyan calls the wilderness of this world — all, too, travellers with a donkey; and the best that we find in our travels is an honest friend. He is a fortunate voyager who finds many. We travel, indeed, to find them. They are the end and the reward of life. They keep us worthy of ourselves; and when we are alone, we are only nearer to the absent.

Every book is, in an intimate sense, a circular letter to the friends of him who writes it. They alone take his meaning; they find private messages, assurances of love, and expressions of gratitude, dropped for them in every corner. The public is but a generous patron who defrays the postage. Yet though the letter is directed to all, we have an old and kindly custom of addressing it on the outside to one. Of what shall a man be proud, if he is not proud of his friends? And so, my dear Sidney Colvin, it is with pride that I sign myself

Affectionately yours,
R. L. S.

THE DONKEY, THE PACK, AND THE PACK-SADDLE

In a little place called Le Monastier, in a pleasant highland valley fifteen miles from Le Puy, I spent about a month of fine days. Monastier is notable for the making of lace, for drunkenness, for freedom of language, and for unparalleled political dissension. There are adherents of each of the four French parties — Legitimists, Orleanists, Imperialists, and Republicans — in this little mountain-town; and they all hate, loathe, decry, and calumniate each other. Except for business purposes, or to give each other the lie in a tavern brawl, they have laid aside even the civility of speech. 'Tis a mere mountain Poland. In the midst of this Babylon I found myself a rallying-point; every one was anxious to be kind and helpful to the stranger. This was not merely from the natural hospitality of mountain people, nor even from the surprise with which I was regarded as a man living of his own free will in Le Monastier, when he might just as well have lived anywhere else in this big world; it arose a good deal from my projected excursion southward through the Cevennes. A traveller of my sort was a thing hitherto unheard-of in that district. I was looked upon with contempt, like a man who should project a journey to the moon, but yet with a respectful interest, like one setting forth for the inclement Pole. All were ready to help in my preparations; a crowd of sympathizers supported me at the critical moment of a bargain; not a step was taken but was heralded by glasses round and celebrated by a dinner or a breakfast.

It was already hard upon October before I was ready to set forth, and at the high altitudes over which my road lay there was no Indian summer to be looked for. I was determined, if not to camp out, at least to have the means of camping out in my possession; for there is nothing more harassing to an easy mind than the necessity of reaching shelter by dusk, and the hospitality of a village inn is not always to be reckoned sure by those who trudge on foot. A tent, above all, for a solitary traveller, is troublesome to pitch and troublesome to strike again; and even on the march it forms a conspicuous feature in your baggage. A sleeping-sack, on the other hand, is always ready — you have only to get into it; it serves a double purpose — a bed by night, a portmanteau by day; and it does not advertise your intention of camping out to every curious passer-by. This is a huge point. If a camp is not secret, it is but a troubled resting-place; you become a public character; the convivial rustic visits your bedside after an early supper; and you must sleep with one eye open, and be up before the day. I decided on a sleeping-sack; and after repeated visits to Le Puy, and a deal of high living for myself and my advisers, a sleeping-sack was designed, constructed, and triumphantly brought home.

This child of my invention was nearly six feet square, exclusive of two triangular flaps to serve as a pillow by night and as the top and bottom of the sack by day. I call it "the sack," but it was never a sack by more than courtesy: only a sort of long roll or sausage, green waterproof cart-cloth without and blue sheep's fur within. It was commodious as a valise, warm and dry for a bed. There was luxurious turning room for one; and at a pinch the thing might serve for two. I could bury myself in it up to the neck; for my head I trusted to a fur cap, with a hood to fold down over my ears, and a band to pass under my nose like a respirator; and in case of heavy rain I proposed to make myself a little tent, or tentlet, with my waterproof coat, three stones, and a bent branch.

It will readily be conceived that I could not carry this huge package on my own, merely human, shoulders. It remained to choose a beast of burden. Now, a horse is a fine lady among animals — flighty, timid, delicate in eating, of tender health; he is too valuable and too restive to be left alone, so that you are chained to your brute as to a fellow galley-slave; a dangerous road puts him out of his wits; in short, he's an uncertain and exacting ally, and adds thirty-fold to the troubles of the voyager. What I required was something cheap and small and hardy, and of a stolid and peaceful temper; and all these requisites pointed to a donkey.

There dwelt an old man in Monastier, of rather unsound intellect according to some, much followed by street-boys, and known to fame as Father Adam. Father Adam had a cart, and to draw the cart a diminutive she-ass, not much bigger than a dog, the colour of a mouse, with a kindly eye and a determined under-jaw. There was something neat and high-bred, a quakerish elegance, about the rogue that hit my fancy on the spot. Our first interview was in Monastier market-place. To prove her good temper, one child after another was set upon her back to ride, and one after another went head over heels into the air; until a want of confidence began to reign in youthful bosoms, and the experiment was discontinued from a dearth of subjects. I was already backed by a deputation of my friends; but as if this were not enough, all the buyers and sellers came round and helped me in the bargain; and the ass and I and Father Adam were the centre of a hubbub for near half an hour. At length she passed into my service for the consideration of sixty-five francs and a glass of brandy. The sack had already cost eighty francs and two glasses of beer; so that Modestine, as I instantly baptized her, was upon all accounts the cheaper article. Indeed, that was as it should be; for she was only an appurtenance of my mattress, or self-acting bedstead on four castors.

I had a last interview with Father Adam in a billiard-room at the witching hour of dawn, when I administered the brandy. He professed himself greatly touched by the separation, and declared he had often bought white bread for the donkey when he had been content with black bread for himself; but this, according to the best authorities, must have been a flight of fancy. He had a name in the village for brutally misusing the ass; yet it is certain that he shed a tear, and the tear made a clean mark down one cheek.

By the advice of a fallacious local saddler, a leather pad was made for me with rings to fasten on my bundle; and I thoughtfully completed my kit and arranged my toilette. By way of armoury and utensils, I took a revolver, a little spirit-lamp and pan, a lantern and some halfpenny candles, a jack-knife and a large leather flask. The main cargo consisted of two entire changes of warm clothing — besides my travelling wear of country velveteen, pilot-coat, and knitted spencer — some books, and my railway-rug, which, being also in the form of a bag, made me a double castle for cold nights. The permanent larder was represented by cakes of chocolate and tins of Bologna sausage. All this, except what I carried about my person, was easily stowed into the sheepskin bag; and by good fortune I threw in my empty knapsack, rather for convenience of carriage than from any thought that I should want it on my journey. For more immediate needs I took a leg of cold mutton, a bottle of Beaujolais, an empty bottle to carry milk, an egg-beater, and a considerable quantity of black bread and white, like Father Adam, for myself and donkey, only in my scheme of things the destinations were reversed.

Monastrians, of all shades of thought in politics, had agreed in threatening me with many ludicrous misadventures, and with sudden death in many surprising forms. Cold, wolves, robbers, above all the nocturnal practical joker, were daily and eloquently forced on my attention. Yet in these vaticinations, the true, patent danger was left out. Like Christian, it was from my pack I suffered by the way. Before telling my own mishaps, let me, in two words, relate the lesson of my experience. If the pack is well strapped at the ends, and hung at full length — not doubled, for your life — across the pack-saddle, the traveller is safe. The saddle will certainly not fit, such is the imperfection of our transitory life; it will assuredly topple and tend to overset; but there are stones on every roadside, and a man soon learns the art of correcting any tendency to overbalance with a well-adjusted stone.

On the day of my departure I was up a little after five; by six, we began to load the donkey; and ten minutes after my hopes were in the dust. The pad would not stay on Modestine's back for half a moment. I returned it to its maker, with whom I had so contumelious a passage that the street outside was crowded from wall to wall with gossips looking on and listening. The pad changed hands with much vivacity; perhaps it would be more descriptive to say that we threw it at each other's heads; and, at any rate, we were very warm and unfriendly, and spoke with a deal of freedom.

I had a common donkey pack-saddle — a *barde*, as they call it — fitted upon Modestine; and once more loaded her with my effects. The doubled sack, my pilot-coat (for it was warm, and I was to walk in my waistcoat), a great bar of black bread, and an open basket containing the white bread, the mutton, and the bottles, were all corded together in a very elaborate system of knots, and I looked on the result with fatuous content. In such a monstrous deck-cargo, all poised above the donkey's shoulders, with nothing below to balance, on a brand-new pack-saddle that had not yet been worn to fit the animal, and fastened with brand-new girths that might be expected to stretch and slacken by the way, even a very careless traveller should have seen disaster brewing. That elaborate system of knots, again, was the work of too many sympathizers to be very artfully designed. It is true they tightened the cords with a will; as many as three at a time would have a foot against Modestine's quarters, and be hauling with clenched teeth; but I learned afterwards that one thoughtful person, without any exercise of force, can make a more solid job than half a dozen heated and enthusiastic grooms. I was then but a novice; even after the misadventure of the pad nothing could disturb my security, and I went forth from the stable-door as an ox goeth to the slaughter.

THE GREEN DONKEY-DRIVER

The bell of Monastier was just striking nine as I got quit of these preliminary troubles and descended the hill through the common. As long as I was within sight of the windows, a secret shame and the fear of some laughable defeat withheld me from tampering with Modestine. She tripped along upon her four small hoofs with a sober daintiness of gait; from time to time she shook her ears or her tail; and she looked so small under the bundle that my mind misgave me. We got across the ford without difficulty — there was no doubt about the matter, she was docility itself — and once on the other bank, where the road begins to mount through pine woods, I took in my right hand the unhallowed staff, and with a quaking spirit applied it to the donkey. Modestine brisked up her pace for perhaps three steps, and then relapsed into her former minuet. Another application had the same effect, and so with the third. I am worthy the name of an Englishman, and it goes against my conscience to lay my hand rudely on a female. I desisted, and looked her all over from head to foot; the poor brute's knees were trembling and her breathing was distressed; it was plain that she could go no faster on a hill. God forbid, thought I, that I should brutalize this innocent creature; let her go at her own pace, and let me patiently follow.

What that pace was there is no word mean enough to describe; it was something as much slower than a walk as a walk is slower than a run; it kept me hanging on each foot for an incredible length of time; in five minutes it exhausted the spirit and set up a fever in all the muscles of the leg. And yet I had to keep close at hand and measure my advance exactly upon hers; for if I dropped a few yards into the rear, or went on a few yards ahead, Modestine came instantly to a halt and began to browse. The thought that this was to last from here to Alais nearly broke my heart. Of all conceivable journeys this promised to be the most tedious. I tried to tell myself it was a lovely day; I tried to charm my foreboding spirit with tobacco; but I had a vision ever present to me of the long, long roads, up hill and down dale, and a pair of figures ever infinitesimally moving, foot by foot, a yard to the minute, and, like things enchanted in a nightmare, approaching no nearer to the goal.

In the meantime there came up behind us a tall peasant, perhaps forty years of age, of an ironical snuffy countenance, and arrayed in the green tail-coat of the country. He overtook us hand over hand, and stopped to consider our pitiful advance.

"Your donkey," says he, "is very old?"

I told him, I believed not.

Then, he supposed, we had come far.

I told him, we had but newly left Monastier.

“*Et vous marchez comme ça!*” cried he; and, throwing back his head, he laughed long and heartily. I watched him, half prepared to feel offended, until he had satisfied his mirth; and then, “You must have no pity on these animals,” said he; and, plucking a switch out of a thicket, he began to lace Modestine about the stern-works, uttering a cry. The rogue pricked up her ears and broke into a good round pace, which she kept up without flagging, and without exhibiting the least symptom of distress, as long as the peasant kept beside us. Her former panting and shaking had been, I regret to say, a piece of comedy.

My *deus ex machinâ*, before he left me, supplied some excellent, if inhumane, advice; presented me with the switch, which he declared she would feel more tenderly than my cane; and finally taught me the true cry or masonic word of donkey-drivers, “Proot!” All the time, he regarded me with a comical, incredulous air, which was embarrassing to confront; and smiled over my donkey-driving, as I might have smiled over his orthography, or his green tail-coat. But it was not my turn for the moment.

I was proud of my new lore, and thought I had learned the art to perfection. And certainly Modestine did wonders for the rest of the forenoon, and I had a breathing space to look about me. It was Sabbath; the mountain-fields were all vacant in the sunshine; and as we came down through St. Martin de Frugères, the church was crowded to the door, there were people kneeling without upon the steps, and the sound of the priest’s chanting came forth out of the dim interior. It gave me a home feeling on the spot; for I am a countryman of the Sabbath, so to speak, and all Sabbath observances, like a Scottish accent, strike in me mixed feelings, grateful and the reverse. It is only a traveller, hurrying by like a person from another planet, who can rightly enjoy the peace and beauty of the great ascetic feast. The sight of the resting country does his spirit good. There is something better than music in the wide, unusual silence; and it disposes him to amiable thoughts, like the sound of a little river or the warmth of sunlight.

In this pleasant humour I came down the hill to where Goudet stands in a green end of a valley, with Château Beaufort opposite upon a rocky steep, and the stream, as clear as crystal, lying in a deep pool between them. Above and below, you may hear it wimpling over the stones, an amiable stripling of a river, which it seems absurd to call the Loire. On all sides, Goudet is shut in by mountains; rocky footpaths, practicable at best for donkeys, join it to the outer world of France; and the men and women drink and swear, in their green corner, or look up at the snow-clad peaks in winter from the threshold of their homes, in an isolation, you would think, like that of Homer's Cyclops. But it is not so; the postman reaches Goudet with the letter-bag; the aspiring youth of Goudet are within a day's walk of the railway at Le Puy; and here in the inn you may find an engraved portrait of the host's nephew, Régis Senac, "Professor of Fencing and Champion of the two Americas," a distinction gained by him, along with the sum of five hundred dollars, at Tammany Hall, New York, on the 10th April 1876.

I hurried over my midday meal, and was early forth again. But, alas, as we climbed the interminable hill upon the other side, "Proot!" seemed to have lost its virtue. I prooted like a lion, I prooted mellifluously like a sucking-dove; but Modestine would be neither softened nor intimidated. She held doggedly to her pace; nothing but a blow would move her, and that only for a second. I must follow at her heels, incessantly belabouring. A moment's pause in this ignoble toil, and she relapsed into her own private gait. I think I never heard of any one in as mean a situation. I must reach the lake of Bouchet, where I meant to camp, before sundown, and, to have even a hope of this, I must instantly maltreat this uncomplaining animal. The sound of my own blows sickened me. Once, when I looked at her, she had a faint resemblance to a lady of my acquaintance who formerly loaded me with kindness; and this increased my horror of my cruelty.

To make matters worse, we encountered another donkey, ranging at will upon the roadside; and this other donkey chanced to be a gentleman. He and Modestine met nickering for joy, and I had to separate the pair and beat down their young romance with a renewed and feverish bastinado. If the other donkey had had the heart of a male under his hide, he would have fallen upon me tooth and hoof; and this was a kind of consolation — he was plainly unworthy of Modestine's affection. But the incident saddened me, as did everything that spoke of my donkey's sex.

It was blazing hot up the valley, windless, with vehement sun upon my shoulders; and I had to labour so consistently with my stick that the sweat ran into my eyes. Every five minutes, too, the pack, the basket, and the pilot-coat would take an ugly slew to one side or the other; and I had to stop Modestine, just when I had got her to a tolerable pace of about two miles an hour, to tug, push, shoulder, and readjust the load. And at last, in the village of Ussel, saddle and all, the whole hypothec, turned round and grovelled in the dust below the donkey's belly. She, none better pleased, incontinently drew up and seemed to smile, and a party of one man, two women, and two children came up, and, standing round me in a half circle, encouraged her by their example.

I had the devil’s own trouble to get the thing righted; and the instant I had done so, without hesitation, it toppled and fell down upon the other side. Judge if I was hot! And yet not a hand was offered to assist me. The man, indeed, told me I ought to have a package of a different shape. I suggested, if he knew nothing better to the point in my predicament, he might hold his tongue. And the good-natured dog agreed with me smilingly. It was the most despicable fix. I must plainly content myself with the pack for Modestine, and take the following items for my own share of the portage: a cane, a quart flask, a pilot-jacket heavily weighted in the pockets, two pounds of black bread, and an open basket full of meats and bottles. I believe I may say I am not devoid of greatness of soul; for I did not recoil from this infamous burden. I disposed it, Heaven knows how, so as to be mildly portable, and then proceeded to steer Modestine through the village. She tried, as was indeed her invariable habit, to enter every house and every courtyard in the whole length; and, encumbered as I was, without a hand to help myself, no words can render an idea of my difficulties. A priest, with six or seven others, was examining a church in process of repair, and he and his acolytes laughed loudly as they saw my plight. I remembered having laughed myself when I had seen good men struggling with adversity in the person of a jackass, and the recollection filled me with penitence. That was in my old light days, before this trouble came upon me. God knows at least that I shall never laugh again, thought I. But oh, what a cruel thing is a farce to those engaged in it!

A little out of the village, Modestine, filled with the demon, set her heart upon a by-road, and positively refused to leave it. I dropped all my bundles, and, I am ashamed to say, struck the poor sinner twice across the face. It was pitiful to see her lift her head with shut eyes, as if waiting for another blow. I came very near crying, but I did a wiser thing than that, and sat squarely down by the roadside to consider my situation under the cheerful influence of tobacco and a nip of brandy. Modestine, in the meanwhile, munched some black bread with a contrite hypocritical air. It was plain that I must make a sacrifice to the gods of shipwreck. I threw away the empty bottle destined to carry milk; I threw away my own white bread, and, disdaining to act by general average, kept the black bread for Modestine; lastly, I threw away the cold leg of mutton and the egg-whisk, although this last was dear to my heart. Thus I found room for everything in the basket, and even stowed the boating-coat on the top. By means of an end of cord I slung it under one arm, and although the cord cut my shoulder, and the jacket hung almost to the ground, it was with a heart greatly lightened that I set forth again.

I I had now an arm free to thrash Modestine, and cruelly I chastised her. If I were to reach the lake-side before dark she must bestir her little shanks to some tune. Already the sun had gone down into a windy-looking mist; and although there were still a few streaks of gold far off to the east on the hills and the black fir-woods, all was cold and grey about our onward path. An infinity of little country by-roads led hither and thither among the fields. It was the most pointless labyrinth. I could see my destination overhead, or rather the peak that dominates it, but choose as I pleased, the roads always ended by turning away from it, and sneaking back towards the valley, or northward along the margin of the hills. The failing light, the waning colour, the naked, unhomely, stony country through which I was travelling, threw me into some despondency. I promise you, the stick was not idle; I think every decent step that Modestine took must have cost me at least two emphatic blows. There was not another sound in the neighbourhood but that of my unwearying bastinado.

Suddenly, in the midst of my toils, the load once more bit the dust, and, as by enchantment, all the cords were simultaneously loosened, and the road scattered with my dear possessions. The packing was to begin again from the beginning; and as I had to invent a new and better system, I do not doubt but I lost half an hour. It began to be dusk in earnest as I reached a wilderness of turf and stones. It had the air of being a road which should lead everywhere at the same time; and I was falling into something not unlike despair when I saw two figures stalking towards me over the stones. They walked one behind the other like tramps, but their pace was remarkable. The son led the way, a tall, ill-made, sombre, Scottish-looking man; the mother followed, all in her Sunday's best, with an elegantly embroidered ribbon to her cap, and a new felt hat atop, and proffering, as she strode along with kilted petticoats, a string of obscene and blasphemous oaths.

I hailed the son, and asked him my direction. He pointed loosely west and north-west, muttered an inaudible comment, and, without slackening his pace for an instant, stalked on, as he was going, right athwart my path. The mother followed without so much as raising her head. I shouted and shouted after them, but they continued to scale the hillside, and turned a deaf ear to my outcries. At last, leaving Modestine by herself, I was constrained to run after them, hailing the while. They stopped as I drew near, the mother still cursing; and I could see she was a handsome, motherly, respectable-looking woman. The son once more answered me roughly and inaudibly, and was for setting out again. But this time I simply collared the mother, who was nearest me, and, apologizing for my violence, declared that I could not let them go until they had put me on my road. They were neither of them offended — rather mollified than otherwise; told me I had only to follow them; and then the mother asked me what I wanted by the lake at such an hour. I replied, in the Scottish manner, by inquiring if she had far to go herself. She told me, with another oath, that she had an hour and a half's road before her. And then, without salutation, the pair strode forward again up the hillside in the gathering dusk.

I returned for Modestine, pushed her briskly forward, and, after a sharp ascent of twenty minutes, reached the edge of a plateau. The view, looking back on my day's journey, was both wild and sad. Mount Mézenc and the peaks beyond St. Julien stood out in trenchant gloom against a cold glitter in the east; and the intervening field of hills had fallen together into one broad wash of shadow, except here and there the outline of a wooded sugar-loaf in black, here and there a white, irregular patch to represent a cultivated farm, and here and there a blot where the Loire, the Gazeille, or the Laussonne wandered in a gorge.

Soon we were on a high-road, and surprise seized on my mind as I beheld a village of some magnitude close at hand; for I had been told that the neighbourhood of the lake was uninhabited except by trout. The road smoked in the twilight with children driving home cattle from the fields; and a pair of mounted stride-legged women, hat and cap and all, dashed past me at a hammering trot from the canton where they had been to church and market. I asked one of the children where I was. At Bouchet St. Nicholas, he told me. Thither, about a mile south of my destination, and on the other side of a respectable summit, had these confused roads and treacherous peasantry conducted me. My shoulder was cut, so that it hurt sharply; my arm ached like tooth-ache from perpetual beating; I gave up the lake and my design to camp, and asked for the *auberge.*

I HAVE A GOAD

The *auberge* of Bouchet St. Nicholas was among the least pretentious I have ever visited; but I saw many more of the like upon my journey. Indeed, it was typical of these French highlands. Imagine a cottage of two stories, with a bench before the door; the stable and kitchen in a suite, so that Modestine and I could hear each other dining; furniture of the plainest, earthen floors, a single bed-chamber for travellers, and that without any convenience but beds. In the kitchen cooking and eating go forward side by side, and the family sleep at night. Any one who has a fancy to wash must do so in public at the common table. The food is sometimes spare; hard fish and omelette have been my portion more than once; the wine is of the smallest, the brandy abominable to man; and the visit of a fat sow, grouting under the table and rubbing against your legs, is no impossible accompaniment to dinner.

But the people of the inn, in nine cases out of ten, show themselves friendly and considerate. As soon as you cross the doors you cease to be a stranger; and although these peasantry are rude and forbidding on the highway, they show a tincture of kind breeding when you share their hearth. At Bouchet, for instance, I uncorked my bottle of Beaujolais, and asked the host to join me. He would take but little.

"I am an amateur of such wine, do you see?" he said, "and I am capable of leaving you not enough."

In these hedge-inns the traveller is expected to eat with his own knife; unless he ask, no other will be supplied: with a glass, a whang of bread, and an iron fork, the table is completely laid. My knife was cordially admired by the landlord of Bouchet, and the spring filled him with wonder.

"I should never have guessed that," he said. "I would bet," he added, weighing it in his hand, "that this cost you not less than five francs."

When I told him it had cost me twenty, his jaw dropped.

He was a mild, handsome, sensible, friendly old man, astonishingly ignorant. His wife, who was not so pleasant in her manners, knew how to read, although I do not suppose she ever did so. She had a share of brains, and spoke with a cutting emphasis, like one who ruled the roast.

"My man knows nothing," she said, with an angry nod; "he is like the beasts."

And the old gentleman signified acquiescence with his head. There was no contempt on her part, and no shame on his; the facts were accepted loyally, and no more about the matter.

I was tightly cross-examined about my journey; and the lady understood in a moment, and sketched out what I should put into my book when I got home. “Whether people harvest or not in such or such a place; if there were forests; studies of manners; what, for example, I and the master of the house say to you; the beauties of Nature, and all that.” And she interrogated me with a look.

“It is just that,” said I.

“You see,” she added to her husband, “I understood that.”

They were both much interested by the story of my misadventures.

“In the morning,” said the husband, “I will make you something better than your cane. Such a beast as that feels nothing; it is in the proverb — *dur comme un âne*; you might beat her insensible with a cudgel, and yet you would arrive nowhere.”

Something better! I little knew what he was offering.

The sleeping-room was furnished with two beds. I had one; and I will own I was a little abashed to find a young man and his wife and child in the act of mounting into the other. This was my first experience of the sort; and if I am always to feel equally silly and extraneous, I pray God it be my last as well. I kept my eyes to myself, and know nothing of the woman except that she had beautiful arms, and seemed no whit embarrassed by my appearance. As a matter of fact, the situation was more trying to me than to the pair. A pair keep each other in countenance; it is the single gentleman who has to blush. But I could not help attributing my sentiments to the husband, and sought to conciliate his tolerance with a cup of brandy from my flask. He told me that he was a cooper of Alais travelling to St. Etienne in search of work, and that in his spare moments he followed the fatal calling of a maker of matches. Me he readily enough divined to be a brandy merchant.

I was up first in the morning (Monday, September 23rd), and hastened my toilette guiltily, so as to leave a clear field for madam, the cooper’s wife. I drank a bowl of milk, and set off to explore the neighbourhood of Bouchet. It was perishing cold, a grey, windy, wintry morning; misty clouds flew fast and low; the wind piped over the naked platform; and the only speck of colour was away behind Mount Mézenc and the eastern hills, where the sky still wore the orange of the dawn.

It was five in the morning, and four thousand feet above the sea; and I had to bury my hands in my pockets and trot. People were trooping out to the labours of the field by twos and threes, and all turned round to stare upon the stranger. I had seen them coming back last night, I saw them going afield again; and there was the life of Bouchet in a nutshell.

When I came back to the inn for a bit of breakfast, the landlady was in the kitchen combing out her daughter’s hair; and I made her my compliments upon its beauty.

“Oh, no,” said the mother; “it is not so beautiful as it ought to be. Look, it is too fine.”

Thus does a wise peasantry console itself under adverse physical circumstances, and, by a startling democratic process, the defects of the majority decide the type of beauty.

“And where,” said I, “is monsieur?”

“The master of the house is upstairs,” she answered, “making you a goad.”

Blessed be the man who invented goads! Blessed the innkeeper of Bouchet St. Nicholas, who introduced me to their use! This plain wand, with an eighth of an inch of pin, was indeed a sceptre when he put it in my hands. Thenceforward Modestine was my slave. A prick, and she passed the most inviting stable-door. A prick, and she broke forth into a gallant little trotlet that devoured the miles. It was not a remarkable speed, when all was said; and we took four hours to cover ten miles at the best of it. But what a heavenly change since yesterday! No more wielding of the ugly cudgel; no more flailing with an aching arm; no more broadsword exercise, but a discreet and gentlemanly fence. And what although now and then a drop of blood should appear on Modestine’s mouse-coloured wedge-like rump? I should have preferred it otherwise, indeed; but yesterday’s exploits had purged my heart of all humanity. The perverse little devil, since she would not be taken with kindness, must even go with pricking.

It was bleak and bitter cold, and, except a cavalcade of stride-legged ladies and a pair of post-runners, the road was dead solitary all the way to Pradelles. I scarce remember an incident but one. A handsome foal with a bell about his neck came charging up to us upon a stretch of common, sniffed the air martially as one about to do great deeds, and, suddenly thinking otherwise in his green young heart, put about and galloped off as he had come, the bell tinkling in the wind. For a long while afterwards I saw his noble attitude as he drew up, and heard the note of his bell; and when I struck the high-road, the song of the telegraph-wires seemed to continue the same music.

Pradelles stands on a hillside, high above the Allier, surrounded by rich meadows. They were cutting aftermath on all sides, which gave the neighbourhood, this gusty autumn morning, an untimely smell of hay. On the opposite bank of the Allier the land kept mounting for miles to the horizon: a tanned and sallow autumn landscape, with black blots of fir-wood and white roads wandering through the hills. Over all this the clouds shed a uniform and purplish shadow, sad and somewhat menacing, exaggerating height and distance, and throwing into still higher relief the twisted ribbons of the highway. It was a cheerless prospect, but one stimulating to a traveller. For I was now upon the limit of Velay, and all that I beheld lay in another county — wild Gévaudan, mountainous, uncultivated, and but recently disforested from terror of the wolves.

Wolves, alas! like bandits, seem to flee the traveler's advance, and you may trudge through all our comfortable Europe and not meet with an adventure worth the name. But here, if anywhere, a man was on the frontiers of hope. For this was the land of the ever-memorable beast, the Napoléon Bonaparte of wolves. What a career was his! He lived ten months at free quarters in Gévaudan and Vivarais; he ate women and children and "shepherdesses celebrated for their beauty"; he pursued armed horsemen; he has been seen at broad noonday chasing a post-chaise and outrider along the king's high-road, and chaise and outrider fleeing before him at the gallop. He was placarded like a political offender, and ten thousand francs were offered for his head. And yet, when he was shot and sent to Versailles, behold! a common wolf, and even small for that. "Though I could reach from pole to pole," sang Alexander Pope; the Little Corporal shook Europe; and if all wolves had been as this wolf they would have changed the history of man. M. Élie Berthet has made him the hero of a novel, which I have read, and do not wish to read again.

I hurried over my lunch, and was proof against the landlady's desire that I should visit our Lady of Pradelles, "who performed many miracles, although she was of wood," and before three-quarters of an hour I was goading Modestine down the deep descent that leads to Langogne on the Allier. On both sides of the road, in big dusty fields, farmers were preparing for next spring. Every fifty yards a yoke of great-necked stolid oxen were patiently haling at the plough. I saw one of these mild formidable servants of the glebe, who took a sudden interest in Modestine and me. The furrow down which he was journeying lay at an angle to the road, and his head was solidly fixed to the yoke like those of caryatides below a ponderous cornice; but he screwed round his big honest eyes and followed us with a ruminating look, until his master bade him turn the plough and proceed to reascend the field. From all these furrowing ploughshares, from the feet of oxen, from a labourer here and there who was breaking the dry clods with a hoe, the wind carried away a thin dust like so much smoke. It was a fine, busy, breathing, rustic landscape; and as I continued to descend, the highlands of Gévaudan kept mounting in front of me against the sky.

I had crossed the Loire the day before; now I was to cross the Allier; so near are these two confluents in their youth. Just at the bridge of

Langogne, as the long-promised rain was beginning to fall, a lassie of some seven or eight addressed me in the sacramental phrase, “*D’où ‘st-ce-que vous venez?*” She did it with so high an air that she set me laughing, and this cut her to the quick. She was evidently one who reckoned on respect, and stood looking after me in silent dudgeon, as I crossed the bridge and entered the county of Gévaudan.

UPPER GÉVAUDAN

The way also here was very wearisome
through dirt and slabbiness; nor was
there on all this ground so much as one
inn or victualling-house wherein to
refresh the feebler sort.
PILGRIM’S PROGRESS.

A CAMP IN THE DARK

The next day (Tuesday, September 24th) it was two o’clock in the afternoon before I got my journal written up and my knapsack repaired, for I was determined to carry my knapsack in the future, and have no more ado with baskets; and half an hour afterwards I set out for Le Cheylard l’Évéque, a place on the borders of the forest of Mercoire. A man, I was told, should walk there in an hour and a half; and I thought it scarce too ambitious to suppose that a man encumbered with a donkey might cover the same distance in four hours.

All the way up the long hill from Langogne it rained and hailed alternately; the wind kept freshening steadily, although slowly; plentiful hurrying clouds — some, dragging veils of straight rain-shower, others massed and luminous as though promising snow — careered out of the north and followed me along my way. I was soon out of the cultivated basin of the Allier, and away from the ploughing oxen and such-like sights of the country. Moor, heathery marsh, tracts of rock and pines, woods of birch all jewelled with the autumn yellow, here and there a few naked cottages and bleak fields, — these were the characters of the country. Hill and valley followed valley and hill; the little green and stony cattle-tracks wandered in and out of one another, split into three or four, died away in marshy hollows, and began again sporadically on hillsides or at the borders of a wood.

There was no direct road to Cheylard, and it was no easy affair to make a passage in this uneven country and through this intermittent labyrinth of tracks. It must have been about four when I struck Sagnerousse, and went on my way rejoicing in a sure point of departure. Two hours afterwards, the dusk rapidly falling, in a lull of the wind, I issued from a fir-wood where I had long been wandering, and found, not the looked-for village, but another marish bottom among rough-and-tumble hills. For some time past I had heard the ringing of cattle-bells ahead; and now, as I came out of the skirts of the wood, I saw near upon a dozen cows, and perhaps as many more black figures, which I conjectured to be children, although the mist had almost unrecognisably exaggerated their forms. These were all silently following each other round and round in a circle, now taking hands, now breaking up with chains and reverences. A dance of children appeals to very innocent and lively thoughts; but, at nightfall on the marshes, the thing was eerie and fantastic to behold. Even I, who am well enough read in Herbert Spencer, felt a sort of silence fall for an instant on my mind. The next, I was pricking Modestine forward, and guiding her like an unruly ship through the open. In a path, she went doggedly ahead of her own accord, as before a fair wind; but once on the turf or among heather, and the brute became demented. The tendency of lost travellers to go round in a circle was developed in her to the degree of passion, and it took all the steering I had in me to keep even a decently straight course through a single field.

While I was thus desperately tacking through the bog, children and cattle began to disperse, until only a pair of girls remained behind. From these I sought direction on my path. The peasantry in general were but little disposed to counsel a wayfarer. One old devil simply retired into his house, and barricaded the door on my approach; and I might beat and shout myself hoarse, he turned a deaf ear. Another, having given me a direction which, as I found afterwards, I had misunderstood, complacently watched me going wrong without adding a sign. He did not care a stalk of parsley if I wandered all night upon the hills! As for these two girls, they were a pair of impudent sly sluts, with not a thought but mischief. One put out her tongue at me, the other bade me follow the cows, and they both giggled and joggled each other's elbows. The Beast of Gévaudan ate about a hundred children of this district; I began to think of him with sympathy.

Leaving the girls, I pushed on through the bog, and got into another wood and upon a well-marked road. It grew darker and darker. Modestine, suddenly beginning to smell mischief, bettered the pace of her own accord, and from that time forward gave me no trouble. It was the first sign of intelligence I had occasion to remark in her. At the same time, the wind freshened into half a gale, and another heavy discharge of rain came flying up out of the north. At the other side of the wood I sighted some red windows in the dusk. This was the hamlet of Fouzilhic; three houses on a hillside, near a wood of birches. Here I found a delightful old man, who came a little way with me in the rain to put me safely on the road for Cheylard. He would hear of no reward, but shook his hands above his head almost as if in menace, and refused volubly and shrilly in unmitigated *patois*.

All seemed right at last. My thoughts began to turn upon dinner and a fireside, and my heart was agreeably softened in my bosom. Alas, and I was on the brink of new and greater miseries! Suddenly, at a single swoop, the night fell. I have been abroad in many a black night, but never in a blacker. A glimmer of rocks, a glimmer of the track where it was well beaten, a certain fleecy density, or night within night, for a tree — this was all that I could discriminate. The sky was simply darkness overhead; even the flying clouds pursued their way invisibly to human eyesight. I could not distinguish my hand at arm's-length from the track, nor my goad, at the same distance, from the meadows or the sky.

Soon the road that I was following split, after the fashion of the country, into three or four in a piece of rocky meadow. Since Modestine had shown such a fancy for beaten roads, I tried her instinct in this predicament. But the instinct of an ass is what might be expected from the name; in half a minute she was clambering round and round among some boulders, as lost a donkey as you would wish to see. I should have camped long before had I been properly provided; but as this was to be so short a stage, I had brought no wine, no bread for myself, and little over a pound for my lady friend. Add to this, that I and Modestine were both handsomely wetted by the showers. But now, if I could have found some water, I should have camped at once in spite of all. Water, however, being entirely absent, except in the form of rain, I determined to return to Fouzilhic, and ask a guide a little farther on my way — ”a little farther lend thy guiding hand.”

The thing was easy to decide, hard to accomplish. In this sensible roaring blackness I was sure of nothing but the direction of the wind. To this I set my face; the road had disappeared, and I went across country, now in marshy opens, now baffled by walls unscalable to Modestine, until I came once more in sight of some red windows. This time they were differently disposed. It was not Fouzilhic, but Fouzilhac, a hamlet little distant from the other in space, but worlds away in the spirit of its inhabitants. I tied Modestine to a gate, and groped forward, stumbling among rocks, plunging mid-leg in bog, until I gained the entrance of the village. In the first lighted house there was a woman who would not open to me. She could do nothing, she cried to me through the door, being alone and lame; but if I would apply at the next house there was a man who could help me if he had a mind.

They came to the next door in force, a man, two women, and a girl, and brought a pair of lanterns to examine the wayfarer. The man was not ill-looking, but had a shifty smile. He leaned against the doorpost, and heard me state my case. All I asked was a guide as far as Cheylard.

“*C’est que, voyez-vous, il fait noir,*” said he.

I told him that was just my reason for requiring help.

“I understand that,” said he, looking uncomfortable; “*mais — c’est — de la peine.*”

I was willing to pay, I said. He shook his head. I rose as high as ten francs; but he continued to shake his head. “Name your own price then,” said I.

“*Ce n’est pas ça,*” he said at length, and with evident difficulty; “but I am not going to cross the door — *mais je ne sortirai pas de la porte.*”

I grew a little warm, and asked him what he proposed that I should do.

"Where are you going beyond Cheylard?" he asked by way of answer.

"That is no affair of yours," I returned, for I was not going to indulge his bestial curiosity; "it changes nothing in my present predicament."

"*C'est vrai, ça,*" he acknowledged, with a laugh; "*oui, c'est vrai. Et d'où venez-vous?*"

A better man than I might have felt nettled.

"Oh," said I, "I am not going to answer any of your questions, so you may spare yourself the trouble of putting them. I am late enough already; I want help. If you will not guide me yourself, at least help me to find some one else who will."

"Hold on," he cried suddenly. "Was it not you who passed in the meadow while it was still day?"

"Yes, yes," said the girl, whom I had not hitherto recognized; "it was monsieur; I told him to follow the cow."

"As for you, mademoiselle," said I, "you are a *farceuse.*"

"And," added the man, "what the devil have you done to be still here?"

What the devil, indeed! But there I was. "The great thing," said I, "is to make an end of it," and once more proposed that he should help me to find a guide.

"*C'est que,*" he said again, "*c'est que — il fait noir.*"

"Very well," said I; "take one of your lanterns."

"No," he cried, drawing a thought backward, and again entrenching himself behind one of his former phrases; "I will not cross the door."

I looked at him. I saw unaffected terror struggling on his face with unaffected shame; he was smiling pitifully and wetting his lip with his tongue, like a detected schoolboy. I drew a brief picture of my state, and asked him what I was to do.

"I don't know," he said; "I will not cross the door."

Here was the Beast of Gévaudan, and no mistake.

"Sir," said I, with my most commanding manners, "you are a coward."

And with that I turned my back upon the family party, who hastened to retire within their fortifications; and the famous door was closed again, but not till I had overheard the sound of laughter. *Filia barbara pater barbarior.* Let me say it in the plural: the Beasts of Gévaudan.

The lanterns had somewhat dazzled me, and I ploughed distressfully among stones and rubbish-heaps. All the other houses in the village were both dark and silent; and though I knocked at here and there a door, my knocking was unanswered. It was a bad business; I gave up Fouzilhac with my curses. The rain had stopped, and the wind, which still kept rising, began to dry my coat and trousers. “Very well,” thought I, “water or no water, I must camp.” But the first thing was to return to Modestine. I am pretty sure I was twenty minutes groping for my lady in the dark; and if it had not been for the unkindly services of the bog, into which I once more stumbled, I might have still been groping for her at the dawn. My next business was to gain the shelter of a wood, for the wind was cold as well as boisterous. How, in this well-wooded district, I should have been so long in finding one, is another of the insoluble mysteries of this day’s adventures; but I will take my oath that I put near an hour to the discovery.

At last black trees began to show upon my left, and, suddenly crossing the road, made a cave of unmitigated blackness right in front. I call it a cave without exaggeration; to pass below that arch of leaves was like entering a dungeon. I felt about until my hand encountered a stout branch, and to this I tied Modestine, a haggard, drenched, desponding donkey. Then I lowered my pack, laid it along the wall on the margin of the road, and unbuckled the straps. I knew well enough where the lantern was, but where were the candles? I groped and groped among the tumbled articles, and, while I was thus groping, suddenly I touched the spirit-lamp. Salvation! This would serve my turn as well. The wind roared unwearyingly among the trees; I could hear the boughs tossing and the leaves churning through half a mile of forest; yet the scene of my encampment was not only as black as the pit, but admirably sheltered. At the second match the wick caught flame. The light was both livid and shifting; but it cut me off from the universe, and doubled the darkness of the surrounding night.

I tied Modestine more conveniently for herself, and broke up half the black bread for her supper, reserving the other half against the morning. Then I gathered what I should want within reach, took off my wet boots and gaiters, which I wrapped in my waterproof, arranged my knapsack for a pillow under the flap of my sleeping-bag, insinuated my limbs into the interior, and buckled myself in like a *bambino*. I opened a tin of Bologna sausage, and broke a cake of chocolate, and that was all I had to eat. It may sound offensive, but I ate them together, bite by bite, by way of bread and meat. All I had to wash down this revolting mixture was neat brandy: a revolting beverage in itself. But I was rare and hungry; ate well, and smoked one of the best cigarettes in my experience. Then I put a stone in my straw hat, pulled the flap of my fur cap over my neck and eyes, put my revolver ready to my hand, and snuggled well down among the sheepskins.

I questioned at first if I were sleepy, for I felt my heart beating faster than usual, as if with an agreeable excitement to which my mind remained a stranger. But as soon as my eyelids touched, that subtle glue leaped between them, and they would no more come separate. The wind among the trees was my lullaby. Sometimes it sounded for minutes together with a steady, even rush, not rising nor abating; and again it would swell and burst like a great crashing breaker, and the trees would patter me all over with big drops from the rain of the afternoon. Night after night, in my own bedroom in the country, I have given ear to this perturbing concert of the wind among the woods, but whether it was a difference in the trees, or the lie of the ground, or because I was myself outside and in the midst of it, the fact remains that the wind sang to a different tune among these woods of Gévaudan. I hearkened and hearkened; and meanwhile sleep took gradual possession of my body and subdued my thoughts and senses; but still my last waking effort was to listen and distinguish, and my last conscious state was one of wonder at the foreign clamour in my ears.

Twice in the course of the dark hours — once when a stone galled me underneath the sack, and again when the poor patient Modestine, growing angry, pawed and stamped upon the road — I was recalled for a brief while to consciousness, and saw a star or two overhead, and the lace-like edge of the foliage against the sky. When I awoke for the third time (Wednesday, September 25th), the world was flooded with a blue light, the mother of the dawn. I saw the leaves labouring in the wind and the ribbon of the road; and, on turning my head, there was Modestine tied to a beech, and standing half across the path in an attitude of inimitable patience. I closed my eyes again, and set to thinking over the experience of the night. I was surprised to find how easy and pleasant it had been, even in this tempestuous weather. The stone which annoyed me would not have been there had I not been forced to camp blindfold in the opaque night; and I had felt no other inconvenience except when my feet encountered the lantern or the second volume of Peyrat's “Pastors of the Desert” among the mixed contents of my sleeping-bag; nay, more, I had felt not a touch of cold, and awakened with unusually lightsome and clear sensations.

With that I shook myself, got once more into my boots and gaiters, and, breaking up the rest of the bread for Modestine, strolled about to see in what part of the world I had awakened. Ulysses, left on Ithaca, and with a mind unsettled by the goddess, was not more pleasantly astray. I have been after an adventure all my life, a pure dispassionate adventure, such as befell early and heroic voyagers; and thus to be found by morning in a random woodside nook in Gévaudan — not knowing north from south, as strange to my surroundings as the first man upon the earth, an inland castaway — was to find a fraction of my daydreams realised. I was on the skirts of a little wood of birch, sprinkled with a few beeches; behind, it adjoined another wood of fir; and in front, it broke up and went down in open order into a shallow and meadowy dale. All around there were bare hill-tops, some near, some far away, as the perspective closed or opened, but none apparently much higher than the rest. The wind huddled the trees. The golden specks of autumn in the birches tossed shiveringly. Overhead the sky was full of strings and shreds of vapour, flying, vanishing, reappearing, and turning about an axis like tumblers, as the wind hounded them through heaven. It was wild weather and famishing cold. I ate some chocolate, swallowed a mouthful of brandy, and smoked a cigarette before the cold should have time to disable my fingers. And by the time I had got all this done, and had made my pack and bound it on the pack-saddle, the day was tiptoe on the threshold of the east. We had not gone many steps along the lane, before the sun, still invisible to me, sent a glow of gold over some cloud mountains that lay ranged along the eastern sky.

The wind had us on the stern, and hurried us bitingly forward. I buttoned myself into my coat, and walked on in a pleasant frame of mind with all men, when suddenly, at a corner, there was Fouzilhic once more in front of me. Nor only that, but there was the old gentleman who had escorted me so far the night before, running out of his house at sight of me, with hands upraised in horror.

“My poor boy!” he cried, “what does this mean?”

I told him what had happened. He beat his old hands like clappers in a mill, to think how lightly he had let me go; but when he heard of the man of Fouzilhac, anger and depression seized upon his mind.

“This time, at least,” said he, “there shall be no mistake.”

And he limped along, for he was very rheumatic, for about half a mile, and until I was almost within sight of Cheylard, the destination I had hunted for so long.

CHEYLARD AND LUC

Candidly, it seemed little worthy of all this searching. A few broken ends of village, with no particular street, but a succession of open places heaped with logs and fagots; a couple of tilted crosses, a shrine to Our Lady of all Graces on the summit of a little hill; and all this, upon a rattling highland river, in the corner of a naked valley. What went ye out for to see? thought I to myself. But the place had a life of its own. I found a board commemorating the liberalities of Cheylard for the past year, hung up, like a banner, in the diminutive and tottering church. In 1877, it appeared, the inhabitants subscribed forty-eight francs ten centimes for the "Work of the Propagation of the Faith." Some of this, I could not help hoping, would be applied to my native land. Cheylard scrapes together halfpence for the darkened souls in Edinburgh, while Balquhidder and Dunrossness bemoan the ignorance of Rome. Thus, to the high entertainment of the angels, do we pelt each other with evangelists, like schoolboys bickering in the snow.

The inn was again singularly unpretentious. The whole furniture of a not ill-to-do family was in the kitchen: the beds, the cradle, the clothes, the plate-rack, the meal-chest, and the photograph of the parish priest. There were five children, one of whom was set to its morning prayers at the stair-foot soon after my arrival, and a sixth would ere long be forthcoming. I was kindly received by these good folk. They were much interested in my misadventure. The wood in which I had slept belonged to them; the man of Fouzilhac they thought a monster of iniquity, and counseled me warmly to summon him at law — "because I might have died." The good wife was horror-stricken to see me drink over a pint of uncreamed milk.

"You will do yourself an evil," she said. "Permit me to boil it for you."

After I had begun the morning on this delightful liquor, she having an infinity of things to arrange, I was permitted, nay requested, to make a bowl of chocolate for myself. My boots and gaiters were hung up to dry, and, seeing me trying to write my journal on my knee, the eldest daughter let down a hinged table in the chimney-corner for my convenience. Here I wrote, drank my chocolate, and finally ate an omelette before I left. The table was thick with dust; for, as they explained, it was not used except in winter weather. I had a clear look up the vent, through brown agglomerations of soot and blue vapour, to the sky; and whenever a handful of twigs was thrown on to the fire, my legs were scorched by the blaze.

The husband had begun life as a muleteer, and when I came to charge Modestine showed himself full of the prudence of his art. “You will have to change this package,” said he; “it ought to be in two parts, and then you might have double the weight.”

I explained that I wanted no more weight; and for no donkey hitherto created would I cut my sleeping-bag in two.

“It fatigues her, however,” said the innkeeper; “it fatigues her greatly on the march. Look.”

Alas, there were her two forelegs no better than raw beef on the inside, and blood was running from under her tail. They told me when I started, and I was ready to believe it, that before a few days I should come to love Modestine like a dog. Three days had passed, we had shared some misadventures, and my heart was still as cold as a potato towards my beast of burden. She was pretty enough to look at; but then she had given proof of dead stupidity, redeemed indeed by patience, but aggravated by flashes of sorry and ill-judged light-heartedness. And I own this new discovery seemed another point against her. What the devil was the good of a she-ass if she could not carry a sleeping-bag and a few necessaries? I saw the end of the fable rapidly approaching, when I should have to carry Modestine. Æsop was the man to know the world! I assure you I set out with heavy thoughts upon my short day’s march.

It was not only heavy thoughts about Modestine that weighted me upon the way; it was a leaden business altogether. For first, the wind blew so rudely that I had to hold on the pack with one hand from Cheylard to Luc; and second, my road lay through one of the most beggarly countries in the world. It was like the worst of the Scottish Highlands, only worse; cold, naked, and ignoble, scant of wood, scant of heather, scant of life. A road and some fences broke the unvarying waste, and the line of the road was marked by upright pillars, to serve in time of snow.

Why any one should desire to visit either Luc or Cheylard is more than my much-inventing spirit can suppose. For my part, I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel’s sake. The great affair is to move; to feel the needs and hitches of our life more nearly; to come down off this feather-bed of civilization, and find the globe granite underfoot and strewn with cutting flints. Alas, as we get up in life, and are more preoccupied with our affairs, even a holiday is a thing that must be worked for. To hold a pack upon a pack-saddle against a gale out of the freezing north is no high industry, but it is one that serves to occupy and compose the mind. And when the present is so exacting, who can annoy himself about the future?

I came out at length above the Allier. A more unsightly prospect at this season of the year it would be hard to fancy. Shelving hills rose round it on all sides, here dabbled with wood and fields, there rising to peaks alternately naked and hairy with pines. The colour throughout was black or ashen, and came to a point in the ruins of the castle of Luc, which pricked up impudently from below my feet, carrying on a pinnacle a tall white statue of Our Lady, which, I heard with interest, weighed fifty quintals, and was to be dedicated on the 6th of October. Through this sorry landscape trickled the Allier and a tributary of nearly equal size, which came down to join it through a broad nude valley in Vivarais. The weather had somewhat lightened, and the clouds massed in squadron; but the fierce wind still hunted them through heaven, and cast great ungainly splashes of shadow and sunlight over the scene.

Luc itself was a straggling double file of houses wedged between hill and river. It had no beauty, nor was there any notable feature, save the old castle overhead with its fifty quintals of brand-new Madonna. But the inn was clean and large. The kitchen, with its two box-beds hung with clean check curtains, with its wide stone chimney, its chimney-shelf four yards long and garnished with lanterns and religious statuettes, its array of chests and pair of ticking clocks, was the very model of what a kitchen ought to be; a melodrama kitchen, suitable for bandits or noblemen in disguise. Nor was the scene disgraced by the landlady, a handsome, silent, dark old woman, clothed and hooded in black like a nun. Even the public bedroom had a character of its own, with the long deal tables and benches, where fifty might have dined, set out as for a harvest-home, and the three box-beds along the wall. In one of these, lying on straw and covered with a pair of table-napkins, did I do penance all night long in goose-flesh and chattering teeth, and sigh, from time to time as I awakened, for my sheepskin sack and the lee of some great wood.

OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS

I behold
The House, the Brotherhood austere —
And what am I, that I am here?
Matthew Arnold.

FATHER APOLLONARIS

Next morning (Thursday, 26th September) I took the road in a new order. The sack was no longer doubled, but hung at full length across the saddle, a green sausage six feet long with a tuft of blue wool hanging out of either end. It was more picturesque, it spared the donkey, and, as I began to see, it would ensure stability, blow high, blow low. But it was not without a pang that I had so decided. For although I had purchased a new cord, and made all as fast as I was able, I was yet jealously uneasy lest the flaps should tumble out and scatter my effects along the line of march.

My way lay up the bald valley of the river, along the march of Vivarais and Gévaudan. The hills of Gévaudan on the right were a little more naked, if anything, than those of Vivarais upon the left, and the former had a monopoly of a low dotty underwood that grew thickly in the gorges and died out in solitary burrs upon the shoulders and the summits. Black bricks of fir-wood were plastered here and there upon both sides, and here and there were cultivated fields. A railway ran beside the river; the only bit of railway in Gévaudan, although there are many proposals afoot and surveys being made, and even, as they tell me, a station standing ready built in Mende. A year or two hence and this may be another world. The desert is beleaguered. Now may some Languedocian Wordsworth turn the sonnet into *patois*: “Mountains and vales and floods, heard YE that whistle?”

At a place called La Bastide I was directed to leave the river, and follow a road that mounted on the left among the hills of Vivarais, the modern Ardèche; for I was now come within a little way of my strange destination, the Trappist monastery of Our Lady of the Snows. The sun came out as I left the shelter of a pine-wood, and I beheld suddenly a fine wild landscape to the south. High rocky hills, as blue as sapphire, closed the view, and between these lay ridge upon ridge, heathery, craggy, the sun glittering on veins of rock, the underwood clambering in the hollows, as rude as God made them at the first. There was not a sign of man’s hand in all the prospect; and indeed not a trace of his passage, save where generation after generation had walked in twisted footpaths, in and out among the beeches, and up and down upon the channeled slopes. The mists, which had hitherto beset me, were now broken into clouds, and fled swiftly and shone brightly in the sun. I drew a long breath. It was grateful to come, after so long, upon a scene of some attraction for the human heart. I own I like definite form in what my eyes are to rest upon; and if landscapes were sold, like the sheets of characters of my boyhood, one penny plain and twopence coloured, I should go the length of twopence every day of my life.

But if things had grown better to the south, it was still desolate and inclement near at hand. A spidery cross on every hill-top marked the neighbourhood of a religious house; and a quarter of a mile beyond, the outlook southward opening out and growing bolder with every step, a white statue of the Virgin at the corner of a young plantation directed the traveller to Our Lady of the Snows. Here, then, I struck leftward, and pursued my way, driving my secular donkey before me, and creaking in my secular boots and gaiters, towards the asylum of silence.

I had not gone very far ere the wind brought to me the clanging of a bell, and somehow, I can scarce tell why, my heart sank within me at the sound. I have rarely approached anything with more unaffected terror than the monastery of Our Lady of the Snows. This it is to have had a Protestant education. And suddenly, on turning a corner, fear took hold on me from head to foot — slavish, superstitious fear; and though I did not stop in my advance, yet I went on slowly, like a man who should have passed a bourne unnoticed, and strayed into the country of the dead. For there, upon the narrow new-made road, between the stripling pines, was a mediæval friar, fighting with a barrowful of turfs. Every Sunday of my childhood I used to study the Hermits of Marco Sadeler — enchanting prints, full of wood and field and mediæval landscapes, as large as a county, for the imagination to go a-travelling in; and here, sure enough, was one of Marco Sadeler's heroes. He was robed in white like any spectre, and the hood falling back, in the instancy of his contention with the barrow, disclosed a pate as bald and yellow as a skull. He might have been buried any time these thousand years, and all the lively parts of him resolved into earth and broken up with the farmer's harrow.

I was troubled besides in my mind as to etiquette. Durst I address a person who was under a vow of silence? Clearly not. But drawing near, I doffed my cap to him with a far-away superstitious reverence. He nodded back, and cheerfully addressed me. Was I going to the monastery? Who was I? An Englishman? Ah, an Irishman, then?

"No," I said, "a Scotsman."

A Scotsman? Ah, he had never seen a Scotsman before. And he looked me all over, his good, honest, brawny countenance shining with interest, as a boy might look upon a lion or an alligator. From him I learned with disgust that I could not be received at Our Lady of the Snows; I might get a meal, perhaps, but that was all. And then, as our talk ran on, and it turned out that I was not a pedlar, but a literary man, who drew landscapes and was going to write a book, he changed his manner of thinking as to my reception (for I fear they respect persons even in a Trappist monastery), and told me I must be sure to ask for the Father Prior, and state my case to him in full. On second thoughts he determined to go down with me himself; he thought he could manage for me better. Might he say that I was a geographer?

No; I thought, in the interests of truth, he positively might not.

“Very well, then” (with disappointment), “an author.”

It appeared he had been in a seminary with six young Irishmen, all priests, long since, who had received newspapers and kept him informed of the state of ecclesiastical affairs in England. And he asked me eagerly after Dr. Pusey, for whose conversion the good man had continued ever since to pray night and morning.

“I thought he was very near the truth,” he said; “and he will reach it yet; there is so much virtue in prayer.”

He must be a stiff, ungodly Protestant who can take anything but pleasure in this kind and hopeful story. While he was thus near the subject, the good father asked me if I were a Christian; and when he found I was not, or not after his way, he glossed it over with great good-will.

The road which we were following, and which this stalwart father had made with his own two hands within the space of a year, came to a corner, and showed us some white buildings a little farther on beyond the wood. At the same time, the bell once more sounded abroad. We were hard upon the monastery. Father Apollinaris (for that was my companion’s name) stopped me.

“I must not speak to you down there,” he said. “Ask for the Brother Porter, and all will be well. But try to see me as you go out again through the wood, where I may speak to you. I am charmed to have made your acquaintance.”

And then suddenly raising his arms, flapping his fingers, and crying out twice, “I must not speak! I must not speak!” he ran away in front of me, and disappeared into the monastery door.

I own this somewhat ghastly eccentricity went a good way to revive my terrors. But where one was so good and simple, why should not all be alike? I took heart of grace, and went forward to the gate as fast as Modestine, who seemed to have a disaffection for monasteries, would permit. It was the first door, in my acquaintance of her, which she had not shown an indecent haste to enter. I summoned the place in form, though with a quaking heart. Father Michael, the Father Hospitaller, and a pair of brown-robed brothers came to the gate and spoke with me a while. I think my sack was the great attraction; it had already beguiled the heart of poor Apollinaris, who had charged me on my life to show it to the Father Prior. But whether it was my address, or the sack, or the idea speedily published among that part of the brotherhood who attend on strangers that I was not a pedlar after all, I found no difficulty as to my reception. Modestine was led away by a layman to the stables, and I and my pack were received into Our Lady of the Snows.

THE MONKS

Father Michael, a pleasant, fresh-faced, smiling man, perhaps of thirty-five, took me to the pantry, and gave me a glass of liqueur to stay me until dinner. We had some talk, or rather I should say he listened to my prattle indulgently enough, but with an abstracted air, like a spirit with a thing of clay. And truly, when I remember that I descanted principally on my appetite, and that it must have been by that time more than eighteen hours since Father Michael had so much as broken bread, I can well understand that he would find an earthly savour in my conversation. But his manner, though superior, was exquisitely gracious; and I find I have a lurking curiosity as to Father Michael's past.

The whet administered, I was left alone for a little in the monastery garden. This is no more than the main court, laid out in sandy paths and beds of parti-coloured dahlias, and with a fountain and a black statue of the Virgin in the centre. The buildings stand around it four-square, bleak, as yet unseasoned by the years and weather, and with no other features than a belfry and a pair of slated gables. Brothers in white, brothers in brown, passed silently along the sanded alleys; and when I first came out, three hooded monks were kneeling on the terrace at their prayers. A naked hill commands the monastery upon one side, and the wood commands it on the other. It lies exposed to wind; the snow falls off and on from October to May, and sometimes lies six weeks on end; but if they stood in Eden with a climate like heaven's, the buildings themselves would offer the same wintry and cheerless aspect; and for my part, on this wild September day, before I was called to dinner, I felt chilly in and out.

When I had eaten well and heartily, Brother Ambrose, a hearty conversible Frenchman (for all those who wait on strangers have the liberty to speak), led me to a little room in that part of the building which is set apart for *MM. les retraitants*. It was clean and whitewashed, and furnished with strict necessaries, a crucifix, a bust of the late Pope, the "Imitation" in French, a book of religious meditations, and the "Life of Elizabeth Seton" — evangelist, it would appear, of North America and of New England in particular. As far as my experience goes, there is a fair field for some more evangelisation in these quarters; but think of Cotton Mather! I should like to give him a reading of this little work in heaven, where I hope he dwells; but perhaps he knows all that already, and much more; and perhaps he and Mrs. Seton are the dearest friends, and gladly unite their voices in the everlasting psalm. Over the table, to conclude the inventory of the room, hung a set of regulations for *MM. les retraitants*: what services they should attend, when they were to tell their beads or meditate, and when they were to rise and go to rest. At the foot was a notable N.B.: “*Le temps libre est employé a l’examen de conscience, à la confession, à faire de bonnes résolutions,*” etc. To make good resolutions, indeed! You might talk as fruitfully of making the hair grow on your head.

I had scarce explored my niche when Brother Ambrose returned. An English boarder, it appeared, would like to speak with me. I professed my willingness, and the friar ushered in a fresh, young, little Irishman of fifty, a deacon of the Church, arrayed in strict canonicals, and wearing on his head what, in default of knowledge, I can only call the ecclesiastical shako. He had lived seven years in retreat at a convent of nuns in Belgium, and now five at Our Lady of the Snows; he never saw an English newspaper; he spoke French imperfectly, and had he spoken it like a native, there was not much chance of conversation where he dwelt. With this, he was a man eminently sociable, greedy of news, and simple-minded like a child. If I was pleased to have a guide about the monastery, he was no less delighted to see an English face and hear an English tongue.

He showed me his own room, where he passed his time among breviaries, Hebrew Bibles, and the Waverley Novels. Thence he led me to the cloisters, into the chapter-house, through the vestry, where the brothers’ gowns and broad straw hats were hanging up, each with his religious name upon a board — names full of legendary suavity and interest, such as Basil, Hilarion, Raphael, or Pacifique; into the library, where were all the works of Veuillot and Chateaubriand, and the “Odes et Ballades,” if you please, and even Molière, to say nothing of innumerable fathers and a great variety of local and general historians. Thence my good Irishman took me round the workshops, where brothers bake bread, and make cart-wheels, and take photographs; where one superintends a collection of curiosities, and another a gallery of rabbits. For in a Trappist monastery each monk has an occupation of his own choice, apart from his religious duties and the general labours of the house. Each must sing in the choir, if he has a voice and ear, and join in the haymaking if he has a hand to stir; but in his private hours, although he must be occupied, he may be occupied on what he likes. Thus I was told that one brother was engaged with literature; while Father Apollinaris busies himself in making roads, and the Abbot employs himself in binding books. It is not so long since this Abbot was consecrated, by the way; and on that occasion, by a special grace, his mother was permitted to enter the chapel and witness the ceremony of consecration. A proud day for her to have a son a mitred abbot; it makes you glad to think they let her in.

In all these journeyings to and fro, many silent fathers and brethren fell in our way. Usually they paid no more regard to our passage than if we had been a cloud; but sometimes the good deacon had a permission to ask of them, and it was granted by a peculiar movement of the hands, almost like that of a dog's paws in swimming, or refused by the usual negative signs, and in either case with lowered eyelids and a certain air of contrition, as of a man who was steering very close to evil.

The monks, by special grace of their Abbot, were still taking two meals a day; but it was already time for their grand fast, which begins somewhere in September and lasts till Easter, and during which they eat but once in the twenty-four hours, and that at two in the afternoon, twelve hours after they have begun the toil and vigil of the day. Their meals are scanty, but even of these they eat sparingly; and though each is allowed a small carafe of wine, many refrain from this indulgence. Without doubt, the most of mankind grossly over-eat themselves; our meals serve not only for support, but as a hearty and natural diversion from the labour of life. Yet, though excess may be hurtful, I should have thought this Trappist regimen defective. And I am astonished, as I look back, at the freshness of face and cheerfulness of manner of all whom I beheld. A happier nor a healthier company I should scarce suppose that I have ever seen. As a matter of fact, on this bleak upland, and with the incessant occupation of the monks, life is of an uncertain tenure, and death no infrequent visitor, at Our Lady of the Snows. This, at least, was what was told me. But if they die easily, they must live healthily in the meantime, for they seemed all firm of flesh and high in colour; and the only morbid sign that I could observe, an unusual brilliancy of eye, was one that served rather to increase the general impression of vivacity and strength.

Those with whom I spoke were singularly sweet-tempered, with what I can only call a holy cheerfulness in air and conversation. There is a note, in the direction to visitors, telling them not to be offended at the curt speech of those who wait upon them, since it is proper to monks to speak little. The note might have been spared; to a man the hospitallers were all brimming with innocent talk, and, in my experience of the monastery, it was easier to begin than to break off a conversation. With the exception of Father Michael, who was a man of the world, they showed themselves full of kind and healthy interest in all sorts of subjects — in politics, in voyages, in my sleeping-sack — and not without a certain pleasure in the sound of their own voices.

As for those who are restricted to silence, I can only wonder how they bear their solemn and cheerless isolation. And yet, apart from any view of mortification, I can see a certain policy, not only in the exclusion of women, but in this vow of silence. I have had some experience of lay phalansteries, of an artistic, not to say a bacchanalian, character; and seen more than one association easily formed and yet more easily dispersed. With a Cistercian rule, perhaps they might have lasted longer. In the neighbourhood of women it is but a touch-and-go association that can be formed among defenceless men; the stronger electricity is sure to triumph; the dreams of boyhood, the schemes of youth, are abandoned after an interview of ten minutes, and the arts and sciences, and professional male jollity, deserted at once for two sweet eyes and a caressing accent. And next after this, the tongue is the great divider.

I am almost ashamed to pursue this worldly criticism of a religious rule; but there is yet another point in which the Trappist order appeals to me as a model of wisdom. By two in the morning the clapper goes upon the bell, and so on, hour by hour, and sometimes quarter by quarter, till eight, the hour of rest; so infinitesimally is the day divided among different occupations. The man who keeps rabbits, for example, hurries from his hutches to the chapel, the chapter-room, or the refectory, all day long: every hour he has an office to sing, a duty to perform; from two, when he rises in the dark, till eight, when he returns to receive the comfortable gift of sleep, he is upon his feet and occupied with manifold and changing business. I know many persons, worth several thousands in the year, who are not so fortunate in the disposal of their lives. Into how many houses would not the note of the monastery bell, dividing the day into manageable portions, bring peace of mind and healthful activity of body! We speak of hardships, but the true hardship is to be a dull fool, and permitted to mismanage life in our own dull and foolish manner.

From this point of view, we may perhaps better understand the monk’s existence. A long novitiate and every proof of constancy of mind and strength of body is required before admission to the order; but I could not find that many were discouraged. In the photographer’s studio, which figures so strangely among the outbuildings, my eye was attracted by the portrait of a young fellow in the uniform of a private of foot. This was one of the novices, who came of the age for service, and marched and drilled and mounted guard for the proper time among the garrison of Algiers. Here was a man who had surely seen both sides of life before deciding; yet as soon as he was set free from service he returned to finish his novitiate.

This austere rule entitles a man to heaven as by right. When the Trappist sickens, he quits not his habit; he lies in the bed of death as he has prayed and laboured in his frugal and silent existence; and when the Liberator comes, at the very moment, even before they have carried him in his robe to lie his little last in the chapel among continual chantings, joy-bells break forth, as if for a marriage, from the slated belfry, and proclaim throughout the neighbourhood that another soul has gone to God.

At night, under the conduct of my kind Irishman, I took my place in the gallery to hear compline and *Salve Regina*, with which the Cistercians bring every day to a conclusion. There were none of those circumstances which strike the Protestant as childish or as tawdry in the public offices of Rome. A stern simplicity, heightened by the romance of the surroundings, spoke directly to the heart. I recall the whitewashed chapel, the hooded figures in the choir, the lights alternately occluded and revealed, the strong manly singing, the silence that ensued, the sight of cowled heads bowed in prayer, and then the clear trenchant beating of the bell breaking in to show that the last office was over and the hour of sleep had come; and when I remember, I am not surprised that I made my escape into the court with somewhat whirling fancies, and stood like a man bewildered in the windy, starry night.

But I was weary; and when I had quieted my spirits with Elizabeth Seton's memoirs — a dull work — the cold and the raving of the wind among the pines (for my room was on that side of the monastery which adjoins the woods) disposed me readily to slumber. I was awakened at black midnight, as it seemed, though it was really two in the morning, by the first stroke upon the bell. All the brothers were then hurrying to the chapel; the dead in life, at this untimely hour, were already beginning the uncomforted labours of their day. The dead in life — there was a chill reflection. And the words of a French song came back into my memory, telling of the best of our mixed existence:

"Que t'as de belles filles,
Giroflé!
Girofla!
Que t'as de belles filles,
L'Amour les comptera!"

And I blessed God that I was free to wander, free to hope, and free to love.

THE BOARDERS

But there was another side to my residence at Our Lady of the Snows. At this late season there were not many boarders; and yet I was not alone in the public part of the monastery. This itself is hard by the gate, with a small dining-room on the ground floor and a whole corridor of cells similar to mine upstairs. I have stupidly forgotten the board for a regular *retraitant*; but it was somewhere between three and five francs a day, and I think most probably the first. Chance visitors like myself might give what they chose as a free-will offering, but nothing was demanded. I may mention that when I was going away Father Michael refused twenty francs as excessive. I explained the reasoning which led me to offer him so much; but even then, from a curious point of honour, he would not accept it with his own hand. "I have no right to refuse for the monastery," he explained, "but I should prefer if you would give it to one of the brothers."

I had dined alone, because I arrived late; but at supper I found two other guests. One was a country parish priest, who had walked over that morning from the seat of his cure near Mende to enjoy four days of solitude and prayer. He was a grenadier in person, with the hale colour and circular wrinkles of a peasant; and as he complained much of how he had been impeded by his skirts upon the march, I have a vivid fancy portrait of him, striding along, upright, big-boned, with kilted cassock, through the bleak hills of Gévaudan. The other was a short, grizzling, thick-set man, from forty-five to fifty, dressed in tweed with a knitted spencer, and the red ribbon of a decoration in his button-hole. This last was a hard person to classify. He was an old soldier, who had seen service and risen to the rank of commandant; and he retained some of the brisk decisive manners of the camp. On the other hand, as soon as his resignation was accepted, he had come to Our Lady of the Snows as a boarder, and, after a brief experience of its ways, had decided to remain as a novice. Already the new life was beginning to modify his appearance; already he had acquired somewhat of the quiet and smiling air of the brethren; and he was as yet neither an officer nor a Trappist, but partook of the character of each. And certainly here was a man in an interesting nick of life. Out of the noise of cannon and trumpets, he was in the act of passing into this still country bordering on the grave, where men sleep nightly in their grave-clothes, and, like phantoms, communicate by signs.

At supper we talked politics. I make it my business, when I am in France, to preach political good-will and moderation, and to dwell on the example of Poland, much as some alarmists in England dwell on the example of Carthage. The priest and the commandant assured me of their sympathy with all I said, and made a heavy sighing over the bitterness of contemporary feeling.

“Why, you cannot say anything to a man with which he does not absolutely agree,” said I, “but he flies up at you in a temper.”

They both declared that such a state of things was antichristian.

While we were thus agreeing, what should my tongue stumble upon but a word in praise of Gambetta’s moderation? The old soldier’s countenance was instantly suffused with blood; with the palms of his hands he beat the table like a naughty child.

“*Comment, monsieur?*” he shouted. “*Comment?* Gambetta moderate? Will you dare to justify these words?”

But the priest had not forgotten the tenor of our talk. And suddenly, in the height of his fury, the old soldier found a warning look directed on his face; the absurdity of his behaviour was brought home to him in a flash; and the storm came to an abrupt end, without another word.

It was only in the morning, over our coffee (Friday, September 27th), that this couple found out I was a heretic. I suppose I had misled them by some admiring expressions as to the monastic life around us; and it was only by a point-blank question that the truth came out. I had been tolerantly used both by simple Father Apollinaris and astute Father Michael; and the good Irish deacon, when he heard of my religious weakness, had only patted me upon the shoulder and said, “You must be a Catholic and come to heaven.” But I was now among a different sect of orthodox. These two men were bitter and upright and narrow, like the worst of Scotsmen, and indeed, upon my heart, I fancy they were worse. The priest snorted aloud like a battle-horse.

“*Et vous prétendez mourir dans cette espèce de croyance?*” he demanded; and there is no type used by mortal printers large enough to qualify his accent.

I humbly indicated that I had no design of changing.

But he could not away with such a monstrous attitude. “No, no,” he cried; “you must change. You have come here, God has led you here, and you must embrace the opportunity.”

I made a slip in policy; I appealed to the family affections, though I was speaking to a priest and a soldier, two classes of men circumstantially divorced from the kind and homely ties of life.

“Your father and mother?” cried the priest. “Very well; you will convert them in their turn when you go home.”

I think I see my father’s face! I would rather tackle the Gætulian lion in his den than embark on such an enterprise against the family theologian.

But now the hunt was up; priest and soldier were in full cry for my conversion; and the Work of the Propagation of the Faith, for which the people of Cheylard subscribed forty-eight francs ten centimes during 1877, was being gallantly pursued against myself. It was an odd but most effective proselytizing. They never sought to convince me in argument, where I might have attempted some defence; but took it for granted that I was both ashamed and terrified at my position, and urged me solely on the point of time. Now, they said, when God had led me to Our Lady of the Snows, now was the appointed hour.

"Do not be withheld by false shame," observed the priest, for my encouragement.

For one who feels very similarly to all sects of religion, and who has never been able, even for a moment, to weigh seriously the merit of this or that creed on the eternal side of things, however much he may see to praise or blame upon the secular and temporal side, the situation thus created was both unfair and painful. I committed my second fault in tact, and tried to plead that it was all the same thing in the end, and we were all drawing near by different sides to the same kind and undiscriminating Friend and Father. That, as it seems to lay spirits, would be the only gospel worthy of the name. But different men think differently; and this revolutionary aspiration brought down the priest with all the terrors of the law. He launched into harrowing details of hell. The damned, he said — on the authority of a little book which he had read not a week before, and which, to add conviction to conviction, he had fully intended to bring along with him in his pocket — were to occupy the same attitude through all eternity in the midst of dismal tortures. And as he thus expatiated, he grew in nobility of aspect with his enthusiasm.

As a result the pair concluded that I should seek out the Prior, since the Abbot was from home, and lay my case immediately before him.

"*C'est mon conseil comme ancien militaire,*" observed the commandant; "*et celui de monsieur comme prêtre.*"

"*Oui,*" added the *curé*, sententiously nodding; "*comme ancien militaire — et comme prêtre.*"

At this moment, whilst I was somewhat embarrassed how to answer, in came one of the monks, a little brown fellow, as lively as a grig, and with an Italian accent, who threw himself at once into the contention, but in a milder and more persuasive vein, as befitted one of these pleasant brethren. Look at *him*, he said. The rule was very hard; he would have dearly liked to stay in his own country, Italy — it was well known how beautiful it was, the beautiful Italy; but then there were no Trappists in Italy; and he had a soul to save; and here he was.

I am afraid I must be at bottom, what a cheerful Indian critic has dubbed me, “a faddling hedonist,” for this description of the brother’s motives gave me somewhat of a shock. I should have preferred to think he had chosen the life for its own sake, and not for ulterior purposes; and this shows how profoundly I was out of sympathy with these good Trappists, even when I was doing my best to sympathize. But to the curé the argument seemed decisive.

“Hear that!” he cried. “And I have seen a marquis here, a marquis, a marquis” — he repeated the holy word three times over — ”and other persons high in society; and generals. And here, at your side, is this gentleman, who has been so many years in armies — decorated, an old warrior. And here he is, ready to dedicate himself to God.”

I was by this time so thoroughly embarrassed that I pled cold feet, and made my escape from the apartment. It was a furious windy morning, with a sky much cleared, and long and potent intervals of sunshine; and I wandered until dinner in the wild country towards the east, sorely staggered and beaten upon by the gale, but rewarded with some striking views.

At dinner the Work of the Propagation of the Faith was recommenced, and on this occasion still more distastefully to me. The priest asked me many questions as to the contemptible faith of my fathers, and received my replies with a kind of ecclesiastical titter.

“Your sect,” he said once; “for I think you will admit it would be doing it too much honour to call it a religion.”

“As you please, monsieur,” said I. “ *La parole est à vous.”*

At length I grew annoyed beyond endurance; and although he was on his own ground, and, what is more to the purpose, an old man, and so holding a claim upon my toleration, I could not avoid a protest against this uncivil usage. He was sadly discountenanced.

“I assure you,” he said, “I have no inclination to laugh in my heart. I have no other feeling but interest in your soul.”

And there ended my conversion. Honest man! he was no dangerous deceiver; but a country parson, full of zeal and faith. Long may he tread Gévaudan with his kilted skirts — a man strong to walk and strong to comfort his parishioners in death! I daresay he would beat bravely through a snowstorm where his duty called him; and it is not always the most faithful believer who makes the cunningest apostle.

UPPER GÉVAUDAN

(Continued)

The bed was made, the room was fit,
By punctual eve the stars were lit;
The air was still, the water ran;
No need there was for maid or man,
When we put up, my ass and I,
At God's green caravanserai.
Old Play.

ACROSS THE GOULET

The wind fell during dinner, and the sky remained clear; so it was under better auspices that I loaded Modestine before the monastery gate. My Irish friend accompanied me so far on the way. As we came through the wood, there was Père Apollinaire hauling his barrow; and he too quitted his labours to go with me for perhaps a hundred yards, holding my hand between both of his in front of him. I parted first from one and then from the other with unfeigned regret, but yet with the glee of the traveller who shakes off the dust of one stage before hurrying forth upon another. Then Modestine and I mounted the course of the Allier, which here led us back into Gévaudan towards its sources in the forest of Mercoire. It was but an inconsiderable burn before we left its guidance. Thence, over a hill, our way lay through a naked plateau, until we reached Chasseradès at sundown.

The company in the inn kitchen that night were all men employed in survey for one of the projected railways. They were intelligent and conversible, and we decided the future of France over hot wine, until the state of the clock frightened us to rest. There were four beds in the little upstairs room; and we slept six. But I had a bed to myself, and persuaded them to leave the window open.

"*Hé, bourgeois; il est cinq heures!*" was the cry that wakened me in the morning (Saturday, September 28th). The room was full of a transparent darkness, which dimly showed me the other three beds and the five different nightcaps on the pillows. But out of the window the dawn was growing ruddy in a long belt over the hill-tops, and day was about to flood the plateau. The hour was inspiriting; and there seemed a promise of calm weather, which was perfectly fulfilled. I was soon under way with Modestine. The road lay for a while over the plateau, and then descended through a precipitous village into the valley of the Chassezac. This stream ran among green meadows, well hidden from the world by its steep banks; the broom was in flower, and here and there was a hamlet sending up its smoke.

At last the path crossed the Chassezac upon a bridge, and, forsaking this deep hollow, set itself to cross the mountain of La Goulet. It wound up through Lestampes by upland fields and woods of beech and birch, and with every corner brought me into an acquaintance with some new interest. Even in the gully of the Chassezac my ear had been struck by a noise like that of a great bass bell ringing at the distance of many miles; but this, as I continued to mount and draw nearer to it, seemed to change in character, and I found at length that it came from some one leading flocks afield to the note of a rural horn. The narrow street of Lestampes stood full of sheep, from wall to wall — black sheep and white, bleating with one accord like the birds in spring, and each one accompanying himself upon the sheep-bell round his neck. It made a pathetic concert, all in treble. A little higher, and I passed a pair of men in a tree with pruning-hooks, and one of them was singing the music of a *bourrée.* Still further, and when I was already threading the birches, the crowing of cocks came cheerfully up to my ears, and along with that the voice of a flute discoursing a deliberate and plaintive air from one of the upland villages. I pictured to myself some grizzled, apple-cheeked, country schoolmaster fluting in his bit of a garden in the clear autumn sunshine. All these beautiful and interesting sounds filled my heart with an unwonted expectation; and it appeared to me that, once past this range which I was mounting, I should descend into the garden of the world. Nor was I deceived, for I was now done with rains and winds and a bleak country. The first part of my journey ended here; and this was like an induction of sweet sounds into the other and more beautiful.

There are other degrees of *feyness*, as of punishment, besides the capital; and I was now led by my good spirits into an adventure which I relate in the interest of future donkey-drivers. The road zigzagged so widely on the hillside, that I chose a short cut by map and compass, and struck through the dwarf woods to catch the road again upon a higher level. It was my one serious conflict with Modestine. She would none of my short cut; she turned in my face; she backed, she reared; she, whom I had hitherto imagined to be dumb, actually brayed with a loud hoarse flourish, like a cock crowing for the dawn. I plied the goad with one hand; with the other, so steep was the ascent, I had to hold on the pack-saddle. Half a dozen times she was nearly over backwards on the top of me; half a dozen times, from sheer weariness of spirit, I was nearly giving it up, and leading her down again to follow the road. But I took the thing as a wager, and fought it through. I was surprised, as I went on my way again, by what appeared to be chill rain-drops falling on my hand, and more than once looked up in wonder at the cloudless sky. But it was only sweat which came dropping from my brow.

Over the summit of the Goulet there was no marked road — only upright stones posted from space to space to guide the drovers. The turf underfoot was springy and well scented. I had no company but a lark or two, and met but one bullock-cart between Lestampes and Bleymard. In front of me I saw a shallow valley, and beyond that the range of the Lozère, sparsely wooded and well enough modeled in the flanks, but straight and dull in outline. There was scarce a sign of culture; only about Bleymard, the white high-road from Villefort to

Mende traversed a range of meadows, set with spiry poplars, and sounding from side to side with the bells of flocks and herds.

A NIGHT AMONG THE PINES

From Bleymard after dinner, although it was already late, I set out to scale a portion of the Lozère. An ill-marked stony drove-road guided me forward; and I met nearly half a dozen bullock-carts descending from the woods, each laden with a whole pine-tree for the winter's firing. At the top of the woods, which do not climb very high upon this cold ridge, I struck leftward by a path among the pines, until I hit on a dell of green turf, where a streamlet made a little spout over some stones to serve me for a water-tap. "In a more sacred or sequestered bower ... nor nymph nor faunus haunted." The trees were not old, but they grew thickly round the glade: there was no outlook, except north-eastward upon distant hill-tops, or straight upward to the sky; and the encampment felt secure and private like a room. By the time I had made my arrangements and fed Modestine, the day was already beginning to decline. I buckled myself to the knees into my sack and made a hearty meal; and as soon as the sun went down I pulled my cap over my eyes and fell asleep.

Night is a dead monotonous period under a roof: but in the open world it passes lightly, with its stars and dews and perfumes, and the hours are marked by changes in the face of Nature. What seems a kind of temporal death to people choked between walls and curtains, is only a light and living slumber to the man who sleeps afield. All night long he can hear Nature breathing deeply and freely; even as she takes her rest, she turns and smiles; and there is one stirring hour unknown to those who dwell in houses, when a wakeful influence goes abroad over the sleeping hemisphere, and all the outdoor world are on their feet. It is then that the cock first crows, not this time to announce the dawn, but like a cheerful watchman speeding the course of night. Cattle awake on the meadows; sheep break their fast on dewy hillsides, and change to a new lair among the ferns; and houseless men, who have lain down with the fowls, open their dim eyes and behold the beauty of the night.

At what inaudible summons, at what gentle touch of Nature, are all these sleepers thus recalled in the same hour to life? Do the stars rain down an influence, or do we share some thrill of mother earth below our resting bodies? Even shepherds and old country-folk, who are the deepest read in these arcana, have not a guess as to the means or purpose of this nightly resurrection. Towards two in the morning they declare the thing takes place, and neither know nor inquire further. And at least it is a pleasant incident. We are disturbed in our slumber, only, like the luxurious Montaigne, "that we may the better and more sensibly relish it." We have a moment to look up on the stars. And there is a special pleasure for some minds in the reflection that we share the impulse with all outdoor creatures in our neighbourhood, that we have escaped out of the Bastille of civilization, and are become, for the time being, a mere kindly animal and a sheep of Nature's flock.

When that hour came to me among the pines, I wakened thirsty. My tin was standing by me half full of water. I emptied it at a draught; and feeling broad awake after this internal cold aspersion, sat upright to make a cigarette. The stars were clear, coloured, and jewel-like, but not frosty. A faint silvery vapour stood for the Milky Way. All around me the black fir-points stood upright and stock-still. By the whiteness of the pack-saddle, I could see Modestine walking round and round at the length of her tether; I could hear her steadily munching at the sward; but there was not another sound, save the indescribable quiet talk of the runnel over the stones. I lay lazily smoking and studying the colour of the sky, as we call the void of space, from where it showed a reddish grey behind the pines to where it showed a glossy blue-black between the stars. As if to be more like a pedlar, I wear a silver ring. This I could see faintly shining as I raised or lowered the cigarette; and at each whiff the inside of my hand was illuminated, and became for a second the highest light in the landscape.

A faint wind, more like a moving coolness than a stream of air, passed down the glade from time to time; so that even in my great chamber the air was being renewed all night long. I thought with horror of the inn at Chasseradès and the congregated nightcaps; with horror of the nocturnal prowesses of clerks and students, of hot theatres and pass-keys and close rooms. I have not often enjoyed a more serene possession of myself, nor felt more independent of material aids. The outer world, from which we cower into our houses, seemed after all a gentle habitable place; and night after night a man's bed, it seemed, was laid and waiting for him in the fields, where God keeps an open house. I thought I had rediscovered one of those truths which are revealed to savages and hid from political economists; at the least, I had discovered a new pleasure for myself. And yet even while I was exulting in my solitude I became aware of a strange lack. I wished a companion to lie near me in the starlight, silent and not moving, but ever within touch. For there is a fellowship more quiet even than solitude, and which rightly understood, is solitude made perfect. And to live out of doors with the woman a man loves is of all lives the most complete and free.

As I thus lay, between content and longing, a faint noise stole towards me through the pines. I thought, at first, it was the crowing of cocks or the barking of dogs at some very distant farm; but steadily and gradually it took articulate shape in my ears, until I became aware that a passenger was going by upon the high-road in the valley, and singing loudly as he went. There was more of good-will than grace in his performance; but he trolled with ample lungs; and the sound of his voice took hold upon the hillside and set the air shaking in the leafy glens. I have heard people passing by night in sleeping cities; some of them sang; one, I remember, played loudly on the bagpipes. I have heard the rattle of a cart or carriage spring up suddenly after hours of stillness, and pass, for some minutes, within the range of my hearing as I lay abed. There is a romance about all who are abroad in the black hours, and with something of a thrill we try to guess their business. But here the romance was double: first, this glad passenger, lit internally with wine, who sent up his voice in music through the night; and then I, on the other hand, buckled into my sack, and smoking alone in the pine-woods between four and five thousand feet towards the stars.

When I awoke again (Sunday, 29th September), many of the stars had disappeared; only the stronger companions of the night still burned visibly overhead; and away towards the east I saw a faint haze of light upon the horizon, such as had been the Milky Way when I was last awake. Day was at hand. I lit my lantern, and by its glow-worm light put on my boots and gaiters; then I broke up some bread for Modestine, filled my can at the water-tap, and lit my spirit-lamp to boil myself some chocolate. The blue darkness lay long in the glade where I had so sweetly slumbered; but soon there was a broad streak of orange melting into gold along the mountain-tops of Vivarais. A solemn glee possessed my mind at this gradual and lovely coming in of day. I heard the runnel with delight; I looked round me for something beautiful and unexpected; but the still black pine-trees, the hollow glade, the munching ass, remained unchanged in figure. Nothing had altered but the light, and that, indeed, shed over all a spirit of life and of breathing peace, and moved me to a strange exhilaration.

I drank my water-chocolate, which was hot if it was not rich, and strolled here and there, and up and down about the glade. While I was thus delaying, a gush of steady wind, as long as a heavy sigh, poured direct out of the quarter of the morning. It was cold, and set me sneezing. The trees near at hand tossed their black plumes in its passage; and I could see the thin distant spires of pine along the edge of the hill rock slightly to and fro against the golden east. Ten minutes later, the sunlight spread at a gallop along the hillside, scattering shadows and sparkles, and the day had come completely.

I hastened to prepare my pack, and tackle the steep ascent that lay before me; but I had something on my mind. It was only a fancy; yet a fancy will sometimes be importunate. I had been most hospitably received and punctually served in my green caravanserai. The room was airy, the water excellent, and the dawn had called me to a moment. I say nothing of the tapestries or the inimitable ceiling, nor yet of the view which I commanded from the windows; but I felt I was in some one's debt for all this liberal entertainment. And so it pleased me, in a half-laughing way, to leave pieces of money on the turf as I went along, until I had left enough for my night's lodging. I trust they did not fall to some rich and churlish drover.

THE COUNTRY OF THE CAMISARDS

We travelled in the print of olden wars;
Yet all the land was green;
And love we found, and peace,
Where fire and war had been.
They pass and smile, the children of the sword —
No more the sword they wield;
And O, how deep the corn
Along the battlefield!
W. P. BANNATYNE.

ACROSS THE LOZÈRE

The track that I had followed in the evening soon died out, and I continued to follow over a bald turf ascent a row of stone pillars, such as had conducted me across the Goulet. It was already warm. I tied my jacket on the pack, and walked in my knitted waistcoat. Modestine herself was in high spirits, and broke of her own accord, for the first time in my experience, into a jolting trot that sent the oats swashing in the pocket of my coat. The view, back upon the northern Gévaudan, extended with every step; scarce a tree, scarce a house, appeared upon the fields of wild hill that ran north, east, and west, all blue and gold in the haze and sunlight of the morning. A multitude of little birds kept sweeping and twittering about my path; they perched on the stone pillars, they pecked and strutted on the turf, and I saw them circle in volleys in the blue air, and show, from time to time, translucent flickering wings between the sun and me.

Almost from the first moment of my march, a faint large noise, like a distant surf, had filled my ears. Sometimes I was tempted to think it the voice of a neighbouring waterfall, and sometimes a subjective result of the utter stillness of the hill. But as I continued to advance, the noise increased, and became like the hissing of an enormous tea urn, and at the same time breaths of cool air began to reach me from the direction of the summit. At length I understood. It was blowing stiffly from the south upon the other slope of the Lozère, and every step that I took I was drawing nearer to the wind.

Although it had been long desired, it was quite unexpectedly at last that my eyes rose above the summit. A step that seemed no way more decisive than many other steps that had preceded it — and, "like stout Cortez when, with eagle eyes, he stared at the Pacific," I took possession, in my own name, of a new quarter of the world. For behold, instead of the gross turf rampart I had been mounting for so long, a view into the hazy air of heaven, and a land of intricate blue hills below my feet.

The Lozère lies nearly east and west, cutting Gévaudan into two unequal parts; its highest point, this Pic de Finiels, on which I was then standing, rises upwards of five thousand six hundred feet above the sea, and in clear weather commands a view over all lower Languedoc to the Mediterranean Sea. I have spoken with people who either pretended or believed that they had seen, from the Pic de Finiels, white ships sailing by Montpellier and Cette. Behind was the upland northern country through which my way had lain, peopled by a dull race, without wood, without much grandeur of hill-form, and famous in the past for little besides wolves. But in front of me, half veiled in sunny haze, lay a new Gévaudan, rich, picturesque, illustrious for stirring events. Speaking largely, I was in the Cevennes at Monastier, and during all my journey; but there is a strict and local sense in which only this confused and shaggy country at my feet has any title to the name, and in this sense the peasantry employ the word. These are the Cevennes with an emphasis: the Cevennes of the Cevennes. In that undecipherable labyrinth of hills, a war of bandits, a war of wild beasts, raged for two years between the Grand Monarch with all his troops and marshals on the one hand, and a few thousand Protestant mountaineers upon the other. A hundred and eighty years ago, the Camisards held a station even on the Lozère, where I stood; they had an organization, arsenals, a military and religious hierarchy; their affairs were "the discourse of every coffee-house" in London; England sent fleets in their support; their leaders prophesied and murdered; with colours and drums, and the singing of old French Psalms, their bands sometimes affronted daylight, marched before walled cities, and dispersed the generals of the king; and sometimes at night, or in masquerade, possessed themselves of strong castles, and avenged treachery upon their allies and cruelty upon their foes. There, a hundred and eighty years ago, was the chivalrous Roland, "Count and Lord Roland, generalissimo of the Protestants in France," grave, silent, imperious, pock-marked ex-dragoon, whom a lady followed in his wanderings out of love. There was Cavalier, a baker's apprentice with a genius for war, elected brigadier of Camisards at seventeen, to die at fifty-five the English Governor of Jersey. There again was Castanet, a partisan leader in a voluminous peruke and with a taste for controversial divinity. Strange generals, who moved apart to take counsel with the God of Hosts, and fled or offered battle, set sentinels or slept in an unguarded camp, as the Spirit whispered to their hearts! And there, to follow these and other leaders, was the rank and file of prophets and disciples, bold, patient, indefatigable, hardy to run upon the mountains, cheering their rough life with psalms, eager to fight, eager to pray, listening devoutly to the oracles of brain-sick children, and mystically putting a grain of wheat among the pewter balls with which they charged their muskets.

I had travelled hitherto through a dull district, and in the track of nothing more notable than the child-eating Beast of Gévaudan, the Napoléon Bonaparte of wolves. But now I was to go down into the scene of a romantic chapter — or, better, a romantic footnote — in the history of the world. What was left of all this bygone dust and heroism? I was told that Protestantism still survived in this head seat of Protestant resistance; so much the priest himself had told me in the monastery parlour. But I had yet to learn if it were a bare survival, or a lively and generous tradition. Again, if in the northern Cevennes the people are narrow in religious judgments, and more filled with zeal than charity, what was I to look for in this land of persecution and reprisal — in a land where the tyranny of the Church produced the Camisard rebellion, and the terror of the Camisards threw the Catholic peasantry into legalized revolt upon the other side, so that Camisard and Florentin skulked for each other's lives among the mountains?

Just on the brow of the hill, where I paused to look before me, the series of stone pillars came abruptly to an end; and only a little below, a sort of track appeared and began to go down a break-neck slope, turning like a corkscrew as it went. It led into a valley between falling hills, stubbly with rocks like a reaped field of corn, and floored farther down with green meadows. I followed the track with precipitation; the steepness of the slope, the continual agile turning of the line of the descent, and the old unwearied hope of finding something new in a new country, all conspired to lend me wings. Yet a little lower and a stream began, collecting itself together out of many fountains, and soon making a glad noise among the hills. Sometimes it would cross the track in a bit of waterfall, with a pool, in which Modestine refreshed her feet.

The whole descent is like a dream to me, so rapidly was it accomplished. I had scarcely left the summit ere the valley had closed round my path, and the sun beat upon me, walking in a stagnant lowland atmosphere. The track became a road, and went up and down in easy undulations. I passed cabin after cabin, but all seemed deserted; and I saw not a human creature, nor heard any sound except that of the stream. I was, however, in a different country from the day before. The stony skeleton of the world was here vigorously displayed to sun and air. The slopes were steep and changeful. Oak-trees clung along the hills, well grown, wealthy in leaf, and touched by the autumn with strong and luminous colours. Here and there another stream would fall in from the right or the left, down a gorge of snow-white and tumultuary boulders. The river in the bottom (for it was rapidly growing a river, collecting on all hands as it trotted on its way) here foamed a while in desperate rapids, and there lay in pools of the most enchanting sea-green shot with watery browns. As far as I have gone, I have never seen a river of so changeful and delicate a hue; crystal was not more clear, the meadows were not by half so green; and at every pool I saw I felt a thrill of longing to be out of these hot, dusty, and material garments, and bathe my naked body in the mountain air and water. All the time as I went on I never forgot it was the Sabbath; the stillness was a perpetual reminder; and I heard in spirit the church-bells clamouring all over Europe, and the psalms of a thousand churches.

At length a human sound struck upon my ear — a cry strangely modulated between pathos and derision; and looking across the valley, I saw a little urchin sitting in a meadow, with his hands about his knees, and dwarfed to almost comical smallness by the distance. But the rogue had picked me out as I went down the road, from oak wood on to oak wood, driving Modestine; and he made me the compliments of the new country in this tremulous high-pitched salutation. And as all noises are lovely and natural at a sufficient distance, this also, coming through so much clean hill air and crossing all the green valley, sounded pleasant to my ear, and seemed a thing rustic, like the oaks or the river.

A little after, the stream that I was following fell into the Tarn at Pont de Montvert of bloody memory.

PONT DE MONTVERT

One of the first things I encountered in Pont de Montvert was, if I remember rightly, the Protestant temple; but this was but the type of other novelties. A subtle atmosphere distinguishes a town in England from a town in France, or even in Scotland. At Carlisle you can see you are in the one country; at Dumfries, thirty miles away, you are as sure that you are in the other. I should find it difficult to tell in what particulars Pont de Montvert differed from Monastier or Langogne, or even Bleymard; but the difference existed, and spoke eloquently to the eyes. The place, with its houses, its lanes, its glaring riverbed, wore an indescribable air of the South.

All was Sunday bustle in the streets and in the public-houses, as all had been Sabbath peace among the mountains. There must have been near a score of us at dinner by eleven before noon; and after I had eaten and drunken, and sat writing up my journal, I suppose as many more came dropping in one after another, or by twos and threes. In crossing the Lozère I had not only come among new natural features, but moved into the territory of a different race. These people, as they hurriedly despatched their viands in an intricate sword-play of knives, questioned and answered me with a degree of intelligence which excelled all that I had met, except among the railway folk at Chasseradès. They had open telling faces, and were lively both in speech and manner. They not only entered thoroughly into the spirit of my little trip, but more than one declared, if he were rich enough, he would like to set forth on such another.

Even physically there was a pleasant change. I had not seen a pretty woman since I left Monastier, and there but one. Now of the three who sat down with me to dinner, one was certainly not beautiful — a poor timid thing of forty, quite troubled at this roaring *table d'hôte*, whom I squired and helped to wine, and pledged and tried generally to encourage, with quite a contrary effect; but the other two, both married, were both more handsome than the average of women. And Clarisse? What shall I say of Clarisse? She waited the table with a heavy placable nonchalance, like a performing cow; her great grey eyes were steeped in amorous languor; her features, although fleshy, were of an original and accurate design; her mouth had a curl; her nostril spoke of dainty pride; her cheek fell into strange and interesting lines. It was a face capable of strong emotion, and, with training, it offered the promise of delicate sentiment. It seemed pitiful to see so good a model left to country admirers and a country way of thought. Beauty should at least have touched society; then, in a moment, it throws off a weight that lay upon it, it becomes conscious of itself, it puts on an elegance, learns a gait and a carriage of the head, and, in a moment, *patet dea.* Before I left I assured Clarisse of my hearty admiration. She took it like milk, without embarrassment or wonder, merely looking at me steadily with her great eyes; and I own the result upon myself was some confusion. If Clarisse could read English, I should not dare to add that her figure was unworthy of her face. Hers was a case for stays; but that may perhaps grow better as she gets up in years.

Pont de Montvert, or Greenhill Bridge, as we might say at home, is a place memorable in the story of the Camisards. It was here that the war broke out; here that those southern Covenanters slew their Archbishop Sharpe. The persecution on the one hand, the febrile enthusiasm on the other, are almost equally difficult to understand in these quiet modern days, and with our easy modern beliefs and disbeliefs. The Protestants were one and all beside their right minds with zeal and sorrow. They were all prophets and prophetesses. Children at the breast would exhort their parents to good works. “A child of fifteen months at Quissac spoke from its mother’s arms, agitated and sobbing, distinctly and with a loud voice.” Marshal Villars has seen a town where all the women “seemed possessed by the devil,” and had trembling fits, and uttered prophecies publicly upon the streets. A prophetess of Vivarais was hanged at Montpellier because blood flowed from her eyes and nose, and she declared that she was weeping tears of blood for the misfortunes of the Protestants. And it was not only women and children. Stalwart dangerous fellows, used to swing the sickle or to wield the forest axe, were likewise shaken with strange paroxysms, and spoke oracles with sobs and streaming tears. A persecution unsurpassed in violence had lasted near a score of years, and this was the result upon the persecuted; hanging, burning, breaking on the wheel, had been in vain; the dragoons had left their hoofmarks over all the countryside; there were men rowing in the galleys, and women pining in the prisons of the Church; and not a thought was changed in the heart of any upright Protestant.

Now the head and forefront of the persecution — after Lamoignon de Bâvile — François de Langlade du Chayla (pronounce Chéïla), Archpriest of the Cevennes and Inspector of Missions in the same country, had a house in which he sometimes dwelt in the town of Pont de Montvert. He was a conscientious person, who seems to have been intended by nature for a pirate, and now fifty-five, an age by which a man has learned all the moderation of which he is capable. A missionary in his youth in China, he there suffered martyrdom, was left for dead, and only succoured and brought back to life by the charity of a pariah. We must suppose the pariah devoid of second-sight, and not purposely malicious in this act. Such an experience, it might be thought, would have cured a man of the desire to persecute; but the human spirit is a thing strangely put together; and, having been a Christian martyr, Du Chayla became a Christian persecutor. The Work of the Propagation of the Faith went roundly forward in his hands. His house in Pont de Montvert served him as a prison. There he closed the hands of his prisoners upon live coal, and plucked out the hairs of their beards, to convince them that they were deceived in their opinions. And yet had not he himself tried and proved the inefficacy of these carnal arguments among the Buddhists in China?

Not only was life made intolerable in Languedoc, but flight was rigidly forbidden. One Massip, a muleteer, and well acquainted with the mountain-paths, had already guided several troops of fugitives in safety to Geneva; and on him, with another convoy, consisting mostly of women dressed as men, Du Chayla, in an evil hour for himself, laid his hands. The Sunday following, there was a conventicle of Protestants in the woods of Altefage upon Mount Bouges; where there stood up one Séguier — Spirit Séguier, as his companions called him — a wool-carder, tall, black-faced, and toothless, but a man full of prophecy. He declared, in the name of God, that the time for submission had gone by, and they must betake themselves to arms for the deliverance of their brethren and the destruction of the priests.

The next night, 24th July 1702, a sound disturbed the Inspector of Missions as he sat in his prison-house at Pont de Montvert: the voices of many men upraised in psalmody drew nearer and nearer through the town. It was ten at night; he had his court about him, priests, soldiers, and servants, to the number of twelve or fifteen; and now dreading the insolence of a conventicle below his very windows, he ordered forth his soldiers to report. But the psalm-singers were already at his door, fifty strong, led by the inspired Séguier, and breathing death. To their summons, the archpriest made answer like a stout old persecutor, and bade his garrison fire upon the mob. One Camisard (for, according to some, it was in this night's work that they came by the name) fell at this discharge: his comrades burst in the door with hatchets and a beam of wood, overran the lower story of the house, set free the prisoners, and finding one of them in the *vine*, a sort of Scavenger's Daughter of the place and period, redoubled in fury against Du Chayla, and sought by repeated assaults to carry the upper floors. But he, on his side, had given absolution to his men, and they bravely held the staircase.

"Children of God," cried the prophet, "hold your hands. Let us burn the house, with the priest and the satellites of Baal."

The fire caught readily. Out of an upper window Du Chayla and his men lowered themselves into the garden by means of knotted sheets;

some escaped across the river under the bullets of the insurgents; but the archpriest himself fell, broke his thigh, and could only crawl into the hedge. What were his reflections as this second martyrdom drew near? A poor, brave, besotted, hateful man, who had done his duty resolutely according to his light both in the Cevennes and China. He found at least one telling word to say in his defence; for when the roof fell in and the upbursting flames discovered his retreat, and they came and dragged him to the public place of the town, raging and calling him damned — ”If I be damned,” said he, “why should you also damn yourselves?”

Here was a good reason for the last; but in the course of his inspectorship he had given many stronger which all told in a contrary direction; and these he was now to hear. One by one, Séguier first, the Camisards drew near and stabbed him. “This,” they said, “is for my father broken on the wheel. This for my brother in the galleys. That for my mother or my sister imprisoned in your cursed convents.” Each gave his blow and his reason; and then all kneeled and sang psalms around the body till the dawn. With the dawn, still singing, they defiled away towards Frugères, farther up the Tarn, to pursue the work of vengeance, leaving Du Chayla’s prison-house in ruins, and his body pierced with two-and-fifty wounds upon the public place.

‘Tis a wild night’s work, with its accompaniment of psalms; and it seems as if a psalm must always have a sound of threatening in that town upon the Tarn. But the story does not end, even so far as concerns Pont de Montvert, with the departure of the Camisards. The career of Séguier was brief and bloody. Two more priests and a whole family at Ladevèze, from the father to the servants, fell by his hand or by his orders; and yet he was but a day or two at large, and restrained all the time by the presence of the soldiery. Taken at length by a famous soldier of fortune, Captain Poul, he appeared unmoved before his judges.

“Your name?” they asked.

“Pierre Séguier.”

“Why are you called Spirit?”

“Because the Spirit of the Lord is with me.”

“Your domicile?”

“Lately in the desert, and soon in heaven.”

“Have you no remorse for your crimes?”

“I have committed none. *My soul is like a garden full of shelter and of fountains”*.”

At Pont de Montvert, on the 12th of August, he had his right hand stricken from his body, and was burned alive. And his soul was like a garden? So perhaps was the soul of Du Chayla, the Christian martyr. And perhaps if you could read in my soul, or I could read in yours, our own composure might seem little less surprising.

Du Chayla's house still stands, with a new roof, beside one of the bridges of the town; and if you are curious you may see the terrace-garden into which he dropped.

IN THE VALLEY OF THE TARN

A new road leads from Pont de Montvert to Florac by the valley of the Tarn; a smooth sandy ledge, it runs about half-way between the summit of the cliffs and the river in the bottom of the valley; and I went in and out, as I followed it, from bays of shadow into promontories of afternoon sun. This was a pass like that of Killiecrankie; a deep turning gully in the hills, with the Tarn making a wonderful hoarse uproar far below, and craggy summits standing in the sunshine high above. A thin fringe of ash trees ran about the hill-tops, like ivy on a ruin; but, on the lower slopes, and far up every glen, the Spanish chestnut trees stood each four-square to heaven under its tented foliage. Some were planted, each on its own terrace no larger than a bed; some, trusting in their roots, found strength to grow and prosper and be straight and large upon the rapid slopes of the valley; others, where there was a margin to the river, stood marshaled in a line and mighty like cedars of Lebanon. Yet even where they grew most thickly they were not to be thought of as a wood, but as a herd of stalwart individuals; and the dome of each tree stood forth separate and large, and as it were a little bill, from among the domes of its companions. They gave forth a faint sweet perfume which pervaded the air of the afternoon; autumn had put tints of gold and tarnish in the green; and the sun so shone through and kindled the broad foliage, that each chestnut was relieved against another, not in shadow, but in light. A humble sketcher here laid down his pencil in despair.

I wish I could convey a notion of the growth of these noble trees; of how they strike out boughs like the oak, and trail sprays of drooping foliage like the willow; of how they stand on upright fluted columns like the pillars of a church; or like the olive, from the most shattered hole can put out smooth and youthful shoots, and begin a new life upon the ruins of the old. Thus they partake of the nature of many different trees; and even their prickly top-knots, seen near at hand against the sky, have a certain palm-like air that impresses the imagination. But their individuality, although compounded of so many elements, is but the richer and the more original. And to look down upon a level filled with these knolls of foliage, or to see a clan of old unconquerable chestnuts cluster “like herded elephants” upon the spur of a mountain, is to rise to higher thoughts of the powers that are in Nature.

Between Modestine’s laggard humour and the beauty of the scene, we made little progress all that afternoon; and at last finding the sun, although still far from setting, was already beginning to desert the narrow valley of the Tarn, I began to cast about for a place to camp in. This was not easy to find; the terraces were too narrow, and the ground, where it was unterraced, was usually too steep for a man to lie upon. I should have slipped all night, and awakened towards morning with my feet or my head in the river.

After perhaps a mile, I saw, some sixty feet above the road, a little plateau large enough to hold my sack, and securely parapeted by the trunk of an aged and enormous chestnut. Thither, with infinite trouble, I goaded and kicked the reluctant Modestine, and there I hastened to unload her. There was only room for myself upon the plateau, and I had to go nearly as high again before I found so much as standing-room for the ass. It was on a heap of rolling stones, on an artificial terrace, certainly not five feet square in all. Here I tied her to a chestnut, and having given her corn and bread and made a pile of chestnut-leaves, of which I found her greedy, I descended once more to my own encampment.

The position was unpleasantly exposed. One or two carts went by upon the road; and as long as daylight lasted I concealed myself, for all the world like a hunted Camisard, behind my fortification of vast chestnut trunk; for I was passionately afraid of discovery and the visit of jocular persons in the night. Moreover, I saw that I must be early awake; for these chestnut gardens had been the scene of industry no further gone than on the day before. The slope was strewn with lopped branches, and here and there a great package of leaves was propped against a trunk; for even the leaves are serviceable, and the peasants use them in winter by way of fodder for their animals. I picked a meal in fear and trembling, half lying down to hide myself from the road; and I daresay I was as much concerned as if I had been a scout from Joani’s band above upon the Lozère, or from Salomon’s across the Tarn, in the old times of psalm-singing and blood. Or indeed, perhaps more; for the Camisards had a remarkable confidence in God; and a tale comes back into my memory of how the Count of Gévaudan, riding with a party of dragoons and a notary at his saddlebow to enforce the oath of fidelity in all the country hamlets, entered a valley in the woods, and found Cavalier and his men at dinner, gaily seated on the grass, and their hats crowned with box-tree garlands, while fifteen women washed their linen in the stream. Such was a field festival in 1703; at that date Antony Watteau would be painting similar subjects.

This was a very different camp from that of the night before in the cool and silent pine-woods. It was warm and even stifling in the valley. The shrill song of frogs, like the tremolo note of a whistle with a pea in it, rang up from the riverside before the sun was down. In the growing dusk, faint rustlings began to run to and fro among the fallen leaves; from time to time a faint chirping or cheeping noise would fall upon my ear; and from time to time I thought I could see the movement of something swift and indistinct between the chestnuts. A profusion of large ants swarmed upon the ground; bats whisked by, and mosquitoes droned overhead. The long boughs with their bunches of leaves hung against the sky like garlands; and those immediately above and around me had somewhat the air of a trellis which should have been wrecked and half overthrown in a gale of wind.

Sleep for a long time fled my eyelids; and just as I was beginning to feel quiet stealing over my limbs, and settling densely on my mind, a noise at my head startled me broad awake again, and, I will frankly confess it, brought my heart into my mouth. It was such a noise as a person would make scratching loudly with a finger-nail; it came from under the knapsack which served me for a pillow, and it was thrice repeated before I had time to sit up and turn about. Nothing was to be seen, nothing more was to be heard, but a few of these mysterious rustlings far and near, and the ceaseless accompaniment of the river and the frogs. I learned next day that the chestnut gardens are infested by rats; rustling, chirping, and scraping were probably all due to these; but the puzzle, for the moment, was insoluble, and I had to compose myself for sleep as best I could, in wondering uncertainty about my neighbours.

I was wakened in the grey of the morning (Monday, 30th September) by the sound of footsteps not far off upon the stones, and, opening my eyes, I beheld a peasant going by among the chestnuts by a footpath that I had not hitherto observed. He turned his head neither to the right nor to the left, and disappeared in a few strides among the foliage. Here was an escape! But it was plainly more than time to be moving. The peasantry were abroad; scarce less terrible to me in my nondescript position than the soldiers of Captain Poul to an undaunted Camisard. I fed Modestine with what haste I could; but as I was returning to my sack, I saw a man and a boy come down the hillside in a direction crossing mine. They unintelligibly hailed me, and I replied with inarticulate but cheerful sounds, and hurried forward to get into my gaiters.

The pair, who seemed to be father and son, came slowly up to the plateau, and stood close beside me for some time in silence. The bed was open, and I saw with regret my revolver lying patently disclosed on the blue wool. At last, after they had looked me all over, and the silence had grown laughably embarrassing, the man demanded in what seemed unfriendly tones: —

“You have slept here?”

“Yes,” said I. “As you see.”

"Why?" he asked.

"My faith," I answered lightly, "I was tired."

He next inquired where I was going, and what I had had for dinner; and then, without the least transition, "*C'est bien,*" he added, "come along." And he and his son, without another word, turned oil to the next chestnut-tree but one, which they set to pruning. The thing had passed off more simply than I hoped. He was a grave, respectable man; and his unfriendly voice did not imply that he thought he was speaking to a criminal, but merely to an inferior.

I was soon on the road, nibbling a cake of chocolate and seriously occupied with a case of conscience. Was I to pay for my night's lodging? I had slept ill, the bed was full of fleas in the shape of ants, there was no water in the room, the very dawn had neglected to call me in the morning. I might have missed a train, had there been any in the neighbourhood to catch. Clearly, I was dissatisfied with my entertainment; and I decided I should not pay unless I met a beggar.

The valley looked even lovelier by morning; and soon the road descended to the level of the river. Here, in a place where many straight and prosperous chestnuts stood together, making an aisle upon a swarded terrace, I made my morning toilette in the water of the Tarn. It was marvelously clear, thrillingly cool; the soap-suds disappeared as if by magic in the swift current, and the white boulders gave one a model for cleanliness. To wash in one of God's rivers in the open air seems to me a sort of cheerful solemnity or semi-pagan act of worship. To dabble among dishes in a bedroom may perhaps make clean the body; but the imagination takes no share in such a cleansing. I went on with a light and peaceful heart, and sang psalms to the spiritual ear as I advanced.

Suddenly up came an old woman, who point-blank demanded alms.

"Good," thought I; "here comes the waiter with the bill."

And I paid for my night's lodging on the spot. Take it how you please, but this was the first and the last beggar that I met with during all my tour.

A step or two farther I was overtaken by an old man in a brown nightcap, clear-eyed, weather-beaten, with a faint excited smile. A little girl followed him, driving two sheep and a goat; but she kept in our wake, while the old man walked beside me and talked about the morning and the valley. It was not much past six; and for healthy people who have slept enough that is an hour of expansion and of open and trustful talk.

"*Connaissez-vous le Seigneur?*" he said at length.

I asked him what Seigneur he meant; but he only repeated the question with more emphasis and a look in his eyes denoting hope and interest.

“Ah,” said I, pointing upwards, “I understand you now. Yes, I know Him; He is the best of acquaintances.”

The old man said he was delighted. “Hold,” he added, striking his bosom; “it makes me happy here.” There were a few who knew the Lord in these valleys, he went on to tell me; not many, but a few. “Many are called,” he quoted, “and few chosen.”

“My father,” said I, “it is not easy to say who know the Lord; and it is none of our business. Protestants and Catholics, and even those who worship stones, may know Him and be known by Him; for He has made all.”

I did not know I was so good a preacher.

The old man assured me he thought as I did, and repeated his expressions of pleasure at meeting me. “We are so few,” he said. “They call us Moravians here; but down in the Department of Gard, where there are also a good number, they are called Derbists, after an English pastor.”

I began to understand that I was figuring, in questionable taste, as a member of some sect to me unknown; but I was more pleased with the pleasure of my companion than embarrassed by my own equivocal position. Indeed, I can see no dishonesty in not avowing a difference; and especially in these high matters, where we have all a sufficient assurance that, whoever may be in the wrong, we ourselves are not completely in the right. The truth is much talked about; but this old man in a brown nightcap showed himself so simple, sweet and friendly, that I am not unwilling to profess myself his convert. He was, as a matter of fact, a Plymouth Brother. Of what that involves in the way of doctrine I have no idea nor the time to inform myself; but I know right well that we are all embarked upon a troublesome world, the children of one Father, striving in many essential points to do and to become the same. And although it was somewhat in a mistake that he shook hands with me so often and showed himself so ready to receive my words, that was a mistake of the truth-finding sort. For charity begins blindfold; and only through a series of similar misapprehensions rises at length into a settled principle of love and patience, and a firm belief in all our fellow-men. If I deceived this good old man, in the like manner I would willingly go on to deceive others. And if ever at length, out of our separate and sad ways, we should all come together into one common house, I have a hope, to which I cling dearly, that my mountain Plymouth Brother will hasten to shake hands with me again.

Thus, talking like Christian and Faithful by the way, he and I came down upon a hamlet by the Tarn. It was but a humble place, called La Vernède, with less than a dozen houses, and a Protestant chapel on a knoll. Here he dwelt; and here, at the inn, I ordered my breakfast. The inn was kept by an agreeable young man, a stone-breaker on the road, and his sister, a pretty and engaging girl. The village schoolmaster dropped in to speak with the stranger. And these were all Protestants — a fact which pleased me more than I should have expected; and, what pleased me still more, they seemed all upright and simple people. The Plymouth Brother hung round me with a sort of yearning interest, and returned at least thrice to make sure I was enjoying my meal. His behaviour touched me deeply at the time, and even now moves me in recollection. He feared to intrude, but he would not willingly forego one moment of my society; and he seemed never weary of shaking me by the hand.

When all the rest had drifted off to their day's work, I sat for near half an hour with the young mistress of the house, who talked pleasantly over her seam of the chestnut harvest, and the beauties of the Tarn, and old family affections, broken up when young folk go from home, yet still subsisting. Hers, I am sure, was a sweet nature, with a country plainness and much delicacy underneath; and he who takes her to his heart will doubtless be a fortunate young man.

The valley below La Vernède pleased me more and more as I went forward. Now the hills approached from either hand, naked and crumbling, and walled in the river between cliffs; and now the valley widened and became green. The road led me past the old castle of Miral on a steep; past a battlemented monastery, long since broken up and turned into a church and parsonage; and past a cluster of black roofs, the village of Cocurès, sitting among vineyards and meadows and orchards thick with red apples, and where, along the highway, they were knocking down walnuts from the roadside trees, and gathering them in sacks and baskets. The hills, however much the vale might open, were still tall and bare, with cliffy battlements and here and there a pointed summit; and the Tarn still rattled through the stones with a mountain noise. I had been led, by bagmen of a picturesque turn of mind, to expect a horrific country after the heart of Byron; but to my Scottish eyes it seemed smiling and plentiful, as the weather still gave an impression of high summer to my Scottish body; although the chestnuts were already picked out by the autumn, and the poplars, that here began to mingle with them, had turned into pale gold against the approach of winter.

There was something in this landscape, smiling although wild, that explained to me the spirit of the Southern Covenanters. Those who took to the hills for conscience' sake in Scotland had all gloomy and bedevilled thoughts; for once that they received God's comfort they would be twice engaged with Satan; but the Camisards had only bright and supporting visions. They dealt much more in blood, both given and taken; yet I find no obsession of the Evil One in their records. With a light conscience, they pursued their life in these rough times and circumstances. The soul of Séguier, let us not forget, was like a garden. They knew they were on God’s side, with a knowledge that has no parallel among the Scots; for the Scots, although they might be certain of the cause, could never rest confident of the person.

“We flew,” says one old Camisard, “when we heard the sound of psalm-singing, we flew as if with wings. We felt within us an animating ardour, a transporting desire. The feeling cannot be expressed in words. It is a thing that must have been experienced to be understood. However weary we might be, we thought no more of our weariness, and grew light so soon as the psalms fell upon our ears.”

The valley of the Tarn and the people whom I met at La Vernède not only explain to me this passage, but the twenty years of suffering which those, who were so stiff and so bloody when once they betook themselves to war, endured with the meekness of children and the constancy of saints and peasants.

FLORAC

On a branch of the Tarn stands Florac, the seat of a sub-prefecture with an old castle, an alley of planes, many quaint street-corners, and a live fountain welling from the hill. It is notable, besides, for handsome women, and as one of the two capitals, Alais being the other, of the country of the Camisards.

The landlord of the inn took me, after I had eaten, to an adjoining café, where I, or rather my journey, became the topic of the afternoon. Every one had some suggestion for my guidance; and the sub-prefectorial map was fetched from the sub-prefecture itself, and much thumbed among coffee-cups and glasses of liqueur. Most of these kind advisers were Protestant, though I observed that Protestant and Catholic intermingled in a very easy manner; and it surprised me to see what a lively memory still subsisted of the religious war. Among the hills of the south-west, by Mauchline, Cumnock, or Carsphairn, in isolated farms or in the manse, serious Presbyterian people still recall the days of the great persecution, and the graves of local martyrs are still piously regarded. But in towns and among the so-called better classes, I fear that these old doings have become an idle tale. If you met a mixed company in the King's Arms at Wigtown, it is not likely that the talk would run on Covenanters. Nay, at Muirkirk of Glenluce, I found the beadle's wife had not so much as heard of Prophet Peden. But these Cévenols were proud of their ancestors in quite another sense; the war was their chosen topic; its exploits were their own patent of nobility; and where a man or a race has had but one adventure, and that heroic, we must expect and pardon some prolixity of reference. They told me the country was still full of legends hitherto uncollected; I heard from them about Cavalier's descendants — not direct descendants, be it understood, but only cousins or nephews — who were still prosperous people in the scene of the boy-general's exploits; and one farmer had seen the bones of old combatants dug up into the air of an afternoon in the nineteenth century, in a field where the ancestors had fought, and the great-grandchildren were peaceably ditching.

Later in the day one of the Protestant pastors was so good as to visit me: a young man, intelligent and polite, with whom I passed an hour or two in talk. Florac, he told me, is part Protestant, part Catholic; and the difference in religion is usually doubled by a difference in politics. You may judge of my surprise, coming as I did from such a babbling purgatorial Poland of a place as Monastier, when I learned that the population lived together on very quiet terms; and there was even an exchange of hospitalities between households thus doubly separated. Black Camisard and White Camisard, militiaman and Miquelet and dragoon, Protestant prophet and Catholic cadet of the White Cross, they had all been sabring and shooting, burning, pillaging, and murdering, their hearts hot with indignant passion; and here, after a hundred and seventy years, Protestant is still Protestant, Catholic still Catholic, in mutual toleration and mild amity of life. But the race of man, like that indomitable nature whence it sprang, has medicating virtues of its own; the years and seasons bring various harvests; the sun returns after the rain; and mankind outlives secular animosities, as a single man awakens from the passions of a day. We judge our ancestors from a more divine position; and the dust being a little laid with several centuries, we can see both sides adorned with human virtues and fighting with a show of right.

I have never thought it easy to be just, and find it daily even harder than I thought. I own I met these Protestants with delight and a sense of coming home. I was accustomed to speak their language, in another and deeper sense of the word than that which distinguishes between French and English; for the true Babel is a divergence upon morals. And hence I could hold more free communication with the Protestants, and judge them more justly, than the Catholics. Father Apollinaris may pair off with my mountain Plymouth Brother as two guileless and devout old men; yet I ask myself if I had as ready a feeling for the virtues of the Trappist; or, had I been a Catholic, if I should have felt so warmly to the dissenter of La Vernède. With the first I was on terms of mere forbearance; but with the other, although only on a misunderstanding and by keeping on selected points, it was still possible to hold converse and exchange some honest thoughts. In this world of imperfection we gladly welcome even partial intimacies. And if we find but one to whom we can speak out of our heart freely, with whom we can walk in love and simplicity without dissimulation, we have no ground of quarrel with the world or God.

IN THE VALLEY OF THE MIMENTE

On Tuesday, 1st October, we left Florac late in the afternoon, a tired donkey and tired donkey-driver. A little way up the Tarnon, a covered bridge of wood introduced us into the valley of the Mimente. Steep rocky red mountains overhung the stream; great oaks and chestnuts grew upon the slopes or in stony terraces; here and there was a red field of millet or a few apple trees studded with red apples; and the road passed hard by two black hamlets, one with an old castle atop to please the heart of the tourist.

It was difficult here again to find a spot fit for my encampment. Even under the oaks and chestnuts the ground had not only a very rapid slope, but was heaped with loose stones; and where there was no timber the hills descended to the stream in a red precipice tufted with heather. The sun had left the highest peak in front of me, and the valley was full of the lowing sound of herdsmen's horns as they recalled the flocks into the stable, when I spied a bight of meadow some way below the roadway in an angle of the river. Thither I descended, and, tying Modestine provisionally to a tree, proceeded to investigate the neighbourhood. A grey pearly evening shadow filled the glen; objects at a little distance grew indistinct and melted bafflingly into each other; and the darkness was rising steadily like an exhalation. I approached a great oak which grew in the meadow, hard by the river's brink; when to my disgust the voices of children fell upon my ear, and I beheld a house round the angle on the other bank. I had half a mind to pack and be gone again, but the growing darkness moved me to remain. I had only to make no noise until the night was fairly come, and trust to the dawn to call me early in the morning. But it was hard to be annoyed by neighbours in such a great hotel.

A hollow underneath the oak was my bed. Before I had fed Modestine and arranged my sack, three stars were already brightly shining, and the others were beginning dimly to appear. I slipped down to the river, which looked very black among its rocks, to fill my can; and dined with a good appetite in the dark, for I scrupled to light a lantern while so near a house. The moon, which I had seen a pallid crescent all afternoon, faintly illuminated the summit of the hills, but not a ray fell into the bottom of the glen where I was lying. The oak rose before me like a pillar of darkness; and overhead the heartsome stars were set in the face of the night. No one knows the stars who has not slept, as the French happily put it, *à la belle étoile.* He may know all their names and distances and magnitudes, and yet be ignorant of what alone concerns mankind, — their serene and gladsome influence on the mind. The greater part of poetry is about the stars; and very justly, for they are themselves the most classical of poets. These same far-away worlds, sprinkled like tapers or shaken together like a diamond dust upon the sky, had looked not otherwise to Roland or Cavalier, when, in the words of the latter, they had “no other tent but the sky, and no other bed than my mother earth.”

All night a strong wind blew up the valley, and the acorns fell pattering over me from the oak. Yet on this first night of October, the air was as mild as May, and I slept with the fur thrown back.

I was much disturbed by the barking of a dog, an animal that I fear more than any wolf. A dog is vastly braver, and is besides supported by the sense of duty. If you kill a wolf, you meet with encouragement and praise; but if you kill a dog, the sacred rights of property and the domestic affections come clamouring round you for redress. At the end of a fagging day, the sharp, cruel note of a dog’s bark is in itself a keen annoyance; and to a tramp like myself, he represents the sedentary and respectable world in its most hostile form. There is something of the clergyman or the lawyer about this engaging animal; and it he were not amenable to stones, the boldest man would shrink from travelling afoot. I respect dogs much in the domestic circle; but on the highway, or sleeping afield, I both detest and fear them.

I was wakened next morning (Wednesday, October 2nd) by the same dog — for I knew his bark — making a charge down the bank, and then, seeing me sit up, retreating again with great alacrity. The stars were not yet quite extinguished. The heaven was of that enchanting mild grey-blue of the early morn. A still clear light began to fall, and the trees on the hillside were outlined sharply against the sky. The wind had veered more to the north, and no longer reached me in the glen; but as I was going on with my preparations, it drove a white cloud very swiftly over the hill-top; and looking up, I was surprised to see the cloud dyed with gold. In these high regions of the air the sun was already shining as at noon. If only the clouds travelled high enough, we should see the same thing all night long. For it is always daylight in the fields of space.

As I began to go up the valley, a draught of wind came down it out of the seat of the sunrise, although the clouds continued to run overhead in an almost contrary direction. A few steps farther, and I saw a whole hillside gilded with the sun; and still a little beyond, between two peaks, a centre of dazzling brilliancy appeared floating in the sky, and I was once more face to face with the big bonfire that occupies the kernel of our system.

I met but one human being that forenoon, a dark military-looking wayfarer, who carried a game-bag on a baldric; but he made a remark that seems worthy of record. For when I asked him if he were

Protestant or Catholic —

“Oh,” said he, “I make no shame of my religion. I am a Catholic.”

He made no shame of it! The phrase is a piece of natural statistics; for it is the language of one in a minority. I thought with a smile of Bâvile and his dragoons, and how you may ride rough-shod over a religion for a century, and leave it only the more lively for the friction. Ireland is still Catholic; the Cevennes still Protestant. It is not a basketful of law-papers, nor the hoofs and pistol-butts of a regiment of horse, that can change one tittle of a ploughman’s thoughts. Outdoor rustic people have not many ideas, but such as they have are hardy plants, and thrive flourishingly in persecution. One who has grown a long while in the sweat of laborious noons, and under the stars at night, a frequenter of hills and forests, an old honest countryman, has, in the end, a sense of communion with the powers of the universe, and amicable relations towards his God. Like my mountain Plymouth Brother, he knows the Lord. His religion does not repose upon a choice of logic; it is the poetry of the man’s experience, the philosophy of the history of his life. God, like a great power, like a great shining sun, has appeared to this simple fellow in the course of years, and become the ground and essence of his least reflections; and you may change creeds and dogma by authority, or proclaim a new religion with the sound of trumpets, if you will; but here is a man who has his own thoughts, and will stubbornly adhere to them in good and evil. He is a Catholic, a Protestant, or a Plymouth Brother, in the same indefeasible sense that a man is not a woman, or a woman not a man. For he could not vary from his faith, unless he could eradicate all memory of the past, and, in a strict and not a conventional meaning, change his mind.

THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY

I was now drawing near to Cassagnas, a cluster of black roofs upon the hillside, in this wild valley, among chestnut gardens, and looked upon in the clear air by many rocky peaks. The road along the Mimente is yet new, nor have the mountaineers recovered their surprise when the first cart arrived at Cassagnas. But although it lay thus apart from the current of men's business, this hamlet had already made a figure in the history of France. Hard by, in caverns of the mountain, was one of the five arsenals of the Camisards; where they laid up clothes and corn and arms against necessity, forged bayonets and sabres, and made themselves gunpowder with willow charcoal and saltpetre boiled in kettles. To the same caves, amid this multifarious industry, the sick and wounded were brought up to heal; and there they were visited by the two surgeons, Chabrier and Tavan, and secretly nursed by women of the neighbourhood.

Of the five legions into which the Camisards were divided, it was the oldest and the most obscure that had its magazines by Cassagnas. This was the band of Spirit Séguier; men who had joined their voices with his in the 68th Psalm as they marched down by night on the archpriest of the Cevennes. Séguier, promoted to heaven, was succeeded by Salomon Couderc, whom Cavalier treats in his memoirs as chaplain-general to the whole army of the Camisards. He was a prophet; a great reader of the heart, who admitted people to the sacrament, or refused them, by "intentively viewing every man" between the eyes; and had the most of the Scriptures off by rote. And this was surely happy; since in a surprise in August 1703, he lost his mule, his portfolios, and his Bible. It is only strange that they were not surprised more often and more effectually; for this legion of Cassagnas was truly patriarchal in its theory of war, and camped without sentries, leaving that duty to the angels of the God for whom they fought. This is a token, not only of their faith, but of the trackless country where they harboured. M. de Caladon, taking a stroll one fine day, walked without warning into their midst, as he might have walked into "a flock of sheep in a plain," and found some asleep and some awake and psalm-singing. A traitor had need of no recommendation to insinuate himself among their ranks, beyond "his faculty of singing psalms"; and even the prophet Salomon "took him into a particular friendship." Thus, among their intricate hills, the rustic troop subsisted; and history can attribute few exploits to them but sacraments and ecstasies.

People of this tough and simple stock will not, as I have just been saying, prove variable in religion; nor will they get nearer to apostasy than a mere external conformity like that of Naaman in the house of Rimmon. When Louis XVI., in the words of the edict, “convinced by the uselessness of a century of persecutions, and rather from necessity than sympathy,” granted at last a royal grace of toleration, Cassagnas was still Protestant; and to a man, it is so to this day. There is, indeed, one family that is not Protestant, but neither is it Catholic. It is that of a Catholic *curé* in revolt, who has taken to his bosom a schoolmistress. And his conduct, it is worth noting, is disapproved by the Protestant villagers.

“It is a bad idea for a man,” said one, “to go back from his engagements.”

The villagers whom I saw seemed intelligent after a countrified fashion, and were all plain and dignified in manner. As a Protestant myself, I was well looked upon, and my acquaintance with history gained me further respect. For we had something not unlike a religious controversy at table, a gendarme and a merchant with whom I dined being both strangers to the place, and Catholics. The young men of the house stood round and supported me; and the whole discussion was tolerantly conducted, and surprised a man brought up among the infinitesimal and contentious differences of Scotland. The merchant, indeed, grew a little warm, and was far less pleased than some others with my historical acquirements. But the gendarme was mighty easy over it all.

“It’s a bad idea for a man to change,” said he; and the remark was generally applauded.

That was not the opinion of the priest and soldier at Our Lady of the Snows. But this is a different race; and perhaps the same great-heartedness that upheld them to resist, now enables them to differ in a kind spirit. For courage respects courage; but where a faith has been trodden out, we may look for a mean and narrow population. The true work of Bruce and Wallace was the union of the nations; not that they should stand apart a while longer, skirmishing upon their borders; but that, when the time came, they might unite with self-respect.

The merchant was much interested in my journey, and thought it dangerous to sleep afield.

“There are the wolves,” said he; “and then it is known you are an Englishman. The English have always long purses, and it might very well enter into some one’s head to deal you an ill blow some night.”

I told him I was not much afraid of such accidents; and at any rate judged it unwise to dwell upon alarms or consider small perils in the arrangement of life. Life itself, I submitted, was a far too risky business as a whole to make each additional particular of danger worth regard. “Something,” said I, “might burst in your inside any day of the week, and there would be an end of you, if you were locked in your room with three turns of the key."

"*Cependant*," said he, "*coucher dehors*!"

"God," said I, "is everywhere."

"*Cependant, coucher dehors!*" he repeated, and his voice was eloquent of terror.

He was the only person, in all my voyage, who saw anything hardy in so simple a proceeding; although many considered it superfluous. Only one, on the other hand, professed much delight in the idea; and that was my Plymouth Brother, who cried out, when I told him I sometimes preferred sleeping under the stars to a close and noisy alehouse, "Now I see that you know the Lord!"

The merchant asked me for one of my cards as I was leaving, for he said I should be something to talk of in the future, and desired me to make a note of his request and reason; a desire with which I have thus complied.

A little after two I struck across the Mimente, and took a rugged path southward up a hillside covered with loose stones and tufts of heather. At the top, as is the habit of the country, the path disappeared; and I left my she-ass munching heather, and went forward alone to seek a road.

I was now on the separation of two vast watersheds; behind me all the streams were bound for the Garonne and the Western Ocean; before me was the basin of the Rhone. Hence, as from the Lozère, you can see in clear weather the shining of the Gulf of Lyons; and perhaps from here the soldiers of Salomon may have watched for the topsails of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, and the long-promised aid from England. You may take this ridge as lying in the heart of the country of the Camisards; four of the five legions camped all round it and almost within view — Salomon and Joani to the north, Castanet and Roland to the south; and when Julien had finished his famous work, the devastation of the High Cevennes, which lasted all through October and November, 1703, and during which four hundred and sixty villages and hamlets were, with fire and pickaxe, utterly subverted, a man standing on this eminence would have looked forth upon a silent, smokeless, and dispeopled land. Time and man's activity have now repaired these ruins; Cassagnas is once more roofed and sending up domestic smoke; and in the chestnut gardens, in low and leafy corners, many a prosperous farmer returns, when the day's work is done, to his children and bright hearth. And still it was perhaps the wildest view of all my journey. Peak upon peak, chain upon chain of hills ran surging southward, channeled and sculptured by the winter streams, feathered from head to foot with chestnuts, and here and there breaking out into a coronal of cliffs. The sun, which was still far from setting, sent a drift of misty gold across the hill-tops, but the valleys were already plunged in a profound and quiet shadow.

A very old shepherd, hobbling on a pair of sticks, and wearing a black cap of liberty, as if in honour of his nearness to the grave, directed me to the road for St. Germain de Calberte. There was something solemn in the isolation of this infirm and ancient creature. Where he dwelt, how he got upon this high ridge, or how he proposed to get down again, were more than I could fancy. Not far off upon my right was the famous Plan de Font Morte, where Poul with his Armenian sabre slashed down the Camisards of Séguier. This, methought, might be some Rip van Winkle of the war, who had lost his comrades, fleeing before Poul, and wandered ever since upon the mountains. It might be news to him that Cavalier had surrendered, or Roland had fallen fighting with his back against an olive. And while I was thus working on my fancy, I heard him hailing in broken tones, and saw him waving me to come back with one of his two sticks. I had already got some way past him; but, leaving Modestine once more, retraced my steps.

Alas, it was a very commonplace affair. The old gentleman had forgot to ask the pedlar what he sold, and wished to remedy this neglect.

I told him sternly, “Nothing.”

“Nothing?” cried he.

I repeated “Nothing,” and made off.

It’s odd to think of, but perhaps I thus became as inexplicable to the old man as he had been to me.

The road lay under chestnuts, and though I saw a hamlet or two below me in the vale, and many lone houses of the chestnut farmers, it was a very solitary march all afternoon; and the evening began early underneath the trees. But I heard the voice of a woman singing some sad, old, endless ballad not far off. It seemed to be about love and a *bel amoureux*, her handsome sweetheart; and I wished I could have taken up the strain and answered her, as I went on upon my invisible woodland way, weaving, like Pippa in the poem, my own thoughts with hers. What could I have told her? Little enough; and yet all the heart requires. How the world gives and takes away, and brings sweethearts near only to separate them again into distant and strange lands; but to love is the great amulet which makes the world a garden; and “hope, which comes to all,” outwears the accidents of life, and reaches with tremulous hand beyond the grave and death. Easy to say: yea, but also, by God’s mercy, both easy and grateful to believe!

We struck at last into a wide white high-road carpeted with noiseless dust. The night had come; the moon had been shining for a long while upon the opposite mountain; when on turning a corner my donkey and I issued ourselves into her light. I had emptied out my brandy at Florac, for I could bear the stuff no longer, and replaced it with some generous and scented Volnay; and now I drank to the moon's sacred majesty upon the road. It was but a couple of mouthfuls; yet I became thenceforth unconscious of my limbs, and my blood flowed with luxury. Even Modestine was inspired by this purified nocturnal sunshine, and bestirred her little hoofs as to a livelier measure. The road wound and descended swiftly among masses of chestnuts. Hot dust rose from our feet and flowed away. Our two shadows — mine deformed with the knapsack, hers comically bestridden by the pack — now lay before us clearly outlined on the road, and now, as we turned a corner, went off into the ghostly distance, and sailed along the mountain like clouds. From time to time a warm wind rustled down the valley, and set all the chestnuts dangling their bunches of foliage and fruit; the ear was filled with whispering music, and the shadows danced in tune. And next moment the breeze had gone by, and in all the valley nothing moved except our travelling feet. On the opposite slope, the monstrous ribs and gullies of the mountain were faintly designed in the moonshine; and high overhead, in some lone house, there burned one lighted window, one square spark of red in the huge field of sad nocturnal colouring.

At a certain point, as I went downward, turning many acute angles, the moon disappeared behind the hill; and I pursued my way in great darkness, until another turning shot me without preparation into St. Germain de Calberte. The place was asleep and silent, and buried in opaque night. Only from a single open door, some lamplight escaped upon the road to show me that I was come among men's habitations. The two last gossips of the evening, still talking by a garden wall, directed me to the inn. The landlady was getting her chicks to bed; the fire was already out, and had, not without grumbling, to be rekindled; half an hour later, and I must have gone supperless to roost.

THE LAST DAY

When I awoke (Thursday, 2nd October), and, hearing a great flourishing of cocks and chuckling of contented hens, betook me to the window of the clean and comfortable room where I had slept the night, I looked forth on a sunshiny morning in a deep vale of chestnut gardens. It was still early, and the cockcrows, and the slanting lights, and the long shadows, encouraged me to be out and look round me.

St. Germain de Calberte is a great parish nine leagues round about. At the period of the wars, and immediately before the devastation, it was inhabited by two hundred and seventy-five families, of which only nine were Catholic; and it took the *curé* seventeen September days to go from house to house on horseback for a census. But the place itself, although capital of a canton, is scarce larger than a hamlet. It lies terraced across a steep slope in the midst of mighty chestnuts. The Protestant chapel stands below upon a shoulder; in the midst of the town is the quaint old Catholic church.

It was here that poor Du Chayla, the Christian martyr, kept his library and held a court of missionaries; here he had built his tomb, thinking to lie among a grateful population whom he had redeemed from error; and hither on the morrow of his death they brought the body, pierced with two-and-fifty wounds, to be interred. Clad in his priestly robes, he was laid out in state in the church. The *curé*, taking his text from Second Samuel, twentieth chapter and twelfth verse, "And Amasa wallowed in his blood in the highway," preached a rousing sermon, and exhorted his brethren to die each at his post, like their unhappy and illustrious superior. In the midst of this eloquence there came a breeze that Spirit Séguier was near at hand; and behold! all the assembly took to their horses' heels, some east, some west, and the *curé* himself as far as Alais.

Strange was the position of this little Catholic metropolis, a thimbleful of Rome, in such a wild and contrary neighbourhood. On the one hand, the legion of Salomon overlooked it from Cassagnas; on the other, it was cut off from assistance by the legion of Roland at Mialet. The *curé*, Louvrelenil, although he took a panic at the arch-priest's funeral, and so hurriedly decamped to Alais, stood well by his isolated pulpit, and thence uttered fulminations against the crimes of the Protestants. Salomon besieged the village for an hour and a half, but was beaten back. The militiamen, on guard before the *curé's* door, could be heard, in the black hours, singing Protestant psalms and holding friendly talk with the insurgents. And in the morning, although not a shot had been fired, there would not be a round of powder in their flasks. Where was it gone? All handed over to the Camisards for a consideration. Untrusty guardians for an isolated priest!

That these continual stirs were once busy in St. Germain de Calberte, the imagination with difficulty receives; all is now so quiet, the pulse of human life now beats so low and still in this hamlet of the mountains. Boys followed me a great way off, like a timid sort of lion-hunters; and people turned round to have a second look, or came out of their houses, as I went by. My passage was the first event, you would have fancied, since the Camisards. There was nothing rude or forward in this observation; it was but a pleased and wondering scrutiny, like that of oxen or the human infant; yet it wearied my spirits, and soon drove me from the street.

I took refuge on the terraces, which are here greenly carpeted with sward, and tried to imitate with a pencil the inimitable attitudes of the chestnuts as they bear up their canopy of leaves. Ever and again a little wind went by, and the nuts dropped all around me, with a light and dull sound, upon the sward. The noise was as of a thin fall of great hailstones; but there went with it a cheerful human sentiment of an approaching harvest and farmers rejoicing in their gains. Looking up, I could see the brown nut peering through the husk, which was already gaping; and between the stems the eye embraced an amphitheatre of hill, sunlit and green with leaves.

I have not often enjoyed a place more deeply. I moved in an atmosphere of pleasure, and felt light and quiet and content. But perhaps it was not the place alone that so disposed my spirit. Perhaps some one was thinking of me in another country; or perhaps some thought of my own had come and gone unnoticed, and yet done me good. For some thoughts, which sure would be the most beautiful, vanish before we can rightly scan their features; as though a god, travelling by our green highways, should but ope the door, give one smiling look into the house, and go again for ever. Was it Apollo, or Mercury, or Love with folded wings? Who shall say? But we go the lighter about our business, and feel peace and pleasure in our hearts.

I dined with a pair of Catholics. They agreed in the condemnation of a young man, a Catholic, who had married a Protestant girl and gone over to the religion of his wife. A Protestant born they could understand and respect: indeed, they seemed to be of the mind of an old Catholic woman, who told me that same day there was no difference between the two sects, save that “wrong was more wrong for the Catholic,” who had more light and guidance; but this of a man’s desertion filled them with contempt.

“It’s a bad idea for a man to change,” said one.

It may have been accidental, but you see how this phrase pursued me; and for myself, I believe it is the current philosophy in these parts. I have some difficulty in imagining a better. It's not only a great flight of confidence for a man to change his creed and go out of his family for heaven's sake; but the odds are — nay, and the hope is — that, with all this great transition in the eyes of man, he has not changed himself a hairbreadth to the eyes of God. Honour to those who do so, for the wrench is sore. But it argues something narrow, whether of strength or weakness, whether of the prophet or the fool, in those who can take a sufficient interest in such infinitesimal and human operations, or who can quit a friendship for a doubtful process of the mind. And I think I should not leave my old creed for another, changing only words for other words; but by some brave reading, embrace it in spirit and truth, and find wrong as wrong for me as for the best of other communions.

The phylloxera was in the neighbourhood; and instead of wine we drank at dinner a more economical juice of the grape — La Parisienne, they call it. It is made by putting the fruit whole into a cask with water; one by one the berries ferment and burst; what is drunk during the day is supplied at night in water; so, with ever another pitcher from the well, and ever another grape exploding and giving out its strength, one cask of Parisienne may last a family till spring. It is, as the reader will anticipate, a feeble beverage, but very pleasant to the taste.

What with dinner and coffee, it was long past three before I left St. Germain de Calberte. I went down beside the Gardon of Mialet, a great glaring watercourse devoid of water, and through St. Etienne de Vallée Française, or Val Francesque, as they used to call it; and towards evening began to ascend the hill of St. Pierre. It was a long and steep ascent. Behind me an empty carriage returning to St. Jean du Gard kept hard upon my tracks, and near the summit overtook me. The driver, like the rest of the world, was sure I was a pedlar; but, unlike others, he was sure of what I had to sell. He had noticed the blue wool which hung out of my pack at either end; and from this he had decided, beyond my power to alter his decision, that I dealt in blue wool collars, such as decorate the neck of the French draught-horse.

I had hurried to the topmost powers of Modestine, for I dearly desired to see the view upon the other side before the day had faded. But it was night when I reached the summit; the moon was riding high and clear; and only a few grey streaks of twilight lingered in the west. A yawning valley, gulfed in blackness, lay like a hole in created nature at my feet; but the outline of the hills was sharp against the sky. There was Mount Aigoal, the stronghold of Castanet. And Castanet, not only as an active undertaking leader, deserves some mention among

Camisards; for there is a spray of rose among his laurel; and he showed how, even in a public tragedy, love will have its way. In the high tide of war he married, in his mountain citadel, a young and pretty lass called Mariette. There were great rejoicings; and the bridegroom released five-and-twenty prisoners in honour of the glad event. Seven months afterwards, Mariette, the Princess of the Cevennes, as they called her in derision, fell into the hands of the authorities, where it was like to have gone hard with her. But Castanet was a man of execution, and loved his wife. He fell on Valleraugue, and got a lady there for a hostage; and for the first and last time in that war there was an exchange of prisoners. Their daughter, pledge of some starry night upon Mount Aigoal, has left descendants to this day.

Modestine and I — it was our last meal together — had a snack upon the top of St. Pierre, I on a heap of stones, she standing by me in the moonlight and decorously eating bread out of my hand. The poor brute would eat more heartily in this manner; for she had a sort of affection for me, which I was soon to betray.

It was a long descent upon St. Jean du Gard, and we met no one but a carter, visible afar off by the glint of the moon on his extinguished lantern.

Before ten o’clock we had got in and were at supper; fifteen miles and a stiff hill in little beyond six hours!

FAREWELL, MODESTINE!

On examination, on the morning of October 3rd, Modestine was pronounced unfit for travel. She would need at least two days' repose, according to the ostler; but I was now eager to reach Alais for my letters; and, being in a civilized country of stage-coaches, I determined to sell my lady friend and be off by the diligence that afternoon. Our yesterday's march, with the testimony of the driver who had pursued us up the long hill of St. Pierre, spread a favourable notion of my donkey's capabilities. Intending purchasers were aware of an unrivaled opportunity. Before ten I had an offer of twenty-five francs; and before noon, after a desperate engagement, I sold her, saddle and all, for five-and-thirty. The pecuniary gain is not obvious, but I had bought freedom into the bargain.

St. Jean du Gard is a large place, and largely Protestant. The maire, a Protestant, asked me to help him in a small matter which is itself characteristic of the country. The young women of the Cevennes profit by the common religion and the difference of the language to go largely as governesses into England; and here was one, a native of Mialet, struggling with English circulars from two different agencies in London. I gave what help I could; and volunteered some advice, which struck me as being excellent.

One thing more I note. The phylloxera has ravaged the vineyards in this neighbourhood; and in the early morning, under some chestnuts by the river, I found a party of men working with a cider-press. I could not at first make out what they were after, and asked one fellow to explain.

"Making cider," he said. "*Oui, c'est comme ça. Comme dans le nord!*"

There was a ring of sarcasm in his voice: the country was going to the devil.

It was not until I was fairly seated by the driver, and rattling through a rocky valley with dwarf olives, that I became aware of my bereavement. I had lost Modestine. Up to that moment I had thought I hated her; but now she was gone,

"And O!
The difference to me!"

For twelve days we had been fast companions; we had travelled upwards of a hundred and twenty miles, crossed several respectable ridges, and jogged along with our six legs by many a rocky and many a boggy by-road. After the first day, although sometimes I was hurt and distant in manner, I still kept my patience; and as for her, poor soul! she had come to regard me as a god. She loved to eat out of my hand. She was patient, elegant in form, the colour of an ideal mouse, and inimitably small. Her faults were those of her race and sex; her virtues were her own. Farewell, and if for ever —

Father Adam wept when he sold her to me; after I had sold her in my turn, I was tempted to follow his example; and being alone with a stage-driver and four or five agreeable young men, I did not hesitate to yield to my emotion.

A MOUNTAINTOWN IN FRANCE

A FRAGMENT

Originally intended to serve as the opening chapter of
“Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes”

Le Monastier is the chief place of a hilly canton in Haute Loire, the ancient Velay. As the name betokens, the town is of monastic origin; and it still contains a towered bulk of monastery and a church of some architectural pretensions, the seat of an archpriest and several vicars. It stands on the side of a hill above the river Gazeille, about fifteen miles from Le Puy, up a steep road where the wolves sometimes pursue the diligence in winter. The road, which is bound for Vivarais, passes through the town from end to end in a single narrow street; there you may see the fountain where women fill their pitchers; there also some old houses with carved doors and pediments and ornamental work in iron. For Monastier, like Maybole in Ayrshire, was a sort of country capital, where the local aristocracy had their town mansions for the winter; and there is a certain baron still alive and, I am told, extremely penitent, who found means to ruin himself by high living in this village on the hills. He certainly has claims to be considered the most remarkable spendthrift on record. How he set about it, in a place where there are no luxuries for sale, and where the board at the best inn comes to little more than a shilling a day, is a problem for the wise. His son, ruined as the family was, went as far as Paris to sow his wild oats; and so the cases of father and son mark an epoch in the history of centralization in France. Not until the latter had got into the train was the work of Richelieu complete.

It is a people of lace-makers. The women sit in the streets by groups of five or six; and the noise of the bobbins is audible from one group to another. Now and then you will hear one woman clattering off prayers for the edification of the others at their work. They wear gaudy shawls, white caps with a gay ribbon about the head, and sometimes a black felt brigand hat above the cap; and so they give the street colour and brightness and a foreign air. A while ago, when England largely supplied herself from this district with the lace called *torchon*, it was not unusual to earn five francs a day; and five francs in Monastier is worth a pound in London. Now, from a change in the market, it takes a clever and industrious workwoman to earn from three to four in the week, or less than an eighth of what she made easily a few years ago. The tide of prosperity came and went, as with our northern pitmen, and left nobody the richer. The women bravely squandered their gains, kept the men in idleness, and gave themselves up, as I was told, to sweethearting and a merry life. From week's end to week's end it was one continuous gala in Monastier; people spent the day in the wine-shops, and the drum or the bagpipes led on the *bourrées* up to ten at night. Now these dancing days are over. "*Il n'y a plus de jeunesse,*" said Victor the garçon. I hear of no great advance in what are thought the essentials of morality; but the *bourrée*, with its rambling, sweet, interminable music, and alert and rustic figures, has fallen into disuse, and is mostly remembered as a custom of the past. Only on the occasion of the fair shall you hear a drum discreetly rattling in a wine-shop or perhaps one of the company singing the measure while the others dance. I am sorry at the change, and marvel once more at the complicated scheme of things upon this earth, and how a turn of fashion in England can silence so much mountain merriment in France. The lace-makers themselves have not entirely forgiven our countrywomen; and I think they take a special pleasure in the legend of the northern quarter of the town, called L'Anglade, because there the English free-lances were arrested and driven back by the potency of a little Virgin Mary on the wall.

From time to time a market is held, and the town has a season of revival; cattle and pigs are stabled in the streets; and pickpockets have been known to come all the way from Lyons for the occasion. Every Sunday the country folk throng in with daylight to buy apples, to attend mass, and to visit one of the wine-shops, of which there are no fewer than fifty in this little town. Sunday wear for the men is a green tail-coat of some coarse sort of drugget, and usually a complete suit to match. I have never set eyes on such degrading raiment. Here it clings, there bulges; and the human body, with its agreeable and lively lines, is turned into a mockery and laughing-stock. Another piece of Sunday business with the peasants is to take their ailments to the chemist for advice. It is as much a matter for Sunday as church-going. I have seen a woman who had been unable to speak since the Monday before, wheezing, catching her breath, endlessly and painfully coughing; and yet she had waited upwards of a hundred hours before coming to seek help, and had the week been twice as long, she would have waited still. There was a canonical day for consultation; such was the ancestral habit, to which a respectable lady must study to conform.

Two conveyances go daily to Le Puy, but they rival each other in polite concessions rather than in speed. Each will wait an hour or two hours cheerfully while an old lady does her marketing or a gentleman finishes the papers in a café. The *Courrier*(such is the name of one) should leave Le Puy by two in the afternoon on the return voyage, and arrive at Monastier in good time for a six o'clock dinner. But the driver dares not disoblige his customers. He will postpone his departure again and again, hour after hour; and I have known the sun to go down on his delay. These purely personal favours, this consideration of men's fancies, rather than the hands of a mechanical clock, as marking the advance of the abstraction, time, makes a more humorous business of stage-coaching than we are used to see it.

As far as the eye can reach, one swelling line of hill-top rises and falls behind another; and if you climb an eminence, it is only to see new and farther ranges behind these. Many little rivers run from all sides in cliffy valleys; and one of them, a few miles from Monastier, bears the great name of Loire. The mean level of the country is a little more than three thousand feet above the sea, which makes the atmosphere proportionally brisk and wholesome. There is little timber except pines, and the greater part of the country lies in moorland pasture. The country is wild and tumbled rather than commanding; an upland rather than a mountain district; and the most striking as well as the most agreeable scenery lies low beside the rivers. There, indeed, you will find many corners that take the fancy; such as made the English noble choose his grave by a Swiss streamlet, where Nature is at her freshest, and looks as young as on the seventh morning. Such a place is the course of the Gazeille, where it waters the common of Monastier and thence downward till it joins the Loire; a place to hear birds singing; a place for lovers to frequent. The name of the river was perhaps suggested by the sound of its passage over the stones; for it is a great warbler, and at night, after I was in bed in Monastier, I could hear it go singing down the valley till I fell asleep.

On the whole, this is a Scottish landscape, although not so noble as the best in Scotland; and by an odd coincidence the population is, in its way, as Scottish as the country. They have abrupt, uncouth, Fifeshire manners, and accost you, as if you were trespassing, with an "*Où'st-ce que vous allez?*" only translatable into the Lowland "Whau'r ye gaun?" They keep the Scottish Sabbath. There is no labour done on that day but to drive in and out the various pigs and sheep and cattle that make so pleasant a tinkling in the meadows. The lace-makers have disappeared from the street. Not to attend mass would involve social degradation; and you may find people reading Sunday books, in particular a sort of Catholic *Monthly Visitor* on the doings of Our Lady of Lourdes. I remember one Sunday, when I was walking in the country, that I fell on a hamlet and found all the inhabitants, from the patriarch to the baby, gathered in the shadow of a gable at prayer. One strapping lass stood with her back to the wall and did the solo part, the rest chiming in devoutly. Not far off, a lad lay flat on his face asleep among some straw, to represent the worldly element.

Again, this people is eager to proselytize; and the postmaster's daughter used to argue with me by the half-hour about my heresy, until she grew quite flushed. I have heard the reverse process going on between a Scots-woman and a French girl; and the arguments in the two cases were identical. Each apostle based her claim on the superior virtue and attainments of her clergy, and clinched the business with a threat of hell-fire. "*Pas bong prêtres ici,*" said the Presbyterian, "*bong prêtres en Écosse.*" And the postmaster's daughter, taking up the same weapon, plied me, so to speak, with the butt of it instead of the bayonet. We are a hopeful race, it seems, and easily persuaded for our good. One cheerful circumstance I note in these guerrilla missions, that each side relies on hell, and Protestant and Catholic alike address themselves to a supposed misgiving in their adversary's heart. And I call it cheerful, for faith is a more supporting quality than imagination.

Here, as in Scotland, many peasant families boast a son in holy orders. And here also, the young men have a tendency to emigrate. It is certainly not poverty that drives them to the great cities or across the seas, for many peasant families, I was told, have a fortune of at least 40,000 francs. The lads go forth pricked with the spirit of adventure and the desire to rise in life, and leave their homespun elders grumbling and wondering over the event. Once, at a village called Laussonne, I met one of these disappointed parents: a drake who had fathered a wild swan and seen it take wing and disappear. The wild swan in question was now an apothecary in Brazil. He had flown by way of Bordeaux, and first landed in America, bare-headed and barefoot, and with a single halfpenny in his pocket. And now he was an apothecary! Such a wonderful thing is an adventurous life! I thought he might as well have stayed at home; but you never can tell wherein a man's life consists, nor in what he sets his pleasure: one to drink, another to marry, a third to write scurrilous articles and be repeatedly caned in public, and now this fourth, perhaps, to be an apothecary in Brazil. As for his old father, he could conceive no reason for the lad's behaviour. "I had always bread for him," he said; "he ran away to annoy me. He loved to annoy me. He had no gratitude." But at heart he was swelling with pride over his travelled offspring, and he produced a letter out of his pocket, where, as he said, it was rotting, a mere lump of paper rags, and waved it gloriously in the air. "This comes from America," he cried, "six thousand leagues away!" And the wine-shop audience looked upon it with a certain thrill.

I soon became a popular figure, and was known for miles in the country. *Où'st-ce que vous allez?* was changed for me into *Quoi, vous rentrez au Monastier ce soir?* and in the town itself every urchin seemed to know my name, although no living creature could pronounce it.

There was one particular group of lace-makers who brought out a chair for me whenever I went by, and detained me from my walk to gossip. They were filled with curiosity about England, its language, its religion, the dress of the women, and were never weary of seeing the Queen’s head on English postage-stamps, or seeking for French words in English Journals. The language, in particular, filled them with surprise.

“Do they speak *patois* in England?” I was once asked; and when I told them not, “Ah, then, French?” said they.

“No, no,” I said, “not French.”

“Then,” they concluded, “they speak *patois.*”

You must obviously either speak French or *patois.* Talk of the force of logic — here it was in all its weakness. I gave up the point, but proceeding to give illustrations of ray native jargon, I was met with a new mortification. Of all *patois* they declared that mine was the most preposterous and the most jocose in sound. At each new word there was a new explosion of laughter, and some of the younger ones were glad to rise from their chairs and stamp about the street in ecstasy; and I looked on upon their mirth in a faint and slightly disagreeable bewilderment. “Bread,” which sounds a commonplace, plain-sailing monosyllable in England, was the word that most delighted these good ladies of Monastier; it seemed to them frolicsome and racy, like a page of Pickwick; and they all got it carefully by heart, as a stand-by, I presume, for winter evenings. I have tried it since then with every sort of accent and inflection, but I seem to lack the sense of humour.

They were of all ages: children at their first web of lace, a stripling girl with a bashful but encouraging play of eyes, solid married women, and grandmothers, some on the top of their age and some falling towards decrepitude. One and all were pleasant and natural, ready to laugh and ready with a certain quiet solemnity when that was called for by the subject of our talk. Life, since the fall in wages, had begun to appear to them with a more serious air. The stripling girl would sometimes laugh at me in a provocative and not unadmiring manner, if I judge aright; and one of the grandmothers, who was my great friend of the party, gave me many a sharp word of judgment on my sketches, my heresy, or even my arguments, and gave them with a wry mouth and a humorous twinkle in her eye that were eminently Scottish. But the rest used me with a certain reverence, as something come from afar and not entirely human. Nothing would put them at their ease but the irresistible gaiety of my native tongue. Between the old lady and myself I think there was a real attachment. She was never weary of sitting to me for her portrait, in her best cap and brigand hat, and with all her wrinkles tidily composed, and though she never failed to repudiate the result, she would always insist upon another trial. It was as good as a play to see her sitting in judgment over the last. "No, no," she would say, "that is not it. I am old, to be sure, but I am better-looking than that. We must try again." When I was about to leave she bade me good-bye for this life in a somewhat touching manner. We should not meet again, she said; it was a long farewell, and she was sorry. But life is so full of crooks, old lady, that who knows? I have said good-bye to people for greater distances and times, and, please God, I mean to see them yet again.

One thing was notable about these women, from the youngest to the oldest, and with hardly an exception. In spite of their piety, they could twang off an oath with Sir Toby Belch in person. There was nothing so high or so low, in heaven or earth or in the human body, but a woman of this neighbourhood would whip out the name of it, fair and square, by way of conversational adornment. My landlady, who was pretty and young, dressed like a lady and avoided *patois* like a weakness, commonly addressed her child in the language of a drunken bully. And of all the swearers that I ever heard, commend me to an old lady in Gondet, a village of the Loire. I was making a sketch, and her curse was not yet ended when I had finished it and took my departure. It is true she had a right to be angry; for here was her son, a hulking fellow, visibly the worse for drink before the day was well begun. But it was strange to hear her unwearying flow of oaths and obscenities, endless like a river, and now and then rising to a passionate shrillness, in the clear and silent air of the morning. In city slums, the thing might have passed unnoticed; but in a country valley, and from a plain and honest countrywoman, this beastliness of speech surprised the ear.

The *Conductor*, as he is called, *of Roads and Bridges* was my principal companion. He was generally intelligent, and could have spoken more or less falsetto on any of the trite topics; but it was his specialty to have a generous taste in eating. This was what was most indigenous in the man; it was here he was an artist; and I found in his company what I had long suspected, that enthusiasm and special knowledge are the great social qualities, and what they are about, whether white sauce or Shakespeare's plays, an altogether secondary question.

I used to accompany the *Conductor* on his professional rounds, and grew to believe myself an expert in the business. I thought I could make an entry in a stone-breaker's time-book, or order manure off the wayside with any living engineer in France. Gondet was one of the places we visited together; and Laussonne, where I met the apothecary's father, was another. There, at Laussonne, George Sand spent a day while she was gathering materials for the "Marquis de Villemer"; and I have spoken with an old man, who was then a child running about the inn kitchen, and who still remembers her with a sort of reverence. It appears that he spoke French imperfectly; for this reason George Sand chose him for companion, and whenever he let slip a broad and picturesque phrase in *patois*, she would make him repeat it again and again till it was graven in her memory. The word for a frog particularly pleased her fancy; and it would be curious to know if she afterwards employed it in her works. The peasants, who knew nothing of letters and had never so much as heard of local colour, could not explain her chattering with this backward child; and to them she seemed a very homely lady and far from beautiful: the most famous man-killer of the age appealed so little to Velaisian swine-herds!

On my first engineering excursion, which lay up by Crouzials towards Mount Mézenc and the borders of Ardèche, I began an improving acquaintance with the foreman road-mender. He was in great glee at having me with him, passed me off among his subalterns as the supervising engineer, and insisted on what he called "the gallantry " of paying for my breakfast in a roadside wine-shop. On the whole, he was a man of great weather-wisdom, some spirits, and a social temper. But I am afraid he was superstitious. When he was nine years old, he had seen one night a company of *bourgeois et dames qui faisaient la manège avec des chaises*, and concluded that he was in the presence of a witches' Sabbath. I suppose, but venture with timidity on the suggestion, that this may have been a romantic and nocturnal picnic party. Again, coming from Pradelles with his brother, they saw a great empty cart drawn by six enormous horses before them on the road. The driver cried aloud and filled the mountains with the cracking of his whip. He never seemed to go faster than a walk, yet it was impossible to overtake him; and at length, at the corner of a hill, the whole equipage disappeared bodily into the night. At the time, people said it was the devil *qui s'amusait à faire ça.*

I suggested there was nothing more likely, as he must have some amusement.

The foreman said it was odd, but there was less of that sort of thing than formerly. "*C'est difficile,*" he added, "*à expliquer.*"

When we were well up on the moors and the *Conductor* was trying some road-metal with the gauge —

"Hark!" said the foreman, "do you hear nothing?"

We listened, and the wind, which was blowing chilly out of the east, brought a faint, tangled jangling to our ears.

"It is the flocks of Vivarais," said he.

For every summer, the flocks out of all Ardèche are brought up to pasture on these grassy plateaux.

Here and there a little private flock was being tended by a girl, one spinning with a distaff, another seated on a wall and intently making lace. This last, when we addressed her, leaped up in a panic and put out her arms, like a person swimming, to keep us at a distance, and it was some seconds before we could persuade her of the honesty of our intentions.

The *Conductor* told me of another herdswoman from whom he had once asked his road while he was yet new to the country, and who fled from him, driving her beasts before her, until he had given up the information in despair. A tale of old lawlessness may yet be read in these uncouth timidities.

The winter in these uplands is a dangerous and melancholy time. Houses are snowed up, and wayfarers lost in a flurry within hail of their own fireside. No man ventures abroad without meat and a bottle of wine, which he replenishes at every wine-shop; and even thus equipped he takes the road with terror. All day the family sits about the fire in a foul and airless hovel, and equally without work or diversion. The father may carve a rude piece of furniture, but that is all that will be done until the spring sets in again, and along with it the labours of the field. It is not for nothing that you find a clock in the meanest of these mountain habitations. A clock and an almanack, you would fancy, were indispensable in such a life....

EDINBURGH: PICTURESQUE NOTES

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The ancient and famous metropolis of the North sits overlooking a windy estuary from the slope and summit of three hills. No situation could be more commanding for the head city of a kingdom; none better chosen for noble prospects. From her tall precipice and terraced gardens she looks far and wide on the sea and broad champaigns. To the east you may catch at sunset the spark of the May lighthouse, where the Firth expands into the German Ocean; and away to the west, over all the carse of Stirling, you can see the first snows upon Ben Ledi.

But Edinburgh pays cruelly for her high seat in one of the vilest climates under heaven. She is liable to be beaten upon by all the winds that blow, to be drenched with rain, to be buried in cold sea fogs out of the east, and powdered with the snow as it comes flying southward from the Highland hills. The weather is raw and boisterous in winter, shifty and ungenial in summer, and a downright meteorological purgatory in the spring. The delicate die early, and I, as a survivor, among bleak winds and plumping rain, have been sometimes tempted to envy them their fate. For all who love shelter and the blessings of the sun, who hate dark weather and perpetual tilting against squalls, there could scarcely be found a more unhomely and harassing place of residence. Many such aspire angrily after that Somewhere else of the imagination, where all troubles are supposed to end. They lean over the great bridge which joins the New Town with the Old — that windiest spot, or high altar, in this northern temple of the winds — and watch the trains smoking out from under them and vanishing into the tunnel on a voyage to brighter skies. Happy the passengers who shake off the dust of Edinburgh, and have heard for the last time the cry of the east wind among her chimney-tops! And yet the place establishes an interest in people's hearts; go where they will, they find no city of the same distinction; go where they will, they take a pride in their old home.

Venice, it has been said, differs from all other cities in the sentiment which she inspires. The rest may have admirers; she only, a famous fair one, counts lovers in her train. And indeed, even by her kindest friends, Edinburgh is not considered in a similar sense. These like her for many reasons, not any one of which is satisfactory in itself. They like her whimsically, if you will, and somewhat as a virtuoso dotes upon his cabinet. Her attraction is romantic in the narrowest meaning of the term. Beautiful as she is, she is not so much beautiful as interesting. She is pre-eminently Gothic, and all the more so since she has set herself off with some Greek airs, and erected classic temples on her crags. In a word, and above all, she is a curiosity. The Palace of Holyrood has been left aside in the growth of Edinburgh, and stands grey and silent in a workman's quarter, and among breweries and gas works. It is a house of many memories. Great people of yore, kings and queens, buffoons, and grave ambassadors, played their stately farce for centuries in Holyrood. Wars have been plotted, dancing has lasted deep into the night, murder has been done in its chambers. There Prince Charlie held his phantom levées, and in a very gallant manner represented a fallen dynasty for some hours. Now, all these things of clay are mingled with the dust, the king's crown itself is shown for sixpence to the vulgar; but the stone palace has outlived these changes. For fifty weeks together, it is no more than a show for tourists and a museum of old furniture; but on the fifty-first, behold the palace reawakened and mimicking its past. The Lord Commissioner, a kind of stage sovereign, sits among stage courtiers; a coach and six and clattering escort come and go before the gate; at night, the windows are lighted up, and its near neighbours, the workmen, may dance in their own houses to the palace music. And in this the palace is typical. There is a spark among the embers; from time to time the old volcano smokes. Edinburgh has but partly abdicated, and still wears, in parody, her metropolitan trappings. Half a capital and half a country town, the whole city leads a double existence; it has long trances of the one and flashes of the other; like the king of the Black Isles, it is half alive and half a monumental marble. There are armed men and cannon in the citadel overhead; you may see the troops Marshalled on the high parade; and at night after the early winter evenfall, and in the morning before the laggard winter dawn, the wind carries abroad over Edinburgh the sound of drums and bugles. Grave judges sit bewigged in what was once the scene of imperial deliberations. Close by in the High Street perhaps the trumpets may sound about the stroke of noon; and you see a troop of citizens in tawdry masquerade; tabard above, heather-mixture trouser below, and the men themselves trudging in the mud among unsympathetic bystanders. The grooms of a well-appointed circus tread the streets with a better presence. And yet these are the Heralds and Pursuivants of Scotland, who are about to proclaim a new law of the United Kingdom before two score boys, and thieves, and hackney-coachmen. Meanwhile every hour the bell of the University rings out over the hum of the streets, and every hour a double tide of students, coming and going, fills the deep archways. And lastly, one night in the spring-time — or say one morning rather, at the peep of day — late folk may hear the voices of many men singing a psalm in unison from a church on one side of the old High Street, and a little after, or perhaps a little before, the sound of many men singing a psalm in unison from another church on the opposite side of the way. There will be something in the words about the dew of Hermon, and how goodly it is to see brethren dwelling together in unity. And the late folk will tell themselves that all this singing denotes the conclusion of two yearly ecclesiastical parliaments — the parliaments of Churches which are brothers in many admirable virtues, but not specially like brothers in this particular of a tolerant and peaceful life.

Again, meditative people will find a charm in a certain consonancy between the aspect of the city and its odd and stirring history. Few places, if any, offer a more barbaric display of contrasts to the eye. In the very midst stands one of the most satisfactory crags in nature — a Bass Rock upon dry land, rooted in a garden, shaken by passing trains, carrying a crown of battlements and turrets, and describing its warlike shadow over the liveliest and brightest thoroughfare of the new town. From their smoky beehives, ten stories high, the unwashed look down upon the open squares and gardens of the wealthy; and gay people sunning themselves along Princes Street, with its mile of commercial palaces all beflagged upon some great occasion, see, across a gardened valley set with statues, where the washings of the old town flutter in the breeze at its high windows. And then, upon all sides, what a clashing of architecture! In this one valley, where the life of the town goes most busily forward, there may be seen, shown one above and behind another by the accidents of the ground, buildings in almost every style upon the globe. Egyptian and Greek temples, Venetian palaces and Gothic spires, are huddled one over another in a most admired disorder; while, above all, the brute mass of the Castle and the summit of Arthur's Seat look down upon these imitations with a becoming dignity, as the works of Nature may look down upon the monuments of Art. But Nature is a more indiscriminate patroness than we imagine, and in no way frightened of a strong effect. The birds roost as willingly among the Corinthian capitals as in the crannies of the crag; the same atmosphere and daylight close the eternal rock and yesterday's imitation portico; and as the soft northern sunshine throws out everything into a glorified distinctness — or easterly mists, coming up with the blue evening, fuse all these incongruous features into one, and the lamps begin to glitter along the street, and faint lights to burn in the high windows across the valley — the feeling grows upon you that this also is a piece of nature in the most intimate sense; that this profusion of eccentricities, this dream in masonry and living rock, is not a drop-scene in a theatre, but a city in the world of every-day reality, connected by railway and telegraph-wire with all the capitals of Europe, and inhabited by citizens of the familiar type, who keep ledgers, and attend church, and have sold their immortal portion to a daily paper. By all the canons of romance, the place demands to be half deserted and leaning towards decay; birds we might admit in profusion, the play of the sun and winds, and a few gypsies encamped in the chief thoroughfare; but these citizens, with their cabs and tramways, their trains and posters, are altogether out of key. Chartered tourists, they make free with historic localities, and rear their young among the most picturesque sites with a grand human indifference. To see them thronging by, in their neat clothes and conscious moral rectitude, and with a little air of possession that verges on the absurd, is not the least striking feature of the place.

And the story of the town is as eccentric as its appearance. For centuries it was a capital thatched with heather, and more than once, in the evil days of English invasion, it has gone up in flame to heaven, a beacon to ships at sea. It was the jousting-ground of jealous nobles, not only on Greenside or by the King's Stables, where set tournaments were fought to the sound of trumpets and under the authority of the royal presence, but in every alley where there was room to cross swords, and in the main street, where popular tumult under the Blue Blanket alternated with the brawls of outlandish clansmen and retainers. Down in the Palace John Knox reproved his queen in the accents of modern democracy. In the town, in one of those little shops plastered like so many swallows' nests among the buttresses of the old Cathedral, that familiar autocrat, James VI., would gladly share a bottle of wine with George Heriot the goldsmith. Up on the Pentland Hills, that so quietly look down on the Castle with the city lying in waves around it, those mad and dismal fanatics, the Sweet Singers, haggard from long exposure on the moors, sat day and night with "tearful psalms" to see Edinburgh consumed with fire from heaven, like another Sodom or Gomorrah. There, in the Grassmarket, stiff-necked, covenanting heroes offered up the often unnecessary, but not less honourable, sacrifice of their lives, and bade eloquent farewell to sun, moon, and stars, and earthly friendships, or died silent to the roll of drums. Down by yon outlet rode Grahame of Claverhouse and his thirty dragoons, with the town beating to arms behind their horses' tails — a sorry handful thus riding for their lives, but with a man at the head who was to return in a different temper, make a dash that staggered Scotland to the heart, and die happily in the thick of fight. There Aikenhead was hanged for a piece of boyish incredulity; there, a few years afterwards, David Hume ruined Philosophy and Faith, an undisturbed and well-reputed citizen; and thither, in yet a few years more, Burns came from the plough-tail, as to an academy of gilt unbelief and artificial letters. There, when the great exodus was made across the valley, and the new town began to spread abroad its draughty parallelograms and rear its long frontage on the opposing hill, there was such a flitting, such a change of domicile and dweller, as was never excelled in the history of cities: the cobbler succeeded the earl; the beggar ensconced himself by the judge's chimney; what had been a palace was used as a pauper refuge; and great mansions were so parceled out among the least and lowest in society, that the hearth-stone of the old proprietor was thought large enough to be partitioned off into a bedroom by the new.

These sentences have, I hear, given offence in my native town; and a proportionable pleasure to our rivals of Glasgow. I confess the news caused me both pain and merriment. May I remark, as a balm for wounded fellow-townsmen, that there is nothing deadly in my accusations? Small blame to them if they keep ledgers: 'tis an excellent business habit. Church-going is not, that ever I heard, a subject of reproach; decency of linen is a mark of prosperous affairs, and conscious moral rectitude one of the tokens of good living. It is not their fault if the city calls for something more specious by the way of inhabitants. A man in a frock-coat looks out of place upon an Alp or Pyramid, although he has the virtues of a Peabody and the talents of a Bentham. And let them console themselves — they do as well as anybody else; the population of (let us say) Chicago would cut quite as rueful a figure on the same romantic stage. To the Glasgow people I would say only one word, but that is of gold: *I have not yet written a book about Glasgow.*

CHAPTER II

OLD TOWN: THE LANDS

The Old Town, it is pretended, is the chief characteristic, and, from a picturesque point of view, the liver-wing of Edinburgh. It is one of the most common forms of depreciation to throw cold water on the whole by adroit over-commendation of a part, since everything worth judging, whether it be a man, a work of art, or only a fine city, must be judged upon its merits as a whole. The Old Town depends for much of its effect on the new quarters that lie around it, on the sufficiency of its situation, and on the hills that back it up. If you were to set it somewhere else by itself, it would look remarkably like Stirling in a bolder and loftier edition. The point is to see this embellished Stirling planted in the midst of a large, active, and fantastic modern city; for there the two react in a picturesque sense, and the one is the making of the other.

The Old Town occupies a sloping ridge or tail of diluvial matter, protected, in some subsidence of the waters, by the Castle cliffs which fortify it to the west. On the one side of it and the other the new towns of the south and of the north occupy their lower, broader, and more gentle hill-tops. Thus, the quarter of the Castle overtops the whole city and keeps an open view to sea and land. It dominates for miles on every side; and people on the decks of ships, or ploughing in quiet country places over in Fife, can see the banner on the Castle battlements, and the smoke of the Old Town blowing abroad over the subjacent country. A city that is set upon a hill. It was, I suppose, from this distant aspect that she got her nickname of *Auld Reekie.* Perhaps it was given her by people who had never crossed her doors: day after day, from their various rustic Pisgahs, they had seen the pile of building on the hill-top, and the long plume of smoke over the plain; so it appeared to them; so it had appeared to their fathers tilling the same field; and as that was all they knew of the place, it could be all expressed in these two words.

Indeed, even on a nearer view, the Old Town is properly smoked; and though it is well washed with rain all the year round, it has a grim and sooty aspect among its younger suburbs. It grew, under the law that regulates the growth of walled cities in precarious situations:, not in extent, but in height and density. Public buildings were forced, wherever there was room for them, into the midst of thoroughfares; thoroughfares were diminished into lanes; houses sprang up story after story, neighbour mounting upon neighbour's shoulder, as in some Black Hole of Calcutta, until the population slept fourteen or fifteen deep in a vertical direction. The tallest of these lands, as they are locally termed, have long since been burnt out; but to this day it is not uncommon to see eight or ten windows at a flight; and the cliff of building which hangs imminent over Waverley Bridge would still put many natural precipices to shame. The cellars are already high above the gazer's head, planted on the steep hillside; as for the garret, all the furniture may be in the pawnshop, but it commands a famous prospect to the Highland hills. The poor man may roost up there in the centre of Edinburgh, and yet have a peep of the green country from his window; he shall see the quarters of the well-to-do fathoms underneath, with their broad squares and gardens; he shall have nothing overhead but a few spires, the stone top-gallants of the city; and perhaps the wind may reach him with a rustic pureness, and bring a smack of the sea, or of flowering lilacs in the spring.

It is almost the correct literary sentiment to deplore the revolutionary improvements of Mr. Chambers and his following. It is easy to be a conservator of the discomforts of others; indeed, it is only our good qualities we find it irksome to,conserve. Assuredly, in driving streets through the black labyrinth, a few curious old corners have been swept away, and some associations turned out of house and home. But what slices of sunlight, what breaths of clean air, have been let in! And what a picturesque world remains untouched! You go under dark arches, and down dark stairs and alleys. The way is so narrow that you can lay a hand on either wall; so steep that, in greasy winter weather, the pavement is almost as treacherous as ice. Washing dangles above washing from the windows; the houses bulge outwards upon flimsy brackets; you see a bit of sculpture in a dark corner; at the top of all, a gable and a few crowsteps are printed on the sky. Here, you come into a court where the children are at play and the grown people sit upon their doorsteps, and perhaps a church spire shows itself above the roofs. Here, in the narrowest of the entry, you find a great old mansion still erect, with some insignia of its former state — some scutcheon, some holy or courageous motto, on the lintel. The local antiquary points out where famous and well-born people had their lodging; and as you look up, out pops the head of a slatternly woman from the countess's window. The Bedouins camp within Pharaoh's palace walls, and the old war-ship is given over to the rats. We are already a far way from the days when powdered heads were plentiful in these alleys, with jolly, port-wine faces underneath. Even in the chief thoroughfares Irish washings flutter at the windows, and the pavements are encumbered with loiterers.

These loiterers are a true character of the scene. Some shrewd

Scotch workmen may have paused on their way to a job, debating Church affairs and politics with their tools upon their arm. But the most part are of a different order — skulking jail-birds; unkempt, barefoot children; big-mouthed, robust women, in a sort of uniform of striped flannel petticoat and short tartan shawl: among these, a few supervising constables and a dismal sprinkling of mutineers and broken men from higher ranks in society, with some mark of better days upon them, like a brand. In a place no larger than Edinburgh, and where the traffic is mostly centred in five or six chief streets, the same face comes often under the notice of an idle stroller. In fact, from this point of view, Edinburgh is not so much a small city as the largest of small towns. It is scarce possible to avoid observing your neighbours; and I never yet heard of any one who tried. It has been my fortune, in this anonymous accidental way, to watch more than one of these downward travellers for some stages on the road to ruin. One man must have been upwards of sixty before I first observed him, and he made then a decent, personable figure in broadcloth of the best. For three years he kept falling — grease coming and buttons going from the square-skirted coat, the face puffing and pimpling, the shoulders growing bowed, the hair falling scant and grey upon his head; and the last that ever I saw of him, he was standing at the mouth of an entry with several men in moleskin, three parts drunk, and his old black raiment daubed with mud. I fancy that I still can hear him laugh. There was something heart-breaking in this gradual declension at so advanced an age; you would have thought a man of sixty out of the reach of these calamities; you would have thought that he was niched by that time into a safe place in life, whence he could pass quietly and honourably into the grave.

One of the earliest marks of these *dégringolades* is, that the victim begins to disappear from the New Town thoroughfares, and takes to the High Street, like a wounded animal to the woods. And such an one is the type of the quarter. It also has fallen socially. A scutcheon over the door somewhat jars in sentiment where there is a washing at every window. The old man, when I saw him last, wore the coat in which he had played the gentleman three years before; and that was just what gave him so pre-eminent an air of wretchedness.

It is true that the over-population was at least as dense in the epoch of lords and ladies, and that nowadays some customs which made Edinburgh notorious of yore have been fortunately pretermitted. But an aggregation of comfort is not distasteful like an aggregation of the reverse. Nobody cares how many lords and ladies, and divines and lawyers, may have been crowded into these houses in the past — perhaps the more the merrier. The glasses clink around the china punch-bowl, some one touches the virginals, there are peacocks' feathers on the chimney, and the tapers burn clear and pale in the red firelight. That is not an ugly picture in itself, nor will it become ugly upon repetition. All the better if the like were going on in every second room; the *land* would only look the more inviting. Times are changed. In one house, perhaps, twoscore families herd together; and, perhaps, not one of them is wholly out of the reach of want. The great hotel is given over to discomfort from the foundation to the chimney-tops; everywhere a pinching, narrow habit, scanty meals, and an air of sluttishness and dirt. In the first room there is a birth, in another a death, in a third a sordid drinking-bout, and the detective and the Bible-reader cross upon the stairs. High words are audible from dwelling to dwelling, and children have a strange experience from the first; only a robust soul, you would think, could grow up in such conditions without hurt. And even if God tempers His dispensations to the young, and all the ill does not arise that our apprehensions may forecast, the sight of such a way of living is disquieting to people who are more happily circumstanced. Social inequality is nowhere more ostentatious than at Edinburgh. I have mentioned already how, to the stroller along Princes Street, the High Street callously exhibits its back garrets. It is true, there is a garden between. And although nothing could be more glaring by way of contrast, sometimes the opposition is more immediate; sometimes the thing lies in a nutshell, and there is not so much as a blade of grass between the rich and poor. To look over the South Bridge and see the Cowgate below full of crying hawkers, is to view one rank of society from another in the twinkling of an eye.

One night I went along the Cowgate after every one was abed but the policeman, and stopped by hazard before a tall *land*. The moon touched upon its chimneys, and shone blankly on the upper windows; there was no light anywhere in the great bulk of building; but as I stood there it seemed to me that I could hear quite a body of quiet sounds from the interior; doubtless there were many clocks ticking, and people snoring on their backs. And thus, as I fancied, the dense life within made itself faintly audible in my ears, family after family contributing its quota to the general hum, and the whole pile beating in tune to its time-pieces, like a great disordered heart. Perhaps it was little more than a fancy altogether, but it was strangely impressive at the time, and gave me an imaginative measure of the disproportion between the quantity of living flesh and the trifling walls that separated and contained it.

There was nothing fanciful, at least, but every circumstance of terror and reality, in the fall of the *land* in the High Street. The building had grown rotten to the core; the entry underneath had suddenly closed up so that the scavenger’s barrow could not pass;

cracks and reverberations sounded through the house at night; the inhabitants of the huge old human bee-hive discussed their peril when they encountered on the stair; some had even left their dwellings in a panic of fear, and returned to them again in a fit of economy or self-respect; when, in the black hours of a Sunday morning, the whole structure ran together with a hideous uproar and tumbled story upon story to the ground. The physical shock was felt far and near; and the moral shock travelled with the morning milkmaid into all the suburbs. The church-bells never sounded more dismally over Edinburgh than that grey forenoon. Death had made a brave harvest; and, like Samson, by pulling down one roof destroyed many a home. None who saw it can have forgotten the aspect of the gable: here it was plastered, there papered, according to the rooms; here the kettle still stood on the hob, high overhead; and there a cheap picture of the Queen was pasted over the chimney, So, by this disaster, you had a glimpse into the life of thirty families, all suddenly cut off from the revolving years. The *land* had fallen; and with the *land* how much! Far in the country, people saw a gap in the city ranks, and the sun looked through between the chimneys in an unwonted place. And all over the world, in London, in Canada, in New Zealand, fancy what a multitude of people could exclaim with truth: “The house that I was born in fell last night!”

CHAPTER III

THE PARLIAMENT CLOSE

Time has wrought its changes most notably around the precinct of St. Giles's Church. The church itself, if it were not for the spire, would be unrecognizable; the *Krames* are all gone, not a shop is left to shelter in its buttresses; and zealous magistrates and a misguided architect have shorn the design of manhood, and left it poor, naked, and pitifully pretentious. As St. Giles's must have had in former days a rich and quaint appearance now forgotten, so the neighbourhood was bustling, sunless, and romantic. It was here that the town was most overbuilt; but the overbuilding has been all rooted out, and not only a free fairway left along the High Street with an open space on either side of the church, but a great porthole, knocked in the main line of the *lands*, gives an outlook to the north and the New Town.

There is a silly story of a subterranean passage between the Castle and Holyrood, and a bold Highland piper who volunteered to explore its windings. He made his entrance by the upper end, playing a strathspey; the curious footed it after him down the street, following his descent by the sound of the chanter from below; until all of a sudden, about the level of St. Giles's, the music came abruptly to an end, and the people in the street stood at fault with hands uplifted. Whether he was choked with gases, or perished in a quag, or was removed bodily by the Evil One, remains a point of doubt; but the piper has never again been seen or heard of from that day to this. Perhaps he wandered down into the land of Thomas the Rhymer, and some day, when it is least expected, may take a thought to revisit the sunlit upper world. That will be a strange moment for the cabmen on the stance beside St. Giles's, when they hear the drone of his pipes reascending from the bowels of the earth below their horses' feet.

But it is not only pipers who have vanished, many a solid bulk of masonry has been likewise spirited into the air. Here, for example, is the shape of a heart let into the causeway. This was the site of the Tolbooth, the Heart of Midlothian, a place old in story and name-father to a noble book. The walls are now down in the dust; there is no more *squalor carceris* for merry debtors, no more cage for the old, acknowledged prison-breaker; but the sun and the wind play freely over the foundations of the jail. Nor is this the only memorial that the pavement keeps of former days. The ancient burying-ground of Edinburgh lay behind St. Giles's Church, running downhill to the

Cowgate and covering the site of the present Parliament House. It has disappeared as utterly as the prison or the Luckenbooths; and for those ignorant of its history, I know only one token that remains. In the Parliament Close, trodden daily underfoot by advocates, two letters and a date mark the resting-place of the man who made Scotland over again in his own image, the indefatigable, undissuadable John Knox. He sleeps within call of the church that so often echoed to his preaching.

Hard by the reformer, a bandy-legged and garlanded Charles Second, made of lead, bestrides a tun-bellied charger. The King has his back turned, and, as you look, seems to be trotting clumsily away from such a dangerous neighbour. Often, for hours together, these two will be alone in the close, for it lies out of the way of all but legal traffic. On one side the south wall of the church, on the other the arcades of the Parliament House, inclose this irregular bight of causeway and describe their shadows on it in the sun. At either end, from round St. Giles's buttresses, you command a look into the High Street with its motley passengers; but the stream goes by east and west, and leaves the Parliament Close to Charles the Second and the birds. Once in a while, a patient crowd may be seen loitering there all day, some eating fruit, some reading a newspaper; and to judge by their quiet demeanour, you would think they were waiting for a distribution of soup-tickets. The fact is far otherwise; within in the Justiciary Court a man is upon trial for his life, and these are some of the curious for whom the gallery was found too narrow. Towards afternoon, if the prisoner is unpopular, there will be a round of hisses when he is brought forth. Once in a while, too, an advocate in wig and gown, hand upon mouth, full of pregnant nods, sweeps to and fro in the arcade listening to an agent; and at certain regular hours a whole tide of lawyers hurries across the space.

The Parliament Close has been the scene of marking incidents in Scottish history. Thus, when the Bishops were ejected from the Convention in 1688, "all fourteen of them gathered together with pale faces and stood in a cloud in the Parliament Close": poor episcopal personages who were done with fair weather for life! Some of the west-country Societarians standing by, who would have "rejoiced more than in great sums" to be at their hanging, hustled them so rudely that they knocked their heads together. It was not magnanimous behaviour to dethroned enemies; but one, at least, of the Societarians had groaned in the *boots*, and they had all seen their dear friends upon the scaffold. Again, at the "woeful Union," it was here that people crowded to escort their favourite from the last of Scottish parliaments: people flushed with nationality, as Boswell would have said, ready for riotous acts, and fresh from throwing stones at the author of “Robinson Crusoe” as he looked out of window.

One of the pious in the seventeenth century, going to pass his *trials* (examinations as we now say) for the Scottish Bar, beheld the Parliament Close open and had a vision of the mouth of Hell. This, and small wonder, was the means of his conversion. Nor was the vision unsuitable to the locality; for after an hospital, what uglier piece is there in civilization than a court of law? Hither come envy, malice, and all uncharitableness to wrestle it out in public tourney; crimes, broken fortunes, severed households, the knave and his victim, gravitate to this low building with the arcade. To how many has not St. Giles’s bell told the first hour after ruin? I think I see them pause to count the strokes, and wander on again into the moving High Street, stunned and sick at heart.

A pair of swing doors gives admittance to a hall with a carved roof, hung with legal portraits, adorned with legal statuary, lighted by windows of painted glass, and warmed by three vast fires. This the *Salle des pas perdus* of the Scottish Bar. Here, by a ferocious custom, idle youths must promenade from ten till two. From end to end, singly or in pairs or trios, the gowns and wigs go back and forward. Through a hum of talk and footfalls, the piping tones of a Macer announce a fresh cause and call upon the names of those concerned. Intelligent men have been walking here daily for ten or twenty years without a rag of business or a shilling of reward. In process of time, they may perhaps be made the Sheriff-Substitute and Fountain of Justice at Lerwick or Tobermory. There is nothing required, you would say, but a little patience and a taste for exercise and bad air. To breathe dust and bombazine, to feed the mind on cackling gossip, to hear three parts of a case and drink a glass of sherry, to long with indescribable longings for the hour when a man may slip out of his travesty and devote himself to golf for the rest of the afternoon, and to do this day by day and year after year, may seem so small a thing to the inexperienced! But those who have made the experiment are of a different way of thinking, and count it the most arduous form of idleness.

More swing doors open into pigeon-holes where Judges of the First Appeal sit singly, and halls of audience where the supreme Lords sit by three or four. Here, you may see Scott’s place within the bar, where he wrote many a page of Waverley novels to the drone of judicial proceeding. You will hear a good deal of shrewdness, and, as their Lordships do not altogether disdain pleasantry, a fair proportion of dry fun. The broadest of broad Scotch is now banished from the bench; but the courts still retain a certain national flavour. We have a solemn enjoyable way of lingering on a case. We treat law as a fine art, and relish and digest a good distinction. There is no hurry: point after point must be rightly examined and reduced to principle; judge after judge must utter forth his *obiter dicta* to delighted brethren.

Besides the courts, there are installed under the same roof no less than three libraries: two of no mean order; confused and semi-subterranean, full of stairs and galleries; where you may see the most studious-looking wigs fishing out novels by lantern light, in the very place where the old Privy Council tortured Covenanters. As the Parliament House is built upon a slope, although it presents only one story to the north, it measures half-a-dozen at least upon the south; and range after range of vaults extend below the libraries. Few places are more characteristic of this hilly capital. You descend one stone stair after another, and wander, by the flicker of a match, in a labyrinth of stone cellars. Now, you pass below the Outer Hall and hear overhead, brisk but ghostly, the interminable pattering of legal feet. Now, you come upon a strong door with a wicket: on the other side are the cells of the police office and the trap-stair that gives admittance to the dock in the Justiciary Court. Many a foot that has gone up there lightly enough, has been dead-heavy in the descent. Many a man’s life has been argued away from him during long hours in the court above. But just now that tragic stage is empty and silent like a church on a week-day, with the bench all sheeted up and nothing moving but the sunbeams on the wall. A little farther and you strike upon a room, not empty like the rest, but crowded with *productions* from bygone criminal cases: a grim lumber: lethal weapons, poisoned organs in a jar, a door with a shot hole through the panel, behind which a man fell dead. I cannot fancy why they should preserve them, unless it were against the Judgment Day. At length, as you continue to descend, you see a peep of yellow gaslight and hear a jostling, whispering noise ahead; next moment you turn a corner, and there, in a whitewashed passage, is a machinery belt industriously turning on its wheels. You would think the engine had grown there of its own accord, like a cellar fungus, and would soon spin itself out and fill the vaults from end to end with its mysterious labours. In truth, it is only some gear of the steam ventilator; and you will find the engineers at hand, and may step out of their door into the sunlight. For all this while, you have not been descending towards the earth’s centre, but only to the bottom of the hill and the foundations of the Parliament House; low down, to be sure, but still under the open heaven and in a field of grass. The daylight shines garishly on the back windows of the Irish quarter; on broken shutters, wry gables, old palsied houses on the brink of ruin, a crumbling human pig-sty fit for human pigs. There are few signs of life, besides a scanty washing or a face at a window: the dwellers are abroad, but they will return at night and stagger to their pallets.

CHAPTER IV

LEGENDS

The character of a place is often most perfectly expressed in its associations. An event strikes root and grows into a legend, when it has happened amongst congenial surroundings. Ugly actions, above all in ugly places, have the true romantic quality, and become an undying property of their scene. To a man like Scott, the different appearances of nature seemed each to contain its own legend ready made, which it was his to call forth: in such or such a place, only such or such events ought with propriety to happen; and in this spirit he made the "Lady of the Lake" for Ben Venue, the "Heart of Midlothian" for Edinburgh, and the "Pirate," so indifferently written but so romantically conceived, for the desolate islands and roaring tideways of the North. The common run of mankind have, from generation to generation, an instinct almost as delicate as that of Scott; but where he created new things, they only forget what is unsuitable among the old; and by survival of the fittest, a body of tradition becomes a work of art. So, in the low dens and high-flying garrets of Edinburgh, people may go back upon dark passages in the town's adventures, and chill their marrow with winter's tales about the fire: tales that are singularly apposite and characteristic, not only of the old life, but of the very constitution of built nature in that part, and singularly well qualified to add horror to horror, when the wind pipes around the tall *lands*, and hoots adown arched passages, and the far-spread wilderness of city lamps keeps quavering and flaring in the gusts.

Here, it is the tale of Begbie the bank-porter, stricken to the heart at a blow and left in his blood within a step or two of the crowded High Street. There, people hush their voices over Burke and Hare; over drugs and violated graves, and the resurrection-men smothering their victims with their knees. Here, again, the fame of Deacon Brodie is kept piously fresh. A great man in his day was the Deacon; well seen in good society, crafty with his hands as a cabinet-maker, and one who could sing a song with taste. Many a citizen was proud to welcome the Deacon to supper, and dismissed him with regret at a timeous hour, who would have been vastly disconcerted had he known how soon, and in what guise, his visitor returned. Many stories are told of this redoubtable Edinburgh burglar, but the one I have in my mind most vividly gives the key of all the rest. A friend of Brodie's, nested some way towards heaven in one of these great *lands*, had told him of a projected visit to the country, and afterwards, detained by some affairs, put it off and stayed the night in town. The good man had lain some time awake; it was far on in the small hours by the Tron bell; when suddenly there came a creak, a jar, a faint light. Softly he clambered out of bed and up to a false window which looked upon another room, and there, by the glimmer of a thieves' lantern, was his good friend the Deacon in a mask. It is characteristic of the town and the town's manners that this little episode should have been quietly tided over, and quite a good time elapsed before a great robbery, an escape, a Bow Street runner, a cock-fight, an apprehension in a cupboard in Amsterdam, and a last step into the air off his own greatly improved gallows drop, brought the career of Deacon William Brodie to an end. But still, by the mind's eye, he may be seen, a man harassed below a mountain of duplicity, slinking from a magistrate's supper-room to a thieves' ken, and pickeering among the closes by the flicker of a dark lamp.

Or where the Deacon is out of favour, perhaps some memory lingers of the great plagues, and of fatal houses still unsafe to enter within the memory of man. For in time of pestilence the discipline had been sharp and sudden, and what we now call "stamping out contagion" was carried on with deadly rigour. The officials, in their gowns of grey, with a white St. Andrew's cross on back and breast, and white cloth carried before them on a staff, perambulated the city, adding the terror of man's justice to the fear of God's visitation. The dead they buried on the Borough Muir; the living who had concealed the sickness were drowned, if they were women, in the Quarry Holes, and if they were men, were hanged and gibbeted at their own doors; and wherever the evil had passed, furniture was destroyed and houses closed. And the most bogeyish part of the story is about such houses. Two generations back they still stood dark and empty; people avoided them as they passed by; the boldest schoolboy only shouted through the key-hole and made off; for within, it was supposed, the plague lay ambushed like a basilisk, ready to flow forth and spread blain and pustule through the city. What a terrible next-door neighbour for superstitious citizens! A rat scampering within would send a shudder through the stoutest heart. Here, if you like, was a sanitary parable, addressed by our uncleanly forefathers to their own neglect.

And then we have Major Weir; for although even his house is now demolished, old Edinburgh cannot clear herself of his unholy memory. He and his sister lived together in an odour of sour piety. She was a marvelous spinster; he had a rare gift of supplication, and was known among devout admirers by the name of Angelical Thomas. "He was a tall, black man, and ordinarily looked down to the ground; a grim countenance, and a big nose. His garb was still a cloak, and somewhat dark, and he never went without his staff.” How it came about that Angelical Thomas was burned in company with his staff, and his sister in gentler manner hanged, and whether these two were simply religious maniacs of the more furious order, or had real as well as imaginary sins upon their old-world shoulders, are points happily beyond the reach of our intention. At least, it is suitable enough that out of this superstitious city some such example should have been put forth: the outcome and fine flower of dark and vehement religion. And at least the facts struck the public fancy and brought forth a remarkable family of myths. It would appear that the Major’s staff went upon his errands, and even ran before him with a lantern on dark nights. Gigantic females, “stentoriously laughing and gaping with tehees of laughter” at unseasonable hours of night and morning, haunted the purlieus of his abode. His house fell under such a load of infamy that no one dared to sleep in it, until municipal improvement leveled the structure with the ground. And my father has often been told in the nursery how the devil’s coach, drawn by six coal-black horses with fiery eyes, would drive at night into the West Bow, and belated people might see the dead Major through the glasses.

Another legend is that of the two maiden sisters. A legend I am afraid it may be, in the most discreditable meaning of the term; or perhaps something worse — a mere yesterday’s fiction. But it is a story of some vitality, and is worthy of a place in the Edinburgh kalendar. This pair inhabited a single room; from the facts, it must have been double-bedded; and it may have been of some dimensions; but when all is said, it was a single room. Here our two spinsters fell out — on some point of controversial divinity belike: but fell out so bitterly that there was never a word spoken between them, black or white, from that day forward. You would have thought they would separate: but no; whether from lack of means, or the Scottish fear of scandal, they continued to keep house together where they were. A chalk line drawn upon the floor separated their two domains; it bisected the doorway and the fireplace, so that each could go out and in, and do her cooking, without violating the territory of the other. So, for years, they co-existed in a hateful silence; their meals, their ablutions, their friendly visitors, exposed to an unfriendly scrutiny; and at night, in the dark watches, each could hear the breathing of her enemy. Never did four walls look down upon an uglier spectacle than these sisters rivaling in unsisterliness. Here is a canvas for Hawthorne to have turned into a cabinet picture — he had a Puritanic vein, which would have fitted him to treat this Puritanic horror; he could have shown them to us in their sicknesses and at their hideous twin devotions, thumbing a pair of great Bibles, or praying aloud for each other’s penitence with marrowy emphasis; now each, with kilted petticoat, at her own corner of the fire on some tempestuous evening; now sitting each at her window, looking out upon the summer landscape sloping far below them towards the firth, and the field-paths where they had wandered hand in hand; or, as age and infirmity grew upon them and prolonged their toilettes, and their hands began to tremble and their heads to nod involuntarily, growing only the more steeled in enmity with years; until one fine day, at a word, a look, a visit, or the approach of death, their hearts would melt and the chalk boundary be overstepped for ever.

Alas! to those who know the ecclesiastical history of the race — the most perverse and melancholy in man's annals — this will seem only a figure of much that is typical of Scotland and her high-seated capital above the Forth — a figure so grimly realistic that it may pass with strangers for a caricature. We are wonderful patient haters for conscience' sake up here in the North. I spoke, in the first of these papers, of the Parliaments of the Established and Free Churches, and how they can hear each other singing psalms across the street. There is but a street between them in space, but a shadow between them in principle; and yet there they sit, enchanted, and in damnatory accents pray for each other's growth in grace. It would be well if there were no more than two; but the sects in Scotland form a large family of sisters, and the chalk lines are thickly drawn, and run through the midst of many private homes. Edinburgh is a city of churches, as though it were a place of pilgrimage. You will see four within a stone-cast at the head of the West Bow. Some are crowded to the doors; some are empty like monuments; and yet you will ever find new ones in the building. Hence that surprising clamour of church bells that suddenly breaks out upon the Sabbath morning, from Trinity and the sea-skirts to Morningside on the borders of the hills. I have heard the chimes of Oxford playing their symphony in a golden autumn morning, and beautiful it was to hear. But in Edinburgh all manner of loud bells join, or rather disjoin, in one swelling, brutal babblement of noise. Now one overtakes another, and now lags behind it; now five or six all strike on the pained tympanum at the same punctual instant of time, and make together a dismal chord of discord; and now for a second all seem to have conspired to hold their peace. Indeed, there are not many uproars in this world more dismal than that of the Sabbath bells in Edinburgh: a harsh ecclesiastical tocsin; the outcry of incongruous orthodoxies, calling on every separate conventicler to put up a protest, each in his own synagogue, against "right-hand extremes and left-hand defections." And surely there are few worse extremes than this extremity of zeal; and few more deplorable defections than this disloyalty to Christian love. Shakespeare wrote a comedy of "Much Ado about Nothing." The Scottish nation made a fantastic tragedy on the same subject. And it is for the success of this remarkable piece that these bells are sounded every Sabbath morning on the hills above the Forth. How many of them might rest silent in the steeple, how many of these ugly churches might be demolished and turned once more into useful building material, if people who think almost exactly the same thoughts about religion would condescend to worship God under the same roof! But there are the chalk lines. And which is to pocket pride, and speak the foremost word?

CHAPTER V

GREYFRIARS

It was Queen Mary who threw open the gardens of the Grey Friars: a new and semi-rural cemetery in those days, although it has grown an antiquity in its turn and been superseded by half-a-dozen others. The Friars must have had a pleasant time on summer evenings; for their gardens were situated to a wish, with the tall Castle and the tallest of the Castle crags in front. Even now, it is one of our famous Edinburgh points of view; and strangers are led thither to see, by yet another instance, how strangely the city lies upon her hills. The enclosure is of an irregular shape; the double church of Old and New Greyfriars stands on the level at the top; a few thorns are dotted here and there, and the ground falls by terrace and steep slope towards the north. The open shows many slabs and table tombstones; and all round the margin, the place is girt by an array of aristocratic mausoleums appallingly adorned. Setting aside the tombs of Roubilliac, which belong to the heroic order of graveyard art, we Scotch stand, to my fancy, highest among nations in the matter of grimly illustrating death. We seem to love for their own sake the emblems of time and the great change; and even around country churches you will find a wonderful exhibition of skulls, and crossbones, and noseless angels, and trumpets pealing for the Judgment Day. Every mason was a pedestrian Holbein: he had a deep consciousness of death, and loved to put its terrors pithily before the churchyard loiterer; he was brimful of rough hints upon mortality, and any dead farmer was seized upon to be a text. The classical examples of this art are in Greyfriars. In their time, these were doubtless costly monuments, and reckoned of a very elegant proportion by contemporaries; and now, when the elegance is not so apparent, the significance remains. You may perhaps look with a smile on the profusion of Latin mottoes — some crawling endwise up the shaft of a pillar, some issuing on a scroll from angels' trumpets — on the emblematic horrors, the figures rising headless from the grave, and all the traditional ingenuities in which it pleased our fathers to set forth their sorrow for the dead and their sense of earthly mutability. But it is not a hearty sort of mirth. Each ornament may have been executed by the merriest apprentice, whistling as he plied the mallet; but the original meaning of each, and the combined effect of so many of them in this quiet enclosure, is serious to the point of melancholy.

Round a great part of the circuit, houses of a low class present their backs to the churchyard. Only a few inches separate the living from the dead. Here, a window is partly blocked up by the pediment of a tomb; there, where the street falls far below the level of the graves, a chimney has been trained up the back of a monument, and a red pot looks vulgarly over from behind. A damp smell of the graveyard finds its way into houses where workmen sit at meat. Domestic life on a small scale goes forward visibly at the windows. The very solitude and stillness of the enclosure, which lies apart from the town's traffic, serves to accentuate the contrast. As you walk upon the graves, you see children scattering crumbs to feed the sparrows; you hear people singing or washing dishes, or the sound of tears and castigation; the linen on a clothes-pole flaps against funereal sculpture; or perhaps the cat slips over the lintel and descends on a memorial urn. And as there is nothing else astir, these incongruous sights and noises take hold on the attention and exaggerate the sadness of the place.

Greyfriars is continually overrun by cats. I have seen one afternoon, as many as thirteen of them seated on the grass beside old Milne, the Master Builder, all sleek and fat, and complacently blinking, as if they had fed upon strange meats. Old Milne was chanting with the saints, as we may hope, and cared little for the company about his grave; but I confess the spectacle had an ugly side for me; and I was glad to step forward and raise my eyes to where the Castle and the roofs of the Old Town, and the spire of the Assembly Hall, stood deployed against the sky with the colourless precision of engraving. An open outlook is to be desired from a churchyard, and a sight of the sky and some of the world's beauty relieves a mind from morbid thoughts.

I shall never forget one visit. It was a grey, dropping day; the grass was strung with rain-drops; and the people in the houses kept hanging out their shirts and petticoats and angrily taking them in again, as the weather turned from wet to fair and back again. A gravedigger, and a friend of his, a gardener from the country, accompanied me into one after another of the cells and little courtyards in which it gratified the wealthy of old days to enclose their old bones from neighbourhood. In one, under a sort of shrine, we found a forlorn human effigy, very realistically executed down to the detail of his ribbed stockings, and holding in his hand a ticket with the date of his demise. He looked most pitiful and ridiculous, shut up by himself in his aristocratic precinct, like a bad old boy or an inferior forgotten deity under a new dispensation; the burdocks grew familiarly about his feet, the rain dripped all round him; and the world maintained the most entire indifference as to who he was or whither he had gone. In another, a vaulted tomb, handsome externally but horrible inside with damp and cobwebs, there were three mounds of black earth and an uncovered thigh-bone. This was the place of interment, it appeared, of a family with whom the gardener had been long in service. He was among old acquaintances. “This’ll be Miss Marg’et’s,” said he, giving the bone a friendly kick. “The auld — — !” I have always an uncomfortable feeling in a graveyard, at sight of so many tombs to perpetuate memories best forgotten; but I never had the impression so strongly as that day. People had been at some expense in both these cases: to provoke a melancholy feeling of derision in the one, and an insulting epithet in the other. The proper inscription for the most part of mankind, I began to think, is the cynical jeer, *cras tibi.* That, if anything, will stop the mouth of a carper; since it both admits the worst and carries the war triumphantly into the enemy’s camp.

Greyfriars is a place of many associations. There was one window in a house at the lower end, now demolished, which was pointed out to me by the gravedigger as a spot of legendary interest. Burke, the resurrection-man, infamous for so many murders at five shillings a head, used to sit thereat, with pipe and nightcap, to watch burials going forward on the green. In a tomb higher up, which must then have been but newly finished, John Knox, according to the same informant, had taken refuge in a turmoil of the Reformation. Behind the church is the haunted mausoleum of Sir George Mackenzie: Bloody Mackenzie, Lord Advocate in the Covenanting troubles and author of some pleasing sentiments on toleration. Here, in the last century, an old Heriot’s Hospital boy once harboured from the pursuit of the police. The Hospital is next door to Greyfriars — a courtly building among lawns, where, on Founder’s Day, you may see a multitude of children playing Kiss-in-the-Ring and Round the Mulberry-bush. Thus, when the fugitive had managed to conceal himself in the tomb, his old schoolmates had a hundred opportunities to bring him food; and there he lay in safety till a ship was found to smuggle him abroad. But his must have been indeed a heart of brass, to lie all day and night alone with the dead persecutor; and other lads were far from emulating him in courage. When a man’s soul is certainly in hell, his body will scarce lie quiet in a tomb, however costly; some time or other the door must open, and the reprobate come forth in the abhorred garments of the grave. It was thought a high piece of prowess to knock at the Lord Advocate’s mausoleum and challenge him to appear. “Bluidy Mackenzie, come oot if ye daur!” sang the foolhardy urchins. But Sir George had other affairs on hand; and the author of an essay on toleration continues to sleep peacefully among the many whom he so intolerantly helped to slay.

For this *infelix campus*, as it is dubbed in one of its own inscriptions — an inscription over which Dr. Johnson passed a critical eye — is in many ways sacred to the memory of the men whom Mackenzie persecuted. It was here, on the flat tombstones, that the Covenant was signed by an enthusiastic people. In the long arm of the churchyard that extends to Lauriston, the prisoners from Bothwell Bridge — fed on bread and water, and guarded, life for life, by vigilant marksmen — lay five months looking for the scaffold or the plantations. And while the good work was going forward in the Grassmarket, idlers in Greyfriars might have heard the throb of the military drums that drowned the voices of the martyrs. Nor is this all: for down in the corner farthest from Sir George, there stands a monument, dedicated, in uncouth Covenanting verse, to all who lost their lives in that contention. There is no moorsman shot in a snow shower beside Irongray or Co'monell; there is not one of the two hundred who were drowned off the Orkneys; nor so much as a poor, over-driven, Covenanting slave in the American plantations; but can lay claim to a share in that memorial, and, if such things interest just men among the shades, can boast he has a monument on earth as well as Julius Caesar or the Pharaohs. Where they may all lie, I know not. Far-scattered bones, indeed! But if the reader cares to learn how some of them — or some part of some of them — found their way at length to such honourable sepulture, let him listen to the words of one who was their comrade in life and their apologist when they were dead. Some of the insane controversial matter I omit, as well as some digressions, but leave the rest in Patrick Walker's language and orthography: —

"The never to be forgotten Mr. *James Renwlck* told me, that he was Witness to their Public Murder at the *Gallowlee*, between *Leith* and *Edinburgh*, when he saw the Hangman hash and hagg off all their Five heads, with *Patrick Foreman's* Right Hand: Their Bodies were all buried at the Gallows Foot: their Heads, with *Patrick's* Hand, were brought and put upon five Pikes on the *Pleasaunce-Port*.... Mr. *Renwick* told me that it was the first public Action that his Hand was at, to conveen Friends, and lift their murthered Bodies, and carried them to the West Churchyard of *Edinburgh*," — not Greyfriars, this time, — "and buried them there. Then they came about the City ... and took down these Five Heads and that Hand; and Day being come, they went quickly up the *Pleasaunce*; and when they came to *Lauristoun* Yards, upon the South-side of the City, they durst not venture, being so light, to go and bury their Heads with their Bodies, which they designed; it being present death, if any of them had been found. *Alexander Tweedie*, a Friend, being with them, who at that Time was Gardner in these Yards, concluded to bury them in his Yard, being in a Box (wrapped in Linen), where they lay 45 Years except 3 Days, being executed upon the 10th of *October* 1681, and found the 7th Day of *October* 1726. That Piece of Ground lay for some years unlaboured; and trenching it, the Gardner found them, which affrighted him; the Box was consumed.

Mr. *Schaw*, the Owner of these Yards, caused lift them, and lay them upon a Table in his Summer-house: Mr. *Schaw's* mother was so kind, as to cut out a Linen-cloth and cover them. They lay Twelve Days there, where all had Access to see them. *Alexander Tweedie*, the foresaid Gardner, said, when dying, There was a Treasure hid in his Yard, but neither Gold nor Silver. *Daniel Tweedie*, his Son, came along with me to that Yard, and told me that his Father planted a white Rose-bush above them, and farther down the Yard a red Rose-bush, which were more fruitful than any other Bush in the Yard.... Many came" — to see the heads — "out of Curiosity; yet I rejoiced to see so many concerned grave Men and Women favouring the Dust of our Martyrs. There were Six of us concluded to bury them upon the Nineteenth Day of *October* 1726, and every one of us to acquaint Friends of the Day and Hour, being *Wednesday*, the Day of the Week on which most of them were executed, and at 4 of the Clock at Night, being the Hour that most of them went to their resting Graves. We caused make a compleat Coffin for them in Black, with four Yards of fine Linen, the way that our Martyrs Corps were managed.... Accordingly we kept the aforesaid Day and Hour, and doubled the Linen, and laid the Half of it below them, their nether Jaws being parted from their Heads; but being young Men, their Teeth remained. All were Witness to the Holes in each of their Heads, which the Hangman broke with his Hammer; and according to the Bigness of their Sculls, we laid the Jaws to them, and drew the other Half of the Linen above them, and stufft the Coffin with Shavings. Some prest hard to go thorow the chief Parts of the City as was done at the Revolution; but this we refused, considering that it looked airy and frothy, to make such Show of them, and inconsistent with the solid serious Observing of such an affecting, surprizing unheard-of Dispensation: But took the ordinary Way of other Burials from that Place, to wit, we went east the Back of the Wall, and in at *Bristo-Port*, and down the Way to the Head of the *Cowgate*, and turned up to the Churchyard, where they were interred closs to the Martyrs Tomb, with the greatest Multitude of People Old and Young, Men and Women, Ministers and others, that ever I saw together."

And so there they were at last, in "their resting graves." So long as men do their duty, even if it be greatly in a misapprehension, they will be leading pattern lives; and whether or not they come to lie beside a martyrs' monument, we may be sure they will find a safe haven somewhere in the providence of God. It is not well to think of death, unless we temper the thought with that of heroes who despised it. Upon what ground, is of small account; if it be only the bishop who was burned for his faith in the antipodes, his memory lightens the heart and makes us walk undisturbed among graves. And so the martyrs' monument is a wholesome heartsome spot in the field of the dead; and as we look upon it, a brave influence comes to us from the land of those who have won their discharge and, in another phrase of Patrick Walker's, got "cleanly off the stage."

CHAPTER VI

NEW TOWN: TOWN AND COUNTRY

It is as much a matter of course to decry the New Town as to exalt the Old; and the most celebrated authorities have picked out this quarter as the very emblem of what is condemnable in architecture. Much may be said, much indeed has been said, upon the text; but to the unsophisticated, who call anything pleasing if it only pleases them, the New Town of Edinburgh seems, in itself, not only gay and airy, but highly picturesque. An old skipper, invincibly ignorant of all theories of the sublime and beautiful, once propounded as his most radiant notion for Paradise: "The new town of Edinburgh, with the wind the matter of a point free." He has now gone to that sphere where all good tars are promised pleasant weather in the song, and perhaps his thoughts fly somewhat higher. But there are bright and temperate days — with soft air coming from the inland hills, military music sounding bravely from the hollow of the gardens, the flags all waving on the palaces of Princes Street — when I have seen the town through a sort of glory, and shaken hands in sentiment with the old sailor. And indeed, for a man who has been much tumbled round Orcadian skerries, what scene could be more agreeable to witness? On such a day, the valley wears a surprising air of festival. It seems (I do not know how else to put my meaning) as if it were a trifle too good to be true. It is what Paris ought to be. It has the scenic quality that would best set off a life of unthinking, open-air diversion. It was meant by nature for the realisation of the society of comic operas. And you can imagine, if the climate were but towardly, how all the world and his wife would flock into these gardens in the cool of the evening, to hear cheerful music, to sip pleasant drinks, to see the moon rise from behind Arthur's Seat and shine upon the spires and monuments and the green tree-tops in the valley. Alas! and the next morning the rain is splashing on the window, and the passengers flee along Princes Street before the galloping squalls.

It cannot be denied that the original design was faulty and short-sighted, and did not fully profit by the capabilities of the situation. The architect was essentially a town bird, and he laid out the modern city with a view to street scenery, and to street scenery alone. The country did not enter into his plan; he had never lifted his eyes to the hills. If he had so chosen, every street upon the northern slope might have been a noble terrace and commanded an extensive and beautiful view. But the space has been too closely built; many of the houses front the wrong way, intent, like the Man with the Muck-Rake, on what is not worth observation, and standing discourteously backforemost in the ranks; and in a word, it is too often only from attic windows, or here and there at a crossing, that you can get a look beyond the city upon its diversified surroundings. But perhaps it is all the more surprising, to come suddenly on a corner, and see a perspective of a mile or more of falling street, and beyond that woods and villas, and a blue arm of sea, and the hills upon the farther side.

Fergusson, our Edinburgh poet, Burns's model, once saw a butterfly at the Town Cross; and the sight inspired him with a worthless little ode. This painted countryman, the dandy of the rose garden, looked far abroad in such a humming neighbourhood; and you can fancy what moral considerations a youthful poet would supply. But the incident, in a fanciful sort of way, is characteristic of the place. Into no other city does the sight of the country enter so far; if you do not meet a butterfly, you shall certainly catch a glimpse of far-away trees upon your walk; and the place is full of theatre tricks in the way of scenery. You peep under an arch, you descend stairs that look as if they would land you in a cellar, you turn to the back window of a grimy tenement in a lane: — and behold! you are face-to-face with distant and bright prospects. You turn a corner, and there is the sun going down into the Highland hills. You look down an alley, and see ships tacking for the Baltic.

For the country people to see Edinburgh on her hill-tops is one thing; it is another for the citizen, from the thick of his affairs, to overlook the country. It should be a genial and ameliorating influence in life; it should prompt good thoughts and remind him of Nature's unconcern: that he can watch from day to day, as he trots officeward, how the Spring green brightens in the wood or the field grows black under a moving ploughshare. I have been tempted, in this connection, to deplore the slender faculties of the human race, with its penny-whistle of a voice, its dull ears, and its narrow range of sight. If you could see as people are to see in heaven, if you had eyes such as you can fancy for a superior race, if you could take clear note of the objects of vision, not only a few yards, but a few miles from where you stand: — think how agreeably your sight would be entertained, how pleasantly your thoughts would be diversified, as you walked the Edinburgh streets! For you might pause, in some business perplexity, in the midst of the city traffic, and perhaps catch the eye of a shepherd as he sat down to breathe upon a heathery shoulder of the Pentlands; or perhaps some urchin, clambering in a country elm, would put aside the leaves and show you his flushed and rustic visage; or a fisher racing seawards, with the tiller under his elbow, and the sail sounding in the wind, would fling you a salutation from between Anst'er and the May.

To be old is not the same thing as to be picturesque; nor because the Old Town bears a strange physiognomy, does it at all follow that the New Town shall look commonplace. Indeed, apart from antique houses, it is curious how much description would apply commonly to either. The same sudden accidents of ground, a similar dominating site above the plain, and the same superposition of one rank of society over another, are to be observed in both. Thus, the broad and comely approach to Princes Street from the east, lined with hotels and public offices, makes a leap over the gorge of the Low Calton; if you cast a glance over the parapet, you look direct into that sunless and disreputable confluent of Leith Street; and the same tall houses open upon both thoroughfares. This is only the New Town passing overhead above its own cellars; walking, so to speak, over its own children, as is the way of cities and the human race. But at the Dean Bridge, you may behold a spectacle of a more novel order. The river runs at the bottom of a deep valley, among rocks and between gardens; the crest of either bank is occupied by some of the most commodious streets and crescents in the modern city; and a handsome bridge unites the two summits. Over this, every afternoon, private carriages go spinning by, and ladies with card cases pass to and fro about the duties of society. And yet down below, you may still see, with its mills and foaming weir, the little rural village of Dean. Modern improvement has gone overhead on its high-level viaduct; and the extended city has cleanly overleapt, and left unaltered, what was once the summer retreat of its comfortable citizens. Every town embraces hamlets in its growth; Edinburgh herself has embraced a good few; but it is strange to see one still surviving — and to see it some hundreds of feet below your path. Is it Torre del Greco that is built above buried Herculaneum? Herculaneum was dead at least; but the sun still shines upon the roofs of Dean; the smoke still rises thriftily from its chimneys; the dusty miller comes to his door, looks at the gurgling water, hearkens to the turning wheel and the birds about the shed, and perhaps whistles an air of his own to enrich the symphony — for all the world as if Edinburgh were still the old Edinburgh on the Castle Hill, and Dean were still the quietest of hamlets buried a mile or so in the green country.

It is not so long ago since magisterial David Hume lent the authority of his example to the exodus from the Old Town, and took up his new abode in a street which is still (so oddly may a jest become perpetuated) known as Saint David Street. Nor is the town so large but a holiday schoolboy may harry a bird's nest within half a mile of his own door. There are places that still smell of the plough in memory's nostrils. Here, one had heard a blackbird on a hawthorn; there, another was taken on summer evenings to eat strawberries and cream; and you have seen a waving wheatfield on the site of your present residence. The memories of an Edinburgh boy are but partly memories of the town. I look back with delight on many an escalade of garden walls; many a ramble among lilacs full of piping birds; many an exploration in obscure quarters that were neither town nor country; and I think that both for my companions and myself, there was a special interest, a point of romance, and a sentiment as of foreign travel, when we hit in our excursions on the butt-end of some former hamlet, and found a few rustic cottages embedded among streets and squares. The tunnel to the Scotland Street Station, the sight of the trains shooting out of its dark maw with the two guards upon the brake, the thought of its length and the many ponderous edifices and open thoroughfares above, were certainly things of paramount impressiveness to a young mind. It was a subterranean passage, although of a larger bore than we were accustomed to in Ainsworth's novels; and these two words, "subterranean passage," were in themselves an irresistible attraction, and seemed to bring us nearer in spirit to the heroes we loved and the black rascals we secretly aspired to imitate. To scale the Castle Rock from West Princes Street Gardens, and lay a triumphal hand against the rampart itself, was to taste a high order of romantic pleasure. And there are other sights and exploits which crowd back upon my mind under a very strong illumination of remembered pleasure. But the effect of not one of them all will compare with the discoverer's joy, and the sense of old Time and his slow changes on the face of this earth, with which I explored such corners as Cannon-mills or Water Lane, or the nugget of cottages at Broughton Market. They were more rural than the open country, and gave a greater impression of antiquity than the oldest *land* upon the High Street. They too, like Fergusson's butterfly, had a quaint air of having wandered far from their own place; they looked abashed and homely, with their gables and their creeping plants, their outside stairs and running null-streams; there were corners that smelt like the end of the country garden where I spent my Aprils; and the people stood to gossip at their doors, as they might have done in Colinton or Cramond.

In a great measure we may, and shall, eradicate this haunting flavour of the country. The last elm is dead in Elm Row; and the villas and the workmen's quarters spread apace on all the borders of the city. We can cut down the trees; we can bury the grass under dead paving-stones; we can drive brisk streets through all our sleepy quarters; and we may forget the stories and the play-grounds of our boyhood. But we have some possessions that not even the infuriate zeal of builders can utterly abolish and destroy. Nothing can abolish the hills, unless it be a cataclysm of nature, which shall subvert Edinburgh Castle itself and lay all her florid structures in the dust. And as long as we have the hills and the Firth, we have a famous heritage to leave our children. Our windows, at no expense to us, are mostly artfully stained to represent a landscape. And when the Spring comes round, and the hawthorn begins to flower, and the meadows to smell of young grass, even in the thickest of our streets, the country hill-tops find out a young man’s eyes, and set his heart beating for travel and pure air.

CHAPTER VII

THE VILLA QUARTERS

Mr. Ruskin's denunciation of the New Town of Edinburgh includes, as I have heard it repeated, nearly all the stone and lime we have to show. Many, however, find a grand air and something settled and imposing in the better parts; and upon many, as I have said, the confusion of styles induces an agreeable stimulation of the mind. But upon the subject of our recent villa architecture, I am frankly ready to mingle my tears with Mr. Ruskin's, and it is a subject which makes one envious of his large declamatory and controversial eloquence.

Day by day, one new villa, one new object of offence, is added to another; all around Newington and Morningside, the dismalest structures keep springing up like mushrooms; the pleasant hills are loaded with them, each impudently squatted in its garden, each roofed and carrying chimneys like a house. And yet a glance of an eye discovers their true character. They are not houses; for they were not designed with a view to human habitation, and the internal arrangements are, as they tell me, fantastically unsuited to the needs of man. They are not buildings; for you can scarcely say a thing is built where every measurement is in clamant disproportion with its neighbour. They belong to no style to art, only to a form of business much to be regretted.

Why should it be cheaper to erect a structure where the size of the windows bears no rational relation to the size of the front? Is there any profit in a misplaced chimney-stalk? Does a hard-working, greedy builder gain more on a monstrosity than on a decent cottage of equal plainness? Frankly, we should say, No. Bricks may be omitted, and green timber employed, in the construction of even a very elegant design; and there is no reason why a chimney should be made to vent, because it is so situated as to look comely from without. On the other hand, there is a noble way of being ugly: a high-aspiring fiasco like the fall of Lucifer. There are daring and gaudy buildings that manage to be offensive, without being contemptible; and we know that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." But to aim at making a commonplace villa, and to make it insufferably ugly in each particular; to attempt the homeliest achievement and to attain the bottom of derided failure; not to have any theory but profit, and yet, at an equal expense, to outstrip all competitors in the art of conceiving and rendering permanent deformity; and to do this in what is, by nature, one of the most agreeable neighbourhoods in Britain: — what are we to say, but that this also is a distinction, hard to earn although not greatly worshipful?

Indifferent buildings give pain to the sensitive; but these things offend the plainest taste. It is a danger which threatens the amenity of the town; and as this eruption keeps spreading on our borders, we have ever the farther to walk among unpleasant sights, before we gain the country air. If the population of Edinburgh were a living, autonomous body, it would arise like one man and make night hideous with arson; the builders and their accomplices would be driven to work, like the Jews of yore, with the trowel in one hand and the defensive cutlass in the other; and as soon as one of these masonic wonders had been consummated, right-minded iconoclasts should fall thereon and make an end of it at once.

Possibly these words may meet the eye of a builder or two. It is no use asking them to employ an architect; for that would be to touch them in a delicate quarter, and its use would largely depend on what architect they were minded to call in. But let them get any architect in the world to point out any reasonably well-proportioned villa not his own design; and let them reproduce that model to satiety.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CALTON HILL

The east of New Edinburgh is guarded by a craggy hill, of no great elevation, which the town embraces. The old London road runs on one side of it; while the New Approach, leaving it on the other hand, completes the circuit. You mount by stairs in a cutting of the rock to find yourself in a field of monuments. Dugald Stewart has the honours of situation and architecture; Burns is memorialized lower down upon a spur; Lord Nelson, as befits a sailor, gives his name to the top-gallant of the Calton Hill. This latter erection has been differently and yet, in both cases, aptly compared to a telescope and a butterchurn; comparisons apart, it ranks among the vilest of men's handiworks. But the chief feature is an unfinished range of columns, "the Modern Ruin" as it has been called, an imposing object from far and near, and giving Edinburgh, even from the sea, that false air of a modern Athens which has earned for her so many slighting speeches. It was meant to be a National Monument; and its present state is a very suitable monument to certain national characteristics. The old Observatory — a quaint brown building on the edge of the steep — and the New Observatory — a classical edifice with a dome — occupy the central portion of the summit. All these are scattered on a green turf, browsed over by some sheep.

The scene suggests reflections on fame and on man's injustice to the dead. You see Dugald Stewart rather more handsomely commemorated than Burns. Immediately below, in the Canongate churchyard, lies Robert Fergusson, Burns's master in his art, who died insane while yet a stripling; and if Dugald Stewart has been somewhat too boisterously acclaimed, the Edinburgh poet, on the other hand, is most unrighteously forgotten. The votaries of Burns, a crew too common in all ranks in Scotland, and more remarkable for number than discretion, eagerly suppress all mention of the lad who handed to him the poetic impulse, and, up to the time when he grew famous, continued to influence him in his manner and the choice of subjects. Burns himself not only acknowledged his debt in a fragment of autobiography, but erected a tomb over the grave in Canongate churchyard. This was worthy of an artist, but it was done in vain; and although I think I have read nearly all the biographies of Burns, I cannot remember one in which the modesty of nature was not violated, or where Fergusson was not sacrificed to the credit of his follower's originality. There is a kind of gaping admiration that would fain roll Shakespeare and Bacon into one, to have a bigger thing to gape at; and a class of men who cannot edit one author without disparaging all others. They are indeed mistaken if they think to please the great originals; and whoever puts Fergusson right with fame cannot do better than dedicate his labours to the memory of Burns, who will be the best delighted of the dead.

Of all places for a view, this Calton Hill is perhaps the best; since you can see the Castle, which you lose from the Castle, and Arthur's Seat, which you cannot see from Arthur's Seat. It is the place to stroll on one of those days of sunshine and east wind which are so common in our more than temperate summer. The breeze comes off the sea, with a little of the freshness, and that touch of chill, peculiar to the quarter, which is delightful to certain very ruddy organizations and greatly the reverse to the majority of mankind. It brings with it a faint, floating haze, a cunning decolouriser, although not thick enough to obscure outlines near at hand. But the haze lies more thickly to windward at the far end of Musselburgh Bay; and over the Links of Aberlady and Berwick Law and the hump of the Bass Rock it assumes the aspect of a bank of thin sea fog.

Immediately underneath upon the south, you command the yards of the High School, and the towers and courts of the new Jail — a large place, castellated to the extent of folly, standing by itself on the edge of a steep cliff, and often joyfully hailed by tourists as the Castle. In the one, you may perhaps see female prisoners taking exercise like a string of nuns; in the other, schoolboys running at play and their shadows keeping step with them. From the bottom of the valley, a gigantic chimney rises almost to the level of the eye, a taller and a shapelier edifice than Nelson's Monument. Look a little farther, and there is Holyrood Palace, with its Gothic frontal and ruined abbey, and the red sentry pacing smartly to and fro before the door like a mechanical figure in a panorama. By way of an outpost, you can single out the little peak-roofed lodge, over which Rizzio's murderers made their escape, and where Queen Mary herself, according to gossip, bathed in white wine to entertain her loveliness. Behind and overhead, lie the Queen's Park, from Muschat's Cairn to Dumbiedykes, St. Margaret's Loch, and the long wall of Salisbury Crags; and thence, by knoll and rocky bulwark and precipitous slope, the eye rises to the top of Arthur's Seat, a hill for magnitude, a mountain in virtue of its bold design. This upon your left. Upon the right, the roofs and spires of the Old Town climb one above another to where the citadel prints its broad bulk and jagged crown of bastions on the western sky. — Perhaps it is now one in the afternoon; and at the same instant of time, a ball rises to the summit of Nelson's flagstaff close at hand, and, far away, a puff of smoke followed by a report bursts from the half-moon battery at the Castle. This is the time-gun by which people set their watches, as far as the sea coast or in hill farms upon the Pentlands. — To complete the view, the eye enfilades Princes Street, black with traffic, and has a broad look over the valley between the Old Town and the New: here, full of railway trains and stepped over by the high North Bridge upon its many columns, and there, green with trees and gardens.

On the north, the Calton Hill is neither so abrupt in itself nor has it so exceptional an outlook; and yet even here it commands a striking prospect. A gully separates it from the New Town. This is Greenside, where witches were burned and tournaments held in former days. Down that almost precipitous bank, Bothwell launched his horse, and so first, as they say, attracted the bright eyes of Mary. It is now tessellated with sheets and blankets out to dry, and the sound of people beating carpets is rarely absent. Beyond all this, the suburbs run out to Leith; Leith camps on the seaside with her forest of masts; Leith roads are full of ships at anchor; the sun picks out the white pharos upon Inchkeith Island: the Firth extends on either hand from the Ferry to the May; the towns of Fifeshire sit, each in its bank of blowing smoke, along the opposite coast; and the hills inclose the view, except to the farthest east, where the haze of the horizon rests upon the open sea. There lies the road to Norway: a dear road for Sir Patrick Spens and his Scots Lords; and yonder smoke on the hither side of Largo Law is Aberdour, from whence they sailed to seek a queen for Scotland.

“O lang, lang, may the ladies sit,
Wi’ their fans into their hand,
Or e’er they see Sir Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the land!”

The sight of the sea, even from a city, will bring thoughts of storm and sea disaster. The sailors’ wives of Leith and the fisherwomen of Cockenzie, not sitting languorously with fans, but crowding to the tail of the harbour with a shawl about their ears, may still look vainly for brave Scotsmen who will return no more, or boats that have gone on their last fishing. Since Sir Patrick sailed from Aberdour, what a multitude have gone down in the North Sea! Yonder is Auldhame, where the London smack went ashore and wreckers cut the rings from ladies’ fingers; and a few miles round Fife Ness is the fatal Inchcape, now a star of guidance; and the lee shore to the east of the Inchcape is that Forfarshire coast where Mucklebackit sorrowed for his son.

These are the main features of the scene roughly sketched. How they are all tilted by the inclination of the ground, how each stands out in delicate relief against the rest, what manifold detail, and play of sun and shadow, animate and accentuate the picture, is a matter for a person on the spot, and turning swiftly on his heels, to grasp and bind together in one comprehensive look. It is the character of such a prospect, to be full of change and of things moving. The multiplicity embarrasses the eye; and the mind, among so much, suffers itself to grow absorbed with single points. You remark a tree in a hedgerow, or follow a cart along a country road. You turn to the city, and see children, dwarfed by distance into pygmies, at play about suburban doorsteps; you have a glimpse upon a thoroughfare where people are densely moving; you note ridge after ridge of chimney-stacks running downhill one behind another, and church spires rising bravely from the sea of roofs. At one of the innumerable windows, you watch a figure moving; on one of the multitude of roofs, you watch clambering chimney-sweeps. The wind takes a run and scatters the smoke; bells are heard, far and near, faint and loud, to tell the hour; or perhaps a bird goes dipping evenly over the housetops, like a gull across the waves. And here you are in the meantime, on this pastoral hillside, among nibbling sheep and looked upon by monumental buildings.

Return thither on some clear, dark, moonless night, with a ring of frost in the air, and only a star or two set sparsely in the vault of heaven; and you will find a sight as stimulating as the hoariest summit of the Alps. The solitude seems perfect; the patient astronomer, flat on his back under the Observatory dome and spying heaven's secrets, is your only neighbour; and yet from all round you there come up the dull hum of the city, the tramp of countless people marching out of time, the rattle of carriages and the continuous jingle of the tramway bells. An hour or so before, the gas was turned on; lamplighters scoured the city; in every house, from kitchen to attic, the windows kindled and gleamed forth into the dusk. And so now, although the town lies blue and darkling on her hills, innumerable spots of the bright element shine far and near along the pavements and upon the high façades. Moving lights of the railway pass and re-pass below the stationary lights upon the bridge. Lights burn in the Jail. Lights burn high up in the tall *lands* and on the Castle turrets; they burn low down in Greenside or along the Park. They run out one beyond the other into the dark country. They walk in a procession down to Leith, and shine singly far along Leith Pier. Thus, the plan of the city and her suburbs is mapped out upon the ground of blackness, as when a child pricks a drawing full of pinholes and exposes it before a candle; not the darkest night of winter can conceal her high station and fanciful design; every evening in the year she proceeds to illuminate herself in honour of her own beauty; and as if to complete the scheme — or rather as if some prodigal Pharaoh were beginning to extend to the adjacent sea and country — half-way over to Fife, there is an outpost of light upon Inchkeith, and far to seaward, yet another on the May.

And while you are looking, across upon the Castle Hill, the drums and bugles begin to recall the scattered garrison; the air thrills with the sound; the bugles sing aloud; and the last rising flourish mounts and melts into the darkness like a star: a martial swan-song, fitly rounding in the labours of the day.

CHAPTER IX

WINTER AND NEW YEAR

The Scots dialect is singularly rich in terms of reproach against the winter wind. *Snell, blae, nirly,* and *scowthering,* are four of these significant vocables; they are all words that carry a shiver with them; and for my part as I see them aligned before me on the page, I am persuaded that a big wind comes tearing over the Firth from Burntisland and the northern hills; I think I can hear it howl in the chimney, and as I set my face northwards, feel its smarting kisses on my cheek. Even in the names of places there is often a desolate, inhospitable sound; and I remember two from the near neighbourhood of Edinburgh, Cauldhame and Blaw-weary, that would promise but starving comfort to their inhabitants. The inclemency of heaven, which has thus endowed the language of Scotland with words, has also largely modified the spirit of its poetry. Both poverty and a northern climate teach men the love of the hearth and the sentiment of the family; and the latter, in its own right, inclines a poet to the praise of strong waters. In Scotland, all our singers have a stave or two for blazing fires and stout potations: — to get indoors out of the wind and to swallow something hot to the stomach, are benefits so easily appreciated where they dwelt!

And this is not only so in country districts where the shepherd must wade in the snow all day after his flock, but in Edinburgh itself, and nowhere more apparently stated than in the works of our Edinburgh poet, Fergusson. He was a delicate youth, I take it, and willingly slunk from the robustious winter to an inn fireside. Love was absent from his life, or only present, if you prefer, in such a form that even the least serious of Burns's amourettes was ennobling by comparison; and so there is nothing to temper the sentiment of indoor revelry which pervades the poor boy's verses. Although it is characteristic of his native town, and the manners of its youth to the present day, this spirit has perhaps done something to restrict his popularity. He recalls a supper-party pleasantry with something akin to tenderness; and sounds the praises of the act of drinking as if it were virtuous, or at least witty, in itself. The kindly jar, the warm atmosphere of tavern parlours, and the revelry of lawyers' clerks, do not offer by themselves the materials of rich existence. It was not choice, so much as an external fate, that kept Fergusson in this round of sordid pleasures. A Scot of poetic temperament, and without religious exaltation, drops as if by nature into the public-house. The picture may not be pleasing; but what else is a man to do in this dog's weather?

To none but those who have themselves suffered the thing in the body, can the gloom and depression of our Edinburgh winters be brought home. For some constitutions there is something almost physically disgusting in the bleak ugliness of easterly weather; the wind wearies, the sickly sky depresses them; and they turn back from their walk to avoid the aspect of the unrefulgent sun going down among perturbed and pallid mists. The days are so short that a man does much of his business, and certainly all his pleasure, by the haggard glare of gas lamps. The roads are as heavy as a fallow. People go by, so drenched and draggle-tailed that I have often wondered how they found the heart to undress. And meantime the wind whistles through the town as if it were an open meadow; and if you lie awake all night, you hear it shrieking and raving overhead with a noise of shipwrecks and of falling houses. In a word, life is so unsightly that there are times when the heart turns sick in a man's inside; and the look of a tavern, or the thought of the warm, firelit study, is like the touch of land to one who has been long struggling with the seas.

As the weather hardens towards frost, the world begins to improve for Edinburgh people. We enjoy superb, sub-arctic sunsets, with the profile of the city stamped in indigo upon a sky of luminous green. The wind may still be cold, but there is a briskness in the air that stirs good blood. People do not all look equally sour and downcast. They fall into two divisions: one, the knight of the blue face and hollow paunch, whom Winter has gotten by the vitals; the other well lined with New-year's fare, conscious of the touch of cold on his periphery, but stepping through it by the glow of his internal fires. Such an one I remember, triply cased in grease, whom no extremity of temperature could vanquish. "Well," would be his jovial salutation, "here's a sneezer!" And the look of these warm fellows is tonic, and upholds their drooping fellow-townsmen. There is yet another class who do not depend on corporal advantages, but support the winter in virtue of a brave and merry heart. One shivering evening, cold enough for frost but with too high a wind, and a little past sundown, when the lamps were beginning to enlarge their circles in the growing dusk, a brace of barefoot lassies were seen coming eastward in the teeth of the wind. If the one was as much as nine, the other was certainly not more than seven. They were miserably clad; and the pavement was so cold, you would have thought no one could lay a naked foot on it unflinching. Yet they came along waltzing, if you please, while the elder sang a tune to give them music. The person who saw this, and whose heart was full of bitterness at the moment, pocketed a reproof which has been of use to him ever since, and which he now hands on, with his good wishes, to the reader.

At length, Edinburgh, with her satellite hills and all the sloping country, is sheeted up in white. If it has happened in the dark hours, nurses pluck their children out of bed and run with them to some commanding window, whence they may see the change that has been worked upon earth's face. "A' the hills are covered wi' snaw," they sing, "and Winter's noo come fairly!" And the children, marveling at the silence and the white landscape, find a spell appropriate to the season in the words. The reverberation of the snow increases the pale daylight, and brings all objects nearer the eye. The Pentlands are smooth and glittering, with here and there the black ribbon of a dry-stone dyke, and here and there, if there be wind, a cloud of blowing snow upon a shoulder. The Firth seems a leaden creek, that a man might almost jump across, between well-powdered Lothian and well-powdered Fife. And the effect is not, as in other cities, a thing of half a day; the streets are soon trodden black, but the country keeps its virgin white; and you have only to lift your eyes and look over miles of country snow. An indescribable cheerfulness breathes about the city; and the well-fed heart sits lightly and beats gaily in the bosom. It is New-year's weather.

New-year's Day, the great national festival, is a time of family expansions and of deep carousal. Sometimes, by a sore stroke of fate for this Calvinistic people, the year's anniversary falls upon a Sunday, when the public-houses are inexorably closed, when singing and even whistling is banished from our homes and highways, and the oldest toper feels called upon to go to church. Thus pulled about, as if between two loyalties, the Scots have to decide many nice cases of conscience, and ride the marches narrowly between the weekly and the annual observance. A party of convivial musicians, next door to a friend of mine, hung suspended in this manner on the brink of their diversions. From ten o'clock on Sunday night, my friend heard them tuning their instruments; and as the hour of liberty drew near, each must have had his music open, his bow in readiness across the fiddle, his foot already raised to mark the time, and his nerves braced for execution; for hardly had the twelfth stroke sounded from the earliest steeple, before they had launched forth into a secular bravura.

Currant-loaf is now popular eating in all households. For weeks before the great morning, confectioners display stacks of Scots bun — a dense, black substance, inimical to life — and full moons of shortbread adorned with mottoes of peel or sugar-plum, in honour of the season and the family affections. "Frae Auld Reekie," "A guid New Year to ye a'," "For the Auld Folk at Hame," are among the most favoured of these devices. Can you not see the carrier, after half-a-day's journey on pinching hill-roads, draw up before a cottage in

Teviotdale, or perhaps in Manor Glen among the rowans, and the old people receiving the parcel with moist eyes and a prayer for Jock or Jean in the city? For at this season, on the threshold of another year of calamity and stubborn conflict, men feel a need to draw closer the links that unite them; they reckon the number of their friends, like allies before a war; and the prayers grow longer in the morning as the absent are recommended by name into God's keeping.

On the day itself, the shops are all shut as on a Sunday; only taverns, toyshops, and other holiday magazines, keep open doors. Everyone looks for his handsel. The postmen and the lamplighters have left, at every house in their districts, a copy of vernacular verses, asking and thanking in a breath; and it is characteristic of Scotland that these verses may have sometimes a touch of reality in detail of sentiment and a measure of strength in the handling. All over the town, you may see comforter'd schoolboys hastening to squander their half-crowns. There are an infinity of visits to be paid; all the world is in the street, except the daintier classes; the sacramental greeting is heard upon all sides; Auld Lang Syne is much in people's mouths; and whisky and shortbread are staple articles of consumption. From an early hour a stranger will be impressed by the number of drunken men; and by afternoon drunkenness has spread to the women. With some classes of society, it is as much a matter of duty to drink hard on New-year's Day as to go to church on Sunday. Some have been saving their wages for perhaps a month to do the season honour. Many carry a whisky-bottle in their pocket, which they will press with embarrassing effusion on a perfect stranger. It is not expedient to risk one's body in a cab, or not, at least, until after a prolonged study of the driver. The streets, which are thronged from end to end, become a place for delicate pilotage. Singly or arm-in-arm, some speechless, others noisy and quarrelsome, the votaries of the New Year go meandering in and out and cannoning one against another; and now and again, one falls, and lies as he has fallen. Before night, so many have gone to bed or the police office, that the streets seem almost clearer. And as *guisards* and *first-footers* are now not much seen except in country places, when once the New Year has been rung in and proclaimed at the Tron railings, the festivities begin to find their way indoors and something like quiet returns upon the town. But think, in these piled *lands*, of all the senseless snorers, all the broken heads and empty pockets!

Of old, Edinburgh University was the scene of heroic snowballing; and one riot obtained the epic honours of military intervention. But the great generation, I am afraid, is at an end; and even during my own college days, the spirit appreciably declined. Skating and sliding, on the other hand, are honoured more and more; and curling, being a creature of the national genius, is little likely to be disregarded. The patriotism that leads a man to eat Scots bun will scarcely desert him at the curling pond. Edinburgh, with its long, steep pavements, is the proper home of sliders; many a happy urchin can slide the whole way to school; and the profession of errand-boy is transformed into a holiday amusement. As for skating, there is scarce any city so handsomely provided. Duddingston Loch lies under the abrupt southern side of Arthur’s Seat; in summer, a shield of blue, with swans sailing from the reeds; in winter, a field of ringing ice. The village church sits above it on a green promontory; and the village smoke rises from among goodly trees. At the church gates is the historical *jougs*, a place of penance for the neck of detected sinners, and the historical *louping-on stane*, from which Dutch-built lairds and farmers climbed into the saddle. Here Prince Charlie slept before the battle of Prestonpans; and here Deacon Brodie, or one of his gang, stole a plough coulter before the burglary in Chessel’s Court. On the opposite side of the loch, the ground rises to Craigmillar Castle, a place friendly to Stuart Mariolaters. It is worth a climb, even in summer, to look down upon the loch from Arthur’s Seat; but it is tenfold more so on a day of skating. The surface is thick with people moving easily and swiftly and leaning over at a thousand graceful inclinations; the crowd opens and closes, and keeps moving through itself like water; and the ice rings to half a mile away, with the flying steel. As night draws on, the single figures melt into the dusk, until only an obscure stir and coming and going of black clusters is visible upon the loch. A little longer, and the first torch is kindled and begins to flit rapidly across the ice in a ring of yellow reflection, and this is followed by another and another, until the whole field is full of skimming lights.

CHAPTER X

TO THE PENTLAND HILLS

On three sides of Edinburgh, the country slopes downward from the city, here to the sea, there to the fat farms of Haddington, there to the mineral fields of Linlithgow. On the south alone, it keeps rising, until it not only out-tops the Castle, but looks down on Arthur's Seat. The character of the neighbourhood is pretty strongly marked by a scarcity of hedges; by many stone walls of varying height; by a fair amount of timber, some of it well grown, but apt to be of a bushy, northern profile and poor in foliage; by here and there a little river, Esk or Leith or Almond, busily journeying in the bottom of its glen; and from almost every point, by a peep of the sea or the hills. There is no lack of variety, and yet most of the elements are common to all parts; and the southern district is alone distinguished by considerable summits and a wide view.

From Boroughmuirhead, where the Scottish army encamped before Flodden, the road descends a long hill, at the bottom of which, and just as it is preparing to mount up on the other side, it passes a toll-bar and issues at once into the open country. Even as I write these words, they are becoming antiquated in the progress of events, and the chisels are tinkling on a new row of houses. The builders have at length adventured beyond the toll which held them in respect so long, and proceed to career in these fresh pastures like a herd of colts turned loose. As Lord Beaconsfield proposed to hang an architect by way of stimulation, a man, looking on these doomed meads, imagines a similar example to deter the builders; for it seems as if it must come to an open fight at last to preserve a corner of green country unbedevilled. And here, appropriately enough, there stood in old days a crow-haunted gibbet, with two bodies hanged in chains. I used to be shown, when a child, a flat stone in the roadway to which the gibbet had been fixed. People of a willing fancy were persuaded, and sought to persuade others, that this stone was never dry. And no wonder, they would add, for the two men had only stolen fourpence between them.

For about two miles the road climbs upwards, a long hot walk in summer time. You reach the summit at a place where four ways meet, beside the toll of Fairmilehead. The spot is breezy and agreeable both in name and aspect. The hills are close by across a valley: Kirk Yetton, with its long, upright scars visible as far as Fife, and Allermuir the tallest on this side: with wood and tilled field running high up on their borders, and haunches all moulded into innumerable glens and shelvings and variegated with heather and fern. The air comes briskly and sweetly off the hills, pure from the elevation, and rustically scented by the upland plants; and even at the toll, you may hear the curlew calling on its mate. At certain seasons, when the gulls desert their surfy forelands, the birds of sea and mountain hunt and scream together in the same field by Fairmilehead. The winged, wild things intermix their wheelings, the sea-birds skim the tree-tops and fish among the furrows of the plough. These little craft of air are at home in all the world, so long as they cruise in their own element; and like sailors, ask but food and water from the shores they coast.

Below, over a stream, the road passes Bow Bridge, now a dairy-farm, but once a distillery of whisky. It chanced, some time in the past century, that the distiller was on terms of good-fellowship with the visiting officer of excise. The latter was of an easy, friendly disposition, and a master of convivial arts. Now and again, he had to walk out of Edinburgh to measure the distiller's stock; and although it was agreeable to find his business lead him in a friend's direction, it was unfortunate that the friend should be a loser by his visits. Accordingly, when he got about the level of Fairmilehead, the gauger would take his flute, without which he never travelled, from his pocket, fit it together, and set manfully to playing, as if for his own delectation and inspired by the beauty of the scene. His favourite air, it seems, was "Over the Hills and Far Away." At the first note, the distiller pricked his ears. A flute at Fairmilehead? and playing, "Over the Hills and Far Away"? This must be his friendly enemy, the gauger. Instantly, horses were harnessed, and sundry barrels of whisky were got upon a cart, driven at a gallop round Hill End, and buried in the mossy glen behind Kirk Yetton. In the same breath, you may be sure, a fat fowl was put to the fire, and the whitest napery prepared for the back parlour. A little after, the gauger, having had his fill of music for the moment, came strolling down with the most innocent air imaginable, and found the good people at Bow Bridge taken entirely unawares by his arrival, but none the less glad to see him. The distiller's liquor and the gauger's flute would combine to speed the moments of digestion; and when both were somewhat mellow, they would wind up the evening with "Over the Hills and Far Away," to an accompaniment of knowing glances. And at least there is a smuggling story, with original and half-idyllic features.

A little farther, the road to the right passes an upright stone in a field. The country people call it General Kay's monument. According to them, an officer of that name had perished there in battle at some indistinct period before the beginning of history. The date is reassuring; for I think cautious writers are silent on the General's exploits. But the stone is connected with one of those remarkable tenures of land which linger on into the modern world from Feudalism. Whenever the reigning sovereign passes by, a certain landed proprietor is held bound to climb on to the top, trumpet in hand, and sound a flourish according to the measure of his knowledge in that art. Happily for a respectable family, crowned heads have no great business in the Pentland Hills. But the story lends a character of comicality to the stone; and the passer-by will sometimes chuckle to himself.

The district is dear to the superstitious. Hard by, at the back-gate of Comiston, a belated carter beheld a lady in white, "with the most beautiful, clear shoes upon her feet," who looked upon him in a very ghastly manner, and then vanished; and just in front is the Hunters' Tryst, once a roadside inn, and not so long ago haunted by the devil in person. Satan led the inhabitants a pitiful existence. He shook the four corners of the building with lamentable outcries, beat at the doors and windows, over-threw crockery in the dead hours of the morning, and danced unholy dances on the roof. Every kind of spiritual disinfectant was put in requisition; chosen ministers were summoned out of Edinburgh and prayed by the hour; pious neighbours sat up all night making a noise of psalmody; but Satan minded them no more than the wind about the hill-tops; and it was only after years of persecution, that he left the Hunters' Tryst in peace to occupy himself with the remainder of mankind. What with General Kay, and the white lady, and this singular visitation, the neighbourhood offers great facilities to the makers of sun-myths; and without exactly casting in one's lot with that disenchanting school of writers, one cannot help hearing a good deal of the winter wind in the last story. "That nicht," says Burns, in one of his happiest moments, —

"That nicht a child might understand
The deil had business on his hand."

And if people sit up all night in lone places on the hills, with Bibles and tremulous psalms, they will be apt to hear some of the most fiendish noises in the world: the wind will beat on doors and dance upon roofs for them, and make the hills howl around their cottage with a clamour like the Judgment Day.

The road goes down through another valley, and then finally begins to scale the main slope of the Pentlands. A bouquet of old trees stands round a white farmhouse; and from a neighbouring dell, you can see smoke rising and leaves ruffling in the breeze. Straight above, the hills climb a thousand feet into the air. The neighbourhood, about the time of lambs, is clamorous with the bleating of flocks; and you will be awakened, in the grey of early summer mornings, by the barking of a dog or the voice of a shepherd shouting to the echoes. This, with the hamlet lying behind unseen, is Swanston.

The place in the dell is immediately connected with the city. Long ago, this sheltered field was purchased by the Edinburgh magistrates for the sake of the springs that rise or gather there. After they had built their water-house and laid their pipes, it occurred to them that the place was suitable for junketing. Once entertained, with jovial magistrates and public funds, the idea led speedily to accomplishment; and Edinburgh could soon boast of a municipal Pleasure House. The dell was turned into a garden; and on the knoll that shelters it from the plain and the sea winds, they built a cottage looking to the hills. They brought crockets and gargoyles from old St. Giles's, which they were then restoring, and disposed them on the gables and over the door and about the garden; and the quarry which had supplied them with building material, they draped with clematis and carpeted with beds of roses. So much for the pleasure of the eye; for creature comfort, they made a capacious cellar in the hillside and fitted it with bins of the hewn stone. In process of time, the trees grew higher and gave shade to the cottage, and the evergreens sprang up and turned the dell into a thicket. There, purple magistrates relaxed themselves from the pursuit of municipal ambition; cocked hats paraded soberly about the garden and in and out among the hollies; authoritative canes drew ciphering upon the path; and at night, from high up on the hills, a shepherd saw lighted windows through the foliage and heard the voice of city dignitaries raised in song.

The farm is older. It was first a grange of Whitekirk Abbey, tilled and inhabited by rosy friars. Thence, after the Reformation, it passed into the hands of a true-blue Protestant family. During the Covenanting troubles, when a night conventicle was held upon the Pentlands, the farm doors stood hospitably open till the morning; the dresser was laden with cheese and bannocks, milk and brandy; and the worshipers kept lipping down from the hill between two exercises, as couples visit the supper-room between two dances of a modern ball. In the Forty-Five, some foraging Highlanders from Prince Charlie's army fell upon Swanston in the dawn. The great-grandfather of the late farmer was then a little child; him they awakened by plucking the blankets from his bed, and he remembered, when he was an old man, their truculent looks and uncouth speech. The churn stood full of cream in the dairy, and with this they made their brose in high delight. "It was braw brose," said one of them. At last they made off, laden like camels with their booty; and Swanston Farm has lain out of the way of history from that time forward. I do not know what may be yet in store for it. On dark days, when the mist runs low upon the hill, the house has a gloomy air as if suitable for private tragedy. But in hot

July, you can fancy nothing more perfect than the garden, laid out in alleys and arbours and bright, old-fashioned flower-plots, and ending in a miniature ravine, all trellis-work and moss and tinkling waterfall, and housed from the sun under fathoms of broad foliage.

The hamlet behind is one of the least considerable of hamlets, and consists of a few cottages on a green beside a burn. Some of them (a strange thing in Scotland) are models of internal neatness; the beds adorned with patchwork, the shelves arrayed with willow-pattern plates, the floors and tables bright with scrubbing or pipeclay, and the very kettle polished like silver. It is the sign of a contented old age in country places, where there is little matter for gossip and no street sights. Housework becomes an art; and at evening, when the cottage interior shines and twinkles in the glow of the fire, the housewife folds her hands and contemplates her finished picture; the snow and the wind may do their worst, she has made herself a pleasant corner in the world. The city might be a thousand miles away: and yet it was close by that Mr. Bough painted the distant view of Edinburgh which has been engraved for this collection: and you have only to look at the cut, to see how near it is at hand. But hills and hill people are not easily sophisticated; and if you walk out here on a summer Sunday, it is as like as not the shepherd may set his dogs upon you. But keep an unmoved countenance; they look formidable at the charge, but their hearts are in the right place; and they will only bark and sprawl about you on the grass, unmindful of their master's excitations.

Kirk Yetton forms the north-eastern angle of the range; thence, the Pentlands trend off to south and west. From the summit you look over a great expanse of champaign sloping to the sea and behold a large variety of distant hills. There are the hills of Fife, the hills of Peebles, the Lammermoors, and the Ochils, more or less mountainous in outline, more or less blue with distance. Of the Pentlands themselves, you see a field of wild heathery peaks with a pond gleaming in the midst; and to that side the view is as desolate as if you were looking into Galloway or Applecross. To turn to the other, is like a piece of travel. Far out in the lowlands Edinburgh shows herself, making a great smoke on clear days and spreading her suburbs about her for miles; the Castle rises darkly in the midst; and close by, Arthur's Seat makes a bold figure in the landscape. All around, cultivated fields, and woods, and smoking villages, and white country roads, diversify the uneven surface of the land. Trains crawl slowly abroad upon the railway lines; little ships are tacking in the Firth; the shadow of a mountainous cloud, as large as a parish, travels before the wind; the wind itself ruffles the wood and standing corn, and sends pulses of varying colour across the landscape. So you sit, like Jupiter on Olympus, and look down from afar upon men's life. The city is as silent as a city of the dead: from all its humming thoroughfares, not a voice, not a footfall, reaches you upon the hill. The sea surf, the cries of ploughmen, the streams and the mill-wheels, the birds and the wind, keep up an animated concert through the plain; from farm to farm, dogs and crowing cocks contend together in defiance; and yet from this Olympian station, except for the whispering rumour of a train, the world has fallen into a dead silence and the business of town and country grown voiceless in your ears. A crying hill-bird, the bleat of a sheep, a wind singing in the dry grass, seem not so much to interrupt, as to accompany, the stillness; but to the spiritual ear, the whole scene makes a music at once human and rural, and discourses pleasant reflections on the destiny of man. The spiry habitable city, ships, the divided fields, and browsing herds, and the straight highways, tell visibly of man's active and comfortable ways; and you may be never so laggard and never so unimpressionable, but there is something in the view that spirits up your blood and puts you in the vein for cheerful labour.

Immediately below is Fairmilehead, a spot of roof and a smoking chimney, where two roads, no thicker than packthread, intersect beside a hanging wood. If you are fanciful, you will be reminded of the gauger in the story. And the thought of this old exciseman, who once lipped and fingered on his pipe and uttered clear notes from it in the mountain air, and the words of the song he affected, carry your mind "Over the hills and far away" to distant countries; and you have a vision of Edinburgh not, as you see her, in the midst of a little neighbourhood, but as a boss upon the round world with all Europe and the deep sea for her surroundings. For every place is a centre to the earth, whence highways radiate or ships set sail for foreign ports; the limit of a parish is not more imaginary than the frontier of an empire; and as a man sitting at home in his cabinet and swiftly writing books, so a city sends abroad an influence and a portrait of herself. There is no Edinburgh emigrant, far or near, from China to Peru, but he or she carries some lively pictures of the mind, some sunset behind the Castle cliffs, some snow scene, some maze of city lamps, indelible in the memory and delightful to study in the intervals of toil. For any such, if this book fall in their way, here are a few more home pictures. It would be pleasant if they should recognise a house where they had dwelt, or a walk that they had taken.

THE AMATEUR EMIGRANT

This travel memoir recounts Stevenson's journey from Scotland to California in 1879-1880. It is not a complete account, covering only the first third, by ship from Europe to New York City. The middle part of the trip was later recounted in *Across the Plains* (1892) with the final part recounted in *The Silverado Squatters* (1883). *The Amateur Emigrant* was written in 1879-80 and was not published in full until 1895, a year after Stevenson's death.

TO

ROBERT ALAN MOWBRAY STEVENSON

Our friendship was not only founded before we were born by a community of blood, but is in itself near as old as my life. It began with our early ages, and, like a history, has been continued to the present time. Although we may not be old in the world, we are old to each other, having so long been intimates. We are now widely separated, a great sea and continent intervening; but memory, like care, mounts into iron ships and rides post behind the horseman. Neither time nor space nor enmity can conquer old affection; and as I dedicate these sketches, it is not to you only, but to all in the old country, that I send the greeting of my heart.

1879.

R. L. S.

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PART I
FROM THE CLYDE TO SANDY HOOK

THE SECOND CABIN

I first encountered my fellow-passengers on the Broomielaw in Glasgow. Thence we descended the Clyde in no familiar spirit, but looking askance on each other as on possible enemies. A few Scandinavians, who had already grown acquainted on the North Sea, were friendly and voluble over their long pipes; but among English speakers distance and suspicion reigned supreme. The sun was soon overclouded, the wind freshened and grew sharp as we continued to descend the widening estuary; and with the falling temperature the gloom among the passengers increased. Two of the women wept. Any one who had come aboard might have supposed we were all absconding from the law. There was scarce a word interchanged, and no common sentiment but that of cold united us, until at length, having touched at Greenock, a pointing arm and rush to the starboard bow announced that our ocean steamer was in sight. There she lay in mid-river, at the tail of the Bank, her sea-signal flying: a wall of bulwark, a street of white deck-houses, an aspiring forest of spars, larger than a church, and soon to be as populous as many an incorporated town in the land to which she was to bear us.

I was not, in truth, a steerage passenger. Although anxious to see the worst of emigrant life, I had some work to finish on the voyage, and was advised to go by the second cabin, where at least I should have a table at command. The advice was excellent; but to understand the choice, and what I gained, some outline of the internal disposition of the ship will first be necessary. In her very nose is Steerage No. 1, down two pair of stairs. A little abaft, another companion, labelled Steerage No. 2 and 3, gives admission to three galleries, two running forward towards steerage No. 1, and the third aft towards the engines. The starboard forward gallery is the second cabin. Away abaft the engines and below the officers' cabins, to complete our survey of the vessel, there is yet a third nest of steerages, labelled 4 and 5. The second cabin, to return, is thus a modified oasis in the very heart of the steerages. Through the thin partition you can hear the steerage passengers being sick, the rattle of tin dishes as they sit at meals, the varied accents in which they converse, the crying of their children terrified by this new experience, or the clean flat smack of the parental hand in chastisement.

There are, however, many advantages for the inhabitant of this strip. He does not require to bring his own bedding or dishes, but finds berths and a table completely if somewhat roughly furnished. He enjoys a distinct superiority in diet; but this, strange to say, differs not only on different ships, but on the same ship according as her head is to the east or west. In my own experience, the principal difference between our table and that of the true steerage passenger was the table itself, and the crockery plates from which we ate. But lest I should show myself ungrateful, let me recapitulate every advantage. At breakfast we had a choice between tea and coffee for beverage; a choice not easy to make, the two were so surprisingly alike. I found that I could sleep after the coffee and lay awake after the tea; which is proof conclusive of some chemical disparity; and even by the palate I could distinguish a smack of snuff in the former from a flavour of boiling and dish-cloths in the second. As a matter of fact, I have seen passengers, after many sips, still doubting which had been supplied them. In the way of eatables at the same meal we were gloriously favoured; for in addition to porridge, which was common to all, we had Irish stew, sometimes a bit of fish, and sometimes rissoles. The dinner of soup, roast fresh beef, boiled salt junk, and potatoes was, I believe, exactly common to the steerage and the second cabin; only I have heard it rumoured that our potatoes were of a superior brand; and twice a week, on pudding days, instead of duff, we had a saddle-bag filled with currants under the name of a plum-pudding. At tea we were served with some broken meat from the saloon; sometimes in the comparatively elegant form of spare patties or rissoles; but as a general thing mere chicken-bones and flakes of fish, neither hot nor cold. If these were not the scrapings of plates their looks belied them sorely; yet we were all too hungry to be proud, and fell to these leavings greedily. These, the bread, which was excellent, and the soup and porridge which were both good, formed my whole diet throughout the voyage; so that except for the broken meat and the convenience of a table I might as well have been in the steerage outright. Had they given me porridge again in the evening I should have been perfectly contented with the fare. As it was, with a few biscuits and some whisky and water before turning in, I kept my body going and my spirits up to the mark.

The last particular in which the second cabin passenger remarkably stands ahead of his brother of the steerage is one altogether of sentiment. In the steerage there are males and females; in the second cabin ladies and gentlemen. For some time after I came aboard I thought I was only a male; but in the course of a voyage of discovery between decks, I came on a brass plate, and learned that I was still a gentleman. Nobody knew it, of course. I was lost in the crowd of males and females, and rigorously confined to the same quarter of the deck. Who could tell whether I housed on the port or starboard side of Steerage No. 2 and 3? And it was only there that my superiority became practical; everywhere else I was incognito, moving among my inferiors with simplicity, not so much as a swagger to indicate that I was a gentleman after all, and had broken meat to tea. Still, I was like one with a patent of nobility in a drawer at home; and when I felt out of spirits I could go down and refresh myself with a look of that brass plate.

For all these advantages I paid but two guineas. Six guineas is the steerage fare; eight that by the second cabin; and when you remember that the steerage passenger must supply bedding and dishes, and, in five cases out of ten, either brings some dainties with him, or privately pays the steward for extra rations, the difference in price becomes almost nominal. Air comparatively fit to breathe, food comparatively varied, and the satisfaction of being still privately a gentleman, may thus be had almost for the asking. Two of my fellow-passengers in the second cabin had already made the passage by the cheaper fare, and declared it was an experiment not to be repeated. As I go on to tell about my steerage friends, the reader will perceive that they were not alone in their opinion. Out of ten with whom I was more or less intimate, I am sure not fewer than five vowed, if they returned, to travel second cabin; and all who had left their wives behind them assured me they would go without the comfort of their presence until they could afford to bring them by saloon.

Our party in the second cabin was not perhaps the most interesting on board. Perhaps even in the saloon there was as much good-will and character. Yet it had some elements of curiosity. There was a mixed group of Swedes, Danes, and Norsemen, one of whom, generally known by the name of “Johnny,” in spite of his own protests, greatly diverted us by his clever, cross-country efforts to speak English, and became on the strength of that an universal favourite — it takes so little in this world of shipboard to create a popularity. There was, besides, a Scots mason known from his favourite dish as “Irish Stew,” three or four nondescript Scots, a fine young Irishman, O’Reilly, and a pair of young men who deserve a special word of condemnation. One of them was Scots: the other claimed to be American; admitted, after some fencing, that he was born in England; and ultimately proved to be an Irishman born and nurtured, but ashamed to own his country. He had a sister on board, whom he faithfully neglected throughout the voyage, though she was not only sick, but much his senior, and had nursed and cared for him in childhood. In appearance he was like an imbecile Henry the Third of France. The Scotsman, though perhaps as big an ass, was not so dead of heart; and I have only bracketed them together because they were fast friends, and disgraced themselves equally by their conduct at the table.

Next, to turn to topics more agreeable, we had a newly-married couple, devoted to each other, with a pleasant story of how they had first seen each other years ago at a preparatory school, and that very afternoon he had carried her books home for her. I do not know if this story will be plain to southern readers; but to me it recalls many a school idyll, with wrathful swains of eight and nine confronting each other stride-legs, flushed with jealousy; for to carry home a young lady's books was both a delicate attention and privilege.

Then there was an old lady, or indeed I am not sure that she was as much old as antiquated and strangely out of place, who had left her husband, and was travelling all the way to Kansas by herself. We had to take her own word that she was married; for it was sorely contradicted by the testimony of her appearance. Nature seemed to have sanctified her for the single state; even the colour of her hair was incompatible with matrimony, and her husband, I thought, should be a man of saintly spirit and phantasmal bodily presence. She was ill, poor thing; her soul turned from the viands; the dirty tablecloth shocked her like an impropriety; and the whole strength of her endeavour was bent upon keeping her watch true to Glasgow time till she should reach New York. They had heard reports, her husband and she, of some unwarrantable disparity of hours between these two cities; and with a spirit commendably scientific, had seized on this occasion to put them to the proof. It was a good thing for the old lady; for she passed much leisure time in studying the watch. Once, when prostrated by sickness, she let it run down. It was inscribed on her harmless mind in letters of adamant that the hands of a watch must never be turned backwards; and so it behoved her to lie in wait for the exact moment ere she started it again. When she imagined this was about due, she sought out one of the young second-cabin Scotsmen, who was embarked on the same experiment as herself and had hitherto been less neglectful. She was in quest of two o'clock; and when she learned it was already seven on the shores of Clyde, she lifted up her voice and cried "Gravy!" I had not heard this innocent expletive since I was a young child; and I suppose it must have been the same with the other Scotsmen present, for we all laughed our fill.

Last but not least, I come to my excellent friend Mr. Jones. It would be difficult to say whether I was his right-hand man, or he mine, during the voyage. Thus at table I carved, while he only scooped gravy; but at our concerts, of which more anon, he was the president who called up performers to sing, and I but his messenger who ran his errands and pleaded privately with the over-modest. I knew I liked Mr. Jones from the moment I saw him. I thought him by his face to be Scottish; nor could his accent undeceive me. For as there is a *lingua franca* of many tongues on the moles and in the feluccas of the Mediterranean, so there is a free or common accent among English-speaking men who follow the sea. They catch a twang in a New England Port; from a cockney skipper, even a Scotsman sometimes learns to drop an *h*; a word of a dialect is picked up from another hand in the forecastle; until often the result is undecipherable, and you have to ask for the man's place of birth. So it was with Mr. Jones. I thought him a Scotsman who had been long to sea; and yet he was from Wales, and had been most of his life a blacksmith at an inland forge; a few years in America and half a score of ocean voyages having sufficed to modify his speech into the common pattern. By his own account he was both strong and skilful in his trade. A few years back, he had been married and after a fashion a rich man; now the wife was dead and the money gone. But his was the nature that looks forward, and goes on from one year to another and through all the extremities of fortune undismayed; and if the sky were to fall to-morrow, I should look to see Jones, the day following, perched on a step-ladder and getting things to rights. He was always hovering round inventions like a bee over a flower, and lived in a dream of patents. He had with him a patent medicine, for instance, the composition of which he had bought years ago for five dollars from an American pedlar, and sold the other day for a hundred pounds (I think it was) to an English apothecary. It was called Golden Oil; cured all maladies without exception; and I am bound to say that I partook of it myself with good results. It is a character of the man that he was not only perpetually dosing himself with Golden Oil, but wherever there was a head aching or a finger cut, there would be Jones with his bottle.

If he had one taste more strongly than another, it was to study character. Many an hour have we two walked upon the deck dissecting our neighbours in a spirit that was too purely scientific to be called unkind; whenever a quaint or human trait slipped out in conversation, you might have seen Jones and me exchanging glances; and we could hardly go to bed in comfort till we had exchanged notes and discussed the day's experience. We were then like a couple of anglers comparing a day's kill. But the fish we angled for were of a metaphysical species, and we angled as often as not in one another's baskets. Once, in the midst of a serious talk, each found there was a scrutinising eye upon himself; I own I paused in embarrassment at this double detection; but Jones, with a better civility, broke into a peal of unaffected laughter, and declared, what was the truth, that there was a pair of us indeed.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS

We steamed out of the Clyde on Thursday night, and early on the Friday forenoon we took in our last batch of emigrants at Lough Foyle, in Ireland, and said farewell to Europe. The company was now complete, and began to draw together, by inscrutable magnetisms, upon the deck. There were Scots and Irish in plenty, a few English, a few Americans, a good handful of Scandinavians, a German or two, and one Russian; all now belonging for ten days to one small iron country on the deep.

As I walked the deck and looked round upon my fellow-passengers, thus curiously assorted from all northern Europe, I began for the first time to understand the nature of emigration. Day by day throughout the passage, and thenceforward across all the States, and on to the shores of the Pacific, this knowledge grew more clear and melancholy. Emigration, from a word of the most cheerful import, came to sound most dismally in my ear. There is nothing more agreeable to picture and nothing more pathetic to behold. The abstract idea, as conceived at home, is hopeful and adventurous. A young man, you fancy, scorning restraints and helpers, issues forth into life, that great battle, to fight for his own hand. The most pleasant stories of ambition, of difficulties overcome, and of ultimate success, are but as episodes to this great epic of self-help. The epic is composed of individual heroisms; it stands to them as the victorious war which subdued an empire stands to the personal act of bravery which spiked a single cannon and was adequately rewarded with a medal. For in emigration the young men enter direct and by the ship-load on their heritage of work; empty continents swarm, as at the bo's'un's whistle, with industrious hands, and whole new empires are domesticated to the service of man.

This is the closet picture, and is found, on trial, to consist mostly of embellishments. The more I saw of my fellow passengers, the less I was tempted to the lyric note. Comparatively few of the men were below thirty; many were married, and encumbered with families; not a few were already up in years; and this itself was out of tune with my imaginations, for the ideal emigrant should certainly be young. Again, I thought he should offer to the eye some bold type of humanity, with bluff or hawk-like features, and the stamp of an eager and pushing disposition. Now those around me were for the most part quiet, orderly, obedient citizens, family men broken by adversity, elderly youths who had failed to place themselves in life, and people who had seen better days. Mildness was the prevailing character; mild mirth and mild endurance. In a word, I was not taking part in an impetuous and conquering sally, such as swept over Mexico or Siberia, but found myself, like Marmion, “in the lost battle, borne down by the flying.”

Labouring mankind had in the last years, and throughout Great Britain, sustained a prolonged and crushing series of defeats. I had heard vaguely of these reverses; of whole streets of houses standing deserted by the Tyne, the cellar-doors broken and removed for firewood; of homeless men loitering at the street-corners of Glasgow with their chests beside them; of closed factories, useless strikes, and starving girls. But I had never taken them home to me or represented these distresses livingly to my imagination. A turn of the market may be a calamity as disastrous as the French retreat from Moscow; but it hardly lends itself to lively treatment, and makes a trifling figure in the morning papers. We may struggle as we please, we are not born economists. The individual is more affecting than the mass. It is by the scenic accidents, and the appeal to the carnal eye, that for the most part we grasp the significance of tragedies. Thus it was only now, when I found myself involved in the rout, that I began to appreciate how sharp had been the battle. We were a company of the rejected; the drunken, the incompetent, the weak, the prodigal, all who had been unable to prevail against circumstances in the one land, were now fleeing pitifully to another; and though one or two might still succeed, all had already failed. We were a shipful of failures, the broken men of England. Yet it must not be supposed that these people exhibited depression. The scene, on the contrary, was cheerful. Not a tear was shed on board the vessel. All were full of hope for the future, and showed an inclination to innocent gaiety. Some were heard to sing, and all began to scrape acquaintance with small jests and ready laughter.

The children found each other out like dogs, and ran about the decks scraping acquaintance after their fashion also. “What do you call your mither?” I heard one ask. “Mawmaw,” was the reply, indicating, I fancy, a shade of difference in the social scale. When people pass each other on the high seas of life at so early an age, the contact is but slight, and the relation more like what we may imagine to be the friendship of flies than that of men; it is so quickly joined, so easily dissolved, so open in its communications and so devoid of deeper human qualities. The children, I observed, were all in a band, and as thick as thieves at a fair, while their elders were still ceremoniously manœuvring on the outskirts of acquaintance. The sea, the ship, and the seamen were soon as familiar as home to these half-conscious little ones. It was odd to hear them, throughout the voyage, employ shore words to designate portions of the vessel. “Co’ ‘way doon to yon dyke,” I heard one say, probably meaning the bulwark. I often had my heart in my mouth, watching them climb into the shrouds or on the rails, while the ship went swinging through the waves; and I admired and envied the courage of their mothers, who sat by in the sun and looked on with composure at these perilous feats. “He’ll maybe be a sailor,” I heard one remark; “now’s the time to learn.” I had been on the point of running forward to interfere, but stood back at that, reproved. Very few in the more delicate classes have the nerve to look upon the peril of one dear to them; but the life of poorer folk, where necessity is so much more immediate and imperious, braces even a mother to this extreme of endurance. And perhaps, after all, it is better that the lad should break his neck than that you should break his spirit.

And since I am here on the chapter of the children, I must mention one little fellow, whose family belonged to Steerage No. 4 and 5, and who, wherever he went, was like a strain of music round the ship. He was an ugly, merry, unbreeched child of three, his lint-white hair in a tangle, his face smeared with suet and treacle; but he ran to and fro with so natural a step, and fell and picked himself up again with such grace and good-humour, that he might fairly be called beautiful when he was in motion. To meet him, crowing with laughter and beating an accompaniment to his own mirth with a tin spoon upon a tin cup, was to meet a little triumph of the human species. Even when his mother and the rest of his family lay sick and prostrate around him, he sat upright in their midst and sang aloud in the pleasant heartlessness of infancy.

Throughout the Friday, intimacy among us men made but few advances. We discussed the probable duration of the voyage, we exchanged pieces of information, naming our trades, what we hoped to find in the new world, or what we were fleeing from in the old; and, above all, we condoled together over the food and the vileness of the steerage. One or two had been so near famine, that you may say they had run into the ship with the devil at their heels; and to these all seemed for the best in the best of possible steamers. But the majority were hugely discontented. Coming as they did from a country in so low a state as Great Britain, many of them from Glasgow, which commercially speaking was as good as dead, and many having long been out of work, I was surprised to find them so dainty in their notions. I myself lived almost exclusively on bread, porridge, and soup, precisely as it was supplied to them, and found it, if not luxurious, at least sufficient. But these working men were loud in their outcries. It was not “food for human beings,” it was “only fit for pigs,” it was “a disgrace.” Many of them lived almost entirely upon biscuit, others on their own private supplies, and some paid extra for better rations from the ship. This marvellously changed my notion of the degree of luxury habitual to the artisan. I was prepared to hear him grumble, for grumbling is the traveller's pastime; but I was not prepared to find him turn away from a diet which was palatable to myself. Words I should have disregarded, or taken with a liberal allowance; but when a man prefers dry biscuit there can be no question of the sincerity of his disgust.

With one of their complaints I could most heartily sympathise. A single night of the steerage had filled them with horror. I had myself suffered, even in my decent second-cabin berth, from the lack of air; and as the night promised to be fine and quiet, I determined to sleep on deck, and advised all who complained of their quarters to follow my example. I dare say a dozen of others agreed to do so, and I thought we should have been quite a party. Yet, when I brought up my rug about seven bells, there was no one to be seen but the watch. That chimerical terror of good night-air, which makes men close their windows, list their doors, and seal themselves up with their own poisonous exhalations, had sent all these healthy workmen down below. One would think we had been brought up in a fever country; yet in England the most malarious districts are in the bed-chambers.

I felt saddened at this defection, and yet half-pleased to have the night so quietly to myself. The wind had hauled a little ahead on the starboard bow, and was dry but chilly. I found a shelter near the fire-hole, and made myself snug for the night. The ship moved over the uneven sea with a gentle and cradling movement. The ponderous, organic labours of the engine in her bowels occupied the mind, and prepared it for slumber. From time to time a heavier lurch would disturb me as I lay, and recall me to the obscure borders of consciousness; or I heard, as it were through a veil, the clear note of the clapper on the brass and the beautiful sea-cry, "All's well!" I know nothing, whether for poetry or music, that can surpass the effect of these two syllables in the darkness of a night at sea.

The day dawned fairly enough, and during the early part we had some pleasant hours to improve acquaintance in the open air; but towards nightfall the wind freshened, the rain began to fall, and the sea rose so high that it was difficult to keep one's footing on the deck. I have spoken of our concerts. We were indeed a musical ship's company, and cheered our way into exile with the fiddle, the accordion, and the songs of all nations. Good, bad, or indifferent — Scottish, English, Irish, Russian, German or Norse, — the songs were received with generous applause. Once or twice, a recitation, very spiritedly rendered in a powerful Scottish accent, varied the proceedings; and once we sought in vain to dance a quadrille, eight men of us together, to the music of the violin. The performers were all humorous, frisky fellows, who loved to cut capers in private life; but as soon as they were arranged for the dance, they conducted themselves like so many mutes at a funeral. I have never seen decorum pushed so far; and as this was not expected, the quadrille was soon whistled down, and the dancers departed under a cloud. Eight Frenchmen, even eight Englishmen from another rank of society, would have dared to make some fun for themselves and the spectators; but the working man, when sober, takes an extreme and even melancholy view of personal deportment. A fifth-form schoolboy is not more careful of dignity. He dares not be comical; his fun must escape from him unprepared, and, above all, it must be unaccompanied by any physical demonstration. I like his society under most circumstances, but let me never again join with him in public gambols.

But the impulse to sing was strong, and triumphed over modesty and even the inclemencies of sea and sky. On this rough Saturday night, we got together by the main deck-house, in a place sheltered from the wind and rain. Some clinging to a ladder which led to the hurricane deck, and the rest knitting arms or taking hands, we made a ring to support the women in the violent lurching of the ship; and when we were thus disposed, sang to our hearts' content. Some of the songs were appropriate to the scene; others strikingly the reverse. Bastard doggrel of the music-hall, such as, "Around her splendid form, I weaved the magic circle," sounded bald, bleak, and pitifully silly. "We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if we do," was in some measure saved by the vigour and unanimity with which the chorus was thrown forth into the night. I observed a Platt-Deutsch mason, entirely innocent of English, adding heartily to the general effect. And perhaps the German mason is but a fair example of the sincerity with which the song was rendered; for nearly all with whom I conversed upon the subject were bitterly opposed to war, and attributed their own misfortunes, and frequently their own taste for whisky, to the campaigns in Zululand and Afghanistan.

Every now and again, however, some song that touched the pathos of our situation was given forth; and you could hear by the voices that took up the burden how the sentiment came home to each. "The Anchor's Weighed," was true for us. We were indeed "Rocked on the Bosom of the Stormy Deep." How many of us could say with the singer, "I'm Lonely To-night, Love, Without You," or, "Go, Someone, and Tell them from me, to write me a Letter from Home." And when was there a more appropriate moment for "Auld Lang Syne" than now, when the land, the friends, and the affections of that mingled but beloved time were fading and fleeing behind us in the vessel's wake? It pointed forward to the hour when these labours should be overpast, to the return voyage, and to many a meeting in the sanded inn, when those who had parted in the spring of youth should again drink a cup of kindness in their age. Had not Burns contemplated emigration, I scarce believe he would have found that note.

All Sunday the weather remained wild and cloudy; many were prostrated by sickness; only five sat down to tea in the second cabin, and two of these departed abruptly ere the meal was at an end. The Sabbath was observed strictly by the majority of the emigrants. I heard an old woman express her surprise that, “The ship didna gae doon,” as she saw some one pass her with a chess-board on the holy day. Some sang Scottish psalms. Many went to service, and in true Scottish fashion came back ill pleased with their divine. “I didna think he was an experienced preacher,” said one girl to me.

It was a bleak, uncomfortable day; but at night, by six bells, although the wind had not yet moderated, the clouds were all wrecked and blown away behind the rim of the horizon, and the stars came out thickly overhead. I saw Venus burning as steadily and sweetly across this hurly-burly of the winds and waters as ever at home upon the summer woods. The engine pounded, the screw tossed out of the water with a roar, and shook the ship from end to end; the bows battled with loud reports against the billows: and as I stood in the lee-scuppers and looked up to where the funnel leaned out, over my head, vomiting smoke, and the black and monstrous top-sails blotted, at each lurch, a different crop of stars, it seemed as if all this trouble were a thing of small account, and that just above the mast reigned peace unbroken and eternal.

STEERAGE SCENES

Our companion (Steerage No. 2 and 3) was a favourite resort. Down one flight of stairs there was a comparatively large open space, the centre occupied by a hatchway, which made a convenient seat for about twenty persons, while barrels, coils of rope, and the carpenter's bench afforded perches for perhaps as many more. The canteen, or steerage bar, was on one side of the stair; on the other a no less attractive spot, the cabin of the indefatigable interpreter. I have seen people packed into this space like herrings in a barrel, and many merry evenings prolonged there until five bells, when the lights were ruthlessly extinguished and all must go to roost.

It had been rumoured since Friday that there was a fiddler aboard, who lay sick and unmelodious in Steerage No. 1; and on the Monday forenoon, as I came down the companion, I was saluted by something in Strathspey time. A white-faced Orpheus was cheerily playing to an audience of white-faced women. It was as much as he could do to play, and some of his hearers were scarce able to sit; yet they had crawled from their bunks at the first experimental flourish, and found better than medicine in the music. Some of the heaviest heads began to nod in time, and a degree of animation looked from some of the palest eyes. Humanly speaking, it is a more important matter to play the fiddle, even badly, than to write huge works upon recondite subjects. What could Mr. Darwin have done for these sick women? But this fellow scraped away; and the world was positively a better place for all who heard him. We have yet to understand the economical value of these mere accomplishments. I told the fiddler he was a happy man, carrying happiness about with him in his fiddle-case, and he seemed alive to the fact.

"It is a privilege," I said. He thought a while upon the word, turning it over in his Scots head, and then answered with conviction, "Yes, a privilege."

That night I was summoned by "Merrily danced the Quaker's Wife" into the companion of Steerage No. 4 and 5. This was, properly speaking, but a strip across a deck-house, lit by a sickly lantern which swung to and fro with the motion of the ship. Through the open slide-door we had a glimpse of the grey night sea, with patches of phosphorescent foam flying, swift as birds, into the wake, and the horizon rising and falling as the vessel rolled to the wind. In the centre the companion ladder plunged down sheerly like an open pit. Below, on the first landing, and lighted by another lamp, lads and lasses danced, not more than three at a time for lack of space, in jigs and reels, and hornpipes. Above, on either side, there was a recess railed with iron, perhaps two feet wide and four long, which stood for orchestra and seats of honour. In the one balcony, five slatternly Irish lasses sat woven in a comely group. In the other was posted Orpheus, his body, which was convulsively in motion, forming an odd contrast to his somnolent, imperturbable Scots face. His brother, a dark man with a vehement, interested countenance, who made a god of the fiddler, sat by with open mouth, drinking in the general admiration and throwing out remarks to kindle it.

"That's a bonny hornpipe now," he would say; "it's a great favourite with performers; they dance the sand dance to it." And he expounded the sand dance. Then suddenly, it would be a long "Hush!" with uplifted finger and glowing, supplicating eyes; "he's going to play 'Auld Robin Gray' on one string!" And throughout this excruciating movement, — "On one string, that's on one string!" he kept crying. I would have given something myself that it had been on none; but the hearers were much awed. I called for a tune or two, and thus introduced myself to the notice of the brother, who directed his talk to me for some little while, keeping, I need hardly mention, true to his topic, like the seamen to the star. "He's grand of it," he said confidentially. "His master was a music-hall man." Indeed, the music-hall man had left his mark, for our fiddler was ignorant of many of our best old airs; "Logie o' Buchan," for instance, he only knew as a quick, jigging figure in a set of quadrilles, and had never heard it called by name. Perhaps, after all, the brother was the more interesting performer of the two. I have spoken with him afterwards repeatedly, and found him always the same quick, fiery bit of a man, not without brains; but he never showed to such advantage as when he was thus squiring the fiddler into public note. There is nothing more becoming than a genuine admiration; and it shares this with love, that it does not become contemptible although misplaced.

The dancing was but feebly carried on. The space was almost impracticably small; and the Irish wenches combined the extreme of bashfulness about this innocent display with a surprising impudence and roughness of address. Most often, either the fiddle lifted up its voice unheeded, or only a couple of lads would be footing it and snapping fingers on the landing. And such was the eagerness of the brother to display all the acquirements of his idol, and such the sleepy indifference of the performer, that the tune would as often as not be changed, and the hornpipe expire into a ballad before the dancers had cut half a dozen shuffles.

In the meantime, however, the audience had been growing more and more numerous every moment; there was hardly standing-room round the top of the companion; and the strange instinct of the race moved some of the new-comers to close both the doors, so that the atmosphere grew insupportable. It was a good place, as the saying is, to leave.

The wind hauled ahead with a head sea. By ten at night heavy sprays were flying and drumming over the forecastle; the companion of Steerage No. 1 had to be closed, and the door of communication through the second cabin thrown open. Either from the convenience of the opportunity, or because we had already a number of acquaintances in that part of the ship, Mr. Jones and I paid it a late visit. Steerage No. 1 is shaped like an isosceles triangle, the sides opposite the equal angles bulging outward with the contour of the ship. It is lined with eight pens of sixteen bunks apiece, four bunks below and four above on either side. At night the place is lit with two lanterns, one to each table. As the steamer beat on her way among the rough billows, the light passed through violent phases of change, and was thrown to and fro and up and down with startling swiftness. You were tempted to wonder, as you looked, how so thin a glimmer could control and disperse such solid blackness. When Jones and I entered we found a little company of our acquaintances seated together at the triangular foremost table. A more forlorn party, in more dismal circumstances, it would be hard to imagine. The motion here in the ship's nose was very violent; the uproar of the sea often overpoweringly loud. The yellow flicker of the lantern spun round and round and tossed the shadows in masses. The air was hot, but it struck a chill from its fœtor. From all round in the dark bunks, the scarcely human noises of the sick joined into a kind of farmyard chorus. In the midst, these five friends of mine were keeping up what heart they could in company. Singing was their refuge from discomfortable thoughts and sensations. One piped, in feeble tones, "Oh why left I my hame?" which seemed a pertinent question in the circumstances. Another, from the invisible horrors of a pen where he lay dog-sick upon the upper shelf, found courage, in a blink of his sufferings, to give us several verses of the "Death of Nelson"; and it was odd and eerie to hear the chorus breathe feebly from all sorts of dark corners, and "this day has done his dooty" rise and fall and be taken up again in this dim *inferno,* to an accompaniment of plunging, hollow-sounding bows and the rattling spray-showers overhead.

All seemed unfit for conversation; a certain dizziness had interrupted the activity of their minds; and except to sing they were tongue-tied. There was present, however, one tall, powerful fellow of doubtful nationality, being neither quite Scotsman nor altogether Irish, but of surprising clearness of conviction on the highest problems. He had gone nearly beside himself on the Sunday, because of a general backwardness to indorse his definition of mind as "a living, thinking substance which cannot be felt, heard, or seen" — nor, I presume, although he failed to mention it, smelt. Now he came forward in a pause with another contribution to our culture.

“Just by way of change,” said he, “I’ll ask you a Scripture riddle. There’s profit in them too,” he added ungrammatically.

This was the riddle —

C and P
Did agree
To cut down C;
But C and P
Could not agree
Without the leave of G.
All the people cried to see
The crueltie
Of C and P.

Harsh are the words of Mercury after the songs of Apollo! We were a long while over the problem, shaking our heads and gloomily wondering how a man could be such a fool; but at length he put us out of suspense and divulged the fact that C and P stood for Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate.

I think it must have been the riddle that settled us; but the motion and the close air likewise hurried our departure. We had not been gone long, we heard next morning, ere two or even three out of the five fell sick. We thought it little wonder on the whole, for the sea kept contrary all night. I now made my bed upon the second cabin floor, where, although I ran the risk of being stepped upon, I had a free current of air, more or less vitiated indeed, and running only from steerage to steerage, but at least not stagnant; and from this couch, as well as the usual sounds of a rough night at sea, the hateful coughing and retching of the sick and the sobs of children, I heard a man run wild with terror beseeching his friend for encouragement. “The ship’s going down!” he cried with a thrill of agony. “The ship’s going down!” he repeated, now in a blank whisper, now with his voice rising towards a sob; and his friend might reassure him, reason with him, joke at him — all was in vain, and the old cry came back, “The ship’s going down!” There was something panic and catching in the emotion of his tones; and I saw in a clear flash what an involved and hideous tragedy was a disaster to an emigrant ship. If this whole parishful of people came no more to land, into how many houses would the newspaper carry woe, and what a great part of the web of our corporate human life would be rent across for ever!

The next morning when I came on deck I found a new world indeed. The wind was fair; the sun mounted into a cloudless heaven; through great dark blue seas the ship cut a swathe of curded foam. The horizon was dotted all day with companionable sails, and the sun shone pleasantly on the long, heaving deck.

We had many fine-weather diversions to beguile the time. There was a single chess-board and a single pack of cards. Sometimes as many as twenty of us would be playing dominoes for love. Feats of dexterity, puzzles for the intelligence, some arithmetical, some of the same order as the old problem of the fox and goose and cabbage, were always welcome; and the latter, I observed, more popular as well as more conspicuously well done than the former. We had a regular daily competition to guess the vessel's progress; and twelve o'clock, when the result was published in the wheel-house, came to be a moment of considerable interest. But the interest was unmixed. Not a bet was laid upon our guesses. From the Clyde to Sandy Hook I never heard a wager offered or taken. We had, besides, romps in plenty. Puss in the Corner, which we had rebaptised, in more manly style, Devil and four Corners, was my own favourite game; but there were many who preferred another, the humour of which was to box a person's ears until he found out who had cuffed him.

This Tuesday morning we were all delighted with the change of weather, and in the highest possible spirits. We got in a cluster like bees, sitting between each other's feet under lee of the deck-houses. Stories and laughter went around. The children climbed about the shrouds. White faces appeared for the first time, and began to take on colour from the wind. I was kept hard at work making cigarettes for one amateur after another, and my less than moderate skill was heartily admired. Lastly, down sat the fiddler in our midst and began to discourse his reels, and jigs, and ballads, with now and then a voice or two to take up the air and throw in the interest of human speech.

Through this merry and good-hearted scene there came three cabin passengers, a gentleman and two young ladies, picking their way with little gracious titters of indulgence, and a Lady-Bountiful air about nothing, which galled me to the quick. I have little of the radical in social questions, and have always nourished an idea that one person was as good as another. But I began to be troubled by this episode. It was astonishing what insults these people managed to convey by their presence. They seemed to throw their clothes in our faces. Their eyes searched us all over for tatters and incongruities. A laugh was ready at their lips; but they were too well-mannered to indulge it in our hearing. Wait a bit, till they were all back in the saloon, and then hear how wittily they would depict the manners of the steerage. We were in truth very innocently, cheerfully, and sensibly engaged, and there was no shadow of excuse for the swaying elegant superiority with which these damsels passed among us, or for the stiff and waggish glances of their squire. Not a word was said; only when they were gone Mackay sullenly damned their impudence under his breath; but we were all conscious of an icy influence and a dead break in the course of our enjoyment.

STEERAGE TYPES

We had a fellow on board, an Irish-American, for all the world like a beggar in a print by Callot; one-eyed, with great, splay crow's-feet round the sockets; a knotty squab nose coming down over his moustache; a miraculous hat; a shirt that had been white, ay, ages long ago; an alpaca coat in its last sleeves; and, without hyperbole, no buttons to his trousers. Even in these rags and tatters, the man twinkled all over with impudence like a piece of sham jewellery; and I have heard him offer a situation to one of his fellow-passengers with the air of a lord. Nothing could overlie such a fellow; a kind of base success was written on his brow. He was then in his ill days; but I can imagine him in Congress with his mouth full of bombast and sawder. As we moved in the same circle, I was brought necessarily into his society. I do not think I ever heard him say anything that was true, kind, or interesting; but there was entertainment in the man's demeanour. You might call him a half-educated Irish Tigg.

Our Russian made a remarkable contrast to this impossible fellow. Rumours and legends were current in the steerages about his antecedents. Some said he was a Nihilist escaping; others set him down for a harmless spendthrift, who had squandered fifty thousand roubles, and whose father had now despatched him to America by way of penance. Either tale might flourish in security; there was no contradiction to be feared, for the hero spoke not one word of English. I got on with him lumberingly enough in broken German, and learned from his own lips that he had been an apothecary. He carried the photograph of his betrothed in a pocket-book, and remarked that it did not do her justice. The cut of his head stood out from among the passengers with an air of startling strangeness. The first natural instinct was to take him for a desperado; but although the features, to our Western eyes, had a barbaric and unhomely cast, the eye both reassured and touched. It was large and very dark and soft, with an expression of dumb endurance, as if it had often looked on desperate circumstances and never looked on them without resolution.

He cried out when I used the word. "No, no," he said, "not resolution."

"The resolution to endure," I explained.

And then he shrugged his shoulders, and said, "*Ach, ja*," with gusto, like a man who has been flattered in his favourite pretensions. Indeed, he was always hinting at some secret sorrow; and his life, he said, had been one of unusual trouble and anxiety; so the legends of the steerage may have represented at least some shadow of the truth. Once, and once only, he sang a song at our concerts, standing forth without embarrassment, his great stature somewhat humped, his long arms frequently extended, his Kalmuck head thrown backward. It was a suitable piece of music, as deep as a cow's bellow and wild like the White Sea. He was struck and charmed by the freedom and sociality of our manners. At home, he said, no one on a journey would speak to him, but those with whom he would not care to speak; thus unconsciously involving himself in the condemnation of his countrymen. But Russia was soon to be changed; the ice of the Neva was softening under the sun of civilisation; the new ideas, "*wie eine feine Violine*," were audible among the big, empty drum-notes of Imperial diplomacy; and he looked to see a great revival, though with a somewhat indistinct and childish hope.

We had a father and son who made a pair of Jacks-of-all-trades. It was the son who sang the "Death of Nelson" under such contrarious circumstances. He was by trade a shearer of ship plates; but he could touch the organ, and led two choirs, and played the flute and piccolo in a professional string band. His repertory of songs was, besides, inexhaustible, and ranged impartially from the very best to the very worst within his reach. Nor did he seem to make the least distinction between these extremes, but would cheerfully follow up "Tom Bowling" with "Around her splendid form."

The father, an old, cheery, small piece of manhood, could do everything connected with tinwork from one end of the process to the other, use almost every carpenter's tool, and make picture frames to boot. "I sat down with silver plate every Sunday," said he, "and pictures on the wall. I have made enough money to be rolling in my carriage. But, sir," looking at me unsteadily with his bright rheumy eyes, "I was troubled with a drunken wife." He took a hostile view of matrimony in consequence. "It's an old saying," he remarked: "God made 'em, and the devil he mixed 'em."

I think he was justified by his experience. It was a dreary story. He would bring home three pounds on Saturday, and on Monday all the clothes would be in pawn. Sick of the useless struggle, he gave up a paying contract, and contented himself with small and ill-paid jobs. "A bad job was as good as a good job for me," he said; "it all went the same way." Once the wife showed signs of amendment; she kept steady for weeks on end; it was again worth while to labour and to do one's best. The husband found a good situation some distance from home, and, to make a little upon every hand, started the wife in a cook-shop; the children were here and there, busy as mice; savings began to grow together in the bank, and the golden age of hope had returned again to that unhappy family. But one week my old acquaintance, getting earlier through with his work, came home on the Friday instead of the Saturday, and there was his wife to receive him, reeling drunk. He “took and gave her a pair o’ black eyes,” for which I pardon him, nailed up the cook-shop door, gave up his situation, and resigned himself to a life of poverty, with the workhouse at the end. As the children came to their full age they fled the house, and established themselves in other countries; some did well, some not so well; but the father remained at home alone with his drunken wife, all his sound-hearted pluck and varied accomplishments depressed and negatived.

Was she dead now? or, after all these years, had he broken the chain, and run from home like a schoolboy? I could not discover which; but here at least he was, out on the adventure, and still one of the bravest and most youthful men on board.

“Now, I suppose, I must put my old bones to work again,” said he; “but I can do a turn yet.”

And the son to whom he was going, I asked, was he not able to support him?

“Oh, yes,” he replied. “But I’m never happy without a job on hand. And I’m stout; I can eat a’most anything. You see no craze about me.”

This tale of a drunken wife was paralleled on board by another of a drunken father. He was a capable man, with a good chance in life; but he had drunk up two thriving businesses like a bottle of sherry, and involved his sons along with him in ruin. Now they were on board with us, fleeing his disastrous neighbourhood.

Total abstinence, like all ascetical conclusions, is unfriendly to the most generous, cheerful, and human parts of man; but it could have adduced many instances and arguments from among our ship’s company. I was one day conversing with a kind and happy Scotsman, running to fat and perspiration in the physical, but with a taste for poetry and a genial sense of fun. I had asked him his hopes in emigrating. They were like those of so many others, vague and unfounded: times were bad at home; they were said to have a turn for the better in the States; and a man could get on anywhere, he thought. That was precisely the weak point of his position; for if he could get on in America, why could he not do the same in Scotland? But I never had the courage to use that argument, though it was often on the tip of my tongue, and instead I agreed with him heartily, adding, with reckless originality, “If the man stuck to his work, and kept away from drink.”

“Ah!” said he slowly, “the drink! You see, that’s just my trouble.”

He spoke with a simplicity that was touching, looking at me at the same time with something strange and timid in his eye, half-ashamed, half-sorry, like a good child who knows he should be beaten. You would have said he recognised a destiny to which he was born, and accepted the consequences mildly. Like the merchant Abudah, he was at the same time fleeing from his destiny and carrying it along with him, the whole at an expense of six guineas.

As far as I saw, drink, idleness, and incompetency were the three great causes of emigration; and for all of them, and drink first and foremost, this trick of getting transported overseas appears to me the silliest means of cure. You cannot run away from a weakness; you must some time fight it out or perish; and if that be so, why not now, and where you stand? *Cœlum non animam*. Change Glenlivet for Bourbon, and it is still whisky, only not so good. A sea-voyage will not give a man the nerve to put aside cheap pleasure; emigration has to be done before we climb the vessel; an aim in life is the only fortune worth the finding; and it is not to be found in foreign lands, but in the heart itself.

Speaking generally, there is no vice of this kind more contemptible than another; for each is but a result and outward sign of a soul tragically shipwrecked. In the majority of cases, cheap pleasure is resorted to by way of anodyne. The pleasure-seeker sets forth upon life with high and difficult ambitions; he meant to be nobly good and nobly happy, though at as little pains as possible to himself; and it is because all has failed in his celestial enterprise that you now behold him rolling in the garbage. Hence the comparative success of the teetotal pledge; because to a man who had nothing it sets at least a negative aim in life. Somewhat as prisoners beguile their days by taming a spider, the reformed drunkard makes an interest out of abstaining from intoxicating drinks, and may live for that negation. There is something, at least, *not to be done* each day; and a cold triumph awaits him every evening.

We had one on board with us, whom I have already referred to under the name of Mackay, who seemed to me not only a good instance of this failure in life of which we have been speaking, but a good type of the intelligence which here surrounded me. Physically he was a small Scotsman, standing a little back as though he were already carrying the elements of a corporation, and his looks somewhat marred by the smallness of his eyes. Mentally, he was endowed above the average. There were but few subjects on which he could not converse with understanding and a dash of wit; delivering himself slowly and with gusto like a man who enjoyed his own sententiousness. He was a dry, quick, pertinent debater, speaking with a small voice, and swinging on his heels to launch and emphasise an argument. When he began a discussion, he could not bear to leave it off, but would pick the subject to the bone, without once relinquishing a point. An engineer by trade, Mackay believed in the unlimited perfectibility of all machines except the human machine. The latter he gave up with ridicule for a compound of carrion and perverse gases.

He had an appetite for disconnected facts which I can only compare to the savage taste for beads. What is called information was indeed a passion with the man, and he not only delighted to receive it, but could pay you back in kind.

With all these capabilities, here was Mackay, already no longer young, on his way to a new country, with no prospects, no money, and but little hope. He was almost tedious in the cynical disclosures of his despair. “The ship may go down for me,” he would say, “now or to-morrow. I have nothing to lose and nothing to hope.” And again: “I am sick of the whole damned performance.” He was, like the kind little man already quoted, another so-called victim of the bottle. But Mackay was miles from publishing his weakness to the world; laid the blame of his failure on corrupt masters and a corrupt State policy; and after he had been one night overtaken and had played the buffoon in his cups, sternly, though not without tact, suppressed all reference to his escapade. It was a treat to see him manage this: the various jesters withered under his gaze, and you were forced to recognise in him a certain steely force, and a gift of command which might have ruled a senate.

In truth it was not whisky that had ruined him; he was ruined long before for all good human purposes but conversation. His eyes were sealed by a cheap, school-book materialism. He could see nothing in the world but money and steam-engines. He did not know what you meant by the word happiness. He had forgotten the simple emotions of childhood, and perhaps never encountered the delights of youth. He believed in production, that useful figment of economy, as if it had been real like laughter; and production, without prejudice to liquor, was his god and guide. One day he took me to task — a novel cry to me — upon the over-payment of literature. Literary men, he said, were more highly paid than artisans; yet the artisan made threshing machines and butter-churns, and the man of letters, except in the way of a few useful handbooks, made nothing worth the while. He produced a mere fancy article. Mackay’s notion of a book was “Hoppus’s Measurer.” Now in my time I have possessed and even studied that work; but if I were to be left to-morrow on Juan Fernandez, Hoppus’s is not the book that I should choose for my companion volume.

I tried to fight the point with Mackay. I made him own that he had taken pleasure in reading books otherwise, to his view, insignificant; but he was too wary to advance a step beyond the admission. It was in vain for me to argue that here was pleasure ready-made and running from the spring, whereas his ploughs and butter-churns were but means and mechanisms to give men the necessary food and leisure before they start upon the search for pleasure; he jibbed and ran away from such conclusions. The thing was different, he declared, and nothing was serviceable but what had to do with food. “Eat, eat, eat!” he cried; “that’s the bottom and the top.” By an odd irony of circumstance, he grew so much interested in this discussion that he let the hour slip by unnoticed and had to go without his tea. He had enough sense and humour, indeed he had no lack of either, to have chuckled over this himself in private; and even to me he referred to it with the shadow of a smile.

Mackay was a hot bigot. He would not hear of religion. I have seen him waste hours of time in argument with all sorts of poor human creatures who understood neither him nor themselves, and he had had the boyishness to dissect and criticise even so small a matter as the riddler’s definition of mind. He snorted aloud with zealotry and the lust for intellectual battle. Anything, whatever it was, that seemed to him likely to discourage the continued passionate production of corn and steam-engines he resented like a conspiracy against the people. Thus, when I put in the plea for literature, that it was only in good books, or in the society of the good, that a man could get help in his conduct, he declared I was in a different world from him. “Damn my conduct!” said he. “I have given it up for a bad job. My question is, ‘Can I drive a nail?’” And he plainly looked upon me as one who was insidiously seeking to reduce the people’s annual bellyful of corn and steam-engines.

It may be argued that these opinions spring from the defect of culture; that a narrow and pinching way of life not only exaggerates to a man the importance of material conditions, but indirectly, by denying him the necessary books and leisure, keeps his mind ignorant of larger thoughts; and that hence springs this overwhelming concern about diet, and hence the bald view of existence professed by Mackay. Had this been an English peasant the conclusion would be tenable. But Mackay had most of the elements of a liberal education. He had skirted metaphysical and mathematical studies. He had a thoughtful hold of what he knew, which would be exceptional among bankers. He had been brought up in the midst of hot-house piety, and told, with incongruous pride, the story of his own brother’s deathbed ecstasies. Yet he had somehow failed to fulfil himself, and was adrift like a dead thing among external circumstances, without hope or lively preference or shaping aim. And further, there seemed a tendency among many of his fellows to fall into the same blank and unlovely opinions. One thing, indeed, is not to be learned in Scotland, and that is, the way to be happy. Yet that is the whole of culture, and perhaps two-thirds of morality. Can it be that the Puritan school, by divorcing a man from nature, by thinning out his instincts, and setting a stamp of its disapproval on whole fields of human activity and interest, leads at last directly to material greed?

Nature is a good guide through life, and the love of simple pleasures next, if not superior, to virtue; and we had on board an Irishman who based his claim to the widest and most affectionate popularity precisely upon these two qualities, that he was natural and happy. He boasted a fresh colour, a tight little figure, unquenchable gaiety, and indefatigable good-will. His clothes puzzled the diagnostic mind, until you heard he had been once a private coachman, when they became eloquent, and seemed a part of his biography. His face contained the rest, and, I fear, a prophecy of the future; the hawk's nose above accorded so ill with the pink baby's mouth below. His spirit and his pride belonged, you might say, to the nose: while it was the general shiftlessness expressed by the other that had thrown him from situation to situation, and at length on board the emigrant ship. Barney ate, so to speak, nothing from the galley; his own tea, butter, and eggs supported him throughout the voyage; and about mealtime you might often find him up to the elbows in amateur cookery. His was the first voice heard singing among all the passengers; he was the first who fell to dancing. From Loch Foyle to Sandy Hook, there was not a piece of fun undertaken but there was Barney in the midst.

You ought to have seen him when he stood up to sing at our concerts — his tight little figure stepping to and fro, and his feet shuffling to the air, his eyes seeking and bestowing encouragement — and to have enjoyed the bow, so nicely calculated between jest and earnest, between grace and clumsiness, with which he brought each song to a conclusion. He was not only a great favourite among ourselves, but his songs attracted the lords of the saloon, who often leaned to hear him over the rails of the hurricane-deck. He was somewhat pleased, but not at all abashed, by this attention; and one night, in the midst of his famous performance of "Billy Keogh," I saw him spin half round in a pirouette and throw an audacious wink to an old gentleman above.

This was the more characteristic, as, for all his daffing, he was a modest and very polite little fellow among ourselves.

He would not hurt the feelings of a fly, nor throughout the passage did he give a shadow of offence; yet he was always, by his innocent freedoms and love of fun, brought upon that narrow margin where politeness must be natural to walk without a fall. He was once seriously angry, and that in a grave, quiet manner, because they supplied no fish on Friday; for Barney was a conscientious Catholic. He had likewise strict notions of refinement; and when, late one evening, after the women had retired, a young Scotsman struck up an indecent song, Barney's drab clothes were immediately missing from the group. His taste was for the society of gentlemen, of whom, with the reader’s permission, there was no lack in our five steerages and second cabin; and he avoided the rough and positive with a girlish shrinking. Mackay, partly from his superior powers of mind, which rendered him incomprehensible, partly from his extreme opinions, was especially distasteful to the Irishman. I have seen him slink off, with backward looks of terror and offended delicacy, while the other, in his witty, ugly way, had been professing hostility to God, and an extreme theatrical readiness to be shipwrecked on the spot. These utterances hurt the little coachman’s modesty like a bad word.

THE SICK MAN

One night Jones, the young O'Reilly, and myself were walking arm-in-arm and briskly up and down the deck. Six bells had rung; a head-wind blew chill and fitful, the fog was closing in with a sprinkle of rain, and the fog-whistle had been turned on, and now divided time with its unwelcome outcries, loud like a bull, thrilling and intense like a mosquito. Even the watch lay somewhere snugly out of sight.

For some time we observed something lying black and huddled in the scuppers, which at last heaved a little and moaned aloud. We ran to the rails. An elderly man, but whether passenger or seaman it was impossible in the darkness to determine, lay grovelling on his belly in the wet scuppers, and kicking feebly with his outspread toes. We asked him what was amiss, and he replied incoherently, with a strange accent and in a voice unmanned by terror, that he had cramp in the stomach, that he had been ailing all day, had seen the doctor twice, and had walked the deck against fatigue till he was overmastered and had fallen where we found him.

Jones remained by his side, while O'Reilly and I hurried off to seek the doctor. We knocked in vain at the doctor's cabin; there came no reply; nor could we find anyone to guide us. It was no time for delicacy; so we ran once more forward; and I, whipping up a ladder and touching my hat to the officer of the watch, addressed him as politely as I could —

"I beg your pardon, sir; but there is a man lying bad with cramp in the lee scuppers; and I can't find the doctor."

He looked at me peeringly in the darkness; and then, somewhat harshly, "Well, *I* can't leave the bridge, my man," said he.

"No, sir; but you can tell me what to do," I returned.

"Is it one of the crew?" he asked.

"I believe him to be a fireman," I replied.

I dare say officers are much annoyed by complaints and alarmist information from their freight of human creatures; but certainly, whether it was the idea that the sick man was one of the crew, or from something conciliatory in my address, the officer in question was immediately relieved and mollified; and speaking in a voice much freer from constraint, advised me to find a steward and despatch him in quest of the doctor, who would now be in the smoking-room over his pipe.

One of the stewards was often enough to be found about this hour down our companion, Steerage No. 2 and 3; that was his smoking-room of a night. Let me call him Blackwood. O'Reilly and I rattled down the companion, breathing hurry; and in his short-sleeves and perched across the carpenter's bench upon one thigh, found Blackwood; a neat, bright, dapper, Glasgow-looking man, with a bead of an eye and a rank twang in his speech. I forget who was with him, but the pair were enjoying a deliberate talk over their pipes. I dare say he was tired with his day's work, and eminently comfortable at that moment; and the truth is, I did not stop to consider his feelings, but told my story in a breath.

"Steward," said I, "there's a man lying bad with cramp, and I can't find the doctor."

He turned upon me as pert as a sparrow, but with a black look that is the prerogative of man; and taking his pipe out of his mouth —

"That's none of my business," said he. "I don't care."

I could have strangled the little ruffian where he sat. The thought of his cabin civility and cabin tips filled me with indignation. I glanced at O'Reilly; he was pale and quivering, and looked like assault and battery, every inch of him. But we had a better card than violence.

"You will have to make it your business," said I, "for I am sent to you by the officer on the bridge."

Blackwood was fairly tripped. He made no answer, but put out his pipe, gave me one murderous look, and set off upon his errand strolling. From that day forward, I should say, he improved to me in courtesy, as though he had repented his evil speech and were anxious to leave a better impression.

When we got on deck again, Jones was still beside the sick man; and two or three late stragglers had gathered round and were offering suggestions. One proposed to give the patient water, which was promptly negatived. Another bade us hold him up; he himself prayed to be let lie; but as it was at least as well to keep him off the streaming decks, O'Reilly and I supported him between us. It was only by main force that we did so, and neither an easy nor an agreeable duty; for he fought in his paroxysms like a frightened child, and moaned miserably when he resigned himself to our control.

"O let me lie!" he pleaded. "I'll no' get better anyway." And then with a moan that went to my heart, "O why did I come upon this miserable journey?"

I was reminded of the song which I had heard a little while before in the close, tossing steerage: "O why left I my hame?"

Meantime Jones, relieved of his immediate charge, had gone off to the galley, where we could see a light. There he found a belated cook scouring pans by the radiance of two lanterns, and one of these he sought to borrow. The scullion was backward. "Was it one of the crew?" he asked. And when Jones, smitten with my theory, had assured him that it was a fireman, he reluctantly left his scouring and came towards us at an easy pace, with one of the lanterns swinging from his finger. The light, as it reached the spot, showed us an elderly man, thick-set, and grizzled with years; but the shifting and coarse shadows concealed from us the expression and even the design of his face.

So soon as the cook set eyes on him he gave a sort of whistle.

"*It's only a passenger!*" said he; and turning about, made, lantern and all, for the galley.

"He's a man anyway," cried Jones in indignation.

"Nobody said he was a woman," said a gruff voice, which I recognised for that of the bo's'un.

All this while there was no word of Blackwood or the doctor; and now the officer came to our side of the ship and asked, over the hurricane-deck rails, if the doctor were not yet come. We told him not.

"No?" he repeated with a breathing of anger; and we saw him hurry aft in person.

Ten minutes after the doctor made his appearance deliberately enough and examined our patient with the lantern. He made little of the case, had the man brought aft to the dispensary, dosed him, and sent him forward to his bunk. Two of his neighbours in the steerage had now come to our assistance, expressing loud sorrow that such "a fine cheery body" should be sick; and these, claiming a sort of possession, took him entirely under their own care. The drug had probably relieved him, for he struggled no more, and was led along plaintive and patient, but protesting. His heart recoiled at the thought of the steerage. "O let me lie down upon the bieldy side," he cried; "O dinna take me down!" And again: "O why did ever I come upon this miserable voyage?" And yet once more, with a gasp and a wailing prolongation of the fourth word: "I had no *call* to come." But there he was; and by the doctor's order and the kind force of his two shipmates disappeared down the companion of Steerage No. 1 into the den allotted him.

At the foot of our own companion, just where I had found Blackwood, Jones and the bo's'un were now engaged in talk. This last was a gruff, cruel-looking seaman, who must have passed near half a century upon the seas; square-headed, goat-bearded, with heavy blonde eyebrows, and an eye without radiance, but inflexibly steady and hard. I had not forgotten his rough speech; but I remembered also that he had helped us about the lantern; and now seeing him in conversation with Jones, and being choked with indignation, I proceeded to blow off my steam.

"Well," said I, "I make you my compliments upon your steward," and furiously narrated what had happened.

"I've nothing to do with him," replied the bo's'un. "They're all alike.

They wouldn't mind if they saw you all lying dead one upon the top of another."

This was enough. A very little humanity went a long way with me after the experience of the evening. A sympathy grew up at once between the bo's'un and myself; and that night, and during the next few days, I learned to appreciate him better. He was a remarkable type, and not at all the kind of man you find in books. He had been at Sebastopol under English colours; and again in a States ship, "after the *Alabama*, and praying God we shouldn't find her." He was a high Tory and a high Englishman. No manufacturer could have held opinions more hostile to the working man and his strikes. "The workmen," he said, "think nothing of their country. They think of nothing but themselves. They're damned greedy, selfish fellows." He would not hear of the decadence of England. "They say they send us beef from America," he argued: "but who pays for it? All the money in the world's in England." The Royal Navy was the best of possible services, according to him. "Anyway the officers are gentlemen," said he; "and you can't get hazed to death by a damned non-commissioned — — as you can in the army." Among nations, England was the first; then came France. He respected the French navy and liked the French people; and if he were forced to make a new choice in life, "by God, he would try Frenchmen!" For all his looks and rough, cold manners, I observed that children were never frightened by him; they divined him at once to be a friend; and one night when he had chalked his hand and went about stealthily setting his mark on people's clothes, it was incongruous to hear this formidable old salt chuckling over his boyish monkey trick.

In the morning, my first thought was of the sick man. I was afraid I should not recognise him, so baffling had been the light of the lantern; and found myself unable to decide if he were Scots, English, or Irish. He had certainly employed north-country words and elisions; but the accent and the pronunciation seemed unfamiliar and incongruous in my ear.

To descend on an empty stomach into Steerage No. 1 was an adventure that required some nerve. The stench was atrocious; each respiration tasted in the throat like some horrible kind of cheese; and the squalid aspect of the place was aggravated by so many people worming themselves into their clothes in the twilight of the bunks. You may guess if I was pleased, not only for him, but for myself also, when I heard that the sick man was better and had gone on deck.

The morning was raw and foggy, though the sun suffused the fog with pink and amber; the fog-horn still blew, stertorous and intermittent; and to add to the discomfort, the seamen were just beginning to wash down the decks. But for a sick man this was heaven compared to the steerage. I found him standing on the hot-water pipe, just forward of the saloon deck-house. He was smaller than I had fancied, and plain-looking; but his face was distinguished by strange and fascinating eyes, limpid grey from a distance, but, when looked into, full of changing colours and grains of gold. His manners were mild and uncompromisingly plain; and I soon saw that, when once started, he delighted to talk. His accent and language had been formed in the most natural way, since he was born in Ireland, had lived a quarter of a century on the banks of the Tyne, and was married to a Scots wife. A fisherman in the season, he had fished the east coast from Fisherrow to Whitby. When the season was over, and the great boats, which required extra hands, were once drawn up on shore till the next spring, he worked as a labourer about chemical furnaces, or along the wharves unloading vessels. In this comparatively humble way of life he had gathered a competence, and could speak of his comfortable house, his hayfield, and his garden. On this ship, where so many accomplished artisans were fleeing from starvation, he was present on a pleasure trip to visit a brother in New York.

Ere he started, he informed me, he had been warned against the steerage and the steerage fare, and recommended to bring with him a ham and tea and a spice loaf. But he laughed to scorn such counsels. "*I'm* not afraid," he had told his adviser, "*I'll* get on for ten days. I've not been a fisherman for nothing." For it is no light matter, as he reminded me, to be in an open boat, perhaps waist-deep with herrings, day breaking with a scowl, and for miles on every hand lee-shores, unbroken, iron-bound, surf-beat, with only here and there an anchorage where you dare not lie, or a harbour impossible to enter with the wind that blows. The life of a North Sea fisher is one long chapter of exposure and hard work and insufficient fare; and even if he makes land at some bleak fisher port, perhaps the season is bad or his boat has been unlucky, and after fifty hours' unsleeping vigilance and toil, not a shop will give him credit for a loaf of bread. Yet the steerage of the emigrant ship had been too vile for the endurance of a man thus rudely trained. He had scarce eaten since he came on board, until the day before, when his appetite was tempted by some excellent pea-soup. We were all much of the same mind on board, and beginning with myself, had dined upon pea-soup not wisely but too well; only with him the excess had been punished, perhaps because he was weakened by former abstinence, and his first meal had resulted in a cramp. He had determined to live henceforth on biscuit; and when, two months later, he should return to England, to make the passage by saloon. The second cabin, after due inquiry, he scouted as another edition of the steerage.

He spoke apologetically of his emotion when ill. "Ye see, I had no call to be here," said he; "and I thought it was by with me last night. I've a good house at home, and plenty to nurse me, and I had no real call to leave them." Speaking of the attentions he had received from his shipmates generally, "They were all so kind," he said, "that there's none to mention." And except in so far as I might share in this, he troubled me with no reference to my services.

But what affected me in the most lively manner was the wealth of this day-labourer, paying a two months' pleasure visit to the States, and preparing to return in the saloon, and the new testimony rendered by his story, not so much to the horrors of the steerage as to the habitual comfort of the working classes. One foggy, frosty December evening, I encountered on Liberton Hill, near Edinburgh, an Irish labourer trudging homeward from the fields. Our roads lay together, and it was natural that we should fall into talk. He was covered with mud; an inoffensive, ignorant creature, who thought the Atlantic cable was a secret contrivance of the masters the better to oppress labouring mankind; and I confess I was astonished to learn that he had nearly three hundred pounds in the bank. But this man had travelled over most of the world, and enjoyed wonderful opportunities on some American railroad, with two dollars a shift and double pay on Sunday and at night; whereas my fellow-passenger had never quitted Tyneside, and had made all that he possessed in that same accursed, down-falling England, whence skilled mechanics, engineers, millwrights, and carpenters were fleeing as from the native country of starvation.

Fitly enough, we slid off on the subject of strikes and wages and hard times. Being from the Tyne, and a man who had gained and lost in his own pocket by these fluctuations, he had much to say, and held strong opinions on the subject. He spoke sharply of the masters, and, when I led him on, of the men also. The masters had been selfish and obstructive; the men selfish, silly, and light-headed. He rehearsed to me the course of a meeting at which he had been present, and the somewhat long discourse which he had there pronounced, calling into question the wisdom and even the good faith of the Union delegates; and although he had escaped himself through flush times and starvation times with a handsomely provided purse, he had so little faith in either man or master, and so profound a terror for the unerring Nemesis of mercantile affairs, that he could think of no hope for our country outside of a sudden and complete political subversion. Down must go Lords and Church and Army; and capital, by some happy direction, must change hands from worse to better, or England stood condemned. Such principles, he said, were growing "like a seed."

From this mild, soft, domestic man, these words sounded unusually ominous and grave. I had heard enough revolutionary talk among my workmen fellow-passengers; but most of it was hot and turgid, and fell discredited from the lips of unsuccessful men. This man was calm; he had attained prosperity and ease; he disapproved the policy which had been pursued by labour in the past; and yet this was his panacea, — to rend the old country from end to end, and from top to bottom, and in clamour and civil discord remodel it with the hand of violence.

THE STOWAWAYS

On the Sunday, among a party of men who were talking in our companion, Steerage No. 2 and 3, we remarked a new figure. He wore tweed clothes, well enough made if not very fresh, and a plain smoking-cap. His face was pale, with pale eyes, and spiritedly enough designed; but though not yet thirty, a sort of blackguardly degeneration had already overtaken his features. The fine nose had grown fleshy towards the point, the pale eyes were sunk in fat. His hands were strong and elegant; his experience of life evidently varied; his speech full of pith and verve; his manners forward, but perfectly presentable. The lad who helped in the second cabin told me, in answer to a question, that he did not know who he was, but thought, "by his way of speaking, and because he was so polite, that he was some one from the saloon."

I was not so sure, for to me there was something equivocal in his air and bearing. He might have been, I thought, the son of some good family who had fallen early into dissipation and run from home. But, making every allowance, how admirable was his talk! I wish you could have heard him tell his own stories. They were so swingingly set forth, in such dramatic language, and illustrated here and there by such luminous bits of acting, that they could only lose in any reproduction. There were tales of the P. and O. Company, where he had been an officer; of the East Indies, where in former years he had lived lavishly; of the Royal Engineers, where he had served for a period; and of a dozen other sides of life, each introducing some vigorous thumb-nail portrait. He had the talk to himself that night, we were all so glad to listen. The best talkers usually address themselves to some particular society; there they are kings, elsewhere camp-followers, as a man may know Russian and yet be ignorant of Spanish; but this fellow had a frank, headlong power of style, and a broad, human choice of subject, that would have turned any circle in the world into a circle of hearers. He was a Homeric talker, plain, strong, and cheerful; and the things and the people of which he spoke became readily and clearly present to the minds of those who heard him. This, with a certain added colouring of rhetoric and rodomontade, must have been the style of Burns, who equally charmed the ears of duchesses and hostlers.

Yet freely and personally as he spoke, many points remained obscure in his narration. The Engineers, for instance, was a service which he praised highly; it is true there would be trouble with the sergeants; but then the officers were gentlemen, and his own, in particular, one among ten thousand. It sounded so far exactly like an episode in the rakish, topsy-turvy life of such an one as I had imagined. But then there came incidents more doubtful, which showed an almost impudent greed after gratuities, and a truly impudent disregard for truth. And then there was the tale of his departure. He had wearied, it seems, of Woolwich, and one fine day, with a companion, slipped up to London for a spree. I have a suspicion that spree was meant to be a long one; but God disposes all things; and one morning, near Westminster Bridge, whom should he come across but the very sergeant who had recruited him at first! What followed? He himself indicated cavalierly that he had then resigned. Let us put it so. But these resignations are sometimes very trying.

At length, after having delighted us for hours, he took himself away from the companion; and I could ask Mackay who and what he was. “That?” said Mackay. “Why, that’s one of the stowaways.”

“No man,” said the same authority, “who has had anything to do with the sea, would ever think of paying for a passage.” I give the statement as Mackay’s, without endorsement; yet I am tempted to believe that it contains a grain of truth; and if you add that the man shall be impudent and thievish, or else dead-broke, it may even pass for a fair representation of the facts. We gentlemen of England who live at home at ease have, I suspect, very insufficient ideas on the subject. All the world over, people are stowing away in coal-holes and dark corners, and when ships are once out to sea, appearing again, begrimed and bashful, upon deck. The career of these sea-tramps partakes largely of the adventurous. They may be poisoned by coal-gas, or die by starvation in their place of concealment; or when found they may be clapped at once and ignominiously into irons, thus to be carried to their promised land, the port of destination, and alas! brought back in the same way to that from which they started, and there delivered over to the magistrates and the seclusion of a county jail. Since I crossed the Atlantic, one miserable stowaway was found in a dying state among the fuel, uttered but a word or two, and departed for a farther country than America.

When the stowaway appears on deck, he has but one thing to pray for: that he be set to work, which is the price and sign of his forgiveness. After half an hour with a swab or a bucket, he feels himself as secure as if he had paid for his passage. It is not altogether a bad thing for the company, who get more or less efficient hands for nothing but a few plates of junk and duff; and every now and again find themselves better paid than by a whole family of cabin passengers. Not long ago, for instance, a packet was saved from nearly certain loss by the skill and courage of a stowaway engineer. As was no more than just, a handsome subscription rewarded him for his success; but even without such exceptional good fortune, as things stand in England and America, the stowaway will often make a good profit out of his adventure. Four engineers stowed away last summer on the same ship, the *Circassia*; and before two days after their arrival each of the four had found a comfortable berth. This was the most hopeful tale of emigration that I heard from first to last; and as you see, the luck was for stowaways.

My curiosity was much inflamed by what I heard; and the next morning, as I was making the round of the ship, I was delighted to find the ex-Royal Engineer engaged in washing down the white paint of a deck house. There was another fellow at work beside him, a lad not more than twenty, in the most miraculous tatters, his handsome face sown with grains of beauty and lighted up by expressive eyes. Four stowaways had been found aboard our ship before she left the Clyde; but these two had alone escaped the ignominy of being put ashore. Alick, my acquaintance of last night, was Scots by birth, and by trade a practical engineer; the other was from Devonshire, and had been to sea before the mast. Two people more unlike by training, character, and habits it would be hard to imagine; yet here they were together, scrubbing paint.

Alick had held all sorts of good situations, and wasted many opportunities in life. I have heard him end a story with these words: “That was in my golden days, when I used finger-glasses.” Situation after situation failed him; then followed the depression of trade, and for months he had hung round with other idlers, playing marbles all day in the West Park, and going home at night to tell his landlady how he had been seeking for a job. I believe this kind of existence was not unpleasant to Alick himself, and he might have long continued to enjoy idleness and a life on tick; but he had a comrade, let us call him Brown, who grew restive. This fellow was continually threatening to slip his cable for the States, and at last, one Wednesday, Glasgow was left widowed of her Brown. Some months afterwards, Alick met another old chum in Sauchiehall Street.

“By the bye, Alick,” said he, “I met a gentleman in New York who was asking for you.”

“Who was that?” asked Alick.

“The new second engineer on board the *So-and-So*,” was the reply.

“Well, and who is he?”

“Brown, to be sure.”

For Brown had been one of the fortunate quartette aboard the *Circassia*. If that was the way of it in the States, Alick thought it was high time to follow Brown’s example. He spent his last day, as he put it, “reviewing the yeomanry,” and the next morning says he to his landlady, “Mrs. X., I’ll not take porridge to-day, please; I’ll take some eggs."

"Why, have you found a job?" she asked, delighted.

"Well, yes," returned the perfidious Alick; "I think I'll start to-day."

And so, well lined with eggs, start he did, but for America. I am afraid that landlady has seen the last of him.

It was easy enough to get on board in the confusion that attends a vessel's departure; and in one of the dark corners of Steerage No. 1, flat in a bunk and with an empty stomach, Alick made the voyage from the Broomielaw to Greenock. That night, the ship's yeoman pulled him out by the heels and had him before the mate. Two other stowaways had already been found and sent ashore; but by this time darkness had fallen, they were out in the middle of the estuary, and the last steamer had left them till the morning.

"Take him to the forecastle and give him a meal," said the mate, "and see and pack him off the first thing to-morrow."

In the forecastle he had supper, a good night's rest and breakfast, and was sitting placidly with a pipe, fancying all was over and the game up for good with that ship, when one of the sailors grumbled out an oath at him, with a "What are you doing there?" and "Do you call that hiding, anyway?" There was need of no more: Alick was in another bunk before the day was older. Shortly before the passengers arrived, the ship was cursorily inspected. He heard the round come down the companion and look into one pen after another, until they came within two of the one in which he lay concealed. Into these last two they did not enter, but merely glanced from without; and Alick had no doubt that he was personally favoured in this escape. It was the character of the man to attribute nothing to luck and but little to kindness; whatever happened to him he had earned in his own right amply; favours came to him from his singular attraction and adroitness, and misfortunes he had always accepted with his eyes open. Half an hour after the searchers had departed, the steerage began to fill with legitimate passengers, and the worst of Alick's troubles was at an end. He was soon making himself popular, smoking other people's tobacco, and politely sharing their private stock of delicacies, and when night came, he retired to his bunk beside the others with composure.

Next day by afternoon, Lough Foyle being already far behind, and only the rough north-western hills of Ireland within view, Alick appeared on deck to court inquiry and decide his fate. As a matter of fact, he was known to several on board, and even intimate with one of the engineers; but it was plainly not the etiquette of such occasions for the authorities to avow their information. Every one professed surprise and anger on his appearance, and he was led prisoner before the captain.

"What have you got to say for yourself?" inquired the captain.

"Not much," said Alick; "but when a man has been a long time out of a job, he will do things he would not under other circumstances."

"Are you willing to work?"

Alick swore he was burning to be useful.

"And what can you do?" asked the captain.

He replied composedly that he was a brass-fitter by trade.

"I think you will be better at engineering?" suggested the officer, with a shrewd look.

"No, sir," says Alick simply. — "There's few can beat me at a lie," was his engaging commentary to me as he recounted the affair.

"Have you been to sea?" again asked the captain.

"I've had a trip on a Clyde steamboat, sir, but no more," replied the unabashed Alick.

"Well, we must try and find some work for you," concluded the officer.

And hence we behold Alick, clear of the hot engine-room, lazily scraping paint and now and then taking a pull upon a sheet. "You leave me alone," was his deduction. "When I get talking to a man, I can get round him."

The other stowaway, whom I will call the Devonian — it was noticeable that neither of them told his name — had both been brought up and seen the world in a much smaller way. His father, a confectioner, died and was closely followed by his mother. His sisters had taken, I think, to dressmaking. He himself had returned from sea about a year ago and gone to live with his brother, who kept the "George Hotel" — "it was not quite a real hotel," added the candid fellow — "and had a hired man to mind the horses." At first the Devonian was very welcome; but as time went on his brother not unnaturally grew cool towards him, and he began to find himself one too many at the "George Hotel." "I don't think brothers care much for you," he said, as a general reflection upon life. Hurt at this change, nearly penniless, and too proud to ask for more, he set off on foot and walked eighty miles to Weymouth, living on the journey as he could. He would have enlisted, but he was too small for the army and too old for the navy; and thought himself fortunate at last to find a berth on board a trading dandy. Somewhere in the Bristol Channel the dandy sprung a leak and went down; and though the crew were picked up and brought ashore by fishermen, they found themselves with nothing but the clothes upon their back. His next engagement was scarcely better starred; for the ship proved so leaky, and frightened them all so heartily during a short passage through the Irish Sea, that the entire crew deserted and remained behind upon the quays of Belfast.

Evil days were now coming thick on the Devonian. He could find no berth in Belfast, and had to work a passage to Glasgow on a steamer. She reached the Broomielaw on a Wednesday: the Devonian had a bellyful that morning, laying in breakfast manfully to provide against the future, and set off along the quays to seek employment. But he was now not only penniless, his clothes had begun to fall in tatters; he had begun to have the look of a street Arab; and captains will have nothing to say to a ragamuffin; for in that trade, as in all others, it is the coat that depicts the man. You may hand, reef, and steer like an angel, but if you have a hole in your trousers, it is like a millstone round your neck. The Devonian lost heart at so many refusals. He had not the impudence to beg; although, as he said, "when I had money of my own, I always gave it." It was only on Saturday morning, after three whole days of starvation, that he asked a scone from a milkwoman, who added of her own accord a glass of milk. He had now made up his mind to stow away, not from any desire to see America, but merely to obtain the comfort of a place in the forecastle and a supply of familiar sea-fare. He lived by begging, always from milkwomen, and always scones and milk, and was not once refused. It was vile wet weather, and he could never have been dry. By night he walked the streets, and by day slept upon Glasgow Green, and heard, in the intervals of his dozing, the famous theologians of the spot clear up intricate points of doctrine and appraise the merits of the clergy. He had not much instruction; he could "read bills on the street," but was "main bad at writing"; yet these theologians seemed to have impressed him with a genuine sense of amusement. Why he did not go to the Sailors' Home I know not; I presume there is in Glasgow one of these institutions, which are by far the happiest and the wisest effort of contemporaneous charity; but I must stand to my author, as they say in old books, and relate the story as I heard it. In the meantime, he had tried four times to stow away in different vessels, and four times had been discovered and handed back to starvation. The fifth time was lucky; and you may judge if he were pleased to be aboard ship again, at his old work, and with duff twice a week. He was, said Alick, "a devil for the duff." Or if devil was not the word, it was one if anything stronger.

The difference in the conduct of the two was remarkable. The Devonian was as willing as any paid hand, swarmed aloft among the first, pulled his natural weight and firmly upon a rope, and found work for himself when there was none to show him. Alick, on the other hand, was not only a skulker in the grain, but took a humorous and fine gentlemanly view of the transaction. He would speak to me by the hour in ostentatious idleness; and only if the bo's'un or a mate came by, fell-to languidly for just the necessary time till they were out of sight. "I'm not breaking my heart with it," he remarked.

Once there was a hatch to be opened near where he was stationed; he watched the preparations for a second or so suspiciously, and then, “Hullo,” said he, “here’s some real work coming — I’m off,” and he was gone that moment. Again, calculating the six guinea passage-money, and the probable duration of the passage, he remarked pleasantly that he was getting six shillings a day for this job, “and it’s pretty dear to the company at that.” “They are making nothing by me,” was another of his observations; “they’re making something by that fellow.” And he pointed to the Devonian, who was just then busy to the eyes.

The more you saw of Alick, the more, it must be owned, you learned to despise him. His natural talents were of no use either to himself or others; for his character had degenerated like his face, and become pulpy and pretentious. Even his power of persuasion, which was certainly very surprising, stood in some danger of being lost or neutralised by over-confidence. He lied in an aggressive, brazen manner, like a pert criminal in the dock; and he was so vain of his own cleverness that he could not refrain from boasting, ten minutes after, of the very trick by which he had deceived you. “Why, now I have more money than when I came on board,” he said one night, exhibiting a sixpence, “and yet I stood myself a bottle of beer before I went to bed yesterday. And as for tobacco, I have fifteen sticks of it.” That was fairly successful indeed; yet a man of his superiority, and with a less obtrusive policy, might, who knows? have got the length of half a crown. A man who prides himself upon persuasion should learn the persuasive faculty of silence, above all as to his own misdeeds. It is only in the farce and for dramatic purposes that Scapin enlarges on his peculiar talents to the world at large.

Scapin is perhaps a good name for this clever, unfortunate Alick; for at the bottom of all his misconduct there was a guiding sense of humour that moved you to forgive him. It was more than half as a jest that he conducted his existence. “Oh, man,” he said to me once with unusual emotion, like a man thinking of his mistress, “I would give up anything for a lark.”

It was in relation to his fellow-stowaway that Alick showed the best, or perhaps I should say the only good, points of his nature. “Mind you,” he said suddenly, changing his tone, “mind you, that’s a good boy. He wouldn’t tell you a lie. A lot of them think he is a scamp because his clothes are ragged, but he isn’t; he’s as good as gold.” To hear him, you become aware that Alick himself had a taste for virtue. He thought his own idleness and the other’s industry equally becoming. He was no more anxious to insure his own reputation as a liar than to uphold the truthfulness of his companion; and he seemed unaware of what was incongruous in his attitude, and was plainly sincere in both characters.

It was not surprising that he should take an interest in the Devonian, for the lad worshipped and served him in love and wonder. Busy as he was, he would find time to warn Alick of an approaching officer, or even to tell him that the coast was clear, and he might slip off and smoke a pipe in safety. “Tom,” he once said to him, for that was the name which Alick ordered him to use, “if you don’t like going to the galley, I’ll go for you. You ain’t used to this kind of thing, you ain’t. But I’m a sailor; and I can understand the feelings of any fellow, I can.” Again, he was hard up, and casting about for some tobacco, for he was not so liberally used in this respect as others perhaps less worthy, when Alick offered him the half of one of his fifteen sticks. I think, for my part, he might have increased the offer to a whole one, or perhaps a pair of them, and not lived to regret his liberality. But the Devonian refused. “No,” he said, “you’re a stowaway like me; I won’t take it from you, I’ll take it from some one who’s not down on his luck.”

It was notable in this generous lad that he was strongly under the influence of sex. If a woman passed near where he was working, his eyes lit up, his hand paused, and his mind wandered instantly to other thoughts. It was natural that he should exercise a fascination proportionally strong upon women. He begged, you will remember, from women only, and was never refused. Without wishing to explain away the charity of those who helped him, I cannot but fancy he may have owed a little to his handsome face, and to that quick, responsive nature formed for love, which speaks eloquently through all disguises, and can stamp an impression in ten minutes’ talk or an exchange of glances. He was the more dangerous in that he was far from bold, but seemed to woo in spite of himself, and with a soft and pleading eye. Ragged as he was, and many a scarecrow is in that respect more comfortably furnished, even on board he was not without some curious admirers.

There was a girl among the passengers, a tall, blonde, handsome, strapping Irishwoman, with a wild, accommodating eye, whom Alick had dubbed Tommy, with that transcendental appropriateness that defies analysis. One day the Devonian was lying for warmth in the upper stoke-hole, which stands open on the deck, when Irish Tommy came past, very neatly attired, as was her custom.

“Poor fellow,” she said, stopping, “you haven’t a vest.”

“No,” he said; “I wish I ‘ad.”

Then she stood and gazed on him in silence, until, in his embarrassment, for he knew not how to look under this scrutiny, he pulled out his pipe and began to fill it with tobacco.

“Do you want a match?” she asked. And before he had time to reply, she ran off and presently returned with more than one.

That was the beginning and the end, as far as our passage is concerned, of what I will make bold to call this love-affair. There are many relations which go on to marriage and last during a lifetime, in which less human feeling is engaged than in this scene of five minutes at the stoke-hole.

Rigidly speaking, this would end the chapter of the stowaways; but in a larger sense of the word I have yet more to add. Jones had discovered and pointed out to me a young woman who was remarkable among her fellows for a pleasing and interesting air. She was poorly clad, to the verge, if not over the line, of disrespectability, with a ragged old jacket and a bit of a sealskin cap no bigger than your fist; but her eyes, her whole expression, and her manner, even in ordinary moments, told of a true womanly nature, capable of love, anger, and devotion. She had a look, too, of refinement, like one who might have been a better lady than most, had she been allowed the opportunity. When alone she seemed preoccupied and sad; but she was not often alone; there was usually by her side a heavy, dull, gross man in rough clothes, chary of speech and gesture — not from caution, but poverty of disposition; a man like a ditcher, unlovely and uninteresting; whom she petted and tended and waited on with her eyes as if he had been Amadis of Gaul. It was strange to see this hulking fellow dog-sick, and this delicate, sad woman caring for him. He seemed, from first to last, insensible of her caresses and attentions, and she seemed unconscious of his insensibility. The Irish husband, who sang his wife to sleep, and this Scottish girl serving her Orson, were the two bits of human nature that most appealed to me throughout the voyage.

On the Thursday before we arrived, the tickets were collected; and soon a rumour began to go round the vessel; and this girl, with her bit of sealskin cap, became the centre of whispering and pointed fingers. She also, it was said, was a stowaway of a sort; for she was on board with neither ticket nor money; and the man with whom she travelled was the father of a family, who had left wife and children to be hers. The ship's officers discouraged the story, which may therefore have been a story and no more; but it was believed in the steerage, and the poor girl had to encounter many curious eyes from that day forth.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND REVIEW

Travel is of two kinds; and this voyage of mine across the ocean combined both. “Out of my country and myself I go,” sings the old poet: and I was not only travelling out of my country in latitude and longitude, but out of myself in diet, associates, and consideration. Part of the interest and a great deal of the amusement flowed, at least to me, from this novel situation in the world.

I found that I had what they call fallen in life with absolute success and verisimilitude. I was taken for a steerage passenger; no one seemed surprised that I should be so; and there was nothing but the brass plate between decks to remind me that I had once been a gentleman. In a former book, describing a former journey, I expressed some wonder that I could be readily and naturally taken for a pedlar, and explained the accident by the difference of language and manners between England and France. I must now take a humbler view; for here I was among my own countrymen, somewhat roughly clad, to be sure, but with every advantage of speech and manner; and I am bound to confess that I passed for nearly anything you please except an educated gentleman. The sailors called me “mate,” the officers addressed me as “my man,” my comrades accepted me without hesitation for a person of their own character and experience, but with some curious information. One, a mason himself, believed I was a mason; several, and among these at least one of the seamen, judged me to be a petty officer in the American navy; and I was so often set down for a practical engineer that at last I had not the heart to deny it. From all these guesses I drew one conclusion, which told against the insight of my companions. They might be close observers in their own way, and read the manners in the face; but it was plain that they did not extend their observation to the hands.

To the saloon passengers also I sustained my part without a hitch. It is true I came little in their way; but when we did encounter, there was no recognition in their eye, although I confess I sometimes courted it in silence. All these, my inferiors and equals, took me, like the transformed monarch in the story, for a mere common, human man. They gave me a hard, dead look, with the flesh about the eye kept unrelaxed.

With the women this surprised me less, as I had already experimented on the sex by going abroad through a suburban part of London simply attired in a sleeve-waistcoat. The result was curious. I then learned for the first time, and by the exhaustive process, how much attention ladies are accustomed to bestow on all male creatures of their own station; for, in my humble rig, each one who went by me caused me a certain shock of surprise and a sense of something wanting. In my normal circumstances, it appeared, every young lady must have paid me some passing tribute of a glance; and though I had often been unconscious of it when given, I was well aware of its absence when it was withheld. My height seemed to decrease with every woman who passed me, for she passed me like a dog. This is one of my grounds for supposing that what are called the upper classes may sometimes produce a disagreeable impression in what are called the lower; and I wish some one would continue my experiment, and find out exactly at what stage of toilette a man becomes invisible to the well-regulated female eye.

Here on shipboard the matter was put to a more complete test; for, even with the addition of speech and manner, I passed among the ladies for precisely the average man of the steerage. It was one afternoon that I saw this demonstrated. A very plainly dressed woman was taken ill on deck. I think I had the luck to be present at every sudden seizure during all the passage; and on this occasion found myself in the place of importance, supporting the sufferer. There was not only a large crowd immediately around us, but a considerable knot of saloon passengers leaning over our heads from the hurricane-deck. One of these, an elderly managing woman, hailed me with counsels. Of course I had to reply; and as the talk went on, I began to discover that the whole group took me for the husband. I looked upon my new wife, poor creature, with mingled feelings; and I must own she had not even the appearance of the poorest class of city servant-maids, but looked more like a country wench who should have been employed at a roadside inn. Now was the time for me to go and study the brass plate.

To such of the officers as knew about me — the doctor, the purser, and the stewards — I appeared in the light of a broad joke. The fact that I spent the better part of my day in writing had gone abroad over the ship and tickled them all prodigiously. Whenever they met me they referred to my absurd occupation with familiarity and breadth of humorous intention. Their manner was well calculated to remind me of my fallen fortunes. You may be sincerely amused by the amateur literary efforts of a gentleman, but you scarce publish the feeling to his face. “Well!” they would say; “still writing?” And the smile would widen into a laugh. The purser came one day into the cabin, and, touched to the heart by my misguided industry, offered me some other kind of writing, “for which,” he added pointedly, “you will be paid.” This was nothing else than to copy out the list of passengers.

Another trick of mine which told against my reputation was my choice of roosting-place in an active draught upon the cabin floor. I was openly jeered and flouted for this eccentricity; and a considerable knot would sometimes gather at the door to see my last dispositions for the night. This was embarrassing, but I learned to support the trial with equanimity.

Indeed I may say that, upon the whole, my new position sat lightly and naturally upon my spirits. I accepted the consequences with readiness, and found them far from difficult to bear. The steerage conquered me; I conformed more and more to the type of the place, not only in manner but at heart, growing hostile to the officers and cabin passengers who looked down upon me, and day by day greedier for small delicacies. Such was the result, as I fancy, of a diet of bread and butter, soup and porridge. We think we have no sweet tooth as long as we are full to the brim of molasses; but a man must have sojourned in the workhouse before he boasts himself indifferent to dainties. Every evening, for instance, I was more and more preoccupied about our doubtful fare at tea. If it was delicate my heart was much lightened; if it was but broken fish I was proportionally downcast. The offer of a little jelly from a fellow-passenger more provident than myself caused a marked elevation in my spirits. And I would have gone to the ship's end and back again for an oyster or a chipped fruit.

In other ways I was content with my position. It seemed no disgrace to be confounded with my company; for I may as well declare at once I found their manners as gentle and becoming as those of any other class. I do not mean that my friends could have sat down without embarrassment and laughable disaster at the table of a duke. That does not imply an inferiority of breeding, but a difference of usage. Thus I flatter myself that I conducted myself well among my fellow-passengers; yet my most ambitious hope is not to have avoided faults, but to have committed as few as possible. I know too well that my tact is not the same as their tact, and that my habit of a different society constituted, not only no qualification, but a positive disability to move easily and becomingly in this. When Jones complimented me — because I "managed to behave very pleasantly" to my fellow-passengers, was how he put it — I could follow the thought in his mind, and knew his compliment to be such as we pay foreigners on their proficiency in English. I dare say this praise was given me immediately on the back of some unpardonable solecism, which had led him to review my conduct as a whole. We are all ready to laugh at the ploughman among lords; we should consider also the case of a lord among the ploughmen. I have seen a lawyer in the house of a Hebridean fisherman; and I know, but nothing will induce me to disclose, which of these two was the better gentleman. Some of our finest behaviour, though it looks well enough from the boxes, may seem even brutal to the gallery. We boast too often manners that are parochial rather than universal; that, like a country wine, will not bear transportation for a hundred miles, nor from the parlour to the kitchen. To be a gentleman is to be one all the world over, and in every relation and grade of society. It is a high calling, to which a man must first be born, and then devote himself for life. And, unhappily, the manners of a certain so-called upper grade have a kind of currency, and meet with a certain external acceptation throughout all the others, and this tends to keep us well satisfied with slight acquirements and the amateurish accomplishments of a clique. But manners, like art, should be human and central.

Some of my fellow-passengers, as I now moved among them in a relation of equality, seemed to me excellent gentlemen. They were not rough, nor hasty, nor disputatious; debated pleasantly, differed kindly; were helpful, gentle, patient, and placid. The type of manners was plain, and even heavy; there was little to please the eye, but nothing to shock; and I thought gentleness lay more nearly at the spring of behaviour than in many more ornate and delicate societies. I say delicate, where I cannot say refined; a thing may be fine, like ironwork, without being delicate, like lace. There was here less delicacy; the skin supported more callously the natural surface of events, the mind received more bravely the crude facts of human existence; but I do not think that there was less effective refinement, less consideration for others, less polite suppression of self. I speak of the best among my fellow-passengers; for in the steerage, as well as in the saloon, there is a mixture. Those, then, with whom I found myself in sympathy, and of whom I may therefore hope to write with a greater measure of truth, were not only as good in their manners, but endowed with very much the same natural capacities, and about as wise in deduction, as the bankers and barristers of what is called society. One and all were too much interested in disconnected facts, and loved information for its own sake with too rash a devotion; but people in all classes display the same appetite as they gorge themselves daily with the miscellaneous gossip of the newspaper. Newspaper-reading, as far as I can make out, is often rather a sort of brown study than an act of culture. I have myself palmed off yesterday’s issue on a friend, and seen him re-peruse it for a continuance of minutes with an air at once refreshed and solemn. Workmen, perhaps, pay more attention; but though they may be eager listeners, they have rarely seemed to me either willing or careful thinkers. Culture is not measured by the greatness of the field which is covered by our knowledge, but by the nicety with which we can perceive relations in that field, whether great or small. Workmen, certainly those who were on board with me, I found wanting in this quality or habit of the mind. They did not perceive relations, but leaped to a so-called cause, and thought the problem settled. Thus the cause of everything in England was the form of government, and the cure for all evils was, by consequence, a revolution. It is surprising how many of them said this, and that none should have had a definite thought in his head as he said it. Some hated the Church because they disagreed with it; some hated Lord Beaconsfield because of war and taxes; all hated the masters, possibly with reason. But these feelings were not at the root of the matter; the true reasoning of their souls ran thus — I have not got on; I ought to have got on; if there was a revolution I should get on. How? They had no idea. Why? Because — because — well, look at America!

To be politically blind is no distinction; we are all so, if you come to that. At bottom, as it seems to me, there is but one question in modern home politics, though it appears in many shapes, and that is the question of money; and but one political remedy, that the people should grow wiser and better. My workmen fellow-passengers were as impatient and dull of hearing on the second of these points as any member of Parliament; but they had some glimmerings of the first. They would not hear of improvement on their part, but wished the world made over again in a crack, so that they might remain improvident and idle and debauched, and yet enjoy the comfort and respect that should accompany the opposite Virtues; and it was in this expectation, as far as I could see, that many of them were now on their way to America. But on the point of money they saw clearly enough that inland politics, so far as they were concerned, were reducible to the question of annual income; a question which should long ago have been settled by a revolution, they did not know how, and which they were now about to settle for themselves, once more they knew not how, by crossing the Atlantic in a steamship of considerable tonnage.

And yet it has been amply shown them that the second or income question is in itself nothing, and may as well be left undecided, if there be no wisdom and virtue to profit by the change. It is not by a man’s purse, but by his character, that he is rich or poor. Barney will be poor, Alick will be poor, Mackay will be poor; let them go where they will, and wreck all the governments under heaven; they will be poor until they die.

Nothing is perhaps more notable in the average workman than his surprising idleness, and the candour with which he confesses to the failing. It has to me been always something of a relief to find the poor, as a general rule, so little oppressed with work. I can in consequence enjoy my own more fortunate beginning with a better grace. The other day I was living with a farmer in America, an old frontiersman, who had worked and fought, hunted and farmed, from his childhood up.

He excused himself for his defective education on the ground that he had been overworked from first to last. Even now, he said, anxious as he was, he had never the time to take up a book. In consequence of this, I observed him closely; he was occupied for four or, at the extreme outside, for five hours out of the twenty-four, and then principally in walking; and the remainder of the day he passed in sheer idleness, either eating fruit or standing with his back against the door. I have known men do hard literary work all morning, and then undergo quite as much physical fatigue by way of relief as satisfied this powerful frontiersman for the day. He, at least, like all the educated class, did so much homage to industry as to persuade himself he was industrious. But the average mechanic recognises his idleness with effrontery; he has even, as I am told, organised it.

I give the story as it was told me, and it was told me for a fact. A man fell from a housetop in the city of Aberdeen, and was brought into hospital with broken bones. He was asked what was his trade, and replied that he was a *tapper*. No one had ever heard of such a thing before; the officials were filled with curiosity; they besought an explanation. It appeared that when a party of slaters were engaged upon a roof, they would now and then be taken with a fancy for the public-house. Now a seamstress, for example, might slip away from her work and no one be the wiser; but if these fellows adjourned, the tapping of the mallets would cease, and thus the neighbourhood be advertised of their defection. Hence the career of the tapper. He has to do the tapping and keep up an industrious bustle on the housetop during the absence of the slaters. When he taps for only one or two the thing is child's-play, but when he has to represent a whole troop, it is then that he earns his money in the sweat of his brow. Then must he bound from spot to spot, reduplicate, triplicate, sexduplicate his single personality, and swell and hasten his blows, until he produce a perfect illusion for the ear, and you would swear that a crowd of emulous masons were continuing merrily to roof the house. It must be a strange sight from an upper window.

I heard nothing on board of the tapper; but I was astonished at the stories told by my companions. Skulking, shirking, malingering, were all established tactics, it appeared. They could see no dishonesty when a man who is paid for an hour's work gives half an hour's consistent idling in its place. Thus the tapper would refuse to watch for the police during a burglary, and call himself an honest man. It is not sufficiently recognised that our race detests to work. If I thought that I should have to work every day of my life as hard as I am working now, I should be tempted to give up the struggle. And the workman early begins on his career of toil. He has never had his fill of holidays in the past, and his prospect of holidays in the future is both distant and uncertain. In the circumstance it would require a high degree of virtue not to snatch alleviations for the moment.

There were many good talkers on the ship; and I believe good talking of a certain sort is a common accomplishment among working men. Where books are comparatively scarce, a greater amount of information will be given and received by word of mouth; and this tends to produce good talkers, and, what is no less needful for conversation, good listeners. They could all tell a story with effect. I am sometimes tempted to think that the less literary class show always better in narration; they have so much more patience with detail, are so much less hurried to reach the points, and preserve so much juster a proportion among the facts. At the same time their talk is dry; they pursue a topic ploddingly, have not an agile fancy, do not throw sudden lights from unexpected quarters, and when the talk is over they often leave the matter where it was. They mark time instead of marching. They think only to argue, not to reach new conclusions, and use their reason rather as a weapon of offence than as a tool for self-improvement. Hence the talk of some of the cleverest was unprofitable in result, because there was no give and take; they would grant you as little as possible for premise, and begin to dispute under an oath to conquer or to die.

But the talk of a workman is apt to be more interesting than that of a wealthy merchant, because the thoughts, hopes, and fears of which the workman's life is built lie nearer to necessity and nature. They are more immediate to human life. An income calculated by the week is a far more human thing than one calculated by the year, and a small income, simply from its smallness, than a large one. I never wearied listening to the details of a workman's economy, because every item stood for some real pleasure. If he could afford pudding twice a week, you know that twice a week the man ate with genuine gusto and was physically happy; while if you learn that a rich man has seven courses a day, ten to one the half of them remain untasted, and the whole is but misspent money and a weariness to the flesh.

The difference between England and America to a working man was thus most humanly put to me by a fellow-passenger: “In America,” said he, “you get pies and puddings.” I do not hear enough, in economy books, of pies and pudding. A man lives in and for the delicacies, adornments, and accidental attributes of life, such as pudding to eat, and pleasant books and theatres to occupy his leisure. The bare terms of existence would be rejected with contempt by all. If a man feeds on bread and butter, soup and porridge, his appetite grows wolfish after dainties. And the workman dwells in a borderland, and is always within sight of those cheerless regions where life is more difficult to sustain than worth sustaining. Every detail of our existence, where it is worth while to cross the ocean after pie and pudding, is made alive and enthralling by the presence of genuine desire; but it is all one to me whether Crœsus has a hundred or a thousand thousands in the bank. There is more adventure in the life of the working man who descends as a common soldier into the battle of life, than in that of the millionaire who sits apart in an office, like Von Moltke, and only directs the manœuvres by telegraph. Give me to hear about the career of him who is in the thick of the business; to whom one change of market means an empty belly, and another a copious and savoury meal. This is not the philosophical, but the human side of economics; it interests like a story; and the life of all who are thus situated partakes in a small way of the charm of “Robinson Crusoe”; for every step is critical, and human life is presented to you naked and verging to its lowest terms.

NEW YORK

As we drew near to New York I was at first amused and then somewhat staggered, by the cautions and the grisly tales that went the round. You would have thought we were to land upon a cannibal island. You must speak to no one in the streets, as they would not leave you till you were rooked and beaten. You must enter a hotel with military precautions; for the least you had to apprehend was to awake next morning without money or baggage, or necessary raiment, a lone forked radish in a bed; and if the worst befell, you would instantly and mysteriously disappear from the ranks of mankind.

I have usually found such stories correspond to the least modicum of fact. Thus I was warned, I remember, against the roadside inns of the Cévennes, and that by a learned professor; and when I reached Pradelles the warning was explained; it was but the far-away rumour and reduplication of a single terrifying story already half a century old, and half forgotten in the theatre of the events. So I was tempted to make light of these reports against America. But we had on board with us a man whose evidence it would not do to put aside. He had come near these perils in the body; he had visited a robber inn. The public has an old and well-grounded favour for this class of incident, and shall be gratified to the best of my power.

My fellow-passenger, whom we shall call M'Naughten, had come from New York to Boston with a comrade, seeking work. They were a pair of rattling blades; and, leaving their baggage at the station, passed the day in beer saloons, and with congenial spirits, until midnight struck. Then they applied themselves to find a lodging, and walked the streets till two, knocking at houses of entertainment and being refused admittance, or themselves declining the terms. By two the inspiration of their liquor had begun to wear off; they were weary and humble, and after a great circuit found themselves in the same street where they had begun their search, and in front of a French hotel where they had already sought accommodation. Seeing the house still open, they returned to the charge. A man in a white cap sat in an office by the door. He seemed to welcome them more warmly than when they had at first presented themselves, and the charge for the night had somewhat unaccountably fallen from a dollar to a quarter. They thought him ill-looking, but paid their quarter apiece, and were shown upstairs to the top of the house. There, in a small room, the man in the white cap wished them pleasant slumbers.

The room was furnished with a bed, a chair, and some conveniences. The door did not lock on the inside; and the only sign of adornment was a couple of framed pictures, one close above the head of the bed, and the other opposite the foot, and both curtained, as we may sometimes see valuable water-colours, or the portraits of the dead, or works of art more than usually skittish in the subject. It was perhaps in the hope of finding something of this last description that M'Naughten's comrade pulled aside the curtain of the first. He was startlingly disappointed. There was no picture. The frame surrounded, and the curtain was designed to hide, an oblong aperture in the partition, through which they looked forth into the dark corridor. A person standing without could easily take a purse from under the pillow, or even strangle a sleeper as he lay abed. M'Naughten and his comrade stared at each other like Balboa and his men, "with a wild surmise"; and then the latter, catching up the lamp, ran to the other frame and roughly raised the curtain. There he stood, petrified; and M'Naughten, who had followed, grasped him by the wrist in terror. They could see into another room, larger in size than that which they occupied, where three men sat crouching and silent in the dark. For a second or so these five persons looked each other in the eyes, then the curtain was dropped, and M'Naughten and his friend made but one bolt of it out of the room and down the stairs. The man in the white cap said nothing as they passed him; and they were so pleased to be once more in the open night that they gave up all notion of a bed, and walked the streets of Boston till the morning.

No one seemed much cast down by these stories, but all inquired after the address of a respectable hotel; and I, for my part, put myself under the conduct of Mr. Jones. Before noon of the second Sunday we sighted the low shores outside of New York harbour; the steerage passengers must remain on board to pass through Castle Garden on the following morning; but we of the second cabin made our escape along with the lords of the saloon; and by six o'clock Jones and I issued into West Street, sitting on some straw in the bottom of an open baggage-waggon. It rained miraculously; and from that moment till on the following night I left New York, there was scarcely a lull, and no cessation of the downpour. The roadways were flooded; a loud strident noise of falling water filled the air; the restaurants smelt heavily of wet people and wet clothing.

It took us but a few minutes, though it cost us a good deal of money, to be rattled along West Street to our destination: "Reunion House, No. 10, West Street, one minute's walk from Castle Garden; convenient to Castle Garden, the Steamboat Landings, California Steamers and Liverpool Ships; Board and Lodging per day 1 dollar, single meals 25 cents, lodging per night 25 cents; private rooms for families; no charge for storage or baggage; satisfaction guaranteed to all persons; Michael Mitchell, proprietor." Reunion House was, I may go the length of saying, a humble hostelry. You entered through a long bar-room, thence passed into a little dining-room, and thence into a still smaller kitchen. The furniture was of the plainest; but the bar was hung in the American taste, with encouraging and hospitable mottoes.

Jones was well known; we were received warmly; and two minutes afterwards I had refused a drink from the proprietor, and was going on, in my plain European fashion, to refuse a cigar, when Mr. Mitchell sternly interposed, and explained the situation. He was offering to treat me, it appeared; whenever an American bar-keeper proposes anything, it must be borne in mind that he is offering to treat; and if I did not want a drink, I must at least take the cigar. I took it bashfully, feeling I had begun my American career on the wrong foot. I did not enjoy that cigar; but this may have been from a variety of reasons, even the best cigar often failing to please if you smoke three-quarters of it in a drenching rain.

For many years America was to me a sort of promised land; "westward the march of empire holds its way"; the race is for the moment to the young; what has been and what is we imperfectly and obscurely know; what is to be yet lies beyond the flight of our imaginations. Greece, Rome, and Judæa are gone by for ever, leaving to generations the legacy of their accomplished work; China still endures, an old-inhabited house in the brand-new city of nations; England has already declined, since she has lost the States; and to these States, therefore, yet undeveloped, full of dark possibilities, and grown, like another Eve, from one rib out of the side of their own old land, the minds of young men in England turn naturally at a certain hopeful period of their age. It will be hard for an American to understand the spirit. But let him imagine a young man, who shall have grown up in an old and rigid circle, following bygone fashions and taught to distrust his own fresh instincts, and who now suddenly hears of a family of cousins, all about his own age, who keep house together by themselves and live far from restraint and tradition; let him imagine this, and he will have some imperfect notion of the sentiment with which spirited English youths turn to the thought of the American Republic. It seems to them as if, out west, the war of life was still conducted in the open air, and on free barbaric terms; as if it had not yet been narrowed into parlours, nor begun to be conducted, like some unjust and dreary arbitration, by compromise, costume, forms of procedure, and sad, senseless self-denial. Which of these two he prefers, a man with any youth still left in him will decide rightly for himself. He would rather be houseless than denied a pass-key; rather go without food than partake of a stalled ox in stiff, respectable society; rather be shot out of hand than direct his life according to the dictates of the world.

He knows or thinks nothing of the Maine Laws, the Puritan sourness, the fierce, sordid appetite for dollars, or the dreary existence of country towns. A few wild story-books which delighted his childhood form the imaginative basis of his picture of America. In course of time, there is added to this a great crowd of stimulating details — vast cities that grow up as by enchantment; the birds, that have gone south in autumn, returning with the spring to find thousands camped upon their marshes, and the lamps burning far and near along populous streets; forests that disappear like snow; countries larger than Britain that are cleared and settled, one man running forth with his household gods before another, while the bear and the Indian are yet scarce aware of their approach; oil that gushes from the earth; gold that is washed or quarried in the brooks or glens of the Sierras; and all that bustle, courage, action, and constant kaleidoscopic change that Walt Whitman has seized and set forth in his vigorous, cheerful, and loquacious verses.

Here I was at last in America, and was soon out upon New York streets, spying for things foreign. The place had to me an air of Liverpool; but such was the rain that not Paradise itself would have looked inviting. We were, a party of four, under two umbrellas; Jones and I and two Scots lads, recent immigrants, and not indisposed to welcome a compatriot. They had been six weeks in New York, and neither of them had yet found a single job or earned a single halfpenny. Up to the present they were exactly out of pocket by the amount of the fare.

The lads soon left us. Now I had sworn by all my gods to have such a dinner as would rouse the dead; there was scarce any expense at which I should have hesitated; the devil was in it but Jones and I should dine like heathen emperors. I set to work, asking after a restaurant; and I chose the wealthiest and most gastronomical-looking passers-by to ask from. Yet, although I had told them I was willing to pay anything in reason, one and all sent me off to cheap, fixed-price houses, where I would not have eaten that night for the cost of twenty dinners. I do not know if this were characteristic of New York, or whether it was only Jones and I who looked un-dinerly and discouraged enterprising suggestions. But at length, by our own sagacity, we found a French restaurant, where there was a French waiter, some fair French cooking, some so-called French wine, and French coffee to conclude the whole. I never entered into the feelings of Jack on land so completely as when I tasted that coffee.

I suppose we had one of the “private rooms for families” at Reunion House. It was very small; furnished with a bed, a chair, and some clothes-pegs; and it derived all that was necessary for the life of the human animal through two borrowed lights; one, looking into the passage, and the second opening, without sash, into another apartment, where three men fitfully snored, or, in intervals of wakefulness, drearily mumbled to each other all night long. It will be observed that this was almost exactly the disposition of the room in M'Naughten's story. Jones had the bed; I pitched my camp upon the floor; he did not sleep until near morning, and I, for my part, never closed an eye.

At sunrise I heard a cannon fired; and shortly afterwards the men in the next room gave over snoring for good, and began to rustle over their toilettes. The sound of their voices as they talked was low and moaning, like that of people watching by the sick. Jones, who had at last begun to doze, tumbled and murmured, and every now and then opened unconscious eyes upon me where I lay. I found myself growing eerier and eerier, for I dare say I was a little fevered by my restless night, and hurried to dress and get downstairs.

You had to pass through the rain, which still fell thick and resonant, to reach a lavatory on the other side of the court. There were three basin-stands, and a few crumpled towels and pieces of wet soap, white and slippery like fish; nor should I forget a looking-glass and a pair of questionable combs. Another Scots lad was here, scrubbing his face with a good will. He had been three months in New York and had not yet found a single job nor earned a single halfpenny. Up to the present, he also was exactly out of pocket by the amount of the fare. I began to grow sick at heart for my fellow-emigrants.

Of my nightmare wanderings in New York I spare to tell. I had a thousand and one things to do; only the day to do them in, and a journey across the continent before me in the evening. It rained with patient fury; every now and then I had to get under cover for a while in order, so to speak, to give my mackintosh a rest; for under this continued drenching it began to grow damp on the inside. I went to banks, post-offices, railway-offices, restaurants, publishers, booksellers, money-changers, and wherever I went a pool would gather about my feet, and those who were careful of their floors would look on with an unfriendly eye. Wherever I went, too, the same traits struck me: the people were all surprisingly rude and surprisingly kind. The money-changer cross-questioned me like a French commissary, asking my age, my business, my average income, and my destination, beating down my attempts at evasion, and receiving my answer in silence; and yet when all was over, he shook hands with me up to the elbows, and sent his lad nearly a quarter of a mile in the rain to get me books at a reduction. Again, in a very large publishing and bookselling establishment, a man, who seemed to be the manager, received me as I had certainly never before been received in any human shop, indicated squarely that he put no faith in my honesty, and refused to look up the names of books or give me the slightest help or information, on the ground, like the steward, that it was none of his business. I lost my temper at last, said I was a stranger in America and not learned in their etiquette; but I would assure him, if he went to any bookseller in England, of more handsome usage. The boast was perhaps exaggerated; but like many a long shot, it struck the gold. The manager passed at once from one extreme to the other; I may say that from that moment he loaded me with kindness; he gave me all sorts of good advice, wrote me down addresses and came bareheaded into the rain to point me out a restaurant, where I might lunch, nor even then did he seem to think that he had done enough. These are (it is as well to be bold in statement) the manners of America. It is this same opposition that has most struck me in people of almost all classes and from east to west. By the time a man had about strung me up to be the death of him by his insulting behaviour, he himself would be just upon the point of melting into confidence and serviceable attentions. Yet I suspect, although I have met with the like in so many parts, that this must be the character of some particular state or group of states; for in America, and this again in all classes, you will find some of the softest-mannered gentlemen in the world.

I was so wet when I got back to Mitchell's towards the evening, that I had simply to divest myself of my shoes, socks, and trousers, and leave them behind for the benefit of New York city. No fire could have dried them ere I had to start; and to pack them in their present condition was to spread ruin among my other possessions. With a heavy heart I said farewell to them as they lay a pulp in the middle of a pool upon the floor of Mitchell's kitchen. I wonder if they are dry by now. Mitchell hired a man to carry my baggage to the station, which was hard by, accompanied me thither himself, and recommended me to the particular attention of the officials. No one could have been kinder. Those who are out of pocket may go safely to Reunion House, where they will get decent meal and find an honest and obliging landlord. I owed him this word of thanks, before I enter fairly on the second chapter of my emigrant experience.

PART II
ACROSS THE PLAINS

TO PAUL BOURGET
Traveller and student and curious as you are, you will never have heard the name of Vailima, most likely not even that of Upolu, and Samoa itself may be strange to your ears. To these barbaric seats there came the other day a yellow book with your name on the title, and filled in every page with the exquisite gifts of your art. Let me take and change your own words: "J'ai beau admirer les autres de toutes mes forces, c'est avec vous que je me complais à vivre."
R. L. S
Vailima,
Upolu,
Samoa.

LETTER TO THE AUTHOR

My dear Stevenson,

You have trusted me with the choice and arrangement of these papers, written before you departed to the South Seas, and have asked me to add a preface to the volume. But it is your prose the public wish to read, not mine; and I am sure they will willingly be spared the preface. Acknowledgments are due in your name to the publishers of the several magazines from which the papers are collected, viz. *Fraser's*, *Longman's*, the *Magazine of Art*, and *Scribner's*. I will only add, lest any reader should find the tone of the concluding pieces less inspiriting than your wont, that they were written under circumstances of especial gloom and sickness. "I agree with you the lights seem a little turned down," so you write to me now: "the truth is I was far through, and came none too soon to the South Seas, where I was to recover peace of body and mind. And however low the lights, the stuff is true...." Well, inasmuch as the South Sea sirens have breathed new life into you, we are bound to be heartily grateful to them, though as they keep you so far removed from us, it is difficult not to bear them a grudge; and if they would reconcile us quite, they have but to do two things more — to teach you new tales that shall charm us like your old, and to spare you, at least once in a while in summer, to climates within reach of us who are task-bound for ten months in the year beside the Thames.

Yours ever,
SIDNEY COLVIN.
February, 1892.

NOTES BY THE WAY TO COUNCIL BLUFFS

Monday. — It was, if I remember rightly, five o'clock when we were all signalled to be present at the Ferry Depôt of the railroad. An emigrant ship had arrived at New York on the Saturday night, another on the Sunday morning, our own on Sunday afternoon, a fourth early on Monday; and as there is no emigrant train on Sunday, a great part of the passengers from these four ships was concentrated on the train by which I was to travel. There was a babel of bewildered men, women, and children. The wretched little booking office, and the baggage-room, which was not much larger, were crowded thick with emigrants, and were heavy and rank with the atmosphere of dripping clothes. Open carts full of bedding stood by the half-hour in the rain. The officials loaded each other with recriminations. A bearded, mildewed little man, whom I take to have been an emigrant agent, was all over the place, his mouth full of brimstone, blustering and interfering. It was plain that the whole system, if system there was, had utterly broken down under the strain of so many passengers.

My own ticket was given me at once, and an oldish man, who preserved his head in the midst of this turmoil, got my baggage registered, and counselled me to stay quietly where I was till he should give me the word to move. I had taken along with me a small valise, a knapsack, which I carried on my shoulders, and in the bag of my railway rug the whole of "Bancroft's History of the United States" in six fat volumes. It was as much as I could carry with convenience even for short distances, but it insured me plenty of clothing, and the valise was at that moment, and often after, useful for a stool. I am sure I sat for an hour in the baggage-room, and wretched enough it was; yet, when at last the word was passed to me, and I picked up my bundles and got under way, it was only to exchange discomfort for downright misery and danger.

I followed the porters into a long shed reaching downhill from West Street to the river. It was dark, the wind blew clean through it from end to end; and here I found a great block of passengers and baggage, hundreds of one and tons of the other. I feel I shall have a difficulty to make myself believed; and certainly the scene must have been exceptional, for it was too dangerous for daily repetition. It was a tight jam; there was no fairway through the mingled mass of brute and living obstruction. Into the upper skirts of the crowd, porters, infuriated by hurry and overwork, clove their way with shouts. I may say that we stood like sheep, and that the porters charged among us like so many maddened sheep-dogs; and I believe these men were no longer answerable for their acts. It mattered not what they were carrying, they drove straight into the press, and when they could get no farther, blindly discharged their barrowful. With my own hand, for instance, I saved the life of a child as it sat upon its mother's knee, she sitting on a box; and since I heard of no accident, I must suppose that there were many similar interpositions in the course of the evening. It will give some idea of the state of mind to which we were reduced if I tell you that neither the porter nor the mother of the child paid the least attention to my act. It was not till some time after that I understood what I had done myself, for to ward off heavy boxes seemed at the moment a natural incident of human life. Cold, wet, clamour, dead opposition to progress, such as one encounters in an evil dream, had utterly daunted the spirits. We had accepted this purgatory as a child accepts the conditions of the world. For my part I shivered a little, and my back ached wearily; but I believe I had neither a hope nor a fear, and all the activities of my nature had become tributary to one massive sensation of discomfort.

At length, and after how long an interval I hesitate to guess, the crowd began to move, heavily straining through itself. About the same time some lamps were lighted, and threw a sudden flare over the shed. We were being filtered out into the river boat for Jersey City. You may imagine how slowly this filtering proceeded, through the dense, choking crush, every one overladen with packages or children, and yet under the necessity of fishing out his ticket by the way; but it ended at length for me, and I found myself on deck, under a flimsy awning, and with a trifle of elbow-room to stretch and breathe in. This was on the starboard; for the bulk of the emigrants stuck hopelessly on the port side, by which we had entered. In vain the seamen shouted to them to move on, and threatened them with shipwreck. These poor people were under a spell of stupor, and did not stir a foot. It rained as heavily as ever, but the wind now came in sudden claps and capfuls, not without danger to a boat so badly ballasted as ours; and we crept over the river in the darkness, trailing one paddle in the water like a wounded duck, and passed ever and again by huge, illuminated steamers running many knots, and heralding their approach by strains of music. The contrast between these pleasure embarkations and our own grim vessel, with her list to port and her freight of wet and silent emigrants, was of that glaring description which we count too obvious for the purposes of art.

The landing at Jersey City was done in a stampede. I had a fixed sense of calamity, and, to judge by conduct, the same persuasion was common to us all. A panic selfishness, like that produced by fear, presided over the disorder of our landing. People pushed, and elbowed, and ran, their families following how they could. Children fell, and were picked up, to be rewarded by a blow. One child, who had lost her parents, screamed steadily and with increasing shrillness, as though verging towards a fit; an official kept her by him, but no one else seemed so much as to remark her distress; and I am ashamed to say that I ran among the rest. I was so weary that I had twice to make a halt and set down my bundles in the hundred yards or so between the pier and the railway station, so that I was quite wet by the time that I got under cover. There was no waiting-room, no refreshment-room; the cars were locked; and for at least another hour, or so it seemed, we had to camp upon the draughty, gas-lit platform. I sat on my valise, too crushed to observe my neighbours; but as they were all cold, and wet, and weary, and driven stupidly crazy by the mismanagement to which we had been subjected, I believe they can have been no happier than myself. I bought half a dozen oranges from a boy, for oranges and nuts were the only refection to be had. As only two of them had even a pretence of juice, I threw the other four under the cars, and beheld, as in a dream, grown people and children groping on the track after my leavings.

At last we were admitted into the cars, utterly dejected, and far from dry. For my own part, I got out a clothes-brush, and brushed my trousers as hard as I could, till I had dried them and warmed my blood into the bargain; but no one else, except my next neighbour, to whom I lent the brush, appeared to take the least precaution. As they were, they composed themselves to sleep. I had seen the lights of Philadelphia, and been twice ordered to change carriages and twice countermanded, before I allowed myself to follow their example.

Tuesday. — When I awoke, it was already day; the train was standing idle; I was in the last carriage, and, seeing some others strolling to and fro about the lines, I opened the door and stepped forth, as from a caravan by the wayside. We were near no station, nor even, as far as I could see, within reach of any signal. A green, open, undulating country stretched away upon all sides. Locust trees and a single field of Indian corn gave it a foreign grace and interest; but the contours of the land were soft and English. It was not quite England, neither was it quite France; yet like enough either to seem natural in my eyes. And it was in the sky, and not upon the earth, that I was surprised to find a change. Explain it how you may, and for my part I cannot explain it at all, the sun rises with a different splendour in America and Europe. There is more clear gold and scarlet in our old country mornings; more purple, brown, and smoky orange in those of the new. It may be from habit, but to me the coming of day is less fresh and inspiriting in the latter; it has a duskier glory, and more nearly resembles sunset; it seems to fit some subsequential, evening epoch of the world, as though America were in fact, and not merely in fancy, farther from the orient of Aurora and the springs of day. I thought so then, by the railroad-side in Pennsylvania, and I have thought so a dozen times since in far distant parts of the continent. If it be an illusion, it is one very deeply rooted, and in which my eyesight is accomplice.

Soon after a train whisked by, announcing and accompanying its passage by the swift beating of a sort of chapel-bell upon the engine; and as it was for this we had been waiting, we were summoned by the cry of “All aboard!” and went on again upon our way. The whole line, it appeared, was topsy-turvy; an accident at midnight having thrown all the traffic hours into arrear. We paid for this in the flesh, for we had no meals all that day. Fruit we could buy upon the cars; and now and then we had a few minutes at some station with a meagre show of rolls and sandwiches for sale; but we were so many and so ravenous that, though I tried at every opportunity, the coffee was always exhausted before I could elbow my way to the counter.

Our American sunrise had ushered in a noble summer’s day. There was not a cloud; the sunshine was baking; yet in the woody river valleys among which we wound our way, the atmosphere preserved a sparkling freshness till late in the afternoon. It had an inland sweetness and variety to one newly from the sea; it smelt of woods, rivers, and the delved earth. These, though in so far a country, were airs from home. I stood on the platform by the hour; and, as I saw, one after another, pleasant villages, carts upon the highway and fishers by the stream, and heard cockcrows and cheery voices in the distance, and beheld the sun no longer shining blankly on the plains of ocean, but striking among shapely hills and his light dispersed and coloured by a thousand accidents of form and surface, I began to exult with myself upon this rise in life like a man who had come into a rich estate. And when I had asked the name of the river from the brakesman, and heard that it was called the Susquehanna, the beauty of the name seemed to be part and parcel of the beauty of the land. As when Adam with divine fitness named the creatures, so this word Susquehanna was at once accepted by the fancy. That was the name, as no other could be, for that shining river and desirable valley.

None can care for literature in itself who do not take a special pleasure in the sound of names; and there is no part of the world where nomenclature is so rich, poetical, humorous, and picturesque as the United States of America. All times, races, and languages have brought their contribution. Pekin is in the same State with Euclid, with Bellefontaine, and with Sansdusky. Chelsea, with its London associations of red brick, Sloane Square, and the King’s Road, is own suburb to stately and primeval Memphis; there they have their seat, translated names of cities, where the Mississippi runs by Tennessee and Arkansas; and both, while I was crossing the continent, lay, watched by armed men, in the horror and isolation of a plague. Old, red Manhattan lies, like an Indian arrowhead under a steam factory, below anglified New York. The names of the States and Territories themselves form a chorus of sweet and most romantic vocables: Delaware, Ohio, Indiana, Florida, Dakota, Iowa, Wyoming, Minnesota, and the Carolinas; there are few poems with a nobler music for the ear: a songful, tuneful land; and if the new Homer shall arise from the Western continent, his verse will be enriched, his pages sing spontaneously, with the names of states and cities that would strike the fancy in a business circular.

Late in the evening we were landed in a waiting-room at Pittsburg. I had now under my charge a young and sprightly Dutch widow with her children; these I was to watch over providentially for a certain distance farther on the way; but as I found she was furnished with a basket of eatables, I left her in the waiting-room to seek a dinner for myself.

I mention this meal, not only because it was the first of which I had partaken for about thirty hours, but because it was the means of my first introduction to a coloured gentleman. He did me the honour to wait upon me after a fashion, while I was eating; and with every word, look, and gesture marched me farther into the country of surprise. He was indeed strikingly unlike the negroes of Mrs. Beecher Stowe, or the Christy Minstrels of my youth. Imagine a gentleman, certainly somewhat dark, but of a pleasant warm hue, speaking English with a slight and rather odd foreign accent, every inch a man of the world, and armed with manners so patronisingly superior that I am at a loss to name their parallel in England. A butler perhaps rides as high over the unbutlered, but then he sets you right with a reserve and a sort of sighing patience which one is often moved to admire. And again, the abstract butler never stoops to familiarity. But the coloured gentleman will pass you a wink at a time; he is familiar like an upper-form boy to a fag; he unbends to you like Prince Hal with Poins and Falstaff. He makes himself at home and welcome. Indeed, I may say, this waiter behaved himself to me throughout that supper much as, with us, a young, free, and not very self-respecting master might behave to a good-looking chambermaid. I had come prepared to pity the poor negro, to put him at his ease, to prove in a thousand condescensions that I was no sharer in the prejudice of race; but I assure you I put my patronage away for another occasion, and had the grace to be pleased with that result.

Seeing he was a very honest fellow, I consulted him upon a point of etiquette: if one should offer to tip the American waiter? Certainly not, he told me. Never. It would not do. They considered themselves too highly to accept. They would even resent the offer. As for him and me, we had enjoyed a very pleasant conversation; he, in particular, had found much pleasure in my society; I was a stranger; this was exactly one of those rare conjunctures.... Without being very clear-seeing, I can still perceive the sun at noonday; and the coloured gentleman deftly pocketed a quarter.

Wednesday. — A little after midnight I convoyed my widow and orphans on board the train; and morning found us far into Ohio. This had early been a favourite home of my imagination; I have played at being in Ohio by the week, and enjoyed some capital sport there with a dummy gun, my person being still unbreeched. My preference was founded on a work which appeared in *Cassell's Family Paper*, and was read aloud to me by my nurse. It narrated the doings of one Custaloga, an Indian brave, who, in the last chapter, very obligingly washed the paint off his face and became Sir Reginald Somebody-or-other; a trick I never forgave him. The idea of a man being an Indian brave, and then giving that up to be a baronet, was one which my mind rejected. It offended verisimilitude, like the pretended anxiety of Robinson Crusoe and others to escape from uninhabited islands.

But Ohio was not at all as I had pictured it. We were now on those great plains which stretch unbroken to the Rocky Mountains. The country was flat like Holland, but far from being dull. All through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, or for as much as I saw of them from the train and in my waking moments, it was rich and various, and breathed an elegance peculiar to itself. The tall corn pleased the eye; the trees were graceful in themselves, and framed the plain into long, aërial vistas; and the clean, bright, gardened townships spoke of country fare and pleasant summer evenings on the stoop. It was a sort of flat paradise; but, I am afraid, not unfrequented by the devil. That morning dawned with such a freezing chill as I have rarely felt; a chill that was not perhaps so measurable by instrument, as it struck home upon the heart and seemed to travel with the blood. Day came in with a shudder. White mists lay thinly over the surface of the plain, as we see them more often on a lake; and though the sun had soon dispersed and drunk them up, leaving an atmosphere of fever heat and crystal pureness from horizon to horizon, the mists had still been there, and we knew that this paradise was haunted by killing damps and foul malaria. The fences along the line bore but two descriptions of advertisement; one to recommend tobaccos, and the other to vaunt remedies against the ague. At the point of day, and while we were all in the grasp of that first chill, a native of the State, who had got in at some way station, pronounced it, with a doctoral air, "a fever and ague morning."

The Dutch widow was a person of some character. She had conceived at first sight a great aversion for the present writer, which she was at no pains to conceal. But, being a woman of a practical spirit, she made no difficulty about accepting my attentions, and encouraged me to buy her children fruits and candies, to carry all her parcels, and even to sleep upon the floor that she might profit by my empty seat. Nay, she was such a rattle by nature, and so powerfully moved to autobiographical talk, that she was forced, for want of a better, to take me into confidence and tell me the story of her life. I heard about her late husband, who seemed to have made his chief impression by taking her out pleasuring on Sundays. I could tell you her prospects, her hopes, the amount of her fortune, the cost of her housekeeping by the week, and a variety of particular matters that are not usually disclosed except to friends. At one station, she shook up her children to look at a man on the platform and say if he were not like Mr. Z.; while to me she explained how she had been keeping company with this Mr. Z., how far matters had proceeded, and how it was because of his desistance that she was now travelling to the west. Then, when I was thus put in possession of the facts, she asked my judgment on that type of manly beauty. I admired it to her heart's content. She was not, I think, remarkably veracious in talk, but broidered as fancy prompted, and built castles in the air out of her past; yet she had that sort of candour, to keep me, in spite of all these confidences, steadily aware of her aversion. Her parting words were ingeniously honest. “I am sure,” said she, “we all *ought* to be very much obliged to you.” I cannot pretend that she put me at my ease; but I had a certain respect for such a genuine dislike. A poor nature would have slipped, in the course of these familiarities, into a sort of worthless toleration for me.

We reached Chicago in the evening. I was turned out of the cars, bundled into an omnibus, and driven off through the streets to the station of a different railroad. Chicago seemed a great and gloomy city. I remember having subscribed, let us say sixpence, towards its restoration at the period of the fire; and now when I beheld street after street of ponderous houses and crowds of comfortable burghers, I thought it would be a graceful act for the corporation to refund that sixpence, or, at the least, to entertain me to a cheerful dinner. But there was no word of restitution. I was that city's benefactor, yet I was received in a third-class waiting-room, and the best dinner I could get was a dish of ham and eggs at my own expense.

I can safely say, I have never been so dog-tired as that night in Chicago. When it was time to start, I descended the platform like a man in a dream. It was a long train, lighted from end to end; and car after car, as I came up with it, was not only filled, but overflowing. My valise, my knapsack, my rug, with those six ponderous tomes of Bancroft, weighed me double; I was hot, feverish, painfully athirst;

and there was a great darkness over me, an internal darkness, not to be dispelled by gas. When at last I found an empty bench, I sank into it like a bundle of rags, the world seemed to swim away into the distance, and my consciousness dwindled within me to a mere pin's head, like a taper on a foggy night.

When I came a little more to myself, I found that there had sat down before me a very cheerful, rosy little German gentleman, somewhat gone in drink, who was talking away to me, nineteen to the dozen, as they say. I did my best to keep up the conversation; for it seemed to me dimly as if something depended upon that. I heard him relate, among many other things, that there were pickpockets on the train, who had already robbed a man of forty dollars and a return ticket; but though I caught the words, I do not think I properly understood the sense until next morning; and I believe I replied at the time that I was very glad to hear it. What else he talked about I have no guess; I remember a gabbling sound of words, his profuse gesticulation, and his smile, which was highly explanatory; but no more. And I suppose I must have shown my confusion very plainly; for, first, I saw him knit his brows at me like one who has conceived a doubt; next, he tried me in German, supposing perhaps that I was unfamiliar with the English tongue; and finally, in despair, he rose and left me. I felt chagrined; but my fatigue was too crushing for delay, and, stretching myself as far as that was possible upon the bench, I was received at once into a dreamless stupor.

The little German gentleman was only going a little way into the suburbs after a *dîner fin*, and was bent on entertainment while the journey lasted. Having failed with me, he pitched next upon another emigrant, who had come through from Canada, and was not one jot less weary than myself. Nay, even in a natural state, as I found next morning when we scraped acquaintance, he was a heavy, uncommunicative man. After trying him on different topics, it appears that the little German gentleman flounced into a temper, swore an oath or two, and departed from that car in quest of livelier society. Poor little gentleman! I suppose he thought an emigrant should be a rollicking, free-hearted blade, with a flask of foreign brandy and a long, comical story to beguile the moments of digestion.

Thursday. — I suppose there must be a cycle in the fatigue of travelling, for when I awoke next morning, I was entirely renewed in spirits and ate a hearty breakfast of porridge, with sweet milk, and coffee and hot cakes, at Burlington upon the Mississippi. Another long day's ride followed, with but one feature worthy of remark. At a place called Creston, a drunken man got in. He was aggressively friendly, but, according to English notions, not at all unpresentable upon a train. For one stage he eluded the notice of the officials; but just as we were beginning to move out of the next station, Cromwell by name, by came the conductor. There was a word or two of talk; and then the official had the man by the shoulders, twitched him from his seat, marched him through the car, and sent him flying on to the track. It was done in three motions, as exact as a piece of drill. The train was still moving slowly, although beginning to mend her pace, and the drunkard got his feet without a fall. He carried a red bundle, though not so red as his cheeks; and he shook this menacingly in the air with one hand, while the other stole behind him to the region of the kidneys. It was the first indication that I had come among revolvers, and I observed it with some emotion. The conductor stood on the steps with one hand on his hip, looking back at him; and perhaps this attitude imposed upon the creature, for he turned without further ado, and went off staggering along the track towards Cromwell, followed by a peal of laughter from the cars. They were speaking English all about me, but I knew I was in a foreign land.

Twenty minutes before nine that night, we were deposited at the Pacific Transfer Station near Council Bluffs, on the eastern bank of the Missouri river. Here we were to stay the night at a kind of caravanserai, set apart for emigrants. But I gave way to a thirst for luxury, separated myself from my companions, and marched with my effects into the Union Pacific Hotel. A white clerk and a coloured gentleman whom, in my plain European way, I should call the boots, were installed behind a counter like bank tellers. They took my name, assigned me a number, and proceeded to deal with my packages. And here came the tug of war. I wished to give up my packages into safe keeping; but I did not wish to go to bed. And this, it appeared, was impossible in an American hotel.

It was, of course, some inane misunderstanding, and sprang from my unfamiliarity with the language. For although two nations use the same words and read the same books, intercourse is not conducted by the dictionary. The business of life is not carried on by words, but in set phrases, each with a special and almost a slang signification. Some international obscurity prevailed between me and the coloured gentleman at Council Bluffs; so that what I was asking, which seemed very natural to me, appeared to him a monstrous exigency. He refused, and that with the plainness of the West. This American manner of conducting matters of business is, at first, highly unpalatable to the European. When we approach a man in the way of his calling, and for those services by which he earns his bread, we consider him for the time being our hired servant. But in the American opinion, two gentlemen meet and have a friendly talk with a view to exchanging favours if they will agree to please. I know not which is the more convenient, nor even which is the more truly courteous. The

English stiffness unfortunately tends to be continued after the particular transaction is at an end, and thus favours class separations. But on the other hand, these equalitarian plainnesses leave an open field for the insolence of Jack-in-office.

I was nettled by the coloured gentleman's refusal, and unbuttoned my wrath under the similitude of ironical submission. I knew nothing, I said, of the ways of American hotels; but I had no desire to give trouble. If there was nothing for it but to get to bed immediately, let him say the word, and though it was not my habit, I should cheerfully obey.

He burst into a shout of laughter. "Ah!" said he, "you do not know about America. They are fine people in America. Oh! you will like them very well. But you mustn't get mad. I know what you want. You come along with me."

And issuing from behind the counter, and taking me by the arm like an old acquaintance, he led me to the bar of the hotel.

"There," said he, pushing me from him by the shoulder, "go and have a drink!"

[] Please pronounce *Arkansaw*, with the accent on the first.

THE EMIGRANT TRAIN

All this while I had been travelling by mixed trains, where I might meet with Dutch widows and little German gentry fresh from table. I had been but a latent emigrant; now I was to be branded once more, and put apart with my fellows. It was about two in the afternoon of Friday that I found myself in front of Emigrant House, with more than a hundred others, to be sorted and boxed for the journey. A white-haired official, with a stick under one arm and a list in the other hand, stood apart in front of us, and called name after name in the tone of a command. At each name you would see a family gather up its brats and bundles and run for the hindmost of the three cars that stood awaiting us, and I soon concluded that this was to be set apart for the women and children. The second, or central car, it turned out, was devoted to men travelling alone, and the third to the Chinese. The official was easily moved to anger at the least delay; but the emigrants were both quick at answering their names, and speedy in getting themselves and their effects on board.

The families once housed, we men carried the second car without ceremony by simultaneous assault. I suppose the reader has some notion of an American railroad car, that long, narrow wooden box, like a flat-roofed Noah's ark, with a stove and a convenience, one at either end, a passage down the middle, and transverse benches upon either hand. Those destined for emigrants on the Union Pacific are only remarkable for their extreme plainness, nothing but wood entering in any part into their constitution, and for the usual inefficacy of the lamps, which often went out and shed but a dying glimmer even while they burned. The benches are too short for anything but a young child. Where there is scarce elbow-room for two to sit, there will not be space enough for one to lie. Hence the company, or rather, as it appears from certain bills about the Transfer Station, the company's servants, have conceived a plan for the better accommodation of travellers. They prevail on every two to chum together. To each of the chums they sell a board and three square cushions stuffed with straw, and covered with thin cotton. The benches can be made to face each other in pairs, for the backs are reversible. On the approach of night the boards are laid from bench to bench, making a couch wide enough for two, and long enough for a man of the middle height; and the chums lie down side by side upon the cushions with the head to the conductor's van and the feet to the engine. When the train is full, of course this plan is impossible, for there must not be more than one to every bench, neither can it be carried out unless the chums agree. It was to bring about this last condition that our white-haired official now bestirred himself. He made a most active master of ceremonies, introducing likely couples, and even guaranteeing the amiability and honesty of each. The greater the number of happy couples the better for his pocket, for it was he who sold the raw material of the beds. His price for one board and three straw cushions began with two dollars and a half; but before the train left, and, I am sorry to say, long after I had purchased mine, it had fallen to one dollar and a half.

The match-maker had a difficulty with me; perhaps, like some ladies, I showed myself too eager for union at any price; but certainly the first who was picked out to be my bedfellow declined the honour without thanks. He was an old, heavy, slow-spoken man, I think from Yankeeland, looked me all over with great timidity, and then began to excuse himself in broken phrases. He didn't know the young man, he said. The young man might be very honest, but how was he to know that? There was another young man whom he had met already in the train; he guessed *he* was honest, and would prefer to chum with *him* upon the whole. All this without any sort of excuse, as though I had been inanimate or absent. I began to tremble lest every one should refuse my company, and I be left rejected. But the next in turn was a tall, strapping, long-limbed, small-headed, curly-haired Pennsylvania Dutchman, with a soldierly smartness in his manner. To be exact, he had acquired it in the navy. But that was all one; he had at least been trained to desperate resolves, so he accepted the match, and the white-haired swindler pronounced the connubial benediction, and pocketed his fees.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in making up the train. I am afraid to say how many baggage-waggons followed the engine — certainly a score; then came the Chinese, then we, then the families, and the rear was brought up by the conductor in what, if I have it rightly, is called his caboose. The class to which I belonged was of course far the largest, and we ran over, so to speak, to both sides; so that there were some Caucasians among the Chinamen, and some bachelors among the families. But our own car was pure from admixture, save for one little boy of eight or nine, who had the whooping-cough. At last, about six, the long train crawled out of the Transfer Station and across the wide Missouri river to Omaha, westward bound.

It was a troubled uncomfortable evening in the cars. There was thunder in the air, which helped to keep us restless. A man played many airs upon the cornet, and none of them were much attended to, until he came to "Home, sweet home." It was truly strange to note how the talk ceased at that, and the faces began to lengthen. I have no idea whether musically this air is to be considered good or bad; but it belongs to that class of art which may be best described as a brutal assault upon the feelings. Pathos must be relieved by dignity of treatment. If you wallow naked in the pathetic, like the author of “Home, sweet home,” you make your hearers weep in an unmanly fashion; and even while yet they are moved, they despise themselves and hate the occasion of their weakness. It did not come to tears that night, for the experiment was interrupted. An elderly, hard-looking man, with a goatee beard and about as much appearance of sentiment as you would expect from a retired slaver, turned with a start and bade the performer stop that “damned thing.” “I’ve heard about enough of that,” he added; “give us something about the good country we’re going to.” A murmur of adhesion ran round the car; the performer took the instrument from his lips, laughed and nodded, and then struck into a dancing measure; and, like a new Timotheus, stilled immediately the emotion he had raised.

The day faded; the lamps were lit; a party of wild young men, who got off next evening at North Platte, stood together on the stern platform, singing “The Sweet By-and-bye” with very tuneful voices; the chums began to put up their beds; and it seemed as if the business of the day were at an end. But it was not so; for, the train stopping at some station, the cars were instantly thronged with the natives, wives and fathers, young men and maidens, some of them in little more than nightgear, some with stable lanterns, and all offering beds for sale. Their charge began with twenty-five cents a cushion, but fell, before the train went on again, to fifteen, with the bed-board gratis, or less than one-fifth of what I had paid for mine at the Transfer. This is my contribution to the economy of future emigrants.

A great personage on an American train is the newsboy. He sells books (such books!), papers, fruit, lollipops, and cigars; and on emigrant journeys, soap, towels, tin washing-dishes, tin coffee-pitchers, coffee, tea, sugar, and tinned eatables, mostly hash or beans and bacon. Early next morning the newsboy went round the cars, and chumming on a more extended principle became the order of the hour. It requires but a copartnery of two to manage beds; but washing and eating can be carried on most economically by a syndicate of three. I myself entered a little after sunrise into articles of agreement, and became one of the firm of Pennsylvania, Shakespeare, and Dubuque. Shakespeare was my own nickname on the cars; Pennsylvania that of my bedfellow; and Dubuque, the name of a place in the State of Iowa, that of an amiable young fellow going west to cure an asthma, and retarding his recovery by incessantly chewing or smoking, and sometimes chewing and smoking together. I have never seen tobacco so sillily abused. Shakespeare bought a tin washing-dish, Dubuque a towel, and Pennsylvania a brick of soap. The partners used these instruments, one after another, according to the order of their first awaking; and when the firm had finished there was no want of borrowers. Each filled the tin dish at the water filter opposite the stove, and retired with the whole stock in trade to the platform of the car. There he knelt down, supporting himself by a shoulder against the woodwork, or one elbow crooked about the railing, and made a shift to wash his face and neck and hands, — a cold, an insufficient, and, if the train is moving rapidly, a somewhat dangerous toilet.

On a similar division of expense, the firm of Pennsylvania, Shakespeare, and Dubuque supplied themselves with coffee, sugar, and necessary vessels; and their operations are a type of what went on through all the cars. Before the sun was up the stove would be brightly burning; at the first station the natives would come on board with milk and eggs and coffee cakes; and soon from end to end the car would be filled with little parties breakfasting upon the bed-boards. It was the pleasantest hour of the day.

There were meals to be had, however, by the wayside; a breakfast in the morning, a dinner somewhere between eleven and two, and supper from five to eight or nine at night. We had rarely less than twenty minutes for each; and if we had not spent many another twenty minutes waiting for some express upon a side track among many miles of desert, we might have taken an hour to each repast and arrived at San Francisco up to time. For haste is not the foible of an emigrant train. It gets through on sufferance, running the gauntlet among its more considerable brethren; should there be a block, it is unhesitatingly sacrificed; and they cannot, in consequence, predict the length of the passage within a day or so. Civility is the main comfort that you miss. Equality, though conceived very largely in America, does not extend so low down as to an emigrant. Thus in all other trains, a warning cry of “All aboard!” recalls the passengers to take their seats; but as soon as I was alone with emigrants, and from the Transfer all the way to San Francisco, I found this ceremony was pretermitted; the train stole from the station without note of warning, and you had to keep an eye upon it even while you ate. The annoyance is considerable, and the disrespect both wanton and petty.

Many conductors, again, will hold no communication with an emigrant. I asked a conductor one day at what time the train would stop for dinner; as he made no answer I repeated the question, with a like result; a third time I returned to the charge, and then Jack-in-office looked me coolly in the face for several seconds and turned ostentatiously away. I believe he was half ashamed of his brutality; for when another person made the same inquiry, although he still refused the information, he condescended to answer, and even to justify his reticence in a voice loud enough for me to hear. It was, he said, his principle not to tell people where they were to dine; for one answer led to many other questions, as what o'clock it was? or, how soon should we be there? and he could not afford to be eternally worried.

As you are thus cut off from the superior authorities, a great deal of your comfort depends on the character of the newsboy. He has it in his power indefinitely to better and brighten the emigrant's lot. The newsboy with whom we started from the Transfer was a dark, bullying, contemptuous, insolent scoundrel, who treated us like dogs. Indeed, in his case, matters came nearly to a fight. It happened thus: he was going his rounds through the cars with some commodities for sale, and coming to a party who were at *Seven-up* or *Cascino* (our two games) upon a bed-board, slung down a cigar-box in the middle of the cards, knocking one man's hand to the floor. It was the last straw. In a moment the whole party were upon their feet, the cigars were upset, and he was ordered to "get out of that directly, or he would get more than he reckoned for." The fellow grumbled and muttered, but ended by making off, and was less openly insulting in the future. On the other hand, the lad who rode with us in this capacity from Ogden to Sacramento made himself the friend of all, and helped us with information, attention, assistance, and a kind countenance. He told us where and when we should have our meals, and how long the train would stop; kept seats at table for those who were delayed, and watched that we should neither be left behind nor yet unnecessarily hurried. You, who live at home at ease, can hardly realise the greatness of this service, even had it stood alone. When I think of that lad coming and going, train after train, with his bright face and civil words, I see how easily a good man may become the benefactor of his kind. Perhaps he is discontented with himself, perhaps troubled with ambitions; why, if he but knew it, he is a hero of the old Greek stamp; and while he thinks he is only earning a profit of a few cents, and that perhaps exorbitant, he is doing a man's work, and bettering the world.

I must tell here an experience of mine with another newsboy. I tell it because it gives so good an example of that uncivil kindness of the American, which is perhaps their most bewildering character to one newly landed. It was immediately after I had left the emigrant train; and I am told I looked like a man at death's door, so much had this long journey shaken me. I sat at the end of a car, and the catch being broken, and myself feverish and sick, I had to hold the door open with my foot for the sake of air. In this attitude my leg debarred the newsboy from his box of merchandise. I made haste to let him pass when I observed that he was coming; but I was busy with a book, and so once or twice he came upon me unawares. On these occasions he most rudely struck my foot aside; and though I myself apologised, as if to show him the way, he answered me never a word. I chafed furiously, and I fear the next time it would have come to words. But suddenly I felt a touch upon my shoulder, and a large juicy pear was put into my hand. It was the newsboy, who had observed that I was looking ill, and so made this present out of a tender heart. For the rest of the journey I was petted like a sick child; he lent me newspapers, thus depriving himself of his legitimate profit on their sale, and came repeatedly to sit by me and cheer me up.

THE PLAINS OF NEBRASKA

It had thundered on the Friday night, but the sun rose on Saturday without a cloud. We were at sea — there is no other adequate expression — on the plains of Nebraska. I made my observatory on the top of a fruit-waggon, and sat by the hour upon that perch to spy about me, and to spy in vain for something new. It was a world almost without a feature; an empty sky, an empty earth; front and back, the line of railway stretched from horizon to horizon, like a cue across a billiard-board; on either hand, the green plain ran till it touched the skirts of heaven. Along the track innumerable wild sunflowers, no bigger than a crown-piece, bloomed in a continuous flower-bed; grazing beasts were seen upon the prairie at all degrees of distance and diminution; and now and again we might perceive a few dots beside the railroad which grew more and more distinct as we drew nearer, till they turned into wooden cabins, and then dwindled and dwindled in our wake until they melted into their surroundings, and we were once more alone upon the billiard-board. The train toiled over this infinity like a snail; and being the one thing moving, it was wonderful what huge proportions it began to assume in our regard. It seemed miles in length, and either end of it within but a step of the horizon. Even my own body or my own head seemed a great thing in that emptiness. I note the feeling the more readily as it is the contrary of what I have read of in the experience of others. Day and night, above the roar of the train, our ears were kept busy with the incessant chirp of grasshoppers — a noise like the winding up of countless clocks and watches, which began after a while to seem proper to that land.

To one hurrying through by steam there was a certain exhilaration in this spacious vacancy, this greatness of the air, this discovery of the whole arch of heaven, this straight, unbroken, prison-line of the horizon. Yet one could not but reflect upon the weariness of those who passed by there in old days, at the foot's pace of oxen, painfully urging their teams, and with no landmark but that unattainable evening sun for which they steered, and which daily fled them by an equal stride. They had nothing, it would seem, to overtake; nothing by which to reckon their advance; no sight for repose or for encouragement; but stage after stage, only the dead green waste under foot, and the mocking, fugitive horizon. But the eye, as I have been told, found differences even here; and at the worst the emigrant came, by perseverance, to the end of his toil. It is the settlers, after all, at whom we have a right to marvel. Our consciousness, by which we live, is itself but the creature of variety. Upon what food does it subsist in such a land? What livelihood can repay a human creature for a life spent in this huge sameness? He is cut off from books, from news, from company, from all that can relieve existence but the prosecution of his affairs. A sky full of stars is the most varied spectacle that he can hope for. He may walk five miles and see nothing; ten, and it is as though he had not moved; twenty, and still he is in the midst of the same great level, and has approached no nearer to the one object within view, the flat horizon which keeps pace with his advance. We are full at home of the question of agreeable wall-papers, and wise people are of opinion that the temper may be quieted by sedative surroundings. But what is to be said of the Nebraskan settler? His is a wall-paper with a vengeance — one quarter of the universe laid bare in all its gauntness. His eye must embrace at every glance the whole seeming concave of the visible world; it quails before so vast an outlook, it is tortured by distance; yet there is no rest or shelter, till the man runs into his cabin, and can repose his sight upon things near at hand. Hence, I am told, a sickness of the vision peculiar to these empty plains.

Yet perhaps with sunflowers and cicadæ, summer and winter, cattle, wife and family, the settler may create a full and various existence. One person at least I saw upon the plains who seemed in every way superior to her lot. This was a woman who boarded us at a way station, selling milk. She was largely formed; her features were more than comely; she had that great rarity — a fine complexion which became her; and her eyes were kind, dark, and steady. She sold milk with patriarchal grace. There was not a line in her countenance, not a note in her soft and sleepy voice, but spoke of an entire contentment with her life. It would have been fatuous arrogance to pity such a woman. Yet the place where she lived was to me almost ghastly. Less than a dozen wooden houses, all of a shape and all nearly of a size, stood planted along the railway lines. Each stood apart in its own lot. Each opened direct off the billiard-board, as if it were a billiard-board indeed, and these only models that had been set down upon it ready made. Her own, into which I looked, was clean but very empty, and showed nothing homelike but the burning fire. This extreme newness, above all in so naked and flat a country, gives a strong impression of artificiality. With none of the litter and discoloration of human life; with the paths unworn, and the houses still sweating from the axe, such a settlement as this seems purely scenic. The mind is loth to accept it for a piece of reality; and it seems incredible that life can go on with so few properties, or the great child, man, find entertainment in so bare a playroom.

And truly it is as yet an incomplete society in some points; or at least it contained, as I passed through, one person incompletely civilised. At North Platte, where we supped that evening, one man asked another to pass the milk-jug. This other was well dressed and of what we should call a respectable appearance; a darkish man, high-spoken, eating as though he had some usage of society; but he turned upon the first speaker with extraordinary vehemence of tone —

"There's a waiter here!" he cried.

"I only asked you to pass the milk," explained the first.

Here is the retort verbatim —

"Pass! Hell! I'm not paid for that business; the waiter's paid for it. You should use civility at table, and, by God, I'll show you how!"

The other man very wisely made no answer, and the bully went on with his supper as though nothing had occurred. It pleases me to think that some day soon he will meet one of his own kidney; and perhaps both may fall.

THE DESERT OF WYOMING

To cross such a plain is to grow homesick for the mountains. I longed for the Black Hills of Wyoming, which I knew we were soon to enter, like an ice-bound whaler for the spring. Alas! and it was a worse country than the other. All Sunday and Monday we travelled through these sad mountains, or over the main ridge of the Rockies, which is a fair match to them for misery of aspect. Hour after hour it was the same unhomely and unkindly world about our onward path; tumbled boulders, cliffs that drearily imitate the shape of monuments and fortifications — how drearily, how tamely, none can tell who has not seen them; not a tree, not a patch of sward, not one shapely or commanding mountain form; sage-brush, eternal sage-brush; over all the same weariful and gloomy colouring, greys warming into brown, greys darkening towards black; and for sole sign of life, here and there a few fleeing antelopes; here and there, but at incredible intervals, a creek running in a cañon. The plains have a grandeur of their own; but here there is nothing but a contorted smallness. Except for the air, which was light and stimulating, there was not one good circumstance in that God-forsaken land.

I had been suffering in my health a good deal all the way; and at last, whether I was exhausted by my complaint or poisoned in some wayside eating-house, the evening we left Laramie I fell sick outright. That was a night which I shall not readily forget. The lamps did not go out; each made a faint shining in its own neighbourhood, and the shadows were confounded together in the long, hollow box of the car. The sleepers lay in uneasy attitudes; here two chums alongside, flat upon their backs like dead folk; there a man sprawling on the floor, with his face upon his arm; there another half seated with his head and shoulders on the bench. The most passive were continually and roughly shaken by the movement of the train; others stirred, turned, or stretched out their arms like children; it was surprising how many groaned and murmured in their sleep; and as I passed to and fro, stepping across the prostrate, and caught now a snore, now a gasp, now a half-formed word, it gave me a measure of the worthlessness of rest in that unresting vehicle. Although it was chill, I was obliged to open my window, for the degradation of the air soon became intolerable to one who was awake and using the full supply of life. Outside, in a glimmering night, I saw the black, amorphous hills shoot by unweariedly into our wake. They that long for morning have never longed for it more earnestly than I.

And yet when day came, it was to shine upon the same broken and unsightly quarter of the world. Mile upon mile, and not a tree, a bird, or a river. Only down the long, sterile cañons, the train shot hooting, and awoke the resting echo. That train was the one piece of life in all the deadly land; it was the one actor, the one spectacle fit to be observed in this paralysis of man and nature. And when I think how the railroad has been pushed through this unwatered wilderness and haunt of savage tribes, and now will bear an emigrant for some £12 from the Atlantic to the Golden Gates; how at each stage of the construction, roaring, impromptu cities, full of gold and lust and death, sprang up and then died away again, and are now but wayside stations in the desert; how in these uncouth places pig-tailed Chinese pirates worked side by side with border ruffians and broken men from Europe, talking together in a mixed dialect, mostly oaths, gambling, drinking, quarrelling, and murdering like wolves; how the plumed hereditary lord of all America heard, in this last fastness, the scream of the "bad medicine waggon" charioting his foes; and then when I go on to remember that all this epical turmoil was conducted by gentlemen in frock-coats, and with a view to nothing more extraordinary than a fortune and a subsequent visit to Paris, it seems to me, I own, as if this railway were the one typical achievement of the age in which we live, as if it brought together into one plot all the ends of the world and all the degrees of social rank, and offered to some great writer the busiest, the most extended, and the most varied subject for an enduring literary work. If it be romance, if it be contrast, if it be heroism that we require, what was Troy town to this? But, alas! it is not these things that are necessary — it is only Homer.

Here also we are grateful to the train, as to some god who conducts us swiftly through these shades and by so many hidden perils. Thirst, hunger, the sleight and ferocity of Indians, are all no more feared, so lightly do we skim these horrible lands; as the gull, who wings safely through the hurricane and past the shark. Yet we should not be forgetful of these hardships of the past; and to keep the balance true, since I have complained of the trifling discomforts of my journey, perhaps more than was enough, let me add an original document. It was not written by Homer, but by a boy of eleven, long since dead, and is dated only twenty years ago. I shall punctuate, to make things clearer, but not change the spelling.

"My dear Sister Mary, — I am afraid you will go nearly crazy when you read my letter. If Jerry" (the writer's eldest brother) "has not written to you before now, you will be surprised to heare that we are in California, and that poor Thomas" (another brother, of fifteen) "is dead. We started from — — — — in July, with plenty of provisions and too yoke oxen. We went along very well till we got within six or seven hundred miles of California, when the Indians attacked us. We found places where they had killed the emigrants. We had one passenger with us, too guns, and one

revolver; so we ran all the lead We had into bullets hung the guns up in the wagon so we could get at them in a minit. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon; droave the cattel a little way; when a prairie chicken alited a little way from the wagon.

"Jerry took out one of the guns to shoot it, and told Tom drive the oxen. Tom and I drove the oxen, and Jerry and the passenger went on. Then, after a little, I left Tom and caught up with Jerry and the other man. Jerry stopped for Tom to come up; me and the man went on and sit down by a little stream. In a few minutes we heard some noise; then three shots (they all struck poor Tom, I suppose); then they gave the war hoop, and as many as twenty of the red skins came down upon us. The three that shot Tom was hid by the side of the road in the bushes.

"I thought the Tom and Jerry were shot; so I told the other man that Tom and Jerry were dead, and that we had better try to escape, if possible. I had no shoes on; having a sore foot, I thought I would not put them on. The man and me run down the road, but We was soon stopt by an Indian on a pony. We then turend the other way, and run up the side of the Mountain, and hid behind some cedar trees, and stayed there till dark. The Indians hunted all over after us, and verry close to us, so close that we could here there tomyhawks Jingle. At dark the man and me started on, I stubing my toes against sticks and stones. We traveld on all night; and next morning, Just as it was getting gray, we saw something in the shape of a man. It layed Down in the grass. We went up to it, and it was Jerry. He thought we ware Indians. You can imagine how glad he was to see me. He thought we was all dead but him, and we thought him and Tom was dead. He had the gun that he took out of the wagon to shoot the prairie Chicken; all he had was the load that was in it.

"We traveld on till about eight o'clock, We caught up with one wagon with too men with it. We had traveld with them before one day; we stopt and they Drove on; we knew that they was ahead of us, unless they had been killed to. My feet was so sore when we caught up with them that I had to ride; I could not step. We traveld on for too days, when the men that owned the cattle said they would (could) not drive them another inch. We unyoked the oxen; we had about seventy pounds of flour; we took it out and divided it into four packs. Each of the men took about 18 pounds apiece and a blanket. I carried a little bacon, dried meat, and little quilt; I had in all about twelve pounds. We had one pint of flour a day for our alloyance. Sometimes we made soup of it; sometimes we (made) pancakes; and sometimes mixed it up with cold water and eat it that way. We traveld twelve or fourteen days. The time came at last when we should have to reach some place or starve. We saw fresh horse and cattle tracks. The morning come, we scraped all the flour out of the sack, mixed it up and baked it into bread, and made some soup, and eat everything we had. We traveld on all day without anything to eat, and that evening we caught up

with a sheep train of eight wagons. We traveld with them till we arrived at the settlements; and know I am safe in California, and got to good home, and going to school.

"Jerry is working in — — — — It is a good country. You can get from 50 to 60 and 75 Dollars for cooking. Tell me all about the affairs in the States, and how all the folks get along."

And so ends this artless narrative. The little man was at school again, God bless him, while his brother lay scalped upon the desert.

FELLOW PASSENGERS

At Ogden we changed cars from the Union Pacific to the Central Pacific line of railroad. The change was doubly welcome; for, first, we had better cars on the new line; and, second, those in which we had been cooped for more than ninety hours had begun to stink abominably. Several yards away, as we returned, let us say from dinner, our nostrils were assailed by rancid air. I have stood on a platform while the whole train was shunting; and as the dwelling-cars drew near, there would come a whiff of pure menagerie, only a little sourer, as from men instead of monkeys. I think we are human only in virtue of open windows. Without fresh air, you only require a bad heart, and a remarkable command of the Queen’s English, to become such another as Dean Swift; a kind of leering human goat, leaping and wagging your scut on mountains of offence. I do my best to keep my head the other way, and look for the human rather than the bestial in this Yahoo-like business of the emigrant train. But one thing I must say, the car of the Chinese was notably the least offensive.

The cars on the Central Pacific were nearly twice as high, and so proportionally airier; they were freshly varnished, which gave us all a sense of cleanliness as though we had bathed; the seats drew out and joined in the centre, so that there was no more need for bed-boards; and there was an upper tier of berths which could be closed by day and opened at night.

I had by this time some opportunity of seeing the people whom I was among. They were in rather marked contrast to the emigrants I had met on board ship while crossing the Atlantic. They were mostly lumpish fellows, silent and noisy, a common combination; somewhat sad, I should say, with an extraordinary poor taste in humour, and little interest in their fellow-creatures beyond that of a cheap and merely external curiosity. If they heard a man’s name and business, they seemed to think they had the heart of that mystery; but they were as eager to know that much as they were indifferent to the rest. Some of them were on nettles till they learned your name was Dickson and you a journeyman baker; but beyond that, whether you were Catholic or Mormon, dull or clever, fierce or friendly, was all one to them. Others who were not so stupid, gossiped a little, and, I am bound to say, unkindly. A favourite witticism was for some lout to raise the alarm of “All aboard!” while the rest of us were dining, thus contributing his mite to the general discomfort. Such a one was always much applauded for his high spirits. When I was ill coming through Wyoming, I was astonished — fresh from the eager humanity on board ship — to meet with little but laughter. One of the young men even amused himself by incommoding me, as was then very easy; and that not from ill-nature, but mere clodlike incapacity to think, for he expected me to join the laugh. I did so, but it was phantom merriment. Later on, a man from Kansas had three violent epileptic fits, and though, of course, there were not wanting some to help him, it was rather superstitious terror than sympathy that his case evoked among his fellow-passengers. “Oh, I hope he’s not going to die!” cried a woman; “it would be terrible to have a dead body!” And there was a very general movement to leave the man behind at the next station. This, by good fortune, the conductor negatived.

There was a good deal of story-telling in some quarters; in others, little but silence. In this society, more than any other that ever I was in, it was the narrator alone who seemed to enjoy the narrative. It was rarely that any one listened for the listening. If he lent an ear to another man’s story, it was because he was in immediate want of a hearer for one of his own. Food and the progress of the train were the subjects most generally treated; many joined to discuss these who otherwise would hold their tongues. One small knot had no better occupation than to worm out of me my name; and the more they tried, the more obstinately fixed I grew to baffle them. They assailed me with artful questions and insidious offers of correspondence in the future; but I was perpetually on my guard, and parried their assaults with inward laughter. I am sure Dubuque would have given me ten dollars for the secret. He owed me far more, had he understood life, for thus preserving him a lively interest throughout the journey. I met one of my fellow-passengers months after, driving a street tramway car in San Francisco; and, as the joke was now out of season, told him my name without subterfuge. You never saw a man more chap-fallen. But had my name been Demogorgon, after so prolonged a mystery he had still been disappointed.

There were no emigrants direct from Europe — save one German family and a knot of Cornish miners who kept grimly by themselves, one reading the New Testament all day long through steel spectacles, the rest discussing privately the secrets of their old-world, mysterious race. Lady Hester Stanhope believed she could make something great of the Cornish; for my part, I can make nothing of them at all. A division of races, older and more original than that of Babel, keeps this close, esoteric family apart from neighbouring Englishmen. Not even a Red Indian seems more foreign in my eyes. This is one of the lessons of travel — that some of the strangest races dwell next door to you at home.

The rest were all American born, but they came from almost every quarter of that Continent. All the States of the North had sent out a fugitive to cross the plains with me. From Virginia, from

Pennsylvania, from New York, from far western Iowa and Kansas, from Maine that borders on the Canadas, and from the Canadas themselves — some one or two were fleeing in quest of a better land and better wages. The talk in the train, like the talk I heard on the steamer, ran upon hard times, short commons, and hope that moves ever westward. I thought of my shipful from Great Britain with a feeling of despair. They had come 3,000 miles, and yet not far enough. Hard times bowed them out of the Clyde, and stood to welcome them at Sandy Hook. Where were they to go? Pennsylvania, Maine, Iowa, Kansas? These were not places for immigration, but for emigration, it appeared; not one of them, but I knew a man who had lifted up his heel and left it for an ungrateful country. And it was still westward that they ran. Hunger, you would have thought, came out of the east like the sun, and the evening was made of edible gold. And, meantime, in the car in front of me, were there not half a hundred emigrants from the opposite quarter? Hungry Europe and hungry China, each pouring from their gates in search of provender, had here come face to face. The two waves had met; east and west had alike failed; the whole round world had been prospected and condemned; there was no El Dorado anywhere; and till one could emigrate to the moon, it seemed as well to stay patiently at home. Nor was there wanting another sign, at once more picturesque and more disheartening; for, as we continued to steam westward towards the land of gold, we were continually passing other emigrant trains upon the journey east; and these were as crowded as our own. Had all these return voyagers made a fortune in the mines? Were they all bound for Paris, and to be in Rome by Easter? It would seem not, for, whenever we met them, the passengers ran on the platform and cried to us through the windows, in a kind of wailing chorus, to "come back." On the plains of Nebraska, in the mountains of Wyoming, it was still the same cry, and dismal to my heart, "Come back!" That was what we heard by the way "about the good country we were going to." And at that very hour the Sand-lot of San Francisco was crowded with the unemployed, and the echo from the other side of Market Street was repeating the rant of demagogues.

If, in truth, it were only for the sake of wages that men emigrate, how many thousands would regret the bargain! But wages, indeed, are only one consideration out of many; for we are a race of gipsies, and love change and travel for themselves.

DESPISED RACES

Of all stupid ill-feelings, the sentiment of my fellow-Caucasians towards our companions in the Chinese car was the most stupid and the worst. They seemed never to have looked at them, listened to them, or thought of them, but hated them *a priori*. The Mongols were their enemies in that cruel and treacherous battlefield of money. They could work better and cheaper in half a hundred industries, and hence there was no calumny too idle for the Caucasians to repeat and even to believe. They declared them hideous vermin, and affected a kind of choking in the throat when they beheld them. Now, as a matter of fact, the young Chinese man is so like a large class of European women, that on raising my head and suddenly catching sight of one at a considerable distance, I have for an instant been deceived by the resemblance. I do not say it is the most attractive class of our women, but for all that many a man's wife is less pleasantly favoured. Again, my emigrants declared that the Chinese were dirty. I cannot say they were clean, for that was impossible upon the journey; but in their efforts after cleanliness they put the rest of us to shame. We all pigged and stewed in one infamy, wet our hands and faces for half a minute daily on the platform, and were unashamed. But the Chinese never lost an opportunity, and you would see them washing their feet — an act not dreamed of among ourselves — and going as far as decency permitted to wash their whole bodies. I may remark by the way that the dirtier people are in their persons the more delicate is their sense of modesty. A clean man strips in a crowded boathouse; but he who is unwashed slinks in and out of bed without uncovering an inch of skin. Lastly, these very foul and malodorous Caucasians entertained the surprising illusion that it was the Chinese waggon, and that alone, which stank. I have said already that it was the exception, and notably the freshest of the three.

These judgments are typical of the feeling in all Western America. The Chinese are considered stupid because they are imperfectly acquainted with English. They are held to be base because their dexterity and frugality enable them to underbid the lazy, luxurious Caucasian. They are said to be thieves; I am sure they have no monopoly of that. They are called cruel; the Anglo-Saxon and the cheerful Irishman may each reflect before he bears the accusation. I am told, again, that they are of the race of river pirates, and belong to the most despised and dangerous class in the Celestial Empire. But if this be so, what remarkable pirates have we here! and what must be the virtues, the industry, the education, and the intelligence of their superiors at home!

Awhile ago it was the Irish, now it is the Chinese that must go. Such is the cry. It seems, after all, that no country is bound to submit to immigration any more than to invasion; each is war to the knife, and resistance to either but legitimate defence. Yet we may regret the free tradition of the republic, which loved to depict herself with open arms, welcoming all unfortunates. And certainly, as a man who believes that he loves freedom, I may be excused some bitterness when I find her sacred name misused in the contention. It was but the other day that I heard a vulgar fellow in the Sand-lot, the popular tribune of San Francisco, roaring for arms and butchery. "At the call of Abreham Lincoln," said the orator, "ye rose in the name of freedom to set free the negroes; can ye not rise and liberate yourselves from a few dhirty Mongolians?"

For my own part, I could not look but with wonder and respect on the Chinese. Their forefathers watched the stars before mine had begun to keep pigs. Gunpowder and printing, which the other day we imitated, and a school of manners which we never had the delicacy so much as to desire to imitate, were theirs in a long-past antiquity. They walked the earth with us, but it seems they must be of different clay. They hear the clock strike the same hour, yet surely of a different epoch. They travel by steam conveyance, yet with such a baggage of old Asiatic thoughts and superstitions as might check the locomotive in its course. Whatever is thought within the circuit of the Great Wall; what the wry-eyed, spectacled schoolmaster teaches in the hamlets round Pekin; religions so old that our language looks a halfling boy alongside; philosophy so wise that our best philosophers find things therein to wonder at; all this travelled alongside of me for thousands of miles over plain and mountain. Heaven knows if we had one common thought or fancy all that way, or whether our eyes, which yet were formed upon the same design, beheld the same world out of the railway windows. And when either of us turned his thoughts to home and childhood, what a strange dissimilarity must there not have been in these pictures of the mind — when I beheld that old, grey, castled city, high throned above the firth, with the flag of Britain flying, and the red-coat sentry pacing over all; and the man in the next car to me would conjure up some junks and a pagoda and a fort of porcelain, and call it, with the same affection, home.

Another race shared among my fellow-passengers in the disfavour of the Chinese; and that, it is hardly necessary to say, was the noble red man of old story — he over whose own hereditary continent we had been steaming all these days. I saw no wild or independent Indian; indeed, I hear that such avoid the neighbourhood of the train; but now and again at way stations, a husband and wife and a few children, disgracefully dressed out with the sweepings of civilisation, came forth and stared upon the emigrants. The silent stoicism of their conduct, and the pathetic degradation of their appearance, would have touched any thinking creature, but my fellow-passengers danced and jested round them with a truly Cockney baseness. I was ashamed for the thing we call civilisation. We shall carry upon our consciences so much, at least, of our forefathers' misconduct as we continue to profit by ourselves.

If oppression drives a wise man mad, what should be raging in the hearts of these poor tribes, who have been driven back and back, step after step, their promised reservations torn from them one after another as the States extended westward, until at length they are shut up into these hideous mountain deserts of the centre — and even there find themselves invaded, insulted, and hunted out by ruffianly diggers? The eviction of the Cherokees (to name but an instance), the extortion of Indian agents, the outrages of the wicked, the ill-faith of all, nay, down to the ridicule of such poor beings as were here with me upon the train, make up a chapter of injustice and indignity such as a man must be in some ways base if his heart will suffer him to pardon or forget. These old, well-founded, historical hatreds have a savour of nobility for the independent. That the Jew should not love the Christian, nor the Irishman love the English, nor the Indian brave tolerate the thought of the American, is not disgraceful to the nature of man; rather, indeed, honourable, since it depends on wrongs ancient like the race, and not personal to him who cherishes the indignation.

TO THE GOLDEN GATES

A little corner of Utah is soon traversed, and leaves no particular impressions on the mind. By an early hour on Wednesday morning we stopped to breakfast at Toano, a little station on a bleak, high-lying plateau in Nevada. The man who kept the station eating-house was a Scot, and learning that I was the same, he grew very friendly, and gave me some advice on the country I was now entering. “You see,” said he, “I tell you this, because I come from your country.” Hail, brither Scots!

His most important hint was on the moneys of this part of the world. There is something in the simplicity of a decimal coinage which is revolting to the human mind; thus the French, in small affairs, reckon strictly by halfpence; and you have to solve, by a spasm of mental arithmetic, such posers as thirty-two, forty-five, or even a hundred halfpence. In the Pacific States they have made a bolder push for complexity, and settle their affairs by a coin that no longer exists — the *bit*, or old Mexican real. The supposed value of the bit is twelve and a half cents, eight to the dollar. When it comes to two bits, the quarter-dollar stands for the required amount. But how about an odd bit? The nearest coin to it is a dime, which is short by a fifth. That, then, is called a *short bit*. If you have one, you lay it triumphantly down, and save two and a half cents. But if you have not, and lay down a quarter, the bar-keeper or shopman calmly tenders you a dime by way of change; and thus you have paid what is called a *long bit*, and lost two and a half cents, or even, by comparison with a short bit, five cents. In country places all over the Pacific coast, nothing lower than a bit is ever asked or taken, which vastly increases the cost of life; as even for a glass of beer you must pay fivepence or sevenpence-halfpenny, as the case may be. You will say that this system of mutual robbery was as broad as it was long; but I have discovered a plan to make it broader, with which I here endow the public. It is brief and simple — radiantly simple. There is one place where five cents are recognised, and that is the post-office. A quarter is only worth two bits, a short and a long. Whenever you have a quarter, go to the post office and buy five cents’ worth of postage-stamps; you will receive in change two dimes, that is, two short bits. The purchasing power of your money is undiminished. You can go and have your two glasses of beer all the same; and you have made yourself a present of five cents’ worth of postage-stamps into the bargain. Benjamin Franklin would have patted me on the head for this discovery.

From Toano we travelled all day through deserts of alkali and sand, horrible to man, and bare sage-brush country that seemed little kindlier, and came by supper-time to Elko. As we were standing, after our manner, outside the station, I saw two men whip suddenly from underneath the cars, and take to their heels across country. They were tramps, it appeared, who had been riding on the beams since eleven of the night before; and several of my fellow-passengers had already seen and conversed with them while we broke our fast at Toano. These land stowaways play a great part over here in America, and I should have liked dearly to become acquainted with them.

At Elko an odd circumstance befell me. I was coming out from supper, when I was stopped by a small, stout, ruddy man, followed by two others taller and ruddier than himself.

"Ex-cuse me, sir," he said, "but do you happen to be going on?"

I said I was, whereupon he said he hoped to persuade me to desist from that intention. He had a situation to offer me, and if we could come to terms, why, good and well. "You see," he continued, "I'm running a theatre here, and we're a little short in the orchestra. You're a musician, I guess?"

I assured him that, beyond a rudimentary acquaintance with "Auld Lang Syne" and "The Wearing of the Green," I had no pretension whatever to that style. He seemed much put out of countenance; and one of his taller companions asked him, on the nail, for five dollars.

"You see, sir," added the latter to me, "he bet you were a musician; I bet you weren't. No offence, I hope?"

"None whatever," I said, and the two withdrew to the bar, where I presume the debt was liquidated.

This little adventure woke bright hopes in my fellow-travellers, who thought they had now come to a country where situations went a-begging. But I am not so sure that the offer was in good faith. Indeed, I am more than half persuaded it was but a feeler to decide the bet.

Of all the next day I will tell you nothing, for the best of all reasons, that I remember no more than that we continued through desolate and desert scenes, fiery hot and deadly weary. But some time after I had fallen asleep that night, I was awakened by one of my companions. It was in vain that I resisted. A fire of enthusiasm and whisky burned in his eyes; and he declared we were in a new country, and I must come forth upon the platform and see with my own eyes. The train was then, in its patient way, standing halted in a by-track. It was a clear, moonlit night; but the valley was too narrow to admit the moonshine direct, and only a diffused glimmer whitened the tall rocks and relieved the blackness of the pines. A hoarse clamour filled the air; it was the continuous plunge of a cascade somewhere near at hand among the mountains. The air struck chill, but tasted good and vigorous in the nostrils — a fine, dry, old mountain atmosphere. I was dead sleepy, but I returned to roost with a grateful mountain feeling at my heart.

When I awoke next morning, I was puzzled for a while to know if it were day or night, for the illumination was unusual. I sat up at last, and found we were grading slowly downward through a long snowshed; and suddenly we shot into an open; and before we were swallowed into the next length of wooden tunnel, I had one glimpse of a huge pine-forested ravine upon my left, a foaming river and a sky already coloured with the fires of dawn. I am usually very calm over the displays of nature; but you will scarce believe how my heart leaped at this. It was like meeting one's wife. I had come home again — home from unsightly deserts to the green and habitable corners of the earth. Every spire of pine along the hilltop, every trouty pool along that mountain river, was more dear to me than a blood relation. Few people have praised God more happily than I did. And thenceforward, down by Blue Cañon, Alta, Dutch Flat, and all the old mining camps, through a sea of mountain forests, dropping thousands of feet toward the far sea-level as we went, not I only, but all the passengers on board, threw off their sense of dirt and heat and weariness, and bawled like schoolboys, and thronged with shining eyes upon the platform, and became new creatures within and without. The sun no longer oppressed us with heat, it only shone laughingly along the mountain-side, until we were fain to laugh ourselves for glee. At every turn we could see farther into the land and our own happy futures. At every town the cocks were tossing their clear notes into the golden air, and crowing for the new day and the new country. For this was indeed our destination; this was "the good country" we had been going to so long.

By afternoon we were at Sacramento, the city of gardens in a plain of corn; and the next day before the dawn we were lying-to upon the Oakland side of San Francisco Bay. The day was breaking as we crossed the ferry; the fog was rising over the citied hills of San Francisco; the day was perfect — not a ripple, scarce a stain, upon its blue expanse; everything was waiting, breathless, for the sun. A spot of cloudy gold lit first upon the head of Tamalpais, and then widened downward on its shapely shoulder; the air seemed to awaken and began to sparkle; and suddenly

"The tall hills Titan discovered,"

and the city of San Francisco, and the bay of gold and corn, were lit from end to end with summer daylight.

ACROSS THE PLAINS

This travel book recounts Stevenson’s journey from Scotland to California in 1879-1880, covering only the middle part of the trip, which began in *The Amatuer Emigrant* and is followed by *The Silverado Squatters*.

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CHAPTER I - ACROSS THE PLAINS

LEAVES FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF AN EMIGRANT BETWEEN NEW YORK AND SAN FRANCISCO

MONDAY. - It was, if I remember rightly, five o'clock when we were all signalled to be present at the Ferry Depot of the railroad. An emigrant ship had arrived at New York on the Saturday night, another on the Sunday morning, our own on Sunday afternoon, a fourth early on Monday; and as there is no emigrant train on Sunday a great part of the passengers from these four ships was concentrated on the train by which I was to travel. There was a babel of bewildered men, women, and children. The wretched little booking-office, and the baggage-room, which was not much larger, were crowded thick with emigrants, and were heavy and rank with the atmosphere of dripping clothes. Open carts full of bedding stood by the half-hour in the rain. The officials loaded each other with recriminations. A bearded, mildewed little man, whom I take to have been an emigrant agent, was all over the place, his mouth full of brimstone, blustering and interfering. It was plain that the whole system, if system there was, had utterly broken down under the strain of so many passengers.

My own ticket was given me at once, and an oldish man, who preserved his head in the midst of this turmoil, got my baggage registered, and counselled me to stay quietly where I was till he should give me the word to move. I had taken along with me a small valise, a knapsack, which I carried on my shoulders, and in the bag of my railway rug the whole of BANCROFT'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES, in six fat volumes. It was as much as I could carry with convenience even for short distances, but it insured me plenty of clothing, and the valise was at that moment, and often after, useful for a stool. I am sure I sat for an hour in the baggage- room, and wretched enough it was; yet, when at last the word was passed to me and I picked up my bundles and got under way, it was only to exchange discomfort for downright misery and danger.

I followed the porters into a long shed reaching downhill from West Street to the river. It was dark, the wind blew clean through it from end to end; and here I found a great block of passengers and baggage, hundreds of one and tons of the other. I feel I shall have a difficulty to make myself believed; and certainly the scene must have been exceptional, for it was too dangerous for daily repetition. It was a tight jam; there was no fair way through the mingled mass of brute and living obstruction. Into the upper skirts of the crowd porters, infuriated by hurry and overwork, clove their way with shouts. I may say that we stood like sheep, and that the porters charged among us like so many maddened sheep- dogs; and I believe these men were no longer answerable for their acts. It mattered not what they were carrying, they drove straight into the press, and when they could get no farther, blindly discharged their barrowful. With my own hand, for instance, I saved the life of a child as it sat upon its mother's knee, she sitting on a box; and since I heard of no accident, I must suppose that there were many similar interpositions in the course of the evening. It will give some idea of the state of mind to which we were reduced if I tell you that neither the porter nor the mother of the child paid the least attention to my act. It was not till some time after that I understood what I had done myself, for to ward off heavy boxes seemed at the moment a natural incident of human life. Cold, wet, clamour, dead opposition to progress, such as one encounters in an evil dream, had utterly daunted the spirits. We had accepted this purgatory as a child accepts the conditions of the world. For my part, I shivered a little, and my back ached wearily; but I believe I had neither a hope nor a fear, and all the activities of my nature had become tributary to one massive sensation of discomfort.

At length, and after how long an interval I hesitate to guess, the crowd began to move, heavily straining through itself. About the same time some lamps were lighted, and threw a sudden flare over the shed. We were being filtered out into the river boat for Jersey City. You may imagine how slowly this filtering proceeded, through the dense, choking crush, every one overladen with packages or children, and yet under the necessity of fishing out his ticket by the way; but it ended at length for me, and I found myself on deck under a flimsy awning and with a trifle of elbow-room to stretch and breathe in. This was on the starboard; for the bulk of the emigrants stuck hopelessly on the port side, by which we had entered. In vain the seamen shouted to them to move on, and threatened them with shipwreck. These poor people were under a spell of stupor, and did not stir a foot. It rained as heavily as ever, but the wind now came in sudden claps and capfuls, not without danger to a boat so badly ballasted as ours; and we crept over the river in the darkness, trailing one paddle in the water like a wounded duck, and passed ever and again by huge, illuminated steamers running many knots, and heralding their approach by strains of music. The contrast between these pleasure embarkations and our own grim vessel, with her list to port and her freight of wet and silent emigrants, was of that glaring description which we count too obvious for the purposes of art.

The landing at Jersey City was done in a stampede. I had a fixed sense of calamity, and to judge by conduct, the same persuasion was common to us all. A panic selfishness, like that produced by fear, presided over the disorder of our landing. People pushed, and elbowed, and ran, their families following how they could. Children fell, and were picked up to be rewarded by a blow. One child, who had lost her parents, screamed steadily and with increasing shrillness, as though verging towards a fit; an official kept her by him, but no one else seemed so much as to remark her distress; and I am ashamed to say that I ran among the rest. I was so weary that I had twice to make a halt and set down my bundles in the hundred yards or so between the pier and the railway station, so that I was quite wet by the time that I got under cover. There was no waiting-room, no refreshment room; the cars were locked; and for at least another hour, or so it seemed, we had to camp upon the draughty, gaslit platform. I sat on my valise, too crushed to observe my neighbours; but as they were all cold, and wet, and weary, and driven stupidly crazy by the mismanagement to which we had been subjected, I believe they can have been no happier than myself. I bought half-a-dozen oranges from a boy, for oranges and nuts were the only refection to be had. As only two of them had even a pretence of juice, I threw the other four under the cars, and beheld, as in a dream, grown people and children groping on the track after my leavings.

At last we were admitted into the cars, utterly dejected, and far from dry. For my own part, I got out a clothes-brush, and brushed my trousers as hard as I could till I had dried them and warmed my blood into the bargain; but no one else, except my next neighbour to whom I lent the brush, appeared to take the least precaution. As they were, they composed themselves to sleep. I had seen the lights of Philadelphia, and been twice ordered to change carriages and twice countermanded, before I allowed myself to follow their example.

TUESDAY. - When I awoke, it was already day; the train was standing idle; I was in the last carriage, and, seeing some others strolling to and fro about the lines, I opened the door and stepped forth, as from a caravan by the wayside. We were near no station, nor even, as far as I could see, within reach of any signal. A green, open, undulating country stretched away upon all sides. Locust trees and a single field of Indian corn gave it a foreign grace and interest; but the contours of the land were soft and English. It was not quite England, neither was it quite France; yet like enough either to seem natural in my eyes. And it was in the sky, and not upon the earth, that I was surprised to find a change. Explain it how you may, and for my part I cannot explain it at all, the sun rises with a different splendour in America and Europe. There is more clear gold and scarlet in our old country mornings; more purple, brown, and smoky orange in those of the new. It may be from habit, but to me the coming of day is less fresh and inspiriting in the latter; it has a duskier glory, and more nearly resembles sunset; it seems to fit some subsequential, evening epoch of the world, as though America were in fact, and not merely in fancy, farther from the orient of Aurora and the springs of day. I thought so then, by the railroad side in Pennsylvania, and I have thought so a dozen times since in far distant parts of the continent. If it be an illusion it is one very deeply rooted, and in which my eyesight is accomplice.

Soon after a train whisked by, announcing and accompanying its passage by the swift beating of a sort of chapel bell upon the engine; and as it was for this we had been waiting, we were summoned by the cry of “All aboard!” and went on again upon our way. The whole line, it appeared, was topsy-turvy; an accident at midnight having thrown all the traffic hours into arrear. We paid for this in the flesh, for we had no meals all that day. Fruit we could buy upon the cars; and now and then we had a few minutes at some station with a meagre show of rolls and sandwiches for sale; but we were so many and so ravenous that, though I tried at every opportunity, the coffee was always exhausted before I could elbow my way to the counter.

Our American sunrise had ushered in a noble summer’s day. There was not a cloud; the sunshine was baking; yet in the woody river valleys among which we wound our way, the atmosphere preserved a sparkling freshness till late in the afternoon. It had an inland sweetness and variety to one newly from the sea; it smelt of woods, rivers, and the delved earth. These, though in so far a country, were airs from home. I stood on the platform by the hour; and as I saw, one after another, pleasant villages, carts upon the highway and fishers by the stream, and heard cockcrows and cheery voices in the distance, and beheld the sun, no longer shining blankly on the plains of ocean, but striking among shapely hills and his light dispersed and coloured by a thousand accidents of form and surface, I began to exult with myself upon this rise in life like a man who had come into a rich estate. And when I had asked the name of a river from the brakesman, and heard that it was called the Susquehanna, the beauty of the name seemed to be part and parcel of the beauty of the land. As when Adam with divine fitness named the creatures, so this word Susquehanna was at once accepted by the fancy. That was the name, as no other could be, for that shining river and desirable valley.

None can care for literature in itself who do not take a special pleasure in the sound of names; and there is no part of the world where nomenclature is so rich, poetical, humorous, and picturesque as the United States of America. All times, races, and languages have brought their contribution. Pekin is in the same State with Euclid, with Bellefontaine, and with Sandusky. Chelsea, with its London associations of red brick, Sloane Square, and the King's Road, is own suburb to stately and primeval Memphis; there they have their seat, translated names of cities, where the Mississippi runs by Tennessee and Arkansas; and both, while I was crossing the continent, lay, watched by armed men, in the horror and isolation of a plague. Old, red Manhattan lies, like an Indian arrowhead under a steam factory, below anglified New York. The names of the States and Territories themselves form a chorus of sweet and most romantic vocables: Delaware, Ohio, Indiana, Florida, Dakota, Iowa, Wyoming, Minnesota, and the Carolinas; there are few poems with a nobler music for the ear: a songful, tuneful land; and if the new Homer shall arise from the Western continent, his verse will be enriched, his pages sing spontaneously, with the names of states and cities that would strike the fancy in a business circular.

Late in the evening we were landed in a waiting-room at Pittsburg. I had now under my charge a young and sprightly Dutch widow with her children; these I was to watch over providentially for a certain distance farther on the way; but as I found she was furnished with a basket of eatables, I left her in the waiting-room to seek a dinner for myself. I mention this meal, not only because it was the first of which I had partaken for about thirty hours, but because it was the means of my first introduction to a coloured gentleman. He did me the honour to wait upon me after a fashion, while I was eating; and with every word, look, and gesture marched me farther into the country of surprise. He was indeed strikingly unlike the negroes of Mrs. Beecher Stowe, or the Christy Minstrels of my youth. Imagine a gentleman, certainly somewhat dark, but of a pleasant warm hue, speaking English with a slight and rather odd foreign accent, every inch a man of the world, and armed with manners so patronisingly superior that I am at a loss to name their parallel in England. A butler perhaps rides as high over the unbutlered, but then he sets you right with a reserve and a sort of sighing patience which one is often moved to admire. And again, the abstract butler never stoops to familiarity. But the coloured gentleman will pass you a wink at a time; he is familiar like an upper form boy to a fag; he unbends to you like Prince Hal with Poins and Falstaff. He makes himself at home and welcome. Indeed, I may say, this waiter behaved himself to me throughout that supper much as, with us, a young, free, and not very self-respecting master might behave to a good-looking chambermaid. I had come prepared to pity the poor negro, to put him at his ease, to prove in a thousand condescensions that I was no sharer in the prejudice of race; but I assure you I put my patronage away for another occasion, and had the grace to be pleased with that result.

Seeing he was a very honest fellow, I consulted him upon a point of etiquette: if one should offer to tip the American waiter? Certainly not, he told me. Never. It would not do. They considered themselves too highly to accept. They would even resent the offer. As for him and me, we had enjoyed a very pleasant conversation; he, in particular, had found much pleasure in my society; I was a stranger; this was exactly one of those rare conjunctures.... Without being very clear seeing, I can still perceive the sun at noonday; and the coloured gentleman deftly pocketed a quarter.

WEDNESDAY. - A little after midnight I convoyed my widow and orphans on board the train; and morning found us far into Ohio. This had early been a favourite home of my imagination; I have played at being in Ohio by the week, and enjoyed some capital sport there with a dummy gun, my person being still unbreeched. My preference was founded on a work which appeared in CASSELL'S FAMILY PAPER, and was read aloud to me by my nurse. It narrated the doings of one Custaloga, an Indian brave, who, in the last chapter, very obligingly washed the paint off his face and became Sir Reginald Somebody-or-other; a trick I never forgave him. The idea of a man being an Indian brave, and then giving that up to be a baronet, was one which my mind rejected. It offended verisimilitude, like the pretended anxiety of Robinson Crusoe and others to escape from uninhabited islands.

But Ohio was not at all as I had pictured it. We were now on those great plains which stretch unbroken to the Rocky Mountains. The country was flat like Holland, but far from being dull. All through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, or for as much as I saw of them from the train and in my waking moments, it was rich and various, and breathed an elegance peculiar to itself. The tall corn pleased the eye; the trees were graceful in themselves, and framed the plain into long, aerial vistas; and the clean, bright, gardened townships spoke of country fare and pleasant summer evenings on the stoop. It was a sort of flat paradise; but, I am afraid, not unfrequented by the devil. That morning dawned with such a freezing chill as I have rarely felt; a chill that was not perhaps so measurable by instrument, as it struck home upon the heart and seemed to travel with the blood. Day came in with a shudder. White mists lay thinly over the surface of the plain, as we see them more often on a lake; and though the sun had soon dispersed and drunk them up, leaving an atmosphere of fever heat and crystal pureness from horizon to horizon, the mists had still been there, and we knew that this paradise was haunted by killing damps and foul malaria. The fences along the line bore but two descriptions of advertisement; one to recommend tobaccos, and the other to vaunt remedies against the ague. At the point of day, and while we were all in the grasp of that first chill, a native of the state, who had got in at some way station, pronounced it, with a doctoral air, “a fever and ague morning.”

The Dutch widow was a person of some character. She had conceived at first sight a great aversion for the present writer, which she was at no pains to conceal. But being a woman of a practical spirit, she made no difficulty about accepting my attentions, and encouraged me to buy her children fruits and candies, to carry all her parcels, and even to sleep upon the floor that she might profit by my empty seat. Nay, she was such a rattle by nature, and, so powerfully moved to autobiographical talk, that she was forced, for want of a better, to take me into confidence and tell me the story of her life. I heard about her late husband, who seemed to have made his chief impression by taking her out pleasuring on Sundays. I could tell you her prospects, her hopes, the amount of her fortune, the cost of her housekeeping by the week, and a variety of particular matters that are not usually disclosed except to friends. At one station, she shook up her children to look at a man on the platform and say if he were not like Mr. Z.; while to me she explained how she had been keeping company with this Mr. Z., how far matters had proceeded, and how it was because of his desistance that she was now travelling to the West. Then, when I was thus put in possession of the facts, she asked my judgment on that type of manly beauty. I admired it to her heart’s content. She was not, I think, remarkably veracious in talk, but broidered as fancy prompted, and built castles in the air out of her past; yet she had that sort of candour, to keep me, in spite of all these confidences, steadily aware of her aversion. Her parting words were ingeniously honest. “I am sure,” said she, “we all OUGHT to be very much obliged to you.” I cannot pretend that she put me at my ease; but I had a certain respect for such a genuine dislike. A poor nature would have slipped, in the course of these familiarities, into a sort of worthless toleration for me.

We reached Chicago in the evening. I was turned out of the cars, bundled into an omnibus, and driven off through the streets to the station of a different railroad. Chicago seemed a great and gloomy city. I remember having subscribed, let us say sixpence, towards its restoration at the period of the fire; and now when I beheld street after street of ponderous houses and crowds of comfortable burghers, I thought it would be a graceful act for the corporation to refund that sixpence, or, at the least, to entertain me to a cheerful dinner. But there was no word of restitution. I was that city’s benefactor, yet I was received in a third-class waiting- room, and the best dinner I could get was a dish of ham and eggs at my own expense.

I can safely say, I have never been so dog-tired as that night in

Chicago. When it was time to start, I descended the platform like a man in a dream. It was a long train, lighted from end to end; and car after car, as I came up with it, was not only filled but overflowing. My valise, my knapsack, my rug, with those six ponderous tomes of Bancroft, weighed me double; I was hot, feverish, painfully athirst; and there was a great darkness over me, an internal darkness, not to be dispelled by gas. When at last I found an empty bench, I sank into it like a bundle of rags, the world seemed to swim away into the distance, and my consciousness dwindled within me to a mere pin's head, like a taper on a foggy night.

When I came a little more to myself, I found that there had sat down beside me a very cheerful, rosy little German gentleman, somewhat gone in drink, who was talking away to me, nineteen to the dozen, as they say. I did my best to keep up the conversation; for it seemed to me dimly as if something depended upon that. I heard him relate, among many other things, that there were pickpockets on the train, who had already robbed a man of forty dollars and a return ticket; but though I caught the words, I do not think I properly understood the sense until next morning; and I believe I replied at the time that I was very glad to hear it. What else he talked about I have no guess; I remember a gabbling sound of words, his profuse gesticulation, and his smile, which was highly explanatory: but no more. And I suppose I must have shown my confusion very plainly; for, first, I saw him knit his brows at me like one who has conceived a doubt; next, he tried me in German, supposing perhaps that I was unfamiliar with the English tongue; and finally, in despair, he rose and left me. I felt chagrined; but my fatigue was too crushing for delay, and, stretching myself as far as that was possible upon the bench, I was received at once into a dreamless stupor.

The little German gentleman was only going a little way into the suburbs after a DINER FIN, and was bent on entertainment while the journey lasted. Having failed with me, he pitched next upon another emigrant, who had come through from Canada, and was not one jot less weary than myself. Nay, even in a natural state, as I found next morning when we scraped acquaintance, he was a heavy, uncommunicative man. After trying him on different topics, it appears that the little German gentleman flounced into a temper, swore an oath or two, and departed from that car in quest of livelier society. Poor little gentleman! I suppose he thought an emigrant should be a rollicking, free-hearted blade, with a flask of foreign brandy and a long, comical story to beguile the moments of digestion.

THURSDAY. - I suppose there must be a cycle in the fatigue of travelling, for when I awoke next morning, I was entirely renewed in spirits and ate a hearty breakfast of porridge, with sweet milk, and coffee and hot cakes, at Burlington upon the Mississippi. Another long day's ride followed, with but one feature worthy of remark. At a place called Creston, a drunken man got in. He was aggressively friendly, but, according to English notions, not at all unpresentable upon a train. For one stage he eluded the notice of the officials; but just as we were beginning to move out of the next station, Cromwell by name, by came the conductor. There was a word or two of talk; and then the official had the man by the shoulders, twitched him from his seat, marched him through the car, and sent him flying on to the track. It was done in three motions, as exact as a piece of drill. The train was still moving slowly, although beginning to mend her pace, and the drunkard got his feet without a fall. He carried a red bundle, though not so red as his cheeks; and he shook this menacingly in the air with one hand, while the other stole behind him to the region of the kidneys. It was the first indication that I had come among revolvers, and I observed it with some emotion. The conductor stood on the steps with one hand on his hip, looking back at him; and perhaps this attitude imposed upon the creature, for he turned without further ado, and went off staggering along the track towards Cromwell followed by a peal of laughter from the cars. They were speaking English all about me, but I knew I was in a foreign land.

Twenty minutes before nine that night, we were deposited at the Pacific Transfer Station near Council Bluffs, on the eastern bank of the Missouri river. Here we were to stay the night at a kind of caravanserai, set apart for emigrants. But I gave way to a thirst for luxury, separated myself from my companions, and marched with my effects into the Union Pacific Hotel. A white clerk and a coloured gentleman whom, in my plain European way, I should call the boots, were installed behind a counter like bank tellers. They took my name, assigned me a number, and proceeded to deal with my packages. And here came the tug of war. I wished to give up my packages into safe keeping; but I did not wish to go to bed. And this, it appeared, was impossible in an American hotel.

It was, of course, some inane misunderstanding, and sprang from my unfamiliarity with the language. For although two nations use the same words and read the same books, intercourse is not conducted by the dictionary. The business of life is not carried on by words, but in set phrases, each with a special and almost a slang signification. Some international obscurity prevailed between me and the coloured gentleman at Council Bluffs; so that what I was asking, which seemed very natural to me, appeared to him a monstrous exigency. He refused, and that with the plainness of the West. This American manner of conducting matters of business is, at first, highly unpalatable to the European. When we approach a man in the way of his calling, and for those services by which he earns his bread, we consider him for the time being our hired servant. But in the American opinion, two gentlemen meet and have a friendly talk with a view to exchanging favours if they shall agree to please. I know not which is the more convenient, nor even which is the more truly courteous. The English stiffness unfortunately tends to be continued after the particular transaction is at an end, and thus favours class separations. But on the other hand, these equalitarian plainnesses leave an open field for the insolence of Jack-in-office.

I was nettled by the coloured gentleman's refusal, and unbuttoned my wrath under the similitude of ironical submission. I knew nothing, I said, of the ways of American hotels; but I had no desire to give trouble. If there was nothing for it but to get to bed immediately, let him say the word, and though it was not my habit, I should cheerfully obey.

He burst into a shout of laughter. "Ah!" said he, "you do not know about America. They are fine people in America. Oh! you will like them very well. But you mustn't get mad. I know what you want. You come along with me."

And issuing from behind the counter, and taking me by the arm like an old acquaintance, he led me to the bar of the hotel.

"There," said he, pushing me from him by the shoulder, "go and have a drink!"

THE EMIGRANT TRAIN

All this while I had been travelling by mixed trains, where I might meet with Dutch widows and little German gentry fresh from table. I had been but a latent emigrant; now I was to be branded once more, and put apart with my fellows. It was about two in the afternoon of Friday that I found myself in front of the Emigrant House, with more than a hundred others, to be sorted and boxed for the journey. A white-haired official, with a stick under one arm, and a list in the other hand, stood apart in front of us, and called name after name in the tone of a command. At each name you would see a family gather up its brats and bundles and run for the hindmost of the three cars that stood awaiting us, and I soon concluded that this was to be set apart for the women and children. The second or central car, it turned out, was devoted to men travelling alone, and the third to the Chinese. The official was easily moved to anger at the least delay; but the emigrants were both quick at answering their names, and speedy in getting themselves and their effects on board.

The families once housed, we men carried the second car without ceremony by simultaneous assault. I suppose the reader has some notion of an American railroad-car, that long, narrow wooden box, like a flat-roofed Noah's ark, with a stove and a convenience, one at either end, a passage down the middle, and transverse benches upon either hand. Those destined for emigrants on the Union Pacific are only remarkable for their extreme plainness, nothing but wood entering in any part into their constitution, and for the usual inefficacy of the lamps, which often went out and shed but a dying glimmer even while they burned. The benches are too short for anything but a young child. Where there is scarce elbow-room for two to sit, there will not be space enough for one to lie. Hence the company, or rather, as it appears from certain bills about the Transfer Station, the company's servants, have conceived a plan for the better accommodation of travellers. They prevail on every two to chum together. To each of the chums they sell a board and three square cushions stuffed with straw, and covered with thin cotton. The benches can be made to face each other in pairs, for the backs are reversible. On the approach of night the boards are laid from bench to bench, making a couch wide enough for two, and long enough for a man of the middle height; and the chums lie down side by side upon the cushions with the head to the conductor's van and the feet to the engine. When the train is full, of course this plan is impossible, for there must not be more than one to every bench, neither can it be carried out unless the chums agree. It was to bring about this last condition that our white-haired official now bestirred himself. He made a most active master of ceremonies, introducing likely couples, and even guaranteeing the amiability and honesty of each. The greater the number of happy couples the better for his pocket, for it was he who sold the raw material of the beds. His price for one board and three straw cushions began with two dollars and a half; but before the train left, and, I am sorry to say, long after I had purchased mine, it had fallen to one dollar and a half.

The match-maker had a difficulty with me; perhaps, like some ladies, I showed myself too eager for union at any price; but certainly the first who was picked out to be my bedfellow, declined the honour without thanks. He was an old, heavy, slow-spoken man, I think from Yankeeland, looked me all over with great timidity, and then began to excuse himself in broken phrases. He didn't know the young man, he said. The young man might be very honest, but how was he to know that? There was another young man whom he had met already in the train; he guessed he was honest, and would prefer to chum with him upon the whole. All this without any sort of excuse, as though I had been inanimate or absent. I began to tremble lest every one should refuse my company, and I be left rejected. But the next in turn was a tall, strapping, long-limbed, small-headed, curly-haired Pennsylvania

Dutchman, with a soldierly smartness in his manner. To be exact, he had acquired it in the navy. But that was all one; he had at least been trained to desperate resolves, so he accepted the match, and the white-haired swindler pronounced the connubial benediction, and pocketed his fees.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in making up the train. I am afraid to say how many baggage-waggons followed the engine, certainly a score; then came the Chinese, then we, then the families, and the rear was brought up by the conductor in what, if I have it rightly, is called his caboose. The class to which I belonged was of course far the largest, and we ran over, so to speak, to both sides; so that there were some Caucasians among the Chinamen, and some bachelors among the families. But our own car was pure from admixture, save for one little boy of eight or nine who had the whooping-cough. At last, about six, the long train crawled out of the Transfer Station and across the wide Missouri river to Omaha, westward bound.

It was a troubled uncomfortable evening in the cars. There was thunder in the air, which helped to keep us restless. A man played many airs upon the cornet, and none of them were much attended to, until he came to "Home, sweet home." It was truly strange to note how the talk ceased at that, and the faces began to lengthen. I have no idea whether musically this air is to be considered good or bad; but it belongs to that class of art which may be best described as a brutal assault upon the feelings. Pathos must be relieved by dignity of treatment. If you wallow naked in the pathetic, like the author of "Home, sweet home," you make your hearers weep in an unmanly fashion; and even while yet they are moved, they despise themselves and hate the occasion of their weakness. It did not come to tears that night, for the experiment was interrupted. An elderly, hard-looking man, with a goatee beard and about as much appearance of sentiment an you would expect from a retired slaver, turned with a start and bade the performer stop that "damned thing." "I've heard about enough of that," he added; "give us something about the good country we're going to." A murmur of adhesion ran round the car; the performer took the instrument from his lips, laughed and nodded, and then struck into a dancing measure; and, like a new Timotheus, stilled immediately the emotion he had raised.

The day faded; the lamps were lit; a party of wild young men, who got off next evening at North Platte, stood together on the stern platform, singing "The Sweet By-and-bye" with very tuneful voices; the chums began to put up their beds; and it seemed as if the business of the day were at an end. But it was not so; for, the train stopping at some station, the cars were instantly thronged with the natives, wives and fathers, young men and maidens, some of them in little more than nightgear, some with stable lanterns, and all offering beds for sale. Their charge began with twenty-five cents a cushion, but fell, before the train went on again, to fifteen, with the bed-board gratis, or less than one-fifth of what I had paid for mine at the Transfer. This is my contribution to the economy of future emigrants.

A great personage on an American train is the newsboy. He sells books (such books!), papers, fruit, lollipops, and cigars; and on emigrant journeys, soap, towels, tin washing dishes, tin coffee pitchers, coffee, tea, sugar, and tinned eatables, mostly hash or beans and bacon. Early next morning the newsboy went around the cars, and chumming on a more extended principle became the order of the hour. It requires but a copartnery of two to manage beds; but washing and eating can be carried on most economically by a syndicate of three. I myself entered a little after sunrise into articles of agreement, and became one of the firm of Pennsylvania, Shakespeare, and Dubuque. Shakespeare was my own nickname on the cars; Pennsylvania that of my bedfellow; and Dubuque, the name of a place in the State of Iowa, that of an amiable young fellow going west to cure an asthma, and retarding his recovery by incessantly chewing or smoking, and sometimes chewing and smoking together. I have never seen tobacco so sillily abused. Shakespeare bought a tin washing-dish, Dubuque a towel, and Pennsylvania a brick of soap. The partners used these instruments, one after another, according to the order of their first awaking; and when the firm had finished there was no want of borrowers. Each filled the tin dish at the water filter opposite the stove, and retired with the whole stock in trade to the platform of the car. There he knelt down, supporting himself by a shoulder against the woodwork or one elbow crooked about the railing, and made a shift to wash his face and neck and hands; a cold, an insufficient, and, if the train is moving rapidly, a somewhat dangerous toilet.

On a similar division of expense, the firm of Pennsylvania, Shakespeare, and Dubuque supplied themselves with coffee, sugar, and necessary vessels; and their operations are a type of what went on through all the cars. Before the sun was up the stove would be brightly burning; at the first station the natives would come on board with milk and eggs and coffee cakes; and soon from end to end the car would be filled with little parties breakfasting upon the bed-boards. It was the pleasantest hour of the day.

There were meals to be had, however, by the wayside: a breakfast in the morning, a dinner somewhere between eleven and two, and supper from five to eight or nine at night. We had rarely less than twenty minutes for each; and if we had not spent many another twenty minutes waiting for some express upon a side track among miles of desert, we might have taken an hour to each repast and arrived at San Francisco up to time. For haste is not the foible of an emigrant train. It gets through on sufferance, running the gauntlet among its more considerable brethren; should there be a block, it is unhesitatingly sacrificed; and they cannot, in consequence, predict the length of the passage within a day or so. Civility is the main comfort that you miss. Equality, though conceived very largely in America, does not extend so low down as to an emigrant. Thus in all other trains, a warning cry of “All aboard!” recalls the passengers to take their seats; but as soon as I was alone with emigrants, and from the Transfer all the way to San Francisco, I found this ceremony was pretermitted; the train stole from the station without note of warning, and you had to keep an eye upon it even while you ate. The annoyance is considerable, and the disrespect both wanton and petty.

Many conductors, again, will hold no communication with an emigrant. I asked a conductor one day at what time the train would stop for dinner; as he made no answer I repeated the question, with a like result; a third time I returned to the charge, and then Jack-in-office looked me coolly in the face for several seconds and turned ostentatiously away. I believe he was half ashamed of his brutality; for when another person made the same inquiry, although he still refused the information, he condescended to answer, and even to justify his reticence in a voice loud enough for me to hear. It was, he said, his principle not to tell people where they were to dine; for one answer led to many other questions, as what o’clock it was? or, how soon should we be there? and he could not afford to be eternally worried.

As you are thus cut off from the superior authorities, a great deal of your comfort depends on the character of the newsboy. He has it in his power indefinitely to better and brighten the emigrant’s lot. The newsboy with whom we started from the Transfer was a dark, bullying, contemptuous, insolent scoundrel, who treated us like dogs. Indeed, in his case, matters came nearly to a fight. It happened thus: he was going his rounds through the cars with some commodities for sale, and coming to a party who were at SEVEN- UP or CASCINO (our two games), upon a bed-board, slung down a cigar-box in the middle of the cards, knocking one man’s hand to the floor. It was the last straw. In a moment the whole party were upon their feet, the cigars were upset, and he was ordered to “get out of that directly, or he would get more than he reckoned for.” The fellow grumbled and muttered, but ended by making off, and was less openly insulting in the future. On the other hand, the lad who rode with us in this capacity from Ogden to Sacramento made himself the friend of all, and helped us with information, attention, assistance, and a kind countenance. He told us where and when we should have our meals, and how long the train would stop; kept seats at table for those who were delayed, and watched that we should neither be left behind nor yet unnecessarily hurried. You, who live at home at ease, can hardly realise the greatness of this service, even had it stood alone. When I think of that lad coming and going, train after train, with his bright face and civil words, I see how easily a good man may become the benefactor of his kind. Perhaps he is discontented with himself, perhaps troubled with ambitions; why, if he but knew it, he is a hero of the old Greek stamp; and while he thinks he is only earning a profit of a few cents, and that perhaps exorbitant, he is doing a man's work, and bettering the world.

I must tell here an experience of mine with another newsboy. I tell it because it gives so good an example of that uncivil kindness of the American, which is perhaps their most bewildering character to one newly landed. It was immediately after I had left the emigrant train; and I am told I looked like a man at death's door, so much had this long journey shaken me. I sat at the end of a car, and the catch being broken, and myself feverish and sick, I had to hold the door open with my foot for the sake of air. In this attitude my leg debarred the newsboy from his box of merchandise. I made haste to let him pass when I observed that he was coming; but I was busy with a book, and so once or twice he came upon me unawares. On these occasions he most rudely struck my foot aside; and though I myself apologised, as if to show him the way, he answered me never a word. I chafed furiously, and I fear the next time it would have come to words. But suddenly I felt a touch upon my shoulder, and a large juicy pear was put into my hand. It was the newsboy, who had observed that I was looking ill, and so made me this present out of a tender heart. For the rest of the journey I was petted like a sick child; he lent me newspapers, thus depriving himself of his legitimate profit on their sale, and came repeatedly to sit by me and cheer me up.

THE PLAINS OF NEBRASKA

It had thundered on the Friday night, but the sun rose on Saturday without a cloud. We were at sea - there is no other adequate expression - on the plains of Nebraska. I made my observatory on the top of a fruit-waggon, and sat by the hour upon that perch to spy about me, and to spy in vain for something new. It was a world almost without a feature; an empty sky, an empty earth; front and back, the line of railway stretched from horizon to horizon, like a cue across a billiard-board; on either hand, the green plain ran till it touched the skirts of heaven. Along the track innumerable wild sunflowers, no bigger than a crown-piece, bloomed in a continuous flower-bed;

grazing beasts were seen upon the prairie at all degrees of distance and diminution; and now and again we might perceive a few dots beside the railroad which grew more and more distinct as we drew nearer till they turned into wooden cabins, and then dwindled and dwindled in our wake until they melted into their surroundings, and we were once more alone upon the billiard-board. The train toiled over this infinity like a snail; and being the one thing moving, it was wonderful what huge proportions it began to assume in our regard. It seemed miles in length, and either end of it within but a step of the horizon. Even my own body or my own head seemed a great thing in that emptiness. I note the feeling the more readily as it is the contrary of what I have read of in the experience of others. Day and night, above the roar of the train, our ears were kept busy with the incessant chirp of grasshoppers - a noise like the winding up of countless clocks and watches, which began after a while to seem proper to that land.

To one hurrying through by steam there was a certain exhilaration in this spacious vacancy, this greatness of the air, this discovery of the whole arch of heaven, this straight, unbroken, prison-line of the horizon. Yet one could not but reflect upon the weariness of those who passed by there in old days, at the foot's pace of oxen, painfully urging their teams, and with no landmark but that unattainable evening sun for which they steered, and which daily fled them by an equal stride. They had nothing, it would seem, to overtake; nothing by which to reckon their advance; no sight for repose or for encouragement; but stage after stage, only the dead green waste under foot, and the mocking, fugitive horizon. But the eye, as I have been told, found differences even here; and at the worst the emigrant came, by perseverance, to the end of his toil. It is the settlers, after all, at whom we have a right to marvel. Our consciousness, by which we live, is itself but the creature of variety. Upon what food does it subsist in such a land? What livelihood can repay a human creature for a life spent in this huge sameness? He is cut off from books, from news, from company, from all that can relieve existence but the prosecution of his affairs. A sky full of stars is the most varied spectacle that he can hope. He may walk five miles and see nothing; ten, and it is as though he had not moved; twenty, and still he is in the midst of the same great level, and has approached no nearer to the one object within view, the flat horizon which keeps pace with his advance. We are full at home of the question of agreeable wall-papers, and wise people are of opinion that the temper may be quieted by sedative surroundings. But what is to be said of the Nebraskan settler? His is a wall-paper with a vengeance - one quarter of the universe laid bare in all its gauntness.

His eye must embrace at every glance the whole seeming concave of the visible world; it quails before so vast an outlook, it is tortured by distance; yet there is no rest or shelter till the man runs into his cabin, and can repose his sight upon things near at hand. Hence, I am told, a sickness of the vision peculiar to these empty plains.

Yet perhaps with sunflowers and cicadae, summer and winter, cattle, wife and family, the settler may create a full and various existence. One person at least I saw upon the plains who seemed in every way superior to her lot. This was a woman who boarded us at a way station, selling milk. She was largely formed; her features were more than comely; she had that great rarity - a fine complexion which became her; and her eyes were kind, dark, and steady. She sold milk with patriarchal grace. There was not a line in her countenance, not a note in her soft and sleepy voice, but spoke of an entire contentment with her life. It would have been fatuous arrogance to pity such a woman. Yet the place where she lived was to me almost ghastly. Less than a dozen wooden houses, all of a shape and all nearly of a size, stood planted along the railway lines. Each stood apart in its own lot. Each opened direct off the billiard-board, as if it were a billiard- board indeed, and these only models that had been set down upon it ready made. Her own, into which I looked, was clean but very empty, and showed nothing homelike but the burning fire. This extreme newness, above all in so naked and flat a country, gives a strong impression of artificiality. With none of the litter and discoloration of human life; with the paths unworn, and the houses still sweating from the axe, such a settlement as this seems purely scenic. The mind is loth to accept it for a piece of reality; and it seems incredible that life can go on with so few properties, or the great child, man, find entertainment in so bare a playroom.

And truly it is as yet an incomplete society in some points; or at least it contained, as I passed through, one person incompletely civilised. At North Platte, where we supped that evening, one man asked another to pass the milk-jug. This other was well-dressed and of what we should call a respectable appearance; a darkish man, high spoken, eating as though he had some usage of society; but he turned upon the first speaker with extraordinary vehemence of tone -

“There’s a waiter here!” he cried.

“I only asked you to pass the milk,” explained the first.

Here is the retort verbatim -

“Pass! Hell! I’m not paid for that business; the waiter’s paid for it. You should use civility at table, and, by God, I’ll show you how!”

The other man very wisely made no answer, and the bully went on with his supper as though nothing had occurred. It pleases me to think that some day soon he will meet with one of his own kidney; and that perhaps both may fall.

THE DESERT OF WYOMING

To cross such a plain is to grow homesick for the mountains. I longed for the Black Hills of Wyoming, which I knew we were soon to enter, like an ice-bound whaler for the spring. Alas! and it was a worse country than the other. All Sunday and Monday we travelled through these sad mountains, or over the main ridge of the Rockies, which is a fair match to them for misery of aspect. Hour after hour it was the same unhomely and unkindly world about our onward path; tumbled boulders, cliffs that drearily imitate the shape of monuments and fortifications - how drearily, how tamely, none can tell who has not seen them; not a tree, not a patch of sward, not one shapely or commanding mountain form; sage-brush, eternal sage- brush; over all, the same weariful and gloomy colouring, grays warming into brown, grays darkening towards black; and for sole sign of life, here and there a few fleeing antelopes; here and there, but at incredible intervals, a creek running in a canon. The plains have a grandeur of their own; but here there is nothing but a contorted smallness. Except for the air, which was light and stimulating, there was not one good circumstance in that God- forsaken land.

I had been suffering in my health a good deal all the way; and at last, whether I was exhausted by my complaint or poisoned in some wayside eating-house, the evening we left Laramie, I fell sick outright. That was a night which I shall not readily forget. The lamps did not go out; each made a faint shining in its own neighbourhood, and the shadows were confounded together in the long, hollow box of the car. The sleepers lay in uneasy attitudes; here two chums alongside, flat upon their backs like dead folk; there a man sprawling on the floor, with his face upon his arm; there another half seated with his head and shoulders on the bench. The most passive were continually and roughly shaken by the movement of the train; others stirred, turned, or stretched out their arms like children; it was surprising how many groaned and murmured in their sleep; and as I passed to and fro, stepping across the prostrate, and caught now a snore, now a gasp, now a half-formed word, it gave me a measure of the worthlessness of rest in that unresting vehicle. Although it was chill, I was obliged to open my window, for the degradation of the air soon became intolerable to one who was awake and using the full supply of life. Outside, in a glimmering night, I saw the black, amorphous hills shoot by unweariedly into our wake. They that long for morning have never longed for it more earnestly than I.

And yet when day came, it was to shine upon the same broken and unsightly quarter of the world. Mile upon mile, and not a tree, a bird, or a river. Only down the long, sterile canons, the train shot hooting and awoke the resting echo. That train was the one piece of life in all the deadly land; it was the one actor, the one spectacle fit to be observed in this paralysis of man and nature. And when I think how the railroad has been pushed through this unwatered wilderness and haunt of savage tribes, and now will bear an emigrant for some 12 pounds from the Atlantic to the Golden Gates; how at each stage of the construction, roaring, impromptu cities, full of gold and lust and death, sprang up and then died away again, and are now but wayside stations in the desert; how in these uncouth places pig-tailed Chinese pirates worked side by side with border ruffians and broken men from Europe, talking together in a mixed dialect, mostly oaths, gambling, drinking, quarrelling and murdering like wolves; how the plumed hereditary lord of all America heard, in this last fastness, the scream of the "bad medicine waggon" charioting his foes; and then when I go on to remember that all this epical turmoil was conducted by gentlemen in frock coats, and with a view to nothing more extraordinary than a fortune and a subsequent visit to Paris, it seems to me, I own, as if this railway were the one typical achievement of the age in which we live, as if it brought together into one plot all the ends of the world and all the degrees of social rank, and offered to some great writer the busiest, the most extended, and the most varied subject for an enduring literary work. If it be romance, if it be contrast, if it be heroism that we require, what was Troy town to this? But, alas! it is not these things that are necessary - it is only Homer.

Here also we are grateful to the train, as to some god who conducts us swiftly through these shades and by so many hidden perils. Thirst, hunger, the sleight and ferocity of Indians are all no more feared, so lightly do we skim these horrible lands; as the gull, who wings safely through the hurricane and past the shark. Yet we should not be forgetful of these hardships of the past; and to keep the balance true, since I have complained of the trifling discomforts of my journey, perhaps more than was enough, let me add an original document. It was not written by Homer, but by a boy of eleven, long since dead, and is dated only twenty years ago. I shall punctuate, to make things clearer, but not change the spelling.

"My dear Sister Mary, - I am afraid you will go nearly crazy when you read my letter. If Jerry" (the writer's eldest brother) "has not written to you before now, you will be surprised to heare that we are in California, and that poor Thomas" (another brother, of fifteen) "is dead. We started from - in July, with plenly of provisions and too yoke oxen. We went along very well till we got within six or seven hundred miles of California, when the Indians attacked us. We found places where they had killed the emigrants. We had one passenger with us, too guns, and one revolver; so we ran all the lead We had into bullets (and) hung the guns up in the wagon so that we could get at them in a minit. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon; droave the cattel a little way; when a prairie chicken alited a little way from the wagon.

"Jerry took out one of the guns to shoot it, and told Tom drive the oxen. Tom and I drove the oxen, and Jerry and the passenger went on. Then, after a little, I left Tom and caught up with Jerry and the other man. Jerry stopped Tom to come up; me and the man went on and sit down by a little stream. In a few minutes, we heard some noise; then three shots (they all struck poor Tom, I suppose); then they gave the war hoop, and as many as twenty of the redskins came down upon us. The three that shot Tom was hid by the side of the road in the bushes.

"I thought the Tom and Jerry were shot; so I told the other man that Tom and Jerry were dead, and that we had better try to escape, if possible. I had no shoes on; having a sore foot, I thought I would not put them on. The man and me run down the road, but We was soon stopped by an Indian on a pony. We then turend the other way, and run up the side of the Mountain, and hid behind some cedar trees, and stayed there till dark. The Indians hunted all over after us, and verry close to us, so close that we could here there tomyhawks Jingle. At dark the man and me started on, I stubing my toes against sticks and stones. We traveld on all night; and next morning, just as it was getting gray, we saw something in the shape of a man. It layed Down in the grass. We went up to it, and it was Jerry. He thought we ware Indians. You can imagine how glad he was to see me. He thought we was all dead but him, and we thought him and Tom was dead. He had the gun that he took out of the wagon to shoot the prairie Chicken; all he had was the load that was in it.

"We traveld on till about eight o'clock, We caught up with one wagon with too men with it. We had traveld with them before one day; we stopt and they Drove on; we knew that they was ahead of us, unless they had been killed to. My feet was so sore when we caught up with them that I had to ride; I could not step. We traveld on for too days, when the men that owned the cattle said they would (could) not drive them another inch. We unyoked the oxen; we had about seventy pounds of flour; we took it out and divided it into four packs. Each of the men took about 18 pounds apiece and a blanket. I carried a little bacon, dried meat, and little quilt; I had in all about twelve pounds. We had one pint of flour a day for our alloyance. Sometimes we made soup of it; sometimes we (made) pancakes; and sometimes mixed it up with cold water and eat it that way. We traveld twelve or fourteen days. The time came at last when we should have to reach some place or starve. We saw fresh horse and cattle tracks. The morning come, we scraped all the flour out of the sack, mixed it up, and baked it into bread, and made some soup, and eat everything we had. We traveld on all day without anything to eat, and that evening we Caught up with a sheep train of eight wagons. We traveld with them till we arrived at the settlements; and know I am safe in California, and got to good home, and going to school.

"Jerry is working in - . It is a good country. You can get from 50 to 60 and 75 Dollars for cooking. Tell me all about the affairs in the States, and how all the folks get along."

And so ends this artless narrative. The little man was at school again, God bless him, while his brother lay scalped upon the deserts.

FELLOW-PASSENGERS

At Ogden we changed cars from the Union Pacific to the Central Pacific line of railroad. The change was doubly welcome; for, first, we had better cars on the new line; and, second, those in which we had been cooped for more than ninety hours had begun to stink abominably. Several yards away, as we returned, let us say from dinner, our nostrils were assailed by rancid air. I have stood on a platform while the whole train was shunting; and as the dwelling-cars drew near, there would come a whiff of pure menagerie, only a little sourer, as from men instead of monkeys. I think we are human only in virtue of open windows. Without fresh air, you only require a bad heart, and a remarkable command of the Queen's English, to become such another as Dean Swift; a kind of leering, human goat, leaping and wagging your scut on mountains of offence. I do my best to keep my head the other way, and look for the human rather than the bestial in this Yahoo-like business of the emigrant train. But one thing I must say, the car of the Chinese was notably the least offensive.

The cars on the Central Pacific were nearly twice as high, and so proportionally airier; they were freshly varnished, which gave us all a sense of cleanliness an though we had bathed; the seats drew out and joined in the centre, so that there was no more need for bed boards; and there was an upper tier of berths which could be closed by day and opened at night.

I had by this time some opportunity of seeing the people whom I was among. They were in rather marked contrast to the emigrants I had met on board ship while crossing the Atlantic. They were mostly lumpish fellows, silent and noisy, a common combination; somewhat sad, I should say, with an extraordinary poor taste in humour, and little interest in their fellow-creatures beyond that of a cheap and merely external curiosity. If they heard a man's name and business, they seemed to think they had the heart of that mystery; but they were as eager to know that much as they were indifferent to the rest. Some of them were on nettles till they learned your name was Dickson and you a journeyman baker; but beyond that, whether you were Catholic or Mormon, dull or clever, fierce or friendly, was all one to them. Others who were not so stupid, gossiped a little, and, I am bound to say, unkindly. A favourite witticism was for some lout to raise the alarm of “All aboard!” while the rest of us were dining, thus contributing his mite to the general discomfort. Such a one was always much applauded for his high spirits. When I was ill coming through Wyoming, I was astonished - fresh from the eager humanity on board ship - to meet with little but laughter. One of the young men even amused himself by incommoding me, as was then very easy; and that not from ill- nature, but mere clodlike incapacity to think, for he expected me to join the laugh. I did so, but it was phantom merriment. Later on, a man from Kansas had three violent epileptic fits, and though, of course, there were not wanting some to help him, it was rather superstitious terror than sympathy that his case evoked among his fellow-passengers. “Oh, I hope he’s not going to die!” cried a woman; “it would be terrible to have a dead body!” And there was a very general movement to leave the man behind at the next station. This, by good fortune, the conductor negatived.

There was a good deal of story-telling in some quarters; in others, little but silence. In this society, more than any other that ever I was in, it was the narrator alone who seemed to enjoy the narrative. It was rarely that any one listened for the listening. If he lent an ear to another man’s story, it was because he was in immediate want of a hearer for one of his own. Food and the progress of the train were the subjects most generally treated; many joined to discuss these who otherwise would hold their tongues. One small knot had no better occupation than to worm out of me my name; and the more they tried, the more obstinately fixed I grew to baffle them. They assailed me with artful questions and insidious offers of correspondence in the future; but I was perpetually on my guard, and parried their assaults with inward laughter. I am sure Dubuque would have given me ten dollars for the secret. He owed me far more, had he understood life, for thus preserving him a lively interest throughout the journey. I met one of my fellow-passengers months after, driving a street tramway car in San Francisco; and, as the joke was now out of season, told him my name without subterfuge. You never saw a man more chapfallen. But had my name been Demogorgon, after so prolonged a mystery he had still been disappointed.

There were no emigrants direct from Europe - save one German family and a knot of Cornish miners who kept grimly by themselves, one reading the New Testament all day long through steel spectacles, the rest discussing privately the secrets of their old-world, mysterious race. Lady Hester Stanhope believed she could make something great of the Cornish; for my part, I can make nothing of them at all. A division of races, older and more original than that of Babel, keeps this close, esoteric family apart from neighbouring Englishmen. Not even a Red Indian seems more foreign in my eyes. This is one of the lessons of travel - that some of the strangest races dwell next door to you at home.

The rest were all American born, but they came from almost every quarter of that Continent. All the States of the North had sent out a fugitive to cross the plains with me. From Virginia, from Pennsylvania, from New York, from far western Iowa and Kansas, from Maime that borders on the Canadas, and from the Canadas themselves - some one or two were fleeing in quest of a better land and better wages. The talk in the train, like the talk I heard on the steamer, ran upon hard times, short commons, and hope that moves ever westward. I thought of my shipful from Great Britain with a feeling of despair. They had come 3000 miles, and yet not far enough. Hard times bowed them out of the Clyde, and stood to welcome them at Sandy Hook. Where were they to go? Pennsylvania, Maine, Iowa, Kansas? These were not places for immigration, but for emigration, it appeared; not one of them, but I knew a man who had lifted up his heel and left it for an ungrateful country. And it was still westward that they ran. Hunger, you would have thought, came out of the east like the sun, and the evening was made of edible gold. And, meantime, in the car in front of me, were there not half a hundred emigrants from the opposite quarter? Hungry Europe and hungry China, each pouring from their gates in search of provender, had here come face to face. The two waves had met; east and west had alike failed; the whole round world had been prospected and condemned; there was no El Dorado anywhere; and till one could emigrate to the moon, it seemed as well to stay patiently at home. Nor was there wanting another sign, at once more picturesque and more disheartening; for, as we continued to steam westward toward the land of gold, we were continually passing other emigrant trains upon the journey east; and these were as crowded as our own. Had all these return voyagers made a fortune in the mines? Were they all bound for Paris, and to be in Rome by Easter? It would seem not, for, whenever we met them, the passengers ran on the platform and cried to us through the windows, in a kind of wailing chorus, to “come back.” On the plains of Nebraska, in the mountains of Wyoming, it was still the same cry, and dismal to my heart, “Come back!” That was what we heard by the way “about the good country we were going to.” And at that very hour the Sand-lot of San Francisco was crowded with the unemployed, and the echo from the other side of Market Street was repeating the rant of demagogues.

If, in truth, it were only for the sake of wages that men emigrate, how many thousands would regret the bargain! But wages, indeed, are only one consideration out of many; for we are a race of gipsies, and love change and travel for themselves.

DESPISED RACES

Of all stupid ill-feelings, the sentiment of my fellow Caucasians towards our companions in the Chinese car was the most stupid and the worst. They seemed never to have looked at them, listened to them, or thought of them, but hated them A PRIORI. The Mongols were their enemies in that cruel and treacherous battle-field of money. They could work better and cheaper in half a hundred industries, and hence there was no calumny too idle for the Caucasians to repeat, and even to believe. They declared them hideous vermin, and affected a kind of choking in the throat when they beheld them. Now, as a matter of fact, the young Chinese man is so like a large class of European women, that on raising my head and suddenly catching sight of one at a considerable distance, I have for an instant been deceived by the resemblance. I do not say it is the most attractive class of our women, but for all that many a man's wife is less pleasantly favoured. Again, my emigrants declared that the Chinese were dirty. I cannot say they were clean, for that was impossible upon the journey; but in their efforts after cleanliness they put the rest of us to shame. We all pigged and stewed in one infamy, wet our hands and faces for half a minute daily on the platform, and were unashamed. But the Chinese never lost an opportunity, and you would see them washing their feet - an act not dreamed of among ourselves - and going as far as decency permitted to wash their whole bodies. I may remark by the way that the dirtier people are in their persons the more delicate is their sense of modesty. A clean man strips in a crowded boathouse; but he who is unwashed slinks in and out of bed without uncovering an inch of skin. Lastly, these very foul and malodorous Caucasians entertained the surprising illusion that it was the Chinese waggon, and that alone, which stank. I have said already that it was the exceptions and notably the freshest of the three.

These judgments are typical of the feeling in all Western America. The Chinese are considered stupid, because they are imperfectly acquainted with English. They are held to be base, because their dexterity and frugality enable them to underbid the lazy, luxurious Caucasian. They are said to be thieves; I am sure they have no monopoly of that. They are called cruel; the Anglo-Saxon and the cheerful Irishman may each reflect before he bears the accusation. I am told, again, that they are of the race of river pirates, and belong to the most despised and dangerous class in the Celestial Empire. But if this be so, what remarkable pirates have we here! and what must be the virtues, the industry, the education, and the intelligence of their superiors at home!

Awhile ago it was the Irish, now it is the Chinese that must go. Such is the cry. It seems, after all, that no country is bound to submit to immigration any more than to invasion; each is war to the knife, and resistance to either but legitimate defence. Yet we may regret the free tradition of the republic, which loved to depict herself with open arms, welcoming all unfortunates. And certainly, as a man who believes that he loves freedom, I may be excused some bitterness when I find her sacred name misused in the contention. It was but the other day that I heard a vulgar fellow in the Sand- lot, the popular tribune of San Francisco, roaring for arms and butchery. “At the call of Abraham Lincoln,” said the orator, “ye rose in the name of freedom to set free the negroes; can ye not rise and liberate yourselves from a few dirty Mongolians?”

For my own part, I could not look but with wonder and respect on the Chinese. Their forefathers watched the stars before mine had begun to keep pigs. Gun-powder and printing, which the other day we imitated, and a school of manners which we never had the delicacy so much as to desire to imitate, were theirs in a long- past antiquity. They walk the earth with us, but it seems they must be of different clay. They hear the clock strike the same hour, yet surely of a different epoch. They travel by steam conveyance, yet with such a baggage of old Asiatic thoughts and superstitions as might check the locomotive in its course. Whatever is thought within the circuit of the Great Wall; what the wry-eyed, spectacled schoolmaster teaches in the hamlets round Pekin; religions so old that our language looks a halfing boy alongside; philosophy so wise that our best philosophers find things therein to wonder at; all this travelled alongside of me for thousands of miles over plain and mountain. Heaven knows if we had one common thought or fancy all that way, or whether our eyes, which yet were formed upon the same design, beheld the same world out of the railway windows. And when either of us turned his thoughts to home and childhood, what a strange dissimilarity must there not have been in these pictures of the mind - when I beheld that old, gray, castled city, high throned above the firth, with the flag of Britain flying, and the red-coat sentry pacing over all; and the man in the next car to me would conjure up some junks and a pagoda and a fort of porcelain, and call it, with the same affection, home.

Another race shared among my fellow-passengers in the disfavour of the Chinese; and that, it is hardly necessary to say, was the noble red man of old story - over whose own hereditary continent we had been steaming all these days. I saw no wild or independent Indian; indeed, I hear that such avoid the neighbourhood of the train; but now and again at way stations, a husband and wife and a few children, disgracefully dressed out with the sweepings of civilisation, came forth and stared upon the emigrants. The silent stoicism of their conduct, and the pathetic degradation of their appearance, would have touched any thinking creature, but my fellow-passengers danced and jested round them with a truly Cockney baseness. I was ashamed for the thing we call civilisation. We should carry upon our consciences so much, at least, of our forefathers' misconduct as we continue to profit by ourselves.

If oppression drives a wise man mad, what should be raging in the hearts of these poor tribes, who have been driven back and back, step after step, their promised reservations torn from them one after another as the States extended westward, until at length they are shut up into these hideous mountain deserts of the centre - and even there find themselves invaded, insulted, and hunted out by ruffianly diggers? The eviction of the Cherokees (to name but an instance), the extortion of Indian agents, the outrages of the wicked, the ill-faith of all, nay, down to the ridicule of such poor beings as were here with me upon the train, make up a chapter of injustice and indignity such as a man must be in some ways base if his heart will suffer him to pardon or forget. These old, well- founded, historical hatreds have a savour of nobility for the independent. That the Jew should not love the Christian, nor the Irishman love the English, nor the Indian brave tolerate the thought of the American, is not disgraceful to the nature of man; rather, indeed, honourable, since it depends on wrongs ancient like the race, and not personal to him who cherishes the indignation.

TO THE GOLDEN GATES

A little corner of Utah is soon traversed, and leaves no particular impressions on the mind. By an early hour on Wednesday morning we stopped to breakfast at Toano, a little station on a bleak, high- lying plateau in Nevada. The man who kept the station eating-house was a Scot, and learning that I was the same, he grew very friendly, and gave me some advice on the country I was now entering. "You see," said he, "I tell you this, because I come from your country." Hail, brither Scots!

His most important hint was on the moneys of this part of the world. There is something in the simplicity of a decimal coinage which is revolting to the human mind; thus the French, in small affairs, reckon strictly by halfpence; and you have to solve, by a spasm of mental arithmetic, such posers as thirty-two, forty-five, or even a hundred halfpence. In the Pacific States they have made a bolder push for complexity, and settle their affairs by a coin that no longer that no longer exists - the BIT, or old Mexican real. The supposed value of the bit is twelve and a half cents, eight to the dollar. When it comes to two bits, the quarter-dollar stands for the required amount. But how about an odd bit? The nearest coin to it is a dime, which is, short by a fifth. That, then, is called a SHORT bit. If you have one, you lay it triumphantly down, and save two and a half cents. But if you have not, and lay down a quarter, the bar-keeper or shopman calmly tenders you a dime by way of change; and thus you have paid what is called a LONG BIT, and lost two and a half cents, or even, by comparison with a short bit, five cents. In country places all over the Pacific coast, nothing lower than a bit is ever asked or taken, which vastly increases the cost of life; as even for a glass of beer you must pay fivepence or sevenpence-halfpenny, as the case may be. You would say that this system of mutual robbery was as broad as it was long; but I have discovered a plan to make it broader, with which I here endow the public. It is brief and simple - radiantly simple. There is one place where five cents are recognised, and that is the post-office. A quarter is only worth two bits, a short and a long. Whenever you have a quarter, go to the post-office and buy five cents worth of postage-stamps; you will receive in change two dimes, that is, two short bits. The purchasing power of your money is undiminished. You can go and have your two glasses of beer all the same; and you have made yourself a present of five cents worth of postage-stamps into the bargain. Benjamin Franklin would have patted me on the head for this discovery.

From Toano we travelled all day through deserts of alkali and sand, horrible to man, and bare sage-brush country that seemed little kindlier, and came by supper-time to Elko. As we were standing, after our manner, outside the station, I saw two men whip suddenly from underneath the cars, and take to their heels across country. They were tramps, it appeared, who had been riding on the beams since eleven of the night before; and several of my fellow- passengers had already seen and conversed with them while we broke our fast at Toano. These land stowaways play a great part over here in America, and I should have liked dearly to become acquainted with them.

At Elko an odd circumstance befell me. I was coming out from supper, when I was stopped by a small, stout, ruddy man, followed by two others taller and ruddier than himself.

“Excuse me, sir,” he said, “but do you happen to be going on?”

I said I was, whereupon he said he hoped to persuade me to desist from that intention. He had a situation to offer me, and if we could come to terms, why, good and well. “You see,” he continued, “I’m running a theatre here, and we’re a little short in the orchestra. You’re a musician, I guess?”

I assured him that, beyond a rudimentary acquaintance with “Auld Lang Syne” and “The Wearing of the Green,” I had no pretension whatever to that style. He seemed much put out of countenance; and one of his taller companions asked him, on the nail, for five dollars.

“You see, sir,” added the latter to me, “he bet you were a musician; I bet you weren’t. No offence, I hope?”

“None whatever,” I said, and the two withdrew to the bar, where I presume the debt was liquidated.

This little adventure woke bright hopes in my fellow-travellers, who thought they had now come to a country where situations went a-begging. But I am not so sure that the offer was in good faith. Indeed, I am more than half persuaded it was but a feeler to decide the bet.

Of all the next day I will tell you nothing, for the best of all reasons, that I remember no more than that we continued through desolate and desert scenes, fiery hot and deadly weary. But some time after I had fallen asleep that night, I was awakened by one of my companions. It was in vain that I resisted. A fire of enthusiasm and whisky burned in his eyes; and he declared we were in a new country, and I must come forth upon the platform and see with my own eyes. The train was then, in its patient way, standing halted in a by-track. It was a clear, moonlit night; but the valley was too narrow to admit the moonshine direct, and only a diffused glimmer whitened the tall rocks and relieved the blackness of the pines. A hoarse clamour filled the air; it was the continuous plunge of a cascade somewhere near at hand among the mountains. The air struck chill, but tasted good and vigorous in the nostrils - a fine, dry, old mountain atmosphere. I was dead sleepy, but I returned to roost with a grateful mountain feeling at my heart.

When I awoke next morning, I was puzzled for a while to know if it were day or night, for the illumination was unusual. I sat up at last, and found we were grading slowly downward through a long snowshed; and suddenly we shot into an open; and before we were swallowed into the next length of wooden tunnel, I had one glimpse of a huge pine-forested ravine upon my left, a foaming river, and a sky already coloured with the fires of dawn. I am usually very calm over the displays of nature; but you will scarce believe how my heart leaped at this. It was like meeting one’s wife. I had come home again - home from unsightly deserts to the green and habitable corners of the earth. Every spire of pine along the hill-top, every trouty pool along that mountain river, was more dear to me than a blood relation. Few people have praised God more happily than I did. And thenceforward, down by Blue Canon, Alta, Dutch Flat, and all the old mining camps, through a sea of mountain forests, dropping thousands of feet toward the far sea-level as we went, not I only, but all the passengers on board, threw off their sense of dirt and heat and weariness, and bawled like schoolboys, and thronged with shining eyes upon the platform and became new creatures within and without. The sun no longer oppressed us with heat, it only shone laughingly along the mountain-side, until we were fain to laugh ourselves for glee. At every turn we could see farther into the land and our own happy futures. At every town the cocks were tossing their clear notes into the golden air, and crowing for the new day and the new country. For this was indeed our destination; this was “the good country” we had been going to so long.

By afternoon we were at Sacramento, the city of gardens in a plain of corn; and the next day before the dawn we were lying to upon the Oakland side of San Francisco Bay. The day was breaking as we crossed the ferry; the fog was rising over the citied hills of San Francisco; the bay was perfect - not a ripple, scarce a stain, upon its blue expanse; everything was waiting, breathless, for the sun. A spot of cloudy gold lit first upon the head of Tamalpais, and then widened downward on its shapely shoulder; the air seemed to awaken, and began to sparkle; and suddenly

“The tall hills Titan discovered,”

and the city of San Francisco, and the bay of gold and corn, were lit from end to end with summer daylight.

CHAPTER II - THE OLD PACIFIC CAPITAL

THE WOODS AND THE PACIFIC

THE Bay of Monterey has been compared by no less a person than General Sherman to a bent fishing-hook; and the comparison, if less important than the march through Georgia, still shows the eye of a soldier for topography. Santa Cruz sits exposed at the shank; the mouth of the Salinas river is at the middle of the bend; and Monterey itself is cosily ensconced beside the barb. Thus the ancient capital of California faces across the bay, while the Pacific Ocean, though hidden by low hills and forest, bombards her left flank and rear with never-dying surf. In front of the town, the long line of sea-beach trends north and north-west, and then westward to enclose the bay. The waves which lap so quietly about the jetties of Monterey grow louder and larger in the distance; you can see the breakers leaping high and white by day; at night, the outline of the shore is traced in transparent silver by the moonlight and the flying foam; and from all round, even in quiet weather, the distant, thrilling roar of the Pacific hangs over the coast and the adjacent country like smoke above a battle.

These long beaches are enticing to the idle man. It would be hard to find a walk more solitary and at the same time more exciting to the mind. Crowds of ducks and sea-gulls hover over the sea. Sandpipers trot in and out by troops after the retiring waves, trilling together in a chorus of infinitesimal song. Strange sea- tangles, new to the European eye, the bones of whales, or sometimes a whole whale’s carcase, white with carrion-gulls and poisoning the wind, lie scattered here and there along the sands. The waves come in slowly, vast and green, curve their translucent necks, and burst with a surprising uproar, that runs, waxing and waning, up and down the long key-board of the beach. The foam of these great ruins mounts in an instant to the ridge of the sand glacis, swiftly fleets back again, and is met and buried by the next breaker. The interest is perpetually fresh. On no other coast that I know shall you enjoy, in calm, sunny weather, such a spectacle of Ocean’s greatness, such beauty of changing colour, or such degrees of thunder in the sound. The very air is more than usually salt by this Homeric deep.

Inshore, a tract of sand-hills borders on the beach. Here and there a lagoon, more or less brackish, attracts the birds and hunters. A rough, undergrowth partially conceals the sand. The crouching, hardy live-oaks flourish singly or in thickets - the kind of wood for murderers to crawl among - and here and there the skirts of the forest extend downward from the hills with a floor of turf and long aisles of pine-trees hung with Spaniard's Beard. Through this quaint desert the railway cars drew near to Monterey from the junction at Salinas City - though that and so many other things are now for ever altered - and it was from here that you had the first view of the old township lying in the sands, its white windmills bickering in the chill, perpetual wind, and the first fogs of the evening drawing drearily around it from the sea.

The one common note of all this country is the haunting presence of the ocean. A great faint sound of breakers follows you high up into the inland canons; the roar of water dwells in the clean, empty rooms of Monterey as in a shell upon the chimney; go where you will, you have but to pause and listen to hear the voice of the Pacific. You pass out of the town to the south-west, and mount the hill among pine-woods. Glade, thicket, and grove surround you. You follow winding sandy tracks that lead nowhither. You see a deer; a multitude of quail arises. But the sound of the sea still follows you as you advance, like that of wind among the trees, only harsher and stranger to the ear; and when at length you gain the summit, out breaks on every hand and with freshened vigour that same unending, distant, whispering rumble of the ocean; for now you are on the top of Monterey peninsula, and the noise no longer only mounts to you from behind along the beach towards Santa Cruz, but from your right also, round by Chinatown and Pinos lighthouse, and from down before you to the mouth of the Carmello river. The whole woodland is begirt with thundering surges. The silence that immediately surrounds you where you stand is not so much broken as it is haunted by this distant, circling rumour. It sets your senses upon edge; you strain your attention; you are clearly and unusually conscious of small sounds near at hand; you walk listening like an Indian hunter; and that voice of the Pacific is a sort of disquieting company to you in your walk.

When once I was in these woods I found it difficult to turn homeward. All woods lure a rambler onward; but in those of Monterey it was the surf that particularly invited me to prolong my walks. I would push straight for the shore where I thought it to be nearest. Indeed, there was scarce a direction that would not, sooner or later, have brought me forth on the Pacific. The emptiness of the woods gave me a sense of freedom and discovery in these excursions. I never in all my visits met but one man. He was a Mexican, very dark of hue, but smiling and fat, and he carried an axe, though his true business at that moment was to seek for straying cattle. I asked him what o'clock it was, but he seemed neither to know nor care; and when he in his turn asked me for news of his cattle, I showed myself equally indifferent. We stood and smiled upon each other for a few seconds, and then turned without a word and took our several ways across the forest.

One day - I shall never forget it - I had taken a trail that was new to me. After a while the woods began to open, the sea to sound nearer hand. I came upon a road, and, to my surprise, a stile. A step or two farther, and, without leaving the woods, I found myself among trim houses. I walked through street after street, parallel and at right angles, paved with sward and dotted with trees, but still undeniable streets, and each with its name posted at the corner, as in a real town. Facing down the main thoroughfare - "Central Avenue," as it was ticketed - I saw an open-air temple, with benches and sounding-board, as though for an orchestra. The houses were all tightly shuttered; there was no smoke, no sound but of the waves, no moving thing. I have never been in any place that seemed so dreamlike. Pompeii is all in a bustle with visitors, and its antiquity and strangeness deceive the imagination; but this town had plainly not been built above a year or two, and perhaps had been deserted overnight. Indeed, it was not so much like a deserted town as like a scene upon the stage by daylight, and with no one on the boards. The barking of a dog led me at last to the only house still occupied, where a Scotch pastor and his wife pass the winter alone in this empty theatre. The place was "The Pacific Camp Grounds, the Christian Seaside Resort." Thither, in the warm season, crowds come to enjoy a life of teetotalism, religion, and flirtation, which I am willing to think blameless and agreeable. The neighbourhood at least is well selected. The Pacific booms in front. Westward is Point Pinos, with the lighthouse in a wilderness of sand, where you will find the lightkeeper playing the piano, making models and bows and arrows, studying dawn and sunrise in amateur oil-painting, and with a dozen other elegant pursuits and interests to surprise his brave, old-country rivals. To the east, and still nearer, you will come upon a space of open down, a hamlet, a haven among rocks, a world of surge and screaming sea- gulls. Such scenes are very similar in different climates; they appear homely to the eyes of all; to me this was like a dozen spots in Scotland. And yet the boats that ride in the haven are of strange outlandish design; and, if you walk into the hamlet, you will behold costumes and faces and hear a tongue that are unfamiliar to the memory. The joss-stick burns, the opium pipe is smoked, the floors are strewn with slips of coloured paper - prayers, you would say, that had somehow missed their destination - and a man guiding his upright pencil from right to left across the sheet, writes home the news of Monterey to the Celestial Empire.

The woods and the Pacific rule between them the climate of this seaboard region. On the streets of Monterey, when the air does not smell salt from the one, it will be blowing perfumed from the resinous tree-tops of the other. For days together a hot, dry air will overhang the town, close as from an oven, yet healthful and aromatic in the nostrils. The cause is not far to seek, for the woods are afire, and the hot wind is blowing from the hills. These fires are one of the great dangers of California. I have seen from Monterey as many as three at the same time, by day a cloud of smoke, by night a red coal of conflagration in the distance. A little thing will start them, and, if the wind be favourable, they gallop over miles of country faster than a horse. The inhabitants must turn out and work like demons, for it is not only the pleasant groves that are destroyed; the climate and the soil are equally at stake, and these fires prevent the rains of the next winter and dry up perennial fountains. California has been a land of promise in its time, like Palestine; but if the woods continue so swiftly to perish, it may become, like Palestine, a land of desolation.

To visit the woods while they are languidly burning is a strange piece of experience. The fire passes through the underbrush at a run. Every here and there a tree flares up instantaneously from root to summit, scattering tufts of flame, and is quenched, it seems, as quickly. But this last is only in semblance. For after this first squib-like conflagration of the dry moss and twigs, there remains behind a deep-rooted and consuming fire in the very entrails of the tree. The resin of the pitch-pine is principally condensed at the base of the bole and in the spreading roots. Thus, after the light, showy, skirmishing flames, which are only as the match to the explosion, have already scampered down the wind into the distance, the true harm is but beginning for this giant of the woods. You may approach the tree from one side, and see it scorched indeed from top to bottom, but apparently survivor of the peril. Make the circuit, and there, on the other side of the column, is a clear mass of living coal, spreading like an ulcer; while underground, to their most extended fibre, the roots are being eaten out by fire, and the smoke is rising through the fissures to the surface. A little while, and, without a nod of warning, the huge pine-tree snaps off short across the ground and falls prostrate with a crash. Meanwhile the fire continues its silent business; the roots are reduced to a fine ash; and long afterwards, if you pass by, you will find the earth pierced with radiating galleries, and preserving the design of all these subterranean spurs, as though it were the mould for a new tree instead of the print of an old one. These pitch-pines of Monterey are, with the single exception of the Monterey cypress, the most fantastic of forest trees. No words can give an idea of the contortion of their growth; they might figure without change in a circle of the nether hell as Dante pictured it; and at the rate at which trees grow, and at which forest fires spring up and gallop through the hills of California, we may look forward to a time when there will not be one of them left standing in that land of their nativity. At least they have not so much to fear from the axe, but perish by what may be called a natural although a violent death; while it is man in his short-sighted greed that robs the country of the nobler redwood. Yet a little while and perhaps all the hills of seaboard California may be as bald as Tamalpais.

I have an interest of my own in these forest fires, for I came so near to lynching on one occasion, that a braver man might have retained a thrill from the experience. I wished to be certain whether it was the moss, that quaint funereal ornament of Californian forests, which blazed up so rapidly when the flame first touched the tree. I suppose I must have been under the influence of Satan, for instead of plucking off a piece for my experiment what should I do but walk up to a great pine-tree in a portion of the wood which had escaped so much as scorching, strike a match, and apply the flame gingerly to one of the tassels. The tree went off simply like a rocket; in three seconds it was a roaring pillar of fire. Close by I could hear the shouts of those who were at work combating the original conflagration. I could see the waggon that had brought them tied to a live oak in a piece of open; I could even catch the flash of an axe as it swung up through the underwood into the sunlight. Had any one observed the result of my experiment my neck was literally not worth a pinch of snuff; after a few minutes of passionate expostulation I should have been run up to convenient bough.

To die for faction is a common evil;
But to be hanged for nonsense is the devil.

I have run repeatedly, but never as I ran that day. At night I went out of town, and there was my own particular fire, quite distinct from the other, and burning as I thought with even greater vigour.

But it is the Pacific that exercises the most direct and obvious power upon the climate. At sunset, for months together, vast, wet, melancholy fogs arise and come shoreward from the ocean. From the hill-top above Monterey the scene is often noble, although it is always sad. The upper air is still bright with sunlight; a glow still rests upon the Gabelano Peak; but the fogs are in possession of the lower levels; they crawl in scarves among the sandhills; they float, a little higher, in clouds of a gigantic size and often of a wild configuration; to the south, where they have struck the seaward shoulder of the mountains of Santa Lucia, they double back and spire up skyward like smoke. Where their shadow touches, colour dies out of the world. The air grows chill and deadly as they advance. The trade-wind freshens, the trees begin to sigh, and all the windmills in Monterey are whirling and creaking and filling their cisterns with the brackish water of the sands.

It takes but a little while till the invasion is complete. The sea, in its lighter order, has submerged the earth. Monterey is curtained in for the night in thick, wet, salt, and frigid clouds, so to remain till day returns; and before the sun's rays they slowly disperse and retreat in broken squadrons to the bosom of the sea. And yet often when the fog is thickest and most chill, a few steps out of the town and up the slope, the night will be dry and warm and full of inland perfume.

MEXICANS, AMERICANS, AND INDIANS

The history of Monterey has yet to be written. Founded by Catholic missionaries, a place of wise beneficence to Indians, a place of arms, a Mexican capital continually wrested by one faction from another, an American capital when the first House of Representatives held its deliberations, and then falling lower and lower from the capital of the State to the capital of a county, and from that again, by the loss of its charter and town lands, to a mere bankrupt village, its rise and decline is typical of that of all Mexican institutions and even Mexican families in California.

Nothing is stranger in that strange State than the rapidity with which the soil has changed-hands. The Mexicans, you may say, are all poor and landless, like their former capital; and yet both it and they hold themselves apart and preserve their ancient customs and something of their ancient air.

The town, when I was there, was a place of two or three streets, economically paved with sea-sand, and two or three lanes, which were watercourses in the rainy season, and were, at all times, rent up by fissures four or five feet deep. There were no street lights. Short sections of wooden sidewalk only added to the dangers of the night, for they were often high above the level of the roadway, and no one could tell where they would be likely to begin or end. The houses were, for the most part, built of unbaked adobe brick, many of them old for so new a country, some of very elegant proportions, with low, spacious, shapely rooms, and walls so thick that the heat of summer never dried them to the heart. At the approach of the rainy season a deathly chill and a graveyard smell began to hang about the lower floors; and diseases of the chest are common and fatal among housekeeping people of either sex.

There was no activity but in and around the saloons, where people sat almost all day long playing cards. The smallest excursion was made on horseback. You would scarcely ever see the main street without a horse or two tied to posts, and making a fine figure with their Mexican housings. It struck me oddly to come across some of the CORNHILL illustrations to Mr. Blackmore's EREMA, and see all the characters astride on English saddles. As a matter of fact, an English saddle is a rarity even in San Francisco, and, you may say, a thing unknown in all the rest of California. In a place so exclusively Mexican as Monterey, you saw not only Mexican saddles but true Vaquero riding - men always at the hand-gallop up hill and down dale, and round the sharpest corner, urging their horses with cries and gesticulations and cruel rotatory spurs, checking them dead with a touch, or wheeling them right-about-face in a square yard. The type of face and character of bearing are surprisingly un-American. The first ranged from something like the pure Spanish, to something, in its sad fixity, not unlike the pure Indian, although I do not suppose there was one pure blood of either race in all the country. As for the second, it was a matter of perpetual surprise to find, in that world of absolutely mannerless Americans, a people full of deportment, solemnly courteous, and doing all things with grace and decorum. In dress they ran to colour and bright sashes. Not even the most Americanised could always resist the temptation to stick a red rose into his hat-band. Not even the most Americanised would descend to wear the vile dress hat of civilisation. Spanish was the language of the streets. It was difficult to get along without a word or two of that language for an occasion. The only communications in which the population joined were with a view to amusement. A weekly public ball took place with great etiquette, in addition to the numerous fandangoes in private houses. There was a really fair amateur brass band. Night after night serenaders would be going about the street, sometimes in a company and with several instruments and voice together, sometimes severally, each guitar before a different window. It was a strange thing to lie awake in nineteenth-century America, and hear the guitar accompany, and one of these old, heart-breaking Spanish love-songs mount into the night air, perhaps in a deep baritone, perhaps in that high-pitched, pathetic, womanish alto which is so common among Mexican men, and which strikes on the unaccustomed ear as something not entirely human but altogether sad.

The town, then, was essentially and wholly Mexican; and yet almost all the land in the neighbourhood was held by Americans, and it was from the same class, numerically so small, that the principal officials were selected. This Mexican and that Mexican would describe to you his old family estates, not one rood of which remained to him. You would ask him how that came about, and elicit some tangled story back-foremost, from which you gathered that the Americans had been greedy like designing men, and the Mexicans greedy like children, but no other certain fact. Their merits and their faults contributed alike to the ruin of the former landholders. It is true they were improvident, and easily dazzled with the sight of ready money; but they were gentlefolk besides, and that in a way which curiously unfitted them to combat Yankee craft. Suppose they have a paper to sign, they would think it a reflection on the other party to examine the terms with any great minuteness; nay, suppose them to observe some doubtful clause, it is ten to one they would refuse from delicacy to object to it. I know I am speaking within the mark, for I have seen such a case occur, and the Mexican, in spite of the advice of his lawyer, has signed the imperfect paper like a lamb. To have spoken in the matter, he said, above all to have let the other party guess that he had seen a lawyer, would have "been like doubting his word." The scruple sounds oddly to one of ourselves, who have been brought up to understand all business as a competition in fraud, and honesty itself to be a virtue which regards the carrying out but not the creation of agreements. This single unworldly trait will account for much of that revolution of which we are speaking. The Mexicans have the name of being great swindlers, but certainly the accusation cuts both ways. In a contest of this sort, the entire booty would scarcely have passed into the hands of the more scupulous race.

Physically the Americans have triumphed; but it is not entirely seen how far they have themselves been morally conquered. This is, of course, but a part of a part of an extraordinary problem now in the course of being solved in the various States of the American Union. I am reminded of an anecdote. Some years ago, at a great sale of wine, all the odd lots were purchased by a grocer in a small way in the old town of Edinburgh. The agent had the curiosity to visit him some time after and inquire what possible use he could have for such material. He was shown, by way of answer, a huge vat where all the liquors, from humble Gladstone to imperial Tokay, were fermenting together. "And what," he asked, "do you propose to call this?" "I'm no very sure," replied the grocer, "but I think it's going to turn out port." In the older Eastern States, I think we may say that this hotch-potch of races in going to turn out English, or thereabout. But the problem is indefinitely varied in other zones. The elements are differently mingled in the south, in what we may call the Territorial belt and in the group of States on the Pacific coast. Above all, in these last, we may look to see some monstrous hybrid - Whether good or evil, who shall forecast? but certainly original and all their own. In my little restaurant at Monterey, we have sat down to table day after day, a Frenchman, two Portuguese, an Italian, a Mexican, and a Scotchman: we had for common visitors an American from Illinois, a nearly pure blood Indian woman, and a naturalised Chinese; and from time to time a Switzer and a German came down from country ranches for the night. No wonder that the Pacific coast is a foreign land to visitors from the Eastern States, for each race contributes something of its own. Even the despised Chinese have taught the youth of California, none indeed of their virtues, but the debasing use of opium. And chief among these influences is that of the Mexicans.

The Mexicans although in the State are out of it. They still preserve a sort of international independence, and keep their affairs snug to themselves. Only four or five years ago Vasquez, the bandit, his troops being dispersed and the hunt too hot for him in other parts of California, returned to his native Monterey, and was seen publicly in her streets and saloons, fearing no man. The year that I was there, there occurred two reputed murders. As the Montereyans are exceptionally vile speakers of each other and of every one behind his back, it is not possible for me to judge how much truth there may have been in these reports; but in the one case every one believed, and in the other some suspected, that there had been foul play; and nobody dreamed for an instant of taking the authorities into their counsel. Now this is, of course, characteristic enough of the Mexicans; but it is a noteworthy feature that all the Americans in Monterey acquiesced without a word in this inaction. Even when I spoke to them upon the subject, they seemed not to understand my surprise; they had forgotten the traditions of their own race and upbringing, and become, in a word, wholly Mexicanised.

Again, the Mexicans, having no ready money to speak of, rely almost entirely in their business transactions upon each other's worthless paper. Pedro the penniless pays you with an I O U from the equally penniless Miguel. It is a sort of local currency by courtesy. Credit in these parts has passed into a superstition. I have seen a strong, violent man struggling for months to recover a debt, and getting nothing but an exchange of waste paper. The very storekeepers are averse to asking for cash payments, and are more surprised than pleased when they are offered. They fear there must be something under it, and that you mean to withdraw your custom from them. I have seen the enterprising chemist and stationer begging me with fervour to let my account run on, although I had my purse open in my hand; and partly from the commonness of the case, partly from some remains of that generous old Mexican tradition which made all men welcome to their tables, a person may be notoriously both unwilling and unable to pay, and still find credit for the necessaries of life in the stores of Monterey. Now this villainous habit of living upon "tick" has grown into Californian nature. I do not mean that the American and European storekeepers of Monterey are as lax as Mexicans; I mean that American farmers in many parts of the State expect unlimited credit, and profit by it in the meanwhile, without a thought for consequences. Jew storekeepers have already learned the advantage to be gained from this; they lead on the farmer into irretrievable indebtedness, and keep him ever after as their bond-slave hopelessly grinding in the mill. So the whirligig of time brings in its revenges, and except that the Jew knows better than to foreclose, you may see Americans bound in the same chains with which they themselves had formerly bound the Mexican. It seems as if certain sorts of follies, like certain sorts of grain, were natural to the soil rather than to the race that holds and tills it for the moment.

In the meantime, however, the Americans rule in Monterey County. The new county seat, Salinas City, in the bald, corn-bearing plain under the Gabelano Peak, is a town of a purely American character. The land is held, for the most part, in those enormous tracts which are another legacy of Mexican days, and form the present chief danger and disgrace of California; and the holders are mostly of American or British birth. We have here in England no idea of the troubles and inconveniences which flow from the existence of these large landholders - land-thieves, land-sharks, or land-grabbers, they are more commonly and plainly called. Thus the townlands of Monterey are all in the hands of a single man. How they came there is an obscure, vexatious question, and, rightly or wrongly, the man is hated with a great hatred. His life has been repeatedly in danger. Not very long ago, I was told, the stage was stopped and examined three evenings in succession by disguised horsemen thirsting for his blood. A certain house on the Salinas road, they say, he always passes in his buggy at full speed, for the squatter sent him warning long ago. But a year since he was publicly pointed out for death by no less a man than Mr. Dennis Kearney. Kearney is a man too well known in California, but a word of explanation is required for English readers. Originally an Irish dray-man, he rose, by his command of bad language, to almost dictatorial authority in the State; throned it there for six months or so, his mouth full of oaths, gallowses, and conflagrations; was first snuffed out last winter by Mr. Coleman, backed by his San Francisco Vigilantes and three gatling guns; completed his own ruin by throwing in his lot with the grotesque Green-backer party; and had at last to be rescued by his old enemies, the police, out of the hands of his rebellious followers. It was while he was at the top of his fortune that Kearney visited Monterey with his battle- cry against Chinese labour, the railroad monopolists, and the land- thieves; and his one articulate counsel to the Montereyans was to “hang David Jacks.” Had the town been American, in my private opinion, this would have been done years ago. Land is a subject on which there is no jesting in the West, and I have seen my friend the lawyer drive out of Monterey to adjust a competition of titles with the face of a captain going into battle and his Smith-and- Wesson convenient to his hand.

On the ranche of another of these landholders you may find our old friend, the truck system, in full operation. Men live there, year in year out, to cut timber for a nominal wage, which is all consumed in supplies. The longer they remain in this desirable service the deeper they will fall in debt - a burlesque injustice in a new country, where labour should be precious, and one of those typical instances which explains the prevailing discontent and the success of the demagogue Kearney.

In a comparison between what was and what is in California, the praisers of times past will fix upon the Indians of Carmel. The valley drained by the river so named is a true Californian valley, bare, dotted with chaparal, overlooked by quaint, unfinished hills. The Carmel runs by many pleasant farms, a clear and shallow river, loved by wading kine; and at last, as it is falling towards a quicksand and the great Pacific, passes a ruined mission on a hill. From the mission church the eye embraces a great field of ocean, and the ear is filled with a continuous sound of distant breakers on the shore. But the day of the Jesuit has gone by, the day of the Yankee has succeeded, and there is no one left to care for the converted savage. The church is roofless and ruinous, sea-breezes and sea-fogs, and the alternation of the rain and sunshine, daily widening the breaches and casting the crockets from the wall. As an antiquity in this new land, a quaint specimen of missionary architecture, and a memorial of good deeds, it had a triple claim to preservation from all thinking people; but neglect and abuse have been its portion. There is no sign of American interference, save where a headboard has been torn from a grave to be a mark for pistol bullets. So it is with the Indians for whom it was erected. Their lands, I was told, are being yearly encroached upon by the neighbouring American proprietor, and with that exception no man troubles his head for the Indians of Carmel. Only one day in the year, the day before our Guy Fawkes, the PADRE drives over the hill from Monterey; the little sacristy, which is the only covered portion of the church, is filled with seats and decorated for the service; the Indians troop together, their bright dresses contrasting with their dark and melancholy faces; and there, among a crowd of somewhat unsympathetic holiday-makers, you may hear God served with perhaps more touching circumstances than in any other temple under heaven. An Indian, stone-blind and about eighty years of age, conducts the singing; other Indians compose the choir; yet they have the Gregorian music at their finger ends, and pronounce the Latin so correctly that I could follow the meaning as they sang. The pronunciation was odd and nasal, the singing hurried and staccato. “In saecula saeculoho-horum,” they went, with a vigorous aspirate to every additional syllable. I have never seen faces more vividly lit up with joy than the faces of these Indian singers. It was to them not only the worship of God, nor an act by which they recalled and commemorated better days, but was besides an exercise of culture, where all they knew of art and letters was united and expressed. And it made a man’s heart sorry for the good fathers of yore who had taught them to dig and to reap, to read and to sing, who had given them European mass-books which they still preserve and study in their cottages, and who had now passed away from all authority and influence in that land - to be succeeded by greedy land-thieves and sacrilegious pistol-shots. So ugly a thing may our Anglo-Saxon Protestantism appear beside the doings of the Society of Jesus.

But revolution in this world succeeds to revolution. All that I say in this paper is in a paulo-past tense. The Monterey of last year exists no longer. A huge hotel has sprung up in the desert by the railway. Three sets of diners sit down successively to table. Invaluable toilettes figure along the beach and between the live oaks; and Monterey is advertised in the newspapers, and posted in the waiting-rooms at railway stations, as a resort for wealth and fashion. Alas for the little town! it is not strong enough to resist the influence of the flaunting caravanserai, and the poor, quaint, penniless native gentlemen of Monterey must perish, like a lower race, before the millionaire vulgarians of the Big Bonanza.

CHAPTER III - FONTAINEBLEAU - VILLAGE COMMUNITIES OF PAINTERS

I

THE charm of Fontainebleau is a thing apart. It is a place that people love even more than they admire. The vigorous forest air, the silence, the majestic avenues of highway, the wilderness of tumbled boulders, the great age and dignity of certain groves - these are but ingredients, they are not the secret of the philtre. The place is sanative; the air, the light, the perfumes, and the shapes of things concord in happy harmony. The artist may be idle and not fear the "blues." He may dally with his life. Mirth, lyric mirth, and a vivacious classical contentment are of the very essence of the better kind of art; and these, in that most smiling forest, he has the chance to learn or to remember. Even on the plain of Biere, where the Angelus of Millet still tolls upon the ear of fancy, a larger air, a higher heaven, something ancient and healthy in the face of nature, purify the mind alike from dulness and hysteria. There is no place where the young are more gladly conscious of their youth, or the old better contented with their age.

The fact of its great and special beauty further recommends this country to the artist. The field was chosen by men in whose blood there still raced some of the gleeful or solemn exultation of great art - Millet who loved dignity like Michelangelo, Rousseau whose modern brush was dipped in the glamour of the ancients. It was chosen before the day of that strange turn in the history of art, of which we now perceive the culmination in impressionistic tales and pictures - that voluntary aversion of the eye from all speciously strong and beautiful effects - that disinterested love of dulness which has set so many Peter Bells to paint the river- side primrose. It was then chosen for its proximity to Paris. And for the same cause, and by the force of tradition, the painter of to-day continues to inhabit and to paint it. There is in France scenery incomparable for romance and harmony. Provence, and the valley of the Rhone from Vienne to Tarascon, are one succession of masterpieces waiting for the brush. The beauty is not merely beauty; it tells, besides, a tale to the imagination, and surprises while it charms. Here you shall see castellated towns that would befit the scenery of dreamland; streets that glow with colour like cathedral windows; hills of the most exquisite proportions; flowers of every precious colour, growing thick like grass. All these, by the grace of railway travel, are brought to the very door of the modern painter; yet he does not seek them; he remains faithful to Fontainebleau, to the eternal bridge of Gretz, to the watering-pot cascade in Cernay valley. Even Fontainebleau was chosen for him; even in Fontainebleau he shrinks from what is sharply charactered. But one thing, at least, is certain, whatever he may choose to paint and in whatever manner, it is good for the artist to dwell among graceful shapes. Fontainebleau, if it be but quiet scenery, is classically graceful; and though the student may look for different qualities, this quality, silently present, will educate his hand and eye.

But, before all its other advantages - charm, loveliness, or proximity to Paris - comes the great fact that it is already colonised. The institution of a painters' colony is a work of time and tact. The population must be conquered. The innkeeper has to be taught, and he soon learns, the lesson of unlimited credit; he must be taught to welcome as a favoured guest a young gentleman in a very greasy coat, and with little baggage beyond a box of colours and a canvas; and he must learn to preserve his faith in customers who will eat heartily and drink of the best, borrow money to buy tobacco, and perhaps not pay a stiver for a year. A colour merchant has next to be attracted. A certain vogue must be given to the place, lest the painter, most gregarious of animals, should find himself alone. And no sooner are these first difficulties overcome, than fresh perils spring up upon the other side; and the bourgeois and the tourist are knocking at the gate. This is the crucial moment for the colony. If these intruders gain a footing, they not only banish freedom and amenity; pretty soon, by means of their long purses, they will have undone the education of the innkeeper; prices will rise and credit shorten; and the poor painter must fare farther on and find another hamlet. “Not here, O Apollo!” will become his song. Thus Trouville and, the other day, St. Raphael were lost to the arts. Curious and not always edifying are the shifts that the French student uses to defend his lair; like the cuttlefish, he must sometimes blacken the waters of his chosen pool; but at such a time and for so practical a purpose Mrs. Grundy must allow him licence. Where his own purse and credit are not threatened, he will do the honours of his village generously. Any artist is made welcome, through whatever medium he may seek expression; science is respected; even the idler, if he prove, as he so rarely does, a gentleman, will soon begin to find himself at home. And when that essentially modern creature, the English or American girl-student, began to walk calmly into his favourite inns as if into a drawing-room at home, the French painter owned himself defenceless; he submitted or he fled. His French respectability, quite as precise as ours, though covering different provinces of life, recoiled aghast before the innovation. But the girls were painters; there was nothing to be done;

and Barbizon, when I last saw it and for the time at least, was practically ceded to the fair invader. Paterfamilias, on the other hand, the common tourist, the holiday shopman, and the cheap young gentleman upon the spree, he hounded from his villages with every circumstance of contumely.

This purely artistic society is excellent for the young artist. The lads are mostly fools; they hold the latest orthodoxy in its crudeness; they are at that stage of education, for the most part, when a man is too much occupied with style to be aware of the necessity for any matter; and this, above all for the Englishman, is excellent. To work grossly at the trade, to forget sentiment, to think of his material and nothing else, is, for awhile at least, the king's highway of progress. Here, in England, too many painters and writers dwell dispersed, unshielded, among the intelligent bourgeois. These, when they are not merely indifferent, prate to him about the lofty aims and moral influence of art. And this is the lad's ruin. For art is, first of all and last of all, a trade. The love of words and not a desire to publish new discoveries, the love of form and not a novel reading of historical events, mark the vocation of the writer and the painter. The arabesque, properly speaking, and even in literature, is the first fancy of the artist; he first plays with his material as a child plays with a kaleidoscope; and he is already in a second stage when he begins to use his pretty counters for the end of representation. In that, he must pause long and toil faithfully; that is his apprenticeship; and it is only the few who will really grow beyond it, and go forward, fully equipped, to do the business of real art - to give life to abstractions and significance and charm to facts. In the meanwhile, let him dwell much among his fellow-craftsmen. They alone can take a serious interest in the childish tasks and pitiful successes of these years. They alone can behold with equanimity this fingering of the dumb keyboard, this polishing of empty sentences, this dull and literal painting of dull and insignificant subjects. Outsiders will spur him on. They will say, “Why do you not write a great book? paint a great picture?” If his guardian angel fail him, they may even persuade him to the attempt, and, ten to one, his hand is coarsened and his style falsified for life.

And this brings me to a warning. The life of the apprentice to any art is both unstrained and pleasing; it is strewn with small successes in the midst of a career of failure, patiently supported; the heaviest scholar is conscious of a certain progress; and if he come not appreciably nearer to the art of Shakespeare, grows letter-perfect in the domain of A-B, ab. But the time comes when a man should cease prelusory gymnastic, stand up, put a violence upon his will, and, for better or worse, begin the business of creation. This evil day there is a tendency continually to postpone: above all with painters. They have made so many studies that it has become a habit; they make more, the walls of exhibitions blush with them; and death finds these aged students still busy with their horn-book. This class of man finds a congenial home in artist villages; in the slang of the English colony at Barbizon we used to call them “Snoozers.” Continual returns to the city, the society of men farther advanced, the study of great works, a sense of humour or, if such a thing is to be had, a little religion or philosophy, are the means of treatment. It will be time enough to think of curing the malady after it has been caught; for to catch it is the very thing for which you seek that dream-land of the painters’ village. “Snoozing” is a part of the artistic education; and the rudiments must be learned stupidly, all else being forgotten, as if they were an object in themselves.

Lastly, there is something, or there seems to be something, in the very air of France that communicates the love of style. Precision, clarity, the cleanly and crafty employment of material, a grace in the handling, apart from any value in the thought, seem to be acquired by the mere residence; or if not acquired, become at least the more appreciated. The air of Paris is alive with this technical inspiration. And to leave that airy city and awake next day upon the borders of the forest is but to change externals. The same spirit of dexterity and finish breathes from the long alleys and the lofty groves, from the wildernesses that are still pretty in their confusion, and the great plain that contrives to be decorative in its emptiness.

II

In spite of its really considerable extent, the forest of Fontainebleau is hardly anywhere tedious. I know the whole western side of it with what, I suppose, I may call thoroughness; well enough at least to testify that there is no square mile without some special character and charm. Such quarters, for instance, as the Long Rocher, the Bas-Breau, and the Reine Blanche, might be a hundred miles apart; they have scarce a point in common beyond the silence of the birds. The two last are really conterminous; and in both are tall and ancient trees that have outlived a thousand political vicissitudes. But in the one the great oaks prosper placidly upon an even floor; they beshadow a great field; and the air and the light are very free below their stretching boughs. In the other the trees find difficult footing; castles of white rock lie tumbled one upon another, the foot slips, the crooked viper slumbers, the moss clings in the crevice; and above it all the great beech goes spiring and casting forth her arms, and, with a grace beyond church architecture, canopies this rugged chaos. Meanwhile, dividing the two cantons, the broad white causeway of the Paris road runs in an avenue: a road conceived for pageantry and for triumphal marches, an avenue for an army; but, its days of glory over, it now lies grilling in the sun between cool groves, and only at intervals the vehicle of the cruising tourist is seen far away and faintly audible along its ample sweep. A little upon one side, and you find a district of sand and birch and boulder; a little upon the other lies the valley of Apremont, all juniper and heather; and close beyond that you may walk into a zone of pine trees. So artfully are the ingredients mingled. Nor must it be forgotten that, in all this part, you come continually forth upon a hill-top, and behold the plain, northward and westward, like an unrefulgent sea; nor that all day long the shadows keep changing; and at last, to the red fires of sunset, night succeeds, and with the night a new forest, full of whisper, gloom, and fragrance. There are few things more renovating than to leave Paris, the lamplit arches of the Carrousel, and the long alignment of the glittering streets, and to bathe the senses in this fragrant darkness of the wood.

In this continual variety the mind is kept vividly alive. It is a changeful place to paint, a stirring place to live in. As fast as your foot carries you, you pass from scene to scene, each vigorously painted in the colours of the sun, each endeared by that hereditary spell of forests on the mind of man who still remembers and salutes the ancient refuge of his race.

And yet the forest has been civilised throughout. The most savage corners bear a name, and have been cherished like antiquities; in the most remote, Nature has prepared and balanced her effects as if with conscious art; and man, with his guiding arrows of blue paint, has countersigned the picture. After your farthest wandering, you are never surprised to come forth upon the vast avenue of highway, to strike the centre point of branching alleys, or to find the aqueduct trailing, thousand-footed, through the brush. It is not a wilderness; it is rather a preserve. And, fitly enough, the centre of the maze is not a hermit’s cavern. In the midst, a little mirthful town lies sunlit, humming with the business of pleasure; and the palace, breathing distinction and peopled by historic names, stands smokeless among gardens.

Perhaps the last attempt at savage life was that of the harmless humbug who called himself the hermit. In a great tree, close by the highroad, he had built himself a little cabin after the manner of the Swiss Family Robinson; thither he mounted at night, by the romantic aid of a rope ladder; and if dirt be any proof of sincerity, the man was savage as a Sioux. I had the pleasure of his acquaintance; he appeared grossly stupid, not in his perfect wits, and interested in nothing but small change; for that he had a great avidity. In the course of time he proved to be a chicken- stealer, and vanished from his perch; and perhaps from the first he was no true votary of forest freedom, but an ingenious, theatrically-minded beggar, and his cabin in the tree was only stock-in-trade to beg withal. The choice of his position would seem to indicate so much; for if in the forest there are no places still to be discovered, there are many that have been forgotten, and that lie unvisited. There, to be sure, are the blue arrows waiting to reconduct you, now blazed upon a tree, now posted in the corner of a rock. But your security from interruption is complete; you might camp for weeks, if there were only water, and not a soul suspect your presence; and if I may suppose the reader to have committed some great crime and come to me for aid, I think I could still find my way to a small cavern, fitted with a hearth and chimney, where he might lie perfectly concealed. A confederate landscape-painter might daily supply him with food; for water, he would have to make a nightly tramp as far as to the nearest pond; and at last, when the hue and cry began to blow over, he might get gently on the train at some side station, work round by a series of junctions, and be quietly captured at the frontier.

Thus Fontainebleau, although it is truly but a pleasure-ground, and although, in favourable weather, and in the more celebrated quarters, it literally buzzes with the tourist, yet has some of the immunities and offers some of the repose of natural forests. And the solitary, although he must return at night to his frequented inn, may yet pass the day with his own thoughts in the companionable silence of the trees. The demands of the imagination vary; some can be alone in a back garden looked upon by windows; others, like the ostrich, are content with a solitude that meets the eye; and others, again, expand in fancy to the very borders of their desert, and are irritably conscious of a hunter’s camp in an adjacent county. To these last, of course, Fontainebleau will seem but an extended tea-garden: a Rosherville on a by-day. But to the plain man it offers solitude: an excellent thing in itself, and a good whet for company.

III

I was for some time a consistent Barbizonian; ET EGO IN ARCADIA VIXI, it was a pleasant season; and that noiseless hamlet lying close among the borders of the wood is for me, as for so many others, a green spot in memory. The great Millet was just dead, the green shutters of his modest house were closed; his daughters were in mourning. The date of my first visit was thus an epoch in the history of art: in a lesser way, it was an epoch in the history of the Latin Quarter. The PETIT CENACLE was dead and buried; Murger and his crew of sponging vagabonds were all at rest from their expedients; the tradition of their real life was nearly lost; and the petrified legend of the VIE DE BOHEME had become a sort of gospel, and still gave the cue to zealous imitators. But if the book be written in rose-water, the imitation was still farther expurgated; honesty was the rule; the innkeepers gave, as I have said, almost unlimited credit; they suffered the seediest painter to depart, to take all his belongings, and to leave his bill unpaid; and if they sometimes lost, it was by English and Americans alone. At the same time, the great influx of Anglo- Saxons had begun to affect the life of the studious. There had been disputes; and, in one instance at least, the English and the Americans had made common cause to prevent a cruel pleasantry. It would be well if nations and races could communicate their qualities; but in practice when they look upon each other, they have an eye to nothing but defects. The Anglo-Saxon is essentially dishonest; the French is devoid by nature of the principle that we call "Fair Play." The Frenchman marvelled at the scruples of his guest, and, when that defender of innocence retired over-seas and left his bills unpaid, he marvelled once again; the good and evil were, in his eyes, part and parcel of the same eccentricity; a shrug expressed his judgment upon both.

At Barbizon there was no master, no pontiff in the arts. Palizzi bore rule at Gretz - urbane, superior rule - his memory rich in anecdotes of the great men of yore, his mind fertile in theories; sceptical, composed, and venerable to the eye; and yet beneath these outworks, all twittering with Italian superstition, his eye scouting for omens, and the whole fabric of his manners giving way on the appearance of a hunchback. Cernay had Pelouse, the admirable, placid Pelouse, smilingly critical of youth, who, when a full-blown commercial traveller, suddenly threw down his samples, bought a colour-box, and became the master whom we have all admired. Marlotte, for a central figure, boasted Olivier de Penne. Only Barbizon, since the death of Millet, was a headless commonwealth. Even its secondary lights, and those who in my day made the stranger welcome, have since deserted it. The good Lachevre has departed, carrying his household gods; and long before that Gaston Lafenestre was taken from our midst by an untimely death. He died before he had deserved success; it may be, he would never have deserved it; but his kind, comely, modest countenance still haunts the memory of all who knew him. Another - whom I will not name - has moved farther on, pursuing the strange Odyssey of his decadence. His days of royal favour had departed even then; but he still retained, in his narrower life at Barbizon, a certain stamp of conscious importance, hearty, friendly, filling the room, the occupant of several chairs; nor had he yet ceased his losing battle, still labouring upon great canvases that none would buy, still waiting the return of fortune. But these days also were too good to last; and the former favourite of two sovereigns fled, if I heard the truth, by night.

There was a time when he was counted a great man, and Millet but a dauber; behold, how the whirligig of time brings in his revenges! To pity Millet is a piece of arrogance; if life be hard for such resolute and pious spirits, it is harder still for us, had we the wit to understand it; but we may pity his unhappier rival, who, for no apparent merit, was raised to opulence and momentary fame, and, through no apparent fault was suffered step by step to sink again to nothing. No misfortune can exceed the bitterness of such back-foremost progress, even bravely supported as it was; but to those also who were taken early from the easel, a regret is due. From all the young men of this period, one stood out by the vigour of his promise; he was in the age of fermentation, enamoured of eccentricities. "Il faut faire de la peinture nouvelle," was his watchword; but if time and experience had continued his education, if he had been granted health to return from these excursions to the steady and the central, I must believe that the name of Hills had become famous.

Siron's inn, that excellent artists' barrack, was managed upon easy principles. At any hour of the night, when you returned from wandering in the forest, you went to the billiard-room and helped yourself to liquors, or descended to the cellar and returned laden with beer or wine. The Sirons were all locked in slumber; there was none to check your inroads; only at the week's end a computation was made, the gross sum was divided, and a varying share set down to every lodger's name under the rubric: ESTRATS. Upon the more long-suffering the larger tax was levied; and your bill lengthened in a direct proportion to the easiness of your disposition. At any hour of the morning, again, you could get your coffee or cold milk, and set forth into the forest. The doves had perhaps wakened you, fluttering into your chamber; and on the threshold of the inn you were met by the aroma of the forest. Close by were the great aisles, the mossy boulders, the interminable field of forest shadow. There you were free to dream and wander. And at noon, and again at six o'clock, a good meal awaited you on Siron's table. The whole of your accommodation, set aside that varying item of the ESTRALS, cost you five francs a day; your bill was never offered you until you asked it; and if you were out of luck's way, you might depart for where you pleased and leave it pending.

IV

Theoretically, the house was open to all corners; practically, it was a kind of club. The guests protected themselves, and, in so doing, they protected Siron. Formal manners being laid aside, essential courtesy was the more rigidly exacted; the new arrival had to feel the pulse of the society; and a breach of its undefined observances was promptly punished. A man might be as plain, as dull, as slovenly, as free of speech as he desired; but to a touch of presumption or a word of hectoring these free Barbizonians were as sensitive as a tea-party of maiden ladies. I have seen people driven forth from Barbizon; it would be difficult to say in words what they had done, but they deserved their fate. They had shown themselves unworthy to enjoy these corporate freedoms; they had pushed themselves; they had "made their head"; they wanted tact to appreciate the "fine shades" of Barbizonian etiquette. And once they were condemned, the process of extrusion was ruthless in its cruelty; after one evening with the formidable Bodmer, the Baily of our commonwealth, the erring stranger was beheld no more; he rose exceeding early the next day, and the first coach conveyed him from the scene of his discomfiture. These sentences of banishment were never, in my knowledge, delivered against an artist; such would, I believe, have been illegal; but the odd and pleasant fact is this, that they were never needed. Painters, sculptors, writers, singers, I have seen all of these in Barbizon; and some were sulky, and some blatant and inane; but one and all entered at once into the spirit of the association. This singular society is purely French, a creature of French virtues, and possibly of French defects. It cannot be imitated by the English. The roughness, the impatience, the more obvious selfishness, and even the more ardent friendships of the Anglo-Saxon, speedily dismember such a commonwealth. But this random gathering of young French painters, with neither apparatus nor parade of government, yet kept the life of the place upon a certain footing, insensibly imposed their etiquette upon the docile, and by caustic speech enforced their edicts against the unwelcome. To think of it is to wonder the more at the strange failure of their race upon the larger theatre. This inbred civility - to use the word in its completest meaning - this natural and facile adjustment of contending liberties, seems all that is required to make a governable nation and a just and prosperous country.

Our society, thus purged and guarded, was full of high spirits, of laughter, and of the initiative of youth. The few elder men who joined us were still young at heart, and took the key from their companions. We returned from long stations in the fortifying air, our blood renewed by the sunshine, our spirits refreshed by the silence of the forest; the Babel of loud voices sounded good; we fell to eat and play like the natural man; and in the high inn chamber, panelled with indifferent pictures and lit by candles guttering in the night air, the talk and laughter sounded far into the night. It was a good place and a good life for any naturally- minded youth; better yet for the student of painting, and perhaps best of all for the student of letters. He, too, was saturated in this atmosphere of style; he was shut out from the disturbing currents of the world, he might forget that there existed other and more pressing interests than that of art. But, in such a place, it was hardly possible to write; he could not drug his conscience, like the painter, by the production of listless studies; he saw himself idle among many who were apparently, and some who were really, employed; and what with the impulse of increasing health and the continual provocation of romantic scenes, he became tormented with the desire to work. He enjoyed a strenuous idleness full of visions, hearty meals, long, sweltering walks, mirth among companions; and still floating like music through his brain, foresights of great works that Shakespeare might be proud to have conceived, headless epics, glorious torsos of dramas, and words that were alive with import. So in youth, like Moses from the mountain, we have sights of that House Beautiful of art which we shall never enter. They are dreams and unsubstantial; visions of style that repose upon no base of human meaning; the last heart- throbs of that excited amateur who has to die in all of us before the artist can be born. But they come to us in such a rainbow of glory that all subsequent achievement appears dull and earthly in comparison. We were all artists; almost all in the age of illusion, cultivating an imaginary genius, and walking to the strains of some deceiving Ariel; small wonder, indeed, if we were happy! But art, of whatever nature, is a kind mistress; and though these dreams of youth fall by their own baselessness, others succeed, graver and more substantial; the symptoms change, the amiable malady endures; and still, at an equal distance, the House Beautiful shines upon its hill-top.

V

Gretz lies out of the forest, down by the bright river. It boasts a mill, an ancient church, a castle, and a bridge of many sterlings. And the bridge is a piece of public property; anonymously famous; beaming on the incurious dilettante from the walls of a hundred exhibitions. I have seen it in the Salon; I have seen it in the Academy; I have seen it in the last French Exposition, excellently done by Bloomer; in a black-and-white by Mr. A. Henley, it once adorned this essay in the pages of the MAGAZINE OF ART. Long-suffering bridge! And if you visit Gretz to-morrow, you shall find another generation, camped at the bottom of Chevillon's garden under their white umbrellas, and doggedly painting it again.

The bridge taken for granted, Gretz is a less inspiring place than Barbizon. I give it the palm over Cernay. There is something ghastly in the great empty village square of Cernay, with the inn tables standing in one corner, as though the stage were set for rustic opera, and in the early morning all the painters breaking their fast upon white wine under the windows of the villagers. It is vastly different to awake in Gretz, to go down the green inn- garden, to find the river streaming through the bridge, and to see the dawn begin across the poplared level. The meals are laid in the cool arbour, under fluttering leaves. The splash of oars and bathers, the bathing costumes out to dry, the trim canoes beside the jetty, tell of a society that has an eye to pleasure. There is "something to do" at Gretz. Perhaps, for that very reason, I can recall no such enduring ardours, no such glories of exhilaration, as among the solemn groves and uneventful hours of Barbizon. This "something to do" is a great enemy to joy; it is a way out of it; you wreak your high spirits on some cut-and-dry employment, and behold them gone! But Gretz is a merry place after its kind: pretty to see, merry to inhabit. The course of its pellucid river, whether up or down, is full of gentle attractions for the navigator: islanded reed-mazes where, in autumn, the red berries cluster; the mirrored and inverted images of trees, lilies, and mills, and the foam and thunder of weirs. And of all noble sweeps of roadway, none is nobler, on a windy dusk, than the highroad to Nemours between its lines of talking poplar.

But even Gretz is changed. The old inn, long shored and trussed and buttressed, fell at length under the mere weight of years, and the place as it was is but a fading image in the memory of former guests. They, indeed, recall the ancient wooden stair; they recall the rainy evening, the wide hearth, the blaze of the twig fire, and the company that gathered round the pillar in the kitchen. But the material fabric is now dust; soon, with the last of its inhabitants, its very memory shall follow; and they, in their turn, shall suffer the same law, and, both in name and lineament, vanish from the world of men. "For remembrance of the old house' sake," as Pepys once quaintly put it, let me tell one story. When the tide of invasion swept over France, two foreign painters were left stranded and penniless in Gretz; and there, until the war was over, the Chevillons ungrudgingly harboured them. It was difficult to obtain supplies; but the two waifs were still welcome to the best, sat down daily with the family to table, and at the due intervals were supplied with clean napkins, which they scrupled to employ. Madame Chevillon observed the fact and reprimanded them. But they stood firm; eat they must, but having no money they would soil no napkins.

VI

Nemours and Moret, for all they are so picturesque, have been little visited by painters. They are, indeed, too populous; they have manners of their own, and might resist the drastic process of colonisation. Montigny has been somewhat strangely neglected, I never knew it inhabited but once, when Will H. Low installed himself there with a barrel of PIQUETTE, and entertained his friends in a leafy trellis above the weir, in sight of the green country and to the music of the falling water. It was a most airy, quaint, and pleasant place of residence, just too rustic to be stagey; and from my memories of the place in general, and that garden trellis in particular - at morning, visited by birds, or at night, when the dew fell and the stars were of the party - I am inclined to think perhaps too favourably of the future of Montigny. Chailly-en-Biere has outlived all things, and lies dustily slumbering in the plain - the cemetery of itself. The great road remains to testify of its former bustle of postilions and carriage bells; and, like memorial tablets, there still hang in the inn room the paintings of a former generation, dead or decorated long ago. In my time, one man only, greatly daring, dwelt there. From time to time he would walk over to Barbizon like a shade revisiting the glimpses of the moon, and after some communication with flesh and blood return to his austere hermitage. But even he, when I last revisited the forest, had come to Barbizon for good, and closed the roll of Chaillyites. It may revive - but I much doubt it. Acheres and Recloses still wait a pioneer; Bourron is out of the question, being merely Gretz over again, without the river, the bridge, or the beauty; and of all the possible places on the western side, Marlotte alone remains to be discussed. I scarcely know Marlotte, and, very likely for that reason, am not much in love with it. It seems a glaring and unsightly hamlet. The inn of Mother Antonie is unattractive; and its more reputable rival, though comfortable enough, is commonplace. Marlotte has a name; it is famous; if I were the young painter I would leave it alone in its glory.

VII

These are the words of an old stager; and though time is a good conservative in forest places, much may be untrue to-day. Many of us have passed Arcadian days there and moved on, but yet left a portion of our souls behind us buried in the woods. I would not dig for these reliquiae; they are incommunicable treasures that will not enrich the finder; and yet there may lie, interred below great oaks or scattered along forest paths, stores of youth’s dynamite and dear remembrances. And as one generation passes on and renovates the field of tillage for the next, I entertain a fancy that when the young men of to-day go forth into the forest they shall find the air still vitalised by the spirits of their predecessors, and, like those “unheard melodies” that are the sweetest of all, the memory of our laughter shall still haunt the field of trees. Those merry voices that in woods call the wanderer farther, those thrilling silences and whispers of the groves, surely in Fontainebleau they must be vocal of me and my companions? We are not content to pass away entirely from the scenes of our delight; we would leave, if but in gratitude, a pillar and a legend.

One generation after another fall like honey-bees upon this memorable forest, rifle its sweets, pack themselves with vital memories, and when the theft is consummated depart again into life richer, but poorer also. The forest, indeed, they have possessed, from that day forward it is theirs indissolubly, and they will return to walk in it at night in the fondest of their dreams, and use it for ever in their books and pictures. Yet when they made their packets, and put up their notes and sketches, something, it should seem, had been forgotten. A projection of themselves shall appear to haunt unfriended these scenes of happiness, a natural child of fancy, begotten and forgotten unawares. Over the whole field of our wanderings such fetches are still travelling like indefatigable bagmen; but the imps of Fontainebleau, as of all beloved spots, are very long of life, and memory is piously unwilling to forget their orphanage. If anywhere about that wood you meet my airy bantling, greet him with tenderness. He was a pleasant lad, though now abandoned. And when it comes to your own turn to quit the forest, may you leave behind you such another; no Antony or Werther, let us hope, no tearful whipster, but, as becomes this not uncheerful and most active age in which we figure, the child of happy hours.

No art, it may be said, was ever perfect, and not many noble, that has not been mirthfully conceived.

And no man, it may be added, was ever anything but a wet blanket and a cross to his companions who boasted not a copious spirit of enjoyment. Whether as man or artist let the youth make haste to Fontainebleau, and once there let him address himself to the spirit of the place; he will learn more from exercise than from studies, although both are necessary; and if he can get into his heart the gaiety and inspiration of the woods he will have gone far to undo the evil of his sketches. A spirit once well strung up to the concert-pitch of the primeval out-of-doors will hardly dare to finish a study and magniloquently ticket it a picture. The incommunicable thrill of things, that is the tuning-fork by which we test the flatness of our art. Here it is that Nature teaches and condemns, and still spurs up to further effort and new failure. Thus it is that she sets us blushing at our ignorant and tepid works; and the more we find of these inspiring shocks the less shall we be apt to love the literal in our productions. In all sciences and senses the letter kills; and to-day, when cackling human geese express their ignorant condemnation of all studio pictures, it is a lesson most useful to be learnt. Let the young painter go to Fontainebleau, and while he stupefies himself with studies that teach him the mechanical side of his trade, let him walk in the great air, and be a servant of mirth, and not pick and botanise, but wait upon the moods of nature. So he will learn - or learn not to forget - the poetry of life and earth, which, when he has acquired his track, will save him from joyless reproduction.

CHAPTER IV - EPILOGUE TO “AN INLAND VOYAGE”

THE country where they journeyed, that green, breezy valley of the Loing, is one very attractive to cheerful and solitary people. The weather was superb; all night it thundered and lightened, and the rain fell in sheets; by day, the heavens were cloudless, the sun fervent, the air vigorous and pure. They walked separate: the Cigarette plodding behind with some philosophy, the lean Arethusa posting on ahead. Thus each enjoyed his own reflections by the way; each had perhaps time to tire of them before he met his comrade at the designated inn; and the pleasures of society and solitude combined to fill the day. The Arethusa carried in his knapsack the works of Charles of Orleans, and employed some of the hours of travel in the concoction of English roundels. In this path, he must thus have preceded Mr. Lang, Mr. Dobson, Mr. Henley, and all contemporary roundeleers; but for good reasons, he will be the last to publish the result. The Cigarette walked burthened with a volume of Michelet. And both these books, it will be seen, played a part in the subsequent adventure.

The Arethusa was unwisely dressed. He is no precisian in attire; but by all accounts, he was never so ill-inspired as on that tramp; having set forth indeed, upon a moment’s notice, from the most unfashionable spot in Europe, Barbizon. On his head he wore a smoking-cap of Indian work, the gold lace pitifully frayed and tarnished. A flannel shirt of an agreeable dark hue, which the satirical called black; a light tweed coat made by a good English tailor; ready-made cheap linen trousers and leathern gaiters completed his array. In person, he is exceptionally lean; and his face is not, like those of happier mortals, a certificate. For years he could not pass a frontier or visit a bank without suspicion; the police everywhere, but in his native city, looked askance upon him; and (though I am sure it will not be credited) he is actually denied admittance to the casino of Monte Carlo. If you will imagine him, dressed as above, stooping under his knapsack, walking nearly five miles an hour with the folds of the ready-made trousers fluttering about his spindle shanks, and still looking eagerly round him as if in terror of pursuit - the figure, when realised, is far from reassuring. When Villon journeyed (perhaps by the same pleasant valley) to his exile at Roussillon, I wonder if he had not something of the same appearance. Something of the same preoccupation he had beyond a doubt, for he too must have tinkered verses as he walked, with more success than his successor. And if he had anything like the same inspiring weather, the same nights of uproar, men in armour rolling and resounding down the stairs of heaven, the rain hissing on the village streets, the wild bull's-eye of the storm flashing all night long into the bare inn- chamber - the same sweet return of day, the same unfathomable blue of noon, the same high-coloured, halcyon eves - and above all, if he had anything like as good a comrade, anything like as keen a relish for what he saw, and what he ate, and the rivers that he bathed in, and the rubbish that he wrote, I would exchange estates to-day with the poor exile, and count myself a gainer.

But there was another point of similarity between the two journeys, for which the Arethusa was to pay dear: both were gone upon in days of incomplete security. It was not long after the Franco- Prussian war. Swiftly as men forget, that country-side was still alive with tales of uhlans, and outlying sentries, and hairbreadth 'scapes from the ignominious cord, and pleasant momentary friendships between invader and invaded. A year, at the most two years later, you might have tramped all that country over and not heard one anecdote. And a year or two later, you would - if you were a rather ill-looking young man in nondescript array - have gone your rounds in greater safety; for along with more interesting matter, the Prussian spy would have somewhat faded from men's imaginations.

For all that, our voyager had got beyond Chateau Renard before he was conscious of arousing wonder. On the road between that place and Chatillon-sur-Loing, however, he encountered a rural postman; they fell together in talk, and spoke of a variety of subjects; but through one and all, the postman was still visibly preoccupied, and his eyes were faithful to the Arethusa's knapsack. At last, with mysterious roguishness, he inquired what it contained, and on being answered, shook his head with kindly incredulity. "NON," said he, "NON, VOUS AVEZ DES PORTRAITS." And then with a languishing appeal, "VOYONS, show me the portraits!" It was some little while before the Arethusa, with a shout of laughter, recognised his drift. By portraits he meant indecent photographs; and in the Arethusa, an austere and rising author, he thought to have identified a pornographic colporteur. When countryfolk in France have made up their minds as to a person's calling, argument is fruitless. Along all the rest of the way, the postman piped and fluted meltingly to get a sight of the collection; now he would upbraid, now he would reason - "VOYONS, I will tell nobody"; then he tried corruption, and insisted on paying for a glass of wine; and, at last when their ways separated - "NON," said he, "CE N'EST PAS BIEN DE VOTRE PART. O NON, CE N'EST PAS BIEN." And shaking his head with quite a sentimental sense of injury, he departed unrefreshed.

On certain little difficulties encountered by the Arethusa at Chatillon-sur-Loing, I have not space to dwell; another Chatillon, of grislier memory, looms too near at hand. But the next day, in a certain hamlet called La Jussiere, he stopped to drink a glass of syrup in a very poor, bare drinking shop. The hostess, a comely woman, suckling a child, examined the traveller with kindly and pitying eyes. "You are not of this department?" she asked. The Arethusa told her he was English. "Ah!" she said, surprised. "We have no English. We have many Italians, however, and they do very well; they do not complain of the people of hereabouts. An Englishman may do very well also; it will be something new." Here was a dark saying, over which the Arethusa pondered as he drank his grenadine; but when he rose and asked what was to pay, the light came upon him in a flash. "O, POUR VOUS," replied the landlady, "a halfpenny!" POUR VOUS? By heaven, she took him for a beggar! He paid his halfpenny, feeling that it were ungracious to correct her. But when he was forth again upon the road, he became vexed in spirit. The conscience is no gentleman, he is a rabbinical fellow; and his conscience told him he had stolen the syrup.

That night the travellers slept in Gien; the next day they passed the river and set forth (severally, as their custom was) on a short stage through the green plain upon the Berry side, to Chatillon- sur-Loire. It was the first day of the shooting; and the air rang with the report of firearms and the admiring cries of sportsmen. Overhead the birds were in consternation, wheeling in clouds, settling and re-arising. And yet with all this bustle on either hand, the road itself lay solitary. The Arethusa smoked a pipe beside a milestone, and I remember he laid down very exactly all he was to do at Chatillon: how he was to enjoy a cold plunge, to change his shirt, and to await the Cigarette's arrival, in sublime inaction, by the margin of the Loire. Fired by these ideas, he pushed the more rapidly forward, and came, early in the afternoon and in a breathing heat, to the entering-in of that ill-fated town. Childe Roland to the dark tower came.

A polite gendarme threw his shadow on the path.

"MONSIEUR EST VOYAGEUR?" he asked.

And the Arethusa, strong in his innocence, forgetful of his vile attire, replied - I had almost said with gaiety: "So it would appear."

"His papers are in order?" said the gendarme. And when the Arethusa, with a slight change of voice, admitted he had none, he was informed (politely enough) that he must appear before the Commissary.

The Commissary sat at a table in his bedroom, stripped to the shirt and trousers, but still copiously perspiring; and when he turned upon the prisoner a large meaningless countenance, that was (like Bardolph's) "all whelks and bubuckles," the dullest might have been prepared for grief. Here was a stupid man, sleepy with the heat and fretful at the interruption, whom neither appeal nor argument could reach.

THE COMMISSARY. You have no papers?

THE ARETHUSA. Not here.

THE COMMISSARY. Why?

THE ARETHUSA. I have left them behind in my valise.

THE COMMISSARY. You know, however, that it is forbidden to circulate without papers?

THE ARETHUSA. Pardon me: I am convinced of the contrary. I am here on my rights as an English subject by international treaty.

THE COMMISSARY (WITH SCORN). You call yourself an Englishman?

THE ARETHUSA. I do.

THE COMMISSARY. Humph. - What is your trade?

THE ARETHUSA. I am a Scotch advocate.

THE COMMISSARY (WITH SINGULAR ANNOYANCE). A Scotch advocate! Do you then pretend to support yourself by that in this department?

The Arethusa modestly disclaimed the pretension. The Commissary had scored a point.

THE COMMISSARY. Why, then, do you travel?

THE ARETHUSA. I travel for pleasure.

THE COMMISSARY (POINTING TO THE KNAPSACK, AND WITH SUBLIME
INCREDULITY). AVEC CA? VOYEZ-VOUS, JE SUIS UN HOMME INTELLIGENT!
(With that? Look here, I am a person of intelligence!)

The culprit remaining silent under this home thrust, the Commissary relished his triumph for a while, and then demanded (like the postman, but with what different expectations!) to see the contents of the knapsack. And here the Arethusa, not yet sufficiently awake to his position, fell into a grave mistake. There was little or no furniture in the room except the Commissary’s chair and table; and to facilitate matters, the Arethusa (with all the innocence on earth) leant the knapsack on a corner of the bed. The Commissary fairly bounded from his seat; his face and neck flushed past purple, almost into blue; and he screamed to lay the desecrating object on the floor.

The knapsack proved to contain a change of shirts, of shoes, of socks, and of linen trousers, a small dressing-case, a piece of soap in one of the shoes, two volumes of the COLLECTION JANNET lettered POESIES DE CHARLES D’ORLEANS, a map, and a version book containing divers notes in prose and the remarkable English roundels of the voyager, still to this day unpublished: the Commissary of Chatillon is the only living man who has clapped an eye on these artistic trifles. He turned the assortment over with a contumelious finger; it was plain from his daintiness that he regarded the Arethusa and all his belongings as the very temple of infection. Still there was nothing suspicious about the map, nothing really criminal except the roundels; as for Charles of Orleans, to the ignorant mind of the prisoner, he seemed as good as a certificate; and it was supposed the farce was nearly over.

The inquisitor resumed his seat.

THE COMMISSARY (AFTER A PAUSE). EH BIEN, JE VAIS VOUS DIRE CE QUE
VOUS ETES. VOUS ETES ALLEMAND ET VOUS VENEZ CHANTER A LA FOIRE.
(Well, then, I will tell you what you are. You are a German and
have come to sing at the fair.)

THE ARETHUSA. Would you like to hear me sing? I believe I could convince you of the contrary.

THE COMMISSARY. PAS DE PLAISANTERIE, MONSIEUR!

THE ARETHUSA. Well, sir, oblige me at least by looking at this book. Here, I open it with my eyes shut. Read one of these songs - read this one - and tell me, you who are a man of intelligence, if it would be possible to sing it at a fair?

THE COMMISSARY (CRITICALLY). MAIS OUI. TRES BIEN.

THE ARETHUSA. COMMENT, MONSIEUR! What! But do you not observe it is antique. It is difficult to understand, even for you and me; but for the audience at a fair, it would be meaningless.

THE COMMISSARY (TAKING A PEN). ENFIN, IL FAUI EN FINIR. What is your name?

THE ARETHUSA (SPEAKING WITH THE SWALLOWING VIVACITY OF THE
ENGLISH). Robert-Louis-Stev’ns’n.

THE COMMISSARY (AGHAST). HE! QUOI?

THE ARETHUSA (PERCEIVING AND IMPROVING HIS ADVANTAGE). Rob’rt-
Lou’s-Stev’ns’n.

THE COMMISSARY (AFTER SEVERAL CONFLICTS WITH HIS PEN). EH BIEN, IL FAUT SE PASSER DU NOM. CA NE S’ECRIT PAS. (Well, we must do without the name: it is unspellable.)

The above is a rough summary of this momentous conversation, in which I have been chiefly careful to preserve the plums of the Commissary; but the remainder of the scene, perhaps because of his rising anger, has left but little definite in the memory of the Arethusa. The Commissary was not, I think, a practised literary man; no sooner, at least, had he taken pen in hand and embarked on the composition of the PROCES-VERBAL, than he became distinctly more uncivil and began to show a predilection for that simplest of all forms of repartee:

"You lie!" Several times the Arethusa let it pass, and then suddenly flared up, refused to accept more insults or to answer further questions, defied the Commissary to do his worst, and promised him, if he did, that he should bitterly repent it. Perhaps if he had worn this proud front from the first, instead of beginning with a sense of entertainment and then going on to argue, the thing might have turned otherwise; for even at this eleventh hour the Commissary was visibly staggered. But it was too late; he had been challenged the PROCES-VERBAL was begun; and he again squared his elbows over his writing, and the Arethusa was led forth a prisoner.

A step or two down the hot road stood the gendarmerie. Thither was our unfortunate conducted, and there he was bidden to empty forth the contents of his pockets. A handkerchief, a pen, a pencil, a pipe and tobacco, matches, and some ten francs of change: that was all. Not a file, not a cipher, not a scrap of writing whether to identify or to condemn. The very gendarme was appalled before such destitution.

"I regret," he said, "that I arrested you, for I see that you are no VOYOU." And he promised him every indulgence.

The Arethusa, thus encouraged, asked for his pipe. That he was told was impossible, but if he chewed, he might have some tobacco. He did not chew, however, and asked instead to have his handkerchief.

"NON," said the gendarme. "NOUS AVONS EU DES HISTOIRES DE GENS QUI SE SONT PENDUS." (No, we have had histories of people who hanged themselves.)

"What," cried the Arethusa. "And is it for that you refuse me my handkerchief? But see how much more easily I could hang myself in my trousers!"

The man was struck by the novelty of the idea; but he stuck to his colours, and only continued to repeat vague offers of service.

"At least," said the Arethusa, "be sure that you arrest my comrade; he will follow me ere long on the same road, and you can tell him by the sack upon his shoulders."

This promised, the prisoner was led round into the back court of the building, a cellar door was opened, he was motioned down the stair, and bolts grated and chains clanged behind his descending person.

The philosophic and still more the imaginative mind is apt to suppose itself prepared for any mortal accident. Prison, among other ills, was one that had been often faced by the undaunted Arethusa. Even as he went down the stairs, he was telling himself that here was a famous occasion for a roundel, and that like the committed linnets of the tuneful cavalier, he too would make his prison musical. I will tell the truth at once: the roundel was never written, or it should be printed in this place, to raise a smile. Two reasons interfered: the first moral, the second physical.

It is one of the curiosities of human nature, that although all men are liars, they can none of them bear to be told so of themselves. To get and take the lie with equanimity is a stretch beyond the stoic; and the Arethusa, who had been surfeited upon that insult, was blazing inwardly with a white heat of smothered wrath. But the physical had also its part. The cellar in which he was confined was some feet underground, and it was only lighted by an unglazed, narrow aperture high up in the wall and smothered in the leaves of a green vine. The walls were of naked masonry, the floor of bare earth; by way of furniture there was an earthenware basin, a water- jug, and a wooden bedstead with a blue-gray cloak for bedding. To be taken from the hot air of a summer's afternoon, the reverberation of the road and the stir of rapid exercise, and plunged into the gloom and damp of this receptacle for vagabonds, struck an instant chill upon the Arethusa's blood. Now see in how small a matter a hardship may consist: the floor was exceedingly uneven underfoot, with the very spade-marks, I suppose, of the labourers who dug the foundations of the barrack; and what with the poor twilight and the irregular surface, walking was impossible. The caged author resisted for a good while; but the chill of the place struck deeper and deeper; and at length, with such reluctance as you may fancy, he was driven to climb upon the bed and wrap himself in the public covering. There, then, he lay upon the verge of shivering, plunged in semi-darkness, wound in a garment whose touch he dreaded like the plague, and (in a spirit far removed from resignation) telling the roll of the insults he had just received. These are not circumstances favourable to the muse.

Meantime (to look at the upper surface where the sun was still shining and the guns of sportsmen were still noisy through the tufted plain) the Cigarette was drawing near at his more philosophic pace. In those days of liberty and health he was the constant partner of the Arethusa, and had ample opportunity to share in that gentleman's disfavour with the police. Many a bitter bowl had he partaken of with that disastrous comrade. He was himself a man born to float easily through life, his face and manner artfully recommending him to all. There was but one suspicious circumstance he could not carry off, and that was his companion. He will not readily forget the Commissary in what is ironically called the free town of Frankfort-on-the-Main ; nor the Franco-Belgian frontier; nor the inn at La Fere; last, but not least, he is pretty certain to remember Chatillon-sur-Loire.

At the town entry, the gendarme culled him like a wayside flower; and a moment later, two persons, in a high state of surprise, were confronted in the Commissary's office. For if the Cigarette was surprised to be arrested, the Commissary was no less taken aback by the appearance and appointments of his captive. Here was a man about whom there could be no mistake: a man of an unquestionable and unassailable manner, in apple-pie order, dressed not with neatness merely but elegance, ready with his passport, at a word, and well supplied with money: a man the Commissary would have doffed his hat to on chance upon the highway; and this BEAU CAVALIER unblushingly claimed the Arethusa for his comrade! The conclusion of the interview was foregone; of its humours, I remember only one. "Baronet?" demanded the magistrate, glancing up from the passport. "ALORS, MONSIEUR, VOUS ETES LE FIRS D'UN BARON?" And when the Cigarette (his one mistake throughout the interview) denied the soft impeachment, "ALORS," from the Commissary, "CE N'EST PAS VOTRE PASSEPORT!" But these were ineffectual thunders; he never dreamed of laying hands upon the Cigarette; presently he fell into a mood of unrestrained admiration, gloating over the contents of the knapsack, commanding our friend's tailor. Ah, what an honoured guest was the Commissary entertaining! what suitable clothes he wore for the warm weather! what beautiful maps, what an attractive work of history he carried in his knapsack! You are to understand there was now but one point of difference between them: what was to be done with the Arethusa? the Cigarette demanding his release, the Commissary still claiming him as the dungeon's own. Now it chanced that the Cigarette had passed some years of his life in Egypt, where he had made acquaintance with two very bad things, cholera morbus and pashas; and in the eye of the Commissary, as he fingered the volume of Michelet, it seemed to our traveller there was something Turkish. I pass over this lightly; it is highly possible there was some misunderstanding, highly possible that the Commissary (charmed with his visitor) supposed the attraction to be mutual and took for an act of growing friendship what the Cigarette himself regarded as a bribe. And at any rate, was there ever a bribe more singular than an odd volume of Michelet's history? The work was promised him for the morrow, before our departure; and presently after, either because he had his price, or to show that he was not the man to be behind in friendly offices - "EH BIEN," he said, "JE SUPPOSE QU'IL FAUT LAHER VOIRE CAMARADE." And he tore up that feast of humour, the unfinished PROCES-VERBAL. Ah, if he had only torn up instead the Arethusa's roundels! There were many works burnt at Alexandria, there are many treasured in the British Museum, that I could better spare than the PROCES-VERBAL of Chatillon. Poor bubuckled Commissary! I begin to be sorry that he never had his Michelet: perceiving in him fine human traits, a broad-based stupidity, a gusto in his magisterial functions, a taste for letters, a ready admiration for the admirable. And if he did not admire the Arethusa, he was not alone in that.

To the imprisoned one, shivering under the public covering, there came suddenly a noise of bolts and chains. He sprang to his feet, ready to welcome a companion in calamity; and instead of that, the door was flung wide, the friendly gendarme appeared above in the strong daylight, and with a magnificent gesture (being probably a student of the drama) - "VOUS ETES LIBRE!" he said. None too soon for the Arethusa. I doubt if he had been half-an-hour imprisoned; but by the watch in a man's brain (which was the only watch he carried) he should have been eight times longer; and he passed forth with ecstasy up the cellar stairs into the healing warmth of the afternoon sun; and the breath of the earth came as sweet as a cow's into his nostril; and he heard again (and could have laughed for pleasure) the concord of delicate noises that we call the hum of life.

And here it might be thought that my history ended; but not so, this was an act-drop and not the curtain. Upon what followed in front of the barrack, since there was a lady in the case, I scruple to expatiate. The wife of the Marechal-des-logis was a handsome woman, and yet the Arethusa was not sorry to be gone from her society. Something of her image, cool as a peach on that hot afternoon, still lingers in his memory: yet more of her conversation. "You have there a very fine parlour," said the poor gentleman. - "Ah," said Madame la Marechale (des-logis), "you are very well acquainted with such parlours!" And you should have seen with what a hard and scornful eye she measured the vagabond before her! I do not think he ever hated the Commissary; but before that interview was at an end, he hated Madame la Marechale. His passion (as I am led to understand by one who was present) stood confessed in a burning eye, a pale cheek, and a trembling utterance; Madame meanwhile tasting the joys of the matador, goading him with barbed words and staring him coldly down.

It was certainly good to be away from this lady, and better still to sit down to an excellent dinner in the inn. Here, too, the despised travellers scraped acquaintance with their next neighbour, a gentleman of these parts, returned from the day's sport, who had the good taste to find pleasure in their society. The dinner at an end, the gentleman proposed the acquaintance should be ripened in the cafe.

The cafe was crowded with sportsmen conclamantly explaining to each other and the world the smallness of their bags. About the centre of the room, the Cigarette and the Arethusa sat with their new acquaintance; a trio very well pleased, for the travellers (after their late experience) were greedy of consideration, and their sportsman rejoiced in a pair of patient listeners. Suddenly the glass door flew open with a crash; the Marechal-des-logis appeared in the interval, gorgeously belted and befrogged, entered without salutation, strode up the room with a clang of spurs and weapons, and disappeared through a door at the far end. Close at his heels followed the Arethusa’s gendarme of the afternoon, imitating, with a nice shade of difference, the imperial bearing of his chief; only, as he passed, he struck lightly with his open hand on the shoulder of his late captive, and with that ringing, dramatic utterance of which he had the secret - “SUIVEZ!” said he.

The arrest of the members, the oath of the Tennis Court, the signing of the declaration of independence, Mark Antony’s oration, all the brave scenes of history, I conceive as having been not unlike that evening in the cafe at Chatillon. Terror breathed upon the assembly. A moment later, when the Arethusa had followed his recaptors into the farther part of the house, the Cigarette found himself alone with his coffee in a ring of empty chairs and tables, all the lusty sportsmen huddled into corners, all their clamorous voices hushed in whispering, all their eyes shooting at him furtively as at a leper.

And the Arethusa? Well, he had a long, sometimes a trying, interview in the back kitchen. The Marechal-des-logis, who was a very handsome man, and I believe both intelligent and honest, had no clear opinion on the case. He thought the Commissary had done wrong, but he did not wish to get his subordinates into trouble; and he proposed this, that, and the other, to all of which the Arethusa (with a growing sense of his position) demurred.

“In short,” suggested the Arethusa, “you want to wash your hands of further responsibility? Well, then, let me go to Paris.”

The Marechal-des-logis looked at his watch.

“You may leave,” said he, “by the ten o’clock train for Paris.”

And at noon the next day the travellers were telling their misadventure in the dining-room at Siron’s.

CHAPTER V - RANDOM MEMORIES

I. - THE COAST OF FIFE

MANY writers have vigorously described the pains of the first day or the first night at school; to a boy of any enterprise, I believe, they are more often agreeably exciting. Misery - or at least misery unrelieved - is confined to another period, to the days of suspense and the "dreadful looking-for" of departure; when the old life is running to an end, and the new life, with its new interests, not yet begun: and to the pain of an imminent parting, there is added the unrest of a state of conscious pre-existence. The area railings, the beloved shop-window, the smell of semi- suburban tanpits, the song of the church bells upon a Sunday, the thin, high voices of compatriot children in a playing-field - what a sudden, what an overpowering pathos breathes to him from each familiar circumstance! The assaults of sorrow come not from within, as it seems to him, but from without. I was proud and glad to go to school; had I been let alone, I could have borne up like any hero; but there was around me, in all my native town, a conspiracy of lamentation: "Poor little boy, he is going away - unkind little boy, he is going to leave us"; so the unspoken burthen followed me as I went, with yearning and reproach. And at length, one melancholy afternoon in the early autumn, and at a place where it seems to me, looking back, it must be always autumn and generally Sunday, there came suddenly upon the face of all I saw - the long empty road, the lines of the tall houses, the church upon the hill, the woody hillside garden - a look of such a piercing sadness that my heart died; and seating myself on a door- step, I shed tears of miserable sympathy. A benevolent cat cumbered me the while with consolations - we two were alone in all that was visible of the London Road: two poor waifs who had each tasted sorrow - and she fawned upon the weeper, and gambolled for his entertainment, watching the effect it seemed, with motherly eyes.

For the sake of the cat, God bless her! I confessed at home the story of my weakness; and so it comes about that I owed a certain journey, and the reader owes the present paper, to a cat in the London Road. It was judged, if I had thus brimmed over on the public highway, some change of scene was (in the medical sense) indicated; my father at the time was visiting the harbour lights of Scotland; and it was decided he should take me along with him around a portion of the shores of Fife; my first professional tour, my first journey in the complete character of man, without the help of petticoats.

The Kingdom of Fife (that royal province) may be observed by the curious on the map, occupying a tongue of land between the firths of Forth and Tay. It may be continually seen from many parts of Edinburgh (among the rest, from the windows of my father's house) dying away into the distance and the easterly HAAR with one smoky seaside town beyond another, or in winter printing on the gray heaven some glittering hill-tops. It has no beauty to recommend it, being a low, sea-salted, wind-vexed promontory; trees very rare, except (as common on the east coast) along the dens of rivers; the fields well cultivated, I understand, but not lovely to the eye. It is of the coast I speak: the interior may be the garden of Eden. History broods over that part of the world like the easterly HAAR. Even on the map, its long row of Gaelic place- names bear testimony to an old and settled race. Of these little towns, posted along the shore as close as sedges, each with its bit of harbour, its old weather-beaten church or public building, its flavour of decayed prosperity and decaying fish, not one but has its legend, quaint or tragic: Dunfermline, in whose royal towers the king may be still observed (in the ballad) drinking the blood- red wine; somnolent Inverkeithing, once the quarantine of Leith; Aberdour, hard by the monastic islet of Inchcolm, hard by Donibristle where the "bonny face was spoiled"; Burntisland where, when Paul Jones was off the coast, the Reverend Mr. Shirra had a table carried between tidemarks, and publicly prayed against the rover at the pitch of his voice and his broad lowland dialect; Kinghorn, where Alexander "brak's neckbane" and left Scotland to the English wars; Kirkcaldy, where the witches once prevailed extremely and sank tall ships and honest mariners in the North Sea; Dysart, famous - well famous at least to me for the Dutch ships that lay in its harbour, painted like toys and with pots of flowers and cages of song-birds in the cabin windows, and for one particular Dutch skipper who would sit all day in slippers on the break of the poop, smoking a long German pipe; Wemyss (pronounce Weems) with its bat-haunted caves, where the Chevalier Johnstone, on his flight from Culloden, passed a night of superstitious terrors; Leven, a bald, quite modern place, sacred to summer visitors, whence there has gone but yesterday the tall figure and the white locks of the last Englishman in Delhi, my uncle Dr. Balfour, who was still walking his hospital rounds, while the troopers from Meerut clattered and cried "Deen Deen" along the streets of the imperial city, and Willoughby mustered his handful of heroes at the magazine, and the nameless brave one in the telegraph office was perhaps already fingering his last despatch; and just a little beyond Leven, Largo Law and the smoke of Largo town mounting about its feet, the town of Alexander Selkirk, better known under the name of Robinson Crusoe. So on, the list might be pursued (only for private reasons, which the reader will shortly have an opportunity to guess) by St. Monance, and Pittenweem, and the two Anstruthers, and Cellardyke, and Crail, where Primate Sharpe was once a humble and innocent country minister: on to the heel of the land, to Fife Ness, overlooked by a sea-wood of matted elders and the quaint old mansion of Balcomie, itself overlooking but the breach or the quiescence of the deep - the Carr Rock beacon rising close in front, and as night draws in, the star of the Inchcape reef springing up on the one hand, and the star of the May Island on the other, and farther off yet a third and a greater on the craggy foreland of St. Abb's. And but a little way round the corner of the land, imminent itself above the sea, stands the gem of the province and the light of mediaeval Scotland, St. Andrews, where the great Cardinal Beaton held garrison against the world, and the second of the name and title perished (as you may read in Knox's jeering narrative) under the knives of true-blue Protestants, and to this day (after so many centuries) the current voice of the professor is not hushed.

Here it was that my first tour of inspection began, early on a bleak easterly morning. There was a crashing run of sea upon the shore, I recollect, and my father and the man of the harbour light must sometimes raise their voices to be audible. Perhaps it is from this circumstance, that I always imagine St. Andrews to be an ineffectual seat of learning, and the sound of the east wind and the bursting surf to linger in its drowsy classrooms and confound the utterance of the professor, until teacher and taught are alike drowned in oblivion, and only the sea-gull beats on the windows and the draught of the sea-air rustles in the pages of the open lecture. But upon all this, and the romance of St. Andrews in general, the reader must consult the works of Mr. Andrew Lang; who has written of it but the other day in his dainty prose and with his incommunicable humour, and long ago in one of his best poems, with grace, and local truth, and a note of unaffected pathos. Mr. Lang knows all about the romance, I say, and the educational advantages, but I doubt if he had turned his attention to the harbour lights; and it may be news even to him, that in the year 1863 their case was pitiable. Hanging about with the east wind humming in my teeth, and my hands (I make no doubt) in my pockets, I looked for the first time upon that tragi-comedy of the visiting engineer which I have seen so often re-enacted on a more important stage. Eighty years ago, I find my grandfather writing: "It is the most painful thing that can occur to me to have a correspondence of this kind with any of the keepers, and when I come to the Light House, instead of having the satisfaction to meet them with approbation and welcome their Family, it is distressing when one-is obliged to put on a most angry countenance and demeanour." This painful obligation has been hereditary in my race. I have myself, on a perfectly amateur and unauthorised inspection of Turnberry Point, bent my brows upon the keeper on the question of storm-panes; and felt a keen pang of self-reproach, when we went down stairs again and I found he was making a coffin for his infant child; and then regained my equanimity with the thought that I had done the man a service, and when the proper inspector came, he would be readier with his panes. The human race is perhaps credited with more duplicity than it deserves. The visitation of a lighthouse at least is a business of the most transparent nature. As soon as the boat grates on the shore, and the keepers step forward in their uniformed coats, the very slouch of the fellows' shoulders tells their story, and the engineer may begin at once to assume his "angry countenance." Certainly the brass of the handrail will be clouded; and if the brass be not immaculate, certainly all will be to match - the reflectors scratched, the spare lamp unready, the storm-panes in the storehouse. If a light is not rather more than middling good, it will be radically bad. Mediocrity (except in literature) appears to be unattainable by man. But of course the unfortunate of St. Andrews was only an amateur, he was not in the Service, he had no uniform coat, he was (I believe) a plumber by his trade and stood (in the mediaeval phrase) quite out of the danger of my father; but he had a painful interview for all that, and perspired extremely.

From St. Andrews, we drove over Magus Muir. My father had announced we were "to post," and the phrase called up in my hopeful mind visions of top-boots and the pictures in Rowlandson's DANCE OF DEATH; but it was only a jingling cab that came to the inn door, such as I had driven in a thousand times at the low price of one shilling on the streets of Edinburgh. Beyond this disappointment, I remember nothing of that drive. It is a road I have often travelled, and of not one of these journeys do I remember any single trait. The fact has not been suffered to encroach on the truth of the imagination. I still see Magus Muir two hundred years ago; a desert place, quite uninclosed; in the midst, the primate's carriage fleeing at the gallop; the assassins loose-reined in pursuit, Burley Balfour, pistol in hand, among the first. No scene of history has ever written itself so deeply on my mind; not because Balfour, that questionable zealot, was an ancestral cousin of my own; not because of the pleadings of the victim and his daughter; not even because of the live bum-bee that flew out of Sharpe's 'bacco-box, thus clearly indicating his complicity with Satan; nor merely because, as it was after all a crime of a fine religious flavour, it figured in Sunday books and afforded a grateful relief from MINISTERING CHILDREN or the MEMOIRS OF MRS. KATHATINE WINSLOWE. The figure that always fixed my attention is that of Hackston of Rathillet, sitting in the saddle with his cloak about his mouth, and through all that long, bungling, vociferous hurly-burly, revolving privately a case of conscience. He would take no hand in the deed, because he had a private spite against the victim, and “that action” must be sullied with no suggestion of a worldly motive; on the other hand, “that action,” in itself, was highly justified, he had cast in his lot with “the actors,” and he must stay there, inactive but publicly sharing the responsibility. “You are a gentleman - you will protect me!” cried the wounded old man, crawling towards him. “I will never lay a hand on you,” said Hackston, and put his cloak about his mouth. It is an old temptation with me, to pluck away that cloak and see the face - to open that bosom and to read the heart. With incomplete romances about Hackston, the drawers of my youth were lumbered. I read him up in every printed book that I could lay my hands on. I even dug among the Wodrow manuscripts, sitting shame-faced in the very room where my hero had been tortured two centuries before, and keenly conscious of my youth in the midst of other and (as I fondly thought) more gifted students. All was vain: that he had passed a riotous nonage, that he was a zealot, that he twice displayed (compared with his grotesque companions) some tincture of soldierly resolution and even of military common sense, and that he figured memorably in the scene on Magus Muir, so much and no more could I make out. But whenever I cast my eyes backward, it is to see him like a landmark on the plains of history, sitting with his cloak about his mouth, inscrutable. How small a thing creates an immortality! I do not think he can have been a man entirely commonplace; but had he not thrown his cloak about his mouth, or had the witnesses forgot to chronicle the action, he would not thus have haunted the imagination of my boyhood, and to-day he would scarce delay me for a paragraph. An incident, at once romantic and dramatic, which at once awakes the judgment and makes a picture for the eye, how little do we realise its perdurable power! Perhaps no one does so but the author, just as none but he appreciates the influence of jingling words; so that he looks on upon life, with something of a covert smile, seeing people led by what they fancy to be thoughts and what are really the accustomed artifices of his own trade, or roused by what they take to be principles and are really picturesque effects. In a pleasant book about a school- class club, Colonel Fergusson has recently told a little anecdote. A “Philosophical Society” was formed by some Academy boys - among them, Colonel Fergusson himself, Fleeming Jenkin, and Andrew Wilson, the Christian Buddhist and author of THE ABODE OF SNOW. Before these learned pundits, one member laid the following ingenious problem: “What would be the result of putting a pound of potassium in a pot of porter?” “I should think there would be a number of interesting bi-products,” said a smatterer at my elbow; but for me the tale itself has a bi-product, and stands as a type of much that is most human. For this inquirer who conceived himself to burn with a zeal entirely chemical, was really immersed in a design of a quite different nature; unconsciously to his own recently breeched intelligence, he was engaged in literature. Putting, pound, potassium, pot, porter; initial p, mediant t - that was his idea, poor little boy! So with politics and that which excites men in the present, so with history and that which rouses them in the past: there lie at the root of what appears, most serious unsuspected elements.

The triple town of Anstruther Wester, Anstruther Easter, and Cellardyke, all three Royal Burghs - or two Royal Burghs and a less distinguished suburb, I forget which - lies continuously along the seaside, and boasts of either two or three separate parish churches, and either two or three separate harbours. These ambiguities are painful; but the fact is (although it argue me uncultured), I am but poorly posted upon Cellardyke. My business lay in the two Anstruthers. A tricklet of a stream divides them, spanned by a bridge; and over the bridge at the time of my knowledge, the celebrated Shell House stood outpost on the west. This had been the residence of an agreeable eccentric; during his fond tenancy, he had illustrated the outer walls, as high (if I remember rightly) as the roof, with elaborate patterns and pictures, and snatches of verse in the vein of EXEGI MONUMENTUM; shells and pebbles, artfully contrasted and conjoined, had been his medium; and I like to think of him standing back upon the bridge, when all was finished, drinking in the general effect and (like Gibbon) already lamenting his employment.

The same bridge saw another sight in the seventeenth century. Mr. Thomson, the “curat” of Anstruther Easter, was a man highly obnoxious to the devout: in the first place, because he was a “curat”; in the second place, because he was a person of irregular and scandalous life; and in the third place, because he was generally suspected of dealings with the Enemy of Man. These three disqualifications, in the popular literature of the time, go hand in hand; but the end of Mr. Thomson was a thing quite by itself, and in the proper phrase, a manifest judgment. He had been at a friend’s house in Anstruther Wester, where (and elsewhere, I suspect) he had partaken of the bottle; indeed, to put the thing in our cold modern way, the reverend gentleman was on the brink of DELIRIUM TREMENS. It was a dark night, it seems; a little lassie came carrying a lantern to fetch the curate home; and away they went down the street of Anstruther Wester, the lantern swinging a bit in the child’s hand, the barred lustre tossing up and down along the front of slumbering houses, and Mr. Thomson not altogether steady on his legs nor (to all appearance) easy in his mind. The pair had reached the middle of the bridge when (as I conceive the scene) the poor tippler started in some baseless fear and looked behind him; the child, already shaken by the minister's strange behaviour, started also; in so doing, she would jerk the lantern; and for the space of a moment the lights and the shadows would be all confounded. Then it was that to the unhinged toper and the twittering child, a huge bulk of blackness seemed to sweep down, to pass them close by as they stood upon the bridge, and to vanish on the farther side in the general darkness of the night. "Plainly the devil come for Mr. Thomson!" thought the child. What Mr. Thomson thought himself, we have no ground of knowledge; but he fell upon his knees in the midst of the bridge like a man praying. On the rest of the journey to the manse, history is silent; but when they came to the door, the poor caitiff, taking the lantern from the child, looked upon her with so lost a countenance that her little courage died within her, and she fled home screaming to her parents. Not a soul would venture out; all that night, the minister dwelt alone with his terrors in the manse; and when the day dawned, and men made bold to go about the streets, they found the devil had come indeed for Mr. Thomson.

This manse of Anstruther Easter has another and a more cheerful association. It was early in the morning, about a century before the days of Mr. Thomson, that his predecessor was called out of bed to welcome a Grandee of Spain, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, just landed in the harbour underneath. But sure there was never seen a more decayed grandee; sure there was never a duke welcomed from a stranger place of exile. Half-way between Orkney and Shetland, there lies a certain isle; on the one hand the Atlantic, on the other the North Sea, bombard its pillared cliffs; sore-eyed, short- living, inbred fishers and their families herd in its few huts; in the graveyard pieces of wreck-wood stand for monuments; there is nowhere a more inhospitable spot. BELLE-ISLE-EN-MER - Fair-Isle- at-Sea - that is a name that has always rung in my mind's ear like music; but the only "Fair Isle" on which I ever set my foot, was this unhomely, rugged turret-top of submarine sierras. Here, when his ship was broken, my lord Duke joyfully got ashore; here for long months he and certain of his men were harboured; and it was from this durance that he landed at last to be welcomed (as well as such a papist deserved, no doubt) by the godly incumbent of Anstruther Easter; and after the Fair Isle, what a fine city must that have appeared! and after the island diet, what a hospitable spot the minister's table! And yet he must have lived on friendly terms with his outlandish hosts. For to this day there still survives a relic of the long winter evenings when the sailors of the great Armada crouched about the hearths of the Fair-Islanders, the planks of their own lost galleon perhaps lighting up the scene, and the gale and the surf that beat about the coast contributing their melancholy voices. All the folk of the north isles are great artificers of knitting: the Fair-Islanders alone dye their fabrics in the Spanish manner. To this day, gloves and nightcaps, innocently decorated, may be seen for sale in the Shetland warehouse at Edinburgh, or on the Fair Isle itself in the catechist's house; and to this day, they tell the story of the Duke of Medina Sidonia's adventure.

It would seem as if the Fair Isle had some attraction for "persons of quality." When I landed there myself, an elderly gentleman, unshaved, poorly attired, his shoulders wrapped in a plaid, was seen walking to and fro, with a book in his hand, upon the beach. He paid no heed to our arrival, which we thought a strange thing in itself; but when one of the officers of the PHAROS, passing narrowly by him, observed his book to be a Greek Testament, our wonder and interest took a higher flight. The catechist was cross- examined; he said the gentleman had been put across some time before in Mr. Bruce of Sumburgh's schooner, the only link between the Fair Isle and the rest of the world; and that he held services and was doing "good." So much came glibly enough; but when pressed a little farther, the catechist displayed embarrassment. A singular diffidence appeared upon his face: "They tell me," said he, in low tones, "that he's a lord." And a lord he was; a peer of the realm pacing that inhospitable beach with his Greek Testament, and his plaid about his shoulders, set upon doing good, as he understood it, worthy man! And his grandson, a good-looking little boy, much better dressed than the lordly evangelist, and speaking with a silken English accent very foreign to the scene, accompanied me for a while in my exploration of the island. I suppose this little fellow is now my lord, and wonder how much he remembers of the Fair Isle. Perhaps not much; for he seemed to accept very quietly his savage situation; and under such guidance, it is like that this was not his first nor yet his last adventure.

CHAPTER VI - RANDOM MEMORIES

II. - THE EDUCATION OF AN ENGINEER

ANSTRUTHER is a place sacred to the Muse; she inspired (really to a considerable extent) Tennant's vernacular poem ANST'ER FAIR; and I have there waited upon her myself with much devotion. This was when I came as a young man to glean engineering experience from the building of the breakwater. What I gleaned, I am sure I do not know; but indeed I had already my own private determination to be an author; I loved the art of words and the appearances of life; and TRAVELLERS, and HEADERS, and RUBBLE, and POLISHED ASHLAR, and PIERRES PERDUES, and even the thrilling question of the STRING- COURSE, interested me only (if they interested me at all) as properties for some possible romance or as words to add to my vocabulary. To grow a little catholic is the compensation of years; youth is one-eyed; and in those days, though I haunted the breakwater by day, and even loved the place for the sake of the sunshine, the thrilling seaside air, the wash of waves on the sea- face, the green glimmer of the divers' helmets far below, and the musical chinking of the masons, my one genuine preoccupation lay elsewhere, and my only industry was in the hours when I was not on duty. I lodged with a certain Bailie Brown, a carpenter by trade; and there, as soon as dinner was despatched, in a chamber scented with dry rose-leaves, drew in my chair to the table and proceeded to pour forth literature, at such a speed, and with such intimations of early death and immortality, as I now look back upon with wonder. Then it was that I wrote VOCES FIDELIUM, a series of dramatic monologues in verse; then that I indited the bulk of a covenanting novel - like so many others, never finished. Late I sat into the night, toiling (as I thought) under the very dart of death, toiling to leave a memory behind me. I feel moved to thrust aside the curtain of the years, to hail that poor feverish idiot, to bid him go to bed and clap VOCES FIDELIUM on the fire before he goes; so clear does he appear before me, sitting there between his candles in the rose-scented room and the late night; so ridiculous a picture (to my elderly wisdom) does the fool present! But he was driven to his bed at last without miraculous intervention; and the manner of his driving sets the last touch upon this eminently youthful business. The weather was then so warm that I must keep the windows open; the night without was populous with moths. As the late darkness deepened, my literary tapers beaconed forth more brightly; thicker and thicker came the dusty night-fliers, to gyrate for one brilliant instant round the flame and fall in agonies upon my paper. Flesh and blood could not endure the spectacle; to capture immortality was doubtless a noble enterprise, but not to capture it at such a cost of suffering; and out would go the candles, and off would I go to bed in the darkness raging to think that the blow might fall on the morrow, and there was VOCES FIDELIUM still incomplete. Well, the moths are - all gone, and VOCES FIDELIUM along with them; only the fool is still on hand and practises new follies.

Only one thing in connection with the harbour tempted me, and that was the diving, an experience I burned to taste of. But this was not to be, at least in Anstruther; and the subject involves a change of scene to the sub-arctic town of Wick. You can never have dwelt in a country more unsightly than that part of Caithness, the land faintly swelling, faintly falling, not a tree, not a hedgerow, the fields divided by single slate stones set upon their edge, the wind always singing in your ears and (down the long road that led nowhere) thrumming in the telegraph wires. Only as you approached the coast was there anything to stir the heart. The plateau broke down to the North Sea in formidable cliffs, the tall out-stacks rose like pillars ringed about with surf, the coves were over- brimmed with clamorous froth, the sea-birds screamed, the wind sang in the thyme on the cliff's edge; here and there, small ancient castles toppled on the brim; here and there, it was possible to dip into a dell of shelter, where you might lie and tell yourself you were a little warm, and hear (near at hand) the whin-pods bursting in the afternoon sun, and (farther off) the rumour of the turbulent sea. As for Wick itself, it is one of the meanest of man's towns, and situate certainly on the baldest of God's bays. It lives for herring, and a strange sight it is to see (of an afternoon) the heights of Pulteney blackened by seaward-looking fishers, as when a city crowds to a review - or, as when bees have swarmed, the ground is horrible with lumps and clusters; and a strange sight, and a beautiful, to see the fleet put silently out against a rising moon, the sea-line rough as a wood with sails, and ever and again and one after another, a boat flitting swiftly by the silver disk. This mass of fishers, this great fleet of boats, is out of all proportion to the town itself; and the oars are manned and the nets hauled by immigrants from the Long Island (as we call the outer Hebrides), who come for that season only, and depart again, if "the take" be poor, leaving debts behind them. In a bad year, the end of the herring fishery is therefore an exciting time; fights are common, riots often possible; an apple knocked from a child's hand was once the signal for something like a war; and even when I was there, a gunboat lay in the bay to assist the authorities. To contrary interests, it should be observed, the curse of Babel is here added; the Lews men are Gaelic speakers. Caithness has adopted

English; an odd circumstance, if you reflect that both must be largely Norsemen by descent. I remember seeing one of the strongest instances of this division: a thing like a Punch-and- Judy box erected on the flat grave-stones of the churchyard; from the hutch or proscenium - I know not what to call it - an eldritch- looking preacher laying down the law in Gaelic about some one of the name of POWL, whom I at last divined to be the apostle to the Gentiles; a large congregation of the Lews men very devoutly listening; and on the outskirts of the crowd, some of the town's children (to whom the whole affair was Greek and Hebrew) profanely playing tigg. The same descent, the same country, the same narrow sect of the same religion, and all these bonds made very largely nugatory by an accidental difference of dialect!

Into the bay of Wick stretched the dark length of the unfinished breakwater, in its cage of open staging; the travellers (like frames of churches) over-plumbing all; and away at the extreme end, the divers toiling unseen on the foundation. On a platform of loose planks, the assistants turned their air-mills; a stone might be swinging between wind and water; underneath the swell ran gaily; and from time to time, a mailed dragon with a window-glass snout came dripping up the ladder. Youth is a blessed season after all; my stay at Wick was in the year of VOCES FIDELIUM and the rose-leaf room at Bailie Brown's; and already I did not care two straws for literary glory. Posthumous ambition perhaps requires an atmosphere of roses; and the more rugged excitant of Wick east winds had made another boy of me. To go down in the diving-dress, that was my absorbing fancy; and with the countenance of a certain handsome scamp of a diver, Bob Bain by name, I gratified the whim.

It was gray, harsh, easterly weather, the swell ran pretty high, and out in the open there were "skipper's daughters," when I found myself at last on the diver's platform, twenty pounds of lead upon each foot and my whole person swollen with ply and ply of woollen underclothing. One moment, the salt wind was whistling round my night-capped head; the next, I was crushed almost double under the weight of the helmet. As that intolerable burthern was laid upon me, I could have found it in my heart (only for shame's sake) to cry off from the whole enterprise. But it was too late. The attendants began to turn the hurdy-gurdy, and the air to whistle through the tube; some one screwed in the barred window of the vizor; and I was cut off in a moment from my fellow-men; standing there in their midst, but quite divorced from intercourse: a creature deaf and dumb, pathetically looking forth upon them from a climate of his own. Except that I could move and feel, I was like a man fallen in a catalepsy. But time was scarce given me to realise my isolation; the weights were hung upon my back and breast, the signal rope was thrust into my unresisting hand; and setting a twenty-pound foot upon the ladder, I began ponderously to descend.

Some twenty rounds below the platform, twilight fell. Looking up, I saw a low green heaven mottled with vanishing bells of white; looking around, except for the weedy spokes and shafts of the ladder, nothing but a green gloaming, somewhat opaque but very restful and delicious. Thirty rounds lower, I stepped off on the PIERRES PERDUES of the foundation; a dumb helmeted figure took me by the hand, and made a gesture (as I read it) of encouragement; and looking in at the creature's window, I beheld the face of Bain. There we were, hand to hand and (when it pleased us) eye to eye; and either might have burst himself with shouting, and not a whisper come to his companion's hearing. Each, in his own little world of air, stood incommunicably separate.

Bob had told me ere this a little tale, a five minutes' drama at the bottom of the sea, which at that moment possibly shot across my mind. He was down with another, settling a stone of the sea-wall. They had it well adjusted, Bob gave the signal, the scissors were slipped, the stone set home; and it was time to turn to something else. But still his companion remained bowed over the block like a mourner on a tomb, or only raised himself to make absurd contortions and mysterious signs unknown to the vocabulary of the diver. There, then, these two stood for awhile, like the dead and the living; till there flashed a fortunate thought into Bob's mind, and he stooped, peered through the window of that other world, and beheld the face of its inhabitant wet with streaming tears. Ah! the man was in pain! And Bob, glancing downward, saw what was the trouble: the block had been lowered on the foot of that unfortunate - he was caught alive at the bottom of the sea under fifteen tons of rock.

That two men should handle a stone so heavy, even swinging in the scissors, may appear strange to the inexpert. These must bear in mind the great density of the water of the sea, and the surprising results of transplantation to that medium. To understand a little what these are, and how a man's weight, so far from being an encumbrance, is the very ground of his agility, was the chief lesson of my submarine experience. The knowledge came upon me by degrees. As I began to go forward with the hand of my estranged companion, a world of tumbled stones was visible, pillared with the weedy uprights of the staging: overhead, a flat roof of green: a little in front, the sea-wall, like an unfinished rampart. And presently in our upward progress, Bob motioned me to leap upon a stone; I looked to see if he were possibly in earnest, and he only signed to me the more imperiously. Now the block stood six feet high; it would have been quite a leap to me unencumbered; with the breast and back weights, and the twenty pounds upon each foot, and the staggering load of the helmet, the thing was out of reason. I laughed aloud in my tomb; and to prove to Bob how far he was astray, I gave a little impulse from my toes. Up I soared like a bird, my companion soaring at my side. As high as to the stone, and then higher, I pursued my impotent and empty flight. Even when the strong arm of Bob had checked my shoulders, my heels continued their ascent; so that I blew out sideways like an autumn leaf, and must be hauled in, hand over hand, as sailors haul in the slack of a sail, and propped upon my feet again like an intoxicated sparrow. Yet a little higher on the foundation, and we began to be affected by the bottom of the swell, running there like a strong breeze of wind. Or so I must suppose; for, safe in my cushion of air, I was conscious of no impact; only swayed idly like a weed, and was now borne helplessly abroad, and now swiftly - and yet with dream-like gentleness - impelled against my guide. So does a child's balloon divagate upon the currents of the air, and touch, and slide off again from every obstacle. So must have ineffectually swung, so resented their inefficiency, those light crowds that followed the Star of Hades, and uttered exiguous voices in the land beyond Cocytus.

There was something strangely exasperating, as well as strangely wearying, in these uncommanded evolutions. It is bitter to return to infancy, to be supported, and directed, and perpetually set upon your feet, by the hand of some one else. The air besides, as it is supplied to you by the busy millers on the platform, closes the eustachian tubes and keeps the neophyte perpetually swallowing, till his throat is grown so dry that he can swallow no longer. And for all these reasons-although I had a fine, dizzy, muddle-headed joy in my surroundings, and longed, and tried, and always failed, to lay hands on the fish that darted here and there about me, swift as humming-birds - yet I fancy I was rather relieved than otherwise when Bain brought me back to the ladder and signed to me to mount. And there was one more experience before me even then. Of a sudden, my ascending head passed into the trough of a swell. Out of the green, I shot at once into a glory of rosy, almost of sanguine light - the multitudinous seas incarnadined, the heaven above a vault of crimson. And then the glory faded into the hard, ugly daylight of a Caithness autumn, with a low sky, a gray sea, and a whistling wind.

Bob Bain had five shillings for his trouble, and I had done what I desired. It was one of the best things I got from my education as an engineer: of which, however, as a way of life, I wish to speak with sympathy. It takes a man into the open air; it keeps him hanging about harbour-sides, which is the richest form of idling; it carries him to wild islands; it gives him a taste of the genial dangers of the sea; it supplies him with dexterities to exercise; it makes demands upon his ingenuity; it will go far to cure him of any taste (if ever he had one) for the miserable life of cities. And when it has done so, it carries him back and shuts him in an office! From the roaring skerry and the wet thwart of the tossing boat, he passes to the stool and desk; and with a memory full of ships, and seas, and perilous headlands, and the shining pharos, he must apply his long-sighted eyes to the petty niceties of drawing, or measure his inaccurate mind with several pages of consecutive figures. He is a wise youth, to be sure, who can balance one part of genuine life against two parts of drudgery between four walls, and for the sake of the one, manfully accept the other.

Wick was scarce an eligible place of stay. But how much better it was to hang in the cold wind upon the pier, to go down with Bob Bain among the roots of the staging, to be all day in a boat coiling a wet rope and shouting orders - not always very wise - than to be warm and dry, and dull, and dead-alive, in the most comfortable office. And Wick itself had in those days a note of originality. It may have still, but I misdoubt it much. The old minister of Keiss would not preach, in these degenerate times, for an hour and a half upon the clock. The gipsies must be gone from their cavern; where you might see, from the mouth, the women tending their fire, like Meg Merrilies, and the men sleeping off their coarse potations; and where, in winter gales, the surf would beleaguer them closely, bursting in their very door. A traveller to-day upon the Thurso coach would scarce observe a little cloud of smoke among the moorlands, and be told, quite openly, it marked a private still. He would not indeed make that journey, for there is now no Thurso coach. And even if he could, one little thing that happened to me could never happen to him, or not with the same trenchancy of contrast.

We had been upon the road all evening; the coach-top was crowded with Lews fishers going home, scarce anything but Gaelic had sounded in my ears; and our way had lain throughout over a moorish country very northern to behold. Latish at night, though it was still broad day in our subarctic latitude, we came down upon the shores of the roaring Pentland Firth, that grave of mariners; on one hand, the cliffs of Dunnet Head ran seaward; in front was the little bare, white town of Castleton, its streets full of blowing sand; nothing beyond, but the North Islands, the great deep, and the perennial ice-fields of the Pole. And here, in the last imaginable place, there sprang up young outlandish voices and a chatter of some foreign speech; and I saw, pursuing the coach with its load of Hebridean fishers - as they had pursued VETTURINI up the passes of the Apennines or perhaps along the grotto under Virgil’s tomb - two little dark-eyed, white-toothed Italian vagabonds, of twelve to fourteen years of age, one with a hurdy- gurdy, the other with a cage of white mice. The coach passed on, and their small Italian chatter died in the distance; and I was left to marvel how they had wandered into that country, and how they fared in it, and what they thought of it, and when (if ever) they should see again the silver wind-breaks run among the olives, and the stone-pine stand guard upon Etruscan sepulchres.

Upon any American, the strangeness of this incident is somewhat lost. For as far back as he goes in his own land, he will find some alien camping there; the Cornish miner, the French or Mexican half-blood, the negro in the South, these are deep in the woods and far among the mountains. But in an old, cold, and rugged country such as mine, the days of immigration are long at an end; and away up there, which was at that time far beyond the northernmost extreme of railways, hard upon the shore of that ill-omened strait of whirlpools, in a land of moors where no stranger came, unless it should be a sportsman to shoot grouse or an antiquary to decipher runes, the presence of these small pedestrians struck the mind as though a bird-of-paradise had risen from the heather or an albatross come fishing in the bay of Wick. They were as strange to their surroundings as my lordly evangelist or the old Spanish grandee on the Fair Isle.

CHAPTER VII - THE LANTERN-BEARERS

I

THESE boys congregated every autumn about a certain easterly fisher-village, where they tasted in a high degree the glory of existence. The place was created seemingly on purpose for the diversion of young gentlemen. A street or two of houses, mostly red and many of, them tiled; a number of fine trees clustered about the manse and the kirkyard, and turning the chief street into a shady alley; many little gardens more than usually bright with flowers; nets a-drying, and fisher-wives scolding in the backward parts; a smell of fish, a genial smell of seaweed; whiffs of blowing sand at the street-corners; shops with golf-balls and bottled lollipops; another shop with penny pickwicks (that remarkable cigar) and the LONDON JOURNAL, dear to me for its startling pictures, and a few novels, dear for their suggestive names: such, as well as memory serves me, were the ingredients of the town. These, you are to conceive posted on a spit between two sandy bays, and sparsely flanked with villas enough for the boys to lodge in with their subsidiary parents, not enough (not yet enough) to cocknify the scene: a haven in the rocks in front: in front of that, a file of gray islets: to the left, endless links and sand wreaths, a wilderness of hiding-holes, alive with popping rabbits and soaring gulls: to the right, a range of seaward crags, one rugged brow beyond another; the ruins of a mighty and ancient fortress on the brink of one; coves between - now charmed into sunshine quiet, now whistling with wind and clamorous with bursting surges; the dens and sheltered hollows redolent of thyme and southernwood, the air at the cliff's edge brisk and clean and pungent of the sea - in front of all, the Bass Rock, tilted seaward like a doubtful bather, the surf ringing it with white, the solan- geese hanging round its summit like a great and glittering smoke. This choice piece of seaboard was sacred, besides, to the wrecker; and the Bass, in the eye of fancy, still flew the colours of King James; and in the ear of fancy the arches of Tantallon still rang with horse-shoe iron, and echoed to the commands of Bell-the-Cat.

There was nothing to mar your days, if you were a boy summering in that part, but the embarrassment of pleasure. You might golf if you wanted; but I seem to have been better employed. You might secrete yourself in the Lady's Walk, a certain sunless dingle of elders, all mossed over by the damp as green as grass, and dotted here and there by the stream-side with roofless walls, the cold homes of anchorites. To fit themselves for life, and with a special eye to acquire the art of smoking, it was even common for the boys to harbour there; and you might have seen a single penny pickwick, honestly shared in lengths with a blunt knife, bestrew the glen with these apprentices. Again, you might join our fishing parties, where we sat perched as thick as solan-geese, a covey of little anglers, boy and girl, angling over each other's heads, to the to the much entanglement of lines and loss of podleys and consequent shrill recrimination - shrill as the geese themselves. Indeed, had that been all, you might have done this often; but though fishing be a fine pastime, the podley is scarce to be regarded as a dainty for the table; and it was a point of honour that a boy should eat all that he had taken. Or again, you might climb the Law, where the whale's jawbone stood landmark in the buzzing wind, and behold the face of many counties, and the smoke and spires of many towns, and the sails of distant ships. You might bathe, now in the flaws of fine weather, that we pathetically call our summer, now in a gale of wind, with the sand scourging your bare hide, your clothes thrashing abroad from underneath their guardian stone, the froth of the great breakers casting you headlong ere it had drowned your knees. Or you might explore the tidal rocks, above all in the ebb of springs, when the very roots of the hills were for the nonce discovered; following my leader from one group to another, groping in slippery tangle for the wreck of ships, wading in pools after the abominable creatures of the sea, and ever with an eye cast backward on the march off the tide and the menaced line of your retreat. And then you might go Crusoeing, a word that covers all extempore eating in the open air: digging perhaps a house under the margin of the links, kindling a fire of the sea-ware, and cooking apples there - if they were truly apples, for I sometimes suppose the merchant must have played us off with some inferior and quite local fruit capable of resolving, in the neighbourhood of fire, into mere sand and smoke and iodine; or perhaps pushing to Tantallon, you might lunch on sandwiches and visions in the grassy court, while the wind hummed in the crumbling turrets; or clambering along the coast, eat geans (the worst, I must suppose, in Christendom) from an adventurous gean tree that had taken root under a cliff, where it was shaken with an ague of east wind, and silvered after gales with salt, and grew so foreign among its bleak surroundings that to eat of its produce was an adventure in itself.

There are mingled some dismal memories with so many that were joyous. Of the fisher-wife, for instance, who had cut her throat at Canty Bay; and of how I ran with the other children to the top of the Quadrant, and beheld a posse of silent people escorting a cart, and on the cart, bound in a chair, her throat bandaged, and the bandage all bloody - horror! - the fisher-wife herself, who continued thenceforth to hag-ride my thoughts, and even to-day (as I recall the scene) darkens daylight. She was lodged in the little old jail in the chief street; but whether or no she died there, with a wise terror of the worst, I never inquired. She had been tippling; it was but a dingy tragedy; and it seems strange and hard that, after all these years, the poor crazy sinner should be still pilloried on her cart in the scrap-book of my memory. Nor shall I readily forget a certain house in the Quadrant where a visitor died, and a dark old woman continued to dwell alone with the dead body; nor how this old woman conceived a hatred to myself and one of my cousins, and in the dread hour of the dusk, as we were clambering on the garden-walls, opened a window in that house of mortality and cursed us in a shrill voice and with a marrowy choice of language. It was a pair of very colourless urchins that fled down the lane from this remarkable experience! But I recall with a more doubtful sentiment, compounded out of fear and exultation, the coil of equinoctial tempests; trumpeting squalls, scouring flaws of rain; the boats with their reefed lugsails scudding for the harbour mouth, where danger lay, for it was hard to make when the wind had any east in it; the wives clustered with blowing shawls at the pier-head, where (if fate was against them) they might see boat and husband and sons - their whole wealth and their whole family - engulfed under their eyes; and (what I saw but once) a troop of neighbours forcing such an unfortunate homeward, and she squalling and battling in their midst, a figure scarcely human, a tragic Maenad.

These are things that I recall with interest; but what my memory dwells upon the most, I have been all this while withholding. It was a sport peculiar to the place, and indeed to a week or so of our two months' holiday there. Maybe it still flourishes in its native spot; for boys and their pastimes are swayed by periodic forces inscrutable to man; so that tops and marbles reappear in their due season, regular like the sun and moon; and the harmless art of knucklebones has seen the fall of the Roman empire and the rise of the United States. It may still flourish in its native spot, but nowhere else, I am persuaded; for I tried myself to introduce it on Tweedside, and was defeated lamentably; its charm being quite local, like a country wine that cannot be exported.

The idle manner of it was this:-

Toward the end of September, when school-time was drawing near and the nights were already black, we would begin to sally from our-respective villas, each equipped with a tin bull's-eye lantern. The thing was so well known that it had worn a rut in the commerce of Great Britain; and the grocers, about the due time, began to garnish their windows with our particular brand of luminary. We wore them buckled to the waist upon a cricket belt, and over them, such was the rigour of the game, a buttoned top-coat. They smelled noisomely of blistered tin; they never burned aright, though they would always burn our fingers; their use was naught; the pleasure of them merely fanciful; and yet a boy with a bull's-eye under his top-coat asked for nothing more. The fishermen used lanterns about their boats, and it was from them, I suppose, that we had got the hint; but theirs were not bull's-eyes, nor did we ever play at being fishermen. The police carried them at their belts, and we had plainly copied them in that; yet we did not pretend to be policemen. Burglars, indeed, we may have had some haunting thoughts of; and we had certainly an eye to past ages when lanterns were more common, and to certain story-books in which we had found them to figure very largely. But take it for all in all, the pleasure of the thing was substantive; and to be a boy with a bull's-eye under his top-coat was good enough for us.

When two of these asses met, there would be an anxious "Have you got your lantern?" and a gratified "Yes!" That was the shibboleth, and very needful too; for, as it was the rule to keep our glory contained, none could recognise a lantern-bearer, unless (like the polecat) by the smell. Four or five would sometimes climb into the belly of a ten-man lugger, with nothing but the thwarts above them - for the cabin was usually locked, or choose out some hollow of the links where the wind might whistle overhead. There the coats would be unbuttoned and the bull's-eyes discovered; and in the chequering glimmer, under the huge windy hall of the night, and cheered by a rich steam of toasting tinware, these fortunate young gentlemen would crouch together in the cold sand of the links or on the scaly bilges of the fishing-boat, and delight themselves with inappropriate talk. Woe is me that I may not give some specimens - some of their foresights of life, or deep inquiries into the rudiments of man and nature, these were so fiery and so innocent, they were so richly silly, so romantically young. But the talk, at any rate, was but a condiment; and these gatherings themselves only accidents in the career of the lantern-bearer. The essence of this bliss was to walk by yourself in the black night; the slide shut, the top-coat buttoned; not a ray escaping, whether to conduct your footsteps or to make your glory public: a mere pillar of darkness in the dark; and all the while, deep down in the privacy of your fool's heart, to know you had a bull's-eye at your belt, and to exult and sing over the knowledge.

II

It is said that a poet has died young in the breast of the most stolid. It may be contended, rather, that this (somewhat minor) bard in almost every case survives, and is the spice of life to his possessor. Justice is not done to the versatility and the unplumbed childishness of man’s imagination. His life from without may seem but a rude mound of mud; there will be some golden chamber at the heart of it, in which he dwells delighted; and for as dark as his pathway seems to the observer, he will have some kind of a bull’s-eye at his belt.

It would be hard to pick out a career more cheerless than that of Dancer, the miser, as he figures in the “Old Bailey Reports,” a prey to the most sordid persecutions, the butt of his neighbourhood, betrayed by his hired man, his house beleaguered by the impish schoolboy, and he himself grinding and fuming and impotently fleeing to the law against these pin-pricks. You marvel at first that any one should willingly prolong a life so destitute of charm and dignity; and then you call to memory that had he chosen, had he ceased to be a miser, he could have been freed at once from these trials, and might have built himself a castle and gone escorted by a squadron. For the love of more recondite joys, which we cannot estimate, which, it may be, we should envy, the man had willingly forgone both comfort and consideration. “His mind to him a kingdom was”; and sure enough, digging into that mind, which seems at first a dust-heap, we unearth some priceless jewels. For Dancer must have had the love of power and the disdain of using it, a noble character in itself; disdain of many pleasures, a chief part of what is commonly called wisdom; disdain of the inevitable end, that finest trait of mankind; scorn of men’s opinions, another element of virtue; and at the back of all, a conscience just like yours and mine, whining like a cur, swindling like a thimble- rigger, but still pointing (there or there-about) to some conventional standard. Here were a cabinet portrait to which Hawthorne perhaps had done justice; and yet not Hawthorne either, for he was mildly minded, and it lay not in him to create for us that throb of the miser’s pulse, his fretful energy of gusto, his vast arms of ambition clutching in he knows not what: insatiable, insane, a god with a muck-rake. Thus, at least, looking in the bosom of the miser, consideration detects the poet in the full tide of life, with more, indeed, of the poetic fire than usually goes to epics; and tracing that mean man about his cold hearth, and to and fro in his discomfortable house, spies within him a blazing bonfire of delight. And so with others, who do not live by bread alone, but by some cherished and perhaps fantastic pleasure; who are meat salesmen to the external eye, and possibly to themselves are Shakespeares, Napoleons, or Beethovens; who have not one virtue to rub against another in the field of active life, and yet perhaps, in the life of contemplation, sit with the saints. We see them on the street, and we can count their buttons; but heaven knows in what they pride themselves! heaven knows where they have set their treasure!

There is one fable that touches very near the quick of life: the fable of the monk who passed into the woods, heard a bird break into song, hearkened for a trill or two, and found himself on his return a stranger at his convent gates; for he had been absent fifty years, and of all his comrades there survived but one to recognise him. It is not only in the woods that this enchanter carols, though perhaps he is native there. He sings in the most doleful places. The miser hears him and chuckles, and the days are moments. With no more apparatus than an ill-smelling lantern I have evoked him on the naked links. All life that is not merely mechanical is spun out of two strands: seeking for that bird and hearing him. And it is just this that makes life so hard to value, and the delight of each so incommunicable. And just a knowledge of this, and a remembrance of those fortunate hours in which the bird has sung to us, that fills us with such wonder when we turn the pages of the realist. There, to be sure, we find a picture of life in so far as it consists of mud and of old iron, cheap desires and cheap fears, that which we are ashamed to remember and that which we are careless whether we forget; but of the note of that time- devouring nightingale we hear no news.

The case of these writers of romance is most obscure. They have been boys and youths; they have lingered outside the window of the beloved, who was then most probably writing to some one else; they have sat before a sheet of paper, and felt themselves mere continents of congested poetry, not one line of which would flow; they have walked alone in the woods, they have walked in cities under the countless lamps; they have been to sea, they have hated, they have feared, they have longed to knife a man, and maybe done it; the wild taste of life has stung their palate. Or, if you deny them all the rest, one pleasure at least they have tasted to the full - their books are there to prove it - the keen pleasure of successful literary composition. And yet they fill the globe with volumes, whose cleverness inspires me with despairing admiration, and whose consistent falsity to all I care to call existence, with despairing wrath. If I had no better hope than to continue to revolve among the dreary and petty businesses, and to be moved by the paltry hopes and fears with which they surround and animate their heroes, I declare I would die now. But there has never an hour of mine gone quite so dully yet; if it were spent waiting at a railway junction, I would have some scattering thoughts, I could count some grains of memory, compared to which the whole of one of these romances seems but dross.

These writers would retort (if I take them properly) that this was very true; that it was the same with themselves and other persons of (what they call) the artistic temperament; that in this we were exceptional, and should apparently be ashamed of ourselves; but that our works must deal exclusively with (what they call) the average man, who was a prodigious dull fellow, and quite dead to all but the paltriest considerations. I accept the issue. We can only know others by ourselves. The artistic temperament (a plague on the expression!) does not make us different from our fellowmen, or it would make us incapable of writing novels; and the average man (a murrain on the word!) is just like you and me, or he would not be average. It was Whitman who stamped a kind of Birmingham sacredness upon the latter phrase; but Whitman knew very well, and showed very nobly, that the average man was full of joys and full of a poetry of his own. And this harping on life's dulness and man's meanness is a loud profession of incompetence; it is one of two things: the cry of the blind eye, I CANNOT SEE, or the complaint of the dumb tongue, I CANNOT UTTER. To draw a life without delights is to prove I have not realised it. To picture a man without some sort of poetry - well, it goes near to prove my case, for it shows an author may have little enough. To see Dancer only as a dirty, old, small-minded, impotently fuming man, in a dirty house, besieged by Harrow boys, and probably beset by small attorneys, is to show myself as keen an observer as . . . the Harrow boys. But these young gentlemen (with a more becoming modesty) were content to pluck Dancer by the coat-tails; they did not suppose they had surprised his secret or could put him living in a book: and it is there my error would have lain. Or say that in the same romance - I continue to call these books romances, in the hope of giving pain - say that in the same romance, which now begins really to take shape, I should leave to speak of Dancer, and follow instead the Harrow boys; and say that I came on some such business as that of my lantern-bearers on the links; and described the boys as very cold, spat upon by flurries of rain, and drearily surrounded, all of which they were; and their talk as silly and indecent, which it certainly was. I might upon these lines, and had I Zola's genius, turn out, in a page or so, a gem of literary art, render the lantern-light with the touches of a master, and lay on the indecency with the ungrudging hand of love; and when all was done, what a triumph would my picture be of shallowness and dulness! how it would have missed the point! how it would have belied the boys! To the ear of the stenographer, the talk is merely silly and indecent; but ask the boys themselves, and they are discussing (as it is highly proper they should) the possibilities of existence. To the eye of the observer they are wet and cold and drearily surrounded; but ask themselves, and they are in the heaven of a recondite pleasure, the ground of which is an ill-smelling lantern.

III

For, to repeat, the ground of a man's joy is often hard to hit. It may hinge at times upon a mere accessory, like the lantern; it may reside, like Dancer's, in the mysterious inwards of psychology. It may consist with perpetual failure, and find exercise in the continued chase. It has so little bond with externals (such as the observer scribbles in his note-book) that it may even touch them not; and the man's true life, for which he consents to live, lie altogether in the field of fancy. The clergyman, in his spare hours, may be winning battles, the farmer sailing ships, the banker reaping triumph in the arts: all leading another life, plying another trade from that they chose; like the poet's housebuilder, who, after all, is cased in stone,

"By his fireside, as impotent fancy prompts.
Rebuilds it to his liking."

In such a case the poetry runs underground. The observer (poor soul, with his documents!) is all abroad. For to look at the man is but to court deception. We shall see the trunk from which he draws his nourishment; but he himself is above and abroad in the green dome of foliage, hummed through by winds and nested in by nightingales. And the true realism were that of the poets, to climb up after him like a squirrel, and catch some glimpse of the heaven for which he lives.

And, the true realism, always and everywhere, is that of the poets: to find out where joy resides, and give it a voice far beyond singing.

For to miss the joy is to miss all. In the joy of the actors lies the sense of any action. That is the explanation, that the excuse. To one who has not the secret of the lanterns, the scene upon the links is meaningless. And hence the haunting and truly spectral unreality of realistic books. Hence, when we read the English realists, the incredulous wonder with which we observe the hero's constancy under the submerging tide of dulness, and how he bears up with his jibbing sweetheart, and endures the chatter of idiot girls, and stands by his whole unfeatured wilderness of an existence, instead of seeking relief in drink or foreign travel. Hence in the French, in that meat-market of middle-aged sensuality, the disgusted surprise with which we see the hero drift sidelong, and practically quite untempted, into every description of misconduct and dishonour. In each, we miss the personal poetry, the enchanted atmosphere, that rainbow work of fancy that clothes what is naked and seems to ennoble what is base; in each, life falls dead like dough, instead of soaring away like a balloon into the colours of the sunset; each is true, each inconceivable; for no man lives in the external truth, among salts and acids, but in the warm, phantasmagoric chamber of his brain, with the painted windows and the storied walls.

Of this falsity we have had a recent example from a man who knows far better - Tolstoi's POWERS OF DARKNESS. Here is a piece full of force and truth, yet quite untrue. For before Mikita was led into so dire a situation he was tempted, and temptations are beautiful at least in part; and a work which dwells on the ugliness of crime and gives no hint of any loveliness in the temptation, sins against the modesty of life, and even when a Tolstoi writes it, sinks to melodrama. The peasants are not understood; they saw their life in fairer colours; even the deaf girl was clothed in poetry for Mikita, or he had never fallen. And so, once again, even an Old Bailey melodrama, without some brightness of poetry and lustre of existence, falls into the inconceivable and ranks with fairy tales.

IV

In nobler books we are moved with something like the emotions of life; and this emotion is very variously provoked. We are so moved when Levine labours in the field, when Andre sinks beyond emotion, when Richard Feverel and Lucy Desborough meet beside the river, when Antony, “not cowardly, puts off his helmet,” when Kent has infinite pity on the dying Lear, when, in Dostoieffky’s DESPISED AND REJECTED, the uncomplaining hero drains his cup of suffering and virtue. These are notes that please the great heart of man. Not only love, and the fields, and the bright face of danger, but sacrifice and death and unmerited suffering humbly supported, touch in us the vein of the poetic. We love to think of them, we long to try them, we are humbly hopeful that we may prove heroes also.

We have heard, perhaps, too much of lesser matters. Here is the door, here is the open air. ITUR IN ANTIQUAM SILVAM.

CHAPTER VIII - A CHAPTER ON DREAMS

THE past is all of one texture - whether feigned or suffered - whether acted out in three dimensions, or only witnessed in that small theatre of the brain which we keep brightly lighted all night long, after the jets are down, and darkness and sleep reign undisturbed in the remainder of the body. There is no distinction on the face of our experiences; one is vivid indeed, and one dull, and one pleasant, and another agonising to remember; but which of them is what we call true, and which a dream, there is not one hair to prove. The past stands on a precarious footing; another straw split in the field of metaphysic, and behold us robbed of it. There is scarce a family that can count four generations but lays a claim to some dormant title or some castle and estate: a claim not prosecutable in any court of law, but flattering to the fancy and a great alleviation of idle hours. A man's claim to his own past is yet less valid. A paper might turn up (in proper story-book fashion) in the secret drawer of an old ebony secretary, and restore your family to its ancient honours, and reinstate mine in a certain West Indian islet (not far from St. Kitt's, as beloved tradition hummed in my young ears) which was once ours, and is now unjustly some one else's, and for that matter (in the state of the sugar trade) is not worth anything to anybody. I do not say that these revolutions are likely; only no man can deny that they are possible; and the past, on the other baud, is, lost for ever: our old days and deeds, our old selves, too, and the very world in which these scenes were acted, all brought down to the same faint residuum as a last night's dream, to some incontinuous images, and an echo in the chambers of the brain. Not an hour, not a mood, not a glance of the eye, can we revoke; it is all gone, past conjuring. And yet conceive us robbed of it, conceive that little thread of memory that we trail behind us broken at the pocket's edge; and in what naked nullity should we be left! for we only guide ourselves, and only know ourselves, by these air-painted pictures of the past.

Upon these grounds, there are some among us who claim to have lived longer and more richly than their neighbours; when they lay asleep they claim they were still active; and among the treasures of memory that all men review for their amusement, these count in no second place the harvests of their dreams. There is one of this kind whom I have in my eye, and whose case is perhaps unusual enough to be described. He was from a child an ardent and uncomfortable dreamer. When he had a touch of fever at night, and the room swelled and shrank, and his clothes, hanging on a nail, now loomed up instant to the bigness of a church, and now drew away into a horror of infinite distance and infinite littleness, the poor soul was very well aware of what must follow, and struggled hard against the approaches of that slumber which was the beginning of sorrows.

But his struggles were in vain; sooner or later the night-hag would have him by the throat, and pluck him strangling and screaming, from his sleep. His dreams were at times commonplace enough, at times very strange, at times they were almost formless: he would be haunted, for instance, by nothing more definite than a certain hue of brown, which he did not mind in the least while he was awake, but feared and loathed while he was dreaming; at times, again, they took on every detail of circumstance, as when once he supposed he must swallow the populous world, and awoke screaming with the horror of the thought. The two chief troubles of his very narrow existence - the practical and everyday trouble of school tasks and the ultimate and airy one of hell and judgment - were often confounded together into one appalling nightmare. He seemed to himself to stand before the Great White Throne; he was called on, poor little devil, to recite some form of words, on which his destiny depended; his tongue stuck, his memory was blank, hell gaped for him; and he would awake, clinging to the curtain-rod with his knees to his chin.

These were extremely poor experiences, on the whole; and at that time of life my dreamer would have very willingly parted with his power of dreams. But presently, in the course of his growth, the cries and physical contortions passed away, seemingly for ever; his visions were still for the most part miserable, but they were more constantly supported; and he would awake with no more extreme symptom than a flying heart, a freezing scalp, cold sweats, and the speechless midnight fear. His dreams, too, as befitted a mind better stocked with particulars, became more circumstantial, and had more the air and continuity of life. The look of the world beginning to take hold on his attention, scenery came to play a part in his sleeping as well as in his waking thoughts, so that he would take long, uneventful journeys and see strange towns and beautiful places as he lay in bed. And, what is more significant, an odd taste that he had for the Georgian costume and for stories laid in that period of English history, began to rule the features of his dreams; so that he masqueraded there in a three-cornered hat and was much engaged with Jacobite conspiracy between the hour for bed and that for breakfast. About the same time, he began to read in his dreams - tales, for the most part, and for the most part after the manner of G. P. R. James, but so incredibly more vivid and moving than any printed book, that he has ever since been malcontent with literature.

And then, while he was yet a student, there came to him a dream-adventure which he has no anxiety to repeat; he began, that is to say, to dream in sequence and thus to lead a double life - one of the day, one of the night - one that he had every reason to believe was the true one, another that he had no means of proving to be false. I should have said he studied, or was by way of studying, at Edinburgh College, which (it may be supposed) was how I came to know him. Well, in his dream-life, he passed a long day in the surgical theatre, his heart in his mouth, his teeth on edge, seeing monstrous malformations and the abhorred dexterity of surgeons. In a heavy, rainy, foggy evening he came forth into the South Bridge, turned up the High Street, and entered the door of a tall LAND, at the top of which he supposed himself to lodge. All night long, in his wet clothes, he climbed the stairs, stair after stair in endless series, and at every second flight a flaring lamp with a reflector. All night long, he brushed by single persons passing downward - beggarly women of the street, great, weary, muddy labourers, poor scarecrows of men, pale parodies of women - but all drowsy and weary like himself, and all single, and all brushing against him as they passed. In the end, out of a northern window, he would see day beginning to whiten over the Firth, give up the ascent, turn to descend, and in a breath be back again upon the streets, in his wet clothes, in the wet, haggard dawn, trudging to another day of monstrosities and operations. Time went quicker in the life of dreams, some seven hours (as near as he can guess) to one; and it went, besides, more intensely, so that the gloom of these fancied experiences clouded the day, and he had not shaken off their shadow ere it was time to lie down and to renew them. I cannot tell how long it was that he endured this discipline; but it was long enough to leave a great black blot upon his memory, long enough to send him, trembling for his reason, to the doors of a certain doctor; whereupon with a simple draught he was restored to the common lot of man.

The poor gentleman has since been troubled by nothing of the sort; indeed, his nights were for some while like other men's, now blank, now chequered with dreams, and these sometimes charming, sometimes appalling, but except for an occasional vividness, of no extraordinary kind. I will just note one of these occasions, ere I pass on to what makes my dreamer truly interesting. It seemed to him that he was in the first floor of a rough hill-farm. The room showed some poor efforts at gentility, a carpet on the floor, a piano, I think, against the wall; but, for all these refinements, there was no mistaking he was in a moorland place, among hillside people, and set in miles of heather. He looked down from the window upon a bare farmyard, that seemed to have been long disused. A great, uneasy stillness lay upon the world. There was no sign of the farm-folk or of any live stock, save for an old, brown, curly dog of the retriever breed, who sat close in against the wall of the house and seemed to be dozing. Something about this dog disquieted the dreamer; it was quite a nameless feeling, for the beast looked right enough - indeed, he was so old and dull and dusty and broken-down, that he should rather have awakened pity; and yet the conviction came and grew upon the dreamer that this was no proper dog at all, but something hellish. A great many dozing summer flies hummed about the yard; and presently the dog thrust forth his paw, caught a fly in his open palm, carried it to his mouth like an ape, and looking suddenly up at the dreamer in the window, winked to him with one eye. The dream went on, it matters not how it went; it was a good dream as dreams go; but there was nothing in the sequel worthy of that devilish brown dog. And the point of interest for me lies partly in that very fact: that having found so singular an incident, my imperfect dreamer should prove unable to carry the tale to a fit end and fall back on indescribable noises and indiscriminate horrors. It would be different now; he knows his business better!

For, to approach at last the point: This honest fellow had long been in the custom of setting himself to sleep with tales, and so had his father before him; but these were irresponsible inventions, told for the teller's pleasure, with no eye to the crass public or the thwart reviewer: tales where a thread might be dropped, or one adventure quitted for another, on fancy's least suggestion. So that the little people who manage man's internal theatre had not as yet received a very rigorous training; and played upon their stage like children who should have slipped into the house and found it empty, rather than like drilled actors performing a set piece to a huge hall of faces. But presently my dreamer began to turn his former amusement of story-telling to (what is called) account; by which I mean that he began to write and sell his tales. Here was he, and here were the little people who did that part of his business, in quite new conditions. The stories must now be trimmed and pared and set upon all fours, they must run from a beginning to an end and fit (after a manner) with the laws of life; the pleasure, in one word, had become a business; and that not only for the dreamer, but for the little people of his theatre. These understood the change as well as he. When he lay down to prepare himself for sleep, he no longer sought amusement, but printable and profitable tales; and after he had dozed off in his box-seat, his little people continued their evolutions with the same mercantile designs. All other forms of dream deserted him but two: he still occasionally reads the most delightful books, he still visits at times the most delightful places; and it is perhaps worthy of note that to these same places, and to one in particular, he returns at intervals of months and years, finding new field-paths, visiting new neighbours, beholding that happy valley under new effects of noon and dawn and sunset. But all the rest of the family of visions is quite lost to him: the common, mangled version of yesterday's affairs, the raw-head-and-bloody-bones nightmare, rumoured to be the child of toasted cheese - these and their like are gone; and, for the most part, whether awake or asleep, he is simply occupied - he or his little people - in consciously making stories for the market. This dreamer (like many other persons) has encountered some trifling vicissitudes of fortune. When the bank begins to send letters and the butcher to linger at the back gate, he sets to belabouring his brains after a story, for that is his readiest money-winner; and, behold! at once the little people begin to bestir themselves in the same quest, and labour all night long, and all night long set before him truncheons of tales upon their lighted theatre. No fear of his being frightened now; the flying heart and the frozen scalp are things by-gone; applause, growing applause, growing interest, growing exultation in his own cleverness (for he takes all the credit), and at last a jubilant leap to wakefulness, with the cry, "I have it, that'll do!" upon his lips: with such and similar emotions he sits at these nocturnal dramas, with such outbreaks, like Claudius in the play, he scatters the performance in the midst. Often enough the waking is a disappointment: he has been too deep asleep, as I explain the thing; drowsiness has gained his little people, they have gone stumbling and maundering through their parts; and the play, to the awakened mind, is seen to be a tissue of absurdities. And yet how often have these sleepless Brownies done him honest service, and given him, as he sat idly taking his pleasure in the boxes, better tales than he could fashion for himself.

Here is one, exactly as it came to him. It seemed he was the son of a very rich and wicked man, the owner of broad acres and a most damnable temper. The dreamer (and that was the son) had lived much abroad, on purpose to avoid his parent; and when at length he returned to England, it was to find him married again to a young wife, who was supposed to suffer cruelly and to loathe her yoke. Because of this marriage (as the dreamer indistinctly understood) it was desirable for father and son to have a meeting; and yet both being proud and both angry, neither would condescend upon a visit. Meet they did accordingly, in a desolate, sandy country by the sea; and there they quarrelled, and the son, stung by some intolerable insult, struck down the father dead. No suspicion was aroused; the dead man was found and buried, and the dreamer succeeded to the broad estates, and found himself installed under the same roof with his father's widow, for whom no provision had been made. These two lived very much alone, as people may after a bereavement, sat down to table together, shared the long evenings, and grew daily better friends; until it seemed to him of a sudden that she was prying about dangerous matters, that she had conceived a notion of his guilt, that she watched him and tried him with questions. He drew back from her company as men draw back from a precipice suddenly discovered; and yet so strong was the attraction that he would drift again and again into the old intimacy, and again and again be startled back by some suggestive question or some inexplicable meaning in her eye. So they lived at cross purposes, a life full of broken dialogue, challenging glances, and suppressed passion; until, one day, he saw the woman slipping from the house in a veil, followed her to the station, followed her in the train to the seaside country, and out over the sandhills to the very place where the murder was done. There she began to grope among the bents, he watching her, flat upon his face; and presently she had something in her hand - I cannot remember what it was, but it was deadly evidence against the dreamer - and as she held it up to look at it, perhaps from the shock of the discovery, her foot slipped, and she hung at some peril on the brink of the tall sand-wreaths. He had no thought but to spring up and rescue her; and there they stood face to face, she with that deadly matter openly in her hand - his very presence on the spot another link of proof. It was plain she was about to speak, but this was more than he could bear - he could bear to be lost, but not to talk of it with his destroyer; and he cut her short with trivial conversation. Arm in arm, they returned together to the train, talking he knew not what, made the journey back in the same carriage, sat down to dinner, and passed the evening in the drawing-room as in the past. But suspense and fear drummed in the dreamer’s bosom. “She has not denounced me yet” - so his thoughts ran - “when will she denounce me? Will it be to- morrow?” And it was not to-morrow, nor the next day, nor the next; and their life settled back on the old terms, only that she seemed kinder than before, and that, as for him, the burthen of his suspense and wonder grew daily more unbearable, so that he wasted away like a man with a disease. Once, indeed, he broke all bounds of decency, seized an occasion when she was abroad, ransacked her room, and at last, hidden away among her jewels, found the damning evidence. There he stood, holding this thing, which was his life, in the hollow of his hand, and marvelling at her inconsequent behaviour, that she should seek, and keep, and yet not use it; and then the door opened, and behold herself. So, once more, they stood, eye to eye, with the evidence between them; and once more she raised to him a face brimming with some communication; and once more he shied away from speech and cut her off. But before he left the room, which he had turned upside down, he laid back his death- warrant where he had found it; and at that, her face lighted up. The next thing he heard, she was explaining to her maid, with some ingenious falsehood, the disorder of her things. Flesh and blood could bear the strain no longer; and I think it was the next morning (though chronology is always hazy in the theatre of the mind) that he burst from his reserve. They had been breakfasting together in one corner of a great, parqueted, sparely-furnished room of many windows; all the time of the meal she had tortured him with sly allusions; and no sooner were the servants gone, and these two protagonists alone together, than he leaped to his feet. She too sprang up, with a pale face; with a pale face, she heard him as he raved out his complaint: Why did she torture him so? she knew all, she knew he was no enemy to her; why did she not denounce him at once? what signified her whole behaviour? why did she torture him? and yet again, why did she torture him? And when he had done, she fell upon her knees, and with outstretched hands: "Do you not understand?" she cried. "I love you!"

Hereupon, with a pang of wonder and mercantile delight, the dreamer awoke. His mercantile delight was not of long endurance; for it soon became plain that in this spirited tale there were unmarketable elements; which is just the reason why you have it here so briefly told. But his wonder has still kept growing; and I think the reader's will also, if he consider it ripely. For now he sees why I speak of the little people as of substantive inventors and performers. To the end they had kept their secret. I will go bail for the dreamer (having excellent grounds for valuing his candour) that he had no guess whatever at the motive of the woman - the hinge of the whole well-invented plot - until the instant of that highly dramatic declaration. It was not his tale; it was the little people's! And observe: not only was the secret kept, the story was told with really guileful craftsmanship. The conduct of both actors is (in the cant phrase) psychologically correct, and the emotion aptly graduated up to the surprising climax. I am awake now, and I know this trade; and yet I cannot better it. I am awake, and I live by this business; and yet I could not outdo - could not perhaps equal - that crafty artifice (as of some old, experienced carpenter of plays, some Dennery or Sardou) by which the same situation is twice presented and the two actors twice brought face to face over the evidence, only once it is in her hand, once in his - and these in their due order, the least dramatic first. The more I think of it, the more I am moved to press upon the world my question: Who are the Little People? They are near connections of the dreamer's, beyond doubt; they share in his financial worries and have an eye to the bank-book; they share plainly in his training; they have plainly learned like him to build the scheme of a considerate story and to arrange emotion in progressive order; only I think they have more talent; and one thing is beyond doubt, they can tell him a story piece by piece, like a serial, and keep him all the while in ignorance of where they aim. Who are they, then? and who is the dreamer?

Well, as regards the dreamer, I can answer that, for he is no less a person than myself; - as I might have told you from the beginning, only that the critics murmur over my consistent egotism; - and as I am positively forced to tell you now, or I could advance but little farther with my story. And for the Little People, what shall I say they are but just my Brownies, God bless them! who do one-half my work for me while I am fast asleep, and in all human likelihood, do the rest for me as well, when I am wide awake and fondly suppose I do it for myself. That part which is done while I am sleeping is the Brownies' part beyond contention; but that which is done when I am up and about is by no means necessarily mine, since all goes to show the Brownies have a hand in it even then. Here is a doubt that much concerns my conscience. For myself - what I call I, my conscious ego, the denizen of the pineal gland unless he has changed his residence since Descartes, the man with the conscience and the variable bank-account, the man with the hat and the boots, and the privilege of voting and not carrying his candidate at the general elections - I am sometimes tempted to suppose he is no story-teller at all, but a creature as matter of fact as any cheesemonger or any cheese, and a realist bemired up to the ears in actuality; so that, by that account, the whole of my published fiction should be the single-handed product of some Brownie, some Familiar, some unseen collaborator, whom I keep locked in a back garret, while I get all the praise and he but a share (which I cannot prevent him getting) of the pudding. I am an excellent adviser, something like Moliere's servant; I pull back and I cut down; and I dress the whole in the best words and sentences that I can find and make; I hold the pen, too; and I do the sitting at the table, which is about the worst of it; and when all is done, I make up the manuscript and pay for the registration; so that, on the whole, I have some claim to share, though not so largely as I do, in the profits of our common enterprise.

I can but give an instance or so of what part is done sleeping and what part awake, and leave the reader to share what laurels there are, at his own nod, between myself and my collaborators; and to do this I will first take a book that a number of persons have been polite enough to read, the STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE. I had long been trying to write a story on this subject, to find a body, a vehicle, for that strong sense of man's double being which must at times come in upon and overwhelm the mind of every thinking creature. I had even written one, THE TRAVELLING COMPANION, which was returned by an editor on the plea that it was a work of genius and indecent, and which I burned the other day on the ground that it was not a work of genius, and that JEKYLL had supplanted it.

Then came one of those financial fluctuations to which (with an elegant modesty) I have hitherto referred in the third person. For two days I went about racking my brains for a plot of any sort; and on the second night I dreamed the scene at the window, and a scene afterward split in two, in which Hyde, pursued for some crime, took the powder and underwent the change in the presence of his pursuers. All the rest was made awake, and consciously, although I think I can trace in much of it the manner of my Brownies. The meaning of the tale is therefore mine, and had long pre-existed in my garden of Adonis, and tried one body after another in vain; indeed, I do most of the morality, worse luck! and my Brownies have not a rudiment of what we call a conscience. Mine, too, is the setting, mine the characters. All that was given me was the matter of three scenes, and the central idea of a voluntary change becoming involuntary. Will it be thought ungenerous, after I have been so liberally ladling out praise to my unseen collaborators, if I here toss them over, bound hand and foot, into the arena of the critics? For the business of the powders, which so many have censured, is, I am relieved to say, not mine at all but the Brownies'. Of another tale, in case the reader should have glanced at it, I may say a word: the not very defensible story of OLALLA. Here the court, the mother, the mother's niche, Olalla, Olalla's chamber, the meetings on the stair, the broken window, the ugly scene of the bite, were all given me in bulk and detail as I have tried to write them; to this I added only the external scenery (for in my dream I never was beyond the court), the portrait, the characters of Felipe and the priest, the moral, such as it is, and the last pages, such as, alas! they are. And I may even say that in this case the moral itself was given me; for it arose immediately on a comparison of the mother and the daughter, and from the hideous trick of atavism in the first. Sometimes a parabolic sense is still more undeniably present in a dream; sometimes I cannot but suppose my Brownies have been aping Bunyan, and yet in no case with what would possibly be called a moral in a tract; never with the ethical narrowness; conveying hints instead of life's larger limitations and that sort of sense which we seem to perceive in the arabesque of time and space.

For the most part, it will be seen, my Brownies are somewhat fantastic, like their stories hot and hot, full of passion and the picturesque, alive with animating incident; and they have no prejudice against the supernatural. But the other day they gave me a surprise, entertaining me with a love-story, a little April comedy, which I ought certainly to hand over to the author of A CHANCE ACQUAINTANCE, for he could write it as it should be written, and I am sure (although I mean to try) that I cannot. - But who would have supposed that a

Brownie of mine should invent a tale for Mr. Howells?

CHAPTER IX - BEGGARS

IN a pleasant, airy, up-hill country, it was my fortune when I was young to make the acquaintance of a certain beggar. I call him beggar, though he usually allowed his coat and his shoes (which were open-mouthed, indeed) to beg for him. He was the wreck of an athletic man, tall, gaunt, and bronzed; far gone in consumption, with that disquieting smile of the mortally stricken on his face; but still active afoot, still with the brisk military carriage, the ready military salute. Three ways led through this piece of country; and as I was inconstant in my choice, I believe he must often have awaited me in vain. But often enough, he caught me; often enough, from some place of ambush by the roadside, he would spring suddenly forth in the regulation attitude, and launching at once into his inconsequential talk, fall into step with me upon my farther course. “A fine morning, sir, though perhaps a trifle inclining to rain. I hope I see you well, sir. Why, no, sir, I don’t feel as hearty myself as I could wish, but I am keeping about my ordinary. I am pleased to meet you on the road, sir. I assure you I quite look forward to one of our little conversations.” He loved the sound of his own voice inordinately, and though (with something too off-hand to call servility) he would always hasten to agree with anything you said, yet he could never suffer you to say it to an end. By what transition he slid to his favourite subject I have no memory; but we had never been long together on the way before he was dealing, in a very military manner, with the English poets. “Shelley was a fine poet, sir, though a trifle atheistical in his opinions. His Queen Mab, sir, is quite an atheistical work. Scott, sir, is not so poetical a writer. With the works of Shakespeare I am not so well acquainted, but he was a fine poet. Keats - John Keats, sir - he was a very fine poet.” With such references, such trivial criticism, such loving parade of his own knowledge, he would beguile the road, striding forward uphill, his staff now clapped to the ribs of his deep, resonant chest, now swinging in the air with the remembered jauntiness of the private soldier; and all the while his toes looking out of his boots, and his shirt looking out of his elbows, and death looking out of his smile, and his big, crazy frame shaken by accesses of cough.

He would often go the whole way home with me: often to borrow a book, and that book always a poet. Off he would march, to continue his mendicant rounds, with the volume slipped into the pocket of his ragged coat; and although he would sometimes keep it quite a while, yet it came always back again at last, not much the worse for its travels into beggardom. And in this way, doubtless, his knowledge grew and his glib, random criticism took a wider range. But my library was not the first he had drawn upon: at our first encounter, he was already brimful of Shelley and the atheistical Queen Mab, and "Keats - John Keats, sir." And I have often wondered how he came by these acquirements; just as I often wondered how he fell to be a beggar. He had served through the Mutiny - of which (like so many people) he could tell practically nothing beyond the names of places, and that it was "difficult work, sir," and very hot, or that so-and-so was "a very fine commander, sir." He was far too smart a man to have remained a private; in the nature of things, he must have won his stripes. And yet here he was without a pension. When I touched on this problem, he would content himself with diffidently offering me advice. "A man should be very careful when he is young, sir. If you'll excuse me saying so, a spirited young gentleman like yourself, sir, should be very careful. I was perhaps a trifle inclined to atheistical opinions myself." For (perhaps with a deeper wisdom than we are inclined in these days to admit) he plainly bracketed agnosticism with beer and skittles.

Keats - John Keats, sir - and Shelley were his favourite bards. I cannot remember if I tried him with Rossetti; but I know his taste to a hair, and if ever I did, he must have doted on that author. What took him was a richness in the speech; he loved the exotic, the unexpected word; the moving cadence of a phrase; a vague sense of emotion (about nothing) in the very letters of the alphabet: the romance of language. His honest head was very nearly empty, his intellect like a child's; and when he read his favourite authors, he can almost never have understood what he was reading. Yet the taste was not only genuine, it was exclusive; I tried in vain to offer him novels; he would none of them, he cared for nothing but romantic language that he could not understand. The case may be commoner than we suppose. I am reminded of a lad who was laid in the next cot to a friend of mine in a public hospital and who was no sooner installed than he sent out (perhaps with his last pence) for a cheap Shakespeare. My friend pricked up his ears; fell at once in talk with his new neighbour, and was ready, when the book arrived, to make a singular discovery. For this lover of great literature understood not one sentence out of twelve, and his favourite part was that of which he understood the least - the inimitable, mouth-filling rodomontade of the ghost in HAMLET. It was a bright day in hospital when my friend expounded the sense of this beloved jargon: a task for which I am willing to believe my friend was very fit, though I can never regard it as an easy one. I know indeed a point or two, on which I would gladly question Mr. Shakespeare, that lover of big words, could he revisit the glimpses of the moon, or could I myself climb backward to the spacious days of Elizabeth. But in the second case, I should most likely pretermit these questionings, and take my place instead in the pit at the Blackfriars, to hear the actor in his favourite part, playing up to Mr. Burbage, and rolling out - as I seem to hear him - with a ponderous gusto-

“Unhousel’d, disappointed, unanel’d.”

What a pleasant chance, if we could go there in a party I and what a surprise for Mr. Burbage, when the ghost received the honours of the evening!

As for my old soldier, like Mr. Burbage and Mr. Shakespeare, he is long since dead; and now lies buried, I suppose, and nameless and quite forgotten, in some poor city graveyard. - But not for me, you brave heart, have you been buried! For me, you are still afoot, tasting the sun and air, and striding southward. By the groves of Comiston and beside the Hermitage of Braid, by the Hunters’ Tryst, and where the curlews and plovers cry around Fairmilehead, I see and hear you, stalwartly carrying your deadly sickness, cheerfully discoursing of uncomprehended poets.

II

The thought of the old soldier recalls that of another tramp, his counterpart. This was a little, lean, and fiery man, with the eyes of a dog and the face of a gipsy; whom I found one morning encamped with his wife and children and his grinder’s wheel, beside the burn of Kinnaird. To this beloved dell I went, at that time, daily; and daily the knife-grinder and I (for as long as his tent continued pleasantly to interrupt my little wilderness) sat on two stones, and smoked, and plucked grass, and talked to the tune of the brown water. His children were mere whelps, they fought and bit among the fern like vermin. His wife was a mere squaw; I saw her gather brush and tend the kettle, but she never ventured to address her lord while I was present. The tent was a mere gipsy hovel, like a sty for pigs. But the grinder himself had the fine self- sufficiency and grave politeness of the hunter and the savage; he did me the honours of this dell, which had been mine but the day before, took me far into the secrets of his life, and used me (I am proud to remember) as a friend.

Like my old soldier, he was far gone in the national complaint. Unlike him, he had a vulgar taste in letters; scarce flying higher than the story papers; probably finding no difference, certainly seeking none, between Tannahill and Burns; his noblest thoughts, whether of poetry or music, adequately embodied in that somewhat obvious ditty,

“Will ye gang, lassie, gang
To the braes o’ Balquidder.”

- which is indeed apt to echo in the ears of Scottish children, and to him, in view of his experience, must have found a special directness of address. But if he had no fine sense of poetry in letters, he felt with a deep joy the poetry of life. You should have heard him speak of what he loved; of the tent pitched beside the talking water; of the stars overhead at night; of the blest return of morning, the peep of day over the moors, the awaking birds among the birches; how he abhorred the long winter shut in cities; and with what delight, at the return of the spring, he once more pitched his camp in the living out-of-doors. But we were a pair of tramps; and to you, who are doubtless sedentary and a consistent first-class passenger in life, he would scarce have laid himself so open; - to you, he might have been content to tell his story of a ghost - that of a buccaneer with his pistols as he lived - whom he had once encountered in a seaside cave near Buckie; and that would have been enough, for that would have shown you the mettle of the man. Here was a piece of experience solidly and livingly built up in words, here was a story created, TERES ATQUE ROTUNDUS.

And to think of the old soldier, that lover of the literary bards! He had visited stranger spots than any seaside cave; encountered men more terrible than any spirit; done and dared and suffered in that incredible, unsung epic of the Mutiny War; played his part with the field force of Delhi, beleaguering and beleaguered; shared in that enduring, savage anger and contempt of death and decency that, for long months together, bedevil'd and inspired the army; was hurled to and fro in the battle-smoke of the assault; was there, perhaps, where Nicholson fell; was there when the attacking column, with hell upon every side, found the soldier's enemy - strong drink, and the lives of tens of thousands trembled in the scale, and the fate of the flag of England staggered. And of all this he had no more to say than “hot work, sir,” or “the army suffered a great deal, sir,” or “I believe General Wilson, sir, was not very highly thought of in the papers.” His life was naught to him, the vivid pages of experience quite blank: in words his pleasure lay - melodious, agitated words - printed words, about that which he had never seen and was connatally incapable of comprehending. We have here two temperaments face to face; both untrained, unsophisticated, surprised (we may say) in the egg; both boldly charactered: - that of the artist, the lover and artificer of words; that of the maker, the seeer, the lover and forger of experience. If the one had a daughter and the other had a son, and these married, might not some illustrious writer count descent from the beggar-soldier and the needy knife-grinder?

III

Every one lives by selling something, whatever be his right to it. The burglar sells at the same time his own skill and courage and my silver plate (the whole at the most moderate figure) to a Jew receiver. The bandit sells the traveller an article of prime necessity: that traveller's life. And as for the old soldier, who stands for central mark to my capricious figures of eight, he dealt in a specially; for he was the only beggar in the world who ever gave me pleasure for my money. He had learned a school of manners in the barracks and had the sense to cling to it, accosting strangers with a regimental freedom, thanking patrons with a merely regimental difference, sparing you at once the tragedy of his position and the embarrassment of yours. There was not one hint about him of the beggar's emphasis, the outburst of revolting gratitude, the rant and cant, the "God bless you, Kind, Kind gentleman," which insults the smallness of your alms by disproportionate vehemence, which is so notably false, which would be so unbearable if it were true. I am sometimes tempted to suppose this reading of the beggar's part, a survival of the old days when Shakespeare was intoned upon the stage and mourners keened beside the death-bed; to think that we cannot now accept these strong emotions unless they be uttered in the just note of life; nor (save in the pulpit) endure these gross conventions. They wound us, I am tempted to say, like mockery; the high voice of keening (as it yet lingers on) strikes in the face of sorrow like a buffet; and the rant and cant of the staled beggar stirs in us a shudder of disgust. But the fact disproves these amateur opinions. The beggar lives by his knowledge of the average man. He knows what he is about when he bandages his head, and hires and drugs a babe, and poisons life with POOR MARY ANN or LONG, LONG AGO; he knows what he is about when he loads the critical ear and sickens the nice conscience with intolerable thanks; they know what they are about, he and his crew, when they pervade the slums of cities, ghastly parodies of suffering, hateful parodies of gratitude. This trade can scarce be called an imposition; it has been so blown upon with exposures; it flaunts its fraudulence so nakedly. We pay them as we pay those who show us, in huge exaggeration, the monsters of our drinking-water; or those who daily predict the fall of Britain. We pay them for the pain they inflict, pay them, and wince, and hurry on. And truly there is nothing that can shake the conscience like a beggar's thanks; and that polity in which such protestations can be purchased for a shilling, seems no scene for an honest man.

Are there, then, we may be asked, no genuine beggars? And the answer is, Not one. My old soldier was a humbug like the rest; his ragged boots were, in the stage phrase, properties; whole boots were given him again and again, and always gladly accepted; and the next day, there he was on the road as usual, with toes exposed. His boots were his method; they were the man's trade; without his boots he would have starved; he did not live by charity, but by appealing to a gross taste in the public, which loves the limelight on the actor's face, and the toes out of the beggar's boots. There is a true poverty, which no one sees: a false and merely mimetic poverty, which usurps its place and dress, and lives and above all drinks, on the fruits of the usurpation. The true poverty does not go into the streets; the banker may rest assured, he has never put a penny in its hand. The self-respecting poor beg from each other; never from the rich. To live in the frock-coated ranks of life, to hear canting scenes of gratitude rehearsed for twopence, a man might suppose that giving was a thing gone out of fashion; yet it goes forward on a scale so great as to fill me with surprise. In the houses of the working class, all day long there will be a foot upon the stair; all day long there will be a knocking at the doors; beggars come, beggars go, without stint, hardly with intermission, from morning till night; and meanwhile, in the same city and but a few streets off, the castles of the rich stand unsummoned. Get the tale of any honest tramp, you will find it was always the poor who helped him; get the truth from any workman who has met misfortunes, it was always next door that he would go for help, or only with such exceptions as are said to prove a rule; look at the course of the mimetic beggar, it is through the poor quarters that he trails his passage, showing his bandages to every window, piercing even to the attics with his nasal song. Here is a remarkable state of things in our Christian commonwealths, that the poor only should be asked to give.

IV

There is a pleasant tale of some worthless, phrasing Frenchman, who was taxed with ingratitude: “IL FAUT SAVOIR GARDER L'INDEPENDANCE DU COEUR,” cried he. I own I feel with him. Gratitude without familarity, gratitude otherwise than as a nameless element in a friendship, is a thing so near to hatred that I do not care to split the difference. Until I find a man who is pleased to receive obligations, I shall continue to question the tact of those who are eager to confer them. What an art it is, to give, even to our nearest friends! and what a test of manners, to receive! How, upon either side, we smuggle away the obligation, blushing for each other; how bluff and dull we make the giver; how hasty, how falsely cheerful, the receiver! And yet an act of such difficulty and distress between near friends, it is supposed we can perform to a total stranger and leave the man transfixed with grateful emotions. The last thing you can do to a man is to burthen him with an obligation, and it is what we propose to begin with! But let us not be deceived: unless he is totally degraded to his trade, anger jars in his inside, and he grates his teeth at our gratuity.

We should wipe two words from our vocabulary: gratitude and charity. In real life, help is given out of friendship, or it is not valued; it is received from the hand of friendship, or it is resented. We are all too proud to take a naked gift: we must seem to pay it, if in nothing else, then with the delights of our society. Here, then, is the pitiful fix of the rich man; here is that needle's eye in which he stuck already in the days of Christ, and still sticks to-day, firmer, if possible, than ever: that he has the money and lacks the love which should make his money acceptable. Here and now, just as of old in Palestine, he has the rich to dinner, it is with the rich that he takes his pleasure: and when his turn comes to be charitable, he looks in vain for a recipient. His friends are not poor, they do not want; the poor are not his friends, they will not take. To whom is he to give? Where to find - note this phase - the Deserving Poor? Charity is (what they call) centralised; offices are hired; societies founded, with secretaries paid or unpaid: the hunt of the Deserving Poor goes merrily forward. I think it will take more than a merely human secretary to disinter that character. What! a class that is to be in want from no fault of its own, and yet greedily eager to receive from strangers; and to be quite respectable, and at the same time quite devoid of self-respect; and play the most delicate part of friendship, and yet never be seen; and wear the form of man, and yet fly in the face of all the laws of human nature: - and all this, in the hope of getting a belly-god Burgess through a needle's eye! O, let him stick, by all means: and let his polity tumble in the dust; and let his epitaph and all his literature (of which my own works begin to form no inconsiderable part) be abolished even from the history of man! For a fool of this monstrosity of dulness, there can be no salvation: and the fool who looked for the elixir of life was an angel of reason to the fool who looks for the Deserving Poor!

V

And yet there is one course which the unfortunate gentleman may take. He may subscribe to pay the taxes. There were the true charity, impartial and impersonal, cumbering none with obligation, helping all. There were a destination for loveless gifts; there were the way to reach the pocket of the deserving poor, and yet save the time of secretaries! But, alas! there is no colour of romance in such a course; and people nowhere demand the picturesque so much as in their virtues.

CHAPTER X - LETTER TO A YOUNG GENTLEMAN WHO PROPOSES TO EMBRACE THE CAREER OF ART

WITH the agreeable frankness of youth, you address me on a point of some practical importance to yourself and (it is even conceivable) of some gravity to the world: Should you or should you not become an artist? It is one which you must decide entirely for yourself; all that I can do is to bring under your notice some of the materials of that decision; and I will begin, as I shall probably conclude also, by assuring you that all depends on the vocation.

To know what you like is the beginning of wisdom and of old age. Youth is wholly experimental. The essence and charm of that unquiet and delightful epoch is ignorance of self as well as ignorance of life. These two unknowns the young man brings together again and again, now in the airiest touch, now with a bitter hug; now with exquisite pleasure, now with cutting pain; but never with indifference, to which he is a total stranger, and never with that near kinsman of indifference, contentment. If he be a youth of dainty senses or a brain easily heated, the interest of this series of experiments grows upon him out of all proportion to the pleasure he receives. It is not beauty that he loves, nor pleasure that he seeks, though he may think so; his design and his sufficient reward is to verify his own existence and taste the variety of human fate. To him, before the razor-edge of curiosity is dulled, all that is not actual living and the hot chase of experience wears a face of a disgusting dryness difficult to recall in later days; or if there be any exception - and here destiny steps in - it is in those moments when, wearied or surfeited of the primary activity of the senses, he calls up before memory the image of transacted pains and pleasures. Thus it is that such an one shies from all cut-and-dry professions, and inclines insensibly toward that career of art which consists only in the tasting and recording of experience.

This, which is not so much a vocation for art as an impatience of all other honest trades, frequently exists alone; and so existing, it will pass gently away in the course of years. Emphatically, it is not to be regarded; it is not a vocation, but a temptation; and when your father the other day so fiercely and (in my view) so properly discouraged your ambition, he was recalling not improbably some similar passage in his own experience. For the temptation is perhaps nearly as common as the vocation is rare. But again we have vocations which are imperfect; we have men whose minds are bound up, not so much in any art, as in the general ARS ARTIUM and common base of all creative work; who will now dip into painting, and now study counterpoint, and anon will be inditing a sonnet: all these with equal interest, all often with genuine knowledge. And of this temper, when it stands alone, I find it difficult to speak; but I should counsel such an one to take to letters, for in literature (which drags with so wide a net) all his information may be found some day useful, and if he should go on as he has begun, and turn at last into the critic, he will have learned to use the necessary tools. Lastly we come to those vocations which are at once decisive and precise; to the men who are born with the love of pigments, the passion of drawing, the gift of music, or the impulse to create with words, just as other and perhaps the same men are born with the love of hunting, or the sea, or horses, or the turning-lathe. These are predestined; if a man love the labour of any trade, apart from any question of success or fame, the gods have called him. He may have the general vocation too: he may have a taste for all the arts, and I think he often has; but the mark of his calling is this laborious partiality for one, this inextinguishable zest in its technical successes, and (perhaps above all) a certain candour of mind to take his very trifling enterprise with a gravity that would befit the cares of empire, and to think the smallest improvement worth accomplishing at any expense of time and industry. The book, the statue, the sonata, must be gone upon with the unreasoning good faith and the unflagging spirit of children at their play. IS IT WORTH DOING? - when it shall have occurred to any artist to ask himself that question, it is implicitly answered in the negative. It does not occur to the child as he plays at being a pirate on the dining-room sofa, nor to the hunter as he pursues his quarry; and the candour of the one and the ardour of the other should be united in the bosom of the artist.

If you recognise in yourself some such decisive taste, there is no room for hesitation: follow your bent. And observe (lest I should too much discourage you) that the disposition does not usually burn so brightly at the first, or rather not so constantly. Habit and practice sharpen gifts; the necessity of toil grows less disgusting, grows even welcome, in the course of years; a small taste (if it be only genuine) waxes with indulgence into an exclusive passion. Enough, just now, if you can look back over a fair interval, and see that your chosen art has a little more than held its own among the thronging interests of youth. Time will do the rest, if devotion help it; and soon your every thought will be engrossed in that beloved occupation.

But even with devotion, you may remind me, even with unfaltering and delighted industry, many thousand artists spend their lives, if the result be regarded, utterly in vain: a thousand artists, and never one work of art. But the vast mass of mankind are incapable of doing anything reasonably well, art among the rest. The worthless artist would not improbably have been a quite incompetent baker. And the artist, even if he does not amuse the public, amuses himself; so that there will always be one man the happier for his vigils. This is the practical side of art: its inexpugnable fortress for the true practitioner. The direct returns - the wages of the trade are small, but the indirect - the wages of the life - are incalculably great. No other business offers a man his daily bread upon such joyful terms. The soldier and the explorer have moments of a worthier excitement, but they are purchased by cruel hardships and periods of tedium that beggar language. In the life of the artist there need be no hour without its pleasure. I take the author, with whose career I am best acquainted; and it is true he works in a rebellious material, and that the act of writing is cramped and trying both to the eyes and the temper; but remark him in his study, when matter crowds upon him and words are not wanting - in what a continual series of small successes time flows by; with what a sense of power as of one moving mountains, he marshals his petty characters; with what pleasures, both of the ear and eye, he sees his airy structure growing on the page; and how he labours in a craft to which the whole material of his life is tributary, and which opens a door to all his tastes, his loves, his hatreds, and his convictions, so that what he writes is only what he longed to utter. He may have enjoyed many things in this big, tragic playground of the world; but what shall he have enjoyed more fully than a morning of successful work? Suppose it ill paid: the wonder is it should be paid at all. Other men pay, and pay dearly, for pleasures less desirable.

Nor will the practice of art afford you pleasure only; it affords besides an admirable training. For the artist works entirely upon honour. The public knows little or nothing of those merits in the quest of which you are condemned to spend the bulk of your endeavours. Merits of design, the merit of first-hand energy, the merit of a certain cheap accomplishment which a man of the artistic temper easily acquires - these they can recognise, and these they value. But to those more exquisite refinements of proficiency and finish, which the artist so ardently desires and so keenly feels, for which (in the vigorous words of Balzac) he must toil “like a miner buried in a landslip,” for which, day after day, he recasts and revises and rejects - the gross mass of the public must be ever blind. To those lost pains, suppose you attain the highest pitch of merit, posterity may possibly do justice; suppose, as is so probable, you fall by even a hair’s breadth of the highest, rest certain they shall never be observed. Under the shadow of this cold thought, alone in his studio, the artist must preserve from day to day his constancy to the ideal. It is this which makes his life noble; it is by this that the practice of his craft strengthens and matures his character; it is for this that even the serious countenance of the great emperor was turned approvingly (if only for a moment) on the followers of Apollo, and that sternly gentle voice bade the artist cherish his art.

And here there fall two warnings to be made. First, if you are to continue to be a law to yourself, you must beware of the first signs of laziness. This idealism in honesty can only be supported by perpetual effort; the standard is easily lowered, the artist who says “IT WILL DO,” is on the downward path; three or four pot- boilers are enough at times (above all at wrong times) to falsify a talent, and by the practice of journalism a man runs the risk of becoming wedded to cheap finish. This is the danger on the one side; there is not less upon the other. The consciousness of how much the artist is (and must be) a law to himself, debauches the small heads. Perceiving recondite merits very hard to attain, making or swallowing artistic formulae, or perhaps falling in love with some particular proficiency of his own, many artists forget the end of all art: to please. It is doubtless tempting to exclaim against the ignorant bourgeois; yet it should not be forgotten, it is he who is to pay us, and that (surely on the face of it) for services that he shall desire to have performed. Here also, if properly considered, there is a question of transcendental honesty. To give the public what they do not want, and yet expect to be supported: we have there a strange pretension, and yet not uncommon, above all with painters. The first duty in this world is for a man to pay his way; when that is quite accomplished, he may plunge into what eccentricity he likes; but emphatically not till then. Till then, he must pay assiduous court to the bourgeois who carries the purse. And if in the course of these capitulations he shall falsify his talent, it can never have been a strong one, and he will have preserved a better thing than talent - character. Or if he be of a mind so independent that he cannot stoop to this necessity, one course is yet open: he can desist from art, and follow some more manly way of life.

I speak of a more manly way of life, it is a point on which I must be frank. To live by a pleasure is not a high calling; it involves patronage, however veiled; it numbers the artist, however ambitious, along with dancing girls and billiard markers. The French have a romantic evasion for one employment, and call its practitioners the Daughters of Joy. The artist is of the same family, he is of the Sons of Joy, chose his trade to please himself, gains his livelihood by pleasing others, and has parted with something of the sterner dignity of man. Journals but a little while ago declaimed against the Tennyson peerage; and this Son of Joy was blamed for condescension when he followed the example of Lord Lawrence and Lord Cairns and Lord Clyde. The poet was more happily inspired; with a better modesty he accepted the honour; and anonymous journalists have not yet (if I am to believe them) recovered the vicarious disgrace to their profession. When it comes to their turn, these gentlemen can do themselves more justice; and I shall be glad to think of it; for to my barbarian eyesight, even Lord Tennyson looks somewhat out of place in that assembly. There should be no honours for the artist; he has already, in the practice of his art, more than his share of the rewards of life; the honours are pre-empted for other trades, less agreeable and perhaps more useful.

But the devil in these trades of pleasing is to fail to please. In ordinary occupations, a man offers to do a certain thing or to produce a certain article with a merely conventional accomplishment, a design in which (we may almost say) it is difficult to fail. But the artist steps forth out of the crowd and proposes to delight: an impudent design, in which it is impossible to fail without odious circumstances. The poor Daughter of Joy, carrying her smiles and finery quite unregarded through the crowd, makes a figure which it is impossible to recall without a wounding pity. She is the type of the unsuccessful artist. The actor, the dancer, and the singer must appear like her in person, and drain publicly the cup of failure. But though the rest of us escape this crowning bitterness of the pillory, we all court in essence the same humiliation. We all profess to be able to delight. And how few of us are! We all pledge ourselves to be able to continue to delight. And the day will come to each, and even to the most admired, when the ardour shall have declined and the cunning shall be lost, and he shall sit by his deserted booth ashamed. Then shall he see himself condemned to do work for which he blushes to take payment. Then (as if his lot were not already cruel) he must lie exposed to the gibes of the wreckers of the press, who earn a little bitter bread by the condemnation of trash which they have not read, and the praise of excellence which they cannot understand.

And observe that this seems almost the necessary end at least of writers. LES BLANCS ET LES BLEUS (for instance) is of an order of merit very different from LE VICOMTE DE BRAGLONNE; and if any gentleman can bear to spy upon the nakedness of CASTLE DANGEROUS, his name I think is Ham: let it be enough for the rest of us to read of it (not without tears) in the pages of Lockhart. Thus in old age, when occupation and comfort are most needful, the writer must lay aside at once his pastime and his breadwinner. The painter indeed, if he succeed at all in engaging the attention of the public, gains great sums and can stand to his easel until a great age without dishonourable failure. The writer has the double misfortune to be ill-paid while he can work, and to be incapable of working when he is old. It is thus a way of life which conducts directly to a false position.

For the writer (in spite of notorious examples to the contrary) must look to be ill-paid. Tennyson and Montepin make handsome livelihoods; but we cannot all hope to be Tennyson, and we do not all perhaps desire to be Montepin. If you adopt an art to be your trade, weed your mind at the outset of all desire of money. What you may decently expect, if you have some talent and much industry, is such an income as a clerk will earn with a tenth or perhaps a twentieth of your nervous output. Nor have you the right to look for more; in the wages of the life, not in the wages of the trade, lies your reward; the work is here the wages. It will be seen I have little sympathy with the common lamentations of the artist class. Perhaps they do not remember the hire of the field labourer; or do they think no parallel will lie? Perhaps they have never observed what is the retiring allowance of a field officer; or do they suppose their contributions to the arts of pleasing more important than the services of a colonel? Perhaps they forget on how little Millet was content to live; or do they think, because they have less genius, they stand excused from the display of equal virtues? But upon one point there should be no dubiety: if a man be not frugal, he has no business in the arts. If he be not frugal, he steers directly for that last tragic scene of LE VIEUX SALTIMBANQUE; if he be not frugal, he will find it hard to continue to be honest. Some day, when the butcher is knocking at the door, he may be tempted, he may be obliged, to turn out and sell a slovenly piece of work. If the obligation shall have arisen through no wantonness of his own, he is even to be commanded; for words cannot describe how far more necessary it is that a man should support his family, than that he should attain to - or preserve - distinction in the arts. But if the pressure comes, through his own fault, he has stolen, and stolen under trust, and stolen (which is the worst of all) in such a way that no law can reach him.

And now you may perhaps ask me, if the debutant artist is to have no thought of money, and if (as is implied) he is to expect no honours from the State, he may not at least look forward to the delights of popularity? Praise, you will tell me, is a savoury dish. And in so far as you may mean the countenance of other artists you would put your finger on one of the most essential and enduring pleasures of the career of art. But in so far as you should have an eye to the commendations of the public or the notice of the newspapers, be sure you would but be cherishing a dream. It is true that in certain esoteric journals the author (for instance) is duly criticised, and that he is often praised a great deal more than he deserves, sometimes for qualities which he prided himself on eschewing, and sometimes by ladies and gentlemen who have denied themselves the privilege of reading his work. But if a man be sensitive to this wild praise, we must suppose him equally alive to that which often accompanies and always follows it - wild ridicule. A man may have done well for years, and then he may fail; he will hear of his failure. Or he may have done well for years, and still do well, but the critics may have tired of praising him, or there may have sprung up some new idol of the instant, some “dust a little gilt,” to whom they now prefer to offer sacrifice. Here is the obverse and the reverse of that empty and ugly thing called popularity. Will any man suppose it worth the gaining?

CHAPTER XI - PULVIS ET UMBRA

We look for some reward of our endeavours and are disappointed; not success, not happiness, not even peace of conscience, crowns our ineffectual efforts to do well. Our frailties are invincible, our virtues barren; the battle goes sore against us to the going down of the sun. The canting moralist tells us of right and wrong; and we look abroad, even on the face of our small earth, and find them change with every climate, and no country where some action is not honoured for a virtue and none where it is not branded for a vice; and we look in our experience, and find no vital congruity in the wisest rules, but at the best a municipal fitness. It is not strange if we are tempted to despair of good. We ask too much. Our religions and moralities have been trimmed to flatter us, till they are all emasculate and sentimentalised, and only please and weaken. Truth is of a rougher strain. In the harsh face of life, faith can read a bracing gospel. The human race is a thing more ancient than the ten commandments; and the bones and revolutions of the Kosmos, in whose joints we are but moss and fungus, more ancient still.

I

Of the Kosmos in the last resort, science reports many doubtful things and all of them appalling. There seems no substance to this solid globe on which we stamp: nothing but symbols and ratios. Symbols and ratios carry us and bring us forth and beat us down; gravity that swings the incommensurable suns and worlds through space, is but a figment varying inversely as the squares of distances; and the suns and worlds themselves, imponderable figures of abstraction, NH3, and H2O. Consideration dares not dwell upon this view; that way madness lies; science carries us into zones of speculation, where there is no habitable city for the mind of man.

But take the Kosmos with a grosser faith, as our senses give it us. We behold space sown with rotatory islands, suns and worlds and the shards and wrecks of systems: some, like the sun, still blazing; some rotting, like the earth; others, like the moon, stable in desolation. All of these we take to be made of something we call matter: a thing which no analysis can help us to conceive; to whose incredible properties no familiarity can reconcile our minds. This stuff, when not purified by the lustration of fire, rots uncleanly into something we call life; seized through all its atoms with a pediculous malady; swelling in tumours that become independent, sometimes even (by an abhorrent prodigy) locomotory; one splitting into millions, millions cohering into one, as the malady proceeds through varying stages. This vital putrescence of the dust, used as we are to it, yet strikes us with occasional disgust, and the profusion of worms in a piece of ancient turf, or the air of a marsh darkened with insects, will sometimes check our breathing so that we aspire for cleaner places. But none is clean: the moving sand is infected with lice; the pure spring, where it bursts out of the mountain, is a mere issue of worms; even in the hard rock the crystal is forming.

In two main shapes this eruption covers the countenance of the earth: the animal and the vegetable: one in some degree the inversion of the other: the second rooted to the spot; the first coming detached out of its natal mud, and scurrying abroad with the myriad feet of insects or towering into the heavens on the wings of birds: a thing so inconceivable that, if it be well considered, the heart stops. To what passes with the anchored vermin, we have little clue, doubtless they have their joys and sorrows, their delights and killing agonies: it appears not how. But of the locomotory, to which we ourselves belong, we can tell more. These share with us a thousand miracles: the miracles of sight, of hearing, of the projection of sound, things that bridge space; the miracles of memory and reason, by which the present is conceived, and when it is gone, its image kept living in the brains of man and brute; the miracle of reproduction, with its imperious desires and staggering consequences. And to put the last touch upon this mountain mass of the revolting and the inconceivable, all these prey upon each other, lives tearing other lives in pieces, cramming them inside themselves, and by that summary process, growing fat: the vegetarian, the whale, perhaps the tree, not less than the lion of the desert; for the vegetarian is only the eater of the dumb.

Meanwhile our rotatory island loaded with predatory life, and more drenched with blood, both animal and vegetable, than ever mutinied ship, scuds through space with unimaginable speed, and turns alternate cheeks to the reverberation of a blazing world, ninety million miles away.

II

What a monstrous spectre is this man, the disease of the agglutinated dust, lifting alternate feet or lying drugged with slumber; killing, feeding, growing, bringing forth small copies of himself; grown upon with hair like grass, fitted with eyes that move and glitter in his face; a thing to set children screaming; - and yet looked at nearlier, known as his fellows know him, how surprising are his attributes! Poor soul, here for so little, cast among so many hardships, filled with desires so incommensurate and so inconsistent, savagely surrounded, savagely descended, irremediably condemned to prey upon his fellow lives: who should have blamed him had he been of a piece with his destiny and a being merely barbarous? And we look and behold him instead filled with imperfect virtues: infinitely childish, often admirably valiant, often touchingly kind; sitting down, amidst his momentary life, to debate of right and wrong and the attributes of the deity; rising up to do battle for an egg or die for an idea; singling out his friends and his mate with cordial affection; bringing forth in pain, rearing with long-suffering solicitude, his young. To touch the heart of his mystery, we find, in him one thought, strange to the point of lunacy: the thought of duty; the thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbour, to his God: an ideal of decency, to which he would rise if it were possible; a limit of shame, below which, if it be possible, he will not stoop. The design in most men is one of conformity; here and there, in picked natures, it transcends itself and soars on the other side, arming martyrs with independence; but in all, in their degrees, it is a bosom thought: - Not in man alone, for we trace it in dogs and cats whom we know fairly well, and doubtless some similar point of honour sways the elephant, the oyster, and the louse, of whom we know so little: - But in man, at least, it sways with so complete an empire that merely selfish things come second, even with the selfish: that appetites are starved, fears are conquered, pains supported; that almost the dullest shrinks from the reproof of a glance, although it were a child's; and all but the most cowardly stand amid the risks of war; and the more noble, having strongly conceived an act as due to their ideal, affront and embrace death. Strange enough if, with their singular origin and perverted practice, they think they are to be rewarded in some future life: stranger still, if they are persuaded of the contrary, and think this blow, which they solicit, will strike them senseless for eternity. I shall be reminded what a tragedy of misconception and misconduct man at large presents: of organised injustice, cowardly violence and treacherous crime; and of the damning imperfections of the best. They cannot be too darkly drawn. Man is indeed marked for failure in his efforts to do right. But where the best consistently miscarry, how tenfold more remarkable that all should continue to strive; and surely we should find it both touching and inspiriting, that in a field from which success is banished, our race should not cease to labour.

If the first view of this creature, stalking in his rotatory isle, be a thing to shake the courage of the stoutest, on this nearer sight, he startles us with an admiring wonder. It matters not where we look, under what climate we observe him, in what stage of society, in what depth of ignorance, burthened with what erroneous morality; by camp-fires in Assiniboia, the snow powdering his shoulders, the wind plucking his blanket, as he sits, passing the ceremonial calumet and uttering his grave opinions like a Roman senator; in ships at sea, a man inured to hardship and vile pleasures, his brightest hope a fiddle in a tavern and a bedizened trull who sells herself to rob him, and he for all that simple, innocent, cheerful, kindly like a child, constant to toil, brave to drown, for others; in the slums of cities, moving among indifferent millions to mechanical employments, without hope of change in the future, with scarce a pleasure in the present, and yet true to his virtues, honest up to his lights, kind to his neighbours, tempted perhaps in vain by the bright gin-palace, perhaps long-suffering with the drunken wife that ruins him; in India (a woman this time) kneeling with broken cries and streaming tears, as she drowns her child in the sacred river; in the brothel, the discard of society, living mainly on strong drink, fed with affronts, a fool, a thief, the comrade of thieves, and even here keeping the point of honour and the touch of pity, often repaying the world's scorn with service, often standing firm upon a scruple, and at a certain cost, rejecting riches: - everywhere some virtue cherished or affected, everywhere some decency of thought and carriage, everywhere the ensign of man's ineffectual goodness: - ah! if I could show you this! if I could show you these men and women, all the world over, in every stage of history, under every abuse of error, under every circumstance of failure, without hope, without help, without thanks, still obscurely fighting the lost fight of virtue, still clinging, in the brothel or on the scaffold, to some rag of honour, the poor jewel of their souls! They may seek to escape, and yet they cannot; it is not alone their privilege and glory, but their doom; they are condemned to some nobility; all their lives long, the desire of good is at their heels, the implacable hunter.

Of all earth's meteors, here at least is the most strange and consoling: that this ennobled lemur, this hair-crowned bubble of the dust, this inheritor of a few years and sorrows, should yet deny himself his rare delights, and add to his frequent pains, and live for an ideal, however misconceived. Nor can we stop with man. A new doctrine, received with screams a little while ago by canting moralists, and still not properly worked into the body of our thoughts, lights us a step farther into the heart of this rough but noble universe. For nowadays the pride of man denies in vain his kinship with the original dust. He stands no longer like a thing apart. Close at his heels we see the dog, prince of another genus: and in him too, we see dumbly testified the same cultus of an unattainable ideal, the same constancy in failure. Does it stop with the dog? We look at our feet where the ground is blackened with the swarming ant: a creature so small, so far from us in the hierarchy of brutes, that we can scarce trace and scarce comprehend his doings; and here also, in his ordered politics and rigorous justice, we see confessed the law of duty and the fact of individual sin. Does it stop, then, with the ant? Rather this desire of well-doing and this doom of frailty run through all the grades of life: rather is this earth, from the frosty top of Everest to the next margin of the internal fire, one stage of ineffectual virtues and one temple of pious tears and perseverance. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together. It is the common and the god-like law of life. The browsers, the biters, the barkers, the hairy coats of field and forest, the squirrel in the oak, the thousand-footed creeper in the dust, as they share with us the gift of life, share with us the love of an ideal: strive like us - like us are tempted to grow weary of the struggle - to do well; like us receive at times unmerited refreshment, visitings of support, returns of courage; and are condemned like us to be crucified between that double law of the members and the will. Are they like us, I wonder, in the timid hope of some reward, some sugar with the drug? do they, too, stand aghast at unrewarded virtues, at the sufferings of those whom, in our partiality, we take to be just, and the prosperity of such as, in our blindness, we call wicked? It may be, and yet God knows what they should look for. Even while they look, even while they repent, the foot of man treads them by thousands in the dust, the yelping hounds burst upon their trail, the bullet speeds, the knives are heating in the den of the vivisectionist; or the dew falls, and the generation of a day is blotted out. For these are creatures, compared with whom our weakness is strength, our ignorance wisdom, our brief span eternity.

And as we dwell, we living things, in our isle of terror and under the imminent hand of death, God forbid it should be man the erected, the reasoner, the wise in his own eyes - God forbid it should be man that wearies in well-doing, that despairs of unrewarded effort, or utters the language of complaint. Let it be enough for faith, that the whole creation groans in mortal frailty, strives with unconquerable constancy: Surely not all in vain.

CHAPTER XII - A CHRISTMAS SERMON

BY the time this paper appears, I shall have been talking for twelve months; and it is thought I should take my leave in a formal and seasonable manner. Valedictory eloquence is rare, and death- bed sayings have not often hit the mark of the occasion. Charles Second, wit and sceptic, a man whose life had been one long lesson in human incredulity, an easy-going comrade, a manoeuvring king - remembered and embodied all his wit and scepticism along with more than his usual good humour in the famous “I am afraid, gentlemen, I am an unconscionable time a-dying.”

I

An unconscionable time a-dying - there is the picture (“I am afraid, gentlemen,”) of your life and of mine. The sands run out, and the hours are “numbered and imputed,” and the days go by; and when the last of these finds us, we have been a long time dying, and what else? The very length is something, if we reach that hour of separation undishonoured; and to have lived at all is doubtless (in the soldierly expression) to have served.

There is a tale in Ticitus of how the veterans mutinied in the German wilderness; of how they mobbed Germanicus, clamouing go home; and of how, seizing their general’s hand, these old, war-worn exiles passed his finger along their toothless gums. SUNT LACRYMAE RERUM: this was the most eloquent of the songs of Simeon. And when a man has lived to a fair age, he bears his marks of service. He may have never been remarked upon the breach at the head of the army; at least he shall have lost his teeth on the camp bread.

The idealism of serious people in this age of ours is of a noble character. It never seems to them that they have served enough; they have a fine impatience of their virtues. It were perhaps more modest to be singly thankful that we are no worse. It is not only our enemies, those desperate characters - it is we ourselves who know not what we do, - thence springs the glimmering hope that perhaps we do better than we think: that to scramble through this random business with hands reasonably clean to have played the part of a man or woman with some reasonable fulness, to have often resisted the diabolic, and at the end to be still resisting it, is for the poor human soldier to have done right well. To ask to see some fruit of our endeavour is but a transcendental way of serving for reward; and what we take to be contempt of self is only greed of hire.

And again if we require so much of ourselves, shall we not require much of others? If we do not genially judge our own deficiencies, is it not to be feared we shall be even stern to the trespasses of others? And he who (looking back upon his own life) can see no more than that he has been unconscionably long a-dying, will he not be tempted to think his neighbour unconscionably long of getting hanged? It is probable that nearly all who think of conduct at all, think of it too much; it is certain we all think too much of sin. We are not damned for doing wrong, but for not doing right; Christ would never hear of negative morality; THOU SHALT was ever his word, with which he superseded THOU SHALT NOT. To make our idea of morality centre on forbidden acts is to defile the imagination and to introduce into our judgments of our fellow-men a secret element of gusto. If a thing is wrong for us, we should not dwell upon the thought of it; or we shall soon dwell upon it with inverted pleasure. If we cannot drive it from our minds - one thing of two: either our creed is in the wrong and we must more indulgently remodel it; or else, if our morality be in the right, we are criminal lunatics and should place our persons in restraint. A mark of such unwholesomely divided minds is the passion for interference with others: the Fox without the Tail was of this breed, but had (if his biographer is to be trusted) a certain antique civility now out of date. A man may have a flaw, a weakness, that unfits him for the duties of life, that spoils his temper, that threatens his integrity, or that betrays him into cruelty. It has to be conquered; but it must never he suffered to engross his thoughts. The true duties lie all upon the farther side, and must be attended to with a whole mind so soon as this preliminary clearing of the decks has been effected. In order that he may be kind and honest, it may be needful he should become a total abstainer; let him become so then, and the next day let him forget the circumstance. Trying to be kind and honest will require all his thoughts; a mortified appetite is never a wise companion; in so far as he has had to mortify an appetite, he will still be the worse man; and of such an one a great deal of cheerfulness will be required in judging life, and a great deal of humility in judging others.

It may be argued again that dissatisfaction with our life's endeavour springs in some degree from dulness. We require higher tasks, because we do not recognise the height of those we have. Trying to be kind and honest seems an affair too simple and too inconsequential for gentlemen of our heroic mould; we had rather set ourselves to something bold, arduous, and conclusive; we had rather found a schism or suppress a heresy, cut off a hand or mortify an appetite. But the task before us, which is to co-endure with our existence, is rather one of microscopic fineness, and the heroism required is that of patience. There is no cutting of the Gordian knots of life; each must be smilingly unravelled.

To be honest, to be kind - to earn a little and to spend a little less, to make upon the whole a family happier for his presence, to renounce when that shall be necessary and not be embittered, to keep a few friends, but these without capitulation - above all, on the same grim condition, to keep friends with himself - here is a task for all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy. He has an ambitious soul who would ask more; he has a hopeful spirit who should look in such an enterprise to be successful. There is indeed one element in human destiny that not blindness itself can controvert: whatever else we are intended to do, we are not intended to succeed; failure is the fate allotted. It is so in every art and study; it is so above all in the continent art of living well. Here is a pleasant thought for the year's end or for the end of life. Only self-deception will be satisfied, and there need be no despair for the despairer.

II

But Christmas is not only the mile-mark of another year, moving us to thoughts of self-examination: it is a season, from all its associations, whether domestic or religious, suggesting thoughts of joy. A man dissatisfied with his endeavours is a man tempted to sadness. And in the midst of the winter, when his life runs lowest and he is reminded of the empty chairs of his beloved, it is well he should be condemned to this fashion of the smiling face. Noble disappointment, noble self-denial, are not to be admired, not even to be pardoned, if they bring bitterness. It is one thing to enter the kingdom of heaven maim; another to maim yourself and stay without. And the kingdom of heaven is of the child-like, of those who are easy to please, who love and who give pleasure. Mighty men of their hands, the smiters and the builders and the judges, have lived long and done sternly and yet preserved this lovely character; and among our carpet interests and twopenny concerns, the shame were indelible if WE should lose it. Gentleness and cheerfulness, these come before all morality; they are the perfect duties. And it is the trouble with moral men that they have neither one nor other. It was the moral man, the Pharisee, whom Christ could not away with. If your morals make you dreary, depend upon it they are wrong. I do not say "give them up," for they may be all you have; but conceal them like a vice, lest they should spoil the lives of better and simpler people.

A strange temptation attends upon man: to keep his eye on pleasures, even when he will not share in them; to aim all his morals against them. This very year a lady (singular iconoclast!) proclaimed a crusade against dolls; and the racy sermon against lust is a feature of the age. I venture to call such moralists insincere. At any excess or perversion of a natural appetite, their lyre sounds of itself with relishing denunciations; but for all displays of the truly diabolic - envy, malice, the mean lie, the mean silence, the calumnious truth, the back-biter, the petty tyrant, the peevish poisoner of family life - their standard is quite different. These are wrong, they will admit, yet somehow not so wrong; there is no zeal in their assault on them, no secret element of gusto warms up the sermon; it is for things not wrong in themselves that they reserve the choicest of their indignation. A man may naturally disclaim all moral kinship with the Reverend Mr. Zola or the hobgoblin old lady of the dolls; for these are gross and naked instances. And yet in each of us some similar element resides. The sight of a pleasure in which we cannot or else will not share moves us to a particular impatience. It may be because we are envious, or because we are sad, or because we dislike noise and romping - being so refined, or because - being so philosophic - we have an over-weighing sense of life's gravity: at least, as we go on in years, we are all tempted to frown upon our neighbour's pleasures. People are nowadays so fond of resisting temptations; here is one to be resisted. They are fond of self-denial; here is a propensity that cannot be too peremptorily denied. There is an idea abroad among moral people that they should make their neighbours good. One person I have to make good: myself. But my duty to my neighbour is much more nearly expressed by saying that I have to make him happy - if I may.

III

Happiness and goodness, according to canting moralists, stand in the relation of effect and cause. There was never anything less proved or less probable: our happiness is never in our own hands; we inherit our constitution; we stand buffet among friends and enemies; we may be so built as to feel a sneer or an aspersion with unusual keenness, and so circumstanced as to be unusually exposed to them; we may have nerves very sensitive to pain, and be afflicted with a disease very painful. Virtue will not help us, and it is not meant to help us. It is not even its own reward, except for the self-centred and - I had almost said - the unamiable. No man can pacify his conscience; if quiet be what he want, he shall do better to let that organ perish from disuse. And to avoid the penalties of the law, and the minor CAPITIS DIMINUTIO of social ostracism, is an affair of wisdom - of cunning, if you will - and not of virtue.

In his own life, then, a man is not to expect happiness, only to profit by it gladly when it shall arise; he is on duty here; he knows not how or why, and does not need to know; he knows not for what hire, and must not ask. Somehow or other, though he does not know what goodness is, he must try to be good; somehow or other, though he cannot tell what will do it, he must try to give happiness to others. And no doubt there comes in here a frequent clash of duties. How far is he to make his neighbour happy? How far must he respect that smiling face, so easy to cloud, so hard to brighten again? And how far, on the other side, is he bound to be his brother's keeper and the prophet of his own morality? How far must he resent evil?

The difficulty is that we have little guidance; Christ's sayings on the point being hard to reconcile with each other, and (the most of them) hard to accept. But the truth of his teaching would seem to be this: in our own person and fortune, we should be ready to accept and to pardon all; it is OUR cheek we are to turn, OUR coat that we are to give away to the man who has taken OUR cloak. But when another's face is buffeted, perhaps a little of the lion will become us best. That we are to suffer others to be injured, and stand by, is not conceivable and surely not desirable. Revenge, says Bacon, is a kind of wild justice; its judgments at least are delivered by an insane judge; and in our own quarrel we can see nothing truly and do nothing wisely. But in the quarrel of our neighbour, let us be more bold. One person's happiness is as sacred as another's; when we cannot defend both, let us defend one with a stout heart. It is only in so far as we are doing this, that we have any right to interfere: the defence of B is our only ground of action against A. A has as good a right to go to the devil, as we to go to glory; and neither knows what he does.

The truth is that all these interventions and denunciations and militant mongerings of moral half-truths, though they be sometimes needful, though they are often enjoyable, do yet belong to an inferior grade of duties. Ill-temper and envy and revenge find here an arsenal of pious disguises; this is the playground of inverted lusts. With a little more patience and a little less temper, a gentler and wiser method might be found in almost every case; and the knot that we cut by some fine heady quarrel-scene in private life, or, in public affairs, by some denunciatory act against what we are pleased to call our neighbour's vices, might yet have been unwoven by the hand of sympathy.

IV

To look back upon the past year, and see how little we have striven and to what small purpose; and how often we have been cowardly and hung back, or temerarious and rushed unwisely in; and how every day and all day long we have transgressed the law of kindness; - it may seem a paradox, but in the bitterness of these discoveries, a certain consolation resides. Life is not designed to minister to a man's vanity. He goes upon his long business most of the time with a hanging head, and all the time like a blind child. Full of rewards and pleasures as it is - so that to see the day break or the moon rise, or to meet a friend, or to hear the dinner-call when he is hungry, fills him with surprising joys - this world is yet for him no abiding city. Friendships fall through, health fails, weariness assails him; year after year, he must thumb the hardly varying record of his own weakness and folly. It is a friendly process of detachment. When the time comes that he should go, there need be few illusions left about himself. HERE LIES ONE WHO MEANT WELL, TRIED A LITTLE, FAILED MUCH: - surely that may be his epitaph, of which he need not be ashamed. Nor will he complain at the summons which calls a defeated soldier from the field: defeated, ay, if he were Paul or Marcus Aurelius! - but if there is still one inch of fight in his old spirit, undishonoured. The faith which sustained him in his life-long blindness and life-long disappointment will scarce even be required in this last formality of laying down his arms. Give him a march with his old bones; there, out of the glorious sun-coloured earth, out of the day and the dust and the ecstasy - there goes another Faithful Failure!

From a recent book of verse, where there is more than one such beautiful and manly poem, I take this memorial piece: it says better than I can, what I love to think; let it be our parting word.

"A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
And from the west,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, gray city
An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.
"The smoke ascends
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires
Shine, and are changed. In the valley
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night -
Night, with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.
"So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart

Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.”

THE SILVERADO SQUATTERS

This travelogue recounts Stevenson’s journey from Scotland to California in 1879-1880, covering only the latter part of the trip, which began in *The Amatuer Emigrant* and was then followed up in *Across the Plains*.

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Vixerunt nonnulli in agris, delectati re sua familiari. His idem propositum fuit quod regibus, ut ne qua re agerent, ne cui parerent, libertate uterentur: cujus proprium est sic vivere ut velis.

Cic. De Off. I. xx.

TO
VIRGIL WILLIAMS
AND
DORA NORTON WILLIAMS
THESE SKETCHES ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY THEIR FRIEND
THE AUTHOR

THE SILVERADO SQUATTERS

The scene of this little book is on a high mountain. There are, indeed, many higher; there are many of a nobler outline. It is no place of pilgrimage for the summary globe trotter; but to one who lives upon its sides, Mount Saint Helena soon becomes a centre of interest. It is the Mont Blanc of one section of the Californian Coast Range, none of its near neighbours rising to one-half its altitude. It looks down on much green, intricate country. It feeds in the spring-time many splashing brooks. From its summit you must have an excellent lesson of geography: seeing, to the south, San Francisco Bay, with Tamalpais on the one hand and Monte Diablo on the other; to the west and thirty miles away, the open ocean; eastward, across the cornlands and thick tule swamps of Sacramento Valley, to where the Central Pacific Railroad begins to climb the sides of the Sierras; and northward, for what I know, the white head of Shasta looking down on Oregon. Three counties, Napa County, Lake County, and Sonoma County, march across its cliffy shoulders. Its naked peak stands nearly four thousand five hundred feet above the sea; its sides are fringed with forest; and the soil, where it is bare, glows warm with cinnabar.

Life in its shadow goes rustically forward. Bucks, and bears, and rattlesnakes, and former mining operations, are the staple of men's talk. Agriculture has only begun to mount above the valley. And though in a few years from now the whole district may be smiling with farms, passing trains shaking the mountain to the heart, many-windowed hotels lighting up the night like factories, and a prosperous city occupying the site of sleepy Calistoga; yet in the meantime, around the foot of that mountain the silence of nature reigns in a great measure unbroken, and the people of hill and valley go sauntering about their business as in the days before the flood.

To reach Mount Saint Helena from San Francisco, the traveller has twice to cross the bay: once by the busy Oakland Ferry, and again, after an hour or so of the railway, from Vallejo Junction to Vallejo. Thence he takes rail once more to mount the long green strath of Napa Valley.

In all the contractions and expansions of that inland sea, the Bay of San Francisco, there can be few drearier scenes than the Vallejo Ferry. Bald shores and a low, bald islet enclose the sea; through the narrows the tide bubbles, muddy like a river. When we made the passage (bound, although yet we knew it not, for Silverado) the steamer jumped, and the black buoys were dancing in the jabble; the ocean breeze blew killing chill; and, although the upper sky was still unflecked with vapour, the sea-fogs were pouring in from seaward, over the hilltops of Marin County, in one great, shapeless, silver cloud.

South Vallejo is typical of many Californian towns. It was a blunder; the site has proved untenable; and although it is still such a young place by the scale of Europe, it has already begun to be deserted for its neighbour and namesake, North Vallejo. A long pier, a number of drinking-saloons, a hotel of a great size, marshy pools where the frogs keep up their croaking, and even at high noon the entire absence of any human face or voice — these are the marks of South Vallejo. Yet there was a tall building beside the pier, labelled the *Star Flour Mills*; and sea-going, full-rigged ships lay close alongshore, waiting for their cargo. Soon these would be plunging round the Horn, soon the flour from the *Star Flour Mills* would be landed on the wharves of Liverpool. For that, too, is one of England's outposts; thither, to this gaunt mill, across the Atlantic and Pacific deeps and round about the icy Horn, this crowd of great, three-masted, deep-sea ships come, bringing nothing, and return with bread.

The Frisby House, for that was the name of the hotel, was a place of fallen fortunes, like the town. It was now given up to labourers, and partly ruinous. At dinner there was the ordinary display of what is called in the west a *two-bit house*: the tablecloth checked red and white, the plague of flies, the wire hencoops over the dishes, the great variety and invariable vileness of the food and the rough, coatless men devouring it in silence. In our bedroom, the stove would not burn, though it would smoke; and while one window would not open, the other would not shut. There was a view on a bit of empty road, a few dark houses, a donkey wandering with its shadow on a slope, and a blink of sea, with a tall ship lying anchored in the moonlight. All about that dreary inn frogs sang their ungainly chorus.

Early the next morning we mounted the hill along a wooden footway, bridging one marish spot after another. Here and there, as we ascended, we passed a house embowered in white roses. More of the bay became apparent, and soon the blue peak of Tamalpais rose above the green level of the island opposite. It told us we were still but a little way from the city of the Golden Gates, already, at that hour, beginning to awake among the sand-hills. It called to us over the waters as with the voice of a bird. Its stately head, blue as a sapphire on the paler azure of the sky, spoke to us of wider outlooks and the bright Pacific. For Tamalpais stands sentry, like a lighthouse, over the Golden Gates, between the bay and the open ocean, and looks down indifferently on both. Even as we saw and hailed it from Vallejo, seamen, far out at sea, were scanning it with shaded eyes; and, as if to answer to the thought, one of the great ships below began silently to clothe herself with white sails, homeward bound for England.

For some way beyond Vallejo the railway led us through bald green pastures. On the west the rough highlands of Marin shut off the ocean; in the midst, in long, straggling, gleaming arms, the bay died out among the grass; there were few trees and few enclosures; the sun shone wide over open uplands, the dis-plumed hills stood clear against the sky. But by-and-by these hills began to draw nearer on either hand, and first thicket and then wood began to clothe their sides; and soon we were away from all signs of the sea's neighbourhood, mounting an inland, irrigated valley. A great variety of oaks stood, now severally, now in a becoming grove, among the fields and vineyards. The towns were compact, in about equal proportions, of bright new wooden houses and great and growing forest trees; and the chapel bell on the engine sounded most festally that sunny Sunday, as we drew up at one green town after another, with the townsfolk trooping in their Sunday's best to see the strangers, with the sun sparkling on the clean houses, and great domes of foliage humming overhead in the breeze.

This pleasant Napa Valley is, at its north end, blockaded by our mountain. There, at Calistoga, the railroad ceases, and the traveller who intends faring farther, to the Geysers or to the springs in Lake County, must cross the spurs of the mountain by stage. Thus Mount Saint Helena is not only a summit, but a frontier; and up to the time of writing it has stayed the progress of the iron horse.

IN THE VALLEY

I

CALISTOGA

It is difficult for a European to imagine Calistoga, the whole place is so new, and of such an Occidental pattern; the very name, I hear, was invented at a supper-party by the man who found the springs.

The railroad and the highway come up the valley about parallel to one another. The street of Calistoga joins them, perpendicular to both — a wide street, with bright, clean, low houses, here and there a veranda over the sidewalk, here and there a horse-post, here and there lounging townsfolk. Other streets are marked out, and most likely named; for these towns in the New World begin with a firm resolve to grow larger, Washington and Broadway, and then First and Second, and so forth, being boldly plotted out as soon as the community indulges in a plan. But, in the meanwhile, all the life and most of the houses of Calistoga are concentrated upon that street between the railway station and the road. I never heard it called by any name, but I will hazard a guess that it is either Washington or Broadway. Here are the blacksmith's, the chemist's, the general merchant's, and Kong Sam Kee, the Chinese laundryman's; here, probably, is the office of the local paper (for the place has a paper — they all have papers); and here certainly is one of the hotels, Cheeseborough's, whence the daring Foss, a man dear to legend, starts his horses for the Geysers.

It must be remembered that we are here in a land of stage-drivers and highwaymen; a land, in that sense, like England a hundred years ago. The highway robber — road-agent, he is quaintly called — is still busy in these parts. The fame of Vasquez is still young. Only a few years ago, the Lakeport stage was robbed a mile or two from Calistoga. In 1879, the dentist of Mendocino City, fifty miles away upon the coast, suddenly threw off the garments of his trade, like Grindoff, in *The Miller and his Men*, and flamed forth in his second dress as a captain of banditti. A great robbery was followed by a long chase, a chase of days if not of weeks, among the intricate hill-country; and the chase was followed by much desultory fighting, in which several — and the dentist, I believe, amongst the number — bit the dust. The grass was springing for the first time, nourished upon their blood, when I arrived in Calistoga. I am reminded of another highwayman of that same year. "He had been unwell," so ran his humorous defence, “and the doctor told him to take something, so he took the express box.”

The cultus of the stage-coachman always flourishes highest where there are thieves on the road, and where the guard travels armed, and the stage is not only a link between country and city, and the vehicle of news, but has a faint warfaring aroma, like a man who should be brother to a soldier. California boasts her famous stage-drivers, and among the famous Foss is not forgotten. Along the unfenced, abominable mountain roads, he launches his team with small regard to human life or the doctrine of probabilities. Flinching travellers, who behold themselves coasting eternity at every corner, look with natural admiration at their driver’s huge, impassive, fleshy countenance. He has the very face for the driver in Sam Weller’s anecdote, who upset the election party at the required point. Wonderful tales are current of his readiness and skill. One in particular, of how one of his horses fell at a ticklish passage of the road, and how Foss let slip the reins, and, driving over the fallen animal, arrived at the next stage with only three. This I relate as I heard it, without guarantee.

I only saw Foss once, though, strange as it may sound, I have twice talked with him. He lives out of Calistoga, at a ranche called Fossville. One evening, after he was long gone home, I dropped into Cheeseborough’s, and was asked if I should like to speak with Mr. Foss. Supposing that the interview was impossible, and that I was merely called upon to subscribe the general sentiment, I boldly answered “Yes.” Next moment, I had one instrument at my ear, another at my mouth, and found myself, with nothing in the world to say, conversing with a man several miles off among desolate hills. Foss rapidly and somewhat plaintively brought the conversation to an end; and he returned to his night’s grog at Fossville, while I strolled forth again on Calistoga high street. But it was an odd thing that here, on what we are accustomed to consider the very skirts of civilisation, I should have used the telephone for the first time in my civilised career. So it goes in these young countries; telephones, and telegraphs, and newspapers, and advertisements running far ahead among the Indians and the grizzly bears.

Alone, on the other side of the railway, stands the Springs Hotel, with its attendant cottages. The floor of the valley is extremely level to the very roots of the hills; only here and there a hillock, crowned with pines, rises like the barrow of some chieftain famed in war; and right against one of these hillocks is the Springs Hotel — is or was; for since I was there the place has been destroyed by fire, and has risen again from its ashes. A lawn runs about the house, and the lawn is in its turn surrounded by a system of little five-roomed cottages, each with a veranda and a weedy palm before the door. Some of the cottages are let to residents, and these are wreathed in flowers. The rest are occupied by ordinary visitors to the hotel; and a very pleasant way this is, by which you have a little country cottage of your own, without domestic burthens, and by the day or week.

The whole neighbourhood of Mount Saint Helena is full of sulphur and of boiling springs. The Geysers are famous; they were the great health resort of the Indians before the coming of the whites. Lake County is dotted with spas; Hot Springs and White Sulphur Springs are the names of two stations on the Napa Valley Railroad; and Calistoga itself seems to repose on a mere film above a boiling, subterranean lake. At one end of the hotel enclosure are the springs from which it takes its name, hot enough to scald a child seriously while I was there. At the other end, the tenant of a cottage sank a well, and there also the water came up boiling. It keeps this end of the valley as warm as a toast. I have gone across to the hotel a little after five in the morning, when a sea-fog from the Pacific was hanging thick and grey, and dark and dirty overhead, and found the thermometer had been up before me, and had already climbed among the nineties; and in the stress of the day it was sometimes too hot to move about.

But in spite of this heat from above and below, doing one on both sides, Calistoga was a pleasant place to dwell in; beautifully green, for it was then that favoured moment in the Californian year, when the rains are over and the dusty summer has not yet set in; often visited by fresh airs, now from the mountain, now across Sonoma from the sea; very quiet, very idle, very silent but for the breezes and the cattle bells afield. And there was something satisfactory in the sight of that great mountain that enclosed us to the north; whether it stood, robed in sunshine, quaking to its topmost pinnacle with the heat and brightness of the day; or whether it set itself to weaving vapours, wisp after wisp growing, trembling, fleeting, and fading in the blue.

The tangled, woody, and almost trackless foothills that enclose the valley, shutting it off from Sonoma on the west, and from Yolo on the east — rough as they were in outline, dug out by winter streams, crowned by cliffy bluffs and nodding pine-trees — were dwarfed into satellites by the bulk and bearing of Mount Saint Helena. She overtowered them by two-thirds of her own stature. She excelled them by the boldness of her profile. Her great bald summit, clear of trees and pasture, a cairn of quartz and cinnabar, rejected kinship with the dark and shaggy wilderness of lesser hilltops.

II

THE PETRIFIED FOREST

We drove off from the Springs Hotel about three in the afternoon. The sun warmed me to the heart. A broad, cool wind streamed pauselessly down the valley, laden with perfume. Up at the top stood Mount Saint Helena, a bulk of mountain, bare atop, with tree-fringed spurs, and radiating warmth. Once we saw it framed in a grove of tall and exquisitely graceful white oaks, in line and colour a finished composition. We passed a cow stretched by the roadside, her bell slowly beating time to the movement of her ruminating jaws, her big red face crawled over by half a dozen flies, a monument of content.

A little farther, and we struck to the left up a mountain road, and for two hours threaded one valley after another, green, tangled, full of noble timber, giving us every now and again a sight of Mount Saint Helena and the blue hilly distance, and crossed by many streams, through which we splashed to the carriage-step. To the right or the left, there was scarce any trace of man but the road we followed; I think we passed but one ranchero's house in the whole distance, and that was closed and smokeless. But we had the society of these bright streams — dazzlingly clear, as is their wont, splashing from the wheels in diamonds, and striking a lively coolness through the sunshine. And what with the innumerable variety of greens, the masses of foliage tossing in the breeze, the glimpses of distance, the descents into seemingly impenetrable thickets, the continual dodging of the road, which made haste to plunge again into the covert, we had a fine sense of woods, and spring-time, and the open air.

Our driver gave me a lecture by the way on Californian trees — a thing I was much in need of, having fallen among painters who know the name of nothing, and Mexicans who know the name of nothing in English. He taught me the madrona, the manzanita, the buckeye, the maple; he showed me the crested mountain quail; he showed me where some young redwoods were already spiring heavenwards from the ruins of the old; for in this district all had already perished: redwoods and redskins, the two noblest indigenous living things, alike condemned.

At length, in a lonely dell, we came on a huge wooden gate with a sign upon it like an inn. "The Petrified Forest. Proprietor: C. Evans," ran the legend. Within, on a knoll of sward, was the house of the proprietor, and another smaller house hard by to serve as a museum, where photographs and petrifactions were retailed. It was a pure little isle of touristry among these solitary hills.

The proprietor was a brave old white-faced Swede. He had wandered this way, Heaven knows how, and taken up his acres — I forget how many years ago — all alone, bent double with sciatica, and with six bits in his pocket and an axe upon his shoulder. Long, useless years of seafaring had thus discharged him at the end, penniless and sick. Without doubt he had tried his luck at the diggings, and got no good from that; without doubt he had loved the bottle, and lived the life of Jack ashore. But at the end of these adventures, here he came; and, the place hitting his fancy, down he sat to make a new life of it, far from crimps and the salt sea. And the very sight of his ranche had done him good. It was "the handsomest spot in the Californy mountains." "Isn't it handsome, now?" he said. Every penny he makes goes into that ranche to make it handsomer. Then the climate, with the sea-breeze every afternoon in the hottest summer weather, had gradually cured the sciatica; and his sister and niece were now domesticated with him for company — or, rather, the niece came only once in the two days, teaching music the meanwhile in the valley. And then, for a last piece of luck, "the handsomest spot in the Californy mountains" had produced a petrified forest, which Mr. Evans now shows at the modest figure of half a dollar a head, or two-thirds of his capital when he first came there with an axe and a sciatica.

This tardy favourite of fortune — hobbling a little, I think, as if in memory of the sciatica, but with not a trace that I can remember of the sea — thoroughly ruralised from head to foot, proceeded to escort us up the hill behind his house.

"Who first found the forest?" asked my wife.

"The first? I was that man," said he. "I was cleaning up the pasture for my beasts, when I found *this*" — kicking a great redwood, seven feet in diameter, that lay there on its side, hollow heart, clinging lumps of bark, all changed into grey stone, with veins of quartz between what had been the layers of the wood.

"Were you surprised?"

"Surprised? No! What would I be surprised about? What did I know about petrifactions — following the sea? Petrifaction! There was no such word in my language! I knew about putrefaction, though! I thought it was a stone; so would you, if you was cleaning up pasture."

And now he had a theory of his own, which I did not quite grasp, except that the trees had not "grewed" there. But he mentioned, with evident pride, that he differed from all the scientific people who had visited the spot; and he flung about such words as "tufa" and "silica" with careless freedom.

When I mentioned I was from Scotland, "My old country," he said; "my old country" — with a smiling look and a tone of real affection in his voice. I was mightily surprised, for he was obviously Scandinavian, and begged him to explain. It seemed he had learned his English and done nearly all his sailing in Scottish ships. “Out of Glasgow,” said he, “or Greenock; but that’s all the same — they all hail from Glasgow.” And he was so pleased with me for being a Scotsman, and his adopted compatriot, that he made me a present of a very beautiful piece of petrifaction — I believe the most beautiful and portable he had.

Here was a man, at least, who was a Swede, a Scot, and an American, acknowledging some kind allegiance to three lands. Mr. Wallace’s Scoto-Circassian will not fail to come before the reader. I have myself met and spoken with a Fifeshire German, whose combination of abominable accents struck me dumb. But, indeed, I think we all belong to many countries. And perhaps this habit of much travel, and the engendering of scattered friendships, may prepare the euthanasia of ancient nations.

And the forest itself? Well, on a tangled, briery hillside — for the pasture would bear a little further cleaning up, to my eyes — there lie scattered thickly various lengths of petrified trunk, such as the one already mentioned. It is very curious, of course, and ancient enough, if that were all. Doubtless, the heart of the geologist beats quicker at the sight; but, for my part, I was mightily unmoved. Sight-seeing is the art of disappointment.

“There’s nothing under heaven so blue,
That’s fairly worth the travelling to.”

But, fortunately, Heaven rewards us with many agreeable prospects and adventures by the way; and sometimes, when we go out to see a petrified forest, prepares a far more delightful curiosity in the form of Mr. Evans, whom may all prosperity attend throughout a long and green old age.

III

NAPA WINE

I was interested in Californian wine. Indeed, I am interested in all wines, and have been all my life, from the raisin wine that a schoolfellow kept secreted in his playbox up to my last discovery, those notable Valtellines that once shone upon the board of Cæsar.

Some of us, kind old Pagans, watch with dread the shadows falling on the age: how the unconquerable worm invades the sunny terraces of France, and Bordeaux is no more, and the Rhone a mere Arabia Petræa. Château Neuf is dead, and I have never tasted it; Hermitage — a hermitage indeed from all life's sorrows — lies expiring by the river. And in the place of these imperial elixirs, beautiful to every sense, gem-hued, flower-scented, dream-compellers: — behold upon the quays at Cette the chemicals arrayed; behold the analyst at Marseilles, raising hands in obsecration, attesting god Lyæus, and the vats staved in, and the dishonest wines poured forth among the sea. It is not Pan only; Bacchus, too, is dead.

If wine is to withdraw its most poetic countenance, the sun of the white dinner-cloth, a deity to be invoked by two or three, all fervent, hushing their talk, degusting tenderly, and storing reminiscences — for a bottle of good wine, like a good act, shines ever in the retrospect — if wine is to desert us, go thy ways, old Jack! Now we begin to have compunctions, and look back at the brave bottles squandered upon dinner-parties, where the guests drank grossly, discussing politics the while, and even the schoolboy "took his whack," like liquorice water. And at the same time, we look timidly forward, with a spark of hope, to where the new lands, already weary of producing gold, begin to green with vineyards. A nice point in human history falls to be decided by Californian and Australian wines.

Wine in California is still in the experimental stage; and when you taste a vintage, grave economical questions are involved. The beginning of vine-planting is like the beginning of mining for the precious metals: the wine-grower also "prospects." One corner of land after another is tried with one kind of grape after another. This is a failure; that is better; a third best. So, bit by bit, they grope about for their Clos Vougeot and Lafitte. Those lodes and pockets of earth, more precious than the precious ores, that yield inimitable fragrance and soft fire; those virtuous Bonanzas, where the soil has sublimated under sun and stars to something finer, and the wine is bottled poetry: these still lie undiscovered; chaparral conceals, thicket embowers them; the miner chips the rock and wanders farther, and the grizzly muses undisturbed. But there they bide their hour, awaiting their Columbus; and nature nurses and prepares them. The smack of Californian earth shall linger on the palate of your grandson.

Meanwhile the wine is merely a good wine; the best that I have tasted — better than a Beaujolais, and not unlike. But the trade is poor; it lives from hand to mouth, putting its all into experiments, and forced to sell its vintages. To find one properly matured, and bearing its own name, is to be fortune's favourite.

Bearing its own name, I say, and dwell upon the inuendo.

"You want to know why Californian wine is not drunk in the States?" a San Francisco wine merchant said to me, after he had shown me through his premises. "Well, here's the reason."

And opening a large cupboard, fitted with many little drawers, he proceeded to shower me all over with a great variety of gorgeously tinted labels, blue, red, or yellow, stamped with crown or coronet, and hailing from such a profusion of *clos* and *châteaux*, that a single department could scarce have furnished forth the names. But it was strange that all looked unfamiliar.

"Château X — — ?" said I. "I never heard of that."

"I dare say not," said he. "I had been reading one of X — — 's novels."

They were all castles in Spain! But that sure enough is the reason why California wine is not drunk in the States.

Napa Valley has been long a seat of the wine-growing industry. It did not here begin, as it does too often, in the low valley lands along the river, but took at once to the rough foot-hills, where alone it can expect to prosper. A basking inclination, and stones, to be a reservoir of the day's heat, seem necessary to the soil for wine; the grossness of the earth must be evaporated, its marrow daily melted and refined for ages; until at length these clods that break below our footing, and to the eye appear but common earth, are truly and to the perceiving mind, a masterpiece of nature. The dust of Richebourg, which the wind carries away, what an apotheosis of the dust! Not man himself can seem a stranger child of that brown, friable powder, than the blood and sun in that old flask behind the fagots.

A Californian vineyard, one of man's outposts in the wilderness, has features of its own. There is nothing here to remind you of the Rhine or Rhone, of the low *côte d'or*, or the infamous and scabby deserts of Champagne; but all is green, solitary, covert. We visited two of them, Mr. Schram's and Mr. M'Eckron's, sharing the same glen.

Some way down the valley below Calistoga, we turned sharply to the south and plunged into the thick of the wood. A rude trail rapidly mounting; a little stream tinkling by on the one hand, big enough perhaps after the rains, but already yielding up its life; overhead and on all sides, a bower of green and tangled thicket, still fragrant and still flower-bespangled by the early season, where thimble-berry played the part of our English hawthorn, and the buck-eyes were putting forth their twisted horns of blossom; through all this, we struggled toughly upwards, canted to and fro by the roughness of the trail, and continually switched across the face by sprays of leaf or blossom. The last is no great inconvenience at home; but here in California it is a matter of some moment. For in all woods and by every wayside there prospers an abominable shrub or weed, called poison oak, whose very neighbourhood is venomous to some, and whose actual touch is avoided by the most impervious.

The two houses, with their vineyards, stood each in a green niche of its own in this steep and narrow forest dell. Though they were so near, there was already a good difference in level; and Mr. M'Eckron's head must be a long way under the feet of Mr. Schram. No more had been cleared than was necessary for cultivation; close around each oasis ran the tangled wood; the glen enfolds them; there they lie basking in sun and silence, concealed from all but the clouds and the mountain birds.

Mr. M'Eckron's is a bachelor establishment; a little bit of a wooden house, a small cellar hard by in the hillside, and a patch of vines planted and tended single-handed by himself. He had but recently begun; his vines were young, his business young also; but I thought he had the look of a man who succeeds. He hailed from Greenock: he remembered his father putting him inside Mons Meg, and that touched me home; and we exchanged a word or two of Scotch, which pleased me more than you would fancy.

Mr. Schram's, on the other hand, is the oldest vineyard in the valley, eighteen years old, I think; yet he began a penniless barber, and even after he had broken ground up here with his black malvoisies, continued for long to tramp the valley with his razor. Now, his place is the picture of prosperity: stuffed birds in the veranda, cellars far dug into the hillside, and resting on pillars like a bandit's cave: — all trimness, varnish, flowers, and sunshine, among the tangled wildwood. Stout, smiling Mrs. Schram, who has been to Europe and apparently all about the States for pleasure, entertaining Fanny in the veranda, while I was tasting wines in the cellar. To Mr. Schram this was a solemn office; his serious gusto warmed my heart; prosperity had not yet wholly banished a certain neophite and girlish trepidation, and he followed every sip and read my face with proud anxiety. I tasted all. I tasted every variety and shade of Schramberger, red and white Schramberger, Burgundy Schramberger, Schramberger Hock, Schramberger Golden Chasselas, the latter with a notable bouquet, and I fear to think how many more. Much of it goes to

London — most, I think; and Mr. Schram has a great notion of the English taste.

In this wild spot, I did not feel the sacredness of ancient cultivation. It was still raw, it was no Marathon, and no Johannisberg; yet the stirring sunlight, and the growing vines, and the vats and bottles in the cavern, made a pleasant music for the mind. Here, also, earth's cream was being skimmed and garnered; and the London customers can taste, such as it is, the tang of the earth in this green valley. So local, so quintessential is a wine, that it seems the very birds in the veranda might communicate a flavour, and that romantic cellar influence the bottle next to be uncorked in Pimlico, and the smile of jolly Mr. Schram might mantle in the glass.

But these are but experiments. All things in this new land are moving farther on: the wine-vats and the miner's blasting tools but picket for a night, like Bedouin pavilions; and to-morrow, to fresh woods! This stir of change and these perpetual echoes of the moving footfall, haunt the land. Men move eternally, still chasing Fortune; and, fortune found, still wander. As we drove back to Calistoga, the road lay empty of mere passengers, but its green side was dotted with the camps of travelling families: one cumbered with a great waggonful of household stuff, settlers going to occupy a ranche they had taken up in Mendocino, or perhaps Tehama County; another, a party in dust-coats, men and women, whom we found camped in a grove on the roadside, all on pleasure bent, with a Chinaman to cook for them, and who waved their hands to us as we drove by.

IV

THE SCOT ABROAD

A few pages back, I wrote that a man belonged in these days to a variety of countries; but the old land is still the true love, the others are but pleasant infidelities. Scotland is indefinable; it has no unity except upon the map. Two languages, many dialects, innumerable forms of piety, and countless local patriotisms and prejudices, part us among ourselves more widely than the extreme east and west of that great continent of America. When I am at home, I feel a man from Glasgow to be something like a rival, a man from Barra to be more than half a foreigner. Yet let us meet in some far country, and, whether we hail from the braes of Manor or the braes of Mar, some ready-made affection joins us on the instant. It is not race. Look at us. One is Norse, one Celtic, and another Saxon. It is not community of tongue. We have it not among ourselves; and we have it almost to perfection, with English, or Irish, or American. It is no tie of faith, for we detest each other's errors. And yet somewhere, deep down in the heart of each one of us, something yearns for the old land, and the old kindly people.

Of all mysteries of the human heart, this is perhaps the most inscrutable. There is no special loveliness in that grey country, with its rainy, sea-beat archipelago; its fields of dark mountains; its unsightly places, black with coal; its treeless, sour, unfriendly-looking corn-lands; its quaint, grey, castled city, where the bells clash of a Sunday, and the wind squalls, and the salt showers fly and beat. I do not even know if I desire to live there; but let me hear, in some far land, a kindred voice sing out, "Oh, why left I my hame?" and it seems at once as if no beauty under the kind heavens, and no society of the wise and good, can repay me for my absence from my country. And though I think I would rather die elsewhere, yet in my heart of hearts I long to be buried among good Scots clods. I will say it fairly, it grows on me with every year: there are no stars so lovely as Edinburgh street-lamps. When I forget thee, auld Reekie, may my right hand forget its cunning!

The happiest lot on earth is to be born a Scotchman. You must pay for it in many ways, as for all other advantages on earth. You have to learn the paraphrases and the shorter catechism; you generally take to drink; your youth, as far as I can find out, is a time of louder war against society, of more outcry and tears and turmoil, than if you had been born, for instance, in England. But somehow life is warmer and closer; the hearth burns more redly; the lights of home shine softer on the rainy street; the very names, endeared in verse and music, cling nearer round our hearts. An Englishman may meet an Englishman to-morrow, upon Chimborazo, and neither of them care; but when the Scotch wine-grower told me of Mons Meg, it was like magic.

"From the dim shieling on the misty island
Mountains divide us, and a world of seas;
Yet still our hearts are true, our hearts are Highland,
And we, in dreams, behold the Hebrides."

And, Highland and Lowland, all our hearts are Scottish.

Only a few days after I had seen M'Eckron, a message reached me in my cottage. It was a Scotchman who had come down a long way from the hills to market. He had heard there was a countryman in Calistoga, and came round to the hotel to see him. We said a few words to each other; we had not much to say — should never have seen each other had we stayed at home, separated alike in space and in society; and then we shook hands, and he went his way again to his ranche among the hills, and that was all.

Another Scotchman there was, a resident, who for the mere love of the common country, douce, serious, religious man, drove me all about the valley, and took as much interest in me as if I had been his son: more, perhaps; for the son has faults too keenly felt, while the abstract countryman is perfect — like a whiff of peats.

And there was yet another. Upon him I came suddenly, as he was calmly entering my cottage, his mind quite evidently bent on plunder: a man of about fifty, filthy, ragged, roguish, with a chimney-pot hat and a tail coat, and a pursing of his mouth that might have been envied by an elder of the kirk. He had just such a face as I have seen a dozen times behind the plate.

"Hullo, sir!" I cried. "Where are you going?"

He turned round without a quiver.

"You are a Scotchman, sir?" he said gravely. "So am I; I come from Aberdeen. This is my card," presenting me with a piece of pasteboard which he had raked out of some gutter in the period of the rains. "I was just examining this palm," he continued, indicating the misbegotten plant before our door, "which is the largest specimen I have yet observed in Califoarnia."

There were four or five larger within sight. But where was the use of argument? He produced a tape-line, made me help him to measure the tree at the level of the ground, and entered the figures in a large and filthy pocket-book, all with the gravity of Solomon. He then thanked me profusely, remarking that such little services were due between countrymen; shook hands with me, "for auld lang syne," as he said; and took himself solemnly away, radiating dirt and humbug as he went.

A month or two after this encounter of mine, there came a Scot to Sacramento — perhaps from Aberdeen. Anyway, there never was anyone more Scottish in this wide world. He could sing and dance and drink, I presume; and he played the pipes with vigour and success. All the Scotch in Sacramento became infatuated with him, and spent their spare time and money driving him about in an open cab, between drinks, while he blew himself scarlet at the pipes. This is a very sad story. After he had borrowed money from every one, he and his pipes suddenly disappeared from Sacramento, and when I last heard, the police were looking for him.

I cannot say how this story amused me, when I felt myself so thoroughly ripe on both sides to be duped in the same way.

It is at least a curious thing, to conclude, that the races which wander widest, Jews and Scots, should be the most clannish in the world. But perhaps these two are cause and effect: “For ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

WITH THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

I

TO INTRODUCE MR. KELMAR

One thing in this new country very particularly strikes a stranger, and that is the number of antiquities. Already there have been many cycles of population succeeding each other, and passing away and leaving behind them relics. These, standing on into changed times, strike the imagination as forcibly as any pyramid or feudal tower. The towns, like the vineyards, are experimentally founded: they grow great and prosper by passing occasions; and when the lode comes to an end, and the miners move elsewhere, the town remains behind them, like Palmyra in the desert. I suppose there are, in no country in the world, so many deserted towns as here in California.

The whole neighbourhood of Mount Saint Helena, now so quiet and sylvan, was once alive with mining camps and villages. Here there would be two thousand souls under canvas; there one thousand or fifteen hundred ensconced, as if for ever, in a town of comfortable houses. But the luck had failed, the mines petered out; and the army of miners had departed, and left this quarter of the world to the rattlesnakes and deer and grizzlies, and to the slower but steadier advance of husbandry.

It was with an eye on one of these deserted places, Pine Flat, on the Geysers road, that we had come first to Calistoga. There is something singularly enticing in the idea of going, rent free, into a ready-made house. And to the British merchant, sitting at home at ease, it may appear that, with such a roof over your head and a spring of clear water hard by, the whole problem of the squatter’s existence would be solved. Food, however, has yet to be considered. I will go as far as most people on tinned meats; some of the brightest moments of my life were passed over tinned mulligatawny in the cabin of a sixteen-ton schooner, storm-stayed in Portree Bay; but after suitable experiments, I pronounce authoritatively that man cannot live by tins alone. Fresh meat must be had on an occasion. It is true that the great Foss, driving by along the Geysers road, wooden-faced, but glorified with legend, might have been induced to bring us meat, but the great Foss could hardly bring us milk. To take a cow would have involved taking a field of grass and a milkmaid; after which it would have been hardly worth while to pause, and we might have added to our colony a flock of sheep and an experienced butcher.

It is really very disheartening how we depend on other people in this life. *Mihi est propositum*, as you may see by the motto, *idem quod regibus*; and behold it cannot be carried out, unless I find a neighbour rolling in cattle.

Now, my principal adviser in this matter was one whom I will call Kelmar. That was not what he called himself, but as soon as I set eyes on him, I knew it was or ought to be his name; I am sure it will be his name among the angels. Kelmar was the store-keeper, a Russian Jew, good-natured, in a very thriving way of business, and, on equal terms, one of the most serviceable of men. He also had something of the expression of a Scottish country elder, who, by some peculiarity, should chance to be a Hebrew. He had a projecting under lip, with which he continually smiled, or rather smirked. Mrs. Kelmar was a singularly kind woman; and the oldest son had quite a dark and romantic bearing, and might be heard on summer evenings playing sentimental airs on the violin.

I had no idea, at the time I made his acquaintance, what an important person Kelmar was. But the Jew store-keepers of California, profiting at once by the needs and habits of the people, have made themselves in too many cases the tyrants of the rural population. Credit is offered, is pressed on the new customer, and when once he is beyond his depth, the tune changes, and he is from thenceforth a white slave. I believe, even from the little I saw, that Kelmar, if he chose to put on the screw, could send half the settlers packing in a radius of seven or eight miles round Calistoga. These are continually paying him, but are never suffered to get out of debt. He palms dull goods upon them, for they dare not refuse to buy; he goes and dines with them when he is on an outing, and no man is loudlier welcomed; he is their family friend, the director of their business, and, to a degree elsewhere unknown in modern days, their king.

For some reason, Kelmar always shook his head at the mention of Pine Flat, and for some days I thought he disapproved of the whole scheme and was proportionately sad. One fine morning, however, he met me, wreathed in smiles. He had found the very place for me — Silverado, another old mining town, right up the mountain. Rufe Hanson, the hunter, could take care of us — fine people the Hansons; we should be close to the Toll House, where the Lakeport stage called daily; it was the best place for my health, besides. Rufe had been consumptive, and was now quite a strong man, ain’t it? In short, the place and all its accompaniments seemed made for us on purpose.

He took me to his back door, whence, as from every point of Calistoga, Mount Saint Helena could be seen towering in the air. There, in the nick, just where the eastern foot-hills joined the mountain, and she herself began to rise above the zone of forest — there was Silverado. The name had already pleased me; the high station pleased me still more. I began to inquire with some eagerness. It was but a little while ago that Silverado was a great place. The mine — a silver mine, of course — had promised great things. There was quite a lively population, with several hotels and boarding-houses; and Kelmar himself had opened a branch store, and done extremely well — ”Ain’t it?” he said, appealing to his wife. And she said, “Yes; extremely well.” Now there was no one living in the town but Rufe the hunter; and once more I heard Rufe’s praises by the yard, and this time sung in chorus.

I could not help perceiving at the time that there was something underneath; that no unmixed desire to have us comfortably settled had inspired the Kelmars with this flow of words. But I was impatient to be gone, to be about my kingly project; and when we were offered seats in Kelmar’s waggon, I accepted on the spot. The plan of their next Sunday’s outing took them, by good fortune, over the border into Lake County. They would carry us so far, drop us at the Toll House, present us to the Hansons, and call for us again on Monday morning early.

II

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF SILVERADO

We were to leave by six precisely; that was solemnly pledged on both sides; and a messenger came to us the last thing at night, to remind us of the hour. But it was eight before we got clear of Calistoga: Kelmar, Mrs. Kelmar, a friend of theirs whom we named Abramina, her little daughter, my wife, myself, and, stowed away behind us, a cluster of ship's coffee-kettles. These last were highly ornamental in the sheen of their bright tin, but I could invent no reason for their presence. Our carriageful reckoned up, as near as we could get at it, some three hundred years to the six of us. Four of the six, besides, were Hebrews. But I never, in all my life, was conscious of so strong an atmosphere of holiday. No word was spoken but of pleasure; and even when we drove in silence, nods and smiles went round the party like refreshments.

The sun shone out of a cloudless sky. Close at the zenith rode the belated moon, still clearly visible, and, along one margin, even bright. The wind blew a gale from the north; the trees roared; the corn and the deep grass in the valley fled in whitening surges; the dust towered into the air along the road and dispersed like the smoke of battle. It was clear in our teeth from the first, and for all the windings of the road it managed to keep clear in our teeth until the end.

For some two miles we rattled through the valley, skirting the eastern foot-hills; then we struck off to the right, through haugh-land, and presently, crossing a dry watercourse, entered the Toll road, or, to be more local, entered on "the grade." The road mounts the near shoulder of Mount Saint Helena, bound northward into Lake County. In one place it skirts along the edge of a narrow and deep cañon, filled with trees, and I was glad, indeed, not to be driven at this point by the dashing Foss. Kelmar, with his unvarying smile, jogging to the motion of the trap, drove for all the world like a good, plain, country clergyman at home; and I profess I blessed him unawares for his timidity.

Vineyards and deep meadows, islanded and framed with thicket, gave place more and more as we ascended to woods of oak and madrona, dotted with enormous pines. It was these pines, as they shot above the lower wood, that produced that pencilling of single trees I had so often remarked from the valley. Thence, looking up and from however far, each fir stands separate against the sky no bigger than an eyelash; and all together lend a quaint, fringed aspect to the hills. The oak is no baby; even the madrona, upon these spurs of Mount Saint Helena, comes to a fine bulk and ranks with forest trees; but the pines look down upon the rest for underwood. As Mount Saint Helena among her foot-hills, so these dark giants out-top their fellow-vegetables. Alas! if they had left the redwoods, the pines, in turn, would have been dwarfed. But the redwoods, fallen from their high estate, are serving as family bedsteads, or yet more humbly as field fences, along all Napa Valley.

A rough smack of resin was in the air, and a crystal mountain purity. It came pouring over these green slopes by the oceanful. The woods sang aloud, and gave largely of their healthful breath. Gladness seemed to inhabit these upper zones, and we had left indifference behind us in the valley. "I to the hills will lift mine eyes!" There are days in a life when thus to climb out of the lowlands seems like scaling heaven.

As we continued to ascend, the wind fell upon us with increasing strength. It was a wonder how the two stout horses managed to pull us up that steep incline and still face the athletic opposition of the wind, or how their great eyes were able to endure the dust. Ten minutes after we went by, a tree fell, blocking the road; and even before us leaves were thickly strewn, and boughs had fallen, large enough to make the passage difficult. But now we were hard by the summit. The road crosses the ridge, just in the nick that Kelmar showed me from below, and then, without pause, plunges down a deep, thickly wooded glen on the farther side. At the highest point a trail strikes up the main hill to the leftward; and that leads to Silverado. A hundred yards beyond, and in a kind of elbow of the glen, stands the Toll House Hotel. We came up the one side, were caught upon the summit by the whole weight of the wind as it poured over into Napa Valley, and a minute after had drawn up in shelter, but all buffeted and breathless, at the Toll House door.

A water-tank, and stables, and a grey house of two stories, with gable ends and a veranda, are jammed hard against the hillside, just where a stream has cut for itself a narrow cañon, filled with pines. The pines go right up overhead; a little more and the stream might have played, like a fire-hose, on the Toll House roof. In front the ground drops as sharply as it rises behind. There is just room for the road and a sort of promontory of croquet ground, and then you can lean over the edge and look deep below you through the wood. I said croquet *ground,* not *green*; for the surface was of brown, beaten earth. The toll-bar itself was the only other note of originality: a long beam, turning on a post, and kept slightly horizontal by a counterweight of stones. Regularly about sundown this rude barrier was swung, like a derrick, across the road and made fast, I think, to a tree upon the farther side.

On our arrival there followed a gay scene in the bar. I was presented to Mr. Corwin, the landlord; to Mr. Jennings, the engineer, who lives there for his health; to Mr. Hoddy, a most pleasant little gentleman, once a member of the Ohio legislature, again the editor of a local paper, and now, with undiminished dignity, keeping the Toll House bar. I had a number of drinks and cigars bestowed on me, and enjoyed a famous opportunity of seeing Kelmar in his glory, friendly, radiant, smiling, steadily edging one of the ship's kettles on the reluctant Corwin. Corwin, plainly aghast, resisted gallantly, and for that bout victory crowned his arms.

At last we set forward for Silverado on foot. Kelmar and his jolly Jew girls were full of the sentiment of Sunday outings, breathed geniality and vagueness, and suffered a little vile boy from the hotel to lead them here and there about the woods. For three people all so old, so bulky in body, and belonging to a race so venerable, they could not but surprise us by their extreme and almost imbecile youthfulness of spirit. They were only going to stay ten minutes at the Toll House; had they not twenty long miles of road before them on the other side? Stay to dinner? Not they! Put up the horses? Never. Let us attach them to the veranda by a wisp of straw rope, such as would not have held a person's hat on that blustering day. And with all these protestations of hurry, they proved irresponsible like children. Kelmar himself, shrewd old Russian Jew, with a smirk that seemed just to have concluded a bargain to its satisfaction, intrusted himself and us devoutly to that boy. Yet the boy was patently fallacious; and for that matter a most unsympathetic urchin, raised apparently on gingerbread. He was bent on his own pleasure, nothing else; and Kelmar followed him to his ruin, with the same shrewd smirk. If the boy said there was "a hole there in the hill" — a hole, pure and simple, neither more nor less — Kelmar and his Jew girls would follow him a hundred yards to look complacently down that hole. For two hours we looked for houses; and for two hours they followed us, smelling trees, picking flowers, foisting false botany on the unwary. Had we taken five, with that vile lad to head them off on idle divagations, for five they would have smiled and stumbled through the woods.

However, we came forth at length, and as by accident, upon a lawn, sparse planted like an orchard, but with forest instead of fruit trees. That was the site of Silverado mining town. A piece of ground was levelled up, where Kelmar's store had been; and facing that we saw Rufe Hanson's house, still bearing on its front the legend *Silverado Hotel*. Not another sign of habitation. Silverado town had all been carted from the scene; one of the houses was now the schoolhouse far down the road; one was gone here, one there, but all were gone away.

It was now a sylvan solitude, and the silence was unbroken but by the great, vague voice of the wind. Some days before our visit, a grizzly bear had been sporting round the Hansons' chicken-house.

Mrs. Hanson was at home, alone, we found. Rufe had been out after a "bar," had risen late, and was now gone, it did not clearly appear whither. Perhaps he had had wind of Kelmar's coming, and was now ensconced among the underwood, or watching us from the shoulder of the mountain. We, hearing there were no houses to be had, were for immediately giving up all hopes of Silverado. But this, somehow, was not to Kelmar's fancy. He first proposed that we should "camp someveres around, ain't it?" waving his hand cheerily as though to weave a spell; and when that was firmly rejected, he decided that we must take up house with the Hansons. Mrs. Hanson had been, from the first, flustered, subdued, and a little pale; but from this proposition she recoiled with haggard indignation. So did we, who would have preferred, in a manner of speaking, death. But Kelmar was not to be put by. He edged Mrs. Hanson into a corner, where for a long time he threatened her with his forefinger, like a character in Dickens; and the poor woman, driven to her entrenchments, at last remembered with a shriek that there were still some houses at the tunnel.

Thither we went; the Jews, who should already have been miles into Lake County, still cheerily accompanying us. For about a furlong we followed a good road along the hillside through the forest, until suddenly that road widened out and came abruptly to an end. A cañon, woody below, red, rocky, and naked overhead, was here walled across by a dump of rolling stones, dangerously steep, and from twenty to thirty feet in height. A rusty iron chute on wooden legs came flying, like a monstrous gargoyle, across the parapet. It was down this that they poured the precious ore; and below here the carts stood to wait their lading, and carry it millward down the mountain.

The whole cañon was so entirely blocked, as if by some rude guerilla fortification, that we could only mount by lengths of wooden ladder, fixed in the hillside. These led us round the farther corner of the dump; and when they were at an end, we still persevered over loose rubble and wading deep in poison oak, till we struck a triangular platform, filling up the whole glen, and shut in on either hand by bold projections of the mountain. Only in front the place was open like the proscenium of a theatre, and we looked forth into a great realm of air, and down upon treetops and hilltops, and far and near on wild and varied country. The place still stood as on the day it was deserted: a line of iron rails with a bifurcation; a truck in working order; a world of lumber, old wood, old iron, a blacksmith's forge on one side, half buried in the leaves of dwarf madronas; and on the other, an old brown wooden house.

Fanny and I dashed at the house. It consisted of three rooms, and was so plastered against the hill, that one room was right atop of another, that the upper floor was more than twice as large as the lower, and that all three apartments must be entered from a different side or level. Not a window-sash remained. The door of the lower room was smashed, and one panel hung in splinters. We entered that, and found a fair amount of rubbish: sand and gravel that had been sifted in there by the mountain winds; straws, sticks, and stones; a table, a barrel; a plate-rack on the wall; two home-made boot-jacks, signs of miners and their boots; and a pair of papers pinned on the boarding, headed respectively "Funnel No. 1," and "Funnel No. 2," but with the tails torn away. The window, sashless of course, was choked with the green and sweetly smelling foliage of a bay; and through a chink in the floor, a spray of poison oak had shot up and was handsomely prospering in the interior. It was my first care to cut away that poison oak, Fanny standing by at a respectful distance. That was our first improvement by which we took possession.

The room immediately above could only be entered by a plank propped against the threshold, along which the intruder must foot it gingerly, clutching for support to sprays of poison oak, the proper product of the country. Herein was, on either hand, a triple tier of beds, where miners had once lain; and the other gable was pierced by a sashless window and a doorless doorway opening on the air of heaven, five feet above the ground. As for the third room, which entered squarely from the ground level, but higher up the hill and farther up the cañon, it contained only rubbish and the uprights for another triple tier of beds.

The whole building was overhung by a bold, lion-like, red rock. Poison oak, sweet bay trees, calycanthus, brush, and chaparral, grew freely but sparsely all about it. In front, in the strong sunshine, the platform lay overstrewn with busy litter, as though the labours of the mine might begin again to-morrow in the morning.

Following back into the cañon, among the mass of rotting plant and through the flowering bushes, we came to a great crazy staging, with a wry windlass on the top; and clambering up, we could look into an open shaft, leading edgeways down into the bowels of the mountain, trickling with water, and lit by some stray sun-gleams, whence I know not. In that quiet place the still, far-away tinkle of the water-drops was loudly audible. Close by, another shaft led edgeways up into the superincumbent shoulder of the hill. It lay partly open; and sixty or a hundred feet above our head, we could see the strata propped apart by solid wooden wedges, and a pine, half-undermined, precariously nodding on the verge. Here also a rugged, horizontal tunnel ran straight into the unsunned bowels of the rock. This secure angle in the mountain's flank was, even on this wild day, as still as my lady's chamber. But in the tunnel a cold, wet draught tempestuously blew. Nor have I ever known that place otherwise than cold and windy.

Such was our first prospect of Juan Silverado. I own I had looked for something different: a clique of neighbourly houses on a village green, we shall say, all empty to be sure, but swept and varnished; a trout stream brawling by; great elms or chestnuts, humming with bees and nested in by song-birds; and the mountains standing round about, as at Jerusalem. Here, mountain and house and the old tools of industry were all alike, rusty and down-falling. The hill was here wedged up, and there poured forth its bowels in a spout of broken mineral; man with his picks and powder, and nature with her own great blasting tools of sun and rain, labouring together at the ruin of that proud mountain. The view up the cañon was a glimpse of devastation; dry red minerals sliding together, here and there a crag, here and there dwarf thicket clinging in the general glissade, and over all a broken outline trenching on the blue of heaven. Downwards indeed, from our rock eyrie, we beheld the greener side of nature; and the bearing of the pine and the sweet smell of bays and nutmegs commended themselves gratefully to our senses. One way and another, now the die was cast. Silverado be it!

After we had got back to the Toll House, the Jews were not long of striking forward. But I observed that one of the Hanson lads came down, before their departure, and returned with a ship's kettle. Happy Hansons! Nor was it until after Kelmar was gone, if I remember rightly, that Rufe put in an appearance to arrange the details of our installation.

The latter part of the day, Fanny and I sat in the veranda of the Toll House, utterly stunned by the uproar of the wind among the trees on the other side of the valley. Sometimes, we would have it it was like a sea, but it was not various enough for that; and again, we thought it like the roar of a cataract, but it was too changeful for the cataract; and then we would decide, speaking in sleepy voices, that it could be compared with nothing but itself. My mind was entirely preoccupied by the noise. I hearkened to it by the hour, gapingly hearkened, and let my cigarette go out. Sometimes the wind would make a sally nearer hand, and send a shrill, whistling crash among the foliage on our side of the glen; and sometimes a back-draught would strike into the elbow where we sat, and cast the gravel and torn leaves into our faces. But for the most part, this great, streaming gale passed unweariedly by us into Napa Valley, not two hundred yards away visible by the tossing boughs, stunningly audible, and yet not moving a hair upon our heads. So it blew all night long while I was writing up my journal, and after we were in bed, under a cloudless, starset heaven; and so it was blowing still next morning when we rose.

It was a laughable thought to us, what had become of our cheerful wandering Hebrews. We could not suppose they had reached a destination. The meanest boy could lead them miles out of their way to see a gopher-hole. Boys we felt to be their special danger; none others were of that exact pitch of cheerful irrelevancy to exercise a kindred sway upon their minds: but before the attractions of a boy their most settled resolutions would be wax. We thought we could follow in fancy these three aged Hebrew truants wandering in and out on hilltop and in thicket, a demon boy trotting far ahead, their will-o'-the-wisp conductor; and at last about midnight, the wind still roaring in the darkness, we had a vision of all three on their knees upon a mountain-top around a glow-worm.

III

THE RETURN

Next morning we were up by half-past five, according to agreement, and it was ten by the clock before our Jew boys returned to pick us up: Kelmar, Mrs. Kelmar, and Abramina, all smiling from ear to ear, and full of tales of the hospitality they had found on the other side. It had not gone unrewarded; for I observed with interest that the ship's kettles, all but one, had been "placed." Three Lake County families, at least, endowed for life with a ship's kettle. Come, this was no misspent Sunday. The absence of the kettles told its own story: our Jews said nothing about them; but, on the other hand, they said many kind and comely things about the people they had met. The two women, in particular, had been charmed out of themselves by the sight of a young girl surrounded by her admirers; all evening, it appeared, they had been triumphing together in the girl's innocent successes, and to this natural and unselfish joy they gave expression in language that was beautiful by its simplicity and truth.

Take them for all in all, few people have done my heart more good; they seem so thoroughly entitled to happiness, and to enjoy it in so large a measure and so free from after-thought; almost they persuaded me to be a Jew. There was, indeed, a chink of money in their talk. They particularly commended people who were well to do. "*He* don't care — ain't it?" was their highest word of commendation to an individual fate; and here I seem to grasp the root of their philosophy — it was to be free from care, to be free to make these Sunday wanderings, that they so eagerly pursued after wealth; and all this carefulness was to be careless. The fine good-humour of all three seemed to declare they had attained their end. Yet there was the other side to it; and the recipients of kettles perhaps cared greatly.

No sooner had they returned, than the scene of yesterday began again. The horses were not even tied with a straw rope this time — it was not worth while; and Kelmar disappeared into the bar, leaving them under a tree on the other side of the road. I had to devote myself. I stood under the shadow of that tree for, I suppose, hard upon an hour, and had not the heart to be angry. Once some one remembered me, and brought me out a half a tumblerful of the playful, innocuous American cocktail. I drank it, and lo! veins of living fire ran down my leg; and then a focus of conflagration remained seated in my stomach, not unpleasantly, for a quarter of an hour. I love these sweet, fiery pangs, but I will not court them. The bulk of the time I spent in repeating as much French poetry as I could remember to the horses, who seemed to enjoy it hugely. And now it went —

“O ma vieille Font-georges
Où volent les rouges-gorges”:

and again, to a more trampling measure: —

“Et tout tremble, Irun, Coïmbre,
Santander, Almodovar,
Sitôt qu’on entend le timbre
Des cymbales de Bivar.”

The redbreasts and the brooks of Europe, in that dry and songless land; brave old names and wars, strong cities, cymbals, and bright armour, in that nook of the mountain, sacred only to the Indian and the bear! This is still the strangest thing in all man’s travelling, that he should carry about with him incongruous memories. There is no foreign land; it is the traveller only that is foreign, and now and again, by a flash of recollection, lights up the contrasts of the earth.

But while I was thus wandering in my fancy, great feats had been transacted in the bar. Corwin the bold had fallen, Kelmar was again crowned with laurels, and the last of the ship’s kettles had changed hands. If I had ever doubted the purity of Kelmar’s motives, if I had ever suspected him of a single eye to business in his eternal dallyings, now at least, when the last kettle was disposed of, my suspicions must have been allayed. I dare not guess how much more time was wasted; nor how often we drove off merely to drive back again and renew interrupted conversations about nothing, before the Toll House was fairly left behind. Alas! and not a mile down the grade there stands a ranche in a sunny vineyard, and here we must all dismount again and enter.

Only the old lady was at home, Mrs. Guele, a brown old Swiss dame, the picture of honesty; and with her we drank a bottle of wine and had an age-long conversation, which would have been highly delightful if Fanny and I had not been faint with hunger. The ladies each narrated the story of her marriage, our two Hebrews with the prettiest combination of sentiment and financial bathos. Abramina, specially, endeared herself with every word. She was as simple, natural, and engaging as a kid that should have been brought up to the business of a money-changer. One touch was so resplendently Hebraic that I cannot pass it over. When her “old man” wrote home for her from America, her old man’s family would not entrust her with the money for the passage, till she had bound herself by an oath — on her knees, I think she said — not to employ it otherwise. This had tickled Abramina hugely, but I think it tickled me fully more.

Mrs. Guele told of her homesickness up here in the long winters; of her honest, country-woman troubles and alarms upon the journey; how in the bank at Frankfort she had feared lest the banker, after having taken her cheque, should deny all knowledge of it — a fear I have myself every time I go to a bank; and how crossing the Lüneburger Heath, an old lady witnessing her trouble and finding whither she was bound, had given her "the blessing of a person eighty years old, which would be sure to bring her safely to the States. And the first thing I did," added Mrs. Guele, "was to fall down-stairs."

At length we got out of the house, and some of us into the trap, when — judgment of Heaven! — here came Mr. Guele from his vineyard. So another quarter of an hour went by; till at length, at our earnest pleading, we set forth again in earnest, Fanny and I white-faced and silent but the Jews still smiling. The heart fails me. There was yet another stoppage! And we drove at last into Calistoga past two in the afternoon, Fanny and I having breakfasted at six in the morning, eight mortal hours before. We were a pallid couple; but still the Jews were smiling.

So ended our excursion with the village usurers, and, now that it was done, we had no more idea of the nature of the business, nor of the part we had been playing in it, than the child unborn. That all the people we had met were the slaves of Kelmar, though in various degrees of servitude; that we ourselves had been sent up the mountain in the interests of none but Kelmar; that the money we laid out, dollar by dollar, cent by cent, and through the hands of various intermediaries, should all hop ultimately into Kelmar's till; these were facts that we only grew to recognise in the course of time and by the accumulation of evidence. At length all doubt was quieted, when one of the kettle-holders confessed. Stopping his trap in the moonlight, a little way out of Calistoga, he told me, in so many words, that he dare not show face there with an empty pocket. "You see, I don't mind if it was only five dollars, Mr. Stevens," he said, "but I must give Mr. Kelmar *something*."

Even now, when the whole tyranny is plain to me, I cannot find it in my heart to be as angry as perhaps I should be with the Hebrew tyrant. The whole game of business is beggar my neighbour; and though perhaps that game looks uglier when played at such close quarters and on so small a scale, it is none the more intrinsically inhumane for that. The village usurer is not so sad a feature of humanity and human progress as the millionaire manufacturer, fattening on the toil and loss of thousands, and yet declaiming from the platform against the greed and dishonesty of landlords. If it were fair for Cobden to buy up land from owners whom he thought unconscious of its proper, value, it was fair enough for my Russian Jew to give credit to his farmers. Kelmar, if he was unconscious of the beam in his own eye, was at least silent in the matter of his brother's mote.

THE ACT OF SQUATTING

There were four of us squatters — myself and my wife, the King and Queen of Silverado; Lloyd, the Crown Prince; and Chuchu, the Grand Duke. Chuchu, a setter crossed with spaniel, was the most unsuited for a rough life. He had been nurtured tenderly in the society of ladies; his heart was large and soft; he regarded the sofa-cushion as a bed-rock necessary of existence. Though about the size of a sheep, he loved to sit in ladies' laps; he never said a bad word in all his blameless days; and if he had seen a flute, I am sure he could have played upon it by nature. It may seem hard to say it of a dog, but Chuchu was a tame cat.

The king and queen, the grand duke, and a basket of cold provender for immediate use, set forth from Calistoga in a double buggy; the crown prince, on horseback, led the way like an outrider. Bags and boxes and a second-hand stove were to follow close upon our heels by Hanson's team.

It was a beautiful still day; the sky was one field of azure. Not a leaf moved, not a speck appeared in heaven. Only from the summit of the mountain one little snowy wisp of cloud after another kept detaching itself, like smoke from a volcano, and blowing southward in some high stream of air: Mount Saint Helena still at her interminable task, making the weather, like a Lapland witch.

By noon we had come in sight of the mill: a great brown building, half-way up the hill, big as a factory, two stories high, and with tanks and ladders along the roof; which, as a pendicle of Silverado mine, we held to be an outlying province of our own. Thither, then, we went, crossing the valley by a grassy trail; and there lunched out of the basket, sitting in a kind of portico, and wondering, while we ate, at this great bulk of useless building. Through a chink we could look far down into the interior, and see sunbeams floating in the dust and striking on tier after tier of silent, rusty machinery. It cost six thousand dollars, twelve hundred English sovereigns; and now, here it stands deserted, like the temple of a forgotten religion, the busy millers toiling somewhere else. All the time we were there, mill and mill town showed no sign of life; that part of the mountain side, which is very open and green, was tenanted by no living creature but ourselves and the insects; and nothing stirred but the cloud manufactory upon the mountain summit. It was odd to compare this with the former days, when the engine was in full blast, the mill palpitating to its strokes, and the carts came rattling down from Silverado, charged with ore.

By two we had been landed at the mine, the buggy was gone again, and we were left to our own reflections and the basket of cold provender, until Hanson should arrive. Hot as it was by the sun, there was something chill in such a home-coming, in that world of wreck and rust, splinter and rolling gravel, where for so many years no fire had smoked.

Silverado platform filled the whole width of the cañon. Above, as I have said, this was a wild, red, stony gully in the mountains; but below it was a wooded dingle. And through this, I was told, there had gone a path between the mine and the Toll House — our natural north-west passage to civilisation. I found and followed it, clearing my way as I went through fallen branches and dead trees. It went straight down that steep cañon, till it brought you out abruptly over the roofs of the hotel. There was nowhere any break in the descent. It almost seemed as if, were you to drop a stone down the old iron chute at our platform, it would never rest until it hopped upon the Toll House shingles. Signs were not wanting of the ancient greatness of Silverado. The footpath was well marked, and had been well trodden in the old days by thirsty miners. And far down, buried in foliage, deep out of sight of Silverado, I came on a last outpost of the mine — a mound of gravel, some wreck of wooden aqueduct, and the mouth of a tunnel, like a treasure grotto in a fairy story. A stream of water, fed by the invisible leakage from our shaft, and dyed red with cinnabar or iron, ran trippingly forth out of the bowels of the cave; and, looking far under the arch, I could see something like an iron lantern fastened on the rocky wall. It was a promising spot for the imagination. No boy could have left it unexplored.

The stream thenceforward stole along the bottom of the dingle, and made, for that dry land, a pleasant warbling in the leaves. Once, I suppose, it ran splashing down the whole length of the cañon, but now its head waters had been tapped by the shaft at Silverado, and for a great part of its course it wandered sunless among the joints of the mountain. No wonder that it should better its pace when it sees, far before it, daylight whitening in the arch, or that it should come trotting forth into the sunlight with a song.

The two stages had gone by when I got down, and the Toll House stood, dozing in sun and dust and silence, like a place enchanted. My mission was after hay for bedding, and that I was readily promised. But when I mentioned that we were waiting for Rufe, the people shook their heads. Rufe was not a regular man anyway, it seemed; and if he got playing poker — — Well, poker was too many for Rufe. I had not yet heard them bracketed together; but it seemed a natural conjunction, and commended itself swiftly to my fears; and as soon as I returned to Silverado and had told my story, we practically gave Hanson up, and set ourselves to do what we could find do-able in our desert-island state.

The lower room had been the assayer’s office. The floor was thick with *débris* — part human, from the former occupants; part natural, sifted in by mountain winds. In a sea of red dust there swam or floated sticks, boards, hay, straw, stones, and paper; ancient newspapers, above all — for the newspaper, especially when torn, soon becomes an antiquity — and bills of the Silverado boarding-house, some dated Silverado, some Calistoga Mine. Here is one, verbatim; and if any one can calculate the scale of charges, he has my envious admiration.

Calistoga Mine, May 3rd, 1875.
John Stanley
To S. Chapman, Cr.
$25 To board from April 1st, to April
2”““ May 1st, to 3rd
— —
27 75

Where is John Stanley mining now? Where is S. Chapman, within whose hospitable walls we were to lodge? The date was but five years old, but in that time the world had changed for Silverado; like Palmyra in the desert, it had outlived its people and its purpose; we camped, like Layard, amid ruins, and these names spoke to us of prehistoric time. A boot-jack, a pair of boots, a dog-hutch, and these bills of Mr. Chapman’s were the only speaking relics that we disinterred from all that vast Silverado rubbish-heap; but what would I not have given to unearth a letter, a pocket-book, a diary, only a ledger, or a roll of names, to take me back, in a more personal manner, to the past? It pleases me, besides, to fancy that Stanley or Chapman, or one of their companions, may light upon this chronicle, and be struck by the name, and read some news of their anterior home, coming, as it were, out of a subsequent epoch of history in that quarter of the world.

As we were tumbling the mingled rubbish on the floor, kicking it with our feet, and groping for these written evidences of the past, Lloyd, with a somewhat whitened face, produced a paper bag. “What’s this?” said he. It contained a granulated powder, something the colour of Gregory’s Mixture, but rosier; and as there were several of the bags, and each more or less broken, the powder was spread widely on the floor. Had any of us ever seen giant powder? No, nobody had; and instantly there grew up in my mind a shadowy belief, verging with every moment nearer to certitude, that I had somewhere heard somebody describe it as just such a powder as the one around us. I have learnt since that it is a substance not unlike tallow, and is made up in rolls for all the world like tallow candles.

Fanny, to add to our happiness, told us a story of a gentleman who had camped one night, like ourselves, by a deserted mine. He was a handy, thrifty fellow, and looked right and left for plunder, but all he could lay his hands on was a can of oil. After dark he had to see to the horses with a lantern; and not to miss an opportunity, filled up his lamp from the oil can. Thus equipped, he set forth into the forest. A little while after, his friends heard a loud explosion; the mountain echoes bellowed, and then all was still. On examination, the can proved to contain oil, with the trifling addition of nitro-glycerine; but no research disclosed a trace of either man or lantern.

It was a pretty sight, after this anecdote, to see us sweeping out the giant powder. It seemed never to be far enough away. And, after all, it was only some rock pounded for assay.

So much for the lower room. We scraped some of the rougher dirt off the floor, and left it. That was our sitting-room and kitchen, though there was nothing to sit upon but the table, and no provision for a fire except a hole in the roof of the room above, which had once contained the chimney of a stove.

To that upper room we now proceeded. There were the eighteen bunks in a double tier, nine on either hand, where from eighteen to thirty-six miners had once snored together all night long, John Stanley, perhaps, snoring loudest. There was the roof, with a hole in it through which the sun now shot an arrow. There was the floor, in much the same state as the one below, though, perhaps, there was more hay, and certainly there was the added ingredient of broken glass, the man who stole the window-frames having apparently made a miscarriage with this one. Without a broom, without hay or bedding, we could but look about us with a beginning of despair. The one bright arrow of day, in that gaunt and shattered barrack, made the rest look dirtier and darker, and the sight drove us at last into the open.

Here, also, the handiwork of man lay ruined: but the plants were all alive and thriving; the view below was fresh with the colours of nature; and we had exchanged a dim, human garret for a corner, even although it were untidy, of the blue hall of heaven. Not a bird, not a beast, not a reptile. There was no noise in that part of the world, save when we passed beside the staging, and heard the water musically falling in the shaft.

We wandered to and fro. We searched among that drift of lumber — wood and iron, nails and rails, and sleepers and the wheels of trucks. We gazed up the cleft into the bosom of the mountain. We sat by the margin of the dump and saw, far below us, the green treetops standing still in the clear air. Beautiful perfumes, breaths of bay, resin, and nutmeg, came to us more often and grew sweeter and sharper as the afternoon declined. But still there was no word of Hanson.

I set to with pick and shovel, and deepened the pool behind the shaft, till we were sure of sufficient water for the morning; and by the time I had finished, the sun had begun to go down behind the mountain shoulder, the platform was plunged in quiet shadow, and a chill descended from the sky. Night began early in our cleft. Before us, over the margin of the dump, we could see the sun still striking aslant into the wooded nick below, and on the battlemented, pine-bescattered ridges on the farther side.

There was no stove, of course, and no hearth in our lodging, so we betook ourselves to the blacksmith's forge across the platform. If the platform be taken as a stage, and the out-curving margin of the dump to represent the line of the footlights, then our house would be the first wing on the actor's left, and this blacksmith's forge, although no match for it in size, the foremost on the right. It was a low, brown cottage, planted close against the hill, and overhung by the foliage and peeling boughs of a madrona thicket. Within it was full of dead leaves and mountain dust, and rubbish from the mine. But we soon had a good fire brightly blazing, and sat close about it on impromptu seats. Chuchu, the slave of sofa cushions, whimpered for a softer bed; but the rest of us were greatly revived and comforted by that good creature — fire, which gives us warmth and light and companionable sounds, and colours up the emptiest building with better than frescoes. For awhile it was even pleasant in the forge, with the blaze in the midst, and a look over our shoulders on the woods and mountains where the day was dying like a dolphin.

It was between seven and eight before Hanson arrived, with a waggonful of our effects and two of his wife's relatives to lend him a hand. The elder showed surprising strength. He would pick up a huge packing-case, full of books, of all things, swing it on his shoulder, and away up the two crazy ladders and the breakneck spout of rolling mineral, familiarly termed a path, that led from the cart-track to our house. Even for a man unburthened, the ascent was toilsome and precarious; but Irvine scaled it with a light foot, carrying box after box, as the hero whisks the stage child up the practicable footway beside the waterfall of the fifth act. With so strong a helper, the business was speedily transacted. Soon the assayer's office was thronged with our belongings, piled higgledy-piggledy, and upside down, about the floor. There were our boxes, indeed, but my wife had left her keys in Calistoga. There was the stove, but, alas! our carriers had forgot the chimney, and lost one of the plates along the road. The Silverado problem was scarce solved.

Rufe himself was grave and good-natured over his share of blame; he even, if I remember right, expressed regret. But his crew, to my astonishment and anger, grinned from ear to ear, and laughed aloud at our distress. They thought it “real funny” about the stovepipe they had forgotten; “real funny” that they should have lost a plate. As for hay, the whole party refused to bring us any till they should have supped. See how late they were! Never had there been such a job as coming up that grade! Nor often, I suspect, such a game of poker as that before they started. But about nine, as a particular favour, we should have some hay.

So they took their departure, leaving me still staring, and we resigned ourselves to wait for their return. The fire in the forge had been suffered to go out, and we were one and all too weary to kindle another. We dined, or not to take that word in vain, we ate after a fashion, in the nightmare disorder of the assayer’s office, perched among boxes. A single candle lighted us. It could scarce be called a house-warming; for there was, of course, no fire, and with the two open doors and the open window gaping on the night, like breaches in a fortress, it began to grow rapidly chill. Talk ceased; nobody moved but the unhappy Chuchu, still in quest of sofa-cushions, who tumbled complainingly among the trunks. It required a certain happiness of disposition to look forward hopefully, from so dismal a beginning, across the brief hours of night, to the warm shining of to-morrow’s sun.

But the hay arrived at last, and we turned, with our last spark of courage, to the bedroom. We had improved the entrance, but it was still a kind of rope-walking; and it would have been droll to see us mounting, one after another, by candle light, under the open stars.

The western door — that which looked up the cañon, and through which we entered by our bridge of flying plank — was still entire, a handsome, panelled door, the most finished piece of carpentry in Silverado. And the two lowest bunks next to this we roughly filled with hay for that night’s use. Through the opposite, or eastern-looking gable, with its open door and window, a faint, diffused starshine came into the room like mist; and when we were once in bed, we lay, awaiting sleep, in a haunted, incomplete obscurity. At first the silence of the night was utter. Then a high wind began in the distance among the treetops, and for hours continued to grow higher. It seemed to me much such a wind as we had found on our visit; yet here in our open chamber we were fanned only by gentle and refreshing draughts, so deep was the cañon, so close our house was planted under the overhanging rock.

THE HUNTER'S FAMILY

There is quite a large race or class of people in America, for whom we scarcely seem to have a parallel in England. Of pure white blood, they are unknown or unrecognisable in towns; inhabit the fringe of settlements and the deep, quiet places of the country; rebellious to all labour, and pettily thievish, like the English gipsies; rustically ignorant, but with a touch of woodlore and the dexterity of the savage. Whence they came is a moot point. At the time of the war, they poured north in thousands to escape the conscription; lived during summer on fruits, wild animals, and petty theft; and at the approach of winter, when these supplies failed, built great fires in the forest, and there died stoically by starvation. They are widely scattered, however, and easily recognised. Loutish, but not ill-looking, they will sit all day, swinging their legs on a field fence, the mind seemingly as devoid of all reflection as a Suffolk peasant's, careless of politics, for the most part incapable of reading, but with a rebellious vanity and a strong sense of independence. Hunting is their most congenial business, or, if the occasion offers, a little amateur detection. In tracking a criminal, following a particular horse along a beaten highway, and drawing inductions from a hair or a footprint, one of these somnolent, grinning Hodges will suddenly display activity of body and finesse of mind. By their names ye may know them, the women figuring as Loveina, Larsenia, Serena, Leanna, Orreana; the men answering to Alvin, Alva, or Orion, pronounced Orrion, with the accent on the first. Whether they are indeed a race, or whether this is the form of degeneracy common to all backwoodsmen, they are at least known by a generic byword, as Poor Whites or Low-downers.

I will not say that the Hanson family was Poor White, because the name savours of offence; but I may go as far as this — they were, in many points, not unsimilar to the people usually so called. Rufe himself combined two of the qualifications, for he was both a hunter and an amateur detective. It was he who pursued Russel and Dollar, the robbers of the Lake Port stage, and captured them the very morning after the exploit, while they were still sleeping in a hayfield. Russel, a drunken Scotch carpenter, was even an acquaintance of his own, and he expressed much grave commiseration for his fate. In all that he said and did, Rufe was grave. I never saw him hurried. When he spoke, he took out his pipe with ceremonial deliberation, looked east and west, and then, in quiet tones and few words, stated his business or told his story. His gait was to match; it would never have surprised you if, at any step, he had turned round and walked away again, so warily and slowly, and with so much seeming hesitation did he go about. He lay long in bed in the morning — rarely, indeed, rose before noon; he loved all games, from poker to clerical croquet; and in the Toll House croquet ground I have seen him toiling at the latter with the devotion of a curate. He took an interest in education, was an active member of the local school-board, and when I was there, he had recently lost the schoolhouse key. His waggon was broken, but it never seemed to occur to him to mend it. Like all truly idle people, he had an artistic eye. He chose the print stuff for his wife's dresses, and counselled her in the making of a patch-work quilt, always, as she thought, wrongly, but to the more educated eye, always with bizarre and admirable taste — the taste of an Indian. With all this, he was a perfect, unoffending gentleman in word and act. Take his clay pipe from him, and he was fit for any society but that of fools. Quiet as he was, there burned a deep, permanent excitement in his dark blue eyes; and when this grave man smiled, it was like sunshine in a shady place.

Mrs. Hanson (*née*, if you please, Lovelands) was more commonplace than her lord. She was a comely woman, too, plump, fair-coloured, with wonderful white teeth; and in her print dresses (chosen by Rufe) and with a large sunbonnet shading her valued complexion, made, I assure you, a very agreeable figure. But she was on the surface, what there was of her, out-spoken and loud-spoken. Her noisy laughter had none of the charm of one of Hanson's rare, slow-spreading smiles; there was no reticence, no mystery, no manner about the woman: she was a first-class dairymaid, but her husband was an unknown quantity between the savage and the nobleman. She was often in and out with us, merry, and healthy, and fair; he came far seldomer — only, indeed, when there was business, or now and again, to pay a visit of ceremony, brushed up for the occasion, with his wife on his arm, and a clean clay pipe in his teeth. These visits, in our forest state, had quite the air of an event, and turned our red cañon into a salon.

Such was the pair who ruled in the old Silverado Hotel, among the windy trees, on the mountain shoulder overlooking the whole length of Napa Valley, as the man aloft looks down on the ship's deck. There they kept house, with sundry horses and fowls, and a family of sons, Daniel Webster, and I think George Washington, among the number. Nor did they want visitors. An old gentleman, of singular stolidity, and called Breedlove — I think he had crossed the plains in the same caravan with Rufe — housed with them for awhile during our stay; and they had besides a permanent lodger, in the form of Mrs. Hanson's brother, Irvine Lovelands. I spell Irvine by guess; for I could get no information on the subject, just as I could never find out, in spite of many inquiries, whether or not Rufe was a contraction for Rufus. They were all cheerfully at sea about their names in that generation. And this is surely the more notable where the names are all so strange, and even the family names appear to have been coined. At one time, at least, the ancestors of all these Alvins and Alvas, Loveinas, Lovelands, and Breedloves, must have taken serious council and found a certain poetry in these denominations; that must have been, then, their form of literature. But still times change; and their next descendants, the George Washingtons and Daniel Websters, will at least be clear upon the point. And anyway, and however his name should be spelt, this Irvine Lovelands was the most unmitigated Caliban I ever knew.

Our very first morning at Silverado, when we were full of business, patching up doors and windows, making beds and seats, and getting our rough lodging into shape, Irvine and his sister made their appearance together, she for neighbourliness and general curiosity; he, because he was working for me, to my sorrow, cutting firewood at I forget how much a day. The way that he set about cutting wood was characteristic. We were at that moment patching up and unpacking in the kitchen. Down he sat on one side, and down sat his sister on the other. Both were chewing pine-tree gum, and he, to my annoyance, accompanied that simple pleasure with profuse expectoration. She rattled away, talking up hill and down dale, laughing, tossing her head, showing her brilliant teeth. He looked on in silence, now spitting heavily on the floor, now putting his head back and uttering a loud, discordant, joyless laugh. He had a tangle of shock hair, the colour of wool; his mouth was a grin; although as strong as a horse, he looked neither heavy nor yet adroit, only leggy, coltish, and in the road. But it was plain he was in high spirits, thoroughly enjoying his visit; and he laughed frankly whenever we failed to accomplish what we were about. This was scarcely helpful; it was even, to amateur carpenters, embarrassing; but it lasted until we knocked off work and began to get dinner. Then Mrs. Hanson remembered she should have been gone an hour ago; and the pair retired, and the lady's laughter died away among the nutmegs down the path. That was Irvine's first day's work in my employment — the devil take him!

The next morning he returned and, as he was this time alone, he bestowed his conversation upon us with great liberality. He prided himself on his intelligence; asked us if we knew the school-ma'am. *He* didn't think much of her, anyway. He had tried her, he had. He had put a question to her. If a tree a hundred feet high were to fall a foot a day, how long would it take to fall right down? She had not been able to solve the problem. "She don't know nothing," he opined. He told us how a friend of his kept a school with a revolver, and chuckled mightily over that; his friend could teach school, he could. All the time he kept chewing gum and spitting. He would stand awhile looking down; and then he would toss back his shock of hair, and laugh hoarsely, and spit, and bring forward a new subject. A man, he told us, who bore a grudge against him, had poisoned his dog. “That was a low thing for a man to do now, wasn’t it? It wasn’t like a man, that, nohow. But I got even with him: I pisoned *his* dog.” His clumsy utterance, his rude embarrassed manner, set a fresh value on the stupidity of his remarks. I do not think I ever appreciated the meaning of two words until I knew Irvine — the verb, loaf, and the noun, oaf; between them, they complete his portrait. He could lounge, and wriggle, and rub himself against the wall, and grin, and be more in everybody’s way than any other two people that I ever set my eyes on. Nothing that he did became him; and yet you were conscious that he was one of your own race, that his mind was cumbrously at work, revolving the problem of existence like a quid of gum, and in his own cloudy manner enjoying life, and passing judgment on his fellows. Above all things, he was delighted with himself. You would not have thought it, from his uneasy manners and troubled, struggling utterance; but he loved himself to the marrow, and was happy and proud like a peacock on a rail.

His self-esteem was, indeed, the one joint in his harness. He could be got to work, and even kept at work, by flattery. As long as my wife stood over him, crying out how strong he was, so long exactly he would stick to the matter in hand; and the moment she turned her back, or ceased to praise him, he would stop. His physical strength was wonderful; and to have a woman stand by and admire his achievements, warmed his heart like sunshine. Yet he was as cowardly as he was powerful, and felt no shame in owning to the weakness. Something was once wanted from the crazy platform over the shaft, and he at once refused to venture there — ”did not like,” as he said, “foolin’ round them kind o’ places,” and let my wife go instead of him, looking on with a grin. Vanity, where it rules, is usually more heroic; but Irvine steadily approved himself, and expected others to approve him; rather looked down upon my wife, and decidedly expected her to look up to him, on the strength of his superior prudence.

Yet the strangest part of the whole matter was perhaps this, that Irvine was as beautiful as a statue. His features were, in themselves, perfect; it was only his cloudy, uncouth, and coarse expression that disfigured them. So much strength residing in so spare a frame was proof sufficient of the accuracy of his shape. He must have been built somewhat after the pattern of Jack Sheppard; but the famous housebreaker, we may be certain, was no lout. It was by the extraordinary powers of his mind no less than by the vigour of his body, that he broke his strong prison with such imperfect implements, turning the very obstacles to surface. Irvine, in the same case, would have sat down and spat, and grumbled curses. He had the soul of a fat sheep; but, regarded as an artist's model, the exterior of a Greek god. It was a cruel thought to persons less favoured in their birth, that this creature, endowed — to use the language of theatres — with extraordinary "means," should so manage to misemploy them that he looked ugly and almost deformed. It was only by an effort of abstraction, and after many days, that you discovered what he was.

By playing on the oaf's conceit, and standing closely over him, we got a path made round the corner of the dump to our door, so that we could come and go with decent ease; and he even enjoyed the work, for in that there were boulders to be plucked up bodily, bushes to be uprooted, and other occasions for athletic display: but cutting wood was a different matter. Anybody could cut wood; and, besides, my wife was tired of supervising him, and had other things to attend to. And in short, days went by, and Irvine came daily, and talked and lounged and spat; but the firewood remained intact as sleepers on the platform or growing trees upon the mountain-side. Irvine, as a woodcutter, we could tolerate; but Irvine as a friend of the family, at so much a day, was too bald an imposition, and at length, on the afternoon of the fourth or fifth day of our connection, I explained to him, as clearly as I could, the light in which I had grown to regard his presence. I pointed out to him that I could not continue to give him a salary for spitting on the floor; and this expression, which came after a good many others, at last penetrated his obdurate wits. He rose at once, and said if that was the way he was going to be spoke to, he reckoned he would quit. And, no one interposing, he departed.

So far, so good. But we had no firewood. The next afternoon, I strolled down to Rufe's and consulted him on the subject. It was a very droll interview, in the large, bare north room of the Silverado Hotel, Mrs. Hanson's patchwork on a frame, and Rufe, and his wife, and I, and the oaf himself, all more or less embarrassed. Rufe announced there was nobody in the neighbourhood but Irvine who could do a day's work for anybody. Irvine, thereupon, refused to have any more to do with my service; he "wouldn't work no more for a man as had spoke to him 's I had done." I found myself on the point of the last humiliation — driven to beseech the creature whom I had just dismissed with insult: but I took the high hand in despair, said there must be no talk of Irvine coming back unless matters were to be differently managed; that I would rather chop firewood for myself than be fooled; and, in short, the Hansons being eager for the lad's hire, I so imposed upon them with merely affected resolution, that they ended by begging me to re-employ him again, on a solemn promise that he should be more industrious. The promise, I am bound to say, was kept. We soon had a fine pile of firewood at our door; and if Caliban gave me the cold shoulder and spared me his conversation, I thought none the worse of him for that, nor did I find my days much longer for the deprivation.

The leading spirit of the family was, I am inclined to fancy, Mrs. Hanson. Her social brilliancy somewhat dazzled the others, and she had more of the small change of sense. It was she who faced Kelmar, for instance; and perhaps if she had been alone, Kelmar would have had no rule within her doors. Rufe, to be sure, had a fine, sober, open-air attitude of mind, seeing the world without exaggeration — perhaps, we may even say, without enough; for he lacked, along with the others, that commercial idealism which puts so high a value on time and money. Sanity itself is a kind of convention. Perhaps Rufe was wrong; but, looking on life plainly, he was unable to see that croquet or poker were in any way less important than, for instance, mending his waggon. Even his own profession, hunting, was dear to him mainly as a sort of play; even that he would have neglected, had it not appealed to his imagination. His hunting suit, for instance, had cost I should be afraid to say how many bucks — the currency in which he paid his way; it was all befringed, after the Indian fashion, and it was dear to his heart. The pictorial side of his daily business was never forgotten. He was even anxious to stand for his picture in those buckskin, hunting clothes; and I remember how he once warmed almost into enthusiasm, his dark blue eyes growing perceptibly larger, as he planned the composition in which he should appear, “with the horns of some real big bucks, and dogs, and a camp on a crick” (creek, stream).

There was no trace in Irvine of this woodland poetry. He did not care for hunting, nor yet for buckskin suits. He had never observed scenery. The world, as it appeared to him, was almost obliterated by his own great grinning figure in the foreground: Caliban-Malvolio. And it seems to me as if, in the persons of these brothers-in-law, we had the two sides of rusticity fairly well represented: the hunter living really in nature; the clodhopper living merely out of society; the one bent up in every corporal agent to capacity in one pursuit, doing at least one thing keenly and thoughtfully, and thoroughly alive to all that touches it; the other in the inert and bestial state, walking in a faint dream, and taking so dim an impression of the myriad sides of life that he is truly conscious of nothing but himself. It is only in the fastnesses of nature, forests, mountains, and the back of man’s beyond, that a creature endowed with five senses can grow up into the perfection of this crass and earthly vanity. In towns or the busier country sides, he is roughly reminded of other men’s existence; and if he learns no more, he learns at least to fear contempt. But Irvine had come scathless through life, conscious only of himself, of his great strength and intelligence; and in the silence of the universe, to which he did not listen, dwelling with delight on the sound of his own thoughts.

THE SEA-FOGS

A change in the colour of the light usually called me in the morning. By a certain hour, the long, vertical chinks in our western gable, where the boards had shrunk and separated, flashed suddenly into my eyes as stripes of dazzling blue, at once so dark and splendid that I used to marvel how the qualities could be combined. At an earlier hour, the heavens in that quarter were still quietly coloured, but the shoulder of the mountain which shuts in the cañon already glowed with sunlight in a wonderful compound of gold and rose and green; and this too would kindle, although more mildly and with rainbow tints, the fissures of our crazy gable. If I were sleeping heavily, it was the bold blue that struck me awake; if more lightly, then I would come to myself in that earlier and fairer light.

One Sunday morning, about five, the first brightness called me. I rose and turned to the east, not for my devotions, but for air. The night had been very still. The little private gale that blew every evening in our cañon, for ten minutes or perhaps a quarter of an hour, had swiftly blown itself out; in the hours that followed not a sigh of wind had shaken the treetops; and our barracks, for all its breaches, was less fresh that morning than of wont. But I had no sooner reached the window than I forgot all else in the sight that met my eyes, and I made but two bounds into my clothes, and down the crazy plank to the platform.

The sun was still concealed below the opposite hilltops, though it was shining already, not twenty feet above my head, on our own mountain slope. But the scene, beyond a few near features, was entirely changed. Napa Valley was gone; gone were all the lower slopes and woody foot-hills of the range; and in their place, not a thousand feet below me, rolled a great level ocean. It was as though I had gone to bed the night before, safe in a nook of inland mountains, and had awakened in a bay upon the coast. I had seen these inundations from below; at Calistoga I had risen and gone abroad in the early morning, coughing and sneezing, under fathoms on fathoms of grey sea-vapour, like a cloudy sky — a dull sight for the artist, and a painful experience for the invalid. But to sit aloft one's self in the pure air and under the unclouded dome of heaven, and thus look down on the submergence of the valley, was strangely different and even delightful to the eyes. Far away were hilltops like little islands. Nearer, a smoky surf beat about the foot of precipices and poured into all the coves of these rough mountains. The colour of that fog ocean was a thing never to be forgotten. For an instant, among the Hebrides and just about sundown, I have seen something like it on the sea itself.

But the white was not so opaline; nor was there, what surprisingly increased the effect, that breathless, crystal stillness over all. Even in its gentlest moods the salt sea travails, moaning among the weeds or lisping on the sand; but that vast fog ocean lay in a trance of silence, nor did the sweet air of the morning tremble with a sound.

As I continued to sit upon the dump, I began to observe that this sea was not so level as at first sight it appeared to be. Away in the extreme south, a little hill of fog arose against the sky above the general surface, and as it had already caught the sun, it shone on the horizon like the topsails of some giant ship. There were huge waves, stationary, as it seemed, like waves in a frozen sea; and yet, as I looked again, I was not sure but they were moving after all, with a slow and august advance. And while I was yet doubting, a promontory of the hills some four or five miles away, conspicuous by a bouquet of tall pines, was in a single instant overtaken and swallowed up. It appeared in a little, with its pines, but this time as an islet, and only to be swallowed up once more and then for good. This set me looking nearer, and I saw that in every cove along the line of mountains the fog was being piled in higher and higher, as though by some wind that was inaudible to me. I could trace its progress, one pine-tree first growing hazy and then disappearing after another; although sometimes there was none of this fore-running haze, but the whole opaque white ocean gave a start and swallowed a piece of mountain at a gulp. It was to flee these poisonous fogs that I had left the seaboard, and climbed so high among the mountains. And now, behold, here came the fog to besiege me in my chosen altitudes, and yet came so beautifully that my first thought was of welcome.

The sun had now gotten much higher, and through all the gaps of the hills it cast long bars of gold across that white ocean. An eagle, or some other very great bird of the mountain, came wheeling over the nearer pine-tops, and hung, poised and something sideways, as if to look abroad on that unwonted desolation, spying, perhaps with terror, for the eyries of her comrades. Then, with a long cry, she disappeared again towards Lake County and the clearer air. At length it seemed to me as if the flood were beginning to subside. The old landmarks, by whose disappearance I had measured its advance, here a crag, there a brave pine-tree, now began, in the inverse order, to make their reappearance into daylight. I judged all danger of the fog was over. This was not Noah's flood; it was but a morning spring, and would now drift out seaward whence it came. So, mightily relieved, and a good deal exhilarated by the sight, I went into the house to light the fire.

I suppose it was nearly seven when I once more mounted the platform to look abroad. The fog ocean had swelled up enormously since last I saw it; and a few hundred feet below me, in the deep gap where the Toll House stands and the road runs through into Lake County, it had already topped the slope, and was pouring over and down the other side like driving smoke. The wind had climbed along with it; and though I was still in calm air, I could see the trees tossing below me, and their long, strident sighing mounted to me where I stood.

Half an hour later, the fog had surmounted all the ridge on the opposite side of the gap, though a shoulder of the mountain still warded it out of our cañon. Napa Valley and its bounding hills were now utterly blotted out. The fog, sunny white in the sunshine, was pouring over into Lake County in a huge, ragged cataract, tossing tree-tops appearing and disappearing in the spray. The air struck with a little chill, and set me coughing. It smelt strong of the fog, like the smell of a washing-house, but with a shrewd tang of the sea salt.

Had it not been for two things — the sheltering spur which answered as a dyke, and the great valley on the other side which rapidly engulfed whatever mounted — our own little platform in the cañon must have been already buried a hundred feet in salt and poisonous air. As it was, the interest of the scene entirely occupied our minds. We were set just out of the wind, and but just above the fog; we could listen to the voice of the one as to music on the stage; we could plunge our eyes down into the other, as into some flowing stream from over the parapet of a bridge; thus we looked on upon a strange, impetuous, silent, shifting exhibition of the powers of nature, and saw the familiar landscape changing from moment to moment like figures in a dream.

The imagination loves to trifle with what is not. Had this been indeed the deluge, I should have felt more strongly, but the emotion would have been similar in kind. I played with the idea, as the child flees in delighted terror from the creations of his fancy. The look of the thing helped me. And when at last I began to flee up the mountain, it was indeed partly to escape from the raw air that kept me coughing, but it was also part in play.

As I ascended the mountain-side, I came once more to overlook the upper surface of the fog; but it wore a different appearance from what I had beheld at daybreak. For, first, the sun now fell on it from high overhead, and its surface shone and undulated like a great nor’land moor country, sheeted with untrodden morning snow. And next the new level must have been a thousand or fifteen hundred feet higher than the old, so that only five or six points of all the broken country below me, still stood out. Napa Valley was now one with Sonoma on the west. On the hither side, only a thin scattered fringe of bluffs was unsubmerged; and through all the gaps the fog was pouring over, like an ocean, into the blue clear sunny country on the east. There it was soon lost; for it fell instantly into the bottom of the valleys, following the water-shed; and the hill-tops in that quarter were still clear cut upon the eastern sky.

Through the Toll House gap and over the near ridges on the other side, the deluge was immense. A spray of thin vapour was thrown high above it, rising and falling, and blown into fantastic shapes. The speed of its course was like a mountain torrent. Here and there a few treetops were discovered and then whelmed again; and for one second, the bough of a dead pine beckoned out of the spray like the arm of a drowning man. But still the imagination was dissatisfied, still the ear waited for something more. Had this indeed been water (as it seemed so, to the eye), with what a plunge of reverberating thunder would it have rolled upon its course, disembowelling mountains and deracinating pines! And yet water it was, and sea-water at that — true Pacific billows, only somewhat rarefied, rolling in mid-air among the hilltops.

I climbed still higher, among the red rattling gravel and dwarf underwood of Mount Saint Helena, until I could look right down upon Silverado, and admire the favoured nook in which it lay. The sunny plain of fog was several hundred feet higher; behind the protecting spur a gigantic accumulation of cottony vapour threatened, with every second, to blow over and submerge our homestead; but the vortex setting past the Toll House was too strong; and there lay our little platform, in the arms of the deluge, but still enjoying its unbroken sunshine. About eleven, however, thin spray came flying over the friendly buttress, and I began to think the fog had hunted out its Jonah after all. But it was the last effort. The wind veered while we were at dinner, and began to blow squally from the mountain summit; and by half-past one, all that world of sea-fogs was utterly routed and flying here and there into the south in little rags of cloud. And instead of a lone sea-beach, we found ourselves once more inhabiting a high mountain-side, with the clear green country far below us, and the light smoke of Calistoga blowing in the air.

This was the great Russian campaign for that season. Now and then, in the early morning, a little white lakelet of fog would be seen far down in Napa Valley; but the heights were not again assailed, nor was the surrounding world again shut off from Silverado.

THE TOLL HOUSE

The Toll House, standing alone by the wayside under nodding pines, with its streamlet and water-tank; its backwoods, toll-bar, and well-trodden croquet ground; the ostler standing by the stable door, chewing a straw; a glimpse of the Chinese cook in the back parts; and Mr. Hoddy in the bar, gravely alert and serviceable, and equally anxious to lend or borrow books; — dozed all day in the dusty sunshine, more than half asleep. There were no neighbours, except the Hansons up the hill. The traffic on the road was infinitesimal; only, at rare intervals, a couple in a waggon, or a dusty farmer on a spring-board, toiling over "the grade" to that metropolitan hamlet, Calistoga; and, at the fixed hours, the passage of the stages.

The nearest building was the schoolhouse, down the road; and the school-ma'am boarded at the Toll House, walking thence in the morning to the little brown shanty, where she taught the young ones of the district, and returning thither pretty weary in the afternoon. She had chosen this outlying situation, I understood, for her health. Mr. Corwin was consumptive; so was Rufe; so was Mr. Jennings, the engineer. In short, the place was a kind of small Davos: consumptive folk consorting on a hilltop in the most unbroken idleness. Jennings never did anything that I could see, except now and then to fish, and generally to sit about in the bar and the veranda, waiting for something to happen. Corwin and Rufe did as little as possible; and if the school-ma'am, poor lady, had to work pretty hard all morning, she subsided when it was over into much the same dazed beatitude as all the rest.

Her special corner was the parlour — a very genteel room, with Bible prints, a crayon portrait of Mrs. Corwin in the height of fashion, a few years ago, another of her son (Mr. Corwin was not represented), a mirror, and a selection of dried grasses. A large book was laid religiously on the table — "From Palace to Hovel," I believe, its name — full of the raciest experiences in England. The author had mingled freely with all classes, the nobility particularly meeting him with open arms; and I must say that traveller had ill requited his reception. His book, in short, was a capital instance of the Penny Messalina school of literature; and there arose from it, in that cool parlour, in that silent, wayside, mountain inn, a rank atmosphere of gold and blood and "Jenkins," and the "Mysteries of London," and sickening, inverted snobbery, fit to knock you down. The mention of this book reminds me of another and far racier picture of our island life. The latter parts of *Rocambole* are surely too sparingly consulted in the country which they celebrate. No man’s education can be said to be complete, nor can he pronounce the world yet emptied of enjoyment, till he has made the acquaintance of “The Reverend Patterson, director of the Evangelical Society.” To follow the evolutions of that reverend gentleman, who goes through scenes in which even Mr. Duffield would hesitate to place a bishop, is to rise to new ideas. But, alas! there was no Patterson about the Toll House. Only, alongside of “From Palace to Hovel,” a sixpenny “Ouida” figured. So literature, you see, was not unrepresented.

The school-ma’am had friends to stay with her, other school-ma’ams enjoying their holidays, quite a bevy of damsels. They seemed never to go out, or not beyond the veranda, but sat close in the little parlour, quietly talking or listening to the wind among the trees. Sleep dwelt in the Toll House, like a fixture: summer sleep, shallow, soft, and dreamless. A cuckoo clock, a great rarity in such a place, hooted at intervals about the echoing house; and Mr. Jennings would open his eyes for a moment in the bar, and turn the leaf of a newspaper, and the resting school-ma’ams in the parlour would be recalled to the consciousness of their inaction. Busy Mrs. Corwin and her busy Chinaman might be heard indeed, in the penetralia, pounding dough or rattling dishes; or perhaps Rufe had called up some of the sleepers for a game of croquet, and the hollow strokes of the mallet sounded far away among the woods; but with these exceptions, it was sleep and sunshine and dust, and the wind in the pine-trees, all day long.

A little before stage time, that castle of indolence awoke. The ostler threw his straw away and set to his preparations. Mr. Jennings rubbed his eyes; happy Mr. Jennings, the something he had been waiting for all day about to happen at last! The boarders gathered in the veranda, silently giving ear, and gazing down the road with shaded eyes. And as yet there was no sign for the senses, not a sound, not a tremor of the mountain road. The birds, to whom the secret of the hooting cuckoo is unknown, must have set down to instinct this premonitory bustle.

And then the first of the two stages swooped upon the Toll House with a roar and in a cloud of dust; and the shock had not yet time to subside, before the second was abreast of it. Huge concerns they were, well horsed and loaded, the men in their shirt-sleeves, the women swathed in veils, the long whip cracking like a pistol; and as they charged upon that slumbering hostelry, each shepherding a dust storm, the dead place blossomed into life and talk and clatter. This the Toll House? — with its city throng, its jostling shoulders, its infinity of instant business in the bar? The mind would not receive it! The heartfelt bustle of that hour is hardly credible; the thrill of the great shower of letters from the post-bag, the childish hope and interest with which one gazed in all these strangers' eyes. They paused there but to pass: the blue-clad China-boy, the San Francisco magnate, the mystery in the dust coat, the secret memoirs in tweed, the ogling, well-shod lady with her troop of girls; they did but flash and go; they were hull-down for us behind life's ocean, and we but hailed their topsails on the line. Yet, out of our great solitude of four and twenty mountain hours, we thrilled to their momentary presence; gauged and divined them, loved and hated; and stood light-headed in that storm of human electricity. Yes, like Piccadilly Circus, this is also one of life's crossing-places. Here I beheld one man, already famous or infamous, a centre of pistol-shots; and another who, if not yet known to rumour, will fill a column of the Sunday paper when he comes to hang — a burly, thick-set, powerful Chinese desperado, six long bristles upon either lip; redolent of whisky, playing-cards, and pistols; swaggering in the bar with the lowest assumption of the lowest European manners; rapping out blackguard English oaths in his canorous oriental voice; and combining in one person the depravities of two races and two civilisations. For all his lust and vigour, he seemed to look cold upon me from the valley of the shadow of the gallows. He imagined a vain thing; and while he drained his cocktail, Holbein's death was at his elbow. Once, too, I fell in talk with another of these flitting strangers — like the rest, in his shirt-sleeves and all begrimed with dust — and the next minute we were discussing Paris and London, theatres and wines. To him, journeying from one human place to another, this was a trifle; but to me! No, Mr. Lillie, I have not forgotten it.

And presently the city-tide was at its flood and began to ebb. Life runs in Piccadilly Circus, say, from nine to one, and then, there also, ebbs into the small hours of the echoing policeman and the lamps and stars. But the Toll House is far up stream, and near its rural springs; the bubble of the tide but touches it. Before you had yet grasped your pleasure, the horses were put to, the loud whips volleyed, and the tide was gone. North and south had the two stages vanished, the towering dust subsided in the woods; but there was still an interval before the flush had fallen on your cheeks, before the ear became once more contented with the silence, or the seven sleepers of the Toll House dozed back to their accustomed corners. Yet a little, and the ostler would swing round the great barrier across the road; and in the golden evening, that dreamy inn begin to trim its lamps and spread the board for supper.

As I recall the place — the green dell below; the spires of pine; the sun-warm, scented air; that grey, gabled inn, with its faint stirrings of life amid the slumber of the mountains — I slowly awake to a sense of admiration, gratitude, and almost love. A fine place, after all, for a wasted life to doze away in — the cuckoo clock hooting of its far home country; the croquet mallets, eloquent of English lawns; the stages daily bringing news of the turbulent world away below there; and perhaps once in the summer, a salt fog pouring overhead with its tale of the Pacific.

A STARRY DRIVE

In our rule at Silverado, there was a melancholy interregnum. The queen and the crown prince with one accord fell sick; and, as I was sick to begin with, our lone position on Mount Saint Helena was no longer tenable, and we had to hurry back to Calistoga and a cottage on the green. By that time we had begun to realise the difficulties of our position. We had found what an amount of labour it cost to support life in our red cañon; and it was the dearest desire of our hearts to get a China-boy to go along with us when we returned. We could have given him a whole house to himself, self-contained, as they say in the advertisements; and on the money question we were prepared to go far. Kong Sam Kee, the Calistoga washerman, was entrusted with the affair; and from day to day it languished on, with protestations on our part and mellifluous excuses on the part of Kong Sam Kee.

At length, about half-past eight of our last evening, with the waggon ready harnessed to convey us up the grade, the washerman, with a somewhat sneering air, produced the boy. He was a handsome, gentlemanly lad, attired in rich dark blue, and shod with snowy white; but, alas! he had heard rumours of Silverado. He knew it for a lone place on the mountain-side, with no friendly wash-house near by, where he might smoke a pipe of opium o' nights with other China-boys, and lose his little earnings at the game of tan; and he first backed out for more money; and then, when that demand was satisfied, refused to come point blank. He was wedded to his wash-houses; he had no taste for the rural life; and we must go to our mountain servantless. It must have been near half an hour before we reached that conclusion, standing in the midst of Calistoga high street under the stars, and the China-boy and Kong Sam Kee singing their pigeon English in the sweetest voices and with the most musical inflections.

We were not, however, to return alone; we brought with us a painter guest, who proved to be a most good-natured comrade and a capital hand at an omelette. I do not know in which capacity he was most valued — as a cook or a companion; and he did excellently well in both.

The Kong Sam Kee negotiation had delayed us unduly; it must have been half-past nine before we left Calistoga, and night came fully ere we struck the bottom of the grade. I have never seen such a night. It seemed to throw calumny in the teeth of all the painters that ever dabbled in starlight. The sky itself was of a ruddy, powerful, nameless, changing colour, dark and glossy like a serpent's back. The stars by innumerable millions, stuck boldly forth like lamps. The milky way was bright, like a moonlit cloud; half heaven seemed milky way. The greater luminaries shone each more clearly than a winter's moon. Their light was dyed in every sort of colour — red, like fire; blue, like steel; green, like the tracks of sunset; and so sharply did each stand forth in its own lustre that there was no appearance of that flat, star-spangled arch we know so well in pictures, but all the hollow of heaven was one chaos of contesting luminaries — a hurly-burly of stars. Against this the hills and rugged treetops stood out redly dark.

As we continued to advance, the lesser lights and milky ways first grew pale, and then vanished; the countless hosts of heaven dwindled in number by successive millions; those that still shone had tempered their exceeding brightness and fallen back into their customary wistful distance; and the sky declined from its first bewildering splendour into the appearance of a common night. Slowly this change proceeded, and still there was no sign of any cause. Then a whiteness like mist was thrown over the spurs of the mountain. Yet awhile, and, as we turned a corner, a great leap of silver light and net of forest shadows fell across the road and upon our wondering waggonful and, swimming low among the trees, we beheld a strange, misshapen, waning moon, half tilted on her back.

"Where are ye when the moon appears?" so the old poet sang, half taunting, to the stars, bent upon a courtly purpose.

"As the sunlight round the dim earth's midnight tower of shadow pours,
Streaming past the dim, wide portals,
Viewless to the eyes of mortals,
Till it floods the moon's pale islet or the morning's golden shores."

So sings Mr. Trowbridge, with a noble inspiration. And so had the sunlight flooded that pale islet of the moon, and her lit face put out, one after another, that galaxy of stars. The wonder of the drive was over; but, by some nice conjunction of clearness in the air and fit shadow in the valley where we travelled, we had seen for a little while that brave display of the midnight heavens. It was gone, but it had been; nor shall I ever again behold the stars with the same mind. He who has seen the sea commoved with a great hurricane, thinks of it very differently from him who has seen it only in a calm. And the difference between a calm and a hurricane is not greatly more striking than that between the ordinary face of night and the splendour that shone upon us in that drive. Two in our waggon knew night as she shines upon the tropics, but even that bore no comparison. The nameless colour of the sky, the hues of the star fire, and the incredible projection of the stars themselves, starting from their orbits, so that the eye seemed to distinguish their positions in the hollow of space —

these were things that we had never seen before and shall never see again.

Meanwhile, in this altered night, we proceeded on our way among the scents and silence of the forest, reached the top of the grade, wound up by Hanson's, and came at last to a stand under the flying gargoyle of the chute. Lloyd, who had been lying back, fast asleep, with the moon on his face, got down, with the remark that it was pleasant "to be home." The waggon turned and drove away, the noise gently dying in the woods, and we clambered up the rough path, Caliban's great feat of engineering, and came home to Silverado.

The moon shone in at the eastern doors and windows and over the lumber, on the platform. The one tall pine beside the ledge was steeped in silver. Away up the cañon, a wild cat welcomed us with three discordant squalls. But once we had lit a candle, and began to review our improvements, homely in either sense, and count our stores, it was wonderful what a feeling of possession and permanence grew up in the hearts of the lords of Silverado. A bed had still to be made up for our guest, and the morning's water to be fetched, with clinking pail; and as we set about these household duties, and showed off our wealth and conveniences before the stranger, and had a glass of wine, I think, in honour of our return, and trooped at length one after another up the flying bridge of plank, and laid down to sleep in our shattered, moon-pierced barrack, we were among the happiest sovereigns in the world, and certainly ruled over the most contented people. Yet, in our absence, the palace had been sacked. Wild cats, so the Hansons said, had broken in and carried off a side of bacon, a hatchet, and two knives.

EPISODES IN THE STORY OF A MINE

No one could live at Silverado and not be curious about the story of the mine. We were surrounded by so many evidences of expense and toil, we lived so entirely in the wreck of that great enterprise, like mites in the ruins of a cheese, that the idea of the old din and bustle haunted our repose. Our own house, the forge, the dump, the chutes, the rails, the windlass, the mass of broken plant; the two tunnels, one far below in the green dell, the other on the platform where we kept our wine; the deep shaft, with the sun-glints and the water-drops; above all, the ledge, that great gaping slice out of the mountain shoulder, propped apart by wooden wedges, on whose immediate margin, high above our heads, the one tall pine precariously nodded, — these stood for its greatness; while the dog-hutch, boot-jacks, old boots, old tavern bills, and the very beds that we inherited from bygone miners, put in human touches and realised for us the story of the past.

I have sat on an old sleeper, under the thick madronas near the forge, with just a look over the dump on the green world below, and seen the sun lying broad among the wreck, and heard the silence broken only by the tinkling water in the shaft, or a stir of the royal family about the battered palace, and my mind has gone back to the epoch of the Stanleys and the Chapmans, with a grand *tutti* of pick and drill, hammer and anvil, echoing about the cañon; the assayer hard at it in our dining-room; the carts below on the road, and their cargo of red mineral bounding and thundering down the iron chute. And now all gone — all fallen away into this sunny silence and desertion: a family of squatters dining in the assayer's office, making their beds in the big sleeping room erstwhile so crowded, keeping their wine in the tunnel that once rang with picks.

But Silverado itself, although now fallen in its turn into decay, was once but a mushroom, and had succeeded to other mines and other flitting cities. Twenty years ago, away down the glen on the Lake County side there was a place, Jonestown by name, with two thousand inhabitants dwelling under canvas, and one roofed house for the sale of whisky. Round on the western side of Mount Saint Helena, there was at the same date a second large encampment, its name, if it ever had one, lost for me. Both of these have perished, leaving not a stick and scarce a memory behind them. Tide after tide of hopeful miners have thus flowed and ebbed about the mountain, coming and going, now by lone prospectors, now with a rush. Last in order of time came Silverado, reared the big mill, in the valley, founded the town which is now represented, monumentally, by Hanson's, pierced all these slaps and shafts and tunnels, and in turn declined and died away.

“Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence.”

As to the success of Silverado in its time of being, two reports were current. According to the first, six hundred thousand dollars were taken out of that great upright seam, that still hung open above us on crazy wedges. Then the ledge pinched out, and there followed, in quest of the remainder, a great drifting and tunnelling in all directions, and a great consequent effusion of dollars, until, all parties being sick of the expense, the mine was deserted, and the town decamped. According to the second version, told me with much secrecy of manner, the whole affair, mine, mill, and town, were parts of one majestic swindle. There had never come any silver out of any portion of the mine; there was no silver to come. At midnight trains of packhorses might have been observed winding by devious tracks about the shoulder of the mountain. They came from far away, from Amador or Placer, laden with silver in “old cigar-boxes.” They discharged their load at Silverado, in the hour of sleep; and before the morning they were gone again with their mysterious drivers to their unknown source. In this way, twenty thousand pounds’ worth of silver was smuggled in under cover of night, in these old cigar-boxes; mixed with Silverado mineral; carted down to the mill; crushed, amalgamated, and refined, and despatched to the city as the proper product of the mine. Stock-jobbing, if it can cover such expenses, must be a profitable business in San Francisco.

I give these two versions as I got them. But I place little reliance on either, my belief in history having been greatly shaken. For it chanced that I had come to dwell in Silverado at a critical hour; great events in its history were about to happen — did happen, as I am led to believe; nay, and it will be seen that I played a part in that revolution myself. And yet from first to last I never had a glimmer of an idea what was going on; and even now, after full reflection, profess myself at sea. That there was some obscure intrigue of the cigar-box order, and that I, in the character of a wooden puppet, set pen to paper in the interest of somebody, so much, and no more, is certain.

Silverado, then under my immediate sway, belonged to one whom I will call a Mr. Ronalds. I only knew him through the extraordinarily distorting medium of local gossip, now as a momentous jobber; now as a dupe to point an adage; and again, and much more probably, as an ordinary Christian gentleman like you or me, who had opened a mine and worked it for awhile with better and worse fortune. So, through a defective window-pane, you may see the passer-by shoot up into a hunch-backed giant, or dwindle into a pot-bellied dwarf.

To Ronalds, at least, the mine belonged; but the notice by which he held it would run out upon the 30th of June — or rather, as I suppose, it had run out already, and the month of grace would expire upon that day, after which any American citizen might post a notice of his own, and make Silverado his. This, with a sort of quiet slyness, Rufe told me at an early period of our acquaintance. There was no silver, of course; the mine "wasn't worth nothing, Mr. Stevens," but there was a deal of old iron and wood around, and to gain possession of this old wood and iron, and get a right to the water, Rufe proposed, if I had no objections, to "jump the claim."

Of course, I had no objection. But I was filled with wonder. If all he wanted was the wood and iron, what, in the name of fortune, was to prevent him taking them? "His right there was none to dispute." He might lay hands on all to-morrow, as the wild cats had laid hands upon our knives and hatchet. Besides, was this mass of heavy mining plant worth transportation? If it was, why had not the rightful owners carted it away? If it was, would they not preserve their title to these movables, even after they had lost their title to the mine? And if it were not, what the better was Rufe? Nothing would grow at Silverado; there was even no wood to cut; beyond a sense of property, there was nothing to be gained. Lastly, was it at all credible that Ronalds would forget what Rufe remembered? The days of grace were not yet over; any fine morning he might appear, paper in hand, and enter for another year on his inheritance. However, it was none of my business; all seemed legal; Rufe or Ronalds, all was one to me.

On the morning of the 27th, Mrs. Hanson appeared with the milk as usual, in her sun-bonnet. The time would be out on Tuesday, she reminded us, and bade me be in readiness to play my part, though I had no idea what it was to be. And suppose Ronalds came? we asked. She received the idea with derision, laughing aloud with all her fine teeth. He could not find the mine to save his life, it appeared, without Rufe to guide him. Last year, when he came, they heard him "up and down the road a-hollerin' and a-raisin' Cain." And at last he had to come to the Hansons in despair, and bid Rufe, "Jump into your pants and shoes, and show me where this old mine is, anyway!" Seeing that Ronalds had laid out so much money in the spot, and that a beaten road led right up to the bottom of the dump, I thought this a remarkable example. The sense of locality must be singularly in abeyance in the case of Ronalds.

That same evening, supper comfortably over, our guest busy at work on a drawing of the dump and the opposite hills, we were all out on the platform together, sitting there, under the tented heavens, with the same sense of privacy as if we had been cabined in a parlour, when the sound of brisk footsteps came mounting up the path. We pricked our ears at this, for the tread seemed lighter and firmer than was usual with our country neighbours. And presently, sure enough, two town gentlemen, with cigars and kid gloves, came debouching past the house. They looked in that place like a blasphemy.

"Good-evening," they said. For none of us had stirred; we all sat stiff with wonder.

"Good-evening," I returned; and then, to put them at their ease, "A stiff climb," I added.

"Yes," replied the leader; "but we have to thank you for this path."

I did not like the man's tone. None of us liked it. He did not seem embarrassed by the meeting, but threw us his remarks like favours, and strode magisterially by us towards the shaft and tunnel.

Presently we heard his voice raised to his companion. "We drifted every sort of way, but couldn't strike the ledge." Then again: "It pinched out here." And once more: "Every miner that ever worked upon it says there's bound to be a ledge somewhere."

These were the snatches of his talk that reached us, and they had a damning significance. We, the lords of Silverado, had come face to face with our superior. It is the worst of all quaint and of all cheap ways of life that they bring us at last to the pinch of some humiliation. I liked well enough to be a squatter when there was none but Hanson by; before Ronalds, I will own, I somewhat quailed. I hastened to do him fealty, said I gathered he was the Squattee, and apologised. He threatened me with ejection, in a manner grimly pleasant — more pleasant to him, I fancy, than to me; and then he passed off into praises of the former state of Silverado. "It was the busiest little mining town you ever saw": a population of between a thousand and fifteen hundred souls, the engine in full blast, the mill newly erected; nothing going but champagne, and hope the order of the day. Ninety thousand dollars came out; a hundred and forty thousand were put in, making a net loss of fifty thousand. The last days, I gathered, the days of John Stanley, were not so bright; the champagne had ceased to flow, the population was already moving elsewhere, and Silverado had begun to wither in the branch before it was cut to the root. The last shot that was fired knocked over the stove chimney, and made that hole in the roof of our barrack, through which the sun was wont to visit slug-a-beds towards afternoon. A noisy last shot, to inaugurate the days of silence.

Throughout this interview, my conscience was a good deal exercised; and I was moved to throw myself on my knees and own the intended treachery. But then I had Hanson to consider. I was in much the same position as Old Rowley, that royal humourist, whom "the rogue had taken into his confidence." And again, here was Ronalds on the spot. He must know the day of the month as well as Hanson and I.

If a broad hint were necessary, he had the broadest in the world. For a large board had been nailed by the crown prince on the very front of our house, between the door and window, painted in cinnabar — the pigment of the country — with doggrel rhymes and contumelious pictures, and announcing in terms unnecessarily figurative, that the trick was already played, the claim already jumped, and the author of the placard the legitimate successor of Mr. Ronalds. But no, nothing could save that man; *quem deus vult perdere, prius dementat*. As he came so he went, and left his rights depending.

Late at night, by Silverado reckoning, and after we were all abed, Mrs. Hanson returned to give us the newest of her news. It was like a scene in a ship's steerage: all of us abed in our different tiers, the single candle struggling with the darkness, and this plump handsome woman, seated on an upturned valise beside the bunks, talking and showing her fine teeth, and laughing till the rafters rang. Any ship, to be sure, with a hundredth part as many holes in it as our barrack, must long ago have gone to her last port. Up to that time I had always imagined Mrs. Hanson's loquacity to be mere incontinence, that she said what was uppermost for the pleasure of speaking, and laughed and laughed again as a kind of musical accompaniment. But I now found there was an art in it. I found it less communicative than silence itself. I wished to know why Ronalds had come; how he had found his way without Rufe; and why, being on the spot, he had not refreshed his title. She talked interminably on, but her replies were never answers. She fled under a cloud of words; and when I had made sure that she was purposely eluding me, I dropped the subject in my turn, and let her rattle where she would.

She had come to tell us that, instead of waiting for Tuesday, the claim was to be jumped on the morrow. How? If the time were not out, it was impossible. Why? If Ronalds had come and gone and done nothing, there was the less cause for hurry. But again I could reach no satisfaction. The claim was to be jumped next morning, that was all that she would condescend upon.

And yet it was not jumped the next morning, nor yet the next, and a whole week had come and gone before we heard more of this exploit. That day week, however, a day of great heat, Hanson, with a little roll of paper in his hand, and the eternal pipe alight; Breedlove, his large, dull friend, to act, I suppose, as witness; Mrs. Hanson in her Sunday best; and all the children from the eldest to the youngest; — arrived in a procession, tailing one behind another up the path. Caliban was absent, but he had been chary of his friendly visits since the row; and with that exception, the whole family was gathered together as for a marriage or a christening. Strong was sitting at work, in the shade of the dwarf madronas near the forge; and they planted themselves about him in a circle, one on a stone, another on the waggon rails, a third on a piece of plank. Gradually the children stole away up the cañon to where there was another chute, somewhat smaller than the one across the dump; and down this chute, for the rest of the afternoon, they poured one avalanche of stones after another, waking the echoes of the glen. Meanwhile we elders sat together on the platform, Hanson and his friend smoking in silence like Indian sachems, Mrs. Hanson rattling on as usual with an adroit volubility, saying nothing, but keeping the party at their ease like a courtly hostess.

Not a word occurred about the business of the day. Once, twice, and thrice I tried to slide the subject in, but was discouraged by the stoic apathy of Rufe, and beaten down before the pouring verbiage of his wife. There is nothing of the Indian brave about me, and I began to grill with impatience. At last, like a highway robber, I cornered Hanson, and bade him stand and deliver his business. Thereupon he gravely rose, as though to hint that this was not a proper place, nor the subject one suitable for squaws, and I, following his example, led him up the plank into our barrack. There he bestowed himself on a box, and unrolled his papers with fastidious deliberation. There were two sheets of note-paper, and an old mining notice, dated May 30th, 1879, part print, part manuscript, and the latter much obliterated by the rains. It was by this identical piece of paper that the mine had been held last year. For thirteen months it had endured the weather and the change of seasons on a cairn behind the shoulder of the cañon; and it was now my business, spreading it before me on the table, and sitting on a valise, to copy its terms with some necessary changes, twice over on the two sheets of note-paper. One was then to be placed on the same cairn — a "mound of rocks" the notice put it; and the other to be lodged for registration.

Rufe watched me, silently smoking, till I came to the place for the locator's name at the end of the first copy; and when I proposed that he should sign, I thought I saw a scare in his eye. "I don't think that'll be necessary," he said slowly; "just you write it down." Perhaps this mighty hunter, who was the most active member of the local school board, could not write. There would be nothing strange in that. The constable of Calistoga is, and has been for years, a bed-ridden man, and, if I remember rightly, blind. He had more need of the emoluments than another, it was explained; and it was easy for him to "depytise," with a strong accent on the last. So friendly and so free are popular institutions.

When I had done my scrivening, Hanson strolled out, and addressed Breedlove, "Will you step up here a bit?" and after they had disappeared a little while into the chaparral and madrona thicket, they came back again, minus a notice, and the deed was done. The claim was jumped; a tract of mountain side, fifteen hundred feet long by six hundred wide, with all the earth's precious bowels, had passed from Ronalds to Hanson, and, in the passage, changed its name from the "Mammoth" to the "Calistoga." I had tried to get Rufe to call it after his wife, after himself, and after Garfield, the Republican Presidential candidate of the hour — since then elected, and, alas! dead — but all was in vain. The claim had once been called the Calistoga before, and he seemed to feel safety in returning to that.

And so the history of that mine became once more plunged in darkness, lit only by some monster pyrotechnical displays of gossip. And perhaps the most curious feature of the whole matter is this: that we should have dwelt in this quiet corner of the mountains, with not a dozen neighbours, and yet struggled all the while, like desperate swimmers, in this sea of falsities and contradictions. Wherever a man is, there will be a lie.

TOILS AND PLEASURES

I must try to convey some notion of our life, of how the days passed and what pleasure we took in them, of what there was to do and how we set about doing it, in our mountain hermitage. The house, after we had repaired the worst of the damages, and filled in some of the doors and windows with white cotton cloth, became a healthy and a pleasant dwelling-place, always airy and dry, and haunted by the outdoor perfumes of the glen. Within, it had the look of habitation, the human look. You had only to go into the third room, which we did not use, and see its stones, its shifting earth, its tumbled litter; and then return to our lodging, with the beds made, the plates on the rack, the pail of bright water behind the door, the stove crackling in a corner, and perhaps the table roughly laid against a meal, — and man's order, the little clean spots that he creates to dwell in, were at once contrasted with the rich passivity of nature. And yet our house was everywhere so wrecked and shattered, the air came and went so freely, the sun found so many portholes, the golden outdoor glow shone in so many open chinks, that we enjoyed, at the same time, some of the comforts of a roof and much of the gaiety and brightness of *al fresco* life. A single shower of rain, to be sure, and we should have been drowned out like mice. But ours was a Californian summer, and an earthquake was a far likelier accident than a shower of rain.

Trustful in this fine weather, we kept the house for kitchen and bedroom, and used the platform as our summer parlour. The sense of privacy, as I have said already, was complete. We could look over the dump on miles of forest and rough hilltop; our eyes commanded some of Napa Valley, where the train ran, and the little country townships sat so close together along the line of the rail. But here there was no man to intrude. None but the Hansons were our visitors. Even they came but at long intervals, or twice daily, at a stated hour, with milk. So our days, as they were never interrupted, drew out to the greater length; hour melted insensibly into hour; the household duties, though they were many, and some of them laborious, dwindled into mere islets of business in a sea of sunny daytime; and it appears to me, looking back, as though the far greater part of our life at Silverado had been passed, propped upon an elbow, or seated on a plank, listening to the silence that there is among the hills.

My work, it is true, was over early in the morning. I rose before any one else, lit the stove, put on the water to boil, and strolled forth upon the platform to wait till it was ready. Silverado would then be still in shadow, the sun shining on the mountain higher up. A clean smell of trees, a smell of the earth at morning, hung in the air. Regularly, every day, there was a single bird, not singing, but awkwardly chirruping among the green madronas, and the sound was cheerful, natural, and stirring. It did not hold the attention, nor interrupt the thread of meditation, like a blackbird or a nightingale; it was mere woodland prattle, of which the mind was conscious like a perfume. The freshness of these morning seasons remained with me far on into the day.

As soon as the kettle boiled, I made porridge and coffee; and that, beyond the literal drawing of water, and the preparation of kindling, which it would be hyperbolical to call the hewing of wood, ended my domestic duties for the day. Thenceforth my wife laboured single-handed in the palace, and I lay or wandered on the platform at my own sweet will. The little corner near the forge, where we found a refuge under the madronas from the unsparing early sun, is indeed connected in my mind with some nightmare encounters over Euclid, and the Latin Grammar. These were known as Crown Prince's lessons. He was supposed to be the victim and the sufferer; but here there must have been some misconception, for whereas I generally retired to bed after one of these engagements, he was no sooner set free than he dashed up to the Chinaman's house, where he had installed a printing-press, that great element of civilisation, and the sound of his labours would be faintly audible about the cañon half the day.

To walk at all was a laborious business; the foot sank and slid, the boots were cut to pieces, among sharp, uneven, rolling stones. When we crossed the platform in any direction, it was usual to lay a course, following as much as possible the line of waggon rails. Thus, if water were to be drawn, the water-carrier left the house along some tilting planks that we had laid down, and not laid down very well. These carried him to that great highroad, the railway; and the railway served him as far as to the head of the shaft. But from thence to the spring and back again he made the best of his unaided way, staggering among the stones, and wading in low growth of the calcanthus, where the rattlesnakes lay hissing at his passage. Yet I liked to draw water. It was pleasant to dip the grey metal pail into the clean, colourless, cool water; pleasant to carry it back, with the water lipping at the edge, and a broken sunbeam quivering in the midst.

But the extreme roughness of the walking confined us in common practice to the platform, and indeed to those parts of it that were most easily accessible along the line of rails. The rails came straight forward from the shaft, here and there overgrown with little green bushes, but still entire, and still carrying a truck, which it was Lloyd's delight to trundle to and fro by the hour with various ladings. About midway down the platform, the railroad trended to the right, leaving our house and coasting along the far side within a few yards of the madronas and the forge, and not far off the latter, ended in a sort of platform on the edge of the dump. There, in old days, the trucks were tipped, and their load sent thundering down the chute. There, besides, was the only spot where we could approach the margin of the dump. Anywhere else, you took your life in your right hand when you came within a yard and a half to peer over. For at any moment the dump might begin to slide and carry you down and bury you below its ruins. Indeed, the neighbourhood of an old mine is a place beset with dangers. For as still as Silverado was, at any moment the report of rotten wood might tell us that the platform had fallen into the shaft; the dump might begin to pour into the road below; or a wedge slip in the great upright seam, and hundreds of tons of mountain bury the scene of our encampment.

I have already compared the dump to a rampart, built certainly by some rude people, and for prehistoric wars. It was likewise a frontier. All below was green and woodland, the tall pines soaring one above another, each with a firm outline and full spread of bough. All above was arid, rocky, and bald. The great spout of broken mineral, that had dammed the cañon up, was a creature of man's handiwork, its material dug out with a pick and powder, and spread by the service of the trucks. But nature herself, in that upper district, seemed to have had an eye to nothing besides mining; and even the natural hillside was all sliding gravel and precarious boulder. Close at the margin of the well leaves would decay to skeletons and mummies, which at length some stronger gust would carry clear of the cañon and scatter in the subjacent woods. Even moisture and decaying vegetable matter could not, with all nature's alchemy, concoct enough soil to nourish a few poor grasses. It is the same, they say, in the neighbourhood of all silver mines; the nature of that precious rock being stubborn with quartz and poisonous with cinnabar. Both were plenty in our Silverado. The stones sparkled white in the sunshine with quartz; they were all stained red with cinnabar. Here, doubtless, came the Indians of yore to paint their faces for the war-path; and cinnabar, if I remember rightly, was one of the few articles of Indian commerce. Now, the Crown Prince had it in his undisturbed possession, to pound down and slake, and paint his rude designs with. But to me it had always a fine flavour of poetry, compounded out of Indian story and Hawthornden's allusion:

"Desire, alas! I desire a Zeuxis new,
From Indies borrowing gold, from Eastern skies
Most bright cinoper ..."

Yet this is but half the picture; our Silverado platform has another side to it. Though there was no soil, and scarce a blade of grass, yet out of these tumbled gravel-heaps and broken boulders, a flower garden bloomed as at home in a conservatory. Calcanthus crept, like a hardy weed, all over our rough parlour, choking the railway, and pushing forth its rusty, aromatic cones from between two blocks of shattered mineral. Azaleas made a big snow-bed just above the well. The shoulder of the hill waved white with Mediterranean heath. In the crannies of the ledge and about the spurs of the tall pine, a red flowering stone-plant hung in clusters. Even the low, thorny chaparral was thick with pea-like blossom. Close at the foot of our path nutmegs prospered, delightful to the sight and smell. At sunrise, and again late at night, the scent of the sweet bay-trees filled the cañon, and the down-blowing night wind must have borne it hundreds of feet into the outer air.

All this vegetation, to be sure, was stunted. The madrona was here no bigger than the manzanita; the bay was but a stripling shrub; the very pines, with four or five exceptions in all our upper cañon, were not so tall as myself, or but a little taller, and the most of them came lower than my waist. For a prosperous forest tree, we must look below, where the glen was crowded with green spires. But for flowers and ravishing perfume, we had none to envy: our heap of road-metal was thick with bloom, like a hawthorn in the front of June; our red, baking angle in the mountain, a laboratory of poignant scents. It was an endless wonder to my mind, as I dreamed about the platform, following the progress of the shadows, where the madrona with its leaves, the azalea and calcanthus with their blossoms, could find moisture to support such thick, wet, waxy growths, or the bay-tree collect the ingredients of its perfume. But there they all grew together, healthy, happy, and happy-making, as though rooted in a fathom of black soil.

Nor was it only vegetable life that prospered. We had, indeed, few birds, and none that had much of a voice or anything worthy to be called a song. My morning comrade had a thin chirp, unmusical and monotonous, but friendly and pleasant to hear. He had but one rival: a fellow with an ostentatious cry of near an octave descending, not one note of which properly followed another. This is the only bird I ever knew with a wrong ear; but there was something enthralling about his performance. You listened and listened, thinking each time he must surely get it right; but no, it was always wrong, and always wrong the same way. Yet he seemed proud of his song, delivered it with execution and a manner of his own, and was charming to his mate. A very incorrect, incessant human whistler had thus a chance of knowing how his own music pleased the world. Two great birds — eagles, we thought — dwelt at the top of the cañon, among the crags that were printed on the sky. Now and again, but very rarely, they wheeled high over our heads in silence, or with a distant, dying scream; and then, with a fresh impulse, winged fleetly forward, dipped over a hilltop, and were gone. They seemed solemn and ancient things, sailing the blue air: perhaps coeval with the mountain where they haunted, perhaps emigrants from Rome, where the glad legions may have shouted to behold them on the morn of battle.

But if birds were rare, the place abounded with rattlesnakes — the rattlesnakes' nest, it might have been named. Wherever we brushed among the bushes, our passage woke their angry buzz. One dwelt habitually in the wood-pile, and sometimes, when we came for firewood, thrust up his small head between two logs, and hissed at the intrusion. The rattle has a legendary credit; it is said to be awe-inspiring, and, once heard, to stamp itself for ever in the memory. But the sound is not at all alarming; the hum of many insects, and the buzz of the wasp convince the ear of danger quite as readily. As a matter of fact, we lived for weeks in Silverado, coming and going, with rattles sprung on every side, and it never occurred to us to be afraid. I used to take sun-baths and do calisthenics in a certain pleasant nook among azalea and calcanthus, the rattles whizzing on every side like spinning-wheels, and the combined hiss or buzz rising louder and angrier at any sudden movement; but I was never in the least impressed, nor ever attacked. It was only towards the end of our stay, that a man down at Calistoga, who was expatiating on the terrifying nature of the sound, gave me at last a very good imitation; and it burst on me at once that we dwelt in the very metropolis of deadly snakes, and that the rattle was simply the commonest noise in Silverado. Immediately on our return, we attacked the Hansons on the subject. They had formerly assured us that our cañon was favoured, like Ireland, with an entire immunity from poisonous reptiles; but with the perfect inconsequence of the natural man, they were no sooner found out than they went off at score in the contrary direction, and we were told that in no part of the world did rattlesnakes attain to such a monstrous bigness as among the warm, flower-dotted rocks of Silverado. This is a contribution rather to the natural history of the Hansons than to that of snakes.

One person, however, better served by his instinct, had known the rattle from the first; and that was Chuchu, the dog. No rational creature has ever led an existence more poisoned by terror than that dog's at Silverado. Every whiz of the rattle made him bound. His eyes rolled; he trembled; he would be often wet with sweat. One of our great mysteries was his terror of the mountain. A little away above our nook, the azaleas and almost all the vegetation ceased. Dwarf pines, not big enough to be Christmas trees, grew thinly among loose stones and gravel scaurs. Here and there a big boulder sat quiescent on a knoll, having paused there till the next rain in his long slide down the mountain. There was here no ambuscade for the snakes, you could see clearly where you trod; and yet the higher I went, the more abject and appealing became Chuchu's terror. He was an excellent master of that composite language in which dogs communicate with men, and he would assure me, on his honour, that there was some peril on the mountain; appeal to me, by all that I held holy, to turn back; and at length, finding all was in vain, and that I still persisted, ignorantly foolhardy, he would suddenly whip round and make a bee-line down the slope for Silverado, the gravel showering after him. What was he afraid of? There were admittedly brown bears and Californian lions on the mountain; and a grizzly visited Rufe's poultry yard not long before, to the unspeakable alarm of Caliban, who dashed out to chastise the intruder, and found himself, by moonlight, face to face with such a tartar. Something at least there must have been; some hairy, dangerous brute lodged permanently among the rocks a little to the north-west of Silverado, spending his summer thereabout, with wife and family.

And there was, or there had been, another animal. Once, under the broad daylight, on that open stony hillside, where the baby pines were growing, scarcely tall enough to be a badge for a MacGregor's bonnet, I came suddenly upon his innocent body, lying mummified by the dry air and sun: a pigmy kangaroo. I am ingloriously ignorant of these subjects; had never heard of such a beast; thought myself face to face with some incomparable sport of nature; and began to cherish hopes of immortality in science. Rarely have I been conscious of a stranger thrill than when I raised that singular creature from the stones, dry as a board, his innocent heart long quiet, and all warm with sunshine. His long hind legs were stiff, his tiny forepaws clutched upon his breast, as if to leap; his poor life cut short upon that mountain by some unknown accident. But the Kangaroo rat, it proved, was no such unknown animal; and my discovery was nothing.

Crickets were not wanting. I thought I could make out exactly four of them, each with a corner of his own, who used to make night musical at Silverado. In the matter of voice, they far excelled the birds, and their ringing whistle sounded from rock to rock, calling and replying the same thing, as in a meaningless opera. Thus, children in full health and spirits shout together, to the dismay of neighbours; and their idle, happy, deafening vociferations rise and fall, like the song of the crickets. I used to sit at night on the platform, and wonder why these creatures were so happy; and what was wrong with man that he also did not wind up his days with an hour or two of shouting; but I suspect that all long-lived animals are solemn. The dogs alone are hardly used by nature; and it seems a manifest injustice for poor Chuchu to die in his teens, after a life so shadowed and troubled, continually shaken with alarm, and the tear of elegant sentiment permanently in his eye.

There was another neighbour of ours at Silverado, small but very active, a destructive fellow. This was a black, ugly fly — a bore, the Hansons called him — who lived by hundreds in the boarding of our house. He entered by a round hole, more neatly pierced than a man could do it with a gimlet, and he seems to have spent his life in cutting out the interior of the plank, but whether as a dwelling or a store-house, I could never find. When I used to lie in bed in the morning for a rest — we had no easy-chairs in Silverado — I would hear, hour after hour, the sharp cutting sound of his labours, and from time to time a dainty shower of sawdust would fall upon the blankets. There lives no more industrious creature than a bore.

And now that I have named to the reader all our animals and insects without exception — only I find I have forgotten the flies — he will be able to appreciate the singular privacy and silence of our days. It was not only man who was excluded: animals, the song of birds, the lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep, clouds even, and the variations of the weather, were here also wanting; and as, day after day, the sky was one dome of blue, and the pines below us stood motionless in the still air, so the hours themselves were marked out from each other only by the series of our own affairs, and the sun's great period as he ranged westward through the heavens. The two birds cackled awhile in the early morning; all day the water tinkled in the shaft, the bores ground sawdust in the planking of our crazy palace — infinitesimal sounds; and it was only with the return of night that any change would fall on our surroundings, or the four crickets begin to flute together in the dark.

Indeed, it would be hard to exaggerate the pleasure that we took in the approach of evening. Our day was not very long, but it was very tiring. To trip along unsteady planks or wade among shifting stones, to go to and fro for water, to clamber down the glen to the Toll House after meat and letters, to cook, to make fires and beds, were all exhausting to the body. Life out of doors, besides, under the fierce eye of day, draws largely on the animal spirits. There are certain hours in the afternoon when a man, unless he is in strong health or enjoys a vacant mind, would rather creep into a cool corner of a house and sit upon the chairs of civilisation. About that time, the sharp stones, the planks, the upturned boxes of Silverado, began to grow irksome to my body; I set out on that hopeless, never-ending quest for a more comfortable posture; I would be fevered and weary of the staring sun; and just then he would begin courteously to withdraw his countenance, the shadows lengthened, the aromatic airs awoke, and an indescribable but happy change announced the coming of the night.

The hours of evening when we were once curtained in the friendly dark, sped lightly. Even as with the crickets, night brought to us a certain spirit of rejoicing. It was good to taste the air; good to mark the dawning of the stars, as they increased their glittering company; good, too, to gather stones, and send them crashing down the chute, a wave of light. It seemed, in some way, the reward and the fulfilment of the day. So it is when men dwell in the open air; it is one of the simple pleasures that we lose by living cribbed and covered in a house, that, though the coming of the day is still the most inspiriting, yet day's departure, also, and the return of night refresh, renew, and quiet us; and in the pastures of the dusk we stand, like cattle, exulting in the absence of the load.

Our nights were never cold, and they were always still, but for one remarkable exception. Regularly, about nine o'clock, a warm wind sprang up, and blew for ten minutes, or maybe a quarter of an hour, right down the cañon, fanning it well out, airing it as a mother airs the night nursery before the children sleep. As far as I could judge, in the clear darkness of the night, this wind was purely local: perhaps dependent on the configuration of the glen. At least, it was very welcome to the hot and weary squatters; and if we were not abed already, the springing up of this lilliputian valley-wind would often be our signal to retire.

I was the last to go to bed, as I was still the first to rise. Many a night I have strolled about the platform, taking a bath of darkness before I slept. The rest would be in bed, and even from the forge I could hear them talking together from bunk to bunk. A single candle in the neck of a pint bottle was their only illumination; and yet the old cracked house seemed literally bursting with the light. It shone keen as a knife through all the vertical chinks; it struck upward through the broken shingles; and through the eastern door and window, it fell in a great splash upon the thicket and the overhanging rock. You would have said a conflagration, or at the least a roaring forge; and behold, it was but a candle. Or perhaps it was yet more strange to see the procession moving bedwards round the corner of the house, and up the plank that brought us to the bedroom door; under the immense spread of the starry heavens, down in a crevice of the giant mountain, these few human shapes, with their unshielded taper, made so disproportionate a figure in the eye and mind. But the more he is alone with nature, the greater man and his doings bulk in the consideration of his fellow-men. Miles and miles away upon the opposite hilltops, if there were any hunter belated or any traveller who had lost his way, he must have stood, and watched and wondered, from the time the candle issued from the door of the assayer's office till it had mounted the plank and disappeared again into the miners’ dormitory.

THE OLD AND NEW PACIFIC CAPITALS

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MONTEREY

The Bay of Monterey has been compared by no less a person than General Sherman to a bent fishing-hook; and the comparison, if less important than the march through Georgia, still shows the eye of a soldier for topography. Santa Cruz sits exposed at the shank; the mouth of the Salinas river is at the middle of the bend; and Monterey itself is cosily ensconced beside the barb. Thus the ancient capital of California faces across the bay, while the Pacific Ocean, though hidden by low hills and forest, bombards her left flank and rear with never-dying surf. In front of the town, the long line of sea-beach trends north and north-west, and then westward to enclose the bay. The waves which lap so quietly about the jetties of Monterey grew louder and larger in the distance; you can see the breakers leaping high and white by day; at night, the outline of the shore is traced in transparent silver by the moonlight and the flying foam; and from all round, even in quiet weather, the low, distant, thrilling roar of the Pacific hangs over the coast and the adjacent country like smoke above a battle.

These long beaches are enticing to the idle man. It would be hard to find a walk more solitary and at the same time more exciting to the mind. Crowds of ducks and sea-gulls hover over the sea. Sandpipers trot in and out by troops after the retiring waves, trilling together in a chorus of infinitesimal song. Strange sea-tangles, new to the European eye, the bones of whales, or sometimes a whole whale's carcase, white with carrion-gulls and poisoning the wind, lie scattered here and there along the sands. The waves come in slowly, vast and green, curve their translucent necks, and burst with a surprising uproar, that runs, waxing and waning, up and down the long key-board of the beach. The foam of these great ruins mounts in an instant to the ridge of the sand glacis, swiftly fleets back again, and is met and buried by the next breaker. The interest is perpetually fresh. On no other coast that I know shall you enjoy, in calm, sunny weather, such a spectacle of Ocean's greatness, such beauty of changing colour, or such degrees of thunder in the sound. The very air is more than usually salt by this Homeric deep.

Inshore, a tract of sand-hills borders on the beach. Here and there a lagoon, more or less brackish, attracts the birds and hunters. A rough, spotty undergrowth partially conceals the sand. The crouching, hardy, live oaks flourish singly or in thickets — the kind of wood for murderers to crawl among — and here and there the skirts of the forest extend downward from the hills with a floor of turf and long aisles of pine-trees hung with Spaniard's Beard. Through this quaint desert the railway cars drew near to Monterey from the junction at Salinas City — though that and so many other things are now for ever altered — and it was from here that you had the first view of the old township lying in the sands, its white windmills bickering in the chill, perpetual wind, and the first fogs of the evening drawing drearily around it from the sea.

The one common note of all this country is the haunting presence of the ocean. A great faint sound of breakers follows you high up into the inland cañons; the roar of water dwells in the clean, empty rooms of Monterey as in a shell upon the chimney; go where you will, you have but to pause and listen to hear the voice of the Pacific. You pass out of the town to the south-west, and mount the hill among pine woods. Glade, thicket, and grove surround you. You follow winding sandy tracks that lead nowhither. You see a deer; a multitude of quail arises. But the sound of the sea still follows you as you advance, like that of wind among the trees, only harsher and stranger to the ear; and when at length you gain the summit, out breaks on every hand and with freshened vigour that same unending, distant, whispering rumble of the ocean; for now you are on the top of Monterey peninsula, and the noise no longer only mounts to you from behind along the beach towards Santa Cruz, but from your right also, round by Chinatown and Pinos lighthouse, and from down before you to the mouth of the Carmello river. The whole woodland is begirt with thundering surges. The silence that immediately surrounds you where you stand is not so much broken as it is haunted by this distant, circling rumour. It sets your senses upon edge; you strain your attention; you are clearly and unusually conscious of small sounds near at hand; you walk listening like an Indian hunter; and that voice of the Pacific is a sort of disquieting company to you in your walk.

When once I was in these woods I found it difficult to turn homeward. All woods lure a rambler onward; but in those of Monterey it was the surf that particularly invited me to prolong my walks. I would push straight for the shore where I thought it to be nearest. Indeed, there was scarce a direction that would not, sooner or later, have brought me forth on the Pacific. The emptiness of the woods gave me a sense of freedom and discovery in these excursions. I never in all my visits met but one man. He was a Mexican, very dark of hue, but smiling and fat, and he carried an axe, though his true business at that moment was to seek for straying cattle. I asked him what o'clock it was, but he seemed neither to know nor care; and when he in his turn asked me for news of his cattle, I showed myself equally indifferent. We stood and smiled upon each other for a few seconds, and then turned without a word and took our several ways across the forest.

One day — I shall never forget it — I had taken a trail that was new to me. After a while the woods began to open, the sea to sound nearer hand. I came upon a road, and, to my surprise, a stile. A step or two farther, and, without leaving the woods, I found myself among trim houses. I walked through street after street, parallel and at right angles, paved with sward and dotted with trees, but still undeniable streets, and each with its name posted at the corner, as in a real town. Facing down the main thoroughfare — "Central Avenue," as it was ticketed — I saw an open-air temple, with benches and sounding-board, as though for an orchestra. The houses were all tightly shuttered; there was no smoke, no sound but of the waves, no moving thing. I have never been in any place that seemed so dream-like. Pompeii is all in a bustle with visitors, and its antiquity and strangeness deceive the imagination; but this town had plainly not been built above a year or two, and perhaps had been deserted overnight. Indeed it was not so much like a deserted town as like a scene upon the stage by daylight, and with no one on the boards. The barking of a dog led me at last to the only house still occupied, where a Scots pastor and his wife pass the winter alone in this empty theatre. The place was "The Pacific Camp Grounds, the Christian Seaside Resort." Thither, in the warm season, crowds come to enjoy a life of teetotalism, religion, and flirtation, which I am willing to think blameless and agreeable. The neighbourhood at least is well selected. The Pacific booms in front. Westward is Point Pinos, with the lighthouse in a wilderness of sand, where you will find the lightkeeper playing the piano, making models and bows and arrows, studying dawn and sunrise in amateur oil-painting, and with a dozen other elegant pursuits and interests to surprise his brave old-country rivals. To the east, and still nearer, you will come upon a space of open down, a hamlet, a haven among rocks, a world of surge and screaming sea-gulls. Such scenes are very similar in different climates; they appear homely to the eyes of all; to me this was like a dozen spots in Scotland. And yet the boats that ride in the haven are of strange outlandish design; and, if you walk into the hamlet you will behold costumes and faces, and hear a tongue, that are unfamiliar to the memory. The joss-stick burns, the opium-pipe is smoked, the floors are strewn with slips of coloured paper — prayers, you would say, that had somehow missed their destination — and a man guiding his upright pencil from right to left across the sheet writes home the news of Monterey to the Celestial Empire.

The woods and the Pacific rule between them the climate of this seaboard region. On the streets of Monterey, when the air does not smell salt from the one, it will be blowing perfumed from the resinous tree-tops of the other. For days together, a hot, dry air will overhang the town, close as from an oven, yet healthful and aromatic in the nostrils. The cause is not far to seek, for the woods are afire, and the hot wind is blowing from the hills. These fires are one of the great dangers of California. I have seen from Monterey as many as three at the same time, by day a cloud of smoke, by night a red coal of conflagration in the distance. A little thing will start them, and, if the wind be favourable, they gallop over miles of country faster than a horse. The inhabitants must turn out and work like demons, for it is not only the pleasant groves that are destroyed; the climate and the soil are equally at stake, and these fires prevent the rains of the next winter and dry up perennial fountains. California has been a land of promise in its time, like Palestine; but if the woods continue so swiftly to perish, it may become, like Palestine, a land of desolation.

To visit the woods while they are languidly burning is a strange piece of experience. The fire passes through the underbrush at a run. Every here and there a tree flares up instantaneously from root to summit, scattering tufts of flame, and is quenched, it seems, as quickly. But this last is only in semblance. For after this first squib-like conflagration of the dry moss and twigs, there remains behind a deep-rooted and consuming fire in the very entrails of the tree. The resin of the pitch-pine is principally condensed at the base of the bole and in the spreading roots. Thus, after the light, showy, skirmishing flames, which are only as the match to the explosion, have already scampered down the wind into the distance, the true harm is but beginning for this giant of the woods. You may approach the tree from one side, and see it, scorched indeed from top to bottom, but apparently survivor of the peril. Make the circuit, and there, on the other side of the column, is a clear mass of living coal, spreading like an ulcer; while underground, to their most extended fibre, the roots are being eaten out by fire, and the smoke is rising through the fissures to the surface. A little while and, without a nod of warning, the huge pine-tree snaps off short across the ground, and falls prostrate with a crash. Meanwhile the fire continues its silent business; the roots are reduced to a fine ash; and long afterwards, if you pass by, you will find the earth pierced with radiating galleries, and preserving the design of all these subterranean spurs, as though it were the mould for a new tree instead of the print of an old one. These pitch-pines of Monterey are, with the single exception of the Monterey cypress, the most fantastic of forest trees. No words can give an idea of the contortion of their growth; they might figure without change in a circle of the nether hell as Dante pictured it; and at the rate at which trees grow, and at which forest fires spring up and gallop through the hills of California, we may look forward to a time when there will not be one of them left standing in that land of their nativity. At least they have not so much to fear from the axe, but perish by what may be called a natural although a violent death; while it is man in his short-sighted greed that robs the country of the nobler redwood. Yet a little while and perhaps all the hills of seaboard California may be as bald as Tamalpais.

I have an interest of my own in these forest fires, for I came so near to lynching on one occasion, that a braver man might have retained a thrill from the experience. I wished to be certain whether it was the moss, that quaint funereal ornament of Californian forests, which blazed up so rapidly when the flame first touched the tree. I suppose I must have been under the influence of Satan, for instead of plucking off a piece for my experiment, what should I do but walk up to a great pine tree in a portion of the wood which had escaped so much as scorching, strike a match, and apply the flame gingerly to one of the tassels. The tree went off simply like a rocket; in three seconds it was a roaring pillar of fire. Close by I could hear the shouts of those who were at work combating the original conflagration. I could see the waggon that had brought them tied to a live oak in a piece of open; I could even catch the flash of an axe as it swung up through the underwood into the sunlight. Had any one observed the result of my experiment my neck was literally not worth a pinch of snuff; after a few minutes of passionate expostulation I should have been run up to a convenient bough.

“To die for faction is a common evil;
But to be hanged for nonsense is the devil.”

I have run repeatedly, but never as I ran that day. At night I went out of town, and there was my own particular fire, quite distinct from the other, and burning, as I thought, with even greater vigour.

But it is the Pacific that exercises the most direct and obvious power upon the climate. At sunset, for months together, vast, wet, melancholy fogs arise and come shoreward from the ocean. From the hill-top above Monterey the scene is often noble, although it is always sad. The upper air is still bright with sunlight; a glow still rests upon the Gabelano Peak; but the fogs are in possession of the lower levels; they crawl in scarves among the sandhills; they float, a little higher, in clouds of a gigantic size and often of a wild configuration; to the south, where they have struck the seaward shoulder of the mountains of Santa Lucia, they double back and spire up skyward like smoke. Where their shadow touches, colour dies out of the world. The air grows chill and deadly as they advance. The trade-wind freshens, the trees begin to sigh, and all the windmills in Monterey are whirling and creaking and filling their cisterns with the brackish water of the sands. It takes but a little while till the invasion is complete. The sea, in its lighter order, has submerged the earth. Monterey is curtained in for the night in thick, wet, salt, and frigid clouds, so to remain till day returns; and before the sun's rays they slowly disperse and retreat in broken squadrons to the bosom of the sea. And yet often when the fog is thickest and most chill, a few steps out of the town and up the slope, the night will be dry and warm and full of inland perfume.

MEXICANS, AMERICANS, AND INDIANS

The history of Monterey has yet to be written. Founded by Catholic missionaries, a place of wise beneficence to Indians, a place of arms, a Mexican capital continually wrested by one faction from another, an American capital when the first House of Representatives held its deliberations, and then falling lower and lower from the capital of the State to the capital of a county, and from that again, by the loss of its charter and town lands, to a mere bankrupt village, its rise and decline is typical of that of all Mexican institutions and even Mexican families in California.

Nothing is stranger in that strange State than the rapidity with which the soil has changed hands. The Mexicans, you may say, are all poor and landless, like their former capital; and yet both it and they hold themselves apart, and preserve their ancient customs and something of their ancient air.

The town, when I was there, was a place of two or three streets, economically paved with sea-sand, and two or three lanes, which were water-courses in the rainy season, and at all times were rent up by fissures four or five feet deep. There were no street lights. Short sections of wooden sidewalk only added to the dangers of the night, for they were often high above the level of the roadway, and no one could tell where they would be likely to begin or end. The houses were for the most part built of unbaked adobe brick, many of them old for so new a country, some of very elegant proportions, with low, spacious, shapely rooms, and walls so thick that the heat of summer never dried them to the heart. At the approach of the rainy season a deathly chill and a graveyard smell began to hang about the lower floors; and diseases of the chest are common and fatal among housekeeping people of either sex.

There was no activity but in and around the saloons, where people sat almost all day long playing cards. The smallest excursion was made on horseback. You would scarcely ever see the main street without a horse or two tied to posts, and making a fine figure with their Mexican housings. It struck me oddly to come across some of the *Cornhill* illustrations to Mr. Blackmore's "Erema," and see all the characters astride on English saddles. As a matter of fact, an English saddle is a rarity even in San Francisco, and you may say a thing unknown in all the rest of California. In a place so exclusively Mexican as Monterey, you saw not only Mexican saddles but true Vaquero riding — men always at the hand-gallop up hill and down dale, and round the sharpest corner, urging their horses with cries and gesticulations and cruel rotatory spurs, checking them dead with a touch, or wheeling them right-about-face in a square yard. The type of face and character of bearing are surprisingly un-American. The first ranged from something like the pure Spanish, to something, in its sad fixity, not unlike the pure Indian, although I do not suppose there was one pure blood of either race in all the country. As for the second, it was a matter of perpetual surprise to find, in that world of absolutely mannerless Americans, a people full of deportment, solemnly courteous, and doing all things with grace and decorum. In dress they ran to colour and bright sashes. Not even the most Americanised could always resist the temptation to stick a red rose into his hatband. Not even the most Americanised would descend to wear the vile dress-hat of civilisation. Spanish was the language of the streets. It was difficult to get along without a word or two of that language for an occasion. The only communications in which the population joined were with a view to amusement. A weekly public ball took place with great etiquette, in addition to the numerous fandangoes in private houses. There was a really fair amateur brass band. Night after night serenaders would be going about the street, sometimes in a company and with several instruments and voices together, sometimes severally, each guitar before a different window. It was a strange thing to lie awake in nineteenth-century America, and hear the guitar accompany, and one of these old, heart-breaking Spanish love-songs mount into the night air, perhaps in a deep baritone, perhaps in that high-pitched, pathetic, womanish alto which is so common among Mexican men, and which strikes on the unaccustomed ear as something not entirely human, but altogether sad.

The town, then, was essentially and wholly Mexican; and yet almost all the land in the neighbourhood was held by Americans, and it was from the same class, numerically so small, that the principal officials were selected. This Mexican and that Mexican would describe to you his old family estates, not one rood of which remained to him. You would ask him how that came about, and elicit some tangled story back-foremost, from which you gathered that the Americans had been greedy like designing men, and the Mexicans greedy like children, but no other certain fact. Their merits and their faults contributed alike to the ruin of the former landholders. It is true they were improvident, and easily dazzled with the sight of ready money; but they were gentle-folk besides, and that in a way which curiously unfitted them to combat Yankee craft. Suppose they have a paper to sign, they would think it a reflection on the other party to examine the terms with any great minuteness; nay, suppose them to observe some doubtful clause, it is ten to one they would refuse from delicacy to object to it. I know I am speaking within the mark, for I have seen such a case occur, and the Mexican, in spite of the advice of his lawyer, has signed the imperfect paper like a lamb. To have spoken in the matter, he said, above all to have let the other party guess that he had seen a lawyer, would have "been like doubting his word." The scruple sounds oddly to one of ourselves, who have been brought up to understand all business as a competition in fraud, and honesty itself to be a virtue which regards the carrying out, but not the creation, of agreements. This single unworldly trait will account for much of that revolution of which we are speaking. The Mexicans have the name of being great swindlers, but certainly the accusation cuts both ways. In a contest of this sort, the entire booty would scarcely have passed into the hands of the more scrupulous race.

Physically the Americans have triumphed; but it is not entirely seen how far they have themselves been morally conquered. This is, of course, but a part of a part of an extraordinary problem now in the course of being solved in the various States of the American Union. I am reminded of an anecdote. Some years ago, at a great sale of wine, all the odd lots were purchased by a grocer in a small way in the old town of Edinburgh. The agent had the curiosity to visit him some time after and inquire what possible use he could have for such material. He was shown, by way of answer, a huge vat where all the liquors, from humble Gladstone to imperial Tokay, were fermenting together. "And what," he asked, "do you propose to call this?" "I'm no' very sure," replied the grocer, "but I think it's going to turn out port." In the older Eastern States, I think we may say that this hotch-potch of races is going to turn out English, or thereabout. But the problem is the Territorial belt, and in the group of States on the Pacific coast. Above all, in these last we may look to see some singular hybrid — whether good or evil, who shall forecast? but certainly original and all their own. In my little restaurant at Monterey, we have sat down to table, day after day, a Frenchman, two Portuguese, an Italian, a Mexican, and a Scotsman: we had for common visitors an American from Illinois, a nearly pure-blood Indian woman, and a naturalised Chinese; and from time to time a Switzer and a German came down from country ranches for the night. No wonder that the Pacific coast is a foreign land to visitors from the Eastern States, for each race contributes something of its own. Even the despised Chinese have taught the youth of California, none indeed of their virtues, but the debasing use of opium. And chief among these influences is that of the Mexicans.

The Mexicans, although in the State, are out of it. They still preserve a sort of international independence, and keep their affairs snug to themselves. Only four or five years ago, Vasquez the bandit, his troops being dispersed and the hunt too hot for him in other parts of California, returned to his native Monterey, and was seen publicly in her streets and saloons, fearing no man. The year that I was there there occurred two reputed murders. As the Montereyans are exceptionally vile speakers of each other and of every one behind his back, it is not possible for me to judge how much truth there may have been in these reports; but in the one case every one believed, and in the other some suspected, that there had been foul play; and nobody dreamed for an instant of taking the authorities into their counsel. Now this is, of course, characteristic enough of the Mexicans; but it is a noteworthy feature that all the Americans in Monterey acquiesced without a word in this inaction. Even when I spoke to them upon the subject, they seemed not to understand my surprise; they had forgotten the traditions of their own race and upbringing, and become, in a word, wholly Mexicanised.

Again, the Mexicans, having no ready money to speak of, rely almost entirely in their business transactions upon each other's worthless paper. Pedro the penniless pays you with an I O U from the equally penniless Miguel. It is a sort of local currency by courtesy. Credit in these parts has passed into a superstition. I have seen a strong, violent man struggling for months to recover a debt, and getting nothing but an exchange of waste paper. The very storekeepers are averse to asking for cash payments, and are more surprised than pleased when they are offered. They fear there must be something under it, and that you mean to withdraw your custom from them. I have seen the enterprising chemist and stationer begging me with fervour to let my account run on, although I had my purse open in my hand; and partly from the commonness of the case, partly from some remains of that generous old Mexican tradition which made all men welcome to their tables, a person may be notoriously both unwilling and unable to pay, and still find credit for the necessaries of life in the stores of Monterey. Now this villainous habit of living upon "tick" has grown into Californian nature. I do not mean that the American and European storekeepers of Monterey are as lax as Mexicans; I mean that American farmers in many parts of the State expect unlimited credit, and profit by it in the meanwhile without a thought for consequences. Jew storekeepers have already learned the advantage to be gained from this; they lead on the farmer into irretrievable indebtedness, and keep him ever after as their bond-slave hopelessly grinding in the mill. So the whirligig of time brings in its revenges, and except that the Jew knows better than to foreclose, you may see Americans bound in the same chains with which they themselves had formerly bound the Mexican. It seems as if certain sorts of follies, like certain sorts of grain, were natural to the soil rather than to the race that holds and tills it for the moment.

In the meantime, however, the Americans rule in Monterey County.

The new county seat, Salinas City, in the bald, corn-bearing plain under the Gabelano Peak, is a town of a purely American character. The land is held, for the most part, in those enormous tracts which are another legacy of Mexican days, and form the present chief danger and disgrace of California; and the holders are mostly of American or British birth. We have here in England no idea of the troubles and inconveniences which flow from the existence of these large landholders — land-thieves, land-sharks, or land-grabbers, they are more commonly and plainly called. Thus the townlands of Monterey are all in the hands of a single man. How they came there is an obscure, vexatious question, and rightly or wrongly the man is hated with a great hatred. His life has been repeatedly in danger. Not very long ago, I was told, the stage was stopped and examined three evenings in succession by disguised horsemen thirsting for his blood. A certain house on the Salinas road, they say, he always passes in his buggy at full speed, for the squatter sent him warning long ago. But a year since he was publicly pointed out for death by no less a man than Mr. Dennis Kearney. Kearney is a man too well known in California, but a word of explanation is required for English readers. Originally an Irish drayman, he rose, by his command of bad language, to almost dictatorial authority in the State; throned it there for six months or so, his mouth full of oaths, gallowses, and conflagrations; was first snuffed out last winter by Mr. Coleman, backed by his San Francisco Vigilantes and three Gatling guns; completed his own ruin by throwing in his lot with the grotesque Green-backer party; and had at last to be rescued by his old enemies, the police, out of the hands of his rebellious followers. It was while he was at the top of his fortune that Kearney visited Monterey with his battle-cry against Chinese labour, the railroad monopolists, and the land-thieves; and his one articulate counsel to the Montereyans was to "hang David Jacks." Had the town been American, in my private opinion, this would have been done years ago. Land is a subject on which there is no jesting in the West, and I have seen my friend the lawyer drive out of Monterey to adjust a competition of titles with the face of a captain going into battle and his Smith-and-Wesson convenient to his hand.

On the ranche of another of these landholders you may find our old friend, the truck system, in full operation. Men live there, year in year out, to cut timber for a nominal wage, which is all consumed in supplies. The longer they remain in this desirable service the deeper they will fall in debt — a burlesque injustice in a new country, where labour should be precious, and one of those typical instances which explains the prevailing discontent and the success of the demagogue Kearney.

In a comparison between what was and what is in California, the praisers of times past will fix upon the Indians of Carmel. The valley drained by the river so named is a true Californian valley, bare, dotted with chaparal, overlooked by quaint, unfinished hills. The Carmel runs by many pleasant farms, a clear and shallow river, loved by wading kine; and at last, as it is falling towards a quicksand and the great Pacific, passes a ruined mission on a hill. From the mission church the eye embraces a great field of ocean, and the ear is filled with a continuous sound of distant breakers on the shore. But the day of the Jesuit has gone by, the day of the Yankee has succeeded, and there is no one left to care for the converted savage. The church is roofless and ruinous, sea-breezes and sea-fogs, and the alternation of the rain and sunshine, daily widening the breaches and casting the crockets from the wall. As an antiquity in this new land, a quaint specimen of missionary architecture, and a memorial of good deeds, it had a triple claim to preservation from all thinking people; but neglect and abuse have been its portion. There is no sign of American interference, save where a headboard has been torn from a grave to be a mark for pistol bullets. So it is with the Indians for whom it was erected. Their lands, I was told, are being yearly encroached upon by the neighbouring American proprietor, and with that exception no man troubles his head for the Indians of Carmel. Only one day in the year, the day before our Guy Fawkes, the *padre* drives over the hill from Monterey; the little sacristy, which is the only covered portion of the church, is filled with seats and decorated for the service; the Indians troop together, their bright dresses contrasting with their dark and melancholy faces; and there, among a crowd of somewhat unsympathetic holiday-makers, you may hear God served with perhaps more touching circumstances than in any other temple under heaven. An Indian, stone-blind and about eighty years of age, conducts the singing; other Indians compose the choir; yet they have the Gregorian music at their finger ends, and pronounce the Latin so correctly that I could follow the meaning as they sang. The pronunciation was odd and nasal, the singing hurried and staccato. “In sæcula sæculo-hohorum,” they went, with a vigorous aspirate to every additional syllable. I have never seen faces more vividly lit up with joy than the faces of these Indian singers. It was to them not only the worship of God, nor an act by which they recalled and commemorated better days, but was besides an exercise of culture, where all they knew of art and letters was united and expressed. And it made a man’s heart sorry for the good fathers of yore who had taught them to dig and to reap, to read and to sing, who had given them European mass-books which they still preserve and study in their cottages, and who had now passed away from all authority and influence in that land — to be succeeded by greedy land-thieves and sacrilegious pistol-shots.

So ugly a thing may our Anglo-Saxon Protestantism appear beside the doings of the Society of Jesus.

But revolution in this world succeeds to revolution. All that I say in this paper is in a paulo-past tense. The Monterey of last year[] exists no longer. A huge hotel has sprung up in the desert by the railway. Three sets of diners sit down successively to table. Invaluable toilettes figure along the beach and between the live oaks; and Monterey is advertised in the newspapers, and posted in the waiting-rooms at railway stations, as a resort for wealth and fashion. Alas for the little town! it is not strong enough to resist the influence of the flaunting caravanserai, and the poor, quaint, penniless native gentlemen of Monterey must perish, like a lower race, before the millionaire vulgarians of the Big Bonanza.

1879.

II

SAN FRANCISCO

The Pacific coast of the United States, as you may see by the map, and still better in that admirable book, “Two Years before the Mast,” by Dana, is one of the most exposed and shelterless on earth. The trade-wind blows fresh; the huge Pacific swell booms along degree after degree of an unbroken line of coast. South of the joint firth of the Columbia and Williamette, there flows in no considerable river; south of Puget Sound there is no protected inlet of the ocean. Along the whole seaboard of California there are but two unexceptionable anchorages, — the bight of the Bay of Monterey, and the inland sea that takes its name from San Francisco.

Whether or not it was here that Drake put in in 1597, we cannot tell. There is no other place so suitable; and yet the narrative of Francis Pretty scarcely seems to suit the features of the scene. Viewed from seaward, the Golden Gates should give no very English impression to justify the name of a new Albion. On the west, the deep lies open; nothing near but the still vexed Farallones. The coast is rough and barren. Tamalpais, a mountain of a memorable figure, springing direct from the sea-level, over-plumbs the narrow entrance from the north. On the south, the loud music of the Pacific sounds along beaches and cliffs, and among broken reefs, the sporting-place of the sea-lion. Dismal, shifting sandhills, wrinkled by the wind, appear behind. Perhaps, too, in the days of Drake, Tamalpais would be clothed to its peak with the majestic redwoods.

Within the memory of persons not yet old, a mariner might have steered into these narrows — not yet the Golden Gates — opened out the surface of the bay — here girt with hills, there lying broad to the horizon — and beheld a scene as empty of the presence, as pure from the handiwork, of man, as in the days of our old sea-commander. A Spanish mission, fort, and church took the place of those “houses of the people of the country” which were seen by Pretty, “close to the water-side.” All else would be unchanged. Now, a generation later, a great city covers the sandhills on the west, a growing town lies along the muddy shallows of the east; steamboats pant continually between them from before sunrise till the small hours of the morning; lines of great sea-going ships lie ranged at anchor; colours fly upon the islands; and from all around the hum of corporate life, of beaten bells, and steam, and running carriages, goes cheerily abroad in the sunshine. Choose a place on one of the huge throbbing ferry-boats, and, when you are midway between the city and the suburb, look around. The air is fresh and salt as if you were at sea. On the one hand is Oakland, gleaming white among its gardens. On the other, to seaward, hill after hill is crowded and crowned with the palaces of San Francisco; its long streets lie in regular bars of darkness, east and west, across the sparkling picture; a forest of masts bristles like bulrushes about its feet; nothing remains of the days of Drake but the faithful trade-wind scattering the smoke, the fogs that will begin to muster about sundown, and the fine bulk of Tamalpais looking down on San Francisco, like Arthur's seat on Edinburgh.

Thus, in the course of a generation only, this city and its suburb have arisen. Men are alive by the score who have hunted all over the foundations in a dreary waste. I have dined, near the "punctual centre" of San Francisco, with a gentleman (then newly married), who told me of his former pleasures, wading with his fowling-piece in sand and scrub, on the site of the house where we were dining. In this busy, moving generation, we have all known cities to cover our boyish playgrounds, we have all started for a country walk and stumbled on a new suburb; but I wonder what enchantment of the Arabian Nights can have equalled this evocation of a roaring city, in a few years of a man's life, from the marshes and the blowing sand. Such swiftness of increase, as with an overgrown youth, suggests a corresponding swiftness of destruction. The sandy peninsula of San Francisco, mirroring itself on one side in the bay, beaten on the other by the surge of the Pacific, and shaken to the heart by frequent earthquakes, seems in itself no very durable foundation. According to Indian tales, perhaps older than the name of California, it once rose out of the sea in a moment, and sometime or other shall, in a moment, sink again. No Indian, they say, cares to linger on that doubtful land. "The earth hath bubbles as the water has, and this is of them." Here, indeed, all is new, nature as well as towns. The very hills of California have an unfinished look; the rains and the streams have not yet carved them to their perfect shape. The forests spring like mushrooms from the unexhausted soil; and they are mown down yearly by the forest fires. We are in early geological epochs, changeful and insecure; and we feel, as with a sculptor's model, that the author may yet grow weary of and shatter the rough sketch.

Fancy apart, San Francisco is a city beleaguered with alarms. The lower parts, along the bay side, sit on piles; old wrecks decaying, fish dwelling unsunned, beneath the populous houses; and a trifling subsidence might drown the business quarters in an hour. Earthquakes are not only common, they are sometimes threatening in their violence; the fear of them grows yearly on a resident; he begins with indifference, ends in sheer panic; and no one feels safe in any but a wooden house. Hence it comes that, in that rainless clime, the whole city is built of timber — a woodyard of unusual extent and complication; that fires spring up readily, and served by the unwearying trade-wind, swiftly spread; that all over the city there are fire-signal boxes; that the sound of the bell, telling the number of the threatened ward, is soon familiar to the ear; and that nowhere else in the world is the art of the fireman carried to so nice a point.

Next, perhaps, in order of strangeness to the rapidity of its appearance, is the mingling of the races that combine to people it. The town is essentially not Anglo-Saxon; still more essentially not American. The Yankee and the Englishman find themselves alike in a strange country. There are none of these touches — not of nature, and I dare scarcely say of art — by which the Anglo-Saxon feels himself at home in so great a diversity of lands. Here, on the contrary, are airs of Marseilles and of Pekin. The shops along the street are like the consulates of different nations. The passers-by vary in feature like the slides of a magic-lantern. For we are here in that city of gold to which adventurers congregated out of all the winds of heaven; we are in a land that till the other day was ruled and peopled by the countrymen of Cortes; and the sea that laves the piers of San Francisco is the ocean of the East and of the isles of summer. There goes the Mexican, unmistakable; there the blue-clad Chinaman with his white slippers; there the soft-spoken, brown Kanaka, or perhaps a waif from far-away Malaya. You hear French, German, Italian, Spanish, and English indifferently. You taste the food of all nations in the various restaurants; passing from a French *prix-fixe* where every one is French, to a roaring German ordinary where every one is German; ending, perhaps, in a cool and silent Chinese tea-house. For every man, for every race and nation, that city is a foreign city; humming with foreign tongues and customs; and yet each and all have made themselves at home. The Germans have a German theatre and innumerable beer-gardens. The French Fall of the Bastille is celebrated with squibs and banners, and marching patriots, as noisily as the American Fourth of July. The Italians have their dear domestic quarter, with Italian caricatures in the windows, Chianti and polenta in the taverns. The Chinese are settled as in China. The goods they offer for sale are as foreign as the lettering on the signboard of the shop: dried fish from the China seas; pale cakes and sweetmeats — the like, perhaps, once eaten by Badroubadour; nuts of unfriendly shape; ambiguous, outlandish vegetables, misshapen, lean, or bulbous — telling of a country where the trees are not as our trees, and the very back-garden is a cabinet of curiosities. The joss-house is hard by, heavy with incense, packed with quaint carvings and the paraphernalia of a foreign ceremonial. All these you behold, crowded together in the narrower arteries of the city, cool, sunless, a little mouldy, with the unfamiliar faces at your elbow, and the high, musical sing-song of that alien language in your ears. Yet the houses are of Occidental build; the lines of a hundred telegraphs pass, thick as a ship's rigging, overhead, a kite hanging among them, perhaps, or perhaps two, one European, one Chinese, in shape and colour; mercantile Jack, the Italian fisher, the Dutch merchant, the Mexican vaquero, go hustling by; at the sunny end of the street, a thoroughfare roars with European traffic; and meanwhile, high and clear, out breaks perhaps the San Francisco fire-alarm, and people pause to count the strokes, and in the stations of the double fire-service you know that the electric bells are ringing, the traps opening, and clapping to, and the engine, manned and harnessed, being whisked into the street, before the sound of the alarm has ceased to vibrate on your ear. Of all romantic places for a boy to loiter in, that Chinese quarter is the most romantic. There, on a half-holiday, three doors from home, he may visit an actual foreign land, foreign in people, language, things, and customs. The very barber of the Arabian Nights shall be at work before him, shaving heads; he shall see Aladdin playing on the streets; who knows but among those nameless vegetables the fruit of the nose-tree itself may be exposed for sale? And the interest is heightened with a chill of horror. Below, you hear, the cellars are alive with mystery; opium dens, where the smokers lie one above another, shelf above shelf, close-packed and grovelling in deadly stupor; the seats of unknown vices and cruelties, the prisons of unacknowledged slaves and the secret lazarettos of disease.

With all this mass of nationalities, crime is common. There are rough quarters where it is dangerous o' nights; cellars of public entertainment which the wary pleasure-seeker chooses to avoid. Concealed weapons are unlawful, but the law is continually broken. One editor was shot dead while I was there; another walked the streets accompanied by a bravo, his guardian angel. I have been quietly eating a dish of oysters in a restaurant, where, not more than ten minutes after I had left, shots were exchanged and took effect; and one night about ten o'clock, I saw a man standing watchfully at a street-corner with a long Smith-and-Wesson glittering in his hand behind his back. Somebody had done something he should not, and was being looked for with a vengeance. It is odd, too, that the seat of the last vigilance committee I know of — a mediæval *Vehmgericht* — was none other than the Palace Hotel, the world's greatest caravanserai, served by lifts and lit with electricity; where, in the great glazed court, a band nightly discourses music from a grove of palms. So do extremes meet in this city of contrasts: extremes of wealth and poverty, apathy and excitement, the conveniences of civilisation and the red justice of Judge Lynch.

The streets lie straight up and down the hills, and straight across at right angles, these in sun, those in shadow, a trenchant pattern of gloom and glare; and what with the crisp illumination, the sea-air singing in your ears, the chill and glitter, the changing aspects both of things and people, the fresh sights at every corner of your walk — sights of the bay, of Tamalpais, of steep, descending streets, of the outspread city — whiffs of alien speech, sailors singing on shipboard, Chinese coolies toiling on the shore, crowds brawling all day in the street before the Stock Exchange — one brief impression follows and obliterates another, and the city leaves upon the mind no general and stable picture, but a profusion of airy and incongruous images, of the sea and shore, the east and west, the summer and the winter.

In the better parts of the most interesting city there is apt to be a touch of the commonplace. It is in the slums and suburbs that the city dilettante finds his game. And there is nothing more characteristic and original than the outlying quarters of San Francisco. The Chinese district is the most famous; but it is far from the only truffle in the pie. There is many another dingy corner, many a young antiquity, many a *terrain vague* with that stamp of quaintness that the city lover seeks and dwells on; and the indefinite prolongation of its streets, up hill and down dale, makes San Francisco a place apart. The same street in its career visits and unites so many different classes of society, here echoing with drays, there lying decorously silent between the mansions of Bonanza millionaires, to founder at last among the drifting sands beside Lone Mountain cemetery, or die out among the sheds and lumber of the north. Thus you may be struck with a spot, set it down for the most romantic of the city, and, glancing at the name-plate, find it is in the same street that you yourself inhabit in another quarter of the town.

The great net of straight thoroughfares lying at right angles, east and west and north and south, over the shoulders of Nob Hill, the hill of palaces, must certainly be counted the best part of San Francisco. It is there that the millionaires are gathered together vying with each other in display. From thence, looking down over the business wards of the city, we can descry a building with a little belfry, and that is the Stock Exchange, the heart of San Francisco: a great pump we might call it, continually pumping up the savings of the lower quarters into the pockets of the millionaires upon the hill. But these same thoroughfares that enjoy for awhile so elegant a destiny have their lines prolonged into more unpleasant places. Some meet their fate in the sands; some must take a cruise in the ill-famed China quarters; some run into the sea; some perish unwept among pig-sties and rubbish-heaps.

Nob Hill comes, of right, in the place of honour; but the two other hills of San Francisco are more entertaining to explore. On both there are a world of old wooden houses snoozing together all forgotten. Some are of the quaintest design, others only romantic by neglect and age. Some have been almost undermined by new thoroughfares, and sit high up on the margin of the sandy cutting, only to be reached by stairs. Some are curiously painted, and I have seen one at least with ancient carvings panelled in its wall. Surely they are not of Californian building, but far voyagers from round the stormy Horn, like those who sent for them and dwelt in them at first. Brought to be the favourites of the wealthy, they have sunk into these poor, forgotten districts, where, like old town toasts, they keep each other silently in countenance. Telegraph Hill and Rincon Hill, these are the two dozing quarters that I recommend to the city dilettante. There stand these forgotten houses, enjoying the unbroken sun and quiet. There, if there were such an author, would the San Francisco Fortuné de Boisgobey pitch the first chapter of his mystery. But the first is the quainter of the two, and commands, moreover, a noble view. As it stands at the turn of the bay, its skirts are all waterside, and round from North Reach to the Bay Front you can follow doubtful paths from one quaint corner to another. Everywhere the same tumble-down decay and sloppy progress, new things yet unmade, old things tottering to their fall; everywhere the same out-at-elbows, many-nationed loungers at dim, irregular grog-shops; everywhere the same sea-air and isleted sea-prospect; and for a last and more romantic note, you have on the one hand Tamalpais standing high in the blue air, and on the other the tail of that long alignment of three-masted, full-rigged, deep-sea ships that make a forest of spars along the eastern front of San Francisco. In no other port is such a navy congregated. For the coast trade is so trifling, and the ocean trade from round the Horn so large, that the smaller ships are swallowed up, and can do nothing to confuse the majestic order of these merchant princes. In an age when the ship-of-the-line is already a thing of the past, and we can never again hope to go coasting in a cock-boat between the “wooden walls” of a squadron at anchor, there is perhaps no place on earth where the power and beauty of sea architecture can be so perfectly enjoyed as in this bay.

The Non-Fiction

VIRGINIBUS PUERISQUE AND OTHER PAPERS

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DEDICATION

My dear William Ernest Henley,
We are all busy in this world building Towers of Babel; and the child of our imaginations is always a changeling when it comes from nurse. This is not only true in the greatest, as of wars and folios, but in the least also, like the trifling volume in your hand. Thus I began to write these papers with a definite end: I was to be the *Advocatus*, not I hope *Diaboli*, but *Juventutis*; I was to state temperately the beliefs of youth as opposed to the contentions of age; to go over all the field where the two differ, and produce at last a little volume of special pleadings which I might call, without misnomer, "Life at Twenty-five." But times kept changing, and I shared in the change. I clung hard to that entrancing age; but, with the best will, no man can be twenty-five for ever. The old, ruddy convictions deserted me, and, along with them, the style that fits their presentation and defence. I saw, and indeed my friends informed me, that the game was up. A good part of the volume would answer to the long-projected title; but the shadows of the prison-house are on the rest.

It is good to have been young in youth and, as years go on, to grow older. Many are already old before they are through their teens; but to travel deliberately through one's ages is to get the heart out of a liberal education. Times change, opinions vary to their opposite, and still this world appears a brave gymnasium, full of sea-bathing, and horse-exercise, and bracing, manly virtues; and what can be more encouraging than to find the friend who was welcome at one age, still welcome at another? Our affections and beliefs are wiser than we; the best that is in us is better than we can understand; for it is grounded beyond experience, and guides us, blindfold but safe, from one age on to another.

These papers are like milestones on the wayside of my life; and as I look back in memory, there is hardly a stage of that distance but I see you present with advice, reproof, or praise. Meanwhile, many things have changed, you and I among the rest: but I hope that our sympathy, founded on the love of our art, and nourished by mutual assistance, shall survive these little revolutions undiminished, and, with God's help, unite us to the end.

R. L. S.
Davos Platz, 1881.

“VIRGINIBUS PUERISQUE”

I

With the single exception of Falstaff, all Shakespeare’s characters are what we call marrying men. Mercutio, as he was own cousin to Benedick and Biron, would have come to the same end in the long run. Even Iago had a wife, and, what is far stranger, he was jealous. People like Jacques and the Fool in *Lear*, although we can hardly imagine they would ever marry, keep single out of a cynical humour or for a broken heart, and not, as we do nowadays, from a spirit of incredulity and preference for the single state. For that matter, if you turn to George Sand’s French version of *As You Like It* (and I think I can promise you will like it but little), you will find Jacques marries Celia just as Orlando marries Rosalind.

At least there seems to have been much less hesitation over marriage in Shakespeare’s days; and what hesitation there was was of a laughing sort, and not much more serious, one way or the other, than that of Panurge. In modern comedies the heroes are mostly of Benedick’s way of thinking, but twice as much in earnest, and not one quarter so confident. And I take this diffidence as a proof of how sincere their terror is. They know they are only human after all; they know what gins and pitfalls lie about their feet; and how the shadow of matrimony waits, resolute and awful, at the cross-roads. They would wish to keep their liberty; but if that may not be, why, God’s will be done! “What, are you afraid of marriage?” asks Cécile, in *Maître Guerin*. “Oh, mon Dieu, non!” replies Arthur; “I should take chloroform.” They look forward to marriage much in the same way as they prepare themselves for death: each seems inevitable; each is a great Perhaps, and a leap into the dark, for which, when a man is in the blue devils, he has specially to harden his heart. That splendid scoundrel, Maxime de Trailles, took the news of marriages much as an old man hears the deaths of his contemporaries. “C’est désespérant,” he cried, throwing himself down in the arm-chair at Madame Schontz’s; “c’est désespérant, nous nous marions tous!” Every marriage was like another grey hair on his head; and the jolly church-bells seemed to taunt him with his fifty years and fair round belly.

The fact is, we are much more afraid of life than our ancestors, and cannot find it in our hearts either to marry or not to marry. Marriage is terrifying, but so is a cold and forlorn old age. The friendships of men are vastly agreeable, but they are insecure. You know all the time that one friend will marry and put you to the door; a second accept a situation in China, and become no more to you than a name, a reminiscence, and an occasional crossed letter, very laborious to read; a third will take up with some religious crotchet and treat you to sour looks thenceforward. So, in one way or another, life forces men apart and breaks up the goodly fellowships for ever. The very flexibility and ease which make men's friendships so agreeable while they endure, make them the easier to destroy and forget. And a man who has a few friends, or one who has a dozen (if there be any one so wealthy on this earth), cannot forget on how precarious a base his happiness reposes; and how by a stroke or two of fate — a death, a few light words, a piece of stamped paper, a woman's bright eyes — he may be left, in a month, destitute of all. Marriage is certainly a perilous remedy. Instead of on two or three, you stake your happiness on one life only. But still, as the bargain is more explicit and complete on your part, it is more so on the other; and you have not to fear so many contingencies; it is not every wind that can blow you from your anchorage; and so long as Death withholds his sickle, you will always have a friend at home. People who share a cell in the Bastile, or are thrown together on an uninhabited isle, if they do not immediately fall to fisticuffs, will find some possible ground of compromise. They will learn each other's ways and humours, so as to know where they must go warily, and where they may lean their whole weight. The discretion of the first years becomes the settled habit of the last; and so, with wisdom and patience, two lives may grow indissolubly into one.

But marriage, if comfortable, is not at all heroic. It certainly narrows and damps the spirits of generous men. In marriage, a man becomes slack and selfish, and under-goes a fatty degeneration of his moral being. It is not only when Lydgate misallies himself with Rosamond Vincy, but when Ladislaw marries above him with Dorothea, that this may be exemplified. The air of the fireside withers out all the fine wildings of the husband's heart. He is so comfortable and happy that he begins to prefer comfort and happiness to everything else on earth, his wife included. Yesterday he would have shared his last shilling; to-day "his first duty is to his family," and is fulfilled in large measure by laying down vintages and husbanding the health of an invaluable parent. Twenty years ago this man was equally capable of crime or heroism; now he is fit for neither. His soul is asleep, and you may speak without constraint; you will not wake him. It is not for nothing that Don Quixote was a bachelor and Marcus Aurelius married ill. For women there is less of this danger. Marriage is of so much use to a woman, opens out to her so much more of life, and puts her in the way of so much more freedom and usefulness, that, whether she marry ill or well, she can hardly miss some benefit.

It is true, however, that some of the merriest and most genuine of women are old maids; and that those old maids, and wives who are unhappily married, have often most of the true motherly touch. And this would seem to show, even for women, some narrowing influence in comfortable married life. But the rule is none the less certain: if you wish the pick of men and women, take a good bachelor and a good wife.

I am often filled with wonder that so many marriages are passably successful, and so few come to open failure, the more so as I fail to understand the principle on which people regulate their choice. I see women marrying indiscriminately with staring burgesses and ferret-faced, white-eyed boys, and men dwell in contentment with noisy scullions, or taking into their lives acidulous vestals. It is a common answer to say the good people marry because they fall in love; and of course you may use and misuse a word as much as you please, if you have the world along with you. But love is at least a somewhat hyperbolical expression for such lukewarm preference. It is not here, anyway, that Love employs his golden shafts; he cannot be said, with any fitness of language, to reign here and revel. Indeed, if this be love at all, it is plain the poets have been fooling with mankind since the foundation of the world. And you have only to look these happy couples in the face, to see they have never been in love, or in hate, or in any other high passion all their days. When you see a dish of fruit at dessert, you sometimes set your affections upon one particular peach or nectarine, watch it with some anxiety as it comes round the table, and feel quite a sensible disappointment when it is taken by some one else. I have used the phrase “high passion.” Well, I should say this was about as high a passion as generally leads to marriage. One husband hears after marriage that some poor fellow is dying of his wife’s love. “What a pity!” he exclaims; “you know I could so easily have got another!” And yet that is a very happy union. Or again: A young man was telling me the sweet story of his loves. “I like it well enough as long as her sisters are there,” said this amorous swain; “but I don’t know what to do when we’re alone.” Once more: A married lady was debating the subject with another lady. “You know, dear,” said the first, “after ten years of marriage, if he is nothing else, your husband is always an old friend.” “I have many old friends,” returned the other, “but I prefer them to be nothing more.” “Oh, perhaps I might *prefer* that also!” There is a common note in these three illustrations of the modern idyll; and it must be owned the god goes among us with a limping gait and blear eyes. You wonder whether it was so always; whether desire was always equally dull and spiritless, and possession equally cold. I cannot help fancying most people make, ere they marry, some such table of recommendations as

Hannah Godwin wrote to her brother William anent her friend, Miss Gay. It is so charmingly comical, and so pat to the occasion, that I must quote a few phrases. "The young lady is in every sense formed to make one of your disposition really happy. She has a pleasing voice, with which she accompanies her musical instrument with judgment. She has an easy politeness in her manners, neither free nor reserved. She is a good housekeeper and a good economist, and yet of a generous disposition. As to her internal accomplishments, I have reason to speak still more highly of them: good sense without vanity, a penetrating judgment without a disposition to satire, with about as much religion as my William likes, struck me with a wish that she was my William's wife." That is about the tune: pleasing voice, moderate good looks, unimpeachable internal accomplishments after the style of the copy-book, with about as much religion as my William likes; and then, with all speed, to church.

To deal plainly, if they only married when they fell in love, most people would die unwed; and among the others, there would be not a few tumultuous households. The Lion is the King of Beasts, but he is scarcely suitable for a domestic pet. In the same way, I suspect love is rather too violent a passion to make, in all cases, a good domestic sentiment. Like other violent excitements, it throws up not only what is best, but what is worst and smallest, in men's characters. Just as some people are malicious in drink, or brawling and virulent under the influence of religious feeling, some are moody, jealous, and exacting when they are in love, who are honest, downright, good-hearted fellows enough in the everyday affairs and humours of the world.

How then, seeing we are driven to the hypothesis that people choose in comparatively cold blood, how is it they choose so well? One is almost tempted to hint that it does not much matter whom you marry; that, in fact, marriage is a subjective affection, and if you have made up your mind to it, and once talked yourself fairly over, you could "pull it through" with anybody. But even if we take matrimony at its lowest, even if we regard it as no more than a sort of friendship recognised by the police, there must be degrees in the freedom and sympathy realised, and some principle to guide simple folk in their selection. Now what should this principle be? Are there no more definite rules than are to be found in the Prayer-book? Law and religion forbid the banns on the ground of propinquity or consanguinity; society steps in to separate classes; and in all this most critical matter, has common sense, has wisdom, never a word to say? In the absence of more magisterial teaching, let us talk it over between friends: even a few guesses may be of interest to youths and maidens.

In all that concerns eating and drinking, company, climate, and ways of life, community of taste is to be sought for. It would be trying, for instance, to keep bed and board with an early riser or a vegetarian. In matters of art and intellect, I believe it is of no consequence. Certainly it is of none in the companionships of men, who will dine more readily with one who has a good heart, a good cellar, and a humorous tongue, than with another who shares all their favourite hobbies and is melancholy withal. If your wife likes Tupper, that is no reason why you should hang your head. She thinks with the majority, and has the courage of her opinions. I have always suspected public taste to be a mongrel product, out of affectation by dogmatism; and felt sure, if you could only find an honest man of no special literary bent, he would tell you he thought much of Shakespeare bombastic and most absurd, and all of him written in very obscure English and wearisome to read. And not long ago I was able to lay by my lantern in content, for I found the honest man. He was a fellow of parts, quick, humorous, a clever painter, and with an eye for certain poetical effects of sea and ships. I am not much of a judge of that kind of thing, but a sketch of his comes before me sometimes at night. How strong, supple, and living the ship seems upon the billows! With what a dip and rake she shears the flying sea! I cannot fancy the man who saw this effect, and took it on the wing with so much force and spirit, was what you call commonplace in the last recesses of the heart. And yet he thought, and was not ashamed to have it known of him, that Ouida was better in every way than William Shakespeare. If there were more people of his honesty, this would be about the staple of lay criticism. It is not taste that is plentiful, but courage that is rare. And what have we in place? How many, who think no otherwise than the young painter, have we not heard disbursing second-hand hyperboles? Have you never turned sick at heart, O best of critics! when some of your own sweet adjectives were returned on you before a gaping audience? Enthusiasm about art is become a function of the average female being, which she performs with precision and a sort of haunting sprightliness, like an ingenious and well-regulated machine. Sometimes, alas! the calmest man is carried away in the torrent, bandies adjectives with the best, and out-Herods Herod for some shameful moments. When you remember that, you will be tempted to put things strongly, and say you will marry no one who is not like George the Second, and cannot state openly a distaste for poetry and painting.

The word “facts” is, in some ways, crucial. I have spoken with Jesuits and Plymouth Brethren, mathematicians and poets, dogmatic republicans and dear old gentlemen in bird’s-eye neckcloths; and each understood the word “facts” in an occult sense of his own. Try as I might, I could get no nearer the principle of their division. What was essential to them seemed to me trivial or untrue. We could come to no compromise as to what was, or what was not, important in the life of man. Turn as we pleased, we all stood back to back in a big ring, and saw another quarter of the heavens, with different mountain-tops along the sky-line and different constellations overhead. We had each of us some whimsy in the brain, which we believed more than anything else, and which discoloured all experience to its own shade. How would you have people agree, when one is deaf and the other blind? Now this is where there should be community between man and wife. They should be agreed on their catchword in "*facts of religion*," or "*facts of science*," or "*society, my dear*"; for without such an agreement all intercourse is a painful strain upon the mind. "About as much religion as my William likes," in short, that is what is necessary to make a happy couple of any William and his spouse. For there are differences which no habit nor affection can reconcile, and the Bohemian must not intermarry with the Pharisee. Imagine Consuelo as Mrs. Samuel Budget, the wife of the Successful Merchant! The best of men and the best of women may sometimes live together all their lives, and for want of some consent on fundamental questions, hold each other lost spirits to the end.

A certain sort of talent is almost indispensable for people who would spend years together and not bore themselves to death. But the talent, like the agreement, must be for and about life. To dwell happily together they should be versed in the niceties of the heart, and born with a faculty for willing compromise. The woman must be talented as a woman, and it will not much matter although she is talented in nothing else. She must know her *métier de femme*, and have a fine touch for the affections. And it is more important that a person should be a good gossip, and talk pleasantly and smartly of common friends and the thousand and one nothings of the day and hour, than that she should speak with the tongues of men and angels; for a while together by the fire happens more frequently in marriage than the presence of a distinguished foreigner to dinner. That people should laugh over the same sort of jests, and have many a story of "grouse in the gun-room," many an old joke between them which time cannot wither nor custom stale, is a better preparation for life, by your leave, than many other things higher and better sounding in the world's ears. You could read Kant by yourself, if you wanted; but you must share a joke with some one else. You can forgive people who do not follow you through a philosophical disquisition; but to find your wife laughing when you had tears in your eyes or staring when you were in a fit of laughter, would go some way towards a dissolution of the marriage.

I know a woman who, from some distaste or disability, could never so much as understand the meaning of the word *politics*, and has given up trying to distinguish Whigs from Tories; but take her on her own politics, ask her about other men or women and the chicanery of everyday existence — the rubs, the tricks, the vanities on which life turns — and you will not find many more shrewd, trenchant, and humorous. Nay, to make plainer what I have in mind, this same woman has a share of the higher and more poetical understanding, frank interest in things for their own sake, and enduring astonishment at the most common. She is not to be deceived by custom, or made to think a mystery solved when it is repeated. I have heard her say she could wonder herself crazy over the human eyebrow. Now in a world where most of us walk very contentedly in the little lit circle of their own reason, and have to be reminded of what lies without by specious and clamant exceptions — earthquakes, eruptions of Vesuvius, banjos floating in mid-air at a *séance*, and the like — a mind so fresh and unsophisticated is no despicable gift. I will own I think it a better sort of mind than goes necessarily with the clearest views on public business. It will wash. It will find something to say at an odd moment. It has in it the spring of pleasant and quaint fancies. Whereas I can imagine myself yawning all night long until my jaws ached and the tears came into my eyes, although my companion on the other side of the hearth held the most enlightened opinions on the franchise or the ballot.

The question of professions, in as far as they regard marriage, was only interesting to women until of late days, but it touches all of us now. Certainly, if I could help it, I would never marry a wife who wrote. The practice of letters is miserably harassing to the mind; and after an hour or two's work, all the more human portion of the author is extinct; he will bully, backbite, and speak daggers. Music, I hear, is not much better. But painting, on the contrary, is often highly sedative; because so much of the labour, after your picture is once begun, is almost entirely manual, and of that skilled sort of manual labour which offers a continual series of successes, and so tickles a man, through his vanity, into good humour. Alas! in letters there is nothing of this sort. You may write as beautiful a hand as you will, you have always something else to think of, and cannot pause to notice your loops and flourishes; they are beside the mark, and the first law stationer could put you to the blush. Rousseau, indeed, made some account of penmanship, even made it a source of livelihood, when he copied out the "Héloïse" for *dilettante* ladies; and therein showed that strange eccentric prudence which guided him among so many thousand follies and insanities. It would be well for all of the *genus irritabile* thus to add something of skilled labour to intangible brain-work. To find the right word is so doubtful a success and lies so near to failure, that there is no satisfaction in a year of it; but we all know when we have formed a letter perfectly; and a stupid artist, right or wrong, is almost equally certain he has found a right tone or a right colour, or made a dexterous stroke with his brush. And, again, painters may work out of doors; and the fresh air, the deliberate seasons, and the "tranquillising influence" of the green earth, counterbalance the fever of thought, and keep them cool, placable, and prosaic.

A ship captain is a good man to marry if it is a marriage of love, for absences are a good influence in love and keep it bright and delicate; but he is just the worst man if the feeling is more pedestrian, as habit is too frequently torn open and the solder has never time to set. Men who fish, botanise, work with the turning-lathe, or gather sea-weeds, will make admirable husbands; and a little amateur painting in water-colour shows the innocent and quiet mind. Those who have a few intimates are to be avoided; while those who swim loose, who have their hat in their hand all along the street, who can number an infinity of acquaintances and are not chargeable with any one friend, promise an easy disposition and no rival to the wife's influence. I will not say they are the best of men, but they are the stuff out of which adroit and capable women manufacture the best of husbands. It is to be noticed that those who have loved once or twice already are so much the better educated to a woman's hand; the bright boy of fiction is an odd and most uncomfortable mixture of shyness and coarseness, and needs a deal of civilising. Lastly (and this is, perhaps, the golden rule) no woman should marry a teetotaller, or a man who does not smoke. It is not for nothing that this "ignoble tabagie," as Michelet calls it, spreads over all the world. Michelet rails against it because it renders you happy apart from thought or work; to provident women this will seem no evil influence in married life. Whatever keeps a man in the front garden, whatever checks wandering fancy and all inordinate ambition, whatever makes for lounging and contentment, makes just so surely for domestic happiness.

These notes, if they amuse the reader at all, will probably amuse him more when he differs than when he agrees with them; at least they will do no harm, for nobody will follow my advice. But the last word is of more concern. Marriage is a step so grave and decisive that it attracts light-headed, variable men by its very awfulness. They have been so tried among the inconstant squalls and currents, so often sailed for islands in the air or lain becalmed with burning heart, that they will risk all for solid ground below their feet. Desperate pilots, they run their sea-sick, weary barque upon the dashing rocks. It seems as if marriage were the royal road through life, and realised, on the instant, what we have all dreamed on summer Sundays when the bells ring, or at night when we cannot sleep for the desire of living. They think it will sober and change them. Like those who join a brotherhood, they fancy it needs but an act to be out of the coil and clamour for ever. But this is a wile of the devil's. To the end, spring winds will sow disquietude, passing faces leave a regret behind them, and the whole world keep calling and calling in their ears. For marriage is like life in this — that it is a field of battle, and not a bed of roses.

II

Hope, they say, deserts us at no period of our existence. From first to last, and in the face of smarting disillusions we continue to expect good fortune, better health, and better conduct; and that so confidently, that we judge it needless to deserve them. I think it improbable that I shall ever write like Shakespeare, conduct an army like Hannibal, or distinguish myself like Marcus Aurelius in the paths of virtue; and yet I have my by-days, hope prompting, when I am very ready to believe that I shall combine all these various excellences in my own person, and go marching down to posterity with divine honours. There is nothing so monstrous but we can believe it of ourselves. About ourselves, about our aspirations and delinquencies, we have dwelt by choice in a delicious vagueness from our boyhood up. No one will have forgotten Tom Sawyer's aspiration: "Ah, if he could only die *temporarily*!" Or, perhaps, better still, the inward resolution of the two pirates, that "so long as they remained in that business, their piracies should not again be sullied with the crime of stealing." Here we recognise the thoughts of our boyhood; and our boyhood ceased, — well, when? — not, I think, at twenty; nor, perhaps, altogether at twenty-five; nor yet at thirty; and possibly, to be quite frank, we are still in the thick of that arcadian period. For as the race of man, after centuries of civilisation, still keeps some traits of their barbarian fathers, so man the individual is not altogether quit of youth, when he is already old and honoured, and Lord Chancellor of England. We advance in years somewhat in the manner of an invading army in a barren land; the age that we have reached, as the phrase goes, we but hold with an outpost, and still keep open our communications with the extreme rear and first beginnings of the march. There is our true base; that is not only the beginning, but the perennial spring of our faculties; and grandfather William can retire upon occasion into the green enchanted forest of his boyhood.

The unfading boyishness of hope and its vigorous irrationality are nowhere better displayed than in questions of conduct. There is a character in the "Pilgrim's Progress," one Mr. "Linger-after-Lust," with whom I fancy we are all on speaking terms; one famous among the famous for ingenuity of hope up to and beyond the moment of defeat; one who, after eighty years of contrary experience, will believe it possible to continue in the business of piracy and yet avoid the guilt of theft. Every sin is our last; every 1st of January a remarkable turning-point in our career. Any overt act, above all, is felt to be alchemic in its power to change. A drunkard takes the pledge; it will be strange if that does not help him. For how many years did Mr. Pepys continue to make and break his little vows? And yet I have not heard that he was discouraged in the end. By such steps we think to fix a momentary resolution; as a timid fellow hies him to the dentist's while the tooth is stinging.

But, alas, by planting a stake at the top of flood, you can neither prevent nor delay the inevitable ebb. There is no hocus-pocus in morality; and even the "sanctimonious ceremony" of marriage leaves the man unchanged. This is a hard saying, and has an air of paradox. For there is something in marriage so natural and inviting, that the step has an air of great simplicity and ease; it offers to bury for ever many aching preoccupations; it is to afford us unfailing and familiar company through life; it opens up a smiling prospect of the blest and passive kind of love, rather than the blessing and active; it is approached not only through the delights of courtship, but by a public performance and repeated legal signatures. A man naturally thinks it will go hard with him if he cannot be good and fortunate and happy within such august circumvallations.

And yet there is probably no other act in a man's life so hot-headed and foolhardy as this one of marriage. For years, let us suppose, you have been making the most indifferent business of your career. Your experience has not, we may dare to say, been more encouraging than Paul's or Horace's; like them, you have seen and desired the good that you were not able to accomplish; like them, you have done the evil that you loathed. You have walked at night in a hot or a cold sweat, according to your habit of body, remembering, with dismal surprise, your own unpardonable acts and sayings. You have been sometimes tempted to withdraw entirely from this game of life; as a man who makes nothing but misses withdraws from that less dangerous one of billiards. You have fallen back upon the thought that you yourself most sharply smarted for your misdemeanours, or, in the old, plaintive phrase, that you were nobody's enemy but your own. And then you have been made aware of what was beautiful and amiable, wise and kind, in the other part of your behaviour; and it seemed as if nothing could reconcile the contradiction, as indeed nothing can. If you are a man, you have shut your mouth hard and said nothing; and if you are only a man in the making, you have recognised that yours was quite a special case, and you yourself not guilty of your own pestiferous career.

Granted, and with all my heart. Let us accept these apologies; let us agree that you are nobody's enemy but your own; let us agree that you are a sort of moral cripple, impotent for good; and let us regard you with the unmingled pity due to such a fate. But there is one thing to which, on these terms, we can never agree: — we can never agree to have you marry. What! you have had one life to manage, and have failed so strangely, and now can see nothing wiser than to conjoin with it the management of some one else's? Because you have been unfaithful in a very little, you propose yourself to be a ruler over ten cities. You strip yourself by such a step of all remaining consolations and excuses. You are no longer content to be your own enemy; you must be your wife's also. You have been hitherto in a mere subaltern attitude; dealing cruel blows about you in life, yet only half responsible, since you came there by no choice or movement of your own. Now, it appears, you must take things on your own authority: God made you, but you marry yourself; and for all that your wife suffers, no one is responsible but you. A man must be very certain of his knowledge ere he undertake to guide a ticket-of-leave man through a dangerous pass; you have eternally missed your way in life, with consequences that you still deplore, and yet you masterfully seize your wife's hand, and, blindfold, drag her after you to ruin. And it is your wife, you observe, whom you select. Her, whose happiness you most desire, you choose to be your victim. You would earnestly warn her from a tottering bridge or bad investment. If she were to marry some one else, how you would tremble for her fate! If she were only your sister, and you thought half as much of her, how doubtfully would you entrust her future to a man no better than yourself!

Times are changed with him who marries; there are no more by-path meadows where you may innocently linger, but the road lies long and straight and dusty to the grave. Idleness, which is often becoming and even wise in the bachelor, begins to wear a different aspect when you have a wife to support. Suppose, after you are married, one of those little slips were to befall you. What happened last November might surely happen February next. They may have annoyed you at the time, because they were not what you had meant; but how will they annoy you in the future, and how will they shake the fabric of your wife's confidence and peace! A thousand things unpleasing went on in the *chiaroscuro* of a life that you shrank from too particularly realising; you did not care, in those days, to make a fetish of your conscience; you would recognise your failures with a nod, and so, good day. But the time for these reserves is over. You have wilfully introduced a witness into your life, the scene of these defeats, and can no longer close the mind's eye upon uncomely passages, but must stand up straight and put a name upon your actions. And your witness is not only the judge, but the victim of your sins; not only can she condemn you to the sharpest penalties, but she must herself share feelingly in their endurance. And observe, once more, with what temerity you have chosen precisely *her* to be your spy, whose esteem you value highest, and whom you have already taught to think you better than you are. You may think you had a conscience and believed in God; but what is a conscience to a wife? Wise men of yore erected statues of their deities, and consciously performed their part in life before those marble eyes. A god watched them at the board, and stood by their bedside in the morning when they woke; and all about their ancient cities, where they bought and sold or where they piped and wrestled, there would stand some symbol of the things that are outside of man. These were lessons, delivered in the quiet dialect of art, which told their story faithfully, but gently. It is the same lesson, if you will — but how harrowingly taught! — when the woman you respect shall weep from your unkindness or blush with shame at your misconduct. Poor girls in Italy turn their painted Madonnas to the wall: you cannot set aside your wife. To marry is to domesticate the Recording Angel. Once you are married, there is nothing left for you, not even suicide, but to be good.

And goodness in marriage is a more intricate problem than mere single virtue; for in marriage there are two ideals to be realised. A girl, it is true, has always lived in a glass house among reproving relatives, whose word was law; she has been bred up to sacrifice her judgments and take the key submissively from dear papa; and it is wonderful how swiftly she can change her tune into the husband's. Her morality has been, too often, an affair of precept and conformity. But in the case of a bachelor who has enjoyed some measure both of privacy and freedom, his moral judgments have been passed in some accordance with his nature. His sins were always sins in his own sight; he could then only sin when he did some act against his clear conviction; the light that he walked by was obscure, but it was single. Now, when two people of any grit and spirit put their fortunes into one, there succeeds to this comparative certainty a huge welter of competing jurisdictions. It no longer matters so much how life appears to one; one must consult another: one, who may be strong, must not offend the other, who is weak. The only weak brother I am willing to consider is (to make a bull for once) my wife. For her, and for her only, I must waive my righteous judgments, and go crookedly about my life. How, then, in such an atmosphere of compromise, to keep honour bright and abstain from base capitulations? How are you to put aside love's pleadings? How are you, the apostle of laxity, to turn suddenly about into the rabbi of precision, and, after these years of ragged practice, pose for a hero to the lackey who has found you out? In this temptation to mutual indulgence lies the particular peril to morality in married life. Daily they drop a little lower from the first ideal, and for a while continue to accept these changelings with a gross complacency. At last Love awakes and looks about him; find his hero sunk into a stout old brute, intent on brandy pawnee; finds his heroine divested of her angel brightness; and, in the flash of that first disenchantment, flees for ever.

Again, the husband, in these unions, is usually a man, and the wife commonly enough a woman; and when this is the case, although it makes the firmer marriage, a thick additional veil of misconception hangs above the doubtful business. Women, I believe, are somewhat rarer than men; but then, if I were a woman, myself, I daresay I should hold the reverse; and at least we all enter more or less wholly into one or other of these camps. A man who delights women by his feminine perceptions will often scatter his admirers by a chance explosion of the under side of man; and the most masculine and direct of women will some day, to your dire surprise, draw out like a telescope into successive lengths of personation. Alas! for the man knowing her to be at heart more candid than himself, who shall flounder, panting, through these mazes in the quest for truth. The proper qualities of each sex are, indeed, eternally surprising to the other. Between the Latin and the Teuton races there are similar divergencies, not to be bridged by the most liberal sympathy. And in the good, plain, cut-and-dry explanations of this life, which pass current among us as the wisdom of the elders, this difficulty has been turned with the aid of pious lies. Thus, when a young lady has angelic features, eats nothing to speak of, plays all day long on the piano, and sings ravishingly in church, it requires a rough infidelity falsely called cynicism, to believe that she may be a little devil after all. Yet so it is: she may be a talebearer, a liar, and a thief; she may have a taste for brandy, and no heart. My compliments to George Eliot for her Rosamond Vincy; the ugly work of satire she has transmuted to the ends of art, by the companion figure of Lydgate; and the satire was much wanted for the education of young men. That doctrine of the excellence of women, however chivalrous, is cowardly as well as false. It is better to face the fact, and know, when you marry that you take into your life a creature of equal, if of unlike, frailties; whose weak human heart beats no more tunefully than yours.

But it is the object of a liberal education not only to obscure the knowledge of one sex by another, but to magnify the natural differences between the two. Man is a creature who lives not upon bread alone, but principally by catchwords; and the little rift between the sexes is astonishingly widened by simply teaching one set of catchwords to the girls and another to the boys. To the first, there is shown but a very small field of experience, and taught a very trenchant principle for judgment and action; to the other, the world of life is more largely displayed, and their rule of conduct is proportionally widened. They are taught to follow different virtues, to hate different vices, to place their ideal, even for each other, in different achievements. What should be the result of such a course? When a horse has run away, and the two flustered people in the gig have each possessed themselves of a rein, we know the end of that conveyance will be in the ditch. So, when I see a raw youth and a green girl fluted and fiddled in a dancing measure into that most serious contract, and setting out upon life's journey with ideas so monstrously divergent, I am not surprised that some make shipwreck, but that any come to port. What the boy does almost proudly, as a manly peccadillo, the girl will shudder at as a debasing vice; what is to her the mere common sense of tactics, he will spit out of his mouth as shameful. Through such a sea of contrarieties must this green couple steer their way; and contrive to love each other; and to respect, forsooth; and be ready, when the time arrives, to educate the little men and women who shall succeed to their places and perplexities.

And yet, when all has been said, the man who should hold back from marriage is in the same case with him who runs away from battle. To avoid an occasion for our virtues is a worse degree of failure than to push forward pluckily and make a fall. It is lawful to pray God that we be not led into temptation; but not lawful to skulk from those that come to us. The noblest passage in one of the noblest books of this century, is where the old pope glories in the trial, nay, in the partial fall and but imperfect triumph, of the younger hero. Without some such manly note, it were perhaps better to have no conscience at all. But there is a vast difference between teaching flight, and showing points of peril that a man may march the more warily. And the true conclusion of this paper is to turn our back on apprehensions, and embrace that shining and courageous virtue, Faith. Hope is the boy, a blind, headlong, pleasant fellow, good to chase swallows with the salt; Faith is the grave, experienced, yet smiling man. Hope lives on ignorance; open-eyed Faith is built upon a knowledge of our life, of the tyranny of circumstance and the frailty of human resolution. Hope looks for unqualified success; but Faith counts certainly on failure, and takes honourable defeat to be a form of victory. Hope is a kind old pagan; but Faith grew up in Christian days, and early learnt humility. In the one temper, a man is indignant that he cannot spring up in a clap to heights of elegance and virtue; in the other, out of a sense of his infirmities, he is filled with confidence because a year has come and gone, and he has still preserved some rags of honour. In the first, he expects an angel for a wife; in the last, he knows that she is like himself — erring, thoughtless, and untrue; but like himself also, filled with a struggling radiancy of better things, and adorned with ineffective qualities. You may safely go to school with hope; but ere you marry, should have learned the mingled lesson of the world; that dolls are stuffed with sawdust, and yet are excellent playthings; that hope and love address themselves to a perfection never realised, and yet, firmly held, become the salt and staff of life; that you yourself are compacted of infirmities, perfect, you might say, in imperfection, and yet you have a something in you lovable and worth preserving; and that, while the mass of mankind lies under this scurvy condemnation, you will scarce find one, but, by some generous reading, will become to you a lesson, a model, and a noble spouse through life. So thinking, you will constantly support your own unworthiness, and easily forgive the failings of your friend. Nay, you will be wisely glad that you retain the sense of blemishes; for the faults of married people continually spur up each of them, hour by hour, to do better and to meet and love upon a higher ground. And ever, between the failures, there will come glimpses of kind virtues to encourage and console.

Browning's "The Ring and the Book."

III

ON FALLING IN LOVE

"Lord, what fools these mortals be!"

There is only one event in life which really astonishes a man and startles him out of his prepared opinions. Everything else befalls him very much as he expected. Event succeeds to event, with an agreeable variety indeed, but with little that is either startling or intense; they form together no more than a sort of background, or running accompaniment to the man's own reflections; and he falls naturally into a cool, curious, and smiling habit of mind, and builds himself up in a conception of life which expects to-morrow to be after the pattern of to-day and yesterday. He may be accustomed to the vagaries of his friends and acquaintances under the influence of love. He may sometimes look forward to it for himself with an incomprehensible expectation. But it is a subject which neither intuition nor the behaviour of others will help the philosopher to the truth. There is probably nothing rightly thought or rightly written on this matter of love that is not a piece of the person's experience. I remember an anecdote of a well-known French theorist, who was debating a point eagerly in his *cénacle*. It was objected against him that he had never experienced love. Whereupon he arose, left the society, and made it a point not to return to it until he considered that he had supplied the defect. "Now," he remarked, on entering, "now I am in a position to continue the discussion." Perhaps he had not penetrated very deeply into the subject after all; but the story indicates right thinking, and may serve as an apologue to readers of this essay.

When at last the scales fall from his eyes, it is not without something of the nature of dismay that the man finds himself in such changed conditions. He has to deal with commanding emotions instead of the easy dislikes and preferences in which he has hitherto passed his days; and he recognises capabilities for pain and pleasure of which he had not yet suspected the existence. Falling in love is the one illogical adventure, the one thing of which we are tempted to think as supernatural, in our trite and reasonable world. The effect is out of all proportion with the cause. Two persons, neither of them it may be, very amiable or very beautiful, meet, speak a little, and look a little into each other's eyes. That has been done a dozen or so of times in the experience of either with no great result. But on this occasion all is different. They fall at once into that state in which another person becomes to us the very gist and centre-point of God's creation, and demolishes our laborious theories with a smile; in which our ideas are so bound up with the one master-thought that even the trivial cares of our own person become so many acts of devotion, and the love of life itself is translated into a wish to remain in the same world with so precious and desirable a fellow-creature. And all the while their acquaintances look on in stupor, and ask each other, with almost passionate emphasis, what so-and-so can see in that woman, or such-an-one in that man. I am sure, gentlemen, I cannot tell you. For my part, I cannot think what the women mean. It might be very well, if the Apollo Belvedere should suddenly glow all over into life, and step forward from the pedestal with that godlike air of his. But of the misbegotten changelings who call themselves men, and prate intolerably over dinner-tables, I never saw one who seemed worthy to inspire love — no, nor read of any, except Leonardo da Vinci, and perhaps Goethe in his youth. About women I entertain a somewhat different opinion; but there, I have the misfortune to be a man.

There are many matters in which you may waylay Destiny, and bid him stand and deliver. Hard work, high thinking, adventurous excitement, and a great deal more that forms a part of this or the other person's spiritual bill of fare, are within the reach of almost any one who can dare a little and be patient. But it is by no means in the way of every one to fall in love. You know the difficulty Shakespeare was put into when Queen Elizabeth asked him to show Falstaff in love. I do not believe that Henry Fielding was ever in love. Scott, if it were not for a passage or two in "Rob Roy," would give me very much the same effect. These are great names and (what is more to the purpose) strong, healthy, high-strung, and generous natures, of whom the reverse might have been expected. As for the innumerable army of anæmic and tailorish persons who occupy the face of this planet with so much propriety, it is palpably absurd to imagine them in any such situation as a love-affair. A wet rag goes safely by the fire; and if a man is blind, he cannot expect to be much impressed by romantic scenery. Apart from all this, many lovable people miss each other in the world, or meet under some unfavourable star. There is the nice and critical moment of declaration to be got over. From timidity or lack of opportunity a good half of possible love cases never get so far, and at least another quarter do there cease and determine. A very adroit person, to be sure, manages to prepare the way and out with his declaration in the nick of time. And then there is a fine solid sort of man, who goes on from snub to snub; and if he has to declare forty times, will continue imperturbably declaring, amid the astonished consideration of men and angels, until he has a favourable answer. I daresay, if one were a woman, one would like to marry a man who was capable of doing this, but not quite one who had done so. It is just a little bit abject, and somehow just a little bit gross; and marriages in which one of the parties has been thus battered into consent scarcely form agreeable subjects for meditation. Love should run out to meet love with open arms. Indeed, the ideal story is that of two people who go into love step for step, with a fluttered consciousness, like a pair of children venturing together into a dark room. From the first moment when they see each other, with a pang of curiosity, through stage after stage of growing pleasure and embarrassment, they can read the expression of their own trouble in each other's eyes. There is here no declaration, properly so called; the feeling is so plainly shared, that as soon as the man knows what it is in his own heart, he is sure of what it is in the woman's.

This simple accident of falling in love is as beneficial as it is astonishing. It arrests the petrifying influence of years, disproves cold-blooded and cynical conclusions, and awakens dormant sensibilities. Hitherto the man had found it a good policy to disbelieve the existence of any enjoyment which was out of his reach; and thus he turned his back upon the strong sunny parts of nature, and accustomed himself to look exclusively on what was common and dull. He accepted a prose ideal, let himself go blind of many sympathies by disuse; and if he were young and witty, or beautiful, wilfully forwent these advantages. He joined himself to the following of what, in the old mythology of love, was prettily called *nonchaloir*; and in an odd mixture of feelings, a fling of self-respect, a preference for selfish liberty, and a great dash of that fear with which honest people regard serious interests, kept himself back from the straightforward course of life among certain selected activities. And now, all of a sudden, he is unhorsed, like St. Paul, from his infidel affectation. His heart, which has been ticking accurate seconds for the last year, gives a bound and begins to beat high and irregularly in his breast. It seems as if he had never heard or felt or seen until that moment; and by the report of his memory, he must have lived his past life between sleep and waking, or with the pre-occupied attention of a brown study. He is practically incommoded by the generosity of his feelings, smiles much when he is alone, and develops a habit of looking rather blankly upon the moon and stars. But it is not at all within the province of a prose essayist to give a picture of this hyperbolical frame of mind; and the thing has been done already, and that to admiration. In "Adelaïde," in Tennyson's "Maud," and in some of Heine's songs, you get the absolute expression of this midsummer spirit. Romeo and Juliet were very much in love; although they tell me some German critics are of a different opinion, probably the same who would have us think Mercutio a dull fellow. Poor Antony was in love, and no mistake. That lay figure, Marius, in "Les Misérables," is also a genuine case in his own way, and worth observation. A good many of George Sand's people are thoroughly in love; and so are a good many of George Meredith's. Altogether, there is plenty to read on the subject. If the root of the matter be in him, and if he has the requisite chords to set in vibration, a young man may occasionally enter, with the key of art, into that land of Beulah which is upon the borders of Heaven, and within sight of the City of Love. There let him sit awhile to hatch delightful hopes and perilous illusions.

One thing that accompanies the passion in its first blush is certainly difficult to explain. It comes (I do not quite see how) that from having a very supreme sense of pleasure in all parts of life — in lying down to sleep, in waking, in motion, in breathing, in continuing to be — the lover begins to regard his happiness as beneficial for the rest of the world and highly meritorious in himself. Our race has never been able contentedly to suppose that the noise of its wars, conducted by a few young gentlemen in a corner of an inconsiderable star, does not re-echo among the courts of Heaven with quite a formidable effect. In much the same taste, when people find a great to-do in their own breasts, they imagine it must have some influence in their neighbourhood. The presence of the two lovers is so enchanting to each other that it seems as if it must be the best thing possible for everybody else. They are half inclined to fancy it is because of them and their love that the sky is blue and the sun shines. And certainly the weather is usually fine while people are courting.... In point of fact, although the happy man feels very kindly towards others of his own sex, there is apt to be something too much of the magnifico in his demeanour. If people grow presuming and self-important over such matters as a dukedom or the Holy See, they will scarcely support the dizziest elevation in life without some suspicion of a strut; and the dizziest elevation is to love and be loved in return. Consequently, accepted lovers are a trifle condescending in their address to other men. An overweening sense of the passion and importance of life hardly conduces to simplicity of manner. To women they feel very nobly, very purely, and very generously, as if they were so many Joan-of-Arcs; but this does not come out in their behaviour; and they treat them to Grandisonian airs marked with a suspicion of fatuity. I am not quite certain that women do not like this sort of thing; but really, after having bemused myself over "Daniel Deronda," I have given up trying to understand what they like.

If it did nothing else, this sublime and ridiculous superstition, that the pleasure of the pair is somehow blessed to others, and everybody is made happier in their happiness, would serve at least to keep love generous and greathearted. Nor is it quite a baseless superstition after all. Other lovers are hugely interested. They strike the nicest balance between pity and approval, when they see people aping the greatness of their own sentiments. It is an understood thing in the play, that while the young gentlefolk are courting on the terrace, a rough flirtation is being carried on, and a light, trivial sort of love is growing up, between the footman and the singing chambermaid. As people are generally cast for the leading parts in their own imaginations, the reader can apply the parallel to real life without much chance of going wrong. In short, they are quite sure this other love-affair is not so deep-seated as their own, but they like dearly to see it going forward. And love, considered as a spectacle, must have attractions for many who are not of the confraternity. The sentimental old maid is a commonplace of the novelists; and he must be rather a poor sort of human being, to be sure, who can look on at this pretty madness without indulgence and sympathy. For nature commends itself to people with a most insinuating art; the busiest is now and again arrested by a great sunset; and you may be as pacific or as coldblooded as you will, but you cannot help some emotion when you read of well-disputed battles, or meet a pair of lovers in the lane.

Certainly, whatever it may be with regard to the world at large, this idea of beneficent pleasure is true as between the sweethearts. To do good and communicate is the lover's grand intention. It is the happiness of the other that makes his own most intense gratification. It is not possible to disentangle the different emotions, the pride, humility, pity, and passion, which are excited by a look of happy love or an unexpected caress. To make one's self beautiful, to dress the hair, to excel in talk, to do anything and all things that puff out the character and attributes and make them imposing in the eyes of others, is not only to magnify oneself, but to offer the most delicate homage at the same time. And it is in this latter intention that they are done by lovers; for the essence of love is kindness: and indeed it may be best defined as passionate kindness: kindness, so to speak, run mad and become importunate and violent. Vanity in a merely personal sense exists no longer. The lover takes a perilous pleasure in privately displaying his weak points and having them, one after another, accepted and condoned. He wishes to be assured that he is not loved for this or that good quality, but for himself, or something as like himself as he can contrive to set forward. For, although it may have been a very difficult thing to paint the marriage of Cana, or write the fourth act of *Antony and Cleopatra*, there is a more difficult piece of art before every one in this world who cares to set about explaining his own character to others. Words and acts are easily wrenched from their true significance; and they are all the language we have to come and go upon. A pitiful job we make of it, as a rule. For better or worse, people mistake our meaning and take our emotions at a wrong valuation. And generally we rest pretty content with our failures; we are content to be misapprehended by crackling flirts; but when once a man is moonstruck with this affection of love, he makes it a point of honour to clear such dubieties away. He cannot have the Best of her Sex misled upon a point of this importance; and his pride revolts at being loved in a mistake.

He discovers a great reluctance to return on former periods of his life. To all that has not been shared with her, rights and duties, bygone fortunes and dispositions, he can look back only by a difficult and repugnant effort of the will. That he should have wasted some years in ignorance of what alone was really important, that he may have entertained the thought of other women with any show of complacency, is a burthen almost too heavy for his self-respect. But it is the thought of another past that rankles in his spirit like a poisoned wound. That he himself made a fashion of being alive in the bald, beggarly days before a certain meeting, is deplorable enough in all good conscience. But that She should have permitted herself the same liberty seems inconsistent with a Divine providence.

A great many people run down jealousy, on the score that it is an artificial feeling, as well as practically inconvenient. This is scarcely fair; for the feeling on which it merely attends, like an ill-humoured courtier, is itself artificial in exactly the same sense and to the same degree. I suppose what is meant by that objection is that jealousy has not always been a character of man; formed no part of that very modest kit of sentiments with which he is supposed to have begun the world; but waited to make its appearance in better days and among richer natures. And this is equally true of love, and friendship, and love of country, and delight in what they call the beauties of nature, and most other things worth having. Love, in particular, will not endure any historical scrutiny: to all who have fallen across it, it is one of the most incontestable facts in the world; but if you begin to ask what it was in other periods and countries, in Greece, for instance, the strangest doubts begin to spring up, and everything seems so vague and changing that a dream is logical in comparison. Jealousy, at any rate, is one of the consequences of love; you may like it or not, at pleasure; but there it is.

It is not exactly jealousy, however, that we feel when we reflect on the past of those we love. A bundle of letters found after years of happy union creates no sense of insecurity in the present; and yet it will pain a man sharply. The two people entertain no vulgar doubt of each other: but this pre-existence of both occurs to the mind as something indelicate. To be altogether right, they should have had twin birth together, at the same moment with the feeling that unites them. Then indeed it would be simple and perfect and without reserve or afterthought. Then they would understand each other with a fulness impossible otherwise. There would be no barrier between them of associations that cannot be imparted. They would be led into none of those comparisons that send the blood back to the heart. And they would know that there had been no time lost, and they had been together as much as was possible. For besides terror for the separation that must follow some time or other in the future, men feel anger, and something like remorse, when they think of that other separation which endured until they met. Some one has written that love makes people believe in immortality, because there seems not to be room enough in life for so great a tenderness, and it is inconceivable that the most masterful of our emotions should have no more than the spare moments of a few years. Indeed, it seems strange; but if we call to mind analogies, we can hardly regard it as impossible.

“The blind bow-boy,” who smiles upon us from the end of terraces in old Dutch gardens, laughingly hails his bird-bolts among a fleeting generation. But for as fast as ever he shoots, the game dissolves and disappears into eternity from under his falling arrows; this one is gone ere he is struck; the other has but time to make one gesture and give one passionate cry; and they are all the things of a moment. When the generation is gone, when the play is over, when the thirty years' panorama has been withdrawn in tatters from the stage of the world, we may ask what has become of these great, weighty, and undying loves, and the sweethearts who despised mortal conditions in a fine credulity; and they can only show us a few songs in a bygone taste, a few actions worth remembering, and a few children who have retained some happy stamp from the disposition of their parents.

IV

TRUTH OF INTERCOURSE

Among sayings that have a currency in spite of being wholly false upon the face of them for the sake of a half-truth upon another subject which is accidentally combined with the error, one of the grossest and broadest conveys the monstrous proposition that it is easy to tell the truth and hard to tell a lie. I wish heartily it were. But the truth is one; it has first to be discovered, then justly and exactly uttered. Even with instruments specially contrived for such a purpose — with a foot-rule, a level, or a theodolite — it is not easy to be exact; it is easier, alas! to be inexact. From those who mark the divisions on a scale to those who measure the boundaries of empires or the distance of the heavenly stars, it is by careful method and minute, unwearying attention that men rise even to material exactness or to sure knowledge even of external and constant things. But it is easier to draw the outline of a mountain than the changing appearance of a face; and truth in human relations is of this more intangible and dubious order: hard to seize, harder to communicate. Veracity to facts in a loose, colloquial sense — not to say that I have been in Malabar when as a matter of fact I was never out of England, not to say that I have read Cervantes in the original when, as a matter of fact, I know not one syllable of Spanish — this, indeed, is easy and to the same degree unimportant in itself. Lies of this sort, according to circumstances, may or may not be important; in a certain sense even they may or may not be false. The habitual liar may be a very honest fellow, and live truly with his wife and friends; while another man who never told a formal falsehood in his life may yet be himself one lie — heart and face, from top to bottom. This is the kind of lie which poisons intimacy. And, *vice versâ*, veracity to sentiment, truth in a relation, truth to your own heart and your friends, never to feign or falsify emotion — that is the truth which makes love possible and mankind happy.

L'art de bien dire is but a drawing-room accomplishment unless it be pressed into the service of the truth. The difficulty of literature is not to write, but to write what you mean; not to affect your reader, but to affect him precisely as you wish. This is commonly understood in the case of books or set orations; even in making your will, or writing an explicit letter, some difficulty is admitted by the world. But one thing you can never make Philistine natures understand; one thing, which yet lies on the surface, remains as unseizable to their wits as a high flight of metaphysics — namely, that the business of life is mainly carried on by means of this difficult art of literature, and according to a man's proficiency in that art shall be the freedom and the fulness of his intercourse with other men. Anybody, it is supposed, can say what he means; and in spite of their notorious experience to the contrary, people so continue to suppose. Now, I simply open the last book I have been reading — Mr. Leland's captivating "English Gipsies." "It is said," I find on , "that those who can converse with Irish peasants in their native tongue form far higher opinions of their appreciation of the beautiful, and of *the elements of humour and pathos in their hearts*, than do those who know their thoughts only through the medium of English. I know from my own observations that this is quite the case with the Indians of North America and it is unquestionably so with the gipsy." In short, where a man has not a full possession of the language, the most important, because the most amiable, qualities of his nature have to lie buried and fallow; for the pleasure of comradeship, and the intellectual part of love, rest upon these very "elements of humour and pathos." Here is a man opulent in both, and for lack of a medium he can put none of it out to interest in the market of affection! But what is thus made plain to our apprehensions in the case of a foreign language is partially true even with the tongue we learned in childhood. Indeed, we all speak different dialects; one shall be copious and exact, another loose and meagre; but the speech of the ideal talker shall correspond and fit upon the truth of fact — not clumsily, obscuring lineaments, like a mantle, but cleanly adhering, like an athlete's skin. And what is the result? That the one can open himself more clearly to his friends, and can enjoy more of what makes life truly valuable — intimacy with those he loves. An orator makes a false step; he employs some trivial, some absurd, some vulgar phrase; in the turn of a sentence he insults, by a side wind, those whom he is labouring to charm; in speaking to one sentiment he unconsciously ruffles another in parenthesis; and you are not surprised, for you know his task to be delicate and filled with perils. "O frivolous mind of man, light ignorance!" As if yourself, when you seek to explain some misunderstanding or excuse some apparent fault, speaking swiftly and addressing a mind still recently incensed, were not harnessing for a more perilous adventure; as if yourself required less tact and eloquence; as if an angry friend or a suspicious lover were not more easy to offend than a meeting of indifferent politicians! Nay, and the orator treads in a beaten round; the matters he discusses have been discussed a thousand times before; language is ready-shaped to his purpose; he speaks out of a cut-and-dry vocabulary. But you — may it not be that your defence reposes on some subtlety of feeling, not so much as touched upon in Shakespeare, to express which, like a pioneer, you must venture forth into zones of thought still unsurveyed, and become yourself a literary innovator? For even in love there are unlovely humours; ambiguous acts, unpardonable words, may yet have sprung from a kind sentiment. If the injured one could read your heart, you may be sure that he would understand and pardon; but, alas! the heart cannot be shown — it has to be demonstrated in words. Do you think it is a hard thing to write poetry? Why, that is to write poetry, and of a high, if not the highest, order.

I should even more admire "the lifelong and heroic literary labours" of my fellow-men, patiently clearing up in words their loves and their contentions, and speaking their autobiography daily to their wives, were it not for a circumstance which lessens their difficulty and my admiration by equal parts. For life, though largely, is not entirely carried on by literature. We are subject to physical passions and contortions; the voice breaks and changes, and speaks by unconscious and winning inflections; we have legible countenances, like an open book; things that cannot be said look eloquently through the eyes; and the soul, not locked into the body as a dungeon, dwells ever on the threshold with appealing signals. Groans and tears, looks and gestures, a flush or a paleness, are often the most clear reporters of the heart, and speak more directly to the hearts of others. The message flies by these interpreters in the least space of time, and the misunderstanding is averted in the moment of its birth. To explain in words takes time and a just and patient hearing; and in the critical epochs of a close relation, patience and justice are not qualities on which we can rely. But the look or the gesture explains things in a breath; they tell their message without ambiguity; unlike speech, they cannot stumble, by the way, on a reproach or an allusion that should steel your friend against the truth; and then they have a higher authority, for they are the direct expression of the heart, not yet transmitted through the unfaithful and sophisticating brain. Not long ago I wrote a letter to a friend which came near involving us in quarrel; but we met, and in personal talk I repeated the worst of what I had written, and added worse to that; and with the commentary of the body it seemed not unfriendly either to hear or say. Indeed, letters are in vain for the purposes of intimacy; an absence is a dead break in the relation; yet two who know each other fully and are bent on perpetuity in love, may so preserve the attitude of their affections that they may meet on the same terms as they had parted.

Pitiful is the case of the blind, who cannot read the face; pitiful that of the deaf, who cannot follow the changes of the voice. And there are others also to be pitied; for there are some of an inert, uneloquent nature, who have been denied all the symbols of communication, who have neither a lively play of facial expression, nor speaking gestures, nor a responsive voice, nor yet the gift of frank, explanatory speech: people truly made of clay, people tied for life into a bag which no one can undo. They are poorer than the gipsy, for their heart can speak no language under heaven. Such people we must learn slowly by the tenor of their acts, or through yea and nay communications; or we take them on trust on the strength of a general air, and now and again, when we see the spirit breaking through in a flash, correct or change our estimate. But these will be uphill intimacies, without charm or freedom, to the end; and freedom is the chief ingredient in confidence. Some minds, romantically dull, despise physical endowments. That is a doctrine for a misanthrope; to those who like their fellow creatures it must always be meaningless; and, for my part, I can see few things more desirable, after the possession of such radical qualities as honour and humour and pathos, than to have a lively and not a stolid countenance; to have looks to correspond with every feeling; to be elegant and delightful in person, so that we shall please even in the intervals of active pleasing, and may never discredit speech with uncouth manners or become unconsciously our own burlesques. But of all unfortunates there is one creature (for I will not call him man) conspicuous in misfortune. This is he who has forfeited his birthright of expression, who has cultivated artful intonations, who has taught his face tricks, like a pet monkey, and on every side perverted or cut off his means of communication with his fellow-men. The body is a house of many windows: there we all sit, showing ourselves and crying on the passers-by to come and love us. But this fellow has filled his windows with opaque glass, elegantly coloured. His house may be admired for its design, the crowd may pause before the stained windows, but meanwhile the poor proprietor must lie languishing within, uncomforted, unchangeably alone.

Truth of intercourse is something more difficult than to refrain from open lies. It is possible to avoid falsehood and yet not tell the truth. It is not enough to answer formal questions. To reach the truth by yea and nay communications implies a questioner with a share of inspiration, such as is often found in mutual love. *Yea* and *nay* mean nothing; the meaning must have been related in the question. Many words are often necessary to convey a very simple statement; for in this sort of exercise we never hit the gold; the most that we can hope, is by many arrows, more or less far off on different sides, to indicate, in the course of time, for what target we are aiming, and after an hour's talk, back and forward to convey the purport of a single principle or a single thought. And yet while the curt, pithy speaker misses the point entirely, a wordy, prolegomenous babbler will often add three new offences in the process of excusing one. It is really a most delicate affair. The world was made before the English language, and seemingly upon a different design. Suppose we held our converse not in words, but in music; those who have a bad ear would find themselves cut off from all near commerce, and no better than foreigners in this big world. But we do not consider how many have "a bad ear" for words, nor how often the most eloquent find nothing to reply. I hate questioners and questions; there are so few that can be spoken to without a lie. "*Do you forgive me?*" Madam and sweetheart, so far as I have gone in life I have never yet been able to discover what forgiveness means. "*Is it still the same between us?*" Why, how can it be? It is eternally different; and yet you are still the friend of my heart. "*Do you understand me?*" God knows; I should think it highly improbable.

The cruellest lies are often told in silence. A man may have sat in a room for hours and not opened his teeth, and yet come out of that room a disloyal friend or a vile calumniator. And how many loves have perished because, from pride, or spite, or diffidence, or that unmanly shame which withholds a man from daring to betray emotion, a lover, at the critical point of the relation, has but hung his head and held his tongue? And, again, a lie may be told by a truth, or a truth conveyed through a lie. Truth to facts is not always truth to sentiment; and part of the truth, as often happens in answer to a question, may be the foulest calumny. A fact may be an exception; but the feeling is the law, and it is that which you must neither garble nor belie. The whole tenor of a conversation is a part of the meaning of each separate statement: the beginning and the end define and travesty the intermediate conversation. You never speak to God; you address a fellow-man, full of his own tempers; and to tell truth, rightly understood; is not to state the true facts, but to convey a true impression; truth in spirit, not truth to letter, is the true veracity. To reconcile averted friends a Jesuitical discretion is often needful, not so much to gain a kind hearing as to communicate sober truth. Women have an ill name in this connection; yet they live in as true relations; the lie of a good woman is the true index of her heart.

"It takes," says Thoreau, in the noblest and most useful passage I remember to have read in any modern author, "two to speak truth — one to speak and another to hear." He must be very little experienced, or have no great zeal for truth, who does not recognise the fact. A grain of anger or a grain of suspicion produces strange acoustical effects, and makes the ear greedy to remark offence. Hence we find those who have once quarrelled carry themselves distantly, and are ever ready to break the truce. To speak truth there must be moral equality or else no respect; and hence between parent and child intercourse is apt to degenerate into a verbal fencing bout, and misapprehensions to become ingrained. And there is another side to this, for the parent begins with an imperfect notion of the child's character, formed in early years or during the equinoctial gales of youth; to this he adheres, noting only the facts which suit with his preconception; and wherever a person fancies himself unjustly judged, he at once and finally gives up the effort to speak truth. With our chosen friends, on the other hand, and still more between lovers (for mutual understanding is love's essence), the truth is easily indicated by the one and aptly comprehended by the other. A hint taken, a look understood, conveys the gist of long and delicate explanations; and where the life is known even *yea* and *nay* become luminous. In the closest of all relations — that of a love well founded and equally shared — speech is half discarded, like a roundabout, infantile process or a ceremony of formal etiquette; and the two communicate directly by their presences, and with few looks and fewer words contrive to share their good and evil and uphold each other's hearts in joy. For love rests upon a physical basis; it is a familiarity of nature's making and apart from voluntary choice. Understanding has in some sort outrun knowledge, for the affection perhaps began with the acquaintance; and as it was not made like other relations, so it is not, like them, to be perturbed or clouded. Each knows more than can be uttered; each lives by faith and believes by a natural compulsion; and between man and wife the language of the body is largely developed and grown strangely eloquent. The thought that prompted and was conveyed in a caress would only lose to be set down in words — ay, although Shakespeare himself should be the scribe.

Yet it is in these dear intimacies, beyond all others, that we must strive and do battle for the truth. Let but a doubt arise, and alas! all the previous intimacy and confidence is but another charge against the person doubted. "*What a monstrous dishonesty is this if I have been deceived so long and so completely!*" Let but that thought gain entrance, and you plead before a deaf tribunal. Appeal to the past; why, that is your crime! Make all clear, convince the reason; alas! speciousness is but a proof against you. "*If you can abuse me now, the more likely that you have abused me from the first.*"

For a strong affection such moments are worth supporting, and they will end well; for your advocate is in your lover's heart and speaks her own language; it is not you but she herself who can defend and clear you of the charge. But in slighter intimacies, and for a less stringent union? Indeed, is it worth while? We are all *incompris*, only more or less concerned for the mischance; all trying wrongly to do right; all fawning at each other's feet like dumb, neglected lapdogs. Sometimes we catch an eye — this is our opportunity in the ages — and we wag our tail with a poor smile. "*Is that all?*" All? If you only knew! But how can they know? They do not love us; the more fools we to squander life on the indifferent.

But the morality of the thing, you will be glad to hear, is excellent; for it is only by trying to understand others that we can get our own hearts understood; and in matters of human feeling the clement judge is the most successful pleader.

"A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," Wednesday, .

II

CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH

"You know my mother now and then argues very notably; always very warmly at least. I happen often to differ from her; and we both think so well of our own arguments, that we very seldom are so happy as to convince one another. A pretty common case, I believe, in all *vehement* debatings. She says, I am *too witty*; Anglicé, *too pert*; I, that she is *too wise*; that is to say, being likewise put into English, *not so young as she had been*." — Miss Howe to Miss Harlowe, "Clarissa," vol. ii. Letter xiii.

There is a strong feeling in favour of cowardly and prudential proverbs. The sentiments of a man while he is full of ardour and hope are to be received, it is supposed, with some qualification. But when the same person has ignominiously failed, and begins to eat up his words, he should be listened to like an oracle. Most of our pocket wisdom is conceived for the use of mediocre people, to discourage them from ambitious attempts, and generally console them in their mediocrity. And since mediocre people constitute the bulk of humanity, this is no doubt very properly so. But it does not follow that the one sort of proposition is any less true than the other, or that Icarus is not to be more praised, and perhaps more envied, than Mr. Samuel Budgett, the Successful Merchant. The one is dead, to be sure, while the other is still in his counting-house counting out his money; and doubtless this is a consideration. But we have, on the other hand, some bold and magnanimous sayings common to high races and natures, which set forth the advantage of the losing side, and proclaim it better to be a dead lion than a living dog. It is difficult to fancy how the mediocrities reconcile such sayings with their proverbs. According to the latter, every lad who goes to sea is an egregious ass; never to forget your umbrella through a long life would seem a higher and wiser flight of achievement than to go smiling to the stake; and so long as you are a bit of a coward and inflexible in money matters, you fulfil the whole duty of man.

It is a still more difficult consideration for our average men, that while all their teachers, from Solomon down to Benjamin Franklin and the ungodly Binney, have inculcated the same ideal of manners, caution, and respectability, those characters in history who have most notoriously flown in the face of such precepts are spoken of in hyperbolical terms of praise, and honoured with public monuments in the streets of our commercial centres. This is very bewildering to the moral sense. You have Joan of Arc, who left a humble but honest and reputable livelihood under the eyes of her parents, to go a-colonelling, in the company of rowdy soldiers, against the enemies of France; surely a melancholy example for one's daughters! And then you have Columbus, who may have pioneered America, but, when all is said, was a most imprudent navigator. His Life is not the kind of thing one would like to put into the hands of young people; rather, one would do one's utmost to keep it from their knowledge, as a red flag of adventure and disintegrating influence in life. The time would fail me if I were to recite all the big names in history whose exploits are perfectly irrational and even shocking, to the business mind. The incongruity is speaking; and I imagine it must engender among the mediocrities a very peculiar attitude towards the nobler and showier sides of national life. They will read of the Charge of Balaclava in much the same spirit as they assist at a performance of the *Lyons Mail*. Persons of substance take in the *Times* and sit composedly in pit or boxes according to the degree of their prosperity in business. As for the generals who go galloping up and down among bomb-shells in absurd cocked hats — as for the actors who raddle their faces and demean themselves for hire upon the stage — they must belong, thank God! to a different order of beings, whom we watch as we watch the clouds careering in the windy, bottomless inane, or read about like characters in ancient and rather fabulous annals. Our offspring would no more think of copying their behaviour, let us hope, than of doffing their clothes and painting themselves blue in consequence of certain admissions in the first chapter of their school history of England.

Discredited as they are in practice, the cowardly proverbs hold their own in theory; and it is another instance of the same spirit, that the opinions of old men about life have been accepted as final. All sorts of allowances are made for the illusions of youth; and none, or almost none, for the disenchantments of age. It is held to be a good taunt, and somehow or other to clinch the question logically, when an old gentleman waggles his head and says: “Ah, so I thought when I was your age.” It is not thought an answer at all, if the young man retorts: “My venerable sir, so I shall most probably think when I am yours.” And yet the one is as good as the other: pass for pass, tit for tat, a Roland for an Oliver.

“Opinion in good men,” says Milton, “is but knowledge in the making.” All opinions, properly so called, are stages on the road to truth. It does not follow that a man will travel any further; but if he has really considered the world and drawn a conclusion, he has travelled as far. This does not apply to formulæ got by rote, which are stages on the road to nowhere but second childhood and the grave. To have a catchword in your mouth is not the same thing as to hold an opinion; still less is it the same thing as to have made one for yourself. There are too many of these catchwords in the world for people to rap out upon you like an oath and by way of an argument. They have a currency as intellectual counters; and many respectable persons pay their way with nothing else. They seem to stand for vague bodies of theory in the background. The imputed virtue of folios full of knockdown arguments is supposed to reside in them, just as some of the majesty of the British Empire dwells in the constable's truncheon. They are used in pure superstition, as old clodhoppers spoil Latin by way of an exorcism. And yet they are vastly serviceable for checking unprofitable discussion and stopping the mouths of babes and sucklings. And when a young man comes to a certain stage of intellectual growth, the examination of these counters forms a gymnastic at once amusing and fortifying to the mind.

Because I have reached Paris, I am not ashamed of having passed through Newhaven and Dieppe. They were very good places to pass through, and I am none the less at my destination. All my old opinions were only stages on the way to the one I now hold, as itself is only a stage on the way to something else. I am no more abashed at having been a red-hot Socialist with a panacea of my own than at having been a sucking infant. Doubtless the world is quite right in a million ways; but you have to be kicked about a little to convince you of the fact. And in the meanwhile you must do something, be something, believe something. It is not possible to keep the mind in a state of accurate balance and blank; and even if you could do so, instead of coming ultimately to the right conclusion, you would be very apt to remain in a state of balance and blank to perpetuity. Even in quite intermediate stages, a dash of enthusiasm is not a thing to be ashamed of in the retrospect: if St. Paul had not been a very zealous Pharisee, he would have been a colder Christian. For my part, I look back to the time when I was a Socialist with something like regret. I have convinced myself (for the moment) that we had better leave these great changes to what we call great blind forces; their blindness being so much more perspicacious than the little, peering, partial eyesight of men. I seem to see that my own scheme would not answer; and all the other schemes I ever heard propounded would depress some elements of goodness just as much as they encouraged others. Now I know that in thus turning Conservative with years, I am going through the normal cycle of change and travelling in the common orbit of men's opinions. I submit to this, as I would submit to gout or grey hair, as a concomitant of growing age or else of failing animal heat; but I do not acknowledge that it is necessarily a change for the better — I daresay it is deplorably for the worse. I have no choice in the business, and can no more resist this tendency of my mind than I could prevent my body from beginning to totter and decay. If I am spared (as the phrase runs) I shall doubtless outlive some troublesome desires; but I am in no hurry about that; nor, when the time comes, shall I plume myself on the immunity. Just in the same way, I do not greatly pride myself on having outlived my belief in the fairy tales of Socialism. Old people have faults of their own; they tend to become cowardly, niggardly, and suspicious. Whether from the growth of experience or the decline of animal heat, I see that age leads to these and certain other faults; and it follows, of course, that while in one sense I hope I am journeying towards the truth, in another I am indubitably posting towards these forms and sources of error.

As we go catching and catching at this or that corner of knowledge, now getting a foresight of generous possibilities, now chilled with a glimpse of prudence, we may compare the headlong course of our years to a swift torrent in which a man is carried away; now he is dashed against a boulder, now he grapples for a moment to a trailing spray; at the end he is hurled out and overwhelmed in a dark and bottomless ocean. We have no more than glimpses and touches; we are torn away from our theories; we are spun round and round and shown this or the other view of life, until only fools or knaves can hold to their opinions. We take a sight at a condition in life, and say we have studied it; our most elaborate view is no more than an impression. If we had breathing space, we should take the occasion to modify and adjust; but at this breakneck hurry, we are no sooner boys than we are adult, no sooner in love than married or jilted, no sooner one age than we begin to be another, and no sooner in the fulness of our manhood than we begin to decline towards the grave. It is in vain to seek for consistency or expect clear and stable views in a medium so perturbed and fleeting. This is no cabinet science, in which things are tested to a scruple; we theorise with a pistol to our head; we are confronted with a new set of conditions on which we have not only to pass a judgment, but to take action, before the hour is at an end. And we cannot even regard ourselves as a constant; in this flux of things, our identity itself seems in a perpetual variation; and not infrequently we find our own disguise the strangest in the masquerade. In the course of time we grow to love things we hated and hate things we loved. Milton is not so dull as he once was, nor perhaps Ainsworth so amusing. It is decidedly harder to climb trees, and not nearly so hard to sit still. There is no use pretending; even the thrice royal game of hide and seek has somehow lost in zest. All our attributes are modified or changed; and it will be a poor account of us if our views do not modify and change in a proportion. To hold the same views at forty as we held at twenty is to have been stupefied for a score of years, and take rank, not as a prophet, but as an unteachable brat, well birched, and none the wiser. It is as if a ship captain should sail to India from the Port of London; and having brought a chart of the Thames on deck at his first setting out, should obstinately use no other for the whole voyage.

And mark you, it would be no less foolish to begin at Gravesend with a chart of the Red Sea. *Si Jeunesse savait, si Vieillesse pouvait*, is a very pretty sentiment, but not necessarily right. In five cases out of ten, it is not so much that the young people do not know, as that they do not choose. There is something irreverent in the speculation, but perhaps the want of power has more to do with the wise resolutions of age than we are always willing to admit. It would be an instructive experiment to make an old man young again and leave him all his *savoir*. I scarcely think he would put his money in the Savings Bank after all; I doubt if he would be such an admirable son as we are led to expect; and as for his conduct in love, I believe firmly he would out-Herod Herod, and put the whole of his new compeers to the blush. Prudence is a wooden Juggernaut, before whom Benjamin Franklin walks with the portly air of a high-priest, and after whom dances many a successful merchant in the character of Atys. But it is not a deity to cultivate in youth. If a man lives to any considerable age, it cannot be denied that he laments his imprudences, but I notice he often laments his youth a deal more bitterly and with a more genuine intonation.

It is customary to say that age should be considered, because it comes last. It seems just as much to the point that youth comes first. And the scale fairly kicks the beam, if you go on to add that age, in a majority of cases, never comes at all. Disease and accident make short work of even the most prosperous persons; death costs nothing, and the expense of a headstone is an inconsiderable trifle to the happy heir. To be suddenly snuffed out in the middle of ambitious schemes is tragical enough at best; but when a man has been grudging himself his own life in the meanwhile, and saving up everything for the festival that was never to be, it becomes that hysterically moving sort of tragedy which lies on the confines of farce. The victim is dead — and he has cunningly overreached himself: a combination of calamities none the less absurd for being grim. To husband a favourite claret until the batch turns sour, is not at all an artful stroke of policy; and how much more with a whole cellar — a whole bodily existence! People may lay down their lives with cheerfulness in the sure expectation of a blessed immortality; but that is a different affair from giving up youth with all its admirable pleasures, in the hope of a better quality of gruel in a more than problematical, nay, more than improbable, old age. We should not compliment a hungry man, who should refuse a whole dinner and reserve all his appetite for the dessert, before he knew whether there was to be any dessert or not. If there be such a thing as imprudence in the world, we surely have it here. We sail in leaky bottoms and on great and perilous waters; and to take a cue from the dolorous old naval ballad, we have heard the mermaids singing, and know that we shall never see dry land any more. Old and young, we are all on our last cruise. If there is a fill of tobacco among the crew, for God's sake pass it round, and let us have a pipe before we go!

Indeed, by the report of our elders, this nervous preparation for old age is only trouble thrown away. We fall on guard, and after all it is a friend who comes to meet us. After the sun is down and the west faded, the heavens begin to fill with shining stars. So, as we grow old, a sort of equable jog-trot of feeling is substituted for the violent ups and downs of passion and disgust; the same influence that restrains our hopes quiets our apprehensions; if the pleasures are less intense, the troubles are milder and more tolerable; and in a word, this period for which we are asked to hoard up everything as for a time of famine, is, in its own right, the richest, easiest, and happiest of life. Nay, by managing its own work and following its own happy inspiration, youth is doing the best it can to endow the leisure of age. A full, busy youth is your only prelude to a self-contained and independent age; and the muff inevitably develops into the bore. There are not many Doctor Johnsons, to set forth upon their first romantic voyage at sixty-four. If we wish to scale Mont Blanc or visit a thieves' kitchen in the East End, to go down in a diving-dress or up in a balloon, we must be about it while we are still young. It will not do to delay until we are clogged with prudence and limping with rheumatism, and people begin to ask us: "What does Gravity out of bed?" Youth is the time to go flashing from one end of the world to the other both in mind and body; to try the manners of different nations; to hear the chimes at midnight; to see sunrise in town and country; to be converted at a revival; to circumnavigate the metaphysics, write halting verses, run a mile to see a fire, and wait all day long in the theatre to applaud *Hernani*. There is some meaning in the old theory about wild oats; and a man who has not had his green-sickness and got done with it for good, is as little to be depended on as an unvaccinated infant. "It is extraordinary," says Lord Beaconsfield, one of the brightest and best preserved of youths up to the date of his last novel, "it is extraordinary how hourly and how violently change the feelings of an unexperienced young man." And this mobility is a special talent entrusted to his care; a sort of indestructible virginity; a magic armour, with which he can pass unhurt through great dangers and come unbedaubed out of the miriest passages. Let him voyage, speculate, see all that he can, do all that he may; his soul has as many lives as a cat; he will live in all weathers, and never be a halfpenny the worse. Those who go to the devil in youth, with anything like a fair chance, were probably little worth saving from the first; they must have been feeble fellows — creatures made of putty and pack-thread, without steel or fire, anger or true joyfulness, in their composition we may sympathise with their parents, but there is not much cause to go into mourning for themselves; for, to be quite honest, the weak brother is the worst of mankind.

When the old man waggles his head and says, “Ah, so I thought when I was your age,” he has proved the youth’s case. Doubtless, whether from growth of experience or decline of animal heat, he thinks so no longer; but he thought so while he was young; and all men have thought so while they were young, since there was dew in the morning or hawthorn in May; and here is another young man adding his vote to those of previous generations and rivetting another link to the chain of testimony. It is as natural and as right for a young man to be imprudent and exaggerated, to live in swoops and circles, and beat about his cage like any other wild thing newly captured, as it is for old men to turn grey, or mothers to love their offspring, or heroes to die for something worthier than their lives.

By way of an apologue for the aged, when they feel more than usually tempted to offer their advice, let me recommend the following little tale. A child who had been remarkably fond of toys (and in particular of lead soldiers) found himself growing to the level of acknowledged boyhood without any abatement of this childish taste. He was thirteen; already he had been taunted for dallying over-long about the playbox; he had to blush if he was found among his lead soldiers; the shades of the prison-house were closing about him with a vengeance. There is nothing more difficult than to put the thoughts of children into the language of their elders; but this is the effect of his meditations at this juncture: “Plainly,” he said, “I must give up my playthings in the meanwhile, since I am not in a position to secure myself against idle jeers. At the same time, I am sure that playthings are the very pick of life; all people give them up out of the same pusillanimous respect for those who are a little older; and if they do not return to them as soon as they can, it is only because they grow stupid and forget. I shall be wiser; I shall conform for a little to the ways of their foolish world; but so soon as I have made enough money, I shall retire and shut myself up among my playthings until the day I die.” Nay, as he was passing in the train along the Esterel mountains between Cannes and Fréjus, he remarked a pretty house in an orange garden at the angle of a bay, and decided that this should be his Happy Valley. Astrea Redux; childhood was to come again! The idea has an air of simple nobility to me, not unworthy of Cincinnatus.

And yet, as the reader has probably anticipated, it is never likely to be carried into effect. There was a worm i’ the bud, a fatal error in the premises. Childhood must pass away, and then youth, as surely as age approaches. The true wisdom is to be always seasonable, and to change with a good grace in changing circumstances. To love playthings well as a child, to lead an adventurous and honourable youth, and to settle when the time arrives, into a green and smiling age, is to be a good artist in life and deserve well of yourself and your neighbour.

You need repent none of your youthful vagaries. They may have been over the score on one side, just as those of age are probably over the score on the other. But they had a point; they not only befitted your age and expressed its attitude and passions, but they had a relation to what was outside of you, and implied criticisms on the existing state of things, which you need not allow to have been undeserved, because you now see that they were partial. All error, not merely verbal, is a strong way of stating that the current truth is incomplete. The follies of youth have a basis in sound reason, just as much as the embarrassing questions put by babes and sucklings. Their most anti-social acts indicate the defects of our society. When the torrent sweeps the man against a boulder, you must expect him to scream, and you need not be surprised if the scream is sometimes a theory. Shelley, chafing at the Church of England, discovered the cure of all evils in universal atheism. Generous lads irritated at the injustices of society see nothing for it but the abolishment of everything and Kingdom Come of anarchy. Shelley was a young fool; so are these cock-sparrow revolutionaries. But it is better to be a fool than to be dead. It is better to emit a scream in the shape of a theory than to be entirely insensible to the jars and incongruities of life, and take everything as it comes in a forlorn stupidity. Some people swallow the universe like a pill; they travel on through the world, like smiling images pushed from behind. For God’s sake give me the young man who has brains enough to make a fool of himself! As for the others, the irony of facts shall take it out of their hands, and make fools of them in downright earnest, ere the farce be over. There shall be such a mopping and a mowing at the last day, and such blushing and confusion of countenance for all those who have been wise in their own esteem, and have not learnt the rough lessons that youth hands on to age. If we are indeed here to perfect and complete our own natures, and grow larger, stronger, and more sympathetic against some nobler career in the future, we had all best bestir ourselves to the utmost while we have the time. To equip a dull, respectable person with wings would be but to make a parody of an angel.

In short, if youth is not quite right in its opinions, there is a strong probability that age is not much more so. Undying hope is co-ruler of the human bosom with infallible credulity. A man finds he has been wrong at every preceding stage of his career, only to deduce the astonishing conclusion that he is at last entirely right. Mankind, after centuries of failure, are still upon the eve of a thoroughly constitutional millennium. Since we have explored the maze so long without result, it follows, for poor human reason, that we cannot have to explore much longer; close by must be the centre, with a champagne luncheon and a piece of ornamental water. How if there were no centre at all, but just one alley after another, and the whole world a labyrinth without end or issue?

I overheard the other day a scrap of conversation, which I take the liberty to reproduce. “What I advance is true,” said one. “But not the whole truth,” answered the other. “Sir,” returned the first (and it seemed to me there was a smack of Dr. Johnson in the speech), “Sir, there is no such thing as the whole truth!” Indeed, there is nothing so evident in life as that there are two sides to a question. History is one long illustration. The forces of nature are engaged, day by day, in cudgelling it into our backward intelligences. We never pause for a moment’s consideration, but we admit it as an axiom. An enthusiast sways humanity exactly by disregarding this great truth, and dinning it into our ears that this or that question has only one possible solution; and your enthusiast is a fine florid fellow, dominates things for a while and shakes the world out of a doze; but when once he is gone, an army of quiet and uninfluential people set to work to remind us of the other side and demolish the generous imposture. While Calvin is putting everybody exactly right in his “Institutes,” and hot-headed Knox is thundering in the pulpit, Montaigne is already looking at the other side in his library in Périgord, and predicting that they will find as much to quarrel about in the Bible as they had found already in the Church. Age may have one side, but assuredly Youth has the other. There is nothing more certain than that both are right, except perhaps that both are wrong. Let them agree to differ; for who knows but what agreeing to differ may not be a form of agreement rather than a form of difference?

I suppose it is written that any one who sets up for a bit of a philosopher must contradict himself to his very face. For here have I fairly talked myself into thinking that we have the whole thing before us at last; that there is no answer to the mystery, except that there are as many as you please; that there is no centre to the maze because, like the famous sphere, its centre is everywhere; and that agreeing to differ with every ceremony of politeness, is the only “one undisturbed song of pure concent” to which we are ever likely to lend our musical voices.

“Lothair.”

III

AN APOLOGY FOR IDLERS

"Boswell: We grow weary when idle."

"Johnson: That is, sir, because others being busy, we want company; but if we were idle, there would be no growing weary; we should all entertain one another."

Just now, when every one is bound, under pain of a decree in absence convicting them of *lèse*-respectability, to enter on some lucrative profession, and labour therein with something not far short of enthusiasm, a cry from the opposite party who are content when they have enough, and like to look on and enjoy in the meanwhile, savours a little of bravado and gasconade. And yet this should not be. Idleness so called, which does not consist in doing nothing, but in doing a great deal not recognised in the dogmatic formularies of the ruling class, has as good a right to state its position as industry itself. It is admitted that the presence of people who refuse to enter in the great handicap race for sixpenny pieces, is at once an insult and a disenchantment for those who do. A fine fellow (as we see so many) takes his determination, votes for the sixpences, and in the emphatic Americanism, "goes for" them. And while such an one is ploughing distressfully up the road, it is not hard to understand his resentment when he perceives cool persons in the meadows by the wayside, lying with a handkerchief over their ears and a glass at their elbow. Alexander is touched in a very delicate place by the disregard of Diogenes. Where was the glory of having taken Rome for those tumultuous barbarians, who poured into the Senate house, and found the Fathers sitting silent and unmoved by their success? It is a sore thing to have laboured along and scaled the arduous hilltops, and when all is done, find humanity indifferent to your achievement. Hence physicists condemn the unphysical; financiers have only a superficial toleration for those who know little of stocks; literary persons despise the unlettered; and people of all pursuits combine to disparage those who have none.

But though this is one difficulty of the subject, it is not the greatest. You could not be put in prison for speaking against industry, but you can be sent to Coventry for speaking like a fool. The greatest difficulty with most subjects is to do them well; therefore, please to remember this is an apology. It is certain that much may be judiciously argued in favour of diligence; only there is something to be said against it, and that is what, on the present occasion, I have to say. To state one argument is not necessarily to be deaf to all others, and that a man has written a book of travels in Montenegro is no reason why he should never have been to Richmond.

It is surely beyond a doubt that people should be a good deal idle in youth. For though here and there a Lord Macaulay may escape from school honours with all his wits about him, most boys pay so dear for their medals that they never afterwards have a shot in their locker, and begin the world bankrupt. And the same holds true during all the time a lad is educating himself, or suffering others to educate him. It must have been a very foolish old gentleman who addressed Johnson at Oxford in these words: “Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task.” The old gentleman seems to have been unaware that many other things besides reading grow irksome, and not a few become impossible, by the time a man has to use spectacles and cannot walk without a stick. Books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life. It seems a pity to sit, like the Lady of Shalott, peering into a mirror, with your back turned on all the bustle and glamour of reality. And if a man reads very hard, as the old anecdote reminds us, he will have little time for thought.

If you look back on your own education, I am sure it will not be the full, vivid, instructive hours of truantry that you regret; you would rather cancel some lack-lustre periods between sleep and waking in the class. For my own part, I have attended a good many lectures in my time. I still remember that the spinning of a top is a case of Kinetic Stability. I still remember that Emphyteusis is not a disease, nor Stillicide a crime. But though I would not willingly part with such scraps of science, I do not set the same store by them as by certain other odds and ends that I came by in the open street while I was playing truant. This is not the moment to dilate on that mighty place of education, which was the favourite school of Dickens and of Balzac, and turns out yearly many inglorious masters in the Science of the Aspects of Life. Suffice it to say this: if a lad does not learn in the streets, it is because he has no faculty of learning. Nor is the truant always in the streets, for, if he prefers, he may go out by the gardened suburbs into the country. He may pitch on some tuft of lilacs over a burn, and smoke innumerable pipes to the tune of the water on the stones. A bird will sing in the thicket, and there he may fall into a vein of kindly thought, and see things in a new perspective. Why, if this be not education, what is? We may conceive Mr. Worldly Wiseman accosting such an one, and the conversation that should thereupon ensue: —

“How now, young fellow, what dost thou here?”

"Truly, sir, I take mine ease."

"Is not this the hour of the class? and shouldst thou not be plying thy Book with diligence, to the end thou mayest obtain knowledge?"

"Nay, but thus also I follow after Learning, by your leave."

"Learning, quotha! After what fashion, I pray thee? Is it mathematics?"

"No, to be sure."

"Is it metaphysics?"

"Nor that."

"Is it some language?"

"Nay, it is no language."

"Is it a trade?"

"Nor a trade neither."

"Why, then, what is't?"

"Indeed, sir, as a time may soon come for me to go upon Pilgrimage, I am desirous to note what is commonly done by persons in my case, and where are the ugliest Sloughs and Thickets on the Road; as also, what manner of Staff is of the best service. Moreover, I lie here, by this water, to learn, by root-of-heart, a lesson which my master teaches me to call Peace, or Contentment."

Hereupon Mr. Worldly Wiseman was much commoved with passion, and shaking his cane with a very threatful countenance, broke forth upon this wise: "Learning, quotha!" said he; "I would have all such rogues scourged by the Hangman!"

And so he would go on his way, ruffling out his cravat with a crackle of starch, like a turkey when it spreads its feathers.

Now this, of Mr. Wiseman's, is the common opinion. A fact is not called a fact, but a piece of gossip, if it does not fall into one of your scholastic categories. An inquiry must be in some acknowledged direction, with a name to go by; or else you are not inquiring at all, only lounging; and the workhouse is too good for you. It is supposed that all knowledge is at the bottom of a well, or the far end of a telescope. Sainte-Beuve, as he grew older, came to regard all experience as a single great book, in which to study for a few years ere we go hence; and it seemed all one to him whether you should read in Chapter xx., which is the differential calculus, or in Chapter xxxix., which is hearing the band play in the gardens. As a matter of fact, an intelligent person, looking out of his eyes and hearkening in his ears, with a smile on his face all the time, will get more true education than many another in a life of heroic vigils. There is certainly some chill and arid knowledge to be found upon the summits of formal and laborious science; but it is all round about you, and for the trouble of looking, that you will acquire the warm and palpitating facts of life. While others are filling their memory with a lumber of words, one-half of which they will forget before the week be out, your truant may learn some really useful art: to play the fiddle, to know a good cigar, or to speak with ease and opportunity to all varieties of men. Many who have "plied their book diligently," and know all about some one branch or another of accepted lore, come out of the study with an ancient and owl-like demeanour, and prove dry, stockish, and dyspeptic in all the better and brighter parts of life. Many make a large fortune, who remain under-bred and pathetically stupid to the last. And meantime there goes the idler, who began life along with them — by your leave, a different picture. He has had time to take care of his health and his spirits; he has been a great deal in the open air, which is the most salutary of all things for both body and mind; and if he has never read the great Book in very recondite places, he has dipped into it and skimmed it over to excellent purpose. Might not the student afford some Hebrew roots, and the business man-some of his half-crowns, for a share of the idler's knowledge of life at large, and Art of Living? Nay, and the idler has another and more important quality than these. I mean his wisdom. He who has much looked on at the childish satisfaction of other people in their hobbles, will regard his own with only a very ironical indulgence. He will not be heard among the dogmatists. He will have a great and cool allowance for all sorts of people and opinions. If he finds no out-of-the-way truths, he will identify himself with no very burning falsehood. His way takes him along a by-road, not much frequented, but very even and pleasant, which is called Commonplace Lane, and leads to the Belvedere of Common-sense. Thence he shall command an agreeable, if no very noble prospect; and while others behold the East and West, the Devil and the Sunrise, he will be contentedly aware of a sort of morning hour upon all sublunary things, with an army of shadows running speedily and in many different directions into the great daylight of Eternity. The shadows and the generations, the shrill doctors and the plangent wars, go by into ultimate silence and emptiness; but underneath all this, a man may see, out of the Belvedere windows, much green and peaceful landscape; many fire-lit parlours; good people laughing, drinking, and making love as they did before the Flood or the French Revolution; and the old shepherd telling his tale under the hawthorn.

Extreme *busyness*, whether at school or college, kirk or market, is a symptom of deficient vitality; and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity. There is a sort of dead-alive, hackneyed people about, who are scarcely conscious of living except in the exercise of some conventional occupation. Bring these fellows into the country, or set them aboard ship, and you will see how they pine for their desk or their study. They have no curiosity; they cannot give themselves over to random provocations; they do not take pleasure in the exercise of their faculties for its own sake; and unless Necessity lays about them with a stick, they will even stand still. It is no good speaking to such folk; they *cannot* be idle, their nature is not generous enough; and they pass those hours in a sort of coma, which are not dedicated to furious moiling in the gold-mill. When they do not require to go to the office, when they are not hungry and have no mind to drink, the whole breathing world is a blank to them. If they have to wait an hour or so for a train, they fall into a stupid trance with their eyes open. To see them, you would suppose there was nothing to look at and no one to speak with; you would imagine they were paralysed or alienated; and yet very possibly they are hard workers in their own way, and have good eyesight for a flaw in a deed or a turn of the market. They have been to school and college, but all the time they had their eye on the medal; they have gone about in the world and mixed with clever people, but all the time they were thinking of their own affairs. As if a man's soul were not too small to begin with, they have dwarfed and narrowed theirs by a life of all work and no play; until here they are at forty, with a listless attention, a mind vacant of all material of amusement, and not one thought to rub against another, while they wait for the train. Before he was breeched, he might have clambered on the boxes; when he was twenty, he would have stared at the girls; but now the pipe is smoked out, the snuff-box empty, and my gentleman sits bolt upright upon a bench, with lamentable eyes. This does not appeal to me as being Success in Life.

But it is not only the person himself who suffers from his busy habits, but his wife and children, his friends and relations, and down to the very people he sits with in a railway-carriage or an omnibus. Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business, is only to be sustained by perpetual neglect of many other things. And it is not by any means certain that a man's business is the most important thing he has to do. To an impartial estimate it will seem clear that many of the wisest, most virtuous, and most beneficent parts that are to be played upon the Theatre of Life are filled by gratuitous performers, and pass, among the world at large, as phases of idleness. For in that Theatre, not only the walking gentlemen, singing chambermaids, and diligent fiddlers in the orchestra, but those who look on and clap their hands from the benches, do really play a part and fulfil important offices towards the general result. You are no doubt very dependent on the care of your lawyer and stockbroker, of the guards and signalmen who convey you rapidly from place to place, and the policemen who walk the streets for your protection; but is there not a thought of gratitude in your heart for certain other benefactors who set you smiling when they fall in your way, or season your dinner with good company? Colonel Newcome helped to lose his friend's money; Fred Bayham had an ugly trick of borrowing shirts; and yet they were better people to fall among than Mr. Barnes. And though Falstaff was neither sober nor very honest, I think I could name one or two long-laced Barabbases whom the world could better have done without. Hazlitt mentions that he was more sensible of obligation to Northcote, who had never done him anything he could call a service, than to his whole circle of ostentatious friends; for he thought a good companion emphatically the greatest benefactor. I know there are people in the world who cannot feel grateful unless the favour has been done them at the cost of pain and difficulty. But this is a churlish disposition. A man may send you six sheets of letter-paper covered with the most entertaining gossip, or you may pass half-an-hour pleasantly, perhaps profitably, over an article of his; do you think the service would be greater, if he had made the manuscript in his heart's blood, like a compact with the devil? Do you really fancy you should be more beholden to your correspondent, if he had been damning you all the while for your importunity? Pleasures are more beneficial than duties because, like the quality of mercy, they are not strained, and they are twice blest. There must always be two to a kiss, and there may be a score in a jest; but wherever there is an element of sacrifice, the favour is conferred with pain, and, among generous people, received with confusion. There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy, we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves, or, when they are disclosed, surprise nobody so much as the benefactor. The other day, a ragged, barefoot boy ran down the street after a marble, with so jolly an air that he set every one he passed into a good humour; one of these persons, who had been delivered from more than usually black thoughts, stopped the little fellow and gave him some money with this remark: "You see what sometimes comes of looking pleased." If he had looked pleased before, he had now to look both pleased and mystified. For my part, I justify this encouragement of smiling rather than tearful children; I do not wish to pay for tears anywhere but upon the stage; but I am prepared to deal largely in the opposite commodity. A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of goodwill; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could prove the forty-seventh proposition; they do a better thing than that, they practically demonstrate the great Theorem of the Liveableness of Life. Consequently, if a person cannot be happy without remaining idle,

idle he should remain. It is a revolutionary precept; but thanks to hunger and the workhouse, one not easily to be abused; and, within practical limits, it is one of the most incontestable truths in the whole Body of Morality. Look at one of your industrious fellows for a moment, I beseech you. He sows hurry and reaps indigestion; he puts a vast deal of activity out to interest, and receives a large measure of nervous derangement in return. Either he absents himself entirely from all fellowship, and lives a recluse in a garret, with carpet slippers and a leaden inkpot; or he comes among people swiftly and bitterly, in a contraction of his whole nervous system, to discharge some temper before he returns to work. I do not care how much or how well he works, this fellow is an evil feature in other people's lives. They would be happier if he were dead. They could easier do without his services in the Circumlocution Office, than they can tolerate his fractious spirits. He poisons life at the well-head. It is better to be beggared out of hand by a scapegrace nephew, than daily hag-ridden by a peevish uncle.

And what, in God's name, is all this pother about? For what cause do they embitter their own and other people's lives? That a man should publish three or thirty articles a year, that he should finish or not finish his great allegorical picture, are questions of little interest to the world. The ranks of life are full; and although a thousand fall, there are always some to go into the breach. When they told Joan of Arc she should be at home minding women's work, she answered there were plenty to spin and wash. And so, even with your own rare gifts! When nature is "so careless of the single life," why should we coddle ourselves into the fancy that our own is of exceptional importance? Suppose Shakespeare had been knocked on the head some dark night in Sir Thomas Lucy's preserves, the world would have wagged on better or worse, the pitcher gone to the well, the scythe to the corn, and the student to his book; and no one been any the wiser of the loss. There are not many works extant, if you look the alternative all over, which are worth the price of a pound of tobacco to a man of limited means. This is a sobering reflection for the proudest of our earthly vanities. Even a tobacconist may, upon consideration, find no great cause for personal vainglory in the phrase; for although tobacco is an admirable sedative, the qualities necessary for retailing it are neither rare nor precious in themselves. Alas and alas! you may take it how you will, but the services of no single individual are indispensable. Atlas was just a gentleman with a protracted nightmare! And yet you see merchants who go and labour themselves into a great fortune and thence into the bankruptcy court; scribblers who keep scribbling at little articles until their temper is a cross to all who come about them, as though Pharaoh should set the

Israelites to make a pin instead of a pyramid; and fine young men who work themselves into a decline, and are driven off in a hearse with white plumes upon it. Would you not suppose these persons had been whispered, by the Master of the Ceremonies, the promise of some momentous destiny? and that this lukewarm bullet on which they play their farces was the bull's-eye and centre-point of all the universe? And yet it is not so. The ends for which they give away their priceless youth, for all they know, may be chimerical or hurtful; the glory and riches they expect may never come, or may find them indifferent; and they and the world they inhabit are so inconsiderable that the mind freezes at the thought.

IV

ORDERED SOUTH

By a curious irony of fate, the places to which we are sent when health deserts us are often singularly beautiful. Often, too, they are places we have visited in former years, or seen briefly in passing by, and kept ever afterwards in pious memory; and we please ourselves with the fancy that we shall repeat many vivid and pleasurable sensations, and take up again the thread of our enjoyment in the same spirit as we let it fall. We shall now have an opportunity of finishing many pleasant excursions, interrupted of yore before our curiosity was fully satisfied. It may be that we have kept in mind, during all these years, the recollection of some valley into which we have just looked down for a moment before we lost sight of it in the disorder of the hills; it may be that we have lain awake at night, and agreeably tantalised ourselves with the thought of corners we had never turned, or summits we had all but climbed: we shall now be able, as we tell ourselves, to complete all these unfinished pleasures, and pass beyond the barriers that confined our recollections.

The promise is so great, and we are all so easily led away when hope and memory are both in one story, that I daresay the sick man is not very inconsolable when he receives sentence of banishment, and is inclined to regard his ill-health as not the least fortunate accident of his life. Nor is he immediately undeceived. The stir and speed of the journey, and the restlessness that goes to bed with him as he tries to sleep between two days of noisy progress, fever him, and stimulate his dull nerves into something of their old quickness and sensibility. And so he can enjoy the faint autumnal splendour of the landscape, as he sees hill and plain, vineyard and forest, clad in one wonderful glory of fairy gold, which the first great winds of winter will transmute, as in the fable, into withered leaves. And so too he can enjoy the admirable brevity and simplicity of such little glimpses of country and country ways as flash upon him through the windows of the train; little glimpses that have a character all their own; sights seen as a travelling swallow might see them from the wing, or Iris as she went abroad over the land on some Olympian errand. Here and there, indeed, a few children huzzah and wave their hands to the express; but for the most part, it is an interruption too brief and isolated to attract much notice; the sheep do not cease from browsing; a girl sits balanced on the projecting tiller of a canal boat, so precariously that it seems as if a fly or the splash of a leaping fish would be enough to overthrow the dainty equilibrium, and yet all these hundreds of tons of coal and wood and iron have been precipitated roaring past her very ear, and there is not a start, not a tremor, not a turn of the averted head, to indicate that she has been even conscious of its passage. Herein, I think, lies the chief attraction of railway travel. The speed is so easy, and the train disturbs so little the scenes through which it takes us, that our heart becomes full of the placidity and stillness of the country; and while the body is borne forward in the flying chain of carriages, the thoughts alight, as the humour moves them, at unfrequented stations; they make haste up the poplar alley that leads towards the town; they are left behind with the signalman as, shading his eyes with his hand, he watches the long train sweep away into the golden distance.

Moreover, there is still before the invalid the shock of wonder and delight with which he will learn that he has passed the indefinable line that separates South from North. And this is an uncertain moment; for sometimes the consciousness is forced upon him early, on the occasion of some slight association, a colour, a flower, or a scent; and sometimes not until, one fine morning, he wakes up with the southern sunshine peeping through the *persiennes*, and the southern patois confusedly audible below the windows. Whether it come early or late, however, this pleasure will not end with the anticipation, as do so many others of the same family. It will leave him wider awake than it found him, and give a new significance to all he may see for many days to come. There is something in the mere name of the South that carries enthusiasm along with it. At the sound of the word, he pricks up his ears; he becomes as anxious to seek out beauties and to get by heart the permanent lines and character of the landscape, as if he had been told that it was all his own — an estate out of which he had been kept unjustly, and which he was now to receive in free and full possession. Even those who have never been there before feel as if they had been; and everybody goes comparing, and seeking for the familiar, and finding it with such ecstasies of recognition, that one would think they were coming home after a weary absence, instead of travelling hourly farther abroad.

It is only after he is fairly arrived and settled down in his chosen corner, that the invalid begins to understand the change that has befallen him. Everything about him is as he had remembered, or as he had anticipated. Here, at his feet, under his eyes, are the olive gardens and the blue sea. Nothing can change the eternal magnificence of form of the naked Alps behind Mentone; nothing, not even the crude curves of the railway, can utterly deform the suavity of contour of one bay after another along the whole reach of the Riviera. And of all this, he has only a cold head-knowledge that is divorced from enjoyment. He recognises with his intelligence that this thing and that thing is beautiful, while in his heart of hearts he has to confess that it is not beautiful for him. It is in vain that he spurs his discouraged spirit; in vain that he chooses out points of view, and stands there, looking with all his eyes, and waiting for some return of the pleasure that he remembers in other days, as the sick folk may have awaited the coming of the angel at the pool of Bethesda. He is like an enthusiast leading about with him a stolid, indifferent tourist. There is some one by who is out of sympathy with the scene, and is not moved up to the measure of the occasion; and that some one is himself. The world is disenchanted for him. He seems to himself to touch things with muffled hands, and to see them through a veil. His life becomes a palsied fumbling after notes that are silent when he has found and struck them. He cannot recognise that this phlegmatic and unimpressionable body with which he now goes burthened, is the same that he knew heretofore so quick and delicate and alive.

He is tempted to lay the blame on the very softness and amenity of the climate, and to fancy that in the rigours of the winter at home, these dead emotions would revive and flourish. A longing for the brightness and silence of fallen snow seizes him at such times. He is homesick for the hale rough weather; for the tracery of the frost upon his window-panes at morning, the reluctant descent of the first flakes, and the white roofs relieved against the sombre sky. And yet the stuff of which these yearnings are made is one of the flimsiest: if but the thermometer fall a little below its ordinary Mediterranean level, or a wind come down from the snow-clad Alps behind, the spirit of his fancies changes upon the instant, and many a doleful vignette of the grim wintry streets at home returns to him, and begins to haunt his memory. The hopeless, huddled attitude of tramps in doorways; the flinching gait of barefoot children on the icy pavement; the sheen of the rainy streets towards afternoon; the meagre anatomy of the poor defined by the clinging of wet garments; the high canorous note of the North-easter on days when the very houses seem to stiffen with cold: these, and such as these, crowd back upon him, and mockingly substitute themselves for the fanciful winter scenes with which he had pleased himself a while before. He cannot be glad enough that he is where he is. If only the others could be there also; if only those tramps could lie down for a little in the sunshine, and those children warm their feet, this once, upon a kindlier earth; if only there were no cold anywhere, and no nakedness and no hunger; if only it were as well with all men as it is with him!

For it is not altogether ill with the invalid, after all. If it is only rarely that anything penetrates, vividly into his numbed spirit, yet, when anything does, it brings with it a joy that is all the more poignant for its very rarity. There is something pathetic in these occasional returns of a glad activity of heart. In his lowest hours he will be stirred and awakened by many such; and they will spring perhaps from very trivial sources; as a friend once said to me, the “spirit of delight” comes often on small wings. For the pleasure that we take in beautiful nature is essentially capricious. It comes sometimes when we least look for it; and sometimes, when we expect it most certainly, it leaves us to gape joyously for days together, in the very home-land of the beautiful. We may have passed a place a thousand times and one; and on the thousand and second it will be transfigured, and stand forth in a certain splendour of reality from the dull circle of surroundings; so that we see it “with a child’s first pleasure,” as Wordsworth saw the daffodils by the lake-side. And if this falls out capriciously with the healthy, how much more so with the invalid! Some day he will find his first violet, and be lost in pleasant wonder, by what alchemy the cold earth of the clods, and the vapid air and rain, can be transmuted into colour so rich and odour so touchingly sweet. Or perhaps he may see a group of washerwomen relieved, on a spit of shingle, against the blue sea, or a meeting of flower-gatherers in the tempered daylight of an olive-garden; and something significant or monumental in the grouping, something in the harmony of faint colour that is always characteristic of the dress of these southern women, will come home to him unexpectedly, and awaken in him that satisfaction with which we tell ourselves that we are the richer by one more beautiful experience. Or it may be something even slighter: as when the opulence of the sunshine, which somehow gets lost and fails to produce its effect on the large scale, is suddenly revealed to him by the chance isolation — as he changes the position of his sunshade — of a yard or two of roadway with its stones and weeds. And then, there is no end to the infinite variety of the olive-yards themselves. Even the colour is indeterminate and continually shifting: now you would say it was green, now grey now blue; now tree stands above tree, like “cloud on cloud,” massed into filmy indistinctness; and now, at the wind’s will, the whole sea of foliage is shaken and broken up with little momentary silverings and shadows. But every one sees the world in his own way. To some the glad moment may have arrived on other provocations; and their recollection may be most vivid of the stately gait of women carrying burthens on their heads; of tropical effects, with canes and naked rock and sunlight; of the relief of cypresses; of the troubled, busy-looking groups of sea-pines, that seem always as if they were being wielded and swept together by a whirlwind; of the air coming, laden with virginal perfumes, over the myrtles and the scented underwood; of the empurpled hills standing up, solemn and sharp, out of the green-gold air of the east at evening.

There go many elements, without doubt, to the making of one such moment of intense perception; and it is on the happy agreement of these many elements, on the harmonious vibration of many nerves, that the whole delight of the moment must depend. Who can forget how, when he has chanced upon some attitude of complete restfulness, after long uneasy rolling to and fro on grass or heather, the whole fashion of the landscape has been changed for him, as though the sun had just broken forth, or a great artist had only then completed, by some cunning touch, the composition of the picture! And not only a change of posture — a snatch of perfume, the sudden singing of a bird, the freshness of some pulse of air from an invisible sea, the light shadow of a travelling cloud, the merest nothing that sends a little shiver along the most infinitesimal nerve of a man's body — not one of the least of these but has a hand somehow in the general effect, and brings some refinement of its own into the character of the pleasure we feel.

And if the external conditions are thus varied and subtle, even more so are those within our own bodies. No man can find out the world, says Solomon, from beginning to end, because the world is in his heart; and so it is impossible for any of us to understand, from beginning to end, that agreement of harmonious circumstances that creates in us the highest pleasure of admiration, precisely because some of these circumstances are hidden from us for ever in the constitution of our own bodies. After we have reckoned up all that we can see or hear or feel, there still remains to be taken into account some sensibility more delicate than usual in the nerves affected, or some exquisite refinement in the architecture of the brain, which is indeed to the sense of the beautiful as the eye or the ear to the sense of hearing or sight. We admire splendid views and great pictures; and yet, what is truly admirable is rather the mind within us, that gathers together these scattered details for its delight, and makes out of certain colours certain distributions of graduated light and darkness, that intelligible whole which alone we call a picture or a view. Hazlitt, relating in one of his essays how he went on foot from one great man's house to another's in search of works of art, begins suddenly to triumph over these noble and wealthy owners, because he was more capable of enjoying their costly possessions than they were; because they had paid the money and he had received the pleasure. And the occasion is a fair one for self-complacency. While the one man was working to be able to buy the picture, the other was working to be able to enjoy the picture. An inherited aptitude will have been diligently improved in either case; only the one man has made for himself a fortune, and the other has made for himself a living spirit. It is a fair occasion for self-complacency, I repeat, when the event shows a man to have chosen the better part, and laid out his life more wisely, in the long run, than those who have credit for most wisdom. And yet even this is not a good unmixed; and, like all other possessions, although in a less degree, the possession of a brain that has been thus improved and cultivated, and made into the prime organ of a man's enjoyment, brings with it certain inevitable cares and disappointments. The happiness of such an one comes to depend greatly upon those fine shades of sensation that heighten and harmonise the coarser elements of beauty. And thus a degree of nervous prostration, that to other men would be hardly disagreeable, is enough to overthrow for him the whole fabric of his life, to take, except at rare moments, the edge off his pleasures, and to meet him wherever he goes with failure, and the sense of want, and disenchantment of the world and life.

It is not in such numbness of spirit only that the life of the invalid resembles a premature old age. Those excursions that he had promised himself to finish prove too long or too arduous for his feeble body; and the barrier-hills are as impassable as ever. Many a white town that sits far out on the promontory, many a comely fold of wood on the mountain-side, beckons and allures his imagination day after day, and is yet as inaccessible to his feet as the clefts and gorges of the clouds. The sense of distance grows upon him wonderfully; and after some feverish efforts and the fretful uneasiness of the first few days, he falls contentedly in with the restrictions of his weakness. His narrow round becomes pleasant and familiar to him as the cell to a contented prisoner. Just as he has fallen already out of the mid race of active life, he now falls out of the little eddy that circulates in the shallow waters of the sanatorium. He sees the country people come and go about their everyday affairs, the foreigners stream out in goodly pleasure parties; the stir of man's activity is all about him, as he suns himself inertly in some sheltered corner; and he looks on with a patriarchal impersonality of interest, such as a man may feel when he pictures to himself the fortunes of his remote descendants, or the robust old age of the oak he has planted over-night.

In this falling aside, in this quietude and desertion of other men, there is no inharmonious prelude to the last quietude and desertion of the grave; in this dulness of the senses there is a gentle preparation for the final insensibility of death. And to him the idea of mortality comes in a shape less violent and harsh than is its wont, less as an abrupt catastrophe than as a thing of infinitesimal gradation, and the last step on a long decline of way. As we turn to and fro in bed, and every moment the movements grow feebler and smaller and the attitude more restful and easy, until sleep overtakes us at a stride and we move no more, so desire after desire leaves him; day by day his strength decreases, and the circle of his activity grows ever narrower; and he feels, if he is to be thus tenderly weaned from the passion of life, thus gradually inducted into the slumber of death, that when at last the end comes, it will come quietly and fitly. If anything is to reconcile poor spirits to the coming of the last enemy, surely it should be such a mild approach as this; not to hale us forth with violence, but to persuade us from a place we have no further pleasure in. It is not so much, indeed, death that approaches as life that withdraws and withers up from round about him. He has outlived his own usefulness, and almost his own enjoyment; and if there is to be no recovery; if never again will he be young and strong and passionate, if the actual present shall be to him always like a thing read in a book or remembered out of the far-away past; if, in fact, this be veritably nightfall, he will not wish greatly for the continuance of a twilight that only strains and disappoints the eyes, but steadfastly await the perfect darkness. He will pray for Medea: when she comes, let her either rejuvenate or slay.

And yet the ties that still attach him to the world are many and kindly. The sight of children has a significance for him such as it may have for the aged also, but not for others. If he has been used to feel humanely, and to look upon life somewhat more widely than from the narrow loophole of personal pleasure and advancement, it is strange how small a portion of his thoughts will be changed or embittered by this proximity of death. He knows that already, in English counties, the sower follows the ploughman up the face of the field, and the rooks follow the sower; and he knows also that he may not live to go home again and see the corn spring and ripen, and be cut down at last, and brought home with gladness. And yet the future of this harvest, the continuance of drought or the coming of rain unseasonably, touch him as sensibly as ever. For he has long been used to wait with interest the issue of events in which his own concern was nothing; and to be joyful in a plenty, and sorrowful for a famine, that did not increase or diminish, by one half loaf, the equable sufficiency of his own supply. Thus there remain unaltered all the disinterested hopes for mankind and a better future which have been the solace and inspiration of his life. These he has set beyond the reach of any fate that only menaces himself; and it makes small difference whether he die five thousand years, or five thousand and fifty years, before the good epoch for which he faithfully labours. He has not deceived himself; he has known from the beginning that he followed the pillar of fire and cloud, only to perish himself in the wilderness, and that it was reserved for others to enter joyfully into possession of the land. And so, as everything grows greyer and quieter about him, and slopes towards extinction, these unfaded visions accompany his sad decline and follow him, with friendly voices and hopeful words, into the very vestibule of death. The desire of love or of fame scarcely moved him, in his days of health, more strongly than these generous aspirations move him now; and so life is carried forward beyond life, and a vista kept open for the eyes of hope, even when his hands grope already on the face of the impassable.

Lastly, he is bound tenderly to life by the thought of his friends; or shall we not say rather, that by their thought for him, by their unchangeable solicitude and love, he remains woven into the very stuff of life, beyond the power of bodily dissolution to undo? In a thousand ways will he survive and be perpetuated. Much of Etienne de la Boétie survived during all the years in which Montaigne continued to converse with him on the pages of the ever-delightful essays. Much of what was truly Goethe was dead already when he revisited places that knew him no more, and found no better consolation than the promise of his own verses, that soon he too would be at rest. Indeed, when we think of what it is that we most seek and cherish, and find most pride and pleasure in calling ours, it will sometimes seem to us as if our friends, at our decease, would suffer loss more truly than ourselves. As a monarch who should care more for the outlying colonies he knows on the map or through the report of his vicegerents, than for the trunk of his empire under his eyes at home, are we not more concerned about the shadowy life that we have in the hearts of others, and that portion in their thoughts and fancies which, in a certain far-away sense, belongs to us, than about the real knot of our identity — that central metropolis of self, of which alone we are immediately aware — or the diligent service of arteries and veins and infinitesimal activity of ganglia, which we know (as we know a proposition in Euclid) to be the source and substance of the whole? At the death of every one whom we love, some fair and honourable portion of our existence falls away, and we are dislodged from one of these dear provinces; and they are not, perhaps, the most fortunate who survive a long series of such impoverishments, till their life and influence narrow gradually into the meagre limit of their own spirits, and death, when he comes at last, can destroy them at one blow.

Note. — To this essay I must in honesty append a word or two of qualification; for this is one of the points on which a slightly greater age teaches us a slightly different wisdom:

A youth delights in generalities, and keeps loose from particular obligations; he jogs on the footpath way, himself pursuing butterflies, but courteously lending his applause to the advance of the human species and the coming of the kingdom of justice and love. As he grows older, he begins to think more narrowly of man's action in the general, and perhaps more arrogantly of his own in the particular. He has not that same unspeakable trust in what he would have done had he been spared, seeing finally that that would have been little; but he has a far higher notion of the blank that he will make by dying. A young man feels himself one too many in the world; his is a painful situation: he has no calling; no obvious utility; no ties but to his parents, and these he is sure to disregard. I do not think that a proper allowance has been made for this true cause of suffering in youth; but by the mere fact of a prolonged existence, we outgrow either the fact or else the feeling. Either we become so callously accustomed to our own useless figure in the world, or else — and this, thank God, in the majority of cases — we so collect about us the interest or the love of our fellows, so multiply our effective part in the affairs of life, that we need to entertain no longer the question of our right to be.

And so in the majority of cases, a man who fancies himself dying will get cold comfort from the very youthful view expressed in this essay. He, as a living man, has some to help, some to love, some to correct; it may be, some to punish. These duties cling, not upon humanity, but upon the man himself. It is he, not another, who is one woman's son and a second woman's husband and a third woman's father. That life which began so small, has now grown, with a myriad filaments, into the lives of others. It is not indispensable; another will take the place and shoulder the discharged responsibility; but the better the man and the nobler his purposes, the more will he be tempted to regret the extinction of his powers and the deletion of his personality. To have lived a generation is not only to have grown at home in that perplexing medium, but to have assumed innumerable duties. To die at such an age, has, for all but the entirely base, something of the air of a betrayal. A man does not only reflect upon what he might have done in a future that is never to be his; but beholding himself so early a deserter from the fight, he eats his heart for the good he might have done already. To have been so useless and now to lose all hope of being useful any more — there it is that death and memory assail him. And even if mankind shall go on, founding heroic cities, practising heroic virtues, rising steadily from strength to strength; even if his work shall be fulfilled, his friends consoled, his wife remarried by a better than he; how shall this alter, in one jot, his estimation of a career which was his only business in this world, which was so fitfully pursued, and which is now so ineffectively to end?

V

ÆS TRIPLEX

The changes wrought by death are in themselves so sharp and final, and so terrible and melancholy in their consequences, that the thing stands alone in man's experience, and has no parallel upon earth. It outdoes all other accidents because it is the last of them. Sometimes it leaps suddenly upon its victims, like a Thug; sometimes it lays a regular siege and creeps upon their citadel during a score of years. And when the business is done, there is sore havoc made in other people's lives, and a pin knocked out by which many subsidiary friendships hung together. There are empty chairs, solitary walks, and single beds at night. Again, in taking away our friends, death does not take them away utterly, but leaves behind a mocking, tragical, and soon intolerable residue, which must be hurriedly concealed. Hence a whole chapter of sights and customs striking to the mind, from the pyramids of Egypt to the gibbets and dule trees of mediæval Europe. The poorest persons have a bit of pageant going towards the tomb; memorial stones are set up over the least memorable; and, in order to preserve some show of respect for what remains of our old loves and friendships, we must accompany it with much grimly ludicrous ceremonial, and the hired undertaker parades before the door. All this, and much more of the same sort, accompanied by the eloquence of poets, has gone a great way to put humanity in error; nay, in many philosophies the error has been embodied and laid down with every circumstance of logic; although in real life the bustle and swiftness, in leaving people little time to think, have not left them time enough to go dangerously wrong in practice.

As a matter of fact, although few things are spoken of with more fearful whisperings than this prospect of death, few have less influence on conduct under healthy circumstances. We have all heard of cities in South America built upon the side of fiery mountains, and how, even in this tremendous neighbourhood, the inhabitants are not a jot more impressed by the solemnity of mortal conditions than if they were delving gardens in the greenest corner of England. There are serenades and suppers and much gallantry among the myrtles overhead; and meanwhile the foundation shudders under foot, the bowels of the mountain growl, and at any moment living ruin may leap sky-high into the moonlight, and tumble man and his merry-making in the dust. In the eyes of very young people, and very dull old ones, there is something indescribably reckless and desperate in such a picture. It seems not credible that respectable married people, with umbrellas, should find appetite for a bit of supper within quite a long distance of a fiery mountain; ordinary life begins to smell of high-handed debauch when it is carried on so close to a catastrophe; and even cheese and salad, it seems, could hardly be relished in such circumstances without something like a defiance of the Creator. It should be a place for nobody but hermits dwelling in prayer and maceration, or mere born-devils drowning care in a perpetual carouse.

And yet, when one comes to think upon it calmly, the situation of these South American citizens forms only a very pale figure for the state of ordinary mankind. This world itself, travelling blindly and swiftly in overcrowded space, among a million other worlds travelling blindly and swiftly in contrary directions, may very well come by a knock that would set it into explosion like a penny squib. And what, pathologically looked at, is the human body with all its organs, but a mere bagful of petards? The least of these is as dangerous to the whole economy as the ship's powder-magazine to the ship; and with every breath we breathe, and every meal we eat, we are putting one or more of them in peril. If we clung as devotedly as some philosophers pretend we do to the abstract idea of life, or were half as frightened as they make out we are, for the subversive accident that ends it all, the trumpets might sound by the hour and no one would follow them into battle — the blue-peter might fly at the truck, but who would climb into a sea-going ship? Think (if these philosophers were right) with what a preparation of spirit we should affront the daily peril of the dinner-table: a deadlier spot than any battle-field in history, where the far greater proportion of our ancestors have miserably left their bones! What woman would ever be lured into marriage, so much more dangerous than the wildest sea? And what would it be to grow old? For, after a certain distance, every step we take in life we find the ice growing thinner below our feet, and all around us and behind us we see our contemporaries going through. By the time a man gets well into the seventies, his continued existence is a mere miracle; and when he lays his old bones in bed for the night, there is an overwhelming probability that he will never see the day. Do the old men mind it, as a matter of fact? Why, no. They were never merrier; they have their grog at night, and tell the raciest stories; they hear of the death of people about their own age, or even younger, not as if it was a grisly warning, but with a simple child-like pleasure at having outlived some one else; and when a draught might puff them out like a guttering candle, or a bit of a stumble shatter them like so much glass, their old hearts keep sound and unaffrighted, and they go on, bubbling with laughter, through years of man's age compared to which the valley at Balaclava was as safe and peaceful as a village cricket-green on Sunday. It may fairly be questioned (if we look to the peril only) whether it was a much more daring feat for Curtius to plunge into the gulf, than for any old gentleman of ninety to doff his clothes and clamber into bed.

Indeed, it is a memorable subject for consideration, with what unconcern and gaiety mankind pricks on along the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The whole way is one wilderness of snares, and the end of it, for those who fear the last pinch, is irrevocable ruin. And yet we go spinning through it all, like a party for the Derby. Perhaps the reader remembers one of the humorous devices of the deified Caligula: how he encouraged a vast concourse of holiday-makers on to his bridge over Baiæ bay; and when they were in the height of their enjoyment, turned loose the Prætorian guards among the company, and had them tossed into the sea. This is no bad miniature of the dealings of nature with the transitory race of man. Only, what a chequered picnic we have of it, even while it lasts! and into what great waters, not to be crossed by any swimmer, God's pale Prætorian throws us over in the end!

We live the time that a match flickers; we pop the cork of a ginger-beer bottle, and the earthquake swallows us on the instant. Is it not odd, is it not incongruous, is it not, in the highest sense of human speech, incredible, that we should think so highly of the ginger-beer, and regard so little the devouring earthquake? The love of Life and the fear of Death are two famous phrases that grow harder to understand the more we think about them. It is a well-known fact that an immense proportion of boat accidents would never happen if people held the sheet in their hands instead of making it fast; and yet, unless it be some martinet of a professional mariner or some landsman with shattered nerves, every one of God's creatures makes it fast. A strange instance of man's unconcern and brazen boldness in the face of death!

We confound ourselves with metaphysical phrases, which we import into daily talk with noble inappropriateness. We have no idea of what death is, apart from its circumstances and some of its consequences to others; and although we have some experience of living, there is not a man on earth who has flown so high into abstraction as to have any practical guess at the meaning of the word *life*. All literature, from Job and Omar Khayam to Thomas Carlyle or Walt Whitman, is but an attempt to look upon the human state with such largeness of view as shall enable us to rise from the consideration of living to the Definition of Life. And our sages give us about the best satisfaction in their power when they say that it is a vapour, or a show, or made out of the same stuff with dreams. Philosophy, in its more rigid sense, has been at the same work for ages; and after a myriad bald heads have wagged over the problem, and piles of words have been heaped one upon another into dry and cloudy volumes without end, philosophy has the honour of laying before us, with modest pride, her contribution towards the subject: that life is a Permanent Possibility of Sensation. Truly a fine result! A man may very well love beef, or hunting, or a woman; but surely, surely, not a Permanent Possibility of Sensation! He may be afraid of a precipice, or a dentist, or a large enemy with a club, or even an undertaker's man; but not certainly of abstract death. We may trick with the word life in its dozen senses until we are weary of tricking; we may argue in terms of all the philosophies on earth, but one fact remains true throughout — that we do not love life, in the sense that we are greatly preoccupied about its conservation; that we do not, properly speaking, love life at all, but living. Into the views of the least careful there will enter some degree of providence; no man's eyes are fixed entirely on the passing hour; but although we have some anticipation of good health, good weather, wine, active employment, love, and self-approval, the sum of these anticipations does not amount to anything like a general view of life's possibilities and issues; nor are those who cherish them most vividly at all the most scrupulous of their personal safety. To be deeply interested in the accidents of our existence, to enjoy keenly the mixed tenure of human experience, rather leads a man to disregard precautions, and risk his neck against a straw. For surely the love of living is stronger in an Alpine climber roping over a peril, or a hunter riding merrily at a stiff fence, than in a creature who lives upon a diet and walks a measured distance in the interest of his constitution.

There is a great deal of very vile nonsense talked upon both sides of the matter: tearing divines reducing life to the dimensions of a mere funeral procession, so short as to be hardly decent; and melancholy unbelievers yearning for the tomb as if it were a world too far away. Both sides must feel a little ashamed of their performances now and again when they draw in their chairs to dinner. Indeed, a good meal and a bottle of wine is an answer to most standard works upon the question. When a man's heart warms to his viands, he forgets a great deal of sophistry, and soars into a rosy zone of contemplation. Death may be knocking at the door, like the Commander's statue; we have something else in hand, thank God, and let him knock. Passing-bells are ringing all the world over. All the world over, and every hour, some one is parting company with all his aches and ecstasies. For us also the trap is laid. But we are so fond of life that we have no leisure to entertain the terror of death. It is a honeymoon with us all through, and none of the longest. Small blame to us if we give our whole hearts to this glowing bride of ours, to the appetites, to honour, to the hungry curiosity of the mind, to the pleasure of the eyes in nature, and the pride of our own nimble bodies.

We all of us appreciate the sensations; but as for caring about the Permanence of the Possibility, a man's head is generally very bald, and his senses very dull, before he comes to that. Whether we regard life as a lane leading to a dead wall — a mere bag's end, as the French say — or whether we think of it as a vestibule or gymnasium, where we wait our turn and prepare our faculties for some more noble destiny; whether we thunder in a pulpit, or pule in little atheistic poetry-books, about its vanity and brevity; whether we look justly for years of health and vigour, or are about to mount into a bath-chair, as a step towards the hearse; in each and all of these views and situations there is but one conclusion possible: that a man should stop his ears against paralysing terror, and run the race that is set before him with a single mind. No one surely could have recoiled with more heartache and terror from the thought of death than our respected lexicographer; and yet we know how little it affected his conduct, how wisely and boldly he walked, and in what a fresh and lively vein he spoke of life. Already an old man, he ventured on his Highland tour; and his heart, bound with triple brass, did not recoil before twenty-seven individual cups of tea. As courage and intelligence are the two qualities best worth a good man's cultivation, so it is the first part of intelligence to recognise our precarious estate in life, and the first part of courage to be not at all abashed before the fact. A frank and somewhat headlong carriage, not looking too anxiously before, not dallying in maudlin regret over the past, stamps the man who is well armoured for this world.

And not only well armoured for himself, but a good friend and a good citizen to boot. We do not go to cowards for tender dealing; there is nothing so cruel as panic; the man who has least fear for his own carcase has most time to consider others. That eminent chemist who took his walks abroad in tin shoes, and subsisted wholly upon tepid milk, had all his work cut out for him in considerate dealings with his own digestion. So soon as prudence has begun to grow up in the brain, like a dismal fungus, it finds its first expression in a paralysis of generous acts. The victim begins to shrink spiritually; he develops a fancy for parlours with a regulated temperature, and takes his morality on the principle of tin shoes and tepid milk. The care of one important body or soul becomes so engrossing, that all the noises of the outer world begin to come thin and faint into the parlour with the regulated temperature; and the tin shoes go equably forward over blood and rain. To be overwise is to ossify; and the scruple-monger ends by standing stockstill. Now the man who has his heart on his sleeve, and a good whirling weathercock of a brain, who reckons his life as a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded, makes a very different acquaintance of the world, keeps all his pulses going true and fast, and gathers impetus as he runs, until, if he be running towards anything better than wildfire, he may shoot up and become a constellation in the end. Lord look after his health, Lord have a care of his soul, says he; and he has at the key of the position, and swashes through incongruity and peril towards his aim. Death is on all sides of him with pointed batteries, as he is on all sides of all of us; unfortunate surprises gird him round; mim-mouthed friends and relations hold up their hands in quite a little elegiacal synod about his path: and what cares he for all this? Being a true lover of living, a fellow with something pushing and spontaneous in his inside, he must, like any other soldier, in any other stirring, deadly warfare, push on at his best pace until he touch the goal. "A peerage or Westminster Abbey!" cried Nelson in his bright, boyish, heroic manner. These are great incentives; not for any of these, but for the plain satisfaction of living, of being about their business in some sort or other, do the brave, serviceable men of every nation tread down the nettle danger, and pass flyingly over all the stumbling-blocks of prudence. Think of the heroism of Johnson, think of that superb indifference to mortal limitation that set him upon his dictionary, and carried him through triumphantly until the end! Who, if he were wisely considerate of things at large, would ever embark upon any work much more considerable than a halfpenny post-card? Who would project a serial novel, after Thackeray and Dickens had each fallen in midcourse? Who would find heart enough to begin to live, if he dallied with the consideration of death?

And, after all, what sorry and pitiful quibbling all this is! To forego all the issues of living in a parlour with a regulated temperature — as if that were not to die a hundred times over, and for ten years at a stretch! As if it were not to die in one's own lifetime, and without even the sad immunities of death! As if it were not to die, and yet be the patient spectators of our own pitiable change! The Permanent Possibility is preserved, but the sensations carefully held at arm's length, as if one kept a photographic plate in a dark chamber. It is better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser. It is better to live and be done with it, than to die daily in the sick-room. By all means begin your folio; even if the doctor does not give you a year, even if he hesitates about a month, make one brave push and see what can be accomplished in a week. It is not only in finished undertakings that we ought to honour useful labour. A spirit goes out of the man who means execution, which outlives the most untimely ending. All who have meant good work with their whole hearts, have done good work, although they may die before they have the time to sign it. Every heart that has beat strong and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the tradition of mankind. And even if death catch people, like an open pitfall, and in mid-career, laying out vast projects, and planning monstrous foundations, flushed with hope, and their mouths full of boastful language, they should be at once tripped up and silenced: is there not something brave and spirited in such a termination? and does not life go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than miserably straggling to an end in sandy deltas? When the Greeks made their fine saying that those whom the gods love die young, I cannot help believing they had this sort of death also in their eye. For surely, at whatever age it overtake the man, this is to die young. Death has not been suffered to take so much as an illusion from his heart. In the hot-fit of life, a-tiptoe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound on to the other side. The noise of the mallet and chisel is scarcely quenched, the trumpets are hardly done blowing, when, trailing with him clouds of glory, this happy-starred, full-blooded spirit shoots into the spiritual land.

VI

EL DORADO

It seems as if a great deal were attainable in a world where there are so many marriages and decisive battles, and where we all, at certain hours of the day, and with great gusto and despatch, stow a portion of victuals finally and irretrievably into the bag which contains us. And it would seem also, on a hasty view, that the attainment of as much as possible was the one goal of man's contentious life. And yet, as regards the spirit, this is but a semblance. We live in an ascending scale when we live happily, one thing leading to another in an endless series. There is always a new horizon for onward-looking men, and although we dwell on a small planet, immersed in petty business and not enduring beyond a brief period of years, we are so constituted that our hopes are inaccessible, like stars, and the term of hoping is prolonged until the term of life. To be truly happy is a question of how we begin and not of how we end, of what we want and not of what we have. An aspiration is a joy for ever, a possession as solid as a landed estate, a fortune which we can never exhaust and which gives us year by year a revenue of pleasurable activity. To have many of these is to be spiritually rich. Life is only a very dull and ill-directed theatre unless we have some interests in the piece; and to those who have neither art nor science, the world is a mere arrangement of colours, or a rough footway where they may very well break their shins. It is in virtue of his own desires and curiosities that any man continues to exist with even patience, that he is charmed by the look of things and people, and that he wakens every morning with a renewed appetite for work and pleasure. Desire and curiosity are the two eyes through which he sees the world in the most enchanted colours: it is they that make women beautiful or fossils interesting: and the man may squander his estate and come to beggary, but if he keeps these two amulets he is still rich in the possibilities of pleasure. Suppose he could take one meal so compact and comprehensive that he should never hunger any more; suppose him at a glance, to take in all the features of the world and allay the desire for knowledge; suppose him to do the like in any province of experience — would not that man be in a poor way for amusement ever after?

One who goes touring on foot with a single volume in his knapsack reads with circumspection, pausing often to reflect, and often laying the book down to contemplate the landscape or the prints in the inn parlour; for he fears to come to an end of his entertainment, and be left companionless on the last stages of his journey. A young fellow recently finished the works of Thomas Carlyle, winding up, if we remember aright, with the ten notebooks upon Frederick the Great. “What!” cried the young fellow, in consternation, “is there no more Carlyle? Am I left to the daily papers?” A more celebrated instance is that of Alexander, who wept bitterly because he had no more worlds to subdue. And when Gibbon had finished the “Decline and Fall,” he had only a few moments of joy; and it was with a “sober melancholy” that he parted from his labours.

Happily we all shoot at the moon with ineffectual arrows; our hopes are set on inaccessible El Dorado; we come to an end of nothing here below. Interests are only plucked up to sow themselves again, like mustard. You would think, when the child was born, there would be an end to trouble; and yet it is only the beginning of fresh anxieties; and when you have seen it through its teething and its education, and at last its marriage, alas! it is only to have new fears, new quivering sensibilities, with every day; and the health of your children’s children grows as touching a concern as that of your own. Again, when you have married your wife, you would think you were got upon a hilltop, and might begin to go downward by an easy slope. But you have only ended courting to begin marriage. Falling in love and winning love are often difficult tasks to overbearing and rebellious spirits; but to keep in love is also a business of some importance, to which both man and wife must bring kindness and goodwill. The true love story commences at the altar, when there lies before the married pair a most beautiful contest of wisdom and generosity, and a life-long struggle towards an unattainable ideal. Unattainable? Ay, surely unattainable, from the very fact that they are two instead of one.

“Of making books there is no end,” complained the Preacher; and did not perceive how highly he was praising letters as an occupation. There is no end, indeed, to making books or experiments, or to travel or to gathering wealth. Problem gives rise to problem. We may study for ever, and we are never as learned as we would. We have never made a statue worthy of our dreams. And when we have discovered a continent, or crossed a chain of mountains, it is only to find another ocean or another plain upon the farther side. In the infinite universe there is room for our swiftest diligence and to spare. It is not like the works of Carlyle, which can be read to an end. Even in a corner of it, in a private park, or in the neighbourhood of a single hamlet, the weather and the seasons keep so deftly changing that although we walk there for a lifetime there will be always something new to startle and delight us.

There is only one wish realisable on the earth; only one thing that can be perfectly attained: Death. And from a variety of circumstances we have no one to tell us whether it be worth attaining.

A strange picture we make on our way to our Chimæras, ceaselessly marching, grudging ourselves the time for rest; indefatigable, adventurous pioneers. It is true that we shall never reach the goal; it is even more than probable that there is no such place; and if we live for centuries and were endowed with the powers of a god, we should find ourselves not much nearer what we wanted at the end. O toiling hands of mortals! O unwearied feet, travelling ye know not whither! Soon, soon, it seems to you, you must come forth on some conspicuous hilltop, and but a little way farther, against the setting sun, descry the spires of El Dorado. Little do ye know your own blessedness; for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour.

VII

THE ENGLISH ADMIRALS

“Whether it be wise in men to do such actions or no, I am sure it is so in States to honour them.” — Sir William Temple.

There is one story of the wars of Rome which I have always very much envied for England. Germanicus was going down at the head of the legions into a dangerous river — on the opposite bank the woods were full of Germans — when there flew out seven great eagles which seemed to marshal the Romans on their way; they did not pause or waver, but disappeared into the forest where the enemy lay concealed. “Forward!” cried Germanicus, with a fine rhetorical inspiration, “Forward! and follow the Roman birds.” It would be a very heavy spirit that did not give a leap at such a signal, and a very timorous one that continued to have any doubt of success. To appropriate the eagles as fellow-countrymen was to make imaginary allies of the forces of nature; the Roman Empire and its military fortunes, and along with these the prospects of those individual Roman legionaries now fording a river in Germany, looked altogether greater and more hopeful. It is a kind of illusion easy to produce. A particular shape of cloud, the appearance of a particular star, the holiday of some particular saint — anything, in short, to remind the combatants of patriotic legends or old successes — may be enough to change the issue of a pitched battle; for it gives to the one party a feeling that Right and the larger interests are with them.

If an Englishman wishes to have such a feeling, it must be about the sea. The lion is nothing to us; he has not been taken to the hearts of the people, and naturalised as an English emblem. We know right well that a lion would fall foul of us as grimly as he would of a Frenchman or a Moldavian Jew, and we do not carry him before us in the smoke of battle. But the sea is our approach and bulwark; it has been the scene of our greatest triumphs and dangers; and we are accustomed in lyrical strains to claim it as our own. The prostrating experiences of foreigners between Calais and Dover have always an agreeable side to English prepossessions. A man from Bedfordshire, who does not know one end of the ship from the other until she begins to move, swaggers among such persons with a sense of hereditary nautical experience. To suppose yourself endowed with natural parts for the sea because you are the countryman of Blake and mighty Nelson is perhaps just as unwarrantable as to imagine Scotch extraction a sufficient guarantee that you will look well in a kilt. But the feeling is there, and seated beyond the reach of argument. We should consider ourselves unworthy of our descent if we did not share the arrogance of our progenitors, and please ourselves with the pretension that the sea is English. Even where it is looked upon by the guns and battlements of another nation we regard it as a kind of English cemetery, where the bones of our seafaring fathers take their rest until the last trumpet; for I suppose no other nation has lost as many ships or sent as many brave fellows to the bottom.

There is nowhere such a background for heroism as the noble, terrifying, and picturesque conditions of some of our sea-fights. Hawke's battle in the tempest, and Aboukir at the moment when the French Admiral blew up, reach the limit of what is imposing to the imagination. And our naval annals owe some of their interest to the fantastic and beautiful appearance of old warships and the romance that invests the sea and everything sea-going in the eyes of English lads on a half-holiday at the coast. Nay, and what we know of the misery between-decks enhances the bravery of what was done by giving it something for contrast. We like to know that these bold and honest fellows contrived to live, and to keep bold and honest, among absurd and vile surroundings. No reader can forget the description of the *Thunder* in "Roderick Random": the disorderly tyranny; the cruelty and dirt of officers and men; deck after deck, each with some new object of offence; the hospital, where the hammocks were huddled together with but fourteen inches space for each; the cockpit, far under water, where "in an intolerable stench" the spectacled steward kept the accounts of the different messes; and the canvas enclosure, six feet square, in which Morgan made flip and salmagundi, smoked his pipe, sang his Welsh songs, and swore his queer Welsh imprecations. There are portions of this business on board the *Thunder* over which the reader passes lightly and hurriedly, like a traveller in a malarious country. It is easy enough to understand the opinion of Dr. Johnson: "Why, sir," he said, "no man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail." You would fancy anyone's spirit would die out under such an accumulation of darkness, noisomeness, and injustice, above all when he had not come there of his own free will, but under the cutlasses and bludgeons of the press-gang. But perhaps a watch on deck in the sharp sea air put a man on his mettle again; a battle must have been a capital relief; and prize-money, bloodily earned and grossly squandered, opened the doors of the prison for a twinkling. Somehow or other, at least, this worst of possible lives could not overlie the spirit and gaiety of our sailors; they did their duty as though they had some interest in the fortune of that country which so cruelly oppressed them, they served their guns merrily when it came to fighting, and they had the readiest ear for a bold, honourable sentiment, of any class of men the world ever produced.

Most men of high destinies have high-sounding names. Pym and Habakkuk may do pretty well, but they must not think to cope with the Cromwells and Isaiahs. And you could not find a better case in point than that of the English Admirals. Drake and Rooke and Hawke are picked names for men of execution. Frobisher, Rodney, Boscawen, "Foul-Weather" Jack Byron are all good to catch the eye in a page of a naval history. Cloudesley Shovel is a mouthful of quaint and sounding syllables. Benbow has a bull-dog quality that suits the man's character, and it takes us back to those English archers who were his true comrades for plainness, tenacity, and pluck. Raleigh is spirited and martial, and signifies an act of bold conduct in the field. It is impossible to judge of Blake or Nelson, no names current among men being worthy of such heroes. But still it is odd enough, and very appropriate in this connection, that the latter was greatly taken with his Sicilian title. "The signification, perhaps, pleased him," says Southey; "Duke of Thunder was what in Dahomey would have been called a *strong name*; it was to a sailor's taste, and certainly to no man could it be more applicable." Admiral in itself is one of the most satisfactory of distinctions; it has a noble sound and a very proud history; and Columbus thought so highly of it, that he enjoined his heirs to sign themselves by that title as long as the house should last.

But it is the spirit of the men, and not their names, that I wish to speak about in this paper. That spirit is truly English; they, and not Tennyson's cotton-spinners or Mr. D'Arcy Thompson's Abstract Bagman, are the true and typical Englishmen. There may be more *head* of bagmen in the country, but human beings are reckoned by number only in political constitutions. And the Admirals are typical in the full force of the word. They are splendid examples of virtue, indeed, but of a virtue in which most Englishmen can claim a moderate share; and what we admire in their lives is a sort of apotheosis of ourselves. Almost everybody in our land, except humanitarians and a few persons whose youth has been depressed by exceptionally æsthetic surroundings, can understand and sympathise with an admiral or a prize-fighter. I do not wish to bracket Benbow and Tom Cribb; but, depend upon it, they are practically bracketed for admiration in the minds of many frequenters of ale-houses. If you told them about Germanicus and the eagles, or Regulus going back to Carthage, they would very likely fall asleep; but tell them about Harry Pearce and Jem Belcher, or about Nelson and the Nile, and they put down their pipes to listen. I have by me a copy of "Boxiana," on the fly-leaves of which a youthful member of the fancy kept a chronicle of remarkable events and an obituary of great men. Here we find piously chronicled the demise of jockeys, watermen, and pugilists — Johnny Moore, of the Liverpool Prize Ring; Tom Spring, aged fifty-six; "Pierce Egan, senior, writer of 'Boxiana' and other sporting works" — and among all these, the Duke of Wellington! If Benbow had lived in the time of this annalist, do you suppose his name would not have been added to the glorious roll? In short, we do not all feel warmly towards Wesley or Laud, we cannot all take pleasure in "Paradise Lost"; but there are certain common sentiments and touches of nature by which the whole nation is made to feel kinship. A little while ago everybody, from Hazlitt and John Wilson down to the imbecile creature who scribbled his register on the fly-leaves of "Boxiana," felt a more or less shamefaced satisfaction in the exploits of prize-fighters. And the exploits of the Admirals are popular to the same degree and tell in all ranks of society. Their sayings and doings stir English blood like the sound of a trumpet; and if the Indian Empire, the trade of London, and all the outward and visible ensigns of our greatness should pass away, we should still leave behind us a durable monument of what we were in these sayings and doings of the English Admirals.

Duncan, lying off the Texel with his own flagship, the *Venerable*, and only one other vessel, heard that the whole Dutch fleet was putting to sea. He told Captain Hotham to anchor alongside of him in the narrowest part of the channel, and fight his vessel till she sank. "I have taken the depth of the water," added he, "and when the *Venerable* goes down my flag will still fly." And you observe this is no naked Viking in a pre-historic period; but a Scottish member of Parliament, with a smattering of the classics, a telescope, a cocked hat of great size, and flannel underclothing. In the same spirit, Nelson went into Aboukir with six colours flying; so that even if five were shot away, it should not be imagined he had struck. He too must needs wear his four stars outside his Admiral's frock, to be a butt for sharpshooters. "In honour I gained them," he said to objectors, adding with sublime illogicality, "in honour I will die with them." Captain Douglas of the *Royal Oak*, when the Dutch fired his vessel in the Thames, sent his men ashore, but was burned along with her himself rather than desert his post without orders. Just then, perhaps the Merry Monarch was chasing a moth round the supper-table with the ladies of his court. When Raleigh sailed into Cadiz, and all the forts and ships opened fire on him at once, he scorned to shoot a gun, and made answer with a flourish of insulting trumpets. I like this bravado better than the wisest dispositions to ensure victory; it comes from the heart and goes to it. God has made nobler heroes, but He never made a finer gentleman than Walter Raleigh. And as our Admirals were full of heroic superstitions, and had a strutting and vainglorious style of fight, so they discovered a startling eagerness for battle, and courted war like a mistress. When the news came to Essex before Cadiz that the attack had been decided, he threw his hat into the sea. It is in this way that a schoolboy hears of a half-holiday; but this was a bearded man of great possessions who had just been allowed to risk his life. Benbow could not lie still in his bunk after he had lost his leg; he must be on deck in a basket to direct and animate the fight. I said they loved war like a mistress; yet I think there are not many mistresses we should continue to woo under similar circumstances. Trowbridge went ashore with the *Culloden*, and was able to take no part in the battle of the Nile. "The merits of that ship and her gallant captain," wrote Nelson to the Admiralty, "are too well known to benefit by anything I could say. Her misfortune was great in getting aground, *while her more fortunate companions were in the full tide of happiness*." This is a notable expression, and depicts the whole great-hearted, big-spoken stock of the English Admirals to a hair. It was to be "in the full tide of happiness" for Nelson to destroy five thousand five hundred and twenty-five of his fellow-creatures, and have his own scalp torn open by a piece of langridge shot. Hear him again at Copenhagen: "A shot through the mainmast knocked the splinters about; and he observed to one of his officers with a smile, 'It is warm work, and this may be the last to any of us at any moment'; and then, stopping short at the gangway, added, with emotion, '*But, mark you — I would not be elsewhere for thousands.*'"

I must tell one more story, which has lately been made familiar to us all, and that in one of the noblest ballads of the English language. I had written my tame prose abstract, I shall beg the reader to believe, when I had no notion that the sacred bard designed an immortality for Greenville. Sir Richard Greenville was Vice-Admiral to Lord Thomas Howard, and lay off the Azores with the English squadron in 1591. He was a noted tyrant to his crew: a dark, bullying fellow apparently; and it is related of him that he would chew and swallow wine-glasses, by way of convivial levity, till the blood ran out of his mouth. When the Spanish fleet of fifty sail came within sight of the English, his ship, the *Revenge*, was the last to weigh anchor, and was so far circumvented by the Spaniards, that there were but two courses open — either to turn her back upon the enemy or sail through one of his squadrons. The first alternative Greenville dismissed as dishonourable to himself, his country, and her Majesty's ship. Accordingly, he chose the latter, and steered into the Spanish armament. Several vessels he forced to luff and fall under his lee; until, about three o'clock of the afternoon, a great ship of three decks of ordnance took the wind out of his sails, and immediately boarded. Thenceforward, and all night long, the *Revenge* held her own single-handed against the Spaniards. As one ship was beaten off, another took its place. She endured, according to

Raleigh's computation, "eight hundred shot of great artillery, besides many assaults and entries." By morning the powder was spent, the pikes all broken, not a stick was standing, "nothing left overhead either for flight or defence"; six feet of water in the hold; almost all the men hurt, and Greenville himself in a dying condition. To bring them to this pass, a fleet of fifty sail had been mauling them for fifteen hours, the *Admiral of the Hulks* and the *Ascension* of Seville had both gone down alongside, and two other vessels had taken refuge on shore in a sinking state. In Hawke's words, "they had taken a great deal of drubbing." The captain and crew thought they had done about enough; but Greenville was not of this opinion; he gave orders to the master-gunner, whom he knew to be a fellow after his own stamp, to scuttle the *Revenge* where she lay. The others, who were not mortally wounded like the Admiral, interfered with some decision, locked the master-gunner in his cabin, after having deprived him of his sword, for he manifested an intention to kill himself if he were not to sink the ship; and sent to the Spaniards to demand terms. These were granted. The second or third day after, Greenville died of his wounds aboard the Spanish flagship, leaving his contempt upon the "traitors and dogs" who had not chosen to do as he did and engage fifty vessels, well found and fully manned, with six inferior craft ravaged by sickness and short of stores. He at least, he said, had done his duty, as he was bound to do, and looked for everlasting fame.

Some one said to me the other day that they considered this story to be of a pestilent example. I am not inclined to imagine we shall ever be put into any practical difficulty from a superfluity of Greenvilles. And besides, I demur to the opinion. The worth of such actions is not a thing to be decided in a quaver of sensibility or a flush of righteous common-sense. The man who wished to make the ballads of his country coveted a small matter compared to what Richard Greenville accomplished. I wonder how many people have been inspired by this mad story, and how many battles have been actually won for England in the spirit thus engendered. It is only with a measure of habitual foolhardiness that you can be sure, in the common run of men, of courage on a reasonable occasion. An army or a fleet, if it is not led by quixotic fancies, will not be led far by terror of the Provost-Marshal. Even German warfare, in addition to maps and telegraphs, is not above employing the "Wacht am Rhein." Nor is it only in the profession of arms that such stories may do good to a man. In this desperate and gleeful fighting, whether it is Greenville or Benbow, Hawke or Nelson, who flies his colours in the ship, we see men brought to the test and giving proof of what we call heroic feeling. Prosperous humanitarians tell me, in my club smoking-room, that they are a prey to prodigious heroic feelings, and that it costs them more nobility of soul to do nothing in particular, than would carry on all the wars, by sea or land, of bellicose humanity. It may very well be so, and yet not touch the point in question. For what I desire is to see some of this nobility brought face to face with me in an inspiriting achievement. A man may talk smoothly over a cigar in my club smoking-room from now to the Day of Judgment, without adding anything to mankind's treasury of illustrious and encouraging examples. It is not over the virtues of a curate-and-tea-party novel that people are abashed into high resolutions. It may be because their hearts are crass, but to stir them properly they must have men entering into glory with some pomp and circumstance. And that is why these stories of our sea-captains, printed, so to speak, in capitals, and full of bracing moral influence, are more valuable to England than any material benefit in all the books of political economy between Westminster and Birmingham. Greenville chewing wine-glasses at table makes no very pleasant figure, any more than a thousand other artists when they are viewed in the body, or met in private life; but his work of art, his finished tragedy, is an eloquent performance; and I contend it ought not only to enliven men of the sword as they go into battle, but send back merchant-clerks with more heart and spirit to their book-keeping by double entry.

There is another question which seems bound up in this; and that is Temple's problem: whether it was wise of Douglas to burn with the *Royal Oak*? and by implication, what it was that made him do so. Many will tell you it was the desire of fame.

"To what do Cæsar and Alexander owe the infinite grandeur of their renown, but to fortune? How many men has she extinguished in the beginning of their progress, of whom we have no knowledge; who brought as much courage to the work as they, if their adverse hap had not cut them off in the first sally of their arms? Amongst so many and so great dangers, I do not remember to have anywhere read that Cæsar was ever wounded; a thousand have fallen in less dangers than the least of those he went through. A great many brave actions must be expected to be performed without witness, for one that comes to some notice. A man is not always at the top of a breach, or at the head of an army in the sight of his general, as upon a platform. He is often surprised between the hedge and the ditch; he must run the hazard of his life against a hen-roost; he must dislodge four rascally musketeers out of a barn; he must pick out single from his party, as necessity arises, and meet adventures alone."

Thus far Montaigne, in a characteristic essay on "Glory." Where death is certain, as in the cases of Douglas or Greenville, it seems all one from a personal point of view. The man who lost his life against a hen-roost is in the same pickle with him who lost his life against a fortified place of the first order. Whether he has missed a peerage or only the corporal's stripes, it is all one if he has missed them and is quietly in the grave. It was by a hazard that we learned the conduct of the four marines of the *Wager*. There was no room for these brave fellows in the boat, and they were left behind upon the island to a certain death. They were soldiers, they said, and knew well enough it was their business to die; and as their comrades pulled away, they stood upon the beach, gave three cheers, and cried "God bless the king!" Now, one or two of those who were in the boat escaped, against all likelihood, to tell the story. That was a great thing for us; but surely it cannot, by any possible twisting of human speech, be construed into anything great for the marines. You may suppose, if you like, that they died hoping their behaviour would not be forgotten; or you may suppose they thought nothing on the subject, which is much more likely. What can be the signification of the word "fame" to a private of marines, who cannot read and knows nothing of past history beyond the reminiscences of his grandmother? But whichever supposition you make, the fact is unchanged. They died while the question still hung in the balance; and I suppose their bones were already white, before the winds and the waves and the humour of Indian chiefs and Spanish governors had decided whether they were to be unknown and useless martyrs or honoured heroes. Indeed, I believe this is the lesson: if it is for fame that men do brave actions, they are only silly fellows after all.

It is at best but a pettifogging, pickthank business to decompose actions into little personal motives, and explain heroism away. The Abstract Bagman will grow like an Admiral at heart, not by ungrateful carping, but in a heat of admiration. But there is another theory of the personal motive in these fine sayings and doings, which I believe to be true and wholesome. People usually do things, and suffer martyrdoms, because they have an inclination that way. The best artist is not the man who fixes his eye on posterity, but the one who loves the practice of his art. And instead of having a taste for being successful merchants and retiring at thirty, some people have a taste for high and what we call heroic forms of excitement. If the Admirals courted war like a mistress; if, as the drum beat to quarters, the sailors came gaily out of the forecastle, — it is because a fight is a period of multiplied and intense experiences, and, by Nelson's computation, worth "thousands" to any one who has a heart under his jacket. If the marines of the *Wager* gave three cheers and cried "God bless the king," it was because they liked to do things nobly for their own satisfaction. They were giving their lives, there was no help for that; and they made it a point of self-respect to give them handsomely. And there were never four happier marines in God's world than these four at that moment. If it was worth thousands to be at the Baltic, I wish a Benthamite arithmetician would calculate how much it was worth to be one of these four marines; or how much their story is worth to each of us who read it. And mark you, undemonstrative men would have spoiled the situation. The finest action is the better for a piece of purple. If the soldiers of the *Birkenhead* had not gone down in line, or these marines of the *Wager* had walked away simply into the island, like plenty of other brave fellows in the like circumstances, my Benthamite arithmetician would assign a far lower value to the two stories. We have to desire a grand air in our heroes; and such a knowledge of the human stage as shall make them put the dots on their own i's, and leave us in no suspense as to when they mean to be heroic. And hence, we should congratulate ourselves upon the fact that our Admirals were not only great-hearted but big-spoken.

The heroes themselves say, as often as not, that fame is their object; but I do not think that is much to the purpose. People generally say what they have been taught to say; that was the catchword they were given in youth to express the aims of their way of life; and men who are gaining great battles are not likely to take much trouble in reviewing their sentiments and the words in which they were told to express them. Almost every person, if you will believe himself, holds a quite different theory of life from the one on which he is patently acting. And the fact is, fame may be a forethought and an afterthought, but it is too abstract an idea to move people greatly in moments of swift and momentous decision. It is from something more immediate, some determination of blood to the head, some trick of the fancy, that the breach is stormed or the bold word spoken. I am sure a fellow shooting an ugly weir in a canoe has exactly as much thought about fame as most commanders going into battle; and yet the action, fall out how it will, is not one of those the muse delights to celebrate. Indeed it is difficult to see why the fellow does a thing so nameless and yet so formidable to look at, unless on the theory that he likes it. I suspect that is why; and I suspect it is at least ten per cent. of why Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone have debated so much in the House of Commons, and why Burnaby rode to Khiva the other day, and why the Admirals courted war like a mistress.

VIII

SOME PORTRAITS BY RAEBURN

Through the initiative of a prominent citizen, Edinburgh has been in possession, for some autumn weeks, of a gallery of paintings of singular merit and interest. They were exposed in the apartments of the Scottish Academy; and filled those who are accustomed to visit the annual spring exhibition with astonishment and a sense of incongruity. Instead of the too common purple sunsets, and pea-green fields, and distances executed in putty and hog's lard, he beheld, looking down upon him from the walls of room after room, a whole army of wise, grave, humorous, capable, or beautiful countenances, painted simply and strongly by a man of genuine instinct. It was a complete act of the Human Drawing-Room Comedy. Lords and ladies, soldiers and doctors, hanging judges and heretical divines, a whole generation of good society was resuscitated; and the Scotsman of to-day walked about among the Scotsman of two generations ago. The moment was well chosen, neither too late nor too early. The people who sat for these pictures are not yet ancestors, they are still relations. They are not yet altogether a part of the dusty past, but occupy a middle distance within cry of our affections. The little child who looks wonderingly on his grandfather's watch in the picture is now the veteran Sheriff *emeritus* of Perth. And I hear a story of a lady who returned the other day to Edinburgh, after an absence of sixty years: "I could see none of my old friends," she said, "until I went into the Raeburn Gallery, and found them all there."

It would be difficult to say whether the collection was more interesting on the score of unity or diversity. Where the portraits were all of the same period, almost all of the same race, and all from the same brush, there could not fail to be many points of similarity. And yet the similarity of the handling seems to throw into more vigorous relief those personal distinctions which Raeburn was so quick to seize. He was a born painter of portraits. He looked people shrewdly between the eyes, surprised their manners in their face, and had possessed himself of what was essential in their character before they had been many minutes in his studio. What he was so swift to perceive, he conveyed to the canvas almost in the moment of conception. He had never any difficulty, he said, about either hands or faces. About draperies or light or composition, he might see room for hesitation or afterthought. But a face or a hand was something plain and legible. There were no two ways about it, any more than about the person's name. And so each of his portraits is not only (in Doctor Johnson's phrase, aptly quoted on the catalogue) "a piece of history," but a piece of biography into the bargain. It is devoutly to be wished that all biography were equally amusing, and carried its own credentials equally upon its face. These portraits are racier than many anecdotes, and more complete than many a volume of sententious memoirs. You can see whether you get a stronger and clearer idea of Robertson the historian from Raeburn's palette or Dugald Stewart's woolly and evasive periods. And then the portraits are both signed and countersigned. For you have, first, the authority of the artist, whom you recognise as no mean critic of the looks and manners of men; and next you have the tacit acquiescence of the subject, who sits looking out upon you with inimitable innocence, and apparently under the impression that he is in a room by himself. For Raeburn could plunge at once through all the constraint and embarrassment of the sitter, and present the face, clear, open, and intelligent as at the most disengaged moments. This is best seen in portraits where the sitter is represented in some appropriate action: Neil Gow with his fiddle, Doctor Spens shooting an arrow, or Lord Bannatyne hearing a cause. Above all, from this point of view, the portrait of Lieutenant-Colonel Lyon is notable. A strange enough young man, pink, fat about the lower part of the face, with a lean forehead, a narrow nose and a fine nostril, sits with a drawing board upon his knees. He has just paused to render himself account of some difficulty, to disentangle some complication of line or compare neighbouring values. And there, without any perceptible wrinkling, you have rendered for you exactly the fixed look in the eyes, and the unconscious compression of the mouth, that befit and signify an effort of the kind. The whole pose, the whole expression, is absolutely direct and simple. You are ready to take your oath to it that Colonel Lyon had no idea he was sitting for his picture, and thought of nothing in the world besides his own occupation of the moment.

Although the collection did not embrace, I understand, nearly the whole of Raeburn's works, it was too large not to contain some that were indifferent, whether as works of art or as portraits. Certainly the standard was remarkably high, and was wonderfully maintained, but there were one or two pictures that might have been almost as well away — one or two that seemed wanting in salt, and some that you can only hope were not successful likenesses. Neither of the portraits of Sir Walter Scott, for instance, was very agreeable to look upon. You do not care to think that Scott looked quite so rustic and puffy. And where is that peaked forehead which according to all written accounts and many portraits, was the distinguishing characteristic of his face?

Again, in spite of his own satisfaction and in spite of Dr. John Brown, I cannot consider that Raeburn was very happy in hands. Without doubt, he could paint one if he had taken the trouble to study it; but it was by no means always that he gave himself the trouble. Looking round one of these rooms hung about with his portraits, you were struck with the array of expressive faces, as compared with what you may have seen in looking round a room full of living people. But it was not so with the hands. The portraits differed from each other in face perhaps ten times as much as they differed by the hand; whereas with living people the two go pretty much together; and where one is remarkable, the other will almost certainly not be commonplace.

One interesting portrait was that of Duncan of Camperdown. He stands in uniform beside a table, his feet slightly straddled with the balance of an old sailor, his hand poised upon a chart by the finger-tips. The mouth is pursed, the nostril spread and drawn up, the eyebrows very highly arched. The cheeks lie along the jaw in folds of iron, and have the redness that comes from much exposure to salt sea winds. From the whole figure, attitude and countenance, there breathes something precise and decisive, something alert, wiry, and strong. You can understand, from the look of him, that sense, not so much of humour, as of what is grimmest and driest in pleasantry, which inspired his address before the fight at Camperdown. He had just overtaken the Dutch fleet under Admiral de Winter. “Gentlemen,” says he, “you see a severe winter approaching; I have only to advise you to keep up a good fire.” Somewhat of this same spirit of adamantine drollery must have supported him in the days of the mutiny at the Nore, when he lay off the Texel with his own flagship, the *Venerable*, and only one other vessel, and kept up active signals as though he had a powerful fleet in the offing, to intimidate the Dutch.

Another portrait which irresistibly attracted the eye was the half-length of Robert M’Queen, of Braxfield, Lord Justice-Clerk. If I know gusto in painting when I see it, this canvas was painted with rare enjoyment. The tart, rosy, humorous look of the man, his nose like a cudgel, his face resting squarely on the jowl, has been caught and perpetuated with something that looks like brotherly love. A peculiarly subtle expression haunts the lower part, sensual and incredulous, like that of a man tasting good Bordeaux with half a fancy it has been somewhat too long uncorked. From under the pendulous eye-lids of old age the eyes look out with a half-youthful half-frosty twinkle. Hands, with no pretence to distinction, are folded on the judge’s stomach. So sympathetically is the character conceived by the portrait-painter, that it is hardly possible to avoid some movement of sympathy on the part of the spectator. And sympathy is a thing to be encouraged, apart from humane considerations, because it supplies us with the materials for wisdom. It is probably more instructive to entertain a sneaking kindness for any unpopular person, and among the rest, for Lord Braxfield, than to give way to perfect raptures of moral indignation against his abstract vices. He was the last judge on the Scots bench to employ the pure Scots idiom. His opinions, thus given in Doric, and conceived in a lively, rugged, conversational style, were full of point and authority. Out of the bar, or off the bench, he was a convivial man, a lover of wine, and one who "shone perculiarly" at tavern meetings. He has left behind him an unrivalled reputation for rough and cruel speech; and to this day his name smacks of the gallows. It was he who presided at the trials of Muir and Skirving in 1793 and 1794; and his appearance on these occasions was scarcely cut to the pattern of to-day. His summing up on Muir began thus — the reader must supply for himself "the growling blacksmith's voice" and the broad Scots accent: "Now this is the question for consideration — Is the panel guilty of sedition, or is he not? Now, before this can be answered, two things must be attended to that require no proof: *First*, that the British constitution is the best that ever was since the creation of the world, and it is not possible to make it better." It's a pretty fair start, is it not, for a political trial? A little later, he has occasion to refer to the relations of Muir with "those wretches," the French. "I never liked the French all my days," said his Lordship, "but now I hate them." And yet a little further on: "A government in any country should be like a corporation; and in this country it is made up of the landed interest, which alone has a right to be represented. As for the rabble who have nothing but personal property, what hold has the nation of them? They may pack up their property on their backs, and leave the country in the twinkling of an eye." After having made profession of sentiments so cynically anti-popular as these, when the trials were at an end, which was generally about midnight, Braxfield would walk home to his house in George Square with no better escort than an easy conscience. I think I see him getting his cloak about his shoulders, and, with perhaps a lantern in one hand, steering his way along the streets in the mirk January night. It might have been that very day that Skirving had defied him in these words: "It is altogether unavailing for your lordship to menace me; for I have long learned to fear not the face of man"; and I can fancy, as Braxfield reflected on the number of what he called *Grumbletonians* in Edinburgh, and of how many of them must bear special malice against so upright and inflexible a judge, nay, and might at that very moment be lurking in the mouth of a dark close with hostile intent — I can fancy that he indulged in a sour smile, as he reflected that he also was not especially afraid of men's faces or men's fists, and had hitherto found no occasion to embody this insensibility in heroic words. For if he was an inhumane old gentleman (and I am afraid it is a fact that he was inhumane), he was also perfectly intrepid. You may look into the queer face of that portrait for as long as you will, but you will not see any hole or corner for timidity to enter in.

Indeed, there would be no end to this paper if I were even to name half of the portraits that were remarkable for their execution or interesting by association. There was one picture of Mr. Wardrop, of Torbane Hill, which you might palm off upon most laymen as a Rembrandt; and close by, you saw the white head of John Clerk, of Eldin, that country gentleman who, playing with pieces of cork on his own dining-table, invented modern naval warfare. There was that portrait of Neil Gow, to sit for which the old fiddler walked daily through the streets of Edinburgh arm in arm with the Duke of Athole. There was good Harry Erskine, with his satirical nose and upper lip, and his mouth just open for a witticism to pop out; Hutton the geologist, in quakerish raiment, and looking altogether trim and narrow, and as if he cared more about fossils than young ladies; full-blown John Robison, in hyperbolical red dressing-gown, and every inch of him a fine old man of the world; Constable the publisher, upright beside a table, and bearing a corporation with commercial dignity; Lord Bannatyne hearing a cause, if ever anybody heard a cause since the world began; Lord Newton just awakened from clandestine slumber on the bench; and the second President Dundas, with every feature so fat that he reminds you, in his wig, of some droll old court officer in an illustrated nursery story-book, and yet all these fat features instinct with meaning, the fat lips curved and compressed, the nose combining somehow the dignity of a beak with the good-nature of a bottle, and the very double chin with an air of intelligence and insight. And all these portraits are so pat and telling, and look at you so spiritedly from the walls, that, compared with the sort of living people one sees about the streets, they are as bright new sovereigns to fishy and obliterated sixpences. Some disparaging thoughts upon our own generation could hardly fail to present themselves; but it is perhaps only the *sacer vates* who is wanting; and we also, painted by such a man as Carolus Duran, may look in holiday immortality upon our children and grandchildren.

Raeburn's young women, to be frank, are by no means of the same order of merit. No one, of course, could be insensible to the presence of Miss Janet Suttie or Mrs. Campbell of Possil. When things are as pretty as that, criticism is out of season. But, on the whole, it is only with women of a certain age that he can be said to have succeeded, in at all the same sense as we say he succeeded with men. The younger women do not seem to be made of good flesh and blood. They are not painted in rich and unctuous touches. They are dry and diaphanous. And although young ladies in Great Britain are all that can be desired of them, I would fain hope they are not quite so much of that as Raeburn would have us believe. In all these pretty faces you miss character, you miss fire, you miss that spice of the devil which is worth all the prettiness in the world; and, what is worst of all, you miss sex. His young ladies are not womanly to nearly the same degree as his men are masculine; they are so in a negative sense; in short, they are the typical young ladies of the male novelist.

To say truth, either Raeburn was timid with young and pretty sitters; or he had stupefied himself with sentimentalities; or else (and here is about the truth of it) Raeburn and the rest of us labour under an obstinate blindness in one direction, and know very little more about women after all these centuries than Adam when he first saw Eve. This is all the more likely, because we are by no means so unintelligent in the matter of old women. There are some capital old women, it seems to me, in books written by men. And Raeburn has some, such as Mrs. Colin Campbell, of Park, or the anonymous “Old lady with a large cap,” which are done in the same frank, perspicacious spirit as the very best of his men. He could look into their eyes without trouble; and he was not withheld, by any bashful sentimentalism, from recognising what he saw there and unsparingly putting it down upon the canvas. But where people cannot meet without some confusion and a good deal of involuntary humbug, and are occupied, for as long as they are together, with a very different vein of thought, there cannot be much room for intelligent study nor much result in the shape of genuine comprehension. Even women, who understand men so well for practical purposes, do not know them well enough for the purposes of art. Take even the very best of their male creations, take Tito Melema, for instance, and you will find he has an equivocal air, and every now and again remembers he has a comb at the back of his head. Of course, no woman will believe this, and many men will be so very polite as to humour their incredulity.

IX

CHILD’S PLAY

The regret we have for our childhood is not wholly justifiable: so much a man may lay down without fear of public ribaldry; for although we shake our heads over the change, we are not unconscious of the manifold advantages of our new state. What we lose in generous impulse we more than gain in the habit of generously watching others; and the capacity to enjoy Shakespeare may balance a lost aptitude for playing at soldiers. Terror is gone out of our lives, moreover; we no longer see the devil in the bed-curtains nor lie awake to listen to the wind. We go to school no more; and if we have only exchanged one drudgery for another (which is by no means sure), we are set free for ever from the daily fear of chastisement. And yet a great change has overtaken us; and although we do not enjoy ourselves less, at least we take our pleasure differently. We need pickles nowadays to make Wednesday's cold mutton please our Friday's appetite; and I can remember the time when to call it red venison, and tell myself a hunter's story, would have made it more palatable than the best of sauces. To the grown person, cold mutton is cold mutton all the world over; not all the mythology ever invented by man will make it better or worse to him; the broad fact, the clamant reality, of the mutton carries away before it such seductive figments. But for the child it is still possible to weave an enchantment over eatables; and if he has but read of a dish in a storybook, it will be heavenly manna to him for a week.

If a grown man does not like eating and drinking and exercise, if he is not something positive in his tastes, it means he has a feeble body and should have some medicine; but children may be pure spirits, if they will, and take their enjoyment in a world of moonshine. Sensation does not count for so much in our first years as afterwards; something of the swaddling numbness of infancy clings about us; we see and touch and hear through a sort of golden mist. Children, for instance, are able enough to see, but they have no great faculty for looking; they do not use their eyes for the pleasure of using them, but for by-ends of their own; and the things I call to mind seeing most vividly were not beautiful in themselves, but merely interesting or enviable to me as I thought they might be turned to practical account in play. Nor is the sense of touch so clean and poignant in children as it is in a man. If you will turn over your old memories, I think the sensations of this sort you remember will be somewhat vague, and come to not much more than a blunt, general sense of heat on summer days, or a blunt, general sense of well-being in bed. And here, of course, you will understand pleasurable sensations; for overmastering pain — the most deadly and tragical element in life, and the true commander of man's soul and body — alas! pain has its own way with all of us; it breaks in, a rude visitant, upon the fairy garden where the child wanders in a dream, no less surely than it rules upon the field of battle, or sends the immortal war-god whimpering to his father; and innocence, no more than philosophy, can protect us from this sting. As for taste, when we bear in mind the excesses of unmitigated sugar which delight a youthful palate, “it is surely no very cynical asperity” to think taste a character of the maturer growth. Smell and hearing are perhaps more developed; I remember many scents, many voices, and a great deal of spring singing in the woods. But hearing is capable of vast improvement as a means of pleasure; and there is all the world between gaping wonderment at the jargon of birds, and the emotion with which a man listens to articulate music.

At the same time, and step by step with this increase in the definition and intensity of what we feel which accompanies our growing age, another change takes place in the sphere of intellect, by which all things are transformed and seen through theories and associations as through coloured windows. We make to ourselves day by day, out of history, and gossip, and economical speculations, and God knows what, a medium in which we walk and through which we look abroad. We study shop windows with other eyes than in our childhood, never to wonder, not always to admire, but to make and modify our little incongruous theories about life. It is no longer the uniform of a soldier that arrests our attention; but perhaps the flowing carriage of a woman, or perhaps a countenance that has been vividly stamped with passion and carries an adventurous story written in its lines. The pleasure of surprise is passed away; sugar loaves and water-carts seem mighty tame to encounter; and we walk the streets to make romances and to sociologise. Nor must we deny that a good many of us walk them solely for the purposes of transit or in the interest of a livelier digestion. These, indeed, may look back with mingled thoughts upon their childhood, but the rest are in a better case; they know more than when they were children, they understand better, their desires and sympathies answer more nimbly to the provocation of the senses, and their minds are brimming with interest as they go about the world.

According to my contention, this is a flight to which children cannot rise. They are wheeled in perambulators or dragged about by nurses in a pleasing stupor. A vague, faint, abiding wonderment possesses them. Here and there some specially remarkable circumstance, such as a water-cart or a guardsman, fairly penetrates into the seat of thought, and calls them, for half a moment, out of themselves; and you may see them, still towed forward sideways by the inexorable nurse as by a sort of destiny, but still staring at the bright object in their wake. It may be some minutes before another such moving spectacle reawakens them to the world in which they dwell. For other children, they almost invariably show some intelligent sympathy. “There is a fine fellow making mud pies," they seem to say; "that I can understand, there is some sense in mud pies." But the doings of their elders, unless where they are speakingly picturesque or recommend themselves by the quality of being easily imitable, they let them go over their heads (as we say) without the least regard. If it were not for this perpetual imitation, we should be tempted to fancy they despised us outright, or only considered us in the light of creatures brutally strong and brutally silly; among whom they condescended to dwell in obedience like a philosopher at a barbarous court. At times, indeed, they display an arrogance of disregard that is truly staggering. Once, when I was groaning aloud with physical pain, a young gentleman came into the room and nonchalantly inquired if I had seen his bow and arrow. He made no account of my groans, which he accepted, as he had to accept so much else, as a piece of the inexplicable conduct of his elders; and like a wise young gentleman, he would waste no wonder on the subject. Those elders, who care so little for rational enjoyment, and are even the enemies of rational enjoyment for others, he had accepted without understanding and without complaint, as the rest of us accept the scheme of the universe.

We grown people can tell ourselves a story, give and take strokes until the bucklers ring, ride far and fast, marry, fall, and die; all the while sitting quietly by the fire or lying prone in bed. This is exactly what a child cannot do, or does not do, at least, when he can find anything else. He works all with lay figures and stage properties. When his story comes to the fighting, he must rise, get something by way of a sword and have a set-to with a piece of furniture, until he is out of breath. When he comes to ride with the king's pardon, he must bestride a chair, which he will so hurry and belabour and on which he will so furiously demean himself, that the messenger will arrive, if not bloody with spurring, at least fiery red with haste. If his romance involves an accident upon a cliff, he must clamber in person about the chest of drawers and fall bodily upon the carpet, before his imagination is satisfied. Lead soldiers, dolls, all toys, in short, are in the same category and answer the same end. Nothing can stagger a child's faith; he accepts the clumsiest substitutes and can swallow the most staring incongruities. The chair he has just been besieging as a castle, or valiantly cutting to the ground as a dragon, is taken away for the accommodation of a morning visitor, and he is nothing abashed; he can skirmish by the hour with a stationary coal-scuttle; in the midst of the enchanted pleasance, he can see, without sensible shock, the gardener soberly digging potatoes for the day's dinner. He can make abstraction of whatever does not fit into his fable; and he puts his eyes into his pocket, just as we hold our noses in an unsavoury lane. And so it is, that although the ways of children cross with those of their elders in a hundred places daily, they never go in the same direction nor so much as lie in the same element. So may the telegraph wires intersect the line of the highroad, or so might a landscape painter and a bagman visit the same country, and yet move in different worlds.

People, struck with these spectacles, cry aloud about the power of imagination in the young. Indeed, there may be two words to that. It is, in some ways, but a pedestrian fancy that the child exhibits. It is the grown people who make the nursery stories; all the children do is jealously to preserve the text. One out of a dozen reasons why "Robinson Crusoe" should be so popular with youth, is that it hits their level in this matter to a nicety; Crusoe was always at makeshifts, and had, in so many words, to *play* at a great variety of professions; and then the book is all about tools, and there is nothing that delights a child so much. Hammers and saws belong to a province of life that positively calls for imitation. The juvenile lyrical drama, surely of the most ancient Thespian model, wherein the trades of mankind are successively simulated to the running burthen "On a cold and frosty morning," gives a good instance of the artistic taste in children. And this need for overt action and lay figures testifies to a defect in the child's imagination which prevents him from carrying out his novels in the privacy of his own heart. He does not yet know enough of the world and men. His experience is incomplete. That stage-wardrobe and scene-room that we call the memory is so ill-provided, that he can overtake few combinations and body out few stories, to his own content, without some external aid. He is at the experimental stage; he is not sure how one would feel in certain circumstances; to make sure, he must come as near trying it as his means permit. And so here is young heroism with a wooden sword, and mothers practise their kind vocation over a bit of jointed stick. It may be laughable enough just now; but it is these same people and these same thoughts, that not long hence, when they are on the theatre of life, will make you weep and tremble. For children think very much the same thoughts and dream the same dreams as bearded men and marriageable women. No one is more romantic. Fame and honour, the love of young men and the love of mothers, the business man's pleasure in method, all these and others they anticipate and rehearse in their play hours. Upon us, who are further advanced and fairly dealing with the threads of destiny, they only glance from time to time to glean a hint for their own mimetic reproduction. Two children playing at soldiers are far more interesting to each other than one of the scarlet beings whom both are busy imitating. This is perhaps the greatest oddity of all. "Art for art" is their motto; and the doings of grown folk are only interesting as the raw material for play. Not Théophile Gautier, not

Flaubert, can look more callously upon life, or rate the reproduction more highly over the reality; and they will parody an execution, a deathbed, or the funeral of the young man of Nain, with all the cheerfulness in the world.

The true parallel for play is not to be found, of course, in conscious art, which, though it be derived from play, is itself an abstract, impersonal thing, and depends largely upon philosophical interests beyond the scope of childhood. It is when we make castles in the air and personate the leading character in our own romances, that we return to the spirit of our first years. Only, there are several reasons why the spirit is no longer so agreeable to indulge. Nowadays, when we admit this personal element into our divagations we are apt to stir up uncomfortable and sorrowful memories, and remind ourselves sharply of old wounds. Our day-dreams can no longer lie all in the air like a story in the “Arabian Nights”; they read to us rather like the history of a period in which we ourselves had taken part, where we come across many unfortunate passages and find our own conduct smartly reprimanded. And then the child, mind you, acts his parts. He does not merely repeat them to himself; he leaps, he runs, and sets the blood agog over all his body. And so his play breathes him; and he no sooner assumes a passion than he gives it vent. Alas! when we betake ourselves to our intellectual form of play, sitting quietly by the fire or lying prone in bed, we rouse many hot feelings for which we can find no outlet. Substitutes are not acceptable to the mature mind, which desires the thing itself; and even to rehearse a triumphant dialogue with one’s enemy, although it is perhaps the most satisfactory piece of play still left within our reach, is not entirely satisfying, and is even apt to lead to a visit and an interview which may be the reverse of triumphant after all.

In the child’s world of dim sensation, play is all in all. “Making believe” is the gist of his whole life, and he cannot so much as take a walk except in character. I could not learn my alphabet without some suitable *mise-en-scène*, and had to act a business man in an office before I could sit down to my book. Will you kindly question your memory, and find out how much you did, work or pleasure, in good faith and soberness, and for how much you had to cheat yourself with some invention? I remember, as though it were yesterday, the expansion of spirit, the dignity and self-reliance, that came with a pair of mustachios in burnt cork, even when there was none to see. Children are even content to forego what we call the realities, and prefer the shadow to the substance. When they might be speaking intelligibly together, they chatter senseless gibberish by the hour, and are quite happy because they are making believe to speak French. I have said already how even the imperious appetite of hunger suffers itself to be gulled and led by the nose with the fag end of an old song. And it goes deeper than this: when children are together even a meal is felt as an interruption in the business of life; and they must find some imaginative sanction, and tell themselves some sort of story, to account for, to colour, to render entertaining, the simple processes of eating and drinking. What wonderful fancies I have heard evolved out of the pattern upon tea-cups! — from which there followed a code of rules and a whole world of excitement, until tea-drinking began to take rank as a game. When my cousin and I took our porridge of a morning, we had a device to enliven the course of the meal. He ate his with sugar, and explained it to be a country continually buried under snow. I took mine with milk, and explained it to be a country suffering gradual inundation. You can imagine us exchanging bulletins; how here was an island still unsubmerged, here a valley not yet covered with snow; what inventions were made; how his population lived in cabins on perches and travelled on stilts, and how mine was always in boats; how the interest grew furious, as the last corner of safe ground was cut off on all sides and grew smaller every moment; and how, in fine, the food was of altogether secondary importance, and might even have been nauseous, so long as we seasoned it with these dreams. But perhaps the most exciting moments I ever had over a meal were in the case of calves'-feet jelly. It was hardly possible not to believe — and you may be sure, so far from trying, I did all I could to favour the illusion — that some part of it was hollow, and that sooner or later my spoon would lay open the secret tabernacle of the golden rock. There, might some miniature *Red Beard* await his hour; there, might one find the treasures of the *Forty Thieves*, and bewildered Cassim beating about the walls. And so I quarried on slowly, with bated breath, savouring the interest. Believe me, I had little palate left for the jelly; and though I preferred the taste when I took cream with it, I used often to go without, because the cream dimmed the transparent fractures.

Even with games, this spirit is authoritative with right-minded children. It is thus that hide-and-seek has so pre-eminent a sovereignty, for it is the wellspring of romance, and the actions and the excitement to which it gives rise lend themselves to almost any sort of fable. And thus cricket, which is a mere matter of dexterity, palpably about nothing and for no end, often fails to satisfy infantile craving. It is a game, if you like, but not a game of play. You cannot tell yourself a story about cricket; and the activity it calls forth can be justified on no rational theory. Even football, although it admirably simulates the tug and the ebb and flow of battle, has presented difficulties to the mind of young sticklers after verisimilitude; and I knew at least one little boy who was mightily exercised about the presence of the ball, and had to spirit himself up, whenever he came to play, with an elaborate story of enchantment, and take the missile as a sort of talisman bandied about in conflict between two Arabian nations.

To think of such a frame of mind is to become disquieted about the bringing up of children. Surely they dwell in a mythological epoch, and are not the contemporaries of their parents. What can they think of them? what can they make of these bearded or petticoated giants who look down upon their games? who move upon a cloudy Olympus, following unknown designs apart from rational enjoyment? who profess the tenderest solicitude for children, and yet every now and again reach down out of their altitude and terribly vindicate the prerogatives of age? Off goes the child, corporally smarting, but morally rebellious. Were there ever such unthinkable deities as parents? I would give a great deal to know what, in nine cases out of ten, is the child's unvarnished feeling. A sense of past cajolery; a sense of personal attraction, at best very feeble; above all, I should imagine, a sense of terror for the untried residue of mankind; go to make up the attraction that he feels. No wonder, poor little heart, with such a weltering world in front of him, if he clings to the hand he knows! The dread irrationality of the whole affair, as it seems to children, is a thing we are all too ready to forget. "Oh, why," I remember passionately wondering, "why can we not all be happy and devote ourselves to play?" And when children do philosophise, I believe it is usually to very much the same purpose.

One thing, at least, comes very clearly out of these considerations: that whatever we are to expect at the hands of children, it should not be any peddling exactitude about matters of fact. They walk in a vain show, and among mists and rainbows; they are passionate after dreams and unconcerned about realities; speech is a difficult art not wholly learned; and there is nothing in their own tastes or purposes to teach them what we mean by abstract truthfulness. When a bad writer is inexact, even if he can look back on half a century of years, we charge him with incompetence and not with dishonesty. And why not extend the same allowance to imperfect speakers? Let a stockbroker be dead stupid about poetry, or a poet inexact in the details of business, and we excuse them heartily from blame. But show us a miserable, unbreeched, human entity, whose whole profession it is to take a tub for a fortified town and a shaving-brush for the deadly stiletto, and who passes three-fourths of his time in a dream and the rest in open self-deception, and we expect him to be as nice upon a matter of fact as a scientific expert bearing evidence. Upon my heart, I think it less than decent. You do not consider how little the child sees, or how swift he is to weave what he has seen into bewildering fiction;

and that he cares no more for what you call truth, than you for a gingerbread dragoon.

I am reminded, as I write, that the child is very inquiring as to the precise truth of stories. But indeed this is a very different matter, and one bound up with the subject of play, and the precise amount of playfulness, or playability, to be looked for in the world. Many such burning questions must arise in the course of nursery education. Among the fauna of this planet, which already embraces the pretty soldier and the terrifying Irish beggar-man, is, or is not, the child to expect a Bluebeard or a Cormoran? Is he, or is he not, to look out for magicians, kindly and potent? May he, or may he not, reasonably hope to be cast away upon a desert island, or turned to such diminutive proportions that he can live on equal terms with his lead soldiery, and go a cruise in his own toy-schooner? Surely all these are practical questions to a neophyte entering upon life with a view to play. Precision upon such a point, the child can understand. But if you merely ask him of his past behaviour, as to who threw such a stone, for instance, or struck such and such a match; or whether he had looked into a parcel or gone by a forbidden path, — why, he can see no moment in the inquiry, and it is ten to one he has already half forgotten and half bemused himself with subsequent imaginings.

It would be easy to leave them in their native cloudland, where they figure so prettily — pretty like flowers and innocent like dogs. They will come out of their gardens soon enough, and have to go into offices and the witness-box. Spare them yet a while, O conscientious parent! Let them doze among their playthings yet a little! for who knows what a rough, warfaring existence lies before them in the future?

X

WALKING TOURS

It must not be imagined that a walking tour, as some would have us fancy, is merely a better or worse way of seeing the country. There are many ways of seeing landscape quite as good; and none more vivid, in spite of canting dilettantes, than from a railway train. But landscape on a walking tour is quite accessory. He who is indeed of the brotherhood does not voyage in quest of the picturesque, but of certain jolly humours — of the hope and spirit with which the march begins at morning, and the peace and spiritual repletion of the evening's rest. He cannot tell whether he puts his knapsack on, or takes it off, with more delight. The excitement of the departure puts him in key for that of the arrival. Whatever he does is not only a reward in itself, but will be further rewarded in the sequel; and so pleasure leads on to pleasure in an endless chain. It is this that so few can understand; they will either be always lounging or always at five miles an hour; they do not play off the one against the other, prepare all day for the evening, and all evening for the next day. And, above all, it is here that your over-walker fails of comprehension. His heart rises against those who drink their curaçoa in liqueur-glasses, when he himself can swill it in a brown John. He will not believe that the flavour is more delicate in the smaller dose. He will not believe that to walk this unconscionable distance is merely to stupefy and brutalise himself, and come to his inn, at night, with a sort of frost on his five wits, and a starless night of darkness in his spirit. Not for him the mild luminous evening of the temperate walker! He has nothing left of man but a physical need for bedtime and a double nightcap; and even his pipe, if he be a smoker, will be savourless and disenchanted. It is the fate of such an one to take twice as much trouble as is needed to obtain happiness, and miss the happiness in the end; he is the man of the proverb, in short, who goes farther and fares worse.

Now, to be properly enjoyed, a walking tour should be gone upon alone. If you go in a company, or even in pairs, it is no longer a walking tour in anything but name; it is something else, and more in the nature of a picnic. A walking tour should be gone upon alone, because freedom is of the essence; because you should be able to stop and go on, and follow this way or that, as the freak takes you; and because you must have your own pace, and neither trot alongside a champion walker, nor mince in time with a girl. And then you must be open to all impressions, and let your thoughts take colour from what you see. You should be as a pipe for any wind to play upon. “I cannot see the wit,” says Hazlitt, “of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate like the country,” — which is the gist of all that can be said upon the matter. There should be no cackle of voices at your elbow, to jar on the meditative silence of the morning. And so long as a man is reasoning he cannot surrender himself to that fine intoxication that comes of much motion in the open air, that begins in a sort of a dazzle and sluggishness of the brain, and ends in a peace that passes comprehension.

During the first day or so of any tour there are moments of bitterness, when the traveller feels more than coldly towards his knapsack, when he is half in a mind to throw it bodily over the hedge, and, like Christian on a similar occasion, “give three leaps and go on singing.” And yet it soon acquires a property of easiness. It becomes magnetic; the spirit of the journey enters into it. And no sooner have you passed the straps over your shoulder than the lees of sleep are cleared from you, you pull yourself together with a shake, and fall at once into your stride. And surely, of all possible moods, this, in which a man takes the road, is the best. Of course, if he *will* keep thinking of his anxieties, if he *will* open the merchant Abudah’s chest and walk arm-in-arm with the hag — why, wherever he is, and whether he walk fast or slow, the chances are that he will not be happy. And so much the more shame to himself! There are perhaps thirty men setting forth at that same hour, and I would lay a large wager there is not another dull face among the thirty. It would be a fine thing to follow, in a coat of darkness, one after another of these wayfarers, some summer morning, for the first few miles upon the road. This one, who walks fast, with a keen look in his eyes, is all concentrated in his own mind; he is up at his loom, weaving and weaving, to set the landscape to words. This one peers about, as he goes, among the grasses; he waits by the canal to watch the dragon-flies; he leans on the gate of the pasture, and cannot look enough upon the complacent kine. And here comes another, talking, laughing, and gesticulating to himself. His face changes from time to time, as indignation flashes from his eyes or anger clouds his forehead. He is composing articles, delivering orations, and conducting the most impassioned interviews, by the way. A little farther on, and it is as like as not he will begin to sing. And well for him, supposing him to be no great master in that art, if he stumble across no stolid peasant at a corner; for on such an occasion, I scarcely know which is the more troubled, or whether it is worse to suffer the confusion of your troubadour, or the unfeigned alarm of your clown. A sedentary population, accustomed, besides, to the strange mechanical bearing of the common tramp, can in no wise explain to itself the gaiety of these passers-by. I knew one man who was arrested as a runaway lunatic, because, although a full-grown person with a red beard, he skipped as he went like a child. And you would be astonished if I were to tell you all the grave and learned heads who have confessed to me that, when on walking tours, they sang — and sang very ill — and had a pair of red ears when, as described above, the inauspicious peasant plumped into their arms from round a corner. And here, lest you should think I am exaggerating, is Hazlitt's own confession, from his essay "On Going a Journey," which is so good that there should be a tax levied on all who have not read it: —

"Give me the clear blue sky over my head," says he, "and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner — and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy."

Bravo! After that adventure of my friend with the policeman, you would not have cared, would you, to publish that in the first person? But we have no bravery nowadays, and, even in books, must all pretend to be as dull and foolish as our neighbours. It was not so with Hazlitt. And notice how learned he is (as, indeed, throughout the essay) in the theory of walking tours. He is none of your athletic men in purple stockings, who walk their fifty miles a day: three hours' march is his ideal. And then he must have a winding road, the epicure.

Yet there is one thing I object to in these words of his, one thing in the great master's practice that seems to me not wholly wise. I do not approve of that leaping and running. Both of these hurry the respiration; they both shake up the brain out of its glorious open-air confusion; and they both break the pace. Uneven walking is not so agreeable to the body, and it distracts and irritates the mind. Whereas, when once you have fallen into an equable stride, it requires no conscious thought from you to keep it up, and yet it prevents you from thinking earnestly of anything else. Like knitting, like the work of a copying clerk, it gradually neutralises and sets to sleep the serious activity of the mind. We can think of this or that, lightly and laughingly, as a child thinks, or as we think in a morning doze; we can make puns or puzzle out acrostics, and trifle in a thousand ways with words and rhymes; but when it comes to honest work, when we come to gather ourselves together for an effort, we may sound the trumpet as loud and long as we please; the great barons of the mind will not rally to the standard, but sit, each one, at home, warming his hands over his own fire, and brooding on his own private thought!

In the course of a day's walk, you see, there is much variance in the mood. From the exhilaration of the start, to the happy phlegm of the arrival, the change is certainly great. As the day goes on, the traveller moves from the one extreme end towards the other. He becomes more and more incorporated with the material landscape, and the open-air drunkenness grows upon him with great strides, until he posts along the road, and sees everything about him, as in a cheerful dream. The first is certainly brighter, but the second stage is the more peaceful. A man does not make so many articles towards the end, nor does he laugh aloud; but the purely animal pleasures, the sense of physical wellbeing, the delight of every inhalation, of every time the muscles tighten down the thigh, console him for the absence of the others, and bring him to his destination still content.

Nor must I forget to say a word on bivouacs. You come to a milestone on a hill, or some place where deep ways meet under trees; and off goes the knapsack, and down you sit to smoke a pipe in the shade. You sink into yourself, and the birds come round and look at you; and your smoke dissipates upon the afternoon under the blue dome of heaven; and the sun lies warm upon your feet, and the cool air visits your neck and turns aside your open shirt. If you are not happy, you must have an evil conscience. You may dally as long as you like by the roadside. It is almost as if the millennium were arrived, when we shall throw our clocks and watches over the housetop, and remember time and seasons no more. Not to keep hours for a lifetime is, I was going to say, to live for ever. You have no idea, unless you have tried it, how endlessly long is a summer's day that you measure out only by hunger, and bring to an end only when you are drowsy. I know a village where there are hardly any clocks, where no one knows more of the days of the week than by a sort of instinct for the fête on Sundays, and where only one person can tell you the day of the month, and she is generally wrong; and if people were aware how slow Time journeyed in that village, and what armfuls of spare hours he gives, over and above the bargain, to its wise inhabitants, I believe there would be a stampede out of London, Liverpool, Paris, and a variety of large towns, where the clocks lose their heads, and shake the hours out each one faster than the other, as though they were all in a wager. And all these foolish pilgrims would each bring his own misery along with him, in a watch-pocket! It is to be noticed there were no clocks and watches in the much-vaunted days before the flood. It follows, of course, there were no appointments, and punctuality was not yet thought upon. "Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure," says Milton, "he has yet one jewel left; ye cannot deprive him of his covetousness." And so I would say of a modern man of business, you may do what you will for him, put him in Eden, give him the elixir of life — he has still a flaw at heart, he still has his business habits. Now, there is no time when business habits are more mitigated than on a walking tour. And so during these halts, as I say, you will feel almost free.

But it is at night, and after dinner, that the best hour comes. There are no such pipes to be smoked as those that follow a good day's march; the flavour of the tobacco is a thing to be remembered, it is so dry and aromatic, so full and so fine. If you wind up the evening with grog, you will own there was never such grog; at every sip a jocund tranquillity spreads about your limbs, and sits easily in your heart. If you read a book — and you will never do so save by fits and starts — you find the language strangely racy and harmonious; words take a new meaning; single sentences possess the ear for half-an-hour together; and the writer endears himself to you, at every page, by the nicest coincidence of sentiment. It seems as if it were a book you had written yourself in a dream. To all we have read on such occasions we look back with special favour. "It was on the 10th of April, 1798," says Hazlitt, with amorous precision, "that I sat down to a volume of the new 'Héloïse,' at the Inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken." I should wish to quote more, for though we are mighty fine fellows nowadays, we cannot write like Hazlitt. And, talking of that, a volume of Hazlitt's essays would be a capital pocket-book on such a journey; so would a volume of Heine's songs; and for "Tristram Shandy" I can pledge a fair experience.

If the evening be fine and warm, there is nothing better in life than to lounge before the inn door in the sunset, or lean over the parapet of the bridge, to watch the weeds and the quick fishes. It is then, if ever, that you taste Joviality to the full significance of that audacious word. Your muscles are so agreeably slack, you feel so clean and so strong and so idle, that whether you move or sit still, whatever you do is done with pride and a kingly sort of pleasure. You fall in talk with any one, wise or foolish, drunk or sober. And it seems as if a hot walk purged you, more than of anything else, of all narrowness and pride, and left curiosity to play its part freely, as in a child or a man of science. You lay aside all your own hobbies, to watch provincial humours develop themselves before you, now as a laughable farce, and now grave and beautiful like an old tale.

Or perhaps you are left to your own company for the night, and surly weather imprisons you by the fire. You may remember how Burns, numbering past pleasures, dwells upon the hours when he has been "happy thinking." It is a phrase that may well perplex a poor modern, girt about on every side by clocks and chimes, and haunted, even at night, by flaming dial-plates. For we are all so busy, and have so many far-off projects to realise, and castles in the fire to turn into solid habitable mansions on a gravel soil, that we can find no time for pleasure trips into the Land of Thought and among the Hills of Vanity. Changed times, indeed, when we must sit all night, beside the fire, with folded hands; and a changed world for most of us, when we find we can pass the hours without discontent, and be happy thinking. We are in such haste to be doing, to be writing, to be gathering gear, to make our voice audible a moment in the derisive silence of eternity, that we forget that one thing, of which these are but the parts — namely, to live. We fall in love, we drink hard, we run to and fro upon the earth like frightened sheep. And now you are to ask yourself if, when all is done, you would not have been better to sit by the fire at home, and be happy thinking. To sit still and contemplate, — to remember the faces of women without desire, to be pleased by the great deeds of men without envy, to be everything and everywhere in sympathy, and yet content to remain where and what you are — is not this to know both wisdom and virtue, and to dwell with happiness? After all, it is not they who carry flags, but they who look upon it from a private chamber, who have the fun of the procession. And once you are at that, you are in the very humour of all social heresy. It is no time for shuffling, or for big, empty words. If you ask yourself what you mean by fame, riches, or learning, the answer is far to seek; and you go back into that kingdom of light imaginations, which seem so vain in the eyes of Philistines perspiring after wealth, and so momentous to those who are stricken with the disproportions of the world, and, in the face of the gigantic stars, cannot stop to split differences between two degrees of the infinitesimally small, such as a tobacco-pipe or the Roman Empire, a million of money or a fiddlestick's end.

You lean from the window, your last pipe reeking whitely into the darkness, your body full of delicious pains, your mind enthroned in the seventh circle of content; when suddenly the mood changes, the weather-cock goes about, and you ask yourself one question more: whether, for the interval, you have been the wisest philosopher or the most egregious of donkeys? Human experience is not yet able to reply; but at least you have had a fine moment, and looked down upon all the kingdoms of the earth. And whether it was wise or foolish, to-morrow's travel will carry you, body and mind, into some different parish of the infinite.

XI

PAN'S PIPES

The world in which we live has been variously said and sung by the most ingenious poets and philosophers: these reducing it to formulæ and chemical ingredients, those striking the lyre in high-sounding measures for the handiwork of God. What experience supplies is of a mingled tissue, and the choosing mind has much to regret before it can get together the materials of a theory. Dew and thunder, destroying Attila and the Spring lambkins, belong to an order of contrasts which no repetition can assimilate. There is an uncouth, outlandish strain throughout the web of the world, as from a vexatious planet in the house of life. Things are not congruous and wear strange disguises: the consummate flower is fostered out of dung, and after nourishing itself awhile with heaven's delicate distillations, decays again into indistinguishable soil; and with Cæsar's ashes, Hamlet tells us, the urchins make dirt pies and filthily besmear their countenance. Nay, the kindly shine of summer, when tracked home with the scientific spyglass, is found to issue from the most portentous nightmare of the universe — the great, conflagrant sun: a world of hell's squibs, tumultuary, roaring aloud, inimical to life. The sun itself is enough to disgust a human being of the scene which he inhabits; and you would not fancy there was a green or habitable spot in a universe thus awfully lighted up. And yet it is by the blaze of such a conflagration, to which the fire of Rome was but a spark, that we do all our fiddling, and hold domestic tea-parties at the arbour door.

The Greeks figured Pan, the god of Nature, now terribly stamping his foot, so that armies were dispersed; now by the woodside on a summer noon trolling on his pipe until he charmed the hearts of upland ploughmen. And the Greeks, in so figuring, uttered the last word of human experience. To certain smoke-dried spirits matter and motion and elastic æthers, and the hypothesis of this or that other spectacled professor, tell a speaking story; but for youth and all ductile and congenial minds, Pan is not dead, but of all the classic hierarchy alone survives in triumph; goat-footed, with a gleeful and an angry look, the type of the shaggy world: and in every wood, if you go with a spirit properly prepared, you shall hear the note of his pipe.

For it is a shaggy world, and yet studded with gardens; where the salt and tumbling sea receives clear rivers running from among reeds and lilies; fruitful and austere; a rustic world; sunshiny, lewd, and cruel. What is it the birds sing among the trees in pairing time? What means the sound of the rain falling far and wide upon the leafy forest? To what tune does the fisherman whistle, as he hauls in his net at morning, and the bright fish are heaped inside the boat? These are all airs upon Pan's pipe; he it was who gave them breath in the exultation of his heart, and gleefully modulated their outflow with his lips and fingers. The coarse mirth of herdsmen, shaking the dells with laughter and striking out high echoes from the rock; the tune of moving feet in the lamplit city, or on the smooth ballroom floor; the hooves of many horses, beating the wide pastures in alarm; the song of hurrying rivers; the colour of clear skies; and smiles and the live touch of hands; and the voice of things, and their significant look, and the renovating influence they breathe forth — these are his joyful measures, to which the whole earth treads in choral harmony. To this music the young lambs bound as to a tabor, and the London shop-girl skips rudely in the dance. For it puts a spirit of gladness in all hearts; and to look on the happy side of nature is common, in their hours, to all created things. Some are vocal under a good influence, are pleasing whenever they are pleased, and hand on their happiness to others, as a child who, looking upon lovely things, looks lovely. Some leap to the strains with unapt foot, and make a halting figure in the universal dance. And some, like sour spectators at the play, receive the music into their hearts with an unmoved countenance, and walk like strangers through the general rejoicing. But let him feign never so carefully, there is not a man but has his pulses shaken when Pan trolls out a stave of ecstasy and sets the world a-singing.

Alas if that were all! But oftentimes the air is changed; and in the screech of the night wind, chasing navies, subverting the tall ships and the rooted cedar of the hills; in the random deadly levin or the fury of headlong floods, we recognise the “dread foundation” of life and the anger in Pan’s heart. Earth wages open war against her children, and under her softest touch hides treacherous claws. The cool waters invite us in to drown; the domestic hearth burns up in the hour of sleep, and makes an end of all. Everything is good or bad, helpful or deadly not in itself, but by its circumstances. For a few bright days in England the hurricane must break forth and the North Sea pay a toll of populous ships. And when the universal music has led lovers into the path of dalliance, confident of Nature’s sympathy, suddenly the air shifts into a minor, and death makes a clutch from his ambuscade below the bed of marriage. For death is given in a kiss; the dearest kindnesses are fatal; and into this life, where one thing preys upon another, the child too often makes its entrance from the mother’s corpse. It is no wonder, with so traitorous a scheme of things, if the wise people who created for us the idea of Pan thought that of all fears the fear of him was the most terrible, since it embraces all. And still we preserve the phrase: a panic terror. To reckon dangers too curiously, to hearken too intently for the threat that runs through all the winning music of the world, to hold back the hand from the rose because of the thorn, and from life because of death: this it is to be afraid of Pan. Highly respectable citizens who flee life’s pleasures and responsibilities and keep, with upright hat, upon the midway of custom, avoiding the right hand and the left, the ecstasies and the agonies, how surprised they would be if they could hear their attitude mythologically expressed, and knew themselves as tooth-chattering ones, who flee from Nature because they fear the hand of Nature's God! Shrilly sound Pan's pipes; and behold the banker instantly concealed in the bank parlour! For to distrust one's impulses is to be recreant to Pan.

There are moments when the mind refuses to be satisfied with evolution, and demands a ruddier presentation of the sum of man's experience. Sometimes the mood is brought about by laughter at the humorous side of life, as when, abstracting ourselves from earth, we imagine people plodding on foot, or seated in ships and speedy trains, with the planet all the while whirling in the opposite direction, so that, for all their hurry, they travel back-foremost through the universe of space. Sometimes it comes by the spirit of delight, and sometimes by the spirit of terror. At least, there will always be hours when we refuse to be put off by the feint of explanation, nicknamed science; and demand instead some palpitating image of our estate, that shall represent the troubled and uncertain element in which we dwell, and satisfy reason by the means of art. Science writes of the world as if with the cold finger of a starfish; it is all true; but what is it when compared to the reality of which it discourses? where hearts beat high in April, and death strikes, and hills totter in the earthquake, and there is a glamour over all the objects of sight, and a thrill in all noises for the ear, and Romance herself has made her dwelling among men? So we come back to the old myth, and hear the goat-footed piper making the music which is itself the charm and terror of things; and when a glen invites our visiting footsteps, fancy that Pan leads us thither with a gracious tremolo; or, when our hearts quail at the thunder of the cataract, tell ourselves that he has stamped his hoof in the nigh thicket.

XII

A PLEA FOR GAS LAMPS

Cities given, the problem was to light them. How to conduct individual citizens about the burgess-warren, when once heaven had withdrawn its leading luminary? or — since we live in a scientific age — when once our spinning planet has turned its back upon the sun? The moon, from time to time, was doubtless very helpful; the stars had a cheery look among the chimney-pots; and a cresset here and there, on church or citadel, produced a fine pictorial effect, and, in places where the ground lay unevenly, held out the right hand of conduct to the benighted. But, sun, moon, and stars abstracted or concealed, the night-faring inhabitant had to fall back — we speak on the authority of old prints — upon stable lanthorns two storeys in height. Many holes, drilled in the conical turret-roof of this vagabond Pharos, let up spouts of dazzlement into the bearer's eyes; and as he paced forth in the ghostly darkness, carrying his own sun by a ring about his finger, day and night swung to and fro and up and down about his footsteps. Blackness haunted his path; he was beleaguered by goblins as he went; and, curfew being struck, he found no light but that he travelled in throughout the township.

Closely following on this epoch of migratory lanthorns in a world of extinction, came the era of oil-lights, hard to kindle, easy to extinguish, pale and wavering in the hour of their endurance. Rudely puffed the winds of heaven; roguishly clomb up the all-destructive urchin; and lo! in a moment night re-established her void empire, and the cit groped along the wall, suppered but bedless, occult from guidance, and sorrily wading in the kennels. As if gamesome winds and gamesome youths were not sufficient, it was the habit to swing these feeble luminaries from house to house above the fairway. There, on invisible cordage, let them swing! And suppose some crane-necked general to go speeding by on a tall charger, spurring the destiny of nations, red-hot in expedition, there would indubitably be some effusion of military blood, and oaths, and a certain crash of glass; and while the chieftain rode forward with a purple coxcomb, the street would be left to original darkness, unpiloted, unvoyageable, a province of the desert night.

The conservative, looking before and after, draws from each contemplation the matter for content. Out of the age of gas lamps he glances back slightingly at the mirk and glimmer in which his ancestors wandered; his heart waxes jocund at the contrast; nor do his lips refrain from a stave, in the highest style of poetry, lauding progress and the golden mean. When gas first spread along a city, mapping it forth about evenfall for the eye of observant birds, a new age had begun for sociality and corporate pleasure-seeking, and begun with proper circumstance, becoming its own birthright. The work of Prometheus had advanced by another stride. Mankind and its supper-parties were no longer at the mercy of a few miles of sea-fog; sundown no longer emptied the promenade; and the day was lengthened out to every man's fancy. The city-folk had stars of their own; biddable, domesticated stars.

It is true that these were not so steady, nor yet so clear, as their originals; nor indeed was their lustre so elegant as that of the best wax candles. But then the gas stars, being nearer at hand, were more practically efficacious than Jupiter himself. It is true, again, that they did not unfold their rays with the appropriate spontaneity of the planets, coming out along the firmament, one after another, as the need arises. But the lamplighters took to their heels every evening, and ran with a good heart. It was pretty to see man thus emulating the punctuality of heaven's orbs; and though perfection was not absolutely reached, and now and then an individual may have been knocked on the head by the ladder of the flying functionary, yet people commended his zeal in a proverb, and taught their children to say, "God bless the lamplighter!" And since his passage was a piece of the day's programme, the children were well pleased to repeat the benediction, not, of course, in so many words, which would have been improper, but in some chaste circumlocution, suitable for infant lips.

God bless him, indeed! For the term of his twilight diligence is near at hand; and for not much longer shall we watch him speeding up the street and, at measured intervals, knocking another luminous hole into the dusk. The Greeks would have made a noble myth of such an one; how he distributed starlight, and, as soon as the need was over, re-collected it; and the little bull's eye, which was his instrument, and held enough fire to kindle a whole parish, would have been fitly commemorated in the legend. Now, like all heroic tasks, his labours draw towards apotheosis, and in the light of victory he himself shall disappear. For another advance has been effected. Our tame stars are to come out in future, not one by one, but all in a body and at once. A sedate electrician somewhere in a back office touches a spring — and behold! from one end to another of the city, from east to west, from the Alexandra to the Crystal Palace, there is light! *Fiat Lux*, says the sedate electrician. What a spectacle, on some clear, dark nightfall, from the edge of Hampstead Hill, when in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the design of the monstrous city flashes into vision — a glittering hieroglyph many square miles in extent; and when, to borrow and debase an image, all the evening street-lamps burst together into song! Such is the spectacle of the future, preluded the other day by the experiment in Pall Mall. Star-rise by electricity, the most romantic flight of civilisation; the compensatory benefit for an innumerable array of factories and bankers' clerks. To the artistic spirit exercised about Thirlmere, here is a crumb of consolation; consolatory, at least, to such of them as look out upon the world through seeing eyes, and contentedly accept beauty where it comes.

But the conservative, while lauding progress, is ever timid of innovation; his is the hand upheld to counsel pause; his is the signal advising slow advance. The word *electricity* now sounds the note of danger. In Paris, at the mouth of the Passage des Princes, in the place before the Opera portico, and in the Rue Drouot at the *Figaro* office, a new sort of urban star now shines out nightly, horrible, unearthly, obnoxious to the human eye; a lamp for a nightmare! Such a light as this should shine only on murders and public crime, or along the corridors of lunatic asylums, a horror to heighten horror. To look at it only once is to fall in love with gas, which gives a warm domestic radiance fit to eat by. Mankind, you would have thought, might have remained content with what Prometheus stole for them and not gone fishing the profound heaven with kites to catch and domesticate the wildfire of the storm. Yet here we have the levin brand at our doors, and it is proposed that we should henceforward take our walks abroad in the glare of permanent lightning. A man need not be very superstitious if he scruple to follow his pleasures by the light of the Terror that Flieth, nor very epicurean if he prefer to see the face of beauty more becomingly displayed. That ugly blinding glare may not improperly advertise the home of slanderous *Figaro*, which is a back-shop to the infernal regions; but where soft joys prevail, where people are convoked to pleasure and the philosopher looks on smiling and silent, where love and laughter and deifying wine abound, there, at least, let the old mild lustre shine upon the ways of man.

FAMILIAR STUDIES OF MEN AND BOOKS

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I

VICTOR HUGO'S ROMANCES

Après le roman pittoresque mais prosaïque de Walter Scott il restera un autre roman à créer, plus beau et plus complet encore selon nous. C'est le roman, à la fois drame et épopée, pittoresque mais poétique, réel mais idéal, vrai mais grand, qui enchâssera Walter Scott dans Homère. — Victor Hugo on "Quentin Durward."

Victor Hugo's romances occupy an important position in the history of literature; many innovations, timidly made elsewhere, have in them been carried boldly out to their last consequences; much that was indefinite in literary tendencies has attained to definite maturity; many things have come to a point and been distinguished one from the other; and it is only in the last romance of all, "Quatrevingt-treize," that this culmination is most perfect. This is in the nature of things. Men who are in any way typical of a stage of progress may be compared more justly to the hand upon the dial of the clock, which continues to advance as it indicates, than to the stationary milestone, which is only the measure of what is past. The movement is not arrested. That significant something by which the work of such a man differs from that of his predecessors goes on disengaging itself and becoming more and more articulate and cognisable. The same principle of growth that carried his first book beyond the books of previous writers carries his last book beyond his first. And just as the most imbecile production of any literary age gives us sometimes the very clue to comprehension we have sought long and vainly in contemporary masterpieces, so it may be the very weakest of an author's books that, coming in the sequel of many others, enables us at last to get hold of what underlies the whole of them — of that spinal marrow of significance that unites the work of his life into something organic and rational. This is what has been done by "Quatrevingt-treize" for the earlier romances of Victor Hugo, and, through them, for a whole division of modern literature. We have here the legitimate continuation of a long and living literary tradition; and hence, so far, its explanation. When many lines diverge from each other in direction so slightly as to confuse the eye, we know that we have only to produce them to make the chaos plain: this is continually so in literary history; and we shall best understand the importance of

Victor Hugo's romances if we think of them as some such prolongation of one of the main lines of literary tendency.

When we compare the novels of Walter Scott with those of the man of genius who preceded him, and whom he delighted to honour as a master in the art — I mean Henry Fielding — we shall be somewhat puzzled, at the first moment, to state the difference that there is between these two. Fielding has as much human science; has a far firmer hold upon the tiller of his story; has a keen sense of character, which he draws (and Scott often does so too) in a rather abstract and academical manner; and finally, is quite as humorous and quite as good-humoured as the great Scotsman. With all these points of resemblance between the men, it is astonishing that their work should be so different. The fact is, that the English novel was looking one way and seeking one set of effects in the hands of Fielding; and in the hands of Scott it was looking eagerly in all ways and searching for all the effects that by any possibility it could utilise. The difference between these two men marks a great enfranchisement. With Scott the Romantic movement, the movement of an extended curiosity and an enfranchised imagination, has begun. This is a trite thing to say; but trite things are often very indefinitely comprehended: and this enfranchisement, in as far as it regards the technical change that came over modern prose romance, has never perhaps been explained with any clearness.

To do so, it will be necessary roughly to compare the two sets of conventions upon which plays and romances are respectively based. The purposes of these two arts are so much alike, and they deal so much with the same passions and interests, that we are apt to forget the fundamental opposition of their methods. And yet such a fundamental opposition exists. In the drama the action is developed in great measure by means of things that remain outside of the art; by means of real things, that is, and not artistic conventions for things. This is a sort of realism that is not to be confounded with that realism in painting of which we hear so much. The realism in painting is a thing of purposes; this, that we have to indicate in the drama, is an affair of method. We have heard a story, indeed, of a painter in France who, when he wanted to paint a sea-beach, carried realism from his ends to his means, and plastered real sand upon his canvas; and that is precisely what is done in the drama. The dramatic author has to paint his beaches with real sand: real live men and women move about the stage; we hear real voices; what is feigned merely puts a sense upon what is; we do actually see a woman go behind a screen as Lady Teazle, and, after a certain interval, we do actually see her very shamefully produced again. Now all these things, that remain as they were in life, and are not transmuted into any artistic convention, are terribly stubborn and difficult to deal with; and hence there are for the dramatist many resultant limitations in time and space. These limitations in some sort approximate towards those of painting: the dramatic author is tied down, not indeed to a moment, but to the duration of each scene or act; he is confined to the stage almost as the painter is confined within his frame. But the great restriction is this, that a dramatic author must deal with his actors, and with his actors alone. Certain moments of suspense, certain significant dispositions of personages, a certain logical growth of emotion, — these are the only means at the disposal of the playwright. It is true that, with the assistance of the scene-painter, the costumier and the conductor of the orchestra, he may add to this something of pageant, something of sound and fury; but these are, for the dramatic writer, beside the mark, and do not come under the vivifying touch of his genius. When we turn to romance, we find this no longer. Here nothing is reproduced to our senses directly. Not only the main conception of the work, but the scenery, the appliances, the mechanism by which this conception is brought home to us, have been put through the crucible of another man's mind, and come out again, one and all, in the form of written words. With the loss of every degree of such realism as we have described, there is for art a clear gain of liberty and largeness of competence. Thus, painting, in which the round outlines of things are thrown on to a flat board, is far more free than sculpture, in which their solidity is preserved. It is by giving up these identities that art gains true strength. And so in the case of novels as compared with the stage. Continuous narration is the flat board on to which the novelist throws everything. And from this there results for him a great loss of vividness, but a great compensating gain in his power over the subject; so that he can now subordinate one thing to another in importance, and introduce all manner of very subtle detail, to a degree that was before impossible. He can render just as easily the flourish of trumpets before a victorious emperor and the gossip of country market women, the gradual decay of forty years of a man's life and the gesture of a passionate moment. He finds himself equally unable, if he looks at it from one point of view — equally able, if he looks at it from another point of view — to reproduce a colour, a sound, an outline, a logical argument, a physical action. He can show his readers, behind and around the personages that for the moment occupy the foreground of his story, the continual suggestion of the landscape; the turn of the weather that will turn with it men's lives and fortunes, dimly foreshadowed on the horizon; the fatality of distant events, the stream of national tendency, the salient framework of causation. And all this thrown upon the flat board — all this entering, naturally and smoothly, into the texture of continuous intelligent narration.

This touches the difference between Fielding and Scott. In the work of the latter, true to his character of a modern and a romantic, we become suddenly conscious of the background. Fielding, on the other hand, although he had recognised that the novel was nothing else than an epic in prose, wrote in the spirit not of the epic, but of the drama. This is not, of course, to say that the drama was in any way incapable of a regeneration similar in kind to that of which I am now speaking with regard to the novel. The notorious contrary fact is sufficient to guard the reader against such a misconstruction. All that is meant is, that Fielding remained ignorant of certain capabilities which the novel possesses over the drama; or, at least, neglected and did not develop them. To the end he continued to see things as a playwright sees them. The world with which he dealt, the world he had realised for himself and sought to realise and set before his readers, was a world of exclusively human interest. As for landscape, he was content to under-line stage directions, as it might be done in a play-book: Tom and Molly retire into a practicable wood. As for nationality and public sentiment, it is curious enough to think that Tom Jones is laid in the year forty-five, and that the only use he makes of the rebellion is to throw a troop of soldiers into his hero's way. It is most really important, however, to remark the change which has been introduced into the conception of character by the beginning of the romantic movement and the consequent introduction into fiction of a vast amount of new material. Fielding tells us as much as he thought necessary to account for the actions of his creatures; he thought that each of these actions could be decomposed on the spot into a few simple personal elements, as we decompose a force in a question of abstract dynamics. The larger motives are all unknown to him; he had not understood that the nature of the landscape or the spirit of the times could be for anything in a story; and so, naturally and rightly, he said nothing about them. But Scott's instinct, the instinct of the man of an age profoundly different, taught him otherwise; and, in his work, the individual characters begin to occupy a comparatively small proportion of that canvas on which armies manœuvre, and great hills pile themselves upon each other's shoulders. Fielding's characters were always great to the full stature of a perfectly arbitrary will. Already in Scott we begin to have a sense of the subtle influences that moderate and qualify a man's personality; that personality is no longer thrown out in unnatural isolation, but is resumed into its place in the constitution of things.

It is this change in the manner of regarding men and their actions, first exhibited in romance, that has since renewed and vivified history.

For art precedes philosophy, and even science. People must have noticed things and interested themselves in them before they begin to debate upon their causes or influence. And it is in this way that art is the pioneer of knowledge; those predilections of the artist he knows not why, those irrational acceptations and recognitions, reclaim, out of the world that we have not yet realised, ever another and another corner; and after the facts have been thus vividly brought before us and have had time to settle and arrange themselves in our minds, some day there will be found the man of science to stand up and give the explanation. Scott took an interest in many things in which Fielding took none; and for this reason, and no other, he introduced them into his romances. If he had been told what would be the nature of the movement that he was so lightly initiating, he would have been very incredulous and not a little scandalised. At the time when he wrote, the real drift of this new manner of pleasing people in fiction was not yet apparent; and, even now, it is only by looking at the romances of Victor Hugo that we are enabled to form any proper judgment in the matter. These books are not only descended by ordinary generation from the Waverley Novels, but it is in them chiefly that we shall find the revolutionary tradition of Scott carried further; that we shall find Scott himself, in so far as regards his conception of prose fiction and its purposes, surpassed in his own spirit, instead of tamely followed. We have here, as I said before, a line of literary tendency produced, and by this production definitely separated from others. When we come to Hugo, we see that the deviation, which seemed slight enough and not very serious between Scott and Fielding, is indeed such a great gulf in thought and sentiment as only successive generations can pass over: and it is but natural that one of the chief advances that Hugo has made upon Scott is an advance in self-consciousness. Both men follow the same road; but where the one went blindly and carelessly, the other advances with all deliberation and forethought. There never was artist much more unconscious than Scott; and there have been not many more conscious than Hugo. The passage at the head of these pages shows how organically he had understood the nature of his own changes. He has, underlying each of the five great romances (which alone I purpose here to examine), two deliberate designs: one artistic, the other consciously ethical and intellectual. This is a man living in a different world from Scott, who professes sturdily (in one of his introductions) that he does not believe in novels having any moral influence at all; but still Hugo is too much of an artist to let himself be hampered by his dogmas; and the truth is that the artistic result seems, in at least one great instance, to have very little connection with the other, or directly ethical result.

The artistic result of a romance, what is left upon the memory by any really powerful and artistic novel, is something so complicated and refined that it is difficult to put a name upon it; and yet something as simple as nature. These two propositions may seem mutually destructive, but they are so only in appearance. The fact is, that art is working far ahead of language as well as of science, realising for us, by all manner of suggestions and exaggerations, effects for which as yet we have no direct name; nay, for which we may never perhaps have a direct name, for the reason that these effects do not enter very largely into the necessities of life. Hence alone is that suspicion of vagueness that often hangs about the purpose of a romance: it is clear enough to us in thought; but we are not used to consider anything clear until we are able to formulate it in words, and analytical language has not been sufficiently shaped to that end. We all know this difficulty in the case of a picture, simple and strong as may be the impression that it has left with us; and it is only because language is the medium of romance that we are prevented from seeing that the two cases are the same. It is not that there is anything blurred or indefinite in the impression left with us, it is just because the impression is so very definite after its own kind, that we find it hard to fit it exactly with the expressions of our philosophical speech.

It is this idea which underlies and issues from a romance, this something which it is the function of that form of art to create, this epical value, that I propose chiefly to seek and, as far as may be, to throw into relief, in the present study. It is thus, I believe, that we shall see most clearly the great stride that Hugo has taken beyond his predecessors, and how, no longer content with expressing more or less abstract relations of man to man, he has set before himself the task of realising, in the language of romance, much of the involution of our complicated lives.

This epical value is not to be found, let it be understood, in every so-called novel. The great majority are not works of art in anything but a very secondary signification. One might almost number on one's fingers the works in which such a supreme artistic intention has been in any way superior to the other and lesser aims, themselves more or less artistic, that generally go hand in hand with it in the conception of prose romance. The purely critical spirit is, in most novels, paramount. At the present moment we can recall one man only, for whose works it would have been equally possible to accomplish our present design: and that man is Hawthorne. There is a unity, an unwavering creative purpose, about some at least of Hawthorne's romances, that impresses itself on the most indifferent reader; and the very restrictions and weaknesses of the man served perhaps to strengthen the vivid and single impression of his works. There is nothing of this kind in Hugo: unity, if he attains to it, is indeed unity out of multitude; and it is the wonderful power of subordination and synthesis thus displayed, that gives us the measure of his talent. No amount of mere discussion and statement, such as this, could give a just conception of the greatness of this power. It must be felt in the books themselves, and all that can be done in the present essay is to recall to the reader the more general features of each of the five great romances, hurriedly and imperfectly, as space will permit, and rather as a suggestion than anything more complete.

The moral end that the author had before him in the conception of "Notre Dame de Paris" was (he tells us) to "denounce" the external fatality that hangs over men in the form of foolish and inflexible superstition. To speak plainly, this moral purpose seems to have mighty little to do with the artistic conception; moreover, it is very questionably handled, while the artistic conception is developed with the most consummate success. Old Paris lives for us with newness of life: we have ever before our eyes the city cut into three by the two arms of the river, the boat-shaped island "moored" by five bridges to the different shores, and the two unequal towns on either hand. We forget all that enumeration of palaces and churches and convents which occupies so many pages of admirable description, and the thoughtless reader might be inclined to conclude from this that they were pages thrown away; but this is not so: we forget, indeed, the details, as we forget or do not see the different layers of paint on a completed picture; but the thing desired has been accomplished, and we carry away with us a sense of the "Gothic profile" of the city, of the "surprising forest of pinnacles and towers and belfries," and we know not what of rich and intricate and quaint. And throughout, Notre Dame has been held up over Paris by a height far greater than that of its twin towers: the Cathedral is present to us from the first page to the last; the title has given us the clue, and already in the Palace of Justice the story begins to attach itself to that central building by character after character. It is purely an effect of mirage; Notre Dame does not, in reality, thus dominate and stand out above the city; and any one who should visit it, in the spirit of the Scott-tourist to Edinburgh or the Trossachs, would be almost offended at finding nothing more than this old church thrust away into a corner. It is purely an effect of mirage, as we say; but it is an effect that permeates and possesses the whole book with astonishing consistency and strength. And then, Hugo has peopled this Gothic city, and, above all, this Gothic church, with a race of men even more distinctly Gothic than their surroundings. We know this generation already: we have seen them clustered about the worn capitals of pillars, or craning forth over the church-leads with the open mouths of gargoyles. About them all there is that sort of stiff quaint unreality, that conjunction of the grotesque, and even of a certain bourgeois snugness, with passionate contortion and horror, that is so characteristic of Gothic art. Esmeralda is somewhat an exception; she and the goat traverse the story like two children who have wandered in a dream. The finest moment of the book is when these two share with the two other leading characters, Dom Claude and Quasimodo, the chill shelter of the old cathedral. It is here that we touch most intimately the generative artistic idea of the romance: are they not all four taken out of some quaint moulding Illustrative of the Beatitudes, or the Ten Commandments, or the seven deadly sins? What is Quasimodo but an animated gargoyle? What is the whole book but the reanimation of Gothic art?

It is curious that in this, the earliest of the five great romances, there should be so little of that extravagance that latterly we have come almost to identify with the author's manner. Yet even here we are distressed by words, thoughts, and incidents that defy belief and alienate the sympathies. The scene of the *in pace,* for example, in spite of its strength, verges dangerously on the province of the penny novelist. I do not believe that Quasimodo rode upon the bell; I should as soon imagine that he swung by the clapper. And again, the following two sentences, out of an otherwise admirable chapter, surely surpass what it had ever entered into the heart of any other man to imagine (vol. ii.): "Il souffrait tant que par instants il s'arrachait des poignées de cheveux, *pour voir s'ils ne blanchissaient pas*." And, : "Ses pensées étaient si insupportables qu'il prenait sa tête à deux mains et tàtchait de l'arracher de ses épaules *pour la briser sur le pavé*."

One other fault, before we pass on. In spite of the horror and misery that pervade all of his later work, there is in it much less of actual melodrama than here, and rarely, I should say never, that sort of brutality, that useless insufferable violence to the feelings, which is the last distinction between melodrama and true tragedy. Now, in "Notre Dame," the whole story of Esmeralda's passion for the worthless archer is unpleasant enough; but when she betrays herself in her last hiding-place, herself and her wretched mother, by calling out to this sordid hero who has long since forgotten her — well, that is just one of those things that readers will not forgive; they do not like it, and they are quite right; life is hard enough for poor mortals without having it indefinitely embittered for them by bad art.

We look in vain for any similar blemish in "Les Misérables." Here, on the other hand, there is perhaps the nearest approach to literary restraint that Hugo has ever made: there is here certainly the ripest and most easy development of his powers. It is the moral intention of this great novel to awaken us a little, if it may be — for such awakenings are unpleasant — to the great cost of the society that we enjoy and profit by, to the labour and sweat of those who support the litter, civilisation, in which we ourselves are so smoothly carried forward. People are all glad to shut their eyes; and it gives them a very simple pleasure when they can forget that our laws commit a million individual injustices, to be once roughly just in the general; that the bread that we eat, and the quiet of the family, and all that embellishes life and makes it worth having, have to be purchased by death — by the deaths of animals, and the deaths of men wearied out with labour, and the deaths of those criminals called tyrants and revolutionaries, and the deaths of those revolutionaries called criminals. It is to something of all this that Victor Hugo wishes to open men's eyes in "Les Misérables"; and this moral lesson is worked out in masterly coincidence with the artistic effect. The deadly weight of civilisation to those who are below presses sensibly on our shoulders as we read. A sort of mocking indignation grows upon us as we find Society rejecting, again and again, the services of the most serviceable; setting Jean Valjean to pick oakum, casting Galileo into prison, even crucifying Christ. There is a haunting and horrible sense of insecurity about the book. The terror we thus feel is a terror for the machinery of law, that we can hear tearing, in the dark, good and bad, between its formidable wheels with the iron stolidity of all machinery, human or divine. This terror incarnates itself sometimes and leaps horribly out upon us; as when the crouching mendicant looks up, and Jean Valjean, in the light of the street lamp, recognises the face of the detective; as when the lantern of the patrol flashes suddenly through the darkness of the sewer; or as when the fugitive comes forth at last at evening, by the quiet riverside, and finds the police there also, waiting stolidly for vice and stolidly satisfied to take virtue instead. The whole book is full of oppression, and full of prejudice, which is the great cause of oppression. We have the prejudices of M. Gillenormand, the prejudices of Marius, the prejudices in revolt that defend the barricade, and the throned prejudices that carry it by storm. And then we have the admirable but ill-written character of Javert, the man who had made a religion of the police, and would not survive the moment when he learned that there was another truth outside the truth of laws; a just creation, over which the reader will do well to ponder.

With so gloomy a design this great work is still full of life and light and love. The portrait of the good Bishop is one of the most agreeable things in modern literature. The whole scene at Montfermeil is full of the charm that Hugo knows so well how to throw about children. Who can forget the passage where Cosette, sent out at night to draw water, stands in admiration before the illuminated booth, and the huckster behind "lui faisait un peu l'effet d'être le Père éternel"? The pathos of the forlorn sabot laid trustingly by the chimney in expectation of the Santa Claus that was not, takes us fairly by the throat; there is nothing in Shakespeare that touches the heart more nearly. The loves of Cosette and Marius are very pure and pleasant, and we cannot refuse our affection to Gavroche, although we may make a mental reservation of our profound disbelief in his existence. Take it for all in all, there are few books in the world that can be compared with it. There is as much calm and serenity as Hugo has ever attained to; the melodramatic coarsenesses that disfigured "Notre Dame" are no longer present. There is certainly much that is painfully improbable; and again, the story itself is a little too well constructed; it produces on us the effect of a puzzle, and we grow incredulous as we find that every character fits again and again into the plot, and is, like the child's cube, serviceable on six faces; things are not so well arranged in life as all that comes to. Some of the digressions, also, seem out of place, and do nothing but interrupt and irritate. But when all is said, the book remains of masterly conception and of masterly development, full of pathos, full of truth, full of a high eloquence.

Superstition and social exigency having been thus dealt with in the first two members of the series, it remained for "Les Travailleurs de la Mer" to show man hand to hand with the elements, the last form of external force that is brought against him. And here once more the artistic effect and the moral lesson are worked out together, and are, indeed, one. Gilliat, alone upon the reef at his herculean task, offers a type of human industry in the midst of the vague "diffusion of forces into the illimitable," and the visionary development of "wasted labour" in the sea, and the winds, and the clouds. No character was ever thrown into such strange relief as Gilliat. The great circle of sea-birds that come wonderingly around him on the night of his arrival, strikes at once the note of his pre-eminence and isolation. He fills the whole reef with his indefatigable toil; this solitary spot in the ocean rings with the clamour of his anvil; we see him as he comes and goes, thrown out sharply against the clear background of the sea. And yet his isolation is not to be compared with the isolation of Robinson Crusoe, for example; indeed, no two books could be more instructive to set side by side than "Les Travailleurs" and this other of the old days before art had learnt to occupy itself with what lies outside of human will. Crusoe was one sole centre of interest in the midst of a nature utterly dead and utterly unrealised by the artist; but this is not how we feel with Gilliat; we feel that he is opposed by a "dark coalition of forces," that an "immense animosity" surrounds him; we are the witnesses of the terrible warfare that he wages with "the silent inclemency of phenomena going their own way, and the great general law, implacable and passive": "a conspiracy of the indifferency of things" is against him. There is not one interest on the reef, but two. Just as we recognise Gilliat for the hero, we recognise, as implied by this indifferency of things, this direction of forces to some purpose outside our purposes, yet another character who may almost take rank as the villain of the novel, and the two face up to one another blow for blow, feint for feint, until, in the storm, they fight it epically out, and Gilliat remains the victor; — a victor, however, who has still to encounter the octopus. I need say nothing of the gruesome, repulsive excellence of that famous scene; it will be enough to remind the reader that Gilliat is in pursuit of a crab when he is himself assaulted by the devil fish, and that this, in its way, is the last touch to the inner significance of the book; here, indeed, is the true position of man in the universe.

But in "Les Travailleurs," with all its strength, with all its eloquence, with all the beauty and fitness of its main situations, we cannot conceal from ourselves that there is a thread of something that will not bear calm scrutiny. There is much that is disquieting about the storm, admirably as it begins. I am very doubtful whether it would be possible to keep the boat from foundering in such circumstances, by any amount of breakwater and broken rock. I do not understand the way in which the waves are spoken of, and prefer just to take it as a loose way of speaking, and pass on. And lastly, how does it happen that the sea was quite calm next day? Is this great hurricane a piece of scene-painting after all? And when we have forgiven Gilliat's prodigies of strength (although, in soberness, he reminds us more of Porthos in the "Vicomte de Bragelonne" than is quite desirable), what is to be said to his suicide, and how are we to condemn in adequate terms that unprincipled avidity after effect, which tells us that the sloop disappeared over the horizon, and the head under the water, at one and the same moment? Monsieur Hugo may say what he will, but we know better; we know very well that they did not; a thing like that raises up a despairing spirit of opposition in a man's readers; they give him the lie fiercely as they read. Lastly, we have here already some beginning of that curious series of English blunders, that makes us wonder if there are neither proof-sheets nor judicious friends in the whole of France, and affects us sometimes with a sickening uneasiness as to what may be our own exploits when we touch upon foreign countries and foreign tongues. It is here that we shall find the famous "first of the fourth," and many English words that may be comprehensible perhaps in Paris. It is here that we learn that "laird" in Scotland is the same title as "lord" in England. Here, also, is an account of a Highland soldier's equipment, which we recommend to the lovers of genuine fun.

In "L'Homme qui Rit," it was Hugo's object to "denounce" (as he would say himself) the aristocratic principle as it was exhibited in England; and this purpose, somewhat more unmitigatedly satiric than that of the two last, must answer for much that is unpleasant in the book. The repulsiveness of the scheme of the story, and the manner in which it is bound up with impossibilities and absurdities, discourage the reader at the outset, and it needs an effort to take it as seriously as it deserves. And yet when we judge it deliberately, it will be seen that, here again, the story is admirably adapted to the moral. The constructive ingenuity exhibited throughout is almost morbid. Nothing could be more happily imagined, as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the aristocratic principle, than the adventures of Gwynplaine, the itinerant mountebank, snatched suddenly out of his little way of life, and installed without preparation as one of the hereditary legislators of a great country. It is with a very bitter irony that the paper, on which all this depends, is left to float for years at the will of wind and tide. What, again, can be finer in conception than that voice from the people heard suddenly in the House of Lords, in solemn arraignment of the pleasures and privileges of its splendid occupants? The horrible laughter, stamped for ever "by order of the king" upon the face of this strange spokesman of democracy, adds yet another feature of justice to the scene; in all time, travesty has been the argument of oppression; and, in all time, the oppressed might have made this answer: "If I am vile, is it not your system that has made me so?" This ghastly laughter gives occasion, moreover, for the one strain of tenderness running through the web of this unpleasant story: the love of the blind girl Dea, for the monster. It is a most benignant providence that thus harmoniously brings together these two misfortunes; it is one of those compensations, one of those after-thoughts of a relenting destiny, that reconcile us from time to time to the evil that is in the world; the atmosphere of the book is purified by the presence of this pathetic love; it seems to be above the story somehow, and not of it, as the full moon over the night of some foul and feverish city.

There is here a quality in the narration more intimate and particular than is general with Hugo; but it must be owned, on the other hand, that the book is wordy, and even, now and then, a little wearisome. Ursus and his wolf are pleasant enough companions; but the former is nearly as much an abstract type as the latter. There is a beginning, also, of an abuse of conventional conversation, such as may be quite pardonable in the drama where needs must, but is without excuse in the romance. Lastly, I suppose one must say a word or two about the weak points of this not immaculate novel; and if so, it will be best to distinguish at once. The large family of English blunders, to which we have alluded already in speaking of “Les Travailleurs,” are of a sort that is really indifferent in art. If Shakespeare makes his ships cast anchor by some seaport of Bohemia, if Hugo imagines Tom-Jim-Jack to be a likely nickname for an English sailor, or if either Shakespeare, or Hugo, or Scott, for that matter, be guilty of “figments enough to confuse the march of a whole history — anachronisms enough to overset all chronology,” the life of their creations, the artistic truth and accuracy of their work, is not so much as compromised. But when we come upon a passage like the sinking of the *Ourque* in this romance, we can do nothing but cover our face with our hands: the conscientious reader feels a sort of disgrace in the very reading. For such artistic falsehoods, springing from what I have called already an unprincipled avidity after effect, no amount of blame can be exaggerated; and above all, when the criminal is such a man as Victor Hugo. We cannot forgive in him what we might have passed over in a third-rate sensation novelist. Little as he seems to know of the sea and nautical affairs, he must have known very well that vessels do not go down as he makes the *Ourque* go down; he must have known that such a liberty with fact was against the laws of the game, and incompatible with all appearance of sincerity in conception or workmanship.

In each of these books, one after another, there has been some departure from the traditional canons of romance; but taking each separately, one would have feared to make too much of these departures, or to found any theory upon what was perhaps purely accidental. The appearance of “Quatrevingt-treize” has put us out of the region of such doubt. Like a doctor who has long been hesitating how to classify an epidemic malady, we have come at last upon a case so well marked that our uncertainty is at an end. It is a novel built upon “a sort of enigma,” which was at that date laid before revolutionary France, and which is presented by Hugo to Tellmarch, to Lantenac, to Gauvain, and very terribly to Cimourdain, each of whom gives his own solution of the question, clement or stern, according to the temper of his spirit. That enigma was this: “Can a good action be a bad action? Does not he who spares the wolf kill the sheep?” This question, as I say, meets with one answer after another during the course of the book, and yet seems to remain undecided to the end. And something in the same way, although one character, or one set of characters, after another comes to the front and occupies our attention for the moment, we never identify our interest with any of these temporary heroes nor regret them after they are withdrawn. We soon come to regard them somewhat as special cases of a general law; what we really care for is something that they only imply and body forth to us. We know how history continues through century after century; how this king or that patriot disappears from its pages with his whole generation, and yet we do not cease to read, nor do we even feel as if we had reached any legitimate conclusion, because our interest is not in the men, but in the country that they loved or hated, benefited or injured. And so it is here: Gauvain and Cimourdain pass away, and we regard them no more than the lost armies of which we find the cold statistics in military annals; what we regard is what remains behind; it is the principle that put these men where they were, that filled them for a while with heroic inspiration, and has the power, now that they are fallen, to inspire others with the same courage. The interest of the novel centres about revolutionary France: just as the plot is an abstract judicial difficulty, the hero is an abstract historical force. And this has been done, not, as it would have been before, by the cold and cumbersome machinery of allegory, but with bold, straightforward realism, dealing only with the objective materials of art, and dealing with them so masterfully that the palest abstractions of thought come before us, and move our hopes and fears, as if they were the young men and maidens of customary romance.

The episode of the mother and children in “Quatrevingt-treize” is equal to anything that Hugo has ever written. There is one chapter in the second volume, for instance, called “*Sein guéri, cœur saignant,*” that is full of the very stuff of true tragedy, and nothing could be more delightful than the humours of the three children on the day before the assault. The passage on La Vendée is really great, and the scenes in Paris have much of the same broad merit. The book is full, as usual, of pregnant and splendid sayings. But when thus much is conceded by way of praise, we come to the other scale of the balance, and find this, also, somewhat heavy. There is here a yet greater over-employment of conventional dialogue than in “L’Homme qui Rit”; and much that should have been said by the author himself, if it were to be said at all, he has most unwarrantably put into the mouths of one or other of his characters. We should like to know what becomes of the main body of the troop in the wood of La Saudraie during the thirty pages or so in which the foreguard lays aside all discipline, and stops to gossip over a woman and some children. We have an unpleasant idea forced upon us at one place, in spite of all the good-natured incredulity that we can summon up to resist it. Is it possible that Monsieur Hugo thinks they ceased to steer the corvette while the gun was loose? Of the chapter in which Lantenac and Halmalho are alone together in the boat, the less said the better; of course, if there were nothing else, they would have been swamped thirty times over during the course of Lantenac's harangue. Again, after Lantenac has landed, we have scenes of almost inimitable workmanship that suggest the epithet "statuesque" by their clear and trenchant outline; but the tocsin scene will not do, and the tocsin unfortunately pervades the whole passage, ringing continually in our ears with a taunting accusation of falsehood. And then, when we come to the place where Lantenac meets the royalists, under the idea that he is going to meet the republicans, it seems as if there were a hitch in the stage mechanism. I have tried it over in every way, and I cannot conceive any disposition that would make the scene possible as narrated.

Such then, with their faults and their signal excellences, are the five great novels.

Romance is a language in which many persons learn to speak with a certain appearance of fluency; but there are few who can ever bend it to any practical need, few who can ever be said to express themselves in it. It has become abundantly plain in the foregoing examination that Victor Hugo occupies a high place among those few. He has always a perfect command over his stories; and we see that they are constructed with a high regard to some ulterior purpose, and that every situation is informed with moral significance and grandeur. Of no other man can the same thing be said in the same degree. His romances are not to be confused with "the novel with a purpose" as familiar to the English reader: this is generally the model of incompetence; and we see the moral clumsily forced into every hole and corner of the story, or thrown externally over it like a carpet over a railing. Now the moral significance, with Hugo, is of the essence of the romance; it is the organising principle. If you could somehow despoil "Les Misérables" or "Les Travailleurs" of their distinctive lesson, you would find that the story had lost its interest and the book was dead.

Having thus learned to subordinate his story to an idea, to make his art speak, he went on to teach it to say things heretofore unaccustomed. If you look back at the five books of which we have now so hastily spoken, you will be astonished at the freedom with which the original purposes of story-telling have been laid aside and passed by. Where are now the two lovers who descended the main watershed of all the Waverley Novels, and all the novels that have tried to follow in their wake? Sometimes they are almost lost sight of before the solemn isolation of a man against the sea and sky, as in "Les Travailleurs"; sometimes, as in "Les Misérables," they merely figure for awhile, as a beautiful episode in the epic of oppression; sometimes they are entirely absent, as in "Quatrevingt-treize." There is no hero in “Notre Dame”: in “Les Misérables” it is an old man: in “L’Homme qui Rit” it is a monster: in “Quatrevingt-treize” it is the Revolution. Those elements that only began to show themselves timidly, as adjuncts, in the novels of Walter Scott, have usurped ever more and more of the canvas; until we find the whole interest of one of Hugo’s romances centring around matter that Fielding would have banished from his altogether, as being out of the field of fiction. So we have elemental forces occupying nearly as large a place, playing (so to speak) nearly as important a *rôle*, as the man, Gilliat, who opposes and overcomes them. So we find the fortunes of a nation put upon the stage with as much vividness as ever before the fortunes of a village maiden or a lost heir; and the forces that oppose and corrupt a principle holding the attention quite as strongly as the wicked barons or dishonest attorneys of the past. Hence those individual interests that were supreme in Fielding, and even in Scott stood out over everything else, and formed as it were the spine of the story, figure here only as one set of interests among many sets, one force among many forces, one thing to be treated out of a whole world of things equally vivid and important. So that, for Hugo, man is no longer an isolated spirit without antecedent or relation here below, but a being involved in the action and reaction of natural forces, himself a centre of such action and reaction; or an unit in a great multitude, chased hither and thither by epidemic terrors and aspirations, and, in all seriousness, blown about by every wind of doctrine. This is a long way that we have travelled: between such work and the work of Fielding is there not, indeed, a great gulf of thought and sentiment?

Art, thus conceived, realises for men a larger portion of life, and that portion one that it is more difficult for them to realise unaided; and, besides helping them to feel more intensely those restricted personal interests which are patent to all, it awakes in them some consciousness of those more general relations that are so strangely invisible to the average man in ordinary moods. It helps to keep man in his place in nature, and, above all, it helps him to understand more intelligently the responsibilities of his place in society. And in all this generalisation of interest, we never miss those small humanities that are at the opposite pole of excellence in art; and while we admire the intellect that could see life thus largely, we are touched with another sentiment for the tender heart that slipped the piece of gold into Cosette’s sabot, that was virginally troubled at the fluttering of her dress in the spring wind, or put the blind girl beside the deformity of the laughing man. This, then, is the last praise that we can award to these romances. The author has shown a power of just subordination hitherto unequalled; and as, in reaching forward to one class of effects, he has not been forgetful or careless of the other, his work is more nearly complete work, and his art, with all its imperfections, deals more comprehensively with the materials of life, than that of any of his otherwise more sure and masterly predecessors.

These five books would have made a very great fame for any writer, and yet they are but one façade of the monument that Victor Hugo has erected to his genius. Everywhere we find somewhat the same greatness, somewhat the same infirmities. In his poems and plays there are the same unaccountable protervities that have already astonished us in the romances. There, too, is the same feverish strength, welding the fiery iron of his idea under forge-hammer repetitions — an emphasis that is somehow akin to weakness — a strength that is a little epileptic. He stands so far above all his contemporaries, and so incomparably excels them in richness, breadth, variety, and moral earnestness, that we almost feel as if he had a sort of right to fall oftener and more heavily than others; but this does not reconcile us to seeing him profit by the privilege so freely. We like to have, in our great men, something that is above question; we like to place an implicit faith in them, and see them always on the platform of their greatness; and this, unhappily, cannot be with Hugo. As Heine said long ago, his is a genius somewhat deformed; but, deformed as it is, we accept it gladly; we shall have the wisdom to see where his foot slips, but we shall have the justice also to recognise in him one of the greatest artists of our generation, and, in many ways, one of the greatest artists of time. If we look back, yet once, upon these five romances, we see blemishes such as we can lay to the charge of no other man in the number of the famous; but to what other man can we attribute such sweeping innovations, such a new and significant presentment of the life of man, such an amount, if we merely think of the amount, of equally consummate performance?

Prefatory letter to “Peveril of the Peak.”

II

SOME ASPECTS OF ROBERT BURNS

To write with authority about another man we must have fellow-feeling and some common ground of experience with our subject. We may praise or blame according as we find him related to us by the best or worst in ourselves; but it is only in virtue of some relationship that we can be his judges, even to condemn. Feelings which we share and understand enter for us into the tissue of the man's character; those to which we are strangers in our own experience we are inclined to regard as blots, exceptions, inconsistencies, and excursions of the diabolic; we conceive them with repugnance, explain them with difficulty, and raise our hands to heaven in wonder when we find them in conjunction with talents that we respect or virtues that we admire. David, king of Israel, would pass a sounder judgment on a man than either Nathaniel or David Hume. Now, Principal Shairp's recent volume, although I believe no one will read it without respect and interest, has this one capital defect — that there is imperfect sympathy between the author and the subject, between the critic and the personality under criticism. Hence an inorganic, if not an incoherent, presentation of both the poems and the man. Of "Holy Willie's Prayer," Principal Shairp remarks that "those who have loved most what was best in Burns's poetry must have regretted that it was ever written." To the "Jolly Beggars," so far as my memory serves me, he refers but once; and then only to remark on the "strange, not to say painful," circumstance that the same hand which wrote the "Cottar's Saturday Night" should have stooped to write the "Jolly Beggars." The "Saturday Night" may or may not be an admirable poem; but its significance is trebled, and the power and range of the poet first appears, when it is set beside the "Jolly Beggars." To take a man's work piecemeal, except with the design of elegant extracts, is the way to avoid, and not to perform, the critic's duty. The same defect is displayed in the treatment of Burns as a man, which is broken, apologetical, and confused. The man here presented to us is not that Burns, *teres atque rotundus* — a burly figure in literature, as, from our present vantage of time, we have begun to see him. This, on the other hand, is Burns as he may have appeared to a contemporary clergyman, whom we shall conceive to have been a kind and indulgent but orderly and orthodox person, anxious to be pleased, but too often hurt and disappointed by the behaviour of his red-hot *protégé*, and solacing himself with the explanation that the poet was "the most inconsistent of men." If you are so sensibly pained by the misconduct of your subject, and so paternally delighted with his virtues, you will always be an excellent gentleman, but a somewhat questionable biographer. Indeed, we can only be sorry and surprised that Principal Shairp should have chosen a theme so uncongenial. When we find a man writing on Burns, who likes neither "Holy Willie," nor the "Beggars," nor the "Ordination," nothing is adequate to the situation but the old cry of Geronte: "Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?" And every merit we find in the book, which is sober and candid in a degree unusual with biographies of Burns, only leads us to regret more heartily that good work should be so greatly thrown away.

It is far from my intention to tell over again a story that has been so often told; but there are certainly some points in the character of Burns that will bear to be brought out, and some chapters in his life that demand a brief rehearsal. The unity of the man's nature, for all its richness, has fallen somewhat out of sight in the pressure of new information and the apologetical ceremony of biographers. Mr. Carlyle made an inimitable bust of the poet's head of gold; may I not be forgiven if my business should have more to do with the feet, which were of clay?

YOUTH

Any view of Burns would be misleading which passed over in silence the influences of his home and his father. That father, William Burnes, after having been for many years a gardener, took a farm, married, and, like an emigrant in a new country, built himself a house with his own hands. Poverty of the most distressing sort, with sometimes the near prospect of a gaol, embittered the remainder of his life. Chill, backward, and austere with strangers, grave and imperious in his family, he was yet a man of very unusual parts and of an affectionate nature. On his way through life he had remarked much upon other men, with more result in theory than practice; and he had reflected upon many subjects as he delved the garden. His great delight was in solid conversation; he would leave his work to talk with the schoolmaster Murdoch; and Robert, when he came home late at night, not only turned aside rebuke but kept his father two hours beside the fire by the charm of his merry and vigorous talk. Nothing is more characteristic of the class in general, and William Burnes in particular, than the pains he took to get proper schooling for his boys, and, when that was no longer possible, the sense and resolution with which he set himself to supply the deficiency by his own influence. For many years he was their chief companion; he spoke with them seriously on all subjects as if they had been grown men; at night, when work was over, he taught them arithmetic; he borrowed books for them on history, science, and theology; and he felt it his duty to supplement this last — the trait is laughably Scottish — by a dialogue of his own composition, where his own private shade of orthodoxy was exactly represented. He would go to his daughter as she stayed afield herding cattle, to teach her the names of grasses and wild flowers, or to sit by her side when it thundered. Distance to strangers, deep family tenderness, love of knowledge, a narrow, precise, and formal reading of theology — everything we learn of him hangs well together, and builds up a popular Scottish type. If I mention the name of Andrew Fairservice, it is only as I might couple for an instant Dugald Dalgetty with old Marshal Loudon, to help out the reader's comprehension by a popular but unworthy instance of a class. Such was the influence of this good and wise man that his household became a school to itself, and neighbours who came into the farm at meal-time would find the whole family, father, brothers, and sisters, helping themselves with one hand, and holding a book in the other. We are surprised at the prose style of Robert; that of Gilbert need surprise us no less; even William writes a remarkable letter for a young man of such slender opportunities. One anecdote marks the taste of the family. Murdoch brought “Titus Andronicus,” and, with such dominie elocution as we may suppose, began to read it aloud before this rustic audience; but when he had reached the passage where Tamora insults Lavinia, with one voice and “in an agony of distress” they refused to hear it to an end. In such a father, and with such a home, Robert had already the making of an excellent education; and what Murdoch added, although it may not have been much in amount, was in character the very essence of a literary training. Schools and colleges, for one great man whom they complete, perhaps unmake a dozen; the strong spirit can do well upon more scanty fare.

Robert steps before us, almost from the first, in his complete character — a proud, headstrong, impetuous lad, greedy of pleasure, greedy of notice; in his own phrase “panting after distinction,” and in his brother’s “cherishing a particular jealousy of people who were richer or of more consequence than himself”; with all this, he was emphatically of the artist nature. Already he made a conspicuous figure in Tarbolton church, with the only tied hair in the parish, “and his plaid, which was of a particular colour, wrapped in a particular manner round his shoulders.” Ten years later, when a married man, the father of a family, a farmer, and an officer of Excise, we shall find him out fishing in masquerade, with fox-skin cap, belted great-coat, and great Highland broadsword. He liked dressing up, in fact, for its own sake. This is the spirit which leads to the extravagant array of Latin Quarter students, and the proverbial velveteen of the English landscape-painter; and, though the pleasure derived is in itself merely personal, it shows a man who is, to say the least of it, not pained by general attention and remark. His father wrote the family name *Burnes*; Robert early adopted the orthography *Burness* from his cousin in the Mearns; and in his twenty-eighth year changed it once more to *Burns*. It is plain that the last transformation was not made without some qualm; for in addressing his cousin he adheres, in at least one more letter, to spelling number two. And this, again, shows a man preoccupied about the manner of his appearance even down to the name, and little willing to follow custom. Again, he was proud, and justly proud, of his powers in conversation. To no other man’s have we the same conclusive testimony from different sources and from every rank of life. It is almost a commonplace that the best of his works was what he said in talk. Robertson the historian “scarcely ever met any man whose conversation displayed greater vigour”; the Duchess of Gordon declared that he “carried her off her feet”; and, when he came late to an inn, the servants would get out of bed to hear him talk. But, in these early days at least, he was determined to shine by any means. He made himself feared in the village for his tongue. He would crush weaker men to their faces, or even perhaps — for the statement of Sillar is not absolute — say cutting things of his acquaintances behind their back. At the church door, between sermons, he would parade his religious views amid hisses. These details stamp the man. He had no genteel timidities in the conduct of his life. He loved to force his personality upon the world. He would please himself, and shine. Had he lived in the Paris of , and joined his lot with the Romantics, we can conceive him writing *Jehan* for *Jean*, swaggering in Gautier's red waistcoat, and horrifying Bourgeois in a public café with paradox and gasconnade.

A leading trait throughout his whole career was his desire to be in love. *Ne fait pas ce tour qui veut.* His affections were often enough touched, but perhaps never engaged. He was all his life on a voyage of discovery, but it does not appear conclusively that he ever touched the happy isle. A man brings to love a deal of ready-made sentiment, and even from childhood obscurely prognosticates the symptoms of this vital malady. Burns was formed for love; he had passion, tenderness, and a singular bent in the direction; he could foresee, with the intuition of an artist, what love ought to be; and he could not conceive a worthy life without it. But he had ill-fortune, and was besides so greedy after every shadow of the true divinity, and so much the slave of a strong temperament, that perhaps his nerve was relaxed and his heart had lost the power of self-devotion before an opportunity occurred. The circumstances of his youth doubtless counted for something in the result. For the lads of Ayrshire, as soon as the day's work was over and the beasts were stabled, would take the road, it might be in a winter tempest, and travel perhaps miles by moss and moorland to spend an hour or two in courtship. Rule of the Bachelors' Club at Tarbolton provides that "every man proper for a member of this Society must be a professed lover of *one or more* of the female sex." The rich, as Burns himself points out, may have a choice of pleasurable occupations, but these lads had nothing but their "cannie hour at e'en." It was upon love and flirtation that this rustic society was built; gallantry was the essence of life among the Ayrshire hills as well as in the Court of Versailles; and the days were distinguished from each other by love-letters, meetings, tiffs, reconciliations, and expansions to the chosen confidant, as in a comedy of Marivaux. Here was a field for a man of Burns's indiscriminate personal ambition, where he might pursue his voyage of discovery in quest of true love, and enjoy temporary triumphs by the way. He was "constantly the victim of some fair enslaver" — at least, when it was not the other way about; and there were often underplots and secondary fair enslavers in the background. Many — or may we not say most? — of these affairs were entirely artificial. One, he tells us, he began out of "a vanity of showing his parts in courtship," for he piqued himself on his ability at a love-letter. But, however they began, these flames of his were fanned into a passion ere the end; and he stands unsurpassed in his power of self-deception, and positively without a competitor in the art, to use his own words, of "battering himself into a warm affection," — a debilitating and futile exercise. Once he had worked himself into the vein, "the agitations of his mind and body" were an astonishment to all who knew him. Such a course as this, however pleasant to a thirsty vanity, was lowering to his nature. He sank more and more towards the professional Don Juan. With a leer of what the French call fatuity, he bids the belles of Mauchline beware of his seductions; and the same cheap self-satisfaction finds a yet uglier vent when he plumes himself on the scandal at the birth of his first bastard. We can well believe what we hear of his facility in striking up an acquaintance with women: he would have conquering manners; he would bear down upon his rustic game with the grace that comes of absolute assurance — the Richelieu of Lochlea or Mossgiel. In yet another manner did these quaint ways of courtship help him into fame. If he were great as principal, he was unrivalled as confidant. He could enter into a passion; he could counsel wary moves, being, in his own phrase, so old a hawk; nay, he could turn a letter for some unlucky swain, or even string a few lines of verse that should clinch the business and fetch the hesitating fair one to the ground. Nor, perhaps, was it only his "curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity" that recommended him for a second in such affairs; it must have been a distinction to have the assistance and advice of "Rab the Ranter"; and one who was in no way formidable by himself might grow dangerous and attractive through the fame of his associate.

I think we can conceive him, in these early years, in that rough moorland country, poor among the poor with his seven pounds a year, looked upon with doubt by respectable elders, but for all that the best talker, the best letter-writer, the most famous lover and confidant, the laureate poet, and the only man who wore his hair tied in the parish. He says he had then as high a notion of himself as ever after; and I can well believe it. Among the youth he walked *facile princeps*, an apparent god; and even if, from time to time, the Reverend Mr. Auld should swoop upon him with the thunders of the Church, and, in company with seven others, Rab the Ranter must figure some fine Sunday on the stool of repentance, would there not be a sort of glory, an infernal apotheosis in so conspicuous a shame? Was not Richelieu in disgrace more idolised than ever by the dames of Paris? and when was the highwayman most acclaimed but on his way to Tyburn? Or, to take a simile from nearer home, and still more exactly to the point, what could even corporal punishment avail, administered by a cold, abstract, unearthly schoolmaster, against the influence and fame of the school's hero?

And now we come to the culminating point of Burns's early period. He began to be received into the unknown upper world. His fame soon spread from among his fellow-rebels on the benches, and began to reach the ushers and monitors of this great Ayrshire academy. This arose in part from his lax views about religion; for at this time that old war of the creeds and confessors, which is always grumbling from end to end of our poor Scotland, brisked up in these parts into a hot and virulent skirmish; and Burns found himself identified with the opposition party, — a clique of roaring lawyers and half-heretical divines, with wit enough to appreciate the value of the poet's help, and not sufficient taste to moderate his grossness and personality. We may judge of their surprise when "Holy Willie" was put into their hand; like the amorous lads of Tarbolton, they recognised in him the best of seconds. His satires began to go the round in manuscript; Mr. Aiken, one of the lawyers, "read him into fame"; he himself was soon welcome in many houses of a better sort, where his admirable talk, and his manners, which he had direct from his Maker, except for a brush he gave them at a country dancing school, completed what his poems had begun. We have a sight of him at his first visit to Adamhill, in his ploughman's shoes, coasting around the carpet as though that were sacred ground. But he soon grew used to carpets and their owners; and he was still the superior of all whom he encountered, and ruled the roost in conversation. Such was the impression made, that a young clergyman, himself a man of ability, trembled and became confused when he saw Robert enter the church in which he was to preach. It is not surprising that the poet determined to publish: he had now stood the test of some publicity, and under this hopeful impulse he composed in six winter months the bulk of his more important poems. Here was a young man who, from a very humble place, was mounting rapidly; from the cynosure of a parish, he had become the talk of a county; once the bard of rural courtships, he was now about to appear as a bound and printed poet in the world's bookshops.

A few more intimate strokes are necessary to complete the sketch. This strong young ploughman, who feared no competitor with the flail, suffered like a fine lady from sleeplessness and vapours; he would fall into the blackest melancholies, and be filled with remorse for the past and terror for the future. He was still not perhaps devoted to religion, but haunted by it; and at a touch of sickness prostrated himself before God in what I can only call unmanly penitence. As he had aspirations beyond his place in the world, so he had tastes, thoughts, and weaknesses to match. He loved to walk under a wood to the sound of a winter tempest; he had a singular tenderness for animals; he carried a book with him in his pocket when he went abroad, and wore out in this service two copies of the “Man of Feeling.” With young people in the field at work he was very long-suffering; and when his brother Gilbert spoke sharply to them — ”O man, ye are no’ for young folk,” he would say, and give the defaulter a helping hand and a smile. In the hearts of the men whom he met, he read as in a book; and, what is yet more rare, his knowledge of himself equalled his knowledge of others. There are no truer things said of Burns than what is to be found in his own letters. Country Don Juan as he was, he had none of that blind vanity which values itself on what it is not; he knew his own strength and weakness to a hair: he took himself boldly for what he was, and, except in moments of hypochondria, declared himself content.

On the night of Mauchline races, , the young men and women of the place joined in a penny ball, according to their custom. In the same set danced Jean Armour, the master-mason's daughter, and our dark-eyed Don Juan. His dog (not the immortal Luath, but a successor unknown to fame, *caret quia vote sacro*), apparently sensible of some neglect, followed his master to and fro, to the confusion of the dancers. Some mirthful comments followed; and Jean heard the poet say to his partner — or, as I should imagine, laughingly launch the remark to the company at large — that "he wished he could get any of the lasses to like him as well as his dog." Some time after, as the girl was bleaching clothes on Mauchline green, Robert chanced to go by, still accompanied by his dog; and the dog, "scouring in long excursion," scampered with four black paws across the linen. This brought the two into conversation; when Jean, with a somewhat hoydenish advance, inquired if "he had yet got any of the lasses to like him as well as his dog?" It is one of the misfortunes of the professional Don Juan that his honour forbids him to refuse battle; he is in life like the Roman soldier upon duty, or like the sworn physician who must attend on all diseases. Burns accepted the provocation; hungry hope reawakened in his heart; here was a girl — pretty, simple at least, if not honestly stupid, and plainly not averse to his attentions: it seemed to him once more as if love might here be waiting him. Had he but known the truth! for this facile and empty-headed girl had nothing more in view than a flirtation; and her heart, from the first and on to the end of her story, was engaged by another man. Burns once more commenced the celebrated process of "battering himself into a warm affection"; and the proofs of his success are to be found in many verses of the period. Nor did he succeed with himself only; Jean, with her heart still elsewhere, succumbed to his fascination, and early in the next year the natural consequence became manifest. It was a heavy stroke for this unfortunate couple. They had trifled with life, and were now rudely reminded of life's serious issues. Jean awoke to the ruin of her hopes; the best she had now to expect was marriage with a man who was a stranger to her dearest thoughts; she might now be glad if she could get what she would never have chosen. As for Burns, at the stroke of the calamity he recognised that his voyage of discovery had led him into a wrong hemisphere — that he was not, and never had been, really in love with Jean. Hear him in the pressure of the hour. "Against two things," he writes, "I am as fixed as fate — staying at home, and owning her conjugally. The first, by heaven, I will not do! — the last, by hell, I will never do!" And then he adds, perhaps already in a more relenting temper: “If you see Jean, tell her I will meet her, so God hold me in my hour of need.” They met accordingly; and Burns, touched with her misery, came down from these heights of independence, and gave her a written acknowledgment of marriage. It is the punishment of Don Juanism to create continually false positions — relations of life which are wrong in themselves, and which it is equally wrong to break or to perpetuate. This was such a case. Worldly Wiseman would have laughed and gone his way; let us be glad that Burns was better counselled by his heart. When we discover that we can no longer be true, the next best is to be kind. I daresay he came away from that interview not very content, but with a glorious conscience; and as he went homeward, he would sing his favourite, “How are Thy servants blest, O Lord!” Jean, on the other hand, armed with her “lines,” confided her position to the master-mason, her father, and his wife. Burns and his brother were then in a fair way to ruin themselves in their farm; the poet was an execrable match for any well-to-do country lass; and perhaps old Armour had an inkling of a previous attachment on his daughter’s part. At least, he was not so much incensed by her slip from virtue as by the marriage which had been designed to cover it. Of this he would not hear a word. Jean, who had besought the acknowledgment only to appease her parents, and not at all from any violent inclination to the poet, readily gave up the paper for destruction; and all parties imagined, although wrongly, that the marriage was thus dissolved. To a proud man like Burns here was a crushing blow. The concession which had been wrung from his pity was now publicly thrown back in his teeth. The Armour family preferred disgrace to his connection. Since the promise, besides, he had doubtless been busy “battering himself” back again into his affection for the girl; and the blow would not only take him in his vanity, but wound him at the heart.

He relieved himself in verse; but for such a smarting affront manuscript poetry was insufficient to console him. He must find a more powerful remedy in good flesh and blood, and after this discomfiture, set forth again at once upon his voyage of discovery in quest of love. It is perhaps one of the most touching things in human nature, as it is a commonplace of psychology, that when a man has just lost hope or confidence in one love, he is then most eager to find and lean upon another. The universe could not be yet exhausted; there must be hope and love waiting for him somewhere; and so, with his head down, this poor, insulted poet ran once more upon his fate. There was an innocent and gentle Highland nursery-maid at service in a neighbouring family; and he had soon battered himself and her into a warm affection and a secret engagement. Jean’s marriage lines had not been destroyed till March , ; yet all was settled between Burns and Mary Campbell by Sunday, May , when they met for the last time, and said farewell with rustic solemnities upon the banks of Ayr. They each wet their hands in a stream, and, standing one on either bank, held a Bible between them as they vowed eternal faith. Then they exchanged Bibles, on one of which Burns, for greater security, had inscribed texts as to the binding nature of an oath; and surely, if ceremony can do aught to fix the wandering affections, here were two people united for life. Mary came of a superstitious family, so that she perhaps insisted on these rites; but they must have been eminently to the taste of Burns at this period; for nothing would seem superfluous, and no oath great enough, to stay his tottering constancy.

Events of consequence now happened thickly in the poet's life. His book was announced; the Armours sought to summon him at law for the aliment of the child; he lay here and there in hiding to correct the sheets; he was under an engagement for Jamaica, where Mary was to join him as his wife; now he had "orders within three weeks at latest to repair aboard the *Nancy*, Captain Smith"; now his chest was already on the road to Greenock; and now, in the wild autumn weather on the moorland, he measures verses of farewell: —

"The bursting tears my heart declare;
Farewell the bonny banks of Ayr!"

But the great Master Dramatist had secretly another intention for the piece; by the most violent and complicated solution, in which death and birth and sudden fame all play a part as interposing deities, the act-drop fell upon a scene of transformation. Jean was brought to bed of twins, and, by an amicable arrangement, the Burnses took the boy to bring up by hand, while the girl remained with her mother. The success of the book was immediate and emphatic; it put £ at once into the author's purse; and he was encouraged upon all hands to go to Edinburgh and push his success in a second and larger edition. Third and last in these series of interpositions, a letter came one day to Mossgiel Farm for Robert. He went to the window to read it; a sudden change came over his face, and he left the room without a word. Years afterwards, when the story began to leak out, his family understood that he had then learned the death of Highland Mary. Except in a few poems and a few dry indications purposely misleading as to date, Burns himself made no reference to this passage of his life; it was an adventure of which, for I think sufficient reasons, he desired to bury the details. Of one thing we may be glad: in after years he visited the poor girl's mother, and left her with the impression that he was "a real warm-hearted chield."

Perhaps a month after he received this intelligence, he set out for Edinburgh on a pony he had borrowed from a friend. The town that winter was “agog with the ploughman poet.” Robertson, Dugald Stewart, Blair, “Duchess Gordon and all the gay world,” were of his acquaintance. Such a revolution is not to be found in literary history. He was now, it must be remembered, twenty-seven years of age; he had fought since his early boyhood an obstinate battle against poor soil, bad seed, and inclement seasons, wading deep in Ayrshire mosses, guiding the plough in the furrow, wielding “the thresher’s weary flingin’-tree”; and his education, his diet, and his pleasures, had been those of a Scots countryman. Now he stepped forth suddenly among the polite and learned. We can see him as he then was, in his boots and buckskins, his blue coat and waistcoat striped with buff and blue, like a farmer in his Sunday best; the heavy ploughman’s figure firmly planted on its burly legs; his face full of sense and shrewdness, and with a somewhat melancholy air of thought, and his large dark eye “literally glowing” as he spoke. “I never saw such another eye in a human head,” says Walter Scott, “though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time.” With men, whether they were lords or omnipotent critics, his manner was plain, dignified, and free from bashfulness or affectation. If he made a slip, he had the social courage to pass on and refrain from explanation. He was not embarrassed in this society, because he read and judged the men; he could spy snobbery in a titled lord; and, as for the critics, he dismissed their system in an epigram. “These gentlemen,” said he, “remind me of some spinsters in my country who spin their thread so fine that it is neither fit for weft nor woof.” Ladies, on the other hand, surprised him; he was scarce commander of himself in their society; he was disqualified by his acquired nature as a Don Juan; and he, who had been so much at his ease with country lasses, treated the town dames to an extreme of deference. One lady, who met him at a ball, gave Chambers a speaking sketch of his demeanour. “His manners were not prepossessing — scarcely, she thinks, manly or natural. It seemed as if he affected a rusticity or *landertness*, so that when he said the music was ‘bonnie, bonnie,’ it was like the expression of a child.” These would be company manners; and doubtless on a slight degree of intimacy the affectation would grow less. And his talk to women had always “a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged the attention particularly.”

The Edinburgh magnates (to conclude this episode at once) behaved well to Burns from first to last. Were heaven-born genius to revisit us in similar guise, I am not venturing too far when I say that he need expect neither so warm a welcome nor such solid help. Although Burns was only a peasant, and one of no very elegant reputation as to morals, he was made welcome to their homes. They gave him a great deal of good advice, helped him to some five hundred pounds of ready money, and got him, as soon as he asked it, a place in the Excise. Burns, on his part, bore the elevation with perfect dignity; and with perfect dignity returned, when the time had come, into a country privacy of life. His powerful sense never deserted him, and from the first he recognised that his Edinburgh popularity was but an ovation and the affair of a day. He wrote a few letters in a high-flown, bombastic vein of gratitude; but in practice he suffered no man to intrude upon his self-respect. On the other hand, he never turned his back, even for a moment, on his old associates; and he was always ready to sacrifice an acquaintance to a friend, although the acquaintance were a duke. He would be a bold man who should promise similar conduct in equally exacting circumstances. It was, in short, an admirable appearance on the stage of life — socially successful, intimately self-respecting, and like a gentleman from first to last.

In the present study, this must only be taken by the way, while we return to Burns's love affairs. Even on the road to Edinburgh he had seized upon the opportunity of a flirtation, and had carried the "battering" so far that when next he moved from town, it was to steal two days with this anonymous fair one. The exact importance to Burns of this affair may be gathered from the song in which he commemorated its occurrence. "I love the dear lassie," he sings, "because she loves me"; or, in the tongue of prose: "Finding an opportunity, I did not hesitate to profit by it; and even now, if it returned, I should not hesitate to profit by it again." A love thus founded has no interest for mortal man. Meantime, early in the winter, and only once, we find him regretting Jean in his correspondence. "Because" — such is his reason — "because he does not think he will ever meet so delicious an armful again"; and then, after a brief excursion into verse, he goes straight on to describe a new episode in the voyage of discovery with the daughter of a Lothian farmer for a heroine. I must ask the reader to follow all these references to his future wife; they are essential to the comprehension of Burns's character and fate. In June we find him back at Mauchline, a famous man. There, the Armour family greeted him with a "mean, servile compliance," which increased his former disgust. Jean was not less compliant; a second time the poor girl submitted to the fascination of the man whom she did not love, and whom she had so cruelly insulted little more than a year ago; and, though Burns took advantage of her weakness, it was in the ugliest and most cynical spirit, and with a heart absolutely indifferent. Judge of this by a letter written some twenty days after his return — a letter to my mind among the most degrading in the whole collection — a letter which seems to have been inspired by a boastful, libertine bagman. "I am afraid," it goes, "I have almost ruined one source, the principal one, indeed, of my former happiness — the eternal propensity I always had to fall in love. My heart no more glows with feverish rapture; I have no paradisiacal evening interviews." Even the process of "battering" has failed him, you perceive. Still he had some one in his eye — a lady, if you please, with a fine figure and elegant manners, and who had "seen the politest quarters in Europe." "I frequently visited her," he writes, "and after passing regularly the intermediate degrees between the distant formal bow and the familiar grasp round the waist, I ventured, in my careless way, to talk of friendship in rather ambiguous terms; and after her return to — — , I wrote her in the same terms. Miss, construing my remarks farther than even I intended, flew off in a tangent of female dignity and reserve, like a mounting lark in an April morning; and wrote me an answer which measured out very completely what an immense way I had to travel before I could reach the climate of her favours. But I am an old hawk at the sport, and wrote her such a cool, deliberate, prudent reply, as brought my bird from her aerial towerings, pop, down to my foot, like Corporal Trim's hat." I avow a carnal longing, after this transcription, to buffet the Old Hawk about the ears. There is little question that to this lady he must have repeated his addresses, and that he was by her (Miss Chalmers) eventually, though not at all unkindly, rejected. One more detail to characterise the period. Six months after the date of this letter, Burns, back to Edinburgh, is served with a writ *in meditatione fugæ*, on behalf of some Edinburgh fair one, probably of humble rank, who declared an intention of adding to his family.

About the beginning of December () a new period opens in the story of the poet's random affections. He met at a tea party one Mrs. Agnes M'Lehose, a married woman of about his own age, who, with her two children, had been deserted by an unworthy husband. She had wit, could use her pen, and had read "Werther" with attention. Sociable, and even somewhat frisky, there was a good, sound, human kernel in the woman; a warmth of love, strong dogmatic religious feeling, and a considerable, but not authoritative, sense of the proprieties. Of what biographers refer to daintily as "her somewhat voluptuous style of beauty," judging from the silhouette in Mr. Scott Douglas's invaluable edition, the reader will be fastidious if he does not approve. Take her for all in all, I believe she was the best woman Burns encountered. The pair took a fancy for each other on the spot; Mrs. M'Lehose, in her turn, invited him to tea; but the poet, in his character of the Old Hawk, preferred a *tête-à-tête*, excused himself at the last moment, and offered a visit instead. An accident confined him to his room for nearly a month, and this led to the famous Clarinda and Sylvander correspondence. It was begun in simple sport; they are already at their fifth or sixth exchange, when Clarinda writes: “It is really curious so much *fun* passing between two persons who saw each other only *once*”; but it is hardly safe for a man and woman in the flower of their years to write almost daily, and sometimes in terms too ambiguous, sometimes in terms too plain, and generally in terms too warm, for mere acquaintance. The exercise partakes a little of the nature of battering, and danger may be apprehended when next they meet. It is difficult to give any account of this remarkable correspondence; it is too far away from us, and perhaps not yet far enough, in point of time and manner; the imagination is baffled by these stilted literary utterances, warming, in bravura passages, into downright truculent nonsense. Clarinda has one famous sentence in which she bids Sylvander connect the thought of his mistress with the changing phases of the year; it was enthusiastically admired by the swain, but on the modern mind produces mild amazement and alarm. “Oh, Clarinda”, writes Burns, “shall we not meet in a state — some yet unknown state — of being, where the lavish hand of plenty shall minister to the highest wish of Benevolence, and where the chill north wind of Prudence shall never blow over the flowery field of Enjoyment?” The design may be that of an Old Hawk, but the style is more suggestive of a Bird of Paradise. It is sometimes hard to fancy they are not gravely making fun of each other as they write. Religion, poetry, love, and charming sensibility, are the current topics. “I am delighted, charming Clarinda, with your honest enthusiasm for religion,” writes Burns; and the pair entertained a fiction that this was their “favourite subject.” “This is Sunday,” writes the lady, “and not a word on our favourite subject. O fy! ‘divine Clarinda!’” I suspect, although quite unconsciously on the part of the lady, who was bent on his redemption, they but used the favourite subject as a stalking-horse. In the meantime, the sportive acquaintance was ripening steadily into a genuine passion. Visits took place, and then became frequent. Clarinda’s friends were hurt and suspicious; her clergyman interfered; she herself had smart attacks of conscience; but her heart had gone from her control; it was altogether his, and she “counted all things but loss — heaven excepted — that she might win and keep him.” Burns himself was transported while in her neighbourhood, but his transports somewhat rapidly declined during an absence. I am tempted to imagine that, womanlike, he took on the colour of his mistress’s feeling; that he could not but heat himself at the fire of her unaffected passion; but that, like one who should leave the hearth upon a winter’s night, his temperature soon fell when he was out of sight, and in a word, though he could share the symptoms, that he had never shared the disease. At the same time, amid the fustian of the letters there are forcible and true expressions, and the love-verses that he wrote upon Clarinda are among the most moving in the language.

We are approaching the solution. In mid-winter, Jean, once more in the family way, was turned out of doors by her family; and Burns had her received and cared for in the house of a friend. For he remained to the last imperfect in his character of Don Juan, and lacked the sinister courage to desert his victim. About the middle of February (), he had to tear himself from his Clarinda and make a journey into the south-west on business. Clarinda gave him two shirts for his little son. They were daily to meet in prayer at an appointed hour. Burns, too late for the post at Glasgow, sent her a letter by parcel that she might not have to wait. Clarinda on her part writes, this time with a beautiful simplicity: “I think the streets look deserted-like since Monday; and there’s a certain insipidity in good kind folks I once enjoyed not a little. Miss Wardrobe supped here on Monday. She once named you, which kept me from falling asleep. I drank your health in a glass of ale — as the lasses do at Hallowe’en — ’in to mysel’.’” Arrived at Mauchline, Burns installed Jean Armour in a lodging, and prevailed on Mrs. Armour to promise her help and countenance in the approaching confinement. This was kind at least; but hear his expressions: “I have taken her a room; I have taken her to my arms; I have given her a mahogany bed; I have given her a guinea.... I swore her privately and solemnly never to attempt any claim on me as a husband, even though anybody should persuade her she had such a claim — which she has not, neither during my life nor after my death. She did all this like a good girl.” And then he took advantage of the situation. To Clarinda he wrote: “I this morning called for a certain woman. I am disgusted with her; I cannot endure her”; and he accused her of “tasteless insipidity, vulgarity of soul, and mercenary fawning.” This was already in March; by the thirteenth of that month he was back in Edinburgh. On the th, he wrote to Clarinda: “Your hopes, your fears, your cares, my love, are mine; so don’t mind them. I will take you in my hand through the dreary wilds of this world, and scare away the ravening bird or beast that would annoy you.” Again, on the st: “Will you open, with satisfaction and delight, a letter from a man who loves you, who has loved you, and who will love you, to death, through death, and for ever?... How rich am I to have such a treasure as you!... ‘The Lord God knoweth,’ and, perhaps, ‘Israel he shall know,’ my love and your merit. Adieu, Clarinda! I am going to remember you in my prayers.” By the 7th of April, seventeen days later, he had already decided to make Jean Armour publicly his wife.

A more astonishing stage-trick is not to be found. And yet his conduct is seen, upon a nearer examination, to be grounded both in reason and in kindness. He was now about to embark on a solid worldly career; he had taken a farm; the affair with Clarinda, however gratifying to his heart, was too contingent to offer any great consolation to a man like Burns, to whom marriage must have seemed the very dawn of hope and self-respect. This is to regard the question from its lowest aspect; but there is no doubt that he entered on this new period of his life with a sincere determination to do right. He had just helped his brother with a loan of a hundred and eighty pounds; should he do nothing for the poor girl whom he had ruined? It was true he could not do as he did without brutally wounding Clarinda; that was the punishment of his bygone fault; he was, as he truly says, "damned with a choice only of different species of error and misconduct." To be professional Don Juan, to accept the provocation of any lively lass upon the village green, may thus lead a man through a series of detestable words and actions, and land him at last in an undesired and most unsuitable union for life. If he had been strong enough to refrain or bad enough to persevere in evil; if he had only not been Don Juan at all, or been Don Juan altogether, there had been some possible road for him throughout this troublesome world; but a man, alas! who is equally at the call of his worse and better instincts, stands among changing events without foundation or resource.

DOWNWARD COURSE

It may be questionable whether any marriage could have tamed Burns; but it is at least certain that there was no hope for him in the marriage he contracted. He did right, but then he had done wrong before; it was, as I said, one of those relations in life which it seems equally wrong to break or to perpetuate. He neither loved nor respected his wife. “God knows,” he writes, “my choice was as random as blind man’s buff.” He consoles himself by the thought that he has acted kindly to her; that she “has the most sacred enthusiasm of attachment to him”; that she has a good figure; that she has a “wood-note wild,” “her voice rising with ease to B natural,” no less. The effect on the reader is one of unmingled pity for both parties concerned. This was not the wife who (in his own words) could “enter into his favourite studies or relish his favourite authors”; this was not even a wife, after the affair of the marriage lines, in whom a husband could joy to place his trust. Let her manage a farm with sense, let her voice rise to B natural all day long, she would still be a peasant to her lettered lord, and an object of pity rather than of equal affection. She could now be faithful, she could now be forgiving, she could now be generous even to a pathetic and touching degree; but coming from one who was unloved, and who had scarce shown herself worthy of the sentiment, these were all virtues thrown away, which could neither change her husband’s heart nor affect the inherent destiny of their relation. From the outset, it was a marriage that had no root in nature; and we find him, ere long, lyrically regretting Highland Mary, renewing correspondence with Clarinda in the warmest language, on doubtful terms with Mrs. Riddel, and on terms unfortunately beyond any question with Anne Park.

Alas! this was not the only ill circumstance in his future. He had been idle for some eighteen months, superintending his new edition, hanging on to settle with the publisher, travelling in the Highlands with Willie Nichol, or philandering with Mrs. M’Lehose; and in this period the radical part of the man had suffered irremediable hurt. He had lost his habits of industry, and formed the habit of pleasure. Apologetical biographers assure us of the contrary; but from the first he saw and recognised the danger for himself; his mind, he writes, is “enervated to an alarming degree,” by idleness and dissipation; and again, “my mind has been vitiated with idleness.” It never fairly recovered. To business he could bring the required diligence and attention without difficulty; but he was thenceforward incapable, except in rare instances, of that superior effort of concentration which is required for serious literary work. He may be said, indeed, to have worked no more, and only amused himself with letters. The man who had written a volume of masterpieces in six months, during the remainder of his life rarely found courage for any more sustained effort than a song. And the nature of the songs is itself characteristic of these idle later years; for they are often as polished and elaborate as his earlier works were frank, and headlong, and colloquial; and this sort of verbal elaboration in short flights is, for a man of literary turn, simply the most agreeable of pastimes. The change in manner coincides exactly with the Edinburgh visit. In he had written the "Address to a Louse," which may be taken as an extreme instance of the first manner; and already, in , we come upon the rosebud pieces to Miss Cruikshank, which are extreme examples of the second. The change was, therefore, the direct and very natural consequence of his great change in life; but it is not the less typical of his loss of moral courage that he should have given up all larger ventures, nor the less melancholy that a man who first attacked literature with a hand that seemed capable of moving mountains, should have spent his later years in whittling cherry-stones.

Meanwhile, the farm did not prosper; he had to join to it the salary of an exciseman; at last he had to give it up, and rely altogether on the latter resource. He was an active officer; and, though he sometimes tempered severity with mercy, we have local testimony, oddly representing the public feeling of the period, that, while "in everything else he was a perfect gentleman, when he met with anything seizable he was no better than any other gauger."

There is but one manifestation of the man in these last years which need delay us: and that was the sudden interest in politics which arose from his sympathy with the great French Revolution. His only political feeling had been hitherto a sentimental Jacobitism, not more or less respectable than that of Scott, Aytoun, and the rest of what George Borrow has nicknamed the "Charlie over the water" Scotsmen. It was a sentiment almost entirely literary and picturesque in its origin, built on ballads and the adventures of the Young Chevalier; and in Burns it is the more excusable, because he lay out of the way of active politics in his youth. With the great French Revolution, something living, practical, and feasible appeared to him for the first time in this realm of human action. The young ploughman who had desired so earnestly to rise, now reached out his sympathies to a whole nation animated with the same desire. Already in we find the old Jacobitism hand in hand with the new popular doctrine, when, in a letter of indignation against the zeal of a Whig clergyman, he writes: "I daresay the American Congress in will be allowed to be as able and as enlightened as the English Convention was in ; and that their posterity will celebrate the centenary of their deliverance from us, as duly and sincerely as we do ours from the oppressive measures of the wrong-headed house of Stuart." As time wore on, his sentiments grew more pronounced and even violent; but there was a basis of sense and generous feeling to his hottest excess. What he asked was a fair chance for the individual in life; an open road to success and distinction for all classes of men. It was in the same spirit that he had helped to found a public library in the parish where his farm was situated, and that he sang his fervent snatches against tyranny and tyrants. Witness, were it alone, this verse:

"Here's freedom to him that wad read,
Here's freedom to him that wad write;
There's nane ever feared that the truth should be heard
But them wham the truth wad indite."

Yet his enthusiasm for the cause was scarce guided by wisdom. Many stories are preserved of the bitter and unwise words he used in country coteries; how he proposed Washington's health as an amendment to Pitt's, gave as a toast "the last verse of the last chapter of Kings," and celebrated Dumouriez in a doggerel impromptu full of ridicule and hate. Now his sympathies would inspire him with "Scots wha hae"; now involve him in a drunken broil with a loyal officer, and consequent apologies and explanations, hard to offer for a man of Burns's stomach. Nor was this the front of his offending. On February , , he took part in the capture of an armed smuggler, bought at the subsequent sale four carronades, and despatched them with a letter to the French Assembly. Letter and guns were stopped at Dover by the English officials; there was trouble for Burns with his superiors; he was reminded firmly, however delicately, that, as a paid official, it was his duty to obey and to be silent; and all the blood of this poor, proud, and falling man must have rushed to his head at the humiliation. His letter to Mr. Erskine, subsequently Earl of Mar, testifies, in its turgid, turbulent phrases, to a perfect passion of alarmed self-respect and vanity. He had been muzzled, and muzzled, when all was said, by his paltry salary as an exciseman; alas! had he not a family to keep? Already, he wrote, he looked forward to some such judgment from a hackney scribbler as this: "Burns, notwithstanding the *fanfaronnade* of independence to be found in his works, and after having been held forth to public view and to public estimation as a man of some genius, yet, quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, he dwindled into a paltry exciseman, and slunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest of pursuits, and among the vilest of mankind." And then on he goes, in a style of rhodomontade, but filled with living indignation, to declare his right to a political opinion, and his willingness to shed his blood for the political birthright of his sons. Poor, perturbed spirit! he was indeed exercised in vain; those who share and those who differ from his sentiments about the Revolution, alike understand and sympathise with him in this painful strait; for poetry and human manhood are lasting like the race, and politics, which are but a wrongful striving after right, pass and change from year to year and age to age. "The Twa Dogs" has already outlasted the constitution of Siéyès and the policy of the Whigs; and Burns is better known among English-speaking races than either Pitt or Fox.

Meanwhile, whether as a man, a husband, or a poet, his steps led downward. He knew, knew bitterly, that the best was out of him: he refused to make another volume, for he felt it would be a disappointment; he grew petulantly alive to criticism, unless he was sure it reached him from a friend. For his songs, he would take nothing; they were all that he could do; the proposed Scots play, the proposed series of Scots tales in verse, all had gone to water; and in a fling of pain and disappointment, which is surely noble with the nobility of a viking, he would rather stoop to borrow than to accept money for these last and inadequate efforts of his muse. And this desperate abnegation rises at times near to the height of madness; as when he pretended that he had not written, but only found and published, his immortal "Auld Lang Syne." In the same spirit he became more scrupulous as an artist; he was doing so little, he would fain do that little well; and about two months before his death, he asked Thomson to send back all his manuscripts for revisal, saying that he would rather write five songs to his taste than twice that number otherwise. The battle of his life was lost; in forlorn efforts to do well, in desperate submissions to evil, the last years flew by. His temper is dark and explosive, launching epigrams, quarrelling with his friends, jealous of young puppy officers. He tries to be a good father; he boasts himself a libertine. Sick, sad, and jaded, he can refuse no occasion of temporary pleasure, no opportunity to shine; and he who had once refused the invitations of lords and ladies is now whistled to the inn by any curious stranger. His death (July ,), in his thirty-seventh year, was indeed a kindly dispensation. It is the fashion to say he died of drink; many a man has drunk more and yet lived with reputation, and reached a good age. That drink and debauchery helped to destroy his constitution, and were the means of his unconscious suicide, is doubtless true; but he had failed in life, had lost his power of work, and was already married to the poor, unworthy, patient Jean, before he had shown his inclination to convivial nights, or at least before that inclination had become dangerous either to his health or his self-respect. He had trifled with life, and must pay the penalty. He had chosen to be Don Juan, he had grasped at temporary pleasures, and substantial happiness and solid industry had passed him by. He died of being Robert Burns, and there is no levity in such a statement of the case; for shall we not, one and all, deserve a similar epitaph?

WORKS

The somewhat cruel necessity which has lain upon me throughout this paper only to touch upon those points in the life of Burns where correction or amplification seemed desirable, leaves me little opportunity to speak of the works which have made his name so famous. Yet, even here, a few observations seem necessary.

At the time when the poet made his appearance and great first success, his work was remarkable in two ways. For, first, in an age when poetry had become abstract and conventional, instead of continuing to deal with shepherds, thunderstorms, and personifications, he dealt with the actual circumstances of his life, however matter-of-fact and sordid these might be. And, second, in a time when English versification was particularly stiff, lame, and feeble, and words were used with ultra-academical timidity, he wrote verses that were easy, racy, graphic, and forcible, and used language with absolute tact and courage as it seemed most fit to give a clear impression. If you take even those English authors whom we know Burns to have most admired and studied, you will see at once that he owed them nothing but a warning. Take Shenstone, for instance, and watch that elegant author as he tries to grapple with the facts of life. He has a description, I remember, of a gentleman engaged in sliding or walking on thin ice, which is a little miracle of incompetence. You see my memory fails me, and I positively cannot recollect whether his hero was sliding or walking; as though a writer should describe a skirmish, and the reader, at the end, be still uncertain whether it were a charge of cavalry or a slow and stubborn advance of foot. There could be no such ambiguity in Burns; his work is at the opposite pole from such indefinite and stammering performances; and a whole lifetime passed in the study of Shenstone would only lead a man further and further from writing the “Address to a Louse.” Yet Burns, like most great artists, proceeded from a school and continued a tradition; only the school and tradition were Scottish, and not English. While the English language was becoming daily more pedantic and inflexible, and English letters more colourless and slack, there was another dialect in the sister country, and a different school of poetry, tracing its descent, through King James I., from Chaucer. The dialect alone accounts for much; for it was then written colloquially, which kept it fresh and supple; and, although not shaped for heroic flights, it was a direct and vivid medium for all that had to do with social life. Hence, whenever Scottish poets left their laborious imitations of bad English verses, and fell back on their own dialect, their style would kindle, and they would write of their convivial and somewhat gross existences with pith and point. In Ramsay, and far more in the poor lad Fergusson, there was mettle, humour, literary courage, and a power of saying what they wished to say definitely and brightly, which in the latter case should have justified great anticipations. Had Burns died at the same age as Fergusson, he would have left us literally nothing worth remark. To Ramsay and to Fergusson, then, he was indebted in a very uncommon degree, not only following their tradition and using their measures, but directly and avowedly imitating their pieces. The same tendency to borrow a hint, to work on some one else's foundation, is notable in Burns from first to last, in the period of song-writing as well as in that of the early poems; and strikes one oddly in a man of such deep originality, who left so strong a print on all he touched, and whose work is so greatly distinguished by that character of "inevitability" which Wordsworth denied to Goethe.

When we remember Burns's obligations to his predecessors, we must never forget his immense advances on them. They had already "discovered" nature; but Burns discovered poetry — a higher and more intense way of thinking of the things that go to make up nature, a higher and more ideal key of words in which to speak of them. Ramsay and Fergusson excelled at making a popular — or shall we say vulgar? — sort of society verses, comical and prosaic, written, you would say, in taverns while a supper-party waited for its laureate's word; but on the appearance of Burns, this coarse and laughing literature was touched to finer issues, and learned gravity of thought and natural pathos.

What he had gained from his predecessors was a direct, speaking style, and to walk on his own feet instead of on academical stilts. There was never a man of letters with more absolute command of his means; and we may say of him, without excess, that his style was his slave. Hence that energy of epithet, so concise and telling, that a foreigner is tempted to explain it by some special richness or aptitude in the dialect he wrote. Hence that Homeric justice and completeness of description which gives us the very physiognomy of nature, in body and detail, as nature is. Hence, too, the unbroken literary quality of his best pieces, which keeps him from any slip into the weariful trade of word-painting, and presents everything, as everything should be presented by the art of words, in a clear, continuous medium of thought. Principal Shairp, for instance, gives us a paraphrase of one tough verse of the original; and for those who know the Greek poets only by paraphrase, this has the very quality they are accustomed to look for and admire in Greek. The contemporaries of Burns were surprised that he should visit so many celebrated mountains and waterfalls, and not seize the opportunity to make a poem. Indeed, it is not for those who have a true command of the art of words, but for peddling, professional amateurs, that these pointed occasions are most useful and inspiring. As those who speak French imperfectly are glad to dwell on any topic they may have talked upon or heard others talk upon before, because they know appropriate words for it in French, so the dabbler in verse rejoices to behold a waterfall, because he has learned the sentiment and knows appropriate words for it in poetry. But the dialect of Burns was fitted to deal with any subject; and whether it was a stormy night, a shepherd's collie, a sheep struggling in the snow, the conduct of cowardly soldiers in the field, the gait and cogitations of a drunken man, or only a village cock-crow in the morning, he could find language to give it freshness, body, and relief. He was always ready to borrow the hint of a design, as though he had a difficulty in commencing — a difficulty, let us say, in choosing a subject out of a world which seemed all equally living and significant to him; but once he had the subject chosen, he could cope with nature single-handed, and make every stroke a triumph. Again, his absolute mastery in his art enabled him to express each and all of his different humours, and to pass smoothly and congruously from one to another. Many men invent a dialect for only one side of their nature — perhaps their pathos or their humour, or the delicacy of their senses — and, for lack of a medium, leave all the others unexpressed. You meet such an one, and find him in conversation full of thought, feeling, and experience, which he has lacked the art to employ in his writings. But Burns was not thus hampered in the practice of the literary art; he could throw the whole weight of his nature into his work, and impregnate it from end to end. If Doctor Johnson, that stilted and accomplished stylist, had lacked the sacred Boswell, what should we have known of him? and how should we have delighted in his acquaintance as we do? Those who spoke with Burns tell us how much we have lost who did not. But I think they exaggerate their privilege: I think we have the whole Burns in our possession set forth in his consummate verses.

It was by his style, and not by his matter, that he affected Wordsworth and the world. There is, indeed, only one merit worth considering in a man of letters — that he should write well; and only one damning fault — that he should write ill. We are little the better for the reflections of the sailor's parrot in the story. And so, if Burns helped to change the course of literary history, it was by his frank, direct, and masterly utterance, and not by his homely choice of subjects. That was imposed upon him, not chosen upon a principle. He wrote from his own experience, because it was his nature so to do, and the tradition of the school from which he proceeded was fortunately not opposed to homely subjects. But to these homely subjects he communicated the rich commentary of his nature; they were all steeped in Burns; and they interest us not in themselves, but because they have been passed through the spirit of so genuine and vigorous a man. Such is the stamp of living literature; and there was never any more alive than that of Burns.

What a gust of sympathy there is in him sometimes flowing out in byways hitherto unused, upon mice, and flowers, and the devil himself; sometimes speaking plainly between human hearts; sometimes ringing out in exultation like a peal of bells! When we compare the "Farmer's Salutation to his Auld Mare Maggie," with the clever and inhumane production of half a century earlier, "The Auld Man's Mare's dead," we see in a nut-shell the spirit of the change introduced by Burns. And as to its manner, who that has read it can forget how the collie, Luath, in the "Twa Dogs," describes and enters into the merry-making in the cottage?

"The luntin' pipe an' sneeshin' mill
Are handed round wi' richt guid will;
The canty auld folks crackin' crouse,
The young anes rantin' through the house —
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them."

It was this ardent power of sympathy that was fatal to so many women, and, through Jean Armour, to himself at last. His humour comes from him in a stream so deep and easy that I will venture to call him the best of humorous poets. He turns about in the midst to utter a noble sentiment or a trenchant remark on human life, and the style changes and rises to the occasion. I think it is Principal Shairp who says, happily, that Burns would have been no Scotsman if he had not loved to moralise; neither, may we add, would he have been his father's son; but (what is worthy of note) his moralisings are to a large extent the moral of his own career. He was among the least impersonal of artists. Except in the "Jolly Beggars," he shows no gleam of dramatic instinct. Mr. Carlyle has complained that "Tam o' Shanter" is, from the absence of this quality, only a picturesque and external piece of work; and I may add that in the "Twa Dogs" it is precisely in the infringement of dramatic propriety that a great deal of the humour of the speeches depends for its existence and effect. Indeed, Burns was so full of his identity that it breaks forth on every page; and there is scarce an appropriate remark either in praise or blame of his own conduct but he has put it himself into verse. Alas for the tenor of these remarks! They are, indeed, his own pitiful apology for such a marred existence and talents so misused and stunted; and they seem to prove for ever how small a part is played by reason in the conduct of man's affairs. Here was one, at least, who with unfailing judgment predicted his own fate; yet his knowledge could not avail him, and with open eyes he must fulfil his tragic destiny. Ten years before the end he had written his epitaph; and neither subsequent events, nor the critical eyes of posterity, have shown us a word in it to alter. And, lastly, has he not put in for himself the last unanswerable plea? —

“Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may gang a kennin’ wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark — ”

One? Alas! I fear every man and woman of us is “greatly dark” to all their neighbours, from the day of birth until death removes them, in their greatest virtues as well as in their saddest faults; and we, who have been trying to read the character of Burns, may take home the lesson and be gentle in our thoughts.

For the love-affairs see, in particular, Mr. Scott Douglas’s edition under the different dates.

III

WALT WHITMAN

Of late years the name of Walt Whitman has been a good deal bandied about in books and magazines. It has become familiar both in good and ill repute. His works have been largely bespattered with praise by his admirers, and cruelly mauled and mangled by irreverent enemies. Now, whether his poetry is good or bad as poetry, is a matter that may admit of a difference of opinion without alienating those who differ. We could not keep the peace with a man who should put forward claims to taste and yet depreciate the choruses in “Samson Agonistes”; but, I think, we may shake hands with one who sees no more in Walt Whitman’s volume, from a literary point of view, than a farrago of incompetent essays in a wrong direction. That may not be at all our own opinion. We may think that, when a work contains many unforgettable phrases, it cannot be altogether devoid of literary merit. We may even see passages of a high poetry here and there among its eccentric contents. But when all is said, Walt Whitman is neither a Milton nor a Shakespeare; to appreciate his works is not a condition necessary to salvation; and I would not disinherit a son upon the question, nor even think much the worse of a critic, for I should always have an idea what he meant.

What Whitman has to say is another affair from how he says it. It is not possible to acquit any one of defective intelligence, or else stiff prejudice, who is not interested by Whitman’s matter and the spirit it represents. Not as a poet, but as what we must call (for lack of a more exact expression) a prophet, he occupies a curious and prominent position. Whether he may greatly influence the future or not, he is a notable symptom of the present. As a sign of the times, it would be hard to find his parallel. I should hazard a large wager, for instance, that he was not unacquainted with the works of Herbert Spencer; and yet where, in all the history books, shall we lay our hands on two more incongruous contemporaries? Mr. Spencer so decorous — I had almost said, so dandy — in dissent; and Whitman, like a large shaggy dog, just unchained, scouring the beaches of the world and baying at the moon. And when was an echo more curiously like a satire, than when Mr. Spencer found his Synthetic Philosophy reverberated from the other shores of the Atlantic in the “barbaric yawp” of Whitman?

I

Whitman, it cannot be too soon explained, writes up to a system. He was a theoriser about society before he was a poet. He first perceived something wanting, and then sat down squarely to supply the want. The reader, running over his works, will find that he takes nearly as much pleasure in critically expounding his theory of poetry as in making poems. This is as far as it can be from the case of the spontaneous village minstrel dear to elegy, who has no theory whatever, although sometimes he may have fully as much poetry as Whitman. The whole of Whitman's work is deliberate and preconceived. A man born into a society comparatively new, full of conflicting elements and interests, could not fail, if he had any thoughts at all, to reflect upon the tendencies around him. He saw much good and evil on all sides, not yet settled down into some more or less unjust compromise as in older nations, but still in the act of settlement. And he could not but wonder what it would turn out; whether the compromise would be very just or very much the reverse, and give great or little scope for healthy human energies. From idle wonder to active speculation is but a step; and he seems to have been early struck with the inefficacy of literature and its extreme unsuitability to the conditions. What he calls "Feudal Literature" could have little living action on the tumult of American democracy; what he calls the "Literature of Woe," meaning the whole tribe of "Werther" and Byron, could have no action for good in any time or place. Both propositions, if art had none but a direct moral influence, would be true enough; and as this seems to be Whitman's view, they were true enough for him. He conceived the idea of a Literature which was to inhere in the life of the present; which was to be, first, human, and next, American; which was to be brave and cheerful as per contract; to give culture in a popular and poetical presentment; and, in so doing, catch and stereotype some democratic ideal of humanity which should be equally natural to all grades of wealth and education, and suited, in one of his favourite phrases, to "the average man." To the formation of some such literature as this his poems are to be regarded as so many contributions, one sometimes explaining, sometimes superseding, the other: and the whole together not so much a finished work as a body of suggestive hints. He does not profess to have built the castle, but he pretends he has traced the lines of the foundation. He has not made the poetry, but he flatters himself he has done something towards making the poets.

His notion of the poetic function is ambitious, and coincides roughly with what Schopenhauer has laid down as the province of the metaphysician. The poet is to gather together for men, and set in order, the materials of their existence. He is “The Answerer”; he is to find some way of speaking about life that shall satisfy, if only for the moment, man’s enduring astonishment at his own position. And besides having an answer ready, it is he who shall provoke the question. He must shake people out of their indifference, and force them to make some election in this world, instead of sliding dully forward in a dream. Life is a business we are all apt to mismanage; either living recklessly from day to day, or suffering ourselves to be gulled out of our moments by the inanities of custom. We should despise a man who gave as little activity and forethought to the conduct of any other business. But in this, which is the one thing of all others, since it contains them all, we cannot see the forest for the trees. One brief impression obliterates another. There is something stupefying in the recurrence of unimportant things. And it is only on rare provocations that we can rise to take an outlook beyond daily concerns, and comprehend the narrow limits and great possibilities of our existence. It is the duty of the poet to induce such moments of clear sight. He is the declared enemy of all living by reflex action, of all that is done betwixt sleep and waking, of all the pleasureless pleasurings and imaginary duties in which we coin away our hearts and fritter invaluable years. He has to electrify his readers into an instant unflagging activity, founded on a wide and eager observation of the world, and make them direct their ways by a superior prudence, which has little or nothing in common with the maxims of the copy-book. That many of us lead such lives as they would heartily disown after two hours’ serious reflection on the subject is, I am afraid, a true, and, I am sure, a very galling thought. The Enchanted Ground of dead-alive respectability is next, upon the map, to the Beulah of considerate virtue. But there they all slumber and take their rest in the middle of God’s beautiful and wonderful universe; the drowsy heads have nodded together in the same position since first their fathers fell asleep; and not even the sound of the last trumpet can wake them to a single active thought. The poet has a hard task before him to stir up such fellows to a sense of their own and other people’s principles in life.

And it happens that literature is, in some ways, but an indifferent means to such an end. Language is but a poor bull’s-eye lantern wherewith to show off the vast cathedral of the world; and yet a particular thing once said in words is so definite and memorable, that it makes us forget the absence of the many which remain unexpressed; like a bright window in a distant view, which dazzles and confuses our sight of its surroundings. There are not words enough in all Shakespeare to express the merest fraction of a man’s experience in an hour. The speed of the eyesight and the hearing, and the continual industry of the mind, produce, in ten minutes, what it would require a laborious volume to shadow forth by comparisons and roundabout approaches. If verbal logic were sufficient, life would be as plain sailing as a piece of Euclid. But, as a matter of fact, we make a travesty of the simplest process of thought when we put it into words; for the words are all coloured and forsworn, apply inaccurately, and bring with them, from former uses, ideas of praise and blame that have nothing to do with the question in hand. So we must always see to it nearly, that we judge by the realities of life and not by the partial terms that represent them in man's speech; and at times of choice, we must leave words upon one side, and act upon those brute convictions, unexpressed and perhaps inexpressible, which cannot be flourished in an argument, but which are truly the sum and fruit of our experience. Words are for communication, not for judgment. This is what every thoughtful man knows for himself, for only fools and silly schoolmasters push definitions over far into the domain of conduct; and the majority of women, not learned in these scholastic refinements, live all-of-a-piece and unconsciously, as a tree grows, without caring to put a name upon their acts or motives. Hence, a new difficulty for Whitman's scrupulous and argumentative poet: he must do more than waken up the sleepers to his words; he must persuade them to look over the book and at life with their own eyes.

This side of truth is very present to Whitman; it is this that he means when he tells us that "To glance with an eye confounds the learning of all times." But he is not unready. He is never weary of descanting on the undebatable conviction that is forced upon our minds by the presence of other men, of animals, or of inanimate things. To glance with an eye, were it only at a chair or a park railing, is by far a more persuasive process, and brings us to a far more exact conclusion than to read the works of all the logicians extant. If both, by a large allowance, may be said to end in certainty, the certainty in the one case transcends the other to an incalculable degree. If people see a lion, they run away; if they only apprehend a deduction, they keep wandering around in an experimental humour. Now, how is the poet to convince like nature, and not like books? Is there no actual piece of nature that he can show the man to his face, as he might show him a tree if they were walking together? Yes, there is one: the man's own thoughts. In fact, if the poet is to speak efficaciously, he must say what is already in his hearer's mind. That, alone, the hearer will believe; that, alone, he will be able to apply intelligently to the facts of life. Any conviction, even if it be a whole system or a whole religion, must pass into the condition of commonplace, or postulate, before it becomes fully operative. Strange excursions and high-flying theories may interest, but they cannot rule behaviour. Our faith is not the highest truth that we perceive, but the highest that we have been able to assimilate into the very texture and method of our thinking. It is not, therefore, by flashing before a man's eyes the weapons of dialectic; it is not by induction, deduction, or construction; it is not by forcing him on from one stage of reasoning to another, that the man will be effectually renewed. He cannot be made to believe anything; but he can be made to see that he has always believed it. And this is the practical canon. It is when the reader cries, "Oh, I know!" and is, perhaps, half irritated to see how nearly the author has forestalled his own thoughts, that he is on the way to what is called in theology a Saving Faith.

Here we have the key to Whitman's attitude. To give a certain unity of ideal to the average population of America — to gather their activities about some conception of humanity that shall be central and normal, if only for the moment — the poet must portray that population as it is. Like human law, human poetry is simply declaratory. If any ideal is possible, it must be already in the thoughts of the people; and, by the same reason, in the thoughts of the poet, who is one of them. And hence Whitman's own formula: "The poet is individual — he is complete in himself: the others are as good as he; only he sees it, and they do not." To show them how good they are, the poet must study his fellow-countrymen and himself somewhat like a traveller on the hunt for his book of travels. There is a sense, of course, in which all true books are books of travel; and all genuine poets must run the risk of being charged with the traveller's exaggeration; for to whom are such books more surprising than to those whose own life is faithfully and smartly pictured? But this danger is all upon one side; and you may judiciously flatter the portrait without any likelihood of the sitter's disowning it for a faithful likeness. And so Whitman has reasoned: that by drawing at first-hand from himself and his neighbours, accepting without shame the inconsistencies and brutalities that go to make up man, and yet treating the whole in a high, magnanimous spirit, he would make sure of belief, and at the same time encourage people forward by the means of praise.

II

We are accustomed nowadays to a great deal of puling over the circumstances in which we are placed. The great refinement of many poetical gentlemen has rendered them practically unfit for the jostling and ugliness of life, and they record their unfitness at considerable length. The bold and awful poetry of Job's complaint produces too many flimsy imitators; for there is always something consolatory in grandeur, but the symphony transposed for the piano becomes hysterically sad. This literature of woe, as Whitman calls it, this *Maladie de René*, as we like to call it in Europe, is in many ways a most humiliating and sickly phenomenon. Young gentlemen with three or four hundred a year of private means look down from a pinnacle of doleful experience on all the grown and hearty men who have dared to say a good word for life since the beginning of the world. There is no prophet but the melancholy Jacques, and the blue devils dance on all our literary wires.

It would be a poor service to spread culture, if this be its result, among the comparatively innocent and cheerful ranks of men. When our little poets have to be sent to look at the ploughman and learn wisdom, we must be careful how we tamper with our ploughmen. Where a man in not the best of circumstances preserves composure of mind, and relishes ale and tobacco, and his wife and children, in the intervals of dull and unremunerative labour; where a man in this predicament can afford a lesson by the way to what are called his intellectual superiors, there is plainly something to be lost, as well as something to be gained, by teaching him to think differently. It is better to leave him as he is than to teach him whining. It is better that he should go without the cheerful lights of culture, if cheerless doubt and paralysing sentimentalism are to be the consequence. Let us, by all means, fight against that hidebound stolidity of sensation and sluggishness of mind which blurs and decolorises for poor natures the wonderful pageant of consciousness; let us teach people, as much as we can, to enjoy, and they will learn for themselves to sympathise; but let us see to it, above all, that we give these lessons in a brave, vivacious note, and build the man up in courage while we demolish its substitute, indifference.

Whitman is alive to all this. He sees that, if the poet is to be of any help, he must testify to the livableness of life. His poems, he tells us, are to be "hymns of the praise of things." They are to make for a certain high joy in living, or what he calls himself "a brave delight fit for freedom's athletes." And he has had no difficulty in introducing his optimism: it fitted readily enough with his system; for the average man is truly a courageous person and truly fond of living. One of Whitman's remarks upon this head is worth quotation, as he is there perfectly successful, and does precisely what he designs to do throughout: Takes ordinary and even commonplace circumstances; throws them out, by a happy turn of thinking, into significance and something like beauty; and tacks a hopeful moral lesson to the end.

"The passionate tenacity of hunters, woodmen, early risers, cultivators of gardens and orchards and fields, he says, the love of healthy women for the manly form, seafaring persons, drivers of horses, the passion for light and the open air, — all is an old unvaried sign of the unfailing perception of beauty, and of a residence of the poetic in outdoor people."

There seems to me something truly original in this choice of trite examples. You will remark how adroitly Whitman begins, hunters and woodmen being confessedly romantic. And one thing more. If he had said "the love of healthy men for the female form," he would have said almost a silliness; for the thing has never been dissembled out of delicacy, and is so obvious as to be a public nuisance. But by reversing it, he tells us something not unlike news; something that sounds quite freshly in words; and, if the reader be a man, gives him a moment of great self-satisfaction and spiritual aggrandisement. In many different authors you may find passages more remarkable for grammar, but few of a more ingenious turn, and none that could be more to the point in our connection. The tenacity of many ordinary people in ordinary pursuits is a sort of standing challenge to everybody else. If one man can grow absorbed in delving his garden, others may grow absorbed and happy over something else. Not to be upsides in this with any groom or gardener is to be very meanly organised. A man should be ashamed to take his food if he has not alchemy enough in his stomach to turn some of it into intense and enjoyable occupation.

Whitman tries to reinforce this cheerfulness by keeping up a sort of outdoor atmosphere of sentiment. His book, he tells us, should be read; "among the cooling influences of external nature"; and this recommendation, like that other famous one which Hawthorne prefixed to his collected tales, is in itself a character of the work. Every one who has been upon a walking or a boating tour, living in the open air, with the body in constant exercise and the mind in fallow, knows true ease and quiet. The irritating action of the brain is set at rest; we think in a plain, unfeverish temper; little things seem big enough, and great things no longer portentous; and the world is smilingly accepted as it is. This is the spirit that Whitman inculcates and parades. He thinks very ill of the atmosphere of parlours or libraries. Wisdom keeps school outdoors. And he has the art to recommend this attitude of mind by simply pluming himself upon it as a virtue; so that the reader, to keep the advantage over his author which most readers enjoy, is tricked into professing the same view. And this spirit, as it is his chief lesson, is the greatest charm of his work. Thence, in spite of an uneven and emphatic key of expression, something trenchant and straightforward, something simple and surprising, distinguishes his poems. He has sayings that come home to one like the Bible. We fall upon Whitman, after the works of so many men who write better, with a sense of relief from strain, with a sense of touching nature, as when one passes out of the flaring, noisy thoroughfares of a great city, into what he himself has called, with unexcelled imaginative justice of language, “the huge and thoughtful night.” And his book in consequence, whatever may be the final judgment of its merit, whatever may be its influence on the future, should be in the hands of all parents and guardians as a specific for the distressing malady of being seventeen years old. Green-sickness yields to his treatment as to a charm of magic; and the youth, after a short course of reading, ceases to carry the universe upon his shoulders.

III

Whitman is not one of those who can be deceived by familiarity. He considers it just as wonderful that there are myriads of stars as that one man should rise from the dead. He declares “a hair on the back of his hand just as curious as any special revelation.” His whole life is to him what it was to Sir Thomas Browne, — one perpetual miracle. Everything is strange, everything unaccountable, everything beautiful; from a bug to the moon, from the sight of the eyes to the appetite for food. He makes it his business to see things as if he saw them for the first time, and professes astonishment on principle. But he has no leaning towards mythology; avows his contempt for what he calls “unregenerate poetry”; and does not mean by nature

“the smooth walks, trimmed edges, butterflies, posies, and nightingales of the English poets, but the whole orb, with its geologic history, the Kosmos, carrying fire and snow, that rolls through the illimitable areas, light as a feather though weighing billions of tons.”

Nor is this exhaustive; for in his character of idealist all impressions, all thoughts, trees and people, love and faith, astronomy, history, and religion, enter upon equal terms into his notion of the universe. He is not against religion; not, indeed, against any religion. He wishes to drag with a larger net, to make a more comprehensive synthesis, than any or than all of them put together. In feeling after the central type of man, he must embrace all eccentricities; his cosmology must subsume all cosmologies, and the feelings that gave birth to them; his statement of facts must include all religion and all irreligion, Christ and Boodha, God and the devil. The world as it is, and the whole world as it is, physical, and spiritual, and historical, with its good and bad, with its manifold inconsistencies, is what he wishes to set forth, in strong, picturesque, and popular lineaments, for the understanding of the average man. One of his favourite endeavours is to get the whole matter into a nutshell; to knock the four corners of the universe, one after another, about his readers’ ears; to hurry him, in breathless phrases, hither and thither, back and forward, in time and space; to focus all this about his own momentary personality; and then, drawing the ground from under his feet, as if by some cataclysm of nature, to plunge him into the unfathomable abyss sown with enormous suns and systems, and among the inconceivable numbers and magnitudes and velocities of the heavenly bodies. So that he concludes by striking into us some sense of that disproportion of things which Shelley has illuminated by the ironical flash of these eight words: The desire of the moth for the star.

The same truth, but to what a different purpose! Whitman’s moth is mightily at his ease about all the planets in heaven, and cannot think too highly of our sublunary tapers. The universe is so large that imagination flags in the effort to conceive it; but here, in the meantime, is the world under our feet, a very warm and habitable corner. “The earth, that is sufficient; I do not want the constellations any nearer,” he remarks. And again: “Let your soul stand cool and composed,” says he, “before a million universes.” It is the language of a transcendental common sense, such as Thoreau held and sometimes uttered. But Whitman, who has a somewhat vulgar inclination for technical talk and the jargon of philosophy, is not content with a few pregnant hints; he must put the dots upon his i’s; he must corroborate the songs of Apollo by some of the darkest talk of human metaphysic. He tells his disciples that they must be ready “to confront the growing arrogance of Realism.” Each person is, for himself, the keystone and the occasion of this universal edifice. “Nothing, not God,” he says, “is greater to one than oneself is”; a statement with an irreligious smack at the first sight; but like most startling sayings, a manifest truism on a second. He will give effect to his own character without apology; he sees “that the elementary laws never apologise.” “I reckon,” he adds, with quaint colloquial arrogance, “I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by, after all.” The level follows the law of its being; so, unrelentingly, will he; everything, every person, is good in his own place and way; God is the maker of all, and all are in one design. For he believes in God, and that with a sort of blasphemous security. “No array of terms,” quoth he, “no array of terms can say how much at peace I am about God and about death.” There certainly never was a prophet who carried things with a higher hand; he gives us less a body of dogmas than a series of proclamations by the grace of God; and language, you will observe, positively fails him to express how far he stands above the highest human doubts and trepidations.

But next in order of truths to a person’s sublime conviction of himself, comes the attraction of one person for another, and all that we mean by the word love: —

“The dear love of man for his comrade — the attraction of friend for friend,
Of the-well-married husband and wife, of children and parents,
Of city for city and land for land.”

The solitude of the most sublime idealist is broken in upon by other people’s faces; he sees a look in their eyes that corresponds to something in his own heart; there comes a tone in their voices which convicts him of a startling weakness for his fellow-creatures. While he is hymning the *ego* and commercing with God and the universe, a woman goes below his window; and at the turn of her skirt, or the colour of her eyes, Icarus is recalled from heaven by the run. Love is so startlingly real that it takes rank upon an equal footing of reality with the consciousness of personal existence. We are as heartily persuaded of the identity of those we love as of our own identity. And so sympathy pairs with self-assertion, the two gerents of human life on earth; and Whitman's ideal man must not only be strong, free, and self-reliant in himself, but his freedom must be bounded and his strength perfected by the most intimate, eager, and long-suffering love for others. To some extent this is taking away with the left hand what has been so generously given with the right. Morality has been ceremoniously extruded from the door only to be brought in again by the window. We are told, on one page, to do as we please; and on the next we are sharply upbraided for not having done as the author pleases. We are first assured that we are the finest fellows in the world in our own right; and then it appears that we are only fine fellows in so far as we practise a most quixotic code of morals. The disciple who saw himself in clear ether a moment before is plunged down again among the fogs and complications of duty. And this is all the more overwhelming because Whitman insists not only on love between sex and sex, and between friends of the same sex, but in the field of the less intense political sympathies; and his ideal man must not only be a generous friend but a conscientious voter into the bargain.

His method somewhat lessens the difficulty. He is not, the reader will remember, to tell us how good we ought to be, but to remind us how good we are. He is to encourage us to be free and kind by proving that we are free and kind already. He passes our corporate life under review, to show that it is upheld by the very virtues of which he makes himself the advocate. "There is no object so soft," he says somewhere in his big, plain way, "there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheel'd universe." Rightly understood, it is on the softest of all objects, the sympathetic heart, that the wheel of society turns easily and securely as on a perfect axle. There is no room, of course, for doubt or discussion, about conduct, where every one is to follow the law of his being with exact compliance. Whitman hates doubt, deprecates discussion, and discourages to his utmost the craving, carping sensibilities of the conscience. We are to imitate, to use one of his absurd and happy phrases, "the satisfaction and aplomb of animals." If he preaches a sort of ranting Christianity in morals, a fit consequent to the ranting optimism of his cosmology, it is because he declares it to be the original deliverance of the human heart; or at least, for he would be honestly historical in method, of the human heart as at present Christianised. His is a morality without a prohibition; his policy is one of encouragement all round. A man must be a born hero to come up to Whitman's standard in the practice of any of the positive virtues; but of a negative virtue, such as temperance or chastity, he has so little to say, that the reader need not be surprised if he drops a word or two upon the other side. He would lay down nothing that would be a clog; he would prescribe nothing that cannot be done ruddily, in a heat. The great point is to get people under way. To the faithful Whitmanite this would be justified by the belief that God made all, and that all was good; the prophet, in this doctrine, has only to cry "Tally-ho," and mankind will break into a gallop on the road to El Dorado. Perhaps, to another class of minds, it may look like the result of the somewhat cynical reflection that you will not make a kind man out of one who is unkind by any precepts under heaven; tempered by the belief that, in natural circumstances, the large majority is well disposed. Thence it would follow, that if you can only get every one to feel more warmly and act more courageously, the balance of results will be for good.

So far, you see, the doctrine is pretty coherent as a doctrine; as a picture of man's life it is incomplete and misleading, although eminently cheerful. This he is himself the first to acknowledge; for if he is prophetic in anything, it is in his noble disregard of consistency. "Do I contradict myself?" he asks somewhere; and then pat comes the answer, the best answer ever given in print, worthy of a sage, or rather of a woman: "Very well, then, I contradict myself!" with this addition, not so feminine and perhaps not altogether so satisfactory: "I am large — I contain multitudes." Life, as a matter of fact, partakes largely of the nature of tragedy. The gospel according to Whitman, even if it be not so logical, has this advantage over the gospel according to Pangloss, that it does not utterly disregard the existence of temporal evil. Whitman accepts the fact of disease and wretchedness like an honest man; and instead of trying to qualify it in the interest of his optimism, sets himself to spur people up to be helpful. He expresses a conviction, indeed, that all will be made up to the victims in the end; that "what is untried and afterward" will fail no one, not even "the old man who has lived without purpose and feels it with bitterness worse than gall." But this is not to palliate our sense of what is hard or melancholy in the present. Pangloss, smarting under one of the worst things that ever was supposed to come from America, consoled himself with the reflection that it was the price we have to pay for cochineal. And with that murderous parody, logical optimism and the praises of the best of possible worlds went irrevocably out of season, and have been no more heard of in the mouths of reasonable men. Whitman spares us all allusions to the cochineal; he treats evil and sorrow in a spirit almost as of welcome; as an old sea-dog might have welcomed the sight of the enemy's topsails off the Spanish Main. There, at least, he seems to say, is something obvious to be done. I do not know many better things in literature than the brief pictures — brief and vivid like things seen by lightning, — with which he tries to stir up the world’s heart upon the side of mercy. He braces us, on the one hand, with examples of heroic duty and helpfulness; on the other, he touches us with pitiful instances of people needing help. He knows how to make the heart beat at a brave story; to inflame us with just resentment over the hunted slave; to stop our mouths for shame when he tells of the drunken prostitute. For all the afflicted, all the weak, all the wicked, a good word is said in a spirit which I can only call one of ultra Christianity; and however wild, however contradictory, it may be in parts, this at least may be said for his book, as it may be said of the Christian Gospels, that no one will read it, however respectable, but he gets a knock upon his conscience; no one however fallen, but he finds a kindly and supporting welcome.

IV

Nor has he been content with merely blowing the trumpet for the battle of well-doing; he has given to his precepts the authority of his own brave example. Naturally a grave, believing man, with little or no sense of humour, he has succeeded as well in life as in his printed performances. The spirit that was in him has come forth most eloquently in his actions. Many who have only read his poetry have been tempted to set him down as an ass, or even as a charlatan; but I never met any one who had known him personally who did not profess a solid affection and respect for the man's character. He practises as he professes; he feels deeply that Christian love for all men, that toleration, that cheerful delight in serving others, which he often celebrates in literature with a doubtful measure of success. And perhaps, out of all his writings, the best and the most human and convincing passages are to be found in "these soil'd and creased little livraisons, each composed of a sheet or two of paper, folded small to carry in the pocket, and fastened with a pin," which he scribbled during the war by the bedsides of the wounded or in the excitement of great events. They are hardly literature in the formal meaning of the word; he has left his jottings for the most part as he made them; a homely detail, a word from the lips of a dying soldier, a business memorandum, the copy of a letter — short, straightforward to the point, with none of the trappings of composition; but they breathe a profound sentiment, they give us a vivid look at one of the sides of life, and they make us acquainted with a man whom it is an honour to love.

Whitman's intense Americanism, his unlimited belief in the future of These States (as, with reverential capitals, he loves to call them), made the war a period of great trial to his soul. The new virtue, Unionism, of which he is the sole inventor, seemed to have fallen into premature unpopularity. All that he loved, hoped, or hated, hung in the balance. And the game of war was not only momentous to him in its issues; it sublimated his spirit by its heroic displays, and tortured him intimately by the spectacle of its horrors. It was a theatre, it was a place of education it was like a season of religious revival. He watched Lincoln going daily to his work; he studied and fraternised with young soldiery passing to the front; above all, he walked the hospitals, reading the Bible, distributing clean clothes, or apples, or tobacco; a patient, helpful, reverend man, full of kind speeches.

His memoranda of this period are almost bewildering to read. From one point of view they seem those of a district visitor; from another, they look like the formless jottings of an artist in the picturesque.

More than one woman, on whom I tried the experiment, immediately claimed the writer for a fellow-woman. More than one literary purist might identify him as a shoddy newspaper correspondent without the necessary faculty of style. And yet the story touches home; and if you are of the weeping order of mankind, you will certainly find your eyes filled with tears, of which you have no reason to be ashamed. There is only one way to characterise a work of this order, and that is to quote. Here is a passage from a letter to a mother, unknown to Whitman, whose son died in hospital: —

> "Frank, as far as I saw, had everything requisite in surgical treatment, nursing, etc. He had watches much of the time. He was so good and well-behaved, and affectionate, I myself liked him very much. I was in the habit of coming in afternoons and sitting by him, and he liked to have me — liked to put out his arm and lay his hand on my knee — would keep it so a long while. Toward the last he was more restless and flighty at night — often fancied himself with his regiment — by his talk sometimes seem'd as if his feelings were hurt by being blamed by his officers for something he was entirely innocent of — said 'I never in my life was thought capable of such a thing, and never was.' At other times he would fancy himself talking as it seem'd to children or such like, his relatives, I suppose, and giving them good advice; would talk to them a long while. All the time he was out of his head not one single bad word, or thought, or idea escaped him. It was remark'd that many a man's conversation in his senses was not half so good as Frank's delirium.
>
> "He was perfectly willing to die — he had become very weak, and had suffer'd a good deal, and was perfectly resign'd, poor boy. I do not know his past life, but I feel as if it must have been good. At any rate what I saw of him here, under the most trying circumstances, with a painful wound, and among strangers, I can say that he behaved so brave, so composed, and so sweet and affectionate, it could not be surpassed. And now, like many other noble and good men, after serving his country as a soldier, he has yielded up his young life at the very outset in her service. Such things are gloomy — yet there is a text, 'God doeth all things well,' the meaning of which, after due time, appears to the soul.
>
> "I thought perhaps a few words, though from a stranger, about your son, from one who was with him at the last, might be worth while, for I loved the young man, though I but saw him immediately to lose him."

It is easy enough to pick holes in the grammar of this letter, but what are we to say of its profound goodness and tenderness? It is written as though he had the mother's face before his eyes, and saw her wincing in the flesh at every word. And what, again, are we to say of its sober truthfulness, not exaggerating, not running to phrases, not seeking to make a hero out of what was only an ordinary but good and brave young man? Literary reticence is not Whitman's stronghold; and this reticence is not literary, but humane; it is not that of a good artist but that of a good man. He knew that what the mother wished to hear about was Frank; and he told her about her Frank as he was.

V

Something should be said of Whitman's style, for style is of the essence of thinking. And where a man is so critically deliberate as our author, and goes solemnly about his poetry for an ulterior end, every indication is worth notice. He has chosen a rough, unrhymed, lyrical verse; sometimes instinct with a fine processional movement; often so rugged and careless that it can only be described by saying that he has not taken the trouble to write prose. I believe myself that it was selected principally because it was easy to write, although not without recollections of the marching measures of some of the prose in our English Old Testament. According to Whitman, on the other hand, "the time has arrived to essentially break down the barriers of form between Prose and Poetry ... for the most cogent purposes of those great inland states, and for Texas, and California, and Oregon"; — a statement which is among the happiest achievements of American humour. He calls his verses "recitatives," in easily followed allusion to a musical form. "Easily written, loose-fingered chords," he cries, "I feel the thrum of your climax and close." Too often, I fear, he is the only one who can perceive the rhythm; and in spite of Mr. Swinburne, a great part of his work considered as verses is poor bald stuff. Considered, not as verse, but as speech, a great part of it is full of strange and admirable merits. The right detail is seized; the right word, bold and trenchant, is thrust into its place. Whitman has small regard to literary decencies, and is totally free from literary timidities. He is neither afraid of being slangy nor of being dull; nor, let me add, of being ridiculous. The result is a most surprising compound of plain grandeur, sentimental affectation, and downright nonsense. It would be useless to follow his detractors and give instances of how bad he can be at his worst; and perhaps it would be not much wiser to give extracted specimens of how happily he can write when he is at his best. These come in to most advantage in their own place; owing something, it may be, to the offset of their curious surroundings. And one thing is certain, that no one can appreciate Whitman's excellences until he has grown accustomed to his faults. Until you are content to pick poetry out of his pages almost as you must pick it out of a Greek play in Bohn's translation, your gravity will be continually upset, your ears perpetually disappointed, and the whole book will be no more to you than a particularly flagrant production by the Poet Close.

A writer of this uncertain quality was, perhaps, unfortunate in taking for thesis the beauty of the world as it now is, not only on the hill-tops but in the factory; not only by the harbour full of stately ships, but in the magazine of the hopelessly prosaic hatter. To show beauty in common things is the work of the rarest tact. It is not to be done by the wishing. It is easy to posit as a theory, but to bring it home to men's minds is the problem of literature, and is only accomplished by rare talent, and in comparatively rare instances. To bid the whole world stand and deliver, with a dogma in one's right hand by way of pistol; to cover reams of paper in a galloping, headstrong vein; to cry louder and louder over everything as it comes up, and make no distinction in one's enthusiasm over the most incomparable matters; to prove one's entire want of sympathy for the jaded, literary palate, by calling, not a spade a spade, but a hatter a hatter, in a lyrical apostrophe; — this, in spite of all the airs of inspiration, is not the way to do it. It may be very wrong, and very wounding to a respectable branch of industry, but the word "hatter" cannot be used seriously in emotional verse; not to understand this is to have no literary tact; and I would, for his own sake, that this were the only inadmissible expression with which Whitman had bedecked his pages. The book teems with similar comicalities; and, to a reader who is determined to take it from that side only, presents a perfect carnival of fun.

A good deal of this is the result of theory playing its usual vile trick upon the artist. It is because he is a Democrat that Whitman must have in the hatter. If you may say Admiral, he reasons, why may you not say Hatter? One man is as good as another, and it is the business of the "great poet" to show poetry in the life of the one as well as the other. A most incontrovertible sentiment, surely, and one which nobody would think of controverting, where — and here is the point — where any beauty has been shown. But how, where that is not the case? where the hatter is simply introduced, as God made him and as his fellow-men have miscalled him, at the crisis of a high-flown rhapsody? And what are we to say, where a man of Whitman's notable capacity for putting things in a bright, picturesque, and novel way, simply gives up the attempt, and indulges, with apparent exultation, in an inventory of trades or implements, with no more colour or coherence than so many index-words out of a dictionary? I do not know that we can say anything, but that it is a prodigiously amusing exhibition for a line or so. The worst of it is, that Whitman must have known better. The man is a great critic, and, so far as I can make out, a good one; and how much criticism does it require to know that capitulation is not description, or that fingering on a dumb keyboard, with whatever show of sentiment and execution, is not at all the same thing as discoursing music? I wish I could believe he was quite honest with us; but, indeed, who was ever quite honest who wrote a book for a purpose? It is a flight beyond the reach of human magnanimity.

One other point, where his means failed him, must be touched upon, however shortly. In his desire to accept all facts loyally and simply, it fell within his programme to speak at some length and with some plainness on what is, for I really do not know what reason, the most delicate of subjects. Seeing in that one of the most serious and interesting parts of life, he was aggrieved that it should be looked upon as ridiculous or shameful. No one speaks of maternity with his tongue in his cheek; and Whitman made a bold push to set the sanctity of fatherhood beside the sanctity of motherhood, and introduce this also among the things that can be spoken of without either a blush or a wink. But the Philistines have been too strong; and, to say truth, Whitman had rather played the fool. We may be thoroughly conscious that his end is improving; that it would be a good thing if a window were opened on these close privacies of life; that on this subject, as on all others, he now and then lets fall a pregnant saying. But we are not satisfied. We feel that he was not the man for so difficult an enterprise. He loses our sympathy in the character of a poet by attracting too much of our attention in that of a Bull in a China Shop. And where, by a little more art, we might have been solemnised ourselves, it is too often Whitman alone who is solemn in the face of an audience somewhat indecorously amused.

VI

Lastly, as most important, after all, to human beings in our disputable state, what is that higher prudence which was to be the aim and issue of these deliberate productions?

Whitman is too clever to slip into a succinct formula. If he could have adequately said his say in a single proverb, it is to be presumed he would not have put himself to the trouble of writing several volumes. It was his programme to state as much as he could of the world with all its contradictions, and leave the upshot with God who planned it. What he has made of the world and the world's meanings is to be found at large in his poems. These altogether give his answers to the problems of belief and conduct; in many ways righteous and high-spirited, in some ways loose and contradictory. And yet there are two passages from the preface to the "Leaves of Grass" which do pretty well 0 condense his teaching on all essential points, and yet preserve a measure of his spirit.

"This is what you shall do," he says in the one, "love the earth, and sun, and animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labour to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence towards the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown, or to any man or number of men; go freely with powerful uneducated persons, and with the young, and mothers of families, read these leaves (his own works) in the open air every season of every year of your life; re-examine all you have been told at school or church, or in any book, and dismiss whatever insults your own soul."

"The prudence of the greatest poet," he adds in the other — and the greatest poet is, of course, himself — "knows that the young man who composedly perilled his life and lost it, has done exceeding well for himself; while the man who has not perilled his life, and retains it to old age in riches and ease, has perhaps achieved nothing for himself worth mentioning; and that only that person has no great prudence to learn, who has learnt to prefer real long-lived things, and favours body and soul the same, and perceives the indirect surely following the direct, and what evil or good he does leaping onward and waiting to meet him again, and who in his spirit, in any emergency whatever, neither hurries nor avoids death."

There is much that is Christian in these extracts, startlingly Christian. Any reader who bears in mind Whitman's own advice and "dismisses whatever insults his own soul" will find plenty that is bracing, brightening, and chastening to reward him for a little patience at first. It seems hardly possible that any being should get evil from so healthy a book as the “Leaves of Grass,” which is simply comical whenever it falls short of nobility; but if there be any such, who cannot both take and leave, who cannot let a single opportunity pass by without some unworthy and unmanly thought, I should have as great difficulty, and neither more nor less, in recommending the works of Whitman as in lending them Shakespeare, or letting them go abroad outside of the grounds of a private asylum.

IV

HENRY DAVID THOREAU: HIS CHARACTER AND OPINIONS

I

Thoreau's thin, penetrating, big-nosed face, even in a bad woodcut, conveys some hint of the limitations of his mind and character. With his almost acid sharpness of insight, with his almost animal dexterity in act, there went none of that large, unconscious geniality of the world's heroes. He was not easy, not ample, not urbane, not even kind; his enjoyment was hardly smiling, or the smile was not broad enough to be convincing; he had no waste lands nor kitchen-midden in his nature, but was all improved and sharpened to a point. "He was bred to no profession," says Emerson; "he never married; he lived alone; he never went to church; he never voted; he refused to pay a tax to the State; he ate no flesh, he drank no wine, he never knew the use of tobacco; and, though a naturalist, he used neither trap nor gun. When asked at dinner what dish he preferred, he answered, 'the nearest.'" So many negative superiorities begin to smack a little of the prig. From his later works he was in the habit of cutting out the humorous passages, under the impression that they were beneath the dignity of his moral muse; and there we see the prig stand public and confessed. It was "much easier," says Emerson acutely, much easier for Thoreau to say *no* than *yes*; and that is a characteristic which depicts the man. It is a useful accomplishment to be able to say *no*, but surely it is the essence of amiability 2 to prefer to say *yes* where it is possible. There is something wanting in the man who does not hate himself whenever he is constrained to say no. And there was a great deal wanting in this born dissenter. He was almost shockingly devoid of weaknesses; he had not enough of them to be truly polar with humanity; whether you call him demi-god or demi-man, he was at least not altogether one of us, for he was not touched with a feeling of our infirmities. The world's heroes have room for all positive qualities, even those which are disreputable, in the capacious theatre of their dispositions. Such can live many lives; while a Thoreau can live but one, and that only with perpetual foresight.

He was no ascetic, rather an Epicurean of the nobler sort; and he had this one great merit, that he succeeded so far as to be happy. "I love my fate to the core and rind," he wrote once; and even while he lay dying, here is what he dictated (for it seems he was already too feeble to control the pen): "You ask particularly after my health. I *suppose* that I have not many months to live, but of course know nothing about it. I may say that I am enjoying existence as much as ever, and regret nothing." It is not given to all to bear so clear a testimony to the sweetness of their fate, nor to any without courage and wisdom; for this world in itself is but a painful and uneasy place of residence, and lasting happiness, at least to the self-conscious, comes only from within. Now Thoreau's content and ecstasy in living was, we may say, like a plant that he had watered and tended with womanish solicitude; for there is apt to be something unmanly, something almost dastardly, in a life that does not move with dash and freedom, and that fears the bracing contact of the world. In one word, Thoreau was a skulker. He did not wish virtue to go out of him among his fellow-men, but slunk into a corner to hoard it for himself. He left all for the sake of certain virtuous self-indulgences. It is true that his tastes were noble; that his ruling passion was to keep himself 3 unspotted from the world; and that his luxuries were all of the same healthy order as cold tubs and early rising. But a man may be both coldly cruel in the pursuit of goodness, and morbid even in the pursuit of health. I cannot lay my hands on the passage in which he explains his abstinence from tea and coffee, but I am sure I have the meaning correctly. It is this: He thought it bad economy and worthy of no true virtuoso to spoil the natural rapture of the morning with such muddy stimulants; let him but see the sun rise, and he was already sufficiently inspirited for the labours of the day. That may be reason good enough to abstain from tea; but when we go on to find the same man, on the same or similar grounds, abstain from nearly everything that his neighbours innocently and pleasurably use, and from the rubs and trials of human society itself into the bargain, we recognise that valetudinarian healthfulness which is more delicate than sickness itself. We need have no respect for a state of artificial training. True health is to be able to do without it. Shakespeare, we can imagine, might begin the day upon a quart of ale, and yet enjoy the sunrise to the full as much as Thoreau, and commemorate his enjoyment in vastly better verses. A man who must separate himself from his neighbours' habits in order to be happy, is in much the same case with one who requires to take opium for the same purpose. What we want to see is one who can breast into the world, do a man's work, and still preserve his first and pure enjoyment of existence.

Thoreau's faculties were of a piece with his moral shyness; for they were all delicacies. He could guide himself about the woods on the darkest night by the touch of his feet. He could pick up at once an exact dozen of pencils by the feeling, pace distances with accuracy, and gauge cubic contents by the eye. His smell was so dainty that he could perceive the fœtor of dwelling-houses as he passed them by at night; his palate so unsophisticated that, like a child, he disliked the taste of wine — or perhaps, living in 4 America, had never tasted any that was good; and his knowledge of nature was so complete and curious that he could have told the time of year, within a day or so, by the aspect of the plants. In his dealings with animals he was the original of Hawthorne's Donatello. He pulled the woodchuck out of its hole by the tail; the hunted fox came to him for protection; wild squirrels have been seen to nestle in his waistcoat; he would thrust his arm into a pool and bring forth a bright, panting fish, lying undismayed in the palm of his hand. There were few things that he could not do. He could make a house, a boat, a pencil, or a book. He was a surveyor, a scholar, a natural historian. He could run, walk, climb, skate, swim, and manage a boat. The smallest occasion served to display his physical accomplishment; and a manufacturer, from merely observing his dexterity with the window of a railway carriage, offered him a situation on the spot. "The only fruit of much living," he observes, "is the ability to do some slight thing better." But such was the exactitude of his senses, so alive was he in every fibre, that it seems as if the maxim should be changed in his case, for he could do most things with unusual perfection. And perhaps he had an approving eye to himself when he wrote: "Though the youth at last grows indifferent, the laws of the universe are not indifferent, *but are for ever on the side of the most sensitive*."

II

Thoreau had decided, it would seem, from the very first to lead a life of self-improvement: the needle did not tremble as with richer natures, but pointed steadily north; and as he saw duty and inclination in one, he turned all his strength in that direction. He was met upon the threshold by a common difficulty. In this world, in spite of its many agreeable features, even the most sensitive must undergo some drudgery to live. It is not possible 5 to devote your time to study and meditation without what are quaintly but happily denominated private means; these absent, a man must contrive to earn his bread by some service to the public such as the public cares to pay him for; or, as Thoreau loved to put it, Apollo must serve Admetus. This was to Thoreau even a sourer necessity than it is to most; there was a love of freedom, a strain of the wild man, in his nature, that rebelled with violence against the yoke of custom; and he was so eager to cultivate himself and to be happy in his own society, that he could consent with difficulty even to the interruptions of friendship. "*Such are my engagements to myself* that I dare not promise," he once wrote in answer to an invitation; and the italics are his own. Marcus Aurelius found time to study virtue, and between whiles to conduct the imperial affairs of Rome; but Thoreau is so busy improving himself that he must think twice about a morning call. And now imagine him condemned for eight hours a day to some uncongenial and unmeaning business! He shrank from the very look of the mechanical in life; all should, if possible, be sweetly spontaneous and swimmingly progressive. Thus he learned to make lead-pencils, and, when he had gained the best certificate, and his friends began to congratulate him on his establishment in life, calmly announced that he should never make another. "Why should I?" said he; "I would not do again what I have done once." For when a thing has once been done as well as it wants to be, it is of no further interest to the self-improver. Yet in after years, and when it became needful to support his family, he returned patiently to this mechanical art — a step more than worthy of himself.

The pencils seem to have been Apollo's first experiment in the service of Admetus; but others followed. "I have thoroughly tried school-keeping," he writes, "and found that my expenses were in proportion, or rather out of proportion, to my income; for I was obliged to dress and train, not to say, think and believe, accordingly, and 6 I lost my time into the bargain. As I did not teach for the benefit of my fellow-men, but simply for a livelihood, this was a failure. I have tried trade, but I found that it would take ten years to get under way in that, and that then I should probably be on my way to the devil." Nothing, indeed, can surpass his scorn for all so-called business. Upon that subject gall squirts from him at a touch. "The whole enterprise of this nation is not illustrated by a thought," he writes; "it is not warmed by a sentiment; there is nothing in it for which a man should lay down his life, nor even his gloves." And again: "If our merchants did not most of them fail, and the banks too, my faith in the old laws of this world would be staggered. The statement that ninety-six in a hundred doing such business surely break down is perhaps the sweetest fact that statistics have revealed." The wish was probably father to the figures; but there is something enlivening in a hatred of so genuine a brand, hot as Corsican revenge, and sneering like Voltaire.

Pencils, school-keeping, and trade being thus discarded one after another, Thoreau, with a stroke of strategy, turned the position. He saw his way to get his board and lodging for practically nothing; and Admetus never got less work out of any servant since the world began. It was his ambition to be an Oriental philosopher; but he was always a very Yankee sort of Oriental. Even in the peculiar attitude in which he stood to money, his system of personal economics, as we may call it, he displayed a vast amount of truly down-East calculation, and he adopted poverty like a piece of business. Yet his system is based on one or two ideas which, I believe, come naturally to all thoughtful youths, and are only pounded out of them by city uncles. Indeed, something essentially youthful distinguishes all Thoreau's knock-down blows at current opinion. Like the posers of a child, they leave the orthodox in a kind of speechless agony. These know the thing is nonsense. They are sure there must be an answer, yet 7 somehow cannot find it. So it is with his system of economy. He cuts through the subject on so new a plane that the accepted arguments apply no longer; he attacks it in a new dialect where there are no catch-words ready made for the defender; after you have been boxing for years on a polite, gladiatorial convention, here is an assailant who does not scruple to hit below the belt.

"The cost of a thing," says he, "is *the amount of what I will call life* which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run." I have been accustomed to put it to myself, perhaps more clearly, that the price we have to pay for money is paid in liberty. Between these two ways of it, at least, the reader will probably not fail to find a third definition of his own; and it follows, on one or other, that a man may pay too dearly for his livelihood, by giving, in Thoreau's terms, his whole life for it, or, in mine, bartering for it the whole of his available liberty, and becoming a slave till death. There are two questions to be considered — the quality of what we buy, and the price we have to pay for it. Do you want a thousand a year, a two thousand a year, or a ten thousand a year livelihood? and can you afford the one you want? It is a matter of taste; it is not in the least degree a question of duty, though commonly supposed so. But there is no authority for that view anywhere. It is nowhere in the Bible. It is true that we might do a vast amount of good if we were wealthy, but it is also highly improbable; not many do; and the art of growing rich is not only quite distinct from that of doing good, but the practice of the one does not at all train a man for practising the other. “Money might be of great service to me,” writes Thoreau; “but the difficulty now is that I do not improve my opportunities, and therefore I am not prepared to have my opportunities increased.” It is a mere illusion that, above a certain income, the personal desires will be satisfied and leave a wider margin for the generous impulse. It is as difficult to be generous, or anything else except perhaps a member 8 of Parliament, on thirty thousand as on two hundred a year.

Now Thoreau’s tastes were well defined. He loved to be free, to be master of his times and seasons, to indulge the mind rather than the body; he preferred long rambles to rich dinners, his own reflections to the consideration of society, and an easy, calm, unfettered, active life among green trees to dull toiling at the counter of a bank. And such being his inclination he determined to gratify it. A poor man must save off something; he determined to save off his livelihood. “When a man has attained those things which are necessary to life,” he writes, “there is another alternative than to obtain the superfluities; *he may adventure on life now*, his vacation from humbler toil having commenced.” Thoreau would get shelter, some kind of covering for his body, and necessary daily bread; even these he should get as cheaply as possible; and then, his vacation from humbler toil having commenced, devote himself to Oriental philosophers, the study of nature, and the work of self-improvement.

Prudence, which bids us all go to the ant for wisdom and hoard against the day of sickness, was not a favourite with Thoreau. He preferred that other, whose name is so much misappropriated: Faith. When he had secured the necessaries of the moment, he would not reckon up possible accidents or torment himself with trouble for the future. He had no toleration for the man “who ventures to live only by the aid of the mutual insurance company, which has promised to bury him decently.” He would trust himself a little to the world. “We may safely trust a good deal more than we do,” says he. “How much is not done by us! or what if we had been taken sick?” And then, with a stab of satire, he describes contemporary mankind in a phrase: “All the day long on the alert, at night we unwillingly say our prayers and commit ourselves to uncertainties.” It is not likely that the public will be much affected by Thoreau, when they blink the direct injunctions 9 of the religion they profess; and yet, whether we will or no, we make the same hazardous ventures; we back our own health and the honesty of our neighbours for all that we are worth; and it is chilling to think how many must lose their wager.

In , twenty-eight years old, an age by which the liveliest have usually declined into some conformity with the world, Thoreau, with a capital of something less than five pounds and a borrowed axe, walked forth into the woods by Walden Pond, and began his new experiment in life. He built himself a dwelling, and returned the axe, he says with characteristic and workmanlike pride, sharper than when he borrowed it; he reclaimed a patch, where he cultivated beans, peas, potatoes, and sweet corn; he had his bread to bake, his farm to dig, and for the matter of six weeks in the summer he worked at surveying, carpentry, or some other of his numerous dexterities, for hire. For more than five years this was all that he required to do for his support, and he had the winter and most of the summer at his entire disposal. For six weeks of occupation, a little cooking and a little gentle hygienic gardening, the man, you may say, had as good as stolen his livelihood. Or we must rather allow that he had done far better; for the thief himself is continually and busily occupied; and even one born to inherit a million will have more calls upon his time than Thoreau. Well might he say, “What old people tell you you cannot do, you try and find you can.” And how surprising is his conclusion: “I am convinced that *to maintain oneself on this earth is not a hardship, but a pastime*, if we will live simply and wisely; *as the pursuits of simpler nations are still the sports of the more artificial*.”

When he had enough of that kind of life, he showed the same simplicity in giving it up as in beginning it. There are some who could have done the one, but, vanity forbidding, not the other; and that is perhaps the story of the hermits; but Thoreau made no fetich of his own example, and did what he wanted squarely. And five years is long
0 enough for an experiment, and to prove the success of transcendental Yankeeism. It is not his frugality which is worthy of note; for, to begin with, that was inborn, and therefore inimitable by others who are differently constituted; and again, it was no new thing, but has often been equalled by poor Scotch students at the universities. The point is the sanity of his view of life, and the insight with which he recognised the position of money, and thought out for himself the problem of riches and a livelihood. Apart from his eccentricities, he had perceived, and was acting on, a truth of universal application. For money enters in two different characters into the scheme of life. A certain amount, varying with the number and empire of our desires, is a true necessary to each one of us in the

present order of society; but beyond that amount, money is a commodity to be bought or not to be bought, a luxury in which we may either indulge or stint ourselves, like any other. And there are many luxuries that we may legitimately prefer to it, such as a grateful conscience, a country life, or the woman of our inclination. Trite, flat, and obvious as this conclusion may appear, we have only to look round us in society to see how scantily it has been recognised; and perhaps even ourselves, after a little reflection, may decide to spend a trifle less for money, and indulge ourselves a trifle more in the article of freedom.

III

“To have done anything by which you earned money merely,” says Thoreau, “is to be” (have been, he means) “idle and worse.” There are two passages in his letters, both, oddly enough, relating to firewood, which must be brought together to be rightly understood. So taken, they contain between them the marrow of all good sense on the subject of work in its relation to something broader than mere livelihood. Here is the first: “I suppose I[1] have burned up a good-sized tree to-night — and for what? I settled with Mr. Tarbell for it the other day; but that wasn’t the final settlement. I got off cheaply from him. At last one will say: ‘Let us see, how much wood did you burn, sir?’ And I shall shudder to think that the next question will be, ‘What did you do while you were warm?’” Even after we have settled with Admetus in the person of Mr. Tarbell, there comes, you see, a further question. It is not enough to have earned our livelihood. Either the earning itself should have been serviceable to mankind, or something else must follow. To live is sometimes very difficult, but it is never meritorious in itself; and we must have a reason to allege to our own conscience why we should continue to exist upon this crowded earth. If Thoreau had simply dwelt in his house at Walden, a lover of trees, birds, and fishes, and the open air and virtue, a reader of wise books, an idle, selfish self-improver, he would have managed to cheat Admetus, but, to cling to metaphor, the devil would have had him in the end. Those who can avoid toil altogether and dwell in the Arcadia of private means, and even those who can, by abstinence, reduce the necessary amount of it to some six weeks a year, having the more liberty, have only the higher moral obligation to be up and doing in the interest of man.

The second passage is this: “There is a far more important and warming heat, commonly lost, which precedes the burning of the wood. It is the smoke of industry, which is incense. I had been so thoroughly warmed in body and spirit, that when at length my fuel was housed, I came near selling it to the ashman, as if I had extracted all its heat.” Industry is, in itself and when properly chosen, delightful and profitable to the worker; and when your toil has been a pleasure, you have not, as Thoreau says, “earned money merely,” but money, health, delight, and moral profit, all in one. “We must heap up a great pile of doing for a small diameter of being,” he says in another place; and then exclaims, “How admirably the artist is made to accomplish[2] his self-culture by devotion to his art!” We may escape uncongenial toil, only to devote ourselves to that which is congenial. It is only to transact some higher business that even Apollo dare play the truant from Admetus. We must all work for the sake of work; we must all work, as Thoreau says again, in any “absorbing pursuit — it does not much matter what, so it be honest”; but the most profitable work is that which combines into one continued effort the largest proportion of the powers and desires of a man’s nature; that into which he will plunge with ardour, and from which he will desist with reluctance; in which he will know the weariness of fatigue, but not that of satiety; and which will be ever fresh, pleasing, and stimulating to his taste. Such work holds a man together, braced at all points; it does not suffer him to doze or wander; it keeps him actively conscious of himself, yet raised among superior interests; it gives him the profit of industry with the pleasures of a pastime. This is what his art should be to the true artist, and that to a degree unknown in other and less intimate pursuits. For other professions stand apart from the human business of life; but an art has its seat at the centre of the artist’s doings and sufferings, deals directly with his experiences, teaches him the lessons of his own fortunes and mishaps, and becomes a part of his biography. So says Goethe:

“Spät erklingt was früh erklang;
Glück und Unglück wird Gesang.”

Now Thoreau’s art was literature; and it was one of which he had conceived most ambitiously. He loved and believed in good books. He said well, “Life is not habitually seen from any common platform so truly and unexaggerated as in the light of literature.” But the literature he loved was of the heroic order. “Books, not which afford us a cowering enjoyment, but in which each thought is of unusual daring; such as an idle man cannot read, and a timid one would not be entertained by, which 3 even make us dangerous to existing institutions — such I call good books.” He did not think them easy to be read. “The heroic books,” he says, “even if printed in the character of our mother-tongue, will always be in a language dead to degenerate times; and we must laboriously seek the meaning of each word and line, conjecturing a larger sense than common use permits out of what wisdom and valour and generosity we have.” Nor does he suppose that such books are easily written. “Great prose, of equal elevation, commands our respect more than great verse,” says he, “since it implies a more permanent and level height, a life more pervaded with the grandeur of the thought. The poet often only makes an irruption, like the Parthian, and is off again, shooting while he retreats; but the prose writer has conquered like a Roman and settled colonies.” We may ask ourselves, almost with dismay, whether such works exist at all but in the imagination of the student. For the bulk of the best of books is apt to be made up with ballast; and those in which energy of thought is combined with any stateliness of utterance may be almost counted on the fingers. Looking round in English for a book that should answer Thoreau's two demands of a style like poetry and sense that shall be both original and inspiriting, I come to Milton's "Areopagitica," and can name no other instance for the moment. Two things at least are plain: that if a man will condescend to nothing more commonplace in the way of reading, he must not look to have a large library; and that if he proposes himself to write in a similar vein, he will find his work cut out for him.

Thoreau composed seemingly while he walked, or at least exercise and composition were with him intimately connected; for we are told that "the length of his walk uniformly made the length of his writing." He speaks in one place of "plainness and vigour, the ornaments of style," which is rather too paradoxical to be comprehensively true. In another he remarks: "As for style of 4 writing, if one has anything to say it drops from him simply as a stone falls to the ground." We must conjecture a very large sense indeed for the phrase "if one has anything to say." When truth flows from a man, fittingly clothed in style and without conscious effort, it is because the effort has been made and the work practically completed before he sat down to write. It is only out of fulness of thinking that expression drops perfect like a ripe fruit; and when Thoreau wrote so nonchalantly at his desk, it was because he had been vigorously active during his walk. For neither clearness, compression, nor beauty of language, come to any living creature till after a busy and prolonged acquaintance with the subject on hand. Easy writers are those who, like Walter Scott, choose to remain contented with a less degree of perfection than is legitimately within the compass of their powers. We hear of Shakespeare and his clean manuscript; but in face of the evidence of the style itself and of the various editions of *Hamlet*, this merely proves that Messrs. Hemming and Condell were unacquainted with the common enough phenomenon called a fair copy. He who would recast a tragedy already given to the world must frequently and earnestly have revised details in the study. Thoreau himself, and in spite of his protestations, is an instance of even extreme research in one direction; and his effort after heroic utterance is proved not only by the occasional finish, but by the determined exaggeration of his style. "I trust you realise what an exaggerator I am — that I lay myself out to exaggerate," he writes. And again, hinting at the explanation: "Who that has heard a strain of music feared lest he should speak extravagantly any more for ever?" And yet once more, in his essay on Carlyle, and this time with his meaning well in hand: "No truth, we think, was ever expressed but with this sort of emphasis, that for the time there seemed to be no other." Thus Thoreau was an exaggerative and a parabolical writer, not because he loved the literature of the East, but from a desire that people should understand 5 and realise what he was writing. He was near the truth upon the general question; but in his own particular method, it appears to me, he wandered. Literature is not less a conventional art than painting or sculpture; and it is the least striking, as it is the most comprehensive of the three. To hear a strain of music, to see a beautiful woman, a river, a great city, or a starry night, is to make a man despair of his Lilliputian arts in language. Now, to gain that emphasis which seems denied to us by the very nature of the medium, the proper method of literature is by selection, which is a kind of negative exaggeration. It is the right of the literary artist, as Thoreau was on the point of seeing, to leave out whatever does not suit his purpose. Thus we extract the pure gold; and thus the well-written story of a noble life becomes, by its very omissions, more thrilling to the reader. But to go beyond this, like Thoreau, and to exaggerate directly, is to leave the saner classical tradition, and to put the reader on his guard. And when you write the whole for the half, you do not express your thought more forcibly, but only express a different thought which is not yours.

Thoreau’s true subject was the pursuit of self-improvement combined with an unfriendly criticism of life as it goes on in our societies; it is there that he best displays the freshness and surprising trenchancy of his intellect; it is there that his style becomes plain and vigorous, and therefore, according to his own formula, ornamental. Yet he did not care to follow this vein singly, but must drop into it by the way in books of a different purport. “Walden, or Life in the Woods”; “A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers”; “The Maine Woods,” — such are the titles he affects. He was probably reminded by his delicate critical perception that the true business of literature is with narrative; in reasoned narrative, and there alone, that art enjoys all its advantages, and suffers least from its defects. Dry precept and disembodied disquisition, as they can only be read with an effort of abstraction, 6 can never convey a perfectly complete or a perfectly natural impression. Truth, even in literature, must be clothed with flesh and blood, or it cannot tell its whole story to the reader. Hence the effect of anecdote on simple minds; and hence good biographies and works of high, imaginative art, are not only far more entertaining, but far more edifying, than books of theory or precept. Now Thoreau could not clothe his opinions in the garment of art, for that was not his talent; but he sought to gain the same elbow-room for himself, and to afford a similar relief to his readers, by mingling his thoughts with a record of experience.

Again, he was a lover of nature. The quality which we should call mystery in a painting, and which belongs so particularly to the aspect of the external world and to its influence upon our feelings, was one which he was never weary of attempting to reproduce in his books. The seeming significance of nature's appearances, their unchanging strangeness to the senses, and the thrilling response which they waken in the mind of man, continued to surprise and stimulate his spirits. It appeared to him, I think, that if we could only write near enough to the facts, and yet with no pedestrian calm, but ardently, we might transfer the glamour of reality direct upon our pages; and that, if it were once thus captured and expressed, a new and instructive relation might appear between men's thoughts and the phenomena of nature. This was the eagle that he pursued all his life long, like a schoolboy with a butterfly net. Hear him to a friend: "Let me suggest a theme for you — to state to yourself precisely and completely what that walk over the mountains amounted to for you, returning to this essay again and again until you are satisfied that all that was important in your experience is in it. Don't suppose that you can tell it precisely the first dozen times you try, but at 'em again; especially when, after a sufficient pause, you suspect that you are touching the heart or summit of the matter, reiterate your blows there, and account for the mountain to yourself. Not that the story need be long, 7 but it will take a long while to make it short." Such was the method, not consistent for a man whose meanings were to "drop from him as a stone falls to the ground." Perhaps the most successful work that Thoreau ever accomplished in this direction is to be found in the passages relating to fish in the "Week." These are remarkable for a vivid truth of impression and a happy suitability of language, not frequently surpassed.

Whatever Thoreau tried to do was tried in fair, square prose, with sentences solidly built, and no help from bastard rhythms. Moreover, there is a progression — I cannot call it a progress — in his work towards a more and more strictly prosaic level, until at last he sinks into the bathos of the prosy. Emerson mentions having once remarked to Thoreau: "Who would not like to write something which all can read, like 'Robinson Crusoe'? and who does not see with regret that his page is not solid with a right materialistic treatment which delights everybody?" I must say in passing, that it is not the right materialistic treatment which delights the world in "Robinson," but the romantic and philosophic interest of the fable. The same treatment does quite the reverse of delighting us when it is applied, in "Colonel Jack," to the management of a plantation. But I cannot help suspecting Thoreau to have been influenced either by this identical remark or by some other closely similar in meaning. He began to fall more and more into a detailed materialistic treatment; he went into the business doggedly, as one who should make a guide-book; he not only chronicled what had been important in his own experience, but whatever might have been important in the experience of anybody else; not only what had affected him, but all that he saw or heard. His ardour had grown less, or perhaps it was inconsistent with a right materialistic treatment to display such emotions as he felt; and, to complete the eventful change, he chose, from a sense of moral dignity, to gut these later works of the saving quality of humour. He was not one of those authors who 8 have learned, in his own words, “to leave out their dulness.” He inflicts his full quantity upon the reader in such books as “Cape Cod,” or “The Yankee in Canada.” Of the latter he confessed that he had not managed to get much of himself into it. Heaven knows he had not, nor yet much of Canada, we may hope. “Nothing,” he says somewhere, “can shock a brave man but dulness.” Well, there are few spots more shocking to the brave than the pages of “The Yankee in Canada.”

There are but three books of his that will be read with much pleasure: the “Week,” “Walden,” and the collected letters. As to his poetry, Emerson’s word shall suffice for us, it is so accurate and so prettily said: “The thyme and marjoram are not yet honey.” In this, as in his prose, he relied greatly on the goodwill of the reader, and wrote throughout in faith. It was an exercise of faith to suppose that many would understand the sense of his best work, or that any could be exhilarated by the dreary chronicling of his worst. “But,” as he says, “the gods do not hear any rude or discordant sound, as we learn from the echo; and I know that the nature towards which I launch these sounds is so rich that it will modulate anew and wonderfully improve my rudest strain.”

IV

“What means the fact,” he cries, “that a soul which has lost all hope for itself can inspire in another listening soul such an infinite confidence in it, even while it is expressing its despair?” The question is an echo and an illustration of the words last quoted; and it forms the key-note of his thoughts on friendship. No one else, to my knowledge, has spoken in so high and just a spirit of the kindly relations; and I doubt whether it be a drawback that these lessons should come from one in many ways so unfitted to be a teacher in this branch. The very coldness and egoism 9 of his own intercourse gave him a clearer insight into the intellectual basis of our warm, mutual tolerations; and testimony to their worth comes with added force from one who was solitary and disobliging, and of whom a friend remarked, with equal wit and wisdom, “I love Henry, but I cannot like him.”

He can hardly be persuaded to make any distinction between love and friendship; in such rarefied and freezing air, upon the mountain-tops of meditation, had he taught himself to breathe. He was, indeed, too accurate an observer not to have remarked that “there exists already a natural disinterestedness and liberality” between men and women; yet, he thought, “friendship is no respecter of sex.” Perhaps there is a sense in which the words are true; but they were spoken in ignorance; and perhaps we shall have put the matter most correctly, if we call love a foundation for a nearer and freer degree of friendship than can be possible without it. For there are delicacies, eternal between persons of the same sex, which are melted and disappear in the warmth of love.

To both, if they are to be right, he attributes the same nature and condition. “We are not what we are,” says he, “nor do we treat or esteem each other for such, but for what we are capable of being.” “A friend is one who incessantly pays us the compliment of expecting all the virtues from us, and who can appreciate them in us.” “The friend asks no return but that his friend will religiously accept and wear and not disgrace his apotheosis of him.” “It is the merit and preservation of friendship that it takes place on a level higher than the actual characters of the parties would seem to warrant.” This is to put friendship on a pedestal indeed; and yet the root of the matter is there; and the last sentence, in particular, is like a light in a dark place, and makes many mysteries plain. We are different with different friends; yet if we look closely we shall find that every such relation reposes on some particular apotheosis of oneself; with each friend, 0 although we could not distinguish it in words from any other, we have at least one special reputation to preserve: and it is thus that we run, when mortified, to our friend or the woman that we love, not to hear ourselves called better, but to be better men in point of fact. We seek this society to flatter ourselves with our own good conduct. And hence any falsehood in the relation, any incomplete or perverted understanding, will spoil even the pleasure of these visits. Thus says Thoreau again: “Only lovers know the value of truth.” And yet again: “They ask for words and deeds, when a true relation is word and deed.”

But it follows that since they are neither of them so good as the other hopes, and each is, in a very honest manner, playing a part above his powers, such an intercourse must often be disappointing to both. “We may bid farewell sooner than complain,” says Thoreau, “for our complaint is too well grounded to be uttered.” “We have not so good a right to hate any as our friend.”

“It were treason to our love
And a sin to God above,
One iota to abate
Of a pure, impartial hate.”

Love is not blind, nor yet forgiving. “O yes, believe me,” as the song says, “Love has eyes!” The nearer the intimacy, the more cuttingly do we feel the unworthiness of those we love; and because you love one, and would die for that love to-morrow, you have not forgiven, and you never will forgive, that friend’s misconduct. If you want a person’s faults, go to those who love him. They will not tell you, but they know. And herein lies the magnanimous courage of love, that it endures this knowledge without change.

It required a cold, distant personality like that of Thoreau, perhaps, to recognise and certainly to utter this truth; for a more human love makes it a point of honour not to acknowledge those faults of which it is most conscious. But his point of view is both high and dry. He 1 has no illusions; he does not give way to love any more than to hatred, but preserves them both with care like valuable curiosities. A more bald-headed picture of life, if I may so express myself, has seldom been presented. He is an egoist; he does not remember, or does not think it worth while to remark, that, in these near intimacies, we are ninety-nine times disappointed in our beggarly selves for once that we are disappointed in our friend; that it is we who seem most frequently undeserving of the love that unites us; and that it is by our friend’s conduct that we are continually rebuked and yet strengthened for a fresh endeavour. Thoreau is dry, priggish, and selfish. It is profit he is after in these intimacies; moral profit, certainly; but still profit to himself. If you will be the sort of friend I want, he remarks naively, “my education cannot dispense with your society.” His education! as though a friend were a dictionary. And with all this, not one word about pleasure, or laughter, or kisses, or any quality of flesh and blood. It was not inappropriate, surely, that he had such close relations with the fish. We can understand the friend already quoted, when he cried: “As for taking his arm, I would as soon think of taking the arm of an elm-tree!”

As a matter of fact he experienced but a broken enjoyment in his intimacies. He says he has been perpetually on the brink of the sort of intercourse he wanted, and yet never completely attained it. And what else had he to expect when he would not, in a happy phrase of Carlyle’s, “nestle down into it”? Truly, so it will be always if you only stroll in upon your friends as you might stroll in to see a cricket match; and even then not simply for the pleasure of the thing, but with some afterthought of self-improvement, as though you had come to the cricket match to bet. It was his theory that people saw each other too frequently, so that their curiosity was not properly whetted, nor had they anything fresh to communicate; but friendship must be something else than a society for mutual improvement — indeed, 2 it must only be that by the way, and to some extent unconsciously; and if Thoreau had been a man instead of a manner of elm-tree, he would have felt that he saw his friends too seldom, and have reaped benefits unknown to his philosophy from a more sustained and easy intercourse. We might remind him of his own words about love: “We should have no reserve; we should give the whole of ourselves to that business. But commonly men have not imagination enough to be thus employed about a human being, but must be coopering a barrel, forsooth.” Ay, or reading Oriental philosophers. It is not the nature of the rival occupation, it is the fact that you suffer it to be a rival, that renders loving intimacy impossible. Nothing is given for nothing in this world; there can be no true love even on your own side, without devotion; devotion is the exercise of love, by which it grows; but if you will give enough of that, if you will pay the price in a sufficient “amount of what you call life,” why then, indeed, whether with wife or comrade, you may have months and even years of such easy, natural, pleasurable, and yet improving intercourse as shall make time a moment and kindness a delight.

The secret of his retirement lies not in misanthropy, of which he had no tincture, but part in his engrossing design of self-improvement and part in the real deficiencies of social intercourse. He was not so much difficult about his fellow human beings as he could not tolerate the terms of their association. He could take to a man for any genuine qualities, as we see by his admirable sketch of the Canadian woodcutter in “Walden”; but he would not consent, in his own words, to “feebly tabulate and paddle in the social slush.” It seemed to him, I think, that society is precisely the reverse of friendship, in that it takes place on a lower level than the characters of any of the parties would warrant us to expect. The society talk of even the most brilliant man is of greatly less account than what you will get from him in (as the French say) a little committee. And Thoreau wanted geniality; he had not enough of the 3 superficial, even at command; he could not swoop into a parlour and, in the naval phrase, "cut out" a human being from that dreary port; nor had he inclination for the task. I suspect he loved books and nature as well and near as warmly as he loved his fellow-creatures, — a melancholy, lean degeneration of the human character.

"As for the dispute about solitude and society," he thus sums up: "Any comparison is impertinent. It is an idling down on the plain at the base of the mountain instead of climbing steadily to its top. Of course you will be glad of all the society you can get to go up with. Will you go to glory with me? is the burden of the song. It is not that we love to be alone, but that we love to soar, and when we do soar the company grows thinner and thinner till there is none at all. It is either the tribune on the plain, a sermon on the mount, or a very private ecstasy still higher up. Use all the society that will abet you." But surely it is no very extravagant opinion that it is better to give than to receive, to serve than to use our companions; and above all, where there is no question of service upon either side, that it is good to enjoy their company like a natural man. It is curious and in some ways dispiriting that a writer may be always best corrected out of his own mouth; and so, to conclude, here is another passage from Thoreau which seems aimed directly at himself: "Do not be too moral; you may cheat yourself out of much life so.... *All fables, indeed, have their morals; but the innocent enjoy the story.*"

V

“The only obligation,” says he, “which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right.” “Why should we ever go abroad, even across the way, to ask a neighbour’s advice?” “There is a nearer neighbour within, who is incessantly telling us how we should behave. *But we wait for the neighbour without to tell us of some false,* [4] *easier way.*” “The greater part of what my neighbours call good I believe in my soul to be bad.” To be what we are, and to become what we are capable of becoming, is the only end of life. It is “when we fall behind ourselves” that “we are cursed with duties and the neglect of duties.” “I love the wild,” he says, “not less than the good.” And again: “The life of a good man will hardly improve us more than the life of a freebooter, for the inevitable laws appear as plainly in the infringement as in the observance, and” (mark this) “*our lives are sustained by a nearly equal expense of virtue of some kind.*” Even although he were a prig, it will be owned he could announce a startling doctrine. “As for doing good,” he writes elsewhere, “that is one of the professions that are full. Moreover, I have tried it fairly, and, strange as it may seem, am satisfied that it does not agree with my constitution. Probably I should not conscientiously and deliberately forsake my particular calling to do the good which society demands of me, to save the universe from annihilation; and I believe that a like but infinitely greater steadfastness elsewhere is all that now preserves it. If you should ever be betrayed into any of these philanthropies, do not let your left hand know what your right hand does, for it is not worth knowing.” Elsewhere he returns upon the subject, and explains his meaning thus: “If I ever *did* a man any good in their sense, of course it was something exceptional and insignificant compared with the good or evil I am constantly doing by being what I am.”

There is a rude nobility, like that of a barbarian king, in this unshaken confidence in himself and indifference to the wants, thoughts, or sufferings of others. In his whole works I find no trace of pity. This was partly the result of theory, for he held the world too mysterious to be criticised, and asks conclusively: “What right have I to grieve who have not ceased to wonder?” But it sprang still more from constitutional indifference and superiority; and he grew up healthy, composed, and unconscious from [5] among life’s horrors, like a green bay-tree from a field of battle. It was from this lack in himself that he failed to do justice to the spirit of Christ; for while he could glean more meaning from individual precepts than any score of Christians, yet he conceived life in such a different hope, and viewed it with such contrary emotions, that the sense and purport of the doctrine as a whole seems to have passed him by or left him unimpressed. He could understand the idealism of the Christian view, but he was himself so unaffectedly unhuman that he did not recognise the human intention and essence of that teaching. Hence he complained that Christ did not leave us a rule that was proper and sufficient for this world, not having conceived the nature of the rule that was laid down; for things of that character that are sufficiently unacceptable become positively non-existent to the mind. But perhaps we shall best appreciate the defect in Thoreau by seeing it supplied in the case of Whitman. For the one, I feel confident, is the disciple of the other; it is what Thoreau clearly whispered that Whitman so uproariously bawls; it is the same doctrine, but with how immense a difference! the same argument, but used to what a new conclusion! Thoreau had plenty of humour until he tutored himself out of it, and so forfeited that best birthright of a sensible man; Whitman, in that respect, seems to have been sent into the world naked and unashamed; and yet by a strange consummation, it is the theory of the former that is arid, abstract, and claustral. Of these two philosophies, so nearly identical at bottom, the one pursues Self-improvement — a churlish, mangy dog; the other is up with the morning, in the best of health, and following the nymph Happiness, buxom, blithe, and debonair. Happiness, at least, is not solitary; it joys to communicate; it loves others, for it depends on them for its existence; it sanctions and encourages to all delights that are not unkind in themselves; if it lived to a thousand, it would not make excision of a single humorous passage; and while the self-improver[6] dwindles towards the prig, and, if he be not of an excellent constitution, may even grow deformed into an Obermann, the very name and appearance of a happy man breathe of good-nature, and help the rest of us to live.

In the case of Thoreau, so great a show of doctrine demands some outcome in the field of action. If nothing were to be done but build a shanty beside Walden Pond, we have heard altogether too much of these declarations of independence. That the man wrote some books is nothing to the purpose, for the same has been done in a suburban villa. That he kept himself happy is perhaps a sufficient excuse, but it is disappointing to the reader. We may be unjust, but when a man despises commerce and philanthropy alike, and has views of good so soaring that he must take himself apart from mankind for their cultivation, we will not be content without some striking act. It was not Thoreau's fault if he were not martyred; had the occasion come, he would have made a noble ending. As it is, he did once seek to interfere in the world's course; he made one practical appearance on the stage of affairs; and a strange one it was, and strangely characteristic of the nobility and the eccentricity of the man. It was forced on him by his calm but radical opposition to negro slavery. “Voting for the right is doing nothing for it,” he saw; “it is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail.” For his part, he would not “for an instant recognise that political organisation for *his* government which is the *slave’s* government also.” “I do not hesitate to say,” he adds, “that those who call themselves Abolitionists should at once effectually withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts.” That is what he did: in he ceased to pay the poll-tax. The highway-tax he paid, for he said he was as desirous to be a good neighbour as to be a bad subject; but no more poll-tax to the State of Massachusetts. Thoreau had now seceded, and was a polity unto himself; or, as he explains it with admirable 7 sense, “In fact, I quietly declare war with the State after my fashion, though I will still make what use and get what advantage of her I can, as is usual in such cases.” He was put in prison; but that was a part of his design. “Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name — ay, if *one* HONEST man, in this State of Massachusetts, *ceasing to hold slaves*, were actually to withdraw from this copartnership, and be locked up in the county gaol therefor, it would be the abolition of slavery in America. For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be; what is once well done is done for ever.” Such was his theory of civil disobedience.

And the upshot? A friend paid the tax for him; continued year by year to pay it in the sequel; and Thoreau was free to walk the woods unmolested. It was a *fiasco*, but to me it does not seem laughable; even those who joined in the laughter at the moment would be insensibly affected by this quaint instance of a good man’s horror for injustice. We may compute the worth of that one night’s imprisonment as outweighing half a hundred voters at some subsequent election; and if Thoreau had possessed as great a power of persuasion as (let us say) Falstaff, if he had counted a party however small, if his example had been followed by a hundred or by thirty of his fellows, I cannot but believe it would have greatly precipitated the era of freedom and justice. We feel the misdeeds of our country with so little fervour, for we are not witnesses to the suffering they cause; but when we see them wake an active horror in our fellow-man, when we see a neighbour prefer to lie in prison rather than be so much as passively implicated in their perpetration, even the dullest of us will begin to realise them with a quicker pulse.

Not far from twenty years later, when Captain John Brown was taken at Harper’s Ferry, Thoreau was the first to come forward in his defence. The committees wrote [8] to him unanimously that his action was premature. "I did not send to you for advice," said he, "but to announce that I was to speak." I have used the word "defence"; in truth he did not seek to defend him, even declared it would be better for the good cause that he should die; but he praised his action as I think Brown would have liked to hear it praised.

Thus this singularly eccentric and independent mind, wedded to a character of so much strength, singleness, and purity, pursued its own path of self-improvement for more than half a century, part gymnosophist, part backwoodsman; and thus did it come twice, though in a subaltern attitude, into the field of political history.

Note. — For many facts in the above essay, among which I may mention the incident of the squirrel, I am indebted to "Thoreau: His Life and Aims," by H. A. Page, *i.e.*, as is well known, Dr Japp.

9

V

YOSHIDA-TORAJIRO

The name at the head of this page is probably unknown to the English reader, and yet I think it should become a household word like that of Garibaldi or John Brown. Some day soon, we may expect to hear more fully the details of Yoshida's history, and the degree of his influence in the transformation of Japan; even now there must be Englishmen acquainted with the subject, and perhaps the appearance of this sketch may elicit something more complete and exact. I wish to say that I am not, rightly speaking, the author of the present paper: I tell the story on the authority of an intelligent Japanese gentleman, Mr. Taiso Masaki, who told it me with an emotion that does honour to his heart; and though I have taken some pains, and sent my notes to him to be corrected, this can be no more than an imperfect outline.

Yoshida-Torajiro was son to the hereditary military instructor of the house of Choshu. The name you are to pronounce with an equality of accent on the different syllables, almost as in French, the vowels as in Italian, but the consonants in the English manner — except the *j*, which has the French sound, or, as it has been cleverly proposed to write it, the sound of *zh*. Yoshida was very learned in Chinese letters, or, as we might say, in the classics, and in his father's subject; fortification was among his favourite studies, and he was a poet from his boyhood. He was born to a lively and intelligent patriotism; the condition of Japan was his great concern; and while he projected a better future, he lost no opportunity of improving 0 his knowledge of her present state. With this end he was continually travelling in his youth, going on foot and sometimes with three days' provisions on his back, in the brave, self-helpful manner of all heroes. He kept a full diary while he was thus upon his journeys, but it is feared that these notes have been destroyed. If their value were in any respect such as we have reason to expect from the man's character, this would be a loss not easy to exaggerate. It is still wonderful to the Japanese how far he contrived to push these explorations; a cultured gentleman of that land and period would leave a complimentary poem where-ever he had been hospitably entertained; and a friend of Mr. Masaki, who was likewise a great wanderer, has found such traces of Yoshida's passage in very remote regions of Japan.

Politics is perhaps the only profession for which no preparation is thought necessary; but Yoshida considered otherwise, and he studied the miseries of his fellow-countrymen with as much attention and research as though he had been going to write a book, instead of merely to propose a remedy. To a man of his intensity and singleness, there is no question but that this survey was melancholy in the extreme. His dissatisfaction is proved by the eagerness with which he threw himself into the cause of reform; and what would have discouraged another braced Yoshida for his task. As he professed the theory of arms, it was firstly the defences of Japan that occupied his mind. The external feebleness of that country was then illustrated by the manners of overriding barbarians, and the visits of big barbarian warships: she was a country beleaguered. Thus the patriotism of Yoshida took a form which may be said to have defeated itself: he had it upon him to keep out these all-powerful foreigners, whom it is now one of his chief merits to have helped to introduce; but a man who follows his own virtuous heart will be always found in the end to have been fighting for the best. One thing leads naturally to another in an awakened mind, and that with 1 an upward progress from effect to cause. The power and knowledge of these foreigners were things inseparable; by envying them their military strength, Yoshida came to envy them their culture; from the desire to equal them in the first, sprang his desire to share with them in the second; and thus he is found treating in the same book of a new scheme to strengthen the defences of Kioto and of the establishment, in the same city, of a university of foreign teachers. He hoped, perhaps, to get the good of other lands without their evil; to enable Japan to profit by the knowledge of the barbarians, and still keep her inviolate with her own arts and virtues. But whatever was the precise nature of his hope, the means by which it was to be accomplished were both difficult and obvious. Some one with eyes and understanding must break through the official cordon, escape into the new world, and study this other civilisation on the spot. And who could be better suited for the business? It was not without danger, but he was without fear. It needed preparation and insight; and what had he done since he was a child but prepare himself with the best culture of Japan, and acquire in his excursions the power and habit of observing?

He was but twenty-two, and already all this was clear in his mind, when news reached Choshu that Commodore Perry was lying near to Yeddo. Here, then, was the patriot's opportunity. Among the Samurai of Choshu, and in particular among the councillors of the Daimio, his general culture, his views, which the enlightened were eager to accept, and, above all, the prophetic charm, the radiant persuasion of the man, had gained him many and sincere disciples. He had thus a strong influence at the provincial Court; and so he obtained leave to quit the district, and, by way of a pretext, a privilege to follow his profession in Yeddo. Thither he hurried, and arrived in time to be too late: Perry had weighed anchor, and his sails had vanished from the waters of Japan. But Yoshida, having put his hand to the plough, was not the 2 man to go back; he had entered upon this business, and, please God, he would carry it through; and so he gave up his professional career and remained in Yeddo to be at hand against the next opportunity. By this behaviour he put himself into an attitude towards his superior, the Daimio of Choshu, which I cannot thoroughly explain. Certainly, he became a *Ronyin*, a broken man, a feudal outlaw; certainly he was liable to be arrested if he set foot upon his native province; yet I am cautioned that "he did not really break his allegiance," but only so far separated himself as that the prince could no longer be held accountable for his late vassal's conduct. There is some nicety of feudal custom here that escapes my comprehension.

In Yeddo, with this nondescript political status, and cut off from any means of livelihood, he was joyfully supported by those who sympathised with his design. One was Sákuma-Shozan, hereditary retainer of one of the Shogun's councillors, and from him he got more than money or than money's worth. A steady, respectable man, with an eye to the world's opinion, Sákuma was one of those who, if they cannot do great deeds in their own person, have yet an ardour of admiration for those who can, that recommends them to the gratitude of history. They aid and abet greatness more, perhaps, than we imagine. One thinks of them in connection with Nicodemus, who visited our Lord by night. And Sákuma was in a position to help Yoshida more practically than by simple countenance; for he could read Dutch, and was eager to communicate what he knew.

While the young Ronyin thus lay studying in Yeddo, news came of a Russian ship at Nangasaki. No time was to be lost. Sákuma contributed "a long copy of encouraging verses"; and off set Yoshida on foot for Nangasaki. His way lay through his own province of Choshu; but, as the high-road to the south lay apart from the capital, he was able to avoid arrest. He supported himself, like a *trouvère*, by his proficiency in verse. He 3 carried his works along with him, to serve as an introduction. When he reached a town he would inquire for the house of any one celebrated for swordsmanship, or poetry, or some of the other acknowledged forms of culture; and there, on giving a taste of his skill, he would be received and entertained, and leave behind him, when he went away, a compliment in verse. Thus he travelled through the Middle Ages on his voyage of discovery into the nineteenth century. When he reached Nangasaki he was once more too late. The Russians were gone. But he made a profit on his journey in spite of fate, and stayed awhile to pick up scraps of knowledge from the Dutch interpreters — a low class of men — but one that had opportunities; and then, still full of purpose, returned to Yeddo on foot, as he had come.

It was not only his youth and courage that supported him under these successive disappointments, but the continual affluence of new disciples. The man had the tenacity of a Bruce or a Columbus, with a pliability that was all his own. He did not fight for what the world would call success; but for "the wages of going on." Check him off in a dozen directions, he would find another outlet and break forth. He missed one vessel after another, and the main work still halted; but so long as he had a single Japanese to enlighten and prepare for the better future, he could still feel that he was working for Japan. Now, he had scarce returned from Nangasaki, when he was sought out by a new inquirer, the most promising of all. This was a common soldier, of the Hemming class, a dyer by birth, who had heard vaguely of Yoshida's movements,[4] and had become filled with wonder as to their design. This was a far different inquirer from Sákuma-Shozan, or the councillors of the Daimio of Choshu. This was no two-sworded gentleman, but the common stuff of the country, born in low traditions and unimproved by books; and yet that influence, that radiant persuasion that never failed Yoshida in any circumstance of his short life, enchanted, enthralled, and converted the common soldier, as it had done already with the elegant and learned. The man instantly burned up into a true enthusiasm; his mind had been only waiting for a teacher; he grasped in a moment the profit of these new ideas; he, too, would go to foreign, outlandish parts, and bring back the knowledge that was to strengthen and renew Japan; and in the meantime, that he might be the better prepared, Yoshida set himself to teach, and he to learn, the Chinese literature. It is an episode most honourable to Yoshida, and yet more honourable still to the soldier, and to the capacity and virtue of the common people of Japan.

And now, at length, Commodore Perry returned to Simoda. Friends crowded round Yoshida with help, counsels, and encouragement. One presented him with a great sword, three feet long and very heavy, which, in the exultation of the hour, he swore to carry throughout all his wanderings, and to bring back — a far-travelled weapon — to Japan. A long letter was prepared in Chinese for the American officers; it was revised and corrected by Sákuma, and signed by Yoshida, under the name of Urinaki-Manji, and by the soldier under that of Ichigi-Koda. Yoshida had supplied himself with a profusion of materials for writing; his dress was literally stuffed with paper which was to come back again enriched with his observations, and make a great and happy kingdom of Japan. Thus equipped, this pair of emigrants set forward on foot from Yeddo, and reached Simoda about nightfall. At no period within history can travel have presented to any

European creature the same face of awe and terror as to these courageous 5 Japanese. The descent of Ulysses into hell is a parallel more near the case than the boldest expedition in the Polar circles. For their act was unprecedented; it was criminal; and it was to take them beyond the pale of humanity into a land of devils. It is not to be wondered at if they were thrilled by the thought of their unusual situation; and perhaps the soldier gave utterance to the sentiment of both when he sang, “in Chinese singing” (so that we see he had already profited by his lessons), these two appropriate verses:

“We do not know where we are to sleep to-night,
In a thousand miles of desert where we can see no human smoke.”

In a little temple, hard by the sea-shore, they lay down to repose; sleep overtook them as they lay; and when they awoke, “the east was already white” for their last morning in Japan. They seized a fisherman’s boat and rowed out — Perry lying far to sea because of the two tides. Their very manner of boarding was significant of determination; for they had no sooner caught hold upon the ship than they kicked away their boat to make return impossible. And now you would have thought that all was over. But the Commodore was already in treaty with the Shogun’s Government; it was one of the stipulations that no Japanese was to be aided in escaping from Japan; and Yoshida and his followers were handed over as prisoners to the authorities at Simoda. That night he who had been to explore the secrets of the barbarian, slept, if he might sleep at all, in a cell too short for lying down at full length, and too low for standing upright. There are some disappointments too great for commentary.

Sákuma, implicated by his handwriting, was sent into his own province in confinement, from which he was soon released. Yoshida and the soldier suffered a long and miserable period of captivity, and the latter, indeed, died, while yet in prison, of a skin disease. But such a spirit as that of Yoshida-Torajiro is not easily made or kept a 6 captive; and that which cannot be broken by misfortune you shall seek in vain to confine in a bastille. He was indefatigably active, writing reports to Government and treatises for dissemination. These latter were contraband; and yet he found no difficulty in their distribution, for he always had the jailer on his side. It was in vain that they kept changing him from one prison to another; Government by that plan only hastened the spread of new ideas; for Yoshida had only to arrive to make a convert. Thus, though he himself was laid by the heels, he confirmed and extended his party in the State.

At last, after many lesser transferences, he was given over from the prisons of the Shogun to those of his own superior, the Daimio of Choshu. I conceive it possible that he may then have served out his time for the attempt to leave Japan, and was now resigned to the provincial Government on a lesser count, as a Ronyin or feudal rebel. But, however that may be, the change was of great importance to Yoshida; for by the influence of his admirers in the Daimio's council, he was allowed the privilege, underhand, of dwelling in his own house. And there, as well to keep up communication with his fellow-reformers as to pursue his work of education, he received boys to teach. It must not be supposed that he was free; he was too marked a man for that; he was probably assigned to some small circle, and lived, as we should say, under police surveillance; but to him, who had done so much from under lock and key, this would seem a large and profitable liberty.

It was at this period that Mr. Masaki was brought into personal contact with Yoshida; and hence, through the eyes of a boy of thirteen, we get one good look at the character and habits of the hero. He was ugly and laughably disfigured with the small-pox; and while nature had been so niggardly with him from the first, his personal habits were even sluttish. His clothes were wretched; when he ate or washed he wiped his hands upon his sleeves; and as his hair was not tied more than once in the two months 7 it was often disgusting to behold. With such a picture, it is easy to believe that he never married. A good teacher, gentle in act, although violent and abusive in speech, his lessons were apt to go over the heads of his scholars, and to leave them gaping, or more often laughing. Such was his passion for study that he even grudged himself natural repose; and when he grew drowsy over his books he would, if it was summer, put mosquitoes up his sleeve; and, if it was winter, take off his shoes and run barefoot on the snow. His handwriting was exceptionally villainous; poet though he was, he had no taste for what was elegant; and in a country where to write beautifully was not the mark of a scrivener but an admired accomplishment for gentlemen, he suffered his letters to be jolted out of him by the press of matter and the heat of his convictions. He would not tolerate even the appearance of a bribe; for bribery lay at the root of much that was evil in Japan, as well as in countries nearer home; and once when a merchant brought him his son to educate, and added, as was customary, a little private sweetener, Yoshida dashed the money in the giver's face, and launched into such an outbreak of indignation as made the matter public in the school. He was still, when Masaki knew him, much weakened by his hardships in prison; and the presentation-sword, three feet long, was too heavy for him to wear without distress; yet he would always gird it on when he went to dig in his garden. That is a touch which qualifies the man. A weaker nature would have shrunk from the sight of what only commemorated a failure. But he was of Thoreau's mind, that if you can "make your failure tragical by courage, it will not differ from success.” He could look back without confusion to his enthusiastic promise. If events had been contrary, and he found himself unable to carry out that purpose — well, there was but the more reason to be brave and constant 8 in another; if he could not carry the sword into barbarian lands, it should at least be witness to a life spent entirely for Japan.

This is the sight we have of him as he appeared to schoolboys, but not related in the schoolboy spirit. A man so careless of the graces must be out of court with boys and women. And, indeed, as we have all been more or less to school, it will astonish no one that Yoshida was regarded by his scholars as a laughing-stock. The schoolboy has a keen sense of humour. Heroes he learns to understand and to admire in books; but he is not forward to recognise the heroic under the traits of any contemporary man, and least of all in a brawling, dirty, and eccentric teacher. But as the years went by, and the scholars of Yoshida continued in vain to look around them for the abstractly perfect, and began more and more to understand the drift of his instructions, they learned to look back upon their comic schoolmaster as upon the noblest of mankind.

The last act of this brief and full existence was already near at hand. Some of his work was done; for already there had been Dutch teachers admitted into Nangasaki, and the country at large was keen for the new learning. But though the renaissance had begun, it was impeded and dangerously threatened by the power of the Shogun. His minister — the same who was afterwards assassinated in the snow in the very midst of his bodyguard — not only held back pupils from going to the Dutchmen, but by spies and detectives, by imprisonment and death, kept thinning out of Japan the most intelligent and active spirits. It is the old story of a power upon its last legs — learning to the bastille, and courage to the block; when there are none left but sheep and donkeys, the State will have been saved. But a man must not think to cope with a revolution; nor a minister, however fortified with guards, to hold in check a country that had given birth to such men as Yoshida and his soldier-follower. The violence of the ministerial Tarquin only served to direct attention to the 9 illegality of his master’s rule; and people began to turn their allegiance from Yeddo and the Shogun to the long-forgotten Mikado in his seclusion at Kioto. At this juncture, whether in consequence or not, the relations between these two rulers became strained; and the Shogun’s minister set forth for Kioto to put another affront upon the rightful sovereign. The circumstance was well fitted to precipitate events. It was a piece of religion to defend the Mikado; it was a plain piece of political righteousness to oppose a tyrannical and bloody usurpation. To Yoshida the moment for action seemed to have arrived. He was himself still confined in Choshu. Nothing was free but his intelligence; but with that he sharpened a sword for the Shogun's minister. A party of his followers were to waylay the tyrant at a village on the Yeddo and Kioto road, present him with a petition, and put him to the sword. But Yoshida and his friends were closely observed; and the too great expedition of two of the conspirators, a boy of eighteen and his brother, wakened the suspicion of the authorities, and led to a full discovery of the plot and the arrest of all who were concerned.

In Yeddo, to which he was taken, Yoshida was thrown again into a strict confinement. But he was not left destitute of sympathy in this last hour of trial. In the next cell lay one Kusákabé, a reformer from the southern highlands of Satsuma. They were in prison for different plots, indeed, but for the same intention; they shared the same beliefs and the same aspirations for Japan; many and long were the conversations they held through the prison wall, and dear was the sympathy that soon united them. It fell first to the lot of Kusákabé to pass before the judges; and when sentence had been pronounced he was led towards the place of death below Yoshida's window. To turn the head would have been to implicate his fellow-prisoner; but he threw him a look from his eye, and bade him farewell in a loud voice, with these two Chinese verses: —

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"It is better to be a crystal and be broken,
Than to remain perfect like a tile upon the housetop."

So Kusákabé, from the highlands of Satsuma, passed out of the theatre of this world. His death was like an antique worthy's.

A little after, and Yoshida too must appear before the Court. His last scene was of a piece with his career, and fitly crowned it. He seized on the opportunity of a public audience, confessed and gloried in his design, and, reading his auditors a lesson in the history of their country, told at length the illegality of the Shogun's power and the crimes by which its exercise was sullied. So, having said his say for once, he was led forth and executed, thirty-one years old.

A military engineer, a bold traveller (at least in wish), a poet, a patriot, a schoolmaster, a friend to learning, a martyr to reform, — there are not many men, dying at seventy, who have served their country in such various characters. He was not only wise and provident in thought, but surely one of the fieriest of heroes in execution. It is hard to say which is the most remarkable — his capacity for command, which subdued his very jailers; his hot, unflagging zeal; or his stubborn superiority to defeat. He failed in each particular enterprise that he attempted; and yet we have only to look at his country to see how complete has been his general success. His friends and pupils made the majority of leaders in that final

Revolution, now some twelve years old; and many of them are, or were until the other day, high placed among the rulers of Japan. And when we see all round us these brisk intelligent students, with their strange foreign air, we should never forget how Yoshida marched afoot from Choshu to Yeddo, and from Yeddo to Nangasaki, and from Nangasaki back again to Yeddo; how he boarded the American ship, his dress stuffed with writing material; nor how he languished in prison, and finally gave his death, as he had formerly given all his life and strength and leisure, to gain for his native[1] land that very benefit which she now enjoys so largely. It is better to be Yoshida and perish, than to be only Sákuma and yet save the hide. Kusákabé, of Satsuma, has said the word: it is better to be a crystal and be broken.

I must add a word; for I hope the reader will not fail to perceive that this is as much the story of a heroic people as that of a heroic man. It is not enough to remember Yoshida; we must not forget the common soldier, nor Kusákabé, nor the boy of eighteen, Nomura, of Choshu, whose eagerness betrayed the plot. It is exhilarating to have lived in the same days with these great-hearted gentlemen. Only a few miles from us, to speak by the proportion of the universe, while I was droning over my lessons, Yoshida was goading himself to be wakeful with the stings of the mosquito; and while you were grudging a penny income-tax, Kusákabé was stepping to death with a noble sentence on his lips.

Yoshida, when on his way to Nangasaki, met the soldier and talked with him by the roadside; they then parted, but the soldier was so much struck by the words he heard, that on Yoshida's return he sought him out and declared his intention of devoting his life to the good cause. I venture, in the absence of the writer, to insert this correction, having been present when the story was told by Mr. Masaki. — F. J. [Fleeming Jenkin.] And I, there being none to settle the difference, must reproduce both versions. — R. L. S.

I understood that the merchant was endeavouring surreptitiously to obtain for his son instruction to which he was not entitled. — F. J.

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VI

FRANÇOIS VILLON, STUDENT, POET, AND HOUSEBREAKER

Perhaps one of the most curious revolutions in literary history is the sudden bull's-eye light cast by M. Longnon on the obscure existence of François Villon. His book is not remarkable merely as a chapter of biography exhumed after four centuries. To readers of the poet it will recall, with a flavour of satire, that characteristic passage in which he bequeaths his spectacles — with a humorous reservation of the case — to the hospital for blind paupers known as the Fifteen-Score. Thus equipped, let the blind paupers go and separate the good from the bad in the cemetery of the Innocents! For his own part, the poet can see no distinction. Much have the dead people made of their advantages. What does it matter now that they have lain in state beds and nourished portly bodies upon cakes and cream! Here they all lie, to be trodden in the mud; the large estate and the small, sounding virtue and adroit or powerful vice, in very much the same condition; and a bishop not to be distinguished from a lamplighter with even the strongest spectacles.

Such was Villon's cynical philosophy. Four hundred years after his death, when surely all danger might be considered at an end, a pair of critical spectacles have been applied to his own remains; and though he left behind him a sufficiently ragged reputation from the first, it is only after these four hundred years that his delinquencies[3] have been finally tracked home, and we can assign him to his proper place among the good or wicked. It is a staggering thought, and one that affords a fine figure of the imperishability of men's acts, that the stealth of the private inquiry office can be carried so far back into the dead and dusty past. We are not so soon quit of our concerns as Villon fancied. In the extreme of dissolution, when not so much as a man's name is remembered, when his dust is scattered to the four winds, and perhaps the very grave and the very graveyard where he was laid to rest have been forgotten, desecrated, and buried under populous towns, — even in this extreme let an antiquary fall across a sheet of manuscript, and the name will be recalled, the old infamy will pop out into daylight like a toad out of a fissure in the rock, and the shadow of the shade of what was once a man will be heartily pilloried by his descendants. A little while ago and Villon was almost totally forgotten; then he was revived for the sake of his verses; and now he is being revived with a vengeance in the detection of his misdemeanours. How unsubstantial is this projection of a man's existence, which can lie in abeyance for centuries and then be brushed up again and set forth for the consideration of posterity by a few dips in an antiquary's inkpot! This precarious tenure of fame goes a long way to justify those (and they are not few) who prefer cakes and cream in the immediate present.

A WILD YOUTH

François de Montcorbier, *alias* François des Loges, *alias* François Villon, *alias* Michel Mouton, Master of Arts in the University of Paris, was born in that city in the summer of . It was a memorable year for France on other and higher considerations. A great-hearted girl and a poor-hearted boy made, the one her last, the other his first appearance on the public stage of that unhappy 4 country. On the th of May the ashes of Joan of Arc were thrown into the Seine, and on the 2nd of December our Henry Sixth made his Joyous Entry dismally enough into disaffected and depopulating Paris. Sword and fire still ravaged the open country. On a single April Saturday twelve hundred persons, besides children, made their escape out of the starving capital. The hangman, as is not uninteresting to note in connection with Master Francis, was kept hard at work in ; on the last of April and on the 4th of May alone, sixty-two bandits swung from Paris gibbets. A more confused or troublous time it would have been difficult to select for a start in life. Not even a man's nationality was certain; for the people of Paris there was no such thing as a Frenchman. The English were the English indeed, but the French were only the Armagnacs, whom, with Joan of Arc at their head, they had beaten back from under their ramparts not two years before. Such public sentiment as they had centred about their dear Duke of Burgundy, and the dear Duke had no more urgent business than to keep out of their neighbourhood.... At least, and whether he liked it or not, our disreputable troubadour was tubbed and swaddled as a subject of the English crown.

We hear nothing of Villon's father, except that he was poor and of mean extraction. His mother was given piously, which does not imply very much in an old Frenchwoman, and quite uneducated. He had an uncle, a monk in an abbey at Angers, who must have prospered beyond the family average, and was reported to be worth five or six hundred crowns. Of this uncle and his money-box the reader will hear once more. In Francis became a student of the University of Paris; in he took the degree of Bachelor, and in that of Master of Arts. His *bourse*, or the sum paid weekly for his board, was of the amount of two sous. Now two sous was about the price of a pound of salt butter in the bad times of about 5 ; it was the price of half a pound in the worse times of ; and in , just four years before Villon joined the University, it seems to have been taken as the average wage for a day's manual labour. In short, it cannot have been a very profuse allowance to keep a sharp-set lad in breakfast and supper for seven mortal days; and Villon's share of the cakes and pastry and general good cheer, to which he is never weary of referring, must have been slender from the first.

The educational arrangements of the University of Paris were, to our way of thinking, somewhat incomplete. Worldly and monkish elements were presented in a curious confusion, which the youth might disentangle for himself. If he had an opportunity, on the one hand, of acquiring much hair-drawn divinity and a taste for formal disputation, he was put in the way of much gross and flaunting vice upon the other. The lecture-room of a scholastic doctor was sometimes under the same roof with establishments of a very different and peculiarly unedifying order. The students had extraordinary privileges, which by all accounts they abused extraordinarily. And while some condemned themselves to an almost sepulchral regularity and seclusion, others fled the schools, swaggered in the street "with their thumbs in their girdle," passed the night in riot, and behaved themselves as the worthy forerunners of Jehan Frollo in the romance of "Notre Dame de Paris." Villon tells us himself that he was among the truants, but we hardly needed his avowal. The burlesque erudition in which he sometimes indulged implies no more than the merest smattering of knowledge; whereas his acquaintance with blackguard haunts and industries could only have been acquired by early and consistent impiety and idleness. He passed his degrees, it is true; but some of us who have been to modern Universities will make their own reflections on the value of the test. As for his three pupils, Colin Laurent, Girard Gossouyn, and Jehan Marceau — if 6 they were really his pupils in any serious sense — what can we say but God help them! And sure enough, by his own description, they turned out as ragged, rowdy, and ignorant as was to be looked for from the views and manners of their rare preceptor.

At some time or other, before or during his University career, the poet was adopted by Master Guillaume de Villon, chaplain of Saint Benoît-le-Bétourné, near the Sorbonne. From him he borrowed the surname by which he is known to posterity. It was most likely from his house, called the "Porte Rouge," and situated in a garden in the cloister of St. Benoît, that Master Francis heard the bell of the Sorbonne ring out the Angelus while he was finishing his "Small Testament" at Christmastide in . Towards this benefactor he usually gets credit for a respectable display of gratitude. But with his trap and pitfall style of writing, it is easy to make too sure. His sentiments are about as much to be relied on as those of a professional beggar; and in this, as in so many other matters, he comes towards us whining and piping the eye, and goes off again with a whoop and his finger to his nose. Thus, he calls Guillaume de Villon his "more than father," thanks him with a great show of sincerity for having helped him out of many scrapes, and bequeaths him his portion of renown. But the portion of renown which belonged to a young thief, distinguished (if, at the period when he wrote this legacy, he was distinguished at all) for having written some more or less obscene and scurrilous ballads, must have been little fitted to gratify the self-respect or increase the reputation of a benevolent ecclesiastic. The same remark applies to a subsequent legacy of the poet's library, with specification of one work which was plainly neither decent nor devout. We are thus left on the horns of a dilemma. If the chaplain was a godly, philanthropic personage, who had tried to graft good principles and good behaviour on this wild slip of an adopted son, these jesting legacies would obviously cut him to the heart. The position of an adopted 7 son towards his adoptive father is one full of delicacy; where a man lends his name he looks for great consideration. And this legacy of Villon's portion of renown may be taken as the mere fling of an unregenerate scapegrace who has wit enough to recognise in his own shame the readiest weapon of offence against a prosy benefactor's feelings. The gratitude of Master Francis figures, on this reading, as a frightful *minus* quantity. If, on the other hand, those jests were given and taken in good humour, the whole relation between the pair degenerates into the unedifying complicity of a debauched old chaplain and a witty and dissolute young scholar. At this rate the house with the red door may have rung with the most mundane minstrelsy; and it may have been below its roof that Villon, through a hole in the plaster, studied, as he tells us, the leisures of a rich ecclesiastic.

It was, perhaps, of some moment in the poet's life that he should have inhabited the cloister of Saint Benoît. Three of the most remarkable among his early acquaintances are Catherine de Vausselles, for whom he entertained a short-lived affection and an enduring and most unmanly resentment; Regnier de Montigny, a young blackguard of good birth; and Colin de Cayeux, a fellow with a marked aptitude for picking locks. Now we are on a foundation of mere conjecture, but it is at least curious to find that two of the canons of Saint Benoît answered respectively to the names of Pierre de Vaucel and Etienne de Montigny, and that there was a householder called Nicolas de Cayeux in a street — the Rue des Poirées — in the immediate neighbourhood of the cloister. M. Longnon is almost ready to identify Catherine as the niece of Pierre; Regnier as the nephew of Etienne, and Colin as the son of Nicolas. Without going so far, it must be owned that the approximation of names is significant. As we go on to see the part played by each of these persons in the sordid melodrama of the poet's life, we shall come to regard it as even more notable. Is it not Clough who has remarked that, after all, everything 8 lies in juxtaposition? Many a man's destiny has been settled by nothing apparently more grave than a pretty face on the opposite side of the street and a couple of bad companions round the corner.

Catherine de Vausselles (or de Vaucel — the change is within the limits of Villon's licence) had plainly delighted in the poet's conversation; near neighbours or not, they were much together; and Villon made no secret of his court, and suffered himself to believe that his feeling was repaid in kind. This may have been an error from the first, or he may have estranged her by subsequent misconduct or temerity. One can easily imagine Villon an impatient wooer. One thing, at least, is sure: that the affair terminated in a manner bitterly humiliating to Master Francis. In presence of his lady-love, perhaps under her window, and certainly with her connivance, he was unmercifully thrashed by one Noë le Joly — beaten, as he says himself, like dirty linen on the washing-board. It is characteristic that his malice had notably increased between the time when he wrote the "Small Testament" immediately on the back of the occurrence, and the time when he wrote the "Large Testament" five years after. On the latter occasion nothing is too bad for his "damsel with the twisted nose," as he calls her. She is spared neither hint nor accusation, and he tells his messenger to accost her with the vilest insults. Villon, it is thought, was out of Paris when these amenities escaped his pen; or perhaps the strong arm of Noë le Joly would have been again in requisition. So ends the love-story, if love-story it may properly be called. Poets are not necessarily fortunate in love; but they usually fall among more romantic circumstances, and bear their disappointment with a better grace.

The neighbourhood of Regnier de Montigny and Colin de Cayeux was probably more influential on his after life than the contempt of Catherine. For a man who is greedy of all pleasures, and provided with little money and less 9 dignity of character, we may prophesy a safe and speedy voyage downward. Humble or even truckling virtue may walk unspotted in this life. But only those who despise the pleasures can afford to despise the opinion of the world. A man of a strong, heady temperament, like Villon, is very differently tempted. His eyes lay hold on all provocations greedily, and his heart flames up at a look into imperious desire; he is snared and broached-to by anything and everything, from a pretty face to a piece of pastry in a cookshop window; he will drink the rinsing of the wine-cup, stay the latest at the tavern party; tap at the lit windows, follow the sound of singing, and beat the whole neighbourhood for another reveller, as he goes reluctantly homeward; and grudge himself every hour of sleep as a black empty period in which he cannot follow after pleasure. Such a person is lost if he have not dignity, or, failing that, at least pride, which is its shadow and in many ways its substitute. Master Francis, I fancy, would follow his own eager instincts without much spiritual struggle. And we soon find him fallen among thieves in sober, literal earnest, and counting as acquaintances the most disreputable people he could lay his hands on; fellows who stole ducks in Paris Moat; sergeants of the criminal court, and archers of the watch; blackguards who slept at night under the butchers' stalls, and for whom the aforesaid archers peered about carefully with lanterns; Regnier de Montigny, Colin de Cayeux, and their crew, all bound on a favouring breeze towards the gallows; the disorderly abbess of Port Royal, who went about at fair-time with soldiers and thieves, and conducted her abbey on the queerest principles; and most likely Perette Mauger, the great Paris receiver of stolen goods, not yet dreaming, poor woman! of the last scene of her career when Henry Cousin, executor of the high justice, shall bury her, alive and most reluctant, in front of the new Montigny gibbet. Nay, our friend soon began to take a foremost rank in this society. He could string off verses, 0 which is always an agreeable talent; and he could make himself useful in many other ways. The whole ragged army of Bohemia, and whosoever loved good cheer without at all loving to work and pay for it, are addressed in contemporary verses as the "Subjects of François Villon." He was a good genius to all hungry and unscrupulous persons; and became the hero of a whole legendary cycle of tavern tricks and cheateries. At best, these were doubtful levities, rather too thievish for a schoolboy, rather too gamesome for a thief. But he would not linger long in this equivocal border-land. He must soon have complied with his surroundings. He was one who would go where the cannikin clinked, not caring who should pay; and from supping in the wolves' den, there is but a step to hunting with the pack. And here, as I am on the chapter of his degradation, I shall say all I mean to say about its darkest expression, and be done with it for good. Some charitable critics see no more than a *jeu d'esprit*, a graceful and trifling exercise of the imagination, in the grimy ballad of Fat Peg (*Grosse Margot*). I am not able to follow these gentlemen to this polite extreme. Out of all Villon's works that ballad stands forth in flaring reality, gross and ghastly, as a thing written in a contraction of disgust. M. Longnon shows us more and more clearly at every page that we are to read our poet literally, that his names are the names of real persons, and the events he chronicles were actual events. But even if the tendency of criticism had run the other way, this ballad would have gone far to prove itself. I can well understand the reluctance of worthy persons in this matter; for of course it is unpleasant to think of a man of genius as one who held, in the words of Marina to Boult —

"A place, for which the pained'st fiend
Of hell would not in reputation change."

But beyond this natural unwillingness, the whole difficulty of the case springs from a highly virtuous ignorance of life. Paris now is not so different from the Paris of then; and 1 the whole of the doings of Bohemia are not written in the sugar-candy pastorals of Mürger. It is really not at all surprising that a young man of the fifteenth century, with a knack of making verses, should accept his bread upon disgraceful terms. The race of those who do so is not extinct; and some of them to this day write the prettiest verses imaginable.... After this, it were impossible for Master Francis to fall lower: to go and steal for himself would be an admirable advance from every point of view, divine or human.

And yet it is not as a thief, but as a homicide, that he makes his first appearance before angry justice. On June 5, , when he was about twenty-four, and had been Master of Arts for a matter of three years, we behold him for the first time quite definitely. Angry justice had, as it were, photographed him in the act of his homicide; and M. Longnon, rummaging among old deeds, has turned up the negative and printed it off for our instruction. Villon had been supping — copiously we may believe — and sat on a stone bench in front of the Church of St. Benoît, in company with a priest called Gilles and a woman of the name of Isabeau. It was nine o'clock, a mighty late hour for the period, and evidently a fine summer's night. Master Francis carried a mantle, like a prudent man, to keep him from the dews (*serain*), and had a sword below it dangling from his girdle. So these three dallied in front of St. Benoît, taking their pleasure (*pour soy esbatre*). Suddenly there arrived upon the scene a priest, Philippe Chermoye or Sermaise, also with sword and cloak, and accompanied by one Master Jehan le Mardi. Sermaise, according to Villon's account, which is all we have to go upon, came up blustering and denying God; as Villon rose to make room for him upon the bench, thrust him rudely back into his place; and finally drew his sword and cut open his lower lip, by what I should imagine was a very clumsy stroke. Up to this point, Villon professes to have been a model of courtesy, even of feebleness: and the brawl, in his version, 2 reads like the fable of the wolf and the lamb. But now the lamb was roused; he drew his sword, stabbed Sermaise in the groin, knocked him on the head with a big stone, and then, leaving him to his fate, went away to have his own lip doctored by a barber of the name of Fouquet. In one version he says that Gilles, Isabeau, and Le Mardi ran away at the first high words, and that he and Sermaise had it out alone; in another, Le Mardi is represented as returning and wresting Villon's sword from him: the reader may please himself. Sermaise was picked up, lay all that night in the prison of Saint Benoît, where he was examined by an official of the Châtelet and expressly pardoned Villon, and died on the following Saturday in the Hôtel Dieu.

This, as I have said, was in June. Not before January of the next year could Villon extract a pardon from the King; but while his hand was in, he got two. One is for “François des Loges, alias (*autrement dit*) de Villon”; and the other runs in the name of François de Montcorbier. Nay, it appears there was a further complication; for in the narrative of the first of these documents it is mentioned that he passed himself off upon Fouquet, the barber-surgeon, as one Michel Mouton. M. Longnon has a theory that this unhappy accident with Sermaise was the cause of Villon’s subsequent irregularities; and that up to that moment he had been the pink of good behaviour. But the matter has to my eyes a more dubious air. A pardon necessary for Des Loges and another for Montcorbier? and these two the same person? and one or both of them known by the *alias* of Villon, however honestly come by? and lastly, in the heat of the moment, a fourth name thrown out with an assured countenance? A ship is not to be trusted that sails under so many colours. This is not the simple bearing of innocence. No — the young master was already treading crooked paths; already, he would start and blench at a hand upon his shoulder, with the look we know so well in the face of Hogarth’s Idle Apprentice; already, in the blue devils, he would see Henry Cousin, the executor of 3 high justice, going in dolorous procession towards Montfaucon, and hear the wind and the birds crying around Paris gibbet.

A GANG OF THIEVES

In spite of the prodigious number of people who managed to get hanged, the fifteenth century was by no means a bad time for criminals. A great confusion of parties and great dust of fighting favoured the escape of private housebreakers and quiet fellows who stole ducks in Paris Moat. Prisons were leaky; and as we shall see, a man with a few crowns in his pocket, and perhaps some acquaintance among the officials, could easily slip out and become once more a free marauder. There was no want of a sanctuary where he might harbour until troubles blew by; and accomplices helped each other with more or less good faith. Clerks, above all, had remarkable facilities for a criminal way of life; for they were privileged, except in cases of notorious incorrigibility, to be plucked from the hands of rude secular justice and tried by a tribunal of their own. In , a couple of thieves, both clerks of the University, were condemned to death by the Provost of Paris. As they were taken to Montfaucon, they kept crying "high and clearly" for their benefit of clergy, but were none the less pitilessly hanged and gibbeted. Indignant Alma Mater interfered before the King; and the Provost was deprived of all royal offices, and condemned to return the bodies and erect a great stone cross, on the road from Paris to the gibbet, graven with the effigies of these two holy martyrs. We shall hear more of the benefit of clergy; for after this the reader will not be surprised to meet with thieves in the shape of tonsured clerks, or even priests and monks.

To a knot of such learned pilferers our poet certainly belonged; and by turning over a few more of M. Longnon's 4 negatives, we shall get a clear idea of their character and doings. Montigny and De Cayeux are names already known; Guy Tabary, Petit-Jehan, Dom Nicolas, little Thibault, who was both clerk and goldsmith, and who made picklocks and melted plate for himself and his companions — with these the reader has still to become acquainted. Petit-Jehan and De Cayeux were handy fellows and enjoyed a useful pre-eminence in honour of their doings with the picklock. "*Dictus des Cahyeus est fortis operator crochetorum*," says Tabary's interrogation, "*sed dictus Petit-Jehan, ejus socius, est forcius operator*." But the flower of the flock was little Thibault; it was reported that no lock could stand before him; he had a persuasive hand; let us salute capacity wherever we may find it. Perhaps the term *gang* is not quite properly applied to the persons whose fortunes we are now about to follow; rather they were independent malefactors, socially intimate, and occasionally joining together for some serious operation, just as modern stockjobbers form a syndicate for an important loan. Nor were they at all particular to any branch of misdoing. They did not scrupulously confine themselves to a single sort of theft, as I hear is common among modern thieves. They were ready for anything, from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter. Montigny, for instance, had neglected neither of these extremes, and we find him accused of cheating at games of hazard on the one hand, and on the other of the murder of one Thevenin Pensete in a house by the Cemetery of St. John. If time had only spared us some particulars, might not this last have furnished us with the matter of a grisly winter's tale?

At Christmas-time in , readers of Villon will remember that he was engaged on the "Small Testament." About the same period, *circa festum nativitatis Domini*, he took part in a memorable supper at the Mule Tavern, in front of the Church of St. Mathurin. Tabary, who seems to have been very much Villon's creature, had ordered the supper in the course of the afternoon. He was a man who 5 had had troubles in his time, and languished in the Bishop of Paris's prisons on a suspicion of picking locks; confiding, convivial, not very astute — who had copied out a whole improper romance with his own right hand. This supper-party was to be his first introduction to De Cayeux and Petit-Jehan, which was probably a matter of some concern to the poor man's muddy wits; in the sequel, at least, he speaks of both with an undisguised respect, based on professional inferiority in the matter of picklocks. Dom Nicolas, a Picardy monk, was the fifth and last at table. When supper had been despatched and fairly washed down, we may suppose, with white Baigneux or red Beaune, which were favourite wines among the fellowship, Tabary was solemnly sworn over to secrecy on the night's performances; and the party left the Mule and proceeded to an unoccupied house belonging to Robert de Saint-Simon. This, over a low wall, they entered without difficulty. All but Tabary took off their upper garments; a ladder was found and applied to the high wall which separated Saint-Simon's house from the court of the College of Navarre; the four fellows in their shirt-sleeves (as we might say) clambered over in a twinkling; and Master Guy Tabary remained alone beside the overcoats. From the court the burglars made their way into the vestry of the chapel, where they found a large chest, strengthened with iron bands and closed with four locks. One of these locks they picked, and then, by levering up the corner, forced the other three. Inside was a small coffer, of walnut wood, also barred with iron, but fastened with only three locks, which were all comfortably picked by way of the keyhole. In the walnut coffer — a joyous sight by our thieves' lantern — were five hundred crowns of gold. There was some talk of opening the aumries, where, if they had only known, a booty eight or nine times greater lay ready to their hand; but one of the party (I have a humorous suspicion it was

Dom Nicolas, the Picardy monk) hurried them away. It was ten o’clock when they mounted the ladder; it was about midnight [6] before Tabary beheld them coming back. To him they gave ten crowns, and promised a share of a two-crown dinner on the morrow; whereat we may suppose his mouth watered. In course of time, he got wind of the real amount of their booty and understood how scurvily he had been used; but he seems to have borne no malice. How could he, against such superb operators as Petit-Jehan and De Cayeux; or a person like Villon, who could have made a new improper romance out of his own head, instead of merely copying an old one with mechanical right hand?

The rest of the winter was not uneventful for the gang. First they made a demonstration against the Church of St. Mathurin after chalices, and were ignominiously chased away by barking dogs. Then Tabary fell out with Casin Chollet, one of the fellows who stole ducks in Paris Moat, who subsequently became a sergeant of the Châtelet and distinguished himself by misconduct, followed by imprisonment and public castigation, during the wars of Louis Eleventh. The quarrel was not conducted with a proper regard to the King’s peace, and the pair publicly belaboured each other until the police stepped in, and Master Tabary was cast once more into the prisons of the Bishop. While he still lay in durance, another job was cleverly executed by the band in broad daylight, at the Augustine Monastery. Brother Guillaume Coiffier was beguiled by an accomplice to St. Mathurin to say mass; and during his absence, his chamber was entered and five or six hundred crowns in money and some silver plate successfully abstracted. A melancholy man was Coiffier on his return! Eight crowns from this adventure were forwarded by little Thibault to the incarcerated Tabary; and with these he bribed the jailer and reappeared in Paris taverns. Some time before or shortly after this, Villon set out for Angers, as he had promised in the “Small Testament.” The object of this excursion was not merely to avoid the presence of his cruel mistress or the strong arm of Noë le Joly, but to plan a deliberate robbery on his uncle the monk. As soon as [7] he had properly studied the ground, the others were to go over in force from Paris — picklocks and all — and away with my uncle’s strongbox! This throws a comical side-light on his own accusation against his relatives, that they had “forgotten natural duty” and disowned him because he was poor. A poor relation is a distasteful circumstance at the best, but a poor relation who plans deliberate robberies against those of his blood, and trudges hundreds of weary leagues to put them into execution, is surely a little on the wrong side of toleration. The uncle at Angers may have been monstrously undutiful; but the nephew from Paris was upsides with him.

On the rd April, that venerable and discreet person, Master Pierre Marchand, Curate and Prior of Paray-le-Monial, in the diocese of Chartres, arrived in Paris and put up at the sign of the Three Chandeliers, in the Rue de la Huchette. Next day, or the day after, as he was breakfasting at the sign of the Armchair, he fell into talk with two customers, one of whom was a priest and the other our friend Tabary. The idiotic Tabary became mighty confidential as to his past life. Pierre Marchand, who was an acquaintance of Guillaume Coiffier's and had sympathised with him over his loss, pricked up his ears at the mention of picklocks, and led on the transcriber of improper romances from one thing to another, until they were fast friends. For picklocks the Prior of Paray professed a keen curiosity; but Tabary, upon some late alarm, had thrown all his into the Seine. Let that be no difficulty, however, for was there not little Thibault, who could make them of all shapes and sizes, and to whom Tabary, smelling an accomplice, would be only too glad to introduce his new acquaintance? On the morrow, accordingly, they met; and Tabary, after having first wet his whistle at the Prior's expense, led him to Notre Dame and presented him to four or five "young companions," who were keeping sanctuary in the church. They were all clerks, recently escaped, like Tabary himself, from the episcopal prisons. Among these we may notice 8 Thibault, the operator, a little fellow of twenty-six, wearing long hair behind. The Prior expressed, through Tabary, his anxiety to become their accomplice and altogether such as they were (*de leur sorte et de leurs complices*). Mighty polite they showed themselves, and made him many fine speeches in return. But for all that, perhaps because they had longer heads than Tabary, perhaps because it is less easy to wheedle men in a body, they kept obstinately to generalities and gave him no information as to their exploits, past, present, or to come. I suppose Tabary groaned under this reserve; for no sooner were he and the Prior out of the church than he fairly emptied his heart to him, gave him full details of many hanging matters in the past, and explained the future intentions of the band. The scheme of the hour was to rob another Augustine monk, Robert de la Porte, and in this the Prior agreed to take a hand with simulated greed. Thus, in the course of two days, he had turned this wineskin of a Tabary inside out. For a while longer the farce was carried on; the Prior was introduced to Petit-Jehan, whom he describes as a little, very smart man of thirty, with a black beard and a short jacket; an appointment was made and broken in the de la Porte affair; Tabary had some breakfast at the Prior's charge and leaked out more secrets under the influence of wine and friendship; and then all of a sudden, on the th of May, an alarm sprang up, the Prior picked up his skirts and walked quietly over to the Châtelet to make a deposition, and the whole band took to their heels and vanished out of Paris and the sight of the police.

Vanish as they like, they all go with a clog about their feet. Sooner or later, here or there, they will be caught in the fact, and ignominiously sent home. From our vantage of four centuries afterwards, it is odd and pitiful to watch the order in which the fugitives are captured and dragged in.

Montigny was the first. In August of that same year he was laid by the heels on many grievous counts — sacrilegious 9 robberies, frauds, incorrigibility, and that bad business about Thevenin Pensete in the house by the Cemetery of St. John. He was reclaimed by the ecclesiastical authorities as a clerk; but the claim was rebutted on the score of incorrigibility, and ultimately fell to the ground; and he was condemned to death by the Provost of Paris. It was a very rude hour for Montigny, but hope was not yet over. He was a fellow of some birth; his father had been king's pantler; his sister, probably married to some one about the Court, was in the family way, and her health would be endangered if the execution was proceeded with. So down comes Charles the Seventh with letters of mercy, commuting the penalty to a year in a dungeon on bread and water, and a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James in Galicia. Alas! the document was incomplete; it did not contain the full tale of Montigny's enormities; it did not recite that he had been denied benefit of clergy, and it said nothing about Thevenin Pensete. Montigny's hour was at hand. Benefit of clergy, honourable descent from king's pantler, sister in the family way, royal letters of commutation — all were of no avail. He had been in prison in Rouen, in Tours, in Bordeaux, and four times already in Paris; and out of all these he had come scatheless; but now he must make a little excursion as far as Montfaucon with Henry Cousin, executor of high justice. There let him swing among the carrion crows.

About a year later, in July , the police laid hands on Tabary. Before the ecclesiastical commissary he was twice examined, and, on the latter occasion, put to the question ordinary and extraordinary. What a dismal change from pleasant suppers at the Mule, where he sat in triumph with expert operators and great wits! He is at the lees of life, poor rogue; and those fingers which once transcribed improper romances are now agonisingly stretched upon the rack. We have no sure knowledge, but we may have a shrewd guess of the conclusion. Tabary, the admirer, would go the same way as those whom he admired.

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The last we hear of is Colin de Gayeux. He was caught in autumn , in the great Church of St. Leu d'Esserens, which makes so fine a figure in the pleasant Oise valley between Creil and Beaumont. He was reclaimed by no less than two bishops; but the Procureur for the Provost held fast by incorrigible Colin. was an ill-starred year: for justice was making a clean sweep of “poor and indigent persons, thieves, cheats, and lock-pickers,” in the neighbourhood of Paris; and Colin de Cayeux, with many others, was condemned to death and hanged.

VILLON AND THE GALLOWS

Villon was still absent on the Angers expedition when the Prior of Paray sent such a bombshell among his accomplices; and the dates of his return and arrest remain undiscoverable. M. Campaux plausibly enough opined for the autumn of , which would make him closely follow on Montigny, and the first of those denounced by the Prior to fall into the toils. We may suppose, at least, that it was not long thereafter; we may suppose him competed for between lay and clerical Courts; and we may suppose him alternately pert and impudent, humble and fawning, in his defence. But at the end of all supposing, we come upon some nuggets of fact. For first, he was put to the question by water. He who had tossed off so many cups of White Baigneux or red Beaune, now drank water through linen folds, until his bowels were flooded and his heart stood still. After so much raising of the 1 elbow, so much outcry of fictitious thirst, here at last was enough drinking for a lifetime. Truly, of our pleasant vices, the gods make whips to scourge us. And secondly he was condemned to be hanged. A man may have been expecting a catastrophe for years, and yet find himself unprepared when it arrives. Certainly, Villon found, in this legitimate issue of his career, a very staggering and grave consideration. Every beast, as he says, clings bitterly to a whole skin. If everything is lost, and even honour, life still remains; nay, and it becomes, like the ewe lamb in Nathan's parable, as dear as all the rest. "Do you fancy," he asks, in a lively ballad, "that I had not enough philosophy under my hood to cry out: 'I appeal'? If I had made any bones about the matter I should have been planted upright in the fields, by the St. Denis Road" — Montfaucon being on the way to St. Denis. An appeal to Parliament, as we saw in the case of Colin de Cayeux, did not necessarily lead to an acquittal or a commutation; and while the matter was pending, our poet had ample opportunity to reflect on his position. Hanging is a sharp argument, and to swing with many others on the gibbet adds a horrible corollary for the imagination. With the aspect of Montfaucon he was well acquainted; indeed, as the neighbourhood appears to have been sacred to junketing and nocturnal picnics of wild young men and women, he had probably studied it under all varieties of hour and weather. And now, as he lay in prison waiting the mortal push, these different aspects crowded back on his imagination with a new and startling significance; and he wrote a ballad, by way of epitaph for himself and his companions, which remains unique in the annals of mankind. It is, in the highest sense, a piece of his biography: —

"La pluye nous a debuez et lavez,

Et le soleil dessechez et noirciz;
Pies, corbeaulx, nous ont les yeux cavez,
Et arrachez la barbe et les sourcilz.
Jamais, nul temps, nous ne sommes rassis;
Puis çà, puis là, comme le vent varie,
2
A son plaisir sans cesser nous charie,
Plus becquetez d’oiseaulx que dez à couldre.
Ne soyez donc de nostre confrairie,
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre.”

Here is some genuine thieves’ literature after so much that was spurious; sharp as an etching, written with a shuddering soul. There is an intensity of consideration in the piece that shows it to be the transcript of familiar thoughts. It is the quintessence of many a doleful nightmare on the straw, when he felt himself swing helpless in the wind, and saw the birds turn about him, screaming and menacing his eyes.

And, after all, the Parliament changed his sentence into one of banishment; and to Roussillon, in Dauphiny, our poet must carry his woes without delay. Travellers between Lyons and Marseilles may remember a station on the line, some way below Vienne, where the Rhone fleets seaward between vine-clad hills. This was Villon’s Siberia. It would be a little warm in summer perhaps, and a little cold in winter in that draughty valley between two great mountain fields; but what with the hills, and the racing river, and the fiery Rhone wines, he was little to be pitied on the conditions of his exile. Villon, in a remarkably bad ballad, written in a breath, heartily thanked and fulsomely belauded the Parliament; the *envoi*, like the proverbial postscript of a lady’s letter, containing the pith of his performance in a request for three days’ delay to settle his affairs and bid his friends farewell. He was probably not followed out of Paris, like Antoine Fradin, the popular preacher, another exile of a few years later, by weeping multitudes; but I daresay one or two rogues of his acquaintance would keep him company for a mile or so on the south road, and drink a bottle with him before they turned. For banished people, in those days, seem to have set out on their own responsibility, in their own guard, and at their own expense. It was no joke to make one’s 3 way from Paris to Roussillon alone and penniless in the fifteenth century. Villon says he left a rag of his tails on every bush. Indeed, he must have had many a weary tramp, many a slender meal, and many a to-do with blustering captains of the Ordonnance. But with one of his light fingers, we may fancy that he took as good as he gave; for every rag of his tail he would manage to indemnify himself upon the population in the shape of food, or wine, or ringing money; and his route would be traceable across France and Burgundy by housewives and inn-keepers lamenting over petty thefts, like the track of a single human locust. A strange figure he must have cut in the eyes of the good country people: this ragged, blackguard city poet, with a smack of the Paris student, and a smack of the Paris street arab, posting along the highways, in rain or sun, among the green fields and vineyards. For himself, he had no taste for rural loveliness; green fields and vineyards would be mighty indifferent to Master Francis; but he would often have his tongue in his cheek at the simplicity of rustic dupes, and often, at city gates, he might stop to contemplate the gibbet with its swinging bodies, and hug himself on his escape.

How long he stayed at Roussillon, how far he became the *protégé* of the Bourbons, to whom that town belonged, or when it was that he took part, under the auspices of Charles of Orleans, in a rhyming tournament to be referred to once again in the pages of the present volume, are matters that still remain in darkness, in spite of M. Longnon's diligent rummaging among archives. When we next find him, in summer , alas! he is once more in durance: this time at Méun-sur-Loire, in the prisons of Thibault d'Aussigny, Bishop of Orleans. He had been lowered in a basket into a noisome pit, where he lay all summer, gnawing hard crusts and railing upon fate. His teeth, he says, were like the teeth of a rake: a touch of haggard portraiture all the more real for being excessive and burlesque, and all the more proper to the man for being a caricature of his own 4 misery. His eyes were "bandaged with thick walls." It might blow hurricanes overhead; the lightning might leap in high heaven; but no word of all this reached him in his noisome pit. "*Il n'entre, ou gist, n'escler ni tourbillon.*" Above all, he was levered with envy and anger at the freedom of others; and his heart flowed over into curses as he thought of Thibault d'Aussigny, walking the streets in God's sunlight, and blessing people with extended fingers. So much we find sharply lined in his own poems. Why he was cast again into prison — how he had again managed to shave the gallows — this we know not, nor, from the destruction of authorities, are we ever likely to learn. But on October 2nd, , or some day immediately preceding, the new King, Louis Eleventh, made his joyous entry into Méun. Now it was a part of the formality on such occasions for the new King to liberate certain prisoners; and so the basket was let down into Villon's pit, and hastily did Master Francis scramble in, and was most joyfully hauled up, and shot out, blinking and tottering, but once more a free man, into the blessed sun and wind. Now or never is the time for verses! Such a happy revolution would turn the head of a stocking-weaver, and set him jingling rhymes. And so — after a voyage to Paris, where he finds Montigny and De Cayeux clattering their bones upon the gibbet, and his three pupils roystering in Paris streets, “with their thumbs under their girdles,” — down sits Master Francis to write his “Large Testament,” and perpetuate his name in a sort of glorious ignominy.

THE “LARGE TESTAMENT”

Of this capital achievement and, with it, of Villon’s style in general, it is here the place to speak. The “Large Testament” is a hurly-burly of cynical and sentimental reflections about life, jesting legacies to friends and enemies, and, interspersed among these, many admirable ballades 5 both serious and absurd. With so free a design, no thought that occurred to him would need to be dismissed without expression; and he could draw at full length the portrait of his own bedevilled soul, and of the bleak and blackguardly world which was the theatre of his exploits and sufferings. If the reader can conceive something between the slap-dash inconsequence of Byron’s “Don Juan” and the racy humorous gravity and brief noble touches that distinguish the vernacular poems of Burns, he will have formed some idea of Villon’s style. To the latter writer — except in the ballades, which are quite his own, and can be paralleled from no other language known to me — he bears a particular resemblance. In common with Burns he has a certain rugged compression, a brutal vivacity of epithet, a homely vigour, a delight in local personalities, and an interest in many sides of life, that are often despised and passed over by more effete and cultured poets. Both also, in their strong, easy colloquial way, tend to become difficult and obscure; the obscurity in the case of Villon passing at times into the absolute darkness of cant language. They are perhaps the only two great masters of expression who keep sending their readers to a glossary.

“Shall we not dare to say of a thief,” asks Montaigne, “that he has a handsome leg?” It is a far more serious claim that we have to put forward in behalf of Villon. Beside that of his contemporaries, his writing, so full of colour, so eloquent, so picturesque, stands out in an almost miraculous isolation. If only one or two of the chroniclers could have taken a leaf out of his book, history would have been a pastime, and the fifteenth century as present to our minds as the age of Charles Second. This gallows-bird was the one great writer of his age and country, and initiated modern literature for France. Boileau, long ago, in the period of perukes and snuff-boxes, recognised him as the first articulate poet in the language; and if we measure him, not by priority of merit, but living duration of influence, not on a comparison with obscure forerunners, but with 6 great and famous successors, we shall instal this ragged and disreputable figure in a far higher niche in glory’s temple than was ever dreamed of by the critic. It is, in itself, a memorable fact that before , in the very dawn of printing, and while modern France was in the making, the works of Villon ran through seven different editions. Out of him flows much of Rabelais; and through Rabelais, directly and indirectly, a deep, permanent, and growing inspiration. Not only his style, but his callous pertinent way of looking upon the sordid and ugly sides of life, becomes every day a more specific feature in the literature of France. And only the other year, a work of some power appeared in Paris, and appeared with infinite scandal, which owed its whole inner significance and much of its outward form to the study of our rhyming thief.

The world to which he introduces us is, as before said, blackguardly and bleak. Paris swarms before us, full of famine, shame, and death; monks and the servants of great lords hold high wassail upon cakes and pastry; the poor man licks his lips before the baker's window; people with patched eyes sprawl all night under the stalls; chuckling Tabary transcribes an improper romance; bare-bosomed lasses and ruffling students swagger in the streets; the drunkard goes stumbling homeward; the graveyard is full of bones; and away on Montfaucon, Colin de Cayeux and Montigny hang draggled in the rain. Is there nothing better to be seen than sordid misery and worthless joys? Only where the poor old mother of the poet kneels in church below painted windows, and makes tremulous supplication to the Mother of God.

In our mixed world, full of green fields and happy lovers, where not long before Joan of Arc had led one of the highest and noblest lives in the whole story of mankind, this was all worth chronicling that our poet could perceive. His eyes were indeed sealed with his own filth. He dwelt all his life in a pit more noisome than the dungeon at Méun. In the moral world, also, there are large phenomena 7 not cognisable out of holes and corners. Loud winds blow, speeding home deep-laden ships and sweeping rubbish from the earth; the lightning leaps and cleans the face of heaven; high purposes and brave passions shake and sublimate men's spirits; and meanwhile, in the narrow dungeon of his soul, Villon is mumbling crusts and picking vermin.

Along with this deadly gloom of outlook, we must take another characteristic of his work, its unrivalled insincerity. I can give no better similitude of this quality than I have given already: that he comes up with a whine and runs away with a whoop and his finger to his nose. His pathos is that of a professional mendicant who should happen to be a man of genius; his levity that of a bitter street arab, full of bread. On a first reading, the pathetic passages preoccupy the reader, and he is cheated out of an alms in the shape of sympathy. But when the thing is studied the illusion fades away: in the transitions, above all, we can detect the evil, ironical temper of the man; and instead of a flighty work, where many crude but genuine feelings tumble together for the mastery as in the lists of tournament, we are tempted to think of the "Large Testament" as of one long-drawn epical grimace, pulled by a merry-andrew, who has found a certain despicable eminence over human respect and human affections by perching himself astride upon the gallows. Between these two views, at best, all temperate judgments will be found to fall; and rather, as I imagine, towards the last.

There were two things on which he felt with perfect and, in one case, even threatening sincerity.

The first of these was an undisguised envy of those richer than himself. He was for ever drawing a parallel, already exemplified from his own words, between the happy life of the well-to-do and the miseries of the poor. Burns, too proud and honest not to work, continued through all reverses to sing of poverty with a light, defiant note. Béranger waited till he was himself beyond the reach of want before writing the “Old Vagabond” or “Jacques.” 8 Samuel Johnson, although he was very sorry to be poor, “was a great arguer for the advantages of poverty” in his ill days. Thus it is that brave men carry their crosses, and smile with the fox burrowing in their vitals. But Villon, who had not the courage to be poor with honesty, now whiningly implores our sympathy, now shows his teeth upon the dung-heap with an ugly snarl. He envies bitterly, envies passionately. Poverty, he protests, drives men to steal, as hunger makes the wolf sally from the forest. The poor, he goes on, will always have a carping word to say, or, if that outlet be denied, nourish rebellious thoughts. It is a calumny on the noble army of the poor. Thousands in a small way of life, ay, and even in the smallest, go through life with tenfold as much honour and dignity and peace of mind as the rich gluttons whose dainties and state-beds awakened Villon’s covetous temper. And every morning’s sun sees thousands who pass whistling to their toil. But Villon was the “*mauvais pauvre*” defined by Victor Hugo, and, in its English expression, so admirably stereotyped by Dickens. He was the first wicked *sans-culotte*. He is the man of genius with the moleskin cap. He is mighty pathetic and beseeching here in the street, but I would not go down a dark road with him for a large consideration.

The second of the points on which he was genuine and emphatic was common to the middle ages; a deep and somewhat snivelling conviction of the transitory nature of this life and the pity and horror of death. Old age and the grave, with some dark and yet half-sceptical terror of an after-world — these were ideas that clung about his bones like a disease. An old ape, as he says, may play all the tricks in its repertory, and none of them will tickle an audience into good humour. “*Tousjours vieil synge est desplaisant.*” It is not the old jester who receives most recognition at a tavern party, but the young fellow, fresh and handsome, who knows the new slang, and carries off his vice with a certain air. Of this, as a tavern jester himself, he would be pointedly conscious. 9 As for the women with whom he was best acquainted, his reflections on their old age, in all their harrowing pathos, shall remain in the original for me. Horace has disgraced himself to something the same tune; but what Horace throws out with an ill-favoured laugh, Villon dwells on with an almost maudlin whimper.

It is in death that he finds his truest inspiration; in the swift and sorrowful change that overtakes beauty; in the strange revolution by which great fortunes and renowns are diminished to a handful of churchyard dust; and in the utter passing away of what was once lovable and mighty. It is in this that the mixed texture of his thought enables him to reach such poignant and terrible effects, and to enhance pity with ridicule, like a man cutting capers to a funeral march. It is in this also that he rises out of himself into the higher spheres of art. So, in the ballade by which he is best known, he rings the changes on names that once stood for beautiful and queenly women, and are now no more than letters and a legend. "Where are the snows of yester year?" runs the burden. And so, in another not so famous, he passes in review the different degrees of bygone men, from the holy Apostles and the golden Emperor of the East, down to the heralds, pursuivants, and trumpeters, who also bore their part in the world's pageantries and ate greedily at great folks' tables: all this to the refrain of "So much carry the winds away!" Probably, there was some melancholy in his mind for a yet lower grade, and Montigny and Colin de Cayeux clattering their bones on Paris gibbet. Alas, and with so pitiful an experience of life, Villon can offer us nothing but terror and lamentation about death! No one has ever more skilfully communicated his own disenchantment; no one ever blown a more ear-piercing note of sadness. This unrepentant thief can attain neither to Christian confidence nor to the spirit of the bright Greek saying, that whom the gods love die early. It is a poor heart, and a poorer age, that cannot accept the conditions of life with some heroic readiness.

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The date of the "Large Testament" is the last date in the poet's biography. After having achieved that admirable and despicable performance, he disappears into the night from whence he came. How or when he died, whether decently in bed or trussed up to a gallows, remains a riddle for foolhardy commentators. It appears his health had suffered in the pit at Méun; he was thirty years of age and quite bald; with the notch in his under lip where Sermaise had struck him with the sword, and what wrinkles the reader may imagine. In default of portraits, that is all I have been able to piece together, and perhaps even the baldness should be taken as a figure of his destitution. A sinister dog, in all likelihood, but with a look in his eye, and the loose flexile mouth that goes with wit and an overweening sensual temperament. Certainly the sorriest figure on the rolls of fame.

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VII

CHARLES OF ORLEANS

For one who was no great politician, nor (as men go) especially wise, capable, or virtuous, Charles of Orleans is more than usually enviable to all who love that better sort of fame which consists in being known not widely, but intimately. “To be content that time to come should know there was such a man, not caring whether they knew more of him, or to subsist under naked denominations, without deserts or noble acts,” is, says Sir Thomas Browne, a frigid ambition. It is to some more specific memory that youth looks forward in its vigils. Old kings are sometimes disinterred in all the emphasis of life, the hands untainted by decay, the beard that had so often wagged in camp or senate still spread upon the royal bosom; and in busts and pictures, some similitude of the great and beautiful of former days is handed down. In this way, public curiosity may be gratified, but hardly any private aspiration after fame. It is not likely that posterity will fall in love with us, but not impossible that it may respect or sympathise; and so a man would rather leave behind him the portrait of his spirit than a portrait of his face, *figura animi magis quam corporis*. Of those who have thus survived themselves most completely, left a sort of personal seduction behind them in the world, and retained, after death, the art of making friends, Montaigne and Samuel Johnson certainly stand first. But we have portraits of all sorts of men, from august Cæsar to the king’s dwarf; and all sorts of portraits, from a Titian treasured in the Louvre to a profile over the grocer’s chimney 2 shelf. And so in a less degree, but no less truly, than the spirit of Montaigne lives on in the delightful Essays, that of Charles of Orleans survives in a few old songs and old account-books; and it is still in the choice of the reader to make this duke’s acquaintance, and, if their humours suit, become his friend.

I

His birth — if we are to argue from a man's parents — was above his merit. It is not merely that he was the grandson of one king, the father of another, and the uncle of a third; but something more specious was to be looked for from the son of his father, Louis de Valois, Duke of Orleans, brother to the mad king Charles VI., lover of Queen Isabel, and the leading patron of art and one of the leading politicians in France. And the poet might have inherited yet higher virtues from his mother, Valentina of Milan, a very pathetic figure of the age, the faithful wife of an unfaithful husband, and the friend of a most unhappy king. The father, beautiful, eloquent, and accomplished, exercised a strange fascination over his contemporaries; and among those who dip nowadays into the annals of the time there are not many — and these few are little to be envied — who can resist the fascination of the mother. All mankind owe her a debt of gratitude because she brought some comfort into the life of the poor madman who wore the crown of France.

Born (May) of such a noble stock, Charles was to know from the first all favours of nature and art. His father's gardens were the admiration of his contemporaries; his castles were situated in the most agreeable parts of France, and sumptuously adorned. We have preserved, in an inventory of , the description of tapestried rooms where Charles may have played in childhood. 3 "A green room, with the ceiling full of angels, and the *dossier* of shepherds and shepherdesses seeming (*faisant contenance*) to eat nuts and cherries. A room of gold, silk and worsted, with a device of little children in a river, and the sky full of birds. A room of green tapestry, showing a knight and lady at chess in a pavilion. Another green-room, with shepherdesses in a trellised garden worked in gold and silk. A carpet representing cherry-trees, where there is a fountain, and a lady gathering cherries in a basin." These were some of the pictures over which his fancy might busy itself of an afternoon, or at morning as he lay awake in bed. With our deeper and more logical sense of life, we can have no idea how large a space in the attention of mediæval men might be occupied by such figured hangings on the wall. There was something timid and purblind in the view they had of the world. Morally, they saw nothing outside of traditional axioms; and little of the physical aspect of things entered vividly into their mind, beyond what was to be seen on church windows and the walls and floors of palaces. The reader will remember how Villon's mother conceived of heaven and hell and took all her scanty stock of theology from the stained glass that threw its light upon her as she prayed. And there is scarcely a detail of external effect in the chronicles and romances of the time, but might have been borrowed at second hand from a piece of tapestry. It was a stage in the history of mankind which we may see paralleled to some extent in the first infant school, where the representations of lions and elephants alternate round the wall with moral verses and trite presentments of the lesser virtues. So that to live in a house of many pictures was tantamount, for a time, to a liberal education in itself.

At Charles's birth an order of knighthood was inaugurated in his honour. At nine years old he was a squire; at eleven, he had the escort of a chaplain and a schoolmaster; at twelve, his uncle the king made him 4 a pension of twelve thousand livres d'or. He saw the most brilliant and the most learned persons of France in his father's court; and would not fail to notice that these brilliant and learned persons were one and all engaged in rhyming. Indeed, if it is difficult to realise the part played by pictures, it is perhaps even more difficult to realise that played by verses in the polite and active history of the age. At the siege of Pontoise, English and French exchanged defiant ballades over the walls. If a scandal happened, as in the loathsome thirty-third story of the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles," all the wits must make rondels and chansonettes, which they would hand from one to another with an unmanly sneer. Ladies carried their favourite's ballades in their girdles. Margaret of Scotland, all the world knows already, kissed Alain Chartier's lips in honour of the many virtuous thoughts and golden sayings they had uttered; but it is not so well known that this princess was herself the most industrious of poetasters, that she is supposed to have hastened her death by her literary vigils, and sometimes wrote as many as twelve rondels in the day. It was in rhyme, even, that the young Charles should learn his lessons. He might get all manner of instruction in the truly noble art of the chase, not without a smack of ethics by the way, from the compendious didactic poem of Gace de la Bigne. Nay, and it was in rhyme that he should learn rhyming: in the verses of his father's Maître d'Hôtel, Eustache Deschamps, which treated of *l'art de dictier et de faire chançons, ballades, virelais et rondeaux*, along with many other matters worth attention, from the courts of Heaven to the misgovernment of France. At this rate, all knowledge is to be had in a goody, and the end of it is an old song. We need not 5 wonder when we hear from Monstrelet that Charles was a very well educated person. He could string Latin texts together by the hour, and make ballades and rondels better than Eustache Deschamps himself. He had seen a mad king who would not change his clothes, and a drunken emperor who could not keep his hand from the wine-cup. He had spoken a great deal with jesters and fiddlers, and with the profligate lords who helped his father to waste the revenues of France. He had seen ladies dance on into broad daylight, and much burning of torches and waste of dainties and good wine. And when all is said, it was no very helpful preparation for the battle of life. “I believe Louis XI.,” writes Comines, “would not have saved himself, if he had not been very differently brought up from such other lords as I have seen educated in this country; for these were taught nothing but to play the jackanapes with finery and fine words.” I am afraid Charles took such lessons to heart, and conceived of life as a season principally for junketing and war. His view of the whole duty of man, so empty, vain, and wearisome to us, was yet sincerely and consistently held. When he came in his ripe years to compare the glory of two kingdoms, England and France, it was on three points only — pleasures, valour, and riches, — that he cared to measure them; and in the very outset of that tract he speaks of the life of the great as passed, “whether in arms, as in assaults, battles, and sieges, or in jousts and tournaments, in high and stately festivities and in funeral solemnities.”

When he was no more than thirteen, his father had 6 him affianced to Isabella, virgin-widow of our Richard II. and daughter of his uncle Charles VI.; and, two years after (June ,), the cousins were married at Compiégne, he fifteen, she seventeen years of age. It was in every way a most desirable match. The bride brought five hundred thousand francs of dowry. The ceremony was of the utmost magnificence, Louis of Orleans figuring in crimson velvet, adorned with no less than seven hundred and ninety-five pearls, gathered together expressly for this occasion. And no doubt it must have been very gratifying for a young gentleman of fifteen to play the chief part in a pageant so gaily put upon the stage. Only, the bridegroom might have been a little older; and, as ill-luck would have it, the bride herself was of this way of thinking, and would not be consoled for the loss of her title as queen, or the contemptible age of her new husband. *Pleuroit fort ladite Isabeau*; the said Isabella wept copiously. It is fairly debatable whether Charles was much to be pitied when, three years later (September), this odd marriage was dissolved by death. Short as it was, however, this connection left a lasting stamp upon his mind; and we find that, in the last decade of his life, and after he had re-married for perhaps the second time, he had not yet forgotten or forgiven the violent death of Richard II. *Ce mauvais cas* — that ugly business, he writes, has yet to be avenged.

The marriage festivity was on the threshold of evil days. The great rivalry between Louis of Orleans and John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, had been forsworn with the most reverend solemnities. But the feud was only in abeyance, and John of Burgundy still conspired in secret. On November , — in that black winter when the frost lasted six-and-sixty days on end — a summons from the King reached Louis of Orleans at the Hôtel Barbette, where he had been supping with Queen Isabel. It was seven or eight in the evening, and the inhabitants of the 7 quarter were abed. He set forth in haste, accompanied by two squires riding on one horse, a page and a few varlets running with torches. As he rode, he hummed to himself and trifled with his glove. And so riding, he was beset by the bravoes of his enemy and slain. My lord of Burgundy set an ill precedent in this deed, as he found some years after on the bridge of Montereau; and even in the meantime he did not profit quietly by his rival's death. The horror of the other princes seems to have perturbed himself; he avowed his guilt in the council, tried to brazen it out, finally lost heart and fled at full gallop, cutting bridges behind him, towards Bapaume and Lille. And so there we have the head of one faction, who had just made himself the most formidable man in France, engaged in a remarkably hurried journey, with black care on the pillion. And meantime, on the other side, the widowed duchess came to Paris, in appropriate mourning, to demand justice for her husband's death. Charles VI., who was then in a lucid interval, did probably all that he could, when he raised up the kneeling suppliant with kisses and smooth words. Things were at a dead-lock. The criminal might be in the sorriest fright, but he was still the greatest of vassals. Justice was easy to ask and not difficult to promise; how it was to be executed was another question. No one in France was strong enough to punish John of Burgundy; and perhaps no one, except the widow, very sincere in wishing to punish him.

She, indeed, was eaten up of zeal; but the intensity of her eagerness wore her out; and she died about a year after the murder, of grief and indignation, unrequited love and unsatisfied resentment. It was during the last months of her life that this fiery and generous woman, seeing the soft hearts of her own children, looked with envy on a certain natural son of her husband's, destined to become famous in the sequel as the Bastard of Orleans, or the brave Dunois. "*You were stolen from me,*" she said; "it is you who are fit to avenge your father." These are 8 not the words of ordinary mourning, or of an ordinary woman. It is a saying over which Balzac would have rubbed his episcopal hands. That the child who was to avenge her husband had not been born out of her body was a thing intolerable to Valentina of Milan; and the expression of this singular and tragic jealousy is preserved to us by a rare chance, in such straightforward and vivid words as we are accustomed to hear only on the stress of actual life, or in the theatre. In history — where we see things as in a glass darkly, and the fashion of former times is brought before us, deplorably adulterated and defaced, fitted to very vague and pompous words, and strained through many men's minds of everything personal or precise — this speech of the widowed duchess startles a reader, somewhat as the footprint startled Robinson Crusoe. A human voice breaks in upon the silence of the study, and the student is aware of a fellow-creature in his world of documents. With such a clue in hand, one may imagine how this wounded lioness would spur and exasperate the resentment of her children, and what would be the last words of counsel and command she left behind her.

With these instancies of his dying mother — almost a voice from the tomb — still tingling in his ears, the position of young Charles of Orleans, when he was left at the head of that great house, was curiously similar to that of Shakespeare's Hamlet. The times were out of joint; here was a murdered father to avenge on a powerful murderer; and here, in both cases, a lad of inactive disposition born to set these matters right. Valentina's commendation of Dunois involved a judgment on Charles, and that judgment was exactly correct. Whoever might be, Charles was not the man to avenge his father. Like Hamlet, this son of a dear father murdered was sincerely grieved at heart. Like Hamlet, too, he could unpack his heart with words, and wrote a most eloquent letter to the King, complaining that what was denied to him would not be denied "to the lowest born and poorest 9 man on earth." Even in his private hours he strove to preserve a lively recollection of his injury, and keep up the native hue of resolution. He had gems engraved with appropriate legends, hortatory or threatening: "*Dieu le scet*", God knows it; or "*Souvenez-vous de —* " Remember! It is only towards the end that the two stories begin to differ; and in some points the historical version is the more tragic. Hamlet only stabbed a silly old councillor behind the arras; Charles of Orleans trampled France for five years under the hoofs of his banditti. The miscarriage of Hamlet's vengeance was confined, at widest, to the palace; the ruin wrought by Charles of Orleans was as broad as France.

Yet the first act of the young duke is worthy of honourable mention. Prodigal Louis had made enormous debts; and there is a story extant, to illustrate how lightly he himself regarded these commercial obligations. It appears that Louis, after a narrow escape he made in a thunderstorm, had a smart access of penitence, and announced he would pay his debts on the following Sunday. More than eight hundred creditors presented themselves, but by that time the devil was well again, and they were shown the door with more gaiety than politeness. A time when such cynical dishonesty was possible for a man of culture is not, it will be granted, a fortunate epoch for creditors. When the original debtor was so lax, we may imagine how an heir would deal with the incumbrances of his inheritance. On the death of Philip the Forward, father of that John the Fearless whom we have seen at work, the widow went through the ceremony of a public renunciation of goods; taking off her purse and girdle, she left them on the grave, and thus, by one notable act, cancelled her husband's debts and defamed his honour. The conduct of young Charles of Orleans was very different. To meet the joint liabilities of his father and mother (for Valentina also was lavish), he had to sell or pledge a quantity of jewels; and yet 0 he would not take advantage of a pretext, even legally valid, to diminish the amount. Thus, one Godefroi Lefèvre, having disbursed many odd sums for the late duke, and received or kept no vouchers, Charles ordered that he should be believed upon his oath. To a modern mind this seems as honourable to his father's memory as if John the Fearless had been hanged as high as Haman. And as things fell out, except a recantation from the University of Paris, which had justified the murder out of party feeling, and various other purely paper reparations, this was about the outside of what Charles was to effect in that direction. He lived five years, and grew up from sixteen to twenty-one, in the midst of the most horrible civil war, or series of civil wars, that ever devastated France; and from first to last his wars were ill-starred, or else his victories useless. Two years after the murder (March), John the Fearless having the upper hand for the moment, a shameful and useless reconciliation took place, by the King's command, in the Church of Our Lady at Chartres. The advocate of the Duke of Burgundy stated that Louis of Orleans had been killed "for the good of the King's person and realm." Charles and his brothers, with tears of shame, under protest, *pour ne pas desobéir au roi*, forgave their father's murderer and swore peace upon the missal. It was, as I say, a shameful and useless ceremony; the very greffier, entering it in his register, wrote in the margin, "*Pax, pax, inquit Propheta, et non est pax.*" Charles was soon after allied with the abominable Bernard d'Armagnac, even betrothed or married to a daughter of his, called by a name that sounds like a contradiction in terms, Bonne d'Armagnac. From that time forth, throughout all this monstrous period — a very nightmare in the history of France — he is no more than a stalking-horse for the ambitious Gascon. Sometimes the smoke lifts, and you can see him for the twinkling 1 of an eye, a very pale figure; at one moment there is a rumour he will be crowned king; at another, when the uproar has subsided, he will be heard still crying out for justice; and the next (), he is showing himself to the applauding populace on the same horse with John of Burgundy. But these are exceptional seasons, and for the most part he merely rides at the Gascon's bridle over devastated France. His very party go, not by the name of Orleans, but by the name of Armagnac. Paris is in the hands of the butchers: the peasants have taken to the woods. Alliances are made and broken as if in a country dance; the English called in, now by this one, now by the other. Poor people sing in church, with white faces and lamentable music: "*Domine Jesu, parce populo tuo, dirige in viam pacis principes.*" And the end and upshot of the whole affair for Charles of Orleans is another peace with John the Fearless. France is once more tranquil, with the tranquillity of ruin; he may ride home again to Blois, and look, with what countenance he may, on those gems he had got engraved in the early days of his resentment, "*Souvenez-vous de —* " Remember! He has killed Polonius, to be sure; but the King is never a penny the worse.

II

From the battle of Agincourt (Oct.) dates the second period of Charles's life. The English reader will remember the name of Orleans in the play of *Henry V.*; and it is at least odd that we can trace a resemblance between the puppet and the original. The interjection, "I have heard a sonnet begin so to one's mistress" (Act iii. scene 7), may very well indicate one who was already an expert in that sort of trifle; and the game of proverbs he plays with the Constable in the same scene would be quite in character for a man who spent many years of his life 2 capping verses with his courtiers. Certainly, Charles was in the great battle with five hundred lances (say, three thousand men), and there he was made prisoner as he led the van. According to one story, some ragged English archer shot him down; and some diligent English Pistol, hunting ransoms on the field of battle, extracted him from under a heap of bodies and retailed him to our King Henry. He was the most important capture of the day, and used with all consideration. On the way to Calais, Henry sent him a present of bread and wine (and bread, you will remember, was an article of luxury in the English camp), but Charles would neither eat nor drink. Thereupon Henry came to visit him in his quarters. "Noble cousin," said he, "how are you?" Charles replied that he was well. "Why then do you neither eat nor drink?" And then with some asperity, as I imagine, the young duke told him that "truly he had no inclination for food." And our Henry improved the occasion with something of a snuffle, assuring his prisoner that God had fought against the French on account of their manifold sins and transgressions. Upon this there supervened the agonies of a rough sea-passage; and many French lords, Charles certainly among the number, declared they would rather endure such another defeat than such another sore trial on shipboard. Charles, indeed, never forgot his sufferings. Long afterwards, he declared his hatred to a seafaring life, and willingly yielded to England the empire of the seas, "because there is danger and loss of life, and God knows what pity when it storms; and sea-sickness is for many people hard to bear; and the rough life that must be led is little suitable for the nobility": which, of all babyish utterances that ever fell from any public man, may surely bear the bell. Scarcely disembarked, he followed his victor, with such wry face as we may fancy, through the streets of holiday London. And then the doors closed upon his last day of garish life for more than a quarter 3 of a century. After a boyhood passed in the dissipations of a luxurious court or in the camp of war, his ears still stunned and his cheeks still burning from his enemies' jubilations; out of all this ringing of English bells and singing of English anthems, from among all these shouting citizens in scarlet cloaks, and beautiful virgins attired in white, he passed into the silence and solitude of a political prison.

His captivity was not without alleviations. He was allowed to go hawking, and he found England an admirable country for the sport; he was a favourite with English ladies, and admired their beauty; and he did not lack for money, wine, or books; he was honourably imprisoned in the strongholds of great nobles, in Windsor Castle and the Tower of London. But when all is said, he was a prisoner for five-and-twenty years. For five-and-twenty years he could not go where he would, or do what he liked, or speak with any but his jailers. We may talk very wisely of alleviations; there is only one alleviation for which the man would thank you: he would thank you to open the door. With what regret Scottish James I. bethought him (in the next room perhaps to Charles) of the time when he rose "as early as the day." What would he not have given to wet his boots once more with morning dew, and follow his vagrant fancy among the meadows? The only alleviation to the misery of constraint lies in the disposition of the prisoner. To each one this place of discipline brings his own lesson. It stirs Latude or Baron Trenck into heroic action; it is a hermitage for pious and conformable spirits. Béranger tells us he found prison life, with its regular hours and long evenings, both pleasant and profitable. The "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Don Quixote" were begun in prison. It was after they were become (to use the words of one of them), "Oh, worst imprisonment — the dungeon of themselves!" that Homer and Milton worked so hard and so well for the profit of mankind. 4 In the year Henry V. had two distinguished prisoners, French Charles of Orleans and Scottish James I., who whiled away the hours of their captivity with rhyming. Indeed, there can be no better pastime for a lonely man than the mechanical exercise of verse. Such intricate forms as Charles had been used to from childhood, the ballade with its scanty rhymes; the rondel, with the recurrence first of the whole, then of half the burthen, in thirteen verses, seem to have been invented for the prison and the sick-bed. The common Scots saying, on the sight of anything operose and finical, "he must have had little to do that made that!" might be put as epigraph on all the song-books of old France. Making such sorts of verse belongs to the same class of pleasures as guessing acrostics or "burying proverbs." It is almost purely formal, almost purely verbal. It must be done gently and gingerly. It keeps the mind occupied a long time, and never so intently as to be distressing; for anything like strain is against the very nature of the craft. Sometimes things go easily, the refrains fall into their place as if of their own accord, and it becomes something of the nature of an intellectual tennis; you must make your poem as the rhymes will go, just as you must strike your ball as your adversary played it. So that these forms are suitable rather for those who wish to make verses than for those who wish to express opinions. Sometimes, on the other hand, difficulties arise: rival verses come into a man’s head, and fugitive words elude his memory. Then it is that he enjoys at the same time the deliberate pleasures of a connoisseur comparing wines, and the ardour of the chase. He may have been sitting all day long in prison with folded hands; but when he goes to bed the retrospect will seem animated and eventful.

Besides confirming himself as an habitual maker of verses, Charles acquired some new opinions during his captivity. He was perpetually reminded of the change that had befallen him. He found the climate of England cold and “prejudicial to the human frame”; he had a [5] great contempt for English fruit and English beer; even the coal fires were unpleasing in his eyes. He was rooted up from among his friends and customs and the places that had known him. And so in this strange land he began to learn the love of his own. Sad people all the world over are like to be moved when the wind is in some particular quarter. So Burns preferred when it was in the west, and blew to him from his mistress; so the girl in the ballade, looking south to Yarrow, thought it might carry a kiss betwixt her and her gallant; and so we find Charles singing of the “pleasant wind that comes from France.” One day, at “Dover-on-the-Sea,” he looked across the straits, and saw the sandhills about Calais. And it happened to him, he tells us in a ballade, to remember his happiness over there in the past; and he was both sad and merry at the recollection, and could not have his fill of gazing on the shores of France. Although guilty of unpatriotic acts, he had never been exactly unpatriotic in feeling. But his sojourn in England gave, for the time at least, some consistency to what had been a very weak and ineffectual prejudice. He must have been under the influence of more than usually solemn considerations, when he proceeded to turn Henry’s puritanical homily after Agincourt into a ballade, and reproach France, and himself by implication, with pride, gluttony, idleness, unbridled covetousness, and sensuality. For the moment, he must really have been thinking more of France than of Charles of Orleans.

And another lesson he learned. He who was only to be released in case of peace begins to think upon the disadvantages of war. “Pray for peace,” is his refrain: a strange enough subject for the ally of Bernard d’Armagnac. But this lesson was plain and practical; it had one side in particular that was specially attractive for Charles; and he [6] did not hesitate to explain it in so many words. “Everybody,” he writes — I translate roughly — ”everybody should be much inclined to peace, for everybody has a deal to gain by it.”

Charles made laudable endeavours to acquire English, and even learned to write a rondel in that tongue of quite average mediocrity. He was for some time billeted on the unhappy Suffolk, who received fourteen shillings and fourpence a day for his expenses; and from the fact that Suffolk afterwards visited Charles in France while he was negotiating the marriage of Henry VI., as well as the terms of that nobleman's impeachment, we may believe there was some not unkindly intercourse between the prisoner and his jailer: a fact of considerable interest when we remember that Suffolk's wife was the grand-daughter of the poet Geoffrey Chaucer. Apart from this, and a mere catalogue of dates and places, only one thing seems evident in the story of Charles's captivity. It seems evident that, as these five-and-twenty years drew on, he became less and less resigned. Circumstances were against the growth of such a feeling. One after another of his fellow-prisoners was ransomed and went home. More than once he was himself permitted to visit France; where he worked on abortive treaties and showed himself more eager for his own deliverance than for the profit of his native land. Resignation may follow after a reasonable time upon despair; but if a man is persecuted by a series of brief and irritating hopes, his mind no more attains to a settled frame of resolution than his eye would grow familiar with a night of thunder and lightning. Years after, when he was speaking at the trial of that Duke of Alençon who began life so hopefully as 7 the boyish favourite of Joan of Arc, he sought to prove that captivity was a harder punishment than death. "For I have had experience myself," he said; "and in my prison of England, for the weariness, danger, and displeasure in which I then lay, I have many a time wished I had been slain at the battle where they took me." This is a flourish, if you will, but it is something more. His spirit would sometimes rise up in a fine anger against the petty desires and contrarieties of life. He would compare his own condition with the quiet and dignified estate of the dead; and aspire to lie among his comrades on the field of Agincourt, as the Psalmist prayed to have the wings of a dove and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea. But such high thoughts came to Charles only in a flash.

John the Fearless had been murdered in his turn on the bridge of Montereau so far back as . His son, Philip the Good — partly to extinguish the feud, partly that he might do a popular action, and partly, in view of his ambitious schemes, to detach another great vassal from the throne of France — had taken up the cause of Charles of Orleans, and negotiated diligently for his release. In a Burgundian embassy was admitted to an interview with the captive duke, in the presence of Suffolk. Charles shook hands most affectionately with the ambassadors. They asked after his health. "I am well enough in body," he replied, “but far from well in mind. I am dying of grief at having to pass the best days of my life in prison, with none to sympathise.” The talk falling on the chances of peace, Charles referred to Suffolk if he were not sincere and constant in his endeavours to bring it about. “If peace depended on me,” he said, “I should procure it gladly, were it to cost me my life seven days after.” We may take this as showing what a large price he set, not so much on peace, as on seven days of freedom. Seven days! — he would make them seven years in the employment. Finally, he assured the ambassadors of his good-will to 8 Philip of Burgundy; squeezed one of them by the hand and nipped him twice in the arm to signify things unspeakable before Suffolk; and two days after sent them Suffolk’s barber, one Jean Carnet, a native of Lille, to testify more freely of his sentiments. “As I speak French,” said this emissary, “the Duke of Orleans is more familiar with me than any other of the household; and I can bear witness he never said anything against Duke Philip.” It will be remembered that this person, with whom he was so anxious to stand well, was no other than his hereditary enemy, the son of his father’s murderer. But the honest fellow bore no malice, indeed — not he. He began exchanging ballades with Philip, whom he apostrophises as his companion, his cousin, and his brother. He assures him that, soul and body, he is altogether Burgundian; and protests that he has given his heart in pledge to him. Regarded as the history of a vendetta, it must be owned that Charles’s life has points of some originality. And yet there is an engaging frankness about these ballades which disarms criticism. You see Charles throwing himself head-foremost into the trap; you hear Burgundy, in his answers, begin to inspire him with his own prejudices, and draw melancholy pictures of the misgovernment of France. But Charles’s own spirits are so high and so amiable, and he is so thoroughly convinced his cousin is a fine fellow, that one’s scruples are carried away in the torrent of his happiness and gratitude. And his would be a sordid spirit who would not clap hands at the consummation (Nov.); when Charles, after having sworn on the Sacrament that he would never again bear arms against England, and pledged himself body and soul to the unpatriotic faction in his own country, set out from London with a light heart and a damaged integrity.

In the magnificent copy of Charles’s poems, given by our Henry VII. to Elizabeth of York on the occasion of their marriage, a large illumination figures at the head 9 of one of the pages, which, in chronological perspective, is almost a history of his imprisonment. It gives a view of London with all its spires, the river passing through the old bridge and busy with boats. One side of the white Tower has been taken out, and we can see, as under a sort of shrine, the paved room where the duke sits writing. He occupies a high-backed bench in front of a great chimney; red and black ink are before him; and the upper end of the apartment is guarded by many halberdiers, with the red cross of England on their breast. On the next side of the tower he appears again, leaning out of window and gazing on the river; doubtless there blows just then “a pleasant wind from out the land of France,” and some ship comes up the river: “the ship of good news.” At the door we find him yet again; this time embracing a messenger, while a groom stands by holding two saddled horses. And yet farther to the left, a cavalcade defiles out of the tower; the duke is on his way at last towards “the sunshine of France.”

III

During the five-and-twenty years of his captivity Charles had not lost in the esteem of his fellow-countrymen. For so young a man, the head of so great a house and so numerous a party, to be taken prisoner as he rode in the vanguard of France, and stereotyped for all men in this heroic attitude, was to taste untimeously the honours of the grave. Of him, as of the dead, it would be ungenerous to speak evil; what little energy he had displayed would be remembered with piety, when all that he had done amiss was courteously forgotten. As English folk looked for Arthur; as Danes awaited the coming of Ogier; as Somersetshire peasants or sergeants of the Old Guard expected the return of Monmouth or Napoleon; the countrymen of Charles of Orleans looked over the 0 straits towards his English prison with desire and confidence. Events had so fallen out while he was rhyming ballades, that he had become the type of all that was most truly patriotic. The remnants of his old party had been the chief defenders of the unity of France. His enemies of Burgundy had been notoriously favourers and furtherers of English domination. People forgot that his brother still lay by the heels for an unpatriotic treaty with England, because Charles himself had been taken prisoner patriotically fighting against it. That Henry V. had left special orders against his liberation served to increase the wistful pity with which he was regarded. And when, in defiance of all contemporary virtue, and against express pledges, the English carried war into their prisoner's fief, not only France, but all thinking men in Christendom, were roused to indignation against the oppressors, and sympathy with the victim. It was little wonder if he came to bulk somewhat largely in the imagination of the best of those at home. Charles le Boutteillier, when (as the story goes) he slew Clarence at Beaugé, was only seeking an exchange for Charles of Orleans. It was one of Joan of Arc's declared intentions to deliver the captive duke. If there was no other way, she meant to cross the seas and bring him home by force. And she professed before her judges a sure knowledge that Charles of Orleans was beloved of God.

Alas! it was not at all as a deliverer that Charles returned to France. He was nearly fifty years old. Many changes had been accomplished since, at twenty-three, he was taken on the field of Agincourt. But of all these he was profoundly ignorant, or had only heard of them in the discoloured reports of Philip of Burgundy. He had the ideas of a former generation, and sought to correct them by the scandal of a factious party. With such qualifications he came back eager for the domination, the pleasures, and 1 the display that befitted his princely birth. A long disuse of all political activity combined with the flatteries of his new friends to fill him with an overweening conceit of his own capacity and influence. If aught had gone wrong in his absence, it seemed quite natural men should look to him for its redress. Was not King Arthur come again?

The Duke of Burgundy received him with politic honours. He took his guest by his foible for pageantry, all the easier as it was a foible of his own; and Charles walked right out of prison into much the same atmosphere of trumpeting and bell-ringing as he had left behind when he went in. Fifteen days after his deliverance he was married to Mary of Cleves, at St. Omer. The marriage was celebrated with the usual pomp of the Burgundian court; there were joustings, and illuminations, and animals that spouted wine; and many nobles dined together, *comme en brigade*, and were served abundantly with many rich and curious dishes. It must have reminded Charles not a little of his first marriage at Compiègne; only then he was two years the junior of his bride, and this time he was five-and-thirty years her senior. It will be a fine question which marriage promises more: for a boy of fifteen to lead off with a lass of seventeen, or a man of fifty to make a match of it with a child of fifteen. But there was something bitter in both. The lamentations of Isabella will not have been forgotten. As for Mary, she took up with one Jaquet de la Lain, a sort of muscular Methody of the period, with a huge appetite for tournaments, and a habit of confessing himself the last thing before he went to bed. With such a hero, the young duchess's amours were most likely innocent; and in all other ways she was a suitable partner for the duke, and well fitted to enter into his pleasures.

When the festivities at Saint Omer had come to an end, Charles and his wife set forth by Ghent and Tournay. 2 The towns gave him offerings of money as he passed through, to help in the payment of his ransom. From all sides, ladies and gentlemen thronged to offer him their services; some gave him their sons for pages, some archers for a bodyguard; and by the time he reached Tournay, he had a following of 0 horse. Everywhere he was received as though he had been the king of France. If he did not come to imagine himself something of the sort, he certainly forgot the existence of any one with a better claim to the title. He conducted himself on the hypothesis that Charles VII. was another Charles VI. He signed with enthusiasm that treaty of Arras, which left France almost at the discretion of Burgundy. On December he was still no further than Bruges, where he entered into a private treaty with Philip; and it was not until January , ten weeks after he disembarked in France, and attended by a ruck of Burgundian gentlemen, that he arrived in Paris and offered to present himself before Charles VII. The King sent word that he might come, if he would, with a small retinue, but not with his present following; and the duke, who was mightily on his high horse after all the ovations he had received, took the King’s attitude amiss, and turned aside into Touraine, to receive more welcome and more presents, and be convoyed by torchlight into faithful cities.

And so you see here was King Arthur home again, and matters nowise mended in consequence. The best we can say is, that this last stage of Charles’s public life was of no long duration. His confidence was soon knocked out of him in the contact with others. He began to find he was an earthen vessel among many vessels of brass; he began to be shrewdly aware that he was no King Arthur. In , at Limoges, he made himself the spokesman of the malcontent nobility. The King showed himself humiliatingly indifferent to his counsels, and humiliatingly generous towards his necessities. And there, with some blushes, he may be said to have taken farewell of the political stage. 3 A feeble attempt on the county of Asti is scarce worth the name of exception. Thenceforward let Ambition wile whom she may into the turmoil of events, our duke will walk cannily in his well-ordered garden, or sit by the fire to touch the slender reed.

IV

If it were given each of us to transplant his life wherever he pleased in time or space, with all the ages and all the countries of the world to choose from, there would be quite an instructive diversity of taste. A certain sedentary majority would prefer to remain where they were. Many would choose the Renaissance; many some stately and simple period of Grecian life; and still more elect to pass a few years wandering among the villages of Palestine with an inspired conductor. For some of our quaintly vicious contemporaries, we have the decline of the Roman Empire and the reign of Henry III. of France. But there are others not quite so vicious, who yet cannot look upon the world with perfect gravity, who have never taken the categorical imperative to wife, and have more taste for what is comfortable than for what is magnanimous and high; and I can imagine some of these casting their lot in the court of Blois during the last twenty years of the life of Charles of Orleans.

The duke and duchess, their staff of officers and ladies, and the high-born and learned persons who were attracted to Blois on a visit, formed a society for killing time and perfecting each other in various elegant accomplishments, such as we might imagine for an ideal watering-place in the Delectable Mountains. The company hunted and went on pleasure-parties; they played chess, tables, and many other games. What we now call the history of the period passed, I imagine, over the heads of these good 4 people much as it passes over our own. News reached them, indeed, of great and joyful import. William Peel received eight livres and five sous from the duchess when he brought the first tidings that Rouen was recaptured from the English. A little later and the duke sang, in a truly patriotic vein, the deliverance of Guyenne and Normandy. They were liberal of rhymes and largesse, and welcomed the prosperity of their country much as they welcomed the coming of spring, and with no more thought of collaborating towards the event. Religion was not forgotten in the court of Blois. Pilgrimages were agreeable and picturesque excursions. In those days a well-served chapel was something like a good vinery in our own, — an opportunity for display and the source of mild enjoyments. There was probably something of his rooted delight in pageantry, as well as a good deal of gentle piety, in the feelings with which Charles gave dinner every Friday to thirteen poor people, served them himself, and washed their feet with his own hands. Solemn affairs would interest Charles and his courtiers from their trivial side. The duke perhaps cared less for the deliverance of Guyenne and Normandy than for his own verses on the occasion; just as Dr. Russell's correspondence in *The*

Times was among the most material parts of the Crimean War for that talented correspondent. And I think it scarcely cynical to suppose that religion as well as patriotism was principally cultivated as a means of filling up the day.

It was not only messengers fiery red with haste and charged with the destiny of nations who were made welcome at the gates of Blois. If any man of accomplishment came that way, he was sure of an audience, and something for his pocket. The courtiers would have received Ben Jonson like Drummond of Hawthornden, and a good pugilist like Captain Barclay. They were catholic, as none but the entirely idle can be catholic. It might be Pierre, called 5 Dieu d'amours, the juggler; or it might be three high English minstrels; or the two men, players of ghitterns, from the kingdom of Scotland, who sang the destruction of the Turks; or again Jehan Rognelet, player of instruments of music, who played and danced with his wife and two children; they would each be called into the castle to give a taste of his proficiency before my lord the duke. Sometimes the performance was of a more personal interest, and produced much the same sensations as are felt on an English green on the arrival of a professional cricketer, or round an English billiard-table during a match between Roberts and Cook. This was when Jehan Nègre, the Lombard, came to Blois and played chess against all these chess-players, and won much money from my lord and his intimates; or when Baudet Harenc of Chalons made ballades before all these ballade-makers.

It will not surprise the reader to learn they were all makers of ballades and rondels. To write verses for May-day seems to have been as much a matter of course as to ride out with the cavalcade that went to gather hawthorn. The choice of Valentines was a standing challenge, and the courtiers pelted each other with humorous and sentimental verses as in a literary carnival. If an indecorous adventure befell our friend Maistre Estienne le Gout, my lord the duke would turn it into the funniest of rondels, all the rhymes being the names of the cases of nouns or the moods of verbs; and Maistre Estienne would make reply in similar fashion, seeking to prune the story of its more humiliating episodes. If Frédet was too long away from Court, a rondel went to upbraid him; and it was in a rondel that Frédet would excuse himself. Sometimes two or three, or as many as a dozen, would set to work on the same refrain, the same idea, or in the same macaronic jargon. Some of the poetasters were heavy enough; others were not wanting in address; and the duchess herself was 6 among those who most excelled. On one occasion eleven competitors made a ballade on the idea,

"I die of thirst beside the fountain's edge"

(Je meurs de soif emprès de la fontaine).

These eleven ballades still exist; and one of them arrests the attention rather from the name of the author than from any special merit in itself. It purports to be the work of François Villon; and so far as a foreigner can judge (which is indeed a small way), it may very well be his. Nay, and if any one thing is more probable than another, in the great *tabula rasa*, or unknown land, which we are fain to call the biography of Villon, it seems probable enough that he may have gone upon a visit to Charles of Orleans. Where Master Baudet Harenc, of Chalons, found a sympathetic, or perhaps a derisive audience (for who can tell nowadays the degree of Baudet's excellence in his art?), favour would not be wanting for the greatest ballade-maker of all time. Great as would seem the incongruity, it may have pleased Charles to own a sort of kinship with ragged singers, and whimsically regard himself as one of the confraternity of poets. And he would have other grounds of intimacy with Villon. A room looking upon Windsor gardens is a different matter from Villon's dungeon at Méun; yet each in his own degree had been tried in prison. Each in his own way also loved the good things of this life and the service of the Muses. But the same gulf that separated Burns from his Edinburgh patrons would separate the singer of Bohemia from the rhyming duke. And it is hard to imagine that Villon's training amongst thieves, loose women, and vagabond students had fitted him to move in a society of any dignity and courtliness. Ballades are very admirable things; and a poet is doubtless a most interesting visitor. But among the courtiers of Charles there would be considerable regard for the proprieties of etiquette; and even a duke will sometimes have an eye to his teaspoons. Moreover, as a poet, I can conceive 7 he may have disappointed expectation. It need surprise nobody if Villon's ballade on the theme,

"I die of thirst beside the fountain's edge,"

was but a poor performance. He would make better verses on the lee-side of a flagon at the sign of the Pomme du Pin, than in a cushioned settle in the halls of Blois.

Charles liked change of place. He was often not so much travelling as making a progress; now to join the King for some great tournament; now to visit King René, at Tarascon, where he had a study of his own and saw all manner of interesting things — Oriental curios, King René painting birds, and, what particularly pleased him, Triboulet, the dwarf jester, whose skull-cap was no bigger than an orange. Sometimes the journeys were set about on horseback in a large party, with the *fourriers* sent forward to prepare a lodging at the next stage. We find almost Gargantuan details of the provision made by these officers against the duke's arrival, of eggs and butter and bread, cheese and peas and chickens, pike and bream and barbel, and wine both white and red. Sometimes he went by water in a barge, playing chess or tables with a friend in the pavilion, or watching other vessels as they went before the wind. Children ran along the bank, as they do to this day on the Crinan Canal; and when Charles threw in money they would dive and bring it up. As he looked on their exploits, I wonder whether that room of gold and silk and worsted came back into his memory, with the device of little children in the river, and the sky full of birds?

He was a bit of a book-fancier, and had vied with his brother Angoulême in bringing back the library of their 8 grandfather Charles V., when Bedford put it up for sale in London. The duchess had a library of her own; and we hear of her borrowing romances from ladies in attendance on the blue-stocking Margaret of Scotland. Not only were books collected, but new books were written at the court of Blois. The widow of one Jean Fougère, a book-binder, seems to have done a number of odd commissions for the bibliophilous count. She it was who received three vellum skins to bind the duchess's Book of Hours, and who was employed to prepare parchment for the use of the duke's scribes. And she it was who bound in vermilion leather the great manuscript of Charles's own poems, which was presented to him by his secretary, Anthony Astesan, with the text in one column, and Astesan's Latin version in the other.

Such tastes, with the coming of years, would doubtless take the place of many others. We find in Charles's verse much semi-ironical regret for other days, and resignation to growing infirmities. He who had been "nourished in the schools of love" now sees nothing either to please or displease him. Old age has imprisoned him within doors, where he means to take his ease, and let younger fellows bestir themselves in life. He had written (in earlier days, we may presume) a bright and defiant little poem in praise of solitude. If they would but leave him alone with his own thoughts and happy recollections, he declared it was beyond the power of melancholy to affect him. But now, when his animal strength has so much declined that he sings the discomforts of winter instead of the inspirations of spring, and he has no longer any appetite for life, he confesses he is wretched when alone, and, to keep his mind from grievous thoughts, he must have many people around him, laughing, talking, and singing.

9

While Charles was thus falling into years, the order of things, of which he was the outcome and ornament, was growing old along with him. The semi-royalty of the princes of the blood was already a thing of the past; and when Charles VII. was gathered to his fathers, a new king reigned in France, who seemed every way the opposite of royal.

Louis XI. had aims that were incomprehensible, and virtues that were inconceivable, to his contemporaries. But his contemporaries were able enough to appreciate his sordid exterior, and his cruel and treacherous spirit. To the whole nobility of France he was a fatal and unreasonable phenomenon. All such courts as that of Charles at Blois, or his friend René's in Provence, would soon be made impossible: interference was the order of the day; hunting was already abolished; and who should say what was to go next? Louis, in fact, must have appeared to Charles primarily in the light of a kill-joy. I take it, when missionaries land in South Sea Islands and lay strange embargo on the simplest things in life, the islanders will not be much more puzzled and irritated than Charles of Orleans at the policy of the Eleventh Louis. There was one thing, I seem to apprehend, that had always particularly moved him; and that was, any proposal to punish a person of his acquaintance. No matter what treason he may have made or meddled with, an Alençon or an Armagnac was sure to find Charles reappear from private life and do his best to get him pardoned. He knew them quite well. He had made rondels with them. They were charming people in every way. There must certainly be some mistake. Had not he himself made anti-national treaties almost before he was out of his nonage? And for the matter of that, had not every one else done the like? Such are some of the thoughts by which he might explain to himself his aversion to such extremities; but it was on a deeper basis that the feeling probably reposed. A man of his temper could not fail to be impressed at the thought of disastrous revolutions in the fortunes of those he knew. He would feel painfully the 0 tragic contrast, when those who had everything to make life valuable were deprived of life itself And it was shocking to the clemency of his spirit, that sinners should be hurried before their Judge without a fitting interval for penitence and satisfaction. It was this feeling which brought him at last, a poor, purblind blue-bottle of the later autumn, into collision with "the universal spider," Louis XI. He took up the defence of the Duke of Brittany at Tours. But Louis was then in no humour to hear Charles's texts and Latin sentiments; he had his back to the wall, the future of France was at stake; and if all the old men in the world had crossed his path, they would have had the rough side of his tongue like Charles of Orleans. I have found nowhere what he said, but it seems it was monstrously to the point, and so rudely conceived that the old duke never recovered the indignity. He got home as far as Amboise, sickened, and died two days after (Jan. 4,), in the seventy-fourth year of his age. And so a whiff of pungent prose stopped the issue of melodious rondels to the end of time.

V

The futility of Charles's public life was of a piece throughout. He never succeeded in any single purpose he set before him; for his deliverance from England, after twenty-five years of failure, and at the cost of dignity and consistency, it would be ridiculously hyperbolical to treat as a success. During the first part of his life he was the stalking-horse of Bernard d'Armagnac; during the second, he was the passive instrument of English diplomatists; and before he was well entered on the third, he hastened to become the dupe and catspaw of Burgundian treason. On each of these occasions, a strong and not dishonourable personal motive determined his behaviour. In and the following years he had his father's murder 1 uppermost in his mind. During his English captivity, that thought was displaced by a more immediate desire for his own liberation. In a sentiment of gratitude to Philip of Burgundy blinded him to all else, and led him to break with the tradition of his party and his own former life. He was born a great vassal, and he conducted himself like a private gentleman. He began life in a showy and brilliant enough fashion, by the light of a petty personal chivalry. He was not without some tincture of patriotism; but it was resolvable into two parts: a preference for life among his fellow-countrymen, and a barren point of honour. In England, he could comfort himself by the reflection that "he had been taken while loyally doing his devoir," without any misgiving as to his conduct in the previous years, when he had prepared the disaster of Agincourt by wasteful feud. This unconsciousness of the larger interests is perhaps most happily exampled out of his own mouth. When Alençon stood accused of betraying Normandy into the hands of the English, Charles made a speech in his defence, from which I have already quoted more than once. Alençon, he said, had professed a great love and trust towards him; "yet did he give no great proof thereof, when he sought to betray Normandy; whereby he would have made me lose an estate of ,0 livres a year, and might have occasioned the destruction of the kingdom and of all us Frenchmen." These are the words of one, mark you, against whom Gloucester warned the English Council because of his "great subtility and cautelous disposition." It is not hard to excuse the impatience of Louis XI. if such stuff was foisted on him by way of political deliberation.

This incapacity to see things with any greatness, this obscure and narrow view, was fundamentally characteristic of the man as well as of the epoch. It is not even so striking in his public life, where he failed, as in his poems, where he notably succeeded. For wherever we might expect a poet to be unintelligent, it certainly would not be in his poetry. And Charles is unintelligent even 2 there. Of all authors whom a modern may still read, and read over again with pleasure, he has perhaps the least to say. His poems seem to bear testimony rather to the fashion of rhyming, which distinguished the age, than to any special vocation in the man himself. Some of them are drawing-room exercises, and the rest seem made by habit. Great writers are struck with something in nature or society, with which they become pregnant and longing; they are possessed with an idea, and cannot be at peace until they have put it outside of them in some distinct embodiment. But with Charles literature was an object rather than a mean; he was one who loved bandying words for its own sake; the rigidity of intricate metrical forms stood him in lieu of precise thought; instead of communicating truth, he observed the laws of a game; and when he had no one to challenge at chess or rackets, he made verses in a wager against himself. From the very idleness of the man's mind, and not from intensity of feeling, it happens that all his poems are more or less autobiographical. But they form an autobiography singularly bald and uneventful. Little is therein recorded beside sentiments. Thoughts, in any true sense, he had none to record. And if we can gather that he had been a prisoner in England, that he had lived in the Orleannese, and that he hunted and went in parties of pleasure, I believe it is about as much definite experience as is to be found in all these five hundred pages of autobiographical verse. Doubtless, we find here and there a complaint on the progress of the infirmities of age. Doubtless, he feels the great change of the year, and distinguishes winter from spring; winter as the time of snow and the fireside; spring as the return of grass and flowers, the time of St. Valentine's day and a beating heart. And he feels love after a fashion. Again and again we learn that Charles of Orleans is in love, and hear him ring the changes through the whole gamut of dainty and tender sentiment. But there is never a spark of passion; and heaven alone knows 3 whether there was any real woman in the matter, or the whole thing was an exercise in fancy. If these poems were indeed inspired by some living mistress, one would think he had never seen, never heard, and never touched her. There is nothing in any one of these so numerous love-songs to indicate who or what the lady was. Was she dark or fair, passionate or gentle like himself, witty or simple? Was it always one woman? or are there a dozen here immortalised in cold indistinction? The old English translator mentions grey eyes in his version of one of the amorous rondels; so far as I remember, he was driven by some emergency of the verse; but in the absence of all sharp lines of character and anything specific, we feel for the moment a sort of surprise, as though the epithet were singularly happy and unusual, or as though we had made our escape from cloudland into something tangible and sure. The measure of Charles's indifference to all that now preoccupies and excites a poet is best given by a positive example. If, besides the coming of spring, any one external circumstance may be said to have struck his imagination, it was the despatch of *fourriers*, while on a journey, to prepare the night's lodging. This seems to be his favourite image; it reappears like the upas-tree in the early work of Coleridge: we may judge with what childish eyes he looked upon the world, if one of the sights which most impressed him was that of a man going to order dinner.

Although they are not inspired by any deeper motive than the common run of contemporaneous drawing-room verses, those of Charles of Orleans are executed with inimitable lightness and delicacy of touch. They deal with floating and colourless sentiments, and the writer is never greatly moved, but he seems always genuine. He makes no attempt to set off thin conceptions with a multiplicity of phrases. His ballades are generally thin and scanty of import; for the ballade presented too large a canvas, and he was preoccupied by technical requirements. But in the rondel he has put himself before all competitors by a happy 4 knack and a prevailing distinction of manner. He is very much more of a duke in his verses than in his absurd and inconsequential career as a statesman; and how he shows himself a duke is precisely by the absence of all pretension, turgidity, or emphasis. He turns verses, as he would have come into the king's presence, with a quiet accomplishment of grace.

Théodore de Banville, the youngest poet of a famous generation now nearly extinct, and himself a sure and finished artist, knocked off, in his happiest vein, a few experiments in imitation of Charles of Orleans. I would recommend these modern rondels to all who care about the old duke, not only because they are delightful in themselves, but because they serve as a contrast to throw into relief the peculiarities of their model. When de Banville revives a forgotten form of verse — and he has already had the honour of reviving the ballade — he does it in the spirit of a workman choosing a good tool wherever he can find one, and not at all in that of the dilettante, who seeks to renew bygone forms of thought and make historic forgeries. With the ballade this seemed natural enough; for in connection with ballades the mind recurs to Villon, and Villon was almost more of a modern than de Banville himself. But in the case of the rondel, a comparison is challenged with Charles of Orleans, and the difference between two ages and two literatures is illustrated in a few poems of thirteen lines. Something, certainly, has been retained of the old movement; the refrain falls in time like a well-played bass; and the very brevity of the thing, by hampering and restraining the greater fecundity of the modern mind, assists the imitation. But de Banville’s poems are full of form and colour; they smack racily of modern life, and own small kindred with the verse of other days, when it seems as if men walked by twilight, seeing little, and that with distracted eyes, and instead of blood, some thin and spectral fluid circulated in their veins. They might gird themselves for battle, make love, eat and drink, and acquit themselves manfully in all the external parts of life; but of the life that is within, and those processes by which we render ourselves an intelligent account of what we feel and do, and so represent experience that we for the first time make it ours, they had only a loose and troubled possession. They beheld or took part in great events, but there was no answerable commotion in their reflective being; and they passed throughout turbulent epochs in a sort of ghostly quiet and abstraction. Feeling seems to have been strangely disproportioned to the occasion, and words were laughably trivial and scanty to set forth the feeling even such as it was. Juvenal des Ursins chronicles calamity after calamity, with but one comment for them all: that “it was great pity.” Perhaps, after too much of our florid literature, we find an adventitious charm in what is so different; and while the big drums are beaten every day by perspiring editors over the loss of a cock-boat or the rejection of a clause, and nothing is heard that is not proclaimed with sound of trumpet, it is not wonderful if we retire with pleasure into old books, and listen to authors who speak small and clear, as if in a private conversation. Truly this is so with Charles of Orleans. We are pleased to find a small man without the buskin, and obvious sentiments stated without affectation. If the sentiments are obvious, there is all the more chance we may have experienced the like. As we turn over the leaves, we may find ourselves in sympathy with some one or other of these staid joys and smiling sorrows. If we do we shall be strangely pleased, for there is a genuine pathos in these simple words, and the lines go with a lilt, and sing themselves to music of their own.

VIII

SAMUEL PEPYS

In two books a fresh light has recently been thrown on the character and position of Samuel Pepys. Mr. Mynors Bright has given us a new transcription of the Diary, increasing it in bulk by near a third, correcting many errors, and completing our knowledge of the man in some curious and important points. We can only regret that he has taken liberties with the author and the public. It is no part of the duties of the editor of an established classic to decide what may or may not be "tedious to the reader." The book is either an historical document or not, and in condemning Lord Braybrooke Mr. Bright condemns himself. As for the time-honoured phrase, "unfit for publication," without being cynical, we may regard it as the sign of a precaution more or less commercial; and we may think, without being sordid, that when we purchase six huge and distressingly expensive volumes, we are entitled to be treated rather more like scholars and rather less like children. But Mr. Bright may rest assured: while we complain, we are still grateful. Mr. Wheatley, to divide our obligation, brings together, clearly and with no lost words, a body of illustrative material. Sometimes we might ask a little more; never, I think, less. And as a matter of fact, a great part of Mr. Wheatley's volume might be transferred, by a good editor of Pepys, to the margin of the text, for it is precisely what the reader wants.

In the light of these two books, at least, we have now to 7 read our author. Between them they contain all we can expect to learn for, it may be, many years. Now, if ever, we should be able to form some notion of that unparalleled figure in the annals of mankind — unparalleled for three good reasons: first, because he was a man known to his contemporaries in a halo of almost historical pomp, and to his remote descendants with an indecent familiarity, like a taproom comrade; second, because he has outstripped all competitors in the art or virtue of a conscious honesty about oneself; and, third, because, being in many ways a very ordinary person, he has yet placed himself before the public eye with such a fulness and such an intimacy of detail as might be envied by a genius like Montaigne. Not then for his own sake only, but as a character in a unique position, endowed with a unique talent, and shedding a unique light upon the lives of the mass of mankind, he is surely worthy of prolonged and patient study.

THE DIARY

That there should be such a book as Pepys's Diary is incomparably strange. Pepys, in a corrupt and idle period, played the man in public employments, toiling hard and keeping his honour bright. Much of the little good that is set down to James the Second comes by right to Pepys; and if it were little for a king, it is much for a subordinate. To his clear, capable head was owing somewhat of the greatness of England on the seas. In the exploits of Hawke, Rodney, or Nelson, this dead Mr. Pepys of the Navy Office had some considerable share. He stood well by his business in the appalling plague of . He was loved and respected by some of the best and wisest men in England. He was President of the Royal Society; and when he came to die, people said of his conduct in that solemn hour — thinking it needless to say more — that it was answerable to the greatness of his life. Thus he walked 8 in dignity, guards of soldiers sometimes attending him in his walks, subalterns bowing before his periwig; and when he uttered his thoughts they were suitable to his state and services. On February 8, , we find him writing to Evelyn, his mind bitterly occupied with the late Dutch war, and some thoughts of the different story of the repulse of the Great Armada: "Sir, you will not wonder at the backwardness of my thanks for the present you made me, so many days since, of the Prospect of the Medway, while the Hollander rode master in it, when I have told you that the sight of it hath led me to such reflections on my particular interest, by my employment, in the reproach due to that miscarriage, as have given me little less disquiet than he is fancied to have who found his face in Michael Angelo's hell. The same should serve me also in excuse for my silence in celebrating your mastery shown in the design and draught, did not indignation rather than courtship urge me so far to commend them, as to wish the furniture of our House of Lords changed from the story of ‘ to that of ‘ (of Evelyn's designing), till the pravity of this were reformed to the temper of that age, wherein God Almighty found his blessings more operative than, I fear, he doth in ours his judgments."

This is a letter honourable to the writer, where the meaning rather than the words is eloquent. Such was the account he gave of himself to his contemporaries; such thoughts he chose to utter, and in such language: giving himself out for a grave and patriotic public servant. We turn to the same date in the Diary by which he is known, after two centuries, to his descendants. The entry begins in the same key with the letter, blaming the "madness of the House of Commons" and "the base proceedings, just the epitome of all our public proceedings in this age, of the House of Lords"; and then, without the least transition, this is how our diarist proceeds: “To the Strand, to my bookseller’s, and there bought an idle, rogueish French book, ‘L’escholle des Filles,’ which I have 9 bought in plain binding, avoiding the buying of it better bound, because I resolve, as soon as I have read it, to burn it, that it may not stand in the list of books, nor among them, to disgrace them, if it should be found.” Even in our day, when responsibility is so much more clearly apprehended, the man who wrote the letter would be notable; but what about the man, I do not say who bought a roguish book, but who was ashamed of doing so, yet did it, and recorded both the doing and the shame in the pages of his daily journal?

We all, whether we write or speak, must somewhat drape ourselves when we address our fellows; at a given moment we apprehend our character and acts by some particular side; we are merry with one, grave with another, as befits the nature and demands of the relation. Pepys’s letter to Evelyn would have little in common with that other one to Mrs. Knipp which he signed by the pseudonym of *Dapper Dicky*; yet each would be suitable to the character of his correspondent. There is no untruth in this, for man, being a Protean animal, swiftly shares and changes with his company and surroundings; and these changes are the better part of his education in the world. To strike a posture once for all, and to march through life like a drum-major, is to be highly disagreeable to others and a fool for oneself into the bargain. To Evelyn and to Knipp we understand the double facing; but to whom was he posing in the Diary, and what, in the name of astonishment, was the nature of the pose? Had he suppressed all mention of the book, or had he bought it, gloried in the act, and cheerfully recorded his glorification, in either case we should have made him out. But no; he is full of precautions to conceal the “disgrace” of the purchase, and yet speeds to chronicle the whole affair in pen and ink. It is a sort of anomaly in human action, which we can exactly parallel from another part of the Diary.

Mrs. Pepys had written a paper of her too just complaints against her husband, and written it in plain and 0 very pungent English. Pepys, in an agony lest the world should come to see it, brutally seizes and destroys the tell-tale document; and then — you disbelieve your eyes — down goes the whole story with unsparing truth and in the cruellest detail. It seems he has no design but to appear respectable, and here he keeps a private book to prove he was not. You are at first faintly reminded of some of the vagaries of the morbid religious diarist; but at a moment’s thought the resemblance disappears. The design of Pepys is not at all to edify; it is not from repentance that he chronicles his peccadilloes, for he tells us when he does repent, and, to be just to him, there often follows some improvement. Again, the sins of the religious diarist are of a very formal pattern, and are told with an elaborate whine. But in Pepys you come upon good, substantive misdemeanours; beams in his eye of which he alone remains unconscious; healthy outbreaks of the animal nature, and laughable subterfuges to himself that always command belief and often engage the sympathies.

Pepys was a young man for his age, came slowly to himself in the world, sowed his wild oats late, took late to industry, and preserved till nearly forty the headlong gusto of a boy. So, to come rightly at the spirit in which the Diary was written, we must recall a class of sentiments which with most of us are over and done before the age of twelve. In our tender years we still preserve a freshness of surprise at our prolonged existence; events make an impression out of all proportion to their consequence; we are unspeakably touched by our own past adventures, and look forward to our future personality with sentimental interest. It was something of this, I think, that clung to Pepys. Although not sentimental in the abstract, he was sweetly sentimental about himself. His own past clung about his heart, an evergreen. He was the slave of an association. He could not pass by Islington, where his father used to carry him to cakes and ale, but he must light at the "King's Head" and eat and drink "for remembrance[1] of the old house sake." He counted it good fortune to lie a night at Epsom to renew his old walks, "where Mrs. Hely and I did use to walk and talk, with whom I had the first sentiments of love and pleasure in a woman's company, discourse and taking her by the hand, she being a pretty woman." He goes about weighing up the *Assurance*, which lay near Woolwich under water, and cries in a parenthesis, "Poor ship, that I have been twice merry in, in Captain Holland's time"; and after revisiting the *Naseby*, now changed into the *Charles*, he confesses "it was a great pleasure to myself to see the ship that I began my good fortune in." The stone that he was cut for he preserved in a case; and to the Turners he kept alive such gratitude for their assistance, that for years, and after he had begun to mount himself into higher zones, he continued to have that family to dinner on the anniversary of the operation. Not Hazlitt nor Rousseau had a more romantic passion for their past, although at times they might express it more romantically; and if Pepys shared with them this childish fondness, did not Rousseau, who left behind him the "Confessions," or Hazlitt, who wrote the "Liber Amoris," and loaded his essays with loving personal detail, share with Pepys in his unwearied egotism? For the two things go hand in hand; or, to be more exact, it is the first that makes the second either possible or pleasing.

But, to be quite in sympathy with Pepys, we must return once more to the experience of children. I can remember to have written, in the fly-leaf of more than one book, the date and the place where I then was — if, for instance, I was ill in bed or sitting in a certain garden; these were jottings for my future self; if I should chance on such a note in after years, I thought it would cause me a particular thrill to recognise myself across the intervening distance. Indeed, I might come upon them now, and not be moved one tittle — which shows that I have comparatively failed in life, and grown older than Samuel Pepys. For in the Diary we can find more than one such note of 2 perfect childish egotism; as when he explains that his candle is going out, "which makes me write thus slobberingly"; or as in this incredible particularity, "To my study, where I only wrote thus much of this day's passages to this *, and so out again"; or lastly, as here, with more of circumstance: "I staid up till the bellman came by with his bell under my window, as *I was writing of this very line*, and cried, 'Past one of the clock, and a cold, frosty, windy morning.'" Such passages are not to be misunderstood. The appeal to Samuel Pepys years hence is unmistakable. He desires that dear, though unknown, gentleman keenly to realise his predecessor; to remember why a passage was uncleanly written; to recall (let us fancy, with a sigh) the tones of the bellman, the chill of the early, windy morning, and the very line his own romantic self was scribing at the moment. The man, you will perceive, was making reminiscences — a sort of pleasure by ricochet, which comforts many in distress, and turns some others into sentimental libertines: and the whole book, if you will but look at it in that way, is seen to be a work of art to Pepys's own address.

Here, then, we have the key to that remarkable attitude preserved by him throughout his Diary, to that unflinching — I had almost said, that unintelligent — sincerity which makes it a miracle among human books. He was not unconscious of his errors — far from it; he was often startled into shame, often reformed, often made and broke his vows of change. But whether he did ill or well, he was still his own unequalled self; still that entrancing *ego* of whom alone he cared to write; and still sure of his own affectionate indulgence, when the parts should be changed, and the writer come to read what he had written. Whatever he did, or said, or thought, or suffered, it was still a trait of Pepys, a character of his career; and as, to himself, he was more interesting than Moses or than Alexander, so all should be faithfully set down. I have called his Diary a work of art. Now when the artist has found something, 3 word or deed, exactly proper to a favourite character in play or novel, he will neither suppress nor diminish it, though the remark be silly or the act mean. The hesitation of Hamlet, the credulity of Othello, the baseness of Emma Bovary, or the irregularities of Mr. Swiveller, caused neither disappointment nor disgust to their creators. And so with Pepys and his adored protagonist: adored not blindly, but with trenchant insight and enduring, human toleration. I have gone over and over the greater part of the Diary; and the points where, to the most suspicious scrutiny, he has seemed not perfectly sincere, are so few, so doubtful, and so petty, that I am ashamed to name them. It may be said that we all of us write such a diary in airy characters upon our brain; but I fear there is a distinction to be made; I fear that as we render to our consciousness an account of our daily fortunes and behaviour, we too often weave a tissue of romantic compliments and dull excuses; and even if Pepys were the ass and coward that men call him, we must take rank as sillier and more cowardly than he. The bald truth about oneself, what we are all too timid to admit when we are not too dull to see it, that was what he saw clearly and set down unsparingly.

It is improbable that the Diary can have been carried on in the same single spirit in which it was begun. Pepys was not such an ass, but he must have perceived, as he went on, the extraordinary nature of the work he was producing. He was a great reader, and he knew what other books were like. It must, at least, have crossed his mind that someone might ultimately decipher the manuscript, and he himself, with all his pains and pleasures, be resuscitated in some later day; and the thought, although discouraged, must have warmed his heart. He was not such an ass, besides, but he must have been conscious of the deadly explosives, the gun-cotton and the giant powder, he was hoarding in his drawer. Let some contemporary light upon the Journal, and Pepys was plunged[4] for ever in social and political disgrace. We can trace the growth of his terrors by two facts. In , while the Diary was still in its youth, he tells about it, as a matter of course, to a lieutenant in the navy; but in , when it was already near an end, he could have bitten his tongue out, as the saying is, because he had let slip his secret to one so grave and friendly as Sir William Coventry. And from two other facts I think we may infer that he had entertained, even if he had not acquiesced in, the thought of a far-distant publicity. The first is of capital importance: the Diary was not destroyed. The second — that he took unusual precautions to confound the cipher in “rogueish” passages — proves, beyond question, that he was thinking of some other reader besides himself. Perhaps while his friends were admiring the “greatness of his behaviour” at the approach of death, he may have had a twinkling hope of immortality. *Mens cujusque is est quisque*, said his chosen motto; and, as he had stamped his mind with every crook and foible in the pages of the Diary, he might feel that what he left behind him was indeed himself. There is perhaps no other instance so remarkable of the desire of man for publicity and an enduring name. The greatness of his life was open, yet he longed to communicate its smallness also;

and, while contemporaries bowed before him, he must buttonhole posterity with the news that his periwig was once alive with nits. But this thought, although I cannot doubt he had it, was neither his first nor his deepest; it did not colour one word that he wrote; and the Diary, for as long as he kept it, remained what it was when he began, a private pleasure for himself. It was his bosom secret; it added a zest to all his pleasures; he lived in and for it, and might well write these solemn words, when he closed that confidant for ever: “And so I betake myself to that course which is almost as much as to see myself go into the grave; for which, and all the discomforts that will accompany my being blind, the good God prepare me.”

5

A LIBERAL GENIUS

Pepys spent part of a certain winter Sunday, when he had taken physic, composing “a song in praise of a liberal genius (such as I take my own to be) to all studies and pleasures.” The song was unsuccessful, but the Diary is, in a sense, the very song that he was seeking; and his portrait by Hales, so admirably reproduced in Mynors Bright’s edition, is a confirmation of the Diary. Hales, it would appear, had known his business; and though he put his sitter to a deal of trouble, almost breaking his neck “to have the portrait full of shadows,” and draping him in an Indian gown hired expressly for the purpose, he was preoccupied about no merely picturesque effects, but to portray the essence of the man. Whether we read the picture by the Diary or the Diary by the picture, we shall at least agree that Hales was among the number of those who can “surprise the manners in the face.” Here we have a mouth pouting, moist with desires; eyes greedy, protuberant, and yet apt for weeping too; a nose great alike in character and dimensions; and altogether a most fleshy, melting countenance. The face is attractive by its promise of reciprocity. I have used the word *greedy*, but the reader must not suppose that he can change it for that closely kindred one of *hungry*, for there is here no aspiration, no waiting for better things, but an animal joy in all that comes. It could never be the face of an artist; it is the face of a *viveur* — kindly, pleased and pleasing, protected from excess and upheld in contentment by the shifting versatility of his desires. For a single desire is more rightly to be called a lust; but there is health in a variety, where one may balance and control another.

The whole world, town or country, was to Pepys a garden of Armida. Wherever he went, his steps were winged with the most eager expectation; whatever he did, it was done with the most lively pleasure. An insatiable[6] curiosity in all the shows of the world and all the secrets of knowledge filled him brimful of the longing to travel, and supported him in the toils of study. Rome was the dream of his life; he was never happier than when he read or talked of the Eternal City. When he was in Holland he was “with child” to see any strange thing. Meeting some friends and singing with them in a palace near the Hague, his pen fails him to express his passion of delight, “the more so because in a heaven of pleasure and in a strange country.” He must go to see all famous executions. He must needs visit the body of a murdered man, defaced “with a broad wound,” he says, “that makes my hand now shake to write of it.” He learned to dance, and was “like to make a dancer.” He learned to sing, and walked about Gray’s Inn Fields “humming to myself (which is now my constant practice) the trillo.” He learned to play the lute, the flute, the flageolet, and the theorbo, and it was not the fault of his intention if he did not learn the harpsichord or the spinet. He learned to compose songs, and burned to give forth “a scheme and theory of music not yet ever made in the world.” When he heard “a fellow whistle like a bird exceeding well,” he promised to return another day and give an angel for a lesson in the art. Once, he writes, “I took the Bezan back with me, and with a brave gale and tide reached up that night to the Hope, taking great pleasure in learning the seamen’s manner of singing when they sound the depths.” If he found himself rusty in his Latin grammar, he must fall to it like a schoolboy. He was a member of Harrington’s Club till its dissolution, and of the Royal Society before it had received the name. Boyle’s “Hydrostatics” was “of infinite delight” to him, walking in Barnes Elms. We find him comparing Bible concordances, a captious judge of sermons, deep in Descartes and Aristotle. We find him, in a single year, studying timber and the measurement of timber; tar and oil, hemp, and the process of preparing cordage; mathematics and accounting; the hull and the rigging of ships from a model; 7 and “looking and informing himself of the (naval) stores with” — hark to the fellow! — ”great delight.” His familiar spirit of delight was not the same with Shelley’s; but how true it was to him through life! He is only copying something, and behold, he “takes great pleasure to rule the lines, and have the capital words wrote with red ink”; he has only had his coal-cellar emptied and cleaned, and behold, “it do please him exceedingly.” A hog’s harslett is “a piece of meat he loves.” He cannot ride home in my Lord Sandwich’s coach, but he must exclaim, with breathless gusto, “his noble, rich coach.” When he is bound for a supper-party, he anticipates a “glut of pleasure.” When he has a new watch, “to see my childishness,” says he, “I could not forbear carrying it in my hand and seeing what o’clock it was an hundred times.” To go to Vauxhall, he says, and “to hear the nightingales and other birds, hear fiddles, and there a harp and here a Jew’s trump, and here laughing, and there fine people walking, is mighty divertising.” And the nightingales, I take it, were particularly dear to him; and it was again “with great pleasure” that he paused to hear them as he walked to Woolwich, while the fog was rising and the April sun broke through.

He must always be doing something agreeable, and, by preference, two agreeable things at once. In his house he had a box of carpenter’s tools, two dogs, an eagle, a canary, and a blackbird that whistled tunes, lest, even in that full life, he should chance upon an empty moment. If he had to wait for a dish of poached eggs, he must put in the time by playing on the flageolet; if a sermon were dull, he must read in the book of Tobit or divert his mind with sly advances on the nearest women. When he walked, it must be with a book in his pocket to beguile the way in case the nightingales were silent; and even along the streets of London, with so many pretty faces to be spied for and dignitaries to be saluted, his trail was marked by little debts "for wine, pictures, etc.," the true headmark of a life intolerant 8 of any joyless passage. He had a kind of idealism in pleasure; like the princess in the fairy story, he was conscious of a rose-leaf out of place. Dearly as he loved to talk, he could not enjoy nor shine in a conversation when he thought himself unsuitably dressed. Dearly as he loved eating, he "knew not how to eat alone"; pleasure for him must heighten pleasure; and the eye and ear must be flattered like the palate ere he avow himself content. He had no zest in a good dinner when it fell to be eaten "in a bad street and in a periwig-maker's house"; and a collation was spoiled for him by indifferent music. His body was indefatigable, doing him yeoman's service in this breathless chase of pleasures. On April , , he mentions that he went to bed "weary, *which I seldom am*"; and already over thirty, he would sit up all night cheerfully to see a comet. But it is never pleasure that exhausts the pleasure-seeker; for in that career, as in all others, it is failure that kills. The man who enjoys so wholly, and bears so impatiently the slightest widowhood from joy, is just the man to lose a night's rest over some paltry question of his right to fiddle on the leads, or to be "vexed to the blood" by a solecism in his wife's attire; and we find in consequence that he was always peevish when he was hungry, and that his head "aked mightily" after a dispute. But nothing could divert him from his aim in life; his remedy in care was the same as his delight in prosperity: it was with pleasure, and with pleasure only, that he sought to drive out sorrow; and, whether he was jealous of his wife or skulking from a bailiff, he would equally take refuge in a theatre. There, if the house be full and the company noble, if the songs be tunable, the actors perfect, and the play diverting, this odd hero of the secret Diary, this private self-adorer, will speedily be healed of his distresses.

Equally pleased with a watch, a coach, a piece of meat, a tune upon the fiddle, or a fact in hydrostatics, Pepys was pleased yet more by the beauty, the worth, the mirth, or the mere scenic attitude in life of his fellow-creatures. 9 He shows himself throughout a sterling humanist. Indeed, he who loves himself, not in idle vanity, but with a plenitude of knowledge, is the best equipped of all to love his neighbours. And perhaps it is in this sense that charity may be most properly said to begin at home. It does not matter what quality a person has: Pepys can appreciate and love him for it. He "fills his eyes" with the beauty of Lady Castlemaine; indeed, he may be said to dote upon the thought of her for years; if a woman be good-looking and not painted, he will walk miles to have another sight of her; and even when a lady by a mischance spat upon his clothes, he was immediately consoled when he had observed that she was pretty. But, on the other hand, he is delighted to see Mrs. Pett upon her knees, and speaks thus of his Aunt James: “a poor, religious, well-meaning, good soul, talking of nothing but God Almighty, and that with so much innocence that mightily pleased me.” He is taken with Pen’s merriment and loose songs, but not less taken with the sterling worth of Coventry. He is jolly with a drunken sailor, but listens with interest and patience, as he rides the Essex roads, to the story of a Quaker’s spiritual trials and convictions. He lends a critical ear to the discourse of kings and royal dukes. He spends an evening at Vauxhall with “Killigrew and young Newport — loose company,” says he, “but worth a man’s being in for once, to know the nature of it, and their manner of talk and lives.” And when a rag-boy lights him home, he examines him about his business and other ways of livelihood for destitute children. This is almost half-way to the beginning of philanthropy; had it only been the fashion, as it is at present, Pepys had perhaps been a man famous for good deeds. And it is through this quality that he rises, at times, superior to his surprising egotism; his interest in the love affairs of others is, indeed, impersonal; he is filled with concern for my Lady Castlemaine, whom he only knows by sight, shares in her very jealousies, joys with her in her successes; and it is not untrue, however 0 strange it seems in his abrupt presentment, that he loved his maid Jane because she was in love with his man Tom.

Let us hear him, for once, at length: “So the women and W. Hewer and I walked upon the Downes, where a flock of sheep was; and the most pleasant and innocent sight that ever I saw in my life. We found a shepherd and his little boy reading, far from any houses or sight of people, the Bible to him; so I made the boy read to me, which he did with the forced tone that children do usually read, that was mighty pretty; and then I did give him something, and went to the father, and talked with him. He did content himself mightily in my liking his boy’s reading, and did bless God for him, the most like one of the old patriarchs that ever I saw in my life, and it brought those thoughts of the old age of the world in my mind for two or three days after. We took notice of his woolen knit stockings of two colours mixed, and of his shoes shod with iron, both at the toe and heels, and with great nails in the soles of his feet, which was mighty pretty; and taking notice of them, ‘Why,’ says the poor man, ‘the downes, you see, are full of stones, and we are faine to shoe ourselves thus; and these,’ says he, ‘will make the stones fly till they ring before me.’ I did give the poor man something, for which he was mighty thankful, and I tried to cast stones with his horne crooke. He values his dog mightily, that would turn a sheep any way which he would have him, when he goes to fold them; told me there was about eighteen score sheep in his flock, and that he hath four shillings a week the year round for keeping of them; and Mrs. Turner, in the common fields here, did gather one of the prettiest nosegays that ever I saw in my life."

And so the story rambles on to the end of that day's pleasuring; with cups of milk, and glowworms, and people walking at sundown with their wives and children, and all the way home Pepys still dreaming "of the old age of the world" and the early innocence of man. This[1] was how he walked through life, his eyes and ears wide open, and his hand, you will observe, not shut; and thus he observed the lives, the speech, and the manners of his fellow-men, with prose fidelity of detail and yet a lingering glamour of romance.

It was "two or three days after" that he extended this passage in the pages of his Journal, and the style has thus the benefit of some reflection. It is generally supposed that, as a writer, Pepys must rank at the bottom of the scale of merit. But a style which is indefatigably lively, telling, and picturesque through six large volumes of everyday experience, which deals with the whole matter of a life, and yet is rarely wearisome, which condescends to the most fastidious particulars, and yet sweeps all away in the forthright current of the narrative, — such a style may be ungrammatical, it may be inelegant, it may be one tissue of mistakes, but it can never be devoid of merit. The first and the true function of the writer has been thoroughly performed throughout; and though the manner of his utterance may be childishly awkward, the matter has been transformed and assimilated by his unfeigned interest and delight. The gusto of the man speaks out fierily after all these years. For the difference between Pepys and Shelley, to return to that half-whimsical approximation, is one of quality but not one of degree; in his sphere, Pepys felt as keenly, and his is the true prose of poetry — prose because the spirit of the man was narrow and earthly, but poetry because he was delightedly alive. Hence, in such a passage as this about the Epsom shepherd, the result upon the reader's mind is entire conviction and unmingled pleasure. So, you feel, the thing fell out, not otherwise; and you would no more change it than you would change a sublimity of Shakespeare's, a homely touch of Bunyan's, or a favoured reminiscence of your own.

There never was a man nearer being an artist, who yet was not one. The tang was in the family; while he was writing the journal for our enjoyment in his comely house[2] in Navy Gardens, no fewer than two of his cousins were tramping the fens, kit under arm, to make music to the country girls. But he himself, though he could play so many instruments, and pass judgment in so many fields of art, remained an amateur. It is not given to any one so keenly to enjoy, without some greater power to understand. That he did not like Shakespeare as an artist for the stage may be a fault, but it is not without either parallel or excuse. He certainly admired him as a poet; he was the first beyond mere actors on the rolls of that innumerable army who have got “To be or not to be” by heart. Nor was he content with that; it haunted his mind; he quoted it to himself in the pages of the Diary, and, rushing in where angels fear to tread, he set it to music. Nothing, indeed, is more notable than the heroic quality of the verses that our little sensualist in a periwig chose out to marry with his own mortal strains. Some gust from brave Elizabethan times must have warmed his spirit, as he sat tuning his sublime theorbo. “To be or not to be. Whether ‘tis nobler” — ”Beauty retire, thou dost my pity move” — ”It is decreed, nor shall thy fate, O Rome”; — open and dignified in the sound, various and majestic in the sentiment, it was no inapt, as it was certainly no timid, spirit that selected such a range of themes. Of “Gaze not on Swans,” I know no more than these four words; yet that also seems to promise well. It was, however, on a probable suspicion, the work of his master, Mr. Berkenshaw — as the drawings that figure at the breaking up of a young ladies’ seminary are the work of the professor attached to the establishment. Mr. Berkenshaw was not altogether happy in his pupil. The amateur cannot usually rise into the artist, some leaven of the world still clogging him; and we find Pepys behaving like a pickthank to the man who taught him composition. In relation to the stage, which he so warmly loved and understood, he was not only more hearty but more generous to others. Thus he encounters Colonel Reames, “a 3 man,” says he, “who understands and loves a play as well as I, and I love him for it.” And again, when he and his wife had seen a most ridiculous insipid piece, “Glad we were,” he writes, “that Betterton had no part in it.” It is by such a zeal and loyalty to those who labour for his delight that the amateur grows worthy of the artist. And it should be kept in mind that, not only in art, but in morals, Pepys rejoiced to recognise his betters. There was not one speck of envy in the whole human-hearted egotist.

RESPECTABILITY

When writers inveigh against respectability, in the present degraded meaning of the word, they are usually suspected of a taste for clay pipes and beer-cellars; and their performances are thought to hail from the *Owl's Nest* of the comedy. They have something more, however, in their eye than the dulness of a round million dinner-parties that sit down yearly in Old England. For to do anything because others do it, and not because the thing is good, or kind, or honest in its own right, is to resign all moral control and captaincy upon yourself, and go post-haste to the devil with the greater number. We smile over the ascendancy of priests; but I had rather follow a priest than what they call the leaders of society. No life can better than that of Pepys illustrate the dangers of this respectable theory of living. For what can be more untoward than the occurrence, at a critical period, and while the habits are still pliable, of such a sweeping transformation as the return of Charles the Second? Round went the whole fleet of England on the other tack; and while a few tall pintas, Milton or Pen, still sailed a lonely course by the stars and their own private compass, the cock-boat, Pepys, must go about with the majority among "the stupid starers and the loud huzzas."

The respectable are not led so much by any desire of 4 applause as by a positive need for countenance. The weaker and the tamer the man, the more will he require this support; and any positive quality relieves him, by just so much, of this dependence. In a dozen ways, Pepys was quite strong enough to please himself without regard for others; but his positive qualities were not co-extensive with the field of conduct; and in many parts of life he followed, with gleeful precision, in the footprints of the contemporary Mrs. Grundy. In morals, particularly, he lived by the countenance of others; felt a slight from another more keenly than a meanness in himself; and then first repented when he was found out. You could talk of religion or morality to such a man; and by the artist side of him, by his lively sympathy and apprehension, he could rise, as it were dramatically, to the significance of what you said. All that matter in religion which has been nicknamed other-worldliness was strictly in his gamut; but a rule of life that should make a man rudely virtuous, following right in good report and ill report, was foolishness and a stumbling-block to Pepys. He was much thrown across the Friends; and nothing can be more instructive than his attitude towards these most interesting people of that age. I have mentioned how he conversed with one as he rode; when he saw some brought from a meeting under arrest, "I would to God," said he, "they would either conform, or be more wise and not be catched"; and to a Quaker in his own office he extended a timid though effectual protection. Meanwhile there was growing up next door to him that beautiful nature, William Pen. It is odd that Pepys condemned him for a fop; odd, though natural enough when you see Pen's portrait, that Pepys was jealous of him with his wife. But the cream of the story is when Pen publishes his "Sandy Foundation Shaken," and Pepys has it read aloud by his wife. "I find it," he says, "so well writ as, I think, it is too good for him ever to have writ it; and it is a serious sort of book, and *not fit for everybody to read*." Nothing is more galling to the merely respectable[5] than to be brought in contact with religious ardour. Pepys had his own foundation, sandy enough, but dear to him from practical considerations, and he would read the book with true uneasiness of spirit; for conceive the blow if, by some plaguy accident, this Pen were to convert him! It was a different kind of doctrine that he judged profitable for himself and others. "A good sermon of Mr. Gifford's at our church, upon 'Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven.' A very excellent and persuasive, good and moral sermon. He showed, like a wise man, that righteousness is a surer moral way of being rich than sin and villainy." It is thus that respectable people desire to have their Greathearts address them, telling, in mild accents, how you may make the best of both worlds, and be a moral hero without courage, kindness, or troublesome reflection; and thus the Gospel, cleared of Eastern metaphor, becomes a manual of worldly prudence, and a handybook for Pepys and the successful merchant.

The respectability of Pepys was deeply grained. He has no idea of truth except for the Diary. He has no care that a thing shall be, if it but appear; gives out that he has inherited a good estate, when he has seemingly got nothing but a lawsuit; and is pleased to be thought liberal when he knows he has been mean. He is conscientiously ostentatious. I say conscientiously, with reason. He could never have been taken for a fop, like Pen, but arrayed himself in a manner nicely suitable to his position. For long he hesitated to assume the famous periwig; for a public man should travel gravely with the fashions, not foppishly before, nor dowdily behind, the central movement of his age. For long he durst not keep a carriage; that, in his circumstances, would have been improper; but a time comes, with the growth of his fortune, when the impropriety has shifted to the other side, and he is "ashamed to be seen in a hackney." Pepys talked about being "a Quaker or some very melancholy thing"; for my part, I can imagine nothing so melancholy, because nothing half[6] so silly, as to be concerned about such problems. But such respectability and the duties of society haunt and burden their poor devotees; and what seems at first the very primrose path of life, proves difficult and thorny like the rest. And the time comes to Pepys, as to all the merely respectable, when he must not only order his pleasures, but even clip his virtuous movements, to the public pattern of the age. There was some juggling among officials to avoid direct taxation; and Pepys, with a noble impulse, growing ashamed of this dishonesty, designed to charge himself with £; but finding none to set him an example, "nobody of our ablest merchants" with this moderate liking for clean hands, he judged it "not decent"; he feared it would "be thought vain glory"; and, rather than appear singular, cheerfully remained a thief. One able merchant's countenance, and Pepys had dared to do an honest act! Had he found one brave spirit, properly recognised by society, he might have gone far as a disciple. Mrs. Turner, it is true, can fill him full of sordid scandal, and make him believe, against the testimony of his senses, that Pen's venison pasty stank like the devil; but, on the other hand, Sir William Coventry can raise him by a word into another being. Pepys, when he is with Coventry, talks in the vein of an old Roman. What does he care for office or emolument? "Thank God, I have enough of my own," says he, "to buy me a good book and a good fiddle, and I have a good wife." And again, we find this pair projecting an old age when an ungrateful country shall have dismissed them from the field of public service; Coventry living retired in a fine house, and Pepys dropping in, "it may be, to read a chapter of Seneca."

Under this influence, the only good one in his life, Pepys continued zealous and, for the period, pure in his employment. He would not be "bribed to be unjust," he says, though he was "not so squeamish as to refuse a present after," suppose the King to have received no wrong. His new arrangement for the victualling of Tangier, he tells us 7 with honest complacency, will save the King a thousand and gain Pepys three hundred pounds a year — a statement which exactly fixes the degree of the age's enlightenment. But for his industry and capacity no praise can be too high. It was an unending struggle for the man to stick to his business in such a garden of Armida as he found this life; and the story of his oaths, so often broken, so courageously renewed, is worthy rather of admiration that the contempt it has received.

Elsewhere, and beyond the sphere of Coventry's influence, we find him losing scruples and daily complying further with the age. When he began the Journal, he was a trifle prim and puritanic; merry enough, to be sure, over his private cups, and still remembering Magdalene ale and his acquaintance with Mrs. Ainsworth of Cambridge. But youth is a hot season with all; when a man smells April and May he is apt at times to stumble; and in spite of a disordered practice, Pepys's theory, the better things that he approved and followed after, we may even say were strict. Where there was "tag, rag, and bobtail, dancing, singing, and drinking," he felt "ashamed, and went away"; and when he slept in church he prayed

God forgive him. In but a little while we find him with some ladies keeping each other awake "from spite," as though not to sleep in church were an obvious hardship; and yet later he calmly passes the time of service, looking about him, with a perspective-glass, on all the pretty women. His favourite ejaculation, "Lord!" occurs but once that I have observed in , never in ', twice in ', and at least five times in '; after which the "Lords" may be said to pullulate like herrings, with here and there a solitary "damned," as it were a whale among the shoal. He and his wife, once filled with dudgeon by some innocent freedoms at a marriage, are soon content to go pleasuring with my Lord Brouncker's mistress, who was not even, by his own account, the most discreet of mistresses. Tag, rag, and bobtail, dancing, singing, and drinking, become his natural element; actors 8 and actresses and drunken, roaring courtiers are to be found in his society; until the man grew so involved with Saturnalian manners and companions that he was shot almost unconsciously into the grand domestic crash of .

That was the legitimate issue and punishment of years of staggering walk and conversation. The man who has smoked his pipe for half a century in a powder-magazine finds himself at last the author and the victim of a hideous disaster. So with our pleasant-minded Pepys and his peccadilloes. All of a sudden, as he still trips dexterously enough among the dangers of a double-faced career, thinking no great evil, humming to himself the trillo, Fate takes the further conduct of that matter from his hands, and brings him face to face with the consequences of his acts. For a man still, after so many years, the lover, although not the constant lover, of his wife, — for a man, besides, who was so greatly careful of appearances, — the revelation of his infidelities was a crushing blow. The tears that he shed, the indignities that he endured, are not to be measured. A vulgar woman, and now justly incensed, Mrs. Pepys spared him no detail of suffering. She was violent, threatening him with the tongs; she was careless of his honour, driving him to insult the mistress whom she had driven him to betray and to discard; worst of all, she was hopelessly inconsequent in word and thought and deed, now lulling him with reconciliations, and anon flaming forth again with the original anger. Pepys had not used his wife well; he had wearied her with jealousies, even while himself unfaithful; he had grudged her clothes and pleasures, while lavishing both upon himself; he had abused her in words; he had bent his fist at her in anger; he had once blacked her eye; and it is one of the oddest particulars in that odd Diary of his, that, while the injury is referred to once in passing, there is no hint as to the occasion or the manner of the blow. But now, when he is in the wrong, nothing can exceed the long-suffering affection of this impatient 9 husband. While he was still sinning and still undiscovered, he seems not to have known a touch of penitence stronger than what might lead him to take his wife to the theatre, or for an airing, or to give her a new dress by way of compensation. Once found out, however, and he seems to himself to have lost all claim to decent usage. It is perhaps the strongest instance of his externality. His wife may do what she pleases, and though he may groan, it will never occur to him to blame her; he has no weapon left but tears and the most abject submission. We should perhaps have respected him more had he not given way so utterly — above all, had he refused to write, under his wife's dictation, an insulting letter to his unhappy fellow-culprit, Miss Willet; but somehow I believe we like him better as he was.

The death of his wife, following so shortly after, must have stamped the impression of this episode upon his mind. For the remaining years of his long life we have no Diary to help us, and we have seen already how little stress is to be laid upon the tenor of his correspondence; but what with the recollection of the catastrophe of his married life, what with the natural influence of his advancing years and reputation, it seems not unlikely that the period of gallantry was at an end for Pepys; and it is beyond a doubt that he sat down at last to an honoured and agreeable old age among his books and music, the correspondent of Sir Isaac Newton, and, in one instance at least, the poetical counsellor of Dryden. Through all this period, that Diary which contained the secret memoirs of his life, with all its inconsistencies and escapades, had been religiously preserved; nor, when he came to die, does he appear to have provided for its destruction. So we may conceive him faithful to the end to all his dear and early memories; still mindful of Mrs. Hely in the woods at Epsom; still lighting at Islington for a cup of kindness to the dead; still, if he heard again that air that once so much disturbed him, thrilling at the recollection of the love that bound him to his wife.

H. R. Wheatley, "Samuel Pepys and the World he Lived in." .

IX

JOHN KNOX AND HIS RELATIONS TO WOMEN

THE CONTROVERSY ABOUT FEMALE RULE

When first the idea became widely spread among men that the Word of God, instead of being truly the foundation of all existing institutions, was rather a stone which the builders had rejected, it was but natural that the consequent havoc among received opinions should be accompanied by the generation of many new and lively hopes for the future. Somewhat as in the early days of the French Revolution, men must have looked for an immediate and universal improvement in their condition. Christianity, up to that time, had been somewhat of a failure politically. The reason was now obvious, the capital flaw was detected, the sickness of the body politic traced at last to its efficient cause. It was only necessary to put the Bible thoroughly into practice, to set themselves strenuously to realise in life the Holy Commonwealth, and all abuses and iniquities would surely pass away. Thus, in a pageant played at Geneva in the year , the world was represented as a sick man at the end of his wits for help, to whom his doctor recommends Lutheran specifics.

The Reformers themselves had set their affections in a different world, and professed to look for the finished result of their endeavours on the other side of death. They took no interest in politics as such; they even condemned political action as Antichristian: notably, Luther in the 1 case of the Peasants' War. And yet, as the purely religious question was inseparably complicated with political difficulties, and they had to make opposition, from day to day, against principalities and powers, they were led, one after another, and again and again, to leave the sphere which was more strictly their own, and meddle, for good and evil, with the affairs of State. Not much was to be expected from interference in such a spirit. Whenever a minister found himself galled or hindered, he would be inclined to suppose some contravention of the Bible. Whenever Christian liberty was restrained (and Christian liberty for each individual would be about co-extensive with what he wished to do), it was obvious that the State was Antichristian. The great thing, and the one thing, was to push the Gospel and the Reformer's own interpretation of it. Whatever helped was good; whatever hindered was evil; and if this simple classification proved inapplicable over the whole field, it was no business of his to stop and reconcile incongruities. He had more pressing concerns on hand; he had to save souls; he had to be about his Father's business. This short-sighted view resulted in a doctrine that was actually Jesuitical in application. They had no serious ideas upon politics, and they were ready, nay, they seemed almost bound, to adopt and support whichever ensured for the moment the greatest benefit to the souls of their fellow-men. They were dishonest in all sincerity. Thus Labitte, in the introduction to a book in which he exposes the hypocritical democracy of the Catholics under the League, steps aside for a moment to stigmatise the hypocritical democracy of the Protestants. And nowhere was this expediency in political questions more apparent than about the question of female sovereignty. So much was this the case that one James Thomasius, of Leipsic, wrote a little paper about the religious partialities of those 2 who took part in the controversy, in which some of these learned disputants cut a very sorry figure.

Now Knox has been from the first a man well hated; and it is somewhat characteristic of his luck that he figures here in the very forefront of the list of partial scribes who trimmed their doctrine with the wind in all good conscience, and were political weathercocks out of conviction. Not only has Thomasius mentioned him, but Bayle has taken the hint from Thomasius, and dedicated a long note to the matter at the end of his article on the Scottish Reformer. This is a little less than fair. If any one among the evangelists of that period showed more serious political sense than another, it was assuredly Knox; and even in this very matter of female rule, although I do not suppose anyone nowadays will feel inclined to endorse his sentiments, I confess I can make great allowance for his conduct. The controversy, besides, has an interest of its own, in view of later controversies.

John Knox, from to , was resident in Geneva, as minister, jointly with Goodman, of a little church of English refugees. He and his congregation were banished from England by one woman, Mary Tudor, and proscribed in Scotland by another, the Regent Mary of Guise. The coincidence was tempting; here were many abuses centring about one abuse; here was Christ's Gospel persecuted in the two kingdoms by one anomalous power. He had not far to go to find the idea that female government was anomalous. It was an age, indeed, in which women, capable and incapable, played a conspicuous part upon the stage of European history; and yet their rule, whatever may have been the opinion of here and there a wise man or enthusiast, was regarded as an anomaly by the great bulk of their contemporaries. It was defended as an anomaly. It, and all that accompanied and sanctioned it, was set aside as a single exception; and no one thought of reasoning down from queens and extending their privileges to ordinary women. Great ladies, as we know, had the 3 privilege of entering into monasteries and cloisters, otherwise forbidden to their sex. As with one thing, so with another. Thus, Margaret of Navarre wrote books with great acclamation, and no one, seemingly, saw fit to call her conduct in question; but Mademoiselle de Gournay, Montaigne's adopted daughter, was in a controversy with the world as to whether a woman might be an author without incongruity. Thus, too, we have Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné writing to his daughters about the learned women of his century, and cautioning them, in conclusion, that the study of letters was unsuited to ladies of a middling station, and should be reserved for princesses. And once more, if we desire to see the same principle carried to ludicrous extreme, we shall find that Reverend Father in God, the Abbot of Brantôme, claiming, on the authority of some lord of his acquaintance, a privilege, or rather a duty, of free love for great princesses, and carefully excluding other ladies from the same gallant dispensation. One sees the spirit in which these immunities were granted; and how they were but the natural consequence of that awe for courts and kings that made the last writer tell us, with simple wonder, how Catherine de Medici would "laugh her fill just like another" over the humours of pantaloons and zanies. And such servility was, of all things, what would touch most nearly the republican spirit of Knox. It was not difficult for him to set aside this weak scruple of loyalty. The lantern of his analysis did not always shine with a very serviceable light; but he had the virtue, at least, to carry it into many places of fictitious holiness, and was not abashed by the tinsel divinity that hedged kings and queens from his contemporaries. And so he could put the proposition in the form already mentioned: there was Christ's Gospel persecuted in the two kingdoms by one anomalous power; plainly, then, the "regiment of women" was Antichristian. Early in he communicated this 4 discovery to the world, by publishing at Geneva his notorious book — "The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women."

As a whole, it is a dull performance; but the preface, as is usual with Knox, is both interesting and morally fine. Knox was not one of those who are humble in the hour of triumph; he was aggressive even when things were at their worst. He had a grim reliance in himself, or rather in his mission; if he were not sure that he was a great man, he was at least sure that he was one set apart to do great things. And he judged simply that whatever passed in his mind, whatever moved him to flee from persecution instead of constantly facing it out, or, as here, to publish and withhold his name from the title-page of a critical work, would not fail to be of interest, perhaps of benefit, to the world. There may be something more finely sensitive in the modern humour, that tends more and more to withdraw a man's personality from the lessons he inculcates or the cause that he has espoused; but there is a loss herewith of wholesome responsibility; and when we find in the works of Knox, as in the Epistles of Paul, the man himself standing nakedly forward, courting and anticipating criticism, putting his character, as it were, in pledge for the sincerity of his doctrine, we had best waive the question of delicacy, and make our acknowledgments for a lesson of courage, not unnecessary in these days of anonymous criticism, and much light, otherwise unattainable, on the spirit in which great movements were initiated and carried forward. Knox's personal revelations are always interesting; and, in the case of the "First Blast," as I have said, there is no exception to the rule. He begins by stating the solemn responsibility of all who are watchmen over God's flock; and all are watchmen (he goes on to explain, with that fine breadth of spirit that characterises him even when, as here, he shows himself most narrow), all are watchmen "whose eyes God doth open, and whose conscience[5] he pricketh to admonish the ungodly." And with the full consciousness of this great duty before him, he sets himself to answer the scruples of timorous or worldly-minded people. How can a man repent, he asks, unless the nature of his transgression is made plain to him? "And therefore I say," he continues, "that of necessity it is that this monstriferous empire of women (which among all enormities that this day do abound upon the face of the whole earth, is most detestable and damnable) be openly and plainly declared to the world, to the end that some may repent and be saved." To those who think the doctrine useless, because it cannot be expected to amend those princes whom it would dispossess if once accepted, he makes answer in a strain that shows him at his greatest. After having instanced how the rumour of Christ's censures found its way to Herod in his own court, "even so," he continues, "may the sound of our weak trumpet, by the support of some wind (blow it from the south, or blow it from the north, it is of no matter), come to the ears of the chief offenders. *But whether it do or not, yet dare we not cease to blow as God will give strength. For we are debtors to more than to princes, to wit, to the great multitude of our brethren,* of whom, no doubt, a great number have heretofore offended by error and ignorance."

It is for the multitude, then, he writes; he does not greatly hope that his trumpet will be audible in palaces, or that crowned women will submissively discrown themselves at his appeal; what he does hope, in plain English, is to encourage and justify rebellion; and we shall see, before we have done, that he can put his purpose into words as roundly as I can put it for him. This he sees to be a matter of much hazard; he is not "altogether so brutish and insensible, but that he has laid his account what the finishing of the work may cost.” He knows that he will find many adversaries, since “to the most part of men, lawful and godly appeareth whatsoever antiquity hath received.” He looks for opposition, “not only of the 6 ignorant multitude, but of the wise, politic, and quiet spirits of the earth.” He will be called foolish, curious, despiteful, and a sower of sedition; and one day, perhaps, for all he is now nameless, he may be attainted of treason. Yet he has “determined to obey God, notwithstanding that the world shall rage thereat.” Finally, he makes some excuse for the anonymous appearance of this first instalment: it is his purpose thrice to blow the trumpet in this matter, if God so permit; twice he intends to do it without name; but at the last blast to take the odium upon himself, that all others may be purged.

Thus he ends the preface, and enters upon his argument with a secondary title: “The First Blast to awake Women degenerate.” We are in the land of assertion without delay. That a woman should bear rule, superiority, dominion or empire over any realm, nation, or city, he tells us, is repugnant to nature, contumely to God, and a subversion of good order. Women are weak, frail, impatient, feeble, and foolish. God has denied to woman wisdom to consider, or providence to foresee, what is profitable to a commonwealth. Women have been very lightly esteemed; they have been denied the tutory of their own sons, and subjected to the unquestionable sway of their husbands; and surely it is irrational to give the greater where the less has been withheld, and suffer a woman to reign supreme over a great kingdom who would be allowed no authority by her own fireside. He appeals to the Bible; but though he makes much of the first transgression and certain strong texts in Genesis and Paul’s Epistles, he does not appeal with entire success. The cases of Deborah and Huldah can be brought into no sort of harmony with his thesis. Indeed, I may say that, logically, he left his bones there; and that it is but the phantom of an argument that he parades thenceforward to the end. Well was it for Knox that he succeeded no better; it is under this very ambiguity about Deborah that we shall find him fain to creep for shelter before he is done with the regiment of women. 7 After having thus exhausted Scripture, and formulated its teaching in the somewhat blasphemous maxim that the man is placed above the woman, even as God above the angels, he goes on triumphantly to adduce the testimonies of Tertullian, Augustine, Ambrose, Basil, Chrysostom, and the Pandects; and having gathered this little cloud of witnesses about him, like pursuivants about a herald, he solemnly proclaims all reigning women to be traitoresses and rebels against God; discharges all men thenceforward from holding any office under such monstrous regiment, and calls upon all the lieges with one consent to *“study to repress the inordinate* *pride and tyranny” of queens*. If this is not treasonable teaching, one would be glad to know what is; and yet, as if he feared he had not made the case plain enough against himself, he goes on to deduce the startling corollary that all oaths of allegiance must be incontinently broken. If it was sin thus to have sworn even in ignorance, it were obstinate sin to continue to respect them after fuller knowledge. Then comes the peroration, in which he cries aloud against the cruelties of that cursed Jezebel of England — that horrible monster Jezebel of England; and after having predicted sudden destruction to her rule and to the rule of all crowned women, and warned all men that if they presume to defend the same when any “noble heart” shall be raised up to vindicate the liberty of his country, they shall not fail to perish themselves in the ruin, he concludes with a last rhetorical flourish: “And therefore let all men be advertised, for the Trumpet hath once blown.”

The capitals are his own. In writing, he probably felt the want of some such reverberation of the pulpit under strong hands as he was wont to emphasise his spoken utterances withal; there would seem to him a want of passion in the orderly lines of type; and I suppose we may take the capitals as a mere substitute for the great voice with which he would have given it forth, had we heard it from his own lips. Indeed, as it is, in this little strain of rhetoric[8] about the trumpet, this current allusion to the fall of Jericho, that alone distinguishes his bitter and hasty production, he was probably right, according to all artistic canon, thus to support and accentuate in conclusion the sustained metaphor of a hostile proclamation. It is curious, by the way, to note how favourite an image the trumpet was with the Reformer. He returns to it again and again; it is the Alpha and Omega of his rhetoric; it is to him what a ship is to the stage sailor; and one would almost fancy he had begun the world as a trumpeter’s apprentice. The partiality is surely characteristic. All his life long he was blowing summonses before various Jerichos, some of which fell duly, but not all. Wherever he appears in history his speech is loud, angry, and hostile; there is no peace in his life, and little tenderness; he is always sounding hopefully to the front for some rough enterprise. And as his voice had something of the trumpet’s hardness, it had something also of the trumpet’s warlike inspiration. So Randolph, possibly fresh from the sound of the Reformer’s preaching, writes of him to Cecil: “Where your honour exhorteth us to stoutness, I assure you the voice of one man is able, in an hour, to put more life in us than six hundred trumpets continually blustering in our ears.”

Thus was the proclamation made. Nor was it long in wakening all the echoes of Europe. What success might have attended it, had the question decided been a purely abstract question, it is difficult to say.

As it was, it was to stand or fall not by logic, but by political needs and sympathies. Thus, in France, his doctrine was to have some future, because Protestants suffered there under the feeble and treacherous regency of Catherine de Medici; and thus it was to have no future anywhere else, because the Protestant interest was bound up with the prosperity of Queen Elizabeth. This stumbling-block lay at the very threshold of the matter; and Knox, in the text of the "First Blast," had set everybody the wrong example and 9 gone to the ground himself. He finds occasion to regret "the blood of innocent Lady Jane Dudley." But Lady Jane Dudley, or Lady Jane Grey, as we call her, was a would-be traitoress and rebel against God, to use his own expressions. If, therefore, political and religious sympathy led Knox himself into so grave a partiality, what was he to expect from his disciples? If the trumpet gave so ambiguous a sound, who could heartily prepare himself for the battle? The question whether Lady Jane Dudley was an innocent martyr, or a traitoress against God, whose inordinate pride and tyranny had been effectually repressed, was thus left altogether in the wind; and it was not, perhaps, wonderful if many of Knox's readers concluded that all right and wrong in the matter turned upon the degree of the sovereign's orthodoxy and possible helpfulness to the Reformation. He should have been the more careful of such an ambiguity of meaning, as he must have known well the lukewarm indifference and dishonesty of his fellow-reformers in political matters. He had already, in or , talked the matter over with his great master, Calvin, in "a private conversation"; and the interview must have been truly distasteful to both parties. Calvin, indeed, went a far way with him in theory, and owned that the "government of women was a deviation from the original and proper order of nature, to be ranked, no less than slavery, among the punishments consequent upon the fall of man." But, in practice, their two roads separated. For the Man of Geneva saw difficulties in the way of the Scripture proof in the cases of Deborah and Huldah, and in the prophecy of Isaiah that queens should be the nursing mothers of the Church. And as the Bible was not decisive, he thought the subject should be let alone, because, "by custom and public consent and long practice, it has been established that realms and principalities may descend to females by hereditary right, and it would not be lawful to unsettle governments which are ordained by 0 the peculiar providence of God." I imagine Knox's ears must have burned during this interview. Think of him listening dutifully to all this — how it would not do to meddle with anointed kings — how there was a peculiar providence in these great affairs; and then think of his own peroration, and the "noble heart" whom he looks for "to vindicate the liberty of his country"; or his answer to Queen Mary, when she asked him who he was, to interfere in the affairs of Scotland: “Madame, a subject born within the same!” Indeed, the two doctors who differed at this private conversation represented, at the moment, two principles of enormous import in the subsequent history of Europe. In Calvin we have represented that passive obedience, that toleration of injustice and absurdity, that holding back of the hand from political affairs as from something unclean, which lost France, if we are to believe M. Michelet, for the Reformation; a spirit necessarily fatal in the long-run to the existence of any sect that may profess it; a suicidal doctrine that survives among us to this day in narrow views of personal duty, and the low political morality of many virtuous men. In Knox, on the other hand, we see foreshadowed the whole Puritan Revolution and the scaffold of Charles I.

There is little doubt in my mind that this interview was what caused Knox to print his book without a name. It was a dangerous thing to contradict the Man of Geneva, and doubly so, surely, when one had had the advantage of correction from him in a private conversation; and Knox had his little flock of English refugees to consider. If they had fallen into bad odour at Geneva, where else was there left to flee to? It was printed, as I said, in ; and, by a singular *mal-à-propos*, in that same year Mary died, and Elizabeth succeeded to the throne of England. And just as the accession of Catholic Queen Mary had condemned 1 female rule in the eyes of Knox, the accession of Protestant Queen Elizabeth justified it in the eyes of his colleagues. Female rule ceases to be an anomaly, not because Elizabeth can “reply to eight ambassadors in one day in their different languages,” but because she represents for the moment the political future of the Reformation. The exiles troop back to England with songs of praise in their mouths. The bright occidental star, of which we have all read in the Preface to the Bible, has risen over the darkness of Europe. There is a thrill of hope through the persecuted Churches of the Continent. Calvin writes to Cecil, washing his hands of Knox and his political heresies. The sale of the “First Blast” is prohibited in Geneva; and along with it the bold book of Knox’s colleague, Goodman — a book dear to Milton — where female rule was briefly characterised as a “monster in nature and disorder among men.” Any who may ever have doubted, or been for a moment led away by Knox or Goodman, or their own wicked imaginations, are now more than convinced. They have seen the occidental star. Aylmer, with his eye set greedily on a possible bishopric, and “the better to obtain the favour of the new Queen,” sharpens his pen to confound Knox by logic. What need? He has been confounded by facts. “Thus what had been to the refugees of Geneva as the very word of God, no sooner were they back in England than, behold! it was the word of the devil.”

Now, what of the real sentiments of these loyal subjects of Elizabeth? They professed a holy horror for Knox's position: let us see if their own would please a modern audience any better, or was, in substance, greatly different.

John Aylmer, afterwards Bishop of London, published [2] an answer to Knox, under the title of "An Harbour for Faithful and true Subjects against the late Blown Blast concerning the government of Women." And certainly he was a thought more acute, a thought less precipitate and simple, than his adversary. He is not to be led away by such captious terms as *natural* and *unnatural*. It is obvious to him that a woman's disability to rule is not natural in the same sense in which it is natural for a stone to fall or fire to burn. He is doubtful, on the whole, whether this disability be natural at all; nay, when he is laying it down that a woman should not be a priest, he shows some elementary conception of what many of us now hold to be the truth of the matter. "The bringing-up of women," he says, "is commonly such" that they cannot have the necessary qualifications, "for they are not brought up in learning in schools, nor trained in disputation." And even so, he can ask, "Are there not in England women, think you, that for learning and wisdom could tell their household and neighbours as good a tale as any Sir John there?" For all that, his advocacy is weak. If women's rule is not unnatural in a sense preclusive of its very existence, it is neither so convenient nor so profitable as the government of men. He holds England to be specially suitable for the government of women, because there the governor is more limited and restrained by the other members of the constitution than in other places; and this argument has kept his book from being altogether forgotten. It is only in hereditary monarchies that he will offer any defence of the anomaly. "If rulers were to be chosen by lot or suffrage, he would not that any women should stand in the election, but men only." The law of succession of crowns was a law to him, in the same sense as the law of evolution is a law to Mr. Herbert Spencer; and the one and the other counsels his readers, in a spirit suggestively alike, not to kick against the pricks or seek to be more wise than He [3] who made them. If God has put a female child into the direct line of inheritance, it is God's affair. His strength will be perfected in her weakness. He makes the Creator address the objectors in this not very flattering vein: "I, that could make Daniel, a sucking babe, to judge better than the wisest lawyers; a brute beast to reprehend the folly of a prophet; and poor fishers to confound the great clerks of the world — cannot I make a woman to be a good ruler over you?" This is the last word of his reasoning. Although he was not altogether without Puritanic leaven, shown particularly in what he says of the incomes of Bishops, yet it was rather loyalty to the old order of things than any generous belief in the capacity of women, that raised up for them this clerical champion. His courtly spirit contrasts singularly with the rude, bracing republicanism of Knox. “Thy knee shall bow,” he says, “thy cap shall off, thy tongue shall speak reverently of thy sovereign.” For himself, his tongue is even more than reverent. Nothing can stay the issue of his eloquent adulation. Again and again, “the remembrance of Elizabeth’s virtues” carries him away; and he has to hark back again to find the scent of his argument. He is repressing his vehement adoration throughout, until when the end comes, and he feels his business at an end, he can indulge himself to his heart’s content in indiscriminate laudation of his royal mistress. It is humorous to think that this illustrious lady, whom he here praises, among many other excellences, for the simplicity of her attire and the “marvellous meekness of her stomach,” threatened him, years after, in no very meek terms, for a sermon against female vanity in dress, which she held as a reflection on herself.

Whatever was wanting here in respect for women generally, there was no want of respect for the Queen; and one cannot very greatly wonder if these devoted servants looked askance, not upon Knox only, but on his little flock,[4] as they came back to England tainted with disloyal doctrine. For them, as for him, the occidental star rose somewhat red and angry. As for poor Knox, his position was the saddest of all. For the juncture seemed to him of the highest importance; it was the nick of time, the flood-water of opportunity. Not only was there an opening for him in Scotland, a smouldering brand of civil liberty and religious enthusiasm which it should be for him to kindle into flame with his powerful breath; but he had his eye seemingly on an object of even higher worth. For now, when religious sympathy ran so high that it could be set against national aversion, he wished to begin the fusion together of England and Scotland, and to begin it at the sore place. If once the open wound were closed at the Border, the work would be half done. Ministers placed at Berwick and such places might seek their converts equally on either side of the march; old enemies would sit together to hear the gospel of peace, and forget the inherited jealousies of many generations in the enthusiasm of a common faith; or — let us say better — a common heresy. For people are not most conscious of brotherhood when they continue languidly together in one creed, but when, with some doubt, with some danger perhaps, and certainly not without some reluctance, they violently break with the tradition of the past, and go forth from the sanctuary of their fathers to worship under the bare heaven. A new creed, like a new country, is an unhomely place of sojourn; but it makes men lean on one another and join hands. It was on this that Knox relied to begin the union of the English and the Scottish. And he had, perhaps, better means of judging than any even of his contemporaries. He knew the temper of both nations; and already during his two years' chaplaincy at Berwick, he had seen his scheme put to the proof. But whether practicable or not, the proposal does him much honour. That he should thus have sought to make a love-match of it between the two peoples, and tried to win their inclination towards a union instead of simply transferring 5 them, like so many sheep, by a marriage, or testament, or private treaty, is thoroughly characteristic of what is best in the man. Nor was this all. He had, besides, to assure himself of English support, secret or avowed, for the Reformation party in Scotland; a delicate affair, trenching upon treason. And so he had plenty to say to Cecil, plenty that he did not care to "commit to paper neither yet to the knowledge of many." But his miserable publication had shut the doors of England in his face. Summoned to Edinburgh by the confederate lords, he waited at Dieppe, anxiously praying for leave to journey through England. The most dispiriting tidings reached him. His messengers, coming from so obnoxious a quarter, narrowly escape imprisonment. His old congregation are coldly received, and even begin to look back again to their place of exile with regret. "My First Blast," he writes ruefully, "has blown from me all my friends of England." And then he adds, with a snarl, "The Second Blast, I fear, shall sound somewhat more sharp, except men be more moderate than I hear they are." But the threat is empty; there will never be a second blast — he has had enough of that trumpet. Nay, he begins to feel uneasily that, unless he is to be rendered useless for the rest of his life, unless he is to lose his right arm and go about his great work maimed and impotent, he must find some way of making his peace with England and the indignant Queen. The letter just quoted was written on the 6th of April, ; and on the th, after he had cooled his heels for four days more about the streets of Dieppe, he gave in altogether, and writes a letter of capitulation to Cecil. In this letter, which he kept back until the nd, still hoping that things would come right of themselves, he censures the great secretary for having "followed the world in the way of perdition," characterises him as "worthy of hell," and threatens him, 6 if he be not found simple, sincere, and fervent in the cause of Christ's gospel, that he shall "taste of the same cup that politic heads have drunken in before him." This is all, I take it, out of respect for the Reformer's own position; if he is going to be humiliated, let others be humiliated first; like a child who will not take his medicine until he has made his nurse and his mother drink of it before him. "But I have, say you, written a treasonable book against the regiment and empire of women.... The writing of that book I will not deny; but prove it treasonable I think it shall be hard.... It is hinted that my book shall be written against. If so be, sir, I greatly doubt they shall rather hurt nor (than) mend the matter." And here come the terms of capitulation; for he does not surrender unconditionally, even in this sore strait: "And yet if any," he goes on, "think me enemy to the person, or yet to the regiment, of her whom God hath now promoted, they are utterly deceived in me, *for the miraculous work of God, comforting His afflicted by means of an infirm vessel, I do acknowledge, and the power of his most potent hand I will obey. More plainly to speak, if Queen Elizabeth shall confess, that the extraordinary dispensation of God's great mercy maketh that lawful unto her which both nature and God's law do deny to all women*, then shall none in England be more willing to maintain her lawful authority than I shall be. But if (God's wondrous work set aside) she ground (as God forbid) the justness of her title upon consuetude, laws, or ordinances of men, then" — Then Knox will denounce her? Not so; he is more politic nowadays — then, he "greatly fears" that her ingratitude to God will not go long without punishment.

His letter to Elizabeth, written some few months later, was a mere amplification of the sentences quoted above. She must base her title entirely upon the extraordinary providence of God; but if she does this, "if thus, in God's presence, she humbles herself, so will he with tongue and pen justify her authority, as the Holy Ghost hath justified
7 the same in Deborah, that blessed mother in Israel." And so, you see, his consistency is preserved; he is merely applying the doctrine of the "First Blast." The argument goes thus: The regiment of women is, as before noted in our work, repugnant to nature, contumely to God, and a subversion of good order. It has nevertheless pleased God to raise up, as exceptions to this law, first Deborah, and afterward Elizabeth Tudor — whose regiment we shall proceed to celebrate.

There is no evidence as to how the Reformer's explanations were received, and indeed it is most probable that the letter was never shown to Elizabeth at all. For it was sent under cover of another to Cecil, and as it was not of a very courtly conception throughout, and was, of all things, what would most excite the Queen's uneasy jealousy about her title, it is like enough that the secretary exercised his discretion (he had Knox's leave in this case, and did not always wait for that, it is reputed) to put the letter harmlessly away beside other valueless or unpresentable State Papers. I wonder very much if he did the same with another, written two years later, after Mary had come into Scotland, in which Knox almost seeks to make Elizabeth an accomplice with him in the matter of the "First Blast." The Queen of Scotland is going to have that work refuted, he tells her; and "though it were but foolishness in him to prescribe unto her Majesty what is to be done," he would yet remind her that Mary is neither so much alarmed about her own security, nor so generously interested in Elizabeth's, "that she would take such pains, *unless her crafty counsel in so doing shot at a further mark*." There is something really ingenious in this letter; it showed Knox in the double capacity of the author of the "First Blast" and the faithful friend of Elizabeth; and he combines them there so naturally, that one would scarcely imagine the two to be incongruous.

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Twenty days later he was defending his intemperate publication to another queen — his own queen, Mary Stuart. This was on the first of those three interviews which he has preserved for us with so much dramatic vigour in the picturesque pages of his History. After he had avowed the authorship in his usual haughty style, Mary asked: "You think, then, that I have no just authority?" The question was evaded. "Please your Majesty," he answered, "that learned men in all ages have had their judgments free, and most commonly disagreeing from the common judgment of the world; such also have they published by pen and tongue; and yet notwithstanding they themselves have lived in the common society with others, and have borne patiently with the errors and imperfections which they could not amend." Thus did "Plato the philosopher": thus will do John Knox. "I have communicated my judgment to the world: if the realm finds no inconvenience from the regiment of a woman, that which they approve shall I not further disallow than within my own breast; but shall be as well content to live under your Grace as Paul was to live under Nero. And my hope is, that so long as ye defile not your hands with the blood of the saints of God, neither I nor my book shall hurt either you or your authority." All this is admirable in wisdom and moderation, and, except that he might have hit upon a comparison less offensive than that with Paul and Nero, hardly to be bettered. Having said thus much, he feels he needs say no more; and so, when he is further pressed, he closes that part of the discussion with an astonishing sally. If he has been content to let this matter sleep, he would recommend her Grace to follow his example with thankfulness of heart; it is grimly to be understood which of them has most to fear if the question should be reawakened. So the talk wandered to other subjects. Only, when the Queen was summoned at last to dinner ("for it was afternoon") Knox made his salutation in this form of words: "I pray God, Madam, that you may be as much blessed 9 within the Commonwealth of Scotland, if it be the pleasure of God, as ever Deborah was in the Commonwealth of Israel." Deborah again.

But he was not yet done with the echoes of his own "First Blast." In , when he was already near his end, the old controversy was taken up in one of a series of anonymous libels against the Reformer, affixed, Sunday after Sunday, to the church door. The dilemma was fairly enough stated. Either his doctrine is false, in which case he is a “false doctor” and seditious; or, if it be true, why does he “avow and approve the contrare, I mean that regiment in the Queen of England’s person; which he avoweth and approveth, not only praying for the maintenance of her estate, but also procuring her aid and support against his own native country?” Knox answered the libel, as his wont was, next Sunday, from the pulpit. He justified the “First Blast” with all the old arrogance; there is no drawing back there. The regiment of women is repugnant to nature, contumely to God, and a subversion of good order, as before. When he prays for the maintenance of Elizabeth’s estate, he is only following the example of those prophets of God who warned and comforted the wicked kings of Israel; or of Jeremiah, who bade the Jews pray for the prosperity of Nebuchadnezzar. As for the Queen’s aid, there is no harm in that: *quia* (these are his own words) *quia omnia munda mundis*: because to the pure all things are pure. One thing, in conclusion, he “may not pretermit”; to give the lie in the throat to his accuser, where he charges him with seeking support against his native country. “What I have been to my country,” said the old Reformer, “What I have been to my country, albeit this unthankful age will not know, yet the ages to come will be compelled to bear witness to the truth. And thus I cease, requiring of all men that have anything to oppone against me, that he may (they may) do it so plainly, as that I may make myself and all my 0 doings manifest to the world. For to me it seemeth a thing unreasonable, that, in this my decrepit age, I shall be compelled to fight against shadows, and howlets that dare not abide the light.”

Now, in this, which may be called his “Last Blast,” there is as sharp speaking as any in the “First Blast” itself. He is of the same opinion to the end, you see, although he has been obliged to cloak and garble that opinion for political ends. He has been tacking indeed, and he has indeed been seeking the favour of a queen; but what man ever sought a queen’s favour with a more virtuous purpose, or with as little courtly policy? The question of consistency is delicate, and must be made plain. Knox never changed his opinion about female rule, but lived to regret that he had published that opinion. Doubtless he had many thoughts so far out of the range of public sympathy, that he could only keep them to himself, and, in his own words, bear patiently with the errors and imperfections that he could not amend. For example, I make no doubt myself that, in his own heart, he did hold the shocking dogma attributed to him by more than one calumniator; and that, had the time been ripe, had there been aught to gain by it, instead of all to lose, he would have been the first to assert that Scotland was elective instead of hereditary — ”elective as in the days of paganism," as one Thevet says in holy horror. And yet, because the time was not ripe, I find no hint of such an idea in his collected works. Now, the regiment of women was another matter that he should have kept to himself; right or wrong, his opinion did not fit the moment; right or wrong, as Aylmer puts it, "the 'Blast' was blown out of season." And this it was that he began to perceive after the accession of Elizabeth: not that he had been wrong, and that female rule was a good thing, for he had said from the 1 first that "the felicity of some women in their empires" could not change the law of God and the nature of created things; not this, but that the regiment of women was one of those imperfections of society which must be borne with because yet they cannot be remedied. The thing had seemed so obvious to him, in his sense of unspeakable masculine superiority, and in his fine contempt for what is only sanctioned by antiquity and common consent, he had imagined that, at the first hint, men would arise and shake off the debasing tyranny. He found himself wrong, and he showed that he could be moderate in his own fashion, and understood the spirit of true compromise. He came round to Calvin's position, in fact, but by a different way. And it derogates nothing from the merit of this wise attitude that it was the consequence of a change of interest. We are all taught by interest; and if the interest be not merely selfish, there is no wiser preceptor under heaven, and perhaps no sterner.

Such is the history of John Knox's connection with the controversy about female rule. In itself, this is obviously an incomplete study; not fully to be understood, without a knowledge of his private relations with the other sex, and what he thought of their position in domestic life. This shall be dealt with in another paper.

PRIVATE LIFE

To those who know Knox by hearsay only, I believe the matter of this paper will be somewhat astonishing. For the hard energy of the man in all public matters has possessed the imagination of the world; he remains for posterity in certain traditional phrases, browbeating Queen Mary, or breaking beautiful carved work in abbeys and cathedrals, that had long smoked themselves out and were no more than sorry ruins, while he was still quietly teaching children in a country gentleman's family. It does not 2 consist with the common acceptation of his character to fancy him much moved, except with anger. And yet the language of passion came to his pen as readily, whether it was a passion of denunciation against some of the abuses that vexed his righteous spirit, or of yearning for the society of an absent friend. He was vehement in affection, as in doctrine. I will not deny that there may have been, along with his vehemence, something shifty, and for the moment only; that, like many men, and many Scotsmen, he saw the world and his own heart, not so much under any very steady, equable light, as by extreme flashes of passion, true for the moment, but not true in the long-run. There does seem to me to be something of this traceable in the Reformer's utterances: precipitation and repentance, hardy speech and action somewhat circumspect, a strong tendency to see himself in a heroic light and to place a ready belief in the disposition of the moment. Withal he had considerable confidence in himself, and in the uprightness of his own disciplined emotions, underlying much sincere aspiration after spiritual humility. And it is this confidence that makes his intercourse with women so interesting to a modern. It would be easy, of course, to make fun of the whole affair, to picture him strutting vaingloriously among these inferior creatures, or compare a religious friendship in the sixteenth century with what was called, I think, a literary friendship in the eighteenth. But it is more just and profitable to recognise what there is sterling and human underneath all his theoretical affectations of superiority. Women, he has said in his "First Blast," are "weak, frail, impatient, feeble, and foolish"; and yet it does not appear that he was himself any less dependent than other men upon the sympathy and affection of these weak, frail, impatient, feeble, and foolish creatures; it seems even as if he had been rather more dependent than most.

Of those who are to act influentially on their fellows, we should expect always something large and public in 3 their way of life, something more or less urbane and comprehensive in their sentiment for others. We should not expect to see them spend their sympathy in idyls, however beautiful. We should not seek them among those who, if they have but a wife to their bosom, ask no more of womankind, just as they ask no more of their own sex, if they can find a friend or two for their immediate need. They will be quick to feel all the pleasures of our association — not the great ones alone, but all. They will know not love only, but all those other ways in which man and woman mutually make each other happy — by sympathy, by admiration, by the atmosphere they bear about them — down to the mere impersonal pleasure of passing happy faces in the street. For, through all this gradation, the difference of sex makes itself pleasurably felt. Down to the most lukewarm courtesies of life, there is a special chivalry due and a special pleasure received, when the two sexes are brought ever so lightly into contact. We love our mothers otherwise than we love our fathers; a sister is not as a brother to us; and friendship between man and woman, be it never so unalloyed and innocent, is not the same as friendship between man and man. Such friendship is not even possible for all. To conjoin tenderness for a woman that is not far short of passionate with such disinterestedness and beautiful gratuity of affection as there is between friends of the same sex, requires no ordinary disposition in the man. For either it would presuppose quite womanly delicacy of perception, and, as it were, a curiosity in shades of differing sentiment; or it would mean that he had accepted the large, simple divisions of society: a strong and positive spirit robustly virtuous, who has chosen a better part coarsely, and holds to it steadfastly, with all its consequences of pain to himself and others; as one who should go straight before him on a journey, neither tempted by wayside flowers nor very scrupulous of small lives under foot. It was in virtue of this latter disposition that Knox was capable of those intimacies 4 with women that embellished his life; and we find him preserved for us in old letters as a man of many women friends; a man of some expansion toward the other sex; a man ever ready to comfort weeping women, and to weep along with them.

Of such scraps and fragments of evidence as to his private life and more intimate thoughts as have survived to us from all the perils that environ written paper, an astonishingly large proportion is in the shape of letters to women of his familiarity. He was twice married, but that is not greatly to the purpose; for the Turk, who thinks even more meanly of women than John Knox, is none the less given to marrying. What is really significant is quite apart from marriage. For the man Knox was a true man, and woman, the *ewig-weibliche*, was as necessary to him, in spite of all low theories, as ever she was to Goethe. He came to her in a certain halo of his own, as the minister of truth, just as Goethe came to her in a glory of art; he made himself necessary to troubled hearts and minds exercised in the painful complications that naturally result from all changes in the world’s way of thinking; and those whom he had thus helped became dear to him, and were made the chosen companions of his leisure if they were at hand, or encouraged and comforted by letter if they were afar.

It must not be forgotten that Knox had been a presbyter of the old Church, and that the many women whom we shall see gathering around him, as he goes through life, had probably been accustomed, while still in the communion of Rome, to rely much upon some chosen spiritual director, so that the intimacies of which I propose to offer some account, while testifying to a good heart in the Reformer, testify also to a certain survival of the spirit of the confessional in the Reformed Church, and are not properly to be judged without this idea. There is no friendship so noble, but it is the product of the time; and a world of little finical observances, and little frail proprieties and fashions of the hour, go to make or to mar, to stint or to 5 perfect, the union of spirits the most loving and the most intolerant of such interference. The trick of the country and the age steps in even between the mother and her child, counts out their caresses upon niggardly fingers, and says, in the voice of authority, that this one thing shall be a matter of confidence between them, and this other thing shall not. And thus it is that we must take into reckoning whatever tended to modify the social atmosphere in which Knox and his women friends met, and loved and trusted each other. To the man who had been their priest, and was now their minister, women would be able to speak with a confidence quite impossible in these latter days; the women would be able to speak, and the man to hear. It was a beaten road just then; and I daresay we should be no less scandalised at their plain speech than they, if they could come back to earth, would be offended at our waltzes and worldly fashions. This, then, was the footing on which Knox stood with his many women friends. The reader will see, as he goes on, how much of warmth, of interest, and of that happy mutual dependence which is the very gist of friendship, he contrived to ingraft upon this somewhat dry relationship of penitent and confessor.

It must be understood that we know nothing of his intercourse with women (as indeed we know little at all about his life) until he came to Berwick in , when he was already in the forty-fifth year of his age. At the same time it is just possible that some of a little group at Edinburgh, with whom he corresponded during his last absence, may have been friends of an older standing. Certainly they were, of all his female correspondents, the least personally favoured. He treats them throughout in a comprehensive sort of spirit that must at times have been a little wounding. Thus, he remits one of them to his former letters, “which I trust be common betwixt you and the rest of our sisters, for to me ye are all equal in Christ." Another letter is a gem in this way. "Albeit," it begins, [6] "albeit I have no particular matter to write unto you, beloved sister, yet I could not refrain to write these few lines to you in declaration of my remembrance of you. True it is that I have many whom I bear in equal remembrance before God with you, to whom at present I write nothing, either for that I esteem them stronger than you, and therefore they need the less my rude labours, or else because they have not provoked me by their writing to recompense their remembrance." His "sisters in Edinburgh" had evidently to "provoke" his attention pretty constantly; nearly all his letters are, on the face of them, answers to questions, and the answers are given with a certain crudity that I do not find repeated when he writes to those he really cares for. So when they consult him about women's apparel (a subject on which his opinion may be pretty correctly imagined by the ingenious reader for himself) he takes occasion to anticipate some of the most offensive matter of the "First Blast" in a style of real brutality. It is not merely that he tells them "the garments of women do declare their weakness and inability to execute the office of man," though that in itself is neither very wise nor very opportune in such a correspondence, one would think; but if the reader will take the trouble to wade through the long, tedious sermon for himself, he will see proof enough that Knox neither loved, nor very deeply respected, the women he was then addressing. In very truth, I believe these Edinburgh sisters simply bored him. He had a certain interest in them as his children in the Lord; they were continually "provoking him by their writing"; and, if they handed his letters about, writing to them was as good a form of publication as was then open to him in Scotland. There is one letter, however, in this budget, addressed to the wife of Clerk-Register Mackgil, which is worthy of some further mention. The Clerk-Register had not opened his heart, it would appear, to the preaching of the Gospel, and Mrs. Mackgil has written [7] seeking the Reformer's prayers in his behalf. "Your husband," he answers, "is dear to me for that he is a man indued with some good gifts, but more dear for that he is your husband. Charity moveth me to thirst his illumination, both for his comfort and for the trouble which you sustain by his coldness, which justly may be called infidelity." He wishes her, however, not to hope too much; he can promise that his prayers will be earnest, but not that they will be effectual; it is possible that this is to be her "cross" in life; that "her head, appointed by God for her comfort, should be her enemy." And if this be so — well, there is nothing for it; "with patience she must abide God's merciful deliverance," taking heed only that she does not "obey manifest iniquity for the pleasure of any mortal man." I conceive this epistle would have given a very modified sort of pleasure to the Clerk-Register, had it chanced to fall into his hands. Compare its tenor — the dry resignation not without a hope of merciful deliverance therein recommended — with these words from another letter, written but the year before to two married women of London: “Call first for grace by Jesus, and thereafter communicate with your faithful husbands, and then shall God, I doubt not, conduct your footsteps, and direct your counsels to His glory.” Here the husbands are put in a very high place; we can recognise here the same hand that has written for our instruction how the man is set above the woman, even as God above the angels. But the point of the distinction is plain. For Clerk-Register Mackgil was not a faithful husband; displayed, indeed, towards religion, a “coldness which justly might be called infidelity.” We shall see in more notable instances how much Knox’s conception of the duty of wives varies according to the zeal and orthodoxy of the husband.

As I have said, he may possibly have made the acquaintance of Mrs. Mackgil, Mrs. Guthrie, or some other, or all, of these Edinburgh friends while he was still Douglas of 8 Longniddry’s private tutor. But our certain knowledge begins in . He was then but newly escaped from his captivity in France, after pulling an oar for nineteen months on the benches of the galley *Nostre Dame*; now up the rivers, holding stealthy intercourse with other Scottish prisoners in the castle of Rouen; now out in the North Sea, raising his sick head to catch a glimpse of the far-off steeples of St. Andrews. And now he was sent down by the English Privy Council as a preacher to Berwick-upon-Tweed; somewhat shaken in health by all his hardships, full of pains and agues, and tormented by gravel, that sorrow of great men; altogether, what with his romantic story, his weak health, and his great faculty of eloquence, a very natural object for the sympathy of devout women. At this happy juncture he fell into the company of a Mrs. Elizabeth Bowes, wife of Richard Bowes, of Aske, in Yorkshire, to whom she had borne twelve children. She was a religious hypochondriac, a very weariful woman, full of doubts and scruples, and giving no rest on earth either to herself or to those whom she honoured with her confidence. From the first time she heard Knox preach she formed a high opinion of him, and was solicitous ever after of his society. Nor was Knox unresponsive. “I have always delighted in your company,” he writes, “and when labours would permit, you know I have not spared hours to talk and commune with you.” Often when they had met in depression he reminds her, “God hath sent great comfort unto both.” We can gather from such letters as are yet extant how close and continuous was their intercourse. “I think it best you remain till to-morrow,” he writes once, “and so shall we commune at large at afternoon. This day you know to be the day of my study and prayer unto God; yet if your trouble be intolerable, or if you think my presence may release your pain, do as the Spirit shall move you.... Your messenger found me in bed, after a sore trouble and most dolorous night, and 9 so dolour may complain to dolour when we two meet.... And this is more plain than ever I spoke, to let you know you have a companion in trouble." Once we have the curtain raised for a moment, and can look at the two together for the length of a phrase. "After the writing of this preceding," writes Knox, "your brother and mine, Harrie Wycliffe, did advertise me by writing, that your adversary (the devil) took occasion to trouble you because that *I did start back from you rehearsing your infirmities. I remember myself so to have done, and that is my common consuetude when anything pierceth or toucheth my heart. Call to your mind what I did standing at the cupboard at Alnwick*. In very deed I thought that no creature had been tempted as I was; and when I heard proceed from your mouth the very same words that he troubles me with, I did wonder and from my heart lament your sore trouble, knowing in myself the dolour thereof." Now intercourse of so very close a description, whether it be religious intercourse or not, is apt to displease and disquiet a husband; and we know incidentally from Knox himself that there was some little scandal about his intimacy with Mrs. Bowes. "The slander and fear of men," he writes, "has impeded me to exercise my pen so oft as I would; *yea, very shame hath holden me from your company, when I was most surely persuaded that God had appointed me at that time to comfort and feed your hungry and afflicted soul. God in His infinite mercy*," he goes on, "*remove not only from me all fear that tendeth not to godliness, but from others suspicion to judge of me otherwise than it becometh one member to judge of another*." And the scandal, such as it was, would not be allayed by the dissension in which Mrs. Bowes seems to have lived with her family upon the matter of religion, and the countenance shown by Knox to her resistance. Talking of these conflicts, and her courage against "her own flesh and most inward affections, yea, against some of her 0 most natural friends" he writes it, "to the praise of God, he has wondered at the bold constancy which he has found in her when his own heart was faint."

Now, perhaps in order to stop scandalous mouths, perhaps out of a desire to bind the much-loved evangelist nearer to her in the only manner possible, Mrs. Bowes conceived the scheme of marrying him to her fifth daughter, Marjorie; and the Reformer seems to have fallen in with it readily enough. It seems to have been believed in the family that the whole matter had been originally made up between these two, with no very spontaneous inclination on the part of the bride. Knox's idea of marriage, as I have said, was not the same for all men; but on the whole, it was not lofty. We have a curious letter of his, written at the request of Queen Mary, to the Earl of Argyle, on very delicate household matters; which, as he tells us, "was not well accepted of the said Earl." We may suppose, however, that his own home was regulated in a similar spirit. I can fancy that for such a man, emotional, and with a need, now and again, to exercise parsimony in emotions not strictly needful, something a little mechanical, something hard and fast and clearly understood, would enter into his ideal of a home. There were storms enough without, and equability was to be desired at the fireside even at a sacrifice of deeper pleasures. So, from a wife, of all women, he would not ask much. One letter to her which has come down to us is, I had almost said, conspicuous for coldness. He calls her, as he called other female correspondents, "dearly beloved sister"; the epistle is doctrinal, and nearly the half of it bears, not upon her own case, but upon that of her mother. However, we know what Heine wrote in his wife's album; and there is, after all, one passage that may be held to intimate some tenderness, although even that admits of an amusingly opposite construction. "I think," he says, "I *think* this be the 1 first letter I ever wrote to you." This, if we are to take it literally, may pair off with the "two *or three* children" whom Montaigne mentions having lost at nurse; the one is as eccentric in a lover as the other in a parent. Nevertheless, he displayed more energy in the course of his troubled wooing than might have been expected. The whole Bowes family, angry enough already at the influence he had obtained over the mother, set their faces obdurately against the match. And I daresay the opposition quickened his inclination. I find him writing to Mrs. Bowes that she need not further trouble herself about the marriage; it should now be his business altogether; it behoved him now to jeopard his life "for the comfort of his own flesh, both fear and friendship of all earthly creatures laid aside." This is a wonderfully chivalrous utterance for a Reformer forty-eight years old; and it compares well with the leaden coquetries of Calvin, not much over thirty, taking this and that into consideration, weighing together dowries and religious qualifications and the instancy of friends, and exhibiting what M. Bungener calls "an honourable and Christian difficulty" of choice, in frigid indecisions and insincere proposals. But Knox's next letter is in a humbler tone; he has not found the negotiation so easy as he fancied; he despairs of the marriage altogether, and talks of leaving England, — regards not "what country consumes his wicked carcass." "You shall understand," he says, "that this sixth of November, I spoke with Sir Robert Bowes" (the head of the family, his bride's uncle) "in the matter you know, according to your request; whose disdainful, yea, despiteful, words hath so pierced my heart that my life is bitter to me. I bear a good countenance with a sore-troubled heart, because he that ought to consider matters with a deep judgment is become not only a despiser, but also a taunter of God's messengers — God be merciful unto him! Amongst others his most unpleasing words, while that I was about to have declared my heart in the whole[2] matter, he said, 'Away with your rhetorical reasons! for I will not be persuaded with them.' God knows I did use no rhetoric nor coloured speech; but would have spoken the truth, and that in most simple manner. I am not a good orator in my own cause; but what he would not be content to hear of me, God shall declare to him one day to his displeasure, unless he repent." Poor Knox, you see, is quite commoved. It has been a very unpleasant interview. And as it is the only sample that we have of how things went with him during his courtship, we may infer that the period was not as agreeable for Knox as it has been for some others.

However, when once they were married, I imagine he and Marjorie Bowes hit it off together comfortably enough. The little we know of it may be brought together in a very short space. She bore him two sons. He seems to have kept her pretty busy, and depended on her to some degree in his work; so that when she fell ill, his papers got at once into disorder. Certainly she sometimes wrote to his dictation; and, in this capacity, he calls her "his left hand." In June, , at the headiest moment of the Reformation in Scotland, he writes regretting the absence of his helpful colleague, Goodman, "whose presence" (this is the not very grammatical form of his lament) "whose presence I more thirst, than she that is my own flesh." And this, considering the source and the circumstances, may be held as evidence of a very tender sentiment. He tells us himself in his History, on the occasion of a certain meeting at the Kirk of Field, that he was in no small heaviness by reason of the late death of his "dear bedfellow, Marjorie Bowes." Calvin, condoling with him, speaks of her as "a wife whose like is not to be found everywhere" (that is very like Calvin), and again, as "the most delightful of wives." We know what Calvin thought desirable in a wife, "good humour, chastity, thrift, patience, and solicitude for her husband's[3] health," and so we may suppose that the first Mrs. Knox fell not far short of this ideal.

The actual date of the marriage is uncertain; but by the summer of , at the latest, the Reformer was settled in Geneva with his wife. There is no fear either that he will be dull; even if the chaste, thrifty, patient Marjorie should not altogether occupy his mind, he need not go out of the house to seek more female sympathy; for behold! Mrs. Bowes is duly domesticated with the young couple. Dr. M'Crie imagined that Richard Bowes was now dead, and his widow, consequently, free to live where she would; and where could she go more naturally than to the house of a married daughter? This, however, is not the case. Richard Bowes did not die till at least two years later. It is impossible to believe that he approved of his wife's desertion, after so many years of marriage, after twelve children had been born to them; and accordingly we find in his will, dated , no mention either of her or of Knox's wife. This is plain sailing. It is easy enough to understand the anger of Bowes against this interloper, who had come into a quiet family, married the daughter in spite of the father's opposition, alienated the wife from the husband and the husband's religion, supported her in a long course of resistance and rebellion, and, after years of intimacy, already too close and tender for any jealous spirit to behold without resentment, carried her away with him at last into a foreign land. But it is not quite easy to understand how, except out of sheer weariness and disgust, he was ever brought to agree to the arrangement. Nor is it easy to square the Reformer's conduct with his public teaching. We have, for instance, a letter addressed by him, Craig, and Spottiswood, to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, anent "a wicked and rebellious woman," one Anne Good, spouse to "John Barron, a minister of Christ Jesus, his evangel," who, "after great rebellion shown unto him, and divers admonitions given, as well by himself as by others in his 4 name, that she should in no wise depart from this realm, nor from his house without his licence, hath not the less stubbornly and rebelliously departed, separated herself from his society, left his house, and withdrawn herself from this realm." Perhaps some sort of licence was extorted, as I have said, from Richard Bowes, weary with years of domestic dissension; but setting that aside, the words employed with so much righteous indignation by Knox, Craig, and Spottiswood, to describe the conduct of that wicked and rebellious woman, Mrs. Barron, would describe nearly as exactly the conduct of the religious Mrs. Bowes. It is a little bewildering, until we recollect the distinction between faithful and unfaithful husbands; for Barron was "a minister of Christ Jesus, his evangel," while Richard Bowes, besides being own brother to a despiser and taunter of God's messengers, is shrewdly suspected to have been "a bigoted adherent of the Roman Catholic faith," or, as Knox himself would have expressed it, "a rotten Papist."

You would have thought that Knox was now pretty well supplied with female society. But we are not yet at the end of the roll. The last year of his sojourn in England had been spent principally in London, where he was resident as one of the chaplains of Edward the Sixth; and here he boasts, although a stranger, he had, by God's grace, found favour before many. The godly women of the metropolis made much of him; once he writes to Mrs. Bowes that her last letter had found him closeted with three, and he and the three women were all in tears. Out of all, however, he had chosen two. "*God,*" he writes to them, "*brought us in such familiar acquaintance, that your hearts were* *incensed and kindled with a special care over me, as a mother useth to be over her natural child*; and my heart was opened and compelled in your presence to be more plain than ever I was to any.” And out of the two even he had chosen one, Mrs. Anne Locke, wife to Mr. Harry Locke, merchant, nigh to Bow Kirk, 5 Cheapside, in London, as the address runs. If one may venture to judge upon such imperfect evidence, this was the woman he loved best. I have a difficulty in quite forming to myself an idea of her character. She may have been one of the three tearful visitors before alluded to; she may even have been that one of them who was so profoundly moved by some passages of Mrs. Bowes’s letter, which the Reformer opened, and read aloud to them before they went. “O would to God,” cried this impressionable matron, “would to God that I might speak with that person, for I perceive there are more tempted than I.” This *may* have been Mrs. Locke, as I say; but even if it were, we must not conclude from this one fact that she was such another as Mrs. Bowes. All the evidence tends the other way. She was a woman of understanding, plainly, who followed political events with interest, and to whom Knox thought it worth while to write, in detail, the history of his trials and successes. She was religious, but without that morbid perversity of spirit that made religion so heavy a burden for the poor-hearted Mrs. Bowes. More of her I do not find, save testimony to the profound affection that united her to the Reformer. So we find him writing to her from Geneva, in such terms as these: — ”You write that your desire is earnest to see me. *Dear sister, if I should express the thirst and languor which I have had for your presence, I should appear to pass measure.... Yea, I weep and rejoice in remembrance of you*; but that would evanish by the comfort of your presence, which I assure you is so dear to me, that if the charge of this little flock here, gathered together in Christ’s name, did not impede me, my coming should prevent my letter.” I say that this was written from Geneva; and yet you will observe that it is no consideration for his wife or mother-in-law, only the charge of his little flock, that keeps him from setting out forthwith for London, to comfort himself with the dear presence of Mrs. Locke. Remember that was a certain plausible enough pretext for Mrs. Locke to come 6 to Geneva — ”the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on earth since the days of the Apostles” — for we are now under the reign of that “horrible monster Jezebel of England,” when a lady of good orthodox sentiments was better out of London. It was doubtful, however, whether this was to be. She was detained in England, partly by circumstances unknown, “partly by empire of her head,” Mr. Harry Locke, the Cheapside merchant. It is somewhat humorous to see Knox struggling for resignation, now that he has to do with a faithful husband (for Mr. Harry Locke was faithful). Had it been otherwise, “in my heart," he says, "I could have wished — yea," here he breaks out, "yea, and cannot cease to wish — that God would guide you to this place." And after all, he had not long to wait, for whether Mr. Harry Locke died in the interval, or was wearied, he too, into giving permission, five months after the date of the letter last quoted, "Mrs. Anne Locke, Harry her son, and Anne her daughter, and Katharine her maid," arrived in that perfect school of Christ, the Presbyterian paradise, Geneva. So now, and for the next two years, the cup of Knox's happiness was surely full. Of an afternoon, when the bells rang out for the sermon, the shops closed, and the good folk gathered to the churches, psalm-book in hand, we can imagine him drawing near to the English chapel in quite patriarchal fashion, with Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Bowes and Mrs. Locke, James his servant, Patrick his pupil, and a due following of children and maids. He might be alone at work all morning in his study, for he wrote much during these two years; but at night, you may be sure there was a circle of admiring women, eager to hear the new paragraph, and not sparing of applause. And what work, among others, was he elaborating at this time, but the notorious "First Blast"? So that he may have rolled out in his big pulpit voice, how women were weak, frail, impatient, feeble, foolish, inconstant, variable, cruel, and lacking the spirit of counsel, and how men were above them, even as God is above the 7 angels, in the ears of his own wife, and the two dearest friends on earth. But he had lost the sense of incongruity, and continued to despise in theory the sex he honoured so much in practice, of whom he chose his most intimate associates, and whose courage he was compelled to wonder at, when his own heart was faint.

We may say that such a man was not worthy of his fortune; and so, as he would not learn, he was taken away from that agreeable school, and his fellowship of women was broken up, not to be reunited. Called into Scotland to take at last that strange position in history which is his best claim to commemoration, he was followed thither by his wife and his mother-in-law. The wife soon died. The death of her daughter did not altogether separate Mrs. Bowes from Knox, but she seems to have come and gone between his house and England. In , however, we find him characterised as "a sole man by reason of the absence of his mother-in-law, Mrs. Bowes," and a passport is got for her, her man, a maid, and "three horses, whereof two shall return," as well as liberty to take all her own money with her into Scotland. This looks like a definite arrangement; but whether she died at Edinburgh, or went back to England yet again, I cannot find. With that great family of hers, unless in leaving her husband she had quarrelled with them all, there must have been frequent occasion for her presence, one would think. Knox at least survived her; and we possess his epigraph to their long intimacy, given to the world by him in an appendix to his latest publication. I have said in a former paper that Knox was not shy of personal revelations in his published works. And the trick seems to have grown on him. To this last tract, a controversial onslaught on a Scottish Jesuit, he prefixed a prayer, not very pertinent to the matter in hand, and containing references to his family which were the occasion of some wit in his adversary's answer; and appended what seems equally irrelevant, one of his devout letters to Mrs. Bowes, with an explanatory preface. To say truth, I believe he had always felt uneasily 8 that the circumstances of this intimacy were very capable of misconstruction; and now, when he was an old man, taking "his good-night of all the faithful in both realms," and only desirous "that without any notable sclander to the evangel of Jesus Christ, he might end his battle; for as the world was weary of him, so was he of it"; — in such a spirit it was not, perhaps, unnatural that he should return to this old story, and seek to put it right in the eyes of all men, ere he died. "Because that God," he says, "because that God now in His mercy hath put an end to the battle of my dear mother, Mistress Elizabeth Bowes, before that He put an end to my wretched life, I could not cease but declare to the world what was the cause of our great familiarity and long acquaintance; which was neither flesh nor blood, but a troubled conscience upon her part, which never suffered her to rest but when she was in the company of the faithful, of whom (from the first hearing of the word at my mouth) she judged me to be one.... Her company to me was comfortable (yea, honourable and profitable, for she was to me and mine a mother), but yet it was not without some cross; for besides trouble and fashery of body sustained for her, my mind was seldom quiet, for doing somewhat for the comfort of her troubled conscience." He had written to her years before from his first exile in Dieppe, that "only God's hand" could withhold him from once more speaking with her face to face; and now, when God's hand has indeed interposed, when there lies between them, instead of the voyageable straits, that great gulf over which no man can pass, this is the spirit in which he can look back upon their long acquaintance. She was a religious hypochondriac, it appears, whom, not without some cross and fashery of mind and body, he was good enough to tend. He might have given a truer character of their friendship had he thought less of his own standing in public estimation, and more of the dead woman. But he was in all things, as Burke said of his son in that ever memorable passage, a public creature. He 9 wished that even into this private place of his affections posterity should follow him with a complete approval; and he was willing, in order that this might be so, to exhibit the defects of his lost friend, and tell the world what weariness he had sustained through her unhappy disposition. There is something here that reminds one of Rousseau.

I do not think he ever saw Mrs. Locke after he left Geneva; but his correspondence with her continued for three years. It may have continued longer, of course, but I think the last letters we possess read like the last that would be written. Perhaps Mrs. Locke was then remarried, for there is much obscurity over her subsequent history. For as long as their intimacy was kept up, at least, the human element remains in the Reformer's life. Here is one passage, for example, the most likable utterance of Knox's that I can quote: — Mrs. Locke has been upbraiding him as a bad correspondent. "My remembrance of you," he answers, "is not so dead, but I trust it shall be fresh enough, albeit it be renewed by no outward token for one year. *Of nature, I am churlish; yet one thing I ashame not to affirm, that familiarity once thoroughly contracted was never yet broken on my default. The cause may be that I have rather need of all, than that any have need of me.* However it (*that*) be, it cannot be, as I say, the corporal absence of one year or two that can quench in my heart that familiar acquaintance in Christ Jesus, which half a year did engender, and almost two years did nourish and confirm. And therefore, whether I write or no, be assuredly persuaded that I have you in such memory as becometh the faithful to have of the faithful." This is the truest touch of personal humility that I can remember to have seen in all the five volumes of the Reformer's collected works: It is no small honour to Mrs. Locke that his affection for her should have brought home to him this unwonted feeling of dependence upon others. Everything else in the course of the correspondence testifies to a good, sound, downright sort of friendship between the two, less ecstatic than it was at first, 0 perhaps, but serviceable and very equal. He gives her ample details as to the progress of the work of reformation; sends her the sheets of the "Confession of Faith," "in quairs," as he calls it; asks her to assist him with her prayers, to collect money for the good cause in Scotland, and to send him books for himself — books by Calvin especially, one on Isaiah, and a new revised edition of the "Institutes." "I must be bold on your liberality," he writes, "not only in that, but in greater things as I shall need." On her part she applies to him for spiritual advice, not after the manner of the drooping Mrs. Bowes, but in a more positive spirit, — advice as to practical points, advice as to the Church of England, for instance, whose ritual he condemns as a "mingle-mangle." Just at the end she ceases to write, sends him "a token, without writing." "I understand your impediment," he answers, "and therefore I cannot complain. Yet if you understood the variety of my temptations, I doubt not but you would have written somewhat." One letter more, and then silence.

And I think the best of the Reformer died out with that correspondence. It is after this, of course, that he wrote that ungenerous description of his intercourse with Mrs. Bowes. It is after this, also, that we come to the unlovely episode of his second marriage. He had been left a widower at the age of fifty-five. Three years after, it occurred apparently to yet another pious parent to sacrifice a child upon the altar of his respect for the Reformer. In January, , Randolph writes to Cecil: “Your Honour will take it for a great wonder when I shall write unto you that Mr. Knox shall marry a very near kinswoman of the Duke’s, a Lord’s daughter, a young lass not above sixteen years of age.” He adds that he fears he will be laughed at for reporting so mad a story. And yet it was true; and on Palm Sunday, , Margaret Stewart, daughter of Andrew Lord Stewart of Ochiltree, aged seventeen, was duly united to John Knox, 1 Minister of St. Giles’s Kirk, Edinburgh, aged fifty-nine, — to the great disgust of Queen Mary from family pride, and I would fain hope of many others for more humane considerations. “In this,” as Randolph says, “I wish he had done otherwise.” The Consistory of Geneva, “that most perfect school of Christ that ever was on earth since the days of the Apostles,” were wont to forbid marriages on the ground of too great a disproportion in age. I cannot help wondering whether the old Reformer’s conscience did not uneasily remind him, now and again, of this good custom of his religious metropolis, as he thought of the two-and-forty years that separated him from his poor bride. Fitly enough, we hear nothing of the second Mrs. Knox until she appears at her husband’s deathbed, eight years after. She bore him three daughters in the interval; and I suppose the poor child’s martyrdom was made as easy for her as might be. She was “extremely attentive to him” at the end, we read; and he seems to have spoken to her with some confidence. Moreover, and this is very characteristic, he had copied out for her use a little volume of his own devotional letters to other women.

This is the end of the roll, unless we add to it Mrs. Adamson, who had delighted much in his company “by reason that she had a troubled conscience,” and whose deathbed is commemorated at some length in the pages of his history.

And now, looking back, it cannot be said that Knox’s intercourse with women was quite of the highest sort. It is characteristic that we find him more alarmed for his own reputation than for the reputation of the women with whom he was familiar. There was a fatal preponderance of self in all his intimacies: many women came to learn from him, but he never condescended to become a learner in his turn. And so there is not anything idyllic in these intimacies of his; and they were never so renovating to his spirit as they might have been. But I believe they were good enough for 2 the women. I fancy the women knew what they were about when so many of them followed after Knox. It is not simply because a man is always fully persuaded that he knows the right from the wrong and sees his way plainly through the maze of life, great qualities as these are, that people will love and follow him, and write him letters full of their "earnest desire for him" when he is absent. It is not over a man, whose one characteristic is grim fixity of purpose, that the hearts of women are "incensed and kindled with a special care," as it were over their natural children. In the strong quiet patience of all his letters to the weariful Mrs. Bowes, we may perhaps see one cause of the fascination he possessed for these religious women. Here was one whom you could besiege all the year round with inconsistent scruples and complaints; you might write to him on Thursday that you were so elated it was plain the devil was deceiving you, and again on Friday that you were so depressed it was plain God had cast you off for ever; and he would read all this patiently and sympathetically, and give you an answer in the most reassuring polysyllables, and all divided into heads — who knows? — like a treatise on divinity. And then, those easy tears of his. There are some women who like to see men crying; and here was this great-voiced, bearded man of God, who might be seen beating the solid pulpit every Sunday, and casting abroad his clamorous denunciations to the terror of all, and who on the Monday would sit in their parlours by the hour, and weep with them over their manifold trials and temptations. Nowadays, he would have to drink a dish of tea with all these penitents.... It sounds a little vulgar, as the past will do, if we look into it too closely. We could not let these great folk of old into our drawing-rooms. Queen Elizabeth would positively not be eligible for a housemaid. The old manners and the old customs go sinking from grade to grade, until, if some mighty emperor revisited the glimpses of the moon, he would not find any one of his way of thinking, any one he could strike hands with and talk to freely and without offence, 3 save perhaps the porter at the end of the street, or the fellow with his elbows out who loafs all day before the public-house. So that this little note of vulgarity is not a thing to be dwelt upon; it is to be put away from us, as we recall the fashion of these old intimacies; so that we may only remember Knox as one who was very long-suffering with women, kind to them in his own way, loving them in his own way — and that not the worst way, if it was not the best — and once at least, if not twice, moved to his heart of hearts by a woman, and giving expression to the yearning he had for her society in words that none of us need be ashamed to borrow.

And let us bear in mind always that the period I have gone over in this essay begins when the Reformer was already beyond the middle age, and already broken in bodily health: it has been the story of an old man's friendships. This it is that makes Knox enviable. Unknown until past forty, he had then before him five-and-twenty years of splendid and influential life, passed through uncommon hardships to an uncommon degree of power, lived in his own country as a sort of king, and did what he would with the sound of his voice out of the pulpit. And besides all this, such a following of faithful women! One would take the first forty-two years gladly, if one could be sure of the last twenty-five. Most of us, even if, by reason of great strength and the dignity of grey hairs, we retain some degree of public respect in the latter days of our existence, will find a falling away of friends, and a solitude making itself round about us day by day, until we are left alone with the hired sick-nurse. For the attraction of a man's character is apt to be outlived, like the attraction of his body; and the power to love grows feeble in its turn, as well as the power to inspire love in others. It is only with a few rare natures that friendship is added to friendship, love to love, and the man keeps growing richer in affection — richer, I mean, as a bank maybe said to grow richer, both giving and receiving more — after his head is white and his back weary, and he prepares to go down into the dust of death.

MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS

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TO
MY MOTHER
IN THE NAME OF PAST JOY
AND PRESENT SORROW
I DEDICATE
THESE MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS
SS. “Ludgate Hill,”
within sight of Cape Race

NOTE

This volume of papers, unconnected as they are, it will be better to read through from the beginning, rather than dip into at random. A certain thread of meaning binds them. Memories of childhood and youth, portraits of those who have gone before us in the battle, — taken together, they build up a face that “I have loved long since and lost awhile,” the face of what was once myself. This has come by accident; I had no design at first to be autobiographical; I was but led away by the charm of beloved memories and by regret for the irrevocable dead; and when my own young face (which is a face of the dead also) began to appear in the well as by a kind of magic, I was the first to be surprised at the occurrence.

My grandfather the pious child, my father the idle eager sentimental youth, I have thus unconsciously exposed. Of their descendant, the person of to-day, I wish to keep the secret; not because I love him better, but because with him I am still in a business partnership, and cannot divide interests.

Of the papers which make up the volume, some have appeared already in “The Cornhill,” “Longman’s,” “Scribner,” “The English Illustrated,” “The Magazine of Art,” “The Contemporary Review”; three are here in print for the first time; and two others have enjoyed only what may be regarded as a private circulation.

R. L. S.

I

THE FOREIGNER AT HOME

"This is no' my ain house;
I ken by the biggin' o't."

Two recent books, one by Mr. Grant White on England, one on France by the diabolically clever Mr. Hillebrand, may well have set people thinking on the divisions of races and nations. Such thoughts should arise with particular congruity and force to inhabitants of that United Kingdom, peopled from so many different stocks, babbling so many different dialects, and offering in its extent such singular contrasts, from the busiest over-population to the unkindliest desert, from the Black Country to the Moor of Rannoch. It is not only when we cross the seas that we go abroad; there are foreign parts of England; and the race that has conquered so wide an empire has not yet managed to assimilate the islands whence she sprang. Ireland, Wales, and the Scottish mountains still cling, in part, to their old Gaelic speech. It was but the other day that English triumphed in Cornwall, and they still show in Mousehole, on St. Michael's Bay, the house of the last Cornish-speaking woman. English itself, which will now frank the traveller through the most of North America, through the greater South Sea Islands, in India, along much of the coast of Africa, and in the ports of China and 8 Japan, is still to be heard, in its home country, in half a hundred varying stages of transition. You may go all over the States, and — setting aside the actual intrusion and influence of foreigners, negro, French, or Chinese — you shall scarce meet with so marked a difference of accent as in the forty miles between Edinburgh and Glasgow, or of dialect as in the hundred miles between Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Book English has gone round the world, but at home we still preserve the racy idioms of our fathers, and every county, in some parts every dale, has its own quality of speech, vocal or verbal. In like manner, local custom and prejudice, even local religion and local law, linger on into the latter end of the nineteenth century — *imperia in imperio*, foreign things at home.

In spite of these promptings to reflection, ignorance of his neighbours is the character of the typical John Bull. His is a domineering nature, steady in fight, imperious to command, but neither curious nor quick about the life of others. In French colonies, and still more in the Dutch, I have read that there is an immediate and lively contact between the dominant and the dominated race, that a certain sympathy is begotten, or at the least a transfusion of prejudices, making life easier for both. But the Englishman sits apart, bursting with pride and ignorance. He figures among his vassals in the hour of peace with the same disdainful air that led him on to victory. A passing enthusiasm for some foreign art or fashion may deceive the world, it cannot impose upon his intimates. He may be amused by a foreigner as by a monkey, but he will never condescend to study him with any patience. Miss Bird, an authoress with whom I profess myself in love, declares all the viands of Japan to be uneatable — a staggering pretension. So, when the Prince of Wales's marriage was celebrated at Mentone by a dinner to the Mentonese, it was proposed to give them solid English fare — roast beef and plum pudding, and no tomfoolery. Here we have either pole of the Britannic folly. We will not eat the food of 9 any foreigner; nor, when we have the chance, will we suffer him to eat of it himself. The same spirit inspired Miss Bird's American missionaries, who had come thousands of miles to change the faith of Japan, and openly professed their ignorance of the religions they were trying to supplant.

I quote an American in this connection without scruple. Uncle Sam is better than John Bull, but he is tarred with the English stick. For Mr. Grant White the States are the New England States and nothing more. He wonders at the amount of drinking in London; let him try San Francisco. He wittily reproves English ignorance as to the status of women in America; but has he not himself forgotten Wyoming? The name Yankee, of which he is so tenacious, is used over the most of the great Union as a term of reproach. The Yankee States, of which he is so staunch a subject, are but a drop in the bucket. And we find in his book a vast virgin ignorance of the life and prospects of America; every view partial, parochial, not raised to the horizon; the moral feeling proper, at the largest, to a clique of States; and the whole scope and atmosphere not American, but merely Yankee. I will go far beyond him in reprobating the assumption and the incivility of my countryfolk to their cousins from beyond the sea; I grill in my blood over the silly rudeness of our newspaper articles; and I do not know where to look when I find myself in company with an American and see my countrymen unbending to him as to a performing dog. But in the case of Mr. Grant White example were better than precept. Wyoming is, after all, more readily accessible to Mr. White than Boston to the English, and the New England self-sufficiency no better justified than the Britannic.

It is so, perhaps, in all countries; perhaps in all, men are most ignorant of the foreigners at home. John Bull is ignorant of the States; he is probably ignorant of India, but, considering his opportunities, he is far more ignorant of countries nearer his own door. There is one country, 10 for instance — its frontier not so far from London, its people closely akin, its language the same in all essentials with the English — of which I will go bail he knows nothing. His ignorance of the sister kingdom cannot be described; it can only be illustrated by anecdote. I once travelled with a man of plausible manners and good intelligence — a University man, as the phrase goes — a man, besides, who had taken his degree in life and knew a thing or two about the age we live in. We were deep in talk, whirling between Peterborough and London; among other things, he began to describe some piece of legal injustice he had recently encountered, and I observed in my innocence that things were not so in Scotland. "I beg your pardon," said he, "this is a matter of law." He had never heard of the Scots law; nor did he choose to be informed. The law was the same for the whole country, he told me roundly; every child knew that. At last, to settle matters, I explained to him that I was a member of a Scottish legal body, and had stood the brunt of an examination in the very law in question. Thereupon he looked me for a moment full in the face and dropped the conversation. This is a monstrous instance, if you like, but it does not stand alone in the experience of Scots.

England and Scotland differ, indeed, in law, in history, in religion, in education, and in the very look of nature and men's faces, not always widely, but always trenchantly. Many particulars that struck Mr. Grant White, a Yankee, struck me, a Scot, no less forcibly; he and I felt ourselves foreigners on many common provocations.

A Scotsman may tramp the better part of Europe and the United States, and never again receive so vivid an impression of foreign travel and strange lands and manners as on his first excursion into England. The change from 11 a hilly to a level country strikes him with delighted wonder. Along the flat horizon there arise the frequent venerable towers of churches. He sees at the end of airy vistas the revolution of the windmill sails. He may go where he pleases in the future; he may see Alps, and Pyramids, and lions; but it will be hard to beat the pleasure of that moment. There are, indeed, few merrier spectacles than that of many windmills bickering together in a fresh breeze over a woody country; their halting alacrity of movement, their pleasant busyness, making bread all day with uncouth gesticulations, their air, gigantically human, as of a creature half alive, put a spirit of romance into the tamest landscape. When the Scottish child sees them first he falls immediately in love; and from that time forward windmills keep turning in his dreams. And so, in their degree, with every feature of the life and landscape. The warm, habitable age of towns and hamlets; the green, settled, ancient look of the country; the lush hedgerows, stiles, and privy pathways in the fields; the sluggish, brimming rivers; chalk and smock-frocks; chimes of bells and the rapid, pertly-sounding English speech — they are all new to the curiosity; they are all set to English airs in the child's story that he tells himself at night. The sharp edge of novelty wears off; the feeling is blunted, but I doubt whether it is ever killed. Rather it keeps returning, ever the more rarely and strangely, and even in scenes to which you have been long accustomed suddenly awakes and gives a relish to enjoyment or heightens the sense of isolation.

One thing especially continues unfamiliar to the Scotsman's eye — the domestic architecture, the look of streets and buildings; the quaint, venerable age of many, and the thin walls and warm colouring of all. We have, in Scotland, far fewer ancient buildings, above all in country places; and those that we have are all of hewn or harled masonry. Wood has been sparingly used in their construction; the window-frames are sunken in the wall, not flat to the front, as in England; the roofs are steeper-pitched; [12] even a hill farm will have a massy, square, cold and permanent appearance. English houses, in comparison, have the look of cardboard toys, such as a puff might shatter. And to this the Scotsman never becomes used. His eye can never rest consciously on one of these brick houses — rickles of brick, as he might call them — or on one of these flat-chested streets, but he is instantly reminded where he is, and instantly travels back in fancy to his home. "This is no' my ain house; I ken by the biggin' o't." And yet perhaps it is his own, bought with his own money, the key of it long polished in his pocket; but it has not yet been, and never will be, thoroughly adopted by his imagination; nor does he cease to remember that, in the whole length and breadth of his native country, there was no building even distantly resembling it.

But it is not alone in scenery and architecture that we count England foreign. The constitution of society, the very pillars of the empire, surprise and even pain us. The dull, neglected peasant, sunk in matter, insolent, gross and servile, makes a startling contrast with our own long-legged, long-headed, thoughtful, Bible-quoting ploughman. A week or two in such a place as Suffolk leaves the Scotsman gasping. It seems incredible that within the boundaries of his own island a class should have been thus forgotten. Even the educated and intelligent, who hold our own opinions and speak in our own words, yet seem to hold them with a difference or from another reason, and to speak on all things with less interest and conviction. The first shock of English society is like a cold plunge. It is possible that the Scot comes looking for too much, and to be sure his first experiment will be in the wrong direction. Yet surely his complaint is grounded; surely the speech of Englishmen is too often lacking in generous ardour, the better part of the man too often withheld from the social commerce, and the contact of mind with mind evaded as with terror. A Scottish peasant will talk more liberally out of his own experience. He will not put you by with [13] conversational counters and small jests; he will give you the best of himself, like one interested in life and man's chief end. A Scotsman is vain, interested in himself and others, eager for sympathy, setting forth his thoughts and experience in the best light. The egoism of the Englishman is self-contained. He does not seek to proselytise. He takes no interest in Scotland or the Scots, and, what is the unkindest cut of all, he does not care to justify his indifference. Give him the wages of going on and being an Englishman, that is all he asks; and in the meantime, while you continue to associate, he would rather be reminded of your baser origin. Compared with the grand, tree-like self-sufficiency of his demeanour, the vanity and curiosity of the Scot seem uneasy, vulgar, and immodest. That you should continually try to establish human and serious relations, that you should actually feel an interest in John Bull, and desire and invite a return of interest from him, may argue something more awake and lively in your mind, but it still puts you in the attitude of a suitor and a poor relation. Thus even the lowest class of the educated English towers over a Scotsman by the head and shoulders.

Different indeed is the atmosphere in which Scottish and English youth begin to look about them, come to themselves in life, and gather up those first apprehensions which are the material of future thought and, to a great extent, the rule of future conduct. I have been to school in both countries, and I found, in the boys of the North, something at once rougher and more tender, at once more reserve and more expansion, a greater habitual distance chequered by glimpses of a nearer intimacy, and on the whole wider extremes of temperament and sensibility. The boy of the South seems more wholesome, but less thoughtful; he gives himself to games as to a business, striving to excel, but is not readily transported by imagination; the type remains with me as cleaner in mind and body, more active, fonder of eating, endowed with a lesser [14] and a less romantic sense of life and of the future, and more immersed in present circumstances. And certainly, for one thing, English boys are younger for their age. Sabbath observance makes a series of grim, and perhaps serviceable, pauses in the tenor of Scottish boyhood — days of great stillness and solitude for the rebellious mind, when in the dearth of books and play, and in the intervals of studying the Shorter Catechism, the intellect and senses prey upon and test each other. The typical English Sunday, with a huge midday dinner and the plethoric afternoon, leads perhaps to different results. About the very cradle of the Scot there goes a hum of metaphysical divinity; and the whole of two divergent systems is summed up, not merely speciously, in the two first questions of the rival catechisms, the English tritely inquiring, “What is your name?” the Scottish striking at the very roots of life with, “What is the chief end of man?” and answering nobly, if obscurely, “To glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.” I do not wish to make an idol of the Shorter Catechism; but the fact of such a question being asked opens to us Scots a great field of speculation; and the fact that it is asked of all of us, from the peer to the ploughboy, binds us more nearly together. No Englishman of Byron’s age, character, and history would have had patience for long theological discussions on the way to fight for Greece; but the daft Gordon blood and the Aberdonian school-days kept their influence to the end. We have spoken of the material conditions; nor need much more be said of these: of the land lying everywhere more exposed, of the wind always louder and bleaker, of the black, roaring winters, of the gloom of high-lying, old stone cities, imminent on the windy seaboard; compared with the level streets, the warm colouring of the brick, the domestic quaintness of the architecture, among which English children begin to grow up and come to themselves in life. As the stage of the University approaches, the contrast becomes more express. The English lad goes to Oxford or Cambridge;[15] there, in an ideal world of gardens, to lead a semi-scenic life, costumed, disciplined, and drilled by proctors. Nor is this to be regarded merely as a stage of education; it is a piece of privilege besides, and a step that separates him further from the bulk of his compatriots. At an earlier age the Scottish lad begins his greatly different experience of crowded class-rooms, of a gaunt quadrangle, of a bell hourly booming over the traffic of the city to recall him from the public-house where he has been lunching, or the streets where he has been wandering fancy-free. His college life has little of restraint, and nothing of necessary gentility. He will find no quiet clique of the exclusive, studious and cultured; no rotten borough of the arts. All classes rub shoulders on the greasy benches. The raffish young gentleman in gloves must measure his scholarship with the plain, clownish laddie from the parish school. They separate, at the session’s end, one to smoke cigars about a watering-place, the other to resume the labours of the field beside his peasant family. The first muster of a college class in Scotland is a scene of curious and painful interest; so many lads, fresh from the heather, hang round the stove in cloddish embarrassment, ruffled by the presence of their smarter comrades, and afraid of the sound of their own rustic voices. It was in these early days, I think, that Professor Blackie won the affection of his pupils, putting these uncouth, umbrageous students at their ease with ready human geniality. Thus, at least, we have a healthy democratic atmosphere to breathe in while at work; even when there is no cordiality there is always a juxtaposition of the different classes, and in the competition of study the intellectual power of each is plainly demonstrated to the other. Our tasks ended, we of the North go forth as freemen into the humming, lamplit city. At five o'clock you may see the last of us hiving from the college gates, in the glare of the shop-windows, under the green glimmer of the winter sunset. The frost tingles in our blood; no proctor lies in wait to intercept us; till the bell sounds again, we are 16 the masters of the world; and some portion of our lives is always Saturday, *la trêve de Dieu.*

Nor must we omit the sense of the nature of his country and his country's history gradually growing in the child's mind from story and from observation. A Scottish child hears much of shipwreck, outlying iron skerries, pitiless breakers, and great sea-lights; much of heathery mountains, wild clans, and hunted Covenanters. Breaths come to him in song of the distant Cheviots and the ring of foraying hoofs. He glories in his hard-fisted forefathers, of the iron girdle and the handful of oatmeal, who rode so swiftly and lived so sparely on their raids. Poverty, ill-luck, enterprise, and constant resolution are the fibres of the legend of his country's history. The heroes and kings of Scotland have been tragically fated; the most marking incidents in Scottish history — Flodden, Darien, or the Forty-five — were still either failures or defeats; and the fall of Wallace and the repeated reverses of the Bruce combine with the very smallness of the country to teach rather a moral than a material criterion for life. Britain is altogether small, the mere taproot of her extended empire; Scotland, again, which alone the Scottish boy adopts in his imagination, is but a little part of that, and avowedly cold, sterile, and unpopulous. It is not so for nothing. I once seemed to have perceived in an American boy a greater readiness of sympathy for lands that are great, and rich, and growing, like his own. It proved to be quite otherwise: a mere dumb piece of boyish romance, that I had lacked penetration to divine. But the error serves the purpose of my argument; for I am sure, at least, that the heart of young Scotland will be always touched more nearly by paucity of number and Spartan poverty of life.

So we may argue, and yet the difference is not explained. That Shorter Catechism which I took as being so typical of Scotland, was yet composed in the city of Westminster. The division of races is more sharply marked within the 17 borders of Scotland itself than between the countries. Galloway and Buchan, Lothian and Lochaber, are like foreign parts; yet you may choose a man from any of them, and, ten to one, he shall prove to have the headmark of a Scot. A century and a half ago the Highlander wore a different costume, spoke a different language, worshipped in another church, held different morals, and obeyed a different social constitution from his fellow-countrymen either of the south or north. Even the English, it is recorded, did not loathe the Highlander and the Highland costume as they were loathed by the remainder of the Scots. Yet the Highlander felt himself a Scot. He would willingly raid into the Scottish lowlands; but his courage failed him at the border, and he regarded England as a perilous, unhomely land. When the Black Watch, after years of foreign service, returned to Scotland, veterans leaped out and kissed the earth at Portpatrick. They had been in Ireland, stationed among men of their own race and language, where they were well liked and treated with affection; but it was the soil of Galloway that they kissed, at the extreme end of the hostile lowlands, among a people who did not understand their speech, and who had hated, harried, and hanged them since the dawn of history. Last, and perhaps most curious, the sons of chieftains were often educated on the continent of Europe. They went abroad speaking Gaelic; they returned speaking, not English, but the broad dialect of Scotland. Now, what idea had they in their minds when they thus, in thought, identified themselves with their ancestral enemies? What was the sense in which they were Scottish and not English, or Scottish and not Irish? Can a bare name be thus influential on the minds and affections of men, and a political aggregation blind them to the nature of facts? The story of the Austrian Empire would seem to answer No; the far more galling business of Ireland clinches the negative from nearer home. Is it common education, common morals, a common language,[18] or a common faith, that join men into nations? There were practically none of these in the case we are considering.

The fact remains: in spite of the difference of blood and language, the Lowlander feels himself the sentimental countryman of the Highlander. When they meet abroad, they fall upon each other’s necks in spirit; even at home there is a kind of clannish intimacy in their talk. But from his compatriot in the South the Lowlander stands consciously apart. He has had a different training; he obeys different laws; he makes his will in other terms, is otherwise divorced and married; his eyes are not at home in an English landscape or with English houses; his ear continues to remark the English speech; and even though his tongue acquire the Southern knack, he will still have a strong Scots accent of the mind.

1881.

The previous pages, from the opening of this essay down to “provocations,” are reprinted from the original edition of 1881; in the reprints of which they still stand. In the Edinburgh Edition they were omitted, and the essay began with “A Scotsman.” — Ed.

II

SOME COLLEGE MEMORIES

I am asked to write something (it is not specifically stated what) to the profit and glory of my *Alma Mater*; and the fact is I seem to be in very nearly the same case with those who addressed me, for while I am willing enough to write something, I know not what to write. Only one point I see, that if I am to write at all, it should be of the University itself and my own days under its shadow; of the things that are still the same and of those that are already changed: such talk, in short, as would pass naturally between a student of to-day and one of yesterday, supposing them to meet and grow confidential.

The generations pass away swiftly enough on the high seas of life; more swiftly still in the little bubbling back-water of the quadrangle; so that we see there, on a scale startlingly diminished, the flight of time and the succession of men. I looked for my name the other day in last year's case-book of the Speculative. Naturally enough I looked for it near the end; it was not there, nor yet in the next column, so that I began to think it had been dropped at press; and when at last I found it, mounted on the shoulders of so many successors, and looking in that posture like the name of a man of ninety, I was conscious of some of the dignity of years. This kind of dignity of temporal precession is likely, with prolonged life, to become more familiar, possibly less welcome; but I felt it strongly then, it is strongly on me now, and I am the more 20 emboldened to speak with my successors in the tone of a parent and a praiser of things past.

For, indeed, that which they attend is but a fallen University; it has doubtless some remains of good, for human institutions decline by gradual stages; but decline, in spite of all seeming embellishments, it does; and, what is perhaps more singular, began to do so when I ceased to be a student. Thus, by an odd chance, I had the very last of the very best of *Alma Mater*; the same thing, I hear (which makes it the more strange), had previously happened to my father; and if they are good and do not die, something not at all unsimilar will be found in time to have befallen my successors of to-day. Of the specific points of change, of advantage in the past, of shortcoming in the present, I must own that, on a near examination, they look wondrous cloudy. The chief and far the most lamentable change is the absence of a certain lean, ugly, idle, unpopular student, whose presence was for me the gist and heart of the whole matter; whose changing humours, fine occasional purposes of good, flinching acceptance of evil, shiverings on wet, east-windy, morning journeys up to class, infinite yawnings during lecture and unquenchable gusto in the delights of truantry, made up the sunshine and shadow of my college life. You cannot fancy what you missed in missing him; his virtues, I make sure, are inconceivable to his successors, just as they were apparently concealed from his contemporaries, for I was practically alone in the pleasure I had in his society. Poor soul, I remember how much he was cast down at times, and how life (which had not yet begun) seemed to be already at an end, and hope quite dead, and misfortune and dishonour, like physical presences, dogging him as he went. And it may be worth while to add that these clouds rolled away in their season, and that all clouds roll away at last, and the troubles of youth in particular are things but of a moment. So this student, whom I have in my eye, took his full share of these concerns, and that very largely by 21 his own fault; but he still clung to his fortune, and in the midst of much misconduct, kept on in his own way learning how to work; and at last, to his wonder, escaped out of the stage of studentship not openly shamed; leaving behind him the University of Edinburgh shorn of a good deal of its interest for myself.

But while he is (in more senses than one) the first person, he is by no means the only one whom I regret, or whom the students of to-day, if they knew what they had lost, would regret also. They have still Tait, to be sure — long may they have him! — and they have still Tait's class-room, cupola and all; but think of what a different place it was when this youth of mine (at least on roll days) would be present on the benches, and, at the near end of the platform, Lindsay senior was airing his robust old age. It is possible my successors may have never even heard of Old Lindsay; but when he went, a link snapped with the last century. He had something of a rustic air, sturdy and fresh and plain; he spoke with a ripe east-country accent, which I used to admire; his reminiscences were all of journeys on foot or highways busy with post-chaises — a Scotland before steam; he had seen the coal fire on the Isle of May, and he regaled me with tales of my own grandfather. Thus he was for me a mirror of things perished; it was only in his memory that I could see the huge shock of flames of the May beacon stream to leeward, and the watchers, as they fed the fire, lay hold unscorched of the windward bars of the furnace; it was only thus that I could see my grandfather driving swiftly in a gig along the seaboard road from Pittenweem to Crail, and for all his business hurry, drawing up to speak good-humouredly with those he met. And now, in his turn, Lindsay is gone also; inhabits only the memories of other men, till these shall follow him; and figures in my reminiscences as my grandfather figured in his.

To-day, again, they have Professor Butcher, and I hear 22 he has a prodigious deal of Greek; and they have Professor Chrystal, who is a man filled with the mathematics. And doubtless these are set-offs. But they cannot change the fact that Professor Blackie has retired, and that Professor Kelland is dead. No man's education is complete or truly liberal who knew not Kelland. There were unutterable lessons in the mere sight of that frail old clerical gentleman, lively as a boy, kind like a fairy godfather, and keeping perfect order in his class by the spell of that very kindness. I have heard him drift into reminiscences in class time, though not for long, and give us glimpses of old-world life in out-of-the-way English parishes when he was young; thus playing the same part as Lindsay — the part of the surviving memory, signalling out of the dark backward and abysm of time the images of perished things. But it was a part that scarce became him; he somehow lacked the means: for all his silver hair and worn face, he was not truly old; and he had too much of the unrest and petulant fire of youth, and too much invincible innocence of mind, to play the veteran well. The time to measure him best, to taste (in the old phrase) his gracious nature, was when he received his class at home. What a pretty simplicity would he then show, trying to amuse us like children with toys; and what an engaging nervousness of manner, as fearing that his efforts might not succeed! Truly, he made us all feel like children, and like children embarrassed, but at the same time filled with sympathy for the conscientious, troubled elder-boy who was working so hard to entertain us. A theorist has held the view that there is no feature in man so tell-tale as his spectacles; that the mouth may be compressed and the brow smoothed artificially, but the sheen of the barnacles is diagnostic. And truly it must have been thus with Kelland; for as I still fancy I behold him frisking actively about the platform, pointer in hand, that which I seem to see most clearly is the way his glasses glittered with affection. I never knew but one other man who had (if you will permit the phrase) so kind a spectacle, 23 and that was Dr. Appleton. But the light in his case was tempered and passive; in Kelland's it danced, and changed, and flashed vivaciously among the students, like a perpetual challenge to goodwill.

I cannot say so much about Professor Blackie, for a good reason. Kelland's class I attended, once even gained there a certificate of merit, the only distinction of my University career. But although I am the holder of a certificate of attendance in the professor's own hand, I cannot remember to have been present in the Greek class above a dozen times. Professor Blackie was even kind enough to remark (more than once) while in the very act of writing the document above referred to, that he did not know my face. Indeed, I denied myself many opportunities; acting upon an extensive and highly rational system of truantry, which cost me a great deal of trouble to put in exercise — perhaps as much as would have taught me Greek — and sent me forth into the world and the profession of letters with the merest shadow of an education. But they say it is always a good thing to have taken pains, and that success is its own reward, whatever be its nature; so that, perhaps, even upon this I should plume myself, that no one ever played the truant with more deliberate care, and none ever had more certificates for less education. One consequence, however, of my system is that I have much less to say of Professor Blackie than I had of Professor Kelland; and as he is still alive, and will long, I hope, continue to be so, it will not surprise you very much that I have no intention of saying it.

Meanwhile, how many others have gone — Jenkin, Hodgson, and I know not who besides; and of that tide of students that used to throng the arch and blacken the quadrangle, how many are scattered into the remotest parts of the earth, and how many more have lain down[24] beside their fathers in their “resting-graves”! And again, how many of these last have not found their way there, all too early, through the stress of education! That was one thing, at least, from which my truantry protected me. I am sorry indeed that I have no Greek, but I should be sorrier still if I were dead; nor do I know the name of that branch of knowledge which is worth acquiring at the price of a brain fever. There are many sordid tragedies in the life of the student, above all if he be poor, or drunken, or both; but nothing more moves a wise man’s pity than the case of the lad who is in too much hurry to be learned. And so, for the sake of a moral at the end, I will call up one more figure, and have done. A student, ambitious of success by that hot, intemperate manner of study that now grows so common, read night and day for an examination. As he went on, the task became more easy to him, sleep was more easily banished, his brain grew hot and clear and more capacious, the necessary knowledge daily fuller and more orderly. It came to the eve of the trial, and he watched all night in his high chamber, reviewing what he knew, and already secure of success. His window looked eastward, and being (as I said) high up, and the house itself standing on a hill, commanded a view over dwindling suburbs to a country horizon. At last my student drew up his blind, and still in quite a jocund humour, looked abroad. Day was breaking, the east was tinging with strange fires, the clouds breaking up for the coming of the sun; and at the sight, nameless terror seized upon his mind. He was sane, his senses were undisturbed; he saw clearly, and knew what he was seeing, and knew that it was normal; but he could neither bear to see it nor find the strength to look away, and fled in panic from his chamber into the enclosure of the street. In the cool air and silence, and among the sleeping houses, his strength was renewed. Nothing troubled him but the memory of what had passed, and an abject fear of its return.

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“Gallo canente, spes redit,
Aegris salus refunditur,
Lapsis fides revertitur,”

as they sang of old in Portugal in the Morning Office. But to him that good hour of cockcrow, and the changes of the dawn, had brought panic, and lasting doubt, and such terror as he still shook to think of. He dared not return to his lodging; he could not eat; he sat down, he rose up, he wandered; the city woke about him with its cheerful bustle, the sun climbed overhead; and still he grew but the more absorbed in the distress of his recollection and the fear of his past fear. At the appointed hour he came to the door of the place of examination; but when he was asked, he had forgotten his name. Seeing him so disordered, they had not the heart to send him away, but gave him a paper and admitted him, still nameless, to the Hall. Vain kindness, vain efforts. He could only sit in a still growing horror, writing nothing, ignorant of all, his mind filled with a single memory of the breaking day and his own intolerable fear. And that same night he was tossing in a brain fever.

People are afraid of war and wounds and dentists, all with excellent reason; but these are not to be compared with such chaotic terrors of the mind as fell on this young man. We all have by our bedsides the box of the Merchant Abudah, thank God, securely enough shut; but when a young man sacrifices sleep to labour, let him have a care, for he is playing with the lock.

For the “Book” of the Edinburgh University Union Fancy Fair, 1886.

Professor Tait’s laboratory assistant.

Charles Edward Appleton, D.C.L., Fellow of St. John’s College, Oxford, founder and first editor of the *Academy:* born 1841, died 1879.

III

OLD MORTALITY

I

There is a certain graveyard, looked upon on the one side by a prison, on the other by the windows of a quiet hotel; below, under a steep cliff, it beholds the traffic of many lines of rail, and the scream of the engine and the shock of meeting buffers mount to it all day long. The aisles are lined with the enclosed sepulchres of families, door beyond door, like houses in a street; and in the morning the shadows of the prison turrets, and of many tall memorials, fall upon the graves. There, in the hot fits of youth, I came to be unhappy. Pleasant incidents are woven with my memory of the place. I here made friends with a certain plain old gentleman, a visitor on sunny mornings, gravely cheerful, who, with one eye upon the place that awaited him, chirped about his youth like winter sparrows; a beautiful housemaid of the hotel once, for some days together, dumbly flirted with me from a window and kept my wild heart flying; and once — she possibly remembers — the wise Eugenia followed me to that austere enclosure. Her hair came down, and in the shelter of a tomb my trembling fingers helped her to repair the braid. But for the most part I went there solitary, and, with irrevocable emotion, pored on the names of the forgotten. Name after name, and to each the conventional attributions and the idle dates: a regiment of the unknown that had been the joy of mothers, and had thrilled with the illusions of youth, and at last, in the dim sick-room, wrestled with 27 the pangs of old mortality. In that whole crew of the silenced there was but one of whom my fancy had received a picture; and he, with his comely, florid countenance, bewigged and habited in scarlet, and in his day combining fame and popularity, stood forth, like a taunt, among that company of phantom appellations. It was possible, then, to leave behind us something more explicit than these severe, monotonous, and lying epitaphs; and the thing left, the memory of a painted picture and what we call the immortality of a name, was hardly more desirable than mere oblivion. Even David Hume, as he lay composed beneath that “circular idea,” was fainter than a dream;

and when the housemaid, broom in hand, smiled and beckoned from the open window, the fame of that bewigged philosopher melted like a raindrop in the sea.

And yet in soberness I cared as little for the housemaid as for David Hume. The interests of youth are rarely frank; his passions, like Noah's dove, come home to roost. The fire, sensibility, and volume of his own nature, that is all that he has learned to recognise. The tumultuary and grey tide of life, the empire of routine, the unrejoicing faces of his elders, fill him with contemptuous surprise; there also he seems to walk among the tombs of spirits: and it is only in the course of years, and after much rubbing with his fellow-men, that he begins by glimpses to see himself from without and his fellows from within: to know his own for one among the thousand undenoted countenances of the city street, and to divine in others the throb of human agony and hope. In the meantime he will avoid the hospital doors, the pale faces, the cripple, the sweet whiff of chloroform — for there, on the most thoughtless, the pains of others are burned home; but he will continue to walk, in a divine self-pity, the aisles of the forgotten graveyard. The length of man's life, which is endless to the brave and busy, is scorned by his ambitious thought. He cannot bear to have come for so little, and to go again so wholly. He cannot bear, above all, in that brief scene,[28] to be still idle, and by way of cure, neglects the little that he has to do. The parable of the talent is the brief epitome of youth. To believe in immortality is one thing, but it is first needful to believe in life. Denunciatory preachers seem not to suspect that they may be taken gravely and in evil part; that young men may come to think of time as of a moment, and with the pride of Satan wave back the inadequate gift. Yet here is a true peril; this it is that sets them to pace the graveyard alleys and to read, with strange extremes of pity and derision, the memorials of the dead.

Books were the proper remedy: books of vivid human import, forcing upon their minds the issues, pleasures, busyness, importance, and immediacy of that life in which they stand; books of smiling or heroic temper, to excite or to console; books of a large design, shadowing the complexity of that game of consequences to which we all sit down, the hanger-back not least. But the average sermon flees the point, disporting itself in that eternity of which we know, and need to know, so little; avoiding the bright, crowded, and momentous fields of life where destiny awaits us. Upon the average book a writer may be silent; he may set it down to his ill-hap that when his own youth was in the acrid fermentation, he should have fallen and fed upon the cheerless fields of Obermann. Yet to Mr. Matthew Arnold, who led him to these pastures, he still bears a grudge. The day is perhaps not far off when people will begin to count "Moll Flanders," ay, or “The Country Wife,” more wholesome and more pious diet than these guide-books to consistent egoism.

But the most inhuman of boys soon wearies of the inhumanity of Obermann. And even while I still continued to be a haunter of the graveyard, I began insensibly to turn my attention to the grave-diggers, and was weaned out of myself to observe the conduct of visitors. This was day-spring, indeed, to a lad in such great darkness. Not that I began to see men, or to try to see them, from within, nor 29
to learn charity and modesty and justice from the sight; but still stared at them externally from the prison windows of my affectation. Once I remember to have observed two working women with a baby halting by a grave; there was something monumental in the grouping, one upright carrying the child, the other with bowed face crouching by her side. A wreath of immortelles under a glass dome had thus attracted them; and, drawing near, I overheard their judgment on that wonder: “Eh! what extravagance!” To a youth afflicted with the callosity of sentiment, this quaint and pregnant saying appeared merely base.

My acquaintance with grave-diggers, considering its length, was unremarkable. One, indeed, whom I found plying his spade in the red evening, high above Allan Water and in the shadow of Dunblane Cathedral, told me of his acquaintance with the birds that still attended on his labours; how some would even perch about him, waiting for their prey; and, in a true Sexton’s Calendar, how the species varied with the season of the year. But this was the very poetry of the profession. The others whom I knew were somewhat dry. A faint flavour of the gardener hung about them, but sophisticated and disbloomed. They had engagements to keep, not alone with the deliberate series of the seasons, but with mankind’s clocks and hour-long measurement of time. And thus there was no leisure for the relishing pinch, or the hour-long gossip, foot on spade. They were men wrapped up in their grim business; they liked well to open long-closed family vaults, blowing in the key and throwing wide the grating; and they carried in their minds a calendar of names and dates. It would be “in fifty-twa” that such a tomb was last opened, for “Miss Jemimy.” It was thus they spoke of their past patients — familiarly but not without respect, like old family servants. Here is indeed a servant, whom we forget that we possess; who does not wait at the bright table, or run at the bell’s summons, but patiently smokes his pipe beside the mortuary fire, and in his faithful memory notches the 30
burials of our race. To suspect Shakespeare in his maturity of a superficial touch savours of paradox; yet he was surely in error when he attributed insensibility to the digger of the grave. But perhaps it is on Hamlet that the charge should lie; or perhaps the English sexton

differs from the Scottish. The “goodman delver,” reckoning up his years of office, might have at least suggested other thoughts. It is a pride common among sextons. A cabinet-maker does not count his cabinets, nor even an author his volumes, save when they stare upon him from the shelves; but the grave-digger numbers his graves. He would indeed be something different from human if his solitary open-air and tragic labours left not a broad mark upon his mind. There, in his tranquil isle, apart from city clamour, among the cats and robins and the ancient effigies and legends of the tomb, he waits the continual passage of his contemporaries, falling like minute drops into eternity. As they fall, he counts them; and this enumeration, which was at first perhaps appalling to his soul, in the process of years and by the kindly influence of habit grows to be his pride and pleasure. There are many common stories telling how he piques himself on crowded cemeteries. But I will rather tell of the old grave-digger of Monkton, to whose unsuffering bedside the minister was summoned. He dwelt in a cottage built into the wall of the churchyard; and through a bull’s-eye pane above his bed he could see, as he lay dying, the rank grasses and the upright and recumbent stones. Dr. Laurie was, I think, a Moderate; ‘tis certain, at least, that he took a very Roman view of death-bed dispositions; for he told the old man that he had lived beyond man’s natural years, that his life had been easy and reputable, that his family had all grown up and been a credit to his care, and that it now behoved him unregretfully to gird his loins and follow the majority. The grave-digger heard him out; then he raised himself up on one elbow, and with the other hand pointed through the window to the scene of his lifelong labours. “Doctor,” he said, “I hae laid three hunner 31 and fower-score in that kirkyaird; an it had been His wull,” indicating Heaven, “I would hae likit weel to hae made out the fower hunner.” But it was not to be; this tragedian of the fifth act had now another part to play; and the time had come when others were to gird and carry him.

II

I would fain strike a note that should be more heroical; but the ground of all youth's suffering, solitude, hysteria, and haunting of the grave, is nothing else than naked, ignorant selfishness. It is himself that he sees dead; those are his virtues that are forgotten; his is the vague epitaph. Pity him but the more, if pity be your cue; for where a man is all pride, vanity, and personal aspiration, he goes through fire unshielded. In every part and corner of our life, to lose oneself is to be gainer; to forget oneself is to be happy; and this poor, laughable, and tragic fool has not yet learned the rudiments; himself, giant Prometheus, is still ironed on the peaks of Caucasus. But by and by his truant interests will leave that tortured body, slip abroad, and gather flowers. Then shall death appear before him in an altered guise; no longer as a doom peculiar to himself, whether fate's crowning injustice or his own last vengeance upon those who fail to value him; but now as a power that wounds him far more tenderly, not without solemn compensations, taking and giving, bereaving and yet storing up.

The first step for all is to learn to the dregs our own ignoble fallibility. When we have fallen through story after story of our vanity and aspiration, and sit rueful among the ruins, then it is that we begin to measure the stature of our friends: how they stand between us and our own contempt, believing in our best; how, linking us with others, and still spreading wide the influential circle, they weave us in and in with the fabric of contemporary 32 life; and to what petty size they dwarf the virtues and the vices that appeared gigantic in our youth. So that at the last, when such a pin falls out — when there vanishes in the least breath of time one of those rich magazines of life on which we drew for our supply — when he who had first dawned upon us as a face among the faces of the city, and, still growing, came to bulk on our regard with those clear features of the loved and living man, falls in a breath to memory and shadow, there falls along with him a whole wing of the palace of our life.

III

One such face I now remember; one such blank some half a dozen of us labour to dissemble. In his youth he was most beautiful in person, most serene and genial by disposition; full of racy words and quaint thoughts. Laughter attended on his coming. He had the air of a great gentleman, jovial and royal with his equals, and to the poorest student gentle and attentive. Power seemed to reside in him exhaustless; we saw him stoop to play with us, but held him marked for higher destinies; we loved his notice; and I have rarely had my pride more gratified than when he sat at my father's table, my acknowledged friend. So he walked among us, both hands full of gifts, carrying with nonchalance the seeds of a most influential life.

The powers and the ground of friendship is a mystery; but, looking back, I can discern that, in part, we loved the thing he was, for some shadow of what he was to be. For with all his beauty, power, breeding, urbanity, and mirth, there was in those days something soulless in our friend. He would astonish us by sallies, witty, innocent, and inhumane; and by a misapplied Johnsonian pleasantry demolish honest sentiment. I can still see and hear him, as he went his way along the lamplit streets, "Là ci darem[33] la mano" on his lips, a noble figure of a youth, but following vanity and incredulous of good; and sure enough, somewhere on the high seas of life, with his health, his hopes, his patrimony, and his self-respect miserably went down.

From this disaster, like a spent swimmer, he came desperately ashore, bankrupt of money and consideration; creeping to the family he had deserted; with broken wing, never more to rise. But in his face there was a light of knowledge that was new to it. Of the wounds of his body he was never healed; died of them gradually, with clear-eyed resignation; of his wounded pride, we knew only from his silence. He returned to that city where he had lorded it in his ambitious youth; lived there alone, seeing few; striving to retrieve the irretrievable; at times still grappling with that mortal frailty that had brought him down; still joying in his friend's successes; his laugh still ready, but with a kindlier music; and over all his thoughts the shadow of that unalterable law which he had disavowed and which had brought him low. Lastly, when his bodily evils had quite disabled him, he lay a great while dying, still without complaint, still finding interests; to his last step gentle, urbane, and with the will to smile.

The tale of this great failure is, to those who remained true to him, the tale of a success. In his youth he took thought for no one but himself; when he came ashore again, his whole armada lost, he seemed to think of none but others. Such was his tenderness for others, such his instinct of fine courtesy and pride, that of that impure passion of remorse he never breathed a syllable; even regret was rare with him, and pointed with a jest. You would not have dreamed, if you had known him then, that this was that great failure, that beacon to young men, over whose fall a whole society had hissed and pointed fingers. Often have we gone to him, red-hot with our own hopeful sorrows, railing on the rose-leaves in our princely bed of life, and he would patiently give ear and wisely counsel; and it was only upon some return of our own thoughts that 34 we were reminded what manner of man this was to whom we disembosomed: a man, by his own fault, ruined; shut out of the garden of his gifts; his whole city of hope both ploughed and salted; silently awaiting the deliverer. Then something took us by the throat; and to see him there, so gentle, patient, brave, and pious, oppressed but not cast down, sorrow was so swallowed up in admiration that we could not dare to pity him. Even if the old fault flashed out again, it but awoke our wonder that, in that lost battle, he should have still the energy to fight. He had gone to ruin with a kind of kingly *abandon*, like one who condescended; but once ruined, with the lights all out, he fought as for a kingdom. Most men, finding themselves the authors of their own disgrace, rail the louder against God or destiny. Most men, when they repent, oblige their friends to share the bitterness of that repentance. But he had held an inquest and passed sentence: *mene, mene*; and condemned himself to smiling silence. He had given trouble enough; had earned misfortune amply, and foregone the right to murmur.

Thus was our old comrade, like Samson, careless in his days of strength; but on the coming of adversity, and when that strength was gone that had betrayed him — ”for our strength is weakness” — he began to blossom and bring forth. Well, now, he is out of the fight: the burden that he bore thrown down before the great deliverer. We

“in the vast cathedral leave him;
God accept him,
Christ receive him!”

IV

If we go now and look on these innumerable epitaphs, the pathos and the irony are strangely fled. They do not stand merely to the dead, these foolish monuments; they are pillars and legends set up to glorify the difficult but not 35 desperate life of man. This ground is hallowed by the heroes of defeat.

I see the indifferent pass before my friend's last resting-place; pause, with a shrug of pity, marvelling that so rich an argosy had sunk. A pity, now that he is done with suffering, a pity most uncalled for, and an ignorant wonder. Before those who loved him, his memory shines like a reproach; they honour him for silent lessons; they cherish his example; and, in what remains before them of their toil, fear to be unworthy of the dead. For this proud man was one of those who prospered in the valley of humiliation; — of whom Bunyan wrote that, "Though Christian had the hard hap to meet in the valley with Apollyon, yet I must tell you, that in former times men have met with angels here, have found pearls here, and have in this place found the words of life."

IV

A COLLEGE MAGAZINE

I

All through my boyhood and youth I was known and pointed out for the pattern of an idler; and yet I was always busy on my own private end, which was to learn to write. I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in. As I walked, my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words; when I sat by the roadside, I would either read, or a pencil and a penny version-book would be in my hand, to note down the features of the scene or commemorate some halting stanzas. Thus I lived with words. And what I thus wrote was for no ulterior use, it was written consciously for practice. It was not so much that I wished to be an author (though I wished that too) as that I had vowed that I would learn to write. That was a proficiency that tempted me; and I practised to acquire it, as men learn to whittle, in a wager with myself. Description was the principal field of my exercise; for to any one with senses there is always something worth describing, and town and country are but one continuous subject. But I worked in other ways also; often accompanied my walks with dramatic dialogues, in which I played many parts; and often exercised myself in writing down conversations from memory.

This was all excellent, no doubt; so were the diaries I sometimes tried to keep, but always and very speedily 37 discarded, finding them a school of posturing and melancholy self-deception. And yet this was not the most efficient part of my training. Good though it was, it only taught me (so far as I have learned them at all) the lower and less intellectual elements of the art, the choice of the essential note and the right word: things that to a happier constitution had perhaps come by nature. And regarded as training, it had one grave defect; for it set me no standard of achievement. So that there was perhaps more profit, as there was certainly more effort, in my secret labours at home. Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful, and I knew it; and tried again, and was again unsuccessful, and always unsuccessful; but at least in these vain bouts I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction and the co-ordination of parts. I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire, and to Obermann. I remember one of these monkey tricks, which was called "The Vanity of Morals": it was to have had a second part, "The Vanity of Knowledge"; and as I had neither morality nor scholarship, the names were apt; but the second part was never attempted, and the first part was written (which is my reason for recalling it, ghostlike, from its ashes) no less than three times: first in the manner of Hazlitt, second in the manner of Ruskin, who had cast on me a passing spell, and third, in a laborious pasticcio of Sir Thomas Browne. So with my other works: "Cain," an epic, was (save the mark!) an imitation of "Sordello": "Robin Hood," a tale in verse, took an eclectic middle course among the fields of Keats, Chaucer, and Morris: in *Monmouth*, a tragedy, I reclined on the bosom of Mr. Swinburne; in my innumerable gouty-footed lyrics, I 38 followed many masters; in the first draft of *The King's Pardon*, a tragedy, I was on the trail of no less a man than John Webster; in the second draft of the same piece, with staggering versatility, I had shifted my allegiance to Congreve, and of course conceived my fable in a less serious vein — for it was not Congreve's verse, it was his exquisite prose, that I admired and sought to copy. Even at the age of thirteen I had tried to do justice to the inhabitants of the famous city of Peebles in the style of "The Book of Snobs." So I might go on for ever, through all my abortive novels, and down to my later plays, of which I think more tenderly, for they were not only conceived at first under the bracing influence of old Dumas, but have met with resurrections: one, strangely bettered by another hand, came on the stage itself and was played by bodily actors; the other, originally known as *Semiramis: a Tragedy*, I have observed on bookstalls under the *alias* of "Prince Otto." But enough has been said to show by what arts of impersonation and in what purely ventriloquial efforts I first saw my words on paper.

That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write; whether I have profited or not, that is the way. It was so Keats learned, and there was never a finer temperament for literature than Keats's; it was so, if we could trace it out, that all men have learned; and that is why a revival of letters is always accompanied or heralded by a cast back to earlier and fresher models. Perhaps I hear some one cry out: "But this is not the way to be original!" It is not; nor is there any way but to be born so. Nor yet, if you are born original, is there anything in this training that shall clip the wings of your originality. There can be none more original than Montaigne, neither could any be more unlike Cicero; yet no craftsman can fail to see how much the one must have tried in his time to imitate the other. Burns is the very type of a prime force in letters: he was of all men the most imitative. Shakespeare himself, the imperial, proceeds directly from a school. It is only from 39 a school that we can expect to have good writers, it is almost invariably from a school that great writers, these lawless exceptions, issue. Nor is there anything here that should astonish the considerate. Before he can tell what cadences he truly prefers, the student should have tried all that are possible; before he can choose and preserve a fitting key of language, he should long have practised the literary scales; and it is only after years of such gymnastic that he can sit down at last, legions of words swarming to his call, dozens of turns of phrase simultaneously bidding for his choice, and he himself knowing what he wants to do and (within the narrow limit of a man's ability) able to do it.

And it is the great point of these imitations that there still shines beyond the student's reach his inimitable model. Let him try as he please, he is still sure of failure; and it is a very old and a very true saying that failure is the only highroad to success. I must have had some disposition to learn; for I clear-sightedly condemned my own performances. I liked doing them indeed; but when they were done, I could see they were rubbish. In consequence, I very rarely showed them even to my friends; and such friends as I chose to be my confidants I must have chosen well, for they had the friendliness to be quite plain with me. "Padding," said one. Another wrote: "I cannot understand why you do lyrics so badly." No more could I! Thrice I put myself in the way of a more authoritative rebuff, by sending a paper to a magazine. These were returned; and I was not surprised or even pained. If they had not been looked at, as (like all amateurs) I suspected was the case, there was no good in repeating the experiment; if they had been looked at — well, then I had not yet learned to write, and I must keep on learning and living. Lastly, I had a piece of good fortune which is the occasion of this paper, and by which I was able to see my literature in print, and to measure experimentally how far I stood from the favour of the public.

II

The Speculative Society is a body of some antiquity, and has counted among its members Scott, Brougham, Jeffrey, Horner, Benjamin Constant, Robert Emmet, and many a legal and local celebrity besides. By an accident, variously explained, it has its rooms in the very buildings of the University of Edinburgh: a hall, Turkey-carpeted, hung with pictures, looking, when lighted up at night with fire and candle, like some goodly dining-room; a passage-like library, walled with books in their wire cages; and a corridor with a fireplace, benches, a table, many prints of famous members, and a mural tablet to the virtues of a former secretary. Here a member can warm himself and loaf and read; here, in defiance of Senatus-consults, he can smoke. The Senatus looks askance at these privileges; looks even with a somewhat vinegar aspect on the whole society; which argues a lack of proportion in the learned mind, for the world, we may be sure, will prize far higher this haunt of dead lions than all the living dogs of the professoriate.

I sat one December morning in the library of the Speculative; a very humble-minded youth, though it was a virtue I never had much credit for; yet proud of my privileges as a member of the Spec.; proud of the pipe I was smoking in the teeth of the Senatus; and, in particular, proud of being in the next room to three very distinguished students, who were then conversing beside the corridor fire. One of these has now his name on the back of several volumes, and his voice, I learn, is influential in the law courts. Of the death of the second, you have just been reading what I had to say. And the third also has escaped out of that battle of life in which he fought so hard, it may be so unwisely. They were all three, as I have said, notable students; but this was the most conspicuous. Wealthy, handsome, ambitious, adventurous, diplomatic, a reader of Balzac, and of all men that I have known, the most like 41 to one of Balzac's characters, he led a life, and was attended by an ill fortune, that could be properly set forth only in the *Comédie Humaine*. He had then his eye on Parliament; and soon after the time of which I write, he made a showy speech at a political dinner, was cried up to heaven next day in the *Courant*, and the day after was dashed lower than earth with a charge of plagiarism in the *Scotsman*. Report would have it (I daresay very wrongly) that he was betrayed by one in whom he particularly trusted, and that the author of the charge had learned its truth from his own lips. Thus, at least, he was up one day on a pinnacle, admired and envied by all; and the next, though still but a boy, he was publicly disgraced. The blow would have broken a less finely tempered spirit; and even him I suppose it rendered reckless; for he took flight to London, and there, in a fast club, disposed of the bulk of his considerable patrimony in the space of one winter. For years thereafter he lived I know not how; always well dressed, always in good hotels and good society, always with empty pockets. The charm of his manner may have stood him in good stead; but though my own manners are very agreeable, I have never found in them a source of livelihood; and to explain the miracle of his continued existence, I must fall back upon the theory of the philosopher, that in his case, as in all of the same kind, “there was a suffering relative in the background.” From this genteel eclipse he reappeared upon the scene, and presently sought me out in the character of a generous editor. It is in this part that I best remember him; tall, slender, with a not ungraceful stoop; looking quite like a refined gentleman, and quite like an urbane adventurer; smiling with an engaging ambiguity; cocking at you one peaked eyebrow with a great appearance of finesse; speaking low and sweet and thick, with a touch of burr; telling strange tales with singular deliberation and, to a patient listener, excellent effect. After all these ups and downs, he seemed still, like the rich student that he was of yore, to breathe of money; 42 seemed still perfectly sure of himself and certain of his end. Yet he was then upon the brink of his last overthrow. He had set himself to found the strangest thing in our society: one of those periodical sheets from which men suppose themselves to learn opinions; in which young gentlemen from the Universities are encouraged, at so much a line, to garble facts, insult foreign nations, and calumniate private individuals; and which are now the source of glory, so that if a man’s name be often enough printed there, he becomes a kind of demigod; and people will pardon him when he talks back and forth, as they do for Mr. Gladstone; and crowd him to suffocation on railway platforms, as they did the other day to General Boulanger; and buy his literary works, as I hope you have just done for me. Our fathers, when they were upon some great enterprise, would sacrifice a life; building, it may be, a favourite slave into the foundations of their palace. It was with his own life that my companion disarmed the envy of the gods. He fought his paper single-handed; trusting no one, for he was something of a cynic; up early and down late, for he was nothing of a sluggard; daily ear-wigging influential men, for he was a master of ingratiation. In that slender and silken fellow there must have been a rare vein of courage, that he should thus have died at his employment; and doubtless ambition spoke loudly in his ear, and doubtless love also, for it seems there was a marriage in his view had he succeeded. But he died, and his paper died after him; and of all this grace, and tact, and courage, it must seem to our blind eyes as if there had come literally nothing.

These three students sat, as I was saying, in the corridor, under the mural tablet that records the virtues of Macbean, the former secretary. We would often smile at that ineloquent memorial, and thought it a poor thing to come into the world at all and leave no more behind one than Macbean. And yet of these three, two are gone and have left less; and this book, perhaps, when it is old and foxy, and some one picks it up in a corner of a book-shop, and 43 glances through it, smiling at the old, graceless turns of speech, and perhaps for the love of *Alma Mater* (which may be still extant and flourishing) buys it, not without haggling, for some pence — this book may alone preserve a memory of James Walter Ferrier and Robert Glasgow Brown.

Their thoughts ran very differently on that December morning; they were all on fire with ambition; and when they had called me in to them, and made me a sharer in their design, I too became drunken with pride and hope. We were to found a University magazine. A pair of little, active brothers — Livingstone by name, great skippers on the foot, great rubbers of the hands, who kept a book-shop over against the University building — had been debauched to play the part of publishers. We four were to be conjunct editors, and, what was the main point of the concern, to print our own works; while, by every rule of arithmetic — that flatterer of credulity — the adventure must succeed and bring great profit. Well, well: it was a bright vision. I went home that morning walking upon air. To have been chosen by these three distinguished students was to me the most unspeakable advance; it was my first draught of consideration; it reconciled me to myself and to my fellow-men; and as I steered round the railings at the Tron, I could not withhold my lips from smiling publicly. Yet, in the bottom of my heart, I knew that magazine would be a grim fiasco; I knew it would not be worth reading; I knew, even if it were, that nobody would read it; and I kept wondering how I should be able, upon my compact income of twelve pounds per annum, payable monthly, to meet my share in the expense. It was a comfortable thought to me that I had a father.

The magazine appeared, in a yellow cover, which was the best part of it, for at least it was unassuming; it ran four months in undisturbed obscurity, and died without a gasp. The first number was edited by all four of us with prodigious bustle; the second fell principally into the hands of Ferrier and me; the third I edited alone; and 44 it has long been a solemn question who it was that edited the fourth. It would perhaps be still more difficult to say who read it. Poor yellow sheet, that looked so hopefully in the Livingstones' window! Poor, harmless paper, that might have gone to print a "Shakespeare" on, and was instead so clumsily defaced with nonsense! And, shall I say, Poor Editors? I cannot pity myself, to whom it was all pure gain. It was no news to me, but only the wholesome confirmation of my judgment, when the magazine struggled into half-birth, and instantly sickened and subsided into night. I had sent a copy to the lady with whom my heart was at that time somewhat engaged, and who did all that in her lay to break it; and she, with some tact, passed over the gift and my cherished contributions in silence. I will not say that I was pleased at this; but I will tell her now, if by any chance she takes up the work of her former servant, that I thought the better of her taste. I cleared the decks after this lost engagement; had the necessary interview with my father, which passed off not amiss; paid over my share of the expense to the two little, active brothers, who rubbed their hands as much, but methought skipped rather less than formerly, having perhaps, these two also, embarked upon the enterprise with some graceful illusions; and then, reviewing the whole episode, I told myself that the time was not yet ripe, nor the man ready; and to work I went again with my penny version-books, having fallen back in one day from the printed author to the manuscript student.

III

From this defunct periodical I am going to reprint one of my own papers. The poor little piece is all tail-foremost. I have done my best to straighten its array, I have pruned it fearlessly, and it remains invertebrate and wordy. No self-respecting magazine would print the thing; and here 45 you behold it in a bound volume, not for any worth of its own, but for the sake of the man whom it purports dimly to represent and some of whose sayings it preserves; so that in this volume of Memories and Portraits, Robert Young, the Swanston gardener, may stand alongside of John Todd, the Swanston shepherd. Not that John and Robert drew very close together in their lives; for John was rough — he smelt of the windy brae; and Robert was gentle, and smacked of the garden in the hollow. Perhaps it is to my shame that I liked John the better of the two; he had grit and dash, and that salt of the old Adam that pleases men with any savage inheritance of blood; and he was a wayfarer besides, and took my gipsy fancy. But however that may be, and however Robert's profile may be blurred in the boyish sketch that follows, he was a man of a most quaint and beautiful nature, whom, if it were possible to recast a piece of work so old, I should like well to draw again with a maturer touch. And as I think of him and of John, I wonder in what other country two such men would be found dwelling together, in a hamlet of some twenty cottages, in the woody fold of a green hill.

V

AN OLD SCOTS GARDENER

I think I might almost have said the last: somewhere, indeed, in the uttermost glens of the Lammermuir or among the south-western hills there may yet linger a decrepit representative of this bygone good fellowship; but as far as actual experience goes, I have only met one man in my life who might fitly be quoted in the same breath with Andrew Fairservice, — though without his vices. He was a man whose very presence could impart a savour of quaint antiquity to the baldest and most modern flower-plots. There was a dignity about his tall, stooping form, and an earnestness in his wrinkled face, that recalled Don Quixote; but a Don Quixote who had come through the training of the Covenant, and been nourished in his youth on "Walker's Lives" and "The Hind let Loose."

Now, as I could not bear to let such a man pass away with no sketch preserved of his old-fashioned virtues, I hope the reader will take this as an excuse for the present paper, and judge as kindly as he can the infirmities of my description. To me, who find it so difficult to tell the little that I know, he stands essentially as a *genius loci*. It is impossible to separate his spare form and old straw hat from the garden in the lap of the hill, with its rocks overgrown with clematis, its shadowy walks, and the splendid breadth of champaign that one saw from the north-west corner. The garden and gardener seem part and parcel of each other. When I take him from his right surroundings and try to make him appear for me on paper, he looks unreal 47 and phantasmal: the best that I can say may convey some notion to those that never saw him, but to me it will be ever impotent.

The first time that I saw him, I fancy Robert was pretty old already: he had certainly begun to use his years as a stalking-horse. Latterly he was beyond all the impudencies of logic, considering a reference to the parish register worth all the reasons in the world. "*I am old and well stricken in years,*" he was wont to say; and I never found any one bold enough to answer the argument. Apart from this vantage that he kept over all who were not yet octogenarian, he had some other drawbacks as a gardener. He shrank the very place he cultivated. The dignity and reduced gentility of his appearance made the small garden cut a sorry figure. He was full of tales of greater situations in his younger days. He spoke of castles and parks with a humbling familiarity. He told of places where under-gardeners had trembled at his looks, where there were meres and swanneries, labyrinths of walk and wildernesses of sad shrubbery in his control, till you could not help feeling that it was condescension on his part to dress your humbler garden plots. You were thrown at once into an invidious position. You felt that you were profiting by the needs of dignity, and that his poverty and not his will consented to your vulgar rule. Involuntarily you compared yourself with the swineherd that made Alfred watch his cakes, or some bloated citizen who may have given his sons and his condescension to the fallen Dionysius. Nor were the disagreeables purely fanciful and metaphysical, for the sway that he exercised over your feelings he extended to your garden, and, through the garden, to your diet. He would trim a hedge, throw away a favourite plant, or fill the most favoured and fertile section of the garden with a vegetable that none of us could eat, in supreme contempt for our opinion. If you asked him to send you in one of your own artichokes, "*That I wull, mem,*" he would say, "*with pleesure, for it is mair blessed 48 to give than to receive*." Ay, and even when, by extra twisting of the screw, we prevailed on him to prefer our commands to his own inclination, and he went away, stately and sad, professing that "*our wull was his pleesure,*" but yet reminding us that he would do it "*with feelin's,*" — even then, I say, the triumphant master felt humbled in his triumph, felt that he ruled on sufferance only, that he was taking a mean advantage of the other's low estate, and that the whole scene had been one of those "slights that patient merit of the unworthy takes."

In flowers his taste was old-fashioned and catholic; affecting sunflowers and dahlias, wallflowers and roses, and holding in supreme aversion whatsoever was fantastic, new-fashioned, or wild. There was one exception to this sweeping ban. Foxgloves, though undoubtedly guilty on the last count, he not only spared, but loved; and when the shrubbery was being thinned, he stayed his hand and dexterously manipulated his bill in order to save every stately stem. In boyhood, as he told me once, speaking in that tone that only actors and the old-fashioned common folk can use nowadays, his heart grew "*proud*" within him when he came on a burn-course among the braes of Manor that shone purple with their graceful trophies; and not all his apprenticeship and practice for so many years of precise gardening had banished these boyish recollections from his heart. Indeed, he was a man keenly alive to the beauty of all that was bygone. He abounded in old stories of his boyhood, and kept pious account of all his former pleasures, and when he went (on a holiday) to visit one of the fabled great places of the earth where he had served before, he came back full of little pre-Raphaelite reminiscences that showed real passion for the past, such as might have shaken hands with Hazlitt or Jean-Jacques.

But however his sympathy with his old feelings might affect his liking for the foxgloves, the very truth was that he scorned all flowers together. They were but garnishings, childish toys, trifling ornaments for ladies' chimney-shelves. 49 It was towards his cauliflowers and peas and cabbage that his heart grew warm. His preference for the more useful growths was such that cabbages were found invading the flower-plots, and an outpost of savoys was once discovered in the centre of the lawn. He would prelect over some thriving plant with wonderful enthusiasm, piling reminiscence on reminiscence of former and perhaps yet finer specimens. Yet even then he did not let the credit leave himself. He had, indeed, raised "*finer o' them*"; but it seemed that no one else had been favoured with a like success. All other gardeners, in fact, were mere foils to his own superior attainments; and he would recount, with perfect soberness of voice and visage, how so-and-so had wondered, and such another could scarcely give credit to his eyes. Nor was it with his rivals only that he parted praise and blame. If you remarked how well a plant was looking, he would gravely touch his hat and thank you with solemn unction; all credit in the matter falling to him. If, on the other hand, you called his attention to some back-going vegetable, he would quote Scripture: "*Paul may plant, and Apollos may water*"; all blame being left to Providence, on the score of deficient rain or untimely frosts.

There was one thing in the garden that shared his preference with his favourite cabbages and rhubarb, and that other was the bee-hive. Their sound, their industry, perhaps their sweet product also, had taken hold of his imagination and heart, whether by way of memory or no I cannot say, although perhaps the bees too were linked to him by some recollection of Manor braes and his country childhood. Nevertheless, he was too chary of his personal safety or (let me rather say) his personal dignity to mingle in any active office towards them. But he could stand by while one of the contemned rivals did the work for him, and protest that it was quite safe in spite of his own considerate distance and the cries of the distressed assistant. In regard to bees, he was rather a man of word than deed, 50 and some of his most striking sentences had the bees for text. "*They are indeed wonderfu' creatures, mem,*" he said once. "*They just mind me o' what the Queen of Sheba said to Solomon — and I think she said it wi' a sigh, — 'The half of it hath not been told unto me.'*"

As far as the Bible goes, he was deeply read. Like the old Covenanters, of whom he was the worthy representative, his mouth was full of sacred quotations; it was the book that he had studied most and thought upon most deeply. To many people in his station the Bible, and perhaps Burns, are the only books of any vital literary merit that they read, feeding themselves, for the rest, on the draff of country newspapers, and the very instructive but not very palatable pabulum of some cheap educational series. This was Robert's position. All day long he had dreamed of the Hebrew stories, and his head had been full of Hebrew poetry and Gospel ethics; until they had struck deep root into his heart, and the very expressions had become a part of him; so that he rarely spoke without some antique idiom or Scripture mannerism that gave a raciness to the merest trivialities of talk. But the influence of the Bible did not stop here. There was more in Robert than quaint phrase and ready store of reference. He was imbued with a spirit of peace and love: he interposed between man and wife: he threw himself between the angry, touching his hat the while with all the ceremony of an usher. He protected the birds from everybody but himself, seeing, I suppose, a great difference between official execution and wanton sport. His mistress telling him one day to put some ferns into his master's particular corner, and adding, "Though, indeed, Robert, he doesn't deserve them, for he wouldn't help me to gather them," "*Eh, mem,*" replied Robert, "*but I wouldna say that, for I think he's just a most deservin' gentleman.*" Again, two of our friends, who were on intimate terms, and accustomed to use language to each other somewhat without the bounds of the parliamentary, happened to differ about the position of a seat in the garden. 51 The discussion, as was usual when these two were at it, soon waxed tolerably insulting on both sides. Every one accustomed to such controversies several times a day was quietly enjoying this prize-fight of somewhat abusive wit — every one but Robert, to whom the perfect good faith of the whole quarrel seemed unquestionable, and who, after having waited till his conscience would suffer him to wait no more, and till he expected every moment that the disputants would fall to blows, cut suddenly in with tones of almost tearful entreaty: "*Eh, but, gentlemen, I wad hae nae mair words about it!*" One thing was noticeable about Robert's religion: it was neither dogmatic nor sectarian. He never expatiated (at least, in my hearing) on the doctrines of his creed, and he never condemned anybody else. I have no doubt that he held all Roman Catholics, Atheists, and Mahometans as considerably out of it; I don't believe he had any sympathy for Prelacy; and the natural feelings of man must have made him a little sore about Free-Churchism; but, at least, he never talked about these views, never grew controversially noisy, and never openly aspersed the belief or practice of anybody. Now all this is not generally characteristic of Scots piety; Scots sects being churches militant with a vengeance, and Scots believers perpetual crusaders the one against the other, and missionaries the one to the other. Perhaps Robert's originally tender heart was what made the difference; or, perhaps, his solitary and pleasant labour among fruits and flowers had taught him a more sunshiny creed than those whose work is among the tares of fallen humanity; and the soft influences of the garden had entered deep into his spirit,

“Annihilating all that’s made
To a green thought in a green shade.”

But I could go on for ever chronicling his golden sayings or telling of his innocent and living piety. I had meant to tell of his cottage, with the German pipe hung reverently above the fire, and the shell box that he had made for his 52 son, and of which he would say pathetically: “*He was real pleased wi’ it at first, but I think he’s got a kind o’ tired o’ it now*” — the son being then a man of about forty. But I will let all these pass. “’Tis more significant: he’s dead.” The earth, that he had digged so much in his life, was dug out by another for himself; and the flowers that he had tended drew their life still from him, but in a new and nearer way. A bird flew about the open grave, as if it too wished to honour the obsequies of one who had so often quoted Scripture in favour of its kind: “Are not two sparrows sold for one farthing? and yet not one of them falleth to the ground.”

Yes, he is dead. But the kings did not rise in the place of death to greet him “with taunting proverbs” as they rose to greet the haughty Babylonian; for in his life he was lowly, and a peacemaker and a servant of God.

VI

PASTORAL

To leave home in early life is to be stunned and quickened with novelties; but to leave it when years have come only casts a more endearing light upon the past. As in those composite photographs of Mr. Galton's, the image of each new sitter brings out but the more clearly the central features of the race; when once youth has flown, each new impression only deepens the sense of nationality and the desire of native places. So may some cadet of Royal Écossais or the Albany Regiment, as he mounted guard about French citadels, so may some officer marching his company of the Scots-Dutch among the polders, have felt the soft rains of the Hebrides upon his brow, or started in the ranks at the remembered aroma of peat-smoke. And the rivers of home are dear in particular to all men. This is as old as Naaman, who was jealous for Abana and Pharpar; it is confined to no race nor country, for I know one of Scottish blood but a child of Suffolk, whose fancy still lingers about the lilied lowland waters of that shire. But the streams of Scotland are incomparable in themselves — or I am only the more Scottish to suppose so — and their sound and colour dwell for ever in the memory. How often and willingly do I not look again in fancy on Tummel, or Manor, or the talking Airdle, or Dee swirling in its Lynn; on the bright burn of Kinnaird, or the golden burn that pours and sulks in the den behind Kingussie! I think shame to leave out one of these enchantresses, but the list would grow too long if I remembered all; only I may not forget Allan Water, nor birch-wetting Rogie, nor yet Almond; nor, 54 for all its pollutions, that Water of Leith of the many and well-named mills — Bell's Mills, and Canon Mills, and Silver Mills; nor Redford Burn of pleasant memories; nor yet, for all its smallness, that nameless trickle that springs in the green bosom of Allermuir, and is fed from Halkerside with a perennial teacupful, and threads the moss under the Shearer's Knowe, and makes one pool there, overhung by a rock, where I loved to sit and make bad verses, and is then kidnapped in its infancy by subterranean pipes for the service of the sea-beholding city in the plain. From many points in the moss you may see at one glance its whole course and that of all its tributaries; the geographer of this Lilliput may visit all its corners without sitting down, and not yet begin to be breathed; Shearer's Knowe and Halkerside are but names of adjacent cantons on a single shoulder of a hill, as names are squandered (it would seem to the inexpert, in superfluity) upon these upland sheepwalks; a bucket would receive the whole discharge of the toy river; it would take it an appreciable time to fill your morning bath; for the most part, besides, it soaks unseen through the moss; and yet for the sake of auld lang syne, and the figure of a certain *genius loci*, I am condemned to linger awhile in fancy by its shores; and if the nymph (who cannot be above a span in stature) will but inspire my pen, I would gladly carry the reader along with me.

John Todd, when I knew him, was already “the oldest herd on the Pentlands,” and had been all his days faithful to that curlew-scattering, sheep-collecting life. He remembered the droving days, when the drove-roads, that now lie green and solitary through the heather, were thronged thoroughfares. He had himself often marched flocks into England, sleeping on the hillsides with his caravan; and by his account it was a rough business, not without danger. The drove-roads lay apart from habitation; the drovers met in the wilderness, as to-day the deep-sea fishers meet off the banks in the solitude of the Atlantic; and in the 55 one as in the other case rough habits and fist-law were the rule. Crimes were committed, sheep filched, and drovers robbed and beaten; most of which offences had a moorland burial, and were never heard of in the courts of justice. John, in those days, was at least once attacked, — by two men after his watch, — and at least once, betrayed by his habitual anger, fell under the danger of the law and was clapped into some rustic prison-house, the doors of which he burst in the night and was no more heard of in that quarter. When I knew him, his life had fallen in quieter places, and he had no cares beyond the dulness of his dogs and the inroads of pedestrians from town. But for a man of his propensity to wrath these were enough; he knew neither rest nor peace, except by snatches; in the grey of the summer morning, and already from far up the hill, he would wake the “toun” with the sound of his shoutings; and in the lambing-time, his cries were not yet silenced late at night. This wrathful voice of a man unseen might be said to haunt that quarter of the Pentlands, an audible bogie; and no doubt it added to the fear in which men stood of John a touch of something legendary. For my own part he was at first my enemy, and I, in my character of a rambling boy, his natural abhorrence. It was long before I saw him near at hand, knowing him only by some sudden blast of bellowing from far above, bidding me “c’way oot amang the sheep.” The quietest recesses of the hill harboured this ogre; I skulked in my favourite wilderness like a Cameronian of the Killing Time, and John Todd was my Claverhouse, and his dogs my questing dragoons. Little by little we dropped into civilities: his hail at sight of me began to have less of the ring of a war-slogan; soon, we never met but he produced his snuff-box, which was with him, like the calumet with the Red Indian, a part of the heraldry of peace; and at length, in the ripeness of time, we grew to be a pair of friends, and when I lived alone in these parts in the winter, it was a settled thing for John to “give me a cry” over the garden wall 56 as he set forth upon his evening round, and for me to overtake and bear him company.

That dread voice of his that shook the hills when he was angry, fell in ordinary talk very pleasantly upon the ear, with a kind of honeyed, friendly whine, not far off singing, that was eminently Scottish. He laughed not very often, and when he did, with a sudden, loud haw-haw, hearty but somehow joyless, like an echo from a rock. His face was permanently set and coloured; ruddy and stiff with weathering; more like a picture than a face; yet with a certain strain, and a threat of latent anger in the expression, like that of a man trained too fine and harassed with perpetual vigilance. He spoke in the richest dialect of Scots I ever heard; the words in themselves were a pleasure and often a surprise to me, so that I often came back from one of our patrols with new acquisitions; and this vocabulary he would handle like a master, stalking a little before me, “beard on shoulder,” the plaid hanging loosely about him, the yellow staff clapped under his arm, and guiding me uphill by that devious, tactical ascent which seems peculiar to men of his trade. I might count him with the best talkers; only that talking Scots and talking English seem incomparable acts. He touched on nothing at least but he adorned it; when he narrated, the scene was before you; when he spoke (as he did mostly) of his own antique business, the thing took on a colour of romance and curiosity that was surprising. The clans of sheep with their particular territories on the hill, and how, in the yearly killings and purchases, each must be proportionately thinned and strengthened; the midnight busyness of animals, the signs of the weather, the cares of the snowy season, the exquisite stupidity of sheep, the exquisite cunning of dogs: all these he could present so humanly, and with so much old experience and living gusto, that weariness was excluded. And in the midst he would suddenly straighten his bowed back, the stick would fly abroad in demonstration, and the sharp thunder of his voice roll out a long itinerary for the dogs, 57 so that you saw at last the use of that great wealth of names for every knowe and howe upon the hillside; and the dogs, having hearkened with lowered tails and raised faces, would run up their flags again to the masthead and spread themselves upon the indicated circuit. It used to fill me with wonder how they could follow and retain so long a story. But John denied these creatures all intelligence; they were the constant butt of his passion and contempt; it was just possible to work with the like of them, he said, — not more than possible. And then he would expand upon the subject of the really good dogs that he had known, and the one really good dog that he had himself possessed. He had been offered forty pounds for it; but a good collie was worth more than that, more than anything, to a “herd”; he did the herd’s work for him. “As for the like of them!” he would cry, and scornfully indicate the scouring tails of his assistants.

Once — I translate John’s Lallan, for I cannot do it justice, being born *Britannis in montibus*, indeed, but alas! *inerudito saeculo* — once, in the days of his good dog, he had bought some sheep in Edinburgh, and on the way out, the road being crowded, two were lost. This was a reproach to John, and a slur upon the dog; and both were alive to their misfortune. Word came, after some days, that a farmer about Braid had found a pair of sheep; and thither went John and the dog to ask for restitution. But the farmer was a hard man and stood upon his rights. “How were they marked?” he asked; and since John had bought right and left from many sellers, and had no notion of the marks — ”Very well,” said the farmer, “then it’s only right that I should keep them.” — ”Well,” said John, “it’s a fact that I canna tell the sheep; but if my dog can, will ye let me have them?” The farmer was honest as well as hard, and besides I daresay he had little fear of the ordeal; so he had all the sheep upon his farm into one large park, and 58 turned John’s dog into the midst. That hairy man of business knew his errand well; he knew that John and he had bought two sheep and (to their shame) lost them about Boroughmuirhead; he knew besides (the Lord knows how, unless by listening) that they were come to Braid for their recovery; and without pause or blunder singled out, first one and then the other, the two waifs. It was that afternoon the forty pounds were offered and refused. And the shepherd and his dog — what do I say? the true shepherd and his man — set off together by Fairmilehead in jocund humour, and “smiled to ither” all the way home, with the two recovered ones before them. So far, so good; but intelligence may be abused. The dog, as he is by little man’s inferior in mind, is only by little his superior in virtue; and John had another collie tale of quite a different complexion. At the foot of the moss behind Kirk Yetton (Caer Ketton, wise men say) there is a scrog of low wood and a pool with a dam for washing sheep. John was one day lying under a bush in the scrog, when he was aware of a collie on the far hillside skulking down through the deepest of the heather with obtrusive stealth. He knew the dog; knew him for a clever, rising practitioner from quite a distant farm; one whom perhaps he had coveted as he saw him masterfully steering flocks to market. But what did the practitioner so far from home? and why this guilty and secret manœuvring towards the pool? — for it was towards the pool that he was heading. John lay the closer under his bush, and presently saw the dog come forth upon the margin, look all about to see if he were anywhere observed, plunge in and repeatedly wash himself over head and ears, and then (but now openly and with tail in air) strike homeward over the hills. That same night word was sent his master, and the rising practitioner, shaken up from where he lay, all innocence before the fire, was had out to a dykeside and promptly shot; for alas! he was that foulest of criminals under trust, a sheep-eater; and it was from the 59 maculation of sheep's blood that he had come so far to cleanse himself in the pool behind Kirk Yetton.

A trade that touches nature, one that lies at the foundations of life, in which we have all had ancestors employed, so that on a hint of it ancestral memories revive, lends itself to literary use, vocal or written. The fortune of a tale lies not alone in the skill of him that writes, but as much, perhaps, in the inherited experience of him who reads; and when I hear with a particular thrill of things that I have never done or seen, it is one of that innumerable army of my ancestors rejoicing in past deeds. Thus novels begin to touch not the fine *dilettante,* but the gross mass of mankind, when they leave off to speak of parlours and shades of manner and still-born niceties of motive, and begin to deal with fighting, sailoring, adventure, death, or childbirth; and thus ancient out-door crafts and occupations, whether Mr. Hardy wields the shepherd's crook or Count Tolstoi swings the scythe, lift romance into a near neighbourhood with epic. These aged things have on them the dew of man's morning; they lie near, not so much to us, the semi-artificial flowerets, as to the trunk and aboriginal taproot of the race. A thousand interests spring up in the process of the ages, and a thousand perish; that is now an eccentricity or a lost art which was once the fashion of an empire; and those only are perennial matters that rouse us to-day, and that roused men in all epochs of the past. There is a certain critic, not indeed of execution but of matter, whom I dare be known to set before the best: a certain low-browed, hairy gentleman, at first a percher in the fork of trees, next (as they relate) a dweller in caves, and whom I think I see squatting in cave-mouths, of a pleasant afternoon, to munch his berries — his wife, that accomplished lady, squatting by his side: his name I never heard, but he is often described as Probably Arboreal, which may serve for recognition. Each has his own tree of ancestors, but at the top of all sits Probably Arboreal; in all our veins 60 there run some minims of his old, wild, tree-top blood; our civilised nerves still tingle with his rude terrors and pleasures; and to that which would have moved our common ancestor, all must obediently thrill.

We have not so far to climb to come to shepherds; and it may be I had one for an ascendant who has largely moulded me. But yet I think I owe my taste for that hillside business rather to the art and interest of John Todd. He it was that made it live for me as the artist can make all things live. It was through him the simple strategy of massing sheep upon a snowy evening, with its attendant scampering of earnest, shaggy aides-de-camp, was an affair that I never wearied of seeing, and that I never weary of recalling to mind; the shadow of the night darkening on the hills, inscrutable black blots of snow-shower moving here and there like night already come, huddles of yellow sheep and dartings of black dogs upon the snow, a bitter air that took you by the throat, unearthly harpings of the wind along the moors; and for centre-piece to all these features and influences, John winding up the brae, keeping his captain's eye upon all sides, and breaking, ever and again, into a spasm of bellowing that seemed to make the evening bleaker. It is thus that I still see him in my mind's eye, perched on a hump of the declivity not far from Halkerside, his staff in airy flourish, his great voice taking hold upon the hills and echoing terror to the lowlands; I, meanwhile, standing somewhat back, until the fit should be over, and, with a pinch of snuff, my friend relapse into his easy, even conversation.

VII

THE MANSE

I have named, among many rivers that make music in my memory, that dirty Water of Leith. Often and often I desire to look upon it again; and the choice of a point of view is easy to me. It should be at a certain water-door, embowered in shrubbery. The river is there dammed back for the service of the flour-mill just below, so that it lies deep and darkling, and the sand slopes into brown obscurity with a glint of gold; and it has but newly been recruited by the borrowings of the snuff-mill just above, and these, tumbling merrily in, shake the pool to its black heart, fill it with drowsy eddies, and set the curded froth of many other mills solemnly steering to and fro upon the surface. Or so it was when I was young; for change, and the masons, and the pruning-knife, have been busy; and if I could hope to repeat a cherished experience, it must be on many and impossible conditions. I must choose, as well as the point of view, a certain moment in my growth, so that the scale may be exaggerated, and the trees on the steep opposite side may seem to climb to heaven, and the sand by the water-door, where I am standing, seem as low as Styx. And I must choose the season also, so that the valley may be brimmed like a cup with sunshine and the songs of birds; — and the year of grace, so that when I turn to leave the river-side I may find the old manse and its inhabitants unchanged.

It was a place in that time like no other: the garden cut into provinces by a great hedge of beech, and overlooked by the church and the terrace of the churchyard,[62] where the tombstones were thick, and after nightfall "spunkies" might be seen to dance, at least by children; flower-plots lying warm in sunshine; laurels and the great yew making elsewhere a pleasing horror of shade; the smell of water rising from all round, with an added tang of paper-mills; the sound of water everywhere, and the sound of mills — the wheel and the dam singing their alternate strain; the birds on every bush and from every corner of the overhanging woods pealing out their notes until the air throbbed with them; and in the midst of this, the manse. I see it, by the standard of my childish stature, as a great and roomy house. In truth, it was not so large as I supposed, nor yet so convenient, and, standing where it did, it is difficult to suppose that it was healthful. Yet a large family of stalwart sons and tall daughters was housed and reared, and came to man and woman-hood, in that nest of little chambers; so that the face of the earth was peppered with the children of the manse, and letters with outlandish stamps became familiar to the local postman, and the walls of the little chambers brightened with the wonders of the East. The dullest could see this was a house that had a pair of hands in divers foreign places: a well-beloved house — its image fondly dwelt on by many travellers.

Here lived an ancestor of mine, who was a herd of men. I read him, judging with older criticism the report of childish observation, as a man of singular simplicity of nature; unemotional, and hating the display of what he felt; standing contented on the old ways; a lover of his life and innocent habits to the end. We children admired him: partly for his beautiful face and silver hair, for none more than children are concerned for beauty, and above all for beauty in the old; partly for the solemn light in which we beheld him once a week, the observed of all observers, in the pulpit. But his strictness and distance, the effect, I now fancy, of old age, slow blood, and settled habit, oppressed us with a 63 kind of terror. When not abroad, he sat much alone, writing sermons or letters to his scattered family in a dark and cold room with a library of bloodless books — or so they seemed in those days, although I have some of them now on my own shelves and like well enough to read them; and these lonely hours wrapped him in the greater gloom for our imaginations. But the study had a redeeming grace in many Indian pictures, gaudily coloured and dear to young eyes. I cannot depict (for I have no such passions now) the greed with which I beheld them; and when I was once sent in to say a psalm to my grandfather, I went, quaking indeed with fear, but at the same time glowing with hope that, if I said it well, he might reward me with an Indian picture.

“Thy foot He’ll not let slide, nor will
He slumber that thee keeps,”

it ran: a strange conglomerate of the unpronounceable, a sad model to set in childhood before one who was himself to be a versifier, and a task in recitation that really merited reward. And I must suppose the old man thought so too, and was either touched or amused by the performance; for he took me in his arms with most unwonted tenderness, and kissed me, and gave me a little kindly sermon for my psalm; so that, for that day, we were clerk and parson. I was struck by this reception into so tender a surprise that I forgot my disappointment. And indeed the hope was one of those that childhood forges for a pastime, and with no design upon reality. Nothing was more unlikely than that my grandfather should strip himself of one of those pictures, love-gifts and reminders of his absent sons; nothing more unlikely than that he should bestow it upon me. He had no idea of spoiling children, leaving all that to my aunt; he had fared hard himself, and blubbered under the rod in the last century; and his ways were still Spartan for the young. The last word I heard upon his lips was in this Spartan key. He 64 had over-walked in the teeth of an east wind, and was now near the end of his many days. He sat by the dining-room fire, with his white hair, pale face, and bloodshot eyes, a somewhat awful figure; and my aunt had given him a dose of our good old Scots medicine, Dr. Gregory's powder. Now that remedy, as the work of a near kinsman of Rob Roy himself, may have a savour of romance for the imagination; but it comes uncouthly to the palate. The old gentleman had taken it with a wry face; and that being accomplished, sat with perfect simplicity, like a child's, munching a "barley-sugar kiss." But when my aunt, having the canister open in her hands, proposed to let me share in the sweets, he interfered at once. I had had no Gregory; then I should have no barley-sugar kiss: so he decided with a touch of irritation. And just then the phaeton coming opportunely to the kitchen door — for such was our unlordly fashion — I was taken for the last time from the presence of my grandfather.

Now I often wonder what I have inherited from this old minister. I must suppose, indeed, that he was fond of preaching sermons, and so am I, though I never heard it maintained that either of us loved to hear them. He sought health in his youth in the Isle of Wight, and I have sought it in both hemispheres; but whereas he found and kept it, I am still on the quest. He was a great lover of Shakespeare, whom he read aloud, I have been told, with taste; well, I love my Shakespeare also and am persuaded I can read him well, though I own I never have been told so. He made embroidery, designing his own patterns; and in that kind of work I never made anything but a kettle-holder in Berlin wool, and an odd garter of knitting, which was as black as the chimney before I had done with it. He loved port, and nuts, and porter; and so do I, but they agreed better with my grandfather, which seems to me a breach of contract. He had chalk-stones in his fingers; and these, 65 in good time, I may possibly inherit, but I would much rather have inherited his noble presence. Try as I please, I cannot join myself on with the reverend doctor; and all the while, no doubt, and even as I write the phrase, he moves in my blood, and whispers words to me, and sits efficient in the very knot and centre of my being. In his garden, as I played there, I learned the love of mills — or had I an ancestor a miller? — and a kindness for the neighbourhood of graves, as homely things not without their poetry — or had I an ancestor a sexton? But what of the garden where he played himself? — for that, too, was a scene of my education. Some part of me played there in the eighteenth century, and ran races under the green avenue at Pilrig; some part of me trudged up Leith Walk, which was still a country place, and sat on the High School benches, and was thrashed, perhaps, by Dr. Adam. The house where I spent my youth was not yet thought upon; but we made holiday parties among the cornfields on its site, and ate strawberries and cream near by at a gardener's. All this I had forgotten; only my grandfather remembered and once reminded me. I have forgotten, too, how we grew up, and took orders, and went to our first Ayrshire parish, and fell in love with and married a daughter of Burns's Dr. Smith — "Smith opens out his cauld harangues." I have forgotten, but I was there all the same, and heard stories of Burns at first hand.

And there is a thing stranger than all that; for this *homunculus* or part-man of mine that walked about the eighteenth century with Dr. Balfour in his youth, was in the way of meeting other *homunculi* or part-men, in the persons of my other ancestors. These were of a lower order, and doubtless we looked down upon them duly. But as I went to college with Dr. Balfour, I may have seen the lamp and oil man taking down the shutters from his shop beside the Tron; — we may have had a rabbit-hutch or a bookshelf made for us by a certain carpenter in I 66 know not what wynd of the old smoky city; or, upon some holiday excursion, we may have looked into the windows of a cottage in a flower-garden and seen a certain weaver plying his shuttle. And these were all kinsmen of mine upon the other side; and from the eyes of the lamp and oil man one-half of my unborn father, and one-quarter of myself, looked out upon us as we went by to college. Nothing of all this would cross the mind of the young student, as he posted up the Bridges with trim, stockinged legs, in that city of cocked hats and good Scots still unadulterated. It would not cross his mind that he should have a daughter; and the lamp and oil man, just then beginning, by a not unnatural metastasis, to bloom into a lighthouse-engineer, should have a grandson; and that these two, in the fulness of time, should wed; and some portion of that student himself should survive yet a year or two longer in the person of their child.

But our ancestral adventures are beyond even the arithmetic of fancy; and it is the chief recommendation of long pedigrees, that we can follow backward the careers of our *homunculi* and be reminded of our antenatal lives. Our conscious years are but a moment in the history of the elements that build us. Are you a bank-clerk, and do you live at Peckham? It was not always so. And though to-day I am only a man of letters, either tradition errs or I was present when there landed at St. Andrews a French barber-surgeon, to tend the health and the beard of the great Cardinal Beaton; I have shaken a spear in the Debateable Land and shouted the slogan of the Elliots; I was present when a skipper, plying from Dundee, smuggled Jacobites to France after the '15; I was in a West India merchant's office, perhaps next door to Bailie Nicol Jarvie's, and managed the business of a plantation in St. Kitt's; I was with my engineer-grandfather (the son-in-law of the lamp and oil man) when he sailed north about Scotland on the famous cruise that gave us "The Pirate" and "The Lord of the Isles"; I was with him, too, on 67 the Bell Rock, in the fog, when the *Smeaton* had drifted from her moorings, and the Aberdeen men, pick in hand, had seized upon the only boats, and he must stoop and lap sea-water before his tongue could utter audible words; and once more with him when the Bell Rock beacon took a "thrawe," and his workmen fled into the tower, then nearly finished, and he sat unmoved reading in his Bible — or affecting to read — till one after another slunk back with confusion of countenance to their engineer. Yes, parts of me have seen life, and met adventures, and sometimes met them well. And away in the still cloudier past, the threads that make me up can be traced by fancy into the bosoms of thousands and millions of ascendants: Picts who rallied round Macbeth and the old (and highly preferable) system of descent by females, fleërs from before the legions of Agricola, marchers in Pannonian morasses, star-gazers on Chaldæan plateaus; and, furthest of all, what face is this that fancy can see peering through the disparted branches? What sleeper in green tree-tops, what muncher of nuts, concludes my pedigree? Probably arboreal in his habits....

And I know not which is the more strange, that I should carry about with me some fibres of my minister-grandfather; or that in him, as he sat in his cool study, grave, reverend, contented gentleman, there was an aboriginal frisking of the blood that was not his; tree-top memories, like undeveloped negatives, lay dormant in his mind; tree-top instincts awoke and were trod down; and Probably Arboreal (scarce to be distinguished from a monkey) gambolled and chattered in the brain of the old divine.

VIII

MEMOIRS OF AN ISLET

Those who try to be artists use, time after time, the matter of their recollections, setting and resetting little coloured memories of men and scenes, rigging up (it may be) some especial friend in the attire of a buccaneer, and decreeing armies to manœuvre, or murder to be done, on the playground of their youth. But the memories are a fairy gift which cannot be worn out in using. After a dozen services in various tales, the little sun-bright pictures of the past still shine in the mind's eye with not a lineament defaced, not a tint impaired. *Glück und unglück wird gesang,* if Goethe pleases; yet only by endless avatars, the original re-embodying after each. So that a writer, in time, begins to wonder at the perdurable life of these impressions; begins, perhaps, to fancy that he wrongs them when he weaves them in with fiction; and looking back on them with ever-growing kindness, puts them at last, substantive jewels, in a setting of their own.

One or two of these pleasant spectres I think I have laid. I used one but the other day: a little eyot of dense, freshwater sand, where I once waded deep in butterburrs, delighting to hear the song of the river on both sides, and to tell myself that I was indeed and at last upon an island. Two of my puppets lay there a summer's day, hearkening to the shearers at work in riverside fields and to the drums of the grey old garrison upon the neighbouring hill. And this was, I think, done rightly: the place was rightly peopled — and now belongs not to me but to my 69 puppets — for a time at least. In time, perhaps, the puppets will grow faint; the original memory swim up instant as ever; and I shall once more lie in bed, and see the little sandy isle in Allan Water as it is in nature, and the child (that once was me) wading there in butterburrs; and wonder at the instancy and virgin freshness of that memory; and be pricked again, in season and out of season, by the desire to weave it into art.

There is another isle in my collection, the memory of which besieges me. I put a whole family there, in one of my tales; and later on, threw upon its shores, and condemned to several days of rain and shellfish on its tumbled boulders, the hero of another. The ink is not yet faded; the sound of the sentences is still in my mind's ear; and I am under a spell to write of that island again.

I

The little isle of Earraid lies close in to the south-west corner of the Ross of Mull: the sound of Iona on one side, across which you may see the isle and church of Columba; the open sea to the other, where you shall be able to mark on a clear surfy day the breakers running white on many sunken rocks. I first saw it, or first remember seeing it, framed in the round bull's-eye of a cabin port, the sea lying smooth along its shores like the waters of a lake, the colourless, clear light of the early morning making plain its heathery and rocky hummocks. There stood upon it, in those days, a single rude house of uncemented stones, approached by a pier of wreckwood. It must have been very early, for it was then summer, and in summer, in that latitude, day scarcely withdraws; but even at that hour the house was making a sweet smoke of peats which came to me over the bay, and the bare-legged daughters of the cotter were wading by the pier. 70 The same day we visited the shores of the isle in the ship's boats; rowed deep into Fiddler's Hole, sounding as we went; and, having taken stock of all possible accommodation, pitched on the northern inlet as the scene of operations. For it was no accident that had brought the lighthouse steamer to anchor in the Bay of Earraid. Fifteen miles away to seaward, a certain black rock stood environed by the Atlantic rollers, the outpost of the Torran reefs. Here was a tower to be built, and a star lighted, for the conduct of seamen. But as the rock was small, and hard of access, and far from land, the work would be one of years; and my father was now looking for a shore station where the stones might be quarried and dressed, the men live, and the tender, with some degree of safety, lie at anchor.

I saw Earraid next from the stern-thwart of an Iona lugger, Sam Bough and I sitting there cheek by jowl, with our feet upon our baggage, in a beautiful, clear, northern summer eve. And behold! there was now a pier of stone, there were rows of sheds, railways, travelling-cranes, a street of cottages, an iron house for the resident engineer, wooden bothies for the men, a stage where the courses of the tower were put together experimentally, and behind the settlement a great gash in the hillside where granite was quarried. In the bay, the steamer lay at her moorings. All day long there hung about the place the music of chinking tools; and even in the dead of night, the watchman carried his lantern to and fro, in the dark settlement, and could light the pipe of any midnight muser. It was, above all, strange to see Earraid on the Sunday, when the sound of the tools ceased, and there fell a crystal quiet. All about the green compound men would be sauntering in their Sunday's best, walking with those lax joints of the reposing toiler, thoughtfully smoking, talking small, as if in honour of the stillness, or hearkening to the wailing of the gulls. And it was strange to see our Sabbath services, held, as they were, in one 71 of the bothies, with Mr. Brebner reading at a table, and the congregation perched about in the double tier of sleeping-bunks; and to hear the singing of the psalms, “the chapters,” the inevitable Spurgeon’s sermon, and the old, eloquent lighthouse prayer.

In fine weather, when by the spy-glass on the hill the sea was observed to run low upon the reef, there would be a sound of preparation in the very early morning; and before the sun had risen from behind Ben More, the tender would steam out of the bay. Over fifteen sea-miles of the great blue Atlantic rollers she ploughed her way, trailing at her tail a brace of wallowing stone-lighters. The open ocean widened upon either board, and the hills of the mainland began to go down on the horizon, before she came to her unhomely destination, and lay-to at last where the rock clapped its black head above the swell, with the tall iron barrack on its spider legs, and the truncated tower, and the cranes waving their arms, and the smoke of the engine-fire rising in the mid-sea. An ugly reef is this of the Dhu Heartach; no pleasant assemblage of shelves, and pools, and creeks, about which a child might play for a whole summer without weariness, like the Bell Rock or the Skerryvore, but one oval nodule of black-trap, sparsely bedabbled with an inconspicuous fucus, and alive in every crevice with a dingy insect between a slater and a bug. No other life was there but that of sea-birds, and of the sea itself, that here ran like a mill-race and growled about the outer reef for ever, and ever and again, in the calmest weather, roared and spouted on the rock itself. Times were different upon Dhu Heartach when it blew, and the night fell dark, and the neighbour lights of Skerryvore and Rhu-val were quenched in fog, and the men sat prisoned high up in their iron drum, that then resounded with the lashing of the sprays. Fear sat with them in their sea-beleaguered dwelling; and the colour changed in anxious faces when some greater billow struck the barrack, and its pillars quivered and sprang under the 72 blow. It was then that the foreman builder, Mr. Goodwillie, whom I see before me still in his rock-habit of undecipherable rags, would get his fiddle down and strike up human minstrelsy amid the music of the storm. But it was in sunshine only that I saw Dhu Heartach; and it was in sunshine, or the yet lovelier summer afterglow, that the steamer would return to Earraid, ploughing an enchanted sea; the obedient lighters, relieved of their deck cargo, riding in her wake more quietly; and the steersman upon each, as she rose on the long swell, standing tall and dark against the shining west.

II

But it was in Earraid itself that I delighted chiefly. The lighthouse settlement scarce encroached beyond its fences; over the top of the first brae the ground was all virgin, the world all shut out, the face of things unchanged by any of man's doings. Here was no living presence, save for the limpets on the rocks, for some old, grey, rain-beaten ram that I might rouse out of a ferny den betwixt two boulders, or for the haunting and the piping of the gulls. It was older than man; it was found so by incoming Celts, and seafaring Norsemen, and Columba's priests. The earthy savour of the bog plants, the rude disorder of the boulders, the inimitable seaside brightness of the air, the brine and the iodine, the lap of the billows among the weedy reefs, the sudden springing up of a great run of dashing surf along the sea-front of the isle, — all that I saw and felt my predecessors must have seen and felt with scarce a difference. I steeped myself in open air and in past ages.

"Delightful would it be to me to be in *Uchd Ailiun*
On the pinnacle of a rock,
That I might often see
The face of the ocean;
That I might hear the song of the wonderful birds,
Source of happiness;That I might hear the thunder of the crowding waves
Upon the rocks:
At times at work without compulsion —
This would be delightful;
At times plucking dulse from the rocks;
At times at fishing."

So, about the next island of Iona, sang Columba himself twelve hundred years before. And so might I have sung of Earraid.

And all the while I was aware that this life of sea-bathing and sun-burning was for me but a holiday. In that year cannon were roaring for days together on French battle-fields; and I would sit in my isle (I call it mine, after the use of lovers) and think upon the war, and the loudness of these far-away battles, and the pain of the men's wounds, and the weariness of their marching. And I would think too of that other war which is as old as mankind, and is indeed the life of man; the unsparing war, the grinding slavery of competition; the toil of seventy years, dear-bought bread, precarious honour, the perils and pitfalls, and the poor rewards. It was a long look forward; the future summoned me as with trumpet calls, it warned me back as with a voice of weeping and beseeching; and I thrilled and trembled on the brink of life, like a childish bather on the beach.

There was another young man on Earraid in these days, and we were much together, bathing, clambering on the boulders, trying to sail a boat and spinning round instead in the oily whirlpools of the roost. But the most part of the time we spoke of the great uncharted desert of our futures; wondering together what should there befall us; hearing with surprise the sound of our own voices in the empty vestibule of youth. As far, and as hard, as it seemed then to look forward to the grave, so far it seems now to look backward upon these emotions; so hard to recall justly that loath submission, as of the sacrificial bull, with which we stooped our necks under the yoke of destiny. I met my old companion but the other day; I cannot tell 74 of course what he was thinking; but, upon my part, I was wondering to see us both so much at home, and so composed and sedentary in the world; and how much we had gained, and how much we had lost, to attain to that composure; and which had been upon the whole our best estate: when we sat there prating sensibly like men of some experience, or when we shared our timorous and hopeful counsels in a western islet.

IX

THOMAS STEVENSON: CIVIL ENGINEER

The death of Thomas Stevenson will mean not very much to the general reader. His service to mankind took on forms of which the public knows little and understands less. He came seldom to London, and then only as a task, remaining always a stranger and a convinced provincial; putting up for years at the same hotel where his father had gone before him; faithful for long to the same restaurant, the same church, and the same theatre, chosen simply for propinquity; steadfastly refusing to dine out. He had a circle of his own, indeed, at home; few men were more beloved in Edinburgh, where he breathed an air that pleased him; and wherever he went, in railway carriages or hotel smoking-rooms, his strange, humorous vein of talk, and his transparent honesty, raised him up friends and admirers. But to the general public and the world of London, except about the parliamentary committee-rooms, he remained unknown. All the time, his lights were in every part of the world, guiding the mariner; his firm were consulting engineers to the Indian, the New Zealand, and the Japanese Lighthouse Boards, so that Edinburgh was a world-centre for that branch of applied science; in Germany, he had been called “the Nestor of lighthouse illumination”; even in France, where his claims were long denied, he was at last, on the occasion of the late Exposition, recognised and medalled. And to show by one instance the inverted nature of his reputation, comparatively small at 76 home, yet filling the world, a friend of mine was this winter on a visit to the Spanish main, and was asked by a Peruvian if he “knew Mr. Stevenson the author, because his works were much esteemed in Peru.” My friend supposed the reference was to the writer of tales; but the Peruvian had never heard of “Dr. Jekyll”; what he had in his eye, what was esteemed in Peru, were the volumes of the engineer.

Thomas Stevenson was born at Edinburgh in the year 1818; the grandson of Thomas Smith, first engineer to the Board of Northern Lights, son of Robert Stevenson, brother of Alan and David; so that his nephew, David Alan Stevenson, joined with him at the time of his death in the engineership, is the sixth of the family who has held, successively or conjointly, that office. The Bell Rock, his father’s great triumph, was finished before he was born; but he served under his brother Alan in the building of Skerryvore, the noblest of all extant deep-sea lights; and, in conjunction with his brother David, he added two — the Chickens and Dhu Heartach — to that small number of man’s extreme outposts in the ocean. Of shore lights, the two brothers last named erected no fewer than twenty-seven; of beacons, about twenty-five. Many harbours were successfully carried out: one, the harbour of Wick, the chief disaster of my father’s life, was a failure; the sea proved too strong for man’s arts; and after expedients hitherto unthought of, and on a scale hyper-cyclopean, the work must be deserted, and now stands a ruin in that bleak, God-forsaken bay, ten miles from John-o’-Groat’s. In the improvement of rivers the brothers were likewise in a large way of practice over both England and Scotland, nor had any British engineer anything approaching their experience.

It was about this nucleus of his professional labours that 77 all my father’s scientific inquiries and inventions centred; these proceeded from, and acted back upon, his daily business. Thus it was as a harbour engineer that he became interested in the propagation and reduction of waves; a difficult subject, in regard to which he has left behind him much suggestive matter and some valuable approximate results. Storms were his sworn adversaries, and it was through the study of storms that he approached that of meteorology at large. Many who knew him not otherwise, knew — perhaps have in their gardens — his louvre-boarded screen for instruments. But the great achievement of his life was, of course, in optics as applied to lighthouse illumination. Fresnel had done much; Fresnel had settled the fixed light apparatus on a principle that still seems unimprovable; and when Thomas Stevenson stepped in and brought to a comparable perfection the revolving light, a not unnatural jealousy and much painful controversy rose in France. It had its hour; and, as I have told already, even in France it has blown by. Had it not, it would have mattered the less, since all through his life my father continued to justify his claim by fresh advances. New apparatus for lights in new situations was continually being designed with the same unwearied search after perfection, the same nice ingenuity of means; and though the holophotal revolving light perhaps still remains his most elegant contrivance, it is difficult to give it the palm over the much later condensing system, with its thousand possible modifications. The number and the value of these improvements entitle their author to the name of one of mankind’s benefactors. In all parts of the world a safer landfall awaits the mariner. Two things must be said: and, first, that Thomas Stevenson was no mathematician. Natural shrewdness, a sentiment of optical laws, and a great intensity of consideration, led him to just conclusions; but to calculate the necessary formulæ for the instruments he had conceived was often beyond him, and he must fall back on the help of others, notably on that of his cousin 78 and lifelong intimate friend, *emeritus* Professor Swan, of St. Andrews, and his later friend, Professor P. G. Tait. It is a curious enough circumstance, and a great encouragement to others, that a man so ill equipped should have succeeded in one of the most abstract and arduous walks of applied science. The second remark is one that applies to the whole family, and only particularly to Thomas Stevenson from the great number and importance of his inventions: holding as the Stevensons did a Government appointment, they regarded their original work as something due already to the nation, and none of them has ever taken out a patent. It is another cause of the comparative obscurity of the name; for a patent not only brings in money, it infallibly spreads reputation; and my father's instruments enter anonymously into a hundred light-rooms, and are passed anonymously over in a hundred reports, where the least considerable patent would stand out and tell its author's story.

But the life-work of Thomas Stevenson remains; what we have lost, what we now rather try to recall, is the friend and companion. He was a man of a somewhat antique strain: with a blended sternness and softness that was wholly Scottish, and at first somewhat bewildering; with a profound essential melancholy of disposition and (what often accompanies it) the most humorous geniality in company; shrewd and childish; passionately attached, passionately prejudiced; a man of many extremes, many faults of temper, and no very stable foothold for himself among life's troubles. Yet he was a wise adviser; many men, and these not inconsiderable, took counsel with him habitually. "I sat at his feet," writes one of these, "when I asked his advice, and when the broad brow was set in thought and the firm mouth said his say, I always knew that no man could add to the worth of the conclusion." He had excellent taste, though whimsical and partial; 79 collected old furniture and delighted specially in sunflowers long before the days of Mr. Oscar Wilde; took a lasting pleasure in prints and pictures; was a devout admirer of Thomson of Duddingston at a time when few shared the taste; and though he read little, was constant to his favourite books. He had never any Greek; Latin he happily re-taught himself after he had left school, where he was a mere consistent idler: happily, I say, for Lactantius, Vossius, and Cardinal Bona were his chief authors. The first he must have read for twenty years uninterruptedly, keeping it near him in his study, and carrying it in his bag on journeys. Another old theologian, Brown of Wamphray, was often in his hands. When he was indisposed, he had two books, "Guy Mannering" and "The Parent's Assistant," of which he never wearied. He was a strong Conservative, or, as he preferred to call himself, a Tory; except in so far as his views were modified by a hot-headed chivalrous sentiment for women. He was actually in favour of a marriage law under which any woman might have a divorce for the asking, and no man on any ground whatever; and the same sentiment found another expression in a Magdalen Mission in Edinburgh, founded and largely supported by himself. This was but one of the many channels of his public generosity; his private was equally unstrained. The Church of Scotland, of which he held the doctrines (though in a sense of his own) and to which he bore a clansman’s loyalty, profited often by his time and money; and though, from a morbid sense of his own unworthiness, he would never consent to be an office-bearer, his advice was often sought, and he served the Church on many committees. What he perhaps valued highest in his work were his contributions to the defence of Christianity; one of which, in particular, was praised by Hutchison Stirling and reprinted at the request of Professor Crawford.

His sense of his own unworthiness I have called morbid; morbid, too, were his sense of the fleetingness of life and 80 his concern for death. He had never accepted the conditions of man’s life or his own character; and his inmost thoughts were ever tinged with the Celtic melancholy. Cases of conscience were sometimes grievous to him, and that delicate employment of a scientific witness cost him many qualms. But he found respite from these troublesome humours in his work, in his lifelong study of natural science, in the society of those he loved, and in his daily walks, which now would carry him far into the country with some congenial friend, and now keep him dangling about the town from one old book-shop to another, and scraping romantic acquaintance with every dog that passed. His talk, compounded of so much sterling sense and so much freakish humour, and clothed in language so apt, droll, and emphatic, was a perpetual delight to all who knew him before the clouds began to settle on his mind. His use of language was both just and picturesque; and when at the beginning of his illness he began to feel the ebbing of this power, it was strange and painful to hear him reject one word after another as inadequate, and at length desist from the search and leave his phrase unfinished rather than finish it without propriety. It was perhaps another Celtic trait that his affections and emotions, passionate as these were, and liable to passionate ups and downs, found the most eloquent expression both in words and gestures. Love, anger, and indignation shone through him and broke forth in imagery, like what we read of Southern races. For all these emotional extremes, and in spite of the melancholy ground of his character, he had upon the whole a happy life; nor was he less fortunate in his death, which at the last came to him unaware.

In Dr. Murray’s admirable new dictionary, I have remarked a flaw *sub voce* Beacon. In its express, technical sense, a beacon may be defined as “a founded, artificial sea-mark, not lighted.”

William Swan, LL. D., Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews, 1859-80: born 1818, died 1894.

X

TALK AND TALKERS

Sir, we had a good talk. — Johnson.

As we must account for every idle word, so we must for every idle silence. — Franklin.

I

There can be no fairer ambition than to excel in talk; to be affable, gay, ready, clear and welcome; to have a fact, a thought, or an illustration, pat to every subject; and not only to cheer the flight of time among our intimates, but bear our part in that great international congress, always sitting, where public wrongs are first declared, public errors first corrected, and the course of public opinion shaped, day by day, a little nearer to the right. No measure comes before Parliament but it has been long ago prepared by the grand jury of the talkers; no book is written that has not been largely composed by their assistance. Literature in many of its branches is no other than the shadow of good talk; but the imitation falls far short of the original in life, freedom, and effect. There are always two to a talk, giving and taking, comparing experience and according conclusions. Talk is fluid, tentative, continually “in further search and progress”; while written words remain fixed, become idols even to the writer, found wooden dogmatisms, and preserve flies of obvious error in the amber of the truth. Last and chief, while literature, gagged with linsey-woolsey, can only deal with a fraction of the life of man, talk goes fancy free and may call a spade a spade. Talk has none of the freezing immunities of the pulpit. It cannot, even if it would, become merely 82 æsthetic or merely classical like literature. A jest intervenes, the solemn humbug is dissolved in laughter, and speech runs forth out of the contemporary groove into the open fields of nature, cheery and cheering, like schoolboys out of school. And it is in talk alone that we can learn our period and ourselves. In short, the first duty of a man is to speak; that is his chief business in this world; and talk, which is the harmonious speech of two or more, is by far the most accessible of pleasures. It costs nothing in money; it is all profit; it completes our education, founds and fosters our friendships, and can be enjoyed at any age and in almost any state of health.

The spice of life is battle; the friendliest relations are still a kind of contest; and if we would not forego all that is valuable in our lot, we must continually face some other person, eye to eye, and wrestle a fall whether in love or enmity. It is still by force of body, or power of character or intellect, that we attain to worthy pleasures. Men and women contend for each other in the lists of love, like rival mesmerists; the active and adroit decide their challenges in the sports of the body; and the sedentary sit down to chess or conversation. All sluggish and pacific pleasures are, to the same degree, solitary and selfish; and every durable bond between human beings is founded in or heightened by some element of competition. Now, the relation that has the least root in matter is undoubtedly that airy one of friendship; and hence, I suppose, it is that good talk most commonly arises among friends. Talk is, indeed, both the scene and instrument of friendship. It is in talk alone that the friends can measure strength, and enjoy that amicable counter-assertion of personality which is the gauge of relations and the sport of life.

A good talk is not to be had for the asking. Humours must first be accorded in a kind of overture or prologue; hour, company, and circumstance be suited; and then, at a fit juncture, the subject, the quarry of two heated minds, spring up like a deer out of the wood. Not that 83 the talker has any of the hunter's pride, though he has all and more than all his ardour. The genuine artist follows the stream of conversation as an angler follows the windings of a brook, not dallying where he fails to "kill." He trusts implicitly to hazard; and he is rewarded by continual variety, continual pleasure, and those changing prospects of the truth that are the best of education. There is nothing in a subject, so called, that we should regard it as an idol or follow it beyond the promptings of desire. Indeed, there are few subjects; and so far as they are truly talkable, more than the half of them may be reduced to three: that I am I, that you are you, and that there are other people dimly understood to be not quite the same as either. Wherever talk may range, it still runs half the time on these eternal lines. The theme being set, each plays on himself as on an instrument; asserts and justifies himself; ransacks his brain for instances and opinions, and brings them forth new-minted, to his own surprise and the admiration of his adversary. All natural talk is a festival of ostentation; and by the laws of the game each accepts and fans the vanity of the other. It is from that reason that we venture to lay ourselves so open, that we dare to be so warmly eloquent, and that we swell in each other's eyes to such a vast proportion. For talkers, once launched, begin to overflow the limits of their ordinary selves, tower up to the height of their secret pretensions, and give themselves out for the heroes, brave, pious, musical, and wise, that in their most shining moments they aspire to be. So they weave for themselves with words and for a while inhabit a palace of delights, temple at once and theatre, where they fill the round of the world's dignities, and feast with the gods, exulting in Kudos. And when the talk is over, each goes his way, still flushed with vanity and admiration, still trailing clouds of glory; each declines from the height of his ideal orgie, not in a moment, but by slow declension. I remember, in the *entr'acte* of an afternoon performance, coming forth 84 into the sunshine in a beautiful green, gardened corner of a romantic city; and as I sat and smoked, the music moving in my blood, I seemed to sit there and evaporate *The Flying Dutchman* (for it was that I had been hearing) with a wonderful sense of life, warmth, well-being and pride; and the noises of the city, voices, bells, and marching feet, fell together in my ears like a symphonious orchestra. In the same way, the excitement of a good talk lives for a long while after in the blood, the heart still hot within you, the brain still simmering, and the physical earth swimming around you with the colours of the sunset.

Natural talk, like ploughing, should turn up a large surface of life, rather than dig mines into geological strata. Masses of experience, anecdote, incident, cross-lights, quotation, historical instances, the whole flotsam and jetsam of two minds forced in and in upon the matter in hand from every point of the compass, and from every degree of mental elevation and abasement — these are the material with which talk is fortified, the food on which the talkers thrive. Such argument as is proper to the exercise should still be brief and seizing. Talk should proceed by instances; by the apposite, not the expository. It should keep close along the lines of humanity, near the bosoms and businesses of men, at the level where history, fiction, and experience intersect and illuminate each other. I am I, and you are you, with all my heart; but conceive how these lean propositions change and brighten when, instead of words, the actual you and I sit cheek by jowl, the spirit housed in the live body, and the very clothes uttering voices to corroborate the story in the face. Not less surprising is the change when we leave off to speak of generalities — the bad, the good, the miser, and all the characters of Theophrastus — and call up other men, by anecdote or instance, in their very trick and feature; or, trading on a common knowledge, toss each other famous names, still glowing with the hues of life. Communication is no longer by words, but by the instancing of whole 85 biographies, epics, systems of philosophy, and epochs of history, in bulk. That which is understood excels that which is spoken in quantity and quality alike; ideas thus figured and personified, change hands, as we may say, like coin; and the speakers imply without effort the most obscure and intricate thoughts. Strangers who have a large common ground of reading will, for this reason, come the sooner to the grapple of genuine converse. If they know Othello and Napoleon, Consuelo and Clarissa Harlowe, Vautrin and Steenie Steenson, they can leave generalities and begin at once to speak by figures.

Conduct and art are the two subjects that arise most frequently and that embrace the widest range of facts. A few pleasures bear discussion for their own sake, but only those which are most social or most radically human; and even these can only be discussed among their devotees. A technicality is always welcome to the expert, whether in athletics, art, or law; I have heard the best kind of talk on technicalities from such rare and happy persons as both know and love their business. No human being ever spoke of scenery for above two minutes at a time, which makes me suspect we hear too much of it in literature. The weather is regarded as the very nadir and scoff of conversational topics. And yet the weather, the dramatic element in scenery, is far more tractable in language, and far more human both in import and suggestion, than the stable features of the landscape. Sailors and shepherds and the people generally of coast and mountain, talk well of it; and it is often excitingly presented in literature. But the tendency of all living talk draws it back and back into the common focus of humanity. Talk is a creature of the street and market-place, feeding on gossip; and its last resort is still in a discussion on morals. That is the heroic form of gossip; heroic in virtue of its high pretensions; but still gossip, because it turns on personalities. You can keep no men long, nor Scotsmen at all, off moral or theological discussion. These are to all the world what 86 law is to lawyers; they are everybody’s technicalities; the medium through which all consider life, and the dialect in which they express their judgments. I knew three young men who walked together daily for some two months in a solemn and beautiful forest and in cloudless summer weather; daily they talked with unabated zest, and yet scarce wandered that whole time beyond two subjects — theology and love. And perhaps neither a court of love nor an assembly of divines would have granted their premisses or welcomed their conclusions.

Conclusions, indeed, are not often reached by talk any more than by private thinking. That is not the profit. The profit is in the exercise, and above all in the experience; for when we reason at large on any subject, we review our state and history in life. From time to time, however, and specially, I think, in talking art, talk becomes effective, conquering like war, widening the boundaries of knowledge like an exploration. A point arises; the question takes a problematical, a baffling, yet a likely air; the talkers begin to feel lively presentiments of some conclusion near at hand; towards this they strive with emulous ardour, each by his own path, and struggling for first utterance; and then one leaps upon the summit of that matter with a shout, and almost at the same moment the other is beside him; and behold they are agreed. Like enough, the progress is illusory, a mere cat's cradle having been wound and unwound out of words. But the sense of joint discovery is none the less giddy and inspiriting. And in the life of the talker such triumphs, though imaginary, are neither few nor far apart; they are attained with speed and pleasure, in the hour of mirth; and by the nature of the process, they are always worthily shared.

There is a certain attitude, combative at once and deferential, eager to fight yet most averse to quarrel, which marks out at once the talkable man. It is not eloquence, not fairness, not obstinacy, but a certain proportion of all of these that I love to encounter in my 87
amicable adversaries. They must not be pontiffs holding doctrine, but huntsmen questing after elements of truth. Neither must they be boys to be instructed, but fellow-teachers with whom I may wrangle and agree on equal terms. We must reach some solution, some shadow of consent; for without that, eager talk becomes a torture. But we do not wish to reach it cheaply, or quickly, or without the tussle and effort wherein pleasure lies.

The very best talker, with me, is one whom I shall call Spring-Heel'd Jack. I say so, because I never knew any one who mingled so largely the possible ingredients of converse. In the Spanish proverb, the fourth man necessary to compound a salad is a madman to mix it: Jack is that madman. I know not which is more remarkable: the insane lucidity of his conclusions, the humorous eloquence of his language, or his power of method, bringing the whole of life into the focus of the subject treated, mixing the conversational salad like a drunken god. He doubles like the serpent, changes and flashes like the shaken kaleidoscope, transmigrates bodily into the views of others, and so, in the twinkling of an eye and with a heady rapture, turns questions inside out and flings them empty before you on the ground, like a triumphant conjuror. It is my common practice when a piece of conduct puzzles me, to attack it in the presence of Jack with such grossness, such partiality, and such wearing iteration, as at length shall spur him up in its defence. In a moment he transmigrates, dons the required character, and with moonstruck philosophy justifies the act in question. I can fancy nothing to compare with the vigour of these impersonations, the strange scale of language, flying from Shakespeare to Kant, and from Kant to Major Dyngwell —

"As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument — "

the sudden, sweeping generalisations, the absurd irrelevant 88
particularities, the wit, wisdom, folly, humour, eloquence, and bathos,

each startling in its kind, and yet all luminous in the admired disorder of their combination. A talker of a different calibre, though belonging to the same school, is Burly. Burly is a man of a great presence; he commands a larger atmosphere, gives the impression of a grosser mass of character than most men. It has been said of him that his presence could be felt in a room you entered blindfold; and the same, I think, has been said of other powerful constitutions condemned to much physical inaction. There is something boisterous and piratic in Burly's manner of talk which suits well enough with this impression. He will roar you down, he will bury his face in his hands, he will undergo passions of revolt and agony; and meanwhile his attitude of mind is really both conciliatory and receptive; and after Pistol has been out-Pistol'd, and the welkin rung for hours, you begin to perceive a certain subsidence in these spring torrents, points of agreement issue, and you end arm-in-arm, and in a glow of mutual admiration. The outcry only serves to make your final union the more unexpected and precious. Throughout there has been perfect sincerity, perfect intelligence, a desire to hear although not always to listen, and an unaffected eagerness to meet concessions. You have, with Burly, none of the dangers that attend debate with Spring-Heel'd Jack; who may at any moment turn his powers of transmigration on yourself, create for you a view you never held, and then furiously fall on you for holding it. These, at least, are my two favourites, and both are loud, copious, intolerant talkers. This argues that I myself am in the same category; for if we love talking at all, we love a bright, fierce adversary, who will hold his ground, foot by foot, in much our own manner, sell his attention dearly, and give us our full measure of the dust and exertion of battle. Both these men can be beat from a position, but it takes six hours to do it; a high and hard adventure, worth attempting.[89] With both you can pass days in an enchanted country of the mind, with people, scenery, and manners of its own; live a life apart, more arduous, active, and glowing than any real existence; and come forth again when the talk is over, as out of a theatre or a dream, to find the east wind still blowing and the chimney-pots of the old battered city still around you. Jack has the far finer mind, Burly the far more honest; Jack gives us the animated poetry, Burly the romantic prose of similar themes; the one glances high like a meteor and makes a light in darkness; the other, with many changing hues of fire, burns at the sea-level, like a conflagration; but both have the same humour and artistic interests, the same unquenched ardour in pursuit, the same gusts of talk and thunderclaps of contradiction.

Cockshot is a different article, but vastly entertaining, and has been meat and drink to me for many a long evening. His manner is dry, brisk, and pertinacious, and the choice of words not much. The point about him is his extraordinary readiness and spirit. You can propound nothing but he has either a theory about it ready-made, or will have one instantly on the stocks, and proceed to lay its timbers and launch it in your presence. “Let me see,” he will say. “Give me a moment. I *should* have some theory for that.” A blither spectacle than the vigour with which he sets about the task, it were hard to fancy. He is possessed by a demoniac energy, welding the elements for his life, and bending ideas, as an athlete bends a horse-shoe, with a visible and lively effort. He has, in theorising, a compass, an art; what I would call the synthetic gusto; something of a Herbert Spencer, who should see the fun of the thing. You are not bound, and no more is he, to place your faith in these brand-new opinions. But some of them are right enough, durable even for life; and the poorest serve for a cock-shy — as when idle people, after picnics, float a bottle on a pond and have an hour’s 90 diversion ere it sinks. Whichever they are, serious opinions or humours of the moment, he still defends his ventures with indefatigable wit and spirit, hitting savagely himself, but taking punishment like a man. He knows and never forgets that people talk, first of all, for the sake of talking; conducts himself in the ring, to use the old slang, like a thorough “glutton,” and honestly enjoys a telling facer from his adversary. Cockshot is bottled effervescency, the sworn foe of sleep. Three-in-the-morning Cockshot, says a victim. His talk is like the driest of all imaginable dry champagnes. Sleight of hand and inimitable quickness are the qualities by which he lives. Athelred, on the other hand, presents you with the spectacle of a sincere and somewhat slow nature thinking aloud. He is the most unready man I ever knew to shine in conversation. You may see him sometimes wrestle with a refractory jest for a minute or two together, and perhaps fail to throw it in the end. And there is something singularly engaging, often instructive, in the simplicity with which he thus exposes the process as well as the result, the works as well as the dial of the clock. Withal he has his hours of inspiration. Apt words come to him as if by accident, and, coming from deeper down, they smack the more personally, they have the more of fine old crusted humanity, rich in sediment and humour. There are sayings of his in which he has stamped himself into the very grain of the language; you would think he must have worn the words next his skin, and slept with them. Yet it is not as a sayer of particular good things that Athelred is most to be regarded, rather as the stalwart woodman of thought. I have pulled on a light cord often enough, while he has been wielding the broad-axe; and, between us, on this unequal division, many a specious fallacy has fallen. I have known him to battle the same question night after night for years, keeping it in the reign of talk, constantly applying it and re-applying it to life with humorous or grave intention, and all the 91 while never hurrying, nor flagging, nor taking an unfair advantage of the facts. Jack at a given moment, when arising, as it were, from the tripod, can be more radiantly just to those from whom he differs; but then the tenor of his thoughts is even calumnious; while Athelred, slower to forge excuses, is yet slower to condemn, and sits over the welter of the world, vacillating but still judicial, and still faithfully contending with his doubts.

Both the last talkers deal much in points of conduct and religion studied in the "dry light" of prose. Indirectly and as if against his will the same elements from time to time appear in the troubled and poetic talk of Opalstein. His various and exotic knowledge, complete although unready sympathies, and fine, full, discriminative flow of language, fit him out to be the best of talkers; so perhaps he is with some, not *quite* with me — *proxime accessit*, I should say. He sings the praises of the earth and the arts, flowers and jewels, wine and music, in a moonlight, serenading manner, as to the light guitar; even wisdom comes from his tongue like singing; no one is, indeed, more tuneful in the upper notes. But even while he sings the song of the Sirens, he still hearkens to the barking of the Sphinx. Jarring Byronic notes interrupt the flow of his Horatian humours. His mirth has something of the tragedy of the world for its perpetual background; and he feasts like Don Giovanni to a double orchestra, one lightly sounding for the dance, one pealing Beethoven in the distance. He is not truly reconciled either with life or with himself; and this instant war in his members sometimes divides the man's attention. He does not always, perhaps not often, frankly surrender himself in conversation. He brings into the talk other thoughts than those which he expresses; you are conscious that he keeps an eye on something else, that he does not shake off the world, nor quite forget himself. Hence arise occasional disappointments; even an occasional unfairness for 92 his companions, who find themselves one day giving too much and the next, when they are wary out of season, giving perhaps too little. Purcel is in another class from any I have mentioned. He is no debater, but appears in conversation, as occasion rises, in two distinct characters, one of which I admire and fear, and the other love. In the first, he is radiantly civil and rather silent, sits on a high, courtly hill-top, and from that vantage-ground drops you his remarks like favours. He seems not to share in our sublunary contentions; he wears no sign of interest; when on a sudden there falls in a crystal of wit, so polished that the dull do not perceive it, but so right that the sensitive are silenced. True talk should have more body and blood, should be louder, vainer, and more declaratory of the man; the true talker should not hold so steady an advantage over whom he speaks with; and that is one reason out of a score why I prefer my Purcel in his second character, when he unbends into a strain of graceful gossip, singing like the fireside kettle. In these moods he has an elegant homeliness that rings of the true Queen Anne. I know another person who attains, in his moments, to the insolence of a Restoration comedy, speaking, I declare, as Congreve wrote; but that is a sport of nature, and scarce falls under the rubric, for there is none, alas! to give him answer.

One last remark occurs: It is the mark of genuine conversation that the sayings can scarce be quoted with their full effect beyond the circle of common friends. To have their proper weight they should appear in a biography, and with the portrait of the speaker. Good talk is dramatic, it is like an impromptu piece of acting where each should represent himself to the greatest advantage; and that is the best kind of talk where each speaker is most fully and candidly himself, and where, if you were to shift the speeches round from one to another, there would be the greatest loss in significance and perspicuity. It is for this 93 reason that talk depends so wholly on our company. We should like to introduce Falstaff and Mercutio, or Falstaff and Sir Toby; but Falstaff in talk with Cordelia seems even painful. Most of us, by the Protean quality of man, can talk to some degree with all; but the true talk, that strikes out all the slumbering best of us, comes only with the peculiar brethren of our spirits, is founded as deep as love in the constitution of our being, and is a thing to relish with all our energy, while yet we have it, and to be grateful for for ever.

XI

TALK AND TALKERS

II

In the last paper there was perhaps too much about mere debate; and there was nothing said at all about that kind of talk which is merely luminous and restful, a higher power of silence, the quiet of the evening shared by ruminating friends. There is something, aside from personal preference, to be alleged in support of this omission. Those who are no chimney-cornerers, who rejoice in the social thunderstorm, have a ground in reason for their choice. They get little rest indeed; but restfulness is a quality for cattle; the virtues are all active, life is alert, and it is in repose that men prepare themselves for evil. On the other hand, they are bruised into a knowledge of themselves and others; they have in a high degree the fencer's pleasure in dexterity displayed and proved; what they get they get upon life's terms, paying for it as they go; and once the talk is launched, they are assured of honest dealing from an adversary eager like themselves. The aboriginal man within us, the cave-dweller, still lusty as when he fought tooth and nail for roots and berries, scents this kind of equal battle from afar; it is like his old primeval days upon the crags, a return to the sincerity of savage life from the comfortable fictions of the civilised. And if it be delightful to the Old Man, it is none the less profitable to his younger brother, the conscientious gentleman. I feel never quite sure of your urbane and smiling 95 coteries; I fear they indulge a man's vanities in silence, suffer him to encroach, encourage him on to be an ass, and send him forth again, not merely contemned for the moment, but radically more contemptible than when he entered. But if I have a flushed, blustering fellow for my opposite, bent on carrying a point, my vanity is sure to have its ears rubbed, once at least, in the course of the debate. He will not spare me when we differ; he will not fear to demonstrate my folly to my face.

For many natures there is not much charm in the still, chambered society, the circle of bland countenances, the digestive silence, the admired remark, the flutter of affectionate approval. They demand more atmosphere and exercise; "a gale upon their spirits," as our pious ancestors would phrase it; to have their wits well breathed in an uproarious Valhalla. And I suspect that the choice, given their character and faults, is one to be defended. The purely wise are silenced by facts; they talk in a clear atmosphere, problems lying around them like a view in nature; if they can be shown to be somewhat in the wrong, they digest the reproof like a thrashing, and make better intellectual blood. They stand corrected by a whisper; a word or a glance reminds them of the great eternal law. But it is not so with all. Others in conversation seek rather contact with their fellow-men than increase of knowledge or clarity of thought. The drama, not the philosophy, of life is the sphere of their intellectual activity. Even when they pursue truth, they desire as much as possible of what we may call human scenery along the road they follow. They dwell in the heart of life; the blood sounding in their ears, their eyes laying hold of what delights them with a brutal avidity that makes them blind to all besides, their interest riveted on people, living, loving, talking, tangible people. To a man of this description, the sphere of argument seems very pale and ghostly. By a strong expression, a perturbed countenance, floods of tears, an insult which his conscience obliges him 96 to swallow, he is brought round to knowledge which no syllogism would have conveyed to him. His own experience is so vivid, he is so superlatively conscious of himself, that if, day after day, he is allowed to hector and hear nothing but approving echoes, he will lose his hold on the soberness of things and take himself in earnest for a god. Talk might be to such an one the very way of moral ruin; the school where he might learn to be at once intolerable and ridiculous.

This character is perhaps commoner than philosophers suppose. And for persons of that stamp to learn much by conversation, they must speak with their superiors, not in intellect, for that is a superiority that must be proved, but in station. If they cannot find a friend to bully them for their good, they must find either an old man, a woman, or some one so far below them in the artificial order of society, that courtesy may be particularly exercised.

The best teachers are the aged. To the old our mouths are always partly closed; we must swallow our obvious retorts and listen. They sit above our heads, on life’s raised dais, and appeal at once to our respect and pity. A flavour of the old school, a touch of something different in their manner — which is freer and rounder, if they come of what is called a good family, and often more timid and precise if they are of the middle class — serves, in these days, to accentuate the difference of age and add a distinction to grey hairs. But their superiority is founded more deeply than by outward marks or gestures. They are before us in the march of man; they have more or less solved the irking problem; they have battled through the equinox of life; in good and evil they have held their course; and now, without open shame, they near the crown and harbour. It may be we have been struck with one of fortune's darts; we can scarce be civil, so cruelly is our spirit tossed. Yet long before we were so much as thought upon, the like calamity befell the old man or 97 woman that now, with pleasant humour, rallies us upon our inattention, sitting composed in the holy evening of man's life, in the clear shining after rain. We grow ashamed of our distresses, new and hot and coarse like villainous roadside brandy; we see life in aerial perspective, under the heavens of faith; and out of the worst, in the mere presence of contented elders, look forward and take patience. Fear shrinks before them "like a thing reproved," not the flitting and ineffectual fear of death, but the instant, dwelling terror of the responsibilities and revenges of life. Their speech, indeed, is timid; they report lions in the path; they counsel a meticulous footing; but their serene marred faces are more eloquent and tell another story. Where they have gone, we will go also, not very greatly fearing; what they have endured unbroken, we also, God helping us, will make a shift to bear.

Not only is the presence of the aged in itself remedial, but their minds are stored with antidotes, wisdom's simples, plain considerations overlooked by youth. They have matter to communicate, be they never so stupid. Their talk is not merely literature, it is great literature; classic in virtue of the speaker's detachment, studded, like a book of travel, with things we should not otherwise have learnt. In virtue, I have said, of the speaker's detachment, — and this is why, of two old men, the one who is not your father speaks to you with the more sensible authority; for in the paternal relation the oldest have lively interests and remain still young. Thus I have known two young men great friends; each swore by the other's father; the father of each swore by the other lad; and yet each pair, of parent and child, were perpetually by the ears. This is typical: it reads like the germ of some kindly comedy.

The old appear in conversation in two characters: the critically silent and the garrulous anecdotic. The last is perhaps what we look for; it is perhaps the more instructive. An old gentleman, well on in years, sits handsomely and naturally in the bow-window of his age, scanning 98 experience with reverted eye; and, chirping and smiling, communicates the accidents and reads the lesson of his long career. Opinions are strengthened, indeed, but they are also weeded out in the course of years. What remains steadily present to the eye of the retired veteran in his hermitage, what still ministers to his content, what still quickens his old honest heart — these are "the real long-lived things" that Whitman tells us to prefer. Where youth agrees with age, not where they differ, wisdom lies; and it is when the young disciple finds his heart to beat in tune with his grey-bearded teacher's that a lesson may be learned. I have known one old gentleman, whom I may name, for he is now gathered to his stock — Robert Hunter, Sheriff of Dumbarton, and author of an excellent law-book still re-edited and republished. Whether he was originally big or little is more than I can guess. When I knew him he was all fallen away and fallen in; crooked and shrunken; buckled into a stiff waistcoat for support; troubled by ailments, which kept him hobbling in and out of the room; one foot gouty; a wig for decency, not for deception, on his head; close shaved, except under his chin — and for that he never failed to apologise, for it went sore against the traditions of his life. You can imagine how he would fare in a novel by Miss Mather; yet this rag of a Chelsea veteran lived to his last year in the plenitude of all that is best in man, brimming with human kindness, and staunch as a Roman soldier under his manifold infirmities. You could not say that he had lost his memory, for he would repeat Shakespeare and Webster and Jeremy Taylor and Burke by the page together; but the parchment was filled up, there was no room for fresh inscriptions, and he was capable of repeating the same anecdote on many successive visits. His voice survived in its full power, and he took a pride in using it. On his last voyage as Commissioner of Lighthouses, he hailed a ship at sea and made himself clearly audible without a speaking-trumpet, ruffling the while with a proper vanity in his achievement. He had a 99 habit of eking out his words with interrogative hems, which was puzzling and a little wearisome, suited ill with his appearance, and seemed a survival from some former stage of bodily portliness. Of yore, when he was a great pedestrian and no enemy to good claret, he may have pointed with these minute-guns his allocutions to the bench. His humour was perfectly equable, set beyond the reach of fate; gout, rheumatism, stone, and gravel might have combined their forces against that frail tabernacle, but when I came round on Sunday evening, he would lay aside Jeremy Taylor's "Life of Christ" and greet me with the same open brow, the same kind formality of manner. His opinions and sympathies dated the man almost to a decade. He had begun life, under his mother's influence, as an admirer of Junius, but on maturer knowledge had transferred his admiration to Burke. He cautioned me, with entire gravity, to be punctilious in writing English; never to forget that I was a Scotsman, that English was a foreign tongue, and that if I attempted the colloquial, I should certainly be shamed: the remark was apposite, I suppose, in the days of David Hume. Scott was too new for him; he had known the author — known him, too, for a Tory; and to the genuine classic a contemporary is always something of a trouble. He had the old, serious love of the play; had even, as he was proud to tell, played a certain part in the history of Shakespearian revivals, for he had successfully pressed on

Murray, of the old Edinburgh Theatre, the idea of producing Shakespeare's fairy pieces with great scenic display. A Moderate in religion, he was much struck in the last years of his life by a conversation with two young lads, revivalists. “H'm,” he would say — ”new to me. I have had — h'm — no such experience.” It struck him, not with pain, rather with a solemn philosophic interest, that he, a Christian as he hoped, and a Christian of so old a standing, should hear these young fellows talking of his own subject, his own weapons that he had fought the battle of life with, — ”and — h'm — not understand.” 100 In this wise and graceful attitude he did justice to himself and others, reposed unshaken in his old beliefs, and recognised their limits without anger or alarm. His last recorded remark, on the last night of his life, was after he had been arguing against Calvinism with his minister and was interrupted by an intolerable pang. “After all,” he said, “of all the ‘isms, I know none so bad as rheumatism.” My own last sight of him was some time before, when we dined together at an inn; he had been on circuit, for he stuck to his duties like a chief part of his existence; and I remember it as the only occasion on which he ever soiled his lips with slang — a thing he loathed. We were both Roberts; and as we took our places at table, he addressed me with a twinkle: “We are just what you would call two bob.” He offered me port, I remember, as the proper milk of youth; spoke of “twenty-shilling notes”; and throughout the meal was full of old-world pleasantry and quaintness, like an ancient boy on a holiday. But what I recall chiefly was his confession that he had never read *Othello* to an end. Shakespeare was his continual study. He loved nothing better than to display his knowledge and memory by adducing parallel passages from Shakespeare, passages where the same word was employed, or the same idea differently treated. But *Othello* had beaten him. “That noble gentleman and that noble lady — h'm — too painful for me.” The same night the hoardings were covered with posters, “Burlesque of *Othello*,” and the contrast blazed up in my mind like a bonfire. An unforgettable look it gave me into that kind man's soul. His acquaintance was indeed a liberal and pious education. All the humanities were taught in that bare dining-room beside his gouty footstool. He was a piece of good advice; he was himself the instance that pointed and adorned his various talk. Nor could a young man have found elsewhere a place so set apart from envy, fear, discontent, or any of the passions that debase; a life so honest and composed; a soul like an ancient violin, so subdued to harmony, 101 responding to a touch in music — as in that dining-room, with Mr. Hunter chatting at the eleventh hour, under the shadow of eternity, fearless and gentle.

The second class of old people are not anecdotic; they are rather hearers than talkers, listening to the young with an amused and critical attention. To have this sort of intercourse to perfection, I think we must go to old ladies. Women are better hearers than men, to begin with; they learn, I fear in anguish, to bear with the tedious and infantile vanity of the other sex; and we will take more from a woman than even from the oldest man in the way of biting comment. Biting comment is the chief part, whether for profit or amusement, in this business. The old lady that I have in my eye is a very caustic speaker, her tongue, after years of practice, in absolute command, whether for silence or attack. If she chance to dislike you, you will be tempted to curse the malignity of age. But if you chance to please even slightly, you will be listened to with a particular laughing grace of sympathy, and from time to time chastised, as if in play, with a parasol as heavy as a pole-axe. It requires a singular art, as well as the vantage-ground of age, to deal these stunning corrections among the coxcombs of the young. The pill is disguised in sugar of wit; it is administered as a compliment — if you had not pleased, you would not have been censured; it is a personal affair — a hyphen, a *trait d'union*, between you and your censor; age's philandering, for her pleasure and your good. Incontestably the young man feels very much of a fool; but he must be a perfect Malvolio, sick with self-love, if he cannot take an open buffet and still smile. The correction of silence is what kills; when you know you have transgressed, and your friend says nothing and avoids your eye. If a man were made of gutta-percha, his heart would quail at such a moment. But when the word is out, the worst is over; and a fellow with any good humour at all may pass through a perfect hail of witty criticism, every bare place on his soul hit to the quick with a shrewd 102 missile, and reappear, as if after a dive, tingling with a fine moral reaction, and ready, with a shrinking readiness, one-third loath, for a repetition of the discipline.

There are few women, not well sunned and ripened, and perhaps toughened, who can thus stand apart from a man and say the true thing with a kind of genial cruelty. Still there are some — and I doubt if there be any man who can return the compliment. The class of man represented by Vernon Whitford in "The Egoist" says, indeed, the true thing, but he says it stockishly. Vernon is a noble fellow, and makes, by the way, a noble and instructive contrast to Daniel Deronda: his conduct is the conduct of a man of honour; but we agree with him, against our consciences, when he remorsefully considers "its astonishing dryness." He is the best of men, but the best of women manage to combine all that and something more. Their very faults assist them; they are helped even by the falseness of their position in life. They can retire into the fortified camp of the proprieties. They can touch a subject and suppress it. The most adroit employ a somewhat elaborate reserve as a means to be frank, much as they wear gloves when they shake hands. But a man has the full responsibility of his freedom, cannot evade a question, can scarce be silent without rudeness, must answer for his words upon the moment, and is not seldom left face to face with a damning choice, between the more or less dishonourable wriggling of Deronda and the downright woodenness of Vernon Whitford.

But the superiority of women is perpetually menaced; they do not sit throned on infirmities like the old; they, are suitors as well as sovereigns; their vanity is engaged, their affections are too apt to follow; and hence much of the talk between the sexes degenerates into something unworthy of the name. The desire to please, to shine with a certain softness of lustre and to draw a fascinating picture of oneself, banishes from conversation all that is sterling and most of what is humorous. As soon as a 103 strong current of mutual admiration begins to flow, the human interest triumphs entirely over the intellectual, and the commerce of words, consciously or not, becomes secondary to the commercing of eyes. But even where this ridiculous danger is avoided, and a man and woman converse equally and honestly, something in their nature or their education falsifies the strain. An instinct prompts them to agree; and where that is impossible, to agree to differ. Should they neglect the warning, at the first suspicion of an argument, they find themselves in different hemispheres. About any point of business or conduct, any actual affair demanding settlement, a woman will speak and listen, hear and answer arguments, not only with natural wisdom, but with candour and logical honesty. But if the subject of debate be something in the air, an abstraction, an excuse for talk, a logical Aunt Sally, then may the male debater instantly abandon hope; he may employ reason, adduce facts, be supple, be smiling, be angry, all shall avail him nothing; what the woman said first, that (unless she has forgotten it) she will repeat at the end. Hence, at the very junctures when a talk between men grows brighter and quicker and begins to promise to bear fruit, talk between the sexes is menaced with dissolution. The point of difference, the point of interest, is evaded by the brilliant woman, under a shower of irrelevant conversational rockets; it is bridged by the discreet woman with a rustle of silk, as she passes smoothly forward to the nearest point of safety. And this sort of prestidigitation, juggling the dangerous topic out of sight until it can be reintroduced with safety in an altered shape, is a piece of tactics among the true drawing-room queens.

The drawing-room is, indeed, an artificial place; it is so by our choice and for our sins. The subjection of women; the ideal imposed upon them from the cradle, and worn, like a hair-shirt, with so much constancy; their motherly, superior tenderness to man’s vanity and self-importance; their managing arts — the arts of a civilised 104 slave among good-natured barbarians — are all painful ingredients and all help to falsify relations. It is not till we get clear of that amusing artificial scene that genuine relations are founded, or ideas honestly compared. In the garden, on the road or the hillside, or *tête-à-tête* and apart from interruptions, occasions arise when we may learn much from any single woman; and nowhere more often than in married life. Marriage is one long conversation, chequered by disputes. The disputes are valueless; they but ingrain the difference; the heroic heart of woman prompting her at once to nail her colours to the mast. But in the intervals, almost unconsciously and with no desire to shine, the whole material of life is turned over and over, ideas are struck out and shared, the two persons more and more adapt their notions one to suit the other, and in process of time, without sound of trumpet, they conduct each other into new worlds of thought.

This sequel was called forth by an excellent article in *The Spectator*.

XII

THE CHARACTER OF DOGS

The civilisation, the manners, and the morals of dog-kind are to a great extent subordinated to those of his ancestral master, man. This animal, in many ways so superior, has accepted a position of inferiority, shares the domestic life, and humours the caprices of the tyrant. But the potentate, like the British in India, pays small regard to the character of his willing client, judges him with listless glances, and condemns him in a byword. Listless have been the looks of his admirers, who have exhausted idle terms of praise, and buried the poor soul below exaggerations. And yet more idle and, if possible, more unintelligent has been the attitude of his express detractors; those who are very fond of dogs, "but in their proper place"; who say "poo' fellow, poo' fellow," and are themselves far poorer; who whet the knife of the vivisectionist or heat his oven; who are not ashamed to admire "the creature's instinct"; and flying far beyond folly, have dared to resuscitate the theory of animal machines. The "dog's instinct" and the "automaton-dog," in this age of psychology and science, sound like strange anachronisms. An automaton he certainly is; a machine working independently of his control, the heart like the mill-wheel, keeping all in motion, and the consciousness, like a person shut in the mill garret, enjoying the view out of the window and shaken by the thunder of the stones; an automaton in one corner of which a living spirit is confined: an automaton like man. Instinct again he certainly possesses. Inherited aptitudes are his, 106 inherited frailties. Some things he at once views and understands, as though he were awakened from a sleep, as though he came "trailing clouds of glory." But with him, as with man, the field of instinct is limited; its utterances are obscure and occasional; and about the far larger part of life both the dog and his master must conduct their steps by deduction and observation.

The leading distinction between dog and man, after and perhaps before the different duration of their lives, is that the one can speak and that the other cannot. The absence of the power of speech confines the dog in the development of his intellect. It hinders him from many speculations, for words are the beginning of metaphysic. At the same blow it saves him from many superstitions, and his silence has won for him a higher name for virtue than his conduct justifies. The faults of the dog are many. He is vainer than man, singularly greedy of notice, singularly intolerant of ridicule, suspicious like the deaf, jealous to the degree of frenzy, and radically devoid of truth. The day of an intelligent small dog is passed in the manufacture and the laborious communication of falsehood; he lies with his tail, he lies with his eye, he lies with his protesting paw; and when he rattles his dish or scratches at the door his purpose is other than appears. But he has some apology to offer for the vice. Many of the signs which form his dialect have come to bear an arbitrary meaning, clearly understood both by his master and himself; yet when a new want arises he must either invent a new vehicle of meaning or wrest an old one to a different purpose; and this necessity frequently recurring must tend to lessen his idea of the sanctity of symbols. Meanwhile the dog is clear in his own conscience, and draws, with a human nicety, the distinction between formal and essential truth. Of his punning perversions, his legitimate dexterity with symbols, he is even vain; but when he has told and been detected in a lie, there is not a hair upon his body but confesses guilt. To a dog of gentlemanly feeling, theft and 107 falsehood are disgraceful vices. The canine, like the human, gentleman demands in his misdemeanours Montaigne's "*je ne sais quoi de généreux*." He is never more than half ashamed of having barked or bitten; and for those faults into which he has been led by the desire to shine before a lady of his race, he retains, even under physical correction, a share of pride. But to be caught lying, if he understands it, instantly uncurls his fleece.

Just as among dull observers he preserves a name for truth, the dog has been credited with modesty. It is amazing how the use of language blunts the faculties of man — that because vainglory finds no vent in words, creatures supplied with eyes have been unable to detect a fault so gross and obvious. If a small spoiled dog were suddenly to be endowed with speech, he would prate interminably, and still about himself; when we had friends, we should be forced to lock him in a garret; and what with his whining jealousies and his foible for falsehood, in a year's time he would have gone far to weary out our love. I was about to compare him to Sir Willoughby Patterne, but the Patternes have a manlier sense of their own merits; and the parallel, besides, is ready. Hans Christian Andersen, as we behold him in his startling memoirs, thrilling from top to toe with an excruciating vanity, and scouting even along the street for shadows of offence — here was the talking dog.

It is just this rage for consideration that has betrayed the dog into his satellite position as the friend of man. The cat, an animal of franker appetites, preserves his independence. But the dog, with one eye ever on the audience, has been wheedled into slavery, and praised and patted into the renunciation of his nature. Once he ceased hunting and became man's plate-licker, the Rubicon was crossed. Thenceforth he was a gentleman of leisure; and except the few whom we keep working, the whole race grew more and more self-conscious, mannered, and affected. The number of things that a small dog does 108 naturally is strangely small. Enjoying better spirits and not crushed under material cares, he is far more theatrical than average man. His whole life, if he be a dog of any pretension to gallantry, is spent in a vain show, and in the hot pursuit of admiration. Take out your puppy for a walk, and you will find the little ball of fur clumsy, stupid, bewildered, but natural. Let but a few months pass, and when you repeat the process you will find nature buried in convention. He will do nothing plainly; but the simplest processes of our material life will all be bent into the forms of an elaborate and mysterious etiquette. Instinct, says the fool, has awakened. But it is not so. Some dogs — some, at the very least — if they be kept separate from others, remain quite natural; and these, when at length they meet with a companion of experience, and have the game explained to them, distinguish themselves by the severity of their devotion to its rules. I wish I were allowed to tell a story which would radiantly illuminate the point; but men, like dogs, have an elaborate and mysterious etiquette. It is their bond of sympathy that both are the children of convention.

The person, man or dog, who has a conscience is eternally condemned to some degree of humbug; the sense of the law in their members fatally precipitates either towards a frozen and affected bearing. And the converse is true; and in the elaborate and conscious manners of the dog, moral opinions and the love of the ideal stand confessed. To follow for ten minutes in the street some swaggering, canine cavalier is to receive a lesson in dramatic art and the cultured conduct of the body; in every act and gesture you see him true to a refined conception; and the dullest cur, beholding him, pricks up his ear and proceeds to imitate and parody that charming ease. For to be a high-mannered and high-minded gentleman, careless, affable, and gay, is the inborn pretension of the dog. The large dog, so much lazier, so much more weighed upon with matter, so majestic in repose, so beautiful in effort, 109 is born with the dramatic means to wholly represent the part. And it is more pathetic and perhaps more instructive to consider the small dog in his conscientious and imperfect efforts to outdo Sir Philip Sidney. For the ideal of the dog is feudal and religious; the ever-present polytheism, the whip-bearing Olympus of mankind, rules them on the one hand; on the other, their singular difference of size and strength among themselves effectually prevents the appearance of the democratic notion. Or we might more exactly compare their society to the curious spectacle presented by a school — ushers, monitors, and big and little boys — qualified by one circumstance, the introduction of the other sex. In each we should observe a somewhat similar tension of manner, and somewhat similar points of honour. In each the larger animal keeps a contemptuous good humour; in each the smaller annoys him with wasp-like impudence, certain of practical immunity; in each we shall find a double life producing double characters, and an excursive and noisy heroism combined with a fair amount of practical timidity. I have known dogs, and I have known school heroes, that, set aside the fur, could hardly have been told apart; and if we desire to understand the chivalry of old, we must turn to the school playfields or the dungheap where the dogs are trooping.

Woman, with the dog, has been long enfranchised. Incessant massacre of female innocents has changed the proportions of the sexes and perverted their relations. Thus, when we regard the manners of the dog, we see a romantic and monogamous animal, once perhaps as delicate as the cat, at war with impossible conditions. Man has much to answer for; and the part he plays is yet more damnable and parlous than Corin's in the eyes of Touchstone. But his intervention has at least created an imperial situation for the rare surviving ladies. In that society they reign without a rival: conscious queens; and in the only instance of a canine wife-beater that has 110 ever fallen under my notice, the criminal was somewhat excused by the circumstances of his story. He is a little, very alert, well-bred, intelligent Skye, as black as a hat, with a wet bramble for a nose and two cairngorms for eyes. To the human observer he is decidedly well-looking; but to the ladies of his race he seems abhorrent. A thorough elaborate gentleman, of the plume and sword-knot order, he was born with a nice sense of gallantry to women. He took at their hands the most outrageous treatment; I have heard him bleating like a sheep, I have seen him streaming blood, and his ear tattered like a regimental banner; and yet he would scorn to make reprisals. Nay more, when a human lady upraised the contumelious whip against the very dame who had been so cruelly misusing him, my little great-heart gave but one hoarse cry and fell upon the tyrant tooth and nail. This is the tale of a soul's tragedy. After three years of unavailing chivalry, he suddenly, in one hour, threw off the yoke of obligation; had he been Shakespeare he would then have written *Troilus and Cressida* to brand the offending sex; but being only a little dog, he began to bite them. The surprise of the ladies whom he attacked indicated the monstrosity of his offence; but he had fairly beaten off his better angel, fairly committed moral suicide; for almost in the same hour, throwing aside the last rags of decency, he proceeded to attack the aged also. The fact is worth remark, showing, as it does, that ethical laws are common both to dogs and men; and that with both a single deliberate violation of the conscience loosens all. “But while the lamp holds on to burn,” says the paraphrase, “the greatest sinner may return.” I have been cheered to see symptoms of effectual penitence in my sweet ruffian; and by the handling that he accepted uncomplainingly the other day from an indignant fair one, I begin to hope the period of *Sturm und Drang* is closed.

All these little gentlemen are subtle casuists. The duty to the female dog is plain; but where competing 111 duties rise, down they will sit and study them out, like Jesuit confessors. I knew another little Skye, somewhat plain in manner and appearance, but a creature compact of amiability and solid wisdom. His family going abroad for a winter, he was received for that period by an uncle in the same city. The winter over, his own family home again, and his own house (of which he was very proud) reopened, he found himself in a dilemma between two conflicting duties of loyalty and gratitude. His old friends were not to be neglected, but it seemed hardly decent to desert the new. This was how he solved the problem. Every morning, as soon as the door was opened, off posted Coolin to his uncle’s, visited the children in the nursery, saluted the whole family, and was back at home in time for breakfast and his bit of fish. Nor was this done without a sacrifice on his part, sharply felt; for he had to forego the particular honour and jewel of his day — his morning’s walk with my father. And, perhaps from this cause, he gradually wearied of and relaxed the practice, and at length returned entirely to his ancient habits. But the same decision served him in another and more distressing case of divided duty, which happened not long after. He was not at all a kitchen dog, but the cook had nursed him with unusual kindness during the distemper; and though he did not adore her as he adored my father — although (born snob) he was critically conscious of her position as “only a servant” — he still cherished for her a special gratitude. Well, the cook left, and retired some streets away to lodgings of her own; and there was Coolin in precisely the same situation with any young gentleman who has had the inestimable benefit of a faithful nurse. The canine conscience did not solve the problem with a pound of tea at Christmas. No longer content to pay a flying visit, it was the whole forenoon that he dedicated to his solitary friend. And so, day by day, he continued to comfort her solitude until (for some reason which I could never understand and cannot approve) he was kept locked up to break him of the 112 graceful habit. Here, it is not the similarity, it is the difference, that is worthy of remark; the clearly marked degrees of gratitude and the proportional duration of his visits. Anything further removed from instinct it were hard to fancy; and one is even stirred to a certain impatience with a character so destitute of spontaneity, so passionless in justice, and so priggishly obedient to the voice of reason.

There are not many dogs like this good Coolin, and not many people. But the type is one well marked, both in the human and the canine family. Gallantry was not his aim, but a solid and somewhat oppressive respectability. He was a sworn foe to the unusual and the conspicuous, a praiser of the golden mean, a kind of city uncle modified by Cheeryble. And as he was precise and conscientious in all the steps of his own blameless course, he looked for the same precision and an even greater gravity in the bearing of his deity, my father. It was no sinecure to be Coolin's idol: he was exacting like a rigid parent; and at every sign of levity in the man whom he respected, he announced loudly the death of virtue and the proximate fall of the pillars of the earth.

I have called him a snob; but all dogs are so, though in varying degrees. It is hard to follow their snobbery among themselves; for though I think we can perceive distinctions of rank, we cannot grasp what is the criterion. Thus in Edinburgh, in a good part of the town, there were several distinct societies or clubs that met in the morning to — the phrase is technical — to "rake the backets" in a troop. A friend of mine, the master of three dogs, was one day surprised to observe that they had left one club and joined another; but whether it was a rise or a fall, and the result of an invitation or an expulsion, was more than he could guess. And this illustrates pointedly our ignorance of the real life of dogs, their social ambitions and their social hierarchies. At least, in their dealings with men they are not only conscious of sex, but of the difference of 113 station. And that in the most snobbish manner; for the poor man's dog is not offended by the notice of the rich, and keeps all his ugly feeling for those poorer or more ragged than his master. And again, for every station they have an ideal of behaviour, to which the master, under pain of derogation, will do wisely to conform. How often has not a cold glance of an eye informed me that my dog was disappointed; and how much more gladly would he not have taken a beating than to be thus wounded in the seat of piety!

I knew one disrespectable dog. He was far liker a cat; cared little or nothing for men, with whom he merely co-existed as we do with cattle, and was entirely devoted to the art of poaching. A house would not hold him, and to live in a town was what he refused. He led, I believe, a life of troubled but genuine pleasure, and perished beyond all question in a trap. But this was an exception, a marked reversion to the ancestral type; like the hairy human infant. The true dog of the nineteenth century, to judge by the remainder of my fairly large acquaintance, is in love with respectability. A street-dog was once adopted by a lady. While still an Arab, he had done as Arabs do, gambolling in the mud, charging into butchers' stalls, a cat-hunter, a sturdy beggar, a common rogue and vagabond; but with his rise into society he laid aside these inconsistent pleasures. He stole no more, he hunted no more cats; and, conscious of his collar, he ignored his old companions. Yet the canine upper class was never brought to recognise the upstart, and from that hour, except for human countenance, he was alone. Friendless, shorn of his sports and the habits of a lifetime, he still lived in a glory of happiness, content with his acquired respectability, and with no care but to support it solemnly. Are we to condemn or praise this self-made dog? We praise his human brother. And thus to conquer vicious habits is as rare with dogs as with men. With the more part, for all their scruple-mongering and moral thought, the vices 114 that are born with them remain invincible throughout; and they live all their years, glorying in their virtues, but still the slaves of their defects. Thus the sage Coolin was a thief to the last; among a thousand peccadilloes, a whole goose and a whole cold leg of mutton lay upon his conscience; but Woggs, whose soul's shipwreck in the matter of gallantry I have recounted above, has only twice been known to steal, and has often nobly conquered the temptation. The eighth is his favourite commandment. There is something painfully human in these unequal virtues and mortal frailties of the best. Still more painful is the bearing of those "stammering professors" in the house of sickness and under the terror of death. It is beyond a doubt to me that, somehow or other, the dog connects together, or confounds, the uneasiness of sickness and the consciousness of guilt. To the pains of the body he often adds the tortures of the conscience; and at these times his haggard protestations form, in regard to the human deathbed, a dreadful parody or parallel.

I once supposed that I had found an inverse relation between the double etiquette which dogs obey; and that those who were most addicted to the showy street life among other dogs were less careful in the practice of home virtues for the tyrant man. But the female dog, that mass of carneying affectations, shines equally in either sphere; rules her rough posse of attendant swains with unwearying tact and gusto; and with her master and mistress pushes the arts of insinuation to their crowning point. The attention of man and the regard of other dogs flatter (it would thus appear) the same sensibility; but perhaps, if we could read the canine heart, they would be found to flatter it in very different degrees. Dogs live with man as courtiers round a monarch, steeped in the flattery of his notice and enriched 115 with sinecures. To push their favour in this world of pickings and caresses is, perhaps, the business of their lives; and their joys may lie outside. I am in despair at our persistent ignorance. I read in the lives of our companions the same processes of reason, the same antique and fatal conflicts of the right against the wrong, and of unbitted nature with too rigid custom; I see them with our weaknesses, vain, false, inconstant against appetite, and with our one stalk of virtue, devoted to the dream of an ideal; and yet as they hurry by me on the street with tail in air, or come singly to solicit my regard, I must own the secret purport of their lives is still inscrutable to man. Is man the friend, or is he the patron only? Have they indeed forgotten nature's voice? or are those moments snatched from courtiership when they touch noses with the tinker's mongrel, the brief reward and pleasure of their artificial lives? Doubtless, when man shares with his dog the toils of a profession and the pleasures of an art, as with the shepherd or the poacher, the affection warms and strengthens till it fills the soul. But doubtless, also, the masters are, in many cases, the object of a merely interested cultus, sitting aloft like Louis Quatorze giving and receiving flattery and favour; and the dogs, like the majority of men, have but foregone their true existence and become the dupes of their ambition.

Walter, Watty, Woggy, Woggs, Wogg, and lastly Bogue; under which last name he fell in battle some twelve months ago. Glory was his aim, and he attained it; for his icon, by the hand of Caldecott, now lies among the treasures of the nation at the British Museum.

XIII

A PENNY PLAIN AND TWOPENCE COLOURED

These words will be familiar to all students of Skelt's Juvenile Drama. That national monument, after having changed its name to Park's, to Webb's, to Redington's, and last of all to Pollock's, has now become, for the most part, a memory. Some of its pillars, like Stonehenge, are still afoot, the rest clean vanished. In may be the Museum numbers a full set; and Mr. Ionides perhaps, or else her gracious Majesty, may boast their great collections; but to the plain private person they are become, like Raphaels, unattainable. I have, at different times, possessed *Aladdin, The Red Rover, The Blind Boy, The Old Oak Chest, The Wood Dæmon, Jack Sheppard, The Miller and his Men, Der Freischütz, The Smuggler, The Forest of Bondy, Robin Hood, The Waterman, Richard I., My Poll and my Partner Joe, The Inchcape Bell* (imperfect), and *Three-Fingered Jack, The Terror of Jamaica*; and I have assisted others in the illumination of *The Maid of the Inn* and *The Battle of Waterloo*. In this roll-call of stirring names you read the evidences of a happy childhood; and though not half of them are still to be procured of any living stationer, in the mind of their once happy owner all survive, kaleidoscopes of changing pictures, echoes of the past.

There stands, I fancy, to this day (but now how fallen!) a certain stationer's shop at a corner of the wide thoroughfare that joins the city of my childhood with the sea. When, upon any Saturday, we made a party to behold the 117 ships, we passed that corner; and since in those days I loved a ship as a man loves Burgundy or daybreak, this of itself had been enough to hallow it. But there was more than that. In the Leith Walk window, all the year round, there stood displayed a theatre in working order, with a "forest set," a "combat," and a few "robbers carousing" in the slides; and below and about, dearer tenfold to me! the plays themselves, those budgets of romance, lay tumbled one upon another. Long and often have I lingered there with empty pockets. One figure, we shall say, was visible in the first plate of characters, bearded, pistol in hand, or drawing to his ear the clothyard arrow; I would spell the name: was it Macaire, or Long Tom Coffin, or Grindoff, 2d dress? O, how I would long to see the rest! how — if the name by chance were hidden — I would wonder in what play he figured, and what immortal legend justified his attitude and strange apparel! And then to go within, to announce yourself as an intending purchaser, and, closely watched, be suffered to undo those bundles and breathlessly devour those pages of gesticulating villains, epileptic combats, bosky forests, palaces and war-ships, frowning fortresses and prison vaults — it was a giddy joy. That shop, which was dark and smelt of Bibles, was a loadstone rock for all that bore the name of boy. They could not pass it by, nor, having entered, leave it. It was a place besieged; the shopmen, like the Jews rebuilding Salem, had a double task. They kept us at the stick's end, frowned us down, snatched each play out of our hand ere we were trusted with another; and, incredible as it may sound, used to demand of us upon our entrance, like banditti, if we came with money or with empty hand. Old Mr. Smith himself, worn out with my eternal vacillation, once swept the treasures from before me, with the cry: "I do not believe, child, that you are an intending purchaser at all!" These were the dragons of the garden; but for such joys of paradise we could have faced the Terror of Jamaica himself. Every sheet we fingered was 118 another lightning glance into obscure, delicious story; it was like wallowing in the raw stuff of story-books. I know nothing to compare with it save now and then in dreams, when I am privileged to read in certain unwrit stories of adventure, from which I awake to find the world all vanity. The *crux* of Buridan's donkey was as nothing to the uncertainty of the boy as he handled and lingered and doated on these bundles of delight; there was a physical pleasure in the sight and touch of them which he would jealously prolong; and when at length the deed was done, the play selected, and the impatient shopman had brushed the rest into the grey portfolio, and the boy was forth again, a little late for dinner, the lamps springing into light in the blue winter's even, and *The Miller*, or *The Rover*, or some kindred drama clutched against his side — on what gay feet he ran, and how he laughed aloud in exultation! I can hear that laughter still. Out of all the years of my life, I can recall but one home-coming to compare with these, and that was on the night when I brought back with me the "Arabian Entertainments" in the fat, old, double-columned volume with the prints. I was just well into the story of the Hunchback, I remember, when my clergyman-grandfather (a man we counted pretty stiff) came in behind me. I grew blind with terror. But instead of ordering the book away, he said he envied me. Ah, well he might!

The purchase and the first half-hour at home, that was the summit. Thenceforth the interest declined by little and little. The fable, as set forth in the playbook, proved to be unworthy of the scenes and characters: what fable would not? Such passages as: "Scene 6. The Hermitage. Night set scene. Place back of scene 1, No. 2, at back of stage and hermitage, Fig. 2, out of set piece, R. H. in a slanting direction" — such passages, I say, though very practical, are hardly to be called good reading. Indeed, as literature, these dramas did not much appeal to me. I forget the very outline of the plots. Of *The Blind* 119 *Boy*, beyond the fact that he was a most injured prince, and once, I think, abducted, I know nothing. And *The Old Oak Chest*, what was it all about? that proscript (1st dress), that prodigious number of banditti, that old woman with the broom, and the magnificent kitchen in the third act (was it in the third?) — they are all fallen in a deliquium, swim faintly in my brain, and mix and vanish.

I cannot deny that joy attended the illumination; nor can I quite forgive that child who, wilfully foregoing pleasure, stoops to “twopence coloured.” With crimson lake (hark to the sound of it — crimson lake! — the horns of elf-land are not richer on the ear) — with crimson lake and Prussian blue a certain purple is to be compounded which, for cloaks especially, Titian could not equal. The latter colour with gamboge, a hated name although an exquisite pigment, supplied a green of such a savoury greenness that to-day my heart regrets it. Nor can I recall without a tender weakness the very aspect of the water where I dipped my brush. Yes, there was pleasure in the painting. But when all was painted, it is needless to deny it, all was spoiled. You might, indeed, set up a scene or two to look at; but to cut the figures out was simply sacrilege; nor could any child twice court the tedium, the worry, and the long-drawn disenchantment of an actual performance. Two days after the purchase the honey had been sucked. Parents used to complain; they thought I wearied of my play. It was not so: no more than a person can be said to have wearied of his dinner when he leaves the bones and dishes; I had got the marrow of it and said grace.

Then was the time to turn to the back of the playbook and to study that enticing double file of names where poetry, for the true child of Skelt, reigned happy and glorious like her Majesty the Queen. Much as I have travelled in these realms of gold, I have yet seen, upon that map or abstract, names of El Dorados that still haunt the ear of memory, and are still but names. *The* 120 *Floating Beacon* — why was that denied me? or *The Wreck Ashore*? *Sixteen-String Jack*, whom I did not even guess to be a highwayman, troubled me awake and haunted my slumbers; and there is one sequence of three from that enchanted calendar that I still at times recall, liked a loved verse of poetry: *Lodoiska*, *Silver Palace*, *Echo of Westminster Bridge*. Names, bare names, are surely more to children than we poor, grown-up, obliterated fools remember.

The name of Skelt itself has always seemed a part and parcel of the charm of his productions. It may be different with the rose, but the attraction of this paper drama sensibly declined when Webb had crept into the rubric: a poor cuckoo, flaunting in Skelt’s nest. And now we have reached Pollock, sounding deeper gulfs. Indeed, this name of

Skelt appears so stagey and piratic, that I will adopt it boldly to design these qualities. Skeltery, then, is a quality of much art. It is even to be found, with reverence be it said, among the works of nature. The stagey is its generic name; but it is an old, insular, home-bred staginess; not French, domestically British; not of to-day, but smacking of O. Smith, Fitzball, and the great age of melodrama; a peculiar fragrance haunting it; uttering its unimportant message in a tone of voice that has the charm of fresh antiquity. I will not insist upon the art of Skelt's purveyors. These wonderful characters that once so thrilled our soul with their bold attitude, array of deadly engines and incomparable costume, to-day look somewhat pallidly; the extreme hard favour of the heroine strikes me, I had almost said with pain; the villain's scowl no longer thrills me like a trumpet; and the scenes themselves, those once unparalleled landscapes, seem the efforts of a prentice hand. So much of fault we find; but on the other side the impartial critic rejoices to remark the presence of a great unity of gusto; of those direct clap-trap appeals, which a man is dead and buriable when he fails to answer; of the footlight glamour, the ready-made, bare-faced, 121 transpontine picturesque, a thing not one with cold reality, but how much dearer to the mind!

The scenery of Skeltdom — or, shall we say, the kingdom of Transpontus? — had a prevailing character. Whether it set forth Poland as in *The Blind Boy*, or Bohemia with *The Miller and his Men*, or Italy with *The Old Oak Chest*, still it was Transpontus. A botanist could tell it by the plants. The hollyhock was all-pervasive, running wild in deserts; the dock was common, and the bending reed; and overshadowing these were poplar, palm, potato tree, and *Quercus Skeltica* — brave growths. The graves were all embowelled in the Surrey-side formation; the soil was all betrodden by the light pump of T. P. Cooke. Skelt, to be sure, had yet another, an Oriental string: he held the gorgeous East in fee; and in the new quarter of Hyères, say, in the garden of the Hôtel des Îles d'Or, you may behold these blessed visions realised. But on these I will not dwell; they were an outwork; it was in the Occidental scenery that Skelt was all himself. It had a strong flavour of England; it was a sort of indigestion of England and drop-scenes, and I am bound to say was charming. How the roads wander, how the castle sits upon the hill, how the sun eradiates from behind the cloud, and how the congregated clouds themselves uproll, as stiff as bolsters! Here is the cottage interior, the usual first flat, with the cloak upon the nail, the rosaries of onions, the gun and powder-horn and corner-cupboard; here is the inn (this drama must be nautical, I foresee Captain Luff and Bold Bob Bowsprit) with the red curtain, pipes, spittoons, and eight-day clock; and there again is that impressive dungeon with the chains, which was so dull to colour.

England, the hedgerow elms, the thin brick houses, windmills, glimpses of the navigable Thames — England, when at last I came to visit it, was only Skelt made evident: to cross the border was, for the Scotsman, to come home to Skelt; there was the inn-sign and there the horse-trough, all foreshadowed in the faithful Skelt. If, at the ripe age of 122 fourteen years, I bought a certain cudgel, got a friend to load it, and thenceforward walked the tame ways of the earth my own ideal, radiating pure romance — still I was but a puppet in the hand of Skelt; the original of that regretted bludgeon, and surely the antitype of all the bludgeon kind, greatly improved from Cruikshank, had adorned the hand of Jonathan Wild, pl. 1. “This is mastering me,” as Whitman cries, upon some lesser provocation. What am I? what are life, art, letters, the world, but what my Skelt has made them? He stamped himself upon my immaturity. The world was plain before I knew him, a poor penny world; but soon it was all coloured with romance. If I go to the theatre to see a good old melodrama, ‘tis but Skelt a little faded. If I visit a bold scene in nature, Skelt would have been bolder; there had been certainly a castle on that mountain, and the hollow tree — that set-piece — I seem to miss it in the foreground. Indeed, out of this cut-and-dry, dull, swaggering, obtrusive and infantile art, I seem to have learned the very spirit of my life’s enjoyment; met there the shadows of the characters I was to read about and love in a late future; got the romance of *Der Freischütz* long ere I was to hear of Weber or the mighty Formes; acquired a gallery of scenes and characters with which, in the silent theatre of the brain, I might enact all novels and romances; and took from these rude cuts an enduring and transforming pleasure. Reader — and yourself?

A word of moral: it appears that B. Pollock, late J. Redington, No. 73 Hoxton Street, not only publishes twenty-three of these old stage favourites, but owns the necessary plates and displays a modest readiness to issue other thirty-three. If you love art, folly, or the bright eyes of children, speed to Pollock’s or to Clarke’s of Garrick Street. In Pollock’s list of publicanda I perceive a pair of my ancient aspirations: *The Wreck Ashore* and *Sixteen-String Jack*; and I cherish the belief that when these shall see once more the light of day, B. Pollock will 123 remember this apologist. But, indeed, I have a dream at times that is not all a dream. I seem to myself to wander in a ghostly street — E.W., I think, the postal district — close below the fool’s cap of St. Paul’s, and yet within easy hearing of the echo of the Abbey Bridge. There in a dim shop, low in the roof and smelling strong of glue and footlights, I find myself in quaking treaty with great Skelt himself, the aboriginal, all dusty from the tomb. I buy, with what a choking heart — I buy them all, all but the pantomimes; I pay my mental money, and go forth; and lo! the packets are dust.

XIV

A GOSSIP ON A NOVEL OF DUMAS’S

The books that we re-read the oftenest are not always those that we admire the most; we choose and we revisit them for many and various reasons, as we choose and revisit human friends. One or two of Scott’s novels, Shakespeare, Molière, Montaigne, “The Egoist,” and the “Vicomte de Bragelonne,” form the inner circle of my intimates. Behind these comes a good troop of dear acquaintances; “The Pilgrim’s Progress” in the front rank, “The Bible in Spain” not far behind. There are besides a certain number that look at me with reproach as I pass them by on my shelves: books that I once thumbed and studied: houses which were once like home to me, but where I now rarely visit. I am on these sad terms (and blush to confess it) with Wordsworth, Horace, Burns, and Hazlitt. Last of all, there is the class of book that has its hour of brilliancy — glows, sings, charms, and then fades again into insignificance until the fit return. Chief of those who thus smile and frown on me by turns, I must name Virgil and Herrick, who, were they but

“Their sometime selves the same throughout the year,”

must have stood in the first company with the six names of my continual literary intimates. To these six, incongruous as they seem, I have long been faithful, and hope to be faithful to the day of death. I have never read the whole of Montaigne, but I do not like to be long without reading some of him, and my delight in what I do read never lessens. Of Shakespeare I have read all but *Richard* 125 *III.*, *Henry VI.*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *All’s Well that Ends Well*; and these, having already made all suitable endeavour, I now know that I shall never read — to make up for which unfaithfulness I could read much of the rest for ever. Of Moliére — surely the next greatest name of Christendom — I could tell a very similar story; but in a little corner of a little essay these princes are too much out of place, and I prefer to pay my fealty and pass on. How often I have read “Guy Mannering,” “Rob Roy,” or “Redgauntlet,” I have no means of guessing, having begun young. But it is either four or five times that I have read “The Egoist,” and either five or six that I have read the “Vicomte de Bragelonne.”

Some, who would accept the others, may wonder that I should have spent so much of this brief life of ours over a work so little famous as the last. And, indeed, I am surprised myself; not at my own devotion, but the coldness of the world. My acquaintance with the “Vicomte” began, somewhat indirectly, in the year of grace 1863, when I had the advantage of studying certain illustrated dessert plates in a hotel at Nice. The name of d'Artagnan in the legends I already saluted like an old friend, for I had met it the year before in a work of Miss Yonge's. My first perusal was in one of those pirated editions that swarmed at that time out of Brussels, and ran to such a troop of neat and dwarfish volumes. I understood but little of the merits of the book; my strongest memory is of the execution of d'Eyméric and Lyodot — a strange testimony to the dulness of a boy, who could enjoy the rough-and-tumble in the Place de Grève, and forget d'Artagnan's visits to the two financiers. My next reading was in winter-time, when I lived alone upon the Pentlands. I would return in the early night from one of my patrols with the shepherd; a friendly face would meet me in the door, a friendly retriever scurry upstairs to fetch my slippers; and I would sit down with the "Vicomte" for a long, silent, solitary lamp-lit evening by the fire. And yet I know not why I 126 call it silent, when it was enlivened with such a clatter of horse-shoes, and such a rattle of musketry, and such a stir of talk; or why I call those evenings solitary in which I gained so many friends. I would rise from my book and pull the blind aside, and see the snow and the glittering hollies chequer a Scottish garden, and the winter moonlight brighten the white hills. Thence I would turn again to that crowded and sunny field of life in which it was so easy to forget myself, my cares, and my surroundings: a place busy as a city, bright as a theatre, thronged with memorable faces, and sounding with delightful speech. I carried the thread of that epic into my slumbers, I woke with it unbroken, I rejoiced to plunge into the book again at breakfast, it was with a pang that I must lay it down and turn to my own labours; for no part of the world has ever seemed to me so charming as these pages, and not even my friends are quite so real, perhaps quite so dear, as d'Artagnan.

Since then I have been going to and fro at very brief intervals in my favourite book; and I have now just risen from my last (let me call it my fifth) perusal, having liked it better and admired it more seriously than ever. Perhaps I have a sense of ownership, being so well known in these six volumes. Perhaps I think that d'Artagnan delights to have me read of him, and Louis Quatorze is gratified, and Fouquet throws me a look, and Aramis, although he knows I do not love him, yet plays to me with his best graces, as to an old patron of the show. Perhaps, if I am not careful, something may befall me like what befell George IV. about the battle of Waterloo, and I may come to fancy the "Vicomte" one of the first, and Heaven knows the best, of my own works. At least, I avow myself a partisan; and when I compare the popularity of the "Vicomte" with that of "Monte Cristo," or its own elder brother, the "Trois Mousquetaires," I confess I am both pained and puzzled.

To those who have already made acquaintance with 127 the titular hero in the pages of “Vingt Ans Après,” perhaps the name may act as a deterrent. A man might well stand back if he supposed he were to follow, for six volumes, so well-conducted, so fine-spoken, and withal so dreary a cavalier as Bragelonne. But the fear is idle. I may be said to have passed the best years of my life in these six volumes, and my acquaintance with Raoul has never gone beyond a bow; and when he, who has so long pretended to be alive, is at last suffered to pretend to be dead, I am sometimes reminded of a saying in an earlier volume: “*Enfin, dit Miss Stewart*,” — and it was of Bragelonne she spoke — ”*enfin il a fait quelquechose: c’est, ma foi! bien heureux*.” I am reminded of it, as I say; and the next moment, when Athos dies of his death, and my dear d’Artagnan bursts into his storm of sobbing, I can but deplore my flippancy.

Or perhaps it is La Vallière that the reader of “Vingt Ans Après” is inclined to flee. Well, he is right there too, though not so right. Louise is no success. Her creator has spared no pains; she is well-meant, not ill-designed, sometimes has a word that rings out true; sometimes, if only for a breath, she may even engage our sympathies. But I have never envied the King his triumph. And so far from pitying Bragelonne for his defeat, I could wish him no worse (not for lack of malice, but imagination) than to be wedded to that lady. Madame enchants me; I can forgive that royal minx her most serious offences; I can thrill and soften with the King on that memorable occasion when he goes to upbraid and remains to flirt; and when it comes to the “*Allons, aimez-moi donc*,” it is my heart that melts in the bosom of de Guiche. Not so with Louise. Readers cannot fail to have remarked that what an author tells us of the beauty or the charm of his creatures goes for nought; that we know instantly better; that the heroine cannot open her mouth but what, all in a moment, the fine phrases of preparation fall from round her like the robes from Cinderella, and 128 she stands before us, self-betrayed, as a poor, ugly, sickly wench, or perhaps a strapping market-woman. Authors, at least, know it well; a heroine will too often start the trick of “getting ugly”; and no disease is more difficult to cure. I said authors; but indeed I had a side eye to one author in particular, with whose works I am very well acquainted, though I cannot read them, and who has spent many vigils in this cause, sitting beside his ailing puppets and (like a magician) wearying his art to restore them to youth and beauty. There are others who ride too high for these misfortunes. Who doubts the loveliness of Rosalind? Arden itself was not more lovely. Who ever questioned the perennial charm of Rose Jocelyn, Lucy Desborough, or Clara Middleton? fair women with fair names, the daughters of George Meredith. Elizabeth Bennet has but to speak, and I am at her knees. Ah! these are the creators of desirable women. They would never have fallen in the mud with Dumas and poor La Vallière. It is my only consolation that not one of all of them, except the first, could have plucked at the moustache of d'Artagnan.

Or perhaps, again, a portion of readers stumble at the threshold. In so vast a mansion there were sure to be back stairs and kitchen offices where no one would delight to linger; but it was at least unhappy that the vestibule should be so badly lighted; and until, in the seventeenth chapter, d'Artagnan sets off to seek his friends, I must confess, the book goes heavily enough. But, from thenceforward, what a feast is spread! Monk kidnapped; d'Artagnan enriched; Mazarin's death; the ever delectable adventure of Belle Isle, wherein Aramis outwits d'Artagnan, with its epilogue (vol. v. chap. xxviii.), where d'Artagnan regains the moral superiority; the love adventures at Fontainebleau, with St. Aignan's story of the dryad and the business of de Guiche, de Wardes, and Manicamp; Aramis made general of the Jesuits; Aramis at the Bastille; the night talk in the forest of Sénart; Belle Isle again, with 129 the death of Porthos; and last, but not least, the taming of d'Artagnan the untamable, under the lash of the young King. What other novel has such epic variety and nobility of incident? often, if you will, impossible; often of the order of an Arabian story; and yet all based in human nature. For if you come to that, what novel has more human nature? not studied with the microscope, but seen largely, in plain daylight, with the natural eye? What novel has more good sense, and gaiety, and wit, and unflagging, admirable literary skill? Good souls, I suppose, must sometimes read it in the blackguard travesty of a translation. But there is no style so untranslatable; light as a whipped trifle, strong as silk; wordy like a village tale; pat like a general's despatch; with every fault, yet never tedious; with no merit, yet inimitably right. And, once more, to make an end of commendations, what novel is inspired with a more unstrained or a more wholesome morality?

Yes; in spite of Miss Yonge, who introduced me to the name of d'Artagnan only to dissuade me from a nearer knowledge of the man, I have to add morality. There is no quite good book without a good morality; but the world is wide, and so are morals. Out of two people who have dipped into Sir Richard Burton's "Thousand and One Nights," one shall have been offended by the animal details; another to whom these were harmless, perhaps even pleasing, shall yet have been shocked in his turn by the rascality and cruelty of all the characters. Of two readers, again, one shall have been pained by the morality of a religious memoir, one by that of the "Vicomte de Bragelonne." And the point is that neither need be wrong. We shall always shock each other both in life and art; we cannot get the sun into our pictures, nor the abstract right (if there be such a thing) into our books; enough if, in the one, there glimmer some hint of the great light that blinds us from heaven; enough if, in the other, there shine, even upon foul details, a spirit of magnanimity. 130 I would scarce send to the "Vicomte" a reader who was in quest of what we may call puritan morality. The ventripotent mulatto, the great eater, worker, earner and waster, the man of much and witty laughter, the man of the great heart, and alas! of the doubtful honesty, is a figure not yet clearly set before the world; he still awaits a sober and yet genial portrait; but with whatever art that may be touched, and whatever indulgence, it will not be the portrait of a precisian. Dumas was certainly not thinking of himself, but of Planchet, when he put into the mouth of d'Artagnan's old servant this excellent profession: "*Monsieur, j'étais une de ces bonnes pâtes d'hommes que Dieu a faits pour s'animer pendant un certain temps et pour trouver bonnes toutes choses qui accompagnent leur séjour sur la terre.*" He was thinking, as I say, of Planchet, to whom the words are aptly fitted; but they were fitted also to Planchet's creator; and perhaps this struck him as he wrote, for observe what follows: "*D'Artagnan s'assit alors près de la fenêtre, et, cette philosophie de Planchet lui ayant paru solide, il y rêva.*" In a man who finds all things good, you will scarce expect much zeal for negative virtues: the active alone will have a charm for him; abstinence, however wise, however kind, will always seem to such a judge entirely mean and partly impious. So with Dumas. Chastity is not near his heart; nor yet, to his own sore cost, that virtue of frugality which is the armour of the artist. Now, in the "Vicomte," he had much to do with the contest of Fouquet and Colbert. Historic justice should be all upon the side of Colbert, of official honesty, and fiscal competence. And Dumas knew it well: three times at least he shows his knowledge; once it is but flashed upon us, and received with the laughter of Fouquet himself, in the jesting controversy in the gardens of Saint Mandé; once it is touched on by Aramis in the forest of Sénart; in the end, it is set before us clearly in one dignified speech of the triumphant Colbert. But in Fouquet, the waster, the lover of good cheer and wit 131 and art, the swift transactor of much business, "*l'homme de bruit, l'homme de plaisir, l'homme qui n'est que parceque les autres sont,*" Dumas saw something of himself and drew the figure the more tenderly. It is to me even touching to see how he insists on Fouquet's honour; not seeing, you might think, that unflawed honour is impossible to spendthrifts; but rather, perhaps, in the light of his own life, seeing it too well, and clinging the more to what was left. Honour can survive a wound; it can live and thrive without a member. The man rebounds from his disgrace; he begins fresh foundations on the ruins of the old; and when his sword is broken, he will do valiantly with his dagger. So it is with Fouquet in the book; so it was with Dumas on the battlefield of life.

To cling to what is left of any damaged quality is virtue in the man; but perhaps to sing its praises is scarcely to be called morality in the writer. And it is elsewhere, it is in the character of d'Artagnan, that we must look for that spirit of morality, which is one of the chief merits of the book, makes one of the main joys of its perusal, and sets it high above more popular rivals. Athos, with the coming of years, has declined too much into the preacher, and the preacher of a sapless creed; but d'Artagnan has mellowed into a man so witty, rough, kind, and upright, that he takes the heart by storm. There is nothing of the copy-book about his virtues, nothing of the drawing-room in his fine, natural civility; he will sail near the wind; he is no district visitor — no Wesley or Robespierre; his conscience is void of all refinement whether for good or evil; but the whole man rings true like a good sovereign. Readers who have approached the "Vicomte," not across country, but by the legitimate, five-volumed avenue of the "Mousquetaires" and "Vingt Ans Après," will not have forgotten d'Artagnan's ungentlemanly and perfectly improbable trick upon Milady. What a pleasure it is, then, what a reward, and how agreeable a lesson, to see the old captain humble himself to the son of the man whom he had 132 personated! Here, and throughout, if I am to choose virtues for myself or my friends, let me choose the virtues of d'Artagnan. I do not say there is no character as well drawn in Shakespeare; I do say there is none that I love so wholly. There are many spiritual eyes that seem to spy upon our actions — eyes of the dead and the absent, whom we imagine to behold us in our most private hours, and whom we fear and scruple to offend: our witnesses and judges. And among these, even if you should think me childish, I must count my d'Artagnan — not d'Artagnan of the memoirs whom Thackeray pretended to prefer — a preference, I take the freedom of saying, in which he stands alone; not the d'Artagnan of flesh and blood, but him of the ink and paper; not Nature's, but Dumas's. And this is the particular crown and triumph of the artist — not to be true merely, but to be lovable; not simply to convince, but to enchant.

There is yet another point in the "Vicomte" which I find incomparable. I can recall no other work of the imagination in which the end of life is represented with so nice a tact. I was asked the other day if Dumas ever made me either laugh or cry. Well, in this my late fifth reading of the "Vicomte" I did laugh once at the small Coquelin de Volière business, and was perhaps a thought surprised at having done so: to make up for it, I smiled continually. But for tears, I do not know. If you put a pistol to my throat, I must own the tale trips upon a very airy foot — within a measurable distance of unreality; and for those who like the big guns to be discharged and the great passions to appear authentically, it may even seem inadequate from first to last. Not so to me; I cannot count that a poor dinner, or a poor book, where I meet with those I love; and, above all, in this last volume, I find a singular charm of spirit. It breathes a pleasant and a tonic sadness, always brave, never hysterical. Upon the crowded, noisy life of this long tale, evening gradually falls; and the lights are extinguished, and the heroes pass away one by 133 one. One by one they go, and not a regret embitters their departure; the young succeed them in their places, Louis Quatorze is swelling larger and shining broader, another generation and another France dawn on the horizon; but for us and these old men whom we have loved so long, the inevitable end draws near, and is welcome. To read this well is to anticipate experience. Ah, if only when these hours of the long shadows fall for us in reality and not in figure, we may hope to face them with a mind as quiet!

But my paper is running out; the siege-guns are firing on the Dutch frontier! and I must say adieu for the fifth time to my old comrade fallen on the field of glory. *Adieu* — rather *au revoir*! Yet a sixth time, dearest d’Artagnan, we shall kidnap Monk and take horse together for Belle Isle.

XV

A GOSSIP ON ROMANCE

In anything fit to be called by the name of reading, the process itself should be absorbing and voluptuous; we should gloat over a book, be rapt clean out of ourselves, and rise from the perusal, our mind filled with the busiest, kaleidoscopic dance of images, incapable of sleep or of continuous thought. The words, if the book be eloquent, should run thenceforward in our ears like the noise of breakers, and the story, if it be a story, repeat itself in a thousand coloured pictures to the eye. It was for this last pleasure that we read so closely, and loved our books so dearly, in the bright, troubled period of boyhood. Eloquence and thought, character and conversation, were but obstacles to brush aside as we dug blithely after a certain sort of incident, like a pig for truffles. For my part, I liked a story to begin with an old wayside inn where, "towards the close of the year 17 — — ," several gentlemen in three-cocked hats were playing bowls. A friend of mine preferred the Malabar coast in a storm, with a ship beating to windward, and a scowling fellow of Herculean proportions striding along the beach; he, to be sure, was a pirate. This was further afield than my home-keeping fancy loved to travel, and designed altogether for a larger canvas than the tales that I affected. Give me a highwayman and I was full to the brim; a Jacobite would do, but the highwayman was my favourite dish. I can still hear that merry clatter of the hoofs along the moonlit lane; night and the coming of day are still related in my mind with the doings of John Rann or Jerry Abershaw; and 135 the words "post-chaise," the "great North Road," "ostler," and "nag" still sound in my ears like poetry. One and all, at least, and each with his particular fancy, we read story-books in childhood, not for eloquence or character or thought, but for some quality of the brute incident. That quality was not mere bloodshed or wonder. Although each of these was welcome in its place, the charm for the sake of which we read depended on something different from either. My elders used to read novels aloud; and I can still remember four different passages which I heard, before I was ten, with the same keen and lasting pleasure. One I discovered long afterwards to be the admirable opening of "What will He Do with It": it was no wonder that I was pleased with that. The other three still remain unidentified. One is a little vague; it was about a dark, tall house at night, and people groping on the stairs by the light that escaped from the open door of a sickroom. In another, a lover left a ball, and went walking in a cool, dewy park, whence he could watch the lighted windows and the figures of the dancers as they moved. This was the most sentimental impression I think I had yet received, for a child is somewhat deaf to the sentimental. In the last, a poet, who had been tragically wrangling with his wife, walked forth on the sea-beach on a tempestuous night and witnessed the horrors of a wreck. Different as they are, all these early favourites have a common note — they have all a touch of the romantic.

Drama is the poetry of conduct, romance the poetry of circumstance. The pleasure that we take in life is of two sorts — the active and the passive. Now we are conscious of a great command over our destiny; anon we are lifted up by circumstance, as by a breaking wave, and dashed we know not how into the future. Now we are pleased by our conduct, anon merely pleased by our 136 surroundings. It would be hard to say which of these modes of satisfaction is the more effective, but the latter is surely the more constant. Conduct is three parts of life, they say; but I think they put it high. There is a vast deal in life and letters both which is not immoral, but simply non-moral; which either does not regard the human will at all, or deals with it in obvious and healthy relations; where the interest turns, not upon what a man shall choose to do, but on how he manages to do it; not on the passionate slips and hesitations of the conscience, but on the problems of the body and of the practical intelligence, in clean, open-air adventure, the shock of arms, or the diplomacy of life. With such material as this it is impossible to build a play, for the serious theatre exists solely on moral grounds, and is a standing proof of the dissemination of the human conscience. But it is possible to build, upon this ground, the most joyous of verses, and the most lively, beautiful, and buoyant tales.

One thing in life calls for another; there is a fitness in events and places. The sight of a pleasant arbour puts it in our mind to sit there. One place suggests work, another idleness, a third early rising and long rambles in the dew. The effect of night, of any flowing water, of lighted cities, of the peep of day, of ships, of the open ocean, calls up in the mind an army of anonymous desires and pleasures. Something, we feel, should happen; we know not what, yet we proceed in quest of it. And many of the happiest hours of life fleet by us in this vain attendance on the genius of the place and moment. It is thus that tracts of young fir, and low rocks that reach into deep surroundings, particularly torture and delight me. Something must have happened in such places, and perhaps ages back, to members of my race; and when I was a child I tried in vain to invent appropriate games for them, as I still try, just as vainly, to fit them with the proper story. Some places speak distinctly. Certain dank gardens cry aloud for a murder; certain old houses demand to be haunted; certain coasts 137 are set apart for shipwreck. Other spots again seem to abide their destiny, suggestive and impenetrable, “miching mallecho.” The inn at Burford Bridge, with its arbours and green garden and silent, eddying river — though it is known already as the place where Keats wrote some of his “Endymion” and Nelson parted from his Emma — still seems to wait the coming of the appropriate legend. Within these ivied walls, behind these old green shutters, some further business smoulders, waiting for its hour. The old “Hawes Inn” at the Queen’s Ferry makes a similar call upon my fancy. There it stands, apart from the town, beside the pier, in a climate of its own, half inland, half marine — in front, the ferry bubbling with the tide and the guardship swinging to her anchor; behind, the old garden with the trees. Americans seek it already for the sake of Lovel and Oldbuck, who dined there at the beginning of “The Antiquary.” But you need not tell me — that is not all; there is some story, unrecorded or not yet complete, which must express the meaning of that inn more fully. So it is with names and faces; so it is with incidents that are idle and inconclusive in themselves, and yet seem like the beginning of some quaint romance, which the all-careless author leaves untold. How many of these romances have we not seen determined at their birth; how many people have met us with a look of meaning in their eye, and sunk at once into trivial acquaintances; to how many places have we not drawn near, with express intimations — ”here my destiny awaits me” — and we have but dined there and passed on! I have lived both at the Hawes and Burford in a perpetual flutter, on the heels, as it seemed, of some adventure that should justify the place; but though the feeling had me to bed at night and called me again at morning in one unbroken round of pleasure and suspense, nothing befell me in either worth remark. The man or the hour had not yet come; but some day, I think, a boat shall put off from the Queen’s Ferry, fraught with a dear cargo, and some frosty night a horseman, on a tragic 138 errand, rattle with his whip upon the green shutters of the inn at Burford.

Now, this is one of the natural appetites with which any lively literature has to count. The desire for knowledge, I had almost added the desire for meat, is not more deeply seated than this demand for fit and striking incident. The dullest of clowns tells, or tries to tell, himself a story, as the feeblest of children uses invention in his play; and even as the imaginative grown person, joining in the game, at once enriches it with many delightful circumstances, the great creative writer shows us the realisation and the apotheosis of the day-dreams of common men. His stories may be nourished with the realities of life, but their true mark is to satisfy the nameless longings of the reader, and to obey the ideal laws of the day-dream. The right kind of thing should fall out in the right kind of place; the right kind of thing should follow; and not only the characters talk aptly and think naturally, but all the circumstances in a tale answer one to another like notes in music. The threads of a story come from time to time together and make a picture in the web; the characters fall from time to time into some attitude to each other or to nature, which stamps the story home like an illustration. Crusoe recoiling from the footprint, Achilles shouting over against the Trojans, Ulysses bending the great bow, Christian running with his fingers in his ears, — these are each culminating moments in the legend, and each has been printed on the mind's eye for ever. Other things we may forget; we may forget the words, although they are beautiful; we may forget the author's comment, although perhaps it was ingenious and true; but these epoch-making scenes, which put the last mark of truth upon a story, and fill up, at one blow, our capacity for sympathetic pleasure, we so adopt into the very bosom of our mind 139 that neither time nor tide can efface or weaken the impression. This, then, is the plastic part of literature: to embody character, thought, or emotion in some act or attitude that shall be remarkably striking to the mind's eye. This is the highest and hardest thing to do in words; the thing which, once accomplished, equally delights the schoolboy and the sage, and makes, in its own right, the quality of epics. Compared with this, all other purposes in literature, except the purely lyrical or the purely philosophic, are bastard in nature, facile of execution, and feeble in result. It is one thing to write about the inn at Burford, or to describe scenery with the word-painters; it is quite another to seize on the heart of the suggestion and make a country famous with a legend. It is one thing to remark and to dissect, with the most cutting logic, the complications of life, and of the human spirit; it is quite another to give them body and blood in the story of Ajax or of Hamlet. The first is literature, but the second is something besides, for it is likewise art.

English people of the present day are apt, I know not why, to look somewhat down on incident, and reserve their admiration for the clink of teaspoons and the accents of the curate. It is thought clever to write a novel with no story at all, or at least with a very dull one. Reduced even to the lowest terms, a certain interest can be communicated by the art of narrative; a sense of human kinship stirred; and a kind of monotonous fitness, comparable to the words and air of "Sandy's Mull," preserved among the infinitesimal occurrences recorded. Some people work, in this manner, with even a strong touch. Mr. Trollope's inimitable clergymen naturally arise to the mind in this connection. But even Mr. Trollope does not confine himself to chronicling small beer. Mr. Crawley's collision with the Bishop's wife, Mr. Melnotte dallying in the deserted banquet-room, are typical incidents, epically conceived, fitly embodying a crisis. Or again look at Thackeray. 140 If Rawdon Crawley's blow were not delivered, "Vanity Fair" would cease to be a work of art. That scene is the chief ganglion of the tale; and the discharge of energy from Rawdon's fist is the reward and consolation of the reader. The end of "Esmond" is a yet wider excursion from the author's customary fields; the scene at Castlewood is pure Dumas; the great and wily English borrower has here borrowed from the great, unblushing French thief; as usual, he has borrowed admirably well, and the breaking of the sword rounds off the best of all his books with a manly martial note. But perhaps nothing can more strongly illustrate the necessity for marking incident than to compare the living fame of "Robinson Crusoe" with the discredit of "Clarissa Harlowe." "Clarissa" is a book of a far more startling import, worked out, on a great canvas, with inimitable courage and unflagging art. It contains wit, character, passion, plot, conversations full of spirit and insight, letters sparkling with unstrained humanity; and if the death of the heroine be somewhat frigid and artificial, the last days of the hero strike the only note of what we now call Byronism, between the Elizabethans and Byron himself. And yet a little story of a shipwrecked sailor, with not a tenth part of the style nor a thousandth part of the wisdom, exploring none of the arcana of humanity and deprived of the perennial interest of love, goes on from edition to edition, ever young, while "Clarissa" lies upon the shelves unread. A friend of mine, a Welsh blacksmith, was twenty-five years old and could neither read nor write, when he heard a chapter of "Robinson" read aloud in a farm kitchen. Up to that moment he had sat content, huddled in his ignorance, but he left that farm another man. There were day-dreams, it appeared, divine day-dreams, written and printed and bound, and to be bought for money and enjoyed at pleasure. Down he sat that day, painfully learned to read Welsh, and returned to borrow the book. It had been lost, nor could he find another copy but one that was in English. 141 Down he sat once more, learned English, and at length, and with entire delight, read "Robinson." It is like the story of a love-chase. If he had heard a letter from "Clarissa," would he have been fired with the same chivalrous ardour? I wonder. Yet "Clarissa" has every quality that can be shown in prose, one alone excepted — pictorial or picture-making romance. While "Robinson" depends, for the most part and with the overwhelming majority of its readers, on the charm of circumstance.

In the highest achievements of the art of words, the dramatic and the pictorial, the moral and romantic interest, rise and fall together, by a common and organic law. Situation is animated with passion, passion clothed upon with situation. Neither exists for itself, but each inheres indissolubly with the other. This is high art; and not only the highest art possible in words, but the highest art of all, since it combines the greatest mass and diversity of the elements of truth and pleasure. Such are epics, and the few prose tales that have the epic weight. But as from a school of works, aping the creative, incident and romance are ruthlessly discarded, so may character and drama be omitted or subordinated to romance. There is one book, for example, more generally loved than Shakespeare, that captivates in childhood, and still delights in age — I mean the “Arabian Nights” — where you shall look in vain for moral or for intellectual interest. No human face or voice greets us among that wooden crowd of kings and genies, sorcerers and beggarmen. Adventure, on the most naked terms, furnishes forth the entertainment and is found enough. Dumas approaches perhaps nearest of any modern to these Arabian authors in the purely material charm of some of his romances. The early part of “Monte Cristo,” down to the finding of the treasure, is a piece of perfect story-telling; the man never breathed who shared these moving incidents without a tremor; and yet Faria is a thing of packthread and Dantès little more than a name. The sequel is one long-drawn error, gloomy, 142 bloody, unnatural, and dull; but as for these early chapters, I do not believe there is another volume extant where you can breathe the same unmingled atmosphere of romance. It is very thin and light, to be sure, as on a high mountain; but it is brisk and clear and sunny in proportion. I saw the other day, with envy, an old and very clever lady setting forth on a second or third voyage into “Monte Cristo.” Here are stories which powerfully affect the reader, which can be reperused at any age, and where the characters are no more than puppets. The bony fist of the showman visibly propels them; their springs are an open secret; their faces are of wood, their bellies filled with bran; and yet we thrillingly partake of their adventures. And the point may be illustrated still further. The last interview between Lucy and Richard Feverel is pure drama; more than that, it is the strongest scene, since Shakespeare, in the English tongue. Their first meeting by the river, on the other hand, is pure romance; it has nothing to do with character; it might happen to any other boy and maiden, and be none the less delightful for the change. And yet I think he would be a bold man who should choose between these passages. Thus, in the same book, we may have two scenes, each capital in its order: in the one, human passion, deep calling unto deep, shall utter its genuine voice; in the second, according circumstances, like instruments in tune, shall build up a trivial but desirable incident, such as we love to prefigure for ourselves; and in the end, in spite of the critics, we may hesitate to give the preference to either. The one may ask more genius — I do not say it does; but at least the other dwells as clearly in the memory.

True romantic art, again, makes a romance of all things. It reaches into the highest abstraction of the ideal; it does not refuse the most pedestrian realism. “Robinson Crusoe” is as realistic as it is romantic; both qualities are pushed to an extreme, and neither suffers. Nor does romance depend upon the material importance 143 of the incidents. To deal with strong and deadly elements, banditti, pirates, war and murder, is to conjure with great names, and, in the event of failure, to double the disgrace. The arrival of Haydn and Consuelo at the Canon’s villa is a very trifling incident; yet we may read a dozen boisterous stories from beginning to end, and not receive so fresh and stirring an impression of adventure. It was the scene of Crusoe at the wreck, if I remember rightly, that so bewitched my blacksmith. Nor is the fact surprising. Every single article the castaway recovers from the hulk is “a joy for ever” to the man who reads of them. They are the things that should be found, and the bare enumeration stirs the blood. I found a glimmer of the same interest the other day in a new book, “The Sailor’s Sweetheart,” by Mr. Clark Russell. The whole business of the brig *Morning Star* is very rightly felt and spiritedly written; but the clothes, the books, and the money satisfy the reader’s mind like things to eat. We are dealing here with the old cut-and-dry, legitimate interest of treasure-trove. But even treasure-trove can be made dull. There are few people who have not groaned under the plethora of goods that fell to the lot of the “Swiss Family Robinson,” that dreary family. They found article after article, creature after creature, from milk-kine to pieces of ordnance, a whole consignment; but no informing taste had presided over the selection, there was no smack or relish in the invoice; and these riches left the fancy cold. The box of goods in Verne’s “Mysterious Island” is another case in point: there was no gusto and no glamour about that; it might have come from a shop. But the two hundred and seventy-eight Australian sovereigns on board the *Morning Star* fell upon me like a surprise that I had expected; whole vistas of secondary stories, besides the one in hand, radiated forth from that discovery, as they radiate from a striking particular in life; and I was made for the moment as happy as a reader has the right to be.To come at all at the nature of this quality of romance, we must bear in mind the peculiarity of our attitude to any art. No art produces illusion; in the theatre we never forget that we are in the theatre; and while we read a story, we sit wavering between two minds, now merely clapping our hands at the merit of the performance, now condescending to take an active part in fancy with the characters. This last is the triumph of romantic story-telling: when the reader consciously plays at being the hero, the scene is a good scene. Now in character-studies the pleasure that we take is critical; we watch, we approve, we smile at incongruities, we are moved to sudden heats of sympathy with courage, suffering, or virtue. But the characters are still themselves, they are not us; the more clearly they are depicted, the more widely do they stand away from us, the more imperiously do they thrust us back into our place as a spectator. I cannot identify myself with Rawdon Crawley or with Eugène de Rastignac, for I have scarce a hope or fear in common with them. It is not character but incident that wooes us out of our reserve. Something happens as we desire to have it happen to ourselves; some situation, that we have long dallied with in fancy, is realised in the story with enticing and appropriate details. Then we forget the characters; then we push the hero aside; then we plunge into the tale in our own person and bathe in fresh experience; and then, and then only, do we say we have been reading a romance. It is not only pleasurable things that we imagine in our day-dreams; there are lights in which we are willing to contemplate even the idea of our own death; ways in which it seems as if it would amuse us to be cheated, wounded, or calumniated. It is thus possible to construct a story, even of tragic import, in which every incident, detail, and trick of circumstance shall be welcome to the reader's thoughts. Fiction is to the grown man what play is to the child; it is there that he changes the atmosphere and tenor of his life; and when the game so chimes with his fancy 145 that he can join in it with all his heart, when it pleases him with every turn, when he loves to recall it and dwells upon its recollection with entire delight, fiction is called romance.

Walter Scott is out and away the king of the romantics. "The Lady of the Lake" has no indisputable claim to be a poem beyond the inherent fitness and desirability of the tale. It is just such a story as a man would make up for himself, walking, in the best health and temper, through just such scenes as it is laid in. Hence it is that a charm dwells undefinable among these slovenly verses, as the unseen cuckoo fills the mountains with his note; hence, even after we have flung the book aside, the scenery and adventures remain present to the mind, a new and green possession, not unworthy of that beautiful name, "The Lady of the Lake," or that direct, romantic opening — one of the most spirited and poetical in literature — ”The stag at eve had drunk his fill." The same strength and the same weaknesses adorn and disfigure the novels. In that ill-written, ragged book, "The Pirate," the figure of Cleveland — cast up by the sea on the resounding foreland of Dunrossness — moving, with the blood on his hands and the Spanish words on his tongue, among the simple islanders — singing a serenade under the window of his Shetland mistress — is conceived in the very highest manner of romantic invention. The words of his song, "Through groves of palm," sung in such a scene and by such a lover, clinch, as in a nutshell, the emphatic contrast upon which the tale is built. In “Guy Mannering,” again, every incident is delightful to the imagination; and the scene when Harry Bertram lands at Ellangowan is a model instance of romantic method.

“‘I remember the tune well,’ he says,’though I cannot guess what should at present so strongly recall it to my memory.’ He took his flageolet from his pocket and played a simple melody. Apparently the tune awoke 146 the corresponding associations of a damsel.... She immediately took up the song —

“‘Are these the links of Forth, she said;
Or are they the crooks of Dee,
Or the bonny woods of Warroch Head
That I so fain would see?’

“‘By heaven!’ said Bertram, ‘it is the very ballad.’”

On this quotation two remarks fall to be made. First, as an instance of modern feeling for romance, this famous touch of the flageolet and the old song is selected by Miss Braddon for omission. Miss Braddon’s idea of a story, like Mrs. Todgers’s idea of a wooden leg, were something strange to have expounded. As a matter of personal experience, Meg’s appearance to old Mr. Bertram on the road, the ruins of Derncleugh, the scene of the flageolet, and the Dominie’s recognition of Harry, are the four strong notes that continue to ring in the mind after the book is laid aside. The second point is still more curious. The reader will observe a mark of excision in the passage as quoted by me. Well, here is how it runs in the original: “a damsel, who, close behind a fine spring about half-way down the descent and which had once supplied the castle with water, was engaged in bleaching linen.” A man who gave in such copy would be discharged from the staff of a daily paper. Scott has forgotten to prepare the reader for the presence of the “damsel”; he has forgotten to mention the spring and its relation to the ruin; and now, face to face with his omission, instead of trying back and starting fair, crams all this matter, tail foremost, into a single shambling sentence. It is not merely bad English, or bad style; it is abominably bad narrative besides.

Certainly the contrast is remarkable; and it is one that throws a strong light upon the subject of this paper. For here we have a man of the finest creative instinct touching with perfect certainty and charm the romantic junctures of his story: and we find him utterly careless, almost, it would seem, incapable, in the technical matter 147 of style, and not only frequently weak, but frequently wrong in points of drama. In character parts, indeed, and particularly in the Scots, he was delicate, strong, and truthful; but the trite, obliterated features of too many of his heroes have already wearied three generations of readers. At times his characters will speak with something far beyond propriety — with a true heroic note; but on the next page they will be wading wearily forward with an ungrammatical and undramatic rigmarole of words. The man who could conceive and write the character of Elspeth of the Craigburnfoot, as Scott has conceived and written it, had not only splendid romantic but splendid tragic gifts. How comes it, then, that he could so often fob us off with languid, inarticulate twaddle? It seems to me that the explanation is to be found in the very quality of his surprising merits. As his books are play to the reader, so were they play to him. He was a great day-dreamer, a seer of fit and beautiful and humorous visions, but hardly a great artist. He conjured up the romantic with delight, but had hardly patience to describe it. Of the pleasures of his art he tasted fully; but of its cares and scruples and distresses never man knew less.

Since traced by many obliging correspondents to the gallery of Charles Kingsley.

Since the above was written I have tried to launch the boat with my own hands in “Kidnapped.” Some day, perhaps, I may try a rattle at the shutters.

1882.

XVI

A HUMBLE REMONSTRANCE

I

We have recently enjoyed a quite peculiar pleasure: hearing, in some detail, the opinions, about the art they practise, of Mr. Walter Besant and Mr. Henry James; two men certainly of very different calibre; Mr. James so precise of outline, so cunning of fence, so scrupulous of finish, and Mr. Besant so genial, so friendly, with so persuasive and humorous a vein of whim: Mr. James the very type of the deliberate artist, Mr. Besant the impersonation of good-nature. That such doctors should differ will excite no great surprise; but one point in which they seem to agree fills me, I confess, with wonder. For they are both content to talk about the "art of fiction"; and Mr. Besant, waxing exceedingly bold, goes on to oppose this so-called "art of fiction" to the "art of poetry." By the art of poetry he can mean nothing but the art of verse, an art of handicraft, and only comparable with the art of prose. For that heat and height of sane emotion which we agree to call by the name of poetry, is but a libertine and vagrant quality; present, at times, in any art, more often absent from them all; too seldom present in the prose novel, too frequently absent from the ode and epic. Fiction is in the same case; it is no substantive art, but an element which enters largely into all the arts but architecture. Homer, Wordsworth, Phidias, Hogarth, and 149 Salvini, all deal in fiction; and yet I do not suppose that either Hogarth or Salvini, to mention but these two, entered in any degree into the scope of Mr. Besant's interesting lecture or Mr. James's charming essay. The art of fiction, then, regarded as a definition, is both too ample and too scanty. Let me suggest another; let me suggest that what both Mr. James and Mr. Besant had in view was neither more nor less than the art of narrative.

But Mr. Besant is anxious to speak solely of "the modern English novel," the stay and bread-winner of Mr. Mudie; and in the author of the most pleasing novel on that roll, "All Sorts and Conditions of Men," the desire is natural enough. I can conceive then, that he would hasten to propose two additions, and read thus: the art of *fictitious* narrative *in prose*.

Now the fact of the existence of the modern English novel is not to be denied; materially, with its three volumes, leaded type, and gilded lettering, it is easily distinguishable from other forms of literature; but to talk at all fruitfully of any branch of art, it is needful to build our definitions on some more fundamental ground than binding. Why, then, are we to add "in prose"? "The Odyssey" appears to me the best of romances; "The Lady of the Lake" to stand high in the second order; and Chaucer's tales and prologues to contain more of the matter and art of the modern English novel than the whole treasury of Mr. Mudie. Whether a narrative be written in blank verse or the Spenserian stanza, in the long period of Gibbon or the chipped phrase of Charles Reade, the principles of the art of narrative must be equally observed. The choice of a noble and swelling style in prose affects the problem of narration in the same way, if not to the same degree, as the choice of measured verse; for both imply a closer synthesis of events, a higher key of dialogue, and a more picked and stately strain of words. If you are to refuse "Don Juan," it is hard to see why you should include "Zanoni" or (to bracket works of very different value) "The Scarlet 150 Letter"; and by what discrimination are you to open your doors to "The Pilgrim's Progress" and close them on "The Faery Queen"? To bring things closer home, I will here propound to Mr. Besant a conundrum. A narrative called "Paradise Lost" was written in English verse by one John Milton; what was it then? It was next translated by Chateaubriand into French prose; and what was it then? Lastly, the French translation was, by some inspired compatriot of George Gilfillan (and of mine), turned bodily into an English novel; and, in the name of clearness, what was it then?

But, once more, why should we add "fictitious"? The reason why is obvious. The reason why not, if something more recondite, does not want for weight. The art of narrative, in fact, is the same, whether it is applied to the selection and illustration of a real series of events or of an imaginary series. Boswell's "Life of Johnson" (a work of cunning and inimitable art) owes its success to the same technical manœuvres as (let us say) "Tom Jones": the clear conception of certain characters of man, the choice and presentation of certain incidents out of a great number that offered, and the invention (yes, invention) and preservation of a certain key in dialogue. In which these things are done with the more art — in which the greater air of nature — readers will differently judge. Boswell's is, indeed, a very special case, and almost a generic; but it is not only in Boswell, it is in every biography with any salt of life, it is in every history where events and men, rather than ideas, are presented — in Tacitus, in Carlyle, in Michelet, in Macaulay — that the novelist will find many of his own methods most conspicuously and adroitly handled. He will find besides that he, who is free — who has the right to invent or steal a missing incident, who has the right, more precious still, of wholesale omission — is frequently defeated, and, with all his advantages, leaves a less strong impression of reality and passion. Mr. James utters his mind with a becoming fervour on the 151 sanctity of truth to the novelist; on a more careful examination truth will seem a word of very debateable propriety, not only for the labours of the novelist, but for those of the historian. No art — to use the daring phrase of Mr. James — can successfully "compete with life"; and the art that seeks to do so is condemned to perish *montibus aviis*. Life goes before us, infinite in complication; attended by the most various and surprising meteors; appealing at once to the eye, to the ear, to the mind — the seat of wonder, to the touch — so thrillingly delicate, and to the belly — so imperious when starved. It combines and employs in its manifestation the method and material, not of one art only, but of all the arts. Music is but an arbitrary trifling with a few of life's majestic chords; painting is but a shadow of its pageantry of light and colour; literature does but drily indicate that wealth of incident, of moral obligation, of virtue, vice, action, rapture, and agony, with which it teems. To "compete with life," whose sun we cannot look upon, whose passions and diseases waste and slay us — to compete with the flavour of wine, the beauty of the dawn, the scorching of fire, the bitterness of death and separation — here is, indeed, a projected escalade of heaven; here are, indeed, labours for a Hercules in a dress coat, armed with a pen and a dictionary to depict the passions, armed with a tube of superior flake-white to paint the portrait of the insufferable sun. No art is true in this sense; none can "compete with life": not even history, built indeed of indisputable facts, but these facts robbed of their vivacity and sting; so that even when we read of the sack of a city or the fall of an empire, we are surprised and justly commend the author's talent, if our pulse be quickened. And mark, for a last differentia, that this quickening of the pulse is, in almost every case, purely agreeable; that these phantom reproductions of experience, even at their most acute, convey decided pleasure; while experience itself, in the cockpit of life, can torture and slay.What, then, is the object, what the method, of an art, and what the source of its power? The whole secret is that no art does "compete with life." Man's one method, whether he reasons or creates, is to half-shut his eyes against the dazzle and confusion of reality. The arts, like arithmetic and geometry, turn away their eyes from the gross, coloured and mobile nature at our feet, and regard instead a certain figmentary abstraction. Geometry will tell us of a circle, a thing never seen in nature: asked about a green circle or an iron circle, it lays its hand upon its mouth. So with the arts. Painting, ruefully comparing sunshine and flake-white, gives up truth of colour, as it had already given up relief and movement; and instead of vying with nature, arranges a scheme of harmonious tints. Literature, above all in its most typical mood, the mood of narrative, similarly flees the direct challenge and pursues instead an independent and creative aim. So far as it imitates at all, it imitates not life but speech; not the facts of human destiny, but the emphasis and the suppressions with which the human actor tells of them. The real art that dealt with life directly was that of the first men who told their stories round the savage campfire. Our art is occupied, and bound to be occupied, not so much in making stories true as in making them typical; not so much in capturing the lineaments of each fact, as in marshalling all of them towards a common end. For the welter of impressions, all forcible but all discrete, which life presents, it substitutes a certain artificial series of impressions, all indeed most feebly represented, but all aiming at the same effect, all eloquent of the same idea, all chiming together like consonant notes in music or like the graduated tints in a good picture. From all its chapters, from all its pages, from all its sentences, the well-written novel echoes and re-echoes its one creative and controlling thought; to this must every incident and character contribute; the style must have been pitched in unison with this; and if there is anywhere a word that 153 looks another way, the book would be stronger, clearer, and (I had almost said) fuller without it. Life is monstrous, infinite, illogical, abrupt and poignant; a work of art, in comparison, is neat, finite, self-contained, rational, flowing and emasculate. Life imposes by brute energy, like inarticulate thunder; art catches the ear, among the far louder noises of experience, like an air artificially made by a discreet musician. A proposition of geometry does not compete with life; and a proposition of geometry is a fair and luminous parallel for a work of art. Both are reasonable, both untrue to the crude fact; both inhere in nature, neither represents it. The novel, which is a work of art, exists, not by its resemblances to life, which are forced and material, as a shoe must still consist of leather, but by its immeasurable difference from life, a difference which is designed and significant, and is both the method and the meaning of the work.

The life of man is not the subject of novels, but the inexhaustible magazine from which subjects are to be selected; the name of these is legion; and with each new subject — for here again I must differ by the whole width of heaven from Mr. James — the true artist will vary his method and change the point of attack. That which was in one case an excellence, will become a defect in another; what was the making of one book, will in the next be impertinent or dull. First each novel, and then each class of novels, exists by and for itself. I will take, for instance, three main classes, which are fairly distinct: first, the novel of adventure, which appeals to certain almost sensual and quite illogical tendencies in man; second, the novel of character, which appeals to our intellectual appreciation of man's foibles and mingled and inconstant motives; and third, the dramatic novel, which deals with the same stuff as the serious theatre, and appeals to our emotional nature and moral judgment.

And first for the novel of adventure. Mr. James refers, with singular generosity of praise, to a little book about a 154 quest for hidden treasure; but he lets fall, by the way, some rather startling words. In this book he misses what he calls the "immense luxury" of being able to quarrel with his author. The luxury, to most of us, is to lay by our judgment, to be submerged by the tale as by a billow, and only to awake, and begin to distinguish and find fault, when the piece is over and the volume laid aside. Still more remarkable is Mr. James's reason. He cannot criticise the author, as he goes, "because," says he, comparing it with another work, "*I have been a child, but I have never been on a quest for buried treasure*." Here, is, indeed, a wilful paradox; for if he has never been on a quest for buried treasure, it can be demonstrated that he has never been a child. There never was a child (unless Master James) but has hunted gold, and been a pirate, and a military commander, and a bandit of the mountains; but has fought, and suffered shipwreck and prison, and imbrued its little hands in gore, and gallantly retrieved the lost battle, and triumphantly protected innocence and beauty. Elsewhere in his essay Mr. James has protested with excellent reason against too narrow a conception of experience; for the born artist, he contends, the "faintest hints of life" are converted into revelations; and it will be found true, I believe, in a majority of cases, that the artist writes with more gusto and effect of those things which he has only wished to do, than of those which he has done. Desire is a wonderful telescope, and Pisgah the best observatory. Now, while it is true that neither Mr. James nor the author of the work in question has ever, in the fleshly sense, gone questing after gold, it is probable that both have ardently desired and fondly imagined the details of such a life in youthful day-dreams; and the author, counting upon that, and well aware (cunning and low-minded man!) that this class of interest, having been frequently treated, finds a readily accessible and beaten road to the sympathies of the reader, addressed himself throughout to the building up and circumstantiation of 155 this boyish dream. Character to the boy is a sealed book; for him, a pirate is a beard, a pair of wide trousers and a liberal complement of pistols. The author, for the sake of circumstantiation and because he was himself more or less grown up, admitted character, within certain limits, into his design; but only within certain limits. Had the same puppets figured in a scheme of another sort, they had been drawn to very different purpose; for in this elementary novel of adventure, the characters need to be presented with but one class of qualities — the warlike and formidable. So as they appear insidious in deceit and fatal in the combat, they have served their end. Danger is the matter with which this class of novel deals; fear, the passion with which it idly trifles; and the characters are portrayed only so far as they realise the sense of danger and provoke the sympathy of fear. To add more traits, to be too clever, to start the hare of moral or intellectual interest while we are running the fox of material interest, is not to enrich but to stultify your tale. The stupid reader will only be offended, and the clever reader lose the scent.

The novel of character has this difference from all others: that it requires no coherency of plot, and for this reason, as in the case of "Gil Blas," it is sometimes called the novel of adventure. It turns on the humours of the persons represented; these are, to be sure, embodied in incidents, but the incidents themselves, being tributary, need not march in a progression; and the characters may be statically shown. As they enter, so they may go out; they must be consistent, but they need not grow. Here Mr. James will recognise the note of much of his own work: he treats, for the most part, the statics of character, studying it at rest or only gently moved; and, with his usual delicate and just artistic instinct, he avoids those stronger passions which would deform the attitudes he loves to study, and change his sitters from the humorists of ordinary life to the brute forces and bare types of more emotional moments. In his recent "Author of Beltraffio," 156 so just in conception, so nimble and neat in workmanship, strong passion is indeed employed; but observe that it is not displayed. Even in the heroine the working of the passion is suppressed; and the great struggle, the true tragedy, the *scène à faire*, passes unseen behind the panels of a locked door. The delectable invention of the young visitor is introduced, consciously or not, to this end: that Mr. James, true to his method, might avoid the scene of passion. I trust no reader will suppose me guilty of undervaluing this little masterpiece. I mean merely that it belongs to one marked class of novel, and that it would have been very differently conceived and treated had it belonged to that other marked class, of which I now proceed to speak.

I take pleasure in calling the dramatic novel by that name, because it enables me to point out by the way a strange and peculiarly English misconception. It is sometimes supposed that the drama consists of incident. It consists of passion, which gives the actor his opportunity; and that passion must progressively increase, or the actor, as the piece proceeded, would be unable to carry the audience from a lower to a higher pitch of interest and emotion. A good serious play must therefore be founded on one of the passionate *cruces* of life, where duty and inclination come nobly to the grapple; and the same is true of what I call, for that reason, the dramatic novel. I will instance a few worthy specimens, all of our own day and language: Meredith's "Rhoda Fleming," that wonderful and painful book, long out of print, and hunted for at bookstalls like an Aldine; Hardy's "Pair of Blue Eyes"; and two of Charles Reade's, "Griffith Gaunt" and "The Double Marriage," originally called "White Lies," and founded (by an accident quaintly favourable to my nomenclature) on a play by Maquet, the partner of the great Dumas. In this kind of novel the closed door of "The Author of Beltraffio" must be broken open; passion 157 must appear upon the scene and utter its last word; passion is the be-all and the end-all, the plot and the solution, the protagonist and the *deus ex machinâ* in one. The characters may come anyhow upon the stage: we do not care; the point is, that, before they leave it, they shall become transfigured and raised out of themselves by passion. It may be part of the design to draw them with detail; to depict a full-length character, and then behold it melt and change in the furnace of emotion. But there is no obligation of the sort; nice portraiture is not required; and we are content to accept mere abstract types, so they be strongly and sincerely moved. A novel of this class may be even great, and yet contain no individual figure; it may be great, because it displays the workings of the perturbed heart and the impersonal utterance of passion; and with an artist of the second class it is, indeed, even more likely to be great, when the issue has thus been narrowed and the whole force of the writer's mind directed to passion alone. Cleverness again, which has its fair field in the novel of character, is debarred all entry upon this more solemn theatre. A far-fetched motive, an ingenious evasion of the issue, a witty instead of a passionate turn, offend us like an insincerity. All should be plain, all straightforward to the end. Hence it is that, in "Rhoda Fleming," Mrs. Lovel raises such resentment in the reader; her motives are too flimsy, her ways are too equivocal, for the weight and strength of her surroundings. Hence the hot indignation of the reader when Balzac, after having begun the "Duchesse de Langeais" in terms of strong if somewhat swollen passion, cuts the knot by the derangement of the hero's clock. Such personages and incidents belong to the novel of character; they are out of place in the high society of the passions; when the passions are introduced in art at their full height, we look to see them, not baffled and impotently striving, as in life, but towering above circumstance and acting substitutes for fate.And here I can imagine Mr. James, with his lucid sense, to intervene. To much of what I have said he would apparently demur; in much he would, somewhat impatiently, acquiesce. It may be true; but it is not what he desired to say or to hear said. He spoke of the finished picture and its worth when done; I, of the brushes, the palette, and the north light. He uttered his views in the tone and for the ear of good society; I, with the emphasis and technicalities of the obtrusive student. But the point, I may reply, is not merely to amuse the public, but to offer helpful advice to the young writer. And the young writer will not so much be helped by genial pictures of what an art may aspire to at its highest, as by a true idea of what it must be on the lowest terms. The best that we can say to him is this: Let him choose a motive, whether of character or passion; carefully construct his plot so that every incident is an illustration of the motive, and every property employed shall bear to it a near relation of congruity or contrast; avoid a sub-plot, unless, as sometimes in Shakespeare, the sub-plot be a reversion or complement of the main intrigue; suffer not his style to flag below the level of the argument; pitch the key of conversation, not with any thought of how men talk in parlours, but with a single eye to the degree of passion he may be called on to express; and allow neither himself in the narrative, nor any character in the course of the dialogue, to utter one sentence that is not part and parcel of the business of the story or the discussion of the problem involved. Let him not regret if this shortens his book; it will be better so; for to add irrelevant matter is not to lengthen but to bury. Let him not mind if he miss a thousand qualities, so that he keeps unflaggingly in pursuit of the one he has chosen. Let him not care particularly if he miss the tone of conversation, the pungent material detail of the day’s manners, the reproduction of the atmosphere and the environment. These elements are not essential: a novel may be excellent, and yet have none 159 of them; a passion or a character is so much the better depicted as it rises clearer from material circumstance. In this age of the particular, let him remember the ages of the abstract, the great books of the past, the brave men that lived before Shakespeare and before Balzac. And as the root of the whole matter, let him bear in mind that his novel is not a transcript of life, to be judged by its exactitude; but a simplification of some side or point of life, to stand or fall by its significant simplicity. For although, in great men, working upon great motives, what we observe and admire is often their complexity, yet underneath appearances the truth remains unchanged: that simplification was their method, and that simplicity is their excellence.

II

Since the above was written another novelist has entered repeatedly the lists of theory: one well worthy of mention, Mr. W. D. Howells; and none ever couched a lance with narrower convictions. His own work and those of his pupils and masters singly occupy his mind; he is the bondslave, the zealot of his school; he dreams of an advance in art like what there is in science; he thinks of past things as radically dead; he thinks a form can be outlived: a strange immersion in his own history; a strange forgetfulness of the history of the race! Meanwhile, by a glance at his own works (could he see them with the eager eyes of his readers) much of this illusion would be dispelled. For while he holds all the poor little orthodoxies of the day — no poorer and no smaller than those of yesterday or to-morrow, poor and small, indeed, only so far as they are exclusive — the living quality of much that he has done is of a contrary, I had almost said of a heretical, complexion. A man, as I read him, of an originally strong romantic bent — a certain glow of 160 romance still resides in many of his books, and lends them their distinction. As by accident he runs out and revels in the exceptional; and it is then, as often as not, that his reader rejoices — justly, as I contend. For in all this excessive eagerness to be centrally human, is there not one central human thing that Mr. Howells is too often tempted to neglect: I mean himself? A poet, a finished artist, a man in love with the appearances of life, a cunning reader of the mind, he has other passions and aspirations than those he loves to draw. And why should he suppress himself and do such reverence to the Lemuel Barkers? The obvious is not of necessity the normal; fashion rules and deforms; the majority fall tamely into the contemporary shape, and thus attain, in the eyes of the true observer, only a higher power of insignificance; and the danger is lest, in seeking to draw the normal, a man should draw the null, and write the novel of society instead of the romance of man.

MEMOIR OF FLEEMING JENKIN

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PREFACE

On the death of Fleeming Jenkin, his family and friends determined to publish a selection of his various papers; by way of introduction, the following pages were drawn up; and the whole, forming two considerable volumes, has been issued in England. In the States, it has not been thought advisable to reproduce the whole; and the memoir appearing alone, shorn of that other matter which was at once its occasion and its justification, so large an account of a man so little known may seem to a stranger out of all proportion. But Jenkin was a man much more remarkable than the mere bulk or merit of his work approves him. It was in the world, in the commerce of friendship, by his brave attitude towards life, by his high moral value and unwearied intellectual effort, that he struck the minds of his contemporaries. His was an individual figure, such as authors delight to draw, and all men to read of, in the pages of a novel. His was a face worth painting for its own sake. If the sitter shall not seem to have justified the portrait, if Jenkin, after his death, shall not continue to make new friends, the fault will be altogether mine.

R. L. S.

Saranac, Oct. 1887.

CHAPTER I

The Jenkins of Stowting — Fleeming's grandfather — Mrs. Buckner's fortune — Fleeming's father; goes to sea; at St. Helena; meets King Tom; service in the West Indies; end of his career — The Campbell-Jacksons — Fleeming's mother — Fleeming's uncle John.

In the reign of Henry viii., a family of the name of Jenkin, claiming to come from York, and bearing the arms of Jenkin ap Philip of St. Melans, are found reputably settled in the county of Kent. Persons of strong genealogical pinion pass from William Jenkin, Mayor of Folkestone in 1555, to his contemporary "John Jenkin, of the Citie of York, Receiver General of the County," and thence, by way of Jenkin ap Philip, to the proper summit of any Cambrian pedigree — a prince; "Guaith Voeth, Lord of Cardigan," the name and style of him. It may suffice, however, for the present, that these Kentish Jenkins must have undoubtedly derived from Wales, and being a stock of some efficiency, they struck root and grew to wealth and consequence in their new home.

Of their consequence we have proof enough in the fact that not only was William Jenkin (as already mentioned) Mayor of Folkestone in 1555, but no less than twenty-three times in the succeeding century and a half, a Jenkin (William, Thomas, Henry or Robert) sat in the same place of humble honour. Of their wealth we know that, in the reign of Charles i., Thomas Jenkin of Eythorne was more than once in the market buying land, and notably, in 1633, acquired the manor of Stowting Court. This was 166 an estate of some 320 acres, six miles from Hythe, in the Bailiwick and Hundred of Stowting, and the Lathe of Shipway, held of the Crown *in capite* by the service of six men and a constable to defend the passage of the sea at Sandgate. It had a chequered history before it fell into the hands of Thomas of Eythorne, having been sold and given from one to another — to the Archbishop, to Heringods, to the Burghershes, to Pavelys, Trivets, Cliffords, Wenlocks, Beauchamps, Nevilles, Kempes, and Clarkes; a piece of Kentish ground condemned to see new faces and to be no man's home. But from 1633 onward it became the anchor of the Jenkin family in Kent; and though passed on from brother to brother, held in shares between uncle and nephew, burthened by debts and jointures, and at least once sold and bought in again, it remains to this day in the hands of the direct line. It is not my design, nor have I the necessary knowledge, to give a history of this obscure family. But this is an age when genealogy has taken a new lease of life, and become for the first time a human science; so that we no longer study it in quest of the Guaith Voeths, but to trace out some of the secrets of descent and destiny; and as we study, we think less of Sir Bernard Burke and more of Mr. Galton. Not only do our character and talents lie upon the anvil and receive their temper during generations; but the very plot of our life's story unfolds itself on a scale of centuries, and the biography of the man is only an episode in the epic of the family. From this point of view I ask the reader's leave to begin this notice of a remarkable man who was my friend, with the accession of his great-grandfather, John Jenkin.

This John Jenkin, a grandson of Damaris Kingsley, of the family of "Westward Ho!" was born in 1727, and married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Frewen, of Church House, Northiam. The Jenkins had now been long enough intermarrying with their Kentish neighbours to be Kentish folk themselves in all but name; and with 167 the Frewens in particular their connection is singularly involved. John and his wife were each descended in the third degree from another Thomas Frewen, Vicar of Northiam, and brother to Accepted Frewen, Archbishop of York. John's mother had married a Frewen for a second husband. And the last complication was to be added by the Bishop of Chichester's brother, Charles Buckner, Vice-Admiral of the White, who was twice married, first to a paternal cousin of Squire John, and second to Anne, only sister of the Squire's wife, and already the widow of another Frewen. The reader must bear Mrs. Buckner in mind; it was by means of that lady that Fleeming Jenkin began life as a poor man. Meanwhile, the relationship of any Frewen to any Jenkin at the end of these evolutions presents a problem almost insoluble; and we need not wonder if Mrs. John, thus exercised in her immediate circle, was in her old age "a great genealogist of all Sussex families, and much consulted." The names Frewen and Jenkin may almost seem to have been interchangeable at will; and yet Fate proceeds with such particularity that it was perhaps on the point of name the family was ruined.

The John Jenkins had a family of one daughter and five extravagant and unpractical sons. The eldest, Stephen, entered the Church and held the living of Salehurst, where he offered, we may hope, an extreme example of the clergy of the age. He was a handsome figure of a man; jovial and jocular; fond of his garden, which produced under his care the finest fruits of the neighbourhood; and, like all the family, very choice in horses. He drove tandem; like Jehu, furiously. His saddle-horse, Captain (for the names of horses are piously preserved in the family chronicle which I follow), was trained to break into a gallop as soon as the vicar's foot was thrown across its back; nor would the rein be drawn in the nine miles between Northiam and the Vicarage door. Debt was the man's proper element; he used to skulk from arrest in 168 the chancel of his church; and the speed of Captain may have come sometimes handy. At an early age this unconventional parson married his cook, and by her he had two daughters and one son. One of the daughters died unmarried; the other imitated her father, and married "imprudently." The son, still more gallantly continuing the tradition, entered the army, loaded himself with debt, was forced to sell out, took refuge in the Marines, and was lost on the Dogger Bank in the war-ship *Minotaur*. If he did not marry below him, like his father, his sister, and a certain great-uncle William, it was perhaps because he never married at all.

The second brother, Thomas, who was employed in the General Post Office, followed in all material points the example of Stephen, married "not very creditably," and spent all the money he could lay his hands on. He died without issue; as did the fourth brother, John, who was of weak intellect and feeble health, and the fifth brother, William, whose brief career as one of Mrs. Buckner's satellites will fall to be considered later on. So soon, then, as the *Minotaur* had struck upon the Dogger Bank, Stowting and the line of the Jenkin family fell on the shoulders of the third brother, Charles.

Facility and self-indulgence are the family marks; facility (to judge by these imprudent marriages) being at once their quality and their defect; but in the case of Charles, a man of exceptional beauty and sweetness, both of face and disposition, the family fault had quite grown to be a virtue, and we find him in consequence the drudge and milk-cow of his relatives. Born in 1766, Charles served at sea in his youth, and smelt both salt-water and powder. The Jenkins had inclined hitherto, as far as I can make out, to the land service. Stephen's son had been a soldier; William (fourth of Stowting) had been an officer of the unhappy Braddock's in America, where, by the way, he owned and afterwards sold an estate on the James River, called after the parental seat; of which I 169 should like well to hear if it still bears the name. It was probably by the influence of Captain Buckner, already connected with the family by his first marriage, that Charles Jenkin turned his mind in the direction of the navy; and it was in Buckner's own ship, the *Prothée*, 64, that the lad made his only campaign. It was in the days of Rodney's war, when the *Prothée*, we read, captured two large privateers to windward of Barbadoes, and was "materially and distinguishedly engaged" in both the actions with De Grasse. While at sea, Charles kept a journal, and made strange archaic pilot-book sketches, part plan, part elevation, some of which survive for the amusement of posterity. He did a good deal of surveying, so that here we may perhaps lay our finger on the beginning of Fleeming's education as an engineer. What is still more strange, among the relics of the handsome midshipman and his stay in the gun-room of the *Prothée*, I find a code of signals graphically represented, for all the world as it would have been done by his grandson.

On the declaration of peace, Charles, because he had suffered from scurvy, received his mother's orders to retire; and he was not the man to refuse a request, far less to disobey a command. Thereupon he turned farmer, a trade he was to practise on a large scale; and we find him married to a Miss Schirr, a woman of some fortune, the daughter of a London merchant. Stephen, the not very reverend, was still alive, galloping about the country or skulking in his chancel. It does not appear whether he let or sold the paternal manor to Charles; one or other it must have been; and the sailor-farmer settled at Stowting, with his wife, his mother, his unmarried sister, and his sick brother John. Out of the six people of whom his nearest family consisted, three were in his own house, and two others (the horse-leeches, Stephen and Thomas) he appears to have continued to assist with more amiability than wisdom. He hunted, belonged to the Yeomanry, owned famous horses, Maggie and Lucy, the 170 latter coveted by royalty itself. "Lord Rokeby, his neighbour, called him kinsman," writes my artless chronicler, "and altogether life was very cheery." At Stowting his three sons, John, Charles, and Thomas Frewen, and his younger daughter, Anna, were all born to him; and the reader should here be told that it is through the report of this second Charles (born 1801) that he has been looking on at these confused passages of family history.

In the year 1805 the ruin of the Jenkins was begun. It was the work of a fallacious lady already mentioned, Aunt Anne Frewen, a sister of Mrs. John. Twice married, first to her cousin Charles Frewen, clerk to the Court of Chancery, Brunswick Herald, and Usher of the Black Rod, and secondly to Admiral Buckner, she was denied issue in both beds, and being very rich — she died worth about £60,000, mostly in land — she was in perpetual quest of an heir. The mirage of this fortune hung before successive members of the Jenkin family until her death in 1825, when it dissolved and left the latest Alnaschar face to face with bankruptcy. The grandniece, Stephen's daughter, the one who had not "married imprudently," appears to have been the first; for she was taken abroad by the golden aunt, and died in her care at Ghent in 1792. Next she adopted William, the youngest of the five nephews; took him abroad with her — it seems as if that were in the formula; was shut up with him in Paris by the Revolution; brought him back to Windsor, and got him a place in the King's Body Guard, where he attracted the notice of George iii. by his proficiency in German. In 1797, being on guard at St. James's Palace, William took a cold which carried him off; and Aunt Anne was once more left heirless. Lastly, in 1805, perhaps moved by the Admiral, who had a kindness for his old midshipman, perhaps pleased by the good looks and the good nature of the man himself, Mrs. Buckner turned her eyes upon Charles Jenkin. He was not only to be the heir, however; he was to be the chief hand in a somewhat wild scheme 171 of family farming. Mrs. Jenkin, the mother, contributed 164 acres of land; Mrs. Buckner, 570, some at Northiam, some farther off; Charles let one-half of Stowting to a tenant, and threw the other and various scattered parcels into the common enterprise; so that the whole farm amounted to near upon a thousand acres, and was scattered over thirty miles of country. The ex-seaman of thirty-nine, on whose wisdom and ubiquity the scheme depended, was to live in the meanwhile without care or fear. He was to check himself in nothing; his two extravagances, valuable horses and worthless brothers, were to be indulged in comfort; and whether the year quite paid itself or not, whether successive years left accumulated savings or only a growing deficit, the fortune of the golden aunt should in the end repair all.

On this understanding Charles Jenkin transported his family to Church House, Northiam: Charles the second, then a child of three, among the number. Through the eyes of the boy we have glimpses of the life that followed: of Admiral and Mrs. Buckner driving up from Windsor in a coach and six, two post-horses and their own four; of the house full of visitors, the great roasts at the fire, the tables in the servants' hall laid for thirty or forty for a month together: of the daily press of neighbours, many of whom, Frewens, Lords, Bishops, Batchellors, and Dynes, were also kinsfolk: and the parties "under the great spreading chestnuts of the old fore court," where the young people danced and made merry to the music of the village band. Or perhaps, in the depth of winter, the father would bid young Charles saddle his pony; they would ride the thirty miles from Northiam to Stowting, with the snow to the pony's saddle-girths, and be received by the tenants like princes.

This life of delights, with the continual visible comings and goings of the golden aunt, was well qualified to relax the fibre of the lads. John the heir, a yeoman and a fox-hunter, "loud and notorious with his whip and spurs," 172 settled down into a kind of Tony Lumpkin, waiting for the shoes of his father and his aunt. Thomas Frewen, the youngest, is briefly dismissed as "a handsome beau"; but he had the merit or the good fortune to become a doctor of medicine, so that when the crash came he was not empty-handed for the war of life. Charles, at the day-school of Northiam, grew so well acquainted with the rod that his floggings became matter of pleasantry and reached the ears of Admiral Buckner. Hereupon that tall, rough-voiced formidable uncle entered with the lad into a covenant; every time that Charles was thrashed he was to pay the Admiral a penny; every day that he escaped, the process was to be reversed. “I recollect,” writes Charles, “going crying to my mother to be taken to the Admiral to pay my debt.” It would seem by these terms the speculation was a losing one; yet it is probable it paid indirectly by bringing the boy under remark. The Admiral was no enemy to dunces; he loved courage, and Charles, while yet little more than a baby, would ride the great horse into the pond. Presently it was decided that here was the stuff of a fine sailor; and at an early period the name of Charles Jenkin was entered on a ship’s books.

From Northiam he was sent to another school at Boonshill, near Rye, where the master took “infinite delight” in strapping him. “It keeps me warm and makes you grow,” he used to say. And the stripes were not altogether wasted, for the dunce, though still very “raw,” made progress with his studies. It was known, moreover, that he was going to sea, always a ground of pre-eminence with schoolboys; and in his case the glory was not altogether future, it wore a present form when he came driving to Rye behind four horses in the same carriage with an admiral. “I was not a little proud, you may believe,” says he.

In 1814, when he was thirteen years of age, he was carried by his father to Chichester to the Bishop’s Palace. The Bishop had heard from his brother the Admiral that 173 Charles was likely to do well, and had an order from Lord Melville for the lad’s admission to the Royal Naval College at Portsmouth. Both the Bishop and the Admiral patted him on the head and said, “Charles will restore the old family”; by which I gather with some surprise that, even in these days of open house at Northiam and golden hope of my aunt’s fortune, the family was supposed to stand in need of restoration. But the past is apt to look brighter than nature, above all to those enamoured of their genealogy; and the ravages of Stephen and Thomas must have always given matter of alarm.

What with the flattery of bishops and admirals, the fine company in which he found himself at Portsmouth, his visits home, with their gaiety and greatness of life, his visits to Mrs. Buckner (soon a widow) at Windsor, where he had a pony kept for him and visited at Lord Melville’s and Lord Harcourt’s and the Leveson-Gowers, he began to have “bumptious notions,” and his head was “somewhat turned with fine people”; as to some extent it remained throughout his innocent and honourable life.

In this frame of mind the boy was appointed to the *Conqueror*, Captain Davie, humorously known as Gentle Johnnie. The Captain had earned this name by his style of discipline, which would have figured well in the pages of Marryat. “Put the prisoner’s head in a bag and give him another dozen!” survives as a specimen of his commands; and the men were often punished twice or thrice in a week. On board the ship of this disciplinarian, Charles and his father were carried in a billy-boat from Sheerness in December 1816: Charles with an outfit suitable to his pretensions, a twenty-guinea sextant and 120 dollars in silver, which were ordered into the care of the gunner. "The old clerks and mates," he writes, "used to laugh and jeer me for joining the ship in a billy-boat, and when they found I was from Kent, vowed I was an old Kentish smuggler. This to my pride, you will believe, was not a little offensive."The *Conqueror* carried the flag of Vice-Admiral Plampin, commanding at the Cape and St. Helena; and at that all-important islet, in July 1817 she relieved the flag-ship of Sir Pulteney Malcolm. Thus it befell that Charles Jenkin, coming too late for the epic of the French wars, played a small part in the dreary and disgraceful afterpiece of St. Helena. Life on the guard-ship was onerous and irksome. The anchor was never lifted, sail never made, the great guns were silent; none was allowed on shore except on duty; all day the movements of the imperial captive were signalled to and fro; all night the boats rowed guard around the accessible portions of the coast. This prolonged stagnation and petty watchfulness in what Napoleon himself called that "unchristian" climate, told cruelly on the health of the ship's company. In eighteen months, according to O'Meara, the *Conqueror* had lost one hundred and ten men and invalided home one hundred and seven, "being more than a third of her complement." It does not seem that our young midshipman so much as once set eyes on Bonaparte; and yet in other ways Jenkin was more fortunate than some of his comrades. He drew in water-colour; not so badly as his father, yet ill enough; and this art was so rare aboard the *Conqueror* that even his humble proficiency marked him out and procured him some alleviations. Admiral Plampin had succeeded Napoleon at the Briars; and here he had young Jenkin staying with him to make sketches of the historic house. One of these is before me as I write, and gives a strange notion of the arts in our old English navy. Yet it was again as an artist that the lad was taken for a run to Rio, and apparently for a second outing in a ten-gun brig. These, and a cruise of six weeks to windward of the island undertaken by the *Conqueror* herself in quest of health, were the only breaks in three years of murderous inaction; and at the end of that period Jenkin was invalided home, having "lost his health entirely."As he left the deck of the guard-ship the historic part of his career came to an end. For forty-two years he continued to serve his country obscurely on the seas, sometimes thanked for inconspicuous and honourable services, but denied any opportunity of serious distinction. He was first two years in the *Larne*, Captain Tait, hunting pirates and keeping a watch on the Turkish and Greek squadrons in the Archipelago. Captain Tait was a favourite with Sir Thomas Maitland, High

Commissioner of the Ionian Islands — King Tom, as he was called — who frequently took passage in the *Larne*. King Tom knew every inch of the Mediterranean, and was a terror to the officers of the watch. He would come on deck at night; and with his broad Scots accent, “Well, sir,” he would say, “what depth of water have ye? Well, now, sound; and ye’ll just find so or so many fathoms,” as the case might be; and the obnoxious passenger was generally right. On one occasion, as the ship was going into Corfu, Sir Thomas came up the hatchway and cast his eyes towards the gallows. “Bangham” — Charles Jenkin heard him say to his aide-de-camp, Lord Bangham — ”where the devil is that other chap? I left four fellows hanging there; now I can only see three. Mind there is another there to-morrow.” And sure enough there was another Greek dangling the next day. “Captain Hamilton, of the *Cambrian*, kept the Greeks in order afloat,” writes my author, “and King Tom ashore.”

From 1823 onward, the chief scene of Charles Jenkin’s activities was in the West Indies, where he was engaged off and on till 1844, now as a subaltern, now in a vessel of his own, hunting out pirates, “then very notorious,” in the Leeward Islands, cruising after slavers, or carrying dollars and provisions for the Government. While yet a midshipman, he accompanied Mr. Cockburn to Caraccas and had a sight of Bolivar. In the brigantine *Griffon*, which he commanded in his last years in the West Indies, he carried aid to Guadeloupe after the earthquake, and 176 twice earned the thanks of Government: once for an expedition to Nicaragua to extort, under threat of a blockade, proper apologies and a sum of money due to certain British merchants; and once during an insurrection in San Domingo, for the rescue of certain others from a perilous imprisonment and the recovery of a “chest of money” of which they had been robbed. Once, on the other hand, he earned his share of public censure. This was in 1837, when he commanded the *Romney*, lying in the inner harbour of Havannah. The *Romney* was in no proper sense a man-of-war; she was a slave-hulk, the bonded warehouse of the Mixed Slave Commission; where negroes, captured out of slavers under Spanish colours, were detained provisionally, till the Commission should decide upon their case, and either set them free or bind them to apprenticeship. To this ship, already an eyesore to the authorities, a Cuban slave made his escape. The position was invidious: on one side were the tradition of the British flag and the state of public sentiment at home; on the other, the certainty that if the slave were kept, the *Romney* would be ordered at once out of the harbour, and the object of the Mixed Commission compromised. Without consultation with any other officer, Captain Jenkin (then lieutenant) returned the man to shore and took the Captain-General’s receipt. Lord Palmerston approved his course; but the zealots of the anti-slave trade movement (never to be named without respect) were much dissatisfied; and thirty-nine years later the matter was again canvassed in Parliament, and Lord Palmerston and Captain Jenkin defended by Admiral Erskine in a letter to the *Times* (March 13, 1876).

In 1845, while still lieutenant, Charles Jenkin acted as Admiral Pigot's flag-captain in the Cove of Cork, where there were some thirty pennants; and about the same time closed his career by an act of personal bravery. He had proceeded with his boats to the help of a merchant vessel, whose cargo of combustibles had taken fire and was 177 smouldering under hatches; his sailors were in the hold, where the fumes were already heavy, and Jenkin was on deck directing operations, when he found his orders were no longer answered from below: he jumped down without hesitation and slung up several insensible men with his own hand. For this act he received a letter from the Lords of the Admiralty expressing a sense of his gallantry; and pretty soon after was promoted Commander, superseded, and could never again obtain employment.

In 1828 or 1829 Charles Jenkin was in the same watch with another midshipman, Robert Colin Campbell-Jackson, who introduced him to his family in Jamaica. The father, the Honourable Robert Jackson, Custos Rotulorum of Kingston, came of a Yorkshire family, said to be originally Scottish; and on the mother's side, counted kinship with some of the Forbeses. The mother was Susan Campbell, one of the Campbells of Auchenbreck. Her father, Colin, a merchant in Greenock, is said to have been the heir to both the estate and the baronetcy; he claimed neither, which casts a doubt upon the fact; but he had pride enough himself, and taught enough pride to his family, for any station or descent in Christendom. He had four daughters. One married an Edinburgh writer, as I have it on a first account — a minister, according to another — a man at least of reasonable station, but not good enough for the Campbells of Auchenbreck; and the erring one was instantly discarded. Another married an actor of the name of Adcock, whom (as I receive the tale) she had seen acting in a barn; but the phrase should perhaps be regarded rather as a measure of the family annoyance than a mirror of the facts. The marriage was not in itself unhappy; Adcock was a gentleman by birth and made a good husband; the family reasonably prospered, and one of the daughters married no less a man than Clarkson Stanfield. But by the father, and the two remaining Miss Campbells, people of fierce passions and a truly Highland pride, the derogation was bitterly resented. 178 For long the sisters lived estranged; then, Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Adcock were reconciled for a moment, only to quarrel the more fiercely; the name of Mrs. Adcock was proscribed, nor did it again pass her sister's lips, until the morning when she announced: “Mary Adcock is dead; I saw her in her shroud last night.” Second-sight was hereditary in the house; and sure enough, as I have it reported, on that very night Mrs. Adcock had passed away. Thus, of the four daughters, two had, according to the idiotic notions of their friends, disgraced themselves in marriage; the others supported the honour of the family with a better grace, and married West Indian magnates of whom, I believe, the world has never heard and would not care to hear: so strange a thing is this hereditary pride. Of Mr. Jackson, beyond the fact that he was Fleeming’s grandfather, I know naught. His wife, as I have said, was a woman of fierce passions; she would tie her house slaves to the bed and lash them with her own hand; and her conduct to her wild and down-going sons was a mixture of almost insane self-sacrifice and wholly insane violence of temper. She had three sons and one daughter. Two of the sons went utterly to ruin, and reduced their mother to poverty. The third went to India, a slim, delicate lad, and passed so wholly from the knowledge of his relatives that he was thought to be long dead. Years later, when his sister was living in Genoa, a red-bearded man of great strength and stature, tanned by years in India, and his hands covered with barbaric gems, entered the room unannounced, as she was playing the piano, lifted her from her seat, and kissed her. It was her brother, suddenly returned out of a past that was never very clearly understood, with the rank of general, many strange gems, many cloudy stories of adventure, and, next his heart, the daguerreotype of an Indian prince with whom he had mixed blood.

The last of this wild family, the daughter, Henrietta Camilla, became the wife of the midshipman Charles, and 179 the mother of the subject of this notice, Fleeming Jenkin. She was a woman of parts and courage. Not beautiful, she had a far higher gift, the art of seeming so; played the part of a belle in society, while far lovelier women were left unattended; and up to old age, had much of both the exigency and the charm that mark that character. She drew naturally, for she had no training, with unusual skill; and it was from her, and not from the two naval artists, that Fleeming inherited his eye and hand. She played on the harp and sang with something beyond the talent of an amateur. At the age of seventeen, she heard Pasta in Paris; flew up in a fire of youthful enthusiasm; and the next morning, all alone and without introduction, found her way into the presence of the *prima donna* and begged for lessons. Pasta made her sing, kissed her when she had done, and though she refused to be her mistress, placed her in the hands of a friend. Nor was this all; for when Pasta returned to Paris, she sent for the girl (once at least) to test her progress. But Mrs. Jenkin’s talents were not so remarkable as her fortitude and strength of will; and it was in an art for which she had no natural taste (the art of literature) that she appeared before the public. Her novels, though they attained and merited a certain popularity both in France and England, are a measure only of her courage. They were a task, not a beloved task; they were written for money in days of poverty, and they served their end. In the least thing as well as in the greatest, in every province of life as well as in her novels, she displayed the same capacity of taking infinite pains, which descended to her son. When she was about forty (as near as her age was known) she lost her voice; set herself at once to learn the piano, working eight hours a day; and attained to such proficiency that her collaboration in chamber music was courted by professionals. And more than twenty years later the old lady might have been seen dauntlessly beginning the study of Hebrew. This is the more ethereal part of courage; nor 180 was she wanting in the more material. Once when a neighbouring groom, a married man, had seduced her maid, Mrs. Jenkin mounted her horse, rode over to the stable entrance, and horsewhipped the man with her own hand.

How a match came about between this talented and spirited girl and the young midshipman is not very easy to conceive. Charles Jenkin was one of the finest creatures breathing; loyalty, devotion, simple natural piety, boyish cheerfulness, tender and manly sentiment in the old sailor fashion, were in him inherent and inextinguishable either by age, suffering, or injustice. He looked, as he was, every inch a gentleman; he must have been everywhere notable, even among handsome men, both for his face and his gallant bearing; not so much that of a sailor, you would have said, as like one of those gentle and graceful soldiers that, to this day, are the most pleasant of Englishmen to see. But though he was in these ways noble, the dunce scholar of Northiam was to the end no genius. Upon all points that a man must understand to be a gentleman, to be upright, gallant, affectionate, and dead to self, Captain Jenkin was more knowing than one among a thousand; outside of that, his mind was very largely blank. He had indeed a simplicity that came near to vacancy; and in the first forty years of his married life this want grew more accentuated. In both families imprudent marriages had been the rule; but neither Jenkin nor Campbell had ever entered into a more unequal union. It was the Captain's good looks, we may suppose, that gained for him this elevation; and in some ways and for many years of his life, he had to pay the penalty. His wife, impatient of his incapacity, and surrounded by brilliant friends, used him with a certain contempt. She was the managing partner; the life was hers, not his; after his retirement they lived much abroad, where the poor Captain, who could never learn any language but his own, sat in the corner mumchance; and even his son, carried away by his bright mother, did not recognise for long the 181 treasures of simple chivalry that lay buried in the heart of his father. Yet it would be an error to regard this marriage as unfortunate. It not only lasted long enough to justify itself in a beautiful and touching epilogue, but it gave to the world the scientific work and what (while time was) were of far greater value, the delightful qualities of Fleeming Jenkin. The Kentish-Welsh family, facile, extravagant, generous to a fault, and far from brilliant, had given in the father an extreme example of its humble virtues. On the other side, the wild, cruel, proud, and somewhat blackguard stock of the Scots Campbell-Jacksons had put forth, in the person of the mother, all its force and courage.

The marriage fell in evil days. In 1823 the bubble of the golden aunt's inheritance had burst. She died holding the hand of the nephew she had so wantonly deceived; at the last she drew him down and seemed to bless him, surely with some remorseful feeling; for when the will was opened there was not found so much as the mention of his name. He was deeply in debt; in debt even to the estate of his deceiver, so that he had to sell a piece of land to clear himself. "My dear boy," he said to Charles, "there will be nothing left for you. I am a ruined man." And here follows for me the strangest part of this story. From the death of the treacherous aunt, Charles Jenkin senior had still some nine years to live; it was perhaps too late for him to turn to saving, and perhaps his affairs were past restoration. But his family at least had all this while to prepare; they were still young men, and knew what they had to look for at their father's death; and yet when that happened, in September, 1831, the heir was still apathetically waiting. Poor John, the days of his whips and spurs and Yeomanry dinners were quite over; and with that incredible softness of the Jenkin nature, he settled down, for the rest of a long life, into something not far removed above a peasant. The mill farm at Stowting had been saved out of the wreck; and here he 182 built himself a house on the Mexican model, and made the two ends meet with rustic thrift, gathering dung with his own hands upon the road and not at all abashed at his employment. In dress, voice, and manner, he fell into mere country plainness; lived without the least care for appearances, the least regret for the past or discontentment with the present; and when he came to die, died with Stoic cheerfulness, announcing that he had had a comfortable time and was yet well pleased to go. One would think there was little active virtue to be inherited from such a race; and yet in this same voluntary peasant, the special gift of Fleeming Jenkin was already half developed. The old man to the end was perpetually inventing; his strange, ill-spelled, unpunctuated correspondence is full (when he does not drop into cookery receipts) of pumps, road-engines, steam-diggers, steam-ploughs, and steam threshing-machines; and I have it on Fleeming's word that what he did was full of ingenuity — only, as if by some cross destiny, useless. These disappointments he not only took with imperturbable good humour, but rejoiced with a particular relish over his nephew's success in the same field. "I glory in the professor," he wrote to his brother; and to Fleeming himself, with a touch of simple drollery, "I was much pleased with your lecture, but why did you hit me so hard with Conisure's" (connoisseur's, *quasi* amateur's) "engineering? Oh, what presumption! — either of you or myself!" A quaint, pathetic figure, this of uncle John, with his dung-cart and his inventions; and the romantic fancy of his Mexican house; and his craze about the Lost Tribes, which seemed to the worthy man the key of all perplexities; and his quiet conscience, looking back on a life not altogether vain, for he was a good son to his father while his father lived, and when evil days approached, he had proved himself a cheerful Stoic.

It followed from John's inertia that the duty of winding up the estate fell into the hands of Charles. He managed it with no more skill than might be expected of a sailor 183 ashore, saved a bare livelihood for John and nothing for the rest. Eight months later he married Miss Jackson; and with her money bought in some two-thirds of Stowting. In the beginning of the little family history which I have been following to so great an extent, the Captain mentions, with a delightful pride: "A Court Baron and Court Leet are regularly held by the Lady of the Manor, Mrs. Henrietta Camilla Jenkin"; and indeed the pleasure of so describing his wife was the most solid benefit of the investment; for the purchase was heavily encumbered, and paid them nothing till some years before their death. In the meanwhile, the Jackson family also, what with wild sons, an indulgent mother, and the impending emancipation of the slaves, was moving nearer and nearer to beggary; and thus of two doomed and declining houses, the subject of this memoir was born, heir to an estate and to no money, yet with inherited qualities that were to make him known and loved.

CHAPTER II

1833-1

Birth and childhood — Edinburgh — Frankfort-on-the-Main — Paris — The Revolution of 1848 — The Insurrection — Flight to Italy — Sympathy with Italy — The insurrection in Genoa — A Student in Genoa — The lad and his mother.

Henry Charles Fleeming Jenkin (Fleeming, pronounced *Flemming,* to his friends and family) was born in a Government building on the coast of Kent, near Dungeness, where his father was serving at the time in the Coastguard, on March 25, 1833, and named after Admiral Fleeming, one of his father's protectors in the navy.

His childhood was vagrant like his life. Once he was left in the care of his grandmother Jackson, while Mrs. Jenkin sailed in her husband's ship and stayed a year at the Havannah. The tragic woman was besides from time to time a member of the family; she was in distress of mind and reduced in fortune by the misconduct of her sons; her destitution and solitude made it a recurring duty to receive her, her violence continually enforced fresh separations. In her passion of a disappointed mother, she was a fit object of pity; but her grandson, who heard her load his own mother with cruel insults and reproaches, conceived for her an indignant and impatient hatred, for which he blamed himself in later life. It is strange from this point of view to see his childish letters to Mrs. Jackson; and to think that a man, distinguished above all by stubborn truthfulness, should have been brought up to such dissimulation. But this is of course unavoidable in life; it did no harm to Jenkin; and whether he got harm 185 or benefit from a so early acquaintance with violent and hateful scenes, is more than I can guess. The experience, at least, was formative; and in judging his character it should not be forgotten. But Mrs. Jackson was not the only stranger in their gates; the Captain's sister, Aunt Anna Jenkin, lived with them until her death; she had all the Jenkin beauty of countenance, though she was unhappily deformed in body and of frail health; and she even excelled her gentle and ineffectual family in all amiable qualities. So that each of the two races from which Fleeming sprang, had an outpost by his very cradle; the one he instinctively loved, the other hated; and the lifelong war in his members had begun thus early by a victory for what was best.

We can trace the family from one country place to another in the south of Scotland; where the child learned his taste for sport by riding home the pony from the moors. Before he was nine he could write such a passage as this about a Hallowe'en observance: "I pulled a middling-sized cabbage-runt with a pretty sum of gold about it. No witches would run after me when I was sowing my hempseed this year; my nuts blazed away together very comfortably to the end of their lives, and when mamma put hers in, which were meant for herself and papa, they blazed away in the like manner." Before he was ten he could write, with a really irritating precocity, that he had been "making some pictures from a book called 'Les Français peints par eux-mêmes.'.... It is full of pictures of all classes, with a description of each in French. The pictures are a little caricatured, but not much." Doubtless this was only an echo from his mother, but it shows the atmosphere in which he breathed. It must have been a good change for this art critic to be the playmate of Mary Macdonald, their gardener's daughter at Barjarg, and to sup with her family on potatoes and milk; and Fleeming himself attached some value to this early and friendly experience of another class.His education, in the formal sense, began at Jedburgh. Thence he went to the Edinburgh Academy, where Clerk Maxwell was his senior and Tait his classmate; bore away many prizes; and was once unjustly flogged by Rector Williams. He used to insist that all his bad school-fellows had died early, a belief amusingly characteristic of the man's consistent optimism. In 1846 the mother and son proceeded to Frankfort-on-the-Main, where they were soon joined by the father, now reduced to inaction and to play something like third fiddle in his narrow household. The emancipation of the slaves had deprived them of their last resource beyond the half-pay of a captain; and life abroad was not only desirable for the sake of Fleeming's education, it was almost enforced by reasons of economy. But it was, no doubt, somewhat hard upon the Captain. Certainly that perennial boy found a companion in his son; they were both active and eager, both willing to be amused, both young, if not in years, then in character. They went out together on excursions and sketched old castles, sitting side by side; they had an angry rivalry in walking, doubtless equally sincere upon both sides; and indeed we may say that Fleeming was exceptionally favoured, and that no boy had ever a companion more innocent, engaging, gay, and airy. But although in this case it would be easy to exaggerate its import, yet, in the Jenkin family also, the tragedy of the generations was proceeding, and the child was growing out of his father's knowledge. His artistic aptitude was of a different order. Already he had his quick sight of many sides of life; he already overflowed with distinctions and generalisations, contrasting the dramatic art and national character of England, Germany, Italy, and France. If he were dull he would write stories and poems. "I have written," he says at thirteen, "a very long story in heroic measure, 300 lines, and another Scotch story and innumerable bits of poetry"; and at the same age he had not only a keen feeling for scenery, but could do something with his pen 187 to call it up. I feel I do always less than justice to the delightful memory of Captain Jenkin; but with a lad of this character, cutting the teeth of his intelligence, he was sure to fall into the background.

The family removed in 1847 to Paris, where Fleeming was put to school under one Deluc. There he learned French, and (if the Captain is right) first began to show a taste for mathematics. But a far more important teacher than Deluc was at hand; the year 1848, so momentous for Europe, was momentous also for Fleeming's character. The family politics were Liberal; Mrs. Jenkin, generous before all things, was sure to be upon the side of exiles; and in the house of a Paris friend of hers, Mrs. Turner — already known to fame as Shelley's Cornelia de Boinville — Fleeming saw and heard such men as Manin, Gioberti, and the Ruffinis. He was thus prepared to sympathise with revolution; and when the hour came, and he found himself in the midst of stirring and influential events, the lad's whole character was moved. He corresponded at that time with a young Edinburgh friend, one Frank Scott; and I am here going to draw somewhat largely on this boyish correspondence. It gives us at once a picture of the Revolution and a portrait of Jenkin at fifteen; not so different (his friends will think) from the Jenkin of the end — boyish, simple, opinionated, delighting in action, delighting before all things in any generous sentiment.

"February 23, 1848.

"When at 7 o'clock to-day I went out, I met a large band going round the streets, calling on the inhabitants to illuminate their houses, and bearing torches. This was all very good fun, and everybody was delighted; but as they stopped rather long and were rather turbulent in the Place de la Madeleine, near where we live" [in the Rue Caumartin] "a squadron of dragoons came up, formed, and charged at a hand-gallop. This was a very pretty sight; the crowd was not too thick, so they easily got away; and the dragoons only gave blows with the back of the sword, which hurt but did not wound. I was as close to them as I am now to the other side of the table; it was rather impressive, however. At the second charge they rode on the pavement and knocked the 188 torches out of the fellows' hands; rather a shame, too — wouldn't be stood in England...."

[At] "ten minutes to ten.... I went a long way along the Boulevards, passing by the office of Foreign Affairs, where Guizot lives, and where to-night there were about a thousand troops protecting him from the fury of the populace. After this was passed, the number of the people thickened, till about half a mile further on, I met a troop of vagabonds, the wildest vagabonds in the world — Paris vagabonds, well armed, having probably broken into gunsmiths' shops and taken the guns and swords. They were about a hundred. These were followed by about a thousand (I am rather diminishing than exaggerating numbers all through), indifferently armed with rusty sabres, sticks, etc. An uncountable troop of gentlemen, workmen, shopkeepers' wives (Paris women dare anything), ladies'-maids, common women — in fact, a crowd of all classes, though by far the greater number were of the better-dressed class — followed. Indeed, it was a splendid sight: the mob in front chanting the 'Marseillaise,' the national war-hymn, grave and powerful, sweetened by the night air — though night in these splendid streets was turned into day, every window was filled with lamps, dim torches were tossing in the crowd, ... for Guizot has late this night given in his resignation, and this was an improvised illumination.

"I and my father had turned with the crowd, and were close behind the second troop of vagabonds. Joy was on every face. I remarked to papa that 'I would not have missed the scene for anything, I might never see such a splendid one,' when *plong* went one shot — every face went pale — *r-r-r-r-r* went the whole detachment, [and] the whole crowd of gentlemen and ladies turned and cut. Such a scene! — ladies, gentlemen, and vagabonds went sprawling in the mud, not shot but tripped up; and those that went down could not rise, they were trampled over.... I ran a short time straight on and did not fall, then turned down a side street, ran fifty yards and felt tolerably safe; looked for papa, did not see him; so walked on quickly, giving the news as I went." [It appears, from another letter, the boy was the first to carry word of the firing to the Rue St. Honoré; and that his news wherever he brought it was received with hurrahs. It was an odd entrance upon life for a little English lad, thus to play the part of rumour in such a crisis of the history of France.]

"But now a new fear came over me. I had little doubt but my papa was safe, but my fear was that he should arrive at home before me and tell the story; in that case I knew my mamma would go half mad with fright, so on I went as quick as possible. I heard no more discharges. When I got half way home, I found my way blocked up by troops. That way or the Boulevards I must pass. In the Boulevards they were fighting, and I was afraid all other passages might be blocked up ... and I should have to sleep in a hotel in that case, and then my mamma — however, after a long *détour*, I found a passage and ran home, and in our street joined papa."... I'll tell you to-morrow the other facts gathered from newspapers and papa.... To-night I have given you what I have seen with my own eyes an hour ago, and began trembling with excitement and fear. If I have been too long on this one subject, it is because it is yet before my eyes.

"*Monday, 24.*

"It was that fire raised the people. There was fighting all through the night in the Rue Notre Dame de Lorette, on the Boulevards where they had been shot at, and at the Porte St. Denis. At ten o'clock they resigned the house of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (where the disastrous volley was fired) to the people, who immediately took possession of it. I went to school but [was] hardly there when the row in that quarter commenced. Barricades began to be fixed. Every one was very grave now; the *externes* went away, but no one came to fetch me, so I had to stay. No lessons could go on. A troop of armed men took possession of the barricades, so it was supposed I should have to sleep there. The revolters came and asked for arms, but Deluc (head-master) is a National Guard, and he said he had only his own and he wanted them; but he said he would not fire on them. Then they asked for wine, which he gave them. They took good care not to get drunk, knowing they would not be able to fight. They were very polite, and behaved extremely well.

"About twelve o'clock a servant came for a boy who lived near me, [and] Deluc thought it best to send me with him. We heard a good deal of firing near, but did not come across any of the parties. As we approached the railway, the barricades were no longer formed of palings, planks, or stones; but they had got all the omnibuses as they passed, sent the horses and passengers about their business, and turned them over. A double row of overturned coaches made a capital barricade, with a few paving-stones.

"When I got home I found to my astonishment that in our fighting quarter it was much quieter. Mamma had just been out seeing the troops in the Place de la Concorde, when suddenly the Municipal Guard, now fairly exasperated, prevented the National Guard from proceeding, and fired at them; the National Guard had come with their musquets not loaded, but at length returned the fire. Mamma saw the National Guard fire. The Municipal Guard were round the corner. She was delighted, for she saw no person killed, though many of the Municipals were....

"I immediately went out with my papa (mamma had just come back with him) and went to the Place de la Concorde. There was an enormous quantity of troops in the Place. Suddenly the gates of the gardens of the Tuileries opened: we rushed forward, out galloped an enormous number of cuirassiers, in the middle of which were a couple of low carriages, said first to contain the Count de Paris and the Duchess of Orleans, but afterwards they said it 190 was the King and Queen; and then I heard he had abdicated. I returned and gave the news.

"Went out again up the Boulevards. The house of the Minister of Foreign Affairs was filled with people and '*Hôtel du Peuple*' written on it; the Boulevards were barricaded with fine old trees that were cut down and stretched all across the road. We went through a great many little streets, all strongly barricaded, and sentinels of the people at the principal of them. The streets are very unquiet, filled with armed men and women, for the troops had followed the ex-King to Neuilly and left Paris in the power of the people. We met the captain of the Third Legion of the National Guard (who had principally protected the people) badly wounded by a Municipal Guard, stretched on a litter. He was in possession of his senses. He was surrounded by a troop of men crying, 'Our brave captain — we have him yet — he's not dead! *Vive la Réforme!*' This cry was responded to by all, and every one saluted him as he passed. I do not know if he was mortally wounded. That Third Legion has behaved splendidly.

"I then returned, and shortly afterwards went out again to the garden of the Tuileries. They were given up to the people and the palace was being sacked. The people were firing blank cartridge to testify their joy, and they had a cannon on the top of the palace. It was a sight to see a palace sacked, and armed vagabonds firing out of the windows, and throwing shirts, papers, and dresses of all kinds out of the windows. They are not rogues, these French; they are not stealing, burning, or doing much harm. In the Tuileries they have dressed up some of the statues, broken some, and stolen nothing but queer dresses. I say, Frank, you must not hate the French; hate the Germans if you like. The French laugh at us a little and call out *Goddam* in the streets; but to-day, in civil war, when they might have put a bullet through our heads, I never was insulted once.

"At present we have a provisional Government, consisting of Odion [*sic*] Barrot, Lamartine, Marast, and some others; among them a common workman, but very intelligent. This is a triumph of liberty — rather!

"Now, then, Frank, what do you think of it? I in a revolution and out all day. Just think, what fun! So it was at first, till I was fired at yesterday; but to-day I was not frightened, but it turned me sick at heart, I don't know why. There has been no great bloodshed, [though] I certainly have seen men's blood several times. But there's something shocking to see a whole armed populace, though not furious, for not one single shop has been broken open, except the gunsmiths' shops, and most of the arms will probably be taken back again. For the French have no cupidity in their nature; they don't like to steal — it is not in their nature. I shall send this letter in a day or two, when I am sure the post will go again. I know I have been a long time writing, but I hope you will find the matter of this letter interesting, as coming from a person resident on the spot; though probably you don't take much interest in the French, but I can think, write, and speak on no other subject.

"*Feb. 25.*

"There is no more fighting, the people have conquered; but the barricades are still kept up, and the people are in arms, more than ever fearing some new act of treachery on the part of the ex-King. The fight where I was was the principal cause of the Revolution. I was in little danger from the shot, for there was an immense crowd in front of me, though quite within gunshot. [By another letter, a hundred yards from the troops.] I wished I had stopped there.

"The Paris streets are filled with the most extraordinary crowds of men, women, and children, ladies and gentlemen. Every person joyful. The bands of armed men are perfectly polite. Mamma and aunt to-day walked through armed crowds alone, that were firing blank cartridges in all directions. Every person made way with the greatest politeness, and one common man with a blouse, coming by accident against her, immediately stopped to beg her pardon in the politest manner. There are few drunken men. The Tuileries is still being run over by the people; they only broke two things, a bust of Louis Philippe and one of Marshal Bugeaud, who fired on the people....

"I have been out all day again to-day, and precious tired I am. The Republican party seems the strongest, and are going about with red ribbons in their button-holes....

"The title of 'Mister' is abandoned: they say nothing but 'Citizen,' and the people are shaking hands amazingly. They have got to the top of the public monuments, and, mingling with bronze or stone statues, five or six make a sort of *tableau vivant,* the top man holding up the red flag of the Republic; and right well they do it, and very picturesque they look. I think I shall put this letter in the post to-morrow as we got a letter to-night.

(*On Envelope.*)

"M. Lamartine has now by his eloquence conquered the whole armed crowd of citizens threatening to kill him if he did not immediately proclaim the Republic and red flag. He said he could not yield to the citizens of Paris alone, that the whole country must be consulted, that he chose the tricolour, for it had followed and accompanied the triumphs of France all over the world, and that the red flag had only been dipped in the blood of the citizens. For sixty hours he has been quieting the people: he is at the head of everything. Don't be prejudiced, Frank, by what you see in the papers. The French have acted nobly, splendidly; there has been no brutality, plundering, or stealing.... I did not like the French before; but in this respect they are the finest people in the world. I am so glad to have been here."

And there one could wish to stop with this apotheosis of liberty and order read with the generous enthusiasm of a boy; but as the reader knows, it was but the first act 192 of the piece. The letters, vivid as they are, written as they were by a hand trembling with fear and excitement, yet do injustice, in their boyishness of tone, to the profound effect produced. At the sound of these songs and shot of cannon, the boy's mind awoke. He dated his own appreciation of the art of acting from the day when he saw and heard Rachel recite the "Marseillaise" at the Français, the tricolor in her arms. What is still more strange, he had been up to then invincibly indifferent to music, insomuch that he could not distinguish "God save the Queen" from "Bonnie Dundee"; and now, to the chanting of the mob, he amazed his family by learning and singing "Mourir pour la Patrie." But the letters, though they prepare the mind for no such revolution in the boy's tastes and feelings, are yet full of entertaining traits. Let the reader note Fleeming's eagerness to influence his friend Frank, an incipient Tory (no less) as further history displayed; his unconscious indifference to his father and devotion to his mother, betrayed in so many significant expressions and omissions; the sense of dignity of this diminutive "person resident on the spot," who was so happy as to escape insult; and the strange picture of the household — father, mother, son, and even poor Aunt Anna — all day in the streets in the thick of this rough business, and the boy packed off alone to school in a distant quarter on the very morrow of the massacre.

They had all the gift of enjoying life's texture as it comes: they were all born optimists. The name of liberty was honoured in that family, its spirit also, but within stringent limits; and some of the foreign friends of Mrs. Jenkin were, as I have said, men distinguished on the Liberal side. Like Wordsworth, they beheld

"France standing on the top of golden hours
And human nature seeming born again."

At once, by temper and belief, they were formed to find their element in such a decent and whiggish convulsion, 193 spectacular in its course, moderate in its purpose. For them,

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven."

And I cannot but smile when I think that (again like Wordsworth) they should have so specially disliked the consequence.

It came upon them by surprise. Liberal friends of the precise right shade of colour had assured them, in Mrs. Turner's drawing-room, that all was for the best; and they rose on February 28 without fear. About the middle of the day they heard the sound of musketry, and the next morning they were wakened by the cannonade. The French, who had behaved so "splendidly," pausing, at the voice of Lamartine, just where judicious Liberals could have desired — the French, who had "no cupidity in their nature," were now about to play a variation on the theme rebellion. The Jenkins took refuge in the house of Mrs. Turner, the house of the false prophets, "Anna going with Mrs. Turner, that she might be prevented speaking English, Fleeming, Miss H., and I" (it is the mother who writes) "walking together. As we reached the Rue de Clichy the report of the cannon sounded close to our ears and made our hearts sick, I assure you. The fighting was at the barrier Rochechouart, a few streets off. All Saturday and Sunday we were a prey to great alarm, there came so many reports that the insurgents were getting the upper hand. One could tell the state of affairs from the extreme quiet or the sudden hum in the street. When the news was bad, all the houses closed and the people disappeared; when better, the doors half opened and you heard the sound of men again. From the upper windows we could see each discharge from the Bastille — I mean the smoke rising — and also the flames and smoke from the Boulevard la Chapelle. We were four ladies, and only Fleeming by way of a man, and 194 difficulty enough we had to keep him from joining the National Guards — his pride and spirit were both fired. You cannot picture to yourself the multitudes of soldiers, guards, and armed men of all sorts we watched — not close to the window, however, for such havoc had been made among them by the firing from the windows, that as the battalions marched by, they cried, '*Fermez vos fenêtres!*' and it was very painful to watch their looks of anxiety and suspicion as they marched by."

"The Revolution," writes Fleeming to Frank Scott, "was quite delightful: getting popped at, and run at by horses, and giving sous for the wounded into little boxes guarded by the raggedest, picturesquest, delightfullest sentinels; but the insurrection! ugh, I shudder to think at [*sic*] it." He found it "not a bit of fun sitting boxed up in the house four days almost.... I was the only *gentleman* to four ladies, and didn't they keep me in order! I did not dare to show my face at a window, for fear of catching a stray ball or being forced to enter the National Guard; [for] they would have it I was a man full grown, French, and every way fit to fight. And my mamma was as bad as any of them; she that told me I was a coward last time if I stayed in the house a quarter of an hour! But I drew, examined the pistols, of which I found lots with caps, powder, and ball, while sometimes murderous intentions of killing a dozen insurgents and dying violently overpowered by numbers...." We may drop this sentence here: under the conduct of its boyish writer, it was to reach no legitimate end.

Four days of such a discipline had cured the family of Paris; the same year Fleeming was to write, in answer apparently to a question of Frank Scott's, "I could find no national game in France but revolutions"; and the witticism was justified in their experience. On the first possible day they applied for passports, and were advised to take the road to Geneva. It appears it was scarce safe to leave Paris for England. Charles Reade, with keen 195 dramatic gusto, had just smuggled himself out of that city in the bottom of a cab. English gold had been found on the insurgents, the name of England was in evil odour; and it was thus — for strategic reasons, so to speak — that Fleeming found himself on the way to that Italy where he was to complete his education, and for which he cherished to the end a special kindness.

It was in Genoa they settled; partly for the sake of the Captain, who might there find naval comrades; partly because of the Ruffinis, who had been friends of Mrs. Jenkin in their time of exile, and were now considerable men at home; partly, in fine, with hopes that Fleeming might attend the University; in preparation for which he was put at once to school. It was the year of Novara; Mazzini was in Rome; the dry bones of Italy were moving; and for people of alert and liberal sympathies the time was inspiriting. What with exiles turned Ministers of State, Universities thrown open to Protestants, Fleeming himself the first Protestant student in Genoa, and thus, as his mother writes, “a living instance of the progress of liberal ideas” — it was little wonder if the enthusiastic young woman and the clever boy were heart and soul upon the side of Italy. It should not be forgotten that they were both on their first visit to that country; the mother still “child enough” to be delighted when she saw “real monks”; and both mother and son thrilling with the first sight of snowy Alps, the blue Mediterranean, and the crowded port and the palaces of Genoa. Nor was their zeal without knowledge. Ruffini, deputy for Genoa, and soon to be head of the University, was at their side; and by means of him the family appear to have had access to much Italian society. To the end, Fleeming professed his admiration of the Piedmontese, and his unalterable confidence in the future of Italy under their conduct; for Victor Emanuel, Cavour, the first La Marmora and Garibaldi, he had varying degrees of sympathy and praise: perhaps highest for the King, whose good sense and temper 196 filled him with respect — perhaps least for Garibaldi, whom he loved but yet mistrusted.

But this is to look forward; these were the days not of Victor Emanuel but of Charles Albert; and it was on Charles Albert that mother and son had now fixed their eyes as on the sword-bearer of Italy. On Fleeming’s sixteenth birthday, they were, the mother writes, “in great anxiety for news from the army. You can have no idea what it is to live in a country where such a struggle is going on. The interest is one that absorbs all others. We eat, drink, and sleep to the noise of drums and musketry. You would enjoy and almost admire Fleeming’s enthusiasm and earnestness — and courage, I may say — for we are among the small minority of English who side with the Italians. The other day, at dinner at the Consul's, boy as he is, and in spite of my admonitions, Fleeming defended the Italian cause, and so well that he 'tripped up the heels of his adversary' simply from being well-informed on the subject and honest. He is as true as steel, and for no one will he bend right or left.... Do not fancy him a Bobadil," she adds, "he is only a very true, candid boy. I am so glad he remains in all respects but information a great child."

If this letter is correctly dated, the cause was already lost, and the King had already abdicated when these lines were written. No sooner did the news reach Genoa, than there began "tumultuous movements"; and the Jenkins received hints it would be wise to leave the city. But they had friends and interests; even the Captain had English officers to keep him company, for Lord Hardwicke's ship, the *Vengeance*, lay in port; and supposing the danger to be real, I cannot but suspect the whole family of a divided purpose, prudence being possibly weaker than curiosity. Stay, at least, they did, and thus rounded their experience of the revolutionary year. On Sunday, April 1, Fleeming and the Captain went for a ramble beyond the walls, leaving Aunt Anna and Mrs. Jenkin to 197 walk on the bastions with some friends. On the way back, this party turned aside to rest in the Church of the Madonna delle Grazie. "We had remarked," writes Mrs. Jenkin, "the entire absence of sentinels on the ramparts, and how the cannons were left in solitary state; and I had just remarked 'How quiet everything is!' when suddenly we heard the drums begin to beat, and distant shouts. *Accustomed as we are* to revolutions, we never thought of being frightened." For all that, they resumed their return home. On the way they saw men running and vociferating, but nothing to indicate a general disturbance, until, near the Duke's palace, they came upon and passed a shouting mob dragging along with it three cannon. It had scarcely passed before they heard "a rushing sound"; one of the gentlemen thrust back the party of ladies under a shed, and the mob passed again. A fine-looking young man was in their hands; and Mrs. Jenkin saw him with his mouth open as if he sought to speak, saw him tossed from one to another like a ball, and then saw him no more. "He was dead a few instants after, but the crowd hid that terror from us. My knees shook under me and my sight left me." With this street tragedy the curtain rose upon the second revolution.

The attack on Spirito Santo and the capitulation and departure of the troops speedily followed. Genoa was in the hands of the Republicans, and now came a time when the English residents were in a position to pay some return for hospitality received. Nor were they backward. Our Consul (the same who had the benefit of correction from Fleeming) carried the Intendente on board the *Vengeance*, escorting him through the streets, getting along with him on board a shore boat, and when the insurgents levelled their muskets, standing up and naming himself "*Console Inglese*." A friend of the Jenkins, Captain Glynne, had a more painful, if a less dramatic part. One Colonel Nosozzo had been killed (I read) while trying to prevent his own artillery from firing on the 198 mob; but in that hell's caldron of a distracted city, there were no distinctions made, and the Colonel's widow was hunted for her life. In her grief and peril, the Glynnes received and hid her; Captain Glynne sought and found her husband's body among the slain, saved it for two days, brought the widow a lock of the dead man's hair; but at last, the mob still strictly searching, seems to have abandoned the body, and conveyed his guest on board the *Vengeance*. The Jenkins also had their refugees, the family of an *employé* threatened by a decree. "You should have seen me making a Union Jack to nail over our door," writes Mrs. Jenkin. "I never worked so fast in my life. Monday and Tuesday," she continues, "were tolerably quiet, our hearts beating fast in the hope of La Marmora's approach, the streets barricaded, and none but foreigners and women allowed to leave the city." On Wednesday, La Marmora came indeed, but in the ugly form of a bombardment; and that evening the Jenkins sat without lights about their drawing-room window, "watching the huge red flashes of the cannon" from the Brigato and La Specula forts, and hearkening, not without some awful pleasure, to the thunder of the cannonade.

Lord Hardwicke intervened between the rebels and La Marmora; and there followed a troubled armistice, filled with the voice of panic. Now the *Vengeance* was known to be cleared for action; now it was rumoured that the galley-slaves were to be let loose upon the town, and now that the troops would enter it by storm. Crowds, trusting in the Union Jack over the Jenkins' door, came to beg them to receive their linen and other valuables; nor could their instances be refused; and in the midst of all this bustle and alarm, piles of goods must be examined and long inventories made. At last the Captain decided things had gone too far. He himself apparently remained to watch over the linen; but at five o'clock on the Sunday morning, Aunt Anna, Fleeming, and his mother were 199 rowed in a pour of rain on board an English merchantman, to suffer "nine mortal hours of agonising suspense." With the end of that time peace was restored. On Tuesday morning officers with white flags appeared on the bastions; then, regiment by regiment, the troops marched in, two hundred men sleeping on the ground floor of the Jenkins' house, thirty thousand in all entering the city, but without disturbance, old La Marmora being a commander of a Roman sternness.

With the return of quiet, and the reopening of the Universities, we behold a new character, Signor Flaminio: the professors, it appears, made no attempt upon the Jenkin; and thus readily italianised the Fleeming. He came well recommended; for their friend Ruffini was then, or soon after, raised to be the head of the University; and the professors were very kind and attentive, possibly to Ruffini's *protégé*, perhaps also to the first Protestant student. It was no joke for Signor Flaminio at first; certificates had to be got from Paris and from Rector Williams; the classics must be furbished up at home that he might follow Latin lectures; examinations bristled in the path, the entrance examination with Latin and English essay, and oral trials (much softened for the foreigner) in Horace, Tacitus, and Cicero, and the first University examination only three months later, in Italian eloquence, no less, and other wider subjects. On one point the first Protestant student was moved to thank his stars: that there was no Greek required for the degree. Little did he think, as he set down his gratitude, how much, in later life and among cribs and dictionaries, he was to lament this circumstance; nor how much of that later life he was to spend acquiring, with infinite toil, a shadow of what he might then have got with ease, and fully. But if his Genoese education was in this particular imperfect, he was fortunate in the branches that more immediately touched on his career. The physical laboratory was the best mounted in Italy. Bancalari, the professor 200 of natural philosophy, was famous in his day; by what seems even an odd coincidence, he went deeply into electro-magnetism; and it was principally in that subject that Signor Flaminio, questioned in Latin and answering in Italian, passed his Master of Arts degree with first-class honours. That he had secured the notice of his teachers one circumstance sufficiently proves. A philosophical society was started under the presidency of Mamiani, "one of the examiners and one of the leaders of the Moderate party"; and out of five promising students brought forward by the professors to attend the sittings and present essays, Signor Flaminio was one. I cannot find that he ever read an essay; and indeed I think his hands were otherwise too full. He found his fellow-students "not such a bad set of chaps," and preferred the Piedmontese before the Genoese; but I suspect he mixed not very freely with either. Not only were his days filled with University work, but his spare hours were fully dedicated to the arts under the eye of a beloved task-mistress. He worked hard and well in the art school, where he obtained a silver medal "for a couple of legs the size of life drawn from one of Raphael's cartoons." His holidays were spent in sketching; his evenings, when they were free, at the theatre. Here at the opera he discovered besides a taste for a new art, the art of music; and it was, he wrote, "as if he had found out a heaven on earth." "I am so anxious that whatever he professes to know, he should really perfectly possess," his mother wrote, "that I spare no pains"; neither to him nor to myself, she might have added. And so when he begged to be allowed to learn the piano, she started him with characteristic barbarity on the scales; and heard in consequence "heart-rending groans" and saw "anguished claspings of hands" as he lost his way among their arid intricacies.

In this picture of the lad at the piano there is something, for the period, girlish. He was indeed his mother's boy; and it was fortunate his mother was not altogether 201 feminine. She gave her son a womanly delicacy in morals, to a man's taste — to his own taste in later life — too finely spun, and perhaps more elegant than healthful. She encouraged him besides in drawing-room interests. But in other points her influence was manlike. Filled with the spirit of thoroughness, she taught him to make of the least of these accomplishments a virile task; and the teaching lasted him through life. Immersed as she was in the day's movements, and buzzed about by leading Liberals, she handed on to him her creed in politics: an enduring kindness for Italy, and a loyalty, like that of many clever women, to the Liberal party with but small regard to men or measures. This attitude of mind used often to disappoint me in a man so fond of logic; but I see now how it was learned from the bright eyes of his mother, and to the sound of the cannonades of 1848. To some of her defects, besides, she made him heir. Kind as was the bond that united her to her son, kind, and even pretty, she was scarce a woman to adorn a home; loving as she did to shine; careless as she was of domestic, studious of public graces. She probably rejoiced to see the boy grow up in somewhat of the image of herself, generous, excessive, enthusiastic, external; catching at ideas, brandishing them when caught; fiery for the right, but always fiery; ready at fifteen to correct a consul, ready at fifty to explain to any artist his own art.

The defects and advantages of such a training were obvious in Fleeming throughout life. His thoroughness was not that of the patient scholar, but of an untrained woman with fits of passionate study; he had learned too much from dogma, given indeed by cherished lips; and precocious as he was in the use of the tools of the mind, he was truly backward in knowledge of life and of himself. Such as it was at least, his home and school training was now complete; and you are to conceive the lad as being formed in a household of meagre revenue, among foreign surroundings, and under the influence of an imperious 202 drawing-room queen; from whom he learned a great refinement of morals, a strong sense of duty, much forwardness of bearing, all manner of studious and artistic interests, and many ready-made opinions which he embraced with a son's and a disciple's loyalty.

CHAPTER III

1851-1

Return to England — Fleeming at Fairbairn's — Experience in a strike — Dr. Bell and Greek architecture — The Gaskells — Fleeming at Greenwich — The Austins — Fleeming and the Austins — His engagement — Fleeming and Sir W. Thomson.

In 1851, the year of Aunt Anna's death, the family left Genoa and came to Manchester, where Fleeming was entered in Fairbairn's works as an apprentice. From the palaces and Alps, the Mole, the blue Mediterranean, the humming lanes and the bright theatres of Genoa, he fell — and he was sharply conscious of the fall — to the dim skies and the foul ways of Manchester. England he found on his return "a horrid place," and there is no doubt the family found it a dear one. The story of the Jenkin finances is not easy to follow. The family, I am told, did not practise frugality, only lamented that it should be needful; and Mrs. Jenkin, who was always complaining of those "dreadful bills," was "always a good deal dressed." But at this time of the return to England, things must have gone further. A holiday tour of a fortnight Fleeming feared would be beyond what he could afford, and he only projected it "to have a castle in the air." And there were actual pinches. Fresh from a warmer sun, he was obliged to go without a greatcoat, and learned on railway journeys to supply the place of one with wrappings of old newspaper.

From half-past eight till six, he must "file and chip vigorously in a moleskin suit and infernally dirty." The work was not new to him, for he had already passed some time in a Genoese shop; and to Fleeming no work was 204 without interest. Whatever a man can do or know, he longed to know and do also. "I never learned anything," he wrote, "not even standing on my head, but I found a use for it." In the spare hours of his first telegraph voyage, to give an instance of his greed of knowledge, he meant "to learn the whole art of navigation, every rope in the ship, and how to handle her on any occasion"; and once when he was shown a young lady's holiday collection of seaweeds, he must cry out, "It showed me my eyes had been idle." Nor was his the case of the mere literary smatterer, content if he but learn the names of things. In him, to do and to do well was even a dearer ambition than to know. Anything done well, any craft, despatch, or finish, delighted and inspired him. I remember him with a twopenny Japanese box of three drawers, so exactly fitted that, when one was driven home, the others started from their places; the whole spirit of Japan, he told me, was pictured in that box; that plain piece of carpentry was as much inspired by the spirit of perfection as the happiest drawing or the finest bronze, and he who could not enjoy it in the one was not fully able to enjoy it in the others. Thus, too, he found in Leonardo’s engineering and anatomical drawings a perpetual feast; and of the former he spoke even with emotion. Nothing indeed annoyed Fleeming more than the attempt to separate the fine arts from the arts of handicraft; any definition or theory that failed to bring these two together, according to him, had missed the point; and the essence of the pleasure received lay in seeing things well done. Other qualities must be added; he was the last to deny that; but this, of perfect craft, was at the bottom of all. And on the other hand, a nail ill driven, a joint ill fitted, a tracing clumsily done, anything to which a man had set his hand and not set it aptly, moved him to shame and anger. With such a character, he would feel but little drudgery at Fairbairn’s. There would be something daily to be done, slovenliness to be avoided, and a higher mark of skill to be attained; he would chip and file, as he had practised 205 scales, impatient of his own imperfection, but resolute to learn.

And there was another spring of delight. For he was now moving daily among those strange creations of man’s brain, to some so abhorrent, to him of an interest so inexhaustible: in which iron, water, and fire are made to serve as slaves, now with a tread more powerful than an elephant’s, and now with a touch more precise and dainty than a pianist’s. The taste for machinery was one that I could never share with him, and he had a certain bitter pity for my weakness. Once when I had proved, for the hundredth time, the depth of this defect, he looked at me askance: “And the best of the joke,” said he, “is that he thinks himself quite a poet.” For to him the struggle of the engineer against brute forces and with inert allies was nobly poetic. Habit never dulled in him the sense of the greatness of the aims and obstacles of his profession. Habit only sharpened his inventor’s gusto in contrivance, in triumphant artifice, in the Odyssean subtleties, by which wires are taught to speak, and iron hands to weave, and the slender ship to brave and to outstrip the tempest. To the ignorant the great results alone are admirable; to the knowing, and to Fleeming in particular, rather the infinite device and sleight of mind that made them possible.

A notion was current at the time that, in such a shop as Fairbairn’s, a pupil would never be popular unless he drank with the workmen and imitated them in speech and manner. Fleeming, who would do none of these things, they accepted as a friend and companion; and this was the subject of remark in Manchester, where some memory of it lingers till to-day. He thought it one of the advantages of his profession to be brought in a close relation with the working classes; and for the skilled artisan he had a great esteem, liking his company, his virtues, and his taste in some of the arts. But he knew the classes too well to regard them, like a platform speaker, in a lump. He drew, on the other hand, broad distinctions; and it was his profound 206 sense of the difference between one working man and another that led him to devote so much time, in later days, to the furtherance of technical education. In 1852 he had occasion to see both men and masters at their worst, in the excitement of a strike; and very foolishly (after their custom) both would seem to have behaved. Beginning with a fair show of justice on either side, the masters stultified their cause by obstinate impolicy, and the men disgraced their order by acts of outrage. “On Wednesday last,” writes Fleeming, “about three thousand banded round Fairbairn’s door at 6 o’clock: men, women, and children, factory boys and girls, the lowest of the low in a very low place. Orders came that no one was to leave the works; but the men inside (Knobsticks, as they are called) were precious hungry and thought they would venture. Two of my companions and myself went out with the very first, and had the full benefit of every possible groan and bad language.” But the police cleared a lane through the crowd, the pupils were suffered to escape unhurt, and only the Knobsticks followed home and kicked with clogs; so that Fleeming enjoyed, as we may say, for nothing, that fine thrill of expectant valour with which he had sallied forth into the mob. “I never before felt myself so decidedly somebody, instead of nobody,” he wrote.

Outside as inside the works, he was “pretty merry and well-to-do,” zealous in study, welcome to many friends, unwearied in loving-kindness to his mother. For some time he spent three nights a week with Dr. Bell, “working away at certain geometrical methods of getting the Greek architectural proportions”: a business after Fleeming’s heart, for he was never so pleased as when he could marry his two devotions, art and science. This was besides, in all likelihood, the beginning of that love and intimate appreciation of things Greek, from the least to the greatest, from the *Agamemnon* (perhaps his favourite tragedy) down to the details of Grecian tailoring, which he used to express in his familiar phrase: “The Greeks were 207 the boys.” Dr. Bell — the son of George Joseph, the nephew of Sir Charles, and, though he made less use of it than some, a sharer in the distinguished talents of his race — had hit upon the singular fact that certain geometrical intersections gave the proportions of the Doric order. Fleeming, under Dr. Bell’s direction, applied the same method to the other orders, and again found the proportions accurately given. Numbers of diagrams were prepared; but the discovery was never given to the world, perhaps because of the dissensions that arose between the authors. For Dr. Bell believed that “these intersections were in some way connected with, or symbolical of, the antagonistic forces at work”; but his pupil and helper, with characteristic trenchancy, brushed aside this mysticism, and interpreted the discovery as “a geometrical method of dividing the spaces or (as might be said) of setting out the work, purely empirical, and in no way connected with any laws of either force or beauty.” “Many a hard and pleasant fight we had over it,” wrote Jenkin, in later years; “and impertinent as it may seem, the pupil is still unconvinced by the arguments of the master.” I do not know about the antagonistic forces in the Doric order; in Fleeming they were plain enough; and the Bobadil of these affairs with Dr. Bell was still, like the corrector of Italian consuls, “a great child in everything but information.” At the house of Colonel Cleather, he might be seen with a family of children; and with these there was no word of the Greek orders; with these Fleeming was only an uproarious boy and an entertaining draughtsman; so that his coming was the signal for the young people to troop into the playroom, where sometimes the roof rang with romping, and sometimes they gathered quietly about him as he amused them with his pencil.

In another Manchester family, whose name will be familiar to my readers — that of the Gaskells, — Fleeming was a frequent visitor. To Mrs. Gaskell he would often bring his new ideas, a process that many of his later friends 208 will understand and, in their own cases, remember. With the girls he had “constant fierce wrangles,” forcing them to reason out their thoughts and to explain their prepossessions; and I hear from Miss Gaskell that they used to wonder how he could throw all the ardour of his character into the smallest matters, and to admire his unselfish devotion to his parents. Of one of these wrangles I have found a record most characteristic of the man. Fleeming had been laying down his doctrine that the end justifies the means, and that it is quite right “to boast of your six men-servants to a burglar, or to steal a knife to prevent a murder”; and the Miss Gaskells, with girlish loyalty to what is current, had rejected the heresy with indignation. From such passages-at-arms many retire mortified and ruffled; but Fleeming had no sooner left the house than he fell into delighted admiration of the spirit of his adversaries. From that it was but a step to ask himself “what truth was sticking in their heads”; for even the falsest form of words (in Fleeming’s life-long opinion) reposed upon some truth, just as he could “not even allow that people admire ugly things, they admire what is pretty in the ugly thing.” And before he sat down to write his letter, he thought he had hit upon the explanation. “I fancy the true idea,” he wrote, “is that you must never do yourself or any one else a moral injury — make any man a thief or a liar — for any end”; quite a different thing, as he would have loved to point out, from never stealing or lying. But this perfervid disputant was not always out of key with his audience. One whom he met in the same house announced that she would never again be happy. “What does that signify?” cried Fleeming. “We are not here to be happy, but to be good.” And the words (as his hearer writes to me) became to her a sort of motto during life.

From Fairbairn’s and Manchester, Fleeming passed to a railway survey in Switzerland, and thence again to Mr. Penn’s at Greenwich, where he was engaged as draughtsman. There, in 1856, we find him in “a terribly busy state, 209 finishing up engines for innumerable gunboats and steam frigates for the ensuing campaign.” From half-past eight in the morning till nine or ten at night, he worked in a crowded office among uncongenial comrades, “saluted by chaff, generally low, personal, and not witty,” pelted with oranges and apples, regaled with dirty stories, and seeking to suit himself with his surroundings or (as he writes it) trying to be as little like himself as possible. His lodgings were hard by, “across a dirty green and through some half-built streets of two-storied houses”; he had Carlyle and the poets, engineering and mathematics, to study by himself in such spare time as remained to him; and there were several ladies, young and not so young, with whom he liked to correspond. But not all of these could compensate for the absence of that mother, who had made herself so large a figure in his life, for sorry surroundings, unsuitable society, and work that leaned to the mechanical. “Sunday,” says he, “I generally visit some friends in town, and seem to swim in clearer water, but the dirty green seems all the dirtier when I get back. Luckily I am fond of my profession, or I could not stand this life.” It is a question in my mind, if he could have long continued to stand it without loss. “We are not here to be happy, but to be good,” quoth the young philosopher; but no man had a keener appetite for happiness than Fleeming Jenkin. There is a time of life besides, when, apart from circumstances, few men are agreeable to their neighbours, and still fewer to themselves; and it was at this stage that Fleeming had arrived, later than common, and even worse provided. The letter from which I have quoted is the last of his correspondence with Frank Scott, and his last confidential letter to one of his own sex. “If you consider it rightly,” he wrote long after, “you will find the want of correspondence no such strange want in men’s friendships. There is, believe me, something noble in the metal which does not rust, though not burnished by daily use.” It is well said; but the last letter to Frank Scott is scarcely 210 of a noble metal. It is plain the writer has outgrown his old self, yet not made acquaintance with the new. This letter from a busy youth of three-and-twenty, breathes of seventeen: the sickening alternations of conceit and shame, the expense of hope *in vacuo*, the lack of friends, the longing after love; the whole world of egoism under which youth stands groaning, a voluntary Atlas.

With Fleeming this disease was never seemingly severe. The very day before this (to me) distasteful letter, he had written to Miss Bell of Manchester in a sweeter strain; I do not quote the one, I quote the other; fair things are the best. “I keep my own little lodgings,” he writes, “but come up every night to see mamma” (who was then on a visit to London) “if not kept too late at the works; and have singing-lessons once more, and sing ‘Donne l’amore è scaltro pargoletto’; and think and talk about you; and listen to mamma’s projects *de* Stowting. Everything turns to gold at her touch — she’s a fairy, and no mistake. We go on talking till I have a picture in my head, and can hardly believe at the end the original is Stowting. Even you don’t know half how good mamma is; in other things too, which I must not mention. She teaches me how it is not necessary to be very rich to do much good. I begin to understand that mamma would find useful occupation and create beauty at the bottom of a volcano. She has little weaknesses, but is a real, generous-hearted woman, which I suppose is the finest thing in the world.” Though neither mother nor son could be called beautiful, they make a pretty picture; the ugly, generous, ardent woman weaving rainbow illusions; the ugly, clear-sighted, loving son sitting at her side in one of his rare hours of pleasure, half-beguiled, half-amused, wholly admiring, as he listens. But as he goes home, and the fancy pictures fade, and Stowting is once more burthened with debt, and the noisy companions and the long hours of drudgery once more approach, no wonder if the dirty green seems all the dirtier, or if Atlas must resume his load.But in healthy natures this time of moral teething passes quickly of itself, and is easily alleviated by fresh interests; and already, in the letter to Frank Scott, there are two words of hope: his friends in London, his love for his profession. The last might have saved him; for he was ere long to pass into a new sphere, where all his faculties were to be tried and exercised, and his life to be filled with interest and effort. But it was not left to engineering; another and more influential aim was to be set before him. He must, in any case, have fallen in love; in any case, his love would have ruled his life; and the question of choice was, for the descendant of two such families, a thing of paramount importance. Innocent of the world, fiery, generous, devoted as he was, the son of the wild Jacksons and the facile Jenkins might have been led far astray. By one of those partialities that fill men at once with gratitude and wonder his choosing was directed well. Or are we to say that, by a man’s choice in marriage, as by a crucial merit, he deserves his fortune? One thing at least reason may discern: that a man but partly chooses, he also partly forms, his helpmate; and he must in part deserve her, or the treasure is but won for a moment to be lost.

Fleeming chanced, if you will (and indeed all these opportunities are as “random as blind-man’s-buff”), upon a wife who was worthy of him; but he had the wit to know it, the courage to wait and labour for his prize, and the tenderness and chivalry that are required to keep such prizes precious. Upon this point he has himself written well, as usual with fervent optimism, but as usual (in his own phrase) with a truth sticking in his head.

“Love,” he wrote, “is not an intuition of the person most suitable to us, most required by us; of the person with whom life flowers and bears fruit. If this were so, the chances of our meeting that person would be small indeed; intuition would often fail; the blindness of love would then be fatal as it is proverbial. No, love works differently, and in its blindness lies its strength. Man and woman, each 212 strongly desires to be loved, each opens to the other that heart of ideal aspirations which they have often hid till then; each, thus knowing the ideal of the other, tries to fulfil that ideal; each partially succeeds. The greater the love, the greater the success; the nobler the idea of each, the more durable, the more beautiful the effect. Meanwhile the blindness of each to the other’s defects enables the transformation to proceed [unobserved], so that when the veil is withdrawn (if it ever is, and this I do not know) neither knows that any change has occurred in the person whom they loved. Do not fear, therefore. I do not tell you that your friend will not change, but as I am sure that her choice cannot be that of a man with a base ideal, so I am sure the change will be a safe and a good one. Do not fear that anything you love will vanish — he must love it too.”

Among other introductions in London, Fleeming had presented a letter from Mrs. Gaskell to the Alfred Austins. This was a family certain to interest a thoughtful young man. Alfred, the youngest and least known of the Austins, had been a beautiful golden-haired child, petted and kept out of the way of both sport and study by a partial mother. Bred an attorney, he had (like both his brothers) changed his way of life, and was called to the Bar when past thirty. A Commission of Inquiry into the state of the poor in Dorsetshire gave him an opportunity of proving his true talents; and he was appointed a Poor Law Inspector, first at Worcester, next at Manchester, where he had to deal with the potato famine and the Irish immigration of the ‘forties, and finally in London, where he again distinguished himself during an epidemic of cholera. He was then advanced to the Permanent Secretaryship of Her Majesty’s Office of Works and Public Buildings; a position which he filled with perfect competence, but with an extreme of modesty; and on his retirement, in 1868, he was made a Companion of the Bath. While apprentice to a Norwich attorney, Alfred Austin was a frequent visitor in the house 213 of Mr. Barren, a rallying-place in those days of intellectual society. Edward Barren, the son of a rich saddler or leather merchant in the Borough, was a man typical of the time. When he was a child, he had once been patted on the head in his father's shop by no less a man than Samuel Johnson, as the Doctor went round the Borough canvassing for Mr. Thrale; and the child was true to this early consecration. "A life of lettered ease spent in provincial retirement," it is thus that the biographer of that remarkable man, William Taylor, announces his subject; and the phrase is equally descriptive of the life of Edward Barron. The pair were close friends: "W. T. and a pipe render everything agreeable," writes Barron in his diary in 1828; and in 1833, after Barron had moved to London, and Taylor had tasted the first public failure of his powers, the latter wrote: "To my ever dearest Mr. Barron say, if you please, that I miss him more than I regret him — that I acquiesce in his retirement from Norwich, because I could ill brook his observation of my increasing debility of mind." This chosen companion of William Taylor must himself have been no ordinary man; and he was the friend besides of Borrow, whom I find him helping in his Latin. But he had no desire for popular distinction, lived privately, married a daughter of Dr. Enfield of Enfield's "Speaker," and devoted his time to the education of his family, in a deliberate and scholarly fashion, and with certain traits of stoicism, that would surprise a modern. From these children we must single out his youngest daughter, Eliza, who learned under his care to be a sound Latin, an elegant Grecian, and to suppress emotion without outward sign after the manner of the Godwin school. This was the more notable, as the girl really derived from the Enfields, whose high-flown romantic temper I wish I could find space to illustrate. She was but seven years old when Alfred Austin remarked and fell in love with her; and the union thus early prepared was singularly full. Where the husband and wife differed, and they did so on momentous subjects, 214 they differed with perfect temper and content; and in the conduct of life, and in depth and durability of love, they were at one. Each full of high spirits, each practised something of the same repression: no sharp word was uttered in their house. The same point of honour ruled them: a guest was sacred and stood within the pale from criticism. It was a house, besides, of unusual intellectual tension. Mrs. Austin remembered, in the early days of the marriage, the three brothers, John, Charles, and Alfred, marching to and fro, each with his hands behind his back, and "reasoning high" till morning; and how, like Dr. Johnson, they would cheer their speculations with as many as fifteen cups of tea. And though, before the date of Fleeming's visit, the brothers were separated, Charles long ago retired from the world at Brandeston, and John already near his end in the "rambling old house" at Weybridge, Alfred Austin and his wife were still a centre of much intellectual society, and still, as indeed they remained until the last, youthfully alert in mind. There was but one child of the marriage, Annie, and she was herself something new for the eyes of the young visitor; brought up as she had been, like her mother before her, to the standard of a man's acquirements. Only one art had she been denied, she must not learn the violin — the thought was too monstrous even for the Austins; and indeed it would seem as if that tide of reform which we may date from the days of Mary Wollstonecraft had in some degree even receded; for though Miss Austin was suffered to learn Greek, the accomplishment was kept secret like a piece of guilt. But whether this stealth was caused by a backward movement in public thought since the time of Edward Barron, or by the change from enlightened Norwich to barbarian London, I have no means of judging.

When Fleeming presented his letter he fell in love at first sight with Mrs. Austin and the life and atmosphere of the house. There was in the society of the Austins, outward, stoical conformers to the world, something 215 gravely suggestive of essential eccentricity, something unpretentiously breathing of intellectual effort, that could not fail to hit the fancy of this hot-brained boy. The unbroken enamel of courtesy, the self-restraint, the dignified kindness of these married folk, had besides a particular attraction for their visitor. He could not but compare what he saw with what he knew of his mother and himself. Whatever virtues Fleeming possessed, he could never count on being civil; whatever brave, true-hearted qualities he was able to admire in Mrs. Jenkin, mildness of demeanour was not one of them. And here he found persons who were the equals of his mother and himself in intellect and width of interest, and the equals of his father in mild urbanity of disposition. Show Fleeming an active virtue, and he always loved it. He went away from that house struck through with admiration, and vowing to himself that his own married life should be upon that pattern, his wife (whoever she might be) like Eliza Barron, himself such another husband as Alfred Austin. What is more strange, he not only brought away, but left behind him, golden opinions. He must have been — he was, I am told — a trying lad; but there shone out of him such a light of innocent candour, enthusiasm, intelligence, and appreciation, that to persons already some way forward in years, and thus able to enjoy indulgently the perennial comedy of youth, the sight of him was delightful. By a pleasant coincidence, there was one person in the house whom he did not appreciate, and who did not appreciate him: Annie Austin, his future wife. His boyish vanity ruffled her; his appearance, never impressive, was then, by reason of obtrusive boyishness, still less so; she found occasion to put him in the wrong by correcting a false quantity; and when Mr. Austin, after doing his visitor the almost unheard-of honour of accompanying him to the door, announced “That was what young men were like in my time” — she could only reply, looking on her handsome father, “I thought they had been better-looking.”This first visit to the Austins took place in 1855; and it seems it was some time before Fleeming began to know his mind; and yet longer ere he ventured to show it. The corrected quantity, to those who knew him well, will seem to have played its part; he was the man always to reflect over a correction and to admire the castigator. And fall in love he did; not hurriedly, but step by step, not blindly, but with critical discrimination; not in the fashion of Romeo, but, before he was done, with all Romeo’s ardour and more than Romeo’s faith. The high favour to which he presently rose in the esteem of Alfred Austin and his wife might well give him ambitious notions; but the poverty of the present and the obscurity of the future were there to give him pause; and when his aspirations began to settle round Miss Austin, he tasted, perhaps for the only time in his life, the pangs of diffidence. There was indeed opening before him a wide door of hope. He had changed into the service of Messrs. Liddell and Gordon; these gentlemen had begun to dabble in the new field of marine telegraphy; and Fleeming was already face to face with his life’s work. That impotent sense of his own value, as of a ship aground, which makes one of the agonies of youth, began to fall from him. New problems which he was endowed to solve, vistas of new inquiry which he was fitted to explore, opened before him continually. His gifts had found their avenue and goal. And with this pleasure of effective exercise, there must have sprung up at once the hope of what is called by the world success. But from these low beginnings, it was a far look upward to Miss Austin: the favour of the loved one seems always more than problematical to any lover; the consent of parents must be always more than doubtful to a young man with a small salary, and no capital except capacity and hope. But Fleeming was not the lad to lose any good thing for the lack of trial; and at length, in the autumn of 1857, this boyish-sized, boyish-mannered and superlatively ill-dressed young engineer entered the house of the Austins, with such sinkings 217 as we may fancy, and asked leave to pay his addresses to the daughter. Mrs. Austin already loved him like a son, she was but too glad to give him her consent; Mr. Austin reserved the right to inquire into his character; from neither was there a word about his prospects, by neither was his income mentioned. “Are these people,” he wrote, struck with wonder at this dignified disinterestedness, “are these people the same as other people?” It was not till he was armed with this permission that Miss Austin even suspected the nature of his hopes: so strong, in this unmannerly boy, was the principle of true courtesy; so powerful, in this impetuous nature, the springs of self-repression. And yet a boy he was; a boy in heart and mind; and it was with a boy’s chivalry and frankness that he won his wife. His conduct was a model of honour, hardly of tact; to conceal love from the loved one, to court her parents, to be silent and discreet till these are won, and then without preparation to approach the lady — these are not arts that I would recommend for imitation. They lead to final refusal. Nothing saved Fleeming from that fate, but one circumstance that cannot be counted upon — the hearty favour of the mother, and one gift that is inimitable and that never failed him throughout life, the gift of a nature essentially noble and outspoken. A happy and high-minded anger flashed through his despair: it won for him his wife.

Nearly two years passed before it was possible to marry: two years of activity — now in London; now at Birkenhead, fitting out ships, inventing new machinery for new purposes, and dipping into electrical experiment; now in the *Elba* on his first telegraph cruise between Sardinia and Algiers: a busy and delightful period of bounding ardour, incessant toil, growing hope and fresh interests, with behind and through all the image of his beloved. A few extracts from his correspondence with his betrothed will give the note of these truly joyous years. “My profession gives me all the excitement and interest I ever hope for, but the sorry jade is obviously jealous of 218 you.” — ”‘Poor Fleeming,’ in spite of wet, cold, and wind, clambering over moist, tarry slips, wandering among pools of slush in waste places inhabited by wandering locomotives, grows visibly stronger, has dismissed his office cough and cured his toothache.” — ”The whole of the paying out and lifting machinery must be designed and ordered in two or three days, and I am half crazy with work. I like it though: it’s like a good ball, the excitement carries you through.” — ”I was running to and from the ships and warehouse through fierce gusts of rain and wind till near eleven, and you cannot think what a pleasure it was to be blown about and think of you in your pretty dress.” — ”I am at the works till ten and sometimes eleven. But I have a nice office to sit in, with a fire to myself, and bright brass scientific instruments all round me, and books to read, and experiments to make, and enjoy myself amazingly. I find the study of electricity so entertaining that I am apt to neglect my other work.” And for a last taste: “Yesterday I had some charming electrical experiments. What shall I compare them to — a new song? a Greek play?”

It was at this time besides that he made the acquaintance of Professor, now Sir William, Thomson. To describe the part played by these two in each other’s lives would lie out of my way. They worked together on the Committee on Electrical Standards; they served together at the laying down or the repair of many deep-sea cables; and

Sir William was regarded by Fleeming, not only with the "worship" (the word is his own) due to great scientific gifts, but with an ardour of personal friendship not frequently excelled. To their association, Fleeming brought the valuable element of a practical understanding; but he never thought or spoke of himself where Sir William was in question; and I recall quite in his last days a singular instance of this modest loyalty to one whom he admired and loved. He drew up a paper, in a quite personal interest, of his own services; yet even here he must step 219 out of his way, he must add, where it had no claim to be added, his opinion that, in their joint work, the contributions of Sir William had been always greatly the most valuable. Again, I shall not readily forget with what emotion he once told me an incident of their associated travels. On one of the mountain ledges of Madeira, Fleeming's pony bolted between Sir William and the precipice above; by strange good fortune, and thanks to the steadiness of Sir William's horse, no harm was done; but for the moment Fleeming saw his friend hurled into the sea, and almost by his own act: it was a memory that haunted him.

Afterwards Lord Kelvin. — Ed.

CHAPTER IV

1859-1

Fleeming's marriage — His married life — Professional difficulties — Life at Claygate — Illness of Mrs. F. Jenkin — and of Fleeming — Appointment to the Chair at Edinburgh.

On Saturday, Feb. 26, 1859, profiting by a holiday of four days, Fleeming was married to Miss Austin at Northiam; a place connected not only with his own family but with that of his bride as well. By Tuesday morning he was at work again, fitting out cableships at Birkenhead. Of the walk from his lodgings to the works I find a graphic sketch in one of his letters: "Out over the railway bridge, along a wide road raised to the level of a ground floor above the land, which, not being built upon, harbours puddles, ponds, pigs, and Irish hovels; — so to the dock warehouses, four huge piles of building with no windows, surrounded by a wall about twelve feet high; — in through the large gates, round which hang twenty or thirty rusty Irish, playing pitch and toss and waiting for employment; — on along the railway, which came in at the same gates, and which branches down between each vast block — past a pilot-engine butting refractory trucks into their places — on to the last block, [and] down the branch, sniffing the guano-scented air, and detecting the old bones. The hartshorn flavour of the guano becomes very strong, as I near the docks, where, across the *Elba's* decks, a huge vessel is discharging her cargo of the brown dust, and where huge vessels have been discharging that same cargo for the last five months." This was the walk he took his young wife on the morrow of his return. She had been used to the 221 society of lawyers and civil servants, moving in that circle which seems to itself the pivot of the nation, and is in truth only a clique like another; and Fleeming was to her the nameless assistant of a nameless firm of engineers, doing his inglorious business, as she now saw for herself, among unsavoury surroundings. But when their walk brought them within view of the river, she beheld a sight to her of the most novel beauty: four great sea-going ships dressed out with flags. "How lovely!" she cried. "What is it for?" "For you," said Fleeming. Her surprise was only equalled by her pleasure. But perhaps, for what we may call private fame, there is no life like that of the engineer; who is a great man in out-of-the-way places, by the dockside or on the desert island, or in populous ships, and remains quite unheard of in the coteries of London. And Fleeming had already made his mark among the few who had an opportunity of knowing him.

His marriage was the one decisive incident of his career; from that moment until the day of his death he had one thought to which all the rest were tributary, the thought of his wife. No one could know him even slightly, and not remark the absorbing greatness of that sentiment; nor can any picture of the man be drawn that does not in proportion dwell upon it. This is a delicate task; but if we are to leave behind us (as we wish) some presentment of the friend we have lost, it is a task that must be undertaken.

For all his play of mind and fancy, for all his indulgence — and, as time went on, he grew indulgent — Fleeming had views of duty that were even stern. He was too shrewd a student of his fellow-men to remain long content with rigid formulæ of conduct. Iron-bound, impersonal ethics, the procrustean bed of rules, he soon saw at their true value as the deification of averages. "As to Miss (I declare I forget her name) being bad," I find him writing, "people only mean that she has broken the Decalogue — which is not at all the same thing. People who have kept in the high road of Life really have less opportunity for taking a 222 comprehensive view of it than those who have leaped over the hedges and strayed up the hills; not but what the hedges are very necessary, and our stray travellers often have a weary time of it. So, you may say, have those in the dusty roads." Yet he was himself a very stern respecter of the hedgerows; sought safety and found dignity in the obvious path of conduct; and would palter with no simple and recognised duty of his epoch. Of marriage in particular, of the bond so formed, of the obligations incurred, of the debt men owe to their children, he conceived in a truly antique spirit; not to blame others, but to constrain himself. It was not to blame, I repeat, that he held these views; for others he could make a large allowance; and yet he tacitly expected of his friends and his wife a high standard of behaviour. Nor was it always easy to wear the armour of that ideal.

Acting upon these beliefs; conceiving that he had indeed "given himself" (in the full meaning of these words) for better, for worse; painfully alive to his defects of temper and deficiency in charm; resolute to make up for these; thinking last of himself: Fleeming was in some ways the very man to have made a noble, uphill fight of an unfortunate marriage. In other ways, it is true, he was one of the most unfit for such a trial. And it was his beautiful destiny to remain to the last hour the same absolute and romantic lover, who had shown to his new bride the flag-draped vessels in the Mersey. No fate is altogether easy; but trials are our touchstone, trials overcome our reward; and it was given to Fleeming to conquer. It was given to him to live for another, not as a task, but till the end as an enchanting pleasure. "People may write novels," he wrote in 1869, "and other people may write poems, but not a man or woman among them can write to say how happy a man may be who is desperately in love with his wife after ten years of marriage.” And again in 1885, after more than twenty-six years of marriage, and within but five weeks of his death: “Your first letter 223 from Bournemouth,” he wrote, “gives me heavenly pleasure — for which I thank Heaven and you too — who are my heaven on earth.” The mind hesitates whether to say that such a man has been more good or more fortunate.

Any woman (it is the defect of her sex) comes sooner to the stable mind of maturity than any man; and Jenkin was to the end of a most deliberate growth. In the next chapter, when I come to deal with his telegraphic voyages and give some taste of his correspondence, the reader will still find him at twenty-five an arrant schoolboy. His wife besides was more thoroughly educated than he. In many ways she was able to teach him, and he proud to be taught; in many ways she outshone him, and he delighted to be outshone. All these superiorities, and others that, after the manner of lovers, he no doubt forged for himself, added as time went on to the humility of his original love. Only once, in all I know of his career, did he show a touch of smallness. He could not learn to sing correctly; his wife told him so and desisted from her lessons; and the mortification was so sharply felt that for years he could not be induced to go to a concert, instanced himself as a typical man without an ear, and never sang again. I tell it; for the fact that this stood singular in his behaviour, and really amazed all who knew him, is the happiest way I can imagine to commend the tenor of his simplicity; and because it illustrates his feeling for his wife. Others were always welcome to laugh at him; if it amused them, or if it amused him, he would proceed undisturbed with his occupation, his vanity invulnerable. With his wife it was different: his wife had laughed at his singing; and for twenty years the fibre ached. Nothing, again, was more notable than the formal chivalry of this unmannered man to the person on earth with whom he was the most familiar. He was conscious of his own innate and often rasping vivacity and roughness; and he was never forgetful of his first visit to the Austins and the vow he had registered on his return. There was thus an artificial element in his punctilio that at 224 times might almost raise a smile. But it stood on noble grounds; for this was how he sought to shelter from his own petulance the woman who was to him the symbol of the household and to the end the beloved of his youth.

I wish in this chapter to chronicle small beer; taking a hasty glance at some ten years of married life and of professional struggle; and reserving till the next all the more interesting matter of his cruises. Of his achievements and their worth it is not for me to speak: his friend and partner, Sir William Thomson, has contributed a note on the subject, to which I must refer the reader. He is to conceive in the meanwhile for himself Fleeming's manifold engagements: his service on the Committee on Electrical Standards, his lectures on electricity at Chatham, his Chair at the London University, his partnership with Sir William Thomson and Mr. Varley in many ingenious patents, his growing credit with engineers and men of science; and he is to bear in mind that of all this activity and acquist of reputation, the immediate profit was scanty. Soon after his marriage, Fleeming had left the service of Messrs. Liddell and Gordon, and entered into a general engineering partnership with Mr. Forde, a gentleman in a good way of business. It was a fortunate partnership in this, that the parties retained their mutual respect unlessened and separated with regret; but men's affairs, like men, have their times of sickness, and by one of those unaccountable variations, for hard upon ten years the business was disappointing and the profits meagre. "Inditing drafts of German railways which will never get made": it is thus I find Fleeming, not without a touch of bitterness, describe his occupation. Even the patents hung fire at first. There was no salary to rely on; children were coming and growing up; the prospect was often anxious. In the days of his courtship, Fleeming had written to Miss Austin a dissuasive picture of the trials of poverty, assuring 225 her these were no figments but truly bitter to support; he told her this, he wrote beforehand, so that when the pinch came and she suffered, she should not be disappointed in herself nor tempted to doubt her own magnanimity: a letter of admirable wisdom and solicitude. But now that the trouble came, he bore it very lightly. It was his principle, as he once prettily expressed it, "to enjoy each day's happiness, as it arises, like birds or children." His optimism, if driven out at the door, would come in again by the window; if it found nothing but blackness in the present, would hit upon some ground of consolation in the future or the past. And his courage and energy were indefatigable. In the year 1863, soon after the birth of their first son, they moved into a cottage at Claygate near Esher; and about this time, under manifold troubles both of money and health, I find him writing from abroad: "The country will give us, please God, health and strength. I will love and cherish you more than ever, you shall go where you wish, you shall receive whom you wish — and as for money, you shall have that too. I cannot be mistaken. I have now measured myself with many men. I do not feel weak, I do not feel that I shall fail. In many things I have succeeded, and I will in this. And meanwhile the time of waiting, which, please Heaven, shall not be long, shall also not be so bitter. Well, well, I promise much, and do not know at this moment how you and the dear child are. If he is but better, courage, my girl, for I see light."

This cottage at Claygate stood just without the village, well surrounded with trees, and commanding a pleasant view. A piece of the garden was turfed over to form a croquet-green, and Fleeming became (I need scarce say) a very ardent player. He grew ardent, too, in gardening. This he took up at first to please his wife, having no natural inclination; but he had no sooner set his hand to it than, like everything else he touched, it became with him a passion. He budded roses, he potted cuttings in the coach-house; 226 if there came a change of weather at night he would rise out of bed to protect his favourites; when he was thrown with a dull companion, it was enough for him to discover in the man a fellow-gardener; on his travels, he would go out of his way to visit nurseries and gather hints; and to the end of his life, after other occupations prevented him putting his own hand to the spade, he drew up a yearly programme for his gardener, in which all details were regulated. He had begun by this time to write. His paper on Darwin, which had the merit of convincing on one point the philosopher himself, had indeed been written before this, in London lodgings; but his pen was not idle at Claygate; and it was here he wrote (among other things) that review of "Fecundity, Fertility, Sterility, and Allied Topics," which Dr. Matthews Duncan prefixed by way of introduction to the second edition of the work. The mere act of writing seems to cheer the vanity of the most incompetent; but a correction accepted by Darwin, and a whole review borrowed and reprinted by Matthews Duncan, are compliments of a rare strain, and to a man still unsuccessful must have been precious indeed. There was yet a third of the same kind in store for him; and when Munro himself owned that he had found instruction in the paper on Lucretius, we may say that Fleeming had been crowned in the Capitol of reviewing.

Croquet, charades, Christmas magic lanterns for the village children, an amateur concert or a review article in the evening; plenty of hard work by day; regular visits to meetings of the British Association, from one of which I find him characteristically writing: "I cannot say that I have had any amusement yet, but I am enjoying the dulness and dry bustle of the whole thing"; occasional visits abroad on business, when he would find the time to glean (as I have said) gardening hints for himself, and old folk-songs or new fashions of dress for his wife; and the continual study and care of his children: these were the chief elements of his life. Nor were friends wanting. 227 Captain and Mrs. Jenkin, Mr. and Mrs. Austin, Clerk Maxwell, Miss Bell of Manchester, and others, came to them on visits. Mr. Hertslet of the Foreign Office, his wife and his daughter, were neighbours, and proved kind friends; in 1867 the Howitts came to Claygate and sought the society of "the two bright, clever young people"; and in a house close by Mr. Frederick Ricketts came to live with his family. Mr. Ricketts was a valued friend during his short life; and when he was lost, with every circumstance of heroism, in the *La*

Plata, Fleeming mourned him sincerely.

I think I shall give the best idea of Fleeming in this time of his early married life, by a few sustained extracts from his letters to his wife, while she was absent on a visit in 1864.

"*Nov. 11.* — Sunday was too wet to walk to Isleworth, for which I was sorry, so I stayed and went to church and thought of you at Ardwick all through the Commandments, and heard Dr. — — expound in a remarkable way a prophecy of St. Paul about Roman Catholics, which, *mutatis mutandis,* would do very well for Protestants in some parts. Then I made a little nursery of borecole and Enfield market cabbage, grubbing in wet earth with leggings and grey coat on. Then I tidied up the coach-house to my own and Christine's admiration. Then encouraged by *bouts-rimés* I wrote you a copy of verses; high time, I think; I shall just save my tenth year of knowing my lady love without inditing poetry or rhymes to her.

"Then I rummaged over the box with my father's letters, and found interesting notes from myself. One I should say my first letter, which little Austin I should say would rejoice to see, and shall see — with a drawing of a cottage and a spirited 'cob.' What was more to the purpose, I found with it a paste-cutter which Mary begged humbly for Christine, and I generously gave this morning.

"Then I read some of Congreve. There are admirable scenes in the manner of Sheridan; all wit and no character, or rather one character in a great variety of situations and scenes. I could show you some scenes, but others are too coarse even for my stomach, hardened by a course of French novels.

"All things look so happy for the rain.

"*Nov. 16.* — Verbenas looking well.... I am but a poor creature without you; I have naturally no spirit or fun or enterprise in me. Only a kind of mechanical capacity for ascertaining whether two really is half four, etc.; but when you are near me I can fancy 228 that I too shine, and vainly suppose it to be my proper light; whereas by my extreme darkness when you are not by, it clearly can only be by a reflected brilliance that I seem aught but dull. Then for the moral part of me: if it were not for you and little Odden, I should feel by no means sure that I had any affection power in me.... Even the muscular me suffers a sad deterioration in your absence. I don't get up when I ought to, I have snoozed in my chair after dinner; I do not go in at the garden with my wonted vigour, and feel ten times as tired as usual with a walk in your absence; so you see, when you are not by, I am a person without ability, affections, or vigour, but droop, dull, selfish, and spiritless; can you wonder that I love you?

"*Nov. 17.* — ... I am very glad we married young. I would not have missed these five years — no, not for any hopes; they are my own.

“*Nov. 30.* — I got through my Chatham lecture very fairly, though almost all my apparatus went astray. I dined at the mess, and got home to Isleworth the same evening; your father very kindly sitting up for me.

“*Dec. 1.* — Back at dear Claygate. Many cuttings flourish, especially those which do honour to your hand. Your Californian annuals are up and about. Badger is fat, the grass green....

“*Dec. 3.* — Odden will not talk of you, while you are away, having inherited, as I suspect, his father’s way of declining to consider a subject which is painful, as your absence is.... I certainly should like to learn Greek, and I think it would be a capital pastime for the long winter evenings.... How things are misrated! I declare croquet is a noble occupation compared to the pursuits of business men. As for so-called idleness — that is, one form of it — I vow it is the noblest aim of man. When idle, one can love, one can be good, feel kindly to all, devote oneself to others, be thankful for existence, educate one’s mind, one’s heart, one’s body. When busy, as I am busy now or have been busy to-day, one feels just as you sometimes felt when you were too busy, owing to want of servants.

“*Dec. 5.* — On Sunday I was at Isleworth, chiefly engaged in playing with Odden. We had the most enchanting walk together through the brickfields. It was very muddy, and, as he remarked, not fit for Nanna, but fit for us *men*. The dreary waste of bared earth, thatched sheds and standing water was a paradise to him; and when we walked up planks to deserted mixing and crushing mills, and actually saw where the clay was stirred with long iron prongs, and chalk or lime ground with ‘a tind of a mill,’ his expression of contentment and triumphant heroism knew no limit to its beauty. Of course on returning I found Mrs. Austin looking out at the door in an anxious manner, and thinking we had been out quite long enough.... I am reading Don Quixote chiefly, and am his fervent admirer, but I am so sorry he did not place his affections on a Dulcinea of somewhat worthier stamp. In fact I think there must be a mistake about it. Don Quixote might and would serve his lady in most preposterous fashion, but I am sure he would have chosen a lady of merit. He imagined her to be such, no doubt, 229 and drew a charming picture of her occupations by the banks of the river; but in his other imaginations there was some kind of peg on which to hang the false costumes he created; windmills are big, and wave their arms like giants; sheep in the distance are somewhat like an army; a little boat on the river-side must look much the same whether enchanted or belonging to millers; but except that Dulcinea is a woman, she bears no resemblance at all to the damsel of his imagination.”

At the time of these letters the oldest son only was born to them. In September of the next year, with the birth of the second, Charles Frewen, there befell Fleeming a terrible alarm, and what proved to be a lifelong misfortune. Mrs. Jenkin was taken suddenly and alarmingly ill; Fleeming ran a matter of two miles to fetch the doctor, and, drenched with sweat as he was, returned with him at once in an open gig. On their arrival at the house, Mrs. Jenkin half unconsciously took and kept hold of her husband’s hand. By the doctor’s orders, windows and doors were set open to create a thorough draught, and the patient was on no account to be disturbed. Thus, then, did Fleeming pass the whole of that night, crouching on the floor in the draught, and not daring to move lest he should wake the sleeper. He had never been strong; energy had stood him in stead of vigour; and the result of that night’s exposure was flying rheumatism varied with settled sciatica. Sometimes it quite disabled him, sometimes it was less acute; but he was rarely free from it until his death. I knew him for many years; for more than ten we were closely intimate; I have lived with him for weeks; and during all this time he only once referred to his infirmity, and then perforce, as an excuse for some trouble he put me to, and so slightly worded that I paid no heed. This is a good measure of his courage under sufferings of which none but the untried will think lightly. And I think it worth noting how this optimist was acquainted with pain. It will seem strange only to the superficial. The disease of pessimism springs never from real troubles, which it braces men to bear, which it delights men to bear well. Nor does it readily spring
230 at all, in minds that have conceived of life as a field of ordered duties, not as a chase in which to hunt for gratifications. “We are not here to be happy, but to be good”; I wish he had mended the phrase: “We are not here to be happy, but to try to be good,” comes nearer the modesty of truth. With such old-fashioned morality it is possible to get through life, and see the worst of it, and feel some of the worst of it, and still acquiesce piously and even gladly in man’s fate. Feel some of the worst of it, I say; for some of the rest of the worst is, by this simple faith, excluded.

It was in the year 1868 that the clouds finally rose. The business in partnership with Mr. Forde began suddenly to pay well; about the same time the patents showed themselves a valuable property; and but a little after, Fleeming was appointed to the new Chair of Engineering in the University of Edinburgh. Thus, almost at once, pecuniary embarrassments passed for ever out of his life. Here is his own epilogue to the time at Claygate, and his anticipations of the future in Edinburgh: —

“… The dear old house at Claygate is not let, and the pretty garden a mass of weeds. I feel rather as if we had behaved unkindly to them. We were very happy there, but now that it is over I am conscious of the weight of anxiety as to money which I bore all the time. With you in the garden, with Austin in the coach-house, with pretty songs in the little low white room, with the moonlight in the dear room upstairs, — ah, it was perfect; but the long walk, wondering, pondering, fearing, scheming, and the dusty jolting railway, and the horrid fusty office with its endless disappointments, they are well gone. It is well enough to fight and scheme, and bustle about in the eager crowd here [in London] for a while now and then, but not for a lifetime. What I have now is just perfect. Study for winter, action for summer, lovely country for recreation, a pleasant town for talk....”

The note by Lord Kelvin, appended in 1887 to the original edition of this Memoir, is not included in the present edition. — Ed.

“Reminiscences of My Later Life,” by Mary Howitt, *Good Words*, May 1886.

CHAPTER V

NOTES OF TELEGRAPH VOYAGES, 1858-1

But it is now time to see Jenkin at his life's work. I have before me certain imperfect series of letters written, as he says, "at hazard, for one does not know at the time what is important and what is not": the earlier addressed to Miss Austin, after the betrothal; the later to Mrs. Jenkin, the young wife. I should premise that I have allowed myself certain editorial freedoms, leaving out and splicing together, much as he himself did with the Bona cable: thus edited the letters speak for themselves, and will fail to interest none who love adventure or activity. Addressed as they were to her whom he called his "dear engineering pupil," they give a picture of his work so clear that a child may understand, and so attractive that I am half afraid their publication may prove harmful, and still further crowd the ranks of a profession already overcrowded. But their most engaging quality is the picture of the writer; with his indomitable self-confidence and courage, his readiness in every pinch of circumstance or change of plan, and his ever fresh enjoyment of the whole web of human experience, nature, adventure, science, toil and rest, society and solitude. It should be borne in mind that the writer of these buoyant pages was, even while he wrote, harassed by responsibility, stinted in sleep, and often struggling with the prostration of sea-sickness. To this last enemy, which he never overcame, I have omitted, in my search after condensation, a good many references; if they were all left, such was the man's temper, they would not represent one hundredth part of what he suffered, for he was never given to complaint. 232 But indeed he had met this ugly trifle, as he met every thwart circumstance of life, with a certain pleasure of pugnacity; and suffered it not to check him, whether in the exercise of his profession or the pursuit of amusement.

I

“Birkenhead. April 18, 1858.

“Well, you should know, Mr. — — having a contract to lay down a submarine telegraph from Sardinia to Africa failed three times in the attempt. The distance from land to land is about 140 miles. On the first occasion, after proceeding some 70 miles, he had to cut the cable — the cause I forget; he tried again, same result; then picked up about 20 miles of the lost cable, spliced on a new piece, and very nearly got across that time, but ran short of cable, and, when but a few miles off Galita in very deep water, had to telegraph to London for more cable to be manufactured and sent out whilst he tried to stick to the end: for five days, I think, he lay there sending and receiving messages, but, heavy weather coming on, the cable parted and Mr. — — went home in despair — at least I should think so.

“He then applied to those eminent engineers, R. S. Newall and Co., who made and laid down a cable for him last autumn — Fleeming Jenkin (at the time in considerable mental agitation) having the honour of fitting out the *Elba* for that purpose.” [On this occasion, the *Elba* has no cable to lay; but] “is going out in the beginning of May to endeavour to fish up the cables Mr. — — lost. There are two ends at or near the shore: the third will probably not be found within 20 miles from land. One of these ends will be passed over a very big pulley or sheave at the bows, passed six times round a big barrel or drum; which will be turned round by a steam-engine on deck, and thus wind up the cable, while the *Elba* slowly steams ahead. The cable is not wound round and round the drum as your silk is wound on its reel, but on the contrary never goes round more than six times, going off at one side as it comes on at the other, and going down into the hold of the *Elba,* to be coiled along in a big coil or skein.

“I went down to Gateshead to discuss with Mr. Newall the form which this tolerably simple idea should take, and have been busy since I came here drawing, ordering, and putting up the machinery — uninterfered with, thank goodness, by any one. I own I like responsibility; it flatters one, and then, your father might say, I have more to gain than to lose. Moreover I do like this bloodless, painless combat with wood and iron, forcing the stubborn rascals to do my will, licking the clumsy cubs into an active shape, seeing the child of to-day’s thought working to-morrow in full vigour at his appointed task.

“*May 12.*

“By dint of bribing, bullying, cajoling, and going day by day to see the state of things ordered, all my work is very nearly ready now; but those who have neglected these precautions are of course disappointed. Five hundred fathoms of chain [were] ordered by — — some three weeks since, to be ready by the 10th without fail; he sends for it to-day — 150 fathoms all they can let us have by the 15th — and how the rest is to be got, who knows? He ordered a boat a month since, and yesterday we could see nothing of her but the keel and about two planks. I could multiply instances without end. At first one goes nearly mad with vexation at these things; but one finds so soon that they are the rule, that then it becomes necessary to feign a rage one does not feel. I look upon it as the natural order of things, that if I order a thing, it will not be done — if by accident it gets done, it will certainly be done wrong; the only remedy being to watch the performance at every stage.

"To-day was a grand field-day. I had steam up and tried the engine against pressure or resistance. One part of the machinery is driven by belt or strap of leather. I always had my doubts this might slip; and so it did, wildly. I had made provision for doubling it, putting on two belts instead of one. No use — off they went, slipping round and off the pulleys instead of driving the machinery. Tighten them — no use. More strength there — down with the lever — smash something, tear the belts, but get them tight — now then stand clear, on with the steam; — and the belts slip away, as if nothing held them. Men begin to look queer; the circle of quidnuncs make sage remarks. Once more — no use. I begin to know I ought to feel sheepish and beat, but somehow I feel cocky instead, I laugh and say, 'Well, I am bound to break something down' — and suddenly see. 'Oho, there's the place; get weight on there, and the belt won't slip.' With much labour, on go the belts again. 'Now then, a spar thro' there and six men's weight on; mind you're not carried away.' 'Ay, ay, sir.' But evidently no one believes in the plan. 'Hurrah, round she goes — stick to your spar. All right, shut off steam.' And the difficulty is vanquished.

"This, or such as this (not always quite so bad), occurs hour after hour, while five hundred tons of coal are rattling down into the holds and bunkers, riveters are making their infernal row all round, and riggers bend the sails and fit the rigging: — a sort of Pandemonium, it appeared to young Mrs. Newall, who was here on Monday and half choked with guano; but it suits the likes of me.

"*SS. Elba, River Mersey, May 17.*

"We are delayed in the river by some of the ship's papers not being ready. Such a scene at the dock gates. Not a sailor will join till the last moment; and then, just as the ship forges ahead through the narrow pass, beds and baggage fly on board, the men, half tipsy, clutch at the rigging, the captain swears, the women 234 scream and sob, the crowd cheer and laugh, while one or two pretty little girls stand still and cry outright, regardless of all eyes.

“These two days of comparative peace have quite set me on my legs again. I was getting worn and weary with anxiety and work. As usual I have been delighted with my shipwrights. I gave them some beer on Saturday, making a short oration. To-day when they went ashore, and I came on board, they gave three cheers, whether for me or the ship I hardly know, but I had just bid them good-bye, and the ship was out of hail; but I was startled and hardly liked to claim the compliment by acknowledging it.

“*SS. Elba, May 25.*

“My first intentions of a long journal have been fairly frustrated by sea-sickness. On Tuesday last about noon we started from the Mersey in very dirty weather, and were hardly out of the river when we met a gale from the south-west and a heavy sea, both right in our teeth; and the poor *Elba* had a sad shaking. Had I not been very sea-sick, the sight would have been exciting enough as I sat wrapped in my oilskins on the bridge; [but] in spite of all my efforts to talk, to eat, and to grin, I soon collapsed into imbecility; and I was heartily thankful towards evening to find myself in bed.

“Next morning I fancied it grew quieter, and, as I listened, heard, ‘Let go the anchor,’ whereon I concluded we had run into Holyhead Harbour, as was indeed the case. All that day we lay in Holyhead, but I could neither read nor write nor draw. The captain of another steamer which had put in came on board, and we all went for a walk on the hill; and in the evening there was an exchange of presents. We gave some tobacco, I think, and received a cat, two pounds of fresh butter, a Cumberland ham, ‘Westward Ho!’ and Thackeray’s ‘English Humourists.’ I was astonished at receiving two such fair books from the captain of a little coasting screw. Our captain said he [the captain of the screw] had plenty of money, five or six hundred a year at least. ‘What in the world makes him go rolling about in such a craft, then?’ ‘Why, I fancy he’s reckless; he’s desperate in love with that girl I mentioned, and she won’t look at him.’ Our honest, fat, old captain says this very grimly in his thick, broad voice.

“My head won’t stand much writing yet, so I will run up and take a look at the blue night sky off the coast of Portugal.

“*May 26.*

“A nice lad of some two-and-twenty, A — — by name, goes out in a nondescript capacity as part purser, part telegraph clerk, part generally useful person. A — — was a great comfort during the miseries [of the gale]; for when with a dead head wind and a heavy sea, plates, books, papers, stomachs were being rolled about in sad confusion, we generally managed to lie on our backs, and grin, and try discordant staves of the ‘Flowers of the Forest’ and the ‘Low-backed Car.’ We could sing and laugh, when we could 235 do nothing else; though A — — was ready to swear after each fit was past, that that was the first time he had felt anything, and at this moment would declare in broad Scotch that he’d never been sick at all, qualifying the oath with ‘except for a minute now and then.’ He brought a cornet-à-piston to practise on, having had three weeks’ instructions on that melodious instrument; and if you could hear the horrid sounds that come I especially at heavy rolls. When I hint he is not improving, there comes a confession: ‘I don’t feel quite right yet, you see!’ But he blows away manfully, and in self-defence I try to roar the tune louder.

“11.30 p.m.

“Long past Cape St. Vincent now. We went within about 400 yards of the cliffs and lighthouse in a calm moonlight, with porpoises springing from the sea, the men crooning long ballads as they lay idle on the forecastle, and the sails flapping uncertain on the yards. As we passed, there came a sudden breeze from land, hot and heavy-scented; and now as I write its warm rich flavour contrasts strongly with the salt air we have been breathing.

“I paced the deck with H — — , the second mate, and in the quiet night drew a confession that he was engaged to be married, and gave him a world of good advice. He is a very nice, active, little fellow, with a broad Scotch tongue and ‘dirty, little rascal’ appearance. He had a sad disappointment at starting. Having been second mate on the last voyage, when the first mate was discharged, he took charge of the *Elba* all the time she was in port, and of course looked forward to being chief mate this trip. Liddell promised him the post. He had not authority to do this; and when Newall heard of it, he appointed another man. Fancy poor H — — having told all the men and, most of all, his sweetheart! But more remains behind; for when it came to signing articles, it turned out that O — — , the new first mate, had not a certificate which allowed him to have a second mate. Then came rather an affecting scene. For H — — proposed to sign as chief (he having the necessary higher certificate) but to act as second for the lower wages. At first O — — would not give in, but offered to go as second. But our brave little H — — said, no: ‘The owners wished Mr. O — — to be chief mate, and chief mate he should be.’ So he carried the day, signed as chief and acts as second. Shakespeare and Byron are his favourite books. I walked into Byron a little, but can well understand his stirring up a rough, young sailor’s romance. I lent him ‘Westward Ho!’ from the cabin; but to my astonishment he did not care much for it; he said it smelt of the shilling railway library; perhaps I had praised it too highly. Scott is his standard for novels. I am very happy to find good taste by no means confined to gentlemen, H — — having no pretensions to that title. He is a man after my own heart.

"Then I came down to the cabin and heard young A — — 's schemes for the future. His highest picture is a commission in the Prince of Vizianagram's irregular horse. His eldest brother is 236 tutor to his Highness's children, and grand vizier, and magistrate, and on his Highness's household staff, and seems to be one of those Scotch adventurers one meets with and hears of in queer berths — raising cavalry, building palaces, and using some petty Eastern king's long purse with their long Scotch heads.

"*Off Bona, June 4.*

"I read your letter carefully, leaning back in a Maltese boat to present the smallest surface of my body to a grilling sun, and sailing from the *Elba* to Cape Hamrah, about three miles distant. How we fried and sighed! At last we reached land under Fort Geneva, and I was carried ashore pick-a-back, and plucked the first flower I saw for Annie. It was a strange scene, far more novel than I had imagined; the high, steep banks covered with rich, spicy vegetation, of which I hardly knew one plant. The dwarf palm with fan-like leaves, growing about two feet high, formed the staple of the verdure. As we brushed through them, the gummy leaves of a cistus stuck to the clothes: and with its small white flower and yellow heart stood for our English dog-rose. In place of heather, we had myrtle and lentisque with leaves somewhat similar. That large bulb with long flat leaves? Do not touch it if your hands are cut; the Arabs use it as blisters for their horses. Is that the same sort? No, take that one up; it is the bulb of a dwarf palm, each layer of the onion peels off, brown and netted, like the outside of a cocoa-nut. It is a clever plant that; from the leaves we get a vegetable horsehair; — and eat the bottom of the centre spike. All the leaves you pull have the same aromatic scent. But here a little patch of cleared ground shows old friends, who seem to cling by abused civilisation: — fine hardy thistles, one of them bright yellow, though; — honest, Scotch-looking, large daisies or gowans; — potatoes here and there, looking but sickly; and dark sturdy fig-trees, looking cool and at their ease in the burning sun.

"Here we are at Fort Genova, crowning the little point, a small old building due to my old Genoese acquaintance who fought and traded bravely once upon a time. A broken cannon of theirs forms the threshold; and through a dark, low arch we enter upon broad terraces sloping to the centre, from which rain-water may collect and run into that well. Large-breeched French troopers lounge about and are most civil; and the whole party sit down to breakfast in a little white-washed room, from the door of which the long, mountain coastline and the sparkling sea show of an impossible blue through the openings of a white-washed rampart. I try a sea-egg, one of those prickly fellows — sea-urchins, they are called sometimes; the shell is of a lovely purple, and when opened there are rays of yellow adhering to the inside; these I eat, but they are very fishy.

"We are silent and shy of one another, and soon go out to watch while turbaned, blue-breeched, bare-legged Arabs dig holes for the land telegraph posts on the following principle: one man takes a pick and bangs lazily at the hard earth; when a little is 237 loosened, his mate with a small spade lifts it on one side; and *da capo*. They have regular features, and look quite in place among the palms. Our English workmen screw the earthenware insulators on the posts, strain the wire, and order the Arabs about by the generic term of Johnny. I find W — — has nothing for me to do; and that in fact no one has anything to do. Some instruments for testing have stuck at Lyons, some at Cagliari; and nothing can be done — or, at any rate, is done. I wander about, thinking of you and staring at big, green grasshoppers — locusts, some people call them — and smelling the rich brushwood. There was nothing for a pencil to sketch, and I soon got tired of this work, though I have paid willingly much money for far less strange and lovely sights.

"*Off Cape Spartivento, June 8.*

"At two this morning we left Cagliari; at five cast anchor here. I got up and began preparing for the final trial; and shortly afterwards every one else of note on board went ashore to make experiments on the state of the cable, leaving me with the prospect of beginning to lift at 12 o'clock. I was not ready by that time; but the experiments were not concluded, and moreover the cable was found to be imbedded some four or five feet in sand, so that the boat could not bring off the end. At three, Messrs. Liddell, etc., came on board in good spirits, having found two wires good, or in such a state as permitted messages to be transmitted freely. The boat now went to grapple for the cable some way from shore, while the *Elba* towed a small lateen craft which was to take back the consul to Cagliari some distance on its way. On our return we found the boat had been unsuccessful; she was allowed to drop astern, while we grappled for the cable in the *Elba* [without more success]. The coast is a low mountain range covered with brushwood or heather — pools of water and a sandy beach at their feet. I have not yet been ashore, my hands having been very full all day.

“*June 9.*

“Grappling for the cable outside the bank had been voted too uncertain; [and the day was spent in] efforts to pull the cable off through the sand which has accumulated over it. By getting the cable tight on to the boat, and letting the swell pitch her about till it got slack, and then tightening again with blocks and pulleys, we managed to get out from the beach towards the ship at the rate of about twenty yards an hour. When they had got about 100 yards from shore, we ran in round the *Elba* to try and help them, letting go the anchor in the shallowest possible water; this was about sunset. Suddenly some one calls out he sees the cable at the bottom: there it was, sure enough, apparently wriggling about as the waves rippled. Great excitement; still greater when we find our own anchor is foul of it and it has been the means of bringing it to light. We let go a grapnel, get the cable clear of the anchor on to the grapnel — the captain in an agony lest we should drift ashore meanwhile — hand 238 the grappling line into the big boat, steam out far enough, and anchor again. A little more work and one end of the cable is up over the bows round my drum. I go to my engine and we start hauling in. All goes pretty well, but it is quite dark. Lamps are got at last, and men arranged. We go on for a quarter of a mile or so from shore and then stop at about half-past nine with orders to be up at three. Grand work at last! A number of the *Saturday Review* here: it reads so hot and feverish, so tomb-like and unhealthy, in the midst of dear Nature’s hills and sea, with good wholesome work to do. Pray that all go well to-morrow.

“*June 10.*

“Thank heaven for a most fortunate day. At three o’clock this morning, in a damp, chill mist, all hands were roused to work. With a small delay, for one or two improvements I had seen to be necessary last night, the engine started, and since that time I do not think there has been half an hour’s stoppage. A rope to splice, a block to change, a wheel to oil, an old rusted anchor to disengage from the cable which brought it up, these have been our only obstructions. Sixty, seventy, eighty, a hundred, a hundred and twenty revolutions at last, my little engine tears away. The even black rope comes straight out of the blue heaving water; passes slowly round an open-hearted, good-tempered-looking pulley, five feet diameter; aft past a vicious nipper, to bring all up should anything go wrong; through a gentle guide; on to a huge bluff drum, who wraps him round his body and says, ‘Come you must,’ as plain as drum can speak: the chattering pauls say, ‘I’ve got him, I’ve got him, he can’t get back’: whilst black cable, much slacker and easier in mind and body, is taken by a slim V-pulley and passed down into the huge hold, where half a dozen men put him comfortably to bed after his exertion in rising from his long bath. In good sooth, it is one of the strangest sights I know to see that black fellow rising up so steadily in the midst of the blue sea. We are more than half way to the place where we expect the fault; and already the one wire, supposed previously to be quite bad near the African coast, can be spoken through. I am very glad I am here, for my machines are my own children, and I look on their little failings with a parent's eye and lead them into the path of duty with gentleness and firmness. I am naturally in good spirits, but keep very quiet, for misfortunes may arise at any instant; moreover, to-morrow my paying-out apparatus will be wanted should all go well, and that will be another nervous operation. Fifteen miles are safely in; but no one knows better than I do that nothing is done till all is done.

"*June 11.*

"9 a.m. — We have reached the splice supposed to be faulty, and no fault has been found. The two men learned in electricity, L — — and W — — , squabble where the fault is.

"*Evening.* — A weary day in a hot broiling sun; no air. After 239 the experiments, L — — said the fault might be ten miles ahead; by that time we should be, according to a chart, in about a thousand fathoms of water — rather more than a mile. It was most difficult to decide whether to go on or not. I made preparations for a heavy pull, set small things to rights and went to sleep. About four in the afternoon, Mr. Liddell decided to proceed, and we are now (at seven) grinding in at the rate of a mile and three-quarters per hour, which appears a grand speed to us. If the paying-out only works well. I have just thought of a great improvement in it; I can't apply it this time, however. — The sea is of an oily calm, and a perfect fleet of brigs and ships surrounds us, their sails hardly filling in the lazy breeze. The sun sets behind the dim coast of the Isola San Pietro, the coast of Sardinia high and rugged becomes softer and softer in the distance, while to the westward still the isolated rock of Toro springs from the horizon. — It would amuse you to see how cool (in head) and jolly everybody is. A testy word now and then shows the wires are strained a little, but every one laughs and makes his little jokes as if it were all in fun: yet we are all as much in earnest as the most earnest of the earnest bastard German school or demonstrative of Frenchmen. I enjoy it very much.

"*June 12.*

"5.30 a.m. — Out of sight of land: about thirty nautical miles in the hold; the wind rising a little; experiments being made for a fault, while the engine slowly revolves to keep us hanging at the same spot: depth supposed about a mile. The machinery has behaved admirably. O that the paying-out were over! The new machinery there is but rough, meant for an experiment in shallow water, and here we are in a mile of water.

"6.30. — I have made my calculations and find the new paying-out gear cannot possibly answer at this depth, some portion would give way. Luckily, I have brought the old things with me and am getting them rigged up as fast as may be. Bad news from the cable. Number four has given in some portion of the last ten miles: the fault in number three is still at the bottom of the sea; number two is now the only good wire; and the hold is getting in such a mess, through keeping bad bits out and cutting for splicing and testing, that there will be great risk in paying out. The cable is somewhat strained in its ascent from one mile below us; what it will be when we get to two miles is a problem we may have to determine.

"9 p.m. — A most provoking, unsatisfactory day. We have done nothing. The wind and sea have both risen. Too little notice has been given to the telegraphists who accompany this expedition; they had to leave all their instruments at Lyons in order to arrive at Bona in time; our tests are therefore of the roughest, and no one really knows where the faults are. Mr. L— — in the morning lost much time; then he told us, after we had been inactive for about eight hours, that the fault in number three was within six miles; and at six o'clock in the evening, when all was ready for a start to 240 pick up these six miles, he comes and says there must be a fault about thirty miles from Bona! By this time it was too late to begin paying out to-day, and we must lie here moored in a thousand fathoms till light to-morrow morning. The ship pitches a good deal, but the wind is going down.

"*June 13, Sunday.*

"The wind has not gone down however. It now (at 10.30) blows a pretty stiff gale, the sea has also risen; and the *Elba's* bows rise and fall about 9 feet. We make twelve pitches to the minute, and the poor cable must feel very sea-sick by this time. We are quite unable to do anything, and continue riding at anchor in one thousand fathoms, the engines going constantly so as to keep the ship's bows up to the cable, which by this means hangs nearly vertical and sustains no strain but that caused by its own weight and the pitching of the vessel. We were all up at four, but the weather entirely forbade work for to-day, so some went to bed and most lay down, making up our leeway, as we nautically term our loss of sleep. I must say Liddell is a fine fellow and keeps his patience and temper wonderfully; and yet how he does fret and fume about trifles at home! This wind has blown now for thirty-six hours, and yet we have telegrams from Bona to say the sea there is as calm as a mirror. It makes one laugh to remember one is still tied to the shore. Click, click, click, the pecker is at work; I wonder what Herr P — — says to Herr L — — ; tests, tests, tests, nothing more. This will be a very anxious day.

"*June 14.*

"Another day of fatal inaction.

"*June 15.*

"9.30. — The wind has gone down a deal; but even now there are doubts whether we shall start to-day. When shall I get back to you?

"9 p.m. — Four miles from land. Our run has been successful and eventless. Now the work is nearly over I feel a little out of spirits — why, I should be puzzled to say — mere wantonness, or reaction perhaps after suspense.

"*June 16.*

"Up this morning at three, coupled my self-acting gear to the break, and had the satisfaction of seeing it pay out the last four miles in very good style. With one or two little improvements, I hope to make it a capital thing. The end has just gone ashore in two boats, three out of four wires good. Thus ends our first expedition. By some odd chance a *Times* of June the 7th has found its way on board through the agency of a wretched old peasant who watches the end of the line here. A long account of breakages in the Atlantic trial trip. To-night we grapple for the 241 heavy cable, eight tons to the mile. I long to have a tug at him; he may puzzle me, and though misfortunes or rather difficulties are a bore at the time, life when working with cables is tame without them.

"2 p.m. — Hurrah, he is hooked, the big fellow, almost at the first cast. He hangs under our bows, looking so huge and imposing that I could find it in my heart to be afraid of him.

"*June 17.*

"We went to a little bay called Chia, where a fresh-water stream falls into the sea, and took in water. This is rather a long operation, so I went a walk up the valley with Mr. Liddell. The coast here consists of rocky mountains 800 to 1,000 feet high, covered with shrubs of a brilliant green. On landing, our first amusement was watching the hundreds of large fish who lazily swam in shoals about the river; the big canes on the further side hold numberless tortoises, we are told, but see none, for just now they prefer taking a siesta. A little further on, and what is this with large pink flowers in such abundance? — the oleander in full flower. At first I fear to pluck them, thinking they must be cultivated and valuable; but soon the banks show a long line of thick tall shrubs, one mass of glorious pink and green. Set these in a little valley, framed by mountains whose rocks gleam out blue and purple colours such as pre-Raphaelites only dare attempt, shining out hard and weirdlike amongst the clumps of castor-oil plants, cistus, arbor vitæ, and many other evergreens, whose names, alas! I know not; the cistus is brown now, the rest all deep or brilliant green. Large herds of cattle browse on the baked deposit at the foot of these large crags. One or two half-savage herdsmen in sheepskin kilts, etc., ask for cigars; partridges whirr up on either side of us; pigeons coo and nightingales sing amongst the blooming oleander. We get six sheep, and many fowls too, from the priest of the small village; and then run back to Spartivento and make preparations for the morning.

"*June 18.*

"The big cable is stubborn, and will not behave like his smaller brother. The gear employed to take him off the drum is not strong enough; he gets slack on the drum and plays the mischief. Luckily for my own conscience, the gear I had wanted was negatived by Mr. Newall. Mr. Liddell does not exactly blame me, but he says we might have had a silver pulley cheaper than the cost of this delay. He has telegraphed for more men to Cagliari, to try to pull the cable off the drum into the hold, by hand. I look as comfortable as I can, but feel as if people were blaming me. I am trying my best to get something rigged which may help us; I wanted a little difficulty, and feel much better. — The short length we have picked up was covered at places with beautiful sprays of coral, twisted and twined with shells of those small, fairy animals we saw in the aquarium at home; poor little things, they died at once, with their little bells and delicate bright tints."*12 o'clock.* — Hurrah, victory! for the present anyhow. Whilst in our first dejection, I thought I saw a place where a flat roller would remedy the whole misfortune; but a flat roller at Cape Spartivento, hard, easily unshipped, running freely! There was a grooved pulley used for the paying-out machinery with a spindle wheel, which might suit me. I filled him up with tarry spunyarn, nailed sheet copper round him, bent some parts in the fire; and we are paying-in without more trouble now. You would think some one would praise me; no — no more praise than blame before; perhaps now they think better of me, though.

"10 p.m. — We have gone on very comfortably for nearly six miles. An hour and a half was spent washing down; for along with many coloured polypi, from corals, shells, and insects, the big cable brings up much mud and rust, and makes a fishy smell by no means pleasant:

the bottom seems to teem with life. — But now we are startled by a most unpleasant, grinding noise; which appeared at first to come from the large low pulley, but when the engines stopped, the noise continued; and we now imagine it is something slipping down the cable, and the pulley but acts as sounding-board to the big fiddle. Whether it is only an anchor or one of the two other cables, we know not. We hope it is not the cable just laid down.

“*June 19.*

“10 a.m. — All our alarm groundless, it would appear: the odd noise ceased after a time, and there was no mark sufficiently strong on the large cable to warrant the suspicion that we had cut another line through. I stopped up on the look-out till three in the morning, which made 23 hours between sleep and sleep. One goes dozing about, though, most of the day, for it is only when something goes wrong that one has to look alive. Hour after hour I stand on the forecastle-head, picking off little specimens of polypi and coral, or lie on the saloon deck reading back numbers of the *Times* — till something hitches, and then all is hurly-burly once more. There are awnings all along the ship, and a most ancient, fish-like smell beneath.

“*1 o’clock.* — Suddenly a great strain in only 95 fathoms of water — belts surging and general dismay; grapnels being thrown out in the hope of finding what holds the cable. — Should it prove the young cable! We are apparently crossing its path — not the working one, but the lost child; Mr. Liddell *would* start the big one first, though it was laid first: he wanted to see the job done, and meant to leave us to the small one unaided by his presence.

“3.30. — Grapnel caught something, lost it again; it left its marks on the prongs. Started lifting gear again; and after hauling in some 50 fathoms — grunt, grunt, grunt — we hear the other cable slipping down our big one, playing the self-same tune we heard last night — louder, however.

“10 p.m. — The pull on the deck engines became harder and harder. I got steam up in a boiler on deck, and another little engine starts hauling at the grapnel. I wonder if there ever was 243 such a scene of confusion; Mr. Liddell and W — — and the captain all giving orders contradictory, etc., on the forecastle; D — — , the foreman of our men, the mates, etc., following the example of our superiors; the ship’s engine and boilers below, a 50-horse engine on deck, a boiler 14 feet long on deck beside it, a little steam-winch tearing round; a dozen Italians (20 have come to relieve our hands, the men we telegraphed for to Cagliari) hauling at the rope; wire-men, sailors, in the crevices left by ropes and machinery; everything that could swear swearing — I found myself swearing like a trooper at last. We got the unknown difficulty within ten fathoms of the surface; but then the forecastle got frightened that, if it was the small cable which we had got hold of, we should certainly break it by continuing the tremendous and increasing strain. So at last Mr. Liddell decided to stop; cut the big cable, buoying its end; go back to our pleasant watering-place at Chia, take more water and start lifting the small cable. The end of the large one has even now regained its sandy bed; and three buoys — one to grapnel foul of the supposed small cable, two to the big cable — are dipping about on the surface. One more — a flag-buoy — will soon follow, and then straight for shore.

“*June 20.*

“It is an ill-wind, etc. I have an unexpected opportunity of forwarding this engineering letter; for the craft which brought out our Italian sailors must return to Cagliari to-night, as the little cable will take us nearly to Galita, and the Italian skipper could hardly find his way from thence. To-day — Sunday — not much rest. Mr. Liddell is at Spartivento telegraphing. We are at Chia, and shall shortly go to help our boat’s crew in getting the small cable on board. We dropped them some time since in order that they might dig it out of the sand as far as possible.

“*June 21.*

“Yesterday — Sunday as it was — all hands were kept at work all day, coaling, watering, and making a futile attempt to pull the cable from the shore on board through the sand. This attempt was rather silly after the experience we had gained at Cape Spartivento. This morning we grappled, hooked the cable at once, and have made an excellent start. Though I have called this the small cable, it is much larger than the Bona one. — Here comes a break-down, and a bad one.

“*June 22.*

“We got over it however; but it is a warning to me that my future difficulties will arise from parts wearing out. Yesterday the cable was often a lovely sight, coming out of the water one large incrustation of delicate, net-like corals and long white curling shells. No portion of the dirty black wires was visible; instead we had a garland of soft pink with little scarlet sprays and white enamel intermixed. All was fragile, however, and could hardly be 244 secured in safety; and inexorable iron crushed the tender leaves to atoms. — This morning at the end of my watch, about 4 o’clock, we came to the buoys, proving our anticipations right concerning the crossing of the cables. I went to bed for four hours, and on getting up, found a sad mess. A tangle of the six-wire cable hung to the grapnel, which had been left buoyed, and the small cable had parted and is lost for the present. Our hauling of the other day must have done the mischief.

“*June 23.*

“We contrived to get the two ends of the large cable and to pick the short end up. The long end, leading us seaward, was next put round the drum, and a mile of it picked up; but then, fearing another tangle, the end was cut and buoyed, and we returned to grapple for the three-wire cable. All this is very tiresome for me. The buoying and dredging are managed entirely by W — — , who has had much experience in this sort of thing; so I have not enough to do, and get very homesick. At noon the wind freshened and the sea rose so high that we had to run for land, and are once more this evening anchored at Chia.

“*June 24.*

“The whole day spent in dredging without success. This operation consists in allowing the ship to drift slowly across the line where you expect the cable to be, while at the end of a long rope, fast either to the bow or stern, a grapnel drags along the ground. This grapnel is a small anchor, made like four pot-hooks tied back to back. When the rope gets taut, the ship is stopped and the grapnel hauled up to the surface in the hopes of finding the cable on its prongs. — I am much discontented with myself for idly lounging about and reading ‘Westward Ho!’ for the second time, instead of taking to electricity or picking up nautical information. I am uncommonly idle. The sea is not quite so rough, but the weather is squally and the rain comes in frequent gusts.

“*June 25.*

“To-day about 1 o’clock we hooked the three-wire cable, buoyed the long sea end, and picked up the short [or shore] end. Now it is dark, and we must wait for morning before lifting the buoy we lowered to-day and proceeding seawards. — The depth of water here is about 600 feet, the height of a respectable English hill; our fishing line was about a quarter of a mile long. It blows pretty fresh, and there is a great deal of sea.

“*26th.*

“This morning it came on to blow so heavily that it was impossible to take up our buoy. The *Elba* recommenced rolling in true Baltic style, and towards noon we ran for land.

“*27th, Sunday.*

“This morning was a beautiful calm. We reached the buoys at about

4.30 and commenced picking up at 6.30. Shortly a new cause of anxiety arose. Kinks came up in great quantities, about thirty in the hour. To have a true conception of a kink, you must see one; it is a loop drawn tight, all the wires get twisted and the gutta-percha inside pushed out. These much diminish the value of the cable, as they must all be cut out, the gutta-percha made good, and the cable spliced. They arise from the cable having been badly laid down, so that it forms folds and tails at the bottom of the sea. These kinks have another disadvantage: they weaken the cable very much. — At about six o'clock [p.m.] we had some twelve miles lifted, when I went to the bows; the kinks were exceedingly tight and were giving way in a most alarming manner. I got a cage rigged up to prevent the end (if it broke) from hurting any one, and sat down on the bowsprit, thinking I should describe kinks to Annie: — suddenly I saw a great many coils and kinks altogether at the surface. I jumped to the gutta-percha pipe, by blowing through which the signal is given to stop the engine. I blow, but the engine does not stop: again — no answer; the coils and kinks jam in the bows and I rush aft shouting Stop! Too late: the cable had parted and must lie in peace at the bottom. Some one had pulled the gutta-percha tube across a bare part of the steam pipe and melted it. It had been used hundreds of times in the last few days and gave no symptoms of failing. I believe the cable must have gone at any rate; however, since it went in my watch, and since I might have secured the tubing more strongly, I feel rather sad....

"*June 28.*

"Since I could not go to Annie I took down Shakespeare, and by the time I had finished *Antony and Cleopatra*, read the second half of *Troilus* and got some way in *Coriolanus*, I felt it was childish to regret the accident had happened in my watch, and moreover I felt myself not much to blame in the tubing matter — it had been torn down, it had not fallen down; so I went to bed, and slept without fretting, and woke this morning in the same good mood — for which thank you and our friend Shakespeare. I am happy to say Mr. Liddell said the loss of the cable did not much matter; though this would have been no consolation had I felt myself to blame. — This morning we have grappled for and found another length of small cable which Mr. — — dropped in 100 fathoms of water. If this also gets full of kinks, we shall probably have to cut it after 10 miles or so, or, more probably still, it will part of its own free will or weight.

"10 p.m. — This second length of three-wire cable soon got into the same condition as its fellow — *i.e.* came up twenty kinks an hour — and after seven miles were in, parted on the pulley over the bows at one of the said kinks: during my watch again, but this time no earthly power could have saved it. I had taken all manner 246 of precautions to prevent the end doing any damage when the smash came, for come I knew it must. We now return to the six-wire cable. As I sat watching the cable to-night, large phosphorescent globes kept rolling from it and fading in the black water.

“*29th.*

“To-day we returned to the buoy we had left at the end of the six-wire cable, and after much trouble from a series of tangles, got a fair start at noon. You will easily believe a tangle of iron rope inch and a half diameter is not easy to unravel, especially with a ton or so hanging to the ends. It is now eight o’clock, and we have about six and a half miles safe: it becomes very exciting, however, for the kinks are coming fast and furious.

“*July 2.*

“Twenty-eight miles safe in the hold. The ship is now so deep that the men are to be turned out of their aft hold, and the remainder coiled there; so the good *Elba’s* nose need not burrow too far into the waves. There can only be about 10 or 12 miles more, but these weigh 80 or 100 tons.

“*July 5.*

“Our first mate was much hurt in securing a buoy on the evening of the 2nd. As interpreter [with the Italians] I am useful in all these cases; but for no fortune would I be a doctor to witness these scenes continually. Pain is a terrible thing. — Our work is done: the whole of the six-wire cable has been recovered; only a small part of the three-wire, but that wire was bad and, owing to its twisted state, the value small. We may therefore be said to have been very successful.”

II

I have given this cruise nearly in full. From the notes, unhappily imperfect, of two others, I will take only specimens; for in all there are features of similarity, and it is possible to have too much even of submarine telegraphy and the romance of engineering. And first from the cruise of 1859 in the Greek Islands and to Alexandria, take a few traits, incidents, and pictures.

"*May 10, 1859.*

"We had a fair wind, and we did very well, seeing a little bit of Cerigo or Cythera, and lots of turtle-doves wandering about 247 over the sea and perching, tired and timid, in the rigging of our little craft. Then Falconera, Antimilo and Milo, topped with huge white clouds, barren, deserted, rising bold and mysterious from the blue chafing sea; — Argentiera, Siphano, Scapho, Paros, Antiparos, and late at night Syra itself. 'Adam Bede' in one hand, a sketch-book in the other, lying on rugs under an awning, I enjoyed a very pleasant day.

"*May 14.*

"Syra is semi-Eastern. The pavement, huge shapeless blocks sloping to a central gutter; from this bare two-storied houses, sometimes plaster many-coloured, sometimes rough-hewn marble, rise, dirty and ill-finished, to straight, plain, flat roofs; shops guiltless of windows, with signs in Greek letters; dogs, Greeks in blue, baggy, Zouave breeches and a fez, a few narghilehs and a sprinkling of the ordinary continental shopboys. — In the evening I tried one more walk in Syra with A — — , but in vain endeavoured to amuse myself or to spend money; the first effort resulting in singing 'Doodah' to a passing Greek or two, the second in spending, no, in making A — — spend, threepence on coffee for three.

"*May 16.*

"On coming on deck, I found we were at anchor in Canea bay, and saw one of the most lovely sights man could witness. Far on either hand stretch bold mountain capes, Spada and Maleka, tender in colour, bold in outline; rich sunny levels lie beneath them, framed by the azure sea. Right in front, a dark brown fortress girdles white mosques and minarets. Rich and green, our mountain capes here join to form a setting for the town, in whose dark walls — still darker — open a dozen high-arched caves in which the huge Venetian galleys used to lie in wait. High above all, higher and higher yet, up into the firmament, range after range of blue and snow-capped mountains. I was bewildered and amazed, having heard nothing of this great beauty. The town when entered is quite Eastern. The streets are formed of open stalls under the first story, in which squat tailors, cooks, sherbet-vendors and the like, busy at their work or smoking narghilehs. Cloths stretched from house to house keep out the sun. Mules rattle through the crowd; curs yelp between your legs; negroes are as hideous and bright clothed as usual; grave Turks with long chibouques continue to march solemnly without breaking them; a little Arab in one dirty rag pokes fun at two splendid little Turks with brilliant fezzes; wiry mountaineers in dirty, full, white kilts, shouldering long guns and one hand on their pistols, stalk untamed past a dozen Turkish soldiers, who look sheepish and brutal in worn cloth jacket and cotton trousers. A headless, wingless lion of St. Mark still stands upon a gate, and has left the mark of his strong clutch. Of ancient times when Crete was Crete not a trace remains; save perhaps in the full, well-cut nostril and firm tread of that mountaineer, and I suspect that even his sires were Albanians, mere outer barbarians.

"*May 17.*

"I spent the day at the little station where the cable was landed, which has apparently been first a Venetian monastery and then a Turkish mosque. At any rate the big dome is very cool, and the little ones hold [our electric] batteries capitally. A handsome young Bashi-bazouk guards it, and a still handsomer mountaineer is the servant; so I draw them and the monastery and the hill, till I'm black in the face with heat, and come on board to hear the Canea cable is still bad.

"*May 23.*

"We arrived in the morning at the east end of Candia, and had a glorious scramble over the mountains, which seem built of adamant. Time has worn away the softer portions of the rock, only leaving sharp jagged edges of steel. Sea-eagles soaring above our heads; old tanks, ruins and desolation at our feet. The ancient Arsinoë stood here; a few blocks of marble with the cross attest the presence of Venetian Christians; but now — the desolation of desolations. Mr. Liddell and I separated from the rest, and when we had found a sure bay for the cable, had a tremendous lively scramble back to the boat. These are the bits of our life which I enjoy, which have some poetry, some grandeur in them.

"*May 29* (?).

"Yesterday we ran round to the new harbour [of Alexandria], landed the shore-end of the cable close to Cleopatra's bath, and made a very satisfactory start about one in the afternoon. We had scarcely gone 200 yards when I noticed that the cable ceased to run out, and I wondered why the ship had stopped. People ran aft to tell me not to put such a strain on the cable; I answered indignantly that there was no strain; and suddenly it broke on every one in the ship at once that we were aground. Here was a nice mess. A violent scirocco blew from the land; making one's skin feel as if it belonged to some one else and didn't fit, making the horizon dim and yellow with fine sand, oppressing every sense and raising the thermometer 20 degrees in an hour, but making calm water round us, which enabled the ship to lie for the time in safety. The wind might change at any moment, since the scirocco was only accidental; and at the first wave from seaward bump would go the poor ship, and there would [might] be an end of our voyage. The captain, without waiting to sound, began to make an effort to put the ship over what was supposed to be a sandbank; but by the time soundings were made this was found to be impossible, and he had only been jamming the poor *Elba* faster on a rock. Now every effort was made to get her astern, an anchor taken out, a rope brought to a winch I had for the cable, and the engines backed; but all in vain. A small Turkish Government steamer, which is to be our consort, came to our assistance, but of course very slowly, and much time was occupied before we could get a hawser to her. I could do no good after having 249 made a chart of the soundings round the ship, and went at last on to the bridge to sketch the scene. But at that moment the strain from the winch and a jerk from the Turkish steamer got off the boat, after we had been some hours aground. The carpenter reported that she had made only two inches of water in one compartment; the cable was still uninjured astern, and our spirits rose; when — will you believe it? — after going a short distance astern, the pilot ran us once more fast aground on what seemed to me nearly the same spot. The very same scene was gone through as on the first occasion, and dark came on whilst the wind shifted, and we were still aground. Dinner was served up, but poor Mr. Liddell could eat very little; and bump, bump, grind, grind, went the ship fifteen or sixteen times as we sat at dinner. The slight sea, however, did enable us to bump off. This morning we appear not to have suffered in any way; but a sea is rolling in, which a few hours ago would have settled the poor old *Elba*.

"*June* — .

"The Alexandria cable has again failed; after paying out two-thirds of the distance successfully, an unlucky touch in deep water snapped the line. Luckily the accident occurred in Mr. Liddell's watch. Though personally it may not really concern me, the accident weighs like a personal misfortune. Still, I am glad I was present: a failure is probably more instructive than a success; and this experience may enable us to avoid misfortune in still greater undertakings.

“*June* — .

“We left Syra the morning after our arrival on Saturday the 4th. This we did (first) because we were in a hurry to do something, and (second) because, coming from Alexandria, we had four days’ quarantine to perform. We were all mustered along the side while the doctor counted us; the letters were popped into a little tin box and taken away to be smoked; the guardians put on board to see that we held no communication with the shore — without them we should still have had four more days’ quarantine; and with twelve Greek sailors besides, we started merrily enough picking up the Canea cable.... To our utter dismay, the yarn covering began to come up quite decayed, and the cable, which when laid should have borne half a ton, was now in danger of snapping with a tenth part of that strain. We went as slow as possible in fear of a break at every instant. My watch was from eight to twelve in the morning, and during that time we had barely secured three miles of cable. Once it broke inside the ship, but I seized hold of it in time — the weight being hardly anything — and the line for the nonce was saved. Regular nooses were then planted inboard with men to draw them taut, should the cable break inboard. A — — , who should have relieved me, was unwell, so I had to continue my look-out; and about one o’clock the line again parted, but was again caught in the last noose, with about 250 four inches to spare. Five minutes afterwards it again parted, and was yet once more caught. Mr. Liddell (whom I had called) could stand this no longer; so we buoyed the line and ran into a bay in Siphano, waiting for calm weather, though I was by no means of opinion that the slight sea and wind had been the cause of our failures. — All next day (Monday) we lay off Siphano, amusing ourselves on shore with fowling-pieces and navy revolvers. I need not say we killed nothing; and luckily we did not wound any of ourselves. A guardiano accompanied us, his functions being limited to preventing actual contact with the natives, for they might come as near, and talk as much as they pleased. These isles of Greece are sad, interesting places. They are not really barren all over, but they are quite destitute of verdure; and tufts of thyme, wild mastic or mint, though they sound well, are not nearly so pretty as grass. Many little churches, glittering white, dot the islands; most of them, I believe, abandoned during the whole year, with the exception of one day sacred to their patron saint. The villages are mean, but the inhabitants do not look wretched, and the men are good sailors. There is something in this Greek race yet; they will become a powerful Levantine nation in the course of time. — What a lovely moonlight evening that was! the barren island cutting the clear sky with fantastic outline, marble cliffs on either hand fairly gleaming over the calm sea. Next day, the wind still continuing, I proposed a boating excursion, and decoyed A — — , L — — , and S — — into accompanying me. We took the little gig, and sailed away merrily enough round a point to a beautiful white bay, flanked with two glistening little churches, fronted by beautiful distant islands; when suddenly, to my horror, I discovered the *Elba* steaming full speed out from the island. Of course we steered after her; but the wind that instant ceased, and we were left in a dead calm. There was nothing for it but to unship the mast, get out the oars and pull. The ship was nearly certain to stop at the buoy; and I wanted to learn how to take an oar, so here was a chance with a vengeance! L — — steered, and we three pulled — a broiling pull it was about half way across to Palikandro; still we did come in, pulling an uncommon good stroke, and I had learned to hang on my oar. L — — had pressed me to let him take my place; but though I was very tired at the end of the first quarter of an hour, and then every successive half hour, I would not give in. I nearly paid dear for my obstinacy, however; for in the evening I had alternate fits of shivering and burning."

III

The next extracts, and I am sorry to say the last, are from Fleeming's letters of 1860, when he was back at Bona and Spartivento, and for the first time at the head of 251 an expedition. Unhappily these letters are not only the last, but the series is quite imperfect; and this is the more to be lamented as he had now begun to use a pen more skilfully, and in the following notes there is at times a touch of real distinction in the manner.

"*Cagliari, October 5, 1860.*

"All Tuesday I spent examining what was on board the *Elba*, and trying to start the repairs of the Spartivento land line, which has been entirely neglected — and no wonder, for no one has been paid for three months, no, not even the poor guards who have to keep themselves, their horses and their families, on their pay. Wednesday morning, I started for Spartivento, and got there in time to try a good many experiments. Spartivento looks more wild and savage than ever, but is not without a strange deadly beauty: the hills covered with bushes of a metallic green with coppery patches of soil in between; the valleys filled with dry salt mud and a little stagnant water; where that very morning the deer had drunk, where herons, curlews, and other fowl abound, and where, alas! malaria is breeding with this rain. (No fear for those who do not sleep on shore.) A little iron hut had been placed there since 1858; but the windows had been carried off, the door broken down, the roof pierced all over. In it we sat to make experiments; and how it recalled Birkenhead! There was Thomson, there was my testing-board, the strings of gutta-percha; Harry P — — even battering with the batteries; but where was my darling Annie? Whilst I sat, feet in sand, with Harry alone inside the hut — mats, coats, and wood to darken the window — the others visited the murderous old friar, who is of the order of Scaloppi, and for whom I brought a letter from his superior, ordering him to pay us attention; but he was away from home, gone to Cagliari in a boat with the produce of the farm belonging to his convent. Then they visited the tower of Chia, but could not get in because the door is thirty feet off the ground; so they came back and pitched a magnificent tent which I brought from the *Bahiana* a long time ago — and where they will live (if I mistake not) in preference to the friar's or the owl- and bat-haunted tower. MM. T — — and S — — will be left there: T — — an intelligent, hard-working Frenchman with whom I am well pleased; he can speak English and Italian well, and has been two years at Genoa. S — — is a French German with a face like an ancient Gaul, who has been sergeant-major in the French line, and who is, I see, a great, big, muscular *fainéant*. We left the tent pitched and some stores in charge of a guide, and ran back to Cagliari.

"Certainly being at the head of things is pleasanter than being subordinate. We all agree very well; and I have made the testing office into a kind of private room, where I can come and write to you undisturbed, surrounded by my dear, bright brass things which 252 all of them remind me of our nights at Birkenhead. Then I can work here too, and try lots of experiments; you know how I like that! and now and then I read — Shakespeare principally. Thank you so much for making me bring him: I think I must get a pocket edition of *Hamlet* and *Henry the Fifth*, so as never to be without them.

"*Cagliari, October 7.*

"[The town was full?] ... of red-shirted English Garibaldini. A very fine-looking set of fellows they are too: the officers rather raffish, but with medals, Crimean and Indian; the men a very sturdy set, with many lads of good birth I should say. They still wait their consort the *Emperor*, and will, I fear, be too late to do anything. I meant to have called on them, but they are all gone into barracks some way from the town, and I have been much too busy to go far.

"The view from the ramparts was very strange and beautiful. Cagliari rises on a very steep rock, at the mouth of a wide plain circled by large hills and three-quarters filled with lagoons; it looks, therefore, like an old island citadel. Large heaps of salt mark the border between the sea and the lagoons; thousands of flamingoes whiten the centre of the huge shallow marsh; hawks hover and scream among the trees under the high mouldering battlements. — A little lower down, the band played. Men and ladies bowed and pranced, the costumes posed, church bells tinkled, processions processed, the sun set behind thick clouds capping the hills; I pondered on you and enjoyed it all.

"Decidedly I prefer being master to being man: boats at all hours, stewards flying for marmalade, captain inquiring when ship is to sail, clerks to copy my writing, the boat to steer when we go out — I have run her nose on several times; decidedly, I begin to feel quite a little king. Confound the cable, though! I shall never be able to repair it.

"*Bona, October 14.*

"We left Cagliari at 4.30 on the 9th, and soon got to Spartivento. I repeated some of my experiments, but found Thomson, who was to have been my grand stand-by, would not work on that day in the wretched little hut. Even if the windows and door had been put in, the wind, which was very high, made the lamp flicker about and blew it out; so I sent on board and got old sails, and fairly wrapped the hut up in them; and then we were as snug as could be, and I left the hut in glorious condition, with a nice little stove in it. The tent which should have been forthcoming from the curé’s for the guards had gone to Cagliari; but I found another, [a] green, Turkish tent, in the *Elba*, and soon had him up. The square tent left on the last occasion was standing all right and tight in spite of wind and rain. We landed provisions, two beds, plates, knives, forks, candles, cooking utensils, and were ready for a start at 6 p.m.; but the wind meanwhile had come on to blow at such a 253 rate that I thought better of it, and we stopped. T — — and S — — slept ashore, however, to see how they liked it; at least they tried to sleep, for S — — , the ancient sergeant-major, had a toothache, and T — — thought the tent was coming down every minute. Next morning they could only complain of sand and a leaky coffee-pot, so I leave them with a good conscience. The little encampment looked quite picturesque: the green round tent, the square white tent, and the hut all wrapped up in sails, on a sandhill, looking on the sea and masking those confounded marshes at the back. One would have thought the Cagliaritans were in a conspiracy to frighten the two poor fellows, who (I believe) will be safe enough if they do not go into the marshes after nightfall. S — — brought a little dog to amuse them, — such a jolly, ugly little cur without a tail, but full of fun; he will be better than quinine.

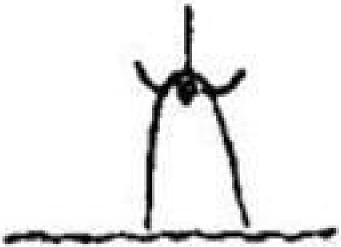
“The wind drove a barque, which had anchored near us for shelter, out to sea. We started, however, at 2 p.m., and had a quick passage, but a very rough one, getting to Bona by daylight [on the 11th]. Such a place as this is for getting anything done! The health boat went away from us at 7.30 with W — — on board; and we heard nothing of them till 9.30, when W — — came back with two fat Frenchmen, who are to look on on the part of the Government. They are exactly alike: only one has four bands and the other three round his cap, and so I know them. Then I sent a boat round to Fort Gênois [Fort Geneva of 1858], where the cable is landed, with all sorts of things and directions, whilst I went ashore to see about coals and a room at the fort. We hunted people in the little square, in their shops and offices, but only found them in cafés. One amiable gentleman wasn’t up at 9.30, was out at 10, and as soon as he came back the servant said he would go to bed and not get up till 3: he came however to find us at a café, and said that, on the contrary, two days in the week he did not do so! Then my two fat friends must have their breakfast after their ‘something’ at a café; and all the shops shut from 10 to 2; and the post does not open till 12; and there was a road to Fort Gênois, only a bridge had been carried away, etc. At last I got off, and we rowed round to Fort Gênois, where my men had put up a capital gipsy tent with sails, and there was my big board and Thomson's number 5 in great glory. I soon came to the conclusion there was a break. Two of my faithful Cagliaritans slept all night in the little tent, to guard it and my precious instruments; and the sea, which was rather rough, silenced my Frenchmen.

"Next day I went on with my experiments, whilst a boat grappled for the cable a little way from shore, and buoyed it where the *Elba* could get hold. I brought all back to the *Elba*, tried my machinery, and was all ready for a start next morning. But the wretched coal had not come yet; Government permission from Algiers to be got; lighters, men, baskets, and I know not what forms to be got or got through — and everybody asleep! Coals or no coals, I was determined to start next morning; and start we did at four in the morning, picked up the buoy with our deck-engine, popped the cable across a boat, tested the wires to make 254 sure the fault was not behind us, and started picking up at 11. Everything worked admirably, and about 2 p.m. in came the fault. There is no doubt the cable was broken by coral-fishers; twice they have had it up to their own knowledge.

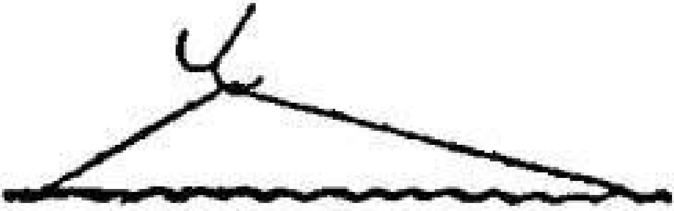
"Many men have been ashore to-day and have come back tipsy, and the whole ship is in a state of quarrel from top to bottom, and they will gossip just within my hearing. And we have had moreover three French gentlemen and a French lady to dinner, and I had to act host and try to manage the mixtures to their taste. The good-natured little Frenchwoman was most amusing; when I asked her if she would have some apple tart — '*Mon Dieu,*' with heroic resignation, '*je veux bien*'; or a little *plombodding* — '*Mais ce que vous voudrez, Monsieur!*'

"*SS. Elba, somewhere not far from Bona, Oct. 19.*

"Yesterday [after three previous days of useless grappling] was destined to be very eventful. We began dredging at daybreak, and hooked at once every time in rocks; but by capital luck, just as we were deciding it was no use to continue in that place, we hooked the cable: up it came, was tested, and lo! another complete break, a quarter of a mile off. I was amazed at my own tranquillity under these disappointments, but I was not really half so fussy as about getting a cab. Well, there was nothing for it but grappling again, and, as you may imagine, we were getting about six miles from shore. But the water did not deepen rapidly; we seemed to be on the crest of a kind of submarine mountain in prolongation of Cape de Gonde, and pretty havoc we must have made with the crags. What rocks we did hook! No sooner was the grapnel down than the ship was anchored; and then came such a business: ship's engines going, deck-engine thundering, belt slipping, fear of breaking ropes: actually breaking grapnels. It was always an hour or more before we could get the grapnel down again. At last we had to give up the place, though we knew we were close to the cable, and go farther to sea in much deeper water; to my great fear, as I knew the cable was much eaten away and would stand but little strain. Well, we hooked the cable first dredge this time, and pulled it slowly and gently to the top, with much trepidation. Was it the cable? was there any weight on? it was evidently too small. Imagine my dismay when the cable did come up, but hanging loosely, thus:



instead of taut, thus:



showing certain signs of a break close by. For a moment I felt provoked, as I thought 'Here we are, in deep water, and the cable will not stand lifting!' I tested at once, and by the very first wire found it had broken towards shore and was good towards sea. This was of course very pleasant: but from that time to this, though the wires test very well, not a signal has come from Spartivento. I got the cable into a boat, and a gutta-percha line from the ship to the boat, and we signalled away at a great rate — but no signs of life. The tests however make me pretty sure one wire at least is good; so I determined to lay down cable from where we were to the shore, and go to Spartivento to see what had happened there. I fear my men are ill. The night was lovely, perfectly calm; so we lay close to the boat and signals were continually sent, but with no result. This morning I had the cable down to Fort Gênois in style; and now we are picking up odds and ends of cable between the different breaks, and getting our buoys on board, etc. To-morrow I expect to leave for Spartivento."

IV

And now I am quite at an end of journal-keeping; diaries and diary letters being things of youth which Fleeming had at length outgrown. But one or two more fragments from his correspondence may be taken, and first this brief sketch of the laying of the Norderney cable; mainly interesting as showing under what defects of strength and in what extremities of pain this cheerful man must at times continue to go about his work.

“I slept on board 29th September, having arranged everything to start by daybreak from where we lay in the roads: but at daybreak a heavy mist hung over us so that nothing of land or water could be seen. At midday it lifted suddenly, and away we went with perfect weather, but could not find the buoys Forde left, that evening. I saw the captain was not strong in navigation, and took matters next day much more into my own hands, and before nine o’clock found the buoys (the weather had been so fine we had anchored in the open sea near Texel). It took us till the evening to reach the buoys, get the cable on board, test the first half, speak to Lowestoft, make the splice, and start. H — — had not finished his work at Norderney, so I was alone on board for Reuter. Moreover the buoys to guide us in our course were not placed, and the captain had very vague ideas about keeping his course; so I had to do a good deal, and only lay down as I was for two hours in the night. I managed to run the course perfectly. Everything went well, and we found Norderney just where we wanted it next afternoon, and if 256 the shore-end had been laid, could have finished there and then, October 1st. But when we got to Norderney, we found the *Caroline* with shore-end lying apparently aground, and could not understand her signals; so we had to anchor suddenly, and I went off in a small boat with the captain to the *Caroline*. It was cold by this time, and my arm was rather stiff, and I was tired; I hauled myself up on board the *Caroline* by a rope, and found H — — and two men on board. All the rest were trying to get the shore-end on shore, but had failed, and apparently had stuck on shore, and the waves were getting up. We had anchored in the right place, and next morning we hoped the shore-end would be laid, so we had only to go back. It was of course still colder, and quite night. I went to bed and hoped to sleep, but, alas, the rheumatism got into the joints and caused me terrible pain, so that I could not sleep. I bore it as long as I could in order to disturb no one, for all were tired; but at last I could bear it no longer, and I managed to wake the steward, and got a mustard poultice, which took the pain from the shoulder; but then the elbow got very bad, and I had to call the second steward and get a second poultice, and then it was daylight, and I felt very ill and feverish. The sea was now rather rough — too rough rather for small boats, but luckily a sort of thing called a scoot came out, and we got on board her with some trouble, and got on shore after a good tossing about, which made us all sea-sick. The cable sent from the *Caroline* was just 60 yards too short, and did not reach the shore, so although the *Caroline* did make the splice late that night, we could neither test nor speak. Reuter was at Norderney, and I had to do the best I could, which was not much, and went to bed early; I thought I should never sleep again, but in sheer desperation got up in the middle of the night and gulped a lot of raw whisky, and slept at last. But not long. A Mr. F — — washed my face and hands and dressed me; and we hauled the cable out of the sea, and got it joined to the telegraph station, and on October 3rd telegraphed to Lowestoft first, and then to London. Miss Clara Volkman, a niece of Mr. Reuter's, sent the first message to Mrs. Reuter, who was waiting (Varley used Miss Clara's hand as a kind of key), and I sent one of the first messages to Odden. I thought a message addressed to him would not frighten you, and that he would enjoy a message through papa's cable. I hope he did. They were all very merry, but I had been so lowered by pain that I could not enjoy myself in spite of the success."

V

Of the 1869 cruise in the *Great Eastern* I give what I am able; only sorry it is no more, for the sake of the ship itself, already almost a legend even to the generation that saw it launched.

"*June 17, 1869.* — Here are the names of our staff, in whom I expect you to be interested, as future *Great Eastern* stories may be full of them; Theophilus Smith, a man of Latimer Clark's; Leslie C. Hill, my prizeman at University College; Lord Sackville Cecil; King, one of the Thomsonian Kings; Laws, goes for Willoughby Smith, who will also be on board; Varley, Clark, and Sir James Anderson, make up the sum of all you know anything of. A Captain Halpin commands the big ship. There are four smaller vessels. The *Wm. Cory*, which laid the Norderney cable, has already gone to St. Pierre to lay the shore-ends. The *Hawk* and *Chiltern* have gone to Brest to lay shore-ends. The *Hawk* and *Scanderia* go with us across the Atlantic, and we shall at St. Pierre be transhipped into one or the other.

"*June 18, somewhere in London.* — The shore-end is laid, as you may have seen, and we are all under pressing orders to march, so we start from London to-night at 5.10.

"*June 20, off Ushant.* — I am getting quite fond of the big ship. Yesterday morning in the quiet sunlight she turned so slowly and lazily in the great harbour at Portland, and by and by slipped out past the long pier with so little stir, that I could hardly believe we were really off. No men drunk, no women crying, no singing or swearing, no confusion or bustle on deck — nobody apparently aware that they had anything to do. The look of the thing was that the ship had been spoken to civilly, and had kindly undertaken to do everything that was necessary without any further interference. I have a nice cabin, with plenty of room for my legs in my berth, and have slept two nights like a top. Then we have the ladies' cabin set apart as an engineer's office, and I think this decidedly the nicest place in the ship: 35 ft. × 20 ft. broad — four tables, three great mirrors, plenty of air, and no heat from the funnels, which spoil the great dining-room. I saw a whole library of books on the walls when here last, and this made me less anxious to provide light literature; but alas, to-day I find that they are every one Bibles or Prayer-books. Now one cannot read many hundred Bibles.... As for the motion of the ship, it is not very much, but 'twill suffice. Thomson shook hands and wished me well. I *do* like Thomson.... Tell Austin that the *Great Eastern* has six masts and four funnels. When I get back I will make a little model of her for all the chicks, and pay out cotton reels.... Here we are at 4.20 at Brest. We leave probably to-morrow morning.

“*July 12, Great Eastern.* — Here as I write we run our last course for the buoy at the St. Pierre shore-end. It blows and lightens, and our good ship rolls, and buoys are hard to find; but we must soon now finish our work, and then this letter will start for home.... Yesterday we were mournfully groping our way through the wet grey fog, not at all sure where we were, with one consort lost and the other faintly answering the roar of our great whistle through the mist. As to the ship which was to meet us, and pioneer us up the deep channel, we did not know if we should come within twenty miles of her; when suddenly up went the fog, 258 out came the sun, and there, straight ahead, was the *Wm. Cory*, our pioneer, and a little dancing boat, the *Gulnare*, sending signals of welcome with many-coloured flags. Since then we have been steaming in a grand procession; but now at 2 a.m. the fog has fallen, and the great roaring whistle calls up the distant answering notes all around us. Shall we or shall we not find the buoy?

“*July 13.* — All yesterday we lay in the damp dripping fog, with whistles all round and guns firing so that we might not bump up against one another. This little delay has let us get our reports into tolerable order. We are now, at seven o’clock, getting the cable end again, with the main cable buoy close to us.”

A telegram of July 20. — ”I have received your four welcome letters. The Americans are charming people.”

VI

And here, to make an end, are a few random bits about the cruise to Pernambuco: —

“*Plymouth, June 21, 1873.* — I have been down to the seashore and smelt the salt sea, and like it; and I have seen the *Hooper* pointing her great bow seaward, while light smoke rises from her funnels, telling that the fires are being lighted; and sorry as I am to be without you, something inside me answers to the call to be off and doing.

“*Lalla Rookh, Plymouth, June 22.* — We have been a little cruise in the yacht over to the Eddystone lighthouse, and my sea-legs seem very well on. Strange how alike all these starts are — first on shore, steaming hot days with a smell of bone-dust and tar and salt water; then the little puffing, panting steam-launch, that bustles out across a port with green woody sides, little yachts sliding about, men-of-war training-ships, and then a great big black hulk of a thing with a mass of smaller vessels sticking to it like parasites; and that is one’s home being coaled. Then comes the champagne lunch, where every one says all that is polite to every one else, and then the uncertainty when to start. So far as we know *now*, we are to start to-morrow morning at daybreak; letters that come later are to be sent to Pernambuco by first mail.... My father has sent me the heartiest sort of Jack Tar’s cheer.

“*SS. Hooper, off Funchal, June 29.* — Here we are, off Madeira at seven o’clock in the morning. Thomson has been sounding with his special toy ever since half-past three (1087 fathoms of water). I have been watching the day break, and long jagged islands start into being out of the dull night. We are still some miles from land; but the sea is calmer than Loch Eil often was, and the big *Hooper* rests very contentedly after a pleasant voyage and favourable breezes. I have not been able to do any real work except the testing [of the cable], for, though not sea-sick, I get a little giddy when I try to 259 think on board.... The ducks have just had their daily souse and are quacking and gabbling in a mighty way outside the door of the captain’s deck cabin, where I write. The cocks are crowing, and new-laid eggs are said to be found in the coops. Four mild oxen have been untethered and allowed to walk along the broad iron decks — a whole drove of sheep seem quite content while licking big lumps of bay salt. Two exceedingly impertinent goats lead the cook a perfect life of misery. They steal round the galley and *will* nibble the carrots or turnips if his back is turned for one minute; and then he throws something at them and misses them; and they scuttle off laughing impudently, and flick one ear at him from a safe distance. This is the most impudent gesture

I ever saw. Winking is nothing to it. The ear normally hangs down behind; the goat turns sideways to her enemy — by a little knowing cock of the head flicks one ear over one eye, and squints from behind it, for half a minute — tosses her head back, skips a pace or two further off, and repeats the manœuvre. The cook is very fat, and cannot run after that goat much.

"*Pernambuco, Aug. 1.* — We landed here yesterday, all well and cable sound, after a good passage.... I am on familiar terms with cocoa-nuts, mangoes, and bread-fruit trees, but I think I like the negresses best of anything I have seen. In turbans and loose sea-green robes, with beautiful black-brown complexions and a stately carriage, they really are a satisfaction to my eye. The weather has been windy and rainy; the *Hooper* has to lie about a mile from the town, in an open roadstead, with the whole swell of the Atlantic driving straight on shore. The little steam-launch gives all who go in her a good ducking, as she bobs about on the big rollers; and my old gymnastic practice stands me in good stead on boarding and leaving her. We clamber down a rope-ladder hanging from the high stern, and then, taking a rope in one hand, swing into the launch at the moment when she can contrive to steam up under us — bobbing about like an apple thrown into a tub all the while. The President of the province and his suite tried to come off to a State luncheon on board on Sunday; but the launch, being rather heavily laden, behaved worse than usual, and some green seas stove in the President's hat and made him wetter than he had probably ever been in his life; so after one or two rollers, he turned back; and indeed he was wise to do so, for I don't see how he could have got on board.... Being fully convinced that the world will not continue to go round unless I pay it personal attention, I must run away to my work."

CHAPTER VI

1869-1

Edinburgh — Colleagues — *Farrago vitæ* — I. The family circle — Fleeming and his sons — Highland life — The cruise of the steam-launch — Summer in Styria — Rustic manners — II. The drama — Private theatricals — III. Sanitary associations — The phonograph — IV. Fleeming's acquaintance with a student — His late maturity of mind — Religion and morality — His love of heroism — Taste in literature — V. His talk — His late popularity — Letter from M. Trélat.

The remaining external incidents of Fleeming's life, pleasures, honours, fresh interests, new friends, are not such as will bear to be told at any length or in the temporal order. And it is now time to lay narration by, and to look at the man he was, and the life he lived, more largely.

Edinburgh, which was thenceforth to be his home, is a metropolitan small town; where college professors and the lawyers of the Parliament House give the tone, and persons of leisure, attracted by educational advantages, make up much of the bulk of society. Not, therefore, an unlettered place, yet not pedantic, Edinburgh will compare favourably with much larger cities. A hard and disputatious element has been commented on by strangers: it would not touch Fleeming, who was himself regarded, even in this metropolis of disputation, as a thorny table-mate. To golf unhappily he did not take, and golf is a cardinal virtue in the city of the winds. Nor did he become an archer of the Queen's Body Guard, which is the Chiltern Hundreds of the distasted golfer. He did not even frequent the Evening Club, where his colleague 261 Tait (in my day) was so punctual and so genial. So that in some ways he stood outside of the lighter and kindlier life of his new home. I should not like to say that he was generally popular; but there, as elsewhere, those who knew him well enough to love him, loved him well. And he, upon his side, liked a place where a dinner-party was not of necessity unintellectual, and where men stood up to him in argument.

The presence of his old classmate, Tait, was one of his early attractions to the Chair; and now that Fleeming is gone again, Tait still remains, ruling and really teaching his great classes. Sir Robert Christison was an old friend of his mother's; Sir Alexander Grant, Kelland, and Sellar were new acquaintances, and highly valued; and these too, all but the last, have been taken from their friends and labours. Death has been busy in the Senatus. I will speak elsewhere of Fleeming's demeanour to his students; and it will be enough to add here that his relations with his colleagues in general were pleasant to himself.

Edinburgh, then, with its society, its University work, its delightful scenery and its skating in the winter, was thenceforth his base of operations. But he shot meanwhile erratic in many directions: twice to America, as we have seen, on telegraph voyages; continually to London on business; often to Paris; year after year to the Highlands to shoot, to fish, to learn reels and Gaelic, to make the acquaintance and fall in love with the character of Highlanders; and once to Styria, to hunt chamois and dance with peasant maidens. All the while he was pursuing the course of his electrical studies, making fresh inventions, taking up the phonograph, filled with theories of graphic representation; reading, writing, publishing, founding sanitary associations, interested in technical education, investigating the laws of metre, drawing, acting, 262 directing private theatricals, going a long way to see an actor — a long way to see a picture; in the very bubble of the tideway of contemporary interests. And all the while he was busied about his father and mother, his wife, and in particular his sons; anxiously watching, anxiously guiding these, and plunging with his whole fund of youthfulness into their sports and interests. And all the while he was himself maturing — not in character or body, for these remained young — but in the stocked mind, in the tolerant knowledge of life and man, in pious acceptance of the universe. Here is a farrago for a chapter; here is a world of interests and activities, human, artistic, social, scientific, at each of which he sprang with impetuous pleasure, on each of which he squandered energy, the arrow drawn to the head, the whole intensity of his spirit bent, for the moment, on the momentary purpose. It was this that lent such unusual interest to his society, so that no friend of his can forget that figure of Fleeming coming charged with some new discovery: it is this that makes his character so difficult to represent. Our fathers, upon some difficult theme, would invoke the Muse; I can but appeal to the imagination of the reader. When I dwell upon some one thing, he must bear in mind it was only one of a score; that the unweariable brain was teeming at the very time with other thoughts; that the good heart had left no kind duty forgotten.

I

In Edinburgh, for a considerable time, Fleeming's family, to three generations, was united: Mr. and Mrs. Austin at Hailes, Captain and Mrs. Jenkin in the suburb of Merchiston, Fleeming himself in the city. It is not every family that could risk with safety such close inter-domestic dealings; but in this also Fleeming was particularly 263 favoured. Even the two extremes, Mr. Austin and the Captain, drew together. It is pleasant to find that each of the old gentlemen set a high value on the good looks of the other, doubtless also on his own; and a fine picture they made as they walked the green terrace at Hailes, conversing by the hour. What they talked of is still a mystery to those who knew them; but Mr. Austin always declared that on these occasions he learned much. To both of these families of elders due service was paid of attention; to both, Fleeming's easy circumstances had brought joy; and the eyes of all were on the grandchildren. In Fleeming's scheme of duties, those of the family stood first; a man was first of all a child, nor did he cease to be so, but only took on added obligations, when he became in turn a father. The care of his parents was always a first thought with him, and their gratification his delight. And the care of his sons, as it was always a grave subject of study with him, and an affair never neglected, so it brought him a thousand satisfactions. "Hard work they are," as he once wrote, "but what fit work!" And again: "O, it's a cold house where a dog is the only representative of a child!" Not that dogs were despised; we shall drop across the name of Jack, the harum-scarum Irish terrier, ere we have done; his own dog Plato went up with him daily to his lectures, and still (like other friends) feels the loss and looks visibly for the reappearance of his master; and Martin the cat Fleeming has himself immortalised, to the delight of Mr. Swinburne, in the columns of the *Spectator*. Indeed, there was nothing in which men take interest, in which he took not some; and yet always most in the strong human bonds, ancient as the race and woven of delights and duties.

He was even an anxious father; perhaps that is the part where optimism is hardest tested. He was eager for his sons; eager for their health, whether of mind or body; eager for their education; in that, I should have 264 thought, too eager. But he kept a pleasant face upon all things, believed in play, loved it himself, shared boyishly in theirs, and knew how to put a face of entertainment upon business and a spirit of education into entertainment. If he was to test the progress of the three boys, this advertisement would appear in their little manuscript paper: — "Notice: The Professor of Engineering in the University of Edinburgh intends at the close of the scholastic year to hold examinations in the following subjects: (1) For boys in the fourth class of the Academy — Geometry and Algebra; (2) For boys at Mr. Henderson's school — Dictation and Recitation; (3) For boys taught exclusively by their mothers — Arithmetic and Reading." Prizes were given; but what prize would be so conciliatory as this boyish little joke? It may read thin here; it would smack racily in the playroom. Whenever his sons "started a new fad" (as one of them writes to me) they "had only to tell him about it, and he was at once interested, and keen to help." He would discourage them in nothing unless it was hopelessly too hard for them; only, if there was any principle of science involved, they must understand the principle; and whatever was attempted, that was to be done thoroughly. If it was but play, if it was but a puppet-show they were to build, he set them the example of being no sluggard in play. When Frewen, the second son, embarked on the ambitious design to make an engine for a toy steamboat, Fleeming made him begin with a proper drawing — doubtless to the disgust of the young engineer; but once that foundation laid, helped in the work with unflagging gusto, "tinkering away," for hours, and assisted at the final trial "in the big bath" with no less excitement than the boy. "He would take any amount of trouble to help us," writes my correspondent. "We never felt an affair was complete till we had called him to see, and he would come at any time, in the middle of any work." There was indeed one recognised play-hour, immediately after the despatch of the day's 265 letters; and the boys were to be seen waiting on the stairs until the mail should be ready and the fun could begin. But at no other time did this busy man suffer his work to interfere with that first duty to his children; and there is a pleasant tale of the inventive Master Frewen, engaged at the time upon a toy crane, bringing to the study where his father sat at work a half-wound reel that formed some part of his design, and observing, "Papa, you might finiss windin' this for me; I am so very busy to-day."

I put together here a few brief extracts from Fleeming's letters, none very important in itself, but all together building up a pleasant picture of the father with his sons.

"*Jan. 15th, 1875.* — Frewen contemplates suspending soap-bubbles by silk threads for experimental purposes. I don't think he will manage that. Bernard" [the youngest] "volunteered to blow the bubbles with enthusiasm."

"*Jan. 17th.* — I am learning a great deal of electrostatics in consequence of the perpetual cross-examination to which I am subjected. I long for you on many grounds, but one is that I may not be obliged to deliver a running lecture on abstract points of science, subject to cross-examination by two acute students. Bernie does not cross-examine much; but if any one gets discomfited, he laughs a sort of little silver-whistle giggle, which is trying to the unhappy blunderer."

"*May 9th.* — Frewen is deep in parachutes. I beg him not to drop from the top landing in one of his own making."

"*June 6th, 1876.* — Frewen's crank axle is a failure just at present — but he bears up."

"*June 14th.* — The boys enjoy their riding. It gets them whole funds of adventures. One of their caps falling off is matter for delightful reminiscences; and when a horse breaks his step, the occurrence becomes a rear, a shy, or a plunge as they talk it over. Austin, with quiet confidence, speaks of the greater pleasure in riding a spirited horse, even if he does give a little trouble. It is the stolid brute that he dislikes. (N.B. — You can still see six inches between him and the saddle when his pony trots.) I listen and sympathise and throw out no hint that their achievements are not really great."

"*June 18th.* — Bernard is much impressed by the fact that I can be useful to Frewen about the steamboat" [which the latter irrepressible inventor was making]. "He says quite with awe, 'He would not have got on nearly so well if you had not helped him.'"

"*June 27th.* — I do not see what I could do without Austin. He talks so pleasantly, and is so truly good all through.""*July 7th.* — My chief difficulty with Austin is to get him measured for a pair of trousers. Hitherto I have failed, but I keep a stout heart and mean to succeed. Frewen the observer, in describing the paces of two horses, says, 'Polly takes twenty-seven steps to get round the school. I couldn't count Sophy, but she takes more than a hundred.'"

"*Feb. 18th, 1877.* — We all feel very lonely without you. Frewen had to come up and sit in my room for company last night, and I actually kissed him, a thing that has not occurred for years. Jack, poor fellow, bears it as well as he can, and has taken the opportunity of having a fester on his foot, so he is lame, and has it bathed, and this occupies his thoughts a good deal."

"*Feb. 19th.* — As to Mill, Austin has not got the list yet. I think it will prejudice him very much against Mill — but that is not my affair. Education of that kind!... I would as soon cram my boys with food, and boast of the pounds they had eaten, as cram them with literature."

But if Fleeming was an anxious father, he did not suffer his anxiety to prevent the boys from any manly or even dangerous pursuit. Whatever it might occur to them to try, he would carefully show them how to do it, explain the risks, and then either share the danger himself or, if that were not possible, stand aside and wait the event with that unhappy courage of the looker-on. He was a good swimmer, and taught them to swim. He thoroughly loved all manly exercises; and during their holidays, and principally in the Highlands, helped and encouraged them to excel in as many as possible: to shoot, to fish, to walk, to pull an oar, to hand, reef and steer, and to run a steam-launch. In all of these, and in all parts of Highland life, he shared delightedly. He was well on to forty when he took once more to shooting, he was forty-three when he killed his first salmon, but no boy could have more single-mindedly rejoiced in these pursuits. His growing love for the Highland character, perhaps also a sense of the difficulty of the task, led him to take up at forty-one the study of Gaelic; in which he made some shadow of progress, but not much: the fastnesses of that elusive speech retaining to the last their independence. At the house of his friend Mrs. Blackburn, who plays the part of a Highland lady as to the manner 267 born, he learned the delightful custom of kitchen dances, which became the rule at his own house, and brought him into yet nearer contact with his neighbours. And thus, at forty-two, he began to learn the reel; a study to which he brought his usual smiling earnestness; and the steps, diagrammatically represented by his own hand, are before me as I write.

It was in 1879 that a new feature was added to the Highland life: a steam-launch, called the *Purgle*, the Styrian corruption of Walpurga, after a friend to be hereafter mentioned. “The steam-launch goes,” Fleeming wrote. “I wish you had been present to describe two scenes of which she has been the occasion already: one during which the population of Ullapool, to a baby, was harnessed to her hurrahing — and the other in which the same population sat with its legs over a little pier, watching Frewen and Bernie getting up steam for the first time.” The *Purgle* was got with educational intent; and it served its purpose so well, and the boys knew their business so practically, that when the summer was at an end, Fleeming, Mrs. Jenkin, Frewen the engineer, Bernard the stoker, and Kenneth Robertson, a Highland seaman, set forth in her to make the passage south. The first morning they got from Loch Broom into Gruinard Bay, where they lunched upon an island; but the wind blowing up in the afternoon, with sheets of rain, it was found impossible to beat to sea; and very much in the situation of castaways upon an unknown coast, the party landed at the mouth of Gruinard river. A shooting-lodge was spied among the trees; there Fleeming went; and though the master, Mr. Murray, was from home, though the two Jenkin boys were of course as black as colliers, and all the castaways so wetted through that, as they stood in the passage, pools formed about their feet and ran before them into the house, yet Mrs. Murray kindly entertained them for the night. On the morrow, however, visitors were to arrive; there would be no room and, in so out-of-the-way a spot, most 268 probably no food for the crew of the *Purgle*; and on the morrow about noon, with the bay white with spindrift and the wind so strong that one could scarcely stand against it, they got up steam and skulked under the land as far as Sanda Bay. Here they crept into a seaside cave, and cooked some food; but the weather now freshening to a gale, it was plain they must moor the launch where she was, and find their way overland to some place of shelter. Even to get their baggage from on board was no light business; for the dingy was blown so far to leeward every trip, that they must carry her back by hand along the beach. But this once managed, and a cart procured in the neighbourhood, they were able to spend the night in a pot-house at Ault Bea. Next day, the sea was unapproachable; but the next they had a pleasant passage to Poolewe, hugging the cliffs, the falling swell bursting close by them in the gullies, and the black scarts that sat like ornaments on the top of every stack and pinnacle, looking down into the *Purgle* as she passed. The climate of Scotland had not done with them yet: for three days they lay storm-stayed in Poolewe, and when they put to sea on the morning of the fourth, the sailors prayed them for God's sake not to attempt the passage. Their setting out was indeed merely tentative; but presently they had gone too far to return, and found themselves committed to double Rhu Reay with a foul wind and a cross sea. From half-past eleven in the morning until half-past five at night, they were in immediate and unceasing danger. Upon the least mishap, the *Purgle* must either have been swamped by the seas or bulged upon the cliffs of that rude headland. Fleeming and Robertson took turns baling and steering; Mrs. Jenkin, so violent was the commotion of the boat, held on with both hands; Frewen, by Robertson's direction, ran the engine, slacking and pressing her to meet the seas; and Bernard, only twelve years old, deadly sea-sick, and continually thrown against the boiler, so that he was found next day to be covered with burns, 269 yet kept an even fire. It was a very thankful party that sat down that evening to meat in the hotel at Gairloch. And perhaps, although the thing was new in the family, no one was much surprised when Fleeming said grace over that meal. Thenceforward he continued to observe the form, so that there was kept alive in his house a grateful memory of peril and deliverance. But there was nothing of the muff in Fleeming; he thought it a good thing to escape death, but a becoming and a healthful thing to run the risk of it; and what is rarer, that which he thought for himself, he thought for his family also. In spite of the terrors of Rhu Reay, the cruise was persevered in, and brought to an end under happier conditions.

One year, instead of the Highlands, Alt-Aussee, in the Steiermark, was chosen for the holidays; and the place, the people, and the life delighted Fleeming. He worked hard at German, which he had much forgotten since he was a boy; and, what is highly characteristic, equally hard at the *patois,* in which he learned to excel. He won a prize at a Schützen-fest; and though he hunted chamois without much success, brought down more interesting game in the shape of the Styrian peasants, and in particular of his gillie, Joseph. This Joseph was much of a character; and his appreciations of Fleeming have a fine note of their own. The bringing up of the boys he deigned to approve of: "*fast so gut wie ein Bauer,*" was his trenchant criticism. The attention and courtly respect with which Fleeming surrounded his wife was something of a puzzle to the philosophic gillie; he announced in the village that Mrs. Jenkin — *die silberne Frau,* as the folk had prettily named her from some silver ornaments — was a "*geborene Gräfin*" who had married beneath her; and when Fleeming explained what he called the English theory (though indeed it was quite his own) of married relations, Joseph, admiring but unconvinced, avowed it was "*gar schön.*" Joseph's cousin, Walpurga Moser, to 270 an orchestra of clarionet and zither, taught the family the country dances, the Steierisch and the Ländler, and gained their hearts during the lessons. Her sister Loys, too, who was up at the Alp with the cattle, came down to church on Sundays, made acquaintance with the Jenkins, and must have them up to see the sunrise from her house upon the Loser, where they had supper and all slept in the loft among the hay. The Mosers were not lost sight of; Walpurga still corresponds with Mrs. Jenkin, and it was a late pleasure of Fleeming's to choose and despatch a wedding present for his little mountain friend. This visit was brought to an end by a ball in the big inn parlour; the refreshments chosen, the list of guests drawn up, by Joseph; the best music of the place in attendance; and hosts and guests in their best clothes. The ball was opened by Mrs. Jenkin dancing Steierisch with a lordly Bauer, in grey and silver and with a plumed hat; and Fleeming followed with Walpurga Moser.

There ran a principle through all these holiday pleasures. In Styria, as in the Highlands, the same course was followed: Fleeming threw himself as fully as he could into the life and occupations of the native people, studying everywhere their dances and their language, and conforming, always with pleasure, to their rustic etiquette. Just as the ball at Alt-Aussee was designed for the taste of Joseph, the parting feast at Attadale was ordered in every particular to the taste of Murdoch, the keeper. Fleeming was not one of the common, so-called gentlemen, who take the tricks of their own coterie to be eternal principles of taste. He was aware, on the other hand, that rustic people dwelling in their own places follow ancient rules with fastidious precision, and are easily shocked and embarrassed by what (if they used the word) they would have to call the vulgarity of visitors from town. And he, who was so cavalier with men of his own class, was sedulous to shield the more tender feelings of the peasant; he, who could be so trying in a drawing-room, was even 271 punctilious in the cottage. It was in all respects a happy virtue. It renewed his life, during these holidays, in all particulars. It often entertained him with the discovery of strange survivals; as when, by the orders of Murdoch, Mrs. Jenkin must publicly taste of every dish before it was set before her guests. And thus to throw himself into a fresh life and a new school of manners was a grateful exercise of Fleeming's mimetic instinct; and to the pleasures of the open air, of hardships supported, of dexterities improved and displayed, and of plain and elegant society, added a spice of drama.

II

Fleeming was all his life a lover of the play and all that belonged to it. Dramatic literature he knew fully. He was one of the not very numerous people who can read a play: a knack, the fruit of much knowledge and some imagination, comparable to that of reading score. Few men better understood the artificial principles on which a play is good or bad; few more unaffectedly enjoyed a piece of any merit of construction. His own play was conceived with a double design; for he had long been filled with his theory of the true story of Griselda; used to gird at Father Chaucer for his misconception; and was, perhaps first of all, moved by the desire to do justice to the Marquis of Saluces, and perhaps only in the second place by the wish to treat a story (as he phrased it) like a sum in arithmetic. I do not think he quite succeeded; but I must own myself no fit judge. Fleeming and I were teacher and taught as to the principles, disputatious rivals in the practice, of dramatic writing.

Acting had always, ever since Rachel and the "*Marseillaise*," a particular power on him. "If I do not cry at the play," he used to say, "I want to have my money back." Even from a poor play with poor actors he could 272 draw pleasure. "Glacometti's *Elisabetta*," I find him writing, "fetched the house vastly. Poor Queen Elizabeth! And yet it was a little good." And again, after a night of Salvini: "I do not suppose any one with feelings could sit out *Othello* if Iago and Desdemona were acted." Salvini was, in his view, the greatest actor he had seen. We were all indeed moved and bettered by the visit of that wonderful man. — "I declare I feel as if I could pray!" cried one of us, on the return from *Hamlet*. — "That is prayer," said Fleeming. W. B. Hole and I, in a fine enthusiasm of gratitude, determined to draw up an address to Salvini, did so, and carried it to Fleeming; and I shall never forget with what coldness he heard and deleted the eloquence of our draft, nor with what spirit (our vanities once properly mortified) he threw himself into the business of collecting signatures. It was his part, on the ground of his Italian, to see and arrange with the actor; it was mine to write in the *Academy* a notice of the first performance of *Macbeth*. Fleeming opened the paper, read so far, and flung it on the floor. "No," he cried, "that won't do. You were thinking of yourself, not of Salvini!" The criticism was shrewd as usual, but it was unfair through ignorance; it was not of myself that I was thinking, but of the difficulties of my trade, which I had not well mastered. Another unalloyed dramatic pleasure, which Fleeming and I shared the year of the Paris Exposition, was the *Marquis de Villemer*, that blameless play, performed by Madeleine Brohan, Delaunay, Worms, and Broisat — an actress, in such parts at least, to whom I have never seen full justice rendered. He had his fill of weeping on that occasion; and when the piece was at an end, in front of a café, in the mild, midnight air, we had our fill of talk about the art of acting.

But what gave the stage so strong a hold on Fleeming was an inheritance from Norwich, from Edward Barren, and from Enfield of the "Speaker." The theatre was one of Edward Barren's elegant hobbies; he read plays, as 273 became Enfield's son-in-law, with a good discretion; he wrote plays for his family, in which Eliza Barron used to shine in the chief parts; and later in life, after the Norwich home was broken up, his little granddaughter would sit behind him in a great arm-chair, and be introduced, with his stately elocution, to the world of dramatic literature. From this, in a direct line, we can deduce the charades at Claygate; and after money came, in the Edinburgh days, that private theatre which took up so much of Fleeming's energy and thought. The company — Mr. and Mrs. R. O. Carter of Colwall, W. B. Hole, Captain Charles Douglas, Mr. Kunz, Mr. Burnett, Professor Lewis Campbell, Mr. Charles Baxter, and many more — made a charming society for themselves, and gave pleasure to their audience. Mr. Carter in Sir Toby Belch it would be hard to beat. Mr. Hole in broad farce, or as the herald in the *Trachiniæ*, showed true stage talent. As for Mrs. Jenkin, it was for her the rest of us existed and were forgiven; her powers were an endless spring of pride and pleasure to her husband; he spent hours hearing and schooling her in private; and when it came to the performance, though there was perhaps no one in the audience more critical, none was more moved than Fleeming. The rest of us did not aspire so high. There were always five performances and weeks of busy rehearsal; and whether we came to sit and stifle as the prompter, to be the dumb (or rather the inarticulate) recipients of Carter's dog whip in the *Taming of the Shrew*, or, having earned our spurs, to lose one more illusion in a leading part, we were always sure at least of a long and an exciting holiday in mirthful company.

In this laborious annual diversion Fleeming's part was large. I never thought him an actor, but he was something of a mimic, which stood him in stead. Thus he had seen Got in Poirier; and his own Poirier, when he came to play it, breathed meritoriously of the model. The last part I saw him play was Triplet, and at first I 274 thought it promised well. But alas! the boys went for a holiday, missed a train, and were not heard of at home till late at night. Poor Fleeming, the man who never hesitated to give his sons a chisel or a gun, or to send them abroad in a canoe or on a horse, toiled all day at his rehearsal, growing hourly paler, Triplet growing hourly less meritorious. And though the return of the children, none the worse for their little adventure, brought the colour back into his face, it could not restore him to his part. I remember finding him seated on the stairs in some rare moment of quiet during the subsequent performances. “Hullo, Jenkin,” said I, “you look down in the mouth.” “My dear boy,” said he, “haven’t you heard me? I have not had one decent intonation from beginning to end.”

But indeed he never supposed himself an actor; took a part, when he took any, merely for convenience, as one takes a hand at whist; and found his true service and pleasure in the more congenial business of the manager. Augier, Racine, Shakespeare, Aristophanes in Hookham Frere’s translation, Sophocles and Æschylus in Lewis Campbell’s, such were some of the authors whom he introduced to his public. In putting these upon the stage, he found a thousand exercises for his ingenuity and taste, a thousand problems arising which he delighted to study, a thousand opportunities to make those infinitesimal improvements which are so much in art and for the artist. Our first Greek play had been costumed by the professional costumier, with unforgettable results of comicality and indecorum; the second, the *Trachiniæ* of Sophocles, he took in hand himself, and a delightful task he made of it. His study was then in antiquarian books, where he found confusion, and on statues and bas-reliefs, where he at last found clearness; after an hour or so at the British Museum he was able to master “the chitôn, sleeves and all”; and before the time was ripe he had a theory of Greek tailoring at his fingers’ ends, and had all the costumes 275 made under his eye as a Greek tailor would have made them. “The Greeks made the best plays and the best statues, and were the best architects; of course, they were the best tailors too,” said he; and was never weary, when he could find a tolerant listener, of dwelling on the simplicity, the economy, the elegance both of means and effect, which made their system so delightful.

But there is another side to the stage-manager’s employment. The discipline of acting is detestable; the failures and triumphs of that business appeal too directly to the vanity; and even in the course of a careful amateur performance such as ours, much of the smaller side of man will be displayed. Fleeming, among conflicting vanities and levities, played his part to my admiration. He had his own view; he might be wrong; but the performances (he would remind us) were after all his, and he must decide. He was, in this as in all other things, an iron taskmaster, sparing not himself nor others. If you were going to do it at all, he would see that it was done as well as you were able. I have known him to keep two culprits (and one of these his wife) repeating the same action and the same two or three words for a whole weary afternoon. And yet he gained and retained warm feelings from far the most of those who fell under his domination, and particularly (it is pleasant to remember) from the girls. After the slipshod training and the incomplete accomplishments of a girls' school, there was something at first annoying, at last exciting and bracing, in this high standard of accomplishment and perseverance.

III

It did not matter why he entered upon any study or employment, whether for amusement, like the Greek tailoring or the Highland reels, whether from a desire to serve the public, as with his sanitary work, or in the view of 276 benefiting poorer men, as with his labours for technical education, he “pitched into it” (as he would have said himself) with the same headlong zest. I give in the Appendix a letter from Colonel Fergusson, which tells fully the nature of the sanitary work and of Fleeming’s part and success in it. It will be enough to say here that it was a scheme of protection against the blundering of builders and the dishonesty of plumbers. Started with an eye rather to the houses of the rich, Fleeming hoped his Sanitary Associations would soon extend their sphere of usefulness, and improve the dwellings of the poor. In this hope he was disappointed; but in all other ways the scheme exceedingly prospered, associations sprang up and continue to spring up in many quarters, and wherever tried they have been found of use.

Here, then, was a serious employment; it has proved highly useful to mankind; and it was begun, besides, in a mood of bitterness, under the shock of what Fleeming would so sensitively feel — the death of a whole family of children. Yet it was gone upon like a holiday jaunt. I read in Colonel Fergusson’s letter that his schoolmates bantered him when he began to broach his scheme; so did I at first, and he took the banter, as he always did, with enjoyment, until he suddenly posed me with the question: “And now do you see any other jokes to make? Well, then,” said he, “that’s all right. I wanted you to have your fun out first; now we can be serious.” And then with a glowing heat of pleasure, he laid his plans before me, revelling in the details, revelling in hope. It was as he wrote about the joy of electrical experiment: “What shall I compare them to? — A new song? a Greek play?” Delight attended the exercise of all his powers; delight painted the future. Of these ideal visions, some (as I have said) failed of their fruition. And the illusion was characteristic. Fleeming believed we had only to make a virtue cheap and easy, and then all would practise 277 it; that for an end unquestionably good men would not grudge a little trouble and a little money, though they might stumble at laborious pains and generous sacrifices. He could not believe in any resolute badness. “I cannot quite say,” he wrote in his young manhood, “that I think there is no sin or misery. This I can say: I do not remember one single malicious act done to myself. In fact, it is rather awkward when I have to say the Lord’s Prayer. I have nobody’s trespasses to forgive.” And to the point, I remember one of our discussions. I said it was a dangerous error not to admit there were bad people; he, that it was only a confession of blindness on our part, and that we probably called others bad only so far as we were wrapped in ourselves and lacking in the transmigratory forces of imagination. I undertook to describe to him three persons irredeemably bad, and whom he should admit to be so. In the first case he denied my evidence: "You cannot judge a man upon such testimony," said he. For the second, he owned it made him sick to hear the tale; but then there was no spark of malice, it was mere weakness I had described, and he had never denied nor thought to set a limit to man's weakness. At my third gentleman he struck his colours. "Yes," said he, "I'm afraid that *is* a bad man." And then, looking at me shrewdly: "I wonder if it isn't a very unfortunate thing for you to have met him." I showed him radiantly how it was the world we must know, the world as it was, not a world expurgated and prettified with optimistic rainbows. "Yes, yes," said he; "but this badness is such an easy, lazy explanation. Won't you be tempted to use it, instead of trying to understand people?"

In the year 1878 he took a passionate fancy for the phonograph: it was a toy after his heart, a toy that touched the skirts of life, art and science, a toy prolific of problems and theories. Something fell to be done for a University Cricket-Ground Bazaar. "And the thought struck him," Mr. Ewing writes to me, "to exhibit Edison's 278 phonograph, then the very newest scientific marvel. The instrument itself was not to be purchased — I think no specimen had then crossed the Atlantic, — but a copy of the *Times* with an account of it was at hand, and by the help of this we made a phonograph which to our great joy talked, and talked, too, with the purest American accent. It was so good that a second instrument was got ready forthwith. Both were shown at the Bazaar: one by Mrs. Jenkin, to people willing to pay half a crown for a private view and the privilege of hearing their own voices, while Jenkin, perfervid as usual, gave half-hourly lectures on the other in an adjoining room — I, as his lieutenant, taking turns. The thing was in its way a little triumph. A few of the visitors were deaf, and hugged the belief that they were the victims of a new kind of fancy-fair swindle. Of the others, many who came to scoff remained to take raffle tickets; and one of the phonographs was finally disposed of in this way." The other remained in Fleeming's hands, and was a source of infinite occupation. Once it was sent to London, "to bring back on the tinfoil the tones of a lady distinguished for clear vocalisation"; at another time "Sir Robert Christison was brought in to contribute his powerful bass"; and there scarcely came a visitor about the house but he was made the subject of experiment. The visitors, I am afraid, took their parts lightly: Mr. Hole and I, with unscientific laughter, commemorating various shades of Scottish accent, or proposing to "teach the poor dumb animal to swear." But Fleeming and Mr. Ewing, when we butterflies were gone, were laboriously ardent. Many thoughts that occupied the later years of my friend were caught from the small utterance of that toy. Thence came his inquiries into the roots of articulate language and the foundations of literary art; his papers on vowel-sounds, his papers in the *Saturday Review* upon the laws of verse, and many a strange approximation, many a just note, thrown out in talk and now forgotten. I pass over dozens 279 of his interests, and dwell on this trifling matter of the phonograph, because it seems to me that it depicts the man. So, for Fleeming, one thing joined into another, the greater with the less. He cared not where it was he scratched the surface of the ultimate mystery — in the child's toy, in the great tragedy, in the laws of the tempest, or in the properties of energy or mass — certain that whatever he touched, it was a part of life — and however he touched it, there would flow for his happy constitution interest and delight. "All fables have their morals," says Thoreau, "but the innocent enjoy the story." There is a truth represented for the imagination in those lines of a noble poem, where we are told that in our highest hours of visionary clearness we can but

"see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

To this clearness Fleeming had attained; and although he heard the voice of the eternal seas and weighed its message, he was yet able, until the end of his life, to sport upon these shores of death and mystery with the gaiety and innocence of children.

IV

It was as a student that I first knew Fleeming, as one of that modest number of young men who sat under his ministrations in a soul-chilling class-room at the top of the University buildings. His presence was against him as a professor: no one, least of all students, would have been moved to respect him at first sight: rather short in stature, markedly plain, boyishly young in manner, cocking his head like a terrier with every mark of the most engaging vivacity and readiness to be pleased, full of words, full of paradox, a stranger could scarcely fail to look at him twice, a man thrown with him in a train could scarcely 280 fail to be engaged by him in talk, but a student would never regard him as academical. Yet he had that fibre in him that order always existed in his class-room. I do not remember that he ever addressed me in language; at the least sign of unrest his eye would fall on me and I was quelled. Such a feat is comparatively easy in a small class; but I have misbehaved in smaller classes and under eyes more Olympian than Fleeming Jenkin’s. He was simply a man from whose reproof one shrank; in manner the least buckramed of mankind, he had, in serious moments, an extreme dignity of goodness. So it was that he obtained a power over the most insubordinate of students, but a power of which I was myself unconscious. I was inclined to regard any professor as a joke, and Fleeming as a particularly good joke, perhaps the broadest in the vast pleasantry of my curriculum. I was not able to follow his lectures; I somehow dared not misconduct myself, as was my customary solace; and I refrained from attending. This brought me at the end of the session into a relation with my contemned professor that completely opened my eyes. During the year, bad student as I was, he had shown a certain leaning to my society; I had been to his house, he had asked me to take a humble part in his theatricals; I was a master in the art of extracting a certificate even at the cannon’s mouth; and I was under no apprehension. But when I approached Fleeming, I found myself in another world; he would have naught of me. “It is quite useless for *you* to come to me, Mr. Stevenson. There may be doubtful cases, there is no doubt about yours. You have simply *not* attended my class.” The document was necessary to me for family considerations; and presently I stooped to such pleadings and rose to such adjurations as make my ears burn to remember. He was quite unmoved; he had no pity for me. — ”You are no fool,” said he, “and you chose your course.” I showed him that he had misconceived his duty, that certificates were things of form, attendance 281 a matter of taste. Two things, he replied, had been required for graduation: a certain competency proved in the final trials, and a certain period of genuine training proved by certificate; if he did as I desired, not less than if he gave me hints for an examination, he was aiding me to steal a degree. “You see, Mr. Stevenson, these are the laws, and I am here to apply them,” said he. I could not say but that this view was tenable, though it was new to me; I changed my attack: it was only for my father’s eye that I required his signature, it need never go to the Senatus, I had already certificates enough to justify my year’s attendance. “Bring them to me; I cannot take your word for that,” said he. “Then I will consider.” The next day I came charged with my certificates, a humble assortment. And when he had satisfied himself, “Remember,” said he, “that I can promise nothing, but I will try to find a form of words.” He did find one, and I am still ashamed when I think of his shame in giving me that paper. He made no reproach in speech, but his manner was the more eloquent; it told me plainly what a dirty business we were on; and I went from his presence, with my certificate indeed in my possession, but with no answerable sense of triumph. That was the bitter beginning of my love for Fleeming; I never thought lightly of him afterwards.

Once, and once only, after our friendship was truly founded did we come to a considerable difference. It was, by the rules of poor humanity, my fault and his. I had been led to dabble in society journalism; and this coming to his ears, he felt it like a disgrace upon himself. So far he was exactly in the right; but he was scarce happily inspired when he broached the subject at his own table and before guests who were strangers to me. It was the sort of error he was always ready to repent, but always certain to repeat; and on this occasion he spoke so freely that I soon made an excuse and left the house, with the firm purpose of returning no more. About a month later I 282 met him at dinner at a common friend’s. “Now,” said he, on the stairs, “I engage you — like a lady to dance — for the end of the evening. You have no right to quarrel with me and not give me a chance.” I have often said and thought that Fleeming had no tact; he belied the opinion then. I remember perfectly how, so soon as we could get together, he began his attack: “You may have grounds of quarrel with me; you have none against Mrs. Jenkin; and before I say another word, I want you to promise you will come to *her* house as usual.” An interview thus begun could have but one ending: if the quarrel were the fault of both, the merit of reconciliation was entirely Fleeming’s.

When our intimacy first began, coldly enough, accidentally enough on his part, he had still something of the Puritan, something of the inhuman narrowness of the good youth. It fell from him slowly, year by year, as he continued to ripen, and grow milder, and understand more generously the mingled characters of men. In the early days he once read me a bitter lecture; and I remember leaving his house in a fine spring afternoon, with the physical darkness of despair upon my eyesight. Long after he made me a formal retractation of the sermon and a formal apology for the pain he had inflicted; adding drolly, but truly, “You see, at that time I was so much younger than you!” And yet even in those days there was much to learn from him; and above all his fine spirit of piety, bravely and trustfully accepting life, and his singular delight in the heroic.

His piety was, indeed, a thing of chief importance. His views (as they are called) upon religious matters varied much; and he could never be induced to think them more or less than views. “All dogma is to me mere form,” he wrote; “dogmas are mere blind struggles to express the inexpressible. I cannot conceive that any single proposition whatever in religion is true in the scientific sense; and yet all the while I think the religious view of the 283 world is the most true view. Try to separate from the mass of their statements that which is common to Socrates, Isaiah, David, St. Bernard, the Jansenists, Luther, Mahomet, Bunyan — yes, and George Eliot: of course you do not believe that this something could be written down in a set of propositions like Euclid, neither will you deny that there is something common, and this something very valuable.... I shall be sorry if the boys ever give a moment’s thought to the question of what community they belong to — I hope they will belong to the great community.” I should observe that as time went on his conformity to the Church in which he was born grew more complete, and his views drew nearer the conventional. “The longer I live, my dear Louis,” he wrote but a few months before his death, “the more convinced I become of a direct care by God — which is reasonably impossible — but there it is.” And in his last year he took the Communion.

But at the time when I fell under his influence he stood more aloof; and this made him the more impressive to a youthful atheist. He had a keen sense of language and its imperial influence on men; language contained all the great and sound metaphysics, he was wont to say; and a word once made and generally understood, he thought a real victory of man and reason. But he never dreamed it could be accurate, knowing that words stand symbol for the indefinable. I came to him once with a problem which had puzzled me out of measure: What is a cause? why out of so many innumerable millions of conditions, all necessary, should one be singled out and ticketed “the cause”? “You do not understand,” said he. “A cause is the answer to a question: it designates that condition which I happen to know, and you happen not to know.” It was thus, with partial exception of the mathematical, that he thought of all means of reasoning: they were in his eyes but means of communication, so to be understood, so to be judged, and only so far to be credited. 284 The mathematical he made, I say, exception of: number and measure he believed in to the extent of their significance, but that significance, he was never weary of reminding you, was slender to the verge of nonentity. Science was true, because it told us almost nothing. With a few abstractions it could deal, and deal correctly; conveying honestly faint truths. Apply its means to any concrete fact of life, and this high dialect of the wise became a childish jargon.

Thus the atheistic youth was met at every turn by a scepticism more complete than his own, so that the very weapons of the fight were changed in his grasp to swords of paper. Certainly the church is not right, he would argue, but certainly not the anti-church either. Men are not such fools as to be wholly in the wrong, nor yet are they so placed as to be ever wholly in the right. Somewhere, in mid air between the disputants, like hovering Victory in some design of a Greek battle, the truth hangs undiscerned. And in the meanwhile what matter these uncertainties? Right is very obvious; a great consent of the best of mankind, a loud voice within us (whether of God, or whether by inheritance, and in that case still from God), guide and command us in the path of duty. He saw life very simple; he did not love refinements; he was a friend to much conformity in unessentials. For (he would argue) it is in this life, as it stands about us, that we are given our problem; the manners of the day are the colours of our palette; they condition, they constrain us; and a man must be very sure he is in the right, must (in a favourite phrase of his) be "either very wise or very vain," to break with any general consent in ethics. I remember taking his advice upon some point of conduct. "Now," he said, "how do you suppose Christ would have advised you?" and when I had answered that He would not have counselled me anything unkind or cowardly, "No," he said, with one of his shrewd strokes at the weakness of his hearer, "nor anything amusing." Later in 285 life, he made less certain in the field of ethics. "The old story of the knowledge of good and evil is a very true one," I find him writing; only (he goes on) "the effect of the original dose is much worn out, leaving Adam's descendants with the knowledge that there is such a thing — but uncertain where." His growing sense of this ambiguity made him less swift to condemn, but no less stimulating in counsel. "You grant yourself certain freedoms. Very well," he would say, "I want to see you pay for them some other way. You positively cannot do this: then there positively must be something else that you can do, and I want to see you find that out and do it." Fleeming would never suffer you to think that you were living, if there were not, somewhere in your life, some touch of heroism, to do or to endure.

This was his rarest quality. Far on in middle age, when men begin to lie down with the bestial goddesses, Comfort and Respectability, the strings of his nature still sounded as high a note as a young man's. He loved the harsh voice of duty like a call to battle. He loved courage, enterprise, brave natures, a brave word, an ugly virtue; everything that lifts us above the table where we eat or the bed we sleep upon. This with no touch of the motive-monger or the ascetic. He loved his virtues to be practical, his heroes to be great eaters of beef; he loved the jovial Heracles, loved the astute Odysseus; not the Robespierres and Wesleys. A fine buoyant sense of life and of man's unequal character ran through all his thoughts. He could not tolerate the spirit of the pickthank; being what we are, he wished us to see others with a generous eye of admiration, not with the smallness of the seeker after faults. If there shone anywhere a virtue, no matter how incongruously set, it was upon the virtue we must fix our eyes. I remember having found much entertainment in Voltaire's "Saül," and telling him what seemed to me the drollest touches. He heard me out, as usual when displeased, and then opened fire on me with red-hot shot. 286 To belittle a noble story was easy; it was not literature, it was not art, it was not morality; there was no sustenance in such a form of jesting, there was (in his favourite phrase) "no nitrogenous food" in such literature. And then he proceeded to show what a fine fellow David was; and what a hard knot he was in about Bathsheba, so that (the initial wrong committed) honour might well hesitate in the choice of conduct; and what owls those people were who marvelled because an Eastern tyrant had killed Uriah, instead of marvelling that he had not killed the prophet also. "Now if Voltaire had helped me to feel that," said he, "I could have seen some fun in it." He loved the comedy which shows a hero human, and yet leaves him a hero; and the laughter which does not lessen love.

It was this taste for what is fine in humankind that ruled his choice in books. These should all strike a high note, whether brave or tender, and smack of the open air. The noble and simple presentation of things noble and simple, that was the "nitrogenous food" of which he spoke so much, which he sought so eagerly, enjoyed so royally. He wrote to an author, the first part of whose story he had seen with sympathy, hoping that it might continue in the same vein. "That this may be so," he wrote, "I long with the longing of David for the water of Bethlehem. But no man need die for the water a poet can give, and all can drink it to the end of time, and their thirst be quenched and the pool never dry — and the thirst and the water are both blessed." It was in the Greeks particularly that he found this blessed water; he loved "a fresh air" which he found "about the Greek things even in translations"; he loved their freedom from the mawkish and the rancid. The tale of David in the Bible, the “Odyssey,” Sophocles, Æschylus, Shakespeare, Scott; old Dumas in his chivalrous note; Dickens rather than Thackeray, and the “Tale of Two Cities” out of Dickens: such were some of his preferences. To Ariosto and Boccaccio he was always faithful; “Burnt Njal” was a 287 late favourite; and he found at least a passing entertainment in the “Arcadia” and the “Grand Cyrus.” George Eliot he outgrew, finding her latterly only sawdust in the mouth; but her influence, while it lasted, was great, and must have gone some way to form his mind. He was easily set on edge, however, by didactic writing; and held that books should teach no other lesson but what “real life would teach, were it as vividly presented.” Again, it was the thing made that took him, the drama in the book; to the book itself, to any merit of the making, he was long strangely blind. He would prefer the “Agamemnon” in the prose of Mr. Buckley, ay, to Keats. But he was his mother’s son, learning to the last. He told me one day that literature was not a trade; that it was no craft; that the professed author was merely an amateur with a door-plate. “Very well,” said I, “the first time you get a proof, I will demonstrate that it is as much a trade as bricklaying, and that you do not know it.” By the very next post a proof came. I opened it with fear; for he was, indeed, a formidable amateur; always wrote brightly, because he always thought trenchantly; and sometimes wrote brilliantly, as the worst of whistlers may sometimes stumble on a perfect intonation. But it was all for the best in the interests of his education; and I was able, over that proof, to give him a quarter of an hour such as Fleeming loved both to give and to receive. His subsequent training passed out of my hands into those of our common friend, W. E. Henley. “Henley and I,” he wrote, “have fairly good times wigging one another for not doing better. I wig him because he won’t try to write a real play, and he wigs me because I can’t try to write English.” When I next saw him he was full of his new acquisitions. “And yet I have lost something too,” he said regretfully. “Up to now Scott seemed to me quite perfect, he was all I wanted. Since I have been learning this confounded thing, I took up one of the novels, and a great deal of it is both careless and clumsy.”

V

He spoke four languages with freedom, not even English with any marked propriety. What he uttered was not so much well said, as excellently acted: so we may hear every day the inexpressive language of a poorly written drama assume character and colour in the hands of a good player. No man had more of the *vis comica* in private life; he played no character on the stage as he could play himself among his friends. It was one of his special charms; now when the voice is silent and the face still, it makes it impossible to do justice to his power in conversation. He was a delightful companion to such as can bear bracing weather; not to the very vain; not to the owlishly wise, who cannot have their dogmas canvassed; not to the painfully refined, whose sentiments become articles of faith. The spirit in which he could write that he was “much revived by having an opportunity of abusing Whistler to a knot of his special admirers” is a spirit apt to be misconstrued. He was not a dogmatist, even about Whistler. “The house is full of pretty things,” he wrote, when on a visit; “but Mrs. —— ’s taste in pretty things has one very bad fault: it is not my taste.” And that was the true attitude of his mind; but these eternal differences it was his joy to thresh out and wrangle over by the hour. It was no wonder if he loved the Greeks; he was in many ways a Greek himself; he should have been a sophist and met Socrates; he would have loved Socrates, and done battle with him staunchly and manfully owned his defeat; and the dialogue, arranged by Plato, would have shone even in Plato’s gallery. He seemed in talk aggressive, petulant, full of a singular energy; as vain, you would have said, as a peacock, until you trod on his toes, and then you saw that he was at least clear of all the sicklier elements of vanity. Soundly rang his laugh at any jest against himself. He wished to be taken, as he took others, for what was good 289 in him without dissimulation of the evil, for what was wise in him without concealment of the childish. He hated a draped virtue, and despised a wit on its own defence. And he drew (if I may so express myself) a human and humorous portrait of himself with all his defects and qualities, as he thus enjoyed in talk the robust sports of the intelligence; giving and taking manfully, always without pretence, always without paradox, always with exuberant pleasure; speaking wisely of what he knew, foolishly of what he knew not; a teacher, a learner, but still combative; picking holes in what was said even to the length of captiousness, yet aware of all that was said rightly; jubilant in victory, delighted by defeat: a Greek sophist, a British schoolboy.

Among the legends of what was once a very pleasant spot, the old Savile Club, not then divorced from Savile Row, there are many memories of Fleeming. He was not popular at first, being known simply as “the man who dines here and goes up to Scotland”; but he grew at last, I think, the most generally liked of all the members. To those who truly knew and loved him, who had tasted the real sweetness of his nature, Fleeming’s porcupine ways had always been a matter of keen regret. They introduced him to their own friends with fear; sometimes recalled the step with mortification. It was not possible to look on with patience while a man so lovable thwarted love at every step. But the course of time and the ripening of his nature brought a cure. It was at the Savile that he first remarked a change; it soon spread beyond the walls of the club. Presently I find him writing: “Will you kindly explain what has happened to me? All my life I have talked a good deal, with the almost unfailing result of making people sick of the sound of my tongue. It appeared to me that I had various things to say, and I had no malevolent feelings, but nevertheless the result was that expressed above. Well, lately some change has happened. If I talk to a person one day, they must have me 290 the next. Faces light up when they see me. ‘Ah, I say, come here’ — ’come and dine with me.’ It’s the most preposterous thing I ever experienced. It is curiously pleasant. You have enjoyed it all your life, and therefore cannot conceive how bewildering a burst of it is for the first time at forty-nine.” And this late sunshine of popularity still further softened him. He was a bit of a porcupine to the last, still shedding darts; or rather he was to the end a bit of a schoolboy, and must still throw stones; but the essential toleration that underlay his disputatiousness, and the kindness that made of him a tender sick-nurse and a generous helper, shone more conspicuously through. A new pleasure had come to him; and as with all sound natures, he was bettered by the pleasure.

I can best show Fleeming in this later stage by quoting from a vivid and interesting letter of M. Émile Trélat’s. Here, admirably expressed, is how he appeared to a friend of another nation, whom he encountered only late in life. M. Trélat will pardon me if I correct, even before I quote him; but what the Frenchman supposed to flow from some particular bitterness against France, was only Fleeming’s usual address. Had M. Trélat been Italian, Italy would have fared as ill; and yet Italy was Fleeming’s favourite country.

Vous savez comment j’ai connu Fleeming Jenkin! C’était en Mai 1878. Nous étions tous deux membres du jury de l’Exposition Universelle. On n’avait rien fait qui vaille à la première séance de notre classe, qui avait eu lieu le matin. Tout le monde avait parlé et reparlé pour ne rien dire. Cela durait depuis huit heures; il était midi. Je demandai la parole pour une motion d’ordre, et je proposal que la

séance fût levée à la condition que chaque membre français *emportât* à déjeuner un juré étranger. Jenkin applaudit. “Je vous emmène déjeuner,” lui criai-je. “Je veux bien.” ... Nous partîmes; en chemin nous vous rencontrions; il vous présente, et nous allons déjeuner tous trois auprès du Trocadéro.

Et, depuis ce temps, nous avons été de vieux amis. Non seulement nous passions nos journées au jury, où nous étions toujours ensemble, côte-à-côte. Mais nos habitudes s’étaient faites telles que, non contents de déjeuner en face l’un de l’autre, je le ramenais dîner presque tous les jours chez moi. Cela dura une quinzaine: puis il fut rappelé en Angleterre. Mais il revint, et nous fîmes 291 encore une bonne étape de vie intellectuelle, morale et philosophique. Je crois qu’il me rendait déjà tout ce que j’éprouvais de sympathie et d’estime, et que je ne fus pas pour rien dans son retour à Paris.

Chose singulière! nous nous étions attachés l’un à l’autre par les sous-entendus bien plus que par la matière de nos conversations. À vrai dire, nous étions presque toujours en discussion; et il nous arrivait de nous rire au nez l’un et l’autre pendant des heures, tant nous nous étonnions réciproquement de la diversité de nos points de vue. Je le trouvais si anglais, et il me trouvait si français! Il était si franchement révolté de certaines choses qu’il voyait chez nous, et je comprenais si mal certaines choses qui se passaient chez vous! Rien de plus intéressant que ces contacts qui étaient des contrastes, et que ces rencontres d’idées qui étaient des choses; rien de si attachant que les échappées de cœur ou d’esprit auxquelles ces petits conflits donnaient à tout moment cours. C’est dans ces conditions que, pendant son séjour à Paris en 1878, je conduisis un peu partout mon nouvel ami. Nous allâmes chez Madame Edmond Adam, où il vit passer beaucoup d’hommes politiques avec lesquels il causa. Mais c’est chez les ministres qu’il fut intéressé. Le moment était, d’ailleurs, curieux en France. Je me rappelle que, lorsque je le présentai au Ministre du Commerce, il fit cette spirituelle repartie: “C’est la seconde fois que je viens en France sous la République. La première fois, c’était en 1848, elle s’était coiffée de travers: je suis bien heureux de saluer aujourd’hui Votre Excellence, quand elle a mis son chapeau droit.” Une fois je le menai voir couronner la Rosière de Nanterre. Il y suivit les cérémonies civiles et religieuses; il y assista au banquet donné par le maire; il y vit notre de Lesseps, au quel il porta un toast. Le soir, nous revînmes tard à Paris; il faisait chaud; nous étions un peu fatigués; nous entrâmes dans un des rares cafés encore ouverts. Il devint silencieux. — ”N’êtes-vous pas content de votre journée?” lui dis-je. — ”O, si! mais je réfléchis, et je me dis que vous êtes un peuple gai — tous ces braves gens étaient gais aujourd’hui. C’est une vertu, la gaieté, et vous l’avez en France, cette vertu!” Il me disait cela mélancoliquement; et c’était la première fois que je lui entendais faire une louange adressée à la France.... Mais il ne faut pas que vous voyiez là une plainte de ma part. Je serais un ingrat si je me plaignais; car il me disait souvent: “Quel bon Français vous faites!” Et il m’aimait à cause de cela, quoi qu’il semblât n’aimer pas la France. C’était là un trait de son originalité. Il est vrai qu’il s’en tirait en disant que je ne ressemblai pas à mes compatriotes, ce à quoi il ne connaissait rien! — Tout cela était fort curieux; car moi-même, je l’aimais quoiqu’il en eût à mon pays!

En 1879 il amena son fils Austin à Paris. J’attirai celui-ci. Il déjeunait avec moi deux fois par semaine. Je lui montrai ce qu’était l’intimité française en le tutoyant paternellement. Cela resserra beaucoup nos liens d’intimité avec Jenkin.... Je fis inviter mon ami au congrès de l’*Association française pour l’avancement des sciences*, qui se tenait à Rheims en 1880. Il y vint. J’eus le 292 plaisir de lui donner la parole dans la section du génie civil et militaire, que je présidais. Il y fit une très intéressante communication, qui me montrait une fois de plus l’originalité de ses vues et la sûreté de sa science. C’est à l’issue de ce congrès que je passai lui faire visite à Rochefort, où je le trouvai installé en famille et où je présentai pour la première fois mes hommages à son éminente compagne. Je le vis là sous un jour nouveau et touchant pour moi Madame Jenkin, qu’il entourait si galamment, et ses deux jeunes fils donnaient plus de relief à sa personne. J’emportai des quelques heures que je passai à côté de lui dans ce charmant paysage un souvenir ému.

J’étais allé en Angleterre en 1882 sans pouvoir gagner Édimbourg. J’y retournai en 1883 avec la commission d’assainissement de la ville de Paris, dont je faisais partie. Jenkin me rejoignit. Je le fis entendre par mes collègues; car il était fondateur d’une société de salubrité. Il eut un grand succès parmi nous. Mais ce voyage me restera toujours en mémoire parce que c’est là que se fixa définitivement notre forte amitié. Il m’invita un jour à dîner à son club et au moment de me faire asseoir à côté de lui, il me retint et me dit: “Je voudrais vous demander de m’accorder quelque chose. C’est mon sentiment que nos relations ne peuvent pas se bien continuer si vous ne me donnez pas la permission de vous tutoyer. Voulez-vous que nous nous tutoyions?” Je lui pris les mains et je lui dis qu’une pareille proposition venant d’un Anglais, et d’un Anglais de sa haute distinction, c’était une victoire, dont je serais fier toute ma vie. Et nous commencions à user de cette nouvelle forme dans nos rapports. Vous savez avec quelle finesse il parlait le français; comme il en connaissait tous les tours, comme il jouait avec ses difficultés, et même avec ses petites gamineries. Je crois qu’il a été heureux de pratiquer avec moi ce tutoiement, qui ne s’adapte pas à l’anglais, et qui est si français. Je ne puis vous peindre l’étendue et la variété de nos conversations de la soirée. Mais ce que je puis vous dire, c’est que, sous la caresse du *tu*, nos idées se sont élevées. Nous avions toujours beaucoup ri ensemble; mais nous n’avions jamais laissé des banalités s’introduire dans nos échanges de pensées. Ce soir-là, notre horizon intellectuel s’est élargi, et nous y avons poussé des reconnaissances profondes et lointaines. Après avoir vivement causé à table, nous avons longuement causé au salon; et nous nous séparions le soir à Trafalgar Square, après avoir longé les trottoirs, stationné aux coins des rues et deux fois rebroussé chemin en nous reconduisant l’un l’autre. Il était près d’une heure du matin! Mais quelle belle passe d’argumentation, quels beaux échanges de sentiments, quelles fortes confidences patriotiques nous avions fournies! J’ai compris ce soir-là que Jenkin ne détestait pas la France, et je lui serrai fort les mains en l’embrassant. Nous nous quittions aussi amis qu’on puisse l’être; et notre affection s’était par lui étendue et comprise dans un *tu* français.

Robert Lawson Tait (1845-1899). — Ed.

William Young Sellar (1825-1890). — Ed.

Not reprinted in this edition. — Ed.

CHAPTER VII

1875-1885.

Mrs. Jenkin's illness — Captain Jenkin — The golden wedding — Death of Uncle John — Death of Mr. and Mrs. Austin — Illness and death of the Captain — Death of Mrs. Jenkin — Effect on Fleeming — Telpherage — The end.

And now I must resume my narrative for that melancholy business that concludes all human histories. In January of the year 1875, while Fleeming's sky was still unclouded, he was reading Smiles. "I read my engineers' lives steadily," he writes, "but find biographies depressing. I suspect one reason to be that misfortunes and trials can be graphically described, but happiness and the causes of happiness either cannot be or are not. A grand new branch of literature opens to my view: a drama in which people begin in a poor way and end, after getting gradually happier, in an ecstasy of enjoyment. The common novel is not the thing at all. It gives struggle followed by relief. I want each act to close on a new and triumphant happiness, which has been steadily growing all the while. This is the real antithesis of tragedy, where things get blacker and blacker and end in hopeless woe. Smiles has not grasped my grand idea, and only shows a bitter struggle followed by a little respite before death. Some feeble critic might say my new idea was not true to nature. I'm sick of this old-fashioned notion of art. Hold a mirror up, indeed! Let's paint a picture of how things ought to be, and hold that up to nature, and perhaps the poor old woman may repent and mend her ways." The "grand idea" might be possible in art; not even the ingenuity of nature could so 294 round in the actual life of any man. And yet it might almost seem to fancy that she had read the letter and taken the hint; for to Fleeming the cruelties of fate were strangely blended with tenderness, and when death came, it came harshly to others, to him not unkindly.

In the autumn of that same year 1875, Fleeming's father and mother were walking in the garden of their house at Merchiston, when the latter fell to the ground. It was thought at the time to be a stumble; it was in all likelihood a premonitory stroke of palsy. From that day there fell upon her an abiding panic fear; that glib, superficial part of us that speaks and reasons could allege no cause, science itself could find no mark of danger, a son's solicitude was laid at rest; but the eyes of the body saw the approach of a blow, and the consciousness of the body trembled at its coming. It came in a moment; the brilliant, spirited old lady leapt from her bed, raving. For about six months this stage of her disease continued with many painful and many pathetic circumstances; her husband, who tended her, her son, who was unwearied in his visits, looked for no change in her condition but the change that comes to all. “Poor mother,” I find Fleeming writing, “I cannot get the tones of her voice out of my head.... I may have to bear this pain for a long time; and so I am bearing it and sparing myself whatever pain seems useless. Mercifully I do sleep, I am so weary that I must sleep.” And again later: “I could do very well if my mind did not revert to my poor mother’s state whenever I stop attending to matters immediately before me.” And the next day: “I can never feel a moment’s pleasure without having my mother’s suffering recalled by the very feeling of happiness. A pretty young face recalls hers by contrast — a careworn face recalls it by association. I tell you, for I can speak to no one else; but do not suppose that I wilfully let my mind dwell on sorrow.”

In the summer of the next year the frenzy left her; it 295 left her stone deaf and almost entirely aphasic, but with some remains of her old sense and courage. Stoutly she set to work with dictionaries, to recover her lost tongues; and had already made notable progress when a third stroke scattered her acquisitions. Thenceforth, for nearly ten years, stroke followed upon stroke, each still further jumbling the threads of her intelligence, but by degrees so gradual and with such partiality of loss and of survival, that her precise state was always and to the end a matter of dispute. She still remembered her friends; she still loved to learn news of them upon the slate; she still read and marked the list of the subscription library; she still took an interest in the choice of a play for the theatricals, and could remember and find parallel passages; but alongside of these surviving powers, were lapses as remarkable, she misbehaved like a child, and a servant had to sit with her at table. To see her so sitting, speaking with the tones of a deaf-mute not always to the purpose, and to remember what she had been, was a moving appeal to all who knew her. Such was the pathos of these two old people in their affliction, that even the reserve of cities was melted and the neighbours vied in sympathy and kindness. Where so many were more than usually helpful, it is hard to draw distinctions; but I am directed and I delight to mention in particular the good Dr. Joseph Bell, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Archibald Constable, with both their wives, the Rev. Mr. Belcombe (of whose good heart and taste I do not hear for the first time — the news had come to me by way of the Infirmary) and their next-door neighbour, unwearied in service, Miss Hannah Mayne. Nor should I omit to mention that John Ruffini continued to write to Mrs. Jenkin till his own death, and the clever lady known to the world as Vernon Lee until the end: a touching, a becoming attention to what was only the wreck and survival of their brilliant friend.

But he to whom this affliction brought the greatest change was the Captain himself. What was bitter in his 296 lot he bore with unshaken courage; only once, in these ten years of trial, has Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin seen him weep; for the rest of the time his wife — his commanding officer, now become his trying child — was served not with patience alone, but with a lovely happiness of temper. He had belonged all his life to the ancient, formal, speech-making, compliment-presenting school of courtesy; the dictates of this code partook in his eyes of the nature of a duty; and he must now be courteous for two. Partly from a happy illusion, partly in a tender fraud, he kept his wife before the world as a still active partner. When he paid a call, he would have her write "with love" upon a card; or if that (at the moment) was too much, he would go armed with a bouquet and present it in her name. He even wrote letters for her to copy and sign: an innocent substitution, which may have caused surprise to Ruffini or to Vernon Lee, if they ever received, in the hand of Mrs. Jenkin, the very obvious reflections of her husband. He had always adored this wife whom he now tended and sought to represent in correspondence: it was now, if not before, her turn to repay the compliment; mind enough was left her to perceive his unwearied kindness; and as her moral qualities seemed to survive quite unimpaired, a childish love and gratitude were his reward. She would interrupt a conversation to cross the room and kiss him. If she grew excited (as she did too often) it was his habit to come behind her chair and pat her shoulder; and then she would turn round, and clasp his hand in hers, and look from him to her visitor with a face of pride and love; and it was at such moments only that the light of humanity revived in her eyes. It was hard for any stranger, it was impossible for any that loved them, to behold these mute scenes, to recall the past, and not to weep. But to the Captain, I think it was all happiness. After these so long years he had found his wife again; perhaps kinder than ever before; perhaps now on a more equal footing; certainly, to his eyes, still beautiful. And the call made on his 297 intelligence had not been made in vain. The merchants of Aux Cayes, who had seen him tried in some "counter-revolution" in 1845, wrote to the consul of his "able and decided measures," "his cool, steady judgment and discernment," with admiration; and of himself, as "a credit and an ornament to H.M. Naval Service." It is plain he must have sunk in all his powers, during the years when he was only a figure, and often a dumb figure, in his wife's drawing-room; but with this new term of service he brightened visibly. He showed tact and even invention in managing his wife, guiding or restraining her by the touch, holding family worship so arranged that she could follow and take part in it. He took (to the world's surprise) to reading — voyages, biographies, Blair's Sermons, even (for her letters' sake) a work of Vernon Lee's, which proved, however, more than he was quite prepared for. He shone more, in his remarkable way, in society; and twice he had a little holiday to Glenmorven, where, as may be fancied, he was the delight of the Highlanders. One of his last pleasures was to arrange his dining-room. Many and many a room (in their wandering and thriftless existence) had he seen his wife furnish "with exquisite taste" and perhaps with "considerable luxury": now it was his turn to be the decorator. On the wall he had an engraving of Lord Rodney's action, showing the *Prothée*, his father's ship, if the reader recollects; on either side of this, on brackets, his father's sword, and his father's telescope, a gift from Admiral Buckner, who had used it himself during the engagement; higher yet, the head of his grandson's first stag, portraits of his son and his son's wife, and a couple of old Windsor jugs from Mrs. Buckner's. But his simple trophy was not yet complete; a device had to be worked and framed and hung below the engraving; and for this he applied to his daughter-in-law: "I want you to work me something, Annie. An anchor at each side — an anchor — stands for an old sailor, you know — stands for hope, you know — an anchor at each side, and in 298 the middle Thankful." It is not easy, on any system of punctuation, to represent the Captain's speech. Yet I hope there may shine out of these facts, even as there shone through his own troubled utterance, some of the charm of that delightful spirit.

In 1881 the time of the golden wedding came round for that sad and pretty household. It fell on a Good Friday, and its celebration can scarcely be recalled without both smiles and tears. The drawing-room was filled with presents and beautiful bouquets; these, to Fleeming and his family, the golden bride and bridegroom displayed with unspeakable pride, she so painfully excited that the guests feared every moment to see her stricken afresh, he guiding and moderating her with his customary tact and understanding, and doing the honours of the day with more than his usual delight. Thence they were brought to the dining-room, where the Captain's idea of a feast awaited them: tea and champagne, fruit and toast and childish little luxuries, set forth pell-mell and pressed at random on the guests. And here he must make a speech for himself and his wife, praising their destiny, their marriage, their son, their daughter-in-law, their grandchildren, their manifold causes of gratitude: surely the most innocent speech, the old, sharp contemner of his innocence now watching him with eyes of admiration. Then it was time for the guests to depart; and they went away, bathed, even to the youngest child, in tears of inseparable sorrow and gladness, and leaving the golden bride and bridegroom to their own society and that of the hired nurse.

It was a great thing for Fleeming to make, even thus late, the

acquaintance of his father; but the harrowing pathos of such scenes consumed him. In a life of tense intellectual effort a certain smoothness of emotional tenor were to be desired; or we burn the candle at both ends. Dr. Bell perceived the evil that was being done; he pressed Mrs. Jenkin to restrain her husband from too frequent 299
visits; but here was one of those clear-cut, indubitable duties for which Fleeming lived, and he could not pardon even the suggestion of neglect.

And now, after death had so long visibly but still innocuously hovered above the family, it began at last to strike, and its blows fell thick and heavy. The first to go was uncle John Jenkin, taken at last from his Mexican dwelling and the lost tribes of Israel; and nothing in this remarkable old gentleman's life became him like the leaving of it. His sterling, jovial acquiescence in man's destiny was a delight to Fleeming. "My visit to Stowting has been a very strange but not at all a painful one," he wrote. "In case you ever wish to make a person die as he ought to die in a novel," he said to me, "I must tell you all about my old uncle." He was to see a nearer instance before long; for this family of Jenkin, if they were not very aptly fitted to live, had the art of manly dying. Uncle John was but an outsider after all; he had dropped out of hail of his nephew's way of life and station in society, and was more like some shrewd, old, humble friend who should have kept a lodge; yet he led the procession of becoming deaths, and began in the mind of Fleeming that train of tender and grateful thought which was like a preparation for his own. Already I find him writing in the plural of "these impending deaths"; already I find him in quest of consolation. "There is little pain in store for these wayfarers," he wrote, "and we have hope — more than hope, trust."

On May 19, 1884, Mr. Austin was taken. He was seventy-eight years of age, suffered sharply with all his old firmness, and died happy in the knowledge that he had left his wife well cared for. This had always been a bosom concern; for the Barrons were long-lived and he believed that she would long survive him. But their union had been so full and quiet that Mrs. Austin languished under the separation. In their last years they would sit all evening in their own drawing-room hand in hand: two old people who, for all their fundamental 300
differences, had yet grown together and become all the world in each other's eyes and hearts; and it was felt to be a kind release when, eight months after, on January 14, 1885, Eliza Barron followed Alfred Austin. "I wish I could save you from all pain," wrote Fleeming six days later to his sorrowing wife, "I would if I could — but my way is not God's way; and of this be assured, — God's way is best."

In the end of the same month Captain Jenkin caught cold and was confined to bed. He was so unchanged in spirit that at first there seemed no ground of fear; but his great age began to tell, and presently it was plain he had a summons. The charm of his sailor’s cheerfulness and ancient courtesy, as he lay dying, is not to be described. There he lay, singing his old sea-songs; watching the poultry from the window with a child’s delight; scribbling on the slate little messages to his wife, who lay bedridden in another room; glad to have Psalms read aloud to him, if they were of a pious strain — checking, with an “I don’t think we need read that, my dear,” any that were gloomy or bloody. Fleeming’s wife coming to the house and asking one of the nurses for news of Mrs. Jenkin, “Madam, I do not know,” said the nurse; “for I am really so carried away by the Captain that I can think of nothing else.” One of the last messages scribbled to his wife, and sent her with a glass of the champagne that had been ordered for himself, ran, in his most finished vein of childish madrigal: “The Captain bows to you, my love, across the table.” When the end was near, and it was thought best that Fleeming should no longer go home, but sleep at Merchiston, he broke his news to the Captain with some trepidation, knowing that it carried sentence of death. “Charming, charming — charming arrangement,” was the Captain’s only commentary. It was the proper thing for a dying man, of Captain Jenkin’s school of manners, to make some expression of his spiritual state; nor did he neglect the observance. With his usual abruptness, 301 “Fleeming,” said he, “I suppose you and I feel about all this as two Christian gentlemen should.” A last pleasure was secured for him. He had been waiting with painful interest for news of Gordon and Khartoum; and by great good fortune a false report reached him that the city was relieved, and the men of Sussex (his old neighbours) had been the first to enter. He sat up in bed and gave three cheers for the Sussex Regiment. The subsequent correction, if it came in time, was prudently withheld from the dying man. An hour before midnight on the 5th of February, he passed away: aged eighty-four.

Word of his death was kept from Mrs. Jenkin; and she survived him no more than nine-and-forty hours. On the day before her death she received a letter from her old friend Miss Bell of Manchester, knew the hand, kissed the envelope and laid it on her heart; so that she too died upon a pleasure. Half an hour after midnight, on the 8th of February, she fell asleep: it is supposed in her seventy-eighth year.

Thus, in the space of less than ten months, the four seniors of this family were taken away; but taken with such features of opportunity in time or pleasant courage in the sufferer, that grief was tempered with a kind of admiration. The effect on Fleeming was profound. His pious optimism increased and became touched with something mystic and filial. “The grave is not good, the approaches to it are terrible,” he had written in the beginning of his mother’s illness: he thought so no more, when he had laid father and mother side by side at Stowting. He had always loved life; in the brief time that now remained to him he seemed to be half in love with death. “Grief is no duty,” he wrote to Miss Bell; “it was all too beautiful for grief,” he said to me, but the emotion, call it by what name we please, shook him to his depths; his wife thought he would have broken his heart when he must demolish the Captain’s trophy in the dining-room, and he seemed thenceforth scarcely the same man.These last years were indeed years of an excessive demand upon his vitality; he was not only worn out with sorrow, he was worn out by hope. The singular invention to which he gave the name of “Telpherage” had of late consumed his time, overtaxed his strength, and overheated his imagination. The words in which he first mentioned his discovery to me — ”I am simply Alnaschar” — were not only descriptive of his state of mind, they were in a sense prophetic; since, whatever fortune may await his idea in the future, it was not his to see it bring forth fruit. Alnaschar he was indeed; beholding about him a world all changed, a world filled with telpherage wires; and seeing not only himself and family but all his friends enriched. It was his pleasure, when the company was floated, to endow those whom he liked with stock; one, at least, never knew that he was a possible rich man until the grave had closed over his stealthy benefactor. And however Fleeming chafed among material and business difficulties, this rainbow vision never faded; and he, like his father and his mother, may be said to have died upon a pleasure. But the strain told, and he knew that it was telling. “I am becoming a fossil,” he had written five years before, as a kind of plea for a holiday visit to his beloved Italy. “Take care! If I am Mr. Fossil, you will be Mrs. Fossil, and Jack will be Jack Fossil, and all the boys will be little fossils, and then we shall be a collection.” There was no fear more chimerical for Fleeming; years brought him no repose; he was as packed with energy, as fiery in hope, as at the first; weariness, to which he began to be no stranger, distressed, it did not quiet him. He feared for himself, not without ground, the fate which had overtaken his mother; others shared the fear. In the changed life now made for his family, the elders dead, the sons going from home upon their education, even their tried domestic (Mrs. Alice Dunns) leaving the house after twenty-two years of service, it was not unnatural that he should return to dreams of Italy. He and his wife were to go (as he told 303 me) on “a real honeymoon tour.” He had not been alone with his wife “to speak of,” he added, since the birth of his children. But now he was to enjoy the society of her to whom he wrote, in these last days, that she was his “Heaven on earth.” Now he was to revisit Italy, and see all the pictures and the buildings and the scenes that he admired so warmly, and lay aside for a time the irritations of his strenuous activity. Nor was this all. A trifling operation was to restore his former lightness of foot; and it was a renovated youth that was to set forth upon this re-enacted honeymoon.

The operation was performed; it was of a trifling character, it seemed to go well, no fear was entertained; and his wife was reading aloud to him as he lay in bed, when she perceived him to wander in his mind. It is doubtful if he ever recovered a sure grasp upon the things of life; and he was still unconscious when he passed away, June the 12th, 1885, in the fifty-third year of his age. He passed; but something in his gallant vitality had impressed itself upon his friends, and still impresses. Not from one or two only, but from many, I hear the same tale of how the imagination refuses to accept our loss, and instinctively looks for his reappearing, and how memory retains his voice and image like things of yesterday. Others, the well-beloved too, die and are progressively forgotten: two years have passed since Fleeming was laid to rest beside his father, his mother, and his uncle John; and the thought and the look of our friend still haunts us.

RECORDS OF A FAMILY OF ENGINEERS

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INTRODUCTION

THE SURNAME OF STEVENSON

From the thirteenth century onwards, the name, under the various disguises of Stevinstoun, Stevensoun, Stevensonne, Stenesone, and Stewinsoune, spread across Scotland from the mouth of the Firth of Forth to the mouth of the Firth of Clyde. Four times at least it occurs as a place-name. There is a parish of Stevenston in Cunningham; a second place of the name in the Barony of Bothwell in Lanark; a third on Lyne, above Drochil Castle; the fourth on the Tyne, near Traprain Law. Stevenson of Stevenson (co. Lanark) swore fealty to Edward I. in 1296, and the last of that family died after the Restoration. Stevensons of Hirdmanshiels, in Midlothian, rode in the Bishops' Raid of Aberlady, served as jurors, stood bail for neighbours — Hunter of Polwood, for instance — and became extinct about the same period, or possibly earlier. A Stevenson of Luthrie and another of Pitroddie make their bows, give their names, and vanish. And by the year 1700 it does not appear that any acre of Scots land was vested in any Stevenson.

Here is, so far, a melancholy picture of backward 4 progress, and a family posting towards extinction. But the law (however administered, and I am bound to aver that, in Scotland "it couldna weel be waur") acts as a kind of dredge, and with dispassionate impartiality brings up into the light of day, and shows us for a moment, in the jury-box or on the gallows, the creeping things of the past. By these broken glimpses we are able to trace the existence of many other and more inglorious Stevensons, picking a private way through the brawl that makes Scots history. They were members of Parliament for Peebles, Stirling, Pittenweem, Kilrenny, and Inverurie. We find them burgesses of Edinburgh; indwellers in Biggar, Perth, and Dalkeith. Thomas was the forester of Newbattle Park, Gavin was a baker, John a maltman, Francis a chirurgeon, and "Schir William" a priest. In the feuds of Humes and Heatleys, Cunninghams, Montgomeries, Mures, Ogilvies, and Turnbulls, we find them inconspicuously involved, and apparently getting rather better than they gave. Schir William (reverend gentleman) was cruellie slaughtered on the Links of Kincraig in 1532; James ("in the mill-town of Roberton"), murdered in 1590; Archibald ("in Gallowfarren"), killed with shots of pistols and hagbuts in 1608. Three violent deaths in about seventy years, against which we can only put the case of Thomas, servant to Hume of Cowden Knowes, who was arraigned with his two young masters for the death of the

Bastard of Mellerstanes in 1569. John (“in Dalkeith”) stood sentry without Holyrood while the banded lords were despatching Rizzio within. William, at the ringing of Perth bell, ran before Cowrie House “with ane sword, and, entering to the yearde, saw George Craiggingilt with ane twa-handit sword and utheris nychtbouris; at quilk time James Boig cryit ower ane wynds, ‘Awa hame! ye will all be hangit’” — a piece of advice which William took, and immediately “depairtit.” John got a maid with child to him in Biggar, and seemingly deserted her; she was hanged on the Castle Hill for infanticide, June 1614;[5] and Martin, elder in Dalkeith, eternally disgraced the name by signing witness in a witch trial, 1661. These are two of our black sheep. Under the Restoration, one Stevenson was a bailie in Edinburgh, and another the lessee of the Canonmills. There were at the same period two physicians of the name in Edinburgh, one of whom, Dr. Archibald, appears to have been a famous man in his day and generation. The Court had continual need of him; it was he who reported, for instance, on the state of Rumbold; and he was for some time in the enjoyment of a pension of a thousand pounds Scots (about eighty pounds sterling) at a time when five hundred pounds is described as “an opulent future.” I do not know if I should be glad or sorry that he failed to keep favour; but on 6th January 1682 (rather a cheerless New Year’s present) his pension was expunged. There need be no doubt, at least, of my exultation at the fact that he was knighted and recorded arms. Not quite so genteel, but still in public life, Hugh was Under-Clerk to the Privy Council, and liked being so extremely. I gather this from his conduct in September 1681, when, with all the lords and their servants, he took the woful and soul-destroying Test, swearing it “word by word upon his knees.” And, behold! it was in vain, for Hugh was turned out of his small post in 1684. Sir Archibald and Hugh were both plainly inclined to be trimmers; but there was one witness of the name of Stevenson who held high the banner of the Covenant — John, “Land-Labourer, in the parish of Daily, in Carrick,” that “eminently pious man.” He seems to have been a poor sickly soul, and shows himself disabled with scrofula, and prostrate and groaning aloud with fever; but the enthusiasm of the martyr burned high within him.[6]

“I was made to take joyfully the spoiling of my goods, and with pleasure for His name’s sake wandered in deserts and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. I lay four months in the coldest season of the year in a haystack in my father’s garden, and a whole February in the open fields not far from Camragen, and this I did without the least prejudice from the night air; one night, when lying in the fields near to the Carrick-Miln, I was all covered with snow in the morning. Many nights have I lain with pleasure in the churchyard of Old Daily, and made a grave my pillow; frequently have I resorted to the old walls about the glen, near to Camragen, and there sweetly rested.” The visible hand of God protected and directed him. Dragoons were turned aside from the bramble-bush where he lay hidden. Miracles were performed for his behoof. “I got a horse and a woman to carry the child, and came to the same mountain, where I wandered by the mist before; it is commonly known by the name of Kellsrhins: when we came to go up the mountain, there came on a great rain, which we thought was the occasion of the child’s weeping, and she wept so bitterly, that all we could do could not divert her from it, so that she was ready to burst. When we got to the top of the mountain, where the Lord had been formerly kind to my soul in prayer, I looked round me for a stone, and espying one, I went and brought it. When the woman with me saw me set down the stone, she smiled, and asked what I was going to do with it. I told her I was going to set it up as my Ebenezer, because hitherto, and in that place, the Lord had formerly helped, and I hoped would yet help. The rain still continuing, the child weeping bitterly, I went to prayer, and no sooner did I cry to God, but the child gave over weeping, and when we got up from prayer, the rain was pouring down on every side, but in the way where we were to go there fell not one drop; the place not rained on was as big as an ordinary avenue.” And so great a saint was the natural butt of 7 Satan’s persecutions. “I retired to the fields for secret prayer about midnight. When I went to pray I was much straitened, and could not get one request, but ‘Lord pity,’ ‘Lord help’; this I came over frequently; at length the terror of Satan fell on me in a high degree, and all I could say even then was — ’Lord help.’ I continued in the duty for some time, notwithstanding of this terror. At length I got up to my feet, and the terror still increased; then the enemy took me by the arm-pits, and seemed to lift me up by my arms. I saw a loch just before me, and I concluded he designed to throw me there by force; and had he got leave to do so, it might have brought a great reproach upon religion.” But it was otherwise ordered, and the cause of piety escaped that danger.

On the whole, the Stevensons may be described as decent, reputable folk, following honest trades — millers, maltsters, and doctors, playing the character parts in the Waverley Novels with propriety, if without distinction; and to an orphan looking about him in the world for a potential ancestry, offering a plain and quite unadorned refuge, equally free from shame and glory. John, the land-labourer, is the one living and memorable figure, and he, alas! cannot possibly be more near than a collateral. It was on August 12, 1678, that he heard Mr. John Welsh on the Craigdowhill, and “took the heavens, earth, and sun in the firmament that was shining on us, as also the ambassador who made the offer, and *the clerk who raised the psalms*, to witness that I did give myself away to the Lord in a personal and perpetual covenant never to be forgotten"; and already, in 1675, the birth of my direct ascendant was registered in Glasgow. So that I have been 8 pursuing ancestors too far down; and John the land-labourer is debarred me, and I must relinquish from the trophies of my house his *rare soul-strengthening and comforting cordial*. It is the same case with the Edinburgh bailie and the miller of the Canonmills, worthy man! and with that public character, Hugh the Under-Clerk, and more than all, with Sir Archibald, the physician, who recorded arms. And I am reduced to a family of inconspicuous maltsters in what was then the clean and handsome little city on the Clyde.

The name has a certain air of being Norse. But the story of Scottish nomenclature is confounded by a continual process of translation and half-translation from the Gaelic which in olden days may have been sometimes reversed. Roy becomes Reid; Gow, Smith. A great Highland clan uses the name of Robertson; a sept in Appin that of Livingstone; Maclean in Glencoe answers to Johnstone at Lockerby. And we find such hybrids as Macalexander for Macallister. There is but one rule to be deduced: that however uncompromisingly Saxon a name may appear, you can never be sure it does not designate a Celt. My great-grandfather wrote the name *Stevenson* but pronounced it *Steenson*, after the fashion of the immortal minstrel in "Redgauntlet"; and this elision of a medial consonant appears a Gaelic process; and, curiously enough, I have come across no less than two Gaelic forms: *John Macstophane cordinerius in Crossraguel*, 1573, and *William M'Steen* in Dunskeith (co. Ross), 1605. Stevenson, Steenson, Macstophane, M'Steen: which is the original? which the translation? Or were these separate creations of the patronymic, some English, some Gaelic? The curiously compact territory in which we find them seated — Ayr, Lanark, Peebles, Stirling, Perth, Fife, and the Lothians — would seem to forbid the supposition. 9

"Stevenson — or according to tradition of one of the proscribed of the clan MacGregor, who was born among the willows or in a hill-side sheep-pen — 'Son of my love,' a heraldic bar sinister, but history reveals a reason for the birth among the willows far other than the sinister aspect of the name": these are the dark words of Mr. Cosmo Innes; but history or tradition, being interrogated, tells a somewhat tangled tale. The heir of Macgregor of Glenorchy, murdered about 1353 by the Argyll Campbells, appears to have been the original "Son of my love"; and his more loyal clansmen took the name to fight under. It may be supposed the story of their resistance became popular, and the name in some sort identified with the idea of opposition to the Campbells. Twice afterwards, on some renewed aggression, in 1502 and 1552, we find the Macgregors again banding themselves into a sept of “Sons of my love”; and when the great disaster fell on them in 1603, the whole original legend re-appears, and we have the heir of Alaster of Glenstrae born “among the willows” of a fugitive mother, and the more loyal clansmen again rallying under the name of Stevenson. A story would not be told so often unless it had some base in fact; nor (if there were no bond at all between the Red Macgregors and the Stevensons) would that extraneous and somewhat uncouth name be so much repeated in the legends of the Children of the Mist.

But I am enabled, by my very lively and obliging correspondent, Mr. George A. Macgregor Stevenson of New York, to give an actual instance. His grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather, and great-great-great-grandfather, all used the names of Macgregor and Stevenson as occasion served; being perhaps Macgregor by night and Stevenson by day. The great-great-great-grandfather was a mighty man of his hands, marched with the clan in the ‘Forty-five, and returned with *spolia opima* in the shape of a sword, which he had wrested from an officer in the retreat, and which is in the possession of my correspondent[10] to this day. His great-grandson (the grandfather of my correspondent), being converted to Methodism by some wayside preacher, discarded in a moment his name, his old nature, and his political principles, and with the zeal of a proselyte sealed his adherence to the Protestant Succession by baptising his next son George. This George became the publisher and editor of the *Wesleyan Times*. His children were brought up in ignorance of their Highland pedigree; and my correspondent was puzzled to overhear his father speak of him as a true Macgregor, and amazed to find, in rummaging about that peaceful and pious house, the sword of the Hanoverian officer. After he was grown up and was better informed of his descent, “I frequently asked my father,” he writes, “why he did not use the name of Macgregor; his replies were significant, and give a picture of the man: ‘It isn’t a good *Methodist* name. You can use it, but it will do you no *good*.’ Yet the old gentleman, by way of pleasantry, used to announce himself to friends as ‘Colonel Macgregor.’”

Here, then, are certain Macgregors habitually using the name of Stevenson, and at last, under the influence of Methodism, adopting it entirely. Doubtless a proscribed clan could not be particular; they took a name as a man takes an umbrella against a shower; as Rob Roy took Campbell, and his son took Drummond. But this case is different; Stevenson was not taken and left — it was consistently adhered to. It does not in the least follow that all Stevensons are of the clan Alpin; but it does follow that some may be. And I cannot conceal from myself the possibility that James Stevenson in Glasgow, my first authentic ancestor, may have had a Highland *alias* upon his conscience and a claymore in his back parlour.

To one more tradition I may allude, that we are somehow descended from a French barber-surgeon who came to St. Andrews in the service of one of the Cardinal 11 Beatons. No details were added. But the very name of France was so detested in my family for three generations, that I am tempted to suppose there may be something in it.

An error: Stevensons owned at this date the barony of Dolphingston in Haddingtonshire, Montgrennan in Ayrshire, and several other lesser places.

Pitcairn's "Criminal Trials," at large. — [R. L. S.]

Fountainhall's "Decisions," vol. i. p, 132, 186, 204, 368. — [R. L. S.]

Ibid. p, 299. — [R. L. S.]

Working farmer: Fr. *laboureur*.

This John Stevenson was not the only "witness" of the name; other Stevensons were actually killed during the persecutions, in the Glen of Trool, on Pentland, etc.; and it is very possible that the author's own ancestor was one of the mounted party embodied by Muir of Caldwell, only a day too late for Pentland.

Wodrow Society's "Select Biographies," vol. ii. — [R. L. S.]

Though the districts here named are those in which the name of Stevenson is most common, it is in point of fact far more wide-spread than the text indicates, and occurs from Dumfries and Berwickshire to Aberdeen and Orkney.

Mr. J.H. Stevenson is satisfied that these speculations as to a possible Norse, Highland, or French origin are vain. All we know about the engineer family is that it was sprung from a stock of Westland Whigs settled in the latter part of the seventeenth century in the parish of Neilston, as mentioned at the beginning of the next chapter. It may be noted that the Ayrshire parish of Stevenson, the lands of which are said to have received the name in the twelfth century, lies within thirteen miles south-west of this place. The lands of Stevenson in Lanarkshire first mentioned in the next century, in the Ragman Roll, lie within twenty miles east.

CHAPTER I

DOMESTIC ANNALS

It is believed that in 1665, James Stevenson in Nether Carsewell, parish of Neilston, county of Renfrew, and presumably a tenant farmer, married one Jean Keir; and in 1675, without doubt, there was born to these two a son Robert, possibly a maltster in Glasgow. In 1710, Robert married, for a second time, Elizabeth Cumming, and there was born to them, in 1720, another Robert, certainly a maltster in Glasgow. In 1742, Robert the second married Margaret Fulton (Margret, she called herself), by whom he had ten children, among whom were Hugh, born February 1749, and Alan, born June 1752.

With these two brothers my story begins. Their deaths were simultaneous; their lives unusually brief and full. Tradition whispered me in childhood they were the owners of an islet near St. Kitts; and it is certain they had risen to be at the head of considerable interests in the West Indies, which Hugh managed abroad and Alan at home, at an age when others are still curveting a clerk's stool. My kinsman, Mr. Stevenson of Stirling, has heard his father mention that there had been "something romantic" about Alan's marriage: and, alas! he has forgotten what. It was early at least. His wife was Jean, daughter of David Lillie, a builder in Glasgow, and several times "Deacon of the Wrights": the date of the marriage has not reached me: but on 8th June 1772, when Robert, the only child of the union, was born, the husband and father had scarce passed, or had not yet attained, his twentieth year. Here was a youth making haste to give 13 hostages to fortune. But this early scene of prosperity in love and business was on the point of closing.

There hung in the house of this young family, and successively in those of my grandfather and father, an oil painting of a ship of many tons burthen. Doubtless the brothers had an interest in the vessel; I was told she had belonged to them outright; and the picture was preserved through years of hardship, and remains to this day in the possession of the family, the only memorial of my great-grandsire Alan. It was on this ship that he sailed on his last adventure, summoned to the West Indies by Hugh. An agent had proved unfaithful on a serious scale; and it used to be told me in my childhood how the brothers pursued him from one island to another in an open boat, were exposed to the pernicious dews of the tropics, and simultaneously struck down. The dates and places of their deaths (now before me) would seem to indicate a more scattered and prolonged pursuit: Hugh, on the 16th April 1774, in Tobago, within sight of Trinidad; Alan, so late as May 26th, and so far away as "Santt Kittes," in the Leeward Islands — both, says the family Bible, "of a fiver" (!). The death of Hugh was probably announced by Alan in a letter, to which we may refer the details of the open boat and the dew. Thus, at least, in something like the course of post, both were called away, the one twenty-five, the other twenty-two; their brief generation became extinct, their short-lived house fell with them; and "in these lawless parts and lawless times" — the words are my grandfather's — their property was stolen or became involved. Many years later, I understand some small recovery to have been made; but at the moment almost the whole means of the family seem to have perished with the young merchants. On the 27th April, eleven days after Hugh Stevenson, twenty-nine before Alan, died David Lillie, the Deacon of the Wrights; so that mother and son were orphaned in one month. Thus, from a few scraps of paper bearing little beyond dates, we construct the 14 outlines of the tragedy that shadowed the cradle of Robert Stevenson.

Jean Lillie was a young woman of strong sense, well fitted to contend with poverty, and of a pious disposition, which it is like that these misfortunes heated. Like so many other widowed Scotswomen, she vowed her son should wag his head in a pulpit; but her means were inadequate to her ambition. A charity school, and some time under a Mr. M'Intyre, "a famous linguist," were all she could afford in the way of education to the would-be minister. He learned no Greek; in one place he mentions that the Orations of Cicero were his highest book in Latin; in another that he had "delighted" in Virgil and Horace; but his delight could never have been scholarly. This appears to have been the whole of his training previous to an event which changed his own destiny and moulded that of his descendants — the second marriage of his mother.

There was a Merchant-Burgess of Edinburgh of the name of Thomas Smith. The Smith pedigree has been traced a little more particularly than the Stevensons', with a similar dearth of illustrious names. One character seems to have appeared, indeed, for a moment at the wings of history: a skipper of Dundee who smuggled over some Jacobite bigwig at the time of the 'Fifteen, and was afterwards drowned in Dundee harbour while going on board his ship. With this exception, the generations of the Smiths present no conceivable interest even to a descendant; and Thomas, of Edinburgh, was the first to issue from respectable obscurity. His father, a skipper out of Broughty Ferry, was drowned at sea while Thomas was still young. He seems to have owned a ship or two — whalers, I suppose, or coasters — and to have been a member of the Dundee Trinity House, whatever that implies.

On his death the widow remained in Broughty, and the son came to push his future in Edinburgh. There is a story told of him in the family which I repeat here 15 because I shall have to tell later on a similar, but more perfectly authenticated, experience of his stepson, Robert Stevenson. Word reached Thomas that his mother was unwell, and he prepared to leave for Broughty on the morrow. It was between two and three in the morning, and the early northern daylight was already clear, when he awoke and beheld the curtains at the bed-foot drawn aside and his mother appear in the interval, smile upon him for a moment, and then vanish. The sequel is stereotype: he took the time by his watch, and arrived at Broughty to learn it was the very moment of her death. The incident is at least curious in having happened to such a person — as the tale is being told of him. In all else, he appears as a man, ardent, passionate, practical, designed for affairs and prospering in them far beyond the average. He founded a solid business in lamps and oils, and was the sole proprietor of a concern called the Greenside Company's Works — ”a multifarious concern it was," writes my cousin, Professor Swan, "of tinsmiths, coppersmiths, brassfounders, blacksmiths, and japanners." He was also, it seems, a shipowner and underwriter. He built himself "a land" — Nos. 1 and 2 Baxter's Place, then no such unfashionable neighbourhood — and died, leaving his only son in easy circumstances, and giving to his three surviving daughters portions of five thousand pounds and upwards. There is no standard of success in life; but in one of its meanings, this is to succeed.

In what we know of his opinions, he makes a figure highly characteristic of the time. A high Tory and patriot, a captain — so I find it in my notes — of Edinburgh Spearmen, and on duty in the Castle during the Muir and Palmer troubles, he bequeathed to his descendants a bloodless sword and a somewhat violent tradition, both long preserved. The judge who sat on Muir and Palmer, the famous Braxfield, let fall from the bench the *obiter dictum* — ”I never liked the French all my days, but now I hate them." If Thomas Smith, the Edinburgh Spearman, were 16 in court, he must have been tempted to applaud. The people of that land were his abhorrence; he loathed Buonaparte like Antichrist. Towards the end he fell into a kind of dotage; his family must entertain him with games of tin soldiers, which he took a childish pleasure to array and overset; but those who played with him must be upon their guard, for if his side, which was always that of the English against the French, should chance to be defeated, there would be trouble in Baxter's Place. For these opinions he may almost be said to have suffered. Baptised and brought up in the Church of Scotland, he had, upon some conscientious scruple, joined the communion of the Baptists. Like other Nonconformists, these were inclined to the Liberal side in politics, and, at least in the beginning, regarded Buonaparte as a deliverer. From the time of his joining the Spearmen, Thomas Smith became in consequence a bugbear to his brethren in the faith. “They that take the sword shall perish with the sword,” they told him; they gave him “no rest”; “his position became intolerable”; it was plain he must choose between his political and his religious tenets; and in the last years of his life, about 1812, he returned to the Church of his fathers.

August 1786 was the date of his chief advancement, when, having designed a system of oil lights to take the place of the primitive coal fires before in use, he was dubbed engineer to the newly-formed Board of Northern Lighthouses. Not only were his fortunes bettered by the appointment, but he was introduced to a new and wider field for the exercise of his abilities, and a new way of life highly agreeable to his active constitution. He seems to have rejoiced in the long journeys, and to have combined them with the practice of field sports. “A tall, stout man coming ashore with his gun over his arm” — so he was described to my father — the only description that has come down to me — by a light-keeper old in the service. Nor did this change come alone. On the 9th July of the same year, [17] Thomas Smith had been left for the second time a widower. As he was still but thirty-three years old, prospering in his affairs, newly advanced in the world, and encumbered at the time with a family of children, five in number, it was natural that he should entertain the notion of another wife. Expeditious in business, he was no less so in his choice; and it was not later than June 1787 — for my grandfather is described as still in his fifteenth year — that he married the widow of Alan Stevenson.

The perilous experiment of bringing together two families for once succeeded. Mr. Smith’s two eldest daughters, Jean and Janet, fervent in piety, unwearied in kind deeds, were well qualified both to appreciate and to attract the stepmother; and her son, on the other hand, seems to have found immediate favour in the eyes of Mr. Smith. It is, perhaps, easy to exaggerate the ready-made resemblances; the tired woman must have done much to fashion girls who were under ten; the man, lusty and opinionated, must have stamped a strong impression on the boy of fifteen. But the cleavage of the family was too marked, the identity of character and interest produced between the two men on the one hand, and the three women on the other, was too complete to have been the result of influence alone. Particular bonds of union must have pre-existed on each side. And there is no doubt that the man and the boy met with common ambitions, and a common bent, to the practice of that which had not so long before acquired the name of civil engineering.

For the profession which is now so thronged, famous, and influential, was then a thing of yesterday. My grandfather had an anecdote of Smeaton, probably learned from John Clerk of Eldin, their common friend. Smeaton was asked by the Duke of Argyll to visit the West Highland coast for a professional purpose. He refused, appalled, it seems, by the rough travelling. "You can recommend some other fit person?" asked the Duke. "No," said 18 Smeaton, "I'm sorry I can't." "What!" cried the Duke, "a profession with only one man in it! Pray, who taught you?" "Why," said Smeaton, "I believe I may say I was self-taught, an't please your grace." Smeaton, at the date of Thomas Smith's third marriage, was yet living; and as the one had grown to the new profession from his place at the instrument-maker's, the other was beginning to enter it by the way of his trade. The engineer of to-day is confronted with a library of acquired results; tables and formulæ to the value of folios full have been calculated and recorded; and the student finds everywhere in front of him the footprints of the pioneers. In the eighteenth century the field was largely unexplored; the engineer must read with his own eyes the face of nature; he arose a volunteer, from the workshop or the mill, to undertake works which were at once inventions and adventures. It was not a science then — it was a living art; and it visibly grew under the eyes and between the hands of its practitioners.

The charm of such an occupation was strongly felt by stepfather and stepson. It chanced that Thomas Smith was a reformer; the superiority of his proposed lamp and reflectors over open fires of coal secured his appointment; and no sooner had he set his hand to the task than the interest of that employment mastered him. The vacant stage on which he was to act, and where all had yet to be created — the greatness of the difficulties, the smallness of the means intrusted him — would rouse a man of his disposition like a call to battle. The lad introduced by marriage under his roof was of a character to sympathise; the public usefulness of the service would appeal to his judgment, the perpetual need for fresh expedients stimulate his ingenuity. And there was another attraction which, in the younger man at least, appealed to, and perhaps first aroused a profound and enduring sentiment of romance: I mean the attraction of the life. The seas into which his labours carried the new engineer were still 19 scarce charted, the coasts still dark; his way on shore was often far beyond the convenience of any road; the isles in which he must sojourn were still partly savage. He must toss much in boats; he must often adventure on horseback by the dubious bridle-track through unfrequented wildernesses; he must sometimes plant his lighthouse in the very camp of wreckers; and he was continually enforced to the vicissitudes of outdoor life. The joy of my grandfather in this career was strong as the love of woman. It lasted him through youth and manhood, it burned strong in age, and at the approach of death his last yearning was to renew these loved experiences. What he felt himself he continued to attribute to all around him. And to this supposed sentiment in others I find him continually, almost pathetically, appealing: often in vain.

Snared by these interests, the boy seems to have become almost at once the eager confidant and adviser of his new connection; the Church, if he had ever entertained the prospect very warmly, faded from his view; and at the age of nineteen I find him already in a post of some authority, superintending the construction of the lighthouse on the isle of Little Cumbrae, in the Firth of Clyde. The change of aim seems to have caused or been accompanied by a change of character. It sounds absurd to couple the name of my grandfather with the word indolence; but the lad who had been destined from the cradle to the Church, and who had attained the age of fifteen without acquiring more than a moderate knowledge of Latin, was at least no unusual student. And from the day of his charge at Little Cumbrae he steps before us what he remained until the end, a man of the most zealous industry, greedy of occupation, greedy of knowledge, a stern husband of time, a reader, a writer, unflagging in his task of self-improvement. Thenceforward his summers were spent directing works and ruling workmen, now in uninhabited, now in half-savage islands; his winters were set apart, first at the Andersonian Institution,[20] then at the University of Edinburgh to improve himself in mathematics, chemistry, natural history, agriculture, moral philosophy, and logic; a bearded student — although no doubt scrupulously shaved. I find one reference to his years in class which will have a meaning for all who have studied in Scottish Universities. He mentions a recommendation made by the professor of logic. “The high-school men,” he writes, “and *bearded men like myself*, were all attention.” If my grandfather were throughout life a thought too studious of the art of getting on, much must be forgiven to the bearded and belated student who looked across, with a sense of difference, at “the high-school men.” Here was a gulf to be crossed; but already he could feel that he had made a beginning, and that must have been a proud hour when he devoted his earliest earnings to the repayment of the charitable foundation in which he had received the rudiments of knowledge.

In yet another way he followed the example of his father-in-law, and from 1794 to 1807, when the affairs of the Bell Rock made it necessary for him to resign, he served in different corps of volunteers. In the last of these he rose to a position of distinction, no less than captain of the Grenadier Company, and his colonel, in accepting his resignation, entreated he would do them “the favour of continuing as an honorary member of a corps which has been so much indebted for your zeal and exertions.”

To very pious women the men of the house are apt to appear worldly. The wife, as she puts on her new bonnet before church, is apt to sigh over that assiduity which enabled her husband to pay the milliner's bill. And in the household of the Smiths and Stevensons the women were not only extremely pious, but the men were in reality a trifle worldly. Religious they both were; conscious, like all Scots, of the fragility and unreality of that scene in which we play our uncomprehended parts; like all Scots, realising daily and hourly the sense of 21 another will than ours and a perpetual direction in the affairs of life. But the current of their endeavours flowed in a more obvious channel. They had got on so far; to get on further was their next ambition — to gather wealth, to rise in society, to leave their descendants higher than themselves, to be (in some sense) among the founders of families. Scott was in the same town nourishing similar dreams. But in the eyes of the women these dreams would be foolish and idolatrous.

I have before me some volumes of old letters addressed to Mrs. Smith and the two girls, her favourites, which depict in a strong light their characters and the society in which they moved.

"My very dear and much esteemed Friend," writes one correspondent, "this day being the anniversary of our acquaintance, I feel inclined to address you; but where shall I find words to express the fealings of a graitful *Heart*, first to the Lord who graiciously inclined you on this day last year to notice an afflicted Strainger providentially cast in your way far from any Earthly friend?… Methinks I shall hear him say unto you, 'Inasmuch as ye shewed kindness to my afflicted handmaiden, ye did it unto me.'"

This is to Jean; but the same afflicted lady wrote indifferently to Jean, to Janet, and to Mrs. Smith, whom she calls "my Edinburgh mother." It is plain the three were as one person, moving to acts of kindness, like the Graces, inarmed. Too much stress must not be laid on the style of this correspondence; Clarinda survived, not far away, and may have met the ladies on the Calton Hill; and many of the writers appear, underneath the conventions of the period, to be genuinely moved. But what unpleasantly strikes a reader is that these devout unfortunates found a revenue in their devotion. It is everywhere the same tale: on the side of the soft-hearted ladies, substantial acts of help; on the side of the correspondents, affection, italics, texts, ecstasies, and imperfect spelling. When a midwife is recommended, not at all for proficiency in her important art, but because she has "a sister whom 22 I [the correspondent] esteem and respect, and [who] is a spiritual daughter of my Hond Father in the Gosple," the mask seems to be torn off, and the wages of godliness appear too openly. Capacity is a secondary matter in a midwife, temper in a servant, affection in a daughter, and the repetition of a shibboleth fulfils the law. Common decency is at times forgot in the same page with the most sanctified advice and aspiration. Thus I am introduced to a correspondent who appears to have been at the time the housekeeper at Invermay, and who writes to condole with my grandmother in a season of distress. For nearly half a sheet she keeps to the point with an excellent discretion in language; then suddenly breaks out:

"It was fully my intention to have left this at Martinmass, but the Lord fixes the bounds of our habitation. I have had more need of patience in my situation here than in any other, partly from the very violent, unsteady, deceitful temper of the Mistress of the Family, and also from the state of the house. It was in a train of repair when I came here two years ago, and is still in Confusion. There is above six Thousand Pounds' worth of Furniture come from London to be put up when the rooms are completely finished; and then, woe be to the Person who is Housekeeper at Invermay!"

And by the tail of the document, which is torn, I see she goes on to ask the bereaved family to seek her a new place. It is extraordinary that people should have been so deceived in so careless an impostor; that a few sprinkled "God willings" should have blinded them to the essence of this venomous letter; and that they should have been at the pains to bind it in with others (many of them highly touching) in their memorial of harrowing days. But the good ladies were without guile and without suspicion; they were victims marked for the axe, and the religious impostors snuffed up the wind as they drew near.

I have referred above to my grandmother; it was no slip of the pen: for by an extraordinary arrangement, in which it is hard not to suspect the managing hand of a mother, Jean Smith became the wife of Robert Stevenson. Mrs. Smith had failed in her design to make her son a 23 minister, and she saw him daily more immersed in business and worldly ambition. One thing remained that she might do: she might secure for him a godly wife, that great means of sanctification; and she had two under her hand, trained by herself, her dear friends and daughters both in law and love — Jean and Janet. Jean's complexion was extremely pale, Janet's was florid; my grandmother's nose was straight, my great-aunt's aquiline; but by the sound of the voice, not even a son was able to distinguish one from other. The marriage of a man of twenty-seven and a girl of twenty who have lived for twelve years as brother and sister, is difficult to conceive. It took place, however, and thus in 1799 the family was still further cemented by the union of a representative of the male or worldly element with one of the female and devout.

This essential difference remained unbridged, yet never diminished the strength of their relation. My grandfather pursued his design of advancing in the world with some measure of success; rose to distinction in his calling, grew to be the familiar of members of Parliament, judges of the Court of Session, and “landed gentlemen”; learned a ready address, had a flow of interesting conversation, and when he was referred to as “a highly respectable *bourgeois*,” resented the description. My grandmother remained to the end devout and unambitious, occupied with her Bible, her children, and her house; easily shocked, and associating largely with a clique of godly parasites. I do not know if she called in the midwife already referred to; but the principle on which that lady was recommended, she accepted fully. The cook was a godly woman, the butcher a Christian man, and the table suffered. The scene has been often described to me of my grandfather sawing with darkened countenance at some indissoluble joint — ”Preserve me, my dear, what kind of a reedy, stringy beast is this?” — of the joint removed, the pudding substituted and uncovered; and of my grandmother’s anxious glance and hasty, deprecatory comment, “Just mismanaged!” 24 Yet with the invincible obstinacy of soft natures, she would adhere to the godly woman and the Christian man, or find others of the same kidney to replace them. One of her confidants had once a narrow escape; an unwieldy old woman, she had fallen from an outside stair in a close of the Old Town; and my grandmother rejoiced to communicate the providential circumstance that a baker had been passing underneath with his bread upon his head. “I would like to know what kind of providence the baker thought it!” cried my grandfather.

But the sally must have been unique. In all else that I have heard or read of him, so far from criticising, he was doing his utmost to honour and even to emulate his wife’s pronounced opinions. In the only letter which has come to my hand of Thomas Smith’s, I find him informing his wife that he was “in time for afternoon church “; similar assurances or cognate excuses abound in the correspondence of Robert Stevenson; and it is comical and pretty to see the two generations paying the same court to a female piety more highly strung: Thomas Smith to the mother of Robert Stevenson — Robert Stevenson to the daughter of Thomas Smith. And if for once my grandfather suffered himself to be hurried, by his sense of humour and justice, into that remark about the case of Providence and the Baker, I should be sorry for any of his children who should have stumbled into the same attitude of criticism. In the apocalyptic style of the housekeeper of Invermay, woe be to that person! But there was no fear; husband and sons all entertained for the pious, tender soul the same chivalrous and moved affection. I have spoken with one who remembered her, and who had been the intimate and equal of her sons, and I found this witness had been struck, as I had been, with a sense of disproportion between the warmth of the adoration felt and the nature of the woman, whether as described or observed. She diligently read and marked her Bible; she was a tender nurse; she had a sense of humour under strong control; she talked and found some amusement 25 at her (or rather at her husband's) dinner-parties. It is conceivable that even my grandmother was amenable to the seductions of dress; at least I find her husband inquiring anxiously about "the gowns from Glasgow," and very careful to describe the toilet of the Princess Charlotte, whom he had seen in church "in a Pelisse and Bonnet of the same colour of cloth as the Boys' Dress jackets, trimmed with blue satin ribbons; the hat or Bonnet, Mr. Spittal said, was a Parisian slouch, and had a plume of three white feathers." But all this leaves a blank impression, and it is rather by reading backward in these old musty letters, which have moved me now to laughter and now to impatience, that I glean occasional glimpses of how she seemed to her contemporaries, and trace (at work in her queer world of godly and grateful parasites) a mobile and responsive nature. Fashion moulds us, and particularly women, deeper than we sometimes think; but a little while ago, and, in some circles, women stood or fell by the degree of their appreciation of old pictures; in the early years of the century (and surely with more reason) a character like that of my grandmother warmed, charmed, and subdued, like a strain of music, the hearts of the men of her own household. And there is little doubt that Mrs. Smith, as she looked on at the domestic life of her son and her step-daughter, and numbered the heads in their increasing nursery, must have breathed fervent thanks to her Creator.

Yet this was to be a family unusually tried; it was not for nothing that one of the godly women saluted Miss Janet Smith as "a veteran in affliction"; and they were all before middle life experienced in that form of service. By the 1st of January 1808, besides a pair of still-born twins, five children had been born and still survived to the young couple. By the 11th two were gone; by the 28th a third had followed, and the two others were still in danger. In the letters of a former nurserymaid — I give her name, Jean Mitchell, *honoris causa* — we are enabled to feel, even at this 26 distance of time, some of the bitterness of that month of bereavement.

"I have this day received," she writes to Miss Janet, "the melancholy news of my dear babys' deaths. My heart is like to break for my dear Mrs. Stevenson. O may she be supported on this trying occasion! I hope her other three babys will be spared to her. O, Miss Smith, did I think when I parted from my sweet babys that I never was to see them more?" "I received," she begins her next, "the mournful news of my dear Jessie's death. I also received the hair of my three sweet babys, which I will preserve as dear to their memorys and as a token of Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson's friendship and esteem. At my leisure hours, when the children are in bed, they occupy all my thoughts, I dream of them. About two weeks ago, I dreamed that my sweet little Jessie came running to me in her usual way, and I took her in my arms. O my dear babys, were mortal eyes permitted to see them in heaven, we would not repine nor grieve for their loss."

By the 29th of February, the Reverend John Campbell, a man of obvious sense and human value, but hateful to the present biographer, because he wrote so many letters and conveyed so little information, summed up this first period of affliction in a letter to Miss Smith: "Your dear sister but a little while ago had a full nursery, and the dear blooming creatures sitting around her table filled her breast with hope that one day they should fill active stations in society and become an ornament in the Church below. But ah!"

Near a hundred years ago these little creatures ceased to be, and for not much less a period the tears have been dried. And to this day, looking in these stitched sheaves of letters, we hear the sound of many soft-hearted women sobbing for the lost. Never was such a massacre of the innocents; teething and chincough and scarlet fever and small-pox ran the round; and little Lillies, and Smiths, and Stevensons fell like moths about a candle; and nearly all the sympathetic correspondents deplore and recall the little losses of their own. "It is impossible to describe the Heavnly looks of the Dear Babe the three last days of his life," writes Mrs. Laurie to Mrs. Smith. "Never — never, my dear aunt, could I wish to eface the rememberance of this Dear Child. Never, never, my dear aunt!" And so 27 soon the memory of the dead and the dust of the survivors are buried in one grave.

There was another death in 1812; it passes almost unremarked; a single funeral seemed but a small event to these "veterans in affliction"; and by 1816 the nursery was full again. Seven little hopefuls enlivened the house; some were growing up; to the elder girl my grandfather already wrote notes in current hand at the tail of his letters to his wife: and to the elder boys he had begun to print, with laborious care, sheets of childish gossip and pedantic applications. Here, for instance, under date of May 26th, 1816, is part of a mythological account of London, with a moral for the three gentlemen, "Messieurs Alan, Robert, and James Stevenson," to whom the document is addressed:

"There are many prisons here like Bridewell, for, like other large towns, there are many bad men here as well as many good men. The natives of London are in general not so tall and strong as the people of Edinburgh, because they have not so much pure air, and instead of taking porridge they eat cakes made with sugar and plums. Here you have thousands of carts to draw timber, thousands of coaches to take you to all parts of the town, and thousands of boats to sail on the river Thames. But you must have money to pay, otherwise you can get nothing. Now the way to get money is, become clever men and men of education, by being good scholars."

From the same absence, he writes to his wife on a Sunday:

"It is now about eight o'clock with me, and I imagine you to be busy with the young folks, hearing the questions [*Anglicé*, catechism], and indulging the boys with a chapter from the large Bible, with their interrogations and your answers in the soundest doctrine. I hope James is getting his verse as usual, and that Mary is not forgetting her little *hymn*. While Jeannie will be reading Wotherspoon, or some other suitable and instructive book, I presume our friend, Aunt Mary, will have just arrived with the news of a *throng kirk* [a crowded church] and a great sermon. You may mention, with my compliments to my mother, that I was at St. Paul's to-day, and attended a very excellent service with Mr. James Lawrie. The text was 'Examine and see that ye be in the faith.'"

A twinkle of humour lights up this evocation of the distant 28 scene — the humour of happy men and happy homes. Yet it is penned upon the threshold of fresh sorrow. James and Mary — he of the verse and she of the hymn — did not much more than survive to welcome their returning father. On the 25th, one of the godly women writes to Janet:

"My dearest beloved madam, when I last parted from you, you was so affected with your affliction [you? or I?] could think of nothing else. But on Saturday, when I went to inquire after your health, how was I startled to hear that dear James was gone! Ah, what is this? My dear benefactors, doing so much good to many, to the Lord, suddenly to be deprived of their most valued comforts? I was thrown into great perplexity, could do nothing but murmur, why these things were done to such a family. I could not rest, but at midnight, whether spoken [or not] it was presented to my mind — 'Those whom ye deplore are walking with me in white.' I conclude from this the Lord saying to sweet Mrs. Stevenson: 'I gave them to be brought up for me: well done, good and faithful! they are fully prepared, and now I must present them to my father and your father, to my God and your God.'"

It would be hard to lay on flattery with a more sure and daring hand. I quote it as a model of a letter of condolence; be sure it would console. Very different, perhaps quite as welcome, is this from a lighthouse inspector to my grandfather:

"In reading your letter the trickling tear ran down my cheeks in silent sorrow for your departed dear ones, my sweet little friends. Well do I remember, and you will call to mind, their little innocent and interesting stories. Often have they come round me and taken me by the hand, but alas! I am no more destined to behold them."

The child who is taken becomes canonised, and the looks of the homeliest babe seem in the retrospect "heavenly the three last days of his life." But it appears that James and Mary had indeed been children more than usually engaging; a record was preserved a long while in the family of their remarks and "little innocent and interesting stories," and the blow and the blank were the more sensible.

Early the next month Robert Stevenson must proceed upon his voyage of inspection, part by land, part by sea. He left his wife plunged in low spirits; the thought of his 29 loss, and still more of her concern, was continually present in his mind, and he draws in his letters home an interesting picture of his family relations: —

"*Windygates Inn, Monday (Postmark July 16th).*

"My dearest Jeannie, — While the people of the inn are getting me a little bit of something to eat, I sit down to tell you that I had a most excellent passage across the water, and got to Wemyss at mid-day. I hope the children will be very good, and that Robert will take a course with you to learn his Latin lessons daily; he may, however, read English in company. Let them have strawberries on Saturdays."

"*Westhaven, 17th July.*

"I have been occupied to-day at the harbour of Newport, opposite Dundee, and am this far on my way to Arbroath. You may tell the boys that I slept last night in Mr. Steadman's tent. I found my bed rather hard, but the lodgings were otherwise extremely comfortable. The encampment is on the Fife side of the Tay, immediately opposite to Dundee. From the door of the tent you command the most beautiful view of the Firth, both up and down, to a great extent. At night all was serene and still, the sky presented the most beautiful appearance of bright stars, and the morning was ushered in with the song of many little birds."

"*Aberdeen, July 19th.*

"I hope, my dear, that you are going out of doors regularly and taking much exercise. I would have you to *make the markets daily* — and by all means to take a seat in the coach once or twice in the week and see what is going on in town. [The family were at the sea-side.] It will be good not to be too great a stranger to the house. It will be rather painful at first, but as it is to be done, I would have you not to be too strange to the house in town.

"Tell the boys that I fell in with a soldier — his name is Henderson — who was twelve years with Lord Wellington and other commanders. He returned very lately with only eightpence-halfpenny in his pocket, and found his father and mother both in life, though they had never heard from him, nor he from them. He carried my great-coat and umbrella a few miles."

"*Fraserburgh, July 20th.*

"Fraserburgh is the same dull place which [Auntie] Mary and Jeannie found it. As I am travelling along the coast which they are acquainted with, you had better cause Robert bring down the map from Edinburgh: and it will be a good exercise in geography for the young folks to trace my course. I hope they have entered upon the writing. The library will afford abundance of excellent books, which I wish you would employ a little. I hope you are 30 doing me the favour to go much out with the boys, which will do you much good and prevent them from getting so very much over-heated."

[*To the Boys — Printed.*]

"When I had last the pleasure of writing to you, your dear little brother James and your sweet little sister Mary were still with us. But it has pleased God to remove them to another and a better world, and we must submit to the will of Providence. I must, however, request of you to think sometimes upon them, and to be very careful not to do anything that will displease or vex your mother. It is therefore proper that you do not roamp [Scottish indeed] too much about, and that you learn your lessons.

"I went to Fraserburgh and visited Kinnaird Head Lighthouse, which I found in good order. All this time I travelled upon good roads, and paid many a toll-man by the way; but from Fraserburgh to Banff there is no toll-bars, and the road is so bad that I had to walk up and down many a hill, and for want of bridges the horses had to drag the chaise up to the middle of the wheels in water. At Banff I saw a large ship of 300 tons lying on the sands upon her beam-ends, and a wreck for want of a good harbour. Captain Wilson — to whom I beg my compliments — -will show you a ship of 300 tons. At the towns of Macduff, Banff, and Portsoy, many of the houses are built of marble, and the rocks on this part of the coast or sea-side are marble. But, my dear Boys, unless marble be polished and dressed, it is a very coarse-looking stone, and has no more beauty than common rock. As a proof of this, ask the favour of your mother to take you to Thomson's Marble Works in South Leith, and you will see marble in all its stages, and perhaps you may there find Portsoy marble! The use I wish to make of this is to tell you that, without education, a man is just like a block of rough, unpolished marble. Notice, in proof of this, how much Mr. Neill and Mr. M'Gregor [the tutor] know, and observe how little a man knows who is not a good scholar. On my way to Fochabers I passed through many thousand acres of Fir timber, and saw many deer running in these woods.”

[*To Mrs. Stevenson.*]
“*Inverness, July 21st.*
“I propose going to church in the afternoon, and as I have breakfasted late, I shall afterwards take a walk, and dine about six o’clock. I do not know who is the clergyman here, but I shall think of you all. I travelled in the mail-coach [from Banff] almost alone. While it was daylight I kept the top, and the passing along a country I had never before seen was a considerable amusement. But, my dear, you are all much in my thoughts, and many are the objects which recall the recollection of our tender and engaging children we have so recently lost. We must not, however, repine. 31 I could not for a moment wish any change of circumstances in their case; and in every comparative view of their state, I see the Lord’s goodness in removing them from an evil world to an abode of bliss; and I must earnestly hope that you may be enabled to take such a view of this affliction as to live in the happy prospect of our all meeting again to part no more — and that under such considerations you are getting up your spirits. I wish you would walk about, and by all means go to town, and do not sit much at home.”

“*Inverness, July 23rd.*
“I am duly favoured with your much-valued letter, and I am happy to find that you are so much with my mother, because that sort of variety has a tendency to occupy the mind, and to keep it from brooding too much upon one subject. Sensibility and tenderness are certainly two of the most interesting and pleasing qualities of the mind. These qualities are also none of the least of the many endearingments of the female character. But if that kind of sympathy and pleasing melancholy, which is familiar to us under distress, be much indulged, it becomes habitual, and takes such a hold of the mind as to absorb all the other affections, and unfit us for the duties and proper enjoyments of life. Resignation sinks into a kind of peevish discontent. I am far, however, from thinking there is the least danger of this in your case, my dear; for you have been on all occasions enabled to look upon the fortunes of this life as under the direction of a higher power, and have always preserved that propriety and consistency of conduct in all circumstances which endears your example to your family in particular, and to your friends. I am therefore, my dear, for you to go out much, and to go to the house up-stairs [he means to go up-stairs in the house, to visit the place of the dead children], and to put yourself in the way of the visits of your friends. I wish you would call on the Miss Grays, and it would be a

good thing upon a Saturday to dine with my mother, and take Meggy and all the family with you, and let them have their strawberries in town. The tickets of one of the *old-fashioned coaches* would take you all up, and if the evening were good, they could all walk down, excepting Meggy and little David.”

“*Inverness, July 25th, 11 p.m.*

“Captain Wemyss, of Wemyss, has come to Inverness to go the voyage with me, and as we are sleeping in a double-bedded room, I must no longer transgress. You must remember me the best way you can to the children.”

“*On board of the Lighthouse Yacht, July 29th.*

“I got to Cromarty yesterday about mid-day, and went to church. It happened to be the sacrament there, and I heard a Mr. Smith at that place conclude the service with a very suitable exhortation. There seemed a great concourse of people, but they 32 had rather an unfortunate day for them at the tent, as it rained a good deal. After drinking tea at the inn, Captain Wemyss accompanied me on board, and we sailed about eight last night. The wind at present being rather a beating one, I think I shall have an opportunity of standing into the bay of Wick, and leaving this letter to let you know my progress and that I am well.”

“*Lighthouse Yacht, Stornoway, August 4th*

“To-day we had prayers on deck as usual when at sea. I read the 14th chapter, I think, of Job. Captain Wemyss has been in the habit of doing this on board his own ship, agreeably to the Articles of War. Our passage round the Cape [Cape Wrath] was rather a cross one, and as the wind was northerly, we had a pretty heavy sea, but upon the whole have made a good passage, leaving many vessels behind us in Orkney. I am quite well, my dear; and Captain Wemyss, who has much spirit, and who is much given to observation, and a perfect enthusiast in his profession, enlivens the voyage greatly. Let me entreat you to move about much, and take a walk with the boys to Leith. I think they have still many places to see there, and I wish you would indulge them in this respect. Mr. Scales is the best person I know for showing them the sailcloth-weaving, etc., and he would have great pleasure in undertaking this. My dear, I trust soon to be with you, and that through the goodness of God we shall meet all well.

“There are two vessels lying here with emigrants for America, each with eighty people on board, at all ages, from a few days to upwards of sixty! Their prospects must be very forlorn to go with a slender purse for distant and unknown countries.”

“*Lighthouse Yacht, off Greenock, Aug. 18th.*

“It was after *church-time* before we got here, but we had prayers upon deck on the way up the Clyde. This has, upon the whole, been a very good voyage, and Captain Wemyss, who enjoys it much, has been an excellent companion; we met with pleasure, and shall part with regret.”

Strange that, after his long experience, my grandfather should have learned so little of the attitude and even the dialect of the spiritually-minded; that after forty-four years in a most religious circle, he could drop without sense of incongruity from a period of accepted phrases to “trust his wife was *getting up her spirits*,” or think to reassure her as to the character of Captain Wemyss by mentioning that he had read prayers on the deck of his frigate “*agreeably to the Articles of War*”! Yet there is no doubt — and it is one of the most agreeable features of the kindly series — that 33 he was doing his best to please, and there is little doubt that he succeeded. Almost all my grandfather’s private letters have been destroyed. This correspondence has not only been preserved entire, but stitched up in the same covers with the works of the godly women, the Reverend John Campbell, and the painful Mrs. Ogle. I did not think to mention the good dame, but she comes in usefully as an example. Amongst the treasures of the ladies of my family, her letters have been honoured with a volume to themselves. I read about a half of them myself; then handed over the task to one of stauncher resolution, with orders to communicate any fact that should be found to illuminate these pages. Not one was found; it was her only art to communicate by post second-rate sermons at second-hand; and such, I take it, was the correspondence in which my grandmother delighted. If I am right, that of Robert Stevenson, with his quaint smack of the contemporary “Sandford and Merton,” his interest in the whole page of experience, his perpetual quest, and fine scent of all that seems romantic to a boy, his needless pomp of language, his excellent good sense, his unfeigned, unstained, unwearied human kindliness, would seem to her, in a comparison, dry and trivial and worldly. And if these letters were by an exception cherished and preserved, it would be for one or both of two reasons — because they dealt with and were bitter-sweet reminders of a time of sorrow; or because she was pleased, perhaps touched, by the writer’s guileless efforts to seem spiritually-minded.

After this date there were two more births and two more deaths, so that the number of the family remained unchanged; in all five children survived to reach maturity and to outlive their parents.

CHAPTER II

THE SERVICE OF THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

I

It were hard to imagine a contrast more sharply defined than that between the lives of the men and women of this family: the one so chambered, so centred in the affections and the sensibilities; the other so active, healthy, and expeditious. From May to November, Thomas Smith and Robert Stevenson were on the mail, in the saddle, or at sea; and my grandfather, in particular, seems to have been possessed with a demon of activity in travel. In 1802, by direction of the Northern Lighthouse Board, he had visited the coast of England from St. Bees, in Cumberland, and round by the Scilly Islands to some place undecipherable by me; in all a distance of 2500 miles. In 1806 I find him starting "on a tour round the south coast of England, from the Humber to the Severn." Peace was not long declared ere he found means to visit Holland, where he was in time to see, in the navy-yard at Helvoetsluys, "about twenty of Bonaparte's *English flotilla* lying in a state of decay, the object of curiosity to Englishmen." By 1834 he seems to have been acquainted with the coast of France from Dieppe to Bordeaux; and a main part of his duty as Engineer to the Board of Northern Lights was one round of dangerous and laborious travel.

In 1786, when Thomas Smith first received the appointment, the extended and formidable coast of Scotland was lighted at a single point — the Isle of May, in the jaws of the Firth of Forth, where, on a tower already a hundred and 35 fifty years old, an open coal-fire blazed in an iron chauffer. The whole archipelago, thus nightly plunged in darkness, was shunned by sea-going vessels, and the favourite courses were north about Shetland and west about St. Kilda. When the Board met, four new lights formed the extent of their intentions — Kinnaird Head, in Aberdeenshire, at the eastern elbow of the coast; North Ronaldsay, in Orkney, to keep the north and guide ships passing to the south'ard of Shetland; Island Glass, on Harris, to mark the inner shore of the Hebrides and illuminate the navigation of the Minch; and the Mull of Kintyre. These works were to be attempted against obstacles, material and financial, that might have staggered the most bold. Smith had no ship at his command till 1791; the roads in those outlandish quarters where his business lay were scarce passable when they existed, and the tower on the Mull of Kintyre stood eleven months unlighted while the apparatus toiled and foundered by the way among rocks and mosses. Not only had towers to be built and apparatus transplanted, the supply of oil must be maintained, and the men fed, in the same inaccessible and distant scenes; a whole service, with its routine and hierarchy, had to be called out of nothing; and a new trade (that of lightkeeper) to be taught, recruited, and organised. The funds of the Board were at the first laughably inadequate. They embarked on their career on a loan of twelve hundred pounds, and their income in 1789, after relief by a fresh Act of Parliament, amounted to less than three hundred. It must be supposed that the thoughts of Thomas Smith, in these early years, were sometimes coloured with despair; and since he built and lighted one tower after another, and created and bequeathed to his successors the elements of an excellent administration, it may be conceded that he was not after all an unfortunate choice for a first engineer.

War added fresh complications. In 1794 Smith came "very near to be taken" by a French squadron. In 1813 Robert Stevenson was cruising about the neighbourhood of 36 Cape Wrath in the immediate fear of Commodore Rogers. The men, and especially the sailors, of the lighthouse service must be protected by a medal and ticket from the brutal activity of the press-gang. And the zeal of volunteer patriots was at times embarrassing.

"I set off on foot," writes my grandfather, "for Marazion, a town at the head of Mount's Bay, where I was in hopes of getting a boat to freight. I had just got that length, and was making the necessary inquiry, when a young man, accompanied by several idle-looking fellows, came up to me, and in a hasty tone said, 'Sir, in the king's name I seize your person and papers.' To which I replied that I should be glad to see his authority, and know the reason of an address so abrupt. He told me the want of time prevented his taking regular steps, but that it would be necessary for me to return to Penzance, as I was suspected of being a French spy. I proposed to submit my papers to the nearest Justice of Peace, who was immediately applied to, and came to the inn where I was. He seemed to be greatly agitated, and quite at a loss how to proceed. The complaint preferred against me was 'that I had examined the Longships Lighthouse with the most minute attention, and was no less particular in my inquiries at the keepers of the lighthouse regarding the sunk rocks lying off the Land's End, with the sets of the currents and tides along the coast: that I seemed particularly to regret the situation of the rocks called the Seven Stones, and the loss of a beacon which the Trinity Board had caused to be fixed on the Wolf Rock; that I had taken notes of the bearings of several sunk rocks, and a drawing of the lighthouse, and of Cape Cornwall. Further, that I had refused the honour of Lord Edgecombe's invitation to dinner, offering as an apology that I had some particular business on hand.'"

My grandfather produced in answer his credentials and letter of credit; but the justice, after perusing them, "very gravely observed that they were 'musty bits of paper,'" and proposed to maintain the arrest. Some more enlightened magistrates at Penzance relieved him of suspicion and left him at liberty to pursue his journey, — ”which I did with so much eagerness,” he adds, “that I gave the two coal lights on the Lizard only a very transient look.”

Lighthouse operations in Scotland differed essentially in character from those in England. The English coast is in comparison a habitable, homely place, well supplied with 37 towns; the Scottish presents hundreds of miles of savage islands and desolate moors. The Parliamentary committee of 1834, profoundly ignorant of this distinction, insisted with my grandfather that the work at the various stations should be let out on contract “in the neighbourhood,” where sheep and deer, and gulls and cormorants, and a few ragged gillies, perhaps crouching in a bee-hive house, made up the only neighbours. In such situations repairs and improvements could only be overtaken by collecting (as my grandfather expressed it) a few “lads,” placing them under charge of a foreman, and despatching them about the coast as occasion served. The particular danger of these seas increased the difficulty. The course of the lighthouse tender lies amid iron-bound coasts, among tide-races, the whirlpools of the Pentland Firth, flocks of islands, flocks of reefs, many of them uncharted. The aid of steam was not yet. At first in random coasting sloop, and afterwards in the cutter belonging to the service, the engineer must ply and run amongst these multiplied dangers, and sometimes late into the stormy autumn. For pages together my grandfather’s diary preserves a record of these rude experiences; of hard winds and rough seas; and of “the try-sail and storm-jib, those old friends which I never like to see.” They do not tempt to quotation, but it was the man’s element, in which he lived, and delighted to live, and some specimen must be presented. On Friday, September 10th, 1830, the *Regent* lying in Lerwick Bay, we have this entry: “The gale increases, with continued rain.” On the morrow, Saturday, 11th, the weather appeared to moderate, and they put to sea, only to be driven by evening into Levenswick. There they lay, “rolling much,” with both anchors ahead and the square yard on deck, till the morning of Saturday, 18th. Saturday and Sunday they were plying to the southward with a “strong breeze and a heavy sea,” and on Sunday evening anchored in Otterswick. “Monday, 20th, it blows so fresh that we have no communication with the shore. 38 We see Mr. Rome on the beach, but we cannot communicate with him. It blows ‘mere fire,’ as the sailors express it.” And for three days more the diary goes on with tales of davits unshipped, high seas, strong gales from the southward, and the ship driven to refuge in Kirkwall or Deer Sound. I have many a passage before me to transcribe, in which my grandfather draws himself as a man of minute and anxious exactitude about details. It must not be forgotten that these voyages in the tender were the particular pleasure and reward of his existence; that he had in him a reserve of romance which carried him delightedly over these hardships and perils; that to him it was "great gain" to be eight nights and seven days in the savage bay of Levenswick — to read a book in the much agitated cabin — to go on deck and hear the gale scream in his ears, and see the landscape dark with rain, and the ship plunge at her two anchors — and to turn in at night and wake again at morning, in his narrow berth, to the clamorous and continued voices of the gale.

His perils and escapes were beyond counting. I shall only refer to two: the first, because of the impression made upon himself; the second, from the incidental picture it presents of the north islanders. On the 9th October 1794 he took passage from Orkney in the sloop *Elizabeth* of Stromness. She made a fair passage till within view of Kinnaird Head, where, as she was becalmed some three miles in the offing, and wind seemed to threaten from the south-east, the captain landed him, to continue his journey more expeditiously ashore. A gale immediately followed, and the *Elizabeth* was driven back to Orkney and lost with all hands. The second escape I have been in the habit of hearing related by an eye-witness, my own father, from the earliest days of childhood. On a September night, the *Regent* lay in the Pentland Firth in a fog and a violent and windless swell. It was still dark, when they were alarmed by the sound of breakers, and an anchor was immediately let go. The peep of dawn discovered them swinging in 39 desperate proximity to the Isle of Swona and the surf bursting close under their stern. There was in this place a hamlet of the inhabitants, fisher-folk and wreckers; their huts stood close about the head of the beach. All slept; the doors were closed, and there was no smoke, and the anxious watchers on board ship seemed to contemplate a village of the dead. It was thought possible to launch a boat and tow the *Regent* from her place of danger; and with this view a signal of distress was made and a gun fired with a red-hot poker from the galley. Its detonation awoke the sleepers. Door after door was opened, and in the grey light of the morning fisher after fisher was seen to come forth, yawning and stretching himself, nightcap on head. Fisher after fisher, I wrote, and my pen tripped; for it should rather stand wrecker after wrecker. There was no emotion, no animation, it scarce seemed any interest; not a hand was raised; but all callously awaited the harvest of the sea, and their children stood by their side and waited also. To the end of his life, my father remembered that amphitheatre of placid spectators on the beach, and with a special and natural animosity, the boys of his own age. But presently a light air sprang up, and filled the sails, and fainted, and filled them again; and little by little the *Regent* fetched way against the swell, and clawed off shore into the turbulent firth.

The purpose of these voyages was to effect a landing on open beaches or among shelving rocks, not for persons only, but for coals and food, and the fragile furniture of light-rooms. It was often impossible. In 1831 I find my grandfather "hovering for a week" about the Pentland Skerries for a chance to land; and it was almost always difficult. Much knack and enterprise were early developed among the seamen of the service; their management of boats is to this day a matter of admiration; and I find my 40 grandfather in his diary depicting the nature of their excellence in one happily descriptive phrase, when he remarks that Captain Soutar had landed "the small stores and nine casks of oil *with all the activity of a smuggler*." And it was one thing to land, another to get on board again. I have here a passage from the diary, where it seems to have been touch-and-go. "I landed at Tarbetness, on the eastern side of the point, in *a mere gale or blast of wind* from west-south-west, at 2 p.m. It blew so fresh that the captain, in a kind of despair, went off to the ship, leaving myself and the steward ashore. While I was in the lightroom, I felt it shaking and waving, not with the tremor of the Bell Rock, but with the *waving of a tree*! This the lightkeepers seemed to be quite familiar to, the principal keeper remarking that 'it was very pleasant,' perhaps meaning interesting or curious. The captain worked the vessel into smooth water with admirable dexterity, and I got on board again about 6 p.m. from the other side of the point." But not even the dexterity of Soutar could prevail always; and my grandfather must at times have been left in strange berths and with but rude provision. I may instance the case of my father, who was storm-bound three days upon an islet, sleeping in the uncemented and unchimneyed houses of the islanders, and subsisting on a diet of nettlesoup and lobsters.

The name of Soutar has twice escaped my pen, and I feel I owe him a vignette. Soutar first attracted notice as mate of a praam at the Bell Rock, and rose gradually to be captain of the *Regent*. He was active, admirably skilled in his trade, and a man incapable of fear. Once, in London, he fell among a gang of confidence-men, naturally deceived by his rusticity and his prodigious accent. They plied him with drink — a hopeless enterprise, for Soutar could not be made drunk; they proposed cards, and Soutar would not play. At last, one of them, regarding him with a formidable countenance, inquired if he were not frightened? "I'm no' very easy fleyed," replied the captain. And the rooks 41 withdrew after some easier pigeon. So many perils shared, and the partial familiarity of so many voyages, had given this man a stronghold in my grandfather's estimation; and there is no doubt but he had the art to court and please him with much hypocritical skill. He usually dined on Sundays in the cabin. He used to come down daily after dinner for a glass of port or whisky, often in his full rig of sou'-wester, oilskins, and long boots; and I have often heard it described how insinuatingly he carried himself on these appearances, artfully combining the extreme of deference with a blunt and seamanlike demeanour. My father and uncles, with the devilish penetration of the boy, were far from being deceived; and my father, indeed, was favoured with an object-lesson not to be mistaken. He had crept one rainy night into an apple-barrel on deck, and from this place of ambush overheard Soutar and a comrade conversing in their oilskins. The smooth sycophant of the cabin had wholly disappeared, and the boy listened with wonder to a vulgar and truculent ruffian. Of Soutar, I may say *tantum vidi*, having met him in the Leith docks now more than thirty years ago, when he abounded in the praises of my grandfather, encouraged me (in the most admirable manner) to pursue his footprints, and left impressed for ever on my memory the image of his own Bardolphian nose. He died not long after.

The engineer was not only exposed to the hazards of the sea; he must often ford his way by land to remote and scarce accessible places, beyond reach of the mail or the post-chaise, beyond even the tracery of the bridle-path, and guided by natives across bog and heather. Up to 1807 my grandfather seems to have travelled much on horseback; but he then gave up the idea — ”such,” he writes with characteristic emphasis and capital letters, “is the Plague of Baiting.” He was a good pedestrian; at the age of fifty-eight I find him covering seventeen miles over the moors of the Mackay country in less than seven hours, and that is not bad travelling for a scramble. The piece of 42 country traversed was already a familiar track, being that between Loch Eriboll and Cape Wrath; and I think I can scarce do better than reproduce from the diary some traits of his first visit. The tender lay in Loch Eriboll; by five in the morning they sat down to breakfast on board; by six they were ashore — my grandfather, Mr. Slight an assistant, and Soutar of the jolly nose, and had been taken in charge by two young gentlemen of the neighbourhood and a pair of gillies. About noon they reached the Kyle of Durness and passed the ferry. By half-past three they were at Cape Wrath — not yet known by the emphatic abbreviation of “The Cape” — and beheld upon all sides of them unfrequented shores, an expanse of desert moor, and the high-piled Western Ocean. The site of the tower was chosen. Perhaps it is by inheritance of blood, but I know few things more inspiriting than this location of a lighthouse in a designated space of heather and air, through which the sea-birds are still flying. By 9 p.m. the return journey had brought them again to the shores of the Kyle. The night was dirty, and as the sea was high and the ferry-boat small, Soutar and Mr. Stevenson were left on the far side, while the rest of the party embarked and were received into the darkness. They made, in fact, a safe though an alarming passage; but the ferryman refused to repeat the adventure; and my grandfather and the captain long paced the beach, impatient for their turn to pass, and tormented with rising anxiety as to the fate of their companions. At length they sought the shelter of a shepherd's house. "We had miserable up-putting," the diary continues, "and on both sides of the ferry much anxiety of mind. Our beds were clean straw, and but for the circumstance of the boat, I should have slept as soundly as ever I did after a walk through moss and mire of sixteen hours."

To go round the lights, even to-day, is to visit past centuries. The tide of tourists that flows yearly in Scotland, vulgarising all where it approaches, is still defined by certain barriers. It will be long ere there is a hotel at Sumburgh[43] or a hydropathic at Cape Wrath; it will be long ere any *char-à-banc*, laden with tourists, shall drive up to Barra Head or Monach, the Island of the Monks. They are farther from London than St. Petersburg, and except for the towers, sounding and shining all night with fog-bells and the radiance of the light-room, glittering by day with the trivial brightness of white paint, these island and moorland stations seem inaccessible to the civilisation of to-day, and even to the end of my grandfather's career the isolation was far greater. There ran no post at all in the Long Island; from the lighthouse on Barra Head a boat must be sent for letters as far as Tobermory, between sixty and seventy miles of open sea; and the posts of Shetland, which had surprised Sir Walter Scott in 1814, were still unimproved in 1833, when my grandfather reported on the subject. The group contained at the time a population of 30,000 souls, and enjoyed a trade which had increased in twenty years sevenfold, to between three and four thousand tons. Yet the mails were despatched and received by chance coasting vessels at the rate of a penny a letter; six and eight weeks often elapsed between opportunities, and when a mail was to be made up, sometimes at a moment's notice, the bellman was sent hastily through the streets of Lerwick. Between Shetland and Orkney, only seventy miles apart, there was "no trade communication whatever."

Such was the state of affairs, only sixty years ago, with the three largest clusters of the Scottish Archipelago; and forty-seven years earlier, when Thomas Smith began his rounds, or forty-two, when Robert Stevenson became conjoined with him in these excursions, the barbarism was deep, the people sunk in superstition, the circumstances of their life perhaps unique in history. Lerwick and Kirkwall, like Guam or the Bay of Islands, were but barbarous ports where whalers called to take up and to return experienced seamen. On the outlying islands the clergy lived isolated, thinking other thoughts, dwelling in a different 44 country from their parishioners, like missionaries in the South Seas. My grandfather's unrivalled treasury of anecdote was never written down; it embellished his talk while he yet was, and died with him when he died; and such as have been preserved relate principally to the islands of Ronaldsay and Sanday, two of the Orkney group. These bordered on one of the water-highways of civilisation; a great fleet passed annually in their view, and of the shipwrecks of the world they were the scene and cause of a proportion wholly incommensurable to their size. In one year, 1798, my grandfather found the remains of no fewer than five vessels on the isle of Sanday, which is scarcely twelve miles long.

"Hardly a year passed," he writes, "without instances of this kind; for, owing to the projecting points of this strangely formed island, the lowness and whiteness of its eastern shores, and the wonderful manner in which the scanty patches of land are intersected with lakes and pools of water, it becomes, even in daylight, a deception, and has often been fatally mistaken for an open sea. It had even become proverbial with some of the inhabitants to observe that 'if wrecks were to happen, they might as well be sent to the poor isle of Sanday as anywhere else.' On this and the neighbouring islands the inhabitants had certainly had their share of wrecked goods, for the eye is presented with these melancholy remains in almost every form. For example, although quarries are to be met with generally in these islands, and the stones are very suitable for building dykes (*Anglicé*, walls), yet instances occur of the land being enclosed, even to a considerable extent, with ship-timbers. The author has actually seen a park (*Anglicé*, meadow) paled round chiefly with cedar-wood and mahogany from the wreck of a Honduras-built ship; and in one island, after the wreck of a ship laden with wine, the inhabitants have been known to take claret to their barley-meal porridge. On complaining to one of the pilots of the badness of his boat's sails, he replied to the author with some degree of pleasantry, 'Had it been His will that you camena' here wi' your lights, we might a' had better sails to our boats, and more o' other things.' It may further be mentioned that when some of Lord Dundas's farms are to be let in these islands a competition takes place for the lease, and it is *bona fide* understood that a much higher rent is paid than the lands would otherwise give were it not for the chance of making considerably by the agency and advantages attending shipwrecks on the shores of the respective farms."

The people of North Ronaldsay still spoke Norse, or, 45 rather, mixed it with their English. The walls of their huts were built to a great thickness of rounded stones from the sea-beach; the roof flagged, loaded with earth, and perforated by a single hole for the escape of smoke. The grass grew beautifully green on the flat house-top, where the family would assemble with their dogs and cats, as on a pastoral lawn; there were no windows, and in my grandfather’s expression, “there was really no demonstration of a house unless it were the diminutive door.” He once landed on Ronaldsay with two friends. “The inhabitants crowded and pressed so much upon the strangers that the bailiff, or resident factor of the island, blew with his ox-horn, calling out to the natives to stand off and let the gentlemen come forward to the laird; upon which one of the islanders, as spokesman, called out, ‘God ha’e us, man! thou needsna mak’ sic a noise. It’s no’ every day we ha’e *three hatted men* on our isle.’” When the Surveyor of Taxes came (for the first time, perhaps) to Sanday, and began in the King’s name to complain of the unconscionable swarms of dogs, and to menace the inhabitants with taxation, it chanced that my grandfather and his friend, Dr. Patrick Neill, were received by an old lady in a Ronaldsay hut. Her hut, which was similar to the model described, stood on a Ness, or point of land jutting into the sea. They were made welcome in the firelit cellar, placed “in *casey* or straw-worked chairs, after the Norwegian fashion, with arms, and a canopy overhead,” and given milk in a wooden dish. These hospitalities attended to, the old lady turned at once to Dr. Neill, whom she took for the Surveyor of Taxes. “Sir,” said she, “gin ye’ll tell the King that I canna keep the Ness free o’ the Bangers (sheep) without twa hun’s, and twa guid hun’s too, he’ll pass me threa the tax on dugs.”

This familiar confidence, these traits of engaging simplicity, are characters of a secluded people. Mankind — and, above all, islanders — come very swiftly to a bearing, and find very readily, upon one convention or another, a tolerable corporate life. The danger is to those from without, 46 who have not grown up from childhood in the islands, but appear suddenly in that narrow horizon, life-sized apparitions. For these no bond of humanity exists, no feeling of kinship is awakened by their peril; they will assist at a shipwreck, like the fisher-folk of Lunga, as spectators, and when the fatal scene is over, and the beach strewn with dead bodies, they will fence their fields with mahogany, and, after a decent grace, sup claret to their porridge. It is not wickedness: it is scarce evil; it is only, in its highest power, the sense of isolation and the wise disinterestedness of feeble and poor races. Think how many viking ships had sailed by these islands in the past, how many vikings had landed, and raised turmoil, and broken up the barrows of the dead, and carried off the wines of the living; and blame them, if you are able, for that belief (which may be called one of the parables of the devil’s gospel) that a man rescued from the sea will prove the bane of his deliverer. It might be thought that my grandfather, coming there unknown, and upon an employment so hateful to the inhabitants, must have run the hazard of his life. But this were to misunderstand. He came franked by the laird and the clergyman; he was the King's officer; the work was "opened with prayer by the Rev. Walter Trail, minister of the parish"; God and the King had decided it, and the people of these pious islands bowed their heads. There landed, indeed, in North Ronaldsay, during the last decade of the eighteenth century, a traveller whose life seems really to have been imperilled. A very little man of a swarthy complexion, he came ashore, exhausted and unshaved, from a long boat passage, and lay down to sleep in the home of the parish schoolmaster. But he had been seen landing. The inhabitants had identified him for a Pict, as, by some singular confusion of name, they called the dark and dwarfish aboriginal people of the land. Immediately the obscure ferment of a race-hatred, grown into a superstition, began to work in their bosoms, and they crowded about the house and the room-door with fearful whisperings. For some 47 time the schoolmaster held them at bay, and at last despatched a messenger to call my grandfather. He came: he found the islanders beside themselves at this unwelcome resurrection of the dead and the detested; he was shown, as adminicular of testimony, the traveller's uncouth and thick-soled boots; he argued, and finding argument unavailing, consented to enter the room and examine with his own eyes the sleeping Pict. One glance was sufficient: the man was now a missionary, but he had been before that an Edinburgh shopkeeper with whom my grandfather had dealt. He came forth again with this report, and the folk of the island, wholly relieved, dispersed to their own houses. They were timid as sheep and ignorant as limpets; that was all. But the Lord deliver us from the tender mercies of a frightened flock!

I will give two more instances of their superstition. When Sir Walter Scott visited the Stones of Stennis, my grandfather put in his pocket a hundred-foot line, which he unfortunately lost.

"Some years afterwards," he writes, "one of my assistants on a visit to the Stones of Stennis took shelter from a storm in a cottage close by the lake; and seeing a box-measuring-line in the bole or sole of the cottage window, he asked the woman where she got this well-known professional appendage. She said: 'O sir, ane of the bairns fand it lang syne at the Stanes; and when drawing it out we took fright, and thinking it had belanged to the fairies, we threw it into the bole, and it has layen there ever since.'"

This is for the one; the last shall be a sketch by the master hand of Scott himself: —

"At the village of Stromness, on the Orkney main island, called Pomona, lived, in 1814, an aged dame called Bessie Millie, who helped out her subsistence by selling favourable winds to mariners. He was a venturous master of a vessel who left the roadstead of Stromness without paying his offering to propitiate Bessie Millie! Her fee was extremely moderate, being exactly sixpence, for which she boiled her kettle and gave the bark the advantage of her prayers, for she disclaimed all unlawful acts. The wind thus petitioned for was sure, she said, to arrive, though occasionally the mariners had to wait some time for it. The woman’s dwelling and appearance were not unbecoming her pretensions. Her house, which was on 48 the brow of the steep hill on which Stromness is founded, was only accessible by a series of dirty and precipitous lanes, and for exposure might have been the abode of Eolus himself, in whose commodities the inhabitant dealt. She herself was, as she told us, nearly one hundred years old, withered and dried up like a mummy. A clay-coloured kerchief, folded round her neck, corresponded in colour to her corpse-like complexion. Two light blue eyes that gleamed with a lustre like that of insanity, an utterance of astonishing rapidity, a nose and chin that almost met together, and a ghastly expression of cunning, gave her the effect of Hecate. Such was Bessie Millie, to whom the mariners paid a sort of tribute with a feeling between jest and earnest.”

II

From about the beginning of the century up to 1807 Robert Stevenson was in partnership with Thomas Smith. In the last-named year the partnership was dissolved; Thomas Smith returning to his business, and my grandfather becoming sole engineer to the Board of Northern Lights.

I must try, by excerpts from his diary and correspondence, to convey to the reader some idea of the ardency and thoroughness with which he threw himself into the largest and least of his multifarious engagements in this service. But first I must say a word or two upon the life of lightkeepers, and the temptations to which they are more particularly exposed. The lightkeeper occupies a position apart among men. In sea-towers the complement has always been three since the deplorable business in the Eddystone, when one keeper died, and the survivor, signalling in vain for relief, was compelled to live for days with the dead body. These usually pass their time by the pleasant human expedient of quarrelling; and sometimes, I am assured, not one of the three is on speaking terms with any other. On shore stations, which on the Scottish coast are sometimes hardly less isolated, the usual number is two, a principal and an assistant. The principal is dissatisfied with the assistant, or perhaps the assistant keeps pigeons, and the principal wants the water from the roof. 49 Their wives and families are with them, living cheek by jowl. The children quarrel; Jockie hits Jimsie in the eye, and the mothers make haste to mingle in the dissension. Perhaps there is trouble about a broken dish; perhaps Mrs. Assistant is more highly born than Mrs. Principal and gives herself airs; and the men are drawn in and the servants presently follow. "Church privileges have been denied the keeper's and the assistant's servants," I read in one case, and the eminently Scots periphrasis means neither more nor less than excommunication, "on account of the discordant and quarrelsome state of the families. The cause, when inquired into, proves to be *tittle-tattle* on both sides." The tender comes round; the foremen and artificers go from station to station; the gossip flies through the whole system of the service, and the stories, disfigured and exaggerated, return to their own birthplace with the returning tender. The English Board was apparently shocked by the picture of these dissensions. "When the Trinity House can," I find my grandfather writing at Beachy Head, in 1834, "they do not appoint two keepers, they disagree so ill. A man who has a family is assisted by his family; and in this way, to my experience and present observation, the business is very much neglected. One keeper is, in my view, a bad system. This day's visit to an English lighthouse convinces me of this, as the lightkeeper was walking on a staff with the gout, and the business performed by one of his daughters, a girl of thirteen or fourteen years of age." This man received a hundred a year! It shows a different reading of human nature, perhaps typical of Scotland and England, that I find in my grandfather's diary the following pregnant entry: *"The lightkeepers, agreeing ill, keep one another to their duty."* But the Scottish system was not alone founded on this cynical opinion. The dignity and the comfort of the northern lightkeeper were both attended to. He had a uniform to "raise him in his own estimation, and in that of his neighbour, which is of consequence to a person of trust. 50 The keepers," my grandfather goes on, in another place, "are attended to in all the detail of accommodation in the best style as shipmasters; and this is believed to have a sensible effect upon their conduct, and to regulate their general habits as members of society." He notes, with the same dip of ink, that "the brasses were not clean, and the persons of the keepers not *trig*"; and thus we find him writing to a culprit: "I have to complain that you are not cleanly in your person, and that your manner of speech is ungentle, and rather inclines to rudeness. You must therefore take a different view of your duties as a lightkeeper." A high ideal for the service appears in these expressions, and will be more amply illustrated further on. But even the Scottish lightkeeper was frail. During the unbroken solitude of the winter months, when inspection is scarce possible, it must seem a vain toil to polish the brass hand-rail of the stair, or to keep an unrewarded vigil in the lightroom; and the keepers are habitually tempted to the beginnings of sloth, and must unremittingly resist. He who temporises with his conscience is already lost. I must tell here an anecdote that illustrates the difficulties of inspection. In the days of my uncle David and my father there was a station which they regarded with jealousy. The two engineers compared notes and were agreed. The tower was always clean, but seemed always to bear traces of a hasty cleansing, as though the keepers had been suddenly forewarned. On inquiry, it proved that such was the case, and that a wandering fiddler was the unfailing harbinger of the engineer. At last my father was storm-stayed one Sunday in a port at the other side of the island. The visit was quite overdue, and as he walked across upon the Monday morning he promised himself that he should at last take the keepers unprepared. They were both waiting for him in uniform at the gate; the fiddler had been there on Saturday!

My grandfather, as will appear from the following extracts, was much a martinet, and had a habit of expressing 51 himself on paper with an almost startling emphasis. Personally, with his powerful voice, sanguine countenance, and eccentric and original locutions, he was well qualified to inspire a salutary terror in the service.

“I find that the keepers have, by some means or another, got into the way of cleaning too much with rotten-stone and oil. I take the principal keeper to *task* on this subject, and make him bring a clean towel and clean one of the brazen frames, which leaves the towel in an odious state. This towel I put up in a sheet of paper, seal, and take with me to confront Mr. Murdoch, who has just left the station.” “This letter” — a stern enumeration of complaints — ”to lie a week on the lightroom book-place, and to be put in the Inspector’s hands when he comes round.” “It is the most painful thing that can occur for me to have a correspondence of this kind with any of the keepers; and when I come to the Lighthouse, instead of having the satisfaction to meet them with approbation, it is distressing when one is obliged to put on a most angry countenance and demeanour; but from such culpable negligence as you have shown there is no avoiding it. I hold it as a fixed maxim that, when a man or a family put on a slovenly appearance in their houses, stairs, and lanterns, I always find their reflectors, burners, windows, and light in general, ill attended to; and, therefore, I must insist on cleanliness throughout.” “I find you very deficient in the duty of the high tower. You thus place your appointment as Principal Keeper in jeopardy; and I think it necessary, as an old servant of the Board, to put you upon your guard once for all at this time. I call upon you to recollect what was formerly and is now said to you. The state of the backs of the reflectors at the high tower was disgraceful, as I pointed out to you on the spot. They were as if spitten upon, and greasy finger-marks upon the back straps. I demand an explanation of this state of things.” “The cause of the Commissioners dismissing you is expressed in the minute; and it must be a matter of regret to you that you have been so much engaged in smuggling, and also that the Reports relative to the cleanliness of the Lighthouse, upon being referred to, rather added to their unfavourable opinion.” “I do not go into the dwelling-house, but severely chide the lightkeepers for the disagreement that seems to subsist among them.” “The families of the two lightkeepers here agree very ill. I have effected a reconciliation for the present.” “Things are in a very *humdrum* state here. There is no painting, and in and out of doors no taste or tidiness displayed. Robert’s wife *greets* and M’Gregor’s scolds; and Robert is so down-hearted that he says he is unfit for duty. I told him that if he was to mind wives’ quarrels, and to take them up, the only way was for him and M’Gregor to go down to the point like Sir G. Grant and Lord Somerset.” “I cannot say that I have experienced a more unpleasant meeting than that of the lighthouse folks this morning, or ever saw a stronger example of unfeeling barbarity than the conduct which the — — s exhibited. These two 52 cold-hearted persons, not contented with having driven the daughter of the poor nervous woman from her father's house, *both* kept *pouncing* at her, lest she should forget her great misfortune. Write me of their conduct. Do not make any communication of the state of these families at Kinnaird Head, as this would be like *Tale-bearing.*"

There is the great word out. Tales and Tale-bearing, always with the emphatic capitals, run continually in his correspondence. I will give but two instances: —

"Write to David [one of the lightkeepers] and caution him to be more prudent how he expresses himself. Let him attend his duty to the Lighthouse and his family concerns, and give less heed to Tale-bearers." "I have not your last letter at hand to quote its date; but, if I recollect, it contains some kind of tales, which nonsense I wish you would lay aside, and notice only the concerns of your family and the important charge committed to you."

Apparently, however, my grandfather was not himself inaccessible to the Tale-bearer, as the following indicates: —

"In-walking along with Mr. — —, I explain to him that I should be under the necessity of looking more closely into the business here from his conduct at Buddonness, which had given an instance of weakness in the Moral principle which had staggered my opinion of him. His answer was, 'That will be with regard to the lass?' I told him I was to enter no farther with him upon the subject." "Mr. Miller appears to be master and man. I am sorry about this foolish fellow. Had I known his train, I should not, as I did, have rather forced him into the service. Upon finding the windows in the state they were, I turned upon Mr. Watt, and especially upon Mr. Stewart. The latter did not appear for a length of time to have visited the lightroom. On asking the cause — did Mr. Watt and him (*sic*) disagree; he said no; but he had got very bad usage from the assistant, 'who was a very obstreperous man.' I could not bring Mr. Watt to put in language his objections to Miller; all I could get was that, he being your friend, and saying he was unwell, he did not like to complain or to push the man; that the man seemed to have no liking to anything like work; that he was unruly; that, being an educated man, he despised them. I was, however, determined to have out of these *unwilling* witnesses the language alluded to. I fixed upon Mr. Stewart as chief; he hedged. My curiosity increased, and I urged. Then he said, 'What would I think, just exactly, of Mr. Watt being called an Old B — — ?' You may judge of my surprise. There was not another word uttered. This was quite enough, as coming from a person I should have calculated upon quite different behaviour from. It spoke a volume of the man's mind and want of principle." "Object to the keeper keeping a 53 Bull-Terrier dog of ferocious appearance. It is dangerous, as we land at all times of the night.” “Have only to complain of the storehouse floor being spotted with oil. Give orders for this being instantly rectified, so that on my return to-morrow I may see things in good order.” “The furniture of both houses wants much rubbing. Mrs. — — ’s carpets are absurd beyond anything I have seen. I want her to turn the fenders up with the bottom to the fireplace: the carpets, when not likely to be in use, folded up and laid as a hearthrug partly under the fender.”

My grandfather was king in the service to his fingertips. All should go in his way, from the principal lightkeeper’s coat to the assistant’s fender, from the gravel in the garden-walks to the bad smell in the kitchen, or the oil-spots on the store-room floor. It might be thought there was nothing more calculated to awake men’s resentment, and yet his rule was not more thorough than it was beneficent. His thought for the keepers was continual, and it did not end with their lives. He tried to manage their successions; he thought no pains too great to arrange between a widow and a son who had succeeded his father; he was often harassed and perplexed by tales of hardship; and I find him writing, almost in despair, of their improvident habits and the destitution that awaited their families upon a death. “The house being completely furnished, they come into possession without necessaries, and they go out NAKED. The insurance seems to have failed, and what next is to be tried?” While they lived he wrote behind their backs to arrange for the education of their children, or to get them other situations if they seemed unsuitable for the Northern Lights. When he was at a lighthouse on a Sunday he held prayers and heard the children read. When a keeper was sick, he lent him his horse and sent him mutton and brandy from the ship. “The assistant’s wife having been this morning confined, there was sent ashore a bottle of sherry and a few rusks — a practice which I have always observed in this service,” he writes. They dwelt, many of them, in uninhabited isles or desert forelands, totally cut off from shops. Many of them were, besides, fallen into a rustic dishabitude of life,[54] so that even when they visited a city they could scarce be trusted with their own affairs, as (for example) he who carried home to his children, thinking they were oranges, a bag of lemons. And my grandfather seems to have acted, at least in his early years, as a kind of gratuitous agent for the service. Thus I find him writing to a keeper in 1806, when his mind was already pre-occupied with arrangements for the Bell Rock: “I am much afraid I stand very unfavourably with you as a man of promise, as I was to send several things of which I believe I have more than once got the memorandum. All I can say is that in this respect you are not singular. This makes me no better; but really I have been driven about beyond all example in my past experience, and have been essentially obliged to neglect my own urgent affairs." No servant of the Northern Lights came to Edinburgh but he was entertained at Baxter's Place to breakfast. There, at his own table, my grandfather sat down delightedly with his broad-spoken, homespun officers. His whole relation to the service was, in fact, patriarchal; and I believe I may say that throughout its ranks he was adored. I have spoken with many who knew him; I was his grandson, and their words may have very well been words of flattery; but there was one thing that could not be affected, and that was the look and light that came into their faces at the name of Robert Stevenson.

In the early part of the century the foreman builder was a young man of the name of George Peebles, a native of Anstruther. My grandfather had placed in him a very high degree of confidence, and he was already designated to be foreman at the Bell Rock, when, on Christmas-day 1806, on his way home from Orkney, he was lost in the schooner *Traveller*. The tale of the loss of the *Traveller* is almost a replica of that of the *Elizabeth* of Stromness; like the *Elizabeth* she came as far as Kinnaird Head, was then surprised by a storm, driven back to Orkney, and bilged and sank on the island of Flotta. It seems it was about 55 the dusk of the day when the ship struck, and many of the crew and passengers were drowned. About the same hour, my grandfather was in his office at the writing-table; and the room beginning to darken, he laid down his pen and fell asleep. In a dream he saw the door open and George Peebles come in, "reeling to and fro, and staggering like a drunken man," with water streaming from his head and body to the floor. There it gathered into a wave which, sweeping forward, submerged my grandfather. Well, no matter how deep; versions vary; and at last he awoke, and behold it was a dream! But it may be conceived how profoundly the impression was written even on the mind of a man averse from such ideas, when the news came of the wreck on Flotta and the death of George.

George's vouchers and accounts had perished with himself; and it appeared he was in debt to the Commissioners. But my grandfather wrote to Orkney twice, collected evidence of his disbursements, and proved him to be seventy pounds ahead. With this sum, he applied to George's brothers, and had it apportioned between their mother and themselves. He approached the Board and got an annuity of £5 bestowed on the widow Peebles; and we find him writing her a long letter of explanation and advice, and pressing on her the duty of making a will. That he should thus act executor was no singular instance. But besides this we are able to assist at some of the stages of a rather touching experiment: no less than an attempt to secure Charles Peebles heir to George's favour. He is despatched, under the character of "a fine young man"; recommended to gentlemen for "advice, as he's a stranger in your place, and indeed to this kind of charge, this being his first outset as Foreman"; and for a long while after, the letter-book, in the midst of that thrilling first year of the Bell Rock, is encumbered with pages of instruction and encouragement. The nature of a bill, and the precautions that are to be observed about discounting it, are expounded at length and with clearness. "You are not, I hope, 56 neglecting, Charles, to work the harbour at spring-tides; and see that you pay the greatest attention to get the well so as to supply the keeper with water, for he is a very helpless fellow, and so unfond of hard work that I fear he could do ill to keep himself in water by going to the other side for it." — "With regard to spirits, Charles, I see very little occasion for it." These abrupt apostrophes sound to me like the voice of an awakened conscience; but they would seem to have reverberated in vain in the ears of Charles. There was trouble in Pladda, his scene of operations; his men ran away from him, there was at least a talk of calling in the Sheriff. "I fear," writes my grandfather, "you have been too indulgent, and I am sorry to add that men do not answer to be too well treated, a circumstance which I have experienced, and which you will learn as you go on in business." I wonder, was not Charles Peebles himself a case in point? Either death, at least, or disappointment and discharge, must have ended his service in the Northern Lights; and in later correspondence I look in vain for any mention of his name — Charles, I mean, not Peebles: for as late as 1839 my grandfather is patiently writing to another of the family: "I am sorry you took the trouble of applying to me about your son, as it lies quite out of my way to forward his views in the line of his profession as a Draper."

III

A professional life of Robert Stevenson has been already given to the world by his son David, and to that I would refer those interested in such matters. But my own design, which is to represent the man, would be very ill carried out if I suffered myself or my reader to forget that he was, first of all and last of all, an engineer. His chief claim to the style of a mechanical inventor is on account of the Jib or Balance Crane of the Bell Rock, which are beautiful contrivances. 57 But the great merit of this engineer was not in the field of engines. He was above all things a projector of works in the face of nature, and a modifier of nature itself. A road to be made, a tower to be built, a harbour to be constructed, a river to be trained and guided in its channel — these were the problems with which his mind was continually occupied; and for these and similar ends he travelled the world for more than half a century, like an artist, note-book in hand.

He once stood and looked on at the emptying of a certain oil-tube; he did so watch in hand, and accurately timed the operation; and in so doing offered the perfect type of his profession. The fact acquired might never be of use: it was acquired: another link in the world's huge chain of processes was brought down to figures and placed at the service of the engineer. "The very term mensuration sounds *engineer-like*," I find him writing; and in truth what the engineer most properly deals with is that which can be measured, weighed, and numbered. The time of any operation in hours and minutes, its cost in pounds, shillings, and pence, the strain upon a given point in foot-pounds — these are his conquests, with which he must continually furnish his mind, and which, after he has acquired them, he must continually apply and exercise. They must be not only entries in note-books, to be hurriedly consulted; in the actor's phrase, he must be *stale* in them; in a word of my grandfather's, they must be "fixed in the mind like the ten fingers and ten toes."

These are the certainties of the engineer; so far he finds a solid footing and clear views. But the province of formulas and constants is restricted. Even the mechanical engineer comes at last to an end of his figures, and must stand up, a practical man, face to face with the discrepancies of nature and the hiatuses of theory. After the machine is finished, and the steam turned on, the next is to drive it; and experience and an exquisite sympathy must teach him where a weight should be applied or a nut 58 loosened. With the civil engineer, more properly so called (if anything can be proper with this awkward coinage), the obligation starts with the beginning. He is always the practical man. The rains, the winds and the waves, the complexity and the fitfulness of nature, are always before him. He has to deal with the unpredictable, with those forces (in Smeaton's phrase) that "are subject to no calculation"; and still he must predict, still calculate them, at his peril. His work is not yet in being, and he must foresee its influence: how it shall deflect the tide, exaggerate the waves, dam back the rain-water, or attract the thunderbolt. He visits a piece of sea-board: and from the inclination and soil of the beach, from the weeds and shell-fish, from the configuration of the coast and the depth of soundings outside, he must deduce what magnitude of waves is to be looked for. He visits a river, its summer water babbling on shallows; and he must not only read, in a thousand indications, the measure of winter freshets, but be able to predict the violence of occasional great floods. Nay, and more: he must not only consider that which is, but that which may be. Thus I find my grandfather writing, in a report on the North Esk Bridge: "A less waterway might have sufficed, but *the valleys may come to be meliorated by drainage*." One field drained after another through all that confluence of vales, and we come to a time when they shall precipitate, by so much a more copious and transient flood, as the gush of the flowing drain-pipe is superior to the leakage of a peat.

It is plain there is here but a restricted use for formulas. In this sort of practice, the engineer has need of some transcendental sense. Smeaton, the pioneer, bade him obey his "feelings"; my father, that "power of estimating obscure forces which supplies a coefficient of its own to every rule." The rules must be everywhere indeed; but they must everywhere be modified by this transcendental coefficient, everywhere bent to the impression of the trained eye and the *feelings* of the engineer. A sentiment of 59 physical laws and of the scale of nature, which shall have been strong in the beginning and progressively fortified by observation, must be his guide in the last recourse. I had the most opportunity to observe my father. He would pass hours on the beach, brooding over the waves, counting them, noting their least deflection, noting when they broke. On Tweedside, or by Lyne or Manor, we have spent together whole afternoons; to me, at the time, extremely wearisome; to him, as I am now sorry to think, bitterly mortifying. The river was to me a pretty and various spectacle; I could not see — I could not be made to see — it otherwise. To my father it was a chequer-board of lively forces, which he traced from pool to shallow with minute appreciation and enduring interest. "That bank was being undercut," he might say; "why? Suppose you were to put a groin out here, would not the *filum fluminis* be cast abruptly off across the channel? and where would it impinge upon the other shore? and what would be the result? Or suppose you were to blast that boulder, what would happen? Follow it — use the eyes God has given you — can you not see that a great deal of land would be reclaimed upon this side?” It was to me like school in holidays; but to him, until I had worn him out with my invincible triviality, a delight. Thus he pored over the engineer’s voluminous handy-book of nature; thus must, too, have pored my grandfather and uncles.

But it is of the essence of this knowledge, or this knack of mind, to be largely incommunicable. “It cannot be imparted to another,” says my father. The verbal casting-net is thrown in vain over these evanescent, inferential relations. Hence the insignificance of much engineering literature. So far as the science can be reduced to formulas or diagrams, the book is to the point; so far as the art depends on intimate study of the ways of nature, the author’s words will too often be found vapid. This fact — engineering looks one way, and literature another — was what my grandfather overlooked. All his life long, his 60 pen was in his hand, piling up a treasury of knowledge, preparing himself against all possible contingencies. Scarce anything fell under his notice but he perceived in it some relation to his work, and chronicled it in the pages of his journal in his always lucid, but sometimes inexact and wordy, style. The Travelling Diary (so he called it) was kept in fascicles of ruled paper, which were at last bound up, rudely indexed, and put by for future reference. Such volumes as have reached me contain a surprising medley: the whole details of his employment in the Northern Lights and his general practice; the whole biography of an enthusiastic engineer. Much of it is useful and curious; much merely otiose; and much can only be described as an attempt to impart that which cannot be imparted in words. Of such are his repeated and heroic descriptions of reefs; monuments of misdirected literary energy, which leave upon the mind of the reader no effect but that of a multiplicity of words and the suggested vignette of a lusty old gentleman scrambling among tangle. It is to be remembered that he came to engineering while yet it was in the egg and without a library, and that he saw the bounds of that profession widen daily. He saw iron ships, steamers, and the locomotive engine, introduced. He lived to travel from Glasgow to Edinburgh in the inside of a forenoon, and to remember that he himself had “often been twelve hours upon the journey, and his grandfather (Lillie) two days”! The profession was still but in its second generation, and had already broken down the barriers of time and space. Who should set a limit to its future encroachments? And hence, with a kind of sanguine pedantry, he pursued his design of “keeping up with the day” and posting himself and his family on every mortal subject. Of this unpractical idealism we shall meet with many instances; there was not a trade, and scarce an accomplishment, but he thought it should form part of the outfit of an engineer; and not content with keeping an encyclopædic diary himself, he would fain have set all his sons to work continuing 61 and extending it. They were more happily inspired. My father's engineering pocket-book was not a bulky volume; with its store of pregnant notes and vital formulas, it served him through life, and was not yet filled when he came to die. As for Robert Stevenson and the Travelling Diary, I should be ungrateful to complain, for it has supplied me with many lively traits for this and subsequent chapters; but I must still remember much of the period of my study there as a sojourn in the Valley of the Shadow.

The duty of the engineer is twofold — to design the work, and to see the work done. We have seen already something of the vociferous thoroughness of the man, upon the cleaning of lamps and the polishing of reflectors. In building, in road-making, in the construction of bridges, in every detail and byway of his employments, he pursued the same ideal. Perfection (with a capital P and violently underscored) was his design. A crack for a penknife, the waste of "six-and-thirty shillings," "the loss of a day or a tide," in each of these he saw and was revolted by the finger of the sloven; and to spirits intense as his, and immersed in vital undertakings, the slovenly is the dishonest, and wasted time is instantly translated into lives endangered. On this consistent idealism there is but one thing that now and then trenches with a touch of incongruity, and that is his love of the picturesque. As when he laid out a road on Hogarth's line of beauty; bade a foreman be careful, in quarrying, not "to disfigure the island"; or regretted in a report that "the great stone, called the *Devil in the Hole*, was blasted or broken down to make road-metal, and for other purposes of the work."

This is only a probable hypothesis; I have tried to identify my father's anecdote in my grandfather's diary, and may very well have been deceived. — R. L. S.

CHAPTER III

THE BUILDING OF THE BELL ROCK

Off the mouths of the Tay and the Forth, thirteen miles from Fifeness, eleven from Arbroath, and fourteen from the Red Head of Angus, lies the Inchcape or Bell Rock. It extends to a length of about fourteen hundred feet, but the part of it discovered at low water to not more than four hundred and twenty-seven. At a little more than half-flood in fine weather the seamless ocean joins over the reef, and at high-water springs it is buried sixteen feet. As the tide goes down, the higher reaches of the rock are seen to be clothed by *Conferva rupestris* as by a sward of grass; upon the more exposed edges, where the currents are most swift and the breach of the sea heaviest, Baderlock or Henware flourishes; and the great Tangle grows at the depth of several fathoms with luxuriance. Before man arrived, and introduced into the silence of the sea the smoke and clangour of a blacksmith's shop, it was a favourite resting-place of seals. The crab and lobster haunt in the crevices; and limpets, mussels, and the white buckie abound.

According to a tradition, a bell had been once hung upon this rock by an abbot of Arbroath, "and being taken 63 down by a sea-pirate, a year thereafter he perished upon the same rock, with ship and goods, in the righteous judgment of God." From the days of the abbot and the sea-pirate no man had set foot upon the Inchcape, save fishers from the neighbouring coast, or perhaps — for a moment, before the surges swallowed them — the unfortunate victims of shipwreck. The fishers approached the rock with an extreme timidity; but their harvest appears to have been great, and the adventure no more perilous than lucrative. In 1800, on the occasion of my grandfather's first landing, and during the two or three hours which the ebb-tide and the smooth water allowed them to pass upon its shelves, his crew collected upwards of two hundredweight of old metal: pieces of a kedge anchor and a cabin stove, crow-bars, a hinge and lock of a door, a ship's marking-iron, a piece of a ship's caboose, a soldier's bayonet, a cannon ball, several pieces of money, a shoe-buckle, and the like. Such were the spoils of the Bell Rock. But the number of vessels actually lost upon the reef was as nothing to those that were cast away in fruitless efforts to avoid it. Placed right in the fairway of two navigations, and one of these the entrance to the only harbour of refuge between the Downs and the Moray Firth, it breathed abroad along the whole coast an atmosphere of terror and perplexity; and no ship sailed that part of the North Sea at night, but what the ears of those on board would be strained to catch the roaring of the seas on the Bell Rock.

From 1794 onward, the mind of my grandfather had been exercised with the idea of a light upon this formidable danger. To build a tower on a sea rock, eleven miles from shore, and barely uncovered at low water of neaps, appeared a fascinating enterprise. It was something yet unattempted, unessayed; and even now, after it has been lighted for more than eighty years, it is still an exploit that has never been repeated. My grandfather was, besides, but [64] a young man, of an experience comparatively restricted, and a reputation confined to Scotland; and when he prepared his first models, and exhibited them in Merchants' Hall, he can hardly be acquitted of audacity. John Clerk of Eldin stood his friend from the beginning, kept the key of the model room, to which he carried "eminent strangers," and found words of counsel and encouragement beyond price. "Mr. Clerk had been personally known to Smeaton, and used occasionally to speak of him to me," says my grandfather; and again: "I felt regret that I had not the opportunity of a greater range of practice to fit me for such an undertaking; but I was fortified by an expression of my friend Mr. Clerk in one of our conversations. 'This work,' said he, 'is unique, and can be little forwarded by experience of ordinary masonic operations. In this case Smeaton's "Narrative" must be the text-book, and energy and perseverance the pratique.'"

A Bill for the work was introduced into Parliament and lost in the Lords in 1802-3. John Rennie was afterwards, at my grandfather's suggestion, called in council, with the style of chief engineer. The precise meaning attached to these words by any of the parties appears irrecoverable. Chief engineer should have full authority, full responsibility, and a proper share of the emoluments; and there were none of these for Rennie. I find in an appendix a paper which resumes the controversy on this subject; and it will be enough to say here that Rennie did not design the Bell Rock, that he did not execute it, and that he was not paid [65] for it. From so much of the correspondence as has come down to me, the acquaintance of this man, eleven years his senior, and already famous, appears to have been both useful and agreeable to Robert Stevenson. It is amusing to find my grandfather seeking high and low for a brace of pistols which his colleague had lost by the way between Aberdeen and Edinburgh; and writing to Messrs. Dollond, "I have not thought it necessary to trouble Mr. Rennie with this order, but *I beg you will see to get two minutes of him as he passes your door*" — a proposal calculated rather from the latitude of Edinburgh than from London, even in 1807. It is pretty, too, to observe with what affectionate regard Smeaton was held in mind by his immediate successors. "Poor old fellow," writes Rennie to

Stevenson, “I hope he will now and then take a peep at us, and inspire you with fortitude and courage to brave all difficulties and dangers to accomplish a work which will, if successful, 66 immortalise you in the annals of fame.” The style might be bettered, but the sentiment is charming.

Smeaton was, indeed, the patron saint of the Bell Rock. Undeterred by the sinister fate of Winstanley, he had tackled and solved the problem of the Eddystone; but his solution had not been in all respects perfect. It remained for my grandfather to outdo him in daring, by applying to a tidal rock those principles which had been already justified by the success of the Eddystone, and to perfect the model by more than one exemplary departure. Smeaton had adopted in his floors the principle of the arch; each therefore exercised an outward thrust upon the walls, which must be met and combated by embedded chains. My grandfather’s flooring-stones, on the other hand, were flat, made part of the outer wall, and were keyed and dovetailed into a central stone, so as to bind the work together and be positive elements of strength. In 1703 Winstanley still thought it possible to erect his strange pagoda, with its open gallery, its florid scrolls and candlesticks: like a rich man’s folly for an ornamental water in a park. Smeaton followed; then Stevenson in his turn corrected such flaws as were left in Smeaton’s design; and with his improvements, it is not too much to say the model was made perfect. Smeaton and Stevenson had between them evolved and finished the sea-tower. No subsequent builder has departed in anything essential from the principles of their design. It remains, and it seems to us as though it must remain for ever, an ideal attained. Every stone in the building, it may interest the reader to know, my grandfather had himself cut out in the model; and the manner in which the courses were fitted, joggled, trenailed, wedged, and the bond broken, is intricate as a puzzle and beautiful by ingenuity.

In 1806 a second Bill passed both Houses, and the preliminary works were at once begun. The same year the Navy had taken a great harvest of prizes in the North Sea, one of which, a Prussian fishing dogger, flat-bottomed and 67 rounded at the stem and stern, was purchased to be a floating lightship, and re-named the *Pharos*. By July 1807 she was overhauled, rigged for her new purpose, and turned into the lee of the Isle of May. “It was proposed that the whole party should meet in her and pass the night; but she rolled from side to side in so extraordinary a manner, that even the most seahardy fled. It was humorously observed of this vessel that she was in danger of making a round turn and appearing with her keel uppermost; and that she would even turn a halfpenny if laid upon deck.” By two o’clock on the morning of the 15th July this purgatorial vessel was moored by the

Bell Rock.

A sloop of forty tons had been in the meantime built at Leith, and named the *Smeaton*: by the 7th of August my grandfather set sail in her —

“carrying with him Mr. Peter Logan, foreman builder, and five artificers selected from their having been somewhat accustomed to the sea, the writer being aware of the distressing trial which the floating light would necessarily inflict upon landsmen from her rolling motion. Here he remained till the 10th, and, as the weather was favourable, a landing was effected daily, when the workmen were employed in cutting the large seaweed from the sites of the lighthouse and beacon, which were respectively traced with pickaxes upon the rock. In the meantime the crew of the *Smeaton* was employed in laying down the several sets of moorings within about half a mile of the rock for the convenience of vessels. The artificers, having, fortunately, experienced moderate weather, returned to the workyard of Arbroath with a good report of their treatment afloat; when their comrades ashore began to feel some anxiety to see a place of which they had heard so much, and to change the constant operations with the iron and mallet in the process of hewing for an occasional tide’s work on the rock, which they figured to themselves as a state of comparative ease and comfort.”

I am now for many pages to let my grandfather speak for himself, and tell in his own words the story of his capital achievement. The tall quarto of 533 pages from which the following narrative has been dug out is practically unknown to the general reader, yet good judges have perceived its merit, and it has been named (with flattering wit) “The Romance of Stone and Lime” and “The Robinson 68 Crusoe of Civil Engineering.” The tower was but four years in the building; it took Robert Stevenson, in the midst of his many avocations, no less than fourteen to prepare the *Account*. The title-page is a solid piece of literature of upwards of a hundred words; the table of contents runs to thirteen pages; and the dedication (to that revered monarch, George IV) must have cost him no little study and correspondence. Walter Scott was called in council, and offered one miscorrection which still blots the page. In spite of all this pondering and filing, there remain pages not easy to construe, and inconsistencies not easy to explain away. I have sought to make these disappear, and to lighten a little the baggage with which my grandfather marches; here and there I have rejointed and rearranged a sentence, always with his own words, and all with a reverent and faithful hand; and I offer here to the reader the true Monument of Robert Stevenson with a little of the moss removed from the inscription, and the Portrait of the artist with some superfluous canvas cut away.

I

OPERATIONS OF 1

Sunday,
16th Aug.

Everything being arranged for sailing to the rock on Saturday the 15th, the vessel might have proceeded on the Sunday; but understanding that this would not be so agreeable to the artificers it was deferred until Monday. Here we cannot help observing that the men allotted for the operations at the rock seemed to enter upon the undertaking with a degree of consideration which fully marked their opinion as to the hazardous nature of the undertaking on which they were about to enter. They went in a body to church on Sunday, and whether it was in the ordinary course, or designed for the occasion, the writer is not certain, but the service was, in many respects, suitable to their circumstances.

Monday,
17th Aug.

The tide happening to fall late in the evening of Monday the 17th, the party, counting twenty-four in number, embarked on board of the *Smeaton* about ten o'clock p.m., and sailed from Arbroath with a gentle breeze at west. Our ship's colours having been flying all day in compliment to the commencement of the work, the other vessels in the harbour also saluted, which made a very gay appearance. A number of the friends and acquaintances of those on board having been thus collected, the piers, though at a late hour, were perfectly crowded, and just as the *Smeaton* cleared the harbour, all on board united in giving three hearty cheers, which were returned by those on shore in such good earnest, that, in the still of the evening, the sound must have been heard in all parts of the town, reechoing from the walls and lofty turrets of the venerable Abbey of Aberbrothwick. The writer felt much satisfaction at the manner of this parting scene, though he must own that the present rejoicing was, on his part, mingled with occasional reflections upon the responsibility of his situation, which extended to the safety of all who should be engaged in this perilous work. With such sensations he retired to his cabin; but as the artificers were rather inclined to move about the deck than to remain in their confined berths below, his repose was transient, and the vessel being small every motion was necessarily heard. Some who were musically inclined occasionally sung; but he listened with peculiar pleasure to the sailor at the helm, who hummed over Dibdin's characteristic air: —

“They say there’s a Providence sits up aloft,
To keep watch for the life of poor Jack.”

Tuesday, 18th Aug.

The weather had been very gentle all night, and, about four in the morning of the 18th, the *Smeaton* anchored. Agreeably to an arranged plan of operations, all hands were called at five o’clock a.m., just as the highest part of the Bell Rock began to show its sable head among the light breakers, which occasionally whitened with the foaming sea. The two boats belonging to the floating light attended the *Smeaton*, to carry the artificers to the rock, as her boat could only accommodate about six or eight sitters. Every one was more eager than his neighbour to leap into the boats, and it required a good deal of management on the part of the coxswains to get men unaccustomed to a boat to take their places for rowing and at the same time trimming her properly. The landing-master and foreman went into one boat, while the writer took charge of another, and steered it to and from the rock. This became the more necessary in the early stages of the work, as places could not be spared for more than two, or at most three, seamen to each boat, who were always stationed, one at the bow, to use the boat-hook in fending or pushing off, and the other at the aftermost oar, to give the proper time in rowing, while the middle oars were double-banked, and rowed by the artificers.

As the weather was extremely fine, with light airs of wind from the east, we landed without difficulty upon the central part of the rock at half-past five, but the water had not yet sufficiently left it for commencing the work. This interval, however, did not pass unoccupied. The first and last of all the principal operations at the Bell Rock were accompanied by three hearty cheers from all hands, and, on occasions like the present, the steward of the ship attended, when each man was regaled with a glass of rum. As the water left the rock about six, some began to bore the holes for the great bats or holdfasts, for fixing the beams of the Beacon-house, while the smith was fully attended in laying out the site of his forge, upon a somewhat sheltered spot of the rock, which also recommended itself from the vicinity of a pool of water for tempering his irons. These preliminary steps occupied about an hour, and as nothing further could be done during this tide towards fixing the forge, the workmen gratified their curiosity by roaming about the rock, which they investigated with great eagerness till the tide overflowed it. Those who had been sick picked dulse (*Fucus palmatus*), which they ate with much seeming appetite; others were more intent upon collecting limpets for bait, to enjoy the amusement of fishing when they returned on board of the vessel. Indeed, none came away empty-handed, as everything found upon the Bell Rock was considered valuable, being connected with some interesting association. Several 71 coins and numerous bits of shipwrecked iron, were picked up, of almost every description; and, in particular, a marking-iron lettered James — a circumstance of which it was thought proper to give notice to the public, as it might lead to the knowledge of some unfortunate shipwreck, perhaps unheard of till this simple occurrence led to the discovery. When the rock began to be overflowed, the landing-master arranged the crews of the respective boats, appointing twelve persons to each. According to a rule which the writer had laid down to himself, he was always the last person who left the rock.

In a short time the Bell Rock was laid completely under water, and the weather being extremely fine, the sea was so smooth that its place could not be pointed out from the appearance of the surface — a circumstance which sufficiently demonstrates the dangerous nature of this rock, even during the day, and in the smoothest and calmest state of the sea. During the interval between the morning and the evening tides, the artificers were variously employed in fishing and reading; others were busy in drying and adjusting their wet clothes, and one or two amused their companions with the violin and German flute.

About seven in the evening the signal bell for landing on the rock was again rung, when every man was at his quarters. In this service it was thought more appropriate to use the bell than to *pipe* to quarters, as the use of this instrument is less known to the mechanic than the sound of the bell. The landing, as in the morning, was at the eastern harbour. During this tide the seaweed was pretty well cleared from the site of the operations, and also from the tracks leading to the different landing-places; for walking upon the rugged surface of the Bell Rock, when covered with seaweed, was found to be extremely difficult and even dangerous. Every hand that could possibly be occupied was now employed in assisting the smith to fit up the apparatus for his forge. At 9 p.m. the boats returned to the tender, after other two hours' work, in the same order as formerly — perhaps as much gratified with the success that attended the work of this day as with any other in the whole course of the operations. Although it could not be said that the fatigues of this day had been great, yet all on board retired early to rest. The sea being calm, and no movement on deck, it was pretty generally remarked in the morning that the bell awakened the greater number on board from their first sleep; and though this observation was not altogether applicable to the writer himself, yet he was not a little pleased to find that thirty people could all at once become so reconciled to a night's quarters within a few hundred paces of the Bell Rock.

Wednesday,
19th Aug.

Being extremely anxious at this time to get forward with fixing the smith's forge, on which the progress of the work at present depended, the writer requested that he might be called at daybreak to learn the landing-master's opinion of the weather from the appearance of the rising sun, a criterion by which experienced seamen can generally judge pretty accurately of the state of the weather for the following day. About five o'clock, on coming upon deck, the sun's upper limb or disc had just begun to appear as if rising from the ocean, and in less than a minute he was seen in the fullest splendour; but after a short interval he was enveloped in a soft cloudy sky, which was considered emblematical of fine weather. His rays had not yet sufficiently dispelled the clouds which hid the land from view, and the Bell Rock being still overflowed, the whole was one expanse of water. This scene in itself was highly gratifying; and, when the morning bell was tolled, we were gratified with the happy forebodings of good weather and the expectation of having both a morning and an evening tide's work on the rock.

The boat which the writer steered happened to be the last which approached the rock at this tide; and, in standing up in the stern, while at some distance, to see how the leading boat entered the creek, he was astonished to observe something in the form of a human figure, in a reclining posture, upon one of the ledges of the rock. He immediately steered the boat through a narrow entrance to the eastern harbour, with a thousand unpleasant sensations in his mind. He thought a vessel or boat must have been wrecked upon the rock during the night; and it seemed probable that the rock might be strewed with dead bodies, a spectacle which could not fail to deter the artificers from returning so freely to their work. In the midst of these reveries the boat took the ground at an improper landing-place but, without waiting to push her off, he leapt upon the rock, and making his way hastily to the spot which had privately given him alarm, he had the satisfaction to ascertain that he had only been deceived by the peculiar situation and aspect of the smith's anvil and block, which very completely represented the appearance of a lifeless body upon the rock. The writer carefully suppressed his feelings, the simple mention of which might have had a bad effect upon the artificers, and his haste passed for an anxiety to examine the apparatus of the smith's forge, left in an unfinished state at evening tide.

In the course of this morning's work two or three apparently distant peals of thunder were heard, and the atmosphere suddenly became thick and foggy. But as the *Smeaton*, our present tender, was moored at no great distance from the rock, the crew on board 73 continued blowing with a horn, and occasionally fired a musket, so that the boats got to the ship without difficulty.

Thursday,
20th Aug.

The wind this morning inclined from the north-east, and the sky had a heavy and cloudy appearance, but the sea was smooth, though there was an undulating motion on the surface, which indicated easterly winds, and occasioned a slight surf upon the rock. But the boats found no difficulty in landing at the western creek at half-past seven, and, after a good tide’s work, left it again about a quarter from eleven. In the evening the artificers landed at half-past seven, and continued till half-past eight, having completed the fixing of the smith’s forge, his vice, and a wooden board or bench, which were also batted to a ledge of the rock, to the great joy of all, under a salute of three hearty cheers. From an oversight on the part of the smith, who had neglected to bring his tinder-box and matches from the vessel, the work was prevented from being continued for at least an hour longer.

The smith’s shop was, of course, in *open space*: the large bellows were carried to and from the rock every tide, for the serviceable condition of which, together with the tinder-box, fuel, and embers of the former fire, the smith was held responsible. Those who have been placed in situations to feel the inconveniency and want of this useful artisan, will be able to appreciate his value in a case like the present. It often happened, to our annoyance and disappointment, in the early state of the work, when the smith was in the middle of a *favourite heat* in making some useful article, or in sharpening the tools, after the flood-tide had obliged the pickmen to strike work, a sea would come rolling over the rocks, dash out the fire, and endanger his indispensable implement, the bellows. If the sea was smooth, while the smith often stood at work knee-deep in water, the tide rose by imperceptible degrees, first cooling the exterior of the fireplace, or hearth, and then quietly blackening and extinguishing the fire from below. The writer has frequently been amused at the perplexing anxiety of the blacksmith when coaxing his fire and endeavouring to avert the effects of the rising tide.

Friday,
21st Aug.

Everything connected with the forge being now completed, the artificers found no want of sharp tools, and the work went forward with great alacrity and spirit. It was also alleged that the rock had a more habitable appearance from the volumes of smoke which ascended from the smith’s shop and the busy noise of his anvil, the operations of the masons, the movements of the boats, and shipping at a distance — all contributed to give life and activity to the scene. This noise and traffic had, however, the effect of almost completely banishing the herd of seals which had hitherto frequented the rock 74 as a resting-place during the period of low water. The rock seemed to be peculiarly adapted to their habits, for, excepting two or three days at neap-tides, a part of it always dries at low water — at least, during the summer season — and as there was good fishing-ground in the neighbourhood, without a human being to disturb or molest them, it had become a very favourite residence of these amphibious animals, the writer having occasionally counted from fifty to sixty playing about the rock at a time. But when they came to be disturbed every tide, and their seclusion was broken in upon by the kindling of great fires, together with the beating of hammers and picks during low water, after hovering about for a time, they changed their place, and seldom more than one or two were to be seen about the rock upon the more detached outlayers which dry partially, whence they seemed to look with that sort of curiosity which is observable in these animals when following a boat.

Saturday,
22nd Aug.

Hitherto the artificers had remained on board the *Smeaton*, which was made fast to one of the mooring buoys at a distance only of about a quarter of a mile from the rock, and, of course, a very great conveniency to the work. Being so near, the seamen could never be mistaken as to the progress of the tide, or state of the sea upon the rock, nor could the boats be much at a loss to pull on board of the vessel during fog, or even in very rough weather; as she could be cast loose from her moorings at pleasure, and brought to the lee side of the rock. But the *Smeaton* being only about forty register tons, her accommodations were extremely limited. It may, therefore, be easily imagined that an addition of twenty-four persons to her own crew must have rendered the situation of those on board rather uncomfortable. The only place for the men’s hammocks on board being in the hold, they were unavoidably much crowded: and if the weather had required the hatches to be fastened down, so great a number of men could not possibly have been accommodated. To add to this evil, the *co-boose* or cooking-place being upon deck, it would not have been possible to have cooked for so large a company in the event of bad weather.

The stock of water was now getting short, and some necessaries being also wanted for the floating light, the *Smeaton* was despatched for Arbroath; and the writer, with the artificers, at the same time shifted their quarters from her to the floating light.

Although the rock barely made its appearance at this period of the tides till eight o’clock, yet, having now a full mile to row from the floating light to the rock, instead of about a quarter of a mile from the moorings of the *Smeaton*, it was necessary to be earlier astir, and to form different arrangements; breakfast was accordingly 75 served up at seven o'clock this morning. From the excessive motion of the floating light, the writer had looked forward rather with anxiety to the removal of the workmen to this ship. Some among them, who had been congratulating themselves upon having become sea-hardy while on board the *Smeaton*, had a complete relapse upon returning to the floating light. This was the case with the writer. From the spacious and convenient berthage of the floating light, the exchange to the artificers was, in this respect, much for the better. The boats were also commodious, measuring sixteen feet in length on the keel, so that, in fine weather, their complement of sitters was sixteen persons for each, with which, however, they were rather crowded, but she could not stow two boats of larger dimensions. When there was what is called a breeze of wind, and a swell in the sea, the proper number for each boat could not, with propriety, be rated at more than twelve persons.

When the tide-bell rung the boats were hoisted out, and two active seamen were employed to keep them from receiving damage alongside. The floating light being very buoyant, was so quick in her motions that when those who were about to step from her gunwale into a boat, placed themselves upon a cleat or step on the ship's side, with the man or rail ropes in their hands, they had often to wait for some time till a favourable opportunity occurred for stepping into the boat. While in this situation, with the vessel rolling from side to side, watching the proper time for letting go the man-ropes, it required the greatest dexterity and presence of mind to leap into the boats. One who was rather awkward would often wait a considerable period in this position: at one time his side of the ship would be so depressed that he would touch the boat to which he belonged, while the next sea would elevate him so much that he would see his comrades in the boat on the opposite side of the ship, his friends in the one boat calling to him to "Jump," while those in the boat on the other side, as he came again and again into their view, would jocosely say, "Are you there yet? You seem to enjoy a swing." In this situation it was common to see a person upon each side of the ship for a length of time, waiting to quit his hold.

On leaving the rock to-day a trial of seamanship was proposed amongst the rowers, for by this time the artificers had become tolerably expert in this exercise. By inadvertency some of the oars provided had been made of fir instead of ash, and although a considerable stock had been laid in, the workmen, being at first awkward in the art, were constantly breaking their oars; indeed it was no uncommon thing to see the broken blades of a pair of oars floating astern, in the course of a passage from the rock to the vessel. The men, upon the whole, had but little work to perform in the course of a day; for though they exerted themselves extremely hard while on the rock, yet, in the early state of the operations, this could not be continued for more than three or four hours at a time, and as their rations were large — consisting of one pound and a half of beef, one pound of ship biscuit, eight ounces oatmeal, two ounces barley, two ounces butter, three quarts of small beer, with vegetables and salt — they got into excellent spirits when free of sea-sickness. The rowing of the boats against each other became a favourite amusement, which was rather a fortunate circumstance, as it must have been attended with much inconvenience had it been found necessary to employ a sufficient number of sailors for this purpose. The writer, therefore, encouraged this spirit of emulation, and the speed of their respective boats became a favourite topic. Premiums for boat-races were instituted, which were contended for with great eagerness, and the respective crews kept their stations in the boats with as much precision as they kept their beds on board of the ship. With these and other pastimes, when the weather was favourable, the time passed away among the inmates of the forecastle and waist of the ship. The writer looks back with interest upon the hours of solitude which he spent in this lonely ship with his small library.

This being the first Saturday that the artificers were afloat, all hands were served with a glass of rum and water at night, to drink the sailors' favourite toast of "Wives and Sweethearts." It was customary, upon these occasions, for the seamen and artificers to collect in the galley, when the musical instruments were put in requisition: for, according to invariable practice, every man must play a tune, sing a song, or tell a story.

Sunday,
23rd Aug.

Having, on the previous evening, arranged matters with the landing-master as to the business of the day, the signal was rung for all hands at half-past seven this morning. In the early state of the spring-tides the artificers went to the rock before breakfast, but as the tides fell later in the day, it became necessary to take this meal before leaving the ship. At eight o'clock all hands were assembled on the quarter-deck for prayers, a solemnity which was gone through in as orderly a manner as circumstances would admit. When the weather permitted, the flags of the ship were hung up as an awning or screen, forming the quarter-deck into a distinct compartment; the pendant was also hoisted at the mainmast, and a large ensign flag was displayed over the stern; and lastly, the ship's companion, or top of the staircase, was covered with the *flag proper* of the Lighthouse

Service, on which the Bible was laid. A particular toll of the bell called all hands to the quarter-deck, when the writer read a 77 chapter of the Bible, and, the whole ship's company being uncovered, he also read the impressive prayer composed by the Reverend Dr. Brunton, one of the ministers of Edinburgh.

Upon concluding this service, which was attended with becoming reverence and attention, all on board retired to their respective berths to breakfast, and, at half-past nine, the bell again rung for the artificers to take their stations in their respective boats. Some demur having been evinced on board about the propriety of working on Sunday, which had hitherto been touched upon as delicately as possible, all hands being called aft, the writer, from the quarter-deck, stated generally the nature of the service, expressing his hopes that every man would feel himself called upon to consider the erection of a lighthouse on the Bell Rock, in every point of view, as a work of necessity and mercy. He knew that scruples had existed with some, and these had, indeed, been fairly and candidly urged before leaving the shore; but it was expected that, after having seen the critical nature of the rock, and the necessity of the measure, every man would now be satisfied of the propriety of embracing all opportunities of landing on the rock when the state of the weather would permit. The writer further took them to witness that it did not proceed from want of respect for the appointments and established forms of religion that he had himself adopted the resolution of attending the Bell Rock works on the Sunday; but, as he hoped, from a conviction that it was his bounden duty, on the strictest principles of morality. At the same time it was intimated that, if any were of a different opinion, they should be perfectly at liberty to hold their sentiments without the imputation of contumacy or disobedience; the only difference would be in regard to the pay.

Upon stating this much, he stepped into his boat, requesting all who were so disposed to follow him. The sailors, from their habits, found no scruple on this subject, and all of the artificers, though a little tardy, also embarked, excepting four of the masons, who, from the beginning, mentioned that they would decline working on Sundays. It may here be noticed that throughout the whole of the operations it was observable that the men wrought, if possible, with more keenness upon the Sundays than at other times, from an impression that they were engaged in a work of imperious necessity, which required every possible exertion. On returning to the floating light, after finishing the tide's work, the boats were received by the part of the ship's crew left on board with the usual attention of handing ropes to the boats and helping the artificers on board; but the four masons who had absented themselves from the work did not appear upon deck.

Monday,
24th Aug.

The boats left the floating light at a quarter-past nine o’clock this morning, and the work began at three-quarters past nine; but as the neap-tides were approaching the working time at the rock became gradually shorter, and it was now with difficulty that two and a half hours’ work could be got. But so keenly had the workmen entered into the spirit of the Beacon-house operations, that they continued to bore the holes in the rock till some of them were knee-deep in water.

The operations at this time were entirely directed to the erection of the beacon, in which every man felt an equal interest, as at this critical period the slightest casualty to any of the boats at the rock might have been fatal to himself individually, while it was perhaps peculiar to the writer more immediately to feel for the safety of the whole. Each log or upright beam of the beacon was to be fixed to the rock by two strong and massive bats or stanchions of iron. These bats, for the fixture of the principal and diagonal beams and bracing chains, required fifty-four holes, each measuring two inches in diameter and eighteen inches in depth. There had already been so considerable a progress made in boring and excavating the holes that the writer’s hopes of getting the beacon erected this year began to be more and more confirmed, although it was now advancing towards what was considered the latter end of the proper working season at the Bell Rock. The foreman joiner, Mr. Francis Watt, was accordingly appointed to attend at the rock to-day, when the necessary levels were taken for the step or seat of each particular beam of the beacon, that they might be cut to their respective lengths, to suit the inequalities of the rock; several of the stanchions were also tried into their places, and other necessary observations made, to prevent mistakes on the application of the apparatus, and to facilitate the operations when the beams came to be set up, which would require to be done in the course of a single tide.

Tuesday,
25th Aug.

We had now experienced an almost unvaried tract of light airs of easterly wind, with clear weather in the fore-part of the day and fog in the evenings. To-day, however, it sensibly changed; when the wind came to the south-west, and blew a fresh breeze. At nine a.m. the bell rung, and the boats were hoisted out, and though the artificers were now pretty well accustomed to tripping up and down the sides of the floating light, yet it required more seamanship this morning than usual. It therefore afforded some merriment to those who had got fairly seated in their respective boats to see the difficulties which attended their companions, and the hesitating manner in which they quitted hold of the man-ropes in leaving the shi The passage to the rock was tedious, and the boats did not reach it till half-past ten.

It being now the period of neap-tides, the water only partially left the rock, and some of the men who were boring on the lower ledges of the site of the beacon stood knee-deep in water. The situation of the smith to-day was particularly disagreeable, but his services were at all times indispensable. As the tide did not leave the site of the forge, he stood in the water, and as there was some roughness on the surface it was with considerable difficulty that, with the assistance of the sailors, he was enabled to preserve alive his fire; and, while his feet were immersed in water, his face was not only scorched but continually exposed to volumes of smoke, accompanied with sparks from the fire, which were occasionally set up owing to the strength and direction of the wind.

Wednesday,
26th Aug

The wind had shifted this morning to N.N.W., with rain, and was blowing what sailors call a fresh breeze. To speak, perhaps, somewhat more intelligibly to the general reader, the wind was such that a fishing-boat could just carry full sail. But as it was of importance, specially in the outset of the business, to keep up the spirit of enterprise for landing on all practicable occasions, the writer, after consulting with the landing-master, ordered the bell to be rung for embarking, and at half-past eleven the boats reached the rock, and left it again at a quarter-past twelve, without, however, being able to do much work, as the smith could not be set to work from the smallness of the ebb and the strong breach of sea, which lashed with great force among the bars of the forge.

Just as we were about to leave the rock the wind shifted to the S.W., and, from a fresh gale, it became what seamen term a hard gale, or such as would have required the fisherman to take in two or three reefs in his sail. It is a curious fact that the respective tides of ebb and flood are apparent upon the shore about an hour and a half sooner than at the distance of three or four miles in the offing. But what seems chiefly interesting here is that the tides around this small sunken rock should follow exactly the same laws as on the extensive shores of the mainland. When the boats left the Bell Rock to-day it was overflowed by the flood-tide, but the floating light did not swing round to the flood-tide for more than an hour afterwards. Under this disadvantage the boats had to struggle with the ebb-tide and a hard gale of wind, so that it was with the greatest difficulty they reached the floating light. Had this gale happened in spring-tides when the current was strong we must have been driven to sea in a very helpless condition.

The boat which the writer steered was considerably behind the 80 other, one of the masons having unluckily broken his oar. Our prospect of getting on board, of course, became doubtful, and our situation was rather perilous, as the boat shipped so much sea that it occupied two of the artificers to bale and clear her of water. When the oar gave way we were about half a mile from the ship, but, being fortunately to windward, we got into the wake of the floating light, at about 250 fathoms astern, just as the landing-master's boat reached the vessel. He immediately streamed or floated a life-buoy astern, with a line which was always in readiness, and by means of this useful implement the boat was towed alongside of the floating light, where, from her rolling motion, it required no small management to get safely on board, as the men were worn out with their exertions in pulling from the rock. On the present occasion the crews of both boats were completely drenched with spray, and those who sat upon the bottom of the boats to bale them were sometimes pretty deep in the water before it could be cleared out. After getting on board, all hands were allowed an extra dram, and, having shifted and got a warm and comfortable dinner, the affair, it is believed, was little more thought of.

Thursday,
27th Aug.

The tides were now in that state which sailors term the dead of the neap, and it was not expected that any part of the rock would be seen above water to-day; at any rate, it was obvious, from the experience of yesterday, that no work could be done upon it, and therefore the artificers were not required to land. The wind was at west, with light breezes, and fine clear weather; and as it was an object with the writer to know the actual state of the Bell Rock at neap-tides, he got one of the boats manned, and, being accompanied by the landing-master, went to it at a quarter-past twelve. The parts of the rock that appeared above water being very trifling, were covered by every wave, so that no landing was made. Upon trying the depth of water with a boat-hook, particularly on the sites of the lighthouse and beacon, on the former, at low water, the depth was found to be three feet, and on the central parts of the latter it was ascertained to be two feet eight inches. Having made these remarks, the boat returned to the ship at two p.m., and the weather being good, the artificers were found amusing themselves with fishing. The *Smeaton* came from Arbroath this afternoon, and made fast to her moorings, having brought letters and newspapers, with parcels of clean linen, etc., for the workmen, who were also made happy by the arrival of three of their comrades from the workyard ashore. From these men they not only received all the news of the workyard, but seemed themselves to enjoy great pleasure in communicating whatever they considered to be interesting with regard to the 81 rock. Some also got letters from their friends at a distance, the postage of which for the men afloat was always free, so that they corresponded the more readily.

The site of the building having already been carefully traced out with the pick-axe, the artificers this day commenced the excavation of the rock for the foundation or first course of the lighthouse. Four men only were employed at this work, while twelve continued at the site of the beacon-house, at which every possible opportunity was embraced, till this essential part of the operations should be completed.

Wednesday
2nd Sept.

The floating light’s bell rung this morning at half-past four o’clock, as a signal for the boats to be got ready, and the landing took place at half-past five. In passing the *Smeaton* at her moorings near the rock, her boat followed with eight additional artificers who had come from Arbroath with her at last trip, but there being no room for them in the floating light’s boats, they had continued on board. The weather did not look very promising in the morning, the wind blowing pretty fresh from W.S.W.: and had it not been that the writer calculated upon having a vessel so much at command, in all probability he would not have ventured to land. The *Smeaton* rode at what sailors call a *salvagee*, with a cross-head made fast to the floating buoy. This kind of attachment was found to be more convenient than the mode of passing the hawser through the ring of the buoy when the vessel was to be made fast. She had then only to be steered very close to the buoy, when the salvagee was laid hold of with a boat-hook, and the *bite* of the hawser thrown over the cross-head. But the salvagee, by this method, was always left at the buoy, and was, of course, more liable to chafe and wear than a hawser passed through the ring, which could be wattled with canvas, and shifted at pleasure. The salvagee and cross method is, however, much practised; but the experience of this morning showed it to be very unsuitable for vessels riding in an exposed situation for any length of time.

Soon after the artificers landed they commenced work; but the Wind coming to blow hard, the *Smeaton’s* boat and crew, who had brought their complement of eight men to the rock, went off to examine her riding ropes, and see that they were in proper order. The boat had no sooner reached the vessel than she went adrift, carrying the boat along with her. By the time that she was got round to make a tack towards the rock, she had drifted at least three miles to leeward, with the praam boat astern; and, having both the Wind and a tide against her, the writer perceived, with no little anxiety, that she could not possibly return to the rock till long after 82 its being overflowed;

for, owing to the anomaly of the tides formerly noticed, the Bell Rock is completely under water when the ebb abates to the offing.

In this perilous predicament, indeed, he found himself placed between hope and despair — but certainly the latter was by much the most predominant feeling of his mind — situate upon a sunken rock in the middle of the ocean, which, in the progress of the flood-tide, was to be laid under water to the depth of at least twelve feet in a stormy sea. There were this morning thirty-two persons in all upon the rock, with only two boats, whose complement, even in good weather, did not exceed twenty-four sitters; but to row to the floating light with so much wind, and in so heavy a sea, a complement of eight men for each boat was as much as could, with propriety, be attempted, so that, in this way, about one-half of our number was unprovided for. Under these circumstances, had the writer ventured to despatch one of the boats in expectation of either working the *Smeaton* sooner up towards the rock, or in hopes of getting her boat brought to our assistance, this must have given an immediate alarm to the artificers, each of whom would have insisted upon taking to his own boat, and leaving the eight artificers belonging to the *Smeaton* to their chance. Of course a scuffle might have ensued, and it is hard to say, in the ardour of men contending for life, where it might have ended. It has even been hinted to the writer that a party of the *pickmen* were determined to keep exclusively to their own boat against all hazards.

The unfortunate circumstance of the *Smeaton* and her boat having drifted was, for a considerable time, only known to the writer and to the landing-master, who removed to the farther point of the rock, where he kept his eye steadily upon the progress of the vessel. While the artificers were at work, chiefly in sitting or kneeling postures, excavating the rock, or boring with the jumpers, and while their numerous hammers, with the sound of the smith's anvil, continued, the situation of things did not appear so awful. In this state of suspense, with almost certain destruction at hand, the water began to rise upon those who were at work on the lower parts of the sites of the beacon and lighthouse. From the run of sea upon the rock, the forge fire was also sooner extinguished this morning than usual, and the volumes of smoke having ceased, objects in every direction became visible from all parts of the rock. After having had about three hours' work, the men began, pretty generally, to make towards their respective boats for their jackets and stockings, when, to their astonishment, instead of three, they found only two boats, the third being adrift with the *Smeaton*. Not a word was uttered by any one, 83
but all appeared to be silently calculating their numbers, and looking to each other with evident marks of perplexity depicted in their countenances. The landing-master, conceiving that blame might be

attached to him for allowing the boat to leave the rock, still kept at a distance. At this critical moment the author was standing upon an elevated part of Smith's Ledge, where he endeavoured to mark the progress of the *Smeaton*, not a little surprised that her crew did not cut the praam adrift, which greatly retarded her way, and amazed that some effort was not making to bring at least the boat, and attempt our relief. The workmen looked steadfastly upon the writer, and turned occasionally towards the vessel, still far to leeward. All this passed in the most perfect silence, and the melancholy solemnity of the group made an impression never to be effaced from his mind.

The writer had all along been considering of various schemes — providing the men could be kept under command — which might be put in practice for the general safety, in hopes that the *Smeaton* might be able to pick up the boats to leeward, when they were obliged to leave the rock. He was, accordingly, about to address the artificers on the perilous nature of their circumstances, and to propose that all hands should unstrip their upper clothing when the higher parts of the rock were laid under water; that the seamen should remove every unnecessary weight and encumbrance from the boats; that a specified number of men should go into each boat, and that the remainder should hang by the gunwales, while the boats were to be rowed gently towards the *Smeaton*, as the course to the *Pharos*, or floating light, lay rather to windward of the rock. But when he attempted to speak his mouth was so parched that his tongue refused utterance, and he now learned by experience that the saliva is as necessary as the tongue itself for speech. He turned to one of the pools on the rock and lapped a little water, which produced immediate relief. But what was his happiness, when on rising from this unpleasant beverage, some one called out, "A boat! a boat!" and, on looking around, at no great distance, a large boat was seen through the haze making towards the rock. This at once enlivened and rejoiced every heart. The timeous visitor proved to be James Spink, the Bell Rock pilot, who had come express from Arbroath with letters. Spink had for some time seen the *Smeaton*, and had even supposed, from the state of the weather, that all hands were on board of her till he approached more nearly and observed people upon the rock; but not supposing that the assistance of his boat was necessary to carry the artificers off the rock, he anchored on the 84 lee-side and began to fish, waiting, as usual, till the letters were sent for, as the pilot-boat was too large and unwieldy for approaching the rock when there was any roughness or run of the sea at the entrance of the landing creeks.

Upon this fortunate change of circumstances, sixteen of the artificers were sent, at two trips, in one of the boats, with instructions for Spink to proceed with them to the floating light. This being accomplished, the remaining sixteen followed in the two boats belonging to the service of the rock. Every one felt the most perfect happiness at leaving the Bell Rock this morning, though a very hard and dangerous passage to the floating light still awaited us, as the wind by this time had increased to a pretty hard gale, accompanied with a considerable swell of sea. Every one was as completely drenched in water as if he had been dragged astern of the boats. The writer, in particular, being at the helm, found, on getting on board, that his face and ears were completely coated with a thin film of salt from the sea spray, which broke constantly over the bows of the boat. After much baling of water and severe work at the oars, the three boats reached the floating light, where some new difficulties occurred in getting on board in safety, owing partly to the exhausted state of the men, and partly to the violent rolling of the vessel.

As the tide flowed, it was expected that the *Smeaton* would have got to windward; but, seeing that all was safe, after tacking for several hours and making little progress, she bore away for Arbroath, with the praam-boat. As there was now too much wind for the pilot-boat to return to Arbroath, she was made fast astern of the floating light, and the crew remained on board till next day, when the weather moderated. There can be very little doubt that the appearance of James Spink with his boat on this critical occasion was the means of preventing the loss of lives at the rock this morning. When these circumstances, some years afterwards, came to the knowledge of the Board, a small pension was ordered to our faithful pilot, then in his seventieth year; and he still continues to wear the uniform clothes and badge of the Lighthouse service. Spink is a remarkably strong man, whose *tout ensemble* is highly characteristic of a North-country fisherman. He usually dresses in a *pé-jacket,* cut after a particular fashion, and wears a large, flat, blue bonnet. A striking likeness of Spink in his pilot-dress, with the badge or insignia on his left arm which is characteristic of the boatmen in the service of the Northern Lights, has been taken by Howe, and is in the writer's possession.

Thursday,
3rd. Sept.

The bell rung this morning at five o'clock, but the writer must acknowledge, from the circumstances of yesterday, that its sound was extremely unwelcome. This appears also to have been the 85 feelings of the artificers, for when they came to be mustered, out of twenty-six, only eight, besides the foreman and seamen, appeared upon deck to accompany the writer to the rock. Such are the baneful effects of anything like misfortune or accident connected with a work of this description. The use of argument to persuade the men to embark in cases of this kind would have been out of place, as it is not only discomfort, or even the risk of the loss of a limb, but life itself that becomes the question. The boats, notwithstanding the thinness of our ranks, left the vessel at half-past five. The rough weather of yesterday having proved but a summer's gale, the wind came to-day in gentle breezes; yet, the atmosphere being cloudy, it had not a very favourable appearance. The boats reached the rock at six a.m., and the eight artificers who landed were employed in clearing out the bat-holes for the beacon-house, and had a very prosperous tide of four hours' work, being the longest yet experienced by half an hour.

The boats left the rock again at ten o'clock, and the weather having cleared up as we drew near the vessel, the eighteen artificers who had remained on board were observed upon deck, but as the boats approached they sought their way below, being quite ashamed of their conduct. This was the only instance of refusal to go to the rock which occurred during the whole progress of the work, excepting that of the four men who declined working upon Sunday, a case which the writer did not conceive to be at all analogous to the present. It may here be mentioned, much to the credit of these four men, that they stood foremost in embarking for the rock this morning.

Saturday,
5th Sept.

It was fortunate that a landing was not attempted this evening, for at eight o'clock the wind shifted to E.S.E., and at ten it had become a hard gale, when fifty fathoms of the floating light's hempen cable were veered out. The gale still increasing, the ship rolled and laboured excessively, and at midnight eighty fathoms of cable were veered out; while the sea continued to strike the vessel with a degree of force which had not before been experienced.

Sunday,
6th Sept.

During the last night there was little rest on board of the *Pharos*, and daylight, though anxiously wished for, brought no relief, as the gale continued with unabated violence. The sea struck so hard upon the vessel's bows that it rose in great quantities, or in "green seas," as the sailors termed it, which were carried by the wind as far aft as the quarter-deck, and not unfrequently over the stern of the ship altogether. It fell occasionally so heavily on the skylight of the writer's cabin, though so far aft as to be within five feet of the helm, that the glass was broken to pieces before the dead-light could be got into its place, so that the water poured down in great quantities. 86 In shutting out the water, the admission of light was prevented, and in the morning all continued in the most comfortless state of darkness. About ten o'clock a.m. the wind shifted to N.E., and blew, if possible, harder than before, and it was accompanied by a much heavier swell of sea. In the course of the gale, the part of the cable in the hause-hole had been so often shifted that nearly the whole length of one of her hempen cables, of 120 fathoms, had been veered out, besides the chain-moorings. The cable, for its preservation, was also carefully served or wattled with pieces of canvas round the windlass, and with leather well greased in the hause-hole. In this state things remained during the whole day, every sea which struck the vessel — and the seas followed each other in close succession — causing her to shake, and all on board occasionally to tremble. At each of these strokes of the sea the rolling and pitching of the vessel ceased for a time, and her motion was felt as if she had either broke adrift before the wind or were in the act of sinking; but, when another sea came, she ranged up against it with great force, and this became the regular intimation of our being still riding at anchor.

About eleven o'clock, the writer with some difficulty got out of bed, but, in attempting to dress, he was thrown twice upon the floor at the opposite end of the cabin. In an undressed state he made shift to get about half-way up the companion-stairs, with an intention to observe the state of the sea and of the ship upon deck; but he no sooner looked over the companion than a heavy sea struck the vessel, which fell on the quarter-deck, and rushed downstairs in the officers' cabin in so considerable a quantity that it was found necessary to lift one of the scuttles in the floor, to let the water into the limbers of the ship, as it dashed from side to side in such a manner as to run into the lower tier of beds. Having been foiled in this attempt, and being completely wetted, he again got below and went to bed. In this state of the weather the seamen had to move about the necessary or indispensable duties of the ship with the most cautious use both of hands and feet, while it required all the art of the landsman to keep within the precincts of his bed. The writer even found himself so much tossed about that it became necessary, in some measure, to shut himself in bed, in order to avoid being thrown upon the floor. Indeed, such was the motion of the ship that it seemed wholly impracticable to remain in any other than a lying posture. On deck the most stormy aspect presented itself, while below all was wet and comfortless.

About two o'clock p.m. a great alarm was given throughout the ship from the effects of a very heavy sea which struck her, and almost filled the waist, pouring down into the berths below, through every 87 chink and crevice of the hatches and skylights. From the motion of the vessel being thus suddenly deadened or checked, and from the flowing in of the water above, it is believed there was not an individual on board who did not think, at the moment, that the vessel had foundered, and was in the act of sinking. The writer could withstand this no longer, and as soon as she again began to range to the sea he determined to make another effort to get upon deck. In the first instance, however, he groped his way in darkness from his own cabin through the berths of the officers, where all was quietness. He next entered the galley and other compartments occupied by the artificers. Here also all was shut up in darkness, the fire having been drowned out in the early part of the gale. Several of the artificers were employed in prayer, repeating psalms and other devotional exercises in a full tone of voice; others protesting that, if they should fortunately get once more on shore, no one should ever see them afloat again. With the assistance of the landing-master, the writer made his way, holding on step by step, among the numerous impediments which lay in the way. Such was the creaking noise of the bulkheads or partitions, the dashing of the water, and the whistling noise of the winds, that it was hardly possible to break in upon such a confusion of sounds. In one or two instances, anxious and repeated inquiries were made by the artificers as to the state of things upon deck, to which the captain made the usual answer, that it could not blow long in this way, and that we must soon have better weather. The next berth in succession, moving forward in the ship, was that allotted for the seamen. Here the scene was considerably different. Having reached the middle of this darksome berth without its inmates being aware of any intrusion, the writer had the consolation of remarking that, although they talked of bad weather and the cross accidents of the sea, yet the conversation was carried on in that sort of tone and manner which bespoke an ease and composure of mind highly creditable to them and pleasing to him. The writer immediately accosted the seamen about the state of the ship. To these inquiries they replied that the vessel being light, and having but little hold of the water, no top-rigging, with excellent ground-tackle, and everything being fresh and new, they felt perfect confidence in their situation.

It being impossible to open any of the hatches in the fore part of the ship in communicating with the deck, the watch was changed by passing through the several berths to the companion-stair leading to the quarter-deck. The writer, therefore, made the best of his way aft, and, on a second attempt to look out, he succeeded, and saw indeed an astonishing sight. The sea or waves appeared to be ten 88 or fifteen feet in height of unbroken water, and every approaching billow seemed as if it would overwhelm our vessel, but she continued to rise upon the waves and to fall between the seas in a very wonderful manner. It seemed to be only those seas which caught her in the act of rising which struck her with so much violence and threw such quantities of water aft. On deck there was only one solitary individual looking out, to give the alarm in the event of the ship breaking from her moorings. The seaman on watch continued only two hours; he who kept watch at this time was a tall, slender man of a black complexion; he had no greatcoat nor over-all of any kind, but was simply dressed in his ordinary jacket and trousers; his hat was tied under his chin with a napkin, and he stood aft the foremast, to which he had lashed himself with a gasket or small rope round his waist, to prevent his falling upon deck or being washed overboard. When the writer looked up, he appeared to smile, which afforded a further symptom of the confidence of the crew in their ship. This person on watch was as completely wetted as if he had been drawn through the sea, which was given as a reason for his not putting on a greatcoat, that he might wet as few of his clothes as possible, and have a dry shift when he went below. Upon deck everything that was movable was out of sight, having either been stowed below, previous to the gale, or been washed overboard. Some trifling parts of the quarter boards were damaged by the breach of the sea; and one of the boats upon deck was about one-third full of water, the oyle-hole or drain having been accidentally stopped up, and part of her gunwale had received considerable injury. These observations were hastily made, and not without occasionally shutting the companion, to avoid being wetted by the successive seas which broke over the bows and fell upon different parts of the deck according to the impetus with which the waves struck the vessel. By this time it was about three o’clock in the afternoon, and the gale, which had now continued with unabated force for twenty-seven hours, had not the least appearance of going off.

In the dismal prospect of undergoing another night like the last, and being in imminent hazard of parting from our cable, the writer thought it necessary to advise with the master and officers of the ship as to the probable event of the vessel’s drifting from her moorings. They severally gave it as their opinion that we had now every chance of riding out the gale, which, in all probability, could not continue with the same fury many hours longer; and that even if she should part from her anchor, the storm-sails had been laid to hand, and could be bent in a very short time. They further stated that from the direction of the wind being N.E., she would sail up the Firth of 89 Forth to Leith Roads. But if this should appear doubtful, after passing the Island and Light of May, it might be advisable at once to steer for Tyningham Sands, on the western side of Dunbar, and there run the vessel ashore. If this should happen at the time of high-water, or during the ebbing of the tide, they were of opinion, from the flatness and strength of the floating light, that no danger would attend her taking the ground, even with a very heavy sea. The writer, seeing the confidence which these gentlemen possessed with regard to the situation of things, found himself as much relieved with this conversation as he had previously been with the seeming indifference of the forecastle-men, and the smile of the watch upon deck, though literally lashed to the foremast. From this time he felt himself almost perfectly at ease; at any rate, he was entirely resigned to the ultimate result.

About six o'clock in the evening the ship's company was heard moving upon deck, which on the present occasion was rather the cause of alarm. The writer accordingly rang his bell to know what was the matter, when he was informed by the steward that the weather looked considerably better, and that the men upon deck were endeavouring to ship the smoke-funnel of the galley that the people might get some meat. This was a more favourable account than had been anticipated. During the last twenty-one hours he himself had not only had nothing to eat, but he had almost never passed a thought on the subject. Upon the mention of a change of weather, he sent the steward to learn how the artificers felt, and on his return he stated that they now seemed to be all very happy, since the cook had begun to light the galley-fire and make preparations for the suet-pudding of Sunday, which was the only dish to be attempted for the mess, from the ease with which it could both be cooked and served up.

The principal change felt upon the ship as the wind abated was her increased rolling motion, but the pitching was much diminished, and now hardly any sea came farther aft than the foremast: but she rolled so extremely hard as frequently to dip and take in water over the gunwales and rails in the waist. By nine o'clock all hands had been refreshed by the exertions of the cook and steward, and were happy in the prospect of the worst of the gale being over. The usual complement of men was also now set on watch, and more quietness was experienced throughout the ship. Although the previous night had been a very restless one, it had not the effect of inducing repose in the writer's berth on the succeeding night; for having been so much tossed about in bed during the last thirty hours, he found no easy spot to turn to, and his body was all sore to the touch, which 90 ill accorded with the unyielding materials with which his bed-place was surrounded.

Monday,
7th Sept.

This morning, about eight o'clock, the writer was agreeably surprised to see the scuttle of his cabin skylight removed, and the bright rays of the sun admitted. Although the ship continued to roll excessively, and the sea was still running very high, yet the ordinary business on board seemed to be going forward on deck. It was impossible to steady a telescope, so as to look minutely at the progress of the waves and trace their breach upon the Bell Rock; but the height to which the cross-running waves rose in sprays when they met each other was truly grand, and the continued roar and noise of the sea was very perceptible to the ear. To estimate the height of the sprays at forty or fifty feet would surely be within the mark. Those of the workmen who were not much afflicted with sea-sickness came upon deck, and the wetness below being dried up, the cabins were again brought into a habitable state. Every one seemed to meet as if after a long absence, congratulating his neighbour upon the return of good weather. Little could be said as to the comfort of the vessel, but after riding out such a gale, no one felt the least doubt or hesitation as to the safety and good condition of her moorings. The master and mate were extremely anxious, however, to heave in the hempen cable, and see the state of the clinch or iron ring of the chain-cable. But the vessel rolled at such a rate that the seamen could not possibly keep their feet at the windlass nor work the handspikes, though it had been several times attempted since the gale took off.

About twelve noon, however, the vessel's motion was observed to be considerably less, and the sailors were enabled to walk upon deck with some degree of freedom. But, to the astonishment of every one, it was soon discovered that the floating light was adrift! The windlass was instantly manned, and the men soon gave out that there was no strain upon the cable. The mizzen sail, which was bent for the occasional purpose of making the vessel ride more easily to the tide, was immediately set, and the other sails were also hoisted in a short time, when, in no small consternation, we bore away about one mile to the south-westward of the former station, and there let go the best bower anchor and cable in twenty fathoms water, to ride until the swell of the sea should fall, when it might be practicable to grapple for the moorings, and find a better anchorage for the ship.

Tuesday,
15th Sept.

This morning, at five a.m., the bell rung as a signal for landing upon the rock, a sound which, after a lapse of ten days, it is believed was welcomed by every one on board. There being a heavy breach 91 of sea at the eastern creek, we landed, though not without difficulty, on the western side, every one seeming more eager than another to get upon the rock; and never did hungry men sit down to a hearty meal with more appetite than the artificers began to pick the dulse from the rocks. This marine plant had the effect of reviving the sickly, and seemed to be no less relished by those who were more hardy.

While the water was ebbing, and the men were roaming in quest of their favourite morsel, the writer was examining the effects of the storm upon the forge and loose apparatus left upon the rock. Six large blocks of granite which had been landed, by way of experiment, on the 1st instant, were now removed from their places and, by the force of the sea, thrown over a rising ledge into a hole at the distance of twelve or fifteen paces from the place on which they had been landed. This was a pretty good evidence both of the violence of the storm and the agitation of the sea upon the rock. The safety of the smith's forge was always an object of essential regard. The ash-pan of the hearth or fireplace, with its weighty cast-iron back, had been washed from their places of supposed security; the chains of attachment had been broken, and these ponderous articles were found at a very considerable distance in a hole on the western side of the rock; while the tools and picks of the Aberdeen masons were scattered about in every direction. It is, however, remarkable that not a single article was ultimately lost.

This being the night on which the floating light was advertised to be lighted, it was accordingly exhibited, to the great joy of every one.

Wednesday,
16th Sept.

The writer was made happy to-day by the return of the Lighthouse yacht from a voyage to the Northern Lighthouses. Having immediately removed on board of this fine vessel of eighty-one tons register, the artificers gladly followed; for, though they found themselves more pinched for accommodation on board of the yacht, and still more so in the *Smeaton*, yet they greatly preferred either of these to the *Pharos*, or floating light, on account of her rolling motion, though in all respects fitted up for their conveniency.

The writer called them to the quarter-deck and informed them that, having been one month afloat, in terms of their agreement they were now at liberty to return to the workyard at Arbroath if they preferred this to continuing at the Bell Rock. But they replied that, in the prospect of soon getting the beacon erected upon the rock, and having made a change from the floating light, they were now perfectly reconciled to their situation, and would remain afloat till the end of the working season.

Thursday,
17th Sept.

The wind was at N.E. this morning, and though there were only light airs, yet there was a pretty heavy swell coming ashore upon the rock. The boats landed at half-past seven o'clock a.m., at the creek on the southern side of the rock, marked Port Hamilton. But as one of the boats was in the act of entering this creek, the seaman at the bow-oar, who had just entered the service, having inadvertently expressed some fear from a heavy sea which came rolling towards the boat, and one of the artificers having at the same time looked round and missed a stroke with his oar, such a preponderance was thus given to the rowers upon the opposite side that when the wave struck the boat it threw her upon a ledge of shelving rocks, where the water left her, and she having *kanted* to seaward, the next wave completely filled her with water. After making considerable efforts the boat was again got afloat in the proper track of the creek, so that we landed without any other accident than a complete ducking. There being no possibility of getting a shift of clothes, the artificers began with all speed to work, so as to bring themselves into heat, while the writer and his assistants kept as much as possible in motion. Having remained more than an hour upon the rock, the boats left it at half-past nine; and, after getting on board, the writer recommended to the artificers, as the best mode of getting into a state of comfort, to strip off their wet clothes and go to bed for an hour or two. No further inconveniency was felt, and no one seemed to complain of the affection called "catching cold."

Friday,
18th Sept.

An important occurrence connected with the operations of this season was the arrival of the *Smeaton* at four p.m., having in tow the six principal beams of the beacon-house, together with all the stanchions and other work on board for fixing it on the rock. The mooring of the floating light was a great point gained, but in the erection of the beacon at this late period of the season new difficulties presented themselves. The success of such an undertaking at any season was precarious, because a single day of bad weather occurring before the necessary fixtures could be made might sweep the whole apparatus from the rock. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the writer had determined to make the trial, although he could almost have wished, upon looking at the state of the clouds and the direction of the wind, that the apparatus for the beacon had been still in the workyard.

Saturday,
19th Sept.

The main beams of the beacon were made up in two separate rafts, fixed with bars and bolts of iron. One of these rafts, not being immediately wanted, was left astern of the floating light, and the other was kept in tow by the *Smeaton*, at the buoy nearest to the rock. The Lighthouse yacht rode at another buoy with all hands on board 93 that could possibly be spared out of the floating light. The party of artificers and seamen which landed on the rock counted altogether forty in number. At half-past eight o'clock a derrick, or mast of thirty feet in height, was erected and properly supported with guy-ropes, for suspending the block for raising the first principal beam of the beacon; and a winch machine was also bolted down to the rock for working the purchase-tackle.

Upon raising the derrick, all hands on the rock spontaneously gave three hearty cheers, as a favourable omen of our future exertions in pointing out more permanently the position of the rock. Even to this single spar of timber, could it be preserved, a drowning man might lay hold. When the *Smeaton* drifted on the 2nd of this month such a spar would have been sufficient to save us till she could have come to our relief.

Sunday,
20th Sept.

The wind this morning was variable, but the weather continued extremely favourable for the operations throughout the whole day. At six a.m. the boats were in motion, and the raft, consisting of four of the six principal beams of the beacon-house, each measuring about sixteen inches square, and fifty feet in length, was towed to the rock, where it was anchored, that it might *ground* upon it as the water ebbed. The sailors and artificers, including all hands, to-day counted no fewer than fifty-two, being perhaps the greatest number of persons ever collected upon the Bell Rock. It was early in the tide when the boats reached the rock, and the men worked a considerable time up to their middle in water, every one being more eager than his neighbour to be useful. Even the four artificers who had hitherto declined working on Sunday were to-day most zealous in their exertions. They had indeed become so convinced of the precarious nature and necessity of the work that they never afterwards absented themselves from the rock on Sunday when a landing was practicable.

Having made fast a piece of very good new line, at about two-thirds from the lower end of one of the beams, the purchase-tackle of the derrick was hooked into the turns of the line, and it was speedily raised by the number of men on the rock and the power of the winch tackle. When this log was lifted to a sufficient height, its foot, or lower end, was *stepped* into the spot which had been previously prepared for it. Two of the great iron stanchions were then set in their respective holes on each side of the beam, when a rope was passed round them and the beam, to prevent it from slipping till it could be more permanently fixed. The derrick, or upright spar used for carrying the tackle to raise the first beam, was placed in such a position as to become useful for supporting the upper end 94 of it, which now became, in its turn, the prop of the tackle for raising the second beam. The whole difficulty of this operation was in the raising and propping of the first beam, which became a convenient derrick for raising the second, these again a pair of shears for lifting the third, and the shears a triangle for raising the fourth. Having thus got four of the six principal beams set on end, it required a considerable degree of trouble to get their upper ends to fit. Here they formed the apex of a cone, and were all together mortised into a large piece of beechwood, and secured, for the present, with ropes, in a temporary manner. During the short period of one tide all that could further be done for their security was to put a single screw-bolt through the great kneed bats or stanchions on each side of the beams, and screw the nut home.

In this manner these four principal beams were erected, and left in a pretty secure state. The men had commenced while there was about two or three feet of water upon the side of the beacon, and as the sea was smooth they continued the work equally long during flood-tide. Two of the boats being left at the rock to take off the joiners, who were busily employed on the upper parts till two o'clock p.m., this tide's work may be said to have continued for about seven hours, which was the longest that had hitherto been got upon the rock by at least three hours.

When the first boats left the rock with the artificers employed on the lower part of the work during the flood-tide, the beacon had quite a novel appearance. The beams erected formed a common base of about thirty-three feet, meeting at the top, which was about forty-five feet above the rock, and here half a dozen of the artificers were still at work. After clearing the rock the boats made a stop, when three hearty cheers were given, which were returned with equal goodwill by those upon the beacon, from the personal interest which every one felt in the prosperity of this work, so intimately connected with his safety.

All hands having returned to their respective ships, they got a shift of dry clothes and some refreshment. Being Sunday, they were afterwards convened by signal on board of the Lighthouse yacht, when prayers were read; for every heart upon this occasion felt gladness, and every mind was disposed to be thankful for the happy and successful termination of the operations of this day.

Monday,
21st Sept.

The remaining two principal beams were erected in the course of this tide, which, with the assistance of those set up yesterday, was found to be a very simple operation.

Tuesday,
22nd Sept.

The six principal beams of the beacon were thus secured, at least in a temporary manner, in the course of two tides, or in the short 95 space of about eleven hours and a half. Such is the progress that may be made when active hands and willing minds set properly to work in operations of this kind. Having now got the weighty part of this work over, and being thereby relieved of the difficulty both of landing and victualling such a number of men, the *Smeaton* could now be spared, and she was accordingly despatched to Arbroath for a supply of water and provisions, and carried with her six of the artificers who could best be spared.

Wednesday,
23rd Sept.

In going out of the eastern harbour, the boat which the writer steered shipped a sea, that filled her about one-third with water. She had also been hid for a short time, by the waves breaking upon the rock, from the sight of the crew of the preceding boat, who were much alarmed for our safety, imagining for a time that she had gone down.

The *Smeaton* returned from Arbroath this afternoon, but there was so much sea that she could not be made fast to her moorings, and the vessel was obliged to return to Arbroath without being able either to deliver the provisions or take the artificers on board. The Lighthouse yacht was also soon obliged to follow her example, as the sea was breaking heavily over her bows. After getting two reefs in the mainsail, and the third or storm-jib set, the wind being S.W., she bent to windward, though blowing a hard gale, and got into St. Andrews Bay, where we passed the night under the lee of Fifeness.

Thursday, 24th Sept.

At two o'clock this morning we were in St. Andrews Bay, standing off and on shore, with strong gales of wind at S.W.; at seven we were off the entrance of the Tay; at eight stood towards the rock, and at ten passed to leeward of it, but could not attempt a landing. The beacon, however, appeared to remain in good order, and by six p.m. the vessel had again beaten up to St. Andrews Bay, and got into somewhat smoother water for the night.

Friday,
25th Sept.

At seven o'clock bore away for the Bell Rock, but finding a heavy sea running on it were unable to land. The writer, however, had the satisfaction to observe, with his telescope, that everything about the beacon appeared entire; and although the sea had a most frightful appearance, yet it was the opinion of every one that, since the erection of the beacon, the Bell Rock was divested of many of its terrors, and had it been possible to have got the boats hoisted out and manned, it might have even been found practicable to land. At six it blew so hard that it was found necessary to strike the topmast and take in a third reef of the mainsail, and under this low canvas we soon reached St. Andrews Bay, and got again under the lee of the land for the night. The artificers, being sea-hardy, were quite reconciled to their quarters on board of the Lighthouse yacht; but it is believed 96 that hardly any consideration would have induced them again to take up their abode in the floating light.

Saturday,
26th Sept.

At daylight the yacht steered towards the Bell Rock, and at eight a.m. made fast to her moorings; at ten, all hands, to the amount of thirty, landed, when the writer had the happiness to find that the beacon had withstood the violence of the gale and the heavy breach of sea, everything being found in the same state in which it had been left on the 21st. The artificers were now enabled to work upon the rock throughout the whole day, both at low and high water, but it required the strictest attention to the state of the weather, in case of their being overtaken with a gale, which might prevent the possibility of getting them off the rock.

Two somewhat memorable circumstances in the annals of the Bell Rock attended the operations of this day: one was the removal of Mr. James Dove, the foreman smith, with his apparatus, from the rock to the upper part of the beacon, where the forge was now erected on a temporary platform, laid on the cross beams or upper framing. The other was the artificers having dined for the first time upon the rock, their dinner being cooked on board of the yacht, and sent to them by one of the boats. But what afforded the greatest happiness and relief was the removal of the large bellows, which had all along been a source of much trouble and perplexity, by their hampering and incommoding the boat which carried the smiths and their apparatus.

Saturday,
3rd Oct.

The wind being west to-day, the weather was very favourable for operations at the rock, and during the morning and evening tides, with the aid of torchlight, the masons had seven hours' work upon the site of the building. The smiths and joiners, who landed at half-past six a.m., did not leave the rock till a quarter-past eleven p.m., having been at work, with little intermission, for sixteen hours and three-quarters. When the water left the rock, they were employed at the lower parts of the beacon, and as the tide rose or fell, they shifted the place of their operations. From these exertions, the fixing and securing of the beacon made rapid advancement, as the men were now landed in the morning, and remained throughout the day. But, as a sudden change of weather might have prevented their being taken off at the proper time of tide, a quantity of bread and water was always kept on the beacon.

During this period of working at the beacon all the day, and often a great part of the night, the writer was much on board of the tender; but, while the masons could work on the rock, and frequently also while it was covered by the tide, he remained on the beacon;

especially during the night, as he made a point of being on the rock to the 97 latest hour, and was generally the last person who stepped into the boat. He had laid this down as part of his plan of procedure; and in this way had acquired, in the course of the first season, a pretty complete knowledge and experience of what could actually be done at the Bell Rock, under all circumstances of the weather. By this means also his assistants, and the artificers and mariners, got into a systematic habit of proceeding at the commencement of the work, which, it is believed, continued throughout the whole of the operations.

Sunday,
4th Oct.

The external part of the beacon was now finished, with its supports and bracing-chains, and whatever else was considered necessary for its stability, in so far as the season would permit; and although much was still wanting to complete this fabric, yet it was in such a state that it could be left without much fear of the consequences of a storm. The painting of the upper part was nearly finished this afternoon and the *Smeaton* had brought off a quantity of brushwood and other articles, for the purpose of heating or charring the lower part of the principal beams, before being laid over with successive coats of boiling pitch, to the height of from eight to twelve feet, or as high as the rise of spring-tides. A small flagstaff having also been erected to-day, a flag was displayed for the first time from the beacon, by which its perspective effect was greatly improved. On this, as on all like occasions at the Bell Rock, three hearty cheers were given; and the steward served out a dram of rum to all hands, while the Lighthouse yacht, *Smeaton*, and floating light, hoisted their colours in compliment to the erection.

Monday,
5th Oct.

In the afternoon, and just as the tide's work was over, Mr. John Rennie, engineer, accompanied by his son Mr. George, on their way to the harbour works of Fraserburgh, in Aberdeenshire, paid a visit to the Bell Rock, in a boat from Arbroath. It being then too late in the tide for landing, they remained on board of the Lighthouse yacht all night, when the writer, who had now been secluded from society for several weeks, enjoyed much of Mr. Rennie's interesting conversation, both on general topics, and professionally upon the progress of the Bell Rock works, on which he was consulted as chief engineer.

Tuesday,
6th Oct.

The artificers landed this morning at nine, after which one of the boats returned to the ship for the writer and Messrs. Rennie, who, upon landing, were saluted with a display of the colours from the beacon and by three cheers from the workmen. Everything was now in a prepared state for leaving the rock, and giving up the works afloat for this season, excepting some small articles, which would still occupy the smiths and joiners for a few days longer. They accordingly 98 shifted on board of the *Smealon*, while the yacht left the rock for Arbroath, with Messrs. Rennie, the writer, and the remainder of the artificers. But, before taking leave, the steward served out a farewell glass, when three hearty cheers were given, and an earnest wish expressed that everything, in the spring of 1808, might be found in the same state of good order as it was now about to be left.

II

OPERATIONS OF 1

Monday,
29th Feb.

The writer sailed from Arbroath at one a.m. in the Lighthouse yacht. At seven the floating light was hailed, and all on board found to be well. The crew were observed to have a very healthy-like appearance, and looked better than at the close of the works upon the rock. They seemed only to regret one thing, which was the secession of their cook, Thomas Elliot — not on account of his professional skill, but for his facetious and curious manner. Elliot had something peculiar in his history, and was reported by his comrades to have seen better days. He was, however, happy with his situation on board of the floating light, and having a taste for music, dancing, and acting plays, he contributed much to the amusement of the ship's company in their dreary abode during the winter months. He had also recommended himself to their notice as a good shipkeeper for as it did not answer Elliot to go often ashore, he had always given up his turn of leave to his neighbours. At his own desire he was at length paid off, when he had a considerable balance of wages to receive, which he said would be sufficient to carry him to the West Indies, and he accordingly took leave of the Lighthouse service.

Tuesday,
1st March.

At daybreak the Lighthouse yacht, attended by a boat from the floating light, again stood towards the Bell Rock. The weather felt extremely cold this morning, the thermometer being at 34 degrees, with the wind at east, accompanied by occasional showers of snow, and the marine barometer indicated 29.80. At half-past seven the sea ran with such force upon the rock that it seemed doubtful if a landing could be effected. At half-past eight, when it was fairly above water, the writer took his place in the floating light's boat with the artificers, while the yacht's boat followed, according to the general rule of having two boats afloat in landing expeditions of this kind, that, in case of accident to one boat, the other might assist. In several unsuccessful attempts the boats were beat back by the breach of the sea upon the rock. On the eastern side it separated into two 99 distinct waves, which came with a sweep round to the western side, where they met; and at the instance of their confluence the water rose in spray to a considerable height. Watching what the sailors term a *smooth*, we caught a favourable opportunity, and in a very dexterous manner the boats were rowed between the two seas, and made a favourable landing at the western creek.

At the latter end of last season, as was formerly noticed, the beacon was painted white, and from the bleaching of the weather and the sprays of the sea the upper parts were kept clean; but within the range of the tide the principal beams were observed to be thickly coated with a green stuff, the *conferva* of botanists. Notwithstanding the intrusion of these works, which had formerly banished the numerous seals that played about the rock, they were now seen in great numbers, having been in an almost undisturbed state for six months. It had now also, for the first time, got some inhabitants of the feathered tribe: in particular the scarth or cormorant, and the large herring-gull, had made the beacon a resting-place, from its vicinity to their fishing-grounds. About a dozen of these birds had rested upon the cross-beams, which, in some places, were coated with their dung; and their flight, as the boats approached, was a very unlooked-for indication of life and habitation on the Bell Rock, conveying the momentary idea of the conversion of this fatal rock, from being a terror to the mariner, into a residence of man and a safeguard to shipping.

Upon narrowly examining the great iron stanchions with which the beams were fixed to the rock, the writer had the satisfaction of finding that there was not the least appearance of working or shifting at any of the joints or places of connection; and, excepting the loosening of the bracing-chains, everything was found in the same entire state in which it had been left in the month of October. This, in the estimation of the writer, was a matter of no small importance to the future success of the work. He from that moment saw the practicability and propriety of fitting up the beacon, not only as a place of refuge in case of accident to the boats in landing, but as a residence for the artificers during the working months.

While upon the top of the beacon the writer was reminded by the landing-master that the sea was running high, and that it would be necessary to set off while the rock afforded anything like shelter to the boats, which by this time had been made fast by a long line to the beacon, and rode with much agitation, each requiring two men with boat-hooks to keep them from striking each other, or from ranging up against the beacon. But even under these circumstances the greatest confidence was felt by every one, from the security 100 afforded by this temporary erection. For, supposing the wind had suddenly increased to a gale, and that it had been found unadvisable to go into the boats; or, supposing they had drifted or sprung a leak from striking upon the rocks; in any of these possible and not at all improbable cases, those who might thus have been left upon the rock had now something to lay hold of, and, though occupying this dreary habitation of the sea-gull and the cormorant, affording only bread and water, yet *life* would be preserved, and the mind would still be supported by the hope of being ultimately relieved.

Wednesday,
25th May.

On the 25th of May the writer embarked at Arbroath, on board of the *Sir Joseph Banks*, for the Bell Rock, accompanied by Mr. Logan senior, foreman builder, with twelve masons, and two smiths, together with thirteen seamen, including the master, mate, and steward.

Thursday,
26th May.

Mr. James Wilson, now commander of the *Pharos*, floating light, and landing-master, in the room of Mr. Sinclair, who had left the service, came into the writer’s cabin this morning at six o’clock, and intimated that there was a good appearance of landing on the rock. Everything being arranged, both boats proceeded in company, and at eight a.m. they reached the rock. The lighthouse colours were immediately hoisted upon the flag-staff of the beacon, a compliment which was duly returned by the tender and floating light, when three hearty cheers were given, and a glass of rum was served out to all hands to drink success to the operations of 1808.

Friday,
27th May.

This morning the wind was at east, blowing a fresh gale, the weather being hazy, with a considerable breach of sea setting in upon the rock. The morning bell was therefore rung, in some doubt as to the practicability of making a landing. After allowing the rock to get fully up, or to be sufficiently left by the tide, that the boats might have some shelter from the range of the sea, they proceeded at eight a.m., and upon the whole made a pretty good landing; and after two hours and three-quarters’ work returned to the ship in safety.

In the afternoon the wind considerably increased, and, as a pretty heavy sea was still running, the tender rode very hard, when Mr. Taylor, the commander, found it necessary to take in the bowsprit, and strike the fore and main topmasts, that she might ride more easily. After consulting about the state of the weather, it was resolved to leave the artificers on board this evening, and carry only the smiths to the rock, as the sharpening of the irons was rather behind, from their being so much broken and blunted by the hard and tough nature of the rock, which became much more compact and hard as the depth of excavation was increased. Besides avoiding 101 the risk of encumbering the boats with a number of men who had not yet got the full command of the oar in a breach of sea, the writer had another motive for leaving them behind. He wanted to examine the site of the building without interruption, and to take the comparative levels of the different inequalities of its area; and as it would have been painful to have seen men standing idle upon the Bell Rock, where all moved with activity, it was judged better to leave them on board. The boats landed at half-past seven p.m., and the landing-master, with the seamen, was employed during this tide in cutting the seaweeds from the several paths leading to the landing-places, to render walking more safe, for, from the slippery state of the surface of the rock, many severe tumbles had taken place. In the meantime the writer took the necessary levels, and having carefully examined the site of the building and considered all its parts, it still appeared to be necessary to excavate to the average depth of fourteen inches over the whole area of the foundation.

Saturday,
28th May.

The wind still continued from the eastward with a heavy swell; and to-day it was accompanied with foggy weather and occasional showers of rain. Notwithstanding this, such was the confidence which the erection of the beacon had inspired that the boats landed the artificers on the rock under very unpromising circumstances, at half-past eight, and they continued at work till half-past eleven, being a period of three hours, which was considered a great tide’s work in the present low state of the foundation. Three of the masons on board were so afflicted with sea-sickness that they had not been able to take any food for almost three days, and they were literally assisted into the boats this morning by their companions. It was, however, not a little surprising to see how speedily these men revived upon landing on the rock and eating a little dulse. Two of them afterwards assisted the sailors in collecting the chips of stone and carrying them out of the way of the pickmen; but the third complained of a pain in his head, and was still unable to do anything. Instead of returning to the tender with the boats, these three men remained on the beacon all day, and had their victuals sent to them along with the smiths’. From Mr. Dove, the foreman smith, they had much sympathy, for he preferred remaining on the beacon at all hazards, to be himself relieved from the malady of sea-sickness. The wind continuing high, with a heavy sea, and the tide falling late, it was not judged proper to land the artificers this evening, but in the twilight the boats were sent to fetch the people on board who had been left on the rock.

Sunday,
29th May.

The wind was from the S.W. to-day, and the signal-bell rung, as usual, about an hour before the period for landing on the rock. The

102 writer was rather surprised, however, to hear the landing-master repeatedly call, “All hands for the rock!” and, coming on deck, he was disappointed to find the seamen only in the boats. Upon inquiry, it appeared that some misunderstanding had taken place about the wages of the artificers for Sundays. They had preferred wages for seven days statedly to the former mode of allowing a day for each tide’s work on Sunday, as they did not like the appearance of working for double or even treble wages on Sunday, and would rather have it understood that their work on that day arose more from the urgency of the case than with a view to emolument. This having been judged creditable to their religious feelings, and readily adjusted to their wish, the boats proceeded to the rock, and the work commenced at nine a.m.

Monday,
30th May.

Mr. Francis Watt commenced, with five joiners, to fit up a temporary platform upon the beacon, about twenty-five feet above the highest part of the rock. This platform was to be used as the site of the smith’s forge, after the beacon should be fitted up as a barrack; and here also the mortar was to be mixed and prepared for the building, and it was accordingly termed the Mortar Gallery.

The landing-master’s crew completed the discharging from the *Smeaton* of her cargo of the cast-iron rails and timber. It must not here be omitted to notice that the *Smeaton* took in ballast from the Bell Rock, consisting of the shivers or chips of stone produced by the workmen in preparing the site of the building, which were now accumulating in great quantities on the rock. These the boats loaded, after discharging the iron. The object in carrying off these chips, besides ballasting the vessel, was to get them permanently out of the way, as they were apt to shift about from place to place with every gale of wind; and it often required a considerable time to clear the foundation a second time of this rubbish. The circumstance of ballasting a ship at the Bell Rock afforded great entertainment, especially to the sailors; and it was perhaps with truth remarked that the *Smeaton* was the first vessel that had ever taken on board ballast at the Bell Rock. Mr. Pool, the commander of this vessel, afterwards acquainted the writer that, when the ballast was landed upon the quay at Leith, many persons carried away specimens of it, as part of a cargo from the Bell Rock; when he added, that such was the interest excited, from the number of specimens carried away, that some of his friends suggested that he should have sent the whole to the Cross of Edinburgh, where each piece might have sold for a penny.

Tuesday,
31st May.

In the evening the boats went to the rock, and brought the joiners and smiths, and their sickly companions, on board of the 103 tender. These also brought with them two baskets full of fish, which they had caught at high-water from the beacon, reporting, at the same time, to their comrades, that the fish were swimming in such numbers over the rock at high-water that it was completely hid from their sight, and nothing seen but the movement of thousands of fish. They were almost exclusively of the species called the podlie, or young coal-fish. This discovery, made for the first time to-day by the workmen, was considered fortunate, as an additional circumstance likely to produce an inclination among the artificers to take up their residence in the beacon, when it came to be fitted up as a barrack.

Tuesday,
7th June.

At three o'clock in the morning the ship's bell was rung as the signal for landing at the rock. When the landing was to be made before breakfast, it was customary to give each of the artificers and seamen a dram and a biscuit, and coffee was prepared by the steward for the cabins. Exactly at four o'clock the whole party landed from three boats, including one of those belonging to the floating light, with a part of that ship's crew, which always attended the works in moderate weather. The landing-master's boat, called the *Seaman,* but more commonly called the *Lifeboat,* took the lead. The next boat, called the *Mason*, was generally steered by the writer; while the floating light's boat, *Pharos,* was under the management of the boatswain of that ship.

Having now so considerable a party of workmen and sailors on the rock, it may be proper here to notice how their labours were directed. Preparations having been made last month for the erection of a second forge upon the beacon, the smiths commenced their operations both upon the lower and higher platforms. They were employed in sharpening the picks and irons for the masons, and making bats and other apparatus of various descriptions connected with the fitting of the railways. The landing-master's crew were occupied in assisting the millwrights in laying the railways to hand. Sailors, of all other descriptions of men, are the most accommodating in the use of their hands. They worked freely with the boring-irons, and assisted in all the operations of the railways, acting by turns as boatmen, seamen, and artificers. We had no such character on the Bell Rock as the common labourer. All the operations of this department were cheerfully undertaken by the seamen, who, both on the rock and on shipboard, were the inseparable companions of every work connected with the erection of the Bell Rock Lighthouse. It will naturally be supposed that about twenty-five masons, occupied with their picks in executing and preparing the foundation of the lighthouse, in the course of a tide of about 104 three hours, would make a considerable impression upon an area even of forty-two feet in diameter. But in proportion as the foundation was deepened, the rock was found to be much more hard and difficult to work, while the baling and pumping of water became much more troublesome. A joiner was kept almost constantly employed in fitting the picks to their handles, which, as well as the points to the irons, were very frequently broken.

The Bell Rock this morning presented by far the most busy and active appearance it had exhibited since the erection of the principal beams of the beacon. The surface of the rock was crowded with men, the two forges flaming, the one above the other, upon the beacon, while the anvils thundered with the rebounding noise of their wooden supports, and formed a curious contrast with the occasional clamour of the surges. The wind was westerly, and the weather being extremely agreeable, so soon after breakfast as the tide had sufficiently overflowed the rock to float the boats over it, the smiths, with a number of the artificers, returned to the beacon, carrying their fishing-tackle along with them. In the course of the forenoon, the beacon exhibited a still more extraordinary appearance than the rock had done in the morning. The sea being smooth, it seemed to be afloat upon the water, with a number of men supporting themselves in all the variety of attitude and position: while, from the upper part of this wooden house, the volumes of smoke which ascended from the forges gave the whole a very curious and fanciful appearance.

In the course of this tide it was observed that a heavy swell was setting in from the eastward, and the appearance of the sky indicated a change of weather, while the wind was shifting about. The barometer also had fallen from 30 in. to 29.6. It was, therefore, judged prudent to shift the vessel to the S.W. or more distant buoy. Her bowsprit was also soon afterwards taken in, the topmasts struck, and everything made *snug*, as seamen term it, for a gale. During the course of the night the wind increased and shifted to the eastward, when the vessel rolled very hard, and the sea often broke over her bows with great force.

Wednesday,
8th June.

Although the motion of the tender was much less than that of the floating light — at least, in regard to the rolling motion — yet she *sended*, or pitched, much. Being also of a very handsome build, and what seamen term very *clean aft*, the sea often struck her counter with such force that the writer, who possessed the aftermost cabin, being unaccustomed to this new vessel, could not divest himself of uneasiness; for when her stern fell into the sea, it struck with so much violence as to be more like the resistance of a rock than the sea. 105 The water, at the same time, often rushed with great force up the rudder-case, and, forcing up the valve of the water-closet, the floor of his cabin was at times laid under water. The gale continued to increase, and the vessel rolled and pitched in such a manner that the hawser by which the tender was made fast to the buoy snapped, and she went adrift. In the act of swinging round to the wind she shipped a very heavy sea, which greatly alarmed the artificers, who imagined that we had got upon the rock; but this, from the direction of the wind, was impossible. The writer, however, sprung upon deck, where he found the sailors busily employed in rigging out the bowsprit and in setting sail. From the easterly direction of the wind, it was considered most advisable to steer for the Firth of Forth, and there wait a change of weather. At two p.m. we accordingly passed the Isle of May, at six anchored in Leith Roads, and at eight the writer landed, when he came in upon his friends, who were not a little surprised at his unexpected appearance, which gave an instantaneous alarm for the safety of things at the Bell Rock.

Thursday,
9th June.

The wind still continued to blow very hard at E. by N., and the *Sir Joseph Banks* rode heavily, and even drifted with both anchors ahead, in Leith Roads. The artificers did not attempt to leave the ship last night; but there being upwards of fifty people on board, and the decks greatly lumbered with the two large boats, they were in a very crowded and impatient state on board. But to-day they got ashore, and amused themselves by walking about the streets of Edinburgh, some in very humble apparel, from having only the worst of their jackets with them, which, though quite suitable for their work, were hardly fit for public inspection, being not only tattered, but greatly stained with the red colour of the rock.

Friday,
10th June.

To-day the wind was at S.E., with light breezes and foggy weather. At six a.m. the writer again embarked for the Bell Rock, when the vessel immediately sailed. At eleven p.m., there being no wind, the kedge-anchor was *let go* off Anstruther, one of the numerous towns on the coast of Fife, where we waited the return of the tide.

Saturday,
11th June.

At six a.m. the *Sir Joseph* got under weigh, and at eleven was again made fast to the southern buoy at the Bell Rock. Though it was now late in the tide, the writer, being anxious to ascertain the state of things after the gale, landed with the artificers to the number of forty-four. Everything was found in an entire state; but, as the tide was nearly gone, only half an hour's work had been got when the site of the building was overflowed. In the evening the boats again landed at nine, and, after a good tide's work of three hours with torchlight, the work was left off at midnight. To the distant shipping the appearance of things under night on the Bell Rock, when 106 the work was going forward, must have been very remarkable, especially to those who were strangers to the operations. Mr. John Reid, principal lightkeeper, who also acted as master of the floating light during the working months at the rock, described the appearance of the numerous lights situated so low in the water, when seen at the distance of two or three miles, as putting him in mind of Milton's description of the fiends in the lower regions, adding, "for it seems greatly to surpass Will-o'-the-wisp, or any of those earthly spectres of which we have so often heard."

Monday
13th June.

From the difficulties attending the landing on the rock, owing to the breach of sea which had for days past been around it, the artificers showed some backwardness at getting into the boats this morning; but after a little explanation this was got over. It was always observable that for some time after anything like danger had occurred at the rock, the workmen became much more cautious, and on some occasions their timidity was rather troublesome. It fortunately happened, however, that along with the writer's assistants and the sailors there were also some of the artificers themselves who felt no such scruples, and in this way these difficulties were the more easily surmounted. In matters where life is in danger it becomes necessary to treat even unfounded prejudices with tenderness, as an accident, under certain circumstances, would not only have been particularly painful to those giving directions, but have proved highly detrimental to the work, especially in the early stages of its advancement.

At four o'clock fifty-eight persons landed; but the tides being extremely languid, the water only left the higher parts of the rock, and no work could be done at the site of the building. A third forge was, however, put in operation during a short time, for the greater conveniency of sharpening the picks and irons, and for purposes connected with the preparations for fixing the railways on the rock. The weather towards the evening became thick and foggy, and there was hardly a breath of wind to ruffle the surface of the water. Had it not, therefore, been for the noise from the anvils of the smiths who had been left on the beacon throughout the day, which afforded a guide for the boats, a landing could not have been attempted this evening, especially with such a company of artificers. This circumstance confirmed the writer’s opinion with regard to the propriety of connecting large bells to be rung with machinery in the lighthouse, to be tolled day and night during the continuance of foggy weather.

Thursday,
23rd June.

The boats landed this evening, when the artificers had again two hours’ work. The weather still continuing very thick and foggy, 107 more difficulty was experienced in getting on board of the vessels to-night than had occurred on any previous occasion, owing to a light breeze of wind which carried the sound of the bell, and the other signals made on board of the vessels, away from the rock. Having fortunately made out the position of the sloop *Smeaton* at the N.E. buoy — to which we were much assisted by the barking of the ship’s dog, — we parted with the *Smeaton’s* boat, when the boats of the tender took a fresh departure for that vessel, which lay about half a mile to the south-westward. Yet such is the very deceiving state of the tides, that, although there was a small binnacle and compass in the landing-master’s boat, we had, nevertheless, passed the *Sir Joseph* a good way, when, fortunately, one of the sailors catched the sound of a blowing-horn. The only firearms on board were a pair of swivels of one-inch calibre; but it is quite surprising how much the sound is lost in foggy weather, as the report was heard but at a very short distance. The sound from the explosion of gunpowder is so instantaneous that the effect of the small guns was not so good as either the blowing of a horn or the tolling of a bell, which afforded a more constant and steady direction for the pilot.

Wednesday,
6th July.

Landed on the rock with the three boats belonging to the tender at five p.m., and began immediately to bale the water out of the foundation-pit with a number of buckets, while the pumps were also kept in action with relays of artificers and seamen. The work commenced upon the higher parts of the foundation as the water left them, but it was now pretty generally reduced to a level. About twenty men could be conveniently employed at each pump, and it is quite astonishing in how short a time so great a body of water could be drawn off. The water in the foundation-pit at this time measured about two feet in depth, on an area of forty-two feet in diameter, and yet it was drawn off in the course of about half an hour. After this the artificers commenced with their picks and continued at work for two hours and a half, some of the sailors being at the same time busily employed in clearing the foundation of chips and in conveying the irons to and from the smiths on the beacon, where they were sharped.

At eight o'clock the sea broke in upon us and overflowed the foundation-pit, when the boats returned to the tender.

Thursday,
7th July.

The landing-master's bell rung this morning about four o'clock, and at half-past five, the foundation being cleared, the work commenced on the site of the building. But from the moment of landing, the squad of joiners and millwrights was at work upon the higher parts of the rock in laying the railways, while the anvils of the smith 108 resounded on the beacon, and such columns of smoke ascended from the forges that they were often mistaken by strangers at a distance for a ship on fire. After continuing three hours at work the foundation of the building was again overflowed, and the boats returned to the ship at half-past eight o'clock. The masons and pickmen had, at this period, a pretty long day on board of the tender, but the smiths and joiners were kept constantly at work upon the beacon, the stability and great conveniency of which had now been so fully shown that no doubt remained as to the propriety of fitting it up as a barrack. The workmen were accordingly employed, during the period of high-water, in making preparations for this purpose.

The foundation-pit now assumed the appearance of a great platform, and the late tides had been so favourable that it became apparent that the first course, consisting of a few irregular and detached stones for making up certain inequalities in the interior parts of the site of the building, might be laid in the course of the present spring-tides. Having been enabled to-day to get the dimensions of the foundation, or first stone, accurately taken, a mould was made of its figure, when the writer left the rock, after the tide's work of this morning, in a fast rowing-boat for Arbroath; and, upon landing, two men were immediately set to work upon one of the blocks from Mylnefield quarry, which was prepared in the course of the following day, as the stone-cutters relieved each other, and worked both night and day, so that it was sent off in one of the stone-lighters without delay.

Saturday,
9th July.

The site of the foundation-stone was very difficult to work, from its depth in the rock; but being now nearly prepared, it formed a very agreeable kind of pastime at high-water for all hands to land the stone itself upon the rock. The landing-master's crew and artificers accordingly entered with great spirit into this operation. The stone was placed upon the deck of the *Hedderwick* praam-boat, which had just been brought from Leith, and was decorated with colours for the occasion. Flags were also displayed from the shipping in the offing, and upon the beacon. Here the writer took his station with the greater part of the artificers, who supported themselves in every possible position while the boats towed the praam from her moorings and brought her immediately over the site of the building, where her grappling anchors were let go. The stone was then lifted off the deck by a tackle hooked into a Lewis bat inserted into it, when it was gently lowered into the water and grounded on the site of the building, amidst the cheering acclamations of about sixty persons.

Sunday,
10th July.

At eleven o'clock the foundation-stone was laid to hand. It was of a square form, containing about twenty cubic feet, and had the 109 figures, or date, of 1808 simply cut upon it with a chisel. A derrick, or spar of timber, having been erected at the edge of the hole and guyed with ropes, the stone was then hooked to the tackle and lowered into its place, when the writer, attended by his assistants — Mr. Peter Logan, Mr. Francis Watt, and Mr. James Wilson, — applied the square, the level, and the mallet, and pronounced the following benediction: "May the Great Architect of the Universe complete and bless this building," on which three hearty cheers were given, and success to the future operations was drunk with the greatest enthusiasm.

Tuesday,
26th July.

The wind being at S.E. this evening, we had a pretty heavy swell of sea upon the rock, and some difficulty attended our getting off in safety, as the boats got aground in the creek and were in danger of being upset. Upon extinguishing the torch-lights, about twelve in number, the darkness of the night seemed quite horrible; the water being also much charged with the phosphorescent appearance which is familiar to every one on shipboard, the waves, as they dashed upon the rock, were in some degree like so much liquid flame. The scene, upon the whole, was truly awful!

Wednesday,
27th July.

In leaving the rock this evening everything, after the torches were extinguished, had the same dismal appearance as last night, but so perfectly acquainted were the landing-master and his crew with the position of things at the rock, that comparatively little inconveniency was experienced on these occasions when the weather was moderate; such is the effect of habit, even in the most unpleasant situations. If, for example, it had been proposed to a person accustomed to a city life, at once to take up his quarters off a sunken reef and land upon it in boats at all hours of the night, the proposition must have appeared quite impracticable and extravagant; but this practice coming progressively upon the artificers, it was ultimately undertaken with the greatest alacrity. Notwithstanding this, however, it must be acknowledged that it was not till after much labour and peril, and many an anxious hour, that the writer is enabled to state that the site of the Bell Rock Lighthouse is fully prepared for the first entire course of the building.

Friday,
12th Aug.

The artificers landed this morning at half-past ten, and after an hour and a half's work eight stones were laid, which completed the first entire course of the building, consisting of 123 blocks, the last of which was laid with three hearty cheers.

Saturday,
10th Sept.

Landed at nine a.m., and by a quarter-past twelve noon twenty-three stones had been laid. The works being now somewhat elevated by the lower courses, we got quit of the very serious inconvenience of pumping water to clear the foundation-pit. This gave much facility
110 to the operations, and was noticed with expressions of as much happiness by the artificers as the seamen had shown when relieved of the continual trouble of carrying the smith's bellows off the rock prior to the erection of the beacon.

Wednesday,
21st Sept.

Mr. Thomas Macurich, mate of the *Smeaton*, and James Scott, one of the crew, a young man about eighteen years of age, immediately went into their boat to make fast a hawser to the ring in the top of the floating buoy of the moorings, and were forthwith to proceed to land their cargo, so much wanted, at the rock. The tides at this period were very strong, and the mooring-chain, when sweeping the ground, had caught hold of a rock or piece of wreck by which the chain was so shortened that when the tide flowed the buoy got almost under water, and little more than the ring appeared at the surface. When Macurich and Scott were in the act of making the hawser fast to the ring, the chain got suddenly disentangled at the bottom, and this large buoy, measuring about seven feet in height and three feet in diameter at the middle, tapering to both ends, being what seamen term a *Nun-buoy*, vaulted or sprung up with such force that it upset the boat, which instantly filled with water. Mr. Macurich, with much exertion, succeeded in getting hold of the boat's gunwale, still above the surface of the water, and by this means was saved; but the young man Scott was unfortunately drowned. He had in all probability been struck about the head by the ring of the buoy, for although surrounded with the oars and the thwarts of the boat which floated near him, yet he seemed entirely to want the power of availing himself of such assistance, and appeared to be quite insensible, while Pool, the master of the *Smeaton*. called loudly to him; and before assistance could be got from the tender, he was carried away by the strength of the current and disappeared.

The young man Scott was a great favourite in the service, having had something uncommonly mild and complaisant in his manner; and his loss was therefore universally regretted. The circumstances of his case were also peculiarly distressing to his mother, as her husband, who was a seaman, had for three years past been confined to a French prison, and the deceased was the chief support of the family. In order in some measure to make up the loss to the poor woman for the monthly aliment regularly allowed her by her late son, it was suggested that a younger boy, a brother of the deceased, might be taken into the service. This appeared to be rather a delicate proposition, but it was left to the landing-master to arrange according to circumstances; such was the resignation, and at the same time the spirit, of the poor woman, that she readily accepted 111 the proposal, and in a few days the younger Scott was actually afloat in the place of his brother. On representing this distressing case to the Board, the Commissioners were pleased to grant an annuity of £5 to Scott’s mother.

The *Smeaton*, not having been made fast to the buoy, had, with the ebb-tide, drifted to leeward a considerable way eastward of the rock, and could not, till the return of the flood-tide, be worked up to her moorings, so that the present tide was lost, notwithstanding all exertions which had been made both ashore and afloat with this cargo. The artificers landed at six a.m.; but, as no materials could be got upon the rock this morning, they were employed in boring trenail holes and in various other operations, and after four hours’ work they returned on board the tender. When the *Smeaton* got up to her moorings, the landing-master’s crew immediately began to unload her. There being too much wind for towing the praams in the usual way, they were warped to the rock in the most laborious manner by their windlasses, with successive grapplings and hawsers laid out for this purpose. At six p.m. the artificers landed, and continued at work till half-past ten, when the remaining seventeen stones were laid which completed the third entire course, or fourth of the lighthouse, with which the building operations were closed for the season.

III

OPERATIONS OF 1

Wednesday,
24th May.

The last night was the first that the writer had passed in his old quarters on board of the floating light for about twelve months, when the weather was so fine and the sea so smooth that even here he felt but little or no motion, excepting at the turn of the tide, when the vessel gets into what the seamen term the *trough of the sea*. At six a.m. Mr. Watt, who conducted the operations of the railways and beacon-house, had landed with nine artificers. At half-past one p.m. Mr. Peter Logan had also landed with fifteen masons, and immediately proceeded to set up the crane. The sheer-crane or apparatus for lifting the stones out of the praam-boats at the eastern creek had been already erected, and the railways now formed about two-thirds of an entire circle round the building: some progress had likewise been made with the reach towards the western landing-place. The floors being laid, the beacon now assumed the appearance of a habitation. The *Smeaton* was at her moorings, with the *Fernie* praam-boat astern, for which she was laying down moorings, and the 112 tender being also at her station, the Bell Rock had again put on its former busy aspect.

Wednesday,
31st May.

The landing-master's bell, often no very favourite sound, rung at six this morning; but on this occasion, it is believed, it was gladly received by all on board, as the welcome signal of the return of better weather. The masons laid thirteen stones to-day, which the seamen had landed, together with other building materials. During these twenty-four hours the wind was from the south, blowing fresh breezes, accompanied with showers of snow. In the morning the snow showers were so thick that it was with difficulty the landing-master, who always steered the leading boat, could make his way to the rock through the drift. But at the Bell Rock neither snow nor rain, nor fog nor wind, retarded the progress of the work, if unaccompanied by a heavy swell or breach of the sea.

The weather during the months of April and May had been uncommonly boisterous, and so cold that the thermometer seldom exceeded 40º, while the barometer was generally about 29.50. We had not only hail and sleet, but the snow on the last day of May lay on the decks and rigging of the ship to the depth of about three inches; and, although now entering upon the month of June, the length of the day was the chief indication of summer. Yet such is the effect of habit, and such was the expertness of the landing-master's crew, that, even in this description of weather, seldom a tide's work was lost. Such was the ardour and zeal of the heads of the several departments at the rock, including Mr. Peter Logan, foreman builder, Mr. Francis Watt, foreman millwright, and Captain Wilson, landing-master, that it was on no occasion necessary to address them, excepting in the way of precaution or restraint. Under these circumstances, however, the writer not unfrequently felt considerable anxiety, of which this day's experience will afford an example.

Thursday,
1st June.

This morning, at a quarter-past eight, the artificers were landed as usual, and, after three hours and three-quarters' work, five stones were laid, the greater part of this tide having been taken up in completing the boring and trenailing of the stones formerly laid. At noon the writer, with the seamen and artificers, proceeded to the tender, leaving on the beacon the joiners, and several of those who were troubled with sea-sickness — among whom was Mr. Logan, who remained with Mr. Watt — counting altogether eleven persons. During the first and middle parts of these twenty-four hours the wind was from the east, blowing what the seamen term "fresh breezes"; but in the afternoon it shifted to E.N.E., accompanied with so heavy a swell of sea that the *Smeaton* and tender struck their topmasts, launched in their bolt-sprits, and "made all snug" for 113 a gale. At four p.m. the *Smeaton* was obliged to slip her moorings, and passed the tender, drifting before the wind, with only the foresail set. In passing, Mr. Pool hailed that he must run for the Firth of Forth to prevent the vessel from "riding under."

On board of the tender the writer's chief concern was about the eleven men left upon the beacon. Directions were accordingly given that everything about the vessel should be put in the best possible state, to present as little resistance to the wind as possible, that she might have the better chance of riding out the gale. Among these preparations the best bower cable was bent, so as to have a second anchor in readiness in case the mooring-hawser should give way, that every means might be used for keeping the vessel within sight of the prisoners on the beacon, and thereby keep them in as good spirits as possible. From the same motive the boats were kept afloat that they might be less in fear of the vessel leaving her station. The landing-master had, however, repeatedly expressed his anxiety for the safety of the boats, and wished much to have them hoisted on board. At seven p.m. one of the boats, as he feared, was unluckily filled with sea from a wave breaking into her, and it was with great difficulty that she could be baled out and got on board, with the loss of her oars, rudder, and loose thwarts. Such was the motion of the ship that in taking this boat on board her gunwale was stove in, and she otherwise received considerable damage. Night approached, but it was still found quite impossible to go near the rock. Consulting, therefore, the safety of the second boat, she also was hoisted on board of the tender.

At this time the cabins of the beacon were only partially covered, and had neither been provided with bedding nor a proper fireplace, while the stock of provisions was but slender. In these uncomfortable circumstances the people on the beacon were left for the night, nor was the situation of those on board of the tender much better. The rolling and pitching motion of the ship was excessive; and, excepting to those who had been accustomed to a residence in the floating light, it seemed quite intolerable. Nothing was heard but the hissing of the winds and the creaking of the bulkheads or partitions of the ship; the night was, therefore, spent in the most unpleasant reflections upon the condition of the people on the beacon, especially in the prospect of the tender being driven from her moorings. But, even in such a case, it afforded some consolation that the stability of the fabric was never doubted, and that the boats of the floating light were at no great distance, and ready to render the people on the rock the earliest assistance which the weather would permit. The writer's cabin being in the sternmost part of the ship, 114 which had what sailors term a good entry, or was sharp built, the sea, as before noticed, struck her counter with so much violence that the water, with a rushing noise, continually forced its way up the rudder-case, lifted the valve of the water-closet, and overran the cabin floor. In these circumstances daylight was eagerly looked for, and hailed with delight, as well by those afloat as by the artificers upon the rock.

Friday,
2nd June.

In the course of the night the writer held repeated conversations with the officer on watch, who reported that the weather continued much in the same state, and that the barometer still indicated 29.20 inches. At six a.m. the landing-master considered the weather to have somewhat moderated; and, from certain appearances of the sky, he was of opinion that a change for the better would soon take place. He accordingly proposed to attempt a landing at low-water, and either get the people off the rock, or at least ascertain what state they were in. At nine a.m. he left the vessel with a boat well manned, carrying with him a supply of cooked provisions and a tea-kettle full of mulled port wine for the people on the beacon, who had not had any regular diet for about thirty hours, while they were exposed during that period, in a great measure, both to the winds and the sprays of the sea. The boat having succeeded in landing, she returned at eleven a.m. with the artificers, who had got off with considerable difficulty, and who were heartily welcomed by all on board.

Upon inquiry it appeared that three of the stones last laid upon the building had been partially lifted from their beds by the force of the sea, and were now held only by the trenails, and that the cast-iron sheer-crane had again been thrown down and completely broken. With regard to the beacon, the sea at high-water had lifted part of the mortar gallery or lowest floor, and washed away all the lime-casks and other movable articles from it; but the principal parts of this fabric had sustained no damage. On pressing Messrs. Logan and Watt on the situation of things in the course of the night, Mr. Logan emphatically said; “That the beacon had an *ill-faured twist* when the sea broke upon it at high-water, but that they were not very apprehensive of danger.” On inquiring as to how they spent the night, it appeared that they had made shift to keep a small fire burning, and by means of some old sails defended themselves pretty well from the sea sprays.

It was particularly mentioned that by the exertions of James Glen, one of the joiners, a number of articles were saved from being washed off the mortar gallery. Glen was also very useful in keeping 115 up the spirits of the forlorn party. In the early part of life he had undergone many curious adventures at sea, which he now recounted somewhat after the manner of the tales of the “Arabian Nights.” When one observed that the beacon was a most comfortless lodging, Glen would presently introduce some of his exploits and hardships, in comparison with which the state of things at the beacon bore an aspect of comfort and happiness. Looking to their slender stock of provisions, and their perilous and uncertain chance of speedy relief, he would launch out into an account of one of his expeditions in the North Sea, when the vessel, being much disabled in a storm, was driven before the wind with the loss of almost all their provisions; and the ship being much infested with rats, the crew hunted these vermin with great eagerness to help their scanty allowance. By such means Glen had the address to make his companions, in some measure, satisfied, or at least passive, with regard to their miserable prospects upon this half-tide rock in the middle of the ocean. This incident is noticed, more particularly, to show the effects of such a happy turn of mind, even under the most distressing and ill-fated circumstances.

Saturday,
17th June.

At eight a.m. the artificers and sailors, forty-five in number, landed on the rock, and after four hours' work seven stones were laid. The remainder of this tide, from the threatening appearance of the weather, was occupied in trenailing and making all things as secure as possible. At twelve noon the rock and building were again overflowed, when the masons and seamen went on board of the tender, but Mr. Watt, with his squad of ten men, remained on the beacon throughout the day. As it blew fresh from the N.W. in the evening, it was found impracticable either to land the building artificers or to take the artificers off the beacon, and they were accordingly left there all night, but in circumstances very different from those of the 1st of this month. The house, being now in a more complete state, was provided with bedding, and they spent the night pretty well, though they complained of having been much disturbed at the time of high-water by the shaking and tremulous motion of their house and by the plashing noise of the sea upon the mortar gallery. Here James Glen's versatile powers were again at work in cheering up those who seemed to be alarmed, and in securing everything as far as possible. On this occasion he had only to recall to the recollections of some of them the former night which they had spent on the beacon, the wind and sea being then much higher, and their habitation in a far less comfortable state.

The wind still continuing to blow fresh from the N.W., at five p.m. the writer caused a signal to be made from the tender for the 116
Smeaton and *Patriot* to slip their moorings, when they ran for Lunan Bay, an anchorage on the east side of the Redhead. Those on board of the tender spent but a very rough night, and perhaps slept less soundly than their companions on the beacon, especially as the wind was at N.W., which caused the vessel to ride with her stern towards the Bell Rock; so that, in the event of anything giving way, she could hardly have escaped being stranded upon it.

Sunday,
18th June.

The weather having moderated to-day, the wind shifted to the westward. At a quarter-past nine a.m. the artificers landed from the tender and had the pleasure to find their friends who had been left on the rock quite hearty, alleging that the beacon was the preferable quarters of the two.

Saturday,
24th June.

Mr. Peter Logan, the foreman builder, and his squad, twenty-one in number, landed this morning at three o'clock, and continued at work four hours and a quarter, and after laying seventeen stones returned to the tender. At six a.m. Mr. Francis Watt and his squad of twelve men landed, and proceeded with their respective operations at the beacon and railways, and were left on the rock during the whole day without the necessity of having any communication with the tender, the kitchen of the beacon-house being now fitted up. It was to-day, also, that Peter Fortune — a most obliging and well-known character in the Lighthouse service — was removed from the tender to the beacon as cook and steward, with a stock of provisions as ample as his limited storeroom would admit.

When as many stones were built as comprised this day's work, the demand for mortar was proportionally increased, and the task of the mortar-makers on these occasions was both laborious and severe. This operation was chiefly performed by John Watt — a strong, active quarrier by profession, — who was a perfect character in his way, and extremely zealous in his department. While the operations of the mortar-makers continued, the forge upon their gallery was not generally in use; but, as the working hours of the builders extended with the height of the building, the forge could not be so long wanted, and then a sad confusion often ensued upon the circumscribed floor of the mortar gallery, as the operations of Watt and his assistants trenched greatly upon those of the smiths. Under these circumstances the boundary of the smiths was much circumscribed, and they were personally annoyed, especially in blowy weather, with the dust of the lime in its powdered state. The mortar-makers, on the other hand, were often not a little distressed with the heat of the fire and the sparks elicited on the anvil, and not unaptly complained that they were placed between "the devil and the deep sea."

Sunday,
25th June.

The work being now about ten feet in height, admitted of a rope-ladder being distended between the beacon and the building. By this "Jacob's Ladder," as the seamen termed it, a communication was kept up with the beacon while the rock was considerably under water. One end of it being furnished with tackle-blocks, was fixed to the beams of the beacon, at the level of the mortar gallery, while the further end was connected with the upper course of the building by means of two Lewis bats which were lifted from course to course as the work advanced. In the same manner a rope furnished with a travelling pulley was distended for the purpose of transporting the mortar-buckets, and other light articles between the beacon and the building, which also proved a great conveniency to the work. At this period the rope-ladder and tackle for the mortar had a descent from the beacon to the building; by and by they were on a level, and towards the end of the season, when the solid part had attained its full height, the ascent was from the mortar gallery to the building.

Friday,

30th June.

The artificers landed on the rock this morning at a quarter-past six, and remained at work five hours. The cooking apparatus being now in full operation, all hands had breakfast on the beacon at the usual hour, and remained there throughout the day. The crane upon the building had to be raised to-day from the eighth to the ninth course, an operation which now required all the strength that could be mustered for working the guy-tackles; for as the top of the crane was at this time about thirty-five feet above the rock, it became much more unmanageable. While the beam was in the act of swinging round from one guy to another, a great strain was suddenly brought upon the opposite tackle, with the end of which the artificers had very improperly neglected to take a turn round some stationary object, which would have given them the complete command of the tackle. Owing to this simple omission, the crane got a preponderancy to one side, and fell upon the building with a terrible crash. The surrounding artificers immediately flew in every direction to get out of its way; but Michael Wishart, the principal builder, having unluckily stumbled upon one of the uncut trenails, fell upon his back. His body fortunately got between the movable beam and the upright shaft of the crane, and was thus saved; but his feet got entangled with the wheels of the crane and were severely injured. Wishart, being a robust young man, endured his misfortune with wonderful firmness; he was laid upon one of the narrow framed beds of the beacon and despatched in a boat to the tender, where the writer was when this accident happened, not a little alarmed on 118 missing the crane from the top of the building, and at the same time seeing a boat rowing towards the vessel with great speed. When the boat came alongside with poor Wishart, stretched upon a bed covered with blankets, a moment of great anxiety followed, which was, however, much relieved when, on stepping into the boat, he was accosted by Wishart, though in a feeble voice, and with an aspect pale as death from excessive bleeding. Directions having been immediately given to the coxswain to apply to Mr. Kennedy at the workyard to procure the best surgical aid, the boat was sent off without delay to Arbroath. The writer then landed at the rock, when the crane was in a very short time got into its place and again put in a working state.

Monday,
3rd July.

The writer having come to Arbroath with the yacht, had an opportunity of visiting Michael Wishart, the artificer who had met with so severe an accident at the rock on the 30th ult., and had the pleasure to find him in a state of recovery. From Dr. Stevenson’s account, under whose charge he had been placed, hopes were entertained that amputation would not be necessary, as his patient still kept free of fever or any appearance of mortification; and Wishart expressed a hope that he might, at least, be ultimately capable of keeping the light at the Bell Rock, as it was not now likely that he would assist further in building the house.

Saturday,
8th July.

It was remarked to-day, with no small demonstration of joy, that the tide, being neap, did not, for the first time, overflow the building at high-water. Flags were accordingly hoisted on the beacon-house and crane on the top of the building, which were repeated from the floating light, Lighthouse yacht, tender, *Smeaton, Patriot*, and the two praams. A salute of three guns was also fired from the yacht at high-water, when, all the artificers being collected on the top of the building, three cheers were given in testimony of this important circumstance. A glass of rum was then served out to all hands on the rock and on board of the respective ships.

Sunday,
16th July.

Besides laying, boring, trenailing, wedging, and grouting thirty-two stones, several other operations were proceeded with on the rock at low-water, when some of the artificers were employed at the railways and at high-water at the beacon-house. The seamen having prepared a quantity of tarpaulin or cloth laid over with successive coats of hot tar, the joiners had just completed the covering of the roof with it. This sort of covering was lighter and more easily managed than sheet-lead in such a situation. As a further defence against the weather the whole exterior of this temporary residence was painted with three coats of white-lead paint. Between the timber framing of the habitable part of the beacon the interstices 119 were to be stuffed with moss as a light substance that would resist dampness and check sifting winds; the whole interior was then to be lined with green baize cloth, so that both without and within the cabins were to have a very comfortable appearance.

Although the building artificers generally remained on the rock throughout the day, and the millwrights, joiners, and smiths, while their number was considerable, remained also during the night, yet the tender had hitherto been considered as their night quarters. But the wind having in the course of the day shifted to the N.W., and as the passage to the tender, in the boats, was likely to be attended with difficulty, the whole of the artificers, with Mr. Logan, the foreman, preferred remaining all night on the beacon, which had of late become the solitary abode of George Forsyth, a jobbing upholsterer, who had been employed in lining the beacon-house with cloth and in fitting up the bedding. Forsyth was a tall, thin, and rather loose-made man, who had an utter aversion at climbing upon the trap-ladders of the beacon, but especially at the process of boating, and the motion of the ship, which he said “was death itself.” He therefore pertinaciously insisted with the landing-master in being left upon the beacon, with a small black dog as his only companion. The writer, however, felt some delicacy in leaving a single individual upon the rock, who must have been so very helpless in case of accident. This fabric had, from the beginning, been rather intended by the writer to guard against accident from the loss or damage of a boat, and as a place for making mortar, a smith’s shop, and a store for tools during the working months, than as permanent quarters; nor was it at all meant to be possessed until the joiner-work was completely finished, and his own cabin, and that for the foreman, in readiness, when it was still to be left to the choice of the artificers to occupy the tender or the beacon. He, however, considered Forsyth’s partiality and confidence in the latter as rather a fortunate occurrence.

Wednesday,
19th July.

The whole of the artificers, twenty-three in number, now removed of their own accord from the tender, to lodge in the beacon, together with Peter Fortune, a person singularly adapted for a residence of this kind, both from the urbanity of his manners and the versatility of his talents. Fortune, in his person, was of small stature, and rather corpulent. Besides being a good Scots cook, he had acted both as groom and house-servant; he had been a soldier, a sutler, a writer’s clerk, and an apothecary, from which he possessed the art of writing and suggesting recipes, and had hence, also, perhaps, acquired a turn for making collections in natural history. But in his practice in surgery on the Bell Rock, for which he received an 120 annual fee of three guineas, he is supposed to have been rather partial to the use of the lancet. In short, Peter was the *factotum* of the beacon-house, where he ostensibly acted in the several capacities of cook, steward, surgeon, and barber, and kept a statement of the rations or expenditure of the provisions with the strictest integrity.

In the present important state of the building, when it had just attained the height of sixteen feet, and the upper courses, and especially the imperfect one, were in the wash of the heaviest seas, an express boat arrived at the rock with a letter from Mr. Kennedy, of the workyard, stating that in consequence of the intended expedition to Walcheren, an embargo had been laid on shipping at all the ports of Great Britain: that both the *Smeaton* and *Patriot* were detained at Arbroath, and that but for the proper view which Mr. Ramsey, the port officer, had taken of his orders, neither the express boat nor one which had been sent with provisions and necessaries for the floating light would have been permitted to leave the harbour. The writer set off without delay for Arbroath, and on landing used every possible means with the official people, but their orders were deemed so peremptory that even boats were not permitted to sail from any port upon the coast. In the meantime, the collector of the Customs at Montrose applied to the Board at Edinburgh, but could, of himself, grant no relief to the Bell Rock shipping.

At this critical period Mr. Adam Duff, then Sheriff of Forfarshire, now of the county of Edinburgh, and *ex officio* one of the Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses, happened to be at Arbroath. Mr. Duff took an immediate interest in representing the circumstances of the case to the Board of Customs at Edinburgh. But such were the doubts entertained on the subject that, on having previously received the appeal from the collector at Montrose, the case had been submitted to the consideration of the Lords of the Treasury, whose decision was now waited for.

In this state of things the writer felt particularly desirous to get the thirteenth course finished, that the building might be in a more secure state in the event of bad weather. An opportunity was therefore embraced on the 25th, in sailing with provisions for the floating light, to carry the necessary stones to the rock for this purpose, which were landed and built on the 26th and 27th. But so closely was the watch kept up that a Custom-house officer was always placed on board of the *Smeaton* and *Patriot* while they were afloat, till the embargo was especially removed from the lighthouse vessels. The artificers at the Bell Rock had been reduced to fifteen, who were regularly supplied with provisions, along with the crew of the floating 121 light, mainly through the port officer's liberal interpretation of his orders.

Tuesday,
1st Aug.

There being a considerable swell and breach of sea upon the rock yesterday, the stones could not be got landed till the day following, when the wind shifted to the southward and the weather improved. But to-day no less than seventy-eight blocks of stone were landed, of which forty were built, which completed the fourteenth and part of the fifteenth courses. The number of workmen now resident in the beacon-house were augmented to twenty-four, including the landing-master's crew from the tender and the boat's crew from the floating light, who assisted at landing the stones. Those daily at work upon the rock at this period amounted to forty-six. A cabin had been laid out for the writer on the beacon, but his apartment had been the last which was finished, and he had not yet taken possession of it; for though he generally spent the greater part of the day, at this time, upon the rock, yet he always slept on board of the tender.

Friday,
11th Aug.

The wind was at S.E. on the 11th, and there was so very heavy a swell of sea upon the rock that no boat could approach it.

Saturday,
12th Aug.

The gale still continuing from the S.E., the sea broke with great violence both upon the building and the beacon. The former being twenty-three feet in height, the upper part of the crane erected on it having been lifted from course to course as the building advanced, was now about thirty-six feet above the rock. From observations made on the rise of the sea by this crane, the artificers were enabled to estimate its height to be about fifty feet above the rock, while the sprays fell with a most alarming noise upon their cabins. At low-water, in the evening, a signal was made from the beacon, at the earnest desire of some of the artificers, for the boats to come to the rock; and although this could not be effected without considerable hazard, it was, however, accomplished, when twelve of their number, being much afraid, applied to the foreman to be relieved, and went on board of the tender. But the remaining fourteen continued on the rock, with Mr. Peter Logan, the foreman builder. Although this rule of allowing an option to every man either to remain on the rock or return to the tender was strictly adhered to, yet, as it would have been extremely inconvenient to have had the men parcelled out in this manner, it became necessary to embrace the first opportunity of sending those who had left the beacon to the workyard, with as little appearance of intention as possible, lest it should hurt their feelings, or prevent others from acting according to their wishes, either in landing on the rock or remaining on the beacon.

Tuesday,
15th Aug.

The wind had fortunately shifted to the S.W. this morning, and though a considerable breach was still upon the rock, yet the landing-master's 122 crew were enabled to get one praam-boat, lightly loaded with five stones, brought in safety to the western creek; these stones were immediately laid by the artificers, who gladly embraced the return of good weather to proceed with their operations. The writer had this day taken possession of his cabin in the beacon-house. It was small, but commodious, and was found particularly convenient in coarse and blowing weather, instead of being obliged to make a passage to the tender in an open boat at all times, both during the day and the night, which was often attended with much difficulty and danger.

Saturday,
19th Aug.

For some days past the weather had been occasionally so thick and foggy that no small difficulty was experienced in going even between the rock and the tender, though quite at hand. But the floating light's boat lost her way so far in returning on board that the first land she made, after rowing all night, was Fifeness, a distance of about fourteen miles. The weather having cleared in the morning, the crew stood off again for the floating light, and got on board in a half-famished and much exhausted state, having been constantly rowing for about sixteen hours.

Sunday,
20th Aug.

The weather being very favourable to-day, fifty-three stones were landed, and the builders were not a little gratified in having built the twenty-second course, consisting of fifty-one stones, being the first course which had been completed in one day. This, as a matter of course, produced three hearty cheers. At twelve noon prayers were read for the first time on the Bell Rock; those present, counting thirty, were crowded into the upper apartment of the beacon, where the writer took a central position, while two of the artificers, joining hands, supported the Bible.

Friday,
25th Aug.

To-day the artificers laid forty-five stones, which completed the twenty-fourth course, reckoning above the first entire one, and the twenty-sixth above the rock. This finished the solid part of the building, and terminated the height of the outward casing of granite, which is thirty-one feet six inches above the rock or site of the foundation-stone, and about seventeen feet above high water of spring-tides. Being a particular crisis in the progress of the lighthouse, the landing and laying of the last stone for the season was observed with the usual ceremonies.

From observations often made by the writer, in so far as such can be ascertained, it appears that no wave in the open seas, in an unbroken state, rises more than from seven to nine feet above the general surface of the ocean. The Bell Rock Lighthouse may therefore now be considered at from eight to ten feet above the height of the waves; and, although the sprays and heavy seas have often been 123 observed, in the present state of the building, to rise to the height of fifty feet, and fall with a tremendous noise on the beacon-house, yet such seas were not likely to make any impression on a mass of solid masonry, containing about 1400 tons.

Wednesday,

30th Aug.

The whole of the artificers left the rock at mid-day, when the tender made sail for Arbroath, which she reached about six p.m. The vessel being decorated with colours, and having fired a salute of three guns on approaching the harbour, the workyard artificers, with a multitude of people, assembled at the harbour, when mutual cheering and congratulations took place between those afloat and those on the quays. The tender had now, with little exception, been six months on the station at the Bell Rock, and during the last four months few of the squad of builders had been ashore. In particular, Mr. Peter Logan, the foreman, and Mr. Robert Selkirk, principal builder, had never once left the rock. The artificers, having made good wages during their stay, like seamen upon a return voyage, were extremely happy, and spent the evening with much innocent mirth and jollity.

In reflecting upon the state of the matters at the Bell Rock during the working months, when the writer was much with the artificers, nothing can equal the happy manner in which these excellent workmen spent their time. They always went from Arbroath to their arduous task cheering, and they generally returned in the same hearty state. While at the rock, between the tides, they amused themselves in reading, fishing, music, playing cards, draughts, etc., or in sporting with one another. In the workyard at Arbroath the young men were almost, without exception, employed in the evening at school, in writing and arithmetic, and not a few were learning architectural drawing, for which they had every convenience and facility, and were, in a very obliging manner, assisted in their studies by Mr. David Logan, clerk of the works. It therefore affords the most pleasing reflections to look back upon the pursuits of about sixty individuals who for years conducted themselves, on all occasions, in a sober and rational manner.

IV

OPERATIONS OF 1

Thursday,
10th May.

The wind had shifted to-day to W.N.W., when the writer, with considerable difficulty, was enabled to land upon the rock for the first time this season, at ten a.m. Upon examining the state of the building, and apparatus in general, he had the satisfaction to find 124 everything in good order. The mortar in all the joints was perfectly entire. The building, now thirty feet in height, was thickly coated with *fuci* to the height of about fifteen feet, calculating from the rock; on the eastern side, indeed, the growth of seaweed was observable to the full height of thirty feet, and even on the top or upper bed of the last-laid course, especially towards the eastern side, it had germinated, so as to render walking upon it somewhat difficult.

The beacon-house was in a perfectly sound state, and apparently just as it had been left in the month of November. But the tides being neap, the lower parts, particularly where the beams rested on the rock, could not now be seen. The floor of the mortar gallery having been already laid down by Mr. Watt and his men on a former visit, was merely soaked with the sprays; but the joisting-beams which supported it had, in the course of the winter, been covered with a fine downy conferva produced by the range of the sea. They were also a good deal whitened with the mute of the cormorant and other sea-fowls, which had roosted upon the beacon in winter. Upon ascending to the apartments, it was found that the motion of the sea had thrown open the door of the cook-house: this was only shut with a single latch, that in case of shipwreck at the Bell Rock the mariner might find ready access to the shelter of this forlorn habitation, where a supply of provisions was kept; and being within two miles and a half of the floating light, a signal could readily be observed, when a boat might be sent to his relief as soon as the weather permitted. An arrangement for this purpose formed one of the instructions on board of the floating light, but happily no instance occurred for putting it in practice. The hearth or fireplace of the cook-house was built of brick in as secure a manner as possible to prevent accident from fire; but some of the plaster-work had shaken loose, from its damp state and the tremulous motion of the beacon in stormy weather. The writer next ascended to the floor which was occupied by the cabins of himself and his assistants, which were in tolerably good order, having only a damp and musty smell. The barrack for the artificers, over all, was next visited; it had now a very dreary and deserted appearance when its former thronged state was recollected. In some parts the water had come through the boarding, and had discoloured the lining of green cloth, but it was, nevertheless, in a good habitable condition. While the seamen were employed in landing a stock of provisions, a few of the artificers set to work with great eagerness to sweep and clean the several apartments. The exterior of the beacon was, in the meantime, examined, and found in perfect order. The painting, though it had a somewhat blanched appearance, adhered firmly both on the sides and roof, and 125 only two or three panes of glass were broken in the cupola, which had either been blown out by the force of the wind or perhaps broken by sea-fowl.

Having on this occasion continued upon the building and beacon a considerable time after the tide had begun to flow, the artificers were occupied in removing the forge from the top of the building, to which the gangway or wooden bridge gave great facility; and, although it stretched or had a span of forty-two feet, its construction was extremely simple, while the roadway was perfectly firm and steady. In returning from this visit to the rock every one was pretty well soused in spray before reaching the tender at two o’clock p.m., where things awaited the landing party in as comfortable a way as such a situation would admit.

Friday,
11th May.

The wind was still easterly, accompanied with rather a heavy swell of sea for the operations in hand. A landing was, however, made this morning, when the artificers were immediately employed in scraping the seaweed off the upper course of the building, in order to apply the moulds of the first course of the staircase, that the joggle-holes might be marked off in the upper course of the solid. This was also necessary previously to the writer’s fixing the position of the entrance door, which was regulated chiefly by the appearance of the growth of the seaweed on the building, indicating the direction of the heaviest seas, on the opposite side of which the door was placed. The landing-master’s crew succeeded in towing into the creek on the western side of the rock the praam-boat with the balance-crane, which had now been on board of the praam for five days. The several pieces of this machine, having been conveyed along the railways upon the waggons to a position immediately under the bridge, were elevated to its level, or thirty feet above the rock, in the following manner. A chain-tackle was suspended over a pulley from the cross-beam connecting the tops of the kingposts of the bridge, which was worked by a winch-machine with wheel, pinion, and barrel, round which last the chain was wound. This apparatus was placed on the beacon side of the bridge, at the distance of about twelve feet from the cross-beam and pulley in the middle of the bridge. Immediately under the cross-beam a hatch was formed in the roadway of the bridge, measuring seven feet in length and five feet in breadth, made to shut with folding boards like a double door, through which stones and other articles were raised; the folding doors were then let down, and the stone or load was gently lowered upon a waggon which was wheeled on railway trucks towards the lighthouse. In this manner the several castings of the balance-crane were got up to the top of the solid of the building.

The several apartments of the beacon-house having been cleaned out and supplied with bedding, a sufficient stock of provisions was put into the store, when Peter Fortune, formerly noticed, lighted his fire in the beacon for the first time this season. Sixteen artificers at the same time mounted to their barrack-room, and all the foremen of the works also took possession of their cabin, all heartily rejoiced at getting rid of the trouble of boating and the sickly motion of the tender.

Saturday,
12th May.

The wind was at E.N.E., blowing so fresh, and accompanied with so much sea, that no stones could be landed to-day. The people on the rock, however, were busily employed in screwing together the balance-crane, cutting out the joggle-holes in the upper course, and preparing all things for commencing the building operations.

Sunday,
13th May.

The weather still continues boisterous, although the barometer has all the while stood at about 30 inches. Towards evening the wind blew so fresh at E. by S. that the boats both of the *Smeaton* and tender were obliged to be hoisted in, and it was feared that the *Smeaton* would have to slip her moorings. The people on the rock were seen busily employed, and had the balance-crane apparently ready for use, but no communication could be had with them to-day.

Monday,
14th May.

The wind continued to blow so fresh, and the *Smeaton* rode so heavily with her cargo, that at noon a signal was made for her getting under weigh, when she stood towards Arbroath; and on board of the tender we are still without any communication with the people on the rock, where the sea was seen breaking over the top of the building in great sprays, and raging with much agitation among the beams of the beacon.

Thursday,
17th May.

The wind, in the course of the day, had shifted from north to west; the sea being also considerably less, a boat landed on the rock at six p.m., for the first time since the 11th, with the provisions and water brought off by the *Patriot.* The inhabitants of the beacon were all well, but tired above measure for want of employment, as the balance-crane and apparatus was all in readiness. Under these circumstances they felt no less desirous of the return of good weather than those afloat, who were continually tossed with the agitation of the sea. The writer, in particular, felt himself almost as much fatigued and worn-out as he had been at any period since the commencement of the work. The very backward state of the weather at so advanced a period of the season unavoidably created some alarm, lest he should be overtaken with bad weather at a late period of the season, with the building operations in an unfinished state. These apprehensions were, no doubt, rather increased by the inconveniences of his situation afloat, as the tender rolled and pitched 127 excessively at times. This being also his first off-set for the season, every bone of his body felt sore with preserving a sitting posture while he endeavoured to pass away the time in reading; as for writing, it was wholly impracticable. He had several times entertained thoughts of leaving the station for a few days and going into Arbroath with the tender till the weather should improve; but as the artificers had been landed on the rock he was averse to this at the commencement of the season, knowing also that he would be equally uneasy in every situation till the first cargo was landed: and he therefore resolved to continue at his post until this should be effected.

Friday,
18th May.

The wind being now N.W., the sea was considerably run down, and this morning at five o’clock the landing-master’s crew, thirteen in number, left the tender; and having now no detention with the landing of artificers, they proceeded to unmoor the *Hedderwick* praam-boat, and towed her alongside of the *Smeaton*: and in the course of the day twenty-three blocks of stone, three casks of pozzolano, three of sand, three of lime, and one of Roman cement, together with three bundles of trenails and three of wedges, were all landed on the rock and raised to the top of the building by means of the tackle suspended from the cross-beam on the middle of the bridge. The stones were then moved along the bridge on the waggon to the building within reach of the balance-crane, with which they were laid in their respective places on the building. The masons immediately thereafter proceeded to bore the trenail-holes into the course below, and otherwise to complete the one in hand. When the first stone was to be suspended by the balance-crane, the bell on the beacon was rung, and all the artificers and seamen were collected on the building. Three hearty cheers were given while it was lowered into its place, and the steward served round a glass of rum, when success was drunk to the further progress of the building.

Sunday,
20th May.

The wind was southerly to-day, but there was much less sea than yesterday, and the landing-master's crew were enabled to discharge and land twenty-three pieces of stone and other articles for the work. The artificers had completed the laying of the twenty-seventh or first course of the staircase this morning, and in the evening they finished the boring, trenailing, wedging, and grouting it with mortar. At twelve o'clock noon the beacon-house bell was rung, and all hands were collected on the top of the building, where prayers were read for the first time on the lighthouse, which forcibly struck every one, and had, upon the whole, a very impressive effect.

From the hazardous situation of the beacon-house with regard to fire, being composed wholly of timber, there was no small risk 128 from accident: and on this account one of the most steady of the artificers was appointed to see that the fire of the cooking-house, and the lights in general, were carefully extinguished at stated hours.

Monday,
4th June.

This being the birthday of our much-revered Sovereign King George III, now in the fiftieth year of his reign, the shipping of the Lighthouse service were this morning decorated with colours according to the taste of their respective captains. Flags were also hoisted upon the beacon-house and balance-crane on the top of the building. At twelve noon a salute was fired from the tender, when the King's health was drunk, with all the honours, both on the rock and on board of the shipping.

Tuesday,
5th June.

As the lighthouse advanced in height, the cubical contents of the stones were less, but they had to be raised to a greater height; and the walls, being thinner, were less commodious for the necessary machinery and the artificers employed, which considerably retarded the work. Inconvenience was also occasionally experienced from the men dropping their coats, hats, mallets, and other tools, at high-water, which were carried away by the tide; and the danger to the people themselves was now greatly increased. Had any of them fallen from the beacon or building at high-water, while the landing-master's crew were generally engaged with the craft at a distance, it must have rendered the accident doubly painful to those on the rock, who at this time had no boat, and consequently no means of rendering immediate and prompt assistance. In such cases it would have been too late to have got a boat by signal from the tender. A small boat, which could be lowered at pleasure, was therefore suspended by a pair of davits projected from the cook-house, the keel being about thirty feet from the rock. This boat, with its tackle, was put under the charge of James Glen, of whose exertions on the beacon mention has already been made, and who, having in early life been a seaman, was also very expert in the management of a boat. A life-buoy was likewise suspended from the bridge, to which a coil of line two hundred fathoms in length was attached, which could be let out to a person falling into the water, or to the people in the boat, should they not be able to work her with the oars.

Thursday,
7th June.

To-day twelve stones were landed on the rock, being the remainder of the *Patriot's* cargo; and the artificers built the thirty-ninth course, consisting of fourteen stones. The Bell Rock works had now a very busy appearance, as the lighthouse was daily getting more into form. Besides the artificers and their cook, the writer and his servant were also lodged on the beacon, counting in all twenty-nine; and at low-water the landing-master's crew, consisting 129 of from twelve to fifteen seamen, were employed in transporting the building materials, working the landing apparatus on the rock, and dragging the stone waggons along the railways.

Friday,
8th June.

In the course of this day the weather varied much. In the morning it was calm, in the middle part of the day there were light airs of wind from the south, and in the evening fresh breezes from the east. The barometer in the writer's cabin in the beacon-house oscillated from 30 inches to 30.42, and the weather was extremely pleasant. This, in any situation, forms one of the chief comforts of life; but, as may easily be conceived, it was doubly so to people stuck, as it were, upon a pinnacle in the middle of the ocean.

Sunday,
10th June.

One of the praam-boats had been brought to the rock with eleven stones, notwithstanding the perplexity which attended the getting of those formerly landed taken up to the building. Mr. Peter Logan, the foreman builder, interposed and prevented this cargo from being delivered; but the landing-master's crew were exceedingly averse to this arrangement, from an idea that "ill luck" would in future attend the praam, her cargo, and those who navigated her, from thus reversing her voyage. It may be noticed that this was the first instance of a praam-boat having been sent from the Bell Rock with any part of her cargo on board, and was considered so uncommon an occurrence that it became a topic of conversation among the seamen and artificers.

Tuesday,
12th June.

To-day the stones formerly sent from the rock were safely landed, notwithstanding the augury of the seamen in consequence of their being sent away two days before.

Thursday,
14th June.

To-day twenty-seven stones and eleven joggle-pieces were landed, part of which consisted of the forty-seventh course, forming the storeroom floor. The builders were at work this morning by four o'clock, in the hopes of being able to accomplish the laying of the eighteen stones of this course. But at eight o'clock in the evening they had still two to lay, and as the stones of this course were very unwieldy, being six feet in length, they required much precaution and care both in lifting and laying them. It was only on the writer's suggestion to Mr. Logan that the artificers were induced to leave off, as they had intended to complete this floor before going to bed. The two remaining stones were, however, laid in their places without mortar when the bell on the beacon was rung, and, all hands being collected on the top of the building, three hearty cheers were given on covering the first apartment. The steward then served out a dram to each, when the whole retired to their barrack much fatigued, but with the anticipation of the most perfect repose even in the "hurricane-house," amidst the dashing seas on the Bell Rock.

While the workmen were at breakfast and dinner it was the writer's usual practice to spend his time on the walls of the building, which, notwithstanding the narrowness of the track, nevertheless formed his principal walk when the rock was under water. But this afternoon he had his writing-desk set upon the storeroom floor, when he wrote to Mrs. Stevenson — certainly the first letter dated from the Bell Rock *Lighthouse* — giving a detail of the fortunate progress of the work, with an assurance that the lighthouse would soon be completed at the rate at which it now proceeded; and, the *Patriot* having sailed for Arbroath in the evening, he felt no small degree of pleasure in despatching this communication to his family.

The weather still continuing favourable for the operations at the rock, the work proceeded with much energy, through the exertions both of the seamen and artificers. For the more speedy and effectual working of the several tackles in raising the materials as the building advanced in height, and there being a great extent of railway to attend to, which required constant repairs, two additional millwrights were added to the complement on the rock, which, including the writer, now counted thirty-one in all. So crowded was the men's barrack that the beds were ranged five tier in height, allowing only about one foot eight inches for each bed. The artificers commenced this morning at five o'clock, and, in the course of the day, they laid the forty-eighth and forty-ninth courses, consisting each of sixteen blocks. From the favourable state of the weather, and the regular manner in which the work now proceeded, the artificers had generally from four to seven extra hours' work, which, including their stated wages of 3s. 4d., yielded them from 5s. 4d. to about 6s. 10d. per day besides their board; even the postage of their letters was paid while they were at the Bell Rock. In these advantages the foremen also shared, having about double the pay and amount of premiums of the artificers. The seamen being less out of their element in the Bell Rock operations than the landsmen, their premiums consisted in a slump sum payable at the end of the season, which extended from three to ten guineas.

As the laying of the floors was somewhat tedious, the landing-master and his crew had got considerably beforehand with the building artificers in bringing materials faster to the rock than they could be built. The seamen having, therefore, some spare time, were occasionally employed during fine weather in dredging or grappling for the several mushroom anchors and mooring-chains which had been lost in the vicinity of the Bell Rock during the progress of the work by the breaking loose and drifting of the floating buoys. To encourage their exertions in this search, five guineas were offered as a 131 premium for each set they should find; and, after much patient application, they succeeded to-day in hooking one of these lost anchors with its chain.

It was a general remark at the Bell Rock, as before noticed, that fish were never plenty in its neighbourhood excepting in good weather. Indeed, the seamen used to speculate about the state of the weather from their success in fishing. When the fish disappeared at the rock, it was considered a sure indication that a gale was not far off, as the fish seemed to seek shelter in deeper water from the roughness of the sea during these changes in the weather. At this time the rock, at high-water, was completely covered with podlies, or the fry of the coal-fish, about six or eight inches in length. The artificers sometimes occupied half an hour after breakfast and dinner in catching these little fishes, but were more frequently supplied from the boats of the tender.

Saturday,
16th June.

The landing-master having this day discharged the *Smeaton* and loaded the *Hedderwick* and *Dickie* praam-boats with nineteen stones, they were towed to their respective moorings, when Captain Wilson, in consequence of the heavy swell of sea, came in his boat to the beacon-house to consult with the writer as to the propriety of venturing the loaded praam-boats with their cargoes to the rock while so much sea was running. After some dubiety expressed on the subject, in which the ardent mind of the landing-master suggested many arguments in favour of his being able to convey the praams in perfect safety, it was acceded to. In bad weather, and especially on occasions of difficulty like the present, Mr. Wilson, who was an extremely active seaman, measuring about five feet three inches in height, of a robust habit, generally dressed himself in what he called a *monkey jacket*, made of thick duffle cloth, with a pair of Dutchman's petticoat trousers, reaching only to his knees, where they were met with a pair of long water-tight boots; with this dress, his glazed hat, and his small brass speaking-trumpet in his hand, he bade defiance to the weather. When he made his appearance in this most suitable attire for the service, his crew seemed to possess additional life, never failing to use their utmost exertions when the captain put on his *storm rigging*. They had this morning commenced loading the praam-boats at four o'clock, and proceeded to tow them into the eastern landing-place, which was accomplished with much dexterity, though not without the risk of being thrown, by the force of the sea, on certain projecting ledges of the rock. In such a case the loss even of a single stone would have greatly retarded the work. For the greater safety in entering the creek it was necessary to put out several warps and guy-ropes to guide the boats into its narrow and intricate entrance; and 132 it frequently happened that the sea made a clean breach over the praams, which not only washed their decks, but completely drenched the crew in water.

Sunday,
17th June.

It was fortunate, in the present state of the weather, that the fiftieth course was in a sheltered spot, within the reach of the tackle of the winch-machine upon the bridge; a few stones were stowed upon the bridge itself, and the remainder upon the building, which kept the artificers at work. The stowing of the materials upon the rock was the department of Alexander Brebner, mason, who spared no pains in attending to the safety of the stones, and who, in the present state of the work, when the stones were landed faster than could be built, generally worked till the water rose to his middle. At one o'clock to-day the bell rung for prayers, and all hands were collected into the upper barrack-room of the beacon-house, when the usual service was performed.

The wind blew very hard in the course of last night from N.E., and to-day the sea ran so high that no boat could approach the rock. During the dinner-hour, when the writer was going to the top of the building as usual, but just as he had entered the door and was about to ascend the ladder, a great noise was heard overhead, and in an instant he was soused in water from a sea which had most unexpectedly come over the walls, though now about fifty-eight feet in height. On making his retreat he found himself completely whitened by the lime, which had mixed with the water while dashing down through the different floors; and, as nearly as he could guess, a quantity equal to about a hogshead had come over the walls, and now streamed out at the door. After having shifted himself, he again sat down in his cabin, the sea continuing to run so high that the builders did not resume their operations on the walls this afternoon. The incident just noticed did not create more surprise in the mind of the writer than the sublime appearance of the waves as they rolled majestically over the rock. This scene he greatly enjoyed while sitting at his cabin window; each wave approached the beacon like a vast scroll unfolding; and in passing discharged a quantity of air, which he not only distinctly felt, but was even sufficient to lift the leaves of a book which lay before him. These waves might be ten or twelve feet in height, and about 250 feet in length, their smaller end being towards the north, where the water was deep, and they were opened or cut through by the interposition of the building and beacon. The gradual manner in which the sea, upon these occasions, is observed to become calm or to subside, is a very remarkable feature of this phenomenon. For example, when a gale is succeeded by a calm, every third or fourth wave forms one of these great seas, 133 which occur in spaces of from three to five minutes, as noted by the writer's watch; but in the course of the next tide they become less frequent, and take off so as to occur only in ten or fifteen minutes; and, singular enough, at the third tide after such gales, the writer has remarked that only one or two of these great waves appear in the course of the whole tide.

Tuesday,
19th June.

The 19th was a very unpleasant and disagreeable day, both for the seamen and artificers, as it rained throughout with little intermission from four a.m. till eleven p.m., accompanied with thunder and lightning, during which period the work nevertheless continued unremittingly and the builders laid the fifty-first and fifty-second courses. This state of weather was no less severe upon the mortar-makers, who required to temper or prepare the mortar of a thicker or thinner consistency, in some measure, according to the state of the weather. From the elevated position of the building, the mortar gallery on the beacon was now much lower, and the lime-buckets were made to traverse upon a rope distended between it and the building. On occasions like the present, however, there was often a difference of opinion between the builders and the mortar-makers. John Watt, who had the principal charge of the mortar, was a most active worker, but, being somewhat of an irascible temper, the builders occasionally amused themselves at his expense: for while he was eagerly at work with his large iron-shod pestle in the mortar-tub, they often sent down contradictory orders, some crying, “Make it a little stiffer, or thicker, John,” while others called out to make it “thinner,” to which he generally returned very speedy and sharp replies, so that these conversations at times were rather amusing.

During wet weather the situation of the artificers on the top of the building was extremely disagreeable; for although their work did not require great exertion, yet, as each man had his particular part to perform, either in working the crane or in laying the stones, it required the closest application and attention, not only on the part of Mr. Peter Logan, the foreman, who was constantly on the walls, but also of the chief workmen. Robert Selkirk, the principal builder, for example, had every stone to lay in its place. David Cumming, a mason, had the charge of working the tackle of the balance-weight, and James Scott, also a mason, took charge of the purchase with which the stones were laid; while the pointing the joints of the walls with cement was intrusted to William Reid and William Kennedy, who stood upon a scaffold suspended over the walls in rather a frightful manner. The least act of carelessness or inattention on the part of any of these men might have been fatal, not only to themselves, but also to the surrounding workmen, 134 especially if any accident had happened to the crane itself, while the material damage or loss of a single stone would have put an entire stop to the operations until another could have been brought from Arbroath. The artificers, having wrought seven and a half hours of extra time to-day, had 3s. 9d. of extra pay, while the foremen had 7s. 6d. over and above their stated pay and board. Although, therefore, the work was both hazardous and fatiguing, yet, the encouragement being considerable, they were always very cheerful, and perfectly reconciled to the confinement and other disadvantages of the place.

During fine weather, and while the nights were short, the duty on board of the floating light was literally nothing but a waiting on, and therefore one of her boats, with a crew of five men, daily attended the rock, but always returned to the vessel at night. The carpenter, however, was one of those who was left on board of the ship, as he also acted in the capacity of assistant lightkeeper, being, besides, a person who was apt to feel discontent and to be averse to changing his quarters, especially to work with the millwrights and joiners at the rock, who often, for hours together, wrought knee-deep, and not unfrequently up to the middle, in water. Mr. Watt having about this time made a requisition for another hand, the carpenter was ordered to attend the rock in the floating light's boat. This he did with great reluctance, and found so much fault that he soon got into discredit with his messmates. On this occasion he left the Lighthouse service, and went as a sailor in a vessel bound for America — a step which, it is believed, he soon regretted, as, in the course of things, he would, in all probability, have accompanied Mr John Reid, the principal lightkeeper of the floating light, to the Bell Rock Lighthouse as his principal assistant. The writer had a wish to be of service to this man, as he was one of those who came off to the floating light in the month of September 1807, while she was riding at single anchor after the severe gale of the 7th, at a time when it was hardly possible to make up this vessel's crew; but the crossness of his manner prevented his reaping the benefit of such intentions.

Friday,
22nd June.

The building operations had for some time proceeded more slowly, from the higher parts of the lighthouse requiring much longer time than an equal tonnage of the lower courses. The duty of the landing-master's crew had, upon the whole, been easy of late; for though the work was occasionally irregular, yet the stones being lighter, they were more speedily lifted from the hold of the stone vessel to the deck of the praam-boat, and again to the waggons on the railway, after which they came properly under the charge of the foreman builder. It is, however, a strange, though not an uncommon, 135 feature in the human character, that, when people have least to complain of they are most apt to become dissatisfied, as was now the case with the seamen employed in the Bell Rock service about their rations of beer. Indeed, ever since the carpenter of the floating light, formerly noticed, had been brought to the rock, expressions of discontent had been manifested upon various occasions. This being represented to the writer, he sent for Captain Wilson, the landing-master, and Mr. Taylor, commander of the tender, with whom he talked over the subject. They stated that they considered the daily allowance of the seamen in every respect ample, and that, the work being now much lighter than formerly, they had no just ground for complaint; Mr. Taylor adding that, if those who now complained "were even to be fed upon soft bread and turkeys, they would not think themselves right." At twelve noon the work of the landing-master's crew was completed for the day; but at four o'clock, while the rock was under water, those on the beacon were surprised by the arrival of a boat from the tender without any signal having been made from the beacon. It brought the following note to the writer from the landing-master’s crew: —

Sir Joseph Banks Tender

“Sir, — We are informed by our masters that our allowance is to be as before, and it is not sufficient to serve us, for we have been at work since four o’clock this morning, and we have come on board to dinner, and there is no beer for us before to-morrow morning, to which a sufficient answer is required before we go from the beacon; and we are, Sir, your most obedient servants.”

On reading this, the writer returned a verbal message, intimating that an answer would be sent on board of the tender, at the same time ordering the boat instantly to quit the beacon. He then addressed the following note to the landing-master: —

“*Beacon-house, 22nd June 1810, Five o’clock p.m.*

“Sir, — I have just now received a letter purporting to be from the landing-master’s crew and seamen on board of the *Sir Joseph Banks*, though without either date or signature; in answer to which I enclose a statement of the daily allowance of provisions for the seamen in this service, which you will post up in the ship’s galley, and at seven o’clock this evening I will come on board to inquire into this unexpected and most unnecessary demand for an [136] additional allowance of beer. In the enclosed you will not find any alteration from the original statement, fixed in the galley at the beginning of the season. I have, however, judged this mode of giving your people an answer preferable to that of conversing with them on the beacon. — I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

“Robert Stevenson.

“To Captain Wilson.”

“*Beacon House, 22nd June* 1810. — Schedule of the daily allowance of provisions to be served out on board of the *Sir Joseph Banks* tender: ‘1½ lb. beef; 1 lb. bread; 8 oz. oatmeal; 2 oz. barley; 2 oz. butter; 3 quarts beer; vegetables and salt no stated allowance. When the seamen are employed in unloading the *Smeaton* and *Patriot*, a draught of beer is, as formerly, to be allowed from the stock of these vessels. Further, in wet and stormy weather, or when the work commences very early in the morning, or continues till a late hour at night, a glass of spirits will also be served out to the crew as heretofore, on the requisition of the landing-master.’

“Robert Stevenson.”

On writing this letter and schedule, a signal was made on the beacon for the landing-master’s boat, which immediately came to the rock, and the schedule was afterwards stuck up in the tender's galley. When sufficient time had been allowed to the crew to consider of their conduct, a second signal was made for a boat, and at seven o'clock the writer left the Bell Rock, after a residence of four successive weeks in the beacon-house. The first thing which occupied his attention on board of the tender was to look round upon the lighthouse, which he saw, with some degree of emotion and surprise, now vying in height with the beacon-house; for although he had often viewed it from the extremity of the western railway on the rock, yet the scene, upon the whole, seemed far more interesting from the tender's moorings at the distance of about half a mile.

The *Smeaton* having just arrived at her moorings with a cargo, a signal was made for Captain Pool to come on board of the tender, that he might be at hand to remove from the service any of those who might persist in their discontented conduct. One of the two principal leaders in this affair, the master of one of the praam-boats, who had also steered the boat which brought the letter to the beacon, was first called upon deck, and asked if he had read the statement fixed up in the galley this afternoon, and whether he was satisfied with it. He replied that he had read the paper, but was not satisfied, as it 137 held out no alteration on the allowance, on which he was immediately ordered into the *Smeaton's* boat. The next man called had but lately entered the service, and, being also interrogated as to his resolution, he declared himself to be of the same mind with the praam-master, and was also forthwith ordered into the boat. The writer, without calling any more of the seamen, went forward to the gangway, where they were collected and listening to what was passing upon deck. He addressed them at the hatchway, and stated that two of their companions had just been dismissed the service and sent on board of the *Smeaton* to be conveyed to Arbroath. He therefore wished each man to consider for himself how far it would be proper, by any unreasonableness of conduct, to place themselves in a similar situation, especially as they were aware that it was optional in him either to dismiss them or send them on board a man-of-war. It might appear that much inconveniency would be felt at the rock by a change of hands at this critical period, by checking for a time the progress of a building so intimately connected with the best interests of navigation; yet this would be but of a temporary nature, while the injury to themselves might be irreparable. It was now, therefore, required of any man who, in this disgraceful manner, chose to leave the service, that he should instantly make his appearance on deck while the *Smeaton's* boat was alongside. But those below having expressed themselves satisfied with their situation — viz., William Brown, George Gibb, Alexander Scott, John Dick, Robert Couper, Alexander Shephard, James Grieve, David Carey, William Pearson, Stuart Eaton, Alexander Lawrence, and John Spink — were accordingly considered as having returned to their duty. This disposition to mutiny, which had so strongly manifested itself, being now happily suppressed, Captain Pool got orders to proceed for Arbroath Bay, and land the two men he had on board, and to deliver the following letter at the office of the workyard: —

“*On board of the Tender off the Bell Rock*,
22*nd June* 1810, *eight o’clock p.m.*

“Dear Sir, — A discontented and mutinous spirit having manifested itself of late among the landing-master’s crew, they struck work to-day and demanded an additional allowance of beer, and I have found it necessary to dismiss D — — d and M — — e, who are now sent on shore with the *Smeaton*. You will therefore be so good as to pay them their wages, including this day only. Nothing can be more unreasonable than the conduct of the seamen on this occasion, as the landing-master’s crew not only had their allowance on board of 138 the tender, but, in the course of this day, they had drawn no fewer than twenty-four quart pots of beer from the stock of the *Patriot* while unloading her. — I remain, yours truly,

“Robert Stevenson.

“To Mr. Lachlan Kennedy,
Bell Rock Office, Arbroath.”

On despatching this letter to Mr. Kennedy, the writer returned to the beacon about nine o’clock, where this afternoon’s business had produced many conjectures, especially when the *Smeaton* got under weigh, instead of proceeding to land her cargo. The bell on the beacon being rung, the artificers were assembled on the bridge, when the affair was explained to them. He, at the same time, congratulated them upon the first appearance of mutiny being happily set at rest by the dismissal of its two principal abettors.

Sunday,
24th June.

At the rock, the landing of the materials and the building operations of the light-room store went on successfully, and in a way similar to those of the provision store. To-day it blew fresh breezes; but the seamen nevertheless landed twenty-eight stones, and the artificers built the fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth courses. The works were visited by Mr. Murdoch, junior, from Messrs. Boulton and Watt’s works of Soho. He landed just as the bell rung for prayers, after which the writer enjoyed much pleasure from his very intelligent conversation; and, having been almost the only stranger he had seen for some weeks, he parted with him, after a short interview, with much regret.

Thursday,

28th June.

Last night the wind had shifted to north-east, and, blowing fresh, was accompanied with a heavy surf upon the rock. Towards high-water it had a very grand and wonderful appearance. Waves of considerable magnitude rose as high as the solid or level of the entrance-door, which, being open to the south-west, was fortunately to the leeward; but on the windward side the sprays flew like lightning up the sloping sides of the building; and although the walls were now elevated sixty-four feet above the rock, and about fifty-two feet from high-water mark, yet the artificers were nevertheless wetted, and occasionally interrupted, in their operations on the top of the walls. These appearances were, in a great measure, new at the Bell Rock, there having till of late been no building to conduct the seas, or object to compare with them. Although, from the description of the Eddystone Lighthouse, the mind was prepared for such effects, yet they were not expected to the present extent in the summer season; the sea being most awful to-day, whether observed from the beacon or the building. To windward, the sprays fell from the height above noticed in the most wonderful cascades, and 139 streamed down the walls of the building in froth as white as snow. To leeward of the lighthouse the collision or meeting of the waves produced a pure white kind of *drift*: it rose about thirty feet in height, like a fine downy mist, which, in its fall, fell upon the face and hands more like a dry powder than a liquid substance. The effect of these seas, as they raged among the beams and dashed upon the higher parts of the beacon, produced a temporary tremulous motion throughout the whole fabric, which to a stranger must have been frightful.

Sunday,
1st July.

The writer had now been at the Bell Rock since the latter end of May, or about six weeks, during four of which he had been a constant inhabitant of the beacon without having been once off the rock. After witnessing the laying of the sixty-seventh or second course of the bedroom apartment, he left the rock with the tender and went ashore, as some arrangements were to be made for the future conduct of the works at Arbroath, which were soon to be brought to a close; the landing-master's crew having, in the meantime, shifted on board of the *Patriot*. In leaving the rock, the writer kept his eyes fixed upon the lighthouse, which had recently got into the form of a house, having several tiers or stories of windows. Nor was he unmindful of his habitation in the beacon — now far overtopped by the masonry, — where he had spent several weeks in a kind of active retirement, making practical experiment of the fewness of the positive wants of man. His cabin measured not more than four feet three inches in breadth on the floor; and though, from the oblique direction of the beams of the beacon, it widened towards the top, yet it did not admit of the full extension of his arms when he stood on the floor; while its length was little more than sufficient for suspending a cot-bed during the night, calculated for being triced up to the roof through the day, which left free room for the admission of occasional visitants. His folding table was attached with hinges, immediately under the small window of the apartment, and his books, barometer, thermometer, portmanteau, and two or three camp-stools, formed the bulk of his movables. His diet being plain, the paraphernalia of the table were proportionally simple; though everything had the appearance of comfort, and even of neatness, the walls being covered with green cloth formed into panels with red tape, and his bed festooned with curtains of yellow cotton-stuff. If, in speculating upon the abstract wants of man in such a state of exclusion, one were reduced to a single book, the Sacred Volume — whether considered for the striking diversity of its story, the morality of its doctrine, or the important truths of its gospel — would have proved by far the greatest treasure.

Monday,
2nd July.

In walking over the workyard at Arbroath this morning, the writer found that the stones of the course immediately under the cornice were all in hand, and that a week's work would now finish the whole, while the intermediate courses lay ready numbered and marked for shipping to the rock. Among other subjects which had occupied his attention to-day was a visit from some of the relations of George Dall, a young man who had been impressed near Dundee in the month of February last; a dispute had arisen between the magistrates of that burgh and the Regulating Officer as to his right of impressing Dall, who was *bonâ fide* one of the protected seamen in the Bell Rock service. In the meantime, the poor lad was detained, and ultimately committed to the prison of Dundee, to remain until the question should be tried before the Court of Session. His friends were naturally very desirous to have him relieved upon bail. But, as this was only to be done by the judgment of the Court, all that could be said was that his pay and allowances should be continued in the same manner as if he had been upon the sick-list. The circumstances of Dall's case were briefly these: — He had gone to see some of his friends in the neighbourhood of Dundee, in winter, while the works were suspended, having got leave of absence from Mr. Taylor, who commanded the Bell Rock tender, and had in his possession one of the Protection Medals. Unfortunately, however, for Dall, the Regulating Officer thought proper to disregard these documents, as, according to the strict and literal interpretation of the Admiralty regulations, a seaman does not stand protected unless he is actually on board of his ship, or in a boat belonging to her, or has the Admiralty protection in his possession. This order of the Board, however, cannot be rigidly followed in practice; and therefore, when the matter is satisfactorily stated to the Regulating Officer, the impressed man is generally liberated. But in Dall's case this was peremptorily refused, and he was retained at the instance of the magistrates. The writer having brought the matter under the consideration of the Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses, they authorised it to be tried on the part of the Lighthouse Board, as one of extreme hardship. The Court, upon the first hearing, ordered Dall to be liberated from prison; and the proceedings never went further.

Wednesday,
4th July.

Being now within twelve courses of being ready for building the cornice, measures were taken for getting the stones of it and the parapet-wall of the light-room brought from Edinburgh, where, as before noticed, they had been prepared and were in readiness for shipping. The honour of conveying the upper part of the lighthouse, and of landing the last stone of the building on the rock, was considered to belong to Captain Pool of the *Smeaton*, who had been 141 longer in the service than the master of the *Patriot*. The *Smeaton* was, therefore, now partly loaded with old iron, consisting of broken railways and other lumber which had been lying about the rock. After landing these at Arbroath, she took on board James Craw, with his horse and cart, which could now be spared at the workyard, to be employed in carting the stones from Edinburgh to Leith. Alexander Davidson and William Kennedy, two careful masons, were also sent to take charge of the loading of the stones at Greenside, and stowing them on board of the vessel at Leith. The writer also went on board, with a view to call at the Bell Rock and to take his passage up the Firth of Forth. The wind, however, coming to blow very fresh from the eastward, with thick and foggy weather, it became necessary to reef the mainsail and set the second jib. When in the act of making a tack towards the tender, the sailors who worked the head-sheets were, all of a sudden, alarmed with the sound of the smith's hammer and anvil on the beacon, and had just time to put the ship about to save her from running ashore on the north-western point of the rock, marked "James Craw's Horse." On looking towards the direction from whence the sound came, the building and beacon-house were seen, with consternation, while the ship was hailed by those on the rock, who were no less confounded at seeing the near approach of the *Smeaton*; and, just as the vessel cleared the danger, the smith and those in the mortar gallery made signs in token of their happiness at our fortunate escape. From this occurrence the writer had an experimental proof of the utility of the large bells which were in preparation to be rung by the machinery of the revolving light; for, had it not been for the sound of the smith's anvil, the *Smeaton*, in all probability, would have been wrecked upon the rock. In case the vessel had struck, those on board might have been safe, having now the beacon-house as a place of refuge; but the vessel, which was going at a great velocity, must have suffered severely, and it was more than probable that the horse would have been drowned, there being no means of getting him out of the vessel. Of this valuable animal and his master we shall take an opportunity of saying more in another place.

Thursday,
5th July.

The weather cleared up in the course of the night, but the wind shifted to the N.E. and blew very fresh. From the force of the wind, being now the period of spring-tides, a very heavy swell was experienced at the rock. At two o'clock on the following morning the people on the beacon were in a state of great alarm about their safety, as the sea had broke up part of the floor of the mortar gallery, Which was thus cleared of the lime-casks and other buoyant articles; and, the alarm-bell being rung, all hands were called to render what 142 assistance was in their power for the safety of themselves and the materials. At this time some would willingly have left the beacon and gone into the building; the sea, however, ran so high that there was no passage along the bridge of communication, and, when the interior of the lighthouse came to be examined in the morning, it appeared that great quantities of water had come over the walls — now eighty feet in height — and had run down through the several apartments and out at the entrance door.

The upper course of the lighthouse at the workyard of Arbroath was completed on the 6th, and the whole of the stones were, therefore, now ready for being shipped to the rock. From the present state of the works it was impossible that the two squads of artificers at Arbroath and the Bell Rock could meet together at this period; and as in public works of this kind, which had continued for a series of years, it is not customary to allow the men to separate without what is termed a "finishing-pint," five guineas were for this purpose placed at the disposal of Mr. David Logan, clerk of works. With this sum the stone-cutters at Arbroath had a merry meeting in their barrack, collected their sweethearts and friends, and concluded their labours with a dance. It was remarked, however, that their happiness on this occasion was not without alloy. The consideration of parting and leaving a steady and regular employment, to go in quest of work and mix with other society, after having been harmoniously lodged for years together in one large “guildhall or barrack,” was rather painful.

Friday,
6th July.

While the writer was at Edinburgh he was fortunate enough to meet with Mrs. Dickson, only daughter of the late celebrated Mr. Smeaton, whose works at the Eddystone Lighthouse had been of such essential consequence to the operations at the Bell Rock. Even her own elegant accomplishments are identified with her father’s work, she having herself made the drawing of the vignette on the title-page of the “Narrative of the Eddystone Lighthouse.” Every admirer of the works of that singularly eminent man must also feel an obligation to her for the very comprehensive and distinct account given of his life, which is attached to his reports, published, in three volumes quarto, by the Society of Civil Engineers. Mrs. Dickson, being at this time returning from a tour to the Hebrides and Western Highlands of Scotland, had heard of the Bell Rock works, and from their similarity to those of the Eddystone, was strongly impressed with a desire of visiting the spot. But on inquiring for the writer at Edinburgh, and finding from him that the upper part of the lighthouse, consisting of nine courses, might be seen in the immediate vicinity, and also that one of the vessels, which, in compliment to 143 her father’s memory, had been named the *Smeaton*, might also now be seen in Leith, she considered herself extremely fortunate; and having first visited the works at Greenside, she afterwards went to Leith to see the *Smeaton*, then loading for the Bell Rock. On stepping on board, Mrs. Dickson seemed to be quite overcome with so many concurrent circumstances, tending in a peculiar manner to revive and enliven the memory of her departed father, and, on leaving the vessel, she would not be restrained from presenting the crew with a piece of money. The *Smeaton* had been named spontaneously, from a sense of the obligation which a public work of the description of the Bell Rock owed to the labours and abilities of Mr. Smeaton. The writer certainly never could have anticipated the satisfaction which he this day felt in witnessing the pleasure it afforded to the only representative of this great man’s family.

Friday,
20th July.

The gale from the N.E. still continued so strong, accompanied with a heavy sea, that the *Patriot* could not approach her moorings; although the tender still kept her station, no landing was made to-day at the rock. At high-water it was remarked that the spray rose to the height of about sixty feet upon the building. The *Smeaton* now lay in Leith loaded, but, the wind and weather being so unfavourable for her getting down the Firth, she did not sail till this afternoon. It may be here proper to notice that the loading of the centre of the light-room floor, or last principal stone of the building, did not fail, when put on board, to excite an interest among those connected with the work. When the stone was laid upon the cart to be conveyed to Leith, the seamen fixed an ensign-staff and flag into the circular hole in the centre of the stone, and decorated their own hats, and that of James Craw, the Bell Rock carter, with ribbons; even his faithful and trusty horse Brassey was ornamented with bows and streamers of various colours. The masons also provided themselves with new aprons, and in this manner the cart was attended in its progress to the ship. When the cart came opposite the Trinity House of Leith, the officer of that corporation made his appearance dressed in his uniform, with his staff of office; and when it reached the harbour, the shipping in the different tiers where the *Smeaton* lay hoisted their colours, manifesting by these trifling ceremonies the interest with which the progress of this work was regarded by the public, as ultimately tending to afford safety and protection to the mariner. The wind had fortunately shifted to the S.W., and about five o'clock this afternoon the Smeaton reached the Bell Rock.

Friday,
27th July.

The artificers had finished the laying of the balcony course, excepting the centre-stone of the light-room floor, which, like the centres of the other floors, could not be laid in its place till after the 144 removal of the foot and shaft of the balance-crane. During the dinner-hour, when the men were off work, the writer generally took some exercise by walking round the walls when the rock was under water; but to-day his boundary was greatly enlarged, for, instead of the narrow wall as a path, he felt no small degree of pleasure in walking round the balcony and passing out and in at the space allotted for the light-room door. In the labours of this day both the artificers and seamen felt their work to be extremely easy compared with what it had been for some days past.

Sunday,
29th July.

Captain Wilson and his crew had made preparations for landing the last stone, and, as may well be supposed, this was a day of great interest at the Bell Rock. "That it might lose none of its honours," as he expressed himself, the *Hedderwick* praam-boat, with which the first stone of the building had been landed, was appointed also to carry the last. At seven o'clock this evening the seamen hoisted three flags upon the *Hedderwick*, when the colours of the *Dickie* praam-boat, tender, *Smeaton*, floating light, beacon-house, and lighthouse were also displayed; and, the weather being remarkably fine, the whole presented a very gay appearance, and, in connection with the associations excited, the effect was very pleasing. The praam which carried the stone was towed by the seamen in gallant style to the rock, and, on its arrival, cheers were given as a finale to the landing department.

Monday,
30th July.

The ninetieth or last course of the building having been laid to-day, which brought the masonry to the height of one hundred and two feet six inches, the lintel of the light-room door, being the finishing-stone of the exterior walls, was laid with due formality by the writer, who, at the same time, pronounced the following benediction: “May the Great Architect of the Universe, under whose blessing this perilous work has prospered, preserve it as a guide to the mariner.”

Friday,
3rd Aug.

At three p.m., the necessary preparations having been made, the artificers commenced the completing of the floors of the several apartments, and at seven o’clock the centre-stone of the light-room floor was laid, which may be held as finishing the masonry of this important national edifice. After going through the usual ceremonies observed by the brotherhood on occasions of this kind, the writer, addressing himself to the artificers and seamen who were present, briefly alluded to the utility of the undertaking as a monument of the wealth of British commerce, erected through the spirited measures of the Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses by means of the able assistance of those who now surrounded him. He then took an opportunity of stating that toward those connected 145 with this arduous work he would ever retain the most heartfelt regard in all their interests.

Saturday,
4th Aug.

When the bell was rung as usual on the beacon this morning, every one seemed as if he were at a loss what to make of himself. At this period the artificers at the rock consisted of eighteen masons, two joiners, one millwright, one smith, and one mortar-maker, besides Messrs. Peter Logan and Francis Watt, foremen, counting in all twenty-five; and matters were arranged for proceeding to Arbroath this afternoon with all hands. The *Sir Joseph Banks* tender had by this time been afloat, with little intermission, for six months, during greater part of which the artificers had been almost constantly off at the rock, and were now much in want of necessaries of almost every description. Not a few had lost different articles of clothing, which had dropped into the sea from the beacon and building. Some wanted jackets; others, from want of hats, wore nightcaps; each was, in fact, more or less curtailed in his wardrobe, and it must be confessed that at best the party were but in a very tattered condition. This morning was occupied in removing the artificers and their bedding on board of the tender; and, although their personal luggage was easily shifted, the boats had, nevertheless, many articles to remove from the beacon-house, and were consequently employed in this service till eleven a.m. All hands being collected, and just ready to embark, as the water had nearly overflowed the rock, the writer, in taking leave, after alluding to the harmony which had ever marked the conduct of those employed on the Bell Rock, took occasion to compliment the great zeal, attention, and abilities of Mr. Peter Logan and Mr. Francis Watt, foremen; Captain James Wilson, landing-master; and Captain David Taylor, commander of the tender, who, in their several departments, had so faithfully discharged the duties assigned to them, often under circumstances the most difficult and trying. The health of these gentlemen was drunk with much warmth of feeling by the artificers and seamen, who severally expressed the satisfaction they had experienced in acting under them; after which the whole party left the rock.

In sailing past the floating light, mutual compliments were made by a display of flags between that vessel and the tender; and at five p.m. the latter vessel entered the harbour of Arbroath, where the party were heartily welcomed by a numerous company of spectators, who had collected to see the artificers arrive after so long an absence from the port. In the evening the writer invited the foremen and captains of the service, together with Mr. David Logan, clerk of works at Arbroath, and Mr. Lachlan Kennedy, engineer's clerk and 146
bookkeeper, and some of their friends, to the principal inn, where the evening was spent very happily; and after "His Majesty's Health" and "The Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses" had been given, "Stability to the Bell Rock Lighthouse" was hailed as a standing toast in the Lighthouse service.

Sunday,
5th Aug.

The author has formerly noticed the uniformly decent and orderly deportment of the artificers who were employed at the Bell Rock Lighthouse, and to-day, it is believed, they very generally attended church, no doubt with grateful hearts for the narrow escapes from personal danger which all of them had more or less experienced during their residence at the rock.

Tuesday,
14th Aug.

The *Smeaton* sailed to-day at one p.m., having on board sixteen artificers, with Mr. Peter Logan, together with a supply of provisions and necessaries, who left the harbour pleased and happy to find themselves once more afloat in the Bell Rock service. At seven o'clock the tender was made fast to her moorings, when the artificers landed on the rock and took possession of their old quarters in the beacon-house, with feelings very different from those of 1807, when the works commenced.

The barometer for some days past had been falling from 29.90, and to-day it was 29.50, with the wind at N.E., which, in the course of this day, increased to a strong gale accompanied with a sea which broke with great violence upon the rock. At twelve noon the tender rode very heavily at her moorings, when her chain broke at about ten fathoms from the ship's bows. The kedge-anchor was immediately let go, to hold her till the floating buoy and broken chain should be got on board. But while this was in operation the hawser of the kedge was chafed through on the rocky bottom and parted, when the vessel was again adrift. Most fortunately, however, she cast off with her head from the rock, and narrowly cleared it, when she sailed up the Firth of Forth to wait the return of better weather. The artificers were thus left upon the rock with so heavy a sea running that it was ascertained to have risen to the height of eighty feet on the building. Under such perilous circumstances it would be difficult to describe the feelings of those who, at this time, were cooped up in the beacon in so forlorn a situation, with the sea not only raging under them, but occasionally falling from a great height upon the roof of their temporary lodging, without even the attending vessel in view to afford the least gleam of hope in the event of any accident. It is true that they had now the masonry of the lighthouse to resort to, which, no doubt, lessened the actual danger of their situation; but the building was still without a roof, and the deadlights, or storm-shutters, not being yet fitted, the windows of 147 the lower story were stove in and broken, and at high-water the sea ran in considerable quantities out at the entrance door.

Thursday,
16th Aug.

The gale continues with unabated violence to-day, and the sprays rise to a still greater height, having been carried over the masonry the building, or about ninety feet above the level of the sea. At four o'clock this morning it was breaking into the cook's berth, when he rang the alarm-bell, and all hands turned out to attend to their personal safety. The floor of the smith's, or mortar gallery, was now completely burst up by the force of the sea, when the whole of the deals and the remaining articles upon the floor were swept away, such as the cast-iron mortar-tubs, the iron hearth of the forge, the smith's bellows, and even his anvil were thrown down upon the rock. Before the tide rose to its full height to-day some of the artificers passed along the bridge into the lighthouse, to observe the effects of the sea upon it, and they reported that they had felt a slight tremulous motion in the building when great seas struck it in a certain direction, about high-water mark. On this occasion the sprays were again observed to wet the balcony, and even to come over the parapet wall into the interior of the light-room.

Thursday,
23rd Aug.

The wind being at W.S.W., and the weather more moderate, both the tender and the *Smeaton* got to their moorings on the 23rd, when hands were employed in transporting the sash-frames from on board of the *Smeaton* to the rock. In the act of setting up one of these frames upon the bridge, it was unguardedly suffered to lose its balance, and in saving it from damage, Captain Wilson met with a severe bruise in the groin, on the seat of a gun-shot wound received in the early part of his life. This accident laid him aside for several days.

Monday,
27th Aug.

The sash-frames of the light-room, eight in number, and weighing each 254 pounds, having been got safely up to the top of the building were ranged on the balcony in the order in which they were numbered for their places on the top of the parapet-wall; and the balance-crane, that useful machine having now lifted all the heavier articles, was unscrewed and lowered, to use the landing-master's phrase, "in mournful silence."

Sunday,
2nd Sept.

The steps of the stair being landed, and all the weightier articles of the light-room got up to the balcony, the wooden bridge was now to be removed, as it had a very powerful effect upon the beacon when a heavy sea struck it, and could not possibly have withstood the storms of a winter. Everything having been cleared from the bridge, and nothing left but the two principal beams with their horizontal braces, James Glen, at high-water, proceeded with a saw to cut through the beams at the end next the beacon, which likewise 148 disengaged their opposite extremity, inserted a few inches into the building. The frame was then gently lowered into the water, and floated off to the *Smeaton* to be towed to Arbroath, to be applied as part of the materials in the erection of the lightkeepers' houses. After the removal of the bridge, the aspect of things at the rock was much altered. The beacon-house and building had both a naked look to those accustomed to their former appearance; a curious optical deception was also remarked, by which the lighthouse seemed to incline from the perpendicular towards the beacon. The horizontal rope-ladder before noticed was again stretched to preserve the communication, and the artificers were once more obliged to practise the awkward and straddling manner of their passage between them during 1809.

At twelve noon the bell rung for prayers, after which the artificers went to dinner, when the writer passed along the rope-ladder to the lighthouse, and went through the several apartments, which were now cleared of lumber. In the afternoon all hands were summoned to the interior of the house, when he had the satisfaction of laying the upper step of the stair, or last stone of the building. This ceremony concluded with three cheers, the sound of which had a very loud and strange effect within the walls of the lighthouse. At six o'clock Mr. Peter Logan and eleven of the artificers embarked with the writer for Arbroath, leaving Mr. James Glen with the special charge of the beacon and railways, Mr. Robert Selkirk with the building, with a few artificers to fit the temporary windows to render the house habitable.

Sunday,
14th Oct.

On returning from his voyage to the Northern Lighthouses, the writer landed at the Bell Rock on Sunday, the 14th of October, and had the pleasure to find, from the very favourable state of the weather, that the artificers had been enabled to make great progress with the fitting-up of the light-room.

Friday,
19th Oct.

The light-room work had proceeded, as usual, to-day under the direction of Mr. Dove, assisted in the plumber-work by Mr. John Gibson, and in the brazier-work by Mr. Joseph Fraser; while Mr. James Slight, with the joiners, were fitting up the storm-shutters of the windows. In these several departments the artificers were at work till seven o'clock p.m., and it being then dark, Mr. Dove gave orders to drop work in the light-room; and all hands proceeded from thence to the beacon-house, when Charles Henderson, smith, and Henry Dickson, brazier, left the work together. Being both young men, who had been for several weeks upon the rock, they had become familiar, and even playful, on the most difficult parts about the beacon and building. This evening they were trying to outrun 149 each other in descending from the light-room, when Henderson led the way; but they were in conversation with each other till they came to the rope-ladder distended between the entrance-door of the lighthouse and the beacon. Dickson, on reaching the cook-room, was surprised at not seeing his companion, and inquired hastily for Henderson. Upon which the cook replied, "Was he before you upon the rope-ladder?"

Dickson answered, “Yes; and I thought I heard something fall.” Upon this the alarm was given, and links were immediately lighted, with which the artificers descended on the legs of the beacon, as near the surface of the water as possible, it being then about full tide, and the sea breaking to a considerable height upon the building, with the wind at S.S.E. But, after watching till low-water, and searching in every direction upon the rock, it appeared that poor Henderson must have unfortunately fallen through the rope-ladder and been washed into the deep water.

The deceased had passed along this rope-ladder many hundred times, both by day and night, and the operations in which he was employed being nearly finished, he was about to leave the rock when this melancholy catastrophe took place. The unfortunate loss of Henderson cast a deep gloom upon the minds of all who were at the rock, and it required some management on the part of those who had charge to induce the people to remain patiently at their work; as the weather now became more boisterous, and the nights long, they found their habitation extremely cheerless, while the winds were howling about their ears, and the waves lashing with fury against the beams of their insulated habitation.

Tuesday,
23rd Oct.

The wind had shifted in the night to N.W., and blew a fresh gale, while the sea broke with violence upon the rock. It was found impossible to land, but the writer, from the boat, hailed Mr. Dove, and directed the ball to be immediately fixed. The necessary preparations were accordingly made, while the vessel made short tacks on the southern side of the rock, in comparatively smooth water. At noon Mr. Dove, assisted by Mr. James Slight, Mr. Robert Selkirk, Mr. James Glen, and Mr. John Gibson, plumber, with considerable difficulty, from the boisterous state of the weather, got the gilded ball screwed on, measuring two feet in diameter, and forming the principal ventilator at the upper extremity of the cupola of the lightroom. At Mr. Hamilton’s desire, a salute of seven guns was fired on this occasion, and, all hands being called to the quarter-deck, “Stability to the Bell Rock Lighthouse” was not forgotten.

Tuesday,
30th Oct.

On reaching the rock it was found that a very heavy sea still ran upon it; but the writer having been disappointed on two former occasions, and, as the erection of the house might now be considered
150 complete, there being nothing wanted externally, excepting some of the storm-shutters for the defence of the windows, he was the more anxious at this time to inspect it. Two well-manned boats were

therefore ordered to be in attendance; and, after some difficulty, the wind being at N.N.E., they got safely into the western creek, though not without encountering plentiful sprays. It would have been impossible to have attempted a landing to-day, under any other circumstances than with boats perfectly adapted to the purpose, and with seamen who knew every ledge of the rock, and even the length of the sea-weeds at each particular spot, so as to dip their oars into the water accordingly, and thereby prevent them from getting entangled. But what was of no less consequence to the safety of the party, Captain Wilson, who always steered the boat, had a perfect knowledge of the set of the different waves, while the crew never shifted their eyes from observing his motions, and the strictest silence was preserved by every individual except himself.

On entering the house, the writer had the pleasure to find it in a somewhat habitable condition, the lower apartments being closed in with temporary windows, and fitted with proper storm-shutters. The lowest apartment at the head of the staircase was occupied with water, fuel, and provisions, put up in a temporary way until the house could be furnished with proper utensils. The second, or light-room store, was at present much encumbered with various tools and apparatus for the use of the workmen. The kitchen immediately over this had, as yet, been supplied only with a common ship’s caboose and plate-iron funnel, while the necessary cooking utensils had been taken from the beacon. The bedroom was for the present used as the joiners’ workshop, and the strangers’ room, immediately under the light-room, was occupied by the artificers, the beds being ranged in tiers, as was done in the barrack of the beacon. The lightroom, though unprovided with its machinery, being now covered over with the cupola, glazed and painted, had a very complete and cleanly appearance. The balcony was only as yet fitted with a temporary rail, consisting of a few iron stanchions, connected with ropes; and in this state it was necessary to leave it during the winter.

Having gone over the whole of the low-water works on the rock, the beacon, and lighthouse, and being satisfied that only the most untoward accident in the landing of the machinery could prevent the exhibition of the light in the course of the winter, Mr. John Reid, formerly of the floating light, was now put in charge of the lighthouse as principal keeper; Mr. James Slight had charge of the operations 151 of the artificers, while Mr. James Dove and the smiths, having finished the frame of the light-room, left the rock for the present. With these arrangements the writer bade adieu to the works for the season. At eleven a.m. the tide was far advanced; and there being now little or no shelter for the boats at the rock, they had to be pulled through the breach of sea, which came on board in great quantities, and it was with extreme difficulty that they could be kept in the proper direction of the landing-creek. On this occasion he may be permitted to look back with gratitude on the many escapes made in the course of this arduous undertaking, now brought so near to a successful conclusion.

Monday,
5th Nov.

On Monday, the 5th, the yacht again visited the rock, when Mr. Slight and the artificers returned with her to the workyard, where a number of things were still to prepare connected with the temporary fitting up of the accommodation for the lightkeepers. Mr. John Reid and Peter Fortune were now the only inmates of the house. This was the smallest number of persons hitherto left in the lighthouse. As four lightkeepers were to be the complement, it was intended that three should always be at the rock. Its present inmates, however, could hardly have been better selected for such a situation; Mr. Reid being a person possessed of the strictest notions of duty and habits of regularity from long service on board of a man-of-war, while Mr. Fortune had one of the most happy and contented dispositions imaginable.

Tuesday,
13th Nov.

From Saturday the 10th till Tuesday the 13th, the wind had been from N.E. blowing a heavy gale; but to-day, the weather having greatly moderated, Captain Taylor, who now commanded the *Smeaton*, sailed at two o’clock a.m. for the Bell Rock. At five the floating light was hailed and found to be all well. Being a fine moonlight morning, the seamen were changed from the one ship to the other. At eight, the *Smeaton* being off the rock, the boats were manned, and taking a supply of water, fuel, and other necessaries, landed at the western side, when Mr. Reid and Mr. Fortune were found in good health and spirits.

Mr. Reid stated that during the late gales, particularly on Friday, the 30th, the wind veering from S.E. to N.E., both he and Mr. Fortune sensibly felt the house tremble when particular seas struck, about the time of high-water; the former observing that it was a tremor of that sort which rather tended to convince him that everything about the building was sound, and reminded him of the effect produced when a good log of timber is struck sharply with a mallet; but, with every confidence in the stability of the building, he nevertheless confessed that, in so forlorn a situation, they were 152 not insensible to those emotions which, he emphatically observed, “made a man look back upon his former life.”

Friday,
1st Feb.

The day, long wished for, on which the mariner was to see a light exhibited on the Bell Rock at length arrived. Captain Wilson, as usual, hoisted the float's lanterns to the topmast on the evening of the 1st of February; but the moment that the light appeared on the rock, the crew, giving three cheers, lowered them, and finally extinguished the lights.

This is, of course, the tradition commemorated by Southey in his ballad of "The Inchcape Bell." Whether true or not, it points to the fact that from the infancy of Scottish navigation, the seafaring mind had been fully alive to the perils of this reef. Repeated attempts had been made to mark the place with beacons, but all efforts were unavailing (one such beacon having been carried away within eight days of its erection) until Robert Stevenson conceived and carried out the idea of the stone tower.

The particular event which concentrated Mr. Stevenson's attention on the problem of the Bell Rock was the memorable gale of December 1799, when, among many other vessels, H.M.S. *York,* a seventy-four-gun ship, went down with all hands on board. Shortly after this disaster Mr. Stevenson made a careful survey, and prepared his models for a stone tower, the idea of which was at first received with pretty general scepticism. Smeaton's Eddystone tower could not be cited as affording a parallel, for there the rock is not submerged even at high-water, while the problem of the Bell Rock was to build a tower of masonry on a sunken reef far distant from land, covered at every tide to a depth of twelve feet or more, and having thirty-two fathoms' depth of water within a mile of its eastern edge.

The grounds for the rejection of the Bill by the House of Lords in 1802-3 had been that the extent of coast over which dues were proposed to be levied would be too great. Before going to Parliament again, the Board of Northern Lights, desiring to obtain support and corroboration for Mr. Stevenson's views, consulted first Telford, who was unable to give the matter his attention, and then (on Stevenson's suggestion) Rennie, who concurred in affirming the practicability of a stone tower, and supported the Bill when it came again before Parliament in 1806. Rennie was afterwards appointed by the Commissioners as advising engineer, whom Stevenson might consult in cases of emergency. It seems certain that the title of chief engineer had in this instance no more meaning than the above. Rennie, in point of fact, proposed certain modifications in Stevenson's plans, which the latter did not accept; nevertheless Rennie continued to take a kindly interest in the work, and the two engineers remained in friendly correspondence during its progress. The official view taken by the Board as to the quarter in which lay both the merit and the responsibility of the work may be gathered from a minute of the Commissioners at their first meeting held after Stevenson died; in which they record their regret "at the death of this zealous, faithful, and able officer, *to whom is due the honour of conceiving and executing the Bell Rock Lighthouse*." The matter is briefly summed up in the "Life" of Robert Stevenson by his son David Stevenson (A. & C. Black, 1878), and fully discussed, on the basis of official facts and figures, by the same writer in a letter to the *Civil Engineers' and Architects' Journal*, 1862.

ADDITIONAL MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS

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I

RANDOM MEMORIES

I. THE COAST OF FIFE

Many writers have vigorously described the pains of the first day or the first night at school; to a boy of any enterprise, I believe, they are more often agreeably exciting. Misery — or at least misery unrelieved — is confined to another period, to the days of suspense and the "dreadful looking-for" of departure; when the old life is running to an end, and the new life, with its new interests, not yet begun; and to the pain of an imminent parting, there is added the unrest of a state of conscious pre-existence. The area railings, the beloved shop-window, the smell of semi-suburban tanpits, the song of the church-bells upon a Sunday, the thin, high voices of compatriot children in a playing-field — what a sudden, what an overpowering pathos breathes to him from each familiar circumstance! The assaults of sorrow come not from within, as it seems to him, but from without. I was proud and glad to go to school; had I been let alone, I could have borne up like any hero; but there was around me, in all my native town, a conspiracy of lamentation: "Poor little boy, he is going away — unkind little boy, he is going to leave us"; so the unspoken burthen followed me as I went, with yearning and reproach. And at length, one melancholy afternoon in the 156 early autumn, and at a place where it seems to me, looking back, it must be always autumn and generally Sunday, there came suddenly upon the face of all I saw — the long empty road, the lines of the tall houses, the church upon the hill, the woody hillside garden — a look of such a piercing sadness that my heart died; and seating myself on a door-step, I shed tears of miserable sympathy. A benevolent cat cumbered me the while with consolations — we two were alone in all that was visible of the London Road: two poor waifs who had each tasted sorrow — and she fawned upon the weeper, and gambolled for his entertainment, watching the effect, it seemed, with motherly eyes.

For the sake of the cat, God bless her! I confessed at home the story of my weakness; and so it comes about that I owed a certain journey, and the reader owes the present paper, to a cat in the London Road. It was judged, if I had thus brimmed over on the public highway, some change of scene was (in the medical sense) indicated; my father at the time was visiting the harbour lights of Scotland; and it was decided that he should take me along with him around a portion of the shores of Fife; my first professional tour, my first journey in the complete character of man, without the help of petticoats.

The Kingdom of Fife (that royal province) may be observed by the curious on the map, occupying a tongue of land between the firths of Forth and Tay. It may be continually seen from many parts of Edinburgh (among the rest, from the windows of my father's house) dying away into the distance and the easterly *haar* with one smoky seaside town beyond another, or in winter printing on the grey heaven some glittering hill-tops. It has no beauty to recommend it, being a low, sea-salted, wind-vexed promontory; trees very rare, except (as common on the east coast) along the dens of rivers; the fields well cultivated, I understand, but not lovely to the eye. It is of the coast I speak: the interior may be the garden of Eden. History broods over that part of the world like the easterly 157 haar. Even on the map, its long row of Gaelic place-names bear testimony to an old and settled race. Of these little towns, posted along the shore as close as sedges, each with its bit of harbour, its old weather-beaten church or public building, its flavour of decayed prosperity and decaying fish, not one but has its legend, quaint or tragic: Dunfermline, in whose royal towers the king may be still observed (in the ballad) drinking the blood-red wine; somnolent Inverkeithing, once the quarantine of Leith; Aberdour, hard by the monastic islet of Inchcolm, hard by Donibristle where the "bonny face was spoiled": Burntisland, where, when Paul Jones was off the coast, the Reverend Mr. Shirra had a table carried between tide-marks, and publicly prayed against the rover at the pitch of his voice and his broad lowland dialect; Kinghorn, where Alexander "brak's neck-bane" and left Scotland to the English wars; Kirkcaldy, where the witches once prevailed extremely and sank tall ships and honest mariners in the North Sea; Dysart, famous — well, famous at least to me for the Dutch ships that lay in its harbour, painted like toys and with pots of flowers and cages of song-birds in the cabin-windows, and for one particular Dutch skipper who would sit all day in slippers on the break of the poop, smoking a long German pipe; Wemyss (pronounced Weems) with its bat-haunted caves, where the Chevalier Johnstone, on his flight from Culloden, passed a night of superstitious terrors; Leven, a bald, quite modern place, sacred to summer visitors, whence there has gone but yesterday the tall figure and the white locks of the last Englishman in Delhi, my uncle Dr. Balfour, who was still walking his hospital rounds, while the troopers from Meerut clattered and cried "Deen Deen" along the streets of the imperial city, and Willoughby mustered his handful of heroes at the magazine, and the nameless brave one in the telegraph office was perhaps already fingering his last despatch; and just a little beyond Leven, Largo Law and the smoke of Largo town mounting about its feet, the town of Alexander Selkirk, better known under the 158 name of Robinson Crusoe. So on the list might be pursued (only for private reasons, which the reader will shortly have an opportunity to guess) by St. Monans, and Pittenweem, and the two Anstruthers, and Cellardyke, and Crail, where Primate Sharpe was once a humble and innocent country minister: on to the heel of the land, to Fife Ness, overlooked by a sea-wood of matted elders and the quaint old mansion of Balcomie, itself overlooking but the breach or the quiescence of the deep — the Carr Rock beacon rising close in front, and as night draws in, the star of the Inchcape reef springing up on the one hand, and the star of the May Island on the other, and farther off yet a third and a greater on the craggy foreland of St. Abb's. And but a little way round the corner of the land, imminent itself above the sea, stands the gem of the province and the light of mediæval Scotland, St. Andrews, where the great Cardinal Beaton held garrison against the world, and the second of the name and title perished (as you may read in Knox's jeering narrative) under the knives of true-blue Protestants, and to this day (after so many centuries) the current voice of the professor is not hushed.

Here it was that my first tour of inspection began, early on a bleak easterly morning. There was a crashing run of sea upon the shore, I recollect, and my father and the man of the harbour light must sometimes raise their voices to be audible. Perhaps it is from this circumstance, that I always imagine St. Andrews to be an ineffectual seat of learning, and the sound of the east wind and the bursting surf to linger in its drowsy class-rooms and confound the utterance of the professor, until teacher and taught are alike drowned in oblivion, and only the sea-gull beats on the windows and the draught of the sea-air rustles in the pages of the open lecture. But upon all this, and the romance of St. Andrews in general, the reader must consult the works of Mr. Andrew Lang; who has written of it but the other day in his dainty prose and with his incommunicable humour, and long ago, in one of his best poems, with grace 159 and local truth and a note of unaffected pathos. Mr. Lang knows all about the romance, I say, and the educational advantages, but I doubt if he had turned his attention to the harbour lights; and it may be news even to him, that in the year 1863 their case was pitiable. Hanging about with the east wind humming in my teeth, and my hands (I make no doubt) in my pockets, I looked for the first time upon that tragi-comedy of the visiting engineer which I have seen so often re-enacted on a more important stage. Eighty years ago, I find my grandfather writing: "It is the most painful thing that can occur to me to have a correspondence of this kind with any of the keepers, and when I come to the Light House, instead of having the satisfaction to meet them with approbation and welcome their Family, it is distressing when one is obliged to put on a most angry countenance and demeanour.” This painful obligation has been hereditary in my race. I have myself, on a perfectly amateur and unauthorised inspection of Turnberry Point, bent my brows upon the keeper on the question of storm-panes; and felt a keen pang of self-reproach, when we went downstairs again and I found he was making a coffin for his infant child; and then regained my equanimity with the thought that I had done the man a service, and when the proper inspector came, he would be readier with his panes. The human race is perhaps credited with more duplicity than it deserves. The visitation of a lighthouse at least is a business of the most transparent nature. As soon as the boat grates on the shore, and the keepers step forward in their uniformed coats, the very slouch of the fellows’ shoulders tells their story, and the engineer may begin at once to assume his “angry countenance.” Certainly the brass of the handrail will be clouded; and if the brass be not immaculate, certainly all will be to match — the reflectors scratched, the spare lamp unready, the storm-panes in the storehouse. If a light is not rather more than middling good, it will be radically bad. Mediocrity (except in literature) appears to be unattainable 160 by man. But of course the unfortunate of St. Andrews was only an amateur, he was not in the Service, he had no uniform coat, he was, I believe, a plumber by his trade, and stood (in the mediæval phrase) quite out of the danger of my father; but he had a painful interview for all that, and perspired extremely.

From St. Andrews we drove over Magus Muir. My father had announced we were “to post,” and the phrase called up in my hopeful mind visions of top-boots and the pictures in Rowlandson’s “Dance of Death”; but it was only a jingling cab that came to the inn door, such as I had driven in a thousand times at the low price of one shilling on the streets of Edinburgh. Beyond this disappointment, I remember nothing of that drive. It is a road I have often travelled, and of not one of these journeys do I remember any single trait. The fact has not been suffered to encroach on the truth of the imagination. I still see Magus Muir two hundred years ago: a desert place, quite unenclosed; in the midst, the primate’s carriage fleeing at the gallop; the assassins loose-reined in pursuit, Burley Balfour, pistol in hand, among the first. No scene of history has ever written itself so deeply on my mind; not because Balfour, that questionable zealot, was an ancestral cousin of my own; not because of the pleadings of the victim and his daughter; not even because of the live bum-bee that flew out of Sharpe’s ‘bacco-box, thus clearly indicating his complicity with Satan; nor merely because, as it was after all a crime of a fine religious flavour, it figured in Sunday books and afforded a grateful relief from “Ministering

Children” or the “Memoirs of Mrs. Katherine Winslowe.” The figure that always fixed my attention is that of Hackston of Rathillet, sitting in the saddle with his cloak about his mouth, and through all that long, bungling, vociferous hurly-burly, revolving privately a case of conscience. He would take no hand in the deed, because he had a private spite against the victim, and “that action” must be sullied with no suggestion of a 161 worldly motive; on the other hand, “that action” in itself was highly justified, he had cast in his lot with “the actors,” and he must stay there, inactive, but publicly sharing the responsibility. “You are a gentleman — you will protect me!” cried the wounded old man, crawling towards him. “I will never lay a hand on you,” said Hackston, and put his cloak about his mouth. It is an old temptation with me to pluck away that cloak and see the face — to open that bosom and to read the heart. With incomplete romances about Hackston, the drawers of my youth were lumbered. I read him up in every printed book that I could lay my hands on. I even dug among the Wodrow manuscripts, sitting shame-faced in the very room where my hero had been tortured two centuries before, and keenly conscious of my youth in the midst of other and (as I fondly thought) more gifted students. All was vain: that he had passed a riotous nonage, that he was a zealot, that he twice displayed (compared with his grotesque companions) some tincture of soldierly resolution and even of military common sense, and that he figured memorably in the scene on Magus Muir, so much and no more could I make out. But whenever I cast my eyes backward, it is to see him like a landmark on the plains of history, sitting with his cloak about his mouth, inscrutable. How small a thing creates an immortality! I do not think he can have been a man entirely commonplace; but had he not thrown his cloak about his mouth, or had the witnesses forgot to chronicle the action, he would not thus have haunted the imagination of my boyhood, and to-day he would scarce delay me for a paragraph. An incident, at once romantic and dramatic, which at once awakes the judgment and makes a picture for the eye, how little do we realise its perdurable power! Perhaps no one does so but the author, just as none but he appreciates the influence of jingling words; so that he looks on upon life, with something of a covert smile, seeing people led by what they fancy to be thoughts and what are really the accustomed 162 artifices of his own trade, or roused by what they take to be principles and are really picturesque effects. In a pleasant book about a school-class club, Colonel Fergusson has recently told a little anecdote. A “Philosophical Society” was formed by some Academy boys — among them, Colonel Fergusson himself, Fleeming Jenkin, and Andrew Wilson, the Christian Buddhist and author of “The Abode of Snow.” Before these learned pundits, one member laid the following ingenious problem: “What would be the result of putting a pound of potassium in a pot of porter?” “I should think there would be a number of interesting bi-products,” said a smatterer at my elbow; but for me the tale itself has a bi-product, and stands as a type of much that is most human. For this inquirer, who conceived himself to burn with a zeal entirely chemical, was really immersed in a design of a quite different nature: unconsciously to his own recently breeched intelligence, he was engaged in literature. Putting, pound, potassium, pot, porter; initial p, mediant t — that was his idea, poor little boy! So with politics and that which excites men in the present, so with history and that which rouses them in the past: there lie, at the root of what appears, most serious unsuspected elements.

The triple town of Anstruther Wester, Anstruther Easter, and Cellardyke, all three Royal Burghs — or two Royal Burghs and a less distinguished suburb, I forget which — lies continuously along the seaside, and boasts of either two or three separate parish churches, and either two or three separate harbours. These ambiguities are painful; but the fact is (although it argues me uncultured), I am but poorly posted up on Cellardyke. My business lay in the two Anstruthers. A tricklet of a stream divides them, spanned by a bridge; and over the bridge at the time of my knowledge, the celebrated Shell House stood outpost on the west. This had been the residence of an agreeable eccentric; during his fond tenancy he had illustrated the outer walls, as high (if I remember rightly) as the roof, with 163 elaborate patterns and pictures, and snatches of verse in the vein of *exegi monumentum*; shells and pebbles, artfully contrasted and conjoined, had been his medium; and I like to think of him standing back upon the bridge, when all was finished, drinking in the general effect, and (like Gibbon) already lamenting his employment.

The same bridge saw another sight in the seventeenth century. Mr. Thomson, the “curat” of Anstruther Easter, was a man highly obnoxious to the devout: in the first place, because he was a “curat”; in the second place, because he was a person of irregular and scandalous life; and in the third place, because he was generally suspected of dealings with the Enemy of Man. These three disqualifications, in the popular literature of the time, go hand in hand; but the end of Mr. Thomson was a thing quite by itself, and, in the proper phrase, a manifest judgment. He had been at a friend’s house in Anstruther Wester, where (and elsewhere, I suspect) he had partaken of the bottle; indeed, to put the thing in our cold modern way, the reverend gentleman was on the brink of *delirium tremens*. It was a dark night, it seems; a little lassie came carrying a lantern to fetch the curate home; and away they went down the street of Anstruther Wester, the lantern swinging a bit in the child’s hand, the barred lustre tossing up and down along the front of slumbering houses, and Mr. Thomson not altogether steady on his legs nor (to all appearance) easy in his mind. The pair had reached the middle of the bridge when (as I conceive the scene) the poor tippler started in some baseless fear and looked behind him; the child, already shaken by the minister's strange behaviour, started also; in so doing she would jerk the lantern; and for the space of a moment the lights and the shadows would be all confounded. Then it was that to the unhinged toper and the twittering child, a huge bulk of blackness seemed to sweep down, to pass them close by as they stood upon the bridge, and to vanish on the farther side in the general darkness of the night. "Plainly the devil come for 164 Mr. Thomson!" thought the child. What Mr. Thomson thought himself, we have no ground of knowledge; but he fell upon his knees in the midst of the bridge like a man praying. On the rest of the journey to the manse, history is silent; but when they came to the door, the poor caitiff, taking the lantern from the child, looked upon her with so lost a countenance that her little courage died within her, and she fled home screaming to her parents. Not a soul would venture out; all that night the minister dwelt alone with his terrors in the manse; and when the day dawned, and men made bold to go about the streets, they found the devil had come indeed for Mr. Thomson.

This manse of Anstruther Easter has another and a more cheerful association. It was early in the morning, about a century before the days of Mr. Thomson, that his predecessor was called out of bed to welcome a Grandee of Spain, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, just landed in the harbour underneath. But sure there was never seen a more decayed grandee; sure there was never a duke welcomed from a stranger place of exile. Half-way between Orkney and Shetland there lies a certain isle; on the one hand the Atlantic, on the other the North Sea, bombard its pillared cliffs; sore-eyed, short-living, inbred fishers and their families herd in its few huts; in the graveyard pieces of wreck-wood stand for monuments; there is nowhere a more inhospitable spot. *Belle-Isle-en-Mer* — Fair-Isle-at-Sea — that is a name that has always rung in my mind's ear like music; but the only "Fair Isle" on which I ever set my foot was this unhomely, rugged turret-top of submarine sierras. Here, when his ship was broken, my lord Duke joyfully got ashore; here for long months he and certain of his men were harboured; and it was from this durance that he landed at last to be welcomed (as well as such a papist deserved, no doubt) by the godly incumbent of Anstruther Easter; and after the Fair Isle, what a fine city must that have appeared! and after the island diet, what a hospitable spot the minister's table! And yet he must have lived on 165 friendly terms with his outlandish hosts. For to this day there still survives a relic of the long winter evenings when the sailors of the great Armada crouched about the hearths of the Fair-Islanders, the planks of their own lost galleon perhaps lighting up the scene, and the gale and the surf that beat about the coast contributing their melancholy voices. All the folk of the north isles are great artificers of knitting: the Fair-Islanders alone dye their fabrics in the Spanish manner. To this day, gloves and nightcaps, innocently decorated, may be seen for sale in the Shetland warehouse at Edinburgh, or on the Fair Isle itself in the catechist's house; and to this day, they tell the story of the Duke of Medina Sidonia's adventure.

It would seem as if the Fair Isle had some attraction for "persons of quality." When I landed there myself, an elderly gentleman, unshaved, poorly attired, his shoulders wrapped in a plaid, was seen walking to and fro, with a book in his hand, upon the beach. He paid no heed to our arrival, which we thought a strange thing in itself; but when one of the officers of the *Pharos*, passing narrowly by him, observed his book to be a Greek Testament, our wonder and interest took a higher flight. The catechist was cross-examined; he said the gentleman had been put across some time before in Mr. Bruce of Sumburgh's schooner, the only link between the Fair Isle and the rest of the world; and that he held services and was doing "good." So much came glibly enough; but when pressed a little further, the catechist displayed embarrassment. A singular diffidence appeared upon his face: "They tell me," said he, in low tones, "that he's a lord." And a lord he was; a peer of the realm pacing that inhospitable beach with his Greek Testament, and his plaid about his shoulders, set upon doing good, as he understood it, worthy man! And his grandson, a good-looking little boy, much better dressed than the lordly evangelist, and speaking with a silken English accent very foreign to the scene, accompanied me for a while in my exploration of the island. I 166 suppose this little fellow is now my lord, and wonder how much he remembers of the Fair Isle. Perhaps not much; for he seemed to accept very quietly his savage situation; and under such guidance, it is like that this was not his first nor yet his last adventure.

II

RANDOM MEMORIES

II. THE EDUCATION OF AN ENGINEER

Anstruther is a place sacred to the Muse; she inspired (really to a considerable extent) Tennant's vernacular poem "Anster Fair"; and I have there waited upon her myself with much devotion. This was when I came as a young man to glean engineering experience from the building of the breakwater. What I gleaned, I am sure I do not know; but indeed I had already my own private determination to be an author; I loved the art of words and the appearances of life; and *travellers*, and *headers*, and *rubble*, and *polished ashlar*, and *pierres perdues*, and even the thrilling question of the *string-course*, interested me only (if they interested me at all) as properties for some possible romance or as words to add to my vocabulary. To grow a little catholic is the compensation of years; youth is one-eyed; and in those days, though I haunted the breakwater by day, and even loved the place for the sake of the sunshine, the thrilling seaside air, the wash of waves on the sea-face, the green glimmer of the divers' helmets far below, and the musical chinking of the masons, my one genuine pre-occupation lay elsewhere, and my only industry was in the hours when I was not on duty. I lodged with a certain Bailie Brown, a carpenter by trade; and there, as soon as dinner was despatched, in a chamber scented with dry rose-leaves, drew in my chair to the table and proceeded to pour forth literature, at such a speed, and with such intimations of early death and immortality, as I now look back upon with 168 wonder. Then it was that I wrote "Voces Fidelium," a series of dramatic monologues in verse; then that I indited the bulk of a covenanting novel — like so many others, never finished. Late I sat into the night, toiling (as I thought) under the very dart of death, toiling to leave a memory behind me. I feel moved to thrust aside the curtain of the years, to hail that poor feverish idiot, to bid him go to bed and clap "Voces Fidelium" on the fire before he goes; so clear does he appear before me, sitting there between his candles in the rose-scented room and the late night; so ridiculous a picture (to my elderly wisdom) does the fool present! But he was driven to his bed at last without miraculous intervention; and the manner of his driving sets the last touch upon this eminently youthful business. The weather was then so warm that I must keep the windows open; the night without was populous with moths. As the late darkness deepened, my literary tapers beaconed forth more brightly; thicker and thicker came the dusty night-fliers, to gyrate for one brilliant instant round the flame and fall in agonies upon my paper. Flesh and blood could not endure the spectacle; to capture immortality was doubtless a noble enterprise, but not to capture it at such a cost of suffering; and out would go the candles, and off would I go to bed in the darkness, raging to think that the blow might fall on the morrow, and there was "Voces Fidelium" still incomplete. Well, the moths are all gone, and "Voces Fidelium" along with them; only the fool is still on hand and practises new follies.

Only one thing in connection with the harbour tempted me, and that was the diving, an experience I burned to taste of. But this was not to be, at least in Anstruther; and the subject involves a change of scene to the sub-arctic town of Wick. You can never have dwelt in a country more unsightly than that part of Caithness, the land faintly swelling, faintly falling, not a tree, not a hedgerow, the fields divided by single slate stones set upon their edge, the wind always singing in your ears and (down the 169 long road that led nowhere) thrumming in the telegraph wires. Only as you approached the coast was there anything to stir the heart. The plateau broke down to the North Sea in formidable cliffs, the tall out-stacks rose like pillars ringed about with surf, the coves were over-brimmed with clamorous froth, the sea-birds screamed, the wind sang in the thyme on the cliff's edge; here and there, small ancient castles toppled on the brim; here and there, it was possible to dip into a dell of shelter, where you might lie and tell yourself you were a little warm, and hear (near at hand) the whin-pods bursting in the afternoon sun, and (farther off) the rumour of the turbulent sea. As for Wick itself, it is one of the meanest of man's towns, and situate certainly on the baldest of God's bays. It lives for herring, and a strange sight it is to see (of an afternoon) the heights of Pulteney blackened by seaward-looking fishers, as when a city crowds to a review — or, as when bees have swarmed, the ground is horrible with lumps and clusters; and a strange sight, and a beautiful, to see the fleet put silently out against a rising moon, the sea-line rough as a wood with sails, and ever and again and one after another, a boat flitting swiftly by the silver disk. This mass of fishers, this great fleet of boats, is out of all proportion to the town itself; and the oars are manned and the nets hauled by immigrants from the Long Island (as we call the outer Hebrides), who come for that season only, and depart again, if "the take" be poor, leaving debts behind them. In a bad year, the end of the herring-fishery is therefore an exciting time; fights are common, riots often possible; an apple knocked from a child's hand was once the signal for something like a war; and even when I was there, a gunboat lay in the bay to assist the authorities. To contrary interests, it should be observed, the curse of Babel is here added; the Lews men are Gaelic speakers, those of Caithness have adopted English; an odd circumstance, if you reflect that both must be largely Norsemen by descent. I remember seeing one of the strongest instances of this division: a 170 thing like a Punch-and-Judy box erected on the flat gravestones of the churchyard; from the hutch or proscenium — I know not what to call it — an eldritch-looking preacher laying down the law in Gaelic about some one of the name of *Powl*, whom I at last divined to be the apostle to the Gentiles; a large congregation of the Lews men very devoutly listening; and on the outskirts of the crowd, some of the town's children (to whom the whole affair was Greek and Hebrew) profanely playing tigg. The same descent, the same country, the same narrow sect of the same religion, and all these bonds made very largely nugatory by an accidental difference of dialect!

Into the bay of Wick stretched the dark length of the unfinished breakwater, in its cage of open staging; the travellers (like frames of churches) over-plumbing all; and away at the extreme end, the divers toiling unseen on the foundation. On a platform of loose planks, the assistants turned their air-mills; a stone might be swinging between wind and water; underneath the swell ran gaily; and from time to time, a mailed dragon with a window-glass snout came dripping up the ladder. Youth is a blessed season after all; my stay at Wick was in the year of "Voces Fidelium" and the rose-leaf room at Bailie Brown's; and already I did not care two straws for literary glory. Posthumous ambition perhaps requires an atmosphere of roses; and the more rugged excitant of Wick east winds had made another boy of me. To go down in the diving-dress, that was my absorbing fancy; and with the countenance of a certain handsome scamp of a diver, Bob Bain by name, I gratified the whim.

It was grey, harsh, easterly weather, the swell ran pretty high, and out in the open there were "skipper's daughters," when I found myself at last on the diver's platform, twenty pounds of lead upon each foot and my whole person swollen with ply and ply of woollen underclothing. One moment, the salt wind was whistling round my night-capped head; the next, I was crushed almost double under the weight of 171 the helmet. As that intolerable burthen was laid upon me, I could have found it in my heart (only for shame's sake) to cry off from the whole enterprise. But it was too late. The attendants began to turn the hurdy-gurdy, and the air to whistle through the tube; some one screwed in the barred window of the vizor; and I was cut off in a moment from my fellow-men; standing there in their midst, but quite divorced from intercourse: a creature deaf and dumb, pathetically looking forth upon them from a climate of his own. Except that I could move and feel, I was like a man fallen in a catalepsy. But time was scarce given me to realise my isolation; the weights were hung upon my back and breast, the signal-rope was thrust into my unresisting hand; and setting a twenty-pound foot upon the ladder, I began ponderously to descend.

Some twenty rounds below the platform, twilight fell. Looking up, I saw a low green heaven mottled with vanishing bells of white; looking around, except for the weedy spokes and shafts of the ladder, nothing but a green gloaming, somewhat opaque but very restful and delicious. Thirty rounds lower, I stepped off on the *pierres perdues* of the foundation; a dumb helmeted figure took me by the hand, and made a gesture (as I read it) of encouragement; and looking in at the creature's window, I beheld the face of Bain. There we were, hand to hand and (when it pleased us) eye to eye; and either might have burst himself with shouting, and not a whisper come to his companion's hearing. Each, in his own little world of air, stood incommunicably separate.

Bob had told me ere this a little tale, a five minutes' drama at the bottom of the sea, which at that moment possibly shot across my mind. He was down with another, settling a stone of the sea-wall. They had it well adjusted, Bob gave the signal, the scissors were slipped, the stone set home; and it was time to turn to something else. But still his companion remained bowed over the block like a mourner on a tomb, or only raised himself to make absurd 172 contortions and mysterious signs unknown to the vocabulary of the diver. There, then, these two stood for a while, like the dead and the living; till there flashed a fortunate thought into Bob's mind, and he stooped, peered through the window of that other world, and beheld the face of its inhabitant wet with streaming tears. Ah! the man was in pain! And Bob, glancing downward, saw what was the trouble: the block had been lowered on the foot of that unfortunate — he was caught alive at the bottom of the sea under fifteen tons of rock.

That two men should handle a stone so heavy, even swinging in the scissors, may appear strange to the inexpert. These must bear in mind the great density of the water of the sea, and the surprising results of transplantation to that medium. To understand a little what these are, and how a man's weight, so far from being an encumbrance, is the very ground of his agility, was the chief lesson of my submarine experience. The knowledge came upon me by degrees. As I began to go forward with the hand of my estranged companion, a world of tumbled stones was visible, pillared with the weedy uprights of the staging: overhead, a flat roof of green: a little in front, the sea-wall, like an unfinished rampart. And presently in our upward progress, Bob motioned me to leap upon a stone; I looked to see if he were possibly in earnest, and he only signed to me the more imperiously. Now the block stood six feet high; it would have been quite a leap to me unencumbered; with the breast and back weights, and the twenty pounds upon each foot, and the staggering load of the helmet, the thing was out of reason. I laughed aloud in my tomb; and to prove to Bob how far he was astray, I gave a little impulse from my toes. Up I soared like a bird, my companion soaring at my side. As high as to the stone, and then higher, I pursued my impotent and empty flight. Even when the strong arm of Bob had checked my shoulders, my heels continued their ascent; so that I blew out side-ways like an autumn leaf, and must 173 be hauled in, hand over hand, as sailors haul in the slack of a sail, and propped upon my feet again like an intoxicated sparrow. Yet a little higher on the foundation, and we began to be affected by the bottom of the swell, running there like a strong breeze of wind. Or so I must suppose; for, safe in my cushion of air, I was conscious of no impact; only swayed idly like a weed, and was now borne helplessly abroad, and now swiftly — and yet with dream-like gentleness — impelled against my guide. So does a child's balloon divagate upon the currents of the air, and touch and slide off again from every obstacle. So must have ineffectually swung, so resented their inefficiency, those light crowds that followed the Star of Hades, and uttered exiguous voices in the land beyond Cocytus.

There was something strangely exasperating, as well as strangely wearying, in these uncommanded evolutions. It is bitter to return to infancy, to be supported, and directed, and perpetually set upon your feet, by the hand of some one else. The air besides, as it is supplied to you by the busy millers on the platform, closes the eustachian tubes and keeps the neophyte perpetually swallowing, till his throat is grown so dry that he can swallow no longer. And for all these reasons — although I had a fine, dizzy, muddle-headed joy in my surroundings, and longed, and tried, and always failed, to lay hands on the fish that darted here and there about me, swift as humming-birds — yet I fancy I was rather relieved than otherwise when Bain brought me back to the ladder and signed to me to mount. And there was one more experience before me even then. Of a sudden, my ascending head passed into the trough of a swell. Out of the green, I shot at once into a glory of rosy, almost of sanguine light — the multitudinous seas incarnadined, the heaven above a vault of crimson. And then the glory faded into the hard, ugly daylight of a Caithness autumn, with a low sky, a grey sea, and a whistling wind.

Bob Bain had five shillings for his trouble, and I had done what I desired. It was one of the best things I got 174 from my education as an engineer: of which, however, as a way of life, I wish to speak with sympathy. It takes a man into the open air; it keeps him hanging about harbour-sides, which is the richest form of idling; it carries him to wild islands; it gives him a taste of the genial dangers of the sea; it supplies him with dexterities to exercise; it makes demands upon his ingenuity; it will go far to cure him of any taste (if ever he had one) for the miserable life of cities. And when it has done so, it carries him back and shuts him in an office! From the roaring skerry and the wet thwart of the tossing boat, he passes to the stool and desk, and with a memory full of ships, and seas, and perilous headlands, and the shining pharos, he must apply his long-sighted eyes to the pretty niceties of drawing, or measure his inaccurate mind with several pages of consecutive figures. He is a wise youth, to be sure, who can balance one part of genuine life against two parts of drudgery between four walls, and for the sake of the one, manfully accept the other.

Wick was scarce an eligible place of stay. But how much better it was to hang in the cold wind upon the pier, to go down with Bob Bain among the roots of the staging, to be all day in a boat coiling a wet rope and shouting orders — not always very wise — than to be warm and dry, and dull, and dead-alive, in the most comfortable office. And Wick itself had in those days a note of originality. It may have still, but I misdoubt it much. The old minister of Keiss would not preach, in these degenerate times, for an hour and a half upon the clock. The gipsies must be gone from their cavern; where you might see, from the mouth, the women tending their fire, like Meg Merrilies, and the men sleeping off their coarse potations; and where in winter gales, the surf would beleaguer them closely, bursting in their very door. A traveller to-day upon the Thurso coach would scarce observe a little cloud of smoke among the moorlands, and be told, quite openly, it marked a private still. He would not indeed make that 175 journey, for there is now no Thurso coach. And even if he could, one little thing that happened to me could never happen to him, or not with the same trenchancy of contrast.

We had been upon the road all evening; the coach-top was crowded with Lews fishers going home, scarce anything but Gaelic had sounded in my ears; and our way had lain throughout over a moorish country very northern to behold. Latish at night, though it was still broad day in our sub-arctic latitude, we came down upon the shores of the roaring Pentland Firth, that grave of mariners; on one hand, the cliffs of Dunnet Head ran seaward; in front was the little bare white town of Castleton, its streets full of blowing sand; nothing beyond, but the North Islands, the great deep, and the perennial ice-fields of the Pole. And here, in the last imaginable place, there sprang up young outlandish voices and a chatter of some foreign speech; and I saw, pursuing the coach with its load of Hebridean fishers — as they had pursued *vetturini* up the passes of the Apennines or perhaps along the grotto under Virgil's tomb — two little dark-eyed, white-toothed Italian vagabonds, of twelve to fourteen years of age, one with a hurdy-gurdy, the other with a cage of white mice. The coach passed on, and their small Italian chatter died in the distance; and I was left to marvel how they had wandered into that country, and how they fared in it, and what they thought of it, and when (if ever) they should see again the silver wind-breaks run among the olives, and the stone-pine stand guard upon Etruscan sepulchres.

Upon any American, the strangeness of this incident is somewhat lost. For as far back as he goes in his own land, he will find some alien camping there; the Cornish miner, the French or Mexican half-blood, the negro in the South, these are deep in the woods and far among the mountains. But in an old, cold, and rugged country such as mine, the days of immigration are long at an end; and away up there, which was at that time far beyond the northernmost extreme of railways, hard upon the shore of that ill-omened 176 strait of whirlpools, in a land of moors where no stranger came, unless it should be a sportsman to shoot grouse or an antiquary to decipher runes, the presence of these small pedestrians struck the mind as though a bird-of-paradise had risen from the heather or an albatross come fishing in the bay of Wick. They were as strange to their surroundings as my lordly evangelist or the old Spanish grandee on the Fair Isle.

III

A CHAPTER ON DREAMS

The past is all of one texture — whether feigned or suffered — whether acted out in three dimensions, or only witnessed in that small theatre of the brain which we keep brightly lighted all night long, after the jets are down, and darkness and sleep reign undisturbed in the remainder of the body. There is no distinction on the face of our experiences; one is vivid indeed, and one dull, and one pleasant, and another agonising to remember; but which of them is what we call true, and which a dream, there is not one hair to prove. The past stands on a precarious footing; another straw split in the field of metaphysic, and behold us robbed of it. There is scarce a family that can count four generations but lays a claim to some dormant title or some castle and estate: a claim not prosecutable in any court of law, but flattering to the fancy and a great alleviation of idle hours. A man's claim to his own past is yet less valid. A paper might turn up (in proper story-book fashion) in the secret drawer of an old ebony secretary, and restore your family to its ancient honours and reinstate mine in a certain West Indian islet (not far from St. Kitt's, as beloved tradition hummed in my young ears) which was once ours, and is now unjustly some one else's, and for that matter (in the state of the sugar trade) is not worth anything to anybody. I do not say that these revolutions are likely; only no man can deny that they are possible; and the past, on the other hand, is lost for ever: our old days and deeds, our old selves, too, and the very world in which these scenes were acted, all brought down to the same faint residuum[178] as a last night's dream, to some incontinuous images, and an echo in the chambers of the brain. Not an hour, not a mood, not a glance of the eye, can we revoke; it is all gone, past conjuring. And yet conceive us robbed of it, conceive that little thread of memory that we trail behind us broken at the pocket's edge; and in what naked nullity should we be left! for we only guide ourselves, and only know ourselves, by these air-painted pictures of the past.

Upon these grounds, there are some among us who claim to have lived longer and more richly than their neighbours; when they lay asleep they claim they were still active; and among the treasures of memory that all men review for their amusement, these count in no second place the harvests of their dreams. There is one of this kind whom I have in my eye, and whose case is perhaps unusual enough to be described. He was from a child an ardent and uncomfortable dreamer. When he had a touch of fever at night, and the room swelled and shrank, and his clothes, hanging on a nail, now loomed up instant to the bigness of a church, and now drew away into a horror of infinite distance and infinite littleness, the poor soul was very well aware of what must follow, and struggled hard against the approaches of that slumber which was the beginning of sorrows. But his struggles were in vain; sooner or later the night-hag would have him by the throat, and pluck him, strangling and screaming, from his sleep. His dreams were at times commonplace enough, at times very strange: at times they were almost formless, he would be haunted, for instance, by nothing more definite than a certain hue of brown, which he did not mind in the least while he was awake, but feared and loathed while he was dreaming; at times, again, they took on every detail of circumstance, as when once he supposed he must swallow the populous world, and awoke screaming with the horror of the thought. The two chief troubles of his very narrow existence — the practical and everyday trouble of school tasks and the ultimate and airy one of hell and judgment — were often 179 confounded together into one appalling nightmare. He seemed to himself to stand before the Great White Throne; he was called on, poor little devil, to recite some form of words, on which his destiny depended; his tongue stuck, his memory was blank, hell gaped for him; and he would awake, clinging to the curtain-rod with his knees to his chin.

These were extremely poor experiences, on the whole; and at that time of life my dreamer would have very willingly parted with his power of dreams. But presently, in the course of his growth, the cries and physical contortions passed away, seemingly for ever; his visions were still for the most part miserable, but they were more constantly supported; and he would awake with no more extreme symptom than a flying heart, a freezing scalp, cold sweats, and the speechless midnight fear. His dreams, too, as befitted a mind better stocked with particulars, became more circumstantial, and had more the air and continuity of life. The look of the world beginning to take hold on his attention, scenery came to play a part in his sleeping as well as in his waking thoughts, so that he would take long, uneventful journeys and see strange towns and beautiful places as he lay in bed. And, what is more significant, an odd taste that he had for the Georgian costume and for stories laid in that period of English history, began to rule the features of his dreams; so that he masqueraded there in a three-cornered hat, and was much engaged with Jacobite conspiracy between the hour for bed and that for breakfast. About the same time, he began to read in his dreams — tales, for the most part, and for the most part after the manner of G. P. R. James, but so incredibly more vivid and moving than any printed book, that he has ever since been malcontent with literature.

And then, while he was yet a student, there came to him a dream-adventure which he has no anxiety to repeat; he began, that is to say, to dream in sequence and thus to 180 lead a double life — one of the day, one of the night — one that he had every reason to believe was the true one, another that he had no means of proving to be false. I should have said he studied, or was by way of studying, at Edinburgh College, which (it may be supposed) was how I came to know him. Well, in his dream-life he passed a long day in the surgical theatre, his heart in his mouth, his teeth on edge, seeing monstrous malformations and the abhorred dexterity of surgeons. In a heavy, rainy, foggy evening he came forth into the South Bridge, turned up the High Street, and entered the door of a tall *land*, at the top of which he supposed himself to lodge. All night long, in his wet clothes, he climbed the stairs, stair after stair in endless series, and at every second flight a flaring lamp with a reflector. All night long he brushed by single persons passing downward — beggarly women of the street, great, weary, muddy labourers, poor scarecrows of men, pale parodies of women — but all drowsy and weary like himself, and all single, and all brushing against him as they passed. In the end, out of a northern window, he would see day beginning to whiten over the Firth, give up the ascent, turn to descend, and in a breath be back again upon the streets, in his wet clothes, in the wet, haggard dawn, trudging to another day of monstrosities and operations. Time went, quicker in the life of dreams, some seven hours (as near as he can guess) to one; and it went, besides, more intensely, so that the gloom of these fancied experiences clouded the day, and he had not shaken off their shadow ere it was time to lie down and to renew them. I cannot tell how long it was that he endured this discipline; but it was long enough to leave a great black blot upon his memory, long enough to send him, trembling for his reason, to the doors of a certain doctor; whereupon with a simple draught he was restored to the common lot of man.

The poor gentleman has since been troubled by nothing of the sort; indeed, his nights were for some while like other men's, now blank, now chequered with dreams, and 181 these sometimes charming, sometimes appalling, but except for an occasional vividness, of no extraordinary kind. I will just note one of these occasions, ere I pass on to what makes my dreamer truly interesting. It seemed to him that he was in the first floor of a rough hill-farm. The room showed some poor efforts at gentility, a carpet on the floor, a piano, I think, against the wall; but, for all these refinements, there was no mistaking he was in a moorland place, among hillside people, and set in miles of heather. He looked down from the window upon a bare farmyard, that seemed to have been long disused. A great, uneasy stillness lay upon the world. There was no sign of the farm-folk or of any live stock, save for an old, brown, curly dog of the retriever breed, who sat close in against the wall of the house and seemed to be dozing. Something about this dog disquieted the dreamer; it was quite a nameless feeling, for the beast looked right enough — indeed, he was so old and dull and dusty and broken-down, that he should rather have awakened pity; and yet the conviction came and grew upon the dreamer that this was no proper dog at all, but something hellish. A great many dozing summer flies hummed about the yard; and presently the dog thrust forth his paw, caught a fly in his open palm, carried it to his mouth like an ape, and looking suddenly up at the dreamer in the window, winked to him with one eye. The dream went on, it matters not how it went; it was a good dream as dreams go; but there was nothing in the sequel worthy of that devilish brown dog. And the point of interest for me lies partly in that very fact: that having found so singular an incident, my imperfect dreamer should prove unable to carry the tale to a fit end and fall back on indescribable noises and indiscriminate horrors. It would be different now; he knows his business better!

For, to approach at last the point: This honest fellow had long been in the custom of setting himself to sleep with tales, and so had his father before him; but these were 182 irresponsible inventions, told for the teller's pleasure, with no eye to the crass public or the thwart reviewer: tales where a thread might be dropped, or one adventure quitted for another, on fancy's least suggestion. So that the little people who manage man's internal theatre had not as yet received a very rigorous training; and played upon their stage like children who should have slipped into the house and found it empty, rather than like drilled actors performing a set piece to a huge hall of faces. But presently my dreamer began to turn his former amusement of story-telling to (what is called) account; by which I mean that he began to write and sell his tales. Here was he, and here were the little people who did that part of his business, in quite new conditions. The stories must now be trimmed and pared and set upon all-fours, they must run from a beginning to an end and fit (after a manner) with the laws of life; the pleasure, in one word, had become a business; and that not only for the dreamer, but for the little people of his theatre. These understood the change as well as he. When he lay down to prepare himself for sleep, he no longer sought amusement, but printable and profitable tales; and after he had dozed off in his box-seat, his little people continued their evolutions with the same mercantile designs. All other forms of dream deserted him but two: he still occasionally reads the most delightful books, he still visits at times the most delightful places; and it is perhaps worthy of note that to these same places, and to one in particular, he returns at intervals of months and years, finding new field-paths, visiting new neighbours, beholding that happy valley under new effects of noon and dawn and sunset. But all the rest of the family of visions is quite lost to him: the common, mangled version of yesterday's affairs, the raw-head-and-bloody-bones nightmare, rumoured to be the child of toasted cheese — these and their like are gone; and, for the most part, whether awake or asleep, he is simply occupied — he or his little people — in consciously making stories for the market. 183 This dreamer (like many other persons) has encountered some trifling vicissitudes of fortune. When the bank begins to send letters and the butcher to linger at the back gate, he sets to belabouring his brains after a story, for that is his readiest money-winner; and, behold! at once the little people begin to bestir themselves in the same quest, and labour all night long, and all night long set before him truncheons of tales upon their lighted theatre. No fear of his being frightened now; the flying heart and the frozen scalp are things bygone; applause, growing applause, growing interest, growing exultation in his own cleverness (for he takes all the credit), and at last a jubilant leap to wakefulness, with the cry, "I have it, that'll do!" upon his lips: with such and similar emotions he sits at these nocturnal dramas, with such outbreaks, like Claudius in the play, he scatters the performance in the midst. Often enough the waking is a disappointment: he has been too deep asleep, as I explain the thing; drowsiness has gained his little people, they have gone stumbling and maundering through their parts; and the play, to the awakened mind, is seen to be a tissue of absurdities. And yet how often have these sleepless Brownies done him honest service, and given him, as he sat idly taking his pleasure in the boxes, better tales than he could fashion for himself.

Here is one, exactly as it came to him. It seemed he was the son of a very rich and wicked man, the owner of broad acres and a most damnable temper. The dreamer (and that was the son) had lived much abroad, on purpose to avoid his parent; and when at length he returned to England, it was to find him married again to a young wife, who was supposed to suffer cruelly and to loathe her yoke. Because of this marriage (as the dreamer indistinctly understood) it was desirable for father and son to have a meeting; and yet both being proud and both angry, neither would condescend upon a visit. Meet they did accordingly, in a desolate, sandy country by the sea; and 184 there they quarrelled, and the son, stung by some intolerable insult, struck down the father dead. No suspicion was aroused; the dead man was found and buried, and the dreamer succeeded to the broad estates, and found himself installed under the same roof with his father's widow, for whom no provision had been made. These two lived very much alone, as people may after a bereavement, sat down to table together, shared the long evenings, and grew daily better friends; until it seemed to him of a sudden that she was prying about dangerous matters, that she had conceived a notion of his guilt, that she watched him and tried him with questions. He drew back from her company as men draw back from a precipice suddenly discovered; and yet so strong was the attraction that he would drift again and again into the old intimacy, and again and again be startled back by some suggestive question or some inexplicable meaning in her eye. So they lived at cross purposes, a life full of broken dialogue, challenging glances, and suppressed passion; until, one day, he saw the woman slipping from the house in a veil, followed her to the station, followed her in the train to the seaside country, and out over the sandhills to the very place where the murder was done. There she began to grope among the bents, he watching her, flat upon his face; and presently she had something in her hand — I cannot remember what it was, but it was deadly evidence against the dreamer — and as she held it up to look at it, perhaps from the shock of the discovery, her foot slipped, and she hung at some peril on the brink of the tall sand-wreaths. He had no thought but to spring up and rescue her; and there they stood face to face, she with that deadly matter openly in her hand — his very presence on the spot another link of proof. It was plain she was about to speak, but this was more than he could bear — he could bear to be lost, but not to talk of it with his destroyer; and he cut her short with trivial conversation. Arm in arm, they returned together to the train, talking he knew not what, made the 185 journey back in the same carriage, sat down to dinner, and passed the evening in the drawing-room as in the past. But suspense and fear drummed in the dreamer's bosom. "She has not denounced me yet" — so his thoughts ran: "when will she denounce me? Will it be to-morrow?" And it was not to-morrow, nor the next day, nor the next; and their life settled back on the old terms, only that she seemed kinder than before, and that, as for him, the burthen of his suspense and wonder grew daily more unbearable, so that he wasted away like a man with a disease. Once, indeed, he broke all bounds of decency, seized an occasion when she was abroad, ransacked her room, and at last, hidden away among her jewels, found the damning evidence. There he stood, holding this thing, which was his life, in the hollow of his hand, and marvelling at her inconsequent behaviour, that she should seek, and keep, and yet not use it; and then the door opened, and behold herself. So, once more, they stood, eye to eye, with the evidence between them; and once more she raised to him a face brimming with some communication; and once more he shied away from speech and cut her off. But before he left the room, which he had turned upside down, he laid back his death-warrant where he had found it; and at that, her face lighted up. The next thing he heard, she was explaining to her maid, with some ingenious falsehood, the disorder of her things. Flesh and blood could bear the strain no longer; and I think it was the next morning (though chronology is always hazy in the theatre of the mind) that he burst from his reserve. They had been breakfasting together in one corner of a great, parqueted, sparely-furnished room of many windows; all the time of the meal she had tortured him with sly allusions; and no sooner were the servants gone, and these two protagonists alone together, than he leaped to his feet. She too sprang up, with a pale face; with a pale face, she heard him as he raved out his complaint: Why did she torture him so? she knew all, she knew he was no enemy to her; why did 186 she not denounce him at once? what signified her whole behaviour? why did she torture him? and yet again, why did she torture him? And when he had done, she fell upon her knees, and with outstretched hands: “Do you not understand?” she cried. “I love you!”

Hereupon, with a pang of wonder and mercantile delight the dreamer awoke. His mercantile delight was not of long endurance; for it soon became plain that in this spirited tale there were unmarketable elements; which is just the reason why you have it here so briefly told. But his wonder has still kept growing; and I think the reader’s will also, if he consider it ripely. For now he sees why I speak of the little people as of substantive inventors and performers. To the end they had kept their secret. I will go bail for the dreamer (having excellent grounds for valuing his candour) that he had no guess whatever at the motive of the woman — the hinge of the whole well-invented plot — until the instant of that highly dramatic declaration. It was not his tale; it was the little people’s! And observe: not only was the secret kept, the story was told with really guileful craftsmanship. The conduct of both actors is (in the cant phrase) psychologically correct, and the emotion aptly graduated up to the surprising climax. I am awake now, and I know this trade; and yet I cannot better it. I am awake, and I live by this business; and yet I could not outdo — could not perhaps equal — that crafty artifice (as of some old, experienced carpenter of plays, some Dennery or Sardou) by which the same situation is twice presented and the two actors twice brought face to face over the evidence, only once it is in her hand, once in his — and these in their due order, the least dramatic first. The more I think of it, the more I am moved to press upon the world my question: Who are the Little People? They are near connections of the dreamer’s, beyond doubt; they share in his financial worries and have an eye to the bank-book; they share plainly in his training; they have plainly learned like him to build the scheme of a considerate story and to 187 arrange emotion in progressive order; only I think they have more talent; and one thing is beyond doubt, they can tell him a story piece by piece, like a serial, and keep him all the while in ignorance of where they aim. Who are they, then? and who is the dreamer?

Well, as regards the dreamer, I can answer that, for he is no less a person than myself; — as I might have told you from the beginning, only that the critics murmur over my consistent egotism; — and as I am positively forced to tell you now, or I could advance but little further with my story. And for the Little People, what shall I say they are but just my Brownies, God bless them! who do one-half my work for me while I am fast asleep, and in all human likelihood, do the rest for me as well, when I am wide awake and fondly suppose I do it for myself. That part which is done while I am sleeping is the Brownies' part beyond contention; but that which is done when I am up and about is by no means necessarily mine, since all goes to show the Brownies have a hand in it even then. Here is a doubt that much concerns my conscience. For myself — what I call I, my conscious ego, the denizen of the pineal gland unless he has changed his residence since Descartes, the man with the conscience and the variable bank-account, the man with the hat and the boots, and the privilege of voting and not carrying his candidate at the general elections — I am sometimes tempted to suppose is no story-teller at all, but a creature as matter of fact as any cheesemonger or any cheese, and a realist bemired up to the ears in actuality; so that, by that account, the whole of my published fiction should be the single-handed product of some Brownie, some Familiar, some unseen collaborator, whom I keep locked in a back garret, while I get all the praise and he but a share (which I cannot prevent him getting) of the pudding. I am an excellent adviser, something like Molière's servant. I pull back and I cut down; and I dress the whole in the best words and sentences that I can find and make; I hold the pen, too; and I do the sitting at the table, 188 which is about the worst of it; and when all is done, I make up the manuscript and pay for the registration; so that, on the whole, I have some claim to share, though not so largely as I do, in the profits of our common enterprise.

I can but give an instance or so of what part is done sleeping and what part awake, and leave the reader to share what laurels there are, at his own nod, between myself and my collaborators; and to do this I will first take a book that a number of persons have been polite enough to read, "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." I had long been trying to write a story on this subject, to find a body, a vehicle, for that strong sense of man's double being which must at times come in upon and overwhelm the mind of every thinking creature. I had even written one, "The Travelling Companion," which was returned by an editor on the plea that it was a work of genius and indecent, and which I burned the other day on the ground that it was not a work of genius, and that “Jekyll” had supplanted it. Then came one of those financial fluctuations to which (with an elegant modesty) I have hitherto referred in the third person. For two days I went about racking my brains for a plot of any sort; and on the second night I dreamed the scene at the window, and a scene afterward split in two, in which Hyde, pursued for some crime, took the powder and underwent the change in the presence of his pursuers. All the rest was made awake, and consciously, although I think I can trace in much of it the manner of my Brownies. The meaning of the tale is therefore mine, and had long pre-existed in my garden of Adonis, and tried one body after another in vain; indeed, I do most of the morality, worse luck! and my Brownies have not a rudiment of what we call a conscience. Mine, too, is the setting, mine the characters. All that was given me was the matter of three scenes, and the central idea of a voluntary change becoming involuntary. Will it be thought ungenerous, after I have been so liberally ladling out praise to my unseen collaborators, if I here toss them over, bound hand and 189 foot, into the arena of the critics? For the business of the powders, which so many have censured, is, I am relieved to say, not mine at all, but the Brownies’. Of another tale, in case the reader should have glanced at it, I may say a word: the not very defensible story of “Olalla.” Here the court, the mother, the mother’s niche, Olalla, Olalla’s chamber, the meetings on the stair, the broken window, the ugly scene of the bite, were all given me in bulk and detail as I have tried to write them; to this I added only the external scenery (for in my dream I never was beyond the court), the portrait, the characters of Felipe and the priest, the moral, such as it is, and the last pages, such as, alas! they are. And I may even say that in this case the moral itself was given me; for it arose immediately on a comparison of the mother and the daughter, and from the hideous trick of atavism in the first. Sometimes a parabolic sense is still more undeniably present in a dream; sometimes I cannot but suppose my Brownies have been aping Bunyan, and yet in no case with what would possibly be called a moral in a tract; never with the ethical narrowness; conveying hints instead of life’s larger limitations and that sort of sense which we seem to perceive in the arabesque of time and space.

For the most part, it will be seen, my Brownies are somewhat fantastic, like their stories hot and hot, full of passion and the picturesque, alive with animating incident; and they have no prejudice against the supernatural. But the other day they gave me a surprise, entertaining me with a love-story, a little April comedy, which I ought certainly to hand over to the author of “A Chance Acquaintance,” for he could write it as it should be written, and I am sure (although I mean to try) that I cannot. — But who would have supposed that a Brownie of mine should invent a tale for Mr. Howells?

IV

BEGGARS

I

In a pleasant, airy, up-hill country, it was my fortune when I was young to make the acquaintance of a certain beggar. I call him beggar, though he usually allowed his coat and his shoes (which were open-mouthed, indeed) to beg for him. He was the wreck of an athletic man, tall, gaunt, and bronzed; far gone in consumption, with that disquieting smile of the mortally stricken on his face; but still active afoot, still with the brisk military carriage, the ready military salute. Three ways led through this piece of country; and as I was inconstant in my choice, I believe he must often have awaited me in vain. But often enough, he caught me; often enough, from some place of ambush by the roadside, he would spring suddenly forth in the regulation attitude, and launching at once into his inconsequential talk, fall into step with me upon my farther course. “A fine morning, sir, though perhaps a trifle inclining to rain. I hope I see you well, sir. Why, no, sir, I don’t feel as hearty myself as I could wish, but I am keeping about my ordinary. I am pleased to meet you on the road, sir. I assure you I quite look forward to one of our little conversations.” He loved the sound of his own voice inordinately, and though (with something too off-hand to call servility) he would always hasten to agree with anything you said, yet he could never suffer you to say it to an end. By what transition he slid to his favourite subject I have no memory; but we had never been long together 191 on the way before he was dealing, in a very military manner, with the English poets. “Shelley was a fine poet, sir, though a trifle atheistical in his opinions. His ‘Queen Mab,’ sir, is quite an atheistical work. Scott, sir, is not so poetical a writer. With the works of Shakespeare I am not so well acquainted, but he was a fine poet. Keats — John Keats, sir — he was a very fine poet.” With such references, such trivial criticism, such loving parade of his own knowledge, he would beguile the road, striding forward up-hill, his staff now clapped to the ribs of his deep, resonant chest, now swinging in the air with the remembered jauntiness of the private soldier; and all the while his toes looking out of his boots, and his shirt looking out of his elbows, and death looking out of his smile, and his big, crazy frame shaken by accesses of cough.

He would often go the whole way home with me: often to borrow a book, and that book always a poet. Off he would march, to continue his mendicant rounds, with the volume slipped into the pocket of his ragged coat; and although he would sometimes keep it quite a while, yet it came always back again at last, not much the worse for its travels into beggardom. And in this way, doubtless, his knowledge grew and his glib, random criticism took a wider range. But my library was not the first he had drawn upon: at our first encounter, he was already brimful of Shelley and the atheistical "Queen Mab," and "Keats — John Keats, sir." And I have often wondered how he came by these acquirements, just as I often wondered how he fell to be a beggar. He had served through the Mutiny — of which (like so many people) he could tell practically nothing beyond the names of places, and that it was "difficult work, sir," and very hot, or that so-and-so was "a very fine commander, sir." He was far too smart a man to have remained a private; in the nature of things, he must have won his stripes. And yet here he was, without a pension. When I touched on this problem, he would content himself with diffidently offering me advice. "A 192 man should be very careful when he is young, sir. If you'll excuse me saying so, a spirited young gentleman like yourself, sir, should be very careful. I was perhaps a trifle inclined to atheistical opinions myself." For (perhaps with a deeper wisdom than we are inclined in these days to admit) he plainly bracketed agnosticism with beer and skittles.

Keats — John Keats, sir — and Shelley were his favourite bards. I cannot remember if I tried him with Rossetti; but I know his taste to a hair, and if ever I did, he must have doted on that author. What took him was a richness in the speech; he loved the exotic, the unexpected word; the moving cadence of a phrase; a vague sense of emotion (about nothing) in the very letters of the alphabet: the romance of language. His honest head was very nearly empty, his intellect like a child's; and when he read his favourite authors, he can almost never have understood what he was reading. Yet the taste was not only genuine, it was exclusive; I tried in vain to offer him novels; he would none of them, he cared for nothing but romantic language that he could not understand. The case may be commoner than we suppose. I am reminded of a lad who was laid in the next cot to a friend of mine in a public hospital, and who was no sooner installed than he sent out (perhaps with his last pence) for a cheap Shakespeare. My friend pricked up his ears; fell at once in talk with his new neighbour, and was ready, when the book arrived, to make a singular discovery. For this lover of great literature understood not one sentence out of twelve, and his favourite part was that of which he understood the least — the inimitable, mouth-filling rodomontade of the ghost in *Hamlet*. It was a bright day in hospital when my friend expounded the sense of this beloved jargon: a task for which I am willing to believe my friend was very fit, though I can never regard it as an easy one. I know indeed a point or two, on which I would gladly question Mr. Shakespeare, that lover of big words, could he revisit the glimpses of the moon, or could I myself climb backward to the 193 spacious days of Elizabeth. But, in the second case, I should most likely pretermit these questionings, and take my place instead in the pit at the Blackfriars, to hear the actor in his favourite part, playing up to Mr. Burbage, and rolling out — as I seem to hear him — with a ponderous gusto —

“Unhousel’d, disappointed, unanel’d.”

What a pleasant chance, if we could go there in a party! and what a surprise for Mr. Burbage, when the ghost received the honours of the evening!

As for my old soldier, like Mr. Burbage and Mr. Shakespeare, he is long since dead; and now lies buried, I suppose, and nameless and quite forgotten, in some poor city graveyard. — But not for me, you brave heart, have you been buried! For me, you are still afoot, tasting the sun and air, and striding southward. By the groves of Comiston and beside the Hermitage of Braid, by the Hunters’ Tryst, and where the curlews and plovers cry around Fairmilehead, I see and hear you, stalwartly carrying your deadly sickness, cheerfully discoursing of uncomprehended poets.

II

The thought of the old soldier recalls that of another tramp, his counterpart. This was a little, lean, and fiery man, with the eyes of a dog and the face of a gipsy; whom I found one morning encamped with his wife and children and his grinder's wheel, beside the burn of Kinnaird. To this beloved dell I went, at that time, daily; and daily the knife-grinder and I (for as long as his tent continued pleasantly to interrupt my little wilderness) sat on two stones, and smoked, and plucked grass and talked to the tune of the brown water. His children were mere whelps, they fought and bit among the fern like vermin. His wife was a mere squaw; I saw her gather brush and tend the kettle, but she never ventured to address her lord while I 194 was present. The tent was a mere gipsy hovel, like a sty for pigs. But the grinder himself had the fine self-sufficiency and grave politeness of the hunter and the savage; he did me the honours of this dell, which had been mine but the day before, took me far into the secrets of his life, and used me (I am proud to remember) as a friend.

Like my old soldier, he was far gone in the national complaint. Unlike him, he had a vulgar taste in letters; scarce flying higher than the story papers; probably finding no difference, certainly seeking none, between Tannahill and Burns; his noblest thoughts, whether of poetry or music, adequately embodied in that somewhat obvious ditty,

"Will ye gang, lassie, gang
To the braes o' Balquhidder":

— which is indeed apt to echo in the ears of Scottish children, and to him, in view of his experience, must have found a special directness of address. But if he had no fine sense of poetry in letters, he felt with a deep joy the poetry of life. You should have heard him speak of what he loved; of the tent pitched beside the talking water; of the stars overhead at night; of the blest return of morning, the peep of day over the moors, the awaking birds among the birches; how he abhorred the long winter shut in cities; and with what delight, at the return of the spring, he once more pitched his camp in the living out-of-doors. But we were a pair of tramps; and to you, who are doubtless sedentary and a consistent first-class passenger in life, he would scarce have laid himself so open; — to you, he might have been content to tell his story of a ghost — that of a buccaneer with his pistols as he lived — whom he had once encountered in a seaside cave near Buckie; and that would have been enough, for that would have shown you the mettle of the man. Here was a piece of experience solidly and livingly built up in words, here was a story created, *teres atque rotundus*.

And to think of the old soldier, that lover of the literary 195 bards!

He had visited stranger spots than any seaside cave; encountered men more terrible than any spirit; done and dared and suffered in that incredible, unsung epic of the Mutiny War; played his part with the field force of Delhi, beleaguering and beleaguered; shared in that enduring, savage anger and contempt of death and decency that, for long months together, bedevil'd and inspired the army; was hurled to and fro in the battle-smoke of the assault; was there, perhaps, where Nicholson fell; was there when the attacking column, with hell upon every side, found the soldier's enemy — strong drink, and the lives of tens of thousands trembled in the scale, and the fate of the flag of England staggered. And of all this he had no more to say than "hot work, sir," or "the army suffered a great deal, sir," or, "I believe General Wilson, sir, was not very highly thought of in the papers." His life was naught to him, the vivid pages of experience quite blank: in words his pleasure lay — melodious, agitated words — printed words, about that which he had never seen and was connatally incapable of comprehending. We have here two temperaments face to face; both untrained, unsophisticated, surprised (we may say) in the egg; both boldly charactered: — that of the artist, the lover and artificer of words; that of the maker, the seeër, the lover and forger of experience. If the one had a daughter and the other had a son, and these married, might not some illustrious writer count descent from the beggar-soldier and the needy knife-grinder?

III

Every one lives by selling something, whatever be his right to it. The burglar sells at the same time his own skill and courage and my silver plate (the whole at the most moderate figure) to a Jew receiver. The bandit sells the traveller an article of prime necessity: that traveller's life. And as for the old soldier, who stands for central mark to 196 my capricious figures of eight, he dealt in a specialty; for he was the only beggar in the world who ever gave me pleasure for my money. He had learned a school of manners in the barracks and had the sense to cling to it, accosting strangers with a regimental freedom, thanking patrons with a merely regimental difference, sparing you at once the tragedy of his position and the embarrassment of yours. There was not one hint about him of the beggar's emphasis, the outburst of revolting gratitude, the rant and cant, the "God bless you, Kind, Kind gentleman," which insults the smallness of your alms by disproportionate vehemence, which is so notably false, which would be so unbearable if it were true. I am sometimes tempted to suppose this reading of the beggar's part a survival of the old days when Shakespeare was intoned upon the stage and mourners keened beside the death-bed; to think that we cannot now accept these strong emotions unless they be uttered in the just note of life; nor (save in the pulpit) endure these gross conventions. They wound us, I am tempted to say, like mockery; the high voice of keening (as it yet lingers on) strikes in the face of sorrow like a buffet; and the rant and cant of the staled beggar stirs in us a shudder of disgust. But the fact disproves these amateur opinions. The beggar lives by his knowledge of the average man. He knows what he is about when he bandages his head, and hires and drugs a babe, and poisons life with "Poor Mary Ann" or "Long, long ago"; he knows what he is about when he loads the critical ear and sickens the nice conscience with intolerable thanks; they know what they are about, he and his crew, when they pervade the slums of cities, ghastly parodies of suffering, hateful parodies of gratitude. This trade can scarce be called an imposition; it has been so blown upon with exposures; it flaunts its fraudulence so nakedly. We pay them as we pay those who show us, in huge exaggeration, the monsters of our drinking-water; or those who daily predict the fall of Britain. We pay them for the pain they inflict, pay them, and wince, and hurry on. And truly 197 there is nothing that can shake the conscience like a beggar's thanks; and that polity in which such protestations can be purchased for a shilling, seems no scene for an honest man.

Are there, then, we may be asked, no genuine beggars? And the answer is, Not one. My old soldier was a humbug like the rest; his ragged boots were, in the stage phrase, properties; whole boots were given him again and again, and always gladly accepted; and the next day, there he was on the road as usual, with toes exposed. His boots were his method; they were the man's trade; without his boots he would have starved; he did not live by charity, but by appealing to a gross taste in the public, which loves the limelight on the actor's face, and the toes out of the beggar's boots. There is a true poverty, which no one sees: a false and merely mimetic poverty, which usurps its place and dress, and lives, and above all drinks, on the fruits of the usurpation. The true poverty does not go into the streets; the banker may rest assured, he has never put a penny in its hand. The self-respecting poor beg from each other; never from the rich. To live in the frock-coated ranks of life, to hear canting scenes of gratitude rehearsed for twopence, a man might suppose that giving was a thing gone out of fashion; yet it goes forward on a scale so great as to fill me with surprise. In the houses of the working classes, all day long there will be a foot upon the stair; all day long there will be a knocking at the doors; beggars come, beggars go, without stint, hardly with intermission, from morning till night; and meanwhile, in the same city and but a few streets off, the castles of the rich stand unsummoned. Get the tale of any honest tramp, you will find it was always the poor who helped him; get the truth from any workman who has met misfortunes, it was always next door that he would go for help, or only with such exceptions as are said to prove a rule; look at the course of the mimetic beggar, it is through the poor quarters that he trails his passage, showing his bandages to every window, piercing even to the attics with his nasal song. Here is a 198 remarkable state of things in our Christian commonwealths, that the poor only should be asked to give.

IV

There is a pleasant tale of some worthless, phrasing Frenchman, who was taxed with ingratitude: “*Il faut savoir garder l’indépendance du cœur*,” cried he. I own I feel with him. Gratitude without familiarity, gratitude otherwise than as a nameless element in a friendship, is a thing so near to hatred that I do not care to split the difference. Until I find a man who is pleased to receive obligations, I shall continue to question the tact of those who are eager to confer them. What an art it is, to give, even to our nearest friends! and what a test of manners, to receive! How, upon either side, we smuggle away the obligation, blushing for each other; how bluff and dull we make the giver; how hasty, how falsely cheerful, the receiver! And yet an act of such difficulty and distress between near friends, it is supposed we can perform to a total stranger and leave the man transfixed with grateful emotions. The last thing you can do to a man is to burthen him with an obligation, and it is what we propose to begin with! But let us not be deceived: unless he is totally degraded to his trade, anger jars in his inside, and he grates his teeth at our gratuity.

We should wipe two words from our vocabulary: gratitude and charity. In real life, help is given out of friendship, or it is not valued; it is received from the hand of friendship, or it is resented. We are all too proud to take a naked gift: we must seem to pay it, if in nothing else, then with the delights of our society. Here, then, is the pitiful fix of the rich man; here is that needle’s eye in which he stuck already in the days of Christ, and still sticks to-day, firmer, if possible, than ever: that he has the money and lacks the love which should make his money acceptable. 199 Here and now, just as of old in Palestine, he has the rich to dinner, it is with the rich that he takes his pleasure: and when his turn comes to be charitable, he looks in vain for a recipient. His friends are not poor, they do not want; the poor are not his friends, they will not take. To whom is he to give? Where to find — note this phrase — the Deserving Poor? Charity is (what they call) centralised; offices are hired; societies founded, with secretaries paid or unpaid: the hunt of the Deserving Poor goes merrily forward. I think it will take more than a merely human secretary to disinter that character. What! a class that is to be in want from no fault of its own, and yet greedily eager to receive from strangers; and to be quite respectable, and at the same time quite devoid of self-respect; and play the most delicate part of friendship, and yet never be seen; and wear the form of man, and yet fly in the face of all the laws of human nature: — and all this, in the hope of getting a belly-god Burgess through a needle’s eye! Oh, let him stick, by all means: and let his polity tumble in the dust; and let his epitaph and all his literature (of which my own works begin to form no inconsiderable part) be abolished even from the history of man! For a fool of this monstrosity of dulness, there can be no salvation: and the fool who looked for the elixir of life was an angel of reason to the fool who looks for the Deserving Poor!

V

And yet there is one course which the unfortunate gentleman may take. He may subscribe to pay the taxes. There were the true charity, impartial and impersonal, cumbering none with obligation, helping all. There were a destination for loveless gifts; there were the way to reach the pocket of the deserving poor, and yet save the time of secretaries! But, alas! there is no colour of romance in such a course; and people nowhere demand the picturesque so much as in their virtues.

V

THE LANTERN-BEARERS

I

These boys congregated every autumn about a certain easterly fisher-village, where they tasted in a high degree the glory of existence. The place was created seemingly on purpose for the diversion of young gentlemen. A street or two of houses, mostly red and many of them tiled; a number of fine trees clustered about the manse and the kirkyard, and turning the chief street into a shady alley; many little gardens more than usually bright with flowers; nets a-drying, and fisher-wives scolding in the backward parts; a smell of fish, a genial smell of seaweed; whiffs of blowing sand at the street-corners; shops with golf-balls and bottled lollipops; another shop with penny pickwicks (that remarkable cigar) and the *London Journal*, dear to me for its startling pictures, and a few novels, dear for their suggestive names: such, as well as memory serves me, were the ingredients of the town. These, you are to conceive posted on a spit between two sandy bays, and sparsely flanked with villas — enough for the boys to lodge in with their subsidiary parents, not enough (not yet enough) to cocknify the scene: a haven in the rocks in front: in front of that, a file of grey islets: to the left, endless links and sand wreaths, a wilderness of hiding-holes, alive with popping rabbits and soaring gulls: to the right, a range of seaward crags, one rugged brow beyond another; the ruins of a mighty and ancient fortress on the brink of one; coves between — now charmed into sunshine quiet, now whistling with wind and clamorous 201 with bursting surges; the dens and sheltered hollows redolent of thyme and southernwood, the air at the cliff's edge brisk and clean and pungent of the sea — in front of all, the Bass Rock, tilted seaward like a doubtful bather, the surf ringing it with white, the solan-geese hanging round its summit like a great and glittering smoke. This choice piece of seaboard was sacred, besides, to the wrecker; and the Bass, in the eye of fancy, still flew the colours of King James; and in the ear of fancy the arches of Tantallon still rang with horse-shoe iron, and echoed to the commands of Bell-the-Cat.

There was nothing to mar your days, if you were a boy summering in that part, but the embarrassment of pleasure. You might golf if you wanted; but I seem to have been better employed. You might secrete yourself in the Lady's Walk, a certain sunless dingle of elders, all mossed over by the damp as green as grass, and dotted here and there by the stream-side with roofless walls, the cold homes of anchorites. To fit themselves for life, and with a special eye to acquire the art of smoking, it was even common for the boys to harbour there; and you might have seen a single penny pickwick, honestly shared in lengths with a blunt knife, bestrew the glen with these apprentices. Again, you might join our fishing parties, where we sat perched as thick as solan-geese, a covey of little anglers, boy and girl, angling over each other's heads, to the much entanglement of lines and loss of podleys and consequent shrill recrimination — shrill as the geese themselves. Indeed, had that been all, you might have done this often; but though fishing be a fine pastime, the podley is scarce to be regarded as a dainty for the table; and it was a point of honour that a boy should eat all that he had taken. Or again, you might climb the Law, where the whale's jawbone stood landmark in the buzzing wind, and behold the face of many counties, and the smoke and spires of many towns, and the sails of distant ships. You might bathe, now in the flaws of fine weather, that we pathetically call our 202 summer, now in a gale of wind, with the sand scourging your bare hide, your clothes thrashing abroad from underneath their guardian stone, the froth of the great breakers casting you headlong ere it had drowned your knees. Or you might explore the tidal rocks, above all in the ebb of springs, when the very roots of the hills were for the nonce discovered; following my leader from one group to another, groping in slippery tangle for the wreck of ships, wading in pools after the abominable creatures of the sea, and ever with an eye cast backward on the march of the tide and the menaced line of your retreat. And then you might go Crusoeing, a word that covers all extempore eating in the open air: digging perhaps a house under the margin of the links, kindling a fire of the sea-ware, and cooking apples there — if they were truly apples, for I sometimes suppose the merchant must have played us off with some inferior and quite local fruit, capable of resolving, in the neighbourhood of fire, into mere sand and smoke and iodine; or perhaps pushing to Tantallon, you might lunch on sandwiches and visions in the grassy court, while the wind hummed in the crumbling turrets; or clambering along the coast, eat geans (the worst, I must suppose, in Christendom) from an adventurous gean tree that had taken root under a cliff, where it was shaken with an ague of east wind, and silvered after gales with salt, and grew so foreign among its bleak surroundings that to eat of its produce was an adventure in itself.

There are mingled some dismal memories with so many that were joyous. Of the fisher-wife, for instance, who had cut her throat at Canty Bay; and of how I ran with the other children to the top of the Quadrant, and beheld a posse of silent people escorting a cart, and on the cart, bound in a chair, her throat bandaged, and the bandage all bloody — horror! — the fisher-wife herself, who continued thenceforth to hag-ride my thoughts, and even to-day (as I recall the scene) darkens daylight. She was lodged in 203 the little old gaol in the chief street; but whether or no she died there, with a wise terror of the worst, I never inquired. She had been tippling; it was but a dingy tragedy; and it seems strange and hard that, after all these years, the poor crazy sinner should be still pilloried on her cart in the scrap-book of my memory. Nor shall I readily forget a certain house in the Quadrant where a visitor died, and a dark old woman continued to dwell alone with the dead body; nor how this old woman conceived a hatred to myself and one of my cousins, and in the dread hour of the dusk, as we were clambering on the garden-walls, opened a window in that house of mortality and cursed us in a shrill voice and with a marrowy choice of language. It was a pair of very colourless urchins that fled down the lane from this remarkable experience! But I recall with a more doubtful sentiment, compounded out of fear and exultation, the coil of equinoctial tempests; trumpeting squalls, scouring flaws of rain; the boats with their reefed lugsails scudding for the harbour mouth, where danger lay, for it was hard to make when the wind had any east in it; the wives clustered with blowing shawls at the pier-head, where (if fate was against them) they might see boat and husband and sons — their whole wealth and their whole family — engulfed under their eyes; and (what I saw but once) a troop of neighbours forcing such an unfortunate homeward, and she squalling and battling in their midst, a figure scarcely human, a tragic Mænad.

These are things that I recall with interest; but what my memory dwells upon the most, I have been all this while withholding. It was a sport peculiar to the place, and indeed to a week or so of our two months' holiday there. Maybe it still flourishes in its native spot; for boys and their pastimes are swayed by periodic forces inscrutable to man; so that tops and marbles reappear in their due season, regular like the sun and moon; and the harmless art of knucklebones has seen the fall of the Roman empire and the rise of the United States. It may still flourish in its 204 native spot, but nowhere else, I am persuaded; for I tried myself to introduce it on Tweedside, and was defeated lamentably; its charm being quite local, like a country wine that cannot be exported.

The idle manner of it was this: —

Toward the end of September, when school-time was drawing near and the nights were already black, we would begin to sally from our respective villas, each equipped with a tin bull's-eye lantern. The thing was so well known that it had worn a rut in the commerce of Great Britain; and the grocers, about the due time, began to garnish their windows with our particular brand of luminary. We wore them buckled to the waist upon a cricket belt, and over them, such was the rigour of the game, a buttoned top-coat. They smelled noisomely of blistered tin; they never burned aright, though they would always burn our fingers; their use was naught; the pleasure of them merely fanciful; and yet a boy with a bull’s-eye under his top-coat asked for nothing more. The fishermen used lanterns about their boats, and it was from them, I suppose, that we had got the hint; but theirs were not bull’s-eyes, nor did we ever play at being fishermen. The police carried them at their belts, and we had plainly copied them in that; yet we did not pretend to be policemen. Burglars, indeed, we may have had some haunting thoughts of; and we had certainly an eye to past ages when lanterns were more common, and to certain story-books in which we had found them to figure very largely. But take it for all in all, the pleasure of the thing was substantive; and to be a boy with a bull’s-eye under his top-coat was good enough for us.

When two of these asses met, there would be an anxious “Have you got your lantern?” and a gratified “Yes!” That was the shibboleth, and very needful too; for, as it was the rule to keep our glory contained, none could recognise a lantern-bearer, unless (like the polecat) by the smell. Four or five would sometimes climb into the belly of a ten-man
205 lugger, with nothing but the thwarts above them — for the cabin was usually locked — or choose out some hollow of the links where the wind might whistle overhead. There the coats would be unbuttoned and the bull’s-eyes discovered; and in the chequering glimmer, under the huge windy hall of the night, and cheered by a rich steam of toasting tinware, these fortunate young gentlemen would crouch together in the cold sand of the links or on the scaly bilges of the fishing-boat, and delight themselves with inappropriate talk. Woe is me that I may not give some specimens — some of their foresights of life, or deep inquiries into the rudiments of man and nature, these were so fiery and so innocent, they were so richly silly, so romantically young. But the talk, at any rate, was but a condiment; and these gatherings themselves only accidents in the career of the lantern-bearer. The essence of this bliss was to walk by yourself in the black night; the slide shut; the top-coat buttoned; not a ray escaping, whether to conduct your footsteps or to make your glory public: a mere pillar of darkness in the dark; and all the while, deep down in the privacy of your fool’s heart, to know you had a bull’s-eye at your belt, and to exult and sing over the knowledge.

II

It is said that a poet has died young in the breast of the most stolid. It may be contended, rather, that this (somewhat minor) bard in almost every case survives, and is the spice of life to his possessor. Justice is not done to the versatility and the unplumbed childishness of man's imagination. His life from without may seem but a rude mound of mud; there will be some golden chamber at the heart of it, in which he dwells delighted; and for as dark as his pathway seems to the observer, he will have some kind of a bull's-eye at his belt.

It would be hard to pick out a career more cheerless 206 than that of Dancer, the miser, as he figures in the "Old Bailey Reports," a prey to the most sordid persecutions, the butt of his neighbourhood, betrayed by his hired man, his house beleaguered by the impish school-boy, and he himself grinding and fuming and impotently fleeing to the law against these pin-pricks. You marvel at first that any one should willingly prolong a life so destitute of charm and dignity; and then you call to memory that had he chosen, had he ceased to be a miser, he could have been freed at once from these trials, and might have built himself a castle and gone escorted by a squadron. For the love of more recondite joys, which we cannot estimate, which, it may be, we should envy, the man had willingly forgone both comfort and consideration. "His mind to him a kingdom was"; and sure enough, digging into that mind, which seems at first a dust-heap, we unearth some priceless jewels. For Dancer must have had the love of power and the disdain of using it, a noble character in itself; disdain of many pleasures, a chief part of what is commonly called wisdom; disdain of the inevitable end, that finest trait of mankind; scorn of men's opinions, another element of virtue; and at the back of all, a conscience just like yours and mine, whining like a cur, swindling like a thimble-rigger, but still pointing (there or thereabout) to some conventional standard. Here were a cabinet portrait to which Hawthorne perhaps had done justice; and yet not Hawthorne either, for he was mildly minded, and it lay not in him to create for us that throb of the miser's pulse, his fretful energy of gusto, his vast arms of ambition clutching in he knows not what: insatiable, insane, a god with a muck-rake. Thus, at least, looking in the bosom of the miser, consideration detects the poet in the full tide of life, with more, indeed, of the poetic fire than usually goes to epics; and tracing that mean man about his cold hearth, and to and fro in his discomfortable house, spies within him a blazing bonfire of delight. And so with others, who do not live by bread alone, but by some 207 cherished and perhaps fantastic pleasure; who are meat salesmen to the external eye, and possibly to themselves are Shakespeares, Napoleons, or Beethovens; who have not one virtue to rub against another in the field of active life, and yet perhaps, in the life of contemplation, sit with the saints. We see them on the street, and we can count their buttons; but heaven knows in what they pride themselves! heaven knows where they have set their treasure!

There is one fable that touches very near the quick of life: the fable of the monk who passed into the woods, heard a bird break into song, hearkened for a trill or two, and found himself on his return a stranger at his convent gates; for he had been absent fifty years, and of all his comrades there survived but one to recognise him. It is not only in the woods that this enchanter carols, though perhaps he is native there. He sings in the most doleful places. The miser hears him and chuckles, and the days are moments. With no more apparatus than an ill-smelling lantern I have evoked him on the naked links. All life that is not merely mechanical is spun out of two strands: seeking for that bird and hearing him. And it is just this that makes life so hard to value, and the delight of each so incommunicable; and just a knowledge of this, and a remembrance of those fortunate hours in which the bird has sung to us, that fills us with such wonder when we turn the pages of the realist. There, to be sure, we find a picture of life in so far as it consists of mud and of old iron, cheap desires and cheap fears, that which we are ashamed to remember and that which we are careless whether we forget; but of the note of that time-devouring nightingale we hear no news.

The case of these writers of romance is most obscure. They have been boys and youths; they have lingered outside the window of the beloved, who was then most probably writing to some one else; they have sat before a sheet of paper, and felt themselves mere continents of congested 208 poetry, not one line of which would flow; they have walked alone in the woods, they have walked in cities under the countless lamps; they have been to sea, they have hated, they have feared, they have longed to knife a man, and maybe done it; the wild taste of life has stung their palate. Or, if you deny them all the rest, one pleasure at least they have tasted to the full — their books are there to prove it — the keen pleasure of successful literary composition. And yet they fill the globe with volumes, whose cleverness inspires me with despairing admiration, and whose consistent falsity to all I care to call existence, with despairing wrath. If I had no better hope than to continue to revolve among the dreary and petty businesses, and to be moved by the paltry hopes and fears with which they surround and animate their heroes, I declare I would die now. But there has never an hour of mine gone quite so dully yet; if it were spent waiting at a railway junction, I would have some scattering thoughts, I could count some grains of memory, compared to which the whole of one of these romances seems but dross.

These writers would retort (if I take them properly) that this was very true; that it was the same with themselves and other persons of (what they call) the artistic temperament that in this we were exceptional, and should apparently be ashamed of ourselves; but that our works must deal exclusively with (what they call) the average man, who was a prodigious dull fellow, and quite dead to all but the paltriest considerations. I accept the issue. We can only know others by ourselves. The artistic temperament (a plague on the expression!) does not make us different from our fellow-men, or it would make us incapable of writing novels; and the average man (a murrain on the word!) is just like you and me, or he would not be average. It was Whitman who stamped a kind of Birmingham sacredness upon the latter phrase; but Whitman knew very well, and showed very nobly, that the average man was full of joys and full of poetry of his own. And this harping on 209 life's dulness and man's meanness is a loud profession of incompetence; it is one of two things: the cry of the blind eye, *I cannot see*, or the complaint of the dumb tongue, *I cannot utter*. To draw a life without delights is to prove I have not realised it. To picture a man without some sort of poetry — well, it goes near to prove my case, for it shows an author may have little enough. To see Dancer only as a dirty, old, small-minded, impotently fuming man, in a dirty house, besieged by Harrow boys, and probably beset by small attorneys, is to show myself as keen an observer as ... the Harrow boys. But these young gentlemen (with a more becoming modesty) were content to pluck Dancer by the coat-tails; they did not suppose they had surprised his secret or could put him living in a book: and it is there my error would have lain. Or say that in the same romance — I continue to call these books romances, in the hope of giving pain — say that in the same romance, which now begins really to take shape, I should leave to speak of Dancer, and follow instead the Harrow boys; and say that I came on some such business as that of my lantern-bearers on the links; and described the boys as very cold, spat upon by flurries of rain, and drearily surrounded, all of which they were; and their talk as silly and indecent, which it certainly was. I might upon these lines, and had I Zola's genius, turn out, in a page or so, a gem of literary art, render the lantern-light with the touches of a master, and lay on the indecency with the ungrudging hand of love; and when all was done, what a triumph would my picture be of shallowness and dulness! how it would have missed the point! how it would have belied the boys! To the ear of the stenographer, the talk is merely silly and indecent; but ask the boys themselves, and they are discussing (as it is highly proper they should) the possibilities of existence. To the eye of the observer they are wet and cold and drearily surrounded; but ask themselves, and they are in the heaven of a recondite pleasure, the ground of which is an ill-smelling lantern.

III

For, to repeat, the ground of a man's joy is often hard to hit. It may hinge at times upon a mere accessory, like the lantern; it may reside, like Dancer's, in the mysterious inwards of psychology. It may consist with perpetual failure, and find exercise in the continued chase. It has so little bond with externals (such as the observer scribbles in his note-book) that it may even touch them not; and the man's true life, for which he consents to live, lie altogether in the field of fancy. The clergyman, in his spare hours, may be winning battles, the farmer sailing ships, the banker reaping triumph in the arts: all leading another life, plying another trade from that they chose; like the poet's housebuilder, who, after all, is cased in stone,

"By his fireside, as impotent fancy prompts,
Rebuilds it to his liking."

In such a case the poetry runs underground. The observer (poor soul, with his documents!) is all abroad. For to look at the man is but to court deception. We shall see the trunk from which he draws his nourishment; but he himself is above and abroad in the green dome of foliage, hummed through by winds and nested in by nightingales. And the true realism were that of the poets, to climb up after him like a squirrel, and catch some glimpse of the heaven for which he lives. And the true realism, always and everywhere, is that of the poets: to find out where joy resides, and give it a voice far beyond singing.

For to miss the joy is to miss all. In the joy of the actors lies the sense of any action. That is the explanation, that the excuse. To one who has not the secret of the lanterns, the scene upon the links is meaningless. And hence the haunting and truly spectral unreality of realistic books. Hence, when we read the English realists, the incredulous wonder with which we observe the hero's constancy under the submerging tide of dulness, and how 211 he bears up with his jibbing sweetheart, and endures the chatter of idiot girls, and stands by his whole unfeatured wilderness of an existence, instead of seeking relief in drink or foreign travel. Hence in the French, in that meat-market of middle-aged sensuality, the disgusted surprise with which we see the hero drift sidelong, and practically quite untempted, into every description of misconduct and dishonour. In each, we miss the personal poetry, the enchanted atmosphere, that rainbow work of fancy that clothes what is naked and seems to ennoble what is base; in each, life falls dead like dough, instead of soaring away like a balloon into the colours of the sunset; each is true, each inconceivable; for no man lives in external truth, among salts and acids, but in the warm, phantasmagoric chamber of his brain, with the painted windows and the storied walls.

Of this falsity we have had a recent example from a man who knows far better — Tolstoi's "Powers of Darkness." Here is a piece full of force and truth, yet quite untrue. For before Mikita was led into so dire a situation he was tempted, and temptations are beautiful at least in part; and a work which dwells on the ugliness of crime and gives no hint of any loveliness in the temptation, sins against the modesty of life, and, even when Tolstoi writes it, sinks to melodrama. The peasants are not understood; they saw their life in fairer colours; even the deaf girl was clothed in poetry for Mikita, or he had never fallen. And so, once again, even an Old Bailey melodrama, without some brightness of poetry and lustre of existence, falls into the inconceivable and ranks with fairy tales.

IV

In nobler books we are moved with something like the emotions of life; and this emotion is very variously provoked. We are so moved when Levine labours on the field,[212] when André sinks beyond emotion, when Richard Feverel and Lucy Desborough meet beside the river, when Antony, “not cowardly, puts off his helmet,” when Kent has infinite pity on the dying Lear, when, in Dostoieffsky’s “Despised and Rejected,” the uncomplaining hero drains his cup of suffering and virtue. These are notes that please the great heart of man. Not only love, and the fields, and the bright face of danger, but sacrifice and death and unmerited suffering humbly supported, touch in us the vein of the poetic. We love to think of them, we long to try them, we are humbly hopeful that we may prove heroes also.

We have heard, perhaps, too much of lesser matters. Here is the door, here is the open air.

Itur in antiquam silvam.

LATER ESSAYS

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FONTAINEBLEAU

VILLAGE COMMUNITIES OF PAINTERS

I

The charm of Fontainebleau is a thing apart. It is a place that people love even more than they admire. The vigorous forest air, the silence, the majestic avenues of highway, the wilderness of tumbled boulders, the great age and dignity of certain groves — these are but ingredients, they are not the secret of the philtre. The place is sanative; the air, the light, the perfumes, and the shapes of things concord in happy harmony. The artist may be idle and not fear the "blues." He may dally with his life. Mirth, lyric mirth, and a vivacious classical contentment are of the very essence of the better kind of art; and these, in that most smiling forest, he has the chance to learn or to remember. Even on the plain of Bière, where the Angelus of Millet still tolls upon the ear of fancy, a larger air, a higher heaven, something ancient and healthy in the face of nature, purify the mind alike from dulness and hysteria. There is no place where the young are more gladly conscious of their youth, or the old better contented with their age.

The fact of its great and special beauty further recommends this country to the artist. The field was chosen by men in whose blood there still raced some of the gleeful or solemn exultation of great art — Millet who loved dignity 216 like Michelangelo, Rousseau whose modern brush was dipped in the glamour of the ancients. It was chosen before the day of that strange turn in the history of art, of which we now perceive the culmination in impressionistic tales and pictures — that voluntary aversion of the eye from all speciously strong and beautiful effects — that disinterested love of dulness which has set so many Peter Bells to paint the river-side primrose. It was then chosen for its proximity to Paris. And for the same cause, and by the force of tradition, the painter of to-day continues to inhabit and to paint it. There is in France scenery incomparable for romance and harmony. Provence, and the valley of the Rhone from Vienne to Tarascon, are one succession of masterpieces waiting for the brush. The beauty is not merely beauty; it tells, besides, a tale to the imagination, and surprises while it charms. Here you shall see castellated towns that would befit the scenery of dreamland; streets that glow with colour like cathedral windows; hills of the most exquisite proportions; flowers of every precious colour, growing thick like grass. All these, by the grace of railway travel, are brought to the very door of the modern painter; yet he does not seek them; he remains faithful to Fontainebleau, to the eternal bridge of Grez, to the watering-pot cascade in Cernay valley. Even Fontainebleau was chosen for him; even in Fontainebleau he shrinks from what is sharply charactered. But one thing, at least, is certain: whatever he may choose to paint and in whatever manner, it is good for the artist to dwell among graceful shapes. Fontainebleau, if it be but quiet scenery, is classically graceful; and though the student may look for different qualities, this quality, silently present, will educate his hand and eye.

But, before all its other advantages — charm, loveliness, or proximity to Paris — comes the great fact that it is already colonised. The institution of a painters' colony is a work of time and tact. The population must be conquered. The innkeeper has to be taught, and he soon learns, the lesson 217 of unlimited credit; he must be taught to welcome as a favoured guest a young gentleman in a very greasy coat, and with little baggage beyond a box of colours and a canvas; and he must learn to preserve his faith in customers who will eat heartily and drink of the best, borrow money to buy tobacco, and perhaps not pay a stiver for a year. A colour merchant has next to be attracted. A certain vogue must be given to the place, lest the painter, most gregarious of animals, should find himself alone. And no sooner are these first difficulties overcome than fresh perils spring up upon the other side; and the bourgeois and the tourist are knocking at the gate. This is the crucial moment for the colony. If these intruders gain a footing, they not only banish freedom and amenity; pretty soon, by means of their long purses, they will have undone the education of the innkeeper; prices will rise and credit shorten; and the poor painter must fare farther on and find another hamlet. "Not here, O Apollo!" will become his song. Thus Trouville and, the other day, St. Raphael were lost to the arts. Curious and not always edifying are the shifts that the French student uses to defend his lair; like the cuttlefish, he must sometimes blacken the waters of his chosen pool; but at such a time and for so practical a purpose Mrs. Grundy must allow him licence. Where his own purse and credit are not threatened, he will do the honours of his village generously. Any artist is made welcome, through whatever medium he may seek expression; science is respected; even the idler, if he prove, as he so rarely does, a gentleman, will soon begin to find himself at home. And when that essentially modern creature, the English or American girl-student, began to walk calmly into his favourite inns as if into a drawing-room at home, the French painter owned himself defenceless; he submitted or he fled. His French respectability, quite as precise as ours, though covering different provinces of life, recoiled aghast before the innovation. But the girls were painters; there was nothing to be done; and Barbizon, 218 when I last saw it and for the time at least, was practically ceded to the fair invader. Paterfamilias, on the other hand, the common tourist, the holiday shopman, and the cheap young gentleman upon the spree, he hounded from his villages with every circumstance of contumely.

This purely artistic society is excellent for the young artist. The lads are mostly fools; they hold the latest orthodoxy in its crudeness; they are at that stage of education, for the most part, when a man is too much occupied with style to be aware of the necessity for any matter; and this, above all for the Englishman, is excellent. To work grossly at the trade, to forget sentiment, to think of his material and nothing else, is, for a while at least, the king's highway of progress. Here, in England, too many painters and writers dwell dispersed, unshielded, among the intelligent bourgeois. These, when they are not merely indifferent, prate to him about the lofty aims and moral influence of art. And this is the lad's ruin. For art is, first of all and last of all, a trade. The love of words and not a desire to publish new discoveries, the love of form and not a novel reading of historical events, mark the vocation of the writer and the painter. The arabesque, properly speaking, and even in literature, is the first fancy of the artist; he first plays with his material as a child plays with a kaleidoscope; and he is already in a second stage when he begins to use his pretty counters for the end of representation. In that, he must pause long and toil faithfully; that is his apprenticeship; and it is only the few who will really grow beyond it, and go forward, fully equipped, to do the business of real art — to give life to abstractions and significance and charm to facts. In the meanwhile, let him dwell much among his fellow-craftsmen. They alone can take a serious interest in the childish tasks and pitiful successes of these years. They alone can behold with equanimity this fingering of the dumb keyboard, this polishing of empty sentences, this dull and literal painting of dull and insignificant subjects. Outsiders will spur him on. 219 They will say, "Why do you not write a great book? paint a great picture?" If his guardian angel fail him, they may even persuade him to the attempt, and, ten to one, his hand is coarsened and his style falsified for life.

And this brings me to a warning. The life of the apprentice to any art is both unstrained and pleasing; it is strewn with small successes in the midst of a career of failure, patiently supported; the heaviest scholar is conscious of a certain progress; and if he come not appreciably nearer to the art of Shakespeare, grows letter-perfect in the domain of A-B, ab. But the time comes when a man should cease prelusory gymnastic, stand up, put a violence upon his will, and, for better or worse, begin the business of creation. This evil day there is a tendency continually to postpone: above all with painters. They have made so many studies that it has become a habit; they make more, the walls of exhibitions blush with them; and death finds these aged students still busy with their horn-book. This class of man finds a congenial home in artist villages; in the slang of the English colony at Barbizon we used to call them “Snoozers.” Continual returns to the city, the society of men further advanced, the study of great works, a sense of humour or, if such a thing is to be had, a little religion or philosophy, are the means of treatment. It will be time enough to think of curing the malady after it has been caught; for to catch it is the very thing for which you seek that dream-land of the painters’ village. “Snoozing” is a part of the artistic education; and the rudiments must be learned stupidly, all else being forgotten, as if they were an object in themselves.

Lastly, there is something, or there seems to be something, in the very air of France that communicates the love of style. Precision, clarity, the cleanly and crafty employment of material, a grace in the handling, apart from any value in the thought, seem to be acquired by the mere residence; or, if not acquired, become at least the more appreciated. The air of Paris is alive with this technical 220 inspiration. And to leave that airy city and awake next day upon the borders of the forest is but to change externals. The same spirit of dexterity and finish breathes from the long alleys and the lofty groves, from the wildernesses that are still pretty in their confusion, and the great plain that contrives to be decorative in its emptiness.

II

In spite of its really considerable extent, the forest of Fontainebleau is hardly anywhere tedious. I know the whole western side of it with what, I suppose, I may call thoroughness; well enough at least to testify that there is no square mile without some special character and charm. Such quarters, for instance, as the Long Rocher, the Bas-Bréau, and the Reine Blanche might be a hundred miles apart; they have scarce a point in common beyond the silence of the birds. The two last are really conterminous; and in both are tall and ancient trees that have outlived a thousand political vicissitudes. But in the one the great oaks prosper placidly upon an even floor; they beshadow a great field; and the air and the light are very free below their stretching boughs. In the other the trees find difficult footing; castles of white rock lie tumbled one upon another, the foot slips, the crooked viper slumbers, the moss clings in the crevice; and above it all the great beech goes spiring and casting forth her arms, and, with a grace beyond church architecture, canopies this rugged chaos. Meanwhile, dividing the two cantons, the broad white causeway of the Paris road runs in an avenue; a road conceived for pageantry and for triumphal marches, an avenue for an army; but, its days of glory over, it now lies grilling in the sun between cool groves, and only at intervals the vehicle of the cruising tourist is seen far away and faintly audible along its ample sweep. A little upon one side, and you find a district of sand and birch and 221 boulder; a little upon the other lies the valley of Apremont, all juniper and heather; and close beyond that you may walk into a zone of pine trees. So artfully are the ingredients mingled. Nor must it be forgotten that, in all this part, you come continually forth upon a hill-top, and behold the plain, northward and westward, like an unrefulgent sea; nor that all day long the shadows keep changing; and at last, to the red fires of sunset, night succeeds, and with the night a new forest, full of whisper, gloom, and fragrance. There are few things more renovating than to leave Paris, the lamplit arches of the Carrousel, and the long alignment of the glittering streets, and to bathe the senses in this fragrant darkness of the wood.

In this continual variety the mind is kept vividly alive. It is a changeful place to paint, a stirring place to live in. As fast as your foot carries you, you pass from scene to scene, each vigorously painted in the colours of the sun, each endeared by that hereditary spell of forests on the mind of man, who still remembers and salutes the ancient refuge of his race.

And yet the forest has been civilised throughout. The most savage corners bear a name, and have been cherished like antiquities; in the most remote, Nature has prepared and balanced her effects as if with conscious art; and man, with his guiding arrows of blue paint, has countersigned the picture. After your farthest wandering, you are never surprised to come forth upon the vast avenue of highway, to strike the centre point of branching alleys, or to find the aqueduct trailing, thousand-footed, through the brush. It is not a wilderness; it is rather a preserve. And, fitly enough, the centre of the maze is not a hermit's cavern. In the midst, a little mirthful town lies sunlit, humming with the business of pleasure; and the palace, breathing distinction and peopled by historic names, stands smokeless among gardens.

Perhaps the last attempt at savage life was that of the harmless humbug who called himself the hermit. In a great 222 tree, close by the highroad, he had built himself a little cabin after the manner of the Swiss Family Robinson; thither he mounted at night, by the romantic aid of a rope ladder; and if dirt be any proof of sincerity, the man was savage as a Sioux. I had the pleasure of his acquaintance; he appeared grossly stupid, not in his perfect wits, and interested in nothing but small change; for that he had a great avidity. In the course of time he proved to be a chicken-stealer, and vanished from his perch; and perhaps from the first he was no true votary of forest freedom, but an ingenious, theatrically-minded beggar, and his cabin in the tree was only stock-in-trade to beg withal. The choice of his position would seem to indicate so much; for if in the forest there are no places still to be discovered, there are many that have been forgotten, and that lie unvisited. There, to be sure, are the blue arrows waiting to reconduct you, now blazed upon a tree, now posted in the corner of a rock. But your security from interruption is complete; you might camp for weeks, if there were only water, and not a soul suspect your presence; and if I may suppose the reader to have committed some great crime and come to me for aid, I think I could still find my way to a small cavern, fitted with a hearth and chimney, where he might lie perfectly concealed. A confederate landscape-painter might daily supply him with food; for water, he would have to make a nightly tramp as far as to the nearest pond; and at last, when the hue and cry began to blow over, he might get gently on the train at some side station, work round by a series of junctions, and be quietly captured at the frontier.

Thus Fontainebleau, although it is truly but a pleasure-ground, and although, in favourable weather, and in the more celebrated quarters, it literally buzzes with the tourist, yet has some of the immunities and offers some of the repose of natural forests. And the solitary, although he must return at night to his frequented inn, may yet pass the day with his own thoughts in the companionable silence 223 of the trees.

The demands of the imagination vary; some can be alone in a back garden looked upon by windows; others, like the ostrich, are content with a solitude that meets the eye; and others, again, expand in fancy to the very borders of their desert, and are irritably conscious of a hunter's camp in an adjacent county. To these last, of course, Fontainebleau will seem but an extended tea-garden: a Rosherville on a by-day. But to the plain man it offers solitude: an excellent thing in itself, and a good whet for company.

III

I was for some time a consistent Barbizonian; *et ego in Arcadia vixi*; it was a pleasant season; and that noiseless hamlet lying close among the borders of the wood is for me, as for so many others, a green spot in memory. The great Millet was just dead, the green shutters of his modest house were closed; his daughters were in mourning. The date of my first visit was thus an epoch in the history of art: in a lesser way, it was an epoch in the history of the Latin Quarter. The *Petit Cénacle* was dead and buried; Murger and his crew of sponging vagabonds were all at rest from their expedients; the tradition of their real life was nearly lost; and the petrified legend of the *Vie de Bohême* had become a sort of gospel, and still gave the cue to zealous imitators. But if the book be written in rose-water, the imitation was still further expurgated; honesty was the rule; the innkeepers gave, as I have said, almost unlimited credit; they suffered the seediest painter to depart, to take all his belongings, and to leave his bill unpaid; and if they sometimes lost, it was by English and Americans alone. At the same time, the great influx of Anglo-Saxons had begun to affect the life of the studious. There had been disputes; and, in one instance at least, the English and the Americans had made common cause to prevent a cruel pleasantry. It would be well if nations and races 224 could communicate their qualities; but in practice when they look upon each other, they have an eye to nothing but defects. The Anglo-Saxon is essentially dishonest; the French is devoid by nature of the principle that we call "Fair Play." The Frenchman marvelled at the scruples of his guest, and, when that defender of innocence retired overseas and left his bills unpaid, he marvelled once again; the good and evil were, in his eyes, part and parcel of the same eccentricity; a shrug expressed his judgment upon both.

At Barbizon there was no master, no pontiff in the arts. Palizzi bore rule at Grez — urbane, superior rule — his memory rich in anecdotes of the great men of yore, his mind fertile in theories; sceptical, composed, and venerable to the eye; and yet beneath these outworks, all twittering with Italian superstition, his eye scouting for omens, and the whole fabric of his manners giving way on the appearance of a hunchback. Cernay had Pelouse, the admirable, placid Pelouse, smilingly critical of youth, who, when a full-blown commercial traveller suddenly threw down his samples, bought a colour-box, and became the master whom we have all admired. Marlotte, for a central figure, boasted Olivier de Penne. Only Barbizon, since the death of Millet, was a headless commonwealth. Even its secondary lights, and those who in my day made the stranger welcome, have since deserted it. The good Lachèvre has departed, carrying his household gods; and long before that Gaston Lafenestre was taken from our midst by an untimely death. He died before he had deserved success; it may be, he would never have deserved it; but his kind, comely, modest countenance still haunts the memory of all who knew him. Another — whom I will not name — has moved farther on, pursuing the strange Odyssey of his decadence. His days of royal favour had departed even then; but he still retained, in his narrower life at Barbizon, a certain stamp of conscious importance, hearty, friendly, filling the room, the occupant of several chairs; nor had he yet ceased his 225 losing battle, still labouring upon great canvases that none would buy, still waiting the return of fortune. But these days also were too good to last; and the former favourite of two sovereigns fled, if I heard the truth, by night. There was a time when he was counted a great man, and Millet but a dauber; behold, how the whirligig of time brings in his revenges! To pity Millet is a piece of arrogance; if life be hard for such resolute and pious spirits, it is harder still for us, had we the wit to understand it; but we may pity his unhappier rival, who, for no apparent merit, was raised to opulence and momentary fame, and, through no apparent fault, was suffered step by step to sink again to nothing. No misfortune can exceed the bitterness of such back-foremost progress, even bravely supported as it was; but to those also who were taken early from the easel, a regret is due. From all the young men of this period, one stood out by the vigour of his promise; he was in the age of fermentation, enamoured of eccentricities. "*Il faut faire de la peinture nouvelle,*" was his watchword; but if time and experience had continued his education, if he had been granted health to return from these excursions to the steady and the central, I must believe that the name of Hills had become famous.

Siron's inn, that excellent artists' barrack, was managed upon easy principles. At any hour of the night, when you returned from wandering in the forest, you went to the billiard-room and helped yourself to liquors, or descended to the cellar and returned laden with beer or wine. The Sirons were all locked in slumber; there was none to check your inroads; only at the week's end a computation was made, the gross sum was divided, and a varying share set down to every lodger's name under the rubric: *estrats*. Upon the more long-suffering the larger tax was levied; and your bill lengthened in a direct proportion to the easiness of your disposition. At any hour of the morning, again, you could get your coffee or cold milk, and set forth into the forest. The doves had perhaps wakened you, 226 fluttering into your chamber; and on the threshold of the inn you were met by the aroma of the forest. Close by were the great aisles, the mossy boulders, the interminable field of forest shadow. There you were free to dream and wander. And at noon, and again at six o'clock, a good meal awaited you on Siron's table. The whole of your accommodation, set aside that varying item of the *estrats*, cost you five francs a day; your bill was never offered you until you asked it; and if you were out of luck's way, you might depart for where you pleased and leave it pending.

IV

Theoretically, the house was open to all comers; practically, it was a kind of club. The guests protected themselves, and, in so doing, they protected Siron. Formal manners being laid aside, essential courtesy was the more rigidly exacted; the new arrival had to feel the pulse of the society; and a breach of its undefined observances was promptly punished. A man might be as plain, as dull, as slovenly, as free of speech as he desired; but to a touch of presumption or a word of hectoring these free Barbizonians were as sensitive as a tea-party of maiden ladies. I have seen people driven forth from Barbizon; it would be difficult to say in words what they had done, but they deserved their fate. They had shown themselves unworthy to enjoy these corporate freedoms; they had pushed themselves; they had "made their head"; they wanted tact to appreciate the "fine shades" of Barbizonian etiquette. And, once they were condemned, the process of extrusion was ruthless in its cruelty; after one evening with the formidable Bodmer, the Bailly of our commonwealth, the erring stranger was beheld no more; he rose exceeding early the next day, and the first coach conveyed him from the scene of his discomfiture. These sentences of banishment were never, in my knowledge, delivered against an 227 artist; such would, I believe, have been illegal; but the odd and pleasant fact is this, that they were never needed. Painters, sculptors, writers, singers, I have seen all of these in Barbizon; and some were sulky, and some blatant and inane; but one and all entered at once into the spirit of the association. This singular society is purely French, a creature of French virtues, and possibly of French defects. It cannot be imitated by the English. The roughness, the impatience, the more obvious selfishness, and even the more ardent friendships of the Anglo-Saxon, speedily dismember such a commonwealth. But this random gathering of young French painters, with neither apparatus nor parade of government, yet kept the life of the place upon a certain footing, insensibly imposed their etiquette upon the docile, and by caustic speech enforced their edicts against the unwelcome. To think of it is to wonder the more at the strange failure of their race upon the larger theatre. This inbred civility — to use the word in its completest meaning — this natural and facile adjustment of contending liberties, seems all that is required to make a governable nation and a just and prosperous country.

Our society, thus purged and guarded, was full of high spirits, of laughter, and of the initiative of youth. The few elder men who joined us were still young at heart, and took the key from their companions. We returned from long stations in the fortifying air, our blood renewed by the sunshine, our spirits refreshed by the silence of the forest; the Babel of loud voices sounded good; we fell to eat and play like the natural man; and in the high inn chamber, panelled with indifferent pictures and lit by candles guttering in the night air, the talk and laughter sounded far into the night. It was a good place and a good life for any naturally-minded youth; better yet for the student of painting, and perhaps best of all for the student of letters. He, too, was saturated in this atmosphere of style; he was shut out from the disturbing currents of the world, he might forget that there existed other and more pressing interests than 228 that of art. But, in such a place, it was hardly possible to write; he could not drug his conscience, like the painter, by the production of listless studies; he saw himself idle among many who were apparently, and some who were really, employed; and what with the impulse of increasing health and the continual provocation of romantic scenes, he became tormented with the desire to work. He enjoyed a strenuous idleness, full of visions, hearty meals, long, sweltering walks, mirth among companions; and, still floating like music through his brain, foresights of great works that Shakespeare might be proud to have conceived, headless epics, glorious torsos of dramas, and words that were alive with import. So in youth, like Moses from the mountain, we have sights of that House Beautiful of art which we shall never enter. They are dreams and unsubstantial; visions of style that repose upon no base of human meaning; the last heart-throbs of that excited amateur who has to die in all of us before the artist can be born. But they come to us in such a rainbow of glory that all subsequent achievement appears dull and earthly in comparison. We were all artists; almost all in the age of illusion, cultivating an imaginary genius, and walking to the strains of some deceiving Ariel; small wonder, indeed, if we were happy! But art, of whatever nature, is a kind mistress; and though these dreams of youth fall by their own baselessness, others succeed, graver and more substantial; the symptoms change, the amiable malady endures; and still, at an equal distance, the House Beautiful shines upon its hill-top.

V

Grez lies out of the forest, down by the bright river. It boasts a mill, an ancient church, a castle, and a bridge of many sterlings. And the bridge is a piece of public property; anonymously famous; beaming on the incurious 229 dilettante from the walls of a hundred exhibitions. I have seen it in the Salon; I have seen it in the Academy; I have seen it in the last French Exposition, excellently done by Bloomer; in a black-and-white by Mr. A. Henley, it once adorned this essay in the pages of the *Magazine of Art*. Long-suffering bridge! And if you visit Grez to-morrow, you shall find another generation, camped at the bottom of Chevillon's garden under their white umbrellas, and doggedly painting it again.

The bridge taken for granted, Grez is a less inspiring place than Barbizon. I give it the palm over Cernay. There is something ghastly in the great empty village square of Cernay, with the inn tables standing in one corner, as though the stage were set for rustic opera, and in the early morning all the painters breaking their fast upon white wine under the windows of the villagers. It is vastly different to awake in Grez, to go down the green inn-garden, to find the river streaming through the bridge, and to see the dawn begin across the poplared level. The meals are laid in the cool arbour, under fluttering leaves. The splash of oars and bathers, the bathing costumes out to dry, the trim canoes beside the jetty, tell of a society that has an eye to pleasure. There is "something to do" at Grez. Perhaps, for that very reason, I can recall no such enduring ardours, no such glories of exhilaration, as among the solemn groves and uneventful hours of Barbizon. This "something to do" is a great enemy to joy; it is a way out of it; you wreak your high spirits on some cut-and-dry employment, and behold them gone! But Grez is a merry place after its kind: pretty to see, merry to inhabit. The course of its pellucid river, whether up or down, is full of gentle attractions for the navigator: islanded reed-mazes where, in autumn, the red berries cluster; the mirrored and inverted images of trees; lilies, and mills, and the foam and thunder of weirs. And of all noble sweeps of roadway, none is nobler, on a windy dusk, than the highroad to Nemours between its lines of talking poplar.

But even Grez is changed. The old inn, long shored and trussed and buttressed, fell at length under the mere weight of years, and the place as it was is but a fading image in the memory of former guests. They, indeed, recall the ancient wooden stair; they recall the rainy evening, the wide hearth, the blaze of the twig fire, and the company that gathered round the pillar in the kitchen. But the material fabric is now dust; soon, with the last of its inhabitants, its very memory shall follow; and they, in their turn, shall suffer the same law, and, both in name and lineament, vanish from the world of men. “For remembrance of the old house’ sake,” as Pepys once quaintly put it, let me tell one story. When the tide of invasion swept over France, two foreign painters were left stranded and penniless in Grez; and there, until the war was over, the Chevillons ungrudgingly harboured them. It was difficult to obtain supplies; but the two waifs were still welcome to the best, sat down daily with the family to table, and at the due intervals were supplied with clean napkins, which they scrupled to employ. Madame Chevillon observed the fact and reprimanded them. But they stood firm; eat they must, but having no money they would soil no napkins.

VI

Nemours and Moret, for all they are so picturesque, have been little visited by painters. They are, indeed, too populous; they have manners of their own, and might resist the drastic process of colonisation. Montigny has been somewhat strangely neglected; I never knew it inhabited but once, when Will H. Low installed himself there with a barrel of *piquette*, and entertained his friends in a leafy trellis above the weir, in sight of the green country and to the music of the falling water. It was a most airy, quaint, and pleasant place of residence, just too rustic to be stagey; and from my memories of the place in general, 231 and that garden trellis in particular — at morning, visited by birds, or at night, when the dew fell and the stars were of the party — I am inclined to think perhaps too favourably of the future of Montigny. Chailly-en-Bière has outlived all things, and lies dustily slumbering in the plain — the cemetery of itself. The great road remains to testify of its former bustle of postilions and carriage bells; and, like memorial tablets, there still hang in the inn room the paintings of a former generation, dead or decorated long ago. In my time, one man only, greatly daring, dwelt there. From time to time he would walk over to Barbizon, like a shade revisiting the glimpses of the moon, and after some communication with flesh and blood return to his austere hermitage. But even he, when I last revisited the forest, had come to Barbizon for good, and closed the roll of the Chaillyites. It may revive — but I much doubt it. Achères and Recloses still wait a pioneer; Bourron is out of the question, being merely Grez over again, without the river, the bridge, or the beauty; and of all the possible places on the western side, Marlotte alone remains to be discussed. I scarcely know Marlotte, and, very likely for that reason, am not much in love with it. It seems a glaring and unsightly hamlet. The inn of Mother Antonie is unattractive; and its more reputable rival, though comfortable enough, is commonplace. Marlotte has a name; it is famous; if I were the young painter I would leave it alone in its glory.

VII

These are the words of an old stager; and though time is a good conservative in forest places, much may be untrue to-day. Many of us have passed Arcadian days there and moved on, but yet left a portion of our souls behind us buried in the woods. I would not dig for these reliquiæ; they are incommunicable treasures that will not enrich the finder; and yet there may lie, interred below great oaks 232 or scattered along forest paths, stores of youth's dynamite and dear remembrances. And as one generation passes on and renovates the field of tillage for the next, I entertain a fancy that when the young men of to-day go forth into the forest they shall find the air still vitalised by the spirits of their predecessors, and, like those "unheard melodies" that are the sweetest of all, the memory of our laughter shall still haunt the field of trees. Those merry voices that in woods call the wanderer farther, those thrilling silences and whispers of the groves, surely in Fontainebleau they must be vocal of me and my companions? We are not content to pass away entirely from the scenes of our delight; we would leave, if but in gratitude, a pillar and a legend.

One generation after another fall like honey-bees upon this memorable forest, rifle its sweets, pack themselves with vital memories, and when the theft is consummated depart again into life richer, but poorer also. The forest, indeed, they have possessed, from that day forward it is theirs indissolubly, and they will return to walk in it at night in the fondest of their dreams, and use it for ever in their books and pictures. Yet when they made their packets, and put up their notes and sketches, something, it should seem, had been forgotten. A projection of themselves shall appear to haunt unfriended these scenes of happiness, a natural child of fancy, begotten and forgotten unawares. Over the whole field of our wanderings such fetches are still travelling like indefatigable bagmen; but the imps of Fontainebleau, as of all beloved spots, are very long of life, and memory is piously unwilling to forget their orphanage. If anywhere about that wood you meet my airy bantling, greet him with tenderness. He was a pleasant lad, though now abandoned. And when it comes to your own turn to quit the forest, may you leave behind you such another; no Antony or Werther, let us hope, no tearful whipster, but, as becomes this not uncheerful and most active age in which we figure, the child of happy hours.

No art, it may be said, was ever perfect, and not many 233 noble, that has not been mirthfully conceived. And no man, it may be added, was ever anything but a wet blanket and a cross to his companions who boasted not a copious spirit of enjoyment. Whether as man or artist, let the youth make haste to Fontainebleau, and once there let him address himself to the spirit of the place; he will learn more from exercise than from studies, although both are necessary; and if he can get into his heart the gaiety and inspiration of the woods he will have gone far to undo the evil of his sketches. A spirit once well strung up to the concert-pitch of the primeval out-of-doors will hardly dare to finish a study and magniloquently ticket it a picture. The incommunicable thrill of things, that is the tuning-fork by which we test the flatness of our art. Here it is that Nature teaches and condemns, and still spurs up to further effort and new failure. Thus it is that she sets us blushing at our ignorant and tepid works; and the more we find of these inspiring shocks the less shall we be apt to love the literal in our productions. In all sciences and senses the letter kills; and to-day, when cackling human geese express their ignorant condemnation of all studio pictures, it is a lesson most useful to be learnt. Let the young painter go to Fontainebleau, and while he stupefies himself with studies that teach him the mechanical side of his trade, let him walk in the great air, and be a servant of mirth, and not pick and botanise, but wait upon the moods of Nature. So he will learn — or learn not to forget — the poetry of life and earth, which, when he has acquired his track, will save him from joyless reproduction.

II

A NOTE ON REALISM

Style is the invariable mark of any master; and for the student who does not aspire so high as to be numbered with the giants, it is still the one quality in which he may improve himself at will. Passion, wisdom, creative force, the power of mystery or colour, are allotted in the hour of birth, and can be neither learned nor simulated. But the just and dexterous use of what qualities we have, the proportion of one part to another and to the whole, the elision of the useless, the accentuation of the important, and the preservation of a uniform character from end to end — these, which taken together constitute technical perfection, are to some degree within the reach of industry and intellectual courage. What to put in and what to leave out; whether some particular fact be organically necessary or purely ornamental; whether, if it be purely ornamental, it may not weaken or obscure the general design; and finally, whether, if we decide to use it, we should do so grossly and notably, or in some conventional disguise: are questions of plastic style continually re-arising. And the sphinx that patrols the highways of executive art has no more unanswerable riddle to propound.

In literature (from which I must draw my instances) the great change of the past century has been effected by the admission of detail. It was inaugurated by the romantic Scott; and at length, by the semi-romantic Balzac and his more or less wholly unromantic followers, bound like a duty on the novelist. For some time it signified and expressed a more ample contemplation of the conditions of 235 man's life; but it has recently (at least in France) fallen into a merely technical and decorative stage, which it is, perhaps, still too harsh to call survival. With a movement of alarm, the wiser or more timid begin to fall a little back from these extremities; they begin to aspire after a more naked, narrative articulation; after the succinct, the dignified, and the poetic; and as a means to this, after a general lightening of this baggage of detail. After Scott we beheld the starveling story — once, in the hands of Voltaire, as abstract as a parable — begin to be pampered upon facts. The introduction of these details developed a particular ability of hand; and that ability, childishly indulged, has led to the works that now amaze us on a railway journey. A man of the unquestionable force of M. Zola spends himself on technical successes. To afford a popular flavour and attract the mob, he adds a steady current of what I may be allowed to call the rancid. That is exciting to the moralist; but what more particularly interests the artist is this tendency of the extreme of detail, when followed as a principle, to degenerate into mere *feux-de-joie* of literary tricking. The other day even M. Daudet was to be heard babbling of audible colours and visible sounds.

This odd suicide of one branch of the realists may serve to remind us of the fact which underlies a very dusty conflict of the critics. All representative art, which can be said to live, is both realistic and ideal; and the realism about which we quarrel is a matter purely of externals. It is no especial cultus of nature and veracity, but a mere whim of veering fashion, that has made us turn our back upon the larger, more various, and more romantic art of yore. A photographic exactitude in dialogue is now the exclusive fashion; but even in the ablest hands it tells us no more — I think it even tells us less — than Molière, wielding his artificial medium, has told to us and to all time of Alceste or Orgon, Dorine or Chrysale. The historical novel is forgotten. Yet truth to the conditions of man's nature 236 and the conditions of man's life, the truth of literary art, is free of the ages. It may be told us in a carpet comedy, in a novel of adventure, or a fairy tale. The scene may be pitched in London, on the sea-coast of Bohemia, or away on the mountains of Beulah. And by an odd and luminous accident, if there is any page of literature calculated to awake the envy of M. Zola, it must be that "Troilus and Cressida" which Shakespeare, in a spasm of unmanly anger with the world, grafted on the heroic story of the siege of Troy.

This question of realism, let it then be clearly understood, regards not in the least degree the fundamental truth, but only the technical method, of a work of art. Be as ideal or as abstract as you please, you will be none the less veracious; but if you be weak, you run the risk of being tedious and inexpressive; and if you be very strong and honest, you may chance upon a masterpiece.

A work of art is first cloudily conceived in the mind; during the period of gestation it stands more clearly forward from these swaddling mists, puts on expressive lineaments, and becomes at length that most faultless, but also, alas! that incommunicable product of the human mind, a perfected design. On the approach to execution all is changed. The artist must now step down, don his working clothes, and become the artisan. He now resolutely commits his airy conception, his delicate Ariel, to the touch of matter; he must decide, almost in a breath, the scale, the style, the spirit, and the particularity of execution of his whole design.

The engendering idea of some works is stylistic; a technical pre-occupation stands them instead of some robuster principle of life. And with these the execution is but play; for the stylistic problem is resolved beforehand, and all large originality of treatment wilfully foregone. Such are the verses, intricately designed, which we have learnt to admire, with a certain smiling admiration, at the hands of Mr. Lang and Mr. Dobson; such, too, are those 237 canvases where dexterity or even breadth of plastic style takes the place of pictorial nobility of design. So, it may be remarked, it was easier to begin to write "Esmond" than "Vanity Fair," since, in the first, the style was dictated by the nature of the plan; and Thackeray, a man probably of some indolence of mind, enjoyed and got good profit of this economy of effort. But the case is exceptional. Usually in all works of art that have been conceived from within outwards, and generously nourished from the author's mind, the moment in which he begins to execute is one of extreme perplexity and strain. Artists of indifferent energy and an imperfect devotion to their own ideal make this ungrateful effort once for all; and, having formed a style, adhere to it through life. But those of a higher order cannot rest content with a process which, as they continue to employ it, must infallibly degenerate towards the academic and the cut-and-dried. Every fresh work in which they embark is the signal for a fresh engagement of the whole forces of their mind; and the changing views which accompany the growth of their experience are marked by still more sweeping alterations in the manner of their art. So that criticism loves to dwell upon and distinguish the varying periods of a Raphael, a Shakespeare, or a Beethoven.

It is, then, first of all, at this initial and decisive moment when execution is begun, and thenceforth only in a less degree, that the ideal and the real do indeed, like good and evil angels, contend for the direction of the work. Marble, paint, and language, the pen, the needle, and the brush, all have their grossnesses, their ineffable impotences, their hours, if I may so express myself, of insubordination. It is the work and it is a great part of the delight of any artist to contend with these unruly tools, and now by brute energy, now by witty expedient, to drive and coax them to effect his will. Given these means, so laughably inadequate, and given the interest, the intensity, and the multiplicity of the actual sensation whose effect he is to render with their aid, the artist has one main and necessary resource which 238 he must, in every case and upon any theory, employ. He must, that is, suppress much and omit more. He must omit what is tedious or irrelevant, and suppress what is tedious and necessary. But such facts as, in regard to the main design, subserve a variety of purposes, he will perforce and eagerly retain. And it is the mark of the very highest order of creative art to be woven exclusively of such. There, any fact that is registered is contrived a double or a treble debt to pay, and is at once an ornament in its place and a pillar in the main design. Nothing would find room in such a picture that did not serve, at once, to complete the composition, to accentuate the scheme of colour, to distinguish the planes of distance, and to strike the note of the selected sentiment; nothing would be allowed in such a story that did not, at the same time, expedite the progress of the fable, build up the characters, and strike home the moral or the philosophical design. But this is unattainable. As a rule, so far from building the fabric of our works exclusively with these, we are thrown into a rapture if we think we can muster a dozen or a score of them, to be the plums of our confection. And hence, in order that the canvas may be filled or the story proceed from point to point, other details must be admitted. They must be admitted, alas! upon a doubtful title; many without marriage robes. Thus any work of art, as it proceeds towards completion, too often — I had almost written always — loses in force and poignancy of main design. Our little air is swamped and dwarfed among hardly relevant orchestration; our little passionate story drowns in a deep sea of descriptive eloquence or slipshod talk.

But again, we are rather more tempted to admit those particulars which we know we can describe; and hence those most of all which, having been described very often, have grown to be conventionally treated in the practice of our art. These we choose, as the mason chooses the acanthus to adorn his capital, because they come naturally to the accustomed hand. The old stock incidents and 239 accessories, tricks of workmanship and schemes of composition (all being admirably good, or they would long have been forgotten) haunt and tempt our fancy; offer us ready-made but not perfectly appropriate solutions for any problem that arises; and wean us from the study of nature and the uncompromising practice of art. To struggle, to face nature, to find fresh solutions, and give expression to facts which have not yet been adequately or not yet elegantly expressed, is to run a little upon the danger of extreme self-love. Difficulty sets a high price upon achievement; and the artist may easily fall into the error of the French naturalists, and consider any fact as welcome to admission if it be the ground of brilliant handiwork; or, again, into the error of the modern landscape-painter, who is apt to think that difficulty overcome and science well displayed can take the place of what is, after all, the one excuse and breath of art — charm. A little further, and he will regard charm in the light of an unworthy sacrifice to prettiness, and the omission of a tedious passage as an infidelity to art.

We have now the matter of this difference before us. The idealist, his eye singly fixed upon the greater outlines, loves rather to fill up the interval with detail of the conventional order, briefly touched, soberly suppressed in tone, courting neglect. But the realist, with a fine intemperance, will not suffer the presence of anything so dead as a convention; he shall have all fiery, all hot-pressed from nature, all charactered and notable, seizing the eye. The style that befits either of these extremes, once chosen, brings with it its necessary disabilities and dangers. The immediate danger of the realist is to sacrifice the beauty and significance of the whole to local dexterity, or, in the insane pursuit of completion, to immolate his readers under facts; but he comes in the last resort, and as his energy declines, to discard all design, abjure all choice, and, with scientific thoroughness, steadily to communicate matter which is not worth learning. The danger of the idealist is, of course, to become merely null and lose all grip of fact, particularity, or passion.

We talk of bad and good. Everything, indeed, is good which is conceived with honesty and executed with communicative ardour. But though on neither side is dogmatism fitting, and though in every case the artist must decide for himself, and decide afresh and yet afresh for each succeeding work and new creation; yet one thing may be generally said, that we of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, breathing as we do the intellectual atmosphere of our age, are more apt to err upon the side of realism than to sin in quest of the ideal. Upon that theory it may be well to watch and correct our own decisions, always holding back the hand from the least appearance of irrelevant dexterity, and resolutely fixed to begin no work that is not philosophical, passionate, dignified, happily mirthful, or at the last and least, romantic in design.

III

ON SOME TECHNICAL ELEMENTS OF STYLE IN LITERATURE

There is nothing more disenchanting to man than to be shown the springs and mechanism of any art. All our arts and occupations lie wholly on the surface; it is on the surface that we perceive their beauty, fitness, and significance; and to pry below is to be appalled by their emptiness and shocked by the coarseness of the strings and pulleys. In a similar way, psychology itself, when pushed to any nicety, discovers an abhorrent baldness, but rather from the fault of our analysis than from any poverty native to the mind. And perhaps in æsthetics the reason is the same: those disclosures which seem fatal to the dignity of art seem so perhaps only in the proportion of our ignorance; and those conscious and unconscious artifices which it seems unworthy of the serious artist to employ were yet, if we had the power to trace them to their springs, indications of a delicacy of the sense finer than we conceive, and hints of ancient harmonies in nature. This ignorance at least is largely irremediable. We shall never learn the affinities of beauty, for they lie too deep in nature and too far back in the mysterious history of man. The amateur, in consequence, will always grudgingly receive details of method, which can be stated but can never wholly be explained; nay, on the principle laid down in Hudibras, that

> “Still the less they understand,
> The more they admire the sleight-of-hand,”

many are conscious at each new disclosure of a diminution in the ardour of their pleasure. I must therefore warn that well-known character, the general reader, that I am here embarked upon a most distasteful business: taking down the picture from the wall and looking on the back; and, like the inquiring child, pulling the musical cart to pieces.

1. *Choice of Words*. — The art of literature stands apart from among its sisters, because the material in which the literary artist works is the dialect of life; hence, on the one hand, a strange freshness and immediacy of address to the public mind, which is ready prepared to understand it; but hence, on the other, a singular limitation. The sister arts enjoy the use of a plastic and ductile material, like the modeller’s clay; literature alone is condemned to work in mosaic with finite and quite rigid words. You have seen these blocks, dear to the nursery: this

one a pillar, that a pediment, a third a window or a vase. It is with blocks of just such arbitrary size and figure that the literary architect is condemned to design the palace of his art. Nor is this all; for since these blocks, or words, are the acknowledged currency of our daily affairs, there are here possible none of those suppressions by which other arts obtain relief, continuity and vigour; no hieroglyphic touch, no smoothed impasto, no inscrutable shadow, as in painting; no blank wall, as in architecture; but every word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph must move in a logical progression, and convey a definite conventional import.

Now, the first merit which attracts in the pages of a good writer, or the talk of a brilliant conversationalist, is the apt choice and contrast of the words employed. It is, indeed, a strange art to take these blocks, rudely conceived for the purpose of the market or the bar, and by tact of application touch them to the finest meanings and distinctions, restore to them their primal energy, wittily shift them to another issue, or make of them a drum to rouse the passions. But though this form of merit is without doubt the most sensible and seizing, it is far from being equally present in all writers. 243 The effect of words in Shakespeare, their singular justice, significance, and poetic charm, is different, indeed, from the effect of words in Addison or Fielding. Or, to take an example nearer home, the words in Carlyle seem electrified into an energy of lineament, like the faces of men furiously moved; whilst the words in Macaulay, apt enough to convey his meaning, harmonious enough in sound, yet glide from the memory like undistinguished elements in a general effect. But the first class of writers have no monopoly of literary merit. There is a sense in which Addison is superior to Carlyle; a sense in which Cicero is better than Tacitus, in which Voltaire excels Montaigne: it certainly lies not in the choice of words; it lies not in the interest or value of the matter; it lies not in force of intellect, of poetry, or of humour. The three first are but infants to the three second; and yet each, in a particular point of literary art, excels his superior in the whole. What is that point?

2. *The Web.* — Literature, although it stands apart by reason of the great destiny and general use of its medium in the affairs of men, is yet an art like other arts. Of these we may distinguish two great classes: those arts, like sculpture, painting, acting, which are representative, or, as used to be said very clumsily, imitative; and those, like architecture, music, and the dance, which are self-sufficient, and merely presentative. Each class, in right of this distinction, obeys principles apart; yet both may claim a common ground of existence, and it may be said with sufficient justice that the motive and end of any art whatever is to make a pattern; a pattern, it may be, of colours, of sounds, of changing attitudes, geometrical

figures, or imitative lines; but still a pattern. That is the plane on which these sisters meet; it is by this that they are arts; and if it be well they should at times forget their childish origin, addressing their intelligence to virile tasks, and performing unconsciously that necessary function of their life, to make a pattern, it is still imperative that the pattern shall be made.

Music and literature, the two temporal arts, contrive their pattern of sounds in time; or, in other words, of sounds and pauses. Communication may be made in broken words, the business of life be carried on with substantives alone; but that is not what we call literature; and the true business of the literary artist is to plait or weave his meaning, involving it around itself; so that each sentence, by successive phrases, shall first come into a kind of knot, and then, after a moment of suspended meaning, solve and clear itself. In every properly constructed sentence there should be observed this knot or hitch; so that (however delicately) we are led to foresee, to expect, and then to welcome the successive phrases. The pleasure may be heightened by an element of surprise, as, very grossly, in the common figure of the antithesis, or, with much greater subtlety, where an antithesis is first suggested and then deftly evaded. Each phrase, besides, is to be comely in itself; and between the implication and the evolution of the sentence there should be a satisfying equipoise of sound; for nothing more often disappoints the ear than a sentence solemnly and sonorously prepared, and hastily and weakly finished. Nor should the balance be too striking and exact, for the one rule is to be infinitely various; to interest, to disappoint, to surprise, and yet still to gratify; to be ever changing, as it were, the stitch, and yet still to give the effect of an ingenious neatness.

The conjurer juggles with two oranges, and our pleasure in beholding him springs from this, that neither is for an instant overlooked or sacrificed. So with the writer. His pattern, which is to please the supersensual ear, is yet addressed, throughout and first of all, to the demands of logic. Whatever be the obscurities, whatever the intricacies of the argument, the neatness of the fabric must not suffer, or the artist has been proved unequal to his design. And, on the other hand, no form of words must be selected, no knot must be tied among the phrases, unless knot and word be precisely what is wanted to forward and illuminate the 245 argument; for to fail in this is to swindle in the game. The genius of prose rejects the *cheville* no less emphatically than the laws of verse; and the *cheville*, I should perhaps explain to some of my readers, is any meaningless or very watered phrase employed to strike a balance in the sound. Pattern and argument live in each other; and it is by the brevity, clearness, charm, or emphasis of the second, that we judge the strength and fitness of the first.

Style is synthetic; and the artist, seeking, so to speak, a peg to plait about, takes up at once two or more elements or two or more views of the subject in hand; combines, implicates, and contrasts them; and while, in one sense, he was merely seeking an occasion for the necessary knot, he will be found, in the other, to have greatly enriched the meaning, or to have transacted the work of two sentences in the space of one. In the change from the successive shallow statements of the old chronicler to the dense and luminous flow of highly synthetic narrative, there is implied a vast amount of both philosophy and wit. The philosophy we clearly see, recognising in the synthetic writer a far more deep and stimulating view of life, and a far keener sense of the generation and affinity of events. The wit we might imagine to be lost; but it is not so, for it is just that wit, these perpetual nice contrivances, these difficulties overcome, this double purpose attained, these two oranges kept simultaneously dancing in the air, that, consciously or not, afford the reader his delight. Nay, and this wit, so little recognised, is the necessary organ of that philosophy which we so much admire. That style is therefore the most perfect, not, as fools say, which is the most natural, for the most natural is the disjointed babble of the chronicler; but which attains the highest degree of elegant and pregnant implication unobtrusively; or if obtrusively, then with the greatest gain to sense and vigour. Even the derangement of the phrases from their (so-called) natural order is luminous for the mind; and it is by the means of such designed reversal that the elements of a judgment may be 246 most pertinently marshalled, or the stages of a complicated action most perspicuously bound into one.

The web, then, or the pattern: a web at once sensuous and logical, an elegant and pregnant texture: that is style, that is the foundation of the art of literature. Books indeed continue to be read, for the interest of the fact or fable, in which this quality is poorly represented, but still it will be there. And, on the other hand, how many do we continue to peruse and reperuse with pleasure whose only merit is the elegance of texture? I am tempted to mention Cicero; and since Mr. Anthony Trollope is dead, I will. It is a poor diet for the mind, a very colourless and toothless “criticism of life”; but we enjoy the pleasure of a most intricate and dexterous pattern, every stitch a model at once of elegance and of good sense; and the two oranges, even if one of them be rotten, kept dancing with inimitable grace.

Up to this moment I have had my eye mainly upon prose; for though in verse also the implication of the logical texture is a crowning beauty, yet in verse it may be dispensed with. You would think that here was a death-blow to all I have been saying; and far from that, it is but a new illustration of the principle involved. For if the versifier is not bound to weave a pattern of his own, it is because another pattern has been formally imposed upon him by the laws of verse. For that is the essence of a prosody. Verse may be rhythmical; it may be merely alliterative; it may, like the French, depend wholly on the (quasi) regular recurrence of the rhyme; or, like the Hebrew, it may consist in the strangely fanciful device of repeating the same idea. It does not matter on what principle the law is based, so it be a law. It may be pure convention; it may have no inherent beauty; all that we have a right to ask of any prosody is, that it shall lay down a pattern for the writer, and that what it lays down shall be neither too easy nor too hard. Hence it comes that it is much easier for men of equal facility to write fairly pleasing verse than reasonably 247 interesting prose; for in prose the pattern itself has to be invented, and the difficulties first created before they can be solved. Hence, again, there follows the peculiar greatness of the true versifier: such as Shakespeare, Milton, and Victor Hugo, whom I place beside them as versifier merely, not as poet. These not only knit and knot the logical texture of the style with all the dexterity and strength of prose; they not only fill up the pattern of the verse with infinite variety and sober wit; but they give us, besides, a rare and special pleasure, by the art, comparable to that of counterpoint, with which they follow at the same time, and now contrast, and now combine, the double pattern of the texture and the verse. Here the sounding line concludes; a little further on, the well-knit sentence; and yet a little further, and both will reach their solution on the same ringing syllable. The best that can be offered by the best writer of prose is to show us the development of the idea and the stylistic pattern proceed hand in hand, sometimes by an obvious and triumphant effort, sometimes with a great air of ease and nature. The writer of verse, by virtue of conquering another difficulty, delights us with a new series of triumphs. He follows three purposes where his rival followed only two; and the change is of precisely the same nature as that from melody to harmony. Or if you prefer to return to the juggler, behold him now, to the vastly increased enthusiasm of the spectators, juggling with three oranges instead of two. Thus it is: added difficulty, added beauty; and the pattern, with every fresh element, becoming more interesting in itself.

Yet it must not be thought that verse is simply an addition; something is lost as well as something gained; and there remains plainly traceable, in comparing the best prose with the best verse, a certain broad distinction of method in the web. Tight as the versifier may draw the knot of logic, yet for the ear he still leaves the tissue of the sentence floating somewhat loose. In prose, the sentence turns upon a pivot, nicely balanced, and fits into itself with 248 an obtrusive neatness like a puzzle. The ear remarks and is singly gratified by this return and balance; while in verse it is all diverted to the measure. To find comparable passages is hard; for either the versifier is hugely the superior of the rival, or, if he be not, and still persist in his more delicate enterprise, he falls to be as widely his inferior. But let us select them from the pages of the same writer, one who was ambidexter; let us take, for instance, Rumour's Prologue to the Second Part of *Henry IV.*, a fine flourish of eloquence in Shakespeare's second manner, and set it side by side with Falstaff's praise of sherris, act iv., scene 1; or let us compare the beautiful prose spoken throughout by Rosalind and Orlando, compare, for example, the first speech of all, Orlando's speech to Adam, with what passage it shall please you to select — the Seven Ages from the same play, or even such a stave of nobility as Othello's farewell to war; and still you will be able to perceive, if you have any ear for that class of music, a certain superior degree of organisation in the prose; a compacter fitting of the parts; a balance in the swing and the return as of a throbbing pendulum. We must not, in things temporal, take from those who have little, the little that they have; the merits of prose are inferior, but they are not the same; it is a little kingdom, but an independent.

3. *Rhythm of the Phrase.* — Some way back, I used a word which still awaits an application. Each phrase, I said, was to be comely; but what is a comely phrase? In all ideal and material points, literature, being a representative art, must look for analogies to painting and the like; but in what is technical and executive, being a temporal art, it must seek for them in music. Each phrase of each sentence, like an air or a recitative in music, should be so artfully compounded out of long and short, out of accented and unaccented, as to gratify the sensual ear. And of this the ear is the sole judge. It is impossible to lay down laws. Even in our accentual and rhythmic language no analysis can find the secret of the beauty of a verse; how much less, 249 then, of those phrases, such as prose is built of, which obey no law but to be lawless and yet to please? The little that we know of verse (and for my part I owe it all to my friend Professor Fleeming Jenkin) is, however, particularly interesting in the present connection. We have been accustomed to describe the heroic line as five iambic feet, and to be filled with pain and confusion whenever, as by the conscientious schoolboy, we have heard our own description put in practice.

“All nìght | the dreàd | less àn | gel ùn | pursùed,”

goes the schoolboy; but though we close our ears, we cling to our definition, in spite of its proved and naked insufficiency. Mr. Jenkin was not so easily pleased, and readily discovered that the heroic line consists of four groups, or, if you prefer the phrase, contains four pauses:

"All night | the dreadless | angel | unpursued."

Four groups, each practically uttered as one word: the first, in this case, an iamb; the second, an amphibrachys; the third, a trochee; and the fourth an amphimacer; and yet our schoolboy, with no other liberty but that of inflicting pain, had triumphantly scanned it as five iambs. Perceive, now, this fresh richness of intricacy in the web; this fourth orange, hitherto unremarked, but still kept flying with the others. What had seemed to be one thing it now appears is two; and, like some puzzle in arithmetic, the verse is made at the same time to read in fives and to read in fours.

But again, four is not necessary. We do not, indeed, find verses in six groups, because there is not room for six in the ten syllables; and we do not find verses of two, because one of the main distinctions of verse from prose resides in the comparative shortness of the group; but it is even common to find verses of three. Five is the one forbidden number; because five is the number of the feet; and if five were chosen, the two patterns would coincide, and 250 that opposition which is the life of verse would instantly be lost. We have here a clue to the effect of polysyllables, above all in Latin, where they are so common and make so brave an architecture in the verse; for the polysyllable is a group of Nature's making. If but some Roman would return from Hades (Martial, for choice), and tell me by what conduct of the voice these thundering verses should be uttered — ”*Aut Lacedæmonium Tarentum,*" for a case in point — I feel as if I should enter at last into the full enjoyment of the best of human verses.

But, again, the five feet are all iambic, or supposed to be; by the mere count of syllables the four groups cannot be all iambic; as a question of elegance, I doubt if any one of them requires to be so; and I am certain that for choice no two of them should scan the same. The singular beauty of the verse analysed above is due, so far as analysis can carry us, part, indeed, to the clever repetition of l, d and n, but part to this variety of scansion in the groups. The groups which, like the bar in music, break up the verse for utterance, fall uniambically; and in declaiming a so-called iambic verse, it may so happen that we never utter one iambic foot. And yet to this neglect of the original beat there is a limit.

"Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts,"

is, with all its eccentricities, a good heroic line; for though it scarcely can be said to indicate the beat of the iamb, it certainly suggests no other measure to the ear. But begin

"Mother Athens, eye of Greece,"

or merely "Mother Athens," and the game is up, for the trochaic beat has been suggested. The eccentric scansion of the groups is an adornment; but as soon as the original beat has been forgotten, they cease implicitly to be eccentric. Variety is what is sought; but if we destroy the original mould, one of the terms of this variety is lost, and we fall 251 back on sameness. Thus, both as to the arithmetical measure of the verse, and the degree of regularity in scansion, we see the laws of prosody to have one common purpose: to keep alive the opposition of two schemes simultaneously followed; to keep them notably apart, though still coincident; and to balance them with such judicial nicety before the reader, that neither shall be unperceived and neither signally prevail.

The rule of rhythm in prose is not so intricate. Here, too, we write in groups, or phrases, as I prefer to call them, for the prose phrase is greatly longer and is much more nonchalantly uttered than the group in verse; so that not only is there a greater interval of continuous sound between the pauses, but, for that very reason, word is linked more readily to word by a more summary enunciation. Still, the phrase is the strict analogue of the group, and successive phrases, like successive groups, must differ openly in length and rhythm. The rule of scansion in verse is to suggest no measure but the one in hand; in prose, to suggest no measure at all. Prose must be rhythmical, and it may be as much so as you will; but it must not be metrical. It may be anything, but it must not be verse. A single heroic line may very well pass and not disturb the somewhat larger stride of the prose style; but one following another will produce an instant impression of poverty, flatness, and disenchantment. The same lines delivered with the measured utterance of verse would perhaps seem rich in variety. By the more summary enunciation proper to prose, as to a more distant vision, these niceties of difference are lost. A whole verse is uttered as one phrase; and the ear is soon wearied by a succession of groups identical in length. The prose writer, in fact, since he is allowed to be so much less harmonious, is condemned to a perpetually fresh variety of movement on a larger scale, and must never disappoint the ear by the trot of an accepted metre. And this obligation is the third orange with which he has to juggle, the third quality which the prose writer must work into his 252 pattern of words. It may be thought perhaps that this is a quality of ease rather than a fresh difficulty; but such is the inherently rhythmical strain of the English language, that the bad writer — and must I take for example that admired friend of my boyhood, Captain Reid? — the inexperienced writer, as Dickens in his earlier attempts to be impressive, and the jaded writer, as any one may see for himself, all tend to fall at once into the production of bad blank verse. And here it may be pertinently asked, Why bad? And I suppose it might be enough to answer that no man ever made good verse by accident, and that no verse can ever sound otherwise than trivial when uttered with the delivery of prose. But we can go beyond such answers. The weak side of verse is the regularity of the beat, which in itself is decidedly less impressive than the movement of the nobler prose; and it is just into this weak side, and this alone, that our careless writer falls. A peculiar density and mass, consequent on the nearness of the pauses, is one of the chief good qualities of verse; but this our accidental versifier, still following after the swift gait and large gestures of prose, does not so much as aspire to imitate. Lastly, since he remains unconscious that he is making verse at all, it can never occur to him to extract those effects of counterpoint and opposition which I have referred to as the final grace and justification of verse, and, I may add, of blank verse in particular.

4. *Contents of the Phrase.* — Here is a great deal of talk about rhythm — and naturally; for in our canorous language rhythm is always at the door. But it must not be forgotten that in some languages this element is almost, if not quite, extinct, and that in our own it is probably decaying. The even speech of many educated Americans sounds the note of danger. I should see it go with something as bitter as despair, but I should not be desperate. As in verse no element, not even rhythm, is necessary; so, in prose also, other sorts of beauty will arise and take the place and play the part of those that we outlive. The beauty of the 253 expected beat in verse, the beauty in prose of its larger and more lawless melody, patent as they are to English hearing, are already silent in the ears of our next neighbours; for in France the oratorical accent and the pattern of the web have almost or altogether succeeded to their places; and the French prose writer would be astounded at the labours of his brother across the Channel, and how a good quarter of his toil, above all *invita Minerva*, is to avoid writing verse. So wonderfully far apart have races wandered in spirit, and so hard it is to understand the literature next door!

Yet French prose is distinctly better than English; and French verse, above all while Hugo lives, it will not do to place upon one side. What is more to our purpose, a phrase or a verse in French is easily distinguishable as comely or uncomely. There is then another element of comeliness hitherto overlooked in this analysis: the contents of the phrase. Each phrase in literature is built of sounds, as each phrase in music consists of notes. One sound suggests, echoes, demands, and harmonises with another; and the art of rightly using these concordances is the final art in literature. It used to be a piece of good advice to all young writers to avoid alliteration; and the advice was sound, in so far as it prevented daubing. None the less for that, was it abominable nonsense, and the mere raving of those blindest of the blind who will not see? The beauty of the contents of a phrase, or of a sentence, depends implicitly upon alliteration and upon assonance. The vowel demands to be repeated; the consonant demands to be repeated; and both cry aloud to be perpetually varied. You may follow the adventures of a letter through any passage that has particularly pleased you; find it, perhaps, denied a while, to tantalise the ear; find it fired again at you in a whole broadside; or find it pass into congenerous sounds, one liquid or labial melting away into another. And you will find another and much stranger circumstance. Literature is written by and for two senses: a sort of internal ear, quick to perceive "unheard melodies"; and 254 the eye, which directs the pen and deciphers the printed phrase. Well, even as there are rhymes for the eye, so you will find that there are assonances and alliterations; that where an author is running the open a, deceived by the eye and our strange English spelling, he will often show a tenderness for the flat a; and that where he is running a particular consonant, he will not improbably rejoice to write it down even when it is mute or bears a different value.

Here, then, we have a fresh pattern — a pattern, to speak grossly, of letters — which makes the fourth preoccupation of the prose writer, and the fifth of the versifier. At times it is very delicate and hard to perceive, and then perhaps most excellent and winning (I say perhaps); but at times again the elements of this literal melody stand more boldly forward and usurp the ear. It becomes, therefore, somewhat a matter of conscience to select examples; and as I cannot very well ask the reader to help me, I shall do the next best by giving him the reason or the history of each selection. The two first, one in prose, one in verse, I chose without previous analysis, simply as engaging passages that had long re-echoed in my ear.

"I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." Down to "virtue," the current s and r are both announced and repeated unobtrusively, and by way of a grace-note that almost inseparable group pvf is given entire. The next phrase is a period of repose, almost ugly in itself, both s and r still audible, and b given as the last fulfilment of pvf. In the next four phrases, from "that never" 255 down to "run for," the mask is thrown off, and, but for a slight repetition of the f and v, the whole matter turns, almost too obtrusively, on s and r; first s coming to the front, and then r. In the concluding phrase all these favourite letters, and even the flat a, a timid preference for which is just perceptible, are discarded at a blow and in a bundle; and to make the break more obvious, every word ends with a dental, and all but one with t, for which we have been cautiously prepared since the beginning. The singular dignity of the first clause, and this hammer-stroke of the last, go far to make the charm of this exquisite sentence. But it is fair to own that S and R are used a little coarsely.

(kndl) “In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
(kdlsr) A stately pleasure dome decree,
(kndlsr) Where Alph the sacred river ran,
(knlsr) Through caverns measureless to man,
(ndls) Down to a sunless sea.”

Here I have put the analysis of the main group alongside the lines; and the more it is looked at, the more interesting it will seem. But there are further niceties. In lines two and four, the current s is most delicately varied with z. In line three, the current flat a is twice varied with the open a, already suggested in line two, and both times (“where” and “sacred”) in conjunction with the current r. In the same line f and v (a harmony in themselves, even when shorn of their comrade p) are admirably contrasted. And in line four there is a marked subsidiary m, which again was announced in line two. I stop from weariness, for more might yet be said.

My next example was recently quoted from Shakespeare as an example of the poet’s colour sense. Now, I do not think literature has anything to do with colour, or poets anyway the better of such a sense; and I instantly attacked this passage, since “purple” was the word that had so pleased the writer of the article, to see if there might not 256 be some literary reason for its use. It will be seen that I succeeded amply; and I am bound to say I think the passage exceptional in Shakespeare — exceptional, indeed, in literature; but it was not I who chose it.

“The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne
Burnt on the water: the poop was beaten gold,
Purple the sails and so pur*fumèd that
The winds were lovesick with them.”

It may be asked why I have put the f of perfumèd in capitals; and I reply, because this change from p to f is the completion of that from b to p, already so adroitly carried out. Indeed, the whole passage is a monument of curious ingenuity; and it seems scarce worth while to indicate the subsidiary s, l and w. In the same article, a second passage from Shakespeare was quoted, once again as an example of his colour sense:

“A mole cinque-spotted like the crimson drops
I’ the bottom of a cowslip.”

It is very curious, very artificial, and not worth while to analyse at length: I leave it to the reader. But before I turn my back on Shakespeare, I should like to quote a passage, for my own pleasure, and for a very model of every technical art: —

“But in the wind and tempest of her frown, w. p. v. f. (st) (ow)
Distinction (with) a loud and powerful fan, w. p. f. (st) (ow) L
Puffing at all, winnowes the light away; w. p. f. L
And what hath mass and matter by itself w. f. w. L
Lies rich in virtue and unmingled.” v. d. m.

From these delicate and choice writers I turned with some curiosity to a player of the big drum — Macaulay. I had in hand the two-volume edition, and I opened at the beginning of the second volume. Here was what I read: —

“The violence of revolutions is generally proportioned to the degree of the maladministration which has produced them. It is 257 therefore not strange that the government of Scotland, having been during many years greatly more corrupt than the government of England, should have fallen with a far heavier ruin. The movement against the last king of the house of Stuart was in England conservative, in Scotland destructive. The English complained not of the law, but of the violation of the law.”

This was plain-sailing enough; it was our old friend pvf, floated by the liquids in a body; but as I read on, and turned the page, and still found pvf with his attendant liquids, I confess my mind misgave me utterly. This could be no trick of Macaulay’s; it must be the nature of the English tongue. In a kind of despair, I turned half-way through the volume; and coming upon his lordship dealing with General Cannon, and fresh from Claverhouse and Killiekrankie, here, with elucidative spelling, was my reward: —

“Meanwhile the disorders of kannon’s kamp went on inkreasing. He kalled a kouncil of war to konsider what kourse it would be advisable to take. But as soon as the kouncil had met a preliminary kuestion was raised. The army was almost eksklusively a Highland army. The recent viktory had been won eksklusively by Highland warriors. Great chie*f*s who had brought siks or se*v*en hundred *f*ighting men into the *f*ield, did not think it *f*air that they should be out*v*oted by gentlemen *f*rom Ireland and *f*rom the Low kountries, who bore indeed King James’s kommission, and were kalled kolonels and kaptains, but who were kolonels without regiments and kaptains without kompanies.”

A moment of fv in all this world of k’s! It was not the English language, then, that was an instrument of one string, but Macaulay that was an incomparable dauber.

It was probably from this barbaric love of repeating the same sound, rather than from any design of clearness, that he acquired his irritating habit of repeating words; I say the one rather than the other, because such a trick of the ear is deeper seated and more original in man than any logical consideration. Few writers, indeed, are probably conscious of the length to which they push this melody of letters. One, writing very diligently, and only concerned about the meaning of his words and the rhythm of his phrases, was struck into amazement by the eager triumph 258 with which he cancelled one expression to substitute another. Neither changed the sense; both being monosyllables, neither could affect the scansion; and it was only by looking back on what he had already written that the mystery was solved: the second word contained an open a, and for nearly half a page he had been riding that vowel to the death.

In practice, I should add, the ear is not always so exacting; and ordinary writers, in ordinary moments, content themselves with avoiding what is harsh, and here and there, upon a rare occasion, buttressing a phrase, or linking two together, with a patch of assonance or a momentary jingle of alliteration. To understand how constant is this preoccupation of good writers, even where its results are least obtrusive, it is only necessary to turn to the bad. There, indeed, you will find cacophony supreme, the rattle of incongruous consonants only relieved by the jaw-breaking hiatus, and whole phrases not to be articulated by the powers of man.

Conclusion. — We may now briefly enumerate the elements of style. We have, peculiar to the prose writer, the task of keeping his phrases large, rhythmical and pleasing to the ear, without ever allowing them to fall into the strictly metrical: peculiar to the versifier, the task of combining and contrasting his double, treble, and quadruple pattern, feet and groups, logic and metre — harmonious in diversity: common to both, the task of artfully combining the prime elements of language into phrases that shall be musical in the mouth; the task of weaving their argument into a texture of committed phrases and of rounded periods — but this particularly binding in the case of prose: and, again common to both, the task of choosing apt, explicit, and communicative words. We begin to see now what an intricate affair is any perfect passage; how many faculties, whether of taste or pure reason, must be held upon the stretch to make it; and why, when it is made, it should afford us so complete a pleasure. From the arrangement of 259 according letters, which is altogether arabesque and sensual, up to the architecture of the elegant and pregnant sentence, which is a vigorous act of the pure intellect, there is scarce a faculty in man but has been exercised. We need not wonder, then, if perfect sentences are rare, and perfect pages rarer.

Milton.

Milton.

Milton.

As pvf will continue to haunt us through our English examples, take, by way of comparison, this Latin verse, of which it forms a chief adornment, and do not hold me answerable for the all too Roman freedom of the sense: “Hanc volo, quæ facilis, quæ palliolata vagatur.”

Coleridge.

Antony and Cleopatra.

Cymbeline.

The v is in “of.”

Troilus and Cressida.

IV

THE MORALITY OF THE PROFESSION OF LETTERS

The profession of letters has been lately debated in the public prints; and it has been debated, to put the matter mildly, from a point of view that was calculated to surprise high-minded men, and bring a general contempt on books and reading. Some time ago, in particular, a lively, pleasant, popular writer devoted an essay, lively and pleasant like himself, to a very encouraging view of the profession. We may be glad that his experience is so cheering, and we may hope that all others, who deserve it, shall be as handsomely rewarded; but I do not think we need be at all glad to have this question, so important to the public and ourselves, debated solely on the ground of money. The salary in any business under heaven is not the only, nor indeed the first, question. That you should continue to exist is a matter for your own consideration; but that your business should be first honest, and second useful, are points in which honour and morality are concerned. If the writer to whom I refer succeeds in persuading a number of young persons to adopt this way of life with an eye set singly on the livelihood, we must expect them in their works to follow profit only, and we must expect in consequence, if he will pardon me the epithets, a slovenly, base, untrue, and empty literature. Of that writer himself I am not speaking: he is diligent, clean, and pleasing; we all owe him periods of entertainment, and he has achieved 261 an amiable popularity which he has adequately deserved. But the truth is, he does not, or did not when he first embraced it, regard his profession from this purely mercenary side. He went into it, I shall venture to say, if not with any noble design, at least in the ardour of a first love; and he enjoyed its practice long before he paused to calculate the wage. The other day an author was complimented on a piece of work, good in itself and exceptionally good for him, and replied in terms unworthy of a commercial traveller, that as the book was not briskly selling he did not give a copper farthing for its merit. It must not be supposed that the person to whom this answer was addressed received it as a profession of faith; he knew, on the other hand, that it was only a whiff of irritation; just as we know, when a respectable writer talks of literature as a way of life, like shoemaking, but not so useful, that he is only debating one aspect of a question, and is still clearly conscious of a dozen others more important in themselves and more central to the matter in hand. But while those who treat literature in this penny-wise and virtue-foolish spirit are themselves truly in possession of a better light, it does not follow that the treatment is decent or improving, whether for themselves or others. To treat all subjects in the highest, the most honourable, and the pluckiest spirit, consistent with the fact, is the first duty of a writer. If he be well paid, as I am glad to hear he is, this duty becomes the more urgent, the neglect of it the more disgraceful. And perhaps there is no subject on which a man should speak so gravely as that industry, whatever it may be, which is the occupation or delight of his life; which is his tool to earn or serve with; and which, if it be unworthy, stamps himself as a mere incubus of dumb and greedy bowels on the shoulders of labouring humanity. On that subject alone even to force the note might lean to virtue's side. It is to be hoped that a numerous and enterprising generation of writers will follow and surpass the present one; but it would be better if the stream were stayed, and 262 the roll of our old, honest English books were closed, than that esurient bookmakers should continue and debase a brave tradition, and lower, in their own eyes, a famous race. Better that our serene temples were deserted than filled with trafficking and juggling priests.

There are two just reasons for the choice of any way of life: the first is inbred taste in the chooser; the second some high utility in the industry selected. Literature, like any other art, is singularly interesting to the artist; and, in a degree peculiar to itself among the arts, it is useful to mankind. These are the sufficient justifications for any young man or woman who adopts it as the business of his life. I shall not say much about the wages. A writer can live by his writing. If not so luxuriously as by other trades, then less luxuriously. The nature of the work he does all day will more affect his happiness than the quality of his dinner at night. Whatever be your calling, and however much it brings you in the year, you could still, you know, get more by cheating. We all suffer ourselves to be too much concerned about a little poverty; but such considerations should not move us in the choice of that which is to be the business and justification of so great a portion of our lives; and like the missionary, the patriot, or the philosopher, we should all choose that poor and brave career in which we can do the most and best for mankind. Now Nature, faithfully followed, proves herself a careful mother. A lad, for some liking to the jingle of words, betakes himself to letters for his life; by-and-by, when he learns more gravity, he finds that he has chosen better than he knew; that if he earns little, he is earning it amply; that if he receives a small wage, he is in a position to do considerable services; that it is in his power, in some small measure, to protect the oppressed and to defend the truth. So kindly is the world arranged, such great profit may arise from a small degree of human reliance on oneself, and such, in particular, is the happy star of this trade of writing, that it should combine pleasure and profit to both parties, and 263 be at once agreeable, like fiddling, and useful, like good preaching.

This is to speak of literature at its highest; and with the four great elders who are still spared to our respect and admiration, with Carlyle, Ruskin, Browning, and Tennyson before us, it would be cowardly to consider it at first in any lesser aspect. But while we cannot follow these athletes, while we may none of us, perhaps, be very vigorous, very original, or very wise, I still contend that, in the humblest sort of literary work, we have it in our power either to do great harm or great good. We may seek merely to please; we may seek, having no higher gift, merely to gratify the idle nine-days' curiosity of our contemporaries; or we may essay, however feebly, to instruct. In each of these we shall have to deal with that remarkable art of words which, because it is the dialect of life, comes home so easily and powerfully to the minds of men; and since that is so, we contribute, in each of these branches, to build up the sum of sentiments and appreciations which goes by the name of Public Opinion or Public Feeling. The total of a nation's reading, in these days of daily papers, greatly modifies the total of the nation's speech; and the speech and reading, taken together, form the efficient educational medium of youth. A good man or woman may keep a youth some little while in clearer air; but the contemporary atmosphere is all-powerful in the end on the average of mediocre characters. The copious Corinthian baseness of the American reporter or the Parisian *chroniqueur*, both so lightly readable, must exercise an incalculable influence for ill; they touch upon all subjects, and on all with the same ungenerous hand; they begin the consideration of all, in young and unprepared minds, in an unworthy spirit; on all, they supply some pungency for dull people to quote. The mere body of this ugly matter overwhelms the rarer utterances of good men; the sneering, the selfish, and the cowardly are scattered in broad sheets on every table, while the antidote, 264 in small volumes, lies unread upon the shelf. I have spoken of the American and the French, not because they are so much baser, but so much more readable, than the English; their evil is done more effectively, in America for the masses, in French for the few that care to read; but with us as with them, the duties of literature are daily neglected, truth daily perverted and suppressed, and grave subjects daily degraded in the treatment. The journalist is not reckoned an important officer; yet judge of the good he might do, the harm he does; judge of it by one instance only: that when we find two journals on the reverse sides of politics each, on the same day, openly garbling a piece of news for the interest of its own party, we smile at the discovery (no discovery now!) as over a good joke and pardonable stratagem. Lying so open is scarce lying, it is true; but one of the things that we profess to teach our young is a respect for truth; and I cannot think this piece of education will be crowned with any great success, so long as some of us practise and the rest openly approve of public falsehood.

There are two duties incumbent upon any man who enters on the business of writing: truth to the fact and a good spirit in the treatment. In every department of literature, though so low as hardly to deserve the name, truth to the fact is of importance to the education and comfort of mankind, and so hard to preserve, that the faithful trying to do so will lend some dignity to the man who tries it. Our judgments are based upon two things, first, upon the original preferences of our soul; but, second, upon the mass of testimony to the nature of God, man, and the universe which reaches us, in divers manners, from without. For the most part these divers manners are reducible to one, all that we learn of past times and much that we learn of our own reaching us through the medium of books or papers, and even he who cannot read learning from the same source at second-hand and by the report of him who can. Thus the sum of the contemporary 265 knowledge or ignorance of good and evil is, in large measure, the handiwork of those who write. Those who write have to see that each man's knowledge is, as near as they can make it, answerable to the facts of life; that he shall not suppose himself an angel or a monster; nor take this world for a hell; nor be suffered to imagine that all rights are concentred in his own caste or country, or all veracities in his own parochial creed. Each man should learn what is within him, that he may strive to mend; he must be taught what is without him, that he may be kind to others. It can never be wrong to tell him the truth; for, in his disputable state, weaving as he goes his theory of life, steering himself, cheering or reproving others, all facts are of the first importance to his conduct; and even if a fact shall discourage or corrupt him, it is still best that he should know it; for it is in this world as it is, and not in a world made easy by educational suppressions, that he must win his way to shame or glory. In one word, it must always be foul to tell what is false; and it can never be safe to suppress what is true. The very fact that you omit may be the fact which somebody was wanting, for one man's meat is another man's poison, and I have known a person who was cheered by the perusal of "Candide." Every fact is a part of that great puzzle we must set together; and none that comes directly in a writer's path but has some nice relations, unperceivable by him, to the totality and bearing of the subject under hand. Yet there are certain classes of fact eternally more necessary than others, and it is with these that literature must first bestir itself. They are not hard to distinguish, nature once more easily leading us; for the necessary, because the efficacious, facts are those which are most interesting to the natural mind of man. Those which are coloured, picturesque, human, and rooted in morality, and those, on the other hand, which are clear, indisputable, and a part of science, are alone vital in importance, seizing by their interest, or useful to communicate. So far as the 266 writer merely narrates, he should principally tell of these. He should tell of the kind and wholesome and beautiful elements of our life; he should tell unsparingly of the evil and sorrow of the present, to move us with instances; he should tell of wise and good people in the past, to excite us by example; and of these he should tell soberly and truthfully, not glossing faults, that we may neither grow discouraged with ourselves nor exacting to our neighbours. So the body of contemporary literature, ephemeral and feeble in itself, touches in the minds of men the springs of thought and kindness, and supports them (for those who will go at all are easily supported) on their way to what is true and right. And if, in any degree, it does so now, how much more might it do so if the writers chose! There is not a life in all the records of the past but, properly studied, might lend a hint and a help to some contemporary. There is not a juncture in to-day's affairs but some useful word may yet be said of it. Even the reporter has an office, and, with clear eyes and honest language, may unveil injustices and point the way to progress. And for a last word: in all narration there is only one way to be clever, and that is to be exact. To be vivid is a secondary quality which must presuppose the first; for vividly to convey a wrong impression is only to make failure conspicuous.

But a fact may be viewed on many sides; it may be chronicled with rage, tears, laughter, indifference, or admiration, and by each of these the story will be transformed to something else. The newspapers that told of the return of our representatives from Berlin, even if they had not differed as to the facts, would have sufficiently differed by their spirit; so that the one description would have been a second ovation, and the other a prolonged insult. The subject makes but a trifling part of any piece of literature, and the view of the writer is itself a fact more important because less disputable than the others. Now this spirit in which a subject is regarded, important in all kinds of literary work, becomes all-important in works of 267 fiction, meditation, or rhapsody; for there it not only colours but itself chooses the facts; not only modifies but shapes the work. And hence, over the far larger proportion of the field of literature, the health or disease of the writer's mind or momentary humour forms not only the leading feature of his work, but is, at bottom, the only thing he can communicate to others. In all works of art, widely speaking, it is first of all the author's attitude that is narrated, though in the attitude there be implied a whole experience and a theory of life. An author who has begged the question and reposes in some narrow faith cannot, if he would, express the whole or even many of the sides of this various existence; for, his own life being maim, some of them are not admitted in his theory, and were only dimly and unwillingly recognised in his experience. Hence the smallness, the triteness, and the inhumanity in works of merely sectarian religion; and hence we find equal although unsimilar limitations in works inspired by the spirit of the flesh or the despicable taste for high society. So that the first duty of any man who is to write is intellectual. Designedly or not, he has so far set himself up for a leader of the minds of men; and he must see that his own mind is kept supple, charitable, and bright. Everything but prejudice should find a voice through him; he should see the good in all things; where he has even a fear that he does not wholly understand, there he should be wholly silent; and he should recognise from the first that he has only one tool in his workshop and that tool is sympathy.

The second duty, far harder to define, is moral. There are a thousand different humours in the mind, and about each of them, when it is uppermost, some literature tends 268 to be deposited. Is this to be allowed? Not certainly in every case, and yet perhaps in more than rigorists would fancy. It were to be desired that all literary work, and chiefly works of art, issued from sound, human, healthy, and potent impulses, whether grave or laughing, humorous, romantic, or religious. Yet it cannot be denied that some valuable books are partially insane; some, mostly religious, partially inhuman; and very many tainted with morbidity and impotence. We do not loathe a masterpiece although we gird against its blemishes. We are not, above all, to look for faults but merits. There is no book perfect, even in design; but there are many that will delight, improve, or encourage the reader. On the one hand, the Hebrew Psalms are the only religious poetry on earth; yet they contain sallies that savour rankly of the man of blood. On the other hand, Alfred de Musset had a poisoned and a contorted nature; I am only quoting that generous and frivolous giant, old Dumas, when I accuse him of a bad heart; yet, when the impulse under which he wrote was purely creative, he could give us works like “Carmosine” or “Fantasio,” in which the last note of the romantic comedy seems to have been found again to touch and please us. When Flaubert wrote “Madame Bovary,” I believe he thought chiefly of a somewhat morbid realism; and behold! the book turned in his hands into a masterpiece of appalling morality. But the truth is, when books are conceived under a great stress, with a soul of nine-fold power nine times heated and electrified by effort, the conditions of our being are seized with such an ample grasp, that, even should the main design be trivial or base, some truth and beauty cannot fail to be expressed. Out of the strong comes forth sweetness; but an ill thing poorly done is an ill thing top and bottom. And so this can be no encouragement to knock-knee'd, feeble-wristed scribes, who must take their business conscientiously or be ashamed to practise it.

Man is imperfect; yet, in his literature, he must express 269 himself and his own views and preferences; for to do anything else is to do a far more perilous thing than to risk being immoral: it is to be sure of being untrue. To ape a sentiment, even a good one, is to travesty a sentiment; that will not be helpful. To conceal a sentiment, if you are sure you hold it, is to take a liberty with truth. There is probably no point of view possible to a sane man but contains some truth and, in the true connection, might be profitable to the race. I am not afraid of the truth, if any one could tell it me, but I am afraid of parts of it impertinently uttered. There is a time to dance and a time to mourn; to be harsh as well as to be sentimental; to be ascetic as well as to glorify the appetites; and if a man were to combine all these extremes into his work, each in its place and proportion, that work would be the world's masterpiece of morality as well as of art. Partiality is immorality; for any book is wrong that gives a misleading picture of the world and life. The trouble is that the weakling must be partial; the work of one proving dank and depressing; of another, cheap and vulgar; of a third, epileptically sensual; of a fourth, sourly ascetic. In literature as in conduct, you can never hope to do exactly right. All you can do is to make as sure as possible; and for that there is but one rule. Nothing should be done in a hurry that can be done slowly. It is no use to write a book and put it by for nine or even ninety years; for in the writing you will have partly convinced yourself; the delay must precede any beginning; and if you meditate a work of art, you should first long roll the subject under the tongue to make sure you like the flavour, before you brew a volume that shall taste of it from end to end; or if you propose to enter on the field of controversy, you should first have thought upon the question under all conditions, in health as well as in sickness, in sorrow as well as in joy. It is this nearness of examination necessary for any true and kind writing, that makes the practice of the art a prolonged and noble education for the writer.

There is plenty to do, plenty to say, or to say over again, in the meantime. Any literary work which conveys faithful facts or pleasing impressions is a service to the public. It is even a service to be thankfully proud of having rendered. The slightest novels are a blessing to those in distress, not chloroform itself a greater. Our fine old sea-captain's life was justified when Carlyle soothed his mind with "The King's Own" or "Newton Forster." To please is to serve; and so far from its being difficult to instruct while you amuse, it is difficult to do the one thoroughly without the other. Some part of the writer or his life will crop out in even a vapid book; and to read a novel that was conceived with any force is to multiply experience and to exercise the sympathies. Every article, every piece of verse, every essay, every *entrefilet*, is destined to pass, however swiftly, through the minds of some portion of the public, and to colour, however transiently, their thoughts. When any subject falls to be discussed, some scribbler on a paper has the invaluable opportunity of beginning its discussion in a dignified and human spirit; and if there were enough who did so in our public press neither the public nor the parliament would find it in their minds to drop to meaner thoughts. The writer has the chance to stumble, by the way, on something pleasing, something interesting, something encouraging, were it only to a single reader. He will be unfortunate, indeed, if he suit no one. He has the chance, besides, to stumble on something that a dull person shall be able to comprehend; and for a dull person to have read anything and, for that once, comprehended it, makes a marking epoch in his education.

Here then is work worth doing and worth trying to do well. And so, if I were minded to welcome any great accession to our trade, it should not be from any reason of a higher wage, but because it was a trade which was useful in a very great and in a very high degree; which every honest tradesman could make more serviceable to 271 mankind in his single strength; which was difficult to do well and possible to do better every year; which called for scrupulous thought on the part of all who practised it, and hence became a perpetual education to their nobler natures; and which, pay it as you please, in the large majority of the best cases will still be underpaid. For surely, at this time of day in the nineteenth century, there is nothing that an honest man should fear more timorously than getting and spending more than he deserves.

Mr. James Payn.

A footnote, at least, is due to the admirable example set before all young writers in the width of literary sympathy displayed by Mr. Swinburne. He runs forth to welcome merit, whether in Dickens or Trollope, whether in Villon, Milton, or Pope. This is, in criticism, the attitude we should all seek to preserve, not only in that, but in every branch of literary work.

V

BOOKS WHICH HAVE INFLUENCED ME

The Editor has somewhat insidiously laid a trap for his correspondents, the question put appearing at first so innocent, truly cutting so deep. It is not, indeed, until after some reconnaissance and review that the writer awakes to find himself engaged upon something in the nature of autobiography, or, perhaps worse, upon a chapter in the life of that little, beautiful brother whom we once all had, and whom we have all lost and mourned, the man we ought to have been, the man we hoped to be. But when word has been passed (even to an editor), it should, if possible, be kept; and if sometimes I am wise and say too little, and sometimes weak and say too much, the blame must lie at the door of the person who entrapped me.

The most influential books, and the truest in their influence, are works of fiction. They do not pin the reader to a dogma, which he must afterwards discover to be inexact; they do not teach him a lesson, which he must afterwards unlearn. They repeat, they rearrange, they clarify the lessons of life; they disengage us from ourselves, they constrain us to the acquaintance of others; and they show us the web of experience, not as we can see it for ourselves, but with a singular change — that monstrous, consuming *ego* of ours being, for the nonce, struck out. To be so, they must be reasonably true to the human comedy; and any work that is so serves the turn of instruction. But the course of our education is answered best by those poems and romances where we breathe a magnanimous 273 atmosphere of thought and meet generous and pious characters. Shakespeare has served me best. Few living friends have had upon me an influence so strong for good as Hamlet or Rosalind. The last character, already well beloved in the reading, I had the good fortune to see, I must think, in an impressionable hour, played by Mrs. Scott Siddons. Nothing has ever more moved, more delighted, more refreshed me; nor has the influence quite passed away. Kent's brief speech over the dying Lear had a great effect upon my mind, and was the burthen of my reflections for long, so profoundly, so touchingly generous did it appear in sense, so overpowering in expression. Perhaps my dearest and best friend outside of Shakespeare is D'Artagnan — the elderly D'Artagnan of the "Vicomte de Bragelonne." I know not a more human soul, nor, in his way, a finer; I shall be very sorry for the man who is so much of a pedant in morals that he cannot learn from the Captain of Musketeers. Lastly, I must name the

“Pilgrim’s Progress,” a book that breathes of every beautiful and valuable emotion.

But of works of art little can be said; their influence is profound and silent, like the influence of nature; they mould by contact; we drink them up like water, and are bettered, yet know not how. It is in books more specifically didactic that we can follow out the effect, and distinguish and weigh and compare. A book which has been very influential upon me fell early into my hands, and so may stand first, though I think its influence was only sensible later on, and perhaps still keeps growing, for it is a book not easily outlived: the “Essais” of Montaigne. That temperate and genial picture of life is a great gift to place in the hands of persons of to-day; they will find in these smiling pages a magazine of heroism and wisdom, all of an antique strain; they will have their “linen decencies” and excited orthodoxies fluttered, and will (if they have any gift of reading) perceive that these have not been fluttered without some excuse and ground of reason; 274 and (again if they have any gift of reading) they will end by seeing that this old gentleman was in a dozen ways a finer fellow, and held in a dozen ways a nobler view of life, than they or their contemporaries.

The next book, in order of time, to influence me was the New Testament, and in particular the Gospel according to St. Matthew. I believe it would startle and move any one if they could make a certain effort of imagination and read it freshly like a book, not droningly and dully like a portion of the Bible. Any one would then be able to see in it those truths which we are all courteously supposed to know and all modestly refrain from applying. But upon this subject it is perhaps better to be silent.

I come next to Whitman’s “Leaves of Grass,” a book of singular service, a book which tumbled the world upside down for me, blew into space a thousand cobwebs of genteel and ethical illusion, and, having thus shaken my tabernacle of lies, set me back again upon a strong foundation of all the original and manly virtues. But it is, once more, only a book for those who have the gift of reading. I will be very frank — I believe it is so with all good books, except, perhaps, fiction. The average man lives, and must live, so wholly in convention, that gunpowder charges of the truth are more apt to discompose than to invigorate his creed. Either he cries out upon blasphemy and indecency, and crouches the closer round that little idol of part-truths and part-conveniences which is the contemporary deity, or he is convinced by what is new, forgets what is old, and becomes truly blasphemous and indecent himself. New truth is only useful to supplement the old; rough truth is only wanted to expand, not to destroy, our civil and often elegant conventions. He who cannot judge had better stick to fiction and the daily papers. There he will get little harm, and, in the first at least, some good.

Close upon the back of my discovery of Whitman, I came under the influence of Herbert Spencer. No more persuasive rabbi exists, and few better. How much of 275 his vast structure will bear the touch of time, how much is clay and how much brass, it were too curious to inquire. But his words, if dry, are always manly and honest; there dwells in his pages a spirit of highly abstract joy, plucked naked like an algebraic symbol, but still joyful; and the reader will find there a *caput-mortuum* of piety, with little indeed of its loveliness, but with most of its essentials; and these two qualities make him a wholesome, as his intellectual vigour makes him a bracing, writer. I should be much of a hound if I lost my gratitude to Herbert Spencer.

“Goethe’s Life,” by Lewes, had a great importance for me when it first fell into my hands — a strange instance of the partiality of man’s good and man’s evil. I know no one whom I less admire than Goethe; he seems a very epitome of the sins of genius, breaking open the doors of private life, and wantonly wounding friends, in that crowning offence of “Werther,” and in his own character a mere pen-and-ink Napoleon, conscious of the rights and duties of superior talents as a Spanish inquisitor was conscious of the rights and duties of his office. And yet in his fine devotion to his art, in his honest and serviceable friendship for Schiller, what lessons are contained! Biography, usually so false to its office, does here for once perform for us some of the work of fiction, reminding us, that is, of the truly mingled tissue of man’s nature, and how huge faults and shining virtues cohabit and persevere in the same character. History serves us well to this effect, but in the originals, not in the pages of the popular epitomiser, who is bound, by the very nature of his task, to make us feel the difference of epochs instead of the essential identity of man, and even in the originals only to those who can recognise their own human virtues and defects in strange forms, often inverted and under strange names, often interchanged. Martial is a poet of no good repute, and it gives a man new thoughts to read his works dispassionately, and find in this unseemly jester’s serious passages the image of a kind, wise, and self-respecting gentleman. 276 It is customary, I suppose, in reading Martial, to leave out these pleasant verses; I never heard of them, at least, until I found them for myself; and this partiality is one among a thousand things that help to build up our distorted and hysterical conception of the great Roman empire.

This brings us by a natural transition to a very noble book — the “Meditations” of Marcus Aurelius. The dispassionate gravity, the noble forgetfulness of self, the tenderness of others, that are there expressed and were practised on so great a scale in the life of its writer, make this book a book quite by itself. No one can read it and not be moved. Yet it scarcely or rarely appeals to the feelings — those very mobile, those not very trusty parts of man. Its address lies further back: its lesson comes more deeply home; when you have read, you carry away with you a memory of the man himself; it is as though you had touched a loyal hand, looked into brave eyes, and made a noble friend; there is another bond on you thenceforward, binding you to life and to the love of virtue.

Wordsworth should perhaps come next. Every one has been influenced by Wordsworth, and it is hard to tell precisely how. A certain innocence, a rugged austerity of joy, a sight of the stars, "the silence that is in the lonely hills," something of the cold thrill of dawn, cling to his work and give it a particular address to what is best in us. I do not know that you learn a lesson; you need not — Mill did not — agree with any one of his beliefs; and yet the spell is cast. Such are the best teachers; a dogma learned is only a new error — the old one was perhaps as good; but a spirit communicated is a perpetual possession. These best teachers climb beyond teaching to the plane of art; it is themselves, and what is best in themselves, that they communicate.

I should never forgive myself if I forgot "The Egoist." It is art, if you like, but it belongs purely to didactic art, and from all the novels I have read (and I have read 277 thousands) stands in a place by itself. Here is a Nathan for the modern David; here is a book to send the blood into men's faces. Satire, the angry picture of human faults, is not great art; we can all be angry with our neighbour; what we want is to be shown, not his defects, of which we are too conscious, but his merits, to which we are too blind. And "The Egoist" is a satire; so much must be allowed; but it is a satire of a singular quality, which tells you nothing of that obvious mote, which is engaged from first to last with that invisible beam. It is yourself that is hunted down; these are your own faults that are dragged into the day and numbered, with lingering relish, with cruel cunning and precision. A young friend of Mr. Meredith's (as I have the story) came to him in an agony. "This is too bad of you," he cried. "Willoughby is me!" "No, my dear fellow," said the author, "he is all of us." I have read "The Egoist" five or six times myself, and I mean to read it again; for I am like the young friend of the anecdote — I think Willoughby an unmanly but a very serviceable exposure of myself.

I suppose, when I am done, I shall find that I have forgotten much that was most influential, as I see already I have forgotten Thoreau, and Hazlitt, whose paper "On the Spirit of Obligations" was a turning-point in my life, and Penn, whose little book of aphorisms had a brief but strong effect on me, and Mitford's "Tales of Old Japan," wherein I learned for the first time the proper attitude of any rational man to his country’s laws — a secret found, and kept, in the Asiatic islands. That I should commemorate all is more than I can hope or the editor could ask. It will be more to the point, after having said so much upon improving books, to say a word or two about the improvable reader. The gift of reading, as I have called it, is not very common, nor very generally understood. It consists, first of all, in a vast intellectual endowment — a free grace, I find I must call it — by which a man rises to understand that he is not punctually right, nor those from whom he differs absolutely 278 wrong. He may hold dogmas; he may hold them passionately; and he may know that others hold them but coldly, or hold them differently, or hold them not at all. Well, if he has the gift of reading, these others will be full of meat for him. They will see the other side of propositions and the other side of virtues. He need not change his dogma for that, but he may change his reading of that dogma, and he must supplement and correct his deductions from it. A human truth, which is always very much a lie, hides as much of life as it displays. It is men who hold another truth, or, as it seems to us, perhaps, a dangerous lie, who can extend our restricted field of knowledge, and rouse our drowsy consciences. Something that seems quite new, or that seems insolently false or very dangerous, is the test of a reader. If he tries to see what it means, what truth excuses it, he has the gift, and let him read. If he is merely hurt, or offended, or exclaims upon his author’s folly, he had better take to the daily papers; he will never be a reader.

And here, with the aptest illustrative force, after I have laid down my part-truth, I must step in with its opposite. For, after all, we are vessels of a very limited content. Not all men can read all books; it is only in a chosen few that any man will find his appointed food; and the fittest lessons are the most palatable, and make themselves welcome to the mind. A writer learns this early, and it is his chief support; he goes on unafraid, laying down the law; and he is sure at heart that most of what he says is demonstrably false, and much of a mingled strain, and some hurtful, and very little good for service; but he is sure besides that when his words fall into the hands of any genuine reader, they will be weighed and winnowed, and only that which suits will be assimilated; and when they fall into the hands of one who cannot intelligently read, they come there quite silent and inarticulate, falling upon deaf ears, and his secret is kept as if he had not written.

Of *The British Weekly.*

VI

THE DAY AFTER TO-MORROW

History is much decried; it is a tissue of errors, we are told, no doubt correctly; and rival historians expose each other's blunders with gratification. Yet the worst historian has a clearer view of the period he studies than the best of us can hope to form of that in which we live. The obscurest epoch is to-day; and that for a thousand reasons of inchoate tendency, conflicting report, and sheer mass and multiplicity of experience; but chiefly, perhaps, by reason of an insidious shifting of landmarks. Parties and ideas continually move, but not by measurable marches on a stable course; the political soil itself steals forth by imperceptible degrees, like a travelling glacier, carrying on its bosom not only political parties but their flag-posts and cantonments; so that what appears to be an eternal city founded on hills is but a flying island of Laputa. It is for this reason in particular that we are all becoming Socialists without knowing it; by which I would not in the least refer to the acute case of Mr. Hyndman and his horn-blowing supporters, sounding their trumps of a Sunday within the walls of our individualist Jericho — but to the stealthy change that has come over the spirit of Englishmen and English legislation. A little while ago, and we were still for liberty; "crowd a few more thousands on the bench of Government," we seemed to cry; "keep her head direct on liberty, and we cannot help but come to port." This is over; *laisser faire* declines in favour; our legislation grows authoritative, grows philanthropical, bristles with new duties and new penalties, and casts a spawn of inspectors, who now begin, note-book in 280 hand, to darken the face of England. It may be right or wrong, we are not trying that; but one thing it is beyond doubt: it is Socialism in action, and the strange thing is that we scarcely know it.

Liberty has served us a long while, and it may be time to seek new altars. Like all other principles, she has been proved to be self-exclusive in the long run. She has taken wages besides (like all other virtues) and dutifully served Mammon; so that many things we were accustomed to admire as the benefits of freedom and common to all were truly benefits of wealth, and took their value from our neighbours' poverty. A few shocks of logic, a few disclosures (in the journalistic phrase) of what the freedom of manufacturers, landlords, or shipowners may imply for operatives, tenants or seamen, and we not unnaturally begin to turn to that other pole of hope, beneficent tyranny. Freedom, to be desirable, involves kindness, wisdom, and all the virtues of the free; but the free man as we have seen him in action has been, as of yore, only the master of many helots; and the slaves are still ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-taught, ill-housed, insolently treated, and driven to their mines and workshops by the lash of famine. So much, in other men's affairs, we have begun to see clearly; we have begun to despair of virtue in these other men, and from our seat in Parliament begin to discharge upon them, thick as arrows, the host of our inspectors. The landlord has long shaken his head over the manufacturer; those who do business on land have lost all trust in the virtues of the shipowner; the professions look askance upon the retail traders and have even started their co-operative stores to ruin them; and from out the smoke-wreaths of Birmingham a finger has begun to write upon the wall the condemnation of the landlord. Thus, piece by piece, do we condemn each other, and yet not perceive the conclusion, that our whole estate is somewhat damnable. Thus, piece by piece, each acting against his neighbour, each sawing away the branch on which some other interest is seated, do we apply in detail 281 our Socialistic remedies, and yet not perceive that we are all labouring together to bring in Socialism at large. A tendency so stupid and so selfish is like to prove invincible; and if Socialism be at all a practicable rule of life, there is every chance that our grandchildren will see the day and taste the pleasures of existence in something far liker an ant-heap than any previous human polity. And this not in the least because of the voice of Mr. Hyndman or the horns of his followers; but by the mere glacier movement of the political soil, bearing forward on its bosom, apparently undisturbed, the proud camps of Whig and Tory. If Mr. Hyndman were a man of keen humour, which is far from my conception of his character, he might rest from his troubling and look on: the walls of Jericho begin already to crumble and dissolve. That great servile war, the Armageddon of money and numbers, to which we looked forward when young, becomes more and more unlikely; and we may rather look to see a peaceable and blindfold evolution, the work of dull men immersed in political tactics and dead to political results.

The principal scene of this comedy lies, of course, in the House of Commons; it is there, besides, that the details of this new evolution (if it proceed) will fall to be decided; so that the state of Parliament is not only diagnostic of the present but fatefully prophetic of the future. Well, we all know what Parliament is, and we are all ashamed of it. We may pardon it some faults, indeed, on the ground of Irish obstruction — a bitter trial, which it supports with notable good humour. But the excuse is merely local; it cannot apply to similar bodies in America and France; and what are we to say of these? President Cleveland's letter may serve as a picture of the one; a glance at almost any paper will convince us of the weakness of the other. Decay appears to have seized on the organ of popular government in every land; and this just at the moment when we begin to bring to it, as to an oracle of justice, the whole skein of our private affairs to be unravelled, and ask it, like 282 a new Messiah, to take upon itself our frailties and play for us the part that should be played by our own virtues. For that, in few words, is the case. We cannot trust ourselves to behave with decency; we cannot trust our consciences; and the remedy proposed is to elect a round number of our neighbours, pretty much at random, and say to these: "Be ye our conscience; make laws so wise, and continue from year to year to administer them so wisely, that they shall save us from ourselves and make us righteous and happy, world without end. Amen." And who can look twice at the British Parliament and then seriously bring it such a task? I am not advancing this as an argument against Socialism; once again, nothing is further from my mind. There are great truths in Socialism, or no one, not even Mr. Hyndman, would be found to hold it; and if it came, and did one-tenth part of what it offers, I for one should make it welcome. But if it is to come, we may as well have some notion of what it will be like; and the first thing to grasp is that our new polity will be designed and administered (to put it courteously) with something short of inspiration. It will be made, or will grow, in a human parliament; and the one thing that will not very hugely change is human nature. The Anarchists think otherwise, from which it is only plain that they have not carried to the study of history the lamp of human sympathy.

Given, then, our new polity, with its new waggon-load of laws, what headmarks must we look for in the life? We chafe a good deal at that excellent thing, the income-tax, because it brings into our affairs the prying fingers, and exposes us to the tart words, of the official. The official, in all degrees, is already something of a terror to many of us. I would not willingly have to do with even a police-constable in any other spirit than that of kindness. I still remember in my dreams the eye-glass of a certain *attaché* at a certain embassy — an eye-glass that was a standing indignity to all on whom it looked; and my next most disagreeable remembrance is of a bracing, Republican 283 postman in the city of San Francisco. I lived in that city among working folk, and what my neighbours accepted at the postman's hands — nay, what I took from him myself — it is still distasteful to recall. The bourgeois, residing in the upper parts of society, has but few opportunities of tasting this peculiar bowl; but about the income-tax, as I have said, or perhaps about a patent, or in the halls of an embassy at the hands of my friend of the eye-glass, he occasionally sets his lips to it; and he may thus imagine (if he has that faculty of imagination, without which most faculties are void) how it tastes to his poorer neighbours who must drain it to the dregs. In every contact with authority, with their employer, with the police, with the School Board officer, in the hospital, or in the workhouse, they have equally the occasion to appreciate the light-hearted civility of the man in office; and as an experimentalist in several out-of-the-way provinces of life, I may say it has but to be felt to be appreciated. Well, this golden age of which we are speaking will be the golden age of officials. In all our concerns it will be their beloved duty to meddle, with what tact, with what obliging words, analogy will aid us to imagine. It is likely these gentlemen will be periodically elected; they will therefore have their turn of being underneath, which does not always sweeten men's conditions. The laws they will have to administer will be no clearer than those we know to-day, and the body which is to regulate their administration no wiser than the British Parliament. So that upon all hands we may look for a form of servitude most galling to the blood — servitude to many and changing masters, and for all the slights that accompany the rule of jack-in-office. And if the Socialistic programme be carried out with the least fulness, we shall have lost a thing, in most respects not much to be regretted, but as a moderator of oppression, a thing nearly invaluable — the newspaper. For the independent journal is a creature of capital and competition; it stands and falls with millionaires and railway bonds and all the abuses and glories of 284 to-day; and as soon as the State has fairly taken its bent to authority and philanthropy, and laid the least touch on private property, the days of the independent journal are numbered. State railways may be good things and so may State bakeries; but a State newspaper will never be a very trenchant critic of the State officials.

But again, these officials would have no sinecure. Crime would perhaps be less, for some of the motives of crime we may suppose would pass away. But if Socialism were carried out with any fulness, there would be more contraventions. We see already new sins springing up like mustard — School Board sins, factory sins, Merchant Shipping Act sins — none of which I would be thought to except against in particular, but all of which, taken together, show us that Socialism can be a hard master even in the beginning. If it go on to such heights as we hear proposed and lauded, if it come actually to its ideal of the ant-heap, ruled with iron justice, the number of new contraventions will be out of all proportion multiplied. Take the case of work alone. Man is an idle animal. He is at least as intelligent as the ant; but generations of advisers have in vain recommended him the ant's example. Of those who are found truly indefatigable in business, some are misers; some are the practisers of delightful industries, like gardening; some are students, artists, inventors, or discoverers, men lured forward by successive hopes; and the rest are those who live by games of skill or hazard — financiers, billiard-players, gamblers, and the like. But in unloved toils, even under the prick of necessity, no man is continually sedulous. Once eliminate the fear of starvation, once eliminate or bound the hope of riches, and we shall see plenty of skulking and malingering. Society will then be something not wholly unlike a cotton plantation in the old days; with cheerful, careless, demoralised slaves, with elected overseers, and, instead of the planter, a chaotic popular assembly. If the blood be purposeful and the soil strong, such a plantation may succeed, and be, indeed, 285 a busy ant-heap, with full granaries and long hours of leisure. But even then I think the whip will be in the overseer's hands, and not in vain. For, when it comes to be a question of each man doing his own share or the rest doing more, prettiness of sentiment will be forgotten. To dock the skulker's food is not enough; many will rather eat haws and starve on petty pilferings than put their shoulder to the wheel for one hour daily. For such as these, then, the whip will be in the overseer's hand; and his own sense of justice and the superintendence of a chaotic popular assembly will be the only checks on its employment. Now, you may be an industrious man and a good citizen, and yet not love, nor yet be loved by, Dr. Fell the inspector. It is admitted by private soldiers that the disfavour of a sergeant is an evil not to be combated; offend the sergeant, they say, and in a brief while you will either be disgraced or have deserted. And the sergeant can no longer appeal to the lash. But if these things go on, we shall see, or our sons shall see, what it is to have offended an inspector.

This for the unfortunate. But with the fortunate also, even those whom the inspector loves, it may not be altogether well. It is concluded that in such a state of society, supposing it to be financially sound, the level of comfort will be high. It does not follow: there are strange depths of idleness in man, a too-easily-got sufficiency, as in the case of the sago-eaters, often quenching the desire for all besides; and it is possible that the men of the richest ant-heaps may sink even into squalor. But suppose they do not; suppose our tricksy instrument of human nature, when we play upon it this new tune, should respond kindly; suppose no one to be damped and none exasperated by the new conditions, the whole enterprise to be financially sound — a vaulting supposition — and all the inhabitants to dwell together in a golden mean of comfort: we have yet to ask ourselves if this be what man desire, or if it be what man will even deign to accept for a continuance. It 286 is certain that man loves to eat, it is not certain that he loves that only or that best. He is supposed to love comfort; it is not a love, at least, that he is faithful to. He is supposed to love happiness; it is my contention that he rather loves excitement. Danger, enterprise, hope, the novel, the aleatory, are dearer to man than regular meals. He does not think so when he is hungry, but he thinks so again as soon as he is fed; and on the hypothesis of a successful ant-heap, he would never go hungry. It would be always after dinner in that society, as, in the land of the Lotos-eaters, it was always afternoon; and food, which, when we have it not, seems all-important, drops in our esteem, as soon as we have it, to a mere pre-requisite of living.

That for which man lives is not the same thing for all individuals nor in all ages; yet it has a common base; what he seeks and what he must have is that which will seize and hold his attention. Regular meals and weather-proof lodgings will not do this long. Play in its wide sense, as the artificial induction of sensation, including all games and all arts, will, indeed, go far to keep him conscious of himself; but in the end he wearies for realities. Study or experiment, to some rare natures, is the unbroken pastime of a life. These are enviable natures; people shut in the house by sickness often bitterly envy them; but the commoner man cannot continue to exist upon such altitudes: his feet itch for physical adventure; his blood boils for physical dangers, pleasures, and triumphs; his fancy, the looker after new things, cannot continue to look for them in books and crucibles, but must seek them on the breathing stage of life. Pinches, buffets, the glow of hope, the shock of disappointment, furious contention with obstacles: these are the true elixir for all vital spirits, these are what they seek alike in their romantic enterprises and their unromantic dissipations. When they are taken in some pinch closer than the common, they cry, “Catch me here again!” and sure enough you catch them there 287 again — perhaps before the week is out. It is as old as “Robinson Crusoe”; as old as man. Our race has not been strained for all these ages through that sieve of dangers that we call Natural Selection, to sit down with patience in the tedium of safety; the voices of its fathers call it forth. Already in our society as it exists, the bourgeois is too much cottoned about for any zest in living; he sits in his parlour out of reach of any danger, often out of reach of any vicissitude but one of health; and there he yawns. If the people in the next villa took pot-shots at him, he might be killed indeed, but so long as he escaped he would find his blood oxygenated and his views of the world brighter. If Mr. Mallock, on his way to the publishers, should have his skirts pinned to a wall by a javelin, it would not occur to him — at least for several hours — to ask if life were worth living; and if such peril were a daily matter, he would ask it never more; he would have other things to think about, he would be living indeed — not lying in a box with cotton, safe, but immeasurably dull. The aleatory, whether it touch life, or fortune, or renown — whether we explore Africa or only toss for halfpence — that is what I conceive men to love best, and that is what we are seeking to exclude from men’s existences. Of all forms of the aleatory, that which most commonly attends our working men — the danger of misery from want of work — is the least inspiriting: it does not whip the blood, it does not evoke the glory of contest; it is tragic, but it is passive; and yet, in so far as it is aleatory, and a peril sensibly touching them, it does truly season the men’s lives. Of those who fail, I do not speak — despair should be sacred; but to those who even modestly succeed, the changes of their life bring interest: a job found, a shilling saved, a dainty earned, all these are wells of pleasure springing afresh for the successful poor; and it is not from these but from the villa-dweller that we hear complaints of the unworthiness of life. Much, then, as the average of the proletariat would gain in this new state of life, they would also lose a certain 288 something, which would not be missed in the beginning, but would be missed progressively and progressively lamented. Soon there would be a looking back: there would be tales of the old world humming in young men’s ears, tales of the tramp and the pedlar, and the hopeful emigrant. And in the stall-fed life of the successful ant-heap — with its regular meals, regular duties, regular pleasures, an even course of life, and fear excluded — the vicissitudes, delights, and havens of to-day will seem of epic breadth. This may seem a shallow observation; but the springs by which men are moved lie much on the surface. Bread, I believe, has always been considered first, but the circus comes close upon its heels. Bread we suppose to be given amply; the cry for circuses will be the louder, and if the life of our descendants be such as we have conceived, there are two beloved pleasures on which they will be likely to fall back: the pleasures of intrigue and of sedition.

In all this I have supposed the ant-heap to be financially sound. I am no economist, only a writer of fiction; but even as such, I know one thing that bears on the economic question — I know the imperfection of man’s faculty for business. The Anarchists, who count some rugged elements of common-sense among what seem to me their tragic errors, have said upon this matter all that I could wish to say, and condemned beforehand great economical polities. So far it is obvious that they are right; they may be right also in predicting a period of communal independence, and they may even be right in thinking that desirable. But the rise of communes is none the less the end of economic equality, just when we were told it was beginning. Communes will not be all equal in extent, nor in quality of soil, nor in growth of population; nor will the surplus produce of all be equally marketable. It will be the old story of competing interests, only with a new unit; and, as it appears to me, a new, inevitable danger. For the merchant and the manufacturer, in this new world, will be a sovereign commune; it is a sovereign power that will see 289 its crops undersold, and its manufactures worsted in the market. And all the more dangerous that the sovereign power should be small. Great powers are slow to stir; national affronts, even with the aid of newspapers, filter slowly into popular consciousness; national losses are so unequally shared, that one part of the population will be counting its gains while another sits by a cold hearth. But in the sovereign commune all will be centralised and sensitive. When jealousy springs up, when (let us say) the commune of Poole has overreached the commune of Dorchester, irritation will run like quicksilver throughout the body politic; each man in Dorchester will have to suffer directly in his diet and his dress; even the secretary, who drafts the official correspondence, will sit down to his task embittered, as a man who has dined ill and may expect to dine worse; and thus a business difference between communes will take on much the same colour as a dispute between diggers in the lawless West, and will lead as directly to the arbitrament of blows. So that the establishment of the communal system will not only reintroduce all the injustices and heart-burnings of economic inequality, but will, in all human likelihood, inaugurate a world of hedgerow warfare. Dorchester will march on Poole, Sherborne on Dorchester, Wimborne on both; the waggons will be fired on as they follow the highway, the trains wrecked on the lines, the ploughman will go armed into the field of tillage; and if we have not a return of ballad literature, the local press at least will celebrate in a high vein the victory of Cerne Abbas or the reverse of Toller Porcorum. At least this will not be dull; when I was younger, I could have welcomed such a world with relief; but it is the New-Old with a vengeance, and irresistibly suggests the growth of military powers and the foundation of new empires.

VII

LETTER TO A YOUNG GENTLEMAN WHO PROPOSES TO EMBRACE THE CAREER OF ART

With the agreeable frankness of youth, you address me on a point of some practical importance to yourself and (it is even conceivable) of some gravity to the world: Should you or should you not become an artist? It is one which you must decide entirely for yourself; all that I can do is to bring under your notice some of the materials of that decision; and I will begin, as I shall probably conclude also, by assuring you that all depends on the vocation.

To know what you like is the beginning of wisdom and of old age. Youth is wholly experimental. The essence and charm of that unquiet and delightful epoch is ignorance of self as well as ignorance of life. These two unknowns the young man brings together again and again, now in the airiest touch, now with a bitter hug; now with exquisite pleasure, now with cutting pain; but never with indifference, to which he is a total stranger, and never with that near kinsman of indifference, contentment. If he be a youth of dainty senses or a brain easily heated, the interest of this series of experiments grows upon him out of all proportion to the pleasure he receives. It is not beauty that he loves, nor pleasure that he seeks, though he may think so; his design and his sufficient reward is to verify his own existence and taste the variety of human fate. To him, before the razor-edge of curiosity is dulled, all that is not actual living and the hot chase of experience wears a 291 face of a disgusting dryness difficult to recall in later days; or if there be any exception — and here destiny steps in — it is in those moments when, wearied or surfeited of the primary activity of the senses, he calls up before memory the image of transacted pains and pleasures. Thus it is that such an one shies from all cut-and-dry professions, and inclines insensibly toward that career of art which consists only in the tasting and recording of experience.

This, which is not so much a vocation for art as an impatience of all other honest trades, frequently exists alone; and, so existing, it will pass gently away in the course of years. Emphatically, it is not to be regarded; it is not a vocation, but a temptation; and when your father the other day so fiercely and (in my view) so properly discouraged your ambition, he was recalling not improbably some similar passage in his own experience. For the temptation is perhaps nearly as

common as the vocation is rare. But again we have vocations which are imperfect; we have men whose minds are bound up, not so much in any art, as in the general *ars artium* and common base of all creative work; who will now dip into painting, and now study counterpoint, and anon will be inditing a sonnet: all these with equal interest, all often with genuine knowledge. And of this temper, when it stands alone, I find it difficult to speak; but I should counsel such an one to take to letters, for in literature (which drags with so wide a net) all his information may be found some day useful, and if he should go on as he has begun, and turn at last into the critic, he will have learned to use the necessary tools. Lastly we come to those vocations which are at once decisive and precise; to the men who are born with the love of pigments, the passion of drawing, the gift of music, or the impulse to create with words, just as other and perhaps the same men are born with the love of hunting, or the sea, or horses, or the turning-lathe. These are predestined; if a man love the labour of any trade, apart from any question of success or fame, the gods have called 292
him. He may have the general vocation too: he may have a taste for all the arts, and I think he often has; but the mark of his calling is this laborious partiality for one, this inextinguishable zest in its technical successes, and (perhaps above all) a certain candour of mind, to take his very trifling enterprise with a gravity that would befit the cares of empire, and to think the smallest improvement worth accomplishing at any expense of time and industry. The book, the statue, the sonata, must be gone upon with the unreasoning good faith and the unflagging spirit of children at their play. *Is it worth doing?* — when it shall have occurred to any artist to ask himself that question, it is implicitly answered in the negative. It does not occur to the child as he plays at being a pirate on the dining-room sofa, nor to the hunter as he pursues his quarry; and the candour of the one and the ardour of the other should be united in the bosom of the artist.

If you recognise in yourself some such decisive taste, there is no room for hesitation: follow your bent. And observe (lest I should too much discourage you) that the disposition does not usually burn so brightly at the first, or rather not so constantly. Habit and practice sharpen gifts; the necessity of toil grows less disgusting, grows even welcome, in the course of years; a small taste (if it be only genuine) waxes with indulgence into an exclusive passion. Enough, just now, if you can look back over a fair interval, and see that your chosen art has a little more than held its own among the thronging interests of youth. Time will do the rest, if devotion help it; and soon your every thought will be engrossed in that beloved occupation.

But even with devotion, you may remind me, even with unfaltering and delighted industry, many thousand artists spend their lives, if the

result be regarded, utterly in vain: a thousand artists, and never one work of art. But the vast mass of mankind are incapable of doing anything reasonably well, art among the rest. The worthless artist 293
would not improbably have been a quite incompetent baker. And the artist, even if he does not amuse the public, amuses himself; so that there will always be one man the happier for his vigils. This is the practical side of art: its inexpugnable fortress for the true practitioner. The direct returns — the wages of the trade — are small, but the indirect — the wages of the life — are incalculably great. No other business offers a man his daily bread upon such joyful terms. The soldier and the explorer have moments of a worthier excitement, but they are purchased by cruel hardships and periods of tedium that beggar language. In the life of the artist there need be no hour without its pleasure. I take the author, with whose career I am best acquainted; and it is true he works in a rebellious material, and that the act of writing is cramped and trying both to the eyes and the temper; but remark him in his study when matter crowds upon him and words are not wanting — in what a continual series of small successes time flows by; with what a sense of power, as of one moving mountains, he marshals his petty characters; with what pleasures, both of the ear and eye, he sees his airy structure growing on the page; and how he labours in a craft to which the whole material of his life is tributary, and which opens a door to all his tastes, his loves, his hatreds, and his convictions, so that what he writes is only what he longed to utter. He may have enjoyed many things in this big, tragic playground of the world; but what shall he have enjoyed more fully than a morning of successful work? Suppose it ill-paid: the wonder is it should be paid at all. Other men pay, and pay dearly, for pleasures less desirable.

Nor will the practice of art afford you pleasure only; it affords besides an admirable training. For the artist works entirely upon honour. The public knows little or nothing of those merits in the quest of which you are condemned to spend the bulk of your endeavours. Merits of design, the merit of first-hand energy, the merit of a 294
certain cheap accomplishment which a man of the artistic temper easily acquires — these they can recognise, and these they value. But to those more exquisite refinements of proficiency and finish, which the artist so ardently desires and so keenly feels, for which (in the vigorous words of Balzac) he must toil “like a miner buried in a landslip,” for which, day after day, he recasts and revises and rejects — the gross mass of the public must be ever blind. To those lost pains, suppose you attain the highest pitch of merit, posterity may possibly do justice; suppose, as is so probable, you fail by even a hair’s breadth of the highest, rest certain they shall never be observed. Under the

shadow of this cold thought, alone in his studio, the artist must preserve from day to day his constancy to the ideal. It is this which makes his life noble; it is by this that the practice of his craft strengthens and matures his character; it is for this that even the serious countenance of the great emperor was turned approvingly (if only for a moment) on the followers of Apollo, and that sternly gentle voice bade the artist cherish his art.

And here there fall two warnings to be made. First, if you are to continue to be a law to yourself, you must beware of the first signs of laziness. This idealism in honesty can only be supported by perpetual effort; the standard is easily lowered, the artist who says "*It will do,*" is on the downward path; three or four pot-boilers are enough at times (above all at wrong times) to falsify a talent, and by the practice of journalism a man runs the risk of becoming wedded to cheap finish. This is the danger on the one side; there is not less upon the other. The consciousness of how much the artist is (and must be) a law to himself debauches the small heads. Perceiving recondite merits very hard to attain, making or swallowing artistic formulæ, or perhaps falling in love with some particular proficiency of his own, many artists forget the end of all art: to please. It is doubtless tempting to exclaim against the ignorant bourgeois; yet it should not be forgotten, 295 it is he who is to pay us, and that (surely on the face of it) for services that he shall desire to have performed. Here also, if properly considered, there is a question of transcendental honesty. To give the public what they do not want, and yet expect to be supported: we have there a strange pretension, and yet not uncommon, above all with painters. The first duty in this world is for a man to pay his way; when that is quite accomplished, he may plunge into what eccentricity he likes; but emphatically not till then. Till then, he must pay assiduous court to the bourgeois who carries the purse. And if in the course of these capitulations he shall falsify his talent, it can never have been a strong one, and he will have preserved a better thing than talent — character. Or if he be of a mind so independent that he cannot stoop to this necessity, one course is yet open: he can desist from art, and follow some more manly way of life.

I speak of a more manly way of life; it is a point on which I must be frank. To live by a pleasure is not a high calling; it involves patronage, however veiled; it numbers the artist, however ambitious, along with dancing girls and billiard-markers. The French have a romantic evasion for one employment, and call its practitioners the Daughters of Joy. The artist is of the same family, he is of the Sons of Joy, chose his trade to please himself, gains his livelihood by pleasing others, and has parted with something of the sterner dignity of man. Journals but a little while ago declaimed against the Tennyson peerage; and this

Son of Joy was blamed for condescension when he followed the example of Lord Lawrence and Lord Cairns and Lord Clyde. The poet was more happily inspired; with a better modesty he accepted the honour; and anonymous journalists have not yet (if I am to believe them) recovered the vicarious disgrace to their profession. When it comes to their turn, these gentlemen can do themselves more justice; and I shall be glad to think of it; for to my barbarian eyesight, even Lord Tennyson looks somewhat out of place 296 in that assembly. There should be no honours for the artist; he has already, in the practice of his art, more than his share of the rewards of life; the honours are pre-empted for other trades, less agreeable and perhaps more useful.

But the devil in these trades of pleasing is to fail to please. In ordinary occupations, a man offers to do a certain thing or to produce a certain article with a merely conventional accomplishment, a design in which (we may almost say) it is difficult to fail. But the artist steps forth out of the crowd and proposes to delight: an impudent design, in which it is impossible to fail without odious circumstances. The poor Daughter of Joy, carrying her smiles and finery quite unregarded through the crowd, makes a figure which it is impossible to recall without a wounding pity. She is the type of the unsuccessful artist. The actor, the dancer, and the singer must appear like her in person, and drain publicly the cup of failure. But though the rest of us escape this crowning bitterness of the pillory, we all court in essence the same humiliation. We all profess to be able to delight. And how few of us are! We all pledge ourselves to be able to continue to delight. And the day will come to each, and even to the most admired, when the ardour shall have declined and the cunning shall be lost, and he shall sit by his deserted booth ashamed. Then shall he see himself condemned to do work for which he blushes to take payment. Then (as if his lot were not already cruel) he must lie exposed to the gibes of the wreckers of the press, who earn a little bitter bread by the condemnation of trash which they have not read, and the praise of excellence which they cannot understand.

And observe that this seems almost the necessary end at least of writers. “Les Blancs et les Bleus” (for instance) is of an order of merit very different from “Le Vicomte de Bragelonne”; and if any gentleman can bear to spy upon the nakedness of “Castle Dangerous,” his name I think is Ham: let it be enough for the rest of us to read of it (not 297 without tears) in the pages of Lockhart. Thus in old age, when occupation and comfort are most needful, the writer must lay aside at once his pastime and his breadwinner. The painter indeed, if he succeed at all in engaging the attention of the public, gains great sums and can stand to his easel until a great age without dishonourable failure. The writer has the double misfortune to be ill-paid while he can work, and to be incapable of working when he is old. It is thus a way of life which conducts directly to a false position.

For the writer (in spite of notorious examples to the contrary) must look to be ill-paid. Tennyson and Montépin make handsome livelihoods; but we cannot all hope to be Tennyson, and we do not all perhaps desire to be Montépin. If you adopt an art to be your trade, weed your mind at the outset of all desire of money. What you may decently expect, if you have some talent and much industry, is such an income as a clerk will earn with a tenth or perhaps a twentieth of your nervous output. Nor have you the right to look for more; in the wages of the life, not in the wages of the trade, lies your reward; the work is here the wages. It will be seen I have little sympathy with the common lamentations of the artist class. Perhaps they do not remember the hire of the field labourer; or do they think no parallel will lie? Perhaps they have never observed what is the retiring allowance of a field officer; or do they suppose their contributions to the arts of pleasing more important than the services of a colonel? Perhaps they forget on how little Millet was content to live; or do they think, because they have less genius, they stand excused from the display of equal virtues? But upon one point there should be no dubiety: if a man be not frugal, he has no business in the arts. If he be not frugal, he steers directly for that last tragic scene of *le vieux saltimbanque*; if he be not frugal, he will find it hard to continue to be honest. Some day, when the butcher is knocking at the door, he may be tempted, he may be obliged, to turn out 298 and sell a slovenly piece of work. If the obligation shall have arisen through no wantonness of his own, he is even to be commended; for words cannot describe how far more necessary it is that a man should support his family, than that he should attain to — or preserve — distinction in the arts. But if the pressure comes through his own fault, he has stolen, and stolen under trust, and stolen (which is the worst of all) in such a way that no law can reach him.

And now you may perhaps ask me whether — if the débutant artist is to have no thought of money, and if (as is implied) he is to expect no honours from the State — he may not at least look forward to the delights of popularity? Praise, you will tell me, is a savoury dish. And in so far as you may mean the countenance of other artists, you would put your finger on one of the most essential and enduring pleasures of the career of art. But in so far as you should have an eye to the commendations of the public or the notice of the newspapers, be sure you would but be cherishing a dream. It is true that in certain esoteric journals the author (for instance) is duly criticised, and that he is often praised a great deal more than he deserves, sometimes for qualities which he prided himself on eschewing, and sometimes by ladies and gentlemen who have denied themselves the privilege of reading his work. But if a man be sensitive to this wild praise, we must suppose him equally alive to that which often accompanies and always follows it — wild ridicule. A man may have done well for years, and then he may fail; he will hear of his failure. Or he may have done well for years, and still do well, but the critics may have tired of praising him, or there may have sprung up some new idol of the instant, some "dust a little gilt," to whom they now prefer to offer sacrifice. Here is the obverse and the reverse of that empty and ugly thing called popularity. Will any man suppose it worth the gaining?

VIII

PULVIS ET UMBRA

We look for some reward of our endeavours and are disappointed; not success, not happiness, not even peace of conscience, crowns our ineffectual efforts to do well. Our frailties are invincible, our virtues barren; the battle goes sore against us to the going down of the sun. The canting moralist tells us of right and wrong; and we look abroad, even on the face of our small earth, and find them change with every climate, and no country where some action is not honoured for a virtue and none where it is not branded for a vice; and we look in our experience, and find no vital congruity in the wisest rules, but at the best a municipal fitness. It is not strange if we are tempted to despair of good. We ask too much. Our religions and moralities have been trimmed to flatter us, till they are all emasculate and sentimentalised, and only please and weaken. Truth is of a rougher strain. In the harsh face of life, faith can read a bracing gospel. The human race is a thing more ancient than the ten commandments; and the bones and revolutions of the Kosmos, in whose joints we are but moss and fungus, more ancient still.

I

Of the Kosmos in the last resort, science reports many doubtful things, and all of them appalling. There seems no substance to this solid globe on which we stamp: nothing but symbols and ratios. Symbols and ratios carry us and 300 bring us forth and beat us down; gravity, that swings the incommensurable suns and worlds through space, is but a figment varying inversely as the squares of distances; and the suns and worlds themselves, imponderable figures of abstraction, NH3 and H2O. Consideration dares not dwell upon this view; that way madness lies; science carries us into zones of speculation, where there is no habitable city for the mind of man.

But take the Kosmos with a grosser faith, as our senses give it us. We behold space sown with rotatory islands, suns and worlds and the shards and wrecks of systems: some, like the sun, still blazing; some rotting, like the earth; others, like the moon, stable in desolation. All of these we take to be made of something we call matter: a thing which no analysis can help us to conceive; to whose incredible properties no familiarity can reconcile our minds. This stuff, when not purified by the lustration of fire, rots uncleanly into something we call life; seized through all its atoms with a pediculous malady; swelling in tumours that become independent, sometimes even (by an abhorrent prodigy) locomotory; one splitting into millions, millions cohering into one, as the malady proceeds through varying stages. This vital putrescence of the dust, used as we are to it, yet strikes us with occasional disgust, and the profusion of worms in a piece of ancient turf, or the air of a marsh darkened with insects, will sometimes check our breathing so that we aspire for cleaner places. But none is clean: the moving sand is infected with lice; the pure spring, where it bursts out of the mountain, is a mere issue of worms; even in the hard rock the crystal is forming.

In two main shapes this eruption covers the countenance of the earth: the animal and the vegetable: one in some degree the inversion of the other: the second rooted to the spot; the first coming detached out of its natal mud, and scurrying abroad with the myriad feet of insects or towering into the heavens on the wings of birds: a thing so inconceivable that, if it be well considered, the heart 301 stops. To what passes with the anchored vermin, we have little clue: doubtless they have their joys and sorrows, their delights and killing agonies: it appears not how. But of the locomotory, to which we ourselves belong, we can tell more. These share with us a thousand miracles: the miracles of sight, of hearing, of the projection of sound, things that bridge space; the miracles of memory and reason, by which the present is conceived, and, when it is gone, its image kept living in the brains of man and brute; the miracle of reproduction, with its imperious desires and staggering consequences. And to put the last touch upon this mountain mass of the revolting and the inconceivable, all these prey upon each other, lives tearing other lives in pieces, cramming them inside themselves, and by that summary process, growing fat: the vegetarian, the whale, perhaps the tree, not less than the lion of the desert; for the vegetarian is only the eater of the dumb.

Meanwhile our rotary island loaded with predatory life, and more drenched with blood, both animal and vegetable, than ever mutinied ship, scuds through space with unimaginable speed, and turns alternate cheeks to the reverberation of a blazing world, ninety million miles away.

II

What a monstrous spectre is this man, the disease of the agglutinated dust, lifting alternate feet or lying drugged with slumber; killing, feeding, growing, bringing forth small copies of himself; grown upon with hair like grass, fitted with eyes that move and glitter in his face; a thing to set children screaming; — and yet looked at nearlier, known as his fellows know him, how surprising are his attributes! Poor soul, here for so little, cast among so many hardships, filled with desires so incommensurate and so inconsistent, savagely surrounded, savagely descended, irremediably condemned to prey upon his fellow lives: who 302 should have blamed him had he been of a piece with his destiny and a being merely barbarous? And we look and behold him instead filled with imperfect virtues: infinitely childish, often admirably valiant, often touchingly kind; sitting down, amidst his momentary life, to debate of right and wrong and the attributes of the Deity; rising up to do battle for an egg or die for an idea; singling out his friends and his mate with cordial affection; bringing forth in pain, rearing with long-suffering solicitude, his young. To touch the heart of his mystery, we find in him one thought, strange to the point of lunacy: the thought of duty; the thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbour, to his God: an ideal of decency, to which he would rise if it were possible; a limit of shame, below which, if it be possible, he will not stoop. The design in most men is one of conformity; here and there, in picked natures, it transcends itself and soars on the other side, arming martyrs with independence; but in all, in their degrees, it is a bosom thought: — Not in man alone, for we trace it in dogs and cats whom we know fairly well, and doubtless some similar point of honour sways the elephant, the oyster, and the louse, of whom we know so little: — But in man, at least, it sways with so complete an empire that merely selfish things come second, even with the selfish: that appetites are starved, fears are conquered, pains supported; that almost the dullest shrinks from the reproof of a glance, although it were a child's; and all but the most cowardly stand amid the risks of war; and the more noble, having strongly conceived an act as due to their ideal, affront and embrace death. Strange enough if, with their singular origin and perverted practice, they think they are to be rewarded in some future life: stranger still, if they are persuaded of the contrary, and think this blow, which they solicit, will strike them senseless for eternity. I shall be reminded what a tragedy of misconception and misconduct man at large presents: of organised injustice, cowardly violence and treacherous crime; and of the 303 damning imperfections of the best. They cannot be too darkly drawn.

Man is indeed marked for failure in his efforts to do right. But where the best consistently miscarry, how tenfold more remarkable that all should continue to strive: and surely we should find it both touching and inspiriting, that in a field from which success is banished, our race should not cease to labour.

If the first view of this creature, stalking in his rotatory isle, be a thing to shake the courage of the stoutest, on this nearer sight he startles us with an admiring wonder. It matters not where we look, under what climate we observe him, in what stage of society, in what depth of ignorance, burthened with what erroneous morality; by camp-fires in Assiniboia, the snow powdering his shoulders, the wind plucking his blanket, as he sits, passing the ceremonial calumet and uttering his grave opinions like a Roman senator; in ships at sea, a man inured to hardship and vile pleasures, his brightest hope a fiddle in a tavern and a bedizened trull who sells herself to rob him, and he, for all that, simple, innocent, cheerful, kindly like a child, constant to toil, brave to drown, for others; in the slums of cities, moving among indifferent millions to mechanical employments, without hope of change in the future, with scarce a pleasure in the present, and yet true to his virtues, honest up to his lights, kind to his neighbours, tempted perhaps in vain by the bright gin-palace, perhaps long-suffering with the drunken wife that ruins him; in India (a woman this time) kneeling with broken cries and streaming tears, as she drowns her child in the sacred river; in the brothel, the discard of society, living mainly on strong drink, fed with affronts, a fool, a thief, the comrade of thieves, and even here keeping the point of honour and the touch of pity, often repaying the world's scorn with service, often standing firm upon a scruple, and at a certain cost, rejecting riches: — everywhere some virtue cherished or affected, everywhere some decency of thought and carriage, everywhere the ensign of man's ineffectual goodness: — ah! if I could show you 304 this! if I could show you these men and women, all the world over, in every stage of history, under every abuse of error, under every circumstance of failure, without hope, without help, without thanks, still obscurely fighting the lost fight of virtue, still clinging, in the brothel or on the scaffold, to some rag of honour, the poor jewel of their souls! They may seek to escape, and yet they cannot; it is not alone their privilege and glory, but their doom; they are condemned to some nobility; all their lives long, the desire of good is at their heels, the implacable hunter.

Of all earth's meteors, here at least is the most strange and consoling: that this ennobled lemur, this hair-crowned bubble of the dust, this inheritor of a few years and sorrows, should yet deny himself his rare delights, and add to his frequent pains, and live for an ideal, however misconceived. Nor can we stop with man. A new doctrine, received with screams a little while ago by canting moralists, and still not properly worked into the body of our thoughts, lights us a step farther into the heart of this rough but noble universe. For nowadays the pride of man denies in vain his kinship with the original dust. He stands no longer like a thing apart. Close at his heels we see the dog, prince of another genus: and in him, too, we see dumbly testified the same cultus of an unattainable ideal, the same constancy in failure. Does it stop with the dog? We look at our feet where the ground is blackened with the swarming ant; a creature so small, so far from us in the hierarchy of brutes, that we can scarce trace and scarce comprehend his doings; and here also, in his ordered polities and rigorous justice, we see confessed the law of duty and the fact of individual sin. Does it stop, then, with the ant? Rather this desire of welldoing and this doom of frailty run through all the grades of life: rather is this earth, from the frosty top of Everest to the next margin of the internal fire, one stage of ineffectual virtues and one temple of pious tears and perseverance. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together. It is the common and the god-like law of life. 305 The browsers, the biters, the barkers, the hairy coats of field and forest, the squirrel in the oak, the thousand-footed creeper in the dust, as they share with us the gift of life, share with us the love of an ideal: strive like us — like us are tempted to grow weary of the struggle — to do well; like us receive at times unmerited refreshment, visitings of support, returns of courage; and are condemned like us to be crucified between that double law of the members and the will. Are they like us, I wonder, in the timid hope of some reward, some sugar with the drug? do they, too, stand aghast at unrewarded virtues, at the sufferings of those whom, in our partiality, we take to be just, and the prosperity of such as, in our blindness, we call wicked? It may be, and yet God knows what they should look for. Even while they look, even while they repent, the foot of man treads them by thousands in the dust, the yelping hounds burst upon their trail, the bullet speeds, the knives are heating in the den of the vivisectionist; or the dew falls, and the generation of a day is blotted out. For these are creatures, compared with whom our weakness is strength, our ignorance wisdom, our brief span eternity.

And as we dwell, we living things, in our isle of terror and under the imminent hand of death, God forbid it should be man the erected, the reasoner, the wise in his own eyes — God forbid it should be man that wearies in welldoing, that despairs of unrewarded effort, or utters the language of complaint. Let it be enough for faith, that the whole creation groans in mortal frailty, strives with unconquerable constancy: Surely not all in vain.

IX

A CHRISTMAS SERMON

By the time this paper appears, I shall have been talking for twelve months; and it is thought I should take my leave in a formal and seasonable manner. Valedictory eloquence is rare, and death-bed sayings have not often hit the mark of the occasion. Charles Second, wit and sceptic, a man whose life had been one long lesson in human incredulity, an easy-going comrade, a manœuvring king — remembered and embodied all his wit and scepticism along with more than his usual good humour in the famous "I am afraid, gentlemen, I am an unconscionable time a-dying."

I

An unconscionable time a-dying — there is the picture ("I am afraid, gentlemen,") of your life and of mine. The sands run out, and the hours are "numbered and imputed," and the days go by; and when the last of these finds us, we have been a long time dying, and what else? The very length is something, if we reach that hour of separation undishonoured; and to have lived at all is doubtless (in the soldierly expression) to have served. There is a tale in Tacitus of how the veterans mutinied in the German wilderness; of how they mobbed Germanicus, clamouring to go home; and of how, seizing their general's hand, these old, war-worn exiles passed his finger along their toothless gums. *Sunt lacrymæ rerum*: this was the most eloquent 307 of the songs of Simeon. And when a man has lived to a fair age, he bears his marks of service. He may have never been remarked upon the breach at the head of the army; at least he shall have lost his teeth on the camp bread.

The idealism of serious people in this age of ours is of a noble character. It never seems to them that they have served enough; they have a fine impatience of their virtues. It were perhaps more modest to be singly thankful that we are no worse. It is not only our enemies, those desperate characters — it is we ourselves who know not what we do; — thence springs the glimmering hope that perhaps we do better than we think: that to scramble through this random business with hands reasonably clean, to have played the part of a man or woman with some reasonable fulness, to have often resisted the diabolic, and at the end to be still resisting it, is for the poor human soldier to have done right well. To ask to see some fruit of our endeavour is but a transcendental way of serving for reward; and what we take to be contempt of self is only greed of hire.

And again if we require so much of ourselves, shall we not require much of others? If we do not genially judge our own deficiencies, is it not to be feared we shall be even stern to the trespasses of others? And he who (looking back upon his own life) can see no more than that he has been unconscionably long a-dying, will he not be tempted to think his neighbour unconscionably long of getting hanged? It is probable that nearly all who think of conduct at all, think of it too much; it is certain we all think too much of sin. We are not damned for doing wrong, but for not doing right; Christ would never hear of negative morality; *thou shall* was ever His word, with which He superseded *thou shall not*. To make our idea of morality centre on forbidden acts is to defile the imagination and to introduce into our judgments of our fellow-men a secret element of gusto. If a thing is wrong for us, we should not dwell upon the thought of it; or we shall soon dwell upon it with inverted pleasure. If we cannot drive it from our minds — one 308 thing of two: either our creed is in the wrong and we must more indulgently remodel it; or else, if our morality be in the right, we are criminal lunatics and should place our persons in restraint. A mark of such unwholesomely divided minds is the passion for interference with others: the Fox without the Tail was of this breed, but had (if his biographer is to be trusted) a certain antique civility now out of date. A man may have a flaw, a weakness, that unfits him for the duties of life, that spoils his temper, that threatens his integrity, or that betrays him into cruelty. It has to be conquered; but it must never be suffered to engross his thoughts. The true duties lie all upon the further side, and must be attended to with a whole mind so soon as this preliminary clearing of the decks has been effected. In order that he may be kind and honest, it may be needful he should become a total abstainer; let him become so then, and the next day let him forget the circumstance. Trying to be kind and honest will require all his thoughts; a mortified appetite is never a wise companion; in so far as he has had to mortify an appetite, he will still be the worse man; and of such an one a great deal of cheerfulness will be required in judging life, and a great deal of humility in judging others.

It may be argued again that dissatisfaction with our life's endeavour springs in some degree from dulness. We require higher tasks, because we do not recognise the height of those we have. Trying to be kind and honest seems an affair too simple and too inconsequential for gentlemen of our heroic mould; we had rather set ourselves to something bold, arduous, and conclusive; we had rather found a schism or suppress a heresy, cut off a hand or mortify an appetite. But the task before us, which is to co-endure with our existence, is rather one of microscopic fineness, and the heroism required is that of patience. There is no cutting of the Gordian knots of life; each must be smilingly unravelled.

To be honest, to be kind — to earn a little and to spend 309 a little less, to make upon the whole a family happier for his presence, to renounce when that shall be necessary and not be embittered, to keep a few friends, but these without capitulation — above all, on the same grim condition, to keep friends with himself — here is a task for all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy. He has an ambitious soul who would ask more; he has a hopeful spirit who should look in such an enterprise to be successful. There is indeed one element in human destiny that not blindness itself can controvert: whatever else we are intended to do, we are not intended to succeed; failure is the fate allotted. It is so in every art and study; it is so above all in the continent art of living well. Here is a pleasant thought for the year’s end or for the end of life: Only self-deception will be satisfied, and there need be no despair for the despairer.

II

But Christmas is not only the mile-mark of another year, moving us to thoughts of self-examination: it is a season, from all its associations, whether domestic or religious, suggesting thoughts of joy. A man dissatisfied with his endeavours is a man tempted to sadness. And in the midst of the winter, when his life runs lowest and he is reminded of the empty chairs of his beloved, it is well he should be condemned to this fashion of the smiling face. Noble disappointment, noble self-denial, are not to be admired, not even to be pardoned, if they bring bitterness. It is one thing to enter the kingdom of heaven maim; another to maim yourself and stay without. And the kingdom of heaven is of the childlike, of those who are easy to please, who love and who give pleasure. Mighty men of their hands, the smiters and the builders and the judges, have lived long and done sternly and yet preserved this lovely character; and among our carpet interests and 310 twopenny concerns, the shame were indelible if *we* should lose it. Gentleness and cheerfulness, these come before all morality; they are the perfect duties. And it is the trouble with moral men that they have neither one nor other. It was the moral man, the Pharisee, whom Christ could not away with. If your morals make you dreary, depend upon it they are wrong. I do not say "give them up," for they may be all you have; but conceal them like a vice, lest they should spoil the lives of better and simpler people.

A strange temptation attends upon man: to keep his eye on pleasures, even when he will not share in them; to aim all his morals against them. This very year a lady (singular iconoclast!) proclaimed a crusade against dolls; and the racy sermon against lust is a feature of the age. I venture to call such moralists insincere. At any excess or perversion of a natural appetite, their lyre sounds of itself with relishing denunciations; but for all displays of the truly diabolic — envy, malice, the mean lie, the mean silence, the calumnious truth, the backbiter, the petty tyrant, the peevish poisoner of family life — their standard is quite different. These are wrong, they will admit, yet somehow not so wrong; there is no zeal in their assault on them, no secret element of gusto warms up the sermon; it is for things not wrong in themselves that they reserve the choicest of their indignation. A man may naturally disclaim all moral kinship with the Reverend Mr. Zola or the hobgoblin old lady of the dolls; for these are gross and naked instances. And yet in each of us some similar element resides. The sight of a pleasure in which we cannot or else will not share moves us to a particular impatience. It may be because we are envious, or because we are sad, or because we dislike noise and romping — being so refined, or because — being so philosophic — we have an overweighing sense of life’s gravity: at least, as we go on in years, we are all tempted to frown upon our neighbour’s pleasures. People are nowadays so fond of resisting temptations; here 311 is one to be resisted. They are fond of self-denial; here is a propensity that cannot be too peremptorily denied. There is an idea abroad among moral people that they should make their neighbours good. One person I have to make good: myself. But my duty to my neighbour is much more nearly expressed by saying that I have to make him happy — if I may.

III

Happiness and goodness, according to canting moralists, stand in the relation of effect and cause. There was never anything less proved or less probable: our happiness is never in our own hands; we inherit our constitution; we stand buffet among friend and enemies; we may be so built as to feel a sneer or an aspersion with unusual keenness, and so circumstanced as to be unusually exposed to them; we may have nerves very sensitive to pain, and be afflicted with a disease very painful. Virtue will not help us, and it is not meant to help us. It is not even its own reward, except for the self-centred and — I had almost said — the unamiable. No man can pacify his conscience; if quiet be what he want, he shall do better to let that organ perish from disuse. And to avoid the penalties of the law, and the minor *capitis diminutio* of social ostracism, is an affair of wisdom — of cunning, if you will — and not of virtue.

In his own life, then, a man is not to expect happiness, only to profit by it gladly when it shall arise; he is on duty here; he knows not how or why, and does not need to know; he knows not for what hire, and must not ask. Somehow or other, though he does not know what goodness is, he must try to be good; somehow or other, though he cannot tell what will do it, he must try to give happiness to others. And no doubt there comes in here a frequent clash of duties. How far is he to make his neighbour happy? How far must he respect that smiling face, so 312 easy to cloud, so hard to brighten again? And how far, on the other side, is he bound to be his brother's keeper and the prophet of his own morality? How far must he resent evil?

The difficulty is that we have little guidance; Christ's sayings on the point being hard to reconcile with each other, and (the most of them) hard to accept. But the truth of His teaching would seem to be this: in our own person and fortune, we should be ready to accept and to pardon all; it is *our* cheek we are to turn, *our* coat that we are to give away to the man who has taken *our* cloak. But when another's face is buffeted, perhaps a little of the lion will become us best. That we are to suffer others to be injured, and stand by, is not conceivable, and surely not desirable. Revenge, says Bacon, is a kind of wild justice; its judgments at least are delivered by an insane judge; and in our own quarrel we can see nothing truly and do nothing wisely. But in the quarrel of our neighbour, let us be more bold. One person's happiness is as sacred as another's; when we cannot defend both, let us defend one with a stout heart. It is only in so far as we are doing this, that we have any right to interfere: the defence of B is our only ground of action against A. A has as good a right to go to the devil as we to go to glory; and neither knows what he does.

The truth is that all these interventions and denunciations and militant mongerings of moral half-truths, though they be sometimes needful, though they are often enjoyable, do yet belong to an inferior grade of duties. Ill-temper and envy and revenge find here an arsenal of pious disguises; this is the playground of inverted lusts. With a little more patience and a little less temper, a gentler and wiser method might be found in almost every case; and the knot that we cut by some fine heady quarrel-scene in private life, or, in public affairs, by some denunciatory act against what we are pleased to call our neighbour's vices, might yet have been unwoven by the hand of sympathy.

IV

To look back upon the past year, and see how little we have striven, and to what small purpose; and how often we have been cowardly and hung back, or temerarious and rushed unwisely in; and how every day and all day long we have transgressed the law of kindness; — it may seem a paradox, but in the bitterness of these discoveries a certain consolation resides. Life is not designed to minister to a man's vanity. He goes upon his long business most of the time with a hanging head, and all the time like a blind child. Full of rewards and pleasures as it is — so that to see the day break or the moon rise, or to meet a friend, or to hear the dinner-call when he is hungry, fills him with surprising joys — this world is yet for him no abiding city. Friendships fall through, health fails, weariness assails him; year after year he must thumb the hardly varying record of his own weakness and folly. It is a friendly process of detachment. When the time comes that he should go, there need be few illusions left about himself. *Here lies one who meant well, tried a little, failed much:* — surely that may be his epitaph, of which he need not be ashamed. Nor will he complain at the summons which calls a defeated soldier from the field: defeated, ay, if he were Paul or Marcus Aurelius! — but if there is still one inch of fight in his old spirit, undishonoured. The faith which sustained him in his lifelong blindness and lifelong disappointment will scarce even be required in this last formality of laying down his arms. Give him a march with his old bones; there, out of the glorious sun-coloured earth, out of the day and the dust and the ecstasy — there goes another Faithful Failure!

From a recent book of verse, where there is more than one such beautiful and manly poem, I take this memorial piece: it says better than I can, what I love to think; let it be our parting word: —

“A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
And from the west,Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, grey city
An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.
“The smoke ascends
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires
Shine, and are changed. In the valley
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night —

Night, with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.
“So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.”

i.e. in the pages of *Scribner’s Magazine* (1888).

From “A Book of Verses,” by William Ernest Henley. D. Nutt, 1888.

X

FATHER DAMIEN

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REVEREND DR. HYDE OF HONOLULU

Sydney, *February* 25, 1890.

Sir, — It may probably occur to you that we have met, and visited, and conversed; on my side, with interest. You may remember that you have done me several courtesies, for which I was prepared to be grateful. But there are duties which come before gratitude, and offences which justly divide friends, far more acquaintances. Your letter to the Reverend H. B. Gage is a document which, in my sight, if you had filled me with bread when I was starving, if you had sat up to nurse my father when he lay a-dying, would yet absolve me from the bonds of gratitude. You know enough, doubtless, of the process of canonisation to be aware that, a hundred years after the death of Damien, there will appear a man charged with the painful office of the *devil's advocate*. After that noble brother of mine, and of all frail clay, shall have lain a century at rest, one shall accuse, one defend him. The circumstance is unusual that the devil's advocate should be a volunteer, should be a member of a sect immediately rival, and should make haste to take upon himself his ugly office ere the bones are cold; unusual, and of a taste which I shall leave my readers free to qualify; unusual, and to me inspiring. If I have at all learned the trade of using words to convey truth and to arouse emotion, you have at last furnished me with a subject. For it is in the interest of all mankind, and the 316 cause of public decency in every quarter of the world, not only that Damien should be righted, but that you and your letter should be displayed at length, in their true colours, to the public eye.

To do this properly, I must begin by quoting you at large: I shall then proceed to criticise your utterance from several points of view, divine and human, in the course of which I shall attempt to draw again, and with more specification, the character of the dead saint whom it has pleased you to vilify: so much being done, I shall say farewell to you for ever.

"Honolulu, *August* 2, 1889.

"Rev. H. B. Gage.

"Dear Brother, — In answer to your inquiries about Father Damien, I can only reply that we who knew the man are surprised at the extravagant newspaper laudations, as if he was a most saintly philanthropist. The simple truth is, he was a coarse, dirty man, headstrong and bigoted. He was not sent to Molokai, but went there without orders; did not stay at the leper settlement (before he became one himself), but circulated freely over the whole island (less than half the island is devoted to the lepers), and he came often to Honolulu. He had no hand in the reforms and improvements inaugurated, which were the work of our Board of Health, as occasion required and means were provided. He was not a pure man in his relations with women, and the leprosy of which he died should be attributed to his vices and carelessness. Others have done much for the lepers, our own ministers, the government physicians, and so forth, but never with the Catholic idea of meriting eternal life. — Yours, etc.,

“C. M. Hyde.”

To deal fitly with a letter so extraordinary, I must draw at the outset on my private knowledge of the signatory and his sect. It may offend others; scarcely you, who have been so busy to collect, so bold to publish, gossip on your rivals. And this is perhaps the moment when I may best explain to you the character of what you are to read: I conceive you as a man quite beyond and below the reticences of civility: with what measure you mete, with that shall it be measured you again; with you, at last, I rejoice 317 to feel the button off the foil and to plunge home. And if in aught that I shall say I should offend others, your colleagues, whom I respect and remember with affection, I can but offer them my regret; I am not free, I am inspired by the consideration of interests far more large; and such pain as can be inflicted by anything from me must be indeed trifling when compared with the pain with which they read your letter. It is not the hangman, but the criminal, that brings dishonour on the house.

You belong, sir, to a sect — I believe my sect, and that in which my ancestors laboured — which has enjoyed, and partly failed to utilise, an exceptional advantage in the islands of Hawaii. The first missionaries came; they found the land already self-purged of its old and bloody faith; they were embraced, almost on their arrival, with enthusiasm; what troubles they supported came far more from whites than from Hawaiians; and to these last they stood (in a rough figure) in the shoes of God. This is not the place to enter into the degree or causes of their failure, such as it is. One element alone is pertinent, and must here be plainly dealt with. In the course of their evangelical calling, they — or too many of them — grew rich. It may be news to you that the houses of missionaries are a cause of mocking on the streets of Honolulu. It will at least be news to you, that when I returned your civil visit, the driver of my cab commented on the size, the taste, and the comfort of your home. It would have been news certainly to myself, had any one told me that afternoon that I should live to drag such matter into print. But you see, sir, how you degrade better men to your own level; and it is needful that those who are to judge betwixt you and me, betwixt Damien and the devil's advocate, should understand your letter to have been penned in a house which could raise, and that very justly, the envy and the comments of the passers-by. I think (to employ a phrase of yours which I admire) it "should be attributed" to you that you have never visited the scene of Damien's life and 318 death. If you had, and had recalled it, and looked about your pleasant rooms, even your pen perhaps would have been stayed.

Your sect (and remember, as far as any sect avows me, it is mine) has not done ill in a worldly sense in the Hawaiian Kingdom. When calamity befell their innocent parishioners, when leprosy descended and took root in the Eight Islands, a *quid pro quo* was to be looked for. To that prosperous mission, and to you, as one of its adornments, God had sent at last an opportunity. I know I am touching here upon a nerve acutely sensitive. I know that others of your colleagues look back on the inertia of your Church, and the intrusive and decisive heroism of Damien, with something almost to be called remorse. I am sure it is so with yourself; I am persuaded your letter was inspired by a certain envy, not essentially ignoble, and the one human trait to be espied in that performance. You were thinking of the lost chance, the past day; of that which should have been conceived and was not; of the service due and not rendered. *Time was*, said the voice in your ear, in your pleasant room, as you sat raging and writing; and if the words written were base beyond parallel, the rage, I am happy to repeat — it is the only compliment I shall pay you — the rage was almost virtuous. But, sir, when we have failed, and another has succeeded; when we have stood by, and another has stepped in; when we sit and grow bulky in our charming mansions, and a plain, uncouth peasant steps into the battle, under the eyes of God, and succours the afflicted, and consoles the dying, and is himself afflicted in his turn, and dies upon the field of honour — the battle cannot be retrieved as your unhappy irritation has suggested. It is a lost battle, and lost for ever. One thing remained to you in your defeat — some rags of common honour; and these you have made haste to cast away.

Common honour; not the honour of having done anything right, but the honour of not having done aught conspicuously 319 foul; the honour of the inert: that was what remained to you. We are not all expected to be Damiens; a man may conceive his duty more narrowly, he may love his comforts better; and none will cast a stone at him for that. But will a gentleman of your reverend profession allow me an example from the fields of gallantry? When two gentlemen compete for the favour of a lady, and the one succeeds and the other is rejected, and (as will sometimes happen) matter damaging to the successful rival's credit reaches the ear of the defeated, it is held by plain men of no pretensions that his mouth is, in the circumstance, almost necessarily closed. Your Church and Damien's were in Hawaii upon a rivalry to do well: to help, to edify, to set divine examples. You having (in one huge instance) failed, and Damien succeeded, I marvel it should not have occurred to you that you were doomed to silence; that when you had been outstripped in that high rivalry, and sat inglorious in the midst of your well-being, in your pleasant room — and Damien, crowned with glories and horrors, toiled and rotted in that pigsty of his under the cliffs of Kalawao — you, the elect who would not, were the last man on earth to collect and propagate gossip on the volunteer who would and did.

I think I see you — for I try to see you in the flesh as I write these sentences — I think I see you leap at the word pigsty, a hyperbolical expression at the best. "He had no hand in the reforms," he was "a coarse, dirty man"; these were your own words; and you may think it possible that I am come to support you with fresh evidence. In a sense, it is even so. Damien has been too much depicted with a conventional halo and conventional features; so drawn by men who perhaps had not the eye to remark or the pen to express the individual; or who perhaps were only blinded and silenced by generous admiration, such as I partly envy for myself — such as you, if your soul were enlightened, would envy on your bended knees. It is the least defect of such a method of portraiture that it makes the 320 path easy for the devil's advocate, and leaves for the misuse of the slanderer a considerable field of truth. For the truth that is suppressed by friends is the readiest weapon of the enemy. The world, in your despite, may perhaps owe you something, if your letter be the means of substituting once for all a credible likeness for a wax abstraction. For, if that world at all remember you, on the day when Damien of Molokai shall be named Saint, it will be in virtue of one work: your letter to the Reverend H. B. Gage.

You may ask on what authority I speak. It was my inclement destiny to become acquainted, not with Damien, but with Dr. Hyde. When I visited the lazaretto Damien was already in his resting grave. But such information as I have, I gathered on the spot in conversation with those who knew him well and long: some indeed who revered his memory; but others who had sparred and wrangled with him, who beheld him with no halo, who perhaps regarded him with small respect, and through whose unprepared and scarcely partial communications the plain, human features of the man shone on me convincingly. These gave me what knowledge I possess; and I learnt it in that scene where it could be most completely and sensitively understood — Kalawao, which you have never visited, about which you have never so much as endeavoured to inform yourself; for, brief as your letter is, you have found the means to stumble into that confession. “*Less than one-half* of the island,” you say, “is devoted to the lepers.” Molokai — ”*Molokai ahina*,” the “grey,” lofty, and most desolate island — along all its northern side plunges a front of precipice into a sea of unusual profundity. This range of cliff is, from east to west, the true end and frontier of the island. Only in one spot there projects into the ocean a certain triangular and rugged down, grassy, stony, windy, and rising in the midst into a hill with a dead crater: the whole bearing to the cliff that overhangs it somewhat the same relation as a bracket to a wall. With this hint you will now be able to pick out the leper station on a map; 321 you will be able to judge how much of Molokai is thus cut off between the surf and precipice, whether less than a half, or less than a quarter, or a fifth, or a tenth — or say, a twentieth; and the next time you burst into print you will be in a position to share with us the issue of your calculations.

I imagine you to be one of those persons who talk with cheerfulness of that place which oxen and wain-ropes could not drag you to behold. You, who do not even know its situation on the map, probably denounce sensational descriptions, stretching your limbs the while in your pleasant parlour on Beretania Street. When I was pulled ashore there one early morning, there sat with me in the boat two sisters, bidding farewell (in humble imitation of Damien) to the lights and joys of human life. One of these wept silently; I could not withhold myself from joining her. Had you been there, it is my belief that nature would have triumphed even in you; and as the boat drew but a little nearer, and you beheld the stairs crowded with abominable deformations of our common manhood, and saw yourself landing in the midst of such a population as only now and then surrounds us in the horror of a nightmare — what a haggard eye you would have rolled over your reluctant shoulder towards the house on Beretania Street! Had you gone on; had you found every fourth face a blot upon the landscape; had you visited the hospital and seen the butt-ends of human beings lying there almost unrecognisable, but still breathing, still thinking, still remembering; you would have understood that life in the lazaretto is an ordeal from which the nerves of a man’s spirit shrink, even as his eye quails under the brightness of the sun; you would have felt it was (even to-day) a pitiful place to visit and a hell to dwell in. It is not the fear of possible infection. That seems a little thing when compared with the pain, the pity, and the disgust of the visitor’s surroundings, and the atmosphere of affliction, disease, and physical disgrace in which he breathes. I do not think I am a man more than 322 usually timid; but I never recall the days and nights I spent upon that island promontory (eight days and seven nights), without heartfelt thankfulness that I am somewhere else. I find in my diary that I speak of my stay as a "grinding experience": I have once jotted in the margin, "*Harrowing* is the word"; and when the *Mokolii* bore me at last towards the outer world, I kept repeating to myself, with a new conception of their pregnancy, those simple words of the song —

"'Tis the most distressful country that ever yet was seen."

And observe: that which I saw and suffered from was a settlement purged, bettered, beautified; the new village built, the hospital and the Bishop-Home excellently arranged; the sisters, the doctor, and the missionaries, all indefatigable in their noble tasks. It was a different place when Damien came there, and made his great renunciation, and slept that first night under a tree amidst his rotting brethren: alone with pestilence; and looking forward (with what courage, with what pitiful sinkings of dread, God only knows) to a lifetime of dressing sores and stumps.

You will say, perhaps, I am too sensitive, that sights as painful abound in cancer hospitals and are confronted daily by doctors and nurses. I have long learned to admire and envy the doctors and the nurses. But there is no cancer hospital so large and populous as Kalawao and Kalaupapa; and in such a matter every fresh case, like every inch of length in the pipe of an organ, deepens the note of the impression; for what daunts the onlooker is that monstrous sum of human suffering by which he stands surrounded. Lastly, no doctor or nurse is called upon to enter once for all the doors of that gehenna; they do not say farewell, they need not abandon hope, on its sad threshold; they but go for a time to their high calling, and can look forward as they go to relief, to recreation, and to rest. But Damien shut-to with his own hand the doors of his own sepulchre.

I shall now extract three passages from my diary at Kalawao.

A. "Damien is dead and already somewhat ungratefully remembered in the field of his labours and sufferings. 'He was a good man, but very officious,' says one. Another tells me he had fallen (as other priests so easily do) into something of the ways and habits of thought of a Kanaka; but he had the wit to recognise the fact, and the good sense to laugh at" [over] "it. A plain man it seems he was; I cannot find he was a popular."

B. "After Ragsdale's death" [Ragsdale was a famous Luna, or overseer, of the unruly settlement] "there followed a brief term of office by Father Damien which served only to publish the weakness of that noble man. He was rough in his ways, and he had no control.

Authority was relaxed; Damien's life was threatened, and he was soon eager to resign."

C. "Of Damien I begin to have an idea. He seems to have been a man of the peasant class, certainly of the peasant type: shrewd; ignorant and bigoted, yet with an open mind, and capable of receiving and digesting a reproof if it were bluntly administered; superbly generous in the least thing as well as in the greatest, and as ready to give his last shirt (although not without human grumbling) as he had been to sacrifice his life; essentially indiscreet and officious, which made him a troublesome colleague; domineering in all his ways, which made him incurably unpopular with the Kanakas, but yet destitute of real authority, so that his boys laughed at him and he must carry out his wishes by the means of bribes. He learned to have a mania for doctoring; and set up the Kanakas against the remedies of his regular rivals: perhaps (if anything matter at all in the treatment of such a disease) the worst thing that he did, and certainly the easiest. The best and worst of the man appear very plainly in his dealings with Mr. Chapman's money; he had originally laid it out" [intended to lay it out] "entirely for the benefit of Catholics, and 324 even so not wisely; but after a long, plain talk, he admitted his error fully and revised the list. The sad state of the boys' home is in part the result of his lack of control; in part, of his own slovenly ways and false ideas of hygiene. Brother officials used to call it 'Damien's Chinatown.' 'Well,' they would say, 'your Chinatown keeps growing.' And he would laugh with perfect good-nature, and adhere to his errors with perfect obstinacy. So much I have gathered of truth about this plain, noble human brother and father of ours; his imperfections are the traits of his face, by which we know him for our fellow; his martyrdom and his example nothing can lessen or annul; and only a person here on the spot can properly appreciate their greatness."

I have set down these private passages, as you perceive, without correction; thanks to you, the public has them in their bluntness. They are almost a list of the man's faults, for it is rather these that I was seeking: with his virtues, with the heroic profile of his life, I and the world were already sufficiently acquainted. I was besides a little suspicious of Catholic testimony; in no ill sense, but merely because Damien's admirers and disciples were the least likely to be critical. I know you will be more suspicious still; and the facts set down above were one and all collected from the lips of Protestants who had opposed the father in his life. Yet I am strangely deceived, or they build up the image of a man, with all his weaknesses, essentially heroic, and alive with rugged honesty, generosity, and mirth.

Take it for what it is, rough private jottings of the worst sides of Damien's character, collected from the lips of those who had laboured with and (in your own phrase) “knew the man”; — though I question whether Damien would have said that he knew you. Take it, and observe with wonder how well you were served by your gossips, how ill by your intelligence and sympathy; in how many points of fact we are at one, and how widely our appreciations 325 vary. There is something wrong here; either with you or me. It is possible, for instance, that you, who seem to have so many ears in Kalawao, had heard of the affair of Mr. Chapman’s money, and were singly struck by Damien’s intended wrong-doing. I was struck with that also, and set it fairly down; but I was struck much more by the fact that he had the honesty of mind to be convinced. I may here tell you that it was a long business; that one of his colleagues sat with him late into the night, multiplying arguments and accusations; that the father listened as usual with “perfect good-nature and perfect obstinacy”; but at the last, when he was persuaded — ”Yes,” said he, “I am very much obliged to you; you have done me a service; it would have been a theft.” There are many (not Catholics merely) who require their heroes and saints to be infallible; to these the story will be painful; not to the true lovers, patrons, and servants of mankind.

And I take it, this is a type of our division; that you are one of those who have an eye for faults and failures; that you take a pleasure to find and publish them; and that, having found them, you make haste to forget the overvailing virtues and the real success which had alone introduced them to your knowledge. It is a dangerous frame of mind. That you may understand how dangerous, and into what a situation it has already brought you, we will (if you please) go hand-in-hand through the different phrases of your letter, and candidly examine each from the point of view of its truth, its appositeness, and its charity.

Damien was *coarse*.

It is very possible. You make us sorry for the lepers who had only a coarse old peasant for their friend and father. But you, who were so refined, why were you not there, to cheer them with the lights of culture? Or may I remind you that we have some reason to doubt if John the Baptist were genteel; and in the case of Peter, on whose career you doubtless dwell approvingly in the pulpit, no 326 doubt at all he was a “coarse, headstrong” fisherman! Yet even in our Protestant Bibles Peter is called Saint.

Damien was *dirty*.

He was. Think of the poor lepers annoyed with this dirty comrade! But the clean Dr. Hyde was at his food in a fine house.

Damien was *headstrong.*

I believe you are right again; and I thank God for his strong head and heart.

Damien was *bigoted.*

I am not fond of bigots myself, because they are not fond of me. But what is meant by bigotry, that we should regard it as a blemish in a priest? Damien believed his own religion with the simplicity of a peasant or a child; as I would I could suppose that you do. For this, I wonder at him some way off; and had that been his only character, should have avoided him in life. But the point of interest in Damien, which has caused him to be so much talked about and made him at last the subject of your pen and mine, was that, in him, his bigotry, his intense and narrow faith, wrought potently for good, and strengthened him to be one of the world's heroes and exemplars.

Damien *was not sent to Molokai, but went there without orders*.

Is this a misreading? or do you really mean the words for blame? I have heard Christ, in the pulpits of our Church, held up for imitation on the ground that His sacrifice was voluntary. Does Dr. Hyde think otherwise?

Damien *did not stay at the settlement, etc*.

It is true he was allowed many indulgences. Am I to understand that you blame the father for profiting by these, or the officers for granting them? In either case, it is a 327 mighty Spartan standard to issue from the house on Beretania Street; and I am convinced you will find yourself with few supporters.

Damien *had no hand in the reforms, etc*.

I think even you will admit that I have already been frank in my description of the man I am defending; but before I take you up upon this head, I will be franker still, and tell you that perhaps nowhere in the world can a man taste a more pleasurable sense of contrast than when he passes from Damien's "Chinatown" at Kalawao to the beautiful Bishop-Home at Kalaupapa. At this point, in my desire to make all fair for you, I will break my rule and adduce Catholic testimony. Here is a passage from my diary about my visit to the Chinatown, from which you will see how it is (even now) regarded by its own officials: "We went round all the dormitories, refectories, etc. — dark and dingy enough, with a superficial cleanliness, which he" [Mr. Dutton, the lay brother] "did not seek to defend. 'It is almost decent,' said he; 'the sisters will make that all right when we get them here.'" And yet I gathered it was already better since Damien was dead, and far better than when he was there alone and had his own (not always excellent) way. I have now come far enough to meet you on a common ground of fact; and I tell you that, to a mind not prejudiced by jealousy, all the reforms of the lazaretto, and even those which he most vigorously opposed, are properly the work of Damien. They are the evidence of his success; they are what his heroism provoked from the reluctant and the careless. Many were before him in the field; Mr. Meyer, for instance, of whose faithful work we hear too little: there have been many since; and some had more worldly wisdom, though none had more devotion, than our saint. Before his day, even you will confess, they had effected little. It was his part, by one striking act of martyrdom, to direct all men's eyes on that distressful country. At a blow, and with the price of his life, he made 328 the place illustrious and public. And that, if you will consider largely, was the one reform needful; pregnant of all that should succeed. It brought money; it brought (best individual addition of them all) the sisters; it brought supervision, for public opinion and public interest landed with the man at Kalawao. If ever any man brought reforms, and died to bring them, it was he. There is not a clean cup or towel in the Bishop-Home, but dirty Damien washed it.

Damien *was not a pure man in his relations with women, etc*.

How do you know that? Is this the nature of the conversation in that house on Beretania Street which the cabman envied, driving past? — racy details of the misconduct of the poor peasant priest, toiling under the cliffs of Molokai?

Many have visited the station before me; they seem not to have heard the rumour. When I was there I heard many shocking tales, for my informants were men speaking with the plainness of the laity; and I heard plenty of complaints of Damien. Why was this never mentioned? and how came it to you in the retirement of your clerical parlour?

But I must not even seem to deceive you. This scandal, when I read it in your letter, was not new to me. I had heard it once before; and I must tell you how. There came to Samoa a man from Honolulu; he in a public-house on the beach volunteered the statement that Damien had "contracted the disease from having connection with the female lepers"; and I find a joy in telling you how the report was welcomed in a public-house. A man sprang to his feet; I am not at liberty to give his name, but from what I heard I doubt if you would care to have him to dinner in Beretania Street. "You miserable little — — " (here is a word I dare not print, it would so shock your ears). "You miserable little — — ," he cried, "if the story were a thousand times true, can't you see you 329 are a million times a lower — — for daring to repeat it?" I wish it could be told of you that when the report reached you in your house, perhaps after family worship, you had found in your soul enough holy anger to receive it with the same expressions; ay, even with that one which I dare not print; it would not need to have been blotted away, like Uncle Toby's oath, by the tears of the recording angel; it would have been counted to you for your brightest righteousness. But you have deliberately chosen the part of the man from Honolulu, and you have played it with improvements of your own. The man from Honolulu — miserable, leering creature — communicated the tale to a rude knot of beach-combing drinkers in a public-house, where (I will so far agree with your temperance opinions) man is not always at his noblest; and the man from Honolulu had himself been drinking — drinking, we may charitably fancy, to excess. It was to your "Dear Brother, the Reverend H. B. Gage," that you chose to communicate the sickening story; and the blue ribbon which adorns your portly bosom forbids me to allow you the extenuating plea that you were drunk when it was done. Your "dear brother" — a brother indeed — made haste to deliver up your letter (as a means of grace, perhaps) to the religious papers; where, after many months, I found and read and wondered at it; and whence I have now reproduced it for the wonder of others. And you and your dear brother have, by this cycle of operations, built up a contrast very edifying to examine in detail. The man whom you would not care to have to dinner, on the one side; on the other, the Reverend Dr. Hyde and the Reverend H. B. Gage: the Apia bar-room, the Honolulu manse.

But I fear you scarce appreciate how you appear to your fellow-men; and to bring it home to you, I will suppose your story to be true. I will suppose — and God forgive me for supposing it — that Damien faltered and stumbled in his narrow path of duty; I will suppose that, in the horror of his isolation, perhaps in the fever of incipient disease, he, 330 who was doing so much more than he had sworn, failed in the letter of his priestly oath — he, who was so much a better man than either you or me, who did what we have never dreamed of daring — he too tasted of our common frailty. "O, Iago, the pity of it!" The least tender should be moved to tears; the most incredulous to prayer. And all that you could do was to pen your letter to the Reverend H. B. Gage!

Is it growing at all clear to you what a picture you have drawn of your own heart? I will try yet once again to make it clearer. You had a father: suppose this tale were about him, and some informant brought it to you, proof in hand: I am not making too high an estimate of your emotional nature when I suppose you would regret the circumstance? that you would feel the tale of frailty the more keenly since it shamed the author of your days? and that the last thing you would do would be to publish it in the religious press? Well, the man who tried to do what Damien did is my father, and the father of the man in the Apia bar, and the father of all who love goodness; and he was your father too, if God had given you grace to see it.

From the Sydney *Presbyterian*, October 26, 1889.

XI

MY FIRST BOOK — ”TREASURE ISLAND”

It was far indeed from being my first book, for I am not a novelist alone. But I am well aware that my paymaster, the Great Public, regards what else I have written with indifference, if not aversion; if it call upon me at all, it calls on me in the familiar and indelible character; and when I am asked to talk of my first book, no question in the world but what is meant is my first novel.

Sooner or later, somehow, anyhow, I was bound to write a novel. It seems vain to ask why. Men are born with various manias: from my earliest childhood it was mine to make a plaything of imaginary series of events; and as soon as I was able to write, I became a good friend to the papermakers. Reams upon reams must have gone to the making of “Rathillet,” “The Pentland Rising,” “The King’s Pardon” (otherwise “Park Whitehead”), “Edward Daven,” “A Country Dance,” and “A Vendetta in the West”; and it is consolatory to remember that these reams are now all ashes, and have been received again into the soil. I have named but a few of my ill-fated efforts, only such indeed as came to a fair bulk ere they were desisted from; and even so they cover a long vista of years. “Rathillet” was attempted before fifteen, “The Vendetta” at twenty-nine, and the succession of defeats 332 lasted unbroken till I was thirty-one. By that time I had written little books and little essays and short stories; and had got patted on the back and paid for them — though not enough to live upon. I had quite a reputation, I was the successful man; I passed my days in toil, the futility of which would sometimes make my cheek to burn — that I should spend a man’s energy upon this business, and yet could not earn a livelihood: and still there shone ahead of me an unattained ideal: although I had attempted the thing with vigour not less than ten or twelve times, I had not yet written a novel. All — all my pretty ones — had gone for a little, and then stopped inexorably like a schoolboy’s watch. I might be compared to a cricketer of many years’ standing who should never have made a run. Anybody can write a short story — a bad one, I mean — who has industry and paper and time enough; but not every one may hope to write even a bad novel. It is the length that kills. The accepted novelist may take his novel up and put it down, spend days upon it in vain, and write not any more than he makes haste to blot. Not so the beginner. Human nature has certain rights; instinct — the instinct of self-preservation — forbids that any man (cheered and supported by the consciousness of no previous victory) should endure the miseries of unsuccessful literary toil beyond a period to be measured in weeks. There must be something for hope to feed upon. The beginner must have a slant of wind, a lucky vein must be running, he must be in one of those hours when the words come and the phrases balance of themselves — *even to begin*. And having begun, what a dread looking forward is that until the book shall be accomplished! For so long a time the slant is to continue unchanged, the vein to keep running, for so long a time you must keep at command the same quality of style: for so long a time your puppets are to be always vital, always consistent, always vigorous! I remember I used to look, in those days, upon every three-volume novel with a sort of veneration, as a feat — not, 333 possibly, of literature — but at least of physical and moral endurance and the courage of Ajax.

In the fated year I came to live with my father and mother at Kinnaird, above Pitlochry. Then I walked on the red moors and by the side of the golden burn; the rude, pure air of our mountains inspirited, if it did not inspire, us, and my wife and I projected a joint volume of bogey stories, for which she wrote “The Shadow on the Bed,” and I turned out “Thrawn Janet” and a first draft of “The Merry Men.” I love my native air, but it does not love me; and the end of this delightful period was a cold, a fly-blister and a migration by Strathardle and Glenshee to the Castleton of Braemar. There it blew a good deal and rained in a proportion; my native air was more unkind than man’s ingratitude, and I must consent to pass a good deal of my time between four walls in a house lugubriously known as the Late Miss McGregor’s Cottage. And now admire the finger of predestination. There was a schoolboy in the Late Miss McGregor’s Cottage, home from the holidays, and much in want of “something craggy to break his mind upon.” He had no thought of literature; it was the art of Raphael that received his fleeting suffrages; and with the aid of pen and ink and a shilling box of watercolours, he had soon turned one of the rooms into a picture-gallery. My more immediate duty towards the gallery was to be showman; but I would sometimes unbend a little, join the artist (so to speak) at the easel, and pass the afternoon with him in a generous emulation, making coloured drawings. On one of these occasions, I made the map of an island; it was elaborately and (I thought) beautifully coloured; the shape of it took my fancy beyond expression; it contained harbours that pleased me like sonnets; and, with the unconsciousness of the predestined, I ticketed my performance “Treasure Island.” I am told there are people who do not care for maps, and find it hard to believe. The names, the shapes of the woodlands, the courses of the roads and rivers, the prehistoric footsteps of 334 man still distinctly traceable up hill and down dale, the mills and the ruins, the ponds and the ferries, perhaps the *Standing Stone* or the *Druidic Circle* on the heath; here is an inexhaustible fund of interest for any man with eyes to see or twopence-worth of imagination to understand with! No child but must remember laying his head in the grass, staring into the infinitesimal forest and seeing it grow populous with fairy armies. Somewhat in this way, as I paused upon my map of "Treasure Island," the future character of the book began to appear there visibly among imaginary woods; and their brown faces and bright weapons peeped out upon me from unexpected quarters, as they passed to and fro, fighting and hunting treasure, on these few square inches of a flat projection. The next thing I knew I had some papers before me and was writing out a list of chapters. How often have I done so, and the thing gone on further! But there seemed elements of success about this enterprise. It was to be a story for boys: no need of psychology or fine writing; and I had a boy at hand to be a touchstone. Women were excluded. I was unable to handle a brig (which the *Hispaniola* should have been), but I thought I could make shift to sail her as a schooner without public shame. And then I had an idea for John Silver from which I promised myself funds of entertainment: to take an admired friend of mine (whom the reader very likely knows and admires as much as I do), to deprive him of all his finer qualities and higher graces of temperament, to leave him with nothing but his strength, his courage, his quickness, and his magnificent geniality, and to try to express these in terms of the culture of a raw tarpaulin. Such psychical surgery is, I think, a common way of "making character"; perhaps it is, indeed, the only way. We can put in the quaint figure that spoke a hundred words with us yesterday by the wayside; but do we know him? Our friend with his infinite variety and flexibility, we know — but can we put him in? Upon the first, we must engraft secondary and imaginary qualities, 335 possibly all wrong; from the second, knife in hand, we must cut away and deduct the needless arborescence of his nature, but the trunk and the few branches that remain we may at least be fairly sure of.

On a chill September morning, by the cheek of a brisk fire, and the rain drumming on the window, I began "The Sea Cook," for that was the original title. I have begun (and finished) a number of other books, but I cannot remember to have sat down to one of them with more complacency. It is not to be wondered at, for stolen waters are proverbially sweet. I am now upon a painful chapter. No doubt the parrot once belonged to Robinson Crusoe. No doubt the skeleton is conveyed from Poe. I think little of these, they are trifles and details; and no man can hope to have a monopoly of skeletons or make a corner in talking birds. The stockade, I am told, is from "Masterman

Ready." It may be, I care not a jot. These useful writers had fulfilled the poet's saying: departing, they had left behind them Footprints on the sands of time, Footprints which perhaps another — and I was the other! It is my debt to Washington Irving that exercises my conscience, and justly so, for I believe plagiarism was rarely carried further. I chanced to pick up the "Tales of a Traveller" some years ago with a view to an anthology of prose narrative, and the book flew up and struck me: Billy Bones, his chest, the company in the parlour, the whole inner spirit, and a good deal of the material detail of my first chapters — all were there, all were the property of Washington Irving. But I had no guess of it then as I sat writing by the fireside, in what seemed the spring-tides of a somewhat pedestrian inspiration; nor yet day by day, after lunch, as I read aloud my morning's work to the family. It seemed to me original as sin; it seemed to belong to me like my right eye. I had counted on one boy, I found I had two in my audience. My father caught fire at once with all the romance and childishness of his original nature. His own stories, that every night of his life he 336 put himself to sleep with, dealt perpetually with ships, roadside inns, robbers, old sailors, and commercial travellers before the era of steam. He never finished one of these romances; the lucky man did not require to finish them! But in "Treasure Island" he recognised something kindred to his own imagination; it was *his* kind of picturesque; and he not only heard with delight the daily chapter, but set himself acting to collaborate. When the time came for Billy Bones's chest to be ransacked, he must have passed the better part of a day preparing, on the back of a legal envelope, an inventory of its contents, which I exactly followed; and the name of "Flint's old ship" — the *Walrus* — was given at his particular request. And now who should come dropping in, *ex machinâ*, but Dr. Japp, like the disguised prince who is to bring down the curtain upon peace and happiness in the last act; for he carried in his pocket, not a horn or a talisman, but a publisher. Even the ruthlessness of a united family recoiled before the extreme measure of inflicting on our guest the mutilated members of "The Sea Cook"; at the same time, we would by no means stop our readings; and accordingly the tale was begun again at the beginning, and solemnly re-delivered for the benefit of Dr. Japp. From that moment on, I have thought highly of his critical faculty; for when he left us he carried away the manuscript in his portmanteau to submit to his friend (since then my own) Mr. Henderson, who accepted it for his periodical, *Young Folks*.

Here, then, was everything to keep me up, sympathy, help, and now a positive engagement. I had chosen besides a very easy style. Compare it with the almost contemporary "Merry Men"; one reader may prefer the one style, one the other — 'tis an affair of character, perhaps of mood; but no expert can fail to see that the one is much more difficult, and the other much easier to maintain. It seems as though a full-grown experienced man of letters might engage to turn out “Treasure Island” at so many pages a day, and keep his pipe alight. But alas! this was 337 not my case. Fifteen days I stuck to it, and turned out fifteen chapters; and then, in the early paragraphs of the sixteenth, ignominiously lost hold. My mouth was empty; there was not one word of “Treasure Island” in my bosom; and here were the proofs of the beginning already waiting me at the “Hand and Spear”! Then I corrected them, living for the most part alone, walking on the heath at Weybridge in dewy autumn mornings, a good deal pleased with what I had done, and more appalled than I can depict to you in words at what remained for me to do. I was thirty-one; I was the head of a family; I had lost my health; I had never yet paid my way, never yet made £200 a year; my father had quite recently bought back and cancelled a book that was judged a failure: was this to be another and last fiasco? I was indeed very close on despair; but I shut my mouth hard, and during the journey to Davos, where I was to pass the winter, had the resolution to think of other things and bury myself in the novels of M. du Boisgobey. Arrived at my destination, down I sat one morning to the unfinished tale; and behold! it flowed from me like small-talk; and in a second tide of delighted industry, and again at the rate of a chapter a day, I finished “Treasure Island.” It had to be transcribed almost exactly; my wife was ill; the schoolboy remained alone of the faithful; and John Addington Symonds (to whom I timidly mentioned what I was engaged on) looked on me askance. He was at that time very eager I should write on the characters of Theophrastus: so far out may be the judgments of the wisest men. But Symonds (to be sure) was scarce the confidant to go to for sympathy on a boy’s story. He was large-minded; “a full man,” if there was one; but the very name of my enterprise would suggest to him only capitulations of sincerity and solecisms of style. Well! he was not far wrong.

“Treasure Island” — it was Mr. Henderson who deleted the first title, “The Sea Cook” — appeared duly in the story paper, where it figured in the ignoble midst, without woodcuts, 338 and attracted not the least attention. I did not care. I liked the tale myself, for much the same reason as my father liked the beginning; it was my kind of picturesque. I was not a little proud of John Silver, also; and to this day rather admire that smooth and formidable adventurer. What was infinitely more exhilarating, I had passed a landmark; I had finished a tale, and written “The End” upon my manuscript, as I had not done since “The Pentland Rising,” when I was a boy of sixteen not yet at college. In truth it was so by a set of lucky accidents; had not Dr. Japp come on his visit, had not the tale flowed from me with singular ease, it must have been laid aside like its predecessors, and found a circuitous and unlamented way to the fire. Purists may suggest it would have been better so. I am not of that mind. The tale seems to have given much pleasure, and it brought (or was the means of bringing) fire and food and wine to a deserving family in which I took an interest. I need scarcely say I mean my own.

But the adventures of "Treasure Island" are not yet quite at an end. I had written it up to the map. The map was the chief part of my plot. For instance, I had called an islet "Skeleton Island," not knowing what I meant, seeking only for the immediate picturesque, and it was to justify this name that I broke into the gallery of Mr. Poe and stole Flint's pointer. And in the same way, it was because I had made two harbours that the *Hispaniola* was sent on her wanderings with Israel Hands. The time came when it was decided to republish, and I sent in my manuscript, and the map along with it, to Messrs. Cassell. The proofs came, they were corrected, but I heard nothing of the map. I wrote and asked; was told it had never been received, and sat aghast. It is one thing to draw a map at random, set a scale in one corner of it at a venture, and write up a story to the measurements. It is quite another to have to examine a whole book, make an inventory of all the allusions contained in it, and with a pair of compasses, painfully design a map to suit the data. I did it; and the 339 map was drawn again in my father's office, with embellishments of blowing whales and sailing ships, and my father himself brought into service a knack he had of various writing, and elaborately *forged* the signature of Captain Flint, and the sailing directions of Billy Bones. But somehow it was never *Treasure Island* to me.

I have said the map was the most of the plot. I might almost say it was the whole. A few reminiscences of Poe, Defoe, and Washington Irving, a copy of Johnson's "Buccaneers," the name of the Dead Man's Chest from Kingsley's "At Last," some recollections of canoeing on the high seas, and the map itself, with its infinite, eloquent suggestion, made up the whole of my materials. It is, perhaps, not often that a map figures so largely in a tale, yet it is always important. The author must know his countryside, whether real or imaginary, like his hand; the distances, the points of the compass, the place of the sun's rising, the behaviour of the moon, should all be beyond cavil. And how troublesome the moon is! I have come to grief over the moon in "Prince Otto," and, so soon as that was pointed out to me, adopted a precaution which I recommend to other men — I never write now without an almanac. With an almanac and the map of the country, and the plan of every house, either actually plotted on paper or already and immediately apprehended in the mind, a man may hope to avoid some of the grossest possible blunders. With the map before him, he will scarce allow the sun to set in the east, as it does in "The Antiquary." With the almanac at hand, he will scarce allow two horsemen, journeying on the most urgent affair, to employ six days, from three of the Monday morning till late in the Saturday night, upon a journey of, say, ninety or a hundred miles, and before the week is out, and still on the same nags, to cover fifty in one day, as may be read at length in the inimitable novel of "Rob Roy." And it is certainly well, though far from necessary, to avoid such "croppers." But it is my contention — my superstition, if you like — that 340 who is faithful to his map, and consults it, and draws from it his inspiration, daily and hourly, gains positive support, and not mere negative immunity from accident. The tale has a root there; it grows in that soil; it has a spine of its own behind the words. Better if the country be real, and he has walked every foot of it and knows every milestone. But even with imaginary places, he will do well in the beginning to provide a map; as he studies it, relations will appear that he had not thought upon; he will discover obvious, though unsuspected, shortcuts and footprints for his messengers; and even when a map is not all the plot, as it was in "Treasure Island," it will be found to be a mine of suggestion.

Ne pas confondre. Not the slim green pamphlet with the imprint of Andrew Elliot, for which (as I see with amazement from the book-lists) the gentlemen of England are willing to pay fancy prices; but its predecessor, a bulky historical romance without a spark of merit and now deleted from the world. — [R. L. S.]

XII

THE GENESIS OF “THE MASTER OF BALLANTRAE”

I was walking one night in the verandah of a small house in which I lived, outside the hamlet of Saranac. It was winter; the night was very dark; the air extraordinary clear and cold, and sweet with the purity of forests. From a good way below, the river was to be heard contending with ice and boulders: a few lights appeared, scattered unevenly among the darkness, but so far away as not to lessen the sense of isolation. For the making of a story here were fine conditions. I was besides moved with the spirit of emulation, for I had just finished my third or fourth perusal of “The Phantom Ship.” “Come,” said I to my engine, “let us make a tale, a story of many years and countries, of the sea and the land, savagery, and civilisation; a story that shall have the same large features, and may be treated in the same summary elliptic method as the book you have been reading and admiring.” I was here brought up with a reflection exceedingly just in itself, but which, as the sequel shows, I failed to profit by. I saw that Marryat, not less than Homer, Milton, and Virgil, profited by the choice of a familiar and legendary subject; so that he prepared his readers on the very title-page; and this set me cudgelling my brains, if by any chance I could hit upon some similar belief to be the centre-piece of my own meditated fiction. In the course of this vain search there cropped up in my memory a singular case of a buried and resuscitated fakir, which I had been often told by an 342 uncle of mine, then lately dead, Inspector-General John Balfour.

On such a fine frosty night, with no wind and the thermometer below zero, the brain works with much vivacity; and the next moment I had seen the circumstance transplanted from India and the tropics to the Adirondack wilderness and the stringent cold of the Canadian border. Here then, almost before I had begun my story, I had two countries, two of the ends of the earth involved: and thus though the notion of the resuscitated man failed entirely on the score of general acceptation, or even (as I have since found) acceptability, it fitted at once with my design of a tale of many lands; and this decided me to consider further of its possibilities. The man who should thus be buried was the first question: a good man, whose return to life would be hailed by the reader and the other characters with gladness? This trenched upon the Christian picture and was dismissed. If the idea, then, was to be of any use at all for me, I had to create a kind of evil genius to his friends and family, take him through many disappearances, and make this final restoration from the pit of death, in the icy American wilderness, the last and the grimmest of the series. I need not tell my brothers of the craft that I was now in the most interesting moment of an author's life; the hours that followed that night upon the balcony, and the following nights and days, whether walking abroad or lying wakeful in my bed, were hours of unadulterated joy. My mother, who was then living with me alone, perhaps had less enjoyment; for, in the absence of my wife, who is my usual helper in these times of parturition, I must spur her up at all seasons to hear me relate and try to clarify my unformed fancies.

And while I was groping for the fable and the character required, behold I found them lying ready and nine years old in my memory. Pease porridge hot, pease porridge cold, pease porridge in the pot, nine years old. Was there ever a more complete justification of the rule of Horace? 343 Here, thinking of quite other things, I had stumbled on the solution or perhaps I should rather say (in stagewright phrase) the Curtain or final Tableau of a story conceived long before on the moors between Pitlochry and Strathardle, conceived in Highland rain, in the blend of the smell of heather and bog-plants, and with a mind full of the Athole correspondence and the memories of the dumlicide Justice. So long ago, so far away it was, that I had first evoked the faces and the mutual tragic situation of the men of Durrisdeer.

My story was now world-wide enough: Scotland, India, and America being all obligatory scenes. But of these India was strange to me except in books; I had never known any living Indian save a Parsee, a member of my club in London, equally civilised, and (to all seeing) equally Occidental with myself. It was plain, thus far, that I should have to get into India and out of it again upon a foot of fairy lightness; and I believe this first suggested to me the idea of the Chevalier Burke for a narrator. It was at first intended that he should be Scottish, and I was then filled with fears that he might prove only the degraded shadow of my own Alan Breck. Presently, however, it began to occur to me it would be like my Master to curry favour with the Prince's Irishmen; and that an Irish refugee would have a particular reason to find himself in India with his countryman, the unfortunate Lally. Irish, therefore, I decided he should be, and then, all of a sudden, I was aware of a tall shadow across my path, the shadow of Barry Lyndon. No man (in Lord Foppington's phrase) of a nice morality could go very deep with my Master: in the original idea of this story conceived in Scotland, this companion had been besides intended to be worse than the bad elder son with whom (as it was then meant) he was to visit Scotland; if I took an Irishman, and a very bad Irishman, in the midst of the eighteenth century, how was I to evade Barry Lyndon? The wretch besieged me, offering his services; he gave me excellent references; he 344 proved that he was highly fitted for the work I had to do; he, or my own evil heart, suggested it was easy to disguise his ancient livery with a little lace and a few frogs and buttons, so that Thackeray himself should hardly recognise him. And then of a sudden there came to me memories of a young Irishman, with whom I was once intimate, and had spent long nights walking and talking with, upon a very desolate coast in a bleak autumn: I recalled him as a youth of an extraordinary moral simplicity — almost vacancy; plastic to any influence, the creature of his admirations: and putting such a youth in fancy into the career of a soldier of fortune, it occurred to me that he would serve my turn as well as Mr. Lyndon, and, in place of entering into competition with the Master, would afford a slight though a distinct relief. I know not if I have done him well, though his moral dissertations always highly entertained me: but I own I have been surprised to find that he reminded some critics of Barry Lyndon after all....

XIII

RANDOM MEMORIES: *ROSA QUO LOCORUM*

I

Through what little channels, by what hints and premonitions, the consciousness of the man's art dawns first upon the child, it should be not only interesting but instructive to inquire. A matter of curiosity to-day, it will become the ground of science to-morrow. From the mind of childhood there is more history and more philosophy to be fished up than from all the printed volumes in a library. The child is conscious of an interest, not in literature but in life. A taste for the precise, the adroit or the comely in the use of words, comes late; but long before that he has enjoyed in books a delightful dress rehearsal of experience. He is first conscious of this material — I had almost said this practical — pre-occupation; it does not follow that it really came the first. I have some old fogged negatives in my collection that would seem to imply a prior stage. "The Lord is gone up with a shout, and God with the sound of a trumpet" — memorial version, I know not where to find the text — rings still in my ear from my first childhood, and perhaps with something of my nurse's accent. There was possibly some sort of image written in my mind by these loud words, but I believe the words themselves were what I cherished. I had about the same time, and under the same influence — that of my dear nurse — a favourite author: it is possible the reader has not heard of him — the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne. 346 My nurse and I admired his name exceedingly, so that I must have been taught the love of beautiful sounds before I was breeched; and I remember two specimens of his muse until this day: —

"Behind the hills of Naphtali
The sun went slowly down,
Leaving on mountain, tower, and tree,
A tinge of golden brown."

There is imagery here, and I set it on one side. The other — it is but a verse — not only contains no image, but is quite unintelligible even to my comparatively instructed mind, and I know not even how to spell the outlandish vocable that charmed me in my childhood:

"Jehovah Tschidkenu is nothing to her";

I may say, without flippancy, that he was nothing to me either, since I had no ray of a guess of what he was about; yet the verse, from then to now, a longer interval than the life of a generation, has continued to haunt me.

I have said that I should set a passage distinguished by obvious and pleasing imagery, however faint; for the child thinks much in images, words are very live to him, phrases that imply a picture eloquent beyond their value. Rummaging in the dusty pigeon-holes of memory, I came once upon a graphic version of the famous Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd": and from the places employed in its illustration, which are all in the immediate neighbourhood of a house then occupied by my father, I am able to date it before the seventh year of my age, although it was probably earlier in fact. The "pastures green" were represented by a certain suburban stubble-field, where I had once walked with my nurse, under an autumnal sunset, on the banks of the Water of Leith: the place is long ago built up; no pastures now, no stubble-fields; only a maze of little streets and smoking chimneys and shrill children. 347 Here, in the fleecy person of a sheep, I seemed to myself to follow something unseen, unrealised, and yet benignant; and close by the sheep in which I was incarnated — as if for greater security — rustled the skirts of my nurse. "Death's dark vale" was a certain archway in the Warriston Cemetery: a formidable yet beloved spot, for children love to be afraid, — in measure as they love all experience of vitality. Here I beheld myself some paces ahead (seeing myself, I mean, from behind) utterly alone in that uncanny passage: on the one side of me a rude, knobby shepherd's staff, such as cheers the heart of the cockney tourist, on the other a rod like a billiard cue, appeared to accompany my progress: the staff sturdily upright, the billiard cue inclined confidentially, like one whispering, towards my ear. I was aware — I will never tell you how — that the presence of these articles afforded me encouragement. The third and last of my pictures illustrated the words: —

"My table Thou hast furnishèd
In presence of my foes:
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows":

and this was perhaps the most interesting of the series. I saw myself seated in a kind of open stone summer-house at table; over my shoulder a hairy, bearded, and robed presence anointed me from an authentic shoe-horn; the summer-house was part of the green court of a ruin, and from the far side of the court black and white imps discharged against me ineffectual arrows. The picture appears arbitrary, but I can trace every detail to its source, as Mr. Brock analysed the dream of Alan Armadale. The summer-house and court were muddled together out of Billings' "Antiquities of Scotland"; the imps conveyed from Bagster's "Pilgrim's Progress"; the bearded and robed figure from any one of a thousand Bible pictures; and the shoe-horn was plagiarised from an old illustrated Bible, where it figured in the hand of Samuel anointing Saul, and 348 had been pointed out to me as a jest by my father. It was shown me for a jest, remark; but the serious spirit of infancy adopted it in earnest. Children are all classics; a bottle would have seemed an intermediary too trivial — that divine refreshment of whose meaning I had no guess; and I seized on the idea of that mystic shoe-horn with delight, even as, a little later, I should have written flagon, chalice, hanaper, beaker, or any word that might have appealed to me at the moment as least contaminate with mean associations. In this string of pictures I believe the gist of the psalm to have consisted; I believe it had no more to say to me; and the result was consolatory. I would go to sleep dwelling with restfulness upon these images; they passed before me, besides, to an appropriate music; for I had already singled out from that rude psalm the one lovely verse which dwells in the minds of all, not growing old, not disgraced by its association with long Sunday tasks, a scarce conscious joy in childhood, in age a companion thought: —

“In pastures green Thou leadest me,
The quiet waters by.”

The remainder of my childish recollections are all of the matter of what was read to me, and not of any manner in the words. If these pleased me, it was unconsciously; I listened for news of the great vacant world upon whose edge I stood; I listened for delightful plots that I might re-enact in play, and romantic scenes and circumstances that I might call up before me, with closed eyes, when I was tired of Scotland, and home and that weary prison of the sick-chamber in which I lay so long in durance. “Robinson Crusoe”; some of the books of that cheerful, ingenious, romantic soul, Mayne Reid; and a work rather gruesome and bloody for a child, but very picturesque, called “Paul Blake”; these are the three strongest impressions I remember: “The Swiss Family Robinson” came next, *longo intervallo*. At these I played, conjured up 349 their scenes, and delighted to hear them rehearsed unto seventy times seven. I am not sure but what “Paul Blake” came after I could read. It seems connected with a visit to the country, and an experience unforgettable. The day had been warm; H — — and I had played together charmingly all day in a sandy wilderness across the road; then came the evening with a great flash of colour and a heavenly sweetness in the air. Somehow my playmate had vanished, or is out of the story, as the sagas say, but I was sent into the village on an errand; and, taking a book of fairy tales, went down alone through a fir-wood, reading as I walked. How often since then has it befallen me to be happy even so; but that was the first time: the shock of that pleasure I have never since forgot, and if my mind serves me to the last, I never shall, for it was then that I knew I loved reading.

II

To pass from hearing literature to reading it is to take a great and dangerous step. With not a few, I think a large proportion of their pleasure then comes to an end; “the malady of not marking” overtakes them; they read thenceforward by the eye alone and hear never again the chime of fair words or the march of the stately period. *Non ragioniam* of these. But to all the step is dangerous; it involves coming of age; it is even a kind of second weaning. In the past all was at the choice of others; they chose, they digested, they read aloud for us and sang to their own tune the books of childhood. In the future we are to approach the silent, inexpressive type alone, like pioneers; and the choice of what we are to read is in our own hands thenceforward. For instance, in the passages already adduced, I detect and applaud the ear of my old nurse; they were of her choice, and she imposed them on my infancy, reading the works of others as a poet 350 would scarce dare to read his own; gloating on the rhythm, dwelling with delight on assonances and alliterations. I know very well my mother must have been all the while trying to educate my taste upon more secular authors; but the vigour and the continual opportunities of my nurse triumphed, and after a long search, I can find in these earliest volumes of my autobiography no mention of anything but nursery rhymes, the Bible, and Mr. M’Cheyne.

I suppose all children agree in looking back with delight on their school Readers. We might not now find so much pathos in “Bingen on the Rhine,” “A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers,” or in “The Soldier’s Funeral,” in the declamation of which I was held to have surpassed myself. “Robert’s voice,” said the master on this memorable occasion, “is not strong, but impressive”: an opinion which I was fool enough to carry home to my father; who roasted me for years in consequence. I am sure one should not be so deliciously tickled by the humorous pieces: —

“What, crusty? cries Will in a taking,
Who would not be crusty with half a year’s baking?”

I think this quip would leave us cold. The “Isles of Greece” seem rather tawdry too; but on the “Address to the Ocean,” or on “The Dying Gladiator,” “time has writ no wrinkle.”

“’Tis the morn, but dim and dark,
Whither flies the silent lark?” —

does the reader recall the moment when his eye first fell upon these lines in the Fourth Reader; and “surprised with joy, impatient as the wind,” he plunged into the sequel? And there was another piece, this time in prose, which none can have forgotten; many like me must have searched Dickens with zeal to find it again, and in its proper context, and have perhaps been conscious of some inconsiderable measure of disappointment, that it was only 351 Tom Pinch who drove, in such a pomp of poetry, to London.

But in the Reader we are still under guides. What a boy turns out for himself, as he rummages the bookshelves, is the real test and pleasure. My father's library was a spot of some austerity: the proceedings of learned societies, some Latin divinity, cyclopædias, physical science, and, above all, optics, held the chief place upon the shelves, and it was only in holes and corners that anything really legible existed as by accident. The "Parent's Assistant," "Rob Roy," "Waverley," and "Guy Mannering," the "Voyages of Captain Woods Rogers," Fuller's and Bunyan's "Holy Wars," "The Reflections of Robinson Crusoe," "The Female Bluebeard," G. Sand's "Mare au Diable" — (how came it in that grave assembly!), Ainsworth's "Tower of London," and four old volumes of *Punch* — these were the chief exceptions. In these latter, which made for years the chief of my diet, I very early fell in love (almost as soon as I could spell) with the Snob Papers. I knew them almost by heart, particularly the visit to the Pontos; and I remember my surprise when I found, long afterwards, that they were famous, and signed with a famous name; to me, as I read and admired them, they were the works of Mr. Punch. Time and again I tried to read "Rob Roy," with whom of course I was acquainted from the "Tales of a Grandfather"; time and again the early part, with Rashleigh and (think of it!) the adorable Diana, choked me off; and I shall never forget the pleasure and surprise with which, lying on the floor one summer evening, I struck of a sudden into the first scene with Andrew Fairservice. "The worthy Dr. Lightfoot" — "mistrysted with a bogle" — "a wheen green trash" — "Jenny, lass, I think I ha'e her": from that day to this the phrases have been unforgotten. I read on, I need scarce say; I came to Glasgow, I bided tryst on Glasgow Bridge, I met Rob Roy and the Bailie in the Tolbooth, all with transporting pleasure; and then the clouds gathered once more about my path; and 352 I dozed and skipped until I stumbled half asleep into the clachan of Aberfoyle, and the voices of Iverach and Galbraith recalled me to myself. With that scene and the defeat of Captain Thornton the book concluded; Helen and her sons shocked even the little schoolboy of nine or ten with their unreality; I read no more, or I did not grasp what I was reading; and years elapsed before I consciously met Diana and her father among the hills, or saw Rashleigh dying in the chair. When I think of that novel and that evening, I am impatient with all others; they seem but shadows and impostors; they cannot satisfy the appetite which this awakened; and I dare be known to think it the best of Sir Walter's by nearly as much as

Sir Walter is the best of novelists. Perhaps Mr. Lang is right, and our first friends in the land of fiction are always the most real. And yet I had read before this "Guy Mannering," and some of "Waverley," with no such delighted sense of truth and humour, and I read immediately after the greater part of the Waverley Novels, and was never moved again in the same way or to the same degree. One circumstance is suspicious: my critical estimate of the Waverley Novels has scarce changed at all since I was ten. "Rob Roy," "Guy Mannering," and "Redgauntlet" first; then, a little lower, "The Fortunes of Nigel"; then, after a huge gulf, "Ivanhoe" and "Anne of Geierstein": the rest nowhere; such was the verdict of the boy. Since then "The Antiquary," "St. Ronan's Well," "Kenilworth," and "The Heart of Midlothian" have gone up in the scale; perhaps "Ivanhoe" and "Anne of Geierstein" have gone a trifle down; Diana Vernon has been added to my admirations in that enchanted world of "Rob Roy"; I think more of the letters in "Redgauntlet" and Peter Peebles, that dreadful piece of realism, I can now read about with equanimity, interest, and I had almost said pleasure, while to the childish critic he often caused unmixed distress. But the rest is the same; I could not finish "The Pirate" when I was a child, I have 353 never finished it yet; "Peveril of the Peak" dropped half way through from my schoolboy hands, and though I have since waded to an end in a kind of wager with myself, the exercise was quite without enjoyment. There is something disquieting in these considerations. I still think the visit to Ponto's the best part of the "Book of Snobs": does that mean that I was right when I was a child, or does it mean that I have never grown since then, that the child is not the man's father, but the man? and that I came into the world with all my faculties complete, and have only learned sinsyne to be more tolerant of boredom?...

"Jehovah Tsidkenu," translated in the Authorised Version as "The Lord our Righteousness" (Jeremiah xxiii. 6 and xxxiii. 16).

XIV

REFLECTIONS AND REMARKS ON HUMAN LIFE

I. Justice and Justification. — (1) It is the business of this life to make excuses for others, but none for ourselves. We should be clearly persuaded of our own misconduct, for that is the part of knowledge in which we are most apt to be defective. (2) Even justice is no right of a man's own, but a thing, like the king's tribute, which shall never be his, but which he should strive to see rendered to another. None was ever just to me; none ever will be. You may reasonably aspire to be chief minister or sovereign pontiff: but not to be justly regarded in your own character and acts. You know too much to be satisfied. For justice is but an earthly currency, paid to appearances; you may see another superficially righted; but be sure he has got too little or too much; and in your own case rest content with what is paid you. It is more just than you suppose; that your virtues are misunderstood is a price you pay to keep your meannesses concealed. (3) When you seek to justify yourself to others, you may be sure you will plead falsely. If you fail, you have the shame of the failure; if you succeed, you will have made too much of it, and be unjustly esteemed upon the other side. (4) You have perhaps only one friend in the world, in whose esteem it is worth while for you to right yourself. Justification to indifferent persons is, at best, an impertinent intrusion. Let them think what they please; they will be the more likely to forgive you in the end. (5) It is a question hard to be resolved, whether you should at any time criminate 355 another to defend yourself. I have done it many times, and always had a troubled conscience for my pains.

II. Parent and Child. — (1) The love of parents for their children is, of all natural affections, the most ill-starred. It is not a love for the person, since it begins before the person has come into the world, and founds on an imaginary character and looks. Thus it is foredoomed to disappointment; and because the parent either looks for too much, or at least for something inappropriate, at his offspring's hands, it is too often insufficiently repaid. The natural bond, besides, is stronger from parent to child than from child to parent; and it is the side which confers benefits, not which receives them, that thinks most of a relation. (2) What do we owe our parents? No man can *owe* love; none can *owe* obedience. We owe, I think, chiefly pity; for we are the pledge of their dear and joyful union, we have been the solicitude of their days and the anxiety of their nights, we have made them, though by no will of ours, to carry the burthen of our sins, sorrows, and physical infirmities; and too many of us grow up at length to disappoint the purpose of their lives and requite their care and piety with cruel pangs. (3) *Mater Dolorosa.* It is the particular cross of parents that when the child grows up and becomes himself instead of that pale ideal they had preconceived, they must accuse their own harshness or indulgence for this natural result. They have all been like the duck and hatched swan's eggs, or the other way about; yet they tell themselves with miserable penitence that the blame lies with them; and had they sat more closely, the swan would have been a duck, and home-keeping, in spite of all. (4) A good son, who can fulfil what is expected of him, has done his work in life. He has to redeem the sins of many, and restore the world's confidence in children.

III. Dialogue on Character and Destiny between Two Puppets. — At the end of Chapter xxxiii. Count 356 Spada and the General of the Jesuits were left alone in the pavilion, while the course of the story was turned upon the doings of the virtuous hero. Profiting by this moment of privacy, the Jesuit turned with a very warning countenance upon the peer.

"Have a care, my lord," said he, raising a finger. "You are already no favourite with the author; and for my part, I begin to perceive from a thousand evidences that the narrative is drawing near a close. Yet a chapter or two at most, and you will be overtaken by some sudden and appalling judgment."

"I despise your womanish presentiments," replied Spada, "and count firmly upon another volume; I see a variety of reasons why my life should be prolonged to within a few pages of the end; indeed, I permit myself to expect resurrection in a sequel, or second part. You will scarce suggest that there can be any end to the newspaper; and you will certainly never convince me that the author, who cannot be entirely without sense, would have been at so great pains with my intelligence, gallant exterior, and happy and natural speech, merely to kick me hither and thither for two or three paltry chapters and then drop me at the end like a dumb personage. I know you priests are often infidels in secret. Pray, do you believe in an author at all?"

"Many do not, I am aware," replied the General softly; "even in the last chapter we encountered one, the self-righteous David Hume, who goes so far as to doubt the existence of the newspaper in which our adventures are now appearing; but it would neither become my cloth, nor do credit to my great experience, were I to meddle with these dangerous opinions. My alarm for you is not metaphysical, it is moral in its origin: You must be aware, my poor friend, that you are a very bad character — the worst indeed that I have met with in these pages. The author hates you, Count; and difficult as it may be to connect the idea of immortality — or, in plain terms, of a sequel — with 357 the paper and printer's ink of which your humanity is made, it is yet more difficult to foresee anything but punishment and pain for one who is justly hateful in the eyes of his creator."

"You take for granted many things that I shall not easily be persuaded to allow," replied the villain. "Do you really so far deceive yourself in your imagination as to fancy that the author is a friend to good? Read; read the book in which you figure; and you will soon disown such crude vulgarities. Lelio is a good character; yet only two chapters ago we left him in a fine predicament. His old servant was a model of the virtues, yet did he not miserably perish in that ambuscade upon the road to Poitiers? And as for the family of the bankrupt merchant, how is it possible for greater moral qualities to be alive with more irremediable misfortunes? And yet you continue to misrepresent an author to yourself, as a deity devoted to virtue and inimical to vice? Pray, if you have no pride in your own intellectual credit for yourself, spare at least the sensibilities of your associates."

"The purposes of the serial story," answered the Priest, "are, doubtless for some wise reason, hidden from those who act in it. To this limitation we must bow. But I ask every character to observe narrowly his own personal relations to the author. There, if nowhere else, we may glean some hint of his superior designs. Now I am myself a mingled personage, liable to doubts, to scruples, and to sudden revulsions of feeling; I reason continually about life, and frequently the result of my reasoning is to condemn or even to change my action. I am now convinced, for example, that I did wrong in joining in your plot against the innocent and most unfortunate Lelio. I told you so, you will remember, in the chapter which has just been concluded and though I do not know whether you perceived the ardour and fluency with which I expressed myself, I am still confident in my own heart that I spoke at that moment not only with the warm approval, but under the 358 direct inspiration, of the author of the tale. I know, Spada, I tell you I *know*, that he loved me as I uttered these words; and yet at other periods of my career I have been conscious of his indifference and dislike. You must not seek to reason me from this conviction; for it is supplied me from higher authority than that of reason, and is indeed a part of my experience. It may be an illusion that I drove last night from Saumur; it may be an illusion that we are now in the garden chamber of the château; it may be an illusion that I am conversing with Count Spada; you may be an illusion, Count, yourself; but of three things I will remain eternally persuaded, that the author exists not only in the newspaper but in my own heart, that he loves me when I do well, and that he hates and despises me when I do otherwise."

"I too believe in the author," returned the Count. "I believe likewise in a sequel, written in finer style and probably cast in a still higher rank of society than the present story; although I am not convinced that we shall then be conscious of our pre-existence here. So much of your argument is, therefore, beside the mark; for to a certain point I am as orthodox as yourself. But where you begin to draw general conclusions from your own private experience, I must beg pointedly and finally to differ. You will not have forgotten, I believe, my daring and single-handed butchery of the five secret witnesses? Nor the sleight of mind and dexterity of language with which I separated Lelio from the merchant's family? These were not virtuous actions; and yet, how am I to tell you? I was conscious of a troubled joy, a glee, a hellish gusto in my author's bosom, which seemed to renew my vigour with every sentence, and which has indeed made the first of these passages accepted for a model of spirited narrative description, and the second for a masterpiece of wickedness and wit. What result, then, can be drawn from two experiences so contrary as yours and mine? For my part, I lay it down as a principle, no author can be moral in a 359 merely human sense. And, to pursue the argument higher, how can you, for one instant, suppose the existence of free-will in puppets situated as we are in the thick of a novel which we do not even understand? And how, without free-will upon our parts, can you justify blame or approval on that of the author? We are in his hands; by a stroke of the pen, to speak reverently, he made us what we are; by a stroke of the pen he can utterly undo and transmute what he has made. In the very next chapter, my dear General, you may be shown up for an impostor, or I be stricken down in the tears of penitence and hurried into the retirement of a monastery!"

"You use an argument old as mankind, and difficult of answer," said the Priest. "I cannot justify the free-will of which I am usually conscious; nor will I ever seek to deny that this consciousness is interrupted. Sometimes events mount upon me with such swiftness and pressure that my choice is overwhelmed, and even to myself I seem to obey a will external to my own; and again I am sometimes so paralysed and impotent between alternatives that I am tempted to imagine a hesitation on the part of my author. But I contend, upon the other hand, for a limited free-will in the sphere of consciousness; and as it is in and by my consciousness that I exist to myself, I will not go on to inquire whether that free-will is valid as against the author, the newspaper, or even the readers of the story. And I contend, further, for a sort of empire or independence of our own characters when once created, which the author cannot or at least does not choose to violate. Hence Lelio was conceived upright, honest, courageous, and headlong; to that first idea all his acts and speeches must of necessity continue to answer; and the same, though with such different defects and qualities, applies to you, Count Spada, and to myself. We must act up to our characters; it is these characters that the author loves or despises; it is on account of them that we must 360 suffer or triumph, whether in this work or in a sequel. Such is my belief."

"It is pure Calvinistic election, my dear sir, and, by your leave, a very heretical position for a churchman to support," replied the Count. "Nor can I see how it removes the difficulty. I was not consulted as to my character; I might have chosen to be Lelio; I might have chosen to be yourself; I might even have preferred to figure in a different romance, or not to enter into the world of literature at all. And am I to be blamed or hated, because some one else wilfully and inhumanely made me what I am, and has continued ever since to encourage me in what are called my vices? You may say what you please, my dear sir, but if that is the case, I had rather be a telegram from the seat of war than a reasonable and conscious character in a romance; nay, and I have a perfect right to repudiate, loathe, curse, and utterly condemn the ruffian who calls himself the author."

"You have, as you say, a perfect right," replied the Jesuit; "and I am convinced that it will not affect him in the least."

"He shall have one slave the fewer for me," added the Count. "I discard my allegiance once for all."

"As you please," concluded the other; "but at least be ready, for I perceive we are about to enter on the scene."

And, indeed, just at that moment, Chapter xxxiv. being completed, Chapter xxxv., "The Count's Chastisement," began to appear in the columns of the newspaper.

IV. Solitude and Society. — (1) A little society is needful to show a man his failings; for if he lives entirely by himself, he has no occasion to fall, and like a soldier in time of peace, becomes both weak and vain. But a little solitude must be used, or we grow content with current virtues and forget the ideal. In society we lose scrupulous brightness of honour; in solitude we lose the courage necessary to face our own imperfections. (2) As 361 a question of pleasure, after a man has reached a certain age, I can hardly perceive much room to choose between them: each is in a way delightful, and each will please best after an experience of the other. (3) But solitude for its own sake should surely never be preferred. We are bound by the strongest obligations to busy ourselves amid the world of men, if it be only to crack jokes. The finest trait in the character of St. Paul was his readiness to be damned for the salvation of anybody else. And surely we should all endure a little weariness to make one face look brighter or one hour go more pleasantly in this mixed world. (4) It is our business here to speak, for it is by the tongue that we multiply ourselves most influentially. To speak kindly, wisely, and pleasantly is the first of duties, the easiest of duties, and the duty that is most blessed in its performance. For it is natural, it whiles away life, it spreads intelligence; and it increases the acquaintance of man with man. (5) It is, besides, a good investment, for while all other pleasures decay, and even the delight in nature, Grandfather William is still bent to gossip. (6) Solitude is the climax of the negative virtues. When we go to bed after a solitary day we can tell ourselves that we have not been unkind nor dishonest nor untruthful; and the negative virtues are agreeable to that dangerous faculty we call the conscience. That they should ever be admitted for a part of virtue is what I cannot explain. I do not care two straws for all the *nots*. (7) The positive virtues are imperfect; they are even ugly in their imperfection: for man’s acts, by the necessity of his being, are coarse and mingled. The kindest, in the course of a day of active kindnesses, will say some things rudely, and do some things cruelly; the most honourable, perhaps, trembles at his nearness to a doubtful act. (8) Hence the solitary recoils from the practice of life, shocked by its unsightlinesses. But if I could only retain that superfine and guiding delicacy of the sense that grows in solitude, and still combine with it that courage of performance which is never abashed by any failure, but steadily 362 pursues its right and human design in a scene of imperfection, I might hope to strike in the long-run a conduct more tender to others and less humiliating to myself.

V. Selfishness and Egoism. — An unconscious, easy, selfish person shocks less, and is more easily loved, than one who is laboriously and egotistically unselfish. There is at least no fuss about the first; but the other parades his sacrifices, and so sells his favours too dear. Selfishness is calm, a force of nature: you might say the trees were selfish. But egoism is a piece of vanity; it must always take you into its confidence; it is uneasy, troublesome, seeking; it can do good, but not handsomely; it is uglier, because less dignified, than selfishness itself. But here I perhaps exaggerate to myself, because I am the one more than the other, and feel it like a hook in my mouth, at every step I take. Do what I will, this seems to spoil all.

VI. Right and Wrong. — It is the mark of a good action that it appears inevitable in the retrospect. We should have been cut-throats to do otherwise. And there’s an end. We ought to know distinctly that we are damned for what we do wrong; but when we have done right, we have only been gentlemen, after all. There is nothing to make a work about.

VII. Discipline of Conscience. — (1) Never allow your mind to dwell on your own misconduct: that is ruin. The conscience has morbid sensibilities; it must be employed but not indulged, like the imagination or the stomach. (2) Let each stab suffice for the occasion; to play with this spiritual pain turns to penance; and a person easily learns to feel good by dallying with the consciousness of having done wrong. (3) Shut your eyes hard against the recollection of your sins. Do not be afraid, you will not be able to forget them. (4) You will always do wrong: you must try to get used to that, my son. It is a small matter to 363 make a work about, when all the world is in the same case. I meant when I was a young man to write a great poem; and now I am cobbling little prose articles and in excellent good spirits, I thank you. So, too, I meant to lead a life that should keep mounting from the first; and though I have been repeatedly down again below sea-level, and am scarce higher than when I started, I am as keen as ever for that enterprise. Our business in this world is not to succeed, but to continue to fail, in good spirits. (5) There is but one test of a good life: that the man shall continue to grow more difficult about his own behaviour. That is to be good: there is no other virtue attainable. The virtues we admire in the saint and the hero are the fruits of a happy constitution. You, for your part, must not think you will ever be a good man, for these are born and not made. You will have your own reward, if you keep on growing better than you were — how do I say? if you do not keep on growing worse. (6) A man is one thing, and must be exercised in all his faculties. Whatever side of you is neglected, whether it is the muscles, or the taste for art, or the desire for virtue, that which is cultivated will suffer in proportion. — — was greatly tempted, I remember, to do a very dishonest act, in order that he might pursue his studies in art. When he consulted me, I advised him not (putting it that way for once), because his art would suffer. (7) It might be fancied that if we could only study all sides of our being in an exact proportion, we should attain wisdom. But in truth a chief part of education is to exercise one set of faculties *à outrance* — one, since we have not the time so to practise all; thus the dilettante misses the kernel of the matter; and the man who has wrung forth the secret of one part of life knows more about the others than he who has tepidly circumnavigated all. (8) Thus, one must be your profession, the rest can only be your delights; and virtue had better be kept for the latter, for it enters into all, but none enters by necessity into it. You will learn a great deal of virtue by studying any art; but 364 nothing of any art in the study of virtue. (9) The study of conduct has to do with grave problems; not every action should be higgled over; one of the leading virtues therein is to let oneself alone. But if you make it your chief employment, you are sure to meddle too much. This is the great error of those who are called pious. Although the war of virtue be unending except with life, hostilities are frequently suspended, and the troops go into winter quarters; but the pious will not profit by these times of truce; where their conscience can perceive no sin, they will find a sin in that very innocency; and so they pervert, to their annoyance, those seasons which God gives to us for repose and a reward. (10) The nearest approximation to sense in all this matter lies with the Quakers. There must be no *will*-worship; how much more, no *will*-repentance! The damnable consequence of set seasons, even for prayer, is to have a man continually posturing to himself, till his conscience is taught as many tricks as a pet monkey, and the gravest expressions are left with a perverted meaning. (11) For my part, I should try to secure some part of every day for meditation, above all in the early morning and the open air; but how that time was to be improved I should leave to circumstance and the inspiration of the hour. Nor if I spent it in whistling or numbering my footsteps, should I consider it misspent for that. I should have given my conscience a fair field; when it has anything to say, I know too well it can speak daggers; therefore, for this time, my hard taskmaster has given me a holyday, and I may go in again rejoicing to my breakfast and the human business of the day.

VIII. Gratitude to God. — (1) To the gratitude that becomes us in this life, I can set no limit. Though we steer after a fashion, yet we must sail according to the winds and currents. After what I have done, what might I not have done? That I have still the courage to attempt my life, that I am not now overladen with dishonours, to whom 365 do I owe it but to the gentle ordering of circumstances in the great design? More has not been done to me than I can bear; I have been marvellously restrained and helped; not unto us, O Lord! (2) I cannot forgive God for the suffering of others; when I look abroad upon His world and behold its cruel destinies, I turn from Him with disaffection; nor do I conceive that He will blame me for the impulse. But when I consider my own fates, I grow conscious of His gentle dealing: I see Him chastise with helpful blows, I feel His stripes to be caresses; and this knowledge is my comfort that reconciles me to the world. (3) All those whom I now pity with indignation, are perhaps not less fatherly dealt with than myself. I do right to be angry: yet they, perhaps, if they lay aside heat and temper, and reflect with patience on their lot, may find everywhere, in their worst trials, the same proofs of a divine affection. (4) While we have little to try us, we are angry with little; small annoyances do not bear their justification on their faces; but when we are overtaken by a great sorrow or perplexity, the greatness of our concern sobers us so that we see more clearly and think with more consideration. I speak for myself; nothing grave has yet befallen me but I have been able to reconcile my mind to its occurrence, and see in it, from my own little and partial point of view, an evidence of a tender and protecting God. Even the misconduct into which I have been led has been blessed to my improvement. If I did not sin, and that so glaringly that my conscience is convicted on the spot, I do not know what I should become, but I feel sure I should grow worse. The man of very regular conduct is too often a prig, if he be not worse — a rabbi. I, for my part, want to be startled out of my conceits; I want to be put to shame in my own eyes; I want to feel the bridle in my mouth, and be continually reminded of my own weakness and the omnipotence of circumstances. (5) If I from my spy-hole, looking with purblind eyes upon the least part of a fraction of the universe, yet perceive in my own destiny some broken 366 evidences of a plan and some signals of an overruling goodness; shall I then be so mad as to complain that all cannot be deciphered? Shall I not rather wonder, with infinite and grateful surprise, that in so vast a scheme I seem to have been able to read, however little, and that that little was encouraging to faith?

IX. Blame. — What comes from without and what from within, how much of conduct proceeds from the spirit or how much from circumstances, what is the part of choice and what the part of the selection offered, where personal character begins or where, if anywhere, it escapes at all from the authority of nature, these are questions of curiosity and eternally indifferent to right and wrong. Our theory of blame is utterly sophisticated and untrue to man’s experience. We are as much ashamed of a pimpled face that came to us by natural descent as by one that we have earned by our excesses, and rightly so; since the two cases, in so much as they unfit us for the easier sort of pleasing and put an obstacle in the path of love, are exactly equal in their consequence. We look aside from the true question. We cannot blame others at all; we can only punish them; and ourselves we blame indifferently for a deliberate crime, a thoughtless brusquerie, or an act done without volition in an ecstasy of madness. We blame ourselves from two considerations: first, because another has suffered; and second, because, in so far as we have again done wrong, we can look forward with the less confidence to what remains of our career. Shall we repent this failure? It is there that the consciousness of sin most cruelly affects us; it is in view of this that a man cries out, in exaggeration, that his heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things. We all tacitly subscribe this judgment: Woe unto him by whom offences shall come! We accept palliations for our neighbours; we dare not, in sight of our own soul, accept them for ourselves. We may not be to blame; we may be conscious of no free 367 will in the matter, of a possession, on the other hand, or an irresistible tyranny of circumstance, — yet we know, in another sense, we are to blame for all. Our right to live, to eat, to share in mankind's pleasures, lies precisely in this: that we must be persuaded we can on the whole live rather beneficially than hurtfully to others. Remove this persuasion, and the man has lost his right. That persuasion is our dearest jewel, to which we must sacrifice the life itself to which it entitles us. For it is better to be dead than degraded.

X. Marriage. — (1) No considerate man can approach marriage without deep concern. I, he will think, who have made hitherto so poor a business of my own life, am now about to embrace the responsibility of another's. Henceforth, there shall be two to suffer from my faults; and that other is the one whom I most desire to shield from suffering. In view of our impotence and folly, it seems an act of presumption to involve another's destiny with ours. We should hesitate to assume command of an army or a trading-smack; shall we not hesitate to become surety for the life and happiness, now and henceforward, of our dearest friend? To be nobody's enemy but one's own, although it is never possible to any, can least of all be possible to one who is married. (2) I would not so much fear to give hostages to fortune, if fortune ruled only in material things; but fortune, as we call those minor and more inscrutable workings of providence, rules also in the sphere of conduct. I am not so blind but that I know I might be a murderer or even a traitor to-morrow; and now, as if I were not already too feelingly alive to my misdeeds, I must choose out the one person whom I most desire to please, and make her the daily witness of my failures, I must give a part in all my dishonours to the one person who can feel them more keenly than myself. (3) In all our daring, magnanimous human way of life, I find nothing more bold than this. To go into battle is but 368 a small thing by comparison. It is the last act of committal. After that, there is no way left, not even suicide, but to be a good man. (4) She will help you, let us pray. And yet she is in the same case; she, too, has daily made shipwreck of her own happiness and worth; it is with a courage no less irrational than yours, that she also ventures on this new experiment of life. Two who have failed severally, now join their fortunes with a wavering hope. (5) But it is from the boldness of the enterprise that help springs. To take home to your hearth that living witness whose blame will most affect you, to eat, to sleep, to live with your most admiring and thence most exacting judge, is not this to domesticate the living God? Each becomes a conscience to the other, legible like a clock upon the chimney-piece. Each offers to his mate a figure of the consequence of human acts. And while I may still continue by my inconsiderate or violent life to spread far-reaching havoc throughout man's confederacy, I can do so no more, at least, in ignorance and levity; one face shall wince before me in the flesh; I have taken home the sorrows I create to my own hearth and bed; and though I continue to sin, it must be now with open eyes.

XI. Idleness and Industry. — I remember a time when I was very idle; and lived and profited by that humour. I have no idea why I ceased to be so, yet I scarce believe I have the power to return to it; it is a change of age. I made consciously a thousand little efforts, but the determination from which these arose came to me while I slept and in the way of growth. I have had a thousand skirmishes to keep myself at work upon particular mornings, and sometimes the affair was hot; but of that great change of campaign, which decided all this part of my life, and turned me from one whose business was to shirk into one whose business was to strive and persevere, — it seems as though all that had been done by some one else. The life of Goethe affected me; so did that of Balzac; and some very 369 noble remarks by the latter in a pretty bad book, the "Cousine Bette." I daresay I could trace some other influences in the change. All I mean is, I was never conscious of a struggle, nor registered a vow, nor seemingly had anything personally to do with the matter. I came about like a well-handled ship. There stood at the wheel that unknown steersman whom we call God.

XII. Courage. — Courage is the principal virtue, for all the others presuppose it. If you are afraid, you may do anything. Courage is to be cultivated, and some of the negative virtues may be sacrificed in the cultivation.

XIII. Results of Action. — The result is the reward of actions, not the test. The result is a child born; if it be beautiful and healthy, well: if club-footed or crook-back, perhaps well also. We cannot direct ...

XV

THE IDEAL HOUSE

Two things are necessary in any neighbourhood where we propose to spend a life: a desert and some living water.

There are many parts of the earth’s face which offer the necessary combination of a certain wildness with a kindly variety. A great prospect is desirable, but the want may be otherwise supplied; even greatness can be found on the small scale; for the mind and the eye measure differently. Bold rocks near hand are more inspiriting than distant Alps, and the thick fern upon a Surrey heath makes a fine forest for the imagination, and the dotted yew trees noble mountains. A Scottish moor with birches and firs grouped here and there upon a knoll, or one of those rocky sea-side deserts of Provence overgrown with rosemary and thyme and smoking with aroma, are places where the mind is never weary. Forests, being more enclosed, are not at first sight so attractive, but they exercise a spell; they must, however, be diversified with either heath or rock, and are hardly to be considered perfect without conifers. Even sand-hills, with their intricate plan, and their gulls and rabbits, will stand well for the necessary desert.

The house must be within hail of either a little river or the sea. A great river is more fit for poetry than to adorn a neighbourhood; its sweep of waters increases the scale of the scenery and the distance of one notable object from another; and a lively burn gives us, in the space of a few yards, a greater variety of promontory and islet, of cascade, shallow goil, and boiling pool, with answerable changes both 371 of song and colour, than a navigable stream in many hundred miles. The fish, too, make a more considerable feature of the brook-side, and the trout plumping in the shadow takes the ear. A stream should, besides, be narrow enough to cross, or the burn hard by a bridge, or we are at once shut out of Eden. The quantity of water need be of no concern, for the mind sets the scale, and can enjoy a Niagara Fall of thirty inches. Let us approve the singer of

“Shallow rivers, by whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.”

If the sea is to be our ornamental water, choose an open seaboard with a heavy beat of surf; one much broken in outline, with small havens and dwarf headlands; if possible a few islets; and as a first necessity, rocks reaching out into deep water. Such a rock on a calm day is a better station than the top of Teneriffe or Chimborazo. In short, both for the desert and the water, the conjunction of many near and bold details is bold scenery for the imagination and keeps the mind alive.

Given these two prime luxuries, the nature of the country where we are to live is, I had almost said, indifferent; after that, inside the garden, we can construct a country of our own. Several old trees, a considerable variety of level, several well-grown hedges to divide our garden into provinces, a good extent of old well-set turf, and thickets of shrubs and evergreens to be cut into and cleared at the new owner's pleasure, are the qualities to be sought for in your chosen land. Nothing is more delightful than a succession of small lawns, opening one out of the other through tall hedges; these have all the charm of the old bowling-green repeated, do not require the labour of many trimmers, and afford a series of changes. You must have much lawn against the early summer, so as to have a great field of daisies, the year's morning frost; as you must have a wood of lilacs, to enjoy to the full the period of their 372 blossoming. Hawthorn is another of the spring's ingredients; but it is even best to have a rough public lane at one side of your enclosure which, at the right season, shall become an avenue of bloom and odour. The old flowers are the best and should grow carelessly in corners. Indeed, the ideal fortune is to find an old garden, once very richly cared for, since sunk into neglect, and to tend, not repair, that neglect; it will thus have a smack of nature and wildness which skilful dispositions cannot overtake. The gardener should be an idler, and have a gross partiality to the kitchen plots: an eager or toilful gardener mis-becomes the garden landscape; a tasteful gardener will be ever meddling, will keep the borders raw, and take the bloom off nature. Close adjoining, if you are in the south, an olive-yard, if in the north, a swarded apple-orchard reaching to the stream, completes your miniature domain; but this is perhaps best entered through a door in the high fruit-wall; so that you close the door behind you on your sunny plots, your hedges and evergreen jungle, when you go down to watch the apples falling in the pool. It is a golden maxim to cultivate the garden for the nose, and the eyes will take care of themselves. Nor must the ear be forgotten: without birds, a garden is a prison-yard. There is a garden near Marseilles on a steep hill-side, walking by which, upon a sunny morning, your ear will suddenly be ravished with a burst of small and very cheerful singing: some score of cages being set out there to sun the occupants. This is a heavenly surprise to any passer-by; but the price paid, to keep so many ardent and winged creatures from their liberty, will make the luxury too dear for any thoughtful pleasure-lover. There is only one sort of bird that I can tolerate caged, though even then I think it hard, and that is what is called in France the Bec-d'Argent. I once had two of these pigmies in captivity; and in the quiet, bare house upon a silent street where I was then living, their song, which was not much louder than a bee's, but airily musical, kept me in a perpetual good humour. 373 I put the cage upon my table when I worked, carried it with me when I went for meals, and kept it by my head at night: the first thing in the morning, these *maestrini* would pipe up. But these, even if you can pardon their imprisonment, are for the house. In the garden the wild birds must plant a colony, a chorus of the lesser warblers that should be almost deafening, a blackbird in the lilacs, a nightingale down the lane, so that you must stroll to hear it, and yet a little farther, tree-tops populous with rooks.

Your house should not command much outlook; it should be set deep and green, though upon rising ground, or, if possible, crowning a knoll, for the sake of drainage. Yet it must be open to the east, or you will miss the sunrise; sunset occurring so much later, you can go up a few steps and look the other way. A house of more than two stories is a mere barrack; indeed the ideal is of one story, raised upon cellars. If the rooms are large, the house may be small: a single room, lofty, spacious, and lightsome, is more palatial than a castleful of cabinets and cupboards. Yet size in a house, and some extent and intricacy of corridor, is certainly delightful to the flesh. The reception room should be, if possible, a place of many recesses, which are "petty retiring places for conference"; but it must have one long wall with a divan: for a day spent upon a divan, among a world of cushions, is as full of diversion as to travel. The eating-room, in the French mode, should be *ad hoc*: unfurnished, but with a buffet, the table, necessary chairs, one or two of Canaletto's etchings, and a tile fire-place for the winter. In neither of these public places should there be anything beyond a shelf or two of books; but the passages may be one library from end to end, and the stair, if there be one, lined with volumes in old leather, very brightly carpeted, and leading half-way up, and by way of landing, to a windowed recess with a fire-place; this window, almost alone in the house, should command a handsome prospect. Husband and wife must 374 each possess a studio; on the woman's sanctuary I hesitate to dwell, and turn to the man's. The walls are shelved waist-high for books, and the top thus forms a continuous table running round the wall. Above are prints, a large map of the neighbourhood, a Corot and a Claude or two. The room is very spacious, and the five tables and two chairs are but as islands. One table is for actual work, one close by for references in use; one, very large, for MSS. or proofs that wait their turn; one kept clear for an occasion; and the fifth is the map table, groaning under a collection of large-scale maps and charts. Of all books these are the least wearisome to read and the richest in matter; the course of roads and rivers, the contour lines and the forests in the maps — the reefs, soundings, anchors, sailing marks and little pilot-pictures in the charts — and, in both, the bead-roll of names, make them of all printed matter the most fit to stimulate and satisfy the fancy. The chair in which you write is very low and easy, and backed into a corner; at one elbow the fire twinkles; close at the other, if you are a little inhumane, your cage of silver-bills are twittering into song.

Joined along by a passage, you may reach the great sunny, glass-roofed, and tiled gymnasium, at the far end of which, lined with bright marble, is your plunge and swimming bath, fitted with a capacious boiler.

The whole loft of the house from end to end makes one undivided chamber; here are set forth tables on which to model imaginary or actual countries in putty or plaster, with tools and hardy pigments; a carpenter's bench; and a spared corner for photography, while at the far end a space is kept clear for playing soldiers. Two boxes contain the two armies of some five hundred horse and foot; two others the ammunition of each side, and a fifth the foot-rules and the three colours of chalk, with which you lay down, or, after a day's play, refresh the outlines of the country; red or white for the two kinds of road (according as they are suitable or not for the passage of ordnance), 375 and blue for the course of the obstructing rivers. Here I foresee that you may pass much happy time; against a good adversary a game may well continue for a month; for with armies so considerable three moves will occupy an hour. It will be found to set an excellent edge on this diversion if one of the players shall, every day or so, write a report of the operations in the character of army correspondent.

I have left to the last the little room for winter evenings. This should be furnished in warm positive colours, and sofas and floor thick with rich furs. The hearth, where you burn wood of aromatic quality on silver dogs, tiled round about with Bible pictures; the seats deep and easy; a single Titian in a gold frame; a white bust or so upon a bracket; a rack for the journals of the week; a table for the books of the year; and close in a corner the three shelves full of eternal books that never weary: Shakespeare, Molière, Montaigne, Lamb, Sterne, De Musset's comedies (the one volume open at *Carmosine* and the other at *Fantasio*); the "Arabian Nights," and kindred stories, in Weber's solemn volumes; Borrow's "Bible in Spain," the "Pilgrim's Progress," "Guy Mannering," and "Rob Roy," "Monte Cristo," and the "Vicomte de Bragelonne," immortal Boswell sole among biographers, Chaucer, Herrick, and the "State Trials."

The bedrooms are large, airy, with almost no furniture, floors of varnished wood, and at the bed-head, in case of insomnia, one shelf of books of a particular and dippable order, such as "Pepys," the "Paston

Letters,” Burt’s “Letters from the Highlands,” or the “Newgate Calendar.” …

LAY MORALS

The following chapters of a projected treatise on Ethics were drafted at Edinburgh in the spring of 1879. They are unrevised, and must not be taken as representing, either as to matter or form, their author's final thoughts; but they contain much that is essentially characteristic of his mind.

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CHAPTER I

The problem of education is twofold: first to know, and then to utter. Every one who lives any semblance of an inner life thinks more nobly and profoundly than he speaks; and the best of teachers can impart only broken images of the truth which they perceive. Speech which goes from one to another between two natures, and, what is worse, between two experiences, is doubly relative. The speaker buries his meaning; it is for the hearer to dig it up again; and all speech, written or spoken, is in a dead language until it finds a willing and prepared hearer. Such, moreover, is the complexity of life, that when we condescend upon details in our advice, we may be sure we condescend on error; and the best of education is to throw out some magnanimous hints. No man was ever so poor that he could express all he has in him by words, looks, or actions; his true knowledge is eternally incommunicable, for it is a knowledge of himself; and his best wisdom comes to him by no process of the mind, but in a supreme self-dictation, which keeps varying from hour to hour in its dictates with the variation of events and circumstances.

A few men of picked nature, full of faith, courage, and contempt for others, try earnestly to set forth as much as they can grasp of this inner law; but the vast majority, when they come to advise the young, must be content to retail certain doctrines which have been already retailed to them in their own youth. Every generation has to educate another which it has brought upon the stage. 380 People who readily accept the responsibility of parentship, having very different matters in their eye, are apt to feel rueful when their responsibility falls due. What are they to tell the child about life and conduct, subjects on which they have themselves so few and such confused opinions? Indeed, I do not know; the least said, perhaps, the soonest mended; and yet the child keeps asking, and the parent must find some words to say in his own defence. Where does he find them? and what are they when found?

As a matter of experience, and in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, he will instil into his wide-eyed brat three bad things; the terror of public opinion, and, flowing from that as a fountain, the desire of wealth and applause. Besides these, or what might be deduced as corollaries from these, he will teach not much else of any effective value: some dim notions of divinity, perhaps, and book-keeping, and how to walk through a quadrille.

But, you may tell me, the young people are taught to be Christians. It may be want of penetration, but I have not yet been able to perceive it. As an honest man, whatever we teach, and be it good or evil, it is not the doctrine of Christ. What He taught (and in this He is like all other teachers worthy of the name) was not a code of rules, but a ruling spirit; not truths, but a spirit of truth; not views, but a view. What He showed us was an attitude of mind. Towards the many considerations on which conduct is built, each man stands in a certain relation. He takes life on a certain principle. He has a compass in his spirit which points in a certain direction. It is the attitude, the relation, the point of the compass, that is the whole body and gist of what he has to teach us; in this, the details are comprehended; out of this the specific precepts issue, and by this, and this only, can they be explained and applied. And thus, to learn aright from any teacher, we must first of all, like a historical artist, think ourselves into sympathy 381 with his position and, in the technical phrase, create his character. A historian confronted with some ambiguous politician, or an actor charged with a part, have but one pre-occupation; they must search all round and upon every side, and grope for some central conception which is to explain and justify the most extreme details; until that is found, the politician is an enigma, or perhaps a quack, and the part a tissue of fustian sentiment and big words; but once that is found, all enters into a plan, a human nature appears, the politician or the stage-king is understood from point to point, from end to end. This is a degree of trouble which will be gladly taken by a very humble artist; but not even the terror of eternal fire can teach a business man to bend his imagination to such athletic efforts. Yet without this, all is vain; until we understand the whole, we shall understand none of the parts; and otherwise we have no more than broken images and scattered words; the meaning remains buried; and the language in which our prophet speaks to us is a dead language in our ears.

Take a few of Christ's sayings and compare them with our current doctrines.

"*Ye cannot,*" He says, "*serve God and Mammon.*" Cannot? And our whole system is to teach us how we can!

"*The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.*" Are they? I had been led to understand the reverse: that the Christian merchant, for example, prospered exceedingly in his affairs; that honesty was the best policy; that an author of repute had written a conclusive treatise "How to make the best of both worlds." Of both worlds indeed! Which am I to believe then — Christ or the author of repute?

"*Take no thought for the morrow.*" Ask the Successful Merchant; interrogate your own heart; and you will have to admit that this is not only a silly but an immoral position. All we believe, all we hope, all we honour in ourselves or 382 our contemporaries, stands condemned in this one sentence, or, if you take the other view, condemns the sentence as unwise and inhumane. We are not then of the “same mind that was in Christ.” We disagree with Christ. Either Christ meant nothing, or else He or we must be in the wrong. Well says Thoreau, speaking of some texts from the New Testament, and finding a strange echo of another style which the reader may recognise: “Let but one of these sentences be rightly read from any pulpit in the land, and there would not be left one stone of that meeting-house upon another.”

It may be objected that these are what are called “hard sayings”; and that a man, or an education, may be very sufficiently Christian although it leave some of these sayings upon one side. But this is a very gross delusion. Although truth is difficult to state, it is both easy and agreeable to receive, and the mind runs out to meet it ere the phrase be done. The universe, in relation to what any man can say of it, is plain, patent, and staringly comprehensible. In itself, it is a great and travailing ocean, unsounded, unvoyageable, an eternal mystery to man; or, let us say, it is a monstrous and impassable mountain, one side of which, and a few near slopes and foothills, we can dimly study with these mortal eyes. But what any man can say of it, even in his highest utterance, must have relation to this little and plain corner, which is no less visible to us than to him. We are looking on the same map; it will go hard if we cannot follow the demonstration. The longest and most abstruse flight of a philosopher becomes clear and shallow, in the flash of a moment, when we suddenly perceive the aspect and drift of his intention. The longest argument is but a finger pointed; once we get our own finger rightly parallel, and we see what the man meant, whether it be a new star or an old street-lamp. And briefly, if a saying is hard to understand, it is because we are thinking of something else.

But to be a true disciple is to think of the same things 383 as our prophet, and to think of different things in the same order. To be of the same mind with another is to see all things in the same perspective; it is not to agree in a few indifferent matters near at hand and not much debated; it is to follow him in his farthest flights, to see the force of his hyperboles, to stand so exactly in the centre of his vision that whatever he may express, your eyes will light at once on the original, that whatever he may see to declare, your mind will at once accept. You do not belong to the school of any philosopher, because you agree with him that theft is, on the whole, objectionable, or that the sun is overhead at noon. It is by the hard sayings that discipleship is tested. We are all agreed about the middling and indifferent parts of knowledge and morality; even the most soaring spirits too often take them tamely upon trust. But the man, the philosopher or the moralist, does not stand upon these chance adhesions; and the purpose of any system looks towards those extreme points where it steps valiantly beyond tradition and returns with some covert hint of things outside. Then only can you be certain that the words are not words of course, nor mere echoes of the past; then only are you sure that if he be indicating anything at all, it is a star and not a street-lamp; then only do you touch the heart of the mystery; since it was for these that the author wrote his book.

Now, every now and then, and indeed surprisingly often, Christ finds a word that transcends all commonplace morality; every now and then He quits the beaten track to pioneer the unexpressed, and throws out a pregnant and magnanimous hyperbole; for it is only by some bold poetry of thought that men can be strung up above the level of everyday conceptions to take a broader look upon experience or accept some higher principle of conduct. To a man who is of the same mind that was in Christ, who stands at some centre not too far from His, and looks at the world and conduct from some not dissimilar or, at least, not opposing attitude — or, shortly, to a man who is of 384 Christ's philosophy — every such saying should come home with a thrill of joy and corroboration; he should feel each one below his feet as another sure foundation in the flux of time and chance; each should be another proof that in the torrent of the years and generations, where doctrines and great armaments and empires are swept away and swallowed, he stands immovable, holding by the eternal stars. But, alas! at this juncture of the ages it is not so with us; on each and every such occasion our whole fellowship of Christians falls back in disapproving wonder and implicitly denies the saying. Christians! the farce is impudently broad. Let us stand up in the sight of heaven and confess. The ethics that we hold are those of Benjamin Franklin. *Honesty is the best policy*, is perhaps a hard saying; it is certainly one by which a wise man of these days will not too curiously direct his steps; but I think it shows a glimmer of meaning to even our most dimmed intelligences; I think we perceive a principle behind it; I think, without hyperbole, we are of the same mind that was in Benjamin Franklin.

CHAPTER II

But, I may be told, we teach the ten commandments, where a world of morals lies condensed, the very pith and epitome of all ethics and religion; and a young man with these precepts engraved upon his mind must follow after profit with some conscience and Christianity of method. A man cannot go very far astray who neither dishonours his parents, nor kills, nor commits adultery, nor steals, nor bears false witness; for these things, rightly thought out, cover a vast field of duty.

Alas! what is a precept? It is at best an illustration; it is case law at the best which can be learned by precept. The letter is not only dead, but killing; the spirit which underlies, and cannot be uttered, alone is true and helpful. This is trite to sickness; but familiarity has a cunning disenchantment; in a day or two she can steal all beauty from the mountain tops; and the most startling words begin to fall dead upon the ear after several repetitions. If you see a thing too often, you no longer see it; if you hear a thing too often, you no longer hear it. Our attention requires to be surprised; and to carry a fort by assault, or to gain a thoughtful hearing from the ruck of mankind, are feats of about equal difficulty and must be tried by not dissimilar means. The whole Bible has thus lost its message for the common run of hearers; it has become mere words of course; and the parson may bawl himself scarlet and beat the pulpit like a thing possessed, but his hearers will continue to nod; they are strangely at peace; they know all he has to say; ring the old bell as you choose, it is still the old bell and it cannot startle their composure. 386 And so with this byword about the letter and the spirit. It is quite true, no doubt; but it has no meaning in the world to any man of us. Alas! it has just this meaning, and neither more nor less: that while the spirit is true, the letter is eternally false.

The shadow of a great oak lies abroad upon the ground at noon, perfect, clear, and stable like the earth. But let a man set himself to mark out the boundary with cords and pegs, and were he never so nimble and never so exact, what with the multiplicity of the leaves and the progression of the shadow as it flees before the travelling sun, long ere he has made the circuit the whole figure will have changed. Life may be compared, not to a single tree, but to a great and complicated forest; circumstance is more swiftly changing than a shadow, language much more inexact than the tools of a surveyor; from day to day the trees fall and are renewed; the very essences are fleeting as we look; and the whole world of leaves is swinging tempest-tossed among the winds of time. Look now for your shadows. O man of formulæ, is this a place for you? Have you fitted the spirit to a single case? Alas, in the cycle of the ages when shall such another be proposed for the judgment of man? Now when the sun shines and the winds blow, the wood is filled with an innumerable multitude of shadows, tumultuously tossed and changing; and at every gust the whole carpet leaps and becomes new. Can you or your heart say more?

Look back now, for a moment, on your own brief experience of life; and although you lived it feelingly in your own person, and had every step of conduct burned in by pains and joys upon your memory, tell me what definite lesson does experience hand on from youth to manhood, or from both to age? The settled tenor which first strikes the eye is but the shadow of a delusion. This is gone; that never truly was; and you yourself are altered beyond recognition. Times and men and circumstances change about your changing character, with a speed of 387 which no earthly hurricane affords an image. What was the best yesterday, is it still the best in this changed theatre of a to-morrow? Will your own Past truly guide you in your own violent and unexpected Future? And if this be questionable, with what humble, with what hopeless eyes, should we not watch other men driving beside us on their unknown careers, seeing with unlike eyes, impelled by different gales, doing and suffering in another sphere of things?

And as the authentic clue to such a labyrinth and change of scene, do you offer me these two score words? these five bald prohibitions? For the moral precepts are no more than five; the first four deal rather with matters of observance than of conduct; the tenth, *Thou shall not covet*, stands upon another basis, and shall be spoken of ere long. The Jews, to whom they were first given, in the course of years began to find these precepts insufficient; and made an addition of no less than six hundred and fifty others! They hoped to make a pocket-book of reference on morals, which should stand to life in some such relation, say, as Hoyle stands in to the scientific game of whist. The comparison is just, and condemns the design; for those who play by rule will never be more than tolerable players; and you and I would like to play our game in life to the noblest and the most divine advantage. Yet if the Jews took a petty and huckstering view of conduct, what view do we take ourselves, who callously leave youth to go forth into the enchanted forest, full of spells and dire chimeras, with no guidance more complete than is afforded by these five precepts?

Honour thy father and thy mother. Yes, but does that mean to obey? and if so, how long and how far? *Thou shall not kill*. Yet the very intention and purport of the prohibition may be best fulfilled by killing. *Thou shall not commit adultery*. But some of the ugliest adulteries are committed in the bed of marriage and under the sanction of religion and law. *Thou shalt not bear false witness*. 388

How? by speech or by silence also? or even by a smile? *Thou shalt not steal.* Ah, that indeed! But what is *to steal*?

To steal? It is another word to be construed; and who is to be our guide? The police will give us one construction, leaving the world only that least minimum of meaning without which society would fall in pieces; but surely we must take some higher sense than this; surely we hope more than a bare subsistence for mankind; surely we wish mankind to prosper and go on from strength to strength, and ourselves to live rightly in the eye of some more exacting potentate than a policeman. The approval or the disapproval of the police must be eternally indifferent to a man who is both valorous and good. There is extreme discomfort, but no shame, in the condemnation of the law. The law represents that modicum of morality which can be squeezed out of the ruck of mankind; but what is that to me, who aim higher and seek to be my own more stringent judge? I observe with pleasure that no brave man has ever given a rush for such considerations. The Japanese have a nobler and more sentimental feeling for this social bond into which we all are born when we come into the world, and whose comforts and protection we all indifferently share throughout our lives: — but even to them, no more than to our Western saints and heroes, does the law of the state supersede the higher law of duty. Without hesitation and without remorse, they transgress the stiffest enactments rather than abstain from doing right. But the accidental superior duty being thus fulfilled, they at once return in allegiance to the common duty of all citizens; and hasten to denounce themselves; and value at an equal rate their just crime and their equally just submission to its punishment.

The evading of the police will not long satisfy an active conscience or a thoughtful head. But to show you how one or the other may trouble a man, and what a vast extent of frontier is left unridden by this invaluable eighth 389 commandment, let me tell you a few pages out of a young man’s life.

He was a friend of mine; a young man like others; generous, flighty, as variable as youth itself, but always with some high motives and on the search for higher thoughts of life. I should tell you at once that he thoroughly agrees with the eighth commandment. But he got hold of some unsettling works, the New Testament among others, and this loosened his views of life and led him into many perplexities. As he was the son of a man in a certain position, and well off, my friend had enjoyed from the first the advantages of education, nay, he had been kept alive through a sickly childhood by constant watchfulness, comforts, and change of air; for all of which he was indebted to his father’s wealth.

At college he met other lads more diligent than himself, who followed the plough in summer-time to pay their college fees in winter; and this inequality struck him with some force. He was at that age of a conversible temper, and insatiably curious in the aspects of life; and he spent much of his time scraping acquaintance with all classes of man- and woman-kind. In this way he came upon many depressed ambitions, and many intelligences stunted for want of opportunity; and this also struck him. He began to perceive that life was a handicap upon strange, wrong-sided principles; and not, as he had been told, a fair and equal race. He began to tremble that he himself had been unjustly favoured, when he saw all the avenues of wealth, and power, and comfort closed against so many of his superiors and equals, and held unwearyingly open before so idle, so desultory, and so dissolute a being as himself. There sat a youth beside him on the college benches who had only one shirt to his back, and, at intervals sufficiently far apart, must stay at home to have it washed. It was my friend's principle to stay away as often as he dared; for I fear he was no friend to learning. But there was something that came home to him sharply, in this fellow 390 who had to give over study till his shirt was washed, and the scores of others who had never an opportunity at all. *If one of these could take his place*, he thought; and the thought tore away a bandage from his eyes. He was eaten by the shame of his discoveries, and despised himself as an unworthy favourite and a creature of the back-stairs of Fortune. He could no longer see without confusion one of these brave young fellows battling up-hill against adversity. Had he not filched that fellow's birthright? At best was he not coldly profiting by the injustice of society, and greedily devouring stolen goods? The money, indeed, belonged to his father, who had worked, and thought, and given up his liberty to earn it; but by what justice could the money belong to my friend, who had, as yet, done nothing but help to squander it? A more sturdy honesty, joined to a more even and impartial temperament, would have drawn from these considerations a new force of industry, that this equivocal position might be brought as swiftly as possible to an end, and some good services to mankind justify the appropriation of expense. It was not so with my friend, who was only unsettled and discouraged, and filled full of that trumpeting anger with which young men regard injustices in the first blush of youth; although in a few years they will tamely acquiesce in their existence, and knowingly profit by their complications. Yet all this while he suffered many indignant pangs. And once, when he put on his boots, like any other unripe donkey, to run away from home, it was his best consolation that he was now, at a single plunge, to free himself from the responsibility of this wealth that was not his, and to battle equally against his fellows in the warfare of life.

Some time after this, falling into ill-health, he was sent at great expense to a more favourable climate; and then I think his perplexities were thickest. When he thought of all the other young men of singular promise, upright, good, the prop of families, who must remain at home to 391 die, and with all their possibilities be lost to life and mankind; and how he, by one more unmerited favour, was chosen out from all these others to survive; he felt as if there were no life, no labour, no devotion of soul and body, that could repay and justify these partialities. A religious lady, to whom he communicated these reflections, could see no force in them whatever. "It was God's will," said she. But he knew it was by God's will that Joan of Arc was burnt at Rouen, which cleared neither Bedford nor Bishop Cauchon; and again, by God's will that Christ was crucified outside Jerusalem, which excused neither the rancour of the priests nor the timidity of Pilate. He knew, moreover, that although the possibility of this favour he was now enjoying issued from his circumstances, its acceptance was the act of his own will; and he had accepted it greedily, longing for rest and sunshine. And hence this allegation of God's providence did little to relieve his scruples. I promise you he had a very troubled mind. And I would not laugh if I were you, though while he was thus making mountains out of what you think molehills, he were still (as perhaps he was) contentedly practising many other things that to you seem black as hell. Every man is his own judge and mountain-guide through life. There is an old story of a mote and a beam, apparently not true, but worthy perhaps of some consideration. I should, if I were you, give some consideration to these scruples of his, and if I were he, I should do the like by yours; for it is not unlikely that there may be something under both. In the meantime you must hear how my invalid acted. Like many invalids, he supposed that he would die. Now should he die, he saw no means of repaying this huge loan which, by the hands of his father, mankind had advanced him for his sickness. In that case it would be lost money. So he determined that the advance should be as small as possible; and, so long as he continued to doubt his recovery, lived in an upper room, and grudged himself all but necessaries. But so soon as he began to perceive a 392 change for the better, he felt justified in spending more freely, to speed and brighten his return to health, and trusted in the future to lend a help to mankind, as mankind, out of its treasury, had lent a help to him.

I do not say but that my friend was a little too curious and partial in his view; nor thought too much of himself and too little of his parents; but I do say that here are some scruples which tormented my friend in his youth, and still, perhaps, at odd times give him a prick in the midst of his enjoyments, and which after all have some foundation in justice, and point, in their confused way, to some honourable honesty within the reach of man. And at least, is not this an unusual gloss upon the eighth commandment? And what sort of comfort, guidance, or illumination did that precept afford my friend throughout these contentions? “Thou shall not steal.” With all my heart! But *am* I stealing?

The truly quaint materialism of our view of life disables us from pursuing any transaction to an end. You can make no one understand that his bargain is anything more than a bargain, whereas in point of fact it is a link in the policy of mankind, and either a good or an evil to the world. We have a sort of blindness which prevents us from seeing anything but sovereigns. If one man agrees to give another so many shillings for so many hours’ work, and then wilfully gives him a certain proportion of the price in bad money and only the remainder in good, we can see with half an eye that this man is a thief. But if the other spends a certain proportion of the hours in smoking a pipe of tobacco, and a certain other proportion in looking at the sky, or the clock, or trying to recall an air, or in meditation on his own past adventures, and only the remainder in downright work such as he is paid to do, is he, because the theft is one of time and not of money, — is he any the less a thief? The one gave a bad shilling, the other an imperfect hour; but both broke the bargain, and each is a thief. In piecework, which is what most of 393 us do, the case is none the less plain for being even less material. If you forge a bad knife, you have wasted some of mankind’s iron, and then, with unrivalled cynicism, you pocket some of mankind’s money for your trouble. Is there any man so blind who cannot see that this is theft? Again, if you carelessly cultivate a farm, you have been playing fast and loose with mankind’s resources against hunger; there will be less bread in consequence, and for lack of that bread somebody will die next winter: a grim consideration. And you must not hope to shuffle out of blame because you got less money for your less quantity of bread; for although a theft be partly punished, it is none the less a theft for that. You took the farm against competitors; there were others ready to shoulder the responsibility and be answerable for the tale of loaves; but it was you who took it. By the act you came under a tacit bargain with mankind to cultivate that farm with your best endeavour; you were under no superintendence, you were on parole; and you have broke your bargain, and to all who look closely, and yourself among the rest if you have moral eyesight, you are a thief. Or take the case of men of letters. Every piece of work which is not as good as you can make it, which you have palmed off imperfect, meagrely thought, niggardly in execution, upon mankind who is your paymaster on parole and in a sense your pupil, every hasty or slovenly or untrue performance, should rise up against you in the court of your own heart and condemn you for a thief. Have you a salary? If you trifle with your health, and so render yourself less capable for duty, and still touch, and still greedily pocket the emolument — what are you but a thief? Have you double accounts? do you by any time-honoured juggle, deceit, or ambiguous process, gain more from those who deal with you than if you were bargaining and dealing face to face in front of God? — What are you but a thief? Lastly, if you fill an office, or produce an article, which, in your heart of hearts, you think a delusion and a fraud upon 394 mankind, and still draw your salary and go through the sham manœuvres of this office, or still book your profits and keep on flooding the world with these injurious goods? — though you were old, and bald, and the first at church, and a baronet, what are you but a thief? These may seem hard words and mere curiosities of the intellect, in an age when the spirit of honesty is so sparingly cultivated that all business is conducted upon lies and so-called customs of the trade, that not a man bestows two thoughts on the utility or honourableness of his pursuit. I would say less if I thought less. But looking to my own reason and the right of things, I can only avow that I am a thief myself, and that I passionately suspect my neighbours of the same guilt.

Where did you hear that it was easy to be honest? Do you find that in your Bible? Easy? It is easy to be an ass and follow the multitude like a blind, besotted bull in a stampede; and that, I am well aware, is what you and Mrs. Grundy mean by being honest. But it will not bear the stress of time nor the scrutiny of conscience. Even before the lowest of all tribunals, — before a court of law, whose business it is, not to keep men right, or within a thousand miles of right, but to withhold them from going so tragically wrong that they will pull down the whole jointed fabric of society by their misdeeds — even before a court of law, as we begin to see in these last days, our easy view of following at each other’s tails, alike to good and evil, is beginning to be reproved and punished, and declared no honesty at all, but open theft and swindling; and simpletons who have gone on through life with a quiet conscience may learn suddenly, from the lips of a judge, that the custom of the trade may be a custom of the devil. You thought it was easy to be honest. Did you think it was easy to be just and kind and truthful? Did you think the whole duty of aspiring man was as simple as a hornpipe? and you could walk through life like a gentleman and a hero, with no more concern than it takes to go to church 395 or to address a circular? And yet all this time you had the eighth commandment! and, what makes it richer, you would not have broken it for the world!

The truth is, that these commandments by themselves are of little use in private judgment. If compression is what you want, you have their whole spirit compressed into the golden rule; and yet there expressed with more significance, since the law is there spiritually and not materially stated. And in truth, four out of these ten commands, from the sixth to the ninth, are rather legal than ethical. The police-court is their proper home. A magistrate cannot tell whether you love your neighbour as yourself, but he can tell more or less whether you have murdered, or stolen, or committed adultery, or held up your hand and testified to that which was not; and these things, for rough practical tests, are as good as can be found. And perhaps, therefore, the best condensation of the Jewish moral law is in the maxims of the priests, "neminem lædere" and "suum cuique tribunere." But all this granted, it becomes only the more plain that they are inadequate in the sphere of personal morality; that while they tell the magistrate roughly when to punish, they can never direct an anxious sinner what to do.

Only Polonius, or the like solemn sort of ass, can offer us a succinct proverb by way of advice, and not burst out blushing in our faces. We grant them one and all and for all that they are worth; it is something above and beyond that we desire. Christ was in general a great enemy to such a way of teaching; we rarely find Him meddling with any of these plump commands but it was to open them out, and lift His hearers from the letter to the spirit. For morals are a personal affair; in the war of righteousness every man fights for his own hand; all the six hundred precepts of the Mishna cannot shake my private judgment; my magistracy of myself is an indefeasible charge, and my decisions absolute for the time and case. The moralist is not a judge of appeal, but an advocate who pleads at my 396 tribunal. He has to show not the law, but that the law applies. Can he convince me? then he gains the cause. And thus you find Christ giving various counsels to varying people, and often jealously careful to avoid definite precept. Is He asked, for example, to divide a heritage? He refuses: and the best advice that He will offer is but a paraphrase of that tenth commandment which figures so strangely among the rest. *Take heed, and beware of covetousness.* If you complain that this is vague, I have failed to carry you along with me in my argument. For no definite precept can be more than an illustration, though its truth were resplendent like the sun, and it was announced from heaven by the voice of God. And life is so intricate and changing, that perhaps not twenty times, or perhaps not twice in the ages, shall we find that nice consent of circumstances to which alone it can apply.

CHAPTER III

Although the world and life have in a sense become commonplace to our experience, it is but in an external torpor; the true sentiment slumbers within us; and we have but to reflect on ourselves or our surroundings to rekindle our astonishment. No length of habit can blunt our first surprise. Of the world I have but little to say in this connection; a few strokes shall suffice. We inhabit a dead ember swimming wide in the blank of space, dizzily spinning as it swims, and lighted up from several million miles away by a more horrible hell-fire than was ever conceived by the theological imagination. Yet the dead ember is a green, commodious dwelling-place; and the reverberation of this hell-fire ripens flower and fruit and mildly warms us on summer eves upon the lawn. Far off on all hands other dead embers, other flaming suns, wheel and race in the apparent void; the nearest is out of call, the farthest so far that the heart sickens in the effort to conceive the distance. Shipwrecked seamen on the deep, though they bestride but the truncheon of a boom, are safe and near at home compared with mankind on its bullet. Even to us who have known no other, it seems a strange, if not an appalling, place of residence.

But far stranger is the resident, man, a creature compact of wonders that, after centuries of custom, is still wonderful to himself. He inhabits a body which he is continually outliving, discarding, and renewing. Food and sleep, by an unknown alchemy, restore his spirits and the freshness of his countenance. Hair grows on him like grass; his eyes, his brain, his sinews, thirst for action; he joys to see and touch and hear, to partake the sun and 398 wind, to sit down and intently ponder on his astonishing attributes and situation, to rise up and run, to perform the strange and revolting round of physical functions. The sight of a flower, the note of a bird, will often move him deeply; yet he looks unconcerned on the impassable distances and portentous bonfires of the universe. He comprehends, he designs, he tames nature, rides the sea, ploughs, climbs the air in a balloon, makes vast inquiries, begins interminable labours, joins himself into federations and populous cities, spends his days to deliver the ends of the earth or to benefit unborn posterity; and yet knows himself for a piece of unsurpassed fragility and the creature of a few days. His sight, which conducts him, which takes notice of the farthest stars, which is miraculous in every way and a thing defying explanation or belief, is yet lodged in a piece of jelly, and can be extinguished with a touch. His heart, which all through life so indomitably, so athletically labours, is but a capsule, and may be stopped with a pin. His whole body, for all its savage energies, its leaping and its winged desires, may yet be tamed and conquered by a draught of air or a sprinkling of cold dew. What he calls death, which is the seeming arrest of everything, and the ruin and hateful transformation of the visible body, lies in wait for him outwardly in a thousand accidents, and grows up in secret diseases from within. He is still learning to be a man when his faculties are already beginning to decline; he has not yet understood himself or his position before he inevitably dies. And yet this mad, chimerical creature can take no thought of his last end, lives as though he were eternal, plunges with his vulnerable body into the shock of war, and daily affronts death with unconcern. He cannot take a step without pain or pleasure. His life is a tissue of sensations, which he distinguishes as they seem to come more directly from himself or his surroundings. He is conscious of himself as a joyer or a sufferer, as that which craves, chooses, and is satisfied; conscious of his surroundings as it were of an inexhaustible purveyor, the 399 source of aspects, inspirations, wonders, cruel knocks and transporting caresses. Thus he goes on his way, stumbling among delights and agonies.

Matter is a far-fetched theory, and materialism is without a root in man. To him everything is important in the degree to which it moves him. The telegraph wires and posts, the electricity speeding from clerk to clerk, the clerks, the glad or sorrowful import of the message, and the paper on which it is finally brought to him at home, are all equally facts, all equally exist for man. A word or a thought can wound him as acutely as a knife of steel. If he thinks he is loved, he will rise up and glory to himself, although he be in a distant land and short of necessary bread. Does he think he is not loved? — he may have the woman at his beck, and there is not a joy for him in all the world. Indeed, if we are to make any account of this figment of reason, the distinction between material and immaterial, we shall conclude that the life of each man as an individual is immaterial, although the continuation and prospects of mankind as a race turn upon material conditions. The physical business of each man’s body is transacted for him; like a sybarite, he has attentive valets in his own viscera; he breathes, he sweats, he digests without an effort, or so much as a consenting volition; for the most part he even eats, not with a wakeful consciousness, but as it were between two thoughts. His life is centred among other and more important considerations; touch him in his honour or his love, creatures of the imagination which attach him to mankind or to an individual man or woman; cross him in his piety which connects his soul with heaven; and he turns from his food, he loathes his breath, and with a magnanimous emotion cuts the knots of his existence and frees himself at a blow from the web of pains and pleasures.

It follows that man is twofold at least; that he is not a rounded and autonomous empire; but that in the same body with him there dwell other powers, tributary but 400 independent. If I now behold one walking in a garden curiously coloured and illuminated by the sun, digesting his food, with elaborate chemistry, breathing, circulating blood, directing himself by the sight of his eyes, accommodating his body by a thousand delicate balancings to the wind and the uneven surface of the path, and all the time, perhaps, with his mind engaged about America, or the dog-star, or the attributes of God — what am I to say, or how am I to describe the thing I see? Is that truly a man, in the rigorous meaning of the word? or is it not a man and something else? What, then, are we to count the centre-bit and axle of a being so variously compounded? It is a question much debated. Some read his history in a certain intricacy of nerve and the success of successive digestions; others find him an exiled piece of heaven blown upon and determined by the breath of God; and both schools of theorists will scream like scalded children at a word of doubt. Yet either of these views, however plausible, is beside the question; either may be right; and I care not; I ask a more particular answer, and to a more immediate point. What is the man? There is Something that was before hunger and that remains behind after a meal. It may or may not be engaged in any given act or passion, but when it is, it changes, heightens, and sanctifies. Thus it is not engaged in lust, where satisfaction ends the chapter; and it is engaged in love, where no satisfaction can blunt the edge of the desire, and where age, sickness, or alienation may deface what was desirable without diminishing the sentiment. This something, which is the man, is a permanence which abides through the vicissitudes of passion, now overwhelmed and now triumphant, now unconscious of itself in the immediate distress of appetite or pain, now rising unclouded above all. So, to the man, his own central self fades and grows clear again amid the tumult of the senses, like a revolving Pharos in the night. It is forgotten; it is hid, it seems, for ever; and yet in the next calm hour he shall behold himself 401 once more, shining and unmoved among changes and storm.

Mankind, in the sense of the creeping mass that is born and eats, that generates and dies, is but the aggregate of the outer and lower sides of man. This inner consciousness, this lantern alternately obscured and shining, to and by which the individual exists and must order his conduct, is something special to himself and not common to the race. His joys delight, his sorrows wound him, according as *this* is interested or indifferent in the affair: according as they arise in an imperial war or in a broil conducted by the tributary chieftains of the mind. He may lose all, and *this* not suffer; he may lose what is materially a trifle, and *this* leap in his bosom with a cruel pang. I do not speak of it to hardened theorists: the living man knows keenly what it is I mean.

"Perceive at last that thou hast in thee something better and more divine than the things which cause the various effects, and, as it were, pull thee by the strings. What is that now in thy mind? is it fear, or suspicion, or desire, or anything of that kind?" Thus far Marcus Aurelius, in one of the most notable passages in any book. Here is a question worthy to be answered. What is in thy mind? What is the utterance of your inmost self when, in a quiet hour, it can be heard intelligibly? It is something beyond the compass of your thinking, inasmuch as it is yourself; but is it not of a higher spirit than you had dreamed betweenwhiles, and erect above all base considerations? This soul seems hardly touched with our infirmities; we can find in it certainly no fear, suspicion, or desire; we are only conscious — and that as though we read it in the eyes of some one else — of a great and unqualified readiness. A readiness to what? to pass over and look beyond the objects of desire and fear, for something else. And this something else? this something which is apart from desire and fear, to which all the kingdoms of the world and the immediate death of the body are alike 402 indifferent and beside the point, and which yet regards conduct — by what name are we to call it? It may be the love of God; or it may be an inherited (and certainly well concealed) instinct to preserve self and propagate the race; I am not, for the moment, averse to either theory; but it will save time to call it righteousness. By so doing I intend no subterfuge to beg a question; I am indeed ready, and more than willing, to accept the rigid consequence, and lay aside, as far as the treachery of the reason will permit, all former meanings attached to the word righteousness. What is right is that for which a man's central self is ever ready to sacrifice immediate or distant interests; what is wrong is what the central self discards or rejects as incompatible with the fixed design of righteousness.

To make this admission is to lay aside all hope of definition. That which is right upon this theory is intimately dictated to each man by himself, but can never be rigorously set forth in language, and never, above all, imposed upon another. The conscience has, then, a vision like that of the eyes, which is incommunicable, and for the most part illuminates none but its possessor. When many people perceive the same or any cognate facts, they agree upon a word as symbol; and hence we have such words as *tree*, *star*, *love*, *honour*, or *death*; hence also we have this word *right*, which, like the others, we all understand, most of us understand differently, and none can express succinctly otherwise. Yet even on the straitest view, we can make some steps towards comprehension of our own superior thoughts. For it is an incredible and most bewildering fact that a man, through life, is on variable terms with himself; he is aware of tiffs and reconciliations; the intimacy is at times almost suspended, at times it is renewed again with joy. As we said before, his inner self or soul appears to him by successive revelations, and is frequently obscured. It is from a study of these alternations that we can alone hope to discover, even dimly, what seems right and what seems wrong to this veiled prophet of ourself.

All that is in the man in the larger sense, what we call impression as well as what we call intuition, so far as my argument looks, we must accept. It is not wrong to desire food, or exercise, or beautiful surroundings, or the love of sex, or interest which is the food of the mind. All these are craved; all these should be craved; to none of these in itself does the soul demur; where there comes an undeniable want, we recognise a demand of nature. Yet we know that these natural demands may be superseded, for the demands which are common to mankind make but a shadowy consideration in comparison to the demands of the individual soul. Food is almost the first pre-requisite; and yet a high character will go without food to the ruin and death of the body rather than gain it in a manner which the spirit disavows. Pascal laid aside mathematics; Origen doctored his body with a knife; every day some one is thus mortifying his dearest interests and desires, and, in Christ's words, entering maim into the Kingdom of Heaven. This is to supersede the lesser and less harmonious affections by renunciation; and though by this ascetic path we may get to heaven, we cannot get thither a whole and perfect man. But there is another way, to supersede them by reconciliation, in which the soul and all the faculties and senses pursue a common route and share in one desire. Thus, man is tormented by a very imperious physical desire; it spoils his rest, it is not to be denied; the doctors will tell you, not I, how it is a physical need, like the want of food or slumber. In the satisfaction of this desire, as it first appears, the soul sparingly takes part; nay, it oft unsparingly regrets and disapproves the satisfaction. But let the man learn to love a woman as far as he is capable of love; and for this random affection of the body there is substituted a steady determination, a consent of all his powers and faculties, which supersedes, adopts, and commands the other. The desire survives, strengthened, perhaps, but taught obedience, and changed in scope and character. Life is no longer a tale of betrayals and regrets; 404 for the man now lives as a whole; his consciousness now moves on uninterrupted like a river; through all the extremes and ups and downs of passion, he remains approvingly conscious of himself.

Now to me this seems a type of that rightness which the soul demands. It demands that we shall not live alternately with our opposing tendencies in continual see-saw of passion and disgust, but seek some path on which the tendencies shall no longer oppose, but serve each other to a common end. It demands that we shall not pursue broken ends, but great and comprehensive purposes, in which soul and body may unite like notes in a harmonious chord. That were indeed a way of peace and pleasure, that were indeed a heaven upon earth. It does not demand, however, or, to speak in measure, it does not demand of me, that I should starve my appetites for no purpose under heaven but as a purpose in itself; or, in a weak despair, pluck out the eye that I have not yet learned to guide and enjoy with wisdom. The soul demands unity of purpose, not the dismemberment of man; it seeks to roll up all his strength and sweetness, all his passion and wisdom, into one, and make of him a perfect man exulting in perfection. To conclude ascetically is to give up, and not to solve, the problem. The ascetic and the creeping hog, although they are at different poles, have equally failed in life. The one has sacrificed his crew; the other brings back his seamen in a cock-boat, and has lost the ship. I believe there are not many sea-captains who would plume themselves on either result as a success.

But if it is righteousness thus to fuse together our divisive impulses and march with one mind through life, there is plainly one thing more unrighteous than all others, and one declension which is irretrievable and draws on the rest. And this is to lose consciousness of oneself. In the best of times, it is but by flashes, when our whole nature is clear, strong and conscious, and events conspire to leave us free, that we enjoy communion with our soul. At the 405 worst, we are so fallen and passive that we may say shortly we have none. An arctic torpor seizes upon men. Although built of nerves, and set adrift in a stimulating world, they develop a tendency to go bodily to sleep; consciousness becomes engrossed among the reflex and mechanical parts of life; and soon loses both the will and power to look higher considerations in the face. This is ruin; this is the last failure in life; this is temporal damnation; damnation on the spot and without the form of judgment. “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and *lose himself*?”

It is to keep a man awake, to keep him alive to his own soul and its fixed design of righteousness, that the better part of moral and religious education is directed; not only that of words and doctors, but the sharp ferule of calamity under which we are all God’s scholars till we die. If, as teachers, we are to say anything to the purpose, we must say what will remind the pupil of his soul; we must speak that soul’s dialect; we must talk of life and conduct as his soul would have him think of them. If, from some conformity between us and the pupil, or perhaps among all men, we do in truth speak in such a dialect and express such views, beyond question we shall touch in him a spring; beyond question he will recognise the dialect as one that he himself has spoken in his better hours; beyond question he will cry, “I had forgotten, but now I remember; I too have eyes, and I had forgot to use them! I too have a soul of my own, arrogantly upright, and to that I will listen and conform.” In short, say to him anything that he has once thought, or been upon the point of thinking, or show him any view of life that he has once clearly seen, or been upon the point of clearly seeing; and you have done your part and may leave him to complete the education for himself.

Now the view taught at the present time seems to me to want greatness; and the dialect in which alone it can be intelligibly uttered is not the dialect of my soul. It is a sort of postponement of life; nothing quite is, but something 406 different is to be; we are to keep our eyes upon the indirect from the cradle to the grave. We are to regulate our conduct not by desire, but by a politic eye upon the future; and to value acts as they will bring us money or good opinion; as they will bring us, in one word, *profit*. We must be what is called respectable, and offend no one by our carriage; it will not do to make oneself conspicuous — who knows? even in virtue? says the Christian parent! And we must be what is called prudent and make money; not only because it is pleasant to have money, but because that also is a part of respectability, and we cannot hope to be received in society without decent possessions. Received in society! as if that were the kingdom of heaven! There is dear Mr. So-and-so; — look at him! — so much respected — so much looked up to — quite the Christian merchant! And we must cut our conduct as strictly as possible after the pattern of Mr. So-and-so; and lay our whole lives to make money and be strictly decent. Besides these holy injunctions, which form by far the greater part of a youth’s training in our Christian homes, there are at least two other doctrines. We are to live just now as well as we can, but scrape at last into heaven, where we shall be good. We are to worry through the week in a lay, disreputable way, but, to make matters square, live a different life on Sunday.

The train of thought we have been following gives us a key to all these positions, without stepping aside to justify them on their own ground. It is because we have been disgusted fifty times with physical squalls and fifty times torn between conflicting impulses, that we teach people this indirect and tactical procedure in life, and to judge by remote consequences instead of the immediate face of things. The very desire to act as our own souls would have us, coupled with a pathetic disbelief in ourselves, moves us to follow the example of others; perhaps, who knows? they may be on the right track; and the more our patterns are in number, the better seems the chance; 407 until, if we be acting in concert with a whole civilised nation, there are surely a majority of chances that we must be acting right. And again, how true it is that we can never behave as we wish in this tormented sphere, and can only aspire to different and more favourable circumstances, in order to stand out and be ourselves wholly and rightly! And yet once more, if in the hurry and pressure of affairs and passions you tend to nod and become drowsy, here are twenty-four hours of Sunday set apart for you to hold counsel with your soul and look around you on the possibilities of life.

This is not, of course, all that is to be, or even should be, said for these doctrines. Only, in the course of this chapter, the reader and I have agreed upon a few catchwords, and been looking at morals on a certain system; it was a pity to lose an opportunity of testing the catchwords, and seeing whether, by this system as well as by others, current doctrines could show any probable justification. If the doctrines had come too badly out of the trial, it would have condemned the system. Our sight of the world is very narrow; the mind but a pedestrian instrument; there's nothing new under the sun, as Solomon says, except the man himself; and though that changes the aspect of everything else, yet he must see the same things as other people, only from a different side.

And now, having admitted so much, let us turn to criticism.

If you teach a man to keep his eyes upon what others think of him, unthinkingly to lead the life and hold the principles of the majority of his contemporaries, you must discredit in his eyes the one authoritative voice of his own soul. He may be a docile citizen; he will never be a man. It is ours, on the other hand, to disregard this babble and chattering of other men better and worse than we are, and to walk straight before us by what light we have. They may be right; but so, before heaven, are we. They may know; but we know also, and by that knowledge we must 408 stand or fall. There is such a thing as loyalty to a man's own better self; and from those who have not that, God help me, how am I to look for loyalty to others? The most dull, the most imbecile, at a certain moment turn round, at a certain point will hear no further argument, but stand unflinching by their own dumb, irrational sense of right. It is not only by steel or fire, but through contempt and blame, that the martyr fulfils the calling of his dear soul. Be glad if you are not tried by such extremities. But although all the world ranged themselves in one line to tell you "This is wrong," be you your own faithful vassal and the ambassador of God — throw down the glove and answer "This is right." Do you think you are only declaring yourself? Perhaps in some dim way, like a child who delivers a message not fully understood, you are opening wider the straits of prejudice and preparing mankind for some truer and more spiritual grasp of truth; perhaps, as you stand forth for your own judgment, you are covering a thousand weak ones with your body; perhaps, by this declaration alone, you have avoided the guilt of false witness against humanity and the little ones unborn. It is good, I believe, to be respectable, but much nobler to respect oneself and utter the voice of God. God, if there be any God, speaks daily in a new language by the tongues of men; the thoughts and habits of each fresh generation and each new-coined spirit throw another light upon the universe and contain another commentary on the printed Bibles; every scruple, every true dissent, every glimpse of something new, is a letter of God's alphabet; and though there is a grave responsibility for all who speak, is there none for those who unrighteously keep silence and conform? Is not that also to conceal and cloak God's counsel? And how should we regard the man of science who suppressed all facts that would not tally with the orthodoxy of the hour?

Wrong? You are as surely wrong as the sun rose this morning round the revolving shoulder of the world. Not 409 truth, but truthfulness, is the good of your endeavour. For when will men receive that first part and pre-requisite of truth, that, by the order of things, by the greatness of the universe, by the darkness and partiality of man's experience, by the inviolate secrecy of God, kept close in His most open revelations, every man is, and to the end of the ages must be, wrong? Wrong to the universe; wrong to mankind; wrong to God. And yet in another sense, and that plainer and nearer, every man of men, who wishes truly, must be right. He is right to himself, and in the measure of his sagacity and candour. That let him do in all sincerity and zeal, not sparing a thought for contrary opinions; that, for what it is worth, let him proclaim. Be not afraid; although he be wrong, so also is the dead, stuffed Dagon he insults. For the voice of God, whatever it is, is not that stammering, inept tradition which the people holds. These truths survive in travesty, swamped in a world of spiritual darkness and confusion; and what a few comprehend and faithfully hold, the many, in their dead jargon, repeat, degrade, and misinterpret.

So far of Respectability: what the Covenanters used to call "rank conformity": the deadliest gag and wet blanket that can be laid on men. And now of Profit. And this doctrine is perhaps the more redoubtable, because it harms all sorts of men; not only the heroic and self-reliant, but the obedient, cowlike squadrons. A man, by this doctrine, looks to consequences at the second, or third, or fiftieth turn. He chooses his end, and for that, with wily turns and through a great sea of tedium, steers this mortal bark. There may be political wisdom in such a view; but I am persuaded there can spring no great moral zeal. To look thus obliquely upon life is the very recipe for moral slumber. Our intention and endeavour should be directed, not on some vague end of money or applause, which shall come to us by a ricochet in a month or a year, or twenty years, but on the act itself; not on the approval of others, but on the rightness of that act. At every 410 instant, at every step in life, the point has to be decided, our soul has to be saved, heaven has to be gained or lost. At every step our spirits must applaud, at every step we must set down the foot and sound the trumpet. "This have I done," we must say; "right or wrong, this have I done, in unfeigned honour of intention, as to myself and God." The profit of every act should be this, that it was right for us to do it. Any other profit than that, if it involved a kingdom or the woman I love, ought, if I were God's upright soldier, to leave me untempted.

It is the mark of what we call a righteous decision, that it is made directly and for its own sake. The whole man, mind and body, having come to an agreement, tyrannically dictates conduct. There are two dispositions eternally opposed: that in which we recognise that one thing is wrong and another right, and that in which, not seeing any clear distinction, we fall back on the consideration of consequences. The truth is, by the scope of our present teaching, nothing is thought very wrong and nothing very right, except a few actions which have the disadvantage of being disrespectable when found out; the more serious part of men inclining to think all things *rather wrong*, the more jovial to suppose them *right enough for practical purposes*. I will engage my head, they do not find that view in their own hearts; they have taken it up in a dark despair; they are but troubled sleepers talking in their sleep. The soul, or my soul at least, thinks very distinctly upon many points of right and wrong, and often differs flatly with what is held out as the thought of corporate humanity in the code of society or the code of law. Am I to suppose myself a monster? I have only to read books, the Christian Gospels for example, to think myself a monster no longer; and instead I think the mass of people are merely speaking in their sleep.

It is a commonplace, enshrined, if I mistake not, even in school copy-books, that honour is to be sought and not fame. I ask no other admission; we are to seek honour, 411 upright walking with our own conscience every hour of the day, and not fame, the consequence, the far-off reverberation of our footsteps. The walk, not the rumour of the walk, is what concerns righteousness. Better disrespectable honour than dishonourable fame. Better useless or seemingly hurtful honour, than dishonour ruling empires and filling the mouths of thousands. For the man must walk by what he sees, and leave the issue with God who made him and taught him by the fortune of his life. You would not dishonour yourself for money; which is at least tangible; would you do it, then, for a doubtful forecast in politics, or another person's theory in morals?

So intricate is the scheme of our affairs, that no man can calculate the bearing of his own behaviour even on those immediately around him, how much less upon the world at large or on succeeding generations! To walk by external prudence and the rule of consequences would require, not a man, but God. All that we know to guide us in this changing labyrinth is our soul with its fixed design of righteousness, and a few old precepts which commend themselves to that. The precepts are vague when we endeavour to apply them; consequences are more entangled than a wisp of string, and their confusion is unrestingly in change; we must hold to what we know and walk by it. We must walk by faith, indeed, and not by knowledge.

You do not love another because he is wealthy or wise or eminently respectable: you love him because you love him; that is love, and any other only a derision and grimace. It should be the same with all our actions. If we were to conceive a perfect man, it should be one who was never torn between conflicting impulses, but who, on the absolute consent of all his parts and faculties, submitted in every action of his life to a self-dictation as absolute and unreasoned as that which bids him love one woman and be true to her till death. But we should not conceive him as sagacious, ascetical, playing off his appetites against each 412 other, turning the wing of public respectable immorality instead of riding it directly down, or advancing toward his end through a thousand sinister compromises and considerations. The one man might be wily, might be adroit, might be wise, might be respectable, might be gloriously useful; it is the other man who would be good.

The soul asks honour and not fame; to be upright, not to be successful; to be good, not prosperous; to be essentially, not outwardly, respectable. Does your soul ask profit? Does it ask money? Does it ask the approval of the indifferent herd? I believe not. For my own part, I want but little money, I hope; and I do not want to be decent at all, but to be good.

CHAPTER IV

We have spoken of that supreme self-dictation which keeps varying from hour to hour in its dictates with the variation of events and circumstances. Now, for us, that is ultimate. It may be founded on some reasonable process, but it is not a process which we can follow or comprehend. And moreover the dictation is not continuous, or not continuous except in very lively and well-living natures; and betweenwhiles we must brush along without it. Practice is a more intricate and desperate business than the toughest theorising; life is an affair of cavalry, where rapid judgment and prompt action are alone possible and right. As a matter of fact, there is no one so upright but he is influenced by the world's chatter; and no one so headlong but he requires to consider consequences and to keep an eye on profit. For the soul adopts all affections and appetites without exception, and cares only to combine them for some common purpose which shall interest all. Now respect for the opinion of others, the study of consequences and the desire of power and comfort, are all undeniably factors in the nature of man; and the more undeniably since we find that, in our current doctrines, they have swallowed up the others and are thought to conclude in themselves all the worthy parts of man. These, then, must also be suffered to affect conduct in the practical domain, much or little according as they are forcibly or feebly present to the mind of each.

Now a man's view of the universe is mostly a view of the civilised society in which he lives. Other men and women are so much more grossly and so much more intimately palpable to his perceptions, that they stand 414 between him and all the rest; they are larger to his eye than the sun, he hears them more plainly than thunder; with them, by them, and for them, he must live and die. And hence the laws that affect his intercourse with his fellow-men, although merely customary and the creatures of a generation, are more clearly and continually before his mind than those which bind him into the eternal system of things, support him in his upright progress on this whirling ball, or keep up the fire of his bodily life. And hence it is that money stands in the first rank of considerations and so powerfully affects the choice. For our society is built with money for mortar; money is present in every joint of circumstance; it might be named the social atmosphere, since, in society, it is by that alone men continue to live, and only through that or chance that they can reach or affect one another. Money gives us food, shelter, and privacy; it permits us to be clean in person, opens for us the doors of the theatre, gains us books for study or pleasure, enables us to help the distresses of others, and puts us above necessity so that we can choose the best in life. If we love, it enables us to meet and live with the loved one, or even to prolong her health and life; if we have scruples, it gives us an opportunity to be honest; if we have any bright designs, here is what will smooth the way to their accomplishment. Penury is the worst slavery, and will soon lead to death.

But money is only a means; it presupposes a man to use it. The rich can go where he pleases, but perhaps please himself nowhere. He can buy a library or visit the whole world, but perhaps has neither patience to read nor intelligence to see. The table may be loaded and the appetite wanting; the purse may be full and the heart empty. He may have gained the world and lost himself; and with all his wealth around him, in a great house and spacious and beautiful demesne, he may live as blank a life as any tattered ditcher. Without an appetite, without 415 an aspiration, void of appreciation, bankrupt of desire and hope, there, in his great house, let him sit and look upon his fingers. It is perhaps a more fortunate destiny to have a taste for collecting shells than to be born a millionaire. Although neither is to be despised, it is always better policy to learn an interest than to make a thousand pounds; for the money will soon be spent, or perhaps you may feel no joy in spending it; but the interest remains imperishable and ever new. To become a botanist, a geologist, a social philosopher, an antiquary, or an artist, is to enlarge one’s possessions in the universe by an incalculably higher degree, and by a far surer sort of property, than to purchase a farm of many acres. You had perhaps two thousand a year before the transaction; perhaps you have two thousand five hundred after it. That represents your gain in the one case. But in the other, you have thrown down a barrier which concealed significance and beauty. The blind man has learned to see. The prisoner has opened up a window in his cell and beholds enchanting prospects; he will never again be a prisoner as he was; he can watch clouds and changing seasons, ships on the river, travellers on the road, and the stars at night; happy prisoner! his eyes have broken gaol! And again he who has learned to love an art or science has wisely laid up riches against the day of riches; if prosperity come, he will not enter poor into his inheritance; he will not slumber and forget himself in the lap of money, or spend his hours in counting idle treasures, but be up and briskly doing; he will have the true alchemic touch, which is not that of Midas, but which transmutes dead money into living delight and satisfaction. *Être et pas avoir* — to be, not to possess — that is the problem of life. To be wealthy, a rich nature is the first requisite and money but the second. To be of a quick and healthy blood, to share in all honourable curiosities, to be rich in admiration and free from envy, to rejoice greatly in the good of others, to love with such generosity of heart that your love is still a dear possession 416 in absence or unkindness — these are the gifts of fortune which money cannot buy and without which money can buy nothing. For what can a man possess, or what can he enjoy, except himself? If he enlarge his nature, it is then that he enlarges his estates. If his nature be happy and valiant, he will enjoy the universe as if it were his park and orchard.

But money is not only to be spent; it has also to be earned. It is not merely a convenience or a necessary in social life; but it is the coin in which mankind pays his wages to the individual man. And from this side, the question of money has a very different scope and application. For no man can be honest who does not work. Service for service. If the farmer buys corn, and the labourer ploughs and reaps, and the baker sweats in his hot bakery, plainly you who eat must do something in your turn. It is not enough to take off your hat, or to thank God upon your knees for the admirable constitution of society and your own convenient situation in its upper and more ornamental stories. Neither is it enough to buy the loaf with a sixpence; for then you are only changing the point of the inquiry; and you must first have *bought the sixpence*. Service for service: how have you bought your sixpences? A man of spirit desires certainty in a thing of such a nature; he must see to it that there is some reciprocity between him and mankind; that he pays his expenditure in service; that he has not a lion's share in profit and a drone's in labour; and is not a sleeping partner and mere costly incubus on the great mercantile concern of mankind.

Services differ so widely with different gifts, and some are so inappreciable to external tests, that this is not only a matter for the private conscience, but one which even there must be leniently and trustfully considered. For remember how many serve mankind who do no more than meditate; and how many are precious to their friends for no more than a sweet and joyous temper. To perform the 417 function of a man of letters it is not necessary to write; nay, it is perhaps better to be a living book. So long as we love we serve; so long as we are loved by others, I would almost say that we are indispensable; and no man is useless while he has a friend. The true services of life are inestimable in money, and are never paid. Kind words and caresses, high and wise thoughts, humane designs, tender behaviour to the weak and suffering, and all the charities of man's existence, are neither bought nor sold.

Yet the dearest and readiest, if not the most just, criterion of a man's services, is the wage that mankind pays him, or, briefly, what he earns. There at least there can be no ambiguity. St. Paul is fully and freely entitled to his earnings as a tentmaker, and Socrates fully and freely entitled to his earnings as a sculptor, although the true business of each was not only something different, but something which remained unpaid. A man cannot forget that he is not superintended, and serves mankind on parole. He would like, when challenged by his own conscience, to reply: “I have done so much work, and no less, with my own hands and brain, and taken so much profit, and no more, for my own personal delight.” And though St. Paul, if he had possessed a private fortune, would probably have scorned to waste his time in making tents, yet of all sacrifices to public opinion none can be more easily pardoned than that by which a man, already spiritually useful to the world, should restrict the field of his chief usefulness to perform services more apparent, and possess a livelihood that neither stupidity nor malice could call in question. Like all sacrifices to public opinion and mere external decency, this would certainly be wrong; for the soul should rest contented with its own approval and indissuadably pursue its own calling. Yet, so grave and delicate is the question, that a man may well hesitate before he decides it for himself; he may well fear that he sets too high a valuation on his own endeavours after good; he may well 418 condescend upon a humbler duty, where others than himself shall judge the service and proportion the wage.

And yet it is to this very responsibility that the rich are born. They can shuffle off the duty on no other; they are their own paymasters on parole; and must pay themselves fair wages and no more. For I suppose that in the course of ages, and through reform and civil war and invasion, mankind was pursuing some other and more general design than to set one or two Englishmen of the nineteenth century beyond the reach of needs and duties. Society was scarce put together, and defended with so much eloquence and blood, for the convenience of two or three millionaires and a few hundred other persons of wealth and position. It is plain that if mankind thus acted and suffered during all these generations, they hoped some benefit, some ease, some well-being, for themselves and their descendants; that if they supported law and order, it was to secure fair-play for all; that if they denied themselves in the present, they must have had some designs upon the future. Now a great hereditary fortune is a miracle of man’s wisdom and mankind’s forbearance; it has not only been amassed and handed down, it has been suffered to be amassed and handed down; and surely in such a consideration as this, its possessor should find only a new spur to activity and honour, that with all this power of service he should not prove unserviceable, and that this mass of treasure should return in benefits upon the race. If he had twenty, or thirty, or a hundred thousand at his banker’s, or if all Yorkshire or all California were his to manage or to sell, he would still be morally penniless, and have the world to begin like Whittington, until he had found some way of serving mankind. His wage is physically in his own hand; but, in honour, that wage must still be earned. He is only steward on parole of what is called his fortune. He must honourably perform his stewardship. He must estimate his own services and allow himself a salary in proportion, for that will be one among his functions. 419 And while he will then be free to spend that salary, great or little, on his own private pleasures, the rest of his fortune he but holds and disposes under trust for mankind; it is not his, because he has not earned it; it cannot be his, because his services have already been paid; but year by year it is his to distribute, whether to help individuals whose birthright and outfit have been swallowed up in his, or to further public works and institutions.

At this rate, short of inspiration, it seems hardly possible to be both rich and honest; and the millionaire is under a far more continuous temptation to thieve than the labourer who gets his shilling daily for despicable toils. Are you surprised? It is even so. And you repeat it every Sunday in your churches. “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” I have heard this and similar texts ingeniously explained away and brushed from the path of the aspiring Christian by the tender Greatheart of the parish. One excellent clergyman told us that the “eye of a needle” meant a low, Oriental postern through which camels could not pass till they were unloaded — which is very likely just; and then went on, bravely confounding the “kingdom of God” with heaven, the future paradise, to show that of course no rich person could expect to carry his riches beyond the grave — which, of course, he could not and never did. Various greedy sinners of the congregation drank in the comfortable doctrine with relief. It was worth the while having come to church that Sunday morning! All was plain. The Bible, as usual, meant nothing in particular; it was merely an obscure and figurative school-copybook; and if a man were only respectable, he was a man after God’s own heart.

Alas! I fear not. And though this matter of a man’s services is one for his own conscience, there are some cases in which it is difficult to restrain the mind from judging. Thus I shall be very easily persuaded that a man has earned his daily bread; and if he has but a friend or two 420 to whom his company is delightful at heart, I am more than persuaded at once. But it will be very hard to persuade me that any one has earned an income of a hundred thousand. What he is to his friends, he still would be if he were made penniless to-morrow; for as to the courtiers of luxury and power, I will neither consider them friends, nor indeed consider them at all. What he does for mankind there are most likely hundreds who would do the same, as effectually for the race and as pleasurably to themselves, for the merest fraction of this monstrous wage. Why it is paid, I am, therefore, unable to conceive, and as the man pays it himself, out of funds in his detention, I have a certain backwardness to think him honest.

At least, we have gained a very obvious point: that *what a man spends upon himself he shall have earned by services to the race*. Thence flows a principle for the outset of life, which is a little different from that taught in the present day. I am addressing the middle and the upper classes; those who have already been fostered and prepared for life at some expense; those who have some choice before them, and can pick professions; and above all, those who are what is called independent, and need do nothing unless pushed by honour or ambition. In this particular the poor are happy; among them, when a lad comes to his strength, he must take the work that offers, and can take it with an easy conscience. But in the richer classes the question is complicated by the number of opportunities and a variety of considerations. Here, then, this principle of ours comes in helpfully. The young man has to seek, not a road to wealth, but an opportunity of service; not money, but honest work. If he has some strong propensity, some calling of nature, some overweening interest in any special field of industry, inquiry, or art, he will do right to obey the impulse; and that for two reasons: the first external, because there he will render the best services; the second personal, because a demand of his own nature is to him without appeal whenever it can be satisfied with 421 the consent of his other faculties and appetites. If he has no such elective taste, by the very principle on which he chooses any pursuit at all he must choose the most honest and serviceable, and not the most highly remunerated. We have here an external problem, not from or to ourself, but flowing from the constitution of society; and we have our own soul with its fixed design of righteousness. All that can be done is to present the problem in proper terms and leave it to the soul of the individual. Now the problem to the poor is one of necessity: to earn wherewithal to live, they must find remunerative labour. But the problem to the rich is one of honour: having the wherewithal, they must find serviceable labour. Each has to earn his daily bread: the one, because he has not yet got it to eat; the other, who has already eaten it, because he has not yet earned it.

Of course, what is true of bread is true of luxuries and comforts, whether for the body or the mind. But the consideration of luxuries leads us to a new aspect of the whole question, and to a second proposition no less true, and maybe no less startling, than the last.

At the present day, we, of the easier classes, are in a state of surfeit and disgrace after meat. Plethora has filled us with indifference; and we are covered from head to foot with the callosities of habitual opulence. Born into what is called a certain rank, we live, as the saying is, up to our station. We squander without enjoyment, because our fathers squandered. We eat of the best, not from delicacy, but from brazen habit. We do not keenly enjoy or eagerly desire the presence of a luxury; we are unaccustomed to its absence. And not only do we squander money from habit, but still more pitifully waste it in ostentation. I can think of no more melancholy disgrace for a creature who professes either reason or pleasure for his guide, than to spend the smallest fraction of his income upon that which he does not desire; and to keep a carriage in which you do not wish to drive, or a butler of whom you are afraid, 422 is a pathetic kind of folly. Money, being a means of happiness, should make both parties happy when it changes hands; rightly disposed, it should be twice blessed in its employment; and buyer and seller should alike have their twenty shillings' worth of profit out of every pound. Benjamin Franklin went through life an altered man, because he once paid too dearly for a penny whistle. My concern springs usually from a deeper source, to wit, from having bought a whistle when I did not want one. I find I regret this, or would regret it if I gave myself the time, not only on personal but on moral and philanthropical considerations. For, first, in a world where money is wanting to buy books for eager students and food and medicine for pining children, and where a large majority are starved in their most immediate desires, it is surely base, stupid, and cruel to squander money when I am pushed by no appetite and enjoy no return of genuine satisfaction. My philanthropy is wide enough in scope to include myself; and when I have made myself happy, I have at least one good argument that I have acted rightly; but where that is not so, and I have bought and not enjoyed, my mouth is closed, and I conceive that I have robbed the poor. And, second, anything I buy or use which I do not sincerely want or cannot vividly enjoy, disturbs the balance of supply and demand, and contributes to remove industrious hands from the production of what is useful or pleasurable and to keep them busy upon ropes of sand and things that are a weariness to the flesh. That extravagance is truly sinful, and a very silly sin to boot, in which we impoverish mankind and ourselves. It is another question for each man's heart. He knows if he can enjoy what he buys and uses; if he cannot, he is a dog in the manger; nay, if he cannot, I contend he is a thief, for nothing really belongs to a man which he cannot use. Proprietor is connected with propriety; and that only is the man's which is proper to his wants and faculties.

A youth, in choosing a career, must not be alarmed 423 by poverty. Want is a sore thing, but poverty does not imply want. It remains to be seen whether with half his present income, or a third, he cannot, in the most generous sense, live as fully as at present. He is a fool who objects to luxuries; but he is also a fool who does not protest against the waste of luxuries on those who do not desire and cannot enjoy them. It remains to be seen, by each man who would live a true life to himself and not a merely specious life to society, how many luxuries he truly wants and to how many he merely submits as to a social propriety; and all these last he will immediately forswear. Let him do this, and he will be surprised to find how little money it requires to keep him in complete contentment and activity of mind and senses. Life at any level among the easy classes is conceived upon a principle of rivalry, where each man and each household must ape the tastes and emulate the display of others. One is delicate in eating, another in wine, a third in furniture or works of art or dress; and I, who care nothing for any of these refinements, who am perhaps a plain athletic creature and love exercise, beef, beer, flannel shirts and a camp bed, am yet called upon to assimilate all these other tastes and make these foreign occasions of expenditure my own. It may be cynical: I am sure I shall be told it is selfish; but I will spend my money as I please and for my own intimate personal gratification, and should count myself a nincompoop indeed to lay out the colour of a halfpenny on any fancied social decency or duty. I shall not wear gloves unless my hands are cold, or unless I am born with a delight in them. Dress is my own affair, and that of one other in the world; that, in fact, and for an obvious reason, of any woman who shall chance to be in love with me. I shall lodge where I have a mind. If I do not ask society to live with me, they must be silent; and even if I do, they have no further right but to refuse the invitation.

There is a kind of idea abroad that a man must live up to his station, that his house, his table, and his toilette, 424 shall be in a ratio of equivalence, and equally imposing to the world. If this is in the Bible, the passage has eluded my inquiries. If it is not in the Bible, it is nowhere but in the heart of the fool. Throw aside this fancy. See what you want, and spend upon that; distinguish what you do not care about, and spend nothing upon that. There are not many people who can differentiate wines above a certain and that not at all a high price. Are you sure you are one of these? Are you sure you prefer cigars at sixpence each to pipes at some fraction of a farthing? Are you sure you wish to keep a gig? Do you care about where you sleep, or are you not as much at your ease in a cheap lodging as in an Elizabethan manor-house? Do you enjoy fine clothes? It is not possible to answer these questions without a trial; and there is nothing more obvious to my mind, than that a man who has not experienced some ups and downs, and been forced to live more cheaply than in his father's house, has still his education to begin. Let the experiment be made, and he will find to his surprise that he has been eating beyond his appetite up to that hour; that the cheap lodging, the cheap tobacco, the rough country clothes, the plain table, have not only no power to damp his spirits, but perhaps give him as keen pleasure in the using as the dainties that he took, betwixt sleep and waking, in his former callous and somnambulous submission to wealth.

The true Bohemian, a creature lost to view under the imaginary Bohemians of literature, is exactly described by such a principle of life. The Bohemian of the novel, who drinks more than is good for him and prefers anything to work, and wears strange clothes, is for the most part a respectable Bohemian, respectable in disrespectability, living for the outside, and an adventurer. But the man I mean lives wholly to himself, does what he wishes, and not what is thought proper, buys what he wants for himself and not what is thought proper, works at what he believes he can do well and not what will bring him in money or 425 favour. You may be the most respectable of men, and yet a true Bohemian. And the test is this: a Bohemian, for as poor as he may be, is always open-handed to his friends; he knows what he can do with money and how he can do without it, a far rarer and more useful knowledge; he has had less, and continued to live in some contentment; and hence he cares not to keep more, and shares his sovereign or his shilling with a friend. The poor, if they are generous, are Bohemian in virtue of their birth. Do you know where beggars go? Not to the great houses where people sit dazed among their thousands, but to the doors of poor men who have seen the world; and it was the widow who had only two mites, who cast half her fortune into the treasury.

But a young man who elects to save on dress or on lodging, or who in any way falls out of the level of expenditure which is common to his level in society, falls out of society altogether. I suppose the young man to have chosen his career on honourable principles; he finds his talents and instincts can be best contented in a certain pursuit; in a certain industry, he is sure that he is serving mankind with a healthy and becoming service; and he is not sure that he would be doing so, or doing so equally well, in any other industry within his reach. Then that is his true sphere in life; not the one in which he was born to his father, but the one which is proper to his talents and instincts. And suppose he does fall out of society, is that a cause of sorrow? Is your heart so dead that you prefer the recognition of many to the love of a few? Do you think society loves you? Put it to the proof. Decline in material expenditure, and you will find they care no more for you than for the Khan of Tartary. You will lose no friends. If you had any, you will keep them. Only those who were friends to your coat and equipage will disappear; the smiling faces will disappear as by enchantment; but the kind hearts will remain steadfastly kind. Are you so lost, are you so dead, are you so little sure of 426 your own soul and your own footing upon solid fact, that you prefer before goodness and happiness the countenance of sundry diners-out, who will flee from you at a report of ruin, who will drop you with insult at a shadow of disgrace, who do not know you and do not care to know you but by sight, and whom you in your turn neither know nor care to know in a more human manner? Is it not the principle of society, openly avowed, that friendship must not interfere with business; which being paraphrased, means simply that a consideration of money goes before any consideration of affection known to this cold-blooded gang, that they have not even the honour of thieves, and will rook their nearest and dearest as readily as a stranger? I hope I would go as far as most to serve a friend; but I declare openly I would not put on my hat to do a pleasure to society. I may starve my appetites and control my temper for the sake of those I love; but society shall take me as I choose to be, or go without me. Neither they nor I will lose; for where there is no love, it is both laborious and unprofitable to associate.

But it is obvious that if it is only right for a man to spend money on that which he can truly and thoroughly enjoy, the doctrine applies with equal force to the rich and to the poor, to the man who has amassed many thousands as well as to the youth precariously beginning life. And it may be asked, Is not this merely preparing misers, who are not the best of company? But the principle was this: that which a man has not fairly earned, and, further, that which he cannot fully enjoy, does not belong to him, but is a part of mankind's treasure which he holds as steward on parole. To mankind, then, it must be made profitable; and how this should be done is, once more, a problem which each man must solve for himself, and about which none has a right to judge him. Yet there are a few considerations which are very obvious and may here be stated. Mankind is not only the whole in general, but every one in particular. Every man or woman is one of 427 mankind's dear possessions; to his or her just brain, and kind heart, and active hands, mankind intrusts some of its hopes for the future; he or she is a possible wellspring of good acts and source of blessings to the race. This money which you do not need, which, in a rigid sense, you do not want, may therefore be returned not only in public benefactions to the race, but in private kindnesses. Your wife, your children, your friends stand nearest to you, and should be helped the first. There at least there can be little imposture, for you know their necessities of your own knowledge. And consider, if all the world did as you did, and according to their means extended help in the circle of their affections, there would be no more crying want in times of plenty and no more cold, mechanical charity given with a doubt and received with confusion. Would not this simple rule make a new world out of the old and cruel one which we inhabit?

[*After two more sentences the fragment breaks off.*]

PRAYERS WRITTEN FOR FAMILY USE AT VAILIMA

For Success

Lord, behold our family here assembled. We thank Thee for this place in which we dwell; for the love that unites us; for the peace accorded us this day; for the hope with which we expect the morrow; for the health, the work, the food, and the bright skies, that make our lives delightful; for our friends in all parts of the earth, and our friendly helpers in this foreign isle. Let peace abound in our small company. Purge out of every heart the lurking grudge. Give us grace and strength to forbear and to persevere. Offenders, give us the grace to accept and to forgive offenders. Forgetful ourselves, help us to bear cheerfully the forgetfulness of others. Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind. Spare to us our friends, soften to us our enemies. Bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavours. If it may not, give us the strength to encounter that which is to come, that we be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath, and in all changes of fortune, and down to the gates of death, loyal and loving one to another. As the clay to the potter, as the windmill to the wind, as children of their sire, we beseech of Thee this help and mercy for Christ's sake.

For Grace

Grant that we here before Thee may be set free from the fear of vicissitude and the fear of death, may finish what 432 remains before us of our course without dishonour to ourselves or hurt to others, and, when the day comes, may die in peace. Deliver us from fear and favour: from mean hopes and cheap pleasures. Have mercy on each in his deficiency; let him be not cast down; support the stumbling on the way, and give at last rest to the weary.

At Morning

The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the man, help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces, let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day, bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonoured, and grant us in the end the gift of sleep.

Evening

We come before Thee, O Lord, in the end of Thy day with thanksgiving.

Our beloved in the far parts of the earth, those who are now beginning the labours of the day what time we end them, and those with whom the sun now stands at the point of noon, bless, help, console, and prosper them.

Our guard is relieved, the service of the day is over, and the hour come to rest. We resign into Thy hands our sleeping bodies, our cold hearths and open doors. Give us to awake with smiles, give us to labour smiling. As the sun returns in the east, so let our patience be renewed with dawn; as the sun lightens the world, so let our loving-kindness make bright this house of our habitation.

Another for Evening

Lord, receive our supplications for this house, family, and country. Protect the innocent, restrain the greedy and 433 the treacherous, lead us out of our tribulation into a quiet land.

Look down upon ourselves and upon our absent dear ones. Help us and them; prolong our days in peace and honour. Give us health, food, bright weather, and light hearts. In what we meditate of evil, frustrate our will; in what of good, further our endeavours. Cause injuries to be forgot and benefits to be remembered.

Let us lie down without fear and awake and arise with exultation. For His sake, in whose words we now conclude.

In Time of Rain

We thank Thee, Lord, for the glory of the late days and the excellent face of Thy sun. We thank Thee for good news received. We thank Thee for the pleasures we have enjoyed and for those we have been able to confer. And now, when the clouds gather and the rain impends over the forest and our house, permit us not to be cast down; let us not lose the savour of past mercies and past pleasures; but, like the voice of a bird singing in the rain, let grateful memory survive in the hour of darkness. If there be in front of us any painful duty, strengthen us with the grace of courage; if any act of mercy, teach us tenderness and patience.

Another in Time of Rain

Lord, Thou sendest down rain upon the uncounted millions of the forest, and givest the trees to drink exceedingly. We are here upon this isle a few handfuls of men, and how many myriads upon myriads of stalwart trees! Teach us the lesson of the trees. The sea around us, which this rain recruits, teems with the race of fish; teach us, Lord, the meaning of the fishes. Let us see ourselves for what we are, one out of the countless number of the clans of Thy handiwork. When we would despair, let us remember that these also please and serve Thee.

Before a Temporary Separation

To-day we go forth separate, some of us to pleasure, some of us to worship, some upon duty. Go with us, our guide and angel; hold Thou before us in our divided paths the mark of our low calling, still to be true to what small best we can attain to. Help us in that, our maker, the dispenser of events — Thou, of the vast designs, in which we blindly labour, suffer us to be so far constant to ourselves and our beloved.

For Friends

For our absent loved ones we implore Thy loving-kindness. Keep them in life, keep them in growing honour; and for us, grant that we remain worthy of their love. For Christ's sake, let not our beloved blush for us, nor we for them. Grant us but that, and grant us courage to endure lesser ills unshaken, and to accept death, loss, and disappointment as it were straws upon the tide of life.

For the Family

Aid us, if it be Thy will, in our concerns. Have mercy on this land and innocent people. Help them who this day contend in disappointment with their frailties. Bless our family, bless our forest house, bless our island helpers. Thou who hast made for us this place of ease and hope, accept and inflame our gratitude; help us to repay, in service one to another, the debt of Thine unmerited benefits and mercies, so that when the period of our stewardship draws to a conclusion, when the windows begin to be darkened, when the bond of the family is to be loosed, there shall be no bitterness of remorse in our farewells.

Help us to look back on the long way that Thou hast brought us, on the long days in which we have been served not according to our deserts but our desires; on the pit and the miry clay, the blackness of despair, the horror of misconduct, from which our feet have been plucked out. 435 For our sins forgiven or prevented, for our shame unpublished, we bless and thank Thee, O God. Help us yet again and ever. So order events, so strengthen our frailty, as that day by day we shall come before Thee with this song of gratitude, and in the end we be dismissed with honour. In their weakness and their fear, the vessels of Thy handiwork so pray to Thee, so praise Thee. Amen.

Sunday

We beseech Thee, Lord, to behold us with favour, folk of many families and nations gathered together in the peace of this roof, weak men and women subsisting under the covert of Thy patience. Be patient still; suffer us yet a while longer; — with our broken purposes of good, with our idle endeavours against evil, suffer us a while longer to endure, and (if it may be) help us to do better. Bless to us our extraordinary mercies; if the day come when these must be taken, brace us to play the man under affliction. Be with our friends, be with ourselves. Go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns, return to us, our sun and comforter, and call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts — eager to labour — eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion — and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it.

We thank Thee and praise Thee; and in the words of Him to whom this day is sacred, close our oblation.

For Self-blame

Lord, enlighten us to see the beam that is in our own eye, and blind us to the mote that is in our brother's. Let us feel our offences with our hands, make them great and bright before us like the sun, make us eat them and drink them for our diet. Blind us to the offences of our beloved, cleanse them from our memories, take them out of our mouths for ever. Let all here before Thee carry and 436 measure with the false balances of love, and be in their own eyes and in all conjunctures the most guilty. Help us at the same time with the grace of courage, that we be none of us cast down when we sit lamenting amid the ruins of our happiness or our integrity: touch us with fire from the altar, that we may be up and doing to rebuild our city: in the name and by the method of Him in whose words of prayer we now conclude.

For Self-forgetfulness

Lord, the creatures of Thy hand, Thy disinherited children, come before Thee with their incoherent wishes and regrets: Children we are, children we shall be, till our mother the earth hath fed upon our bones. Accept us, correct us, guide us, Thy guilty innocents. Dry our vain tears, wipe out our vain resentments, help our yet vainer efforts. If there be any here, sulking as children will, deal with and enlighten him. Make it day about that person, so that he shall see himself and be ashamed. Make it heaven about him, Lord, by the only way to heaven, forgetfulness of self, and make it day about his neighbours, so that they shall help, not hinder him.

For Renewal of Joy

We are evil, O God, and help us to see it and amend. We are good, and help us to be better. Look down upon Thy servants with a patient eye, even as Thou sendest sun and rain; look down, call upon the dry bones, quicken, enliven; re-create in us the soul of service, the spirit of peace; renew in us the sense of joy.

A FOOTNOTE TO HISTORY

EIGHT YEARS OF TROUBLE IN SAMOA

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PREFACE

An affair which might be deemed worthy of a note of a few lines in any general history has been here expanded to the size of a volume or large pamphlet. The smallness of the scale, and the singularity of the manners and events and many of the characters, considered, it is hoped that, in spite of its outlandish subject, the sketch may find readers. It has been a task of difficulty. Speed was essential, or it might come too late to be of any service to a distracted country. Truth, in the midst of conflicting rumours and in the dearth of printed material, was often hard to ascertain, and since most of those engaged were of my personal acquaintance, it was often more than delicate to express. I must certainly have erred often and much; it is not for want of trouble taken nor of an impartial temper. And if my plain speaking shall cost me any of the friends that I still count, I shall be sorry, but I need not be ashamed.

In one particular the spelling of Samoan words has been altered; and the characteristic nasal *n* of the language written throughout *ng* instead of *g*. Thus I put Pango-Pango, instead of Pago-Pago; the sound being that of soft *ng* in English, as in *singer*, not as in *finger*.

R. L. S.
Vailima,
Upolu,
Samoa.

CHAPTER I

THE ELEMENTS OF DISCORD: NATIVE

The story I have to tell is still going on as I write; the characters are alive and active; it is a piece of contemporary history in the most exact sense. And yet, for all its actuality and the part played in it by mails and telegraphs and iron war-ships, the ideas and the manners of the native actors date back before the Roman Empire. They are Christians, church-goers, singers of hymns at family worship, hardy cricketers; their books are printed in London by Spottiswoode, Trübner, or the Tract Society; but in most other points they are the contemporaries of our tattooed ancestors who drove their chariots on the wrong side of the Roman wall. We have passed the feudal system; they are not yet clear of the patriarchal. We are in the thick of the age of finance; they are in a period of communism. And this makes them hard to understand.

To us, with our feudal ideas, Samoa has the first appearance of a land of despotism. An elaborate courtliness marks the race alone among Polynesians; terms of ceremony fly thick as oaths on board a ship; commoners my-lord each other when they meet — and urchins as they play marbles. And for the real noble a whole private dialect is set apart. The common names for an axe, for blood, for bamboo, a bamboo knife, a pig, food, entrails, and an oven are taboo in his presence, as the common names for 6 a bug and for many offices and members of the body are taboo in the drawing-rooms of English ladies. Special words are set apart for his leg, his face, his hair, his belly, his eyelids, his son, his daughter, his wife, his wife's pregnancy, his wife's adultery, adultery with his wife, his dwelling, his spear, his comb, his sleep, his dreams, his anger, the mutual anger of several chiefs, his food, his pleasure in eating, the food and eating of his pigeons, his ulcers, his cough, his sickness, his recovery, his death, his being carried on a bier, the exhumation of his bones, and his skull after death. To address these demigods is quite a branch of knowledge, and he who goes to visit a high chief does well to make sure of the competence of his interpreter. To complete the picture, the same word signifies the watching of a virgin and the warding of a chief; and the same word means to cherish a chief and to fondle a favourite child.

Men like us, full of memories of feudalism, hear of a man so addressed, so flattered, and we leap at once to the conclusion that he is hereditary and absolute. Hereditary he is; born of a great family, he must always be a man of mark; but yet his office is elective and (in a weak sense) is held on good behaviour. Compare the case of a Highland chief: born one of the great ones of his clan, he was sometimes appointed its chief officer and conventional father; was loved, and respected, and served, and fed, and died for implicitly, if he gave loyalty a chance; and yet if he sufficiently outraged clan sentiment, was liable to deposition. As to authority, the parallel is not so close. Doubtless the Samoan chief, if he be popular, wields a great influence; but it is limited. Important matters are debated in a fono, or native parliament, with its feasting and parade, its endless speeches and polite genealogical allusions. Debated, I say — not decided; for even a small minority will often strike a clan or a province impotent. In the midst of these ineffective councils the chief sits usually silent: a kind of a gagged audience for village[7] orators. And the deliverance of the fono seems (for the moment) to be final. The absolute chiefs of Tahiti and Hawaii were addressed as plain John and Thomas; the chiefs of Samoa are surfeited with lip-honour, but the seat and extent of their actual authority is hard to find.

It is so in the members of the state, and worse in the belly. The idea of a sovereign pervades the air; the name we have; the thing we are not so sure of. And the process of election to the chief power is a mystery. Certain provinces have in their gift certain high titles, or *names*, as they are called. These can only be attributed to the descendants of particular lines. Once granted, each *name* conveys at once the principality (whatever that be worth) of the province which bestows it, and counts as one suffrage towards the general sovereignty of Samoa. To be indubitable king, they say, or some of them say, — I find few in perfect harmony, — a man should resume five of these names in his own person. But the case is purely hypothetical; local jealousy forbids its occurrence. There are rival provinces, far more concerned in the prosecution of their rivalry than in the choice of a right man for king. If one of these shall have bestowed its name on competitor A, it will be the signal and the sufficient reason for the other to bestow its name on competitor B or C. The majority of Savaii and that of Aana are thus in perennial opposition. Nor is this all. In 1881, Laupepa, the present king, held the three names of Malietoa, Natoaitele, and Tamasoalii; Tamasese held that of Tuiaana; and Mataafa that of Tuiatua. Laupepa had thus a majority of suffrages; he held perhaps as high a proportion as can be hoped in these distracted islands; and he counted among the number the preponderant name of Malietoa. Here, if ever, was an election. Here, if a king were at all possible, was the king. And yet the natives were not satisfied. Laupepa was crowned, March 19th; and next month, the provinces of Aana and Atua met in joint parliament, and elected their own two princes,[8] Tamasese and Mataafa, to an alternate monarchy, Tamasese taking the first trick of two years. War was imminent, when the consuls interfered, and any war were preferable to the terms of the peace which they procured. By the Lackawanna treaty, Laupepa was confirmed king, and Tamasese set by his side in the nondescript office of vice-king. The compromise was not, I am told, without precedent; but it lacked all appearance of success. To the constitution of Samoa, which was already all wheels and no horses, the consuls had added a fifth wheel. In addition to the old conundrum, "Who is the king?" they had supplied a new one, "What is the vice-king?"

Two royal lines; some cloudy idea of alternation between the two; an electorate in which the vote of each province is immediately effectual, as regards itself, so that every candidate who attains one *name* becomes a perpetual and dangerous competitor for the other four: such are a few of the more trenchant absurdities. Many argue that the whole idea of sovereignty is modern and imported; but it seems impossible that anything so foolish should have been suddenly devised, and the constitution bears on its front the marks of dotage.

But the king, once elected and nominated, what does he become? It may be said he remains precisely as he was. Election to one of the five names is significant; it brings not only dignity but power, and the holder is secure, from that moment, of a certain following in war. But I cannot find that the further step of election to the kingship implies anything worth mention. The successful candidate is now the *Tupu o Samoa* — much good may it do him! He can so sign himself on proclamations, which it does not follow that any one will heed. He can summon parliaments; it does not follow they will assemble. If he be too flagrantly disobeyed, he can go to war. But so he could before, when he was only the chief of certain provinces. His own provinces will support him, the provinces of his rivals will take the field 9 upon the other part; just as before. In so far as he is the holder of any of the five *names*, in short, he is a man to be reckoned with; in so far as he is king of Samoa, I cannot find but what the president of a college debating society is a far more formidable officer. And unfortunately, although the credit side of the account proves thus imaginary, the debit side is actual and heavy. For he is now set up to be the mark of consuls; he will be badgered to raise taxes, to make roads, to punish crime, to quell rebellion: and how he is to do it is not asked.

If I am in the least right in my presentation of this obscure matter, no one need be surprised to hear that the land is full of war and rumours of war. Scarce a year goes by but what some province is in arms, or sits sulky and menacing, holding parliaments, disregarding the king's proclamations and planting food in the bush, the first step of military preparation. The religious sentiment of the people is indeed for peace at any price; no pastor can bear arms; and even the layman who does so is denied the sacraments. In the last war the college of Mlua, where the picked youth are prepared for the ministry, lost but a single student; the rest, in the bosom of a bleeding country, and deaf to the voices of vanity and honour, peacefully pursued their studies. But if the church looks askance on war, the warrior in no extremity of need or passion forgets his consideration for the church. The houses and gardens of her ministers stand safe in the midst of armies; a way is reserved for themselves along the beach, where they may be seen in their white kilts and jackets openly passing the lines, while not a hundred yards behind the skirmishers will be exchanging the useless volleys of barbaric warfare. Women are also respected; they are not fired upon; and they are suffered to pass between the hostile camps, exchanging gossip, spreading rumour, and divulging to either army the secret councils of the other. This is plainly no savage war; it has all the punctilio of the barbarian, and all his parade; feasts 10 precede battles, fine dresses and songs decorate and enliven the field; and the young soldier comes to camp burning (on the one hand) to distinguish himself by acts of valour, and (on the other) to display his acquaintance with field etiquette. Thus after Mataafa became involved in hostilities against the Germans, and had another code to observe beside his own, he was always asking his white advisers if "things were done correctly." Let us try to be as wise as Mataafa, and to conceive that etiquette and morals differ in one country and another. We shall be the less surprised to find Samoan war defaced with some unpalatable customs. The childish destruction of fruit-trees in an enemy's country cripples the resources of Samoa; and the habit of head-hunting not only revolts foreigners, but has begun to exercise the minds of the natives themselves. Soon after the German heads were taken, Mr. Carne, Wesleyan missionary, had occasion to visit Mataafa's camp, and spoke of the practice with abhorrence. "Misi Kne," said one chief, "we have just been puzzling ourselves to guess where that custom came from. But, Misi, is it not so that when David killed Goliath, he cut off his head and carried it before the king?"

With the civil life of the inhabitants we have far less to do; and yet even here a word of preparation is inevitable. They are easy, merry, and pleasure-loving; the gayest, though by far from either the most capable or the most beautiful of Polynesians. Fine dress is a passion, and makes a Samoan festival a thing of beauty. Song is almost ceaseless. The boatman sings at the oar, the family at evening worship, the girls at night in the guest-house, sometimes the workman at his toil. No occasion is too small for the poets and musicians; a death, a visit, the day's news, the day's pleasantry, will be set to rhyme and harmony. Even half-grown girls, the occasion arising, fashion words and train choruses of children for its celebration. Song, as with all Pacific islanders, goes hand in hand with the dance, and both shade into the drama. Some of the performances 11 are indecent and ugly, some only dull; others are pretty, funny, and attractive. Games are popular. Cricket-matches, where a hundred played upon a side, endured at times for weeks, and ate up the country like the presence of an army. Fishing, the daily bath, flirtation; courtship, which is gone upon by proxy; conversation, which is largely political; and the delights of public oratory, fill in the long hours.

But the special delight of the Samoan is the *malanga*. When people form a party and go from village to village, junketing and gossiping, they are said to go on a *malanga*. Their songs have announced their approach ere they arrive; the guest-house is prepared for their reception; the virgins of the village attend to prepare the kava bowl and entertain them with the dance; time flies in the enjoyment of every pleasure which an islander conceives; and when the *malanga* sets forth, the same welcome and the same joys expect them beyond the next cape, where the nearest village nestles in its grove of palms. To the visitors it is all golden; for the hosts, it has another side. In one or two words of the language the fact peeps slyly out. The same word (*afemoeina*) expresses "a long call" and "to come as a calamity"; the same word (*lesolosolou*) signifies "to have no intermission of pain" and "to have no cessation, as in the arrival of visitors"; and *soua,* used of epidemics, bears the sense of being overcome as with "fire, flood, or visitors." But the gem of the dictionary is the verb *alovao*, which illustrates its pages like a humorous woodcut. It is used in the sense of "to avoid visitors," but it means literally "hide in the wood." So, by the sure hand of popular speech, we have the picture of the house deserted, the *malanga* disappointed, and the host that should have been quaking in the bush.

We are thus brought to the beginning of a series of traits of manners, highly curious in themselves, and essential to an understanding of the war. In Samoa authority sits on the one hand entranced; on the other, property 12 stands bound in the midst of chartered marauders. What property exists is vested in the family, not in the individual; and of the loose communism in which a family dwells, the dictionary may yet again help us to some idea. I find a string of verbs with the following senses: to deal leniently with, as in helping oneself from a family plantation; to give away without consulting other members of the family; to go to strangers for help instead of to relatives; to take from relatives without permission; to steal from relatives; to have plantations robbed by relatives. The ideal of conduct in the family, and some of its depravations, appear here very plainly. The man who (in a native word of praise) is *mata-ainga*, a race-regarder, has his hand always open to his kindred; the man who is not (in a native term of contempt) *noa*, knows always where to turn in any pinch of want or extremity of laziness. Beggary within the family — and by the less self-respecting, without it — has thus grown into a custom and a scourge, and the dictionary teems with evidence of its abuse. Special words signify the begging of food, of uncooked food, of fish, of pigs, of pigs for travellers, of pigs for stock, of taro, of taro-tops, of taro-tops for planting, of tools, of flyhooks, of implements for netting pigeons, and of mats. It is true the beggar was supposed in time to make a return, somewhat as by the Roman contract of *mutuum*. But the obligation was only moral; it could not be, or was not, enforced; as a matter of fact, it was disregarded. The language had recently to borrow from the Tahitians a word for debt; while by a significant excidence, it possessed a native expression for the failure to pay — ”to omit to make a return for property begged.” Conceive now the position of the householder besieged by harpies, and all defence denied him by the laws of honour. The sacramental gesture of refusal, his last and single resource, was supposed to signify “my house is destitute.” Until that point was reached, in other words, the conduct prescribed for a Samoan was to give and to continue giving. But it does 13 not appear he was at all expected to give with a good grace. The dictionary is well stocked with expressions standing ready, like missiles, to be discharged upon the locusts — ”troop of shamefaced ones,” “you draw in your head like a tern,” “you make your voice small like a whistle-pipe,” “you beg like one delirious”; and the verb *pongitai*, “to look cross,” is equipped with the pregnant rider, “as at the sight of beggars.”

This insolence of beggars and the weakness of proprietors can only be illustrated by examples. We have a girl in our service to whom we had given some finery, that she might wait at table, and (at her own request) some warm clothing against the cold mornings of the bush. She went on a visit to her family, and returned in an old tablecloth, her whole wardrobe having been divided out among relatives in the course of twenty-four hours. A pastor in the province of Atua, being a handy, busy man, bought a boat for a hundred dollars, fifty of which he paid down. Presently after, relatives came to him upon a visit and took a fancy to his new possession. “We have long been wanting a boat,” said they. “Give us this one.” So, when the visit was done, they departed in the boat. The pastor, meanwhile, travelled into Savaii the best way he could, sold a parcel of land, and begged mats among his other relatives, to pay the remainder of the price of the boat which was no longer his. You might think this was enough; but some months later, the harpies, having broken a thwart, brought back the boat to be repaired and repainted by the original owner.

Such customs, it might be argued, being double-edged, will ultimately right themselves. But it is otherwise in practice. Such folk as the pastor's harpy relatives will generally have a boat, and will never have paid for it; such men as the pastor may have sometimes paid for a boat, but they will never have one. It is there as it is with us at home: the measure of the abuse of either system is the blackness of the individual heart. The same man, 14 who would drive his poor relatives from his own door in England, would besiege in Samoa the doors of the rich; and the essence of the dishonesty in either case is to pursue one's own advantage and to be indifferent to the losses of one's neighbour. But the particular drawback of the Polynesian system is to depress and stagger industry. To work more is there only to be more pillaged; to save is impossible. The family has then made a good day of it when all are filled and nothing remains over for the crew of free-booters; and the injustice of the system begins to be recognised even in Samoa. One native is said to have amassed a certain fortune; two clever lads have individually expressed to us their discontent with a system which taxes industry to pamper idleness; and I hear that in one village of Savaii a law has been passed forbidding gifts under the penalty of a sharp fine.

Under this economic regimen, the unpopularity of taxes, which strike all at the same time, which expose the industrious to a perfect siege of mendicancy, and the lazy to be actually condemned to a day's labour, may be imagined without words. It is more important to note the concurrent relaxation of all sense of property. From applying for help to kinsmen who are scarce permitted to refuse, it is but a step to taking from them (in the dictionary phrase) "without permission"; from that to theft at large is but a hair's-breadth.

CHAPTER II

THE ELEMENTS OF DISCORD: FOREIGN

The huge majority of Samoans, like other God-fearing folk in other countries, are perfectly content with their own manners. And upon one condition, it is plain they might enjoy themselves far beyond the average of man. Seated in islands very rich in food, the idleness of the many idle would scarce matter; and the provinces might continue to bestow their names among rival pretenders, and fall into war and enjoy that a while, and drop into peace and enjoy that, in a manner highly to be envied. But the condition — that they should be let alone — is now no longer possible. More than a hundred years ago, and following closely on the heels of Cook, an irregular invasion of adventurers began to swarm about the isles of the Pacific. The seven sleepers of Polynesia stand, still but half aroused, in the midst of the century of competition. And the island races, comparable to a shopful of crockery launched upon the stream of time, now fall to make their desperate voyage among pots of brass and adamant.

Apia, the port and mart, is the seat of the political sickness of Samoa. At the foot of a peaked, woody mountain, the coast makes a deep indent, roughly semicircular. In front the barrier reef is broken by the fresh water of the streams; if the swell be from the north, it enters almost without diminution; and the war-ships roll dizzily at their moorings, and along the fringing coral which follows the configuration of the beach, the surf breaks with a continuous uproar. In wild weather, as the world knows,[16] the roads are untenable. Along the whole shore, which is everywhere green and level and overlooked by inland mountain-tops, the town lies drawn out in strings and clusters. The western horn is Mulinuu, the eastern, Matautu; and from one to the other of these extremes, I ask the reader to walk. He will find more of the history of Samoa spread before his eyes in that excursion, than has yet been collected in the blue-books or the white-books of the world. Mulinuu (where the walk is to begin) is a flat, wind-swept promontory, planted with palms, backed against a swamp of mangroves, and occupied by a rather miserable village. The reader is informed that this is the proper residence of the Samoan kings; he will be the more surprised to observe a board set up, and to read that this historic village is the property of the German firm. But these boards, which are among the commonest features of the landscape, may be rather taken to imply that the claim has been disputed. A little farther east he skirts the stores, offices, and barracks of the firm itself. Thence he will pass through Matafele, the one really town-like portion of this long string of villages, by German bars and stores and the German consulate; and reach the Catholic mission and cathedral standing by the mouth of a small river. The bridge which crosses here (bridge of Mulivai) is a frontier; behind is Matafele; beyond, Apia proper; behind, Germans are supreme; beyond, with but few exceptions, all is Anglo-Saxon. Here the reader will go forward past the stores of Mr. Moors (American) and Messrs. MacArthur (English); past the English mission, the office of the English newspaper, the English church, and the old American consulate, till he reaches the mouth of a larger river, the Vaisingano. Beyond, in Matautu, his way takes him in the shade of many trees and by scattered dwellings, and presently brings him beside a great range of offices, the place and the monument of a German who fought the German firm during his life. His house (now he is dead) remains pointed like a discharged cannon at the citadel of[17] his old enemies. Fitly enough, it is at present leased and occupied by Englishmen. A little farther, and the reader gains the eastern flanking angle of the bay, where stands the pilot-house and signal-post, and whence he can see, on the line of the main coast of the island, the British and the new American consulates.

The course of his walk will have been enlivened by a considerable to and fro of pleasure and business. He will have encountered many varieties of whites, — sailors, merchants, clerks, priests, Protestant missionaries in their pith helmets, and the nondescript hangers-on of any island beach. And the sailors are sometimes in considerable force; but not the residents. He will think at times there are more signboards than men to own them. It may chance it is a full day in the harbour; he will then have seen all manner of ships, from men-of-war and deep-sea packets to the labour vessels of the German firm and the cockboat island schooner; and if he be of an arithmetical turn, he may calculate that there are more whites afloat in Apia bay than whites ashore in the whole Archipelago. On the other hand, he will have encountered all ranks of natives, chiefs and pastors in their scrupulous white clothes; perhaps the king himself, attended by guards in uniform; smiling policemen with their pewter stars; girls, women, crowds of cheerful children. And he will have asked himself with some surprise where these reside. Here and there, in the back yards of European establishments, he may have had a glimpse of a native house elbowed in a corner; but since he left Mulinuu, none on the beach where islanders prefer to live, scarce one on the line of street. The handful of whites have everything; the natives walk in a foreign town. A year ago, on a knoll behind a bar-room, he might have observed a native house guarded by sentries and flown over by the standard of Samoa.

He would then have been told it was the seat of government, driven (as I have to relate) over the Mulivai and from beyond the 18 German town into the Anglo-Saxon. To-day, he will learn it has been carted back again to its old quarters. And he will think it significant that the king of the islands should be thus shuttled to and fro in his chief city at the nod of aliens. And then he will observe a feature more significant still: a house with some concourse of affairs, policemen and idlers hanging by, a man at a bank-counter overhauling manifests, perhaps a trial proceeding in the front verandah, or perhaps the council breaking up in knots after a stormy sitting. And he will remember that he is in the *Eleele Sa*, the "Forbidden Soil," or Neutral Territory of the treaties; that the magistrate whom he has just seen trying native criminals is no officer of the native king's; and that this, the only port and place of business in the kingdom, collects and administers its own revenue for its own behoof by the hands of white councillors and under the supervision of white consuls. Let him go further afield. He will find the roads almost everywhere to cease or to be made impassable by native pig-fences, bridges to be quite unknown, and houses of the whites to become at once a rare exception. Set aside the German plantations, and the frontier is sharp. At the boundary of the *Eleele Sa*, Europe ends, Samoa begins. Here, then, is a singular state of affairs: all the money, luxury, and business of the kingdom centred in one place; that place excepted from the native government and administered by whites for whites; and the whites themselves holding it not in common but in hostile camps, so that it lies between them like a bone between two dogs, each growling, each clutching his own end.

Should Apia ever choose a coat of arms, I have a motto ready: "Enter Rumour painted full of tongues." The majority of the natives do extremely little; the majority of the whites are merchants with some four mails in the month, shopkeepers with some ten or twenty customers a day, and gossip is the common resource of all. The town hums to the day's news, and the bars are crowded 19 with amateur politicians. Some are office-seekers, and earwig king and consul, and compass the fall of officials, with an eye to salary. Some are humorists, delighted with the pleasure of faction for itself. "I never saw so good a place as this Apia," said one of these; "you can be in a new conspiracy every day!" Many, on the other hand, are sincerely concerned for the future of the country. The quarters are so close and the scale is so small, that perhaps not any one can be trusted always to preserve his temper. Every one tells everything he knows; that is our country sickness. Nearly every one has been betrayed at times, and told a trifle more; the way our sickness takes the predisposed. And the news flies, and the tongues wag, and fists are shaken. Pot boil and caldron bubble!

Within the memory of man, the white people of Apia lay in the worst squalor of degradation. They are now unspeakably improved, both men and women. To-day they must be called a more than fairly respectable population, and a much more than fairly intelligent. The whole would probably not fill the ranks of even an English half-battalion, yet there are a surprising number above the average in sense, knowledge, and manners. The trouble (for Samoa) is that they are all here after a livelihood. Some are sharp practitioners, some are famous (justly or not) for foul play in business. Tales fly. One merchant warns you against his neighbour; the neighbour on the first occasion is found to return the compliment: each with a good circumstantial story to the proof. There is so much copra in the islands, and no more; a man's share of it is his share of bread; and commerce, like politics, is here narrowed to a focus, shows its ugly side, and becomes as personal as fisticuffs. Close at their elbows, in all this contention, stands the native looking on. Like a child, his true analogue, he observes, apprehends, misapprehends, and is usually silent. As in a child, a considerable intemperance of speech is accompanied by some power of 20 secrecy. News he publishes; his thoughts have often to be dug for. He looks on at the rude career of the dollar-hunt, and wonders. He sees these men rolling in a luxury beyond the ambition of native kings; he hears them accused by each other of the meanest trickery; he knows some of them to be guilty; and what is he to think? He is strongly conscious of his own position as the common milk-cow; and what is he to do? "Surely these white men on the beach are not great chiefs?" is a common question, perhaps asked with some design of flattering the person questioned. And one, stung by the last incident into an unusual flow of English, remarked to me: "I begin to be weary of white men on the beach."

But the true centre of trouble, the head of the boil of which Samoa languishes, is the German firm. From the conditions of business, a great island house must ever be an inheritance of care; and it chances that the greatest still afoot has its chief seat in Apia bay, and has sunk the main part of its capital in the island of Upolu. When its founder, John Cæsar Godeffroy, went bankrupt over Russian paper and Westphalian iron, his most considerable asset was found to be the South Sea business. This passed (I understand) through the hands of Baring Brothers in London, and is now run by a company rejoicing in the Gargantuan name of the *Deutsche Handels und Plantagen Gesellschaft für Süd-See Inseln zu Hamburg*. This piece of literature is (in practice) shortened to the D.H. and P.G., the Old Firm, the German Firm, the Firm, and (among humorists) the Long Handle Firm. Even from the deck of an approaching ship, the island is seen to bear its signature — zones of cultivation showing in a more vivid tint of green on the dark vest of forest. The total area in use is near ten thousand acres. Hedges of fragrant lime enclose, broad avenues intersect them. You shall walk for hours in parks of palm-tree alleys, regular, like soldiers on parade; in the recesses of the hills you may stumble on a mill-house, toiling and trembling there, fathoms deep in superincumbent [21] forest. On the carpet of clean sward, troops of horses and herds of handsome cattle may be seen to browse; and to one accustomed to the rough luxuriance of the tropics, the appearance is of fairyland. The managers, many of them German sea-captains, are enthusiastic in their new employment. Experiment is continually afoot: coffee and cacao, both of excellent quality, are among the more recent outputs; and from one plantation quantities of pineapples are sent at a particular season to the Sydney markets. A hundred and fifty thousand pounds of English money, perhaps two hundred thousand, lie sunk in these magnificent estates. In estimating the expense of maintenance quite a fleet of ships must be remembered, and a strong staff of captains, supercargoes, overseers, and clerks. These last mess together at a liberal board; the wages are high, and the staff is inspired with a strong and pleasing sentiment of loyalty to their employers.

Seven or eight hundred imported men and women toil for the company on contracts of three or of five years, and at a hypothetical wage of a few dollars in the month. I am now on a burning question: the labour traffic; and I shall ask permission in this place only to touch it with the tongs. Suffice it to say that in Queensland, Fiji, New Caledonia, and Hawaii it has been either suppressed or placed under close public supervision. In Samoa, where it still flourishes, there is no regulation of which the public receives any evidence; and the dirty linen of the firm, if there be any dirty, and if it be ever washed at all, is washed in private. This is unfortunate, if Germans would believe it. But they have no idea of publicity, keep their business to themselves, rather affect to “move in a mysterious way,” and are naturally incensed by criticisms, which they consider hypocritical, from men who would import “labour” for themselves, if they could afford it, and would probably maltreat them if they dared. It is said the whip is very busy on some of the plantations; it is said that punitive extra-labour, by which the thrall’s [22] term of service is extended, has grown to be an abuse; and it is complained that, even where that term is out, much irregularity occurs in the repatriation of the discharged. To all this I can say nothing, good or bad. A certain number of the thralls, many of them wild negritos from the west, have taken to the bush, harbour there in a state partly bestial, or creep into the back quarters of the town to do a day’s stealthy labour under the nose of their proprietors.

Twelve were arrested one morning in my own boys' kitchen. Farther in the bush, huts, small patches of cultivation, and smoking ovens, have been found by hunters. There are still three runaways in the woods of Tutuila, whither they escaped upon a raft. And the Samoans regard these dark-skinned rangers with extreme alarm; the fourth refugee in Tutuila was shot down (as I was told in that island) while carrying off the virgin of a village; and tales of cannibalism run round the country, and the natives shudder about the evening fire. For the Samoans are not cannibals, do not seem to remember when they were, and regard the practice with a disfavour equal to our own.

The firm is Gulliver among the Lilliputs; and it must not be forgotten, that while the small, independent traders are fighting for their own hand, and inflamed with the usual jealousy against corporations, the Germans are inspired with a sense of the greatness of their affairs and interests. The thought of the money sunk, the sight of these costly and beautiful plantations, menaced yearly by the returning forest, and the responsibility of administering with one hand so many conjunct fortunes, might well nerve the manager of such a company for desperate and questionable deeds. Upon this scale, commercial sharpness has an air of patriotism; and I can imagine the man, so far from higgling over the scourge for a few Solomon islanders, prepared to oppress rival firms, overthrow inconvenient monarchs, and let loose the dogs of war. Whatever he may decide, he will not want for backing. Every clerk 23 will be eager to be up and strike a blow; and most Germans in the group, whatever they may babble of the firm over the walnuts and the wine, will rally round the national concern at the approach of difficulty. They are so few — I am ashamed to give their number, it were to challenge contradiction — they are so few, and the amount of national capital buried at their feet is so vast, that we must not wonder if they seem oppressed with greatness and the sense of empire. Other whites take part in our brabbles, while temper holds out, with a certain schoolboy entertainment. In the Germans alone, no trace of humour is to be observed, and their solemnity is accompanied by a touchiness often beyond belief. Patriotism flies in arms about a hen; and if you comment upon the colour of a Dutch umbrella, you have cast a stone against the German Emperor. I give one instance, typical although extreme. One who had returned from Tutuila on the mail cutter complained of the vermin with which she is infested. He was suddenly and sharply brought to a stand. The ship of which he spoke, he was reminded, was a German ship.

John Cæsar Godeffroy himself had never visited the islands; his sons and nephews came, indeed, but scarcely to reap laurels; and the mainspring and headpiece of this great concern, until death took him, was a certain remarkable man of the name of Theodor Weber. He was of an artful and commanding character; in the smallest thing or the greatest, without fear or scruple; equally able to affect, equally ready to adopt, the most engaging politeness or the most imperious airs of domination. It was he who did most damage to rival traders; it was he who most harried the Samoans; and yet I never met any one, white or native, who did not respect his memory. All felt it was a gallant battle, and the man a great fighter; and now when he is dead, and the war seems to have gone against him, many can scarce remember, without a kind of regret, how much devotion and audacity 24 have been spent in vain. His name still lives in the songs of Samoa. One, that I have heard, tells of *Misi Ueba* and a biscuit-box — the suggesting incident being long since forgotten. Another sings plaintively how all things, land and food and property, pass progressively, as by a law of nature, into the hands of *Misi Ueba*, and soon nothing will be left for Samoans. This is an epitaph the man would have enjoyed.

At one period of his career, Weber combined the offices of director of the firm and consul for the City of Hamburg. No question but he then drove very hard. Germans admit that the combination was unfortunate; and it was a German who procured its overthrow. Captain Zembsch superseded him with an imperial appointment, one still remembered in Samoa as “the gentleman who acted justly.” There was no house to be found, and the new consul must take up his quarters at first under the same roof with Weber. On several questions, in which the firm was vitally interested, Zembsch embraced the contrary opinion. Riding one day with an Englishman in Vailele plantation, he was startled by a burst of screaming, leaped from the saddle, ran round a house, and found an overseer beating one of the thralls. He punished the overseer, and, being a kindly and perhaps not a very diplomatic man, talked high of what he felt and what he might consider it his duty to forbid or to enforce. The firm began to look askance at such a consul; and worse was behind. A number of deeds being brought to the consulate for registration, Zembsch detected certain transfers of land in which the date, the boundaries, the measure, and the consideration were all blank. He refused them with an indignation which he does not seem to have been able to keep to himself; and, whether or not by his fault, some of these unfortunate documents became public. It was plain that the relations between the two flanks of the German invasion, the diplomatic and the commercial, were strained to bursting. But Weber was a man ill to 25 conquer. Zembsch was recalled; and from that time forth, whether through influence at home, or by the solicitations of Weber on the spot, the German consulate has shown itself very apt to play the game of the German firm. That game, we may say, was twofold, — the first part even praiseworthy, the second at least natural. On the one part, they desired an efficient native administration, to open up the country and punish crime; they wished, on the other, to extend their own provinces and to curtail the dealings of their rivals. In the first, they had the jealous and diffident sympathy of all whites; in the second, they had all whites banded together against them for their lives and livelihoods. It was thus a game of *Beggar my Neighbour* between a large merchant and some small ones. Had it so remained, it would still have been a cut-throat quarrel. But when the consulate appeared to be concerned, when the war-ships of the German Empire were thought to fetch and carry for the firm, the rage of the independent traders broke beyond restraint. And, largely from the national touchiness and the intemperate speech of German clerks, this scramble among dollar-hunters assumed the appearance of an inter-racial war.

The firm, with the indomitable Weber at its head and the consulate at its back — there has been the chief enemy at Samoa. No English reader can fail to be reminded of John Company; and if the Germans appear to have been not so successful, we can only wonder that our own blunders and brutalities were less severely punished. Even on the field of Samoa, though German faults and aggressions make up the burthen of my story, they have been nowise alone. Three nations were engaged in this infinitesimal affray, and not one appears with credit. They figure but as the three ruffians of the elder playwrights. The United States have the cleanest hands, and even theirs are not immaculate. It was an ambiguous business when a private American adventurer was landed 26 with his pieces of artillery from an American war-ship, and became prime minister to the king. It is true (even if he were ever really supported) that he was soon dropped and had soon sold himself for money to the German firm. I will leave it to the reader whether this trait dignifies or not the wretched story. And the end of it spattered the credit alike of England and the States, when this man (the premier of a friendly sovereign) was kidnapped and deported, on the requisition of an American consul, by the captain of an English war-ship. I shall have to tell, as I proceed, of villages shelled on very trifling grounds by Germans; the like has been done of late years, though in a better quarrel, by ourselves of England. I shall have to tell how the Germans landed and shed blood at Fangalii; it was only in 1876 that we British had our own misconceived little massacre at Mulinuu. I shall have to tell how the Germans bludgeoned Malietoa with a sudden call for money; it was something of the suddenest that Sir Arthur Gordon himself, smarting under a sensible public affront, made and enforced a somewhat similar demand.

CHAPTER III

THE SORROWS OF LAUPEPA, 1883 TO 1

You ride in a German plantation and see no bush, no soul stirring; only acres of empty sward, miles of cocoa-nut alley: a desert of food. In the eyes of the Samoan the place has the attraction of a park for the holiday schoolboy, of a granary for mice. We must add the yet more lively allurement of a haunted house, for over these empty and silent miles there broods the fear of the negrito cannibal. For the Samoan besides, there is something barbaric, unhandsome, and absurd in the idea of thus growing food only to send it from the land and sell it. A man at home who should turn all Yorkshire into one wheatfield, and annually burn his harvest on the altar of Mumbo-Jumbo, might impress ourselves not much otherwise. And the firm which does these things is quite extraneous, a wen that might be excised to-morrow without loss but to itself; few natives drawing from it so much as day's wages; and the rest beholding in it only the occupier of their acres. The nearest villages have suffered most; they see over the hedge the lands of their ancestors waving with useless cocoa-palms; and the sales were often questionable, and must still more often appear so to regretful natives, spinning and improving yarns about the evening lamp. At the worst, then, to help oneself from the plantation will seem to a Samoan very like orchard-breaking to the British schoolboy; at the best, it will be thought a gallant Robin-Hoodish readjustment of a public wrong.

And there is more behind. Not only is theft from the plantations regarded rather as a lark and peccadillo, the idea of theft in itself is not very clearly present to these communists; and as to the punishment of crime in general, a great gulf of opinion divides the natives from ourselves. Indigenous punishments were short and sharp. Death, deportation by the primitive method of setting the criminal to sea in a canoe, fines, and in Samoa itself the penalty of publicly biting a hot, ill-smelling root, comparable to a rough forfeit in a children's game — these are approved. The offender is killed, or punished and forgiven. We, on the other hand, harbour malice for a period of years: continuous shame attaches to the criminal; even when he is doing his best — even when he is submitting to the worst form of torture, regular work — he is to stand aside from life and from his family in dreadful isolation. These ideas most Polynesians have accepted in appearance, as they accept other ideas of the whites; in practice, they reduce it to a farce. I have heard the French resident in the Marquesas in talk with the French gaoler of Tai-o-hae: "*Eh bien, où sont vos prisonnières? — Je crois, mon commandant, qu'elles sont allées quelque part faire une visite.*" And the ladies would be welcome. This is to take the most savage of Polynesians; take some of the most civilised. In Honolulu, convicts labour on the highways in piebald clothing, gruesome and ridiculous; and it is a common sight to see the family of such an one troop out, about the dinner hour, wreathed with flowers and in their holiday best, to picnic with their kinsman on the public wayside. The application of these outlandish penalties, in fact, transfers the sympathy to the offender. Remember, besides, that the clan system, and that imperfect idea of justice which is its worst feature, are still lively in Samoa; that it is held the duty of a judge to favour kinsmen, of a king to protect his vassals; and the difficulty of getting a plantation thief first caught, then convicted, and last of all punished, will appear.

During the early 'eighties, the Germans looked upon this system with growing irritation. They might see their convict thrust in gaol by the front door; they could never tell how soon he was enfranchised by the back; and they need not be the least surprised if they met him, a few days after, enjoying the delights of a *malanga*. It was a banded conspiracy, from the king and the vice-king downward, to evade the law and deprive the Germans of their profits. In 1883, accordingly, the consul, Dr. Stuebel, extorted a convention on the subject, in terms of which Samoans convicted of offences against German subjects were to be confined in a private gaol belonging to the German firm. To Dr. Stuebel it seemed simple enough: the offenders were to be effectually punished, the sufferers partially indemnified. To the Samoans, the thing appeared no less simple, but quite different: "Malietoa was selling Samoans to Misi Ueba." What else could be expected? Here was a private corporation engaged in making money; to it was delegated, upon a question of profit and loss, one of the functions of the Samoan crown; and those who make anomalies must look for comments. Public feeling ran unanimous and high. Prisoners who escaped from the private gaol were not recaptured or not returned, and Malietoa hastened to build a new prison of his own, whither he conveyed, or pretended to convey, the fugitives. In October 1885 a trenchant state paper issued from the German consulate. Twenty prisoners, the consul wrote, had now been at large for eight months from Weber's prison. It was pretended they had since then completed their term of punishment elsewhere. Dr. Stuebel did not seek to conceal his incredulity; but he took ground beyond; he declared the point irrelevant. The law was to be enforced. The men were condemned to a certain period in Weber's prison; they had run away; they must now be brought back and (whatever had become of them in the interval) work out the sentence. Doubtless Dr. Stuebel’s demands were substantially just; but [30] doubtless also they bore from the outside a great appearance of harshness; and when the king submitted, the murmurs of the people increased.

But Weber was not yet content. The law had to be enforced; property, or at least the property of the firm, must be respected. And during an absence of the consul’s, he seems to have drawn up with his own hand, and certainly first showed to the king, in his own house, a new convention. Weber here and Weber there. As an able man, he was perhaps in the right to prepare and propose conventions. As the head of a trading company, he seems far out of his part to be communicating state papers to a sovereign. The administration of justice was the colour, and I am willing to believe the purpose, of the new paper; but its effect was to depose the existing government. A council of two Germans and two Samoans were to be invested with the right to make laws and impose taxes as might be “desirable for the common interest of the Samoan government and the German residents.” The provisions of this council the king and vice-king were to sign blindfold. And by a last hardship, the Germans, who received all the benefit, reserved a right to recede from the agreement on six months’ notice; the Samoans, who suffered all the loss, were bound by it in perpetuity. I can never believe that my friend Dr. Stuebel had a hand in drafting these proposals; I am only surprised he should have been a party to enforcing them, perhaps the chief error in these islands of a man who has made few. And they were enforced with a rigour that seems injudicious. The Samoans (according to their own account) were denied a copy of the document; they were certainly rated and threatened; their deliberation was treated as contumacy; two German war-ships lay in port, and it was hinted that these would shortly intervene.

Succeed in frightening a child, and he takes refuge in duplicity. “Malietoa,” one of the chiefs had written, “we know well we are in bondage to the great governments.” [31] It was now thought one tyrant might be better than three, and any one preferable to Germany. On the 5th November 1885, accordingly, Laupepa, Tamasese, and forty-eight high chiefs met in secret, and the supremacy of Samoa was secretly offered to Great Britain for the second time in history. Laupepa and Tamasese still figured as king and vice-king in the eyes of Dr. Stuebel; in their own, they had secretly abdicated, were become private persons, and might do what they pleased without binding or dishonouring their country. On the morrow, accordingly, they did public humiliation in the dust before the consulate, and five days later signed the convention. The last was done, it is claimed, upon an impulse. The humiliation, which it appeared to the Samoans so great a thing to offer, to the practical mind of Dr. Stuebel seemed a trifle to receive; and the pressure was continued and increased. Laupepa and Tamasese were both heavy, well-meaning, inconclusive men. Laupepa, educated for the ministry, still bears some marks of it in character and appearance; Tamasese was in private of an amorous and sentimental turn, but no one would have guessed it from his solemn and dull countenance. Impossible to conceive two less dashing champions for a threatened race; and there is no doubt they were reduced to the extremity of muddlement and childish fear. It was drawing towards night on the 10th, when this luckless pair and a chief of the name of Tuiatafu, set out for the German consulate, still minded to temporise. As they went, they discussed their case with agitation. They could see the lights of the German war-ships as they walked — an eloquent reminder. And it was then that Tamasese proposed to sign the convention. “It will give us peace for the day,” said Laupepa, “and afterwards Great Britain must decide.” — ”Better fight Germany than that!” cried Tuiatafu, speaking words of wisdom, and departed in anger. But the two others proceeded on their fatal errand; signed the convention, writing themselves king and vice-king, 32 as they now believed themselves to be no longer; and with childish perfidy took part in a scene of “reconciliation” at the German consulate.

Malietoa supposed himself betrayed by Tamasese. Consul Churchward states with precision that the document was sold by a scribe for thirty-six dollars. Twelve days later at least, November 22nd, the text of the address to Great Britain came into the hands of Dr. Stuebel. The Germans may have been wrong before; they were now in the right to be angry. They had been publicly, solemnly, and elaborately fooled; the treaty and the reconciliation were both fraudulent, with the broad, farcical fraudulency of children and barbarians. This history is much from the outside; it is the digested report of eye-witnesses; it can be rarely corrected from state papers; and as to what consuls felt and thought, or what instructions they acted under, I must still be silent or proceed by guess. It is my guess that Stuebel now decided Malietoa Laupepa to be a man impossible to trust and unworthy to be dealt with. And it is certain that the business of his deposition was put in hand at once. The position of Weber, with his knowledge of things native, his prestige, and his enterprising intellect, must have always made him influential with the consul: at this juncture he was indispensable. Here was the deed to be done; here the man of action. “Mr. Weber rested not,” says Laupepa. It was “like the old days of his own consulate,” writes Churchward. His messengers filled the isle; his house was thronged with chiefs and orators; he sat close over his loom, delightedly weaving the future. There was one thing requisite to the intrigue, — a native pretender;

and the very man, you would have said, stood waiting: Mataafa, titular of Atua, descended from both the royal lines, late joint king with Tamasese, fobbed off with nothing in the time of the Lackawanna treaty, probably mortified by the circumstance, a chief with a strong following, and in character and capacity high above the native average. Yet when Weber's spiriting 33 was done, and the curtain rose on the set scene of the coronation, Mataafa was absent, and Tamasese stood in his place. Malietoa was to be deposed for a piece of solemn and offensive trickery, and the man selected to replace him was his sole partner and accomplice in the act. For so strange a choice, good ground must have existed; but it remains conjectural: some supposing Mataafa scratched as too independent; others that Tamasese had indeed betrayed Laupepa, and his new advancement was the price of his treachery.

So these two chiefs began to change places like the scales of a balance, one down, the other up. Tamasese raised his flag (Jan. 28th, 1886) in Leulumoenga, chief place of his own province of Aana, usurped the style of king, and began to collect and arm a force. Weber, by the admission of Stuebel, was in the market supplying him with weapons; so were the Americans; so, but for our salutary British law, would have been the British; for wherever there is a sound of battle, there will the traders be gathered together selling arms. A little longer, and we find Tamasese visited and addressed as king and majesty by a German commodore. Meanwhile, for the unhappy Malietoa, the road led downward. He was refused a bodyguard. He was turned out of Mulinuu, the seat of his royalty, on a land claim of Weber's, fled across the Mulivai, and "had the coolness" (German expression) to hoist his flag in Apia. He was asked "in the most polite manner," says the same account — ”in the most delicate manner in the world," a reader of Marryat might be tempted to amend the phrase, — to strike his flag in his own capital; and on his "refusal to accede to this request," Dr. Stuebel appeared himself with ten men and an officer from the cruiser *Albatross*; a sailor climbed into the tree and brought down the flag of Samoa, which was carefully folded, and sent, "in the most polite manner," to its owner. The consuls of England and the States were there (the excellent gentlemen!) to 34 protest. Last, and yet more explicit, the German commodore who visited the be-titled Tamasese, addressed the king — we may surely say the late king — as "the High Chief Malietoa."

Had he no party, then? At that time, it is probable, he might have called some five-sevenths of Samoa to his standard. And yet he sat there, helpless monarch, like a fowl trussed for roasting. The blame lies with himself, because he was a helpless creature; it lies also with England and the States. Their agents on the spot preached peace (where there was no peace, and no pretence of it) with eloquence and iteration. Secretary Bayard seems to have felt a call to join personally in the solemn farce, and was at the expense of a telegram in which he assured the sinking monarch it was “for the higher interests of Samoa” he should do nothing. There was no man better at doing that; the advice came straight home, and was devoutly followed. And to be just to the great Powers, something was done in Europe; a conference was called, it was agreed to send commissioners to Samoa, and the decks had to be hastily cleared against their visit. Dr. Stuebel had attached the municipality of Apia and hoisted the German war-flag over Mulinuu; the American consul (in a sudden access of good service) had flown the stars and stripes over Samoan colours; on either side these steps were solemnly retracted. The Germans expressly disowned Tamasese; and the islands fell into a period of suspense, of some twelve months’ duration, during which the seat of the history was transferred to other countries and escapes my purview. Here on the spot, I select three incidents: the arrival on the scene of a new actor, the visit of the Hawaiian embassy, and the riot on the Emperor’s birthday. The rest shall be silence; only it must be borne in view that Tamasese all the while continued to strengthen himself in Leulumoenga, and Laupepa sat inactive listening to the song of consuls.

Captain Brandeis. The new actor was Brandeis, a Bavarian captain of artillery, of a romantic and adventurous character. He had served with credit in war; but soon wearied of garrison life, resigned his battery, came to the States, found employment as a civil engineer, visited Cuba, took a sub-contract on the Panama canal, caught the fever, and came (for the sake of the sea voyage) to Australia. He had that natural love for the tropics which lies so often latent in persons of a northern birth; difficulty and danger attracted him; and when he was picked out for secret duty, to be the hand of Germany in Samoa, there is no doubt but he accepted the post with exhilaration. It is doubtful if a better choice could have been made. He had courage, integrity, ideas of his own, and loved the employment, the people, and the place. Yet there was a fly in the ointment. The double error of unnecessary stealth and of the immixture of a trading company in political affairs, has vitiated, and in the end defeated, much German policy. And Brandeis was introduced to the islands as a clerk, and sent down to Leulumoenga (where he was soon drilling the troops and fortifying the position of the rebel king) as an agent of the German firm. What this mystification cost in the end I shall tell in another place; and even in the beginning, it deceived no one. Brandeis is a man of notable personal appearance; he looks the part allotted him; and the military clerk was soon the centre of observation and rumour. Malietoa wrote and complained of his presence to Becker, who had succeeded Dr. Stuebel in the consulate. Becker replied, “I have nothing to do with the gentleman Brandeis. Be it well known that the gentleman Brandeis has no appointment in a military character, but resides peaceably assisting the government of Leulumoenga in their work, for Brandeis is a quiet, sensible gentleman.” And then he promised to send the vice-consul to “get information of the captain’s doings”: surely supererogation of deceit.

The Hawaiian Embassy. The prime minister of the Hawaiian kingdom was, at this period, an adventurer of the name of Gibson. He claimed, on the strength of a romantic story, to be the heir of a great English house. He had played a part in a revolt in Java, had languished in Dutch fetters, and had risen to be a trusted agent of Brigham Young, the Utah president. It was in this character of a Mormon emissary that he first came to the islands of Hawaii, where he collected a large sum of money for the Church of the Latter Day Saints. At a given moment, he dropped his saintship and appeared as a Christian and the owner of a part of the island of Lanai. The steps of the transformation are obscure; they seem, at least, to have been ill-received at Salt Lake; and there is evidence to the effect that he was followed to the islands by Mormon assassins. His first attempt on politics was made under the auspices of what is called the missionary party, and the canvass conducted largely (it is said with tears) on the platform at prayer-meetings. It resulted in defeat. Without any decency of delay he changed his colours, abjured the errors of reform, and, with the support of the Catholics, rose to the chief power. In a very brief interval he had thus run through the gamut of religions in the South Seas. It does not appear that he was any more particular in politics, but he was careful to consult the character and prejudices of the late king, Kalakaua. That amiable, far from unaccomplished, but too convivial sovereign, had a continued use for money: Gibson was observant to keep him well supplied. Kalakaua (one of the most theoretical of men) was filled with visionary schemes for the protection and development of the Polynesian race: Gibson fell in step with him; it is even thought he may have shared in his illusions. The king and minister at least conceived between them a scheme of island confederation — the most obvious fault of which was that it came too late — and armed and fitted out the cruiser *Kaimiloa*, nest-egg of the future navy of Hawaii. Samoa,[37] the most important group still independent, and one immediately threatened with aggression, was chosen for the scene of action. The Hon. John E. Bush, a half-caste Hawaiian, sailed (December 1887) for Apia as minister-plenipotentiary, accompanied by a secretary of legation, Henry F. Poor; and as soon as she was ready for sea, the war-ship followed in support. The expedition was futile in its course, almost tragic in result. The *Kaimiloa* was from the first a scene of disaster and dilapidation: the stores were sold; the crew revolted; for a great part of a night she was in the hands of mutineers, and the secretary lay bound upon the deck. The mission, installing itself at first with extravagance in Matautu, was helped at last out of the island by the advances of a private citizen. And they returned from dreams of Polynesian independence to find their own city in the hands of a clique of white shopkeepers, and the great Gibson once again in gaol. Yet the farce had not been quite without effect. It had encouraged the natives for the moment, and it seems to have ruffled permanently the temper of the Germans. So might a fly irritate Cæsar.

The arrival of a mission from Hawaii would scarce affect the composure of the courts of Europe. But in the eyes of Polynesians the little kingdom occupies a place apart. It is there alone that men of their race enjoy most of the advantages and all the pomp of independence; news of Hawaii and descriptions of Honolulu are grateful topics in all parts of the South Seas; and there is no better introduction than a photograph in which the bearer shall be represented in company with Kalakaua. Laupepa was, besides, sunk to the point at which an unfortunate begins to clutch at straws, and he received the mission with delight. Letters were exchanged between him and Kalakaua; a deed of confederation was signed, 17th February 1887, and the signature celebrated in the new house of the Hawaiian embassy with some original ceremonies. Malietoa Laupepa came, attended by his 38 ministry, several hundred chiefs, two guards, and six policemen. Always decent, he withdrew at an early hour; by those that remained, all decency appears to have been forgotten; high chiefs were seen to dance; and day found the house carpeted with slumbering grandees, who must be roused, doctored with coffee, and sent home. As a first chapter in the history of Polynesian Confederation, it was hardly cheering, and Laupepa remarked to one of the embassy, with equal dignity and sense: “If you have come here to teach my people to drink, I wish you had stayed away.”

The Germans looked on from the first with natural irritation that a power of the powerlessness of Hawaii should thus profit by its undeniable footing in the family of nations, and send embassies, and make believe to have a navy, and bark and snap at the heels of the great German Empire. But Becker could not prevent the hunted Laupepa from taking refuge in any hole that offered, and he could afford to smile at the fantastic orgie in the embassy. It was another matter when the Hawaiians approached the intractable Mataafa, sitting still in his Atua government like Achilles in his tent, helping neither side, and (as the Germans suspected) keeping the eggs warm for himself. When the *Kaimiloa* steamed out of Apia on this visit, the German war-ship *Adler* followed at her heels; and Mataafa was no sooner set down with the embassy than he was summoned and ordered on board by two German officers. The step is one of those triumphs of temper which can only be admired. Mataafa is entertaining the plenipotentiary of a sovereign power in treaty with his own king, and the captain of a German corvette orders him to quit his guests.

But there was worse to come. I gather that Tamasese was at the time in the sulks. He had doubtless been promised prompt aid and a prompt success; he had seen himself surreptitiously helped, privately ordered about, and publicly disowned; and he was still the king of nothing 39 more than his own province, and already the second in command of Captain Brandeis. With the adhesion of some part of his native cabinet, and behind the back of his white minister, he found means to communicate with the Hawaiians. A passage on the *Kaimiloa*, a pension, and a home in Honolulu were the bribes proposed; and he seems to have been tempted. A day was set for a secret interview. Poor, the Hawaiian secretary, and J. D. Strong, an American painter attached to the embassy in the surprising quality of "Government Artist," landed with a Samoan boat's-crew in Aana; and while the secretary hid himself, according to agreement, in the outlying home of an English settler, the artist (ostensibly bent on photography) entered the headquarters of the rebel king. It was a great day in Leulumoenga; three hundred recruits had come in, a feast was cooking; and the photographer, in view of the native love of being photographed, was made entirely welcome. But beneath the friendly surface all were on the alert. The secret had leaked out: Weber beheld his plans threatened in the root; Brandeis trembled for the possession of his slave and sovereign; and the German vice-consul, Mr. Sonnenschein, had been sent or summoned to the scene of danger.

It was after dark, prayers had been said and the hymns sung through all the village, and Strong and the German sat together on the mats in the house of Tamasese, when the events began. Strong speaks German freely, a fact which he had not disclosed, and he was scarce more amused than embarrassed to be able to follow all the evening the dissension and the changing counsels of his neighbours. First the king himself was missing, and there was a false alarm that he had escaped and was already closeted with Poor. Next came certain intelligence that some of the ministry had run the blockade, and were on their way to the house of the English settler. Thereupon, in spite of some protests from Tamasese, who tried to defend the independence of his cabinet, Brandeis gathered a posse 40 of warriors, marched out of the village, brought back the fugitives, and clapped them in the corrugated iron shanty which served as gaol. Along with these he seems to have seized Billy Coe, interpreter to the Hawaiians; and Poor, seeing his conspiracy public, burst with his boat's-crew into the town, made his way to the house of the native prime minister, and demanded Coe's release. Brandeis hastened to the spot, with Strong at his heels; and the two principals being both incensed, and Strong seriously alarmed for his friend's safety, there began among them a scene of great intemperance. At one point, when Strong suddenly disclosed his acquaintance with German, it attained a high style of comedy; at another, when a pistol was most foolishly drawn, it bordered on drama; and it may be said to have ended in a mixed genus, when Poor was finally packed into the corrugated iron gaol along with the forfeited ministers. Meanwhile the captain of his boat, Siteoni, of whom I shall have to tell again, had cleverly withdrawn the boat's-crew at an early stage of the quarrel. Among the population beyond Tamasese's marches, he collected a body of armed men, returned before dawn to Leulumoenga, demolished the corrugated iron gaol, and liberated the Hawaiian secretary and the rump of the rebel cabinet. No opposition was shown; and doubtless the rescue was connived at by Brandeis, who had gained his point. Poor had the face to complain the next day to Becker; but to compete with Becker in effrontery was labour lost. "You have been repeatedly warned, Mr. Poor, not to expose yourself among these savages," said he.

Not long after, the presence of the *Kaimiloa* was made a *casus belli* by the Germans; and the rough-and-tumble embassy withdrew, on borrowed money, to find their own government in hot water to the neck.

The Emperor's Birthday. It is possible, and it is alleged, that the Germans entered into the conference with hope. 41 But it is certain they were resolved to remain prepared for either fate. And I take the liberty of believing that Laupepa was not forgiven his duplicity; that, during this interval, he stood marked like a tree for felling; and that his conduct was daily scrutinised for further pretexts of offence. On the evening of the Emperor's birthday, March 22nd, 1887, certain Germans were congregated in a public bar. The season and the place considered, it is scarce cynical to assume they had been drinking; nor, so much being granted, can it be thought exorbitant to suppose them possibly in fault for the squabble that took place. A squabble, I say; but I am willing to call it a riot. And this was the new fault of Laupepa; this it is that was described by a German commodore as "the trampling upon by Malietoa of the German Emperor." I pass the rhetoric by to examine the point of liability. Four natives were brought to trial for this horrid fact: not before a native judge, but before the German magistrate of the tripartite municipality of Apia. One was acquitted, one condemned for theft, and two for assault. On appeal, not to Malietoa, but to the three consuls, the case was by a majority of two to one returned to the magistrate and (as far as I can learn) was then allowed to drop. Consul Becker himself laid the chief blame on one of the policemen of the municipality, a half-white of the name of Scanlon. Him he sought to have discharged, but was again baffled by his brother consuls. Where, in all this, are we to find a corner of responsibility for the king of Samoa? Scanlon, the alleged author of the outrage, was a half-white; as Becker was to learn to his cost, he claimed to be an American subject; and he was not even in the king's employment. Apia, the scene of the outrage, was outside the king's jurisdiction by treaty; by the choice of Germany, he was not so much as allowed to fly his flag there. And the denial of justice (if justice were denied) rested with the consuls of Britain and the States.

But when a dog is to be beaten, any stick will serve. 42 In the meanwhile, on the proposition of Mr. Bayard, the Washington conference on Samoan affairs was adjourned till autumn, so that "the ministers of Germany and Great Britain might submit the protocols to their respective Governments." "You propose that the conference is to adjourn and not to be broken up?" asked Sir Lionel West. "To adjourn for the reasons stated," replied Bayard. This was on July 26th; and, twenty-nine days later, by Wednesday the 24th of August, Germany had practically seized Samoa. For this flagrant breach of faith one excuse is openly alleged; another whispered. It is openly alleged that Bayard had shown himself impracticable; it is whispered that the Hawaiian embassy was an expression of American intrigue, and that the Germans only did as they were done by. The sufficiency of these excuses may be left to the discretion of the reader. But, however excused, the breach of faith was public and express; it must have been deliberately predetermined; and it was resented in the States as a deliberate insult.

By the middle of August 1887 there were five sail of German warships in Apia bay: the *Bismarck*, of 3000 tons displacement; the *Carola*, the *Sophie*, and the *Olga*, all considerable ships; and the beautiful *Adler*, which lies there to this day, kanted on her beam, dismantled, scarlet with rust, the day showing through her ribs. They waited inactive, as a burglar waits till the patrol goes by. And on the 23rd, when the mail had left for Sydney, when the eyes of the world were withdrawn, and Samoa plunged again for a period of weeks into her original island-obscurity, Becker opened his guns. The policy was too cunning to seem dignified; it gave to conduct which would otherwise have seemed bold and even brutally straightforward, the appearance of a timid ambuscade; and helped to shake men's reliance on the word of Germany. On the day named, an ultimatum reached Malietoa at Afenga, whither he had retired months before to avoid friction. A fine of one thousand dollars and an *ifo*, or public humiliation, 43 were demanded for the affair of the Emperor's birthday. Twelve thousand dollars were to be "paid quickly" for thefts from German plantations in the course of the last four years. "It is my opinion that there is nothing just or correct in Samoa while you are at the head of the government," concluded Becker. "I shall be at Afenga in the morning of to-morrow, Wednesday, at 11 A.M." The blow fell on Laupepa (in his own expression) "out of the bush"; the dilatory fellow had seen things hang over so long, he had perhaps begun to suppose they might hang over for ever; and here was ruin at the door. He rode at once to Apia, and summoned his chiefs. The council lasted all night long. Many voices were for defiance. But Laupepa had grown inured to a policy of procrastination; and the answer ultimately drawn only begged for delay till Saturday, the 27th. So soon as it was signed, the king took horse and fled in the early morning to Afenga; the council hastily dispersed; and only three chiefs, Selu, Seumanu, and Le Mmea, remained by the government building, tremulously expectant of the result.

By seven the letter was received. By 7.30 Becker arrived in person, inquired for Laupepa, was evasively answered, and declared war on the spot. Before eight, the Germans (seven hundred men and six guns) came ashore and seized and hoisted German colours on the government building. The three chiefs had made good haste to escape; but a considerable booty was made of government papers, fire-arms, and some seventeen thousand cartridges. Then followed a scene which long rankled in the minds of the white inhabitants, when the German marines raided the town in search of Malietoa, burst into private houses, and were accused (I am willing to believe on slender grounds) of violence to private persons.

On the morrow, the 25th, one of the German war-ships, which had been despatched to Leulumoenga over night re-entered the bay, flying the Tamasese colours at the fore. The new king was given a royal salute of twenty-one guns, 44 marched through the town by the commodore and a German guard of honour, and established on Mulinuu with two or three hundred warriors. Becker announced his recognition to the other consuls. These replied by proclaiming Malietoa, and in the usual mealy-mouthed manner advised Samoans to do nothing. On the 27th martial law was declared; and on the 1st September the German squadron dispersed about the group, bearing along with them the proclamations of the new king. Tamasese was now a great man, to have five iron war-ships for his post-runners. But the moment was critical. The revolution had to be explained, the chiefs persuaded to assemble at a fono summoned for the 15th; and the ships carried not only a store of printed documents, but a squad of Tamasese orators upon their round.

Such was the German *coup d'état.* They had declared war with a squadron of five ships upon a single man; that man, late king of the group, was in hiding on the mountains; and their own nominee, backed by German guns and bayonets, sat in his stead in Mulinuu.

One of the first acts of Malietoa, on fleeing to the bush, was to send for Mataafa twice: "I am alone in the bush; if you do not come quickly you will find me bound." It is to be understood the men were near kinsmen, and had (if they had nothing else) a common jealousy. At the urgent cry, Mataafa set forth from Falefá, and came to Mulinuu to Tamasese. "What is this that you and the German commodore have decided on doing?" he inquired. "I am going to obey the German consul," replied Tamasese, "whose wish it is that I should be the king and that all Samoa should assemble here." "Do not pursue in wrath against Malietoa," said Mataafa; "but try to bring about a compromise, and form a united government." "Very well," said Tamasese, "leave it to me, and I will try." From Mulinuu, Mataafa went on board the *Bismarck,* and was graciously received. "Probably," said the commodore, "we shall bring about a reconciliation of all Samoa 45
through you"; and then asked his visitor if he bore any affection to Malietoa. "Yes," said Mataafa. "And to Tamasese?" "To him also; and if you desire the weal of Samoa, you will allow either him or me to bring about a reconciliation." "If it were my will," said the commodore, "I would do as you say. But I have no will in the matter. I have instructions from the Kaiser, and I cannot go back again from what I have been sent to do." "I thought you would be commended," said Mataafa, "if you brought about the weal of Samoa." "I will tell you," said the commodore. "All shall go quietly. But there is one thing that must be done: Malietoa must be deposed. I will do nothing to him beyond; he will only be kept on board for a couple of months and be well treated, just as we Germans did to the French chief [Napoleon III.] some time ago, whom we kept a while and cared for well." Becker was no less explicit: war, he told Sewall, should not cease till the Germans had custody of Malietoa and Tamasese should be recognised.

Meantime, in the Malietoa provinces, a profound impression was received. People trooped to their fugitive sovereign in the bush. Many natives in Apia brought their treasures, and stored them in the houses of white friends. The Tamasese orators were sometimes ill received. Over in Savaii, they found the village of Satupaitea deserted, save for a few lads at cricket. These they harangued, and were rewarded with ironical applause; and the proclamation, as soon as they had departed, was torn down. For this offence the village was ultimately burned by

German sailors, in a very decent and orderly style, on the 3rd September. This was the dinner-bell of the fono on the 15th. The threat conveyed in the terms of the summons — ”If any government district does not quickly obey this direction, I will make war on that government district” — was thus commented on and reinforced. And the meeting was in consequence well attended by chiefs of all parties. They found themselves unarmed among 46 the armed warriors of Tamasese and the marines of the German squadron, and under the guns of five strong ships. Brandeis rose; it was his first open appearance, the German firm signing its revolutionary work. His words were few and uncompromising: “Great are my thanks that the chiefs and heads of families of the whole of Samoa are assembled here this day. It is strictly forbidden that any discussion should take place as to whether it is good or not that Tamasese is king of Samoa, whether at this fono or at any future fono. I place for your signature the following: *‘We inform all the people of Samoa of what follows*: (1) *The government of Samoa has been assumed by King Tuiaana Tamasese*. (2) *By order of the king, it was directed that a fono should take place today, composed of the chiefs and heads of families, and we have obeyed the summons. We have signed our names under this, 15th September 1887.*’” Needs must under all these guns; and the paper was signed, but not without open sullenness. The bearing of Mataafa in particular was long remembered against him by the Germans. “Do you not see the king?” said the commodore reprovingly. “His father was no king,” was the bold answer. A bolder still has been printed, but this is Mataafa’s own recollection of the passage. On the next day, the chiefs were all ordered back to shake hands with Tamasese. Again they obeyed; but again their attitude was menacing, and some, it is said, audibly murmured as they gave their hands.

It is time to follow the poor Sheet of Paper (literal meaning of *Laupepa*), who was now to be blown so broadly over the face of earth. As soon as news reached him of the declaration of war, he fled from Afenga to Tanungamanono, a hamlet in the bush, about a mile and a half behind Apia, where he lurked some days. On the 24th, Selu, his secretary, despatched to the American consul an anxious appeal, his majesty’s “cry and prayer” in behalf of “this weak people.” By August 30th, the Germans had word of his lurking-place, surrounded the hamlet under 47 cloud of night, and in the early morning burst with a force of sailors on the houses. The people fled on all sides, and were fired upon. One boy was shot in the hand, the first blood of the war. But the king was nowhere to be found; he had wandered farther, over the woody mountains, the backbone of the land, towards Siumu and Safata. Here, in a safe place, he built himself a town in the forest, where he received a continual stream of visitors and messengers. Day after day the German blue-jackets were employed in the hopeless enterprise of beating the forests for the fugitive; day after day they were suffered to pass unhurt under the guns of ambushed Samoans; day after day they returned, exhausted and disappointed, to Apia. Seumanu Tafa, high chief of Apia, was known to be in the forest with the king; his wife, Fatuila, was seized, imprisoned in the German hospital, and when it was thought her spirit was sufficiently reduced, brought up for cross-examination. The wise lady confined herself in answer to a single word. “Is your husband near Apia?” “Yes.” “Is he far from Apia?” “Yes.” “Is he with the king?” “Yes.” “Are he and the king in different places?” “Yes.” Whereupon the witness was discharged. About the 10th of September, Laupepa was secretly in Apia at the American consulate with two companions. The German pickets were close set and visited by a strong patrol; and on his return, his party was observed and hailed and fired on by a sentry. They ran away on all fours in the dark, and so doing plumped upon another sentry, whom Laupepa grappled and flung in a ditch; for the Sheet of Paper, although infirm of character, is, like most Samoans, of an able body. The second sentry (like the first) fired after his assailants at random in the dark; and the two shots awoke the curiosity of Apia. On the afternoon of the 16th, the day of the hand-shakings, Suatele, a high chief, despatched two boys across the island with a letter. They were most of the night upon the road; it was near three in the morning before the sentries in the camp of Malietoa 48 beheld their lantern drawing near out of the wood; but the king was at once awakened. The news was decisive and the letter peremptory; if Malietoa did not give himself up before ten on the morrow, he was told that great sorrows must befall his country. I have not been able to draw Laupepa as a hero; but he is a man of certain virtues, which the Germans had now given him an occasion to display. Without hesitation he sacrificed himself, penned his touching farewell to Samoa, and making more expedition than the messengers, passed early behind Apia to the banks of the Vaisingano. As he passed, he detached a messenger to Mataafa at the Catholic mission. Mataafa followed by the same road, and the pair met at the river-side and went and sat together in a house. All present were in tears. “Do not let us weep,” said the talking man, Lauati. “We have no cause for shame. We do not yield to Tamasese, but to the invincible strangers.” The departing king bequeathed the care of his country to Mataafa; and when the latter sought to console him with the commodore’s promises, he shook his head, and declared his assurance that he was going to a life of exile, and perhaps to death. About two o’clock the meeting broke up; Mataafa returned to the Catholic mission by the back of the town; and Malietoa proceeded by the beach road to the

German naval hospital, where he was received (as he owns, with perfect civility) by Brandeis. About three, Becker brought him forth again. As they went to the wharf, the people wept and clung to their departing monarch. A boat carried him on board the *Bismarck*, and he vanished from his countrymen. Yet it was long rumoured that he still lay in the harbour; and so late as October 7th, a boy, who had been paddling round the *Carola*, professed to have seen and spoken with him. Here again the needless mystery affected by the Germans bitterly disserved them. The uncertainty which thus hung over Laupepa's fate, kept his name continually in men's mouths. The words of his farewell rang in their ears: "To all Samoa: On 49 account of my great love to my country and my great affection to all Samoa, this is the reason that I deliver up my body to the German government. That government may do as they wish to me. The reason of this is, because I do not desire that the blood of Samoa shall be spilt for me again. But I do not know what is my offence which has caused their anger to me and to my country." And then, apostrophising the different provinces: "Tuamasanga, farewell! Manono and family, farewell! So, also, Salafai, Tutuila, Aana, and Atua, farewell! If we do not again see one another in this world, pray that we may be again together above." So the sheep departed with the halo of a saint, and men thought of him as of some King Arthur snatched into Avilion.

On board the *Bismarck*, the commodore shook hands with him, told him he was to be "taken away from all the chiefs with whom he had been accustomed," and had him taken to the wardroom under guard. The next day he was sent to sea in the *Adler*. There went with him his brother Moli, one Meisake, and one Alualu, half-caste German, to interpret. He was respectfully used; he dined in the stern with the officers, but the boys dined "near where the fire was." They came to a "newly-formed place" in Australia, where the *Albatross* was lying, and a British ship, which he knew to be a man-of-war "because the officers were nicely dressed and wore epaulettes." Here he was transhipped, "in a boat with a screen," which he supposed was to conceal him from the British ship; and on board the *Albatross* was sent below and told he must stay there till they had sailed. Later, however, he was allowed to come on deck, where he found they had rigged a screen (perhaps an awning) under which he walked, looking at "the newly-formed settlement," and admiring a big house "where he was sure the governor lived." From Australia, they sailed some time, and reached an anchorage where a consul-general came on board, and where Laupepa was only allowed on deck at 50 night. He could then see the lights of a town with wharves; he supposes Cape Town. Off the Cameroons they anchored or lay-to, far at sea, and sent a boat ashore to see (he supposes) that there was no British man-of-war. It was the next morning before the boat returned, when the *Albatross* stood in and came to anchor near another German ship. Here Alualu came to him on deck and told him this was the place. “That is an astonishing thing,” said he. “I thought I was to go to Germany, I do not know what this means; I do not know what will be the end of it; my heart is troubled.” Whereupon Alualu burst into tears. A little after, Laupepa was called below to the captain and the governor. The last addressed him: “This is my own place, a good place, a warm place. My house is not yet finished, but when it is, you shall live in one of my rooms until I can make a house for you.” Then he was taken ashore and brought to a tall, iron house. “This house is regulated,” said the governor; “there is no fire allowed to burn in it.” In one part of this house, weapons of the government were hung up; there was a passage, and on the other side of the passage, fifty criminals were chained together, two and two, by the ankles. The windows were out of reach; and there was only one door, which was opened at six in the morning and shut again at six at night. All day he had his liberty, went to the Baptist Mission, and walked about viewing the negroes, who were “like the sand on the seashore” for number. At six they were called into the house and shut in for the night without beds or lights. “Although they gave me no light,” said he, with a smile, “I could see I was in a prison.” Good food was given him: biscuits, “tea made with warm water,” beef, etc.; all excellent. Once, in their walks, they spied a breadfruit tree bearing in the garden of an English merchant, ran back to the prison to get a shilling, and came and offered to purchase. “I am not going to sell breadfruit to you people,” said the merchant; “come and take what you like.” Here 51 Malietoa interrupted himself to say it was the only tree bearing in the Cameroons. “The governor had none, or he would have given it to me.” On the passage from the Cameroons to Germany, he had great delight to see the cliffs of England. He saw “the rocks shining in the sun, and three hours later was surprised to find them sunk in the heavens.” He saw also wharves and immense buildings; perhaps Dover and its castle. In Hamburg, after breakfast, Mr. Weber, who had now finally “ceased from troubling” Samoa, came on board, and carried him ashore “suitably” in a steam launch to “a large house of the government,” where he stayed till noon. At noon Weber told him he was going to “the place where ships are anchored that go to Samoa,” and led him to “a very magnificent house, with carriages inside and a wonderful roof of glass”; to wit, the railway station. They were benighted on the train, and then went in “something with a house, drawn by horses, which had windows and many decks”; plainly an omnibus. Here (at Bremen or Bremerhaven, I believe) they stayed some while in “a house of five hundred rooms”; then were got on board the *Nürnberg* (as they understood) for Samoa, anchored in

England on a Sunday, were joined *en route* by the famous Dr. Knappe, passed through “a narrow passage where they went very slow and which was just like a river,” and beheld with exhilarated curiosity that Red Sea of which they had learned so much in their Bibles. At last, “at the hour when the fires burn red,” they came to a place where was a German man-of-war. Laupepa was called, with one of the boys, on deck, when he found a German officer awaiting him, and a steam launch alongside, and was told he must now leave his brother and go elsewhere. “I cannot go like this,” he cried. “You must let me see my brother and the other old men” — a term of courtesy. Knappe, who seems always to have been good-natured, revised his orders, and consented not only to an interview, but to allow Moli to continue to
52 accompany the king. So these two were carried to the man-of-war, and sailed many a day, still supposing themselves bound for Samoa; and lo! she came to a country the like of which they had never dreamed of, and cast anchor in the great lagoon of Jaluit; and upon that narrow land the exiles were set on shore. This was the part of his captivity on which he looked back with the most bitterness. It was the last, for one thing, and he was worn down with the long suspense, and terror, and deception. He could not bear the brackish water; and though “the Germans were still good to him, and gave him beef and biscuit and tea,” he suffered from the lack of vegetable food.

Such is the narrative of this simple exile. I have not sought to correct it by extraneous testimony. It is not so much the facts that are historical, as the man’s attitude. No one could hear this tale as he originally told it in my hearing — I think none can read it as here condensed and unadorned — without admiring the fairness and simplicity of the Samoan; and wondering at the want of heart — or want of humour — in so many successive civilised Germans, that they should have continued to surround this infant with the secrecy of state.

CHAPTER IV

BRANDEIS

September ‘87 to August ‘

So Tamasese was on the throne, and Brandeis behind it; and I have now to deal with their brief and luckless reign. That it was the reign of Brandeis needs not to be argued: the policy is throughout that of an able, over-hasty white, with eyes and ideas. But it should be borne in mind that he had a double task, and must first lead his sovereign, before he could begin to drive their common subjects. Meanwhile, he himself was exposed (if all tales be true) to much dictation and interference, and to some “cumbrous aid,” from the consulate and the firm. And to one of these aids, the suppression of the municipality, I am inclined to attribute his ultimate failure.

The white enemies of the new regimen were of two classes. In the first stood Moors and the employés of MacArthur, the two chief rivals of the firm, who saw with jealousy a clerk (or a so-called clerk) of their competitors advanced to the chief power. The second class, that of the officials, numbered at first exactly one. Wilson, the English acting consul, is understood to have held strict orders to help Germany. Commander Leary, of the *Adams*, the American captain, when he arrived, on the 16th October, and for some time after, seemed devoted to the German interest, and spent his days with a German officer, Captain Von Widersheim, who was deservedly beloved by all who knew him. There remains the American consul-general, Harold Marsh Sewall, a young man of 54 high spirit and a generous disposition. He had obeyed the orders of his government with a grudge; and looked back on his past action with regret almost to be called repentance. From the moment of the declaration of war against Laupepa, we find him standing forth in bold, consistent, and sometimes rather captious opposition, stirring up his government at home with clear and forcible despatches, and on the spot grasping at every opportunity to thrust a stick into the German wheels. For some while, he and Moors fought their difficult battle in conjunction; in the course of which, first one, and then the other, paid a visit home to reason with the authorities at Washington; and during the consul’s absence, there was found an American clerk in Apia, William Blacklock, to perform the duties of the office with remarkable ability and courage. The three names just brought together, Sewall, Moors, and Blacklock, make the head and front of the opposition; if Tamasese fell, if Brandeis was driven forth, if the treaty of Berlin was signed, theirs is the blame or the credit.

To understand the feelings of self-reproach and bitterness with which Sewall took the field, the reader must see Laupepa's letter of farewell to the consuls of England and America. It is singular that this far from brilliant or dignified monarch, writing in the forest, in heaviness of spirit and under pressure for time, should have left behind him not only one, but two remarkable and most effective documents. The farewell to his people was touching; the farewell to the consuls, for a man of the character of Sewall, must have cut like a whip. "When the chief Tamasese and others first moved the present troubles," he wrote, "it was my wish to punish them and put an end to the rebellion; but I yielded to the advice of the British and American consuls. Assistance and protection was repeatedly promised to me and my government, if I abstained from bringing war upon my country. Relying upon these promises, I did not put down the rebellion. Now I find that war has been made upon me 55 by the Emperor of Germany, and Tamasese has been proclaimed king of Samoa. I desire to remind you of the promises so frequently made by your government, and trust that you will so far redeem them as to cause the lives and liberties of my chiefs and people to be respected."

Sewall's immediate adversary was, of course, Becker. I have formed an opinion of this gentleman, largely from his printed despatches, which I am at a loss to put in words. Astute, ingenious, capable, at moments almost witty with a kind of glacial wit in action, he displayed in the course of this affair every description of capacity but that which is alone useful and which springs from a knowledge of men's natures. It chanced that one of Sewall's early moves played into his hands, and he was swift to seize and to improve the advantage. The neutral territory and the tripartite municipality of Apia were eyesores to the German consulate and Brandeis. By landing Tamasese's two or three hundred warriors at Mulinuu, as Becker himself owns, they had infringed the treaties, and Sewall entered protest twice. There were two ways of escaping this dilemma: one was to withdraw the warriors; the other, by some hocus-pocus, to abrogate the neutrality. And the second had subsidiary advantages: it would restore the taxes of the richest district in the islands to the Samoan king; and it would enable them to substitute over the royal seat the flag of Germany for the new flag of Tamasese. It is true (and it was the subject of much remark) that these two could hardly be distinguished by the naked eye; but their effects were different. To seat the puppet king on German land and under German colours, so that any rebellion was constructive war on Germany, was a trick apparently invented by Becker, and which we shall find was repeated and persevered in till the end.

Otto Martin was at this time magistrate in the municipality. The post was held in turn by the three nationalities; Martin had served far beyond his term, and should have been succeeded months before by an American. 56 To make the change it was necessary to hold a meeting of the municipal board, consisting of the three consuls, each backed by an assessor. And for some time these meetings had been evaded or refused by the German consul. As long as it was agreed to continue Martin, Becker had attended regularly; as soon as Sewall indicated a wish for his removal, Becker tacitly suspended the municipality by refusing to appear. This policy was now the more necessary; for if the whole existence of the municipality were a check on the freedom of the new government, it was plainly less so when the power to enforce and punish lay in German hands. For some while back the Malietoa flag had been flown on the municipal building: Becker denies this; I am sorry; my information obliges me to suppose he is in error. Sewall, with post-mortem loyalty to the past, insisted that this flag should be continued. And Becker immediately made his point. He declared, justly enough, that the proposal was hostile, and argued that it was impossible he should attend a meeting under a flag with which his sovereign was at war. Upon one occasion of urgency, he was invited to meet the two other consuls at the British consulate; even this he refused; and for four months the municipality slumbered, Martin still in office. In the month of October, in consequence, the British and American ratepayers announced they would refuse to pay. Becker doubtless rubbed his hands. On Saturday, the 10th, the chief Tamaseu, a Malietoa man of substance and good character, was arrested on a charge of theft believed to be vexatious, and cast by Martin into the municipal prison. He sent to Moors, who was his tenant and owed him money at the time, for bail. Moors applied to Sewall, ranking consul. After some search, Martin was found and refused to consider bail before the Monday morning. Whereupon Sewall demanded the keys from the gaoler, accepted Moors's verbal recognisances, and set Tamaseu free.

Things were now at a deadlock; and Becker astonished 57 every one by agreeing to a meeting on the 14th. It seems he knew what to expect. Writing on the 13th at least, he prophesies that the meeting will be held in vain, that the municipality must lapse, and the government of Tamasese step in. On the 14th, Sewall left his consulate in time, and walked some part of the way to the place of meeting in company with Wilson, the English pro-consul. But he had forgotten a paper, and in an evil hour returned for it alone. Wilson arrived without him, and Becker broke up the meeting for want of a quorum. There was some unedifying disputation as to whether he had waited ten or twenty minutes, whether he had been officially or unofficially informed by Wilson that Sewall was on the way, whether the statement had been made to himself or to Weber in answer to a question, and whether he had heard Wilson's answer or only Weber's question: all otiose; if he heard the question, he was bound to have waited for the answer; if he heard it not, he should have put it himself; and it was the manifest truth that he rejoiced in his occasion. "Sir," he wrote to Sewall, "I have the honour to inform you that, to my regret, I am obliged to consider the municipal government to be provisionally in abeyance since you have withdrawn your consent to the continuation of Mr. Martin in his position as magistrate, and since you have refused to take part in the meeting of the municipal board agreed to for the purpose of electing a magistrate. The government of the town and district of the municipality rests, as long as the municipality is in abeyance, with the Samoan government. The Samoan government has taken over the administration, and has applied to the commander of the imperial German squadron for assistance in the preservation of good order." This letter was not delivered until 4 P.M. By three, sailors had been landed. Already German colours flew over Tamasese's headquarters at Mulinuu, and German guards had occupied the hospital, the German consulate, and the municipal[58] gaol and courthouse, where they stood to arms under the flag of Tamasese. The same day Sewall wrote to protest. Receiving no reply, he issued on the morrow a proclamation bidding all Americans look to himself alone. On the 26th, he wrote again to Becker, and on the 27th received this genial reply: "Sir, your high favour of the 26th of this month, I give myself the honour of acknowledging. At the same time I acknowledge the receipt of your high favour of the 14th October in reply to my communication of the same date, which contained the information of the suspension of the arrangements for the municipal government." There the correspondence ceased. And on the 18th January came the last step of this irritating intrigue when Tamasese appointed a judge — and the judge proved to be Martin.

Thus was the adventure of the Castle Municipal achieved by Sir Becker the chivalrous. The taxes of Apia, the gaol, the police, all passed into the hands of Tamasese-Brandeis; a German was secured upon the bench; and the German flag might wave over her puppet unquestioned. But there is a law of human nature which diplomatists should be taught at school, and it seems they are not; that men can tolerate bare injustice, but not the combination of injustice and subterfuge. Hence the chequered career of the thimble-rigger. Had the municipality been seized by open force, there might have been complaint, it would not have aroused the same lasting grudge.

This grudge was an ill gift to bring to Brandeis, who had trouble enough in front of him without. He was an alien, he was supported by the guns of alien war-ships, and he had come to do an alien's work, highly needful for Samoa, but essentially unpopular with all Samoans. The law to be enforced, causes of dispute between white and brown to be eliminated, taxes to be raised, a central power created, the country opened up, the native race taught industry: all these were detestable to the natives, and to all of these he must set his hand. The more I learn of 59 his brief term of rule, the more I learn to admire him, and to wish we had his like.

In the face of bitter native opposition, he got some roads accomplished. He set up beacons. The taxes he enforced with necessary vigour. By the 6th of January, Aua and Fangatonga, districts in Tutuila, having made a difficulty, Brandeis is down at the island in a schooner, with the *Adler* at his heels, seizes the chief Maunga, fines the recalcitrant districts in three hundred dollars for expenses, and orders all to be in by April 20th, which if it is not, "not one thing will be done," he proclaimed, "but war declared against you, and the principal chiefs taken to a distant island." He forbade mortgages of copra, a frequent source of trickery and quarrel; and to clear off those already contracted, passed a severe but salutary law. Each individual or family was first to pay off its own obligation; that settled, the free man was to pay for the indebted village, the free village for the indebted province, and one island for another. Samoa, he declared, should be free of debt within a year. Had he given it three years, and gone more gently, I believe it might have been accomplished. To make it the more possible, he sought to interdict the natives from buying cotton stuffs and to oblige them to dress (at least for the time) in their own tapa. He laid the beginnings of a royal territorial army. The first draft was in his hands drilling. But it was not so much on drill that he depended; it was his hope to kindle in these men an *esprit de corps*, which should weaken the old local jealousies and bonds, and found a central or national party in the islands. Looking far before, and with a wisdom beyond that of many merchants, he had condemned the single dependence placed on copra for the national livelihood. His recruits, even as they drilled, were taught to plant cacao. Each, his term of active service finished, should return to his own land and plant and cultivate a stipulated area. Thus, as the young men continued to pass through the army, habits of discipline and industry, 60 a central sentiment, the principles of the new culture, and actual gardens of cacao, should be concurrently spread over the face of the islands.

Tamasese received, including his household expenses, 1960 dollars a year; Brandeis, 2400. All such disproportions are regrettable, but this is not extreme: we have seen horses of a different colour since then. And the Tamaseseites, with true Samoan ostentation, offered to increase the salary of their white premier: an offer he had the wisdom and good feeling to refuse. A European chief of police received twelve hundred. There were eight head judges, one to each province, and appeal lay from the district judge to the provincial, thence to Mulinuu. From all salaries (I gather) a small monthly guarantee was withheld. The army was to cost from three to four thousand, Apia (many whites refusing to pay taxes since the suppression of the municipality) might cost three thousand more: Sir Becker's high feat of arms coming expensive (it will be noticed) even in money. The whole outlay was estimated at twenty-seven thousand; and the revenue forty thousand: a sum Samoa is well able to pay.

Such were the arrangements and some of the ideas of this strong, ardent, and sanguine man. Of criticisms upon his conduct, beyond the general consent that he was rather harsh and in too great a hurry, few are articulate. The native paper of complaints was particularly childish. Out of twenty-three counts, the first two refer to the private character of Brandeis and Tamasese. Three complain that Samoan officials were kept in the dark as to the finances; one, of the tapa law; one, of the direct appointment of chiefs by Tamasese-Brandeis, the sort of mistake into which Europeans in the South Seas fall so readily; one, of the enforced labour of chiefs; one, of the taxes; and one, of the roads. This I may give in full from the very lame translation in the American white book. "The roads that were made were called the Government Roads; they were six fathoms wide. Their making 61 caused much damage to Samoa's lands and what was planted on it. The Samoans cried on account of their lands, which were taken high-handedly and abused. They again cried on account of the loss of what they had planted, which was now thrown away in a high-handed way, without any regard being shown or question asked of the owner of the land, or any compensation offered for the damage done. This was different with foreigners' land; in their case permission was first asked to make the roads; the foreigners were paid for any destruction made." The sting of this count was, I fancy, in the last clause. No less than six articles complain of the administration of the law; and I believe that was never satisfactory. Brandeis told me himself he was never yet satisfied with any native judge. And men say (and it seems to fit in well with his hasty and eager character) that he would legislate by word of mouth; sometimes forget what he had said; and, on the same question arising in another province, decide it perhaps otherwise. I gather, on the whole, our artillery captain was not great in law. Two articles refer to a matter I must deal with more at length, and rather from the point of view of the white residents.

The common charge against Brandeis was that of favouring the German firm. Coming as he did, this was inevitable. Weber had bought Steinberger with hard cash; that was matter of history. The present government he did not even require to buy, having founded it by his intrigues, and introduced the premier to Samoa through the doors of his own office. And the effect of the initial blunder was kept alive by the chatter of the clerks in bar-rooms, boasting themselves of the new government and prophesying annihilation to all rivals. The time of raising a tax is the harvest of the merchants; it is the time when copra will be made, and must be sold; and the intention of the German firm, first in the time of Steinberger, and again in April and May, 1888, with Brandeis, was to seize and handle the whole operation. Their 62 chief rivals were the Messrs. MacArthur; and it seems beyond question that provincial governors more than once issued orders forbidding Samoans to take money from "the New Zealand firm." These, when they were brought to his notice, Brandeis disowned, and he is entitled to be heard. No man can live long in Samoa and not have his honesty impugned. But the accusations against Brandeis's veracity are both few and obscure. I believe he was as straight as his sword. The governors doubtless issued these orders, but there were plenty besides Brandeis to suggest them. Every wandering clerk from the firm's office, every plantation manager, would be dinning the same story in the native ear. And here again the initial blunder hung about the neck of Brandeis, a ton's weight. The natives, as well as the whites, had seen their premier masquerading on a stool in the office; in the eyes of the natives, as well as in those of the whites, he must always have retained the mark of servitude from that ill-judged passage; and they would be inclined to look behind and above him, to the great house of *Misi Ueba*. The government was like a vista of puppets. People did not trouble with Tamasese, if they got speech with Brandeis; in the same way, they might not always trouble to ask Brandeis, if they had a hint direct from *Misi Ueba*. In only one case, though it seems to have had many developments, do I find the premier personally committed. The MacArthurs claimed the copra of Fasitotai on a district mortgage of three hundred dollars. The German firm accepted a mortgage of the whole province of Aana, claimed the copra of Fasitotai as that of a part of Aana, and were supported by the government. Here Brandeis was false to his own principle, that personal and village debts should come before provincial. But the case occurred before the promulgation of the law, and was, as a matter of fact, the cause of it; so the most we can say is that he changed his mind, and changed it for the better. If the history of his government be considered — how it originated 63 in an intrigue between the firm and the consulate, and was (for the firm's sake alone) supported by the consulate with foreign bayonets — the existence of the least doubt on the man's action must seem marvellous. We should have looked to find him playing openly and wholly into their hands; that he did not, implies great independence and much secret friction; and I believe (if the truth were known) the firm would be found to have been disgusted with the stubbornness of its intended tool, and Brandeis often impatient of the demands of his creators.

But I may seem to exaggerate the degree of white opposition. And it is true that before fate overtook the Brandeis government, it appeared to enjoy the fruits of victory in Apia; and one dissident, the unconquerable Moors, stood out alone to refuse his taxes. But the victory was in appearance only; the opposition was latent; it found vent in talk, and thus reacted on the natives; upon the least excuse, it was ready to flame forth again. And this is the more singular because some were far from out of sympathy with the native policy pursued. When I met Captain Brandeis, he was amazed at my attitude. “Whom did you find in Apia to tell you so much good of me?” he asked. I named one of my informants. “He?” he cried. “If he thought all that, why did he not help me?” I told him as well as I was able. The man was a merchant. He beheld in the government of Brandeis a government created by and for the firm who were his rivals. If Brandeis were minded to deal fairly, where was the probability that he would be allowed? If Brandeis insisted and were strong enough to prevail, what guarantee that, as soon as the government were fairly accepted, Brandeis might not be removed? Here was the attitude of the hour; and I am glad to find it clearly set forth in a despatch of Sewall’s, June 18th, 1888, when he commends the law against mortgages, and goes on: “Whether the author of this law will carry out the good intentions which he professes — whether he will be allowed to do so, if he desires, 64 against the opposition of those who placed him in power and protect him in the possession of it — may well be doubted.” Brandeis had come to Apia in the firm’s livery. Even while he promised neutrality in commerce, the clerks were prating a different story in the bar-rooms; and the late high feat of the knight-errant, Becker, had killed all confidence in Germans at the root. By these three impolicies, the German adventure in Samoa was defeated.

I imply that the handful of whites were the true obstacle, not the thousands of malcontent Samoans; for had the whites frankly accepted Brandeis, the path of Germany was clear, and the end of their policy, however troublesome might be its course, was obvious. But this is not to say that the natives were content. In a sense, indeed, their opposition was continuous. There will always be opposition in Samoa when taxes are imposed; and the deportation of Malietoa stuck in men’s throats. Tuiatua Mataafa refused to act under the new government from the beginning, and Tamasese usurped his place and title. As early as February, I find him signing himself “Tuiaana *Tuiatua*

Tamasese," the first step on a dangerous path. Asi, like Mataafa, disclaimed his chiefship and declared himself a private person; but he was more rudely dealt with. German sailors surrounded his house in the night, burst in, and dragged the women out of the mosquito nets — an offence against Samoan manners. No Asi was to be found; but at last they were shown his fishing-lights on the reef, rowed out, took him as he was, and carried him on board a man-of-war, where he was detained some while between-decks. At last, January 16th, after a farewell interview over the ship's side with his wife, he was discharged into a ketch, and along with two other chiefs, Maunga and Tuiletu-funga, deported to the Marshalls. The blow struck fear upon all sides. Le Mmea (a very able chief) was secretly among the malcontents. His family and followers murmured at his weakness; but he continued, throughout 65 the duration of the government, to serve Brandeis with trembling. A circus coming to Apia, he seized at the pretext for escape, and asked leave to accept an engagement in the company. "I will not allow you to make a monkey of yourself," said Brandeis; and the phrase had a success throughout the islands, pungent expressions being so much admired by the natives that they cannot refrain from repeating them, even when they have been levelled at themselves. The assumption of the Atua *name* spread discontent in that province; many chiefs from thence were convicted of disaffection, and condemned to labour with their hands upon the roads — a great shock to the Samoan sense of the becoming, which was rendered the more sensible by the death of one of the number at his task. Mataafa was involved in the same trouble. His disaffected speech at a meeting of Atua chiefs was betrayed by the girls that made the kava, and the man of the future was called to Apia on safe-conduct, but, after an interview, suffered to return to his lair. The peculiarly tender treatment of Mataafa must be explained by his relationship to Tamasese. Laupepa was of Malietoa blood. The hereditary retainers of the Tupua would see him exiled even with some complacency. But Mataafa was Tupua himself; and Tupua men would probably have murmured, and would perhaps have mutinied, had he been harshly dealt with.

The native opposition, I say, was in a sense continuous. And it kept continuously growing. The sphere of Brandeis was limited to Mulinuu and the north central quarters of Upolu — practically what is shown upon the map opposite. There the taxes were expanded; in the out-districts, men paid their money and saw no return. Here the eye and hand of the dictator were ready to correct the scales of justice; in the out-districts, all things lay at the mercy of the native magistrates, and their oppressions increased with the course of time and the experience of impunity. In the spring of the year, a very intelligent observer had occasion 66 to visit many places in the island of Savaii. “Our lives are not worth living,” was the burthen of the popular complaint. “We are groaning under the oppression of these men. We would rather die than continue to endure it.” On his return to Apia, he made haste to communicate his impressions to Brandeis. Brandeis replied in an epigram: “Where there has been anarchy in a country, there must be oppression for a time.” But unfortunately the terms of the epigram may be reversed; and personal supervision would have been more in season than wit. The same observer who conveyed to him this warning thinks that, if Brandeis had himself visited the districts and inquired into complaints, the blow might yet have been averted and the government saved. At last, upon a certain unconstitutional act of Tamasese, the discontent took life and fire. The act was of his own conception; the dull dog was ambitious. Brandeis declares he would not be dissuaded; perhaps his adviser did not seriously try, perhaps did not dream that in that welter of contradictions, the Samoan constitution, any one point would be considered sacred. I have told how Tamasese assumed the title of Tuiatua. In August 1888 a year after his installation, he took a more formidable step and assumed that of Malietoa. This name, as I have said, is of peculiar honour; it had been given to, it had never been taken from, the exiled Laupepa; those in whose grant it lay, stood punctilious upon their rights; and Tamasese, as the representative of their natural opponents, the Tupua line, was the last who should have had it. And there was yet more, though I almost despair to make it thinkable by Europeans. Certain old mats are handed down, and set huge store by; they may be compared to coats of arms or heirlooms among ourselves; and to the horror of more than one-half of Samoa, Tamasese, the head of the Tupua, began collecting Malietoa mats. It was felt that the cup was full, and men began to prepare secretly for rebellion. The history of the month of August is unknown to whites; it passed altogether in the covert 67 of the woods or in the stealthy councils of Samoans. One ominous sign was to be noted; arms and ammunition began to be purchased or inquired about; and the more wary traders ordered fresh consignments of material of war. But the rest was silence; the government slept in security; and Brandeis was summoned at last from a public dinner, to find rebellion organised, the woods behind Apia full of insurgents, and a plan prepared, and in the very article of execution, to surprise and seize Mulinuu. The timely discovery averted all; and the leaders hastily withdrew towards the south side of the island, leaving in the bush a rear-guard under a young man of the name of Saifaleupolu. According to some accounts, it scarce numbered forty; the leader was no great chief, but a handsome, industrious lad who seems to have been much beloved. And upon this obstacle

Brandeis fell. It is the man's fault to be too impatient of results; his public intention to free Samoa of all debt within the year, depicts him; and instead of continuing to temporise and let his enemies weary and disperse, he judged it politic to strike a blow. He struck it, with what seemed to be success, and the sound of it roused Samoa to rebellion.

About two in the morning of August 31st, Apia was wakened by men marching. Day came, and Brandeis and his war-party were already long disappeared in the woods. All morning belated Tamaseseites were still to be seen running with their guns. All morning shots were listened for in vain; but over the top of the forest, far up the mountain, smoke was for some time observed to hang. About ten a dead man was carried in, lashed under a pole like a dead pig, his rosary (for he was a Catholic) hanging nearly to the ground. Next came a young fellow wounded, sitting in a rope swung from a pole; two fellows bearing him, two running behind for a relief. At last about eleven, three or four heavy volleys and a great shouting were heard from the bush town Tanungamanono; the affair was over, the victorious force, on the march back, was there 68 celebrating its victory by the way. Presently after, it marched through Apia, five or six hundred strong, in tolerable order and strutting with the ludicrous assumption of the triumphant islander. Women who had been buying bread ran and gave them loaves. At the tail end came Brandeis himself, smoking a cigar, deadly pale, and with perhaps an increase of his usual nervous manner. One spoke to him by the way. He expressed his sorrow the action had been forced on him. "Poor people, it's all the worse for them!" he said. "It'll have to be done another way now." And it was supposed by his hearer that he referred to intervention from the German war-ships. He meant, he said, to put a stop to head-hunting; his men had taken two that day, he added, but he had not suffered them to bring them in, and they had been left in Tanungamanono. Thither my informant rode, was attracted by the sound of wailing, and saw in a house the two heads washed and combed, and the sister of one of the dead lamenting in the island fashion and kissing the cold face. Soon after, a small grave was dug, the heads were buried in a beef box, and the pastor read the service. The body of Saifaleupolu himself was recovered unmutilated, brought down from the forest, and buried behind Apia.

The same afternoon, the men of Vaimaunga were ordered to report in Mulinuu, where Tamasese's flag was half-masted for the death of a chief in the skirmish. Vaimaunga is that district of Taumasanga which includes the bay and the foothills behind Apia; and both province and district are strong Malietoa. Not one man, it is said, obeyed the summons. Night came, and the town lay in unusual silence; no one abroad; the blinds down around the native houses, the men within sleeping on their arms; the old women keeping watch in pairs. And in the course of the two following days all Vaimaunga was gone into the bush, the very gaoler setting free his prisoners and joining them in their escape. Hear the words of the chiefs in the 23rd article of their complaint: 69 “Some of the chiefs fled to the bush from fear of being reported, fear of German men-of-war, constantly being accused, etc., and Brandeis commanded that they were to be shot on sight. This act was carried out by Brandeis on the 31st day of August, 1888. After this we evaded these laws; we could not stand them; our patience was worn out with the constant wickedness of Tamasese and Brandeis. We were tired out and could stand no longer the acts of these two men.”

So through an ill-timed skirmish, two severed heads, and a dead body, the rule of Brandeis came to a sudden end. We shall see him a while longer fighting for existence in a losing battle; but his government — take it for all in all, the most promising that has ever been in these unlucky islands — was from that hour a piece of history.

Brother and successor of Theodor.

CHAPTER V

THE BATTLE OF MATAUTU

September 1
The revolution had all the character of a popular movement. Many of the high chiefs were detained in Mulinuu; the commons trooped to the bush under inferior leaders. A camp was chosen near Faleula, threatening Mulinuu, well placed for the arrival of recruits and close to a German plantation from which the force could be subsisted. Manono came, all Tuamasanga, much of Savaii, and part of Aana, Tamasese's own government and titular seat. Both sides were arming. It was a brave day for the trader, though not so brave as some that followed, when a single cartridge is said to have been sold for twelve cents currency — between nine and ten cents gold. Yet even among the traders a strong party feeling reigned, and it was the common practice to ask a purchaser upon which side he meant to fight.

On September 5th, Brandeis published a letter: "To the chiefs of Tuamasanga, Manono, and Faasaleleanga in the Bush: Chiefs, by authority of his majesty Tamasese, the king of Samoa, I make known to you all that the German man-of-war is about to go together with a Samoan fleet for the purpose of burning Manono. After this island is all burnt, 'tis good if the people return to Manono and live quiet. To the people of Faasaleleanga I say, return to your houses and stop there. The same to those belonging to Tuamasanga. If you obey this instruction, then you will all be forgiven; if you do not obey, then all your villages 71 will be burnt like Manono. These instructions are made in truth in the sight of God in the Heaven." The same morning, accordingly, the *Adler* steamed out of the bay with a force of Tamasese warriors and some native boats in tow, the Samoan fleet in question. Manono was shelled; the Tamasese warriors, under the conduct of a Manono traitor, who paid before many days the forfeit of his blood, landed and did some damage, but were driven away by the sight of a force returning from the mainland; no one was hurt, for the women and children, who alone remained on the island, found a refuge in the bush; and the *Adler* and her acolytes returned the same evening. The letter had been energetic; the performance fell below the programme. The demonstration annoyed and yet re-assured the insurgents, and it fully disclosed to the Germans a new enemy.

Captain von Widersheim had been relieved. His successor, Captain Fritze, was an officer of a different stamp. I have nothing to say of him but good; he seems to have obeyed the consul's requisitions with secret distaste; his despatches were of admirable candour; but his habits were retired, he spoke little English, and was far indeed from inheriting von Widersheim's close relations with Commander Leary. It is believed by Germans that the American officer resented what he took to be neglect. I mention this, not because I believe it to depict Commander Leary, but because it is typical of a prevailing infirmity among Germans in Samoa. Touchy themselves, they read all history in the light of personal affronts and tiffs; and I find this weakness indicated by the big thumb of Bismarck, when he places "sensitiveness to small disrespects — *Empfindlichkeit ueber Mangel an Respect*," among the causes of the wild career of Knappe. Whatever the cause, at least, the natives had no sooner taken arms than Leary appeared with violence upon that side. As early as the 3rd, he had sent an obscure but menacing despatch to Brandeis. On the 6th, he fell on Fritze in the matter of the Manono bombardment. "The revolutionists,"[72] he wrote, "had an armed force in the field within a few miles of this harbour, when the vessels under your command transported the Tamasese troops to a neighbouring island with the avowed intention of making war on the isolated homes of the women and children of the enemy. Being the only other representative of a naval power now present in this harbour, for the sake of humanity I hereby respectfully and solemnly protest in the name of the United States of America and of the civilised world in general against the use of a national war-vessel for such services as were yesterday rendered by the German corvette *Adler*." Fritze's reply, to the effect that he is under the orders of the consul and has no right of choice, reads even humble; perhaps he was not himself vain of the exploit, perhaps not prepared to see it thus described in words. From that moment Leary was in the front of the row. His name is diagnostic, but it was not required; on every step of his subsequent action in Samoa Irishman is writ large; over all his doings a malign spirit of humour presided. No malice was too small for him, if it were only funny. When night signals were made from Mulinuu, he would sit on his own poop and confound them with gratuitous rockets. He was at the pains to write a letter and address it to "the High Chief Tamasese" — a device as old at least as the wars of Robert Bruce — in order to bother the officials of the German post-office, in whose hands he persisted in leaving it, although the address was death to them and the distribution of letters in Samoa formed no part of their profession. His great masterwork of pleasantry, the Scanlon affair, must be narrated in its place. And he was no less bold than comical. The *Adams* was not supposed to be a match for the *Adler*; there was no glory to be gained in beating her; and yet I have heard naval officers maintain she might have proved a dangerous antagonist in narrow waters and at short range. Doubtless Leary thought so. He was continually daring Fritze to come on; and already, in a despatch of the 9th, I find Becker 73 complaining of his language in the hearing of German officials, and how he had declared that, on the *Adler* again interfering, he would interfere himself, “if he went to the bottom for it — *und wenn sein Schiff dabei zu Grunde ginge*.” Here is the style of opposition which has the merit of being frank, not that of being agreeable. Becker was annoying, Leary infuriating; there is no doubt that the tempers in the German consulate were highly ulcerated; and if war between the two countries did not follow, we must set down the praise to the forbearance of the German navy. This is not the last time that I shall have to salute the merits of that service.

The defeat and death of Saifaleupolu and the burning of Manono had thus passed off without the least advantage to Tamasese. But he still held the significant position of Mulinuu, and Brandeis was strenuous to make it good. The whole peninsula was surrounded with a breastwork; across the isthmus it was six feet high and strengthened with a ditch; and the beach was staked against landing. Weber’s land claim — the same that now broods over the village in the form of a signboard — then appeared in a more military guise; the German flag was hoisted, and German sailors manned the breastwork at the isthmus — ”to protect German property” and its trifling parenthesis, the king of Samoa. Much vigilance reigned and, in the island fashion, much wild firing. And in spite of all, desertion was for a long time daily. The detained high chiefs would go to the beach on the pretext of a natural occasion, plunge in the sea, and swimming across a broad, shallow bay of the lagoon, join the rebels on the Faleula side. Whole bodies of warriors, sometimes hundreds strong, departed with their arms and ammunition. On the 7th of September, for instance, the day after Leary’s letter, Too and Mataia left with their contingents, and the whole Aana people returned home in a body to hold a parliament. Ten days later, it is true, a part of them returned to their duty; but another part branched off by the way and carried 74 their services, and Tamasese’s dear-bought guns, to Faleula.

On the 8th there was a defection of a different kind, but yet sensible. The High Chief Seumanu had been still detained in Mulinuu under anxious observation. His people murmured at his absence, threatened to “take away his name,” and had already attempted a rescue. The adventure was now taken in hand by his wife Faatulia, a woman of much sense and spirit and a strong partisan; and by her contrivance, Seumanu gave his guardians the slip and rejoined his clan at Faleula. This process of winnowing was of course counterbalanced by another of recruitment. But the harshness of European and military rule had made Brandeis detested and Tamasese unpopular with many; and the force on Mulinuu is thought to have done little more than hold its own. Mataafa sympathisers set it down at about two or three thousand. I have no estimate from the other side; but Becker admits they were not strong enough to keep the field in the open.

The political significance of Mulinuu was great, but in a military sense the position had defects. If it was difficult to carry, it was easy to blockade: and to be hemmed in on that narrow finger of land were an inglorious posture for the monarch of Samoa. The peninsula, besides, was scant of food and destitute of water. Pressed by these considerations, Brandeis extended his lines till he had occupied the whole foreshore of Apia bay and the opposite point, Matautu. His men were thus drawn out along some three nautical miles of irregular beach, everywhere with their backs to the sea, and without means of communication or mutual support except by water. The extension led to fresh sorrows. The Tamasese men quartered themselves in the houses of the absent men of the Vaimaunga. Disputes arose with English and Americans. Leary interposed in a loud voice of menace. It was said the firm profited by the confusion to buttress up imperfect land claims; 75 I am sure the other whites would not be far behind the firm. Properties were fenced in, fences and houses were torn down, scuffles ensued. The German example at Mulinuu was followed with laughable unanimity; wherever an Englishman or an American conceived himself to have a claim, he set up the emblem of his country; and the beach twinkled with the flags of nations.

All this, it will be observed, was going forward in that neutral territory, sanctified by treaty against the presence of armed Samoans. The insurgents themselves looked on in wonder: on the 4th, trembling to transgress against the great Powers, they had written for a delimitation of the *Eleele Sa*; and Becker, in conversation with the British consul, replied that he recognised none. So long as Tamasese held the ground, this was expedient. But suppose Tamasese worsted, it might prove awkward for the stores, mills, and offices of a great German firm, thus bared of shelter by the act of their own consul.

On the morning of the 9th September, just ten days after the death of Saifaleupolu, Mataafa, under the name of Malietoa To’oa Mataafa, was crowned king at Faleula. On the 11th he wrote to the British and American consuls: “Gentlemen, I write this letter to you two very humbly and entreatingly, on account of this difficulty that has come before me. I desire to know from you two gentlemen the truth where the boundaries of the neutral territory are. You will observe that I am now at Vaimoso [a step nearer the enemy], and I have stopped here until I knew what you say regarding the neutral territory. I wish to know where I can go, and where the forbidden ground is, for I do not wish to go on any neutral territory, or on any foreigner’s property. I do not want to offend any of the great Powers. Another thing I would like. Would it be possible for you three consuls to make Tamasese remove from German property? for I am in awe of going on German land." He must have received a reply embodying Becker's renunciation of the principle, at once; for he 76 broke camp the same day, and marched eastward through the bush behind Apia.

Brandeis, expecting attack, sought to improve his indefensible position. He reformed his centre by the simple expedient of suppressing it. Apia was evacuated. The two flanks, Mulinuu and Matautu, were still held and fortified, Mulinuu (as I have said) to the isthmus, Matautu on a line from the bayside to the little river Fuisá. The centre was represented by the trajectory of a boat across the bay from one flank to another, and was held (we may say) by the German war-ship. Mataafa decided (I am assured) to make a feint on Matautu, induce Brandeis to deplete Mulinuu in support, and then fall upon and carry that. And there is no doubt in my mind that such a plan was bruited abroad, for nothing but a belief in it could explain the behaviour of Brandeis on the 12th. That it was seriously entertained by Mataafa I stoutly disbelieve; the German flag and sailors forbidding the enterprise in Mulinuu. So that we may call this false intelligence the beginning and the end of Mataafa's strategy.

The whites who sympathised with the revolt were uneasy and impatient. They will still tell you, though the dates are there to show them wrong, that Mataafa, even after his coronation, delayed extremely: a proof of how long two days may seem to last when men anticipate events. On the evening of the 11th, while the new king was already on the march, one of these walked into Matautu. The moon was bright. By the way he observed the native houses dark and silent; the men had been about a fortnight in the bush, but now the women and children were gone also; at which he wondered. On the sea-beach, in the camp of the Tamaseses, the solitude was near as great; he saw three or four men smoking before the British consulate, perhaps a dozen in all; the rest were behind in the bush upon their line of forts. About the midst he sat down, and here a woman drew near to him. The moon 77 shone in her face, and he knew her for a householder near by, and a partisan of Mataafa's. She looked about her as she came, and asked him, trembling, what he did in the camp of Tamasese. He was there after news, he told her. She took him by the hand. "You must not stay here, you will get killed," she said. "The bush is full of our people, the others are watching them, fighting may begin at any moment, and we are both here too long." So they set off together; and she told him by the way that she had came to the hostile camp with a present of bananas, so that the Tamasese men might spare her house. By the Vaisingano they met an old man, a woman, and a child; and these also she warned and turned back. Such is the strange part played by women among the scenes of Samoan warfare, such were the liberties then permitted to the whites, that these two could pass the lines, talk together in Tamasese's camp on the eve of an engagement, and pass forth again bearing intelligence, like privileged spies. And before a few hours the white man was in direct communication with the opposing general. The next morning he was accosted "about breakfast-time" by two natives who stood leaning against the pickets of a public-house, where the Siumu road strikes in at right angles to the main street of Apia. They told him battle was imminent, and begged him to pass a little way inland and speak with Mataafa. The road is at this point broad and fairly good, running between thick groves of cocoa-palm and breadfruit. A few hundred yards along this the white man passed a picket of four armed warriors, with red handkerchiefs and their faces blackened in the form of a full beard, the Mataafa rallying signs for the day; a little farther on, some fifty; farther still, a hundred; and at last a quarter of a mile of them sitting by the wayside armed and blacked. Near by, in the verandah of a house on a knoll, he found Mataafa seated in white clothes, a Winchester across his knees. His men, he said, were still arriving from behind, and there was a turning movement in operation beyond the 78 Fuisá, so that the Tamaseses should be assailed at the same moment from the south and east. And this is another indication that the attack on Matautu was the true attack; had any design on Mulinuu been in the wind, not even a Samoan general would have detached these troops upon the other side. While they still spoke, five Tamasese women were brought in with their hands bound; they had been stealing "our" bananas.

All morning the town was strangely deserted, the very children gone. A sense of expectation reigned, and sympathy for the attack was expressed publicly. Some men with unblacked faces came to Moors's store for biscuit. A native woman, who was there marketing, inquired after the news, and, hearing that the battle was now near at hand, "Give them two more tins," said she; "and don't put them down to my husband — he would growl; put them down to me." Between twelve and one, two white men walked toward Matautu, finding as they went no sign of war until they had passed the Vaisingano and come to the corner of a by-path leading to the bush. Here were four blackened warriors on guard, — the extreme left wing of the Mataafa force, where it touched the waters of the bay. Thence the line (which the white men followed) stretched inland among bush and marsh, facing the forts of the Tamaseses. The warriors lay as yet inactive behind trees; but all the young boys and harlots of Apia toiled in the front upon a trench, digging with knives and cocoa-shells; and a continuous stream of children brought them water. The young sappers worked crouching; from the outside only an occasional head, or a hand emptying a shell of earth, was visible; and their enemies looked on inert from the line of the opposing forts. The lists were not yet prepared, the tournament was not yet open; and the attacking force was suffered to throw up works under the silent guns of the defence. But there is an end even to the delay of islanders. As the white men stood and looked, the Tamasese line thundered into a volley; it was answered; the crowd of 79 silent workers broke forth in laughter and cheers; and the battle had begun.

Thenceforward, all day and most of the next night, volley followed volley; and pounds of lead and pounds sterling of money continued to be blown into the air without cessation and almost without result. Colonel de Coetlogon, an old soldier, described the noise as deafening. The harbour was all struck with shots; a man was knocked over on the German war-ship; half Apia was under fire; and a house was pierced beyond the Mulivai. All along the two lines of breastwork, the entrenched enemies exchanged this hail of balls; and away on the east of the battle the fusillade was maintained, with equal spirit, across the narrow barrier of the Fuisá. The whole rear of the Tamaseses was enfiladed by this flank fire; and I have seen a house there, by the river brink, that was riddled with bullets like a piece of worm-eaten wreck-wood. At this point of the field befell a trait of Samoan warfare worth recording. Taiese (brother to Siteoni already mentioned) shot a Tamasese man. He saw him fall, and, inflamed with the lust of glory, passed the river single-handed in that storm of missiles to secure the head. On the farther bank, as was but natural, he fell himself; he who had gone to take a trophy remained to afford one; and the Mataafas, who had looked on exulting in the prospect of a triumph, saw themselves exposed instead to a disgrace. Then rose one Vingi, passed the deadly water, swung the body of Taiese on his back, and returned unscathed to his own side, the head saved, the corpse filled with useless bullets.

At this rate of practice, the ammunition soon began to run low, and from an early hour of the afternoon, the Malietoa stores were visited by customers in search of more. An elderly man came leaping and cheering, his gun in one hand, a basket of three heads in the other. A fellow came shot through the forearm. “It doesn’t hurt now,” he said, as he bought his cartridges; “but it will 80 hurt to-morrow, and I want to fight while I can.” A third followed, a mere boy, with the end of his nose shot off: “Have you any painkiller? give it me quick, so that I can get back to fight.” On either side, there was the same delight in sound and smoke and schoolboy cheering, the same unsophisticated ardour of battle; and the misdirected skirmish proceeded with a din, and was illustrated with traits of bravery that would have fitted a Waterloo or a Sedan.

I have said how little I regard the alleged plan of battle. At least it was now all gone to water. The whole forces of Mataafa had leaked out, man by man, village by village, on the so-called false attack. They were all pounding for their lives on the front and the left flank of Matautu. About half-past three they enveloped the right flank also. The defenders were driven back along the beach road as far as the pilot station at the turn of the land. From this also they were dislodged, stubbornly fighting. One, it is told, retreated to his middle in the lagoon; stood there, loading and firing, till he fell; and his body was found on the morrow pierced with four mortal wounds. The Tamasese force was now enveloped on three sides; it was besides almost cut off from the sea; and across its whole rear and only way of retreat a fire of hostile bullets crossed from east and west, in the midst of which men were surprised to observe the birds continuing to sing, and a cow grazed all afternoon unhurt. Doubtless here was the defence in a poor way; but then the attack was in irons. For the Mataafas about the pilot house could scarcely advance beyond without coming under the fire of their own men from the other side of the Fuisá; and there was not enough organisation, perhaps not enough authority, to divert or to arrest that fire.

The progress of the fight along the beach road was visible from Mulinuu, and Brandeis despatched ten boats of reinforcements. They crossed the harbour, paused for a while beside the *Adler* — it is supposed for ammunition — and 81 drew near the Matautu shore. The Mataafa men lay close among the shore-side bushes, expecting their arrival; when a silly lad, in mere lightness of heart, fired a shot in the air. My native friend, Mrs. Mary Hamilton, ran out of her house and gave the culprit a good shaking: an episode in the midst of battle as incongruous as the grazing cow. But his sillier comrades followed his example; a harmless volley warned the boats what they might expect; and they drew back and passed outside the reef for the passage of the Fuisá. Here they came under the fire of the right wing of the Mataafas on the river-bank. The beach, raked east and west, appeared to them no place to land on. And they hung off in the deep water of the lagoon inside the barrier reef, feebly fusillading the pilot house.

Between four and five, the Fabeata regiment (or folk of that village) on the Mataafa left, which had been under arms all day, fell to be withdrawn for rest and food; the Siumu regiment, which should have relieved it, was not ready or not notified in time; and the Tamaseses, gallantly profiting by the mismanagement, recovered the most of the ground in their proper right. It was not for long. They lost it again, yard by yard and from house to house, till the pilot station was once more in the hands of the Mataafas. This is the last definite incident in the battle. The vicissitudes along the line of the entrenchments remain concealed from us under the cover of the forest. Some part of the Tamasese position there appears to have been carried, but what part, or at what hour, or whether the advantage was maintained, I have never learned. Night and rain, but not silence, closed upon the field. The trenches were deep in mud; but the younger folk wrecked the houses in the neighbourhood, carried the roofs to the front, and lay under them, men and women together, through a long night of furious squalls and furious and useless volleys. Meanwhile the older folk trailed back into Apia in the rain; they talked as they went of who had fallen and what heads had been taken upon either side — they seemed to know by 82 name the losses upon both; and drenched with wet and broken with excitement and fatigue, they crawled into the verandahs of the town to eat and sleep. The morrow broke grey and drizzly, but as so often happens in the islands, cleared up into a glorious day. During the night, the majority of the defenders had taken advantage of the rain and darkness and stolen from their forts unobserved. The rallying sign of the Tamaseses had been a white handkerchief. With the dawn, the de Coetlogons from the English consulate beheld the ground strewn with these badges discarded; and close by the house, a belated turncoat was still changing white for red. Matautu was lost; Tamasese was confined to Mulinuu; and by nine o'clock two Mataafa villages paraded the streets of Apia, taking possession. The cost of this respectable success in ammunition must have been enormous; in life it was but small. Some compute forty killed on either side, others forty on both, three or four being women and one a white man, master of a schooner from Fiji. Nor was the number even of the wounded at all proportionate to the surprising din and fury of the affair while it lasted.

CHAPTER VI

LAST EXPLOITS OF BECKER

September — November 1

Brandeis had held all day by Mulinuu, expecting the reported real attack. He woke on the 13th to find himself cut off on that unwatered promontory, and the Mataafa villagers parading Apia. The same day Fritze received a letter from Mataafa summoning him to withdraw his party from the isthmus; and Fritze, as if in answer, drew in his ship into the small harbour close to Mulinuu, and trained his port battery to assist in the defence. From a step so decisive, it might be thought the German plans were unaffected by the disastrous issue of the battle. I conceive nothing would be further from the truth. Here was Tamasese penned on Mulinuu with his troops; Apia, from which alone these could be subsisted, in the hands of the enemy; a battle imminent, in which the German vessel must apparently take part with men and battery, and the buildings of the German firm were apparently destined to be the first target of fire. Unless Becker re-established that which he had so lately and so artfully thrown down — the neutral territory — the firm would have to suffer. If he re-established it, Tamasese must retire from Mulinuu. If Becker saved his goose, he lost his cabbage. Nothing so well depicts the man's effrontery as that he should have conceived the design of saving both, — of re-establishing only so much of the neutral territory as should hamper Mataafa, and leaving in abeyance all that could incommode Tamasese. By drawing the boundary where he now proposed, across 84 the isthmus, he protected the firm, drove back the Mataafas out of almost all that they had conquered, and, so far from disturbing Tamasese, actually fortified him in his old position.

The real story of the negotiations that followed we shall perhaps never learn. But so much is plain: that while Becker was thus outwardly straining decency in the interest of Tamasese, he was privately intriguing, or pretending to intrigue, with Mataafa. In his despatch of the 11th, he had given an extended criticism of that chieftain, whom he depicts as very dark and artful; and while admitting that his assumption of the name of Malietoa might raise him up followers, predicted that he could not make an orderly government or support himself long in sole power "without very energetic foreign help." Of what help was the consul thinking? There was no helper in the field but Germany. On the 15th he had an interview with the victor; told him that Tamasese's was the only government recognised by Germany, and that he must continue to recognise it till he received "other instructions from his government, whom he was now advising of the late events"; refused, accordingly, to withdraw the guard from the isthmus; and desired Mataafa, "until the arrival of these fresh instructions," to refrain from an attack on Mulinuu. One thing of two: either this language is extremely perfidious, or Becker was preparing to change sides. The same detachment appears in his despatch of October 7th. He computes the losses of the German firm with an easy cheerfulness. If Tamasese get up again *(gelingt die Wiederherstellung der Regierung Tamasese's)*, Tamasese will have to pay. If not, then Mataafa. This is not the language of a partisan. The tone of indifference, the easy implication that the case of Tamasese was already desperate, the hopes held secretly forth to Mataafa and secretly reported to his government at home, trenchantly contrast with his external conduct. At this very time he was feeding Tamasese; he had German sailors mounting 85 guard on Tamasese's battlements; the German war-ship lay close in, whether to help or to destroy. If he meant to drop the cause of Tamasese, he had him in a corner, helpless, and could stifle him without a sob. If he meant to rat, it was to be with every condition of safety and every circumstance of infamy.

Was it conceivable, then, that he meant it? Speaking with a gentleman who was in the confidence of Dr. Knappe: "Was it not a pity," I asked, "that Knappe did not stick to Becker's policy of supporting Mataafa?" "You are quite wrong there; that was not Knappe's doing," was the reply. "Becker had changed his mind before Knappe came." Why, then, had he changed it? This excellent, if ignominious, idea once entertained, why was it let drop? It is to be remembered there was another German in the field, Brandeis, who had a respect, or rather, perhaps, an affection, for Tamasese, and who thought his own honour and that of his country engaged in the support of that government which they had provoked and founded. Becker described the captain to Laupepa as "a quiet, sensible gentleman." If any word came to his ears of the intended manœuvre, Brandeis would certainly show himself very sensible of the affront; but Becker might have been tempted to withdraw his former epithet of quiet. Some such passage, some such threatened change of front at the consulate, opposed with outcry, would explain what seems otherwise inexplicable, the bitter, indignant, almost hostile tone of a subsequent letter from Brandeis to Knappe — "Brandeis's inflammatory letter," Bismarck calls it — the proximate cause of the German landing and reverse at Fangalii.

But whether the advances of Becker were sincere or not — whether he meditated treachery against the old king or was practising treachery upon the new, and the choice is between one or other — no doubt but he contrived to gain his points with Mataafa, prevailing on him to change his camp for the better protection of the German 86 plantations, and persuading him (long before he could persuade his brother consuls) to accept that miraculous new neutral territory of his, with a piece cut out for the immediate needs of Tamasese.

During the rest of September, Tamasese continued to decline. On the 19th one village and half of another deserted him; on the 22nd two more. On the 21st the Mataafas burned his town of Leulumoenga, his own splendid house flaming with the rest; and there are few things of which a native thinks more, or has more reason to think well, than of a fine Samoan house. Tamasese women and children were marched up the same day from Atua, and handed over with their sleeping-mats to Mulinuu: a most unwelcome addition to a party already suffering from want. By the 20th, they were being watered from the *Adler*. On the 24th the Manono fleet of sixteen large boats, fortified and rendered unmanageable with tons of firewood, passed to windward to intercept supplies from Atua. By the 27th the hungry garrison flocked in great numbers to draw rations at the German firm. On the 28th the same business was repeated with a different issue. Mataafas crowded to look on; words were exchanged, blows followed; sticks, stones, and bottles were caught up; the detested Brandeis, at great risk, threw himself between the lines and expostulated with the Mataafas — his only personal appearance in the wars, if this could be called war. The same afternoon, the Tamasese boats got in with provisions, having passed to seaward of the lumbering Manono fleet; and from that day on, whether from a high degree of enterprise on the one side or a great lack of capacity on the other, supplies were maintained from the sea with regularity. Thus the spectacle of battle, or at least of riot, at the doors of the German firm was not repeated. But the memory must have hung heavy on the hearts, not of the Germans only, but of all Apia. The Samoans are a gentle race, gentler than any in Europe; we are often enough reminded of the circumstance, not always by their 87 friends. But a mob is a mob, and a drunken mob is a drunken mob, and a drunken mob with weapons in its hands is a drunken mob with weapons in its hands, all the world over: elementary propositions, which some of us upon these islands might do worse than get by rote, but which must have been evident enough to Becker. And I am amazed by the man’s constancy, that, even while blows were going at the door of that German firm which he was in Samoa to protect, he should have stuck to his demands. Ten days before, Blacklock had offered to recognise the old territory, including Mulinuu, and Becker had refused, and still in the midst of these “alarums and excursions,” he continued to refuse it.

On October 2nd, anchored in Apia bay H.B.M.S. *Calliope*, Captain

Kane, carrying the flag of Rear-Admiral Fairfax, and the gunboat *Lizard*, Lieutenant-Commander Pelly. It was rumoured the admiral had come to recognise the government of Tamasese, I believe in error. And at least the day for that was quite gone by; and he arrived not to salute the king's accession, but to arbitrate on his remains. A conference of the consuls and commanders met on board the *Calliope*, October 4th, Fritze alone being absent, although twice invited: the affair touched politics, his consul was to be there; and even if he came to the meeting (so he explained to Fairfax) he would have no voice in its deliberations. The parties were plainly marked out: Blacklock and Leary maintaining their offer of the old neutral territory, and probably willing to expand or to contract it to any conceivable extent, so long as Mulinuu was still included; Knappe offered (if the others liked) to include "the whole eastern end of the island," but quite fixed upon the one point that Mulinuu should be left out; the English willing to meet either view, and singly desirous that Apia should be neutralised. The conclusion was foregone. Becker held a trump card in the consent of Mataafa; Blacklock and Leary stood alone, spoke with an ill grace, and could not long hold out. Becker had his 88 way; and the neutral boundary was chosen just where he desired: across the isthmus, the firm within, Mulinuu without. He did not long enjoy the fruits of victory.

On the 7th, three days after the meeting, one of the Scanlons (well-known and intelligent half-castes) came to Blacklock with a complaint. The Scanlon house stood on the hither side of the Tamasese breastwork, just inside the newly accepted territory, and within easy range of the firm. Armed men, to the number of a hundred, had issued from Mulinuu, had "taken charge" of the house, had pointed a gun at Scanlon's head, and had twice "threatened to kill" his pigs. I hear elsewhere of some effects (*Gegenstände*) removed. At the best a very pale atrocity, though we shall find the word employed. Germans declare besides that Scanlon was no American subject; they declare the point had been decided by court-martial in 1875; that Blacklock had the decision in the consular archives; and that this was his reason for handing the affair to Leary. It is not necessary to suppose so. It is plain he thought little of the business; thought indeed nothing of it; except in so far as armed men had entered the neutral territory from Mulinuu; and it was on this ground alone, and the implied breach of Becker's engagement at the conference, that he invited Leary's attention to the tale. The impish ingenuity of the commander perceived in it huge possibilities of mischief. He took up the Scanlon outrage, the atrocity of the threatened pigs; and with that poor instrument — I am sure, to his own wonder — drove Tamasese out of Mulinuu. It was "an intrigue," Becker complains. To be sure it was; but who was Becker to be complaining of intrigue?

On the 7th Leary laid before Fritze the following conundrum "As the natives of Mulinuu appear to be under the protection of the Imperial German naval guard belonging to the vessel under your command, I have the honour to request you to inform me whether or not they are under 89 such protection? Amicable relations," pursued the humorist, "amicable relations exist between the government of the United States and His Imperial German Majesty's government, but we do not recognise Tamasese's government, and I am desirous of locating the responsibility for violations of American rights." Becker and Fritze lost no time in explanation or denial, but went straight to the root of the matter and sought to buy off Scanlon. Becker declares that every reparation was offered. Scanlon takes a pride to recapitulate the leases and the situations he refused, and the long interviews in which he was tempted and plied with drink by Becker or Beckmann of the firm. No doubt, in short, that he was offered reparation in reason and out of reason, and, being thoroughly primed, refused it all. Meantime some answer must be made to Leary; and Fritze repeated on the 8th his oft-repeated assurances that he was not authorised to deal with politics. The same day Leary retorted: "The question is not one of diplomacy nor of politics. It is strictly one of military jurisdiction and responsibility. Under the shadow of the German fort at Mulinuu," continued the hyperbolical commander, "atrocities have been committed.... And I again have the honour respectfully to request to be informed whether or not the armed natives at Mulinuu are under the protection of the Imperial German naval guard belonging to the vessel under your command." To this no answer was vouchsafed till the 11th, and then in the old terms; and meanwhile, on the 10th, Leary got into his gaiters — the sure sign, as was both said and sung aboard his vessel, of some desperate or some amusing service — and was set ashore at the Scanlons' house. Of this he took possession at the head of an old woman and a mop, and was seen from the Tamasese breastwork directing operations and plainly preparing to install himself there in a military posture. So much he meant to be understood; so much he meant to carry out, and an armed party from the 90 *Adams* was to have garrisoned on the morrow the scene of the atrocity. But there is no doubt he managed to convey more. No doubt he was a master in the art of loose speaking, and could always manage to be overheard when he wanted; and by this, or some other equally unofficial means, he spread the rumour that on the morrow he was to bombard.

The proposed post, from its position, and from Leary's well-established character as an artist in mischief, must have been regarded by the Germans with uneasiness. In the bombardment we can scarce suppose them to have believed. But Tamasese must have both believed and trembled. The prestige of the European Powers was still unbroken. No native would then have dreamed of defying these colossal ships, worked by mysterious powers, and laden with outlandish instruments of death. None would have dreamed of resisting those strange but quite unrealised Great Powers, understood (with difficulty) to be larger than Tonga and Samoa put together, and known to be prolific of prints, knives, hard biscuit, picture-books, and other luxuries, as well as of overbearing men and inconsistent orders. Laupepa had fallen in ill-blood with one of them; his only idea of defence had been to throw himself in the arms of another; his name, his rank, and his great following had not been able to preserve him; and he had vanished from the eyes of men — as the Samoan thinks of it, beyond the sky. Asi, Maunga, Tuiletu-funga, had followed him in that new path of doom. We have seen how carefully Mataafa still walked, how he dared not set foot on the neutral territory till assured it was no longer sacred, how he withdrew from it again as soon as its sacredness had been restored, and at the bare word of a consul (however gilded with ambiguous promises) paused in his course of victory and left his rival unassailed in Mulinuu. And now it was the rival's turn. Hitherto happy in the continued support of one of the white Powers, he now found himself — or 91 thought himself — threatened with war by no less than two others.

Tamasese boats as they passed Matautu were in the habit of firing on the shore, as like as not without particular aim, and more in high spirits than hostility. One of these shots pierced the house of a British subject near the consulate; the consul reported to Admiral Fairfax; and, on the morning of the 10th, the admiral despatched Captain Kane of the *Calliope* to Mulinuu. Brandeis met the messenger with voluble excuses and engagements for the future. He was told his explanations were satisfactory so far as they went, but that the admiral's message was to Tamasese, the *de facto* king. Brandeis, not very well assured of his puppet's courage, attempted in vain to excuse him from appearing. No *de facto* king, no message, he was told: produce your *de facto* king. And Tamasese had at last to be produced. To him Kane delivered his errand: that the *Lizard* was to remain for the protection of British subjects; that a signalman was to be stationed at the consulate; that, on any further firing from boats, the signalman was to notify the *Lizard* and she to fire one gun, on which all boats must lower sail and come alongside for examination and the detection of the guilty; and that, "in the event of the boats not obeying the gun, the admiral would not be responsible for the consequences." It was listened to by Brandeis and Tamasese "with the greatest attention." Brandeis, when it was done, desired his thanks to the admiral for the moderate terms of his message, and, as Kane went to his boat, repeated the expression of his gratitude as though he meant it, declaring his own hands would be thus strengthened for the maintenance of discipline. But I have yet to learn of any gratitude on the part of Tamasese. Consider the case of the poor owlish man hearing for the first time our diplomatic commonplaces. The admiral would not be answerable for the consequences. Think of it! A devil of a position for a *de facto* king. And here, the same afternoon, was Leary in the Scanlon house, 92 mopping it out for unknown designs by the hands of an old woman, and proffering strange threats of bloodshed. Scanlon and his pigs, the admiral and his gun, Leary and his bombardment, — what a kettle of fish!

I dwell on the effect on Tamasese. Whatever the faults of Becker, he was not timid; he had already braved so much for Mulinuu that I cannot but think he might have continued to hold up his head even after the outrage of the pigs, and that the weakness now shown originated with the king. Late in the night, Blacklock was wakened to receive a despatch addressed to Leary. "You have asked that I and my government go away from Mulinuu, because you pretend a man who lives near Mulinuu and who is under your protection, has been threatened by my soldiers. As your Excellency has forbidden the man to accept any satisfaction, and as I do not wish to make war against the United States, I shall remove my government from Mulinuu to another place." It was signed by Tamasese, but I think more heads than his had wagged over the direct and able letter. On the morning of the 11th, accordingly, Mulinuu the much defended lay desert. Tamasese and Brandeis had slipped to sea in a schooner; their troops had followed them in boats; the German sailors and their war-flag had returned on board the *Adler;* and only the German merchant flag blew there for Weber's land-claim. Mulinuu, for which Becker had intrigued so long and so often, for which he had overthrown the municipality, for which he had abrogated and refused and invented successive schemes of neutral territory, was now no more to the Germans than a very unattractive, barren peninsula and a very much disputed land-claim of Mr. Weber's. It will scarcely be believed that the tale of the Scanlon outrages was not yet finished. Leary had gained his point, but Scanlon had lost his compensation. And it was months later, and this time in the shape of a threat of bombardment in black and white, that Tamasese heard the last of the absurd affair. Scanlon had both his fun and his money, 93 and Leary's practical joke was brought to an artistic end.

Becker sought and missed an instant revenge. Mataafa, a devout Catholic, was in the habit of walking every morning to mass from his camp at Vaiala beyond Matautu to the mission at the Mulivai. He was sometimes escorted by as many as six guards in uniform, who displayed their proficiency in drill by perpetually shifting arms as they marched. Himself, meanwhile, paced in front, bareheaded and barefoot, a staff in his hand, in the customary chief's dress of white kilt, shirt, and jacket, and with a conspicuous rosary about his neck. Tall but not heavy, with eager eyes and a marked appearance of courage and capacity, Mataafa makes an admirable figure in the eyes of Europeans; to those of his countrymen, he may seem not always to preserve that quiescence of manner which is thought becoming in the great. On the morning of October 16th he reached the mission before day with two attendants, heard mass, had coffee with the fathers, and left again in safety. The smallness of his following we may suppose to have been reported. He was scarce gone, at least, before Becker had armed men at the mission gate and came in person seeking him.

The failure of this attempt doubtless still further exasperated the consul, and he began to deal as in an enemy's country. He had marines from the *Adler* to stand sentry over the consulate and parade the streets by threes and fours. The bridge of the Vaisingano, which cuts in half the English and American quarters, he closed by proclamation and advertised for tenders to demolish it. On the 17th Leary and Pelly landed carpenters and repaired it in his teeth. Leary, besides, had marines under arms, ready to land them if it should be necessary to protect the work. But Becker looked on without interference, perhaps glad enough to have the bridge repaired; for even Becker may not always have offended intentionally. Such was now the distracted posture of the little town: all government 94 extinct, the German consul patrolling it with armed men and issuing proclamations like a ruler, the two other Powers defying his commands, and at least one of them prepared to use force in the defiance. Close on its skirts sat the warriors of Mataafa, perhaps four thousand strong, highly incensed against the Germans, having all to gain in the seizure of the town and firm, and, like an army in a fairy tale, restrained by the air-drawn boundary of the neutral ground.

I have had occasion to refer to the strange appearance in these islands of an American adventurer with a battery of cannon. The adventurer was long since gone, but his guns remained, and one of them was now to make fresh history. It had been cast overboard by Brandeis on the outer reef in the course of this retreat; and word of it coming to the ears of the Mataafas, they thought it natural that they should serve themselves the heirs of Tamasese. On the 23rd a Manono boat of the kind called *taumualua* dropped down the coast from Mataafa's camp, called in broad day at the German quarter of the town for guides, and proceeded to the reef. Here, diving with a rope, they got the gun aboard; and the night being then come, returned by the same route in the shallow water along shore, singing a boat-song. It will be seen with what childlike reliance they had accepted the neutrality of Apia bay; they came for the gun without concealment, laboriously dived for it in broad day under the eyes of the town and shipping, and returned with it, singing as they went. On Grevsmühl's wharf, a light showed them a crowd of German blue-jackets clustered, and a hail was heard. "Stop the singing so that we may hear what is said," said one of the chiefs in the *taumualua*. The song ceased; the hail was heard again, "*Au mai le fana* — bring the gun"; and the natives report themselves to have replied in the affirmative, and declare that they had begun to back the boat. It is perhaps not needful to believe them. A volley at least was fired from the wharf, at about 95 fifty yards' range and with a very ill direction, one bullet whistling over Pelly's head on board the *Lizard*. The natives jumped overboard; and swimming under the lee of the *taumualua* (where they escaped a second volley) dragged her towards the east. As soon as they were out of range and past the Mulivai, the German border, they got on board and (again singing — though perhaps a different song) continued their return along the English and American shore. Off Matautu they were hailed from the seaward by one of the *Adler's* boats, which had been suddenly despatched on the sound of the firing or had stood ready all evening to secure the gun. The hail was in German; the Samoans knew not what it meant, but took the precaution to jump overboard and swim for land. Two volleys and some dropping shot were poured upon them in the water; but they dived, scattered, and came to land unhurt in different quarters of Matautu. The volleys, fired inshore, raked the highway, a British house was again pierced by numerous bullets, and these sudden sounds of war scattered consternation through the town.

Two British subjects, Hetherington-Carruthers, a solicitor, and Maben, a land-surveyor — the first being in particular a man well versed in the native mind and language — hastened at once to their consul; assured him the Mataafas would be roused to fury by this onslaught in the neutral zone, that the German quarter would be certainly attacked, and the rest of the town and white inhabitants exposed to a peril very difficult of estimation; and prevailed upon him to intrust them with a mission to the king. By the time they reached headquarters, the warriors were already taking post round Matafele, and the agitation of Mataafa himself was betrayed in the fact that he spoke with the deputation standing and gun in hand: a breach of high-chief dignity perhaps unparalleled. The usual result, however, followed: the whites persuaded the Samoan; and the attack was countermanded, to the benefit of all concerned, and not least of 96 Mataafa. To the benefit of all, I say; for I do not think the Germans were that evening in a posture to resist; the liquor-cellars of the firm must have fallen into the power of the insurgents; and I will repeat my formula that a mob is a mob, a drunken mob is a drunken mob, and a drunken mob with weapons in its hands is a drunken mob with weapons in its hands, all the world over.

In the opinion of some, then, the town had narrowly escaped destruction, or at least the miseries of a drunken sack. To the knowledge of all, the air of the neutral territory had once more whistled with bullets. And it was clear the incident must have diplomatic consequences. Leary and Pelly both protested to Fritze. Leary announced he should report the affair to his government "as a gross violation of the principles of international law, and as a breach of the neutrality." "I positively decline the protest," replied Fritze, "and cannot fail to express my astonishment at the tone of your last letter." This was trenchant. It may be said, however, that Leary was already out of court; that, after the night signals and the Scanlon incident, and so many other acts of practical if humorous hostility, his position as a neutral was no better than a doubtful jest. The case with Pelly was entirely different; and with Pelly, Fritze was less well inspired. In his first note, he was on the old guard; announced that he had acted on the requisition of his consul, who was alone responsible on "the legal side"; and declined accordingly to discuss "whether the lives of British subjects were in danger, and to what extent armed intervention was necessary." Pelly replied judiciously that he had nothing to do with political matters, being only responsible for the safety of Her Majesty's ships under his command and for the lives and property of British subjects; that he had considered his protest a purely naval one; and as the matter stood could only report the case to the admiral on the station. "I have the honour," replied Fritze, "to refuse to entertain the protest concerning the safety of Her 97 Britannic Majesty's ship *Lizard* as being a naval matter. The safety of Her Majesty's ship *Lizard* was never in the least endangered. This was guaranteed by the disciplined fire of a few shots under the direction of two officers." This offensive note, in view of Fritze's careful and honest bearing among so many other complications, may be attributed to some misunderstanding. His small knowledge of English perhaps failed him. But I cannot pass it by without remarking how far too much it is the custom of German officials to fall into this style. It may be witty, I am sure it is not wise. It may be sometimes necessary to offend for a definite object, it can never be diplomatic to offend gratuitously.

Becker was more explicit, although scarce less curt. And his defence may be divided into two statements: first, that the *taumualua* was proceeding to land with a hostile purpose on Mulinuu; second, that the shots complained of were fired by the Samoans. The second may be dismissed with a laugh. Human nature has laws. And no men hitherto discovered, on being suddenly challenged from the sea, would have turned their backs upon the challenger and poured volleys on the friendly shore. The first is not extremely credible, but merits examination. The story of the recovered gun seems straightforward; it is supported by much testimony, the diving operations on the reef seem to have been watched from shore with curiosity; it is hard to suppose that it does not roughly represent the fact. And yet if any part of it be true, the whole of Becker's explanation falls to the ground. A boat which had skirted the whole eastern coast of Mulinuu, and was already opposite a wharf in Matafele, and still going west, might have been guilty on a thousand points — there was one on which she was necessarily innocent; she was necessarily innocent of proceeding on Mulinuu. Or suppose the diving operations, and the native testimony, and Pelly's chart of the boat's course, and the boat itself, to be all stages of some epidemic hallucination or steps in a 98 conspiracy — suppose even a second *taumualua* to have entered Apia bay after nightfall, and to have been fired upon from Grevsmühl's wharf in the full career of hostilities against Mulinuu — suppose all this, and Becker is not helped. At the time of the first fire, the boat was off Grevsmühl's wharf. At the time of the second (and that is the one complained of) she was off Carruthers's wharf in Matautu. Was she still proceeding on Mulinuu? I trow not. The danger to German property was no longer imminent, the shots had been fired upon a very trifling provocation, the spirit implied was that of designed disregard to the neutrality. Such was the impression here on the spot; such in plain terms the statement of Count Hatzfeldt to Lord Salisbury at home: that the neutrality of Apia was only "to prevent the natives from fighting," not the Germans; and that whatever Becker might have promised at the conference, he could not "restrict German war-vessels in their freedom of action."

There was nothing to surprise in this discovery; and had events been guided at the same time with a steady and discreet hand, it might have passed with less observation. But the policy of Becker was felt to be not only reckless, it was felt to be absurd also. Sudden nocturnal onfalls upon native boats could lead, it was felt, to no good end whether of peace or war; they could but exasperate; they might prove, in a moment, and when least expected, ruinous. To those who knew how nearly it had come to fighting, and who considered the probable result, the future looked ominous. And fear was mingled with annoyance in the minds of the Anglo-Saxon colony. On the 24th, a public meeting appealed to the British and American consuls. At half-past seven in the evening guards were landed at the consulates. On the morrow they were each fortified with sand-bags; and the subjects informed by proclamation that these asylums stood open to them on any alarm, and at any hour of the day or night. The social bond in Apia was dissolved. The consuls, like barons 99 of old, dwelt each in his armed citadel. The rank and file of the white nationalities dared each other, and sometimes fell to on the street like rival clansmen. And the little town, not by any fault of the inhabitants, rather by the act of Becker, had fallen back in civilisation about a thousand years.

There falls one more incident to be narrated, and then I can close with this ungracious chapter. I have mentioned the name of the new English consul. It is already familiar to English readers; for the gentleman who was fated to undergo some strange experiences in Apia was the same de Coetlogon who covered Hicks's flank at the time of the disaster in the desert, and bade farewell to Gordon in Khartoum before the investment. The colonel was abrupt and testy; Mrs. de Coetlogon was too exclusive for society like that of Apia; but whatever their superficial disabilities, it is strange they should have left, in such an odour of unpopularity, a place where they set so shining an example of the sterling virtues. The colonel was perhaps no diplomatist; he was certainly no lawyer; but he discharged the duties of his office with the constancy and courage of an old soldier, and these were found sufficient. He and his wife had no ambition to be the leaders of society; the consulate was in their time no house of feasting; but they made of it that house of mourning to which the preacher tells us it is better we should go. At an early date after the battle of Matautu, it was opened as a hospital for the wounded. The English and Americans subscribed what was required for its support. Pelly of the *Lizard* strained every nerve to help, and set up tents on the lawn to be a shelter for the patients. The doctors of the English and American ships, and in particular Dr. Oakley of the *Lizard*, showed themselves indefatigable. But it was on the de Coetlogons that the distress fell. For nearly half a year, their lawn, their verandah, sometimes their rooms, were cumbered with the sick and dying, their ears were filled with the complaints of suffering humanity, their 100 time was too short for the multiplicity of pitiful duties. In Mrs. de Coetlogon, and her helper, Miss Taylor, the merit of this endurance was perhaps to be looked for; in a man of the colonel's temper, himself painfully suffering, it was viewed with more surprise, if with no more admiration. Doubtless all had their reward in a sense of duty done; doubtless, also, as the days passed, in the spectacle of many traits of gratitude and patience, and in the success that waited on their efforts. Out of a hundred cases treated, only five died. They were all well-behaved, though full of childish wiles. One old gentleman, a high chief, was seized with alarming symptoms of belly-ache whenever

Mrs. de Coetlogon went her rounds at night: he was after brandy. Others were insatiable for morphine or opium. A chief woman had her foot amputated under chloroform. “Let me see my foot! Why does it not hurt?” she cried. “It hurt so badly before I went to sleep.” Siteoni, whose name has been already mentioned, had his shoulder-blade excised, lay the longest of any, perhaps behaved the worst, and was on all these grounds the favourite. At times he was furiously irritable, and would rail upon his family and rise in bed until he swooned with pain. Once on the balcony he was thought to be dying, his family keeping round his mat, his father exhorting him to be prepared, when Mrs. de Coetlogon brought him round again with brandy and smelling-salts. After discharge, he returned upon a visit of gratitude; and it was observed, that instead of coming straight to the door, he went and stood long under his umbrella on that spot of ground where his mat had been stretched and he had endured pain so many months. Similar visits were the rule, I believe without exception; and the grateful patients loaded Mrs. de Coetlogon with gifts which (had that been possible in Polynesia) she would willingly have declined, for they were often of value to the givers.

The tissue of my story is one of rapacity, intrigue, and 101 the triumphs of temper; the hospital at the consulate stands out almost alone as an episode of human beauty, and I dwell on it with satisfaction. But it was not regarded at the time with universal favour; and even to-day its institution is thought by many to have been impolitic. It was opened, it stood open, for the wounded of either party. As a matter of fact it was never used but by the Mataafas, and the Tamaseses were cared for exclusively by German doctors. In the progressive decivilisation of the town, these duties of humanity became thus a ground of quarrel. When the Mataafa hurt were first brought together after the battle of Matautu, and some more or less amateur surgeons were dressing wounds on a green by the wayside, one from the German consulate went by in the road. “Why don’t you let the dogs die?” he asked. “Go to hell,” was the rejoinder. Such were the amenities of Apia. But Becker reserved for himself the extreme expression of this spirit. On November 7th hostilities began again between the Samoan armies, and an inconclusive skirmish sent a fresh crop of wounded to the de Coetlogons. Next door to the consulate, some native houses and a chapel (now ruinous) stood on a green. Chapel and houses were certainly Samoan, but the ground was under a land-claim of the German firm; and de Coetlogon wrote to Becker requesting permission (in case it should prove necessary) to use these structures for his wounded. Before an answer came, the hospital was startled by the appearance of a case of gangrene, and the patient was hastily removed into the chapel. A rebel laid on German ground —

here was an atrocity! The day before his own relief, November 11th, Becker ordered the man's instant removal. By his aggressive carriage and singular mixture of violence and cunning, he had already largely brought about the fall of Brandeis, and forced into an attitude of hostility the whole non-German population of the islands. Now, in his last hour of office, by this wanton buffet to his English colleague, he prepared a 102 continuance of evil days for his successor. If the object of diplomacy be the organisation of failure in the midst of hate, he was a great diplomatist. And amongst a certain party on the beach he is still named as the ideal consul.

CHAPTER VII

THE SAMOAN CAMPS

November 1

When Brandeis and Tamasese fled by night from Mulinuu, they carried their wandering government some six miles to windward, to a position above Lotoanuu. For some three miles to the eastward of Apia, the shores of Upolu are low and the ground rises with a gentle acclivity, much of which waves with German plantations. A barrier reef encloses a lagoon passable for boats: and the traveller skims there, on smooth, many-tinted shallows, between the wall of the breakers on the one hand, and on the other a succession of palm-tree capes and cheerful beach-side villages. Beyond the great plantation of Vailele, the character of the coast is changed. The barrier reef abruptly ceases, the surf beats direct upon the shore; and the mountains and untenanted forest of the interior descend sheer into the sea. The first mountain promontory is Letongo. The bay beyond is called Laulii, and became the headquarters of Mataafa. And on the next projection, on steep, intricate ground, veiled in forest and cut up by gorges and defiles, Tamasese fortified his lines. This greenwood citadel, which proved impregnable by Samoan arms, may be regarded as his front; the sea covered his right; and his rear extended along the coast as far as Saluafata, and thus commanded and drew upon a rich country, including the plain of Falefá.

He was left in peace from 11th October till November 6th. But his adversary is not wholly to be blamed for 104 this delay, which depended upon island etiquette. His Savaii contingent had not yet come in, and to have moved again without waiting for them would have been surely to offend, perhaps to lose them. With the month of November they began to arrive: on the 2nd twenty boats, on the 3rd twenty-nine, on the 5th seventeen. On the 6th the position Mataafa had so long occupied on the skirts of Apia was deserted; all that day and night his force kept streaming eastward to Laulii; and on the 7th the siege of Lotoanuu was opened with a brisk skirmish.

Each side built forts, facing across the gorge of a brook. An endless fusillade and shouting maintained the spirit of the warriors; and at night, even if the firing slackened, the pickets continued to exchange from either side volleys of songs and pungent pleasantries. Nearer hostilities were rendered difficult by the nature of the ground, where men must thread dense bush and clamber on the face of precipices. Apia was near enough; a man, if he had a dollar or two, could walk in before a battle and array himself in silk or velvet. Casualties were not common; there was nothing to cast gloom upon the camps, and no more danger than was required to give a spice to the perpetual firing. For the young warriors it was a period of admirable enjoyment. But the anxiety of Mataafa must have been great and growing. His force was now considerable. It was scarce likely he should ever have more. That he should be long able to supply them with ammunition seemed incredible; at the rates then or soon after current, hundreds of pounds sterling might be easily blown into the air by the skirmishers in the course of a few days. And in the meanwhile, on the mountain opposite, his outnumbered adversary held his ground unshaken.

By this time the partisanship of the whites was unconcealed. Americans supplied Mataafa with ammunition; English and Americans openly subscribed together and sent boat-loads of provisions to his camp. One such boat started from Apia on a day of rain; it was pulled by six 105 oars, three being paid by Moors, three by the MacArthurs; Moors himself and a clerk of the MacArthurs' were in charge; and the load included not only beef and biscuit, but three or four thousand rounds of ammunition. They came ashore in Laulii, and carried the gift to Mataafa. While they were yet in his house a bullet passed overhead; and out of his door they could see the Tamasese pickets on the opposite hill. Thence they made their way to the left flank of the Mataafa position next the sea. A Tamasese barricade was visible across the stream. It rained, but the warriors crowded in their shanties, squatted in the mud, and maintained an excited conversation. Balls flew; either faction, both happy as lords, spotting for the other in chance shots, and missing. One point is characteristic of that war; experts in native feeling doubt if it will characterise the next. The two white visitors passed without and between the lines to a rocky point upon the beach. The person of Moors was well known; the purpose of their coming to Laulii must have been already bruited abroad; yet they were not fired upon. From the point they spied a crow's nest, or hanging fortification, higher up; and, judging it was a good position for a general view, obtained a guide. He led them up a steep side of the mountain, where they must climb by roots and tufts of grass; and coming to an open hill-top with some scattered trees, bade them wait, let him draw the fire, and then be swift to follow. Perhaps a dozen balls whistled about him ere he had crossed the dangerous passage and dropped on the farther side into the crow's-nest; the white men, briskly following, escaped unhurt. The crow's-nest was built like a bartizan on the precipitous front of the position. Across the ravine, perhaps at five hundred yards, heads were to be seen popping up and down in a fort of Tamesese's. On both sides the same enthusiasm without council, the same senseless vigilance, reigned. Some took aim;

some blazed before them at a venture. Now — when a head showed on the 106 other side — one would take a crack at it, remarking that it would never do to “miss a chance.” Now they would all fire a volley and bob down; a return volley rang across the ravine, and was punctually answered: harmless as lawn-tennis. The whites expostulated in vain. The warriors, drunken with noise, made answer by a fresh general discharge and bade their visitors run while it was time. Upon their return to headquarters, men were covering the front with sheets of coral limestone, two balls having passed through the house in the interval. Mataafa sat within, over his kava bowl, unmoved. The picture is of a piece throughout: excellent courage, super-excellent folly, a war of school-children; expensive guns and cartridges used like squibs or catherine-wheels on Guy Fawkes’s Day.

On the 20th Mataafa changed his attack. Tamasese’s front was seemingly impregnable. Something must be tried upon his rear. There was his bread-basket; a small success in that direction would immediately curtail his resources; and it might be possible with energy to roll up his line along the beach and take the citadel in reverse. The scheme was carried out as might be expected from these childish soldiers. Mataafa, always uneasy about Apia, clung with a portion of his force to Laulii; and thus, had the foe been enterprising, exposed himself to disaster. The expedition fell successfully enough on Saluafata and drove out the Tamaseses with a loss of four heads; but so far from improving the advantage, yielded immediately to the weakness of the Samoan warrior, and ranged farther east through unarmed populations, bursting with shouts and blackened faces into villages terrified or admiring, making spoil of pigs, burning houses, and destroying gardens. The Tamasese had at first evacuated several beach towns in succession, and were still in retreat on Lotoanuu; finding themselves unpursued, they reoccupied them one after another, and re-established their lines to the very borders of Saluafata. Night fell; Mataafa had taken Saluafata, 107 Tamasese had lost it; and that was all. But the day came near to have a different and very singular issue. The village was not long in the hands of the Mataafas, when a schooner, flying German colours, put into the bay and was immediately surrounded by their boats. It chanced that Brandeis was on board. Word of it had gone abroad, and the boats as they approached demanded him with threats. The late premier, alone, entirely unarmed, and a prey to natural and painful feelings, concealed himself below. The captain of the schooner remained on deck, pointed to the German colours, and defied approaching boats. Again the prestige of a great Power triumphed; the Samoans fell back before the bunting; the schooner worked out of the bay; Brandeis escaped. He himself apprehended the worst if he fell into Samoan hands; it is my diffident impression that his life would have been safe.

On the 22nd, a new German war-ship, the *Eber*, of tragic memory, came to Apia from the Gilberts, where she had been disarming turbulent islands. The rest of that day and all night she loaded stores from the firm, and on the morrow reached Saluafata bay. Thanks to the misconduct of the Mataafas, the most of the foreshore was still in the hands of the Tamaseses; and they were thus able to receive from the *Eber* both the stores and weapons. The weapons had been sold long since to Tarawa, Apaiang, and Pleasant Island; places unheard of by the general reader, where obscure inhabitants paid for these instruments of death in money or in labour, misused them as it was known they would be misused, and had been disarmed by force. The *Eber* had brought back the guns to a German counter, whence many must have been originally sold; and was here engaged, like a shopboy, in their distribution to fresh purchasers. Such is the vicious circle of the traffic in weapons of war. Another aid of a more metaphysical nature was ministered by the *Eber* to Tamasese, in the shape of uncountable German flags. The full history of this epidemic of bunting falls to be told in the next chapter. 108 But the fact has to be chronicled here, for I believe it was to these flags that we owe the visit of the *Adams*, and my next and best authentic glance into a native camp. The *Adams* arrived in Saluafata on the 26th. On the morrow Leary and Moors landed at the village. It was still occupied by Mataafas, mostly from Manono and Savaii, few in number, high in spirit. The Tamasese pickets were meanwhile within musket range; there was maintained a steady sputtering of shots; and yet a party of Tamasese women were here on a visit to the women of Manono, with whom they sat talking and smoking, under the fire of their own relatives. It was reported that Leary took part in a council of war, and promised to join with his broadside in the next attack. It is certain he did nothing of the sort: equally certain that, in Tamasese circles, he was firmly credited with having done so. And this heightens the extraordinary character of what I have now to tell. Prudence and delicacy alike ought to have forbid the camp of Tamasese to the feet of either Leary or Moors. Moors was the original — there was a time when he had been the only — opponent of the puppet king. Leary had driven him from the seat of government; it was but a week or two since he had threatened to bombard him in his present refuge. Both were in close and daily council with his adversary, and it was no secret that Moors was supplying the latter with food. They were partisans; it lacked but a hair that they should be called belligerents; it were idle to try to deny they were the most dangerous of spies. And yet these two now sailed across the bay and landed inside the Tamasese lines at Salelesi. On the very beach they had another glimpse of the artlessness of Samoan war. Hitherto the Tamasese fleet, being hardy and unencumbered, had made a fool of the huge floating forts upon the other side; and here they were toiling, not to produce another boat on their own pattern in which they had always enjoyed the advantage, but to make a new one the type of their enemies', of which they 109 had now proved the uselessness for months. It came on to rain as the Americans landed; and though none offered to oppose their coming ashore, none invited them to take shelter. They were nowise abashed, entered a house unbidden, and were made welcome with obvious reserve. The rain clearing off, they set forth westward, deeper into the heart of the enemies' position. Three or four young men ran some way before them, doubtless to give warning; and Leary, with his indomitable taste for mischief, kept inquiring as he went after "the high chief" Tamasese. The line of the beach was one continuous breastwork; some thirty odd iron cannon of all sizes and patterns stood mounted in embrasures; plenty grape and canister lay ready; and at every hundred yards or so the German flag was flying. The numbers of the guns and flags I give as I received them, though they test my faith. At the house of Brandeis — a little, weatherboard house, crammed at the time with natives, men, women, and squalling children — Leary and Moors again asked for "the high chief," and were again assured that he was farther on. A little beyond, the road ran in one place somewhat inland, the two Americans had gone down to the line of the beach to continue their inspection of the breastwork, when Brandeis himself, in his shirt-sleeves and accompanied by several German officers, passed them by the line of the road. The two parties saluted in silence. Beyond Eva Point there was an observable change for the worse in the reception of the Americans; some whom they met began to mutter at Moors; and the adventurers, with tardy but commendable prudence, desisted from their search after the high chief, and began to retrace their steps. On the return, Suatele and some chiefs were drinking kava in a "big house," and called them in to join — their only invitation. But the night was closing, the rain had begun again: they stayed but for civility, and returned on board the *Adams*, wet and hungry, and I believe delighted with their expedition. It was perhaps the last as it was certainly one of the most extreme 110 examples of that divinity which once hedged the white in Samoa. The feeling was already different in the camp of Mataafa, where the safety of a German loiterer had been a matter of extreme concern. Ten days later, three commissioners, an Englishman, an American, and a German, approached a post of Mataafas, were challenged by an old man with a gun, and mentioned in answer what they were. "*Ifea Siamani?* Which is the German?" cried the old gentleman, dancing, and with his finger on the trigger; and the commissioners stood somewhile in a very anxious posture, till they were released by the opportune arrival of a chief. It was November the 27th when Leary and Moors completed their absurd excursion; in about three weeks an event was to befall which changed at once, and probably for ever, the relations of the natives and the whites.

By the 28th Tamasese had collected seventeen hundred men in the trenches before Saluafata, thinking to attack next day. But the Mataafas evacuated the place in the night. At half-past five on the morning of the 29th a signal-gun was fired in the trenches at Laulii, and the Tamasese citadel was assaulted and defended with a fury new among Samoans. When the battle ended on the following day, one or more outworks remained in the possession of Mataafa. Another had been taken and lost as many as four times. Carried originally by a mixed force from Savaii and Tuamasanga, the victors, instead of completing fresh defences or pursuing their advantage, fell to eat and smoke and celebrate their victory with impromptu songs. In this humour a rally of the Tamaseses smote them, drove them out pell-mell, and tumbled them into the ravine, where many broke their heads and legs. Again the work was taken, again lost. Ammunition failed the belligerents; and they fought hand to hand in the contested fort with axes, clubs, and clubbed rifles. The sustained ardour of the engagement surprised even those who were engaged; and the butcher's bill was counted extraordinary by Samoans. On December 1st the women of either side 111 collected the headless bodies of the dead, each easily identified by the name tattooed on his forearm. Mataafa is thought to have lost sixty killed; and the de Coetlogons' hospital received three women and forty men. The casualties on the Tamasese side cannot be accepted, but they were presumably much less.

CHAPTER VIII

AFFAIRS OF LAULII AND FANGALII

November — December 1

For Becker I have not been able to conceal my distaste, for he seems to me both false and foolish. But of his successor, the unfortunately famous Dr. Knappe, we may think as of a good enough fellow driven distraught. Fond of Samoa and the Samoans, he thought to bring peace and enjoy popularity among the islanders; of a genial, amiable, and sanguine temper, he made no doubt but he could repair the breach with the English consul. Hope told a flattering tale. He awoke to find himself exchanging defiances with de Coetlogon, beaten in the field by Mataafa, surrounded on the spot by general exasperation, and disowned from home by his own government. The history of his administration leaves on the mind of the student a sentiment of pity scarcely mingled.

On Blacklock he did not call, and, in view of Leary's attitude, may be excused. But the English consul was in a different category. England, weary of the name of Samoa, and desirous only to see peace established, was prepared to wink hard during the process and to welcome the result of any German settlement. It was an unpardonable fault in Becker to have kicked and buffeted his ready-made allies into a state of jealousy, anger, and suspicion. Knappe set himself at once to efface these impressions, and the English officials rejoiced for the moment in the change. Between Knappe and de Coetlogon there seems to have been mutual sympathy; and, in considering the steps by which 113 they were led at last into an attitude of mutual defiance, it must be remembered that both the men were sick, — Knappe from time to time prostrated with that formidable complaint, New Guinea fever, and de Coetlogon throughout his whole stay in the islands continually ailing.

Tamasese was still to be recognised, and, if possible, supported: such was the German policy. Two days after his arrival, accordingly, Knappe addressed to Mataafa a threatening despatch. The German plantation was suffering from the proximity of his "war-party." He must withdraw from Laulii at once, and, whithersoever he went, he must approach no German property nor so much as any village where there was a German trader. By five o'clock on the morrow, if he were not gone, Knappe would turn upon him "the attention of the man-of-war" and inflict a fine. The same evening, November 14th, Knappe went on board the *Adler*, which began to get up steam.

Three months before, such direct intervention on the part of Germany would have passed almost without protest; but the hour was now gone by. Becker's conduct, equally timid and rash, equally inconclusive and offensive, had forced the other nations into a strong feeling of common interest with Mataafa. Even had the German demands been moderate, de Coetlogon could not have forgotten the night of the *taumualua*, nor how Mataafa had relinquished, at his request, the attack upon the German quarter. Blacklock, with his driver of a captain at his elbow, was not likely to lag behind. And Mataafa having communicated Knappe's letter, the example of the Germans was on all hands exactly followed; the consuls hastened on board their respective war-ships, and these began to get up steam. About midnight, in a pouring rain, Pelly communicated to Fritze his intention to follow him and protect British interests; and Knappe replied that he would come on board the *Lizard* and see de Coetlogon personally. It was deep in the small hours, and de Coetlogon had been 114 long asleep, when he was wakened to receive his colleague; but he started up with an old soldier's readiness. The conference was long. De Coetlogon protested, as he did afterwards in writing, against Knappe's claim: the Samoans were in a state of war; they had territorial rights; it was monstrous to prevent them from entering one of their own villages because a German trader kept the store; and in case property suffered, a claim for compensation was the proper remedy. Knappe argued that this was a question between Germans and Samoans, in which de Coetlogon had nothing to see; and that he must protect German property according to his instructions. To which de Coetlogon replied that he was himself in the same attitude to the property of the British; that he understood Knappe to be intending hostilities against Laulii; that Laulii was mortgaged to the MacArthurs; that its crops were accordingly British property; and that, while he was ever willing to recognise the territorial rights of the Samoans, he must prevent that property from being molested "by any other nation." "But if a German man-of-war does it?" asked Knappe. — "We shall prevent it to the best of our ability," replied the colonel. It is to the credit of both men that this trying interview should have been conducted and concluded without heat; but Knappe must have returned to the *Adler* with darker anticipations.

At sunrise on the morning of the 15th, the three ships, each loaded with its consul, put to sea. It is hard to exaggerate the peril of the forenoon that followed, as they lay off Laulii. Nobody desired a collision, save perhaps the reckless Leary; but peace and war trembled in the balance; and when the *Adler*, at one period, lowered her gun ports, war appeared to preponderate. It proved, however, to be a last — and therefore surely an unwise — extremity. Knappe contented himself with visiting the rival kings, and the three ships returned to Apia before noon. Beyond a doubt, coming after Knappe's decisive letter of the day 115 before, this impotent conclusion shook the credit of Germany among the natives of both sides; the Tamaseses fearing they were deserted, the Mataafas (with secret delight) hoping they were feared. And it gave an impetus to that ridiculous business which might have earned for the whole episode the name of the war of flags. British and American flags had been planted the night before, and were seen that morning flying over what they claimed about Laulii. British and American passengers, on the way up and down, pointed out from the decks of the war-ships, with generous vagueness, the boundaries of problematical estates. Ten days later, the beach of Saluafata bay fluttered (as I have told in the last chapter) with the flag of Germany. The Americans riposted with a claim to Tamasese's camp, some small part of which (says Knappe) did really belong to "an American nigger." The disease spread, the flags were multiplied, the operations of war became an egg-dance among miniature neutral territories; and though all men took a hand in these proceedings, all men in turn were struck with their absurdity. Mullan, Leary's successor, warned Knappe, in an emphatic despatch, not to squander and discredit the solemnity of that emblem which was all he had to be a defence to his own consulate. And Knappe himself, in his despatch of March 21st, 1889, castigates the practice with much sense. But this was after the tragi-comic culmination had been reached, and the burnt rags of one of these too-frequently mendacious signals gone on a progress to Washington, like Cæsar's body, arousing indignation where it came. To such results are nations conducted by the patent artifices of a Becker.

The discussion of the morning, the silent menace and defiance of the voyage to Laulii, might have set the best-natured by the ears. But Knappe and de Coetlogon took their difference in excellent part. On the morrow, November 16th, they sat down together with Blacklock in conference. The English consul introduced his colleagues, who shook hands. If Knappe were dead-weighted with 116 the inheritance of Becker, Blacklock was handicapped by reminiscences of Leary; it is the more to the credit of this inexperienced man that he should have maintained in the future so excellent an attitude of firmness and moderation, and that when the crash came, Knappe and de Coetlogon, not Knappe and Blacklock, were found to be the protagonists of the drama. The conference was futile. The English and American consuls admitted but one cure of the evils of the time: that the farce of the Tamasese monarchy should cease. It was one which the German refused to consider. And the agents separated without reaching any result, save that diplomatic relations had been restored between the

States and Germany, and that all three were convinced of their fundamental differences.

Knappe and de Coetlogon were still friends; they had disputed and differed and come within a finger's breadth of war, and they were still friends. But an event was at hand which was to separate them for ever. On December 4th came the *Royalist*, Captain Hand, to relieve the *Lizard*. Pelly of course had to take his canvas from the consulate hospital; but he had in charge certain awnings belonging to the *Royalist*, and with these they made shift to cover the wounded, at that time (after the fight at Laulii) more than usually numerous. A lieutenant came to the consulate, and delivered (as I have received it) the following message: "Captain Hand's compliments, and he says you must get rid of these niggers at once, and he will help you to do it." Doubtless the reply was no more civil than the message. The promised "help," at least, followed promptly. A boat's crew landed and the awnings were stripped from the wounded, Hand himself standing on the colonel's verandah to direct operations. It were fruitless to discuss this passage from the humanitarian point of view, or from that of formal courtesy. The mind of the new captain was plainly not directed to these objects. But it is understood that he considered the existence of a hospital a source of irritation to Germans and a fault in policy. His 117 own rude act proved in the result far more impolitic. The hospital had now been open some two months, and de Coetlogon was still on friendly terms with Knappe, and he and his wife were engaged to dine with him that day. By the morrow that was practically ended. For the rape of the awnings had two results: one, which was the fault of de Coetlogon, not at all of Hand, who could not have foreseen it; the other which it was his duty to have seen and prevented. The first was this: the de Coetlogons found themselves left with their wounded exposed to the inclemencies of the season; they must all be transported into the house and verandah; in the distress and pressure of this task, the dinner engagement was too long forgotten; and a note of excuse did not reach the German consulate before the table was set, and Knappe dressed to receive his visitors. The second consequence was inevitable. Captain Hand was scarce landed ere it became public (was "*sofort bekannt,*" writes Knappe) that he and the consul were in opposition. All that had been gained by the demonstration at Laulii was thus immediately cast away; de Coetlogon's prestige was lessened; and it must be said plainly that Hand did less than nothing to restore it. Twice indeed he interfered, both times with success; and once, when his own person had been endangered, with vehemence; but during all the strange doings I have to narrate, he remained in close intimacy with the German consulate, and on one occasion may be said to have acted as its marshal. After the worst is over, after Bismarck has told Knappe that "the protests of his English colleague were grounded," that his own conduct "has not been good," and that in any dispute which may arise he "will find himself in the wrong," Knappe can still plead in his defence that Captain Hand "has always maintained friendly intercourse with the German authorities." Singular epitaph for an English sailor. In this complicity on the part of Hand we may find the reason — and I had almost said, the excuse — of much that was excessive in the bearing of the unfortunate Knappe.

On the 11th December, Mataafa received twenty-eight thousand cartridges, brought into the country in salt-beef kegs by the British ship *Richmond*. This not only sharpened the animosity between whites; following so closely on the German fizzle at Laulii, it raised a convulsion in the camp of Tamasese. On the 13th Brandeis addressed to Knappe his famous and fatal letter. I may not describe it as a letter of burning words, but it is plainly dictated by a burning heart. Tamasese and his chiefs, he announces, are now sick of the business, and ready to make peace with Mataafa. They began the war relying upon German help; they now see and say that "*e faaalo Siamani i Peritania ma America*, that Germany is subservient to England and the States." It is grimly given to be understood that the despatch is an ultimatum, and a last chance is being offered for the recreant ally to fulfil her pledge. To make it more plain, the document goes on with a kind of bilious irony: "The two German war-ships now in Samoa are here for the protection of German property alone; and when the *Olga* shall have arrived" [she arrived on the morrow] "the German war-ships will continue to do against the insurgents precisely as little as they have done heretofore." Plant flags, in fact.

Here was Knappe's opportunity, could he have stooped to seize it. I find it difficult to blame him that he could not. Far from being so inglorious as the treachery once contemplated by Becker, the acceptance of this ultimatum would have been still in the nature of a disgrace. Brandeis's letter, written by a German, was hard to swallow. It would have been hard to accept that solution which Knappe had so recently and so peremptorily refused to his brother consuls. And he was tempted, on the other hand, by recent changes. There was no Pelly to support de Coetlogon, who might now be disregarded. Mullan, Leary's successor, even if he were not precisely a Hand, was at least no Leary; and even if Mullan should show fight, Knappe had now three ships and could defy 119 or sink him without danger. Many small circumstances moved him in the same direction. The looting of German plantations continued; the whole force of Mataafa was to a large extent subsisted from the crops of Vailele; and armed men were to be seen openly plundering bananas, bread-fruit, and cocoa-nuts under the walls of the plantation building. On the night of the 13th the consulate stable had been broken into and a horse removed. On the 16th there was a riot in Apia between half-castes and sailors from the new ship *Olga*, each side claiming that the other was the worse of drink, both (for a wager) justly. The multiplication of flags and little neutral territories had, besides, begun to irritate the Samoans. The protests of German settlers had been received uncivilly. On the 16th the Mataafas had again sought to land in Saluafata bay, with the manifest intention to attack the Tamaseses, or (in other words) "to trespass on German lands, covered, as your Excellency knows, with flags." I quote from his requisition to Fritze, December 17th. Upon all these considerations, he goes on, it is necessary to bring the fighting to an end. Both parties are to be disarmed and returned to their villages — Mataafa first. And in case of any attempt upon Apia, the roads thither are to be held by a strong landing-party. Mataafa was to be disarmed first, perhaps rightly enough in his character of the last insurgent. Then was to have come the turn of Tamasese; but it does not appear the disarming would have had the same import or have been gone about in the same way. Germany was bound to Tamasese. No honest man would dream of blaming Knappe because he sought to redeem his country's word. The path he chose was doubtless that of honour, so far as honour was still left. But it proved to be the road to ruin.

Fritze, ranking German officer, is understood to have opposed the measure. His attitude earned him at the time unpopularity among his country-people on the spot, and should now redound to his credit. It is to be hoped 120 he extended his opposition to some of the details. If it were possible to disarm Mataafa at all, it must be done rather by prestige than force. A party of blue-jackets landed in Samoan bush, and expected to hold against Samoans a multiplicity of forest paths, had their work cut out for them. And it was plain they should be landed in the light of day, with a discouraging openness, and even with parade. To sneak ashore by night was to increase the danger of resistance and to minimise the authority of the attack. The thing was a bluff, and it is impossible to bluff with stealth. Yet this was what was tried. A landing-party was to leave the *Olga* in Apia bay at two in the morning; the landing was to be at four on two parts of the foreshore of Vailele. At eight they were to be joined by a second landing-party from the *Eber*. By nine the Olgas were to be on the crest of Letongo Mountain, and the Ebers to be moving round the promontory by the seaward paths, "with measures of precaution," disarming all whom they encountered. There was to be no firing unless fired upon. At the appointed hour (or perhaps later) on the morning of the 19th, this unpromising business was put in hand, and there moved off from the *Olga* two boats with some fifty blue-jackets between them, and a *praam* or punt containing ninety, — the boats and the whole expedition under the command of Captain-Lieutenant Jaeckel, the praam under Lieutenant Spengler. The men had each forty rounds, one day's provisions, and their flasks filled.

In the meanwhile, Mataafa sympathisers about Apia were on the alert. Knappe had informed the consuls that the ships were to put to sea next day for the protection of German property; but the Tamaseses had been less discreet. "To-morrow at the hour of seven," they had cried to their adversaries, "you will know of a difficulty, and our guns shall be made good in broken bones." An accident had pointed expectation towards Apia. The wife of Le Mmea washed for the German 121 ships — a perquisite, I suppose, for her husband's unwilling fidelity. She sent a man with linen on board the *Adler*, where he was surprised to see Le Mmea in person, and to be himself ordered instantly on shore. The news spread. If Mmea were brought down from Lotoanuu, others might have come at the same time. Tamasese himself and half his army might perhaps lie concealed on board the German ships. And a watch was accordingly set and warriors collected along the line of the shore. One detachment lay in some rifle-pits by the mouth of the Fuisá. They were commanded by Seumanu; and with his party, probably as the most contiguous to Apia, was the war-correspondent, John Klein. Of English birth, but naturalised American, this gentleman had been for some time representing the *New York World* in a very effective manner, always in the front, living in the field with the Samoans, and in all vicissitudes of weather, toiling to and fro with his despatches. His wisdom was perhaps not equal to his energy. He made himself conspicuous, going about armed to the teeth in a boat under the stars and stripes; and on one occasion, when he supposed himself fired upon by the Tamaseses, had the petulance to empty his revolver in the direction of their camp. By the light of the moon, which was then nearly down, this party observed the *Olga's* two boats and the praam, which they described as "almost sinking with men," the boats keeping well out towards the reef, the praam at the moment apparently heading for the shore. An extreme agitation seems to have reigned in the rifle-pits. What were the new-comers? What was their errand? Were they Germans or Tamaseses? Had they a mind to attack? The praam was hailed in Samoan and did not answer. It was proposed to fire upon her ere she drew near. And at last, whether on his own suggestion or that of Seumanu, Klein hailed her in English, and in terms of unnecessary melodrama. "Do not try to land here," he cried. "If you do, your blood will be upon 122 your head." Spengler, who had never the least intention to touch at the Fuisá, put up the head of the praam to her true course and continued to move up the lagoon with an offing of some seventy or eighty yards. Along all the irregularities and obstructions of the beach, across the mouth of the Vaivasa, and through the startled village of Matafangatele, Seumanu, Klein, and seven or eight others raced to keep up, spreading the alarm and rousing reinforcements as they went. Presently a man on horseback made his appearance on the opposite beach of Fangalii. Klein and the natives distinctly saw him signal with a lantern; which is the more strange, as the horseman (Captain Hufnagel, plantation manager of Vailele) had never a lantern to signal with. The praam kept in. Many men in white were seen to stand up, step overboard, and wade to shore. At the same time the eye of panic descried a breastwork of "foreign stone" (brick) upon the beach. Samoans are prepared to-day to swear to its existence, I believe conscientiously, although no such thing was ever made or ever intended in that place. The hour is doubtful. "It was the hour when the streak of dawn is seen, the hour known in the warfare of heathen times as the hour of the night attack," says the Mataafa official account. A native whom I met on the field declared it was at cock-crow. Captain Hufnagel, on the other hand, is sure it was long before the day. It was dark at least, and the moon down. Darkness made the Samoans bold; uncertainty as to the composition and purpose of the landing-party made them desperate. Fire was opened on the Germans, one of whom was here killed. The Germans returned it, and effected a lodgment on the beach; and the skirmish died again to silence. It was at this time, if not earlier, that Klein returned to Apia.

Here, then, were Spengler and the ninety men of the praam, landed on the beach in no very enviable posture, the woods in front filled with unnumbered enemies, but for the time successful. Meanwhile, Jaeckel and the boats 123 had gone outside the reef, and were to land on the other side of the Vailele promontory, at Sunga, by the buildings of the plantation. It was Hufnagel's part to go and meet them. His way led straight into the woods and through the midst of the Samoans, who had but now ceased firing. He went in the saddle and at a foot's pace, feeling speed and concealment to be equally helpless, and that if he were to fall at all, he had best fall with dignity. Not a shot was fired at him; no effort made to arrest him on his errand. As he went, he spoke and even jested with the Samoans, and they answered in good part. One fellow was leaping, yelling, and tossing his axe in the air, after the way of an excited islander. "*Faimalosi*! go it!" said Hufnagel, and the fellow laughed and redoubled his exertions. As soon as the boats entered the lagoon, fire was again opened from the woods. The fifty blue-jackets jumped overboard, hove down the boats to be a shield, and dragged them towards the landing-place. In this way, their rations, and (what was more unfortunate) some of their miserable provision of forty rounds got wetted; but the men came to shore and garrisoned the plantation house without a casualty. Meanwhile the sound of the firing from Sunga immediately renewed the hostilities at Fangalii. The civilians on shore decided that Spengler must be at once guided to the house, and Haideln, the surveyor, accepted the dangerous errand. Like Hufnagel, he was suffered to pass without question through the midst of these platonic enemies. He found Spengler some way inland on a knoll, disastrously engaged, the woods around him filled with Samoans, who were continuously reinforced. In three successive charges, cheering as they ran, the blue-jackets burst through their scattered opponents, and made good their junction with Jaeckel. Four men only remained upon the field, the other wounded being helped by their comrades or dragging themselves painfully along.

The force was now concentrated in the house and its immediate patch of garden. Their rear, to the seaward, 124 was unmolested; but on three sides they were beleaguered. On the left, the Samoans occupied and fired from some of the plantation offices. In front, a long rising crest of land in the horse-pasture commanded the house, and was lined with the assailants. And on the right, the hedge of the same paddock afforded them a dangerous cover. It was in this place that a Samoan sharpshooter was knocked over by Jaeckel with his own hand. The fire was maintained by the Samoans in the usual wasteful style. The roof was made a sieve; the balls passed clean through the house; Lieutenant Sieger, as he lay, already dying, on Hufnagel's bed, was despatched with a fresh wound. The Samoans showed themselves extremely enterprising: pushed their lines forward, ventured beyond cover, and continually threatened to envelop the garden. Thrice, at least, it was necessary to repel them by a sally. The men were brought into the house from the rear, the front doors were thrown suddenly open, and the gallant blue-jackets issued cheering: necessary, successful, but extremely costly sorties. Neither could these be pushed far. The foes were undaunted; so soon as the sailors advanced at all deep in the horse-pasture, the Samoans began to close in upon both flanks; and the sally had to be recalled. To add to the dangers of the German situation, ammunition began to run low; and the cartridge-boxes of the wounded and the dead had been already brought into use before, at about eight o'clock, the *Eber* steamed into the bay. Her commander, Wallis, threw some shells into Letongo, one of which killed five men about their cooking-pot. The Samoans began immediately to withdraw; their movements were hastened by a sortie, and the remains of the landing-party brought on board. This was an unfortunate movement; it gave an irremediable air of defeat to what might have been else claimed for a moderate success. The blue-jackets numbered a hundred and forty all told; they were engaged separately and fought under the worst conditions, in the 125 dark and among woods; their position in the house was scarce tenable; they lost in killed and wounded fifty-six, — forty per cent.; and their spirit to the end was above question. Whether we think of the poor sailor lads, always so pleasantly behaved in times of peace, or whether we call to mind the behaviour of the two civilians, Haideln and Hufnagel, we can only regret that brave men should stand to be exposed upon so poor a quarrel, or lives cast away upon an enterprise so hopeless.

News of the affair reached Apia early, and Moors, always curious of these spectacles of war, was immediately in the saddle. Near Matafangatele he met a Manono chief, whom he asked if there were any German dead. “I think there are about thirty of them knocked over,” said he. “Have you taken their heads?” asked Moors. “Yes,” said the chief. “Some foolish people did it, but I have stopped them. We ought not to cut off their heads when they do not cut off ours.” He was asked what had been done with the heads. “Two have gone to Mataafa,” he replied, “and one is buried right under where your horse is standing, in a basket wrapped in tapa.” This was afterwards dug up, and I am told on native authority that, besides the three heads, two ears were taken. Moors next asked the Manono man how he came to be going away. “The man-of-war is throwing shells,” said he. “When they stopped firing out of the house, we stopped firing also; so it was as well to scatter when the shells began. We could have killed all the white men. I wish they had been Tamaseses.” This is an *ex parte* statement, and I give it for such; but the course of the affair, and in particular the adventures of Haideln and Hufnagel, testify to a surprising lack of animosity against the Germans. About the same time or but a little earlier than this conversation, the same spirit was being displayed. Hufnagel, with a party of labour, had gone out to bring in the German dead, when he was surprised to be suddenly fired on from the wood. The boys he had with him were not negritos, but 126 Polynesians from the Gilbert Islands; and he suddenly remembered that these might be easily mistaken for a detachment of Tamaseses. Bidding his boys conceal themselves in a thicket, this brave man walked into the open. So soon as he was recognised, the firing ceased, and the labourers followed him in safety. This is chivalrous war; but there was a side to it less chivalrous. As Moors drew nearer to Vailele, he began to meet Samoans with hats, guns, and even shirts, taken from the German sailors. With one of these who had a hat and a gun he stopped and spoke. The hat was handed up for him to look at; it had the late owner’s name on the inside. “Where is he?” asked Moors. “He is dead; I cut his head off.” “You shot him?” “No, somebody else shot him in the hip. When I came, he put up his hands, and cried:

‘Don’t kill me; I am a Malietoa man.’ I did not believe him, and I cut his head off.” “Have you any ammunition to fit that gun?” “I do not know.” “What has become of the cartridge-belt?” “Another fellow grabbed that and the cartridges, and he won’t give them to me.” A dreadful and silly picture of barbaric war. The words of the German sailor must be regarded as imaginary: how was the poor lad to speak native, or the Samoan to understand German? When Moors came as far as Sunga, the *Eber* was yet in the bay, the smoke of battle still lingered among the trees, which were themselves marked with a thousand bullet-wounds. But the affair was over, the combatants, German and Samoan, were all gone, and only a couple of negrito labour boys lurked on the scene. The village of Letongo beyond was equally silent; part of it was wrecked by the shells of the *Eber*, and still smoked; the inhabitants had fled. On the beach were the native boats, perhaps five thousand dollars’ worth, deserted by the Mataafas and overlooked by the Germans, in their common hurry to escape. Still Moors held eastward by the sea-paths. It was his hope to get a view from the other side of the promontory, towards Laulii. In the way he found a house hidden in the 127 wood and among rocks, where an aged and sick woman was being tended by her elderly daughter. Last lingerers in that deserted piece of coast, they seemed indifferent to the events which had thus left them solitary, and, as the daughter said, did not know where Mataafa was, nor where Tamasese.

It is the official Samoan pretension that the Germans fired first at Fangalii. In view of all German and some native testimony, the text of Fritze’s orders, and the probabilities of the case, no honest mind will believe it for a moment. Certainly the Samoans fired first. As certainly they were betrayed into the engagement in the agitation of the moment, and it was not till afterwards that they understood what they had done. Then, indeed, all Samoa drew a breath of wonder and delight. The invincible had fallen; the men of the vaunted war-ships had been met in the field by the braves of Mataafa: a superstition was no more. Conceive this people steadily as schoolboys; and conceive the elation in any school if the head boy should suddenly arise and drive the rector from the schoolhouse. I have received one instance of the feeling instantly aroused. There lay at the time in the consular hospital an old chief who was a pet of the colonel’s. News reached him of the glorious event; he was sick, he thought himself sinking, sent for the colonel, and gave him his gun. “Don’t let the Germans get it,” said the old gentleman, and having received a promise, was at peace.

CHAPTER IX

“FUROR CONSULARIS”

December 1888 *to March* 1

Knappe, in the *Adler,* with a flag of truce at the fore, was entering Laulii Bay when the *Eber* brought him the news of the night’s reverse. His heart was doubtless wrung for his young countrymen who had been butchered and mutilated in the dark woods, or now lay suffering, and some of them dying, on the ship. And he must have been startled as he recognised his own position. He had gone too far; he had stumbled into war, and, what was worse, into defeat; he had thrown away German lives for less than nothing, and now saw himself condemned either to accept defeat, or to kick and pummel his failure into something like success; either to accept defeat, or take frenzy for a counsellor. Yesterday, in cold blood, he had judged it necessary to have the woods to the westward guarded lest the evacuation of Laulii should prove only the peril of Apia. To-day, in the irritation and alarm of failure, he forgot or despised his previous reasoning, and, though his detachment was beat back to the ships, proceeded with the remainder of his maimed design. The only change he made was to haul down the flag of truce. He had now no wish to meet with Mataafa. Words were out of season, shells must speak.

At this moment an incident befell him which must have been trying to his self-command. The new American ship *Nipsic* entered Laulii Bay; her commander, Mullan, boarded the *Adler* to protest, succeeded in wresting 129 from Knappe a period of delay in order that the women might be spared, and sent a lieutenant to Mataafa with a warning. The camp was already excited by the news and the trophies of Fangalii. Already Tamasese and Lotoanuu seemed secondary objectives to the Germans and Apia. Mullan’s message put an end to hesitation. Laulii was evacuated. The troops streamed westward by the mountain side, and took up the same day a strong position about Tanungamanono and Mangiangi, some two miles behind Apia, which they threatened with the one hand, while with the other they continued to draw their supplies from the devoted plantations of the German firm. Laulii, when it was shelled, was empty. The British flags were, of course, fired upon; and I hear that one of them was struck down, but I think every one must be privately of the mind that it was fired upon and fell, in a place where it had little business to be shown.

Such was the military epilogue to the ill-judged adventure of Fangalii; it was difficult for failure to be more complete. But the other consequences were of a darker colour and brought the whites immediately face to face in a spirit of ill-favoured animosity. Knappe was mourning the defeat and death of his country-folk, he was standing aghast over the ruin of his own career, when Mullan boarded him. The successor of Leary served himself, in that bitter moment, heir to Leary's part. And in Mullan, Knappe saw more even than the successor of Leary, — he saw in him the representative of Klein. Klein had hailed the praam from the rifle-pits; he had there uttered ill-chosen words, unhappily prophetic; it is even likely that he was present at the time of the first fire. To accuse him of the design and conduct of the whole attack was but a step forward; his own vapouring served to corroborate the accusation; and it was not long before the German consulate was in possession of sworn native testimony in support. The worth of native testimony is small, the worth of white testimony not overwhelming; and I am in the painful 130 position of not being able to subscribe either to Klein's own account of the affair or to that of his accusers. Klein was extremely flurried; his interest as a reporter must have tempted him at first to make the most of his share in the exploit, the immediate peril in which he soon found himself to stand must have at least suggested to him the idea of minimising it; one way and another, he is not a good witness. As for the natives, they were no doubt cross-examined in that hall of terror, the German consulate, where they might be trusted to lie like schoolboys, or (if the reader prefer it) like Samoans. By outside white testimony, it remains established for me that Klein returned to Apia either before or immediately after the first shots. That he ever sought or was ever allowed a share in the command may be denied peremptorily; but it is more than likely that he expressed himself in an excited manner and with a highly inflammatory effect upon his hearers. He was, at least, severely punished. The Germans, enraged by his provocative behaviour and what they thought to be his German birth, demanded him to be tried before court-martial; he had to skulk inside the sentries of the American consulate, to be smuggled on board a war-ship, and to be carried almost by stealth out of the island; and what with the agitations of his mind, and the results of a marsh fever contracted in the lines of Mataafa, reached Honolulu a very proper object of commiseration. Nor was Klein the only accused: de Coetlogon was himself involved. As the boats passed Matautu, Knappe declares a signal was made from the British consulate. Perhaps we should rather read "from its neighbourhood"; since, in the general warding of the coast, the point of Matautu could scarce have been neglected. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the Samoans, in the anxiety of that night of watching and fighting, crowded to the friendly consul for advice. Late in the night, the wounded Siteoni, lying on the colonel's verandah, one corner of which had been blinded down that 131 he might sleep, heard the coming and going of bare feet and the voices of eager consultation. And long after, a man who had been discharged from the colonel's employment took upon himself to swear an affidavit as to the nature of the advice then given, and to carry the document to the German consul. It was an act of private revenge; it fell long out of date in the good days of Dr. Stuebel, and had no result but to discredit the gentleman who volunteered it. Colonel de Coetlogon had his faults, but they did not touch his honour; his bare word would always outweigh a waggon-load of such denunciations; and he declares his behaviour on that night to have been blameless. The question was besides inquired into on the spot by Sir John Thurston, and the colonel honourably acquitted. But during the weeks that were now to follow, Knappe believed the contrary; he believed not only that Moors and others had supplied ammunition and Klein commanded in the field, but that de Coetlogon had made the signal of attack; that though his blue-jackets had bled and fallen against the arms of Samoans, these were supplied, inspired, and marshalled by Americans and English.

The legend was the more easily believed because it embraced and was founded upon so much truth. Germans lay dead, the German wounded groaned in their cots; and the cartridges by which they fell had been sold by an American and brought into the country in a British bottom. Had the transaction been entirely mercenary, it would already have been hard to swallow; but it was notoriously not so. British and Americans were notoriously the partisans of Mataafa. They rejoiced in the result of Fangalii, and so far from seeking to conceal their rejoicing, paraded and displayed it. Calumny ran high. Before the dead were buried, while the wounded yet lay in pain and fever, cowardly accusations of cowardice were levelled at the German blue-jackets. It was said they had broken and run before their enemies, and that they had huddled helpless like sheep in the plantation house. Small wonder if they 132 had; small wonder had they been utterly destroyed. But the fact was heroically otherwise; and these dastard calumnies cut to the blood. They are not forgotten; perhaps they will never be forgiven.

In the meanwhile, events were pressing towards a still more trenchant opposition. On the 20th, the three consuls met and parted without agreement, Knappe announcing that he had lost men and must take the matter in his own hands to avenge their death. On the 21st the *Olga* came before Matafangatele, ordered the delivery of all arms within the hour, and at the end of that period, none being brought, shelled and burned the village. The shells fell for the most part innocuous; an eyewitness saw children at play beside the flaming houses; not a soul was injured; and the one noteworthy event was the mutilation of Captain Hamilton's American flag. In one sense an incident too small to be chronicled, in another this was of historic interest and import. These rags of tattered bunting occasioned the display of a new sentiment in the United States; and the republic of the West, hitherto so apathetic and unwieldy, but already stung by German nonchalance, leaped to its feet for the first time at the news of this fresh insult. As though to make the inefficiency of the war-ships more apparent, three shells were thrown inland at Mangiangi; they flew high over the Mataafa camp, where the natives could "hear them singing" as they flew, and fell behind in the deep romantic valley of the Vaisingano. Mataafa had been already summoned on board the *Adler*; his life promised if he came, declared "in danger" if he came not; and he had declined in silence the unattractive invitation. These fresh hostile acts showed him that the worst had come. He was in strength, his force posted along the whole front of the mountain behind Apia, Matautu occupied, the Siumu road lined up to the houses of the town with warriors passionate for war. The occasion was unique, and there is no doubt that he designed to seize it. The same day of this bombardment, he sent word bidding all 133 English and Americans wear a black band upon their arm, so that his men should recognise and spare them. The hint was taken, and the band worn for a continuance of days. To have refused would have been insane; but to consent was unhappily to feed the resentment of the Germans by a fresh sign of intelligence with their enemies, and to widen the breach between the races by a fresh and a scarce pardonable mark of their division. The same day again the Germans repeated one of their earlier offences by firing on a boat within the harbour. Times were changed; they were now at war and in peril, the rigour of military advantage might well be seized by them and pardoned by others; but it so chanced that the bullets flew about the ears of Captain Hand, and that commander is said to have been insatiable of apologies. The affair, besides, had a deplorable effect on the inhabitants. A black band (they saw) might protect them from the Mataafas, not from undiscriminating shots. Panic ensued. The war-ships were open to receive the fugitives, and the gentlemen who had made merry over Fangalii were seen to thrust each other from the wharves in their eagerness to flee Apia. I willingly drop the curtain on the shameful picture.

Meanwhile, on the German side of the bay, a more manly spirit was exhibited in circumstances of alarming weakness. The plantation managers and overseers had all retreated to Matafele, only one (I understand) remaining at his post. The whole German colony was thus collected in one spot, and could count and wonder at its scanty numbers. Knappe declares (to my surprise) that the war-ships could not spare him more than fifty men a day. The great extension of the German quarter, he goes on, did not “allow a full occupation of the outer line”; hence they had shrunk into the western end by the firm buildings, and the inhabitants were warned to fall back on this position, in the case of an alert. So that he who had set forth, a day or so before, to disarm the Mataafas in the open field, now found his resources scarce adequate to garrison the buildings 134 of the firm. But Knappe seemed unteachable by fate. It is probable he thought he had

“Already waded in so deep,
Returning were as tedious as go o’er”;

it is certain that he continued, on the scene of his defeat and in the midst of his weakness, to bluster and menace like a conqueror. Active war, which he lacked the means of attempting, was continually threatened. On the 22nd he sought the aid of his brother consuls to maintain the neutral territory against Mataafa; and at the same time, as though meditating instant deeds of prowess, refused to be bound by it himself. This singular proposition was of course refused: Blacklock remarking that he had no fear of the natives, if these were let alone; de Coetlogon refusing in the circumstances to recognise any neutral territory at all. In vain Knappe amended and baited his proposal with the offer of forty-eight or ninety-six hours’ notice, according as his objective should be near or within the boundary of the *Eleele Sa*. It was rejected; and he learned that he must accept war with all its consequences — and not that which he desired — war with the immunities of peace.

This monstrous exigence illustrates the man’s frame of mind. It has been still further illuminated in the German white-book by printing alongside of his despatches those of the unimpassioned Fritze. On January 8th the consulate was destroyed by fire. Knappe says it was the work of incendiaries, “without doubt”; Fritze admits that “everything seems to show” it was an accident. “Tamasese’s people fit to bear arms,” writes Knappe, “are certainly for the moment equal to Mataafa’s,” though restrained from battle by the lack of ammunition. “As for Tamasese,” says Fritze of the same date, “he is now but a phantom — *dient er nur als Gespenst*. His party, for practical purposes, is no longer large. They pretend ammunition to be lacking, but what they lack most is good-will. Captain Brandeis, whose influence is now small, declares they can no longer 135 sustain a serious engagement, and is himself in the intention of leaving Samoa by the *Lübeck* of the 5th February.” And Knappe, in the same despatch, confutes himself and confirms the testimony of his naval colleague, by the admission that “the re-establishment of Tamasese’s government is, under present circumstances, not to be thought of.” Plainly, then, he was not so much seeking to deceive others, as he was himself possessed; and we must regard the whole series of his acts and despatches as the agitations of a fever.

The British steamer *Richmond* returned to Apia, January 15th. On the last voyage she had brought the ammunition already so frequently referred to; as a matter of fact, she was again bringing contraband of war. It is necessary to be explicit upon this, which served as spark to so great a flame of scandal. Knappe was justified in interfering; he would have been worthy of all condemnation if he had neglected, in his posture of semi-investment, a precaution so elementary; and the manner in which he set about attempting it was conciliatory and almost timid. He applied to Captain Hand, and begged him to accept himself the duty of “controlling” the discharge of the *Richmond’s* cargo. Hand was unable to move without his consul; and at night an armed boat from the Germans boarded, searched, and kept possession of, the suspected ship. The next day, as by an after-thought, war and martial law were proclaimed for the Samoan Islands, the introduction of contraband of war forbidden, and ships and boats declared liable to search. “All support of the rebels will be punished by martial law,” continued the proclamation, “no matter to what nationality the person [*Thäter*] may belong.”

Hand, it has been seen, declined to act in the matter of the *Richmond* without the concurrence of his consul; but I have found no evidence that either Hand or Knappe communicated with de Coetlogon, with whom they were both at daggers drawn. First the seizure and next the proclamation seem to have burst on the English consul[136] from a clear sky; and he wrote on the same day, throwing doubt on Knappe’s authority to declare war. Knappe replied on the 20th that the Imperial German Government had been at war as a matter of fact since December 19th, and that it was only for the convenience of the subjects of other states that he had been empowered to make a formal declaration. “From that moment,” he added, “martial law prevails in Samoa.” De Coetlogon instantly retorted, declining martial law for British subjects, and announcing a proclamation in that sense. Instantly, again, came that astonishing document, Knappe’s rejoinder, without pause, without reflection — the pens screeching on the paper, the messengers (you would think) running from consulate to consulate: “I have had the honour to receive your Excellency’s [*Hochwohlgeboren*] agreeable communication of to-day. Since, on the ground of received instructions, martial law has been declared in Samoa, British subjects as well as others fall under its application. I warn you therefore to abstain from such a proclamation as you announce in your letter. It will be such a piece of business as shall make yourself answerable under martial law. Besides, your proclamation will be disregarded.” De Coetlogon of course issued his proclamation at once, Knappe retorted with another, and night closed on the first stage of this insane collision. I hear the German consul was on this day prostrated with fever; charity at least must suppose him hardly answerable for his language.

Early on the 21st, Mr. Mansfield Gallien, a passing traveller, was seized in his berth on board the *Richmond*, and carried, half-dressed, on board a German war-ship. His offence was, in the circumstances and after the proclamation, substantial. He had gone the day before, in the spirit of a tourist to Mataafa’s camp, had spoken with the king, and had even recommended him an appeal to Sir George Grey. Fritze, I gather, had been long uneasy; this arrest on board a British ship filled the measure. 137 Doubtless, as he had written long before, the consul alone was responsible “on the legal side”; but the captain began to ask himself, “What next?” — telegraphed direct home for instructions, “Is arrest of foreigners on foreign vessels legal?” — and was ready, at a word from Captain Hand, to discharge his dangerous prisoner. The word in question (so the story goes) was not without a kind of wit. “I wish you would set that man ashore,” Hand is reported to have said, indicating Gallien; “I wish you would set that man ashore, to save me the trouble.” The same day de Coetlogon published a proclamation requesting captains to submit to search for contraband of war.

On the 22nd the *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser* was suppressed by order of Fritze. I have hitherto refrained from mentioning the single paper of our islands, that I might deal with it once for all. It is of course a tiny sheet; but I have often had occasion to wonder at the ability of its articles, and almost always at the decency of its tone. Officials may at times be a little roughly, and at times a little captiously, criticised; private persons are habitually respected; and there are many papers in England, and still more in the States, even of leading organs in chief cities, that might envy, and would do well to imitate, the courtesy and discretion of the *Samoa Times*. Yet the editor, Cusack, is only an amateur in journalism, and a carpenter by trade. His chief fault is one perhaps inevitable in so small a place — that he seems a little in the leading of a clique; but his interest in the public weal is genuine and generous. One man’s meat is another man’s poison: Anglo-Saxons and Germans have been differently brought up. To our galled experience the paper appears moderate; to their untried sensations it seems violent. We think a public man fair game; we think it a part of his duty, and I am told he finds it a part of his reward, to be continually canvassed by the press. For the Germans, on the other hand, an official wears a certain sacredness; when he is called over the coals, they are shocked, and (if 138 the official be a German) feel that Germany itself has been insulted. The *Samoa Times* had been long a mountain of offence. Brandeis had imported from the colonies another printer of the name of Jones, to deprive Cusack of the government printing. German sailors had come ashore one day, wild with offended patriotism, to punish the editor with stripes, and the result was delightfully amusing. The champions asked for the English printer. They were shown the wrong man, and the blows intended for Cusack had hailed on the shoulders of his rival Jones. On the 12th, Cusack had reprinted an article from a San Francisco paper; the Germans had complained; and de Coetlogon, in a moment of weakness, had fined the editor twenty pounds. The judgment was afterwards reversed in Fiji; but even at the time it had not satisfied the Germans. And so now, on the third day of martial law, the paper was suppressed. Here we have another of these international obscurities. To Fritze the step seemed natural and obvious; for Anglo-Saxons it was a hand laid upon the altar; and the month was scarce out before the voice of Senator Frye announced to his colleagues that free speech had been suppressed in Samoa.

Perhaps we must seek some similar explanation for Fritze's short-lived code, published and withdrawn the next day, the 23rd. Fritze himself was in no humour for extremities. He was much in the position of a lieutenant who should perceive his captain urging the ship upon the rocks. It is plain he had lost all confidence in his commanding officer "upon the legal side"; and we find him writing home with anxious candour. He had understood that martial law implied military possession; he was in military possession of nothing but his ship, and shrewdly suspected that his martial jurisdiction should be confined within the same limits. "As a matter of fact," he writes, "we do not occupy the territory, and cannot give foreigners the necessary protection, because Mataafa and his people can at any moment forcibly interrupt me in my jurisdiction." 139 Yet in the eyes of Anglo-Saxons the severity of his code appeared burlesque. I give but three of its provisions. The crime of inciting German troops "by any means, as, for instance, informing them of proclamations by the enemy," was punishable with death; that of "publishing or secretly distributing anything, whether printed or written, bearing on the war," with prison or deportation; and that of calling or attending a public meeting, unless permitted, with the same. Such were the tender mercies of Knappe, lurking in the western end of the German quarter, where Mataafa could "at any moment" interrupt his jurisdiction.

On the 22nd (day of the suppression of the *Times*) de Coetlogon wrote to inquire if hostilities were intended against Great Britain, which Knappe on the same day denied. On the 23rd de Coetlogon sent a complaint of hostile acts, such as the armed and forcible entry of the *Richmond* before the declaration and arrest of Gallien. In his reply, dated the 24th, Knappe took occasion to repeat, although now with more self-command, his former threat against de Coetlogon. “I am still of the opinion,” he writes, “that even foreign consuls are liable to the application of martial law, if they are guilty of offences against the belligerent state.” The same day (24th) de Coetlogon complained that Fletcher, manager for Messrs. MacArthur, had been summoned by Fritze. In answer, Knappe had “the honour to inform your Excellency that since the declaration of the state of war, British subjects are liable to martial law, and Mr. Fletcher will be arrested if he does not appear.” Here, then, was the gauntlet thrown down, and de Coetlogon was burning to accept it. Fletcher’s offence was this. Upon the 22nd a steamer had come in from Wellington, specially chartered to bring German despatches to Apia. The rumour came along with her from New Zealand that in these despatches Knappe would find himself rebuked, and Fletcher was accused of having “interested himself in the spreading of this rumour.” His 140 arrest was actually ordered, when Hand succeeded in persuading him to surrender. At the German court, the case was dismissed “*wegen Nichtigkeit*”; and the acute stage of these distempers may be said to have ended. Blessed are the peacemakers. Hand had perhaps averted a collision. What is more certain, he had offered to the world a perfectly original reading of the part of British seaman.

Hand may have averted a collision, I say; but I am tempted to believe otherwise. I am tempted to believe the threat to arrest Fletcher was the last mutter of the declining tempest and a mere sop to Knappe’s self-respect. I am tempted to believe the rumour in question was substantially correct, and the steamer from Wellington had really brought the German consul grounds for hesitation, if not orders to retreat. I believe the unhappy man to have awakened from a dream, and to have read ominous writing on the wall. An enthusiastic popularity surrounded him among the Germans. It was natural. Consul and colony had passed through an hour of serious peril, and the consul had set the example of undaunted courage. He was entertained at dinner. Fritze, who was known to have secretly opposed him, was scorned and avoided. But the clerks of the German firm were one thing, Prince Bismarck was another; and on a cold review of these events, it is not improbable that Knappe may have envied the position of his naval colleague. It is certain, at least, that he set himself to shuffle and capitulate; and when the blow fell, he was able to reply that the martial law business had in the meanwhile come right; that the English and American consular courts stood open for ordinary cases; and that in different conversations with Captain Hand, “who has always maintained friendly intercourse with the German authorities," it had been repeatedly explained that only the supply of weapons and ammunition, or similar aid and support, was to come under German martial law. Was it weapons or ammunition that Fletcher had supplied? 141 But it is unfair to criticise these wrigglings of an unfortunate in a false position.

In a despatch of the 23rd, which has not been printed, Knappe had told his story: how he had declared war, subjected foreigners to martial law, and been received with a counter-proclamation by the English consul; and how (in an interview with Mataafa chiefs at the plantation house of Motuotua, of which I cannot find the date) he had demanded the cession of arms and of ringleaders for punishment, and proposed to assume the government of the islands. On February 12th he received Bismarck's answer: "You had no right to take foreigners from the jurisdiction of their consuls. The protest of your English colleague is grounded. In disputes which may arise from this cause you will find yourself in the wrong. The demand formulated by you, as to the assumption of the government of Samoa by Germany, lay outside of your instructions and of our design. Take it immediately back. If your telegram is here rightly understood, I cannot call your conduct good." It must be a hard heart that does not sympathise with Knappe in the hour when he received this document. Yet it may be said that his troubles were still in the beginning. Men had contended against him, and he had not prevailed; he was now to be at war with the elements, and find his name identified with an immense disaster.

One more date, however, must be given first. It was on February 27th that Fritze formally announced martial law to be suspended, and himself to have relinquished the control of the police.

CHAPTER X

THE HURRICANE

March 1

The so-called harbour of Apia is formed in part by a recess of the coast-line at Matautu, in part by the slim peninsula of Mulinuu, and in part by the fresh waters of the Mulivai and Vaisingano. The barrier reef — that singular breakwater that makes so much of the circuit of Pacific islands — is carried far to sea at Matautu and Mulinuu; inside of these two horns it runs sharply landward, and between them it is burst or dissolved by the fresh water. The shape of the enclosed anchorage may be compared to a high-shouldered jar or bottle with a funnel mouth. Its sides are almost everywhere of coral; for the reef not only bounds it to seaward and forms the neck and mouth, but skirting about the beach, it forms the bottom also. As in the bottle of commerce, the bottom is re-entrant, and the shore-reef runs prominently forth into the basin and makes a dangerous cape opposite the fairway of the entrance. Danger is, therefore, on all hands. The entrance gapes three cables wide at the narrowest, and the formidable surf of the Pacific thunders both outside and in. There are days when speech is difficult in the chambers of shore-side houses; days when no boat can land, and when men are broken by stroke of sea against the wharves. As I write these words, three miles in the mountains, and with the land-breeze still blowing from the island summit, the sound of that vexed harbour hums in my ears. Such a creek in my native coast of Scotland would scarce be 143 dignified with the mark of an anchor in the chart; but in the favoured climate of Samoa, and with the mechanical regularity of the winds in the Pacific, it forms, for ten or eleven months out of the twelve, a safe if hardly a commodious port. The ill-found island traders ride there with their insufficient moorings the year through, and discharge, and are loaded, without apprehension. Of danger, when it comes, the glass gives timely warning; and that any modern war-ship, furnished with the power of steam, should have been lost in Apia, belongs not so much to nautical as to political history.

The weather throughout all that winter (the turbulent summer of the islands) was unusually fine, and the circumstance had been commented on as providential, when so many Samoans were lying on their weapons in the bush. By February it began to break in occasional gales. On February 10th a German brigantine was driven ashore. On the 14th the same misfortune befell an American brigantine and a schooner. On both these days, and again on the 7th March, the men-of-war must steam to their anchors. And it was in this last month, the most dangerous of the twelve, that man's animosities crowded that indentation of the reef with costly, populous, and vulnerable ships.

I have shown, perhaps already at too great a length, how violently passion ran upon the spot; how high this series of blunders and mishaps had heated the resentment of the Germans against all other nationalities and of all other nationalities against the Germans. But there was one country beyond the borders of Samoa where the question had aroused a scarce less angry sentiment. The breach of the Washington Congress, the evidence of Sewall before a sub-committee on foreign relations, the proposal to try Klein before a military court, and the rags of Captain Hamilton's flag, had combined to stir the people of the States to an unwonted fervour. Germany was for the time the abhorred of nations. Germans in 144 America publicly disowned the country of their birth. In Honolulu, so near the scene of action, German and American young men fell to blows in the street. In the same city, from no traceable source, and upon no possible authority, there arose a rumour of tragic news to arrive by the next occasion, that the *Nipsic* had opened fire on the *Adler*, and the *Adler* had sunk her on the first reply. Punctually on the day appointed, the news came; and the two nations, instead of being plunged into war, could only mingle tears over the loss of heroes.

By the second week in March three American ships were in Apia bay, — the *Nipsic*, the *Vandalia*, and the *Trenton*, carrying the flag of Rear-Admiral Kimberley; three German, — the *Adler*, the *Eber*, and the *Olga*; and one British, — the *Calliope*, Captain Kane. Six merchantmen, ranging from twenty-five up to five hundred tons, and a number of small craft, further encumbered the anchorage. Its capacity is estimated by Captain Kane at four large ships; and the latest arrivals, the *Vandalia* and *Trenton*, were in consequence excluded, and lay without in the passage. Of the seven war-ships, the seaworthiness of two was questionable: the *Trenton's*, from an original defect in her construction, often reported, never remedied — her hawse-pipes leading in on the berth-deck; the *Eber's*, from an injury to her screw in the blow of February 14th. In this overcrowding of ships in an open entry of the reef, even the eye of the landsman could spy danger; and Captain-Lieutenant Wallis of the *Eber* openly blamed and lamented, not many hours before the catastrophe, their helpless posture. Temper once more triumphed. The army of Mataafa still hung imminent behind the town; the German quarter was still daily garrisoned with fifty sailors from the squadron; what was yet more influential, Germany and the States, at least in Apia bay, were on the brink of war, viewed each other with looks of hatred, and scarce observed the letter of civility. On the day of the admiral's arrival, Knappe failed to call on him, and on the 145 morrow called on him while he was on shore. The slight was remarked and resented, and the two squadrons clung more obstinately to their dangerous station.

On the 15th the barometer fell to 29.11 in. by 2 p.m. This was the moment when every sail in port should have escaped. Kimberley, who flew the only broad pennant, should certainly have led the way: he clung, instead, to his moorings, and the Germans doggedly followed his example: semi-belligerents, daring each other and the violence of heaven. Kane, less immediately involved, was led in error by the report of residents and a fallacious rise in the glass; he stayed with the others, a misjudgment that was like to cost him dear. All were moored, as is the custom in Apia, with two anchors practically east and west, clear hawse to the north, and a kedge astern. Topmasts were struck, and the ships made snug. The night closed black, with sheets of rain. By midnight it blew a gale; and by the morning watch, a tempest. Through what remained of darkness, the captains impatiently expected day, doubtful if they were dragging, steaming gingerly to their moorings, and afraid to steam too much.

Day came about six, and presented to those on shore a seizing and terrific spectacle. In the pressure of the squalls the bay was obscured as if by midnight, but between them a great part of it was clearly if darkly visible amid driving mist and rain. The wind blew into the harbour mouth. Naval authorities describe it as of hurricane force. It had, however, few or none of the effects on shore suggested by that ominous word, and was successfully withstood by trees and buildings. The agitation of the sea, on the other hand, surpassed experience and description. Seas that might have awakened surprise and terror in the midst of the Atlantic ranged bodily and (it seemed to observers) almost without diminution into the belly of that flask-shaped harbour; and the war-ships were alternately 146 buried from view in the trough, or seen standing on end against the breast of billows.

The *Trenton* at daylight still maintained her position in the neck of the bottle. But five of the remaining ships tossed, already close to the bottom, in a perilous and helpless crowd; threatening ruin to each other as they tossed; threatened with a common and imminent destruction on the reefs. Three had been already in collision: the *Olga* was injured in the quarter, the *Adler* had lost her bowsprit; the *Nipsic* had lost her smoke-stack, and was making steam with difficulty, maintaining her fire with barrels of pork, and the smoke and sparks pouring along the level of the deck. For the seventh war-ship the day had come too late; the *Eber* had finished her last cruise; she was to be seen no more save by the eyes of divers. A coral reef is not only an instrument of destruction, but a place of sepulture; the submarine cliff is profoundly undercut, and presents the mouth of a huge antre in which the bodies of men and the hulls of ships are alike hurled down and buried. The *Eber* had dragged anchors with the rest; her injured screw disabled her from steaming vigorously up; and a little before day she had struck the front of the coral, come off, struck again, and gone down stern foremost, oversetting as she went, into the gaping hollow of the reef. Of her whole complement of nearly eighty, four souls were cast alive on the beach; and the bodies of the remainder were, by the voluminous outpouring of the flooded streams, scoured at last from the harbour, and strewed naked on the seaboard of the island.

Five ships were immediately menaced with the same destruction. The *Eber* vanished — the four poor survivors on shore — read a dreadful commentary on their danger; which was swelled out of all proportion by the violence of their own movements as they leaped and fell among the billows. By seven the *Nipsic* was so fortunate as to avoid the reef and beach upon a space of sand; where she was immediately deserted by her crew, with the 147 assistance of Samoans, not without loss of life. By about eight it was the turn of the *Adler*. She was close down upon the reef; doomed herself, it might yet be possible to save a portion of her crew; and for this end Captain Fritze placed his reliance on the very hugeness of the seas that threatened him. The moment was watched for with the anxiety of despair, but the coolness of disciplined courage. As she rose on the fatal wave, her moorings were simultaneously slipped; she broached to in rising; and the sea heaved her bodily upward and cast her down with a concussion on the summit of the reef, where she lay on her beam-ends, her back broken, buried in breaching seas, but safe. Conceive a table: the *Eber* in the darkness had been smashed against the rim and flung below; the *Adler*, cast free in the nick of opportunity, had been thrown upon the top. Many were injured in the concussion; many tossed into the water; twenty perished. The survivors crept again on board their ship, as it now lay, and as it still remains, keel to the waves, a monument of the sea's potency. In still weather, under a cloudless sky, in those seasons when that ill-named ocean, the Pacific, suffers its vexed shores to rest, she lies high and dry, the spray scarce touching her — the hugest structure of man's hands within a circuit of a thousand miles — tossed up there like a schoolboy's cap upon a shelf; broken like an egg; a thing to dream of.

The unfriendly consuls of Germany and Britain were both that morning in Matautu, and both displayed their nobler qualities. De Coetlogon, the grim old soldier, collected his family and kneeled with them in an agony of prayer for those exposed. Knappe, more fortunate in that he was called to a more active service, must, upon the striking of the *Adler*, pass to his own consulate. From this he was divided by the Vaisingano, now a raging torrent, impetuously charioting the trunks of trees. A kelpie might have dreaded to attempt the passage; we may conceive this brave but unfortunate and now ruined man to have found a natural joy in the exposure of his life; and 148 twice that day, coming and going, he braved the fury of the river. It was possible, in spite of the darkness of the hurricane and the continual breaching of the seas, to remark human movements on the *Adler*; and by the help of Samoans, always nobly forward in the work, whether for friend or enemy, Knappe sought long to get a line conveyed from shore, and was for long defeated. The shore guard of fifty men stood to their arms the while upon the beach, useless themselves, and a great deterrent of Samoan usefulness. It was perhaps impossible that this mistake should be avoided. What more natural, to the mind of a European, than that the Mataafas should fall upon the Germans in this hour of their disadvantage? But they had no other thought than to assist; and those who now rallied beside Knappe braved (as they supposed) in doing so a double danger, from the fury of the sea and the weapons of their enemies. About nine, a quarter-master swam ashore, and reported all the officers and some sixty men alive but in pitiable case; some with broken limbs, others insensible from the drenching of the breakers. Later in the forenoon, certain valorous Samoans succeeded in reaching the wreck and returning with a line; but it was speedily broken; and all subsequent attempts proved unavailing, the strongest adventurers being cast back again by the bursting seas. Thenceforth, all through that day and night, the deafened survivors must continue to endure their martyrdom and one officer died, it was supposed from agony of mind, in his inverted cabin.

Three ships still hung on the next margin of destruction, steaming desperately to their moorings, dashed helplessly together. The *Calliope* was the nearest in; she had the *Vandalia* close on her port side and a little ahead, the *Olga* close a-starboard, the reef under her heel; and steaming and veering on her cables, the unhappy ship fenced with her three dangers. About a quarter to nine she carried away the *Vandalia's* quarter gallery with her jib-boom; a moment later, the *Olga* had near rammed her 149 from the other side. By nine the *Vandalia* dropped down on her too fast to be avoided, and clapped her stern under the bowsprit of the English ship, the fastenings of which were burst asunder as she rose. To avoid cutting her down, it was necessary for the *Calliope* to stop and even to reverse her engines; and her rudder was at the moment — or it seemed so to the eyes of those on board — within ten feet of the reef. "Between the *Vandalia* and the reef" (writes Kane, in his excellent report) "it was destruction." To repeat Fritze's manœuvre with the *Adler* was impossible; the *Calliope* was too heavy. The one possibility of escape was to go out. If the engines should stand, if they should have power to drive the ship against wind and sea, if she should answer the helm, if the wheel, rudder, and gear should hold out, and if they were favoured with a clear blink of weather in which to see and avoid the outer reef — there, and there only, were safety. Upon this catalogue of "ifs" Kane staked his all. He signalled to the engineer for every pound of steam — and at that moment (I am told) much of the machinery was already red-hot. The ship was sheered well to starboard of the *Vandalia*, the last remaining cable slipped. For a time — and there was no onlooker so cold-blooded as to offer a guess at its duration — the *Calliope* lay stationary; then gradually drew ahead. The highest speed claimed for her that day is of one sea-mile an hour. The question of times and seasons, throughout all this roaring business, is obscured by a dozen contradictions; I have but chosen what appeared to be the most consistent; but if I am to pay any attention to the time named by Admiral Kimberley, the *Calliope*, in this first stage of her escape, must have taken more than two hours to cover less than four cables. As she thus crept seaward, she buried bow and stern alternately under the billows.

In the fairway of the entrance the flagship *Trenton* still held on. Her rudder was broken, her wheel carried away; within she was flooded with water from the peccant 150 hawse-pipes; she had just made the signal "fires extinguished," and lay helpless, awaiting the inevitable end. Between this melancholy hulk and the external reef Kane must find a path. Steering within fifty yards of the reef (for which she was actually headed) and her foreyard passing on the other hand over the *Trenton's* quarter as she rolled, the *Calliope* sheered between the rival dangers, came to the wind triumphantly, and was once more pointed for the sea and safety. Not often in naval history was there a moment of more sickening peril, and it was dignified by one of those incidents that reconcile the chronicler with his otherwise abhorrent task. From the doomed flagship the Americans hailed the success of the English with a cheer. It was led by the old admiral in person, rang out over the storm with holiday vigour, and was answered by the Calliopes with an emotion easily conceived. This ship of their kinsfolk was almost the last external object seen from the *Calliope* for hours; immediately after, the mists closed about her till the morrow. She was safe at sea again — *una de multis* — with a damaged foreyard, and a loss of all the ornamental work about her bow and stern, three anchors, one kedge-anchor, fourteen lengths of chain, four boats, the jib-boom, bobstay, and bands and fastenings of the bowsprit.

Shortly after Kane had slipped his cable, Captain Schoonmaker, despairing of the *Vandalia*, succeeded in passing astern of the *Olga*, in the hope to beach his ship beside the *Nipsic*. At a quarter to eleven her stern took the reef, her hand swung to starboard, and she began to fill and settle. Many lives of brave men were sacrificed in the attempt to get a line ashore; the captain, exhausted by his exertions, was swept from deck by a sea; and the rail being soon awash, the survivors took refuge in the tops.

Out of thirteen that had lain there the day before, there were now but two ships afloat in Apia harbour, and one of these was doomed to be the bane of the other. About 3 p.m. the *Trenton* parted one cable, and shortly after 151 a second. It was sought to keep her head to wind with storm-sails and by the ingenious expedient of filling the rigging with seamen; but in the fury of the gale, and in that sea, perturbed alike by the gigantic billows and the volleying discharges of the rivers, the rudderless ship drove down stern foremost into the inner basin; ranging, plunging, and striking like a frightened horse; drifting on destruction for herself and bringing it to others. Twice the *Olga* (still well under command) avoided her impact by the skilful use of helm and engines. But about four the vigilance of the Germans was deceived, and the ships collided; the *Olga* cutting into the *Trenton's* quarters, first from one side, then from the other, and losing at the same time two of her own cables. Captain von Ehrhardt instantly slipped the remainder of his moorings, and setting fore and aft canvas, and going full steam ahead, succeeded in beaching his ship in Matautu; whither Knappe, recalled by this new disaster, had returned. The berth was perhaps the best in the harbour, and von Ehrhardt signalled that ship and crew were in security.

The *Trenton*, guided apparently by an under-tow or eddy from the discharge of the Vaisingano, followed in the course of the *Nipsic* and *Vandalia*, and skirted south-eastward along the front of the shore reef, which her keel was at times almost touching. Hitherto she had brought disaster to her foes; now she was bringing it to friends. She had already proved the ruin of the *Olga*, the one ship that had rid out the hurricane in safety; now she beheld across her course the submerged *Vandalia*, the tops filled with exhausted seamen. Happily the approach of the *Trenton* was gradual, and the time employed to advantage. Rockets and lines were thrown into the tops of the friendly wreck; the approach of danger was transformed into a means of safety; and before the ships struck, the men from the *Vandalia's* main and mizzen masts, which went immediately by the board in the collision, were already mustered on the 152 *Trenton's* decks. Those from the foremast were next rescued; and the flagship settled gradually into a position alongside her neighbour, against which she beat all night with violence. Out of the crew of the *Vandalia* forty-three had perished; of the four hundred and fifty on board the *Trenton*, only one.

The night of the 16th was still notable for a howling tempest and extraordinary floods of rain. It was feared the wreck could scarce continue to endure the breaching of the seas; among the Germans, the fate of those on board the *Adler* awoke keen anxiety; and Knappe, on the beach of Matautu, and the other officers of his consulate on that of Matafele, watched all night. The morning of the 17th displayed a scene of devastation rarely equalled: the *Adler* high and dry, the *Olga* and *Nipsic* beached, the *Trenton* partly piled on the *Vandalia* and herself sunk to the gun-deck; no sail afloat; and the beach heaped high with the *débris* of ships and the wreck of mountain forests. Already, before the day, Seumanu, the chief of Apia, had gallantly ventured forth by boat through the subsiding fury of the seas, and had succeeded in communicating with the admiral; already, or as soon after as the dawn permitted, rescue lines were rigged, and the survivors were with difficulty and danger begun to be brought to shore. And soon the cheerful spirit of the admiral added a new feature to the scene. Surrounded as he was by the crews of two wrecked ships, he paraded the band of the *Trenton*, and the bay was suddenly enlivened with the strains of “Hail Columbia.”

During a great part of the day the work of rescue was continued, with many instances of courage and devotion; and for a long time succeeding, the almost inexhaustible harvest of the beach was to be reaped. In the first employment, the Samoans earned the gratitude of friend and foe; in the second, they surprised all by an unexpected virtue, that of honesty. The greatness of the disaster, and the magnitude of the treasure now rolling at their feet, may perhaps have roused in their bosoms an emotion 153 too serious for the rule of greed, or perhaps that greed was for the moment satiated. Sails that twelve strong Samoans could scarce drag from the water, great guns (one of which was rolled by the sea on the body of a man, the only native slain in all the hurricane), an infinite wealth of rope and wood, of tools and weapons, tossed upon the beach. Yet I have never heard that much was stolen; and beyond question, much was very honestly returned. On both accounts, for the saving of life and the restoration of property, the government of the United States showed themselves generous in reward. A fine boat was fitly presented to Seumanu; and rings, watches, and money were lavished on all who had assisted. The Germans also gave money at the rate (as I receive the tale) of three dollars a head for every German saved. The obligation was in this instance incommensurably deep, those with whom they were at war had saved the German blue-jackets at the venture of their lives; Knappe was, besides, far from ungenerous; and I can only explain the niggard figure by supposing it was paid from his own pocket. In one case, at least, it was refused. “I have saved three Germans,” said the rescuer; “I will make you a present of the three.”

The crews of the American and German squadrons were now cast, still in a bellicose temper, together on the beach. The discipline of the Americans was notoriously loose; the crew of the *Nipsic* had earned a character for lawlessness in other ports; and recourse was had to stringent and indeed extraordinary measures. The town was divided in two camps, to which the different nationalities were confined. Kimberley had his quarter sentinelled and patrolled. Any seaman disregarding a challenge was to be shot dead; any tavern-keeper who sold spirits to an American sailor was to have his tavern broken and his stock destroyed. Many of the publicans were German; and Knappe, having narrated these rigorous but necessary dispositions, wonders (grinning to himself 154 over his despatch) how far these Americans will go in their assumption of jurisdiction over Germans. Such as they were, the measures were successful. The incongruous mass of castaways was kept in peace, and at last shipped in peace out of the islands.

Kane returned to Apia on the 19th, to find the *Calliope* the sole survivor of thirteen sail. He thanked his men, and in particular the engineers, in a speech of unusual feeling and beauty, of which one who was present remarked to another, as they left the ship, “This has been a means of grace.” Nor did he forget to thank and compliment the admiral; and I cannot deny myself the pleasure of transcribing from Kimberley’s reply some generous and engaging words. “My dear captain,” he wrote, “your kind note received. You went out splendidly, and we all felt from our hearts for you, and our cheers came with sincerity and admiration for the able manner in which you handled your ship. We could not have been gladder if it had been one of our ships, for in a time like that I can truly say with old Admiral Josiah Latnall, ‘that blood *is* thicker than water.’” One more trait will serve to build up the image of this typical sea-officer. A tiny schooner, the *Equator*, Captain Edwin Reid, dear to myself from the memories of a six months’ cruise, lived out upon the high seas the fury of that tempest which had piled with wrecks the harbour of Apia, found a refuge in Pango-Pango, and arrived at last in the desolated port with a welcome and lucrative cargo of pigs. The admiral was glad to have the pigs; but what most delighted the man’s noble and childish soul, was to see once more afloat the colours of his country.

Thus, in what seemed the very article of war, and within the duration of a single day, the sword-arm of each of the two angry Powers was broken; their formidable ships reduced to junk; their disciplined hundreds to a horde of castaways, fed with difficulty, and the fear of whose misconduct marred the sleep of their commanders. Both paused aghast; both had time to recognise that not 155 the whole Samoan Archipelago was worth the loss in men and costly ships already suffered. The so-called hurricane of March 16th made thus a marking epoch in world-history; directly, and at once, it brought about the congress and treaty of Berlin; indirectly, and by a process still continuing, it founded the modern navy of the States. Coming years and other historians will declare the influence of that.

CHAPTER XI

LAUPEPA AND MATAAFA

1889-1

With the hurricane, the broken war-ships, and the stranded sailors, I am at an end of violence, and my tale flows henceforth among carpet incidents. The blue-jackets on Apia beach were still jealously held apart by sentries, when the powers at home were already seeking a peaceable solution. It was agreed, so far as might be, to obliterate two years of blundering; and to resume in 1889, and at Berlin, those negotiations which had been so unhappily broken off at Washington in 1887. The example thus offered by Germany is rare in history; in the career of Prince Bismarck, so far as I am instructed, it should stand unique. On a review of these two years of blundering, bullying, and failure in a little isle of the Pacific, he seems magnanimously to have owned his policy was in the wrong. He left Fangalii unexpiated; suffered that house of cards, the Tamasese government, to fall by its own frailty and without remark or lamentation; left the Samoan question openly and fairly to the conference: and in the meanwhile, to allay the local heats engendered by Becker and Knappe, he sent to Apia that invaluable public servant, Dr. Stuebel. I should be a dishonest man if I did not bear testimony to the loyalty since shown by Germans in Samoa. Their position was painful; they had talked big in the old days, now they had to sing small. Even Stuebel returned to the islands under the prejudice of an unfortunate record. To the minds of the Samoans 157 his name represented the beginning of their sorrows; and in his first term of office he had unquestionably driven hard. The greater his merit in the surprising success of the second. So long as he stayed, the current of affairs moved smoothly; he left behind him on his departure all men at peace; and whether by fortune, or for the want of that wise hand of guidance, he was scarce gone before the clouds began to gather once more on our horizon.

Before the first convention, Germany and the States hauled down their flags. It was so done again before the second; and Germany, by a still more emphatic step of retrogression, returned the exile Laupepa to his native shores. For two years the unfortunate man had trembled and suffered in the Cameroons, in Germany, in the rainy Marshalls. When he left (September 1887) Tamasese was king, served by five iron war-ships; his right to rule (like a dogma of the Church) was placed outside dispute; the Germans were still, as they were called at that last tearful interview in the house by the river, "the invincible strangers"; the thought of resistance, far less the hope of success, had not yet dawned on the Samoan mind. He returned (November 1889) to a changed world. The Tupua party was reduced to sue for peace, Brandeis was withdrawn, Tamasese was dying obscurely of a broken heart; the German flag no longer waved over the capital; and over all the islands one figure stood supreme. During Laupepa's absence this man had succeeded him in all his honours and titles, in tenfold more than all his power and popularity. He was the idol of the whole nation but the rump of the Tamaseses, and of these he was already the secret admiration. In his position there was but one weak point, — that he had even been tacitly excluded by the Germans. Becker, indeed, once coquetted with the thought of patronising him; but the project had no sequel, and it stands alone. In every other juncture of history the German attitude has been the same. Choose whom you will to be king; when he has 158 failed, choose whom you please to succeed him; when the second fails also, replace the first: upon the one condition, that Mataafa be excluded. "*Pourvu qu'il sache signer*!" — an official is said to have thus summed up the qualifications necessary in a Samoan king. And it was perhaps feared that Mataafa could do no more and might not always do so much. But this original diffidence was heightened by late events to something verging upon animosity. Fangalii was unavenged: the arms of Mataafa were

Nondum inexpiatis uncta cruoribus,
Still soiled with the unexpiated blood

of German sailors; and though the chief was not present in the field, nor could have heard of the affair till it was over, he had reaped from it credit with his countrymen and dislike from the Germans.

I may not say that trouble was hoped. I must say — if it were not feared, the practice of diplomacy must teach a very hopeful view of human nature. Mataafa and Laupepa, by the sudden repatriation of the last, found themselves face to face in conditions of exasperating rivalry. The one returned from the dead of exile to find himself replaced and excelled. The other, at the end of a long, anxious, and successful struggle, beheld his only possible competitor resuscitated from the grave. The qualities of both, in this difficult moment, shone out nobly. I feel I seem always less than partial to the lovable Laupepa; his virtues are perhaps not those which chiefly please me, and are certainly not royal; but he found on his return an opportunity to display the admirable sweetness of his nature. The two entered into a competition of generosity, for which I can recall no parallel in history, each waiving the throne for himself, each pressing it upon his rival; and they embraced at last a compromise the terms of which seem to have been always obscure and are now disputed. Laupepa at least resumed his style of King of Samoa; Mataafa retained much of the conduct of affairs, and continued to receive much of the attendance and respect befitting 159 royalty; and the two Malietoas, with so many causes of disunion, dwelt and met together in the same town like kinsmen. It was so, that I first saw them; so, in a house set about with sentries — for there was still a haunting fear of Germany, — that I heard them relate their various experience in the past; heard Laupepa tell with touching candour of the sorrows of his exile, and Mataafa with mirthful simplicity of his resources and anxieties in the war. The relation was perhaps too beautiful to last; it was perhaps impossible but the titular king should grow at last uneasily conscious of the *maire de palais* at his side, or the king-maker be at last offended by some shadow of distrust or assumption in his creature. I repeat the words king-maker and creature; it is so that Mataafa himself conceives of their relation: surely not without justice; for, had he not contended and prevailed, and been helped by the folly of consuls and the fury of the storm, Laupepa must have died in exile.

Foreigners in these islands know little of the course of native intrigue. Partly the Samoans cannot explain, partly they will not tell. Ask how much a master can follow of the puerile politics in any school; so much and no more we may understand of the events which surround and menace us with their results. The missions may perhaps have been to blame. Missionaries are perhaps apt to meddle overmuch outside their discipline; it is a fault which should be judged with mercy; the problem is sometimes so insidiously presented that even a moderate and able man is betrayed beyond his own intention; and the missionary in such a land as Samoa is something else besides a minister of mere religion; he represents civilisation, he is condemned to be an organ of reform, he could scarce evade (even if he desired) a certain influence in political affairs. And it is believed, besides, by those who fancy they know, that the effective force of division between Mataafa and Laupepa came from the natives rather than from whites. Before the end of 1890, 160 at least, it began to be rumoured that there was dispeace between the two Malietoas; and doubtless this had an unsettling influence throughout the islands. But there was another ingredient of anxiety. The Berlin convention had long closed its sittings; the text of the Act had been long in our hands; commissioners were announced to right the wrongs of the land question, and two high officials, a chief justice and a president, to guide policy and administer law in Samoa. Their coming was expected with an impatience, with a childishness of trust, that can hardly be exaggerated. Months passed, these angel-deliverers still delayed to arrive, and the impatience of the natives became changed to an ominous irritation. They have had much experience of being deceived, and they began to think they were deceived again. A sudden crop of superstitious stories buzzed about the islands. Rivers had come down red; unknown fishes had been taken on the reef and found to be marked with menacing runes; a headless lizard crawled among chiefs in council; the gods of Upolu and Savaii made war by night, they swam the straits to battle, and, defaced by dreadful wounds, they had besieged the house of a medical missionary. Readers will remember the portents in mediæval chronicles, or those in *Julius Cæsar* when

“Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds
In ranks and squadrons.”

And doubtless such fabrications are, in simple societies, a natural expression of discontent; and those who forge, and even those who spread them, work towards a conscious purpose.

Early in January 1891 this period of expectancy was brought to an end by the arrival of Conrad Cedarcrantz, chief justice of Samoa. The event was hailed with acclamation, and there was much about the new official to increase the hopes already entertained. He was seen to be a man of culture and ability; in public, of an excellent presence — in private, of a most engaging cordiality. But there was 161 one point, I scarce know whether to say of his character or policy, which immediately and disastrously affected public feeling in the islands. He had an aversion, part judicial, part perhaps constitutional, to haste; and he announced that, until he should have well satisfied his own mind, he should do nothing; that he would rather delay all than do aught amiss. It was impossible to hear this without academical approval; impossible to hear it without practical alarm. The natives desired to see activity; they desired to see many fair speeches taken on a body of deeds and works of benefit. Fired by the event of the war, filled with impossible hopes, they might have welcomed in that hour a ruler of the stamp of Brandeis, breathing hurry, perhaps dealing blows. And the chief justice, unconscious of the fleeting opportunity, ripened his opinions deliberately in Mulinuu; and had been already the better part of half a year in the islands before he went through the form of opening his court. The curtain had risen; there was no play. A reaction, a chill sense of disappointment, passed about the island; and intrigue, one moment suspended, was resumed.

In the Berlin Act, the three Powers recognise, on the threshold, “the independence of the Samoan government, and the free right of the natives to elect their chief or king and choose their form of government.” True, the text continues that, “in view of the difficulties that surround an election in the present disordered condition of the government,” Malietoa Laupepa shall be recognised as king, “unless the three Powers shall by common accord otherwise declare.” But perhaps few natives have followed it so far, and even those who have, were possibly all cast abroad again by the next clause: “and his successor shall be duly elected according to the laws and customs of Samoa.” The right to elect, freely given in one sentence, was suspended in the next, and a line or so further on appeared to be reconveyed by a side-wind. The reason offered for suspension was ludicrously false; in May 1889, 162 when Sir Edward Malet moved the matter in the conference, the election of Mataafa was not only certain to have been peaceful, it could not have been opposed; and behind the English puppet it was easy to suspect the hand of Germany. No one is more swift to smell trickery than a Samoan; and the thought, that, under the long, bland, benevolent sentences of the Berlin Act, some trickery lay lurking, filled him with the breath of opposition. Laupepa seems never to have been a popular king. Mataafa, on the other hand, holds an unrivalled position in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen; he was the hero of the war, he had lain with them in the bush, he had borne the heat and burthen of the day; they began to claim that he should enjoy more largely the fruits of victory; his exclusion was believed to be a stroke of German vengeance, his elevation to the kingship was looked for as the fitting crown and copestone of the Samoan triumph; and but a little after the coming of the chief justice, an ominous cry for Mataafa began to arise in the islands. It is difficult to see what that official could have done but what he did. He was loyal, as in duty bound, to the treaty and to Laupepa; and when the orators of the important and unruly islet of Manono demanded to his face a change of kings, he had no choice but to refuse them, and (his reproof being unheeded) to suspend the meeting. Whether by any neglect of his own or the mere force of circumstance, he failed, however, to secure the sympathy, failed even to gain the confidence, of Mataafa. The latter is not without a sense of his own abilities or of the great service he has rendered to his native land. He felt himself neglected; at the very moment when the cry for his elevation rang throughout the group, he thought himself made little of on Mulinuu; and he began to weary of his part. In this humour, he was exposed to a temptation which I must try to explain, as best I may be able, to Europeans.

The bestowal of the great name, Malietoa, is in the power of the district of Malie, some seven miles to the 163 westward of Apia. The most noisy and conspicuous supporters of that party are the inhabitants of Manono. Hence in the elaborate, allusive oratory of Samoa, Malie is always referred to by the name of *Pule* (authority) as having the power of the name, and Manono by that of *Ainga* (clan, sept, or household) as forming the immediate family of the chief. But these, though so important, are only small communities; and perhaps the chief numerical force of the Malietoas inhabits the island of Savaii. Savaii has no royal name to bestow, all the five being in the gift of different districts of Upolu; but she has the weight of numbers, and in these latter days has acquired a certain force by the preponderance in her councils of a single man, the orator Lauati. The reader will now understand the peculiar significance of a deputation which should embrace Lauati and the orators of both Malie and Manono, how it would represent all that is most effective on the Malietoa side, and all that is most considerable in Samoan politics, except the opposite feudal party of the Tupua. And in the temptation brought to bear on Mataafa, even the Tupua was conjoined. Tamasese was dead. His followers had conceived a not unnatural aversion to all Germans, from which only the loyal Brandeis is excepted; and a not unnatural admiration for their late successful adversary. Men of his own blood and clan, men whom he had fought in the field, whom he had driven from Matautu, who had smitten him back time and again from before the rustic bulwarks of Lotoanuu, they approached him hand in hand with their ancestral enemies and concurred in the same prayer. The treaty (they argued) was not carried out. The right to elect their king had been granted them; or if that were denied or suspended, then the right to elect "his successor." They were dissatisfied with Laupepa, and claimed, "according to the laws and customs of Samoa," duly to appoint another. The orators of Malie declared with irritation that their second appointment was alone valid and Mataafa the sole Malietoa; the 164 whole body of malcontents named him as their choice for king; and they requested him in consequence to leave Apia and take up his dwelling in Malie, the name-place of Malietoa; a step which may be described, to European ears, as placing before the country his candidacy for the crown.

I do not know when the proposal was first made. Doubtless the disaffection grew slowly, every trifle adding to its force; doubtless there lingered for long a willingness to give the new government a trial. The chief justice at least had been nearly five months in the country, and the president, Baron Senfft von Pilsach, rather more than a month, before the mine was sprung. On May 31, 1891, the house of Mataafa was found empty, he and his chiefs had vanished from Apia, and, what was worse, three prisoners, liberated from the gaol, had accompanied them in their secession; two being political offenders, and the third (accused of murder) having been perhaps set free by accident. Although the step had been discussed in certain quarters, it took all men by surprise. The inhabitants at large expected instant war. The officials awakened from a dream to recognise the value of that which they had lost. Mataafa at Vaiala, where he was the pledge of peace, had perhaps not always been deemed worthy of particular attention; Mataafa at Malie was seen, twelve hours too late, to be an altogether different quantity. With excess of zeal on the other side, the officials trooped to their boats and proceeded almost in a body to Malie, where they seem to have employed every artifice of flattery and every resource of eloquence upon the fugitive high chief. These courtesies, perhaps excessive in themselves, had the unpardonable fault of being offered when too late. Mataafa showed himself facile on small issues, inflexible on the main; he restored the prisoners, he returned with the consuls to Apia on a flying visit; he gave his word that peace should be preserved — a pledge in which perhaps no one believed at the moment, but which he has since nobly redeemed. On the rest he was immovable; 165 he had cast the die, he had declared his candidacy, he had gone to Malie. Thither, after his visit to Apia, he returned again; there he has practically since resided.

Thus was created in the islands a situation, strange in the beginning, and which, as its inner significance is developed, becomes daily stranger to observe. On the one hand, Mataafa sits in Malie, assumes a regal state, receives deputations, heads his letters “Government of Samoa,” tacitly treats the king as a co-ordinate; and yet declares himself, and in many ways conducts himself, as a law-abiding citizen. On the other, the white officials in Mulinuu stand contemplating the phenomenon with eyes of growing stupefaction; now with symptoms of collapse, now with accesses of violence. For long, even those well versed in island manners and the island character daily expected war, and heard imaginary drums beat in the forest. But for now close upon a year, and against every stress of persuasion and temptation, Mataafa has been the bulwark of our peace. Apia lay open to be seized, he had the power in his hand, his followers cried to be led on, his enemies marshalled him the same way by impotent examples; and he has never faltered. Early in the day, a white man was sent from the government of Mulinuu to examine and report upon his actions: I saw the spy on his return; “It was only our rebel that saved us,” he said, with a laugh. There is now no honest man in the islands but is well aware of it; none but knows that, if we have enjoyed during the past eleven months the conveniences of peace, it is due to the forbearance of “our rebel.” Nor does this part of his conduct stand alone. He calls his party at Malie the government, — ”our government,” — but he pays his taxes to the government at Mulinuu. He takes ground like a king; he has steadily and blandly refused to obey all orders as to his own movements or behaviour; but upon requisition he sends offenders to be tried under the chief justice.

We have here a problem of conduct, and what seems 166 an image of inconsistency, very hard at the first sight to be solved by any European. Plainly Mataafa does not act at random. Plainly, in the depths of his Samoan mind, he regards his attitude as regular and constitutional. It may be unexpected, it may be inauspicious, it may be undesirable; but he thinks it — and perhaps it is — in full accordance with those “laws and customs of Samoa” ignorantly invoked by the draughtsmen of the Berlin Act. The point is worth an effort of comprehension; a man’s life may yet depend upon it. Let us conceive, in the first place, that there are five separate kingships in Samoa, though not always five different kings; and that though one man, by holding the five royal names, might become king *in all parts* of Samoa, there is perhaps no such matter as a kingship of all Samoa. He who holds one royal name would be, upon this view, as much a sovereign person as he who should chance to hold the other four; he would have less territory and fewer subjects, but the like independence and an equal royalty. Now Mataafa, even if all debatable points were decided against him, is still Tuiatua, and as such, on this hypothesis, a sovereign prince. In the second place, the draughtsmen of the Act, waxing exceeding bold, employed the word “election,” and implicitly justified all precedented steps towards the kingship according with the “customs of Samoa.” I am not asking what was intended by the gentlemen who sat and debated very benignly and, on the whole, wisely in Berlin; I am asking what will be understood by a Samoan studying their literary work, the Berlin Act; I am asking what is the result of taking a word out of one state of society, and applying it to another, of which the writers know less than nothing, and no European knows much. Several interpreters and several days were employed last September in the fruitless attempt to convey to the mind of Laupepa the sense of the word “resignation.” What can a Samoan gather from the words, *election? election of a king? election of a king according to the laws and customs of Samoa*? What are the 167 electoral measures, what is the method of canvassing, likely to be employed by two, three, four, or five, more or less absolute princelings, eager to evince each other? And who is to distinguish such a process from the state of war? In such international — or, I should say, interparochial — differences, the nearest we can come towards understanding is to appreciate the cloud of ambiguity in which all parties grope —

“Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying.”

Now, in one part of Mataafa’s behaviour his purpose is beyond mistake. Towards the provisions of the Berlin Act, his desire to be formally obedient is manifest. The Act imposed the tax. He has paid his taxes, although he thus contributes to the ways and means of his immediate rival. The Act decreed the supreme court, and he sends his partisans to be tried at Mulinuu, although he thus places them (as I shall have occasion to show) in a position far from wholly safe. From this literal conformity, in matters regulated, to the terms of the Berlin plenipotentiaries, we may plausibly infer, in regard to the rest, a no less exact observance of the famous and obscure "laws and customs of Samoa."

But though it may be possible to attain, in the study, to some such adumbration of an understanding, it were plainly unfair to expect it of officials in the hurry of events. Our two white officers have accordingly been no more perspicacious than was to be looked for, and I think they have sometimes been less wise. It was not wise in the president to proclaim Mataafa and his followers rebels and their estates confiscated. Such words are not respectable till they repose on force; on the lips of an angry white man, standing alone on a small promontory, they were both dangerous and absurd; they might have provoked ruin; thanks to the character of Mataafa, they only raised a smile and damaged the authority of government. And again it is not wise in the government of Mulinuu to have 168 twice attempted to precipitate hostilities, once in Savaii, once here in the Tuamasanga. The late of the Savaii attempt I never heard; it seems to have been stillborn. The other passed under my eyes. A war-party was armed in Apia, and despatched across the island against Mataafa villages, where it was to seize the women and children. It was absent for some days, engaged in feasting with those whom it went out to fight; and returned at last, innocuous and replete. In this fortunate though undignified ending we may read the fact that the natives on Laupepa's side are sometimes more wise than their advisers. Indeed, for our last twelve months of miraculous peace under what seem to be two rival kings, the credit is due first of all to Mataafa, and second to the half-heartedness, or the forbearance, or both, of the natives in the other camp. The voice of the two whites has ever been for war. They have published at least one incendiary proclamation; they have armed and sent into the field at least one Samoan war-party; they have continually besieged captains of war-ships to attack Malie, and the captains of the war-ships have religiously refused. Thus in the last twelve months our European rulers have drawn a picture of themselves, as bearded like the pard, full of strange oaths, and gesticulating like semaphores; while over against them Mataafa reposes smilingly obstinate, and their own retainers surround them, frowningly inert. Into the question of motive I refuse to enter; but if we come to war in these islands, and with no fresh occasion, it will be a manufactured war, and one that has been manufactured, against the grain of opinion, by two foreigners.

For the last and worst of the mistakes on the Laupepa side it would be unfair to blame any but the king himself. Capable both of virtuous resolutions and of fits of apathetic obstinacy, His Majesty is usually the whip-top of competitive advisers; and his conduct is so unstable as to wear at times an appearance of treachery which would surprise himself if he could see it. Take, for example, 169 the experience of Lieutenant Ulfsparre, late chief of police, and (so to speak) commander of the forces. His men were under orders for a certain hour; he found himself almost alone at the place of muster, and learned the king had sent the soldiery on errands. He sought an audience, explained that he was here to implant discipline, that (with this purpose in view) his men could only receive orders through himself, and if that condition were not agreed to and faithfully observed, he must send in his papers. The king was as usual easily persuaded, the interview passed and ended to the satisfaction of all parties engaged — and the bargain was kept for one day. On the day after, the troops were again dispersed as post-runners, and their commander resigned. With such a sovereign, I repeat, it would be unfair to blame any individual minister for any specific fault. And yet the policy of our two whites against Mataafa has appeared uniformly so excessive and implacable, that the blame of the last scandal is laid generally at their doors. It is yet fresh. Lauati, towards the end of last year, became deeply concerned about the situation; and by great personal exertions and the charms of oratory brought Savaii and Manono into agreement upon certain terms of compromise: Laupepa still to be king, Mataafa to accept a high executive office comparable to that of our own prime minister, and the two governments to coalesce. Intractable Manono was a party. Malie was said to view the proposal with resignation, if not relief. Peace was thought secure. The night before the king was to receive Lauati, I met one of his company, — the family chief, Iina, — and we shook hands over the unexpected issue of our troubles. What no one dreamed was that Laupepa would refuse. And he did. He refused undisputed royalty for himself and peace for these unhappy islands; and the two whites on Mulinuu rightly or wrongly got the blame of it.

But their policy has another and a more awkward side. About the time of the secession to Malie, many ugly 170 things were said; I will not repeat that which I hope and believe the speakers did not wholly mean; let it suffice that, if rumour carried to Mataafa the language I have heard used in my own house and before my own native servants, he would be highly justified in keeping clear of Apia and the whites. One gentleman whose opinion I respect, and am so bold as to hope I may in some points modify, will understand the allusion and appreciate my reserve. About the same time there occurred an incident, upon which I must be more particular. *A* was a gentleman who had long been an intimate of Mataafa's, and had recently (upon account, indeed, of the secession to Malie) more or less wholly broken off relations. To him came one whom I shall call *B* with a dastardly proposition. It may have been *B's* own, in which case he were the more unpardonable but from the closeness of his intercourse with the chief justice, as well as from the terms used in the interview, men judged otherwise. It was proposed that *A* should simulate a renewal of the friendship, decoy Mataafa to a suitable place, and have him there arrested. What should follow in those days of violent speech was at the least disputable; and the proposal was of course refused. "You do not understand," was the base rejoinder. "*You* will have no discredit. The Germans are to take the blame of the arrest." Of course, upon the testimony of a gentleman so depraved, it were unfair to hang a dog; and both the Germans and the chief justice must be held innocent. But the chief justice has shown that he can himself be led, by his animosity against Mataafa, into questionable acts. Certain natives of Malie were accused of stealing pigs; the chief justice summoned them through Mataafa; several were sent, and along with them a written promise that, if others were required, these also should be forthcoming upon requisition. Such as came were duly tried and acquitted; and Mataafa's offer was communicated to the chief justice, who made a formal answer, and the same day (in pursuance of his constant design to have Malie attacked by war-ships) 171 reported to one of the consuls that his warrant would not run in the country and that certain of the accused had been withheld. At least, this is not fair dealing; and the next instance I have to give is possibly worse. For one blunder the chief justice is only so far responsible, in that he was not present where it seems he should have been, when it was made. He had nothing to do with the silly proscription of the Mataafas; he has always disliked the measure; and it occurred to him at last that he might get rid of this dangerous absurdity and at the same time reap a further advantage. Let Mataafa leave Malie for any other district in Samoa; it should be construed as an act of submission and the confiscation and proscription instantly recalled. This was certainly well devised; the government escaped from their own false position, and by the same stroke lowered the prestige of their adversaries. But unhappily the chief justice did not put all his eggs in one basket. Concurrently with these negotiations he began again to move the captain of one of the war-ships to shell the rebel village; the captain, conceiving the extremity wholly unjustified, not only refused these instances, but more or less publicly complained of their being made; the matter came to the knowledge of the white resident who was at that time playing the part of intermediary with Malie; and he, in natural anger and disgust, withdrew from the negotiation. These duplicities, always deplorable when discovered, are never more fatal than with men imperfectly civilised. Almost incapable of truth themselves, they cherish a particular score of the same fault in whites.

And Mataafa is besides an exceptional native. I would scarce dare say of any Samoan that he is truthful, though I seem to have encountered the phenomenon; but I must say of Mataafa that he seems distinctly and consistently averse to lying.

For the affair of the Manono prisoners, the chief justice is only again in so far answerable as he was at the moment absent from the seat of his duties; and the blame falls on 172 Baron Senfft von Pilsach, president of the municipal council. There were in Manono certain dissidents, loyal to Laupepa. Being Manono people, I daresay they were very annoying to their neighbours; the majority, as they belonged to the same island, were the more impatient; and one fine day fell upon and destroyed the houses and harvests of the dissidents "according to the laws and customs of Samoa." The president went down to the unruly island in a war-ship and was landed alone upon the beach. To one so much a stranger to the mansuetude of Polynesians, this must have seemed an act of desperation; and the baron's gallantry met with a deserved success. The six ring-leaders, acting in Mataafa's interest, had been guilty of a delict; with Mataafa's approval, they delivered themselves over to be tried. On Friday, September 4, 1891, they were convicted before a native magistrate and sentenced to six months' imprisonment; or, I should rather say, detention; for it was expressly directed that they were to be used as gentlemen and not as prisoners, that the door was to stand open, and that all their wishes should be gratified. This extraordinary sentence fell upon the accused like a thunderbolt. There is no need to suppose perfidy, where a careless interpreter suffices to explain all; but the six chiefs claim to have understood their coming to Apia as an act of submission merely formal, that they came in fact under an implied indemnity, and that the president stood pledged to see them scatheless. Already, on their way from the court-house, they were tumultuously surrounded by friends and clansmen, who pressed and cried upon them to escape; Lieutenant Ulfsparre must order his men to load; and with that the momentary effervescence died away. Next day, Saturday, 5th, the chief justice took his departure from the islands — a step never yet explained and (in view of the doings of the day before and the remonstrances of other officials) hard to justify. The president, an amiable and brave young man of singular inexperience, was thus left to face the growing difficulty by 173 himself. The clansmen of the prisoners, to the number of near upon a hundred, lay in Vaiusu, a village half way between Apia and Malie; there they talked big, thence sent menacing messages; the gaol should be broken in the night, they said, and the six martyrs rescued. Allowance is to be made for the character of the people of Manono, turbulent fellows, boastful of tongue, but of late days not thought to be answerably bold in person.

Yet the moment was anxious. The government of Mulinuu had gained an important moral victory by the surrender and condemnation of the chiefs; and it was needful the victory should be maintained. The guard upon the gaol was accordingly strengthened; a war-party was sent to watch the Vaiusu road under Asi; and the chiefs of the Vaimaunga were notified to arm and assemble their men. It must be supposed the president was doubtful of the loyalty of these assistants. He turned at least to the war-ships, where it seems he was rebuffed; thence he fled into the arms of the wrecker gang, where he was unhappily more successful. The government of Washington had presented to the Samoan king the wrecks of the *Trenton* and the *Vandalia*; an American syndicate had been formed to break them up; an experienced gang was in consequence settled in Apia; and the report of submarine explosions had long grown familiar in the ears of residents. From these artificers the president obtained a supply of dynamite, the needful mechanism, and the loan of a mechanic; the gaol was mined, and the Manono people in Vaiusu were advertised of the fact in a letter signed by Laupepa. Partly by the indiscretion of the mechanic, who had sought to embolden himself (like Lady Macbeth) with liquor for his somewhat dreadful task, the story leaked immediately out and raised a very general, or I might say almost universal, reprobation. Some blamed the proposed deed because it was barbarous and a foul example to set before a race half barbarous itself; others because it was illegal; others again because, in the face of so weak an enemy, it appeared 174 pitifully pusillanimous; almost all because it tended to precipitate and embitter war. In the midst of the turmoil he had raised, and under the immediate pressure of certain indignant white residents, the baron fell back upon a new expedient, certainly less barbarous, perhaps no more legal; and on Monday afternoon, September 7th, packed his six prisoners on board the cutter *Lancashire Lass*, and deported them to the neighbouring low-island group of the Tokelaus. We watched her put to sea with mingled feelings. Anything were better than dynamite, but this was not good. The men had been summoned in the name of law; they had surrendered; the law had uttered its voice; they were under one sentence duly delivered; and now the president, by no right with which we were acquainted, had exchanged it for another. It was perhaps no less fortunate, though it was more pardonable in a stranger, that he had increased the punishment to that which, in the eyes of Samoans, ranks next to death, — exile from their native land and friends. And the *Lancashire Lass* appeared to carry away with her into the uttermost parts of the sea the honour of the administration and the prestige of the supreme court.

The policy of the government towards Mataafa has thus been of a piece throughout; always would-be violent, it has been almost always defaced with some appearance of perfidy or unfairness. The policy of Mataafa (though extremely bewildering to any white) appears everywhere consistent with itself, and the man's bearing has always been calm. But to represent the fulness of the contrast, it is necessary that I should give some description of the two capitals, or the two camps, and the ways and means of the regular and irregular government.

Mulinuu. Mulinuu, the reader may remember, is a narrow finger of land planted in cocoa-palms, which runs forth into the lagoon perhaps three quarters of a mile. To the east is the bay of Apia. To the west, there is, first of all, a mangrove swamp, the mangroves excellently green, the mud ink-black, and its face crawled upon by countless 175 insects and black and scarlet crabs. Beyond the swamp is a wide and shallow bay of the lagoon, bounded to the west by Faleula Point. Faleula is the next village to Malie; so that from the top of some tall palm in Malie it should be possible to descry against the eastern heavens the palms of Mulinuu. The trade wind sweeps over the low peninsula and cleanses it from the contagion of the swamp. Samoans have a quaint phrase in their language; when out of health, they seek exposed places on the shore "to eat the wind," say they; and there can be few better places for such a diet than the point of Mulinuu.

Two European houses stand conspicuous on the harbour side; in Europe they would seem poor enough, but they are fine houses for Samoa. One is new; it was built the other day under the apologetic title of a Government House, to be the residence of Baron Senfft. The other is historical; it was built by Brandeis on a mortgage, and is now occupied by the chief justice on conditions never understood, the rumour going uncontradicted that he sits rent free. I do not say it is true, I say it goes uncontradicted; and there is one peculiarity of our officials in a nutshell, — their remarkable indifference to their own character. From the one house to the other extends a scattering village for the Faipule or native parliament men. In the days of Tamasese this was a brave place, both his own house and those of the Faipule good, and the whole excellently ordered and approached by a sanded way. It is now like a neglected bush-town, and speaks of apathy in all concerned. But the chief scandal of Mulinuu is elsewhere. The house of the president stands just to seaward of the isthmus, where the watch is set nightly, and armed men guard the uneasy slumbers of the government. On the landward side there stands a monument to the poor German lads who fell at Fangalii, just beyond which the passer-by may chance to observe a little house standing backward from the road. It is such a house as a commoner might use in a bush village; none could dream that it gave shelter even to a family chief; 176 yet this is the palace of Malietoa-Natoaitele-Tamasoalii Laupepa, king of Samoa. As you sit in his company under this humble shelter, you shall see, between the posts, the new house of the president. His Majesty himself beholds it daily, and the tenor of his thoughts may be divined. The fine house of a Samoan chief is his appropriate attribute; yet, after seventeen months, the government (well housed themselves) have not yet found — have not yet sought — a roof-tree for their sovereign. And the lodging is typical. I take up the president's financial statement of September 8, 1891. I find the king's allowance to figure at seventy-five dollars a month; and I find that he is further (though somewhat obscurely) debited with the salaries of either two or three clerks. Take the outside figure, and the sum expended on or for His Majesty amounts to ninety-five dollars in the month. Lieutenant Ulfsparre and Dr. Hagberg (the chief justice's Swedish friends) drew in the same period one hundred and forty and one hundred dollars respectively on account of salary alone. And it should be observed that Dr. Hagberg was employed, or at least paid, from government funds, in the face of His Majesty's express and reiterated protest. In another column of the statement, one hundred and seventy-five dollars and seventy-five cents are debited for the chief justice's travelling expenses. I am of the opinion that if His Majesty desired (or dared) to take an outing, he would be asked to bear the charge from his allowance. But although I think the chief justice had done more nobly to pay for himself, I am far from denying that his excursions were well meant; he should indeed be praised for having made them; and I leave the charge out of consideration in the following statement.

On the one hand

$500	Salary of Chief Justice Cedarkrantz
415	Salary of President Baron Senfft von Pilsach (about)
140	Salary of Lieutenant Ulfsparre, Chief of Police
100	Salary of Dr. Hagberg, Private Secretary to the Chief Justice
— — —	
$1155	Total monthly salary to four whites, one of them paid against His Majesty's protest

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On the other hand

$95	Total monthly payments to and for His Majesty the King, including allowance and hire of three clerks, one of these placed under the rubric of extraordinary expenses

This looks strange enough and mean enough already. But we have ground of comparison in the practice of Brandeis.

$200	Brandeis, white prime minister
60	Tamasese (about)
100	White Chief of Police

Under Brandeis, in other words, the king received the second highest allowance on the sheet; and it was a good second, and the third was a bad third. And it must be borne in mind that Tamasese himself was pointed and laughed at among natives. Judge, then, what is muttered of Laupepa, housed in his shanty before the president's doors like Lazarus before the doors of Dives; receiving not so much of his own taxes as the private secretary of the law officer; and (in actual salary) little more than half as much as his own chief of police. It is known besides that he has protested in vain against the charge for Dr. Hagberg; it is known that he has himself applied for an advance and been refused. Money is certainly a grave subject on Mulinuu; but respect costs nothing, and thrifty officials might have judged it wise to make up in extra politeness for what they curtailed of pomp or comfort. One instance may suffice. Laupepa appeared last summer on a public occasion; the president was there — and not even the president rose to greet the entrance of the sovereign. Since about the same period, besides, the monarch must be described as in a state of sequestration. A white man, an Irishman, the true type of all that is most gallant, humorous, and reckless in his country, chose to visit His Majesty and give him some excellent advice (to make up his difference with Mataafa) couched unhappily in vivid and figurative language. The adviser now sleeps 178 in the Pacific, but the evil that he chanced to do lives after him. His Majesty was greatly (and I must say justly) offended by the freedom of the expressions used; he appealed to his white advisers; and these, whether from want of thought or by design, issued an ignominious proclamation. Intending visitors to the palace must appear before their consuls and justify their business. The majesty of buried Samoa was henceforth only to be viewed (like a private collection) under special permit; and was thus at once cut off from the company and opinions of the self-respecting. To retain any dignity in such an abject state would require a man of very different virtues from those claimed by the not unvirtuous Laupepa. He is not designed to ride the whirlwind or direct the storm, rather to be the ornament of private life. He is kind, gentle, patient as Job, conspicuously well-intentioned, of charming manners; and when he pleases, he has one accomplishment in which he now begins to be alone — I mean that he can pronounce correctly his own beautiful language.

The government of Brandeis accomplished a good deal and was continually and heroically attempting more. The government of our two whites has confined itself almost wholly to paying and receiving salaries. They have built, indeed, a house for the president; they are believed (if that be a merit) to have bought the local newspaper with government funds; and their rule has been enlivened by a number of scandals, into which I feel with relief that it is unnecessary I should enter. Even if the three Powers do not remove these gentlemen, their absurd and disastrous government must perish by itself of inanition. Native taxes (except perhaps from Mataafa, true to his own private policy) have long been beyond hope. And only the other day (May 6th, 1892), on the expressed ground that there was no guarantee as to how the funds would be expended, and that the president consistently refused to allow the verification of his cash balances, the municipal council has negatived the proposal to call up 179 further taxes from the whites. All is well that ends even ill, so that it end; and we believe that with the last dollar we shall see the last of the last functionary. Now when it is so nearly over, we can afford to smile at this extraordinary passage, though we must still sigh over the occasion lost.

Malie. The way to Malie lies round the shores of Faleula bay and through a succession of pleasant groves and villages. The road, one of the works of Brandeis, is now cut up by pig fences. Eight times you must leap a barrier of cocoa posts; the take-off and the landing both in a patch of mire planted with big stones, and the stones sometimes reddened with the blood of horses that have gone before. To make these obstacles more annoying, you have sometimes to wait while a black boar clambers sedately over the so-called pig fence. Nothing can more thoroughly depict the worst side of the Samoan character than these useless barriers which deface their only road. It was one of the first orders issued by the government of Mulinuu after the coming of the chief justice, to have the passage cleared. It is the disgrace of Mataafa that the thing is not yet done.

The village of Malie is the scene of prosperity and peace. In a very good account of a visit there, published in the *Australasian*, the writer describes it to be fortified; she must have been deceived by the appearance of some pig walls on the shore. There is no fortification, no parade of war. I understand that from one to five hundred fighting men are always within reach; but I have never seen more than five together under arms, and these were the king's guard of honour. A Sabbath quiet broods over the well-weeded green, the picketed horses, the troops of pigs, the round or oval native dwellings. Of these there are a surprising number, very fine of their sort: yet more are in the building; and in the midst a tall house of assembly, by far the greatest Samoan structure now in these islands, stands about half finished and already makes a figure in 180 the landscape. No bustle is to be observed, but the work accomplished testifies to a still activity.

The centre-piece of all is the high chief himself, Malietoa-Tuiatua-Tuiaana Mataafa, king — or not king — or king-claimant — of Samoa.

All goes to him, all comes from him. Native deputations bring him gifts and are feasted in return. White travellers, to their indescribable irritation, are (on his approach) waved from his path by his armed guards. He summons his dancers by the note of a bugle. He sits nightly at home before a semicircle of talking-men from many quarters of the islands, delivering and hearing those ornate and elegant orations in which the Samoan heart delights. About himself and all his surroundings there breathes a striking sense of order, tranquillity, and native plenty. He is of a tall and powerful person, sixty years of age, white-haired and with a white moustache; his eyes bright and quiet; his jaw perceptibly underhung, which gives him something of the expression of a benevolent mastiff; his manners dignified and a thought insinuating, with an air of a Catholic prelate. He was never married, and a natural daughter attends upon his guests. Long since he made a vow of chastity, — ”to live as our Lord lived on this earth,” and Polynesians report with bated breath that he has kept it. On all such points, true to his Catholic training, he is inclined to be even rigid. Lauati, the pivot of Savaii, has recently repudiated his wife and taken a fairer; and when I was last in Malie, Mataafa (with a strange superiority to his own interests) had but just despatched a reprimand. In his immediate circle, in spite of the smoothness of his ways, he is said to be more respected than beloved; and his influence is the child rather of authority than popularity. No Samoan grandee now living need have attempted that which he has accomplished during the last twelve months with unimpaired prestige, not only to withhold his followers from war, but to send them to be judged in the camp of their enemies on Mulinuu. And it is a matter of debate whether such a triumph of 181 authority were ever possible before. Speaking for myself, I have visited and dwelt in almost every seat of the Polynesian race, and have met but one man who gave me a stronger impression of character and parts.

About the situation, Mataafa expresses himself with unshaken peace. To the chief justice he refers with some bitterness; to Laupepa, with a smile, as “my poor brother.” For himself, he stands upon the treaty, and expects sooner or later an election in which he shall be raised to the chief power. In the meanwhile, or for an alternative, he would willingly embrace a compromise with Laupepa; to which he would probably add one condition, that the joint government should remain seated at Malie, a sensible but not inconvenient distance from white intrigues and white officials. One circumstance in my last interview particularly pleased me. The king’s chief scribe, Esela, is an old employé under Tamasese, and the talk ran some while upon the character of Brandeis. Loyalty in this world is after all not thrown away; Brandeis was guilty, in Samoan eyes, of many irritating errors, but he stood true to Tamasese; in the course of time a sense of this virtue and of his general uprightness has obliterated the memory of his mistakes; and it would have done his heart good if he could have heard his old scribe and his old adversary join in praising him. “Yes,” concluded Mataafa, “I wish we had Planteisa back again.” *A quelque chose malheur est bon.* So strong is the impression produced by the defects of Cedarcrantz and Baron Senfft, that I believe Mataafa far from singular in this opinion, and that the return of the upright Brandeis might be even welcome to many.

I must add a last touch to the picture of Malie and the pretender’s life. About four in the morning, the visitor in his house will be awakened by the note of a pipe, blown without, very softly and to a soothing melody. This is Mataafa’s private luxury to lead on pleasant dreams. We have a bird here in Samoa that about the same hour of 182 darkness sings in the bush. The father of Mataafa, while he lived, was a great friend and protector to all living creatures, and passed under the by-name of *the King of Birds*. It may be it was among the woodland clients of the sire that the son acquired his fancy for this morning music.

I have now sought to render without extenuation the impressions received: of dignity, plenty, and peace at Malie, of bankruptcy and distraction at Mulinuu. And I wish I might here bring to an end ungrateful labours. But I am sensible that there remain two points on which it would be improper to be silent. I should be blamed if I did not indicate a practical conclusion; and I should blame myself if I did not do a little justice to that tried company of the Land Commissioners.

The Land Commission has been in many senses unfortunate. The original German member, a gentleman of the name of Eggert, fell early into precarious health; his work was from the first interrupted, he was at last (to the regret of all that knew him) invalided home; and his successor had but just arrived. In like manner, the first American commissioner, Henry C. Ide, a man of character and intelligence, was recalled (I believe by private affairs) when he was but just settling into the spirit of the work; and though his place was promptly filled by ex-Governor Ormsbee, a worthy successor, distinguished by strong and vivacious common sense, the break was again sensible. The English commissioner, my friend Bazett Michael Haggard, is thus the only one who has continued at his post since the beginning. And yet, in spite of these unusual changes, the Commission has a record perhaps unrivalled among international commissions. It has been unanimous practically from the first until the last; and out of some four hundred cases disposed of, there is but one on which the members were divided. It was the more unfortunate they should have early fallen in a difficulty with 183 the chief justice. The original ground of this is supposed to be a difference of opinion as to the import of the Berlin Act, on which, as a layman, it would be unbecoming if I were to offer an opinion. But it must always seem as if the chief justice had suffered himself to be irritated beyond the bounds of discretion. It must always seem as if his original attempt to deprive the commissioners of the services of a secretary and the use of a safe were even senseless; and his step in printing and posting a proclamation denying their jurisdiction were equally impolitic and undignified. The dispute had a secondary result worse than itself. The gentleman appointed to be Natives' Advocate shared the chief justice's opinion, was his close intimate, advised with him almost daily, and drifted at last into an attitude of opposition to his colleagues. He suffered himself besides (being a layman in law) to embrace the interest of his clients with something of the warmth of a partisan. Disagreeable scenes occurred in court; the advocate was more than once reproved, he was warned that his consultations with the judge of appeal tended to damage his own character and to lower the credit of the appellate court. Having lost some cases on which he set importance, it should seem that he spoke unwisely among natives. A sudden cry of colour prejudice went up; and Samoans were heard to assure each other that it was useless to appear before the Land Commission, which was sworn to support the whites.

This deplorable state of affairs was brought to an end by the departure from Samoa of the Natives' Advocate. He was succeeded *pro tempore* by a young New Zealander, E. W. Gurr, not much more versed in law than himself, and very much less so in Samoan. Whether by more skill or better fortune, Gurr has been able in the course of a few weeks to recover for the natives several important tracts of land; and the prejudice against the Commission seems to be abating as fast as it arose. I should not omit to say that, in the eagerness of the original advocate, there was much 184 that was amiable; nor must I fail to point out how much there was of blindness. Fired by the ardour of pursuit, he seems to have regarded his immediate clients as the only natives extant and the epitome and emblem of the Samoan race. Thus, in the case that was the most exclaimed against as "an injustice to natives," his client, Puaauli, was certainly nonsuited. But in that intricate affair who lost the money? The German firm. And who got the land? Other natives. To twist such a decision into evidence, either of a prejudice against Samoans or a partiality to whites, is to keep one eye shut and have the other bandaged.

And lastly, one word as to the future. Laupepa and Mataafa stand over against each other, rivals with no third competitor. They may be said to hold the great name of Malietoa in commission; each has borne the style, each exercised the authority, of a Samoan king; one is secure of the small but compact and fervent following of the Catholics, the other has the sympathies of a large part of the Protestant majority, and upon any sign of Catholic aggression would have more. With men so nearly balanced, it may be asked whether a prolonged successful exercise of power be possible for either. In the case of the feeble Laupepa, it is certainly not; we have the proof before us. Nor do I think we should judge, from what we see to-day, that it would be possible, or would continue to be possible, even for the kingly Mataafa. It is always the easier game to be in opposition. The tale of David and Saul would infallibly be re-enacted; once more we shall have two kings in the land, — the latent and the patent; and the house of the first will become once more the resort of “every one that is in distress, and every one that is in debt, and every one that is discontented.” Against such odds it is my fear that Mataafa might contend in vain; it is beyond the bounds of my imagination that Laupepa should contend at all. Foreign ships and bayonets is the cure proposed in Mulinuu. And certainly, if people at home desire that money should be thrown away and blood 185 shed in Samoa, an effect of a kind, and for the time, may be produced. Its nature and prospective durability I will ask readers of this volume to forecast for themselves. There is one way to peace and unity: that Laupepa and Mataafa should be again conjoined on the best terms procurable. There may be other ways, although I cannot see them; but not even malevolence, not even stupidity, can deny that this is one. It seems, indeed, so obvious, and sure, and easy, that men look about with amazement and suspicion, seeking some hidden motive why it should not be adopted.

To Laupepa’s opposition, as shown in the case of the Lauati scheme, no dweller in Samoa will give weight, for they know him to be as putty in the hands of his advisers. It may be right, it may be wrong, but we are many of us driven to the conclusion that the stumbling-block is Fangalii, and that the memorial of that affair shadows appropriately the house of a king who reigns in right of it. If this be all, it should not trouble us long. Germany has shown she can be generous; it now remains for her only to forget a natural but certainly ill-grounded prejudice, and allow to him, who was sole king before the plenipotentiaries assembled, and who would be sole king to-morrow if the Berlin Act could be rescinded, a fitting share of rule. The future of Samoa should lie thus in the hands of a single man, on whom the eyes of Europe are already fixed. Great concerns press on his attention; the Samoan group, in his view, is but as a grain of dust; and the country where he reigns has bled on too many august scenes of victory to remember for ever a blundering skirmish in the plantation of Vailele. It is to him — to the sovereign of the wise Stuebel and the loyal Brandeis, — that I make my appeal.

May 25, 1892.

IN THE SOUTH SEAS

This memoir was published posthumously and gives an account of Stevenson’s 1888 cruise, which he undertook with his wife on the *Casco* from the Hawaiian Islands to the Marquesas and Tuamotu islands. The work also concerns his 1889 voyage on the trading schooner *Equator*, visiting Butaritari, Mariki, Apaiang and Abemama in the Gilbert Islands and Kiribati. During this latter voyage Stevenson spent several months on Abemama with the tyrant-chief Tem Binoka, of Abemama, as well as visiting Aranuka and Kuria, which are all extensively described in *In the South Seas*.

Stevenson with King Kalakaua, Hawaii, 1889

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PART 1: THE MARQUESAS

CHAPTER I - AN ISLAND LANDFALL

For nearly ten years my health had been declining; and for some while before I set forth upon my voyage, I believed I was come to the afterpiece of life, and had only the nurse and undertaker to expect. It was suggested that I should try the South Seas; and I was not unwilling to visit like a ghost, and be carried like a bale, among scenes that had attracted me in youth and health. I chartered accordingly Dr. Merrit's schooner yacht, the *Casco*, seventy-four tons register; sailed from San Francisco towards the end of June 1888, visited the eastern islands, and was left early the next year at Honolulu. Hence, lacking courage to return to my old life of the house and sick-room, I set forth to leeward in a trading schooner, the *Equator*, of a little over seventy tons, spent four months among the atolls (low coral islands) of the Gilbert group, and reached Samoa towards the close of '89. By that time gratitude and habit were beginning to attach me to the islands; I had gained a competency of strength; I had made friends; I had learned new interests; the time of my voyages had passed like days in fairyland; and I decided to remain. I began to prepare these pages at sea, on a third cruise, in the trading steamer *Janet Nicoll*. If more days are granted me, they shall be passed where I have found life most pleasant and man most interesting; the axes of my black boys are already clearing the foundations of my future house; and I must learn to address readers from the uttermost parts of the sea.

That I should thus have reversed the verdict of Lord Tennyson's hero is less eccentric than appears. Few men who come to the islands leave them; they grow grey where they alighted; the palm shades and the trade-wind fans them till they die, perhaps cherishing to the last the fancy of a visit home, which is rarely made, more rarely enjoyed, and yet more rarely repeated. No part of the world exerts the same attractive power upon the visitor, and the task before me is to communicate to fireside travellers some sense of its seduction, and to describe the life, at sea and ashore, of many hundred thousand persons, some of our own blood and language, all our contemporaries, and yet as remote in thought and habit as Rob Roy or Barbarossa, the Apostles or the Caesars.

The first experience can never be repeated. The first love, the first sunrise, the first South Sea island, are memories apart and touched a virginity of sense. On the 28th of July 1888 the moon was an hour down by four in the morning. In the east a radiating centre of brightness told of the day; and beneath, on the skyline, the morning bank was already building, black as ink. We have all read of the swiftness of the day's coming and departure in low latitudes; it is a point on which the scientific and sentimental tourist are at one, and has inspired some tasteful poetry. The period certainly varies with the season; but here is one case exactly noted. Although the dawn was thus preparing by four, the sun was not up till six; and it was half-past five before we could distinguish our expected islands from the clouds on the horizon. Eight degrees south, and the day two hours a-coming. The interval was passed on deck in the silence of expectation, the customary thrill of landfall heightened by the strangeness of the shores that we were then approaching. Slowly they took shape in the attenuating darkness. Ua-huna, piling up to a truncated summit, appeared the first upon the starboard bow; almost abeam arose our destination, Nuka-hiva, whelmed in cloud; and betwixt and to the southward, the first rays of the sun displayed the needles of Ua-pu. These pricked about the line of the horizon; like the pinnacles of some ornate and monstrous church, they stood there, in the sparkling brightness of the morning, the fit signboard of a world of wonders.

Not one soul aboard the *Casco* had set foot upon the islands, or knew, except by accident, one word of any of the island tongues; and it was with something perhaps of the same anxious pleasure as thrilled the bosom of discoverers that we drew near these problematic shores. The land heaved up in peaks and rising vales; it fell in cliffs and buttresses; its colour ran through fifty modulations in a scale of pearl and rose and olive; and it was crowned above by opalescent clouds. The suffusion of vague hues deceived the eye; the shadows of clouds were confounded with the articulations of the mountains; and the isle and its unsubstantial canopy rose and shimmered before us like a single mass. There was no beacon, no smoke of towns to be expected, no plying pilot. Somewhere, in that pale phantasmagoria of cliff and cloud, our haven lay concealed; and somewhere to the east of it - the only sea-mark given - a certain headland, known indifferently as Cape Adam and Eve, or Cape Jack and Jane, and distinguished by two colossal figures, the gross statuary of nature. These we were to find; for these we craned and stared, focused glasses, and wrangled over charts; and the sun was overhead and the land close ahead before we found them. To a ship approaching, like the *Casco*, from the north, they proved indeed the least conspicuous features of a striking coast; the surf flying high above its base; strange, austere, and feathered mountains rising behind; and Jack and Jane, or Adam and Eve, impending like a pair of warts above the breakers.

Thence we bore away along shore. On our port beam we might hear the explosions of the surf; a few birds flew fishing under the prow; there was no other sound or mark of life, whether of man or beast, in all that quarter of the island. Winged by her own impetus and the dying breeze, the *Casco* skimmed under cliffs, opened out a cove, showed us a beach and some green trees, and flitted by again, bowing to the swell. The trees, from our distance, might have been hazel; the beach might have been in Europe; the mountain forms behind modelled in little from the Alps, and the forest which clustered on their ramparts a growth no more considerable than our Scottish heath. Again the cliff yawned, but now with a deeper entry; and the *Casco*, hauling her wind, began to slide into the bay of Anaho. The cocoa-palm, that giraffe of vegetables, so graceful, so ungainly, to the European eye so foreign, was to be seen crowding on the beach, and climbing and fringing the steep sides of mountains. Rude and bare hills embraced the inlet upon either hand; it was enclosed to the landward by a bulk of shattered mountains. In every crevice of that barrier the forest harboured, roosting and nestling there like birds about a ruin; and far above, it greened and roughened the razor edges of the summit.

Under the eastern shore, our schooner, now bereft of any breeze, continued to creep in: the smart creature, when once under way, appearing motive in herself. From close aboard arose the bleating of young lambs; a bird sang in the hillside; the scent of the land and of a hundred fruits or flowers flowed forth to meet us; and, presently, a house or two appeared, standing high upon the ankles of the hills, and one of these surrounded with what seemed a garden. These conspicuous habitations, that patch of culture, had we but known it, were a mark of the passage of whites; and we might have approached a hundred islands and not found their parallel. It was longer ere we spied the native village, standing (in the universal fashion) close upon a curve of beach, close under a grove of palms; the sea in front growling and whitening on a concave arc of reef. For the cocoa-tree and the island man are both lovers and neighbours of the surf. ‘The coral waxes, the palm grows, but man departs,’ says the sad Tahitian proverb; but they are all three, so long as they endure, co-haunters of the beach. The mark of anchorage was a blow-hole in the rocks, near the south-easterly corner of the bay. Punctually to our use, the blow-hole spouted; the schooner turned upon her heel; the anchor plunged. It was a small sound, a great event; my soul went down with these moorings whence no windlass may extract nor any diver fish it up; and I, and some part of my ship’s company, were from that hour the bondslaves of the isles of Vivien.

Before yet the anchor plunged a canoe was already paddling from the hamlet. It contained two men: one white, one brown and tattooed across the face with bands of blue, both in immaculate white European clothes: the resident trader, Mr. Regler, and the native chief, Taipi-Kikino. ‘Captain, is it permitted to come on board?’ were the first words we heard among the islands. Canoe followed canoe till the ship swarmed with stalwart, six-foot men in every stage of undress; some in a shirt, some in a loin-cloth, one in a handkerchief imperfectly adjusted; some, and these the more considerable, tattooed from head to foot in awful patterns; some barbarous and knived; one, who sticks in my memory as something bestial, squatting on his hams in a canoe, sucking an orange and spitting it out again to alternate sides with ape-like vivacity - all talking, and we could not understand one word; all trying to trade with us who had no thought of trading, or offering us island curios at prices palpably absurd. There was no word of welcome; no show of civility; no hand extended save that of the chief and Mr. Regler. As we still continued to refuse the proffered articles, complaint ran high and rude; and one, the jester of the party, railed upon our meanness amid jeering laughter. Amongst other angry pleasantries - ‘Here is a mighty fine ship,’ said he, ‘to have no money on board!’ I own I was inspired with sensible repugnance; even with alarm. The ship was manifestly in their power; we had women on board; I knew nothing of my guests beyond the fact that they were cannibals; the Directory (my only guide) was full of timid cautions; and as for the trader, whose presence might else have reassured me, were not whites in the Pacific the usual instigators and accomplices of native outrage? When he reads this confession, our kind friend, Mr. Regler, can afford to smile.

Later in the day, as I sat writing up my journal, the cabin was filled from end to end with Marquesans: three brown-skinned generations, squatted cross-legged upon the floor, and regarding me in silence with embarrassing eyes. The eyes of all Polynesians are large, luminous, and melting; they are like the eyes of animals and some Italians. A kind of despair came over me, to sit there helpless under all these staring orbs, and be thus blocked in a corner of my cabin by this speechless crowd: and a kind of rage to think they were beyond the reach of articulate communication, like furred animals, or folk born deaf, or the dwellers of some alien planet.

To cross the Channel is, for a boy of twelve, to change heavens; to cross the Atlantic, for a man of twenty-four, is hardly to modify his diet. But I was now escaped out of the shadow of the Roman empire, under whose toppling monuments we were all cradled, whose laws and letters are on every hand of us, constraining and preventing. I was now to see what men might be whose fathers had never studied Virgil, had never been conquered by Caesar, and never been ruled by the wisdom of Gaius or Papinian. By the same step I had journeyed forth out of that comfortable zone of kindred languages, where the curse of Babel is so easy to be remedied; and my new fellow-creatures sat before me dumb like images. Methought, in my travels, all human relation was to be excluded; and when I returned home (for in those days I still projected my return) I should have but dipped into a picture-book without a text. Nay, and I even questioned if my travels should be much prolonged; perhaps they were destined to a speedy end; perhaps my subsequent friend, Kauanui, whom I remarked there, sitting silent with the rest, for a man of some authority, might leap from his hams with an ear-splitting signal, the ship be carried at a rush, and the ship's company butchered for the table.

There could be nothing more natural than these apprehensions, nor anything more groundless. In my experience of the islands, I had never again so menacing a reception; were I to meet with such to-day, I should be more alarmed and tenfold more surprised. The majority of Polynesians are easy folk to get in touch with, frank, fond of notice, greedy of the least affection, like amiable, fawning dogs; and even with the Marquesans, so recently and so imperfectly redeemed from a blood-boltered barbarism, all were to become our intimates, and one, at least, was to mourn sincerely our departure.

CHAPTER II - MAKING FRIENDS

The impediment of tongues was one that I particularly over-estimated. The languages of Polynesia are easy to smatter, though hard to speak with elegance. And they are extremely similar, so that a person who has a tincture of one or two may risk, not without hope, an attempt upon the others.

And again, not only is Polynesian easy to smatter, but interpreters abound. Missionaries, traders, and broken white folk living on the bounty of the natives, are to be found in almost every isle and hamlet; and even where these are unserviceable, the natives themselves have often scraped up a little English, and in the French zone (though far less commonly) a little French-English, or an efficient pidgin, what is called to the westward 'Beach-la-Mar,' comes easy to the Polynesian; it is now taught, besides, in the schools of Hawaii; and from the multiplicity of British ships, and the nearness of the States on the one hand and the colonies on the other, it may be called, and will almost certainly become, the tongue of the Pacific. I will instance a few examples. I met in Majuro a Marshall Island boy who spoke excellent English; this he had learned in the German firm in Jaluit, yet did not speak one word of German. I heard from a gendarme who had taught school in Rapa-iti that while the children had the utmost difficulty or reluctance to learn French, they picked up English on the wayside, and as if by accident. On one of the most out-of-the-way atolls in the Carolines, my friend Mr. Benjamin Hird was amazed to find the lads playing cricket on the beach and talking English; and it was in English that the crew of the *Janet Nicoll*, a set of black boys from different Melanesian islands, communicated with other natives throughout the cruise, transmitted orders, and sometimes jested together on the fore-hatch. But what struck me perhaps most of all was a word I heard on the verandah of the Tribunal at Noumea. A case had just been heard - a trial for infanticide against an ape-like native woman; and the audience were smoking cigarettes as they awaited the verdict. An anxious, amiable French lady, not far from tears, was eager for acquittal, and declared she would engage the prisoner to be her children's nurse. The bystanders exclaimed at the proposal; the woman was a savage, said they, and spoke no language. '*Mais, vous savez,*' objected the fair sentimentalist; '*ils apprennent si vite l'anglais*!'

But to be able to speak to people is not all. And in the first stage of my relations with natives I was helped by two things. To begin with, I was the show-man of the *Casco*. She, her fine lines, tall spars, and snowy decks, the crimson fittings of the saloon, and the white, the gilt, and the repeating mirrors of the tiny cabin, brought us a hundred visitors. The men fathomed out her dimensions with their arms, as their fathers fathomed out the ships of Cook; the women declared the cabins more lovely than a church; bouncing Junos were never weary of sitting in the chairs and contemplating in the glass their own bland images; and I have seen one lady strip up her dress, and, with cries of wonder and delight, rub herself bare-breeched upon the velvet cushions. Biscuit, jam, and syrup was the entertainment; and, as in European parlours, the photograph album went the round. This sober gallery, their everyday costumes and physiognomies, had become transformed, in three weeks' sailing, into things wonderful and rich and foreign; alien faces, barbaric dresses, they were now beheld and fingered, in the swerving cabin, with innocent excitement and surprise. Her Majesty was often recognised, and I have seen French subjects kiss her photograph; Captain Speedy - in an Abyssinian war-dress, supposed to be the uniform of the British army - met with much acceptance; and the effigies of Mr. Andrew Lang were admired in the Marquesas. There is the place for him to go when he shall be weary of Middlesex and Homer.

It was perhaps yet more important that I had enjoyed in my youth some knowledge of our Scots folk of the Highlands and the Islands. Not much beyond a century has passed since these were in the same convulsive and transitionary state as the Marquesans of to-day. In both cases an alien authority enforced, the clans disarmed, the chiefs deposed, new customs introduced, and chiefly that fashion of regarding money as the means and object of existence. The commercial age, in each, succeeding at a bound to an age of war abroad and patriarchal communism at home. In one the cherished practice of tattooing, in the other a cherished costume, proscribed. In each a main luxury cut off: beef, driven under cloud of night from Lowland pastures, denied to the meat-loving Highlander; long-pig, pirated from the next village, to the man-eating Kanaka. The grumbling, the secret ferment, the fears and resentments, the alarms and sudden councils of Marquesan chiefs, reminded me continually of the days of Lovat and Struan. Hospitality, tact, natural fine manners, and a touchy punctilio, are common to both races: common to both tongues the trick of dropping medial consonants. Here is a table of two widespread Polynesian words:-

House

.

Love.

Tahitian	FARE	AROHA
New Zealand	WHARE	
Samoan	FALE	TALOFA
Manihiki	FALE	ALOHA
Hawaiian	HALE	ALOHA
Marquesan	HA’E	KAOHA

The elision of medial consonants, so marked in these Marquesan instances, is no less common both in Gaelic and the Lowland Scots. Stranger still, that prevalent Polynesian sound, the so-called catch, written with an apostrophe, and often or always the gravestone of a perished consonant, is to be heard in Scotland to this day. When a Scot pronounces water, better, or bottle - *wa’er, be’er*, or *bo’le* - the sound is precisely that of the catch; and I think we may go beyond, and say, that if such a population could be isolated, and this mispronunciation should become the rule, it might prove the first stage of transition from *t* to *k*, which is the disease of Polynesian languages. The tendency of the Marquesans, however, is to urge against consonants, or at least on the very common letter *l*, a war of mere extermination. A hiatus is agreeable to any Polynesian ear; the ear even of the stranger soon grows used to these barbaric voids; but only in the Marquesan will you find such names as *Haaii* and *Paaaeua*, when each individual vowel must be separately uttered.

These points of similarity between a South Sea people and some of my own folk at home ran much in my head in the islands; and not only inclined me to view my fresh acquaintances with favour, but continually modified my judgment. A polite Englishman comes to-day to the Marquesans and is amazed to find the men tattooed; polite Italians came not long ago to England and found our fathers stained with woad; and when I paid the return visit as a little boy, I was highly diverted with the backwardness of Italy: so insecure, so much a matter of the day and hour, is the pre-eminence of race. It was so that I hit upon a means of communication which I recommend to travellers. When I desired any detail of savage custom, or of superstitious belief, I cast back in the story of my fathers, and fished for what I wanted with some trait of equal barbarism: Michael Scott, Lord Derwentwater’s head, the second-sight, the Water Kelpie, - each of these I have found to be a killing bait; the black bull’s head of

Stirling procured me the legend of *Rahero*; and what I knew of the Cluny Macphersons, or the Appin Stewarts, enabled me to learn, and helped me to understand, about the *Tevas* of Tahiti. The native was no longer ashamed, his sense of kinship grew warmer, and his lips were opened. It is this sense of kinship that the traveller must rouse and share; or he had better content himself with travels from the blue bed to the brown. And the presence of one Cockney titterer will cause a whole party to walk in clouds of darkness.

The hamlet of Anaho stands on a margin of flat land between the west of the beach and the spring of the impending mountains. A grove of palms, perpetually ruffling its green fans, carpets it (as for a triumph) with fallen branches, and shades it like an arbour. A road runs from end to end of the covert among beds of flowers, the milliner's shop of the community; and here and there, in the grateful twilight, in an air filled with a diversity of scents, and still within hearing of the surf upon the reef, the native houses stand in scattered neighbourhood. The same word, as we have seen, represents in many tongues of Polynesia, with scarce a shade of difference, the abode of man. But although the word be the same, the structure itself continually varies; and the Marquesan, among the most backward and barbarous of islanders, is yet the most commodiously lodged. The grass huts of Hawaii, the birdcage houses of Tahiti, or the open shed, with the crazy Venetian blinds, of the polite Samoan - none of these can be compared with the Marquesan *paepae-hae*, or dwelling platform. The paepae is an oblong terrace built without cement or black volcanic stone, from twenty to fifty feet in length, raised from four to eight feet from the earth, and accessible by a broad stair. Along the back of this, and coming to about half its width, runs the open front of the house, like a covered gallery: the interior sometimes neat and almost elegant in its bareness, the sleeping space divided off by an endlong coaming, some bright raiment perhaps hanging from a nail, and a lamp and one of White's sewing-machines the only marks of civilization. On the outside, at one end of the terrace, burns the cooking-fire under a shed; at the other there is perhaps a pen for pigs; the remainder is the evening lounge and *al fresco* banquet-hall of the inhabitants. To some houses water is brought down the mountains in bamboo pipes, perforated for the sake of sweetness. With the Highland comparison in my mind, I was struck to remember the sluttish mounds of turf and stone in which I have sat and been entertained in the Hebrides and the North Islands. Two things, I suppose, explain the contrast. In Scotland wood is rare, and with materials so rude as turf and stone the very hope of neatness is excluded. And in Scotland it is cold. Shelter and a hearth are needs so pressing that a man looks not beyond; he is out all day after a bare bellyful, and at night when he saith, 'Aha, it is warm!' he has not appetite for more. Or if for something else, then something higher; a fine school of poetry and song arose in these rough shelters, and an air like '*Lochaber no more*' is an evidence of refinement more convincing, as well as more imperishable, than a palace.

To one such dwelling platform a considerable troop of relatives and dependants resort. In the hour of the dusk, when the fire blazes, and the scent of the cooked breadfruit fills the air, and perhaps the lamp glints already between the pillars and the house, you shall behold them silently assemble to this meal, men, women, and children; and the dogs and pigs frisk together up the terrace stairway, switching rival tails. The strangers from the ship were soon equally welcome: welcome to dip their fingers in the wooden dish, to drink cocoanuts, to share the circulating pipe, and to hear and hold high debate about the misdeeds of the French, the Panama Canal, or the geographical position of San Francisco and New Yo'ko. In a Highland hamlet, quite out of reach of any tourist, I have met the same plain and dignified hospitality.

I have mentioned two facts - the distasteful behaviour of our earliest visitors, and the case of the lady who rubbed herself upon the cushions - which would give a very false opinion of Marquesan manners. The great majority of Polynesians are excellently mannered; but the Marquesan stands apart, annoying and attractive, wild, shy, and refined. If you make him a present he affects to forget it, and it must be offered him again at his going: a pretty formality I have found nowhere else. A hint will get rid of any one or any number; they are so fiercely proud and modest; while many of the more lovable but blunter islanders crowd upon a stranger, and can be no more driven off than flies. A slight or an insult the Marquesan seems never to forget. I was one day talking by the wayside with my friend Hoka, when I perceived his eyes suddenly to flash and his stature to swell. A white horseman was coming down the mountain, and as he passed, and while he paused to exchange salutations with myself, Hoka was still staring and ruffling like a gamecock. It was a Corsican who had years before called him *cochon sauvage - coçon chauvage*, as Hoka mispronounced it. With people so nice and so touchy, it was scarce to be supposed that our company of greenhorns should not blunder into offences. Hoka, on one of his visits, fell suddenly in a brooding silence, and presently after left the ship with cold formality. When he took me back into favour, he adroitly and pointedly explained the nature of my offence: I had asked him to sell cocoa-nuts; and in Hoka's view articles of food were things that a gentleman should give, not sell; or at least that he should not sell to any friend. On another occasion I gave my boat's crew a luncheon of chocolate and biscuits. I had sinned, I could never learn how, against some point of observance; and though I was drily thanked, my offerings were left upon the beach. But our worst mistake was a slight we put on Toma, Hoka's adoptive father, and in his own eyes the rightful chief of Anaho. In the first place, we did not call upon him, as perhaps we should, in his fine new European house, the only one in the hamlet. In the second, when we came ashore upon a visit to his rival, Taipi-Kikino, it was Toma whom we saw standing at the head of the beach, a magnificent figure of a man, magnificently tattooed; and it was of Toma that we asked our question: 'Where is the chief?' 'What chief?' cried Toma, and turned his back on the blasphemers. Nor did he forgive us. Hoka came and went with us daily; but, alone I believe of all the countryside, neither Toma nor his wife set foot on board the *Casco*. The temptation resisted it is hard for a European to compute. The flying city of Laputa moored for a fortnight in St. James's Park affords but a pale figure of the *Casco* anchored before Anaho; for the Londoner has still his change of pleasures, but the Marquesan passes to his grave through an unbroken uniformity of days.

On the afternoon before it was intended we should sail, a valedictory party came on board: nine of our particular friends equipped with gifts and dressed as for a festival. Hoka, the chief dancer and singer, the greatest dandy of Anaho, and one of the handsomest young fellows in the world-sullen, showy, dramatic, light as a feather and strong as an ox - it would have been hard, on that occasion, to recognise, as he sat there stooped and silent, his face heavy and grey. It was strange to see the lad so much affected; stranger still to recognise in his last gift one of the curios we had refused on the first day, and to know our friend, so gaily dressed, so plainly moved at our departure, for one of the half-naked crew that had besieged and insulted us on our arrival: strangest of all, perhaps, to find, in that carved handle of a fan, the last of those curiosities of the first day which had now all been given to us by their possessors - their chief merchandise, for which they had sought to ransom us as long as we were strangers, which they pressed on us for nothing as soon as we were friends. The last visit was not long protracted. One after another they shook hands and got down into their canoe; when Hoka turned his back immediately upon the ship, so that we saw his face no more. Taipi, on the other hand, remained standing and facing us with gracious valedictory gestures; and when Captain Otis dipped the ensign, the whole party saluted with their hats. This was the farewell; the episode of our visit to Anaho was held concluded; and though the *Casco* remained nearly forty hours at her moorings, not one returned on board, and I am inclined to think they avoided appearing on the beach. This reserve and dignity is the finest trait of the Marquesan.

CHAPTER III - THE MAROON

Of the beauties of Anaho books might be written. I remember waking about three, to find the air temperate and scented. The long swell brimmed into the bay, and seemed to fill it full and then subside. Gently, deeply, and silently the *Casco* rolled; only at times a block piped like a bird. Oceanward, the heaven was bright with stars and the sea with their reflections. If I looked to that side, I might have sung with the Hawaiian poet:

Ua maomao ka lani, ua kahaea luna,
Ua pipi ka maka o ka hoku.
(The heavens were fair, they stretched above,
Many were the eyes of the stars.)

And then I turned shoreward, and high squalls were overhead; the mountains loomed up black; and I could have fancied I had slipped ten thousand miles away and was anchored in a Highland loch; that when the day came, it would show pine, and heather, and green fern, and roofs of turf sending up the smoke of peats; and the alien speech that should next greet my ears must be Gaelic, not Kanaka.

And day, when it came, brought other sights and thoughts. I have watched the morning break in many quarters of the world; it has been certainly one of the chief joys of my existence, and the dawn that I saw with most emotion shone upon the bay of Anaho. The mountains abruptly overhang the port with every variety of surface and of inclination, lawn, and cliff, and forest. Not one of these but wore its proper tint of saffron, of sulphur, of the clove, and of the rose. The lustre was like that of satin; on the lighter hues there seemed to float an efflorescence; a solemn bloom appeared on the more dark. The light itself was the ordinary light of morning, colourless and clean; and on this ground of jewels, pencilled out the least detail of drawing. Meanwhile, around the hamlet, under the palms, where the blue shadow lingered, the red coals of cocoa husk and the light trails of smoke betrayed the awakening business of the day; along the beach men and women, lads and lasses, were returning from the bath in bright raiment, red and blue and green, such as we delighted to see in the coloured little pictures of our childhood; and presently the sun had cleared the eastern hill, and the glow of the day was over all.

The glow continued and increased, the business, from the main part, ceased before it had begun. Twice in the day there was a certain stir of shepherding along the seaward hills. At times a canoe went out to fish. At times a woman or two languidly filled a basket in the cotton patch. At times a pipe would sound out of the shadow of a house, ringing the changes on its three notes, with an effect like *Que le jour me dure*, repeated endlessly. Or at times, across a corner of the bay, two natives might communicate in the Marquesan manner with conventional whistlings. All else was sleep and silence. The surf broke and shone around the shores; a species of black crane fished in the broken water; the black pigs were continually galloping by on some affair; but the people might never have awaked, or they might all be dead.

My favourite haunt was opposite the hamlet, where was a landing in a cove under a lianaed cliff. The beach was lined with palms and a tree called the purao, something between the fig and mulberry in growth, and bearing a flower like a great yellow poppy with a maroon heart. In places rocks encroached upon the sand; the beach would be all submerged; and the surf would bubble warmly as high as to my knees, and play with cocoa-nut husks as our more homely ocean plays with wreck and wrack and bottles. As the reflux drew down, marvels of colour and design streamed between my feet; which I would grasp at, miss, or seize: now to find them what they promised, shells to grace a cabinet or be set in gold upon a lady's finger; now to catch only *maya* of coloured sand, pounded fragments and pebbles, that, as soon as they were dry, became as dull and homely as the flints upon a garden path. I have toiled at this childish pleasure for hours in the strong sun, conscious of my incurable ignorance; but too keenly pleased to be ashamed. Meanwhile, the blackbird (or his tropical understudy) would be fluting in the thickets overhead.

A little further, in the turn of the bay, a streamlet trickled in the bottom of a den, thence spilling down a stair of rock into the sea. The draught of air drew down under the foliage in the very bottom of the den, which was a perfect arbour for coolness. In front it stood open on the blue bay and the *Casco* lying there under her awning and her cheerful colours. Overhead was a thatch of puraos, and over these again palms brandished their bright fans, as I have seen a conjurer make himself a halo out of naked swords. For in this spot, over a neck of low land at the foot of the mountains, the trade-wind streams into Anaho Bay in a flood of almost constant volume and velocity, and of a heavenly coolness.

It chanced one day that I was ashore in the cove, with Mrs. Stevenson and the ship's cook. Except for the *Casco* lying outside, and a crane or two, and the ever-busy wind and sea, the face of the world was of a prehistoric emptiness; life appeared to stand stock-still, and the sense of isolation was profound and refreshing. On a sudden, the trade-wind, coming in a gust over the isthmus, struck and scattered the fans of the palms above the den; and, behold! in two of the tops there sat a native, motionless as an idol and watching us, you would have said, without a wink. The next moment the tree closed, and the glimpse was gone. This discovery of human presences latent overhead in a place where we had supposed ourselves alone, the immobility of our tree-top spies, and the thought that perhaps at all hours we were similarly supervised, struck us with a chill. Talk languished on the beach. As for the cook (whose conscience was not clear), he never afterwards set foot on shore, and twice, when the *Casco* appeared to be driving on the rocks, it was amusing to observe that man's alacrity; death, he was persuaded, awaiting him upon the beach. It was more than a year later, in the Gilberts, that the explanation dawned upon myself. The natives were drawing palm-tree wine, a thing forbidden by law; and when the wind thus suddenly revealed them, they were doubtless more troubled than ourselves.

At the top of the den there dwelt an old, melancholy, grizzled man of the name of Tari (Charlie) Coffin. He was a native of Oahu, in the Sandwich Islands; and had gone to sea in his youth in the American whalers; a circumstance to which he owed his name, his English, his down-east twang, and the misfortune of his innocent life. For one captain, sailing out of New Bedford, carried him to Nuka-hiva and marooned him there among the cannibals. The motive for this act was inconceivably small; poor Tari's wages, which were thus economised, would scarce have shook the credit of the New Bedford owners. And the act itself was simply murder. Tari's life must have hung in the beginning by a hair. In the grief and terror of that time, it is not unlikely he went mad, an infirmity to which he was still liable; or perhaps a child may have taken a fancy to him and ordained him to be spared. He escaped at least alive, married in the island, and when I knew him was a widower with a married son and a granddaughter. But the thought of Oahu haunted him; its praise was for ever on his lips; he beheld it, looking back, as a place of ceaseless feasting, song, and dance; and in his dreams I daresay he revisits it with joy. I wonder what he would think if he could be carried there indeed, and see the modern town of Honolulu brisk with traffic, and the palace with its guards, and the great hotel, and Mr. Berger's band with their uniforms and outlandish instruments; or what he would think to see the brown faces grown so few and the white so many; and his father's land sold, for planting sugar, and his father's house quite perished, or perhaps the last of them struck leprous and immured between the surf and the cliffs on Molokai? So simply, even in South Sea Islands, and so sadly, the changes come.

Tari was poor, and poorly lodged. His house was a wooden frame, run up by Europeans; it was indeed his official residence, for Tari was the shepherd of the promontory sheep. I can give a perfect inventory of its contents: three kegs, a tin biscuit-box, an iron saucepan, several cocoa-shell cups, a lantern, and three bottles, probably containing oil; while the clothes of the family and a few mats were thrown across the open rafters. Upon my first meeting with this exile he had conceived for me one of the baseless island friendships, had given me nuts to drink, and carried me up the den 'to see my house' - the only entertainment that he had to offer. He liked the 'Amelican,' he said, and the 'Inglisman,' but the 'Flessman' was his abhorrence; and he was careful to explain that if he had thought us 'Fless,' we should have had none of his nuts, and never a sight of his house. His distaste for the French I can partly understand, but not at all his toleration of the Anglo-Saxon. The next day he brought me a pig, and some days later one of our party going ashore found him in act to bring a second. We were still strange to the islands; we were pained by the poor man's generosity, which he could ill afford, and, by a natural enough but quite unpardonable blunder, we refused the pig. Had Tari been a Marquesan we should have seen him no more; being what he was, the most mild, long-suffering, melancholy man, he took a revenge a hundred times more painful. Scarce had the canoe with the nine villagers put off from their farewell before the *Casco* was boarded from the other side. It was Tari; coming thus late because he had no canoe of his own, and had found it hard to borrow one; coming thus solitary (as indeed we always saw him), because he was a stranger in the land, and the dreariest of company. The rest of my family basely fled from the encounter. I must receive our injured friend alone; and the interview must have lasted hard upon an hour, for he was loath to tear himself away. 'You go 'way. I see you no more - no, sir!' he lamented; and then looking about him with rueful admiration, 'This goodee ship - no, sir! - goodee ship!' he would exclaim: the 'no, sir,' thrown out sharply through the nose upon a rising inflection, an echo from New Bedford and the fallacious whaler. From these expressions of grief and praise, he would return continually to the case of the rejected pig. 'I like give present all 'e same you,' he complained; 'only got pig: you no take him!' He was a poor man; he had no choice of gifts; he had only a pig, he repeated; and I had refused it. I have rarely been more wretched than to see him sitting there, so old, so grey, so poor, so hardly fortuned, of so rueful a countenance, and to appreciate, with growing keenness, the affront which I had so innocently dealt him; but it was one of those cases in which speech is vain.

Tari's son was smiling and inert; his daughter-in-law, a girl of sixteen, pretty, gentle, and grave, more intelligent than most Anaho women, and with a fair share of French; his grandchild, a mite of a creature at the breast. I went up the den one day when Tari was from home, and found the son making a cotton sack, and madame suckling mademoiselle. When I had sat down with them on the floor, the girl began to question me about England; which I tried to describe, piling the pan and the cocoa shells one upon another to represent the houses, and explaining, as best I was able, and by word and gesture, the over-population, the hunger, and the perpetual toil. '*Pas de cocotiers? pas do popoi*?' she asked. I told her it was too cold, and went through an elaborate performance, shutting out draughts, and crouching over an imaginary fire, to make sure she understood. But she understood right well; remarked it must be bad for the health, and sat a while gravely reflecting on that picture of unwonted sorrows. I am sure it roused her pity, for it struck in her another thought always uppermost in the Marquesan bosom; and she began with a smiling sadness, and looking on me out of melancholy eyes, to lament the decease of her own people. '*Ici pas de Kanaques,*' said she; and taking the baby from her breast, she held it out to me with both her hands. '*Tenez* - a little baby like this; then dead. All the Kanaques die. Then no more.' The smile, and this instancing by the girl-mother of her own tiny flesh and blood, affected me strangely; they spoke of so tranquil a despair. Meanwhile the husband smilingly made his sack; and the unconscious babe struggled to reach a pot of raspberry jam, friendship's offering, which I had just brought up the den; and in a perspective of centuries I saw their case as ours, death coming in like a tide, and the day already numbered when there should be no more Beretani, and no more of any race whatever, and (what oddly touched me) no more literary works and no more readers.

CHAPTER IV - DEATH

The thought of death, I have said, is uppermost in the mind of the Marquesan. It would be strange if it were otherwise. The race is perhaps the handsomest extant. Six feet is about the middle height of males; they are strongly muscled, free from fat, swift in action, graceful in repose; and the women, though fatter and duller, are still comely animals. To judge by the eye, there is no race more viable; and yet death reaps them with both hands. When Bishop Dordillon first came to Tai-o-hae, he reckoned the inhabitants at many thousands; he was but newly dead, and in the same bay Stanislao Moanatini counted on his fingers eight residual natives. Or take the valley of Hapaa, known to readers of Herman Melville under the grotesque misspelling of Hapar. There are but two writers who have touched the South Seas with any genius, both Americans: Melville and Charles Warren Stoddard; and at the christening of the first and greatest, some influential fairy must have been neglected: ‘He shall be able to see,’ ‘He shall be able to tell,’ ‘He shall be able to charm,’ said the friendly godmothers; ‘But he shall not be able to hear,’ exclaimed the last. The tribe of Hapaa is said to have numbered some four hundred, when the small-pox came and reduced them by one-fourth. Six months later a woman developed tubercular consumption; the disease spread like a fire about the valley, and in less than a year two survivors, a man and a woman, fled from that new-created solitude. A similar Adam and Eve may some day wither among new races, the tragic residue of Britain. When I first heard this story the date staggered me; but I am now inclined to think it possible. Early in the year of my visit, for example, or late the year before, a first case of phthisis appeared in a household of seventeen persons, and by the month of August, when the tale was told me, one soul survived, and that was a boy who had been absent at his schooling. And depopulation works both ways, the doors of death being set wide open, and the door of birth almost closed. Thus, in the half-year ending July 1888 there were twelve deaths and but one birth in the district of the Hatiheu. Seven or eight more deaths were to be looked for in the ordinary course; and M. Aussel, the observant gendarme, knew of but one likely birth. At this rate it is no matter of surprise if the population in that part should have declined in forty years from six thousand to less than four hundred; which are, once more on the authority of M. Aussel, the estimated figures. And the rate of decline must have even accelerated towards the end.

A good way to appreciate the depopulation is to go by land from

Anaho to Hatiheu on the adjacent bay. The road is good travelling, but cruelly steep. We seemed scarce to have passed the deserted house which stands highest in Anaho before we were looking dizzily down upon its roof; the *Casco* well out in the bay, and rolling for a wager, shrank visibly; and presently through the gap of Tari's isthmus, Ua-huna was seen to hang cloudlike on the horizon. Over the summit, where the wind blew really chill, and whistled in the reed-like grass, and tossed the grassy fell of the pandanus, we stepped suddenly, as through a door, into the next vale and bay of Hatiheu. A bowl of mountains encloses it upon three sides. On the fourth this rampart has been bombarded into ruins, runs down to seaward in imminent and shattered crags, and presents the one practicable breach of the blue bay. The interior of this vessel is crowded with lovely and valuable trees, - orange, breadfruit, mummy-apple, cocoa, the island chestnut, and for weeds, the pine and the banana. Four perennial streams water and keep it green; and along the dell, first of one, then of another, of these, the road, for a considerable distance, descends into this fortunate valley. The song of the waters and the familiar disarray of boulders gave us a strong sense of home, which the exotic foliage, the daft-like growth of the pandanus, the buttressed trunk of the banyan, the black pigs galloping in the bush, and the architecture of the native houses dissipated ere it could be enjoyed.

The houses on the Hatiheu side begin high up; higher yet, the more melancholy spectacle of empty paepaes. When a native habitation is deserted, the superstructure - pandanus thatch, wattle, unstable tropical timber - speedily rots, and is speedily scattered by the wind. Only the stones of the terrace endure; nor can any ruin, cairn, or standing stone, or vitrified fort present a more stern appearance of antiquity. We must have passed from six to eight of these now houseless platforms. On the main road of the island, where it crosses the valley of Taipi, Mr. Osbourne tells me they are to be reckoned by the dozen; and as the roads have been made long posterior to their erection, perhaps to their desertion, and must simply be regarded as lines drawn at random through the bush, the forest on either hand must be equally filled with these survivals: the gravestones of whole families. Such ruins are tapu in the strictest sense; no native must approach them; they have become outposts of the kingdom of the grave. It might appear a natural and pious custom in the hundreds who are left, the rearguard of perished thousands, that their feet should leave untrod these hearthstones of their fathers. I believe, in fact, the custom rests on different and more grim conceptions. But the house, the grave, and even the body of the dead, have been always particularly honoured by Marquesans. Until recently the corpse was sometimes kept in the family and daily oiled and sunned, until, by gradual and revolting stages, it dried into a kind of mummy. Offerings are still laid upon the grave. In Traitor's Bay, Mr. Osbourne saw a man buy a looking-glass to lay upon his son's. And the sentiment against the desecration of tombs, thoughtlessly ruffled in the laying down of the new roads, is a chief ingredient in the native hatred for the French.

The Marquesan beholds with dismay the approaching extinction of his race. The thought of death sits down with him to meat, and rises with him from his bed; he lives and breathes under a shadow of mortality awful to support; and he is so inured to the apprehension that he greets the reality with relief. He does not even seek to support a disappointment; at an affront, at a breach of one of his fleeting and communistic love-affairs, he seeks an instant refuge in the grave. Hanging is now the fashion. I heard of three who had hanged themselves in the west end of Hiva-oa during the first half of 1888; but though this be a common form of suicide in other parts of the South Seas, I cannot think it will continue popular in the Marquesas. Far more suitable to Marquesan sentiment is the old form of poisoning with the fruit of the eva, which offers to the native suicide a cruel but deliberate death, and gives time for those decencies of the last hour, to which he attaches such remarkable importance. The coffin can thus be at hand, the pigs killed, the cry of the mourners sounding already through the house; and then it is, and not before, that the Marquesan is conscious of achievement, his life all rounded in, his robes (like Caesar's) adjusted for the final act. Praise not any man till he is dead, said the ancients; envy not any man till you hear the mourners, might be the Marquesan parody. The coffin, though of late introduction, strangely engages their attention. It is to the mature Marquesan what a watch is to the European schoolboy. For ten years Queen Vaekehu had dunned the fathers; at last, but the other day, they let her have her will, gave her her coffin, and the woman's soul is at rest. I was told a droll instance of the force of this preoccupation. The Polynesians are subject to a disease seemingly rather of the will than of the body. I was told the Tahitians have a word for it, *erimatua*, but cannot find it in my dictionary. A gendarme, M. Nouveau, has seen men beginning to succumb to this insubstantial malady, has routed them from their houses, turned them on to do their trick upon the roads, and in two days has seen them cured. But this other remedy is more original: a Marquesan, dying of this discouragement - perhaps I should rather say this acquiescence - has been known, at the fulfilment of his crowning wish, on the mere sight of that desired hermitage, his coffin - to revive, recover, shake off the hand of death, and be restored for years to his occupations - carving tikis (idols), let us say, or braiding old men's beards. From all this it may be conceived how easily they meet death when it approaches naturally. I heard one example, grim and picturesque. In the time of the small-pox in Hapaa, an old man was seized with the disease; he had no thought of recovery; had his grave dug by a wayside, and lived in it for near a fortnight, eating, drinking, and smoking with the passers-by, talking mostly of his end, and equally unconcerned for himself and careless of the friends whom he infected.

This proneness to suicide, and loose seat in life, is not peculiar to the Marquesan. What is peculiar is the widespread depression and acceptance of the national end. Pleasures are neglected, the dance languishes, the songs are forgotten. It is true that some, and perhaps too many, of them are proscribed; but many remain, if there were spirit to support or to revive them. At the last feast of the Bastille, Stanislao Moanatini shed tears when he beheld the inanimate performance of the dancers. When the people sang for us in Anaho, they must apologise for the smallness of their repertory. They were only young folk present, they said, and it was only the old that knew the songs. The whole body of Marquesan poetry and music was being suffered to die out with a single dispirited generation. The full import is apparent only to one acquainted with other Polynesian races; who knows how the Samoan coins a fresh song for every trifling incident, or who has heard (on Penrhyn, for instance) a band of little stripling maids from eight to twelve keep up their minstrelsy for hours upon a stretch, one song following another without pause. In like manner, the Marquesan, never industrious, begins now to cease altogether from production. The exports of the group decline out of all proportion even with the death-rate of the islanders. ‘The coral waxes, the palm grows, and man departs,’ says the Marquesan; and he folds his hands. And surely this is nature. Fond as it may appear, we labour and refrain, not for the rewards of any single life, but with a timid eye upon the lives and memories of our successors; and where no one is to succeed, of his own family, or his own tongue, I doubt whether Rothschilds would make money or Cato practise virtue. It is natural, also, that a temporary stimulus should sometimes rouse the Marquesan from his lethargy. Over all the landward shore of Anaho cotton runs like a wild weed; man or woman, whoever comes to pick it, may earn a dollar in the day; yet when we arrived, the trader’s store-house was entirely empty; and before we left it was near full. So long as the circus was there, so long as the *Casco* was yet anchored in the bay, it behoved every one to make his visit; and to this end every woman must have a new dress, and every man a shirt and trousers. Never before, in Mr. Regler’s experience, had they displayed so much activity.

In their despondency there is an element of dread. The fear of ghosts and of the dark is very deeply written in the mind of the Polynesian; not least of the Marquesan. Poor Taipi, the chief of Anaho, was condemned to ride to Hatiheu on a moonless night. He borrowed a lantern, sat a long while nerving himself for the adventure, and when he at last departed, wrung the *Cascos* by the hand as for a final separation. Certain presences, called Vehinehae, frequent and make terrible the nocturnal roadside; I was told by one they were like so much mist, and as the traveller walked into them dispersed and dissipated; another described them as being shaped like men and having eyes like cats; from none could I obtain the smallest clearness as to what they did, or wherefore they were dreaded. We may be sure at least they represent the dead; for the dead, in the minds of the islanders, are all-pervasive. 'When a native says that he is a man,' writes Dr. Codrington, 'he means that he is a man and not a ghost; not that he is a man and not a beast. The intelligent agents of this world are to his mind the men who are alive, and the ghosts the men who are dead.' Dr. Codrington speaks of Melanesia; from what I have learned his words are equally true of the Polynesian. And yet more. Among cannibal Polynesians a dreadful suspicion rests generally on the dead; and the Marquesans, the greatest cannibals of all, are scarce likely to be free from similar beliefs. I hazard the guess that the Vehinehae are the hungry spirits of the dead, continuing their life's business of the cannibal ambuscade, and lying everywhere unseen, and eager to devour the living. Another superstition I picked up through the troubled medium of Tari Coffin's English. The dead, he told me, came and danced by night around the paepae of their former family; the family were thereupon overcome by some emotion (but whether of pious sorrow or of fear I could not gather), and must 'make a feast,' of which fish, pig, and popoi were indispensable ingredients. So far this is clear enough. But here Tari went on to instance the new house of Toma and the house-warming feast which was just then in preparation as instances in point. Dare we indeed string them together, and add the case of the deserted ruin, as though the dead continually besieged the paepaes of the living: were kept at arm's-length, even from the first foundation, only by propitiatory feasts, and, so soon as the fire of life went out upon the hearth, swarmed back into possession of their ancient seat?

I speak by guess of these Marquesan superstitions. On the cannibal ghost I shall return elsewhere with certainty. And it is enough, for the present purpose, to remark that the men of the Marquesas, from whatever reason, fear and shrink from the presence of ghosts. Conceive how this must tell upon the nerves in islands where the number of the dead already so far exceeds that of the living, and the dead multiply and the living dwindle at so swift a rate. Conceive how the remnant huddles about the embers of the fire of life; even as old Red Indians, deserted on the march and in the snow, the kindly tribe all gone, the last flame expiring, and the night around populous with wolves.

CHAPTER V - DEPOPULATION

Over the whole extent of the South Seas, from one tropic to another, we find traces of a bygone state of over-population, when the resources of even a tropical soil were taxed, and even the improvident Polynesian trembled for the future. We may accept some of the ideas of Mr. Darwin's theory of coral islands, and suppose a rise of the sea, or the subsidence of some former continental area, to have driven into the tops of the mountains multitudes of refugees. Or we may suppose, more soberly, a people of sea-rovers, emigrants from a crowded country, to strike upon and settle island after island, and as time went on to multiply exceedingly in their new seats. In either case the end must be the same; soon or late it must grow apparent that the crew are too numerous, and that famine is at hand. The Polynesians met this emergent danger with various expedients of activity and prevention. A way was found to preserve breadfruit by packing it in artificial pits; pits forty feet in depth and of proportionate bore are still to be seen, I am told, in the Marquesas; and yet even these were insufficient for the teeming people, and the annals of the past are gloomy with famine and cannibalism. Among the Hawaiians - a hardier people, in a more exacting climate - agriculture was carried far; the land was irrigated with canals; and the fish-ponds of Molokai prove the number and diligence of the old inhabitants. Meanwhile, over all the island world, abortion and infanticide prevailed. On coral atolls, where the danger was most plainly obvious, these were enforced by law and sanctioned by punishment. On Vaitupu, in the Ellices, only two children were allowed to a couple; on Nukufetau, but one. On the latter the punishment was by fine; and it is related that the fine was sometimes paid, and the child spared.

This is characteristic. For no people in the world are so fond or so long-suffering with children - children make the mirth and the adornment of their homes, serving them for playthings and for picture-galleries. 'Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them.' The stray bastard is contended for by rival families; and the natural and the adopted children play and grow up together undistinguished. The spoiling, and I may almost say the deification, of the child, is nowhere carried so far as in the eastern islands; and furthest, according to my opportunities of observation, in the Paumotu group, the so-called Low or Dangerous Archipelago. I have seen a Paumotuan native turn from me with embarrassment and disaffection because I suggested that a brat would be the better for a beating. It is a daily matter in some eastern islands to see a child strike or even stone its mother, and the mother, so far from punishing, scarce ventures to resist. In some, when his child was born, a chief was superseded and resigned his name; as though, like a drone, he had then fulfilled the occasion of his being. And in some the lightest words of children had the weight of oracles. Only the other day, in the Marquesas, if a child conceived a distaste to any stranger, I am assured the stranger would be slain. And I shall have to tell in another place an instance of the opposite: how a child in Manihiki having taken a fancy to myself, her adoptive parents at once accepted the situation and loaded me with gifts.

With such sentiments the necessity for child-destruction would not fail to clash, and I believe we find the trace of divided feeling in the Tahitian brotherhood of Oro. At a certain date a new god was added to the Society-Island Olympus, or an old one refurbished and made popular. Oro was his name, and he may be compared with the Bacchus of the ancients. His zealots sailed from bay to bay, and from island to island; they were everywhere received with feasting; wore fine clothes; sang, danced, acted; gave exhibitions of dexterity and strength; and were the artists, the acrobats, the bards, and the harlots of the group. Their life was public and epicurean; their initiation a mystery; and the highest in the land aspired to join the brotherhood. If a couple stood next in line to a high-chieftaincy, they were suffered, on grounds of policy, to spare one child; all other children, who had a father or a mother in the company of Oro, stood condemned from the moment of conception. A freemasonry, an agnostic sect, a company of artists, its members all under oath to spread unchastity, and all forbidden to leave offspring - I do not know how it may appear to others, but to me the design seems obvious. Famine menacing the islands, and the needful remedy repulsive, it was recommended to the native mind by these trappings of mystery, pleasure, and parade. This is the more probable, and the secret, serious purpose of the institution appears the more plainly, if it be true that, after a certain period of life, the obligation of the votary was changed; at first, bound to be profligate: afterwards, expected to be chaste.

Here, then, we have one side of the case. Man-eating among kindly men, child-murder among child-lovers, industry in a race the most idle, invention in a race the least progressive, this grim, pagan salvation-army of the brotherhood of Oro, the report of early voyagers, the widespread vestiges of former habitation, and the universal tradition of the islands, all point to the same fact of former crowding and alarm. And to-day we are face to face with the reverse. To-day in the Marquesas, in the Eight Islands of Hawaii, in Mangareva, in Easter Island, we find the same race perishing like flies. Why this change? Or, grant that the coming of the whites, the change of habits, and the introduction of new maladies and vices, fully explain the depopulation, why is that depopulation not universal? The population of Tahiti, after a period of alarming decrease, has again become stationary. I hear of a similar result among some Maori tribes; in many of the Paumotus a slight increase is to be observed; and the Samoans are to-day as healthy and at least as fruitful as before the change. Grant that the Tahitians, the Maoris, and the Paumotuans have become inured to the new conditions; and what are we to make of the Samoans, who have never suffered?

Those who are acquainted only with a single group are apt to be ready with solutions. Thus I have heard the mortality of the Maoris attributed to their change of residence - from fortified hill-tops to the low, marshy vicinity of their plantations. How plausible! And yet the Marquesans are dying out in the same houses where their fathers multiplied. Or take opium. The Marquesas and Hawaii are the two groups the most infected with this vice; the population of the one is the most civilised, that of the other by far the most barbarous, of Polynesians; and they are two of those that perish the most rapidly. Here is a strong case against opium. But let us take unchastity, and we shall find the Marquesas and Hawaii figuring again upon another count. Thus, Samoans are the most chaste of Polynesians, and they are to this day entirely fertile; Marquesans are the most debauched: we have seen how they are perishing; Hawaiians are notoriously lax, and they begin to be dotted among deserts. So here is a case stronger still against unchastity; and here also we have a correction to apply. Whatever the virtues of the Tahitian, neither friend nor enemy dares call him chaste; and yet he seems to have outlived the time of danger. One last example: syphilis has been plausibly credited with much of the sterility. But the Samoans are, by all accounts, as fruitful as at first; by some accounts more so; and it is not seriously to be argued that the Samoans have escaped syphilis.

These examples show how dangerous it is to reason from any particular cause, or even from many in a single group. I have in my eye an able and amiable pamphlet by the Rev. S. E. Bishop: ‘Why are the Hawaiians Dying Out?’ Any one interested in the subject ought to read this tract, which contains real information; and yet Mr. Bishop’s views would have been changed by an acquaintance with other groups. Samoa is, for the moment, the main and the most instructive exception to the rule. The people are the most chaste and one of the most temperate of island peoples. They have never been tried and depressed with any grave pestilence. Their clothing has scarce been tampered with; at the simple and becoming tabard of the girls, Tartuffe, in many another island, would have cried out; for the cool, healthy, and modest lava-lava or kilt, Tartuffe has managed in many another island to substitute stifling and inconvenient trousers. Lastly, and perhaps chiefly, so far from their amusements having been curtailed, I think they have been, upon the whole, extended. The Polynesian falls easily into despondency: bereavement, disappointment, the fear of novel visitations, the decay or proscription of ancient pleasures, easily incline him to be sad; and sadness detaches him from life. The melancholy of the Hawaiian and the emptiness of his new life are striking; and the remark is yet more apposite to the Marquesas. In Samoa, on the other hand, perpetual song and dance, perpetual games, journeys, and pleasures, make an animated and a smiling picture of the island life. And the Samoans are to-day the gayest and the best entertained inhabitants of our planet. The importance of this can scarcely be exaggerated. In a climate and upon a soil where a livelihood can be had for the stooping, entertainment is a prime necessity. It is otherwise with us, where life presents us with a daily problem, and there is a serious interest, and some of the heat of conflict, in the mere continuing to be. So, in certain atolls, where there is no great gaiety, but man must bestir himself with some vigour for his daily bread, public health and the population are maintained; but in the lotos islands, with the decay of pleasures, life itself decays. It is from this point of view that we may instance, among other causes of depression, the decay of war. We have been so long used in Europe to that dreary business of war on the great scale, trailing epidemics and leaving pestilential corpses in its train, that we have almost forgotten its original, the most healthful, if not the most humane, of all field sports - hedge-warfare. From this, as well as from the rest of his amusements and interests, the islander, upon a hundred islands, has been recently cut off. And to this, as well as to so many others, the Samoan still makes good a special title.

Upon the whole, the problem seems to me to stand thus:- Where there have been fewest changes, important or unimportant, salutary or hurtful, there the race survives. Where there have been most, important or unimportant, salutary or hurtful, there it perishes. Each change, however small, augments the sum of new conditions to which the race has to become inured. There may seem, *a priori*, no comparison between the change from ‘sour toddy’ to bad gin, and that from the island kilt to a pair of European trousers. Yet I am far from persuaded that the one is any more hurtful than the other; and the unaccustomed race will sometimes die of pin-pricks. We are here face to face with one of the difficulties of the missionary. In Polynesian islands he easily obtains pre-eminent authority; the king becomes his *mairedupalais*; he can proscribe, he can command; and the temptation is ever towards too much. Thus (by all accounts) the Catholics in Mangareva, and thus (to my own knowledge) the Protestants in

Hawaii, have rendered life in a more or less degree unliveable to their converts. And the mild, uncomplaining creatures (like children in a prison) yawn and await death. It is easy to blame the missionary. But it is his business to make changes. It is surely his business, for example, to prevent war; and yet I have instanced war itself as one of the elements of health. On the other hand, it were, perhaps, easy for the missionary to proceed more gently, and to regard every change as an affair of weight. I take the average missionary; I am sure I do him no more than justice when I suppose that he would hesitate to bombard a village, even in order to convert an archipelago. Experience begins to show us (at least in Polynesian islands) that change of habit is bloodier than a bombardment.

There is one point, ere I have done, where I may go to meet criticism. I have said nothing of faulty hygiene, bathing during fevers, mistaken treatment of children, native doctoring, or abortion - all causes frequently adduced. And I have said nothing of them because they are conditions common to both epochs, and even more efficient in the past than in the present. Was it not the same with unchastity, it may be asked? Was not the Polynesian always unchaste? Doubtless he was so always: doubtless he is more so since the coming of his remarkably chaste visitors from Europe. Take the Hawaiian account of Cook: I have no doubt it is entirely fair. Take Krusenstern’s candid, almost innocent, description of a Russian man-of-war at the Marquesas; consider the disgraceful history of missions in Hawaii itself, where (in the war of lust) the American missionaries were once shelled by an English adventurer, and once raided and mishandled by the crew of an American warship; add the practice of whaling fleets to call at the Marquesas, and carry off a complement of women for the cruise; consider, besides, how the whites were at first regarded in the light of demi-gods, as appears plainly in the reception of Cook upon Hawaii; and again, in the story of the discovery of Tutuila, when the really decent women of Samoa prostituted themselves in public to the French; and bear in mind how it was the custom of the adventurers, and we may almost say the business of the missionaries, to deride and infract even the most salutary tapus. Here we see every engine of dissolution directed at once against a virtue never and nowhere very strong or popular; and the result, even in the most degraded islands, has been further degradation. Mr. Lawes, the missionary of Savage Island, told me the standard of female chastity had declined there since the coming of the whites. In heathen time, if a girl gave birth to a bastard, her father or brother would dash the infant down the cliffs; and to-day the scandal would be small. Or take the Marquesas. Stanislao Moanatini told me that in his own recollection, the young were strictly guarded; they were not suffered so much as to look upon one another in the street, but passed (so my informant put it) like dogs; and the other day the whole school-children of Nuka-hiva and Ua-pu escaped in a body to the woods, and lived there for a fortnight in promiscuous liberty. Readers of travels may perhaps exclaim at my authority, and declare themselves better informed. I should prefer the statement of an intelligent native like Stanislao (even if it stood alone, which it is far from doing) to the report of the most honest traveller. A ship of war comes to a haven, anchors, lands a party, receives and returns a visit, and the captain writes a chapter on the manners of the island. It is not considered what class is mostly seen. Yet we should not be pleased if a Lascar foremast hand were to judge England by the ladies who parade Ratcliffe Highway, and the gentlemen who share with them their hire. Stanislao's opinion of a decay of virtue even in these unvirtuous islands has been supported to me by others; his very example, the progress of dissolution amongst the young, is adduced by Mr. Bishop in Hawaii. And so far as Marquesans are concerned, we might have hazarded a guess of some decline in manners. I do not think that any race could ever have prospered or multiplied with such as now obtain; I am sure they would have been never at the pains to count paternal kinship. It is not possible to give details; suffice it that their manners appear to be imitated from the dreams of ignorant and vicious children, and their debauches persevered in until energy, reason, and almost life itself are in abeyance.

CHAPTER VI - CHIEFS AND TAPUS

We used to admire exceedingly the bland and gallant manners of the chief called Taipi-Kikino. An elegant guest at table, skilled in the use of knife and fork, a brave figure when he shouldered a gun and started for the woods after wild chickens, always serviceable, always ingratiating and gay, I would sometimes wonder where he found his cheerfulness. He had enough to sober him, I thought, in his official budget. His expenses - for he was always seen attired in virgin white - must have by far exceeded his income of six dollars in the year, or say two shillings a month. And he was himself a man of no substance; his house the poorest in the village. It was currently supposed that his elder brother, Kauanui, must have helped him out. But how comes it that the elder brother should succeed to the family estate, and be a wealthy commoner, and the younger be a poor man, and yet rule as chief in Anaho? That the one should be wealthy, and the other almost indigent is probably to be explained by some adoption; for comparatively few children are brought up in the house or succeed to the estates of their natural begetters. That the one should be chief instead of the other must be explained (in a very Irish fashion) on the ground that neither of them is a chief at all.

Since the return and the wars of the French, many chiefs have been deposed, and many so-called chiefs appointed. We have seen, in the same house, one such upstart drinking in the company of two such extruded island Bourbons, men, whose word a few years ago was life and death, now sunk to be peasants like their neighbours. So when the French overthrew hereditary tyrants, dubbed the commons of the Marquesas freeborn citizens of the republic, and endowed them with a vote for a *conseiller-général* at Tahiti, they probably conceived themselves upon the path to popularity; and so far from that, they were revolting public sentiment. The deposition of the chiefs was perhaps sometimes needful; the appointment of others may have been needful also; it was at least a delicate business. The Government of George II. exiled many Highland magnates. It never occurred to them to manufacture substitutes; and if the French have been more bold, we have yet to see with what success.

Our chief at Anaho was always called, he always called himself, Taipi-Kikino; and yet that was not his name, but only the wand of his false position. As soon as he was appointed chief, his name - which signified, if I remember exactly, *Prince born among flowers* - fell in abeyance, and he was dubbed instead by the expressive byword, Taipi-Kikino - *Highwater man-of-no-account* - or, Englishing more boldly, *Beggar on horseback* - a witty and a wicked cut. A nickname in Polynesia destroys almost the memory of the original name. To-day, if we were Polynesians, Gladstone would be no more heard of. We should speak of and address our Nestor as the Grand Old Man, and it is so that himself would sign his correspondence. Not the prevalence, then, but the significancy of the nickname is to be noted here. The new authority began with small prestige. Taipi has now been some time in office; from all I saw he seemed a person very fit. He is not the least unpopular, and yet his power is nothing. He is a chief to the French, and goes to breakfast with the Resident; but for any practical end of chieftaincy a rag doll were equally efficient.

We had been but three days in Anaho when we received the visit of the chief of Hatiheu, a man of weight and fame, late leader of a war upon the French, late prisoner in Tahiti, and the last eater of long-pig in Nuka-hiva. Not many years have elapsed since he was seen striding on the beach of Anaho, a dead man's arm across his shoulder. 'So does Kooamua to his enemies!' he roared to the passers-by, and took a bite from the raw flesh. And now behold this gentleman, very wisely replaced in office by the French, paying us a morning visit in European clothes. He was the man of the most character we had yet seen: his manners genial and decisive, his person tall, his face rugged, astute, formidable, and with a certain similarity to Mr. Gladstone's - only for the brownness of the skin, and the high-chief's tattooing, all one side and much of the other being of an even blue. Further acquaintance increased our opinion of his sense. He viewed the *Casco* in a manner then quite new to us, examining her lines and the running of the gear; to a piece of knitting on which one of the party was engaged, he must have devoted ten minutes' patient study; nor did he desist before he had divined the principles; and he was interested even to excitement by a type-writer, which he learned to work. When he departed he carried away with him a list of his family, with his own name printed by his own hand at the bottom. I should add that he was plainly much of a humorist, and not a little of a humbug. He told us, for instance, that he was a person of exact sobriety; such being the obligation of his high estate: the commons might be sots, but the chief could not stoop so low. And not many days after he was to be observed in a state of smiling and lop-sided imbecility, the *Casco* ribbon upside down on his dishonoured hat.

But his business that morning in Anaho is what concerns us here. The devil-fish, it seems, were growing scarce upon the reef; it was judged fit to interpose what we should call a close season; for that end, in Polynesia, a tapu (vulgarly spelt 'taboo') has to be declared, and who was to declare it? Taipi might; he ought; it was a chief part of his duty; but would any one regard the inhibition of a Beggar on

Horse-back? He might plant palm branches: it did not in the least follow that the spot was sacred. He might recite the spell: it was shrewdly supposed the spirits would not hearken. And so the old, legitimate cannibal must ride over the mountains to do it for him; and the respectable official in white clothes could but look on and envy. At about the same time, though in a different manner, Kooamua established a forest law. It was observed the cocoa-palms were suffering, for the plucking of green nuts impoverishes and at last endangers the tree. Now Kooamua could tapu the reef, which was public property, but he could not tapu other people's palms; and the expedient adopted was interesting. He tapu'd his own trees, and his example was imitated over all Hatiheu and Anaho. I fear Taipi might have tapu'd all that he possessed and found none to follow him. So much for the esteem in which the dignity of an appointed chief is held by others; a single circumstance will show what he thinks of it himself. I never met one, but he took an early opportunity to explain his situation. True, he was only an appointed chief when I beheld him; but somewhere else, perhaps upon some other isle, he was a chieftain by descent: upon which ground, he asked me (so to say it) to excuse his mushroom honours.

It will be observed with surprise that both these tapus are for thoroughly sensible ends. With surprise, I say, because the nature of that institution is much misunderstood in Europe. It is taken usually in the sense of a meaningless or wanton prohibition, such as that which to-day prevents women in some countries from smoking, or yesterday prevented any one in Scotland from taking a walk on Sunday. The error is no less natural than it is unjust. The Polynesians have not been trained in the bracing, practical thought of ancient Rome; with them the idea of law has not been disengaged from that of morals or propriety; so that tapu has to cover the whole field, and implies indifferently that an act is criminal, immoral, against sound public policy, unbecoming or (as we say) 'not in good form.' Many tapus were in consequence absurd enough, such as those which deleted words out of the language, and particularly those which related to women. Tapu encircled women upon all hands. Many things were forbidden to men; to women we may say that few were permitted. They must not sit on the paepae; they must not go up to it by the stair; they must not eat pork; they must not approach a boat; they must not cook at a fire which any male had kindled. The other day, after the roads were made, it was observed the women plunged along margin through the bush, and when they came to a bridge waded through the water: roads and bridges were the work of men's hands, and tapu for the foot of women. Even a man's saddle, if the man be native, is a thing no self-respecting lady dares to use. Thus on the Anaho side of the island, only two white men, Mr. Regler and the gendarme, M. Aussel, possess saddles; and when a woman has a journey to make she must borrow from one or other. It will be noticed that these prohibitions tend, most of them, to an increased reserve between the sexes. Regard for female chastity is the usual excuse for these disabilities that men delight to lay upon their wives and mothers. Here the regard is absent; and behold the women still bound hand and foot with meaningless proprieties! The women themselves, who are survivors of the old regimen, admit that in those days life was not worth living. And yet even then there were exceptions. There were female chiefs and (I am assured) priestesses besides; nice customs curtseyed to great dames, and in the most sacred enclosure of a High Place, Father Siméon Delmar was shown a stone, and told it was the throne of some well-descended lady. How exactly parallel is this with European practice, when princesses were suffered to penetrate the strictest cloister, and women could rule over a land in which they were denied the control of their own children.

But the tapu is more often the instrument of wise and needful restrictions. We have seen it as the organ of paternal government. It serves besides to enforce, in the rare case of some one wishing to enforce them, rights of private property. Thus a man, weary of the coming and going of Marquesan visitors, tapus his door; and to this day you may see the palm-branch signal, even as our great-grandfathers saw the peeled wand before a Highland inn. Or take another case. Anaho is known as ‘the country without popoi.’ The word popoi serves in different islands to indicate the main food of the people: thus, in Hawaii, it implies a preparation of taro; in the Marquesas, of breadfruit. And a Marquesan does not readily conceive life possible without his favourite diet. A few years ago a drought killed the breadfruit trees and the bananas in the district of Anaho; and from this calamity, and the open-handed customs of the island, a singular state of things arose. Well-watered Hatiheu had escaped the drought; every householder of Anaho accordingly crossed the pass, chose some one in Hatiheu, ‘gave him his name’ - an onerous gift, but one not to be rejected - and from this improvised relative proceeded to draw his supplies, for all the world as though he had paid for them. Hence a continued traffic on the road. Some stalwart fellow, in a loin-cloth, and glistening with sweat, may be seen at all hours of the day, a stick across his bare shoulders, tripping nervously under a double burthen of green fruits. And on the far side of the gap a dozen stone posts on the wayside in the shadow of a grove mark the breathing-space of the popoi-carriers. A little back from the beach, and not half a mile from Anaho, I was the more amazed to find a cluster of well-doing breadfruits heavy with their harvest. ‘Why do you not take these?' I asked. 'Tapu,' said Hoka; and I thought to myself (after the manner of dull travellers) what children and fools these people were to toil over the mountain and despoil innocent neighbours when the staff of life was thus growing at their door. I was the more in error. In the general destruction these surviving trees were enough only for the family of the proprietor, and by the simple expedient of declaring a tapu he enforced his right.

The sanction of the tapu is superstitious; and the punishment of infraction either a wasting or a deadly sickness. A slow disease follows on the eating of tapu fish, and can only be cured with the bones of the same fish burned with the due mysteries. The cocoa-nut and breadfruit tapu works more swiftly. Suppose you have eaten tapu fruit at the evening meal, at night your sleep will be uneasy; in the morning, swelling and a dark discoloration will have attacked your neck, whence they spread upward to the face; and in two days, unless the cure be interjected, you must die. This cure is prepared from the rubbed leaves of the tree from which the patient stole; so that he cannot be saved without confessing to the Tahuku the person whom he wronged. In the experience of my informant, almost no tapu had been put in use, except the two described: he had thus no opportunity to learn the nature and operation of the others; and, as the art of making them was jealously guarded amongst the old men, he believed the mystery would soon die out. I should add that he was no Marquesan, but a Chinaman, a resident in the group from boyhood, and a reverent believer in the spells which he described. White men, amongst whom Ah Fu included himself, were exempt; but he had a tale of a Tahitian woman, who had come to the Marquesas, eaten tapu fish, and, although uninformed of her offence and danger, had been afflicted and cured exactly like a native.

Doubtless the belief is strong; doubtless, with this weakly and fanciful race, it is in many cases strong enough to kill; it should be strong indeed in those who tapu their trees secretly, so that they may detect a depredator by his sickness. Or, perhaps, we should understand the idea of the hidden tapu otherwise, as a politic device to spread uneasiness and extort confessions: so that, when a man is ailing, he shall ransack his brain for any possible offence, and send at once for any proprietor whose rights he has invaded. 'Had you hidden a tapu?' we may conceive him asking; and I cannot imagine the proprietor gainsaying it; and this is perhaps the strangest feature of the system - that it should be regarded from without with such a mental and implicit awe, and, when examined from within, should present so many apparent evidences of design.

We read in Dr. Campbell's *Poenamo* of a New Zealand girl, who was foolishly told that she had eaten a tapu yam, and who instantly sickened, and died in the two days of simple terror. The period is the same as in the Marquesas; doubtless the symptoms were so too. How singular to consider that a superstition of such sway is possibly a manufactured article; and that, even if it were not originally invented, its details have plainly been arranged by the authorities of some Polynesian Scotland Yard. Fitly enough, the belief is to-day - and was probably always - far from universal. Hell at home is a strong deterrent with some; a passing thought with others; with others, again, a theme of public mockery, not always well assured; and so in the Marquesas with the tapu. Mr. Regler has seen the two extremes of scepticism and implicit fear. In the tapu grove he found one fellow stealing breadfruit, cheerful and impudent as a street arab; and it was only on a menace of exposure that he showed himself the least discountenanced. The other case was opposed in every point. Mr. Regler asked a native to accompany him upon a voyage; the man went gladly enough, but suddenly perceiving a dead tapu fish in the bottom of the boat, leaped back with a scream; nor could the promise of a dollar prevail upon him to advance.

The Marquesan, it will be observed, adheres to the old idea of the local circumscription of beliefs and duties. Not only are the whites exempt from consequences; but their transgressions seem to be viewed without horror. It was Mr. Regler who had killed the fish; yet the devout native was not shocked at Mr. Regler - only refused to join him in his boat. A white is a white: the servant (so to speak) of other and more liberal gods; and not to be blamed if he profit by his liberty. The Jews were perhaps the first to interrupt this ancient comity of faiths; and the Jewish virus is still strong in Christianity. All the world must respect our tapus, or we gnash our teeth.

CHAPTER VII - HATIHEU

The bays of Anaho and Hatiheu are divided at their roots by the knife-edge of a single hill - the pass so often mentioned; but this isthmus expands to the seaward in a considerable peninsula: very bare and grassy; haunted by sheep and, at night and morning, by the piercing cries of the shepherds; wandered over by a few wild goats; and on its sea-front indented with long, clamorous caves, and faced with cliffs of the colour and ruinous outline of an old peat-stack. In one of these echoing and sunless gullies we saw, clustered like sea-birds on a splashing ledge, shrill as sea-birds in their salutation to the passing boat, a group of fisherwomen, stripped to their gaudy under-clothes. (The clash of the surf and the thin female voices echo in my memory.) We had that day a native crew and steersman, Kauanui; it was our first experience of Polynesian seamanship, which consists in hugging every point of land. There is no thought in this of saving time, for they will pull a long way in to skirt a point that is embayed. It seems that, as they can never get their houses near enough the surf upon the one side, so they can never get their boats near enough upon the other. The practice in bold water is not so dangerous as it looks - the reflex from the rocks sending the boat off. Near beaches with a heavy run of sea, I continue to think it very hazardous, and find the composure of the natives annoying to behold. We took unmingled pleasure, on the way out, to see so near at hand the beach and the wonderful colours of the surf. On the way back, when the sea had risen and was running strong against us, the fineness of the steersman's aim grew more embarrassing. As we came abreast of the sea-front, where the surf broke highest, Kauanui embraced the occasion to light his pipe, which then made the circuit of the boat - each man taking a whiff or two, and, ere he passed it on, filling his lungs and cheeks with smoke. Their faces were all puffed out like apples as we came abreast of the cliff foot, and the bursting surge fell back into the boat in showers. At the next point 'cocanetti' was the word, and the stroke borrowed my knife, and desisted from his labours to open nuts. These untimely indulgences may be compared to the tot of grog served out before a ship goes into action.

My purpose in this visit led me first to the boys' school, for Hatiheu is the university of the north islands. The hum of the lesson came out to meet us. Close by the door, where the draught blew coolest, sat the lay brother; around him, in a packed half-circle, some sixty high-coloured faces set with staring eyes; and in the background of the barn-like room benches were to be seen, and blackboards with sums on them in chalk. The brother rose to greet us, sensibly humble. Thirty years he had been there, he said, and fingered his white locks as a bashful child pulls out his pinafore. *'Et point de résultats, monsieur, presque pas de résultats.'* He pointed to the scholars: 'You see, sir, all the youth of Nuka-hiva and Ua-pu. Between the ages of six and fifteen this is all that remains; and it is but a few years since we had a hundred and twenty from Nuka-hiva alone. *Oui, monsieur, cela se dépérit.'* Prayers, and reading and writing, prayers again and arithmetic, and more prayers to conclude: such appeared to be the dreary nature of the course. For arithmetic all island people have a natural taste. In Hawaii they make good progress in mathematics. In one of the villages on Majuro, and generally in the Marshall group, the whole population sit about the trader when he is weighing copra, and each on his own slate takes down the figures and computes the total. The trader, finding them so apt, introduced fractions, for which they had been taught no rule. At first they were quite gravelled but ultimately, by sheer hard thinking, reasoned out the result, and came one after another to assure the trader he was right. Not many people in Europe could have done the like. The course at Hatiheu is therefore less dispiriting to Polynesians than a stranger might have guessed; and yet how bald it is at best! I asked the brother if he did not tell them stories, and he stared at me; if he did not teach them history, and he said, 'O yes, they had a little Scripture history - from the New Testament'; and repeated his lamentations over the lack of results. I had not the heart to put more questions; I could but say it must be very discouraging, and resist the impulse to add that it seemed also very natural. He looked up - 'My days are far spent,' he said; 'heaven awaits me.' May that heaven forgive me, but I was angry with the old man and his simple consolation. For think of his opportunity! The youth, from six to fifteen, are taken from their homes by Government, centralised at Hatiheu, where they are supported by a weekly tax of food; and, with the exception of one month in every year, surrendered wholly to the direction of the priests. Since the escapade already mentioned the holiday occurs at a different period for the girls and for the boys; so that a Marquesan brother and sister meet again, after their education is complete, a pair of strangers. It is a harsh law, and highly unpopular; but what a power it places in the hands of the instructors, and how languidly and dully is that power employed by the mission! Too much concern to make the natives pious, a design in which they all confess defeat, is, I suppose, the explanation of their miserable system. But they might see in the girls' school at Tai-o-hae, under the brisk, housewifely sisters, a different picture of efficiency, and a scene of neatness, airiness, and spirited and mirthful occupation that should shame them into cheerier methods. The sisters themselves lament their failure. They complain the annual holiday undoes the whole year's work; they complain particularly of the heartless indifference of the girls. Out of so many pretty and apparently affectionate pupils whom they have taught and reared, only two have ever returned to pay a visit of remembrance to their teachers. These, indeed, come regularly, but the rest, so soon as their school-days are over, disappear into the woods like captive insects. It is hard to imagine anything more discouraging; and yet I do not believe these ladies need despair. For a certain interval they keep the girls alive and innocently busy; and if it be at all possible to save the race, this would be the means. No such praise can be given to the boys' school at Hatiheu. The day is numbered already for them all; alike for the teacher and the scholars death is girt; he is afoot upon the march; and in the frequent interval they sit and yawn. But in life there seems a thread of purpose through the least significant; the drowsiest endeavour is not lost, and even the school at Hatiheu may be more useful than it seems.

Hatiheu is a place of some pretensions. The end of the bay towards Anaho may be called the civil compound, for it boasts the house of Kooamua, and close on the beach, under a great tree, that of the gendarme, M. Armand Aussel, with his garden, his pictures, his books, and his excellent table, to which strangers are made welcome. No more singular contrast is possible than between the gendarmerie and the priesthood, who are besides in smouldering opposition and full of mutual complaints. A priest's kitchen in the eastern islands is a depressing spot to see; and many, or most of them, make no attempt to keep a garden, sparsely subsisting on their rations. But you will never dine with a gendarme without smacking your lips; and M. Aussel's home-made sausage and the salad from his garden are unforgotten delicacies. Pierre Loti may like to know that he is M. Aussel's favourite author, and that his books are read in the fit scenery of Hatiheu bay.

The other end is all religious. It is here that an overhanging and tip-tilted horn, a good sea-mark for Hatiheu, bursts naked from the verdure of the climbing forest, and breaks down shoreward in steep taluses and cliffs. From the edge of one of the highest, perhaps seven hundred or a thousand feet above the beach, a Virgin looks insignificantly down, like a poor lost doll, forgotten there by a giant child. This laborious symbol of the Catholics is always strange to Protestants; we conceive with wonder that men should think it worth while to toil so many days, and clamber so much about the face of precipices, for an end that makes us smile; and yet I believe it was the wise Bishop Dordillon who chose the place, and I know that those who had a hand in the enterprise look back with pride upon its vanquished dangers. The boys' school is a recent importation; it was at first in Tai-o-hae, beside the girls'; and it was only of late, after their joint escapade, that the width of the island was interposed between the sexes. But Hatiheu must have been a place of missionary importance from before. About midway of the beach no less than three churches stand grouped in a patch of bananas, intermingled with some pine-apples. Two are of wood: the original church, now in disuse; and a second that, for some mysterious reason, has never been used. The new church is of stone, with twin towers, walls flangeing into buttresses, and sculptured front. The design itself is good, simple, and shapely; but the character is all in the detail, where the architect has bloomed into the sculptor. It is impossible to tell in words of the angels (although they are more like winged archbishops) that stand guard upon the door, of the cherubs in the corners, of the scapegoat gargoyles, or the quaint and spirited relief, where St. Michael (the artist's patron) makes short work of a protesting Lucifer. We were never weary of viewing the imagery, so innocent, sometimes so funny, and yet in the best sense - in the sense of inventive gusto and expression - so artistic. I know not whether it was more strange to find a building of such merit in a corner of a barbarous isle, or to see a building so antique still bright with novelty. The architect, a French lay brother, still alive and well, and meditating fresh foundations, must have surely drawn his descent from a master-builder in the age of the cathedrals; and it was in looking on the church of Hatiheu that I seemed to perceive the secret charm of mediaeval sculpture; that combination of the childish courage of the amateur, attempting all things, like the schoolboy on his slate, with the manly perseverance of the artist who does not know when he is conquered.

I had always afterwards a strong wish to meet the architect, Brother Michel; and one day, when I was talking with the Resident in Tai-o-hae (the chief port of the island), there were shown in to us an old, worn, purblind, ascetic-looking priest, and a lay brother, a type of all that is most sound in France, with a broad, clever, honest, humorous countenance, an eye very large and bright, and a strong and healthy body inclining to obesity. But that his blouse was black and his face shaven clean, you might pick such a man to-day, toiling cheerfully in his own patch of vines, from half a dozen provinces of France; and yet he had always for me a haunting resemblance to an old kind friend of my boyhood, whom I name in case any of my readers should share with me that memory - Dr. Paul, of the West Kirk. Almost at the first word I was sure it was my architect, and in a moment we were deep in a discussion of Hatiheu church. Brother Michel spoke always of his labours with a twinkle of humour, underlying which it was possible to spy a serious pride, and the change from one to another was often very human and diverting. '*Et vos gargouilles moyen-âge,*' cried I; '*comme elles sont originates*!' '*N'est-ce pas? Elles sont bien drôles*!' he said, smiling broadly; and the next moment, with a sudden gravity: '*Cependant il y en a une qui a une patte de cassé*; *il faut que je voie cela*.' I asked if he had any model - a point we much discussed. '*Non,*' said he simply; '*c'est une église idéale*.' The relievo was his favourite performance, and very justly so. The angels at the door, he owned, he would like to destroy and replace. '*Ils n'ont pas de vie, ils manquent de vie. Vous devriez voir mon église à la Dominique; j'ai là une Vierge qui est vraiment gentille*.' 'Ah,' I cried, 'they told me you had said you would never build another church, and I wrote in my journal I could not believe it.' '*Oui, j'aimerais bien en fairs une autre,*' he confessed, and smiled at the confession. An artist will understand how much I was attracted by this conversation. There is no bond so near as a community in that unaffected interest and slightly shame-faced pride which mark the intelligent man enamoured of an art. He sees the limitations of his aim, the defects of his practice; he smiles to be so employed upon the shores of death, yet sees in his own devotion something worthy. Artists, if they had the same sense of humour with the Augurs, would smile like them on meeting, but the smile would not be scornful.

I had occasion to see much of this excellent man. He sailed with us from Tai-o-hae to Hiva-oa, a dead beat of ninety miles against a heavy sea. It was what is called a good passage, and a feather in the *Casco's* cap; but among the most miserable forty hours that any one of us had ever passed. We were swung and tossed together all that time like shot in a stage thunder-box. The mate was thrown down and had his head cut open; the captain was sick on deck; the cook sick in the galley. Of all our party only two sat down to dinner. I was one. I own that I felt wretchedly; and I can only say of the other, who professed to feel quite well, that she fled at an early moment from the table. It was in these circumstances that we skirted the windward shore of that indescribable island of Ua-pu; viewing with dizzy eyes the coves, the capes, the breakers, the climbing forests, and the inaccessible stone needles that surmount the mountains. The place persists, in a dark corner of our memories, like a piece of the scenery of nightmares. The end of this distressful passage, where we were to land our passengers, was in a similar vein of roughness. The surf ran high on the beach at Taahauku; the boat broached-to and capsized; and all hands were submerged. Only the brother himself, who was well used to the experience, skipped ashore, by some miracle of agility, with scarce a sprinkling. Thenceforward, during our stay at Hiva-oa, he was our cicerone and patron; introducing us, taking us excursions, serving us in every way, and making himself daily more beloved.

Michel Blanc had been a carpenter by trade; had made money and retired, supposing his active days quite over; and it was only when he found idleness dangerous that he placed his capital and acquirements at the service of the mission. He became their carpenter, mason, architect, and engineer; added sculpture to his accomplishments, and was famous for his skill in gardening. He wore an enviable air of having found a port from life's contentions and lying there strongly anchored; went about his business with a jolly simplicity; complained of no lack of results - perhaps shyly thinking his own statuary result enough; and was altogether a pattern of the missionary layman.

CHAPTER VIII - THE PORT OF ENTRY

The port - the mart, the civil and religious capital of these rude islands - is called Tai-o-hae, and lies strung along the beach of a precipitous green bay in Nuka-hiva. It was midwinter when we came thither, and the weather was sultry, boisterous, and inconstant. Now the wind blew squally from the land down gaps of splintered precipice; now, between the sentinel islets of the entry, it came in gusts from seaward. Heavy and dark clouds impended on the summits; the rain roared and ceased; the scuppers of the mountain gushed; and the next day we would see the sides of the amphitheatre bearded with white falls. Along the beach the town shows a thin file of houses, mostly white, and all ensconced in the foliage of an avenue of green puraos; a pier gives access from the sea across the belt of breakers; to the eastward there stands, on a projecting bushy hill, the old fort which is now the calaboose, or prison; eastward still, alone in a garden, the Residency flies the colours of France. Just off Calaboose Hill, the tiny Government schooner rides almost permanently at anchor, marks eight bells in the morning (there or thereabout) with the unfurling of her flag, and salutes the setting sun with the report of a musket.

Here dwell together, and share the comforts of a club (which may be enumerated as a billiard-board, absinthe, a map of the world on Mercator's projection, and one of the most agreeable verandahs in the tropics), a handful of whites of varying nationality, mostly French officials, German and Scottish merchant clerks, and the agents of the opium monopoly. There are besides three tavern-keepers, the shrewd Scot who runs the cotton gin-mill, two white ladies, and a sprinkling of people 'on the beach' - a South Sea expression for which there is no exact equivalent. It is a pleasant society, and a hospitable. But one man, who was often to be seen seated on the logs at the pier-head, merits a word for the singularity of his history and appearance. Long ago, it seems, he fell in love with a native lady, a High Chiefess in Ua-pu. She, on being approached, declared she could never marry a man who was untattooed; it looked so naked; whereupon, with some greatness of soul, our hero put himself in the hands of the Tahukus, and, with still greater, persevered until the process was complete. He had certainly to bear a great expense, for the Tahuku will not work without reward; and certainly exquisite pain. Kooamua, high chief as he was, and one of the old school, was only part tattooed; he could not, he told us with lively pantomime, endure the torture to an end. Our enamoured countryman was more resolved; he was tattooed from head to foot in the most approved methods of the art; and at last presented himself before his mistress a new man. The fickle fair one could never behold him from that day except with laughter. For my part, I could never see the man without a kind of admiration; of him it might be said, if ever of any, that he had loved not wisely, but too well.

The Residency stands by itself, Calaboose Hill screening it from the fringe of town along the further bay. The house is commodious, with wide verandahs; all day it stands open, back and front, and the trade blows copiously over its bare floors. On a week-day the garden offers a scene of most untropical animation, half a dozen convicts toiling there cheerfully with spade and barrow, and touching hats and smiling to the visitor like old attached family servants. On Sunday these are gone, and nothing to be seen but dogs of all ranks and sizes peacefully slumbering in the shady grounds; for the dogs of Tai-o-hae are very courtly-minded, and make the seat of Government their promenade and place of siesta. In front and beyond, a strip of green down loses itself in a low wood of many species of acacia; and deep in the wood a ruinous wall encloses the cemetery of the Europeans. English and Scottish sleep there, and Scandinavians, and French *maîtres de manoeuvres* and *maîtres ouvriers*: mingling alien dust. Back in the woods, perhaps, the blackbird, or (as they call him there) the island nightingale, will be singing home strains; and the ceaseless requiem of the surf hangs on the ear. I have never seen a resting-place more quiet; but it was a long thought how far these sleepers had all travelled, and from what diverse homes they had set forth, to lie here in the end together.

On the summit of its promontory hill, the calaboose stands all day with doors and window-shutters open to the trade. On my first visit a dog was the only guardian visible. He, indeed, rose with an attitude so menacing that I was glad to lay hands on an old barrel-hoop; and I think the weapon must have been familiar, for the champion instantly retreated, and as I wandered round the court and through the building, I could see him, with a couple of companions, humbly dodging me about the corners. The prisoners' dormitory was a spacious, airy room, devoid of any furniture; its whitewashed walls covered with inscriptions in Marquesan and rude drawings: one of the pier, not badly done; one of a murder; several of French soldiers in uniform. There was one legend in French: '*Je n'est*' (sic) '*pas le sou.*' From this noontide quietude it must not be supposed the prison was untenanted; the calaboose at Tai-o-hae does a good business. But some of its occupants were gardening at the Residency, and the rest were probably at work upon the streets, as free as our scavengers at home, although not so industrious. On the approach of evening they would be called in like children from play; and the harbour-master (who is also the jailer) would go through the form of locking them up until six the next morning. Should a prisoner have any call in town, whether of pleasure or affairs, he has but to unhook the window-shutters; and if he is back again, and the shutter decently replaced, by the hour of call on the morrow, he may have met the harbour-master in the avenue, and there will be no complaint, far less any punishment. But this is not all. The charming French Resident, M. Delaruelle, carried me one day to the calaboose on an official visit. In the green court, a very ragged gentleman, his legs deformed with the island elephantiasis, saluted us smiling. 'One of our political prisoners - an insurgent from Raiatea,' said the Resident; and then to the jailer: 'I thought I had ordered him a new pair of trousers.' Meanwhile no other convict was to be seen - '*Eh bien*,' said the Resident, *'où sont vos prisonniers*?' '*Monsieur le Résident*,' replied the jailer, saluting with soldierly formality, *'comme c'est jour de fête, je les ai laissé aller à la chasse*.' They were all upon the mountains hunting goats! Presently we came to the quarters of the women, likewise deserted - '*Où sont vos bonnes femmes*?' asked the Resident; and the jailer cheerfully responded: '*Je crois, Monsieur le Résident, qu'elles sont allées quelquepart faire une visite*.' It had been the design of M. Delaruelle, who was much in love with the whimsicalities of his small realm, to elicit something comical; but not even he expected anything so perfect as the last. To complete the picture of convict life in Tai-o-hae, it remains to be added that these criminals draw a salary as regularly as the President of the Republic. Ten sous a day is their hire. Thus they have money, food, shelter, clothing, and, I was about to write, their liberty. The French are certainly a good-natured people, and make easy masters. They are besides inclined to view the Marquesans with an eye of humorous indulgence. 'They are dying, poor devils!' said M. Delaruelle: 'the main thing is to let them die in peace.' And it was not only well said, but I believe expressed the general thought. Yet there is another element to be considered; for these convicts are not merely useful, they are almost essential to the French existence. With a people incurably idle, dispirited by what can only be called endemic pestilence, and inflamed with ill-feeling against their new masters, crime and convict labour are a godsend to the Government.

Theft is practically the sole crime. Originally petty pilferers, the men of Tai-o-hae now begin to force locks and attack strong-boxes. Hundreds of dollars have been taken at a time; though, with that redeeming moderation so common in Polynesian theft, the Marquesan burglar will always take a part and leave a part, sharing (so to speak) with the proprietor. If it be Chilian coin - the island currency - he will escape; if the sum is in gold, French silver, or bank-notes, the police wait until the money begins to come in circulation, and then easily pick out their man. And now comes the shameful part. In plain English, the prisoner is tortured until he confesses and (if that be possible) restores the money. To keep him alone, day and night, in the black hole, is to inflict on the Marquesan torture inexpressible. Even his robberies are carried on in the plain daylight, under the open sky, with the stimulus of enterprise, and the countenance of an accomplice; his terror of the dark is still insurmountable; conceive, then, what he endures in his solitary dungeon; conceive how he longs to confess, become a full-fledged convict, and be allowed to sleep beside his comrades. While we were in Tai-o-hae a thief was under prevention. He had entered a house about eight in the morning, forced a trunk, and stolen eleven hundred francs; and now, under the horrors of darkness, solitude, and a bedevilled cannibal imagination, he was reluctantly confessing and giving up his spoil. From one cache, which he had already pointed out, three hundred francs had been recovered, and it was expected that he would presently disgorge the rest. This would be ugly enough if it were all; but I am bound to say, because it is a matter the French should set at rest, that worse is continually hinted. I heard that one man was kept six days with his arms bound backward round a barrel; and it is the universal report that every gendarme in the South Seas is equipped with something in the nature of a thumbscrew. I do not know this. I never had the face to ask any of the gendarmes - pleasant, intelligent, and kindly fellows - with whom I have been intimate, and whose hospitality I have enjoyed; and perhaps the tale reposes (as I hope it does) on a misconstruction of that ingenious cat's-cradle with which the French agent of police so readily secures a prisoner. But whether physical or moral, torture is certainly employed; and by a barbarous injustice, the state of accusation (in which a man may very well be innocently placed) is positively painful; the state of conviction (in which all are supposed guilty) is comparatively free, and positively pleasant. Perhaps worse still, - not only the accused, but sometimes his wife, his mistress, or his friend, is subjected to the same hardships. I was admiring, in the tapu system, the ingenuity of native methods of detection; there is not much to admire in those of the French, and to lock up a timid child in a dark room, and, if he proved obstinate, lock up his sister in the next, is neither novel nor humane.

The main occasion of these thefts is the new vice of opium-eating. 'Here nobody ever works, and all eat opium,' said a gendarme; and Ah Fu knew a woman who ate a dollar's worth in a day. The successful thief will give a handful of money to each of his friends, a dress to a woman, pass an evening in one of the taverns of Tai-o-hae, during which he treats all comers, produce a big lump of opium, and retire to the bush to eat and sleep it off. A trader, who did not sell opium, confessed to me that he was at his wit's end. 'I do not sell it, but others do,' said he. 'The natives only work to buy it; if they walk over to me to sell their cotton, they have just to walk over to some one else to buy their opium with my money. And why should they be at the bother of two walks? There is no use talking,' he added - 'opium is the currency of this country.'

The man under prevention during my stay at Tai-o-hae lost patience while the Chinese opium-seller was being examined in his presence. 'Of course he sold me opium!' he broke out; 'all the Chinese here sell opium. It was only to buy opium that I stole; it is only to buy opium that anybody steals. And what you ought to do is to let no opium come here, and no Chinamen.' This is precisely what is done in Samoa by a native Government; but the French have bound their own hands, and for forty thousand francs sold native subjects to crime and death. This horrid traffic may be said to have sprung up by accident. It was Captain Hart who had the misfortune to be the means of beginning it, at a time when his plantations flourished in the Marquesas, and he found a difficulty in keeping Chinese coolies. To-day the plantations are practically deserted and the Chinese gone; but in the meanwhile the natives have learned the vice, the patent brings in a round sum, and the needy Government at Papeete shut their eyes and open their pockets. Of course, the patentee is supposed to sell to Chinamen alone; equally of course, no one could afford to pay forty thousand francs for the privilege of supplying a scattered handful of Chinese; and every one knows the truth, and all are ashamed of it. French officials shake their heads when opium is mentioned; and the agents of the farmer blush for their employment. Those that live in glass houses should not throw stones; as a subject of the British crown, I am an unwilling shareholder in the largest opium business under heaven. But the British case is highly complicated; it implies the livelihood of millions; and must be reformed, when it can be reformed at all, with prudence. This French business, on the other hand, is a nostrum and a mere excrescence. No native industry was to be encouraged: the poison is solemnly imported. No native habit was to be considered: the vice has been gratuitously introduced. And no creature profits, save the Government at Papeete - the not very enviable gentlemen who pay them, and the Chinese underlings who do the dirty work.

CHAPTER IX - THE HOUSE OF TEMOANA

The history of the Marquesas is, of late years, much confused by the coming and going of the French. At least twice they have seized the archipelago, at least once deserted it; and in the meanwhile the natives pursued almost without interruption their desultory cannibal wars. Through these events and changing dynasties, a single considerable figure may be seen to move: that of the high chief, a king, Temoana. Odds and ends of his history came to my ears: how he was at first a convert to the Protestant mission; how he was kidnapped or exiled from his native land, served as cook aboard a whaler, and was shown, for small charge, in English seaports; how he returned at last to the Marquesas, fell under the strong and benign influence of the late bishop, extended his influence in the group, was for a while joint ruler with the prelate, and died at last the chief supporter of Catholicism and the French. His widow remains in receipt of two pounds a month from the French Government. Queen she is usually called, but in the official almanac she figures as '*Madame Vaekehu, Grande Chefesse*.' His son (natural or adoptive, I know not which), Stanislao Moanatini, chief of Akaui, serves in Tai-o-hae as a kind of Minister of Public Works; and the daughter of Stanislao is High Chiefess of the southern island of Tauata. These, then, are the greatest folk of the archipelago; we thought them also the most estimable. This is the rule in Polynesia, with few exceptions; the higher the family, the better the man - better in sense, better in manners, and usually taller and stronger in body. A stranger advances blindfold. He scrapes acquaintance as he can. Save the tattoo in the Marquesas, nothing indicates the difference of rank; and yet almost invariably we found, after we had made them, that our friends were persons of station. I have said 'usually taller and stronger.' I might have been more absolute, - over all Polynesia, and a part of Micronesia, the rule holds good; the great ones of the isle, and even of the village, are greater of bone and muscle, and often heavier of flesh, than any commoner. The usual explanation - that the high-born child is more industriously shampooed, is probably the true one. In New Caledonia, at least, where the difference does not exist, has never been remarked, the practice of shampooing seems to be itself unknown. Doctors would be well employed in a study of the point.

Vaekehu lives at the other end of the town from the Residency, beyond the buildings of the mission. Her house is on the European plan: a table in the midst of the chief room; photographs and religious pictures on the wall. It commands to either hand a charming vista:

through the front door, a peep of green lawn, scurrying pigs, the pendent fans of the coco-palm and splendour of the bursting surf: through the back, mounting forest glades and coronals of precipice. Here, in the strong thorough-draught, Her Majesty received us in a simple gown of print, and with no mark of royalty but the exquisite finish of her tattooed mittens, the elaboration of her manners, and the gentle falsetto in which all the highly refined among Marquesan ladies (and Vaekehu above all others) delight to sing their language. An adopted daughter interpreted, while we gave the news, and rehearsed by name our friends of Anaho. As we talked, we could see, through the landward door, another lady of the household at her toilet under the green trees; who presently, when her hair was arranged, and her hat wreathed with flowers, appeared upon the back verandah with gracious salutations.

Vaekehu is very deaf; '*merci*' is her only word of French; and I do not know that she seemed clever. An exquisite, kind refinement, with a shade of quietism, gathered perhaps from the nuns, was what chiefly struck us. Or rather, upon that first occasion, we were conscious of a sense as of district-visiting on our part, and reduced evangelical gentility on the part of our hostess. The other impression followed after she was more at ease, and came with Stanislao and his little girl to dine on board the *Casco*. She had dressed for the occasion: wore white, which very well became her strong brown face; and sat among us, eating or smoking her cigarette, quite cut off from all society, or only now and then included through the intermediary of her son. It was a position that might have been ridiculous, and she made it ornamental; making believe to hear and to be entertained; her face, whenever she met our eyes, lighting with the smile of good society; her contributions to the talk, when she made any, and that was seldom, always complimentary and pleasing. No attention was paid to the child, for instance, but what she remarked and thanked us for. Her parting with each, when she came to leave, was gracious and pretty, as had been every step of her behaviour. When Mrs. Stevenson held out her hand to say good-bye, Vaekehu took it, held it, and a moment smiled upon her; dropped it, and then, as upon a kindly afterthought, and with a sort of warmth of condescension, held out both hands and kissed my wife upon both cheeks. Given the same relation of years and of rank, the thing would have been so done on the boards of the *Comédie Française*; just so might Madame Brohan have warmed and condescended to Madame Broisat in the *Marquis de Villemer*. It was my part to accompany our guests ashore: when I kissed the little girl good-bye at the pier steps, Vaekehu gave a cry of gratification, reached down her hand into the boat, took mine, and pressed it with that flattering softness which seems the coquetry of the old lady in every quarter of the earth. The next moment she had taken Stanislao's arm, and they moved off along the pier in the moonlight, leaving me bewildered. This was a queen of cannibals; she was tattooed from hand to foot, and perhaps the greatest masterpiece of that art now extant, so that a while ago, before she was grown prim, her leg was one of the sights of Tai-o-hae; she had been passed from chief to chief; she had been fought for and taken in war; perhaps, being so great a lady, she had sat on the high place, and throned it there, alone of her sex, while the drums were going twenty strong and the priests carried up the blood-stained baskets of long-pig. And now behold her, out of that past of violence and sickening feasts, step forth, in her age, a quiet, smooth, elaborate old lady, such as you might find at home (mittened also, but not often so well-mannered) in a score of country houses. Only Vaekehu's mittens were of dye, not of silk; and they had been paid for, not in money, but the cooked flesh of men. It came in my mind with a clap, what she could think of it herself, and whether at heart, perhaps, she might not regret and aspire after the barbarous and stirring past. But when I asked Stanislao - 'Ah!' said he, 'she is content; she is religious, she passes all her days with the sisters.'

Stanislao (Stanislaos, with the final consonant evaded after the Polynesian habit) was sent by Bishop Dordillon to South America, and there educated by the fathers. His French is fluent, his talk sensible and spirited, and in his capacity of ganger-in-chief, he is of excellent service to the French. With the prestige of his name and family, and with the stick when needful, he keeps the natives working and the roads passable. Without Stanislao and the convicts, I am in doubt what would become of the present regimen in Nuka-hiva; whether the highways might not be suffered to close up, the pier to wash away, and the Residency to fall piecemeal about the ears of impotent officials. And yet though the hereditary favourer, and one of the chief props of French authority, he has always an eye upon the past. He showed me where the old public place had stood, still to be traced by random piles of stone; told me how great and fine it was, and surrounded on all sides by populous houses, whence, at the beating of the drums, the folk crowded to make holiday. The drum-beat of the Polynesian has a strange and gloomy stimulation for the nerves of all. White persons feel it - at these precipitate sounds their hearts beat faster; and, according to old residents, its effect on the natives was extreme. Bishop Dordillon might entreat; Temoana himself command and threaten; at the note of the drum wild instincts triumphed. And now it might beat upon these ruins, and who should assemble? The houses are down, the people dead, their lineage extinct; and the sweepings and fugitives of distant bays and islands encamp upon their graves. The decline of the dance Stanislao especially laments.

‘*Chaque pays a ses coutumes,*’ said he; but in the report of any gendarme, perhaps corruptly eager to increase the number of *délits* and the instruments of his own power, custom after custom is placed on the expurgatorial index. ‘*Tenez, une danse qui n’est pas permise,*’ said Stanislao: ‘*je ne sais pas pourquoi, elle est très jolie, elle va comme ça,*’ and sticking his umbrella upright in the road, he sketched the steps and gestures. All his criticisms of the present, all his regrets for the past, struck me as temperate and sensible. The short term of office of the Resident he thought the chief defect of the administration; that officer having scarce begun to be efficient ere he was recalled. I thought I gathered, too, that he regarded with some fear the coming change from a naval to a civil governor. I am sure at least that I regard it so myself; for the civil servants of France have never appeared to any foreigner as at all the flower of their country, while her naval officers may challenge competition with the world. In all his talk, Stanislao was particular to speak of his own country as a land of savages; and when he stated an opinion of his own, it was with some apologetic preface, alleging that he was ‘a savage who had travelled.’ There was a deal, in this elaborate modesty, of honest pride. Yet there was something in the precaution that saddened me; and I could not but fear he was only forestalling a taunt that he had heard too often.

I recall with interest two interviews with Stanislao. The first was a certain afternoon of tropic rain, which we passed together in the verandah of the club; talking at times with heightened voices as the showers redoubled overhead, passing at times into the billiard-room, to consult, in the dim, cloudy daylight, that map of the world which forms its chief adornment. He was naturally ignorant of English history, so that I had much of news to communicate. The story of Gordon I told him in full, and many episodes of the Indian Mutiny, Lucknow, the second battle of Cawn-pore, the relief of Arrah, the death of poor Spottis-woode, and Sir Hugh Rose’s hotspur, midland campaign. He was intent to hear; his brown face, strongly marked with small-pox, kindled and changed with each vicissitude. His eyes glowed with the reflected light of battle; his questions were many and intelligent, and it was chiefly these that sent us so often to the map. But it is of our parting that I keep the strongest sense. We were to sail on the morrow, and the night had fallen, dark, gusty, and rainy, when we stumbled up the hill to bid farewell to Stanislao. He had already loaded us with gifts; but more were waiting. We sat about the table over cigars and green cocoa-nuts; claps of wind blew through the house and extinguished the lamp, which was always instantly relighted with a single match; and these recurrent intervals of darkness were felt as a relief. For there was something painful and embarrassing in the kindness of that separation. ‘*Ah, vous devriez rester ici, mon cher ami*!’ cried Stanislao. ‘*Vous êtes les gens qu’il faut pour les Kanaques; vous êtes doux, vous et votre famille*; *vous seriez obéis dans toutes les îles*.’ We had been civil; not always that, my conscience told me, and never anything beyond; and all this to-do is a measure, not of our considerateness, but of the want of it in others. The rest of the evening, on to Vaekehu’s and back as far as to the pier, Stanislao walked with my arm and sheltered me with his umbrella; and after the boat had put off, we could still distinguish, in the murky darkness, his gestures of farewell. His words, if there were any, were drowned by the rain and the loud surf.

I have mentioned presents, a vexed question in the South Seas; and one which well illustrates the common, ignorant habit of regarding races in a lump. In many quarters the Polynesian gives only to receive. I have visited islands where the population mobbed me for all the world like dogs after the waggon of cat’s-meat; and where the frequent proposition, ‘You my pleni (friend),’ or (with more of pathos) ‘You all ‘e same my father,’ must be received with hearty laughter and a shout. And perhaps everywhere, among the greedy and rapacious, a gift is regarded as a sprat to catch a whale. It is the habit to give gifts and to receive returns, and such characters, complying with the custom, will look to it nearly that they do not lose. But for persons of a different stamp the statement must be reversed. The shabby Polynesian is anxious till he has received the return gift; the generous is uneasy until he has made it. The first is disappointed if you have not given more than he; the second is miserable if he thinks he has given less than you. This is my experience; if it clash with that of others, I pity their fortune, and praise mine: the circumstances cannot change what I have seen, nor lessen what I have received. And indeed I find that those who oppose me often argue from a ground of singular presumptions; comparing Polynesians with an ideal person, compact of generosity and gratitude, whom I never had the pleasure of encountering; and forgetting that what is almost poverty to us is wealth almost unthinkable to them. I will give one instance: I chanced to speak with consideration of these gifts of Stanislao’s with a certain clever man, a great hater and contemner of Kanakas. ‘Well! what were they?’ he cried. ‘A pack of old men’s beards. Trash!’ And the same gentleman, some half an hour later, being upon a different train of thought, dwelt at length on the esteem in which the Marquesans held that sort of property, how they preferred it to all others except land, and what fancy prices it would fetch. Using his own figures, I computed that, in this commodity alone, the gifts of Vaekehu and Stanislao represented between two and three hundred dollars; and the queen’s official salary is of two hundred and forty in the year.

But generosity on the one hand, and conspicuous meanness on the other, are in the South Seas, as at home, the exception. It is neither with any hope of gain, nor with any lively wish to please, that the ordinary Polynesian chooses and presents his gifts. A plain social duty lies before him, which he performs correctly, but without the least enthusiasm. And we shall best understand his attitude of mind, if we examine our own to the cognate absurdity of marriage presents. There we give without any special thought of a return; yet if the circumstance arise, and the return be withheld, we shall judge ourselves insulted. We give them usually without affection, and almost never with a genuine desire to please; and our gift is rather a mark of our own status than a measure of our love to the recipients. So in a great measure and with the common run of the Polynesians; their gifts are formal; they imply no more than social recognition; and they are made and reciprocated, as we pay and return our morning visits. And the practice of marking and measuring events and sentiments by presents is universal in the island world. A gift plays with them the part of stamp and seal; and has entered profoundly into the mind of islanders. Peace and war, marriage, adoption and naturalisation, are celebrated or declared by the acceptance or the refusal of gifts; and it is as natural for the islander to bring a gift as for us to carry a card-case.

CHAPTER X - A PORTRAIT AND A STORY

I have had occasion several times to name the late bishop, Father Dordillon, 'Monseigneur,' as he is still almost universally called, Vicar-Apostolic of the Marquesas and Bishop of Cambysopolis *in partibus*. Everywhere in the islands, among all classes and races, this fine, old, kindly, cheerful fellow is remembered with affection and respect. His influence with the natives was paramount. They reckoned him the highest of men - higher than an admiral; brought him their money to keep; took his advice upon their purchases; nor would they plant trees upon their own land till they had the approval of the father of the islands. During the time of the French exodus he singly represented Europe, living in the Residency, and ruling by the hand of Temoana. The first roads were made under his auspices and by his persuasion. The old road between Hatiheu and Anaho was got under way from either side on the ground that it would be pleasant for an evening promenade, and brought to completion by working on the rivalry of the two villages. The priest would boast in Hatiheu of the progress made in Anaho, and he would tell the folk of Anaho, 'If you don't take care, your neighbours will be over the hill before you are at the top.' It could not be so done to-day; it could then; death, opium, and depopulation had not gone so far; and the people of Hatiheu, I was told, still vied with each other in fine attire, and used to go out by families, in the cool of the evening, boat-sailing and racing in the bay. There seems some truth at least in the common view, that this joint reign of Temoana and the bishop was the last and brief golden age of the Marquesas. But the civil power returned, the mission was packed out of the Residency at twenty-four hours' notice, new methods supervened, and the golden age (whatever it quite was) came to an end. It is the strongest proof of Father Dordillon's prestige that it survived, seemingly without loss, this hasty deposition.

His method with the natives was extremely mild. Among these barbarous children he still played the part of the smiling father; and he was careful to observe, in all indifferent matters, the Marquesan etiquette. Thus, in the singular system of artificial kinship, the bishop had been adopted by Vaekehu as a grandson; Miss Fisher, of Hatiheu, as a daughter. From that day, Monseigneur never addressed the young lady except as his mother, and closed his letters with the formalities of a dutiful son. With Europeans he could be strict, even to the extent of harshness. He made no distinction against heretics, with whom he was on friendly terms; but the rules of his own Church he would see observed; and once at least he had a white man clapped in jail for the desecration of a saint’s day. But even this rigour, so intolerable to laymen, so irritating to Protestants, could not shake his popularity. We shall best conceive him by examples nearer home; we may all have known some divine of the old school in Scotland, a literal Sabbatarian, a stickler for the letter of the law, who was yet in private modest, innocent, genial and mirthful. Much such a man, it seems, was Father Dordillon. And his popularity bore a test yet stronger. He had the name, and probably deserved it, of a shrewd man in business and one that made the mission pay. Nothing so much stirs up resentment as the inmixture in commerce of religious bodies; but even rival traders spoke well of Monseigneur.

His character is best portrayed in the story of the days of his decline. A time came when, from the failure of sight, he must desist from his literary labours: his Marquesan hymns, grammars, and dictionaries; his scientific papers, lives of saints, and devotional poetry. He cast about for a new interest: pitched on gardening, and was to be seen all day, with spade and water-pot, in his childlike eagerness, actually running between the borders. Another step of decay, and he must leave his garden also. Instantly a new occupation was devised, and he sat in the mission cutting paper flowers and wreaths. His diocese was not great enough for his activity; the churches of the Marquesas were papered with his handiwork, and still he must be making more. ‘Ah,’ said he, smiling, ‘when I am dead what a fine time you will have clearing out my trash!’ He had been dead about six months; but I was pleased to see some of his trophies still exposed, and looked upon them with a smile: the tribute (if I have read his cheerful character aright) which he would have preferred to any useless tears. Disease continued progressively to disable him; he who had clambered so stalwartly over the rude rocks of the Marquesas, bringing peace to warfaring clans, was for some time carried in a chair between the mission and the church, and at last confined to bed, impotent with dropsy, and tormented with bed-sores and sciatica. Here he lay two months without complaint; and on the 11th January 1888, in the seventy-ninth year of his life, and the thirty-fourth of his labours in the Marquesas, passed away.

Those who have a taste for hearing missions, Protestant or Catholic, decried, must seek their pleasure elsewhere than in my pages. Whether Catholic or Protestant, with all their gross blots, with all their deficiency of candour, of humour, and of common sense, the missionaries are the best and the most useful whites in the Pacific. This is a subject which will follow us throughout; but there is one part of it that may conveniently be treated here. The married and the celibate missionary, each has his particular advantage and defect. The married missionary, taking him at the best, may offer to the native what he is much in want of - a higher picture of domestic life; but the woman at his elbow tends to keep him in touch with Europe and out of touch with Polynesia, and to perpetuate, and even to ingrain, parochial decencies far best forgotten. The mind of the female missionary tends, for instance, to be continually busied about dress. She can be taught with extreme difficulty to think any costume decent but that to which she grew accustomed on Clapham Common; and to gratify this prejudice, the native is put to useless expense, his mind is tainted with the morbidities of Europe, and his health is set in danger. The celibate missionary, on the other hand, and whether at best or worst, falls readily into native ways of life; to which he adds too commonly what is either a mark of celibate man at large, or an inheritance from mediaeval saints - I mean slovenly habits and an unclean person. There are, of course, degrees in this; and the sister (of course, and all honour to her) is as fresh as a lady at a ball. For the diet there is nothing to be said - it must amaze and shock the Polynesian - but for the adoption of native habits there is much. '*Chaque pays a ses coutumes*,' said Stanislao; these it is the missionary's delicate task to modify; and the more he can do so from within, and from a native standpoint, the better he will do his work; and here I think the Catholics have sometimes the advantage; in the Vicariate of Dordillon, I am sure they had it. I have heard the bishop blamed for his indulgence to the natives, and above all because he did not rage with sufficient energy against cannibalism. It was a part of his policy to live among the natives like an elder brother; to follow where he could; to lead where it was necessary; never to drive; and to encourage the growth of new habits, instead of violently rooting up the old. And it might be better, in the long-run, if this policy were always followed.

It might be supposed that native missionaries would prove more indulgent, but the reverse is found to be the case. The new broom sweeps clean; and the white missionary of to-day is often embarrassed by the bigotry of his native coadjutor. What else should we expect? On some islands, sorcery, polygamy, human sacrifice, and tobacco-smoking have been prohibited, the dress of the native has been modified, and himself warned in strong terms against rival sects of Christianity; all by the same man, at the same period of time, and with the like authority. By what criterion is the convert to distinguish the essential from the unessential? He swallows the nostrum whole; there has been no play of mind, no instruction, and, except for some brute utility in the prohibitions, no advance. To call things by their proper names, this is teaching superstition. It is unfortunate to use the word; so few people have read history, and so many have dipped into little atheistic manuals, that the majority will rush to a conclusion, and suppose the labour lost. And far from that: These semi-spontaneous superstitions, varying with the sect of the original evangelist and the customs of the island, are found in practice to be highly fructifying; and in particular those who have learned and who go forth again to teach them offer an example to the world. The best specimen of the Christian hero that I ever met was one of these native missionaries. He had saved two lives at the risk of his own; like Nathan, he had bearded a tyrant in his hour of blood; when a whole white population fled, he alone stood to his duty; and his behaviour under domestic sorrow with which the public has no concern filled the beholder with sympathy and admiration. A poor little smiling laborious man he looked; and you would have thought he had nothing in him but that of which indeed he had too much - facile good-nature.

It chances that the only rivals of Monseigneur and his mission in the Marquesas were certain of these brown-skinned evangelists, natives from Hawaii. I know not what they thought of Father Dordillon: they are the only class I did not question; but I suspect the prelate to have regarded them askance, for he was eminently human. During my stay at Tai-o-hae, the time of the yearly holiday came round at the girls' school; and a whole fleet of whale-boats came from Ua-pu to take the daughters of that island home. On board of these was Kauwealoha, one of the pastors, a fine, rugged old gentleman, of that leonine type so common in Hawaii. He paid me a visit in the *Casco*, and there entertained me with a tale of one of his colleagues, Kekela, a missionary in the great cannibal isle of Hiva-oa. It appears that shortly after a kidnapping visit from a Peruvian slaver, the boats of an American whaler put into a bay upon that island, were attacked, and made their escape with difficulty, leaving their mate, a Mr. Whalon, in the hands of the natives. The captive, with his arms bound behind his back, was cast into a house; and the chief announced the capture to Kekela. And here I begin to follow the version of Kauwealoha; it is a good specimen of Kanaka English; and the reader is to conceive it delivered with violent emphasis and speaking pantomime.

"“I got ‘Melican mate,” the chief he say. “What you go do ‘Melican mate?” Kekela he say. “I go make fire, I go kill, I go eat him,” he say; “you come to-mollow eat piece.” “I no *want* eat ‘Melican mate!” Kekela he say; “why you want?” “This bad shippee, this slave shippee,” the chief he say. “One time a shippee he come from Pelu, he take away plenty Kanaka, he take away my son. ‘Melican mate he bad man. I go eat him; you eat piece.” “I no *want* eat ‘Melican mate!” Kekela he say; and he *cly* - all night he cly! To-mollow Kekela he get up, he put on blackee coat, he go see chief; he see Missa Whela, him hand tie' like this. (*Pantomime.*) Kekela he cly. He say chief:- “Chief, you like things of mine? you like whale-boat?” “Yes,” he say. “You like file-a'm?" (fire-arms). "Yes," he say. "You like blackee coat?" "Yes," he say. Kekela he take Missa Whela by he shoul'a' (shoulder), he take him light out house; he give chief he whale-boat, he file-a'm, he blackee coat. He take Missa Whela he house, make him sit down with he wife and chil'en. Missa Whela all-the-same pelison (prison); he wife, he chil'en in Amelica; he cly - O, he cly. Kekela he solly. One day Kekela he see ship. (*Pantomime.*) He say Missa Whela, "Ma' Whala?" Missa Whela he say, "Yes." Kanaka they begin go down beach. Kekela he get eleven Kanaka, get oa' (oars), get evely thing. He say Missa Whela, "Now you go quick." They jump in whale-boat. "Now you low!" Kekela he say: "you low quick, quick!" (*Violent pantomime, and a change indicating that the narrator has left the boat and returned to the beach.*) All the Kanaka they say, "How! 'Melican mate he go away?" - jump in boat; low afta. (*Violent pantomime, and change again to boat.*) Kekela he say, "Low quick!"'

Here I think Kauwealoha's pantomime had confused me; I have no more of his *ipsissima verba*; and can but add, in my own less spirited manner, that the ship was reached, Mr. Whalon taken aboard, and Kekela returned to his charge among the cannibals. But how unjust it is to repeat the stumblings of a foreigner in a language only partly acquired! A thoughtless reader might conceive Kauwealoha and his colleague to be a species of amicable baboon; but I have here the antidote. In return for his act of gallant charity, Kekela was presented by the American Government with a sum of money, and by President Lincoln personally with a gold watch. From his letter of thanks, written in his own tongue, I give the following extract. I do not envy the man who can read it without emotion.

'When I saw one of your countrymen, a citizen of your great nation, ill-treated, and about to be baked and eaten, as a pig is eaten, I ran to save him, full of pity and grief at the evil deed of these benighted people. I gave my boat for the stranger's life. This boat came from James Hunnewell, a gift of friendship. It became the ransom of this countryman of yours, that he might not be eaten by the savages who knew not Jehovah. This was Mr. Whalon, and the date, Jan. 14, 1864.

As to this friendly deed of mine in saving Mr. Whalon, its seed came from your great land, and was brought by certain of your countrymen, who had received the love of God. It was planted in Hawaii, and I brought it to plant in this land and in these dark regions, that they might receive the root of all that is good and true, which is *love.*

'1. Love to Jehovah.

'2. Love to self.

'3. Love to our neighbour.

'If a man have a sufficiency of these three, he is good and holy, like his God, Jehovah, in his triune character (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), one-three, three-one. If he have two and wants one, it is not well; and if he have one and wants two, indeed, is not well; but if he cherishes all three, then is he holy, indeed, after the manner of the Bible.

'This is a great thing for your great nation to boast of, before all the nations of the earth. From your great land a most precious seed was brought to the land of darkness. It was planted here, not by means of guns and men-of-war and threatening. It was planted by means of the ignorant, the neglected, the despised. Such was the introduction of the word of the Almighty God into this group of Nuuhiwa. Great is my debt to Americans, who have taught me all things pertaining to this life and to that which is to come.

'How shall I repay your great kindness to me? Thus David asked of Jehovah, and thus I ask of you, the President of the United States. This is my only payment - that which I have received of the Lord, love - (aloha).'

CHAPTER XI - LONG-PIG - A CANNIBAL HIGH PLACE

Nothing more strongly arouses our disgust than cannibalism, nothing so surely unmortars a society; nothing, we might plausibly argue, will so harden and degrade the minds of those that practise it. And yet we ourselves make much the same appearance in the eyes of the Buddhist and the vegetarian. We consume the carcasses of creatures of like appetites, passions, and organs with ourselves; we feed on babes, though not our own; and the slaughter-house resounds daily with screams of pain and fear. We distinguish, indeed; but the unwillingness of many nations to eat the dog, an animal with whom we live on terms of the next intimacy, shows how precariously the distinction is grounded. The pig is the main element of animal food among the islands; and I had many occasions, my mind being quickened by my cannibal surroundings, to observe his character and the manner of his death. Many islanders live with their pigs as we do with our dogs; both crowd around the hearth with equal freedom; and the island pig is a fellow of activity, enterprise, and sense. He husks his own cocoa-nuts, and (I am told) rolls them into the sun to burst; he is the terror of the shepherd. Mrs. Stevenson, senior, has seen one fleeing to the woods with a lamb in his mouth; and I saw another come rapidly (and erroneously) to the conclusion that the *Casco* was going down, and swim through the flush water to the rail in search of an escape. It was told us in childhood that pigs cannot swim; I have known one to leap overboard, swim five hundred yards to shore, and return to the house of his original owner. I was once, at Tautira, a pig-master on a considerable scale; at first, in my pen, the utmost good feeling prevailed; a little sow with a belly-ache came and appealed to us for help in the manner of a child; and there was one shapely black boar, whom we called Catholicus, for he was a particular present from the Catholics of the village, and who early displayed the marks of courage and friendliness; no other animal, whether dog or pig, was suffered to approach him at his food, and for human beings he showed a full measure of that toadying fondness so common in the lower animals, and possibly their chief title to the name. One day, on visiting my piggery, I was amazed to see Catholicus draw back from my approach with cries of terror; and if I was amazed at the change, I was truly embarrassed when I learnt its reason. One of the pigs had been that morning killed; Catholicus had seen the murder, he had discovered he was dwelling in the shambles, and from that time his confidence and his delight in life were ended.

We still reserved him a long while, but he could not endure the sight of any two-legged creature, nor could we, under the circumstances, encounter his eye without confusion. I have assisted besides, by the ear, at the act of butchery itself; the victim's cries of pain I think I could have borne, but the execution was mismanaged, and his expression of terror was contagious: that small heart moved to the same tune with ours. Upon such 'dread foundations' the life of the European reposes, and yet the European is among the less cruel of races. The paraphernalia of murder, the preparatory brutalities of his existence, are all hid away; an extreme sensibility reigns upon the surface; and ladies will faint at the recital of one tithe of what they daily expect of their butchers. Some will be even crying out upon me in their hearts for the coarseness of this paragraph. And so with the island cannibals. They were not cruel; apart from this custom, they are a race of the most kindly; rightly speaking, to cut a man's flesh after he is dead is far less hateful than to oppress him whilst he lives; and even the victims of their appetite were gently used in life and suddenly and painlessly despatched at last. In island circles of refinement it was doubtless thought bad taste to expatiate on what was ugly in the practice.

Cannibalism is traced from end to end of the Pacific, from the Marquesas to New Guinea, from New Zealand to Hawaii, here in the lively haunt of its exercise, there by scanty but significant survivals. Hawaii is the most doubtful. We find cannibalism chronicled in Hawaii, only in the history of a single war, where it seems to have been thought exception, as in the case of mountain outlaws, such as fell by the hand of Theseus. In Tahiti, a single circumstance survived, but that appears conclusive. In historic times, when human oblation was made in the marae, the eyes of the victim were formally offered to the chief: a delicacy to the leading guest. All Melanesia appears tainted. In Micronesia, in the Marshalls, with which my acquaintance is no more than that of a tourist, I could find no trace at all; and even in the Gilbert zone I long looked and asked in vain. I was told tales indeed of men who had been eaten in a famine; but these were nothing to my purpose, for the same thing is done under the same stress by all kindreds and generations of men. At last, in some manuscript notes of Dr. Turner's, which I was allowed to consult at Malua, I came on one damning evidence: on the island of Onoatoa the punishment for theft was to be killed and eaten. How shall we account for the universality of the practice over so vast an area, among people of such varying civilisation, and, with whatever intermixture, of such different blood? What circumstance is common to them all, but that they lived on islands destitute, or very nearly so, of animal food? I can never find it in my appetite that man was meant to live on vegetables only. When our stores ran low among the islands, I grew to weary for the recurrent day when economy allowed us to open another tin of miserable mutton. And in at least one ocean language, a particular word denotes that a man is 'hungry for fish,' having reached that stage when vegetables can no longer satisfy, and his soul, like those of the Hebrews in the desert, begins to lust after flesh-pots. Add to this the evidences of over-population and imminent famine already adduced, and I think we see some ground of indulgence for the island cannibal.

It is right to look at both sides of any question; but I am far from making the apology of this worse than bestial vice. The higher Polynesian races, such as the Tahitians, Hawaiians, and Samoans, had one and all outgrown, and some of them had in part forgot, the practice, before Cook or Bougainville had shown a top-sail in their waters. It lingered only in some low islands where life was difficult to maintain, and among inveterate savages like the New-Zealanders or the Marquesans. The Marquesans intertwined man-eating with the whole texture of their lives; long-pig was in a sense their currency and sacrament; it formed the hire of the artist, illustrated public events, and was the occasion and attraction of a feast. To-day they are paying the penalty of this bloody commixture. The civil power, in its crusade against man-eating, has had to examine one after another all Marquesan arts and pleasures, has found them one after another tainted with a cannibal element, and one after another has placed them on the proscript list. Their art of tattooing stood by itself, the execution exquisite, the designs most beautiful and intricate; nothing more handsomely sets off a handsome man; it may cost some pain in the beginning, but I doubt if it be near so painful in the long-run, and I am sure it is far more becoming than the ignoble European practice of tight-lacing among women. And now it has been found needful to forbid the art. Their songs and dances were numerous (and the law has had to abolish them by the dozen). They now face empty-handed the tedium of their uneventful days; and who shall pity them? The least rigorous will say that they were justly served.

Death alone could not satisfy Marquesan vengeance: the flesh must be eaten. The chief who seized Mr. Whalon preferred to eat him; and he thought he had justified the wish when he explained it was a vengeance. Two or three years ago, the people of a valley seized and slew a wretch who had offended them. His offence, it is to be supposed, was dire; they could not bear to leave their vengeance incomplete, and, under the eyes of the French, they did not dare to hold a public festival. The body was accordingly divided; and every man retired to his own house to consummate the rite in secret, carrying his proportion of the dreadful meat in a Swedish match-box.

The barbarous substance of the drama and the European properties employed offer a seizing contrast to the imagination. Yet more striking is another incident of the very year when I was there myself, 1888. In the spring, a man and woman skulked about the school-house in Hiva-oa till they found a particular child alone. Him they approached with honeyed words and carneying manners - ‘You are So-and-so, son of So-and-so?’ they asked; and caressed and beguiled him deeper in the woods. Some instinct woke in the child’s bosom, or some look betrayed the horrid purpose of his deceivers. He sought to break from them; he screamed; and they, casting off the mask, seized him the more strongly and began to run. His cries were heard; his schoolmates, playing not far off, came running to the rescue; and the sinister couple fled and vanished in the woods. They were never identified; no prosecution followed; but it was currently supposed they had some grudge against the boy’s father, and designed to eat him in revenge. All over the islands, as at home among our own ancestors, it will be observed that the avenger takes no particular heed to strike an individual. A family, a class, a village, a whole valley or island, a whole race of mankind, share equally the guilt of any member. So, in the above story, the son was to pay the penalty for his father; so Mr. Whalon, the mate of an American whaler, was to bleed and be eaten for the misdeeds of a Peruvian slaver. I am reminded of an incident in Jaluit in the Marshall group, which was told me by an eye-witness, and which I tell here again for the strangeness of the scene. Two men had awakened the animosity of the Jaluit chiefs; and it was their wives who were selected to be punished. A single native served as executioner. Early in the morning, in the face of a large concourse of spectators, he waded out upon the reef between his victims. These neither complained nor resisted; accompanied their destroyer patiently; stooped down, when they had waded deep enough, at his command; and he (laying one hand upon the shoulders of each) held them under water till they drowned. Doubtless, although my informant did not tell me so, their families would be lamenting aloud upon the beach.

It was from Hatiheu that I paid my first visit to a cannibal high place.

The day was sultry and clouded. Drenching tropical showers succeeded bursts of sweltering sunshine. The green pathway of the road wound steeply upward. As we went, our little schoolboy guide a little ahead of us, Father Simeon had his portfolio in his hand, and named the trees for me, and read aloud from his notes the abstract of their virtues. Presently the road, mounting, showed us the vale of Hatiheu, on a larger scale; and the priest, with occasional reference to our guide, pointed out the boundaries and told me the names of the larger tribes that lived at perpetual war in the old days: one on the north-east, one along the beach, one behind upon the mountain. With a survivor of this latter clan Father Simeon had spoken; until the pacification he had never been to the sea's edge, nor, if I remember exactly, eaten of sea-fish. Each in its own district, the septs lived cantoned and beleaguered. One step without the boundaries was to affront death. If famine came, the men must out to the woods to gather chestnuts and small fruits; even as to this day, if the parents are backward in their weekly doles, school must be broken up and the scholars sent foraging. But in the old days, when there was trouble in one clan, there would be activity in all its neighbours; the woods would be laid full of ambushes; and he who went after vegetables for himself might remain to be a joint for his hereditary foes. Nor was the pointed occasion needful. A dozen different natural signs and social junctures called this people to the war-path and the cannibal hunt. Let one of chiefly rank have finished his tattooing, the wife of one be near upon her time, two of the debauching streams have deviated nearer on the beach of Hatiheu, a certain bird have been heard to sing, a certain ominous formation of cloud observed above the northern sea; and instantly the arms were oiled, and the man-hunters swarmed into the wood to lay their fratricidal ambuscades. It appears besides that occasionally, perhaps in famine, the priest would shut himself in his house, where he lay for a stated period like a person dead. When he came forth it was to run for three days through the territory of the clan, naked and starving, and to sleep at night alone in the high place. It was now the turn of the others to keep the house, for to encounter the priest upon his rounds was death. On the eve of the fourth day the time of the running was over; the priest returned to his roof, the laymen came forth, and in the morning the number of the victims was announced. I have this tale of the priest on one authority - I think a good one, - but I set it down with diffidence. The particulars are so striking that, had they been true, I almost think I must have heard them oftener referred to. Upon one point there seems to be no question: that the feast was sometimes furnished from within the clan. In times of scarcity, all who were not protected by their family connections - in the Highland expression, all the commons of the clan - had cause to tremble. It was vain to resist, it was useless to flee. They were begirt upon all hands by cannibals; and the oven was ready to smoke for them abroad in the country of their foes, or at home in the valley of their fathers.

At a certain corner of the road our scholar-guide struck off to his left into the twilight of the forest. We were now on one of the ancient native roads, plunged in a high vault of wood, and clambering, it seemed, at random over boulders and dead trees; but the lad wound in and out and up and down without a check, for these paths are to the natives as marked as the king's highway is to us; insomuch that, in the days of the man-hunt, it was their labour rather to block and deface than to improve them. In the crypt of the wood the air was clammy and hot and cold; overhead, upon the leaves, the tropical rain uproariously poured, but only here and there, as through holes in a leaky roof, a single drop would fall, and make a spot upon my mackintosh. Presently the huge trunk of a banyan hove in sight, standing upon what seemed the ruins of an ancient fort; and our guide, halting and holding forth his arm, announced that we had reached the *paepae tapu.*

Paepae signifies a floor or platform such as a native house is built on; and even such a paepae - a paepae hae - may be called a paepae tapu in a lesser sense when it is deserted and becomes the haunt of spirits; but the public high place, such as I was now treading, was a thing on a great scale. As far as my eyes could pierce through the dark undergrowth, the floor of the forest was all paved. Three tiers of terrace ran on the slope of the hill; in front, a crumbling parapet contained the main arena; and the pavement of that was pierced and parcelled out with several wells and small enclosures. No trace remained of any superstructure, and the scheme of the amphitheatre was difficult to seize. I visited another in Hiva-oa, smaller but more perfect, where it was easy to follow rows of benches, and to distinguish isolated seats of honour for eminent persons; and where, on the upper platform, a single joist of the temple or dead-house still remained, its uprights richly carved. In the old days the high place was sedulously tended. No tree except the sacred banyan was suffered to encroach upon its grades, no dead leaf to rot upon the pavement. The stones were smoothly set, and I am told they were kept bright with oil. On all sides the guardians lay encamped in their subsidiary huts to watch and cleanse it. No other foot of man was suffered to draw near; only the priest, in the days of his running, came there to sleep - perhaps to dream of his ungodly errand; but, in the time of the feast, the clan trooped to the high place in a body, and each had his appointed seat. There were places for the chiefs, the drummers, the dancers, the women, and the priests. The drums - perhaps twenty strong, and some of them twelve feet high - continuously throbbed in time. In time the singers kept up their long-drawn, lugubrious, ululating song; in time, too, the dancers, tricked out in singular finery, stepped, leaped, swayed, and gesticulated - their plumed fingers fluttering in the air like butterflies. The sense of time, in all these ocean races, is extremely perfect; and I conceive in such a festival that almost every sound and movement fell in one. So much the more unanimously must have grown the agitation of the feasters; so much the more wild must have been the scene to any European who could have beheld them there, in the strong sun and the strong shadow of the banyan, rubbed with saffron to throw in a more high relief the arabesque of the tattoo; the women bleached by days of confinement to a complexion almost European; the chiefs crowned with silver plumes of old men's beards and girt with kirtles of the hair of dead women. All manner of island food was meanwhile spread for the women and the commons; and, for those who were privileged to eat of it, there were carried up to the dead-house the baskets of long-pig. It is told that the feasts were long kept up; the people came from them brutishly exhausted with debauchery, and the chiefs heavy with their beastly food. There are certain sentiments which we call emphatically human - denying the honour of that name to those who lack them. In such feasts - particularly where the victim has been slain at home, and men banqueted on the poor clay of a comrade with whom they had played in infancy, or a woman whose favours they had shared - the whole body of these sentiments is outraged. To consider it too closely is to understand, if not to excuse, the fervours of self-righteous old ship-captains, who would man their guns, and open fire in passing, on a cannibal island.

And yet it was strange. There, upon the spot, as I stood under the high, dripping vault of the forest, with the young priest on the one hand, in his kilted gown, and the bright-eyed Marquesan schoolboy on the other, the whole business appeared infinitely distant, and fallen in the cold perspective and dry light of history. The bearing of the priest, perhaps, affected me. He smiled; he jested with the boy, the heir both of these feasters and their meat; he clapped his hands, and gave me a stave of one of the old, ill-omened choruses. Centuries might have come and gone since this slimy theatre was last in operation; and I beheld the place with no more emotion than I might have felt in visiting Stonehenge. In Hiva-oa, as I began to appreciate that the thing was still living and latent about my footsteps, and that it was still within the bounds of possibility that I might hear the cry of the trapped victim, my historic attitude entirely failed, and I was sensible of some repugnance for the natives. But here, too, the priests maintained their jocular attitude: rallying the cannibals as upon an eccentricity rather absurd than horrible; seeking, I should say, to shame them from the practice by good-natured ridicule, as we shame a child from stealing sugar. We may here recognise the temperate and sagacious mind of Bishop Dordillon.

CHAPTER XII - THE STORY OF A PLANTATION

Taahauku, on the south-westerly coast of the island of Hiva-oa - Tahuku, say the slovenly whites - may be called the port of Atuona. It is a narrow and small anchorage, set between low cliffy points, and opening above upon a woody valley: a little French fort, now disused and deserted, overhangs the valley and the inlet. Atuona itself, at the head of the next bay, is framed in a theatre of mountains, which dominate the more immediate settling of Taahauku and give the salient character of the scene. They are reckoned at no higher than four thousand feet; but Tahiti with eight thousand, and Hawaii with fifteen, can offer no such picture of abrupt, melancholy alps. In the morning, when the sun falls directly on their front, they stand like a vast wall: green to the summit, if by any chance the summit should be clear - water-courses here and there delineated on their face, as narrow as cracks. Towards afternoon, the light falls more obliquely, and the sculpture of the range comes in relief, huge gorges sinking into shadow, huge, tortuous buttresses standing edged with sun. At all hours of the day they strike the eye with some new beauty, and the mind with the same menacing gloom.

The mountains, dividing and deflecting the endless airy deluge of the Trade, are doubtless answerable for the climate. A strong draught of wind blew day and night over the anchorage. Day and night the same fantastic and attenuated clouds fled across the heavens, the same dusky cap of rain and vapour fell and rose on the mountain. The land-breezes came very strong and chill, and the sea, like the air, was in perpetual bustle. The swell crowded into the narrow anchorage like sheep into a fold; broke all along both sides, high on the one, low on the other; kept a certain blowhole sounding and smoking like a cannon; and spent itself at last upon the beach.

On the side away from Atuona, the sheltering promontory was a nursery of coco-trees. Some were mere infants, none had attained to any size, none had yet begun to shoot skyward with that whip-like shaft of the mature palm. In the young trees the colour alters with the age and growth. Now all is of a grass-like hue, infinitely dainty; next the rib grows golden, the fronds remaining green as ferns; and then, as the trunk continues to mount and to assume its final hue of grey, the fans put on manlier and more decided depths of verdure, stand out dark upon the distance, glisten against the sun, and flash like silver fountains in the assault of the wind. In this young wood of Taahauku, all these hues and combinations were exampled and repeated by the score. The trees grew pleasantly spaced upon a hilly sward, here and there interspersed with a rack for drying copra, or a tumble-down hut for storing it. Every here and there the stroller had a glimpse of the *Casco* tossing in the narrow anchorage below; and beyond he had ever before him the dark amphitheatre of the Atuona mountains and the cliffy bluff that closes it to seaward. The trade-wind moving in the fans made a ceaseless noise of summer rain; and from time to time, with the sound of a sudden and distant drum-beat, the surf would burst in a sea-cave.

At the upper end of the inlet, its low, cliffy lining sinks, at both sides, into a beach. A copra warehouse stands in the shadow of the shoreside trees, flitted about for ever by a clan of dwarfish swallows; and a line of rails on a high wooden staging bends back into the mouth of the valley. Walking on this, the new-landed traveller becomes aware of a broad fresh-water lagoon (one arm of which he crosses), and beyond, of a grove of noble palms, sheltering the house of the trader, Mr. Keane. Overhead, the cocos join in a continuous and lofty roof; blackbirds are heard lustily singing; the island cock springs his jubilant rattle and airs his golden plumage; cow-bells sound far and near in the grove; and when you sit in the broad verandah, lulled by this symphony, you may say to yourself, if you are able: 'Better fifty years of Europe . . .' Farther on, the floor of the valley is flat and green, and dotted here and there with stripling coco-palms. Through the midst, with many changes of music, the river trots and brawls; and along its course, where we should look for willows, puraos grow in clusters, and make shadowy pools after an angler's heart. A vale more rich and peaceful, sweeter air, a sweeter voice of rural sounds, I have found nowhere. One circumstance alone might strike the experienced: here is a convenient beach, deep soil, good water, and yet nowhere any paepaes, nowhere any trace of island habitation.

It is but a few years since this valley was a place choked with jungle, the debatable land and battle-ground of cannibals. Two clans laid claim to it - neither could substantiate the claim, and the roads lay desert, or were only visited by men in arms. It is for this very reason that it wears now so smiling an appearance: cleared, planted, built upon, supplied with railways, boat-houses, and bath-houses. For, being no man's land, it was the more readily ceded to a stranger. The stranger was Captain John Hart: Ima Hati, 'Broken-arm,' the natives call him, because when he first visited the islands his arm was in a sling. Captain Hart, a man of English birth, but an American subject, had conceived the idea of cotton culture in the Marquesas during the American War, and was at first rewarded with success. His plantation at Anaho was highly productive; island cotton fetched a high price, and the natives used to debate which was the stronger power, Ima

Hati or the French: deciding in favour of the captain, because, though the French had the most ships, he had the more money.

He marked Taahauku for a suitable site, acquired it, and offered the superintendence to Mr. Robert Stewart, a Fifeshire man, already some time in the islands, who had just been ruined by a war on Tauata. Mr. Stewart was somewhat averse to the adventure, having some acquaintance with Atuona and its notorious chieftain, Moipu. He had once landed there, he told me, about dusk, and found the remains of a man and woman partly eaten. On his starting and sickening at the sight, one of Moipu's young men picked up a human foot, and provocatively staring at the stranger, grinned and nibbled at the heel. None need be surprised if Mr. Stewart fled incontinently to the bush, lay there all night in a great horror of mind, and got off to sea again by daylight on the morrow. 'It was always a bad place, Atuona,' commented Mr. Stewart, in his homely Fifeshire voice. In spite of this dire introduction, he accepted the captain's offer, was landed at Taahauku with three Chinamen, and proceeded to clear the jungle.

War was pursued at that time, almost without interval, between the men of Atuona and the men of Haamau; and one day, from the opposite sides of the valley, battle - or I should rather say the noise of battle - raged all the afternoon: the shots and insults of the opposing clans passing from hill to hill over the heads of Mr. Stewart and his Chinamen. There was no genuine fighting; it was like a bicker of schoolboys, only some fool had given the children guns. One man died of his exertions in running, the only casualty. With night the shots and insults ceased; the men of Haamau withdrew; and victory, on some occult principle, was scored to Moipu. Perhaps, in consequence, there came a day when Moipu made a feast, and a party from Haamau came under safe-conduct to eat of it. These passed early by Taahauku, and some of Moipu's young men were there to be a guard of honour. They were not long gone before there came down from Haamau, a man, his wife, and a girl of twelve, their daughter, bringing fungus. Several Atuona lads were hanging round the store; but the day being one of truce none apprehended danger. The fungus was weighed and paid for; the man of Haamau proposed he should have his axe ground in the bargain; and Mr. Stewart demurring at the trouble, some of the Atuona lads offered to grind it for him, and set it on the wheel. While the axe was grinding, a friendly native whispered Mr. Stewart to have a care of himself, for there was trouble in hand; and, all at once, the man of Haamau was seized, and his head and arm stricken from his body, the head at one sweep of his own newly sharpened axe. In the first alert, the girl escaped among the cotton; and Mr. Stewart, having thrust the wife into the house and locked her in from the outside, supposed the affair was over. But the business had not passed without noise, and it reached the ears of an older girl who had loitered by the way, and who now came hastily down the valley, crying as she came for her father. Her, too, they seized and beheaded; I know not what they had done with the axe, it was a blunt knife that served their butcherly turn upon the girl; and the blood spurted in fountains and painted them from head to foot. Thus horrible from crime, the party returned to Atuona, carrying the heads to Moipu. It may be fancied how the feast broke up; but it is notable that the guests were honourably suffered to retire. These passed back through Taahauku in extreme disorder; a little after the valley began to be overrun with shouting and triumphing braves; and a letter of warning coming at the same time to Mr. Stewart, he and his Chinamen took refuge with the Protestant missionary in Atuona. That night the store was gutted, and the bodies cast in a pit and covered with leaves. Three days later the schooner had come in; and things appearing quieter, Mr. Stewart and the captain landed in Taahauku to compute the damage and to view the grave, which was already indicated by the stench. While they were so employed, a party of Moipu's young men, decked with red flannel to indicate martial sentiments, came over the hills from Atuona, dug up the bodies, washed them in the river, and carried them away on sticks. That night the feast began.

Those who knew Mr. Stewart before this experience declare the man to be quite altered. He stuck, however, to his post; and somewhat later, when the plantation was already well established, and gave employment to sixty Chinamen and seventy natives, he found himself once more in dangerous times. The men of Haamau, it was reported, had sworn to plunder and erase the settlement; letters came continually from the Hawaiian missionary, who acted as intelligence department; and for six weeks Mr. Stewart and three other whites slept in the cotton-house at night in a rampart of bales, and (what was their best defence) ostentatiously practised rifle-shooting by day upon the beach. Natives were often there to watch them; the practice was excellent; and the assault was never delivered - if it ever was intended, which I doubt, for the natives are more famous for false rumours than for deeds of energy. I was told the late French war was a case in point; the tribes on the beach accusing those in the mountains of designs which they had never the hardihood to entertain. And the same testimony to their backwardness in open battle reached me from all sides. Captain Hart once landed after an engagement in a certain bay; one man had his hand hurt, an old woman and two children had been slain; and the captain improved the occasion by poulticing the hand, and taunting both sides upon so wretched an affair. It is true these wars were often merely formal - comparable with duels to the first blood. Captain Hart visited a bay where such a war was being carried on between two brothers, one of whom had been thought wanting in civility to the guests of the other. About one-half of the population served day about on alternate sides, so as to be well with each when the inevitable peace should follow. The forts of the belligerents were over against each other, and close by. Pigs were cooking. Well-oiled braves, with well-oiled muskets, strutted on the paepae or sat down to feast. No business, however needful, could be done, and all thoughts were supposed to be centred in this mockery of war. A few days later, by a regrettable accident, a man was killed; it was felt at once the thing had gone too far, and the quarrel was instantly patched up. But the more serious wars were prosecuted in a similar spirit; a gift of pigs and a feast made their inevitable end; the killing of a single man was a great victory, and the murder of defenceless solitaries counted a heroic deed.

The foot of the cliffs, about all these islands, is the place of fishing. Between Taahauku and Atuona we saw men, but chiefly women, some nearly naked, some in thin white or crimson dresses, perched in little surf-beat promontories - the brown precipice overhanging them, and the convolvulus overhanging that, as if to cut them off the more completely from assistance. There they would angle much of the morning; and as fast as they caught any fish, eat them, raw and living, where they stood. It was such helpless ones that the warriors from the opposite island of Tauata slew, and carried home and ate, and were thereupon accounted mighty men of valour. Of one such exploit I can give the account of an eye-witness. ‘Portuguese Joe,’ Mr. Keane’s cook, was once pulling an oar in an Atuona boat, when they spied a stranger in a canoe with some fish and a piece of tapu. The Atuona men cried upon him to draw near and have a smoke. He complied, because, I suppose, he had no choice; but he knew, poor devil, what he was coming to, and (as Joe said) ‘he didn’t seem to care about the smoke.’ A few questions followed, as to where he came from, and what was his business. These he must needs answer, as he must needs draw at the unwelcome pipe, his heart the while drying in his bosom. And then, of a sudden, a big fellow in Joe’s boat leaned over, plucked the stranger from his canoe, struck him with a knife in the neck - inward and downward, as Joe showed in pantomime more expressive than his words - and held him under water, like a fowl, until his struggles ceased. Whereupon the long-pig was hauled on board, the boat’s head turned about for Atuona, and these Marquesan braves pulled home rejoicing. Moipu was on the beach and rejoiced with them on their arrival. Poor Joe toiled at his oar that day with a white face, yet he had no fear for himself. ‘They were very good to me - gave me plenty grub: never wished to eat white man,’ said he.

If the most horrible experience was Mr. Stewart’s, it was Captain

Hart himself who ran the nearest danger. He had bought a piece of land from Timau, chief of a neighbouring bay, and put some Chinese there to work. Visiting the station with one of the Godeffroys, he found his Chinamen trooping to the beach in terror: Timau had driven them out, seized their effects, and was in war attire with his young men. A boat was despatched to Taahauku for reinforcement; as they awaited her return, they could see, from the deck of the schooner, Timau and his young men dancing the war-dance on the hill-top till past twelve at night; and so soon as the boat came (bringing three gendarmes, armed with chassepots, two white men from Taahauku station, and some native warriors) the party set out to seize the chief before he should awake. Day was not come, and it was a very bright moonlight morning, when they reached the hill-top where (in a house of palm-leaves) Timau was sleeping off his debauch. The assailants were fully exposed, the interior of the hut quite dark; the position far from sound. The gendarmes knelt with their pieces ready, and Captain Hart advanced alone. As he drew near the door he heard the snap of a gun cocking from within, and in sheer self-defence - there being no other escape - sprang into the house and grappled Timau. ‘Timau, come with me!’ he cried. But Timau - a great fellow, his eyes blood-red with the abuse of kava, six foot three in stature - cast him on one side; and the captain, instantly expecting to be either shot or brained, discharged his pistol in the dark. When they carried Timau out at the door into the moonlight, he was already dead, and, upon this unlooked-for termination of their sally, the whites appeared to have lost all conduct, and retreated to the boats, fired upon by the natives as they went. Captain Hart, who almost rivals Bishop Dordillon in popularity, shared with him the policy of extreme indulgence to the natives, regarding them as children, making light of their defects, and constantly in favour of mild measures. The death of Timau has thus somewhat weighed upon his mind; the more so, as the chieftain’s musket was found in the house unloaded. To a less delicate conscience the matter will seem light. If a drunken savage elects to cock a fire-arm, a gentleman advancing towards him in the open cannot wait to make sure if it be charged.

I have touched on the captain’s popularity. It is one of the things that most strikes a stranger in the Marquesas. He comes instantly on two names, both new to him, both locally famous, both mentioned by all with affection and respect - the bishop’s and the captain’s. It gave me a strong desire to meet with the survivor, which was subsequently gratified - to the enrichment of these pages. Long after that again, in the Place Dolorous - Molokai - I came once more on the traces of that affectionate popularity. There was a blind white leper there, an old sailor - ‘an old tough,’ he called himself - who had long sailed among the eastern islands. Him I used to visit, and, being fresh from the scenes of his activity, gave him the news. This (in the true island style) was largely a chronicle of wrecks; and it chanced I mentioned the case of one not very successful captain, and how he had lost a vessel for Mr. Hart; thereupon the blind leper broke forth in lamentation. ‘Did he lose a ship of John Hart’s?’ he cried; ‘poor John Hart! Well, I’m sorry it was Hart’s,’ with needless force of epithet, which I neglect to reproduce.

Perhaps, if Captain Hart’s affairs had continued to prosper, his popularity might have been different. Success wins glory, but it kills affection, which misfortune fosters. And the misfortune which overtook the captain’s enterprise was truly singular. He was at the top of his career. Ile Masse belonged to him, given by the French as an indemnity for the robberies at Taahauku. But the Ile Masse was only suitable for cattle; and his two chief stations were Anaho, in Nuka-hiva, facing the north-east, and Taahauku in Hiva-oa, some hundred miles to the southward, and facing the south-west. Both these were on the same day swept by a tidal wave, which was not felt in any other bay or island of the group. The south coast of Hiva-oa was bestrewn with building timber and camphor-wood chests, containing goods; which, on the promise of a reasonable salvage, the natives very honestly brought back, the chests apparently not opened, and some of the wood after it had been built into their houses. But the recovery of such jetsam could not affect the result. It was impossible the captain should withstand this partiality of fortune; and with his fall the prosperity of the Marquesas ended. Anaho is truly extinct, Taahauku but a shadow of itself; nor has any new plantation arisen in their stead.

CHAPTER XIII - CHARACTERS

There was a certain traffic in our anchorage at Atuona; different indeed from the dead inertia and quiescence of the sister island, Nuka-hiva. Sails were seen steering from its mouth; now it would be a whale-boat manned with native rowdies, and heavy with copra for sale; now perhaps a single canoe come after commodities to buy. The anchorage was besides frequented by fishers; not only the lone females perched in niches of the cliff, but whole parties, who would sometimes camp and build a fire upon the beach, and sometimes lie in their canoes in the midst of the haven and jump by turns in the water; which they would cast eight or nine feet high, to drive, as we supposed, the fish into their nets. The goods the purchasers came to buy were sometimes quaint. I remarked one outrigger returning with a single ham swung from a pole in the stern. And one day there came into Mr. Keane's store a charming lad, excellently mannered, speaking French correctly though with a babyish accent; very handsome too, and much of a dandy, as was shown not only in his shining raiment, but by the nature of his purchases. These were five ship-biscuits, a bottle of scent, and two balls of washing blue. He was from Tauata, whither he returned the same night in an outrigger, daring the deep with these young-ladyish treasures. The gross of the native passengers were more ill-favoured: tall, powerful fellows, well tattooed, and with disquieting manners. Something coarse and jeering distinguished them, and I was often reminded of the slums of some great city. One night, as dusk was falling, a whale-boat put in on that part of the beach where I chanced to be alone. Six or seven ruffianly fellows scrambled out; all had enough English to give me 'good-bye,' which was the ordinary salutation; or 'good-morning,' which they seemed to regard as an intensitive; jests followed, they surrounded me with harsh laughter and rude looks, and I was glad to move away. I had not yet encountered Mr. Stewart, or I should have been reminded of his first landing at Atuona and the humorist who nibbled at the heel. But their neighbourhood depressed me; and I felt, if I had been there a castaway and out of reach of help, my heart would have been sick.

Nor was the traffic altogether native. While we lay in the anchorage there befell a strange coincidence. A schooner was observed at sea and aiming to enter. We knew all the schooners in the group, but this appeared larger than any; she was rigged, besides, after the English manner; and, coming to an anchor some way outside the *Casco*, showed at last the blue ensign. There were at that time, according to rumour, no fewer than four yachts in the Pacific; but it was strange that any two of them should thus lie side by side in that outlandish inlet: stranger still that in the owner of the *Nyanza*, Captain Dewar, I should find a man of the same country and the same county with myself, and one whom I had seen walking as a boy on the shores of the Alpes Maritimes.

We had besides a white visitor from shore, who came and departed in a crowded whale-boat manned by natives; having read of yachts in the Sunday papers, and being fired with the desire to see one. Captain Chase, they called him, an old whaler-man, thickset and white-bearded, with a strong Indiana drawl; years old in the country, a good backer in battle, and one of those dead shots whose practice at the target struck terror in the braves of Haamau. Captain Chase dwelt farther east in a bay called Hanamate, with a Mr. M'Callum; or rather they had dwelt together once, and were now amicably separated. The captain is to be found near one end of the bay, in a wreck of a house, and waited on by a Chinese. At the point of the opposing corner another habitation stands on a tall paepae. The surf runs there exceeding heavy, seas of seven and eight feet high bursting under the walls of the house, which is thus continually filled with their clamour, and rendered fit only for solitary, or at least for silent, inmates. Here it is that Mr. M'Callum, with a Shakespeare and a Burns, enjoys the society of the breakers. His name and his Burns testify to Scottish blood; but he is an American born, somewhere far east; followed the trade of a ship-carpenter; and was long employed, the captain of a hundred Indians, breaking up wrecks about Cape Flattery. Many of the whites who are to be found scattered in the South Seas represent the more artistic portion of their class; and not only enjoy the poetry of that new life, but came there on purpose to enjoy it. I have been shipmates with a man, no longer young, who sailed upon that voyage, his first time to sea, for the mere love of Samoa; and it was a few letters in a newspaper that sent him on that pilgrimage. Mr. M'Callum was another instance of the same. He had read of the South Seas; loved to read of them; and let their image fasten in his heart: till at length he could refrain no longer - must set forth, a new Rudel, for that unseen homeland - and has now dwelt for years in Hiva-oa, and will lay his bones there in the end with full content; having no desire to behold again the places of his boyhood, only, perhaps - once, before he dies - the rude and wintry landscape of Cape Flattery. Yet he is an active man, full of schemes; has bought land of the natives; has planted five thousand coco-palms; has a desert island in his eye, which he desires to lease, and a schooner in the stocks, which he has laid and built himself, and even hopes to finish. Mr. M'Callum and I did not meet, but, like gallant troubadours, corresponded in verse. I hope he will not consider it a breach of copyright if I give here a specimen of his muse. He and Bishop Dordillon are the two European bards of the Marquesas.

'Sail, ho! Ahoy! *Casco,*
First among the pleasure fleet
That came around to greet
These isles from San Francisco,
And first, too; only one
Among the literary men
That this way has ever been -
Welcome, then, to Stevenson.
Please not offended be
At this little notice
Of the *Casco*, Captain Otis,
With the novelist's family.
Avoir une voyage magnifical
Is our wish sincere,
That you'll have from here
Allant sur la Grande Pacifical.'

But our chief visitor was one Mapiao, a great Tahuku - which seems to mean priest, wizard, tattooer, practiser of any art, or, in a word, esoteric person - and a man famed for his eloquence on public occasions and witty talk in private. His first appearance was typical of the man. He came down clamorous to the eastern landing, where the surf was running very high; scorned all our signals to go round the bay; carried his point, was brought aboard at some hazard to our skiff, and set down in one corner of the cockpit to his appointed task. He had been hired, as one cunning in the art, to make my old men's beards into a wreath: what a wreath for Celia's arbour! His own beard (which he carried, for greater safety, in a sailor's knot) was not merely the adornment of his age, but a substantial piece of property. One hundred dollars was the estimated value; and as Brother Michel never knew a native to deposit a greater sum with Bishop Dordillon, our friend was a rich man in virtue of his chin. He had something of an East Indian cast, but taller and stronger: his nose hooked, his face narrow, his forehead very high, the whole elaborately tattooed. I may say I have never entertained a guest so trying. In the least particular he must be waited on; he would not go to the scuttle-butt for water; he would not even reach to get the glass, it must be given him in his hand; if aid were denied him, he would fold his arms, bow his head, and go without: only the work would suffer. Early the first forenoon he called aloud for biscuit and salmon; biscuit and ham were brought; he looked on them inscrutably, and signed they should be set aside. A number of considerations crowded on my mind; how the sort of work on which he was engaged was probably tapu in a high degree; should by rights, perhaps, be transacted on a tapu platform which no female might approach; and it was possible that fish might be the essential diet. Some salted fish I therefore brought him, and along with that a glass of rum: at sight of which Mapiao displayed extraordinary animation, pointed to the zenith, made a long speech in which I picked up *umati* - the word for the sun - and signed to me once more to place these dainties out of reach. At last I had understood, and every day the programme was the same. At an early period of the morning his dinner must be set forth on the roof of the house and at a proper distance, full in view but just out of reach; and not until the fit hour, which was the point of noon, would the artificer partake. This solemnity was the cause of an absurd misadventure. He was seated plaiting, as usual, at the beards, his dinner arrayed on the roof, and not far off a glass of water standing. It appears he desired to drink; was of course far too great a gentleman to rise and get the water for himself; and spying Mrs. Stevenson, imperiously signed to her to hand it. The signal was misunderstood; Mrs. Stevenson was, by this time, prepared for any eccentricity on the part of our guest; and instead of passing him the water, flung his dinner overboard. I must do Mapiao justice: all laughed, but his laughter rang the loudest.

These troubles of service were at worst occasional; the embarrassment of the man's talk incessant. He was plainly a practised conversationalist; the nicety of his inflections, the elegance of his gestures, and the fine play of his expression, told us that. We, meanwhile, sat like aliens in a playhouse; we could see the actors were upon some material business and performing well, but the plot of the drama remained undiscoverable. Names of places, the name of Captain Hart, occasional disconnected words, tantalised without enlightening us; and the less we understood, the more gallantly, the more copiously, and with still the more explanatory gestures, Mapiao returned to the assault. We could see his vanity was on the rack; being come to a place where that fine jewel of his conversational talent could earn him no respect; and he had times of despair when he desisted from the endeavour, and instants of irritation when he regarded us with unconcealed contempt. Yet for me, as the practitioner of some kindred mystery to his own, he manifested to the last a measure of respect. As we sat under the awning in opposite corners of the cockpit, he braiding hairs from dead men's chins, I forming runes upon a sheet of folio paper, he would nod across to me as one Tahuku to another, or, crossing the cockpit, study for a while my shapeless scrawl and encourage me with a heartfelt '*mitai*! - good!' So might a deaf painter sympathise far off with a musician, as the slave and master of some uncomprehended and yet kindred art. A silly trade, he doubtless considered it; but a man must make allowance for barbarians - *chaque pays a ses coutumes* - and he felt the principle was there.

The time came at last when his labours, which resembled those rather of Penelope than Hercules, could be no more spun out, and nothing remained but to pay him and say farewell. After a long, learned argument in Marquesan, I gathered that his mind was set on fish-hooks; with three of which, and a brace of dollars, I thought he was not ill rewarded for passing his forenoons in our cockpit, eating, drinking, delivering his opinions, and pressing the ship's company into his menial service. For all that, he was a man of so high a bearing, and so like an uncle of my own who should have gone mad and got tattooed, that I applied to him, when we were both on shore, to know if he were satisfied. '*Mitai ehipe*?' I asked. And he, with rich unction, offering at the same time his hand - '*Mitai ehipe, mitai kaehae; kaoha nui*!' - or, to translate freely: 'The ship is good, the victuals are up to the mark, and we part in friendship.' Which testimonial uttered, he set off along the beach with his head bowed and the air of one deeply injured.

I saw him go, on my side, with relief. It would be more interesting to learn how our relation seemed to Mapiao. His exigence, we may suppose, was merely loyal. He had been hired by the ignorant to do a piece of work; and he was bound that he would do it the right way. Countless obstacles, continual ignorant ridicule, availed not to dissuade him. He had his dinner laid out; watched it, as was fit, the while he worked; ate it at the fit hour; was in all things served and waited on; and could take his hire in the end with a clear conscience, telling himself the mystery was performed duly, the beards rightfully braided, and we (in spite of ourselves) correctly served. His view of our stupidity, even he, the mighty talker, must have lacked language to express. He never interfered with my Tahuku work; civilly praised it, idle as it seemed; civilly supposed that I was competent in my own mystery: such being the attitude of the intelligent and the polite. And we, on the other hand - who had yet the most to gain or lose, since the product was to be ours - who had professed our disability by the very act of hiring him to do it - were never weary of impeding his own more important labours, and sometimes lacked the sense and the civility to refrain from laughter.

CHAPTER XIV - IN A CANNIBAL VALLEY

The road from Taahauku to Atuona skirted the north-westerly side of the anchorage, somewhat high up, edged, and sometimes shaded, by the splendid flowers of the *flamboyant* - its English name I do not know. At the turn of the hand, Atuona came in view: a long beach, a heavy and loud breach of surf, a shore-side village scattered among trees, and the guttered mountains drawing near on both sides above a narrow and rich ravine. Its infamous repute perhaps affected me; but I thought it the loveliest, and by far the most ominous and gloomy, spot on earth. Beautiful it surely was; and even more salubrious. The healthfulness of the whole group is amazing; that of Atuona almost in the nature of a miracle. In Atuona, a village planted in a shore-side marsh, the houses standing everywhere intermingled with the pools of a taro-garden, we find every condition of tropical danger and discomfort; and yet there are not even mosquitoes - not even the hateful day-fly of Nuka-hiva - and fever, and its concomitant, the island fe'efe'e, are unknown.

This is the chief station of the French on the man-eating isle of Hiva-oa. The sergeant of gendarmerie enjoys the style of the vice-resident, and hoists the French colours over a quite extensive compound. A Chinaman, a waif from the plantation, keeps a restaurant in the rear quarters of the village; and the mission is well represented by the sister's school and Brother Michel's church. Father Orens, a wonderful octogenarian, his frame scarce bowed, the fire of his eye undimmed, has lived, and trembled, and suffered in this place since 1843. Again and again, when Moipu had made coco-brandy, he has been driven from his house into the woods. 'A mouse that dwelt in a cat's ear' had a more easy resting-place; and yet I have never seen a man that bore less mark of years. He must show us the church, still decorated with the bishop's artless ornaments of paper - the last work of industrious old hands, and the last earthly amusement of a man that was much of a hero. In the sacristy we must see his sacred vessels, and, in particular, a vestment which was a '*vraie curiosité*,' because it had been given by a gendarme. To the Protestant there is always something embarrassing in the eagerness with which grown and holy men regard these trifles; but it was touching and pretty to see Orens, his aged eyes shining in his head, display his sacred treasures.

August 26. - The vale behind the village, narrowing swiftly to a mere ravine, was choked with profitable trees. A river gushed in the midst. Overhead, the tall coco-palms made a primary covering; above that, from one wall of the mountain to another, the ravine was roofed with cloud; so that we moved below, amid teeming vegetation, in a covered house of heat. On either hand, at every hundred yards, instead of the houseless, disembowelling paepaes of Nuka-hiva, populous houses turned out their inhabitants to cry ‘Kaoha!’ to the passers-by. The road, too, was busy: strings of girls, fair and foul, as in less favoured countries; men bearing breadfruit; the sisters, with a little guard of pupils; a fellow bestriding a horse - passed and greeted us continually; and now it was a Chinaman who came to the gate of his flower-yard, and gave us ‘Good-day’ in excellent English; and a little farther on it would be some natives who set us down by the wayside, made us a feast of mummy-apple, and entertained us as we ate with drumming on a tin case. With all this fine plenty of men and fruit, death is at work here also. The population, according to the highest estimate, does not exceed six hundred in the whole vale of Atuona; and yet, when I once chanced to put the question, Brother Michel counted up ten whom he knew to be sick beyond recovery. It was here, too, that I could at last gratify my curiosity with the sight of a native house in the very article of dissolution. It had fallen flat along the paepae, its poles sprawling ungainly; the rains and the mites contended against it; what remained seemed sound enough, but much was gone already; and it was easy to see how the insects consumed the walls as if they had been bread, and the air and the rain ate into them like vitriol.

A little ahead of us, a young gentleman, very well tattooed, and dressed in a pair of white trousers and a flannel shirt, had been marching unconcernedly. Of a sudden, without apparent cause, he turned back, took us in possession, and led us undissuadably along a by-path to the river’s edge. There, in a nook of the most attractive amenity, he bade us to sit down: the stream splashing at our elbow, a shock of nondescript greenery enshrining us from above; and thither, after a brief absence, he brought us a cocoa-nut, a lump of sandal-wood, and a stick he had begun to carve: the nut for present refreshment, the sandal-wood for a precious gift, and the stick - in the simplicity of his vanity - to harvest premature praise. Only one section was yet carved, although the whole was pencil-marked in lengths; and when I proposed to buy it, Poni (for that was the artist’s name) recoiled in horror. But I was not to be moved, and simply refused restitution, for I had long wondered why a people who displayed, in their tattooing, so great a gift of arabesque invention, should display it nowhere else. Here, at last, I had found something of the same talent in another medium; and I held the incompleteness, in these days of world-wide brummagem, for a happy mark of authenticity. Neither my reasons nor my purpose had I the means of making clear to Poni; I could only hold on to the stick, and bid the artist follow me to the gendarmerie, where I should find interpreters and money; but we gave him, in the meanwhile, a boat-call in return for his sandal-wood. As he came behind us down the vale he sounded upon this continually. And continually, from the wayside houses, there poured forth little groups of girls in crimson, or of men in white. And to these must Poni pass the news of who the strangers were, of what they had been doing, of why it was that Poni had a boat-whistle; and of why he was now being haled to the vice-residency, uncertain whether to be punished or rewarded, uncertain whether he had lost a stick or made a bargain, but hopeful on the whole, and in the meanwhile highly consoled by the boat-whistle. Whereupon he would tear himself away from this particular group of inquirers, and once more we would hear the shrill call in our wake.

August 27. - I made a more extended circuit in the vale with Brother Michel. We were mounted on a pair of sober nags, suitable to these rude paths; the weather was exquisite, and the company in which I found myself no less agreeable than the scenes through which I passed. We mounted at first by a steep grade along the summit of one of those twisted spurs that, from a distance, mark out provinces of sun and shade upon the mountain-side. The ground fell away on either hand with an extreme declivity. From either hand, out of profound ravines, mounted the song of falling water and the smoke of household fires. Here and there the hills of foliage would divide, and our eye would plunge down upon one of these deep-nested habitations. And still, high in front, arose the precipitous barrier of the mountain, greened over where it seemed that scarce a harebell could find root, barred with the zigzags of a human road where it seemed that not a goat could scramble. And in truth, for all the labour that it cost, the road is regarded even by the Marquesans as impassable; they will not risk a horse on that ascent; and those who lie to the westward come and go in their canoes. I never knew a hill to lose so little on a near approach: a consequence, I must suppose, of its surprising steepness. When we turned about, I was amazed to behold so deep a view behind, and so high a shoulder of blue sea, crowned by the whale-like island of Motane. And yet the wall of mountain had not visibly dwindled, and I could even have fancied, as I raised my eyes to measure it, that it loomed higher than before.

We struck now into covert paths, crossed and heard more near at hand the bickering of the streams, and tasted the coolness of those recesses where the houses stood. The birds sang about us as we descended. All along our path my guide was being hailed by voices: ‘Mikaël - Kaoha, Mikaël!’ From the doorstep, from the cotton-patch, or out of the deep grove of island-chestnuts, these friendly cries arose, and were cheerily answered as we passed. In a sharp angle of a glen, on a rushing brook and under fathoms of cool foliage, we struck a house upon a well-built paepae, the fire brightly burning under the popoi-shed against the evening meal; and here the cries became a chorus, and the house folk, running out, obliged us to dismount and breathe. It seemed a numerous family: we saw eight at least; and one of these honoured me with a particular attention. This was the mother, a woman naked to the waist, of an aged countenance, but with hair still copious and black, and breasts still erect and youthful. On our arrival I could see she remarked me, but instead of offering any greeting, disappeared at once into the bush. Thence she returned with two crimson flowers. 'Good-bye!' was her salutation, uttered not without coquetry; and as she said it she pressed the flowers into my hand - 'Good-bye! I speak Inglis.' It was from a whaler-man, who (she informed me) was 'a plenty good chap,' that she had learned my language; and I could not but think how handsome she must have been in these times of her youth, and could not but guess that some memories of the dandy whaler-man prompted her attentions to myself. Nor could I refrain from wondering what had befallen her lover; in the rain and mire of what sea-ports he had tramped since then; in what close and garish drinking-dens had found his pleasure; and in the ward of what infirmary dreamed his last of the Marquesas. But she, the more fortunate, lived on in her green island. The talk, in this lost house upon the mountains, ran chiefly upon Mapiao and his visits to the *Casco*: the news of which had probably gone abroad by then to all the island, so that there was no paepae in Hiva-oa where they did not make the subject of excited comment.

Not much beyond we came upon a high place in the foot of the ravine. Two roads divided it, and met in the midst. Save for this intersection the amphitheatre was strangely perfect, and had a certain ruder air of things Roman. Depths of foliage and the bulk of the mountain kept it in a grateful shadow. On the benches several young folk sat clustered or apart. One of these, a girl perhaps fourteen years of age, buxom and comely, caught the eye of Brother Michel. Why was she not at school? - she was done with school now. What was she doing here? - she lived here now. Why so? - no answer but a deepening blush. There was no severity in Brother Michel's manner; the girl's own confusion told her story. '*Elle a honte*,' was the missionary's comment, as we rode away. Near by in the stream, a grown girl was bathing naked in a goyle between two stepping-stones; and it amused me to see with what alacrity and real alarm she bounded on her many-coloured under-clothes. Even in these daughters of cannibals shame was eloquent.

It is in Hiva-oa, owing to the inveterate cannibalism of the natives, that local beliefs have been most rudely trodden underfoot. It was here that three religious chiefs were set under a bridge, and the women of the valley made to defile over their heads upon the roadway: the poor, dishonoured fellows sitting there (all observers agree) with streaming tears. Not only was one road driven across the high place, but two roads intersected in its midst. There is no reason to suppose that the last was done of purpose, and perhaps it was impossible entirely to avoid the numerous sacred places of the islands. But these things are not done without result. I have spoken already of the regard of Marquesans for the dead, making (as it does) so strange a contrast with their unconcern for death. Early on this day's ride, for instance, we encountered a petty chief, who inquired (of course) where we were going, and suggested by way of amendment. 'Why do you not rather show him the cemetery?' I saw it; it was but newly opened, the third within eight years. They are great builders here in Hiva-oa; I saw in my ride paepaes that no European dry-stone mason could have equalled, the black volcanic stones were laid so justly, the corners were so precise, the levels so true; but the retaining-wall of the new graveyard stood apart, and seemed to be a work of love. The sentiment of honour for the dead is therefore not extinct. And yet observe the consequence of violently countering men's opinions. Of the four prisoners in Atuona gaol, three were of course thieves; the fourth was there for sacrilege. He had levelled up a piece of the graveyard - to give a feast upon, as he informed the court - and declared he had no thought of doing wrong. Why should he? He had been forced at the point of the bayonet to destroy the sacred places of his own piety; when he had recoiled from the task, he had been jeered at for a superstitious fool. And now it is supposed he will respect our European superstitions as by second nature.

CHAPTER XV - THE TWO CHIEFS OF ATUONA

It had chanced (as the *Casco* beat through the Bordelais Straits for Taahauku) she approached on one board very near the land in the opposite isle of Tauata, where houses were to be seen in a grove of tall coco-palms. Brother Michel pointed out the spot. ‘I am at home now,’ said he. ‘I believe I have a large share in these cocoa-nuts; and in that house madame my mother lives with her two husbands!’ ‘With two husbands?’ somebody inquired. ‘*C’est ma honte,*’ replied the brother drily.

A word in passing on the two husbands. I conceive the brother to have expressed himself loosely. It seems common enough to find a native lady with two consorts; but these are not two husbands. The first is still the husband; the wife continues to be referred to by his name; and the position of the coadjutor, or *pikio,* although quite regular, appears undoubtedly subordinate. We had opportunities to observe one household of the sort. The *pikio* was recognised; appeared openly along with the husband when the lady was thought to be insulted, and the pair made common cause like brothers. At home the inequality was more apparent. The husband sat to receive and entertain visitors; the *pikio* was running the while to fetch cocoa-nuts like a hired servant, and I remarked he was sent on these errands in preference even to the son. Plainly we have here no second husband; plainly we have the tolerated lover. Only, in the Marquesas, instead of carrying his lady’s fan and mantle, he must turn his hand to do the husband’s housework.

The sight of Brother Michel’s family estate led the conversation for some while upon the method and consequence of artificial kinship. Our curiosity became extremely whetted; the brother offered to have the whole of us adopted, and some two days later we became accordingly the children of Paaaeua, appointed chief of Atuona. I was unable to be present at the ceremony, which was primitively simple. The two Mrs. Stevensons and Mr. Osbourne, along with Paaaeua, his wife, and an adopted child of theirs, son of a shipwrecked Austrian, sat down to an excellent island meal, of which the principal and the only necessary dish was pig. A concourse watched them through the apertures of the house; but none, not even Brother Michel, might partake; for the meal was sacramental, and either creative or declaratory of the new relationship. In Tahiti things are not so strictly ordered; when Ori and I ‘made brothers,’ both our families sat with us at table, yet only he and I, who had eaten with intention were supposed to be affected by the ceremony. For the adoption of an infant I believe no formality to be required; the child is handed over by the natural parents, and grows up to inherit the estates of the adoptive. Presents are doubtless exchanged, as at all junctures of island life, social or international; but I never heard of any banquet - the child's presence at the daily board perhaps sufficing. We may find the rationale in the ancient Arabian idea that a common diet makes a common blood, with its derivative axiom that 'he is the father who gives the child its morning draught.' In the Marquesan practice, the sense would thus be evanescent; from the Tahitian, a mere survival, it will have entirely fled. An interesting parallel will probably occur to many of my readers.

What is the nature of the obligation assumed at such a festival? It will vary with the characters of those engaged, and with the circumstances of the case. Thus it would be absurd to take too seriously our adoption at Atuona. On the part of Paaaeua it was an affair of social ambition; when he agreed to receive us in his family the man had not so much as seen us, and knew only that we were inestimably rich and travelled in a floating palace. We, upon our side, ate of his baked meats with no true *animus affiliandi*, but moved by the single sentiment of curiosity. The affair was formal, and a matter of parade, as when in Europe sovereigns call each other cousin. Yet, had we stayed at Atuona, Paaaeua would have held himself bound to establish us upon his land, and to set apart young men for our service, and trees for our support. I have mentioned the Austrian. He sailed in one of two sister ships, which left the Clyde in coal; both rounded the Horn, and both, at several hundred miles of distance, though close on the same point of time, took fire at sea on the Pacific. One was destroyed; the derelict iron frame of the second, after long, aimless cruising, was at length recovered, refitted, and hails to-day from San Francisco. A boat's crew from one of these disasters reached, after great hardships, the isle of Hiva-oa. Some of these men vowed they would never again confront the chances of the sea; but alone of them all the Austrian has been exactly true to his engagement, remains where he landed, and designs to die where he has lived. Now, with such a man, falling and taking root among islanders, the processes described may be compared to a gardener's graft. He passes bodily into the native stock; ceases wholly to be alien; has entered the commune of the blood, shares the prosperity and consideration of his new family, and is expected to impart with the same generosity the fruits of his European skill and knowledge. It is this implied engagement that so frequently offends the ingrafted white. To snatch an immediate advantage - to get (let us say) a station for his store - he will play upon the native custom and become a son or a brother for the day, promising himself to cast down the ladder by which he shall have ascended, and repudiate the kinship so soon as it shall grow burdensome. And he finds there are two parties to the bargain. Perhaps his Polynesian relative is simple, and conceived the blood-bond literally; perhaps he is shrewd, and himself entered the covenant with a view to gain. And either way the store is ravaged, the house littered with lazy natives; and the richer the man grows, the more numerous, the more idle, and the more affectionate he finds his native relatives. Most men thus circumstanced contrive to buy or brutally manage to enforce their independence; but many vegetate without hope, strangled by parasites.

We had no cause to blush with Brother Michel. Our new parents were kind, gentle, well-mannered, and generous in gifts; the wife was a most motherly woman, the husband a man who stood justly high with his employers. Enough has been said to show why Moipu should be deposed; and in Paaaeua the French had found a reputable substitute. He went always scrupulously dressed, and looked the picture of propriety, like a dark, handsome, stupid, and probably religious young man hot from a European funeral. In character he seemed the ideal of what is known as the good citizen. He wore gravity like an ornament. None could more nicely represent the desired character as an appointed chief, the outpost of civilisation and reform. And yet, were the French to go and native manners to revive, fancy beholds him crowned with old men’s beards and crowding with the first to a man-eating festival. But I must not seem to be unjust to Paaaeua. His respectability went deeper than the skin; his sense of the becoming sometimes nerved him for unexpected rigours.

One evening Captain Otis and Mr. Osbourne were on shore in the village. All was agog; dancing had begun; it was plain it was to be a night of festival, and our adventurers were overjoyed at their good fortune. A strong fall of rain drove them for shelter to the house of Paaaeua, where they were made welcome, wiled into a chamber, and shut in. Presently the rain took off, the fun was to begin in earnest, and the young bloods of Atuona came round the house and called to my fellow-travellers through the interstices of the wall. Late into the night the calls were continued and resumed, and sometimes mingled with taunts; late into the night the prisoners, tantalised by the noises of the festival, renewed their efforts to escape. But all was vain; right across the door lay that god-fearing householder, Paaaeua, feigning sleep; and my friends had to forego their junketing. In this incident, so delightfully European, we thought we could detect three strands of sentiment. In the first place, Paaaeua had a charge of souls: these were young men, and he judged it right to withhold them from the primrose path. Secondly, he was a public character, and it was not fitting that his guests should countenance a festival of which he disapproved. So might some strict clergyman at home address a worldly visitor: 'Go to the theatre if you like, but, by your leave, not from my house!' Thirdly, Paaaeua was a man jealous, and with some cause (as shall be shown) for jealousy; and the feasters were the satellites of his immediate rival, Moipu.

For the adoption had caused much excitement in the village; it made the strangers popular. Paaaeua, in his difficult posture of appointed chief, drew strength and dignity from their alliance, and only Moipu and his followers were malcontent. For some reason nobody (except myself) appears to dislike Moipu. Captain Hart, who has been robbed and threatened by him; Father Orens, whom he has fired at, and repeatedly driven to the woods; my own family, and even the French officials - all seemed smitten with an irrepressible affection for the man. His fall had been made soft; his son, upon his death, was to succeed Paaaeua in the chieftaincy; and he lived, at the time of our visit, in the shoreward part of the village in a good house, and with a strong following of young men, his late braves and pot-hunters. In this society, the coming of the *Casco*, the adoption, the return feast on board, and the presents exchanged between the whites and their new parents, were doubtless eagerly and bitterly canvassed. It was felt that a few years ago the honours would have gone elsewhere. In this unwonted business, in this reception of some hitherto undreamed-of and outlandish potentate - some Prester John or old Assaracus - a few years back it would have been the part of Moipu to play the hero and the host, and his young men would have accompanied and adorned the various celebrations as the acknowledged leaders of society. And now, by a malign vicissitude of fortune, Moipu must sit in his house quite unobserved; and his young men could but look in at the door while their rivals feasted. Perhaps M. Grévy felt a touch of bitterness towards his successor when he beheld him figure on the broad stage of the centenary of eighty-nine; the visit of the *Casco* which Moipu had missed by so few years was a more unusual occasion in Atuona than a centenary in France; and the dethroned chief determined to reassert himself in the public eye.

Mr. Osbourne had gone into Atuona photographing; the population of the village had gathered together for the occasion on the place before the church, and Paaaeua, highly delighted with this new appearance of his family, played the master of ceremonies. The church had been taken, with its jolly architect before the door; the nuns with their pupils; sundry damsels in the ancient and singularly unbecoming robes of tapa; and Father Orens in the midst of a group of his parishioners. I know not what else was in hand, when the photographer became aware of a sensation in the crowd, and, looking around, beheld a very noble figure of a man appear upon the margin of a thicket and stroll nonchalantly near. The nonchalance was visibly affected; it was plain he came there to arouse attention, and his success was instant. He was introduced; he was civil, he was obliging, he was always ineffably superior and certain of himself; a well-graced actor. It was presently suggested that he should appear in his war costume; he gracefully consented; and returned in that strange, inappropriate and ill-omened array (which very well became his handsome person) to strut in a circle of admirers, and be thenceforth the centre of photography. Thus had Moipu effected his introduction, as by accident, to the white strangers, made it a favour to display his finery, and reduced his rival to a secondary *rôle* on the theatre of the disputed village. Paaaeua felt the blow; and, with a spirit which we never dreamed he could possess, asserted his priority. It was found impossible that day to get a photograph of Moipu alone; for whenever he stood up before the camera his successor placed himself unbidden by his side, and gently but firmly held to his position. The portraits of the pair, Jacob and Esau, standing shoulder to shoulder, one in his careful European dress, one in his barbaric trappings, figure the past and present of their island. A graveyard with its humble crosses would be the aptest symbol of the future.

We are all impressed with the belief that Moipu had planned his campaign from the beginning to the end. It is certain that he lost no time in pushing his advantage. Mr. Osbourne was inveigled to his house; various gifts were fished out of an old sea-chest; Father Orens was called into service as interpreter, and Moipu formally proposed to 'make brothers' with Mata-Galahi - Glass-Eyes, - the not very euphonious name under which Mr. Osbourne passed in the Marquesas. The feast of brotherhood took place on board the *Casco*. Paaaeua had arrived with his family, like a plain man; and his presents, which had been numerous, had followed one another, at intervals through several days. Moipu, as if to mark at every point the opposition, came with a certain feudal pomp, attended by retainers bearing gifts of all descriptions, from plumes of old men's beard to little, pious, Catholic engravings.

I had met the man before this in the village, and detested him on sight; there was something indescribably raffish in his looks and ways that raised my gorge; and when man-eating was referred to, and he laughed a low, cruel laugh, part boastful, part bashful, like one reminded of some dashing peccadillo, my repugnance was mingled with nausea. This is no very human attitude, nor one at all becoming in a traveller. And, seen more privately, the man improved. Something negroid in character and face was still displeasing; but his ugly mouth became attractive when he smiled, his figure and bearing were certainly noble, and his eyes superb. In his appreciation of jams and pickles, in is delight in the reverberating mirrors of the dining cabin, and consequent endless repetition of Moipus and Mata-Galahis, he showed himself engagingly a child. And yet I am not sure; and what seemed childishness may have been rather courtly art. His manners struck me as beyond the mark; they were refined and caressing to the point of grossness, and when I think of the serene absent-mindedness with which he first strolled in upon our party, and then recall him running on hands and knees along the cabin sofas, pawing the velvet, dipping into the beds, and bleating commendatory '*mitais*' with exaggerated emphasis, like some enormous over-mannered ape, I feel the more sure that both must have been calculated. And I sometimes wonder next, if Moipu were quite alone in this polite duplicity, and ask myself whether the *Casco* were quite so much admired in the Marquesas as our visitors desired us to suppose.

I will complete this sketch of an incurable cannibal grandee with two incongruous traits. His favourite morsel was the human hand, of which he speaks to-day with an ill-favoured lustfulness. And when he said good-bye to Mrs. Stevenson, holding her hand, viewing her with tearful eyes, and chanting his farewell improvisation in the falsetto of Marquesan high society, he wrote upon her mind a sentimental impression which I try in vain to share.

PART II: THE PAUMOTUS

CHAPTER I - THE DANGEROUS ARCHIPELAGO - ATOLLS AT A DISTANCE

In the early morning of 4th September a whale-boat manned by natives dragged us down the green lane of the anchorage and round the spouting promontory. On the shore level it was a hot, breathless, and yet crystal morning; but high overhead the hills of Atuona were all cowled in cloud, and the ocean-river of the trades streamed without pause. As we crawled from under the immediate shelter of the land, we reached at last the limit of their influence. The wind fell upon our sails in puffs, which strengthened and grew more continuous; presently the *Casco* heeled down to her day's work; the whale-boat, quite outstripped, clung for a noisy moment to her quarter; the stipulated bread, rum, and tobacco were passed in; a moment more and the boat was in our wake, and our late pilots were cheering our departure.

This was the more inspiriting as we were bound for scenes so different, and though on a brief voyage, yet for a new province of creation. That wide field of ocean, called loosely the South Seas, extends from tropic to tropic, and from perhaps 123 degrees W. to 150 degrees E., a parallelogram of one hundred degrees by forty-seven, where degrees are the most spacious. Much of it lies vacant, much is closely sown with isles, and the isles are of two sorts. No distinction is so continually dwelt upon in South Sea talk as that between the 'low' and the 'high' island, and there is none more broadly marked in nature. The Himalayas are not more different from the Sahara. On the one hand, and chiefly in groups of from eight to a dozen, volcanic islands rise above the sea; few reach an altitude of less than 4000 feet; one exceeds 13,000; their tops are often obscured in cloud, they are all clothed with various forests, all abound in food, and are all remarkable for picturesque and solemn scenery. On the other hand, we have the atoll; a thing of problematic origin and history, the reputed creature of an insect apparently unidentified; rudely annular in shape; enclosing a lagoon; rarely extending beyond a quarter of a mile at its chief width; often rising at its highest point to less than the stature of a man - man himself, the rat and the land crab, its chief inhabitants; not more variously supplied with plants; and offering to the eye, even when perfect, only a ring of glittering beach and verdant foliage, enclosing and enclosed by the blue sea.

In no quarter are the atolls so thickly congregated, in none are they so varied in size from the greatest to the least, and in none is navigation so beset with perils, as in that archipelago that we were now to thread. The huge system of the trades is, for some reason, quite confounded by this multiplicity of reefs, the wind intermits, squalls are frequent from the west and south-west, hurricanes are known. The currents are, besides, inextricably intermixed; dead reckoning becomes a farce; the charts are not to be trusted; and such is the number and similarity of these islands that, even when you have picked one up, you may be none the wiser. The reputation of the place is consequently infamous; insurance offices exclude it from their field, and it was not without misgiving that my captain risked the *Casco* in such waters. I believe, indeed, it is almost understood that yachts are to avoid this baffling archipelago; and it required all my instances - and all Mr. Otis's private taste for adventure - to deflect our course across its midst.

For a few days we sailed with a steady trade, and a steady westerly current setting us to leeward; and toward sundown of the seventh it was supposed we should have sighted Takaroa, one of Cook's so-called King George Islands. The sun set; yet a while longer the old moon - semi-brilliant herself, and with a silver belly, which was her successor - sailed among gathering clouds; she, too, deserted us; stars of every degree of sheen, and clouds of every variety of form disputed the sub-lustrous night; and still we gazed in vain for Takaroa. The mate stood on the bowsprit, his tall grey figure slashing up and down against the stars, and still

'nihil astra praeter
Vidit et undas.

The rest of us were grouped at the port anchor davit, staring with no less assiduity, but with far less hope on the obscure horizon. Islands we beheld in plenty, but they were of 'such stuff as dreams are made on,' and vanished at a wink, only to appear in other places; and by and by not only islands, but refulgent and revolving lights began to stud the darkness; lighthouses of the mind or of the wearied optic nerve, solemnly shining and winking as we passed. At length the mate himself despaired, scrambled on board again from his unrestful perch, and announced that we had missed our destination. He was the only man of practice in these waters, our sole pilot, shipped for that end at Tai-o-hae. If he declared we had missed Takaroa, it was not for us to quarrel with the fact, but, if we could, to explain it. We had certainly run down our southing. Our canted wake upon the sea and our somewhat drunken-looking course upon the chart both testified with no less certainty to an impetuous westward current. We had no choice but to conclude we were again set down to leeward; and the best we could do was to bring the *Casco* to the wind, keep a good watch, and expect morning.

I slept that night, as was then my somewhat dangerous practice, on deck upon the cockpit bench. A stir at last awoke me, to see all the eastern heaven dyed with faint orange, the binnacle lamp already dulled against the brightness of the day, and the steersman leaning eagerly across the wheel. 'There it is, sir!' he cried, and pointed in the very eyeball of the dawn. For awhile I could see nothing but the bluish ruins of the morning bank, which lay far along the horizon, like melting icebergs. Then the sun rose, pierced a gap in these *dêbris* of vapours, and displayed an inconsiderable islet, flat as a plate upon the sea, and spiked with palms of disproportioned altitude.

So far, so good. Here was certainly an atoll; and we were certainly got among the archipelago. But which? And where? The isle was too small for either Takaroa: in all our neighbourhood, indeed, there was none so inconsiderable, save only Tikei; and Tikei, one of Roggewein's so-called Pernicious Islands, seemed beside the question. At that rate, instead of drifting to the west, we must have fetched up thirty miles to windward. And how about the current? It had been setting us down, by observation, all these days: by the deflection of our wake, it should be setting us down that moment. When had it stopped? When had it begun again? and what kind of torrent was that which had swept us eastward in the interval? To these questions, so typical of navigation in that range of isles, I have no answer. Such were at least the facts; Tikei our island turned out to be; and it was our first experience of the dangerous archipelago, to make our landfall thirty miles out.

The sight of Tikei, thrown direct against the splendour of the morning, robbed of all its colour, and deformed with disproportioned trees like bristles on a broom, had scarce prepared us to be much in love with atolls. Later the same day we saw under more fit conditions the island of Taiaro. *Lost in the Sea* is possibly the meaning of the name. And it was so we saw it; lost in blue sea and sky: a ring of white beach, green underwood, and tossing palms, gem-like in colour; of a fairy, of a heavenly prettiness. The surf ran all around it, white as snow, and broke at one point, far to seaward, on what seems an uncharted reef. There was no smoke, no sign of man; indeed, the isle is not inhabited, only visited at intervals. And yet a trader (Mr. Narii Salmon) was watching from the shore and wondering at the unexpected ship. I have spent since then long months upon low islands; I know the tedium of their undistinguished days; I know the burden of their diet. With whatever envy we may have looked from the deck on these green coverts, it was with a tenfold greater that Mr. Salmon and his comrades saw us steer, in our trim ship, to seaward.

The night fell lovely in the extreme. After the moon went down, the heaven was a thing to wonder at for stars. And as I lay in the cockpit and looked upon the steersman I was haunted by Emerson's verses:

'And the lone seaman all the night
Sails astonished among stars.'

By this glittering and imperfect brightness, about four bells in the first watch we made our third atoll, Raraka. The low line of the isle lay straight along the sky; so that I was at first reminded of a towpath, and we seemed to be mounting some engineered and navigable stream. Presently a red star appeared, about the height and brightness of a danger signal, and with that my simile was changed; we seemed rather to skirt the embankment of a railway, and the eye began to look instinctively for the telegraph-posts, and the ear to expect the coming of a train. Here and there, but rarely, faint tree-tops broke the level. And the sound of the surf accompanied us, now in a drowsy monotone, now with a menacing swing.

The isle lay nearly east and west, barring our advance on Fakarava. We must, therefore, hug the coast until we gained the western end, where, through a passage eight miles wide, we might sail southward between Raraka and the next isle, Kauehi. We had the wind free, a lightish air; but clouds of an inky blackness were beginning to arise, and at times it lightened - without thunder. Something, I know not what, continually set us up upon the island. We lay more and more to the nor'ard; and you would have thought the shore copied our manoeuvre and outsailed us. Once and twice Raraka headed us again - again, in the sea fashion, the quite innocent steersman was abused - and again the *Casco* kept away. Had I been called on, with no more light than that of our experience, to draw the configuration of that island, I should have shown a series of bow-window promontories, each overlapping the other to the nor'ard, and the trend of the land from the south-east to the north-west, and behold, on the chart it lay near east and west in a straight line.

We had but just repeated our manoeuvre and kept away - for not more than five minutes the railway embankment had been lost to view and the surf to hearing - when I was aware of land again, not only on the weather bow, but dead ahead. I played the part of the judicious landsman, holding my peace till the last moment; and presently my mariners perceived it for themselves.

'Land ahead!' said the steersman.

'By God, it's Kauehi!' cried the mate.

And so it was. And with that I began to be sorry for cartographers. We were scarce doing three and a half; and they asked me to believe that (in five minutes) we had dropped an island, passed eight miles of open water, and run almost high and dry upon the next. But my captain was more sorry for himself to be afloat in such a labyrinth; laid the *Casco* to, with the log line up and down, and sat on the stern rail and watched it till the morning. He had enough of night in the Paumotus.

By daylight on the 9th we began to skirt Kauehi, and had now an opportunity to see near at hand the geography of atolls. Here and there, where it was high, the farther side loomed up; here and there the near side dipped entirely and showed a broad path of water into the lagoon; here and there both sides were equally abased, and we could look right through the discontinuous ring to the sea horizon on the south. Conceive, on a vast scale, the submerged hoop of the duck-hunter, trimmed with green rushes to conceal his head - water within, water without - you have the image of the perfect atoll. Conceive one that has been partly plucked of its rush fringe; you have the atoll of Kauehi. And for either shore of it at closer quarters, conceive the line of some old Roman highway traversing a wet morass, and here sunk out of view and there re-arising, crowned with a green tuft of thicket; only instead of the stagnant waters of a marsh, the live ocean now boiled against, now buried the frail barrier. Last night's impression in the dark was thus confirmed by day, and not corrected. We sailed indeed by a mere causeway in the sea, of nature's handiwork, yet of no greater magnitude than many of the works of man.

The isle was uninhabited; it was all green brush and white sand, set in transcendently blue water; even the coco-palms were rare, though some of these completed the bright harmony of colour by hanging out a fan of golden yellow. For long there was no sign of life beyond the vegetable, and no sound but the continuous grumble of the surf. In silence and desertion these fair shores slipped past, and were submerged and rose again with clumps of thicket from the sea. And then a bird or two appeared, hovering and crying; swiftly these became more numerous, and presently, looking ahead, we were aware of a vast effervescence of winged life. In this place the annular isle was mostly under water, carrying here and there on its submerged line a wooded islet. Over one of these the birds hung and flew with an incredible density like that of gnats or hiving bees; the mass flashed white and black, and heaved and quivered, and the screaming of the creatures rose over the voice of the surf in a shrill clattering whirr. As you descend some inland valley a not dissimilar sound announces the nearness of a mill and pouring river. Some stragglers, as I said, came to meet our approach; a few still hung about the ship as we departed. The crying died away, the last pair of wings was left behind, and once more the low shores of Kauehi streamed past our eyes in silence like a picture. I supposed at the time that the birds lived, like ants or citizens, concentred where we saw them. I have been told since (I know not if correctly) that the whole isle, or much of it, is similarly peopled; and that the effervescence at a single spot would be the mark of a boat's crew of egg-hunters from one of the neighbouring inhabited atolls. So that here at Kauehi, as the day before at Taiaro, the *Casco* sailed by under the fire of unsuspected eyes. And one thing is surely true, that even on these ribbons of land an army might lie hid and no passing mariner divine its presence.

CHAPTER II - FAKARAVA: AN ATOLL AT HAND

By a little before noon we were running down the coast of our destination, Fakarava: the air very light, the sea near smooth; though still we were accompanied by a continuous murmur from the beach, like the sound of a distant train. The isle is of a huge longitude, the enclosed lagoon thirty miles by ten or twelve, and the coral tow-path, which they call the land, some eighty or ninety miles by (possibly) one furlong. That part by which we sailed was all raised; the underwood excellently green, the topping wood of coco-palms continuous - a mark, if I had known it, of man's intervention. For once more, and once more unconsciously, we were within hail of fellow-creatures, and that vacant beach was but a pistol-shot from the capital city of the archipelago. But the life of an atoll, unless it be enclosed, passes wholly on the shores of the lagoon; it is there the villages are seated, there the canoes ply and are drawn up; and the beach of the ocean is a place accursed and deserted, the fit scene only for wizardry and shipwreck, and in the native belief a haunting ground of murderous spectres.

By and by we might perceive a breach in the low barrier; the woods ceased; a glittering point ran into the sea, tipped with an emerald shoal the mark of entrance. As we drew near we met a little run of sea - the private sea of the lagoon having there its origin and end, and here, in the jaws of the gateway, trying vain conclusions with the more majestic heave of the Pacific. The *Casco* scarce avowed a shock; but there are times and circumstances when these harbour mouths of inland basins vomit floods, deflecting, burying, and dismasting ships. For, conceive a lagoon perfectly sealed but in the one point, and that of merely navigable width; conceive the tide and wind to have heaped for hours together in that coral fold a superfluity of waters, and the tide to change and the wind fall - the open sluice of some great reservoirs at home will give an image of the unstemmable effluxion.

We were scarce well headed for the pass before all heads were craned over the rail. For the water, shoaling under our board, became changed in a moment to surprising hues of blue and grey; and in its transparency the coral branched and blossomed, and the fish of the inland sea cruised visibly below us, stained and striped, and even beaked like parrots. I have paid in my time to view many curiosities; never one so curious as that first sight over the ship's rail in the lagoon of Fakarava. But let not the reader be deceived with hope. I have since entered, I suppose, some dozen atolls in different parts of the Pacific, and the experience has never been repeated. That exquisite hue and transparency of submarine day, and these shoals of rainbow fish, have not enraptured me again.

Before we could raise our eyes from that engaging spectacle the schooner had slipped betwixt the pierheads of the reef, and was already quite committed to the sea within. The containing shores are so little erected, and the lagoon itself is so great, that, for the more part, it seemed to extend without a check to the horizon. Here and there, indeed, where the reef carried an inlet, like a signet-ring upon a finger, there would be a pencilling of palms; here and there, the green wall of wood ran solid for a length of miles; and on the port hand, under the highest grove of trees, a few houses sparkled white - Rotoava, the metropolitan settlement of the Paumotus. Hither we beat in three tacks, and came to an anchor close in shore, in the first smooth water since we had left San Francisco, five fathoms deep, where a man might look overboard all day at the vanishing cable, the coral patches, and the many-coloured fish.

Fakarava was chosen to be the seat of Government from nautical considerations only. It is eccentrically situate; the productions, even for a low island, poor; the population neither many nor - for Low Islanders - industrious. But the lagoon has two good passages, one to leeward, one to windward, so that in all states of the wind it can be left and entered, and this advantage, for a government of scattered islands, was decisive. A pier of coral, landing-stairs, a harbour light upon a staff and pillar, and two spacious Government bungalows in a handsome fence, give to the northern end of Rotoava a great air of consequence. This is confirmed on the one hand by an empty prison, on the other by a gendarmerie pasted over with hand-bills in Tahitian, land-law notices from Papeete, and republican sentiments from Paris, signed (a little after date) ‘Jules Grévy, *Perihidente*.’ Quite at the far end a belfried Catholic chapel concludes the town; and between, on a smooth floor of white coral sand and under the breezy canopy of coco-palms, the houses of the natives stand irregularly scattered, now close on the lagoon for the sake of the breeze, now back under the palms for love of shadow.

Not a soul was to be seen. But for the thunder of the surf on the far side, it seemed you might have heard a pin drop anywhere about that capital city. There was something thrilling in the unexpected silence, something yet more so in the unexpected sound. Here before us a sea reached to the horizon, rippling like an inland mere; and behold! close at our back another sea assaulted with assiduous fury the reverse of the position. At night the lantern was run up and lit a vacant pier. In one house lights were seen and voices heard, where the population (I was told) sat playing cards. A little beyond, from deep in the darkness of the palm-grove, we saw the glow and smelt the aromatic odour of a coal of cocoa-nut husk, a relic of the evening kitchen. Crickets sang; some shrill thing whistled in a tuft of weeds; and the mosquito hummed and stung. There was no other trace that night of man, bird, or insect in the isle. The moon, now three days old, and as yet but a silver crescent on a still visible sphere, shone through the palm canopy with vigorous and scattered lights. The alleys where we walked were smoothed and weeded like a boulevard; here and there were plants set out; here and there dusky cottages clustered in the shadow, some with verandahs. A public garden by night, a rich and fashionable watering-place in a by-season, offer sights and vistas not dissimilar. And still, on the one side, stretched the lapping mere, and from the other the deep sea still growled in the night. But it was most of all on board, in the dead hours, when I had been better sleeping, that the spell of Fakarava seized and held me. The moon was down. The harbour lantern and two of the greater planets drew vari-coloured wakes on the lagoon. From shore the cheerful watch-cry of cocks rang out at intervals above the organ-point of surf. And the thought of this depopulated capital, this protracted thread of annular island with its crest of coco-palms and fringe of breakers, and that tranquil inland sea that stretched before me till it touched the stars, ran in my head for hours with delight.

So long as I stayed upon that isle these thoughts were constant. I lay down to sleep, and woke again with an unblunted sense of my surroundings. I was never weary of calling up the image of that narrow causeway, on which I had my dwelling, lying coiled like a serpent, tail to mouth, in the outrageous ocean, and I was never weary of passing - a mere quarter-deck parade - from the one side to the other, from the shady, habitable shores of the lagoon to the blinding desert and uproarious breakers of the opposite beach. The sense of insecurity in such a thread of residence is more than fanciful. Hurricanes and tidal waves over-leap these humble obstacles; Oceanus remembers his strength, and, where houses stood and palms flourished, shakes his white beard again over the barren coral. Fakarava itself has suffered; the trees immediately beyond my house were all of recent replantation; and Anaa is only now recovered from a heavier stroke. I knew one who was then dwelling in the isle. He told me that he and two ship captains walked to the sea beach. There for a while they viewed the oncoming breakers, till one of the captains clapped suddenly his hand before his eyes and cried aloud that he could endure no longer to behold them. This was in the afternoon; in the dark hours of the night the sea burst upon the island like a flood; the settlement was razed all but the church and presbytery; and, when day returned, the survivors saw themselves clinging in an abattis of uprooted coco-palms and ruined houses.

Danger is but a small consideration. But men are more nicely sensible of a discomfort; and the atoll is a discomfortable home. There are some, and these probably ancient, where a deep soil has formed and the most valuable fruit-trees prosper. I have walked in one, with equal admiration and surprise, through a forest of huge breadfruits, eating bananas and stumbling among taro as I went. This was in the atoll of Namorik in the Marshall group, and stands alone in my experience. To give the opposite extreme, which is yet far more near the average, I will describe the soil and productions of Fakarava. The surface of that narrow strip is for the more part of broken coral lime-stone, like volcanic clinkers, and excruciating to the naked foot; in some atolls, I believe, not in Fakarava, it gives a fine metallic ring when struck. Here and there you come upon a bank of sand, exceeding fine and white, and these parts are the least productive. The plants (such as they are) spring from and love the broken coral, whence they grow with that wonderful verdancy that makes the beauty of the atoll from the sea. The coco-palm in particular luxuriates in that stern *solum*, striking down his roots to the brackish, percolated water, and bearing his green head in the wind with every evidence of health and pleasure. And yet even the coco-palm must be helped in infancy with some extraneous nutriment, and through much of the low archipelago there is planted with each nut a piece of ship's biscuit and a rusty nail. The pandanus comes next in importance, being also a food tree; and he, too, does bravely. A green bush called *miki* runs everywhere; occasionally a purao is seen; and there are several useless weeds. According to M. Cuzent, the whole number of plants on an atoll such as Fakarava will scarce exceed, even if it reaches to, one score. Not a blade of grass appears; not a grain of humus, save when a sack or two has been imported to make the semblance of a garden; such gardens as bloom in cities on the window-sill. Insect life is sometimes dense; a cloud o' mosquitoes, and, what is far worse, a plague of flies blackening our food, has sometimes driven us from a meal on Apemama; and even in Fakarava the mosquitoes were a pest. The land crab may be seen scuttling to his hole, and at night the rats besiege the houses and the artificial gardens. The crab is good eating; possibly so is the rat; I have not tried. Pandanus fruit is made, in the Gilberts, into an agreeable sweetmeat, such as a man may trifle with at the end of a long dinner; for a substantial meal I have no use for it. The rest of the food-supply, in a destitute atoll such as Fakarava, can be summed up in the favourite jest of the archipelago - cocoa-nut beefsteak. Cocoa-nut green, cocoa-nut ripe, cocoa-nut germinated; cocoa-nut to eat and cocoa-nut to drink; cocoa-nut raw and cooked, cocoa-nut hot and cold

- such is the bill of fare. And some of the entrées are no doubt delicious. The germinated nut, cooked in the shell and eaten with a spoon, forms a good pudding; cocoa-nut milk - the expressed juice of a ripe nut, not the water of a green one - goes well in coffee, and is a valuable adjunct in cookery through the South Seas; and cocoa-nut salad, if you be a millionaire, and can afford to eat the value of a field of corn for your dessert, is a dish to be remembered with affection. But when all is done there is a sameness, and the Israelites of the low islands murmur at their manna.

The reader may think I have forgot the sea. The two beaches do certainly abound in life, and they are strangely different. In the lagoon the water shallows slowly on a bottom of the fine slimy sand, dotted with clumps of growing coral. Then comes a strip of tidal beach on which the ripples lap. In the coral clumps the great holy-water clam *(Tridacna)* grows plentifully; a little deeper lie the beds of the pearl-oyster and sail the resplendent fish that charmed us at our entrance; and these are all more or less vigorously coloured. But the other shells are white like lime, or faintly tinted with a little pink, the palest possible display; many of them dead besides, and badly rolled. On the ocean side, on the mounds of the steep beach, over all the width of the reef right out to where the surf is bursting, in every cranny, under every scattered fragment of the coral, an incredible plenty of marine life displays the most wonderful variety and brilliancy of hues. The reef itself has no passage of colour but is imitated by some shell. Purple and red and white, and green and yellow, pied and striped and clouded, the living shells wear in every combination the livery of the dead reef - if the reef be dead - so that the eye is continually baffled and the collector continually deceived. I have taken shells for stones and stones for shells, the one as often as the other. A prevailing character of the coral is to be dotted with small spots of red, and it is wonderful how many varieties of shell have adopted the same fashion and donned the disguise of the red spot. A shell I had found in plenty in the Marquesas I found here also unchanged in all things else, but there were the red spots. A lively little crab wore the same markings. The case of the hermit or soldier crab was more conclusive, being the result of conscious choice. This nasty little wrecker, scavenger, and squatter has learned the value of a spotted house; so it be of the right colour he will choose the smallest shard, tuck himself in a mere corner of a broken whorl, and go about the world half naked; but I never found him in this imperfect armour unless it was marked with the red spot.

Some two hundred yards distant is the beach of the lagoon. Collect the shells from each, set them side by side, and you would suppose they came from different hemispheres; the one so pale, the other so brilliant; the one prevalently white, the other of a score of hues, and infected with the scarlet spot like a disease. This seems the more strange, since the hermit crabs pass and repass the island, and I have met them by the Residency well, which is about central, journeying either way. Without doubt many of the shells in the lagoon are dead. But why are they dead? Without doubt the living shells have a very different background set for imitation. But why are these so different? We are only on the threshold of the mysteries.

Either beach, I have said, abounds with life. On the sea-side and in certain atolls this profusion of vitality is even shocking: the rock under foot is mined with it. I have broken off - notably in Funafuti and Arorai - great lumps of ancient weathered rock that rang under my blows like iron, and the fracture has been full of pendent worms as long as my hand, as thick as a child's finger, of a slightly pinkish white, and set as close as three or even four to the square inch. Even in the lagoon, where certain shell-fish seem to sicken, others (it is notorious) prosper exceedingly and make the riches of these islands. Fish, too, abound; the lagoon is a closed fish-pond, such as might rejoice the fancy of an abbot; sharks swarm there, and chiefly round the passages, to feast upon this plenty, and you would suppose that man had only to prepare his angle. Alas! it is not so. Of these painted fish that came in hordes about the entering *Casco*, some bore poisonous spines, and others were poisonous if eaten. The stranger must refrain, or take his chance of painful and dangerous sickness. The native, on his own isle, is a safe guide; transplant him to the next, and he is helpless as yourself. For it is a question both of time and place. A fish caught in a lagoon may be deadly; the same fish caught the same day at sea, and only a few hundred yards without the passage, will be wholesome eating: in a neighbouring isle perhaps the case will be reversed; and perhaps a fortnight later you shall be able to eat of them indifferently from within and from without. According to the natives, these bewildering vicissitudes are ruled by the movement of the heavenly bodies. The beautiful planet Venus plays a great part in all island tales and customs; and among other functions, some of them more awful, she regulates the season of good fish. With Venus in one phase, as we had her, certain fish were poisonous in the lagoon: with Venus in another, the same fish was harmless and a valued article of diet. White men explain these changes by the phases of the coral.

It adds a last touch of horror to the thought of this precarious annular gangway in the sea, that even what there is of it is not of honest rock, but organic, part alive, part putrescent; even the clean sea and the bright fish about it poisoned, the most stubborn boulder burrowed in by worms, the lightest dust venomous as an apothecary's drugs.

CHAPTER III - A HOUSE TO LET IN A LOW ISLAND

Never populous, it was yet by a chapter of accidents that I found the island so deserted that no sound of human life diversified the hours; that we walked in that trim public garden of a town, among closed houses, without even a lodging-bill in a window to prove some tenancy in the back quarters; and, when we visited the Government bungalow, that Mr. Donat, acting Vice-Resident, greeted us alone, and entertained us with cocoa-nut punches in the Sessions Hall and seat of judgment of that widespread archipelago, our glasses standing arrayed with summonses and census returns. The unpopularity of a late Vice-Resident had begun the movement of exodus, his native employés resigning court appointments and retiring each to his own coco-patch in the remoter districts of the isle. Upon the back of that, the Governor in Papeete issued a decree: All land in the Paumotus must be defined and registered by a certain date. Now, the folk of the archipelago are half nomadic; a man can scarce be said to belong to a particular atoll; he belongs to several, perhaps holds a stake and counts cousinship in half a score; and the inhabitants of Rotoava in particular, man, woman, and child, and from the gendarme to the Mormon prophet and the schoolmaster, owned - I was going to say land - owned at least coral blocks and growing coco-palms in some adjacent isle. Thither - from the gendarme to the babe in arms, the pastor followed by his flock, the schoolmaster carrying along with him his scholars, and the scholars with their books and slates - they had taken ship some two days previous to our arrival, and were all now engaged disputing boundaries. Fancy overhears the shrillness of their disputation mingle with the surf and scatter sea-fowl. It was admirable to observe the completeness of their flight, like that of hibernating birds; nothing left but empty houses, like old nests to be reoccupied in spring; and even the harmless necessary dominie borne with them in their transmigration. Fifty odd set out, and only seven, I was informed, remained. But when I made a feast on board the *Casco*, more than seven, and nearer seven times seven, appeared to be my guests. Whence they appeared, how they were summoned, whither they vanished when the feast was eaten, I have no guess. In view of Low Island tales, and that awful frequentation which makes men avoid the seaward beaches of an atoll, some two score of those that ate with us may have returned, for the occasion, from the kingdom of the dead.

It was this solitude that put it in our minds to hire a house, and become, for the time being, indwellers of the isle - a practice I have ever since, when it was possible, adhered to. Mr. Donat placed us, with that intent, under the convoy of one Taniera Mahinui, who combined the incongruous characters of catechist and convict. The reader may smile, but I affirm he was well qualified for either part. For that of convict, first of all, by a good substantial felony, such as in all lands casts the perpetrator in chains and dungeons. Taniera was a man of birth - the chief a while ago, as he loved to tell, of a district in Anaa of 800 souls. In an evil hour it occurred to the authorities in Papeete to charge the chiefs with the collection of the taxes. It is a question if much were collected; it is certain that nothing was handed on; and Taniera, who had distinguished himself by a visit to Papeete and some high living in restaurants, was chosen for the scapegoat. The reader must understand that not Taniera but the authorities in Papeete were first in fault. The charge imposed was disproportioned. I have not yet heard of any Polynesian capable of such a burden; honest and upright Hawaiians - one in particular, who was admired even by the whites as an inflexible magistrate - have stumbled in the narrow path of the trustee. And Taniera, when the pinch came, scorned to denounce accomplices; others had shared the spoil, he bore the penalty alone. He was condemned in five years. The period, when I had the pleasure of his friendship, was not yet expired; he still drew prison rations, the sole and not unwelcome reminder of his chains, and, I believe, looked forward to the date of his enfranchisement with mere alarm. For he had no sense of shame in the position; complained of nothing but the defective table of his place of exile; regretted nothing but the fowls and eggs and fish of his own more favoured island. And as for his parishioners, they did not think one hair the less of him. A schoolboy, mulcted in ten thousand lines of Greek and dwelling sequestered in the dormitories, enjoys unabated consideration from his fellows. So with Taniera: a marked man, not a dishonoured; having fallen under the lash of the unthinkable gods; a Job, perhaps, or say a Taniera in the den of lions. Songs are likely made and sung about this saintly Robin Hood. On the other hand, he was even highly qualified for his office in the Church; being by nature a grave, considerate, and kindly man; his face rugged and serious, his smile bright; the master of several trades, a builder both of boats and houses; endowed with a fine pulpit voice; endowed besides with such a gift of eloquence that at the grave of the late chief of Fakarava he set all the assistants weeping. I never met a man of a mind more ecclesiastical; he loved to dispute and to inform himself of doctrine and the history of sects; and when I showed him the cuts in a volume of Chambers’s *Encyclopaedia* - except for one of an ape - reserved his whole enthusiasm for cardinals’ hats, censers, candlesticks, and cathedrals. Methought when he looked upon the cardinal's hat a voice said low in his ear: 'Your foot is on the ladder.'

Under the guidance of Taniera we were soon installed in what I believe to have been the best-appointed private house in Fakarava. It stood just beyond the church in an oblong patch of cultivation. More than three hundred sacks of soil were imported from Tahiti for the Residency garden; and this must shortly be renewed, for the earth blows away, sinks in crevices of the coral, and is sought for at last in vain. I know not how much earth had gone to the garden of my villa; some at least, for an alley of prosperous bananas ran to the gate, and over the rest of the enclosure, which was covered with the usual clinker-like fragments of smashed coral, not only coco-palms and mikis but also fig-trees flourished, all of a delicious greenness. Of course there was no blade of grass. In front a picket fence divided us from the white road, the palm-fringed margin of the lagoon, and the lagoon itself, reflecting clouds by day and stars by night. At the back, a bulwark of uncemented coral enclosed us from the narrow belt of bush and the nigh ocean beach where the seas thundered, the roar and wash of them still humming in the chambers of the house.

This itself was of one story, verandahed front and back. It contained three rooms, three sewing-machines, three sea-chests, chairs, tables, a pair of beds, a cradle, a double-barrelled gun, a pair of enlarged coloured photographs, a pair of coloured prints after Wilkie and Mulready, and a French lithograph with the legend: '*Le brigade du Général Lepasset brûlant son drapeau devant Metz*.' Under the stilts of the house a stove was rusting, till we drew it forth and put it in commission. Not far off was the burrow in the coral whence we supplied ourselves with brackish water. There was live stock, besides, on the estate - cocks and hens and a brace of ill-regulated cats, whom Taniera came every morning with the sun to feed on grated cocoa-nut. His voice was our regular réveille, ringing pleasantly about the garden: 'Pooty - pooty - poo - poo - poo!'

Far as we were from the public offices, the nearness of the chapel made our situation what is called eligible in advertisements, and gave us a side look on some native life. Every morning, as soon as he had fed the fowls, Taniera set the bell agoing in the small belfry; and the faithful, who were not very numerous, gathered to prayers. I was once present: it was the Lord's day, and seven females and eight males composed the congregation. A woman played precentor, starting with a longish note; the catechist joined in upon the second bar; and then the faithful in a body. Some had printed hymn-books which they followed; some of the rest filled up with 'eh - eh - eh,' the Paumotuan tol-de-rol. After the hymn, we had an antiphonal prayer or two; and then Taniera rose from the front bench, where he had been sitting in his catechist's robes, passed within the altar-rails, opened his Tahitian Bible, and began to preach from notes. I understood one word - the name of God; but the preacher managed his voice with taste, used rare and expressive gestures, and made a strong impression of sincerity. The plain service, the vernacular Bible, the hymn-tunes mostly on an English pattern - 'God save the Queen,' I was informed, a special favourite, - all, save some paper flowers upon the altar, seemed not merely but austerely Protestant. It is thus the Catholics have met their low island proselytes half-way.

Taniera had the keys of our house; it was with him I made my bargain, if that could be called a bargain in which all was remitted to my generosity; it was he who fed the cats and poultry, he who came to call and pick a meal with us like an acknowledged friend; and we long fondly supposed he was our landlord. This belief was not to bear the test of experience; and, as my chapter has to relate, no certainty succeeded it.

We passed some days of airless quiet and great heat; shell-gatherers were warned from the ocean beach, where sunstroke waited them from ten till four; the highest palm hung motionless, there was no voice audible but that of the sea on the far side. At last, about four of a certain afternoon, long cat's-paws flawed the face of the lagoon; and presently in the tree-tops there awoke the grateful bustle of the trades, and all the houses and alleys of the island were fanned out. To more than one enchanted ship, that had lain long becalmed in view of the green shore, the wind brought deliverance; and by daylight on the morrow a schooner and two cutters lay moored in the port of Rotoava. Not only in the outer sea, but in the lagoon itself, a certain traffic woke with the reviving breeze; and among the rest one François, a half-blood, set sail with the first light in his own half-decked cutter. He had held before a court appointment; being, I believe, the Residency sweeper-out. Trouble arising with the unpopular Vice-Resident, he had thrown his honours down, and fled to the far parts of the atoll to plant cabbages - or at least coco-palms. Thence he was now driven by such need as even a Cincinnatus must acknowledge, and fared for the capital city, the seat of his late functions, to exchange half a ton of copra for necessary flour. And here, for a while, the story leaves to tell of his voyaging.

It must tell, instead, of our house, where, toward seven at night, the catechist came suddenly in with his pleased air of being welcome; armed besides with a considerable bunch of keys. These he proceeded to try on the sea-chests, drawing each in turn from its place against the wall. Heads of strangers appeared in the doorway and volunteered suggestions. All in vain. Either they were the wrong keys or the wrong boxes, or the wrong man was trying them. For a little

Taniera fumed and fretted; then had recourse to the more summary method of the hatchet; one of the chests was broken open, and an armful of clothing, male and female, baled out and handed to the strangers on the verandah.

These were François, his wife, and their child. About eight a.m., in the midst of the lagoon, their cutter had capsized in jibbing. They got her righted, and though she was still full of water put the child on board. The mainsail had been carried away, but the jib still drew her sluggishly along, and François and the woman swam astern and worked the rudder with their hands. The cold was cruel; the fatigue, as time went on, became excessive; and in that preserve of sharks, fear hunted them. Again and again, François, the half-breed, would have desisted and gone down; but the woman, whole blood of an amphibious race, still supported him with cheerful words. I am reminded of a woman of Hawaii who swam with her husband, I dare not say how many miles, in a high sea, and came ashore at last with his dead body in her arms. It was about five in the evening, after nine hours' swimming, that François and his wife reached land at Rotoava. The gallant fight was won, and instantly the more childish side of native character appears. They had supped, and told and retold their story, dripping as they came; the flesh of the woman, whom Mrs. Stevenson helped to shift, was cold as stone; and François, having changed to a dry cotton shirt and trousers, passed the remainder of the evening on my floor and between open doorways, in a thorough draught. Yet François, the son of a French father, speaks excellent French himself and seems intelligent.

It was our first idea that the catechist, true to his evangelical vocation, was clothing the naked from his superfluity. Then it came out that François was but dealing with his own. The clothes were his, so was the chest, so was the house. François was in fact the landlord. Yet you observe he had hung back on the verandah while Taniera tried his 'prentice hand upon the locks: and even now, when his true character appeared, the only use he made of the estate was to leave the clothes of his family drying on the fence. Taniera was still the friend of the house, still fed the poultry, still came about us on his daily visits, François, during the remainder of his stay, holding bashfully aloof. And there was stranger matter. Since François had lost the whole load of his cutter, the half ton of copra, an axe, bowls, knives, and clothes - since he had in a manner to begin the world again, and his necessary flour was not yet bought or paid for - I proposed to advance him what he needed on the rent. To my enduring amazement he refused, and the reason he gave - if that can be called a reason which but darkens counsel - was that Taniera was his friend. His friend, you observe; not his creditor. I inquired into that, and was assured that Taniera, an exile in a strange isle, might possibly be in debt himself, but certainly was no man’s creditor.

Very early one morning we were awakened by a bustling presence in the yard, and found our camp had been surprised by a tall, lean old native lady, dressed in what were obviously widow’s weeds. You could see at a glance she was a notable woman, a housewife, sternly practical, alive with energy, and with fine possibilities of temper. Indeed, there was nothing native about her but the skin; and the type abounds, and is everywhere respected, nearer home. It did us good to see her scour the grounds, examining the plants and chickens; watering, feeding, trimming them; taking angry, purpose-like possession. When she neared the house our sympathy abated; when she came to the broken chest I wished I were elsewhere. We had scarce a word in common; but her whole lean body spoke for her with indignant eloquence. ‘My chest!’ it cried, with a stress on the possessive. ‘My chest - broken open! This is a fine state of things!’ I hastened to lay the blame where it belonged - on François and his wife - and found I had made things worse instead of better. She repeated the names at first with incredulity, then with despair. A while she seemed stunned, next fell to disembowelling the box, piling the goods on the floor, and visibly computing the extent of François’s ravages; and presently after she was observed in high speech with Taniera, who seemed to hang an ear like one reproved.

Here, then, by all known marks, should be my land-lady at last; here was every character of the proprietor fully developed. Should I not approach her on the still depending question of my rent? I carried the point to an adviser. ‘Nonsense!’ he cried. ‘That’s the old woman, the mother. It doesn’t belong to her. I believe that’s the man the house belongs to,’ and he pointed to one of the coloured photographs on the wall. On this I gave up all desire of understanding; and when the time came for me to leave, in the judgment-hall of the archipelago, and with the awful countenance of the acting Governor, I duly paid my rent to Taniera. He was satisfied, and so was I. But what had he to do with it? Mr. Donat, acting magistrate and a man of kindred blood, could throw no light upon the mystery; a plain private person, with a taste for letters, cannot be expected to do more.

CHAPTER IV - TRAITS AND SECTS IN THE PAUMOTUS

The most careless reader must have remarked a change of air since the Marquesas. The house, crowded with effects, the bustling housewife counting her possessions, the serious, indoctrinated island pastor, the long fight for life in the lagoon: here are traits of a new world. I read in a pamphlet (I will not give the author's name) that the Marquesan especially resembles the Paumotuan. I should take the two races, though so near in neighbourhood, to be extremes of Polynesian diversity. The Marquesan is certainly the most beautiful of human races, and one of the tallest - the Paumotuan averaging a good inch shorter, and not even handsome; the Marquesan open-handed, inert, insensible to religion, childishly self-indulgent - the Paumotuan greedy, hardy, enterprising, a religious disputant, and with a trace of the ascetic character.

Yet a few years ago, and the people of the archipelago were crafty savages. Their isles might be called sirens' isles, not merely from the attraction they exerted on the passing mariner, but from the perils that awaited him on shore. Even to this day, in certain outlying islands, danger lingers; and the civilized Paumotuan dreads to land and hesitates to accost his backward brother. But, except in these, to-day the peril is a memory. When our generation were yet in the cradle and playroom it was still a living fact. Between 1830 and 1840, Hao, for instance, was a place of the most dangerous approach, where ships were seized and crews kidnapped. As late as 1856, the schooner *Sarah Ann* sailed from Papeete and was seen no more. She had women on board, and children, the captain's wife, a nursemaid, a baby, and the two young sons of a Captain Steven on their way to the mainland for schooling. All were supposed to have perished in a squall. A year later, the captain of the *Julia*, coasting along the island variously called Bligh, Lagoon, and Tematangi saw armed natives follow the course of his schooner, clad in many-coloured stuffs. Suspicion was at once aroused; the mother of the lost children was profuse of money; and one expedition having found the place deserted, and returned content with firing a few shots, she raised and herself accompanied another. None appeared to greet or to oppose them; they roamed a while among abandoned huts and empty thickets; then formed two parties and set forth to beat, from end to end, the pandanus jungle of the island. One man remained alone by the landing-place - Teina, a chief of Anaa, leader of the armed natives who made the strength of the expedition. Now that his comrades were departed this way and that, on their laborious exploration, the silence fell profound; and this silence was the ruin of the islanders. A sound of stones rattling caught the ear of Teina. He looked, thinking to perceive a crab, and saw instead the brown hand of a human being issue from a fissure in the ground. A shout recalled the search parties and announced their doom to the buried caitiffs. In the cave below, sixteen were found crouching among human bones and singular and horrid curiosities. One was a head of golden hair, supposed to be a relic of the captain's wife; another was half of the body of a European child, sun-dried and stuck upon a stick, doubtless with some design of wizardry.

The Paumotuan is eager to be rich. He saves, grudges, buries money, fears not work. For a dollar each, two natives passed the hours of daylight cleaning our ship's copper. It was strange to see them so indefatigable and so much at ease in the water - working at times with their pipes lighted, the smoker at times submerged and only the glowing bowl above the surface; it was stranger still to think they were next congeners to the incapable Marquesan. But the Paumotuan not only saves, grudges, and works, he steals besides; or, to be more precise, he swindles. He will never deny a debt, he only flees his creditor. He is always keen for an advance; so soon as he has fingered it he disappears. He knows your ship; so soon as it nears one island, he is off to another. You may think you know his name; he has already changed it. Pursuit in that infinity of isles were fruitless. The result can be given in a nutshell. It has been actually proposed in a Government report to secure debts by taking a photograph of the debtor; and the other day in Papeete credits on the Paumotus to the amount of sixteen thousand pounds were sold for less than forty - *quatre cent mille francs pour moins de mille francs*. Even so, the purchase was thought hazardous; and only the man who made it and who had special opportunities could have dared to give so much.

The Paumotuan is sincerely attached to those of his own blood and household. A touching affection sometimes unites wife and husband. Their children, while they are alive, completely rule them; after they are dead, their bones or their mummies are often jealously preserved and carried from atoll to atoll in the wanderings of the family. I was told there were many houses in Fakarava with the mummy of a child locked in a sea-chest; after I heard it, I would glance a little jealously at those by my own bed; in that cupboard, also, it was possible there was a tiny skeleton.

The race seems in a fair way to survive. From fifteen islands, whose rolls I had occasion to consult, I found a proportion of 59 births to 47 deaths for 1887. Dropping three out of the fifteen, there remained for the other twelve the comfortable ratio of 50 births to 32 deaths. Long habits of hardship and activity doubtless explain the contrast with Marquesan figures. But the Paumotuan displays, besides, a certain concern for health and the rudiments of a sanitary discipline. Public talk with these free-spoken people plays the part of the Contagious Diseases Act; in-comers to fresh islands anxiously inquire if all be well; and syphilis, when contracted, is successfully treated with indigenous herbs. Like their neighbours of Tahiti, from whom they have perhaps imbibed the error, they regard leprosy with comparative indifference, elephantiasis with disproportionate fear. But, unlike indeed to the Tahitian, their alarm puts on the guise of self-defence. Any one stricken with this painful and ugly malady is confined to the ends of villages, denied the use of paths and highways, and condemned to transport himself between his house and coco-patch by water only, his very footprint being held infectious. Fe'efe'e, being a creature of marshes and the sequel of malarial fever, is not original in atolls. On the single isle of Makatea, where the lagoon is now a marsh, the disease has made a home. Many suffer; they are excluded (if Mr. Wilmot be right) from much of the comfort of society; and it is believed they take a secret vengeance. The defections of the sick are considered highly poisonous. Early in the morning, it is narrated, aged and malicious persons creep into the sleeping village, and stealthily make water at the doors of the houses of young men. Thus they propagate disease; thus they breathe on and obliterate comeliness and health, the objects of their envy. Whether horrid fact or more abominable legend, it equally depicts that something bitter and energetic which distinguishes Paumotuan man.

The archipelago is divided between two main religions, Catholic and Mormon. They front each other proudly with a false air of permanence; yet are but shapes, their membership in a perpetual flux. The Mormon attends mass with devotion: the Catholic sits attentive at a Mormon sermon, and to-morrow each may have transferred allegiance. One man had been a pillar of the Church of Rome for fifteen years; his wife dying, he decided that must be a poor religion that could not save a man his wife, and turned Mormon. According to one informant, Catholicism was the more fashionable in health, but on the approach of sickness it was judged prudent to secede. As a Mormon, there were five chances out of six you might recover; as a Catholic, your hopes were small; and this opinion is perhaps founded on the comfortable rite of unction.

We all know what Catholics are, whether in the Paumotus or at home. But the Paumotuan Mormon seemed a phenomenon apart. He marries but the one wife, uses the Protestant Bible, observes Protestant forms of worship, forbids the use of liquor and tobacco, practises adult baptism by immersion, and after every public sin, rechristens the backslider. I advised with Mahinui, whom I found well informed in the history of the American Mormons, and he declared against the least connection. '*Pour moi,*' said he, with a fine charity, '*les Mormons ici un petit Catholiques*.' Some months later I had an opportunity to consult an orthodox fellow-countryman, an old dissenting Highlander, long settled in Tahiti, but still breathing of the heather of Tiree. 'Why do they call themselves Mormons?' I asked. 'My dear, and that is my question!' he exclaimed. 'For by all that I can hear of their doctrine, I have nothing to say against it, and their life, it is above reproach.' And for all that, Mormons they are, but of the earlier sowing: the so-called Josephites, the followers of Joseph Smith, the opponents of Brigham Young.

Grant, then, the Mormons to be Mormons. Fresh points at once arise: What are the Israelites? and what the Kanitus? For a long while back the sect had been divided into Mormons proper and so-called Israelites, I never could hear why. A few years since there came a visiting missionary of the name of Williams, who made an excellent collection, and retired, leaving fresh disruption imminent. Something irregular (as I was told) in his way of 'opening the service' had raised partisans and enemies; the church was once more rent asunder; and a new sect, the Kanitu, issued from the division. Since then Kanitus and Israelites, like the Cameronians and the United Presbyterians, have made common cause; and the ecclesiastical history of the Paumotus is, for the moment, uneventful. There will be more doing before long, and these isles bid fair to be the Scotland of the South. Two things I could never learn. The nature of the innovations of the Rev. Mr. Williams none would tell me, and of the meaning of the name Kanitu none had a guess. It was not Tahitian, it was not Marquesan; it formed no part of that ancient speech of the Paumotus, now passing swiftly into obsolescence. One man, a priest, God bless him! said it was the Latin for a little dog. I have found it since as the name of a god in New Guinea; it must be a bolder man than I who should hint at a connection. Here, then, is a singular thing: a brand-new sect, arising by popular acclamation, and a nonsense word invented for its name.

The design of mystery seems obvious, and according to a very intelligent observer, Mr. Magee of Mangareva, this element of the mysterious is a chief attraction of the Mormon Church. It enjoys some of the status of Freemasonry at home, and there is for the convert some of the exhilaration of adventure. Other attractions are certainly conjoined. Perpetual rebaptism, leading to a succession of baptismal feasts, is found, both from the social and the spiritual side, a pleasing feature. More important is the fact that all the faithful enjoy office; perhaps more important still, the strictness of the discipline. 'The veto on liquor,' said Mr. Magee, 'brings them plenty members.' There is no doubt these islanders are fond of drink, and no doubt they refrain from the indulgence; a bout on a feast-day, for instance, may be followed by a week or a month of rigorous sobriety. Mr. Wilmot attributes this to Paumotuan frugality and the love of hoarding; it goes far deeper. I have mentioned that I made a feast on board the *Casco*. To wash down ship's bread and jam, each guest was given the choice of rum or syrup, and out of the whole number only one man voted - in a defiant tone, and amid shouts of mirth - for 'Trum'! This was in public. I had the meanness to repeat the experiment, whenever I had a chance, within the four walls of my house; and three at least, who had refused at the festival, greedily drank rum behind a door. But there were others thoroughly consistent. I said the virtues of the race were bourgeois and puritan; and how bourgeois is this! how puritanic! how Scottish! and how Yankee! - the temptation, the resistance, the public hypocritical conformity, the Pharisees, the Holy Willies, and the true disciples. With such a people the popularity of an ascetic Church appears legitimate; in these strict rules, in this perpetual supervision, the weak find their advantage, the strong a certain pleasure; and the doctrine of rebaptism, a clean bill and a fresh start, will comfort many staggering professors.

There is yet another sect, or what is called a sect - no doubt improperly - that of the Whistlers. Duncan Cameron, so clear in favour of the Mormons, was no less loud in condemnation of the Whistlers. Yet I do not know; I still fancy there is some connection, perhaps fortuitous, probably disavowed. Here at least are some doings in the house of an Israelite clergyman (or prophet) in the island of Anaa, of which I am equally sure that Duncan would disclaim and the Whistlers hail them for an imitation of their own. My informant, a Tahitian and a Catholic, occupied one part of the house; the prophet and his family lived in the other. Night after night the Mormons, in the one end, held their evening sacrifice of song; night after night, in the other, the wife of the Tahitian lay awake and listened to their singing with amazement. At length she could contain herself no longer, woke her husband, and asked him what he heard. 'I hear several persons singing hymns,' said he. 'Yes,' she returned, 'but listen again! Do you not hear something supernatural?' His attention thus directed, he was aware of a strange buzzing voice - and yet he declared it was beautiful - which justly accompanied the singers. The next day he made inquiries. 'It is a spirit,' said the prophet, with entire simplicity, 'which has lately made a practice of joining us at family worship.' It did not appear the thing was visible, and like other spirits raised nearer home in these degenerate days, it was rudely ignorant, at first could only buzz, and had only learned of late to bear a part correctly in the music.

The performances of the Whistlers are more business-like. Their meetings are held publicly with open doors, all being 'cordially invited to attend.' The faithful sit about the room - according to one informant, singing hymns; according to another, now singing and now whistling; the leader, the wizard - let me rather say, the medium - sits in the midst, enveloped in a sheet and silent; and presently, from just above his head, or sometimes from the midst of the roof, an aerial whistling proceeds, appalling to the inexperienced. This, it appears, is the language of the dead; its purport is taken down progressively by one of the experts, writing, I was told, 'as fast as a telegraph operator'; and the communications are at last made public. They are of the baldest triviality; a schooner is, perhaps, announced, some idle gossip reported of a neighbour, or if the spirit shall have been called to consultation on a case of sickness, a remedy may be suggested. One of these, immersion in scalding water, not long ago proved fatal to the patient. The whole business is very dreary, very silly, and very European; it has none of the picturesque qualities of similar conjurations in New Zealand; it seems to possess no kernel of possible sense, like some that I shall describe among the Gilbert islanders. Yet I was told that many hardy, intelligent natives were inveterate Whistlers. 'Like Mahinui?' I asked, willing to have a standard; and I was told 'Yes.' Why should I wonder? Men more enlightened than my convict-catechist sit down at home to follies equally sterile and dull.

The medium is sometimes female. It was a woman, for instance, who introduced these practices on the north coast of Taiarapu, to the scandal of her own connections, her brother-in-law in particular declaring she was drunk. But what shocked Tahiti might seem fit enough in the Paumotus, the more so as certain women there possess, by the gift of nature, singular and useful powers. They say they are honest, well-intentioned ladies, some of them embarrassed by their weird inheritance. And indeed the trouble caused by this endowment is so great, and the protection afforded so infinitesimally small, that I hesitate whether to call it a gift or a hereditary curse. You may rob this lady's coco-patch, steal her canoes, burn down her house, and slay her family scatheless; but one thing you must not do: you must not lay a hand upon her sleeping-mat, or your belly will swell, and you can only be cured by the lady or her husband. Here is the report of an eye-witness, Tasmanian born, educated, a man who has made money - certainly no fool. In 1886 he was present in a house on Makatea, where two lads began to skylark on the mats, and were (I think) ejected. Instantly after, their bellies began to swell; pains took hold on them; all manner of island remedies were exhibited in vain, and rubbing only magnified their sufferings. The man of the house was called, explained the nature of the visitation, and prepared the cure.

A cocoa-nut was husked, filled with herbs, and with all the ceremonies of a launch, and the utterance of spells in the Paumotuan language, committed to the sea. From that moment the pains began to grow more easy and the swelling to subside. The reader may stare. I can assure him, if he moved much among old residents of the archipelago, he would be driven to admit one thing of two - either that there is something in the swollen bellies or nothing in the evidence of man.

I have not met these gifted ladies; but I had an experience of my own, for I have played, for one night only, the part of the whistling spirit. It had been blowing wearily all day, but with the fall of night the wind abated, and the moon, which was then full, rolled in a clear sky. We went southward down the island on the side of the lagoon, walking through long-drawn forest aisles of palm, and on a floor of snowy sand. No life was abroad, nor sound of life; till in a clear part of the isle we spied the embers of a fire, and not far off, in a dark house, heard natives talking softly. To sit without a light, even in company, and under cover, is for a Paumotuan a somewhat hazardous extreme. The whole scene - the strong moonlight and crude shadows on the sand, the scattered coals, the sound of the low voices from the house, and the lap of the lagoon along the beach - put me (I know not how) on thoughts of superstition. I was barefoot, I observed my steps were noiseless, and drawing near to the dark house, but keeping well in shadow, began to whistle. ‘The Heaving of the Lead’ was my air - no very tragic piece. With the first note the conversation and all movement ceased; silence accompanied me while I continued; and when I passed that way on my return I found the lamp was lighted in the house, but the tongues were still mute. All night, as I now think, the wretches shivered and were silent. For indeed, I had no guess at the time at the nature and magnitude of the terrors I inflicted, or with what grisly images the notes of that old song had peopled the dark house.

CHAPTER V - A PAUMOTUAN FUNERAL

No, I had no guess of these men's terrors. Yet I had received ere that a hint, if I had understood; and the occasion was a funeral.

A little apart in the main avenue of Rotoava, in a low hut of leaves that opened on a small enclosure, like a pigsty on a pen, an old man dwelt solitary with his aged wife. Perhaps they were too old to migrate with the others; perhaps they were too poor, and had no possessions to dispute. At least they had remained behind; and it thus befell that they were invited to my feast. I dare say it was quite a piece of politics in the pigsty whether to come or not to come, and the husband long swithered between curiosity and age, till curiosity conquered, and they came, and in the midst of that last merrymaking death tapped him on the shoulder. For some days, when the sky was bright and the wind cool, his mat would be spread in the main highway of the village, and he was to be seen lying there inert, a mere handful of a man, his wife inertly seated by his head. They seemed to have outgrown alike our needs and faculties; they neither spoke nor listened; they suffered us to pass without a glance; the wife did not fan, she seemed not to attend upon her husband, and the two poor antiques sat juxtaposed under the high canopy of palms, the human tragedy reduced to its bare elements, a sight beyond pathos, stirring a thrill of curiosity. And yet there was one touch of the pathetic haunted me: that so much youth and expectation should have run in these starved veins, and the man should have squandered all his lees of life on a pleasure party.

On the morning of 17th September the sufferer died, and, time pressing, he was buried the same day at four. The cemetery lies to seaward behind Government House; broken coral, like so much road-metal, forms the surface; a few wooden crosses, a few inconsiderable upright stones, designate graves; a mortared wall, high enough to lean on, rings it about; a clustering shrub surrounds it with pale leaves. Here was the grave dug that morning, doubtless by uneasy diggers, to the sound of the nigh sea and the cries of sea-birds; meanwhile the dead man waited in his house, and the widow and another aged woman leaned on the fence before the door, no speech upon their lips, no speculation in their eyes.

Sharp at the hour the procession was in march, the coffin wrapped in white and carried by four bearers; mourners behind - not many, for not many remained in Rotoava, and not many in black, for these were poor; the men in straw hats, white coats, and blue trousers or the gorgeous parti-coloured pariu, the Tahitian kilt; the women, with a few exceptions, brightly habited. Far in the rear came the widow, painfully carrying the dead man's mat; a creature aged beyond humanity, to the likeness of some missing link.

The dead man had been a Mormon; but the Mormon clergyman was gone with the rest to wrangle over boundaries in the adjacent isle, and a layman took his office. Standing at the head of the open grave, in a white coat and blue pariu, his Tahitian Bible in his hand and one eye bound with a red handkerchief, he read solemnly that chapter in Job which has been read and heard over the bones of so many of our fathers, and with a good voice offered up two prayers. The wind and the surf bore a burthen. By the cemetery gate a mother in crimson suckled an infant rolled in blue. In the midst the widow sat upon the ground and polished one of the coffin-stretchers with a piece of coral; a little later she had turned her back to the grave and was playing with a leaf. Did she understand? God knows. The officiant paused a moment, stooped, and gathered and threw reverently on the coffin a handful of rattling coral. Dust to dust: but the grains of this dust were gross like cherries, and the true dust that was to follow sat near by, still cohering (as by a miracle) in the tragic semblance of a female ape.

So far, Mormon or not, it was a Christian funeral. The well-known passage had been read from Job, the prayers had been rehearsed, the grave was filled, the mourners straggled homeward. With a little coarser grain of covering earth, a little nearer outcry of the sea, a stronger glare of sunlight on the rude enclosure, and some incongruous colours of attire, the well-remembered form had been observed.

By rights it should have been otherwise. The mat should have been buried with its owner; but, the family being poor, it was thriftily reserved for a fresh service. The widow should have flung herself upon the grave and raised the voice of official grief, the neighbours have chimed in, and the narrow isle rung for a space with lamentation. But the widow was old; perhaps she had forgotten, perhaps never understood, and she played like a child with leaves and coffin-stretchers. In all ways my guest was buried with maimed rites. Strange to think that his last conscious pleasure was the *Casco* and my feast; strange to think that he had limped there, an old child, looking for some new good. And the good thing, rest, had been allotted him.

But though the widow had neglected much, there was one part she must not utterly neglect. She came away with the dispersing funeral; but the dead man's mat was left behind upon the grave, and I learned that by set of sun she must return to sleep there. This vigil is imperative. From sundown till the rising of the morning star the Paumotuan must hold his watch above the ashes of his kindred. Many friends, if the dead have been a man of mark, will keep the watchers company; they will be well supplied with coverings against the weather; I believe they bring food, and the rite is persevered in for two weeks. Our poor survivor, if, indeed, she properly survived, had little to cover, and few to sit with her; on the night of the funeral a strong squall chased her from her place of watch; for days the weather held uncertain and outrageous; and ere seven nights were up she had desisted, and returned to sleep in her low roof. That she should be at the pains of returning for so short a visit to a solitary house, that this borderer of the grave should fear a little wind and a wet blanket, filled me at the time with musings. I could not say she was indifferent; she was so far beyond me in experience that the court of my criticism waived jurisdiction; but I forged excuses, telling myself she had perhaps little to lament, perhaps suffered much, perhaps understood nothing. And lo! in the whole affair there was no question whether of tenderness or piety, and the sturdy return of this old remnant was a mark either of uncommon sense or of uncommon fortitude.

Yet one thing had occurred that partly set me on the trail. I have said the funeral passed much as at home. But when all was over, when we were trooping in decent silence from the graveyard gate and down the path to the settlement, a sudden inbreak of a different spirit startled and perhaps dismayed us. Two people walked not far apart in our procession: my friend Mr. Donat - Donat-Rimarau: ‘Donat the much-handed’ - acting Vice-Resident, present ruler of the archipelago, by far the man of chief importance on the scene, but known besides for one of an unshakable good temper; and a certain comely, strapping young Paumotuan woman, the comeliest on the isle, not (let us hope) the bravest or the most polite. Of a sudden, ere yet the grave silence of the funeral was broken, she made a leap at the Resident, with pointed finger, shrieked a few words, and fell back again with a laughter, not a natural mirth. ‘What did she say to you?’ I asked. ‘She did not speak to *me*,’ said Donat, a shade perturbed; ‘she spoke to the ghost of the dead man.’ And the purport of her speech was this: ‘See there! Donat will be a fine feast for you to-night.’

‘M. Donat called it a jest,’ I wrote at the time in my diary. ‘It seemed to me more in the nature of a terrified conjuration, as though she would divert the ghost’s attention from herself. A cannibal race may well have cannibal phantoms.’ The guesses of the traveller appear foredoomed to be erroneous; yet in these I was precisely right. The woman had stood by in terror at the funeral, being then in a dread spot, the graveyard. She looked on in terror to the coming night, with that ogre, a new spirit, loosed upon the isle. And the words she had cried in Donat’s face were indeed a terrified conjuration, basely to shield herself, basely to dedicate another in her stead. One thing is to be said in her excuse. Doubtless she partly chose Donat because he was a man of great good-nature, but partly, too, because he was a man of the half-caste. For I believe all natives regard white blood as a kind of talisman against the powers of hell. In no other way can they explain the unpunished recklessness of Europeans.

CHAPTER VI - GRAVEYARD STORIES

WITH my superstitious friend, the islander, I fear I am not wholly frank, often leading the way with stories of my own, and being always a grave and sometimes an excited hearer. But the deceit is scarce mortal, since I am as pleased to hear as he to tell, as pleased with the story as he with the belief; and, besides, it is entirely needful. For it is scarce possible to exaggerate the extent and empire of his superstitions; they mould his life, they colour his thinking; and when he does not speak to me of ghosts, and gods, and devils, he is playing the dissembler and talking only with his lips. With thoughts so different, one must indulge the other; and I would rather that I should indulge his superstition than he my incredulity. Of one thing, besides, I may be sure: Let me indulge it as I please, I shall not hear the whole; for he is already on his guard with me, and the amount of the lore is boundless.

I will give but a few instances at random, chiefly from my own doorstep in Upolu, during the past month (October 1890). One of my workmen was sent the other day to the banana patch, there to dig; this is a hollow of the mountain, buried in woods, out of all sight and cry of mankind; and long before dusk Lafaele was back again beside the cook-house with embarrassed looks; he dared not longer stay alone, he was afraid of 'spirits in the bush.' It seems these are the souls of the unburied dead, haunting where they fell, and wearing woodland shapes of pig, or bird, or insect; the bush is full of them, they seem to eat nothing, slay solitary wanderers apparently in spite, and at times, in human form, go down to villages and consort with the inhabitants undetected. So much I learned a day or so after, walking in the bush with a very intelligent youth, a native. It was a little before noon; a grey day and squally; and perhaps I had spoken lightly. A dark squall burst on the side of the mountain; the woods shook and cried; the dead leaves rose from the ground in clouds, like butterflies; and my companion came suddenly to a full stop. He was afraid, he said, of the trees falling; but as soon as I had changed the subject of our talk he proceeded with alacrity. A day or two before a messenger came up the mountain from Apia with a letter; I was in the bush, he must await my return, then wait till I had answered: and before I was done his voice sounded shrill with terror of the coming night and the long forest road. These are the commons. Take the chiefs. There has been a great coming and going of signs and omens in our group. One river ran down blood; red eels were captured in another; an unknown fish was thrown upon the coast, an ominous word found written on its scales. So far we might be reading in a monkish chronicle; now we come on a fresh note, at once modern and Polynesian. The gods of Upolu and Savaii, our two chief islands, contended recently at cricket. Since then they are at war. Sounds of battle are heard to roll along the coast. A woman saw a man swim from the high seas and plunge direct into the bush; he was no man of that neighbourhood; and it was known he was one of the gods, speeding to a council. Most perspicuous of all, a missionary on Savaii, who is also a medical man, was disturbed late in the night by knocking; it was no hour for the dispensary, but at length he woke his servant and sent him to inquire; the servant, looking from a window, beheld crowds of persons, all with grievous wounds, lopped limbs, broken heads, and bleeding bullet-holes; but when the door was opened all had disappeared. They were gods from the field of battle. Now these reports have certainly significance; it is not hard to trace them to political grumblers or to read in them a threat of coming trouble; from that merely human side I found them ominous myself. But it was the spiritual side of their significance that was discussed in secret council by my rulers. I shall best depict this mingled habit of the Polynesian mind by two connected instances. I once lived in a village, the name of which I do not mean to tell. The chief and his sister were persons perfectly intelligent: gentlefolk, apt of speech. The sister was very religious, a great church-goer, one that used to reprove me if I stayed away; I found afterwards that she privately worshipped a shark. The chief himself was somewhat of a freethinker; at the least, a latitudinarian: he was a man, besides, filled with European knowledge and accomplishments; of an impassive, ironical habit; and I should as soon have expected superstition in Mr. Herbert Spencer. Hear the sequel. I had discovered by unmistakable signs that they buried too shallow in the village graveyard, and I took my friend, as the responsible authority, to task. ‘There is something wrong about your graveyard,’ said I, ‘which you must attend to, or it may have very bad results.’ ‘Something wrong? What is it?’ he asked, with an emotion that surprised me. ‘If you care to go along there any evening about nine o’clock you can see for yourself,’ said I. He stepped backward. ‘A ghost!’ he cried.

In short, in the whole field of the South Seas, there is not one to blame another. Half blood and whole, pious and debauched, intelligent and dull, all men believe in ghosts, all men combine with their recent Christianity fear of and a lingering faith in the old island deities. So, in Europe, the gods of Olympus slowly dwindled into village bogies; so to-day, the theological Highlander sneaks from under the eye of the Free Church divine to lay an offering by a sacred well.

I try to deal with the whole matter here because of a particular quality in Paumotuan superstitions. It is true I heard them told by a man with a genius for such narrations. Close about our evening lamp, within sound of the island surf, we hung on his words, thrilling. The reader, in far other scenes, must listen close for the faint echo.

This bundle of weird stories sprang from the burial and the woman's selfish conjuration. I was dissatisfied with what I heard, harped upon questions, and struck at last this vein of metal. It is from sundown to about four in the morning that the kinsfolk camp upon the grave; and these are the hours of the spirits' wanderings. At any time of the night - it may be earlier, it may be later - a sound is to be heard below, which is the noise of his liberation; at four sharp, another and a louder marks the instant of the re-imprisonment; between-whiles, he goes his malignant rounds. 'Did you ever see an evil spirit?' was once asked of a Paumotuan. 'Once.' 'Under what form?' 'It was in the form of a crane.' 'And how did you know that crane to be a spirit?' was asked. 'I will tell you,' he answered; and this was the purport of his inconclusive narrative. His father had been dead nearly a fortnight; others had wearied of the watch; and as the sun was setting, he found himself by the grave alone. It was not yet dark, rather the hour of the afterglow, when he was aware of a snow-white crane upon the coral mound; presently more cranes came, some white, some black; then the cranes vanished, and he saw in their place a white cat, to which there was silently joined a great company of cats of every hue conceivable; then these also disappeared, and he was left astonished.

This was an anodyne appearance. Take instead the experience of Rua-a-mariterangi on the isle of Katiu. He had a need for some pandanus, and crossed the isle to the sea-beach, where it chiefly flourishes. The day was still, and Rua was surprised to hear a crashing sound among the thickets, and then the fall of a considerable tree. Here must be some one building a canoe; and he entered the margin of the wood to find and pass the time of day with this chance neighbour. The crashing sounded more at hand; and then he was aware of something drawing swiftly near among the tree-tops. It swung by its heels downward, like an ape, so that its hands were free for murder; it depended safely by the slightest twigs; the speed of its coming was incredible; and soon Rua recognised it for a corpse, horrible with age, its bowels hanging as it came. Prayer was the weapon of Christian in the Valley of the Shadow, and it is to prayer that Rua-a-mariterangi attributes his escape. No merely human expedition had availed.

This demon was plainly from the grave; yet you will observe he was abroad by day. And inconsistent as it may seem with the hours of the night watch and the many references to the rising of the morning star, it is no singular exception. I could never find a case of another who had seen this ghost, diurnal and arboreal in its habits; but others have heard the fall of the tree, which seems the signal of its coming. Mr. Donat was once pearling on the uninhabited isle of Haraiki. It was a day without a breath of wind, such as alternate in the archipelago with days of contumelious breezes. The divers were in the midst of the lagoon upon their employment; the cook, a boy of ten, was over his pots in the camp. Thus were all souls accounted for except a single native who accompanied Donat into the wood in quest of sea-fowls' eggs. In a moment, out of the stillness, came the sound of the fall of a great tree. Donat would have passed on to find the cause. 'No,' cried his companion, 'that was no tree. It was something *not right*. Let us go back to camp.' Next Sunday the divers were turned on, all that part of the isle was thoroughly examined, and sure enough no tree had fallen. A little later Mr. Donat saw one of his divers flee from a similar sound, in similar unaffected panic, on the same isle. But neither would explain, and it was not till afterwards, when he met with Rua, that he learned the occasion of their terrors.

But whether by day or night, the purpose of the dead in these abhorred activities is still the same. In Samoa, my informant had no idea of the food of the bush spirits; no such ambiguity would exist in the mind of a Paumotuan. In that hungry archipelago, living and dead must alike toil for nutriment; and the race having been cannibal in the past, the spirits are so still. When the living ate the dead, horrified nocturnal imagination drew the shocking inference that the dead might eat the living. Doubtless they slay men, doubtless even mutilate them, in mere malice. Marquesan spirits sometimes tear out the eyes of travellers; but even that may be more practical than appears, for the eye is a cannibal dainty. And certainly the root-idea of the dead, at least in the far eastern islands, is to prowl for food. It was as a dainty morsel for a meal that the woman denounced Donat at the funeral. There are spirits besides who prey in particular not on the bodies but on the souls of the dead. The point is clearly made in a Tahitian story. A child fell sick, grew swiftly worse, and at last showed signs of death. The mother hastened to the house of a sorcerer, who lived hard by. 'You are yet in time,' said he; 'a spirit has just run past my door carrying the soul of your child wrapped in the leaf of a purao; but I have a spirit stronger and swifter who will run him down ere he has time to eat it.' Wrapped in a leaf: like other things edible and corruptible.

Or take an experience of Mr. Donat's on the island of Anaa. It was a night of a high wind, with violent squalls; his child was very sick, and the father, though he had gone to bed, lay wakeful, hearkening to the gale. All at once a fowl was violently dashed on the house wall.

Supposing he had forgot to put it in shelter with the rest, Donat arose, found the bird (a cock) lying on the verandah, and put it in the hen-house, the door of which he securely fastened. Fifteen minutes later the business was repeated, only this time, as it was being dashed against the wall, the bird crew. Again Donat replaced it, examining the hen-house thoroughly and finding it quite perfect; as he was so engaged the wind puffed out his light, and he must grope back to the door a good deal shaken. Yet a third time the bird was dashed upon the wall; a third time Donat set it, now near dead, beside its mates; and he was scarce returned before there came a rush, like that of a furious strong man, against the door, and a whistle as loud as that of a railway engine rang about the house. The sceptical reader may here detect the finger of the tempest; but the women gave up all for lost and clustered on the beds lamenting. Nothing followed, and I must suppose the gale somewhat abated, for presently after a chief came visiting. He was a bold man to be abroad so late, but doubtless carried a bright lantern. And he was certainly a man of counsel, for as soon as he heard the details of these disturbances he was in a position to explain their nature. ‘Your child,’ said he, ‘must certainly die. This is the evil spirit of our island who lies in wait to eat the spirits of the newly dead.’ And then he went on to expatiate on the strangeness of the spirit’s conduct. He was not usually, he explained, so open of assault, but sat silent on the house-top waiting, in the guise of a bird, while within the people tended the dying and bewailed the dead, and had no thought of peril. But when the day came and the doors were opened, and men began to go abroad, blood-stains on the wall betrayed the tragedy.

This is the quality I admire in Paumotuan legend. In Tahiti the spirit-eater is said to assume a vesture which has much more of pomp, but how much less of horror. It has been seen by all sorts and conditions, native and foreign; only the last insist it is a meteor. My authority was not so sure. He was riding with his wife about two in the morning; both were near asleep, and the horses not much better. It was a brilliant and still night, and the road wound over a mountain, near by a deserted marae (old Tahitian temple). All at once the appearance passed above them: a form of light; the head round and greenish; the body long, red, and with a focus of yet redder brilliancy about the midst. A buzzing hoot accompanied its passage; it flew direct out of one marae, and direct for another down the mountain side. And this, as my informant argued, is suggestive. For why should a mere meteor frequent the altars of abominable gods? The horses, I should say, were equally dismayed with their riders. Now I am not dismayed at all - not even agreeably. Give me rather the bird upon the house-top and the morning blood-gouts on the wall.

But the dead are not exclusive in their diet. They carry with them to the grave, in particular, the Polynesian taste for fish, and enter at times with the living into a partnership in fishery. Rua-a-mariterangi is again my authority; I feel it diminishes the credit of the fact, but how it builds up the image of this inveterate ghost-seer! He belongs to the miserably poor island of Taenga, yet his father's house was always well supplied. As Rua grew up he was called at last to go a-fishing with this fortunate parent. They rowed the lagoon at dusk, to an unlikely place, and the lay down in the stern, and the father began vainly to cast his line over the bows. It is to be supposed that Rua slept; and when he awoke there was the figure of another beside his father, and his father was pulling in the fish hand over hand. 'Who is that man, father?' Rua asked. 'It is none of your business,' said the father; and Rua supposed the stranger had swum off to them from shore. Night after night they fared into the lagoon, often to the most unlikely places; night after night the stranger would suddenly be seen on board, and as suddenly be missed; and morning after morning the canoe returned laden with fish. 'My father is a very lucky man,' thought Rua. At last, one fine day, there came first one boat party and then another, who must be entertained; father and son put off later than usual into the lagoon; and before the canoe was landed it was four o'clock, and the morning star was close on the horizon. Then the stranger appeared seized with some distress; turned about, showing for the first time his face, which was that of one long dead, with shining eyes; stared into the east, set the tips of his fingers to his mouth like one a-cold, uttered a strange, shuddering sound between a whistle and a moan - a thing to freeze the blood; and, the day-star just rising from the sea, he suddenly was not. Then Rua understood why his father prospered, why his fishes rotted early in the day, and why some were always carried to the cemetery and laid upon the graves. My informant is a man not certainly averse to superstition, but he keeps his head, and takes a certain superior interest, which I may be allowed to call scientific. The last point reminding him of some parallel practice in Tahiti, he asked Rua if the fish were left, or carried home again after a formal dedication. It appears old Mariterangi practised both methods; sometimes treating his shadowy partner to a mere oblation, sometimes honestly leaving his fish to rot upon the grave.

It is plain we have in Europe stories of a similar complexion; and the Polynesian *varua ino* or *aitu o le vao* is clearly the near kinsman of the Transylvanian vampire. Here is a tale in which the kinship appears broadly marked. On the atoll of Penrhyn, then still partly savage, a certain chief was long the salutary terror of the natives. He died, he was buried; and his late neighbours had scarce tasted the delights of licence ere his ghost appeared about the village. Fear seized upon all; a council was held of the chief men and sorcerers; and with the approval of the Rarotongan missionary, who was as frightened as the rest, and in the presence of several whites - my friend Mr. Ben Hird being one - the grave was opened, deepened until water came, and the body re-interred face down. The still recent staking of suicides in England and the decapitation of vampires in the east of Europe form close parallels.

So in Samoa only the spirits of the unburied awake fear. During the late war many fell in the bush; their bodies, sometimes headless, were brought back by native pastors and interred; but this (I know not why) was insufficient, and the spirit still lingered on the theatre of death. When peace returned a singular scene was enacted in many places, and chiefly round the high gorges of Lotoanuu, where the struggle was long centred and the loss had been severe. Kinswomen of the dead came carrying a mat or sheet and guided by survivors of the fight. The place of death was earnestly sought out; the sheet was spread upon the ground; and the women, moved with pious anxiety, sat about and watched it. If any living thing alighted it was twice brushed away; upon the third coming it was known to be the spirit of the dead, was folded in, carried home and buried beside the body; and the aitu rested. The rite was practised beyond doubt in simple piety; the repose of the soul was its object: its motive, reverent affection. The present king disowns indeed all knowledge of a dangerous aitu; he declares the souls of the unburied were only wanderers in limbo, lacking an entrance to the proper country of the dead, unhappy, nowise hurtful. And this severely classic opinion doubtless represents the views of the enlightened. But the flight of my Lafaele marks the grosser terrors of the ignorant.

This belief in the exorcising efficacy of funeral rites perhaps explains a fact, otherwise amazing, that no Polynesian seems at all to share our European horror of human bones and mummies. Of the first they made their cherished ornaments; they preserved them in houses or in mortuary caves; and the watchers of royal sepulchres dwelt with their children among the bones of generations. The mummy, even in the making, was as little feared. In the Marquesas, on the extreme coast, it was made by the household with continual unction and exposure to the sun; in the Carolines, upon the farthest west, it is still cured in the smoke of the family hearth. Head-hunting, besides, still lives around my doorstep in Samoa. And not ten years ago, in the Gilberts, the widow must disinter, cleanse, polish, and thenceforth carry about her, by day and night, the head of her dead husband. In all these cases we may suppose the process, whether of cleansing or drying, to have fully exorcised the aitu.

But the Paumotuan belief is more obscure. Here the man is duly buried, and he has to be watched. He is duly watched, and the spirit goes abroad in spite of watches. Indeed, it is not the purpose of the vigils to prevent these wanderings; only to mollify by polite attention the inveterate malignity of the dead. Neglect (it is supposed) may irritate and thus invite his visits, and the aged and weakly sometimes balance risks and stay at home. Observe, it is the dead man's kindred and next friends who thus deprecate his fury with nocturnal watchings. Even the placatory vigil is held perilous, except in company, and a boy was pointed out to me in Rotoava, because he had watched alone by his own father. Not the ties of the dead, nor yet their proved character, affect the issue. A late Resident, who died in Fakarava of sunstroke, was beloved in life and is still remembered with affection; none the less his spirit went about the island clothed with terrors, and the neighbourhood of Government House was still avoided after dark. We may sum up the cheerful doctrine thus: All men become vampires, and the vampire spares none. And here we come face to face with a tempting inconsistency. For the whistling spirits are notoriously clannish; I understood them to wait upon and to enlighten kinsfolk only, and that the medium was always of the race of the communicating spirit. Here, then, we have the bonds of the family, on the one hand, severed at the hour of death; on the other, helpfully persisting.

The child's soul in the Tahitian tale was wrapped in leaves. It is the spirits of the newly dead that are the dainty. When they are slain, the house is stained with blood. Rua's dead fisherman was decomposed; so - and horribly - was his arboreal demon. The spirit, then, is a thing material; and it is by the material ensigns of corruption that he is distinguished from the living man. This opinion is widespread, adds a gross terror to the more ugly Polynesian tales, and sometimes defaces the more engaging with a painful and incongruous touch. I will give two examples sufficiently wide apart, one from Tahiti, one from Samoa.

And first from Tahiti. A man went to visit the husband of his sister, then some time dead. In her life the sister had been dainty in the island fashion, and went always adorned with a coronet of flowers. In the midst of the night the brother awoke and was aware of a heavenly fragrance going to and fro in the dark house. The lamp I must suppose to have burned out; no Tahitian would have lain down without one lighted. A while he lay wondering and delighted; then called upon the rest. 'Do none of you smell flowers?' he asked. 'O,' said his brother-in-law, 'we are used to that here.' The next morning these two men went walking, and the widower confessed that his dead wife came about the house continually, and that he had even seen her. She was shaped and dressed and crowned with flowers as in her lifetime; only she moved a few inches above the earth with a very easy progress, and flitted dryshod above the surface of the river. And now comes my point: It was always in a back view that she appeared; and these brothers-in-law, debating the affair, agreed that this was to conceal the inroads of corruption.

Now for the Samoan story. I owe it to the kindness of Dr. F. Otto Sierich, whose collection of folk-tales I expect with a high degree of interest. A man in Manu'a was married to two wives and had no issue. He went to Savaii, married there a third, and was more fortunate. When his wife was near her time he remembered he was in a strange island, like a poor man; and when his child was born he must be shamed for lack of gifts. It was in vain his wife dissuaded him. He returned to his father in Manu'a seeking help; and with what he could get he set off in the night to re-embark. Now his wives heard of his coming; they were incensed that he did not stay to visit them; and on the beach, by his canoe, intercepted and slew him. Now the third wife lay asleep in Savaii; - her babe was born and slept by her side; and she was awakened by the spirit of her husband. 'Get up,' he said, 'my father is sick in Manu'a and we must go to visit him.' 'It is well,' said she; 'take you the child, while I carry its mats.' 'I cannot carry the child,' said the spirit; 'I am too cold from the sea.' When they were got on board the canoe the wife smelt carrion. 'How is this?' she said. 'What have you in the canoe that I should smell carrion?' 'It is nothing in the canoe,' said the spirit. 'It is the land-wind blowing down the mountains, where some beast lies dead.' It appears it was still night when they reached Manu'a - the swiftest passage on record - and as they entered the reef the bale-fires burned in the village. Again she asked him to carry the child; but now he need no more dissemble. 'I cannot carry your child,' said he, 'for I am dead, and the fires you see are burning for my funeral.'

The curious may learn in Dr. Sierich's book the unexpected sequel of the tale. Here is enough for my purpose. Though the man was but new dead, the ghost was already putrefied, as though putrefaction were the mark and of the essence of a spirit. The vigil on the Paumotuan grave does not extend beyond two weeks, and they told me this period was thought to coincide with that of the resolution of the body. The ghost always marked with decay - the danger seemingly ending with the process of dissolution - here is tempting matter for the theorist. But it will not do. The lady of the flowers had been long dead, and her spirit was still supposed to bear the brand of perishability. The Resident had been more than a fortnight buried, and his vampire was still supposed to go the rounds.

Of the lost state of the dead, from the lurid Mangaian legend, in which infernal deities hocus and destroy the souls of all, to the various submarine and aerial limbos where the dead feast, float idle, or resume the occupations of their life on earth, it would be wearisome to tell. One story I give, for it is singular in itself, is well-known in Tahiti, and has this of interest, that it is post-Christian, dating indeed from but a few years back. A princess of the reigning house died; was transported to the neighbouring isle of Raiatea; fell there under the empire of a spirit who condemned her to climb coco-palms all day and bring him the nuts; was found after some time in this miserable servitude by a second spirit, one of her own house; and by him, upon her lamentations, reconveyed to Tahiti, where she found her body still waked, but already swollen with the approaches of corruption. It is a lively point in the tale that, on the sight of this dishonoured tabernacle, the princess prayed she might continue to be numbered with the dead. But it seems it was too late, her spirit was replaced by the least dignified of entrances, and her startled family beheld the body move. The seemingly purgatorial labours, the helpful kindred spirit, and the horror of the princess at the sight of her tainted body, are all points to be remarked.

The truth is, the tales are not necessarily consistent in themselves; and they are further darkened for the stranger by an ambiguity of language. Ghosts, vampires, spirits, and gods are all confounded. And yet I seem to perceive that (with exceptions) those whom we would count gods were less maleficent. Permanent spirits haunt and do murder in corners of Samoa; but those legitimate gods of Upolu and Savaii, whose wars and cricketings of late convulsed society, I did not gather to be dreaded, or not with a like fear. The spirit of Aana that ate souls is certainly a fearsome inmate; but the high gods, even of the archipelago, seem helpful. Mahinui - from whom our convict-catechist had been named - the spirit of the sea, like a Proteus endowed with endless avatars, came to the assistance of the shipwrecked and carried them ashore in the guise of a ray fish. The same divinity bore priests from isle to isle about the archipelago, and by his aid, within the century, persons have been seen to fly. The tutelar deity of each isle is likewise helpful, and by a particular form of wedge-shaped cloud on the horizon announces the coming of a ship.

To one who conceives of these atolls, so narrow, so barren, so beset with sea, here would seem a superfluity of ghostly denizens. And yet there are more. In the various brackish pools and ponds, beautiful women with long red hair are seen to rise and bathe; only (timid as mice) on the first sound of feet upon the coral they dive again for ever. They are known to be healthy and harmless living people, dwellers of an underworld; and the same fancy is current in Tahiti, where also they have the hair red. *Tetea* is the Tahitian name; the Paumotuan, *Mokurea*.

PART III: THE GILBERTS

CHAPTER I - BUTARITARI

At Honolulu we had said farewell to the *Casco* and to Captain Otis, and our next adventure was made in changed conditions. Passage was taken for myself, my wife, Mr. Osbourne, and my China boy, Ah Fu, on a pigmy trading schooner, the *Equator*, Captain Dennis Reid; and on a certain bright June day in 1889, adorned in the Hawaiian fashion with the garlands of departure, we drew out of port and bore with a fair wind for Micronesia.

The whole extent of the South Seas is a desert of ships; more especially that part where we were now to sail. No post runs in these islands; communication is by accident; where you may have designed to go is one thing, where you shall be able to arrive another. It was my hope, for instance, to have reached the Carolines, and returned to the light of day by way of Manila and the China ports; and it was in Samoa that we were destined to re-appear and be once more refreshed with the sight of mountains. Since the sunset faded from the peaks of Oahu six months had intervened, and we had seen no spot of earth so high as an ordinary cottage. Our path had been still on the flat sea, our dwellings upon unerected coral, our diet from the pickle-tub or out of tins; I had learned to welcome shark’s flesh for a variety; and a mountain, an onion, an Irish potato or a beef-steak, had been long lost to sense and dear to aspiration.

The two chief places of our stay, Butaritari and Apemama, lie near the line; the latter within thirty miles. Both enjoy a superb ocean climate, days of blinding sun and bracing wind, nights of a heavenly brightness. Both are somewhat wider than Fakarava, measuring perhaps (at the widest) a quarter of a mile from beach to beach. In both, a coarse kind of *taro* thrives; its culture is a chief business of the natives, and the consequent mounds and ditches make miniature scenery and amuse the eye. In all else they show the customary features of an atoll: the low horizon, the expanse of the lagoon, the sedge-like rim of palm-tops, the sameness and smallness of the land, the hugely superior size and interest of sea and sky. Life on such islands is in many points like life on shipboard. The atoll, like the ship, is soon taken for granted; and the islanders, like the ship’s crew, become soon the centre of attention. The isles are populous, independent, seats of kinglets, recently civilised, little visited. In the last decade many changes have crept in; women no longer go unclothed till marriage; the widow no longer sleeps at night and goes abroad by day with the skull of her dead husband; and, fire-arms being introduced, the spear and the shark-tooth sword are sold for curiosities. Ten years ago all these things and practices were to be seen in use; yet ten years more, and the old society will have entirely vanished. We came in a happy moment to see its institutions still erect and (in Apemama) scarce decayed.

Populous and independent - warrens of men, ruled over with some rustic pomp - such was the first and still the recurring impression of these tiny lands. As we stood across the lagoon for the town of Butaritari, a stretch of the low shore was seen to be crowded with the brown roofs of houses; those of the palace and king's summer parlour (which are of corrugated iron) glittered near one end conspicuously bright; the royal colours flew hard by on a tall flagstaff; in front, on an artificial islet, the gaol played the part of a martello. Even upon this first and distant view, the place had scarce the air of what it truly was, a village; rather of that which it was also, a petty metropolis, a city rustic and yet royal.

The lagoon is shoal. The tide being out, we waded for some quarter of a mile in tepid shallows, and stepped ashore at last into a flagrant stagnancy of sun and heat. The lee side of a line island after noon is indeed a breathless place; on the ocean beach the trade will be still blowing, boisterous and cool; out in the lagoon it will be blowing also, speeding the canoes; but the screen of bush completely intercepts it from the shore, and sleep and silence and companies of mosquitoes brood upon the towns.

We may thus be said to have taken Butaritari by surprise. A few inhabitants were still abroad in the north end, at which we landed. As we advanced, we were soon done with encounter, and seemed to explore a city of the dead. Only, between the posts of open houses, we could see the townsfolk stretched in the siesta, sometimes a family together veiled in a mosquito-net, sometimes a single sleeper on a platform like a corpse on a bier.

The houses were of all dimensions, from those of toys to those of churches. Some might hold a battalion, some were so minute they could scarce receive a pair of lovers; only in the playroom, when the toys are mingled, do we meet such incongruities of scale. Many were open sheds; some took the form of roofed stages; others were walled and the walls pierced with little windows. A few were perched on piles in the lagoon; the rest stood at random on a green, through which the roadway made a ribbon of sand, or along the embankments of a sheet of water like a shallow dock. One and all were the creatures of a single tree; palm-tree wood and palm-tree leaf their materials; no nail had been driven, no hammer sounded, in their building, and they were held together by lashings of palm-tree sinnet.

In the midst of the thoroughfare, the church stands like an island, a lofty and dim house with rows of windows; a rich tracery of framing sustains the roof; and through the door at either end the street shows in a vista. The proportions of the place, in such surroundings, and built of such materials, appeared august; and we threaded the nave with a sentiment befitting visitors in a cathedral. Benches run along either side. In the midst, on a crazy dais, two chairs stand ready for the king and queen when they shall choose to worship; over their heads a hoop, apparently from a hogshead, depends by a strip of red cotton; and the hoop (which hangs askew) is dressed with streamers of the same material, red and white.

This was our first advertisement of the royal dignity, and presently we stood before its seat and centre. The palace is built of imported wood upon a European plan; the roof of corrugated iron, the yard enclosed with walls, the gate surmounted by a sort of lych-house. It cannot be called spacious; a labourer in the States is sometimes more commodiously lodged; but when we had the chance to see it within, we found it was enriched (beyond all island expectation) with coloured advertisements and cuts from the illustrated papers. Even before the gate some of the treasures of the crown stand public: a bell of a good magnitude, two pieces of cannon, and a single shell. The bell cannot be rung nor the guns fired; they are curiosities, proofs of wealth, a part of the parade of the royalty, and stand to be admired like statues in a square. A straight gut of water like a canal runs almost to the palace door; the containing quay-walls excellently built of coral; over against the mouth, by what seems an effect of landscape art, the martello-like islet of the gaol breaks the lagoon. Vassal chiefs with tribute, neighbour monarchs come a-roving, might here sail in, view with surprise these extensive public works, and be awed by these mouths of silent cannon. It was impossible to see the place and not to fancy it designed for pageantry. But the elaborate theatre then stood empty; the royal house deserted, its doors and windows gaping; the whole quarter of the town immersed in silence. On the opposite bank of the canal, on a roofed stage, an ancient gentleman slept publicly, sole visible inhabitant; and beyond on the lagoon a canoe spread a striped lateen, the sole thing moving.

The canal is formed on the south by a pier or causeway with a parapet. At the far end the parapet stops, and the quay expands into an oblong peninsula in the lagoon, the breathing-place and summer parlour of the king. The midst is occupied by an open house or permanent marquee - called here a maniapa, or, as the word is now pronounced, a maniap' - at the lowest estimation forty feet by sixty. The iron roof, lofty but exceedingly low-browed, so that a woman must stoop to enter, is supported externally on pillars of coral, within by a frame of wood. The floor is of broken coral, divided in aisles by the uprights of the frame; the house far enough from shore to catch the breeze, which enters freely and disperses the mosquitoes; and under the low eaves the sun is seen to glitter and the waves to dance on the lagoon.

It was now some while since we had met any but slumberers; and when we had wandered down the pier and stumbled at last into this bright shed, we were surprised to find it occupied by a society of wakeful people, some twenty souls in all, the court and guardsmen of Butaritari. The court ladies were busy making mats; the guardsmen yawned and sprawled. Half a dozen rifles lay on a rock and a cutlass was leaned against a pillar: the armoury of these drowsy musketeers. At the far end, a little closed house of wood displayed some tinsel curtains, and proved, upon examination, to be a privy on the European model. In front of this, upon some mats, lolled Tebureimoa, the king; behind him, on the panels of the house, two crossed rifles represented fasces. He wore pyjamas which sorrowfully misbecame his bulk; his nose was hooked and cruel, his body overcome with sodden corpulence, his eye timorous and dull: he seemed at once oppressed with drowsiness and held awake by apprehension: a pepper rajah muddled with opium, and listening for the march of a Dutch army, looks perhaps not otherwise. We were to grow better acquainted, and first and last I had the same impression; he seemed always drowsy, yet always to hearken and start; and, whether from remorse or fear, there is no doubt he seeks a refuge in the abuse of drugs.

The rajah displayed no sign of interest in our coming. But the queen, who sat beside him in a purple sacque, was more accessible; and there was present an interpreter so willing that his volubility became at last the cause of our departure. He had greeted us upon our entrance:- ‘That is the honourable King, and I am his interpreter,’ he had said, with more stateliness than truth. For he held no appointment in the court, seemed extremely ill-acquainted with the island language, and was present, like ourselves, upon a visit of civility. Mr. Williams was his name: an American darkey, runaway ship’s cook, and bar-keeper at *The Land we Live in* tavern, Butaritari. I never knew a man who had more words in his command or less truth to communicate; neither the gloom of the monarch, nor my own efforts to be distant, could in the least abash him; and when the scene closed, the darkey was left talking.

The town still slumbered, or had but just begun to turn and stretch itself; it was still plunged in heat and silence. So much the more vivid was the impression that we carried away of the house upon the islet, the Micronesian Saul wakeful amid his guards, and his unmelodious David, Mr. Williams, chattering through the drowsy hours.

CHAPTER II - THE FOUR BROTHERS

The kingdom of Tebureimoa includes two islands, Great and Little Makin; some two thousand subjects pay him tribute, and two semi-independent chieftains do him qualified homage. The importance of the office is measured by the man; he may be a nobody, he may be absolute; and both extremes have been exemplified within the memory of residents.

On the death of king Tetimararoa, Tebureimoa's father, Nakaeia, the eldest son, succeeded. He was a fellow of huge physical strength, masterful, violent, with a certain barbaric thrift and some intelligence of men and business. Alone in his islands, it was he who dealt and profited; he was the planter and the merchant; and his subjects toiled for his behoof in servitude. When they wrought long and well their taskmaster declared a holiday, and supplied and shared a general debauch. The scale of his providing was at times magnificent; six hundred dollars' worth of gin and brandy was set forth at once; the narrow land resounded with the noise of revelry: and it was a common thing to see the subjects (staggering themselves) parade their drunken sovereign on the fore-hatch of a wrecked vessel, king and commons howling and singing as they went. At a word from Nakaeia's mouth the revel ended; Makin became once more an isle of slaves and of teetotalers; and on the morrow all the population must be on the roads or in the taro-patches toiling under his bloodshot eye.

The fear of Nakaeia filled the land. No regularity of justice was affected; there was no trial, there were no officers of the law; it seems there was but one penalty, the capital; and daylight assault and midnight murder were the forms of process. The king himself would play the executioner: and his blows were dealt by stealth, and with the help and countenance of none but his own wives. These were his oarswomen; one that caught a crab, he slew incontinently with the tiller; thus disciplined, they pulled him by night to the scene of his vengeance, which he would then execute alone and return well-pleased with his connubial crew. The inmates of the harem held a station hard for us to conceive. Beasts of draught, and driven by the fear of death, they were yet implicitly trusted with their sovereign's life; they were still wives and queens, and it was supposed that no man should behold their faces. They killed by the sight like basilisks; a chance view of one of those boatwomen was a crime to be wiped out with blood. In the days of Nakaeia the palace was beset with some tall coco-palms which commanded the enclosure. It chanced one evening, while Nakaeia sat below at supper with his wives, that the owner of the grove was in a tree-top drawing palm-tree wine; it chanced that he looked down, and the king at the same moment looking up, their eyes encountered. Instant flight preserved the involuntary criminal. But during the remainder of that reign he must lurk and be hid by friends in remote parts of the isle; Nakaeia hunted him without remission, although still in vain; and the palms, accessories to the fact, were ruthlessly cut down. Such was the ideal of wifely purity in an isle where nubile virgins went naked as in paradise. And yet scandal found its way into Nakaeia's well-guarded harem. He was at that time the owner of a schooner, which he used for a pleasure-house, lodging on board as she lay anchored; and thither one day he summoned a new wife. She was one that had been sealed to him; that is to say (I presume), that he was married to her sister, for the husband of an elder sister has the call of the cadets. She would be arrayed for the occasion; she would come scented, garlanded, decked with fine mats and family jewels, for marriage, as her friends supposed; for death, as she well knew. 'Tell me the man's name, and I will spare you,' said Nakaeia. But the girl was staunch; she held her peace, saved her lover and the queens strangled her between the mats.

Nakaeia was feared; it does not appear that he was hated. Deeds that smell to us of murder wore to his subjects the reverend face of justice; his orgies made him popular; natives to this day recall with respect the firmness of his government; and even the whites, whom he long opposed and kept at arm's-length, give him the name (in the canonical South Sea phrase) of 'a perfect gentleman when sober.'

When he came to lie, without issue, on the bed of death, he summoned his next brother, Nanteitei, made him a discourse on royal policy, and warned him he was too weak to reign. The warning was taken to heart, and for some while the government moved on the model of Nakaeia's. Nanteitei dispensed with guards, and walked abroad alone with a revolver in a leather mail-bag. To conceal his weakness he affected a rude silence; you might talk to him all day; advice, reproof, appeal, and menace alike remained unanswered.

The number of his wives was seventeen, many of them heiresses; for the royal house is poor, and marriage was in these days a chief means of buttressing the throne. Nakaeia kept his harem busy for himself; Nanteitei hired it out to others. In his days, for instance, Messrs. Wightman built a pier with a verandah at the north end of the town. The masonry was the work of the seventeen queens, who toiled and waded there like fisher lasses; but the man who was to do the roofing durst not begin till they had finished, lest by chance he should look down and see them.

It was perhaps the last appearance of the harem gang. For some time already Hawaiian missionaries had been seated at Butaritari - Maka and Kanoa, two brave childlike men. Nakaeia would none of their doctrine; he was perhaps jealous of their presence; being human, he had some affection for their persons. In the house, before the eyes of Kanoa, he slew with his own hand three sailors of Oahu, crouching on their backs to knife them, and menacing the missionary if he interfered; yet he not only spared him at the moment, but recalled him afterwards (when he had fled) with some expressions of respect. Nanteitei, the weaker man, fell more completely under the spell. Maka, a light-hearted, lovable, yet in his own trade very rigorous man, gained and improved an influence on the king which soon grew paramount. Nanteitei, with the royal house, was publicly converted; and, with a severity which liberal missionaries disavow, the harem was at once reduced. It was a compendious act. The throne was thus impoverished, its influence shaken, the queen's relatives mortified, and sixteen chief women (some of great possessions) cast in a body on the market. I have been shipmates with a Hawaiian sailor who was successively married to two of these *impromptu* widows, and successively divorced by both for misconduct. That two great and rich ladies (for both of these were rich) should have married 'a man from another island' marks the dissolution of society. The laws besides were wholly remodelled, not always for the better. I love Maka as a man; as a legislator he has two defects: weak in the punishment of crime, stern to repress innocent pleasures.

War and revolution are the common successors of reform; yet Nanteitei died (of an overdose of chloroform), in quiet possession of the throne, and it was in the reign of the third brother, Nabakatokia, a man brave in body and feeble of character, that the storm burst. The rule of the high chiefs and notables seems to have always underlain and perhaps alternated with monarchy. The Old Men (as they were called) have a right to sit with the king in the Speak House and debate: and the king's chief superiority is a form of closure - 'The Speaking is over.' After the long monocracy of Nakaeia and the changes of Nanteitei, the Old Men were doubtless grown impatient of obscurity, and they were beyond question jealous of the influence of Maka. Calumny, or rather caricature, was called in use; a spoken cartoon ran round society; Maka was reported to have said in church that the king was the first man in the island and himself the second; and, stung by the supposed affront, the chiefs broke into rebellion and armed gatherings. In the space of one forenoon the throne of Nakaeia was humbled in the dust. The king sat in the maniap' before the palace gate expecting his recruits; Maka by his side, both anxious men; and meanwhile, in the door of a house at the north entry of the town, a chief had taken post and diverted the succours as they came.

They came singly or in groups, each with his gun or pistol slung about his neck. ‘Where are you going?’ asked the chief. ‘The king called us,’ they would reply. ‘Here is your place. Sit down,’ returned the chief. With incredible disloyalty, all obeyed; and sufficient force being thus got together from both sides, Nabakatokia was summoned and surrendered. About this period, in almost every part of the group, the kings were murdered; and on Tapituea, the skeleton of the last hangs to this day in the chief Speak House of the isle, a menace to ambition. Nabakatokia was more fortunate; his life and the royal style were spared to him, but he was stripped of power. The Old Men enjoyed a festival of public speaking; the laws were continually changed, never enforced; the commons had an opportunity to regret the merits of Nakaeia; and the king, denied the resource of rich marriages and the service of a troop of wives, fell not only in disconsideration but in debt.

He died some months before my arrival on the islands, and no one regretted him; rather all looked hopefully to his successor. This was by repute the hero of the family. Alone of the four brothers, he had issue, a grown son, Natiata, and a daughter three years old; it was to him, in the hour of the revolution, that Nabakatokia turned too late for help; and in earlier days he had been the right hand of the vigorous Nakaeia. Nontemat’, *Mr. Corpse*, was his appalling nickname, and he had earned it well. Again and again, at the command of Nakaeia, he had surrounded houses in the dead of night, cut down the mosquito bars and butchered families. Here was the hand of iron; here was Nakaeia *redux*. He came, summoned from the tributary rule of Little Makin: he was installed, he proved a puppet and a trembler, the unwieldy shuttlecock of orators; and the reader has seen the remains of him in his summer parlour under the name of Tebureimoa.

The change in the man’s character was much commented on in the island, and variously explained by opium and Christianity. To my eyes, there seemed no change at all, rather an extreme consistency. Mr. Corpse was afraid of his brother: King Tebureimoa is afraid of the Old Men. Terror of the first nerved him for deeds of desperation; fear of the second disables him for the least act of government. He played his part of bravo in the past, following the line of least resistance, butchering others in his own defence: to-day, grown elderly and heavy, a convert, a reader of the Bible, perhaps a penitent, conscious at least of accumulated hatreds, and his memory charged with images of violence and blood, he capitulates to the Old Men, fuddles himself with opium, and sits among his guards in dreadful expectation. The same cowardice that put into his hand the knife of the assassin deprives him of the sceptre of a king.

A tale that I was told, a trifling incident that fell in my observation, depicts him in his two capacities. A chief in Little Makin asked, in an hour of lightness, 'Who is Kaeia?' A bird carried the saying; and Nakaeia placed the matter in the hands of a committee of three. Mr. Corpse was chairman; the second commissioner died before my arrival; the third was yet alive and green, and presented so venerable an appearance that we gave him the name of Abou ben Adhem. Mr. Corpse was troubled with a scruple; the man from Little Makin was his adopted brother; in such a case it was not very delicate to appear at all, to strike the blow (which it seems was otherwise expected of him) would be worse than awkward. 'I will strike the blow,' said the venerable Abou; and Mr. Corpse (surely with a sigh) accepted the compromise. The quarry was decoyed into the bush; he was set to carrying a log; and while his arms were raised Abou ripped up his belly at a blow. Justice being thus done, the commission, in a childish horror, turned to flee. But their victim recalled them to his side. 'You need not run away now,' he said. 'You have done this thing to me. Stay.' He was some twenty minutes dying, and his murderers sat with him the while: a scene for Shakespeare. All the stages of a violent death, the blood, the failing voice, the decomposing features, the changed hue, are thus present in the memory of Mr. Corpse; and since he studied them in the brother he betrayed, he has some reason to reflect on the possibilities of treachery. I was never more sure of anything than the tragic quality of the king's thoughts; and yet I had but the one sight of him at unawares. I had once an errand for his ear. It was once more the hour of the siesta; but there were loiterers abroad, and these directed us to a closed house on the bank of the canal where Tebureimoa lay unguarded. We entered without ceremony, being in some haste. He lay on the floor upon a bed of mats, reading in his Gilbert Island Bible with compunction. On our sudden entrance the unwieldy man reared himself half-sitting so that the Bible rolled on the floor, stared on us a moment with blank eyes, and, having recognised his visitors, sank again upon the mats. So Eglon looked on Ehud.

The justice of facts is strange, and strangely just; Nakaeia, the author of these deeds, died at peace discoursing on the craft of kings; his tool suffers daily death for his enforced complicity. Not the nature, but the congruity of men's deeds and circumstances damn and save them; and Tebureimoa from the first has been incongruously placed. At home, in a quiet bystreet of a village, the man had been a worthy carpenter, and, even bedevilled as he is, he shows some private virtues. He has no lands, only the use of such as are impignorate for fines; he cannot enrich himself in the old way by marriages; thrift is the chief pillar of his future, and he knows and uses it. Eleven foreign traders pay him a patent of a hundred dollars, some two thousand subjects pay capitation at the rate of a dollar for a man, half a dollar for a woman, and a shilling for a child: allowing for the exchange, perhaps a total of three hundred pounds a year. He had been some nine months on the throne: had bought his wife a silk dress and hat, figure unknown, and himself a uniform at three hundred dollars; had sent his brother's photograph to be enlarged in San Francisco at two hundred and fifty dollars; had greatly reduced that brother's legacy of debt and had still sovereigns in his pocket. An affectionate brother, a good economist; he was besides a handy carpenter, and cobbled occasionally on the woodwork of the palace. It is not wonderful that Mr. Corpse has virtues; that Tebureimoa should have a diversion filled me with surprise.

CHAPTER III - AROUND OUR HOUSE

When we left the palace we were still but seafarers ashore; and within the hour we had installed our goods in one of the six foreign houses of Butaritari, namely, that usually occupied by Maka, the Hawaiian missionary. Two San Francisco firms are here established, Messrs. Crawford and Messrs. Wightman Brothers; the first hard by the palace of the mid town, the second at the north entry; each with a store and bar-room. Our house was in the Wightman compound, betwixt the store and bar, within a fenced enclosure. Across the road a few native houses nestled in the margin of the bush, and the green wall of palms rose solid, shutting out the breeze. A little sandy cove of the lagoon ran in behind, sheltered by a verandah pier, the labour of queens' hands. Here, when the tide was high, sailed boats lay to be loaded; when the tide was low, the boats took ground some half a mile away, and an endless series of natives descended the pier stair, tailed across the sand in strings and clusters, waded to the waist with the bags of copra, and loitered backward to renew their charge. The mystery of the copra trade tormented me, as I sat and watched the profits drip on the stair and the sands.

In front, from shortly after four in the morning until nine at night, the folk of the town streamed by us intermittingly along the road: families going up the island to make copra on their lands; women bound for the bush to gather flowers against the evening toilet; and, twice a day, the toddy-cutters, each with his knife and shell. In the first grey of the morning, and again late in the afternoon, these would straggle past about their tree-top business, strike off here and there into the bush, and vanish from the face of the earth. At about the same hour, if the tide be low in the lagoon, you are likely to be bound yourself across the island for a bath, and may enter close at their heels alleys of the palm wood. Right in front, although the sun is not yet risen, the east is already lighted with preparatory fires, and the huge accumulations of the trade-wind cloud glow with and heliograph the coming day. The breeze is in your face; overhead in the tops of the palms, its playthings, it maintains a lively bustle; look where you will, above or below, there is no human presence, only the earth and shaken forest. And right overhead the song of an invisible singer breaks from the thick leaves; from farther on a second tree-top answers; and beyond again, in the bosom of the woods, a still more distant minstrel perches and sways and sings. So, all round the isle, the toddy-cutters sit on high, and are rocked by the trade, and have a view far to seaward, where they keep watch for sails, and like huge birds utter their songs in the morning. They sing with a certain lustiness and Bacchic glee; the volume of sound and the articulate melody fall unexpected from the tree-top, whence we anticipate the chattering of fowls. And yet in a sense these songs also are but chatter; the words are ancient, obsolete, and sacred; few comprehend them, perhaps no one perfectly; but it was understood the cutters 'prayed to have good toddy, and sang of their old wars.' The prayer is at least answered; and when the foaming shell is brought to your door, you have a beverage well 'worthy of a grace.' All forenoon you may return and taste; it only sparkles, and sharpens, and grows to be a new drink, not less delicious; but with the progress of the day the fermentation quickens and grows acid; in twelve hours it will be yeast for bread, in two days more a devilish intoxicant, the counsellor of crime.

The men are of a marked Arabian cast of features, often bearded and mustached, often gaily dressed, some with bracelets and anklets, all stalking hidalgo-like, and accepting salutations with a haughty lip. The hair (with the dandies of either sex) is worn turban-wise in a frizzled bush; and like the daggers of the Japanese a pointed stick (used for a comb) is thrust gallantly among the curls. The women from this bush of hair look forth enticingly: the race cannot be compared with the Tahitian for female beauty; I doubt even if the average be high; but some of the prettiest girls, and one of the handsomest women I ever saw, were Gilbertines. Butaritari, being the commercial centre of the group, is Europeanised; the coloured sacque or the white shift are common wear, the latter for the evening; the trade hat, loaded with flowers, fruit, and ribbons, is unfortunately not unknown; and the characteristic female dress of the Gilberts no longer universal. The *ridi* is its name: a cutty petticoat or fringe of the smoked fibre of cocoa-nut leaf, not unlike tarry string: the lower edge not reaching the mid-thigh, the upper adjusted so low upon the haunches that it seems to cling by accident. A sneeze, you think, and the lady must surely be left destitute. 'The perilous, hairbreadth ridi' was our word for it; and in the conflict that rages over women's dress it has the misfortune to please neither side, the prudish condemning it as insufficient, the more frivolous finding it unlovely in itself. Yet if a pretty Gilbertine would look her best, that must be her costume. In that and naked otherwise, she moves with an incomparable liberty and grace and life, that marks the poetry of Micronesia. Bundle her in a gown, the charm is fled, and she wriggles like an Englishwoman.

Towards dusk the passers-by became more gorgeous. The men broke out in all the colours of the rainbow - or at least of the trade-room, - and both men and women began to be adorned and scented with new flowers. A small white blossom is the favourite, sometimes sown singly in a woman's hair like little stars, now composed in a thick wreath. With the night, the crowd sometimes thickened in the road, and the padding and brushing of bare feet became continuous; the promenades mostly grave, the silence only interrupted by some giggling and scampering of girls; even the children quiet. At nine, bed-time struck on a bell from the cathedral, and the life of the town ceased. At four the next morning the signal is repeated in the darkness, and the innocent prisoners set free; but for seven hours all must lie - I was about to say within doors, of a place where doors, and even walls, are an exception - housed, at least, under their airy roofs and clustered in the tents of the mosquito-nets. Suppose a necessary errand to occur, suppose it imperative to send abroad, the messenger must then go openly, advertising himself to the police with a huge brand of cocoa-nut, which flares from house to house like a moving bonfire. Only the police themselves go darkling, and grope in the night for misdemeanants. I used to hate their treacherous presence; their captain in particular, a crafty old man in white, lurked nightly about my premises till I could have found it in my heart to beat him. But the rogue was privileged.

Not one of the eleven resident traders came to town, no captain cast anchor in the lagoon, but we saw him ere the hour was out. This was owing to our position between the store and the bar - the *Sans Souci*, as the last was called. Mr. Rick was not only Messrs. Wightman's manager, but consular agent for the States; Mrs. Rick was the only white woman on the island, and one of the only two in the archipelago; their house besides, with its cool verandahs, its bookshelves, its comfortable furniture, could not be rivalled nearer than Jaluit or Honolulu. Every one called in consequence, save such as might be prosecuting a South Sea quarrel, hingeing on the price of copra and the odd cent, or perhaps a difference about poultry. Even these, if they did not appear upon the north, would be presently visible to the southward, the *Sans Souci* drawing them as with cords. In an island with a total population of twelve white persons, one of the two drinking-shops might seem superfluous: but every bullet has its billet, and the double accommodation of Butaritari is found in practice highly convenient by the captains and the crews of ships: *The Land we Live in* being tacitly resigned to the forecastle, the *Sans Souci* tacitly reserved for the afterguard. So aristocratic were my habits, so commanding was my fear of Mr. Williams, that I have never visited the first; but in the other, which was the club or rather the casino of the island, I regularly passed my evenings. It was small, but neatly fitted, and at night (when the lamp was lit) sparkled with glass and glowed with coloured pictures like a theatre at Christmas. The pictures were advertisements, the glass coarse enough, the carpentry amateur; but the effect, in that incongruous isle, was of unbridled luxury and inestimable expense. Here songs were sung, tales told, tricks performed, games played. The Ricks, ourselves, Norwegian Tom the bar-keeper, a captain or two from the ships, and perhaps three or four traders come down the island in their boats or by the road on foot, made up the usual company. The traders, all bred to the sea, take a humorous pride in their new business; 'South Sea Merchants' is the title they prefer. 'We are all sailors here' - 'Merchants, if you please' - '*South Sea* Merchants,' - was a piece of conversation endlessly repeated, that never seemed to lose in savour. We found them at all times simple, genial, gay, gallant, and obliging; and, across some interval of time, recall with pleasure the traders of Butaritari. There was one black sheep indeed. I tell of him here where he lived, against my rule; for in this case I have no measure to preserve, and the man is typical of a class of ruffians that once disgraced the whole field of the South Seas, and still linger in the rarely visited isles of Micronesia. He had the name on the beach of 'a perfect gentleman when sober,' but I never saw him otherwise than drunk. The few shocking and savage traits of the Micronesian he has singled out with the skill of a collector, and planted in the soil of his original baseness. He has been accused and acquitted of a treacherous murder; and has since boastfully owned it, which inclines me to suppose him innocent. His daughter is defaced by his erroneous cruelty, for it was his wife he had intended to disfigure, and in the darkness of the night and the frenzy of coco-brandy, fastened on the wrong victim. The wife has since fled and harbours in the bush with natives; and the husband still demands from deaf ears her forcible restoration. The best of his business is to make natives drink, and then advance the money for the fine upon a lucrative mortgage. 'Respect for whites' is the man's word: 'What is the matter with this island is the want of respect for whites.' On his way to Butaritari, while I was there, he spied his wife in the bush with certain natives and made a dash to capture her; whereupon one of her companions drew a knife and the husband retreated: 'Do you call that proper respect for whites?' he cried. At an early stage of the acquaintance we proved our respect for his kind of white by forbidding him our enclosure under pain of death. Thenceforth he lingered often in the neighbourhood with I knew not what sense of envy or design of mischief; his white, handsome face (which I beheld with loathing) looked in upon us at all hours across the fence; and once, from a safe distance, he avenged himself by shouting a recondite island insult, to us quite inoffensive, on his English lips incredibly incongruous.

Our enclosure, round which this composite of degradations wandered, was of some extent. In one corner was a trellis with a long table of rough boards. Here the Fourth of July feast had been held not long before with memorable consequences, yet to be set forth; here we took our meals; here entertained to a dinner the king and notables of Makin. In the midst was the house, with a verandah front and back, and three is rooms within. In the verandah we slung our man-of-war hammocks, worked there by day, and slept at night. Within were beds, chairs, a round table, a fine hanging lamp, and portraits of the royal family of Hawaii. Queen Victoria proves nothing; Kalakaua and Mrs. Bishop are diagnostic; and the truth is we were the stealthy tenants of the parsonage. On the day of our arrival Maka was away; faithless trustees unlocked his doors; and the dear rigorous man, the sworn foe of liquor and tobacco, returned to find his verandah littered with cigarettes and his parlour horrible with bottles. He made but one condition - on the round table, which he used in the celebration of the sacraments, he begged us to refrain from setting liquor; in all else he bowed to the accomplished fact, refused rent, retired across the way into a native house, and, plying in his boat, beat the remotest quarters of the isle for provender. He found us pigs - I could not fancy where - no other pigs were visible; he brought us fowls and taro; when we gave our feast to the monarch and gentry, it was he who supplied the wherewithal, he who superintended the cooking, he who asked grace at table, and when the king's health was proposed, he also started the cheering with an English hip-hip-hip. There was never a more fortunate conception; the heart of the fatted king exulted in his bosom at the sound.

Take him for all in all, I have never known a more engaging creature than this parson of Butaritari: his mirth, his kindness, his noble, friendly feelings, brimmed from the man in speech and gesture. He loved to exaggerate, to act and overact the momentary part, to exercise his lungs and muscles, and to speak and laugh with his whole body. He had the morning cheerfulness of birds and healthy children; and his humour was infectious. We were next neighbours and met daily, yet our salutations lasted minutes at a stretch - shaking hands, slapping shoulders, capering like a pair of Merry-Andrews, laughing to split our sides upon some pleasantry that would scarce raise a titter in an infant-school. It might be five in the morning, the toddy-cutters just gone by, the road empty, the shade of the island lying far on the lagoon: and the ebullition cheered me for the day.

Yet I always suspected Maka of a secret melancholy - these jubilant extremes could scarce be constantly maintained. He was besides long, and lean, and lined, and corded, and a trifle grizzled; and his Sabbath countenance was even saturnine. On that day we made a procession to the church, or (as I must always call it) the cathedral: Maka (a blot on the hot landscape) in tall hat, black frock-coat, black trousers; under his arm the hymn-book and the Bible; in his face, a reverent gravity:- beside him Mary his wife, a quiet, wise, and handsome elderly lady, seriously attired:- myself following with singular and moving thoughts. Long before, to the sound of bells and streams and birds, through a green Lothian glen, I had accompanied Sunday by Sunday a minister in whose house I lodged; and the likeness, and the difference, and the series of years and deaths, profoundly touched me. In the great, dusky, palm-tree cathedral the congregation rarely numbered thirty: the men on one side, the women on the other, myself posted (for a privilege) amongst the women, and the small missionary contingent gathered close around the platform, we were lost in that round vault. The lessons were read antiphonally, the flock was catechised, a blind youth repeated weekly a long string of psalms, hymns were sung - I never heard worse singing, - and the sermon followed. To say I understood nothing were untrue; there were points that I learned to expect with certainty; the name of Honolulu, that of Kalakaua, the word Cap’n-man-o’-wa’, the word ship, and a description of a storm at sea, infallibly occurred; and I was not seldom rewarded with the name of my own Sovereign in the bargain. The rest was but sound to the ears, silence for the mind: a plain expanse of tedium, rendered unbearable by heat, a hard chair, and the sight through the wide doors of the more happy heathen on the green. Sleep breathed on my joints and eyelids, sleep hummed in my ears; it reigned in the dim cathedral. The congregation stirred and stretched; they moaned, they groaned aloud; they yawned upon a singing note, as you may sometimes hear a dog when he has reached the tragic bitterest of boredom. In vain the preacher thumped the table; in vain he singled and addressed by name particular hearers. I was myself perhaps a more effective excitant; and at least to one old gentleman the spectacle of my successful struggles against sleep - and I hope they were successful - cheered the flight of time. He, when he was not catching flies or playing tricks upon his neighbours, gloated with a fixed, truculent eye upon the stages of my agony; and once, when the service was drawing towards a close, he winked at me across the church.

I write of the service with a smile; yet I was always there - always with respect for Maka, always with admiration for his deep seriousness, his burning energy, the fire of his roused eye, the sincere and various accents of his voice. To see him weekly flogging a dead horse and blowing a cold fire was a lesson in fortitude and constancy. It may be a question whether if the mission were fully supported, and he was set free from business avocations, more might not result; I think otherwise myself; I think not neglect but rigour has reduced his flock, that rigour which has once provoked a revolution, and which to-day, in a man so lively and engaging, amazes the beholder. No song, no dance, no tobacco, no liquor, no alleviative of life - only toil and church-going; so says a voice from his face; and the face is the face of the Polynesian Esau, but the voice is the voice of a Jacob from a different world. And a Polynesian at the best makes a singular missionary in the Gilberts, coming from a country recklessly unchaste to one conspicuously strict; from a race hag-ridden with bogies to one comparatively bold against the terrors of the dark. The thought was stamped one morning in my mind, when I chanced to be abroad by moonlight, and saw all the town lightless, but the lamp faithfully burning by the missionary's bed. It requires no law, no fire, and no scouting police, to withhold Maka and his countrymen from wandering in the night unlighted.

CHAPTER IV - A TALE OF A TAPU

On the morrow of our arrival (Sunday, 14th July 1889) our photographers were early stirring. Once more we traversed a silent town; many were yet abed and asleep; some sat drowsily in their open houses; there was no sound of intercourse or business. In that hour before the shadows, the quarter of the palace and canal seemed like a landing-place in the *Arabian Nights* or from the classic poets; here were the fit destination of some 'faery frigot,' here some adventurous prince might step ashore among new characters and incidents; and the island prison, where it floated on the luminous face of the lagoon, might have passed for the repository of the Grail. In such a scene, and at such an hour, the impression received was not so much of foreign travel - rather of past ages; it seemed not so much degrees of latitude that we had crossed, as centuries of time that we had re-ascended; leaving, by the same steps, home and to-day. A few children followed us, mostly nude, all silent; in the clear, weedy waters of the canal some silent damsels waded, baring their brown thighs; and to one of the maniap's before the palace gate we were attracted by a low but stirring hum of speech.

The oval shed was full of men sitting cross-legged. The king was there in striped pyjamas, his rear protected by four guards with Winchesters, his air and bearing marked by unwonted spirit and decision; tumblers and black bottles went the round; and the talk, throughout loud, was general and animated. I was inclined at first to view this scene with suspicion. But the hour appeared unsuitable for a carouse; drink was besides forbidden equally by the law of the land and the canons of the church; and while I was yet hesitating, the king's rigorous attitude disposed of my last doubt. We had come, thinking to photograph him surrounded by his guards, and at the first word of the design his piety revolted. We were reminded of the day - the Sabbath, in which thou shalt take no photographs - and returned with a flea in our ear, bearing the rejected camera.

At church, a little later, I was struck to find the throne unoccupied. So nice a Sabbatarian might have found the means to be present; perhaps my doubts revived; and before I got home they were transformed to certainties. Tom, the bar-keeper of the *Sans Souci,* was in conversation with two emissaries from the court. The 'keen,' they said, wanted 'din,' failing which 'perandi.' No din, was Tom's reply, and no perandi; but 'pira' if they pleased. It seems they had no use for beer, and departed sorrowing.

'Why, what is the meaning of all this?' I asked. 'Is the island on the spree?'

Such was the fact. On the 4th of July a feast had been made, and the king, at the suggestion of the whites, had raised the tapu against liquor. There is a proverb about horses; it scarce applies to the superior animal, of whom it may be rather said, that any one can start him drinking, not any twenty can prevail on him to stop. The tapu, raised ten days before, was not yet re-imposed; for ten days the town had been passing the bottle or lying (as we had seen it the afternoon before) in hoggish sleep; and the king, moved by the Old Men and his own appetites, continued to maintain the liberty, to squander his savings on liquor, and to join in and lead the debauch. The whites were the authors of this crisis; it was upon their own proposal that the freedom had been granted at the first; and for a while, in the interests of trade, they were doubtless pleased it should continue. That pleasure had now sometime ceased; the bout had been prolonged (it was conceded) unduly; and it now began to be a question how it might conclude. Hence Tom's refusal. Yet that refusal was avowedly only for the moment, and it was avowedly unavailing; the king's foragers, denied by Tom at the *Sans Souci*, would be supplied at *The Land we Live in* by the gobbling Mr. Williams.

The degree of the peril was not easy to measure at the time, and I am inclined to think now it was easy to exaggerate. Yet the conduct of drunkards even at home is always matter for anxiety; and at home our populations are not armed from the highest to the lowest with revolvers and repeating rifles, neither do we go on a debauch by the whole townful - and I might rather say, by the whole polity - king, magistrates, police, and army joining in one common scene of drunkenness. It must be thought besides that we were here in barbarous islands, rarely visited, lately and partly civilised. First and last, a really considerable number of whites have perished in the Gilberts, chiefly through their own misconduct; and the natives have displayed in at least one instance a disposition to conceal an accident under a butchery, and leave nothing but dumb bones. This last was the chief consideration against a sudden closing of the bars; the bar-keepers stood in the immediate breach and dealt direct with madmen; too surly a refusal might at any moment precipitate a blow, and the blow might prove the signal for a massacre.

Monday, 15th. - At the same hour we returned to the same muniap'. Kümmel (of all drinks) was served in tumblers; in the midst sat the crown prince, a fatted youth, surrounded by fresh bottles and busily plying the corkscrew; and king, chief, and commons showed the loose mouth, the uncertain joints, and the blurred and animated eye of the early drinker. It was plain we were impatiently expected; the king retired with alacrity to dress, the guards were despatched after their uniforms; and we were left to await the issue of these preparations with a shedful of tipsy natives. The orgie had proceeded further than on Sunday. The day promised to be of great heat; it was already sultry, the courtiers were already fuddled; and still the kümmel continued to go round, and the crown prince to play butler. Flemish freedom followed upon Flemish excess; and a funny dog, a handsome fellow, gaily dressed, and with a full turban of frizzed hair, delighted the company with a humorous courtship of a lady in a manner not to be described. It was our diversion, in this time of waiting, to observe the gathering of the guards. They have European arms, European uniforms, and (to their sorrow) European shoes. We saw one warrior (like Mars) in the article of being armed; two men and a stalwart woman were scarce strong enough to boot him; and after a single appearance on parade the army is crippled for a week.

At last, the gates under the king's house opened; the army issued, one behind another, with guns and epaulettes; the colours stooped under the gateway; majesty followed in his uniform bedizened with gold lace; majesty's wife came next in a hat and feathers, and an ample trained silk gown; the royal imps succeeded; there stood the pageantry of Makin marshalled on its chosen theatre. Dickens might have told how serious they were; how tipsy; how the king melted and streamed under his cocked hat; how he took station by the larger of his two cannons - austere, majestic, but not truly vertical; how the troops huddled, and were straightened out, and clubbed again; how they and their firelocks raked at various inclinations like the masts of ships; and how an amateur photographer reviewed, arrayed, and adjusted them, to see his dispositions change before he reached the camera.

The business was funny to see; I do not know that it is graceful to laugh at; and our report of these transactions was received on our return with the shaking of grave heads.

The day had begun ill; eleven hours divided us from sunset; and at any moment, on the most trifling chance, the trouble might begin. The Wightman compound was in a military sense untenable, commanded on three sides by houses and thick bush; the town was computed to contain over a thousand stand of excellent new arms; and retreat to the ships, in the case of an alert, was a recourse not to be thought of. Our talk that morning must have closely reproduced the talk in English garrisons before the Sepoy mutiny; the sturdy doubt that any mischief was in prospect, the sure belief that (should any come) there was nothing left but to go down fighting, the half-amused, half-anxious attitude of mind in which we were awaiting fresh developments.

The kümmel soon ran out; we were scarce returned before the king had followed us in quest of more. Mr. Corpse was now divested of his more awful attitude, the lawless bulk of him again encased in striped pyjamas; a guardsman brought up the rear with his rifle at the trail: and his majesty was further accompanied by a Rarotongan whalerman and the playful courtier with the turban of frizzed hair. There was never a more lively deputation. The whalerman was gapingly, tearfully tipsy: the courtier walked on air; the king himself was even sportive. Seated in a chair in the Ricks' sitting-room, he bore the brunt of our prayers and menaces unmoved. He was even rated, plied with historic instances, threatened with the men-of-war, ordered to restore the tapu on the spot - and nothing in the least affected him. It should be done to-morrow, he said; to-day it was beyond his power, to-day he durst not. 'Is that royal?' cried indignant Mr. Rick. No, it was not royal; had the king been of a royal character we should ourselves have held a different language; and royal or not, he had the best of the dispute. The terms indeed were hardly equal; for the king was the only man who could restore the tapu, but the Ricks were not the only people who sold drink. He had but to hold his ground on the first question, and they were sure to weaken on the second. A little struggle they still made for the fashion's sake; and then one exceedingly tipsy deputation departed, greatly rejoicing, a case of brandy wheeling beside them in a barrow. The Rarotongan (whom I had never seen before) wrung me by the hand like a man bound on a far voyage. 'My dear frien'!' he cried, 'good-bye, my dear frien'!' - tears of kümmel standing in his eyes; the king lurched as he went, the courtier ambled, - a strange party of intoxicated children to be entrusted with that barrowful of madness.

You could never say the town was quiet; all morning there was a ferment in the air, an aimless movement and congregation of natives in the street. But it was not before half-past one that a sudden hubbub of voices called us from the house, to find the whole white colony already gathered on the spot as by concerted signal. The *Sans Souci* was overrun with rabble, the stair and verandah thronged. From all these throats an inarticulate babbling cry went up incessantly; it sounded like the bleating of young lambs, but angrier. In the road his royal highness (whom I had seen so lately in the part of butler) stood crying upon Tom; on the top step, tossed in the hurly-burly, Tom was shouting to the prince. Yet a while the pack swayed about the bar, vociferous. Then came a brutal impulse; the mob reeled, and returned, and was rejected; the stair showed a stream of heads; and there shot into view, through the disbanding ranks, three men violently dragging in their midst a fourth. By his hair and his hands, his head forced as low as his knees, his face concealed, he was wrenched from the verandah and whisked along the road into the village, howling as he disappeared. Had his face been raised, we should have seen it bloodied, and the blood was not his own. The courtier with the turban of frizzed hair had paid the costs of this disturbance with the lower part of one ear.

So the brawl passed with no other casualty than might seem comic to the inhumane. Yet we looked round on serious faces and - a fact that spoke volumes - Tom was putting up the shutters on the bar. Custom might go elsewhere, Mr. Williams might profit as he pleased, but Tom had had enough of bar-keeping for that day. Indeed the event had hung on a hair. A man had sought to draw a revolver - on what quarrel I could never learn, and perhaps he himself could not have told; one shot, when the room was so crowded, could scarce have failed to take effect; where many were armed and all tipsy, it could scarce have failed to draw others; and the woman who spied the weapon and the man who seized it may very well have saved the white community.

The mob insensibly melted from the scene; and for the rest of the day our neighbourhood was left in peace and a good deal in solitude. But the tranquillity was only local; *din* and *perandi* still flowed in other quarters: and we had one more sight of Gilbert Island violence. In the church, where we had wandered photographing, we were startled by a sudden piercing outcry. The scene, looking forth from the doors of that great hall of shadow, was unforgettable. The palms, the quaint and scattered houses, the flag of the island streaming from its tall staff, glowed with intolerable sunshine. In the midst two women rolled fighting on the grass. The combatants were the more easy to be distinguished, because the one was stripped to the *ridi* and the other wore a holoku (sacque) of some lively colour. The first was uppermost, her teeth locked in her adversary's face, shaking her like a dog; the other impotently fought and scratched. So for a moment we saw them wallow and grapple there like vermin; then the mob closed and shut them in.

It was a serious question that night if we should sleep ashore. But we were travellers, folk that had come far in quest of the adventurous; on the first sign of an adventure it would have been a singular inconsistency to have withdrawn; and we sent on board instead for our revolvers. Mindful of Taahauku, Mr. Rick, Mr. Osbourne, and Mrs. Stevenson held an assault of arms on the public highway, and fired at bottles to the admiration of the natives. Captain Reid of the *Equator* stayed on shore with us to be at hand in case of trouble, and we retired to bed at the accustomed hour, agreeably excited by the day's events. The night was exquisite, the silence enchanting; yet as I lay in my hammock looking on the strong moonshine and the quiescent palms, one ugly picture haunted me of the two women, the naked and the clad, locked in that hostile embrace. The harm done was probably not much, yet I could have looked on death and massacre with less revolt. The return to these primeval weapons, the vision of man's beastliness, of his ferality, shocked in me a deeper sense than that with which we count the cost of battles. There are elements in our state and history which it is a pleasure to forget, which it is perhaps the better wisdom not to dwell on. Crime, pestilence, and death are in the day's work; the imagination readily accepts them. It instinctively rejects, on the contrary, whatever shall call up the image of our race upon its lowest terms, as the partner of beasts, beastly itself, dwelling pell-mell and hugger-mugger, hairy man with hairy woman, in the caves of old. And yet to be just to barbarous islanders we must not forget the slums and dens of our cities; I must not forget that I have passed dinnerward through Soho, and seen that which cured me of my dinner.

Tuesday, July 16. - It rained in the night, sudden and loud, in Gilbert Island fashion. Before the day, the crowing of a cock aroused me and I wandered in the compound and along the street. The squall was blown by, the moon shone with incomparable lustre, the air lay dead as in a room, and yet all the isle sounded as under a strong shower, the eaves thickly pattering, the lofty palms dripping at larger intervals and with a louder note. In this bold nocturnal light the interior of the houses lay inscrutable, one lump of blackness, save when the moon glinted under the roof, and made a belt of silver, and drew the slanting shadows of the pillars on the floor. Nowhere in all the town was any lamp or ember; not a creature stirred; I thought I was alone to be awake; but the police were faithful to their duty; secretly vigilant, keeping account of time; and a little later, the watchman struck slowly and repeatedly on the cathedral bell; four o'clock, the warning signal. It seemed strange that, in a town resigned to drunkenness and tumult, curfew and réveille should still be sounded and still obeyed.

The day came, and brought little change. The place still lay silent; the people slept, the town slept. Even the few who were awake, mostly women and children, held their peace and kept within under the strong shadow of the thatch, where you must stop and peer to see them. Through the deserted streets, and past the sleeping houses, a deputation took its way at an early hour to the palace; the king was suddenly awakened, and must listen (probably with a headache) to unpalatable truths. Mrs. Rick, being a sufficient mistress of that difficult tongue, was spokeswoman; she explained to the sick monarch that I was an intimate personal friend of Queen Victoria's; that immediately on my return I should make her a report upon Butaritari; and that if my house should have been again invaded by natives, a man-of-war would be despatched to make reprisals. It was scarce the fact - rather a just and necessary parable of the fact, corrected for latitude; and it certainly told upon the king. He was much affected; he had conceived the notion (he said) that I was a man of some importance, but not dreamed it was as bad as this; and the missionary house was tapu'd under a fine of fifty dollars.

So much was announced on the return of the deputation; not any more; and I gathered subsequently that much more had passed. The protection gained was welcome. It had been the most annoying and not the least alarming feature of the day before, that our house was periodically filled with tipsy natives, twenty or thirty at a time, begging drink, fingering our goods, hard to be dislodged, awkward to quarrel with. Queen Victoria's friend (who was soon promoted to be her son) was free from these intrusions. Not only my house, but my neighbourhood as well, was left in peace; even on our walks abroad we were guarded and prepared for; and, like great persons visiting a hospital, saw only the fair side. For the matter of a week we were thus suffered to go out and in and live in a fool's paradise, supposing the king to have kept his word, the tapu to be revived and the island once more sober.

Tuesday, July 23. - We dined under a bare trellis erected for the Fourth of July; and here we used to linger by lamplight over coffee and tobacco. In that climate evening approaches without sensible chill; the wind dies out before sunset; heaven glows a while and fades, and darkens into the blueness of the tropical night; swiftly and insensibly the shadows thicken, the stars multiply their number; you look around you and the day is gone. It was then that we would see our Chinaman draw near across the compound in a lurching sphere of light, divided by his shadows; and with the coming of the lamp the night closed about the table. The faces of the company, the spars of the trellis, stood out suddenly bright on a ground of blue and silver, faintly designed with palm-tops and the peaked roofs of houses. Here and there the gloss upon a leaf, or the fracture of a stone, returned an isolated sparkle. All else had vanished. We hung there, illuminated like a galaxy of stars *in vacuo*; we sat, manifest and blind, amid the general ambush of the darkness; and the islanders, passing with light footfalls and low voices in the sand of the road, lingered to observe us, unseen.

On Tuesday the dusk had fallen, the lamp had just been brought, when a missile struck the table with a rattling smack and rebounded past my ear. Three inches to one side and this page had never been written; for the thing travelled like a cannon ball. It was supposed at the time to be a nut, though even at the time I thought it seemed a small one and fell strangely.

Wednesday, July 24. - The dusk had fallen once more, and the lamp been just brought out, when the same business was repeated. And again the missile whistled past my ear. One nut I had been willing to accept; a second, I rejected utterly. A cocoa-nut does not come slinging along on a windless evening, making an angle of about fifteen degrees with the horizon; cocoa-nuts do not fall on successive nights at the same hour and spot; in both cases, besides, a specific moment seemed to have been chosen, that when the lamp was just carried out, a specific person threatened, and that the head of the family. I may have been right or wrong, but I believed I was the mark of some intimidation; believed the missile was a stone, aimed not to hit, but to frighten.

No idea makes a man more angry. I ran into the road, where the natives were as usual promenading in the dark; Maka joined me with a lantern; and I ran from one to another, glared in quite innocent faces, put useless questions, and proffered idle threats. Thence I carried my wrath (which was worthy the son of any queen in history) to the Ricks. They heard me with depression, assured me this trick of throwing a stone into a family dinner was not new; that it meant mischief, and was of a piece with the alarming disposition of the natives. And then the truth, so long concealed from us, came out. The king had broken his promise, he had defied the deputation; the tapu was still dormant, *The Land we Live in* still selling drink, and that quarter of the town disturbed and menaced by perpetual broils. But there was worse ahead: a feast was now preparing for the birthday of the little princess; and the tributary chiefs of Kuma and Little Makin were expected daily. Strong in a following of numerous and somewhat savage clansmen, each of these was believed, like a Douglas of old, to be of doubtful loyalty. Kuma (a little pot-bellied fellow) never visited the palace, never entered the town, but sat on the beach on a mat, his gun across his knees, parading his mistrust and scorn; Karaiti of Makin, although he was more bold, was not supposed to be more friendly; and not only were these vassals jealous of the throne, but the followers on either side shared in the animosity. Brawls had already taken place; blows had passed which might at any moment be repaid in blood. Some of the strangers were already here and already drinking; if the debauch continued after the bulk of them had come, a collision, perhaps a revolution, was to be expected.

The sale of drink is in this group a measure of the jealousy of traders; one begins, the others are constrained to follow; and to him who has the most gin, and sells it the most recklessly, the lion's share of copra is assured. It is felt by all to be an extreme expedient, neither safe, decent, nor dignified. A trader on Tarawa, heated by an eager rivalry, brought many cases of gin. He told me he sat afterwards day and night in his house till it was finished, not daring to arrest the sale, not venturing to go forth, the bush all round him filled with howling drunkards. At night, above all, when he was afraid to sleep, and heard shots and voices about him in the darkness, his remorse was black.

'My God!' he reflected, 'if I was to lose my life on such a wretched business!' Often and often, in the story of the Gilberts, this scene has been repeated; and the remorseful trader sat beside his lamp, longing for the day, listening with agony for the sound of murder, registering resolutions for the future. For the business is easy to begin, but hazardous to stop. The natives are in their way a just and law-abiding people, mindful of their debts, docile to the voice of their own institutions; when the tapu is re-enforced they will cease drinking; but the white who seeks to antedate the movement by refusing liquor does so at his peril.

Hence, in some degree, the anxiety and helplessness of Mr. Rick. He and Tom, alarmed by the rabblement of the *Sans Souci*, had stopped the sale; they had done so without danger, because *The Land we Live in* still continued selling; it was claimed, besides, that they had been the first to begin. What step could be taken? Could Mr. Rick visit Mr. Muller (with whom he was not on terms) and address him thus: 'I was getting ahead of you, now you are getting ahead of me, and I ask you to forego your profit. I got my place closed in safety, thanks to your continuing; but now I think you have continued long enough. I begin to be alarmed; and because I am afraid I ask you to confront a certain danger'? It was not to be thought of. Something else had to be found; and there was one person at one end of the town who was at least not interested in copra. There was little else to be said in favour of myself as an ambassador. I had arrived in the Wightman schooner, I was living in the Wightman compound, I was the daily associate of the Wightman coterie. It was egregious enough that I should now intrude unasked in the private affairs of Crawford's agent, and press upon him the sacrifice of his interests and the venture of his life. But bad as I might be, there was none better; since the affair of the stone I was, besides, sharp-set to be doing, the idea of a delicate interview attracted me, and I thought it policy to show myself abroad.

The night was very dark. There was service in the church, and the building glimmered through all its crevices like a dim Kirk Allowa'. I saw few other lights, but was indistinctly aware of many people stirring in the darkness, and a hum and sputter of low talk that sounded stealthy. I believe (in the old phrase) my beard was sometimes on my shoulder as I went. Muller's was but partly lighted, and quite silent, and the gate was fastened. I could by no means manage to undo the latch. No wonder, since I found it afterwards to be four or five feet long - a fortification in itself. As I still fumbled, a dog came on the inside and sniffed suspiciously at my hands, so that I was reduced to calling 'House ahoy!' Mr. Muller came down and put his chin across the paling in the dark. 'Who is that?' said he, like one who has no mind to welcome strangers.

'My name is Stevenson,' said I.

'O, Mr. Stevens! I didn't know you. Come inside.' We stepped into the dark store, when I leaned upon the counter and he against the wall. All the light came from the sleeping-room, where I saw his family being put to bed; it struck full in my face, but Mr. Muller stood in shadow. No doubt he expected what was Coming, and sought the advantage of position; but for a man who wished to persuade and had nothing to conceal, mine was the preferable.

‘Look here,’ I began, ‘I hear you are selling to the natives.’

‘Others have done that before me,’ he returned pointedly.

‘No doubt,’ said I, ‘and I have nothing to do with the past, but the future. I want you to promise you will handle these spirits carefully.’

‘Now what is your motive in this?’ he asked, and then, with a sneer, ‘Are you afraid of your life?’

‘That is nothing to the purpose,’ I replied. ‘I know, and you know, these spirits ought not to be used at all.’

‘Tom and Mr. Rick have sold them before.’

‘I have nothing to do with Tom and Mr. Rick. All I know is I have heard them both refuse.’

‘No, I suppose you have nothing to do with them. Then you are just afraid of your life.’

‘Come now,’ I cried, being perhaps a little stung, ‘you know in your heart I am asking a reasonable thing. I don’t ask you to lose your profit - though I would prefer to see no spirits brought here, as you would - ‘

‘I don’t say I wouldn’t. I didn’t begin this,’ he interjected.

‘No, I don’t suppose you did,’ said I. ‘And I don’t ask you to lose; I ask you to give me your word, man to man, that you will make no native drunk.’

Up to now Mr. Muller had maintained an attitude very trying to my temper; but he had maintained it with difficulty, his sentiment being all upon my side; and here he changed ground for the worse. ‘It isn’t me that sells,’ said he.

‘No, it’s that nigger,’ I agreed. ‘But he’s yours to buy and sell; you have your hand on the nape of his neck; and I ask you - I have my wife here - to use the authority you have.’

He hastily returned to his old ward. ‘I don’t deny I could if I wanted,’ said he. ‘But there’s no danger, the natives are all quiet. You’re just afraid of your life.’

I do not like to be called a coward, even by implication; and here I lost my temper and propounded an untimely ultimatum. ‘You had better put it plain,’ I cried. ‘Do you mean to refuse me what I ask?’

‘I don’t want either to refuse it or grant it,’ he replied.

‘You’ll find you have to do the one thing or the other, and right now!’ I cried, and then, striking into a happier vein, ‘Come,’ said I, ‘you’re a better sort than that. I see what’s wrong with you - you think I came from the opposite camp. I see the sort of man you are, and you know that what I ask is right.’

Again he changed ground. ‘If the natives get any drink, it isn’t safe to stop them,' he objected.

'I'll be answerable for the bar,' I said. 'We are three men and four revolvers; we'll come at a word, and hold the place against the village.'

'You don't know what you're talking about; it's too dangerous!' he cried.

'Look here,' said I, 'I don't mind much about losing that life you talk so much of; but I mean to lose it the way I want to, and that is, putting a stop to all this beastliness.'

He talked a while about his duty to the firm; I minded not at all, I was secure of victory. He was but waiting to capitulate, and looked about for any potent to relieve the strain. In the gush of light from the bedroom door I spied a cigar-holder on the desk. 'That is well coloured,' said I.

'Will you take a cigar?' said he.

I took it and held it up unlighted. 'Now,' said I, 'you promise me.'

'I promise you you won't have any trouble from natives that have drunk at my place,' he replied.

'That is all I ask,' said I, and showed it was not by immediately offering to try his stock.

So far as it was anyway critical our interview here ended. Mr. Muller had thenceforth ceased to regard me as an emissary from his rivals, dropped his defensive attitude, and spoke as he believed. I could make out that he would already, had he dared, have stopped the sale himself. Not quite daring, it may be imagined how he resented the idea of interference from those who had (by his own statement) first led him on, then deserted him in the breach, and now (sitting themselves in safety) egged him on to a new peril, which was all gain to them, all loss to him! I asked him what he thought of the danger from the feast.

'I think worse of it than any of you,' he answered. 'They were shooting around here last night, and I heard the balls too. I said to myself, "That's bad." What gets me is why you should be making this row up at your end. I should be the first to go.'

It was a thoughtless wonder. The consolation of being second is not great; the fact, not the order of going - there was our concern.

Scott talks moderately of looking forward to a time of fighting 'with a feeling that resembled pleasure.' The resemblance seems rather an identity. In modern life, contact is ended; man grows impatient of endless manoeuvres; and to approach the fact, to find ourselves where we can push an advantage home, and stand a fair risk, and see at last what we are made of, stirs the blood. It was so at least with all my family, who bubbled with delight at the approach of trouble; and we sat deep into the night like a pack of schoolboys, preparing the revolvers and arranging plans against the morrow. It promised certainly to be a busy and eventful day. The Old Men were to be summoned to confront me on the question of the tapu; Muller might call us at any moment to garrison his bar; and suppose Muller to fail, we decided in a family council to take that matter into our own hands, *The Land we Live in* at the pistol's mouth, and with the polysyllabic Williams, dance to a new tune. As I recall our humour I think it would have gone hard with the mulatto.

Wednesday, *July* 24. - It was as well, and yet it was disappointing that these thunder-clouds rolled off in silence. Whether the Old Men recoiled from an interview with Queen Victoria's son, whether Muller had secretly intervened, or whether the step flowed naturally from the fears of the king and the nearness of the feast, the tapu was early that morning re-enforced; not a day too soon, from the manner the boats began to arrive thickly, and the town was filled with the big rowdy vassals of Karaiti.

The effect lingered for some time on the minds of the traders; it was with the approval of all present that I helped to draw up a petition to the United States, praying for a law against the liquor trade in the Gilberts; and it was at this request that I added, under my own name, a brief testimony of what had passed; - useless pains; since the whole reposes, probably unread and possibly unopened, in a pigeon-hole at Washington.

Sunday, July 28. - This day we had the afterpiece of the debauch. The king and queen, in European clothes, and followed by armed guards, attended church for the first time, and sat perched aloft in a precarious dignity under the barrel-hoops. Before sermon his majesty clambered from the dais, stood lopsidedly upon the gravel floor, and in a few words abjured drinking. The queen followed suit with a yet briefer allocution. All the men in church were next addressed in turn; each held up his right hand, and the affair was over - throne and church were reconciled.

CHAPTER VI - THE FIVE DAYS' FESTIVAL

Thursday, July 25. - The street was this day much enlivened by the presence of the men from Little Makin; they average taller than Butaritarians, and being on a holiday, went wreathed with yellow leaves and gorgeous in vivid colours. They are said to be more savage, and to be proud of the distinction. Indeed, it seemed to us they swaggered in the town, like plaided Highlanders upon the streets of Inverness, conscious of barbaric virtues.

In the afternoon the summer parlour was observed to be packed with people; others standing outside and stooping to peer under the eaves, like children at home about a circus. It was the Makin company, rehearsing for the day of competition. Karaiti sat in the front row close to the singers, where we were summoned (I suppose in honour of Queen Victoria) to join him. A strong breathless heat reigned under the iron roof, and the air was heavy with the scent of wreaths. The singers, with fine mats about their loins, cocoa-nut feathers set in rings upon their fingers, and their heads crowned with yellow leaves, sat on the floor by companies. A varying number of soloists stood up for different songs; and these bore the chief part in the music. But the full force of the companies, even when not singing, contributed continuously to the effect, and marked the ictus of the measure, mimicking, grimacing, casting up their heads and eyes, fluttering the feathers on their fingers, clapping hands, or beating (loud as a kettledrum) on the left breast; the time was exquisite, the music barbarous, but full of conscious art. I noted some devices constantly employed. A sudden change would be introduced (I think of key) with no break of the measure, but emphasised by a sudden dramatic heightening of the voice and a swinging, general gesticulation. The voices of the soloists would begin far apart in a rude discord, and gradually draw together to a unison; which, when, they had reached, they were joined and drowned by the full chorus. The ordinary, hurried, barking unmelodious movement of the voices would at times be broken and glorified by a psalm-like strain of melody, often well constructed, or seeming so by contrast. There was much variety of measure, and towards the end of each piece, when the fun became fast and furious, a recourse to this figure -

[Musical notation which cannot be produced. It means two/four time with quaver, quaver, crotchet repeated for three bars.]

It is difficult to conceive what fire and devilry they get into these hammering finales; all go together, voices, hands, eyes, leaves, and fluttering finger-rings; the chorus swings to the eye, the song throbs on the ear; the faces are convulsed with enthusiasm and effort.

Presently the troop stood up in a body, the drums forming a half-circle for the soloists, who were sometimes five or even more in number. The songs that followed were highly dramatic; though I had none to give me any explanation, I would at times make out some shadowy but decisive outline of a plot; and I was continually reminded of certain quarrelsome concerted scenes in grand operas at home; just so the single voices issue from and fall again into the general volume; just so do the performers separate and crowd together, brandish the raised hand, and roll the eye to heaven - or the gallery. Already this is beyond the Thespian model; the art of this people is already past the embryo: song, dance, drums, quartette and solo - it is the drama full developed although still in miniature. Of all so-called dancing in the South Seas, that which I saw in Butaritari stands easily the first. The *hula*, as it may be viewed by the speedy globe-trotter in Honolulu, is surely the most dull of man's inventions, and the spectator yawns under its length as at a college lecture or a parliamentary debate. But the Gilbert Island dance leads on the mind; it thrills, rouses, subjugates; it has the essence of all art, an unexplored imminent significance. Where so many are engaged, and where all must make (at a given moment) the same swift, elaborate, and often arbitrary movement, the toil of rehearsal is of course extreme. But they begin as children. A child and a man may often be seen together in a maniap': the man sings and gesticulates, the child stands before him with streaming tears and tremulously copies him in act and sound; it is the Gilbert Island artist learning (as all artists must) his art in sorrow.

I may seem to praise too much; here is a passage from my wife's diary, which proves that I was not alone in being moved, and completes the picture:- 'The conductor gave the cue, and all the dancers, waving their arms, swaying their bodies, and clapping their breasts in perfect time, opened with an introductory. The performers remained seated, except two, and once three, and twice a single soloist. These stood in the group, making a slight movement with the feet and rhythmical quiver of the body as they sang. There was a pause after the introductory, and then the real business of the opera - for it was no less - began; an opera where every singer was an accomplished actor. The leading man, in an impassioned ecstasy which possessed him from head to foot, seemed transfigured; once it was as though a strong wind had swept over the stage - their arms, their feathered fingers thrilling with an emotion that shook my nerves as well: heads and bodies followed like a field of grain before a gust. My blood came hot and cold, tears pricked my eyes, my head whirled, I felt an almost irresistible impulse to join the dancers. One drama, I think, I very nearly understood. A fierce and savage old man took the solo part. He sang of the birth of a prince, and how he was tenderly rocked in his mother's arms; of his boyhood, when he excelled his fellows in swimming, climbing, and all athletic sports; of his youth, when he went out to sea with his boat and fished; of his manhood, when he married a wife who cradled a son of his own in her arms. Then came the alarm of war, and a great battle, of which for a time the issue was doubtful; but the hero conquered, as he always does, and with a tremendous burst of the victors the piece closed. There were also comic pieces, which caused great amusement. During one, an old man behind me clutched me by the arm, shook his finger in my face with a roguish smile, and said something with a chuckle, which I took to be the equivalent of "O, you women, you women; it is true of you all!" I fear it was not complimentary. At no time was there the least sign of the ugly indecency of the eastern islands. All was poetry pure and simple. The music itself was as complex as our own, though constructed on an entirely different basis; once or twice I was startled by a bit of something very like the best English sacred music, but it was only for an instant. At last there was a longer pause, and this time the dancers were all on their feet. As the drama went on, the interest grew. The performers appealed to each other, to the audience, to the heaven above; they took counsel with each other, the conspirators drew together in a knot; it was just an opera, the drums coming in at proper intervals, the tenor, baritone, and bass all where they should be - except that the voices were all of the same calibre. A woman once sang from the back row with a very fine contralto voice spoilt by being made artificially nasal; I notice all the women affect that unpleasantness. At one time a boy of angelic beauty was the soloist; and at another, a child of six or eight, doubtless an infant phenomenon being trained, was placed in the centre. The little fellow was desperately frightened and embarrassed at first, but towards the close warmed up to his work and showed much dramatic talent. The changing expressions on the faces of the dancers were so speaking, that it seemed a great stupidity not to understand them.'

Our neighbour at this performance, Karaiti, somewhat favours his Butaritarian majesty in shape and feature, being, like him, portly, bearded, and Oriental. In character he seems the reverse: alert, smiling, jovial, jocular, industrious. At home in his own island, he labours himself like a slave, and makes his people labour like a slave-driver. He takes an interest in ideas. George the trader told him about flying-machines. 'Is that true, George?' he asked. 'It is in the papers,' replied George. 'Well,' said Karaiti, 'if that man can do it with machinery, I can do it without'; and he designed and made a pair of wings, strapped them on his shoulders, went to the end of a pier, launched himself into space, and fell bulkily into the sea. His wives fished him out, for his wings hindered him in swimming. ‘George,’ said he, pausing as he went up to change, ‘George, you lie.’ He had eight wives, for his small realm still follows ancient customs; but he showed embarrassment when this was mentioned to my wife. ‘Tell her I have only brought one here,’ he said anxiously. Altogether the Black Douglas pleased us much; and as we heard fresh details of the king’s uneasiness, and saw for ourselves that all the weapons in the summer parlour had been hid, we watched with the more admiration the cause of all this anxiety rolling on his big legs, with his big smiling face, apparently unarmed, and certainly unattended, through the hostile town. The Red Douglas, pot-bellied Kuma, having perhaps heard word of the debauch, remained upon his fief; his vassals thus came uncommanded to the feast, and swelled the following of Karaiti.

Friday, *July* 26. - At night in the dark, the singers of Makin paraded in the road before our house and sang the song of the princess. ‘This is the day; she was born to-day; Nei Kamaunave was born to-day - a beautiful princess, Queen of Butaritari.’ So I was told it went in endless iteration. The song was of course out of season, and the performance only a rehearsal. But it was a serenade besides; a delicate attention to ourselves from our new friend, Karaiti.

Saturday, *July* 27. - We had announced a performance of the magic lantern to-night in church; and this brought the king to visit us. In honour of the Black Douglas (I suppose) his usual two guardsmen were now increased to four; and the squad made an outlandish figure as they straggled after him, in straw hats, kilts and jackets. Three carried their arms reversed, the butts over their shoulders, the muzzles menacing the king’s plump back; the fourth had passed his weapon behind his neck, and held it there with arms extended like a backboard. The visit was extraordinarily long. The king, no longer galvanised with gin, said and did nothing. He sat collapsed in a chair and let a cigar go out. It was hot, it was sleepy, it was cruel dull; there was no resource but to spy in the countenance of Tebureimoa for some remaining trait of *Mr. Corpse* the butcher. His hawk nose, crudely depressed and flattened at the point, did truly seem to us to smell of midnight murder. When he took his leave, Maka bade me observe him going down the stair (or rather ladder) from the verandah. ‘Old man,’ said Maka. ‘Yes,’ said I, ‘and yet I suppose not old man.’ ‘Young man,’ returned Maka, ‘perhaps fo’ty.’ And I have heard since he is most likely younger.

While the magic lantern was showing, I skulked without in the dark. The voice of Maka, excitedly explaining the Scripture slides, seemed to fill not the church only, but the neighbourhood. All else was silent. Presently a distant sound of singing arose and approached;

and a procession drew near along the road, the hot clean smell of the men and women striking in my face delightfully. At the corner, arrested by the voice of Maka and the lightening and darkening of the church, they paused. They had no mind to go nearer, that was plain. They were Makin people, I believe, probably staunch heathens, contemners of the missionary and his works. Of a sudden, however, a man broke from their company, took to his heels, and fled into the church; next moment three had followed him; the next it was a covey of near upon a score, all pelting for their lives. So the little band of the heathen paused irresolute at the corner, and melted before the attractions of a magic lantern, like a glacier in spring. The more staunch vainly taunted the deserters; three fled in a guilty silence, but still fled; and when at length the leader found the wit or the authority to get his troop in motion and revive the singing, it was with much diminished forces that they passed musically on up the dark road.

Meanwhile inside the luminous pictures brightened and faded. I stood for some while unobserved in the rear of the spectators, when I could hear just in front of me a pair of lovers following the show with interest, the male playing the part of interpreter and (like Adam) mingling caresses with his lecture. The wild animals, a tiger in particular, and that old school-treat favourite, the sleeper and the mouse, were hailed with joy; but the chief marvel and delight was in the gospel series. Maka, in the opinion of his aggrieved wife, did not properly rise to the occasion. ‘What is the matter with the man? Why can’t he talk?’ she cried. The matter with the man, I think, was the greatness of the opportunity; he reeled under his good fortune; and whether he did ill or well, the exposure of these pious ‘phantoms’ did as a matter of fact silence in all that part of the island the voice of the scoffer. ‘Why then,’ the word went round, ‘why then, the Bible is true!’ And on our return afterwards we were told the impression was yet lively, and those who had seen might be heard telling those who had not, ‘O yes, it is all true; these things all happened, we have seen the pictures.’ The argument is not so childish as it seems; for I doubt if these islanders are acquainted with any other mode of representation but photography; so that the picture of an event (on the old melodrama principle that ‘the camera cannot lie, Joseph,’) would appear strong proof of its occurrence. The fact amused us the more because our slides were some of them ludicrously silly, and one (Christ before Pilate) was received with shouts of merriment, in which even Maka was constrained to join.

Sunday, *July* 28. - Karaiti came to ask for a repetition of the ‘phantoms’ - this was the accepted word - and, having received a promise, turned and left my humble roof without the shadow of a salutation. I felt it impolite to have the least appearance of pocketing a slight; the times had been too difficult, and were still too doubtful; and Queen Victoria's son was bound to maintain the honour of his house. Karaiti was accordingly summoned that evening to the Ricks, where Mrs. Rick fell foul of him in words, and Queen Victoria's son assailed him with indignant looks. I was the ass with the lion's skin; I could not roar in the language of the Gilbert Islands; but I could stare. Karaiti declared he had meant no offence; apologised in a sound, hearty, gentlemanly manner; and became at once at his ease. He had in a dagger to examine, and announced he would come to price it on the morrow, to-day being Sunday; this nicety in a heathen with eight wives surprised me. The dagger was 'good for killing fish,' he said roguishly; and was supposed to have his eye upon fish upon two legs. It is at least odd that in Eastern Polynesia fish was the accepted euphemism for the human sacrifice. Asked as to the population of his island, Karaiti called out to his vassals who sat waiting him outside the door, and they put it at four hundred and fifty; but (added Karaiti jovially) there will soon be plenty more, for all the women are in the family way. Long before we separated I had quite forgotten his offence. He, however, still bore it in mind; and with a very courteous inspiration returned early on the next day, paid us a long visit, and punctiliously said farewell when he departed.

Monday, *July* 29. - The great day came round at last. In the first hours the night was startled by the sound of clapping hands and the chant of Nei Kamaunava; its melancholy, slow, and somewhat menacing measures broken at intervals by a formidable shout. The little morsel of humanity thus celebrated in the dark hours was observed at midday playing on the green entirely naked, and equally unobserved and unconcerned.

The summer parlour on its artificial islet, relieved against the shimmering lagoon, and shimmering itself with sun and tinned iron, was all day crowded about by eager men and women. Within, it was boxed full of islanders, of any age and size, and in every degree of nudity and finery. So close we squatted, that at one time I had a mighty handsome woman on my knees, two little naked urchins having their feet against my back. There might be a dame in full attire of *holoku* and hat and flowers; and her next neighbour might the next moment strip some little rag of a shift from her fat shoulders and come out a monument of flesh, painted rather than covered by the hairbreadth *ridi*. Little ladies who thought themselves too great to appear undraped upon so high a festival were seen to pause outside in the bright sunshine, their miniature ridis in their hand; a moment more and they were full-dressed and entered the concert-room.

At either end stood up to sing, or sat down to rest, the alternate companies of singers; Kuma and Little Makin on the north, Butaritari and its conjunct hamlets on the south; both groups conspicuous in barbaric bravery. In the midst, between these rival camps of troubadours, a bench was placed; and here the king and queen throned it, some two or three feet above the crowded audience on the floor - Tebureimoa as usual in his striped pyjamas with a satchel strapped across one shoulder, doubtless (in the island fashion) to contain his pistols; the queen in a purple *holoku*, her abundant hair let down, a fan in her hand. The bench was turned facing to the strangers, a piece of well-considered civility; and when it was the turn of Butaritari to sing, the pair must twist round on the bench, lean their elbows on the rail, and turn to us the spectacle of their broad backs. The royal couple occasionally solaced themselves with a clay pipe; and the pomp of state was further heightened by the rifles of a picket of the guard.

With this kingly countenance, and ourselves squatted on the ground, we heard several songs from one side or the other. Then royalty and its guards withdrew, and Queen Victoria's son and daughter-in-law were summoned by acclamation to the vacant throne. Our pride was perhaps a little modified when we were joined on our high places by a certain thriftless loafer of a white; and yet I was glad too, for the man had a smattering of native, and could give me some idea of the subject of the songs. One was patriotic, and dared Tembinok' of Apemama, the terror of the group, to an invasion. One mixed the planting of taro and the harvest-home. Some were historical, and commemorated kings and the illustrious chances of their time, such as a bout of drinking or a war. One, at least, was a drama of domestic interest, excellently played by the troop from Makin. It told the story of a man who has lost his wife, at first bewails her loss, then seeks another: the earlier strains (or acts) are played exclusively by men; but towards the end a woman appears, who has just lost her husband; and I suppose the pair console each other, for the finale seemed of happy omen. Of some of the songs my informant told me briefly they were 'like about the *weemen*'; this I could have guessed myself. Each side (I should have said) was strengthened by one or two women. They were all soloists, did not very often join in the performance, but stood disengaged at the back part of the stage, and looked (in *ridi*, necklace, and dressed hair) for all the world like European ballet-dancers. When the song was anyway broad these ladies came particularly to the front; and it was singular to see that, after each entry, the *première danseuse* pretended to be overcome by shame, as though led on beyond what she had meant, and her male assistants made a feint of driving her away like one who had disgraced herself. Similar affectations accompany certain truly obscene dances of Samoa, where they are very well in place. Here it was different.

The words, perhaps, in this free-spoken world, were gross enough to make a carter blush; and the most suggestive feature was this feint of shame. For such parts the women showed some disposition; they were pert, they were neat, they were acrobatic, they were at times really amusing, and some of them were pretty. But this is not the artist's field; there is the whole width of heaven between such capering and ogling, and the strange rhythmic gestures, and strange, rapturous, frenzied faces with which the best of the male dancers held us spellbound through a Gilbert Island ballet.

Almost from the first it was apparent that the people of the city were defeated. I might have thought them even good, only I had the other troop before my eyes to correct my standard, and remind me continually of 'the little more, and how much it is.' Perceiving themselves worsted, the choir of Butaritari grew confused, blundered, and broke down; amid this hubbub of unfamiliar intervals I should not myself have recognised the slip, but the audience were quick to catch it, and to jeer. To crown all, the Makin company began a dance of truly superlative merit. I know not what it was about, I was too much absorbed to ask. In one act a part of the chorus, squealing in some strange falsetto, produced very much the effect of our orchestra; in another, the dancers, leaping like jumping-jacks, with arms extended, passed through and through each other's ranks with extraordinary speed, neatness, and humour. A more laughable effect I never saw; in any European theatre it would have brought the house down, and the island audience roared with laughter and applause. This filled up the measure for the rival company, and they forgot themselves and decency. After each act or figure of the ballet, the performers pause a moment standing, and the next is introduced by the clapping of hands in triplets. Not until the end of the whole ballet do they sit down, which is the signal for the rivals to stand up. But now all rules were to be broken. During the interval following on this great applause, the company of Butaritari leaped suddenly to their feet and most unhandsomely began a performance of their own. It was strange to see the men of Makin staring; I have seen a tenor in Europe stare with the same blank dignity into a hissing theatre; but presently, to my surprise, they sobered down, gave up the unsung remainder of their ballet, resumed their seats, and suffered their ungallant adversaries to go on and finish. Nothing would suffice. Again, at the first interval, Butaritari unhandsomely cut in; Makin, irritated in turn, followed the example; and the two companies of dancers remained permanently standing, continuously clapping hands, and regularly cutting across each other at each pause. I expected blows to begin with any moment; and our position in the midst was highly unstrategical. But the Makin people had a better thought; and upon a fresh interruption turned and trooped out of the house. We followed them, first because these were the artists, second because they were guests and had been scurvily ill-used. A large population of our neighbours did the same, so that the causeway was filled from end to end by the procession of deserters; and the Butaritari choir was left to sing for its own pleasure in an empty house, having gained the point and lost the audience. It was surely fortunate that there was no one drunk; but, drunk or sober, where else would a scene so irritating have concluded without blows?

The last stage and glory of this auspicious day was of our own providing - the second and positively the last appearance of the phantoms. All round the church, groups sat outside, in the night, where they could see nothing; perhaps ashamed to enter, certainly finding some shadowy pleasure in the mere proximity. Within, about one-half of the great shed was densely packed with people. In the midst, on the royal dais, the lantern luminously smoked; chance rays of light struck out the earnest countenance of our Chinaman grinding the hand-organ; a fainter glimmer showed off the rafters and their shadows in the hollow of the roof; the pictures shone and vanished on the screen; and as each appeared, there would run a hush, a whisper, a strong shuddering rustle, and a chorus of small cries among the crowd. There sat by me the mate of a wrecked schooner. ‘They would think this a strange sight in Europe or the States,’ said he, ‘going on in a building like this, all tied with bits of string.’

CHAPTER VII - HUSBAND AND WIFE

The trader accustomed to the manners of Eastern Polynesia has a lesson to learn among the Gilberts. The *ridi* is but a spare attire; as late as thirty years back the women went naked until marriage; within ten years the custom lingered; and these facts, above all when heard in description, conveyed a very false idea of the manners of the group. A very intelligent missionary described it (in its former state) as a 'Paradise of naked women' for the resident whites. It was at least a platonic Paradise, where Lothario ventured at his peril. Since 1860, fourteen whites have perished on a single island, all for the same cause, all found where they had no business, and speared by some indignant father of a family; the figure was given me by one of their contemporaries who had been more prudent and survived. The strange persistence of these fourteen martyrs might seem to point to monomania or a series of romantic passions; gin is the more likely key. The poor buzzards sat alone in their houses by an open case; they drank; their brain was fired; they stumbled towards the nearest houses on chance; and the dart went through their liver. In place of a Paradise the trader found an archipelago of fierce husbands and of virtuous women. 'Of course if you wish to make love to them, it's the same as anywhere else,' observed a trader innocently; but he and his companions rarely so choose.

The trader must be credited with a virtue: he often makes a kind and loyal husband. Some of the worst beachcombers in the Pacific, some of the last of the old school, have fallen in my path, and some of them were admirable to their native wives, and one made a despairing widower. The position of a trader's wife in the Gilberts is, besides, unusually enviable. She shares the immunities of her husband. Curfew in Butaritari sounds for her in vain. Long after the bell is rung and the great island ladies are confined for the night to their own roof, this chartered libertine may scamper and giggle through the deserted streets or go down to bathe in the dark. The resources of the store are at her hand; she goes arrayed like a queen, and feasts delicately everyday upon tinned meats. And she who was perhaps of no regard or station among natives sits with captains, and is entertained on board of schooners. Five of these privileged dames were some time our neighbours. Four were handsome skittish lasses, gamesome like children, and like children liable to fits of pouting. They wore dresses by day, but there was a tendency after dark to strip these lendings and to career and squall about the compound in the aboriginal *ridi*. Games of cards were continually played, with shells for counters; their course was much marred by cheating; and the end of a round (above all if a man was of the party) resolved itself into a scrimmage for the counters. The fifth was a matron. It was a picture to see her sail to church on a Sunday, a parasol in hand, a nursemaid following, and the baby buried in a trade hat and armed with a patent feeding-bottle. The service was enlivened by her continual supervision and correction of the maid. It was impossible not to fancy the baby was a doll, and the church some European playroom. All these women were legitimately married. It is true that the certificate of one, when she proudly showed it, proved to run thus, that she was 'married for one night,' and her gracious partner was at liberty to 'send her to hell' the next morning; but she was none the wiser or the worse for the dastardly trick. Another, I heard, was married on a work of mine in a pirated edition; it answered the purpose as well as a Hall Bible. Notwithstanding all these allurements of social distinction, rare food and raiment, a comparative vacation from toil, and legitimate marriage contracted on a pirated edition, the trader must sometimes seek long before he can be mated. While I was in the group one had been eight months on the quest, and he was still a bachelor.

Within strictly native society the old laws and practices were harsh, but not without a certain stamp of high-mindedness. Stealthy adultery was punished with death; open elopement was properly considered virtue in comparison, and compounded for a fine in land. The male adulterer alone seems to have been punished. It is correct manners for a jealous man to hang himself; a jealous woman has a different remedy - she bites her rival. Ten or twenty years ago it was a capital offence to raise a woman's *ridi*; to this day it is still punished with a heavy fine; and the garment itself is still symbolically sacred. Suppose a piece of land to be disputed in Butaritari, the claimant who shall first hang a *ridi* on the tapu-post has gained his cause, since no one can remove or touch it but himself.

The *ridi* was the badge not of the woman but the wife, the mark not of her sex but of her station. It was the collar on the slave's neck, the brand on merchandise. The adulterous woman seems to have been spared; were the husband offended, it would be a poor consolation to send his draught cattle to the shambles. Karaiti, to this day, calls his eight wives 'his horses,' some trader having explained to him the employment of these animals on farms; and Nanteitei hired out his wives to do mason-work. Husbands, at least when of high rank, had the power of life and death; even whites seem to have possessed it; and their wives, when they had transgressed beyond forgiveness, made haste to pronounce the formula of deprecation - *I Kana Kim*. This form of words had so much virtue that a condemned criminal repeating it on a particular day to the king who had condemned him, must be instantly released. It is an offer of abasement, and, strangely enough, the reverse - the imitation - is a common vulgar insult in Great Britain to this day. I give a scene between a trader and his Gilbert Island wife, as it was told me by the husband, now one of the oldest residents, but then a freshman in the group.

'Go and light a fire,' said the trader, 'and when I have brought this oil I will cook some fish.' The woman grunted at him, island fashion. 'I am not a pig that you should grunt at me,' said he.

'I know you are not a pig,' said the woman, 'neither am I your slave.'

'To be sure you are not my slave, and if you do not care to stop with me, you had better go home to your people,' said he. 'But in the mean time go and light the fire; and when I have brought this oil I will cook some fish.'

She went as if to obey; and presently when the trader looked she had built a fire so big that the cook-house was catching in flames.

'*I Kana Kim*!' she cried, as she saw him coming; but he recked not, and hit her with a cooking-pot. The leg pierced her skull, blood spouted, it was thought she was a dead woman, and the natives surrounded the house in a menacing expectation. Another white was present, a man of older experience. 'You will have us both killed if you go on like this,' he cried. 'She had said *I Kana Kim*!' If she had not said *I Kana Kim* he might have struck her with a caldron. It was not the blow that made the crime, but the disregard of an accepted formula.

Polygamy, the particular sacredness of wives, their semi-servile state, their seclusion in kings' harems, even their privilege of biting, all would seem to indicate a Mohammedan society and the opinion of the soullessness of woman. And not so in the least. It is a mere appearance. After you have studied these extremes in one house, you may go to the next and find all reversed, the woman the mistress, the man only the first of her thralls. The authority is not with the husband as such, nor the wife as such. It resides in the chief or the chief-woman; in him or her who has inherited the lands of the clan, and stands to the clansman in the place of parent, exacting their service, answerable for their fines. There is but the one source of power and the one ground of dignity - rank. The king married a chief-woman; she became his menial, and must work with her hands on Messrs. Wightman's pier. The king divorced her; she regained at once her former state and power. She married the Hawaiian sailor, and behold the man is her flunkey and can be shown the door at pleasure. Nay, and such low-born lords are even corrected physically, and, like grown but dutiful children, must endure the discipline.

We were intimate in one such household, that of Nei Takauti and Nan Tok'; I put the lady first of necessity. During one week of fool's paradise, Mrs. Stevenson had gone alone to the sea-side of the island after shells. I am very sure the proceeding was unsafe; and she soon perceived a man and woman watching her. Do what she would, her guardians held her steadily in view; and when the afternoon began to fall, and they thought she had stayed long enough, took her in charge, and by signs and broken English ordered her home. On the way the lady drew from her earring-hole a clay pipe, the husband lighted it, and it was handed to my unfortunate wife, who knew not how to refuse the incommodious favour; and when they were all come to our house, the pair sat down beside her on the floor, and improved the occasion with prayer. From that day they were our family friends; bringing thrice a day the beautiful island garlands of white flowers, visiting us any evening, and frequently carrying us down to their own maniap' in return, the woman leading Mrs. Stevenson by the hand like one child with another.

Nan Tok', the husband, was young, extremely handsome, of the most approved good humour, and suffering in his precarious station from suppressed high spirits. Nei Takauti, the wife, was getting old; her grown son by a former marriage had just hanged himself before his mother's eyes in despair at a well-merited rebuke. Perhaps she had never been beautiful, but her face was full of character, her eye of sombre fire. She was a high chief-woman, but by a strange exception for a person of her rank, was small, spare, and sinewy, with lean small hands and corded neck. Her full dress of an evening was invariably a white chemise - and for adornment, green leaves (or sometimes white blossoms) stuck in her hair and thrust through her huge earring-holes. The husband on the contrary changed to view like a kaleidoscope. Whatever pretty thing my wife might have given to Nei Takauti - a string of beads, a ribbon, a piece of bright fabric - appeared the next evening on the person of Nan Tok'. It was plain he was a clothes-horse; that he wore livery; that, in a word, he was his wife's wife. They reversed the parts indeed, down to the least particular; it was the husband who showed himself the ministering angel in the hour of pain, while the wife displayed the apathy and heartlessness of the proverbial man.

When Nei Takauti had a headache Nan Tok' was full of attention and concern. When the husband had a cold and a racking toothache the wife heeded not, except to jeer. It is always the woman's part to fill and light the pipe; Nei Takauti handed hers in silence to the wedded page; but she carried it herself, as though the page were not entirely trusted. Thus she kept the money, but it was he who ran the errands, anxiously sedulous. A cloud on her face dimmed instantly his beaming looks; on an early visit to their maniap’ my wife saw he had cause to be wary. Nan Tok’ had a friend with him, a giddy young thing, of his own age and sex; and they had worked themselves into that stage of jocularity when consequences are too often disregarded. Nei Takauti mentioned her own name. Instantly Nan Tok’ held up two fingers, his friend did likewise, both in an ecstasy of slyness. It was plain the lady had two names; and from the nature of their merriment, and the wrath that gathered on her brow, there must be something ticklish in the second. The husband pronounced it; a well-directed cocoa-nut from the hand of his wife caught him on the side of the head, and the voices and the mirth of these indiscreet young gentlemen ceased for the day.

The people of Eastern Polynesia are never at a loss; their etiquette is absolute and plenary; in every circumstance it tells them what to do and how to do it. The Gilbertines are seemingly more free, and pay for their freedom (like ourselves) in frequent perplexity. This was often the case with the topsy-turvy couple. We had once supplied them during a visit with a pipe and tobacco; and when they had smoked and were about to leave, they found themselves confronted with a problem: should they take or leave what remained of the tobacco? The piece of plug was taken up, it was laid down again, it was handed back and forth, and argued over, till the wife began to look haggard and the husband elderly. They ended by taking it, and I wager were not yet clear of the compound before they were sure they had decided wrong. Another time they had been given each a liberal cup of coffee, and Nan Tok’ with difficulty and disaffection made an end of his. Nei Takauti had taken some, she had no mind for more, plainly conceived it would be a breach of manners to set down the cup unfinished, and ordered her wedded retainer to dispose of what was left. ‘I have swallowed all I can, I cannot swallow more, it is a physical impossibility,’ he seemed to say; and his stern officer reiterated her commands with secret imperative signals. Luckless dog! but in mere humanity we came to the rescue and removed the cup.

I cannot but smile over this funny household; yet I remember the good souls with affection and respect. Their attention to ourselves was surprising. The garlands are much esteemed, the blossoms must be sought far and wide; and though they had many retainers to call to their aid, we often saw themselves passing afield after the blossoms, and the wife engaged with her own in putting them together. It was no want of only that disregard so incident to husbands, that made Nei Takauti despise the sufferings of Nan Tok’. When my wife was unwell she proved a diligent and kindly nurse; and the pair, to the extreme embarrassment of the sufferer, became fixtures in the sick-room. This rugged, capable, imperious old dame, with the wild eyes, had deep and tender qualities: her pride in her young husband it seemed that she dissembled, fearing possibly to spoil him; and when she spoke of her dead son there came something tragic in her face. But I seemed to trace in the Gilbertines a virility of sense and sentiment which distinguishes them (like their harsh and uncouth language) from their brother islanders in the east.

PART IV: THE GILBERTS - APEMAMA

CHAPTER I - THE KING OF APEMAMA: THE ROYAL TRADER

There is one great personage in the Gilberts: Tembinok’ of Apemama: solely conspicuous, the hero of song, the butt of gossip. Through the rest of the group the kings are slain or fallen in tutelage: Tembinok’ alone remains, the last tyrant, the last erect vestige of a dead society. The white man is everywhere else, building his houses, drinking his gin, getting in and out of trouble with the weak native governments. There is only one white on Apemama, and he on sufferance, living far from court, and hearkening and watching his conduct like a mouse in a cat’s ear. Through all the other islands a stream of native visitors comes and goes, travelling by families, spending years on the grand tour. Apemama alone is left upon one side, the tourist dreading to risk himself within the clutch of Tembinok’. And fear of the same Gorgon follows and troubles them at home. Maiana once paid him tribute; he once fell upon and seized Nonuti: first steps to the empire of the archipelago. A British warship coming on the scene, the conqueror was driven to disgorge, his career checked in the outset, his dear-bought armoury sunk in his own lagoon. But the impression had been made; periodical fear of him still shakes the islands; rumour depicts him mustering his canoes for a fresh onfall; rumour can name his destination; and Tembinok’ figures in the patriotic war-songs of the Gilberts like Napoleon in those of our grandfathers.

We were at sea, bound from Mariki to Nonuti and Tapituea, when the wind came suddenly fair for Apemama. The course was at once changed; all hands were turned-to to clean ship, the decks holy-stoned, all the cabin washed, the trade-room overhauled. In all our cruising we never saw the *Equator* so smart as she was made for Tembinok’. Nor was Captain Reid alone in these coquetries; for, another schooner chancing to arrive during my stay in Apemama, I found that she also was dandified for the occasion. And the two cases stand alone in my experience of South Sea traders.

We had on board a family of native tourists, from the grandsire to the babe in arms, trying (against an extraordinary series of ill-luck) to regain their native island of Peru. Five times already they had paid their fare and taken ship; five times they had been disappointed, dropped penniless upon strange islands, or carried back to Butaritari, whence they sailed. This last attempt had been no better-starred; their provisions were exhausted. Peru was beyond hope, and they had cheerfully made up their minds to a fresh stage of exile in Tapituea or Nonuti. With this slant of wind their random destination became once more changed; and like the Calendar's pilot, when the 'black mountains' hove in view, they changed colour and beat upon their breasts. Their camp, which was on deck in the ship's waist, resounded with complaint. They would be set to work, they must become slaves, escape was hopeless, they must live and toil and die in Apemama, in the tyrant's den. With this sort of talk they so greatly terrified their children, that one (a big hulking boy) must at last be torn screaming from the schooner's side. And their fears were wholly groundless. I have little doubt they were not suffered to be idle; but I can vouch for it that they were kindly and generously used. For, the matter of a year later, I was once more shipmate with these inconsistent wanderers on board the *Janet Nicoll*. Their fare was paid by Tembinok'; they who had gone ashore from the *Equator* destitute, reappeared upon the *Janet* with new clothes, laden with mats and presents, and bringing with them a magazine of food, on which they lived like fighting-cocks throughout the voyage; I saw them at length repatriated, and I must say they showed more concern on quitting Apemama than delight at reaching home.

We entered by the north passage (Sunday, September 1st), dodging among shoals. It was a day of fierce equatorial sunshine; but the breeze was strong and chill; and the mate, who conned the schooner from the cross-trees, returned shivering to the deck. The lagoon was thick with many-tinted wavelets; a continuous roaring of the outer sea overhung the anchorage; and the long, hollow crescent of palm ruffled and sparkled in the wind. Opposite our berth the beach was seen to be surmounted for some distance by a terrace of white coral seven or eight feet high and crowned in turn by the scattered and incongruous buildings of the palace. The village adjoins on the south, a cluster of high-roofed maniap's. And village and palace seemed deserted.

We were scarce yet moored, however, before distant and busy figures appeared upon the beach, a boat was launched, and a crew pulled out to us bringing the king's ladder. Tembinok' had once an accident; has feared ever since to entrust his person to the rotten chandlery of South Sea traders; and devised in consequence a frame of wood, which is brought on board a ship as soon as she appears, and remains lashed to her side until she leave. The boat's crew, having applied this engine, returned at once to shore. They might not come on board; neither might we land, or not without danger of offence; the king giving pratique in person. An interval followed, during which dinner was delayed for the great man - the prelude of the ladder, giving us some notion of his weighty body and sensible, ingenious character, had highly whetted our curiosity; and it was with something like excitement that we saw the beach and terrace suddenly blacken with attendant vassals, the king and party embark, the boat (a man-of-war gig) come flying towards us dead before the wind, and the royal coxswain lay us cleverly aboard, mount the ladder with a jealous diffidence, and descend heavily on deck.

Not long ago he was overgrown with fat, obscured to view, and a burthen to himself. Captains visiting the island advised him to walk; and though it broke the habits of a life and the traditions of his rank, he practised the remedy with benefit. His corpulence is now portable; you would call him lusty rather than fat; but his gait is still dull, stumbling, and elephantine. He neither stops nor hastens, but goes about his business with an implacable deliberation. We could never see him and not be struck with his extraordinary natural means for the theatre: a beaked profile like Dante's in the mask, a mane of long black hair, the eye brilliant, imperious, and inquiring: for certain parts, and to one who could have used it, the face was a fortune. His voice matched it well, being shrill, powerful, and uncanny, with a note like a sea-bird's. Where there are no fashions, none to set them, few to follow them if they were set, and none to criticise, he dresses - as Sir Charles Grandison lived - 'to his own heart.' Now he wears a woman's frock, now a naval uniform; now (and more usually) figures in a masquerade costume of his own design: trousers and a singular jacket with shirt tails, the cut and fit wonderful for island workmanship, the material always handsome, sometimes green velvet, sometimes cardinal red silk. This masquerade becomes him admirably. In the woman's frock he looks ominous and weird beyond belief. I see him now come pacing towards me in the cruel sun, solitary, a figure out of Hoffmann.

A visit on board ship, such as that at which we now assisted, makes a chief part and by far the chief diversion of the life of Tembinok'. He is not only the sole ruler, he is the sole merchant of his triple kingdom, Apemama, Aranuka, and Kuria, well-planted islands. The taro goes to the chiefs, who divide as they please among their immediate adherents; but certain fish, turtles - which abound in Kuria, - and the whole produce of the coco-palm, belong exclusively to Tembinok'. 'A' cobra berong me,' observed his majesty with a wave of his hand; and he counts and sells it by the houseful. 'You got copra, king?' I have heard a trader ask. 'I got two, three outches,' his majesty replied: 'I think three.' Hence the commercial importance of Apemama, the trade of three islands being centred there in a single hand; hence it is that so many whites have tried in vain to gain or to preserve a footing; hence ships are adorned, cooks have special orders, and captains array themselves in smiles, to greet the king. If he be pleased with his welcome and the fare he may pass days on board, and, every day, and sometimes every hour, will be of profit to the ship. He oscillates between the cabin, where he is entertained with strange meats, and the trade-room, where he enjoys the pleasures of shopping on a scale to match his person. A few obsequious attendants squat by the house door, awaiting his least signal. In the boat, which has been suffered to drop astern, one or two of his wives lie covered from the sun under mats, tossed by the short sea of the lagoon, and enduring agonies of heat and tedium. This severity is now and then relaxed and the wives allowed on board. Three or four were thus favoured on the day of our arrival: substantial ladies airily attired in *ridis*. Each had a share of copra, her *peculium*, to dispose of for herself. The display in the trade-room - hats, ribbbons, dresses, scents, tins of salmon - the pride of the eye and the lust of the flesh - tempted them in vain. They had but the one idea - tobacco, the island currency, tantamount to minted gold; returned to shore with it, burthened but rejoicing; and late into the night, on the royal terrace, were to be seen counting the sticks by lamplight in the open air.

The king is no such economist. He is greedy of things new and foreign. House after house, chest after chest, in the palace precinct, is already crammed with clocks, musical boxes, blue spectacles, umbrellas, knitted waistcoats, bolts of stuff, tools, rifles, fowling-pieces, medicines, European foods, sewing-machines, and, what is more extraordinary, stoves: all that ever caught his eye, tickled his appetite, pleased him for its use, or puzzled him with its apparent inutility. And still his lust is unabated. He is possessed by the seven devils of the collector. He hears a thing spoken of, and a shadow comes on his face. 'I think I no got him,' he will say; and the treasures he has seem worthless in comparison. If a ship be bound for Apemama, the merchant racks his brain to hit upon some novelty. This he leaves carelessly in the main cabin or partly conceals in his own berth, so that the king shall spy it for himself. 'How much you want?' inquires Tembinok', passing and pointing. 'No, king; that too dear,' returns the trader. 'I think I like him,' says the king. This was a bowl of gold-fish. On another occasion it was scented soap. 'No, king; that cost too much,' said the trader; 'too good for a Kanaka.' 'How much you got? I take him all,' replied his majesty, and became the lord of seventeen boxes at two dollars a cake. Or again, the merchant feigns the article is not for sale, is private property, an heirloom or a gift; and the trick infallibly succeeds. Thwart the king and you hold him. His autocratic nature rears at the affront of opposition. He accepts it for a challenge; sets his teeth like a hunter going at a fence; and with no mark of emotion, scarce even of interest, stolidly piles up the price. Thus, for our sins, he took a fancy to my wife's dressing-bag, a thing entirely useless to the man, and sadly battered by years of service. Early one forenoon he came to our house, sat down, and abruptly offered to purchase it. I told him I sold nothing, and the bag at any rate was a present from a friend; but he was acquainted with these pretexts from of old, and knew what they were worth and how to meet them. Adopting what I believe is called 'the object method,' he drew out a bag of English gold, sovereigns and half-sovereigns, and began to lay them one by one in silence on the table; at each fresh piece reading our faces with a look. In vain I continued to protest I was no trader; he deigned not to reply. There must have been twenty pounds on the table, he was still going on, and irritation had begun to mingle with our embarrassment, when a happy idea came to our delivery. Since his majesty thought so much of the bag, we said, we must beg him to accept it as a present. It was the most surprising turn in Tembinok's experience. He perceived too late that his persistence was unmannerly; hung his head a while in silence; then, lifting up a sheepish countenance, 'I 'shamed,' said the tyrant. It was the first and the last time we heard him own to a flaw in his behaviour. Half an hour after he sent us a camphor-wood chest worth only a few dollars - but then heaven knows what Tembinok' had paid for it.

Cunning by nature, and versed for forty years in the government of men, it must not be supposed that he is cheated blindly, or has resigned himself without resistance to be the milch-cow of the passing trader. His efforts have been even heroic. Like Nakaeia of Makin, he has owned schooners. More fortunate than Nakaeia, he has found captains. Ships of his have sailed as far as to the colonies. He has trafficked direct, in his own bottoms, with New Zealand. And even so, even there, the world-enveloping dishonesty of the white man prevented him; his profit melted, his ship returned in debt, the money for the insurance was embezzled, and when the *Coronet* came to be lost, he was astonished to find he had lost all. At this he dropped his weapons; owned he might as hopefully wrestle with the winds of heaven; and like an experienced sheep, submitted his fleece thenceforward to the shearers. He is the last man in the world to waste anger on the incurable; accepts it with cynical composure; asks no more in those he deals with than a certain decency of moderation; drives as good a bargain as he can; and when he considers he is more than usually swindled, writes it in his memory against the merchant's name. He once ran over to me a list of captains and supercargoes with whom he had done business, classing them under three heads: 'He cheat a litty' - 'He cheat plenty' - and 'I think he cheat too much.' For the first two classes he expressed perfect toleration; sometimes, but not always, for the third. I was present when a certain merchant was turned about his business, and was the means (having a considerable influence ever since the bag) of patching up the dispute. Even on the day of our arrival there was like to have been a hitch with Captain Reid: the ground of which is perhaps worth recital. Among goods exported specially for Tembinok' there is a beverage known (and labelled) as Hennessy's brandy. It is neither Hennessy, nor even brandy; is about the colour of sherry, but is not sherry; tastes of kirsch, and yet neither is it kirsch. The king, at least, has grown used to this amazing brand, and rather prides himself upon the taste; and any substitution is a double offence, being at once to cheat him and to cast a doubt upon his palate. A similar weakness is to be observed in all connoisseurs. Now the last case sold by the *Equator* was found to contain a different and I would fondly fancy a superior distillation; and the conversation opened very black for Captain Reid. But Tembinok' is a moderate man. He was reminded and admitted that all men were liable to error, even himself; accepted the principle that a fault handsomely acknowledged should be condoned; and wound the matter up with this proposal: 'Tuppoti I mi'take, you 'peakee me. Tuppoti you mi'take, I 'peakee you. Mo' betta.'

After dinner and supper in the cabin, a glass or two of 'Hennetti' - the genuine article this time, with the kirsch bouquet, - and five hours' lounging on the trade-room counter, royalty embarked for home. Three tacks grounded the boat before the palace; the wives were carried ashore on the backs of vassals; Tembinok' stepped on a railed platform like a steamer's gangway, and was borne shoulder high through the shallows, up the beach, and by an inclined plane, paved with pebbles, to the glaring terrace where he dwells.

CHAPTER II - THE KING OF APEMAMA: FOUNDATION OF EQUATOR TOWN

Our first sight of Tembinok' was a matter of concern, almost alarm, to my whole party. We had a favour to seek; we must approach in the proper courtly attitude of a suitor; and must either please him or fail in the main purpose of our voyage. It was our wish to land and live in Apemama, and see more near at hand the odd character of the man and the odd (or rather ancient) condition of his island. In all other isles of the South Seas a white man may land with his chest, and set up house for a lifetime, if he choose, and if he have the money or the trade; no hindrance is conceivable. But Apemama is a close island, lying there in the sea with closed doors; the king himself, like a vigilant officer, ready at the wicket to scrutinise and reject intrenching visitors. Hence the attraction of our enterprise; not merely because it was a little difficult, but because this social quarantine, a curiosity in itself, has been the preservative of others.

Tembinok', like most tyrants, is a conservative; like many conservatives, he eagerly welcomes new ideas, and, except in the field of politics, leans to practical reform. When the missionaries came, professing a knowledge of the truth, he readily received them; attended their worship, acquired the accomplishment of public prayer, and made himself a student at their feet. It is thus - it is by the cultivation of similar passing chances - that he has learned to read, to write, to cipher, and to speak his queer, personal English, so different from ordinary 'Beach de Mar,' so much more obscure, expressive, and condensed. His education attended to, he found time to become critical of the new inmates. Like Nakaeia of Makin, he is an admirer of silence in the island; broods over it like a great ear; has spies who report daily; and had rather his subjects sang than talked. The service, and in particular the sermon, were thus sure to become offences: 'Here, in my island, *I* 'peak,' he once observed to me. 'My chieps no 'peak - do what I talk.' He looked at the missionary, and what did he see? 'See Kanaka 'peak in a big outch!' he cried, with a strong ring of sarcasm. Yet he endured the subversive spectacle, and might even have continued to endure it, had not a fresh point arisen. He looked again, to employ his own figure; and the Kanaka was no longer speaking, he was doing worse - he was building a copra-house. The king was touched in his chief interests; revenue and prerogative were threatened. He considered besides (and some think with him) that trade is incompatible with the missionary claims. 'Tuppoti mitonary think "good man": very good. Tuppoti he think "cobra": no good. I send him away ship.' Such was his abrupt history of the evangelist in Apemama.

Similar deportations are common: 'I send him away ship' is the epitaph of not a few, his majesty paying the exile's fare to the next place of call. For instance, being passionately fond of European food, he has several times added to his household a white cook, and one after another these have been deported. They, on their side, swear they were not paid their wages; he, on his, that they robbed and swindled him beyond endurance: both perhaps justly. A more important case was that of an agent, despatched (as I heard the story) by a firm of merchants to worm his way into the king's good graces, become, if possible, premier, and handle the copra in the interest of his employers. He obtained authority to land, practised his fascinations, was patiently listened to by Tembinok', supposed himself on the highway to success; and behold! when the next ship touched at Apemama, the would-be premier was flung into a boat - had on board - his fare paid, and so good-bye. But it is needless to multiply examples; the proof of the pudding is in the eating. When we came to Apemama, of so many white men who have scrambled for a place in that rich market, one remained - a silent, sober, solitary, niggardly recluse, of whom the king remarks, 'I think he good; he no 'peak.'

I was warned at the outset we might very well fail in our design: yet never dreamed of what proved to be the fact, that we should be left four-and-twenty hours in suspense and come within an ace of ultimate rejection. Captain Reid had primed himself; no sooner was the king on board, and the Hennetti question amicably settled, than he proceeded to express my request and give an abstract of my claims and virtues. The gammon about Queen Victoria's son might do for Butaritari; it was out of the question here; and I now figured as 'one of the Old Men of England,' a person of deep knowledge, come expressly to visit Tembinok's dominion, and eager to report upon it to the no less eager Queen Victoria. The king made no shadow of an answer, and presently began upon a different subject. We might have thought that he had not heard, or not understood; only that we found ourselves the subject of a constant study. As we sat at meals, he took us in series and fixed upon each, for near a minute at a time, the same hard and thoughtful stare. As he thus looked he seemed to forget himself, the subject and the company, and to become absorbed in the process of his thought; the look was wholly impersonal; I have seen the same in the eyes of portrait-painters. The counts upon which whites have been deported are mainly four: cheating Tembinok', meddling overmuch with copra, which is the source of his wealth, and one of the sinews of his power, *'peaking*, and political intrigue. I felt guiltless upon all; but how to show it? I would not have taken copra in a gift: how to express that quality by my dinner-table bearing? The rest of the party shared my innocence and my embarrassment. They shared also in my mortification when after two whole meal-times and the odd moments of an afternoon devoted to this reconnoitring, Tembinok' took his leave in silence. Next morning, the same undisguised study, the same silence, was resumed; and the second day had come to its maturity before I was informed abruptly that I had stood the ordeal. 'I look your eye. You good man. You no lie,' said the king: a doubtful compliment to a writer of romance. Later he explained he did not quite judge by the eye only, but the mouth as well. 'Tuppoti I see man,' he explained. 'I no tavvy good man, bad man. I look eye, look mouth. Then I tavvy. Look *eye*, look mouth,' he repeated. And indeed in our case the mouth had the most to do with it, and it was by our talk that we gained admission to the island; the king promising himself (and I believe really amassing) a vast amount of useful knowledge ere we left.

The terms of our admission were as follows: We were to choose a site, and the king should there build us a town. His people should work for us, but the king only was to give them orders. One of his cooks should come daily to help mine, and to learn of him. In case our stores ran out, he would supply us, and be repaid on the return of the *Equator*. On the other hand, he was to come to meals with us when so inclined; when he stayed at home, a dish was to be sent him from our table; and I solemnly engaged to give his subjects no liquor or money (both of which they are forbidden to possess) and no tobacco, which they were to receive only from the royal hand. I think I remember to have protested against the stringency of this last article; at least, it was relaxed, and when a man worked for me I was allowed to give him a pipe of tobacco on the premises, but none to take away.

The site of Equator City - we named our city for the schooner - was soon chosen. The immediate shores of the lagoon are windy and blinding; Tembinok' himself is glad to grope blue-spectacled on his terrace; and we fled the neighbourhood of the red *conjunctiva*, the suppurating eyeball, and the beggar who pursues and beseeches the passing foreigner for eye wash. Behind the town the country is diversified; here open, sandy, uneven, and dotted with dwarfish palms; here cut up with taro trenches, deep and shallow, and, according to the growth of the plants, presenting now the appearance of a sandy tannery, now of an alleyed and green garden. A path leads towards the sea, mounting abruptly to the main level of the island - twenty or even thirty feet, although Findlay gives five; and just hard by the top of the rise, where the coco-palms begin to be well grown, we found a grove of pandanus, and a piece of soil pleasantly covered with green underbush. A well was not far off under a rustic well-house; nearer still, in a sandy cup of the land, a pond where we might wash our clothes. The place was out of the wind, out of the sun, and out of sight of the village. It was shown to the king, and the town promised for the morrow.

The morrow came, Mr. Osbourne landed, found nothing done, and carried his complaint to Tembinok'. He heard it, rose, called for a Winchester, stepped without the royal palisade, and fired two shots in the air. A shot in the air is the first Apemama warning; it has the force of a proclamation in more loquacious countries; and his majesty remarked agreeably that it would make his labourers 'mo' bright.' In less than thirty minutes, accordingly, the men had mustered, the work was begun, and we were told that we might bring our baggage when we pleased.

It was two in the afternoon ere the first boat was beached, and the long procession of chests and crates and sacks began to straggle through the sandy desert towards Equator Town. The grove of pandanus was practically a thing of the past. Fire surrounded and smoke rose in the green underbush. In a wide circuit the axes were still crashing. Those very advantages for which the place was chosen, it had been the king's first idea to abolish; and in the midst of this devastation there stood already a good-sized maniap' and a small closed house. A mat was spread near by for Tembinok'; here he sat superintending, in cardinal red, a pith helmet on his head, a meerschaum pipe in his mouth, a wife stretched at his back with custody of the matches and tobacco. Twenty or thirty feet in front of him the bulk of the workers squatted on the ground; some of the bush here survived and in this the commons sat nearly to their shoulders, and presented only an arc of brown faces, black heads, and attentive eyes fixed on his majesty. Long pauses reigned, during which the subjects stared and the king smoked. Then Tembinok' would raise his voice and speak shrilly and briefly. There was never a response in words; but if the speech were jesting, there came by way of answer discreet, obsequious laughter - such laughter as we hear in schoolrooms; and if it were practical, the sudden uprising and departure of the squad. Twice they so disappeared, and returned with further elements of the city: a second house and a second maniap'. It was singular to spy, far off through the coco stems, the silent oncoming of the maniap', at first (it seemed) swimming spontaneously in the air - but on a nearer view betraying under the eaves many score of moving naked legs. In all the affair servile obedience was no less remarkable than servile deliberation. The gang had here mustered by the note of a deadly weapon; the man who looked on was the unquestioned master of their lives; and except for civility, they bestirred themselves like so many American hotel clerks. The spectator was aware of an unobtrusive yet invincible inertia, at which the skipper of a trading dandy might have torn his hair.

Yet the work was accomplished. By dusk, when his majesty withdrew, the town was founded and complete, a new and ruder Amphion having called it from nothing with three cracks of a rifle. And the next morning the same conjurer obliged us with a further miracle: a mystic rampart fencing us, so that the path which ran by our doors became suddenly impassable, the inhabitants who had business across the isle must fetch a wide circuit, and we sat in the midst in a transparent privacy, seeing, seen, but unapproachable, like bees in a glass hive. The outward and visible sign of this glamour was no more than a few ragged coco-leaf garlands round the stems of the outlying palms; but its significance reposed on the tremendous sanction of the tapu and the guns of Tembinok'.

We made our first meal that night in the improvised city, where we were to stay two months, and which - so soon as we had done with it - was to vanish in a day as it appeared, its elements returning whence they came, the tapu raised, the traffic on the path resumed, the sun and the moon peering in vain between the palm-trees for the bygone work, the wind blowing over an empty site. Yet the place, which is now only an episode in some memories, seemed to have been built, and to be destined to endure, for years. It was a busy hamlet. One of the maniap's we made our dining-room, one the kitchen. The houses we reserved for sleeping. They were on the admirable Apemama plan: out and away the best house in the South Seas; standing some three feet above the ground on posts; the sides of woven flaps, which can be raised to admit light and air, or lowered to shut out the wind and the rain: airy, healthy, clean, and watertight. We had a hen of a remarkable kind: almost unique in my experience, being a hen that occasionally laid eggs. Not far off, Mrs. Stevenson tended a garden of salad and shalots. The salad was devoured by the hen - which was her bane. The shalots were served out a leaf at a time, and welcomed and relished like peaches. Toddy and green cocoa-nuts were brought us daily. We once had a present of fish from the king, and once of a turtle. Sometimes we shot so-called plover along on the shore, sometimes wild chicken in the bush. The rest of our diet was from tins.

Our occupations were very various. While some of the party would be away sketching, Mr. Osbourne and I hammered away at a novel. We read Gibbon and Carlyle aloud; we blew on flageolets, we strummed on guitars; we took photographs by the light of the sun, the moon, and flash-powder; sometimes we played cards. Pot-hunting engaged a part of our leisure. I have myself passed afternoons in the exciting but innocuous pursuit of winged animals with a revolver; and it was fortunate there were better shots of the party, and fortunate the king could lend us a more suitable weapon, in the form of an excellent fowling-piece, or our spare diet had been sparer still.

Night was the time to see our city, after the moon was up, after the lamps were lighted, and so long as the fire sparkled in the cook-house. We suffered from a plague of flies and mosquitoes, comparable to that of Egypt; our dinner-table (lent, like all our furniture, by the king) must be enclosed in a tent of netting, our citadel and refuge; and this became all luminous, and bulged and beaconed under the eaves, like the globe of some monstrous lamp under the margin of its shade. Our cabins, the sides being propped at a variety of inclinations, spelled out strange, angular patterns of brightness. In his roofed and open kitchen, Ah Fu was to be seen by lamp and firelight, dabbling among pots. Over all, there fell in the season an extraordinary splendour of mellow moonshine. The sand sparkled as with the dust of diamonds; the stars had vanished. At intervals, a dusky night-bird, slow and low flying, passed in the colonnade of the tree stems and uttered a hoarse croaking cry.

CHAPTER III - THE KING OF APEMAMA: THE PALACE OF MANY WOMEN

The palace, or rather the ground which it includes, is several acres in extent. A terrace encloses it toward the lagoon; on the side of the land, a palisade with several gates. These are scarce intended for defence; a man, if he were strong, might easily pluck down the palisade; he need not be specially active to leap from the beach upon the terrace. There is no parade of guards, soldiers, or weapons; the armoury is under lock and key; and the only sentinels are certain inconspicuous old women lurking day and night before the gates. By day, these crones were often engaged in boiling syrup or the like household occupation; by night, they lay ambushed in the shadow or crouched along the palisade, filling the office of eunuchs to this harem, sole guards upon a tyrant life.

Female wardens made a fit outpost for this palace of many women. Of the number of the king's wives I have no guess; and but a loose idea of their function. He himself displayed embarrassment when they were referred to as his wives, called them himself 'my pamily,' and explained they were his 'cutcheons' - cousins. We distinguished four of the crowd: the king's mother; his sister, a grave, trenchant woman, with much of her brother's intelligence; the queen proper, to whom (and to whom alone) my wife was formally presented; and the favourite of the hour, a pretty, graceful girl, who sat with the king daily, and once (when he shed tears) consoled him with caresses. I am assured that even with her his relations are platonic. In the background figured a multitude of ladies, the lean, the plump, and the elephantine, some in sacque frocks, some in the hairbreadth *ridi*; high-born and low, slave and mistress; from the queen to the scullion, from the favourite to the scraggy sentries at the palisade. Not all of these of course are of 'my pamily,' - many are mere attendants; yet a surprising number shared the responsibility of the king's trust. These were key-bearers, treasurers, wardens of the armoury, the napery, and the stores. Each knew and did her part to admiration. Should anything be required - a particular gun, perhaps, or a particular bolt of stuff, - the right queen was summoned; she came bringing the right chest, opened it in the king's presence, and displayed her charge in perfect preservation - the gun cleaned and oiled, the goods duly folded. Without delay or haste, and with the minimum of speech, the whole great establishment turned on wheels like a machine. Nowhere have I seen order more complete and pervasive. And yet I was always reminded of Norse tales of trolls and ogres who kept their hearts buried in the ground for the mere safety, and must confide the secret to their wives. For these weapons are the life of Tembinok'. He does not aim at popularity; but drives and braves his subjects, with a simplicity of domination which it is impossible not to admire, hard not to sympathise with. Should one out of so many prove faithless, should the armoury be secretly unlocked, should the crones have dozed by the palisade and the weapons find their way unseen into the village, revolution would be nearly certain, death the most probable result, and the spirit of the tyrant of Apemama flit to rejoin his predecessors of Mariki and Tapituea. Yet those whom he so trusts are all women, and all rivals.

There is indeed a ministry and staff of males: cook, steward, carpenter, and supercargoes: the hierarchy of a schooner. The spies, 'his majesty's daily papers,' as we called them, come every morning to report, and go again. The cook and steward are concerned with the table only. The supercargoes, whose business it is to keep tally of the copra at three pounds a month and a percentage, are rarely in the palace; and two at least are in the other islands. The carpenter, indeed, shrewd and jolly old Rubam - query, Reuben? - promoted on my last visit to the greater dignity of governor, is daily present, altering, extending, embellishing, pursuing the endless series of the king's inventions; and his majesty will sometimes pass an afternoon watching and talking with Rubam at his work. But the males are still outsiders; none seems to be armed, none is entrusted with a key; by dusk they are all usually departed from the palace; and the weight of the monarchy and of the monarch's life reposes unshared on the women.

Here is a household unlike, indeed, to one of ours; more unlike still to the Oriental harem: that of an elderly childless man, his days menaced, dwelling alone amid a bevy of women of all ages, ranks, and relationships, - the mother, the sister, the cousin, the legitimate wife, the concubine, the favourite, the eldest born, and she of yesterday; he, in their midst, the only master, the only male, the sole dispenser of honours, clothes, and luxuries, the sole mark of multitudinous ambitions and desires. I doubt if you could find a man in Europe so bold as to attempt this piece of tact and government. And seemingly Tembinok' himself had trouble in the beginning. I hear of him shooting at a wife for some levity on board a schooner. Another, on some more serious offence, he slew outright; he exposed her body in an open box, and (to make the warning more memorable) suffered it to putrefy before the palace gate. Doubtless his growing years have come to his assistance; for upon so large a scale it is more easy to play the father than the husband. And to-day, at least to the eye of a stranger, all seems to go smoothly, and the wives to be proud of their trust, proud of their rank, and proud of their cunning lord.

I conceived they made rather a hero of the man. A popular master in a girls' school might, perhaps, offer a figure of his preponderating station. But then the master does not eat, sleep, live, and wash his dirty linen in the midst of his admirers; he escapes, he has a room of his own, he leads a private life; if he had nothing else, he has the holidays, and the more unhappy Tembinok' is always on the stage and on the stretch.

In all my coming and going, I never heard him speak harshly or express the least displeasure. An extreme, rather heavy, benignity - the benignity of one sure to be obeyed - marked his demeanour; so that I was at times reminded of Samual Richardson in his circle of admiring women. The wives spoke up and seemed to volunteer opinions, like our wives at home - or, say, like doting but respectable aunts. Altogether, I conclude that he rules his seraglio much more by art than terror; and those who give a different account (and who have none of them enjoyed my opportunities of observation) perhaps failed to distinguish between degrees of rank, between 'my pamily' and the hangers-on, laundresses, and prostitutes.

A notable feature is the evening game of cards when lamps are set forth upon the terrace, and 'I and my pamily' play for tobacco by the hour. It is highly characteristic of Tembinok' that he must invent a game for himself; highly characteristic of his worshipping household that they should swear by the absurd invention. It is founded on poker, played with the honours out of many packs, and inconceivably dreary. But I have a passion for all games, studied it, and am supposed to be the only white who ever fairly grasped its principle: a fact for which the wives (with whom I was not otherwise popular) admired me with acclamation. It was impossible to be deceived; this was a genuine feeling: they were proud of their private game, had been cut to the quick by the want of interest shown in it by others, and expanded under the flattery of my attention. Tembinok' puts up a double stake, and receives in return two hands to choose from: a shallow artifice which the wives (in all these years) have not yet fathomed. He himself, when talking with me privately, made not the least secret that he was secure of winning; and it was thus he explained his recent liberality on board the *Equator*. He let the wives buy their own tobacco, which pleased them at the moment. He won it back at cards, which made him once more, and without fresh expense, that which he ought to be, - the sole fount of all indulgences. And he summed the matter up in that phrase with which he almost always concludes any account of his policy: 'Mo' betta.'

The palace compound is laid with broken coral, excruciating to the eyes and the bare feet, but exquisitely raked and weeded. A score or more of buildings lie in a sort of street along the palisade and scattered on the margin of the terrace; dwelling-houses for the wives and the attendants, storehouses for the king's curios and treasures, spacious maniap's for feast or council, some on pillars of wood, some on piers of masonry. One was still in hand, a new invention, the king's latest born: a European frame-house built for coolness inside a lofty maniap': its roof planked like a ship's deck to be a raised, shady, and yet private promenade. It was here the king spent hours with Rubam; here I would sometimes join them; the place had a most singular appearance; and I must say I was greatly taken with the fancy, and joined with relish in the counsels of the architects.

Suppose we had business with his majesty by day: we strolled over the sand and by the dwarfish palms, exchanged a '*Kõnamaori*' with the crone on duty, and entered the compound. The wide sheet of coral glared before us deserted; all having stowed themselves in dark canvas from the excess of room. I have gone to and fro in that labyrinth of a place, seeking the king; and the only breathing creature I could find was when I peered under the eaves of a maniap', and saw the brawny body of one of the wives stretched on the floor, a naked Amazon plunged in noiseless slumber. If it were still the hour of the 'morning papers' the quest would be more easy, the half-dozen obsequious, sly dogs squatting on the ground outside a house, crammed as far as possible in its narrow shadow, and turning to the king a row of leering faces. Tembinok' would be within, the flaps of the cabin raised, the trade blowing through, hearing their report. Like journalists nearer home, when the day's news were scanty, these would make the more of it in words; and I have known one to fill up a barren morning with an imaginary conversation of two dogs. Sometimes the king deigns to laugh, sometimes to question or jest with them, his voice sounding shrilly from the cabin. By his side he may have the heir-apparent, Paul, his nephew and adopted son, six years old, stark naked, and a model of young human beauty. And there will always be the favourite and perhaps two other wives awake; four more lying supine under mats and whelmed in slumber. Or perhaps we came later, fell on a more private hour, and found Tembinok' retired in the house with the favourite, an earthenware spittoon, a leaden inkpot, and a commercial ledger. In the last, lying on his belly, he writes from day to day the uneventful history of his reign; and when thus employed he betrayed a touch of fretfulness on interruption with which I was well able to sympathise. The royal annalist once read me a page or so, translating as he went; but the passage being genealogical, and the author boggling extremely in his version, I own I have been sometimes better entertained. Nor does he confine himself to prose, but touches the lyre, too, in his leisure moments, and passes for the chief bard of his kingdom, as he is its sole public character, leading architect, and only merchant.

His competence, however, does not reach to music; and his verses, when they are ready, are taught to a professional musician, who sets them and instructs the chorus. Asked what his songs were about, Tembinok' replied, 'Sweethearts and trees and the sea. Not all the same true, all the same lie.' For a condensed view of lyrical poetry (except that he seems to have forgot the stars and flowers) this would be hard to mend. These multifarious occupations bespeak (in a native and an absolute prince) unusual activity of mind.

The palace court at noon is a spot to be remembered with awe, the visitor scrambling there, on the loose stones, through a splendid nightmare of light and heat; but the sweep of the wind delivers it from flies and mosquitoes; and with the set of sun it became heavenly. I remember it best on moonless nights. The air was like a bath of milk. Countless shining stars were overhead, the lagoon paved with them. Herds of wives squatted by companies on the gravel, softly chatting. Tembinok' would doff his jacket, and sit bare and silent, perhaps meditating songs; the favourite usually by him, silent also. Meanwhile in the midst of the court, the palace lanterns were being lit and marshalled in rank upon the ground - six or eight square yards of them; a sight that gave one strange ideas of the number of 'my pamily': such a sight as may be seen about dusk in a corner of some great terminus at home. Presently these fared off into all corners of the precinct, lighting the last labours of the day, lighting one after another to their rest that prodigious company of women. A few lingered in the middle of the court for the card-party, and saw the honours shuffled and dealt, and Tembinok' deliberating between his two; hands, and the queens losing their tobacco. Then these also were scattered and extinguished; and their place was taken by a great bonfire, the night-light of the palace. When this was no more, smaller fires burned likewise at the gates. These were tended by the crones, unseen, unsleeping - not always unheard. Should any approach in the dark hours, a guarded alert made the circuit of the palisade; each sentry signalled her neighbour with a stone; the rattle of falling pebbles passed and died away; and the wardens of Tembinok' crouched in their places silent as before.

CHAPTER IV - THE KING OF APEMAMA: EQUATOR TOWN AND THE PALACE

Five persons were detailed to wait upon us. Uncle Parker, who brought us toddy and green nuts, was an elderly, almost an old man, with the spirits, the industry, and the morals of a boy of ten. His face was ancient, droll, and diabolical, the skin stretched over taut sinews, like a sail on the guide-rope; and he smiled with every muscle of his head. His nuts must be counted every day, or he would deceive us in the tale; they must be daily examined, or some would prove to be unhusked; nothing but the king's name, and scarcely that, would hold him to his duty. After his toils were over he was given a pipe, matches, and tobacco, and sat on the floor in the maniap' to smoke. He would not seem to move from his position, and yet every day, when the things fell to be returned the plug had disappeared; he had found the means to conceal it in the roof, whence he could radiantly produce it on the morrow. Although this piece of legerdemain was performed regularly before three or four pairs of eyes, we could never catch him in the fact; although we searched after he was gone, we could never find the tobacco. Such were the diversions of Uncle Parker, a man nearing sixty. But he was punished according unto his deeds: Mrs. Stevenson took a fancy to paint him, and the sufferings of the sitter were beyond description.

Three lasses came from the palace to do our washing and racket with Ah Fu. They were of the lowest class, hangers-on kept for the convenience of merchant skippers, probably low-born, perhaps out-islanders, with little refinement whether of manner or appearance, but likely and jolly enough wenches in their way. We called one *Guttersnipe*, for you may find her image in the slums of any city; the same lean, dark-eyed, eager, vulgar face, the same sudden, hoarse guffaws, the same forward and yet anxious manner, as with a tail of an eye on the policeman: only the policeman here was a live king, and his truncheon a rifle. I doubt if you could find anywhere out of the islands, or often there, the parallel of *Fatty*, a mountain of a girl, who must have weighed near as many stones as she counted summers, could have given a good account of a life-guardsman, had the face of a baby, and applied her vast mechanical forces almost exclusively to play. But they were all three of the same merry spirit. Our washing was conducted in a game of romps; and they fled and pursued, and splashed, and pelted, and rolled each other in the sand, and kept up a continuous noise of cries and laughter like holiday children. Indeed, and however strange their own function in that austere establishment, were they not escaped for the day from the largest and strictest Ladies' School in the South Seas?

Our fifth attendant was no less a person than the royal cook. He was strikingly handsome both in face and body, lazy as a slave, and insolent as a butcher's boy. He slept and smoked on our premises in various graceful attitudes; but so far from helping Ah Fu, he was not at the pains to watch him. It may be said of him that he came to learn, and remained to teach; and his lessons were at times difficult to stomach. For example, he was sent to fill a bucket from the well. About half-way he found my wife watering her onions, changed buckets with her, and leaving her the empty, returned to the kitchen with the full. On another occasion he was given a dish of dumplings for the king, was told they must be eaten hot, and that he should carry them as fast as possible. The wretch set off at the rate of about a mile in the hour, head in air, toes turned out. My patience, after a month of trial, failed me at the sight. I pursued, caught him by his two big shoulders, and thrusting him before me, ran with him down the hill, over the sands, and through the applauding village, to the Speak House, where the king was then holding a pow-wow. He had the impudence to pretend he was internally injured by my violence, and to profess serious apprehensions for his life.

All this we endured; for the ways of Tembinok' are summary, and I was not yet ripe to take a hand in the man's death. But in the meanwhile, here was my unfortunate China boy slaving for the pair, and presently he fell sick. I was now in the position of Cimondain Lantenac, and indeed all the characters in *Quatre-Vingt-Treize*: to continue to spare the guilty, I must sacrifice the innocent. I took the usual course and tried to save both, with the usual consequence of failure. Well rehearsed, I went down to the palace, found the king alone, and obliged him with a vast amount of rigmarole. The cook was too old to learn: I feared he was not making progress; how if we had a boy instead? - boys were more teachable. It was all in vain; the king pierced through my disguises to the root of the fact; saw that the cook had desperately misbehaved; and sat a while glooming. 'I think he tavvy too much,' he said at last, with grim concision; and immediately turned the talk to other subjects. The same day another high officer, the steward, appeared in the cook's place, and, I am bound to say, proved civil and industrious.

As soon as I left, it seems the king called for a Winchester and strolled outside the palisade, awaiting the defaulter. That day Tembinok' wore the woman's frock; as like as not, his make-up was completed by a pith helmet and blue spectacles. Conceive the glaring stretch of sandhills, the dwarf palms with their noon-day shadows, the line of the palisade, the crone sentries (each by a small clear fire) cooking syrup on their posts - and this chimaera waiting with his deadly engine. To him, enter at last the cook, strolling down the sandhill from Equator Town, listless, vain and graceful; with no thought of alarm. As soon as he was well within range, the travestied monarch fired the six shots over his head, at his feet, and on either hand of him: the second Apemama warning, startling in itself, fatal in significance, for the next time his majesty will aim to hit. I am told the king is a crack shot; that when he aims to kill, the grave may be got ready; and when he aims to miss, misses by so near a margin that the culprit tastes six times the bitterness of death. The effect upon the cook I had an opportunity of seeing for myself. My wife and I were returning from the sea-side of the island, when we spied one coming to meet us at a very quick, disordered pace, between a walk and a run. As we drew nearer we saw it was the cook, beside himself with some emotion, his usual warm, mulatto colour declined into a bluish pallor. He passed us without word or gesture, staring on us with the face of a Satan, and plunged on across the wood for the unpeopled quarter of the island and the long, desert beach, where he might rage to and fro unseen, and froth out the vials of his wrath, fear, and humiliation. Doubtless in the curses that he there uttered to the bursting surf and the tropic birds, the name of the Kaupoi - the rich man - was frequently repeated. I had made him the laughing-stock of the village in the affair of the king's dumplings; I had brought him by my machinations into disgrace and the immediate jeopardy of his days; last, and perhaps bitterest, he had found me there by the way to spy upon him in the hour of his disorder.

Time passed, and we saw no more of him. The season of the full moon came round, when a man thinks shame to lie sleeping; and I continued until late - perhaps till twelve or one in the morning - to walk on the bright sand and in the tossing shadow of the palms. I played, as I wandered, on a flageolet, which occupied much of my attention; the fans overhead rattled in the wind with a metallic chatter; and a bare foot falls at any rate almost noiseless on that shifting soil. Yet when I got back to Equator Town, where all the lights were out, and my wife (who was still awake, and had been looking forth) asked me who it was that followed me, I thought she spoke in jest. 'Not at all,' she said. 'I saw him twice as you passed, walking close at your heels. He only left you at the corner of the maniap'; he must be still behind the cook-house.' Thither I ran - like a fool, without any weapon - and came face to face with the cook. He was within my tapu-line, which was death in itself; he could have no business there at such an hour but either to steal or to kill; guilt made him timorous; and he turned and fled before me in the night in silence. As he went I kicked him in that place where honour lies, and he gave tongue faintly like an injured mouse. At the moment I daresay he supposed it was a deadly instrument that touched him.

What had the man been after? I have found my music better qualified to scatter than to collect an audience. Amateur as I was, I could not suppose him interested in my reading of the *Carnival of Venice*, or that he would deny himself his natural rest to follow my variations on *The Ploughboy*. And whatever his design, it was impossible I should suffer him to prowl by night among the houses. A word to the king, and the man were not, his case being far beyond pardon. But it is one thing to kill a man yourself; quite another to bear tales behind his back and have him shot by a third party; and I determined to deal with the fellow in some method of my own. I told Ah Fu the story, and bade him fetch me the cook whenever he should find him. I had supposed this would be a matter of difficulty; and far from that, he came of his own accord: an act really of desperation, since his life hung by my silence, and the best he could hope was to be forgotten. Yet he came with an assured countenance, volunteered no apology or explanation, complained of injuries received, and pretended he was unable to sit down. I suppose I am the weakest man God made; I had kicked him in the least vulnerable part of his big carcase; my foot was bare, and I had not even hurt my foot. Ah Fu could not control his merriment. On my side, knowing what must be the nature of his apprehensions, I found in so much impudence a kind of gallantry, and secretly admired the man. I told him I should say nothing of his night's adventure to the king; that I should still allow him, when he had an errand, to come within my tapu-line by day; but if ever I found him there after the set of the sun I would shoot him on the spot; and to the proof showed him a revolver. He must have been incredibly relieved; but he showed no sign of it, took himself off with his usual dandy nonchalance, and was scarce seen by us again.

These five, then, with the substitution of the steward for the cook, came and went, and were our only visitors. The circle of the tapu held at arm's-length the inhabitants of the village. As for 'my pamily,' they dwelt like nuns in their enclosure; only once have I met one of them abroad, and she was the king's sister, and the place in which I found her (the island infirmary) was very likely privileged. There remains only the king to be accounted for. He would come strolling over, always alone, a little before a meal-time, take a chair, and talk and eat with us like an old family friend. Gilbertine etiquette appears defective on the point of leave-taking. It may be remembered we had trouble in the matter with Karaiti; and there was something childish and disconcerting in Tembinok's abrupt 'I want go home now,' accompanied by a kind of ducking rise, and followed by an unadorned retreat. It was the only blot upon his manners, which were otherwise plain, decent, sensible, and dignified. He never stayed long nor drank much, and copied our behaviour where he perceived it to differ from his own. Very early in the day, for instance, he ceased eating with his knife. It was plain he was determined in all things to wring profit from our visit, and chiefly upon etiquette. The quality of his white visitors puzzled and concerned him; he would bring up name after name, and ask if its bearer were a 'big chiep,' or even a 'chiep' at all - which, as some were my excellent good friends, and none were actually born in the purple, became at times embarrassing. He was struck to learn that our classes were distinguishable by their speech, and that certain words (for instance) were tapu on the quarter-deck of a man-of-war; and he begged in consequence that we should watch and correct him on the point. We were able to assure him that he was beyond correction. His vocabulary is apt and ample to an extraordinary degree. God knows where he collected it, but by some instinct or some accident he has avoided all profane or gross expressions. 'Obliged,' 'stabbed,' 'gnaw,' 'lodge,' 'power,' 'company,' 'slender,' 'smooth,' and 'wonderful,' are a few of the unexpected words that enrich his dialect. Perhaps what pleased him most was to hear about saluting the quarter-deck of a man-of-war. In his gratitude for this hint he became fulsome. 'Schooner cap'n no tell me,' he cried; 'I think no tavvy! You tavvy too much; tavvy 'teama', tavvy man-a-wa'. I think you tavvy everything.' Yet he gravelled me often enough with his perpetual questions; and the false Mr. Barlow stood frequently exposed before the royal Sandford. I remember once in particular. We were showing the magic-lantern; a slide of Windsor Castle was put in, and I told him there was the 'outch' of Victoreea. 'How many pathom he high?' he asked, and I was dumb before him. It was the builder, the indefatigable architect of palaces, that spoke; collector though he was, he did not collect useless information; and all his questions had a purpose. After etiquette, government, law, the police, money, and medicine were his chief interests - things vitally important to himself as a king and the father of his people. It was my part not only to supply new information, but to correct the old. 'My patha he tell me,' or 'White man he tell me,' would be his constant beginning; 'You think he lie?' Sometimes I thought he did. Tembinok' once brought me a difficulty of this kind, which I was long of comprehending. A schooner captain had told him of Captain Cook; the king was much interested in the story; and turned for more information - not to Mr. Stephen's Dictionary, not to the *Britannica*, but to the Bible in the Gilbert Island version (which consists chiefly of the New Testament and the Psalms). Here he sought long and earnestly; Paul he found, and Festus and Alexander the coppersmith: no word of Cook. The inference was obvious: the explorer was a myth. So hard it is, even for a man of great natural parts like Tembinok', to grasp the ideas of a new society and culture.

CHAPTER V - KING AND COMMONS

We saw but little of the commons of the isle. At first we met them at the well, where they washed their linen and we drew water for the table. The combination was distasteful; and, having a tyrant at command, we applied to the king and had the place enclosed in our tapu. It was one of the few favours which Tembinok' visibly boggled about granting, and it may be conceived how little popular it made the strangers. Many villagers passed us daily going afield; but they fetched a wide circuit round our tapu, and seemed to avert their looks. At times we went ourselves into the village - a strange place. Dutch by its canals, Oriental by the height and steepness of the roofs, which looked at dusk like temples; but we were rarely called into a house: no welcome, no friendship, was offered us; and of home life we had but the one view: the waking of a corpse, a frigid, painful scene: the widow holding on her lap the cold, bluish body of her husband, and now partaking of the refreshments which made the round of the company, now weeping and kissing the pale mouth. ('I fear you feel this affliction deeply,' said the Scottish minister. 'Eh, sir, and that I do!' replied the widow. 'I've been greetin' a' nicht; an' noo I'm just gaun to sup this bit parritch, and then I'll begin an' greet again.') In our walks abroad I have always supposed the islanders avoided us, perhaps from distaste, perhaps by order; and those whom we met we took generally by surprise. The surface of the isle is diversified with palm groves, thickets, and romantic dingles four feet deep, relics of old taro plantation; and it is thus possible to stumble unawares on folk resting or hiding from their work. About pistol-shot from our township there lay a pond in the bottom of a jungle; here the maids of the isle came to bathe, and were several times alarmed by our intrusion. Not for them are the bright cold rivers of Tahiti or Upolu, not for them to splash and laugh in the hour of the dusk with a villageful of gay companions; but to steal here solitary, to crouch in a place like a cow-wallow, and wash (if that can be called washing) in lukewarm mud, brown as their own skins. Other, but still rare, encounters occur to my memory. I was several times arrested by a tender sound in the bush of voices talking, soft as flutes and with quiet intonations. Hope told a flattering tale; I put aside the leaves; and behold! in place of the expected dryads, a pair of all too solid ladies squatting over a clay pipe in the ungraceful *ridi*. The beauty of the voice and the eye was all that remained to those vast dames; but that of the voice was indeed exquisite. It is strange I should have never heard a more winning sound of speech, yet the dialect should be one remarkable for violent, ugly, and outlandish vocables; so that Tembinok' himself declared it made him weary, and professed to find repose in talking English.

The state of this folk, of whom I saw so little, I can merely guess at. The king himself explains the situation with some art. 'No; I no pay them,' he once said. 'I give them tobacco. They work for me *all the same brothers*.' It is true there was a brother once in Arden! But we prefer the shorter word. They bear every servile mark, - levity like a child's, incurable idleness, incurious content. The insolence of the cook was a trait of his own; not so his levity, which he shared with the innocent Uncle Parker. With equal unconcern both gambolled under the shadow of the gallows, and took liberties with death that might have surprised a careless student of man's nature. I wrote of Parker that he behaved like a boy of ten: what was he else, being a slave of sixty? He had passed all his years in school, fed, clad, thought for, commanded; and had grown familiar and coquetted with the fear of punishment. By terror you may drive men long, but not far. Here, in Apemama, they work at the constant and the instant peril of their lives; and are plunged in a kind of lethargy of laziness. It is common to see one go afield in his stiff mat ungirt, so that he walks elbows-in like a trussed fowl; and whatsoever his right hand findeth to do, the other must be off duty holding on his clothes. It is common to see two men carrying between them on a pole a single bucket of water. To make two bites of a cherry is good enough: to make two burthens of a soldier's kit, for a distance of perhaps half a furlong, passes measure. Woman, being the less childish animal, is less relaxed by servile conditions. Even in the king's absence, even when they were alone, I have seen Apemama women work with constancy. But the outside to be hoped for in a man is that he may attack his task in little languid fits, and lounge between-whiles. So I have seen a painter, with his pipe going, and a friend by the studio fireside. You might suppose the race to lack civility, even vitality, until you saw them in the dance. Night after night, and sometimes day after day, they rolled out their choruses in the great Speak House - solemn andantes and adagios, led by the clapped hand, and delivered with an energy that shook the roof. The time was not so slow, though it was slow for the islands; but I have chosen rather to indicate the effect upon the hearer. Their music had a church-like character from near at hand, and seemed to European ears more regular than the run of island music. Twice I have heard a discord regularly solved. From farther off, heard at Equator Town for instance, the measures rose and fell and crepitated like the barking of hounds in a distant kennel.

The slaves are certainly not overworked - children of ten do more without fatigue - and the Apemama labourers have holidays, when the singing begins early in the afternoon. The diet is hard; copra and a sweetmeat of pounded pandanus are the only dishes I observed outside the palace; but there seems no defect in quantity, and the king shares with them his turtles. Three came in a boat from Kuria during our stay; one was kept for the palace, one sent to us, one presented to the village. It is the habit of the islanders to cook the turtle in its carapace; we had been promised the shells, and we asked a tapu on this foolish practice. The face of Tembinok' darkened and he answered nothing. Hesitation in the question of the well I could understand, for water is scarce on a low island; that he should refuse to interfere upon a point of cookery was more than I had dreamed of; and I gathered (rightly or wrongly) that he was scrupulous of touching in the least degree the private life and habits of his slaves. So that even here, in full despotism, public opinion has weight; even here, in the midst of slavery, freedom has a corner.

Orderly, sober, and innocent, life flows in the isle from day to day as in a model plantation under a model planter. It is impossible to doubt the beneficence of that stern rule. A curious politeness, a soft and gracious manner, something effeminate and courtly, distinguishes the islanders of Apemama; it is talked of by all the traders, it was felt even by residents so little beloved as ourselves, and noticeable even in the cook, and even in that scoundrel's hours of insolence. The king, with his manly and plain bearing, stood out alone; you might say he was the only Gilbert Islander in Apemama. Violence, so common in Butaritari, seems unknown. So are theft and drunkenness. I am assured the experiment has been made of leaving sovereigns on the beach before the village; they lay there untouched. In all our time on the island I was but once asked for drink. This was by a mighty plausible fellow, wearing European clothes and speaking excellent English - Tamaiti his name, or, as the whites have now corrupted it, 'Tom White': one of the king's supercargoes at three pounds a month and a percentage, a medical man besides, and in his private hours a wizard. He found me one day in the outskirts of the village, in a secluded place, hot and private, where the taro-pits are deep and the plants high. Here he buttonholed me, and, looking about him like a conspirator, inquired if I had gin.

I told him I had. He remarked that gin was forbidden, lauded the prohibition a while, and then went on to explain that he was a doctor, or 'dogstar' as he pronounced the word, that gin was necessary to him for his medical infusions, that he was quite out of it, and that he would be obliged to me for some in a bottle. I told him I had passed the king my word on landing; but since his case was so exceptional, I would go down to the palace at once, and had no doubt that Tembinok' would set me free. Tom White was immediately overwhelmed with embarrassment and terror, besought me in the most moving terms not to betray him, and fled my neighbourhood. He had none of the cook's valour; it was weeks before he dared to meet my eye; and then only by the order of the king and on particular business.

The more I viewed and admired this triumph of firm rule, the more I was haunted and troubled by a problem, the problem (perhaps) of to-morrow for ourselves. Here was a people protected from all serious misfortune, relieved of all serious anxieties, and deprived of what we call our liberty. Did they like it? and what was their sentiment toward the ruler? The first question I could not of course ask, nor perhaps the natives answer. Even the second was delicate; yet at last, and under charming and strange circumstances, I found my opportunity to put it and a man to reply. It was near the full of the moon, with a delicious breeze; the isle was bright as day - to sleep would have been sacrilege; and I walked in the bush, playing my pipe. It must have been the sound of what I am pleased to call my music that attracted in my direction another wanderer of the night. This was a young man attired in a fine mat, and with a garland on his hair, for he was new come from dancing and singing in the public hall; and his body, his face, and his eyes were all of an enchanting beauty. Every here and there in the Gilberts youths are to be found of this absurd perfection; I have seen five of us pass half an hour in admiration of a boy at Mariki; and Te Kop (my friend in the fine mat and garland) I had already several times remarked, and long ago set down as the loveliest animal in Apemama. The philtre of admiration must be very strong, or these natives specially susceptible to its effects, for I have scarce ever admired a person in the islands but what he has sought my particular acquaintance. So it was with Te Kop. He led me to the ocean side; and for an hour or two we sat smoking and talking on the resplendent sand and under the ineffable brightness of the moon. My friend showed himself very sensible of the beauty and amenity of the hour. 'Good night! Good wind!' he kept exclaiming, and as he said the words he seemed to hug myself. I had long before invented such reiterated expressions of delight for a character (Felipe, in the story of *Olalla*) intended to be partly bestial. But there was nothing bestial in Te Kop; only a childish pleasure in the moment. He was no less pleased with his companion, or was good enough to say so; honoured me, before he left, by calling me Te Kop; apostrophised me as 'My name!' with an intonation exquisitely tender, laying his hand at the same time swiftly on my knee; and after we had risen, and our paths began to separate in the bush, twice cried to me with a sort of gentle ecstasy, 'I like you too much!' From the beginning he had made no secret of his terror of the king; would not sit down nor speak above a whisper till he had put the whole breadth of the isle between himself and his monarch, then harmlessly asleep; and even there, even within a stone-cast of the outer sea, our talk covered by the sound of the surf and the rattle of the wind among the palms, continued to speak guardedly, softening his silver voice (which rang loud enough in the chorus) and looking about him like a man in fear of spies. The strange thing is that I should have beheld him no more. In any other island in the whole South Seas, if I had advanced half as far with any native, he would have been at my door next morning, bringing and expecting gifts. But Te Kop vanished in the bush for ever. My house, of course, was unapproachable; but he knew where to find me on the ocean beach, where I went daily. I was the *Kaupoi*, the rich man; my tobacco and trade were known to be endless: he was sure of a present. I am at a loss how to explain his behaviour, unless it be supposed that he recalled with terror and regret a passage in our interview. Here it is:

'The king, he good man?' I asked.

'Suppose he like you, he good man,' replied Te Kop: 'no like, no good.'

That is one way of putting it, of course. Te Kop himself was probably no favourite, for he scarce appealed to my judgment as a type of industry. And there must be many others whom the king (to adhere to the formula) does not like. Do these unfortunates like the king? Or is not rather the repulsion mutual? and the conscientious Tembinok', like the conscientious Braxfield before him, and many other conscientious rulers and judges before either, surrounded by a considerable body of 'grumbletonians'? Take the cook, for instance, when he passed us by, blue with rage and terror. He was very wroth with me; I think by all the old principles of human nature he was not very well pleased with his sovereign. It was the rich man he sought to waylay: I think it must have been by the turn of a hair that it was not the king he waylaid instead. And the king gives, or seems to give, plenty of opportunities; day and night he goes abroad alone, whether armed or not I can but guess; and the taro-patches, where his business must so often carry him, seem designed for assassination. The case of the cook was heavy indeed to my conscience. I did not like to kill my enemy at second-hand; but had I a right to conceal from the king, who had trusted me, the dangerous secret character of his attendant? And suppose the king should fall, what would be the fate of the king's friends? It was our opinion at the time that we should pay dear for the closing of the well; that our breath was in the king's nostrils; that if the king should by any chance be bludgeoned in a taro-patch, the philosophical and musical inhabitants of Equator Town might lay aside their pleasant instruments, and betake themselves to what defence they had, with a very dim prospect of success. These speculations were forced upon us by an incident which I am ashamed to betray. The schooner *H. L. Haseltine* (since capsized at sea, with the loss of eleven lives) put into Apemama in a good hour for us, who had near exhausted our supplies. The king, after his habit, spent day after day on board; the gin proved unhappily to his taste; he brought a store of it ashore with him; and for some time the sole tyrant of the isle was half-seas-over. He was not drunk - the man is not a drunkard, he has always stores of liquor at hand, which he uses with moderation, - but he was muzzy, dull, and confused. He came one day to lunch with us, and while the cloth was being laid fell asleep in his chair. His confusion, when he awoke and found he had been detected, was equalled by our uneasiness. When he was gone we sat and spoke of his peril, which we thought to be in some degree our own; of how easily the man might be surprised in such a state by *grumbletonians*; of the strange scenes that would follow - the royal treasures and stores at the mercy of the rabble, the palace overrun, the garrison of women turned adrift. And as we talked we were startled by a gun-shot and a sudden, barbaric outcry. I believe we all changed colour; but it was only the king firing at a dog and the chorus striking up in the Speak House. A day or two later I learned the king was very sick; went down, diagnosed the case; and took at once the highest medical degree by the exhibition of bicarbonate of soda. Within the hour Richard was himself again; and I found him at the unfinished house, enjoying the double pleasure of directing Rubam and making a dinner of cocoa-nut dumplings, and all eagerness to have the formula of this new sort of *pain-killer* - for *pain-killer* in the islands is the generic name of medicine. So ended the king's modest spree and our anxiety.

On the face of things, I ought to say, loyalty appeared unshaken. When the schooner at last returned for us, after much experience of baffling winds, she brought a rumour that Tebureimoa had declared war on Apemama. Tembinok' became a new man; his face radiant; his attitude, as I saw him preside over a council of chiefs in one of the palace maniap's, eager as a boy's; his voice sounding abroad, shrill and jubilant, over half the compound. War is what he wants, and here was his chance. The English captain, when he flung his arms in the lagoon, had forbidden him (except in one case) all military adventures in the future: here was the case arrived. All morning the council sat; men were drilled, arms were bought, the sound of firing disturbed the afternoon; the king devised and communicated to me his plan of campaign, which was highly elaborate and ingenious, but perhaps a trifle fine-spun for the rough and random vicissitudes of war. And in all this bustle the temper of the people appeared excellent, an unwonted animation in every face, and even Uncle Parker burning with military zeal.

Of course it was a false alarm. Tebureimoa had other fish to fry. The ambassador who accompanied us on our return to Butaritari found him retired to a small island on the reef, in a huff with the Old Men, a tiff with the traders, and more fear of insurrection at home than appetite for wars abroad. The plenipotentiary had been placed under my protection; and we solemnly saluted when we met. He proved an excellent fisherman, and caught bonito over the ship's side. He pulled a good oar, and made himself useful for a whole fiery afternoon, towing the becalmed *Equator* off Mariki. He went to his post and did no good. He returned home again, having done no harm. *O si sic omnes*!

CHAPTER VI - THE KING OF APEMAMA: DEVIL-WORK

The ocean beach of Apemama was our daily resort. The coast is broken by shallow bays. The reef is detached, elevated, and includes a lagoon about knee-deep, the unrestful spending-basin of the surf. The beach is now of fine sand, now of broken coral. The trend of the coast being convex, scarce a quarter of a mile of it is to be seen at once; the land being so low, the horizon appears within a stone-cast; and the narrow prospect enhances the sense of privacy. Man avoids the place - even his footprints are uncommon; but a great number of birds hover and pipe there fishing, and leave crooked tracks upon the sand. Apart from these, the only sound (and I was going to say the only society), is that of the breakers on the reef.

On each projection of the coast, the bank of coral clinkers immediately above the beach has been levelled, and a pillar built, perhaps breast-high. These are not sepulchral; all the dead being buried on the inhabited side of the island, close to men's houses, and (what is worse) to their wells. I was told they were to protect the isle against inroads from the sea - divine or diabolical martellos, probably sacred to Taburik, God of Thunder.

The bay immediately opposite Equator Town, which we called Fu Bay, in honour of our cook, was thus fortified on either horn. It was well sheltered by the reef, the enclosed water clear and tranquil, the enclosing beach curved like a horseshoe, and both steep and broad. The path debouched about the midst of the re-entrant angle, the woods stopping some distance inland. In front, between the fringe of the wood and the crown of the beach, there had been designed a regular figure, like the court for some new variety of tennis, with borders of round stones imbedded, and pointed at the angles with low posts, likewise of stone. This was the king's Pray Place. When he prayed, what he prayed for, and to whom he addressed his supplications I could never learn. The ground was tapu.

In the angle, by the mouth of the path, stood a deserted maniap'. Near by there had been a house before our coming, which was now transported and figured for the moment in Equator Town. It had been, and it would be again when we departed, the residence of the guardian and wizard of the spot - Tamaiti. Here, in this lone place, within sound of the sea, he had his dwelling and uncanny duties. I cannot call to mind another case of a man living on the ocean side of any open atoll; and Tamaiti must have had strong nerves, the greater confidence in his own spells, or, what I believe to be the truth, an enviable scepticism. Whether Tamaiti had any guardianship of the Pray Place I never heard. But his own particular chapel stood farther back in the fringe of the wood. It was a tree of respectable growth. Around it there was drawn a circle of stones like those that enclosed the Pray Place; in front, facing towards the sea, a stone of a much greater size, and somewhat hollowed, like a piscina, stood close against the trunk; in front of that again a conical pile of gravel. In the hollow of what I have called the piscina (though it proved to be a magic seat) lay an offering of green cocoa-nuts; and when you looked up you found the boughs of the tree to be laden with strange fruit: palm-branches elaborately plaited, and beautiful models of canoes, finished and rigged to the least detail. The whole had the appearance of a mid-summer and sylvan Christmas-tree *al fresco*. Yet we were already well enough acquainted in the Gilberts to recognise it, at the first sight, for a piece of wizardry, or, as they say in the group, of Devil-work.

The plaited palms were what we recognised. We had seen them before on Apaiang, the most christianised of all these islands; where excellent Mr. Bingham lived and laboured and has left golden memories; whence all the education in the northern Gilberts traces its descent; and where we were boarded by little native Sunday-school misses in clean frocks, with demure faces, and singing hymns as to the manner born.

Our experience of Devil-work at Apaiang had been as follows:- It chanced we were benighted at the house of Captain Tierney. My wife and I lodged with a Chinaman some half a mile away; and thither Captain Reid and a native boy escorted us by torch-light. On the way the torch went out, and we took shelter in a small and lonely Christian chapel to rekindle it. Stuck in the rafters of the chapel was a branch of knotted palm. ‘What is that?’ I asked. ‘O, that’s Devil-work,’ said the Captain. ‘And what is Devil-work?’ I inquired. ‘If you like, I’ll show you some when we get to Johnnie’s,’ he replied. ‘Johnnie’s’ was a quaint little house upon the crest of the beach, raised some three feet on posts, approached by stairs; part walled, part trellised. Trophies of advertisement-photographs were hung up within for decoration. There was a table and a recess-bed, in which Mrs. Stevenson slept; while I camped on the matted floor with Johnnie, Mrs. Johnnie, her sister, and the devil’s own regiment of cockroaches. Hither was summoned an old witch, who looked the part to horror. The lamp was set on the floor; the crone squatted on the threshold, a green palm-branch in her hand, the light striking full on her aged features and picking out behind her, from the black night, timorous faces of spectators. Our sorceress began with a chanted incantation; it was in the old tongue, for which I had no interpreter; but ever and again there ran among the crowd outside that laugh which every traveller in the islands learns so soon to recognise, - the laugh of terror. Doubtless these half-Christian folk were shocked, these half-heathen folk alarmed. Chench or Taburik thus invoked, we put our questions; the witch knotted the leaves, here a leaf and there a leaf, plainly on some arithmetical system; studied the result with great apparent contention of mind; and gave the answers. Sidney Colvin was in robust health and gone a journey; and we should have a fair wind upon the morrow: that was the result of our consultation, for which we paid a dollar. The next day dawned cloudless and breathless; but I think Captain Reid placed a secret reliance on the sibyl, for the schooner was got ready for sea. By eight the lagoon was flawed with long cat's-paws, and the palms tossed and rustled; before ten we were clear of the passage and skimming under all plain sail, with bubbling scuppers. So we had the breeze, which was well worth a dollar in itself; but the bulletin about my friend in England proved, some six months later, when I got my mail, to have been groundless. Perhaps London lies beyond the horizon of the island gods.

Tembinok', in his first dealings, showed himself sternly averse from superstition: and had not the *Equator* delayed, we might have left the island and still supposed him an agnostic. It chanced one day, however, that he came to our maniap', and found Mrs. Stevenson in the midst of a game of patience. She explained the game as well as she was able, and wound up jocularly by telling him this was her devil-work, and if she won, the *Equator* would arrive next day. Tembinok' must have drawn a long breath; we were not so high-and-dry after all; he need no longer dissemble, and he plunged at once into confessions. He made devil-work every day, he told us, to know if ships were coming in; and thereafter brought us regular reports of the results. It was surprising how regularly he was wrong; but he always had an explanation ready. There had been some schooner in the offing out of view; but either she was not bound for Apemama, or had changed her course, or lay becalmed. I used to regard the king with veneration as he thus publicly deceived himself. I saw behind him all the fathers of the Church, all the philosophers and men of science of the past; before him, all those that are to come; himself in the midst; the whole visionary series bowed over the same task of welding incongruities. To the end Tembinok' spoke reluctantly of the island gods and their worship, and I learned but little. Taburik is the god of thunder, and deals in wind and weather. A while since there were wizards who could call him down in the form of lightning. 'My patha he tell me he see: you think he lie?' Tienti - pronounced something like 'Chench,' and identified by his majesty with the devil - sends and removes bodily sickness. He is whistled for in the Paumotuan manner, and is said to appear; but the king has never seen him. The doctors treat disease by the aid of Chench: eclectic Tembinok' at the same time administering 'pain-killer' from his medicine-chest, so as to give the sufferer both chances. 'I think mo' betta,' observed his majesty, with more than his usual self-approval. Apparently the gods are not jealous, and placidly enjoy both shrine and priest in common. On Tamaiti's medicine-tree, for instance, the model canoes are hung up *ex voto* for a prosperous voyage, and must therefore be dedicated to Taburik, god of the weather; but the stone in front is the place of sick folk come to pacify Chench.

It chanced, by great good luck, that even as we spoke of these affairs, I found myself threatened with a cold. I do not suppose I was ever glad of a cold before, or shall ever be again; but the opportunity to see the sorcerers at work was priceless, and I called in the faculty of Apemama. They came in a body, all in their Sunday's best and hung with wreaths and shells, the insignia of the devil-worker. Tamaiti I knew already: Terutak' I saw for the first time - a tall, lank, raw-boned, serious North-Sea fisherman turned brown; and there was a third in their company whose name I never heard, and who played to Tamaiti the part of *famulus*. Tamaiti took me in hand first, and led me, conversing agreeably, to the shores of Fu Bay. The *famulus* climbed a tree for some green cocoa-nuts. Tamaiti himself disappeared a while in the bush and returned with coco tinder, dry leaves, and a spray of waxberry. I was placed on the stone, with my back to the tree and my face to windward; between me and the gravel-heap one of the green nuts was set; and then Tamaiti (having previously bared his feet, for he had come in canvas shoes, which tortured him) joined me within the magic circle, hollowed out the top of the gravel-heap, built his fire in the bottom, and applied a match: it was one of Bryant and May's. The flame was slow to catch, and the irreverent sorcerer filled in the time with talk of foreign places - of London, and 'companies,' and how much money they had; of San Francisco, and the nefarious fogs, 'all the same smoke,' which had been so nearly the occasion of his death. I tried vainly to lead him to the matter in hand. 'Everybody make medicine,' he said lightly. And when I asked him if he were himself a good practitioner - 'No savvy,' he replied, more lightly still. At length the leaves burst in a flame, which he continued to feed; a thick, light smoke blew in my face, and the flames streamed against and scorched my clothes. He in the meanwhile addressed, or affected to address, the evil spirit, his lips moving fast, but without sound; at the same time he waved in the air and twice struck me on the breast with his green spray. So soon as the leaves were consumed the ashes were buried, the green spray was imbedded in the gravel, and the ceremony was at an end.

A reader of the *Arabian Nights* felt quite at home. Here was the suffumigation; here was the muttering wizard; here was the desert place to which Aladdin was decoyed by the false uncle. But they manage these things better in fiction. The effect was marred by the levity of the magician, entertaining his patient with small talk like an affable dentist, and by the incongruous presence of Mr. Osbourne with a camera. As for my cold, it was neither better nor worse.

I was now handed over to Terutak', the leading practitioner or medical baronet of Apemama. His place is on the lagoon side of the island, hard by the palace. A rail of light wood, some two feet high, encloses an oblong piece of gravel like the king's Pray Place; in the midst is a green tree; below, a stone table bears a pair of boxes covered with a fine mat; and in front of these an offering of food, a cocoa-nut, a piece of taro or a fish, is placed daily. On two sides the enclosure is lined with maniap's; and one of our party, who had been there to sketch, had remarked a daily concourse of people and an extraordinary number of sick children; for this is in fact the infirmary of Apemama. The doctor and myself entered the sacred place alone; the boxes and the mat were displaced; and I was enthroned in their stead upon the stone, facing once more to the east. For a while the sorcerer remained unseen behind me, making passes in the air with a branch of palm. Then he struck lightly on the brim of my straw hat; and this blow he continued to repeat at intervals, sometimes brushing instead my arm and shoulder. I have had people try to mesmerise me a dozen times, and never with the least result. But at the first tap - on a quarter no more vital than my hat-brim, and from nothing more virtuous than a switch of palm wielded by a man I could not even see - sleep rushed upon me like an armed man. My sinews fainted, my eyes closed, my brain hummed, with drowsiness. I resisted, at first instinctively, then with a certain flurry of despair, in the end successfully; if that were indeed success which enabled me to scramble to my feet, to stumble home somnambulous, to cast myself at once upon my bed, and sink at once into a dreamless stupor. When I awoke my cold was gone. So I leave a matter that I do not understand.

Meanwhile my appetite for curiosities (not usually very keen) had been strangely whetted by the sacred boxes. They were of pandanus wood, oblong in shape, with an effect of pillaring along the sides like straw work, lightly fringed with hair or fibre and standing on four legs. The outside was neat as a toy; the inside a mystery I was resolved to penetrate. But there was a lion in the path. I might not approach Terutak', since I had promised to buy nothing in the island; I dared not have recourse to the king, for I had already received from him more gifts than I knew how to repay. In this dilemma (the schooner being at last returned) we hit on a device. Captain Reid came forward in my stead, professed an unbridled passion for the boxes, and asked and obtained leave to bargain for them with the wizard. That same afternoon the captain and I made haste to the infirmary, entered the enclosure, raised the mat, and had begun to examine the boxes at our leisure, when Terutak's wife bounced out of one of the nigh houses, fell upon us, swept up the treasures, and was gone. There was never a more absolute surprise. She came, she took, she vanished, we had not a guess whither; and we remained, with foolish looks and laughter on the empty field. Such was the fit prologue of our memorable bargaining.

Presently Terutak' came, bringing Tamaiti along with him, both smiling; and we four squatted without the rail. In the three maniap's of the infirmary a certain audience was gathered: the family of a sick child under treatment, the king's sister playing cards, a pretty girl, who swore I was the image of her father; in all perhaps a score. Terutak's wife had returned (even as she had vanished) unseen, and now sat, breathless and watchful, by her husband's side. Perhaps some rumour of our quest had gone abroad, or perhaps we had given the alert by our unseemly freedom: certain, at least, that in the faces of all present, expectation and alarm were mingled.

Captain Reid announced, without preface or disguise, that I was come to purchase; Terutak', with sudden gravity, refused to sell. He was pressed; he persisted. It was explained we only wanted one: no matter, two were necessary for the healing of the sick. He was rallied, he was reasoned with: in vain. He sat there, serious and still, and refused. All this was only a preliminary skirmish; hitherto no sum of money had been mentioned; but now the captain brought his great guns to bear. He named a pound, then two, then three. Out of the maniap's one person after another came to join the group, some with mere excitement, others with consternation in their faces. The pretty girl crept to my side; it was then that - surely with the most artless flattery - she informed me of my likeness to her father. Tamaiti the infidel sat with hanging head and every mark of dejection. Terutak' streamed with sweat, his eye was glazed, his face wore a painful rictus, his chest heaved like that of one spent with running. The man must have been by nature covetous; and I doubt if ever I saw moral agony more tragically displayed. His wife by his side passionately encouraged his resistance.

And now came the charge of the old guard. The captain, making a skip, named the surprising figure of five pounds. At the word the maniap's were emptied. The king's sister flung down her cards and came to the front to listen, a cloud on her brow. The pretty girl beat her breast and cried with wearisome iteration that if the box were hers I should have it. Terutak's wife was beside herself with pious fear, her face discomposed, her voice (which scarce ceased from warning and encouragement) shrill as a whistle. Even Terutak' lost that image-like immobility which he had hitherto maintained. He rocked on his mat, threw up his closed knees alternately, and struck himself on the breast after the manner of dancers. But he came gold out of the furnace; and with what voice was left him continued to reject the bribe.

And now came a timely interjection. 'Money will not heal the sick,' observed the king's sister sententiously; and as soon as I heard the remark translated my eyes were unsealed, and I began to blush for my employment. Here was a sick child, and I sought, in the view of its parents, to remove the medicine-box. Here was the priest of a religion, and I (a heathen millionaire) was corrupting him to sacrilege. Here was a greedy man, torn in twain betwixt greed and conscience; and I sat by and relished, and lustfully renewed his torments. *Ave, Caesar*! Smothered in a corner, dormant but not dead, we have all the one touch of nature: an infant passion for the sand and blood of the arena. So I brought to an end my first and last experience of the joys of the millionaire, and departed amid silent awe. Nowhere else can I expect to stir the depths of human nature by an offer of five pounds; nowhere else, even at the expense of millions, could I hope to see the evil of riches stand so legibly exposed. Of all the bystanders, none but the king's sister retained any memory of the gravity and danger of the thing in hand. Their eyes glowed, the girl beat her breast, in senseless animal excitement. Nothing was offered them; they stood neither to gain nor to lose; at the mere name and wind of these great sums Satan possessed them.

From this singular interview I went straight to the palace; found the king; confessed what I had been doing; begged him, in my name, to compliment Terutak' on his virtue, and to have a similar box made for me against the return of the schooner. Tembinok', Rubam, and one of the Daily Papers - him we used to call 'the Facetiae Column' - laboured for a while of some idea, which was at last intelligibly delivered. They feared I thought the box would cure me; whereas, without the wizard, it was useless; and when I was threatened with another cold I should do better to rely on pain-killer. I explained I merely wished to keep it in my 'outch' as a thing made in Apemama and these honest men were much relieved.

Late the same evening, my wife, crossing the isle to windward, was aware of singing in the bush. Nothing is more common in that hour and place than the jubilant carol of the toddy-cutter, swinging high overhead, beholding below him the narrow ribbon of the isle, the surrounding field of ocean, and the fires of the sunset. But this was of a graver character, and seemed to proceed from the ground-level. Advancing a little in the thicket, Mrs. Stevenson saw a clear space, a fine mat spread in the midst, and on the mat a wreath of white flowers and one of the devil-work boxes. A woman - whom we guess to have been Mrs. Terutak' - sat in front, now drooping over the box like a mother over a cradle, now lifting her face and directing her song to heaven. A passing toddy-cutter told my wife that she was praying. Probably she did not so much pray as deprecate; and perhaps even the ceremony was one of disenchantment. For the box was already doomed; it was to pass from its green medicine-tree, reverend precinct, and devout attendants; to be handled by the profane; to cross three seas; to come to land under the foolscap of St. Paul's; to be domesticated within the hail of Lillie Bridge; there to be dusted by the British housemaid, and to take perhaps the roar of London for the voice of the outer sea along the reef. Before even we had finished dinner Chench had begun his journey, and one of the newspapers had already placed the box upon my table as the gift of Tembinok'.

I made haste to the palace, thanked the king, but offered to restore the box, for I could not bear that the sick of the island should be made to suffer. I was amazed by his reply. Terutak', it appeared, had still three or four in reserve against an accident; and his reluctance, and the dread painted at first on every face, was not in the least occasioned by the prospect of medical destitution, but by the immediate divinity of Chench. How much more did I respect the king's command, which had been able to extort in a moment and for nothing a sacrilegious favour that I had in vain solicited with millions! But now I had a difficult task in front of me; it was not in my view that Terutak' should suffer by his virtue; and I must persuade the king to share my opinion, to let me enrich one of his subjects, and (what was yet more delicate) to pay for my present. Nothing shows the king in a more becoming light than the fact that I succeeded. He demurred at the principle; he exclaimed, when he heard it, at the sum. 'Plenty money!' cried he, with contemptuous displeasure. But his resistance was never serious; and when he had blown off his ill-humour - 'A' right,' said he. 'You give him. Mo' betta.'

Armed with this permission, I made straight for the infirmary. The night was now come, cool, dark, and starry. On a mat hard by a clear fire of wood and coco shell, Terutak' lay beside his wife. Both were smiling; the agony was over, the king's command had reconciled (I must suppose) their agitating scruples; and I was bidden to sit by them and share the circulating pipe. I was a little moved myself when I placed five gold sovereigns in the wizard's hand; but there was no sign of emotion in Terutak' as he returned them, pointed to the palace, and named Tembinok'. It was a changed scene when I had managed to explain. Terutak', long, dour Scots fisherman as he was, expressed his satisfaction within bounds; but the wife beamed; and there was an old gentleman present - her father, I suppose - who seemed nigh translated. His eyes stood out of his head; '*Kaupoi, Kaupoi* - rich, rich!' ran on his lips like a refrain; and he could not meet my eye but what he gurgled into foolish laughter.

I might now go home, leaving that fire-lit family party gloating over their new millions, and consider my strange day. I had tried and rewarded the virtue of Terutak'. I had played the millionaire, had behaved abominably, and then in some degree repaired my thoughtlessness. And now I had my box, and could open it and look within. It contained a miniature sleeping-mat and a white shell. Tamaiti, interrogated next day as to the shell, explained it was not exactly Chench, but a cell, or body, which he would at times inhabit. Asked why there was a sleeping-mat, he retorted indignantly, 'Why have you mats?' And this was the sceptical Tamaiti! But island scepticism is never deeper than the lips.

CHAPTER VII - THE KING OF APEMAMA

Thus all things on the island, even the priests of the gods, obey the word of Tembinok'. He can give and take, and slay, and allay the scruples of the conscientious, and do all things (apparently) but interfere in the cookery of a turtle. 'I got power' is his favourite word; it interlards his conversation; the thought haunts him and is ever fresh; and when be has asked and meditates of foreign countries, he looks up with a smile and reminds you, '*I* got *Power*.' Nor is his delight only in the possession, but in the exercise. He rejoices in the crooked and violent paths of kingship like a strong man to run a race, or like an artist in his art. To feel, to use his power, to embellish his island and the picture of the island life after a private ideal, to milk the island vigorously, to extend his singular museum - these employ delightfully the sum of his abilities. I never saw a man more patently in the right trade.

It would be natural to suppose this monarchy inherited intact through generations. And so far from that, it is a thing of yesterday. I was already a boy at school while Apemama was yet republican, ruled by a noisy council of Old Men, and torn with incurable feuds. And Tembinok' is no Bourbon; rather the son of a Napoleon. Of course he is well-born. No man need aspire high in the isles of the Pacific unless his pedigree be long and in the upper regions mythical. And our king counts cousinship with most of the high families in the archipelago, and traces his descent to a shark and a heroic woman. Directed by an oracle, she swam beyond sight of land to meet her revolting paramour, and received at sea the seed of a predestined family. 'I think lie,' is the king's emphatic commentary; yet he is proud of the legend. From this illustrious beginning the fortunes of the race must have declined; and Teñkoruti, the grandfather of Tembinok', was the chief of a village at the north end of the island. Kuria and Aranuka were yet independent; Apemama itself the arena of devastating feuds. Through this perturbed period of history the figure of Teñkoruti stalks memorable. In war he was swift and bloody; several towns fell to his spear, and the inhabitants were butchered to a man. In civil life this arrogance was unheard of. When the council of Old Men was summoned, he went to the Speak House, delivered his mind, and left without waiting to be answered. Wisdom had spoken: let others opine according to their folly. He was feared and hated, and this was his pleasure. He was no poet; he cared not for arts or knowledge. 'My gran'patha one thing savvy, savvy pight,' observed the king. In some lull of their own disputes the Old Men of Apemama adventured on the conquest of Apemama; and this unlicked Caius Marcius was elected general of the united troops. Success attended him; the islands were reduced, and Teñkoruti returned to his own government, glorious and detested. He died about 1860, in the seventieth year of his age and the full odour of unpopularity. He was tall and lean, says his grandson, looked extremely old, and 'walked all the same young man.' The same observer gave me a significant detail. The survivors of that rough epoch were all defaced with spearmarks; there was none on the body of this skilful fighter. 'I see old man, no got a spear,' said the king.

Teñkoruti left two sons, Tembaitake and Tembinatake. Tembaitake, our king's father, was short, middling stout, a poet, a good genealogist, and something of a fighter; it seems he took himself seriously, and was perhaps scarce conscious that he was in all things the creature and nursling of his brother. There was no shadow of dispute between the pair: the greater man filled with alacrity and content the second place; held the breach in war, and all the portfolios in the time of peace; and, when his brother rated him, listened in silence, looking on the ground. Like Teñkoruti, he was tall and lean and a swift talker - a rare trait in the islands. He possessed every accomplishment. He knew sorcery, he was the best genealogist of his day, he was a poet, he could dance and make canoes and armour; and the famous mast of Apemama, which ran one joint higher than the mainmast of a full-rigged ship, was of his conception and design. But these were avocations, and the man's trade was war. 'When my uncle go make wa', he laugh,' said Tembinok'. He forbade the use of field fortification, that protractor of native hostilities; his men must fight in the open, and win or be beaten out of hand; his own activity inspired his followers; and the swiftness of his blows beat down, in one lifetime, the resistance of three islands. He made his brother sovereign, he left his nephew absolute. 'My uncle make all smooth,' said Tembinok'. 'I mo' king than my patha: I got power,' he said, with formidable relish.

Such is the portrait of the uncle drawn by the nephew. I can set beside it another by a different artist, who has often - I may say always - delighted me with his romantic taste in narrative, but not always - and I may say not often - persuaded me of his exactitude. I have already denied myself the use of so much excellent matter from the same source, that I begin to think it time to reward good resolution; and his account of Tembinatake agrees so well with the king's, that it may very well be (what I hope it is) the record of a fact, and not (what I suspect) the pleasing exercise of an imagination more than sailorly. A., for so I had perhaps better call him, was walking up the island after dusk, when he came on a lighted village of some size, was directed to the chief's house, and asked leave to rest and smoke a pipe. 'You will sit down, and smoke a pipe, and wash, and eat, and sleep,' replied the chief, 'and to-morrow you will go again.' Food was brought, prayers were held (for this was in the brief day of Christianity), and the chief himself prayed with eloquence and seeming sincerity. All evening A. sat and admired the man by the firelight. He was six feet high, lean, with the appearance of many years, and an extraordinary air of breeding and command. 'He looked like a man who would kill you laughing,' said A., in singular echo of one of the king's expressions. And again: 'I had been reading the Musketeer books, and he reminded me of Aramis.' Such is the portrait of Tembinatake, drawn by an expert romancer.

We had heard many tales of 'my patha'; never a word of my uncle till two days before we left. As the time approached for our departure Tembinok' became greatly changed; a softer, a more melancholy, and, in particular, a more confidential man appeared in his stead. To my wife he contrived laboriously to explain that though he knew he must lose his father in the course of nature, he had not minded nor realised it till the moment came; and that now he was to lose us he repeated the experience. We showed fireworks one evening on the terrace. It was a heavy business; the sense of separation was in all our minds, and the talk languished. The king was specially affected, sat disconsolate on his mat, and often sighed. Of a sudden one of the wives stepped forth from a cluster, came and kissed him in silence, and silently went again. It was just such a caress as we might give to a disconsolate child, and the king received it with a child's simplicity. Presently after we said good-night and withdrew; but Tembinok' detained Mr. Osbourne, patting the mat by his side and saying: 'Sit down. I feel bad, I like talk.' Osbourne sat down by him. 'You like some beer?' said he; and one of the wives produced a bottle. The king did not partake, but sat sighing and smoking a meerschaum pipe. 'I very sorry you go,' he said at last. 'Miss Stlevens he good man, woman he good man, boy he good man; all good man. Woman he smart all the same man. My woman' (glancing towards his wives) 'he good woman, no very smart. I think Miss Stlevens he is chiep all the same cap'n man-o-wa'. I think Miss Stlevens he rich man all the same me. All go schoona. I very sorry. My patha he go, my uncle he go, my cutcheons he go, Miss Stlevens he go: all go. You no see king cry before. King all the same man: feel bad, he cry. I very sorry.'

In the morning it was the common topic in the village that the king had wept. To me he said: 'Last night I no can 'peak: too much here,' laying his hand upon his bosom. 'Now you go away all the same my pamily. My brothers, my uncle go away. All the same.' This was said with a dejection almost passionate. And it was the first time I had heard him name his uncle, or indeed employ the word. The same day he sent me a present of two corselets, made in the island fashion of plaited fibre, heavy and strong. One had been worn by Teñkoruti, one by Tembaitake; and the gift being gratefully received, he sent me, on the return of his messengers, a third - that of Tembinatake. My curiosity was roused; I begged for information as to the three wearers; and the king entered with gusto into the details already given. Here was a strange thing, that he should have talked so much of his family, and not once mentioned that relative of whom he was plainly the most proud. Nay, more: he had hitherto boasted of his father; thenceforth he had little to say of him; and the qualities for which he had praised him in the past were now attributed where they were due, - to the uncle. A confusion might be natural enough among islanders, who call all the sons of their grandfather by the common name of father. But this was not the case with Tembinok'. Now the ice was broken the word uncle was perpetually in his mouth; he who had been so ready to confound was now careful to distinguish; and the father sank gradually into a self-complacent ordinary man, while the uncle rose to his true stature as the hero and founder of the race.

The more I heard and the more I considered, the more this mystery of Tembinok's behaviour puzzled and attracted me. And the explanation, when it came, was one to strike the imagination of a dramatist. Tembinok' had two brothers. One, detected in private trading, was banished, then forgiven, lives to this day in the island, and is the father of the heir-apparent, Paul. The other fell beyond forgiveness. I have heard it was a love-affair with one of the king's wives, and the thing is highly possible in that romantic archipelago. War was attempted to be levied; but Tembinok' was too swift for the rebels, and the guilty brother escaped in a canoe. He did not go alone. Tembinatake had a hand in the rebellion, and the man who had gained a kingdom for a weakling brother was banished by that brother's son. The fugitives came to shore in other islands, but Tembinok' remains to this day ignorant of their fate.

So far history. And now a moment for conjecture. Tembinok' confused habitually, not only the attributes and merits of his father and his uncle, but their diverse personal appearance. Before he had even spoken, or thought to speak, of Tembinatake, he had told me often of a tall, lean father, skilled in war, and his own schoolmaster in genealogy and island arts. How if both were fathers, one natural, one adoptive? How if the heir of Tembaitake, like the heir of Tembinok' himself, were not a son, but an adopted nephew? How if the founder of the monarchy, while he worked for his brother, worked at the same time for the child of his loins? How if on the death of Tembaitake, the two stronger natures, father and son, king and kingmaker, clashed, and Tembinok', when he drove out his uncle, drove out the author of his days? Here is at least a tragedy four-square.

The king took us on board in his own gig, dressed for the occasion in the naval uniform. He had little to say, he refused refreshments, shook us briefly by the hand, and went ashore again. That night the palm-tops of Apemama had dipped behind the sea, and the schooner sailed solitary under the stars.

LETTERS FROM SAMOA

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LETTERS TO THE "TIMES," "PALL MALL GAZETTE," ETC.

I

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES"
Yacht "Casco," Hawaiian Islands, Feb. 10, 1889.

Sir, — News from Polynesia is apt to come piecemeal, and thus fail of its effect, the first step being forgotten before the second comes to hand. For this reason I should like to be allowed to recapitulate a little of the past before I go on to illustrate the present extraordinary state of affairs in the Samoan Islands.

It is quite true that this group was largely opened up by German enterprise, and that the port of Apia is much the creation of the Godeffroys. So far the German case extends; no farther. Apia was governed till lately by a tripartite municipality, the American, English, and German Consuls, and one other representative of each of the three nations making up the body. To both America and Germany a harbour had been ceded. England, I believe, had no harbour, but that her position was quite equal to that of her neighbours one fact eloquently displays. Malietoa — then King of Samoa, now a prisoner on the Marshall Islands — offered to accept the supremacy of England. Unhappily for himself, his offer was refused, Her Majesty's Government declaring, I am told, that they would prefer to see him independent. As he now wanders the territory of his island prison, under the guns of an Imperial war-ship, his independence (if it still exist) must be confined entirely to his bosom.

Such was the former equal and pacific state of the three nations at Apia. It would be curious to tell at length by what steps of encroachment on the one side and weakness on the other the present reign of terror has been brought about; but my time before the mail departs is very short, your space is limited, and in such a history much must be only matter of conjecture. Briefly and roughly, then, there came a sudden change in the attitude of Germany. Another treaty was proposed to Malietoa and refused; the cause of the rebel Tamasese was invented or espoused; Malietoa was seized and deported, Tamasese installed, the tripartite municipality dissolved, the German Consul seated autocratically in its place, and the Hawaiian Embassy (sent by a Power of the same race to moderate among Samoans) dismissed with threats and insults. In the course of these events villages have been shelled, the German flag has been at least once substituted for the English, and the Stars and Stripes (only the other day) were burned at

Matafatatele. On the day of the chase after Malietoa the houses of both English and Americans were violently entered by the Germans. Since the dissolution of the municipality English and Americans have paid their taxes into the hands of their own Consuls, where they accumulate, and the German representative, unrecognised and unsupported, rules single in Apia. I have had through my hands a file of Consular proclamations, the most singular reading — a state of war declared, all other authority but that of the German representative suspended, punishment (and the punishment of death in particular) liberally threatened. It is enough to make a man rub his eyes when he reads Colonel de Coetlogon's protest and the high-handed rejoinder posted alongside of it the next day by Dr. Knappe. Who is Dr. Knappe, thus to make peace and war, deal in life and death, and close with a buffet the mouth of English Consuls? By what process known to diplomacy has he risen from his one-sixth part of municipal authority to be the Bismarck of a Polynesian island? And what spell has been cast on the Cabinets of Washington and St. James's, that Mr. Blacklock should have been so long left unsupported, and that Colonel de Coetlogon must bow his head under a public buffet?

I have not said much of the Samoans. I despair, in so short a space, to interest English readers in their wrongs; with the mass of people at home they will pass for some sort of cannibal islanders, with whom faith were superfluous, upon whom kindness might be partly thrown away. And, indeed, I recognise with gladness that (except as regards the captivity of Malietoa) the Samoans have had throughout the honours of the game. Tamasese, the German puppet, has had everywhere the under hand; almost none, except those of his own clan, have ever supported his cause, and even these begin now to desert him. "This is no Samoan war," said one of them, as he transferred his followers and services to the new Malietoa — Mataafa; "this is a German war." Mataafa, if he be cut off from Apia and the sea, lies inexpugnable in the foot-hills immediately behind with 5,000 warriors at his back. And beyond titles to a great deal of land, which they extorted in exchange for rifles and ammunition from the partisans of Tamasese, of all this bloodshed and bullying the Germans behold no profit. I have it by last advices that Dr. Knappe has approached the King privately with fair speeches, assuring him that the state of war, bombardments, and other evils of the day, are not at all directed at Samoans, but against the English and Americans; and that, when these are extruded, peace shall again smile on a German island. It can never be proved, but it is highly possible he may have said so; and, whether he said it or not, there is a sense in which the thing is true. Violence has not been found to succeed with the Samoans; with the two Anglo-Saxon Powers it has been found to work like a charm.

I conclude with two instances, one American, one English: —

First. — Mr. Klein, an American journalist, was on the beach with Malietoa's men on the night of the recent German defeat. Seeing the boats approach in the darkness, Mr. Klein hailed them and warned them of the Samoan ambush, and, by this innocent and humane step, made public the fact of his presence. Where much else is contested so much appears to be admitted (and, indeed, claimed) upon both sides. Mr. Klein is now accused of firing on the Germans and of advising the Samoans to fire, both of which he denies. He is accused, after the fight, of succouring only the wounded of Malietoa's party; he himself declares that he helped both; and, at any rate, the offence appears a novel one, and the accusation threatens to introduce fresh dangers into Red Cross work. He was on the beach that night in the exercise of his profession. If he was with Malietoa's men, which is the real gist of his offence, we who are not Germans may surely ask, Why not? On what ground is Malietoa a rebel? The Germans have not conquered Samoa that I ever heard of; they are there on treaty like their neighbours, and Dr. Knappe himself (in the eyes of justice) is no more than the one-sixth part of the town council of Apia. Lastly, Mr. Klein's innocence stands very clearly proven by the openness with which he declared his presence. For all that, this gentleman lay for a considerable time, watched day and night by German sailors, a prisoner in the American Consulate; even after he had succeeded in running the gauntlet of the German guards, and making his escape in a canoe to the American warship *Nipsic*, he was imperiously redemanded from under his own flag, and it is probable his extradition is being already called for at Washington.

Secondly. — An English artist had gone into the bush sketching. I believe he had been to Malietoa's camp, so that his guilt stands on somewhat the same ground as Mr. Klein's. He was forcibly seized on board the British packet *Richmond*, carried half-dressed on board the *Adler*, and detained there, in spite of all protest, until an English war-ship had been cleared for action. This is of notoriety, and only one case (although a strong one) of many. Is it what the English people understand by the sovereignty of the seas? — I am, etc.,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

II

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES"

Vailima, Upolu, Samoa, Oct. 12, 1891.

Sir, — I beg leave to lay before your readers a copy of a correspondence, or (should that have reached you by another channel) to offer a few words of narrative and comment.

On Saturday, September 5, Mr. Cedercrantz, the Chief Justice of Samoa, sailed on a visit to Fiji, leaving behind him certain prisoners in the gaol, and Baron Senfft von Pilsach, President of the Municipal Council, master of the field. The prisoners were five chiefs of Manono who had surrendered of their own accord, or at the desire of Mataafa, had been tried by a native magistrate, and received sentence of six months' confinement under "gentlemanly" (*sic*) conditions. As they were marched to prison, certain of their country-folk of Manono ran beside and offered an immediate rescue; but Lieutenant Ulfsparre ordered the men of the escort to load, and the disturbance blew by. How little weight was attached to this incident by the Chief Justice is sufficiently indicated by the fact of his departure. It was unhappily otherwise with those whom he left behind. Panic seems to have marked them for her own; they despaired at once of all lawful defence; and, on Sunday, the day after the Chief Justice's departure, Apia was in consequence startled with strange news. Dynamite bought from the wrecker ship, an electrical machine and a mechanic hired, the prison mined, and a letter despatched to the people of Manono advising them of the fact, and announcing that if any rescue were attempted prison and prisoners should be blown up — such were the voices of rumour; and the design appearing equally feeble, reckless, and wicked, considerable agitation was aroused. Perhaps it had some effect. Our Government at least, which had rushed so hastily to one extreme, now dashed with the same speed into another. Sunday was the day of dynamite, Tuesday dawned the day of deportation. A cutter was hurriedly prepared for sea, and the prisoners, whom the Chief Justice had left three days before under a sentence of "gentlemanly" detention, found themselves under way to exile in the Tokelaus.

A Government of this agility escapes criticism: by multiplying surprises it obliterates the very memory of past mistakes. Some, perhaps, forgot the dynamite; some, hearing no more of it, set it down to be a trick of rumour such as we are well used to in the islands. But others were not so sure. Others considered that the rumour (even if unfounded) was of an ill example, might bear deplorable fruit, and, from all points of view of morality and policy, required a public contradiction. Eleven of these last entered accordingly into the annexed correspondence with the President. It will be seen in the crevice of what quibble that gentleman sought refuge and sits inexpugnable. In a question affecting his humanity, his honour, and the wellbeing of the kingdom which he serves, he has preferred to maintain what I can only call a voluble silence. The public must judge of the result; but there is one point to which I may be allowed to draw attention — that passage in the fourth of the appended documents in which he confesses that he was already acquainted with the rumours in question, and that he has been present (and apparently not protesting) when the scandal was discussed and the proposed enormity commended.

The correspondence was still passing when the President surprised Apia with a fresh gambado. He has been a long while in trouble as to his disposition of the funds. His intention to build a house for himself — to all appearance with native money — his sending the taxes out of the islands and locking them up in deposits, and his noisy squabbles with the King and native Parliament as to the currency, had all aroused unfavourable comment. On Saturday, the 3rd of October, a correspondence on the last point appeared in the local paper. By this it appeared that our not too resolute King and Parliament had at last and in one particular defied his advice and maintained their own opinion. If vengeance were to be the order of the day, it might have been expected to fall on the King and Parliament; but this would have been too direct a course, and the blow was turned instead against an innocent municipal council. On the 7th the President appeared before that body, informed them that his authority was lessened by the publication, that he had applied to the King for a month's leave of (theatrical) absence, and must now refuse to fulfil his duties. With this he retired to his own house, which is under the same roof, leaving the councillors and the municipality to do what they pleased and drift where they could without him. It is reported he has since declared his life to be in danger, and even applied to his Consul for protection. This seems to pass the bounds of credibility; but the movements of Baron Senfft von Pilsach have been throughout so agitated and so unexpected that we know not what to look for; and the signatories of the annexed addresses, if they were accused to-morrow of a design on the man's days, would scarce have spirit left to be surprised.

It must be clearly pointed out that this is no quarrel of German and anti-German. The German officials, consular and naval, have behaved with perfect loyalty. A German wrote the letter to the paper which unchained this thunderbolt; and it was a German who took the chair which the President had just vacated at the table of the municipal board. And though the Baron is himself of German race, his conduct presents no appearance of design, how much less of conspiracy! Doubtless certain journals will so attempt to twist it; but to the candid it will seem no more than the distracted evolutions of a weak man in a series of panics.

Such is a rough outline of the events to which I would fain direct the attention of the public at home, in the States, and still more in Germany. It has for me but one essential point. Budgets have been called in question, and officials publicly taken the pet before now. But the dynamite scandal is unique.

If it be unfounded, our complaint is already grave. It was the President's duty, as a man and as a responsible official, to have given it instant and direct denial: and since he neither did so of his own motion, nor consented to do so on our repeated instances, he has shown that he neither understands nor yet is willing to be taught the condition of this country. From what I have been able to collect, Samoans are indignant because the thing was decided between the King and President without consultation with the native Parliament. The thing itself, it does not enter in their thoughts to call in question; they receive gratefully a fresh lesson in civilised methods and civilised justice; a day may come when they shall put that lesson in practice for themselves; and if they are then decried for their barbarity — as they will surely be — and punished for it, as is highly probable, I will ask candid people what they are to think? "How?" they will say. "Your own white people intended to do this, and you said nothing. We do it, and you call us treacherous savages!"

This is to suppose the story false. Suppose it true, however; still more, suppose the plan had been carried out. Suppose these chiefs to have surrendered to the white man's justice, administered or not by a brown Judge; suppose them tried, condemned, confined in that snare of a gaol, and some fine night their mangled limbs cast in the faces of their countrymen: I leave others to predict the consequences of such an object-lesson in the arts of peace and the administration of the law. The Samoans are a mild race, but their patience is in some points limited. Under Captain Brandeis a single skirmish and the death of a few youths sufficed to kindle an enduring war and bring on the ruin of the Government. The residents have no desire for war, and they deprecate altogether a war embittered from the beginning by atrocities. Nor can they think the stakes at all equal between themselves and Baron Senfft. He has nothing to lose but a situation; he is here in what he stands in; he can swarm to-morrow on board a war-ship and be off. But the residents have some of them sunk capital on these shores; some of them are involved in extended affairs; they are tied to the stake, and they protest against being plunged into war by the violence, and having that war rendered more implacable by the preliminary cruelties, of a white official.

I leave entirely upon one side all questions of morality; but there is still one point of expediency on which I must touch. The old native Government (which was at least cheap) failed to enforce the law, and fell, in consequence, into the manifold troubles which have made the name of Samoa famous. The enforcement of the law — that was what was required, that was the salvation looked for. And here we have a Government at a high figure, and it cannot defend its own gaol, and can find no better remedy than to assassinate its prisoners. What we have bought at this enormous increase of expenditure is the change from King Log to King Stork — from the man who failed to punish petty theft to the man who plots the destruction of his own gaol and the death of his own prisoners.

On the return of the Chief Justice, the matter will be brought to his attention; but the cure of our troubles must come from home; it is from the Great Powers that we look for deliverance. They sent us the President. Let them either remove the man, or see that he is stringently instructed — instructed to respect public decency, so we be no longer menaced with doings worthy of a revolutionary committee; and instructed to respect the administration of the law, so if I be fined a dollar to-morrow for fast riding in Apia street, I may not awake next morning to find my sentence increased to one of banishment or death by dynamite. — I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — October 14. — I little expected fresh developments before the mail left. But the unresting President still mars the quiet of his neighbours. Even while I was writing the above lines, Apia was looking on in mere amazement on the continuation of his gambols. A white man had written to the King, and the King had answered the letter — crimes against Baron Senfft von Pilsach and (his private reading of) the Berlin Treaty. He offered to resign — I was about to say “accordingly,” for the unexpected is here the normal — from the presidency of the municipal board, and to retain his position as the King’s adviser. He was instructed that he must resign both, or neither; resigned both; fell out with the Consuls on details; and is now, as we are advised, seeking to resile from his resignations. Such an official I never remember to have read of, though I have seen the like, from across the footlights and the orchestra, evolving in similar figures to the strains of Offenbach.

R. L. S.

Copies of a Correspondence between certain Residents of Apia and Baron Senfft von Pilsach.

I

September 28, 1.

Baron Senfft von Pilsach.

Sir, — We are requested to lay the enclosed appeal before you, and to express the desire of the signatories to meet your views as to the manner of the answer.

Should you prefer to reply by word of mouth, a deputation will be ready to wait upon you on Thursday, at any hour you may please to appoint.

Should you prefer to reply in writing, we are asked only to impress upon you the extreme desire of the signatories that no time should be unnecessarily lost.

Should you condescend in either of the ways suggested to set at rest our anxiety, we need scarce assure you that the step will be received with gratitude. — We have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servants,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

E. W. Gurr.

II

(*Enclosed in No. I.*)

The attention of the President of the Municipal Council is respectfully directed to the following rumours: —

1. That at his suggestion, or with his authority, dynamite was purchased, or efforts were made to procure dynamite, and the use of an electrical machine was secured, or attempted to be obtained.

2. That this was for the purpose of undermining, or pretending to undermine, the gaol in which the Manono prisoners were confined. 3. That notification of this design was sent to the friends of the prisoners.

4. That a threat of blowing up the gaol and the prisoners, in the event of an attempted rescue, was made.

Upon all and upon each of these points severally the white residents anxiously expect and respectfully beg information.

It is suggested for the President's consideration that rumours unconnected or unexplained acquire almost the force of admitted truth.

That any want of confidence between the governed and the Government must be fruitful in loss to both.

That the rumours in their present form tend to damage the white races in the native mind, and to influence for the worse the manners of the Samoans.

And that the President alone is in a position to deny, to explain, or to correct these rumours.

Upon these grounds the undersigned ask to be excused for any informality in their address, and they hope and humbly pray that the President will accept the occasion here presented, and take early and effectual means to inform and reassure the whites, and to relieve them from possible misjudgment on the part of the Samoans.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

E.W. Gurr.

[*and nine other signatures*.]

III

Apia, Sept. 30, 1891.

Robert Louis Stevenson, Esq., E.W. Gurr, Esq.

Dear Sirs, — Thanking you for your kind letter dated 28th inst., which I received yesterday, together with the address in question, I beg to inform you that I am going to answer the address in writing as soon as possible. — I have the honour to be, dear Sirs, your obedient servant,

Senfft.

IV

Apia, Oct. 2, 1891.

Robert Louis Stevenson, Esq., E. W. Gurr, Esq.

Gentlemen, — I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of an address without date which has been signed by you and some other foreign residents and handed to me on the 29th of September.

In this address my attention is directed to some rumours, specified therein, concerning which I am informed that "upon all and upon each of these points severally the white residents anxiously expect and respectfully beg information."

Generally, I beg to state that, with a view of successfully performing my official duties, I believe it is advisable for me to pay no attention to any anonymous rumour.

Further, I cannot forbear expressing my astonishment that in speaking to me so seriously in the name of "the white residents" the subscribers of the address have deemed it unnecessary to acquaint me with their authorisation for doing so. This omission is by no means a mere informality. There are white residents who in my presence have commented upon the rumours in question in a manner directly opposed to the meaning of the address.

This fact alone will justify me in objecting to the truth of the above-quoted statement so prominently set forth and so positively affirmed in the address. It will also justify me in abstaining from a reply to the further assertions of gentlemen who, in apostrophising me, care so little for the correctness of the facts they deal with.

If, in consequence, according to the apprehensions laid down in the address, those unexplained rumours will "damage the white races in the native mind," I think the signing parties will then remember that there are public authorities in Samoa officially and especially charged with the protection of "the white residents." If they present to them their complaints and their wishes I have no doubt by so doing they will get all information they may require.

I ask you, gentlemen, to communicate this answer to the parties having signed the address in question. — I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

Frhr. Senfft von Pilsach.

V

Oct. 9, 1891.

The signatories of the address are in receipt of the President's favour under date October 2. Much of his answer is occupied in dealing with a point foreign to the matter in hand, and in itself surprising to the signatories. Their address was an appeal for information on specific points and an appeal from specific persons, who correctly described themselves as "white residents," "the undersigned," and in the accompanying letter as the "signatories." They were so far from seeking to collect evidence in private that they applied frankly and directly to the person accused for explanation; and so far from seeking to multiply signatures or promote scandal that they kept the paper strictly to themselves. They see with regret that the President has failed to appreciate this delicacy. They see with sorrow and surprise that, in answer to a communication which they believe to have been temperately and courteously worded, the President has thought fit to make an imputation on their honesty. The trick of which he would seem to accuse them would have been useless, and even silly, if attempted; and on a candid re-examination of the address and the accompanying letter, the President will doubtless see fit to recall the imputation.

By way of answer to the questions asked the signatories can find nothing but what seems to be a recommendation to them to apply to their Consuls for "protection." It was not protection they asked, but information. It was not a sense of fear that moved them, but a sense of shame. It is their misfortune that they cannot address the President in his own language, or they would not now require to explain that the words "tend to damage the white races in the native mind," quoted and misapplied by the President, do not express any fear of suffering by the hands of the Samoans, but in their good opinion, and were not the expression of any concern for the duration of peace, but of a sense of shame under what they conceived to be disgraceful imputations. While agreeing generally with the President's expressed sentiment as to "anonymous rumours," they feel that a line has to be drawn. Certain rumours they would not suffer to remain uncontradicted for an hour. It was natural, therefore, that when they heard a man of their own white race accused of conspiring to blow up the gaol and the prisoners who were there under the safeguard of his honour, they should attribute to the accused a similar impatience to be justified; and it is with a sense of painful surprise that they find themselves to have been mistaken.

(*Signatures as to Number II.*)

VI

Apia, October 9, 1891.

Gentlemen, — Being in receipt of your communication under to-day's date, I have the honour to inform you that I have undertaken the re-examination of your first address, which you believe would induce me to recall the answer I have given on the 2nd inst.

From this re-examination I have learned again that your appeal begins with the following statement: —

"Upon all and upon each of these points severally the white residents anxiously expect and respectfully beg information."

I have called this statement a seriously speaking to me in the name of the white residents, and I have objected to the truth of that statement.

If after a "candid re-examination" of the matter from your part you may refute me in either or both points, I shall be glad, indeed, in recalling my answer.

At present I beg to say that I see no reason for your supposing I misunderstood your expression of damaging the white races in the native mind, unless you have no other notion of protection than that applying to the body.

Concerning the assertion contained in the last clause of your second address, that five Samoan prisoners having been sentenced by a Samoan Judge for destroying houses were in the gaol of the Samoan Government "under the safeguard of my honour," I ask for your permission to recommend this statement also and especially to your re-examination. — I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

Frhr. Senfft von Pilsach.

III

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES"
Samoa, April 9, 1892.

Sir, — A sketch of our latest difficulty in Samoa will be interesting, at least to lawyers.

In the Berlin General Act there is one point on which, from the earliest moment, volunteer interpreters have been divided. The revenue arising from the customs was held by one party to belong to the Samoan Government, by another to the municipality; and the dispute was at last decided in favour of the municipality by Mr. Cedercrantz, Chief Justice. The decision was not given in writing; but it was reported by at least one of the Consuls to his Government, it was of public notoriety, it is not denied, and it was at once implicitly acted on by the parties. Before that decision, the revenue from customs was suffered to accumulate; ever since, to the knowledge of the Chief Justice, and with the daily countenance of the President, it has been received, administered, and spent by the municipality. It is the function of the Chief Justice to interpret the Berlin Act; its sense was thus supposed to be established beyond cavil; those who were dissatisfied with the result conceived their only recourse lay in a prayer to the Powers to have the treaty altered; and such a prayer was, but the other day, proposed, supported, and finally negatived, in a public meeting.

About a year has gone by since the decision, and the state of the Samoan Government has been daily growing more precarious. Taxes have not been paid, and the Government has not ventured to enforce them. Fresh taxes have fallen due, and the Government has not ventured to call for them. Salaries were running on, and that of the Chief Justice alone amounts to a considerable figure for these islands; the coffers had fallen low, at last it is believed they were quite empty, no resource seemed left, and bystanders waited with a smiling curiosity for the wheels to stop. I should add, to explain the epithet "smiling," that the Government has proved a still-born child; and except for some spasmodic movements which I have already made the subject of remark in your columns, it may be said to have done nothing but pay salaries.

In this state of matters, on March 28, the President of the Council, Baron Senfft von Pilsach, was suddenly and privately supplied by Mr. Cedercrantz with a written judgment, reversing the verbal and public decision of a year before. By what powers of law was this result attained? And how was the point brought again before his Honour? I feel I shall here strain the credulity of your readers, but our authority is the President in person. The suit was brought by himself in his capacity (perhaps an imaginary one) of King's adviser; it was defended by himself in his capacity of President of the Council, no notice had been given, the parties were not summoned, they were advised neither of the trial nor the judgment; so far as can be learned two persons only met and parted — the first was the plaintiff and defendant rolled in one, the other was a Judge who had decided black a year ago, and had now intimated a modest willingness to decide white.

But it is possible to follow more closely these original proceedings. Baron von Pilsach sat down (he told us) in his capacity of adviser to the King, and wrote to himself, in his capacity of President of the Council, an eloquent letter of reprimand three pages long; an unknown English artist clothed it for him in good language; and nothing remained but to have it signed by King Malietoa, to whom it was attributed. "So long as he knows how to sign!" — a white official is said thus to have summed up, with a shrug, the qualifications necessary in a Samoan king. It was signed accordingly, though whether the King knew what he was signing is matter of debate; and thus regularised, it was forwarded to the Chief Justice enclosed in a letter of adhesion from the President. Such as they were, these letters appear to have been the pleadings on which the Chief Justice proceeded; such as they were, they seem to have been the documents in this unusual case.

Suppose an unfortunate error to have been made, suppose a reversal of the Court's finding and the year's policy to have become immediately needful, wisdom would indicate an extreme frankness of demeanour. And our two officials preferred a policy of irritating dissimulation. While the revolution was being prepared behind the curtain, the President was holding night sessions of the municipal council. What was the business? No other than to prepare an ordinance regulating those very customs which he was secretly conspiring to withdraw from their control. And it was a piece of duplicity of a similar nature which first awoke the echoes of Apia by its miscarriage. The council had sent up for the approval of the Consular Board a project of several bridges, one of which, that of the Vaisingano, was of chief importance to the town. To sanction so much fresh expense, at the very moment when, to his secret knowledge, the municipality was to be left bare of funds, appeared to one of the Consuls an unworthy act; and the proposal was accordingly disallowed. The people of Apia are extremely swift to guess. No sooner was the Vaisingano bridge denied them than they leaped within a measurable distance of the truth. It was remembered that the Chief Justice had but recently (this time by a decision regularly obtained) placed the municipal funds at the President's mercy; talk ran high of collusion between the two officials; it was rumoured the safe had been already secretly drawn upon; the newspaper being at this juncture suddenly and rather mysteriously sold, it was rumoured it had been bought for the officials with municipal money, and the Apians crowded in consequence to the municipal meeting on April 1, with minds already heated.

The President came on his side armed with the secret judgment; and the hour being now come, he unveiled his work of art to the municipal councillors. On the strength of the Chief Justice's decision, to his knowledge, and with the daily countenance of the President, they had for twelve months received and expended the revenue from customs. They learned now that this was wrong; they learned not only that they were to receive no more, but that they must refund what they had already spent; and the total sum amounting to about $25,000, and there being less than $20,000 in the treasury, they learned that they were bankrupt. And with the next breath the President reassured them; time was to be given to these miserable debtors, and the King in his clemency would even advance them from their own safe — now theirs no longer — a loan of $3,000 against current expenses. If the municipal council of Apia be far from an ideal body, at least it makes roads and builds bridges, at least it does something to justify its existence and reconcile the ratepayer to the rates. This was to cease: all the funds husbanded for this end were to be transferred to the Government at Mulinuu, which has never done anything to mention but pay salaries, and of which men have long ceased to expect anything else but that it shall continue to pay salaries till it die of inanition. Let us suppose this raid on the municipal treasury to have been just and needful. It is plain, even if introduced in the most conciliatory manner, it could never have been welcome. And, as it was, the sting was in the manner — in the secrecy and the surprise, in the dissimulation, the dissonant decisions, the appearance of collusion between the officials, and the offer of a loan too small to help. Bitter words were spoken at the council-table; the public joined with shouts; it was openly proposed to overpower the President and seize the treasury key. Baron von Pilsach possesses the redeeming rudimentary virtue of courage. It required courage to come at all on such an errand to those he had deceived; and amidst violent voices and menacing hands he displayed a constancy worthy of a better cause. The council broke tumultuously up; the inhabitants crowded to a public meeting; the Consuls, acquainted with the alarming effervescency of feeling, communicated their willingness to meet the municipal councillors and arrange a compromise; and the inhabitants renewed by acclamation the mandate of their representatives. The same night these sat in council with the Consular

Board, and a *modus vivendi* was agreed upon, which was rejected the next morning by the President.

The representations of the Consuls had, however, their effect; and when the council met again on April 6, Baron von Pilsach was found to have entirely modified his attitude. The bridge over the Vaisingano was conceded, the sum of $3,000 offered to the council was increased to $9,000, about one-half of the existing funds; the Samoan Government, which was to profit by the customs, now agreed to bear the expenses of collection; the President, while refusing to be limited to a specific figure, promised an anxious parsimony in the Government expenditure, admitted his recent conduct had been of a nature to irritate the councillors, and frankly proposed it should be brought under the notice of the Powers. I should not be a fair reporter if I did not praise his bearing. In the midst of men whom he had grossly deceived, and who had recently insulted him in return, he behaved himself with tact and temper. And largely in consequence his *modus vivendi* was accepted under protest, and the matter in dispute referred without discussion to the Powers.

I would like to refer for one moment to my former letter. The Manono prisoners were solemnly sentenced to six months' imprisonment; and, by some unexplained and secret process, the sentence was increased to one of banishment. The fact seems to have rather amused the Governments at home. It did not at all amuse us here on the spot. But we sought consolation by remembering that the President was a layman, and the Chief Justice had left the islands but the day before. Let Mr. Cedercrantz return, we thought, and Arthur would be come again. Well, Arthur is come. And now we begin to think he was perhaps an approving, if an absent, party to the scandal. For do we not find, in the case of the municipal treasury, the same disquieting features? A decision is publicly delivered, it is acted on for a year, and by some secret and inexplicable process we find it suddenly reversed. We are supposed to be governed by English law. Is this English law? Is it a law at all? Does it permit a state of society in which a citizen can live and act with confidence? And when we are asked by natives to explain these peculiarities of white man's government and white man's justice, in what form of words are we to answer?

April 12.

Fresh news reaches me; I have once again to admire the accuracy of rumour in Apia, and that which I had passed over with a reference becomes the head and front of our contention. The *Samoa Times* was nominally purchased by a gentleman who, whatever be his other recommendations, was notoriously ill off. There was paid down for it £600 in gold, a huge sum of ready money for Apia, above all in gold, and all men wondered where it came from. It is this which has been discovered. The wrapper of each rouleau was found to be signed by Mr. Martin, collector for the municipality as well as for the Samoan Government, and countersigned by Mr. Savile, his assistant. In other words, the money had left either the municipal or the Government safe.

The position of the President is thus extremely exposed. His accounts up to January 1 are in the hands of auditors. The next term of March 31 is already past, and although the natural course has been repeatedly suggested to him, he has never yet permitted the verification of the balance in his safe. The case would appear less strong against the Chief Justice. Yet a month has not elapsed since he placed the funds at the disposal of the President, on the avowed ground that the population of Apia was unfit to be intrusted with its own affairs. And the very week of the purchase he reversed his own previous decision and liberated his colleague from the last remaining vestige of control. Beyond the extent of these judgments, I doubt if this astute personage will be found to have committed himself in black and white; and the more foolhardy President may thus be left in the top of the breach alone.

Let it be explained or apportioned as it may, this additional scandal is felt to have overfilled the measure. It may be argued that the President has great tact and the Chief Justice a fund of philosophy. Give us instead a judge who shall proceed according to the forms of justice, and a treasurer who shall permit the verification of his balances. Surely there can be found among the millions of Europe two frank and honest men, one of whom shall be acquainted with English law, and the other possess the ordinary virtues of a clerk, over whose heads, in the exercise of their duties, six months may occasionally pass without painful disclosures and dangerous scandals; who shall not weary us with their surprises and intrigues; who shall not amaze us with their lack of penetration; who shall not, in the hour of their destitution, seem to have diverted £600 of public money for the purchase of an inconsiderable sheet, or at a time when eight provinces of discontented natives threaten at any moment to sweep their ineffective Government into the sea to have sought safety and strength in gagging the local Press of Apia. If it be otherwise — if we cannot be relieved, if the Powers are satisfied with the conduct of Mr. Cedercrantz and Baron Senfft von Pilsach; if these were sent here with the understanding that they should secretly purchase, perhaps privately edit, a little sheet of two pages, issued from a crazy wooden building at the mission gate; if it were, indeed, intended that, for this important end, they should divert (as it seems they have done) public funds and affront all the forms of law — we whites can only bow the head. We are here quite helpless. If we would complain of Baron Pilsach, it can only be to Mr. Cedercrantz; if we would complain of Mr. Cedercrantz, and the Powers will not hear us, the circle is complete. A nightly guard surrounds and protects their place of residence, while the house of the King is cynically left without the pickets. Secure from interference, one utters the voice of the law, the other moves the hands of authority; and now they seem to have sequestered in the course of a single week the only available funds and the only existing paper in the islands.

But there is one thing they forget. It is not the whites who menace the duration of their Government, and it is only the whites who read the newspaper. Mataafa sits hard by in his armed camp and sees. He sees the weakness, he counts the scandals of their Government. He sees his rival and “brother” sitting disconsidered at their doors, like Lazarus before the house of Dives, and, if he is not very fond of his “brother,” he is very scrupulous of native dignities. He has seen his friends menaced with midnight destruction in the Government gaol, and deported without form of law. He is not himself a talker, and his thoughts are hid from us; but what is said by his more hasty partisans we know. On March 29, the day after the Chief Justice signed the secret judgment, three days before it was made public, and while the purchase of the newspaper was yet in treaty, a native orator stood up in an assembly. “Who asked the Great Powers to make laws for us; to bring strangers here to rule us?” he cried. “We want no white officials to bind us in the bondage of taxation.” Here is the changed spirit which these gentlemen have produced by a misgovernment of fifteen months. Here is their peril, which no purchase of newspapers and no subsequent editorial suppressions can avert.

It may be asked if it be still time to do anything. It is, indeed, already late; and these gentlemen, arriving in a golden moment, have fatally squandered opportunity and perhaps fatally damaged white prestige. Even the whites themselves they have not only embittered, but corrupted. We were pained the other day when our municipal councillors refused, by a majority, to make the production of invoices obligatory at the Custom-house. Yet who shall blame them, when the Chief Justice, with a smallness of rapacity at which all men wondered, refused to pay, and I believe, still withholds the duties on his imports? He was above the law, being the head of it; and this was how he preached by example. He refused to pay his customs; the white councillors, following in his wake, refuse to take measures to enforce them against others; and the natives, following in his wake, refuse to pay their taxes. These taxes it may, perhaps, be never possible to raise again directly. Taxes have never been popular in Samoa; yet in the golden moment when this Government began its course, a majority of the Samoans paid them. Every province should have seen some part of that money expended in its bounds; every nerve should have been strained to interest and gratify the natives in the manner of its expenditure. It has been spent instead on Mulinuu, to pay four white officials, two of whom came in the suite of the Chief Justice, and to build a so-called Government House, in which the President resides, and the very name of taxes is become abhorrent. What can still be done, and what must be done immediately, is to give us a new Chief Justice — a lawyer, a man of honour, a man who will not commit himself to one side, whether in politics or in private causes, and who shall not have the appearance of trying to coin money at every joint of our affairs. So much the better if he be a man of talent, but we do not ask so much. With an ordinary appreciation of law, an ordinary discretion and ordinary generosity, he may still, in the course of time, and with good fortune, restore confidence and repair the breaches in the prestige of the whites. As for the President there is much discussion. Some think the office is superfluous, still more the salary to be excessive; some regard the present man, who is young and personally pleasing, as a tool and scapegoat for another, and these are tempted to suppose that, with a new and firm Chief Justice, he might yet redeem his character. He would require at least to clear himself of the affair of the rouleaux, or all would be against him. — I am. Sir, your obedient servant,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

IV

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES"
Samoa, June 22, 1892.

Sir, — I read in a New Zealand paper that you published my last with misgiving. The writer then goes on to remind me that I am a novelist, and to bid me return to my romances and leave the affairs of Samoa to sub-editors in distant quarters of the world. "We, in common with other journals, have correspondents in Samoa," he complains, "and yet we have no news from them of the curious conspiracy which Mr. Stevenson appears to have unearthed, and which, if it had any real existence, would be known to everybody on the island." As this is the only voice which has yet reached me from beyond the seas, I am constrained to make some answer. But it must not be supposed that, though you may perhaps have been alone to publish, I have been alone to write. The same story is now in the hands of the three Governments from their respective Consuls. Not only so, but the complaint of the municipal council, drawn by two able solicitors, has been likewise laid before them.

This at least is public, and I may say notorious. The solicitors were authorised to proceed with their task at a public meeting. The President (for I was there and heard him) approved the step, though he refrained from voting. But he seems to have entertained a hope of burking, or, at least, indefinitely postponing, the whole business, and, when the meeting was over, and its proceedings had been approved (as is necessary) by the Consular Board, he neglected to notify the two gentlemen appointed of that approval. In a large city the trick might have succeeded for a time; in a village like Apia, where all news leaks out and the King meets the cobbler daily, it did no more than to advertise his own artfulness. And the next he learned, the case for the municipal council had been prepared, approved by the Consuls, and despatched to the Great Powers. I am accustomed to have my word doubted in this matter, and must here look to have it doubted once again. But the fact is certain. The two solicitors (Messrs. Carruthers and Cooper) were actually cited to appear before the Chief Justice in the Supreme Court. I have seen the summons, and the summons was the first and last of this State trial. The proceeding, instituted in an hour of temper, was, in a moment of reaction, allowed to drop.

About the same date a final blow befell the Government of Mulinuu. Let me remind you, sir, of the situation. The funds of the municipality had been suddenly seized, on what appeared a collusive judgment, by the bankrupt Government of Mulinuu. The paper, the organ of opposition, was bought by a man of straw; and it was found the purchase-money had been paid in rouleaux from the Government safes. The Government consisted of two men. One, the President and treasurer, had a ready means to clear himself and dispose for ever of the scandal — that means, apart from any scandal, was his mere, immediate duty, — viz., to have his balance verified. And he has refused to do so, and he still refuses. But the other, though he sits abstruse, must not think to escape his share of blame. He holds a high situation; he is our chief magistrate, he has heard this miserable tale of the rouleaux, at which the Consuls looked so black, and why has he done nothing? When he found that the case against himself and his colleague had gone to the three Powers a little of the suddenest, he could launch summonses (which it seems he was afterwards glad to disavow) against Messrs. Cooper and Carruthers. But then, when the whole island murmured — then, when a large sum which could be traced to the Government treasuries was found figuring in the hands of a man of straw — where were his thunderbolts then? For more than a month the scandal has hung black about his colleague; for more than a month he has sat inert and silent; for more than a month, in consequence, the last spark of trust in him has quite died out.

In was in these circumstances that the Government of Mulinuu approached the municipal council with a proposal to levy fresh taxes from the whites. It was in these circumstances that the municipal council answered, No. Public works have ceased, the destination of public moneys is kept secret, and the municipal council resolved to stop supplies.

At this, it seems, the Government awoke to a sense of their position. The natives had long ceased to pay them; now the whites had followed suit. Destitution had succeeded to embarrassment. And they made haste to join with themselves another who did not share in their unpopularity. This gentleman, Mr. Thomas Maben, Government surveyor, is himself deservedly popular, and the office created for him, that of Secretary of State, is one in which, under happier auspices, he might accomplish much. He is promised a free hand; he has succeeded to, and is to exercise entirely, those vague functions claimed by the President under his style of adviser to the King. It will be well if it is found to be so in the field of practice. It will be well if Mr. Maben find any funds left for his not exorbitant salary. It would doubtless have been better, in this day of their destitution and in the midst of growing Samoan murmurs against the high salaries of whites, if the Government could have fallen on some expedient which did not imply another. And there is a question one would fain have answered. The President claims to hold two offices — that of adviser to the King, that of President of the Municipal Council. A year ago, in the time of the dynamite affair, he proposed to resign the second and retain his whole emoluments as adviser to the King. He has now practically resigned the first; and we wish to know if he now proposes to retain his entire salary as President of the Council. — I am, etc.,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

V

TO THE EDITOR OF THE “TIMES”

Apia, July 19, 1892.

Sir, — I am at last in receipt of your article upon my letter. It was as I supposed; you had a difficulty in believing the events recorded; and, to my great satisfaction, you suggest an inquiry. You observe the marks of passion in my letter, or so it seems to you. But your summary shows me that I have not failed to communicate with a sufficient clearness the facts alleged. Passion may have seemed to burn in my words: it has not at least impaired my ability to record with precision a plain tale. The “cold language” of Consular reports (which you say you would prefer) is doubtless to be had upon inquiry in the proper quarter; I make bold to say it will be found to bear me out. Of the law case for the municipality I can speak with more assurance; for, since it was sent, I have been shown a copy. Its language is admirably cold, yet it tells (it is possible in a much better dialect) the same remarkable story. But all these corroborations sleep in official keeping; and, thanks to the generosity with which you have admitted me to your columns, I stand alone before the public. It is my prayer that this may cease as soon as possible. There is other evidence gone home; let that be produced. Or let us have (as you propose) an inquiry; give to the Chief Justice and the President an opportunity to clear their characters, and to myself that liberty (which I am so often requested to take) of returning to my private business. — I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

VI

TO THE EDITOR OF THE “TIMES”

Apia, September 14, 1892.

Sir, — The Peninsula of Mulinuu was claimed by the German firm; and in case their claim should be found good, they had granted to the Samoan Government an option to buy at a certain figure. Hereon stand the houses of our officials, in particular that of the Chief Justice. It has long been a problem here whether this gentleman paid any rent, and the problem is now solved; the Chief Justice of Samoa was a squatter. On the ground that the Government was about to purchase the peninsula, he occupied a house; on the ground that the Germans were about to sell it, he refused to pay them any rent. The firm seemed to have no remedy but to summon the squatter before himself, and hear over again from the official what they had heard already from the disastrous tenant. But even in Samoa an ingenious man, inspired by annoyance, may find means of self-protection. The house was no part of the land, nor included in the option; the firm put it up for sale; and the Government, under pain of seeing the Chief Justice houseless, was obliged to buy it.

In the meanwhile the German claim to Mulinuu was passed by the Land Commission and sent on to the Chief Justice on the 17th of May. He ended by confirming the report; but though his judgment bears date the 9th of August, it was not made public till the 15th. So far as we are aware, and certainly so far as Samoa has profited by his labours, his Honour may be said to have had nothing else to do but to attend to this one piece of business; he was being paid to do so at the rate of £100 a month; and it took him ninety days, or about as long as it took Napoleon to recapture and to lose again his empire. But better late than never; and the Germans, rejoicing in the decision, summoned the Government to complete the purchase or to waive their option. There was again a delay in answering, for the policy of all parts of this extraordinary Government is on one model; and when the answer came it was only to announce a fresh deception. The German claim had passed the Land Commission and the Supreme Court, it was good against objections, but it appeared it was not yet good for registration, and must still be resurveyed by a “Government surveyor.” The option thus continues to brood over the land of Mulinuu, the Government to squat there without payment, and the German firm to stand helpless and dispossessed. What can they do? Their adversary is their only judge. I hear it calculated that the present state of matters may be yet spun out for months, at the end of which period there must come at last a day of reckoning; and the purchase-money will have to be found or the option to be waived and the Government to flit elsewhere. As for the question of arrears of rent, it will be in judicious hands, and his Honour may be trusted to deal with it in a manner suitable to the previous history of the case.

But why (it will be asked) spin out by these excessive methods a thread of such tenuity? Why go to such lengths for four months longer of fallacious solvency? I expect not to be believed, but I think the Government still hopes. A war-ship, under a hot-headed captain, might be decoyed into hostilities; the taxes might begin to come in again; the three Powers might become otherwise engaged and the little stage of Samoa escape observation — indeed, I know not what they hope, but they hope something. There lives on in their breasts a remainder coal of ambition still unquenched. Or it is only so that I can explain a late astonishing sally of his Honour's. In a long and elaborate judgment he has pared the nails, and indeed removed the fingers, of his only rival, the municipal magistrate. For eighteen months he has seen the lower Court crowded with affairs, the while his own stood unfrequented like an obsolete churchyard. He may have remarked with envy many hundred cases passing through his rival's hands, cases of assault, cases of larceny, ranging in the last four months from 2s. up to £1 12s.; or he may have viewed with displeasure that despatch of business which was characteristic of the magistrate, Mr. Cooper. An end, at least, has been made of these abuses. Mr. Cooper is henceforth to draw his salary for the *minimum* of public service; and all larcenies and assaults, however trivial, must go, according to the nationality of those concerned, before the Consular or the Supreme Courts.

To this portentous judgment there are two sides — a practical and legal. And first as to the practical. For every blow struck or shilling stolen the parties must now march out to Mulinuu and place themselves at the mercy of a Court, which if Hamlet had known, he would have referred with more emotion to the law's delays. It is feared they will not do so, and that crime will go on in consequence unpunished, and increase by indulgence. But this is nothing. The Court of the municipal magistrate was a convenient common-ground and clearing-house for our manifold nationalities. It has now been, for all purpose of serious utility, abolished, and the result is distraction. There was a recent trumpery case, heard by Mr. Cooper amid shouts of mirth. It resolved itself (if I remember rightly) into three charges of assault with counter-charges, and three of abusive language with the same; and the parties represented only two nationalities — a small allowance for Apia. Yet in our new world, since the Chief Justice's decision, this vulgar shindy would have split up into six several suits before three different Courts; the charges must have been heard by one Judge, the counter-charges by another; the whole nauseous evidence six times repeated, and the lawyers six times fee'd.

Remains the legal argument. His Honour admits the municipality to be invested "with such legislative powers as generally constitute a police jurisdiction"; he does not deny the municipality is empowered to take steps for the protection of the person, and it was argued this implied a jurisdiction in cases of assault. But this argument (observes his Honour) "proves too much, and consequently nothing. For like reasons the municipal council should have power to provide for the punishment of all felonies against the person, and I suppose the property as well." And, filled with a just sense that a merely police jurisdiction should be limited, he limits it with a vengeance by the exclusion of all assaults and all larcenies. A pity he had not looked into the Berlin Act! He would have found it already limited there by the same power which called it into being — limited to fines not exceeding $200 and imprisonment not extending beyond 180 days. Nay, and I think he might have even reasoned from this discovery that he was himself somewhat in error. For, assaults and larcenies being excluded, what kind of enormity is that which is to be visited with a fine of £40 or an imprisonment of half a year? It is perhaps childish to pursue further this childish controversialist. But there is one passage, if he had dipped into the Berlin Act, that well might have arrested his attention: that in which he is himself empowered to deal with "crimes and offences,... subject, however, to the provisions defining the jurisdiction of the municipal magistrate of Apia."

I trust, sir, this is the last time I shall have to trouble you with these twopenny concerns. But until some step is taken by the three Powers, or until I have quite exhausted your indulgence, I shall continue to report our scandals as they arise. Once more, one thing or other: Either what I write is false, and I should be chastised as a calumniator; or else it is true, and these officials are unfit for their position. — I am, etc.,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — The mail is already closed when I receive at last decisive confirmation of the purchase of the *Samoa Times* by the Samoan Government. It has never been denied; it is now admitted. The paper which they bought so recently, they are already trying to sell; and have received and refused an offer of £150 for what they bought for upwards of £600. Surely we may now demand the attention of the three Powers.

VII

TO THE EDITOR OF THE “PALL MALL GAZETTE”

I

September 4, 1893.

In June it became clear that the King's Government was weary of waiting upon Europe, as it had been clear long before that Europe would do nothing. The last commentary on the Berlin Act was read. Malietoa Laupepa had been put in *ex auctoritate* by the Powers; the Powers would not support him even by a show of strength, and there was nothing left but to fall back on an "Election according to the Laws and Customs of Samoa" — by arbitrament of rifle-bullets and blackened faces. Instantly heaven was darkened by a brood of rumours, random calumnies, and idle tales. As we rode, late at night, through the hamlet near my house, we saw the fires lighted in the houses, and eager talkers discussing the last report. The King was sick; he was dying; he was perfectly well; he was seen riding furiously by night in the back parts of Apia, and covering his face as he rode. Mataafa was in favour with the Germans; he was to be made a German king; he was secure of the support of all Samoa; he had no following whatsoever. The name of every chief and village (with many that were new to the hearer) came up in turn, to be dubbed Laupepa, or Mataafa, or both at the same time, or neither. Dr. George Brown, the missionary, had just completed a tour of the islands. There are few men in the world with a more mature knowledge of native character, and I applied to him eagerly for an estimate of the relative forces. "When the first shot is fired, and not before," said he, "you will know who is who." The event has shown that he might have gone yet further; for even after shots were fired and men slain, an important province was still hesitating and trimming.

Mataafa lay in Malie. He had an armed picket at a ford some two miles from Apia, where they sat in a prodigious state of vigilance and glee; and his whole troop, although not above five hundred strong, appeared animated with the most warlike spirit. For himself, he waited, as he had waited for two years; wrote eloquent letters, the time to answer which was quite gone by; and looked on while his enemies painfully collected their forces. Doubtless to the last he was assured and deceived by vain promises of help.

The process of gathering a royal army in Samoa is cumbrous and dilatory in the extreme. There is here none of the expedition of the fiery cross and the bale-fire; but every step is diplomatic. Each village, with a great expense of eloquence, has to be wiled with promises and spurred by threats, and the greater chieftains make stipulations ere they will march. Tamasese, son to the late German puppet, and heir of his ambitions, demanded the vice-kingship as the price of his accession, though I am assured that he demanded it in vain. The various provinces returned various and unsatisfactory answers. Atua was off and on; Tuamasaga was divided; Tutuila recalcitrant; and for long the King sat almost solitary under the windy palms of Mulinuu. It seemed indeed as if the war was off, and the whole archipelago unanimous (in the native phrase) to sit still and plant taro.

But at last, in the first days of July, Atua began to come in. Boats arrived, thirty and fifty strong, a drum and a very ill-played bugle giving time to the oarsmen, the whole crew uttering at intervals a savage howl; and on the decked fore-sheets of the boat the village champion, frantically capering and dancing. Parties were to be seen encamped in palm-groves with their rifles stacked. The shops were emptied of red handkerchiefs, the rallying sign, or (as a man might say) the uniform of the Royal army. There was spirit shown; troops of handsome lads marched in a right manly fashion, with their guns on their shoulders, to the music of the drum and the bugle or the tin-whistle. From a hamlet close to my own doors a contingent of six men marched out. Their leader's kit contained one stick of tobacco, four boxes of matches, and the inevitable red handkerchief; in his case it was of silk, for he had come late to the purchasing, and the commoner materials were exhausted. This childish band of braves marched one afternoon to a neighbouring hill, and the same night returned to their houses, on the ground that it was "uncomfortable" in the bush. An excellent old fellow, who had had enough of war in many campaigns, took refuge in my service from the conscription, but in vain. The village had decided no warrior might hang back. One summoner arrived; and then followed some negotiations — I have no authority to say what: enough that the messenger departed and our friend remained. But, alas! a second envoy followed and proved to be of sterner composition; and with a basket full of food, kava, and tobacco, the reluctant hero proceeded to the wars. I am sure they had few handsomer soldiers, if, perhaps, some that were more willing. And he would have been better to be armed. His gun — but in Mr. Kipling's pleasant catchword, that is another story.

War, to the Samoan of mature years, is often an unpleasant necessity. To the young boy it is a heaven of immediate pleasures, as well as an opportunity of ultimate glory. Women march with the troops — even the Taupo-sa, or sacred maid of the village, accompanies her father in the field to carry cartridges, and bring him water to drink, — and their bright eyes are ready to "rain influence" and reward valour. To what grim deeds this practice may conduct I shall have to say later on. In the rally of their arms, it is at least wholly pretty; and I have one pleasant picture of a war-party marching out; the men armed and boastful, their heads bound with the red handkerchief, their faces blacked — and two girls marching in their midst under European parasols.

On Saturday, July 8th, by the early morning, the troops began to file westward from Apia, and about noon found found themselves face to face with the lines of Mataafa in the German plantation of Vaitele. The armies immediately fraternised; kava was made by the ladies, as who should say tea, at home, and partaken of by the braves with many truculent expressions. One chief on the King's side, revolted by the extent of these familiarities, began to beat his followers with a staff. But both parties were still intermingled between the lines, and the chiefs on either side were conversing, and even embracing, at the moment, when an accidental, or perhaps a treacherous, shot precipitated the engagement. I cannot find there was any decisive difference in the numbers actually under fire; but the Mataafas appear to have been ill posted and ill led. Twice their flank was turned, their line enfiladed, and themselves driven with the loss of about thirty, from two successive cattle walls. A third wall afforded them a more effectual shelter, and night closed on the field of battle without further advantage. All night the Royal troops hailed volleys of bullets at this obstacle. With the earliest light, a charge proved it to be quite deserted, and from further down the coast smoke was seen rising from the houses of Malie. Mataafa had precipitately fled, destroying behind him the village, which, for two years, he had been raising and beautifying.

So much was accomplished: what was to follow? Mataafa took refuge in Manono, and cast up forts. His enemies, far from following up this advantage, held *fonos* and made speeches and found fault. I believe the majority of the King's army had marched in a state of continuous indecision, and maintaining an attitude of impartiality more to be admired in the cabinet of the philosopher than in the field of war. It is certain at least that only one province has as yet fired a shot for Malietoa Laupepa. The valour of the Tuamasaga was sufficient and prevailed. But Atua was in the rear, and has as yet done nothing. As for the men of Crana, so far from carrying out the plan agreed upon, and blocking the men of Malie, on the morning of the 8th, they were entertaining an embassy from Mataafa, and they suffered his fleet of boats to escape without a shot through certain dangerous narrows of the lagoon, and the chief himself to pass on foot and unmolested along the whole foreshore of their province. No adequate excuse has been made for this half-heartedness — or treachery. It was a piece of the whole which was a specimen. There are too many strings in a Samoan intrigue for the merely European mind to follow, and the desire to serve upon both sides, and keep a door open for reconciliation, was manifest almost throughout. A week passed in these divided counsels. Savaii had refused to receive Mataafa — it is said they now hesitated to rise for the King, and demanded instead a *fono* (or council) of both sides. And it seemed at least possible that the Royal army might proceed no further, and the unstable alliance be dissolved.

On Sunday, the 16th, Her British Majesty's ship *Katoomba*, Captain Bickford, C.M.G., arrived in Apia with fresh orders. Had she but come ten days earlier the whole of this miserable business would have been prevented, for the three Powers were determined to maintain Malietoa Laupepa by arms, and had declared finally against Mataafa. Right or wrong, it was at least a decision, and therefore welcome. It may not be best — it was something. No honest friend to Samoa can pretend anything but relief that the three Powers should at last break their vacillating silence. It is of a piece with their whole policy in the islands that they should have hung in stays for upwards of two years — of a piece with their almost uniform ill-fortune that, eight days before their purpose was declared, war should have marked the country with burned houses and severed heads.

II

There is another side to the medal of Samoan warfare. So soon as an advantage is obtained, a new and (to us) horrible animal appears upon the scene — the Head Hunter. Again and again we have reasoned with our boys against this bestial practice; but reason and (upon this one point) even ridicule are vain. They admit it to be indefensible; they allege its imperative necessity. One young man, who had seen his father take a head in the late war, spoke of the scene with shuddering revolt, and yet said he must go and do likewise himself in the war which was to come. How else could a man prove he was brave? and had not every country its own customs?

Accordingly, as occasion offered, these same pleasing children, who had just been drinking kava with their opponents, fell incontinently on the dead and dying, and secured their grisly trophies. It should be said, in fairness, that the Mataafas had no opportunity to take heads, but that their chief, taught by the lesson of Fangalii, had forbidden the practice. It is doubtful if he would have been obeyed, and yet his power over his people was so great that the German plantation, where they lay some time, and were at last defeated, had not to complain of the theft of a single cocoa-nut. Hateful as it must always be to mutilate and murder the disabled, there were in this day's affray in Vaitele circumstances yet more detestable. Fifteen heads were brought in all to Mulinuu. They were carried with parade in front of the fine house which our late President built for himself before he was removed. Here, on the verandah, the King sat to receive them, and utter words of course and compliment to each successful warrior. They were *spolia opima* in the number. Leaupepe, Mataafa's nephew — or, as Samoans say, his son — had fallen by the first wall, and whether from those sentiments of kindred and friendship that so often unite the combatants in civil strife, or to mark by an unusual formality the importance of the conquest, not only his head but his mutilated body also was brought in. From the mat in which the corpse was enveloped a bloody hand protruded, and struck a chill in white eye-witnesses. It were to attribute to [Malietoa] Laupepa sentiments entirely foreign to his race and training, if we were to suppose him otherwise than gratified.

But it was not so throughout. Every country has its customs, say native apologists, and one of the most decisive customs of Samoa ensures the immunity of women. They go to the front, as our women of yore went to a tournament. Bullets are blind; and they must take their risk of bullets, but of nothing else. They serve out cartridges and water; they jeer the faltering and defend the wounded. Even in this skirmish of Vaitele they distinguished themselves on either side. One dragged her skulking husband from a hole, and drove him to the front. Another, seeing her lover fall, snatched up his gun, kept the head-hunters at bay, and drew him unmutilated from the field. Such services they have been accustomed to pay for centuries; and often, in the course of centuries, a bullet or a spear must have despatched one of these warlike angels. Often enough, too, the head-hunter, springing ghoul-like on fallen bodies, must have decapitated a woman for a man. But, the case arising, there was an established etiquette. So soon as the error was discovered the head was buried, and the exploit forgotten. There had never yet, in the history of Samoa, occurred an instance in which a man had taken a woman's head and kept it and laid it at his monarch's feet.

Such was the strange and horrid spectacle, which must have immediately shaken the heart of Laupepa, and has since covered the faces of his party with confusion. It is not quite certain if there were three, or only two: a recent attempt to reduce the number to one must be received with caution as an afterthought; the admissions in the beginning were too explicit, the panic of shame and fear had been too sweeping. There is scarce a woman of our native friends in Apia who can speak upon the subject without terror; scarce any man without humiliation. And the shock was increased out of measure by the fact that the head — or one of the heads — was recognised; recognised for the niece of one of the greatest of court ladies; recognised for a Taupo-sa, or sacred maid of a village from Savaii. It seemed incredible that she — who had been chosen for virtue and beauty, who went everywhere attended by the fairest maidens, and watched over by vigilant duennas, whose part it was, in holiday costume, to receive guests, to make kava, and to be the leader of the revels, should become the victim of a brutal rally in a cow-park, and have her face exposed for a trophy to the victorious king.

In all this muttering of aversion and alarm, no word has been openly said. No punishment, no disgrace, has been inflicted on the perpetrators of the outrage. King, Consuls, and mission appear to have held their peace alike. I can understand a certain apathy in whites. Head-hunting, they say, is a horrid practice: and will not stop to investigate its finer shades. But the Samoan himself does not hesitate; for him the act is portentous; and if it go unpunished, and set a fashion, its consequences must be damnable. This is not a breach of a Christian virtue, of something half-learned by rote, and from foreigners, in the last thirty years. It is a flying in the face of their own native, instinctive, and traditional standard: tenfold more ominous and degrading. And, taking the matter for all in all, it seems to me that head-hunting itself should be firmly and immediately suppressed.

“How else can a man prove himself to be brave?” my friend asked. But often enough these are but fraudulent trophies. On the morrow of the fight at Vaitele, an Atua man discovered a body lying in the bush: he took the head. A day or two ago a party was allowed to visit Manono. The King’s troops on shore, observing them put off from the rebel island, leaped to the conclusion that this must be the wounded going to Apia, launched off at once two armed boats and overhauled the others — after heads. The glory of such exploits is not apparent; their power for degradation strikes the eyes. Lieutenant Ulfsparre, our late Swedish Chief of Police and Commander of the forces, told his men that if any of them took a head his own hand should avenge it. That was talking; I should like to see all in the same story — king, consuls, and missionaries — included.

III

The three Powers have at last taken hold here in Apia. But they came the day after the fair; and the immediate business on hand is very delicate. This morning, 18th, Captain Bickford, followed by two Germans, sailed for Manono. If he shall succeed in persuading Mataafa to surrender, all may be well. If he cannot, this long train of blunders may end in — what is so often the result of blundering in the field of politics — a horrid massacre. Those of us who remember the services of Mataafa, his unfailing generosity and moderation in the past, and his bereavement in the present — as well as those who are only interested in a mass of men and women, many of them our familiar friends, now pent up on an island, and beleaguered by three warships and a Samoan army — await the issue with dreadful expectation.

VIII

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES"

Vailima, Apia, April 23, 1894.

Sir, — I last addressed you on the misconduct of certain officials here, and I was so far happy as to have had my facts confirmed in every particular with but one exception. That exception, the affair of the dynamite, has been secretly smuggled away; you shall look in vain in either Blue-book or White-book for any mention even of the charge; it is gone like the conjurer's orange. I might have been tempted to inquire into the reason of this conspiracy of silence, whether the idea was conceived in the bosoms of the three Powers themselves, or whether in the breasts of the three Consuls, because one of their number was directly implicated. And I might have gone on to consider the moral effect of such suppressions, and to show how very idle they were, and how very undignified, in the face of a small and compact population, where everybody sees and hears, where everybody knows, and talks, and laughs. But only a personal question remained, which I judged of no interest to the public. The essential was accomplished. Baron Senfft was gone already. Mr. Cedercrantz still lingered among us in the character (I may say) of a private citizen, his Court at last closed, only his pocket open for the receipt of his salary, representing the dignity of the Berlin Act by sitting in the wind on Mulinuu Point for several consecutive months — a curious phantom or survival of a past age. The new officials were not as yet, because they had not been created. And we fell into our old estate of government by the three Consuls, as it was in the beginning before the Berlin Act existed; as it seems it will be till the end, after the Berlin Act has been swept away.

It was during the time of this triumvirate, and wholly at their instigation and under their conduct, that Mataafa was defeated, driven to Manono, and (three warships coming opportunely to hand) forced to surrender. I have been called a partisan of this chief's, and I accept the term. I thought him, on the whole, the most honest man in Samoa, not excepting white officials. I ventured to think he had been hardly used by the Treaty Powers; I venture to think so still. It was my opinion that he should have been conjoined with Malietoa as Vice-King; and I have seen no reason to change that opinion, except that the time for it is past. Mataafa has played and lost; an exile, and stripped of his titles, he walks the exiguous beach of Jaluit, sees the German flag over his head, and yearns for the land wind of Upolu. In the politics of Samoa he is no longer a factor; and it only remains to speak of the manner in which his rebellion was suppressed and punished. Deportation is, to the Samoan mind, the punishment next to death, and thirteen of the chiefs engaged were deported with their leader. Twenty-seven others were cast into the gaol. There they lie still; the Government makes almost no attempt to feed them, and they must depend on the activity of their families and the charity of pitying whites. In the meantime, these very families are overloaded with fines, the exorbitant sum of more than £6,600 having been laid on the chiefs and villages that took part with Mataafa.

So far we can only complain that the punishments have been severe and the prison commissariat absent. But we have, besides, to regret the repeated scandals in connection with the conduct of the war, and we look in vain for any sign of punishment. The Consuls had to employ barbarous hands; we might expect outrages; we did expect them to be punished, or at least disowned. Thus, certain Mataafa chiefs were landed, and landed from a British man-of-war, to be shamefully abused, beaten, and struck with whips along the main street of Mulinuu. There was no punishment, there was even no inquiry; the three Consuls winked. Only one man was found honest and bold enough to open his mouth, and that was my old enemy, Mr. Cedercrantz. Walking in Mulinuu, in his character of disinterested spectator, gracefully desipient, he came across the throng of these rabblers and their victims. He had forgotten that he was an official, he remembered that he was a man. It was his last public appearance in Samoa to interfere; it was certainly his best. Again, the Government troops in the field took the heads of girls, a detestable felony even in Samoan eyes. They carried them in procession to Mulinuu, and made of them an oblation to that melancholy effigy the King, who (sore against his will) sat on the verandah of the Government building, publicly to receive this affront, publicly to utter the words of compliment and thanks which constitute the highest reward known to Samoan bravery, and crowned as heroes those who should have been hanged like dogs. And again the three Consuls unanimously winked. There was no punishment, there was even no inquiry.

Lastly, there is the story of Manono. Three hours were given to Mataafa to accept the terms of the ultimatum, and the time had almost elapsed when his boats put forth, and more than elapsed before he came alongside the *Katoomba* and surrendered formally to Captain Bickford. In the dusk of the evening, when all the ships had sailed, flames were observed to rise from the island. Mataafa flung himself on his knees before Captain Bickford, and implored protection for his women and children left behind, and the captain put back the ship and despatched one of the Consuls to inquire. The *Katoomba* had been about seventy hours in the islands. Captain Bickford was a stranger; he had to rely on the Consuls implicitly. At the same time, he knew that the Government troops had been suffered to land for the purpose of restoring order, and with the understanding that no reprisals should be committed on the adherents of Mataafa; and he charged the emissary with his emphatic disapproval, threats of punishment on the offenders, and reminders that the war had now passed under the responsibility of the three Powers. I cannot condescend on what this Consul saw during his visit; I can only say what he reported on his return. He reported all well, and the chiefs on the Government side fraternising and making *ava* with those on Mataafa's. It may have been; at least it is strange. The burning of the island proceeded, fruit-trees were cut down, women stripped naked; a scene of brutal disorder reigned all night, and left behind it, over a quarter of the island, ruin. If they fraternised with Mataafa's chieftains they must have been singularly inconsistent, for, the next we learn of the two parties, they were beating, spitting upon, and insulting them along the highway. The next morning in Apia I asked the same Consul if there had not been some houses burned. He told me no. I repeated the question, alleging the evidence of officers on board the *Katoomba* who had seen the flames increase and multiply as they steamed away; whereupon he had this remarkable reply — ”O! huts, huts, huts! There isn't a house, a frame house, on the island.” The case to plain men stands thus: — The people of Manono were insulted, their food-trees cut down, themselves left houseless; not more than ten houses — I beg the Consul's pardon, huts — escaped the rancour of their enemies; and to this day they may be seen to dwell in shanties on the site of their former residences, the pride of the Samoan heart. The ejaculation of the Consul was thus at least prophetic; and the traveller who revisits to-day the shores of the “Garden Island” may well exclaim in his turn, “Huts, huts, huts!”

The same measure was served out, in the mere wantonness of clan hatred, to Apolima, a nearly inaccessible islet in the straits of the same name; almost the only property saved there (it is amusing to remember) being a framed portrait of Lady Jersey, which its custodian escaped with into the bush, as it were the palladium and chief treasure of the inhabitants. The solemn promise passed by Consuls and captains in the name of the three Powers was thus broken; the troops employed were allowed their bellyful of barbarous outrage. And again there was no punishment, there was no inquiry, there was no protest, there was not a word said to disown the act or disengage the honour of the three Powers. I do not say the Consuls desired to be disobeyed, though the case looks black against one gentleman, and even he is perhaps only to be accused of levity and divided interest; it was doubtless important for him to be early in Apia, where he combines with his diplomatic functions the management of a thriving business as commission agent and auctioneer. I do say of all of them that they took a very nonchalant view of their duty.

I told myself that this was the government of the Consular Triumvirate. When the new officials came it would cease; it would pass away like a dream in the night; and the solid *Pax Romana*, of the Berlin General Act would succeed. After all, what was there to complain of? The Consuls had shown themselves no slovens and no sentimentalists. They had shown themselves not very particular, but in one sense very thorough. Rebellion was to be put down swiftly and rigorously, if need were with the hand of Cromwell; at least it was to be put down. And in these unruly islands I was prepared almost to welcome the face of Rhadamanthine severity.

And now it appears it was all a mistake. The government by the Berlin General Act is no more than a mask, and a very expensive one, for government by the Consular Triumvirate. Samoa pays (or tries to pay) £2,200 a year to a couple of helpers; and they dare not call their souls their own. They take their walks abroad with an anxious eye on the three Consuls, like two well-behaved children with three nurses; and the Consuls, smiling superior, allow them to amuse themselves with the routine of business. But let trouble come, and the farce is suspended. At the whistle of a squall these heaven-born mariners seize the tiller, and the £2,200 amateurs are knocked sprawling on the bilge. At the first beat of the drum, the treaty officials are sent below, gently protesting, like a pair of old ladies, and behold! the indomitable Consuls ready to clear the wreck and make the deadly cutlass shine. And their method, studied under the light of a new example, wears another air. They are not so Rhadamanthine as we thought. Something that we can only call a dignified panic presides over their deliberations. They have one idea to lighten the ship. “Overboard with the ballast, the main-mast, and the chronometer!” is the cry. In the last war they got rid (first) of the honour of their respective countries, and (second) of all idea that Samoa was to be governed in a manner consistent with civilisation, or Government troops punished for any conceivable misconduct. In the present war they have sacrificed (first) the prestige of the new Chief Justice, and (second) the very principle for which they had contended so vigorously and so successfully in the war before — that rebellion was a thing to be punished.

About the end of last year, that war, a war of the Tupuas under Tamasese the younger, which was a necessary pendant to the crushing of Mataafa, began to make itself heard of in obscure grumblings. It was but a timid business. One half of the Tupua party, the whole province of Atua, never joined the rebellion, but sulked in their villages and spent the time in indecisive eloquence and barren embassies. Tamasese, by a trick eminently Samoan, “went in the high bush and the mountains,” carrying a gun like a private soldier —

served, in fact, with his own troops *incognito* — and thus, to Samoan eyes, waived his dynastic pretensions. And the war, which was announced in the beginning with a long catalogue of complaints against the King and a distinct and ugly threat to the white population of Apia, degenerated into a war of defence by the province of Aána against the eminently brutal troops of Savaii, in which sympathy was generally and justly with the rebels. Savaii, raging with private clan hatred and the lust of destruction, was put at free quarters in the disaffected province, repeated on a wider scale the outrages of Manono and Apolima, cut down the food-trees, stripped and insulted the women, robbed the children of their little possessions, burned the houses, killed the horses, the pigs, the dogs, the cats, along one half of the seaboard of Aána, and in the prosecution of these manly exploits managed (to the joy of all) to lose some sixty men killed, wounded, and drowned.

Government by the Treaty of Berlin was still erect when, one fine morning, in walked the three Consuls, totally uninvited, with a proclamation prepared and signed by themselves, without any mention of anybody else. They had awoke to a sense of the danger of the situation and their own indispensable merits. The two children knew their day was over; the nurses had come for them. Who can blame them for their timidity? The Consuls have the ears of the Governments; they are the authors of those despatches of which, in the ripeness of time, Blue-books and White-books are made up; they had dismissed (with some little assistance from yourself) MM. Cedercrantz and Senfft von Pilsach, and they had strangled, like an illegitimate child, the scandal of the dynamite. The Chief Justice and the President made haste to disappear between decks, and left the ship of the State to the three volunteers. There was no lack of activity. The Consuls went up to Atua, they went down to Aána; the oarsmen toiled, the talking men pleaded; they are said to have met with threats in Atua, and to have yielded to them — at least, in but a few days' time they came home to us with a new treaty of pacification. Of course, and as before, the Government troops were whitewashed; the Savaii ruffians had been stripping women and killing cats in the interests of the Berlin Treaty; there was to be no punishment and no inquiry; let them retire to Savaii with their booty and their dead. Offensive as this cannot fail to be, there is still some slight excuse for it. The King is no more than one out of several chiefs of clans. His strength resides in the willing obedience of the Tuamasaga, and a portion — I have to hope a bad portion — of the island of Savaii. To punish any of these supporters must always be to accept a risk; and the golden opportunity had been allowed to slip at the moment of the Mataafa war.

What was more original was the treatment of the rebels. They were under arms that moment against the Government; they had fought and sometimes vanquished; they had taken heads and carried them to Tamasese. And the terms granted were to surrender fifty rifles, to make some twenty miles of road, to pay some old fines — and to be forgiven! The loss of fifty rifles to people destitute of any shadow of a gunsmith to repair them when they are broken, and already notoriously short of ammunition, is a trifle; the number is easy to be made up of those that are out of commission; for there is not the least stipulation as to their value; any synthesis of old iron and smashed wood that can be called a gun is to be taken from its force. The road, as likely as not, will never be made. The fines have nothing to say to this war; in any reasonably governed country they should never have figured in the treaty; they had been inflicted before, and were due before. Before the rebellion began, the beach had rung with I know not what indiscreet bluster; the natives were to be read a lesson; Tamasese (by name) was to be hanged; and after what had been done to Mataafa, I was so innocent as to listen with awe. And now the rebellion has come, and this was the punishment! There might well have been 400 a doubt in the mind of any chief who should have been tempted to follow the example of Mataafa; but who is it that would not dare to follow Tamasese?

For some reason — I know not what, unless it be fear — there is a strong prejudice amongst whites against any interference with the bestial practice of head-hunting. They say it would be impossible to identify the criminals — a thing notoriously contrary to fact. A man does not take a head, as he steals an apple, for secret degustation; the essence of the thing is its publicity. After the girls' heads were brought into Mulinuu I pressed Mr. Cusack-Smith to take some action. He proposed a paper of protest, to be signed by the English residents. We made rival drafts; his was preferred, and I have heard no more of it. It has not been offered me to sign; it has not been published; under a paper-weight in the British Consulate I suppose it may yet be found! Meanwhile, his Honour Mr. Ide, the new Chief Justice, came to Samoa and took spirited action. He engineered an ordinance through the House of Faipule, inflicting serious penalties on any who took heads, and the papers at the time applauded his success. The rebellion followed, the troops were passing to the front, and with excellent resolution Mr. Ide harangued the chiefs, reiterated the terms of the new law, and promised unfailing vengeance on offenders. It was boldly done, and he stood committed beyond possibility of retreat to enforce this his first important edict. Great was the commotion, great the division, in the Samoan mind. "O! we have had Chief Justices before," said a visitor to my house; "we know what they are; I will take a head if I can get one.” Others were more doubtful, but thought none could be so bold as lay a hand on the peculiar institution of these islands. Yet others were convinced. Savaii took heads; but when they sent one to Mulinuu a messenger met them by the convent gates from the King; he would none of it, and the trophy must be ingloriously buried, Savaii took heads also, and Tamasese accepted the presentation. Tuamasaga, on the other hand, obeyed the Chief Justice and (the occasion being thrust upon them) contented themselves with taking the dead man’s ears. On the whole, about one-third of the troops engaged, and our not very firm Monarch himself, kept the letter of the ordinance. And it was upon this scene of partial, but really cheering, success that the Consuls returned with their general pardon! The Chief Justice was not six months old in the islands. He had succeeded to a position complicated by the failure of his predecessor. Personally, speaking face to face with the chiefs, he had put his authority in pledge that the ordinance should be enforced. And he found himself either forgotten or betrayed by the three Consuls. These volunteers had made a liar of him; they had administered to him, before all Samoa, a triple buffet. I must not wonder, though I may still deplore, that Mr. Ide accepted the position thus made for him. There was a deal of alarm in Apia. To refuse the treaty thus hastily and shamefully cobbled up would have increased it tenfold. Already, since the declaration of war and the imminence of the results, one of the papers had ratted, and the white population were girding at the new ordinance. It was feared besides that the native Government, though they had voted, were secretly opposed to it. It was almost certain they would try to prevent its application to the loyalist offenders of Savaii. The three Consuls in the negotiations of the treaty had fully illustrated both their want of sympathy with the ordinance and their want of regard for the position of the Chief Justice. “In short, I am to look for no support, whether physical or moral?” asked Mr. Ide; and I could make but the one answer — ”Neither physical nor moral.” It was a hard choice; and he elected to accept the terms of the treaty without protest. And the next war (if we are to continue to enjoy the benefits of the Berlin Act) will probably show us the result in an enlarged assortment of heads, and the next difficulty perhaps prove to us the diminished prestige of the Chief Justice. Mr. Ide announces his intention of applying the law in the case of another war; but I very much fear the golden opportunity has again been lost. About one-third of the troops believed him this time; how many will believe him the next?

It will doubtless be answered that the Consuls were affected by the alarm in Apia and actuated by the desire to save white lives. I am far from denying that there may be danger; and I believe that the way we are going is the best way to bring it on. In the progressive decivilisation of these islands — evidenced by the female heads taken in the last war and the treatment of white missionaries in this — our methods of pull devil, pull baker, general indecision, and frequent (though always dignified) panic are the best calculated in the world to bring on a massacre of whites. A consistent dignity, a consistent and independent figure of a Chief Justice, the enforcement of the laws, and above all, of the laws against barbarity, a Consular board the same in the presence as in the absence of warships, will be found our best defence.

Much as I have already occupied of your space, I would yet ask leave to draw two conclusions.

And first, Mataafa and Tamasese both made war. Both wars were presumably dynastic in character, though the Tupua not rallying to Tamasese as he had expected led him to cover his design. That he carried a gun himself, and himself fired, will not seem to European ears a very important alleviation. Tamasese received heads, sitting as a King, under whatever name; Mataafa had forbidden the taking of heads — of his own accord, and before Mr. Ide had taken office. Tamasese began with threats against the white population; Mataafa never ceased to reassure them and to extend an effectual protection to their property. What is the difference between their cases? That Mataafa was an old man, already famous, who had served his country well, had been appointed King of Samoa, had served in the office, and had been set aside — not, indeed, in the text, but in the protocols of the Berlin Act, by name? I do not grudge his good fortune to Tamasese, who is an amiable, spirited, and handsome young man; and who made a barbarous war, indeed, since heads were taken after the old Samoan practice, but who made it without any of the savagery which we have had reason to comment upon in the camp of his adversaries. I do not grudge the invidious fate that has befallen my old friend and his followers. At first I believed these judgments to be the expression of a severe but equal justice. I find them, on further experience, to be mere measures of the degree of panic in the Consuls, varying directly as the distance of the nearest war-ship. The judgments under which they fell have now no sanctity; they form no longer a precedent; they may perfectly well be followed by a pardon, or a partial pardon, as the authorities shall please. The crime of Mataafa is to have read strictly the first article of the Berlin Act, and not to have read at all (as how should he when it has never been translated?) the insidious protocol which contains its significance; the crime of his followers is to have practised clan fidelity, and to have in consequence raised an *imperium in imperio*, and fought against the Government. Their punishment is to be sent to a coral atoll and detained there prisoners. It does not sound much; it is a great deal. Taken from a mountain island, they must inhabit a narrow strip of reef sunk to the gunwale in the ocean. Sand, stone, and cocoa-nuts, stone, sand, and pandanus, make the scenery. There is no grass. Here these men, used to the cool, bright mountain rivers of Samoa, must drink with loathing the brackish water of the coral. The food upon such islands is distressing even to the omnivorous white. To the Samoan, who has that shivering delicacy and ready disgust of the child or the rustic mountaineer, it is intolerable. I remember what our present King looked like, what a phantom he was, when he returned from captivity in the same place. Lastly, these fourteen have been divorced from their families. The daughter of Mataafa somehow broke the *consigne* and accompanied her father; but she only. To this day one of them, Palepa, the wife of Faamuina, is dunning the authorities in vain to be allowed to join her husband — she a young and handsome woman, he an old man and infirm. I cannot speak with certainty, but I believe they are allowed no communication with the prisoners, nor the prisoners with them. My own open experience is brief and conclusive — I have not been suffered to send my friends one stick of tobacco or one pound of *ava*. So much to show the hardships are genuine. I have to ask a pardon for these unhappy victims of untranslated protocols and inconsistent justice. After the case of Tamasese, I ask it almost as of right. As for the other twenty-seven in the gaol, let the doors be opened at once. They have showed their patience, they have proved their loyalty long enough. On two occasions, when the guards deserted in a body, and again when the Aana prisoners fled, they remained — one may truly say — voluntary prisoners. And at least let them be fed! I have paid taxes to the Samoan Government for some four years, and the most sensible benefit I have received in return has been to be allowed to feed their prisoners.

Second, if the farce of the Berlin Act is to be gone on with, it will be really necessary to moderate among our five Sovereigns — six if we are to count poor Malietoa, who represents to the life the character of the Hare and Many Friends. It is to be presumed that Mr. Ide and Herr Schmidt were chosen for their qualities; it is little good we are likely to get by them if, at every wind of rumour, the three Consuls are to intervene. The three Consuls are paid far smaller salaries, they have no right under the treaty to interfere with the government of autonomous Samoa, and they have contrived to make themselves all In all. The King and a majority of the Faipule fear them and look to them alone, while the legitimate adviser occupies a second place, if that. The misconduct of MM. Cedercrantz and Senfft von Pilsach was so extreme that the Consuls were obliged to encroach; and now when these are gone the authority acquired in the contest remains with the encroachers. On their side they have no rights, but a tradition of victory, the ear of the Governments at home, and the *vis viva* of the war-ships. For the poor treaty officials, what have they but rights very obscurely expressed and very weakly defended by their predecessors? Thus it comes about that people who are scarcely mentioned in the text of the treaty are, to all intents and purposes, our only rulers.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

IX

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES"
Vailima, Samoa, May 22, 1894.

Sir, — I told you in my last that the Consuls had tinkered up a treaty of peace with the rebels of Aána. A month has gone by, and I would not weary readers your with a story so intricate and purposeless. The Consuls seem to have gone backward and forward, to and fro. To periods of agitated activity, comparable to that of three ants about a broken nest, there succeeded seasons in which they rested from their labours and ruefully considered the result. I believe I am not overstating the case when I say that this treaty was at least twice rehandled, and the date of submission changed, in the interval. And yesterday at length we beheld the first-fruits of the Consular diplomacy. A boat came in from Aána bearing the promised fifty stand of arms — in other words, a talking man, a young chief, and some boatmen in charge of a boat-load of broken ironmongery. The Government (well advised for once) had placed the Embassy under an escort of German blue-jackets, or I think it must have gone ill with the Ambassadors.

So much for Aána and the treaty. With Atua, the other disaffected province, we have been and are on the brink of war. The woods have been patrolled, the army sent to the front, blood has been shed. It consists with my knowledge that the loyalist troops marched against the enemy under a hallucination. One and all believed, a majority of them still believe, that the war-ships were to follow and assist them. Who told them so? If I am to credit the rumours of the natives, as well as the gossip of official circles, a promise had been given to this effect by the Consuls, or at least by one of the Consuls. And when I say that a promise had been given, I mean that it had been sold. I mean that the natives had to buy it by submissions.

Let me take an example of these submissions. The native Government increased the salary of Mr. Gurr, the natives' advocate. It was not a largesse; it was rather an act of tardy justice, by which Mr. Gurr received at last the same emoluments as his predecessor in the office. At the same time, with a bankrupt treasury, all fresh expenses are and must be regarded askance. The President, acting under a so-called Treasury regulation, refused to honour the King's order. And a friendly suit was brought, which turned on the validity of this Treasury regulation. This was more than doubtful. The President was a treaty official; hence bound by the treaty. The three Consuls had been acting for him in his absence, using his powers and no other powers whatever under the treaty; and the three Consuls so acting had framed a regulation by which the powers of the President were greatly extended. This was a vicious circle with a vengeance. But the Consuls, with the ordinary partiality of parents for reformed offspring, regarded the regulation as the apple of their eye. They made themselves busy in its defence, they held interviews, it is reported they drew pleas; and it seemed to all that the Chief Justice hesitated. It is certain at least that he long delayed sentence. And during this delay the Consuls showed their power. The native Government was repeatedly called together, and at last forced to rescind the order in favour of Mr. Gurr. It was not done voluntarily, for the Government resisted. It was not done by conviction, for the Government had taken the first opportunity to restore it. If the Consuls did not appear personally in the affair — and I do not know that they did not — they made use of the President as a mouthpiece; and the President delayed the deliberations of the Government until he should receive further instructions from the Consuls. Ten pounds is doubtless a considerable affair to a bankrupt Government. But what were the Consuls doing in this matter of inland administration? What was their right to interfere? What were the arguments with which they overcame the resistance of the Government? I am either very much misinformed, or these gentlemen were trafficking in a merchandise which they did not possess, and selling at a high price the assistance of the war-ships over which (as now appears) they have no control.

Remark the irony of fate. This affair had no sooner been settled, Mr. Gurr's claims cut at the very root, and the Treasury regulation apparently set beyond cavil, than the Chief Justice pulled himself together, and, taking his life in his right hand, delivered sentence in the case. Great was the surprise. Because the Chief Justice had balked so long, it was supposed he would never have taken the leap. And here, upon a sudden, he came down with a decision flat against the Consuls and their Treasury regulation. The Government have, I understand, restored Mr. Gurr's salary in consequence. The Chief Justice, after giving us all a very severe fright, has reinstated himself in public opinion by this tardy boldness; and the Consuls find their conduct judicially condemned.

It was on a personal affront that the Consuls turned on Mr. Cedercrantz. Here is another affront, far more galling and public! I suppose it is but a coincidence that I should find at the same time the clouds beginning to gather about Mr. Ide's head. In a telegram, dated from Auckland, March 30, and copyrighted by the Associated Press, I find the whole blame of the late troubles set down to his account. It is the work of a person worthy of no trust. In one of his charges, and in one only, he is right. The Chief Justice fined and imprisoned certain chiefs of Aána under circumstances far from clear; the act was, to say the least of it, susceptible of misconstruction, and by natives will always be thought of as an act of treachery. But, even for this, it is not possible for me to split the blame justly between Mr. Ide and the three Consuls. In these early days, as now, the three Consuls were always too eager to interfere where they had no business, and the Chief Justice was always too patient or too timid to set them in their place. For the rest of the telegram no qualification is needed. “The Chief Justice was compelled to take steps to disarm the natives.” He took no such steps; he never spoke of disarmament except publicly and officially to disown the idea; it was during the days of the Consular triumvirate that the cry began. “The Chief Justice called upon Malietoa to send a strong force,” etc.; the Chief Justice “disregarded the menacing attitude assumed by the Samoans,” etc. — these are but the delusions of a fever. The Chief Justice has played no such part; he never called for forces; he never disregarded menacing attitudes, not even those of the Consuls. What we have to complain of in Mr. Ide and Mr. Schmidt is strangely different. We complain that they have been here since November, and the three Consuls are still allowed, when they are not invited, to interfere in the least and the greatest; that they have been here for upwards of six months, and government under the Berlin Treaty is still overridden — and I may say overlaid — by the government of the Consular triumvirate.

This is the main fountain of our present discontents. This it is that we pray to be relieved from. Out of six Sovereigns, exercising incongruous rights or usurpations on this unhappy island, we pray to be relieved of three. The Berlin Treaty was not our choice; but if we are to have it at all, let us have it plain. Let us have the text, and nothing but the text. Let the three Consuls who have no position under the treaty cease from troubling, cease from raising war and making peace, from passing illegal regulations in the face of day, and from secretly blackmailing the Samoan Government into renunciations of its independence. Afterwards, when we have once seen it in operation, we shall be able to judge whether government under the Berlin Treaty suits or does not suit our case. — I am, Sir, etc.,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

X

FROM THE "DAILY CHRONICLE," *March* 18, 1895.

[Subjoined is the full text of the late Robert Louis Stevenson's last letter to Mr. J. F. Hogan, M.P. Apart from its pathetic interest as one of the final compositions of the distinguished novelist, its eloquent terms of pleading for his exiled friend Mataafa, and the light it sheds on Samoan affairs, make it a very noteworthy and instructive document. — ED. *D.C.*]

Vailima, Oct. 7, 1894.

J. F. Hogan, Esq., M.P.

Dear Sir, — My attention was attracted the other day by the thoroughly pertinent questions which you put in the House of Commons, and which the Government failed to answer. It put an idea in my head that you were perhaps the man who might take up a task which I am almost ready to give up. Mataafa is now known to be my hobby. People laugh when they see any mention of his name over my signature, and the *Times*, while it still grants me hospitality, begins to lead the chorus. I know that nothing can be more fatal to Mataafa's cause than that he should be made ridiculous, and I cannot help feeling that a man who makes his bread by writing fiction labours under the disadvantage of suspicion when he touches on matters of fact. If I were even backed up before the world by one other voice, people might continue to listen, and in the end something might be done. But so long as I stand quite alone, telling the same story, which becomes, apparently, not only more tedious, but less credible by repetition, I feel that I am doing nothing good, possibly even some evil.

Now, sir, you have shown by your questions in the House, not only that you remember Mataafa, but that you are instructed in his case, and this exposes you to the trouble of reading this letter.

Mataafa was made the prisoner of the three Powers. He had been guilty of rebellion; but surely rather formally than really. He was the appointed King of Samoa. The treaty set him aside, and he obeyed the three Powers. His successor — or I should rather say his successor's advisers and surroundings — fell out with him. He was disgusted by the spectacle of their misgovernment. In this humour he fell to the study of the Berlin Act, and was misled by the famous passage, "His successor shall be duly elected according to the laws and customs of Samoa." It is to be noted that what I will venture to call the infamous Protocol — a measure equally of German vanity, English cowardice, and American *incuria* — had not been and *has never yet been* translated into the Samoan language. They feared light because their works were darkness. For what he did during what I can only call his candidature, I must refer you to the last chapter of my book. It was rebellion to the three Powers; to him it was not rebellion. The troops of the King attacked him first. The sudden arrival and sudden action of Captain Bickford concluded the affair in the very beginning. Mataafa surrendered. He surrendered to Captain Bickford. He was brought back to Apia on Captain Bickford's ship. I shall never forget the Captain pointing to the British ensign and saying, "Tell them they are safe under that." And the next thing we learned, Mataafa and his chiefs were transferred to a German war-ship and carried to the Marshalls.

Who was responsible for this? Who is responsible now for the care and good treatment of these political prisoners? I am far from hinting that the Germans actually maltreat him. I know even that many of the Germans regard him with respect. But I can only speak of what I know here. It is impossible to send him or any of his chiefs either a present or a letter. I believe the mission (Catholic) has been allowed some form of communication. On the same occasion I sent down letters and presents. They were refused; and the officer of the deck on the German war-ship had so little reticence as to pass the remark, "O, you see, you like Mataafa; we don't." In short, communication is so completely sundered that for anything we can hear in Samoa, they may all have been hanged at the yard-arm two days out.

To take another instance. The high chief Faamoina was recently married to a young and pleasing wife. She desired to follow her husband, an old man, in bad health, and so deservedly popular that he had been given the by-name of "*Papalagi Mativa*," or "Poor White Man," on account of his charities to our countrymen. She was refused. Again and again she has renewed her applications to be allowed to rejoin him, and without the least success.

It has been decreed by some one, I know not whom, that Faamoina must have no one to nurse him, and that his wife must be left in the anomalous and dangerous position which the Treaty Powers have made for her. I have wearied myself, and I fear others, by my attempts to get a passage for her or to have her letters sent. Every one sympathises. The German ships now in port are loud in expressions of disapproval and professions of readiness to help her. But to whom can we address ourselves? Who is responsible? Who is the unknown power that sent Mataafa in a German ship to the Marshalls, instead of in an English ship to Fiji? that has decreed since that he shall receive not even inconsiderable gifts and open letters? and that keeps separated Faamoina and his wife?

Now, dear sir, these are the facts, and I think that I may be excused for being angry. At the same time, I am well aware that an angry man is a bore. I am a man with a grievance, and my grievance has the misfortune to be very small and very far away. It is very small, for it is only the case of under a score of brown-skinned men who have been dealt with in the dark by I know not whom. And I want to know. I want to know by whose authority Mataafa was given over into German hands. I want to know by whose authority, and for how long a term of years, he is condemned to the miserable exile of a low island. And I want to know how it happens that what is sauce for the goose is not sauce for the gander in Samoa? — that the German enemy Mataafa has been indefinitely exiled for what is after all scarce more than constructive rebellion, and the German friend Tamasese, for a rebellion which has lasted long enough to threaten us with famine, and was disgraced in its beginning by ominous threats against the whites, has been punished by a fine of fifty rifles?

True, I could sympathise with the German officers in their embarrassment. Here was the son of the old King whom they had raised, and whom they had deserted. What an unenviable office was theirs when they must make war upon, suppress, and make a feint of punishing, this man to whom they stood bound by a hereditary alliance, and to whose father they had already failed so egregiously! They were loyal all round. They were loyal to their Tamasese, and got him off with his fine. And shall I not be a little loyal to Mataafa? And will you not help me? He is now an old man, very piously inclined, and I believe he would enter at least the lesser orders of the Church if he were suffered to come back. But I do not even ask so much as this, though I hope it. It would be enough if he were brought back to Fiji, back to the food and fresh water of his childhood, back into the daylight from the darkness of the Marshalls, where some of us could see him, where we could write to him and receive answers, where he might pass a tolerable old age. If you can help me to get this done, I am sure that you will never regret it. In its small way, this is another case of Toussaint L'Ouverture, not so monstrous if you like, not on so large a scale, but with circumstances of small perfidy that make it almost as odious.

I may tell you in conclusion that, circumstances co-operating with my tedious insistence, the last of the Mataafa chiefs here in Apia has been liberated from gaol. All this time they stayed of their own free will, thinking it might injure Mataafa if they escaped when others did. And you will see by the enclosed paper how these poor fellows spent the first hours of their liberty. You will see also that I am not the firebrand that I am sometimes painted, and that in helping me, if you shall decide to do so, you will be doing nothing against the peace and prosperity of Samoa.

With many excuses for having occupied so much of your valuable time, I remain, yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — On revisal, I observe some points: in the first place, I do not believe Captain Bickford was to blame; I suspect him to have been a victim. I have been told, but it seems incredible, that he underwent an examination about Mataafa's daughter having been allowed to accompany him. Certainly he liked his job little, and some of his colleagues less.

R. L. S.

Oct. 9.

Latest intelligence. We have received at last a letter from Mataafa. He is well treated and has good food; only complains of not hearing from Samoa. This has very much relieved our minds. But why were they previously left in the dark?

R. L. S.

i.e. in building a section of a new road to Mr. Stevenson's house. The paper referred to is a copy of the *Samoa Times*, containing a report of the dinner given by Mr. Stevenson at Vailima to inaugurate this new road.

LETTERS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

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I

TO MISS B...
Vailima Plantation [*Spring*, 1892].

Dear Friend, — Please salute your pupils in my name, and tell them that a long, lean, elderly man who lives right through on the underside of the world, so that down in your cellar you are nearer him than the people in the street, desires his compliments.

This man lives on an island which is not very long and is extremely narrow. The sea beats round it very hard, so that it is difficult to get to shore. There is only one harbour where ships come, and even that is very wild and dangerous; four ships of war were broken there a little while ago, and one of them is still lying on its side on a rock clean above water, where the sea threw it as you might throw your fiddle-bow upon the table. All round the harbour the town is strung out: it is nothing but wooden houses, only there are some churches built of stone. They are not very large, but the people have never seen such fine buildings. Almost all the houses are of one story. Away at one end of the village lives the king of the whole country. His palace has a thatched roof which rests upon posts; there are no walls, but when it blows and rains, they have Venetian blinds which they let down between the posts, making all very snug. There is no furniture, and the king and the queen and the courtiers sit and eat on the floor, which is of gravel: the lamp stands there too, and every now and then it is upset.

These good folk wear nothing but a kilt about their waists, unless to go to church or for a dance on the New Year or some great occasion. The children play marbles all along the street; and though they are generally very jolly, yet they get awfully cross over their marbles, and cry and fight just as boys and girls do at home. Another amusement in country places is to shoot fish with a little bow and arrow. All round the beach there is bright shallow water, where the fishes can be seen darting or lying in shoals. The child trots round the shore, and whenever he sees a fish, lets fly an arrow, and misses, and then wades in after his arrow. It is great fun (I have tried it) for the child, and I never heard of it doing any harm to the fishes, so what could be more jolly?

The road to this lean man's house is uphill all the way, and through forests; the trees are not so much unlike those at home, only here and there some very queer ones are mixed with them — cocoa-nut palms, and great trees that are covered with bloom like red hawthorn but not near so bright; and from them all thick creepers hang down like ropes, and ugly-looking weeds that they call orchids grow in the forks of the branches; and on the ground many prickly things are dotted, which they call pine-apples. I suppose every one has eaten pine-apple drops.

On the way up to the lean man's house you pass a little village, all of houses like the king's house, so that as you ride by you can see everybody sitting at dinner, or, if it is night, lying in their beds by lamplight; because all the people are terribly afraid of ghosts, and would not lie in the dark for anything. After the village, there is only one more house, and that is the lean man's. For the people are not very many, and live all by the sea, and the whole inside of the island is desert woods and mountains. When the lean man goes into the forest, he is very much ashamed to own it, but he is always in a terrible fright. The wood is so great, and empty, and hot, and it is always filled with curious noises: birds cry like children, and bark like dogs; and he can hear people laughing and felling trees; and the other day (when he was far in the woods) he heard a sound like the biggest mill-wheel possible, going with a kind of dot-and-carry-one movement like a dance. That was the noise of an earthquake away down below him in the bowels of the earth; and that is the same thing as to say away up toward you in your cellar in Kilburn. All these noises make him feel lonely and scared, and he doesn't quite know what he is scared of. Once when he was just about to cross a river, a blow struck him on the top of his head, and knocked him head-foremost down the bank and splash into the water. It was a nut, I fancy, that had fallen from a tree, by which accident people are sometimes killed. But at the time he thought it was a Black Boy.

"Aha," say you, "and what is a Black Boy?" Well, there are here a lot of poor people who are brought to Samoa from distant islands to labour for the Germans. They are not at all like the king and his people, who are brown and very pretty: for these are black as negroes and as ugly as sin, poor souls, and in their own land they live all the time at war, and cook and eat men's flesh. The Germans make them work; and every now and then some run away into the Bush, as the forest is called, and build little sheds of leaves, and eat nuts and roots and fruits, and dwell there by themselves. Sometimes they are bad, and wild, and people whisper to each other that some of them have gone back to their horrid old habits, and catch men and women in order to eat them. But it is very likely not true; and the most of them are poor, half-starved, pitiful creatures, like frightened dogs. Their life is all very well when the sun shines, as it does eight or nine months in the year. But it is very different the rest of the time. The wind rages then most violently. The great trees thrash about like whips; the air is filled with leaves and branches flying like birds; and the sound of the trees falling shakes the earth. It rains, too, as it never rains at home. You can hear a shower while it is yet half a mile away, hissing like a shower-bath in the forest; and when it comes to you, the water blinds your eyes, and the cold drenching takes your breath away as though some one had struck you. In that kind of weather it must be dreadful indeed to live in the woods, one man alone by himself. And you must know that if the lean man feels afraid to be in the forest, the people of the island and the Black Boys are much more afraid than he; for they believe the woods to be quite filled with spirits; some like pigs, and some like flying things; but others (and these are thought the most dangerous) in the shape of beautiful young women and young men, beautifully dressed in the island manner with fine kilts and fine necklaces, and crosses of scarlet seeds and flowers. Woe betide him or her who gets to speak with one of these! They will be charmed out of their wits, and come home again quite silly, and go mad and die. So that the poor runaway Black Boy must be always trembling, and looking about for the coming of the demons.

Sometimes the women-demons go down out of the woods into the villages; and here is a tale the lean man heard last year: One of the islanders was sitting in his house, and he had cooked fish. There came along the road two beautiful young women, dressed as I told you, who came into his house, and asked for some of his fish. It is the fashion in the islands always to give what is asked, and never to ask folks' names. So the man gave them fish, and talked to them in the island jesting way. Presently he asked one of the women for her red necklace; which is good manners and their way: he had given the fish, and he had a right to ask for something back. "I will give it you by and by," said the woman, and she and her companion went away; but he thought they were gone very suddenly, and the truth is they had vanished. The night was nearly come, when the man heard the voice of the woman crying that he should come to her, and she would give the necklace. He looked out, and behold! she was standing calling him from the top of the sea, on which she stood as you might stand on the table. At that, fear came on the man; he fell on his knees and prayed, and the woman disappeared.

It was said afterward that this was once a woman, indeed, but she should have died a thousand years ago, and has lived all that while as an evil spirit in the woods beside the spring of a river. Sau-mai-afe is her name, in case you want to write to her.

Ever your friend (for whom I thank the stars),

Tusitala (Tale-writer).

II

TO MISS B...
Vailima Plantation, 14 *Aug.* 1892.

... The lean man is exceedingly ashamed of himself, and offers his apologies to the little girls in the cellar just above. If they will be so good as to knock three times upon the floor, he will hear it on the other side of his floor, and will understand that he is forgiven.

I left you and the children still on the road to the lean man's house, where a great part of the forest has now been cleared away. It comes back again pretty quick, though not quite so high; but everywhere, except where the weeders have been kept busy, young trees have sprouted up, and the cattle and the horses cannot be seen as they feed. In this clearing there are two or three houses scattered about, and between the two biggest I think the little girls in the cellar would first notice a sort of thing like a gridiron on legs, made of logs of wood. Sometimes it has a flag flying on it, made of rags of old clothes. It is a fort (as I am told) built by the person here who would be much the most interesting to the girls in the cellar. This is a young gentleman of eleven years of age, answering to the name of Austin. It was after reading a book about the Red Indians that he thought it more prudent to create this place of strength. As the Red Indians are in North America, and this fort seems to me a very useless kind of building, I anxiously hope that the two may never be brought together. When Austin is not engaged in building forts, nor on his lessons, which are just as annoying to him as other children's lessons are to them, he walks sometimes in the Bush, and if anybody is with him, talks all the time. When he is alone I don't think he says anything, and I dare say he feels very lonely and frightened, just as the Samoan does, at the queer noises and the endless lines of the trees.

He finds the strangest kinds of seeds, some of them bright-coloured like lollipops, or really like precious stones; some of them in odd cases like tobacco-pouches. He finds and collects all kinds of little shells, with which the whole ground is scattered, and that, though they are the shells of land creatures like our snails, are of nearly as many shapes and colours as the shells on our sea-beaches. In the streams that come running down out of our mountains, all as clear and bright as mirror-glass, he sees eels and little bright fish that sometimes jump together out of the surface of the brook in a spray of silver, and fresh-water prawns which lie close under the stones, looking up at him through the water with eyes the colour of a jewel. He sees all kinds of beautiful birds, some of them blue and white, and some of them coloured like our pigeons at home; and these last, the little girls in the cellar may like to know, live almost entirely on wild nutmegs as they fall ripe off the trees. Another little bird he may sometimes see, as the lean man saw him only this morning: a little fellow not so big as a man's hand, exquisitely neat, of a pretty bronzy black like ladies' shoes, who sticks up behind him (much as a peacock does) his little tail, shaped and fluted like a scallop-shell.

Here there are a lot of curious and interesting things that Austin sees all round him every day; and when I was a child at home in the old country I used to play and pretend to myself that I saw things of the same kind — that the rooms were full of orange and nutmeg trees, and the cold town gardens outside the windows were alive with parrots and with lions. What do the little girls in the cellar think that Austin does? He makes believe just the other way; he pretends that the strange great trees with their broad leaves and slab-sided roots are European oaks; and the places on the road up (where you and I and the little girls in the cellar have already gone) he calls old-fashioned, far-away European names, just as if you were to call the cellar-stairs and the corner of the next street — if you could only manage to pronounce their names — Upolu and Savaii. And so it is with all of us, with Austin, and the lean man, and the little girls in the cellar; wherever we are, it is but a stage on the way to somewhere else, and whatever we do, however well we do it, it is only a preparation to do something else that shall be different.

But you must not suppose that Austin does nothing but build forts, and walk among the woods, and swim in the rivers. On the contrary, he is sometimes a very busy and useful fellow; and I think the little girls in the cellar would have admired him very nearly as much as he admired himself, if they had seen him setting off on horseback, with his hand on his hip, and his pocket full of letters and orders, at the head of quite a procession of huge white cart-horses with pack-saddles, and big, brown native men with nothing on but gaudy kilts. Mighty well he managed all his commissions; and those who saw him ordering and eating his single-handed luncheon in the queer little Chinese restaurant on the beach, declare he looked as if the place, and the town, and the whole archipelago belonged to him.

But I am not going to let you suppose that this great gentleman at the head of all his horses and his men, like the king of France in the old rhyme, would be thought much of a dandy on the streets of London. On the contrary, if he could be seen with his dirty white cap and his faded purple shirt, and his little brown breeks that do not reach his knees, and the bare shanks below, and the bare feet stuck in the stirrup-leathers — for he is not quite long enough to reach the irons — I am afraid the little girls and boys in your part of the town might be very much inclined to give him a penny in charity. So you see that a very big man in one place might seem very small potatoes in another, just as the king’s palace here (of which I told you in my last) would be thought rather a poor place of residence by a Surrey gipsy. And if you come to that, even the lean man himself, who is no end of an important person, if he were picked up from the chair where he is now sitting, and slung down, feet foremost, in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross, would probably have to escape into the nearest shop, or take the risk of being mobbed. And the ladies of his family, who are very pretty ladies, and think themselves uncommon well-dressed for Samoa, would (if the same thing were to be done to them) be extremely glad to get into a cab....

Tusitala.

III

UNDER COVER TO MISS B…
Vailima, 4th Sept. 1892.

Dear Children in the Cellar, — I told you before something of the Black Boys who come here to work on the plantations, and some of whom run away and live a wild life in the forests of the island. Now I want to tell you of one who lived in the house of the lean man. Like the rest of them here, he is a little fellow, and when he goes about in old battered cheap European clothes, looks very small and shabby. When first he came he was as lean as a tobacco-pipe, and his smile (like that of almost all the others) was the sort that half makes you wish to smile yourself, and half wish to cry. However, the boys in the kitchen took him in hand and fed him up. They would set him down alone to table, and wait upon him till he had his fill, which was a good long time to wait. The first thing we noticed was that his little stomach began to stick out like a pigeon's breast; and then the food got a little wider spread, and he started little calves to his legs; and last of all, he began to get quite saucy and impudent. He is really what you ought to call a young man, though I suppose nobody in the whole wide world has any idea of his age; and as far as his behaviour goes, you can only think of him as a big little child with a good deal of sense.

When Austin built his fort against the Indians, Arick (for that is the Black Boy's name) liked nothing so much as to help him. And this is very funny, when you think that of all the dangerous savages in this island Arick is one of the most dangerous. The other day, besides, he made Austin a musical instrument of the sort they use in his own country — a harp with only one string. He took a stick about three feet long and perhaps four inches round. The under side he hollowed out in a deep trench to serve as sounding-box; the two ends of the upper side he made to curve upward like the ends of a canoe, and between these he stretched the single string. He plays upon it with a match or a little piece of stick, and sings to it songs of his own country, of which no person here can understand a single word, and which are, very likely, all about fighting with his enemies in battle, and killing them, and, I am sorry to say, cooking them in a ground-oven, and eating them for supper when the fight is over.

For Arick is really what you call a savage, though a savage is a very different sort of a person, and very much nicer than he is made to appear in little books. He is the kind of person that everybody smiles to, or makes faces at, or gives a smack as he goes by; the sort of person that all the girls on the plantation give the best seat to and help first, and love to decorate with flowers and ribbons, and yet all the while are laughing at him; the sort of person who likes best to play with Austin, and whom Austin, perhaps (when he is allowed), likes best to play with. He is all grins and giggles and little steps out of dances, and little droll ways to attract people's attention and set them laughing. And yet, when you come to look at him closely, you will find that his body is all covered with *scars*! This happened when he was a child. There was war, as is the way in these wild islands, between his village and the next, much as if there were war in London between one street and another; and all the children ran about playing in the middle of the trouble, and, I dare say, took no more notice of the war than you children in London do of a general election. But sometimes, at general elections, English children may get run over by processions in the street; and it chanced that as little Arick was running about in the Bush, and very busy about his playing, he ran into the midst of the warriors on the other side. These speared him with a poisoned spear; and his own people, when they had found him, in order to cure him of the poison scored him with knives that were probably made of fish-bone.

This is a very savage piece of child-life; and Arick, for all his good nature, is still a very savage person. I have told you how the Black Boys sometimes run away from the plantations, and live alone in the forest, building little sheds to protect them from the rain, and sometimes planting little gardens for food; but for the most part living the best they can upon the nuts of the trees and the yams that they dig with their hands out of the earth. I do not think there can be anywhere in the world people more wretched than these runaways. They cannot return, for they would only return to be punished; they can never hope to see again their own people — indeed, I do not know what they can hope, but just to find enough yams every day to keep them from starvation. And in the wet season of the year, which is our summer and your winter, when the rain falls day after day far harder and louder than the loudest thunder-plump that ever fell in England, and the room is so dark that the lean man is sometimes glad to light his lamp to write by, I can think of nothing so dreary as the state of these poor runaways in the houseless bush. You are to remember, besides, that the people of the island hate and fear them because they are cannibals; sit and tell tales of them about their lamps at night in their own comfortable houses, and are sometimes afraid to lie down to sleep if they think there is a lurking Black Boy in the neighbourhood. Well, now, Arick is of their own race and language, only he is a little more lucky because he has not run away; and how do you think that he proposed to help them? He asked if he might not have a gun. "What do you want with a gun, Arick?" was asked. He answered quite simply, and with his nice, good-natured smile, that if he had a gun he would go up into the High Bush and shoot Black Boys as men shoot pigeons. He said nothing about eating them, nor do I think he really meant to; I think all he wanted was to clear the plantation of vermin, as gamekeepers at home kill weasels or rats.

The other day he was sent on an errand to the German company where many of the Black Boys live. It was very late when he came home. He had a white bandage round his head, his eyes shone, and he could scarcely speak for excitement. It seems some of the Black Boys who were his enemies at home had attacked him, one with a knife. By his own account, he had fought very well; but the odds were heavy. The man with the knife had cut him both in the head and back; he had been struck down; and if some Black Boys of his own side had not come to the rescue, he must certainly have been killed. I am sure no Christmas-box could make any of you children so happy as this fight made Arick. A great part of the next day he neglected his work to play upon the one-stringed harp and sing songs about his great victory. To-day, when he is gone upon his holiday, he has announced that he is going back to the German firm to have another battle and another triumph. I do not think he will go, all the same, or I should be uneasy; for I do not want to have my Arick killed; and there is no doubt that if he begins this fight again, he will be likely to go on with it very far. For I have seen him once when he saw, or thought he saw, an enemy.

It was one of those dreadful days of rain, the sound of it like a great waterfall, or like a tempest of wind blowing in the forest; and there came to our door two runaway Black Boys seeking refuge. In such weather as that my enemy's dog (as Shakespeare says) should have had a right to shelter. But when Arick saw the two poor rogues coming with their empty stomachs and drenched clothes, one of them with a stolen cutlass in his hand, through that world of falling water, he had no thought of any pity in his heart. Crouching behind one of the pillars of the verandah, to which he clung with his two hands, his mouth drew back into a strange sort of smile, his eyes grew bigger and bigger, and his whole face was just like the one word MURDER in big capitals.

But I have told you a great deal too much about poor Arick's savage nature, and now I must tell you of a great amusement he had the other day. There came an English ship of war into the harbour, and the officers good-naturedly gave an entertainment of songs and dances and a magic lantern, to which Arick and Austin were allowed to go. At the door of the hall there were crowds of Black Boys waiting and trying to peep in, as children at home lie about and peep under the tent of a circus; and you may be sure Arick was a very proud person when he passed them all by, and entered the hall with his ticket.

I wish I knew what he thought of the whole performance; but a friend of the lean man, who sat just in front of Arick, tells me what seemed to startle him most. The first thing was when two of the officers came out with blackened faces, like minstrels, and began to dance. Arick was sure that they were really black, and his own people, and he was wonderfully surprised to see them dance in this new European style.

But the great affair was the magic lantern. The hall was made quite dark, which was very little to Arick's taste. He sat there behind my friend, nothing to be seen of him but eyes and teeth, and his heart was beating finely in his little scarred breast. And presently there came out of the white sheet that great big eye of light that I am sure all you children must have often seen. It was quite new to Arick; he had no idea what would happen next, and in his fear and excitement he laid hold with his little slim black fingers like a bird's claw on the neck of the friend in front of him. All through the rest of the show, as one picture followed another on the white sheet, he sat there grasping and clutching, and goodness knows whether he were more pleased or frightened.

Doubtless it was a very fine thing to see all those bright pictures coming out and dying away again, one after another; but doubtless it was rather alarming also, for how was it done? At last when there appeared upon the screen the head of a black woman (as it might be his own mother or sister), and this black woman of a sudden began to roll her eyes, the fear or the excitement, whichever it was, rung out of him a loud, shuddering sob. I think we all ought to admire his courage when, after an evening spent in looking at such wonderful miracles, he and Austin set out alone through the forest to the lean man's house. It was late at night and pitch dark when some of the party overtook the little white boy and the big black boy, marching among the trees with their lantern. I have told you this wood has an ill name, and all the people of the island believe it to be full of evil spirits; it is a pretty dreadful place to walk in by the moving light of a lantern, with nothing about you but a curious whirl of shadows, and the black night above and beyond. But Arick kept his courage up, and I dare say Austin's too, with a perpetual chatter, so that the people coming after heard his voice long before they saw the shining of the lantern.

Tusitala.

IV

TO AUSTIN STRONG

Vailima, November 2, 1892.

My dear Austin, — First and foremost I think you will be sorry to hear that our poor friend Arick has gone back to the German firm. He had not been working very well, and we had talked of sending him off before; but remembering how thin he was when he came here, and seeing what fat little legs and what a comfortable little stomach he had laid on in the meanwhile, we found we had not the heart. The other day, however, he set up chat to Henry, the Samoan overseer, asking him who he was and where he came from, and refusing to obey his orders. I was in bed in the workmen's house, having a fever. Uncle Lloyd came over to me, told me of it, and I had Arick sent up. I told him I would give him another chance. He was taken out and asked to apologise to Henry, but he would do no such thing. He preferred to go back to the German firm. So we hired a couple of Samoans who were up here on a visit to the boys and packed him off in their charge to the firm, where he arrived safely, and a receipt was given for him like a parcel.

Sunday last the *Alameda* returned. Your mother was off bright and early with Palema, for it is a very curious thing, but is certainly the case, that she was very impatient to get news of a young person by the name of Austin. Mr. Gurr lent a horse for the Captain — it was a pretty big horse, but our handsome Captain, as you know, is a very big Captain indeed. Now, do you remember Misifolo — a tall, thin Hovea boy that came shortly before you left? He had been riding up this same horse of Gurr's just the day before, and the horse threw him off at Motootua corner, and cut his hip. So Misifolo called out to the Captain as he rode by that that was a very bad horse, that it ran away and threw people off, and that he had best be careful; and the funny thing is, that the Captain did not like it at all. The foal might as well have tried to run away with Vailima as that horse with Captain Morse, which is poetry, as you see, into the bargain; but the Captain was not at all in that way of thinking, and was never really happy until he had got his foot on ground again. It was just then that the horse began to be happy too, so they parted in one mind. But the horse is still wondering what kind of piece of artillery he had brought up to Vailima last Sunday morning. So far it was all right. The Captain was got safe off the wicked horse, but how was he to get back again to Apia and the *Alameda*?

Happy thought — there was Donald, the big pack-horse! The last time Donald was ridden he had upon him a hair-pin and a pea — by which I mean — (once again to drop into poetry) you and me. Now he was to have a rider more suited to his size. He was brought up to the door — he looked a mountain. A step-ladder was put alongside of him. The Captain approached the step-ladder, and he looked an Alp. I wasn't as much afraid for the horse as I was for the step-ladder, but it bore the strain, and with a kind of sickening smash that you might have heard at Monterey, the Captain descended to the saddle. Now don't think that I am exaggerating, but at the moment when that enormous Captain settled down upon Donald, the horse's hind-legs gave visibly under the strain. What the couple looked like, one on top of t'other, no words can tell you, and your mother must here draw a picture. — Your respected Uncle,

O Tusitala.

V

TO AUSTIN STRONG

Vailima, November 15, 1892.

My dear Austin, — The new house is begun. It stands out nearly half way over towards Pineapple Cottage — the lower floor is laid and the uprights of the wall are set up; so that the big lower room wants nothing but a roof over its head. When it rains (as it does mostly all the time) you never saw anything look so sorry for itself as that room left outside. Beyond the house there is a work-shed roofed with sheets of iron, and in front, over about half the lawn, the lumber for the house lies piled. It is about the bringing up of this lumber that I want to tell you.

For about a fortnight there were at work upon the job two German overseers, about a hundred Black Boys, and from twelve to twenty-four draught-oxen. It rained about half the time, and the road was like lather for shaving. The Black Boys seemed to have had a new rig-out. They had almost all shirts of scarlet flannel, and lavalavas, the Samoan kilt, either of scarlet or light blue. As the day got warm they took off the shirts; and it was a very curious thing, as you went down to Apia on a bright day, to come upon one tree after another in the empty forest with these shirts stuck among the branches like vermilion birds.

I observed that many of the boys had a very queer substitute for a pocket. This was nothing more than a string which some of them tied about their upper arms and some about their necks, and in which they stuck their clay pipes; and as I don't suppose they had anything else to carry, it did very well. Some had feathers in their hair, and some long stalks of grass through the holes in their noses. I suppose this was intended to make them look pretty, poor dears; but you know what a Black Boy looks like, and these Black Boys, for all their blue, and their scarlet, and their grass, looked just as shabby, and small, and sad, and sorry for themselves, and like sick monkeys as any of the rest.

As you went down the road you came upon them first working in squads of two. Each squad shouldered a couple of planks and carried them up about two hundred feet, gave them to two others, and walked back empty-handed to the places they had started from. It wasn't very hard work, and they didn't go about it at all lively; but of course, when it rained, and the mud was deep, the poor fellows were unhappy enough. This was in the upper part about Trood's. Below, all the way down to Tanugamanono, you met the bullock-carts coming and going, each with ten or twenty men to attend upon it, and often enough with one of the overseers near. Quite a far way off through the forest you could hear the noise of one of these carts approaching. The road was like a bog, and though a good deal wider than it was when you knew it, so narrow that the bullocks reached quite across it with the span of their big horns. To pass by, it was necessary to get into the bush on one side or the other. The bullocks seemed to take no interest in their business; they looked angry and stupid, and sullen beyond belief; and when it came to a heavy bit of the road, as often as not they would stop.

As long as they were going, the Black Boys walked in the margin of the bush on each side, pushing the cart-wheels with hands and shoulders, and raising the most extraordinary outcry. It was strangely like some very big kind of bird. Perhaps the great flying creatures that lived upon the earth long before man came, if we could have come near one of their meeting-places, would have given us just such a concert.

When one of the bullamacows stopped altogether the fun was highest. The bullamacow stood on the road, his head fixed fast in the yoke, chewing a little, breathing very hard, and showing in his red eye that if he could get rid of the yoke he would show them what a circus was. All the Black Boys tailed on to the wheels and the back of the cart, stood there getting their spirits up, and then of a sudden set to shooing and singing out. It was these outbursts of shrill cries that it was so curious to hear in the distance. One such stuck cart I came up to and asked what was the worry. “Old fool bullamacow stop same place,” was the reply. I never saw any of the overseers near any of the stuck carts; you were a very much better overseer than either of these.

While this was going on, I had to go down to Apia five or six different times, and each time there were a hundred Black Boys to say “Good-morning” to. This was rather a tedious business; and, as very few of them answered at all, and those who did, only with a grunt like a pig’s, it was several times in my mind to give up this piece of politeness. The last time I went down, I was almost decided; but when I came to the first pair of Black Boys, and saw them looking so comic and so melancholy, I began the business over again. This time I thought more of them seemed to answer, and when I got down to the tail-end where the carts were running, I received a very pleasant surprise, for one of the boys, who was pushing at the back of a cart, lifted up his head, and called out to me in wonderfully good English, “You good man — always say ‘Good-morning.’” It was sad to think that these poor creatures should think so much of so small a piece of civility, and strange that (thinking so) they should be so dull as not to return it.

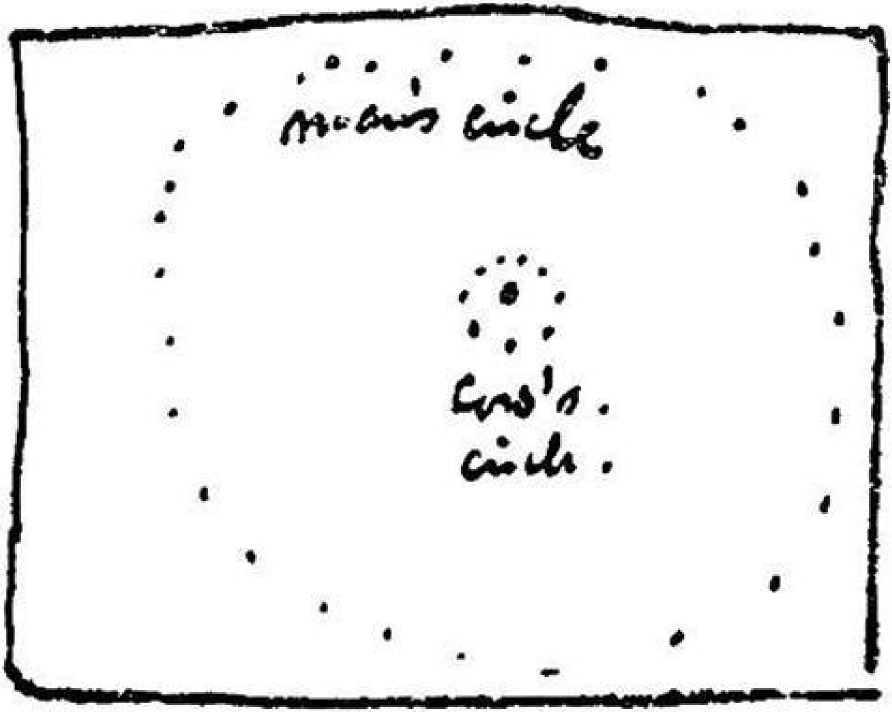
Uncle Louis.

VI

TO AUSTIN STRONG
June 18, 1893.

Respected Hopkins, — This is to inform you that the Jersey cow had an elegant little cow-calf Sunday last. There was a great deal of rejoicing, of course; but I don't know whether or not you remember the Jersey cow. Whatever else she is, the Jersey cow is *not* good-natured, and Dines, who was up here on some other business, went down to the paddock to get a hood and to milk her. The hood is a little wooden board with two holes in it, by which it is hung from her horns. I don't know how he got it on, and I don't believe *he* does. Anyway, in the middle of the operation, in came Bull Bazett, with his head down, and roaring like the last trumpet. Dines and all his merry men hid behind trees in the paddock, and skipped. Dines then got upon a horse, plied his spurs, and cleared for Apia. The next time he is asked to meddle with our cows, he will probably want to know the reason why. Meanwhile, there was the cow, with the board over her eyes, left tied by a pretty long rope to a small tree in the paddock, and who was to milk her? She roared, — I was going to say like a bull, but it was Bazett who did that, walking up and down, switching his tail, and the noise of the pair of them was perfectly dreadful.

Palema went up to the Bush to call Lloyd; and Lloyd came down in one of his know-all-about-it moods. "It was perfectly simple," he said. "The cow was hooded; anybody could milk her. All you had to do was to draw her up to the tree, and get a hitch about it." So he untied the cow, and drew her up close to the tree, and got a hitch about it right enough. And then the cow brought her intellect to bear on the subject, and proceeded to walk round the tree to get the hitch off.



Now, this is geometry, which you'll have to learn some day. The tree is the centre of two circles. The cow had a "radius" of about two feet, and went leisurely round a small circle; the man had a "radius" of about thirty feet, and either he must let the cow get the hitch unwound, or else he must take up his two feet to about the height of his eyes, and race round a big circle. This was racing and chasing.

The cow walked quietly round and round the tree to unwind herself; and first Lloyd, and then Palema, and then Lloyd again, scampered round the big circle, and fell, and got up again, and bounded like a deer, to keep her hitched.

It was funny to see, but we couldn't laugh with a good heart; for every now and then (when the man who was running tumbled down) the cow would get a bit ahead; and I promise you there was then no sound of any laughter, but we rather edged away toward the gate, looking to see the crazy beast loose, and charging us. To add to her attractions, the board had fallen partly off, and only covered one eye, giving her the look of a crazy old woman in a Sydney slum. Meanwhile, the calf stood looking on, a little perplexed, and seemed to be saying: "Well, now, is this life? It doesn't seem as if it was all it was cracked up to be. And this is my mamma? What a very impulsive lady!"

All the time, from the lower paddock, we could hear Bazett roaring like the deep seas, and if we cast our eye that way, we could see him switching his tail, as a very angry gentleman may sometimes switch his cane. And the Jersey would every now and then put up her head, and low like the pu for dinner. And take it for all in all, it was a very striking scene. Poor Uncle Lloyd had plenty of time to regret having been in such a hurry; so had poor Palema, who was let into the business, and ran until he was nearly dead. Afterward Palema went and sat on a gate, where your mother sketched him, and she is going to send you the sketch. And the end of it? Well, we got her tied again, I really don't know how; and came stringing back to the house with our tails between our legs. That night at dinner, the Tamaitai bid us tell the boys to be very careful "not to frighten the cow." It was too much; the cow had frightened us in such fine style that we all broke down and laughed like mad.

General Hoskyns, there is no further news, your Excellency, that I am aware of. But it may interest you to know that Mr. Christian held his twenty-fifth birthday yesterday — a quarter of a living century old; think of it, drink of it, innocent youth! — and asked down Lloyd and Daplyn to a feast at one o'clock, and Daplyn went at seven, and got nothing to eat at all. Whether they had anything to drink, I know not — no, not I; but it's to be hoped so. Also, your uncle Lloyd has stopped smoking, and he doesn't like it much. Also, that your mother is most beautifully gotten up to-day, in a pink gown with a topaz stone in front of it; and is really looking like an angel, only that she isn't like an angel at all — only like your mother herself.

Also that the Tamaitai has been waxing the floor of the big room, so that it shines in the most ravishing manner; and then we insisted on coming in, and she wouldn't let us, and we came anyway, and have made the vilest mess of it — but still it shines.

Also, that I am, your Excellency's obedient servant,

Uncle Louis.

VII

TO AUSTIN STRONG

My Dear Hutchinson, — This is not going to be much of a letter, so don’t expect what can’t be had. Uncle Lloyd and Palema made a malanga to go over the island to Siumu, and Talolo was anxious to go also; but how could we get along without him? Well, Misifolo, the Maypole, set off on Saturday, and walked all that day down the island to beyond Faleasiu with a letter for Iopu; and Iopu and Tali and Misifolo rose very early on the Sunday morning, and walked all that day up the island, and came by seven at night — all pretty tired, and Misifolo most of all — to Tanugamanono. We at Vailima knew nothing at all about the marchings of the Saturday and Sunday, but Uncle Lloyd got his boys and things together and went to bed.

A little after five in the morning I awoke and took the lantern, and went out of the front door and round the verandahs. There was never a spark of dawn in the east, only the stars looked a little pale; and I expected to find them all asleep in the workhouse. But no! the stove was roaring, and Talolo and Fono, who was to lead the party, were standing together talking by the stove, and one of Fono’s young men was lying asleep on the sofa in the smoking-room, wrapped in his lavalava. I had my breakfast at half-past five that morning, and the bell rang before six, when it was just the grey of dawn. But by seven the feast was spread — there was lopu coming up, with Tali at his heels, and Misifolo bringing up the rear — and Talolo could go the malanga.

Off they set, with two guns and three porters, and Fono and Lloyd and Palema and Talolo himself with best Sunday-go-to-meeting lavalava rolled up under his arm, and a very sore foot; but much he cared — he was smiling from ear to ear, and would have gone to Siumu over red-hot coals. Off they set round the corner of the cook-house, and into the bush beside the chicken-house, and so good-bye to them.

But you should see how Iopu has taken possession! “Never saw a place in such a state!” is written on his face. “In my time,” says he, “we didn’t let things go ragging along like this, and I’m going to show you fellows.” The first thing he did was to apply for a bar of soap, and then he set to work washing everything (that had all been washed last Friday in the regular course). Then he had the grass cut all round the cook-house, and I tell you but he found scraps, and odds and ends, and grew more angry and indignant at each fresh discovery.

“If a white chief came up here and smelt this, how would you feel?” he asked your mother. “It is enough to breed a sickness!”

And I dare say you remember this was just what your mother had often said to himself; and did say the day she went out and cried on the kitchen steps in order to make Talolo ashamed. But Iopu gave it all out as little new discoveries of his own. The last thing was the cows, and I tell you he was solemn about the cows. They were all destroyed, he said, nobody knew how to milk except himself — where he is about right. Then came dinner and a delightful little surprise. Perhaps you remember that long ago I used not to eat mashed potatoes, but had always two or three boiled in a plate. This has not been done for months, because Talolo makes such admirable mashed potatoes that I have caved in. But here came dinner, mashed potatoes for your mother and the Tamaitai, and then boiled potatoes in a plate for me!

And there is the end of the Tale of the return of Iopu, up to date. What more there may be is in the lap of the gods, and, Sir, I am yours considerably,

Uncle Louis.

VIII

TO AUSTIN STRONG

My Dear Hoskyns, — I am kept away in a cupboard because everybody has the influenza; I never see anybody at all, and never do anything whatever except to put ink on paper up here in my room. So what can I find to write to you? — you, who are going to school, and getting up in the morning to go bathing, and having (it seems to me) rather a fine time of it in general?

You ask if we have seen Arick? Yes, your mother saw him at the head of a gang of boys, and looking fat, and sleek, and well-to-do. I have an idea that he misbehaved here because he was homesick for the other Black Boys, and didn't know how else to get back to them. Well, he has got them now, and I hope he likes it better than I should.

I read the other day something that I thought would interest so great a sea-bather as yourself. You know that the fishes that we see, and catch, go only a certain way down into the sea. Below a certain depth there is no life at all. The water is as empty as the air is above a certain height. Even the shells of dead fishes that come down there are crushed into nothing by the huge weight of the water. Lower still, in the places where the sea is profoundly deep, it appears that life begins again. People fish up in dredging-buckets loose rags and tatters of creatures that hang together all right down there with the great weight holding them in one, but come all to pieces as they are hauled up. Just what they look like, just what they do or feed upon, we shall never find out. Only that we have some flimsy fellow-creatures down in the very bottom of the deep seas, and cannot get them up except in tatters. It must be pretty dark where they live, and there are no plants or weeds, and no fish come down there, or drowned sailors either, from the upper parts, because these are all mashed to pieces by the great weight long before they get so far, or else come to a place where perhaps they float. But I dare say a cannon sometimes comes careering solemnly down, and circling about like a dead leaf or thistle-down; and then the ragged fellows go and play about the cannon and tell themselves all kinds of stories about the fish higher up and their iron houses, and perhaps go inside and sleep, and perhaps dream of it all like their betters.

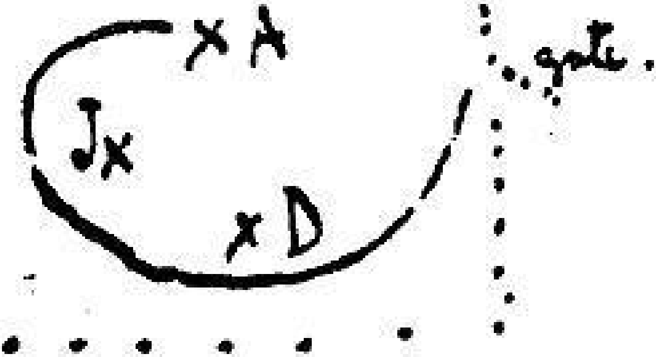
Of course you know a cannon down there would be quite light. Even in shallow water, where men go down with a diving-dress, they grow so light that they have to hang weights about their necks, and have their boots loaded with twenty pounds of lead — as I know to my sorrow. And with all this, and the helmet, which is heavy enough of itself to any one up here in the thin air, they are carried about like gossamers, and have to take every kind of care not to be upset and stood upon their heads. I went down once in the dress, and speak from experience. But if we could get down for a moment near where the fishes are, we should be in a tight place. Suppose the water not to crush us (which it would), we should pitch about in every kind of direction; every step we took would carry us as far as if we had seven-league boots; and we should keep flying head over heels, and top over bottom, like the liveliest clowns in the world.

Well, sir, here is a great deal of words put down upon a piece of paper, and if you think that makes a letter, why, very well! And if you don't, I can't help it. For I have nothing under heaven to tell you.

So, with kindest wishes to yourself, and Louie, and Aunt Nellie, believe me, your affectionate

Uncle Louis.

Now here is something more worth telling you. This morning at six o'clock I saw all the horses together in the front paddock, and in a terrible ado about something. Presently I saw a man with two buckets on the march, and knew where the trouble was — the cow! The whole lot cleared to the gate but two — Donald, the big white horse, and my Jack. They stood solitary, one here, one there. I began to get interested, for I thought Jack was off his feed. In came the man with the bucket and all the ruck of curious horses at his tail. Right round he went to where Donald stood (D) and poured out a feed, and the majestic Donald ate it, and the ruck of common horses followed the man. On he went to the second station, Jack's (J. in the plan), and poured out a feed, and the fools of horses went in with him to the next place (A in the plan). And behold as the train swung round, the last of them came curiously too near Jack; and Jack left his feed and rushed upon this fool with a kind of outcry, and the fool fled, and Jack returned to his feed; and he and Donald ate theirs with glory, while the others were still circling round for fresh feeds.



Glory be to the name of Donald and to the name of Jack, for they had found out where the foods were poured, and each took his station and waited there, Donald at the first of the course for his, Jack at the second station, while all the impotent fools ran round and round after the man with his buckets!

R. L. S.

IX

TO AUSTIN STRONG

Vailima.

My Dear Austin, — Now when the overseer is away I think it my duty to report to him anything serious that goes on on the plantation. Early the other afternoon we heard that Sina's foot was very bad, and soon after that we could have heard her cries as far away as the front balcony. I think Sina rather enjoys being ill, and makes as much of it as she possibly can; but all the same it was painful to hear the cries; and there is no doubt she was at least very uncomfortable. I went up twice to the little room behind the stable, and found her lying on the floor, with Tali and Faauma and Talolo all holding on different bits of her. I gave her an opiate; but whenever she was about to go to sleep one of these silly people would be shaking her, or talking in her ear, and then she would begin to kick about again and scream.

Palema and Aunt Maggie took horse and went down to Apia after the doctor. Right on their heels off went Mitaele on Musu to fetch Tauilo, Talolo's mother. So here was all the island in a bustle over Sina's foot. No doctor came, but he told us what to put on. When I went up at night to the little room, I found Tauilo there, and the whole plantation boxed into the place like little birds in a nest. They were sitting on the bed, they were sitting on the table, the floor was full of them, and the place as close as the engine-room of a steamer. In the middle lay Sina, about three parts asleep with opium; two able-bodied work-boys were pulling at her arms, and whenever she closed her eyes calling her by name, and talking in her ear. I really didn't know what would become of the girl before morning. Whether or not she had been very ill before, this was the way to make her so, and when one of the work-boys woke her up again, I spoke to him very sharply, and told Tauilo she must put a stop to it.

Now I suppose this was what put it into Tauilo's head to do what she did next. You remember Tauilo, and what a fine, tall, strong, Madame Lafarge sort of person she is? And you know how much afraid the natives are of the evil spirits in the wood, and how they think all sickness comes from them? Up stood Tauilo, and addressed the spirit in Sina's foot, and scolded it, and the spirit answered and promised to be a good boy and go away. I do not feel so much afraid of the demons after this. It was Faauma told me about it. I was going out into the pantry after soda-water, and found her with a lantern drawing water from the tank. "Bad spirit he go away," she told me.

"That's first-rate," said I. "Do you know what the name of that spirit was? His name was *tautala* (talking)."

"O, no!" she said; "his name is *Tu.*"

You might have knocked me down with a straw. "How on earth do you know that?" I asked.

"Heerd him tell Tauilo," she said.

As soon as I heard that I began to suspect Mrs. Tauilo was a little bit of a ventriloquist; and imitating as well as I could the sort of voice they make, asked her if the bad spirit did not talk like that. Faauma was very much surprised, and told me that was just his voice.

Well, that was a very good business for the evening. The people all went away because the demon was gone away, and the circus was over, and Sina was allowed to sleep. But the trouble came after. There had been an evil spirit in that room and his name was Tu. No one could say when he might come back again; they all voted it was Tu much; and now Talolo and Sina have had to be lodged in the Soldier Room. As for the little room by the stable, there it stands empty; it is too small to play soldiers in, and I do not see what we can do with it, except to have a nice brass name-plate engraved in Sydney, or in "Frisco," and stuck upon the door of it — *Mr. Tu.*

So you see that ventriloquism has its bad side as well as its good sides; and I don't know that I want any more ventriloquists on this plantation. We shall have *Tu* in the cook-house next, and then *Tu* in Lafaele's, and *Tu* in the workman's cottage; and the end of it all will be that we shall have to take the Tamaitai's room for the kitchen, and my room for the boys' sleeping-house, and we shall all have to go out and camp under umbrellas.

Well, where you are there may be schoolmasters, but there is no such thing as Mr. *Tu*!

Now, it's all very well that these big people should be frightened out of their wits by an old wife talking with her mouth shut; that is one of the things we happen to know about. All the old women in the world might talk with their mouths shut, and not frighten you or me, but there are plenty of other things that frighten us badly. And if we only knew about them, perhaps we should find them no more worthy to be feared than an old woman talking with her mouth shut. And the names of some of these things are Death, and Pain, and Sorrow.

Uncle Louis.

X

TO AUSTIN STRONG
Jan. 27, 1893.

Dear General Hoskyns, — I have the honour to report as usual. Your giddy mother having gone planting a flower-garden, I am obliged to write with my own hand, and, of course, nobody will be able to read it. This has been a very mean kind of a month. Aunt Maggie left with the influenza. We have heard of her from Sydney, and she is all right again; but we have inherited her influenza, and it made a poor place of Vailima. We had Talolo, Mitaele, Sosimo, Iopu, Sina, Misifolo, and myself, all sick in bed at the same time; and was not that a pretty dish to set before the king! The big hall of the new house having no furniture, the sick pitched their tents in it, — I mean their mosquito-nets, — like a military camp. The Tamaitai and your mother went about looking after them, and managed to get us something to eat. Henry, the good boy! though he was getting it himself, did housework, and went round at night from one mosquito-net to another, praying with the sick. Sina, too, was as good as gold, and helped us greatly. We shall always like her better. All the time — I do not know how they managed — your mother found the time to come and write for me; and for three days, as I had my old trouble on, and had to play dumb man, I dictated a novel in the deaf-and-dumb alphabet. But now we are all recovered, and getting to feel quite fit. A new paddock has been made; the wires come right up to the top of the hill, pass within twenty yards of the big clump of flowers (if you remember that) and by the end of the pineapple patch. The Tamaitai and your mother and I all sleep in the upper story of the new house; Uncle Lloyd is alone in the workman's cottage; and there is nobody at all at night in the old house, but ants and cats and mosquitoes. The whole inside of the new house is varnished. It is a beautiful golden-brown by day, and in lamplight all black and sparkle. In the corner of the hall the new safe is built in, and looks as if it had millions of pounds in it; but I do not think there is much more than twenty dollars and a spoon or two; so the man that opens it will have a great deal of trouble for nothing. Our great fear is lest we should forget how to open it; but it will look just as well if we can't. Poor Misifolo — you remember the thin boy, do you not? — had a desperate attack of influenza; and he was in a great taking. You would not like to be very sick in some savage place in the islands, and have only the savages to doctor you? Well, that was just the way he felt. "It is all very well," he thought, "to let these childish white people doctor a sore foot or a toothache, but this is serious — I might die of this! For goodness' sake let me get away into a draughty native house, where I can lie in cold gravel, eat green bananas, and have a real grown-up, tattooed man to raise spirits and say charms over me." A day or two we kept him quiet, and got him much better. Then he said he *must* go. He had had his back broken in his own islands, he said; it had come broken again, and he must go away to a native house and have it mended. "Confound your back!" said we; "lie down in your bed." At last, one day, his fever was quite gone, and he could give his mind to the broken back entirely. He lay in the hall; I was in the room alone; all morning and noon I heard him roaring like a bull calf, so that the floor shook with it. It was plainly humbug; it had the humbugging sound of a bad child crying; and about two of the afternoon we were worn out, and told him he might go. Off he set. He was in some kind of a white wrapping, with a great white turban on his head, as pale as clay, and walked leaning on a stick. But, O, he was a glad boy to get away from these foolish, savage, childish white people, and get his broken back put right by somebody with some sense. He nearly died that night, and little wonder! but he has now got better again, and long may it last! All the others were quite good, trusted us wholly, and stayed to be cured where they were. But then he was quite right, if you look at it from his point of view; for, though we may be very clever, we do not set up to cure broken backs. If a man has his back broken we white people can do nothing at all but bury him. And was he not wise, since that was his complaint, to go to folks who could do more?

Best love to yourself, and Louie, and Aunt Nellie, and apologies for so dull a letter from your respectful and affectionate

Uncle Louis.

JUVENILIA AND OTHER PAPERS

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THE PENTLAND RISING
A PAGE OF HISTORY

1

A cloud of witnesses ly here,
Who for Christ's interest did appear.
Inscription on Battle-field at Rullion Green

THE PENTLAND RISING

I

THE CAUSES OF THE REVOLT

“Halt, passenger; take heed what thou dost see,
This tomb doth show for what some men did die.”

Monument, Greyfriars’ Churchyard, Edinburgh, 1661-1668.

Two hundred years ago a tragedy was enacted in Scotland, the memory whereof has been in great measure lost or obscured by the deep tragedies which followed it. It is, as it were, the evening of the night of persecution — a sort of twilight, dark indeed to us, but light as the noonday when compared with the midnight gloom which followed. This fact, of its being the very threshold of persecution, lends it, however, an additional interest.

The prejudices of the people against Episcopacy were “out of measure increased,” says Bishop Burnet, “by the new incumbents who were put in the places of the ejected preachers, and were generally very mean and despicable in all respects. They were the worst preachers I ever heard; they were ignorant to a reproach; and many of them were openly vicious. They ... were indeed the dreg and refuse of the northern parts. Those of them who arose above contempt or scandal were men of such violent tempers that they were as much hated as the others were despised.” It was little to be wondered at, from this 4 account, that the country-folk refused to go to the parish church, and chose rather to listen to outed ministers in the fields. But this was not to be allowed, and their persecutors at last fell on the method of calling a roll of the parishioners’ names every Sabbath, and marking a fine of twenty shillings Scots to the name of each absenter. In this way very large debts were incurred by persons altogether unable to pay. Besides this, landlords were fined for their tenants’ absences, tenants for their landlords’, masters for their servants’, servants for their masters’, even though they themselves were perfectly regular in their attendance. And as the curates were allowed to fine with the sanction of any common soldier, it may be imagined that often the pretexts were neither very sufficient nor well proven.

When the fines could not be paid at once, Bibles, clothes, and household utensils were seized upon, or a number of soldiers, proportionate to his wealth, were quartered on the offender. The coarse and drunken privates filled the houses with woe; snatched the bread from the children to feed their dogs; shocked the principles, scorned the scruples, and blasphemed the religion of their humble hosts; and when they had reduced them to destitution, sold the furniture, and burned down the roof-tree which was consecrated to the peasants by the name of Home. For all this attention each of these soldiers received from his unwilling landlord a certain sum of money per day — three shillings sterling, according to *Naphtali.* And frequently they were forced to pay quartering money for more men than were in reality "cessed on them." At that time it was no strange thing to behold a strong man begging for money to pay his fines, and many others who were deep in arrears, or who had attracted attention in some other way, were forced to flee from their homes, and take refuge from arrest and imprisonment among the wild mosses of the uplands. 5

One example in particular we may cite:

John Neilson, the Laird of Corsack, a worthy man, was, unfortunately for himself, a Nonconformist. First he was fined in four hundred pounds Scots, and then through cessing he lost nineteen hundred and ninety-three pounds Scots. He was next obliged to leave his house and flee from place to place, during which wanderings he lost his horse. His wife and children were turned out of doors, and then his tenants were fined till they too were almost ruined. As a final stroke, they drove away all his cattle to Glasgow and sold them. Surely it was time that something were done to alleviate so much sorrow, to overthrow such tyranny.

About this time too there arrived in Galloway a person calling himself Captain Andrew Gray, and advising the people to revolt. He displayed some documents purporting to be from the northern Covenanters, and stating that they were prepared to join in any enterprise commenced by their southern brethren. The leader of the persecutors was Sir James Turner, an officer afterwards degraded for his share in the matter. "He was naturally fierce, but was mad when he was drunk, and that was very often," said Bishop Burnet. "He was a learned man, but had always been in armies, and knew no other rule but to obey orders. He told me he had no regard to any law, but acted, as he was commanded, in a military way."

This was the state of matters, when an outrage was committed which gave spirit and determination to the oppressed countrymen, lit the flame of insubordination, and for the time at least recoiled on those who perpetrated it with redoubled force.

"Theater of Mortality," ; Edin. 1713.

"History of My Own Times," beginning 1660, by Bishop Gilbert Burnet, .

Wodrow's "Church History," Book II. chap. i. sect. 1.
Crookshank's "Church History," 1751, second ed. .
Burnet, .

II

THE BEGINNING

I love no warres,
I love no jarres,
Nor strife's fire.
May discord cease,
Let's live in peace:
If it must be
Warre we must see
(So fates conspire),
May we not feel
The force of steel:
This I desire.
T. Jackson, 1651.

Upon Tuesday, November 13th, 1666, Corporal George Deanes and three other soldiers set upon an old man in the clachan of Dairy and demanded the payment of his fines. On the old man's refusing to pay, they forced a large party of his neighbours to go with them and thresh his corn. The field was a certain distance out of the clachan, and four persons, disguised as countrymen, who had been out on the moors all night, met this mournful drove of slaves, compelled by the four soldiers to work for the ruin of their friend. However, chilled to the bone by their night on the hills, and worn out by want of food, they proceeded to the village inn to refresh themselves. Suddenly some people rushed into the room where they were sitting, and told them that the soldiers were about to roast the old man, naked, on his own girdle. This was too much for them to stand, and they repaired immediately to the scene of this gross outrage, and at first merely requested that the captive should be released. On the refusal of the two soldiers who were in the front room, high words were given and taken on both sides, and the other two rushed forth from an adjoining chamber and made at the countrymen with drawn swords. One of the latter, John M'Lellan of Barscob, drew a pistol and shot the corporal in the body.[7] The pieces of tobacco-pipe with which it was loaded, to the number of ten at least, entered him, and he was so much disturbed that he never appears to have recovered, for we find long afterwards a petition to the Privy Council requesting a pension for him. The other soldiers then laid down their arms, the old man was rescued, and the rebellion was commenced.

And now we must turn to Sir James Turner's memoirs of himself; for, strange to say, this extraordinary man was remarkably fond of literary composition, and wrote, besides the amusing account of his own adventures just mentioned, a large number of essays and short biographies, and a work on war, entitled "Pallas Armata." The following are some of the shorter pieces: "Magick," "Friendship," "Imprisonment," "Anger," "Revenge," "Duells," "Cruelty," "A Defence of some of the Ceremonies of the English Liturgie — to wit — Bowing at the Name of Jesus, The frequent repetition of the Lord's Prayer and Good Lord deliver us, Of the Doxologie, Of Surplesses, Rotchets, Cannonicall Coats," etc. From what we know of his character we should expect "Anger" and "Cruelty" to be very full and instructive. But what earthly right he had to meddle with ecclesiastical subjects it is hard to see.

Upon the 12th of the month he had received some information concerning Gray's proceedings, but as it was excessively indefinite in its character, he paid no attention to it. On the evening of the 14th, Corporal Deanes was brought into Dumfries, who affirmed stoutly that he had been shot while refusing to sign the Covenant — a story rendered singularly unlikely by the after conduct of the rebels. Sir James instantly despatched orders to the cessed soldiers either to come to Dumfries or meet him on the way to Dairy, and commanded the thirteen or fourteen men in the town with him to come at nine next morning to his lodging for supplies.

On the morning of Thursday the rebels arrived at 8 Dumfries with 50 horse and 150 foot. Neilson of Corsack, and Gray, who commanded, with a considerable troop, entered the town, and surrounded Sir James Turner's lodging. Though it was between eight and nine o'clock, that worthy, being unwell, was still in bed, but rose at once and went to the window.

Neilson and some others cried, "You may have fair quarter."

"I need no quarter," replied Sir James; "nor can I be a prisoner, seeing there is no war declared." On being told, however, that he must either be a prisoner or die, he came down, and went into the street in his night-shirt. Here Gray showed himself very desirous of killing him, but he was overruled by Corsack. However, he was taken away a prisoner, Captain Gray mounting him on his own horse, though, as Turner naïvely remarks, "there was good reason for it, for he mounted himself on a farre better one of mine." A large coffer containing his clothes and money, together with all his papers, were taken away by the rebels. They robbed Master Chalmers, the Episcopalian minister of Dumfries, of his horse, drank the King's health at the market cross, and then left Dumfries.

Fuller's "Historie of the Holy Warre," fourth ed. 1651.
Wodrow, vol. ii. .
Sir J. Turner's "Memoirs," p-50.

III

THE MARCH OF THE REBELS

“Stay, passenger, take notice what thou reads,
At Edinburgh lie our bodies, here our heads;
Our right hands stood at Lanark, these we want,
Because with them we signed the Covenant.”
Epitaph on a Tombstone at Hamilton.

On Friday the 16th, Bailie Irvine of Dumfries came to the Council at Edinburgh, and gave information concerning 9 this “horrid rebellion.” In the absence of Rothes, Sharpe presided — much to the wrath of some members; and as he imagined his own safety endangered, his measures were most energetic. Dalzell was ordered away to the West, the guards round the city were doubled, officers and soldiers were forced to take the oath of allegiance, and all lodgers were commanded to give in their names. Sharpe, surrounded with all these guards and precautions, trembled — trembled as he trembled when the avengers of blood drew him from his chariot on Magus Muir, — for he knew how he had sold his trust, how he had betrayed his charge, and he felt that against him must their chiefest hatred be directed, against him their direst thunderbolts be forged. But even in his fear the apostate Presbyterian was unrelenting, unpityingly harsh; he published in his manifesto no promise of pardon, no inducement to submission. He said, “If you submit not you must die,” but never added, “If you submit you may live!”

Meantime the insurgents proceeded on their way. At Carsphairn they were deserted by Captain Gray, who, doubtless in a fit of oblivion, neglected to leave behind him the coffer containing Sir James’s money. Who he was is a mystery, unsolved by any historian; his papers were evidently forgeries — that, and his final flight, appear to indicate that he was an agent of the Royalists, for either the King or the Duke of York was heard to say, “That, if he might have his wish, he would have them all turn rebels and go to arms.”

Upon the 18th day of the month they left Carsphairn and marched onwards.

Turner was always lodged by his captors at a good inn, frequently at the best of which their halting-place could boast. Here many visits were paid to him by the ministers and officers of the insurgent force. In his description of these interviews he displays a vein of satiric severity, admitting any kindness that was done to him with some 10 qualifying souvenir of former harshness, and gloating over any injury, mistake, or folly, which it was his chance to suffer or to hear. He appears, notwithstanding all this, to have been on pretty good terms with his cruel "phanaticks," as the following extract sufficiently proves:

"Most of the foot were lodged about the church or churchyard, and order given to ring bells next morning for a sermon to be preached by Mr. Welch. Maxwell of Morith, and Major M'Cullough invited me to heare 'that phanatick sermon' (for soe they merrilie called it). They said that preaching might prove an effectual meane to turne me, which they heartilie wished. I answered to them that I was under guards, and that if they intended to heare that sermon, it was probable I might likewise, for it was not like my guards wold goe to church and leave me alone at my lodgeings. Bot to what they said of my conversion, I said it wold be hard to turne a Turner. Bot because I founde them in a merrie humour, I said, if I did not come to heare Mr. Welch preach, then they might fine me in fortie shillings Scots, which was double the suome of what I had exacted from the phanatics."

This took place at Ochiltree, on the 22nd day of the month. The following is recounted by this personage with malicious glee, and certainly, if authentic, it is a sad proof of how chaff is mixed with wheat, and how ignorant, almost impious, persons were engaged in this movement; nevertheless we give it, for we wish to present with impartiality all the alleged facts to the reader:

"Towards the evening Mr. Robinsone and Mr. Crukshank gaue me a visite; I called for some ale purposelie to heare one of them blesse it. It fell Mr. Robinsone to seeke the blessing, who said one of the most bombastick graces that ever I heard in my life. He summoned God Almightie very imperiouslie to be their secondarie (for that was his language). 'And if,' said he, 'thou wilt not be our Secondarie, we will not fight for thee at all, for it is not 11 our cause bot thy cause; and if thou wilt not fight for our cause and thy oune cause, then we are not obliged to fight for it. They say,' said he, 'that Dukes, Earles, and Lords are coming with the King's General against us, bot they shall be nothing bot a threshing to us.' This grace did more fullie satisfie me of the folly and injustice of their cause, then the ale did quench my thirst."

Frequently the rebels made a halt near some roadside alehouse, or in some convenient park, where Colonel Wallace, who had now taken the command, would review the horse and foot, during which time Turner was sent either into the alehouse or round the shoulder of the hill, to prevent him from seeing the disorders which were likely to arise. He was, at last, on the 25th day of the month, between Douglas and Lanark, permitted to behold their evolutions. "I found their horse did consist of four hundreth and fortie, and the foot of five hundreth and upwards.... The horsemen were armed for most part with suord and pistoll, some onlie with suord. The foot with musket, pike, sith (scythe), forke, and suord; and some with suords great and long.” He admired much the proficiency of their cavalry, and marvelled how they had attained to it in so short a time.

At Douglas, which they had just left on the morning of this great wapinshaw, they were charged — awful picture of depravity! — with the theft of a silver spoon and a nightgown. Could it be expected that while the whole country swarmed with robbers of every description, such a rare opportunity for plunder should be lost by rogues — that among a thousand men, even though fighting for religion, there should not be one Achan in the camp? At Lanark a declaration was drawn up and signed by the chief rebels. In it occurs the following:

“The just sense whereof” — the sufferings of the country — ”made us choose, rather to betake ourselves to the fields for self-defence, than to stay at home, burdened 12 daily with the calamities of others, and tortured with the fears of our own approaching misery.”

The whole body, too, swore the Covenant, to which ceremony the epitaph at the head of this chapter seems to refer.

A report that Dalzell was approaching drove them from Lanark to Bathgate, where, on the evening of Monday the 26th, the wearied army stopped. But at twelve o’clock the cry, which served them for a trumpet, of “Horse! horse!” and “Mount the prisoner!” resounded through the night-shrouded town, and called the peasants from their well-earned rest to toil onwards in their march. The wind howled fiercely over the moorland; a close, thick, wetting rain descended. Chilled to the bone, worn out with long fatigue, sinking to the knees in mire, onward they marched to destruction. One by one the weary peasants fell off from their ranks to sleep, and die in the rain-soaked moor, or to seek some house by the wayside wherein to hide till daybreak. One by one at first, then in gradually increasing numbers, at every shelter that was seen, whole troops left the waning squadrons, and rushed to hide themselves from the ferocity of the tempest. To right and left nought could be descried but the broad expanse of the moor, and the figures of their fellow-rebels seen dimly through the murky night, plodding onwards through the sinking moss. Those who kept together — a miserable few — often halted to rest themselves, and to allow their lagging comrades to overtake them. Then onward they went again, still hoping for assistance, reinforcement, and supplies; onward again, through the wind, and the rain, and the darkness — onward to their defeat at Pentland, and their scaffold at Edinburgh. It was calculated that they lost one half of their army on that disastrous night-march.

Next night they reached the village of Colinton, four miles from Edinburgh, where they halted for the last time.

“A Cloud of Witnesses,” .

Wodrow, p, 20.

“A Hind Let Loose,” .

Turner, .

Turner, .

Ibid. .

Wodrow, .

Turner, Wodrow, and “Church History” by James Kirkton, an outed minister of the period.

IV

RULLION GREEN

“From Covenanters with uplifted hands,
From Remonstrators with associate bands,
Good Lord, deliver us!”
Royalist Rhyme, Kirkton, .

Late on the fourth night of November, exactly twenty-four days before Rullion Green, Richard and George Chaplain, merchants in Haddington, beheld four men, clad like West-country Whigamores, standing round some object on the ground. It was at the two-mile cross, and within that distance from their homes. At last, to their horror, they discovered that the recumbent figure was a livid corpse, swathed in a blood-stained winding-sheet. Many thought that this apparition was a portent of the deaths connected with the Pentland Rising.

On the morning of Wednesday, the 28th of November 1666, they left Colinton and marched to Rullion Green. There they arrived about sunset. The position was a strong one. On the summit of a bare, heathery spur of the Pentlands are two hillocks, and between them lies a narrow band of flat marshy ground. On the highest of the two mounds — that nearest the Pentlands, and on the left hand of the main body — was the greater part of the cavalry, under Major Learmont; on the other Barscob and the Galloway gentlemen; and in the centre Colonel Wallace and the weak, half-armed infantry. Their position was further strengthened by the depth of the valley below, and the deep chasm-like course of the Rullion Burn.

The sun, going down behind the Pentlands, cast golden lights and blue shadows on their snow-clad summits, 14 slanted obliquely into the rich plain before them, bathing with rosy splendour the leafless, snow-sprinkled trees, and fading gradually into shadow in the distance. To the south, too, they beheld a deep-shaded amphitheatre of heather and bracken; the course of the Esk, near Penicuik, winding about at the foot of its gorge; the broad, brown expanse of Maw Moss; and, fading into blue indistinctness in the south, the wild heath-clad Peeblesshire hills. In sooth, that scene was fair, and many a yearning glance was cast over that peaceful evening scene from the spot where the rebels awaited their defeat; and when the fight was over, many a noble fellow lifted his head from the blood-stained heather to strive with darkening eyeballs to behold that landscape, over which, as over his life and his cause, the shadows of night and of gloom were falling and thickening.

It was while waiting on this spot that the fear-inspiring cry was raised: “The enemy! Here come the enemy!”

Unwilling to believe their own doom — for our insurgents still hoped for success in some negotiations for peace which had been carried on at Colinton — they called out, “They are some of our own.”

“They are too blacke” (*i.e.* numerous), “fie! fie! for ground to draw up on,” cried Wallace, fully realising the want of space for his men, and proving that it was not till after this time that his forces were finally arranged.

First of all the battle was commenced by fifty Royalist horse sent obliquely across the hill to attack the left wing of the rebels. An equal number of Learmont’s men met them, and, after a struggle, drove them back. The course of the Rullion Burn prevented almost all pursuit, and Wallace, on perceiving it, despatched a body of foot to occupy both the burn and some ruined sheep walls on the farther side.

Dalzell changed his position, and drew up his army at the foot of the hill, on the top of which were his foes. He then despatched a mingled body of infantry and cavalry[15] to attack Wallace’s outpost, but they also were driven back. A third charge produced a still more disastrous effect, for Dalzell had to check the pursuit of his men by a reinforcement.

These repeated checks bred a panic in the Lieutenant-General’s ranks, for several of his men flung down their arms. Urged by such fatal symptoms, and by the approaching night, he deployed his men, and closed in overwhelming numbers on the centre and right flank of the insurgent army. In the increasing twilight the burning matches of the firelocks, shimmering on barrel, halbert, and cuirass, lent to the approaching army a picturesque effect, like a huge, many-armed giant breathing flame into the darkness.

Placed on an overhanging hill, Welch and Semple cried aloud, “The God of Jacob! The God of Jacob!” and prayed with uplifted hands for victory.

But still the Royalist troops closed in.

Captain John Paton was observed by Dalzell, who determined to capture him with his own hands. Accordingly he charged forward, presenting his pistols. Paton fired, but the balls hopped off Dalzell’s buff coat and fell into his boot. With the superstition peculiar to his age, the Nonconformist concluded that his adversary was rendered bullet-proof by enchantment, and, pulling some small silver coins from his pocket, charged his pistol therewith. Dalzell, seeing this, and supposing, it is likely, that Paton was putting in larger balls, hid behind his servant, who was killed.

Meantime the outposts were forced, and the army of Wallace was enveloped in the embrace of a hideous boa-constrictor — tightening, closing, crushing every semblance of life from the victim enclosed in his toils. The flanking parties of horse were forced in upon the centre, and though, as even Turner grants, they fought with desperation, a general flight was the result.

But when they fell there was none to sing their coronach 16 or wail the death-wail over them. Those who sacrificed themselves for the peace, the liberty, and the religion of their fellow-countrymen, lay bleaching in the field of death for long, and when at last they were buried by charity, the peasants dug up their bodies, desecrated their graves, and cast them once more upon the open heath for the sorry value of their winding-sheets!

Inscription on stone at Rullion Green

HERE
AND NEAR TO
THIS PLACE LYES THE

REVEREND MR JOHN CROOKSHANK AND MR ANDREW MCCORMICK MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL AND ABOUT FIFTY OTHER TRUE COVENANTED PRESBYTERIANS WHO WERE KILLED IN THIS PLACE IN THEIR OWN INOCENT SELF DEFENCE AND DEFFENCE OF THE COVENANTED WORK OF REFORMATION BY THOMAS DALZEEL OF BINS UPON THE 28 OF NOVEMBER 1666. REV. 12. 11. ERECTED SEPT. 28 1738.

Back of stone:

A Cloud of Witnesses lyes here,
Who for Christ's Interest did appear,
For to restore true Liberty,
O'erturned then by tyranny.
And by proud Prelats who did Rage
Against the Lord's own heritage.
They sacrificed were for the laws
Of Christ their king, his noble cause.
These heroes fought with great renown
By falling got the Martyr's crown.

Kirkton, .
Kirkton.
Turner.
Kirkton.
Kirkton.

V

A RECORD OF BLOOD

“They cut his hands ere he was dead,
And after that struck off his head.
His blood under the altar cries
For vengeance on Christ’s enemies.”
Epitaph on Tomb at Longcross of Clermont.

Master Andrew Murray, an outed minister, residing in the Potterrow, on the morning after the defeat, heard the sounds of cheering and the march of many feet beneath his window. He gazed out. With colours flying, and with music sounding, Dalzell, victorious, entered Edinburgh. But his banners were dyed in blood, and a band of prisoners were marched within his ranks. The old man knew it all. That martial and triumphant strain was the death-knell of his friends and of their cause, the rust-hued spots upon the flags were the tokens of their courage and their death, and the prisoners were the miserable remnant spared from death in battle to die upon the scaffold. Poor old man! he had outlived all joy. Had he lived longer he would have seen increasing torment and increasing woe; he would have seen the clouds, then but gathering in mist, cast a more than midnight darkness over his native hills, and have fallen a victim to those bloody persecutions which, later, sent their red memorials to the sea by many a burn. By a merciful Providence all this was spared to him — he fell beneath the first blow; and ere four days had passed since Rullion Green, the aged minister of God was gathered to his fathers.

When Sharpe first heard of the rebellion, he applied to Sir Alexander Ramsay, the Provost, for soldiers to guard 18 his house. Disliking their occupation, the soldiers gave him an ugly time of it. All the night through they kept up a continuous series of “alarms and incursions,” “cries of ‘Stand!’ ‘Give fire!’” etc., which forced the prelate to flee to the Castle in the morning, hoping there to find the rest which was denied him at home. Now, however, when all danger to himself was past, Sharpe came out in his true colours, and scant was the justice likely to be shown to the foes of Scottish Episcopacy when the Primate was by. The prisoners were lodged in Haddo’s Hole, a part of St. Giles’ Cathedral, where, by the kindness of Bishop Wishart, to his credit be it spoken, they were amply supplied with food.

Some people urged, in the Council, that the promise of quarter which had been given on the field of battle should protect the lives of the miserable men. Sir John Gilmoure, the greatest lawyer, gave no opinion — certainly a suggestive circumstance, — but Lord Lee declared that this would not interfere with their legal trial; “so to bloody executions they went.” To the number of thirty they were condemned and executed; while two of them, Hugh M’Kail, a young minister, and Neilson of Corsack, were tortured with the boots.

The goods of those who perished were confiscated, and their bodies were dismembered and distributed to different parts of the country; “the heads of Major M’Culloch and the two Gordons,” it was resolved, says Kirkton, “should be pitched on the gate of Kirkcudbright; the two Hamiltons and Strong’s head should be affixed at Hamilton, and Captain Arnot’s sett on the Watter Gate at Edinburgh. The armes of all the ten, because they hade with uplifted hands renewed the Covenant at Lanark, were sent to the people of that town to expiate that crime, by placing these arms on the top of the prison.” Among these was John Neilson, the Laird of Corsack, who saved Turner’s life at Dumfries; 19 in return for which service Sir James attempted, though without success, to get the poor man reprieved. One of the condemned died of his wounds between the day of condemnation and the day of execution. “None of them,” says Kirkton, “would save their life by taking the declaration and renouncing the Covenant, though it was offered to them.... But never men died in Scotland so much lamented by the people, not only spectators, but those in the country. When Knockbreck and his brother were turned over, they clasped each other in their armes, and so endured the pangs of death. When Humphrey Colquhoun died, he spoke not like an ordinary citizen, but like a heavenly minister, relating his comfortable Christian experiences, and called for his Bible, and laid it on his wounded arm, and read John iii. 8, and spoke upon it to the admiration of all. But most of all, when Mr. M’Kail died, there was such a lamentation as was never known in Scotland before; not one dry cheek upon all the street, or in all the numberless windows in the mercate place.”

The following passage from this speech speaks for itself and its author:

“Hereafter I will not talk with flesh and blood, nor think on the world’s consolations. Farewell to all my friends, whose company hath been refreshful to me in my pilgrimage. I have done with the light of the sun and the moon; welcome eternal light, eternal life, everlasting love, everlasting praise, everlasting glory. Praise to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever! Bless the Lord, O my soul, that hath pardoned all my iniquities in the blood of His Son, and healed all my diseases. Bless Him, O all ye His angels that excel in strength, ye ministers of His that do His pleasure. Bless the Lord, O my soul!”

After having ascended the gallows ladder he again broke forth in the following words of touching eloquence:

“And now I leave off to speak any more to creatures, and begin my intercourse with God, which shall never be 20 broken off. Farewell father and mother, friends and relations! Farewell the world and all delights! Farewell meat and drink! Farewell sun, moon, and stars! — Welcome God and Father! Welcome sweet Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant! Welcome blessed Spirit of grace and God of all consolation! Welcome glory! Welcome eternal life! Welcome Death!"

At Glasgow too, where some were executed, they caused the soldiers to beat the drums and blow the trumpets on their closing ears. Hideous refinement of revenge! Even the last words which drop from the lips of a dying man — words surely the most sincere and the most unbiassed which mortal mouth can utter — even these were looked upon as poisoned and as poisonous. "Drown their last accents," was the cry, "lest they should lead the crowd to take their part, or at the least to mourn their doom!" But, after all, perhaps it was more merciful than one would think — unintentionally so, of course; perhaps the storm of harsh and fiercely jubilant noises, the clanging of trumpets, the rattling of drums, and the hootings and jeerings of an unfeeling mob, which were the last they heard on earth, might, when the mortal fight was over, when the river of death was passed, add tenfold sweetness to the hymning of the angels, tenfold peacefulness to the shores which they had reached.

Not content with the cruelty of these executions, some even of the peasantry, though these were confined to the shire of Mid-Lothian, pursued, captured, plundered, and murdered the miserable fugitives who fell in their way. One strange story have we of these times of blood and persecution: Kirkton the historian and popular tradition tell us alike of a flame which often would arise from the grave, in a moss near Carnwath, of some of those poor rebels: of how it crept along the ground; of how it covered the house of their murderer; and of how it scared him with its lurid glare.

Hear Daniel Defoe:

"If the poor people were by these insupportable violences made desperate, and driven to all the extremities of a wild despair, who can justly reflect on them when they read in the Word of God 'That oppression makes a wise man mad'? And therefore were there no other original of the insurrection known by the name of the Rising of Pentland, it was nothing but what the intolerable oppressions of those times might have justified to all the world, nature having dictated to all people a right of defence when illegally and arbitrarily attacked in a manner not justifiable either by laws of nature, the laws of God, or the laws of the country."

Bear this remonstrance of Defoe's in mind, and though it is the fashion of the day to jeer and to mock, to execrate and to contemn, the noble band of Covenanters, — though the bitter laugh at their old-world religious views, the curl of the lip at their merits, and the chilling silence on their bravery and their determination, are but too rife through all society, — be charitable to what was evil and honest to what was good about the Pentland insurgents, who fought for life and liberty, for country and religion, on the 28th of November 1666, now just two hundred years ago.

Edinburgh, 28*th November* 1866.

“Cloud of Witnesses,” ; Edin. 1765.

Kirkton, .

Kirkton, .

Ibid. .

Ibid. p, 248.

Ibid. .

Kirkton, .

“Naphtali,” ; Glasgow, 1721.

Wodrow, .

Kirkton, .

Defoe’s “History of the Church of Scotland.”

SKETCHES

I

THE SATIRIST

My companion enjoyed a cheap reputation for wit and insight. He was by habit and repute a satirist. If he did occasionally condemn anything or anybody who richly deserved it, and whose demerits had hitherto escaped, it was simply because he condemned everything and everybody. While I was with him he disposed of St. Paul with an epigram, shook my reverence for Shakespeare in a neat antithesis, and fell foul of the Almighty Himself, on the score of one or two out of the ten commandments. Nothing escaped his blighting censure. At every sentence he overthrew an idol, or lowered my estimation of a friend. I saw everything with new eyes, and could only marvel at my former blindness. How was it possible that I had not before observed A's false hair, B's selfishness, or C's boorish manners? I and my companion, methought, walked the streets like a couple of gods among a swarm of vermin; for every one we saw seemed to bear openly upon his brow the mark of the apocalyptic beast. I half expected that these miserable beings, like the people of Lystra, would recognise their betters and force us to the altar; in which case, warned by the fate of Paul and Barnabas, I do not know that my modesty would have prevailed upon me to decline. But there was no need for such churlish virtue. More blinded than the Lycaonians, the people saw no divinity in our gait; and as our temporary godhead lay 26 more in the way of observing than healing their infirmities, we were content to pass them by in scorn.

I could not leave my companion, not from regard or even from interest, but from a very natural feeling, inseparable from the case. To understand it, let us take a simile. Suppose yourself walking down the street with a man who continues to sprinkle the crowd out of a flask of vitriol. You would be much diverted with the grimaces and contortions of his victims; and at the same time you would fear to leave his arm until his bottle was empty, knowing that, when once among the crowd, you would run a good chance yourself of baptism with his biting liquor. Now my companion's vitriol was inexhaustible.

It was perhaps the consciousness of this, the knowledge that I was being anointed already out of the vials of his wrath, that made me fall to criticising the critic, whenever we had parted.

After all, I thought, our satirist has just gone far enough into his neighbours to find that the outside is false, without caring to go farther and discover what is really true. He is content to find that things are not what they seem, and broadly generalises from it that they do not exist at all. He sees our virtues are not what they pretend they are; and, on the strength of that, he denies us the possession of virtue altogether. He has learnt the first lesson, that no man is wholly good; but he has not even suspected that there is another equally true, to wit, that no man is wholly bad. Like the inmate of a coloured star, he has eyes for one colour alone. He has a keen scent after evil, but his nostrils are plugged against all good, as people plugged their nostrils before going about the streets of the plague-struck city.

Why does he do this? It is most unreasonable to flee the knowledge of good like the infection of a horrible disease, and batten and grow fat in the real atmosphere of a lazar-house. This was my first thought; but my second was not like unto it, and I saw that our satirist was wise, wise in 27 his generation, like the unjust steward. He does not want light, because the darkness is more pleasant. He does not wish to see the good, because he is happier without it. I recollect that when I walked with him, I was in a state of divine exaltation, such as Adam and Eve must have enjoyed when the savour of the fruit was still unfaded between their lips; and I recognise that this must be the man's habitual state. He has the forbidden fruit in his waistcoat pocket, and can make himself a god as often and as long as he likes. He has raised himself upon a glorious pedestal above his fellows; he has touched the summit of ambition; and he envies neither King nor Kaiser, Prophet nor Priest, content in an elevation as high as theirs, and much more easily attained. Yes, certes, much more easily attained. He has not risen by climbing himself, but by pushing others down. He has grown great in his own estimation, not by blowing himself out, and risking the fate of Æsop's frog, but simply by the habitual use of a diminishing glass on everybody else. And I think altogether that his is a better, a safer, and a surer recipe than most others.

After all, however, looking back on what I have written, I detect a spirit suspiciously like his own. All through, I have been comparing myself with our satirist, and all through, I have had the best of the comparison. Well, well, contagion is as often mental as physical; and I do not think my readers, who have all been under his lash, will blame me very much for giving the headsman a mouthful of his own sawdust.

II

NUITS BLANCHES

If any one should know the pleasure and pain of a sleepless night, it should be I. I remember, so long ago, the sickly 28 child that woke from his few hours' slumber with the sweat of a nightmare on his brow, to lie awake and listen and long for the first signs of life among the silent streets. These nights of pain and weariness are graven on my mind; and so when the same thing happened to me again, everything that I heard or saw was rather a recollection than a discovery.

Weighed upon by the opaque and almost sensible darkness, I listened eagerly for anything to break the sepulchral quiet. But nothing came, save, perhaps, an emphatic crack from the old cabinet that was made by Deacon Brodie, or the dry rustle of the coals on the extinguished fire. It was a calm; or I know that I should have heard in the roar and clatter of the storm, as I have not heard it for so many years, the wild career of a horseman, always scouring up from the distance and passing swiftly below the window; yet always returning again from the place whence first he came, as though, baffled by some higher power, he had retraced his steps to gain impetus for another and another attempt.

As I lay there, there arose out of the utter stillness the rumbling of a carriage a very great way off, that drew near, and passed within a few streets of the house, and died away as gradually as it had arisen. This, too, was as a reminiscence.

I rose and lifted a corner of the blind. Over the black belt of the garden I saw the long line of Queen Street, with here and there a lighted window. How often before had my nurse lifted me out of bed and pointed them out to me, while we wondered together if, there also, there were children that could not sleep, and if these lighted oblongs were signs of those that waited like us for the morning.

I went out into the lobby, and looked down into the great deep well of the staircase. For what cause I know not, just as it used to be in the old days that the feverish child might be the better served, a peep of gas illuminated a narrow circle far below me. But where I was, all was darkness 29 and silence, save the dry monotonous ticking of the clock that came ceaselessly up to my ear.

The final crown of it all, however, the last touch of reproduction on the pictures of my memory, was the arrival of that time for which, all night through, I waited and longed of old. It was my custom, as the hours dragged on, to repeat the question, "When will the carts come in?” and repeat it again and again until at last those sounds arose in the street that I have heard once more this morning. The road before our house is a great thoroughfare for early carts. I know not, and I never have known, what they carry, whence they come, or whither they go. But I know that, long ere dawn, and for hours together, they stream continuously past, with the same rolling and jerking of wheels and the same clink of horses’ feet. It was not for nothing that they made the burthen of my wishes all night through. They are really the first throbbings of life, the harbingers of day; and it pleases you as much to hear them as it must please a shipwrecked seaman once again to grasp a hand of flesh and blood after years of miserable solitude. They have the freshness of the daylight life about them. You can hear the carters cracking their whips and crying hoarsely to their horses or to one another; and sometimes even a peal of healthy, harsh horse-laughter comes up to you through the darkness. There is now an end of mystery and fear. Like the knocking at the door in *Macbeth,* or the cry of the watchman in the *Tour de Nesle,* they show that the horrible cæsura is over and the nightmares have fled away, because the day is breaking and the ordinary life of men is beginning to bestir itself among the streets.

In the middle of it all I fell asleep, to be wakened by the officious knocking at my door, and I find myself twelve years older than I had dreamed myself all night.

See a short essay of De Quincey’s.

III

THE WREATH OF IMMORTELLES

It is all very well to talk of death as “a pleasant potion of immortality”; but the most of us, I suspect, are of “queasy stomachs,” and find it none of the sweetest. The graveyard may be cloak-room to Heaven; but we must admit that it is a very ugly and offensive vestibule in itself, however fair may be the life to which it leads. And though Enoch and Elias went into the temple through a gate which certainly may be called Beautiful, the rest of us have to find our way to it through Ezekiel’s low-bowed door and the vault full of creeping things and all manner of abominable beasts. Nevertheless, there is a certain frame of mind to which a cemetery is, if not an antidote, at least an alleviation. If you are in a fit of the blues, go nowhere else. It was in obedience to this wise regulation that the other morning found me lighting my pipe at the entrance to Old Greyfriars’, thoroughly sick of the town, the country, and myself.

Two of the men were talking at the gate, one of them carrying a spade in hands still crusted with the soil of graves. Their very aspect was delightful to me; and I crept nearer to them, thinking to pick up some snatch of sexton gossip, some “talk fit for a charnel,” something, in fine, worthy of that fastidious logician, that adept in coroner’s law, who has come down to us as the patron of Yaughan’s liquor, and the very prince of gravediggers. Scots people in general are so much wrapped up in their profession that I had a good chance of overhearing such conversation: the talk of fishmongers running usually on stockfish and haddocks; while of the Scots sexton I could repeat stories and speeches that positively smell of the 31 graveyard. But on this occasion I was doomed to disappointment. My two friends were far into the region of generalities. Their profession was forgotten in their electorship. Politics had engulfed the narrower economy of gravedigging. “Na, na,” said the one, “ye’re a’ wrang.” “The English and Irish Churches,” answered the other, in a tone as if he had made the remark before, and it had been called in question — ”The English and Irish Churches have *impoverished* the country.”

“Such are the results of education,” thought I as I passed beside them and came fairly among the tombs. Here, at least, there were no commonplace politics, no diluted this-morning’s leader, to distract or offend me. The old shabby church showed, as usual, its quaint extent of roofage and the relievo skeleton on one gable, still blackened with the fire of thirty years ago. A chill dank mist lay over all. The Old

Greyfriars' churchyard was in perfection that morning, and one could go round and reckon up the associations with no fear of vulgar interruption. On this stone the Covenant was signed. In that vault, as the story goes, John Knox took hiding in some Reformation broil. From that window Burke the murderer looked out many a time across the tombs, and perhaps o' nights let himself down over the sill to rob some new-made grave. Certainly he would have a selection here. The very walks have been carried over forgotten resting-places; and the whole ground is uneven, because (as I was once quaintly told) "when the wood rots it stands to reason the soil should fall in," which, from the law of gravitation, is certainly beyond denial. But it is round the boundary that there are the finest tombs. The whole irregular space is, as it were, fringed with quaint old monuments, rich in death's-heads and scythes and hour-glasses, and doubly rich in pious epitaphs and Latin mottoes — rich in them to such an extent that their proper space has run over, and they have crawled end-long up the shafts of columns and 32 ensconced themselves in all sorts of odd corners among the sculpture. These tombs raise their backs against the rabble of squalid dwelling-houses, and every here and there a clothes-pole projects between two monuments its fluttering trophy of white and yellow and red. With a grim irony they recall the banners in the Invalides, banners as appropriate perhaps over the sepulchres of tailors and weavers as these others above the dust of armies. Why they put things out to dry on that particular morning it was hard to imagine. The grass was grey with drops of rain, the headstones black with moisture. Yet, in despite of weather and common-sense, there they hung between the tombs; and beyond them I could see through open windows into miserable rooms where whole families were born and fed, and slept and died. At one a girl sat singing merrily with her back to the graveyard; and from another came the shrill tones of a scolding woman. Every here and there was a town garden full of sickly flowers, or a pile of crockery inside upon the window-seat. But you do not grasp the full connection between these houses of the dead and the living, the unnatural marriage of stately sepulchres and squalid houses, till, lower down, where the road has sunk far below the surface of the cemetery, and the very roofs are scarcely on a level with its wall, you observe that a proprietor has taken advantage of a tall monument and trained a chimney-stack against its back. It startles you to see the red, modern pots peering over the shoulder of the tomb.

A man was at work on a grave, his spade clinking away the drift of bones that permeates the thin brown soil; but my first disappointment had taught me to expect little from Greyfriars' sextons, and I passed him by in silence. A slater on the slope of a neighbouring roof eyed me curiously. A lean black cat, looking as if it had battened on strange meats, slipped past me. A little boy at a window put his finger to his nose in so offensive a manner that I was put upon my dignity, and turned grandly off [33] to read old epitaphs and peer through the gratings into the shadow of vaults.

Just then I saw two women coming down a path, one of them old, and the other younger, with a child in her arms. Both had faces eaten with famine and hardened with sin, and both had reached that stage of degradation, much lower in a woman than a man, when all care for dress is lost. As they came down they neared a grave, where some pious friend or relative had laid a wreath of immortelles, and put a bell glass over it, as is the custom. The effect of that ring of dull yellow among so many blackened and dusty sculptures was more pleasant than it is in modern cemeteries, where every second mound can boast a similar coronal; and here, where it was the exception and not the rule, I could even fancy the drops of moisture that dimmed the covering were the tears of those who laid it where it was. As the two women came up to it, one of them kneeled down on the wet grass and looked long and silently through the clouded shade, while the second stood above her, gently oscillating to and fro to lull the muling baby. I was struck a great way off with something religious in the attitude of these two unkempt and haggard women; and I drew near faster, but still cautiously, to hear what they were saying. Surely on them the spirit of death and decay had descended; I had no education to dread here: should I not have a chance of seeing nature? Alas! a pawnbroker could not have been more practical and commonplace, for this was what the kneeling woman said to the woman upright — this and nothing more: “Eh, what extravagance!”

O nineteenth century, wonderful art thou indeed — wonderful, but wearisome in thy stale and deadly uniformity. Thy men are more like numerals than men. They must bear their idiosyncrasies or their professions written on a placard about their neck, like the scenery in Shakespeare’s theatre. The precepts of economy have pierced into the lowest ranks of life; and there is now a decorum in vice, [34] a respectability among the disreputable, a pure spirit of Philistinism among the waifs and strays of thy Bohemia. For lo! thy very gravediggers talk politics; and thy castaways kneel upon new graves, to discuss the cost of the monument and grumble at the improvidence of love.

Such was the elegant apostrophe that I made as I went out of the gates again, happily satisfied in myself, and feeling that I alone of all whom I had seen was able to profit by the silent poem of these green mounds and blackened headstones.

“Religio Medici,” Part ii.

“Duchess of Malfi.”

IV

NURSES

I knew one once, and the room where, lonely and old, she waited for death. It was pleasant enough, high up above the lane, and looking forth upon a hill-side, covered all day with sheets and yellow blankets, and with long lines of underclothing fluttering between the battered posts. There were any number of cheap prints, and a drawing by one of “her children,” and there were flowers in the window, and a sickly canary withered into consumption in an ornamental cage. The bed, with its checked coverlid, was in a closet. A great Bible lay on the table; and her drawers were full of “scones,” which it was her pleasure to give to young visitors such as I was then.

You may not think this a melancholy picture; but the canary, and the cat, and the white mouse that she had for a while, and that died, were all indications of the want that ate into her heart. I think I know a little of what that old woman felt; and I am as sure as if I had seen her, that she sat many an hour in silent tears, with the big Bible open before her clouded eyes.

If you could look back upon her life, and feel the great 35 chain that had linked her to one child after another, sometimes to be wrenched suddenly through, and sometimes, which is infinitely worse, to be torn gradually off through years of growing neglect, or perhaps growing dislike! She had, like the mother, overcome that natural repugnance — repugnance which no man can conquer — towards the infirm and helpless mass of putty of the earlier stage. She had spent her best and happiest years in tending, watching, and learning to love like a mother this child, with which she has no connection and to which she has no tie. Perhaps she refused some sweetheart (such things have been), or put him off and off, until he lost heart and turned to some one else, all for fear of leaving this creature that had wound itself about her heart. And the end of it all, — her month’s warning, and a present perhaps, and the rest of the life to vain regret. Or, worse still, to see the child gradually forgetting and forsaking her, fostered in disrespect and neglect on the plea of growing manliness, and at last beginning to treat her as a servant whom he had treated a few years before as a mother. She sees the Bible or the Psalm-book, which with gladness and love unutterable in her heart she had bought for him years ago out of her slender savings, neglected for some newer gift of his father, lying in dust in the lumber-room or given away to a poor child, and the act applauded for its unfeeling charity. Little wonder if she becomes hurt and angry, and attempts to tyrannise and to grasp her old power back again. We are not all patient Grizzels, by good fortune, but the most of us human beings with feelings and tempers of our own.

And so in the end, behold her in the room that I described. Very likely and very naturally, in some fling of feverish misery or recoil of thwarted love, she has quarrelled with her old employers and the children are forbidden to see her or to speak to her; or at best she gets her rent paid and a little to herself, and now and then her late charges are sent up (with another nurse, perhaps) to pay her a short visit. How bright these visits seem as she looks 36 forward to them on her lonely bed! How unsatisfactory their realisation, when the forgetful child, half wondering, checks with every word and action the outpouring of her maternal love! How bitter and restless the memories that they leave behind! And for the rest, what else has she? — to watch them with eager eyes as they go to school, to sit in church where she can see them every Sunday, to be passed some day unnoticed in the street, or deliberately cut because the great man or the great woman are with friends before whom they are ashamed to recognise the old woman that loved them.

When she goes home that night, how lonely will the room appear to her! Perhaps the neighbours may hear her sobbing to herself in the dark, with the fire burnt out for want of fuel, and the candle still unlit upon the table.

And it is for this that they live, these quasi-mothers — mothers in everything but the travail and the thanks. It is for this that they have remained virtuous in youth, living the dull life of a household servant. It is for this that they refused the old sweetheart, and have no fireside or offspring of their own.

I believe in a better state of things, that there will be no more nurses, and that every mother will nurse her own offspring; for what can be more hardening and demoralising than to call forth the tenderest feelings of a woman’s heart and cherish them yourself as long as you need them, as long as your children require a nurse to love them, and then to blight and thwart and destroy them, whenever your own use for them is at an end? This may be Utopian; but it is always a little thing if one mother or two mothers can be brought to feel more tenderly to those who share their toil and have no part in their reward.

V

A CHARACTER

The man has a red, bloated face, and his figure is short and squat. So far there is nothing in him to notice, but when you see his eyes, you can read in these hard and shallow orbs a depravity beyond measure depraved, a thirst after wickedness, the pure, disinterested love of Hell for its own sake. The other night, in the street, I was watching an omnibus passing with lit-up windows, when I heard some one coughing at my side as though he would cough his soul out; and turning round, I saw him stopping under a lamp, with a brown greatcoat buttoned round him and his whole face convulsed. It seemed as if he could not live long; and so the sight set my mind upon a train of thought, as I finished my cigar up and down the lighted streets.

He is old, but all these years have not yet quenched his thirst for evil, and his eyes still delight themselves in wickedness. He is dumb; but he will not let that hinder his foul trade, or perhaps I should say, his yet fouler amusement, and he has pressed a slate into the service of corruption. Look at him, and he will sign to you with his bloated head, and when you go to him in answer to the sign, thinking perhaps that the poor dumb man has lost his way, you will see what he writes upon his slate. He haunts the doors of schools, and shows such inscriptions as these to the innocent children that come out. He hangs about picture-galleries, and makes the noblest pictures the text for some silent homily of vice. His industry is a lesson to ourselves. Is it not wonderful how he can triumph over his infirmities and do such an amount of harm without a tongue? Wonderful industry — strange, fruitless, pleasureless toil? Must not the very devil feel a soft emotion to see his disinterested and laborious service? Ah, but 38 the devil knows better than this: he knows that this man is penetrated with the love of evil and that all his pleasure is shut up in wickedness: he recognises him, perhaps, as a fit type for mankind of his satanic self, and watches over his effigy as we might watch over a favourite likeness. As the business man comes to love the toil, which he only looked upon at first as a ladder towards other desires and less unnatural gratifications, so the dumb man has felt the charm of his trade and fallen captivated before the eyes of sin. It is a mistake when preachers tell us that vice is hideous and loathsome; for even vice has her Hörsel and her devotees, who love her for her own sake.

COLLEGE PAPERS

I

EDINBURGH STUDENTS IN 1

On the 2nd of January 1824 was issued the prospectus of the *Lapsus Linguæ; or, the College Tatler;* and on the 7th the first number appeared. On Friday the 2nd of April "*Mr. Tatler* became speechless." Its history was not all one success; for the editor (who applies to himself the words of Iago, "I am nothing if I am not critical") overstepped the bounds of caution, and found himself seriously embroiled with the powers that were. There appeared in No. xvi. a most bitter satire upon Sir John Leslie, in which he was compared to Falstaff, charged with puffing himself, and very prettily censured for publishing only the first volume of a class-book, and making all purchasers pay for both. Sir John Leslie took up the matter angrily, visited Carfrae the publisher, and threatened him with an action, till he was forced to turn the hapless *Lapsus* out of doors. The maltreated periodical found shelter in the shop of Huie, Infirmary Street; and No. xvii. was duly issued from the new office. No. xvii. beheld *Mr. Tatler's* humiliation, in which, with fulsome apology and not very credible assurances of respect and admiration, he disclaims the article in question, and advertises a new issue of No. xvi. with all objectionable matter omitted. This, with pleasing euphemism, he terms in a later advertisement, "a new and improved edition." This was the only remarkable adventure of *Mr. Tatler's* brief existence; unless we consider 42 as such a silly Chaldee manuscript in imitation of *Blackwood*, and a letter of reproof from a divinity student on the impiety of the same dull effusion. He laments the near approach of his end in pathetic terms. "How shall we summon up sufficient courage," says he, "to look for the last time on our beloved little devil and his inestimable proof-sheet? How shall we be able to pass No. 14 Infirmary Street and feel that all its attractions are over? How shall we bid farewell for ever to that excellent man, with the long greatcoat, wooden leg and wooden board, who acts as our representative at the gate of *Alma Mater?*" But alas! he had no choice: *Mr. Tatler*, whose career, he says himself, had been successful, passed peacefully away, and has ever since dumbly implored "the bringing home of bell and burial."

Alter et idem. A very different affair was the *Lapsus Linguæ* from the

Edinburgh University Magazine. The two prospectuses alone, laid side by side, would indicate the march of luxury and the repeal of the paper duty. The penny bi-weekly broadside of session 1823-4 was almost wholly dedicated to Momus. Epigrams, pointless letters, amorous verses, and University grievances are the continual burthen of the song. But *Mr. Tatler* was not without a vein of hearty humour; and his pages afford what is much better: to wit, a good picture of student life as it then was. The students of those polite days insisted on retaining their hats in the class-room. There was a cab-stance in front of the College; and "Carriage Entrance" was posted above the main arch, on what the writer pleases to call "coarse, unclassic boards." The benches of the "Speculative" then, as now, were red; but all other Societies (the "Dialectic" is the only survivor) met downstairs, in some rooms of which it is pointedly said that "nothing else could conveniently be made of them." However horrible these dungeons may have been, it is certain that they were paid for, and that far too heavily for the taste of session 1823-4, which found enough calls 43 upon its purse for porter and toasted cheese at Ambrose's, or cranberry tarts and ginger-wine at Doull's. Duelling was still a possibility; so much so that when two medicals fell to fisticuffs in Adam Square, it was seriously hinted that single combat would be the result. Last and most wonderful of all, Gall and Spurzheim were in every one's mouth; and the Law student, after having exhausted Byron's poetry and Scott's novels, informed the ladies of his belief in phrenology. In the present day he would dilate on "Red as a rose is she," and then mention that he attends Old Greyfriars', as a tacit claim to intellectual superiority. I do not know that the advance is much.

But *Mr. Tatler's* best performances were three short papers in which he hit off pretty smartly the idiosyncrasies of the "*Divinity*," the "*Medical*," and the "*Law*" of session 1823-4. The fact that there was no notice of the "*Arts*" seems to suggest that they stood in the same intermediate position as they do now — the epitome of student-kind. *Mr. Tatler's* satire is, on the whole, good-humoured, and has not grown superannuated in *all* its limbs. His descriptions may limp at some points, but there are certain broad traits that apply equally well to session 1870-71. He shows us the *Divinity* of the period — tall, pale, and slender — his collar greasy, and his coat bare about the seams — "his white neckcloth serving four days, and regularly turned the third," — "the rim of his hat deficient in wool," — and "a weighty volume of theology under his arm." He was the man to buy cheap "a snuff-box, or a dozen of pencils, or a six-bladed knife, or a quarter of a hundred quills," at any of the public sale-rooms. He was noted for cheap purchases, and for exceeding the legal tender in halfpence. He haunted "the darkest and remotest corner of the Theatre Gallery." He was to be seen issuing from “aerial lodging-houses.” Withal, says mine author, “there were many good points about him: he paid his landlady’s bill, read his Bible, went twice to 44 church on Sunday, seldom swore, was not often tipsy, and bought the *Lapsus Linguæ*.”

The *Medical*, again, “wore a white greatcoat, and consequently talked loud” — (there is something very delicious in that *consequently*). He wore his hat on one side. He was active, volatile, and went to the top of Arthur’s Seat on the Sunday forenoon. He was as quiet in a debating society as he was loud in the streets. He was reckless and imprudent: yesterday he insisted on your sharing a bottle of claret with him (and claret was claret then, before the cheap-and-nasty treaty), and to-morrow he asks you for the loan of a penny to buy the last number of the *Lapsus*.

The student of *Law*, again, was a learned man. “He had turned over the leaves of Justinian’s ‘Institutes,’ and knew that they were written in Latin. He was well acquainted with the title-page of ‘Blackstone’s Commentaries,’ and *argal* (as the gravedigger in *Hamlet* says) he was not a person to be laughed at.” He attended the Parliament House in the character of a critic, and could give you stale sneers at all the celebrated speakers. He was the terror of essayists at the Speculative or the Forensic. In social qualities he seems to have stood unrivalled. Even in the police-office we find him shining with undiminished lustre. “If a *Charlie* should find him rather noisy at an untimely hour, and venture to take him into custody, he appears next morning like a Daniel come to judgment. He opens his mouth to speak, and the divine precepts of unchanging justice and Scots law flow from his tongue. The magistrate listens in amazement, and fines him only a couple of guineas.”

Such then were our predecessors and their College Magazine. Barclay, Ambrose, Young Amos, and Fergusson were to them what the Café, the Rainbow, and Rutherford’s are to us. An hour’s reading in these old pages absolutely confuses us, there is so much that is similar and so much that is different; the follies and amusements are so like our own, and the manner of frolicking and enjoying are so 45 changed, that one pauses and looks about him in philosophic judgment. The muddy quadrangle is thick with living students; but in our eyes it swarms also with the phantasmal white greatcoats and tilted hats of 1824. Two races meet: races alike and diverse. Two performances are played before our eyes; but the change seems merely of impersonators, of scenery, of costume. Plot and passion are the same. It is the fall of the spun shilling whether seventy-one or twenty-four has the best of it.

In a future number we hope to give a glance at the individualities of the present, and see whether the cast shall be head or tail — whether we or the readers of the *Lapsus* stand higher in the balance.

II

THE MODERN STUDENT CONSIDERED GENERALLY

We have now reached the difficult portion of our task. *Mr. Tatler*, for all that we care, may have been as virulent as he liked about the students of a former day; but for the iron to touch our sacred selves, for a brother of the Guild to betray its most privy infirmities, let such a Judas look to himself as he passes on his way to the Scots Law or the Diagnostic, below the solitary lamp at the corner of the dark quadrangle. We confess that this idea alarms us. We enter a protest. We bind ourselves over verbally to keep the peace. We hope, moreover, that having thus made you secret to our misgivings, you will excuse us if we be dull, and set that down to caution which you might before have charged to the account of stupidity.

The natural tendency of civilisation is to obliterate those distinctions which are the best salt of life. All the fine old professional flavour in language has evaporated. 46 Your very gravedigger has forgotten his avocation in his electorship, and would quibble on the Franchise over Ophelia’s grave, instead of more appropriately discussing the duration of bodies under ground. From this tendency, from this gradual attrition of life, in which everything pointed and characteristic is being rubbed down, till the whole world begins to slip between our fingers in smooth undistinguishable sands, from this, we say, it follows that we must not attempt to join *Mr. Tatler* in his simple division of students into *Law*, *Divinity*, and *Medical*. Nowadays the Faculties may shake hands over their follies; and, like Mrs. Frail and Mrs. Foresight (in *Love for Love*) they may stand in the doors of opposite class-rooms, crying: “Sister, Sister — Sister everyway!” A few restrictions, indeed, remain to influence the followers of individual branches of study. The *Divinity*, for example, must be an avowed believer; and as this, in the present day, is unhappily considered by many as a confession of weakness, he is fain to choose one of two ways of gilding the distasteful orthodox bolus. Some swallow it in a thin jelly of metaphysics; for it is even a credit to believe in God on the evidence of some crack-jaw philosopher, although it is a decided slur to believe in Him on His own authority. Others again (and this we think the worst method), finding German grammar a somewhat dry morsel, run their own little heresy as a proof of independence; and deny one of the cardinal doctrines that they may hold the others without being laughed at.

Besides, however, such influences as these, there is little more distinction between the faculties than the traditionary ideal, handed down through a long sequence of students, and getting rounder and more featureless at each successive session. The plague of uniformity has descended on the College. Students (and indeed all sorts and conditions of men) now require their faculty and character hung round their neck on a placard, like the scenes in Shakespeare’s theatre. And in the midst of all this weary sameness, not 47 the least common feature is the gravity of every face. No more does the merry medical run eagerly in the clear winter morning up the rugged sides of Arthur’s Seat, and hear the church bells begin and thicken and die away below him among the gathered smoke of the city. He will not break Sunday to so little purpose. He no longer finds pleasure in the mere output of his surplus energy. He husbands his strength, and lays out walks, and reading, and amusement with deep consideration, so that he may get as much work and pleasure out of his body as he can, and waste none of his energy on mere impulse, or such flat enjoyment as an excursion in the country.

See the quadrangle in the interregnum of classes, in those two or three minutes when it is full of passing students, and we think you will admit that, if we have not made it “an habitation of dragons,” we have at least transformed it into “a court for owls.” Solemnity broods heavily over the enclosure; and wherever you seek it, you will find a dearth of merriment, an absence of real youthful enjoyment. You might as well try

“To move wild laughter in the throat of death”

as to excite any healthy stir among the bulk of this staid company.

The studious congregate about the doors of the different classes, debating the matter of the lecture, or comparing note-books. A reserved rivalry sunders them. Here are some deep in Greek particles: there, others are already inhabitants of that land

“Where entity and quiddity,
Like ghosts of defunct bodies fly —
Where Truth in person does appear
Like words congealed in northern air.”

But none of them seem to find any relish for their studies — no pedantic love of this subject or that lights up their eyes — science and learning are only means for a livelihood, 48 which they have considerately embraced and which they solemnly pursue. “Labour’s pale priests,” their lips seem incapable of laughter, except in the way of polite recognition of professorial wit. The stains of ink are chronic on their meagre fingers. They walk like Saul among the asses.

The dandies are not less subdued. In 1824 there was a noisy dapper dandyism abroad. Vulgar, as we should now think, but yet genial — a matter of white greatcoats and loud voices — strangely different from the stately frippery that is rife at present. These men are out of their element in the quadrangle. Even the small remains of boisterous humour, which still clings to any collection of young men, jars painfully on their morbid sensibilities; and they beat a hasty retreat to resume their perfunctory march along Princes Street. Flirtation is to them a great social duty, a painful obligation, which they perform on every occasion in the same chill official manner, and with the same commonplace advances, the same dogged observance of traditional behaviour. The shape of their raiment is a burden almost greater than they can bear, and they halt in their walk to preserve the due adjustment of their trouser-knees, till one would fancy he had mixed in a procession of Jacobs. We speak, of course, for ourselves; but we would as soon associate with a herd of sprightly apes as with these gloomy modern beaux. Alas, that our Mirabels, our Valentines, even our Brummels, should have left their mantles upon nothing more amusing!

Nor are the fast men less constrained. Solemnity, even in dissipation, is the order of the day; and they go to the devil with a perverse seriousness, a systematic rationalism of wickedness that would have surprised the simpler sinners of old. Some of these men whom we see gravely conversing on the steps have but a slender acquaintance with each other. Their intercourse consists principally of mutual bulletins of depravity; and, week after week, as they meet they reckon up their items of transgression, and give an abstract of their downward progress for approval and 49 encouragement. These folk form a freemasonry of their own. An oath is the shibboleth of their sinister fellowship. Once they hear a man swear, it is wonderful how their tongues loosen and their bashful spirits take enlargement under the consciousness of brotherhood. There is no folly, no pardoning warmth of temper about them; they are as steady-going and systematic in their own way as the studious in theirs.

Not that we are without merry men. No. We shall not be ungrateful to those, whose grimaces, whose ironical laughter, whose active feet in the “College Anthem” have beguiled so many weary hours and added a pleasant variety to the strain of close attention. But even these are too evidently professional in their antics. They go about cogitating puns and inventing tricks. It is their vocation, Hal. They are the gratuitous jesters of the class-room; and, like the clown when he leaves the stage, their merriment too often sinks as the bell rings the hour of liberty, and they pass forth by the Post-Office, grave and sedate, and meditating fresh gambols for the morrow.

This is the impression left on the mind of any observing student by too many of his fellows. They seem all frigid old men; and one pauses to think how such an unnatural state of matters is produced. We feel inclined to blame for it the unfortunate absence of *University feeling* which is so marked a characteristic of our Edinburgh students. Academical interests are so few and far between — students, as students, have so little in common, except a peevish rivalry — there is such an entire want of broad college sympathies and ordinary college friendships, that we fancy that no University in the kingdom is in so poor a plight. Our system is full of anomalies. A, who cut B whilst he was a shabby student, curries sedulously up to him and cudgels his memory for anecdotes about him when he becomes the great so-and-so. Let there be an end of this shy, proud reserve on the one hand, and this shuddering fine ladyism on the other; and we think we shall find both 50 ourselves and the College bettered. Let it be a sufficient reason for intercourse that two men sit together on the same benches. Let the great A be held excused for nodding to the shabby B in Princes Street, if he can say, "That fellow is a student." Once this could be brought about, we think you would find the whole heart of the University beat faster. We think you would find a fusion among the students, a growth of common feelings, an increasing sympathy between class and class, whose influence (in such a heterogeneous company as ours) might be of incalculable value in all branches of politics and social progress. It would do more than this. If we could find some method of making the University a real mother to her sons — something beyond a building of class-rooms, a Senatus and a lottery of somewhat shabby prizes — we should strike a death-blow at the constrained and unnatural attitude of our Society. At present we are not a united body, but a loose gathering of individuals, whose inherent attraction is allowed to condense them into little knots and coteries. Our last snowball riot read us a plain lesson on our condition. There was no party spirit — no unity of interests. A few, who were mischievously inclined, marched off to the College of Surgeons in a pretentious file; but even before they reached their destination the feeble inspiration had died out in many, and their numbers were sadly thinned. Some followed strange gods in the direction of Drummond Street, and others slunk back to meek good-boyism at the feet of the Professors. The same is visible in better things. As you send a man to an English University that he may have his prejudices rubbed off, you might send him to Edinburgh that he may have them ingrained — rendered indelible — fostered by sympathy into living principles of his spirit. And the reason of it is quite plain. From this absence of University feeling it comes that a man's friendships are always the direct and immediate results of these very prejudices. A common weakness is the best master of ceremonies in our quadrangle: a mutual vice is the 51 readiest introduction. The studious associate with the studious alone — the dandies with the dandies. There is nothing to force them to rub shoulders with the others; and so they grow day by day more wedded to their own original opinions and affections. They see through the same spectacles continually. All broad sentiments, all real catholic humanity expires; and the mind gets gradually stiffened into one position — becomes so habituated to a contracted atmosphere, that it shudders and withers under the least draught of the free air that circulates in the general field of mankind.

Specialism in Society then, is, we think, one cause of our present state. Specialism in study is another. We doubt whether this has ever been a good thing since the world began; but we are sure it is much worse now than it was. Formerly, when a man became a specialist, it was out of affection for his subject. With a somewhat grand devotion he left all the world of Science to follow his true love; and he contrived to find that strange pedantic interest which inspired the man who

> "Settled *Hoti's* business — let it be —
> Properly based *Oun* —
> Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *D*
> Dead from the waist down."

Nowadays it is quite different. Our pedantry wants even the saving clause of Enthusiasm. The election is now matter of necessity and not of choice. Knowledge is now too broad a field for your Jack-of-all-Trades; and, from beautifully utilitarian reasons, he makes his choice, draws his pen through a dozen branches of study, and behold — John the Specialist. That this is the way to be wealthy we shall not deny; but we hold that it is *not* the way to be healthy or wise. The whole mind becomes narrowed and circumscribed to one "punctual spot" of knowledge. A rank unhealthy soil breeds a harvest of prejudices. Feeling himself above others in his one little branch — in 52 the classification of toadstools, or Carthaginian history — he waxes great in his own eyes and looks down on others. Having all his sympathies educated in one way, they die out in every other; and he is apt to remain a peevish, narrow, and intolerant bigot. Dilettante is now a term of reproach; but there is a certain form of dilettantism to which no one can object. It is this that we want among our students. We wish them to abandon no subject until they have seen and felt its merit — to act under a general interest in all branches of knowledge, not a commercial eagerness to excel in one.

In both these directions our sympathies are constipated. We are apostles of our own caste and our own subject of study, instead of being, as we should, true men and *loving* students. Of course both of these could be corrected by the students themselves; but this is nothing to the purpose: it is more important to ask whether the

Senatus or the body of alumni could do nothing towards the growth of better feeling and wider sentiments. Perhaps in another paper we may say something upon this head.

One other word, however, before we have done. What shall we be when we grow really old? Of yore, a man was thought to lay on restrictions and acquire new deadweight of mournful experience with every year, till he looked back on his youth as the very summer of impulse and freedom. We please ourselves with thinking that it cannot be so with us. We would fain hope that, as we have begun in one way, we may end in another; and that when we *are* in fact the octogenarians that we *seem* at present, there shall be no merrier men on earth. It is pleasant to picture us, sunning ourselves in Princes Street of a morning, or chirping over our evening cups, with all the merriment that we wanted in youth.

III

DEBATING SOCIETIES

A debating society is at first somewhat of a disappointment. You do not often find the youthful Demosthenes chewing his pebbles in the same room with you; or, even if you do, you will probably think the performance little to be admired. As a general rule, the members speak shamefully ill. The subjects of debate are heavy; and so are the fines. The Ballot Question — oldest of dialectic nightmares — is often found astride of a somnolent sederunt. The Greeks and Romans, too, are reserved as sort of *general-utility* men, to do all the dirty work of illustration; and they fill as many functions as the famous waterfall scene at the "Princess's," which I found doing duty on one evening as a gorge in Peru, a haunt of German robbers, and a peaceful vale in the Scottish borders. There is a sad absence of striking argument or real lively discussion. Indeed, you feel a growing contempt for your fellow-members; and it is not until you rise yourself to hawk and hesitate and sit shamefully down again, amid eleemosynary applause, that you begin to find your level and value others rightly. Even then, even when failure has damped your critical ardour, you will see many things to be laughed at in the deportment of your rivals.

Most laughable, perhaps, are your indefatigable strivers after eloquence. They are of those who "pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope," and who, since they expect that "the deficiencies of last sentence will be supplied by the next," have been recommended by Dr. Samuel Johnson to "attend to the History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia." They are characterised by a hectic hopefulness. Nothing damps them. They rise from the ruins of one abortive sentence, to launch forth into another with 54 unabated vigour. They have all the manner of an orator. From the tone of their voice, you would expect a splendid period — and lo! a string of broken-backed, disjointed clauses, eked out with stammerings and throat-clearings. They possess the art (learned from the pulpit) of rounding an uneuphonious sentence by dwelling on a single syllable — of striking a balance in a top-heavy period by lengthening out a word into a melancholy quaver. Withal, they never cease to hope. Even at last, even when they have exhausted all their ideas, even after the would-be peroration has finally refused to perorate, they remain upon their feet with their mouths open, waiting for some further inspiration, like Chaucer's widow's son in the dung-hole, after

"His throat was kit unto the nekké bone," in vain expectation of that seed that was to be laid upon his tongue, and give him renewed and clearer utterance.

These men may have something to say, if they could only say it — indeed they generally have; but the next class are people who, having nothing to say, are cursed with a facility and an unhappy command of words, that makes them the prime nuisances of the society they affect. They try to cover their absence of matter by an unwholesome vitality of delivery. They look triumphantly round the room, as if courting applause, after a torrent of diluted truism. They talk in a circle, harping on the same dull round of argument, and returning again and again to the same remark with the same sprightliness, the same irritating appearance of novelty.

After this set, any one is tolerable; so we shall merely hint at a few other varieties. There is your man who is pre-eminently conscientious, whose face beams with sincerity as he opens on the negative, and who votes on the affirmative at the end, looking round the room with an air of chastened pride. There is also the irrelevant speaker, who rises, emits a joke or two, and then sits down again, without ever attempting to tackle the subject of debate. 55 Again, we have men who ride pick-a-back on their family reputation, or, if their family have none, identify themselves with some well-known statesman, use his opinions, and lend him their patronage on all occasions. This is a dangerous plan, and serves oftener, I am afraid, to point a difference than to adorn a speech.

But alas! a striking failure may be reached without tempting Providence by any of these ambitious tricks. Our own stature will be found high enough for shame. The success of three simple sentences lures us into a fatal parenthesis in the fourth, from whose shut brackets we may never disentangle the thread of our discourse. A momentary flush tempts us into a quotation; and we may be left helpless in the middle of one of Pope's couplets, a white film gathering before our eyes, and our kind friends charitably trying to cover our disgrace by a feeble round of applause. *Amis lecteurs*, this is a painful topic. It is possible that we too, we, the "potent, grave, and reverend" editor, may have suffered these things, and drunk as deep as any of the cup of shameful failure. Let us dwell no longer on so delicate a subject.

In spite, however, of these disagreeables, I should recommend any student to suffer them with Spartan courage, as the benefits he receives should repay him an hundredfold for them all. The life of the debating society is a handy antidote to the life of the class-room and quadrangle. Nothing could be conceived more excellent as a weapon against many of those *peccant humours* that we have been railing against in the jeremiad of our last "College Paper" — particularly in the field of intellect. It is a sad sight to see our heather-scented students, our boys of seventeen, coming up to College with determined views — *roués* in speculation — having gauged the vanity of philosophy or learned to shun it as the middle-man of heresy — a company of determined, deliberate opinionists, not to be moved by all the sleights of logic. What have such men to do with study? If their minds are made up irrevocably, why 56 burn the "studious lamp" in search of further confirmation? Every set opinion I hear a student deliver I feel a certain lowering of my regard. He who studies, he who is yet employed in groping for his premises, should keep his mind fluent and sensitive, keen to mark flaws, and willing to surrender untenable positions. He should keep himself teachable, or cease the expensive farce of being taught. It is to further this docile spirit that we desire to press the claims of debating societies. It is as a means of melting down this museum of premature petrifactions into living and impressionable soul that we insist on their utility. If we could once prevail on our students to feel no shame in avowing an uncertain attitude towards any subject, if we could teach them that it was unnecessary for every lad to have his *opinionette* on every topic, we should have gone a far way towards bracing the intellectual tone of the coming race of thinkers; and this it is which debating societies are so well fitted to perform.

We there meet people of every shade of opinion, and make friends with them. We are taught to rail against a man the whole session through, and then hob-a-nob with him at the concluding entertainment. We find men of talent far exceeding our own, whose conclusions are widely different from ours; and we are thus taught to distrust ourselves. But the best means of all towards catholicity is that wholesome rule which some folk are most inclined to condemn, — I mean the law of *obliged speeches*. Your senior member commands; and you must take the affirmative or the negative, just as suits his best convenience. This tends to the most perfect liberality. It is no good hearing the arguments of an opponent, for in good verity you rarely follow them; and even if you do take the trouble to listen, it is merely in a captious search for weaknesses. This is proved, I fear, in every debate; when you hear each speaker arguing out his own prepared *spécialité* (he never intended speaking, of course, until some remarks of, etc.), arguing out, I say, his own *coached-up* subject without the 57 least attention to what has gone before, as utterly at sea about the drift of his adversary's speech as Panurge when he argued with Thaumaste, and merely linking his own prelection to the last by a few flippant criticisms. Now, as the rule stands, you are saddled with the side you disapprove, and so you are forced, by regard for your own fame, to argue out, to feel with, to elaborate completely, the case as it stands against yourself; and what a fund of wisdom do you not turn up in this idle digging of the vineyard! How many new difficulties take form before your eyes? how many superannuated arguments cripple finally into limbo, under the glance of your enforced eclecticism!

Nor is this the only merit of Debating Societies. They tend also to foster taste, and to promote friendship between University men. This last, as we have had occasion before to say, is the great requirement of our student life; and it will therefore be no waste of time if we devote a paragraph to this subject in its connection with Debating Societies. At present they partake too much of the nature of a *clique*. Friends propose friends, and mutual friends second them, until the society degenerates into a sort of family party. You may confirm old acquaintances, but you can rarely make new ones. You find yourself in the atmosphere of your own daily intercourse. Now, this is an unfortunate circumstance, which it seems to me might readily be rectified. Our Principal has shown himself so friendly towards all College improvements that I cherish the hope of seeing shortly realised a certain suggestion, which is not a new one with me, and which must often have been proposed and canvassed heretofore — I mean, a real *University Debating Society*, patronised by the Senatus, presided over by the Professors, to which every one might gain ready admittance on sight of his matriculation ticket, where it would be a favour and not a necessity to speak, and where the obscure student might have another object for attendance besides the mere desire to save his fines: to wit, the chance of drawing on himself the favourable consideration of his 58 teachers. This would be merely following in the good tendency, which has been so noticeable during all this session, to increase and multiply student societies and clubs of every sort. Nor would it be a matter of much difficulty. The united societies would form a nucleus: one of the class-rooms at first, and perhaps afterwards the great hall above the library, might be the place of meeting. There would be no want of attendance or enthusiasm, I am sure; for it is a very different thing to speak under the bushel of a private club on the one hand, and, on the other, in a public place, where a happy period or a subtle argument may do the speaker permanent service in after life. Such a club might end, perhaps, by rivalling the “Union” at Cambridge or the “Union” at Oxford.

IV

THE PHILOSOPHY OF UMBRELLAS

It is wonderful to think what a turn has been given to our whole Society by the fact that we live under the sign of Aquarius, — that our climate is essentially wet. A mere arbitrary distinction, like the walking-swords of yore, might have remained the symbol of foresight and respectability, had not the raw mists and dropping showers of our island pointed the inclination of Society to another exponent of those virtues. A ribbon of the Legion of Honour or a string of medals may prove a person's courage; a title may prove his birth; a professorial chair his study and acquirement; but it is the habitual carriage of the umbrella that is the stamp of Respectability. The umbrella has become the acknowledged index of social position.

Robinson Crusoe presents us with a touching instance of the hankering after them inherent in the civilised and educated mind. To the superficial, the hot suns of Juan Fernandez may sufficiently account for his quaint choice of a luxury; but surely one who had borne the hard labour of a seaman under the tropics for all these years could have supported an excursion after goats or a peaceful *constitutional* arm in arm with the nude Friday. No, it was not this: the memory of a vanished respectability called for some outward manifestation, and the result was — an umbrella. A pious castaway might have rigged up a belfry and solaced his Sunday mornings with the mimicry of church-bells; but Crusoe was rather a moralist than a pietist, and his leaf-umbrella is as fine an example of the civilised mind striving to express itself under adverse circumstances as we have ever met with.

It is not for nothing, either, that the umbrella has become the very foremost badge of modern civilisation — the Urim and Thummim of respectability. Its pregnant symbolism has taken its rise in the most natural manner. Consider, for a moment, when umbrellas were first introduced into this country, what manner of men would use them, and what class would adhere to the useless but ornamental cane. The first, without doubt, would be the hypochondriacal, out of solicitude for their health, or the frugal, out of care for their raiment; the second, it is equally plain, would include the fop, the fool, and the Bobadil. Any one acquainted with the growth of Society, and knowing out of what small seeds of cause are produced great revolutions, and wholly new conditions of intercourse, sees from this simple thought how the carriage of an umbrella came to indicate frugality, judicious regard for bodily welfare, and scorn for mere outward adornment, and, in one word, all those homely and solid virtues implied in the term

RESPECTABILITY. Not that the umbrella's costliness has nothing to do with its great influence. Its possession, besides symbolising (as we have already indicated) the 60 change from wild Esau to plain Jacob dwelling in tents, implies a certain comfortable provision of fortune. It is not every one that can expose twenty-six shillings' worth of property to so many chances of loss and theft. So strongly do we feel on this point, indeed, that we are almost inclined to consider all who possess really well-conditioned umbrellas as worthy of the Franchise. They have a qualification standing in their lobbies; they carry a sufficient stake in the common-weal below their arm. One who bears with him an umbrella — such a complicated structure of whalebone, of silk, and of cane, that it becomes a very microcosm of modern industry — is necessarily a man of peace. A half-crown cane may be applied to an offender's head on a very moderate provocation; but a six-and-twenty shilling silk is a possession too precious to be adventured in the shock of war.

These are but a few glances at how umbrellas (in the general) came to their present high estate. But the true Umbrella-Philosopher meets with far stranger applications as he goes about the streets.

Umbrellas, like faces, acquire a certain sympathy with the individual who carries them: indeed, they are far more capable of betraying his trust; for whereas a face is given to us so far ready made, and all our power over it is in frowning, and laughing, and grimacing, during the first three or four decades of life, each umbrella is selected from a whole shopful, as being most consonant to the purchaser's disposition. An undoubted power of diagnosis rests with the practised Umbrella-Philosopher. O you who lisp, and amble, and change the fashion of your countenances — you who conceal all these, how little do you think that you left a proof of your weakness in our umbrella-stand — that even now, as you shake out the folds to meet the thickening snow, we read in its ivory handle the outward and visible sign of your snobbery, or from the exposed gingham of its cover detect, through coat and waistcoat, the hidden hypocrisy of the "*dickey*"! But alas! even 61 the umbrella is no certain criterion. The falsity and the folly of the human race have degraded that graceful symbol to the ends of dishonesty; and while some umbrellas, from carelessness in selection, are not strikingly characteristic (for it is only in what a man loves that he displays his real nature), others, from certain prudential motives, are chosen directly opposite to the person's disposition. A mendacious umbrella is a sign of great moral degradation. Hypocrisy naturally shelters itself below a silk; while the fast youth goes to visit his religious friends armed with the decent and reputable gingham. May it not be said of the bearers of these inappropriate umbrellas that they go about the streets "with a lie in their right hand"?

The kings of Siam, as we read, besides having a graduated social scale of umbrellas (which was a good thing), prevented the great bulk of their subjects from having any at all, which was certainly a bad thing. We should be sorry to believe that this Eastern legislator was a fool — the idea of an aristocracy of umbrellas is too philosophic to have originated in a nobody, — and we have accordingly taken exceeding pains to find out the reason of this harsh restriction. We think we have succeeded; but, while admiring the principle at which he aimed, and while cordially recognising in the Siamese potentate the only man before ourselves who had taken a real grasp of the umbrella, we must be allowed to point out how unphilosophically the great man acted in this particular. His object, plainly, was to prevent any unworthy persons from bearing the sacred symbol of domestic virtues. We cannot excuse his limiting these virtues to the circle of his court. We must only remember that such was the feeling of the age in which he lived. Liberalism had not yet raised the war-cry of the working classes. But here was his mistake: it was a needless regulation. Except in a very few cases of hypocrisy joined to a powerful intellect, men, not by nature *umbrellarians*, have tried again and again to become so by art, and yet have failed — have expended their patrimony in 62 the purchase of umbrella after umbrella, and yet have systematically lost them, and have finally, with contrite spirits and shrunken purses, given up their vain struggle, and relied on theft and borrowing for the remainder of their lives. This is the most remarkable fact that we have had occasion to notice; and yet we challenge the candid reader to call it in question. Now, as there cannot be any *moral selection* in a mere dead piece of furniture — as the umbrella cannot be supposed to have an affinity for individual men equal and reciprocal to that which men certainly feel toward individual umbrellas, — we took the trouble of consulting a scientific friend as to whether there was any possible physical explanation of the phenomenon. He was unable to supply a plausible theory, or even hypothesis; but we extract from his letter the following interesting passage relative to the physical peculiarities of umbrellas: "Not the least important, and by far the most curious property of the umbrella, is the energy which it displays in affecting the atmospheric strata. There is no fact in meteorology better established — indeed, it is almost the only one on which meteorologists are agreed — than that the carriage of an umbrella produces desiccation of the air; while if it be left at home, aqueous vapour is largely produced, and is soon deposited in the form of rain. No theory," my friend continues, "competent to explain this hygrometric law has been given (as far as I am aware) by Herschel, Dove, Glaisher, Tait, Buchan, or any other writer; nor do I pretend to supply the defect. I venture, however, to throw out the conjecture that it will be ultimately found to belong to the same class of natural laws as that agreeable to which a slice of toast always descends with the buttered surface downwards."

But it is time to draw to a close. We could expatiate much longer upon this topic, but want of space constrains us to leave unfinished these few desultory remarks — slender contributions towards a subject which has fallen sadly backward, and which, we grieve to say, was better understood 63 by the king of Siam in 1686 than by all the philosophers of to-day. If, however, we have awakened in any rational mind an interest in the symbolism of umbrellas — in any generous heart a more complete sympathy with the dumb companion of his daily walk, — or in any grasping spirit a pure notion of respectability strong enough to make him expend his six-and-twenty shillings — we shall have deserved well of the world, to say nothing of the many industrious persons employed in the manufacture of the article.

"This paper was written in collaboration with James Walter Ferrier, and if reprinted this is to be stated, though his principal collaboration was to lie back in an easy-chair and laugh." — [R. L. S., *Oct.* 25, 1894.]

V

THE PHILOSOPHY OF NOMENCLATURE

“How many Cæsars and Pompeys, by mere inspirations of the names, have been rendered worthy of them? And how many are there, who might have done exceeding well in the world, had not their characters and spirits been totally depressed and Nicodemus’d into nothing?” — ”Tristram Shandy,” vol. i. chap. xix.

Such were the views of the late Walter Shandy, Esq., Turkey merchant. To the best of my belief, Mr. Shandy is the first who fairly pointed out the incalculable influence of nomenclature upon the whole life — who seems first to have recognised the one child, happy in an heroic appellation, soaring upwards on the wings of fortune, and the other, like the dead sailor in his shotted hammock, haled down by sheer weight of name into the abysses of social failure. Solomon possibly had his eye on some such theory when he said that “a good name is better than precious ointment”; and perhaps we may trace a similar spirit in the compilers of the English Catechism, and the affectionate interest with which they linger round the catechumen’s name at the very threshold of their work. But, be these as they may, I think no one can censure me for appending, in pursuance of the expressed wish of his son, the Turkey merchant’s 64 name to his system, and pronouncing, without further preface, a short epitome of the “Shandean Philosophy of Nomenclature.”

To begin, then: the influence of our name makes itself felt from the very cradle. As a schoolboy I remember the pride with which I hailed Robin Hood, Robert Bruce, and Robert le Diable as my name-fellows; and the feeling of sore disappointment that fell on my heart when I found a freebooter or a general who did not share with me a single one of my numerous *prænomina*. Look at the delight with which two children find they have the same name. They are friends from that moment forth; they have a bond of union stronger than exchange of nuts and sweetmeats. This feeling, I own, wears off in later life. Our names lose their freshness and interest, become trite and indifferent. But this, dear reader, is merely one of the sad effects of those “shades of the prison-house” which come gradually betwixt us and nature with advancing years; it affords no weapon against the philosophy of names.

In after life, although we fail to trace its working, that name which careless godfathers lightly applied to your unconscious infancy will have been moulding your character, and influencing with irresistible power the whole course of your earthly fortunes. But the last name, overlooked by Mr. Shandy, is no whit less important as a condition of success. Family names, we must recollect, are but inherited nicknames; and if the *sobriquet* were applicable to the ancestor, it is most likely applicable to the descendant also. You would not expect to find Mr. M’Phun acting as a mute, or Mr. M’Lumpha excelling as a professor of dancing. Therefore, in what follows, we shall consider names, independent of whether they are first or last. And to begin with, look what a pull *Cromwell* had over *Pym* — the one name full of a resonant imperialism, the other, mean, pettifogging, and unheroic to a degree. Who would expect eloquence from *Pym* — who would read poems 65 by *Pym* — who would bow to the opinion of *Pym*? He might have been a dentist, but he should never have aspired to be a statesman. I can only wonder that he succeeded as he did. Pym and Habakkuk stand first upon the roll of men who have triumphed, by sheer force of genius, over the most unfavourable appellations. But even these have suffered; and, had they been more fitly named, the one might have been Lord Protector, and the other have shared the laurels with Isaiah. In this matter we must not forget that all our great poets have borne great names. Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Wordsworth, Shelley — what a constellation of lordly words! Not a single common-place name among them — not a Brown, not a Jones, not a Robinson; they are all names that one would stop and look at on a door-plate. Now, imagine if *Pepys* had tried to clamber somehow into the enclosure of poetry, what a blot would that word have made upon the list! The thing was impossible. In the first place a certain natural consciousness that men would have held him down to the level of his name, would have prevented him from rising above the Pepsine standard, and so haply withheld him altogether from attempting verse. Next, the book-sellers would refuse to publish, and the world to read them, on the mere evidence of the fatal appellation. And now, before I close this section, I must say one word as to *punnable* names, names that stand alone, that have a significance and life apart from him that bears them. These are the bitterest of all. One friend of mine goes bowed and humbled through life under the weight of this misfortune; for it is an awful thing when a man’s name is a joke, when he cannot be mentioned without exciting merriment, and when even the intimation of his death bids fair to carry laughter into many a home.

So much for people who are badly named. Now for people who are *too* well named, who go top-heavy from the font, who are baptized into a false position, and find themselves 66 beginning life eclipsed under the fame of some of the great ones of the past. A man, for instance, called William Shakespeare could never dare to write plays.

He is thrown into too humbling an apposition with the author of *Hamlet.* His own name coming after is such an anti-climax. “The plays of William Shakespeare”? says the reader — ”O no! The plays of William Shakespeare Cockerill,” and he throws the book aside. In wise pursuance of such views, Mr. John Milton Hengler, who not long since delighted us in this favoured town, has never attempted to write an epic, but has chosen a new path, and has excelled upon the tight-rope. A marked example of triumph over this is the case of Mr. Dante Gabriel Rossetti. On the face of the matter, I should have advised him to imitate the pleasing modesty of the last-named gentleman, and confine his ambition to the sawdust. But Mr. Rossetti has triumphed. He has even dared to translate from his mighty name-father; and the voice of fame supports him in his boldness.

Dear readers, one might write a year upon this matter. A lifetime of comparison and research could scarce suffice for its elucidation. So here, if it please you, we shall let it rest. Slight as these notes have been, I would that the great founder of the system had been alive to see them. How he had warmed and brightened, how his persuasive eloquence would have fallen on the ears of Toby; and what a letter of praise and sympathy would not the editor have received before the month was out! Alas, the thing was not to be. Walter Shandy died and was duly buried, while yet his theory lay forgotten and neglected by his fellow-countrymen. But, reader, the day will come, I hope, when a paternal government will stamp out, as seeds of national weakness, all depressing patronymics, and when godfathers and godmothers will soberly and earnestly debate the interest of the nameless one, and not rush blindfold to the christening. In these days there shall be written a “Godfather’s Assistant,” in shape of a dictionary 67 of names, with their concomitant virtues and vices; and this book shall be scattered broadcast through the land, and shall be on the table of every one eligible for god-fathership, until such a thing as a vicious or untoward appellation shall have ceased from off the face of the earth.

NOTES AND ESSAYS

I

A RETROSPECT

(*A Fragment: written at Dunoon, 1870*)

If there is anything that delights me in Hazlitt, beyond the charm of style and the unconscious portrait of a vain and powerful spirit, which his works present, it is the loving and tender way in which he returns again to the memory of the past. These little recollections of bygone happiness were too much a part of the man to be carelessly or poorly told. The imaginary landscapes and visions of the most ecstatic dreamer can never rival such recollections, told simply perhaps, but still told (as they could not fail to be) with precision, delicacy, and evident delight. They are too much loved by the author not to be palated by the reader. But beyond the mere felicity of pencil, the nature of the piece could never fail to move my heart. When I read his essay "On the Past and Future," every word seemed to be something I had said myself. I could have thought he had been eavesdropping at the doors of my heart, so entire was the coincidence between his writing and my thought. It is a sign perhaps of a somewhat vain disposition. The future is nothing; but the past is myself, my own history, the seed of my present thoughts, the mould of my present disposition. It is not in vain that I return to the nothings 72 of my childhood; for every one of them has left some stamp upon me or put some fetter on my boasted free-will. In the past is my present fate; and in the past also is my real life. It is not the past only, but the past that has been many years in that tense. The doings and actions of last year are as uninteresting and vague to me as the blank gulf of the future, the *tabula rasa* that may never be anything else. I remember a confused hotch-potch of unconnected events, a "chaos without form, and void"; but nothing salient or striking rises from the dead level of "flat, stale, and unprofitable" generality. When we are looking at a landscape we think ourselves pleased; but it is only when it comes back upon us by the fire o' nights that we can disentangle the main charm from the thick of particulars. It is just so with what is lately past. It is too much loaded with detail to be distinct; and the canvas is too large for the eye to encompass. But this is no more the case when our recollections have been strained long enough through the hour-glass of time; when they have been the burthen of so much thought, the charm and comfort of so many a vigil. All that is worthless has been sieved and sifted out of them. Nothing remains but the brightest lights and the darkest shadows. When we see a mountain country near at hand, the spurs and haunches crowd up in eager rivalry, and the whole range seems to have shrugged its shoulders to its ears, till we cannot tell the higher from the lower: but when we are far off, these lesser prominences are melted back into the bosom of the rest, or have set behind the round horizon of the plain, and the highest peaks stand forth in lone and sovereign dignity against the sky. It is just the same with our recollections. We require to draw back and shade our eyes before the picture dawns upon us in full breadth and outline. Late years are still in limbo to us; but the more distant past is all that we possess in life, the corn already harvested and stored for ever in the grange of memory. The doings of to-day at some future time will gain the required offing; I shall learn to love the 73 things of my adolescence, as Hazlitt loved them, and as I love already the recollections of my childhood. They will gather interest with every year. They will ripen in forgotten corners of my memory; and some day I shall waken and find them vested with new glory and new pleasantness.

It is for stirring the chords of memory, then, that I love Hazlitt's essays, and for the same reason (I remember) he himself threw in his allegiance to Rousseau, saying of him, what was so true of his own writings: "He seems to gather up the past moments of his being like drops of honey-dew to distil some precious liquor from them; his alternate pleasures and pains are the bead-roll that he tells over and piously worships; he makes a rosary of the flowers of hope and fancy that strewed his earliest years." How true are these words when applied to himself! and how much I thank him that it was so! All my childhood is a golden age to me. I have no recollection of bad weather. Except one or two storms where grandeur had impressed itself on my mind, the whole time seems steeped in sunshine. "*Et ego in Arcadia vixi*" would be no empty boast upon my grave. If I desire to live long, it is that I may have the more to look back upon. Even to one, like the unhappy Duchess,

"Acquainted with sad misery
As the tamed galley-slave is with his oar,"

and seeing over the night of troubles no "lily-wristed morn" of hope appear, a retrospect of even chequered and doubtful happiness in the past may sweeten the bitterness of present tears. And here I may be excused if I quote a passage from an unpublished drama (the unpublished is perennial, I fancy) which the author believed was not all devoid of the flavour of our elder dramatists. However this may be, it expresses better than I could some further thoughts on this same subject. The heroine is taken by a minister to the grave, where already some have been 74 recently buried, and where her sister's lover is destined to rejoin them on the following day.

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What led me to the consideration of this subject, and what has made me take up my pen to-night, is the rather strange coincidence of two very different accidents — a prophecy of my future and a return into my past. No later than yesterday, seated in the coffee-room here, there came into the tap of the hotel a poor mad Highland woman. The noise of her strained, thin voice brought me out to see her. I could conceive that she had been pretty once, but that was many years ago. She was now withered and fallen-looking. Her hair was thin and straggling, her dress poor and scanty. Her moods changed as rapidly as a weathercock before a thunderstorm. One moment she said her "mutch" was the only thing that gave her comfort, and the next she slackened the strings and let it back upon her neck, in a passion at it for making her too hot. Her talk was a wild, somewhat weird, farrago of utterly meaningless balderdash, mere inarticulate gabble, snatches of old Jacobite ballads and exaggerated phrases from the drama, to which she suited equally exaggerated action. She "babbled of green fields" and Highland glens; she prophesied "the drawing of the claymore," with a lofty disregard of cause or common-sense; and she broke out suddenly, with uplifted hands and eyes, into ecstatic "Heaven bless hims!" and "Heaven forgive hims!" She had been a camp-follower in her younger days, and she was never tired of expatiating on the gallantry, the fame, and the beauty of the 42nd Highlanders. Her patriotism knew no bounds, and her prolixity was much on the same scale. This Witch of Endor offered to tell my fortune, with much dignity and proper oracular enunciation. But on my holding forth my hand a somewhat ludicrous incident 75 occurred. "Na, na," she said; "wait till I have a draw of my pipe." Down she sat in the corner, puffing vigorously and regaling the lady behind the counter with conversation more remarkable for stinging satire than prophetic dignity. The person in question had "mair weeg than hair on her head" (did not the chignon plead guilty at these words?) — "wad be better if she had less tongue" — and would come at last to the grave, a goal which, in a few words, she invested with "warning circumstance" enough to make a Stoic shudder. Suddenly, in the midst of this, she rose up and beckoned me to approach. The oracles of my Highland sorceress had no claim to consideration except in the matter of obscurity. In "question hard and sentence intricate" she beat the priests of Delphi; in bold, unvarnished falsity (as regards the past) even spirit-rapping was a child to her. All that I could gather may be thus summed up shortly: that I was to visit America, that I was to be very happy, and that I was to be much upon the sea, predictions which, in consideration of an uneasy stomach, I can scarcely think agreeable with one another. Two incidents alone relieved the dead level of idiocy and incomprehensible gabble. The first was the comical announcement that "when I drew fish to the Marquis of Bute, I should take care of my sweetheart," from which I deduce the fact that at some period of my life I shall drive a fishmonger's cart. The second, in the middle of such nonsense, had a touch of the tragic. She suddenly looked at me with an eager glance, and dropped my hand saying, in what were tones of misery or a very good affectation of them, "Black eyes!" A moment after she was at work again. It is as well to mention that I have not black eyes.

This incident, strangely blended of the pathetic and the ludicrous, set my mind at work upon the future; but I could find little interest in the study. Even the predictions of my sibyl failed to allure me, nor could life's prospect charm and detain my attention like its retrospect.

Not far from Dunoon is Rosemore, a house in which I had spent a week or so in my very distant childhood, how distant I have no idea; and one may easily conceive how I looked forward to revisiting this place and so renewing contact with my former self. I was under necessity to be early up, and under necessity also, in the teeth of a bitter spring north-easter, to clothe myself warmly on the morning of my long-promised excursion. The day was as bright as it was cold. Vast irregular masses of white and purple cumulus drifted rapidly over the sky. The great hills, brown with the bloomless heather, were here and there buried in blue shadows, and streaked here and there with sharp stripes of sun. The new-fired larches were green in the glens; and "pale primroses" hid themselves in mossy hollows and under hawthorn roots. All these things were new to me; for I had noticed none of these beauties in my younger days, neither the larch woods, nor the winding road edged in between field and flood, nor the broad, ruffled bosom of the hill-surrounded loch. It was, above all, the height of these hills that astonished me. I remembered the existence of hills, certainly, but the picture in my memory was low, featureless, and uninteresting. They seemed to have kept pace with me in my growth, but to a gigantic scale; and the villas that I remembered as half-way up the slope seemed to have been left behind like myself, and now only ringed their mighty feet, white among the newly kindled woods. As I felt myself on the road at last that I had been dreaming for these many days before, a perfect intoxication of joy took hold upon me; and I was so pleased at my own happiness that I could let none past me till I had taken them into my confidence. I asked my way from every one, and took good care to let 77 them all know, before they left me, what my object was, and how many years had elapsed since my last visit. I wonder what the good folk thought of me and my communications.

At last, however, after much inquiry, I arrive at the place, make my peace with the gardener, and enter. My disillusion dates from the opening of the garden door. I repine, I find a reluctation of spirit against believing that this is the place. What, is this kailyard that inexhaustible paradise of a garden in which M — — and I found “elbow-room,” and expatiated together without sensible constraint? Is that little turfed slope the huge and perilous green bank down which I counted it a feat, and the gardener a sin, to run? Are these two squares of stone, some two feet high, the pedestals on which I walked with such a penetrating sense of dizzy elevation, and which I had expected to find on a level with my eyes? Ay, the place is no more like what I expected than this bleak April day is like the glorious September with which it is incorporated in my memory. I look at the gardener, disappointment in my face, and tell him that the place seems sorrily shrunken from the high estate that it had held in my remembrance, and he returns, with quiet laughter, by asking me how long it is since I was there. I tell him, and he remembers me. Ah! I say, I was a great nuisance, I believe. But no, my good gardener will plead guilty to having kept no record of my evil-doings, and I find myself much softened toward the place and willing to take a kinder view and pardon its shortcomings for the sake of the gardener and his pretended recollection of myself. And it is just at this stage (to complete my re-establishment) that I see a little boy — the gardener’s grandchild — just about the same age and the same height that I must have been in the days when I was here last. My first feeling is one of almost anger, to see him playing on the gravel where I had played before, as if he had usurped something of my identity; but next moment I feel a softening and a sort of rising and qualm 78 of the throat, accompanied by a pricking heat in the eye balls. I hastily join conversation with the child, and inwardly felicitate myself that the gardener is opportunely gone for the key of the house. But the child is a sort of homily to me. He is perfectly quiet and resigned, an unconscious hermit. I ask him jocularly if he gets as much abused as I used to do for running down the bank; but the child’s perfect seriousness of answer staggers me — ”O no, grandpapa doesn’t allow it — why should he?” I feel caught: I stand abashed at the reproof; I must not expose my childishness again to this youthful disciplinarian, and so I ask him very stately what he is going to be — a good serious practical question, out of delicacy for his parts. He answers that he is going to be a missionary to China, and tells me how a missionary once took him on his knee and told him about missionary work, and asked him if he, too, would not like to become one, to which the child had simply answered in the affirmative. The child is altogether so different from what I have been, is so absolutely complementary to what I now am, that I turn away not a little abashed from the conversation, for there is always something painful in sudden contact with the good qualities that we do not possess. Just then the grandfather returns; and I go with him to the summer-house, where I used to learn my Catechism, to the wall on which M — — and I thought it no small exploit to walk upon, and all the other places that I remembered.

In fine, the matter being ended, I turn and go my way home to the hotel, where, in the cold afternoon, I write these notes with the table and chair drawn as near the fire as the rug and the French polish will permit.

One other thing I may as well make a note of, and that is how there arises that strange contradiction of the hills being higher than I had expected and everything near at hand being so ridiculously smaller. This is a question I think easily answered: the very terms of the problem suggest the solution. To everything near at hand I applied 79 my own stature, as a sort of natural unit of measurement, so that I had no actual image of their dimensions but their ratio to myself; so, of course, as one term of the proportion changed, the other changed likewise, and as my own height increased my notion of things near at hand became equally expanded. But the hills, mark you, were out of my reach: I could not apply myself to them: I had an actual, instead of a proportional eidolon of their magnitude; so that, of course (my eye being larger and flatter nowadays, and so the image presented to me then being in sober earnest smaller than the image presented to me now), I found the hills nearly as much too great as I had found the other things too small.

[*Added the next morning.*] — He who indulges habitually in the intoxicating pleasures of imagination, for the very reason that he reaps a greater pleasure than others, must resign himself to a keener pain, a more intolerable and utter prostration. It is quite possible, and even comparatively easy, so to enfold oneself in pleasant fancies that the realities of life may seem but as the white snow-shower in the street, that only gives a relish to the swept hearth and lively fire within. By such means I have forgotten hunger, I have sometimes eased pain, and I have invariably changed into the most pleasant hours of the day those very vacant and idle seasons which would otherwise have hung most heavily upon my hand. But all this is attained by the undue prominence of purely imaginative joys, and consequently the weakening and almost the destruction of reality. This is buying at too great a price. There are seasons when the imagination becomes somehow tranced and surfeited, as it is with me this morning; and then upon what can we fall back? The very faculty that we have fostered and trusted has failed us in the hour of trial; and we have so blunted and enfeebled our appetite for the others that they are subjectively dead to us. It is just as though a farmer should plant all his fields in potatoes, 80 instead of varying them with grain and pasture; and so, when the disease comes, lose all his harvest, while his neighbours, perhaps, may balance the profit and the loss. Do not suppose that I am exaggerating when I talk about all pleasures seeming stale. To me, at least, the edge of almost everything is put on by imagination; and even nature, in these days when the fancy is drugged and useless, wants half the charm it has in better moments. I can no longer see satyrs in the thicket, or picture a highwayman riding down the lane. The fiat of indifference has gone forth: I am vacant, unprofitable: a leaf on a river with no volition and no aim: a mental drunkard the morning after an intellectual debauch. Yes, I have a more subtle opium in my own mind than any apothecary's drug; but it has a sting of its own, and leaves me as flat and helpless as does the other.

The quotation here promised from one of the author's own early dramatic efforts (a tragedy of Semiramis) is not supplied in the MS. — [Sir Sidney Colvin's Note.]

"The old pythoness was right," adds the author in a note appended to his MS. in 1887; "I have been happy: I did go to America (am even going again — unless — —): and I have been twice and once upon the deep." The seafaring part of the prophecy remained to be fulfilled on a far more extended scale in his Pacific voyages of 1888-90. — [Sir Sidney Colvin's Note.]

II

COCKERMOUTH AND KESWICK

(*A Fragment*: 1871)
Very much as a painter half closes his eyes so that some salient unity may disengage itself from among the crowd of details, and what he sees may thus form itself into a whole; very much on the same principle, I may say, I allow a considerable lapse of time to intervene between any of my little journeyings and the attempt to chronicle them. I cannot describe a thing that is before me at the moment, or that has been before me only a very little while before; I must allow my recollections to get thoroughly strained free from all chaff till nothing be except the pure gold; allow my memory to choose out what is truly memorable by a process of natural selection; and I piously believe 81 that in this way I ensure the Survival of the Fittest. If I make notes for future use, or if I am obliged to write letters during the course of my little excursion, I so interfere with the process that I can never again find out what is worthy of being preserved, or what should be given in full length, what in torso, or what merely in profile. This process of incubation may be unreasonably prolonged; and I am somewhat afraid that I have made this mistake with the present journey. Like a bad daguerreotype, great part of it has been entirely lost; I can tell you nothing about the beginning and nothing about the end; but the doings of some fifty or sixty hours about the middle remain quite distinct and definite, like a little patch of sunshine on a long, shadowy plain, or the one spot on an old picture that has been restored by the dexterous hand of the cleaner. I remember a tale of an old Scots minister, called upon suddenly to preach, who had hastily snatched an old sermon out of his study and found himself in the pulpit before he noticed that the rats had been making free with his manuscript and eaten the first two or three pages away; he gravely explained to the congregation how he found himself situated; “And now,” said he, “let us just begin where the rats have left off.” I must follow the divine’s example, and take up the thread of my discourse where it first distinctly issues from the limbo of forgetfulness.

COCKERMOUTH

I was lighting my pipe as I stepped out of the inn at Cockermouth, and did not raise my head until I was fairly in the street. When I did so, it flashed upon me that I was in England; the evening sunlight lit up English houses, English faces, an English conformation of street, — as it were, an English atmosphere blew against my face. There is nothing perhaps more puzzling (if one thing in sociology can ever really be more unaccountable than another) than the great gulf that is set between England 82 and Scotland — a gulf so easy in appearance, in reality so difficult to traverse. Here are two people almost identical in blood; pent up together on one small island, so that their intercourse (one would have thought) must be as close as that of prisoners who shared one cell of the Bastille; the same in language and religion; and yet a few years of quarrelsome isolation — a mere forenoon's tiff, as one may call it, in comparison with the great historical cycles — has so separated their thoughts and ways that not unions, not mutual dangers, nor steamers, nor railways, nor all the king's horses and all the king's men, seem able to obliterate the broad distinction. In the trituration of another century or so the corners may disappear; but in the meantime, in the year of grace 1871, I was as much in a new country as if I had been walking out of the Hotel St. Antoine at Antwerp.

I felt a little thrill of pleasure at my heart as I realised the change, and strolled away up the street with my hands behind my back, noting in a dull, sensual way how foreign, and yet how friendly, were the slopes of the gables and the colour of the tiles, and even the demeanour and voices of the gossips round about me.

Wandering in this aimless humour, I turned up a lane and found myself following the course of the bright little river. I passed first one and then another, then a third, several couples out love-making in the spring evening; and a consequent feeling of loneliness was beginning to grow upon me, when I came to a dam across the river, and a mill — a great, gaunt promontory of building, — half on dry ground and half arched over the stream. The road here drew in its shoulders, and crept through between the landward extremity of the mill and a little garden enclosure, with a small house and a large signboard within its privet hedge. I was pleased to fancy this an inn, and drew little etchings in fancy of a sanded parlour, and three-cornered spittoons, and a society of parochial gossips seated within over their churchwardens; but as I drew near, the board 83 displayed its superscription, and I could read the name of Smethurst, and the designation of "Canadian Felt Hat Manufacturers." There was no more hope of evening fellowship, and I could only stroll on by the riverside, under the trees. The water was dappled with slanting sunshine, and dusted all over with a little mist of flying insects. There were some amorous ducks, also, whose love-making reminded me of what I had seen a little farther down. But the road grew sad, and I grew weary; and as I was perpetually haunted with the terror of a return of the tic that had been playing such ruin in my head a week ago, I turned and went back to the inn, and supper, and my bed.

The next morning, at breakfast, I communicated to the smart waitress my intention of continuing down the coast and through Whitehaven to Furness, and, as I might have expected, I was instantly confronted by that last and most worrying form of interference, that chooses to introduce tradition and authority into the choice of a man's own pleasures. I can excuse a person combating my religious or philosophical heresies, because them I have deliberately accepted, and am ready to justify by present argument. But I do not seek to justify my pleasures. If I prefer tame scenery to grand, a little hot sunshine over lowland parks and woodlands to the war of the elements round the summit of Mont Blanc; or if I prefer a pipe of mild tobacco, and the company of one or two chosen companions, to a ball where I feel myself very hot, awkward, and weary, I merely state these preferences as facts, and do not seek to establish them as principles. This is not the general rule, however, and accordingly the waitress was shocked, as one might be at a heresy, to hear the route that I had sketched out for myself. Everybody who came to Cockermouth for pleasure, it appeared, went on to Keswick. It was in vain that I put up a little plea for the liberty of the subject; it was in vain that I said I should prefer to go to Whitehaven. I was told that there was "nothing to see 84 there" — that weary, hackneyed, old falsehood; and at last, as the handmaiden began to look really concerned, I gave way, as men always do in such circumstances, and agreed that I was to leave for Keswick by a train in the early evening.

Cockermouth itself, on the same authority, was a place with “nothing to see”; nevertheless I saw a good deal, and retain a pleasant, vague picture of the town and all its surroundings. I might have dodged happily enough all day about the main street and up to the castle and in and out of byways, but the curious attraction that leads a person in a strange place to follow, day after day, the same round, and to make set habits for himself in a week or ten days, led me half unconsciously up the same road that I had gone the evening before. When I came up to the hat manufactory, Smethurst himself was standing in the garden gate. He was brushing one Canadian felt hat, and several others had been put to await their turn one above the other on his own head, so that he looked something like the typical Jew old-clothesman. As I drew near, he came sidling out of the doorway to accost me, with so curious an expression on his face that I instinctively prepared myself to apologise for some unwitting trespass. His first question rather confirmed me in this belief, for it was whether or not he had seen me going up this way last night; and after having answered in the affirmative, I waited in some alarm for the rest of my indictment. But the good man’s heart was full of peace; and he stood there brushing his hats and prattling on about fishing, and walking, and the pleasures of convalescence, in a bright shallow stream that kept me pleased and interested, I could scarcely say how. As he went on, he warmed to his subject, and laid his hats aside to go along the water-side and show me where the large trout commonly lay, underneath an overhanging bank;[85] and he was much disappointed, for my sake, that there were none visible just then. Then he wandered off on to another tack, and stood a great while out in the middle of a meadow in the hot sunshine, trying to make out that he had known me before, or, if not me, some friend of mine — merely, I believe, out of a desire that we should feel more friendly and at our ease with one another. At last he made a little speech to me, of which I wish I could recollect the very words, for they were so simple and unaffected that they put all the best writing and speaking to the blush; as it is, I can recall only the sense, and that perhaps imperfectly. He began by saying that he had little things in his past life that it gave him especial pleasure to recall; and that the faculty of receiving such sharp impressions had now died out in himself, but must at my age be still quite lively and active. Then he told me that he had a little raft afloat on the river above the dam which he was going to lend me, in order that I might be able to look back, in after years, upon having done so, and get great pleasure from the recollection. Now, I have a friend of my own who will forego present enjoyments and suffer much present inconvenience for the sake of manufacturing “a reminiscence” for himself; but there was something singularly refined in this pleasure that the hatmaker found in making reminiscences for others; surely no more simple or unselfish luxury can be imagined. After he had unmoored his little embarkation, and seen me safely shoved off into mid-stream, he ran away back to his hats with the air of a man who had only just recollected that he had anything to do.

I did not stay very long on the raft. It ought to have been very nice punting about there in the cool shade of the trees, or sitting moored to an overhanging root; but perhaps the very notion that I was bound in gratitude specially to enjoy my little cruise, and cherish its recollection, turned the whole thing from a pleasure into a duty. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that I soon wearied and came ashore again, and that it gives me more pleasure to 86 recall the man himself and his simple, happy conversation, so full of gusto and sympathy, than anything possibly connected with his crank, insecure embarkation. In order to avoid seeing him, for I was not a little ashamed of myself for having failed to enjoy this treat sufficiently, I determined to continue up the river, and, at all prices, to find some other way back into the town in time for dinner. As I went, I was thinking of Smethurst with admiration; a look into that man’s mind was like a retrospect over the smiling champaign of his past life, and very different from the Sinai-gorges up which one looks for a terrified moment into the dark souls of many good, many wise, and many prudent men. I cannot be very grateful to such men for their excellence, and wisdom, and prudence. I find myself facing as stoutly as I can a hard, combative existence, full of doubt, difficulties, defeats, disappointments, and dangers, quite a hard enough life without their dark countenances at my elbow, so that what I want is a happy-minded Smethurst placed here and there at ugly corners of my life’s wayside, preaching his gospel of quiet and contentment.

ANOTHER

I was shortly to meet with an evangelist of another stamp. After I had forced my way through a gentleman's grounds, I came out on the high road, and sat down to rest myself on a heap of stones at the top of a long hill, with Cockermouth lying snugly at the bottom. An Irish beggar-woman, with a beautiful little girl by her side, came up to ask for alms, and gradually fell to telling me the little tragedy of her life. Her own sister, she told me, had seduced her husband from her after many years of married life, and the pair had fled, leaving her destitute, with the little girl upon her hands. She seemed quite hopeful and cheery, and, though she was unaffectedly sorry for the loss of her husband's earnings, she made no pretence of despair at the loss of his affection; some day she would meet the 87 fugitives, and the law would see her duly righted, and in the meantime the smallest contribution was gratefully received. While she was telling all this in the most matter-of-fact way, I had been noticing the approach of a tall man, with a high white hat and darkish clothes. He came up the hill at a rapid pace, and joined our little group with a sort of half salutation. Turning at once to the woman, he asked her in a business-like way whether she had anything to do, whether she were a Catholic or a Protestant, whether she could read, and so forth; and then, after a few kind words and some sweeties to the child, he despatched the mother with some tracts about Biddy and the Priest, and the Orangeman's Bible. I was a little amused at his abrupt manner, for he was still a young man, and had somewhat the air of a navy officer; but he tackled me with great solemnity. I could make fun of what he said, for I do not think it was very wise; but the subject does not appear to me just now in a jesting light, so I shall only say that he related to me his own conversion, which had been effected (as is very often the case) through the agency of a gig accident, and that, after having examined me and diagnosed my case, he selected some suitable tracts from his repertory, gave them to me, and, bidding me God-speed, went on his way.

LAST OF SMETHURST

That evening I got into a third-class carriage on my way for Keswick, and was followed almost immediately by a burly man in brown clothes. This fellow-passenger was seemingly ill at ease, and kept continually putting his head out of the window, and asking the bystanders if they saw *him* coming. At last, when the train was already in motion, there was a commotion on the platform, and a way was left clear to our carriage door. *He* had arrived. In the hurry I could just see Smethurst, red and panting, thrust a couple of clay pipes into my companion's outstretched 88 hand, and hear him crying his farewells after us as we slipped out of the station at an ever accelerating pace. I said something about its being a close run, and the broad man, already engaged in filling one of the pipes, assented, and went on to tell me of his own stupidity in forgetting a necessary, and of how his friend had good-naturedly gone down town at the last moment to supply the omission. I mentioned that I had seen Mr. Smethurst already, and that he had been very polite to me; and we fell into a discussion of the hatter's merits that lasted some time and left us quite good friends at its conclusion. The topic was productive of goodwill. We exchanged tobacco and talked about the season, and agreed at last that we should go to the same hotel at Keswick and sup in company. As he had some business in the town which would occupy him some hour or so, on our arrival I was to improve the time and go down to the lake, that I might see a glimpse of the promised wonders.

The night had fallen already when I reached the water-side, at a place where many pleasure-boats are moored and ready for hire; and as I went along a stony path, between wood and water, a strong wind blew in gusts from the far end of the lake. The sky was covered with flying scud; and, as this was ragged, there was quite a wild chase of shadow and moon-glimpse over the surface of the shuddering water. I had to hold my hat on, and was growing rather tired, and inclined to go back in disgust, when a little incident occurred to break the tedium. A sudden and violent squall of wind sundered the low underwood, and at the same time there came one of those brief discharges of moonlight, which leaped into the opening thus made, and showed me three girls in the prettiest flutter and disorder. It was as though they had sprung out of the ground. I accosted them very politely in my capacity of stranger, and requested to be told the names of all manner of hills and woods and places that I did not wish to know, and we stood together for a while and had an amusing little talk. 89 The wind, too, made himself of the party, brought the colour into their faces, and gave them enough to do to repress their drapery;

and one of them, amid much giggling, had to pirouette round and round upon her toes (as girls do) when some specially strong gust had got the advantage over her. They were just high enough up in the social order not to be afraid to speak to a gentleman; and just low enough to feel a little tremor, a nervous consciousness of wrong-doing — of stolen waters, that gave a considerable zest to our most innocent interview. They were as much discomposed and fluttered, indeed, as if I had been a wicked baron proposing to elope with the whole trio; but they showed no inclination to go away, and I had managed to get them off hills and waterfalls and on to more promising subjects, when a young man was descried coming along the path from the direction of Keswick. Now whether he was the young man of one of my friends, or the brother of one of them, or indeed the brother of all, I do not know; but they incontinently said that they must be going, and went away up the path with friendly salutations. I need not say that I found the lake and the moonlight rather dull after their departure and speedily found my way back to potted herrings and whisky-and-water in the commercial room with my late fellow-traveller. In the smoking-room there was a tall dark man with a moustache, in an ulster coat, who had got the best place and was monopolising most of the talk; and, as I came in, a whisper came round to me from both sides, that this was the manager of a London theatre. The presence of such a man was a great event for Keswick, and I must own that the manager showed himself equal to his position. He had a large fat pocket-book, from which he produced poem after poem, written on the backs of letters or hotel-bills; and nothing could be more humorous than his recitation of these elegant extracts, except perhaps the anecdotes with which he varied the entertainment. Seeing, I suppose, something less countrified in my appearance than in most of the company, 90 he singled me out to corroborate some statements as to the depravity and vice of the aristocracy, and when he went on to describe some gilded saloon experiences, I am proud to say that he honoured my sagacity with one little covert wink before a second time appealing to me for confirmation. The wink was not thrown away; I went in up to the elbows with the manager, until I think that some of the glory of that great man settled by reflection upon me, and that I was as noticeably the second person in the smoking-room as he was the first. For a young man, this was a position of some distinction, I think you will admit....

III

ROADS

(1873)

No amateur will deny that he can find more pleasure in a single drawing, over which he can sit a whole quiet forenoon, and so gradually study himself into humour with the artist, than he can ever extract from the dazzle and accumulation of incongruous impressions that send him, weary and stupefied, out of some famous picture-gallery. But what is thus admitted with regard to art is not extended to the (so-called) natural beauties: no amount of excess in sublime mountain outline or the graces of cultivated lowland can do anything, it is supposed, to weaken or degrade the palate. We are not at all sure, however, that moderation, and a regimen tolerably austere, even in scenery, are not healthful and strengthening to the taste; and that the best school for a lover of nature is not to be found in one of those countries where there is no stage effect — nothing salient or sudden, — but a quiet spirit of orderly and harmonious beauty pervades all the details, 91 so that we can patiently attend to each of the little touches that strike in us, all of them together, the subdued note of the landscape. It is in scenery such as this that we find ourselves in the right temper to seek out small sequestered loveliness. The constant recurrence of similar combinations of colour and outline gradually forces upon us a sense of how the harmony has been built up, and we become familiar with something of nature's mannerism. This is the true pleasure of your "rural voluptuary," — not to remain awe-stricken before a Mount Chimborazo; not to sit deafened over the big drum in the orchestra, but day by day to teach himself some new beauty — to experience some new vague and tranquil sensation that has before evaded him. It is not the people who "have pined and hungered after nature many a year, in the great city pent," as Coleridge said in the poem that made Charles Lamb so much ashamed of himself; it is not those who make the greatest progress in this intimacy with her, or who are most quick to see and have the greatest gusto to enjoy. In this, as in everything else, it is minute knowledge and long-continued loving industry that make the true dilettante. A man must have thought much over scenery before he begins fully to enjoy it. It is no youngling enthusiasm on hill-tops that can possess itself of the last essence of beauty. Probably most people's heads are growing bare before they can see all in a landscape that they have the capability of seeing; and, even then, it will be only for one little moment of consummation before the faculties are again on the decline, and they that look out of the windows begin to be darkened and restrained in sight. Thus the study of nature should be carried forward thoroughly and with system. Every gratification should be rolled long under the tongue, and we should be always eager to analyse and compare, in order that we may be able to give some plausible reason for our admirations. True, it is difficult to put even approximately into words the kind of feelings thus called into play. There is a dangerous vice inherent in any such intellectual 92 refining upon vague sensation. The analysis of such satisfactions lends itself very readily to literary affectations; and we can all think of instances where it has shown itself apt to exercise a morbid influence, even upon an author's choice of language and the turn of his sentences. And yet there is much that makes the attempt attractive; for any expression, however imperfect, once given to a cherished feeling, seems a sort of legitimation of the pleasure we take in it. A common sentiment is one of those great goods that make life palatable and ever new. The knowledge that another has felt as we have felt, and seen things, even if they are little things, not much otherwise than we have seen them, will continue to the end to be one of life's choicest pleasures.

Let the reader, then, betake himself in the spirit we have recommended to some of the quieter kinds of English landscape. In those homely and placid agricultural districts, familiarity will bring into relief many things worthy of notice, and urge them pleasantly home to him by a sort of loving repetition; such as the wonderful life-giving speed of windmill sails above the stationary country; the occurrence and recurrence of the same church tower at the end of one long vista after another; and, conspicuous among these sources of quiet pleasure, the character and variety of the road itself, along which he takes his way. Not only near at hand, in the lithe contortions with which it adapts itself to the interchanges of level and slope, but far away also, when he sees a few hundred feet of it upheaved against a hill and shining in the afternoon sun, he will find it an object so changeful and enlivening that he can always pleasurably busy his mind about it. He may leave the river-side, or fall out of the way of villages, but the road he has always with him; and, in the true humour of observation, will find in that sufficient company. From its subtle windings and changes of level there arises a keen and continuous interest, that keeps the attention ever alert and cheerful. Every sensitive adjustment to the contour of the 93 ground, every little dip and swerve, seems instinct with life and an exquisite sense of balance and beauty. The road rolls upon the easy slopes of the country, like a long ship in the hollows of the sea. The very margins of waste ground, as they trench a little farther on the beaten way, or recede again to the shelter of the hedge, have something of the same free delicacy of line — of the same swing and wilfulness. You might think for a whole summer's day (and not have thought it any nearer an end by evening) what concourse and succession of circumstances has produced the least of these deflections; and it is, perhaps, just in this that we should look for the secret of their interest. A footpath across a meadow — in all its human waywardness and unaccountability, in all the *grata protervitas* of its varying direction — will always be more to us than a railroad well engineered through a difficult country. No reasoned sequence is thrust upon our attention: we seem to have slipped for one lawless little moment out of the iron rule of cause and effect; and so we revert at once to some of the pleasant old heresies of personification, always poetically orthodox, and attribute a sort of free will, an active and spontaneous life, to the white riband of road that lengthens out, and bends, and cunningly adapts itself to the inequalities of the land before our eyes. We remember, as we write, some miles of fine wide highway laid out with conscious æsthetic artifice through a broken and richly cultivated tract of country. It is said that the engineer had Hogarth's line of beauty in his mind as he laid them down. And the result is striking. One splendid satisfying sweep passes with easy transition into another, and there is nothing to trouble or dislocate the strong continuousness of the main line of the road. And yet there is something wanting. There is here no saving imperfection, none of these secondary curves and little trepidations of direction that carry, in 94 natural roads, our curiosity actively along with them. One feels at once that this road has not grown like a natural road, but has been laboriously made to pattern; and that, while a model may be academically correct in outline, it will always be inanimate and cold. The traveller is also aware of a sympathy of mood between himself and the road he travels. We have all seen ways that have wandered into heavy sand near the sea-coast, and trail wearily over the dunes like a trodden serpent: here we too must plod forward at a dull, laborious pace; and so a sympathy is preserved between our frame of mind and the expression of the relaxed, heavy curves of the roadway. Such a phenomenon, indeed, our reason might perhaps resolve with a little trouble. We might reflect that the present road had been developed out of a track spontaneously followed by generations of primitive wayfarers; and might see in its expression a testimony that those generations had been affected at the same ground, one after another, in the same manner as we are affected to-day. Or we might carry the reflection further, and remind ourselves that where the air is invigorating and the ground firm under the traveller's foot, his eye is quick to take advantage of small undulations, and he will turn carelessly aside from the direct way wherever there is anything beautiful to examine or some promise of a wider view; so that even a bush of wild roses may permanently bias and deform the straight path over the meadow; whereas, where the soil is heavy, one is preoccupied with the labour of mere progression, and goes with a bowed head heavily and unobservantly forward. Reason, however, will not carry us the whole way; for the sentiment often recurs in situations where it is very hard to imagine any possible explanation; and indeed, if we drive briskly along a good, well-made road in an open vehicle, we shall experience this sympathy almost at its fullest. We feel the sharp settle of the springs at some curiously twisted corner; after a steep ascent, the fresh air dances in our faces as we rattle precipitately down the 95 other side, and we find It difficult to avoid attributing something headlong, a sort of *abandon*, to the road itself.

The mere winding of the path is enough to enliven a long day's walk in even a commonplace or dreary country-side. Something that we have seen from miles back, upon an eminence, is so long hid from us, as we wander through folded valleys or among woods, that our expectation of seeing it again is sharpened into a violent appetite, and as we draw nearer we impatiently quicken our steps and turn every corner with a beating heart. It is through these prolongations of expectancy, this succession of one hope to another, that we live out long seasons of pleasure in a few hours' walk. It is in following these capricious sinuosities that we learn, only bit by bit and through one coquettish reticence after another, much as we learn the heart of a friend, the whole loveliness of the country. This disposition always preserves something new to be seen, and takes us, like a careful cicerone, to many different points of distant view before it allows us finally to approach the hoped-for destination.

In its connection with the traffic, and whole friendly intercourse with the country, there is something very pleasant in that succession of saunterers and brisk and business-like passers-by, that peoples our ways and helps to build up what Walt Whitman calls "the cheerful voice of the public road, the gay, fresh sentiment of the road." But out of the great network of ways that binds all life together from the hill-farm to the city, there is something individual to most, and, on the whole, nearly as much choice on the score of company as on the score of beauty or easy travel. On some we are never long without the sound of wheels, and folk pass us by so thickly that we lose the sense of their number. But on others, about little-frequented districts, a meeting is an affair of moment; we have the sight far off of some one coming towards us, the growing definiteness of the person, and then the brief passage and salutation, and the road left empty in front 96 of us for perhaps a great while to come. Such encounters have a wistful interest that can hardly be understood by the dweller in places more populous. We remember standing beside a countryman once, in the mouth of a quiet by-street in a city that was more than ordinarily crowded and bustling; he seemed stunned and bewildered by the continual passage of different faces; and after a long pause, during which he appeared to search for some suitable expression, he said timidly that there seemed to be a *great deal of meeting thereabouts*. The phrase is significant. It is the expression of town-life in the language of the long, solitary country highways. A meeting of one with one was what this man had been used to in the pastoral uplands from which he came; and the concourse of the streets was in his eyes only an extraordinary multiplication of such "meetings."

And now we come to that last and most subtle quality of all, to that sense of prospect, of outlook, that is brought so powerfully to our minds by a road. In real nature as well as in old landscapes, beneath that impartial daylight in which a whole variegated plain is plunged and saturated, the line of the road leads the eye forth with the vague sense of desire up to the green limit of the horizon. Travel is brought home to us, and we visit in spirit every grove and hamlet that tempts us in the distance. *Sehnsucht* — the passion for what is ever beyond — is livingly expressed in that white riband of possible travel that severs the uneven country; not a ploughman following his plough up the shining furrow, not the blue smoke of any cottage in a hollow, but is brought to us with a sense of nearness and attainability by this wavering line of junction. There is a passionate paragraph in Werther that strikes the very key. "When I came hither," he writes, "how the beautiful valley invited me on every side, as I gazed down into it from the hill-top! There the wood — ah, that I might mingle in its shadows! there the mountain summits — ah, that I might look down from them over the broad country! 97 the interlinked hills! the secret valleys! O, to lose myself among their mysteries! I hurried into the midst, and came back without finding aught I hoped for. Alas! the distance is like the future. A vast whole lies in the twilight before our spirit; sight and feeling alike plunge and lose themselves in the prospect, and we yearn to surrender our whole being, and let it be filled full with all the rapture of one single glorious sensation; and alas! when we hasten to the fruition, when *there* is changed to *here*, all is afterwards as it was before, and we stand in our indigent and cramped estate, and our soul thirsts after a still ebbing elixir." It is to this wandering and uneasy spirit of anticipation that roads minister. Every little vista, every little glimpse that we have of what lies before us, gives the impatient imagination rein, so that it can outstrip the body and already plunge into the shadow of the woods, and overlook from the hilltop the plain beyond it, and wander in the windings of the valleys that are still far in front. The road is already there — we shall not be long behind. It is as if we were marching with the rear of a great army, and, from far before, heard the acclamation of the people as the vanguard entered some friendly and jubilant city. Would not every man, through all the long miles of march, feel as if he also were within the gates?

Compare Blake, in the “Marriage of Heaven and Hell”: “Improvement makes straight roads; but the crooked roads, without improvement, are roads of Genius.”

IV

NOTES ON THE MOVEMENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

(1874)

I wish to direct the reader's attention to a certain quality in the movements of children when young, which is somehow lovable in them, although it would be even unpleasant 98 in any grown person. Their movements are not graceful, but they fall short of grace by something so sweetly humorous that we only admire them the more. The imperfection is so pretty and pathetic, and it gives so great a promise of something different in the future, that it attracts us more than many forms of beauty. They have something of the merit of a rough sketch by a master, in which we pardon what is wanting or excessive for the sake of the very bluntness and directness of the thing. It gives us pleasure to see the beginning of gracious impulses and the springs of harmonious movement laid bare to us with innocent simplicity.

One night some ladies formed a sort of impromptu dancing-school in the drawing-room of an hotel in France. One of the ladies led the ring, and I can recall her as a model of accomplished, cultured movement. Two little girls, about eight years old, were the pupils; that is an age of great interest in girls, when natural grace comes to its consummation of justice and purity, with little admixture of that other grace of forethought and discipline that will shortly supersede it altogether. In these two, particularly, the rhythm was sometimes broken by an excess of energy, as though the pleasure of the music in their light bodies could endure no longer the restraint of regulated dance. So that, between these and the lady, there was not only some beginning of the very contrast I wish to insist upon, but matter enough to set one thinking a long while on the beauty of motion. I do not know that, here in England, we have any good opportunity of seeing what that is; the generation of British dancing men and women are certainly more remarkable for other qualities than for grace: they are, many of them, very conscientious artists, and give quite a serious regard to the technical parts of their performance; but the spectacle, somehow, is not often beautiful, and strikes no note of pleasure. If I had seen no more, therefore, this evening might have remained in my memory as a rare experience. But the best part of it was yet to come. For 99 after the others had desisted, the musician still continued to play, and a little button between two and three years old came out into the cleared space and began to figure before us as the music prompted. I had an opportunity of seeing her, not on this night only, but on many subsequent nights; and the wonder and comical admiration she inspired was only deepened as time went on. She had an admirable musical ear; and each new melody, as it struck in her a new humour, suggested wonderful combinations and variations of movement. Now it would be a dance with which she would suit the music, now rather an appropriate pantomime, and now a mere string of disconnected attitudes. But whatever she did, she did it with the same verve and gusto. The spirit of the air seemed to have entered into her, and to possess her like a passion; and you could see her struggling to find expression for the beauty that was in her against the inefficacy of the dull, half-informed body. Though her footing was uneven, and her gestures often ludicrously helpless, still the spectacle was not merely amusing; and though subtle inspirations of movement miscarried in tottering travesty, you could still see that they had been inspirations; you could still see that she had set her heart on realising something just and beautiful, and that, by the discipline of these abortive efforts, she was making for herself in the future a quick, supple, and obedient body. It was grace in the making. She was not to be daunted by any merriment of people looking on critically; the music said something to her, and her whole spirit was intent on what the music said: she must carry out its suggestions, she must do her best to translate its language into that other dialect of the modulated body into which it can be translated most easily and fully.

Just the other day I was witness to a second scene, in which the motive was something similar; only this time with quite common children, and in the familiar neighbourhood of Hampstead. A little congregation had formed 100 itself in the lane underneath my window, and was busy over a skipping-rope. There were two sisters, from seven to nine perhaps, with dark faces and dark hair, and slim, lithe, little figures clad in lilac frocks. The elder of these two was mistress of the art of skipping. She was just and adroit in every movement; the rope passed over her black head and under her scarlet-stockinged legs with a precision and regularity that was like machinery; but there was nothing mechanical in the infinite variety and sweetness of her inclinations, and the spontaneous agile flexure of her lean waist and hips. There was one variation favourite with her, in which she crossed her hands before her with a motion not unlike that of weaving, which was admirably intricate and complete. And when the two took the rope together and whirled in and out with occasional interruptions, there was something Italian in the type of both — in the length of nose, in the slimness and accuracy of the shapes — and something gay and harmonious in the double movement, that added to the whole scene a southern element, and took me over sea and land into distant and beautiful places. Nor was this impression lessened when the elder girl took in her arms a fair-headed baby, while the others held the rope for her, turned and gyrated, and went in and out over it lightly, with a quiet regularity that seemed as if it might go on for ever. Somehow, incongruous as was the occupation, she reminded me of Italian Madonnas. And now, as before in the hotel drawing-room, the humorous element was to be introduced; only this time it was in broad farce. The funniest little girl, with a mottled complexion and a big, damaged nose, and looking for all the world like any dirty, broken-nosed doll in a nursery lumber-room, came forward to take her turn. While the others swung the rope for her as gently as it could be done — a mere mockery of movement — and playfully taunted her timidity, she passaged backwards and forwards in a pretty flutter of indecision, putting up her shoulders and laughing with the embarrassed laughter of 101 children by the water's edge, eager to bathe and yet fearful. There never was anything at once so droll and so pathetic. One did not know whether to laugh or to cry. And when at last she had made an end of all her deprecations and drawings back, and summoned up heart enough to straddle over the rope, one leg at a time, it was a sight to see her ruffle herself up like a peacock and go away down the lane with her damaged nose, seeming to think discretion the better part of valour, and rather uneasy lest they should ask her to repeat the exploit. Much as I had enjoyed the grace of the older girls, it was now just as it had been before in France, and the clumsiness of the child seemed to have a significance and a sort of beauty of its own, quite above this grace of the others in power to affect the heart. I had looked on with a certain sense of balance and completion at the silent, rapid, masterly evolutions of the eldest; I had been pleased by these in the way of satisfaction. But when little broken-nose began her pantomime of indecision I grew excited. There was something quite fresh and poignant in the delight I took in her imperfect movements. I remember, for instance, that I moved my own shoulders, as if to imitate her; really, I suppose, with an inarticulate wish to help her out.

Now, there are many reasons why this gracelessness of young children should be pretty and sympathetic to us. And, first, there is an interest as of battle. It is in travail and laughable *fiasco* that the young school their bodies to beautiful expression, as they school their minds. We seem, in watching them, to divine antagonists pitted one against the other; and, as in other wars, so in this war of the intelligence against the unwilling body, we do not wish to see even the cause of progress triumph without some honourable toil; and we are so sure of the ultimate result, that it pleases us to linger in pathetic sympathy over these reverses of the early campaign, just as we do over the troubles that environ the heroine of a novel on her way to the happy ending. Again, people are very ready to 102 disown the pleasure they take in a thing merely because it is big, as an Alp, or merely because it is little, as a little child; and yet this pleasure is surely as legitimate as another. There is much of it here; we have an irrational indulgence for small folk; we ask but little where there is so little to ask it of; we cannot overcome our astonishment that they should be able to move at all, and are interested in their movements somewhat as we are interested in the movements of a puppet. And again, there is a prolongation of expectancy when, as in these movements of children, we are kept continually on the very point of attainment and ever turned away and tantalised by some humorous imperfection. This is altogether absent in the secure and accomplished movements of persons more fully grown. The tight-rope walker does not walk so freely or so well as any one else can walk upon a good road; and yet we like to watch him for the mere sake of the difficulty; we like to see his vacillations; we like this last so much even, that I am told a really artistic tight-rope walker must feign to be troubled in his balance, even if he is not so really. And again, we have in these baby efforts an assurance of spontaneity that we do not have often. We know this at least certainly, that the child tries to dance for its own pleasure, and not for any by-end of ostentation and conformity. If we did not know it we should see it. There is a sincerity, a directness, an impulsive truth, about their free gestures that shows throughout all imperfection, and it is to us as a reminiscence of primitive festivals and the Golden Age. Lastly, there is in the sentiment much of a simple human compassion for creatures more helpless than ourselves. One nearly ready to die is pathetic; and so is one scarcely ready to live. In view of their future, our heart is softened to these clumsy little ones. They will be more adroit when they are not so happy.

Unfortunately, then, this character that so much delights us is not one that can be preserved by any plastic art. It turns, as we have seen, upon consideration not really 103 æsthetic. Art may deal with the slim freedom of a few years later; but with this fettered impulse, with these stammering motions, she is powerless to do more than stereotype what is ungraceful, and, in the doing of it, lose all pathos and humanity. So these humorous little ones must go away into the limbo of beautiful things that are not beautiful for art, there to wait a more perfect age before they sit for their portraits.

V

ON THE ENJOYMENT OF UNPLEASANT PLACES

(1874)
It is a difficult matter to make the most of any given place, and we have much in our own power. Things looked at patiently from one side after another generally end by showing a side that is beautiful. A few months ago some words were said in the *Portfolio* as to an "austere regimen in scenery"; and such a discipline was then recommended as "healthful and strengthening to the taste." That is the test, so to speak, of the present essay. This discipline in scenery, it must be understood, is something more than a mere walk before breakfast to whet the appetite. For when we are put down in some unsightly neighbourhood, and especially if we have come to be more or less dependent on what we see, we must set ourselves to hunt out beautiful things with all the ardour and patience of a botanist after a rare plant. Day by day we perfect ourselves in the art of seeing nature more favourably. We learn to live with her, as people learn to live with fretful or violent spouses: to dwell lovingly on what is good, and shut our eyes against all that is bleak or inharmonious. 104 We learn, also, to come to each place in the right spirit. The traveller, as Brantôme quaintly tells us, "*fait des discours en soi pour se soutenir en chemin*"; and into these discourses he weaves something out of all that he sees and suffers by the way; they take their tone greatly from the varying character of the scene; a sharp ascent brings different thoughts from a level road; and the man's fancies grow lighter as he comes out of the wood into a clearing. Nor does the scenery any more affect the thoughts than the thoughts affect the scenery. We see places through our humours as through differently-coloured glasses. We are ourselves a term in the equation, a note of the chord, and make discord or harmony almost at will. There is no fear for the result, if we can but surrender ourselves sufficiently to the country that surrounds and follows us, so that we are ever thinking suitable thoughts or telling ourselves some suitable sort of story as we go. We become thus, in some sense, a centre of beauty; we are provocative of beauty, much as a gentle and sincere character is provocative of sincerity and gentleness in others. And even where there is no harmony to be elicited by the quickest and most obedient of spirits, we may still embellish a place with some attraction of romance. We may learn to go far afield for associations, and handle them lightly when we have

found them. Sometimes an old print comes to our aid; I have seen many a spot lit up at once with picturesque imaginations, by a reminiscence of Callot, or Sadeler, or Paul Brill. Dick Turpin has been my lay figure for many an English lane. And I suppose the Trossachs would hardly be the Trossachs for most tourists if a man of admirable romantic instinct had not peopled it for them with harmonious figures, and brought them thither with minds rightly prepared for the impression. There is half the battle in this preparation. For instance: I have rarely been able to visit, in the proper spirit, the wild and inhospitable places of our own Highlands. I am happier where it is tame 105 and fertile, and not readily pleased without trees. I understand that there are some phases of mental trouble that harmonise well with such surroundings, and that some persons, by the dispensing power of the imagination, can go back several centuries in spirit, and put themselves into sympathy with the hunted, houseless, unsociable way of life that was in its place upon these savage hills. Now, when I am sad, I like nature to charm me out of my sadness, like David before Saul; and the thought of these past ages strikes nothing in me but an unpleasant pity; so that I can never hit on the right humour for this sort of landscape, and lose much pleasure in consequence. Still, even here, if I were only let alone, and time enough were given, I should have all manner of pleasures, and take many clear and beautiful images away with me when I left. When we cannot think ourselves into sympathy with the great features of a country, we learn to ignore them, and put our head among the grass for flowers, or pore, for long times together, over the changeful current of a stream. We come down to the sermon in stones, when we are shut out from any poem in the spread landscape. We begin to peep and botanise, we take an interest in birds and insects, we find many things beautiful in miniature. The reader will recollect the little summer scene in “Wuthering Heights” — the one warm scene, perhaps, in all that powerful, miserable novel — and the great feature that is made therein by grasses and flowers and a little sunshine: this is in the spirit of which I now speak. And, lastly, we can go indoors; interiors are sometimes as beautiful, often more picturesque, than the shows of the open air, and they have that quality of shelter of which I shall presently have more to say.

With all this in mind, I have often been tempted to put forth the paradox that any place is good enough to live a life in, while it is only in a few, and those highly favoured, that we can pass a few hours agreeably. For, 106 if we only stay long enough, we become at home in the neighbourhood. Reminiscences spring up, like flowers, about uninteresting corners. We forget to some degree the superior loveliness of other places, and fall into a tolerant and sympathetic spirit which is its own reward and justification. Looking back the other day on some recollections of my own, I was astonished to find how much I owed to such a residence; six weeks in one unpleasant country-side had done more, it seemed, to quicken and educate my sensibilities than many years in places that jumped more nearly with my inclination.

The country to which I refer was a level and treeless plateau over which the winds cut like a whip. For miles on miles it was the same. A river, indeed, fell into the sea near the town where I resided; but the valley of the river was shallow and bald, for as far up as ever I had the heart to follow it. There were roads, certainly, but roads that had no beauty or interest; for, as there was no timber, and but little irregularity of surface, you saw your whole walk exposed to you from the beginning: there was nothing left to fancy, nothing to expect, nothing to see by the wayside, save here and there an unhomely-looking homestead, and here and there a solitary, spectacled stone-breaker; and you were only accompanied, as you went doggedly forward, by the gaunt telegraph-posts and the hum of the resonant wires in the keen sea-wind. To one who had learned to know their song in warm pleasant places by the Mediterranean, it seemed to taunt the country, and make it still bleaker by suggested contrast. Even the waste places by the side of the road were not, as Hawthorne liked to put it, "taken back to Nature" by any decent covering of vegetation. Wherever the land had the chance, it seemed to lie fallow. There is a certain tawny nudity of the South, bare sun-burnt plains, coloured like a lion, and hills clothed only in the blue transparent air; but this was of another description — this was the nakedness of the North; the 107
earth seemed to know that it was naked, and was ashamed and cold.

It seemed to be always blowing on that coast. Indeed, this had passed into the speech of the inhabitants, and they saluted each other when they met with "Breezy, breezy," instead of the customary "Fine day" of farther south. These continual winds were not like the harvest breeze, that just keeps an equable pressure against your face as you walk, and serves to set all the trees talking over your head, or bring round you the smell of the wet surface of the country after a shower. They were of the bitter, hard, persistent sort, that interferes with sight and respiration, and makes the eyes sore. Even such winds as these have their own merit in proper time and place. It is pleasant to see them brandish great masses of shadow. And what a power they have over the colour of the world! How they ruffle the solid woodlands in their passage, and make them shudder and whiten like a single willow! There is nothing more vertiginous than a wind like this among the woods, with all its sights and noises; and the effect gets between some painters and their sober eyesight, so that, even when the rest of their picture is calm, the foliage is coloured like foliage in a gale. There was nothing, however, of this sort to be noticed in a country where there were no trees and hardly any shadows, save the passive shadows of clouds or those of rigid houses and walls. But the wind was nevertheless an occasion of pleasure; for nowhere could you taste more fully the pleasure of a sudden lull, or a place of opportune shelter. The reader knows what I mean; he must remember how, when he has sat himself down behind a dyke on a hill-side, he delighted to hear the wind hiss vainly through the crannies at his back; how his body tingled all over with warmth, and it began to dawn upon him, with a sort of slow surprise, that the country was beautiful, the heather purple, and the far-away hills all marbled with sun and shadow. Wordsworth, in a beautiful passage of the "Prelude," has 108 used this as a figure for the feeling struck in us by the quiet by-streets of London after the uproar of the great thoroughfares; and the comparison may be turned the other way with as good effect:

"Meanwhile the roar continues, till at length,
Escaped as from an enemy, we turn
Abruptly into some sequester'd nook,
Still as a shelter'd place when winds blow loud!"

I remember meeting a man once, in a train, who told me of what must have been quite the most perfect instance of this pleasure of escape. He had gone up, one sunny, windy morning, to the top of a great cathedral somewhere abroad; I think it was Cologne Cathedral, the great unfinished marvel by the Rhine; and after a long while in dark stairways, he issued at last into the sunshine, on a platform high above the town. At that elevation it was quite still and warm; the gale was only in the lower strata of the air, and he had forgotten it in the quiet interior of the church and during his long ascent; and so you may judge of his surprise when, resting his arms on the sunlit balustrade and looking over into the "Place" far below him, he saw the good people holding on their hats and leaning hard against the wind as they walked. There is something, to my fancy, quite perfect in this little experience of my fellow-traveller's. The ways of men seem always very trivial to us when we find ourselves alone on a church top, with the blue sky and a few tall pinnacles, and see far below us the steep roofs and foreshortened buttresses, and the silent activity of the city streets; but how much more must they not have seemed so to him as he stood, not only above other men's business, but above other men's climate, in a golden zone like Apollo's!

This was the sort of pleasure I found in the country of which I write. The pleasure was to be out of the wind, and to keep it in memory all the time, and hug oneself 109 upon the shelter. And it was only by the sea that any such sheltered places were to be found. Between the black worm-eaten headlands there are little bights and havens, well screened from the wind and the commotion of the external sea, where the sand and weeds look up into the gazer’s face from a depth of tranquil water, and the sea-birds, screaming and flickering from the ruined crags, alone disturb the silence and the sunshine. One such place has impressed itself on my memory beyond all others. On a rock by the water’s edge, old fighting men of the Norse breed had planted a double castle; the two stood wall to wall like semi-detached villas; and yet feud had run so high between their owners, that one, from out of a window, shot the other as he stood in his own doorway. There is something in the juxtaposition of these two enemies full of tragic irony. It is grim to think of bearded men and bitter women taking hateful counsel together about the two hall-fires at night, when the sea boomed against the foundations and the wild winter wind was loose over the battlements. And in the study we may reconstruct for ourselves some pale figure of what life then was. Not so when we are there; when we are there such thoughts come to us only to intensify a contrary impression, and association is turned against itself. I remember walking thither three afternoons in succession, my eyes weary with being set against the wind, and how, dropping suddenly over the edge of the down, I found myself in a new world of warmth and shelter. The wind, from which I had escaped, “as from an enemy,” was seemingly quite local. It carried no clouds with it, and came from such a quarter that it did not trouble the sea within view. The two castles, black and ruinous as the rocks about them, were still distinguishable from these by something more insecure and fantastic in the outline, something that the last storm had left imminent and the next would demolish entirely. It would be difficult to render in words the sense of peace that took possession of 110 me on these three afternoons. It was helped out, as I have said, by the contrast. The shore was battered and bemauled by previous tempests; I had the memory at heart of the insane strife of the pigmies who had erected these two castles and lived in them in mutual distrust and enmity, and knew I had only to put my head out of this little cup of shelter to find the hard wind blowing in my eyes; and yet there were the two great tracts of motionless blue air and peaceful sea looking on, unconcerned and apart, at the turmoil of the present moment and the memorials of the precarious past. There is ever something transitory and fretful in the impression of a high wind under a cloudless sky; it seems to have no root in the constitution of things; it must speedily begin to faint and wither away like a cut flower. And on those days the thought of the wind and the thought of human life came very near together in my mind. Our noisy years did indeed seem moments in the being of the eternal silence: and the wind, in the face of that great field of stationary blue, was as the wind of a butterfly's wing. The placidity of the sea was a thing likewise to be remembered. Shelley speaks of the sea as "hungering for calm," and in this place one learned to understand the phrase. Looking down into these green waters from the broken edge of the rock, or swimming leisurely in the sunshine, it seemed to me that they were enjoying their own tranquillity; and when now and again it was disturbed by a wind ripple on the surface, or the quick black passage of a fish far below, they settled back again (one could fancy) with relief.

On shore too, in the little nook of shelter, everything was so subdued and still that the least particular struck in me a pleasurable surprise. The desultory crackling of the whin-pods in the afternoon sun usurped the ear. The hot, sweet breath of the bank, that had been saturated all day long with sunshine, and now exhaled it into my face, was like the breath of a fellow-creature. I remember that 111 I was haunted by two lines of French verse; in some dumb way they seemed to fit my surroundings and give expression to the contentment that was in me, and I kept repeating to myself —

"Mon cœur est un luth suspendu;
Sitôt qu'on le touche, il résonne."

I can give no reason why these lines came to me at this time; and for that very cause I repeat them here. For all I know, they may serve to complete the impression in the mind of the reader, as they were certainly a part of it for me.

And this happened to me in the place of all others where I liked least to stay. When I think of it I grow ashamed of my own ingratitude. "Out of the strong came forth sweetness." There, in the bleak and gusty North, I received, perhaps, my strongest impression of peace. I saw the sea to be great and calm; and the earth, in that little corner, was all alive and friendly to me. So, wherever a man is, he will find something to please and pacify him: in the town he will meet pleasant faces of men and women, and see beautiful flowers at a window, or hear a cage-bird singing at the corner of the gloomiest street; and for the country, there is no country without some amenity — let him only look for it in the right spirit, and he will surely find.

VI

AN AUTUMN EFFECT

(1875)

“Nous ne décrivons jamais mieux la nature que lorsque nous nous efforçons d’exprimer sobrement et simplement l’impression que nous en avons reçue.” — M. André Theuriet, “L’Automne dans les Bois,” *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1st Oct. 1874, .

A country rapidly passed through under favourable auspices may leave upon us a unity of impression that would only be disturbed and dissipated if we stayed longer. Clear vision goes with the quick foot. Things fall for us into a sort of natural perspective when we see them for a moment in going by; we generalise boldly and simply, and are gone before the sun is overcast, before the rain falls, before the season can steal like a dial-hand from his figure, before the lights and shadows, shifting round towards nightfall, can show us the other side of things, and belie what they showed us in the morning. We expose our mind to the landscape (as we would expose the prepared plate in the camera) for the moment only during which the effect endures; and we are away before the effect can change. Hence we shall have in our memories a long scroll of continuous wayside pictures, all imbued already with the prevailing sentiment of the season, the weather, and the landscape, and certain to be 113 unified more and more, as time goes on, by the unconscious processes of thought. So that we who have only looked at a country over our shoulder, so to speak, as we went by, will have a conception of it far more memorable and articulate than a man who has lived there all his life from a child upwards, and had his impression of to-day modified by that of to-morrow, and belied by that of the day after, till at length the stable characteristics of the country are all blotted out from him behind the confusion of variable effect.

I began my little pilgrimage in the most enviable of all humours: that in which a person, with a sufficiency of money and a knapsack, turns his back on a town and walks forward into a country of which he knows only by the vague report of others. Such an one has not surrendered his will and contracted for the next hundred miles, like a man on a railway. He may change his mind at every finger-post, and, where ways meet, follow vague preferences freely and go the low road or the high, choose the shadow or the sunshine, suffer himself to be tempted by the lane that turns immediately into the woods, or the broad road that lies open before him into the distance, and shows him the far-off spires of some city, or a range of mountain-tops, or a rim of sea, perhaps, along a low horizon. In short, he may gratify his every whim and fancy, without a pang of reproving conscience, or the least jostle to his self-respect. It is true, however, that most men do not possess the faculty of free action, the priceless gift of being able to live for the moment only; and as they begin to go forward on their journey, they will find that they have made for themselves new fetters. Slight projects they may have entertained for a moment, half in jest, become iron laws to them, they know not why. They will be led by the nose by these vague reports of which I spoke above; and the mere fact that their informant mentioned one village and not another will compel their footsteps with inexplicable power. And yet 114 a little while, yet a few days of this fictitious liberty, and they will begin to hear imperious voices calling on them to return; and some passion, some duty, some worthy or unworthy expectation, will set its hand upon their shoulder and lead them back into the old paths. Once and again we have all made the experiment. We know the end of it right well. And yet if we make it for the hundredth time to-morrow, it will have the same charm as ever; our heart will beat and our eyes will be bright, as we leave the town behind us, and we shall feel once again (as we have felt so often before) that we are cutting ourselves loose for ever from our whole past life, with all its sins and follies and circumscriptions, and go forward as a new creature into a new world.

It is well, perhaps, that I had this first enthusiasm to encourage me up the long hill above High Wycombe; for the day was a bad day for walking at best, and now began to draw towards afternoon, dull, heavy, and lifeless. A pall of grey cloud covered the sky, and its colour reacted on the colour of the landscape. Near at hand, indeed, the hedgerow trees were still fairly green, shot through with bright autumnal yellows, bright as sunshine. But a little way off, the solid bricks of woodland that lay squarely on slope and hill-top were not green, but russet and grey, and ever less russet and more grey as they drew off into the distance. As they drew off into the distance, also, the woods seemed to mass themselves together, and lay thin and straight, like clouds, upon the limit of one's view. Not that this massing was complete, or gave the idea of any extent of forest, for every here and there the trees would break up and go down into a valley in open order, or stand in long Indian file along the horizon, tree after tree relieved, foolishly enough, against the sky. I say foolishly enough, although I have seen the effect employed cleverly in art, and such long line of single trees thrown out against the customary sunset of a Japanese picture with a certain fantastic effect that was not to be despised; 115 but this was over water and level land, where it did not jar, as here, with the soft contour of hills and valleys. The whole scene had an indefinable look of being painted, the colour was so abstract and correct, and there was something so sketchy and merely impressional about these distant single trees on the horizon that one was forced to think of it all as of a clever French landscape. For it is rather in nature that we see resemblance to art, than in art to nature; and we say a hundred times, “How like a picture!” for once that we say, “How like the truth!” The forms in which we learn to think of landscape are forms that we have got from painted canvas. Any man can see and understand a picture; it is reserved for the few to separate anything out of the confusion of nature, and see that distinctly and with intelligence.

The sun came out before I had been long on my way; and as I had got by that time to the top of the ascent, and was now treading a labyrinth of confined by-roads, my whole view brightened considerably in colour, for it was the distance only that was grey and cold, and the distance I could see no longer. Overhead there was a wonderful carolling of larks which seemed to follow me as I went. Indeed, during all the time I was in that country the larks did not desert me. The air was alive with them from High Wycombe to Tring; and as, day after day, their “shrill delight” fell upon me out of the vacant sky, they began to take such a prominence over other conditions, and form so integral a part of my conception of the country, that I could have baptised it “The Country of Larks.” This, of course, might just as well have been in early spring; but everything else was deeply imbued with the sentiment of the later year. There was no stir of insects in the grass. The sunshine was more golden, and gave less heat than summer sunshine; and the shadows under the hedge were somewhat blue and misty. It was only in autumn that you could have seen the mingled green and yellow of the elm foliage, and the fallen leaves 116 that lay about the road, and covered the surface of wayside pools so thickly that the sun was reflected only here and there from little joints and pin-holes in that brown coat of proof; or that your ear would have been troubled, as you went forward, by the occasional report of fowling-pieces from all directions and all degrees of distance.

For a long time this dropping fire was the one sign of human activity that came to disturb me as I walked. The lanes were profoundly still. They would have been sad but for the sunshine and the singing of the larks. And as it was, there came over me at times a feeling of isolation that was not disagreeable, and yet was enough to make me quicken my steps eagerly when I saw some one before me on the road. This fellow-voyager proved to be no less a person than the parish constable. It had occurred to me that in a district which was so little populous and so well wooded, a criminal of any intelligence might play hide-and-seek with the authorities for months; and this idea was strengthened by the aspect of the portly constable as he walked by my side with deliberate dignity and turned-out toes. But a few minutes' converse set my heart at rest. These rural criminals are very tame birds, it appeared. If my informant did not immediately lay his hand on an offender, he was content to wait; some evening after nightfall there would come a tap at his door, and the outlaw, weary of outlawry, would give himself quietly up to undergo sentence, and resume his position in the life of the country-side. Married men caused him no disquietude whatever; he had them fast by the foot. Sooner or later they would come back to see their wives, a peeping neighbour would pass the word, and my portly constable would walk quietly over and take the bird sitting. And if there were a few who had no particular ties in the neighbourhood, and preferred to shift into another county when they fell into trouble, their departure moved the placid constable in no degree. He was of Dogberry's opinion; and if a man would not stand in the 117 Prince's name, he took no note of him, but let him go, and thanked God he was rid of a knave. And surely the crime and the law were in admirable keeping: rustic constable was well met with rustic offender. The officer sitting at home over a bit of fire until the criminal came to visit him, and the criminal coming — it was a fair match. One felt as if this must have been the order in that delightful seaboard Bohemia where Florizel and Perdita courted in such sweet accents, and the Puritan sang psalms to hornpipes, and the four-and-twenty shearers danced with nosegays in their bosoms, and chanted their three songs apiece at the old shepherd's festival; and one could not help picturing to oneself what havoc among good people's purses, and tribulation for benignant constable, might be worked here by the arrival, over stile and footpath, of a new Autolycus.

Bidding good-morning to my fellow-traveller, I left the road and struck across country. It was rather a revelation to pass from between the hedgerows and find quite a bustle on the other side, a great coming and going of school-children upon by-paths, and, in every second field, lusty horses and stout country-folk a-ploughing. The way I followed took me through many fields thus occupied, and through many strips of plantation, and then over a little space of smooth turf, very pleasant to the feet, set with tall fir-trees and clamorous with rooks making ready for the winter, and so back again into the quiet road. I was now not far from the end of my day's journey. A few hundred yards farther, and, passing through a gap in the hedge, I began to go down hill through a pretty extensive tract of young beeches. I was soon in shadow myself, but the afternoon sun still coloured the upmost boughs of the wood, and made a fire over my head in the autumnal foliage. A little faint vapour lay among the slim tree-stems in the bottom of the hollow; and from farther up I heard from time to time an outburst of gross laughter, as though clowns were making merry in the bush. There was something about the atmosphere that 118 brought all sights and sounds home to one with a singular purity, so that I felt as if my senses had been washed with water. After I had crossed the little zone of mist, the path began to remount the hill; and just as I, mounting along with it, had got back again, from the head downwards, into the thin golden sunshine, I saw in front of me a donkey tied to a tree. Now, I have a certain liking for donkeys, principally, I believe, because of the delightful things that Sterne has written of them. But this was not after the pattern of the ass at Lyons. He was of a white colour, that seemed to fit him rather for rare festal occasions than for constant drudgery. Besides, he was very small, and of the daintiest proportions you can imagine in a donkey. And so, sure enough, you had only to look at him to see he had never worked. There was something too roguish and wanton in his face, a look too like that of a schoolboy or a street Arab, to have survived much cudgelling. It was plain that these feet had kicked off sportive children oftener than they had plodded with a freight through miry lanes. He was altogether a fine-weather, holiday sort of donkey; and though he was just then somewhat solemnised and rueful, he still gave proof of the levity of his disposition by impudently wagging his ears at me as I drew near. I say he was somewhat solemnised just then; for, with the admirable instinct of all men and animals under restraint, he had so wound and wound the halter about the tree that he could go neither back nor forwards, nor so much as put down his head to browse. There he stood, poor rogue, part puzzled, part angry, part, I believe, amused. He had not given up hope, and dully revolved the problem in his head, giving ever and again another jerk at the few inches of free rope that still remained unwound. A humorous sort of sympathy for the creature took hold upon me. I went up, and, not without some trouble on my part, and much distrust and resistance on the part of Neddy, got him forced backward until the whole length of the halter was set loose, and he was once more as free a donkey as I dared to make 119 him. I was pleased (as people are) with this friendly action to a fellow-creature in tribulation, and glanced back over my shoulder to see how he was profiting by his freedom. The brute was looking after me; and no sooner did he catch my eye than he put up his long white face into the air, pulled an impudent mouth at me, and began to bray derisively. If ever any one person made a grimace at another, that donkey made a grimace at me. The hardened ingratitude of his behaviour, and the impertinence that inspired his whole face as he curled up his lip, and showed his teeth, and began to bray, so tickled me, and was so much in keeping with what I had imagined to myself about his character, that I could not find it in my heart to be angry, and burst into a peal of hearty laughter. This seemed to strike the ass as a repartee, so he brayed at me again by way of rejoinder; and we went on for a while, braying and laughing, until I began to grow a-weary of it, and, shouting a derisive farewell, turned to pursue my way. In so doing — it was like going suddenly into cold water — I found myself face to face with a prim little old maid. She was all in a flutter, the poor old dear! She had concluded beyond question that this must be a lunatic who stood laughing aloud at a white donkey in the placid beech-woods. I was sure, by her face, that she had already recommended her spirit most religiously to Heaven, and prepared herself for the worst. And so, to reassure her, I uncovered and besought her, after a very staid fashion, to put me on my way to Great Missenden. Her voice trembled a little, to be sure, but I think her mind was set at rest; and she told me, very explicitly, to follow the path until I came to the end of the wood, and then I should see the village below me in the bottom of the valley. And, with mutual courtesies, the little old maid and I went on our respective ways.

Nor had she misled me. Great Missenden was close at hand, as she had said, in the trough of a gentle valley, with many great elms about it. The smoke from its chimneys 120 went up pleasantly in the afternoon sunshine. The sleepy hum of a threshing-machine filled the neighbouring fields and hung about the quaint street corners. A little above, the church sits well back on its haunches against the hill-side — an attitude for a church, you know, that makes it look as if it could be ever so much higher if it liked; and the trees grew about it thickly, so as to make a density of shade in the churchyard. A very quiet place it looks; and yet I saw many boards and posters about threatening dire punishment against those who broke the church windows or defaced the precinct, and offering rewards for the apprehension of those who had done the like already. It was fair-day in Great Missenden. There were three stalls set up *sub jove*, for the sale of pastry and cheap toys; and a great number of holiday children thronged about the stalls, and noisily invaded every corner of the straggling village. They came round me by coveys, blowing simultaneously upon penny trumpets as though they imagined I should fall to pieces like the battlements of Jericho. I noticed one among them who could make a wheel of himself like a London boy, and seemingly enjoyed a grave pre-eminence upon the strength of the accomplishment. By and by, however, the trumpets began to weary me, and I went indoors, leaving the fair, I fancy at its height.

Night had fallen before I ventured forth again. It was pitch dark in the village street, and the darkness seemed only the greater for a light here and there in an uncurtained window or from an open door. Into one such window I was rude enough to peep, and saw within a charming *genre* picture. In a room, all white wainscot and crimson wall-paper, a perfect gem of colour after the black, empty darkness in which I had been groping, a pretty girl was telling a story, as well as I could make out, to an attentive child upon her knee, while an old woman sat placidly dozing over the fire. You may be sure I was not behindhand with a story for myself — a good old story after the manner of G.P.R. James and the village melodramas, with a wicked 121 squire, and poachers, and an attorney, and a virtuous young man with a genius for mechanics, who should love, and protect, and ultimately marry the girl in the crimson room. Baudelaire has a few dainty sentences on the fancies that we are inspired with when we look through a window into other people's lives; and I think Dickens has somewhat enlarged on the same text. The subject, at least, is one that I am seldom weary of entertaining. I remember, night after night, at Brussels, watching a good family sup together, make merry, and retire to rest; and night after night I waited to see the candles lit, and the salad made, and the last salutations dutifully exchanged, without any abatement of interest. Night after night I found the scene rivet my attention and keep me awake in bed with all manner of quaint imaginations. Much of the pleasure of the "Arabian Nights" hinges upon this Asmodean interest; and we are not weary of lifting other people's roofs and going about behind the scenes of life with the Caliph and the serviceable Giaffar. It is a salutary exercise, besides; it is salutary to get out of ourselves and see people living together in perfect unconsciousness of our existence, as they will live when we are gone. If to-morrow the blow falls, and the worst of our ill fears is realised, the girl will none the less tell stories to the child on her lap in the cottage at Great Missenden, nor the good Belgians light their candle, and mix their salad, and go orderly to bed.

The next morning was sunny overhead and damp underfoot, with a thrill in the air like a reminiscence of frost. I went up into the sloping garden behind the inn and smoked a pipe pleasantly enough, to the tune of my landlady's lamentations over sundry cabbages and cauliflowers that had been spoiled by caterpillars. She had been so much pleased in the summer-time, she said, to see the garden all hovered over by white butterflies. And now, look at the end of it! She could nowise reconcile this with her moral sense. And, indeed, unless these butterflies are created 122 with a side-look to the composition of improving apologues, it is not altogether easy, even for people who have read Hegel and Dr. M'Cosh, to decide intelligibly upon the issue raised. Then I fell into a long and abstruse calculation with my landlord; having for object to compare the distance driven by him during eight years' service on the box of the Wendover coach with the girth of the round world itself. We tackled the question most conscientiously, made all necessary allowance for Sundays and leap-years, and were just coming to a triumphant conclusion of our labours when we were stayed by a small lacuna in my information. I did not know the circumference of the earth. The landlord knew it, to be sure — plainly he had made the same calculation twice and once before, — but he wanted confidence in his own figures, and from the moment I showed myself so poor a second seemed to lose all interest in the result.

Wendover (which was my next stage) lies in the same valley with Great Missenden, but at the foot of it, where the hills trend off on either hand like a coast-line, and a great hemisphere of plain lies, like a sea, before one. I went up a chalky road, until I had a good outlook over the place. The vale, as it opened out into the plain, was shallow, and a little bare, perhaps, but full of graceful convolutions. From the level to which I have now attained the fields were exposed before me like a map, and I could see all that bustle of autumn field-work which had been hid from me yesterday behind the hedgerows, or shown to me only for a moment as I followed the footpath. Wendover lay well down in the midst, with mountains of foliage about it. The great plain stretched away to the northward, variegated near at hand with the quaint pattern of the fields, but growing ever more and more indistinct, until it became a mere hurly-burly of trees and bright crescents of river, and snatches of slanting road, and finally melted into the ambiguous cloud-land over the horizon. The sky was an opal-grey, touched here and there with blue, and with certain faint russets that 123 looked as if they were reflections of the colour of the autumnal woods below. I could hear the ploughmen shouting to their horses, the uninterrupted carol of larks innumerable overhead, and, from a field where the shepherd was marshalling his flock, a sweet tumultuous tinkle of sheep-bells. All these noises came to me very thin and distinct in the clear air. There was a wonderful sentiment of distance and atmosphere about the day and the place.

I mounted the hill yet farther by a rough staircase of chalky footholds cut in the turf. The hills about Wendover, and, as far as I could see, all the hills in Buckinghamshire, wear a sort of hood of beech plantation; but in this particular case the hood had been suffered to extend itself into something more like a cloak, and hung down about the shoulders of the hill in wide folds, instead of lying flatly along the summit. The trees grew so close, and their boughs were so matted together, that the whole wood looked as dense as a bush of heather. The prevailing colour was a dull, smouldering red, touched here and there with vivid yellow. But the autumn had scarce advanced beyond the outworks; it was still almost summer in the heart of the wood; and as soon as I had scrambled through the hedge, I found myself in a dim green forest atmosphere under eaves of virgin foliage. In places where the wood had itself for a background and the trees were massed together thickly, the colour became intensified and almost gem-like: a perfect fire of green, that seemed none the less green for a few specks of autumn gold. None of the trees were of any considerable age or stature; but they grew well together, I have said; and as the road turned and wound among them, they fell into pleasant groupings and broke the light up pleasantly. Sometimes there would be a colonnade of slim, straight tree-stems with the light running down them as down the shafts of pillars, that looked as if it ought to lead to something, and led only to a corner of sombre and intricate jungle. Sometimes a spray of delicate foliage would be thrown out flat, the light lying 124 flatly along the top of it, so that against a dark background it seemed almost luminous. There was a great hush over the thicket (for, indeed, it was more of a thicket than a wood); and the vague rumours that went among the tree-tops, and the occasional rustling of big birds or hares among the undergrowth, had in them a note of almost treacherous stealthiness, that put the imagination on its guard and made me walk warily on the russet carpeting of last year’s leaves. The spirit of the place seemed to be all attention; the wood listened as I went, and held its breath to number my footfalls. One could not help feeling that there ought to be some reason for this stillness: whether, as the bright old legend goes, Pan lay somewhere near in a siesta, or whether, perhaps, the heaven was meditating rain, and the first drops would soon come pattering through the leaves. It was not unpleasant, in such an humour, to catch sight, ever and anon, of large spaces of the open plain. This happened only where the path lay much upon the slope, and there was a flaw in the solid leafy thatch of the wood at some distance below the level at which I chanced myself to be walking; then, indeed, little scraps of foreshortened distance, miniature fields, and Liliputian houses and hedgerow trees would appear for a moment in the aperture, and grow larger and smaller, and change and melt one into another, as I continued to go forward, and so shift my point of view.

For ten minutes, perhaps, I had heard from somewhere before me in the wood a strange, continuous noise, as of clucking, cooing, and gobbling, now and again interrupted by a harsh scream. As I advanced towards this noise, it began to grow lighter about me, and I caught sight, through the trees, of sundry gables and enclosure walls, and something like the tops of a rickyard. And sure enough, a rickyard it proved to be, and a neat little farm-steading, with the beech-woods growing almost to the door of it. Just before me, however, as I came up the path, the trees drew back and let in a wide flood of daylight on to a circular 125 lawn. It was here that the noises had their origin. More than a score of peacocks (there are altogether thirty at the farm), a proper contingent of peahens, and a great multitude that I could not number of more ordinary barn-door fowls, were all feeding together on this little open lawn among the beeches. They fed in a dense crowd, which swayed to and fro, and came hither and thither as by a sort of tide, and of which the surface was agitated like the surface of a sea as each bird guzzled his head along the ground after the scattered corn. The clucking, cooing noise that had led me thither was formed by the blending together of countless expressions of individual contentment into one collective expression of contentment, or general grace during meat. Every now and again a big peacock would separate himself from the mob and take a stately turn or two about the lawn, or perhaps mount for a moment upon the rail, and there shrilly publish to the world his satisfaction with himself and what he had to eat. It happened, for my sins, that none of these admirable birds had anything beyond the merest rudiment of a tail. Tails, it seemed, were out of season just then. But they had their necks for all that; and by their necks alone they do as much surpass all the other birds of our grey climate as they fall in quality of song below the blackbird or the lark. Surely the peacock, with its incomparable parade of glorious colour and the scrannel voice of it issuing forth, as in mockery, from its painted throat, must, like my landlady’s butterflies at Great Missenden, have been invented by some skilful fabulist for the consolation and support of homely virtue: or rather, perhaps, by a fabulist not quite so skilful, who made points for the moment without having a studious enough eye to the complete effect; for I thought these melting greens and blues so beautiful that afternoon, that I would have given them my vote just then before the sweetest pipe in all the spring woods. For indeed there is no piece of colour of the same extent in nature, that will so flatter and satisfy the lust of a man’s eyes; and to come 126 upon so many of them, after these acres of stone-coloured heavens and russet woods, and grey-brown ploughlands and white roads, was like going three whole days’ journey to the southward, or a month back into the summer.

I was sorry to leave “Peacock Farm” — for so the place is called, after the name of its splendid pensioners — and go forward again in the quiet woods. It began to grow both damp and dusk under the beeches: and as the day declined the colour faded out of the foliage: and shadow, without form and void, took the place of all the fine tracery of leaves and delicate gradations of living green that had before accompanied my walk. I had been sorry to leave “Peacock

Farm," but I was not sorry to find myself once more in the open road, under a pale and somewhat troubled-looking evening sky, and put my best foot foremost for the inn at Wendover.

Wendover, in itself, is a straggling, purposeless sort of place. Everybody seems to have had his own opinion as to how the street should go; or rather, every now and then a man seems to have arisen with a new idea on the subject, and led away a little sect of neighbours to join in his heresy. It would have somewhat the look of an abortive watering-place, such as we may now see them here and there along the coast, but for the age of the houses, the comely quiet design of some of them, and the look of long habitation, of a life that is settled and rooted, and makes it worth while to train flowers about the windows, and otherwise shape the dwelling to the humour of the inhabitant. The church, which might perhaps have served as rallying-point for these loose houses, and pulled the township into something like intelligible unity, stands some distance off among great trees; but the inn (to take the public buildings in order of importance) is in what I understand to be the principal street: a pleasant old house, with bay windows, and three peaked gables, and many swallows' nests plastered about the eaves.

The interior of the inn was answerable to the outside: 127 indeed, I never saw any room much more to be admired than the low wainscoted parlour in which I spent the remainder of the evening. It was a short oblong in shape, save that the fireplace was built across one of the angles so as to cut it partially off, and the opposite angle was similarly truncated by a corner cupboard. The wainscot was white, and there was a Turkey carpet on the floor, so old that it might have been imported by Walter Shandy before he retired, worn almost through in some places, but in others making a good show of blues and oranges, none the less harmonious for being somewhat faded. The corner cupboard was agreeable in design; and there were just the right things upon the shelves — decanters and tumblers, and blue plates, and one red rose in a glass of water. The furniture was old-fashioned and stiff. Everything was in keeping, down to the ponderous leaden inkstand on the round table. And you may fancy how pleasant it looked all flushed and flickered over by the light of a brisk companionable fire, and seen, in a strange, tilted sort of perspective, in the three compartments of the old mirror above the chimney. As I sat reading in the great arm-chair, I kept looking round with the tail of my eye at the quaint, bright picture that was about me, and could not help some pleasure and a certain childish pride in forming part of it. The book I read was about Italy in the early Renaissance, the pageantries and the light loves of princes, the passion of men for learning, and poetry, and art; but it was written, by good luck, after a solid, prosaic fashion, that suited the room infinitely more nearly than the matter; and the result was that I thought less, perhaps, of Lippo Lippi, or Lorenzo, or Politian, than of the good Englishman who had written in that volume what he knew of them, and taken so much pleasure in his solemn polysyllables.

I was not left without society. My landlord had a very pretty little daughter whom we shall call Lizzie. If I had made any notes at the time, I might be able to tell you something definite of her appearance. But faces have a 128 trick of growing more and more spiritualised and abstract in the memory, until nothing remains of them but a look, a haunting expression; just that secret quality in a face that is apt to slip out somehow under the cunningest painter's touch, and leave the portrait dead for the lack of it. And if it is hard to catch with the finest of camel's hair pencils, you may think how hopeless it must be to pursue after it with clumsy words. If I say, for instance, that this look, which I remember as Lizzie, was something wistful that seemed partly to come of slyness and in part of simplicity, and that I am inclined to imagine it had something to do with the daintiest suspicion of a cast in one of her large eyes, I shall have said all that I can, and the reader will not be much advanced towards comprehension. I had struck up an acquaintance with this little damsel in the morning, and professed much interest in her dolls, and an impatient desire to see the large one which was kept locked away for great occasions. And so I had not been very long in the parlour before the door opened, and in came Miss Lizzie with two dolls tucked clumsily under her arm. She was followed by her brother John, a year or so younger than herself, not simply to play propriety at our interview, but to show his own two whips in emulation of his sister's dolls. I did my best to make myself agreeable to my visitors, showing much admiration for the dolls and dolls' dresses, and, with a very serious demeanour, asking many questions about their age and character. I did not think that Lizzie distrusted my sincerity, but it was evident she was both bewildered and a little contemptuous. Although she was ready herself to treat her dolls as if they were alive, she seemed to think rather poorly of any grown person who could fall heartily into the spirit of the fiction. Sometimes she would look at me with gravity and a sort of disquietude, as though she really feared I must be out of my wits. Sometimes, as when I inquired too particularly into the question of their names, she laughed at me so long and heartily that I began to feel almost embarrassed. But 129 when, in an evil moment, I asked to be allowed to kiss one of them, she could keep herself no longer to herself. Clambering down from the chair on which she sat perched to show me, Cornelia-like, her jewels, she ran straight out of the room and into the bar — it was just across the passage, — and I could hear her telling her mother in loud tones, but apparently more in sorrow than in merriment, that *the gentleman in the parlour wanted to kiss Dolly*. I fancy she was determined to save me from this humiliating action, even in spite of myself, for she never gave me the desired permission. She reminded me of an old dog I once knew, who would never suffer the master of the house to dance, out of an exaggerated sense of the dignity of that master's place and carriage.

After the young people were gone there was but one more incident ere I went to bed. I heard a party of children go up and down the dark street for a while, singing together sweetly. And the mystery of this little incident was so pleasant to me that I purposely refrained from asking who they were, and wherefore they went singing at so late an hour. One can rarely be in a pleasant place without meeting with some pleasant accident. I have a conviction that these children would not have gone singing before the inn unless the inn-parlour had been the delightful place it was. At least, if I had been in the customary public room of the modern hotel, with all its disproportions and discomforts, my ears would have been dull, and there would have been some ugly temper or other uppermost in my spirit, and so they would have wasted their songs upon an unworthy hearer.

Next morning I went along to visit the church. It is a long-backed red-and-white building, very much restored, and stands in a pleasant graveyard among those great trees of which I have spoken already. The sky was drowned in a mist. Now and again pulses of cold wind went about the enclosure, and set the branches busy overhead, and the dead leaves scurrying in to the angles of the church buttresses. 130 Now and again, also, I could hear the dull sudden fall of a chestnut among the grass — the dog would bark before the rectory door — or there would come a clinking of pails from the stable-yard behind. But in spite of these occasional interruptions — in spite, also, of the continuous autumn twittering that filled the trees — the chief impression somehow was one as of utter silence, inasmuch that the little greenish bell that peeped out of a window in the tower disquieted me with a sense of some possible and more inharmonious disturbance. The grass was wet, as if with a hoar-frost that had just been melted. I do not know that ever I saw a morning more autumnal. As I went to and fro among the graves, I saw some flowers set reverently before a recently erected tomb, and drawing near was almost startled to find they lay on the grave of a man seventy-two years old when he died. We are accustomed to strew flowers only over the young, where love has been cut short untimely, and great possibilities have been restrained by death. We strew them there in token that these possibilities, in some deeper sense, shall yet be realised, and the touch of our dead loves remain with us and guide us to the end. And yet there was more significance, perhaps, and perhaps a greater consolation, in this little nosegay on the grave of one who had died old. We are apt to make so much of the tragedy of death, and think so little of the enduring tragedy of some men's lives, that we see more to lament for in a life cut off in the midst of usefulness and love, than in one that miserably survives all love and usefulness, and goes about the world the phantom of itself, without hope, or joy, or any consolation. These flowers seemed not so much the token of love that survived death, as of something yet more beautiful — of love that had lived a man's life out to an end with him, and been faithful and companionable, and not weary of loving, throughout all these years.

The morning cleared a little, and the sky was once more the old stone-coloured vault over the sallow meadows and the russet woods, as I set forth on a dog-cart from Wendover 131 to Tring. The road lay for a good distance along the side of the hills, with the great plain below on one hand, and the beech-woods above on the other. The fields were busy with people ploughing and sowing; every here and there a jug of ale stood in the angle of the hedge, and I could see many a team wait smoking in the furrow as ploughman or sower stepped aside for a moment to take a draught. Over all the brown ploughlands, and under all the leafless hedgerows, there was a stout piece of labour abroad, and, as it were, a spirit of picnic. The horses smoked and the men laboured and shouted and drank in the sharp autumn morning; so that one had a strong effect of large, open-air existence. The fellow who drove me was something of a humorist; and his conversation was all in praise of an agricultural labourer's way of life. It was he who called my attention to these jugs of ale by the hedgerow; he could not sufficiently express the liberality of these men's wages; he told me how sharp an appetite was given by breaking up the earth in the morning air, whether with plough or spade, and cordially admired this provision of nature. He sang *O fortunatos agricolas*! indeed, in every possible key, and with many cunning inflections, till I began to wonder what was the use of such people as Mr. Arch, and to sing the same air myself in a more diffident manner.

Tring was reached, and then Tring railway station; for the two are not very near, the good people of Tring having held the railway, of old days, in extreme apprehension, lest some day it should break loose in the town and work mischief. I had a last walk, among russet beeches as usual, and the air filled, as usual, with the carolling of larks; I heard shots fired in the distance, and saw, as a new sign of the fulfilled autumn, two horsemen exercising a pack of fox-hounds. And then the train came and carried me back to London.

I had nearly finished the transcription of the following pages, when

I saw on a friend’s table the number containing the piece from which this sentence is extracted, and, struck with a similarity of title, took it home with me and read it with indescribable satisfaction. I do not know whether I more envy M. Theuriet the pleasure of having written this delightful article, or the reader the pleasure, which I hope he has still before him, of reading it once and again, and lingering over the passages that please him most.

VII

A WINTER'S WALK IN CARRICK AND GALLOWAY

(*A Fragment*: 1876)

At the famous bridge of Doon, Kyle, the central district of the shire of Ayr, marches with Carrick, the most southerly. On the Carrick side of the river rises a hill of somewhat gentle conformation, cleft with shallow dells, and sown here and there with farms and tufts of wood. Inland, it loses itself, joining, I suppose, the great herd of similar hills that occupies the centre of the Lowlands. Towards the sea, it swells out the coast-line into a protuberance, like a bay window in a plan, and is fortified against the surf behind bold crags. This hill is known as the Brown Hill of Carrick, or, more shortly, Brown Carrick.

It had snowed overnight. The fields were all sheeted up; they were tucked in among the snow, and their shape was modelled through the pliant counterpane, like children tucked in by a fond mother. The wind had made ripples and folds upon the surface, like what the sea, in quiet weather, leaves upon the sand. There was a frosty stifle in the air. An effusion of coppery light on the summit of Brown Carrick showed where the sun was trying to look through; but along the horizon clouds of cold fog had settled down, so that there was no distinction of sky and sea. Over the white shoulders of the headlands, or in the opening of bays, there was nothing but a great vacancy and blackness; and the road as it drew near the edge of the cliff seemed to skirt the shores of creation and void space.

The snow crunched underfoot, and at farms all the dogs broke out barking as they smelt a passer-by upon the road. I met a fine old fellow, who might have sat as 133 the father in "The Cottar's Saturday Night," and who swore most heathenishly at a cow he was driving. And a little after I scraped acquaintance with a poor body tramping out to gather cockles. His face was wrinkled by exposure; it was broken up into flakes and channels, like mud beginning to dry, and weathered in two colours, an incongruous pink and grey. He had a faint air of being surprised — which, God knows, he might well be — that life had gone so ill with him. The shape of his trousers was in itself a jest, so strangely were they bagged and ravelled about his knees; and his coat was all bedaubed with clay as though he had lain in a rain-dub during the New Year's festivity. I will own I was not sorry to think he had had a merry New Year, and been young again for an evening; but I was sorry to see the mark still there. One could not expect such an old gentleman to be much of a dandy, or a great student of respectability in dress; but there might have been a wife at home, who had brushed out similar stains after fifty New Years, now become old, or a round-armed daughter, who would wish to have him neat, were it only out of self-respect and for the ploughman sweetheart when he looks round at night. Plainly, there was nothing of this in his life, and years and loneliness hung heavily on his old arms. He was seventy-six, he told me; and nobody would give a day’s work to a man that age: they would think he couldn’t do it. “And, ‘deed,” he went on, with a sad little chuckle, “‘deed, I doubt if I could.” He said good-bye to me at a foot-path, and crippled wearily off to his work. It will make your heart ache if you think of his old fingers groping in the snow.

He told me I was to turn down beside the school-house for Dunure. And so, when I found a lone house among the snow, and heard a babble of childish voices from within, I struck off into a steep road leading downwards to the sea. Dunure lies close under the steep hill: a haven among the rocks, a breakwater in consummate disrepair, much apparatus for drying nets, and a score or so of 134 fishers’ houses. Hard by, a few shards of ruined castle overhang the sea, a few vaults, and one tall gable honeycombed with windows. The snow lay on the beach to the tide-mark. It was daubed on to the sills of the ruin; it roosted in the crannies of the rock like white sea-birds; even on outlying reefs there would be a little cock of snow, like a toy lighthouse. Everything was grey and white in a cold and dolorous sort of shepherd’s plaid. In the profound silence, broken only by the noise of oars at sea, a horn was sounded twice; and I saw the postman, girt with two bags, pause a moment at the end of the clachan for letters. It is, perhaps, characteristic of Dunure that none were brought him.

The people at the public-house did not seem well pleased to see me, and though I would fain have stayed by the kitchen fire, sent me “ben the hoose” into the guest-room. This guest-room at Dunure was painted in quite æsthetic fashion. There are rooms in the same taste not a hundred miles from London, where persons of an extreme sensibility meet together without embarrassment. It was all in a fine dull bottle-green and black; a grave harmonious piece of colouring, with nothing, so far as coarser folk can judge, to hurt the better feelings of the most exquisite purist. A cherry-red half window-blind kept up an imaginary warmth in the cold room, and threw quite a glow on the floor. Twelve cockle-shells and a halfpenny china figure were ranged solemnly along the mantel-shelf. Even the spittoon was an original note, and instead of sawdust contained sea-shells. And as for the hearthrug, it would merit an article to itself, and a coloured diagram to help the text. It was patchwork, but the patchwork of the poor; no glowing shreds of old brocade and Chinese silk, shaken together in the kaleidoscope of some tasteful housewife's fancy; but a work of art in its own way, and plainly a labour of love. The patches came exclusively from people's raiment. There was no colour more brilliant than a heather mixture; "My Johnnie's grey breeks," 135 well polished over the oar on the boat's thwart, entered largely into its composition. And the spoils of an old black cloth coat, that had been many a Sunday to church, added something (save the mark!) of preciousness to the material.

While I was at luncheon four carters came in — long-limbed, muscular Ayrshire Scots, with lean, intelligent faces. Four quarts of stout were ordered; they kept filling the tumbler with the other hand as they drank; and in less time than it takes me to write these words the four quarts were finished — another round was proposed, discussed, and negatived — and they were creaking out of the village with their carts.

The ruins drew you towards them. You never saw any place more desolate from a distance, nor one that less belied its promise near at hand. Some crows and gulls flew away croaking as I scrambled in. The snow had drifted into the vaults. The clachan dabbled with snow, the white hills, the black sky, the sea marked in the coves with faint circular wrinkles, the whole world, as it looked from a loop-hole in Dunure, was cold, wretched, and out-at-elbows. If you had been a wicked baron and compelled to stay there all the afternoon, you would have had a rare fit of remorse. How you would have heaped up the fire and gnawed your fingers! I think it would have come to homicide before the evening — if it were only for the pleasure of seeing something red! And the masters of Dunure, it is to be noticed, were remarkable of old for inhumanity. One of these vaults where the snow had drifted was that "black voute" where "Mr. Alane Stewart, Commendatour of Crossraguel," endured his fiery trials. On the 1st and 7th of September 1570 (ill dates for Mr. Alan!), Gilbert, Earl of Cassilis, his chaplain, his baker, his cook, his pantryman, and another servant, bound the poor Commendator "betwix an iron chimlay and a fire," and there cruelly roasted him until he signed away his abbacy. It is one of the ugliest stories of an ugly period, but not, 136 somehow, without such a flavour of the ridiculous as makes it hard to sympathise quite seriously with the victim. And it is consoling to remember that he got away at last, and kept his abbacy, and, over and above, had a pension from the Earl until he died.

Some way beyond Dunure a wide bay, of somewhat less unkindly aspect, opened out. Colzean plantations lay all along the steep shore, and there was a wooded hill towards the centre, where the trees made a sort of shadowy etching over the snow. The road went down and up, and past a blacksmith's cottage that made fine music in the valley. Three compatriots of Burns drove up to me in a cart. They were all drunk, and asked me jeeringly if this was the way to Dunure. I told them it was; and my answer was received with unfeigned merriment. One gentleman was so much tickled he nearly fell out of the cart; indeed, he was only saved by a companion, who either had not so fine a sense of humour or had drunken less.

"The toune of Mayboll," says the inimitable Abercrummie, "stands upon an ascending ground from east to west, and lyes open to the south. It hath one principall street, with houses upon both sides, built of freestone, and it is beautifyed with the situation of two castles, one at each end of this street. That on the east belongs to the Erle of Cassilis. On the west end is a castle, which belonged sometime to the laird of Blairquan, which is now the tolbuith, and is adorned with a pyremide [conical roof], and a row of ballesters round it raised from the top of the staircase, into which they have mounted a fyne clock. There be four lanes which pass from the principall street; one is called the Back Vennel, which is steep, declining to the south-west, and leads to a lower street, which is far larger than the high chiefe street, and it runs from the Kirkland to the Well Trees, in which there have been many pretty buildings, belonging to the severall 137 gentry of the countrey, who were wont to resort thither in winter, and divert themselves in converse together at their owne houses. It was once the principall street of the town; but many of these houses of the gentry having been decayed and ruined, it has lost much of its ancient beautie. Just opposite to this vennel, there is another that leads north-west, from the chiefe street to the green, which is a pleasant plott of ground, enclosed round with an earthen wall, wherein they were wont to play football, but now at the Gowff and byasse-bowls. The houses of this towne, on both sides of the street, have their several gardens belonging to them; and in the lower street there be some pretty orchards, that yield store of good fruit." As Patterson says, this description is near enough even to-day, and is mighty nicely written to boot. I am bound to add, of my own experience, that Maybole is tumble-down and dreary. Prosperous enough in reality, it has an air of decay; and though the population has increased, a roofless house every here and there seems to protest the contrary. The women are more than well-favoured, and the men fine tall fellows; but they look slipshod and dissipated. As they slouched at street corners, or stood about gossiping in the snow, it seemed they would have been more at home in the slums of a large city than here in a country place betwixt a village and a town. I heard a great deal about drinking, and a great deal about religious revivals: two things in which the Scottish character is emphatic and most unlovely. In particular, I heard of clergymen who were employing their time in explaining to a delighted audience the physics of the Second Coming. It is not very likely any of us will be asked to help. If we were, it is likely we should receive instructions for the occasion, and that on more reliable authority. And so I can only figure to myself a congregation truly curious in such flights of theological fancy, as one of veteran and accomplished saints, who have fought the good fight to an end and outlived all worldly passion, and are to be regarded rather as 138 a part of the Church Triumphant than the poor, imperfect company on earth. And yet I saw some young fellows about the smoking-room who seemed, in the eyes of one who cannot count himself strait-laced, in need of some more practical sort of teaching. They seemed only eager to get drunk, and to do so speedily. It was not much more than a week after the New Year; and to hear them return on their past bouts with a gusto unspeakable was not altogether pleasing. Here is one snatch of talk, for the accuracy of which I can vouch —

"Ye had a spree here last Tuesday?"

"We had that!"

"I wasna able to be oot o' my bed. Man, I was awful bad on Wednesday."

"Ay, ye were gey bad."

And you should have seen the bright eyes, and heard the sensual accents! They recalled their doings with devout gusto and a sort of rational pride. Schoolboys, after their first drunkenness, are not more boastful; a cock does not plume himself with a more unmingled satisfaction as he paces forth among his harem; and yet these were grown men, and by no means short of wit. It was hard to suppose they were very eager about the Second Coming: it seemed as if some elementary notions of temperance for the men and seemliness for the women would have gone nearer the mark. And yet, as it seemed to me typical of much that is evil in Scotland, Maybole is also typical of much that is best. Some of the factories, which have taken the place of weaving in the town's economy, were originally founded and are still possessed by self-made men of the sterling, stout old breed — fellows who made some little bit of an invention, borrowed some little pocketful of capital, and then, step by step, in courage, thrift, and industry, fought their way upward to an assured position.

Abercrummie has told you enough of the Tolbooth; but, as a bit of spelling, this inscription on the Tolbooth 139 bell seems too delicious to withhold: "This bell is founded at Maiboll Bi Danel Geli, a Frenchman, the 6th November 1696, Bi appointment of the heritors of the parish of Maiyboll." The Castle deserves more notice. It is a large and shapely tower, plain from the ground upward, but with a zone of ornamentation running about the top. In a general way this adornment is perched on the very summit of the chimney-stacks; but there is one corner more elaborate than the rest. A very heavy string-course runs round the upper story, and just above this, facing up the street, the tower carries a small oriel window, fluted and corbelled and carved about with stone heads. It is so ornate it has somewhat the air of a shrine. And it was, indeed, the casket of a very precious jewel, for in the room to which it gives light lay, for long years, the heroine of the sweet old ballad of “Johnnie Faa” — she who, at the call of the gipsies’ songs, “came tripping down the stair, and all her maids before her.” Some people say the ballad has no basis in fact, and have written, I believe, unanswerable papers to the proof. But in the face of all that, the very look of that high oriel window convinces the imagination, and we enter into all the sorrows of the imprisoned dame. We conceive the burthen of the long, lack-lustre days, when she leaned her sick head against the mullions, and saw the burghers loafing in Maybole High Street, and the children at play, and ruffling gallants riding by from hunt or foray. We conceive the passion of odd moments, when the wind threw up to her some snatch of song, and her heart grew hot within her, and her eyes overflowed at the memory of the past. And even if the tale be not true of this or that lady, or this or that old tower, it is true in the essence of all men and women: for all of us, some time or other, hear the gipsies singing; over all of us is the glamour cast. Some resist and sit resolutely by the fire. Most go and are brought back again, like Lady Cassilis. A few, of the tribe of Waring, go and are seen no more; only now and again, at springtime, 140 when the gipsies’ song is afloat in the amethyst evening, we can catch their voices in the glee.

By night it was clearer, and Maybole more visible than during the day. Clouds coursed over the sky in great masses; the full moon battled the other way, and lit up the snow with gleams of flying silver; the town came down the hill in a cascade of brown gables, bestridden by smooth white roofs, and spangled here and there with lighted windows. At either end the snow stood high up in the darkness, on the peak of the Tolbooth and among the chimneys of the Castle. As the moon flashed a bull’s-eye glitter across the town between the racing clouds, the white roofs leaped into relief over the gables and the chimney-stacks, and their shadows over the white roofs. In the town itself the lit face of the clock peered down the street; an hour was hammered out on Mr. Geli’s bell, and from behind the red curtains of a public-house some one trolled out — a compatriot of Burns, again! — ”The saut tear blin’s my e’e.”

Next morning there were sun and a flapping wind. From the street-corners of Maybole I could catch breezy glimpses of green fields. The road underfoot was wet and heavy — part ice, part snow, part water;

and any one I met greeted me, by way of salutation, with “A fine thowe” (thaw). My way lay among rather bleak hills, and past bleak ponds and dilapidated castles and monasteries, to the Highland-looking village of Kirkoswald. It has little claim to notice save that Burns came there to study surveying in the summer of 1777, and there also, in the kirkyard, the original of Tam o’ Shanter sleeps his last sleep. It is worth noticing, however, that this was the first place I thought “Highland-looking.” Over the hill from Kirkoswald a farm-road leads to the coast. As I came down above Turnberry, the sea view was indeed strangely different from the day before. The cold fogs were all blown away; and there was Ailsa Craig, like a refraction, magnified and deformed, of the Bass Rock; and there 141 were the chiselled mountain tops of Arran, veined and tipped with snow; and behind, and fainter, the low, blue land of Cantyre. Cottony clouds stood, in a great castle, over the top of Arran, and blew out in long streamers to the south. The sea was bitten all over with white; little ships, tacking up and down the Firth, lay over at different angles in the wind. On Shanter they were ploughing lea; a cart foal, all in a field by himself, capered and whinnied as if the spring were in him.

The road from Turnberry to Girvan lies along the shore, among sandhills and by wildernesses of tumbled bent. Every here and there a few cottages stood together beside a bridge. They had one odd feature, not easy to describe in words: a triangular porch projected from above the door, supported at the apex by a single upright post; a secondary door was hinged to the post, and could be hasped on either cheek of the real entrance; so, whether the wind was north or south, the cotter could make himself a triangular bight of shelter where to set his chair and finish a pipe with comfort. There is one objection to this device: for, as the post stands in the middle of the fairway, any one precipitately issuing from the cottage must run his chance of a broken head. So far as I am aware, it is peculiar to the little corner of country about Girvan. And that corner is noticeable for more reasons: it is certainly one of the most characteristic districts in Scotland. It has this movable porch by way of architecture; it has, as we shall see, a sort of remnant of provincial costume, and it has the handsomest population in the Lowlands....

William Abercrombie. See *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ,* under “Maybole” (Part iii.).

VIII

FOREST NOTES

(1875-6)

ON THE PLAIN

Perhaps the reader knows already the aspect of the great levels of the Gâtinais, where they border with the wooded hills of Fontainebleau. Here and there a few grey rocks creep out of the forest as if to sun themselves. Here and there a few apple-trees stand together on a knoll. The quaint, undignified tartan of a myriad small fields dies out into the distance; the strips blend and disappear; and the dead flat lies forth open and empty, with no accident save perhaps a thin line of trees or faint church-spire against the sky. Solemn and vast at all times, in spite of pettiness in the near details, the impression becomes more solemn and vast towards evening. The sun goes down, a swollen orange, as it were into the sea. A blue-clad peasant rides home, with a harrow smoking behind him among the dry clods. Another still works with his wife in their little strip. An immense shadow fills the plain; these people stand in it up to their shoulders; and their heads, as they stoop over their work and rise again, are relieved from time to time against the golden sky.

These peasant farmers are well off nowadays, and not by any means overworked; but somehow you always see in them the historical representative of the serf of yore, and think not so much of present times, which may be prosperous enough, as of the old days when the peasant was taxed beyond possibility of payment, and lived, in Michelet’s image, like a hare between two furrows. These very people now weeding their patch under the broad 143 sunset, that very man and his wife, it seems to us, have suffered all the wrongs of France. It is they who have been their country’s scape-goat for long ages; they who, generation after generation, have sowed and not reaped, reaped and another has garnered; and who have now entered into their reward, and enjoy their good things in their turn. For the days are gone by when the Seigneur ruled and profited. “Le Seigneur,” says the old formula, “enferme ses manants comme sous porte et gonds, du ciel à la terre. Tout est à lui, forêt chenue, oiseau dans l’air, poisson dans l’eau, bête au buisson, l’onde qui coule, la cloche dont le son au loin roule.” Such was his old state of sovereignty, a local god rather than a mere king. And now you may ask yourself where he is, and look round for vestiges of my late lord, and in all the country-side there is no trace of him but his forlorn and fallen mansion. At the end of a long avenue, now sown with grain, in the midst of a close full of cypresses and lilacs, ducks and crowing chanticleers and droning bees, the old château lifts its red chimneys and peaked roofs and turning vanes into the wind and sun. There is a glad spring bustle in the air, perhaps, and the lilacs are all in flower, and the creepers green about the broken balustrade; but no spring shall revive the honour of the place. Old women of the people, little children of the people, saunter and gambol in the walled court or feed the ducks in the neglected moat. Plough-horses, mighty of limb, browse in the long stables. The dial-hand on the clock waits for some better hour. Out on the plain, where hot sweat trickles into men's eyes, and the spade goes in deep and comes up slowly, perhaps the peasant may feel a movement of joy at his heart when he thinks that these spacious chimneys are now cold, which have so often blazed and flickered upon gay folk at supper, while he and his hollow-eyed children watched through the night with empty bellies and cold feet. And perhaps, as he raises his head and sees the forest lying like a coast-line of low hills along the sea-like level of 144 the plain, perhaps forest and château hold no unsimilar place in his affections.

If the château was my lord's the forest was my lord the king's; neither of them for this poor Jacques. If he thought to eke out his meagre way of life by some petty theft of wood for the fire, or for a new roof-tree, he found himself face to face with a whole department, from the Grand Master of the Woods and Waters, who was a high-born lord, down to the common sergeant, who was a peasant like himself, and wore stripes or bandolier by way of uniform. For the first offence, by the Salic law, there was a fine of fifteen sols; and should a man be taken more than once in fault, or circumstances aggravate the colour of his guilt, he might be whipped, branded, or hanged. There was a hangman over at Melun, and, I doubt not, a fine tall gibbet hard by the town gate, where Jacques might see his fellows dangle against the sky as he went to market.

And then, if he lived near to a cover, there would be the more hares and rabbits to eat out his harvest, and the more hunters to trample it down. My lord has a new horn from England. He has laid out seven francs in decorating it with silver and gold, and fitting it with a silken leash to hang about his shoulder. The hounds have been on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Mesmer, or Saint Hubert in the Ardennes, or some other holy intercessor who has made a speciality of the health of hunting-dogs. In the grey dawn the game was turned and the branch broken by our best piqueur. A rare day's hunting lies before us. Wind a jolly flourish, sound the *bien-aller* with all your lungs. Jacques must stand by, hat in hand, while the quarry and hound and huntsman sweep across his field, and a year's sparing and labouring is as though it had not been. If he can see the ruin with a good enough grace, who knows but he may fall in favour with my lord; who knows but his son may become the last and least among the servants at his lordship's kennel — one of the 145 two poor varlets who get no wages and sleep at night among the hounds?

For all that, the forest has been of use to Jacques, not only warming him with fallen wood, but giving him shelter in days of sore trouble, when my lord of the château, with all his troopers and trumpets, had been beaten from field after field into some ultimate fastness, or lay overseas in an English prison. In these dark days, when the watch on the church steeple saw the smoke of burning villages on the sky-line, or a clump of spears and fluttering pennon drawing nigh across the plain, these good folk gat them up, with all their household gods, into the wood, whence, from some high spur, their timid scouts might overlook the coming and going of the marauders, and see the harvest ridden down, and church and cottage go up to heaven all night in flame. It was but an unhomely refuge that the woods afforded, where they must abide all change of weather and keep house with wolves and vipers. Often there was none left alive, when they returned, to show the old divisions of field from field. And yet, as times went, when the wolves entered at night into depopulated Paris, and perhaps De Retz was passing by with a company of demons like himself, even in these caves and thickets there were glad hearts and grateful prayers.

Once or twice, as I say, in the course of the ages, the forest may have served the peasant well, but at heart it is a royal forest, and noble by old association. These woods have rung to the horns of all the kings of France, from Philip Augustus downwards. They have seen St. Louis exercise the dogs he brought with him from Egypt; Francis I. go a-hunting with ten thousand horses in his train; and Peter of Russia following his first stag. And so they are still haunted for the imagination by royal 146 hunts and progresses, and peopled with the faces of memorable men of yore. And this distinction is not only in virtue of the pastime of dead monarchs. Great events, great revolutions, great cycles in the affairs of men, have here left their note, here taken shape in some significant and dramatic situation. It was hence that Guise and his leaguers led Charles the Ninth a prisoner to Paris. Here, booted and spurred, and with all his dogs about him, Napoleon met the Pope beside a woodland cross. Here, on his way to Elba, not so long after, he kissed the eagle of the Old Guard, and spoke words of passionate farewell to his soldiers. And here, after Waterloo, rather than yield its ensign to the new power, one of his faithful regiments burned that memorial of so much toil and glory on the Grand Master’s table, and drank its dust in brandy, as a devout priest consumes the remnants of the Host.

IN THE SEASON

Close into the edge of the forest, so close that the trees of the *bornage* stand pleasantly about the last houses, sits a certain small and very quiet village. There is but one street, and that, not long ago, was a green lane, where the cattle browsed between the doorsteps. As you go up this street, drawing ever nearer the beginning of the wood, you will arrive at last before an inn where artists lodge. To the door (for I imagine it to be six o'clock on some fine summer's even), half a dozen, or maybe half a score, of people have brought out chairs, and now sit sunning themselves and waiting the omnibus from Melun. If you go on into the court you will find as many more, some in the billiard-room over absinthe and a match of corks, some without over a last cigar and a vermouth. The doves coo and flutter from the dovecot; Hortense is drawing water from the well; and as all the rooms open into the court, you can see the white-capped cook over 147 the furnace in the kitchen, and some idle painter, who has stored his canvases and washed his brushes, jangling a waltz on the crazy, tongue-tied piano in the salle-à-manger. "*Edmond, encore un vermouth*," cries a man in velveteen, adding in a tone of apologetic after-thought, "*un double, s'il vous plaît.*" "Where are you working?" asks one in pure white linen from top to toe. "At the Garrefour de l'Épine," returns the other in corduroy (they are all gaitered, by the way). "I couldn't do a thing to it. I ran out of white. Where were you?" "I wasn't working. I was looking for motives." Here is an outbreak of jubilation, and a lot of men clustering together about some new-comer with outstretched hands; perhaps the "correspondence" has come in and brought So-and-so from Paris, or perhaps it is only So-and-so who has walked over from Chailly to dinner.

"*À table, Messieurs!*" cries M. Siron, bearing through the court the first tureen of soup. And immediately the company begins to settle down about the long tables in the dining-room, framed all round with sketches of all degrees of merit and demerit. There's the big picture of the huntsman winding a horn with a dead boar between his legs, and his legs — well, his legs in stockings. And here is the little picture of a raw mutton-chop, in which Such-a-one knocked a hole last summer with no worse a missile than a plum from the dessert. And under all these works of art so much eating goes forward, so much drinking, so much jabbering in French and English, that it would do your heart good merely to peep and listen at the door. One man is telling how they all went last year to the fête at Fleury, and another how well So-and-so would sing of an evening; and here are a third and fourth making plans for the whole future of their lives; and there is a fifth imitating a conjuror making faces on his clenched fist, surely of all arts the most difficult and admirable! A sixth has eaten his fill, lights a cigarette, and resigns himself to digestion. A seventh has just 148 dropped in, and calls for soup. Number eight, meanwhile, has left the table, and is once more trampling the poor piano under powerful and uncertain fingers.

Dinner over, people drop outside to smoke and chat. Perhaps we go along to visit our friends at the other end of the village, where there is always a good welcome and a good talk, and perhaps some pickled oysters and white wine to close the evening. Or a dance is organised in the dining-room, and the piano exhibits all its paces under manful jockeying, to the light of three or four candles and a lamp or two, while the waltzers move to and fro upon the wooden floor, and sober men, who are not given to such light pleasures, get up on the table or the sideboard, and sit there looking on approvingly over a pipe and a tumbler of wine. Or sometimes — suppose my lady moon looks forth, and the court from out the half-lit dining-room seems nearly as bright as by day, and the light picks out the window-panes, and makes a clear shadow under every vine leaf on the wall — sometimes a picnic is proposed, and a basket made ready, and a good procession formed in front of the hotel. The two trumpeters in honour go before; and as we file down the long alley, and up through devious footpaths among rocks and pine-trees, with every here and there a dark passage of shadow, and every here and there a spacious outlook over moonlit woods, these two precede us and sound many a jolly flourish as they walk. We gather ferns and dry boughs into the cavern, and soon a good blaze flutters the shadows of the old bandits' haunt, and shows shapely beards and comely faces and toilettes ranged about the wall. The bowl is lit, and the punch is burnt and sent round in scalding thimblefuls. So a good hour or two may pass with song and jest. And then we go home in the moonlight morning, straggling a good deal among the birch tufts and the boulders, but ever called together again, as one of our leaders winds his horn. Perhaps some one of the party will not heed the summons, but chooses 149 out some by-way of his own. As he follows the winding sandy road, he hears the flourishes grow fainter and fainter in the distance, and die finally out, and still walks on in the strange coolness and silence and between the crisp lights and shadows of the moonlit woods, until suddenly the bell rings out the hour from far-away Chailly, and he starts to find himself alone. No surf-bell on forlorn and perilous shores, no passing knell over the busy market-place, can speak with a more heavy and disconsolate tongue to human ears. Each stroke calls up a host of ghostly reverberations in his mind. And as he stands rooted, it has grown once more so utterly silent that it seems to him he might hear the church-bells ring the hour out all the world over, not at Chailly only, but in Paris, and away in outlandish cities, and in the village on the river, where his childhood passed between the sun and flowers.

IDLE HOURS

The woods by night, in all their uncanny effect, are not rightly to be understood until you can compare them with the woods by day. The stillness of the medium, the floor of glittering sand, these trees that go streaming up like monstrous sea-weeds and waver in the moving winds like the weeds in submarine currents, all these set the mind working on the thought of what you may have seen off a foreland or over the side of a boat, and make you feel like a diver, down in the quiet water, fathoms below the tumbling, transitory surface of the sea. And yet in itself, as I say, the strangeness of these nocturnal solitudes is not to be felt fully without the sense of contrast. You must have risen in the morning and seen the woods as they are by day, kindled and coloured in the sun's light; you must have felt the odour of innumerable trees at even, the unsparing heat along the forest roads, and the coolness of the groves.

And on the first morning you will doubtless rise betimes. 150 If you have not been wakened before by the visit of some adventurous pigeon, you will be wakened as soon as the sun can reach your window — for there are no blinds or shutters to keep him out — and the room, with its bare wood floor and bare whitewashed walls, shines all round you in a sort of glory of reflected lights. You may doze a while longer by snatches, or lie awake to study the charcoal men and dogs and horses with which former occupants have defiled the partitions: Thiers, with wily profile; local celebrities, pipe in hand; or, maybe, a romantic landscape splashed in oil. Meanwhile artist after artist drops into the salle-à-manger for coffee, and then shoulders easel, sunshade, stool, and paint-box, bound into a fagot, and sets off for what he calls his "motive." And artist after artist, as he goes out of the village, carries with him a little following of dogs. For the dogs, who belong only nominally to any special master, hang about the gate of the forest all day long, and whenever any one goes by who hits their fancy, profit by his escort, and go forth with him to play an hour or two at hunting. They would like to be under the trees all day. But they cannot go alone. They require a pretext. And so they take the passing artist as an excuse to go into the woods, as they might take a walking-stick as an excuse to bathe. With quick ears, long spines, and bandy legs, or perhaps as tall as a greyhound and with a bulldog's head, this company of mongrels will trot by your side all day and come home with you at night, still showing white teeth and wagging stunted tail. Their good humour is not to be exhausted. You may pelt them with stones if you please, all they will do is to give you a wider berth. If once they come out with you, to you they will remain faithful, and with you return; although if you meet them next morning in the street, it is as like as not they will cut you with a countenance of brass.

The forest — a strange thing for an Englishman — is very destitute of birds. This is no country where every patch 151 of wood among the meadows gives up an incense of song, and every valley wandered through by a streamlet rings and reverberates from side to side with a profusion of clear notes. And this rarity of birds is not to be regretted on its own account only. For the insects prosper in their absence, and become as one of the plagues of Egypt. Ants swarm in the hot sand; mosquitoes drone their nasal drone; wherever the sun finds a hole in the roof of the forest, you see a myriad transparent creatures coming and going in the shaft of light; and even between-whiles, even where there is no incursion of sun-rays into the dark arcade of the wood, you are conscious of a continual drift of insects, an ebb and flow of infinitesimal living things between the trees. Nor are insects the only evil creatures that haunt the forest. For you may plump into a cave among the rocks, and find yourself face to face with a wild boar, or see a crooked viper slither across the road.

Perhaps you may set yourself down in the bay between two spreading beech-roots with a book on your lap, and be awakened all of a sudden by a friend: “I say, just keep where you are, will you? You make the jolliest motive.” And you reply: “Well, I don’t mind, if I may smoke.” And thereafter the hours go idly by. Your friend at the easel labours doggedly a little way off, in the wide shadow of the tree; and yet farther, across a strait of glaring sunshine, you see another painter, encamped in the shadow of another tree, and up to his waist in the fern. You cannot watch your own effigy growing out of the white trunk, and the trunk beginning to stand forth from the rest of the wood, and the whole picture getting dappled over with the flecks of sun that slip through the leaves overhead, and, as a wind goes by and sets the trees a-talking, flicker hither and thither like butterflies of light. But you know it is going forward; and, out of emulation with the painter, get ready your own palette, and lay out the colour for a woodland scene in words.

Your tree stands in a hollow paved with fern and 152 heather, set in a basin of low hills, and scattered over with rocks and junipers. All the open is steeped in pitiless sunlight. Everything stands out as though it were cut in cardboard, every colour is strained into its highest key. The boulders are some of them upright and dead like monolithic castles, some of them prone like sleeping cattle. The junipers — looking, in their soiled and ragged mourning, like some funeral procession that has gone seeking the place of sepulchre three hundred years and more in wind and rain — are daubed in forcibly against the glowing ferns and heather. Every tassel of their rusty foliage is defined with pre-Raphaelite minuteness. And a sorry figure they make out there in the sun, like misbegotten yew-trees! The scene is all pitched in a key of colour so peculiar, and lit up with such a discharge of violent sunlight, as a man might live fifty years in England and not see.

Meanwhile at your elbow some one tunes up a song, words of Ronsard to a pathetic tremulous air, of how the poet loved his mistress long ago, and pressed on her the flight of time, and told her how white and quiet the dead lay under the stones, and how the boat dipped and pitched as the shades embarked for the passionless land. Yet a little while, sang the poet, and there shall be no more love; only to sit and remember loves that might have been. There is a falling flourish in the air that remains in the memory and comes back in incongruous places, on the seat of hansoms or in the warm bed at night, with something of a forest savour.

“You can get up now,” says the painter; “I’m at the background.”

And so up you get, stretching yourself, and go your way into the wood, the daylight becoming richer and more golden, and the shadows stretching farther into the open. A cool air comes along the highways, and the scents awaken. The fir-trees breathe abroad their ozone. Out of unknown thickets comes forth the soft, secret, aromatic odour of the woods, not like a smell of the free heaven, but as 153 though court ladies, who had known these paths in ages long gone by, still walked in the summer evenings, and shed from their brocades a breath of musk or bergamot upon the woodland winds. One side of the long avenues is still kindled with the sun, the other is plunged in transparent shadow. Over the trees the west begins to burn like a furnace; and the painters gather up their chattels, and go down, by avenue or footpath, to the plain.

A PLEASURE-PARTY

As this excursion is a matter of some length, and, moreover, we go in force, we have set aside our usual vehicle, the pony-cart, and ordered a large wagonette from Lejosne's. It has been waiting for near an hour, while one went to pack a knapsack, and t'other hurried over his toilette and coffee; but now it is filled from end to end with merry folk in summer attire, the coachman cracks his whip, and amid much applause from round the inn-door off we rattle at a spanking trot. The way lies through the forest, up hill and down dale, and by beech and pine wood, in the cheerful morning sunshine. The English get down at all the ascents and walk on ahead for exercise; the French are mightily entertained at this, and keep coyly underneath the tilt. As we go we carry with us a pleasant noise of laughter and light speech, and some one will be always breaking out into a bar or two of opera bouffe. Before we get to the Route Ronde here comes Desprez, the colourman from Fontainebleau, trudging across on his weekly peddle with a case of merchandise; and it is "Desprez, leave me some malachite green"; "Desprez, leave me so much canvas"; "Desprez, leave me this, or leave me that"; M. Desprez standing the while in the sunlight with grave face and many salutations. The next interruption is more important. For some time back we have had the sound of cannon in our ears; and now, a little past Franchard, we find a mounted trooper holding 154 a led horse, who brings the wagonette to a stand. The artillery is practising in the Quadrilateral, it appears; passage along the Route Ronde formally interdicted for the moment. There is nothing for it but to draw up at the glaring cross-roads, and get down to make fun with the notorious Cocardon, the most ungainly and ill-bred dog of all the ungainly and ill-bred dogs of Barbizon, or clamber about the sandy banks. And meanwhile the Doctor, with sun umbrella, wide Panama, and patriarchal beard, is busy wheedling and (for aught the rest of us know) bribing the too facile sentry. His speech is smooth and dulcet, his manner dignified and insinuating. It is not for nothing that the Doctor has voyaged all the world over, and speaks all languages from French to Patagonian. He has not come home from perilous journeys to be thwarted by a corporal of horse. And so we soon see the soldier's mouth relax, and his shoulders imitate a relenting heart. "*En voiture, Messieurs, Mesdames,*" sings the Doctor; and on we go again at a good round pace, for black care follows hard after us, and discretion prevails not a little over valour in some timorous spirits of the party. At any moment we may meet the sergeant, who will send us back. At any moment we may encounter a flying shell, which will send us somewhere farther off than Grez.

Grez — for that is our destination — has been highly recommended for its beauty. “*Il y a de l’eau,*” people have said, with an emphasis, as if that settled the question, which, for a French mind, I am rather led to think it does. And Grez, when we get there, is indeed a place worthy of some praise. It lies out of the forest, a cluster of houses, with an old bridge, an old castle in ruin, and a quaint old church. The inn garden descends in terraces to the river; stableyard, kailyard, orchard, and a space of lawn, fringed with rushes and embellished with a green arbour. On the opposite bank there is a reach of English-looking plain, set thickly with willows and poplars. And between the two lies the river, clear and deep, and full of reeds 155 and floating lilies. Water-plants cluster about the starlings of the long low bridge, and stand half-way up upon the piers in green luxuriance. They catch the dipped oar with long antennæ, and chequer the slimy bottom with the shadow of their leaves. And the river wanders hither and thither among the islets, and is smothered and broken up by the reeds, like an old building in the lithe, hardy arms of the climbing ivy. You may watch the box where the good man of the inn keeps fish alive for his kitchen, one oily ripple following another over the top of the yellow deal. And you can hear a splashing and a prattle of voices from the shed under the old kirk, where the village women wash and wash all day among the fish and water-lilies. It seems as if linen washed there should be specially cool and sweet.

We have come here for the river. And no sooner have we all bathed than we board the two shallops and push off gaily, and go gliding under the trees and gathering a great treasure of water-lilies. Some one sings; some trail their hands in the cool water; some lean over the gunwale to see the image of the tall poplars far below, and the shadow of the boat, with balanced oars and their own head protruded, glide smoothly over the yellow floor of the stream. At last, the day declining — all silent and happy, and up to the knees in the wet lilies — we punt slowly back again to the landing-place beside the bridge. There is a wish for solitude on all. One hides himself in the arbour with a cigarette; another goes a walk in the country with Cocardon; a third inspects the church. And it is not till dinner is on the table, and the inn’s best wine goes round from glass to glass, that we begin to throw off the restraint and fuse once more into a jolly fellowship.

Half the party are to return to-night with the wagonette; and some of the others, loath to break up good company, will go with them a bit of the way and drink a stirrup-cup at Marlotte. It is dark in the wagonette, and 156 not so merry as it might have been. The coachman loses the road. So-and-so tries to light fireworks with the most indifferent success. Some sing, but the rest are too weary to applaud; and it seems as if the festival were fairly at an end —

“Nous avons fait la noce,
Rentrons à nos foyers!”

And such is the burthen, even after we have come to Marlotte and taken our places in the court at Mother Antonine’s. There is punch on the long table out in the open air, where the guests dine in summer weather. The candles flare in the night wind, and the faces round the punch are lit up, with shifting emphasis, against a background of complete and solid darkness. It is all picturesque enough; but the fact is, we are aweary. We yawn; we are out of the vein; we have made the wedding, as the song says, and now, for pleasure’s sake, let’s make an end on’t. When here comes striding into the court, booted to mid-thigh, spurred and splashed, in a jacket of green cord, the great, famous, and redoubtable Blank; and in a moment the fire kindles again, and the night is witness of our laughter as he imitates Spaniards, Germans, Englishmen, picture-dealers, all eccentric ways of speaking and thinking, with a possession, a fury, a strain of mind and voice, that would rather suggest a nervous crisis than a desire to please. We are as merry as ever when the trap sets forth again, and say farewell noisily to all the good folk going farther. Then, as we are far enough from thoughts of sleep, we visit Blank in his quaint house, and sit an hour or so in a great tapestried chamber, laid with furs, littered with sleeping hounds, and lit up, in fantastic shadow and shine, by a wood-fire in a mediæval chimney. And then we plod back through the darkness to the inn beside the river.

How quick bright things come to confusion! When we arise next morning, the grey showers fall steadily, the 157 trees hang limp, and the face of the stream is spoiled with dimpling raindrops. Yesterday’s lilies encumber the garden walk, or begin, dismally enough, their voyage towards the Seine and the salt sea. A sickly shimmer lies upon the dripping house roofs, and all the colour is washed out of the green and golden landscape of last night, as though an envious man had taken a water-colour sketch and blotted it together with a sponge. We go out a-walking in the wet roads. But the roads about Grez have a trick of their own. They go on for a while among clumps of willows and patches of vine, and then, suddenly and without any warning, cease and determine in some miry hollow or upon some bald knowe; and you have a short period of hope, then right-about face, and back the way you came! So we draw about the kitchen fire and play a round game of cards for ha’pence, or go to the billiard-room for a match at corks; and by one consent a messenger is sent over for the wagonette — Grez shall be left to-morrow.

To-morrow dawns so fair that two of the party agree to walk back for exercise, and let their knapsacks follow by the trap. I need hardly say they are neither of them French; for, of all English phrases, the phrase “for exercise” is the least comprehensible across the Straits of Dover. All goes well for a while with the pedestrians. The wet woods are full of scents in the noontide. At a certain cross, where there is a guard-house, they make a halt, for the forester’s wife is the daughter of their good host at Barbizon. And so there they are hospitably received by the comely woman, with one child in her arms and another prattling and tottering at her gown, and drink some syrup of quince in the back parlour, with a map of the forest on the wall, and some prints of love-affairs and the great Napoleon hunting. As they draw near the Quadrilateral, and hear once more the report of the big guns, they take a by-road to avoid the sentries, and go on a while somewhat vaguely, with the sound of 158 the cannon in their ears and the rain beginning to fall. The ways grow wider and sandier; here and there there are real sand hills, as though by the seashore; the fir-wood is open and grows in clumps upon the hillocks, and the race of sign-posts is no more. One begins to look at the other doubtfully. “I am sure we should keep more to the right,” says one; and the other is just as certain they should hold to the left. And now, suddenly, the heavens open, and the rain falls “sheer and strong and loud,” as out of a shower-bath. In a moment they are as wet as shipwrecked sailors. They cannot see out of their eyes for the drift, and the water churns and gurgles in their boots. They leave the track and try across country with a gambler’s desperation, for it seems as if it were impossible to make the situation worse; and, for the next hour, go scrambling from boulder to boulder, or plod along paths that are now no more than rivulets, and across waste clearings where the scattered shells and broken fir-trees tell all too plainly of the cannon in the distance. And meantime the cannon grumble out responses to the grumbling thunder. There is such a mixture of melodrama and sheer discomfort about all this, it is at once so grey and so lurid, that it is far more agreeable to read and write about by the chimney-corner than to suffer in the person. At last they chance on the right path, and make Franchard in the early evening, the sorriest pair of wanderers that ever welcomed English ale. Thence, by the Bois d’Hyver, the Ventes-Alexandre, and the Pins Brulés, to the clean hostelry, dry clothes, and dinner.

THE WOODS IN SPRING

I think you will like the forest best in the sharp early spring-time, when it is just beginning to re-awaken, and innumerable violets peep from among the fallen leaves; when two or three people at most sit down to dinner, and, at table, you will do well to keep a rug about your 159 knees, for the nights are chill, and the salle-à-manger opens on the court. There is less to distract the attention, for one thing, and the forest is more itself. It is not bedotted with artists' sunshades as with unknown mushrooms, nor bestrewn with the remains of English picnics. The hunting still goes on, and at any moment your heart may be brought into your mouth as you hear far-away horns; or you may be told by an agitated peasant that the Vicomte has gone up the avenue, not ten minutes since, "*à fond de train, monsieur, et avec douze piqueurs.*"

If you go up to some coign of vantage in the system of low hills that permeates the forest, you will see many different tracts of country, each of its own cold and melancholy neutral tint, and all mixed together and mingled the one into the other at the seams. You will see tracts of leafless beeches of a faint yellowish grey, and leafless oaks a little ruddier in the hue. Then zones of pine of a solemn green; and, dotted among the pines, or standing by themselves in rocky clearings, the delicate, snow-white trunks of birches, spreading out into snow-white branches yet more delicate, and crowned and canopied with a purple haze of twigs. And then a long, bare ridge of tumbled boulders, with bright sandbreaks between them, and wavering sandy roads among the bracken and brown heather. It is all rather cold and unhomely. It has not the perfect beauty, nor the gem-like colouring, of the wood in the later year, when it is no more than one vast colonnade of verdant shadow, tremulous with insects, intersected here and there by lanes of sunlight set in purple heather. The loveliness of the woods in March is not, assuredly, of this blowsy rustic type. It is made sharp with a grain of salt, with a touch of ugliness. It has a sting like the sting of bitter ale; you acquire the love of it as men acquire a taste for olives. And the wonderful clear, pure air wells into your lungs the while by voluptuous inhalations, and makes the eyes bright, and sets the heart tinkling to a new tune — or, rather, to an old tune; for 160 you remember in your boyhood something akin to this spirit of adventure, this thirst for exploration, that now takes you masterfully by the hand, plunges you into many a deep grove, and drags you over many a stony crest. It is as if the whole wood were full of friendly voices calling you farther in, and you turn from one side to another, like Buridan's donkey, in a maze of pleasure.

Comely beeches send up their white, straight, clustered branches, barred with green moss, like so many fingers from a half-clenched hand. Mighty oaks stand to the ankles in a fine tracery of underwood; thence the tall shaft climbs upward, and the great forest of stalwart boughs spreads out into the golden evening sky, where the rooks are flying and calling. On the sward of the Bois d'Hyver the firs stand well asunder with outspread arms, like fencers saluting; and the air smells of resin all around, and the sound of the axe is rarely still. But strangest of all, and in appearance oldest of all, are the dim and wizard upland districts of young wood. The ground is carpeted with fir-tassel, and strewn with fir-apples and flakes of fallen bark. Rocks lie crouching in the thicket, guttered with rain, tufted with lichen, white with years and the rigours of the changeful seasons. Brown and yellow butterflies are sown and carried away again by the light air — like thistledown. The loneliness of these coverts is so excessive, that there are moments when pleasure draws to the verge of fear. You listen and listen for some noise to break the silence, till you grow half mesmerised by the intensity of the strain; your sense of your own identity is troubled; your brain reels, like that of some gymnosophist poring on his own nose in Asiatic jungles; and should you see your own outspread feet, you see them, not as anything of yours, but as a feature of the scene around you.

Still the forest is always, but the stillness is not always unbroken. You can hear the wind pass in the distance over the tree-tops; sometimes briefly, like the noise of a 161 train; sometimes with a long steady rush, like the breaking of waves. And sometimes, close at hand, the branches move, a moan goes through the thicket, and the wood thrills to its heart. Perhaps you may hear a carriage on the road to Fontainebleau, a bird gives a dry continual chirp, the dead leaves rustle underfoot, or you may time your steps to the steady recurrent strokes of the woodman's axe. From time to time, over the low grounds, a flight of rooks goes by; and from time to time the cooing of wild doves falls upon the ear, not sweet and rich and near at hand as in England, but a sort of voice of the woods, thin and far away, as fits these solemn places. Or you hear suddenly the hollow, eager, violent barking of dogs; scared deer flit past you through the fringes of the wood; then a man or two running, in green blouse, with gun and game-bag on a bandolier; and then, out of the thick of the trees, comes the jar of rifle-shots. Or perhaps the hounds are out, and horns are blown, and scarlet-coated huntsmen flash through the clearings, and the solid noise of horses galloping passes below you, where you sit perched among the rocks and heather. The boar is afoot, and all over the forest, and in all neighbouring villages, there is a vague excitement and a vague hope; for who knows whither the chase may lead? and even to have seen a single piqueur, or spoken to a single sportsman, is to be a man of consequence for the night.

Besides men who shoot and men who ride with the hounds, there are few people in the forest, in the early spring, save woodcutters plying their axes steadily, and old women and children gathering wood for the fire. You may meet such a party coming home in the twilight: the old woman laden with a fagot of chips, and the little ones hauling a long branch behind them in her wake. That is the worst of what there is to encounter; and if I tell you of what once happened to a friend of mine, it is by no means to tantalise you with false hopes; for the adventure was unique. It was on a very cold, still, sunless 162 morning, with a flat grey sky and a frosty tingle in the air, that this friend (who shall here be nameless) heard the notes of a key-bugle played with much hesitation, and saw the smoke of a fire spread out along the green pine-tops, in a remote uncanny glen, hard by a hill of naked boulders. He drew near warily, and beheld a picnic party seated under a tree in an open. The old father knitted a sock, the mother sat staring at the fire. The eldest son, in the uniform of a private of dragoons, was choosing out notes on a key-bugle. Two or three daughters lay in the neighbourhood picking violets. And the whole party as grave and silent as the woods around them! My friend watched for a long time, he says; but all held their peace; not one spoke or smiled; only the dragoon kept choosing out single notes upon the bugle, and the father knitted away at his work and made strange movements the while with his flexible eyebrows. They took no notice whatever of my friend's presence, which was disquieting in itself, and increased the resemblance of the whole party to mechanical wax-works. Certainly, he affirms, a wax figure might have played the bugle with more spirit than that strange dragoon. And as this hypothesis of his became more certain, the awful insolubility of why they should be left out there in the woods with nobody to wind them up again when they ran down, and a growing disquietude as to what might happen next, became too much for his courage, and he turned tail, and fairly took to his heels. It might have been a singing in his ears, but he fancies he was followed as he ran by a peal of Titanic laughter. Nothing has ever transpired to clear up the mystery; it may be they were automata; or it may be (and this is the theory to which I lean myself) that this is all another chapter of Heine's "Gods in Exile"; that the upright old man with the eyebrows was no other than Father Jove, and the young dragoon with the taste for music either Apollo or Mars.

MORALITY

Strange indeed is the attraction of the forest for the minds of men. Not one or two only, but a great chorus of grateful voices have arisen to spread abroad its fame. Half the famous writers of modern France have had their word to say about Fontainebleau. Chateaubriand, Michelet, Béranger, George Sand, de Senancour, Flaubert, Murger, the brothers Goncourt, Théodore de Banville, each of these has done something to the eternal praise and memory of these woods. Even at the very worst of times, even when the picturesque was anathema in the eyes of all Persons of Taste, the forest still preserved a certain reputation for beauty. It was in 1730 that the Abbé Guilbert published his “Historical Description of the Palace, Town, and Forest of Fontainebleau.” And very droll it is to see him, as he tries to set forth his admiration in terms of what was then permissible. The monstrous rocks, etc., says the Abbé, “sont admirées avec surprise des voyageurs qui s’écrient aussitôt avec Horace: Ut mihi devio rupes et vacuum nemus mirari libet.” The good man is not exactly lyrical in his praise; and you see how he sets his back against Horace as against a trusty oak. Horace, at any rate, was classical. For the rest, however, the Abbé likes places where many alleys meet; or which, like the Belle-Étoile, are kept up “by a special gardener,” and admires at the Table du Roi the labours of the Grand Master of Woods and Waters, the Sieur de la Falure, “qui a fait faire ce magnifique endroit.”

But indeed, it is not so much for its beauty that the forest makes a claim upon men’s hearts, as for that subtle something, that quality of the air, that emanation from the old trees, that so wonderfully changes and renews a weary spirit. Disappointed men, sick Francis Firsts and vanquished Grand Monarchs, time out of mind have come here for consolation. Hither perplexed folk have retired out of the press of life, as into a deep bay-window on some 164 night of masquerade, and here found quiet and silence, and rest, the mother of wisdom. It is the great moral spa; this forest without a fountain is itself the great fountain of Juventius. It is the best place in the world to bring an old sorrow that has been a long while your friend and enemy; and if, like Béranger’s, your gaiety has run away from home and left open the door for sorrow to come in, of all covers in Europe, it is here you may expect to find the truant hid. With every hour you change. The air penetrates through your clothes, and nestles to your living body. You love exercise and slumber, long fasting and full meals. You forget all your scruples and live a while in peace and freedom, and for the moment only. For here, all is absent that can stimulate to moral feeling. Such people as you see may be old, or toil-worn, or sorry; but you see them framed in the forest, like figures on a painted canvas; and for you, they are not people in any living and kindly sense. You forget the grim contrariety of interests. You forget the narrow lane where all men jostle together in unchivalrous contention, and the kennel, deep and unclean, that gapes on either hand for the defeated. Life is simple enough, it seems, and the very idea of sacrifice becomes like a mad fancy out of a last night's dream.

Your ideal is not perhaps high, but it is plain and possible. You become enamoured of a life of change and movement and the open air, where the muscles shall be more exercised than the affections. When you have had your will of the forest, you may visit the whole round world. You may buckle on your knapsack and take the road on foot. You may bestride a good nag, and ride forth, with a pair of saddle-bags, into the enchanted East. You may cross the Black Forest, and see Germany widespread before you, like a map, dotted with old cities, walled and spired, that dream all day on their own reflections in the Rhine or Danube. You may pass the spinal cord of Europe and go down from Alpine glaciers to where Italy 165 extends her marble moles and glasses her marble palaces in the midland sea. You may sleep in flying trains or wayside taverns. You may be awakened at dawn by the scream of the express or the small pipe of the robin in the hedge. For you the rain should allay the dust of the beaten road; the wind dry your clothes upon you as you walked. Autumn should hang out russet pears and purple grapes along the lane; inn after inn proffer you their cups of raw wine; river by river receive your body in the sultry noon. Wherever you went warm valleys and high trees and pleasant villages should compass you about; and light fellowships should take you by the arm, and walk with you an hour upon your way. You may see from afar off what it will come to in the end — the weather-beaten red-nosed vagabond, consumed by a fever of the feet, cut off from all near touch of human sympathy, a waif, an Ishmael, and an outcast. And yet it will seem well — and yet, in the air of the forest, this will seem the best — to break all the network bound about your feet by birth and old companionship and loyal love, and bear your shovelful of phosphates to and fro, in town and country, until the hour of the great dissolvent.

Or, perhaps, you will keep to the cover. For the forest is by itself, and forest life owns small kinship with life in the dismal land of labour. Men are so far sophisticated that they cannot take the world as it is given to them by the sight of their eyes. Not only what they see and hear, but what they know to be behind, enter into their notion of a place. If the sea, for instance, lie just across the hills, sea-thoughts will come to them at intervals, and the tenor of their dreams from time to time will suffer a sea-change. And so here, in this forest, a knowledge of its greatness is for much in the effect produced. You reckon up the miles that lie between you and intrusion. You may walk before you all day long, and not fear to touch the barrier of your Eden, or stumble out of fairyland into the land of gin and steam-hammers. And there is an old 166 tale enhances for the imagination the grandeur of the woods of France, and secures you in the thought of your seclusion. When Charles VI. hunted in the time of his wild boyhood near Senlis, there was captured an old stag, having a collar of bronze about his neck, and these words engraved on the collar: “Cæsar mini hoc donavit.” It is no wonder if the minds of men were moved at this occurrence and they stood aghast to find themselves thus touching hands with forgotten ages, and following an antiquity with hound and horn. And even for you, it is scarcely in an idle curiosity that you ponder how many centuries this stag had carried its free antlers through the wood, and how many summers and winters had shone and snowed on the imperial badge. If the extent of solemn wood could thus safeguard a tall stag from the hunter’s hounds and horses, might not you also play hide-and-seek, in these groves, with all the pangs and trepidations of man’s life, and elude Death, the mighty hunter, for more than the span of human years? Here, also, crash his arrows; here, in the farthest glade, sounds the gallop of the pale horse. But he does not hunt this cover with all his hounds, for the game is thin and small: and if you were but alert and wary, if you lodged ever in the deepest thickets, you too might live on into later generations and astonish men by your stalwart age and the trophies of an immemorial success.

For the forest takes away from you all excuse to die. There is nothing here to cabin or thwart your free desires. Here all the impudences of the brawling world reach you no more. You may count your hours, like Endymion, by the strokes of the lone woodcutter, or by the progression of the lights and shadows and the sun wheeling his wide circuit through the naked heavens. Here shall you see no enemies but winter and rough weather. And if a pang comes to you at all, it will be a pang of healthful hunger. All the puling sorrows, all the carking repentance, all this talk of duty that is no duty, in the great peace, in the 167 pure daylight of these woods, fall away from you like a garment. And if perchance you come forth upon an eminence, where the wind blows upon you large and fresh, and the pines knock their long stems together, like an ungainly sort of puppets, and see far away over the plain a factory chimney defined against the pale horizon — it is for you, as for the staid and simple peasant when, with his plough, he upturns old arms and harness from the furrow of the glebe. Ay, sure enough, there was a battle there in the old times; and, sure enough, there is a world out yonder where men strive together with a noise of oaths and weeping and clamorous dispute. So much you apprehend by an athletic act of the imagination. A faint far-off rumour as of Merovingian wars; a legend as of some dead religion.

“Deux poures varlez qui n’out nulz gages et qui gissoient la nuit avec les chiens.” See Champollion-Figeac’s “Louis et Charles d’Orléans,” i. 63, and for my lord’s English horn, *ibid.* 96.

CRITICISMS

I

LORD LYTTON'S "FABLES IN SONG"

It seems as if Lord Lytton, in this new book of his, had found the form most natural to his talent. In some ways, indeed, it may be held inferior to "Chronicles and Characters"; we look in vain for anything like the terrible intensity of the night-scene in "Irene," or for any such passages of massive and memorable writing as appeared, here and there, in the earlier work, and made it not altogether unworthy of its model, Hugo's "Legend of the Ages." But it becomes evident, on the most hasty retrospect, that this earlier work was a step on the way towards the later. It seems as if the author had been feeling about for his definite medium, and was already, in the language of the child's game, growing hot. There are many pieces in "Chronicles and Characters" that might be detached from their original setting, and embodied, as they stand, among the "Fables in Song."

For the term Fable is not very easy to define rigorously. In the most typical form some moral precept is set forth by means of a conception purely fantastic, and usually somewhat trivial into the bargain; there is something playful about it, that will not support a very exacting criticism, and the lesson must be apprehended by the fancy at half a hint. Such is the great mass of the old stories of wise animals or foolish men that have amused 172 our childhood. But we should expect the fable, in company with other and more important literary forms, to be more and more loosely, or at least largely, comprehended as time went on, and so to degenerate in conception from this original type. That depended for much of its piquancy on the very fact that it was fantastic: the point of the thing lay in a sort of humorous inappropriateness; and it is natural enough that pleasantry of this description should become less common, as men learn to suspect some serious analogy underneath. Thus a comical story of an ape touches us quite differently after the proposition of Mr. Darwin's theory. Moreover, there lay, perhaps, at the bottom of this primitive sort of fable, a humanity, a tenderness of rough truths; so that at the end of some story, in which vice or folly had met with its destined punishment, the fabulist might be able to assure his auditors, as we have often to assure tearful children on the like occasions, that they may dry their eyes, for none of it was true.

But this benefit of fiction becomes lost with more sophisticated hearers and authors: a man is no longer the dupe of his own artifice, and cannot deal playfully with truths that are a matter of bitter concern to him in his life. And hence, in the progressive centralisation of modern thought, we should expect the old form of fable to fall gradually into desuetude, and be gradually succeeded by another, which is a fable in all points except that it is not altogether fabulous. And this new form, such as we should expect, and such as we do indeed find, still presents the essential character of brevity; as in any other fable also, there is, underlying and animating the brief action, a moral idea; and as in any other fable, the object is to bring this home to the reader through the intellect rather than through the feelings; so that, without being very deeply moved or interested by the characters of the piece, we should recognise vividly the hinges on which the little plot revolves. But the fabulist now seeks analogies where 173 before he merely sought humorous situations. There will be now a logical nexus between the moral expressed and the machinery employed to express it. The machinery, in fact, as this change is developed, becomes less and less fabulous. We find ourselves in presence of quite a serious, if quite a miniature division of creative literature; and sometimes we have the lesson embodied in a sober, everyday narration, as in the parables of the New Testament, and sometimes merely the statement or, at most, the collocation of significant facts in life, the reader being left to resolve for himself the vague, troublesome, and not yet definitely moral sentiment which has been thus created. And step by step with the development of this change, yet another is developed: the moral tends to become more indeterminate and large. It ceases to be possible to append it, in a tag, to the bottom of the piece, as one might write the name below a caricature; and the fable begins to take rank with all other forms of creative literature, as something too ambitious, in spite of its miniature dimensions, to be resumed in any succinct formula without the loss of all that is deepest and most suggestive in it.

Now it is in this widest sense that Lord Lytton understands the term; there are examples in his two pleasant volumes of all the forms already mentioned, and even of another which can only be admitted among fables by the utmost possible leniency of construction. “Composure,” “Et Cætera,” and several more, are merely similes poetically elaborated. So, too, is the pathetic story of the grandfather and grandchild: the child, having treasured away an icicle and forgotten it for ten minutes, comes back to find it already nearly melted, and no longer beautiful: at the same time, the grandfather has just remembered and taken out a bundle of love-letters, which he too had stored away in years gone by, and then long neglected; and, behold! the letters are as faded and sorrowfully disappointing as the icicle. This is merely a simile poetically worked out; and yet it is in such as these, and some 174 others, to be mentioned further on, that the author seems at his best. Wherever he has really written after the old model, there is something to be deprecated: in spite of all the spirit and freshness, in spite of his happy assumption of that cheerful acceptation of things as they are, which, rightly or wrongly, we come to attribute to the ideal fabulist, there is ever a sense as of something a little out of place. A form of literature so very innocent and primitive looks a little over-written in Lord Lytton's conscious and highly-coloured style. It may be bad taste, but sometimes we should prefer a few sentences of plain prose narration, and a little Bewick by way of tail-piece. So that it is not among those fables that conform most nearly to the old model, but one had nearly said among those that most widely differ from it, that we find the most satisfactory examples of the author's manner.

In the mere matter of ingenuity, the metaphysical fables are the most remarkable; such as that of the windmill who imagined that it was he who raised the wind; or that of the grocer's balance ("Cogito ergo sum") who considered himself endowed with free-will, reason, and an infallible practical judgment; until, one fine day, the police made a descent upon the shop, and find the weights false and the scales unequal; and the whole thing is broken up for old iron. Capital fables, also, in the same ironical spirit, are "Prometheus Unbound," the tale of the vaingloryinging of a champagne-cork, and "Teleology," where a nettle justifies the ways of God to nettles while all goes well with it, and, upon a change of luck, promptly changes its divinity.

In all these there is still plenty of the fabulous if you will, although, even here, there may be two opinions possible; but there is another group, of an order of merit perhaps still higher, where we look in vain for any such playful liberties with Nature. Thus we have "Conservation of Force"; where a musician, thinking of a certain picture, improvises in the twilight; a poet, hearing 175 the music, goes home inspired, and writes a poem; and then a painter, under the influence of this poem, paints another picture, thus lineally descended from the first. This is fiction, but not what we have been used to call fable. We miss the incredible element, the point of audacity with which the fabulist was wont to mock at his readers. And still more so is this the case with others. "The Horse and the Fly" states one of the unanswerable problems of life in quite a realistic and straightforward way. A fly startles a cab-horse, the coach is overset; a newly-married pair within and the driver, a man with a wife and family, are all killed. The horse continues to gallop off in the loose traces, and ends the tragedy by running over an only child; and there is some little pathetic detail here introduced in the telling, that makes the reader's indignation very white-hot against some one. It remains to be seen who that some one is to be: the fly? Nay, but on closer inspection, it appears that the fly, actuated by maternal instinct, was only seeking a place for her eggs: is maternal instinct, then, "sole author of these mischiefs all"? "Who's in the Right?" one of the best fables in the book, is somewhat in the same vein. After a battle has been won, a group of officers assemble inside a battery, and debate together who should have the honour of the success; the Prince, the general staff, the cavalry, the engineer who posted the battery in which they then stand talking, are successively named: the sergeant, who pointed the guns, sneers to himself at the mention of the engineer; and, close by, the gunner, who had applied the match, passes away with a smile of triumph, since it was through his hand that the victorious blow had been dealt. Meanwhile, the cannon claims the honour over the gunner; the cannon-ball, who actually goes forth on the dread mission, claims it over the cannon, who remains idly behind; the powder reminds the cannon-ball that, but for him, it would still be lying on the arsenal floor; and the match caps the discussion; 176 powder, cannon-ball, and cannon would be all equally vain and ineffectual without fire. Just then there comes on a shower of rain, which wets the powder and puts out the match, and completes this lesson of dependence, by indicating the negative conditions which are as necessary for any effect, in their absence, as is the presence of this great fraternity of positive conditions, not any one of which can claim priority over any other. But the fable does not end here, as perhaps, in all logical strictness, it should. It wanders off into a discussion as to which is the truer greatness, that of the vanquished fire or that of the victorious rain. And the speech of the rain is charming:

"Lo, with my little drops I bless again
And beautify the fields which thou didst blast!
Rend, wither, waste, and ruin, what thou wilt,
But call not Greatness what the Gods call Guilt.
Blossoms and grass from blood in battle spilt,
And poppied corn, I bring.
'Mid mouldering Babels, to oblivion built,
My violets spring.
Little by little my small drops have strength
To deck with green delights the grateful earth."

And so forth, not quite germane (it seems to me) to the matter in hand, but welcome for its own sake.

Best of all are the fables that deal more immediately with the emotions. There is, for instance, that of "The Two Travellers," which is profoundly moving in conception, although by no means as well written as some others. In this, one of the two, fearfully frost-bitten, saves his life out of the snow at the cost of all that was comely in his body; just as, long before, the other, who has now quietly resigned himself to death, had violently freed himself from Love at the cost of all that was finest and fairest in his character. Very graceful and sweet is the fable (if so it should be called) in which the author sings the praises of that "kindly perspective," which lets a wheat-stalk near the eye cover twenty leagues of distant country, and makes the humble circle about a man's hearth 177 more to him than all the possibilities of the external world. The companion fable to this is also excellent. It tells us of a man who had, all his life through, entertained a passion for certain blue hills on the far horizon, and had promised himself to travel thither ere he died, and become familiar with these distant friends. At last, in some political trouble, he is banished to the very place of his dreams. He arrives there overnight, and, when he rises and goes forth in the morning, there sure enough are the blue hills, only now they have changed places with him, and smile across to him, distant as ever, from the old home whence he has come. Such a story might have been very cynically treated; but it is not so done, the whole tone is kindly and consolatory, and the disenchanted man submissively takes the lesson, and understands that things far away are to be loved for their own sake, and that the unattainable is not truly unattainable, when we can make the beauty of it our own. Indeed, throughout all these two volumes, though there is much practical scepticism, and much irony on abstract questions, this kindly and consolatory spirit is never absent. There is much that is cheerful and, after a sedate, fireside fashion, hopeful. No one will be discouraged by reading the book; but the ground of all this hopefulness and cheerfulness remains to the end somewhat vague. It does not seem to arise from any practical belief in the future either of the individual or the race, but rather from the profound personal contentment of the writer. This is, I suppose, all we must look for in the case. It is as much as we can expect, if the fabulist shall prove a shrewd and cheerful fellow-wayfarer, one with whom the world does not seem to have gone much amiss, but who has yet laughingly learned something of its evil. It will depend much, of course, upon our own character and circumstances, whether the encounter will be agreeable and bracing to the spirits, or offend us as an ill-timed mockery. But where, as here, there is a little tincture of bitterness along with the good-nature, where 178 it is plainly not the humour of a man cheerfully ignorant, but of one who looks on, tolerant and superior and smilingly attentive, upon the good and bad of our existence, it will go hardly if we do not catch some reflection of the same spirit to help us on our way. There is here no impertinent and lying proclamation of peace — none of the cheap optimism of the well-to-do; what we find here is a view of life that would be even grievous, were it not enlivened with this abiding cheerfulness, and ever and anon redeemed by a stroke of pathos.

It is natural enough, I suppose, that we should find wanting in this book some of the intenser qualities of the author's work; and their absence is made up for by much happy description after a quieter fashion. The burst of jubilation over the departure of the snow, which forms the prelude to "The Thistle," is full of spirit and of pleasant images. The speech of the forest in "Sans Souci" is inspired by a beautiful sentiment for nature of the modern sort, and pleases us more, I think, as poetry should please us, than anything in "Chronicles and Characters." There are some admirable felicities of expression here and there; as that of the hill, whose summit

"Did print
The azure air with pines."

Moreover, I do not recollect in the author's former work any symptom of that sympathetic treatment of still life, which is noticeable now and again in the fables; and perhaps most noticeably, when he sketches the burned letters as they hover along the gusty flue, "Thin, sable veils, wherein a restless spark Yet trembled." But the description is at its best when the subjects are unpleasant, or even grisly. There are a few capital lines in this key on the last spasm of the battle before alluded to. Surely nothing could be better, in its own way, than the fish in "The Last Cruise of the Arrogant," "the shadowy, side-faced, silent things," that come butting and staring with 179 lidless eyes at the sunken steam-engine. And although, in yet another, we are told, pleasantly enough, how the water went down into the valleys, where it set itself gaily to saw wood, and on into the plains, where it would soberly carry grain to town; yet the real strength of the fable is when it deals with the shut pool in which certain unfortunate raindrops are imprisoned among slugs and snails, and in the company of an old toad. The sodden contentment of the fallen acorn is strangely significant; and it is astonishing how unpleasantly we are startled by the appearance of her horrible lover, the maggot.

And now for a last word, about the style. This is not easy to criticise. It is impossible to deny to it rapidity, spirit, and a full sound; the lines are never lame, and the sense is carried forward with an uninterrupted, impetuous rush. But it is not equal. After passages of really admirable versification, the author falls back upon a sort of loose, cavalry manner, not unlike the style of some of Mr. Browning's minor pieces, and almost inseparable from wordiness, and an easy acceptation of somewhat cheap finish. There is nothing here of that compression which is the note of a really sovereign style. It is unfair, perhaps, to set a not remarkable passage from Lord Lytton side by side with one of the signal masterpieces of another, and a very perfect poet; and yet it is interesting, when we see how the portraiture of a dog, detailed through thirty odd lines, is frittered down and finally almost lost in the mere laxity of the style, to compare it with the clear, simple, vigorous delineation that Burns, in four couplets, has given us of the ploughman's collie. It is interesting, at first, and then it becomes a little irritating; for when we think of other passages so much more finished and adroit, we cannot help feeling, that with a little more ardour after perfection of form, criticism would have found nothing left for her to censure. A similar mark of precipitate work is the number of adjectives tumultuously heaped together, sometimes to help out the sense, and 180 sometimes (as one cannot but suspect) to help out the sound of the verses. I do not believe, for instance, that Lord Lytton himself would defend the lines in which we are told how Laocoön "Revealed to *Roman* crowds, now *Christian* grown, That *Pagan* anguish which, in *Parian* stone, the *Rhodian* artist," and so on. It is not only that this is bad in itself; but that it is unworthy of the company in which it is found; that such verses should not have appeared with the name of a good versifier like Lord Lytton. We must take exception, also, in conclusion, to the excess of alliteration. Alliteration is so liable to be abused that we can scarcely be too sparing of it; and yet it is a trick that seems to grow upon the author with years. It is a pity to see fine verses, such as some in "Demos," absolutely spoiled by the recurrence of one wearisome consonant.

II

SALVINI’S MACBETH

Salvini closed his short visit to Edinburgh by a performance of *Macbeth*. It was, perhaps, from a sentiment of local colour that he chose to play the Scottish usurper for the first time before Scotsmen; and the audience were not insensible of the privilege. Few things, indeed, can move a stronger interest than to see a great creation taking shape for the first time. If it is not purely artistic, the sentiment is surely human. And the thought that you are before all the world, and have the start of so many others as eager as yourself, at least keeps you in a more unbearable suspense before the curtain rises, if it does not enhance the delight with which you follow the performance and see the actor “bend up each corporal agent” to realise a masterpiece of a few hours’ duration. With a player 181 so variable as Salvini, who trusts to the feelings of the moment for so much detail, and who, night after night, does the same thing differently but always well, it can never be safe to pass judgment after a single hearing. And this is more particularly true of last week’s *Macbeth*; for the whole third act was marred by a grievously humorous misadventure. Several minutes too soon the ghost of Banquo joined the party, and after having sat helpless a while at a table, was ignominiously withdrawn. Twice was this ghostly Jack-in-the-box obtruded on the stage before his time; twice removed again; and yet he showed so little hurry when he was really wanted, that, after an awkward pause, Macbeth had to begin his apostrophe to empty air. The arrival of the belated spectre in the middle, with a jerk that made him nod all over, was the last accident in the chapter, and worthily topped the whole. It may be imagined how lamely matters went throughout these cross purposes.

In spite of this, and some other hitches, Salvini’s Macbeth had an emphatic success. The creation is worthy of a place beside the same artist’s Othello and Hamlet. It is the simplest and most unsympathetic of the three; but the absence of the finer lineaments of Hamlet is redeemed by gusto, breadth, and a headlong unity. Salvini sees nothing great in Macbeth beyond the royalty of muscle, and that courage which comes of strong and copious circulation. The moral smallness of the man is insisted on from the first, in the shudder of uncontrollable jealousy with which he sees Duncan embracing Banquo. He may have some northern poetry of speech, but he has not much logical understanding. In his dealings with the supernatural powers he is like a savage with his fetich, trusting them beyond bounds while all goes well, and whenever he is crossed, casting his belief aside and calling “fate into the list.” For his wife, he is little more than an agent, a frame of bone and sinew for her fiery spirit to command. The nature of his feeling towards her is 182 rendered with a most precise and delicate touch. He always yields to the woman’s fascination; and yet his caresses (and we know how much meaning Salvini can give to a caress) are singularly hard and unloving. Sometimes he lays his hand on her as he might take hold of any one who happened to be nearest to him at a moment of excitement. Love has fallen out of this marriage by the way, and left a curious friendship. Only once — at the very moment when she is showing herself so little a woman and so much a high-spirited man — only once is he very deeply stirred towards her; and that finds expression in the strange and horrible transport of admiration, doubly strange and horrible on Salvini’s lips — ”Bring forth men-children only!”

The murder scene, as was to be expected, pleased the audience best. Macbeth’s voice, in the talk with his wife, was a thing not to be forgotten; and when he spoke of his hangman’s hands he seemed to have blood in his utterance. Never for a moment, even in the very article of the murder, does he possess his own soul. He is a man on wires. From first to last it is an exhibition of hideous cowardice. For, after all, it is not here, but in broad daylight, with the exhilaration of conflict, where he can assure himself at every blow he has the longest sword and the heaviest hand, that this man’s physical bravery can keep him up; he is an unwieldy ship, and needs plenty of way on before he will steer.

In the banquet scene, while the first murderer gives account of what he has done, there comes a flash of truculent joy at the “twenty trenchèd gashes” on Banquo’s head. Thus Macbeth makes welcome to his imagination those very details of physical horror which are so soon to turn sour in him. As he runs out to embrace these cruel circumstances, as he seeks to realise to his mind’s eye the reassuring spectacle of his dead enemy, he is dressing out the phantom to terrify himself; and his imagination, playing the part of justice, is to “commend to his own lips the ingredients 183 of his poisoned chalice.” With the recollection of Hamlet and his father’s spirit still fresh upon him, and the holy awe with which that good man encountered things not dreamt of in his philosophy, it was not possible to avoid looking for resemblances between the two apparitions and the two men haunted. But there are none to be found. Macbeth has a purely physical dislike for Banquo’s spirit and the “twenty trenchèd gashes.” He is afraid of he knows not what. He is abject, and again blustering. In the end he so far forgets himself, his terror, and the nature of what is before him, that he rushes upon it as he would upon a man. When his wife tells him he needs repose, there is something really childish in the way he looks about the room, and, seeing nothing, with an expression of almost sensual relief, plucks up heart enough to go to bed. And what is the upshot of the visitation? It is written in Shakespeare, but should be read with the commentary of Salvini's voice and expression: — ”*O! siam nell' opra ancor fanciulli,*” — ”We are yet but young in deed.” Circle below circle. He is looking with horrible satisfaction into the mouth of hell. There may still be a prick to-day; but to-morrow conscience will be dead, and he may move untroubled in this element of blood.

In the fifth act we see this lowest circle reached; and it is Salvini's finest moment throughout the play. From the first he was admirably made up, and looked Macbeth to the full as perfectly as ever he looked Othello. From the first moment he steps upon the stage you can see this character is a creation to the fullest meaning of the phrase; for the man before you is a type you know well already. He arrives with Banquo on the heath, fair and red-bearded, sparing of gesture, full of pride and the sense of animal wellbeing, and satisfied after the battle like a beast who has eaten his fill. But in the fifth act there is a change. This is still the big, burly, fleshly, handsome-looking Thane; here is still the same face which in the earlier acts could be superficially good-humoured and sometimes royally 184 courteous. But now the atmosphere of blood, which pervades the whole tragedy, has entered into the man and subdued him to its own nature; and an indescribable degradation, a slackness and puffiness, has overtaken his features. He has breathed the air of carnage, and supped full of horrors. Lady Macbeth complains of the smell of blood on her hand: Macbeth makes no complaint — he has ceased to notice it now; but the same smell is in his nostrils. A contained fury and disgust possesses him. He taunts the messenger and the doctor as people would taunt their mortal enemies. And, indeed, as he knows right well, every one is his enemy now, except his wife. About her he questions the doctor with something like a last human anxiety; and, in tones of grisly mystery, asks him if he can “minister to a mind diseased.” When the news of her death is brought him, he is staggered and falls into a seat; but somehow it is not anything we can call grief that he displays. There had been two of them against God and man; and now, when there is only one, it makes perhaps less difference than he had expected. And so her death is not only an affliction, but one more disillusion; and he redoubles in bitterness. The speech that follows, given with tragic cynicism in every word, is a dirge, not so much for her as for himself. From that time forth there is nothing human left in him, only “the fiend of Scotland,” Macduff's “hell-hound,” whom, with a stern glee, we see baited like a bear and hunted down like a wolf. He is inspired and set above fate by a demoniacal energy, a lust of wounds and slaughter. Even after he meets Macduff his courage does not fail; but when he hears the Thane was not born of woman, all virtue goes out of him; and though he speaks sounding words of defiance, the last combat is little better than a suicide.

The whole performance is, as I said, so full of gusto and a headlong unity; the personality of Macbeth is so sharp and powerful; and within these somewhat narrow limits there is so much play and saliency that, so far as concerns 185 Salvini himself, a third great success seems indubitable. Unfortunately, however, a great actor cannot fill more than a very small fraction of the boards; and though Banquo's ghost will probably be more seasonable in his future apparitions, there are some more inherent difficulties in the piece. The company at large did not distinguish themselves. Macduff, to the huge delight of the gallery, out-Macduff'd the average ranter. The lady who filled the principal female part has done better on other occasions, but I fear she has not metal for what she tried last week. Not to succeed in the sleep-walking scene is to make a memorable failure. As it was given, it succeeded in being wrong in art without being true to nature.

And there is yet another difficulty, happily easy to reform, which somewhat interfered with the success of the performance. At the end of the incantation scene the Italian translator has made Macbeth fall insensible upon the stage. This is a change of questionable propriety from a psychological point of view; while in point of view of effect it leaves the stage for some moments empty of all business. To remedy this, a bevy of green ballet-girls came forth and pointed their toes about the prostrate king. A dance of High Church curates, or a hornpipe by Mr. T. P. Cooke, would not be more out of the key; though the gravity of a Scots audience was not to be overcome, and they merely expressed their disapprobation by a round of moderate hisses, a similar irruption of Christmas fairies would most likely convulse a London theatre from pit to gallery with inextinguishable laughter. It is, I am told, the Italian tradition; but it is one more honoured in the breach than the observance. With the total disappearance of these damsels, with a stronger Lady Macbeth, and, if possible, with some compression of those scenes in which Salvini does not appear, and the spectator is left at the mercy of Macduffs and Duncans, the play would go twice as well, and we should be better able to follow and enjoy an admirable work of dramatic art.

III

BAGSTER'S "PILGRIM'S PROGRESS"

I have here before me an edition of the "Pilgrim's Progress," bound in green, without a date, and described as "illustrated by nearly three hundred engravings, and memoir of Bunyan." On the outside it is lettered "Bagster's Illustrated Edition," and after the author's apology, facing the first page of the tale, a folding pictorial "Plan of the Road" is marked as "drawn by the late Mr. T. Conder," and engraved by J. Basire. No further information is anywhere vouchsafed; perhaps the publishers had judged the work too unimportant; and we are still left ignorant whether or not we owe the woodcuts in the body of the volume to the same hand that drew the plan. It seems, however, more than probable. The literal particularity of mind which, in the map, laid down the flower-plots in the devil's garden, and carefully introduced the court-house in the town of Vanity, is closely paralleled in many of the cuts; and in both, the architecture of the buildings and the disposition of the gardens have a kindred and entirely English air. Whoever he was, the author of these wonderful little pictures may lay claim to be the best illustrator of Bunyan. They are not only good illustrations, like so many others; but they are like so few, good illustrations of Bunyan. Their spirit, in defect and quality, is still the same as his own. The designer also has lain down and dreamed a dream, as literal, as quaint, and almost as apposite as Bunyan's; and text and pictures 187 make but the two sides of the same homespun yet impassioned story. To do justice to the designs, it will be necessary to say, for the hundredth time, a word or two about the masterpiece which they adorn.

All allegories have a tendency to escape from the purpose of their creators; and as the characters and incidents become more and more interesting in themselves, the moral, which these were to show forth, falls more and more into neglect. An architect may command a wreath of vine-leaves round the cornice of a monument; but if, as each leaf came from the chisel, it took proper life and fluttered freely on the wall, and if the vine grew, and the building were hidden over with foliage and fruit, the architect would stand in much the same situation as the writer of allegories. The "Faëry Queen" was an allegory, I am willing to believe; but it survives as an imaginative tale in incomparable verse. The case of Bunyan is widely different; and yet in this also Allegory, poor nymph, although never quite forgotten, is sometimes rudely thrust against the wall. Bunyan was fervently in earnest; with “his fingers in his ears, he ran on,” straight for his mark. He tells us himself, in the conclusion to the first part, that he did not fear to raise a laugh; indeed, he feared nothing, and said anything; and he was greatly served in this by a certain rustic privilege of his style, which, like the talk of strong uneducated men, when it does not impress by its force, still charms by its simplicity. The mere story and the allegorical design enjoyed perhaps his equal favour. He believed in both with an energy of faith that was capable of moving mountains. And we have to remark in him, not the parts where inspiration fails and is supplied by cold and merely decorative invention, but the parts where faith has grown to be credulity, and his characters become so real to him that he forgets the end of their creation. We can follow him step by step into the trap which he lays for himself by his own entire good faith and triumphant literality of vision, till the trap closes and shuts him in an 188 inconsistency. The allegories of the Interpreter and of the Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains are all actually performed, like stage-plays, before the pilgrims. The son of Mr. Great-grace visibly “tumbles hills about with his words.” Adam the First has his condemnation written visibly on his forehead, so that Faithful reads it. At the very instant the net closes round the pilgrims, “the white robe falls from the black man’s body.” Despair “getteth him a grievous crab-tree cudgel”; it was in “sunshiny weather” that he had his fits; and the birds in the grove about the House Beautiful, “our country birds,” only sing their little pious verses “at the spring, when the flowers appear and the sun shines warm.” “I often,” says Piety, “go out to hear them; we also ofttimes keep them tame on our house.” The post between Beulah and the Celestial City sounds his horn, as you may yet hear in country places. Madam Bubble, that “tall, comely dame, something of a swarthy complexion, in very pleasant attire, but old,” “gives you a smile at the end of each sentence” — a real woman she; we all know her. Christiana dying “gave Mr. Stand-fast a ring,” for no possible reason in the allegory, merely because the touch was human and affecting. Look at Great-heart, with his soldierly ways, garrison ways, as I had almost called them; with his taste in weapons; his delight in any that “he found to be a man of his hands”; his chivalrous point of honour, letting Giant Maul get up again when he was down, a thing fairly flying in the teeth of the moral; above all, with his language in the inimitable tale of Mr. Fearing: “I thought I should have lost my man” — ”chicken-hearted” — ”at last he came in, and I will say that for my lord, he carried it wonderful lovingly to him.” This is no Independent minister; this is a stout, honest, big-busted ancient, adjusting his shoulder-belts, twirling his long moustaches as he speaks. Last and most remarkable, “My sword,” says the dying Valiant-for-Truth, he in whom Great-heart delighted, “my sword I give to him that shall succeed me 189 in my pilgrimage, *and my courage and skill to him that can get it.*” And after this boast, more arrogantly unorthodox than was ever dreamed of by the rejected Ignorance, we are told that “all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.”

In every page the book is stamped with the same energy of vision and the same energy of belief. The quality is equally and indifferently displayed in the spirit of the fighting, the tenderness of the pathos, the startling vigour and strangeness of the incidents, the natural strain of the conversations, and the humanity and charm of the characters. Trivial talk over a meal, the dying words of heroes, the delights of Beulah or the Celestial City, Apollyon and my Lord Hate-good, Great-heart, and Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, all have been imagined with the same clearness, all written of with equal gusto and precision, all created in the same mixed element, of simplicity that is almost comical, and art that, for its purpose, is faultless.

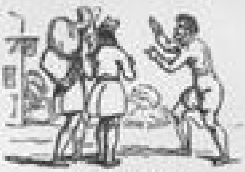
It was in much the same spirit that our artist sat down to his drawings. He is by nature a Bunyan of the pencil. He, too, will draw anything, from a butcher at work on a dead sheep, up to the courts of Heaven. “A Lamb for Supper” is the name of one of his designs, “Their Glorious Entry” of another. He has the same disregard for the ridiculous, and enjoys somewhat of the same privilege of style, so that we are pleased even when we laugh the most. He is literal to the verge of folly. If dust is to be raised from the unswept parlour, you may be sure it will “fly abundantly” in the picture. If Faithful is to lie “as dead” before Moses, dead he shall lie with a warrant — dead and stiff like granite; nay (and here the artist must enhance upon the symbolism of the author), it is with the identical stone tables of the law that Moses fells the sinner. Good and bad people, whom we at once distinguish in the text by their names, Hopeful, Honest, and Valiant-for-Truth, on the one hand, as against By-ends, Sir Having Greedy, and the Lord Old-man on the other, are in these 190 drawings as simply distinguished by their costume. Good people, when not armed *cap-à-pie*, wear a speckled tunic girt about the waist, and low hats, apparently of straw. Bad people swagger in tail-coats and chimney-pots, a few with knee-breeches, but the large majority in trousers, and for all the world like guests at a garden-party. Worldly-Wiseman alone, by some inexplicable quirk, stands before Christian in laced hat, embroidered waistcoat, and trunk-hose. But above all examples of this artist’s intrepidity, commend me to the print entitled “Christian Finds it Deep.” “A great darkness and horror,” says the text, have fallen on the pilgrim; it is the comfortless deathbed with which Bunyan so strikingly concludes the sorrows and conflicts of his hero. How to represent this worthily the artist knew not; and yet he was determined to represent it somehow. This was how he did: Hopeful is still shown to his neck above the water of death; but Christian has bodily disappeared, and a blot of solid blackness indicates his place.

As you continue to look at these pictures, about an inch square for the most part, sometimes printed three or more to the page, and each having a printed legend of its own, however trivial the event recorded, you will soon become aware of two things: first, that the man can draw, and, second, that he possesses the gift of an imagination. "Obstinate reviles," says the legend; and you should see Obstinate reviling. "He warily retraces his steps"; and there is Christian, posting through the plain, terror and speed in every muscle. "Mercy yearns to go" shows you a plain interior with packing going forward, and, right in the middle, Mercy yearning to go — every line of the girl's figure yearning. In "The Chamber called Peace" we see a simple English room, bed with white curtains, window valance and door, as may be found in many thousand unpretentious houses; but far off, through the open window, we behold the sun uprising out of a great plain, and Christian hails it with his hand: 191

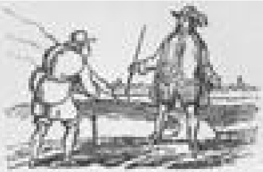
"Where am I now! is this the love and care
Of Jesus, for the men that pilgrims are!
Thus to provide! That I should be forgiven!
And dwell already the next door to heaven!"

A page or two further, from the top of the House Beautiful, the damsels point his gaze toward the Delectable Mountains: "The Prospect," so the cut is ticketed — and I shall be surprised, if on less than a square of paper you can show me one so wide and fair. Down a cross road on an English plain, a cathedral city outlined on the horizon, a hazel shaw upon the left, comes Madam Wanton dancing with her fair enchanted cup, and Faithful, book in hand, half pauses. The cut is perfect as a symbol; the giddy movement of the sorceress, the uncertain poise of the man struck to the heart by a temptation, the contrast of that even plain of life whereon he journeys with the bold, ideal bearing of the wanton — the artist who invented and portrayed this had not merely read Bunyan, he had also thoughtfully lived. The Delectable Mountains — I continue skimming the first part — are not on the whole happily rendered. Once, and once only, the note is struck, when Christian and Hopeful are seen coming, shoulder-high, through a thicket of green shrubs — box, perhaps, or perfumed nutmeg; while behind them, domed or pointed, the hills stand ranged against the sky. A little further, and we come to that masterpiece of Bunyan's insight into life, the Enchanted Ground; where, in a few traits, he has set down the latter end of such a number of the would-be good; where his allegory goes so deep that, to people looking seriously on life, it cuts like satire. The true significance of this invention lies, of course, far out of the way of drawing; only one feature, the great tedium of the land, the growing weariness in welldoing, may be somewhat represented in a symbol. The pilgrims are near the end: “Two Miles Yet,” says the legend. The road goes ploughing up and down over a rolling heath; the wayfarers, with outstretched arms, are already sunk to the knees over the 192 brow of the nearest hill; they have just passed a milestone with the cipher two; from overhead a great, piled, summer cumulus, as of a slumberous summer afternoon, beshadows them: two miles! it might be hundreds. In dealing with the Land of Beulah the artist lags, in both parts, miserably behind the text, but in the distant prospect of the Celestial City more than regains his own. You will remember when Christian and Hopeful “with desire fell sick.” “Effect of the Sunbeams” is the artist’s title. Against the sky, upon a cliffy mountain, the radiant temple beams upon them over deep, subjacent woods; they, behind a mound, as if seeking shelter from the splendour — one prostrate on his face, one kneeling, and with hands ecstatically lifted — yearn with passion after that immortal city. Turn the page, and we behold them walking by the very shores of death; Heaven, from this nigher view, has risen half-way to the zenith, and sheds a wider glory; and the two pilgrims, dark against that brightness, walk and sing out of the fulness of their hearts. No cut more thoroughly illustrates at once the merit and the weakness of the artist. Each pilgrim sings with a book in his grasp — a family Bible at the least for bigness; tomes so recklessly enormous that our second impulse is to laughter. And yet that is not the first thought, nor perhaps the last. Something in the attitude of the manikins — faces they have none, they are too small for that — something in the way they swing these monstrous volumes to their singing, something perhaps borrowed from the text, some subtle differentiation from the cut that went before and the cut that follows after — something, at least, speaks clearly of a fearful joy, of Heaven seen from the deathbed, of the horror of the last passage no less than of the glorious coming home. There is that in the action of one of them which always reminds me, with a difference, of that haunting last glimpse of Thomas Idle, travelling to Tyburn in the cart. Next come the Shining Ones, wooden and trivial enough; the pilgrims pass into the river; the blot already mentioned 193 settles over and obliterates Christian. In two more cuts we behold them drawing nearer to the other shore; and then, between two radiant angels, one of whom points upward, we see them mounting in new weeds, their former lendings left behind them on the inky river. More angels meet them; Heaven is displayed, and if no better, certainly no worse, than it has been shown by others — a place, at least, infinitely populous and glorious with light — a place that haunts solemnly the hearts of children. And then this symbolic draughtsman once more strikes into his proper vein. Three cuts conclude the first part. In the first the gates close, black against the glory struggling from within. The second shows us Ignorance — alas! poor Arminian! — hailing, in a sad twilight, the ferryman Vain-Hope; and in the third we behold him, bound hand and foot, and black already with the hue of his eternal fate, carried high over the mountain-tops of the world by two angels of the anger of the Lord. “Carried to Another Place,” the artist enigmatically names his plate — a terrible design.

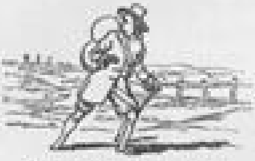
Wherever he touches on the black side of the supernatural his pencil grows more daring and incisive. He has many true inventions in the perilous and diabolic; he has many startling nightmares realised. It is not easy to select the best; some may like one and some another; the nude, depilated devil bounding and casting darts against the Wicket Gate; the scroll of flying horrors that hang over Christian by the Mouth of Hell; the horned shade that comes behind him whispering blasphemies; the daylight breaking through that rent cave-mouth of the mountains and falling chill adown the haunted tunnel; Christian’s further progress along the causeway, between the two black pools, where, at every yard or two, a gin, a pitfall, or a snare awaits the passer-by — loathsome white devilkins harbouring close under the bank to work the springes, Christian himself pausing and pricking with his sword’s point at the nearest noose, and pale discomfortable mountains 194 rising on the farther side; or yet again, the two ill-favoured ones that beset the first of Christian’s journey, with the frog-like structure of the skull, the frog-like limberness of limbs — crafty, slippery, lustful-looking devils, drawn always in outline as though possessed of a dim, infernal luminosity. Horrid fellows are they, one and all; horrid fellows and horrific scenes. In another spirit that Good-Conscience “to whom Mr. Honest had spoken in his lifetime,” a cowled, grey, awful figure, one hand pointing to the heavenly shore, realises, I will not say all, but some at least of the strange impressiveness of Bunyan’s words. It is no easy nor pleasant thing to speak in one’s lifetime with Good-Conscience; he is an austere, unearthly friend, whom maybe Torquemada knew; and the folds of his raiment are not merely claustral, but have something of the horror of the pall. Be not afraid, however; with the hand of that appearance Mr. Honest will get safe across.



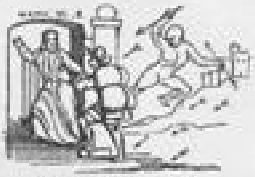
Obstinate reviles



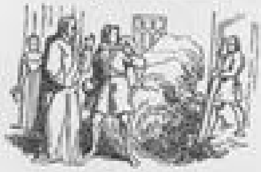
Mr. Worldly-Wiseman



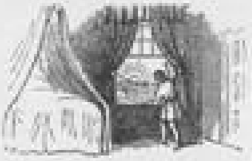
He warily retraces his steps



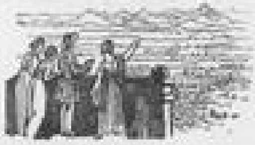
Christian at the gate



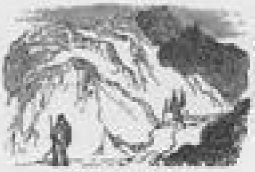
The parlour unswept



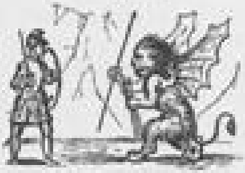
The chamber called Peace



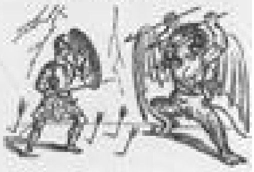
The prospect



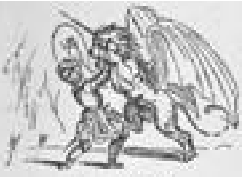
Is met by Apollyon



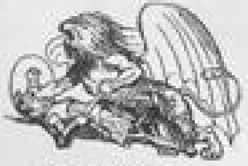
The fiend in discourse



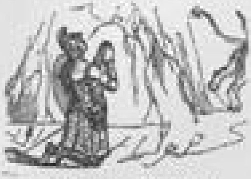
The conflict



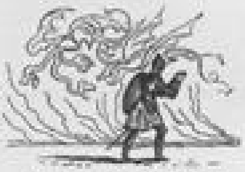
Close combat



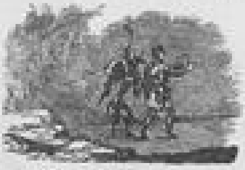
The deadly thrust



Thanksgiving for victory

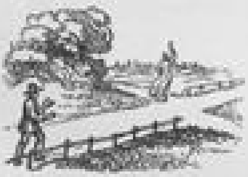


His last weapon—All-prayer



Whispering blasphemies

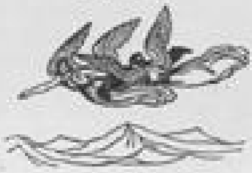
Snares, traps, gins, and pitfalls



Madam Wanton

Two miles yet

Effect of the sunbeams



Carried to another place

Yet perhaps it is in sequences that this artist best displays himself. He loves to look at either side of a thing: as, for instance, when he shows us both sides of the wall — ”Grace Inextinguishable” on the one side, with the devil vainly pouring buckets on the flame, and “The Oil of Grace” on the other, where the Holy Spirit, vessel in hand, still secretly supplies the fire. He loves, also, to show us the same event twice over, and to repeat his instantaneous photographs at the interval of but a moment. So we have, first, the whole troop of pilgrims coming up to Valiant, and Great-heart to the front, spear in hand and parleying; and next, the same cross-roads, from a more distant view, the convoy now scattered and looking safely and curiously on, and Valiant handing over for inspection his “right Jerusalem blade.” It is true that this designer has no great care after consistency: Apollyon’s spear is laid by, his quiver of darts will disappear, whenever they might hinder the designer's freedom; and the fiend's tail is blobbed or forked at his good pleasure. But this is not unsuitable to the illustration of the fervent Bunyan, breathing hurry 195 and momentary inspiration. He, with his hot purpose, hunting sinners with a lasso, shall himself forget the things that he has written yesterday. He shall first slay Heedless in the Valley of the Shadow, and then take leave of him talking in his sleep, as if nothing had happened, in an arbour on the Enchanted Ground. And again, in his rhymed prologue, he shall assign some of the glory of the siege of Doubting Castle to his favourite Valiant-for-the-Truth, who did not meet with the besiegers till long after, at that dangerous corner by Deadman's Lane. And, with all inconsistencies and freedoms, there is a power shown in these sequences of cuts: a power of joining on one action or one humour to another; a power of following out the moods, even of the dismal subterhuman fiends engendered by the artist's fancy; a power of sustained continuous realisation, step by step, in nature's order, that can tell a story, in all its ins and outs, its pauses and surprises, fully and figuratively, like the art of words.

One such sequence is the fight of Christian and Apollyon — six cuts, weird and fiery, like the text. The pilgrim is throughout a pale and stockish figure; but the devil covers a multitude of defects. There is no better devil of the conventional order than our artist's Apollyon, with his mane, his wings, his bestial legs, his changing and terrifying expression, his infernal energy to slay. In cut the first you see him afar off, still obscure in form, but already formidable in suggestion. Cut the second, "The Fiend in Discourse," represents him, not reasoning, railing rather, shaking his spear at the pilgrim, his shoulder advanced, his tail writhing in the air, his foot ready for a spring, while Christian stands back a little, timidly defensive. The third illustrates these magnificent words: "Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am void of fear in this matter: prepare thyself to die; for I swear by my infernal den that thou shalt go no farther: here will I spill thy soul! And with that he threw a flaming dart at his breast." In the cut he throws 196 a dart with either hand, belching pointed flames out of his mouth, spreading his broad vans, and straddling the while across the path, as only a fiend can straddle who has just sworn by his infernal den. The defence will not be long against such vice, such flames, such red-hot nether energy. And in the fourth cut, to be sure, he has leaped bodily upon his victim, sped by foot and pinion, and roaring as he leaps. The fifth shows the climacteric of the battle; Christian has reached nimbly out and got his sword, and dealt that deadly home-thrust, the fiend still stretched upon him, but "giving back, as one that had received his mortal wound." The raised head, the bellowing mouth, the paw clapped upon the sword, the one wing relaxed in agony, all realise vividly these words of the text. In the sixth and last, the trivial armed figure of the pilgrim is seen kneeling with clasped hands on the betrodden scene of contest and among the shivers of the darts; while just at the margin the hinder quarters and the tail of Apollyon are whisking off, indignant and discomfited.

In one point only do these pictures seem to be unworthy of the text, and that point is one rather of the difference of arts than the difference of artists. Throughout his best and worst, in his highest and most divine imaginations as in the narrowest sallies of his sectarianism, the human-hearted piety of Bunyan touches and ennobles, convinces, accuses the reader. Through no art beside the art of words can the kindness of a man's affections be expressed. In the cuts you shall find faithfully parodied the quaintness and the power, the triviality and the surprising freshness of the author's fancy; there you shall find him outstripped in ready symbolism and the art of bringing things essentially invisible before the eyes: but to feel the contact of essential goodness, to be made in love with piety, the book must be read and not the prints examined.

Farewell should not be taken with a grudge; nor can I dismiss in any other words than those of gratitude a series of pictures which have, to one at least, been the 197 visible embodiment of Bunyan from childhood up, and shown him, through all his years, Great-heart lungeing at Giant Maul, and Apollyon breathing fire at Christian, and every turn and town along the road to the Celestial City, and that bright place itself, seen as to a stave of music, shining afar off upon the hill-top, the candle of the world.

The illustrator was, in fact, a lady, Miss Eunice Bagster, eldest daughter of the publisher, Samuel Bagster; except in the case of the cuts depicting the fight with Apollyon, which were designed by her brother, Mr. Jonathan Bagster. The edition was published in 1845. I am indebted for this information to the kindness of Mr. Robert Bagster, the present managing director of the firm. — Sir Sidney Colvin's Note. [redacted]

An Appeal
TO THE
Clergy of the Church of Scotland
WITH A NOTE FOR THE LAITY

"*Had I a strong voice, as it is the weakest alive, yea, could I lift it up as a trumpet, I would sound a retreat from our unnatural contentions, and irreligious strivings for religion*"

Archbishop Leighton, 1

William Blackwood & Sons
Edinburgh and London
1
Price 3d.]

Facsimile of original Title-page) AN APPEAL TO THE CLERGY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND WITH A NOTE FOR THE LAITY

“Had I a strong voice, as it is the weakest alive, yea, could I lift it up as a trumpet, I would sound a retreat from our unnatural contentions, and irreligious strivings for religion.” — Archbishop Leighton, 1669.

Gentlemen, — The position of the Church of Scotland is now one of considerable difficulty; not only the credit of the Church, not only the credit of Christianity, but to some extent also that of the national character, is at stake. You have just gained a great victory, in spite of an opposition neither very logical nor very generous; you have succeeded in effecting, by quiet constitutional processes, a great reform which brings your Church somewhat nearer in character to what is required by your Dissenting brethren. It remains to be seen whether you can prove yourselves as generous as you have been wise and patient. And the position, as I say, is one of difficulty. Many, doubtless, left the Church for a reason which is now removed; many have joined other sects who would rather have joined themselves with you, had you been then as you now are; and for these you are bound to render as easy as may be the way of reconciliation, and show, by some notable action, the reality of your own desire for Peace. But I am not unaware that there are others, and those possibly a majority, who hold very different opinions — who regard the old quarrel as still competent, or have found some new reason for dissent; and from these the Church, if she makes 202 such an advance as she ought to make, in all loyalty and charity, may chance to meet that most sensible of insults — ridicule, in return for an honest offer of reconciliation. I am not unaware, also, that there is yet another ground of difficulty; and that those even who would be most ready to hold the cause of offence as now removed will find it hard to forget the past — will continue to think themselves unjustly used — will not be willing to come back, as though they were repentant offenders, among those who delayed the reform and quietly enjoyed their benefices, while they bore the heat and burthen of the day in a voluntary exile for the Truth’s sake.

In view of so many elements of difficulty, no intelligent person can be free from apprehension for the result; and you, gentlemen, may be perhaps more ready now to receive advice, to hear and weigh the opinion of one who is free, because he writes without name, than you would be at any juncture less critical. There is now a hope, at least, that some term may be put to our more clamorous dissensions. Those who are at all open to a feeling of national disgrace look eagerly forward to such a possibility; they have been witnesses already too long to the strife that has divided this small corner of Christendom; and they cannot remember without shame that there has been as much noise, as much recrimination, as much severance of friends, about mere logical abstractions in our remote island, as would have sufficed for the great dogmatic battles of the Continent. It would be difficult to exaggerate the pity that fills the heart at such a reflection; at the thought of how this neck of barren hills between two inclement seaways has echoed for three centuries with the uproar of sectarian battle; of how the east wind has carried out the sound of our shrill disputations into the desolate Atlantic, and the west wind has borne it over the German Ocean, as though it would make all Europe privy to how well we Scottish brethren abide together in unity. It is not a bright page in the annals of a small country: it is not 203 a pleasant commentary on the Christianity that we profess; there is something in it pitiful, as I have said, for the pitiful man, but bitterly humorous for others. How much time we have lost, how much of the precious energy and patience of good men we have exhausted, on these trivial quarrels, it would be nauseous to consider; we know too much already when we know the facts in block; we know enough to make us hide our heads for shame, and grasp gladly at any present humiliation, if it would ensure a little more quiet, a little more charity, a little more brotherly love in the distant future.

And it is with this before your eyes that, as I feel certain, you are now addressing yourselves to the consideration of this important crisis. It is with a sense of the blackness of this discredit upon the national character and national Christianity that not you alone but many of other Churches are now setting themselves to square their future course with the exigencies of the new position of sects; and it is with you that the responsibility remains. The obligation lies ever on the victor; and just so surely as you have succeeded in the face of captious opposition in carrying forth the substance of a reform of which others had despaired, just as surely does it lie upon you as a duty to take such steps as shall make that reform available, not to you only, but to all your brethren who will consent to profit by it; not only to all the clergy, but to the cause of decency and peace, throughout your native land. It is earnestly hoped that you may show yourselves worthy of a great opportunity, and do more for the public minds by the example of one act of generosity and humility than you could do by an infinite series of sermons.

Without doubt, it is your intention, on the earliest public opportunity, to make some advance. Without doubt, it is your purpose to improve the advantage you have gained, and to press upon those who quitted your communion some thirty years ago your great desire to be once more united to them. This, at least, will find a place in the 204 most unfriendly programme you can entertain; and if there are any in the Free Church (as I doubt not there are some) who seceded, not so much from any dislike to the just supremacy of the law, as from a belief that the law in these ecclesiastical matters was applied unjustly, I know well that you will be most eager to receive them back again; I know well that you will not let any petty vanity, any scruple of worldly dignity, stand between them and their honourable return. If, therefore, there were no more to be done than to display to these voluntary exiles the deep sense of your respect for their position, this appeal would be unnecessary, and you might be left to the guidance of your own good feeling.

But it seems to me that there is need of something more; it seems to me, and I think that it will seem so to you also, that you must go even further if you would be equal to the importance of the situation. If there are any among the Dissenters whose consciences are so far satisfied with the provisions of the recent Act that they could now return to your communion, to such, it must not be forgotten, you stand in a position of great delicacy. The conduct of these men you have so far justified; you have tacitly admitted that there was some ground for dissatisfaction with the former condition of the Church; and though you may still judge those to have been over-scrupulous who were moved by this imperfection to secede, instead of waiting patiently with you until it could be remedied by peaceful means, you must not forget that it is the strong stomach, according to St. Paul, that is to consider the weak, and should come forward to meet these brethren with something better than compliments upon your lips. Observe, I speak only of those who would now see their way back to your communion with a clear conscience; it is their conduct, and their conduct alone, that you have justified, and therefore it is only for them that your special generosity is here solicited. But towards them, if there are any such, your countrymen would desire to see you 205 behave with all consideration. I do not pretend to lay before you any definite scheme of action; I wish only to let you understand what thoughts are busy in the heads of some outside your councils, so that you may take this also into consideration when you come to decide.

And this, roughly, is how it appears to these: These good men have exposed themselves to the chance of hardship for the sake of their scruples, whilst you being of a stronger stomach, continued to enjoy the security of national endowments. Some of you occupy the very livings which they resigned for conscience' sake. To others preferment has fallen which would have fallen to them had they been still eligible. If, then, any of them are now content to return, you are bound, if not in justice, then in honour, to do all that you can to testify your respect for brave conviction, and to repair to them such losses as they may have suffered, whether for their first secession or their second. You owe a special duty, not only to the courage that left the Church, but to the wisdom and moderation that now returns to it. And your sense of this duty will find a vent not only in word but in action. You will facilitate their return not only by considerate and brotherly language but by pecuniary aid; you will seek, by some new endowment scheme, to preserve for them their ecclesiastical status. That they have no claim will be their strongest claim on your consideration. Many of you, if not all, will set apart some share out of your slender livings for their assistance and support: you will give them what you can afford; and you will say to them, as you do so, what I dare say to you, that what you give is theirs — not only in honour but in justice.

For you know that the justice which should rule the dealings of Christians, how much more of Christian ministers, is not as the justice of courts of law or equity; and those who profess the morality of Jesus Christ have abjured, in that profession, all that can be urged by policy or worldly prudence. From them we can accept no half-hearted and calculating generosity; they must make haste to be liberal; 206 they must catch with eagerness at all opportunities of service, and the mere whisper of an obligation should be to them more potent than the decree of a court to others who make profession of a less stringent code. And remember that it lies with you to show to the world that Christianity is something more than a verbal system. In the lapse of generations men grow weary of unsupported precept. They may wait long, and keep long in memory the bright doings of former days, but they will weary at the last; they will begin to trouble you for your credentials; if you cannot give them miracles, they will demand virtue; if you cannot heal the sick, they will call upon you for some practice of the Christian ethics. Thus people will knock often at a door if only it be opened to them now and again; but if the door remains closed too long, they will judge the house uninhabited and go elsewhere. And thus it is that a season of persecution, constantly endured, revives the fainting confidence of the people, and some centuries of prosperity may prepare a Church for ruin. You have here at your hand an opportunity to do more for the credit of your Christianity than ever you could do by visions, miracles, or prophecies. A sacrifice such as this would be better worth, as I said before, than many sermons; and there is a disposition in mankind that would ennoble it beyond much that is more ostentatious; for men, whether lay or clerical, suffer better the flame of the stake than a daily inconvenience or a pointed sneer, and will not readily be martyred without some external circumstance and a concourse looking on. And you need not fear that your virtue will be thrown away; the people of Scotland will be quick to understand, in default of visible fire and halter, that you have done a brave action for Christianity and the national weal; and if they are spared in the future any of the present ignoble jealousy of sect against sect, they will not forget that to that end you gave of your household comfort and stinted your children. Even if you fail — ay, and even if there were not found one to profit by your 207 invitation — your virtue would still have its own reward. Your predecessors gave their lives for ends not always the most Christian; they were tempted, and slain with the sword; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, in caves and in dens of the earth. But your action will not be less illustrious; what you may have to suffer may be a small thing if the world will, but it will have been suffered for the cause of peace and brotherly love.

I have said that the people of Scotland will be quick to appreciate what you do. You know well that they will be quick also to follow your example. But the sign should come from you. It is more seemly that you should lead than follow in this matter. Your predecessors gave the word from their free pulpits which was to brace men for sectarian strife: it would be a pleasant sequel if the word came from you that was to bid them bury all jealousy, and forget the ugly and contentious past in a good hope of peace to come.

What is said in these few pages may be objected to as vague; it is no more vague than the position seemed to me to demand. Each man must judge for himself what it behoves him to do at this juncture, and the whole Church for herself. All that is intended in this appeal is to begin, in a tone of dignity and disinterestedness, the consideration of the question; for when such matters are much pulled about in public prints, and have been often discussed from many different, and not always from very high, points of view, there is ever a tendency that the decision of the parties may contract some taint of meanness from the spirit of their critics. All that is desired is to press upon you, as ministers of the Church of Scotland, some sense of the high expectation with which your country looks to you at this time; and how many reasons there are that you should show an example of signal disinterestedness and zeal in the encouragement that you give to returning brethren. For, first, it lies with you to clear the Church from the discredit of our miserable contentions; and surely you can never have a fairer opportunity to improve her claim to 208 the style of a peacemaker. Again, it lies with you, as I have said, to take the first step, and prove your own true ardour for an honourable union; and how else are you to prove it? It lies with you, moreover, to justify in the eyes of the world the time you have been enjoying your benefices, while these others have voluntarily shut themselves out from all participation in their convenience; and how else are you to convince the world that there was not something of selfishness in your motives? It lies with you, lastly, to keep your example unspotted before your congregations; and I do not know how better you are to do that.

It is never a thankful office to offer advice; and advice is the more unpalatable, not only from the difficulty of the service recommended, but often from its very obviousness. We are fired with anger against those who make themselves the spokesmen of plain obligations; for they seem to insult us as they advise. In the present case I should have feared to waken some such feeling, had it not been that I was addressing myself to a body of special men on a very special occasion. I know too much of the history of ideas to imagine that the sentiments advocated in this appeal are peculiar to me and a few others. I am confident that your own minds are already busy with similar reflections. But I know at the same time how difficult it is for one man to speak to another in such a matter; how he is withheld by all manner of personal considerations, and dare not propose what he has nearest his heart, because the other has a larger family or a smaller stipend, or is older, more venerable, and more conscientious than himself; and it is in view of this that I have determined to profit by the freedom of an anonymous writer, and give utterance to what many of you would have uttered already, had they been (as I am) apart from the battle. It is easy to be virtuous when one's own convenience is not affected; and it is no shame to any man to follow the advice of an outsider who owns that, while he sees which is the better part, he might not have the courage to profit himself by this opinion.[*Note for the Laity*]

The foregoing pages have been in type since the beginning of last September. I have been advised to give them to the public; and it is only necessary to add that nothing of all that has taken place since they were written has made me modify an opinion or so much as change a word. The question is not one that can be altered by circumstances.

I need not tell the laity that with them this matter ultimately rests. Whether we regard it as a question of mere expense or as a question of good feeling against ill feeling, the solution must come from the Church members. The lay purse is the long one; and if the lay opinion does not speak from so high a place, it speaks all the week through and with innumerable voices. Trumpets and captains are all very well in their way; but if the trumpets were ever so clear, and the captains as bold as lions, it is still the army that must take the fort.

The laymen of the Church have here a question before them, on the answering of which, as I still think, many others attend. If the Established Church could throw off its lethargy, and give the Dissenters some speaking token of its zeal for union, I still think that union, to some extent, would be the result. There is a motion tabled (as I suppose all know) for the next meeting of the General Assembly; but something more than motions must be tabled, and something more must be given than votes. It lies practically with the laymen, by a new endowment scheme, to put the Church right with the world in two ways, so that those who left it more than thirty years ago, and who may now be willing to return, shall lose neither in money nor in ecclesiastical status. At the outside, what will they have to do? They will have to do for (say) ten years what the laymen of the Free Church have done cheerfully ever since 1843.

February 12th 1875.

THE CHARITY BAZAAR: AN ALLEGORICAL DIALOGUE

PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE
The Ingenuous Public
His Wife
The Tout

The Tout, in an allegorical costume, holding a silver trumpet in his right hand, is discovered on the steps in front of the Bazaar. He sounds a preliminary flourish.

The Tout. — Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the honour to announce a sale of many interesting, beautiful, rare, quaint, comical, and necessary articles. Here you will find objects of taste, such as Babies' Shoes, Children's Petticoats, and Shetland Wool Cravats; objects of general usefulness, such as Tea-cosies, Bangles, Brahmin Beads, and Madras Baskets; and objects of imperious necessity, such as Pen-wipers, Indian Figures carefully repaired with glue, and Sealed Envelopes, containing a surprise. And all this is not to be sold by your common Shopkeepers, intent on small and legitimate profits, but by Ladies and Gentlemen, who would as soon think of picking your pocket of a cotton handkerchief as of selling a single one of these many interesting, beautiful, rare, quaint, comical, and necessary articles at less than twice its market value. (*He sounds another flourish.*)

The Wife. — This seems a very fair-spoken young man.

The Ingenuous Public (*addressing the Tout*). — Sir, I am a man of simple and untutored mind; but I apprehend that this sale, of which you give us so glowing a description, is neither more nor less than a Charity Bazaar?

The Tout. — Sir, your penetration has not deceived you.

The Ingenuous Public. — Into which you seek to entice unwary passengers?

The Tout. — Such is my office.

The Ingenuous Public. — But is not a Charity Bazaar, Sir, a place where, for ulterior purposes, amateur goods are sold at a price above their market value?

The Tout. — I perceive you are no novice. Let us sit down, all three, upon the doorsteps, and reason this matter at length. The position is a little conspicuous, but airy and convenient.

(*The Tout seats himself on the second step, the Ingenuous Public and his Wife to right and left of him, one step below.*)

The Tout. — Shopping is one of the dearest pleasures of the human heart.

The Wife. — Indeed, Sir, and that it is.

The Tout. — The choice of articles, apart from their usefulness, is an appetising occupation, and to exchange bald, uniform shillings for a fine big, figurative knick-knack, such as a windmill, a gross of green spectacles, or a cocked hat, gives us a direct and emphatic sense of gain. We have had many shillings before, as good as these; but this is the first time we have possessed a windmill. Upon these principles of human nature, Sir, is based the theory of the Charity Bazaar. People were doubtless charitably disposed. The problem was to make the exercise of charity entertaining in itself — you follow me, Madam? — and in the Charity Bazaar a satisfactory solution was attained. The act of giving away money for charitable purposes is, 215 by this admirable invention, transformed into an amusement, and puts on the externals of profitable commerce. You play at shopping a while; and in order to keep up the illusion, sham goods do actually change hands. Thus, under the similitude of a game, I have seen children confronted with the horrors of arithmetic, and even taught to gargle.

The Ingenuous Public. — You expound this subject very magisterially, Sir. But tell me, would it not be possible to carry this element of play still further? and after I had remained a proper time in the Bazaar, and negotiated a sufficient number of sham bargains, would it not be possible to return me my money in the hall?

The Tout. — I question whether that would not impair the humour of the situation. And besides, my dear Sir, the pith of the whole device is to take that money from you.

The Ingenuous Public. — True. But at least the Bazaar might take back the tea-cosies and pen-wipers.

The Tout. — I have no doubt, if you were to ask it handsomely, that you would be so far accommodated. Still it is out of the theory. The sham goods, for which, believe me, I readily understand your disaffection — the sham goods are well adapted for their purpose. Your lady wife will lay these tea-cosies and pen-wipers aside in a safe place, until she is asked to contribute to another Charity Bazaar. There the tea-cosies and pen-wipers will be once more charitably sold. The new purchasers, in their turn, will accurately imitate the dispositions of your lady wife. In short, Sir, the whole affair is a cycle of operations. The tea-cosies and pen-wipers are merely counters; they come off and on again like a stage army; and year after year people pretend to buy and pretend to sell them, with a vivacity that seems to indicate a talent for the stage. But in the course of these illusory manœuvres, a great deal of money is given in charity, and that in a picturesque, bustling, and agreeable manner. If you have to travel 216 somewhere on business, you would choose the prettiest route, and desire pleasant companions by the way. And why not show the same spirit in giving alms?

The Ingenuous Public. — Sir, I am profoundly indebted to you for all you have said. I am, Sir, your absolute convert.

The Wife. — Let us lose no time, but enter the Charity Bazaar.

The Ingenuous Public. — Yes; let us enter the Charity Bazaar.

Both (*singing*). — Let us enter, let us enter, let us enter, Let us enter the Charity Bazaar!

(*An interval is supposed to elapse. The Ingenuous Public and his Wife are discovered issuing from the Charity Bazaar.*)

The Wife. — How fortunate you should have brought your cheque-book!

The Ingenuous Public. — Well, fortunate in a sense. (*Addressing the Tout.*) — Sir, I shall send a van in the course of the afternoon for the little articles I have purchased. I shall not say good-bye; because I shall probably take a lift in the front seat, not from any solicitude, believe me, about the little articles, but as the last opportunity I may have for some time of enjoying the costly entertainment of a drive.

The Scene Closes

THE LIGHT-KEEPER

I

The brilliant kernel of the night,
The flaming lightroom circles me:
I sit within a blaze of light
Held high above the dusky sea.
Far off the surf doth break and roar
Along bleak miles of moonlit shore,
Where through the tides the tumbling wave
Falls in an avalanche of foam
And drives its churnèd waters home
Up many an undercliff and cave.
The clear bell chimes: the clockworks strain:
The turning lenses flash and pass,
Frame turning within glittering frame
With frosty gleam of moving glass:
Unseen by me, each dusky hour
The sea-waves welter up the tower
Or in the ebb subside again;
And ever and anon all night,
Drawn from afar by charm of light,
A sea-bird beats against the pane.
And lastly when dawn ends the night
And belts the semi-orb of sea,
The tall, pale pharos in the light
Looks white and spectral as may be.The early ebb is out: the green
Straight belt of sea-weed now is seen,
That round the basement of the tower
Marks out the interspace of tide;
And watching men are heavy-eyed,
And sleepless lips are dry and sour.
The night is over like a dream:
The sea-birds cry and dip themselves;
And in the early sunlight, steam
The newly-bared and dripping shelves,
Around whose verge the glassy wave
With lisping wash is heard to lave;
While, on the white tower lifted high,
With yellow light in faded glass
The circling lenses flash and pass,
And sickly shine against the sky.
1869.

II

As the steady lenses circle
With a frosty gleam of glass;
And the clear bell chimes,
And the oil brims over the lip of the burner,
Quiet and still at his desk,
The lonely light-keeper
Holds his vigil.
Lured from afar,
The bewildered sea-gull beats
Dully against the lantern;
Yet he stirs not, lifts not his head
From the desk where he reads,
Lifts not his eyes to see
The chill blind circle of night
Watching him through the panes.This is his country’s guardian,
The outmost sentry of peace.
This is the man,
Who gives up all that is lovely in living
For the means to live.
Poetry cunningly gilds
The life of the Light-Keeper,
Held on high in the blackness
In the burning kernel of night.
The seaman sees and blesses him;
The Poet, deep in a sonnet,
Numbers his inky fingers
Fitly to praise him:
Only we behold him,
Sitting, patient and stolid,
Martyr to a salary.
1870.

ON A NEW FORM OF INTERMITTENT LIGHT FOR LIGHTHOUSES

The necessity for marked characteristics in coast illumination increases with the number of lights. The late Mr. Robert Stevenson, my grandfather, contributed two distinctions, which he called respectively the *intermittent* and the *flashing* light. It is only to the former of these that I have to refer in the present paper. The intermittent light was first introduced at Tarbetness in 1830, and is already in use at eight stations on the coasts of the United Kingdom. As constructed originally, it was an arrangement by which a fixed light was alternately eclipsed and revealed. These recurrent occultations and revelations produce an effect totally different from that of the revolving light, which comes gradually into its full strength, and as gradually fades away. The changes in the intermittent, on the other hand, are immediate; a certain duration of darkness is followed at once and without the least gradation by a certain period of light. The arrangement employed by my grandfather to effect this object consisted of two opaque cylindric shades or extinguishers, one of which descended from the roof, while the other ascended from below to meet it, at a fixed interval. The light was thus entirely intercepted.

At a later period, at the harbour light of Troon, Mr. Wilson, C.E., produced an intermittent light by the use of gas, which leaves little to be desired, and which is still in 221 use at Troon harbour. By a simple mechanical contrivance, the gas jet was suddenly lowered to the point of extinction, and, after a set period, as suddenly raised again. The chief superiority of this form of intermittent light is economy in the consumption of the gas. In the original design, of course, the oil continues uselessly to illuminate the interior of the screens during the period of occultation.

Mr. Wilson's arrangement has been lately resuscitated by Mr. Wigham of Dublin, in connection with his new gas-burner.

Gas, however, is inapplicable to many situations; and it has occurred to me that the desired result might be effected with strict economy with oil lights, in the following manner: —

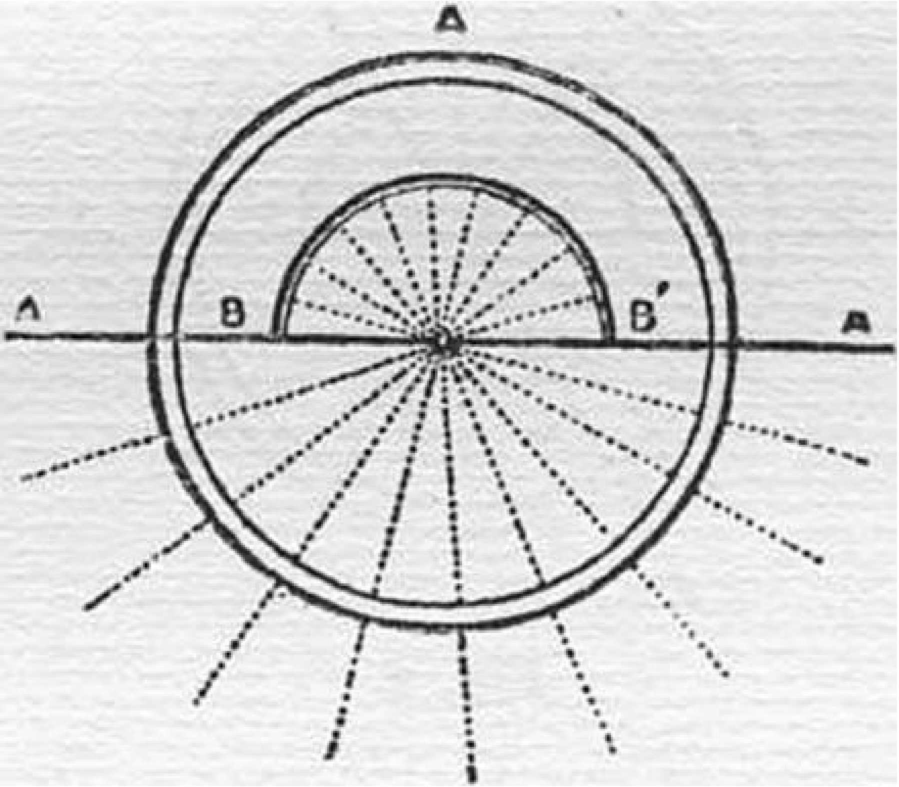


Fig. 1.

In Fig. 1, AAA represents in plan an ordinary Fresnel's dioptric fixed light apparatus, and BB' a hemispherical mirror (either metallic or dioptric on my father's principle) which is made to revolve with uniform speed about the burner. This mirror, it is obvious, intercepts the rays of one hemisphere, and, returning them through the flame (less loss by absorption, etc.), spreads them equally over the other. In this way 180° of light pass regularly the eye of the seaman; and are followed at once by 180° of darkness. As the hemispherical mirror begins to open, the observer receives the full light, since the whole lit 222 hemisphere is illuminated with strict equality; and as it closes again, he passes into darkness.

Other characteristics can be produced by different modifications of the above. In Fig. 2 the original hemispherical mirror is shown broken up into three different sectors, BB´, CC´, and DD´; so that with the same velocity of revolution the periods of light and darkness will be produced in quicker succession. In this figure (Fig. 2) the three sectors have been shown as subtending equal angles, but if one of them were increased in size and the other two diminished (as in Fig. 3), we should have one long steady illumination and two short flashes at each revolution. Again, the number of sectors may be increased; and by varying both their number and their relative size, a number of additional characteristics are attainable.

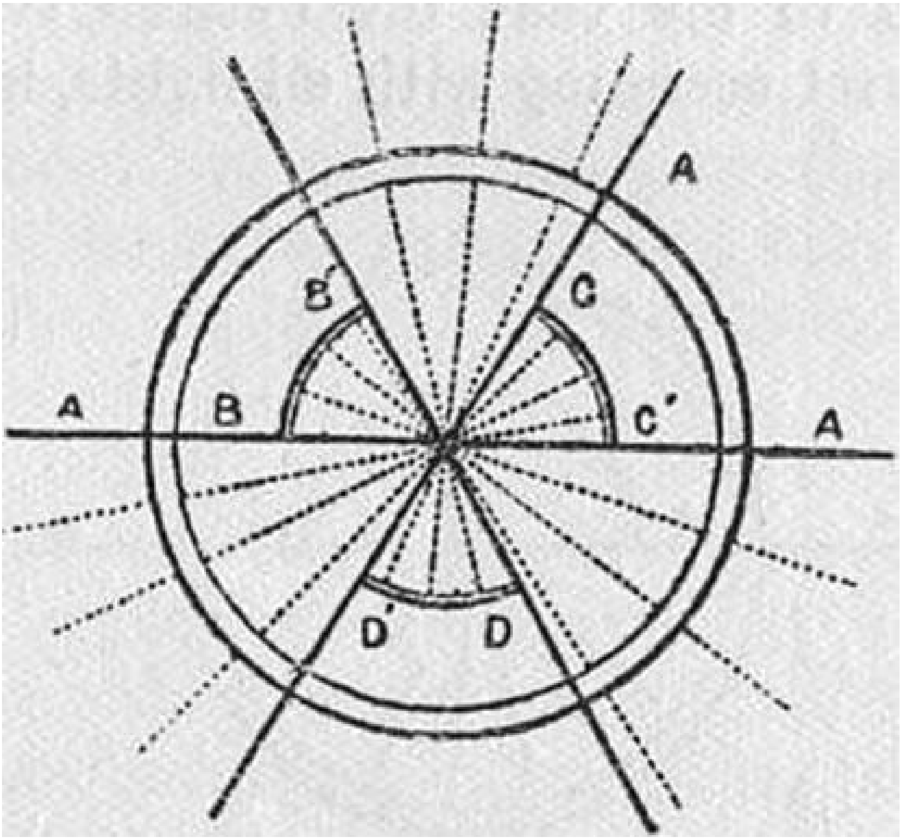


Fig. 2.

Colour may also be introduced as a means of distinction. Coloured glass may be set in the alternate spaces; but it is necessary to remark that these coloured sectors will be inferior in power to those which remain white. This objection is, however, obviated to a large extent (especially where the dioptric spherical mirror is used) by such an arrangement as is shown in Fig. 4; where the two sectors, WW, are left unassisted, while the two with the red 223 screens are reinforced respectively by the two sectors of mirror, MM.

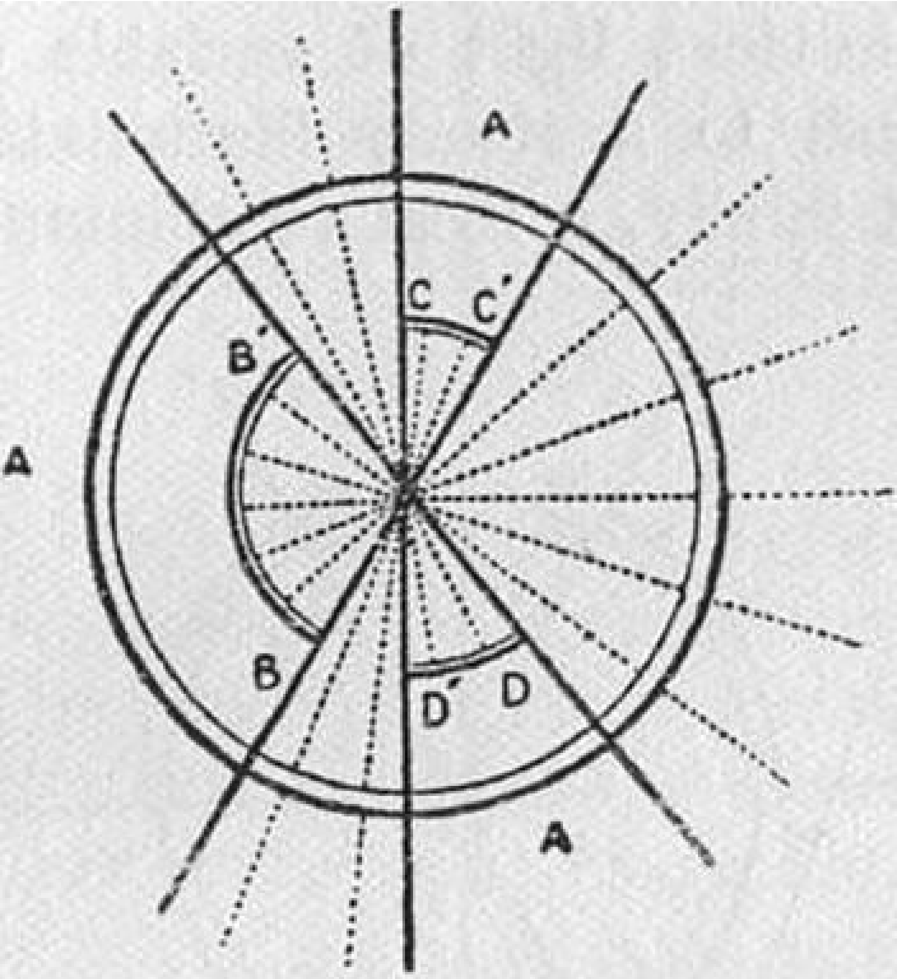

A
A
A
A
C
C'
B'
B
D'
D

Fig. 3.

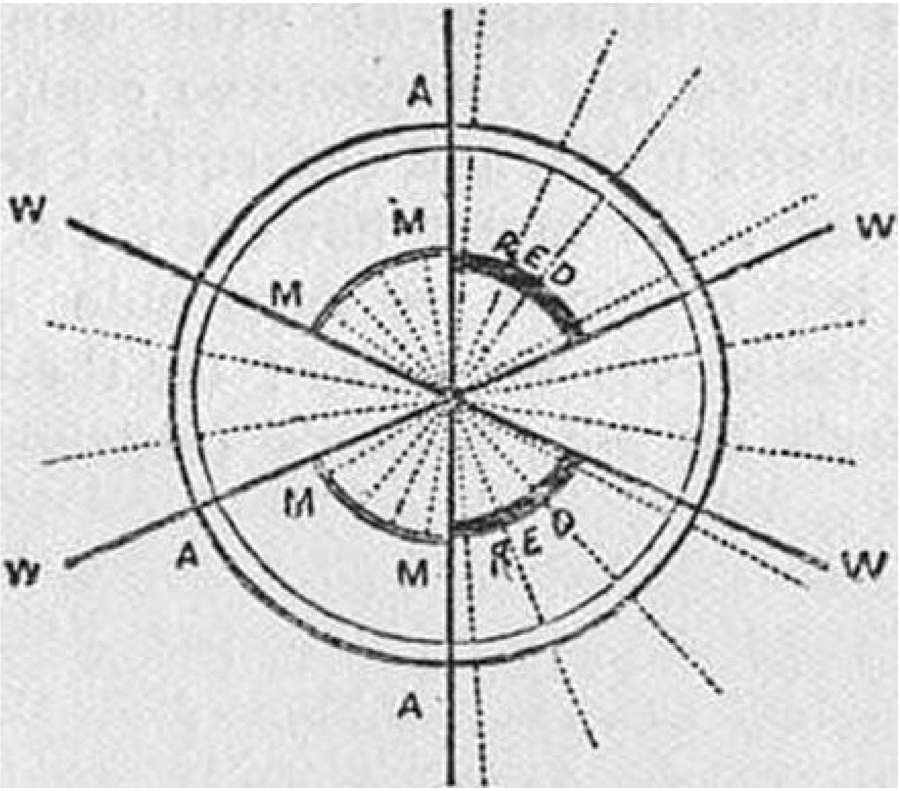


Fig. 4.

Another mode of holophotally producing the intermittent light has been suggested by my father, and is shown in Fig. 5. It consists of alternate and opposite sectors of dioptric spherical mirror, MM, and of Fresnel’s fixed light apparatus, AA. By the revolution of this composite frame about the burner, the same immediate alternation of light and darkness is produced, the first when the front of the 224 fixed panel, and the second when the back of the mirror, is presented to the eye of the sailor.

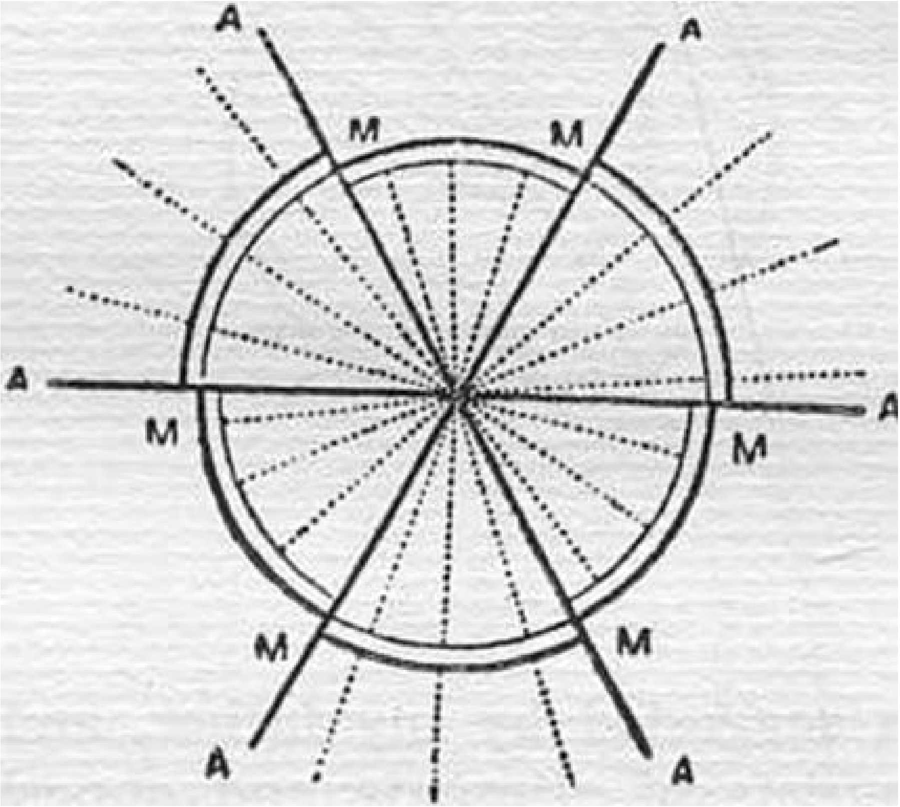


Fig. 5.

One advantage of the method that I propose is this, that while we are able to produce a plain intermittent light; an intermittent light of variable period, ranging from a brief flash to a steady illumination of half the revolution; and finally, a light combining the immediate occultation of the intermittent with combination and change of colour, we can yet preserve comparative lightness in the revolving parts, and consequent economy in the driving machinery. It must, however, be noticed, that none of these last methods are applicable to cases where more than one radiant is employed: for these cases, either my grandfather's or Mr. Wilson's contrivance must be resorted to.

1871.

Read before the Royal Scottish Society of Arts on 27th March 1871, and awarded the Society's Silver Medal.

ON THE THERMAL INFLUENCE OF FORESTS

The opportunity of an experiment on a comparatively large scale, and under conditions of comparative isolation, can occur but rarely in such a science as Meteorology. Hence Mr. Milne Home's proposal for the plantation of Malta seemed to offer an exceptional opportunity for progress. Many of the conditions are favourable to the simplicity of the result; and it seemed natural that, if a searching and systematic series of observations were to be immediately set afoot, and continued during the course of the plantation and the growth of the wood, some light would be thrown on the still doubtful question of the climatic influence of forests.

Mr. Milne Home expects, as I gather, a threefold result: — 1st, an increased and better regulated supply of available water; 2nd, an increased rainfall; and, 3rd, a more equable climate, with more temperate summer heat and winter cold. As to the first of these expectations, I suppose there can be no doubt that it is justified by facts; but it may not be unnecessary to guard against any confusion of the first with the second. Not only does the presence of growing timber increase and regulate the supply of running and spring water independently of any change in the amount of rainfall, but as Boussingault found at Marmato, denudation of forest is sufficient to decrease that supply, even when the rainfall has increased instead 226 of diminished in amount. The second and third effects stand apart, therefore, from any question as to the utility of Mr. Milne Home's important proposal; they are both, perhaps, worthy of discussion at the present time, but I wish to confine myself in the present paper to the examination of the third alone.

A wood, then, may be regarded either as a *superficies* or as a *solid*; that is, either as a part of the earth's surface slightly elevated above the rest, or as a diffused and heterogeneous body displacing a certain portion of free and mobile atmosphere. It is primarily in the first character that it attracts our attention, as a radiating and absorbing surface, exposed to the sun and the currents of the air; such that, if we imagine a plateau of meadow-land or bare earth raised to the mean level of the forest's exposed leaf-surface, we shall have an agent entirely similar in kind, although perhaps widely differing in the amount of action. Now, by comparing a tract of wood with such a plateau as we have just supposed, we shall arrive at a clear idea of the specialities of the former. In the first place, then, the mass of foliage may be expected to increase the radiating power of each tree. The upper leaves radiate freely towards the stars and the cold inter-stellar spaces, while the lower ones radiate to those above and receive less heat in return; consequently, during the absence of the sun, each tree cools gradually downward from top to bottom. Hence we must take into account not merely the area of leaf-surface actually exposed to the sky, but, to a greater or less extent, the surface of every leaf in the whole tree or the whole wood. This is evidently a point in which the action of the forest may be expected to differ from that of the meadow or naked earth; for though, of course, inferior strata tend to a certain extent to follow somewhat the same course as the mass of inferior leaves, they do so to a less degree — conduction, and the conduction of a very slow conductor, being substituted for radiation.

We come next, however, to a second point of difference. 227 In the case of the meadow, the chilled air continues to lie upon the surface, the grass, as Humboldt says, remaining all night submerged in the stratum of lowest temperature; while in the case of trees, the coldest air is continually passing down to the space underneath the boughs, or what we may perhaps term the crypt of the forest. Here it is that the consideration of any piece of woodland conceived as a solid comes naturally in; for this solid contains a portion of the atmosphere, partially cut off from the rest, more or less excluded from the influence of wind, and lying upon a soil that is screened all day from isolation by the impending mass of foliage. In this way (and chiefly, I think, from the exclusion of winds), we have underneath the radiating leaf-surface a stratum of comparatively stagnant air, protected from many sudden variations of temperature, and tending only slowly to bring itself into equilibrium with the more general changes that take place in the free atmosphere.

Over and above what has been mentioned, thermal effects have been attributed to the vital activity of the leaves in the transudation of water, and even to the respiration and circulation of living wood. The whole actual amount of thermal influence, however, is so small that I may rest satisfied with mere mention. If these actions have any effect at all, it must be practically insensible; and the others that I have already stated are not only sufficient validly to account for all the observed differences, but would lead naturally to the expectation of differences very much larger and better marked. To these observations I proceed at once. Experience has been acquired upon the following three points: — 1, The relation between the temperature of the trunk of a tree and the temperature of the surrounding atmosphere; 2, The relation between the temperature of the air under a wood and the temperature of the air outside; and, 3, The relation between the temperature of the air above a wood and the temperature of the air above cleared land.

As to the first question, there are several independent series of observations; and I may remark in passing, what applies to all, that allowance must be made throughout for some factor of specific heat. The results were as follows: — The seasonal and monthly means in the tree and in the air were not sensibly different. The variations in the tree, in M. Becquerel's own observations, appear as considerably less than a fourth of those in the atmosphere, and he has calculated, from observations made at Geneva between 1796 and 1798, that the variations in the tree were less than a fifth of those in the air; but the tree in this case, besides being of a different species, was seven or eight inches thicker than the one experimented on by himself. The variations in the tree, therefore, are always less than those in the air, the ratio between the two depending apparently on the thickness of the tree in question and the rapidity with which the variations followed upon one another. The times of the maxima, moreover, were widely different: in the air, the maximum occurs at 2 P.M. in winter, and at 3 P.M. in summer; in the tree, it occurs in winter at 6 P.M., and in summer between 10 and 11 P.M. At nine in the morning in the month of June, the temperatures of the tree and of the air had come to an equilibrium. A similar difference of progression is visible in the means, which differ most in spring and autumn, and tend to equalise themselves in winter and in summer. But it appears most strikingly in the case of variations somewhat longer in period than the daily ranges. The following temperatures occurred during M. Becquerel's observations in the Jardin des Plantes: —

Date.	Temperature of the Air.	Temperature of the Tree.
1859 Dec. 15,	28.70°	32.08°
16,	19.76°	32.00°
17,	17.46°	31.78°
18,	13.28°	30.58°
19,	12.42°	28.09°
20,	13.34°	25.20°
21,	38.80°	27.26°
22,	40.92°	30.24°
23,	44.05°	31.06°

A moment's comparison of the two columns will make the principle apparent. The temperature of the air falls nearly fifteen degrees in five days; the temperature of the tree, sluggishly following, falls in the same time less than four degrees. Between the 19th and the 20th the temperature of the air has changed its direction of motion, and risen nearly a degree; but the temperature of the tree persists in its former course, and continues to fall nearly three degrees farther. On the 21st there comes a sudden increase of heat, a sudden thaw; the temperature of the air rises twenty-five and a half degrees; the change at last reaches the tree, but only raises its temperature by less than three degrees; and even two days afterwards, when the air is already twelve degrees above freezing point, the tree is still half a degree below it. Take, again, the following case: —

Date Temperature of
the Air. Tree.

8659 22° July 13,
82.58°,
80.72°,
78.86°,
75.22°,
68.30°,
65.60°,

The same order reappears. From the 13th to the 19th the temperature of the air steadily falls, while the temperature of the tree continues apparently to follow the course of previous variations, and does not really begin to fall, is not really affected by the ebb of heat, until the 17th, three days at least after it had been operating in the air. Hence we may conclude that all variations of 230 the temperature of the air, whatever be their period, from twenty-four hours up to twelve months, are followed in the same manner by variations in the temperature of the tree; and that those in the tree are always less in amount and considerably slower of occurrence than those in the air. This *thermal sluggishness*, so to speak, seems capable of explaining all the phenomena of the case without any hypothetical vital power of resisting temperatures below the freezing point, such as is hinted at even by Becquerel.

Réaumur, indeed, is said to have observed temperatures in slender trees nearly thirty degrees higher than the temperature of the air in the sun; but we are not informed as to the conditions under which this observation was made, and it is therefore impossible to assign to it its proper value. The sap of the ice-plant is said to be materially colder than the surrounding atmosphere; and there are several other somewhat incongruous facts, which tend, at first sight, to favour the view of some inherent power of resistance in some plants to high temperatures, and in others to low temperatures. But such a supposition seems in the meantime to be gratuitous. Keeping in view the thermal redispositions, which must be greatly favoured by the ascent of the sap, and the difference between the condition as to temperature of such parts as the root, the heart of the trunk, and the extreme foliage, and never forgetting the unknown factor of specific heat, we may still regard it as possible to account for all anomalies without the aid of any such hypothesis. We may, therefore, I think, disregard small exceptions, and state the result as follows: —

If, after every rise or fall, the temperature of the air remained stationary for a length of time proportional to the amount of the change, it seems probable — setting aside all question of vital heat — that the temperature of the tree would always finally equalise itself with the new temperature 231 of the air, and that the range in tree and atmosphere would thus become the same. This pause, however, does not occur: the variations follow each other without interval; and the slow-conducting wood is never allowed enough time to overtake the rapid changes of the more sensitive air. Hence, so far as we can see at present, trees appear to be simply bad conductors, and to have no more influence upon the temperature of their surroundings than is fully accounted for by the consequent tardiness of their thermal variations.

Observations bearing on the second of the three points have been made by Becquerel in France, by La Cour in Jutland and Iceland, and by Rivoli at Posen. The results are perfectly congruous. Becquerel's observations were made under wood, and about a hundred yards outside in open ground, at three stations in the district of Montargis, Loiret. There was a difference of more than one degree Fahrenheit between the mean annual temperatures in favour of the open ground. The mean summer temperature in the wood was from two to three degrees lower than the mean summer temperature outside. The mean maxima in the wood were also lower than those without by a little more than two degrees. Herr La Cour found the daily range consistently smaller inside the wood than outside. As far as regards the mean winter temperatures, there is an excess in favour of the forest, but so trifling in amount as to be unworthy of much consideration. Libri found that the minimum winter temperatures were not sensibly lower at Florence, after the Apennines had been denuded of forest, than they had been before. The disheartening contradictoriness of his observations on this subject led Herr Rivoli to the following ingenious and satisfactory comparison. Arranging his results according to the wind 232 that blew on the day of observation, he set against each other the variation of the temperature under wood from that without, and the variation of the temperature of the wind from the local mean for the month: —

Wind.	[illegible]
Variation Wood	[illegible]
Variation Wind	[illegible]

From this curious comparison, it becomes apparent that the variations of the difference in question depend upon the amount of variations of temperature which take place in the free air, and on the slowness with which such changes are communicated to the stagnant atmosphere of woods; in other words, as Herr Rivoli boldly formulates it, a forest is simply a bad conductor. But this is precisely the same conclusion as we have already arrived at with regard to individual trees; and in Herr Rivoli's table, what we see is just another case of what we saw in M. Becquerel's — the different progression of temperatures. It must be obvious, however, that the thermal condition of a single tree must be different in many ways from that of a combination of trees and more or less stagnant air, such as we call a forest. And accordingly we find, in the case of the latter, the following new feature: The mean yearly temperature of woods is lower than the mean yearly temperature of free air, while they are decidedly colder in summer, and very little, if at all, warmer in winter. Hence, on the whole, forests are colder than cleared lands. But this is just what might have been expected from the amount of evaporation, the continued descent of cold air, and its stagnation in the close and sunless crypt of a forest; and one can only wonder here, as elsewhere, that the resultant difference is so insignificant and doubtful.

We come now to the third point in question, the thermal influence of woods upon the air above them. It will be remembered that we have seen reason to believe their effect to be similar to that of certain other surfaces, except in so far as it may be altered, in the case of the forest, by the greater extent of effective radiating area, and by the possibility of generating a descending cold current as well as an ascending hot one. M. Becquerel is (so far as I can learn) the only observer who has taken up the elucidation of this subject. He placed his thermometers at three points: A and B were both about seventy feet above the surface of the ground; but A was at the summit of a chestnut tree, while B was in the free air, fifty feet away from the other. C was four or five feet above the ground, with a northern exposure; there was also a fourth station to the south, at the same level as this last, but its readings are very seldom referred to. After several years of observation, the mean temperature at A was found to be between one and two degrees higher than that at B. The order of progression of differences is as instructive here as in the two former investigations. The maximum difference in favour of station A occurred between three and five in the afternoon, later or sooner according as there had been more or less sunshine, and ranged sometimes as high as seven degrees. After this the difference kept declining until sunrise, when there was often a difference of a degree, or a degree and a half, upon the other side. On cloudy days the difference tended to a minimum. During a rainy month of April, for example, the difference in favour of station A was less than half a degree; the first fifteen days of May following, however, were sunny, and the difference rose to more than a degree and a half. It will be observed that I have omitted up to the present point all mention of station C. I do so because M. Becquerel's language leaves it doubtful whether the observations made at this station are logically comparable with 234 those made at the other two. If the end in view were to compare the progression of temperatures above the earth, above a tree, and in free air, removed from all such radiative and absorptive influences, it is plain that all three should have been equally exposed to the sun or kept equally in shadow. As the observations were made, they give us no notion of the relative action of earth-surface and forest-surface upon the temperature of the contiguous atmosphere; and this, as it seems to me, was just the *crux* of the problem. So far, however, as they go, they seem to justify the view that all these actions are the same in kind, however they may differ in degree. We find the forest heating the air during the day, and heating it more or less according as there has been more or less sunshine for it to absorb, and we find it also chilling it during the night; both of which are actions common to any radiating surface, and would be produced, if with differences of amount and time, by any other such surface raised to the mean level of the exposed foliage.

To recapitulate:

1st. We find that single trees appear to act simply as bad conductors.

2nd. We find that woods, regarded as solids, are, on the whole, slightly lower in temperature than the free air which they have displaced, and that they tend slowly to adapt themselves to the various thermal changes that take place without them.

3rd. We find forests regarded as surfaces acting like any other part of the earth's surface, probably with more or less difference in amount and progression, which we still lack the information necessary to estimate.

All this done, I am afraid that there can be little doubt that the more general climatic investigations will be long and vexatious. Even in South America, with extremely favourable conditions, the result is far from being definite. Glancing over the table published by M. Becquerel in his book on climates, from the observations of Humboldt, 235 Hall, Boussingault, and others, it becomes evident, I think, that nothing can be founded upon the comparisons therein instituted; that all reasoning, in the present state of our information, is premature and unreliable. Strong statements have certainly been made; and particular cases lend themselves to the formation of hasty judgments. "From the Bay of Cupica to the Gulf of Guayaquil," says M. Boussingault, "the country is covered with immense forest and traversed by numerous rivers; it rains there almost ceaselessly; and the mean temperature of this moist district scarcely reaches 78.8° F.... At

Payta commence the sandy deserts of Priura and Sechura; to the constant humidity of Choco succeeds almost at once an extreme of dryness; and the mean temperature of the coast increases at the same time by 1.8° F.” Even in this selected favourable instance it might be argued that the part performed in the change by the presence or absence of forest was comparatively small; there seems to have been, at the same time, an entire change of soil; and, in our present ignorance, it would be difficult to say by how much this of itself is able to affect the climate. Moreover, it is possible that the humidity of the one district is due to other causes besides the presence of wood, or even that the presence of wood is itself only an effect of some more general difference or combination of differences. Be that as it may, however, we have only to look a little longer at the table before referred to, to see how little weight can be laid on such special instances. Let us take five stations, all in this very district of Choco. Hacquita is eight hundred and twenty feet above Novita, and their mean temperatures are the same. Alto de Mombu, again, is five hundred feet higher than Hacquita, and the mean temperature has here fallen nearly two degrees. Go up another five hundred feet to Tambo de la Orquita, and again we find no fall in the mean temperature. Go up some five hundred further to Chami, and there is a fall in the mean temperature of nearly 236 six degrees. Such numbers are evidently quite untrustworthy; and hence we may judge how much confidence can be placed in any generalisation from these South American mean temperatures.

The question is probably considered too simply — too much to the neglect of concurrent influences. Until we know, for example, somewhat more of the comparative radiant powers of different soils, we cannot expect any very definite result. A change of temperature would certainly be effected by the plantation of such a marshy district as the Sologne, because, if nothing else were done, the roots might pierce the impenetrable subsoil, allow the surface-water to drain itself off, and thus dry the country. But might not the change be quite different if the soil planted were a shifting sand, which, *fixed* by the roots of the trees, would become gradually covered with a vegetable earth, and be thus changed from dry to wet? Again, the complication and conflict of effects arises, not only from the soil, vegetation, and geographical position of the place of the experiment itself, but from the distribution of similar or different conditions in its immediate neighbourhood, and probably to great distances on every side. A forest, for example, as we know from Herr Rivoli’s comparison, would exercise a perfectly different influence in a cold country subject to warm winds, and in a warm country subject to cold winds; so that our question might meet with different solutions even on the east and west coasts of Great Britain.

The consideration of such a complexity points more and more to the plantation of Malta as an occasion of special importance; its insular position and the unity of its geological structure both tend to simplify the question. There are certain points about the existing climate, moreover, which seem specially calculated to throw the influence of woods into a strong relief. Thus, during four summer months, there is practically no rainfall. Thus, again, the northerly winds when stormy, and especially in winter, tend to depress the temperature very suddenly; and thus, 237 too, the southerly and south-westerly winds, which raise the temperature during their prevalence to from eighty-eight to ninety-eight degrees, seldom last longer than a few hours; insomuch that “their disagreeable heat and dryness may be escaped by carefully closing the windows and doors of apartments at their onset.” Such sudden and short variations seem just what is wanted to accentuate the differences in question. Accordingly, the opportunity seems one not lightly to be lost, and the British Association or this Society itself might take the matter up and establish a series of observations, to be continued during the next few years. Such a combination of favourable circumstances may not occur again for years; and when the whole subject is at a standstill for want of facts, the present occasion ought not to go past unimproved.

Such observations might include the following: —

The observation of maximum and minimum thermometers in three different classes of situation — *videlicet*, in the areas selected for plantation themselves, at places in the immediate neighbourhood of those areas where the external influence might be expected to reach its maximum, and at places distant from those areas where the influence might be expected to be least.

The observation of rain-gauges and hygrometers at the same three descriptions of locality.

In addition to the ordinary hours of observation, special readings of the thermometers should be made as often as possible at a change of wind and throughout the course of the short hot breezes alluded to already, in order to admit of the recognition and extension of Herr Rivoli’s comparison.

Observation of the periods and forces of the land and sea breezes.

Gauging of the principal springs, both in the neighbourhood of the areas of plantation and at places far removed from those areas.

1873.

Read before the Royal Society, Edinburgh, 19th May 1873, and reprinted from the *Proceedings* R.S.E.

Jour. Scot. Met. Soc., New Ser. xxvi. 35.

Quoted by Mr. Milne Home.

Atlas Météorologique de l'Observatoire Impérial, 1867.

Comptes Rendus de l'Académie, 29th March 1869.

Professor Balfour's "Class Book of Botany," Physiology, chap. xii., .

Comptes Rendus, 1867 and 1869.

See his paper.

Annales de Chimie et de Physique, xlv., 1830. A more detailed comparison of the climates in question would be a most interesting and important contribution to the subject.

Reviewed in the *Austrian Meteorological Magazine*, vol. iv.; .

Comptes Rendus, 28th May 1860.

Ibid., 20th May 1861.

Becquerel, "Climats," .

Scoresby-Jackson's "Medical Climatology."

ESSAYS OF TRAVEL

I

DAVOS IN WINTER

A mountain valley has, at the best, a certain prison-like effect on the imagination, but a mountain valley, an Alpine winter, and an invalid's weakness make up among them a prison of the most effective kind. The roads indeed are cleared, and at least one footpath dodging up the hill; but to these the health-seeker is rigidly confined. There are for him no cross-cuts over the field, no following of streams, no unguided rambles in the wood. His walks are cut and dry. In five or six different directions he can push as far, and no farther, than his strength permits; never deviating from the line laid down for him and beholding at each repetition the same field of wood and snow from the same corner of the road. This, of itself, would be a little trying to the patience in the course of months; but to this is added, by the heaped mantle of the snow, an almost utter absence of detail and an almost unbroken identity of colour. Snow, it is true, is not merely white. The sun touches it with roseate and golden lights. Its own crushed infinity of crystals, its own richness of tiny sculpture, fills it, when regarded near at hand, with wonderful depths of coloured shadow, and, though wintrily transformed, it is still water, and has watery tones of blue. But, when all is said, these fields of white and blots of crude black forest are but a trite and staring substitute for the infinite variety and pleasantness of the earth's face. Even a boulder, whose front is too 242 precipitous to have retained the snow, seems, if you come upon it in your walk, a perfect gem of colour, reminds you almost painfully of other places, and brings into your head the delights of more Arcadian days — the path across the meadow, the hazel dell, the lilies on the stream, and the scents, the colours, and the whisper of the woods. And scents here are as rare as colours. Unless you get a gust of kitchen in passing some hotel, you shall smell nothing all day long but the faint and choking odour of frost. Sounds, too, are absent: not a bird pipes, not a bough waves, in the dead, windless atmosphere. If a sleigh goes by, the sleigh-bells ring, and that is all; you work all winter through to no other accompaniment but the crunching of your steps upon the frozen snow.

It is the curse of the Alpine valleys to be each one village from one end to the other. Go where you please, houses will still be in sight, before and behind you, and to the right and left. Climb as high as an invalid is able, and it is only to spy new habitations nested in the wood. Nor is that all; for about the health resort the walks are besieged by single people walking rapidly with plaids about their shoulders, by sudden troops of German boys trying to learn to jödel, and by German couples silently and, as you venture to fancy, not quite happily, pursuing love's young dream. You may perhaps be an invalid who likes to make bad verses as he walks about. Alas! no muse will suffer this imminence of interruption — and at the second stampede of jödellers you find your modest inspiration fled. Or you may only have a taste for solitude; it may try your nerves to have some one always in front whom you are visibly overtaking, and some one always behind who is audibly overtaking you, to say nothing of a score or so who brush past you in an opposite direction. It may annoy you to take your walks and seats in public view. Alas! there is no help for it among the Alps. There are no recesses, as in Gorbio Valley by the oil-mill; no sacred solitude of olive gardens on the Roccabruna-road; 243 no nook upon St. Martin's Cape, haunted by the voice of breakers, and fragrant with the three-fold sweetness of the rosemary and the sea-pines and the sea.

For this publicity there is no cure, and no alleviation; but the storms of which you will complain so bitterly while they endure, chequer and by their contrast brighten the sameness of the fair-weather scenes. When sun and storm contend together — when the thick clouds are broken up and pierced by arrows of golden daylight — there will be startling rearrangements and transfigurations of the mountain summits. A sun-dazzling spire of alp hangs suspended in mid-sky among awful glooms and blackness; or perhaps the edge of some great mountain shoulder will be designed in living gold, and appear for the duration of a glance bright like a constellation, and alone "in the unapparent." You may think you know the figure of these hills; but when they are thus revealed, they belong no longer to the things of earth — meteors we should rather call them, appearances of sun and air that endure but for a moment and return no more. Other variations are more lasting, as when, for instance, heavy and wet snow has fallen through some windless hours, and the thin, spiry mountain pine-trees stand each stock-still and loaded with a shining burthen. You may drive through a forest so disguised, the tongue-tied torrent struggling silently in the cleft of the ravine, and all still except the jingle of the sleigh bells, and you shall fancy yourself in some untrodden northern territory — Lapland, Labrador, or Alaska.

Or, possibly, you arise very early in the morning; totter down-stairs in a state of somnambulism; take the simulacrum of a meal by the glimmer of one lamp in the deserted coffee-room; and find yourself by seven o’clock outside in a belated moonlight and a freezing chill. The mail sleigh takes you up and carries you on, and you reach the top of the ascent in the first hour of the day. To trace the fires of the sunrise as they pass from peak to peak, to see the unlit tree-tops stand out soberly against the lighted sky, 244 to be for twenty minutes in a wonderland of clear, fading shadows, disappearing vapours, solemn blooms of dawn, hills half glorified already with the day and still half confounded with the greyness of the western heaven — these will seem to repay you for the discomforts of that early start; but as the hour proceeds, and these enchantments vanish, you will find yourself upon the farther side in yet another Alpine valley, snow white and coal black, with such another long-drawn congeries of hamlets and such another senseless watercourse bickering along the foot. You have had your moment; but you have not changed the scene. The mountains are about you like a trap; you cannot foot it up a hillside and behold the sea as a great plain, but live in holes and corners, and can change only one for another.

II

HEALTH AND MOUNTAINS

There has come a change in medical opinion, and a change has followed in the lives of sick folk. A year or two ago and the wounded soldiery of mankind were all shut up together in some basking angle of the Riviera, walking a dusty promenade or sitting in dusty olive-yards within earshot of the interminable and unchanging surf — idle among spiritless idlers not perhaps dying, yet hardly living either, and aspiring, sometimes fiercely, after livelier weather and some vivifying change. These were certainly beautiful places to live in, and the climate was wooing in its softness. Yet there was a later shiver in the sunshine; you were not certain whether you were being wooed; and these mild shores would sometimes seem to you to be the shores of death. There was a lack of a manly element; the air was not reactive; you might write bits of poetry 245 and practise resignation, but you did not feel that here was a good spot to repair your tissue or regain your nerve. And it appears, after all, that there was something just in these appreciations. The invalid is now asked to lodge on wintry Alps; a ruder air shall medicine him; the demon of cold is no longer to be fled from, but bearded in his den. For even Winter has his "dear domestic cave," and in those places where he may be said to dwell for ever tempers his austerities.

Any one who has travelled westward by the great transcontinental railroad of America must remember the joy with which he perceived, after the tedious prairies of Nebraska and across the vast and dismal moorlands of Wyoming, a few snowy mountain summits along the southern sky. It is among these mountains in the new State of colourado that the sick man may find, not merely an alleviation of his ailments, but the possibility of an active life and an honest livelihood. There, no longer as a lounger in a plaid, but as a working farmer, sweating at his work, he may prolong and begin anew his life. Instead of the bath-chair, the spade; instead of the regulated walk, rough journeys in the forest, and the pure, rare air of the open mountains for the miasma of the sick-room — these are the changes offered him, with what promise of pleasure and of self-respect, with what a revolution in all his hopes and terrors, none but an invalid can know. Resignation, the cowardice that apes a kind of courage and that lives in the very air of health resorts, is cast aside at a breath of such a prospect. The man can open the door; he can be up and doing; he can be a kind of a man after all and not merely an invalid.

But it is a far cry to the Rocky Mountains. We cannot all of us go farming in colourado; and there is yet a middle term, which combines the medical benefits of the new system with the moral drawbacks of the old. Again the invalid has to lie aside from life and its wholesome duties; again he has to be an idler among idlers; but this time 246 at a great altitude, far among the mountains, with the snow piled before his door and the frost flowers every morning on his window. The mere fact is tonic to his nerves. His choice of a place of wintering has somehow to his own eyes the air of an act of bold contract; and, since he has wilfully sought low temperatures, he is not so apt to shudder at a touch of chill. He came for that, he looked for it, and he throws it from him with the thought.

A long straight reach of valley, wall-like mountains upon either hand that rise higher and higher and shoot up new summits the higher you climb; a few noble peaks seen even from the valley; a village of hotels; a world of black and white — black pine-woods, clinging to the sides of the valley, and white snow flouring it, and papering it between the pine-woods, and covering all the mountains with a dazzling curd; add a few score invalids marching to and fro upon the snowy road, or skating on the ice-rinks, possibly to music, or sitting under sunshades by the door of the hotel — and you have the larger features of a mountain sanatorium. A certain furious river runs curving down the valley; its pace never varies, it has not a pool for as far as you can follow it; and its unchanging, senseless hurry is strangely tedious to witness. It is a river that a man could grow to hate. Day after day breaks with the rarest gold upon the mountain spires, and creeps, growing and glowing, down into the valley. From end to end the snow reverberates the sunshine; from end to end the air tingles with the light, clear and dry like crystal. Only along the course of the river, but high above it, there hangs far into the noon one waving scarf of vapour. It were hard to fancy a more engaging feature in a landscape; perhaps it is harder to believe that delicate, long-lasting phantom of the atmosphere, a creature of the incontinent stream whose course it follows. By noon the sky is arrayed in an unrivalled pomp of colour — mild and pale and melting in the north, but towards the zenith, dark with an intensity of purple blue. What with this darkness of heaven and the 247 intolerable lustre of the snow, space is reduced again to chaos. An English painter, coming to France late in life, declared with natural anger that “the values were all wrong.” Had he got among the Alps on a bright day he might have lost his reason. And even to any one who has looked at landscape with any care, and in any way through the spectacles of representative art, the scene has a character of insanity. The distant shining mountain peak is here beside your eye; the neighbouring dull-coloured house in comparison is miles away; the summit, which is all of splendid snow, is close at hand; the nigh slopes, which are black with pine-trees, bear it no relation, and might be in another sphere. Here there are none of those delicate gradations, those intimate, misty joinings-on and spreadings-out into the distance, nothing of that art of air and light by which the face of nature explains and veils itself in climes which we may be allowed to think more lovely. A glaring piece of crudity, where everything that is not white is a solecism and defies the judgment of the eyesight; a scene of blinding definition; a parade of daylight, almost scenically vulgar, more than scenically trying, and yet hearty and healthy, making the nerves to tighten and the mouth to smile: such is the winter daytime in the Alps. With the approach of evening all is changed. A mountain will suddenly intercept the sun; a shadow fall upon the valley; in ten minutes the thermometer will drop as many degrees; the peaks that are no longer shone upon dwindle into ghosts; and meanwhile, overhead, if the weather be rightly characteristic of the place, the sky fades towards night through a surprising key of colours. The latest gold leaps from the last mountain. Soon, perhaps, the moon shall rise, and in her gentler light the valley shall be mellowed and misted, and here and there a wisp of silver cloud upon a hilltop, and here and there a warmly glowing window in a house, between fire and starlight, kind and homely in the fields of snow.

But the valley is not seated so high among the clouds 248 to be eternally exempt from changes. The clouds gather, black as ink; the wind bursts rudely in; day after day the mists drive overhead, the snowflakes flutter down in blinding disarray; daily the mail comes in later from the top of the pass; people peer through their windows and foresee no end but an entire seclusion from Europe, and death by gradual dry-rot, each in his indifferent inn; and when at last the storm goes and the sun comes again, behold a world of unpolluted snow, glossy like fur, bright like daylight, a joy to wallowing dogs and cheerful to the souls of men. Or perhaps from across storied and malarious Italy, a wind cunningly winds about the mountains and breaks, warm and unclean, upon our mountain valley. Every nerve is set ajar; the conscience recognises, at a gust, a load of sins and negligences hitherto unknown; and the whole invalid world huddles into its private chambers, and silently recognises the empire of the Föhn.

III

ALPINE DIVERSIONS

There will be no lack of diversion in an Alpine sanatorium. The place is half English, to be sure, the local sheet appearing in double column, text and translation; but it still remains half German; and hence we have a band which is able to play, and a company of actors able, as you will be told, to act. This last you will take on trust, for the players, unlike the local sheet, confine themselves to German; and though at the beginning of winter they come with their wig-boxes to each hotel in turn, long before Christmas they will have given up the English for a bad job. There will follow, perhaps, a skirmish between the two races; the German element seeking, in the interest of their actors, to raise a mysterious item, the *Kur-taxe*, which 249 figures heavily enough already in the weekly bills, the English element stoutly resisting. Meantime in the English hotels home-played farces, *tableaux-vivants*, and even balls enliven the evenings; a charity bazaar sheds genial consternation; Christmas and New Year are solemnised with Pantagruelian dinners, and from time to time the young folks carol and revolve untunefully enough through the figures of a singing quadrille. A magazine club supplies you with everything, from the *Quarterly* to the *Sunday at Home*. Grand tournaments are organised at chess, draughts, billiards, and whist. Once and again wandering artists drop into our mountain valley, coming you know not whence, going you cannot imagine whither, and belonging to every degree in the hierarchy of musical art, from the recognised performer who announces a concert for the evening, to the comic German family or solitary long-haired German baritone, who surprises the guests at dinner-time with songs and a collection. They are all of them good to see; they, at least, are moving; they bring with them the sentiment of the open road; yesterday, perhaps, they were in Tyrol, and next week they will be far in Lombardy, while all we sick folk still simmer in our mountain prison. Some of them, too, are welcome as the flowers in May for their own sake; some of them may have a human voice; some may have that magic which transforms a wooden box into a song-bird, and what we jeeringly call a fiddle into what we mention with respect as a violin. From that grinding lilt, with which the blind man, seeking pence, accompanies the beat of paddle wheels across the ferry, there is surely a difference rather of kind than of degree to that unearthly voice of singing that bewails and praises the destiny of man at the touch of the true virtuoso. Even that you may perhaps enjoy; and if you do so you will own it impossible to enjoy it more keenly than here, *im Schnee der Alpen*. A hyacinth in a pot, a handful of primroses packed in moss, or a piece of music by some one who knows the way to the heart of a violin, are things 250 that, in this invariable sameness of the snows and frosty air, surprise you like an adventure. It is droll, moreover, to compare the respect with which the invalids attend a concert, and the ready contempt with which they greet the dinner-time performers. Singing which they would hear with real enthusiasm — possibly with tears — from a corner of a drawing-room, is listened to with laughter when it is offered by an unknown professional and no money has been taken at the door.

Of skating little need be said; in so snowy a climate the rinks must be intelligently managed; their mismanagement will lead to many days of vexation and some petty quarrelling, but when all goes well, it is certainly curious, and perhaps rather unsafe, for the invalid to skate under a burning sun, and walk back to his hotel in a sweat, through long tracts of glare and passages of freezing shadow. But the peculiar outdoor sport of this district is tobogganing. A Scotsman may remember the low flat board, with the front wheels on a pivot, which was called a *hurlie*; he may remember this contrivance, laden with boys, as, laboriously started, it ran rattling down the brae, and was, now successfully, now unsuccessfully, steered round the corner at the foot; he may remember scented summer evenings passed in this diversion, and many a grazed skin, bloody cockscomb, and neglected lesson. The toboggan is to the hurlie what the sled is to the carriage; it is a hurlie upon runners; and if for a grating road you substitute a long declivity of beaten snow, you can imagine the giddy career of the tobogganist. The correct position is to sit; but the fantastic will sometimes sit hindforemost, or dare the descent upon their belly or their back. A few steer with a pair of pointed sticks, but it is more classical to use the feet. If the weight be heavy and the track smooth, the toboggan takes the bit between its teeth; and to steer a couple of full-sized friends in safety requires not only judgment but desperate exertion. On a very steep track, with a keen evening frost, you may have moments almost 251 too appalling to be called enjoyment; the head goes, the world vanishes; your blind steed bounds below your weight; you reach the foot, with all the breath knocked out of your body, jarred and bewildered as though you had just been subjected to a railway accident. Another element of joyful horror is added by the formation of a train; one toboggan being tied to another, perhaps to the number of half a dozen, only the first rider being allowed to steer, and all the rest pledged to put up their feet and follow their leader, with heart in mouth, down the mad descent. This, particularly if the track begins with a headlong plunge, is one of the most exhilarating follies in the world, and the tobogganing invalid is early reconciled to somersaults.

There is all manner of variety in the nature of the tracks, some miles in length, others but a few yards, and yet like some short rivers, furious in their brevity. All degrees of skill and courage and taste may be suited in your neighbourhood. But perhaps the true way to toboggan is alone and at night. First comes the tedious climb, dragging your instrument behind you. Next a long breathing-space, alone with snow and pine-woods, cold, silent, and solemn to the heart. Then you push off; the toboggan fetches away; she begins to feel the hill, to glide, to swim, to gallop. In a breath you are out from under the pine-trees, and a whole heavenful of stars reels and flashes overhead. Then comes a vicious effort; for by this time your wooden steed is speeding like the wind, and you are spinning round a corner, and the whole glittering valley and all the lights in all the great hotels lie for a moment at your feet; and the next you are racing once more in the shadow of the night with close-shut teeth and beating heart. Yet a little while and you will be landed on the high-road by the door of your own hotel. This, in an atmosphere tingling with forty degrees of frost, in a night made luminous with stars and snow, and girt with strange white mountains, teaches the pulse an 252 unaccustomed tune and adds a new excitement to the life of man upon his planet.

IV

THE STIMULATION OF THE ALPS

To any one who should come from a southern sanatorium to the Alps, the row of sun-burned faces round the table would present the first surprise. He would begin by looking for the invalids, and he would lose his pains, for not one out of five of even the bad cases bears the mark of sickness on his face. The plump sunshine from above and its strong reverberation from below colour the skin like an Indian climate; the treatment, which consists mainly of the open air, exposes even the sickliest to tan, and a tableful of invalids comes, in a month or two, to resemble a tableful of hunters. But although he may be thus surprised at the first glance, his astonishment will grow greater, as he experiences the effects of the climate on himself. In many ways it is a trying business to reside upon the Alps: the stomach is exercised, the appetite often languishes; the liver may at times rebel; and because you have come so far from metropolitan advantages, it does not follow that you shall recover. But one thing is undeniable — that in the rare air, clear, cold, and blinding light of Alpine winters, a man takes a certain troubled delight in his existence which can nowhere else be paralleled. He is perhaps no happier, but he is stingingly alive. It does not, perhaps, come out of him in work or exercise, yet he feels an enthusiasm of the blood unknown in more temperate climates. It may not be health, but it is fun.

There is nothing more difficult to communicate on paper than this baseless ardour, this stimulation of the brain, this sterile joyousness of spirits. You wake every morning, see the gold upon the snow-peaks, become filled 253 with courage, and bless God for your prolonged existence. The valleys are but a stride to you; you cast your shoe over the hilltops; your ears and your heart sing; in the words of an unverified quotation from the Scots psalms, you feel yourself fit “on the wings of all the winds” to “come flying all abroad.” Europe and your mind are too narrow for that flood of energy. Yet it is notable that you are hard to root out of your bed; that you start forth, singing, indeed, on your walk, yet are unusually ready to turn home again; that the best of you is volatile; and that although the restlessness remains till night, the strength is early at an end. With all these heady jollities, you are half conscious of an underlying languor in the body; you prove not to be so well as you had fancied; you weary before you have well begun; and though you mount at morning with the lark, that is not precisely a song-bird’s heart that you bring back with you when you return with aching limbs and peevish temper to your inn.

It is hard to say wherein it lies, but this joy of Alpine winters is its own reward. Baseless, in a sense, it is more than worth more permanent improvements. The dream of health is perfect while it lasts; and if, in trying to realise it, you speedily wear out the dear hallucination, still every day, and many times a day, you are conscious of a strength you scarce possess, and a delight in living as merry as it proves to be transient.

The brightness — heaven and earth conspiring to be bright — the levity and quiet of the air; the odd stirring silence — more stirring than a tumult; the snow, the frost, the enchanted landscape: all have their part in the effect and on the memory, "*tous vous tapent sur la tête*"; and yet when you have enumerated all, you have gone no nearer to explain or even to qualify the delicate exhilaration that you feel — delicate, you may say, and yet excessive, greater than can be said in prose, almost greater than an invalid can bear. There is a certain wine of France known in England in some gaseous disguise, but when drunk in 254 the land of its nativity still as a pool, clean as river water, and as heady as verse. It is more than probable that in its noble natural condition this was the very wine of Anjou so beloved by Athos in the "Musketeers." Now, if the reader has ever washed down a liberal second breakfast with the wine in question, and gone forth, on the back of these dilutions, into a sultry, sparkling noontide, he will have felt an influence almost as genial, although strangely grosser, than this fairy titillation of the nerves among the snow and sunshine of the Alps. That also is a mode, we need not say of intoxication, but of insobriety. Thus also a man walks in a strong sunshine of the mind, and follows smiling, insubstantial meditations. And whether he be really so clever or so strong as he supposes, in either case he will enjoy his chimera while it lasts.

The influence of this giddy air displays itself in many secondary ways. A certain sort of laboured pleasantry has already been recognised, and may perhaps have been remarked in these papers, as a sort peculiar to that climate. People utter their judgments with a cannonade of syllables; a big word is as good as a meal to them; and the turn of a phrase goes further than humour or wisdom. By the professional writer many sad vicissitudes have to be undergone. At first he cannot write at all. The heart, it appears, is unequal to the pressure of business, and the brain, left without nourishment, goes into a mild decline. Next, some power of work returns to him, accompanied by jumping headaches. Last, the spring is opened, and there pours at once from his pen a world of blatant, hustling polysyllables, and talk so high as, in the old joke, to be positively offensive in hot weather. He writes it in good faith and with a sense of inspiration; it is only when he comes to read what he has written that surprise and disquiet seize upon his mind. What is he to do, poor man? All his little fishes talk like whales. This yeasty inflation, this stiff and strutting architecture of the sentence has come upon him while he slept; and it is not he, it is the 255 Alps, who are to blame. He is not, perhaps, alone, which somewhat comforts him. Nor is the ill without a remedy. Some day, when the spring returns, he shall go down a little lower in this world, and remember quieter inflections and more modest language. But here, in the meantime, there seems to swim up some outline of a new cerebral hygiene and a good time coming, when experienced advisers shall send a man to the proper measured level for the ode, the biography, or the religious tract; and a nook may be found between the sea and Chimborazo, where Mr. Swinburne shall be able to write more continently, and Mr. Browning somewhat slower.

Is it a return of youth, or is it a congestion of the brain? It is a sort of congestion, perhaps, that leads the invalid, when all goes well, to face the new day with such a bubbling cheerfulness. It is certainly congestion that makes night hideous with visions, all the chambers of a many-storied caravanserai, haunted with vociferous nightmares, and many wakeful people come down late for breakfast in the morning. Upon that theory the cynic may explain the whole affair — exhilaration, nightmares, pomp of tongue and all. But, on the other hand, the peculiar blessedness of boyhood may itself be but a symptom of the same complaint, for the two effects are strangely similar; and the frame of mind of the invalid upon the Alps is a sort of intermittent youth, with periods of lassitude. The fountain of Juventus does not play steadily in these parts; but there it plays, and possibly nowhere else.

STEVENSON AT PLAY

INTRODUCTION BY MR. LLOYD OSBOURNE

In an old note-book, soiled and dog-eared by much travelling, yellow and musty with the long years it had lain hid in a Samoan chest, the present writer came across the mimic war correspondence here presented to the public. The stirring story of these tin-soldier campaigns occupies the greater share of the book, though interspersed with many pages of scattered verse, not a little Gaelic idiom and verb, a half-made will and the chaptering of a novel. This game of tin soldiers, an intricate “Kriegspiel,” involving rules innumerable, prolonged arithmetical calculations, constant measuring with foot-rules, and the throwing of dice, sprang from the humblest beginnings — a row of soldiers on either side and a deadly marble. From such a start it grew in size and complexity until it became mimic war indeed, modelled closely upon real conditions and actual warfare, requiring, on Stevenson’s part, the use of text-books and long conversations with military invalids; on mine, all the pocket-money derived from my publishing ventures as well as a considerable part of my printing stock in trade.

The abiding spirit of the child in Stevenson was seldom shown in more lively fashion than during those days of exile at Davos, where he brought a boy’s eagerness, a man’s intellect, a novelist’s imagination, into the varied business of my holiday hours; the printing press, the toy theatre, the tin soldiers, all engaged his attention. Of these, however, the tin soldiers most took his fancy; and the war game was constantly improved and elaborated, until from a few hours a “war” took weeks to play, and the critical operations in the attic monopolised half our thoughts. This attic was a most chilly and dismal spot, reached by a crazy ladder, and unlit save for a single frosted window; so low at the eaves and so dark that we could seldom stand upright, 260 nor see without a candle. Upon the attic floor a map was roughly drawn in chalks of different colours, with mountains, rivers, towns, bridges, and roads of two classes. Here we would play by the hour, with tingling fingers and stiffening knees, and an intentness, zest, and excitement that I shall never forget. The mimic battalions marched and counter-marched, changed by measured evolutions from column formation into line, with cavalry screens in front and massed supports behind, in the most approved military fashion of to-day. It was war in miniature, even to the making and destruction of bridges, the entrenching of camps, good and bad weather, with corresponding influence on the roads, siege and horse artillery proportionately slow, as compared to the speed of unimpeded foot and proportionately expensive in the upkeep; and an exacting commissariat added to the last touch of verisimilitude. Four men formed the regiment or unit, and our shots were in proportion to our units and amount of ammunition. The troops carried carts of printers' "ems" — twenty "ems" to each cart — and for every shot taken an "em" had to be paid into the base, from which fresh supplies could be slowly drawn in empty carts returned for the purpose. As a large army often contained thirty regiments, consuming a cart and a half of ammunition in every engagement (not to speak of the heavy additional expense of artillery), it will be seen what an important part the commissariat played in the game, and how vital to success became the line of communication to the rear. A single cavalry brigade, if bold and lucky enough, could break the line at the weakest link, and by cutting off the sustenance of a vast army could force it to fall back in the full tide of success. A well-devised flank attack, the plucky destruction of a bridge, or the stubborn defence of a town, might each become a factor in changing the face of the war and materially alter the course of campaigns.

It must not be supposed that the enemy ever knew your precise strength, or that it could divine your intentions by the simple expedient of looking at your side of the attic and counting your regiments. Numerous numbered cards dotted the country wherever the eye might fall; one, perhaps, representing a whole army with supports, another a solitary horseman dragging some ammunition, another nothing but a dummy that might paralyse the efforts of a corps, and overawe it into a ruinous inactivity. To uncover these cards and unmask the forces for which they 261 stood was the duty of the cavalry vedettes, whose movements were governed by an elaborate and most vexatious set of rules. It was necessary to feel your way amongst these alarming pasteboards to obtain an inkling of your opponent's plans, and the first dozen moves were often spent in little less. But even if you were befriended by the dice, and your cavalry broke the enemy's screen and uncovered his front, you would learn nothing more than could reasonably be gleaned with a field-glass. The only result of a daring and costly activity might be such meagre news as "the road is blocked with artillery and infantry in column" or "you can perceive light horse-artillery strongly supported." It was only when the enemy began to take his shots that you would begin to learn the number of his regiments, and even then he often fired less than his entitled share in order to maintain the mystery of his strength.

If the game possessed a weakness, it was the unshaken courage of our troops, who faced the most terrific odds and endured defeat upon defeat with an intrepidity rarely seen on the actual field. An attempt was made to correct this with the dice, but the innovation was so heart-breaking to the loser, and so perpetual a menace to the best-laid plans, that it had perforce to be given up. After two or three dice-box panics our heroes were permitted to resume their normal and unprecedented devotion to their cause, and their generals breathed afresh. There was another defect in our "Kriegspiel": I was so much the better shot that my marksmanship often frustrated the most admirable strategy and the most elaborate of military schemes. It was in vain that we — or rather my opponent — wrestled with the difficulty and tried to find a substitute for the deadly and discriminating pop-gun. It was all of no use. Whatever the missile — sleeve-fink, marble, or button — I was invariably the better shot, and that skill stood me in good stead on many an ensanguined plain, and helped to counteract the inequality between a boy of twelve and a man of mature years. A wise discretion ruled with regard to the *personnel* of the fighting line. Stevenson possessed a horde of particularly chubby cavalrymen, who, when marshalled in close formation at the head of the infantry, could bear unscathed the most accurate and overwhelming fire, and thus shelter their weaker brethren in the rear. This was offset by his "Old Guard," whose unfortunate peculiarity of carrying their weapons at the charge often involved 262 whole regiments in a common ruin. On my side there was a multitude of flimsy Swiss, for whom I trembled whenever they were called to action. These Swiss were so weak upon their legs that the merest breath would mow them down in columns, and so deficient in stamina that they would often fall before they were hurt. Their ranks were burdened, too, with a number of egregious puppets with musical instruments, who never fell without entangling a few of their comrades.

Another improvement that was tried and soon again given up was an effort to match the sickness of actual war. Certain zones were set apart as unwholesome, especially those near great rivers and lakes, and troops unfortunate enough to find themselves in these miasmic plains had to undergo the ordeal of the dice-box. Swiss or Guards, musicians, Arabs, chubby cavalrymen or thin, all had to pay Death's toll in a new and frightful form. But we rather overdid the miasma, so it was abolished by mutual consent.

The war which forms the subject of the present paper was unusual in no respect save that its operations were chronicled from day to day in a public press of Stevenson's imagination, and reported by daring correspondents on the field. Nothing is more eloquent of the man than the particularity and care with which this mimic war correspondence was compiled; the author of the "Child's Garden" had never outgrown his love for childish things, and it is typical of him that, though he mocks us at every turn and loses no occasion to deride the puppets in the play, he is everywhere faithful to the least detail of fact. It must not be supposed that I was privileged to hear these records daily read and thus draw my plans against the morrow; on the contrary, they were sometimes held back until the military news was staled by time or were guardedly communicated with blanks for names and the dead unnumbered. Potty, Pipes, and Piffle were very real to me, and lived like actual people in that dim garret. I can still see them through the mist of years; the formidable General Stevenson, corpulent with solder, a detachable midget who could be mounted upon a fresh steed whenever his last had been trodden under foot, whose frame gave evidence of countless mendings; the emaciated Delafield, with the folded arms, originally a simple artilleryman, but destined to reach the highest honours; Napoleon, with the flaming clothes, whom fate had bound to a very fragile 263 horse; Green, the simple patriot, who took his name from his coat; and the redoubtable Lafayette in blue, alas! with no Washington to help him.

The names of that attic country fall pleasantly upon the ear and brighten the dark and bloody page of war: Scarlet, Glendarule, Sandusky, Mar, Tahema, and Savannah; how sweetly they run! I must except my own (and solitary) contribution to the map, Samuel City, which sounds out of key with these mouthfuls of melody, though none the less an important point. Yallobally I shall always recall with bitterness, for it was there I first felt the thorn of a vindictive press. The reader will see what little cause I had to love the *Yallobally Record*, a scurrilous sheet that often made my heart ache, for all I pretended to laugh and see the humour of its attacks. It was indeed a relief when I learned I might exert my authority and suppress its publication — and even hang the editor — which I did, I fear, with unseemly haste. It will be noticed that the story of the war begins on the tenth day, the earlier moves being without interest save to the combatants themselves, passed as they were in uncovering the cards on either side; and in learning, with more or less success, the forces for which they stood. This was an essential but scarcely stirring branch of tin-soldiering, and has been accordingly unreported as too tedious even for the columns of the *Yallobally Record*. When the veil had been somewhat lifted and the shadowy armies discerned with some precision, the historian takes his pen and awaits the clash of arms.

Lloyd Osbourne

WAR CORRESPONDENCE FROM STEVENSON’S NOTE-BOOK

Glendarule Times. — 10th. *Scarlet.* — ”The advance of the enemy continues along three lines, a light column moving from Tahema on Grierson, and the main body concentrating on Garrard from the Savannah and Yallobally roads. Garrard and Grierson have both been evacuated. A small force, without artillery, is alone in the neighbourhood of Cinnabar, and some of that has fallen back on 264 Glentower by the pass. The brave artillery remains in front of Scarlet, and was reinforced this morning with some ammunition. All day infantry has been moving eastward on Sandusky. The greatest depression prevails.”

Editorial Comment. — General Stevenson may, or may not, be a capable commander. It would be unjust to pronounce in the meantime. Still, the attempt to seize Mar was disastrously miscalculated, and, as we all know, the column has fallen back on Sandusky with cruel loss. Nor is it possible to deny that the attempt to hold Grierson, and keep an army in the west, was idle. Our correspondent at Scarlet mentions the passage of troops moving eastward through that place, and the retreat of another column on Glentower. These are the last wrecks of that Army of the West, from which great things were once expected. With the exception of the Yolo column, which is without guns, all our forces are now concentrated in the province of Sandusky; Blue Mountain Province is particularly deserted, and nothing has been done to check, even for an hour, the advance of our numerous and well-appointed foes.

11th. *Scarlet.* — The horse-artillery returned through Scarlet on the Glendarule road; hideous confusion reigns; were the enemy to fall upon us now, the best opinions regard our position as hopeless. Authentic news has been received of the desertion of Cinnabar.

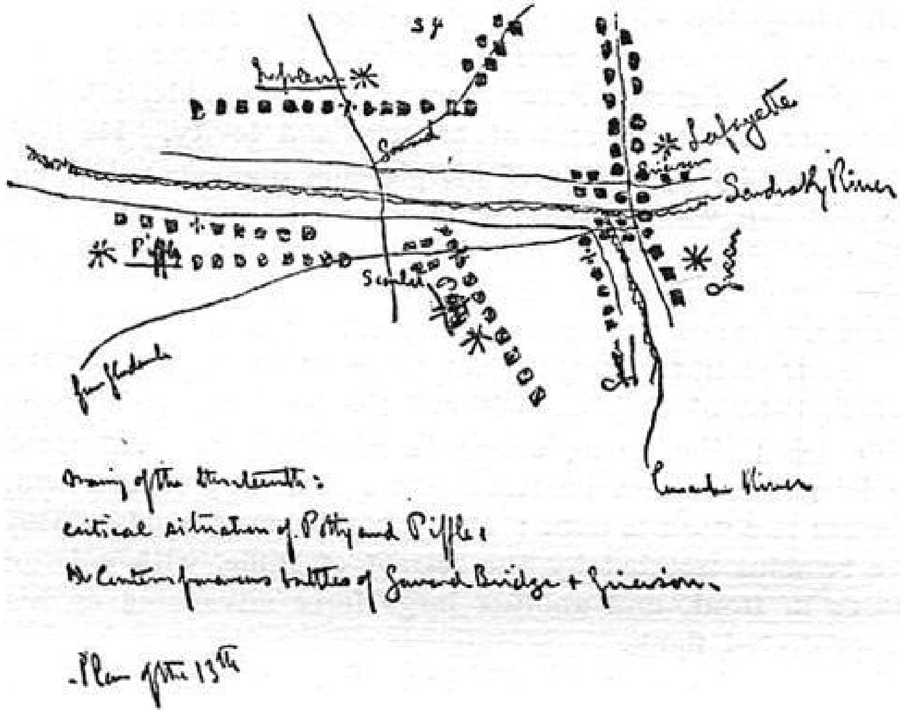
Sandusky. — The enemy has again appeared, threatening Mar, and the column moving to the relief of the Yolo column has stopped in its advance in consequence. General Stevenson moved out a column with artillery, and crushed a flanking party of the enemy’s great centre army on Scarlet, Garrard, and Savannah road; no loss was sustained on our side; the enemy’s loss is officially calculated at four hundred killed or wounded.

Scarlet. — At last the moment has arrived. The enemy, with a strong column of horse and horse-artillery, occupied Grierson this morning. This, with his Army of the Centre moving steadily forward upon Garrard, places all the troops 265 in and around this place in imminent danger of being entirely cut off, or being forced to retreat before overwhelming forces across the Blue Mountains, a course, according to all military men, involving the total destruction of General Potty's force. Piffle's whole corps, with the heavy artillery, continued its descent on the left bank of the Sandusky river, while Potty, dashing through Scarlet at the hand-gallop, and among the cheers of the populace, moved off along the Grierson road, collecting infantry as he moved, and riding himself at the head of the horse-artillery.

Note. — General Potty was an airy, amiable, affected creature, the very soul of bravery and levity. He had risen rapidly by virtue of his pleasing manners; but his application was small, and he lacked self-reliance at the Council Board. Piffle called him a parrot; he returned the compliment by calling Piffle "the hundred-weight of bricks." They were scarce on speaking terms.

Half an hour after, he had driven the fore-guard of the enemy out of Grierson without the loss of a trooper on our side; the enemy's loss is reckoned at 1,600 men. I telegraph at this juncture before returning to the field. So far the work is done; Potty has behaved nobly. But he remains isolated by the retreat of Piffle, with a large force in front, and another large force advancing on his unprotected flank.

Editorial Comment. — We have been successful in two skirmishes, but the situation is felt to be critical, and is by some supposed to be desperate. Stevenson's skirmish on the 11th did not check the advance of the Army of the Centre; it is impossible to predict the result of Potty's success before Grierson. The Yolo column appears to meet with no resistance; but it is terribly committed, and is, it must be remembered, quite helpless for offensive purposes, without the co-operation of Stevenson from Sandusky. How that can be managed, while the enemy hold the pass behind Mar, is more than we can see. Some shrewd, but perhaps too hopeful, critics perceive a deep 266 policy in the inactivity of our troops about Sandusky, and believe that Stevenson is luring on the cautious Osbourne to his ruin. We will hope so; but this does not explain Piffle's senseless counter-marchings around Scarlet, nor the horribly outflanked and unsupported position of Potty on the line of the Cinnabar river. If General Osbourne were a child, we might hope for the best; there is no doubt that he has been careless about Mar and Yolo, and that he was yesterday only saved from a serious disaster by a fluke, and the imperfection of our scout system; but the situation to the west and centre wears a different complexion; there his steady, well-combined advance, carrying all before him, contrasts most favourably with the timid and divided counsels of our Stevensons, Piffles, and Pottys.


Lafayette
Sandusky River
Evening of the thirteenth:
critical situation of Potty and Piffle;
the contemporaneous battles of Sword Bridge + Grierson.
-Plan of the 13th

From the original sketch in Stevenson's Note-book

Yallobally Record. — "That incompetent shuffler, General Osbourne, has again put his foot into it. Blundering 267 into Grierson with a lot of unsupported horse, he has got exactly what he deserved. The whole command was crushed by that wide-awake fellow, Potty, and a lot of guns and ammunition lie ignominiously deserted on our own side of the river. All this through mere chuckle-headed incompetence and the neglect of the most elementary precautions, within a day's march of two magnificent armies, either of which, under any sane, soldierly man, is capable of marching right through to Glendarule.

"This is the last scandal. Yesterday, it was a whole regiment cut off between the Garrard road and the Sandusky river, and cut off without firing or being able to fire a single shot in self-defence. It is an open secret that the men behind Mar are starving, and that the whole east and the city of Savannah were within a day of being deserted. How long is this disorganisation to go on? How long is that bloated bondholder to go prancing round on horseback, wall-eyed and muddle-headed, while his men are starved and butchered, and the forces of this great country are at the mercy of clever rogues like Potty, or respectable mediocrities like Stevenson?"

General Piffle's force was, I learn, attacked this morning from across the river by the whole weight of the enemy's centre. Supports were being hurried forward. Ammunition was scarce. A feeling of anxiety, not unmixed with hope, is the rule.

Noon. — I am now back in Scarlet, as being more central to both actions now raging, one along the line of the Sandusky between General Piffle and the Army of the Centre, the other toward Grierson between Potty and the corps of Generals Green and Lafayette. News has come from both quarters. Piffle, who was at one time thought to be overwhelmed, has held his ground on the Sandusky highroad; and by last advices his whole supports had come into line, and he hoped, by a last effort, to carry the day. His losses have been severe; they are estimated at 2,600 killed and wounded; but it appears from the reports 268 of captives that the enemy's losses must amount to 3,000 at least. The fate of the engagement still trembles in the balance. From the battle at Grierson, the news is both encouraging and melancholy. The enemy has once more been driven across the rivers, and even some distance behind the town of Grierson itself on the Tahema road; he has certainly lost 2,400 men, principally horse; but he has succeeded in carrying off his guns and ammunition in the face of our attack, and his immense reserves are close at hand. Both Green and Lafayette are sent wounded to the rear; it is unknown who now commands their column. These successes, necessary as they were felt to be, were somewhat dearly purchased. Two thousand six hundred men are *hors de combat*; and the chivalrous Potty is himself seriously hurt. This has cast a shade of anxiety over our triumph; and though the light column is still pushing its advantage under Lieutenant-General Pipes, it is felt that nothing but a complete success of the main body under Piffle can secure us from the danger of complete investment.

14th. *Scarlet.* — The engagement ended last night by the complete evacuation of Grierson. Pipes cleared the whole country about that town in splendid style, and the army encamped on the field of battle; sadly reduced indeed, but victorious for the moment. The enemy, since their first appearance at Grierson, have lost 4,400 men, and have been beaten decisively back. There is now not a man on our side of the Sandusky; and our loss of 2,600 is serious indeed, but, seeing how much has been accomplished, not excessive. The enemy's horse was cut to pieces.

Piffle slept on the ground that he had held all day. In the afternoon he had once more driven back the head of the enemy's columns, inflicting a further loss of 3,200 killed and wounded at the lowest computation; but the enemy's camp-fires can still be plainly made out with a field-glass, in the same position as the night before. This 269 is scarcely to be called success, although it is certainly not failure.

Sandusky. — All quiet at Sandusky; the army has fallen back into the city, and large reserves are still massed behind.

Editorial Comment. — The battle of Grierson is a distinct success; the enemy, with a heavy loss, have been beaten back to their own side. As to the vital engagement on the Sandusky and the heavy fighting before Yolo, it is plain that we must wait for further news of both. In neither case has any decided advantage crowned our arms, and if we are to judge by the expressions of the commander-in-chief to our Sandusky correspondent, the course of the former still leaves room for the most serious apprehensions. General Potty, we are glad to assure our readers, will be once more in the saddle before many days. It is an odd coincidence that all the principal commanders in the battle of Grierson were at one period or another of the day carried to the rear; and that none of the three is seriously hurt. Green and Lafayette were shot down, it appears, within a few moments of each other. It was reported that they had been having high words as to the reckless advance over the Sandusky, each charging the blame upon the other; but it seems certain that the fault was Lafayette's, who was in chief command, and was present in Grierson itself at the time of the fatal manœuvre. The result would have been crushing, had not General Potty been left for some hours utterly without ammunition; Commissary Scuttlebutt is loudly blamed. To-morrow's news is everywhere awaited with an eagerness approaching to agony.

15th. *Scarlet.* — Late last night, orders reached General Pipes to fall back on this place, where his reserves were diverted to support Piffle, hard-pressed on the Sandusky. This morning the manœuvre was effected in good order, the enemy following us through Grierson and capturing one hundred prisoners. The battle was resumed on the Sandusky with the same fury; and it is still raging as I 270 write. The enemy's Army of the Centre is commanded, as we learn from stragglers, by General Napoleon; they boast of large supports arriving, both from Savannah and Tahema directions. The slaughter is something appalling; the whole of Potty's infantry corps has marched to support Piffle; and as we have now no more men within a day's ride, it is feared the enemy may yet manage to carry Garrard and command the line of the river.

Sandusky. — This morning, General Stevenson marched out of town to the southward on the Savannah and Sandusky road. It was fully expected that he would have mounted the Sandusky river to support Piffle and engage the enemy's Army of the Centre on the flank; and the present manœuvre is loudly criticised. Not only is the integrity of the line of the Sandusky ventured, but Stevenson's own force is now engaged in a most awkward country, with a difficult bridge in front. To add, if possible, to our anxiety, it is reported that General Delafield, in yesterday's engagement, lost 3,200 men, killed and wounded. He held his ground, however, and by the last advices had killed 800 and taken 1,400 prisoners, with which he had fallen back again on Yolo itself. This retrogression, it seems, is in accordance with his original orders: he was either to hold Yolo, or if possible advance on Savannah via Brierly. This last he judged unwise, so that he was obliged to cling to Yolo itself. This also is seriously criticised in the best-informed circles. Osbourne himself is reported to be in Savannah.

Yallobally Record. — ”We have never concealed our opinion that Osbourne was a bummer and a scallywag; but the entire collapse of his campaign beats the worst that we imagined possible. We have received, at the same moment, news of Green and Lafayette’s column being beaten ignominiously back again across the Sandusky river and out of Grierson, a place on our own side; and next of the appearance of a large body of troops at Yolo, in the very heart of this great land, where they seem to have played the very devil, taking prisoners by the hundred and marching 271 with arrogant footsteps on the sacred soil of the province of Savannah. General Napoleon, the only commander who has not yet disgraced himself, still fights an uphill battle in the centre, inflicting terrific losses and upholding the honour of his country single-handed. The infamous Osbourne is shaking in his spectacles at Savannah. He was roundly taken to task by a public-spirited reporter, and babbled meaningless excuses; he did not know, he said, that the force now falling in on us at Yolo was so large. It was his business to know. What is he paid for? That force has been ten days at least turning the east of the Mar Mountains, a week at least on our own side of the frontier. Where were Osbourne’s wits? Will it be believed, the column at Lone Bluff is again short of ammunition? This old man of the sea, whom all the world knows to be an ass and whom we can prove to be a coward, is apparently a peculator also. If we were to die to-morrow, the word Osbourne would be found engraven backside foremost on our hearts.”

Note. *The Tergiversation of the Army of the West.* — The delay of the Army of the West, and the timorous counsels of Green and Lafayette, were the salvation of Potty, Pipes, and Piffle. This is the third time we hear of this great army crossing the river. It never should have left hold. Lafayette had an overwhelming force at his back; and with a little firmness, a little obstinacy even, he might have swallowed up the thin lines opposed to him. On this day, the 16th, when we hear of his leaving Grierson for the third time, his headquarters should have been in Scarlet, and his guns should have enfiladed the weak posts of Piffle.

Sandusky. Noon. — Great gloom here. As everyone predicted, Stevenson has already lost 600 men in the marshes at the mouth of the Sandusky, men simply sacrificed. His wilful conduct in not mounting the river, following on his melancholy defeat before Mar, and his long and fatal hesitation as to the Armies of the West and

Centre, fill 272 up the measure of his incapacity. His uncontrolled temper and undisguised incivility, not only to the Press, but to fellow-soldiers of the stamp of Piffle, have alienated from him even the sympathy that sometimes improperly consoles demerit.

Editorial. — We leave our correspondents to speak for themselves, reserving our judgment with a heavy heart. Piffle has the sympathy of the nation.

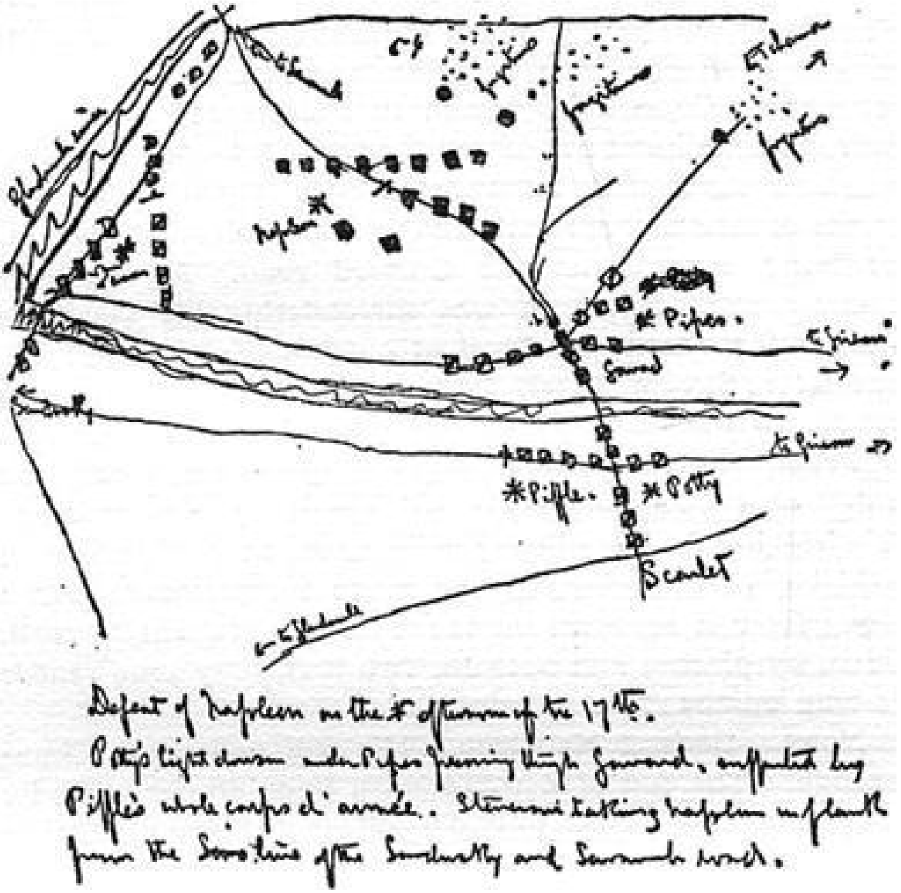
Scarlet. 9 P.M. — The attack has ceased. Napoleon is moving off southward. Our fellows smartly pursued and cut off 1,600 men; in spreading along the other side of the Sandusky they fell on a flanking column of the enemy's Army of the West and sent it to the right-about with a loss of 800 left upon the field. This shows how perilously near to a junction these two formidable armies were, and should increase our joy at Napoleon's retreat. That movement is variously explained, but many suppose it is due to some advance from Sandusky.

*Sandusky.*8 P.M. — Stevenson this afternoon occupied the angle between the Glendarule and the Sandusky; his guns command the Garrard and Savannah highroad, the only line of retreat for General Napoleon's guns, and he has already hopelessly defeated and scattered a strong body of supports advancing from Savannah to the aid of that commander. The enemy lost 1,600 men; it is thought that this success and Stevenson's present position involve the complete destruction or the surrender of the enemy's Army of the Centre. The enemy have retired from the passes behind Mar; but it is thought they have moved too late to save Savannah. Pleasant news from Colonel Delafield, who, with a loss of 600, has destroyed thrice that number of the enemy before Yolo.

17th. *Scarlet.* — The enemy turned last night, inflicting losses on the combined forces of Generals Pipes and Piffle, amounting together to 1,600 men. But his retreat still continues, harassed by our cavalry and guns. The rest of the troops out of Cinnabar have arrived, via Glentower, 273 at the foot of the Blue Mountains. Everyone is in high spirits. Potty has resumed command of his division; I met him half an hour ago at lunch, when he expressed himself delighted with the campaign.

Sandusky. — A great victory must be announced. Today Stevenson passed the Sandusky, and occupied the right bank of the Glendarule and the country in front of Savannah. General Napoleon, in full retreat upon that place, found himself cut off, and, after a desperate struggle, in which 2,600 fell, surrendered with 6,000 men. The wrecks of his army are scattered far and wide, and his guns are lying deserted on the Garrard road. At the very moment while Napoleon was surrendering his sword to General Stevenson, the head of our colours cut off 1,400 men before Savannah, which was under the fire of our guns, and destroyed a convoy on the Mar and Savannah highroad. This completes the picture; the enemy have now only one bridge over the Glendarule not swept by our artillery. Delafield has had another partial success; with a loss of 1,000 he has cut off 1,200 and made 400 prisoners, but a strong force ts reported on the Yolo and Yallobally road, which, by placing him between two fires, may soon render his hold on the Yolo untenable.

Note. — General Napoleon. His real name was Clamborough. The son of a well-known linen-draper in Yolo, he was educated at the military college of Savannah. His chief fault was an overwhelming vanity, which betrayed itself in his unfortunate assumption of a pseudonym, and in the gorgeous Oriental costumes by which he rendered himself conspicuous and absurd. He received early warning of Stevenson's advance from Sandusky, but refused to be advised, and did not begin to retreat until his army was already circumvented. A characteristic anecdote is told of the surrender. "General," said Napoleon to his captor, "you have to-day immortalised your name." "Sir," returned Stevenson, whose brutality of manner was already proverbial, "if you had taken as much trouble to direct 274 your army as your tailor to make your clothes, our positions might have been reversed."


Pifer.
Savannah
Potty
Piffle.
Scarlet
Sandusky
fugitives
Defeat of Napoleon on the afternoon of the 17th.
Potty's light division under Pifer pressing through Savannah, supported by Piffle's whole corps d'armée. Stevenson taking Napoleon in flank from the [illegible] line of the Sandusky and Savannah road.

From the original sketch in Stevenson's Note-book

Editorial Comment. — Unlike many others, we have never lost confidence in General Stevenson; indeed, as our readers may remember, we have always upheld him as a capable, even a great commander. Some little ruffle at Scarlet did occur, but it was, no doubt, chargeable to the hasty Potty; and now, by one of the finest manœuvres on record, the head general of our victorious armies has justified our most hopeful prophecies and aspirations. There is not, perhaps, an officer in the army who would not have chosen the obvious and indecisive move up the 275 Sandusky, which even our correspondent, able as he is, referred to with apparent approval. Had Stevenson done that, the brave enemy who chooses to call himself Napoleon might have been defeated twelve hours earlier, and there would have been less sacrifice of life in the divisions of Potty and the ignorant Piffle. But the enemy's retreat would not have been cut off; his general would not now have been a prisoner in our camp, nor should our cannon, advanced boldly into the country of our foes, thunder against the gates of Savannah and cut off the supplies from the army behind Mar. A glance at the map will show the authority of our position; not a loaf of bread, not an ounce of powder can reach Savannah or the enemy's Army of the East, but it must run the gauntlet of our guns. And this is the result produced by the turning movement at Yolo, General Stevenson's long inactivity in Sandusky, and his advance at last, the one right movement and in the one possible direction.

Yallobally Record. — "The humbug who had the folly and indecency to pick up the name of Napoleon second-hand at a sale of old pledges, has been thrashed and is a prisoner. Except the Army of the West, and the division on the Mar road, which is commanded by an old woman, we have nothing on foot but scattered, ragamuffin regiments. Savannah is under fire; that will teach Osbourne to skulk in cities instead of going to the front with the poor devils whom he butchers by his ignorance and starves with his peculations. What we want to know is, when is Osbourne to be shot?"

Note. — The *Record* editor, a man of the name of McGuffog, was subsequently hanged by order of General Osbourne. Public opinion endorsed this act of severity. My great-uncle, Mr. Phelim Settle, was present and saw him with the nightcap on and a file of his journals around his neck; when he was turned off, the applause, according to Mr. Settle, was deafening. He was a man, as the extracts prove, not without a kind of vulgar talent.

Yallobally Evening Herald. — "It would be idle to disguise the fact that the retreat of our Army of the Centre, and the accidental capture of the accomplished soldier whose modesty conceals itself under the pseudonym of Napoleon, have created a slight though baseless feeling of alarm in this city. Nearer the field the troops are quite steady, the inhabitants enthusiastic, and the loyal and indefatigable Osbourne multiplies his bodily presence. The events of yesterday were much exaggerated by some papers, and the publication of one rowdy sheet, suspected of receiving pay from the enemy, has been suspended by an order from headquarters. Our Army of the West still advances triumphantly unresisted into the heart of the enemy's country; the force at Yolo, which is a mere handful and quite without artillery, will probably be rooted out to-morrow. Addresses and congratulations pour in to General Osbourne; subscriptions to the great testimonial Osbourne statue are received at the *Herald* office every day between the hours of 10 and 4."

Abstract of Six Days' Fighting, from the 19th to the 24th, from the Glendarule Times Saturday Special. — "This week has been, on the whole, unimportant; there are few changes in the aspect of the field of war, and perhaps the most striking fact is the collapse of Colonel Delafield's Yolo column. Fourteen hundred killed and eighteen hundred prisoners is assuredly a serious consideration for our small army; yet the good done by that expedition is not wiped away by the present defeat; large reinforcements of troops and much ammunition have been directed into the far east, and the city of Savannah and the enemy's forces in the pass have thus been left without support. Delafield himself has reached Mar, now in our hands, and the cavalry and stores of the expedition, all safe, are close behind him. Yolo is a name that will never be forgotten. Our forces are now thus disposed: Potty, with the brave artillery, lies behind the south-east shoulder of the Blue Mountains, on the Sandusky and Samuel City 277 road; Piffle, with the Army of the Centre, has fallen back into Sandusky itself; while Stevenson still holds the same position across the Sandusky river, his advance to which will constitute his chief claim to celebrity. Savannah was bombarded from the 18th to the 20th, inclusive; 4,000 men fell in its defence. Osbourne himself, directing operations, was seriously wounded and sent to Yallobally; and on the evening of the 20th the city surrendered, only 600 men being found within its walls. A heavy contribution was raised: but the general himself, fearing to expose his communications, remains in the same position and has not even occupied the fallen city.

"In the meantime the army from the pass has been slowly drawing down to the support of Savannah, suffering cruelly at every step. Yesterday (24th) Mar was occupied by a corps of our infantry, who fell on the rear of the retreating enemy, inflicting heavy loss."

Note. — Retreat of the Mar column. The army which so long and so usefully held the passes behind Mar, over the neck of Long Bluff, did not begin to retreat until the enemy had already occupied Mar and begun to engage their outposts. Supplies had already been cut off by the advanced position of Stevenson. The men were short of bread. The roads were heavy; the horses starving. The rear of the column was continually and disastrously engaged with the enemy pouring after. It is perhaps the saddest chapter in the history of the war. My grandmother, Mrs. Hankey (*née* Pillworthy), then a young girl on a mountain farm on the line of the retreat, distinctly remembers giving a soda biscuit, which was greedily received, to Colonel Diggory Jacks, then in command of our division, and lending him an umbrella, which was never returned. This incident, trivial as it may be thought, emphatically depicts the destitution of our brave soldiers.

In the meantime, in the west, the enemy are slowly passing the rivers and advancing with their main body on Scarlet, and with a single corps on Glentower. Cinnabar 278 was occupied on the 21st in the morning, and a heavy contribution raised. The situation may thus be stated: In the centre we are the sole arbiters, commanding the roads and holding a position which can only be described as authoritative. In the east, Delafield's corps has been destroyed; but the enemy's army of the pass, on the other hand, is in a critical position and may, in the course of a few days or so, be forced to lay down its arms. In the west, nothing as yet is decided, and the movement through the Glentower Pass somewhat hampers General Potty's position.

The comparative losses during these days are very encouraging, and compare pleasingly with the cost of the early part of the campaign. The enemy have lost 12,800 men, killed, wounded, and prisoners, as against 4,800 on our side.

Yallobally Herald. — Interview from General Osbourne with a special reporter. — "I met the wounded hero some miles out of Yallobally, still working, even as he walked, and surrounded by messengers from every quarter. After the usual salutations, he inquired what paper I represented, and received the name of the *Herald* with satisfaction. 'It is a decent paper,' he said. 'It does not seek to obstruct a general in the exercise of his discretion.' He spoke hopefully of the west and east, and explained that the collapse of our centre was not so serious as might have been imagined. 'It is unfortunate,' he said, 'but if Green succeeds in his double advance on Glendarule, and if our army can continue to keep up even the show of resistance in the province of Savannah, Stevenson dare not advance upon the capital; that would expose his communications too seriously for such a cautious and often cowardly commander. I call him cowardly,' he added, 'even in the face of the desperate Yolo expedition, for you see he is withdrawing all along the west, and Green, though now in the heart of his country, encounters no resistance.' The General hopes soon to recover; his wound, though annoying, presents no character of gravity."

Note. — General Osbourne's perfect sincerity is doubtful. He must have known that Green was hopelessly short of ammunition. "Unfortunate," as an epithet describing the collapse of the Army of the Centre, is perhaps without parallel in military criticism. It was not unfortunate, it was ruinous. Stevenson was a man of uneven character, whom his own successes rendered timid; this timidity it was that delayed the end; but the war was really over when General Napoleon surrendered his sword on the afternoon of the 17th.

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FAR WEST

A

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for the Young.

BY

SAMUEL OSBOURNE

ILLUSTRATED.

Printed by the Author.

Davos-Platz.

Chapter I.

In this forest we see, in a misty morning, a camp fire! Sitting lazily around it are three men. The oldest is evidently a sailor. The sailor turns to the fellow next to him and says, "blast my eyes if I know where we is." "I's rather think we're in the vecenty of tho Rocky Mount'ins." Remarked the young man.

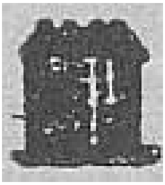
Suddenly the bushes parted. 'WHAT!' they all exclaim, '*Not BLACK EAGLE?*'

Who is Black Eagle? We shall see.

Chapter II.

James P. Drake was a gambler! Not in cards, but *in lost luggage*! 287 In America, all baggage etc. lost on trains and not reclaimed is put up to auction *unopened.*

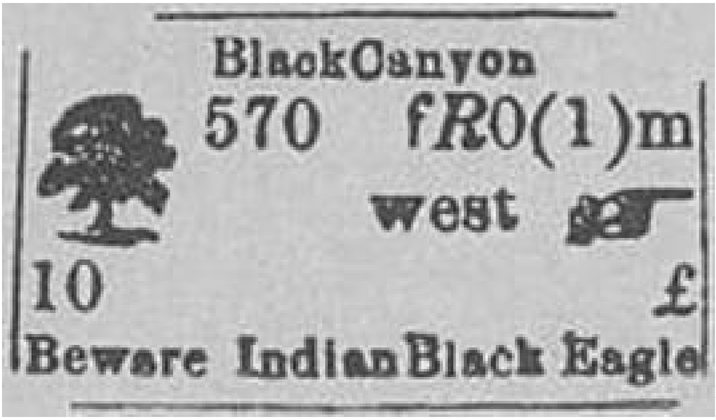
James was one who always expected to find a fortune in some one of these bags.



One day he was at the auction house as usual, when a small and exceedingly light trunk was put up for sale. He bought and opened it.

It was empty! NO! A little bit of paper was in the bottom with this written on it.

IDAHO



BlackCanyon

570 fRO(1)m

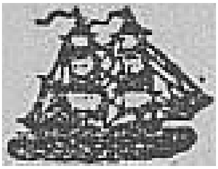
west

10 £

Beware IndianBlack Eagle

Being an intelligent young man he knew that this was *a clue for finding Hidden TREASURE*! Then after a while he made this: *In Black Canyon, Idaho, 570 feet west of some mark, 10 feet below a tree Treasure will be found. Beware of Black Eagle (Indian).* But he forgot the (1).

Chapter III.

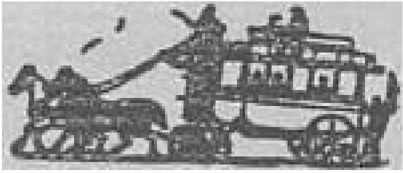


James at once took two friends into his secret: an old sailor (Jack), and a young frontiersman.

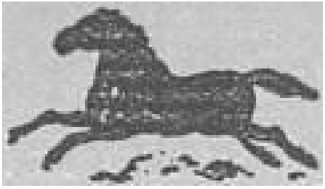
They all agreed that they must start for Black Canyon at once. The frontiersman said he had heard of Black Canyon in Idaho. 289 But who could Black Eagle be?

Chapter IV.

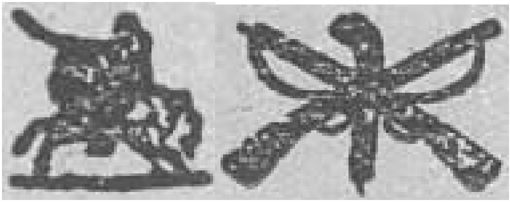
Lost! Certainly lost! Lost in the Far West! The Frontiersman had lost them in a large forest. They had travelled for about a month, first by water (See page 4) then by stage, then by horse.



This was their third day in it. Just after their morning meal the bushes parted.



An Indian stood before them! (See 1st Chap.) He merely said

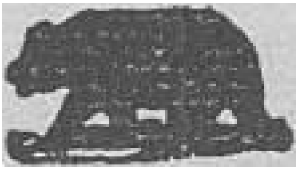


'*COME.*' They take up their arms and do so.Chapter V.

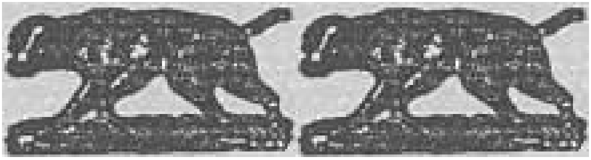
After following him for four hours, he stopped, turned around and said, "Rest, eat you fellows." They did so. In about an hour they started again. After walking ten miles they heard the roaring of an immense cataract. Suddenly they find themselves face to face *with a long deep gorge or canyon. 'Black Canyon,'* they all cry. '*Stop,*' says the Indian. He pushes a stone aside. It uncovers the mouth of a small cave. The Indian struck a light with *two sticks*. They follow him into this cave for about a mile when the cave opens into an immense 291 Grotto. The Indian whistled, *a bear and dog appeared*. "Bring meat, Nero," said the Indian.

The bear at once brought a deer. Which they cooked and ate. Then the Indian said, *"Show me the Treasure clue." His eyes flashed when he saw it.*

Chapter VI.



MIDNIGHT! *The Indian is about to light a fuse to a cask*

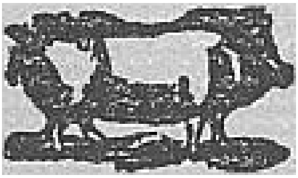


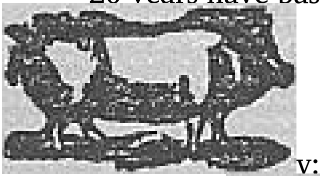
v:shapes="x0000i1291"> of gunpowder! But James sees him and shoots him before he is able to light the fuse.

He ran to the side of the dying Indian who made this confession. "I am not an Indian. 10 years 292 ago I met G. Gidean, a man who found a quantity of gold here. Before be died, he sent that clue to a friend *who never received it*. I knew the gold was here. I have hunted 10 years for it, your clue showed me where IT was," *(here Black Eagle told it to James.) Then Black Eagle DIED*.

Chapter VII.

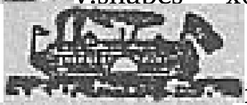
20 years have passed! James is





v:shapes="x0000i1292"> the same as ever.

Jack



is owner of a yacht.

v:shapes="x0000i1294">The Frontiersman owns a large cattle and hog ranch.

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Author of

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by

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Davos

1881

v:shapes="x0000i1295">

Not I.

Some like drink
In a pint pot,
Some like to think;
Some not.
Strong Dutch Cheese,
Old Kentucky Rye,
Some like these;
Not I.

Some like Poe
And others like Scott,
Some like Mrs. Stowe;
Some not.
Some like to laugh,
Some like to cry.
Some like chaff;
Not I.

297

Here, perfect to a wish,
We offer, not a dish,
But just the platter:
A book that’s not a book,
A pamphlet in the look
But not the matter.
I own in disarray;
As to the flowers of May
The frosts of Winter,
To my poetic rage,

The smallness of the page
And of the printer.As seamen on the seas
With song and dance descry
Adown the morning breeze
An islet in the sky:
In Araby the dry,
As o'er the sandy plain
The panting camels cry
To smell the coming rain.
So all things over earth
A common law obey
And rarity and worth
Pass, arm in arm, away;And even so, today,
The printer and the bard,
In pressless Davos, pray
Their sixpenny reward.

The pamphlet here presented
Was planned and printed by
A printer unindent-ed,
A bard whom all decry.The author and the printer,
With various kinds of skill,
Concocted it in Winter
At Davos on the Hill.
They burned the nightly taper
But now the work is ripe
Observe the costly paper,
Remark the perfect type!

Begun FEB ended OCT 1

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A
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By
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Author of
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Printers:
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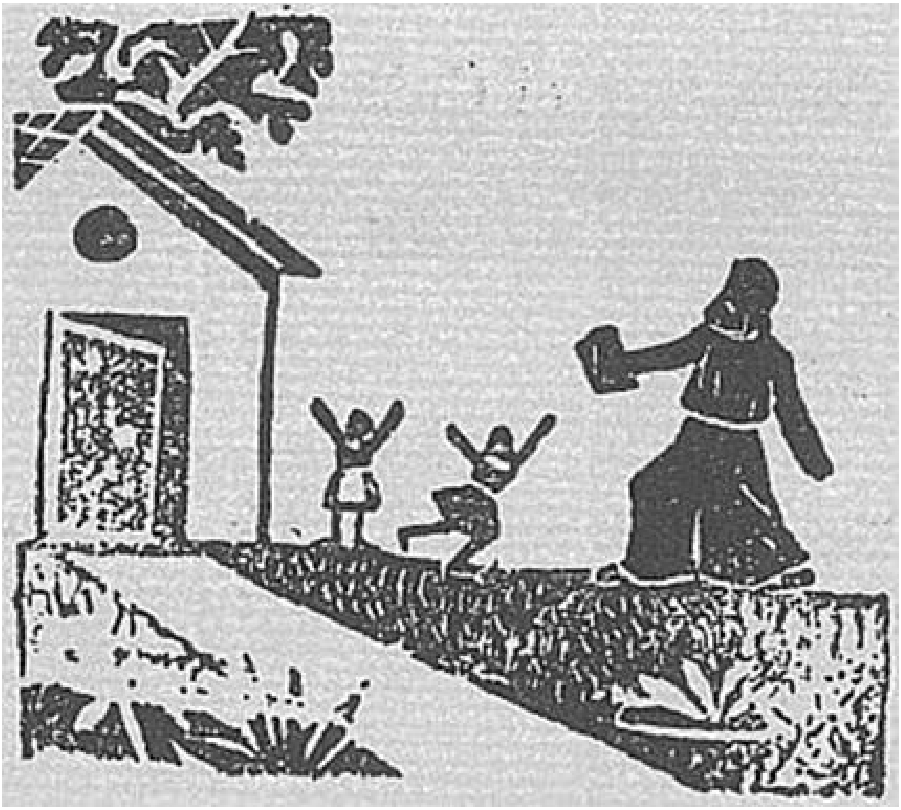
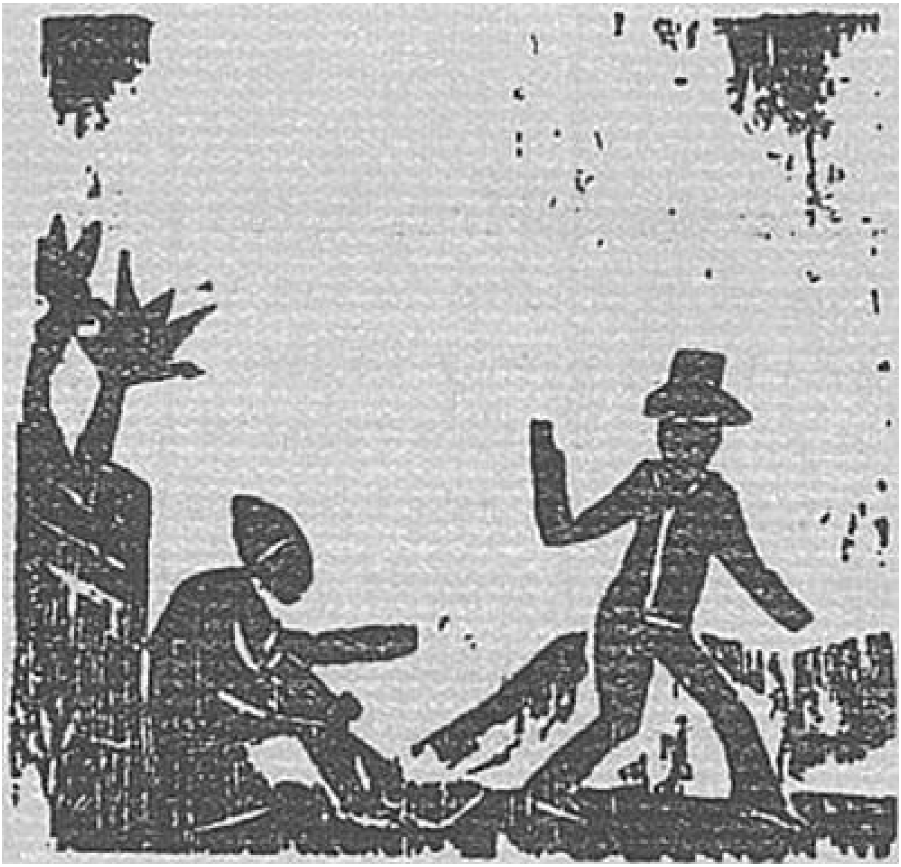
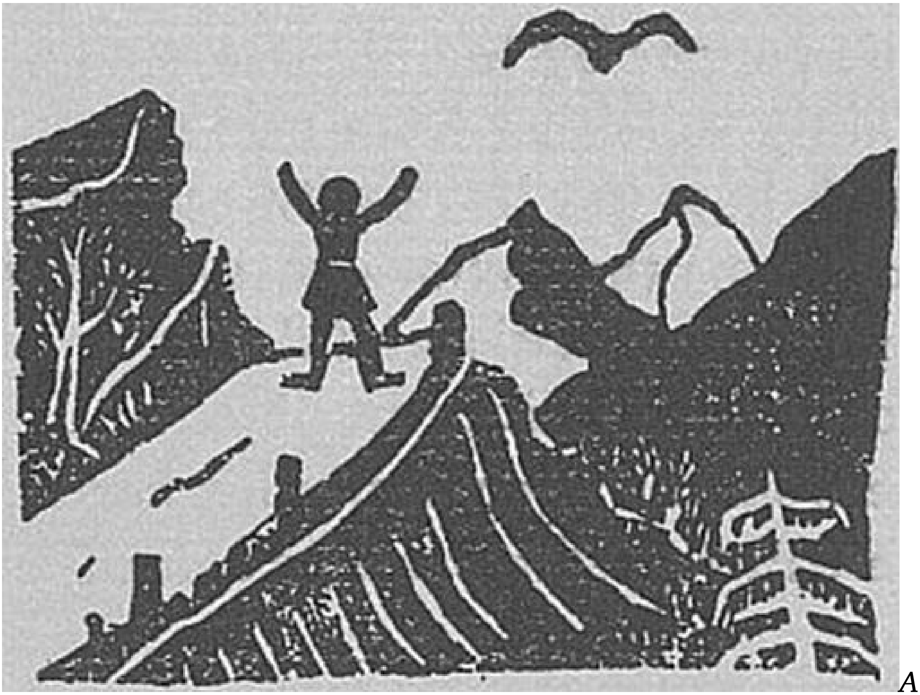


See how the children in the print
Bound on the book to see what’s in’t!
O, like these pretty babes, may you
Seize and *apply* this volume too!
And while your eye upon the cuts
With harmless ardour open and shuts,
Reader, may your immortal mind
To their sage lessons not be blind.



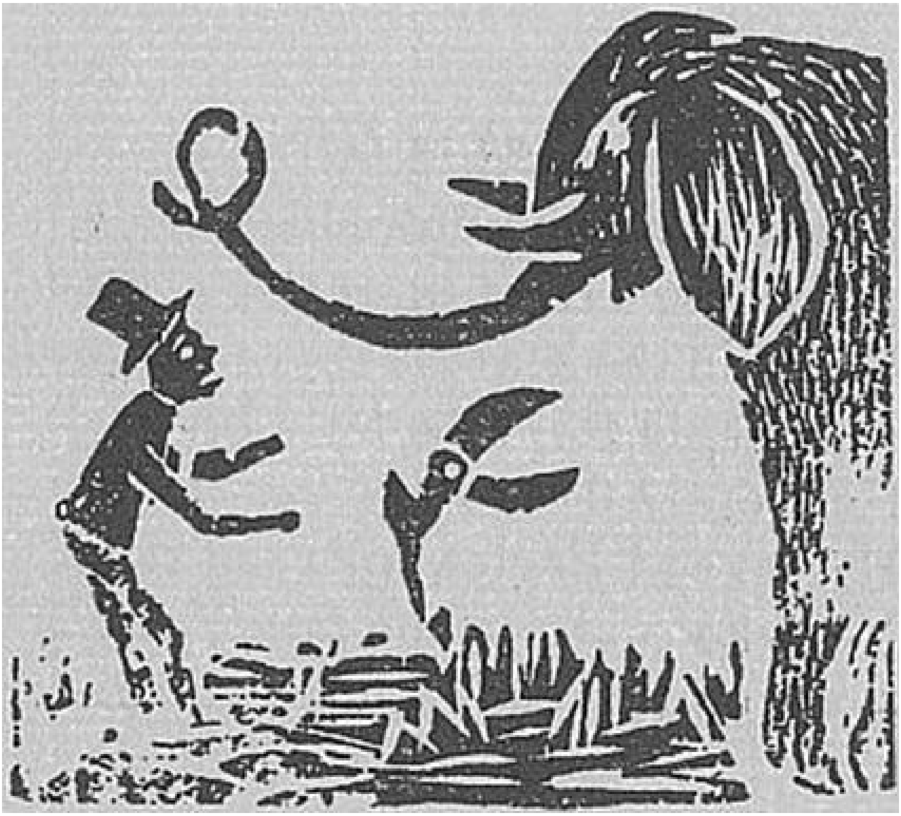
305

Reader, your soul upraise to see,
In yon fair cut designed by me,
The pauper by the highwayside
Vainly soliciting from pride.
Mark how the Beau with easy air
Contemps the anxious rustic’s prayer,
And casting a disdainful eye,
Goes gaily gallivanting by.
He from the poor averts his head....
He will regret it when he’s dead.

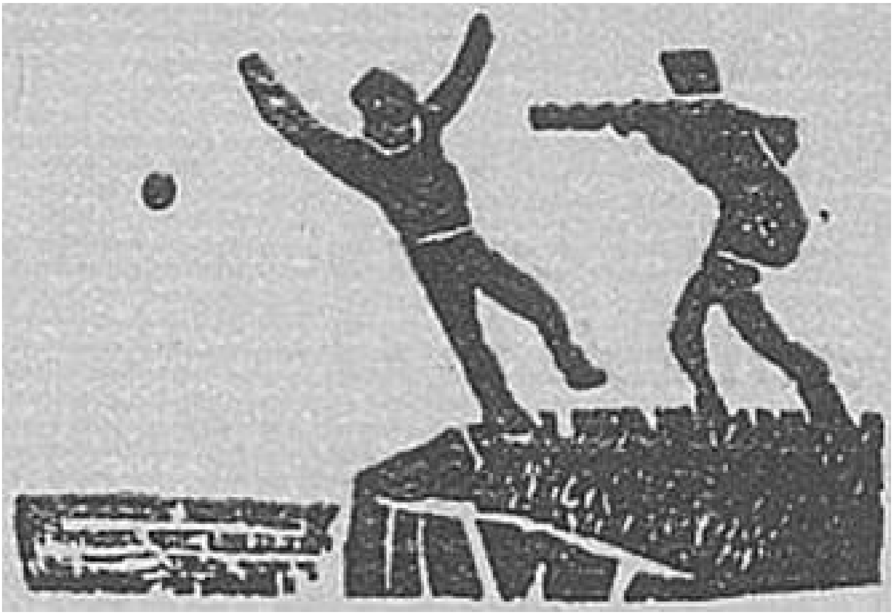


A Peak in Darien.

Broad gazing on untrodden lands,
See where adventurous Cortez stands;
While in the heavens above his head,
The Eagle seeks its daily bread.
How aptly fact to fact replies:
Heroes and Eagles, hills and skies.
Ye, who contemn the fatted slave,
Look on this emblem and be brave



309
See in the print, how moved by whim
Trumpeting Jumbo, great and grim,
Adjusts his trunk, like a cravat,
To noose that individual’s hat.
The sacred Ibis in the distance
Joys to observe his bold resistance.



Mark, printed on the opposing page,
The unfortunate effects of rage.
A man (who might be you or me)
Hurls another into the sea.
Poor soul, his unreflecting act
His future joys will much contract,
And he will spoil his evening toddy
By dwelling on that mangled body.

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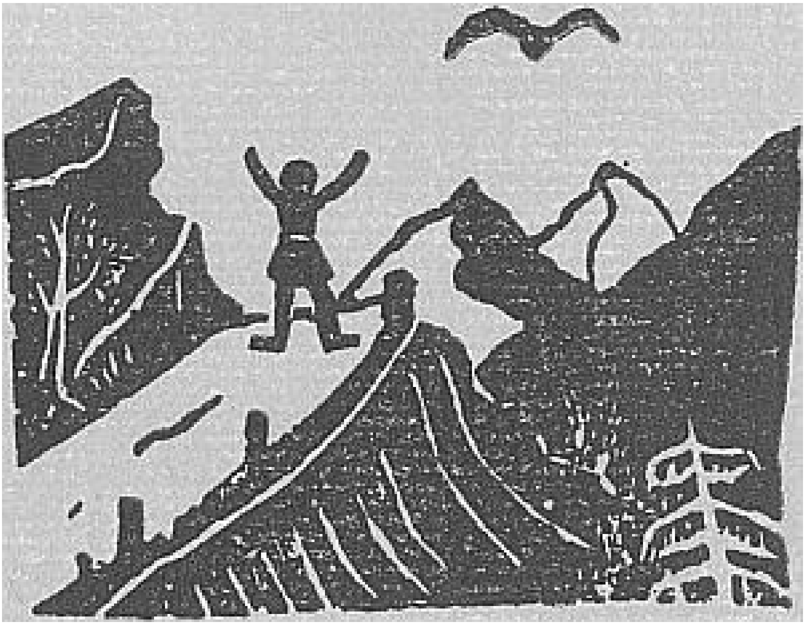

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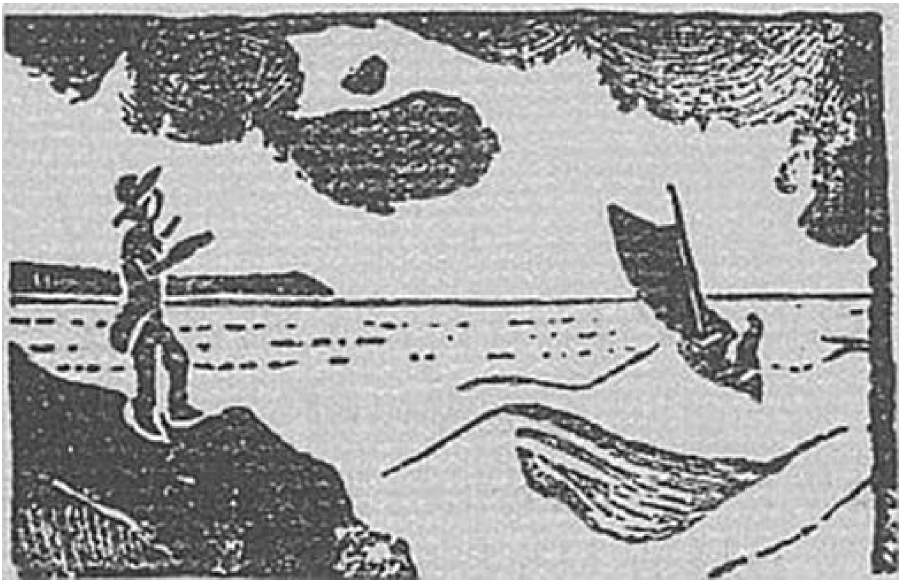
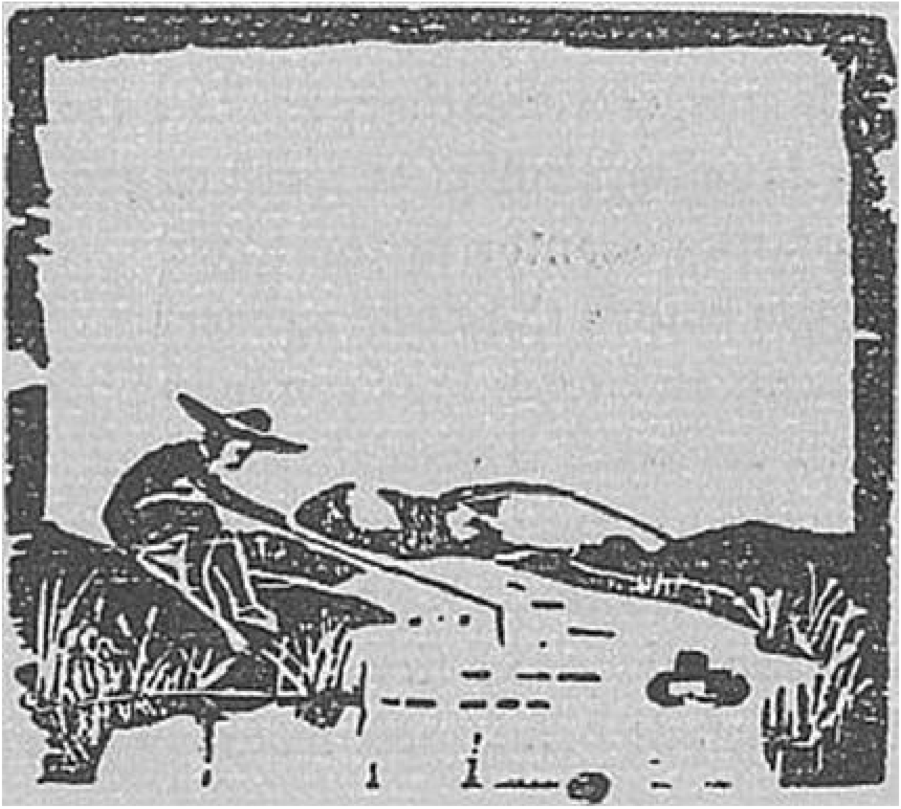


319

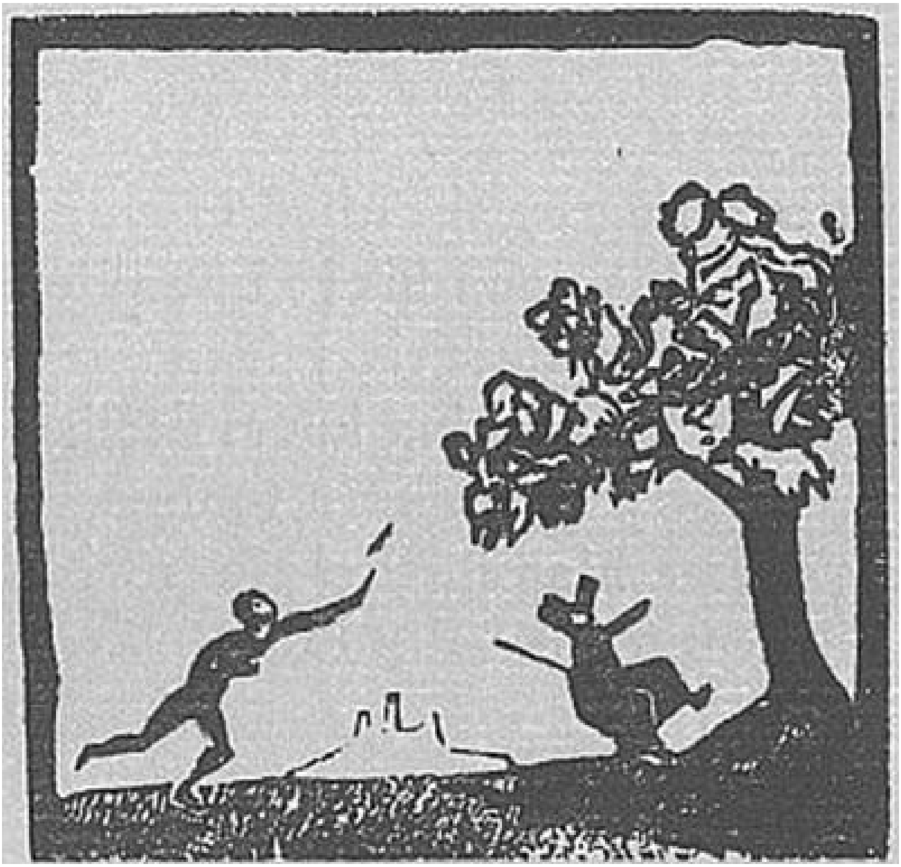
With storms a-weather, rocks a-lee,
The dancing skiff puts forth to sea.
The lone dissenter in the blast
Recoils before the sight aghast.
But she, although the heavens be black,

Holds on upon the starboard tack.
For why? although today she sink
Still safe she sails in printers’ ink,
And though today the seamen drown,
My cut shall hand their memory down.

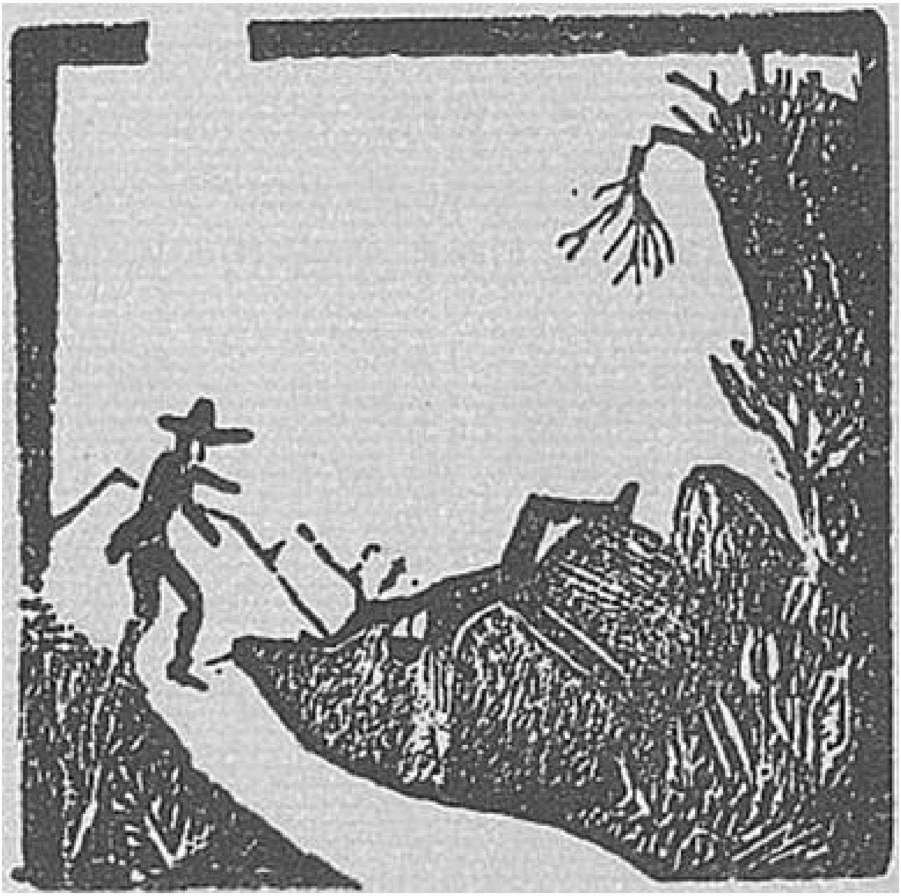


321

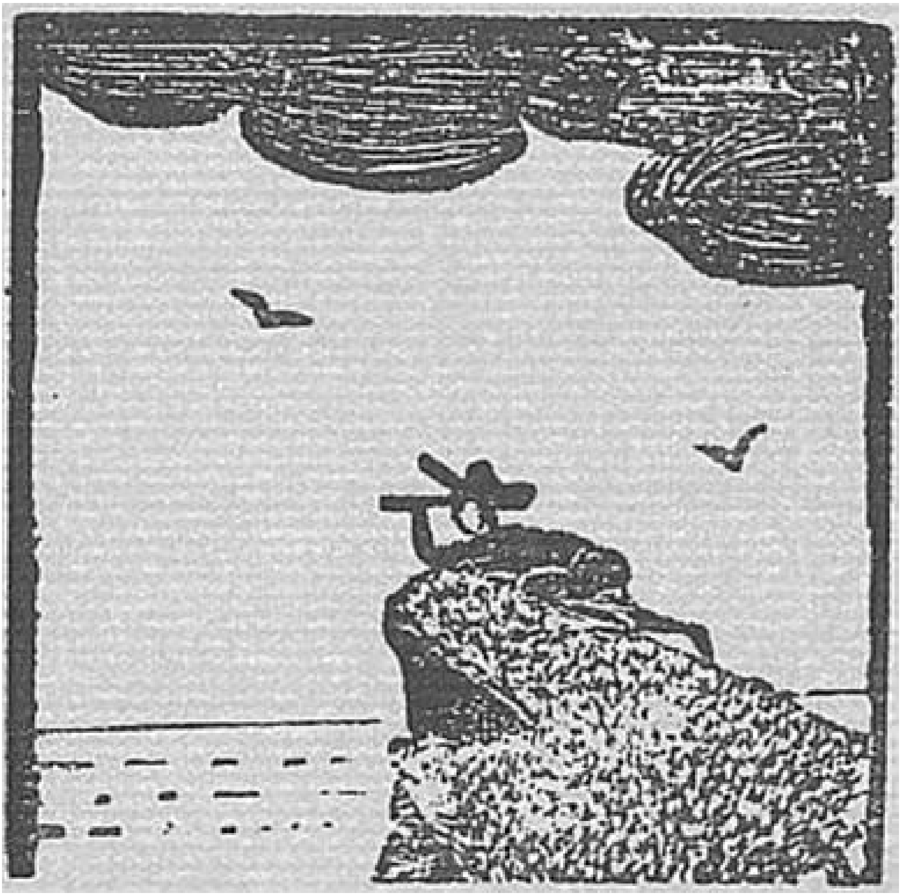
The careful angler chose his nook
At morning by the lilied brook,
And all the noon his rod he plied
By that romantic riverside.
Soon as the evening hours decline
Tranquilly he’ll return to dine,
And breathing forth a pious wish,
Will cram his belly full of fish.



323
The Abbot for a walk went out
A wealthy cleric, very stout,
And Robin has that Abbot stuck
As the red hunter spears the buck.
The djavel or the javelin
Has, you observe, gone bravely in,
And you may hear that weapon whack
Bang through the middle of his back.
Hence we may learn that abbots should
Never go walking in a wood.



The frozen peaks he once explored,
But now he’s dead and by the board.
How better far at home to have stayed
Attended by the parlour maid,
And warmed his knees before the fire
Until the hour when folks retire!
So, if you would be spared to friends.
Do nothing but for business ends.



Industrious pirate! see him sweep
The lonely bosom of the deep,
And daily the horizon scan
From Hatteras or Matapan.
Be sure, before that pirate's old,
He will have made a pot of gold,
And will retire from all his labours
And be respected by his neighbors.
You also scan your life's horizon
For all that you can clap your eyes on.

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329

A Martial Elegy for some lead Soldiers.

For certain soldiers lately dead
Our-reverent dirge shall here be said.
Them, when their martial leader called,
No dread preparative appalled;
But leaden hearted, leaden heeled,
I marked them steadfast in the field
Death grimly sided with the foe,
And smote each leaden hero low.
Proudly they perished one by one:
The dread Pea-cannon's work was done
O not for them the tears we shed,
Consigned to their congenial lead;
But while unmoved their sleep they take,
We mourn for their dear Captain's sake,
For their dear Captain, who shall smart
Both in his pocket and his heart,
Who saw his heros shed their gore
And lacked a shilling to buy more!

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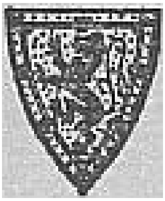
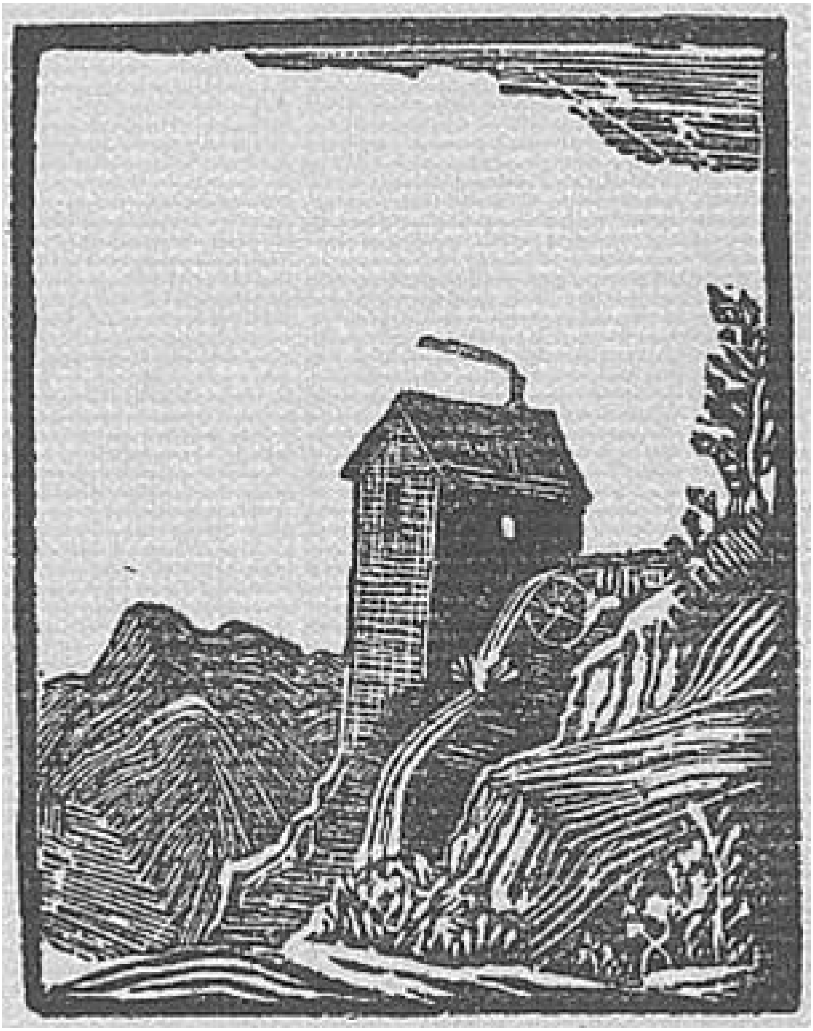
etc.
Illustrated.
Edinburgh
S. L. Osbourne & Company
No. 17 Heriot Row.

[It was only by the kindness of Mr. Crerar of Kingussie that we are able to issue this little work — having allowed us to print with his own press when ours was broken.] Proem.

Unlike the common run of men,
I wield a double power to please,
And use the Graver and the Pen
With equal aptitude and ease.
I move with that illustrious crew,
The ambidextrous Kings of Art;
And every mortal thing I do
Brings ringing money in the mart.
Hence, to the morning hour, the mead,
The forest and the stream perceive
Me wandering as the muses lead — —
Or back returning in the eve.Two muses like two maiden aunts,
The engraving and the singing muse,
Follow, through all my favorite haunts,
My devious traces in the dews.
To guide and cheer me, each attends;
Each speeds my rapid task along;
One to my cuts her ardour lends,
One breathes her magic in my song.

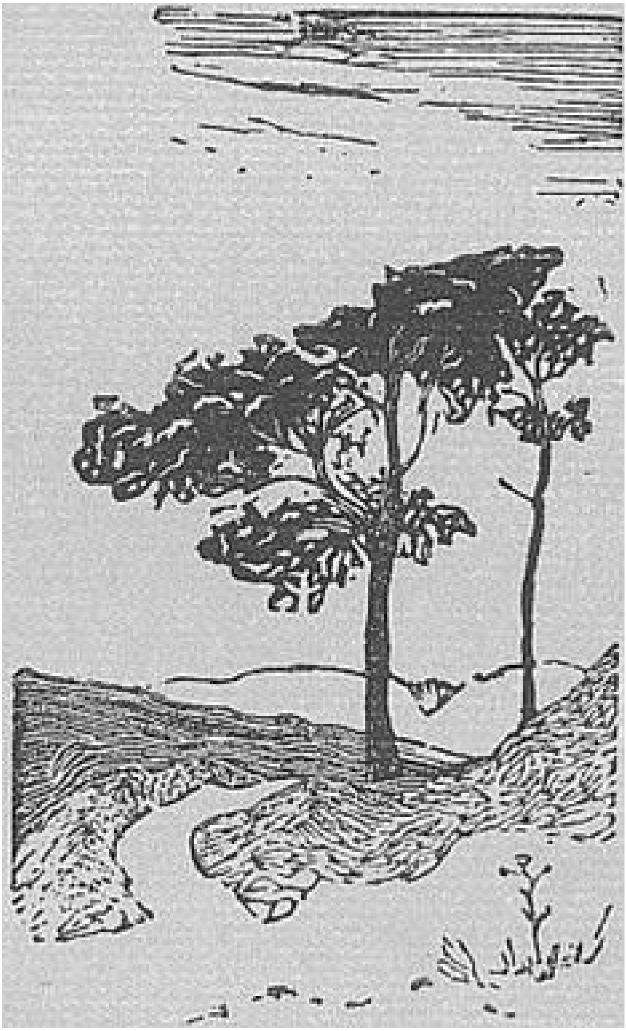




The Precarious Mill.

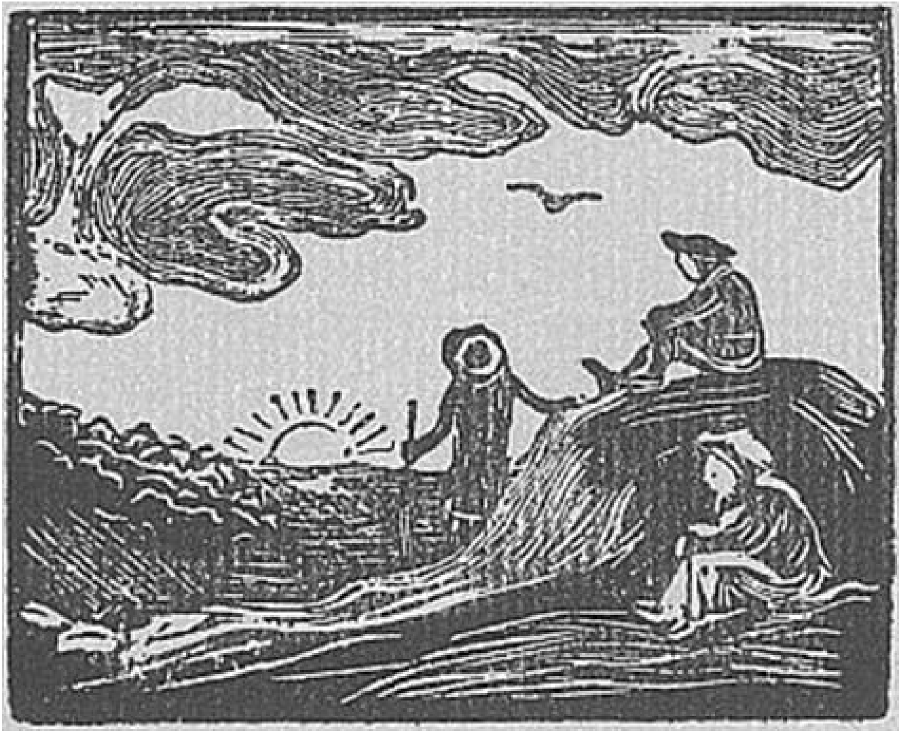
Alone above the stream it stands,
Above the iron hill,
The topsy-turvy, tumble-down,
Yet habitable mill.
Still as the ringing saws advance
To slice the humming deal,
All day the pallid miller hears
The thunder of the wheel.
He hears the river plunge and roar
As roars the angry mob;
He feels the solid building quake,
The trusty timbers throb.All night beside the fire he cowers:
He hears the rafters jar:
O why is he not in a proper house

As decent people are!
The floors are all aslant, he sees,
The doors are all a-jam;
And from the hook above his head
All crooked swings the ham.
“Alas,” he cries and shakes his head,
“I see by every sign,
There soon will be the deuce to pay,
With this estate of mine.”


The Disputatious Pines.

The first pine to the second said:
“My leaves are black, my branches red;
I stand upon this moor of mine,
A hoar, *unconquerable pine*.”
The second sniffed and answered: “Pooh,
I am as good a pine as you.”

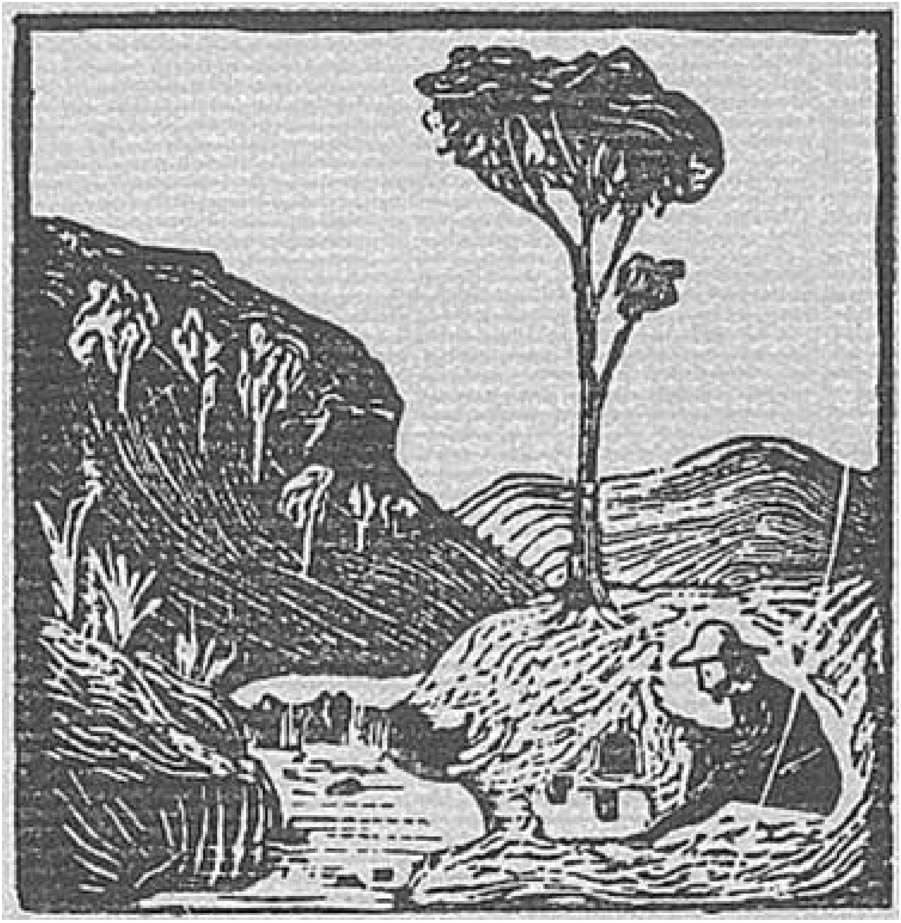
“Discourteous tree” the first replied,
“The tempest in my boughs had cried,
The hunter slumbered in my shade,
A hundred years ere you were made.”The second smiled as he returned:
“I shall be here when you are burned.”
So far dissension ruled the pair,
Each turned on each a frowning air,
When flickering from the bank anigh,
A flight of martens met their eye.
Sometime their course they watched; and then
They nodded off to sleep again.



The Tramps.

Now long enough has day endured,
Or King Apollo Palinured,
Seaward be steers his panting team,
And casts on earth his latest gleam.
But see! the Tramps with jaded eye
Their destined provinces espy.
Long through the hills their way they took,
Long camped beside the mountain brook;
‘Tis over; now with rising hope
They pause upon the downward slope,And as their aching bones

they rest,
Their anxious captain scans the west.
So paused Alaric on the Alps
And ciphered up the Roman scalps.

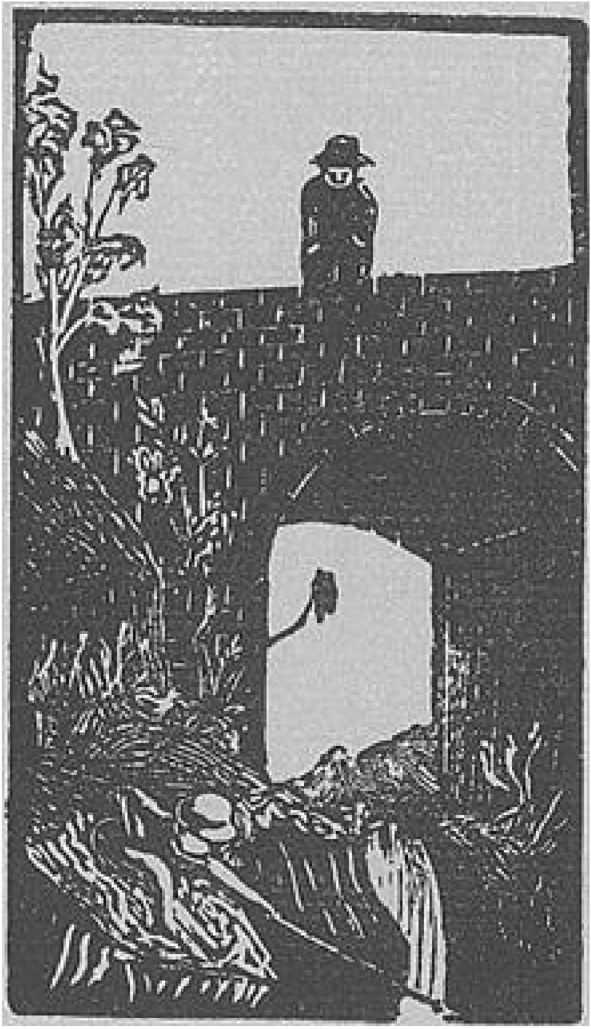


The Foolhardy Geographer.

The howling desert miles around,
The tinkling brook the only sound —
Wearied with all his toils and feats,
The traveller dines on potted meats;
On potted meats and princely wines,
Not wisely but too well he dines.
The brindled Tiger loud may roar,
High may the hovering Vulture soar,
Alas! regardless of them all,
Soon shall the empurpled glutton sprawl —
Soon, in the desert's hushed repose,Shall trumpet tidings through his nose!
Alack, unwise! that nasal song

Shall be the Ounce's dinner-gong!

A blemish in the cut appears;
Alas! it cost both blood and tears.
The glancing graver swerved aside,
Fast flowed the artist's vital tide!
And now the apolegetic bard
Demands indulgence for his pard!

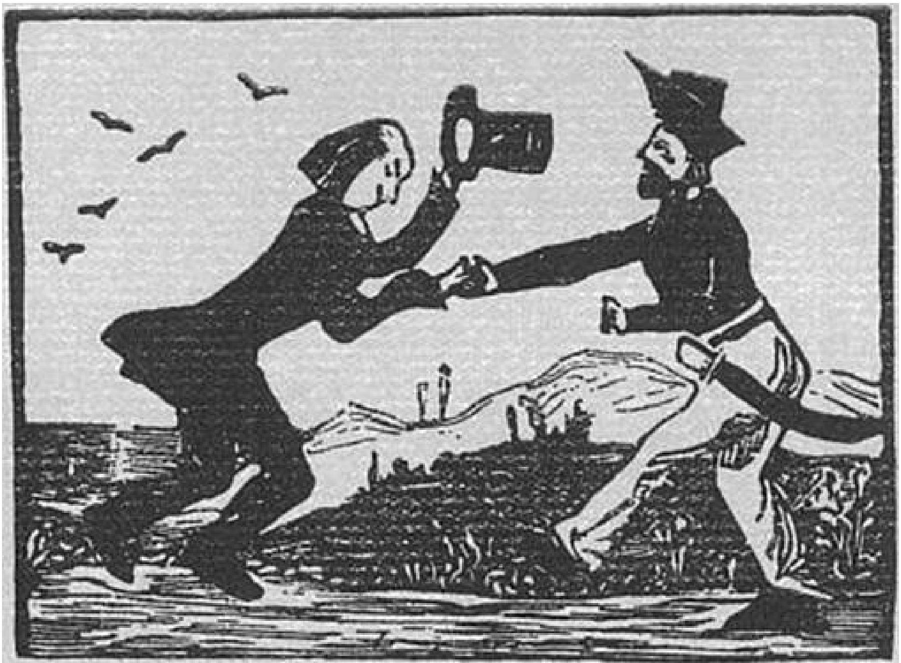


The Angler & the Clown.

The echoing bridge you here may see,
The pouring lynn, the waving tree,
The eager angler fresh from town —
Above, the contumelious clown.
'The angler plies his line and rod,
The clodpole stands with many a nod, —
With many a nod and many a grin,

He sees him cast his engine in.
“What have you caught?” the peasant cries.
“Nothing as yet,” the Fool replies.

MORAL TALES



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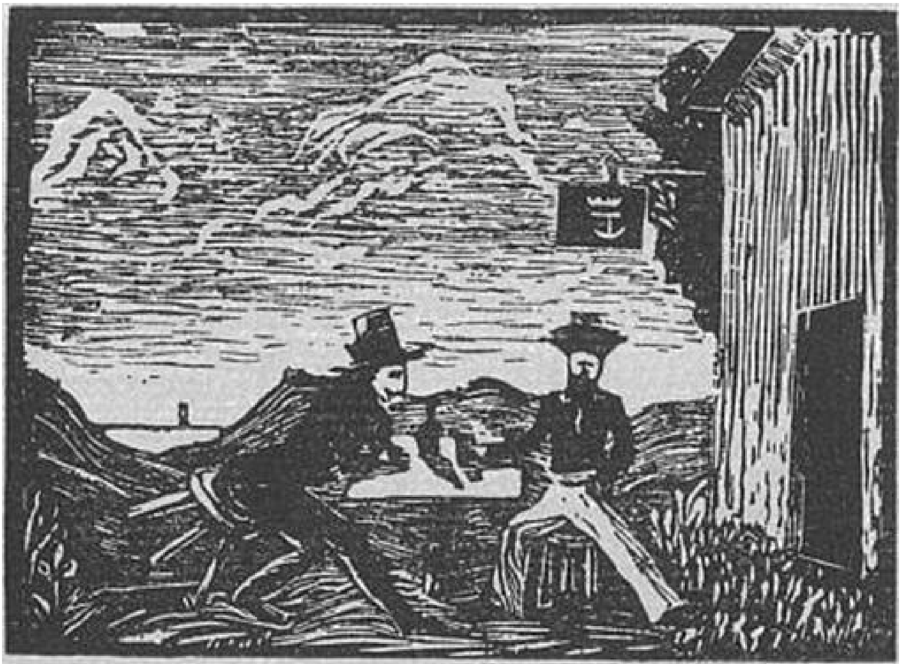
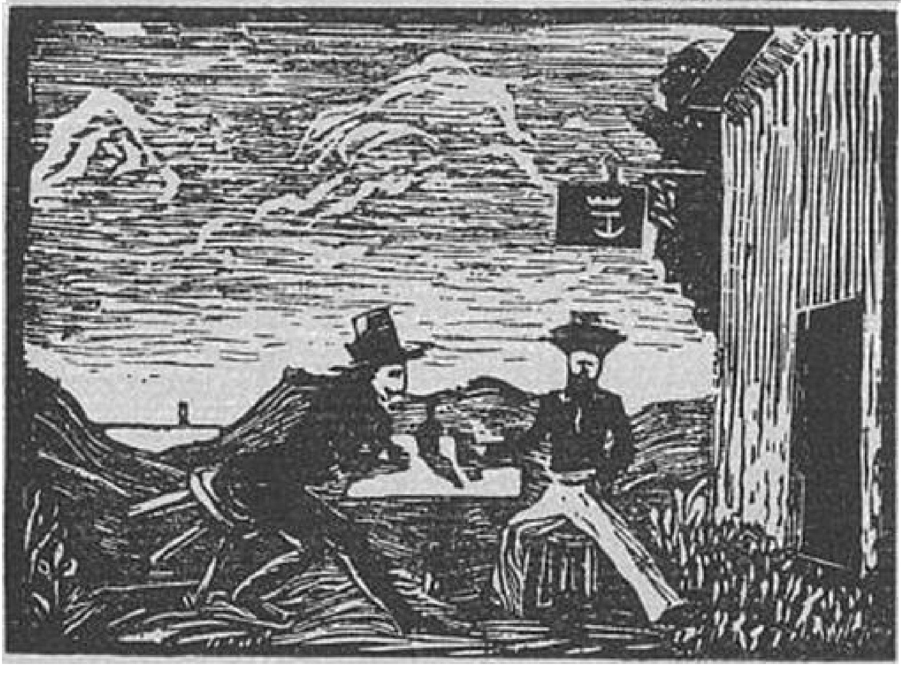
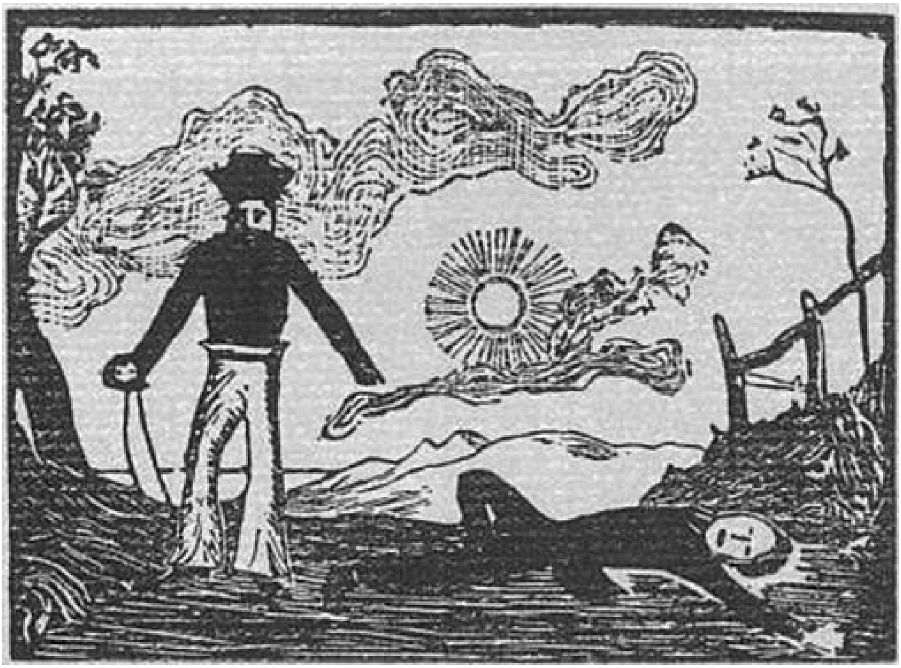
ROB AND BEN

or
The PIRATE and the APOTHECARY.
Scene the First.





or
The PIRATE and the APOTHECARY.
Scene the Second.



Scene the Third. ROBIN AND BEN: OR, THE PIRATE AND THE APOTHECARY

Come lend me an attentive ear
A startling moral tale to hear,
Of Pirate Rob and Chemist Ben,
And different destinies of men.
Deep in the greenest of the vales
That nestle near the coast of Wales,
The heaving main but just in view,
Robin and Ben together grew,
Together worked and played the fool,
Together shunned the Sunday school,
And pulled each other's youthful noses
Around the cots, among the roses.
Together but unlike they grew;
Robin was rough, and through and through
Bold, inconsiderate, and manly,
Like some historic Bruce or Stanley.
Ben had a mean and servile soul,
He robbed not, though he often stole.
He sang on Sunday in the choir,
And tamely capped the passing Squire.At length, intolerant of trammels —

Wild as the wild Bithynian camels,
Wild as the wild sea-eagles — Bob
His widowed dam contrives to rob,
And thus with great originality
Effectuates his personality.
Thenceforth his terror-haunted flight
He follows through the starry night;
And with the early morning breeze,
Behold him on the azure seas.
The master of a trading dandy
Hires Robin for a go of brandy;
And all the happy hills of home
Vanish beyond the fields of foam.
Ben, meanwhile, like a tin reflector,
Attended on the worthy rector;
Opened his eyes and held his breath,
And flattered to the point of death;
And was at last, by that good fairy,
Apprenticed to the Apothecary.
So Ben, while Robin chose to ro
A rising chemist was at home,
Tended his shop with learnéd air,
Watered his drugs and oiled his hair,
And gave advice to the unwary,
Like any sleek apothecary.Meanwhile upon the deep afar
Robin the brave was waging war,
With other tarry desperadoes
About the latitude of Barbadoes.
He knew no touch of craven fear;
His voice was thunder in the cheer;
First, from the main-to’-gallan’ high,
The skulking merchantman to spy —
The first to bound upon the deck,
The last to leave the sinking wreck.
His hand was steel, his word was law,
His mates regarded him with awe.
No pirate in the whole profession
Held a more honourable position.
At length, from years of anxious toil,
Bold Robin seeks his native soil;
Wisely arranges his affairs,
And to his native dale repairs.
The Bristol Swallow sets him down
Beside the well-remembered town.

He sighs, he spits, he marks the scene,
Proudly he treads the village green;
And free from pettiness and rancour,
Takes lodgings at the ‘Crown and Anchor.’
Strange when a man so great and good,
Once more in his home-country stood,
Strange that the sordid clowns should show
A dull desire to have him go.His clinging breeks, his tarry hat,
The way he swore, the way he spat,
A certain quality of manner,
Alarming like the pirate’s banner —
Something that did not seem to suit all —
Something, O call it bluff, not brutal —
Something at least, howe’er it’s called,
Made Robin generally black-balled.
His soul was wounded; proud and glum,
Alone he sat and swigged his rum,
And took a great distaste to men
Till he encountered Chemist Ben.
Bright was the hour and bright the day,
That threw them in each other’s way;
Glad were their mutual salutations,
Long their respective revelations.
Before the inn in sultry weather
They talked of this and that together;
Ben told the tale of his indentures,
And Rob narrated his adventures.
Last, as the point of greatest weight,
The pair contrasted their estate,
And Robin, like a boastful sailor,
Despised the other for a tailor.
‘See,’ he remarked, ‘with envy, see
A man with such a fist as me!
Bearded and ringed, and big, and brown,
I sit and toss the stingo down.Hear the gold jingle in my bag —
All won beneath the Jolly Flag!’
Ben moralised and shook his head:
‘You wanderers earn and eat your bread.
The foe is found, beats or is beaten,
And either how, the wage is eaten.
And after all your pully-hauly
Your proceeds look uncommon small-ly.
You had done better here to tarry
Apprentice to the Apothecary.

The silent pirates of the shore
Eat and sleep soft, and pocket more
Than any red, robustious ranger
Who picks his farthings hot from danger.
You clank your guineas on the board;
Mine are with several bankers stored.
You reckon riches on your digits,
You dash in chase of Sals and Bridgets,
You drink and risk delirium tremens,
Your whole estate a common seaman’s!
Regard your friend and school companion,
Soon to be wed to Miss Trevanion
(Smooth, honourable, fat and flowery,
With Heaven knows how much land in dowry)
Look at me — am I in good case?
Look at my hands, look at my face;
Look at the cloth of my apparel;
Try me and test me, lock and barrel;And own, to give the devil his due,
I have made more of life than you.
Yet I nor sought nor risked a life;
I shudder at an open knife;
The perilous seas I still avoided
And stuck to land whate’er betided.
I had no gold, no marble quarry,
I was a poor apothecary,
Yet here I stand, at thirty-eight,
A man of an assured estate.’
‘Well,’ answered Robin — ’well, and how?’
The smiling chemist tapped his brow.
‘Rob,’ he replied,’this throbbing brain
Still worked and hankered after gain.
By day and night, to work my will,
It pounded like a powder mill;
And marking how the world went round
A theory of theft it found.
Here is the key to right and wrong:
Steal little but steal all day long;
And this invaluable plan
Marks what is called the Honest Man.
When first I served with Doctor Pill,
My hand was ever in the till.
Now that I am myself a master
My gains come softer still and faster.

As thus: on Wednesday, a maid
Came to me in the way of trade.Her mother, an old farmer’s wife,
Required a drug to save her life.
‘At once, my dear, at once,’ I said,
Patted the child upon the head,
Bade her be still a loving daughter,
And filled the bottle up with water.
‘Well, and the mother?’ Robin cried.
‘O she!’ said Ben, ‘I think she died.’
‘Battle and blood, death and disease,
Upon the tainted Tropic seas —
The attendant sharks that chew the cud —
The abhorred scuppers spouting blood —
The untended dead, the Tropic sun —
The thunder of the murderous gun —
The cut-throat crew — the Captain’s curse —
The tempest blustering worse and worse —
These have I known and these can stand,
But you, I settle out of hand!’
Out flashed the cutlass, down went
Dead and rotten, there and then.

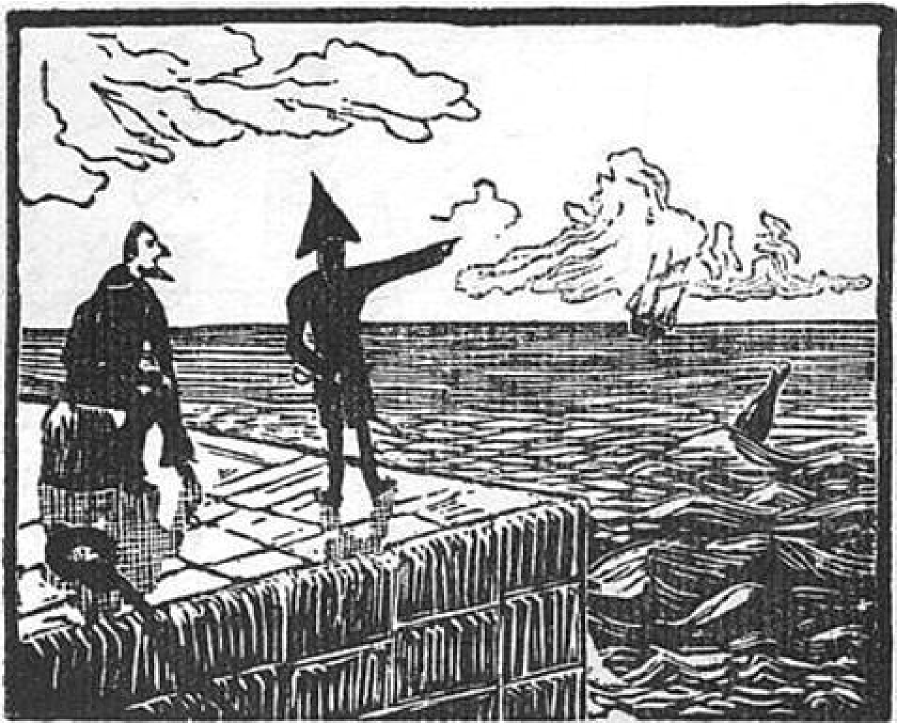
THE BUILDER’S DOOM

In eighteen twenty Deacon Thin
Feu’d the land and fenced it in,
And laid his broad foundations down
About a furlong out of town.
Early and late the work went on.
The carts were toiling ere the dawn;
The mason whistled, the hodman sang;
Early and late the trowels rang;
And Thin himself came day by day
To push the work in every way.
An artful builder, patent king
Of all the local building ring,
Who was there like him in the quarter
For mortifying brick and mortar,
Or pocketing the odd piastre
By substituting lath and plaster?
With plan and two-foot rule in hand,
He by the foreman took his stand,
With boisterous voice, with eagle glance
To stamp upon extravagance.
Far thrift of bricks and greed of guilders,
He was the Buonaparte of Builders.
The foreman, a desponding creature,
Demurred to here and there a feature:
‘For surely, sir — with your permeession —
Bricks here, sir, in the main parteetion…’
The builder goggled, gulped and stared,
The foreman’s services were spared.
Thin would not count among his minions
A man of Wesleyan opinions.
‘Money is money,’ so he said.
‘Crescents are crescents, trade is trade.
Pharaohs and emperors in their seasons
Built, I believe, for different reasons —
Charity, glory, piety, pride —
To pay the men, to please a bride,
To use their stone, to spite their neighbours,
Not for a profit on their labours.
They built to edify or bewilder;
I build because I am a builder.
Crescent and street and square I build,

Plaster and paint and carve and gild.
Around the city see them stand,
These triumphs of my shaping hand,
With bulging walls, with sinking floors,
With shut, impracticable doors,
Fickle and frail in every part,
And rotten to their inmost heart.
There shall the simple tenant find
Death in the falling window-blind,
Death in the pipe, death in the faucit,
Death in the deadly water-closet!
A day is set for all to die:
Caveat emptor! what care I?'
As to Amphion's tuneful kit
Troy rose, with towers encircling it;
As to the Mage's brandished wand
A spiry palace clove the sand;
To Thin's indomitable financing,
That phantom crescent kept advancing.
When first the brazen bells of churches
Called clerk and parson to their perches,
The worshippers of every sect
Already viewed it with respect;
A second Sunday had not gone
Before the roof was rattled on:
And when the fourth was there, behold
The crescent finished, painted, sold!
The stars proceeded in their courses,
Nature with her subversive forces,
Time, too, the iron-toothed and sinewed;
And the edacious years continued.
Thrones rose and fell; and still the crescent,
Unsanative and now senescent,
A plastered skeleton of lath,
Looked forward to a day of wrath.
In the dead night, the groaning timber
Would jar upon the ear of slumber,
And, like Dodona's talking oak,
Of oracles and judgments spoke.
When to the music fingered well
The feet of children lightly fell,
The sire, who dozed by the decanters,
Started, and dreamed of misadventures.
The rotten brick decayed to dust;

The iron was consumed by rust;
Each tabid and perverted mansion
Hung in the article of declension.
So forty, fifty, sixty passed;
Until, when seventy came at last,
The occupant of number three
Called friends to hold a jubilee.
Wild was the night; the charging rack
Had forced the moon upon her back;
The wind piped up a naval ditty;
And the lamps winked through all the city.
Before that house, where lights were shining,
Corpulent feeders, grossly dining,
And jolly clamour, hum and rattle,
Fairly outvoiced the tempest's battle.
As still his moistened lip he fingered,
The envious policeman lingered;
While far the infernal tempest sped,
And shook the country folks in bed,
And tore the trees and tossed the ships,
He lingered and he licked his lips.
Lo, from within, a hush! the host
Briefly expressed the evening's toast;
And lo, before the lips were dry,
The Deacon rising to reply!
'Here in this house which once I built,
Papered and painted, carved and gilt,
And out of which, to my content,
I netted seventy-five per cent.;
Here at this board of jolly neighbours,
I reap the credit of my labours.
These were the days — I will say more —
These were the grand old days of yore!
The builder laboured day and night;
He watched that every brick was right;
The decent men their utmost did;
And the house rose — a pyramid!
These were the days, our provost knows,
When forty streets and crescents rose,
The fruits of my creative noddle,
All more or less upon a model,
Neat and commodious, cheap and dry,
A perfect pleasure to the eye!
I found this quite a country quarter;

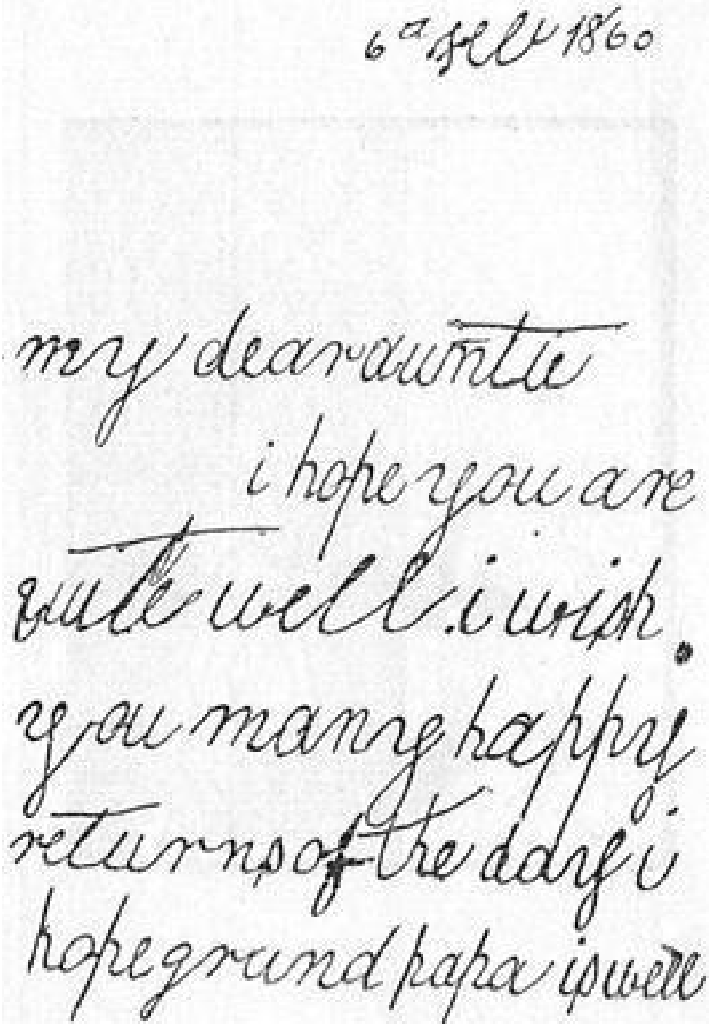
I leave it solid lath and mortar.
In all, I was the single actor —
And am this city’s benefactor!
Since then, alas! both thing and name,
Shoddy across the ocean came —
Shoddy that can the eye bewilder
And makes me blush to meet a builder!
Had this good house, in frame or fixture,
Been tempered by the least admixture
Of that discreditable shoddy,
Should we to-day compound our toddy,
Or gaily marry song and laughter
Below its sempiternal rafter?
Not so!’ the Deacon cried.
The mansion
Had marked his fatuous expansion.
The years were full, the house was fated,
The rotten structure crepitated!
A moment, and the silent guests
Sat pallid as their dinner vests.
A moment more, and root and branch,
That mansion fell in avalanche,
Story on story, floor on floor,
Roof, wall and window, joist and door,
Dead weight of damnable disaster,
A cataclysm of lath and plaster.
Siloam did not choose a sinner —
All were not builders at the dinner.



LORD NELSON AND HIS TAR.

6d Feb 1860

my dear auntie
i hope you are
quite well. i wish
you many happy
returns of the day. i
hope grandpapa is well


6d Feb 1860

my dear auntie
i hope you are
quite well. i wish
you many happy
returns of the day i
hope grand papa is well

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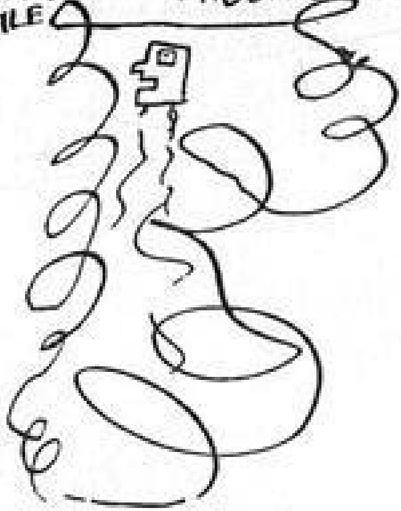
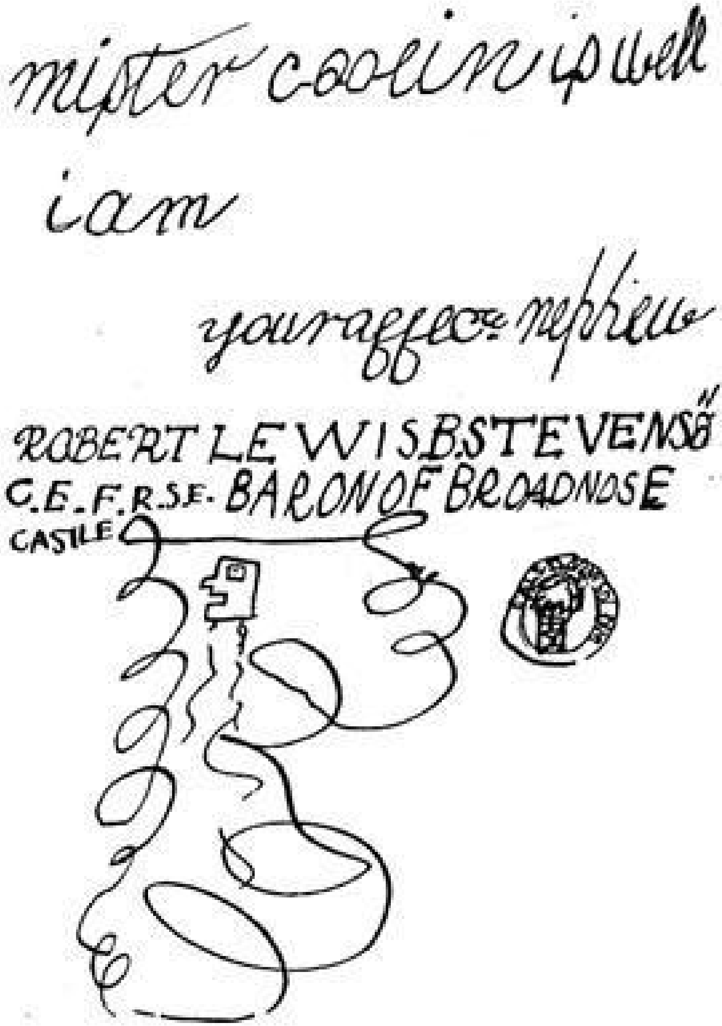
mister coolin is well

i am

your affect. nephew

ROBERT LEWIS B. STEVENSÕ
C.E. F.R.S.E. BARON OF BROADNOSE
CASTLE





mister cooein is well

i am

your affecte nephew

ROBERT LEWIS B. STEVENSÖ
C.E.F.R.S.E. BARON OF BROADNOSE
CASTLE

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PIERRE JEAN DE BÉRANGER ARTICLE

FOR THE NINTH EDITION OF THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA (1875–89)

BÉRANGER, PIERRE JEAN DE (1780-1857), French song-writer, was born in Paris on the 19th of August 1780. The aristocratic de was a piece of groundless VANITY ON THE PART OF HIS father, who had assumed the name of Béranger de Mersix. He was descended in truth from a country innkeeper on the one side, and, on the other, from a tailor in the rue Montorgueil. Of education, in the narrower sense, he had but little. From the roof of his first school he beheld the capture of the Bastille, and this stirring memory was all that he acquired. Later on he passed some time in a school at Péronne, founded by one Bellenglise on the principles of Rousseau, where the boys were formed into clubs and regiments, and taught to play solemnly at politics and war. Béranger was president of the club, made speeches before such members of Convention as passed through Péronne, and drew up addresses to Tallien or Robespierre at Paris. In the meanwhile he learned neither Greek nor Latin — not even French, it would appear; for it was after he left school, from the printer Laisney, that he acquired the elements of grammar. His true education was of another sort. In his childhood, shy, sickly and skilful with his hands, as he sat at home alone to carve cherry stones, he was already forming for himself those habits of retirement and patient elaboration which influenced the whole tenor of his life and the character of all that he wrote. At Péronne he learned of his good aunt to be a stout republican; and from the doorstep of her inn, on quiet evenings, he would listen to the thunder of the guns before Valenciennes, and fortify himself in his passionate love of France and distaste for all things foreign. Although he could never read Horace save in a translation, he had been educated on Télémaque, Racine and the dramas of Voltaire, and taught, from a child, in the tradition of all that is highest and most correct in French.

After serving his aunt for some time in the capacity of waiter, and passing some time also in the printing-office of one Laisney, he was taken to Paris by his father. Here he saw much low speculation, and many low royalist intrigues. In 1802, in consequence of a distressing quarrel, he left his father and began life for himself in the garret of his ever memorable song. For two years he did literary hackwork, when he could get it, and wrote pastorals, epics and all manner of ambitious failures. At the end of that period (1804) he wrote to Lucien Bonaparte, enclosing some of these attempts. He was then in bad health, and in the last state of misery. His watch was pledged. His wardrobe consisted of one pair of boots, one greatcoat, one pair of trousers with a hole in the knee, and “three bad shirts which a friendly hand wearied itself in endeavouring to mend.” The friendly hand was that of Judith Frère, with whom he had been already more or less acquainted since 1796, and who continued to be his faithful companion until her death, three months before his own, in 1857. She must not be confounded with the Lisette of the songs; the pieces addressed to her (La Bonne Vieille, Maudit printemps, &c.) are in a very different vein. Lucien Bonaparte interested himself in the young poet, transferred to him his own pension of 1000 francs from the Institute, and set him to work on a Death of Nero. Five years later, through the same patronage, although indirectly, Béranger became a clerk in the university at a salary of another thousand.

Meanwhile he had written many songs for convivial occasions, and “to console himself under all misfortunes”; some, according to M. Boiteau, had been already published by his father, but he set no great store on them himself; and it was only in 1812, while watching by the sick-bed of a friend, that it occurred to him to write down the best he could remember. Next year he was elected to the Caveau Moderne, and his reputation as a song-writer began to spread. Manuscript copies of Les Gueux, Le Sénateur, above all, of Le Roi d’Yvetot, a satire against Napoleon, whom he was to magnify so much in the sequel, passed from hand to hand with acclamation. It was thus that all his best works went abroad; one man sang them to another over all the land of France. He was the only poet of modern times who could altogether have dispensed with printing.

His first collection escaped censure. “We must pardon many things to the author of Le Roi d’Yvetot,” said Louis XVIII. The second (1821) was more daring. The apathy of the Liberal camp, he says, had convinced him of the need for some bugle call of awakening. This publication lost him his situation in the university, and subjected him to a trial, a fine of 500 francs and an imprisonment of three months. Imprisonment was a small affair for Béranger. At Sainte Pélagie he occupied a room (it had just been quitted by Paul Louis Courier), warm, well furnished, and preferable in every way to his own poor lodging, where the water froze on winter nights. He adds, on the occasion of his second imprisonment, that he found a certain charm in this quiet, claustral existence, with its regular hours and long evenings alone over the fire. This second imprisonment of nine months, together with a fine and expenses amounting to 1100 francs, followed on the appearance of his fourth collection. The government proposed through Laffitte that, if he would submit to judgment without appearing or making defences, he should only be condemned in the smallest penalty. But his public spirit made him refuse the proposal; and he would not even ask permission to pass his term of imprisonment in a Maison de santé, although his health was more than usually feeble at the time. “When you have taken your stand in a contest with government, it seems to me,” he wrote, “ridiculous to complain of the blows it inflicts on you, and impolitic to furnish it with any occasion of generosity.” His first thought in La Force was to alleviate the condition of the other prisoners.

In the revolution of July he took no inconsiderable part. Copies of his song, Le Vieux Drapeau, were served out to the insurgent crowd. He had been for long the intimate friend and adviser of the leading men; and during the decisive week his counsels went a good way towards shaping the ultimate result. “As for the republic, that dream of my whole life,” he wrote in 1831, “I did not wish it should be given to us a second time unripe.” Louis Philippe, hearing how much the song-writer had done towards his elevation, expressed a wish to see and speak with him; but Béranger refused to present himself at court, and used his favour only to ask a place for a friend, and a pension for Rouget de l’Isle, author of the famous Marseillaise, who was now old and poor, and whom he had been already succouring for five years.

In 1848, in spite of every possible expression of his reluctance, he was elected to the Constituent Assembly, and that by so large a number of votes (204,471) that he felt himself obliged to accept the seat. Not long afterwards, and with great difficulty, he obtained leave to resign. This was the last public event of Béranger’s life. He continued to polish his songs in retirement, visited by nearly all the famous men of France. He numbered among his friends Chateaubriand, Thiers, Jacques Laffitte, Michelet, Lamennais, Mignet. Nothing could exceed the amiability of his private character; so poor a man has rarely been so rich in good actions; he was always ready to receive help from his friends when he was in need, and always forward to help others. His correspondence is full of wisdom and kindness, with a smack of Montaigne, and now and then a vein of pleasantry that will remind the English reader of Charles Lamb. He occupied some of his leisure in preparing his own memoirs, and a certain treatise on Social and Political Morality, intended for the people, a work he had much at heart, but judged at last to be beyond his strength. He died on the 16th July 1857. It was feared that his funeral would be the signal for some political disturbance; but the government took immediate measures, and all went quietly. The streets of Paris were lined with soldiers and full of townsfolk, silent and uncovered. From time to time cries arose: — “Honneur, honneur à Béranger!”

The songs of Béranger would scarcely be called songs in England. They are elaborate, written in a clear and sparkling style, full of wit and incision. It is not so much for any lyrical flow as for the happy turn of the phrase that they claim superiority. Whether the subject be gay or serious, light or passionate, the medium remains untroubled. The special merits of the songs are merits to be looked for rather in English prose than in English verse. He worked deliberately, never wrote more than fifteen songs a year and often less, and was so fastidious that he has not preserved a quarter of what he finished. “I am a good little bit of a poet,” he says himself, “clever in the craft, and a conscientious worker to whom old airs and a modest choice of subjects (le coin où je me suis confiné) have brought some success.” Nevertheless, he makes a figure of importance in literary history. When he first began to cultivate the chanson, this minor form lay under some contempt, and was restricted to slight subjects and a humorous guise of treatment. Gradually he filled these little chiselled toys of verbal perfection with ever more and more of sentiment. From a date comparatively early he had determined to sing for the people. It was for this reason that he fled, as far as possible, the houses of his influential friends and came back gladly to the garret and the street corner. Thus it was, also, that he came to acknowledge obligations to Emile Debraux, who had often stood between him and the masses as interpreter, and given him the key-note of the popular humour. Now, he had observed in the songs of sailors, and all who labour, a prevailing tone of sadness; and so, as he grew more masterful in this sort of expression, he sought more and more after what is deep, serious and constant in the thoughts of common men. The evolution was slow; and we can see in his own works examples of every stage, from that of witty indifference in fifty pieces of the first collection, to that of grave and even tragic feeling in Les Souvenirs du peuple or Le Vieux Vagabond. And this innovation involved another, which was as a sort of prelude to the great romantic movement. For the chanson, as he says himself, opened up to him a path in which his genius could develop itself at ease; he escaped, by this literary postern, from strict academical requirements, and had at his disposal the whole dictionary, four-fifths of which, according to La Harpe, were forbidden to the use of more regular and pretentious poetry. If he still kept some of the old vocabulary, some of the old imagery, he was yet accustoming people to hear moving subjects treated in a manner more free and simple than heretofore; so that his was a sort of conservative reform, preceding the violent revolution of Victor Hugo and his army of uncompromising romantics. He seems himself to have had glimmerings of some such idea; but he withheld his full approval from the new movement on two grounds: — first, because the romantic school misused somewhat brutally the delicate organism of the French language; and second, as he wrote to Sainte-Beuve in 1832, because they adopted the motto of "Art for art," and set no object of public usefulness before them as they wrote. For himself (and this is the third point of importance) he had a strong sense of political responsibility. Public interest took a far higher place in his estimation than any private passion or favour. He had little toleration for those erotic poets who sing their own loves and not the common sorrows of mankind, "who forget," to quote his own words, "forget beside their mistress those who labour before the Lord." Hence it is that so many of his pieces are political, and so many, in the later times at least, inspired with a socialistic spirit of indignation and revolt. It is by this socialism that he becomes truly modern and touches hands with Burns.

Stevenson's burial in Samoa

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INTRODUCTION

The circumstances which have made me responsible for selecting and editing the correspondence of Robert Louis Stevenson are the following. He was for many years my closest friend. We first met in 1873, when he was in his twenty-third year and I in my twenty-ninth, at the place and in the manner mentioned at page 54 of this volume. It was my good fortune then to be of use to him, partly by such technical hints as even the most brilliant beginner may take from an older hand, partly by recommending him to editors — first, if I remember right, to Mr. Hamerton and Mr. Richmond Seeley, of the Portfolio, then in succession to Mr. George Grove (Macmillan's Magazine), Mr. Leslie Stephen (Cornhill), and Dr. Appleton (the Academy); and somewhat, lastly, by helping to raise him in the estimation of parents who loved but for the moment failed to understand him. It belonged to the richness of his nature to repay in all things much for little, º±ÄÌ¼²¿v ½½µ±²¿¹ö½, and from these early relations sprang the affection and confidence, to me inestimable, of which the following correspondence bears evidence.

One day in the autumn of 1888, in the island of Tahiti, during an illness which he supposed might be his last, Stevenson put into the hands of his stepson, Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, a sealed paper with a request that it might be opened after his death. He recovered, and had strength xviii enough to enjoy six years more of active life and work in the Pacific Islands. When the end came, the paper was opened and found to contain, among other things, the expression of his wish that I should prepare for publication "a selection of his letters and a sketch of his life." I had already, in 1892, when he was anxious — needlessly, as it turned out — as to the provision he might be able to leave for his family, received from him a suggestion that "some kind of a book" might be made out of the monthly journal-letters which he had been in the habit of writing me from Samoa: letters begun at first with no thought of publication and simply in order to maintain our intimacy, so far as might be, undiminished by separation. This part of his wishes I was able to carry out promptly, and the result appeared under the title *Vailima Letters* in the autumn following his death (1895). Lack of leisure delayed the execution of the remaining part. For one thing, the body of correspondence which came in from various quarters turned out much larger than had been anticipated. He did not love writing letters, and will be found somewhere in the following pages referring to himself as one "essentially and originally incapable of the art epistolary." That he was a bad correspondent had come to be an accepted view among his friends; but in truth it was only during one period of his life that he at all deserved such a reproach. At other times, as became apparent after his death, he had shown a degree of industry and spirit in letter-writing extraordinary considering his health and his occupations. It was indeed he and not his friends, as will abundantly appear in the course of these volumes, who oftenest had cause to complain of answers neglected or delayed. His letters, it is true, were often the most xix informal in the world, and he generally neglected to date them, a habit which is the despair of editors: but after his own whim and fashion he wrote a vast number, so that the work of sifting, copying, and arranging was long and laborious. It was not until the autumn of 1899 that the *Letters to his Family and Friends* were ready for publication, and in the meantime the task of writing the *Life* had been taken over by his cousin and my friend, Mr. Graham Balfour, who completed it two years later.

“In considering the scale and plan on which my friend’s instruction should be carried out” (I quote, with the change of a word or two, from my Introduction of 1899), “it seemed necessary to take into account, not his own always modest opinion of himself, but the place which he seemed likely to take ultimately in the world’s regard. The four or five years following the death of a writer much applauded in his lifetime are generally the years when the decline of his reputation begins, if it is going to suffer decline at all. At present, certainly, Stevenson’s name seems in no danger of going down. On the stream of daily literary reference and allusion it floats more actively than ever. In another sense its vitality is confirmed by the material test of continued sales and of the market. Since we have lost him other writers, whose beginnings he watched with sympathetic interest, have come to fill a greater immediate place in public attention; but none has exercised Stevenson’s peculiar and personal power to charm, to attach, and to inspirit. By his study of perfection in form and style — qualities for which his countrymen in general have been apt to care little — he might seem destined to give pleasure chiefly to the fastidious and the artistically minded. But as to its matter, the main appeal of his work is not to any mental tastes and xx fashions of the few; it is rather to universal, hereditary instincts, to the primitive sources of imaginative excitement and entertainment in the race.

“The voice of the *advocatus diaboli* has been heard against him, as it is right and proper that it should be heard against any man before his reputation can be held fully established. One such advocate in this country has thought to dispose of him by the charge of ‘externality.’ But the reader who remembers things like the sea-frenzy of Gordon Darnaway, or the dialogue of Markheim with his other self in the house of murder, or the re-baptism of the spirit of Seraphina in the forest dews, or the failure of Herrick to find in the waters of the island lagoon a last release from dishonour, or the death of Goguelat, or the appeal of Kirstie Elliot in the midnight chamber — such a reader can only smile at a criticism like this and put it by. These and a score of other passages breathe the essential poetry and significance of things as they reveal themselves to true masters only: they are instinct at once with the morality and the romance which lie deep together at the soul of nature and experience. Not in vain had Stevenson read the lesson of the Lantern-Bearers, and hearkened to the music of the pipes of Pan. He was feeling his way all his life towards a fuller mastery of his means, preferring always to leave unexpressed what he felt that he could not express adequately; and in much of his work was content merely to amuse himself and others. But even when he is playing most fancifully with his art and his readers, as in the shudders, tempered with laughter, of the *Suicide Club*, or the airy sentimental comedy of *Providence and the Guitar*, or the schoolboy historical inventions of Dickon Crookback and the old sailor Arblaster, a writer of his quality cannot xxi help striking notes from the heart of life and the inwardness of things deeper than will ever be struck, or even apprehended, by another who labours, with never a smile either of his own or of his reader's, upon the most solemn enterprises of realistic fiction, but is born without the magician's touch and insight.

"Another advocate on the same side, in the United States, has made much of the supposed dependence of this author on his models, and classed him among writers whose inspiration is imitative and second-hand. But this is to be quite misled by the well-known passage of Stevenson's own, in which he speaks of himself as having in his prentice years played the 'sedulous ape' to many writers of different styles and periods. In doing this he was not seeking inspiration, but simply practising the use of the tools which were to help him to express his own inspirations. Truly he was always much of a reader: but it was life, not books, that always in the first degree allured and taught him.

'He loved of life the myriad sides,
Pain, prayer, or pleasure, act or sleep,
As wallowing narwhals love the deep' —

so with just self-knowledge he wrote of himself; and the books which he most cared for and lived with were those of which the writers seemed — to quote again a phrase of his own — to have been 'eavesdropping at the door of his heart': those which told of experiences or cravings after experience, pains, pleasures, or conflicts of the spirit, which in the eagerness of youthful living and thinking had already been his own. No man, in fact, was ever less inclined to take anything at second-hand. The root of all originality was in him, in the shape of an extreme xxii natural vividness of perception, imagination, and feeling. An instinctive and inbred unwillingness to accept the accepted and conform to the conventional was of the essence of his character, whether in life or art, and was a source to him both of strength and weakness. He would not follow a general rule — least of all if it was a prudential rule — of conduct unless he was clear that it was right according to his private conscience; nor would he join, in youth, in the ordinary social amusements of his class when he had once found out that they did not amuse *him*; nor wear their clothes if he could not feel at ease and be himself in them; nor use, whether in speech or writing, any trite or inanimate form of words that did not faithfully and livingly express his thought. A readier acceptance alike of current usages and current phrases might have been better for him, but was simply not in his nature. No reader of this book will close it, I am sure, without feeling that he has been throughout in the company of a spirit various indeed and many-mooded, but profoundly sincere and real. Ways that in another might easily have been mere signs of affectation were in him the true expression of a nature ten times more spontaneously itself and individually alive than that of others. Self-consciousness, in many characters that possess it, deflects and falsifies conduct; and so does the dramatic instinct. Stevenson was self-conscious in a high degree, but only as a part of his general activity of mind; only in so far as he could not help being an extremely intelligent spectator of his own doings and feelings: these themselves came from springs of character and impulse much too deep and strong to be diverted. He loved also, with a child's or actor's gusto, to play a part and make a drama out of life: but the part was always for the moment xxiii his very own: he had it not in him to pose for anything but what he truly was.

"When a man so constituted had once mastered his craft of letters, he might take up whatever instrument he pleased with the instinctive and just confidence that he would play upon it to a tune and with a manner of his own. This is indeed the true mark and test of his originality. He has no need to be, or to seem, especially original in the form and mode of literature which he attempts. By his choice of these he may at any time give himself and his reader the pleasure of recalling, like a familiar air, some strain of literary association; but in so doing he only adds a secondary charm to his work; the vision, the temperament, the mode of conceiving and handling, are in every case personal to himself. He may try his hand in youth at a *Sentimental Journey*, but R. L. S. cannot choose but be at the opposite pole of human character and feeling from Laurence Sterne. In tales of mystery, allegorical or other, he may bear in mind the precedent of Edgar Poe, and yet there is nothing in style and temper much wider apart than *Markheim* and *Jekyll and Hyde* are from the *Murders in the*

Rue Morgue or *William Wilson*. He may set out to tell a pirate story for boys ‘exactly in the ancient way,’ and it will come from him not in the ancient way at all, but re-minted; marked with a sharpness and saliency in the characters, a private stamp of buccaneering ferocity combined with smiling humour, an energy of vision and happy vividness of presentment, which are shiningly his own. Another time, he may desert the paths of Kingston and Ballantyne for those of Sir Walter Scott; but literature presents few stronger contrasts than between any scene of *Waverley* or *Redgauntlet* and any scene of the *Master of Ballantrae* xxiv or *Catriona*, whether in their strength or weakness: and it is the most loyal lovers of the older master who take the greatest pleasure in reading the work of the younger, so much less opulently gifted as is probable — though we must remember that Stevenson died at the age when Scott wrote *Waverley* — so infinitely more careful of his gift. Stevenson may even blow upon the pipe of Burns and yet his tune will be no echo, but one which utters the heart and mind of a Scots maker who has his own outlook on life, his own special and profitable vein of smiling or satirical contemplation.

“Not by reason, then, of ‘externality,’ for sure, nor yet of imitativeness, will this writer lose his hold on the attention and regard of his countrymen. The debate, before his place in literature is settled, must rather turn on other points: as whether the genial essayist and egoist or the romantic inventor and narrator was the stronger in him — whether the Montaigne and Pepys elements prevailed in his literary composition or the Scott and Dumas elements — a question indeed which among those who care for him most has always been at issue. Or again, what degree of true inspiring and illuminating power belongs to the gospel, or gospels, airily encouraging or gravely didactic, which are set forth in the essays with so captivating a grace? Or whether in romance and tale he had a power of inventing and constructing a whole fable comparable to his admitted power of conceiving and presenting single scenes and situations in a manner which stamps them indelibly on the reader’s mind? And whether his figures are sustained continuously by the true spontaneous breath of creation, or are but transitorily animated at happy moments by flashes of spiritual and dramatic insight, aided by the conscious devices of his singularly adroit and xxv spirited art? These are questions which no criticism but that of time can solve. To contend, as some do, that strong creative impulse and so keen an artistic self-consciousness as Stevenson’s was cannot exist together, is quite idle. The truth, of course, is that the deep-seated energies of imaginative creation are found sometimes in combination, and sometimes not in combination, with an artistic intelligence thus keenly conscious of its own purpose and watchful of its own working.

“Once more, it may be questioned whether, among the many varieties of work which Stevenson has left, all distinguished by a grace and precision of workmanship which are the rarest qualities in English art, there are any which can be pointed to as absolute masterpieces, such as the future cannot be expected to let die. Let the future decide. What is certain is that posterity must either be very well or very ill occupied if it can consent to give up so much sound entertainment, and better than entertainment, as this writer afforded his contemporaries. In the meantime, among judicious readers on both sides of the Atlantic, Stevenson stands, I think it may safely be said, as a true master of English prose; scarcely surpassed for the union of lenity and lucidity with suggestive pregnancy and poetic animation; for harmony of cadence and the well-knit structure of sentences; and for the art of imparting to words the vital quality of things, and making them convey the precise — sometimes, let it be granted, the too curiously precise — expression of the very shade and colour of the thought, feeling, or vision in his mind. He stands, moreover, as the writer who, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, has handled with the most of freshness and inspiriting power the widest range of established literary forms — the moral, critical, and personal essay, xxvi travels sentimental and other, romances and short tales both historical and modern, parables and tales of mystery, boys’ stories of adventure, memoirs — nor let lyrical and meditative verse both English and Scottish, and especially nursery verse, a new vein for genius to work in, be forgotten. To some of these forms Stevenson gave quite new life; through all alike he expressed vividly an extremely personal way of seeing and being, a sense of nature and romance, of the aspects of human existence and problems of human conduct, which was essentially his own. And in so doing he contrived to make friends and even lovers of his readers. Those whom he attracts at all (and there is no writer who attracts every one) are drawn to him over and over again, finding familiarity not lessen but increase the charm of his work, and desiring ever closer intimacy with the spirit and personality which they divine behind it.

“As to the fitting scale, then, on which to treat the memory of a man who fills five years after his death such a place as this in the general regard, and who has desired that a selection from his letters shall be made public, the word ‘selection’ has evidently to be given a pretty liberal interpretation. Readers, it must be supposed, will scarce be content without the opportunity of a fairly ample intercourse with such a man as he was accustomed to reveal himself in writing to his familiars. In choosing from among the material before me” (I still quote from the Introduction of 1899), “I have used the best discretion that I could. Stevenson’s feelings and relations throughout life were in almost all directions so warm and kindly, that very little had to be suppressed from fear of giving pain. xxvii On the other hand, he drew people towards him with so much confidence and affection, and met their openness with so much of his own, that an editor could not but feel the frequent risk of inviting readers to trespass too far on purely private affairs and feelings, including those of the living. This was a point upon which in his lifetime he felt strongly. That excellent critic, Mr. Walter Raleigh, has noticed, as one of the merits of Stevenson's personal essays and accounts of travel, that few men have written more or more attractively of themselves without ever taking the public unduly into familiarity or overstepping proper bounds of reticence. Public prying into private lives, the propagation of gossip by the press, and printing of private letters during the writer's lifetime, were things he hated. Once, indeed, he very superfluously gave himself a dangerous cold, by dancing before a bonfire in his garden at the news of a 'society' editor having been committed to prison; and the only approach to a difference he ever had with one of his lifelong friends arose from the publication, without permission, of one of his letters written during his first Pacific voyage.

"How far, then, must I regard his instructions about publication as authorising me to go after his death beyond the limits which he had been so careful in observing and desiring others to observe in life? How much may now fairly become public of that which had been held sacred and hitherto private among his friends? To cut out all xxviii that is strictly personal and intimate were to leave his story untold and half the charm of his character unrevealed: to put in too much were to break all bonds of that privacy which he so carefully regarded while he lived. I know not if I have at all been able to hit the mean, and to succeed in making these letters, as it has been my object to make them, present, without offence or intrusion, a just, a living, and proportionate picture of the man as far as they will yield it. There is one respect in which his own practice and principle has had to be in some degree violated, if the work was to be done at all. Except in the single case of the essay *Ordered South*, he would never in writing for the public adopt the invalid point of view, or invite any attention to his infirmities. 'To me,' he says, 'the medicine bottles on my chimney and the blood on my handkerchief are accidents; they do not colour my view of life; and I should think myself a trifler and in bad taste if I introduced the world to these unimportant privacies.' But from his letters to his family and friends these matters could not possibly be left out. The tale of his life, in the years when he was most of a correspondent, was in truth a tale of daily and nightly battle against weakness and physical distress and danger. To those who loved him, the incidents of this battle were communicated, sometimes gravely, sometimes laughingly. I have greatly cut down such bulletins, but could not possibly omit them altogether.”

In 1911, twelve years after the above words were written, the estimate expressed in them of Stevenson’s qualities as a writer, and of the place he seemed likely to maintain in the affections of English readers all the world over, had been amply confirmed by the lapse of time. The sale of his works kept increasing rather than diminishing. xxix Editions kept multiplying. A new generation of readers had found life and letters, nature and human nature, touched by him at so many points with so vivifying and illuminating a charm that it had become scarcely possible to take up any newspaper or magazine and not find some reference to his work and name. Both series of letters — even one mainly concerned, as the *Vailima Letters* are, with matters of interest both remote and transitory — had been read in edition after edition: and readers had been and were continually asking for more. The time was thought to have come for a new and definitive edition, in which the two series of letters already published should be thrown into one, and as much new material added as could be found suitable. The task of carrying out this scheme fell again upon me. The new edition constituted in effect a nearly complete epistolary autobiography. It contained not less than a hundred and fifty of Stevenson’s letters hitherto unpublished. They dated from all periods of his life, those written in the brilliant and troubled days of his youth predominating, and giving a picture, perhaps unique in its kind, of a character and talent in the making. The present edition is a reprint of the edition of 1911, with a few errors of transcription and one or two of date corrected, and with a very few new letters added.

Much, of course, remains and ought to remain unprinted. Some of the outpourings of the early time are too sacred and intimate for publicity. Many of the letters of his maturer years are dry business letters of no general interest: many others are mere scraps tossed in jest to his familiars and full of catchwords and code-words current in their talk but meaningless to outsiders. Above all, many have to be omitted because they deal with the xxx intimate affairs of private persons. Stevenson has been sometimes called an egoist, as though he had been one in the practical sense as well as in the sense of taking a lively interest in his own moods and doings. Nothing can be more untrue. The letters printed in these volumes are indeed for the most part about himself: but it was of himself that his correspondents of all things most cared to hear. If the letters concerned with the private affairs of other people could be printed, as of course they cannot, the balance would come more than even. We should see him throwing himself with sympathetic ardour and without thought of self into the cares and interests of his correspondents, and should learn to recognise him as having been truly the helper in many a relation where he might naturally have been taken for the person helped.

As to the form in which the Letters are now presented, they fill three volumes instead of the four of the 1911 edition, the division into fourteen sections according to date being retained. As to the text, it is faithful to the original except in so far as I have freely used the editorial privilege of omission when I thought it desirable, and as I have not felt myself bound to reproduce slips and oddities, however characteristic, of spelling. In formal matters like the use of quote-marks, italics, and so forth, I have adopted a more uniform practice than his, which was very casual and variable.

To some readers, perhaps — (from this point I again resume my Introduction of 1899, but with more correction and abridgment) — to some, perhaps, the very lack of art as a correspondent to which Stevenson, as above quoted, pleads guilty may give the reading an added charm and flavour. What he could do as an artist in letters we xxxi know. I remember Sir John Millais, a shrewd and very independent judge of books, calling across to me at a dinner-table, “You know Stevenson, don’t you?” and then going on, “Well, I wish you would tell him from me, if he cares to know, that to my mind he is the very first of living artists. I don’t mean writers merely, but painters and all of us. Nobody living can see with such an eye as that fellow, and nobody is such a master of his tools.” But in his letters, excepting a few written in youth and having more or less the character of exercises, and a few in after years which were intended for the public eye, Stevenson the deliberate artist is scarcely forthcoming at all. He does not care a fig for order or logical sequence or congruity, or for striking a key of expression and keeping it, but becomes simply the most spontaneous and unstudied of human beings. He has at his command the whole vocabularies of the English and Scottish languages, classical and slang, with good stores of the French, and tosses and tumbles them about irresponsibly to convey the impression or affection, the mood or freak of the moment; pouring himself out in all manner of rhapsodical confessions and speculations, grave or gay, notes of observation and criticism, snatches of remembrance and autobiography, moralisings on matters uppermost for the hour in his mind, comments on his own work or other people’s, or mere idle fun and foolery.

By this medley of moods and manners, Stevenson’s letters at their best come nearer than anything else to the full-blooded charm and variety of his conversation. Nearer, yet not quite near; for it was in company only that his genial spirit rose to his very best. Few men probably have had in them such a richness and variety of human nature; and few can ever have been better gifted than xxxii he was to express the play of being that was in him by means of the apt, expressive word and the animated look and gesture. *Divers et ondoyant*, in the words of Montaigne, beyond other men, he seemed to contain within himself a whole troop of singularly assorted characters. Though prose was his chosen medium of expression, he was by temperament a born poet, to whom the world was full of enchantment and of latent romance, only waiting to take shape and substance in the forms of art. It was his birthright —

“to hear
The great bell beating far and near —
The odd, unknown, enchanted gong
That on the road hales men along,
That from the mountain calls afar,
That lures the vessel from a star,
And with a still, aerial sound
Makes all the earth enchanted ground.”

He had not only the poet’s mind but the poet’s senses: in youth ginger was only too hot in his mouth, and the chimes at midnight only too favourite a music. At the same time he was not less a born preacher and moralist and son of the Covenanters after his fashion. He had about him, as has been said, little spirit of social or other conformity; but an active and searching private conscience kept him for ever calling in question both the grounds of his own conduct and the validity of the accepted codes and compromises of society. He must try to work out a scheme of morality suitable to his own case and temperament, which found the prohibitory law of Moses chill and uninspiring, but in the Sermon on the Mount a strong incentive to all those impulses of pity and charity to which his heart was prone. In early days his sense of social injustice and the inequalities of human opportunity made xxxiii him inwardly much of a rebel, who would have embraced and acted on theories of socialism or communism, could he have found any that did not seem to him at variance with ineradicable instincts of human nature. All his life the artist and the moralist in him alike were in rebellion against the bourgeois spirit, — against timid, negative, and shuffling substitutes for active and courageous well-doing, — and declined to worship at the shrine of what he called the bestial goddesses Comfort and Respectability. The moralist in him helped the artist by backing with the force of a highly sensitive conscience his instinctive love of perfection in his work. The artist qualified the moralist by discountenancing any preference for the harsh, the sour, or the self-mortifying forms of virtue, and encouraging the love for all tender or heroic, glowing, generous, and cheerful forms.

Above all things, perhaps, Stevenson was by instinct an adventurer and practical experimentalist in life. Many poets are content to dream, and many, perhaps most, moralists to preach: Stevenson must ever be doing and undergoing. He was no sentimentalist, to pay himself with fine feelings whether for mean action or slack inaction. He had an insatiable zest for all experiences, not the pleasurable only, but including the more harsh and biting — those that bring home to a man the pinch and sting of existence as it is realised by the disinherited of the world, and excluding only what he thought the prim, the conventional, the dead-alive, and the cut-and-dry. On occasion the experimentalist and man of adventure in him would enter into special partnership with the moralist and man of conscience: he was prone to plunge into difficult social passes and ethical dilemmas, which he might sometimes more wisely have avoided, for the sake of trying to xxxiv behave in them to the utmost according to his own personal sense of the obligations of honour, duty, and kindness. In yet another part of his being he cherished, as his great countryman Scott had done before him, an intense underlying longing for the life of action, danger and command. “Action, Colvin, action,” I remember his crying eagerly to me with his hand on my arm as we lay basking for his health’s sake in a boat off the scented shores of the Cap Martin. Another time — this was on his way to a winter cure at Davos — some friend had given him General Hamley’s *Operations of War*: — ”in which,” he writes to his father, “I am drowned a thousand fathoms deep, and O that I had been a soldier is still my cry.” Fortunately, with all these ardent and divers instincts, there were present two invaluable gifts besides: that of humour, which for all his stress of being and vivid consciousness of self saved him from ever seeing himself for long together out of a just proportion, and kept wholesome laughter always ready at his lips; and that of a most tender and loyal heart, which through all his experiments and agitations made the law of kindness the one ruling law of his life. In the end, lack of health determined his career, giving the chief part in his life to the artist and man of imagination, and keeping the man of action a prisoner in the sickroom until, by a singular turn of destiny, he was able to wring a real prolonged and romantically successful adventure out of that voyage to the Pacific which had been, in its origin, the last despairing resource of the invalid.

Again, it was characteristic of this multiple personality that he never seemed to be cramped like the rest of us, at any given time of life, within the limits of his proper age, but to be child, boy, young man, and old man all at once. There was never a time in his life when Stevenson xxxv had to say with St. Augustine, “Behold! my childhood is dead, but I am alive.” The child lived on always in him, not in memory only, but in real survival, with all its freshness of perception unimpaired, and none of its play instincts in the least degree extinguished or made ashamed. As for the perennial boy in Stevenson, that is too apparent to need remark. It was as a boy for boys that he wrote the best known of his books, *Treasure Island*, and with all boys that he met, provided they were really boys and not prigs nor puppies, he was instantly and delightedly at home. At the same time, even when I first knew him, he showed already surprising occasional traits and glimpses of old sagacity, of premature life-wisdom and experience.

Once more, it is said that in every poet there must be something of the woman. If to be quick in sympathy and feeling, ardent in attachment, and full of pity for the weak and suffering, is to be womanly, Stevenson was certainly all those; he was even like a woman in being ÁÄ¯´±ºÁÅÂ, easily moved to tears at the touch of pity or affection, or even at any specially poignant impression of art or beauty. But yet, if any one word were to be chosen for the predominant quality of his character and example, I suppose that word would be manly. In his gentle and complying nature there were strains of iron tenacity and will: occasionally even, let it be admitted, of perversity and Scottish “thrawnness.” He had both kinds of physical courage — the active, delighting in danger, and the passive, unshaken in endurance. In the moral courage of facing situations and consequences, of readiness to pay for faults committed, of outspokenness, admitting no ambiguous relations and clearing away the clouds from human intercourse, I have not known his equal. xxxvi The great Sir Walter himself, as this book will prove, was not more manfully free from artistic jealousy or irritability under criticism, or more unfeignedly inclined to exaggerate the qualities of other people’s work and to underrate those of his own. Of the humorous and engaging parts of vanity and egoism, which led him to make infinite talk and fun about himself, and use his own experiences as a key for unlocking the confidences of others, Stevenson had plenty; but of the morose and fretful parts never a shade. “A little Irish girl,” he wrote once during a painful crisis of his life, “is now reading my book aloud to her sister at my elbow; they chuckle, and I feel flattered. — Yours, R. L. S. *P.S.* — Now they yawn, and I am indifferent. Such a wisely conceived thing is vanity.” If only vanity so conceived were commoner! And whatever might be the abstract and philosophical value of that somewhat grimly stoical conception of the universe, of conduct and duty, at which in mature years he had arrived, want of manliness is certainly not its fault. Take the kind of maxims which he was accustomed to forge for his own guidance: — ”Acts may be forgiven; not even God can forgive the hanger-back.” “Choose the best, if you can; or choose the worst; that which hangs in the wind dangles from a gibbet.” “‘Shall I?’ said Feeble-mind; and the echo said, ‘Fie!’” “‘Do I love?’ said Loveless; and the echo laughed.” “A fault known is a fault cured to the strong; but to the weak it is a fetter riveted.” “The mean man doubts, the great-hearted is deceived.” “Great-heart was deceived. ‘Very well,’ said Great-heart.” “‘I have not forgotten my umbrella,’ said the careful man; but the lightning struck him.” “Shame had a fine bed, but where was slumber? Once he was in jail he slept.” With this moralist maxims meant actions; xxxvii and where shall we easily find a much manlier spirit of wisdom than this?

There was yet another and very different side to Stevenson which struck others more than it struck myself, namely, that of the freakish or elvish, irresponsible madcap or jester which sometimes appeared in him. It is true that his demoniac quickness of wit and intelligence suggested occasionally a “spirit of air and fire” rather than one of earth; that he was abundantly given to all kinds of quirk and laughter; and that there was no jest (saving the unkind) he would not make and relish. The late Mr. J. A. Symonds always called him Sprite; qualifying the name, however, by the epithets “most fantastic, but most human.” To me the essential humanity was always the thing most apparent. In a fire well nourished of seasoned ship-timber, the flames glance fantastically and of many colours, but the glow at heart is ever deep and strong; it was at such a glow that the friends of Stevenson were accustomed to warm their hands, while they admired and were entertained by the shifting lights.

It was only in company, as I have said, that all these many lights and colours could be seen in full play. He would begin no matter how — perhaps with a jest at some absurd adventure of his own, perhaps with the recitation, in his vibrating voice and full Scotch accent, of some snatch of poetry that was haunting him, perhaps with a rhapsody of analytic delight over some minute accident of beauty or expressiveness that had struck him in man, woman, child, or external nature. And forthwith the floodgates would be opened, and the talk would stream on in endless, never importunate, flood and variety. A hundred fictitious characters would be invented and launched on their imaginary careers; a hundred ingenious xxxviii problems of conduct and cases of honour would be set and solved; romantic voyages would be planned and followed out in vision, with a thousand incidents; the possibilities of life and art would be illuminated with search-lights of bewildering range and penetration, sober argument and high poetic eloquence alternating with coruscations of insanely apposite slang — the earthiest jape anon shooting up into the empyrean and changing into the most ethereal fantasy — the stalest and most vulgarised forms of speech gaining brilliancy and illuminating power from some hitherto undreamt-of application — and all the while an atmosphere of goodwill diffusing itself from the speaker, a glow of eager benignity and affectionate laughter emanating from his presence, till every one about him seemed to catch something of his own gift and inspiration. This sympathetic power of inspiring others was the special and distinguishing note of Stevenson's conversation. He would keep a houseful or a single companion entertained all day, and day after day and half the nights, yet never seemed to monopolise the talk or absorb it; rather he helped every one about him to discover and to exercise unexpected powers of their own.

Imagine all this helped by the most speaking of presences: a steady, penetrating fire in the brown, wide-set eyes, a compelling power and richness in the smile; courteous, waving gestures of the arms and long, nervous hands, a lit cigarette generally held between the fingers; continual rapid shiftings and pacings to and fro as he conversed: rapid, but not flurried nor awkward, for there was a grace in his attenuated but well-carried figure, and his movements were light, deft, and full of spring. There was something for strangers, and even for friends, to get xxxix over in the queer garments which in youth it was his whim to wear — the badge, as they always seemed to me, partly of a genuine carelessness, certainly of a genuine lack of cash (the little he had was always absolutely at the disposal of his friends), partly of a deliberate detachment from any particular social class or caste, partly of his love of pickles and adventures, which he thought befel a man thus attired more readily than another. But this slender, slovenly, nondescript apparition, long-visaged and long-haired, had only to speak in order to be recognised in the first minute for a witty and charming gentleman, and within the first five for a master spirit and man of genius. There were, indeed, certain stolidly conventional and superciliously official kinds of persons, both at home and abroad, who were incapable of looking beyond the clothes, and eyed him always with frozen suspicion. This attitude used sometimes in youth to drive him into fits of flaming anger, which put him helplessly at a disadvantage unless, or until, he could call the sense of humour to his help. Apart from these his human charm was the same for all kinds of people, without distinction of class or caste; for worldly-wise old great ladies, whom he reminded of famous poets in their youth; for his brother artists and men of letters, perhaps, above all; for the ordinary clubman; for his physicians, who could never do enough for him; for domestic servants, who adored him; for the English policeman even, on whom he often tried, quite in vain, to pass himself as one of the criminal classes; for the shepherd, the street arab, or the tramp, the common seaman, the beach-comber, or the Polynesian high-chief. Even in the imposed silence and restraint of extreme sickness the power and attraction of the man made themselves felt, and there seemed to be more vitality and fire xl of the spirit in him as he lay exhausted and speechless in bed than in an ordinary roomful of people in health.

But I have strayed from my purpose, which was only to indicate that in the best of these letters of Stevenson's you have some echo, far away indeed, but yet the nearest, of his talk — talk which could not possibly be taken down, and of which nothing remains save in the memory of his friends an impression magical and never to be effaced.

Sidney Colvin.

THE LETTERS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON 1868-1882

I

STUDENT DAYS AT EDINBURGH

TRAVELS AND EXCURSIONS

1868-1873

The following section consists chiefly of extracts from the correspondence and journals addressed by Louis Stevenson, as a lad of eighteen to twenty-two, to his father and mother during summer excursions to the Scottish coast or to the Continent. There exist enough of them to fill a volume; but it is not in letters of this kind to his family that a young man unbosoms himself most freely, and these are perhaps not quite devoid of the qualities of the guide-book and the descriptive exercise. Nevertheless they seem to me to contain enough signs of the future master-writer, enough of character, observation, and skill in expression, to make a certain number worth giving by way of an opening chapter to the present book. Among them are interspersed four or five of a different character addressed to other correspondents, and chiefly to his lifelong friend and intimate, Mr. Charles Baxter.

On both sides of the house Stevenson came of interesting stock. His grandfather was Robert Stevenson, civil 4 engineer, highly distinguished as the builder of the Bell Rock lighthouse. By this Robert Stevenson, his three sons, and two of his grandsons now living, the business of civil engineers in general, and of official engineers to the Commissioners of Northern Lights in particular, has been carried on at Edinburgh with high credit and public utility for almost a century. Thomas Stevenson, the youngest of the three sons of the original Robert, was Robert Louis Stevenson's father. He was a man not only of mark, zeal, and inventiveness in his profession, but of a strong and singular personality; a staunch friend and sagacious adviser, trenchant in judgment and demonstrative in emotion, outspoken, dogmatic, — despotic, even, in little things, but withal essentially chivalrous and soft-hearted; apt to pass with the swiftest transition from moods of gloom or sternness to those of tender or freakish gaiety, and commanding a gift of humorous and figurative speech second only to that of his more famous son.

Thomas Stevenson was married to Margaret Isabella, youngest daughter of the Rev. Lewis Balfour, for many years minister of the parish of Colinton in Midlothian. This Mr. Balfour (described by his grandson in the essay called *The Manse*) was of the stock of the Balfours of Pilrig, and grandson to that James Balfour, professor first of moral philosophy and afterwards of the law of nature and of nations, who was held in particular esteem as a philosophical controversialist by David Hume. His wife, Henrietta Smith, a daughter of the Rev. George Smith of Galston, to whose gift as a preacher Burns refers scoffingly in the *Holy Fair*, is said to have been a woman of uncommon beauty and charm of manner. Their daughter, Mrs. Thomas Stevenson, suffered in early and middle life from chest and nerve troubles, and her son 5 may have inherited from her some of his constitutional weakness. Capable, cultivated, companionable, affectionate, she was a determined looker at the bright side of things, and hence better skilled, perhaps, to shut her eyes to troubles or differences among those she loved than understandingly to compose or heal them. Conventionally minded one might have thought her, but for the surprising readiness with which in later life she adapted herself to conditions of life and travel the most unconventional possible. The son and only child of these two, Robert Louis (baptized Robert Lewis Balfour), was born on November 13, 1850, at 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh. His health was infirm from the first, and he was with difficulty kept alive by the combined care of his mother and a most devoted nurse, Alison Cunningham; to whom his lifelong gratitude will be found touchingly expressed in the course of the following letters. In 1858 he was near dying of a gastric fever, and was at all times subject to acute catarrhal and bronchial affections and extreme nervous excitability.

In January 1853 Stevenson's parents moved to Inverleith Terrace, and in May 1857 to 17 Heriot Row, which continued to be their Edinburgh home until the death of Thomas Stevenson in 1887. Much of the boy's time was also spent in the manse of Colinton on the Water of Leith, the home of his maternal grandfather. Ill-health prevented him getting much regular or continuous schooling. He attended first (1858-61) a preparatory school kept by a Mr. Henderson in India Street; and next (at 6 intervals for some time after the autumn of

1861) the Edinburgh Academy.

Schooling was interrupted in the end of 1862 and first half of 1863 by excursions with his parents to Germany, the Riviera, and Italy. The love of wandering, which was a rooted passion in Stevenson's nature, thus began early to find satisfaction. For a few months in the autumn of 1863, when his parents had been ordered for a second time to Mentone for the sake of his mother's health, he was sent to a boarding-school kept by a Mr. Wyatt at Spring Grove, near London. It is not my intention to treat the reader to the series of childish and boyish letters of these days which parental fondness has preserved. But here is one written from his English school when he was about thirteen, which is both amusing in itself and had a certain influence on his destiny, inasmuch as his appeal led to his being taken out to join his parents on the French Riviera; which from these days of his boyhood he never ceased to love, and for which the longing, amid the gloom of Edinburgh winters, often afterwards gripped him by the heart.

Spring Grove School, 12th November 1863.

MA CHERE MAMAN, — Jai recu votre lettre Aujourdhui et comme le jour prochaine est mon jour de naisance je vous écrit ce lettre. Ma grande gatteaux est arrivé il leve 12 livres et demi le prix etait 17 shillings. Sur la soirée de Monseigneur Faux il y etait quelques belles feux d'artifice. Mais les polissons entrent dans notre champ et nos feux d'artifice et handkerchiefs disappeared quickly, but we charged them out of the field. Je suis presque driven mad par une bruit terrible tous les garcons kik up comme grand un bruit qu'il est possible. I hope you will find your 7 house at Mentone nice. I have been obliged to stop from writing by the want of a pen, but now I have one, so I will continue.

My dear papa, you told me to tell you whenever I was miserable. I do not feel well, and I wish to get home. Do take me with you.

R. Stevenson.

This young French scholar has yet, it will be discerned, a good way to travel; in later days he acquired a complete reading and speaking, with a less complete writing, mastery of the language, and was as much at home with French ways of thought and life as with English.

For one more specimen of his boyish style, it may be not amiss to give the text of another appeal which dates from two and a half years later, and is also typical of much in his life's conditions both then and later: —

2 Sulgarde Terrace, Torquay, Thursday [*April 1866*].

RESPECTED PATERNAL RELATIVE, — I write to make a request of the most moderate nature. Every year I have cost you an enormous — nay, elephantine — sum of money for drugs and physician's fees, and the most expensive time of the twelve months was March.

But this year the biting Oriental blasts, the howling tempests, and the general ailments of the human race have been successfully braved by yours truly.

Does not this deserve remuneration?

I appeal to your charity, I appeal to your generosity, I appeal to your justice, I appeal to your accounts, I appeal, in fine, to your purse.

My sense of generosity forbids the receipt of more — my sense of justice forbids the receipt of less — than half-a-crown. — Greeting from, Sir, your most affectionate and needy son,

R. Stevenson.

8

From 1864 to 1867 Stevenson's education was conducted chiefly at Mr. Thomson's private school in Frederick Street, Edinburgh, and by private tutors in various places to which he travelled for his own or his parents' health. These travels included frequent visits to such Scottish health resorts as Bridge of Allan, Dunoon, Rothesay, North Berwick, Lasswade, and Peebles, and occasional excursions with his father on his nearer professional rounds to the Scottish coasts and lighthouses. From 1867 the family life became more settled between Edinburgh and Swanston Cottage, Lothianburn, a country home in the Pentlands which Mr. Stevenson first rented in that year, and the scenery and associations of which sank deeply into the young man's spirit, and vitally affected his after thoughts and his art.

By this time Louis Stevenson seemed to show signs of outgrowing his early infirmities of health. He was a lover, to a degree even beyond his strength, of outdoor life and exercise (though not of sports), and it began to be hoped that as he grew up he would be fit to enter the family profession of civil engineer. He was accordingly entered as a student at Edinburgh University, and for several winters attended classes there with such regularity as his health and inclinations permitted. This was in truth but small. The mind on fire with its own imaginations, and eager to acquire its own experiences in its own way, does not take kindly to the routine of classes and repetitions, nor could the desultory mode of schooling enforced upon him by ill-health answer much purpose by way of discipline. According to his own account he was at college, as he had been at school, an inveterate idler and truant. But outside the field of school and college routine he showed an eager curiosity and activity of 9 mind. "He was of a conversable temper," so he says of himself, "and insatiably curious in the aspects of life, and spent much of his time scraping acquaintance with all classes of men and womenkind." Of one class indeed, and that was his own, he had soon had enough, at least in so far as it was to be studied at the dinners, dances, and other polite entertainments of ordinary Edinburgh society. Of these he early wearied. At home he made himself pleasant to all comers, but for his own resort chose out a very few houses, mostly those of intimate college companions, into which he could go without constraint, and where his inexhaustible flow of poetic, imaginative, and laughing talk seems generally to have rather puzzled his hearers than impressed them. On the other hand, during his endless private rambles and excursions, whether among the streets and slums, the gardens and graveyards of the city, or farther afield among the Pentland hills or on the shores of Forth, he was never tired of studying character and seeking acquaintance among the classes more nearly exposed to the pinch and stress of life.

In the eyes of anxious elders, such vagrant ways naturally take on the colours of idleness and a love of low company. Stevenson was, however, in his own fashion an eager student of books as well as of man and nature. He read precociously and omnivorously in the *belles-lettres*, including a very wide range of English poetry, fiction, and essays, and a fairly wide range of French; and was a genuine student of Scottish history, especially from the time of the persecutions down, and to some extent of history in general. The art of literature was already his private passion, and something within him even already told him that it was to be his life's work. On all his 10 truantries he went pencil and copybook in hand, trying to fit his impression of the scene to words, to compose original rhymes, tales, dialogues, and dramas, or to imitate the style and cadences of the author he at the moment preferred. For three or four years, nevertheless, he tried dutifully, if half-heartedly, to prepare himself for the family profession. In 1868, the year when the following correspondence opens, he went to watch the works of the firm in progress first at Anstruther on the coast of Fife, and afterwards at Wick. In 1869 he made the tour of the Orkneys and Shetlands on board the steam yacht of the Commissioners of Northern Lights, and in 1870 the tour of the Western Islands, preceded by a stay on the isle of Earraid, where the works of the Dhu Heartach lighthouse were then in progress. He was a favourite, although a very irregular, pupil of the professor of engineering, Fleeming Jenkin, whose friendship and that of Mrs. Jenkin were of great value to him, and whose life he afterwards wrote; and must have shown some aptitude for the family calling, inasmuch as in 1871 he received the silver medal of the Edinburgh Society of Arts for a paper on a suggested improvement in lighthouse apparatus. The outdoor and seafaring parts of an engineer's life were in fact wholly to his taste. But he looked instinctively at the powers and phenomena of waves and tide, of storm and current, reef, cliff, and rock, with the eye of the poet and artist, and not those of the practician and calculator. For desk work and office routine he had an unconquerable aversion; and his physical powers, had they remained at their best, must have proved quite unequal to the workshop training necessary to the practical engineer. Accordingly in 1871 it was agreed, not without natural reluctance on his father's part, that he should give up 11 the hereditary vocation and read for the bar: literature, on which his heart was set, and in which his early attempts had been encouraged, being held to be by itself no profession, or at least one altogether too irregular and undefined. For the next several years, therefore, he attended law classes instead of engineering and science classes in the University, giving to the subject a certain amount of serious, although fitful, attention until he was called to the bar in 1875.

So much for the course of Stevenson's outward life during these days at Edinburgh. To tell the story of his inner life would be a far more complicated task, and cannot here be attempted even briefly. The ferment of youth was more acute and more prolonged in him than in most men even of genius. In the Introduction I have tried to give some notion of the many various strains and elements which met in him, and which were in these days pulling one against another in his half-formed being, at a great expense of spirit and body. Add the storms, which from time to time attacked him, of shivering repulsion from the climate and conditions of life in the city which he yet deeply and imaginatively loved; the moods of spiritual revolt against the harsh doctrines of the creed in which he had been brought up, and to which his parents were deeply, his father even passionately, attached; the seasons of temptation, to which he was exposed alike by temperament and circumstance, to seek solace among the crude allurements of the city streets.

In the later and maturer correspondence which will appear in these volumes, the agitations of the writer's early days are often enough referred to in retrospect. In the boyish letters to his parents, which make up the chief part of this first section, they naturally find no 12 expression at all; nor will these letters be found to differ much in any way from those of any other lively and observant lad who is also something of a reader and has some natural gift of writing. At the end of the section I have indeed printed one cry of the heart, written not to his parents, but about them, and telling of the strain which matters of religious difference for a while brought into his home relations. The attachment between the father and son from childhood was exceptionally strong. But the father was staunchly wedded to the hereditary creeds and dogmas of Scottish Calvinistic Christianity; while the course of the young man's reading, with the spirit of the generation in which he grew up, had loosed him from the bonds of that theology, and even of dogmatic Christianity in general, and had taught him to respect all creeds alike as expressions of the cravings and conjectures of the human spirit in face of the unsolved mystery of things, rather than to cling to any one of them as a revelation of ultimate truth. The shock to the father was great when his son's opinions came to his knowledge; and there ensued a time of extremely painful discussion and private tension between them. In due time this cloud upon a family life otherwise very harmonious and affectionate passed quite away. But the greater the love, the greater the pain; when I first knew Stevenson this trouble gave him no peace, and it has left a strong trace upon his mind and work. See particularly the parable called "The House of Eld," in his collection of *Fables*, and the many studies of difficult paternal and filial relations which are to be found in *The Story of a Lie*, *The Misadventures of John Nicholson*, *The Wrecker*, and *Weir of Hermiston*.

To Thomas Stevenson

In July 1868 R. L. S. went to watch the harbour works at Anstruther and afterwards those at Wick. Of his private moods and occupations in the Anstruther days he has told in retrospect in the essay *Random Memories: the Coast of Fife*. Here are some passages from letters written at the time to his parents. "Travellers" and "jennies" are, of course, terms of engineering.

'*Kenzie House or whatever it is called, Anstruther.* [*July 1868.*]

First sheet: Thursday.
Second sheet: Friday.

MY DEAR FATHER, — My lodgings are very nice, and I don't think there are any children. There is a box of mignonette in the window and a factory of dried rose-leaves, which make the atmosphere a trifle heavy, but very pleasant.

When you come, bring also my paint-box — I forgot it. I am going to try the travellers and jennies, and have made a sketch of them and begun the drawing. After that I'll do the staging.

Mrs. Brown "has suffered herself from her stommick, and that makes her kind of think for other people." She is a motherly lot. Her mothering and thought for others displays itself in advice against hard-boiled eggs, well-done meat, and late dinners, these being my only requests. Fancy — I am the only person in Anstruther who dines in the afternoon.

If you could bring me some wine when you come, 'twould be a good move: I fear *vin d'Anstruther*; and having procured myself a severe attack of gripes by two days' total abstinence on chilly table beer I have been forced to purchase Green Ginger ("Somebody or other's 'celebrated'"), for the benefit of my stomach, like St. Paul.

There is little or nothing doing here to be seen. By heightening the corner in a hurry to support the staging they have let the masons get ahead of the divers and wait till they can overtake them. I wish you would write and 14 put me up to the sort of things to ask and find out. I received your registered letter with the £5; it will last for ever. To-morrow I will watch the masons at the pier-foot and see how long they take to work that Fifeness stone you ask about; they get sixpence an hour; so that is the only datum required.

It is awful how slowly I draw, and how ill: I am not nearly done with the travellers, and have not thought of the jennies yet. When I'm drawing I find out something I have not measured, or, having measured, have not noted, or, having noted, cannot find; and so I have to trudge to the pier again ere I can go farther with my noble design.

Love to all. — Your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

'*Kenzie House, Anstruther* [*later in July, 1868*].

MY DEAR MOTHER, — To-night I went with the youngest M. to see a strolling band of players in the townhall. A large table placed below the gallery with a print curtain on either side of the most limited dimensions was at once the scenery and the proscenium. The manager told us that his scenes were sixteen by sixty-four, and so could not be got in. Though I knew, or at least felt sure, that there were no such scenes in the poor man's possession, I could not laugh, as did the major part of the audience, at this shift to escape criticism. We saw a wretched farce, and some comic songs were sung. The manager sang one, but it came grimly from his throat. The whole receipt of the evening was 5s. and 3d., out of which had to come room, gas, and town drummer. We left soon; and I must say came out as sad as I have been for ever so long: I think that manager had a soul above comic songs. I said this to young M., who is a "Phillistine" (Matthew Arnold's Philistine you understand), and he replied, 15 "How much happier would he be as a common working-man!" I told him I thought he would be less happy earning a comfortable living as a shoemaker than he was starving as an actor, with such artistic work as he had to do. But the Phillistine wouldn't see it. You observe that I spell Philistine time about with one and two l's.

As we went home we heard singing, and went into the porch of the schoolhouse to listen. A fisherman entered and told us to go in. It was a psalmody class. One of the girls had a glorious voice. We stayed for half an hour.

Tuesday. — I am utterly sick of this grey, grim, sea-beaten hole. I have a little cold in my head, which makes my eyes sore; and you can't tell how utterly sick I am, and how anxious to get back among trees and flowers and something less meaningless than this bleak fertility.

Papa need not imagine that I have a bad cold or am stone-blind from this description, which is the whole truth.

Last night Mr. and Mrs. Fortune called in a dog-cart, Fortune's beard and Mrs. F.'s brow glittering with mist-drops, to ask me to come next Saturday. Conditionally, I accepted. Do you think I can cut it? I am only anxious to go slick home on the Saturday. Write by return of post and tell me what to do. If possible, I should like to cut the business and come right slick out to Swanston. — I remain, your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

An early Portfolio paper On *the Enjoyment of Unpleasant Places*, as well as the second part of the *Random Memories* essay, written twenty years later, refer to the same experiences as the following letters. Stevenson lodged during his stay at Wick in a private hotel on the Harbour Brae, kept by a Mr. Sutherland.

Wick, Friday, September 11, 1868.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — ... Wick lies at the end or elbow of an open triangular bay, hemmed on either side 16 by shores, either cliff or steep earth-bank, of no great height. The grey houses of Pulteney extend along the southerly shore almost to the cape; and it is about half-way down this shore — no, six-sevenths way down — that the new breakwater extends athwart the bay.

Certainly Wick in itself possesses no beauty: bare, grey shores, grim grey houses, grim grey sea; not even the gleam of red tiles; not even the greenness of a tree. The southerly heights, when I came here, were black with people, fishers waiting on wind and night. Now all the S.Y.S. (Stornoway boats) have beaten out of the bay, and the Wick men stay indoors or wrangle on the quays with dissatisfied fish-curers, knee-high in brine, mud, and herring refuse. The day when the boats put out to go home to the Hebrides, the girl here told me there was "a black wind"; and on going out, I found the epithet as justifiable as it was picturesque. A cold, *black* southerly wind, with occasional rising showers of rain; it was a fine sight to see the boats beat out a-teeth of it.

In Wick I have never heard any one greet his neighbour with the usual "Fine day" or "Good morning." Both come shaking their heads, and both say, "Breezy, breezy!" And such is the atrocious quality of the climate, that the remark is almost invariably justified by the fact.

The streets are full of the Highland fishers, lubberly, stupid, inconceivably lazy and heavy to move. You bruise against them, tumble over them, elbow them against the wall — all to no purpose; they will not budge; and you are forced to leave the pavement every step.

To the south, however, is as fine a piece of coast scenery as I ever saw. Great black chasms, huge black cliffs, rugged and over-hung gullies, natural arches, and deep green pools below them, almost too deep to let you see the gleam of sand among the darker weed: there are deep caves too. In one of these lives a tribe of gipsies. The men are *always* drunk, simply and truthfully always. From morning to evening the great villainous-looking 17 fellows are either sleeping off the last debauch, or hulking about the cove "in the horrors." The cave is deep, high, and airy, and might be made comfortable enough. But they just live among heaped boulders, damp with continual droppings from above, with no more furniture than two or three tin pans, a truss of rotten straw, and a few ragged cloaks. In winter the surf bursts into the mouth and often forces them to abandon it.

An *émeute* of disappointed fishers was feared, and two ships of war are in the bay to render assistance to the municipal authorities. This is the ides; and, to all intents and purposes, said ides are passed. Still there is a good deal of disturbance, many drunk men, and a double supply of police. I saw them sent for by some people and enter an inn, in a pretty good hurry: what it was for I do not know.

You would see by papa's letter about the carpenter who fell off the staging: I don't think I was ever so much excited in my life. The man was back at his work, and I asked him how he was; but he was a Highlander, and — need I add it? — dickens a word could I understand of his answer. What is still worse, I find the people hereabout — that is to say, the Highlanders, not the northmen — don't understand *me*.

I have lost a shilling's worth of postage stamps, which has damped my ardour for buying big lots of 'em: I'll buy them one at a time as I want 'em for the future.

The Free Church minister and I got quite thick. He left last night about two in the morning, when I went to turn in. He gave me the enclosed. — I remain your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Wick, September 5, 1868. Monday.

MY DEAR MAMMA, — This morning I got a delightful haul: your letter of the fourth (surely mis-dated); papa's 18 of same day; Virgil's *Bucolics*, very thankfully received; and Aikman's *Annals*, a precious and most acceptable donation, for which I tender my most ebullient thanksgivings. I almost forgot to drink my tea and eat mine egg.

It contains more detailed accounts than anything I ever saw, except Wodrow, without being so portentously tiresome and so desperately overborne with footnotes, proclamations, acts of Parliament, and citations as that last history.

I have been reading a good deal of Herbert. He's a clever and a devout cove; but in places awfully twaddley (if I may use the word). Oughtn't this to rejoice papa's heart —

"Carve or discourse; do not a famine fear.
Who carves is kind to two, who talks to all."

You understand? The "fearing a famine" is applied to people gulping down solid vivers without a word, as if the ten lean kine began to-morrow.

Do you remember condemning something of mine for being too obtrusively didactic. Listen to Herbert —

"Is it not verse except enchanted groves
And sudden arbours shadow coarse-spun lines?
Must purling streams refresh a lover's loves?
Must all be veiled, while he that reads divines
Catching the sense at two removes?"

You see, "except" was used for "unless" before 1630.

Tuesday. — The riots were a hum. No more has been heard; and one of the war-steamers has deserted in disgust.

The *Moonstone* is frightfully interesting: isn't the detective prime? Don't say anything about the plot; for I have only read on to the end of Betteredge's narrative, so don't know anything about it yet.

I thought to have gone on to Thurso to-night, but the coach was full; so I go to-morrow instead.

To-day I had a grouse: great glorification.

There is a drunken brute in the house who disturbed my rest last night. He's a very respectable man in general, but when on the "spree" a most consummate fool. When he came in he stood on the top of the stairs and preached in the dark with great solemnity and no audience from 12 p.m. to half-past one. At last I opened my door. "Are we to have no sleep at all for that *drunken brute?*" I said. As I hoped, it had the desired effect. "Drunken brute!" he howled, in much indignation; then after a pause, in a voice of some contrition, "Well, if I am a drunken brute, it's only once in the twelvemonth!" And that was the end of him; the insult rankled in his mind; and he retired to rest. He is a fish-curer, a man over fifty, and pretty rich too. He's as bad again to-day; but I'll be shot if he keeps me awake, I'll douse him with water if he makes a row. — Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

The Macdonald father and son here mentioned were engineers attached to the Stevenson firm and in charge of the harbour works.

Wick, September 1868. Saturday, 10 a.m.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — The last two days have been dreadfully hard, and I was so tired in the evenings that I could not write. In fact, last night I went to sleep immediately after dinner, or very nearly so. My hours have been 10-2 and 3-7 out in the lighter or the small boat, in a long, heavy roll from the nor'-east. When the dog was taken out, he got awfully ill; one of the men, Geordie Grant by name and surname, followed *shoot* with considerable *éclat*; but, wonderful to relate! I kept well. My hands are all skinned, blistered, discoloured, and 20 engrained with tar, some of which latter has established itself under my nails in a position of such natural strength that it defies all my efforts to dislodge it. The worst work I had was when David (Macdonald's eldest) and I took the charge ourselves. He remained in the lighter to tighten or slacken the guys as we raised the pole towards the perpendicular, with two men. I was with four men in the boat. We dropped an anchor out a good bit, then tied a cord to the pole, took a turn round the sternmost thwart with it, and pulled on the anchor line. As the great, big, wet hawser came in it soaked you to the skin: I was the sternest (used, by way of variety, for sternmost) of the lot, and had to coil it — a work which involved, from *its* being so stiff and *your* being busy pulling with all your might, no little trouble and an extra ducking. We got it up; and, just as we were going to sing "Victory!" one of the guys slipped in, the pole tottered — went over on its side again like a shot, and behold the end of our labour.

You see, I have been roughing it; and though some parts of the letter may be neither very comprehensible nor very interesting to *you*, I think that perhaps it might amuse Willie Traquair, who delights in all such dirty jobs.

The first day, I forgot to mention, was like mid-winter for cold, and rained incessantly so hard that the livid white of our cold-pinched faces wore a sort of inflamed rash on the windward side.

I am not a bit the worse of it, except fore-mentioned state of hands, a slight crick in my neck from the rain running down, and general stiffness from pulling, hauling, and tugging for dear life.

We have got double weights at the guys, and hope to get it up like a shot.

What fun you three must be having! I hope the cold don't disagree with you. — I remain, my dear mother, your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

The following will help the reader to understand the passage referring to this undertaking in Stevenson's biographical essay on his father where he has told how in the end "the sea proved too strong for men's arts, and after expedients hitherto unthought of, and on a scale hyper-Cyclopean, the work must be deserted, and now stands a ruin in that bleak, God-forsaken bay." The Russels herein mentioned are the family of Sheriff Russel. The tombstone of Miss Sara Russel is to be seen in Wick cemetery.

Pulteney, Wick, Sunday, September 1868.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — Another storm: wind higher, rain thicker: the wind still rising as the night closes in and the sea slowly rising along with it; it looks like a three days' gale.

Last week has been a blank one: always too much sea.

I enjoyed myself very much last night at the Russels'. There was a little dancing, much singing and supper.

Are you not well that you do not write? I haven't heard from you for more than a fortnight.

The wind fell yesterday and rose again to-day; it is a dreadful evening; but the wind is keeping the sea down as yet. Of course, nothing more has been done to the poles; and I can't tell when I shall be able to leave, not for a fortnight yet, I fear, at the earliest, for the winds are persistent. Where's Murra? Is Cummy struck dumb about the boots? I wish you would get somebody to write an interesting letter and say how you are, for you're on the broad of your back I see. There hath arrived an inroad of farmers to-night; and I go to avoid them to Macdonald if he's disengaged, to the Russels if not.

Sunday (*later*). — Storm without: wind and rain: a confused mass of wind-driven rain-squalls, wind-ragged mist, foam, spray, and great, grey waves. Of this hereafter; in the meantime let us follow the due course of historic narrative.

Seven p.m. found me at Breadalbane Terrace, clad in spotless blacks, white tie, shirt, et cætera, and finished off below with a pair of navvies' boots. How true that the devil is betrayed by his feet! A message to Cummy at last. Why, O treacherous woman! were my dress boots withheld?

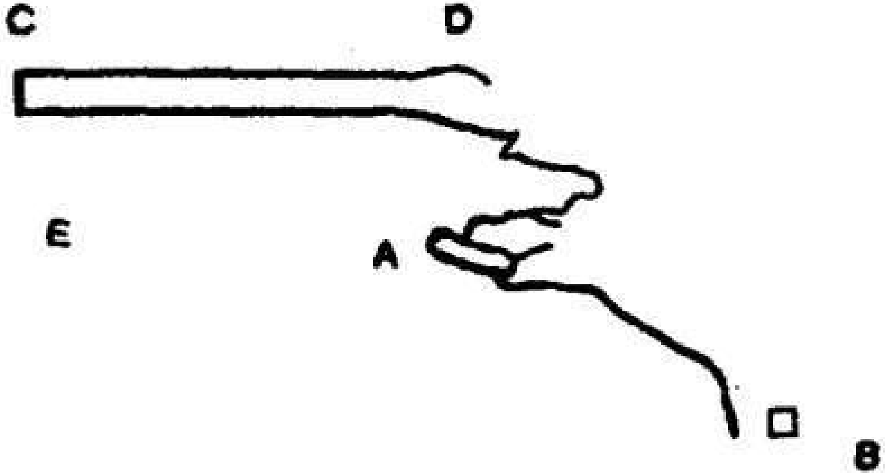
Dramatis personæ: père Russel, amusing, long-winded, in many points like papa; mère Russel, nice, delicate, likes hymns, knew Aunt Margaret ('t'ould man knew Uncle Alan); fille Russel, nominée Sara (no h), rather nice, lights up well, good voice, *interested* face; Miss L., nice also, washed out a little, and, I think, a trifle sentimental; fils Russel, in a Leith office, smart, full of happy epithet, amusing. They are very nice and very kind, asked me to come back — "any night you feel dull: and any night doesn't mean no night: we'll be so glad to see you." *C'est la mère qui parle.*

I was back there again to-night. There was hymn-singing, and general religious controversy till eight, after which talk was secular. Mrs. Sutherland was deeply distressed about the boot business. She consoled me by saying that many would be glad to have such feet whatever shoes they had on. Unfortunately, fishers and seafaring men are too facile to be compared with! This looks like enjoyment! better speck than Anster.

I have done with frivolity. This morning I was awakened by Mrs. Sutherland at the door. "There's a ship ashore at Shaltigoe!" As my senses slowly flooded, I heard the whistling and the roaring of wind, and the lashing of gust-blown and uncertain flaws of rain. I got up, dressed, and went out. The mizzled sky and rain blinded you.

She was a Norwegian: coming in she saw our first gauge-pole, standing at point E. Norse skipper thought it was a sunk smack, and dropped his anchor in full drift of sea: chain broke: schooner came ashore. Insured: laden 23 with wood: skipper owner of vessel and cargo: bottom out.

I was in a great fright at first lest we should be liable; but it seems that's all right.



C D is the new pier.

A the schooner ashore. B the salmon house.

Some of the waves were twenty feet high. The spray rose eighty feet at the new pier. Some wood has come ashore, and the roadway seems carried away. There is something fishy at the far end where the cross wall is building; but till we are able to get along, all speculation is vain.

I am so sleepy I am writing nonsense.

I stood a long while on the cope watching the sea below me; I hear its dull, monotonous roar at this moment below the shrieking of the wind; and there came ever recurring to my mind the verse I am so fond of: —

"But yet the Lord that is on high
Is more of might by far

Than noise of many waters is
Or great sea-billows are."

The thunder at the wall when it first struck — the rush along ever growing higher — the great jet of snow-white spray some forty feet above you — and the "noise of many waters," the roar, the hiss, the "shrieking" among the shingle as it fell head over heels at your feet. I watched if it threw the big stones at the wall; but it never moved them.

Monday. — The end of the work displays gaps, cairns of ten ton blocks, stones torn from their places and turned right round. The damage above water is comparatively little: what there may be below, on *ne sait pas encore*. The roadway is torn away, cross-heads, broken planks tossed here and there, planks gnawn and mumbled as if a starved bear had been trying to eat them, planks with spates lifted from them as if they had been dressed with a rugged plane, one pile swaying to and fro clear of the bottom, the rails in one place sunk a foot at least. This was not a great storm, the waves were light and short. Yet when we are standing at the office, I felt the ground beneath me *quail* as a huge roller thundered on the work at the last year's cross wall.

How could *noster amicus Q. maximus* appreciate a storm at Wick? It requires a little of the artistic temperament, of which Mr. T. S., C.E., possesses some, whatever he may say. I can't look at it practically however: that will come, I suppose, like grey hair or coffin nails.

Our pole is snapped: a fortnight's work and the loss of the Norse schooner all for nothing! — except experience and dirty clothes. — Your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

I omit the letters of 1869, which describe at great length, and not very interestingly, a summer trip on board the lighthouse steamer to the Orkneys, Shetlands, and the Fair Isle. The following of 1870 I give (by consent of the lady who figures as a youthful character in the narrative) both for the sake of its lively social sketches — including that of the able painter and singular personage, the late Sam Bough, — and because it is dated from the Isle of Earraid, celebrated alike in *Kidnapped* and in the essay *Memoirs of an Islet.*

Earraid, Thursday, August 5th, 1870.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I have so much to say, that needs must I take a large sheet; for the notepaper brings with 25 it a chilling brevity of style. Indeed, I think pleasant writing is proportional to the size of the material you write withal.

From Edinburgh to Greenock, I had the ex-secretary of the E.U. Conservative Club, Murdoch. At Greenock I spent a dismal evening, though I found a pretty walk. Next day on board the *Iona*, I had Maggie Thomson to Tarbet; Craig, a well-read, pleasant medical, to Ardrishaig; and Professor, Mrs., and all the little Fleeming Jenkinseses to Oban.

At Oban, that night, it was delicious. Mr. Stephenson's yacht lay in the bay, and a splendid band on board played delightfully. The waters of the bay were as smooth as a mill-pond; and, in the dusk, the black shadows of the hills stretched across to our very feet and the lights were reflected in long lines. At intervals, blue lights were burned on the water; and rockets were sent up. Sometimes great stars of clear fire fell from them, until the bay received and quenched them. I hired a boat and skulled round the yacht in the dark. When I came in, a very pleasant Englishman on the steps fell into talk with me, till it was time to go to bed.

Next morning I slept on or I should have gone to Glencoe. As it was, it was blazing hot; so I hired a boat, pulled all forenoon along the coast and had a delicious bathe on a beautiful white beach. Coming home, I *cotogai'd* my Englishman, lunched alongside of him and his sister, and took a walk with him in the afternoon, during which I find that he was travelling with a servant, kept horses, *et cetera*. At dinner he wished me to sit beside him and his sister; but there was no room. When he came out he told me why he was so *empressé* on this point. He had found out my name, and that I was connected with lighthouses, and his sister wished to know if I were any relative of the Stevenson in Ballantyne's *Lighthouse*. All evening, he, his sister, I, and Mr. Hargrove, of Hargrove and Fowler, sate in front of the hotel. 26 I asked Mr. H. if he knew who my friend was. "Yes," he said; "I never met him before: but my partner knows him. He is a man of old family; and the solicitor of highest standing about Sheffield." At night he said, "Now if you're down in my neighbourhood, you must pay me a visit. I am very fond of young men about me; and I should like a visit from you very much. I can take you through any factory in Sheffield and I'll drive you all about the *Dookeries*." He then wrote me down his address; and we parted huge friends, he still keeping me up to visiting him.

Hitherto, I had enjoyed myself amazingly; but to-day has been the crown. In the morning I met Bough on board, with whom I am both surprised and delighted. He and I have read the same books, and discuss Chaucer, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Fletcher, Webster, and all the old authors. He can quote verses by the page, and has really a very pretty literary taste. Altogether, with all his roughness and buffoonery, a more pleasant, clever fellow you may seldom see. I was very much surprised with him; and he with me. "Where the devil did you read all these books?" says he; and in my heart, I echo the question. One amusing thing I must say. We were both talking about travelling; and I said I was so fond of travelling alone, from the people one met and grew friendly with. “Ah,” says he, “but you’ve such a pleasant manner, you know — quite captivated my old woman, you did — she couldn’t talk of anything else.” Here was a compliment, even in Sam Bough’s sneering tones, that rather tickled my vanity; and really, my social successes of the last few days, the best of which is yet to come, are enough to turn anybody’s head. To continue, after a little go in with Samuel, he going up on the bridge, I looked about me to see who there was; and mine eye lighted on two girls, one of whom was sweet and pretty, talking to an old gentleman. “*Eh bien*,” says I to myself, “that seems the best investment on board.” So I sidled 27 up to the old gentleman, got into conversation with him and so with the damsel; and thereupon, having used the patriarch as a ladder, I kicked him down behind me. Who should my damsel prove, but Amy Sinclair, daughter of Sir Tollemache. She certainly was the simplest, most naïve specimen of girlhood ever I saw. By getting brandy and biscuit and generally coaching up her cousin, who was sick, I ingratiated myself; and so kept her the whole way to Iona, taking her into the cave at Staffa and generally making myself as gallant as possible. I was never so much pleased with anything in my life, as her amusing absence of *mauvaise honte*: she was so sorry I wasn’t going on to Oban again: didn’t know how she could have enjoyed herself if I hadn’t been there; and was so sorry we hadn’t met on the Crinan. When we came back from Staffa, she and her aunt went down to have lunch; and a minute after up comes Miss Amy to ask me if I wouldn’t think better of it, and take some lunch with them. I couldn’t resist that, of course; so down I went; and there she displayed the full extent of her innocence. I must be sure to come to Thurso Castle the next time I was in Caithness, and Upper Norwood (whence she would take me all over the Crystal Palace) when I was near London; and (most complete of all) she offered to call on us in Edinburgh! Wasn’t it delicious? — she is a girl of sixteen or seventeen, too, and the latter I think. I never yet saw a girl so innocent and fresh, so perfectly modest without the least trace of prudery.

Coming off Staffa, Sam Bough (who had been in huge force the whole time, drawing in Miss Amy’s sketchbook and making himself agreeable or otherwise to everybody) pointed me out to a parson and said, “That’s him.” This was Alexander Ross and his wife.

The last stage of the steamer now approached, Miss Amy and I lamenting pathetically that Iona was so near. “People meet in this way,” quoth she, “and then lose sight of one another so soon.” We all landed together, 28 Bough and I and the Rosses with our baggage; and went together over the ruins. I was here left with the cousin and the aunt, during which I learned that said cousin sees me *every Sunday* in St. Stephen's. Oho! thought I, at the "every." The aunt was very anxious to know who that strange, wild man was? (didn't I wish Samuel in Tophet!). Of course, in reply, I drew it strong about eccentric genius and my never having known him before, and a good deal that was perhaps "strained to the extremest limit of the fact."

The steamer left, and Miss Amy and her cousin waved their handkerchiefs, until my arm in answering them was nearly broken. I believe women's arms must be better made for this exercise: mine ache still; and I regretted at the time that the handkerchief had seen service. Altogether, however, I was left in a pleasant frame of mind.

Being thus left alone, Bough, I, the Rosses, Professor Blackie, and an Englishman called M — — : these people were going to remain the night, except the Professor, who is resident there at present. They were going to dine *en compagnie* and wished us to join the party; but we had already committed ourselves by mistake to the wrong hotel, and besides, we wished to be off as soon as wind and tide were against us to Earraid. We went up; Bough selected a place for sketching and blocked in the sketch for Mrs. R.; and we all talked together. Bough told us his family history and a lot of strange things about old Cumberland life; among others, how he had known "John Peel" of pleasant memory in song, and of how that worthy hunted. At five, down we go to the Argyll Hotel, and wait dinner. Broth — "nice broth" — fresh herrings, and fowl had been promised. At 5.50, I get the shovel and tongs and drum them at the stair-head till a response comes from below that the nice broth is at hand. I boast of my engineering, and Bough compares me to the Abbot of Arbroath who originated the Inchcape Bell. At last, 29 in comes the tureen and the hand-maid lifts the cover. "Rice soup!" I yell; "O no! none o' that for me!" — "Yes," says Bough savagely; "but Miss Amy didn't take *me* downstairs to eat salmon." Accordingly he is helped. How his face fell. "I imagine myself in the accident ward of the Infirmary," quoth he. It was, purely and simply, rice and water. After this, we have another weary pause, and then herrings in a state of mash and potatoes like iron. "Send the potatoes out to Prussia for grape-shot," was the suggestion. I dined off broken herrings and dry bread. At last "the supreme moment comes," and the fowl in a lordly dish is carried in. On the cover being raised, there is something so forlorn and miserable about the aspect of the animal that we both roar with laughter. Then Bough, taking up knife and fork, turns the "swarry" over and over, shaking doubtfully his head. "There's an aspect of quiet resistance about the beggar," says he, "that looks bad." However, to work he falls until the sweat stands on his brow and a dismembered leg falls, dull and leaden-like, on to my dish. To eat it was simply impossible. I did not know before that flesh could be so tough. “The strongest jaws in England,” says Bough piteously, harpooning his dry morsel, “couldn’t eat this leg in less than twelve hours.” Nothing for it now, but to order boat and bill. “That fowl,” says Bough to the landlady, “is of a breed I know. I knew the cut of its jib whenever it was put down. That was the grandmother of the cock that frightened Peter.” — ”I thought it was a historical animal,” says I. “What a shame to kill it. It’s as bad as eating Whittington’s cat or the Dog of Montargis.” — ”Na — na, it’s no so old,” says the landlady, “but it eats hard.” — ”Eats!” I cry, “where do you find that? Very little of that verb with us.” So with more raillery, we pay six shillings for our festival and run over to Earraid, shaking the dust of the Argyll Hotel from off our feet.

I can write no more just now, and I hope you will be 30 able to decipher so much; for it contains matter. Really, the whole of yesterday’s work would do in a novel without one little bit of embellishment; and, indeed, few novels are so amusing. Bough, Miss Amy, Mrs. Ross, Blackie, M — — the parson — all these were such distinct characters, the incidents were so entertaining, and the scenery so fine, that the whole would have made a novelist’s fortune.

MY DEAR FATHER, — No landing to-day, as the sea runs high on the rock. They are at the second course of the first story on the rock. I have as yet had no time here; so this is ± and É of my business news. — Your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mrs. Churchill Babington

This is addressed to a favourite cousin of the Balfour clan, married to a Cambridge colleague of mine, Professor Churchill Babington of learned and amiable memory, whose home was at the college living of Cockfield near Bury St. Edmunds. Here Stevenson had visited them in the previous year. “Mrs. Hutchinson” is, of course, Lucy Hutchinson’s famous *Life* of her husband the regicide.

[*Swanston Cottage, Lothianburn, Summer 1871.*]

MY DEAR MAUD, — If you have forgotten the handwriting — as is like enough — you will find the name of a former correspondent (don’t know how to spell that word) at the end. I have begun to write to you before now, but always stuck somehow, and left it to drown in a drawerful of like fiascos. This time I am determined to carry through, though I have nothing specially to say.

We look fairly like summer this morning; the trees are blackening out of their spring greens; the warmer suns have melted the hoarfrost of daisies of the paddock; and the blackbird, I fear, already beginning to “stint his pipe of mellower days” — which is very apposite (I can’t spell anything to-day — *one* p or *two*?) and pretty. All 31 the same, we have been having shocking weather — cold winds and grey skies.

I have been reading heaps of nice books; but I can't go back so far. I am reading Clarendon's *Hist. Rebell.* at present, with which I am more pleased than I expected, which is saying a good deal. It is a pet idea of mine that one gets more real truth out of one avowed partisan than out of a dozen of your sham impartialists — wolves in sheep's clothing — simpering honesty as they suppress documents. After all, what one wants to know is not what people did, but why they did it — or rather, why they *thought* they did it; and to learn that, you should go to the men themselves. Their very falsehood is often more than another man's truth.

I have possessed myself of Mrs. Hutchinson, which, of course, I admire, etc. But is there not an irritating deliberation and correctness about her and everybody connected with her? If she would only write bad grammar, or forget to finish a sentence, or do something or other that looks fallible, it would be a relief. I sometimes wish the old Colonel had got drunk and beaten her, in the bitterness of my spirit. I know I felt a weight taken off my heart when I heard he was extravagant. It is quite possible to be too good for this evil world; and unquestionably, Mrs. Hutchinson was. The way in which she talks of herself makes one's blood run cold. There — I am glad to have got that out — but don't say it to anybody — seal of secrecy.

Please tell Mr. Babington that I have never forgotten one of his drawings — a Rubens, I think — a woman holding up a model ship. That woman had more life in her than ninety per cent. of the lame humans that you see crippling about this earth.

By the way, that is a feature in art which seems to have come in with the Italians. Your old Greek statues have scarce enough vitality in them to keep their monstrous bodies fresh withal. A shrewd country attorney, 32 in a turned white neckcloth and rusty blacks, would just take one of these Agamemnons and Ajaxes quietly by his beautiful, strong arm, trot the unresisting statue down a little gallery of legal shams, and turn the poor fellow out at the other end, "naked, as from the earth he came." There is more latent life, more of the coiled spring in the sleeping dog, about a recumbent figure of Michael Angelo's than about the most excited of Greek statues. The very marble seems to wrinkle with a wild energy that we never feel except in dreams.

I think this letter has turned into a sermon, but I had nothing interesting to talk about.

I do wish you and Mr. Babington would think better of it and come north this summer. We should be so glad to see you both. *Do* reconsider it. — Believe me, my dear Maud, ever your most affectionate cousin,

Louis Stevenson.

To Alison Cunningham

The following is the first which has been preserved of many letters to the admirable nurse whose care, during his ailing childhood, had done so much both to preserve Stevenson's life and awaken his love of tales and poetry, and of whom until his death he thought with the utmost constancy of affection. The letter bears no sign of date or place, but by the handwriting would seem to belong to this year: —

1871?

MY DEAR CUMMY, — I was greatly pleased by your letter in many ways. Of course, I was glad to hear from you; you know, you and I have so many old stories between us, that even if there was nothing else, even if there was not a very sincere respect and affection, we should always be glad to pass a nod. I say, "even if there was not." But you know right well there is. Do not suppose that I shall ever forget those long, bitter nights, when I coughed and coughed and was so unhappy, and you were so patient and loving with a poor, sick child. 33 Indeed, Cummy, I wish I might become a man worth talking of, if it were only that you should not have thrown away your pains.

Happily, it is not the result of our acts that makes them brave and noble, but the acts themselves and the unselfish love that moved us to do them. "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these." My dear old nurse, and you know there is nothing a man can say nearer his heart except his mother or his wife — my dear old nurse, God will make good to you all the good that you have done, and mercifully forgive you all the evil. And next time when the spring comes round, and everything is beginning once again, if you should happen to think that you might have had a child of your own, and that it was hard you should have spent so many years taking care of some one else's prodigal, just you think this — you have been for a great deal in my life; you have made much that there is in me, just as surely as if you had conceived me; and there are sons who are more ungrateful to their own mothers than I am to you. For I am not ungrateful, my dear Cummy, and it is with a very sincere emotion that I write myself your little boy,

Louis.

To Charles Baxter

After a winter of troubled health, Stevenson had gone to Dunblane for a change in early spring; and thence writes to his college companion and lifelong friend, Mr. Charles Baxter: —

Dunblane, Friday, 5th March 1872.

MY DEAR BAXTER, — By the date you may perhaps understand the purport of my letter without any words wasted about the matter. I cannot walk with you to-morrow, and you must not expect me. I came yesterday afternoon to Bridge of Allan, and have been very happy ever since, as every place is sanctified by the eighth sense, Memory. I walked up here this morning (three miles, 34 *tu-dieu!* a good stretch for me), and passed one of my favourite places in the world, and one that I very much affect in spirit when the body is tied down and brought immovably to anchor on a sickbed. It is a meadow and bank on a corner on the river, and is connected in my mind inseparably with Virgil's *Eclogues. Hic corulis mistos inter consedimus ulmos*, or something very like that, the passage begins (only I know my short-winded Latinity must have come to grief over even this much of quotation); and here, to a wish, is just such a cavern as Menalcas might shelter himself withal from the bright noon, and, with his lips curled backward, pipe himself blue in the face, while *Messieurs les Arcadiens* would roll out those cloying hexameters that sing themselves in one's mouth to such a curious lilting chant.

In such weather one has the bird's need to whistle; and I, who am specially incompetent in this art, must content myself by chattering away to you on this bit of paper. All the way along I was thanking God that he had made me and the birds and everything just as they are and not otherwise; for although there was no sun, the air was so thrilled with robins and blackbirds that it made the heart tremble with joy, and the leaves are far enough forward on the underwood to give a fine promise for the future. Even myself, as I say, I would not have had changed in one *iota* this forenoon, in spite of all my idleness and Guthrie's lost paper, which is ever present with me — a horrible phantom.

No one can be alone at home or in a quite new place. Memory and you must go hand in hand with (at least) decent weather if you wish to cook up a proper dish of solitude. It is in these little flights of mine that I get more pleasure than in anything else. Now, at present, I am supremely uneasy and restless — almost to the extent of pain; but O! how I enjoy it, and how I *shall* enjoy it afterwards (please God), if I get years enough allotted to me for the thing to ripen in. When I am a very old 35 and very respectable citizen with white hair and bland manners and a gold watch, I shall hear three crows cawing in my heart, as I heard them this morning: I vote for old age and eighty years of retrospect. Yet, after all, I dare say, a short shrift and a nice green grave are about as desirable.

Poor devil! how I am wearying you! Cheer up. Two pages more, and my letter reaches its term, for I have no more paper. What delightful things inns and waiters and bagmen are! If we didn't travel now and then, we should forget what the feeling of life is. The very cushion of a railway carriage — "the things restorative to the touch." I can't write, confound it! That's because I am so tired with my walk.... Believe me, ever your affectionate friend,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

The “Spec.” is, of course, the famous and historical debating society (the Speculative Society) of Edinburgh University, to which Stevenson had been elected on the strength of his conversational powers, and to whose meetings he contributed several essays.

Dunblane, Tuesday, 9th April 1872.

MY DEAR BAXTER, — I don’t know what you mean. I know nothing about the Standing Committee of the Spec., did not know that such a body existed, and even if it doth exist, must sadly repudiate all association with such “goodly fellowship.” I am a “Rural Voluptuary” at present. *That* is what is the matter with me. The Spec. may go whistle. As for “C. Baxter, Esq.,” who is he? “One Baxter, or Bagster, a secretary,” I say to mine acquaintance, “is at present disquieting my leisure with certain illegal, uncharitable, unchristian, and unconstitutional documents called *Business Letters: The affair is in the hands of the Police*.” Do you hear *that,* you evildoer? Sending business letters is surely a far more hateful and slimy degree of wickedness than sending 36 threatening letters; the man who throws grenades and torpedoes is less malicious; the Devil in red-hot hell rubs his hands with glee as he reckons up the number that go forth spreading pain and anxiety with each delivery of the post.

I have been walking to-day by a colonnade of beeches along the brawling Allan. My character for sanity is quite gone, seeing that I cheered my lonely way with the following, in a triumphant chaunt: “Thank God for the grass, and the fir-trees, and the crows, and the sheep, and the sunshine, and the shadows of the fir-trees.” I hold that he is a poor mean devil who can walk alone, in such a place and in such weather, and doesn’t set up his lungs and cry back to the birds and the river. Follow, follow, follow me. Come hither, come hither, come hither — here shall you see — no enemy — except a very slight remnant of winter and its rough weather. My bedroom, when I awoke this morning, was full of bird-songs, which is the greatest pleasure in life. Come hither, come hither, come hither, and when you come bring the third part of the *Earthly Paradise*; you can get it for me in Elliot’s for two and tenpence (2s. 10d.) (*business habits*). Also bring an ounce of honeydew from Wilson’s.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

In the previous year, 1871, it had become apparent that Stevenson was neither fitted by bodily health nor by inclination for the family profession of civil engineer. Accordingly his summer excursions were no longer to the harbour works and lighthouses of Scotland, but to the ordinary scenes of holiday travel abroad.

Brussels, Thursday, 25th July 1872.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I am here at last, sitting in my room, without coat or waistcoat, and with both window and door open, and yet perspiring like a terra-cotta jug or a Gruyère cheese.

We had a very good passage, which we certainly 37 deserved, in compensation for having to sleep on the cabin floor, and finding absolutely nothing fit for human food in the whole filthy embarkation. We made up for lost time by sleeping on deck a good part of the forenoon. When I woke, Simpson was still sleeping the sleep of the just, on a coil of ropes and (as appeared afterwards) his own hat; so I got a bottle of Bass and a pipe and laid hold of an old Frenchman of somewhat filthy aspect (*fiat experimentum in corpore vili*) to try my French upon. I made very heavy weather of it. The Frenchman had a very pretty young wife; but my French always deserted me entirely when I had to answer her, and so she soon drew away and left me to her lord, who talked of French politics, Africa, and domestic economy with great vivacity. From Ostend a smoking-hot journey to Brussels. At Brussels we went off after dinner to the Parc. If any person wants to be happy, I should advise the Parc. You sit drinking iced drinks and smoking penny cigars under great old trees. The band place, covered walks, etc., are all lit up. And you can't fancy how beautiful was the contrast of the great masses of lamplit foliage and the dark sapphire night sky with just one blue star set overhead in the middle of the largest patch. In the dark walks, too, there are crowds of people whose faces you cannot see, and here and there a colossal white statue at the corner of an alley that gives the place a nice, *artificial*, eighteenth century sentiment. There was a good deal of summer lightning blinking overhead, and the black avenues and white statues leapt out every minute into short-lived distinctness.

I get up to add one thing more. There is in the hotel a boy in whom I take the deepest interest. I cannot tell you his age, but the very first time I saw him (when I was at dinner yesterday) I was very much struck with his appearance. There is something very leonine in his face, with a dash of the negro especially, if I remember aright, in the mouth. He has a great quantity of dark 38 hair, curling in great rolls, not in little corkscrews, and a pair of large, dark, and very steady, bold, bright eyes. His manners are those of a prince. I felt like an overgrown ploughboy beside him. He speaks English perfectly, but with, I think, sufficient foreign accent to stamp him as a Russian, especially when his manners are taken into account. I don't think I ever saw any one who looked like a hero before. After breakfast this morning I was talking to him in the court, when he mentioned casually that he had caught a snake in the Riesengebirge. "I have it here," he said; "would you like to see it?" I said yes; and putting his hand into his breast-pocket, he drew forth not a dried serpent skin, but the head and neck of the reptile writhing and shooting out its horrible tongue in my face. You may conceive what a fright I got. I send off this single sheet just now in order to let you know I am safe across; but you must not expect letters often.

R. L. Stevenson.

P.S. — The snake was about a yard long, but harmless, and now, he says, quite tame.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Hotel Landsberg, Frankfurt, Monday, 29th July 1872.

... Last night I met with rather an amusing adventurette. Seeing a church door open, I went in, and was led by most importunate finger-bills up a long stair to the top of the tower. The father smoking at the door, the mother and the three daughters received me as if I was a friend of the family and had come in for an evening visit. The youngest daughter (about thirteen, I suppose, and a pretty little girl) had been learning English at the school, and was anxious to play it off upon a real, veritable Englander; so we had a long talk, and I was shown 39 photographs, etc., Marie and I talking, and the others looking on with evident delight at having such a linguist in the family. As all my remarks were duly translated and communicated to the rest, it was quite a good German lesson. There was only one contretemps during the whole interview — the arrival of another visitor, in the shape (surely) the last of God's creatures, a wood-worm of the most unnatural and hideous appearance, with one great striped horn sticking out of his nose like a boltsprit. If there are many wood-worms in Germany, I shall come home. The most courageous men in the world must be entomologists. I had rather be a lion-tamer.

To-day I got rather a curiosity — *Lieder und Balladen von Robert Burns*, translated by one Silbergleit, and not so ill done either. Armed with which, I had a swim in the Main, and then bread and cheese and Bavarian beer in a sort of café, or at least the German substitute for a café; but what a falling off after the heavenly forenoons in Brussels!

I have bought a meerschaum out of local sentiment, and am now very low and nervous about the bargain, having paid dearer than I should in England, and got a worse article, if I can form a judgment.

Do write some more, somebody. To-morrow I expect I shall go into lodgings, as this hotel work makes the money disappear like butter in a furnace. — Meanwhile believe me, ever your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Hotel Landsberg, Thursday, 1st August 1872.

... Yesterday I walked to Eckenheim, a village a little way out of Frankfurt, and turned into the alehouse. In the room, which was just such as it would have been in Scotland, were the landlady, two neighbours, and an old peasant eating raw sausage at the far end. I soon 40 got into conversation; and was astonished when the landlady, having asked whether I were an Englishman, and received an answer in the affirmative, proceeded to inquire further whether I were not also a Scotchman. It turned out that a Scotch doctor — a professor — a poet — who wrote books — *gross wie das* — had come nearly every day out of Frankfurt to the *Eckenheimer Wirthschaft*, and had left behind him a most savoury memory in the hearts of all its customers. One man ran out to find his name for me, and returned with the news that it was *Cobie* (Scobie, I suspect); and during his absence the rest were pouring into my ears the fame and acquirements of my countryman. He was, in some undecipherable manner, connected with the Queen of England and one of the Princesses. He had been in Turkey, and had there married a wife of immense wealth. They could find apparently no measure adequate to express the size of his books. In one way or another, he had amassed a princely fortune, and had apparently only one sorrow, his daughter to wit, who had absconded into a *Kloster*, with a considerable slice of the mother's *Geld*. I told them we had no Klosters in Scotland, with a certain feeling of superiority. No more had they, I was told — ”*Hier ist unser Kloster!*” and the speaker motioned with both arms round the taproom. Although the first torrent was exhausted, yet the Doctor came up again in all sorts of ways, and with or without occasion, throughout the whole interview; as, for example, when one man, taking his pipe out of his mouth and shaking his head, remarked *àpropos* of nothing and with almost defiant conviction, "*Er war ein feiner Mann, der Herr Doctor*," and was answered by another with "*Yaw, yaw, und trank immer rothen Wein.*"

Setting aside the Doctor, who had evidently turned the brains of the entire village, they were intelligent people. One thing in particular struck me, their honesty in admitting that here they spoke bad German, and advising me to go to Coburg or Leipsic for German. — ”*Sie sprechen da* 41 *rein*” (clean), said one; and they all nodded their heads together like as many mandarins, and repeated *rein, so rein* in chorus.

Of course we got upon Scotland. The hostess said, "*Die Schottländer trinken gern Schnapps,*" which may be freely translated, "Scotchmen are horrid fond of whisky." It was impossible, of course, to combat such a truism; and so I proceeded to explain the construction of toddy, interrupted by a cry of horror when I mentioned the *hot* water; and thence, as I find is always the case, to the most ghastly romancing about Scottish scenery and manners, the Highland dress, and everything national or local that I could lay my hands upon. Now that

I have got my German Burns, I lean a good deal upon him for opening a conversation, and read a few translations to every yawning audience that I can gather. I am grown most insufferably national, you see. I fancy it is a punishment for my want of it at ordinary times. Now, what do you think, there was a waiter in this very hotel, but, alas! he is now gone, who sang (from morning to night, as my informant said with a shrug at the recollection) what but *'s ist lange her*, the German version of Auld Lang Syne; so you see, madame, the finest lyric ever written *will* make its way out of whatsoever corner of patois it found its birth in.

"Mein Herz ist im Hochland, mein Herz ist nicht hier,
Mein Herz ist im Hochland im grünen Revier.
Im grünen Reviere zu jagen das Reh;
Mein Herz ist im Hochland, wo immer ich geh."

I don't think I need translate that for you.

There is one thing that burthens me a good deal in my patriotic garrulage, and that is the black ignorance in which I grope about everything, as, for example, when I gave yesterday a full and, I fancy, a startlingly incorrect account of Scotch education to a very stolid German on a garden bench: he sat and perspired under it, however, with much composure. I am generally glad enough 42 to fall back again, after these political interludes, upon Burns, toddy, and the Highlands.

I go every night to the theatre, except when there is no opera. I cannot stand a play yet; but I am already very much improved, and can understand a good deal of what goes on.

Friday, August 2, 1872. — In the evening, at the theatre, I had a great laugh. Lord Allcash in *Fra Diavolo*, with his white hat, red guide-books, and bad German, was the *pièce-de-résistance* from a humorous point of view; and I had the satisfaction of knowing that in my own small way I could minister the same amusement whenever I chose to open my mouth.

I am just going off to do some German with Simpson. — Your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Thomas Stevenson

Frankfurt, Rosengasse 13, August 4, 1872.

MY DEAR FATHER, — You will perceive by the head of this page that we have at last got into lodgings, and powerfully mean ones too. If I were to call the street anything but *shady*, I should be boasting. The people sit at their doors in shirt-sleeves, smoking as they do in Seven Dials of a Sunday.

Last night we went to bed about ten, for the first time *householders* in Germany — real Teutons, with no deception, spring, or false bottom. About half-past one there began such a trumpeting, shouting, pealing of bells, and scurrying hither and thither of feet as woke every person in Frankfurt out of their first sleep with a vague sort of apprehension that the last day was at hand. The whole street was alive, and we could hear people talking in their rooms, or crying to passers-by from their windows, all around us. At last I made out what a man was saying 43 in the next room. It was a fire in Sachsenhausen, he said (Sachsenhausen is the suburb on the other side of the Main), and he wound up with one of the most tremendous falsehoods on record, "*Hier alles ruht* — here all is still." If it can be said to be still in an engine factory, or in the stomach of a volcano when it is meditating an eruption, he might have been justified in what he said, but not otherwise. The tumult continued unabated for near an hour; but as one grew used to it, it gradually resolved itself into three bells, answering each other at short intervals across the town, a man shouting at ever shorter intervals and with superhuman energy, "*Feuer — im Sachsenhausen,*" and the almost continuous winding of all manner of bugles and trumpets, sometimes in stirring flourishes, and sometimes in mere tuneless wails. Occasionally there was another rush of feet past the window, and once there was a mighty drumming, down between us and the river, as though the soldiery were turning out to keep the peace. This was all we had of the fire, except a great cloud, all flushed red with the glare, above the roofs on the other side of the Gasse; but it was quite enough to put me entirely off my sleep and make me keenly alive to three or four gentlemen who were strolling leisurely about my person, and every here and there leaving me somewhat as a keepsake.... However, everything has its compensation, and when day came at last, and the sparrows awoke with trills and *carol-ets,* the dawn seemed to fall on me like a sleeping draught. I went to the window and saw the sparrows about the eaves, and a great troop of doves go strolling up the paven Gasse, seeking what they may devour. And so to sleep, despite fleas and fire-alarms, and clocks chiming the hours out of neighbouring houses at all sorts of odd times and with the most charming want of unanimity.

We have got settled down in Frankfurt, and like the place very much. Simpson and I seem to get on very well together. We suit each other capitally; and it is 44 an awful joke to be living (two would-be advocates, and one a baronet) in this supremely mean abode.

The abode is, however, a great improvement on the hotel, and I think we shall grow quite fond of it. — Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

13 Rosengasse, Frankfurt, Tuesday Morning, August 1872.

... Last night I was at the theatre and heard *Die Judin* (*La Juive*), and was thereby terribly excited. At last, in the middle of the fifth act, which was perfectly beastly, I had to slope. I could stand even seeing the cauldron with the sham fire beneath, and the two hateful executioners in red; but when at last the girl's courage breaks down, and, grasping her father's arm, she cries out — O so shudderfully! — I thought it high time to be out of that *galère*, and so I do not know yet whether it ends well or ill; but if I ever afterwards find that they do carry things to the extremity, I shall think more meanly of my species. It was raining and cold outside, so I went into a *Bierhalle*, and sat and brooded over a *Schnitt* (half-glass) for nearly an hour. An opera is far more *real* than real life to me. It seems as if stage illusion, and particularly this hardest to swallow and most conventional illusion of them all — an opera — would never stale upon me. I wish that life was an opera. I should like to *live* in one; but I don't know in what quarter of the globe I shall find a society so constituted. Besides, it would soon pall: imagine asking for three-kreuzer cigars in recitative, or giving the washerwoman the inventory of your dirty clothes in a sustained and *flourishous* aria.

I am in a right good mood this morning to sit here and write to you; but not to give you news. There is a great stir of life, in a quiet, almost country fashion, all about us here. Some one is hammering a beef-steak in the 45 *rez-de-chaussée*: there is a great clink of pitchers and noise of the pump-handle at the public well in the little square-kin round the corner. The children, all seemingly within a month, and certainly none above five, that always go halting and stumbling up and down the roadway, are ordinarily very quiet, and sit sedately puddling in the gutter, trying, I suppose, poor little devils! to understand their *Muttersprache;* but they, too, make themselves heard from time to time in little incomprehensible antiphonies, about the drift that comes down to them by their rivers from the strange lands higher up the Gasse. Above all, there is here such a twittering of canaries (I can see twelve out of our window), and such continual visitation of grey doves and big-nosed sparrows, as make our little bye-street into a perfect aviary.

I look across the Gasse at our opposite neighbour, as he dandles his baby about, and occasionally takes a spoonful or two of some pale slimy nastiness that looks like *dead porridge*, if you can take the conception. These two are his only occupations. All day long you can hear him singing over the brat when he is not eating; or see him eating when he is not keeping baby. Besides which, there comes into his house a continual round of visitors that puts me in mind of the luncheon hour at home. As he has thus no ostensible avocation, we have named him "the W.S." to give a flavour of respectability to the street.

Enough of the Gasse. The weather is here much colder. It rained a good deal yesterday; and though it is fair and sunshiny again to-day, and we can still sit, of course, with our windows open, yet there is no more excuse for the siesta; and the bathe in the river, except for cleanliness, is no longer a necessity of life. The Main is very swift. In one part of the baths it is next door to impossible to swim against it, and I suspect that, out in the open, it would be quite impossible. — Adieu, my dear mother, and believe me, ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson

(*Rentier*).

To Charles Baxter

On the way home with Sir Walter Simpson from Germany. The L.J.R. herein mentioned was a short-lived Essay Club of only six members; its meetings were held in a public-house in Advocate's Close; the meaning of its initials (as recently divulged by Mr. Baxter) was Liberty, Justice, Reverence; no doubt understood by the members in some fresh and esoteric sense of their own.

Boulogne Sur Mer, Wednesday, 3rd or 4th September 1872.

Blame me not that this epistle
Is the first you have from me.
Idleness has held me fettered,
But at last the times are bettered
And once more I wet my whistle
Here, in France beside the sea.
All the green and idle weather
I have had in sun and shower,
Such an easy warm subsistence,
Such an indolent existence
I should find it hard to sever
Day from day and hour from hour.
Many a tract-provided ranter
May upbraid me, dark and sour,
Many a bland Utilitarian
Or excited Millenarian,
— "*Pereunt et imputantur*
You must speak to every hour."
But (the very term's deceptive)
You at least, my friend, will see,
That in sunny grassy meadows
Trailed across by moving shadows
To be actively receptive
Is as much as man can be.
He that all the winter grapples

Difficulties, thrust and ward —
Needs to cheer him thro’ his duty
Memories of sun and beauty
Orchards with the russet apples
Lying scattered on the sward.
Many such I keep in prison,
Keep them here at heart unseen,
Till my muse again rehearses
Long years hence, and in my verses
You shall meet them rearisen
Ever comely, ever green.
You know how they never perish,
How, in time of later art,
Memories consecrate and sweeten
These defaced and tempest-beaten
Flowers of former years we cherish,
Half a life, against our heart.
Most, those love-fruits withered greenly,
Those frail, sickly amourettes,
How they brighten with the distance
Take new strength and new existence
Till we see them sitting queenly
Crowned and courted by regrets!
All that loveliest and best is,
Aureole-fashion round their head,
They that looked in life but plainly,
How they stir our spirits vainly
When they come to us Alcestis-
like returning from the dead!
Not the old love but another,
Bright she comes at Memory’s call
Our forgotten vows reviving
To a newer, livelier living,
As the dead child to the mother
Seems the fairest child of all.
Thus our Goethe, sacred master,
Travelling backward thro’ his youth,
Surely wandered wrong in trying
To renew the old, undying
Loves that cling in memory faster
Than they ever lived in truth.

So; *en voilà assez de mauvais vers.* Let us finish with a word or two in honest prose, tho’ indeed I shall so soon be back again and, if you be in town as I hope, so soon get linked again down the Lothian road by a cigar or two and a liquor, that it is perhaps scarce worth the postage to send my letter on before me. I have just been long enough away to be satisfied and even anxious to get home again and talk the matter over with my friends. I shall have plenty to tell you; and principally plenty that I do not care to write; and I daresay, you, too, will have a lot of gossip. What about Ferrier? Is the L.J.R. think you to go naked and unashamed this winter? He with his charming idiosyncrasy was in my eyes the vine-leaf that preserved our self-respect. All the rest of us are such shadows, compared to his full-flavoured personality; but I must not spoil my own *début*. I am trenching upon one of the essayettes which I propose to introduce as a novelty this year before that august assembly. For we must not let it die. It is a sickly baby, but what with nursing, and pap, and the like, I do not see why it should not have a stout manhood after all, and perhaps a green old age. Eh! when we are old (if we ever should be) that too will be one of those cherished memories I 49 have been so rhapsodizing over. We must consecrate our room. We must make it a museum of bright recollections; so that we may go back there white-headed, and say "Vixi." After all, new countries, sun, music, and all the rest can never take down our gusty, rainy, smoky, grim old city out of the first place that it has been making for itself in the bottom of my soul, by all pleasant and hard things that have befallen me for these past twenty years or so. My heart is buried there — say, in Advocate's Close!

Simpson and I got on very well together, and made a very suitable pair. I like him much better than I did when I started which was almost more than I hoped for.

If you should chance to see Bob, give him my news or if you have the letter about you, let him see it. — Ever your Affct. friend,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

Through the jesting tenor of this letter is to be discerned a vein of more than half serious thinking very characteristic of R. L. S. alike as youth and man.

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, October 1872.

MY DEAR BAXTER, — I am gum-boiled and face swollen to an unprecedented degree. It is very depressing to suffer from gibber that cannot be brought to a head. I cannot speak it, because my face is so swollen and stiff that enunciation must be deliberate — a thing your true gibberer cannot hold up his head under; and writ gibber is somehow not gibber at all, it does not come forth, does not *flow*, with that fine irrational freedom that it loves in speech — it does not afford relief to the packed bosom.

Hence I am suffering from *suppressed gibber* — an uneasy complaint; and like all cases of suppressed humours, this hath a nasty tendency to the brain. Therefore (the more confused I get, the more I lean on Thus's and Hences and Therefores) you must not be down upon me, most 50 noble Festus, altho' this letter should smack of some infirmity of judgment. I speak the words of soberness and truth; and would you were not almost but altogether as I am, except this swelling. Lord, Lord, if we could change personalities how we should hate it. How I should rebel at the office, repugn under the Ulster coat, and repudiate your monkish humours thus unjustly and suddenly thrust upon poor, infidel me! And as for you — why, my dear Charles, "a mouse that hath its lodging in a cat's ear" would not be so uneasy as you in your new conditions. I do not see how your temperament would come thro' the feverish longings to do things that cannot then (or perhaps ever) be accomplished, the feverish unrests and damnable indecisions, that it takes all my easy-going spirits to come through. A vane can live out anything in the shape of a wind; and that is how I can be, and am, a more serious person than you. Just as the light French seemed very serious to Sterne, light L. Stevenson can afford to bob about over the top of any deep sea of prospect or retrospect, where ironclad C. Baxter would incontinently go down with all hands. A fool is generally the wisest person out. The wise man must shut his eyes to all the perils and horrors that lie round him; but the cap and bells can go bobbing along the most slippery ledges and the bauble will not stir up sleeping lions. Hurray! for motley, for a good sound *insouciance*, for a healthy philosophic carelessness!

My dear Baxter, a word in your ear — ”DON'T YOU WISH YOU WERE A FOOL?" How easy the world would go on with you — literally on castors. The only reason a wise man can assign for getting drunk is that he wishes to enjoy for a while the blessed immunities and sunshiny weather of the land of fooldom. But a fool, who dwells ever there, has no excuse at all. *That* is a happy land, if you like — and not so far away either. Take a fool's advice and let us strive without ceasing to get into it. Hark in your ear again: "THEY ALLOW PEOPLE TO REASON 51 IN THAT LAND." I wish I could take you by the hand and lead you away into its pleasant boundaries. There is no custom-house on the frontier, and you may take in what books you will. There are no manners and customs; but men and women grow up, like trees in a still, well-walled garden, "at their own sweet will." There is no prescribed or customary folly — no motley, cap, or bauble: out of the well of each one's own innate absurdity he is allowed and encouraged freely to draw and to communicate; and it is a strange thing how this natural fooling comes so nigh to one's better thoughts of wisdom; and stranger still, that all this discord of people speaking in their own natural moods and keys, masses itself into a far more perfect harmony than all the dismal, official unison in which they sing in other countries. Part-singing seems best all the world over.

I who live in England must wear the hackneyed symbols of the profession, to show that I have (at least) consular immunities, coming as I do out of another land, where they are not so wise as they are here, but fancy that God likes what he makes and is not best pleased with us when we deface and dissemble all that he has given us and put about us to one common standard of — — Highty-Tighty! — when was a jester obliged to finish his sentence? I cut so strong a pirouette that all my bells jingle, and come down in an attitude, with one hand upon my hip. The evening's entertainment is over, — ”and if our kyind friends — — ”

Hurrah! I feel relieved. I have put out my gibber, and if you have read thus far, you will have taken it in. I wonder if you will ever come this length. I shall try a trap for you, and insult you here, on this last page. “O Baxter what a damned humbug you are!” There, — shall this insult bloom and die unseen, or will you come toward me, when next we meet, with a face deformed with anger and demand speedy and bloody satisfaction. *Nous verrons*, which is French.

R. L. Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

In the winter of 1872-73 Stevenson was out of health again; and by the beginning of spring there began the trouble which for the next twelve months clouded his home life. The following shows exactly in what spirit he took it: —

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, Sunday, February 2, 1873.

MY DEAR BAXTER, — The thunderbolt has fallen with a vengeance now. On Friday night after leaving you, in the course of conversation, my father put me one or two questions as to beliefs, which I candidly answered. I really hate all lying so much now — a new found honesty that has somehow come out of my late illness — that I could not so much as hesitate at the time; but if I had foreseen the real hell of everything since, I think I should have lied, as I have done so often before. I so far thought of my father, but I had forgotten my mother. And now! they are both ill, both silent, both as down in the mouth as if — I can find no simile. You may fancy how happy it is for me. If it were not too late, I think I could almost find it in my heart to retract, but it is too late; and again, am I to live my whole life as one falsehood? Of course, it is rougher than hell upon my father, but can I help it? They don't see either that my game is not the light-hearted scoffer; that I am not (as they call me) a careless infidel. I believe as much as they do, only generally in the inverse ratio: I am, I think, as honest as they can be in what I hold. I have not come hastily to my views. I reserve (as I told them) many points until I acquire fuller information, and do not think I am thus justly to be called “horrible atheist."

Now, what is to take place? What a curse I am to my parents! O Lord, what a pleasant thing it is to have just *damned* the happiness of (probably) the only two people who care a damn about you in the world.

What is my life to be at this rate? What, you rascal? Answer — I have a pistol at your throat. If all that I hold true and most desire to spread is to be such death, and worse than death, in the eyes of my father and mother, what the *devil* am I to do?

Here is a good heavy cross with a vengeance, and all rough with rusty nails that tear your fingers, only it is not I that have to carry it alone; I hold the light end, but the heavy burden falls on these two.

Don't — I don't know what I was going to say. I am an abject idiot, which, all things considered, is not remarkable. — Ever your affectionate and horrible atheist,

R. L. Stevenson.

It was the father who, from dislike of a certain Edinburgh Lewis, changed the sound and spelling of his son's second name to Louis (spoken always with the "s" sounded), and it was the son himself who about his eighteenth year dropped the use of his third name and initial altogether.

See a paper on *R. L. Stevenson in Wick*, by Margaret H. Roberton, in Magazine of Wick Literary Society, Christmas 1903.

Aikman's *Annals of the Persecution in Scotland*.

Thomas Stevenson.

II

STUDENT DAYS — *Continued*

NEW FRIENDSHIPS — ORDERED SOUTH

July 1873-May 1874

The year 1873 was a critical one in Stevenson's life. Late in July he went for the second time to pay a visit to Cockfield Rectory, the pleasant Suffolk home of his cousin Mrs. Churchill Babington and her husband. Another guest at the same time was Mrs. Sitwell — now my wife — an intimate friend and connection by marriage of the hostess. I was shortly due to join the party, when Mrs. Sitwell wrote telling me of the "fine young spirit" she had found under her friend's roof, and suggesting that I should hasten my visit so as to make his acquaintance before he left. I came accordingly, and from that time on the fine young spirit became a leading interest both in her life and mine. He had thrown himself on her sympathies, in that troubled hour of his youth, with entire dependence almost from the first, and clung to her devotedly for the next two years as to an inspirer, consoler, and guide. Under her influence he began for the first time to see his way in life, and to believe hopefully and manfully in his own powers and future. To encourage such hopes further, and to lend what hand one could towards their fulfilment, became quickly one of the first of cares and pleasures. It was impossible not to recognise, 55 in this very unacademical type of Scottish youth, a spirit the most interesting and full of promise. His social charm was already at its height, and quite irresistible; but inwardly he was full of trouble and self-doubt. If he could steer himself or be steered safely through the difficulties of youth, and if he could learn to write with half the charm and genius that shone from his presence and conversation, there seemed room to hope for the highest from him. He went back to Edinburgh in the beginning of September full of new hope and heart. It had been agreed that while still reading, as his parents desired, for the bar, he should try seriously to get ready for publication some essays which he had already on hand — one on Walt Whitman, one on John Knox, one on Roads and the Spirit of the Road — and should so far as possible avoid topics of dispute in the home circle.

But after a while the news of him was not favourable. Those differences with his father, which had been weighing almost morbidly upon his high-strung nature, were renewed. By mid-October his letters told of failing health. He came to London, and instead of presenting himself, as had been proposed, to be examined for admission to one of the London Inns of Court, he was forced to consult the late Sir Andrew Clark, who found him suffering from acute nerve exhaustion, with some threat of danger to the lungs. He was ordered to break at once with Edinburgh for a time, and to spend the winter in a more soothing climate and surroundings. He went accordingly to Mentone, a place he had delighted in as a boy ten years before, and during a stay of six months made a slow, but for the time being a pretty complete, recovery. I visited him twice during the winter, and the second time found him coming fairly to himself again 56 in the southern peace and sunshine. He was busy with the essay *Ordered South*, and with that on *Victor Hugo's Romances*, which was afterwards his first contribution to the Cornhill Magazine; was full of a thousand dreams and projects for future work; and was passing his invalid days pleasantly meanwhile in the companionship of two kind and accomplished Russian ladies, who took to him warmly, and of their children. The following record of the time is drawn from his correspondence partly with his parents and partly with myself, but chiefly from the journal-letters, containing a full and intimate record of his daily moods and doings, which he was accustomed to send off weekly or oftener to Mrs. Sitwell.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

This is from his cousin's house in Suffolk. Some of the impressions then received of the contrasts between Scotland and England were later worked out in the essay *The Foreigner at Home*, printed at the head of *Memories and Portraits*: —

Cockfield Rectory, Sudbury, Suffolk, Tuesday, July 28, 1873.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I am too happy to be much of a correspondent. Yesterday we were away to Melford and Lavenham, both exceptionally placid, beautiful old English towns. Melford scattered all round a big green, with an Elizabethan Hall and Park, great screens of trees that seem twice as high as trees should seem, and everything else like what ought to be in a novel, and what one never expects to see in reality, made me cry out how good we were to live in Scotland, for the many hundredth time. I cannot get over my astonishment — indeed, it increases every day — at the hopeless gulf that there is between England and Scotland, and English and Scotch. Nothing is the same; and I feel as strange and outlandish here as I do in France or Germany. Everything by 57 the wayside, in the houses, or about the people, strikes me with an unexpected unfamiliarity: I walk among surprises, for just where you think you have them, something wrong turns up.

I got a little Law read yesterday, and some German this morning, but on the whole there are too many amusements going for much work; as for correspondence, I have neither heart nor time for it to-day.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

After leaving Cockfield Stevenson spent a few days in London and a few with me in a cottage I then had at Norwood. This and the following letters were written in the next days after his return home. “Bob” in the last paragraph is Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson, an elder cousin to whom Louis had been from boyhood devotedly attached: afterwards known as the brilliant painter-critic and author of *Velasquez*, etc.

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, Monday, September 1st, 1873.

I have arrived, as you see, without accident; but I never had a more wretched journey in my life. I could not settle to read anything; I bought Darwin’s last book in despair, for I knew I could generally read Darwin, but it was a failure. However, the book served me in good stead; for when a couple of children got in at Newcastle, I struck up a great friendship with them on the strength of the illustrations. These two children (a girl of nine and a boy of six) had never before travelled in a railway, so that everything was a glory to them, and they were never tired of watching the telegraph posts and trees and hedges go racing past us to the tail of the train; and the girl I found quite entered into the most daring personifications that I could make. A little way on, about Alnmouth, they had their first sight of the sea; and it was wonderful how loath they were to believe that what they saw was water; indeed it was very still and grey and solid-looking under a sky to match. It was 58 worth the fare, yet a little farther on, to see the delight of the girl when she passed into “another country,” with the black Tweed under our feet, crossed by the lamps of the passenger bridge. I remember the first time I had gone into “another country,” over the same river from the other side.

Bob was not at the station when I arrived; but a friend of his brought me a letter; and he is to be in the first thing to-morrow. Do you know, I think yesterday and the day before were the two happiest days of my life? I would not have missed last month for eternity. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

The paper on *Roads* herein mentioned had been planned during walks at Cockfield; was offered to and rejected by the Saturday Review and ultimately accepted by Mr. Hamerton for the Portfolio; and was the first regular or paid contribution of Stevenson to periodical literature.

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, Saturday, September 6, 1873.

I have been to-day a very long walk with my father through some of the most beautiful ways hereabouts; the day was cold with an iron, windy sky, and only glorified now and then with autumn sunlight. For it is fully autumn with us, with a blight already over the greens, and a keen wind in the morning that makes one rather timid of one’s tub when it finds its way indoors.

I was out this evening to call on a friend, and, coming back through the wet, crowded, lamp-lit streets, was singing after my own fashion, “*Du hast Diamanten und Perlen,*” when I heard a poor cripple man in the gutter wailing over a pitiful Scotch air, his club-foot supported on the other knee, and his whole woebegone body propped sideways against a crutch. The nearest lamp threw a strong light on his worn, sordid face and the three boxes 59 of lucifer matches that he held for sale. My own false notes stuck in my chest. How well off I am! is the burthen of my songs all day long — ”*Drum ist so wohl mir in der Welt!*” and the ugly reality of the cripple man was an intrusion on the beautiful world in which I was walking. He could no more sing than I could; and his voice was cracked and rusty, and altogether perished. To think that that wreck may have walked the streets some night years ago, as glad at heart as I was, and promising himself a future as golden and honourable!

Sunday, 11.20 *a.m.* — I wonder what you are doing now? — in church likely, at the *Te Deum*. Everything here is utterly silent. I can hear men’s footfalls streets away; the whole life of Edinburgh has been sucked into sundry pious edifices; the gardens below my windows are steeped in a diffused sunlight, and every tree seems standing on tiptoes, strained and silent, as though to get its head above its neighbour’s and *listen*. You know what I mean, don’t you? How trees do seem silently to assert themselves on an occasion! I have been trying to write *Roads* until I feel as if I were standing on my head; but I mean *Roads*, and shall do something to them.

I wish I could make you feel the hush that is over everything, only made the more perfect by rare interruptions; and the rich, placid light, and the still autumnal foliage. Houses, you know, stand all about our gardens: solid, steady blocks of houses; all look empty and asleep.

Monday night. — The drums and fifes up in the castle are sounding the guard-call through the dark, and there is a great rattle of carriages without. I have had (I must tell you) my bed taken out of this room, so that I am alone in it with my books and two tables, and two chairs, and a coal-skuttle (or *scuttle*) (?) and a *débris* of broken pipes 60 in a corner, and my old school play-box, so full of papers and books that the lid will not shut down, standing reproachfully in the midst. There is something in it that is still a little gaunt and vacant; it needs a little populous disorder over it to give it the feel of homeliness, and perhaps a bit more furniture, just to take the edge off the sense of illimitable space, eternity, and a future state, and the like, that is brought home to one, even in this small attic, by the wide, empty floor.

You would require to know, what only I can ever know, many grim and many maudlin passages out of my past life to feel how great a change has been made for me by this past summer. Let me be ever so poor and thread-paper a soul, I am going to try for the best.

These good booksellers of mine have at last got a *Werther* without illustrations. I want you to like Charlotte. Werther himself has every feebleness and vice that could tend to make his suicide a most virtuous and commendable action; and yet I like Werther too — I don't know why, except that he has written the most delightful letters in the world. Note, by the way, the passage under date June 21st not far from the beginning; it finds a voice for a great deal of dumb, uneasy, pleasurable longing that we have all had, times without number. I looked that up the other day for *Roads*, so I know the reference; but you will find it a garden of flowers from beginning to end. All through the passion keeps steadily rising, from the thunderstorm at the country-house — there was thunder in that story too — up to the last wild delirious interview; either Lotte was no good at all, or else Werther should have remained alive after that; either he knew his woman too well, or else he was precipitate. But an idiot like that is hopeless; and yet, he wasn't an idiot — I make reparation, and will offer eighteen pounds of best wax at his tomb. Poor devil! he was only the weakest — or, at least, a very weak strong man.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, Friday, September 12, 1873.

... I was over last night, contrary to my own wish, in Leven, Fife; and this morning I had a conversation of which, I think, some account might interest you. I was up with a cousin who was fishing in a mill-lade, and a shower of rain drove me for shelter into a tumble-down steading attached to the mill. There I found a labourer cleaning a byre, with whom I fell into talk. The man was to all appearance as heavy, as *hébété*, as any English clodhopper; but I knew I was in Scotland, and launched out forthright into Education and Politics and the aims of one's life. I told him how I had found the peasantry in Suffolk, and added that their state had made me feel quite pained and down-hearted. "It but to do that," he said, "to onybody that thinks at a'!" Then, again, he said that he could not conceive how anything could daunt or cast down a man who had an aim in life. "They that have had a guid schoolin' and do nae mair, whatever they do, they have done; but him that has aye something ayont need never be weary." I have had to mutilate the dialect much, so that it might be comprehensible to you; but I think the sentiment will keep, even through a change of words, something of the heartsome ring of encouragement that it had for me: and that from a man cleaning a byre! You see what John Knox and his schools have done.

Saturday. — This has been a charming day for me from morning to now (5 p.m.). First, I found your letter, and went down and read it on a seat in those Public Gardens of which you have heard already. After lunch, my father and I went down to the coast and walked a little way along the shore between Granton and Cramond. This has always been with me a very favourite walk. The Firth 62 closes gradually together before you, the coast runs in a series of the most beautifully moulded bays, hill after hill, wooded and softly outlined, trends away in front till the two shores join together. When the tide is out there are great, gleaming flats of wet sand, over which the gulls go flying and crying; and every cape runs down into them with its little spit of wall and trees. We lay together a long time on the beach; the sea just babbled among the stones; and at one time we heard the hollow, sturdy beat of the paddles of an unseen steamer somewhere round the cape. I am glad to say that the peace of the day and scenery was not marred by any unpleasantness between us two.

I am, unhappily, off my style, and can do nothing well; indeed, I fear I have marred *Roads* finally by patching at it when I was out of the humour. Only, I am beginning to see something great about John Knox and Queen Mary; I like them both so much, that I feel as if I could write the history fairly.

Sunday. — It has rained and blown chilly out of the East all day. This was my first visit to church since the last Sunday at Cockfield. I was alone, and read the minor prophets and thought of the past all the time; a sentimental Calvinist preached — a very odd animal, as you may fancy — and to him I did not attend very closely. All afternoon I worked until half-past four, when I went out under an umbrella, and cruised about the empty, wet, glimmering streets until near dinner time.

I have finished *Roads* to-day, and send it off to you to see. The Lord knows whether it is worth anything! — some of it pleases me a good deal, but I fear it is quite unfit for any possible magazine. However, I wish you to see it, as you know the humour in which it was conceived, walking alone and very happily about the Suffolk highways and byeways on several splendid sunny afternoons. — Believe me, ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Monday. — I have looked over *Roads* again, and I am aghast at its feebleness. It is the trial of a very “‘prentice hand” indeed. Shall I ever learn to do anything *well*? However, it shall go to you, for the reasons given above.

To Mrs Sitwell

After an outpouring about difficulties at home.

Edinburgh, Tuesday, September 16, 1873.

... I must be very strong to have all this vexation and still to be well. I was weighed the other day, and the gross weight of my large person was eight stone six! Does it not seem surprising that I can keep the lamp alight, through all this gusty weather, in so frail a lantern? And yet it burns cheerily.

My mother is leaving for the country this morning, and my father and I will be alone for the best part of the week in this house. Then on Friday I go south to Dumfries till Monday. I must write small, or I shall have a tremendous budget by then.

7.20 *p.m.* — I must tell you a thing I saw to-day. I was going down to Portobello in the train, when there came into the next compartment (third class) an artisan, strongly marked with smallpox, and with sunken, heavy eyes — a face hard and unkind, and without anything lovely. There was a woman on the platform seeing him off. At first sight, with her one eye blind and the whole cast of her features strongly plebeian, and even vicious, she seemed as unpleasant as the man; but there was something beautifully soft, a sort of light of tenderness, as on some Dutch Madonna, that came over her face when she looked at the man. They talked for a while together through the window; the man seemed to have been asking money. “Ye ken the last time,” she said, “I gave ye two shillin’s for your ludgin’, and ye said — — ” it died off into whisper. Plainly Falstaff and Dame Quickly over again. The man laughed unpleasantly, even 64 cruelly, and said something; and the woman turned her back on the carriage and stood a long while so, and, do what I might, I could catch no glimpse of her expression, although I thought I saw the heave of a sob in her shoulders. At last, after the train was already in motion, she turned round and put two shillings into his hand. I saw her stand and look after us with a perfect heaven of love on her face — this poor one-eyed Madonna — until the train was out of sight; but the man, sordidly happy with his gains, did not put himself to the inconvenience of one glance to thank her for her ill-deserved kindness.

I have been up at the Spec. and looked out a reference I wanted. The whole town is drowned in white, wet vapour off the sea. Everything drips and soaks. The very statues seem wet to the skin. I cannot pretend to be very cheerful; I did not see one contented face in the streets; and the poor did look so helplessly chill and dripping, without a stitch to change, or so much as a fire to dry themselves at, or perhaps money to buy a meal, or perhaps even a bed. My heart shivers for them.

Dumfries, Friday. — All my thirst for a little warmth, a little sun, a little corner of blue sky avails nothing. Without, the rain falls with a long drawn *swish*, and the night is as dark as a vault. There is no wind indeed, and that is a blessed change after the unruly, bedlamite gusts that have been charging against one round street corners and utterly abolishing and destroying all that is peaceful in life. Nothing sours my temper like these coarse termagant winds. I hate practical joking; and your vulgarest practical joker is your flaw of wind.

I have tried to write some verses; but I find I have nothing to say that has not been already perfectly said and perfectly sung in *Adelaïde*. I have so perfect an idea out of that song! The great Alps, a wonder in the star-light — the river, strong from the hills, and turbulent, and loudly audible at night — the country, a scented *Frühlingsgarten* of orchards and deep wood where the nightingales 65 harbour — a sort of German flavour over all — and this love-drunken man, wandering on by sleeping village and silent town, pours out of his full heart, *Einst, O Wunder, einst*, etc. I wonder if I am wrong about this being the most beautiful and perfect thing in the world — the only marriage of really accordant words and music — both drunk with the same poignant, unutterable sentiment.

To-day in Glasgow my father went off on some business, and my mother and I wandered about for two hours. We had lunch together, and were very merry over what the people at the restaurant would think of us — mother and son they could not suppose us to be.

Saturday. — And to-day it came — warmth, sunlight, and a strong, hearty living wind among the trees. I found myself a new being. My father and I went off a long walk, through a country most beautifully wooded and various, under a range of hills. You should have seen one place where the wood suddenly fell away in front of us down a long, steep hill between a double row of trees, with one small fair-haired child framed in shadow in the foreground; and when we got to the foot there was the little kirk and kirkyard of Irongray, among broken fields and woods by the side of the bright, rapid river. In the kirkyard there was a wonderful congregation of tombstones, upright and recumbent on four legs (after our Scotch fashion), and of flat-armed fir-trees. One gravestone was erected by Scott (at a cost, I learn, of £70) to the poor woman who served him as heroine in the *Heart of Midlothian*, and the inscription in its stiff, Jedediah Cleishbotham fashion is not without something touching. We went up the stream a little further to where two Covenanters lie buried in an oak-wood; the tombstone (as the custom is) containing the details of their grim little tragedy in funnily bad rhyme, one verse of which sticks in my memory: —

“We died, their furious rage to stay,
Near to the kirk of Iron-gray.”

66

We then fetched a long compass round about through Holywood Kirk and Lincluden ruins to Dumfries. But the walk came sadly to grief as a pleasure excursion before our return....

Sunday. — Another beautiful day. My father and I walked into Dumfries to church. When the service was done I noted the two halberts laid against the pillar of the churchyard gate; and as I had not seen the little weekly pomp of civic dignitaries in our Scotch country towns for some years, I made my father wait. You should have seen the provost and three bailies going stately away down the sunlit street, and the two town servants strutting in front of them, in red coats and cocked hats, and with the halberts most conspicuously shouldered. We saw Burns’s house — a place that made me deeply sad — and spent the afternoon down the banks of the Nith. I had not spent a day by a river since we lunched in the meadows near Sudbury. The air was as pure and clear and sparkling as spring water; beautiful, graceful outlines of hill and wood shut us in on every side; and the swift, brown river fled smoothly away from before our eyes, rippled over with oily eddies and dimples. White gulls had come up from the sea to fish, and hovered and flew hither and thither among the loops of the stream. By good fortune, too, it was a dead calm between my father and me. Do you know, I find these rows harder on me than ever. I get a funny swimming in the head when they come on that I had not before — and the like when I think of them.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Edinburgh*], *Monday, 22nd September 1873.*

I have just had another disagreeable to-night. It is difficult indeed to steer steady among the breakers: I am always touching ground; generally it is my own blame, for I cannot help getting friendly with my father 67 (whom I *do* love), and so speaking foolishly with my mouth. I have yet to learn in ordinary conversation that reserve and silence that I must try to unlearn in the matter of the feelings.

The news that *Roads* would do reached me in good season; I had begun utterly to despair of doing anything. Certainly I do not think I should be in a hurry to commit myself about the Covenanters; the whole subject turns round about me and so branches out to this side and that, that I grow bewildered; and one cannot write discreetly about any one little corner of an historical period, until one has an organic view of the whole. I have, however — given life and health — great hope of my Covenanters; indeed, there is a lot of precious dust to be beaten out of that stack even by a very infirm hand.

Much later. — I can scarcely see to write just now; so please excuse. We have had an awful scene. All that my father had to say has been put forth — not that it was anything new; only it is the devil to hear. I don't know what to do — the world goes hopelessly round about me; there is no more possibility of doing, living, being anything but a *beast*, and there's the end of it.

It is eleven, I think, for a clock struck. O Lord, there has been a deal of time through our hands since I went down to supper! All this has come from my own folly; I somehow could not think the gulf so impassable, and I read him some notes on the Duke of Argyll — I thought he would agree so far, and that we might have some rational discussion on the rest. And now — after some hours — he has told me that he is a weak man, and that I am driving him too far, and that I know not what I am doing. O dear God, this is bad work!

I have lit a pipe and feel calmer. I say, my dear friend, I am killing my father — he told me to-night (by the way) that I alienated utterly my mother — and this is 68 the result of my attempt to start fair and fresh and to do my best for all of them.

I must wait till to-morrow ere I finish. I am to-night too excited.

Tuesday. — The sun is shining to-day, which is a great matter, and altogether the gale having blown off again, I live in a precarious lull. On the whole I am not displeased with last night; I kept my eyes open through it all, and, I think, not only avoided saying anything that could make matters worse in the future, but said something that *may* do good. But a little better or a little worse is a trifle. I lay in bed this morning awake, for I was tired and cold and in no special hurry to rise, and heard my father go out for the papers; and then I lay and wished — O, if he would only *whistle* when he comes in again! But of course he did not. I have stopped that pipe.

Now, you see, I have written to you this time and sent it off, for both of which God forgive me. — Ever your faithful friend,

R. L. S.

My father and I together can put about a year through in half an hour. Look here, you mustn't take this too much to heart. I shall be all right in a few hours. It's impossible to depress me. And of course, when you can't do anything, there's no need of being depressed. It's all waste tissue.

L.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Edinburgh*], *Wednesday, September 24th 1873.*

I have found another "flowering isle." All this beautiful, quiet, sunlit day, I have been out in the country; down by the sea on my favourite coast between Granton and Queensferry. There was a delicate, delicious haze over the firth and sands on one side, and on the other was the shadow of the woods all riven with great 69 golden rifts of sunshine. A little faint talk of waves upon the beach; the wild strange crying of seagulls over the sea; and the hoarse wood-pigeons and shrill, sweet robins full of their autumn love-making among the trees, made up a delectable concerto of peaceful noises. I spent the whole afternoon among these sights and sounds with Simpson. And we came home from Queensferry on the outside of the coach and four, along a beautiful way full of ups and downs among woody, uneven country, laid out (fifty years ago, I suppose) by my grandfather, on the notion of Hogarth's line of beauty. You see my taste for roads is hereditary.

Friday. — I was wakened this morning by a long flourish of bugles and a roll upon the drums — the *réveillé* at the Castle. I went to the window; it was a grey, quiet dawn, a few people passed already up the street between the gardens, already I heard the noise of an early cab somewhere in the distance, most of the lamps had been extinguished but not all, and there were two or three lit windows in the opposite façade that showed where sick people and watchers had been awake all night and knew not yet of the new, cool day. This appealed to me with a special sadness: how often in the old times my nurse and I had looked across at these, and sympathised!

I wish you would read Michelet's *Louis Quatorze et la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes*. I read it out in the garden, and the autumnal trees and weather, and my own autumnal humour, and the pitiable prolonged tragedies of Madame and of Molière, as they look, darkling and sombre, out of their niches in the great gingerbread façade of the *Grand Âge*, go wonderfully hand in hand.

I wonder if my revised paper has pleased the Saturday? If it has not, I shall be rather sorry — no, very sorry indeed — but not surprised and certainly not hurt. It will be a great disappointment; but I am glad to say that, among all my queasy, troublesome feelings, I have 70 not a sensitive vanity. Not that I am not as conceited as you know me to be; only I go easy over the coals in that matter.

I have been out reading Hallam in the garden; and have been talking with my old friend the gardener, a man of singularly hard favour and few teeth. He consulted me this afternoon on the choice of books, premising that his taste ran mainly on war and travel. On travel I had to own at once my ignorance. I suggested Kinglake, but he had read that; and so, finding myself here unhorsed, I turned about and at last recollected Southey's *Lives of the Admirals*, and the volumes of Macaulay containing the wars of William. Can you think of any other for this worthy man? I believe him to hold me in as high an esteem as any one can do; and I reciprocate his respect, for he is quite an intelligent companion.

On Saturday morning I read Morley's article aloud to Bob in one of the walks of the public garden. I was full of it and read most excitedly; and we were ever, as we went to and fro, passing a bench where a man sat reading the Bible aloud to a small circle of the devout. This man is well known to me, sits there all day, sometimes reading, sometimes singing, sometimes distributing tracts. Bob laughed much at the opposition preachers — I never noticed it till he called my attention to the other; but it did not seem to me like opposition — does it to you? — each in his way was teaching what he thought best.

Last night, after reading Walt Whitman a long while for my attempt to write about him, I got *tête-montée*, rushed out up to M. S., came in, took out *Leaves of Grass*, and without giving the poor unbeliever time to object, proceeded to wade into him with favourite passages. I had at least this triumph, that he swore he must read some more of him. — Ever your faithful friend,

Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

On the question of the authorship of the *Ode to the Cuckoo*, which Burke thought the most beautiful lyric in our language, the debate was between the claims of John Logan, minister of South Leith (1745-1785), and his friend and fellow-worker Michael Bruce. Those of Logan have, I believe, been now vindicated past doubt.

[*Edinburgh*], *Saturday, October 4, 1873.*

It is a little sharp to-day; but bright and sunny with a sparkle in the air, which is delightful after four days of unintermitting rain. In the streets I saw two men meet after a long separation, it was plain. They came forward with a little run and *leaped* at each other's hands. You never saw such bright eyes as they both had. It put one in a good humour to see it.

8 p.m. — I made a little more out of my work than I have made for a long while back; though even now I cannot make things fall into sentences — they only sprawl over the paper in bald orphan clauses. Then I was about in the afternoon with Baxter; and we had a good deal of fun, first rhyming on the names of all the shops we passed, and afterwards buying needles and quack drugs from open-air vendors, and taking much pleasure in their inexhaustible eloquence. Every now and then as we went, Arthur's Seat showed its head at the end of a street. Now, to-day the blue sky and the sunshine were both entirely wintry; and there was about the hill, in these glimpses, a sort of thin, unreal, crystalline distinctness that I have not often seen excelled. As the sun began to go down over the valley between the new town and the old, the evening grew resplendent; all the gardens and low-lying buildings sank back and became almost invisible in a mist of wonderful sun, and the Castle stood up against the sky, as thin and sharp in outline as a castle cut out of paper. Baxter made a good remark about Princes Street, that it was the most elastic street for length that he knew; sometimes it looks, as it looked 72 to-night, interminable, a way leading right into the heart of the red sundown; sometimes, again, it shrinks together, as if for warmth, on one of the withering, clear east-windy days, until it seems to lie underneath your feet.

I want to let you see these verses from an *Ode to the Cuckoo* written by one of the ministers of Leith in the middle of last century — the palmy days of Edinburgh — who was a friend of Hume and Adam Smith and the whole constellation. The authorship of these beautiful verses has been most truculently fought about; but whoever wrote them (and it seems as if this Logan had) they are lovely —

"What time the pea puts on the bloom,
Thou fliest the vocal vale,
An annual guest, in other lands
Another spring to hail.
Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year.
O could I fly, I'd fly with thee!
We'd make on joyful wing
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the spring."

Sunday. — I have been at church with my mother, where we heard "Arise, shine," sung excellently well, and my mother was so much upset with it that she nearly had to leave church. This was the antidote, however, to fifty minutes of solid sermon, varra heavy. I have been sticking in to Walt Whitman; nor do I think I have ever laboured so hard to attain so small a success. Still, the thing is taking shape, I think; I know a little better what I want to say all through; and in process of time, possibly I shall manage to say it. I must say I am a very bad workman, *mais j'ai du courage*: I am indefatigable at 73 rewriting and bettering, and surely that humble quality should get me on a little.

Monday, October 6. — It is a magnificent glimmering moonlight night, with a wild, great west wind abroad, flapping above one like an immense banner, and every now and again swooping furiously against my windows. The wind is too strong perhaps, and the trees are certainly too leafless for much of that wide rustle that we both remember; there is only a sharp, angry, sibilant hiss, like breath drawn with the strength of the elements through shut teeth, that one hears between the gusts only. I am in excellent humour with myself, for I have worked hard and not altogether fruitlessly; and I wished before I turned in just to tell you that things were so. My dear friend, I feel so happy when I think that you remember me kindly. I have been up to-night lecturing to a friend on life and duties and what a man could do; a coal off the altar had been laid on my lips, and I talked quite above my average, and hope I spread, what you would wish to see spread, into one person's heart; and with a new light upon it.

I shall tell you a story. Last Friday I went down to Portobello, in the heavy rain, with an uneasy wind blowing *par rafales* off the sea (or "*en rafales*" should it be? or what?). As I got down near the beach a poor woman, oldish, and seemingly, lately at least, respectable, followed me and made signs. She was drenched to the skin, and looked wretched below wretchedness. You know, I did not like to look back at her; it seemed as if she might misunderstand and be terribly hurt and slighted; so I stood at the end of the street — there was no one else within sight in the wet — and lifted up my hand very high with some money in it. I heard her steps draw heavily near behind me, and, when she was near enough to see, I let the money fall in the mud and went off at my best walk without ever turning round. There is nothing in the story; and yet you will understand how much 74 there is, if one chose to set it forth. You see, she was so ugly; and you know there is something terribly, miserably pathetic in a certain smile, a certain sodden aspect of invitation on such faces. It is so terrible, that it is in a way sacred; it means the outside of degradation and (what is worst of all in life) false position. I hope you understand me rightly. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Edinburgh*], *Tuesday, October 14, 1873.*

My father has returned in better health, and I am more delighted than I can well tell you. The one trouble that I can see no way through is that his health, or my mother's, should give way. To-night, as I was walking along Princes Street, I heard the bugles sound the recall. I do not think I had ever remarked it before; there is something of unspeakable appeal in the cadence. I felt as if something yearningly cried to me out of the darkness overhead to come thither and find rest; one felt as if there must be warm hearts and bright fires waiting for one up there, where the buglers stood on the damp pavement and sounded their friendly invitation forth into the night.

Wednesday. — I may as well tell you exactly about my health. I am not at all ill; have quite recovered; only I am what *MM. les médecins* call below par; which, in plain English, is that I am weak. With tonics, decent weather, and a little cheerfulness, that will go away in its turn, and I shall be all right again.

I am glad to hear what you say about the Exam.; until quite lately I have treated that pretty cavalierly, for I say honestly that I do not mind being plucked; I shall just have to go up again. We travelled with the Lord Advocate the other day, and he strongly advised me in 75 my father's hearing to go to the English Bar; and the Lord Advocate's advice goes a long way in Scotland. It is a sort of special legal revelation. Don't misunderstand me. I don't, of course, want to be plucked; but so far as my style of knowledge suits them, I cannot make much betterment on it in a month. If they wish scholarship more exact, I must take a new lease altogether.

Thursday. — My head and eyes both gave in this morning, and I had to take a day of complete idleness. I was in the open air all day, and did no thought that I could avoid, and I think I have got my head between my shoulders again; however, I am not going to do much. I don't want you to run away with any fancy about my being ill. Given a person weak and in some trouble, and working longer hours than he is used to, and you have the matter in a nutshell. You should have seen the sunshine on the hill to-day; it has lost now that crystalline clearness, as if the medium were spring-water (you see, I am stupid!); but it retains that wonderful thinness of outline that makes the delicate shape and hue savour better in one's mouth, like fine wine out of a finely-blown glass. The birds are all silent now but the crows. I sat a long time on the stairs that lead down to Duddingston Loch — a place as busy as a great town during frost, but now solitary and silent; and when I shut my eyes I heard nothing but the wind in the trees; and you know all that went through me, I dare say, without my saying it.

11. — I am now all right. I do not expect any tic to-night, and shall be at work again to-morrow. I have had a day of open air, only a little modified by *Le Capitaine Fracasse* before the dining-room fire. I must write no more, for I am sleepy after two nights, to quote my book, "*sinon blanches, du moins grises*"; and so I must go to bed and faithfully, hoggishly slumber. — Your faithful

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

On the advice of the Lord Advocate it had been agreed that Stevenson should present himself for admission as a student at one of the London Inns of Court and should come to town after the middle of October to be examined for that purpose. The following two letters refer to this purpose and to the formalities required for effecting it: —

[*Edinburgh, Oct. 15, 1873*], *Wednesday*.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Of course I knew as well as you that I was merely running before an illness; but I thought I should be in time to escape. However I was knocked over on Monday night with a bad sore throat, fever, rheumatism, and a threatening of pleurisy, which last is, I think, gone. I still hope to be able to get away early next week, though I am not very clear as to how I shall manage the journey. If I don't get away on Wednesday at latest, I lose my excuse for going at all, and I do wish to escape a little while.

I shall see about the form when I get home, which I hope will be to-morrow (I was taken ill in a friend's house and have not yet been moved).

How could a broken-down engineer expect to make anything of *Roads*. Requiescant. When we get well (and if we get well), we shall do something better. — Yours sincerely,

R. L. Stevenson.

Ye couche of pain.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Edinburgh, October 16, 1873*], *Thursday.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am at my wits' end about this abominable form of admission. I don't know what the devil it is; I haven't got one even if I did, and so can't sign.

Monday night is the very earliest on which (even if I go on mending at the very great pace I have made 77 already) I can hope to be in London myself. But possibly it is only intimation that requires to be made on Tuesday morning; and one may possess oneself of a form of admission up to the eleventh hour. I send herewith a letter which I must ask you to cherish, as I count it a sort of talisman. Perhaps you may understand it, I don't.

If you don't understand it, please do not trouble and we must just hope that Tuesday morning will be early enough to do all. Of course I fear the exam. will spin me; indeed after this bodily and spiritual crisis I should not dream of coming up at all; only that I require it as a pretext for a moment's escape, which I want much.

I am so glad that *Roads* has got in. I had almost as soon have it in the Portfolio as the Saturday; the P. is so nicely printed and I am *gourmet* in type. I don't know how to thank you for your continual kindness to me; and I am afraid I do not even feel grateful enough — you have let your kindnesses come on me so easily. — Yours sincerely,

Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

When Stevenson a few days later came to London, it was before the physicians and not the lawyers that he must present himself; and the result of an examination by Sir Andrew Clark was his prompt and peremptory despatch to Mentone for a winter's rest and sunshine at a distance from all causes of mental agitation. This episode of his life gave occasion to the essay *Ordered South*, the only one of his writings in which he took the invalid point of view or allowed his health troubles in any degree to colour his work. Travelling south by slow stages, he wrote on the way a long diary-letter from which extracts follow: —

Avignon [*November 1873*].

I have just read your letter upon the top of the hill beside the church and castle. The whole air was filled with sunset and the sound of bells; and I wish I could 78 give you the least notion of the *southernness* and *Provençality* of all that I saw.

I cannot write while I am travelling; *c'est un défaut;* but so it is. I must have a certain feeling of being at home, and my head must have time to settle. The new images oppress me, and I have a fever of restlessness on me. You must not be disappointed at such shabby letters; and besides, remember my poor head and the fanciful crawling in the spine.

I am back again in the stage of thinking there is nothing the matter with me, which is a good sign; but I am wretchedly nervous. Anything like rudeness I am simply babyishly afraid of; and noises, and especially the sounds of certain voices, are the devil to me. A blind poet whom I found selling his immortal works in the streets of Sens, captivated me with the remarkable equable strength and sweetness of his voice; and I listened a long while and bought some of the poems; and now this voice, after I had thus got it thoroughly into my head, proved false metal and a really bad and horrible voice at bottom. It haunted me some time, but I think I am done with it now.

I hope you don't dislike reading bad style like this as much as I do writing it: it hurts me when neither words nor clauses fall into their places, much as it would hurt you to sing when you had a bad cold and your voice deceived you and missed every other note. I do feel so inclined to break the pen and write no more; and here *àpropos* begins my back.

After dinner. — It blows to-night from the north down the valley of the Rhone, and everything is so cold that I have been obliged to indulge in a fire. There is a fine crackle and roar of burning wood in the chimney which is very homely and companionable, though it does seem to postulate a town all white with snow outside.

I have bought Sainte-Beuve's Chateaubriand and am 79 immensely delighted with the critic. Chateaubriand is more antipathetic to me than anyone else in the world.

I begin to wish myself arrived to-night. Travelling, when one is not quite well, has a good deal of unpleasantness. One is easily upset by cross incidents, and wants that *belle humeur* and spirit of adventure that makes a pleasure out of what is unpleasant.

Tuesday, November 11th. — There! There's a date for you. I shall be in Mentone for my birthday, with plenty of nice letters to read. I went away across the Rhone and up the hill on the other side that I might see the town from a distance. Avignon followed me with its bells and drums and bugles; for the old city has no equal for multitude of such noises. Crossing the bridge and seeing the brown turbid water foam and eddy about the piers, one could scarce believe one's eyes when one looked down upon the stream and saw the smooth blue mirroring tree and hill. Over on the other side, the sun beat down so furiously on the white road that I was glad to keep in the shadow and, when the occasion offered, to turn aside among the olive-yards. It was nine years and six months since I had been in an olive-yard. I found myself much changed, not so gay, but wiser and more happy. I read your letter again, and sat awhile looking down over the tawny plain and at the fantastic outline of the city. The hills seemed just fainting into the sky; even the great peak above Carpentras (Lord knows how many metres above the sea) seemed unsubstantial and thin in the breadth and potency of the sunshine.

I should like to stay longer here but I can't. I am driven forward by restlessness, and leave this afternoon about two. I am just going out now to visit again the church, castle, and hill, for the sake of the magnificent panorama, and besides, because it is the friendliest spot in all Avignon to me.

Later. — You cannot picture to yourself anything more steeped in hard bright sunshine than the view from the hill. The immovable inky shadow of the old bridge on the fleeting surface of the yellow river seemed more solid than the bridge itself. Just in the place where I sat yesterday evening a shaven man in a velvet cap was studying music — evidently one of the singers for *La Muette de Portici* at the theatre to-night. I turned back as I went away: the white Christ stood out in strong relief on his brown cross against the blue sky, and the four kneeling angels and lanterns grouped themselves about the foot with a symmetry that was almost laughable; the musician read on at his music, and counted time with his hand on the stone step.

Menton, November 12th. — My first enthusiasm was on rising at Orange and throwing open the shutters. Such a great living flood of sunshine poured in upon me, that I confess to having danced and expressed my satisfaction aloud; in the middle of which the boots came to the door with hot water, to my great confusion.

To-day has been one long delight, coming to a magnificent climax on my arrival here. I gave up my baggage to an hotel porter and set off to walk at once. I was somewhat confused as yet as to my directions, for the station of course was new to me, and the hills had not sufficiently opened out to let me recognise the peaks. Suddenly, as I was going forward slowly in this confusion of mind, I was met by a great volley of odours out of the lemon and orange gardens, and the past linked on to the present, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the whole scene fell before me into order, and I was at home. I nearly danced again.

I suppose I must send off this to-night to notify my arrival in safety and good-humour and, I think, in good health, before relapsing into the old weekly vein. I hope this time to send you a weekly dose of sunshine from the 81 south, instead of the jet of *snell* Edinburgh east wind that used to was. — Ever your faithful friend,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Hôtel du Pavillon, Menton, November 13, 1873.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — The *Place* is not where I thought; it is about where the old Post Office was. The Hôtel de Londres is no more an hotel. I have found a charming room in the Hôtel du Pavillon, just across the road from the Prince's Villa; it has one window to the south and one to the east, with a superb view of Mentone and the hills, to which I move this afternoon. In the old great *Place* there is a kiosque for the sale of newspapers; a string of omnibuses (perhaps thirty) go up and down under the plane-trees of the Turin Road on the occasion of each train; the Promenade has crossed both streams, and bids fair to reach the Cap Martin. The old chapel near Freeman's house at the entrance to the Gorbio valley is now entirely submerged under a shining new villa, with pavilion annexed; over which, in all the pride of oak and chestnut and divers coloured marbles, I was shown this morning by the obliging proprietor. The Prince's Palace itself is rehabilitated, and shines afar with white window-curtains from the midst of a garden, all trim borders and greenhouses and carefully kept walks. On the other side, the villas are more thronged together, and they have arranged themselves, shelf after shelf, behind each other. I see the glimmer of new buildings, too, as far eastward as Grimaldi; and a viaduct carries (I suppose) the railway past the mouth of the bone caves. F. Bacon (Lord Chancellor) made the remark that "Time was the greatest innovator"; it is perhaps as meaningless a remark as was ever made; but as Bacon made it, I suppose it is better than any that I could make. Does it not seem as if things were 82 fluid? They are displaced and altered in ten years so that one has difficulty, even with a memory so very vivid and retentive for that sort of thing as mine, in identifying places where one lived a long while in the past, and which one has kept piously in mind during all the interval. Nevertheless, the hills, I am glad to say, are unaltered; though I dare say the torrents have given them many a shrewd scar, and the rains and thaws dislodged many a boulder from their heights, if one were only keen enough to perceive it. The sea makes the same noise in the shingle; and the lemon and orange gardens still discharge in the still air their fresh perfume; and the people have still brown comely faces; and the Pharmacie Gros still dispenses English medicines; and the invalids (eheu!) still sit on the promenade and trifle with their fingers in the fringes of shawls and wrappers; and the shop of Pascal Amarante still, in its present bright consummate flower of aggrandisement and new paint, offers everything that it has entered into people's hearts to wish for in the idleness of a sanatorium; and the "Château des Morts" is still at the top of the town; and the fort and the jetty are still at the foot, only there are now two jetties; and — I am out of breath. (To be continued in our next.)

For myself, I have come famously through the journey; and as I have written this letter (for the first time for ever so long) with ease and even pleasure, I think my head must be better. I am still no good at coming down hills or stairs; and my feet are more consistently cold than is quite comfortable. But, these apart, I feel well; and in good spirits all round.

I have written to Nice for letters, and hope to get them to-night. Continue to address Poste Restante. Take care of yourselves.

This is my birthday, by the way — O, I said that before. Adieu. — Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

Menton, November 13, 1873.

I must pour out my disgust at the absence of a letter; my birthday nearly gone, and devil a letter — I beg pardon. After all, now I think of it, it is only a week since I left.

I have here the nicest room in Mentone. Let me explain. Ah! there's the bell for the *table d'hôte*. Now to see if there is anyone conversable within these walls.

In the interval my letters have come; none from you, but one from Bob, which both pained and pleased me. He cannot get on without me at all, he writes; he finds that I have been the whole world for him; that he only talked to other people in order that he might tell me afterwards about the conversation. Should I — I really don't know quite what to feel; I am so much astonished, and almost more astonished that he should have expressed it than that he should feel it; he never would have *said* it, I know. I feel a strange sense of weight and responsibility. — Ever your faithful friend,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

In the latter part of this letter will be found the germ of the essay *Ordered South.*

Menton, Sunday [*November 23, 1873*].

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I sat a long while up among the olive yards to-day at a favourite corner, where one has a fair view down the valley and on to the blue floor of the sea. I had a Horace with me, and read a little; but Horace, when you try to read him fairly under the open heaven, sounds urban, and you find something of the escaped townsman in his descriptions of the country, just as somebody said that Morris's sea-pieces were all taken 84 from the coast. I tried for long to hit upon some language that might catch ever so faintly the indefinable shifting colour of olive leaves; and, above all, the changes and little silverings that pass over them, like blushes over a face, when the wind tosses great branches to and fro; but the Muse was not favourable. A few birds scattered here and there at wide intervals on either side of the valley sang the little broken songs of late autumn; and there was a great stir of insect life in the grass at my feet. The path up to this coign of vantage, where I think I shall make it a habit to ensconce myself a while of a morning, is for a little while common to the peasant and a little clear brooklet. It is pleasant, in the tempered grey daylight of the olive shadows, to see the people picking their way among the stones and the water and the brambles; the women especially, with the weights poised on their heads and walking all from the hips with a certain graceful deliberation.

Tuesday. — I have been to Nice to-day to see Dr. Bennet; he agrees with Clark that there is no disease; but I finished up my day with a lamentable exhibition of weakness. I could not remember French, or at least I was afraid to go into any place lest I should not be able to remember it, and so could not tell when the train went. At last I crawled up to the station and sat down on the steps, and just steeped myself there in the sunshine until the evening began to fall and the air to grow chilly. This long rest put me all right; and I came home here triumphantly and ate dinner well. There is the full, true, and particular account of the worst day I have had since I left London. I shall not go to Nice again for some time to come.

Thursday. — I am to-day quite recovered, and got into Mentone to-day for a book, which is quite a creditable walk. As an intellectual being I have not yet begun to re-exist; my immortal soul is still very nearly extinct; but we must hope the best. Now, do take warning by 85 me. I am set up by a beneficent providence at the corner of the road, to warn you to flee from the hebetude that is to follow. Being sent to the South is not much good unless you take your soul with you, you see; and my soul is rarely with me here. I don't see much beauty. I have lost the key; I can only be placid and inert, and see the bright days go past uselessly one after another; therefore don't talk foolishly with your mouth any more about getting liberty by being ill and going south *viâ* the sickbed. It is not the old free-born bird that gets thus to freedom; but I know not what manacled and hide-bound spirit, incapable of pleasure, the clay of a man. Go south! Why, I saw more beauty with my eyes healthfully alert to see in two wet windy February afternoons in Scotland than I can see in my beautiful olive gardens and grey hills in a whole week in my low and lost estate, as the Shorter Catechism puts it somewhere. It is a pitiable blindness, this blindness of the soul; I hope it may not be long with me. So remember to keep well; and remember rather anything than not to keep well; and again I say, *anything* rather than not to keep well.

Not that I am unhappy, mind you. I have found the words already — placid and inert, that is what I am. I sit in the sun and enjoy the tingle all over me, and I am cheerfully ready to concur with any one who says that this is a beautiful place, and I have a sneaking partiality for the newspapers, which would be all very well, if one had not fallen from heaven and were not troubled with some reminiscence of the *ineffable aurore*.

To sit by the sea and to be conscious of nothing but the sound of the waves, and the sunshine over all your body, is not unpleasant; but I was an Archangel once.

Friday. — If you knew how old I felt! I am sure this is what age brings with it — this carelessness, this disenchantment, this continual bodily weariness. I am a 86 man of seventy: O Medea, kill me, or make me young again!

To-day has been cloudy and mild; and I have lain a great while on a bench outside the garden wall (my usual place now) and looked at the dove-coloured sea and the broken roof of cloud, but there was no seeing in my eye. Let us hope to-morrow will be more profitable.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

The history of the scruples and ideas of duty in regard to money expressed in the following letter is set forth and further explained in retrospect in the fragment called *Lay Morals*, written in 1879. The Walt Whitman essay here mentioned is not that afterwards printed in *Men and Books*, but an earlier and more enthusiastic version. Mr. Dowson (of whom Stevenson lost sight after these Riviera days) was the father of the unfortunate poet Ernest Dowson. His acquaintance was the first result of Stevenson's search for "anyone conversable" in the hotel.

Menton, Sunday [*November 30, 1873*].

MY DEAR FRIEND, — To-day is as hot as it has been in the sun; and as I was a little tired and seedy, I went down and just drank in sunshine. A strong wind has risen out of the west; the great big dead leaves from the roadside planes scuttled about and chased one another over the gravel round me with a noise like little waves under the keel of a boat, and jumped up sometimes on to my lap and into my face. I lay down on my back at last, and looked up into the sky. The white corner of the hotel, with a wide projection at the top, stood out in dazzling relief; and there was nothing else, save a few of the plane leaves that had got up wonderfully high and turned and eddied and flew here and there like little pieces of gold leaf, to break the extraordinary sea of blue. It was bluer than anything in the world here; wonderfully 87 blue, and looking deeply peaceful, although in truth there was a high wind blowing.

I am concerned about the plane leaves. Hitherto it has always been a great feature to see these trees standing up head and shoulders and chest — head and body, in fact — above the wonderful blue-grey-greens of the olives, in one glory of red gold. Much more of this wind, and the gold, I fear, will be all spent.

9.20. — I must write you another little word. I have found here a new friend, to whom I grow daily more devoted — George Sand. I go on from one novel to another and think the last I have read the most sympathetic and friendly in tone, until I have read another. It is a life in dreamland. Have you read *Mademoiselle Merquem*?

Monday. — I did not quite know last night what to say to you about *Mlle. Merquem.* If you want to be unpleasantly moved, read it.

I am gloomy and out of spirits to-night in consequence of a ridiculous scene at the *table d'hôte*, where a parson whom I rather liked took offence at something I said and we had almost a quarrel. It was mopped up and stifled, like spilt wine with a napkin; but it leaves an unpleasant impression.

I have again ceased all work, because I felt that it strained my head a little, and so I have resumed the tedious task of waiting with folded hands for better days. But thanks to George Sand and the sunshine, I am very jolly.

That last word was so much out of key that I could sit no longer, and went away to seek out my clergyman and apologise to him. He was gone to bed. I don't know what makes me take this so much to heart. I suppose it's nerves or pride or something; but I am unhappy about it. I am going to drown my sorrows in *Consuelo* and burn some incense in my pipe to the god of Contentment and Forgetfulness.

I do not know, but I hope, if I can only get better, I shall be a help to you soon in every way and no more a trouble and burthen. All my difficulties about life have so cleared away; the scales have fallen from my eyes, and the broad road of my duty lies out straight before me without cross or hindrance. I have given up all hope, all fancy rather, of making literature my hold: I see that I have not capacity enough. My life shall be, if I can make it, my only business. I am desirous to practise now, rather than to preach, for I know that I should ever preach badly, and men can more easily forgive faulty practice than dull sermons. If Colvin does not think that I shall be able to support myself soon by literature, I shall give it up and go (horrible as the thought is to me) into an office of some sort: the first and main question is, that I must live by my own hands; after that come the others.

You will not regard me as a madman, I am sure. It is a very rational aberration at least to try to put your beliefs into practice. Strangely enough, it has taken me a long time to see this distinctly with regard to my whole creed; but I have seen it at last, praised be my sickness and my leisure! I have seen it at last; the sun of my duty has risen; I have enlisted for the first time, and after long coquetting with the shilling, under the banner of the Holy Ghost!

8.15. — If you had seen the moon last night! It was like transfigured sunshine; as clear and mellow, only showing everything in a new wonderful significance. The shadows of the leaves on the road were so strangely black that Dowson and I had difficulty in believing that they were not solid, or at least pools of dark mire. And the hills and the trees, and the white Italian houses with lit windows! O! nothing could bring home to you the keenness and the reality and the wonderful *Unheimlichkeit* of all these. When the moon rises every night 89 over the Italian coast, it makes a long path over the sea as yellow as gold.

How I happened to be out in the moonlight yesterday, was that Dowson and I spent the evening with an odd man called Bates, who played Italian music to us with great feeling; all which was quite a dissipation in my still existence.

Friday. — I cannot endure to be dependent much longer, it stops my mouth. Something I must find shortly. I mean when I am able for anything. However I am much better already; and have been writing not altogether my worst although not very well. Walt Whitman is stopped. I have bemired it so atrociously by working at it when I was out of humour that I must let the colour dry; and alas! what I have been doing in its place doesn't seem to promise any money. However it is all practice and it interests myself extremely. I have now received £80, some £55 of which still remain; all this is more debt to civilisation and my fellowmen. When shall I be able to pay it back? You do not know how much this money question begins to take more and more importance in my eyes every day. It is an old phrase of mine that money is the *atmosphere* of civilised life, and I do hate to take the breath out of other people's nostrils. I live here at the rate of more than £3 a week and I do nothing for it. If I didn't hope to get well and do good work yet and more than repay my debts to the world, I should consider it right to invest an extra franc or two in laudanum. But I *will* repay it. — Always your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter
[*Menton, December, 1873.*]

MY DEAR BAXTER, — At last, I must write. I must say straight out that I am not recovering as I could wish. I am no stronger than I was when I came here, and I 90 pay for every walk, beyond say a quarter of a mile in length, by one or two, or even three, days of more or less prostration. Therefore let nobody be down upon me for not writing. I was very thankful to you for answering my letter; and for the princely action of Simpson in writing to me, I mean before I had written to him, I was ditto to an almost higher degree. I hope one or another of you will write again soon; and, remember, I still live in hope of reading Grahame Murray's address.

I have not made a joke, upon my living soul, since I left London. O! except one, a very small one, that I had made before, and that I very timidly repeated in a half-exhilarated state towards the close of dinner, like one of those dead-alive flies that we see pretending to be quite light and full of the frivolity of youth in the first sunshiny days. It was about mothers' meetings, and it was damned small, and it was my ewe lamb — the Lord knows I couldn't have made another to save my life — and a clergyman quarrelled with me, and there was as nearly an explosion as could be. This has not fostered my leaning towards pleasantry. I felt that it was a very cold, hard world that night.

My dear Charles, is the sky blue at Mentone? Was that your question? Well, it depends upon what you call blue; it's a question of taste, I suppose. Is the sky blue? You poor critter, you never saw blue sky worth being called blue in the same day with it. And I should rather fancy that the sun did shine I should. And the moon doesn't shine either. O no! (This last is sarcastic.) Mentone is one of the most beautiful places in the world, and has always had a very warm corner in my heart since first I knew it eleven years ago.

11th December. — I live in the same hotel with Lord X. He has black whiskers, and has been successful in raising some kids; rather a melancholy success; they are weedy looking kids in Highland clo'. They have a tutor with 91 them who respires Piety and that kind of humble your-lordship's-most-obedient sort of gentlemanliness that noblemen's tutors have generally. They all get livings, these men, and silvery hair and a gold watch from their attached pupil; and they sit in the porch and make the watch repeat for their little grandchildren, and tell them long stories, beginning, "When I was private tutor in the family of," etc., and the grandchildren cock snooks at them behind their backs and go away whenever they can to get the groom to teach them bad words.

Sidney Colvin will arrive here on Saturday or Sunday; so I shall have someone to jaw with. And, seriously, this is a great want. I have not been all these weeks in idleness, as you may fancy, without much thinking as to my future; and I have a great deal in view that may or may not be possible (that I do not yet know), but that is at least an object and a hope before me. I cannot help recurring to seriousness a moment before I stop; for I must say that living here a good deal alone, and having had ample time to look back upon my past, I have become very serious all over. If I can only get back my health, by God! I shall not be as useless as I have been. — Ever yours, *mon vieux*,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Menton, December, 1873*], *Sunday*.

The first violet. There is more sweet trouble for the heart in the breath of this small flower than in all the wines of all the vineyards of Europe. I cannot contain myself. I do not think so small a thing has ever given me such a princely festival of pleasure. I feel as if my heart were a little bunch of violets in my bosom; and my brain is pleasantly intoxicated with the wonderful odour. I suppose I am writing nonsense, but it does not seem nonsense to me. Is it not a wonderful odour? 92 is it not something incredibly subtle and perishable? It is like a wind blowing to one out of fairyland. No one need tell me that the phrase is exaggerated if I say that this violet *sings*; it sings with the same voice as the March blackbird; and the same adorable tremor goes through one’s soul at the hearing of it.

Monday. — All yesterday I was under the influence of opium. I had been rather seedy during the night and took a dose in the morning, and for the first time in my life it took effect upon me. I had a day of extraordinary happiness; and when I went to bed there was something almost terrifying in the pleasures that besieged me in the darkness. Wonderful tremors filled me; my head swam in the most delirious but enjoyable manner; and the bed softly oscillated with me, like a boat in a very gentle ripple. It does not make me write a good style apparently, which is just as well, lest I should be tempted to renew the experiment; and some verses which I wrote turn out on inspection to be not quite equal to *Kubla Khan*. However, I was happy, and the recollection is not troubled by any reaction this morning.

Wednesday. — Do you know, I think I am much better. I really enjoy things, and I really feel dull occasionally, neither of which was possible with me before; and though I am still tired and weak, I almost think I feel a stirring among the dry bones. O, I should like to recover, and be once more well and happy and fit for work! And then to be able to begin really to my life; to have done, for the rest of time, with preluding and doubting; and to take hold of the pillars strongly with Samson — to burn my ships with (whoever did it). O, I begin to feel my spirits come back to me again at the thought!

Thursday. — I sat along the beach this morning under some reeds (or canes — I know not which they are): everything was so tropical; nothing visible but the glaring white shingle, the blue sea, the blue sky, and the green plumes of the canes thrown out against the latter some 93 ten or fifteen feet above my head. The noise of the surf alone broke the quiet. I had somehow got *Ueber allen Gipfeln ist Ruh* into my head; and I was happy for I do not know how long, sitting there and repeating to myself these lines. It is wonderful how things somehow fall into a full satisfying harmony, and out of the fewest elements there is established a sort of small perfection. It was so this morning. I did not want anything further.

To Mrs. Sitwell

In the third week of December I went out to join my friend for a part of the Christmas vacation, and found him without tangible disease, but very weak and ailing: ill-health and anxiety, however, neither then nor at any time diminished his charm as a companion. He left Mentone to meet me at the old town of Monaco, where we spent a few days and from whence these stray notes of nature and human nature were written.

Monaco, Tuesday [*December 1873*]

We have been out all day in a boat; lovely weather and almost dead calm, only the most infinitesimal and indeterminate of oscillations moved us hither and thither; the sails were duly set, and flapped about idly overhead. Our boatman was a man of a delightful humour, who told us many tales of the sea, notably one of a doctor, who was an Englishman, and who seemed almost an epitome of vices — drunken, dishonest, and utterly without faith; and yet he was a *charmant garçon.* He told us many amusing circumstances of the doctor's incompetence and dishonesty, and imitated his accent with a singular success. I couldn't quite see that he was a charming *garçon* — "*O, oui — comme caractère, un charmant garçon.*" We landed on that Cap Martin, the place of firs and rocks and myrtle and rosemary of which I spoke to you. As we pulled along in the fresh shadow, the wonderfully clean scents blew out upon us, as if from islands of spice — only how much better than cloves and cinnamon!

Friday. — Colvin and I are sitting on a seat on the 94 battlemented gardens of Old Monaco. The day is grey and clouded, with a little red light on the horizon, and the sea, hundreds of feet below us, is a sort of purple dove-colour. Shrub-geraniums, firs, and aloes cover all available shelves and terraces, and where these become impossible, the prickly pear precipitates headlong downwards its bunches of oval plates; so that the whole face of the cliff is covered with an arrested fall (please excuse clumsy language), a sort of fall of the evil angels petrified midway on its career. White gulls sail past below us every now and then, sometimes singly, sometimes by twos and threes, and sometimes in a great flight. The sharp perfume of the shrub-geraniums fills the air.

I cannot write, in any sense of the word; but I am as happy as can be, and wish to notify the fact, before it passes. The sea is blue, grey, purple and green; very subdued and peaceful; earlier in the day it was marbled by small keen specks of sun and larger spaces of faint irradiation; but the clouds have closed together now, and these appearances are no more. Voices of children and occasional crying of gulls; the mechanical noise of a gardener somewhere behind us in the scented thicket; and the faint report and rustle of the waves on the precipice far below, only break in upon the quietness to render it more complete and perfect.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

After spending a few days in one of the more retired hotels of Monte Carlo, we went on to Mentone and settled at the Hotel Mirabeau, long since, I believe, defunct, near the eastern extremity of the town. The little American girl mentioned in the last paragraph is the same we shall meet later under her full name of Marie Johnstone.

[*Hotel Mirabeau, Menton*], *January 2nd, 1874*.

Here I am over in the east bay of Mentone, where I am not altogether sorry to find myself. I move so little 95 that I soon exhaust the immediate neighbourhood of my dwelling places. Our reason for coming here was however very simple. Hobson’s choice. Mentone during my absence has filled marvellously.

Continue to address P. R. Menton; and try to conceive it as possible that I am not a drivelling idiot. When I wish an address changed, it is quite on the cards that I shall be able to find language explicit enough to express the desire. My whole desire is to avoid complication of addresses. It is quite fatal. If two P. R.’s have contradictory orders they will continue to play battledoor and shuttlecock with an unhappy epistle, which will never get farther afield but perish there miserably.

You act too much on the principle that whatever I do is done unwisely; and that whatever I do not, has been culpably forgotten. This is wounding to my nat’ral vanity.

I have not written for three days I think; but what days! They were very cold; and I must say I was able thoroughly to appreciate the blessings of Mentone. Old Smoko this winter would evidently have been very summary with me. I could not stand the cold at all. I exhausted all my own and all Colvin’s clothing; I then retired to the house, and then to bed; in a condition of sorrow for myself unequalled. The sun is forth again (laus Deo) and the wind is milder, and I am greatly re-established. A certain asperity of temper still lingers, however, which Colvin supports with much mildness.

In this hotel, I have a room on the first floor! Luxury, however, is not altogether regardless of expense. We only pay 13 francs per day — 3½ more than at the Pavillon on the third floor. — And beggars must not be choosers. We were very nearly houseless, the night we came. And it is rarely that such winds of adversity blow men into king's Palaces.

Looking over what has gone before, it seems to me 96 that it is not strictly polite. I beg to withdraw all that is offensive.

At *table d'hôte,* we have some people who amuse us much; two Americans, who would try to pass for French people, and their daughter, the most charming of little girls. Both Colvin and I have planned an abduction already. The whole hotel is devoted to her; and the waiters continually do smuggle out comfits and fruit and pudding to her.

All well. — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

The M'Laren herein mentioned was of course the distinguished Scotch politician and social reformer, Duncan M'Laren, for sixteen years M.P. for Edinburgh.

[*Menton*], *Sunday, January 4, 1874.*

MY DEAR MOTHER, — We have here fallen on the very pink of hotels. I do not say that it is more pleasantly conducted than the Pavillon, for that were impossible; but the rooms are so cheery and bright and new, and then the food! I never, I think, so fully appreciated the phrase "the fat of the land" as I have done since I have been here installed. There was a dish of eggs at *déjeûner* the other day, over the memory of which I lick my lips in the silent watches.

Now that the cold has gone again, I continue to keep well in body, and already I begin to walk a little more. My head is still a very feeble implement, and easily set a-spinning; and I can do nothing in the way of work beyond reading books that may, I hope, be of some use to me afterwards.

I was very glad to see that M'Laren was sat upon, and principally for the reason why. Deploring as I do much of the action of the Trades Unions, these conspiracy clauses and the whole partiality of the Master and Servant 97 Act are a disgrace to our equal laws. Equal laws become a byeword when what is legal for one class becomes a criminal offence for another. It did my heart good to hear that man tell M'Laren how, as he had talked much of getting the franchise for working men, he must now be content to see them use it now they had got it. This is a smooth stone well planted in the foreheads of certain dilettanti radicals, after M'Laren's fashion, who are willing to give the working men words and wind, and votes and the like, and yet think to keep all the advantages, just or unjust, of the wealthier classes without abatement. I do hope wise men will not attempt to fight the working men on the head of this notorious injustice. Any such step will only precipitate the action of the newly enfranchised classes, and irritate them into acting hastily; when what we ought to desire should be that they should act warily and little for many years to come, until education and habit may make them the more fit.

All this (intended for my father) is much after the fashion of his own correspondence. I confess it has left my own head exhausted; I hope it may not produce the same effect on yours. But I want him to look really into this question (both sides of it, and not the representations of rabid middle-class newspapers, sworn to support all the little tyrannies of wealth), and I know he will be convinced that this is a case of unjust law; and that, however desirable the end may seem to him, he will not be Jesuit enough to think that any end will justify an unjust law.

Here ends the political sermon of your affectionate (and somewhat dogmatical) son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

In the first week of January I went for some necessary work to Paris, with the intention of returning towards the end of the month. The following letter introduces the Russian sisters, Madame 98 Zassetsky and Madame Garschine, whose society and that of their children was to do so much to cheer Stevenson during his remaining months on the Riviera. The French painter Robinet (sometimes in his day known as *le Raphael des cailloux*, from the minuteness of detail which he put into his Provençal coast landscapes) was a chivalrous and affectionate soul, in whom R. L. S. delighted in spite of his fervent clerical and royalist opinions.

[*Menton*], *January 7, 1874*.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I received yesterday two most charming letters — the nicest I have had since I left — December 26th and January 1st: this morning I got January 3rd.

Into the bargain with Marie, the American girl, who is grace itself, and comes leaping and dancing simply like a wave — like nothing else, and who yesterday was Queen out of the Epiphany cake and chose Robinet (the French painter) as her *favori* with the most pretty confusion possible — into the bargain with Marie, we have two little Russian girls, with the youngest of whom, a little polyglot button of a three-year old, I had the most laughable little scene at lunch to-day. I was watching her being fed with great amusement, her face being as broad as it is long, and her mouth capable of unlimited extension; when suddenly, her eye catching mine, the fashion of her countenance was changed, and regarding me with a really admirable appearance of offended dignity, she said something in Italian which made everybody laugh much. It was explained to me that she had said I was very *polisson* to stare at her. After this she was somewhat taken up with me, and after some examination she announced emphatically to the whole table, in German, that I was a *Mädchen*; which word she repeated with shrill emphasis, as though fearing that her proposition would be called in question — *Mädchen, Mädchen, Mädchen, Mädchen*. This hasty conclusion as to my sex she was led afterwards to revise, I am informed; but her new opinion (which seems to have been something nearer the truth) was announced in a third language quite unknown 99 to me, and probably Russian. To complete the scroll of her accomplishments, she was brought round the table after the meal was over, and said good-bye to me in very commendable English.

The weather I shall say nothing about, as I am incapable of explaining my sentiments upon that subject before a lady. But my health is really greatly improved: I begin to recognise myself occasionally now and again, not without satisfaction.

Please remember me very kindly to Professor Swan; I wish I had a story to send him; but story, Lord bless you, I have none to tell, sir, unless it is the foregoing adventure with the little polyglot. The best of that depends on the significance of *polisson*, which is beautifully out of place.

Saturday, 10th January. — The little Russian kid is only two and a half: she speaks six languages. She and her sister (æt. 8) and May Johnstone (æt. 8) are the delight of my life. Last night I saw them all dancing — O it was jolly; kids are what is the matter with me. After the dancing, we all — that is the two Russian ladies, Robinet the French painter, Mr. and Mrs. Johnstone, two governesses, and fitful kids joining us at intervals — played a game of the stool of repentance in the Gallic idiom.

O — I have not told you that Colvin is gone; however, he is coming back again; has left clothes in pawn to me. — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

[*Menton*], *Sunday, 11th January 1874*.

In many ways this hotel is more amusing than the Pavillon. There are the children, to begin with; and then there are games every evening — the stool of repentance, question and answer, etc.; and then we speak French, 100 although that is not exactly an advantage in so far as personal brilliancy is concerned.

I am in lovely health again to-day: I-walked as far as the Pont St. Louis very nearly, besides walking and knocking about among the olives in the afternoon. I do not make much progress with my French; but I do make a little, I think. I was pleased with my success this evening, though I do not know if others shared the satisfaction.

The two Russian ladies are from Georgia all the way. They do not at all answer to the description of Georgian slaves however, being graceful and refined, and only good-looking after you know them a bit.

Please remember me very kindly to the Jenkins, and thank them for having asked about me. Tell Mrs. J. that I am engaged perfecting myself in the "Gallic idiom," in order to be a worthier Vatel for the future. Monsieur Folleté, our host, is a Vatel by the way. He cooks himself, and is not insensible to flattery on the score of his table. I began, of course, to complain of the wine (part of the routine of life at Mentone); I told him that where one found a kitchen so exquisite, one astonished oneself that the wine was not up to the same form. "Et voilà précisément mon côté faible, monsieur," he replied, with an indescribable amplitude of gesture. "Que voulez-vous? Moi, je suis cuisinier!" It was as though Shakespeare, called to account for some such peccadillo as the Bohemian seaport, should answer magnificently that he was a poet. So Folleté lives in a golden zone of a certain sort — a golden, or rather torrid zone, whence he issues twice daily purple as to his face — and all these clouds and vapours and ephemeral winds pass far below him and disturb him not.

He has another hobby however — his garden, round which it is his highest pleasure to lead the unwilling guest. Whenever he is not in the kitchen, he is hanging round loose, seeking whom he may show his garden to. Much 101 of my time is passed in studiously avoiding him, and I have brought the art to a very extreme pitch of perfection. The fox, often hunted, becomes wary. — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Menton*], *Tuesday, 13th January 1874.*

... I lost a Philipine to little Mary Johnstone last night; so to-day I sent her a rubbishing doll's toilet, and a little note with it, with some verses telling how happy children made every one near them happy also, and advising her to keep the lines, and some day, when she was "grown a stately demoiselle," it would make her "glad to know she gave pleasure long ago," all in a very lame fashion, with just a note of prose at the end, telling her to mind her doll and the dog, and not trouble her little head just now to understand the bad verses; for some time when she was ill, as I am now, they would be plain to her and make her happy. She has just been here to thank me, and has left me very happy. Children are certainly too good to be true.

Yesterday I walked too far, and spent all the afternoon on the outside of my bed; went finally to rest at nine, and slept nearly twelve hours on the stretch. Bennet (the doctor), when told of it this morning, augured well for my recovery; he said youth must be putting in strong; of course I ought not to have slept at all. As it was, I dreamed *horridly*; but not my usual dreams of social miseries and misunderstandings and all sorts of crucifixions of the spirit; but of good, cheery, physical things — of long successions of vaulted, dimly lit cellars full of black water, in which I went swimming among toads and unutterable, cold, blind fishes. Now and then these cellars opened up into sort of domed music-hall places, where one could land for a little on the slope of the orchestra,[102] but a sort of horror prevented one from staying long, and made one plunge back again into the dead waters. Then my dream changed, and I was a sort of Siamese pirate, on a very high deck with several others. The ship was almost captured, and we were fighting desperately. The hideous engines we used and the perfectly incredible carnage that we effected by means of them kept me cheery, as you may imagine; especially as I felt all the time my sympathy with the boarders, and knew that I was only a prisoner with these horrid Malays. Then I saw a signal being given, and knew they were going to blow up the ship. I leaped right off, and heard my captors splash in the water after me as thick as pebbles when a bit of river bank has given way beneath the foot. I never heard the ship blow up; but I spent the rest of the night swimming about some piles with the whole sea full of Malays, searching for me with knives in their mouths. They could swim any distance under water, and every now and again, just as I was beginning to reckon myself safe, a cold hand would be laid on my ankle — ugh!

However, my long sleep, troubled as it was, put me all right again, and I was able to work acceptably this morning and be very jolly all day. This evening I have had a great deal of talk with both the Russian ladies; they talked very nicely, and are bright, likable women both. They come from Georgia.

Wednesday, 10.30. — We have all been to tea to-night at the Russians’ villa. Tea was made out of a samovar, which is something like a small steam engine, and whose principal advantage is that it burns the fingers of all who lay their profane touch upon it. After tea Madame Z. played Russian airs, very plaintive and pretty; so the evening was Muscovite from beginning to end. Madame G.’s daughter danced a tarantella, which was very pretty.

Whenever Nelitchka cries — and she never cries except from pain — all that one has to do is to start “Malbrook s’en va-t-en guerre.” She cannot resist the attraction; 103 she is drawn through her sobs into the air; and in a moment there is Nellie singing, with the glad look that comes into her face always when she sings, and all the tears and pain forgotten.

It is wonderful, before I shut this up, how that child remains ever interesting to me. Nothing can stale her infinite variety; and yet it is not very various. You see her thinking what she is to do or to say next, with a funny grave air of reserve, and then the face breaks up into a smile, and it is probably "Berecchino!" said with that sudden little jump of the voice that one knows in children, as the escape of a jack-in-the-box, and, somehow, I am quite happy after that!

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Menton, January 1874*], *Wednesday*.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — It is still so cold, I cannot tell you how miserable the weather is. I have begun my "Walt Whitman" again seriously. Many winds have blown since I last laid it down, when sickness took me in Edinburgh. It seems almost like an ill-considered jest to take up these old sentences, written by so different a person under circumstances so different, and try to string them together and organise them into something anyway whole and comely; it is like continuing another man's book. Almost every word is a little out of tune to me now but I shall pull it through for all that and make something that will interest you yet on this subject that I had proposed to myself and partly planned already, before I left for Cockfield last July.

I am very anxious to hear how you are. My own health is quite very good; I am a healthy octogenarian; very old, I thank you and of course not so active as a young man, but hale withal: a lusty December. This is so; such is R. L. S.

I am a little bothered about Bob, a little afraid that he is living too poorly. The fellow he chums with spends only two francs a day on food, with a little excess every day or two to keep body and soul together, and though Bob is not so austere I am afraid he draws it rather too fine himself.

Friday. — We have all got our photographs; it is pretty fair, they say, of me and as they are particular in the matter of photographs, and besides partial judges I suppose I may take that for proven. Of Nellie there is one quite adorable. The weather is still cold. My "Walt Whitman" at last looks really well: I think it is going to get into shape in spite of the long gestation.

Sunday. — Still cold and grey, and a high imperious wind off the sea. I see nothing particularly *couleur de rose* this morning: but I am trying to be faithful to my creed and hope. O yes, one can do something to make things happier and better; and to give a good example before men and show them how goodness and fortitude and faith remain undiminished after they have been stripped bare of all that is formal and outside. We must do that; you have done it already; and I shall follow and shall make a worthy life, and you must live to approve of me.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

The following are two different impressions of the Mediterranean, dated on two different Mondays in January: —

Yes, I am much better; very much better I think I may say. Although it is funny how I have ceased to be able to write with the improvement of my health. Do you notice how for some time back you have had no descriptions of anything? The reason is that I can't describe anything. No words come to me when I see a thing. I want awfully to tell you to-day about a little "*piece*" of green sea, and gulls, and clouded sky with 105 the usual golden mountain-breaks to the southward. It was wonderful, the sea near at hand was living emerald; the white breasts and wings of the gulls as they circled above — high above even — were dyed bright green by the reflection. And if you could only have seen or if any right word would only come to my pen to tell you how wonderfully these illuminated birds floated hither and thither under the grey purples of the sky!

To-day has been windy but not cold. The sea was troubled and had a fine fresh saline smell like our own seas, and the sight of the breaking waves, and above all the spray that drove now and again in my face, carried me back to storms that I have enjoyed, O how much! in other places. Still (as Madame Zassetsky justly remarked) there is something irritating in a stormy sea whose waves come always to the same spot and never farther: it looks like playing at passion: it reminds one of the loathsome sham waves in a stage ocean.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Menton, January 1874.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I write to let you know that my cousin may possibly come to Paris before you leave; he will likely look you up to hear about me, etc. I want to tell you about him before you see him, as I am tired of people misjudging him. You know *me* now. Well, Bob is just such another mutton, only somewhat farther wandered. He has all the same elements of character that I have: no two people were ever more alike, only that the world has gone more unfortunately for him although more evenly. Besides which, he is really a gentleman, and an admirable true friend, which is not a common article. I write this as a letter of introduction in case he should catch you ere you leave.

Monday. — No letters to-day. *Sacré chien, Dieu de Dieu* — and I have written with exemplary industry. But I am hoping that no news is good news and shall continue so to hope until all is blue. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

It had been a very cold Christmas at Monaco and Monte Carlo, and Stevenson had no adequate overcoat, so it was agreed that when I went to Paris I should try and find him a warm cloak or wrap. I amused myself looking for one suited to his taste for the picturesque and piratical in apparel, and found one in the style of 1830-40, dark blue and flowing, and fastening with a snake buckle.

[*Menton, January 1874*], *Friday.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Thank you very much for your note. This morning I am stupid again; can do nothing at all; am no good "comme plumitif." I think it must be the cold outside. At least that would explain my addled head and intense laziness.

O why did you tell me about that cloak? Why didn't you buy it? Isn't it in *Julius Cæsar* that Pompey blames — no not Pompey but a friend of Pompey's — well, Pompey's friend, I mean the friend of Pompey — blames somebody else who was his friend — that is who was the friend of Pompey's friend — because he (the friend of Pompey's friend) had not done something right off, but had come and asked him (Pompey's friend) whether he (the friend of Pompey's friend) ought to do it or no? There I fold my hands with some complacency: that's a piece of very good narration. I am getting into good form. These classical instances are always distracting. I was talking of the cloak. It's awfully dear. Are there no cheap and nasty imitations? Think of that — if, however, it were the opinion (ahem) of competent persons that the great cost of the mantle in question was no more than proportionate 107 to its durability; if it were to be a joy for ever; if it would cover my declining years and survive me in anything like integrity for the comfort of my executors; if — I have the word — if the price indicates (as it seems) the quality of *perdurability* in the fabric; if, in fact, it would not be extravagant, but only the leariest economy to lay out £5 .. 15 .. in a single mantle without seam and without price, and if — and if — it really fastens with an agrafe — I would Buy it. But not unless. If not a cheap imitation would be the move. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

The following is in answer to a set of numbered questions, of which the first three are of no general interest.

[*Menton*], *Monday, January 19th, 1874.*

Answers to a series of questions.

……..

4. Nelitchka, or Nelitska, as you know already by this time, is my adorable kid's name. Her laugh does more good to one's health than a month at the seaside: as she said to-day herself, when asked whether she was a boy or a girl, after having denied both with gravity, she is an angel.

5. O no, her brain is not in a chaos; it is only the brains of those who hear her. It is all plain sailing for her. She wishes to refuse or deny anything, and there is the English "No fank you" ready to her hand; she wishes to admire anything, and there is the German "schön"; she wishes to sew (which she does with admirable seriousness and clumsiness), and there is the French "coudre"; she wishes to say she is ill, and there is the Russian "bulla"; she wishes to be down on any one, and there is the Italian "Berecchino"; she wishes to play at a railway train, and there is her own original word 108 "Collie" (say the o with a sort of Gaelic twirl). And all these words are equally good.

7. I am called M. Stevenson by everybody except Nelitchka, who calls me M. Berecchino.

8. The weather to-day is no end: as bright and as warm as ever. I have been out on the beach all afternoon with the Russians. Madame Garschine has been reading Russian to me; and I cannot tell prose from verse in that delectable tongue, which is a pity. Johnson came out to tell us that Corsica was visible, and there it was over a white, sweltering sea, just a little darker than the pallid blue of the sky, and when one looked at it closely, breaking up into sun-brightened peaks.

I may mention that Robinet has never heard an Englishman with so little accent as I have — ahem — ahem — eh? — What do you say to that? I don't suppose I have said five sentences in English to-day; all French; all bad French, alas!

I am thought to be looking better. Madame Zassetsky said I was all green when I came here first, but that I am all right in colour now, and she thinks fatter. I am very partial to the Russians; I believe they are rather partial to me. I am supposed to be an *esprit observateur! À mon age, c'est étonnant comme je suis observateur!*

The second volume of *Clément Marot* has come. Where and O where is the first? — Ever your affectionate

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

The Bottle here mentioned is a story that had been some time in hand called *The Curate of Anstruther's Bottle*; afterwards abandoned like so many early attempts of the same kind.

[*Menton, January 1874.*]

MY DEAR S. C., — I suppose this will be my last note then. I think you will find everything very jolly here, I 109 am very jolly myself. I worked six hours to-day. I am occupied in transcribing *The Bottle*, which is pleasant work to me; I find much in it that I still think excellent and much that I am doubtful about; my convention is so terribly difficult that I have to put out much that pleases me, and much that I still preserve I only preserve with misgiving. I wonder if my convention is not a little too hard and too much in the style of those decadent curiosities, poems without the letter E, poems going with the alphabet and the like. And yet the idea, if rightly understood and treated as a convention always and not as an abstract principle, should not so much hamper one as it seems to do. The idea is not, of course, to put in nothing but what would naturally have been noted and remembered and handed down, but not to put in anything that would make a person stop and say — how could this be known? Without doubt it has the advantage of making one rely on the essential interest of a situation and not cocker up and validify feeble intrigue with incidental fine writing and scenery, and pyrotechnic exhibitions of inappropriate cleverness and sensibility. I remember Bob once saying to me that the quadrangle of Edinburgh University was a good thing and our having a talk as to how it could be employed in different arts. I then stated that the different doors and staircases ought to be brought before a reader of a story not by mere recapitulation but by the use of them, by the descent of different people one after another by each of them. And that the grand feature of shadow and the light of the one lamp in the corner should also be introduced only as they enabled people in the story to see one another or prevented them. And finally that whatever could not thus be worked into the evolution of the action had no right to be commemorated at all. After all, it is a story you are telling; not a place you are to describe; and everything that does not attach itself to the story is out of place.

This is a lecture not a letter, and it seems rather like sending coals to Newcastle to write a lecture to a subsidised professor. I hope you have seen Bob by this time. I know he is anxious to meet you and I am in great anxiety to know what you think of his prospects — frankly, of course: as for his person, I don't care a damn what you think of it: I am case-hardened in that matter.

I wrote a French note to Madame Zassetsky the other day, and there were no errors in it. The complete Gaul, as you may see. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Menton, January, 1874.*]

... Last night I had a quarrel with the American on politics. It is odd how it irritates you to hear certain political statements made. He was excited, and he began suddenly to abuse our conduct to America. I, of course, admitted right and left that we had behaved disgracefully (as we had); until somehow I got tired of turning alternate cheeks and getting duly buffeted; and when he said that the Alabama money had not wiped out the injury, I suggested, in language (I remember) of admirable directness and force, that it was a pity they had taken the money in that case. He lost his temper at once, and cried out that his dearest wish was a war with England; whereupon I also lost my temper, and, thundering at the pitch of my voice, I left him and went away by myself to another part of the garden. A very tender reconciliation took place, and I think there will come no more harm out of it. We are both of us nervous people, and he had had a very long walk and a good deal of beer at dinner: that explains the scene a little. But I regret having employed so much of the voice with which I have been endowed, as I fear every person in 111 the hotel was taken into confidence as to my sentiments, just at the very juncture when neither the sentiments nor (perhaps) the language had been sufficiently considered.

Friday. — You have not yet heard of my book? — *Four Great Scotsmen* — John Knox, David Hume, Robert Burns, Walter Scott. These, their lives, their work, the social media in which they lived and worked, with, if I can so make it, the strong current of the race making itself felt underneath and throughout — this is my idea. You must tell me what you think of it. The Knox will really be new matter, as his life hitherto has been disgracefully written, and the events are romantic and rapid; the character very strong, salient, and worthy; much interest as to the future of Scotland, and as to that part of him which was truly modern under his Hebrew disguise. Hume, of course, the urbane, cheerful, gentlemanly, letter-writing eighteenth century, full of attraction, and much that I don't yet know as to his work. Burns, the sentimental side that there is in most Scotsmen, his poor troubled existence, how far his poems were his personally, and how far national, the question of the framework of society in Scotland, and its fatal effect upon the finest natures. Scott again, the ever delightful man, sane, courageous, admirable; the birth of Romance, in a dawn that was a sunset; snobbery, conservatism, the wrong thread in History, and notably in that of his own land. *Voilà, madame, le menu. Comment le trouvez-vous? Il y a de la bonne viande, si on parvient à la cuire convenablement.*

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

[*Menton*], *Monday, January 26th, 1874.*

MY DEAR FATHER, — Heh! Heh! business letter finished. Receipt acknowledged without much ado, and I think with a certain commercial decision and brevity. The signature is good but not original.

I should rather think I *had* lost my heart to the wee princess. Her mother demanded the other day "*À quand les noces?*" which Mrs. Stevenson will translate for you in case you don't see it yourself.

I had a political quarrel last night with the American; it was a real quarrel for about two minutes; we relieved our feelings and separated; but a mutual feeling of shame led us to a most moving reconciliation, in which the American vowed he would shed his best blood for England. In looking back upon the interview, I feel that I have learned something; I scarcely appreciated how badly England had behaved, and how well she deserves the hatred the Americans bear her. It would have made you laugh if you could have been present and seen your unpatriotic son thundering anathemas in the moonlight against all those that were not the friend of England. Johnson being nearly as nervous as I, we were both very ill after it, which added a further pathos to the reconciliation.

There is no good in sending this off to-day, as I have sent another letter this morning already.

O, a remark of the Princess's amused me the other day. Somebody wanted to give Nelitchka garlic as a medicine. "*Quoi? Une petite amour comme ça, qu'on ne pourrait pas baiser? Il n'y a pas de sens en cela!*"

I am reading a lot of French histories just now, and the spelling keeps one in a good humour all day long — I mean the spelling of English names. — Your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

[*Menton, January 29, 1874*], *Thursday.*

Marot vol. 1 arrived. The post has been at its old games. A letter of the 31st and one of the 2nd arrive at the same moment.

I have had a great pleasure. Mrs. Andrews had a 113 book of Scotch airs, which I brought over here, and set Madame Z. to work upon. They are so like Russian airs that they cannot contain their astonishment. I was quite out of my mind with delight. "The Flowers of the Forest" — "Auld Lang Syne" — "Scots wha hae" — "Wandering Willie" — "Jock o' Hazeldean" — "My Boy Tammie," which my father whistles so often — I had no conception how much I loved them. The air which pleased Madame Zassetsky the most was "Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye waukin yet?" It is certainly no end. And I was so proud that they were appreciated. No triumph of my own, I am sure, could ever give me such vain-glorious satisfaction. You remember, perhaps, how conceited I was to find "Auld Lang Syne" popular in its German dress; but even that was nothing to the pleasure I had yesterday at the success of our dear airs.

The edition is called *The Songs of Scotland without Words for the Pianoforte*, edited by J. T. Surenne, published by Wood in George Street. As these people have been so kind to me, I wish you would get a copy of this and send it out. If that should be too dear, or anything, Mr. Mowbray would be able to tell you what is the best substitute, would he not? *This* I really would like you to do, as Madame proposes to hire a copyist to copy those she likes, and so it is evident she wants them. — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Thomas Stevenson

With reference to the political allusions in the following it will be remembered that this was the date of Mr. Gladstone's dissolution, followed by his defeat at the polls notwithstanding his declared intention of abolishing the income-tax.

[*Menton*], *February 1st, 1874.*

I am so sorry to hear of poor Mr. M.'s death. He was really so amiable and kind that no one could help liking 114 him, and carrying away a pleasant recollection of his simple, happy ways. I hope you will communicate to all the family how much I feel with them.

Madame Zassetsky is Nelitchka's mamma. They have both husbands, and they are in Russia, and the ladies are both here for their health. They make it very pleasant for me here. To-day we all went a drive to the Cap Martin, and the Cap was adorable in the splendid sunshine.

I read J. H. A. Macdonald's speech with interest; his sentiments are quite good, I think. I would support him against M'Laren at once. What has disgusted me most as yet about this election is the detestable proposal to do away with the income tax. Is there no shame about the easy classes? Will those who have nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of the advantage of our society, never consent to pay a single tax unless it is to be paid also by those who have to bear the burthen and heat of the day, with almost none of the reward? And the selfishness here is detestable, because it is so deliberate. A man may not feel poverty very keenly and may live a quiet self-pleasing life in pure thoughtlessness; but it is quite another matter when he knows thoroughly what the issues are, and yet wails pitiably because he is asked to pay a little more, even if it does fall hardly sometimes, than those who get almost none of the benefit. It is like the healthy child crying because they do not give him a goody, as they have given to his sick brother to take away the taste of the dose. I have not expressed myself clearly; but for all that, you ought to understand, I think.

Friday, February 6th. — The wine has arrived, and a dozen of it has been transferred to me; it is much better than Folleté's stuff. We had a masquerade last night at the Villa Marina; Nellie in a little red satin cap, in a red satin suit of boy's clothes, with a funny little black tail that stuck out behind her, and wagged as she danced about the room, and gave her a look of Puss in Boots; 115 Pella as a contadina; Monsieur Robinet as an old woman, and Mademoiselle as an old lady with blue spectacles.

Yesterday we had a visit from one of whom I had often heard from Mrs. Sellar — Andrew Lang. He is good-looking, delicate, Oxfordish, etc.

My cloak is the most admirable of all garments. For warmth, unequalled; for a sort of pensive, Roman stateliness, sometimes warming into Romantic guitarism, it is simply without concurrent; it starts alone. If you could see me in my cloak, it would impress you. I am hugely better, I think: I stood the cold these last few days without trouble, instead of taking to bed, as I did at Monte Carlo. I hope you are going to send the Scotch music.

I am stupid at letter-writing again; I don't know why. I hope it may not be permanent; in the meantime, you must take what you can get and be hopeful. The Russian ladies are as kind and nice as ever. — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Menton, February 6, 1874*], *Friday.*

Last night we had a masquerade at the Villa Marina. Pella was dressed as a contadina and looked beautiful; and little Nellie, in red satin cap and wonderful red satin jacket and little breeches as of a nondescript impossible boy; to which Madame Garschine had slily added a little black tail that wagged comically behind her as she danced about the room, and got deliriously tilted up over the middle bar of the back of her chair as she sat at tea, with an irresistible suggestion of Puss in Boots — well, Nellie thus masqueraded (to get back to my sentence again) was all that I could have imagined. She held herself so straight and stalwart, and had such an infinitesimal dignity of carriage; and then her big baby face, already quite definitely marked with her sex, came in so funnily atop that she got clear away from all my power 116 of similes and resembled nothing in the world but Nellie in masquerade. Then there was Robinet in a white night gown, old woman's cap (*mutch*, in my vernacular), snuff-box and crutch doubled up and yet leaping and gyrating about the floor with incredible agility; and lastly, Mademoiselle in a sort of elderly walking-dress and with blue spectacles. And all this incongruous impossible world went tumbling and dancing and going hand in hand, in flying circles to the music; until it was enough to make one forget one was in this wicked world, with Conservative majorities and Presidents MacMahon and all other abominations about one.

Also last night will be memorable to me for another reason, Madame Zassetsky having given me a light as to my own intellect. They were talking about things in history remaining in their minds because they had assisted them to generalisations. And I began to explain how things remained in my mind yet more vividly for no reason at all. She got interested, and made me give her several examples; then she said, with her little falsetto of discovery, “Mais c’est que vous êtes tout simplement enfant!” This *mot* I have reflected on at leisure and there is some truth in it. Long may I be so. Yesterday too I finished *Ordered South* and at last had some pleasure and contentment with it. S. C. has sent it off to Macmillan’s this morning and I hope it may be accepted; I don’t care whether it is or no except for the all-important lucre; the end of it is good, whether the able editor sees it or no. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

[*Menton*], *February 22nd, 1874.*

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I am glad to hear you are better again: nobody can expect to be *quite* well in February, that is the only consolation I can offer you.

Madame Garschine is ill, I am sorry to say, and was confined to bed all yesterday, which made a great difference to our little society. À propos of which, what keeps me here is just precisely the said society. These people are so nice and kind and intelligent, and then as I shall never see them any more I have a disagreeable feeling about making the move. With ordinary people in England, you have more or less chance of re-encountering one another; at least you may see their death in the papers; but with these people, they die for me and I die for them when we separate.

Andrew Lang, O you of little comprehension, called on Colvin.

You had not told me before about the fatuous person who thought *Roads* like Ruskin — surely the vaguest of contemporaneous humanity. Again my letter writing is of an enfeebled sort. — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

[*Menton*], *March 1st, 1874.*

MY DEAR MOTHER, — The weather is again beautiful, soft, warm, cloudy and soft again, in provincial sense. Very interesting, I find Robertson; and Dugald Stewart’s life of him a source of unquenchable laughter. Dugald Stewart is not much better than McCrie, and puts me much in mind of him. By the way, I want my father to find out whether any more of Knox's Works was ever issued than the five volumes, as I have them. There are some letters that I am very anxious to see, not printed in any of the five, and perhaps still in MS.

I suppose you are now home again in Auld Reekie: that abode of bliss does not much attract me yet a bit.

Colvin leaves at the end of this week, I fancy.

How badly yours sincerely writes. O! Madame Zassetsky has a theory that "Dumbarton Drums" is an epitome of my character and talents. She plays it, and goes into ecstasies over it, taking everybody to witness that each note, as she plays it, is the moral of Berecchino. Berecchino is my stereotype name in the world now. I am announced as M. Berecchino; a German hand-maiden came to the hotel, the other night, asking for M. Berecchino; said hand-maiden supposing in good faith that sich was my name.

Your letter come. O, I am all right now about the parting, because it will not be death, as we are to write. Of course the correspondence will drop off: but that's no odds, it breaks the back of the trouble. — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

[*Menton*], *Monday, March 9th, 1874.*

We have all been getting photographed, and the proofs are to be seen to-day. How they will look I know not. Madame Zassetsky arranged me for mine, and then said to the photographer: "*C'est mon fils. Il vient d'avoir dix-neuf ans. Il est tout fier de sa jeune moustache. Tâchez de la faire paraître,*" and then bolted leaving me solemnly alone with the artist. The artist was quite serious, and explained that he would try to "*faire ressortir ce que veut Madame la Princesse*" to the best of his ability; he bowed very much to me, after this, in quality of Prince you see. I bowed in return and handled the flap of my cloak after the most princely fashion I could command. — Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

[*Menton*], *March 20, 1874.*

I. *My Cloak.* — An exception occurs to me to the frugality described a letter (or may be two) ago; my 119 cloak: it would certainly have been possible to have got something less expensive; still it is a fine thought for absent parents that their son possesses simply the greatest vestment in Mentone. It is great in size, and unspeakably great in design; *qua* raiment, it has not its equal.

....

III. *About Spain.* — Well, I don't know about *me* and Spain. I am certainly in no humour and in no state of health for voyages and travels. Towards the end of May (see end), up to which time I seem to see my plans, I might be up to it, or I might not; I think *not* myself. I have given up all idea of going on to Italy, though it seems a pity when one is so near; and Spain seems to me in the same category. But for all that, it need not interfere with your voyage thither: I would not lose the chance, if I wanted.

IV. *Money.* — I am much obliged. That makes £180 now. This money irks me, one feels it more than when living at home. However, if I have health, I am in a fair way to make a bit of a livelihood for myself. Now please don't take this up wrong; don't suppose I am thinking of the transaction between you and me; I think of the transaction between me and mankind. I think of all this money wasted in keeping up a structure that may never be worth it — all this good money sent after bad. I shall be seriously angry if you take me up wrong.

V. *Roads.* — The familiar false concord is not certainly a form of colloquialism that I should feel inclined to encourage. It is very odd; I wrote it very carefully, and you seem to have read it very carefully, and yet none of us found it out. The Deuce is in it.

VI. *Russian Prince.* — A cousin of these ladies is come to stay with them — Prince Léon Galitzin. He is the image of — whom? — guess now — do you give it up? — Hillhouse.

VII. *Miscellaneous.* — I send you a pikler of me in the 120 cloak. I think it is like a hunchback. The moustache is clearly visible to the naked eye — O diable! what do I hear in my lug? A mosquito — the first of the season. Bad luck to him!

Good nicht and joy be wi' you a'. I am going to bed. — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Note to III. — I had counted on being back at Embro' by the last week or so of May.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

This describes another member of the Russian party, recently arrived at Mentone, who did his best, very nearly with success, to persuade Stevenson to join him in the study of law for some terms under the celebrated Professor Jhering at Göttingen.

[*Menton*], *March 28, 1874.*

MY DEAR MOTHER, — Beautiful weather, perfect weather; sun, pleasant cooling winds; health very good; only incapacity to write.

The only new cloud on my horizon (I mean this in no menacing sense) is the Prince, I have philosophical and artistic discussions with the Prince. He is capable of talking for two hours upon end, developing his theory of everything under Heaven from his first position, which is that there is no straight line. Doesn't that sound like a game of my father's — I beg your pardon, you haven't read it — I don't mean *my* father, I mean Tristram Shandy's. He is very clever, and it is an immense joke to hear him unrolling all the problems of life — philosophy, science, what you will — in this charmingly cut-and-dry, here-we-are-again kind of manner. He is better to listen to than to argue withal. When you differ from him, he lifts up his voice and thunders; and you know that the thunder of an excited foreigner often miscarries. One stands aghast, marvelling how such a colossus of a man, 121 in such a great commotion of spirit, can open his mouth so much and emit such a still small voice at the hinder end of it all. All this while he walks about the room, smokes cigarettes, occupies divers chairs for divers brief spaces, and casts his huge arms to the four winds like the sails of a mill. He is a most sportive Prince.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Menton, April 1874*], *Monday.*

My last night at Mentone. I cannot tell how strange and sad I feel. I leave behind me a dear friend whom I have but little hope of seeing again between the eyes.

To-day, I hadn't arranged all my plans till five o'clock: I hired a poor old cabman, whose uncomfortable vehicle and sorry horse make everyone despise him, and set off to get money and say farewells. It was a dark misty evening; the mist was down over all the hills; the peach-trees in beautiful pink bloom. Arranged my plans; that merits a word by the way if I can be bothered. I have half arranged to go to Göttingen in summer to a course of lectures. Galitzin is responsible for this. He tells me the professor is to law what Darwin has been to Natural History, and I should like to understand Roman Law and a knowledge of law is so necessary for all I hope to do.

My poor old cabman; his one horse made me three-quarters of an hour too late for dinner, but I had not the heart to discharge him and take another. Poor soul, he was so pleased with his pourboire, I have made Madame Zassetsky promise to employ him often; so he will be something the better for me, little as he will know it.

I have read *Ordered South*; it is pretty decent I think, but poor, stiff, limping stuff at best — not half so well straightened up as *Roads*. However the stuff is good.

God help us all, this is a rough world: address Hotel St. Romain, rue St. Roch, Paris. I draw the line: a chapter finished. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

The line.

That bit of childishness has made me laugh, do you blame me?

See Scott himself, in the preface to the Author's edition.

i.e. on his book, *The Reign of Law*.

Compare the paragraph in *Ordered South* describing the state of mind of the invalid doubtful of recovery, and ending: “He will pray for Medea; when she comes, let her either rejuvenate or slay.”

Alluding to Heine's *Ritter von dem heiligen Geist*.

Poste Restante

Thomas McCrie, D.D., author of the *Life of John Knox*, *Life of Andrew Melville*, etc.

III

STUDENT DAYS — *Concluded*

HOME AGAIN — LITERATURE AND LAW

May 1874 — June 1875

Returning to Edinburgh by way of Paris in May 1874, Stevenson went to live with his parents at Swanston and Edinburgh and resumed his reading for the Bar. Illness and absence had done their work, and the old harmony of the home was henceforth quite re-established. In his spare time during the next year he worked hard at his chosen art, trying his hand at essays, short stories, criticisms, and prose poems. In all this experimental writing he had neither the aims nor the facility of the journalist, but strove always after the higher qualities of literature, and was never satisfied with what he had done. To find for all he had to say words of vital aptness and animation — to communicate as much as possible of what he has somewhere called "the incommunicable thrill of things" — was from the first his endeavour in literature, nay more, it was the main passion of his life: and the instrument that should serve his purpose could not be forged in haste. Neither was it easy for this past master of the random, the unexpected, the brilliantly back-foremost and topsy-turvy in talk, to learn in writing the habit of orderly arrangement and organic sequence which even the lightest forms of literature cannot lack.

In the course of this summer Stevenson's excursions included a week or two spent with me at Hampstead, during which he joined the Savile Club and made some acquaintance with London literary society; a yachting trip with his friend Sir Walter Simpson in the western islands of Scotland; a journey to Barmouth and Llandudno with his parents; and in the late autumn a walking tour in Buckinghamshire. The Scottish winter (1874-75) tried him severely, as Scottish winters always did, but was enlivened by a new and what was destined to be a very fruitful and intimate friendship, the origin of which was described in the following letters, namely that of Mr. W. E. Henley. In April 1875 he made his first visit, in the company of his cousin R. A. M. Stevenson to the artist haunts of the forest of Fontainebleau, whence he returned to finish his reading for the Scottish Bar and face the examination which was before him in July. During all this year, as will be seen, his chief, almost his exclusive, correspondents and confidants continued to be the same as in the preceding winter.

To Sidney Colvin

Written in Paris on his way home to Edinburgh. Some of our talk at Mentone had run on the scheme of a spectacle play on the story of the burning of the temple of Diana at Ephesus by Herostratus, the type of insane vanity *in excelsis*.

[*Hôtel St. Romain, Paris, end of April 1874.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am a great deal better, but still have to take care. I have got quite a lot of Victor Hugo done; and not I think so badly: pitching into this work has straightened me up a good deal. It is the devil's own weather but that is a trifle. I must know when Cornhill must see it. I can send some of it in a week 125 easily, but I still have to read *The Laughing Man*, and I mean to wait until I get to London and have the loan of that from you. If I buy anything more this production will not pay itself. The first part is not too well written, though it has good stuff in it.

My people have made no objection to my going to Göttingen; but my body has made I think very strong objections. And you know if it is cold here, it must be colder there. It is a sore pity; that was a great chance for me and it is gone. I know very well that between Galitzin and this swell professor I should have become a good specialist in law and how that would have changed and bettered all my work it is easy to see; however I must just be content to live as I have begun, an ignorant, *chic-y* penny-a-liner. May the Lord have mercy on my soul!

Going home not very well is an astonishing good hold for me. I shall simply be a prince.

Have you had any thought about Diana of the Ephesians? I will straighten up a play for you, but it may take years. A play is a thing just like a story, it begins to disengage itself and then unrolls gradually in block. It will disengage itself some day for me and then I will send you the nugget and you will see if you can make anything out of it. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

This and the following letters were written after Stevenson's return to Scotland. The essay *Ordered South* appeared in Macmillan's Magazine at this date; that on Victor Hugo's romances in the Cornhill a little later.

[*Swanston*], *May 1874, Monday.*

We are now at Swanston Cottage, Lothianburn, Edinburgh. The garden is but little clothed yet, for, you 126 know, here we are six hundred feet above the sea. It is very cold, and has sleeted this morning. Everything wintry. I am very jolly, however, having finished Victor Hugo, and just looking round to see what I should next take up. I have been reading Roman Law and Calvin this morning.

Evening. — I went up the hill a little this afternoon. The air was invigorating, but it was so cold that my scalp was sore. With this high wintry wind, and the grey sky, and faint northern daylight, it was quite wonderful to hear such a clamour of blackbirds coming up to me out of the woods, and the bleating of sheep being shorn in a field near the garden, and to see golden patches of blossom already on the furze, and delicate green shoots upright and beginning to frond out, among last year's russet bracken. Flights of crows were passing continually between the wintry leaden sky and the wintry cold-looking hills. It was the oddest conflict of seasons. A wee rabbit — this year's making, beyond question — ran out from under my feet, and was in a pretty perturbation, until he hit upon a lucky juniper and blotted himself there promptly. Evidently this gentleman had not had much experience of life.

I have made an arrangement with my people: I am to have £84 a year — I only asked for £80 on mature reflection — and as I should soon make a good bit by my pen, I shall be very comfortable. We are all as jolly as can be together, so that is a great thing gained.

Wednesday. — Yesterday I received a letter that gave me much pleasure from a poor fellow-student of mine, who has been all winter very ill, and seems to be but little better even now. He seems very much pleased with *Ordered South*. "A month ago," he says, "I could scarcely have ventured to read it; to-day I felt on reading it as I did on the first day that I was able to sun myself a little in the open air." And much more to the like effect. It is very gratifying. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Mr. John Morley had asked for a notice by R. L. S. for the Fortnightly Review, which he was then editing, of Lord Lytton's newly published volume, *Fables in Song.*

Swanston, Lothianburn, Edinburgh [*May 1874*].

All right. I'll see what I can do. Before I could answer I had to see the book; and my good father, after trying at all our libraries, bought it for me. I like the book; that is some of it and I'll try to lick up four or five pages for the Fortnightly.

It is still as cold as cold, hereaway. And the Spring hammering away at the New Year in despite. Poor Spring, scattering flowers with red hands and preparing for Summer's triumphs all in a shudder herself. Health still good, and the humour for work enduring.

Jenkin wrote to say he would second me in such a kind little notelet. I shall go in for it (the Savile I mean) whether *Victor Hugo* is accepted or not, being now a man of means. Have I told you by the way that I have now an income of £84, or as I prefer to put it for dignity's sake, two thousand one hundred francs, a year.

In lively hope of better weather and your arrival hereafter. — I remain, yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

Swanston, Wednesday, May 1874.

Struggling away at *Fables in Song*. I am much afraid I am going to make a real failure; the time is so short, and I am so out of the humour. Otherwise very calm and jolly: cold still *impossible*.

Thursday. — I feel happier about the *Fables*, and it is warmer a bit; but my body is most decrepit, and I can just manage to be cheery and tread down hypochondria under foot by work. I lead such a funny life, utterly 128 without interest or pleasure outside of my work: nothing, indeed, but work all day long, except a short walk alone on the cold hills, and meals, and a couple of pipes with my father in the evening. It is surprising how it suits me, and how happy I keep.

Friday. — ”My dear Stevenson how do you do? do you annoying yourself or no? when we go to the Olivses it allways rememberse us you. Nelly and my aunt went away. And when the organ come and play the Soldaten it mak us think of Nelly. It is so sad I allmoste went away. I make my baths; and then we go to Franzensbad; will you come to see us?”

There is Pella’s letter facsimile, punctuation, spelling and all. Mme. Garschine’s was rather sad and gave me the blues a bit; I think it very likely I may run over to Franzensbad for a week or so this autumn, if I am wanted that is to say: I shall be able to afford it easily.

I have got on rather better with the *Fables*; perhaps it won’t be a failure, though I fear. To-day the sun shone brightly although the wind was cold: I was up the hill a good time. It is very solemn to see the top of one hill steadfastly regarding you over the shoulder of another: I never before to-day fully realised the haunting of such a gigantic face, as it peers over into a valley and seems to command all corners. I had a long talk with the shepherd about foreign lands, and sheep. A Russian had once been on the farm as a pupil; he told me that he had the utmost pity for the Russian’s capacities, since (dictionary and all) he had never managed to understand him; it must be remembered that my friend the shepherd spoke Scotch of the broadest and often enough employs words which I do not understand myself.

Saturday. — I have received such a nice long letter (four sides) from Leslie Stephen to-day about my *Victor Hugo*. It is accepted. This ought to have made me gay, but it hasn’t. I am not likely to be much of a tonic to-night. I have been very cynical over myself to-day, 129 partly, perhaps, because I have just finished some of the deedest rubbish about Lord Lytton’s *Fables* that an intelligent editor ever shot into his wastepaper basket. If Morley prints it I shall be glad, but my respect for him will be shaken.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Enclosing Mr. Leslie Stephen's letter accepting the article on Victor Hugo: the first of Stevenson's many contributions to the Cornhill Magazine.

[*Edinburgh, May 1874.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I send you L. Stephen's letter which is certainly very kind and jolly to get. I wrote 130 some stuff about Lord Lytton, but I had not the heart to submit it to you. I sent it direct to Morley, with a Spartan billet. God knows it is bad enough; but it cost 131 me labour incredible. I was so out of the vein, it would have made you weep to see me digging the rubbish out of my seven wits with groanings unutterable. I certainly mean to come to London, and likely before long if all goes well; so on that ground, I cannot force you to come to Scotland. Still, the weather is now warm and jolly, and of course it would not be expensive to live here so long as that did not bore you. If you could see the hills out of my window to-night, you would start incontinent. However do as you will, and if the mountain will not come to Mahomet Mahomet will come to the mountain in due time, Mahomet being me and the mountain you, Q.E.D., F.R.S. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Swanston, May 1874*], *Tuesday.*

Another cold day; yet I have been along the hillside, wondering much at idiotic sheep, and raising partridges at every second step. One little plover is the object of my firm adherence. I pass his nest every day, and if you saw how he flies by me, and almost into my face, crying and flapping his wings, to direct my attention from his little treasure, you would have as kind a heart to him as I. To-day I saw him not, although I took my usual way; and I am afraid that some person has abused his 132 simple wiliness and harried (as we say in Scotland) the nest. I feel much righteous indignation against such imaginary aggressor. However, one must not be too chary of the lower forms. To-day I sat down on a tree-stump at the skirt of a little strip of planting, and thoughtlessly began to dig out the touchwood with an end of twig. I found I had carried ruin, death, and universal consternation into a little community of ants; and this set me a-thinking of how close we are environed with frail lives, so that we can do nothing without spreading havoc over all manner of perishable homes and interests and affections; and so on to my favourite mood of an holy terror for all action and all inaction equally — a sort of shuddering revulsion from the necessary responsibilities of life. We must not be too scrupulous of others, or we shall die. Conscientiousness is a sort of moral opium; an excitant in small doses, perhaps, but at bottom a strong narcotic.

Saturday. — I have been two days in Edinburgh, and so had not the occasion to write to you. Morley has accepted the *Fables*, and I have seen it in proof, and think less of it than ever. However, of course, I shall send you a copy of the magazine without fail, and you can be as disappointed as you like, or the reverse if you can. I would willingly recall it if I could.

Try, by way of change, Byron's *Mazeppa*; you will be astonished. It is grand and no mistake, and one sees through it a fire, and a passion, and a rapid intuition of genius, that makes one rather sorry for one's own generation of better writers, and — I don't know what to say; I was going to say "smaller men"; but that's not right; read it, and you will feel what I cannot express. Don't be put out by the beginning; persevere, and you will find yourself thrilled before you are at an end with it.

Sunday. — The white mist has obliterated the hills and lies heavily round the cottage, as though it were laying siege to it; the trees wave their branches in the 133 wind, with a solemn melancholy manner, like people swaying themselves to and fro in pain. I am alone in the house, all the world being gone to church; and even in here at the side of the fire, the air clings about one like a wet blanket. Yet this morning, when I was just awake, I had thought it was going to be a fine day. First, a cock crew, loudly and beautifully and often; then followed a long interval of silence and darkness, the grey morning began to get into my room; and then from the other side of the garden, a blackbird executed one long flourish, and in a moment as if a spring had been touched or a sluice-gate opened, the whole garden just brimmed and ran over with bird-songs. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

For a part of June Stevenson had come south, spending most of his time in lodgings with me at Hampstead (where he got the idea for part of his essay *Notes on the Movements of Young Children*) and making his first appearance at the Savile Club. Trouble awaited him after his return.

[*Swanston, June 1874*], *Wednesday.*

News reaches me that Bob is laid down with diphtheria; and you know what that means.

Night. — I am glad to say that I have on the whole a good account of Bob and I do hope he may pull through in spite of all. I went down and saw the doctor; but it is not thought right that I should go in to see him in case of contagion: you know it is a very contagious malady.

Thursday. — It is curious how calm I am in such a case. I wait with perfect composure for farther news; I can do nothing; why should I disturb myself? And yet if things go wrong I shall be in a fine way I can tell you.

How curiously we are built up into our false positions. The other day, having toothache and the black dog on my back generally, I was rude to one of the servants at 134 the dinner-table. And nothing of course can be more disgusting than for a man to speak harshly to a young woman who will lose her place if she speak back to him; and of course I determined to apologise. Well, do you know, it was perhaps four days before I found courage enough, and I felt as red and ashamed as could be. Why? because I had been rude? not a bit of it; because I was doing a thing that would be called ridiculous in thus apologising. I did not know I had so much respect of middle-class notions before; this is my right hand which I must cut off. Hold the arm please: once — twice — thrice: the offensive member is amputated: let us hope I shall never be such a cad any more as to be ashamed of being a gentleman.

Night. — I suppose I must have been more affected than I thought; at least I found I could not work this morning and had to go out. The whole garden was filled with a high westerly wind, coming straight out of the hills and richly scented with furze — or whins, as we would say. The trees were all in a tempest and roared like a heavy surf; the paths all strewn with fallen apple-blossom and leaves. I got a quiet seat behind a yew and went away into a meditation. I was very happy after my own fashion, and whenever there came a blink of sunshine or a bird whistled higher than usual, or a little powder of white apple-blossom came over the hedge and settled about me in the grass, I had the gladdest little flutter at my heart and stretched myself for very voluptuousness. I wasn’t altogether taken up with my private pleasures, however, and had many a look down ugly vistas in the future, for Bob and others. But we must all be content and brave, and look eagerly for these little passages of happiness by the wayside, and go on afterwards, savouring them under the tongue.

Friday. — Our garden has grown beautiful at last, beautiful with fresh foliage and daisied grass. The sky is still cloudy and the day perhaps even a little gloomy; 135 but under this grey roof, in this shaded temperate light, how delightful the new summer is.

When I shall come to London must always be problematical like all my movements, and of course this sickness of Bob’s makes it still more uncertain. If all goes well I may have to go to the country and take care of him in his convalescence. But I shall come shortly. Do not hurry to write to me; I had rather *you* had ten minutes more of good, friendly sleep, than I a longer letter; and you know I am rather partial to your letters. Yesterday, by the bye, I received the proof of *Victor Hugo*; it is not nicely written, but the stuff is capital, I think. Modesty is my most remarkable quality, I may remark in passing.

1.30. — I was out, behind the yew hedge, reading the *Comtesse de Rudolstadt* when I found my eyes grow weary, and looked up from the book. O the rest of the quiet greens and whites, of the daisied surface! I was very peaceful, but it began to sprinkle rain and so I fain to come in for a moment and chat with you. By the way, I must send you *Consuelo*; you said you had quite forgotten it if I remember aright; and surely a book that could divert me, when I thought myself on the very edge of the grave, from the work that I so much desired and was yet unable to do, and from many painful thoughts, should somewhat support and amuse you under all the hard things that may be coming upon you. If you should wonder why I am writing to you so voluminously, know that it is because I am not suffering myself to work, and in idleness, as in death, etc.

Saturday. — I have had a very cruel day. I heard this morning that yesterday Bob had been very much worse and I went down to Portobello with all sorts of horrible presentiments. I was glad when I turned the corner and saw the blinds still up. He was definitely better, if the word definitely can be used about such a detestably insidious complaint. I have ordered *Consuelo* for you, 136 and you should have it soon this week; I mean next week of course; I am thinking when you will receive this letter, not of now when I am writing it.

I am so tired; but I am very hopeful. All will be well some time, if it be only when we are dead. One thing I see so clearly. Death is the end neither of joy nor sorrow. Let us pass into the clods and come up again as grass and flowers; we shall still be this wonderful, shrinking, sentient matter — we shall still thrill to the sun and grow relaxed and quiet after rain, and have all manner of pains and pleasures that we know not of now. Consciousness, and ganglia, and suchlike, are after all but theories. And who knows? This God may not be cruel when all is done; he may relent and be good to us *à la fin des fins*. Think of how he tempers our afflictions to us, of how tenderly he mixes in bright joys with the grey web of trouble and care that we call our life. Think of how he gives, who takes away. Out of the bottom of the miry clay I write this; and I look forward confidently; I have faith after all; I believe, I hope, I *will* not have it reft from me; there *is* something good behind it all, bitter and terrible as it seems. The infinite majesty (as it will be always in regard to us the bubbles of an hour) the infinite majesty must have moments, if it were no more, of greatness; must sometimes be touched with a feeling for our infirmities, must sometimes relent and be clement to those frail playthings that he has made, and made so bitterly alive. Must it not be so, my dear friend, out of the depths I cry? I feel it, now when I am most painfully conscious of his cruelty. He must relent. He must reward. He must give some indemnity, if it were but in the quiet of a daisy, tasting of the sun and the soft rain and the sweet shadow of trees, for all the dire fever that he makes us bear in this poor existence. We make too much of this human life of ours. It may be that two clods together, two flowers together, two grown trees together touching each other deliciously with their spread leaves, it may be that 137 these dumb things have their own priceless sympathies, surer and more untroubled than ours.

I don't know quite whether I have wandered. Forgive me, I feel as if I had relieved myself; so perhaps it may not be unpleasant for you either. — Believe me, ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

Swanston, Sunday (*June 1874*).

DEAR FRIEND, — I fear to have added something to your troubles by telling you of the grief in which I find myself; but one cannot always come to meet a friend smiling, although we should try for the best cheer possible. All to-day I have been very weary, resting myself after the trouble and fatigue of yesterday. The day was warm enough, but it blew a whole gale of wind; and the noise and the purposeless rude violence of it somehow irritated and depressed me. There was good news however, though the anxiety must still be long. O peace, peace, whither are you fled and where have you carried my old quiet humour? I am so bitter and disquiet and speak even spitefully to people. And somehow, though I promise myself amendment, day after day finds me equally rough and sour to those about me. But this would pass with good health and good weather; and at bottom I am not unhappy; the soil is still good although it bears thorns; and the time will come again for flowers.

Wednesday. — I got your letter this morning and have to thank you so much for it. Bob is much better; and I do hope out of danger. To-day has been more glorious than I can tell you. It has been the first day of blue sky that we have had; and it was happiness for a week to see the clear bright outline of the hills and the glory of sunlit foliage and the darkness of green shadows, and the big white clouds that went voyaging overhead deliberately. My two cousins from Portobello were here; and 138 they and I and Maggie ended the afternoon by lying half an hour together on a shawl. The big cloud had all been carded out into a thin luminous white gauze, miles away; and miles away too seemed the little black birds that passed between this and us as we lay with faces upturned. The similarity of what we saw struck in us a curious similarity of mood; and in consequence of the small size of the shawl, we all lay so close that we half pretended, half felt, we had lost our individualities and had become merged and mixed up in a quadruple existence. We had the shadow of an umbrella over ourselves, and when any one reached out a brown hand into the golden sunlight overhead we all feigned that we did not know whose hand it was, until at last I don't really think we quite did. Little black insects also passed over us and in the same half wanton manner we pretended we could not distinguish them from the birds. There was a splendid sunlit silence about us, and as Katharine said the heavens seemed to be dropping oil on us, or honey-dew — it was all so bland.

Thursday evening. — I have seen Bob again, and I am charmed at his convalescence. Le bon Dieu has been *so* bon this time: here's his health! Still the danger is not over by a good way; it is so miserable a thing for reverses.

I hear the wind outside roaring among our leafy trees as the surf on some loud shore. The hill-top is whelmed in a passing rain-shower and the mist lies low in the valleys. But the night is warm and in our little sheltered garden it is fair and pleasant, and the borders and hedges and evergreens and boundary trees are all distinct in an equable diffusion of light from the buried moon and the day not altogether passed away. My dear friend, as I hear the wind rise and die away in that tempestuous world of foliage, I seem to be conscious of I know not what breath of creation. I know what this warm wet wind of the west betokens, I know how already, in this morning's 139 sunshine, we could see all the hills touched and accentuated with little delicate golden patches of young fern; how day by day the flowers thicken and the leaves unfold; how already the year is a-tip-toe on the summit of its finished youth; and I am glad and sad to the bottom of my heart at the knowledge. If you knew how different I am from what I was last year; how the knowledge of you has changed and finished me, you would be glad and sad also. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

The strain of anxiety recorded in the two last letters had given a shake to Stevenson's own health, and it was agreed that he should go for a yachting tour with Sir Walter Simpson in the Inner Hebrides.

[*Edinburgh, June 1874*], *Thursday.*

I have been made so miserable by Chopin's *Marche funèbre*. Try two of Schubert's songs, "*Ich unglückselige Atlas*" and "*Du schönes Fischermädchen*" — they are very jolly. I have read aloud my death-cycle from Walt Whitman this evening. I was very much affected myself, never so much before, and it fetched the auditory considerable. Reading these things that I like aloud when I am painfully excited is the keenest artistic pleasure I know. It does seem strange that these dependent arts — singing, acting, and in its small way reading aloud seem the best rewarded of all arts. I am sure it is more exciting for me to read than it was for W. W. to write; and how much more must this be so with singing.

Friday. — I am going in the yacht on Wednesday. I am not right yet, and I hope the yacht will set me up. I am too tired to-night to make more of it. Good-bye. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Edinburgh, June 1874*], *Friday.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am seedy — very seedy, I may say. I am quite unfit for any work or any pleasure; and generally very sick. I am going away next week on Wednesday for my cruise which I hope will set me up again. I should like a proof here up to Wednesday morning, or at Greenock, Tontine Hotel, up to Friday morning, as I don't quite know my future address. I hope you are better, and that it was not that spell of work you had that did the harm. It is to my spurt of work that I am *redevable* for my harm. Walt Whitman is at the bottom of it all, *'cré nom*! What a pen I have! — a new pen, God be praised, how smoothly it functions! Would that I could work as well. Chorus — Would that both of us could work as well — would that all of us could work as well! — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — Bob is better; but he might be better yet. All goes smoothly except my murrained health.

To Mrs. Sitwell

Swanston [*Summer 1874*].

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I am back again here, as brown as a berry with sun, and in good form. I have been and gone and lost my portmanteau, with *Walt Whitman* in it and a lot of notes. This is a nuisance. However, I am pretty happy, only wearying for news of you and for your address.

Friday. — *À la bonne heure!* I hear where you are and that you are apparently fairish well. That is good at least. I am full of Reformation work; up to the eyes in it; and begin to feel learned. A beautiful day outside, though something cold.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Of the projects here mentioned, that of the little book of essays on the enjoyment of the world never took shape, nor were those contributions towards it which he printed in the Portfolio ever republished until after the writer's death. *The Appeal to the Clergy of the*

Church of Scotland was printed in 1874, published as a pamphlet in February 1875, and attracted, I believe, no attention whatever. The "fables" must have been some of the earliest numbers of the series continued at odd times till near the date of his death and published posthumously: I do not know which, but should guess *The House of Eld*, *Yellow Paint*, and perhaps those in the vein of Celtic mystery, *The Touchstone*, *The Poor Thing*, *The Song of To-morrow*.

[*Swanston, Summer* 1874], *Tuesday.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — What is new with you? There is nothing new with me: Knox and his females begin to get out of restraint altogether; the subject expands so damnably, I know not where to cut it off. I have another paper for the PTFL on the stocks: a sequel to the two others; also, that is to say, a word in season as to contentment and a hint to the careless to look around them for disregarded pleasures. Seeley wrote to me asking me "to propose" something: I suppose he means — well, I suppose I don't know what he means. But I shall write to him (if you think it wise) when I send him this paper, saying that my writing is more a matter of God's disposition than of man's proposal; that I had from *Roads* upward ever intended to make a little budget of little papers all with this intention before them, call it ethical or æsthetic as you will; and thus I shall leave it to him (if he likes) to regard this little budget, as slowly they come forth, as a unity in its own small way. Twelve or twenty such essays, some of them mainly ethical and expository, put together in a little book with narrow print in each page, antique, vine leaves about, and the following title.

XII (OR XX) ESSAYS ON THE ENJOYMENT OF THE WORLD:
By Robert Louis Stevenson
(*A motto in italics*)
Publisher
Place and date

You know the class of old book I have in my head. I smack my lips; would it not be nice! I am going to launch on Scotch ecclesiastical affairs, in a tract addressed to the Clergy; in which doctrinal matters being laid aside, I contend simply that they should be just and dignified men at a certain crisis: this for the honour of humanity. Its authorship must, of course, be secret or the publication would be useless. You shall have a copy of course, and may God help you to understand it.

I have done no more to my fables. I find I must let things take their time. I am constant to my schemes; but I must work at them fitfully as the humour moves.

— To return, I wonder, if I have to make a budget of such essays as I dream, whether Seeley would publish them: I should give them unity, you know, by the doctrinal essays; nor do I think these would be the least agreeable. You must give me your advice and tell me whether I should throw out this delicate feeler to R. S.; or if not, what I am to say to this “proposal” business.

I shall go to England or Wales, with parents, shortly: after which, dash to Poland before setting in for the dismal session at Edinburgh.

Spirits good, with a general sense of hollowness underneath: wanity of wanities etc. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — Parents capital; thanks principally to them; yours truly still rather bitter, but less so.

To Sidney Colvin

The last paragraph of the following means that Dr. Appleton, the amiable and indefatigable editor of the Academy, then recently founded, had been a little disturbed in mind by some of the contributions of his brilliant young friend, but allowed his academic conscience to be salved by the fact of their signature.

[*Swanston, Summer 1874.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Am I mad? Have I lived thus long and have you known me thus long, to no purpose? Do you imagine I could ever write an essay a month, or promise an essay even every three months? I declare I would rather die than enter into any such arrangement. The Essays must fall from me, Essay by Essay, as they ripen; and all that my communication with Seeley would effect would be to make him see more in them than mere occasional essays; or at least *look* far more faithfully, in which spirit men rarely look in vain. You know both *Roads* and my little girls are a part of the scheme which dates from early at Mentone. My word to Seeley, therefore, would be to inform him of what I hope will lie ultimately behind them, of how I regard them as contributions towards a friendlier and more thoughtful way of looking about one, etc. One other purpose of telling him would be that I should feel myself more at liberty to write as I please, and not bound to drag in a tag about Art every time to make it more suitable. Tying myself down to time is an impossibility. You know my own description of myself as a person with a poetic character and no poetic talent: just as my prose muse has all the ways of a poetic one, and I must take my Essays as they come to me. If I got 12 of ‘em done in two years, I should be pleased. Never, please, let yourself imagine that I am fertile; I am constipated in the brains.

Look here, Appleton dined here last night and was delightful after the manner of our Appleton: I was none 144 the less pleased, because I was somewhat amused, to hear of your kind letter to him in defence of my productions. I was amused at the tranquil dishonesty with which he told me that I must put my name to all I write and then all will be well. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

Written on an expedition to Wales with his parents.

Train between Edinburgh and Chester, August 8, 1874.

My father and mother reading. I think I shall talk to you for a moment or two. This morning at Swanston, the birds, poor creatures, had the most troubled hour or two; evidently there was a hawk in the neighbourhood; not one sang; and the whole garden thrilled with little notes of warning and terror. I did not know before that the voice of birds could be so tragically expressive. I had always heard them before express their trivial satisfaction with the blue sky and the return of daylight. Really, they almost frightened me; I could hear mothers and wives in terror for those who were dear to them; it was easy to translate, I wish it were as easy to write; but it is very hard in this flying train, or I would write you more.

Chester. — I like this place much; but somehow I feel glad when I get among the quiet eighteenth century buildings, in cosy places with some elbow room about them, after the older architecture. This other is bedevilled and furtive; it seems to stoop; I am afraid of trap-doors, and could not go pleasantly into such houses. I don't know how much of this is legitimately the effect of the architecture; little enough possibly; possibly far the most part of it comes from bad historical novels and the disquieting statuary that garnishes some façades.

On the way, to-day, I passed through my dear Cumberland country. Nowhere to as great a degree can one find the combination of lowland and highland beauties; the outline of the blue hills is broken by the outline of many tumultuous tree-clumps; and the broad spaces of moorland are balanced by a network of deep hedgerows that might rival Suffolk, in the foreground. — How a railway journey shakes and discomposes one, mind and body! I grow blacker and blacker in humour as the day goes on; and when at last I am let out, and have the fresh air about me, it is as though I were born again, and the sick fancies flee away from my mind like swans in spring.

I want to come back on what I have said about eighteenth century and middle-age houses: I do not know if I have yet explained to you the sort of loyalty, of urbanity, that there is about the one to my mind; the spirit of a country orderly and prosperous, a flavour of the presence of magistrates and well-to-do merchants in bag-wigs, the clink of glasses at night in fire-lit parlours, something certain and civic and domestic, is all about these quiet, staid, shapely houses, with no character but their exceeding shapeliness, and the comely external utterance that they make of their internal comfort. Now the others are, as I have said, both furtive and bedevilled; they are sly and grotesque; they combine their sort of feverish grandeur with their sort of secretive baseness, after the manner of a Charles the Ninth. They are peopled for me with persons of the same fashion. Dwarfs and sinister people in cloaks are about them; and I seem to divine crypts, and, as I said, trap-doors. O God be praised that we live in this good daylight and this good peace.

Barmouth, August 9th. — To-day we saw the cathedral at Chester; and, far more delightful, saw and heard a certain inimitable verger who took us round. He was full of a certain recondite, far-away humour that did not 146 quite make you laugh at the time, but was somehow laughable to recollect. Moreover, he had so far a just imagination, and could put one in the right humour for seeing an old place, very much as, according to my favourite text, Scott's novels and poems do for one. His account of the monks in the Scriptorium, with their cowls over their heads, in a certain sheltered angle of the cloister where the big cathedral building kept the sun off the parchments, was all that could be wished; and so too was what he added of the others pacing solemnly behind them and dropping, ever and again, on their knees before a little shrine there is in the wall, "to keep 'em in the frame of mind." You will begin to think me unduly biassed in this verger's favour if I go on to tell you his opinion of me. We got into a little side chapel, whence we could hear the choir children at practice, and I stopped a moment listening to them, with, I dare say, a very bright face, for the sound was delightful to me. "Ah," says he, "you're *very* fond of music." I said I was. "Yes, I could tell that by your head," he answered. "There's a deal in that head." And he shook his own solemnly. I said it might be so, but I found it hard, at least, to get it out. Then my father cut in brutally, said anyway I had no ear, and left the verger so distressed and shaken in the foundations of his creed that, I hear, he got my father aside afterwards and said he was sure there was something in my face, and wanted to know what it was, if not music. He was relieved when he heard that I occupied myself with literature (which word, note here, I do now spell correctly). Good-night, and here's the verger's health!

Friday. — Yesterday received the letter you know of. I have finished my Portfolio paper, not very good but with things in it: I don't know if they will take it; and I have got a good start made with my *John Knox* articles. The weather here is rainy and miserable and windy: it is warm and not over boisterous for a certain sort of 147 pleasure. This place, as I have made my first real inquisition into it to-night is curious enough; all the days I have been here, I have been at work, and so I was quite new to it.

Saturday. — A most beautiful day. We took a most beautiful drive, also up the banks of the river. The heather and furze are in flower at once and make up a splendid richness of colour on the hills; the trees were beautiful; there was a bit of winding road with larches on one hand and oaks on the other; the oaks were in shadow and printed themselves off at every corner on the sunlit background of the larches. We passed a little family of children by the roadside. The youngest of all sat a good way apart from the others on the summit of a knoll; it was ensconced in an old tea-box, out of which issued its head and shoulders in a blue cloak and scarlet hat. O if you could have seen its dignity! It was deliciously humorous: and this little piece of comic self-satisfaction was framed in wonderfully by the hills and the sunlit estuary. We saw another child in a cottage garden. She had been sick, it seemed, and was taking the air quietly for health's sake. Over her pale face, she had decorated herself with all available flowers and weeds; and she was driving one chair as a horse, sitting in another by way of carriage. We cheered her as we passed, and she acknowledged the compliment like a queen. I like children better every day, I think, and most other things less. *John Knox* goes on, and a horrible story of a nurse which I think almost too cruel to go on with: I wonder why my stories are always so nasty. I am still well, and in good spirits. I say, by the way, have you any means of finding Madame Garschine's address. If you have, communicate with me. I fear my last letter has been too late to catch her at Franzensbad; and so I shall have to go without my visit altogether, which would vex me.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Barmouth, September 1874*], *Tuesday.*

I wonder if you ever read Dickens' Christmas books? I don't know that I would recommend you to read them, because they are too much perhaps. I have only read two of them yet, and feel so good after them and would do anything, yes and shall do everything, to make it a little better for people. I wish I could lose no time; I want to go out and comfort some one; I shall never listen to the nonsense they tell one about not giving money — I *shall* give money; not that I haven't done so always, but I shall do it with a high hand now.

It is raining here; and I have been working at John Knox, and at the horrid story I have in hand, and walking in the rain. Do you know this story of mine is horrible; I only work at it by fits and starts, because I feel as if it were a sort of crime against humanity — it is so cruel.

Wednesday. — I saw such nice children again to-day; one little fellow alone by the roadside, putting a stick into a spout of water and singing to himself — so wrapt up that we had to poke him with our umbrellas to attract his attention; and again, two solid, fleshly, grave, double-chinned burgomasters in black, with black hats on 'em, riding together in what they call, I think, a double perambulator. My father is such fun here. He is always skipping about into the drawing-room, and speaking to all the girls, and telling them God knows what about us all. My mother and I are the old people who sit aloof, receive him as a sort of prodigal when he comes back to us, and listen indulgently to what he has to tell.

Llandudno, Thursday. — A cold bleak place of stucco villas with wide streets to let the wind in at you. A beautiful journey, however, coming hither.

Friday. — Seeley has taken my paper, which is, as I now think, not to beat about the bush, bad. However, 149 there are pretty things in it, I fancy; we shall see what you shall say.

Sunday. — I took my usual walk before turning in last night, and dallied over it a little. It was a cool, dark, solemn night, starry, but the sky charged with big black clouds. The lights in house windows you could see, but the houses themselves were lost in the general blackness. A church clock struck eleven as I went past, and rather startled me. The whiteness of the road was all I had to go by. I heard an express train roaring away down the coast into the night, and dying away sharply in the distance; it was like the noise of an enormous rocket, or a shot world, one would fancy. I suppose the darkness made me a little fanciful; but when at first I was puzzled by this great sound in the night, between sea and hills, I thought half seriously that it might be a world broken loose — this world to wit. I stood for I suppose five seconds with this looking-for of destruction in my head, not exactly frightened but put out; and I wanted badly not to be overwhelmed where I was, unless I could cry out a farewell with a great voice over the ruin and make myself heard. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

“John Knox” and “J. K.” herein mentioned are the two papers on *John Knox and His Relations with Women,* first printed in Macmillan’s Magazine and afterwards in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*.

Swanston, Wednesday [*Autumn*], 1874.

I have been hard at work all yesterday, and besides had to write a long letter to Bob, so I found no time until quite late, and then was sleepy. Last night it blew a fearful gale; I was kept awake about a couple of hours, and could not get to sleep for the horror of the wind’s noise; the whole house shook; and, mind you, our house is a 150 house, a great castle of jointed stone that would weigh up a street of English houses; so that when it quakes, as it did last night, it means something. But the quaking was not what put me about; it was the horrible howl of the wind round the corner; the audible haunting of an incarnate anger about the house; the evil spirit that was abroad;

and, above all, the shuddering silent pauses when the storm's heart stands dreadfully still for a moment. O how I hate a storm at night! They have been a great influence in my life, I am sure; for I can remember them so far back — long before I was six at least, for we left the house in which I remember listening to them times without number when I was six. And in those days the storm had for me a perfect impersonation, as durable and unvarying as any heathen deity. I always heard it, as a horseman riding past with his cloak about his head, and somehow always carried away, and riding past again, and being baffled yet once more, *ad infinitum*, all night long. I think I wanted him to get past, but I am not sure; I know only that I had some interest either for or against in the matter; and I used to lie and hold my breath, not quite frightened, but in a state of miserable exaltation.

My first *John Knox* is in proof, and my second is on the anvil. It is very good of me so to do; for I want so much to get to my real tour and my sham tour, the real tour first; it is always working in my head, and if I can only turn on the right sort of style at the right moment, I am not much afraid of it. One thing bothers me; what with hammering at this J. K., and writing necessary letters, and taking necessary exercise (that even not enough, the weather is so repulsive to me, cold and windy), I find I have no time for reading except times of fatigue, when I wish merely to relax myself. O — and I read over again for this purpose Flaubert's *Tentation de St. Antoine*; it struck me a good deal at first, but this second time it has fetched me immensely. I am but just done with it, so you will know the large proportion of salt to take 151 with my present statement, that it's the finest thing I ever read! Of course, it isn't that, it's full of *longueurs*, and is not quite "redd up," as we say in Scotland, not quite articulated; but there are splendid things in it.

I say, *do* take your macaroni with oil: *do, please*. It's *beastly* with butter. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

Mr. (later Sir) George Grove was for some years before and after this date the editor of Macmillan's Magazine (but the true monument to his memory is of course his *Dictionary of Music*). After the Knox articles no more contributions from R. L. S. appeared in this magazine, partly, I think, because Mr. Alexander Macmillan disapproved of his essay on Burns published the following year. The Portfolio paper here mentioned is that entitled *On the Enjoyment of Unpleasant Places*.

[*Swanston, Autumn 1874*], *Thursday.*

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have another letter from Grove, about my *John Knox*, which is flattering in its way: he is a very gushing and spontaneous person. I am busy with another Portfolio paper for which

I can find no name; I think I shall require to leave it without.

I am afraid I shall not get to London on my way to Poland, but I must try to manage it on my way back; I must see you anyway, before I tackle this sad winter work, just to get new heart. As it is, I am as jolly as three, in good health, fairish working trim and on good, very good, terms with my people.

Look here, I must have people well. If they will keep well, I am all right: if they won't — well I'll do as well as I can, and forgive them, and try to be something of a comfortable thought in spite. So with that cheerful sentiment, good-night dear friend and good health to you.

Saturday. — Your letter to-day. Thank you. It is a horrid day, outside. You talk of my setting to a book, as if I could; don't you know that things must *come* to 152 me? I can do but little; I mostly wait and look out. I am struggling with a Portfolio paper just now, which will not come straight somehow and *will* get too gushy; but a little patience will get it out of the kink and sober it down I hope. I have been thinking over my movements, and am not sure but that I may get to London on my way to Poland after all. Hurrah! But we must not halloo till we are out of the wood; this may be only a clearing.

God help us all, it is a funny world. To see people skipping all round us with their eyes sealed up with indifference, knowing nothing of the earth or man or woman, going automatically to offices and saying they are happy or unhappy out of a sense of duty, I suppose, surely at least from no sense of happiness or unhappiness, unless perhaps they have a tooth that twinges, is it not like a bad dream? Why don't they stamp their foot upon the ground and awake? There is the moon rising in the east, and there is a person with their heart broken and still glad and conscious of the world's glory up to the point of pain; and behold they know nothing of all this! I should like to kick them into consciousness, for damp gingerbread puppets as they are. S. C. is down on me for being bitter; who can help it sometimes, especially after they have slept ill?

I am going to have a lot of lunch presently; and then I shall feel all right again, and the loneliness will pass away as often before. It is the flesh that is weak. Already I have done myself all the good in the world by this scribble, and feel alive again and pretty jolly.

Sunday. — What a day! Cold and dark as mid-winter. I shall send with this two new photographs of myself for your opinion. My father regards this life "as a shambling sort of omnibus which is taking him to his hotel." Is that not well said? It came out in a rather pleasant and entirely amicable discussion which we had this afternoon on a walk. The colouring of the world, to-day is of course hideous; we saw only one pleasant sight, a couple 153 of lovers under a thorn-tree by the wayside, he with his arm about her waist: they did not seem to find it so cold as we. I have made a lot of progress to-day with my Portfolio paper. I think some of it should be nice, but it rambles a little; I like rambling, if the country be pleasant; don't you? — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*October 27, 1874*], *Edinburgh, Thursday.*

It is cold, but very sunshiny and dry; I wish you were here; it would suit you and it doesn't suit me; if we could change? This is the Fast day — Thursday preceding bi-annual Holy Sacrament that is — nobody does any work, they go to Church twice, they read nothing secular (except the newspapers, that is the nuance between Fast day and Sunday), they eat like fighting-cocks. Behold how good a thing it is and becoming well to fast in Scotland. I am progressing with *John Knox and Women No. 2*; I shall finish it, I think, in a fortnight hence; and then I shall begin to enjoy myself. *J. K. and W. No. 2* is not uninteresting however; it only bores me because I am so anxious to be at something else which I like better. I shall perhaps go to Church this afternoon from a sort of feeling that it is rather a wholesome thing to do of an afternoon; it keeps one from work and it lets you out so late that you cannot weary yourself walking and so spoil your evening's work.

Friday. — I got your letter this morning, and whether owing to that, or to the fact that I had spent the evening before in comparatively riotous living, I managed to work five hours and a half well and without fatigue; besides reading about an hour more at history. This is a thing to be proud of.

We have had lately some of the most beautiful sunsets; our autumn sunsets here are always admirable in 154 colour. To-night there was just a little lake of tarnished green deepening into a blood-orange at the margins, framed above by dark clouds and below by the long roof-line of the Egyptian buildings on what we call the Mound, the statues on the top (of her Britannic Majesty and diverse nondescript Sphinxes) printing themselves off black against the lit space.

Saturday. — It has been colder than ever; and to-night there is a truculent wind about the house, shaking the windows and making a hollow inarticulate grumbling in the chimney. I cannot say how much I hate the cold. It makes my scalp so tight across my head and gives me such a beastly rheumatism about my shoulders, and wrinkles and stiffens my face; O I have such a *Sehnsucht* for Mentone, where the sun is shining and the air still, and (a friend writes to me) people are complaining of the heat.

Sunday. — I was chased out by my lamp again last night; it always goes out when I feel in the humour to write to you. To-day I have been to Church, which has not improved my temper I must own. The clergyman did his best to make me hate him, and I took refuge in that admirable poem the Song of Deborah and Barak; I should like to make a long scroll of painting (say to go all round a cornice) illustrative of this poem; with the people seen in the distance going stealthily on footpaths while the great highways go vacant; with the archers besetting the draw-wells; with the princes in hiding on the hills among the bleating sheep-flocks; with the overthrow of Sisera, the stars fighting against him in their courses and that ancient river, the river Kishon, sweeping him away in anger; with his mother looking and looking down the long road in the red sunset, and never a banner and never a spear-clump coming into sight, and her women with white faces round her, ready with lying comfort. To say nothing of the people on white asses.

O, I do hate this damned life that I lead. Work — work — work; 155 that's all right, it's amusing; but I want women about me and I want pleasure. John Knox had a better time of it than I, with his godly females all leaving their husbands to follow after him; I would I were John Knox; I hate living like a hermit. Write me a nice letter if ever you are in the humour to write to me, and it doesn't hurt your head. Good-bye. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

The projected visit to his Russian friend in Poland did not come off, and shortly after the preceding letter Stevenson went for a few days' walking tour in the Chiltern Hills of Buckinghamshire, as recorded in his essay *An Autumn Effect*. He then came on for a visit to London.

[*London, November 1874.*]

When I left you I found an organ-grinder in Russell Square playing to a child; and the simple fact that there was a child listening to him, that he was giving this pleasure, entitled him, according to my theory, as you know, to some money; so I put some coppers on the ledge of his organ, without so much as looking at him, and I was going on when a woman said to me: "Yes, sir, he do look bad, don't he? scarcely fit like to be working." And then I looked at the man, and O! he was so ill, so yellow and heavy-eyed and drooping. I did not like to go back somehow, and so I gave the woman a shilling and asked her to give it to him for me. I saw her do so and walked on; but the face followed me, and so when I had got to the end of the division, I turned and came back as hard as I could and filled his hand with money — ten to thirteen shillings, I should think. I was sure he was going to be ill, you know, and he was a young man; and I dare say he was alone, and had no one to love him.

I had my reward; for a few yards farther on, here was another organ-grinder playing a dance tune, and perhaps 156 a dozen children all dancing merrily to his music, singly, and by twos and threes, and in pretty little figures together. Just what my organ-grinder in my story wanted to have happen to him! It was so gay and pleasant in the twilight under the street lamp.

I am very well, have eaten well, and am so sleepy I can write no more. This I write to let you know I am no worse; all the better. — Ever your faithful friend,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Edinburgh, November 1874*], *Sunday.*

I was never more sorry to leave you, but I never left you with a better heart, than last night. I had a long journey and a cold one; but never was sick nor sorry the whole way. It was a long one because when we got to Berwick, we had to go round through the hills by Kelso, as there was a block on the main line. I knew nothing of this, and you may imagine my bewilderment when I came to myself, the train standing and whistling dismally in the black morning, before a little vacant half-lit station, with a name up that I had never heard before. My fellow-traveller woke up and wanted to know what was wrong. “O, it’s nothing,” I said, “nothing at all, it’s an evil dream.” However we had the thing explained to us at the end of ends, and trailed on in the dark among the snowy hills, stopping every now and again and whistling in an appealing kind of way, as much as to say, “God knows where we are, for God’s sake don’t run into us”; until at last we came to a dead standstill and remained so for perhaps an hour and a quarter. This wakened us up for a little; and we managed, at last, to attract the attention of one of the officials whom we could see picking their way about the snow with lanterns. This man (very wide awake, and hale, and lusty) informed us we were waiting for another conductor, as our own guard 157 did not know the line. “Where is the new guard coming from?” we ask. “O, close by; only — he, he — he was married last night.” And immediately we heard much hoarse laughter in the dark about us; and the moving lanterns were shaken to and fro, as if in a wind. This poor conductor! However, I recomposed myself for slumber, and did not re-awake much before Edinburgh, where I was discharged three hours too late and found my father waiting for me in the snow, with a very long face. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

I forget what the Japanese prints were which I had been sending to Stevenson at his wish, but they sound like specimens of Hiroshigé and

Kuniyoshi. The taste for these things was then quite new and had laid hold on him strongly.

[*Edinburgh, November 1874.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Thank you, and God bless you for ever: this is a far better lot than the last; I have chosen four complete sets out of it for setting, quite admirable: the others are not quite one's taste; I find the colour far from always being agreeable, it is a great toss up. They have sent me duplicates of first a mad little scene with a white horse, a red monarch and a blue arm of the sea in it; and second of a night scene with water, flowers and a black and white umbrella and a wonderful grey distance and a wonderful general effect — one of my best in fact. Do not now force yourself to make any more purchases for me; but if ever you see a thing you would like to lecture off, remember I am the person who is ready to buy it and let you have the use of it: keep this in view *always*.

I am working very hard (for me) and am very happy over my picters.

Goodbye, *mon vieux*. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — In fact if ever you see anything exceptionally fine, purchase for R. L. S. I owe you lots of money besides this, don't I? *John Knox* is red and sparkling on the anvil and the hammer goes about six hours on him.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

During his days in London Stevenson had gone with Mrs. Sitwell to revisit the Elgin marbles, and had carried off photographs of them to put up in his room at Edinburgh. *King Matthias's Hunting Horn* has perished like so many other stories of this time.

[*Edinburgh, November 1874*], *Tuesday.*

Well, I've got some women now, and they're better than nothing. Three, without heads, who have been away getting framed. And you know they are more to me, after a fashion, than they can be to you, because, after a fashion also, they are women. I have come now to think the sitting figure in spite of its beautiful drapery rather a blemish, rather an interruption to the sentiment. The two others are better than one has ever dreamed; I think these two women are the only things in the world that have been better than, in Bible phrase, it had entered into my heart to conceive. Who made them? Was it Pheidias? or do they not know? It is wonderful what company they are — noble company. And then I have now three Japanese pictures that are after my own heart, and I get up from time to time and turn a bit of favourite colour over and over, roll it under my tongue, savour it till it gets all through me; and then back to my chair and to work.

This afternoon about six there was a small orange moon, lost in a great world of blue evening. A few leafless boughs, and a bit of garden railing, criss-cross its face; and below it there was blueness and the spread lights of Leith, lost in blue haze. To the east, the town, also subdued to the same blue, piled itself up, with here and there a lit window, until it could print off its outline 159 against a faint patch of green and russet that remained behind the sunset.

I must tell you about my way of life, which is regular to a degree. Breakfast 8.30; during breakfast and my smoke afterwards till ten, when I begin work, I read Reformation; from ten, I work until about a quarter to one; from one until two, I lunch and read a book on Schopenhauer or one on Positivism; two to three work, three to six anything; if I am in before six, I read about Japan: six, dinner and a pipe with my father and coffee until 7.30; 7.30 to 9.30, work; after that either supper and a pipe at home, or out to Simpson's or Baxter's: bed between eleven and twelve.

Wednesday. — Two good things have arrived to me to-day: your letter for one, and the end of *John Knox* for another. I cannot write English because I have been speaking French all evening with some French people of my knowledge. It's a sad thing the state I get into, when I cannot remember English and yet do not know French! And it is worse when it is complicated, as at present, with a pen that will not write! If you knew how I have to paint and how I have to manœuvre to get the stuff legible at all.

Thursday. — I have said the Fates are only women after a fashion; and that is one of the strangest things about them. They are wonderfully womanly — they are more womanly than any woman — and those girt draperies are drawn over a wonderful greatness of body instinct with sex; I do not see a line in them that could be a line in a man. And yet, when all is said, they are not women for us; they are of another race, immortal, separate; one has no wish to look at them with love, only with a sort of lowly adoration, physical, but wanting what is the soul of all love, whether admitted to oneself or not, hope; in a word "the desire of the moth for the star." O great white stars of eternal marble, O shapely, colossal women, and yet not women. It is not love that 160 we seek from them, we do not desire to see their great eyes troubled with our passions, or the great impassive members contorted by any hope or pain or pleasure; only now and again, to be conscious that they exist, to have knowledge of them far off in cloudland or feel their steady eyes shining, like quiet watchful stars, above the turmoil of the earth.

I write so ill; so cheap and miserable and penny-a-linerish is this *John Knox* that I have just sent, that I am low. Only I keep my heart up by thinking of you. And if all goes to the worst, shall I not be able to lay my head on the great knees of the middle Fate — O these great knees — I know all Baudelaire meant now with his *géante* — to lay my head on her great knees and go to sleep.

Friday. — I have finished *The Story of King Matthias' Hunting Horn*, whereof I spoke to you, and I think it should be good. It excites me like wine, or fire, or death, or love, or something; nothing of my own writing ever excited me so much; it does seem to me so weird and fantastic.

Saturday. — I know now that there is a more subtle and dangerous sort of selfishness in habit than there ever can be in disorder. I never ceased to be generous when I was most *déréglé*; now when I am beginning to settle into habits, I see the danger in front of me — one might cease to be generous and grow hard and sordid in time and trouble. However, thank God it is life I want, and nothing posthumous, and for two good emotions I would sacrifice a thousand years of fame. Moreover I know so well that I shall never be much as a writer that I am not very sorely tempted.

My only chance is in my stories; and so you will forgive me if I postpone everything else to copy out *King Matthias*; I have learned by experience that a story should be copied out and finished fairly off at the first heat if ever. I am even thinking of finishing up half-a-dozen 161 perhaps and trying the publishers? what do you say? Give me your advice?

Sunday. — Good-bye. A long story to tell but no time to tell it: well and happy. Adieu. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

Edinburgh [*Sunday, November 1874*].

Here is my long story: yesterday night, after having supped, I grew so restless that I was obliged to go out in search of some excitement. There was a half-moon lying over on its back, and incredibly bright in the midst of a faint grey sky set with faint stars: a very inartistic moon, that would have damned a picture.

At the most populous place of the city I found a little boy, three years old perhaps, half frantic with terror, and crying to every one for his "Mammy." This was about eleven, mark you. People stopped and spoke to him, and then went on, leaving him more frightened than before. But I and a good-humoured mechanic came up together; and I instantly developed a latent faculty for setting the hearts of children at rest. Master Tommy Murphy (such was his name) soon stopped crying, and allowed me to take him up and carry him; and the mechanic and I trudged away along Princes Street to find his parents. I was soon so tired that I had to ask the mechanic to carry the bairn; and you should have seen the puzzled contempt with which he looked at me, for knocking in so soon. He was a good fellow, however, although very impracticable and sentimental; and he soon bethought him that Master Murphy might catch cold after his excitement, so we wrapped him up in my greatcoat. “Tobauga (Tobago) Street” was the address he gave us; and we deposited him in a little grocer’s shop and went through all the houses in the street without being able to find any one of the name of Murphy. Then I set off to the 162 head police office, leaving my greatcoat in pawn about Master Murphy’s person. As I went down one of the lowest streets in the town, I saw a little bit of life that struck me. It was now half-past twelve, a little shop stood still half-open, and a boy of four or five years old was walking up and down before it imitating cockcrow. He was the only living creature within sight.

At the police offices no word of Master Murphy’s parents; so I went back empty-handed. The good groceress, who had kept her shop open all this time, could keep the child no longer; her father, bad with bronchitis, said he must forth. So I got a large scone with currants in it, wrapped my coat about Tommy, got him up on my arm, and away to the police office with him: not very easy in my mind, for the poor child, young as he was — he could scarce speak — was full of terror for the “office,” as he called it. He was now very grave and quiet and communicative with me; told me how his father thrashed him, and divers household matters. Whenever he saw a woman on our way he looked after her over my shoulder and then gave his judgment: “That’s no *her*,” adding sometimes, “She has a wean wi’ her.” Meantime I was telling him how I was going to take him to a gentleman who would find out his mother for him quicker than ever I could, and how he must not be afraid of him, but be brave, as he had been with me. We had just arrived at our destination — we were just under the lamp — when he looked me in the face and said appealingly, “He’ll no put me in the office?” And I had to assure him that he would not, even as I pushed open the door and took him in.

The serjeant was very nice, and I got Tommy comfortably seated on a bench, and spirited him up with good words and the scone with the currants in it; and then, telling him I was just going out to look for Mammy, I got my greatcoat and slipped away.

Poor little boy! he was not called for, I learn, until ten this morning. This is very ill written, and I’ve missed 163 half that was picturesque in it; but to say truth, I am very tired and sleepy: it was two before I got to bed. However, you see, I had my excitement.

Monday. — I have written nothing all morning; I cannot settle to it. Yes — I *will* though.

10.45. — And I did. I want to say something more to you about the three women. I wonder so much why they should have been *women*, and halt between two opinions in the matter. Sometimes I think it is because they were made by a man for men; sometimes, again, I think there is an abstract reason for it, and there is something more substantive about a woman than ever there can be about a man. I can conceive a great mythical woman, living alone among inaccessible mountain-tops or in some lost island in the pagan seas, and ask no more. Whereas if I hear of a Hercules, I ask after Iole or Dejanira. I cannot think him a man without women. But I can think of these three deep-breasted women, living out all their days on remote hilltops, seeing the white dawn and the purple even, and the world outspread before them for ever, and no more to them for ever than a sight of the eyes, a hearing of the ears, a far-away interest of the inflexible heart, not pausing, not pitying, but austere with a holy austerity, rigid with a calm and passionless rigidity; and I find them none the less women to the end.

And think, if one could love a woman like that once, see her once grow pale with passion, and once wring your lips out upon hers, would it not be a small thing to die? Not that there is not a passion of a quite other sort, much less epic, far more dramatic and intimate, that comes out of the very frailty of perishable women; out of the lines of suffering that we see written about their eyes, and that we may wipe out if it were but for a moment; out of the thin hands, wrought and tempered in agony to a fineness of perception, that the indifferent or the merely happy cannot know; out of the tragedy that 164 lies about such a love, and the pathetic incompleteness. This is another thing, and perhaps it is a higher. I look over my shoulder at the three great headless Madonnas, and they look back at me and do not move; see me, and through and over me, the foul life of the city dying to its embers already as the night draws on; and over miles and miles of silent country, set here and there with lit towns, thundered through here and there with night expresses scattering fire and smoke; and away to the ends of the earth, and the furthest star, and the blank regions of nothing; and they are not moved. My quiet, great-kneed, deep-breasted, well-draped ladies of Necessity, I give my heart to you!

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Edinburgh*] *December 23, 1874.*

Monday. — I have come from a concert, and the concert was rather a disappointment. Not so my afternoon skating — Duddingston, our big loch, is bearing; and I wish you could have seen it this afternoon, covered with people, in thin driving snow flurries, the big hill grim and white and alpine overhead in the thick air, and the road up the gorge, as it were into the heart of it, dotted black with traffic. Moreover, I *can* skate a little bit; and what one can do is always pleasant to do.

Tuesday. — I got your letter to-day, and was so glad thereof. It was of good omen to me also. I worked from ten to one (my classes are suspended now for Xmas holidays), and wrote four or five Portfolio pages of my Buckinghamshire affair. Then I went to Duddingston and skated all afternoon. If you had seen the moon rising, a perfect sphere of smoky gold, in the dark air above the trees, and the white loch thick with skaters, and the great hill, snow-sprinkled, overhead! It was a sight for a king.

Wednesday. — I stayed on Duddingston to-day till after nightfall. The little booths that hucksters set up round the edge were marked each one by its little lamp. There were some fires too; and the light, and the shadows of the people who stood round them to warm themselves, made a strange pattern all round on the snow-covered ice. A few people with torches began to travel up and down the ice, a lit circle travelling along with them over the snow. A gigantic moon rose, meanwhile, over the trees and the kirk on the promontory among perturbed and vacillating clouds.

The walk home was very solemn and strange. Once, through a broken gorge, we had a glimpse of a little space of mackerel sky, moon-litten, on the other side of the hill; the broken ridges standing grey and spectral between; and the hilltop over all, snow-white, and strangely magnified in size.

This must go to you to-morrow, so that you may read it on Christmas Day for company. I hope it may be good company to you.

Thursday. — Outside, it snows thick and steadily. The gardens before our house are now a wonderful fairy forest. And O, this whiteness of things, how I love it, how it sends the blood about my body! Maurice de Guérin hated snow; what a fool he must have been! Somebody tried to put me out of conceit with it by saying that people were lost in it. As if people don’t get lost in love, too, and die of devotion to art; as if everything worth were not an occasion to some people’s end.

What a wintry letter this is! Only I think it is winter seen from the inside of a warm greatcoat. And there is, at least, a warm heart about it somewhere. Do you know, what they say in Xmas stories is true. I think one loves their friends more dearly at this season. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

The Portfolio article here mentioned is *An Autumn Effect* (see *Essays of Travel*). The Italian story so delightedly begun was by and by condemned and destroyed like all the others of this time.

[*Edinburgh, January 1875*], *Monday.*

Have come from a concert. Sinico sang, *tant bien que mal*, "Ah perfido spergiuro!"; and then we had the Eroica symphony (No. 3). I can, and need, say no more; I am rapt out of earth by it; Beethoven is certainly the greatest man the world has yet produced. I wonder, is there anything so superb — I can find no word for it more specific than superb — all I know is that all my knowledge is transcended. I finished to-day and sent off (and a mighty mean detail it is, to set down after Beethoven's grand passion) my Portfolio article about Buckinghamshire. In its own way I believe it to be a good thing; and I hope you will find something in it to like; it touches, in a dry enough manner, upon most things under heaven, and if you like me, I think you ought to like this intellectual — no, I withdraw the word — this artistic dog of mine. Thaw — thaw — thaw, up here; and farewell skating, and farewell the clear dry air and the wide, bright, white snow-surface, and all that was so pleasant in the past.

Wednesday. — Yesterday I wasn't well and to-night I have been ever so busy. There came a note from the Academy, sent by John H. Ingram, the editor of the edition of Poe's works I have been reviewing, challenging me to find any more faults. I have found nearly sixty; so I may be happy; but that makes me none the less sleepy; so I must go to bed.

Friday. — I am awfully out of the humour to write; I am very inert although quite happy; I am informed by those who are more expert that I am bilious. *Bien*; let it be so; I am still content; and though I can do no original work, I get forward making notes for my Knox at a good trot.

Saturday. — I am so happy. I am no longer here in Edinburgh. I have been all yesterday evening and this forenoon in Italy, four hundred years ago, with one Sannazzaro, a sculptor, painter, poet, etc., and one Ippolita, a beautiful Duchess. O I like it badly! I wish you could hear it at once; or rather I wish you could see it immediately in beautiful type on such a page as it ought to be, in my first little volume of stories. What a change this is from collecting dull notes for *John Knox*, as I have been all the early part of the week — the difference between life and death. — I am quite well again and in such happy spirits, as who would not be, having spent so much of his time at that convent on the hills with these sweet people. *Vous verrez*, and if you don't like this story — well, I give it up if you don't like it. Not but what there's a long way to travel yet; I am no farther than the threshold; I have only set the men, and the game has still to be played, and a lot of dim notions must become definite and shapely, and a deal be clear to me that is anything but clear as yet. The story shall be called, I think, *When the Devil was well*, in allusion to the old proverb.

Good-bye.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [*January 1875*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I have worked too hard; I have given myself one day of rest, and that was not enough; so I am giving myself another. I shall go to bed again likewise so soon as this is done, and slumber most potently.

9 P.M. — Slept all afternoon like a lamb.

About my coming south, I think the still small unanswerable voice of coins will make it impossible until the session is over (end of March); but for all that, I think I shall hold out jolly. I do not want you to come and bother yourself; indeed, it is still not quite certain 168 whether my father will be quite fit for you, although I have now no fear of that really. Now don't take up this wrongly; I wish you could come; and I do not know anything that would make me happier, but I see that it is wrong to expect it, and so I resign myself: some time after. I offered Appleton a series of papers on the modern French school — the Parnassiens, I think they call them — de Banville, Coppée, Soulary, and Sully Prudhomme. But he has not deigned to answer my letter.

I shall have another Portfolio paper so soon as I am done with this story, that has played me out; the story is to be called *When the Devil was well*: scene, Italy, Renaissance; colour, purely imaginary of course, my own unregenerate idea of what Italy then was. O, when shall I find the story of my dreams, that shall never halt nor wander nor step aside, but go ever before its face, and ever swifter and louder, until the pit receives it, roaring? The Portfolio paper will be about Scotland and England. — Ever yours,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Edinburgh, January 1875.*]

I wish I could write better letters to you. Mine must be very dull. I must try to give you news. Well, I was at the annual dinner of my old Academy schoolfellows last night. We sat down ten, out of seventy-two! The others are scattered all over the places of the earth, some in San Francisco, some in New Zealand, some in India, one in the backwoods — it gave one a wide look over the world to hear them talk so. I read them some verses. It is great fun; I always read verses, and in the vinous enthusiasm of the moment they always propose to have them printed; *Ce qui n'arrive jamais du reste*: in the morning, they are more calm.

Sunday. — It occurs to me that one reason why there is 169 no news in my letters is because there is so little in my life. I always tell you of my concerts: I was at another yesterday afternoon: a recital of Hallé and Norman Neruda. I went in the evening to the pantomime with the Mackintoshes — cousins of mine. Their little boy, aged four, was there for the first time. To see him with his eyes fixed and open like saucers, and never varying his expression save in so far as he might sometimes open his mouth a little wider, was worth the money. He laughed only once — when the giant's dwarf fed his master as though he were a child. Coming home, he was much interested as to who made the fairies, and wanted to know if they were like *berries*. I should like to know how much this question was due to the idea of their coming up from under the stage, and how much to a vague idea of rhyme. When he was told that they were not like berries, he then asked if they had not been flowers before they were fairies. It was a good deal in the vein of Herbert Spencer's primitive man all this.

I am pretty well but have not got back to work much since Tuesday. I work far too hard at the story; but I wish I had finished it before I stopped as I feel somewhat out of the swing now. — Ever your faithful

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Another of the literary projects which came to naught, no one of the stories mentioned having turned out according to Stevenson's dream and desire at its first conception, or even having been preserved for use afterwards as the foundation of riper work. "Clytie" is of course the famous Roman bust from the Townley collection in the British Museum.

[*Edinburgh, January 1875.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Thanks for your letter, I too am in such a state of business that I know not when to find the time to write. Look here — Seeley does not seem to me to have put that paper of mine in this month; so I 170 remain unable to pay you; which is a sad pity and must be forgiven me.

What am I doing? Well I wrote my second *John Knox*, which is not a bad piece of work for me; begun and finished ready for press in nine days. Then I have since written a story called *King Matthias's Hunting Horn*, and I am engaged in finishing another called *The Two Falconers of Cairnstane*. I find my stories affect me rather more perhaps than is wholesome. I have only been two hours at work to-day, and yet I have been crying and am shaking badly, as you can see in my handwriting, and my back is a bit bad. They give me pleasure though, quite worth all results. However I shall work no more to-day.

I am to get £1000 when I pass Advocate, it seems; which is good.

O I say, will you kindly tell me all about the bust of Clytie.

Then I had the wisdom to stop and look over Japanese picture books until lunch time.

Well, tell me all about Clytie, how old is it, who did it, what's it about, etc. Send it on a sheet that I can forward without indiscretion to another, as I desire the information for a friend whom I wish to please.

Now, look here. When I have twelve stories ready — these twelve —

I. The Devil on Cramond Sands (needs copying about half).
Scotch.
II. The Curate of Anstruther's Bottle (needs copying altogether).
III. The Two Falconers of Cairnstane (wants a few pages).
IV. Strange Adventures of Mr. Nehemiah Solny (wants reorganisation).
V. King Matthias's Hunting Horn (all ready).
VI. Autolycus at Court (in gremio).
VII. The Family of Love (in gremio). 171
VIII. The Barrel Organ (all ready).
IX. The Last Sinner (wants copying).
X. Margery Bonthron (wants a few pages).
XI. Martin's Madonna (in gremio).
XII. Life and Death (all ready).

— when I have these twelve ready, should I not do better to try to get a publisher for them, call them *A Book of Stories* and put a good dedicatory letter at the fore end of them. I should get less coin than by going into magazines perhaps; but I should also get more notice, should I not? and so, do better for myself in the long run. Now, should I not? Besides a book with boards is a book with boards, even if it bain't a very fat one and has no references to Ammianus Marcellinus and German critics at the foot of the pages. On all this, I shall want your serious advice. I am sure I shall stand or fall by the stories; and you'll think so too, when you see those poor excrescences the two John Knox and Women games. However, judge for yourself and be prudent on my behalf, like a good soul.

Yes, I'll come to Cambridge then or thereabout, if God doesn't put a real tangible spoke in my wheel.

My terms with my parents are admirable; we are a very united family.

Good-bye, *mon cher, je ne puis plus écrire*. I have not quite got over a damned affecting part in my story this morning. O cussed stories, they will never affect any one but me I fear. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

In the following is related Stevenson's first introduction to Mr. W. E. Henley. The acquaintance thus formed ripened quickly, as is well known, into a close and stimulating friendship. Of the story called *A Country Dance* no trace remains.

Edinburgh, Tuesday [*February 1875*].

I got your nice long gossiping letter to-day — I mean by that that there was more news in it than usual — and 172 so, of course, I am pretty jolly. I am in the house, however, with such a beastly cold in the head. Our east winds begin already to be very cold.

O, I have such a longing for children of my own; and yet I do not think I could bear it if I had one. I fancy I must feel more like a woman than like a man about that. I sometimes hate the children I see on the street — you know what I mean by hate — wish they were somewhere else, and not there to mock me; and sometimes, again, I don't know how to go by them for the love of them, especially the very wee ones.

Thursday. — I have been still in the house since I wrote, and I *have* worked. I finished the Italian story; not well, but as well as I can just now; I must go all over it again, some time soon, when I feel in the humour to better and perfect it. And now I have taken up an old story, begun years ago; and I have now re-written all I had written of it then, and mean to finish it. What I have lost and gained is odd. As far as regards simple writing, of course, I am in another world now; but in some things, though more clumsy, I seem to have been freer and more plucky: this is a lesson I have taken to heart. I have got a jolly new name for my old story. I am going to call it *A Country Dance*; the two heroes keep changing places, you know; and the chapter where the most of this changing goes on is to be called "Up the middle, down the middle." It will be in six or (perhaps) seven chapters. I have never worked harder in my life than these last four days. If I can only keep it up.

Saturday. — Yesterday, Leslie Stephen, who was down here to lecture, called on me and took me up to see a poor fellow, a sort of poet who writes for him, and who has been eighteen months in our infirmary, and may be, for all I know, eighteen months more. It was very sad to see him there, in a little room with two beds, and a couple of sick children in the other bed; a girl came in to visit the children, and played dominoes on 173 the counterpane with them; the gas flared and crackled, the fire burned in a dull economical way; Stephen and I sat on a couple of chairs, and the poor fellow sat up in his bed with his hair and beard all tangled, and talked as cheerfully as if he had been in a King's palace, or the great King's palace of the blue air. He has taught himself two languages since he has been lying there. I shall try to be of use to him.

We have had two beautiful spring days, mild as milk, windy withal, and the sun hot. I dreamed last night I was walking by moonlight round the place where the scene of my story is laid; it was all so quiet and sweet, and the blackbirds were singing as if it was day; it made my heart very cool and happy. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Edinburgh*] *February 8, 1875.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Forgive my bothering you. Here is the proof of my second *Knox*. Glance it over, like a good fellow, and if there's anything very flagrant send it to me marked. I have no confidence in myself; I feel such an ass. What have I been doing? As near as I can calculate, nothing. And yet I have worked all this month from three to five hours a day, that is to say, from one to three hours more than my doctor allows me; positively no result.

No, I can write no article just now; I am *pioching*, like a madman, at my stories, and can make nothing of them; my simplicity is tame and dull — my passion tinsel, boyish, hysterical. Never mind — ten years hence, if I live, I shall have learned, so help me God. I know one must work, in the meantime (so says Balzac) *comme le mineur enfoui sous un éboulement.*

J'y parviendrai, nom de nom de nom! But it's a long look forward. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

As the spring advanced Stevenson had again been much out of sorts, and had gone for a change, in the company of Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson, on his first visit to the artist haunts of Fontainebleau which were afterwards so much endeared to him.

[*Barbizon, April 1875.*]

MY DEAR FRIEND, — This is just a line to say I am well and happy. I am here in my dear forest all day in the open air. It is very be — no, not beautiful exactly, just now, but very bright and living. There are one or two song birds and a cuckoo; all the fruit-trees are in flower, and the beeches make sunshine in a shady place. I begin to go all right; you need not be vexed about my health; I really was ill at first, as bad as I have been for nearly a year; but the forest begins to work, and the air, and the sun, and the smell of the pines. If I could stay a month here, I should be as right as possible. Thanks for your letter. — Your faithful

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Swanston, Tuesday, April 1875.*]

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have been so busy, away to Bridge of Allan with my father first, and then with Simpson and Baxter out here from Saturday till Monday. I had no time to write, and, as it is, am strangely incapable. Thanks for your letter. I have been reading such lots of law, and it seems to take away the power of writing from me. From morning to night, so often as I have a spare moment, I am in the embrace of a law book — barren embraces. I am in good spirits; and my heart smites me as usual, when I am in good spirits, about my parents. If I get a bit dull, I am away to London without a scruple; but so long as my heart keeps up, I am all for my parents.

What do you think of Henley's hospital verses? They were to have been dedicated to me, but Stephen wouldn't allow it — said it would be pretentious.

Wednesday. — I meant to have made this quite a decent letter this morning, but listen. I had pain all last night, and did not sleep well, and now am cold and sickish, and strung up ever and again with another flash of pain. Will you remember me to everybody? My principal characteristics are cold, poverty, and Scots Law — three very bad things. Oo, how the rain falls! The mist is quite low on the hill. The birds are twittering to each other about the indifferent season. O, here's a gem for you. An old godly woman predicted the end of the world, because the seasons were becoming indistinguishable; my cousin Dora objected that last winter had been pretty well marked. "Yes, my dear," replied the soothsayeress; "but I think you'll find the summer will be rather co-amplicated." — Ever your faithful

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

The rehearsals were those of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* for amateur theatricals at Professor Fleeming Jenkin's, in which Stevenson played the part of Orsino.

[*Edinburgh, April 1875*] *Saturday*.

I am getting on with my rehearsals, but I find the part very hard. I rehearsed yesterday from a quarter to seven, and to-day from four (with interval for dinner) to eleven. You see the sad strait I am in for ink. — *À demain.*

Sunday. — This is the third ink-bottle I have tried, and still it's nothing to boast of. My journey went off all right, and I have kept ever in good spirits. Last night, indeed, I did think my little bit of gaiety was going away down the wind like a whiff of tobacco smoke, but to-day it has come back to me a little. The influence of this place is assuredly all that can be worst against 176 one; *mais il faut lutter*. I was haunted last night when I was in bed by the most cold, desolate recollections of my past life here; I was glad to try and think of the forest, and warm my hands at the thought of it. O the quiet, grey thickets, and the yellow butterflies, and the woodpeckers, and the outlook over the plain as it were over a sea! O for the good, fleshly stupidity of the woods, the body conscious of itself all over and the mind forgotten, the clean air nestling next your skin as though your clothes were gossamer, the eye filled and content, the whole MAN HAPPY! Whereas here it takes a pull to hold yourself together; it needs both hands, and a book of stoical maxims, and a sort of bitterness at the heart by way of armour. — Ever your faithful

R. L. S.

Wednesday. — I am so played out with a cold in my eye that I cannot see to write or read without difficulty. It is swollen *horrible*; so how I shall look as Orsino, God knows! I have my fine clothes tho'. Henley's sonnets have been taken for the Cornhill. He is out of hospital now, and dressed, but still not too much to brag of in health, poor fellow, I am afraid.

Sunday. — So. I have still rather bad eyes, and a nasty sore throat. I play Orsino every day, in all the pomp of Solomon, splendid Francis the First clothes, heavy with gold and stage jewellery. I play it ill enough, I believe; but me and the clothes, and the wedding wherewith the clothes and me are reconciled, produce every night a thrill of admiration. Our cook told my mother (there is a servants' night, you know) that she and the housemaid were "just prood to be able to say it was oor young gentleman." To sup afterwards with these clothes on, and a wonderful lot of gaiety and Shakespearean jokes about the table, is something to live for. It is so nice to feel you have been dead three hundred years, and the sound of your laughter is faint and far off in the centuries. — Ever your faithful

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Edinburgh, April 1875.*]

Wednesday. — A moment at last. These last few days have been as jolly as days could be, and by good fortune I leave to-morrow for Swanston, so that I shall not feel the whole fall back to habitual self. The pride of life could scarce go further. To live in splendid clothes, velvet and gold and fur, upon principally champagne and lobster salad, with a company of people nearly all of whom are exceptionally good talkers; when your days began about eleven and ended about four — I have lost that sentence; I give it up; it is very admirable sport, any way. Then both my afternoons have been so pleasantly occupied — taking Henley drives. I had a business to carry him down the long stair, and more of a business to get him up again, but while he was in the carriage it was splendid. It is now just the top of spring with us. The whole country is mad with green. To see the cherry-blossom bitten out upon the black firs, and the black firs bitten out of the blue sky, was a sight to set before a king. You may imagine what it was to a man who has been eighteen months in an hospital ward. The look of his face was a wine to me. He plainly has been little in the country before. Imagine this: I always stopped him on the Bridges to let him enjoy the great *cry* of green that goes up to Heaven out of the river beds, and he asked (more than once) "What noise is that?" —

”The water.” — ”O!” almost incredulously; and then quite a long while after: “Do you know the noise of the water astonished me very much?” I was much struck by his putting the question *twice*; I have lost the sense of wonder of course; but there must be something to wonder at, for Henley has eyes and ears and an immortal soul of his own.

I shall send this off to-day to let you know of my new 178 address — Swanston Cottage, Lothianburn, Edinburgh. Salute the faithful in my name. Salute Priscilla, salute Barnabas, salute Ebenezer — O no, he’s too much, I withdraw Ebenezer; enough of early Christians. — Ever your faithful

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Edinburgh, May or June 1875.*]

I say, we have a splendid picture here in Edinburgh. A Ruysdael of which one can never tire: I think it is one of the best landscapes in the world: a grey still day, a grey still river, a rough oak wood on one shore, on the other chalky banks with very complicated footpaths, oak woods, a field where a man stands reaping, church towers relieved against the sky and a beautiful distance, neither blue nor green. It is so still, the light is so cool and temperate, the river woos you to bathe in it. O I like it!

I say, I wonder if our Scottish Academy’s exhibition is going to be done at all for Appleton or whether he does not care for it. It might amuse me, although I am not fit for it. Why and O why doesn’t Grove publish me? — Ever yours,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

I was at this time, if I remember rightly, preparing some lectures on Hogarth for a course at Cambridge.

[*Swanston, June 1875.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am a devil certainly; but write I cannot. Look here, you had better get hold of G. C. Lichtenberg’s *Ausfürliche Erklarung der Hogarthischen Kupferstiche*: Göttingen, 1794 to 1816 (it was published in numbers seemingly). Douglas the publisher lent it to me: and tho’ I hate the damned tongue too cordially to do more than dip into it, I have seen some shrewd things. 179 If you cannot get it for yourself, (it seems scarce), I dare say I could negotiate with Douglas for a loan. This adorable spring has made me quite drunken, drunken with green colour and golden sound. We have the best blackbird here that we have had for years; we have two; but the other is but an average performer. Anything so rich and clear as the pipe of our first fiddle, it never entered into the heart of man to fancy. How the years slip away, Colvin; and we walk little cycles, and turn in little abortive spirals, and come out again, hot and weary, to find the same view before us, the same hill barring the road. Only, bless God for it, we have still the same eye to see with, and if the scene be not altogether unsightly, we can enjoy it whether or no. I feel quite happy, but curiously inert and passive, something for the winds to blow over, and the sun to glimpse on and go off again, as it might be a tree or a gravestone. All this willing and wishing and striving leads a man nowhere after all. Here I am back again in my old humour of a sunny equanimity; to see the world fleet about me; and the days chase each other like sun patches, and the nights like cloud-shadows, on a windy day; content to see them go and no wise reluctant for the cool evening, with its dew and stars and fading strain of tragic red. And I ask myself why I ever leave this humour? What I have gained? And the winds blow in the trees with a sustained "Pish"! and the birds answer me in a long derisive whistle.

So that for health, happiness, and indifferent literature, apply to — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

"*Burns*" means the article on Burns which R. L. S. had been commissioned to write for the Encyclopædia Britannica. The "awfully nice man" was the Hon. J. Seed, formerly Secretary to the Customs and Marine Department of New Zealand; and it was from his conversation that the notion of the Samoan Islands as a 180 place of refuge for the sick and world-worn first entered Stevenson's mind, to lie dormant (I never heard him speak of it) and be revived thirteen years later.

[*Edinburgh, June 1875.*]

Simply a scratch. All right, jolly, well, and through with the difficulty. My father pleased about the *Burns*. Never travel in the same carriage with three able-bodied seamen and a fruiterer from Kent; the A.-B.'s speak all night as though they were hailing vessels at sea; and the fruiterer as if he were crying fruit in a noisy market-place — such, at least, is my *funeste* experience. I wonder if a fruiterer from some place else — say Worcestershire — would offer the same phenomena? insoluble doubt.

R. L. S.

Later. — Forgive me, couldn't get it off. Awfully nice man here to-night. Public servant — New Zealand. Telling us all about the South Sea Islands till I was sick with desire to go there: beautiful places, green for ever; perfect climate; perfect shapes of men and women, with red flowers in their hair; and nothing to do but to study oratory and etiquette, sit in the sun, and pick up the fruits as they fall. Navigator's Island is the place; absolute balm for the weary. — Ever your faithful friend,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

The examination for the Bar at Edinburgh was approaching. *Fontainebleau* is the paper called *Forest Notes*, afterwards printed in the Cornhill Magazine. The church is Glencorse Church in the Pentlands, to the thoughts of which Stevenson reverted in his last days with so much emotion (see *Weir of Hermiston*, chap. v.).

[*Swanston. End of June 1875.*]

Thursday. — This day fortnight I shall fall or conquer. Outside the rain still soaks; but now and again the hilltop looks through the mist vaguely. I am very comfortable, very sleepy, and very much satisfied with the arrangements of Providence.

Saturday — no, Sunday, 12.45. — Just been — not grinding, alas! — I couldn't — but doing a bit of *Fontainebleau*. I don't think I'll be plucked. I am not sure though — I am so busy, what with this d — — d law, and this *Fontainebleau* always at my elbow, and three plays (three, think of that!) and a story, all crying out to me, "Finish, finish, make an entire end, make us strong, shapely, viable creatures!" It's enough to put a man crazy. Moreover, I have my thesis given out now, which is a fifth (is it fifth? I can't count) incumbrance.

Sunday. — I've been to church, and am not depressed — a great step. I was at that beautiful church my *petit poëme en prose* was about. It is a little cruciform place, with heavy cornices and string course to match, and a steep slate roof. The small kirkyard is full of old gravestones. One of a Frenchman from Dunkerque — I suppose he died prisoner in the military prison hard by — and one, the most pathetic memorial I ever saw, a poor school-slate, in a wooden frame, with the inscription cut into it evidently by the father's own hand. In church, old Mr. Torrence preached — over eighty, and a relic of times forgotten, with his black thread gloves and mild old foolish face. One of the nicest parts of it was to see John Inglis, the greatest man in Scotland, our Justice-General, and the only born lawyer I ever heard, listening to the piping old body, as though it had all been a revelation, grave and respectful. — Ever your faithful

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Edinburgh, July 15, 1875.*]

Passed.

Ever your

R.
L.
S.

L'Homme qui rit.

This letter, accepting the first contribution of R. L. S., has by an accident been preserved, and is so interesting, both for its occasion and for the light it throws on the writer's care and kindness as an editor, that by permission of his representatives I here print it. '93 stands, of course, for the novel *Quatre-vingt Treize*.

15 Waterloo Place, S. W., 15/5/74

DEAR SIR, — I have read with great interest your article on Victor Hugo and also that which appeared in the last number of Macmillan. I shall be happy to accept Hugo, and if I have been rather long in answering you, it is only because I wished to give a second reading to the article, and have lately been very much interrupted.

I will now venture to make a few remarks, and by way of preface I must say that I do not criticise you because I take a low view of your powers: but for the very contrary reason. I think very highly of the promise shown in your writings and therefore think it worth while to write more fully than I can often to contributors. Nor do I set myself up as a judge — I am very sensible of my own failings in the critical department and merely submit what has occurred to me for your consideration.

I fully agree with the greatest portion of your opinions and think them very favourably expressed. The following points struck me as doubtful when I read and may perhaps be worth notice.

First, you seem to make the distinction between dramatic and novelistic art coincide with the distinction between romantic and 18th century. This strikes me as doubtful, as at least to require qualification. To my mind Hugo is far more dramatic in spirit than Fielding, though his method involves (as you show exceedingly well) a use of scenery and background which would hardly be admissible in drama. I am not able — I fairly confess — to define the dramatic element in Hugo or to say why I think it absent from Fielding and Richardson. Yet surely Hugo's own dramas are a sufficient proof that a drama may be romantic as well as a novel: though, of course, the pressure of the great moral forces, etc., must be indicated by different means. The question is rather a curious one and too wide to discuss in a letter. I merely suggest what seems to me to be an obvious criticism on your argument.

Secondly, you speak very sensibly of the melodramatic and claptrap element in Hugo. I confess that it seems to me to go deeper into his work than you would apparently allow. I think it, for example, very palpable even in *Notre Dame*, and I doubt the historical fidelity though my ignorance of mediæval history prevents me from putting my finger on many faults. The consequence is that in my opinion you are scarcely just to Scott or Fielding as compared with Hugo. Granting fully his amazing force and fire, he seems to me to be deficient often in that kind of healthy realism which is so admirable in Scott's best work. For example, though my Scotch blood (for I can boast of some) may prejudice me I am profoundly convinced that Balfour of Burley would have knocked M. Lantenac into a cocked hat and stormed la Tourgue if it had been garrisoned by 19 x 19 French spouters of platitude in half the time that Gauvain and Cimourdain took about it. In fact, Balfour seems to me to be flesh and blood and Gauvain & Co. to be too often mere personified bombast: and therefore I fancy that *Old Mortality* will outlast '93, though *Notre Dame* is far better than *Quentin Durward*, and *Les Misérables*, perhaps, better than any. This is, of course, fair matter of opinion.

Thirdly, I don't think that you quite bring out your meaning in saying that '93 is a decisive symptom. I confess that I don't quite see in what sense it decides precisely what question. A sentence or so would clear this up.

Fourthly, as a matter of form, I think (but I am very doubtful) that it might possibly have been better not to go into each novel in succession; but to group the substance of your remarks a little differently. Of course I don't want you to alter the form, I merely notice the point as suggesting a point in regard to any future article.

Many of your criticisms in detail strike me as very good. I was much pleased by your remarks on the storm in the *Travailleurs*. There was another very odd storm, as it struck me on a hasty reading in '93, where there is mention of a beautiful summer evening and yet the wind is so high that you can't hear the tocsin. You do justice also and more than justice to Hugo's tenderness about children. That, I think, points to one great source of his power.

It would be curious to compare Hugo to a much smaller man, Chas. Reade, who is often a kind of provincial or Daily Telegraph Hugo. However that would hardly do in the Cornhill. I shall send your article to the press and hope to use it in July. Any alterations can be made when the article is in type, if any are desirable. I cannot promise definitely in advance; but at any rate it shall appear as soon as may be.

Excuse this long rigmarole and believe me to be, yours very truly,

Leslie Stephen.

I shall hope to hear from you again. If ever you come to town you will find me at 8 Southwell Gardens (close to the Gloucester Road Station of the Underground). I am generally at home, except from 3 to 5.

Portfolio.

Richmond Seeley.

The essay *Notes on the Movements of Young Children*.

I remember nothing of either the title or the tenor of this story.

Printed by Mr. Leslie Stephen in the Cornhill.

IV

ADVOCATE AND AUTHOR

EDINBURGH — PARIS — FONTAINEBLEAU

July 1875-July 1879

Having on the 14th of July 1875 passed with credit his examination for the Bar at Edinburgh, Stevenson thenceforth enjoyed whatever status and consideration attaches to the title of Advocate. But he made no serious attempt to practise, and by the 25th of the same month had started with Sir Walter Simpson for France. Here he lived and tramped for several weeks among the artist haunts of Fontainebleau and the neighbourhood, occupying himself chiefly with studies of the French poets and poetry of the fifteenth century, which afterwards bore fruit in his papers on Charles of Orleans and François Villon. Thence he travelled to join his parents at Wiesbaden and Homburg. Returning in the autumn to Scotland, he made, to please them, an effort to live the ordinary life of an Edinburgh advocate — attending trials and spending his mornings in wig and gown at the Parliament House. But this attempt was before long abandoned as tending to waste of time and being incompatible with his real occupation of literature. Through the next winter and spring he remained in Edinburgh, except for a short winter walking tour in Ayrshire and Galloway, and a month spent among his friends in London. In the late summer of 1876, after a 183 visit to the West Highlands, he made the canoe trip with Sir Walter Simpson which furnished the subject of the *Inland Voyage*, followed by a prolonged autumn stay at Grez and Barbizon. The life, atmosphere, and scenery of these forest haunts had charmed and soothed him, as we have seen, since he was first introduced to them by his cousin, Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson, in the spring of 1875. An unfettered, unconventional, open-air existence, passed face to face with nature and in the company of congenial people engaged, like himself, in grappling with the problems and difficulties of an art, had been what he had longed for most consistently through all the agitations of his youth. And now he had found just such an existence, and with it, as he thought, peace of mind, health, and the spirit of unimpeded work.

But peace of mind was not to be his for long. What indeed awaited him in the forest was something different and more momentous: it was his fate: the romance which decided his life, and the companion whom he resolved to make his own at all hazards. But of this hereafter. To continue briefly the annals of the time: the year 1877 was again spent between Edinburgh, London, the Fontainebleau region, and several different temporary abodes in the artists' and other quarters of Paris; with an excursion in the company of his parents to the Land's End in August. In 1878 a similar general mode of life was varied by a visit with his parents in March to Burford Bridge, where he made warm friends with a senior to whom he had long looked up from a distance, Mr. George Meredith; by a spell of secretarial work under Professor Fleeming Jenkin, who was serving as a juror on the Paris Exhibition; and lastly, by the autumn tramp through the Cévennes, afterwards recounted with 184 so much charm in *Travels with a Donkey*. The first half of 1879 was again spent between London, Scotland, and France.

During these four years, it should be added, Stevenson's health was very passable. It often, indeed, threatened to give way after any prolonged residence in Edinburgh, but was generally soon restored by open-air excursions (during which he was capable of fairly vigorous and sustained daily exercise), or by a spell of life among the woods of Fontainebleau. They were also the years in which he settled for good into his chosen profession of letters. He worked rather desultorily for the first twelve months after his call to the Bar, but afterwards with ever-growing industry and success, winning from the critical a full measure of recognition, though relatively little, so far, from the general public. In 1875 and 1876 he contributed as a journalist, though not frequently, to the Academy and Vanity Fair, and in 1877 more abundantly to London, a weekly review founded by Mr. Glasgow Brown, an acquaintance of Edinburgh Speculative days, and carried on, after the failure of that gentleman's health, by Mr. Henley. But he had no great gift or liking for journalism, or for any work not calling for the best literary form and finish he could give. Where he found special scope for such work was in the Cornhill Magazine under the editorship of Mr. Leslie Stephen. Here he continued his critical papers on men and books, already begun in 1874 with *Victor Hugo*, and began in 1876 the series of papers afterwards collected in *Virginibus Puerisque*. They were continued in 1877, and in greater number throughout 1878. His first published stories appeared as follows: — *A Lodging for the Night*, Temple Bar, October 1877; *The Sire de Malétroit's Door*, Temple Bar, January 1878; and 185 *Will o' the Mill*, Cornhill Magazine, January 1878. In May 1878 followed his first travel book, *The Inland Voyage*, containing the account of his canoe trip from Antwerp to Grez. This was to Stevenson a year of great and various productiveness. Besides six or eight characteristic essays of the *Virginibus Puerisque* series, there appeared in London the set of fantastic modern tales called the *New Arabian Nights*, conceived and written in an entirely different key from any of his previous work, as well as the kindly, sentimental comedy of French artist life, *Providence and the Guitar*; and in the Portfolio the *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh*, republished at the end of the year in book form. During the autumn and winter of this year he wrote *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*, and was much and eagerly engaged in the planning of plays in collaboration with Mr. Henley; of which one, *Deacon Brodie*, was finished in the spring of 1879. In the same spring he drafted in Edinburgh, but afterwards laid by, four chapters on ethics, a study of which he once spoke as being always his "veiled mistress," under the name of *Lay Morals*.

But abounding in good work as this period was, and momentous as it was in regard to Stevenson's future life, it is a period which figures but meagrely in his correspondence, and in this book must fill disproportionately little space. Without the least breach of friendship, or even of intimate confidence on occasion, Stevenson had begun, as was natural and necessary, to wean himself from his entire dependence on his friend and counsellor of the last two years; to take his life more into his own hands; and to intermit the regularity of his correspondence with her. A few new correspondents appear; but to none of us in these days did he write more than scantily. Partly 186 his growing absorption by the complications of his life and the interests of his work left him little time or inclination for letter-writing; partly his greater freedom of movement made it unnecessary. On his way backwards and forwards between Scotland and France, his friends in London had the chance of seeing him much more frequently than of yore. He avoided formal and dress-coated society; but in the company of congenial friends, whether men or women, and in places like the Savile Club (his favourite haunt), he was as brilliant and stimulating as ever, and however acute his inward preoccupations, his visits were always a delight.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Edinburgh, end of July 1875.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Herewith you receive the rest of Henley's hospital work. He was much pleased by what you said of him, and asked me to forward these to you for your opinion. One poem, the *Spring Sorrow*, seems to me the most beautiful. I thank God for this *petit bout de consolation*, that by Henley's own account, this one more lovely thing in the world is not altogether without some trace of my influence: let me say that I have been something sympathetic which the mother found and contemplated while she yet carried it in her womb. This, in my profound discouragement, is a great thing for me; if I cannot do good with myself, at least, it seems, I can help others better inspired; I am at least a skilful accoucheur. My discouragement is from many causes: among others the re-reading of my Italian story. Forgive me, Colvin, but I cannot agree with you; it seems green fruit to me, if not really unwholesome; it is profoundly feeble, damn its weakness! Moreover I stick over my *Fontainebleau*, it presents difficulties to me that I surmount slowly.

I am very busy with Béranger for the Britannica. Shall be up in town on Friday or Saturday. — Ever yours,

R. L. S., *Advocate.*

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

[*Chez Siron, Barbizon, Seine et Marne, August 1875.*]

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I have been three days at a place called Grez, a pretty and very melancholy village on the plain. A low bridge of many arches choked with sedge; great fields of white and yellow water-lilies; poplars and willows innumerable; and about it all such an atmosphere of sadness and slackness, one could do nothing but get into the boat and out of it again, and yawn for bedtime.

Yesterday Bob and I walked home; it came on a very creditable thunderstorm; we were soon wet through; sometimes the rain was so heavy that one could only see by holding the hand over the eyes; and to crown all, we lost our way and wandered all over the place, and into the artillery range, among broken trees, with big shot lying about among the rocks. It was near dinner-time when we got to Barbizon; and it is supposed that we walked from twenty-three to twenty-five miles, which is not bad for the Advocate, who is not tired this morning. I was very glad to be back again in this dear place, and smell the wet forest in the morning.

Simpson and the rest drove back in a carriage, and got about as wet as we did.

Why don't you write? I have no more to say. — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

At this time Stevenson was much occupied, as were several young writers his contemporaries, with imitating the artificial 188 forms of early French verse. Only one of his attempts, I believe, has been preserved, besides the two contained in this letter. The second is a variation on a theme of Banville's.

Château Renard, Loiret, August 1875.

I have been walking these last days from place to place; and it does make it hot for walking with a sack in this weather. I am burned in horrid patches of red; my nose, I fear, is going to take the lead in colour; Simpson is all flushed, as if he were seen by a sunset. I send you here two rondeaux; I don't suppose they will amuse anybody but me; but this measure, short and yet intricate, is just what I desire; and

I have had some good times walking along the glaring roads, or down the poplar alley of the great canal, pitting my own humour to this old verse.

Far have you come, my lady, from the town,
And far from all your sorrows, if you please,
To smell the good sea-winds and hear the seas,
And in green meadows lay your body down.
To find your pale face grow from pale to brown,
Your sad eyes growing brighter by degrees;
Far have you come, my lady, from the town,
And far from all your sorrows, if you please.
Here in this seaboard land of old renown,
In meadow grass go wading to the knees;
Bathe your whole soul a while in simple ease;
There is no sorrow but the sea can drown;
Far have you come, my lady, from the town.

Nous n'irons plus au bois

We'll walk the woods no more,
But stay beside the fire,
To weep for old desire
And things that are no more.
The woods are spoiled and hoar,
The ways are full of mire;
We'll walk the woods no more,
But stay beside the fire.
We loved, in days of yore,
Love, laughter, and the lyre.
Ah God, but death is dire,
And death is at the door —
We'll walk the woods no more.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

The special mood or occasion of unaccustomed bitterness which prompted this rhapsody has passed from memory beyond recall. The date must be after his return from his second excursion to Fontainebleau.

[*Swanston, late Summer 1875*] *Thursday.*

I have been staying in town, and could not write a word. It is a fine strong night, full of wind; the trees are all crying out in the darkness; funny to think of the birds asleep outside, on the tossing branches, the little bright eyes closed, the brave wings folded, the little hearts that beat so hard and thick (so much harder and thicker than ever human heart) all stilled and quieted in deep slumber, in the midst of this noise and turmoil. Why, it will be as much as I can do to sleep in here in my walled room; so loud and jolly the wind sounds through the open window. The unknown places of the night invite the travelling fancy; I like to think of the sleeping towns and sleeping farm-houses and cottages, all the world over, here by the white road poplar-lined, there by the clamorous surf. Isn't that a good dormitive?

Saturday. — I cannot tell how I feel, who can ever? I feel like a person in a novel of George Sand's; I feel I desire to go out of the house, and begin life anew in the cool blue night; never to come back here; never, never. Only to go on for ever by sunny day and grey day, by 190 bright night and foul, by high-way and by-way, town and hamlet, until somewhere by a road-side or in some clean inn clean death opened his arms to me and took me to his quiet heart for ever. If soon, good; if late, well then, late — there would be many a long bright mile behind me, many a goodly, many a serious sight; I should die ripe and perfect, and take my garnered experience with me into the cool, sweet earth. For I have died already and survived a death; I have seen the grass grow rankly on my grave; I have heard the train of mourners come weeping and go laughing away again. And when I was alone there in the kirk-yard, and the birds began to grow familiar with the grave-stone, I have begun to laugh also, and laughed and laughed until night-flowers came out above me. I have survived myself, and somehow live on, a curious changeling, a merry ghost; and do not mind living on, finding it not unpleasant; only had rather, a thousandfold, died and been done with the whole damned show for ever. It is a strange feeling at first to survive yourself, but one gets used to that as to most things. *Et puis*, is it not one's own fault? Why did not one lie still in the grave? Why rise again among men's troubles and toils, where the wicked wag their shock beards and hound the weary out to labour? When I was safe in prison, and stone walls and iron bars were an hermitage about me, who told me to burst the mild constraint and go forth where the sun dazzles, and the wind pierces, and the loud world sounds and jangles all through the weary day? I mind an old print of a hermit coming out of a great wood towards evening and shading his bleared eyes to see all the kingdoms of the earth before his feet, where towered cities and castled hills, and stately rivers, and good corn lands made one great chorus of temptation for his weak spirit, and I think I am the hermit, and would to God I had dwelt ever in the wood of penitence — —

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The *Burns* herein mentioned is an article undertaken in the early summer of the same year for the Encyclopædia Britannica. In the end Stevenson's work was thought to convey a view of the poet too frankly critical, and too little in accordance with the accepted Scotch tradition; and the publishers, duly paying him for his labours, transferred the task to Professor Shairp. The volume here announced on the three Scottish eighteenth-century poets unfortunately never came into being. The *Charles of Orleans* essay appeared in the Cornhill Magazine for December of the following year; that on Villon (with the story on the same theme, *A Lodging for the Night*) not until the autumn of 1877. The essay on Béranger referred to at the end of the letter was one commissioned and used by the editor of the Encyclopædia; *Spring* was a prose poem, of which the manuscript, sent to me at Cambridge, was unluckily lost in the confusion of a change of rooms.

[*Edinburgh, Autumn 1875.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Thanks for your letter and news. No — my *Burns* is not done yet, it has led me so far afield that I cannot finish it; every time I think I see my way to an end, some new game (or perhaps wild goose) starts up, and away I go. And then, again, to be plain, I shirk the work of the critical part, shirk it as a man shirks a long jump. It is awful to have to express and differentiate *Burns* in a column or two. O golly, I say, you know, it *can't* be done at the money. All the more as I'm going to write a book about it. *Ramsay, Fergusson, and Burns: an Essay* (or *a critical essay?* but then I'm going to give lives of the three gentlemen, only the gist of the book is the criticism) by Robert Louis Stevenson, Advocate. How's that for cut and dry? And I *could* write this book. Unless I deceive myself, I could even write it pretty adequately. I feel as if I was really in it, and knew the game thoroughly. You see what comes of trying to write an essay on Burns in ten columns.

Meantime, when I have done Burns, I shall finish Charles of Orleans (who is in a good way, about the fifth month, I should think, and promises to be a fine healthy child, better than any of his elder brothers for a while); 192 and then perhaps a Villon, for Villon is a very essential part of my *Ramsay-Fergusson-Burns*; I mean, is a note in it, and will recur again and again for comparison and illustration; then, perhaps, I may try Fontainebleau, by the way. But so soon as Charles of Orleans is polished off, and immortalised for ever, he and his pipings, in a solid imperishable shrine of R. L. S., my true aim and end will be this little book. Suppose I could jerk you out 100 Cornhill pages; that would easy make 200 pages of decent form; and then thickish paper — eh? would that do? I dare say it could be made bigger; but I know what 100 pages of copy, bright consummate copy, imply behind the scenes of weary manuscribing; I think if I put another nothing to it, I should not be outside the mark; and 100 Cornhill pages of 500 words means, I fancy (but I never was good at figures), means 50,000 words. There's a prospect for an idle young gentleman who lives at home at ease! The future is thick with inky fingers. And then perhaps nobody would publish. *Ah nom de dieu!* What do you think of all this? will it paddle, think you?

I hope this pen will write; it is the third I have tried.

About coming up, no, that's impossible; for I am worse than a bankrupt. I have at the present six shillings and a penny; I have a sounding lot of bills for Christmas; new dress suit, for instance, the old one having gone for Parliament House; and new white shirts to live up to my new profession; I'm as gay and swell and gummy as can be; only all my boots leak; one pair water, and the other two simple black mud; so that my rig is more for the eye than a very solid comfort to myself. That is my budget. Dismal enough, and no prospect of any coin coming in; at least for months. So that here I am, I almost fear, for the winter; certainly till after Christmas, and then it depends on how my bills "turn out" whether it shall not be till spring. So, meantime, I must whistle in my cage. My cage is better by 193 one thing; I am an Advocate now. If you ask me why that makes it better, I would remind you that in the most distressing circumstances a little consequence goes a long way, and even bereaved relatives stand on precedence round the coffin. I idle finely. I read Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Martin's *History of France*, *Allan Ramsay*, *Olivier Basselin*, all sorts of rubbish *àpropos* of *Burns*, *Commines*, *Juvénal des Ursins*, etc. I walk about the Parliament House five forenoons a week, in wig and gown; I have either a five or six mile walk, or an hour or two hard skating on the rink, every afternoon, without fail.

I have not written much; but, like the seaman's parrot in the tale, I have thought a deal. You have never, by the way, returned me either *Spring* or *Béranger*, which is certainly a d — — d shame. I always comforted myself with that when my conscience pricked me about a letter to you. "Thus conscience" — O no, that's not appropriate in this connection. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

I say, is there any chance of your coming north this year? Mind you that promise is now more respectable for age than is becoming.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

The following epistle in verse, with its mixed flavour of Burns and Horace, gives a lively picture of winter forenoons spent in the Parliament House: —

[*Edinburgh, October 1875.*]

Noo lyart leaves blaw ower the green,
Red are the bonny woods o' Dean,
An' here we're back in Embro, freen',
To pass the winter.

Whilk noo, wi’ frosts afore, draws in,
An’ snaws ahint her.
I’ve seen’s hae days to fricht us a’,
The Pentlands poothered weel wi’ snaw,
The ways half-smoored wi’ liquid thaw,
An’ half-congealin’,
The snell an’ scowtherin’ norther blaw
Frae blae Brunteelan’.
I’ve seen’s been unco sweir to sally,
And at the door-cheeks daff an’ dally,
Seen’s daidle thus an’ shilly-shally
For near a minute —
Sae cauld the wind blew up the valley,
The deil was in it! —
Syne spread the silk an’ tak the gate
In blast an’ blaudin’ rain, deil hae’t!
The hale toon glintin’, stane an’ slate,
Wi’ cauld an’ weet,
An’ to the Court, gin we’se be late,
Bicker oor feet.
And at the Court, tae, aft I saw
Whaur Advocates by twa an’ twa
Gang gesterin’ end to end the ha’
In weeg an’ goon,
To crack o’ what ye wull but Law
The hale forenoon.
That muckle ha’, maist like a kirk,
I’ve kent at braid mid-day sae mirk
Ye’d seen white weegs an’ faces lurk
Like ghaists frae Hell,
But whether Christian ghaists or Turk
Deil ane could tell.
The three fires lunted in the gloom,
The wind blew like the blast o’ doom,
The rain upo’ the roof abune
Played Peter Dick — —
Ye wad nae’d licht enough i’ the room
Your teeth to pick!
But, freend, ye ken how me an’ you,
The ling-lang lanely winter through,
Keep’d a guid speerit up, an’ true
To lore Horatian,
We aye the ither bottle drew
To inclination.

Sae let us in the comin' days
Stand sicker on our auncient ways —
The strauchtest road in a' the maze
Since Eve ate apples;
An' let the winter weet our cla'es —
We'll weet our thrapples.

To Sidney Colvin

The two following letters refer to the essay on the Spirit of Spring which I was careless enough to lose in the process of a change of rooms at Cambridge. *The Petits Poèmes en Prose* were attempts, not altogether successful, in the form though not in the spirit of Baudelaire.

Swanston [*Autumn 1875*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Thanks. Only why don't you tell me if I can get my *Spring* printed? I want to print it; because it's nice, and genuine to boot, and has got less side on than my other game. Besides I want coin badly.

I am writing *Petits Poèmes en Prose*. Their principal resemblance to Baudelaire's is that they are rather longer and not quite so good. They are ve-ry cle-ver (words of two syllables), O so aw-ful-ly cle-ver (words of three), O 196 so dam-na-bly cle-ver (words of a devil of a number of syllables). I have written fifteen in a fortnight. I have also written some beautiful poetry. I would like a cake and a cricket-bat; and a pass-key to Heaven if you please, and as much money as my friend the Baron Rothschild can spare. I used to look across to Rothschild of a morning when we were brushing our hair, and say — (this is quite true, only we were on the opposite side of the street, and though I used to look over I cannot say I ever detected the beggar, he feared to meet my eagle eye) — well, I used to say to him, "Rothschild, old man, lend us five hundred francs," and it is characteristic of Rothy's dry humour that he used never to reply when it was a question of money. He was a very humorous dog indeed, was Rothy. Heigh-ho! those happy old days. Funny, funny fellow, the dear old Baron.

How's that for genuine American wit and humour? Take notice of this in your answer; say, for instance, "Even although the letter had been unsigned, I could have had no difficulty in guessing who was my dear, *lively*, *witty* correspondent. Yours, Letitia Languish."

O! — my mind has given way. I have gone into a mild, babbling, sunny idiocy. I shall buy a Jew's harp and sit by the roadside with a woman's bonnet on my manly head begging my honest livelihood. Meantime, adieu.

I would send you some of these *PP. Poèmes* of mine, only I know you would never acknowledge receipt or return them. — Yours, and

Rothschild's,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Edinburgh, Autumn 1875.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — *Fous ne me gombrennez pas.* Angry with you? No. Is the thing lost? Well, so be it. There is one masterpiece fewer in the world. The world can ill 197 spare it, but I, sir, I (and here I strike my hollow bosom so that it resounds) I am full of this sort of bauble; I am made of it; it comes to me, sir, as the desire to sneeze comes upon poor ordinary devils on cold days, when they should be getting out of bed and into their horrid cold tubs by the light of a seven o'clock candle, with the dismal seven o'clock frost-flowers all over the window.

Show Stephen what you please; if you could show him how to give me money, you would oblige, sincerely yours, R. L. S.

I have a scroll of *Springtime* somewhere, but I know that it is not in very good order, and do not feel myself up to very much grind over it. I am damped about *Springtime*, that's the truth of it. It might have been four or five quid!

Sir, I shall shave my head, if this goes on. All men take a pleasure to gird at me. The laws of nature are in open war with me. The wheel of a dog-cart took the toes off my new boots. Gout has set in with extreme rigour, and cut me out of the cheap refreshment of beer. I leant my back against an oak, I thought it was a trusty tree, but first it bent, and syne — it lost the Spirit of Springtime, and so did Professor Sidney Colvin, Trinity College, to me. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Along with this, I send you some *P.P.P.*'s; if you lose them, you need not seek to look upon my face again. Do, for God's sake, answer me about them also; it is a horrid thing for a fond architect to find his monuments received in silence. — Yours,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Edinburgh, November 12, 1875.*]

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Since I got your letter I have been able to do a little more work, and I have been much better contented with myself; but I can't get away, that is absolutely prevented by the state of my purse and my 198 debts, which, I may say, are red like crimson. I don't know how I am to clear my hands of them, nor when, not before Christmas anyway. Yesterday I was twenty-five; so please wish me many happy returns — directly. This one was not unhappy anyway. I have got back a good deal into my old random, little-thought way of life, and do not care whether I read, write, speak, or walk, so long as I do something. I have a great delight in this wheel-skating; I have made great advance in it of late, can do a good many amusing things (I mean amusing in *my* sense — amusing to do). You know, I lose all my forenoons at Court! So it is, but the time passes; it is a great pleasure to sit and hear cases argued or advised. This is quite autobiographical, but I feel as if it was some time since we met, and I can tell you, I am glad to meet you again. In every way, you see, but that of work the world goes well with me. My health is better than ever it was before; I get on without any jar, nay, as if there never had been a jar, with my parents. If it weren't about that work, I'd be happy. But the fact is, I don't think — the fact is, I'm going to trust in Providence about work. If I could get one or two pieces I hate out of my way all would be well, I think; but these obstacles disgust me, and as I know I ought to do them first, I don't do anything. I must finish this off, or I'll just lose another day. I'll try to write again soon. — Ever your faithful friend,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

The review of Robert Browning's *Inn Album* here mentioned appears in Vanity Fair, Dec. 11, 1875. The matter of the poem is praised; the "slating" is only for the form and metres.

[*Edinburgh, December 1875.*]

Well, I am hardy! Here I am in the midst of this great snowstorm, sleeping with my window open and *smoking* in my cold tub in the morning so as it would do 199 your heart good to see. Moreover I am in pretty good form otherwise. Fontainebleau lags; it has turned out more difficult than I expected in some places, but there is a deal of it ready, and (I think) straight.

I was at a concert on Saturday and heard Hallé and Norman Neruda play that Sonata of Beethoven's you remember, and I felt very funny. But I went and took a long spanking walk in the dark and got quite an appetite for dinner. I did; that's not bragging.

As you say, a concert wants to be gone to *with* someone, and I know who. I have done rather an amusing paragraph or two for Vanity Fair on the *Inn Album*. I have slated R. B. pretty handsomely. I am in a desperate hurry; so good-bye. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. de Mattos

The state of health and spirits mentioned in the last soon gave way to one of the fits of depression, frequent with him in Edinburgh winters. In the following letter he unbosoms himself to a favourite cousin (sister to R. A. M. Stevenson).

Edinburgh, January 1876.

MY DEAR KATHARINE, — The prisoner reserved his defence. He has been seedy, however; principally sick of the family evil, despondency; the sun is gone out utterly; and the breath of the people of this city lies about as a sort of damp, unwholesome fog, in which we go walking with bowed hearts. If I understand what is a contrite spirit, I have one; it is to feel that you are a small jar, or rather, as I feel myself, a very large jar, of pottery work rather *mal réussi*, and to make every allowance for the potter (I beg pardon; Potter with a capital P.) on his ill-success, and rather wish he would reduce you as soon as possible to potsherds. However, there are many things to do yet before we go

Grossir la pâte universelle
Faite des formes que Dieu fond.

200

For instance, I have never been in a revolution yet. I pray God I may be in one at the end, if I am to make a mucker. The best way to make a mucker is to have your back set against a wall and a few lead pellets whiffed into you in a moment, while yet you are all in a heat and a fury of combat, with drums sounding on all sides, and people crying, and a general smash like the infernal orchestration at the end of the *Huguenots*....

Please pardon me for having been so long of writing, and show your pardon by writing soon to me; it will be a kindness, for I am sometimes very dull. Edinburgh is much changed for the worse by the absence of Bob; and this damned weather weighs on me like a curse. Yesterday, or the day before, there came so black a rain squall that I was frightened — what a child would call frightened, you know, for want of a better word — although in reality it has nothing to do with fright. I lit the gas and sat cowering in my chair until it went away again. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

O, I am trying my hand at a novel just now; it may interest you to know, I am bound to say I do not think it will be a success. However, it's an amusement for the moment, and work, work is your only ally against the "bearded people" that squat upon their hams in the dark places of life and embrace people horribly as they go by. God save us from the bearded people! to think that the sun is still shining in some happy places!

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Edinburgh, January 1876.*]

... Our weather continues as it was, bitterly cold, and raining often. There is not much pleasure in life certainly as it stands at present. *Nous n'irons plus au bois, hélas!*

I meant to write some more last night, but my father was ill and it put it out of my way. He is better this morning.

If I had written last night, I should have written a lot. But this morning I am so dreadfully tired and stupid that I can say nothing. I was down at Leith in the afternoon. God bless me, what horrid women I saw; I never knew what a plain-looking race it was before. I was sick at heart with the looks of them. And the children, filthy and ragged! And the smells! And the fat black mud!

My soul was full of disgust ere I got back. And yet the ships were beautiful to see, as they are always; and on the pier there was a clean cold wind that smelt a little of the sea, though it came down the Firth, and the sunset had a certain *éclat* and warmth. Perhaps if I could get more work done, I should be in a better trim to enjoy filthy streets and people and cold grim weather; but I don't much feel as if it was what I would have chosen. I am tempted every day of my life to go off on another walking tour. I like that better than anything else that I know. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Fontainebleau is the paper called *Forest Notes* which appeared in the Cornhill Magazine in May of this year (reprinted in *Essays of Travel*). The *Winter's Walk*, as far as it goes one of the most charming of his essays of the Road, was for some reason never finished; reprinted *ibidem*.

[*Edinburgh, February 1876.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — *1st.* I have sent *Fontainebleau* long ago, long ago. And Leslie Stephen is worse than tepid about it — liked "some parts" of it "very well," the son of Belial. Moreover, he proposes to shorten it; and I, who want *money*, and money soon, and not glory and 202 the illustration of the English language, I feel as if my poverty were going to consent.

2nd. I'm as fit as a fiddle after my walk. I am four inches bigger about the waist than last July! There, that's your prophecy did that. I am on *Charles of Orleans* now, but I don't know where to send him. Stephen obviously spews me out of his mouth, and I spew him out of mine, so help me! A man who doesn't like my *Fontainebleau*! His head must be turned.

3rd. If ever you do come across my *Spring* (I beg your pardon for referring to it again, but I don't want you to forget) send it off at once.

4th. I went to Ayr, Maybole, Girvan, Ballantrae, Stranraer, Glenluce, and Wigton. I shall make an article of it some day soon, *A Winter's Walk in Carrick and Galloway*. I had a good time. — Yours,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

"Baynes" in the following is Stevenson's good friend and mine, the late Professor Spencer Baynes, who was just relinquishing the editorship of the Encyclopædia Britannica by reason of ill-health.

[*Swanston, July 1876.*]

Here I am, here, and very well too. I am glad you liked *Walking Tours*; I like it, too; I think it's prose; and I own with contrition that I have not always written prose. However, I am "endeavouring after new obedience" (Scot. Shorter Catechism). You don't say aught of *Forest Notes,* which is kind. There is one, if you will, that was too sweet to be wholesome.

I am at Charles d'Orléans. About fifteen Cornhill pages have already coulé'd from under my facile plume — no, I mean eleven, fifteen of MS. — and we are not much more than half-way through, Charles and I; but he's a pleasant companion. My health is very well; I am in a fine exercisy state. Baynes is gone to London; 203 if you see him, inquire about my *Burns*. They have sent me £5, 5s. for it, which has mollified me horrid. £5, 5s. is a good deal to pay for a read of it in MS.; I can't complain. — Yours,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

This dates from just before the canoeing trip recounted in the *Inland Voyage*.

[*Swanston, July 1876.*]

Well, here I am at last; it is a Sunday, blowing hard, with a grey sky with the leaves flying; and I have nothing to say. I ought to have no doubt; since it's so long since last I wrote; but there are times when people's lives stand still. If you were to ask a squirrel in a mechanical cage for his autobiography, it would not be very gay. Every spin may be amusing in itself, but is mighty like the last; you see I compare myself to a lighthearted animal; and indeed I have been in a very good humour. For the weather has been passable; I have taken a deal of exercise, and done some work. But I have the strangest repugnance for writing; indeed, I have nearly got myself persuaded into the notion that letters don't arrive, in order to salve my conscience for never sending them off. I'm reading a great deal of fifteenth century: *Trial of Joan of Arc*, *Paston Letters*, *Basin*, etc., also Boswell daily by way of a Bible; I mean to read Boswell now until the day I die. And now and again a bit of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Is that all? Yes, I think that's all. I have a thing in proof for the Cornhill called *Virginibus Puerisque*. *Charles of Orleans* is again laid aside, but in a good state of furtherance this time. A paper called *A Defence of Idlers* (which is really a defence of R. L. S.) is in a good way. So, you see, I am busy in a tumultuous, knotless sort of fashion; and 204 as I say, I take lots of exercise, and I'm as brown as a berry.

This is the first letter I've written for — O I don't know how long.

July 30th. — This is, I suppose, three weeks after I began. Do, please, forgive me.

To the Highlands, first, to the Jenkins'; then to Antwerp; thence, by canoe with Simpson, to Paris and Grez (on the Loing, and an old acquaintance of mine on the skirts of Fontainebleau) to complete our cruise next spring (if we're all alive and jolly) by Loing and Loire, Saone and Rhone to the Mediterranean. It should make a jolly book of gossip, I imagine.

God bless you.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — *Virginibus Puerisque* is in August Cornhill. *Charles of Orleans* is finished, and sent to Stephen; *Idlers* ditto, and sent to Grove; but I've no word of either. So I've not been idle.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

In a well-known passage of the *Inland Voyage* the following incident is related to the same purport, but in another style: —

Chauny, Aisne [*September 1876*].

MY DEAR HENLEY, — Here I am, you see; and if you will take to a map, you will observe I am already more than two doors from Antwerp, whence I started. I have fought it through under the worst weather I ever saw in France; I have been wet through nearly every day of travel since the second (inclusive); besides this, I have had to fight against pretty mouldy health; so that, on the whole, the essayist and reviewer has shown, I think, some pluck. Four days ago I was not a hundred miles from being miserably drowned, to the immense regret of a large circle of friends and the permanent impoverishment of British Essayism and Reviewery. My boat culbutted 205 me under a fallen tree in a very rapid current; and I was a good while before I got on to the outside of that fallen tree; rather a better while than I cared about. When I got up, I lay some time on my belly, panting, and exuded fluid. All my symptoms *jusqu' ici* are trifling. But I've a damned sore throat. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

Part of *The Hair Trunk* still exists in MS. It contains some tolerable fooling, but is chiefly interesting from the fact that the seat of the proposed Bohemian colony from Cambridge is to be in the Navigator Islands; showing the direction which had been given to Stevenson's thoughts by the conversation of the New Zealand official, Mr. Seed, two years before.

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, May 1877.

... A perfect chorus of repudiation is sounding in my ears; and although you say nothing, I know you must be repudiating me, all the same. Write I cannot — there's no good mincing matters, a letter frightens me worse than the devil; and I am just as unfit for correspondence as if I had never learned the three R.'s.

Let me give my news quickly before I relapse into my usual idleness. I have a terror lest I should relapse before I get this finished. Courage, R. L. S.! On Leslie Stephen's advice, I gave up the idea of a book of essays. He said he didn't imagine I was rich enough for such an amusement; and moreover, whatever was worth publication was worth republication. So the best of those I had already, *An Apology for Idlers*, is in proof for the Cornhill. I have Villon to do for the same magazine, but God knows when I'll get it done, for drums, trumpets — I'm engaged upon — trumpets, drums — a novel! "The Hair Trunk; or, the Ideal Commonwealth." It is a most absurd story of a lot of young Cambridge fellows who are going to found a new society, with no ideas on the subject, and nothing but Bohemian tastes in the place of ideas; and 206 who are — well, I can't explain about the trunk — it would take too long — but the trunk is the fun of it — everybody steals it; burglary, marine fight, life on desert island on west coast of Scotland, sloops, etc. The first scene where they make their grand schemes and get drunk is supposed to be very funny, by Henley. I really saw him laugh over it until he cried.

Please write to me, although I deserve it so little, and show a Christian spirit. — Ever your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Edinburgh, August 1877.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I'm to be whipped away to-morrow to Penzance, where at the post-office a letter will find me glad and grateful. I am well, but somewhat tired out with overwork. I have only been home a fortnight this morning, and I have already written to the tune of forty-five Cornhill pages and upwards. The most of it was only very laborious re-casting and re-modelling, it is true; but it took it out of me famously, all the same.

Temple Bar appears to like my *Villon*, so I may count on another market there in the future, I hope. At least, I am going to put it to the proof at once, and send another story, *The Sire de Malétroit's Mousetrap*: a true novel, in the old sense; all unities preserved moreover, if that's anything, and I believe with some little merits; not so *clever* perhaps as the last, but sounder and more natural.

My *Villon* is out this month; I should so much like to know what you think of it. Stephen has written to me à propos of *Idlers*, that something more in that vein would be agreeable to his views. From Stephen I count that a devil of a lot.

I am honestly so tired this morning that I hope you will take this for what it's worth and give me an answer in peace. — Ever yours,

Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

Neither *The Stepfather's Story* nor the *St. Michael's Mounts* essay here mentioned ever, to my knowledge, came into being.

[*Penzance, August 1877.*]

... You will do well to stick to your burn, that is a delightful life you sketch, and a very fountain of health. I wish I could live like that, but, alas! it is just as well I got my "Idlers" written and done with, for I have quite lost all power of resting. I have a goad in my flesh continually, pushing me to work, work, work. I have an essay pretty well through for Stephen; a story, *The Sire de Malétroit's Mousetrap*, with which I shall try Temple Bar; another story, in the clouds, *The Stepfather's Story*, most pathetic work of a high morality or immorality, according to point of view; and lastly, also in the clouds, or perhaps a little farther away, an essay on *The Two St. Michael's Mounts*, historical and picturesque; perhaps if it didn't come too long, I might throw in the *Bass Rock*, and call it *Three Sea Fortalices*, or something of that kind. You see how work keeps bubbling in my mind. Then I shall do another fifteenth century paper this autumn — La Sale and *Petit Jehan de Saintré*, which is a kind of fifteenth century *Sandford and Merton*, ending in horrid immoral cynicism, as if the author had got tired of being didactic, and just had a good wallow in the mire to wind up with and indemnify himself for so much restraint.

Cornwall is not much to my taste, being as bleak as the bleakest parts of Scotland, and nothing like so pointed and characteristic. It has a flavour of its own, though, which I may try and catch, if I find the space, in the proposed article. *Will o' the Mill* I sent, red hot, to Stephen in a fit of haste, and have not yet had an answer. I am quite prepared for a refusal. But I begin to have more hope in the story line, and that should improve my 208 income anyway. I am glad you liked *Villon*; some of it was not as good as it ought to be, but on the whole it seems pretty vivid, and the features strongly marked. Vividness and not style is now my line; style is all very well, but vividness is the real line of country; if a thing is meant to be read, it seems just as well to try and make it readable. I am such a dull person now, I cannot keep off my own immortal works. Indeed, they are scarcely ever out of my head. And yet I value them less and less every day. But occupation is the great thing; so that a man should have his life in his own pocket, and never be thrown out of work by anything. I am glad to hear you are better. I must stop — going to Land's End. — Always your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To A. Patchett Martin

This correspondent, living at the time in Australia, was, I believe, the first to write and seek Stevenson's acquaintance from admiration of his work, meaning especially the Cornhill essays of the *Virginibus Puerisque* series so far as they had yet appeared. The "present" herein referred to is Mr. Martin's volume called *A Sweet Girl Graduate and other Poems* (Melbourne, 1876).

DEAR SIR, — It would not be very easy for me to give you any idea of the pleasure I found in your present. People who write for the magazines (probably from a guilty conscience) are apt to suppose their works practically unpublished. It seems unlikely that any one would take the trouble to read a little paper buried among so many others; and reading it, read it with any attention or pleasure. And so, I can assure you, your little book, coming from so far, gave me all the pleasure and encouragement in the world.

I suppose you know and remember Charles Lamb's essay on distant correspondents? Well, I was somewhat of his way of thinking about my mild productions. I did 209 not indeed imagine they were read, and (I suppose I may say) enjoyed right round upon the other side of the big Football we have the honour to inhabit. And as your present was the first sign to the contrary, I feel I have been very ungrateful in not writing earlier to acknowledge the receipt. I dare say, however, you hate writing letters as much as I can do myself (for if you like my article, I may presume other points of sympathy between us); and on this hypothesis you will be ready to forgive me the delay.

I may mention with regard to the piece of verses called *Such is Life* that I am not the only one on this side of the Football aforesaid to think it a good and bright piece of work, and recognised a link of sympathy with the poets who "play in hostelries at euchre." — Believe me, dear sir, yours truly,

R. L. S.

To A. Patchett Martin

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [*December 1877*].

MY DEAR SIR, — I am afraid you must already have condemned me for a very idle fellow truly. Here it is more than two months since I received your letter; I had no fewer than three journals to acknowledge; and never a sign upon my part. If you have seen a Cornhill paper of mine upon idling, you will be inclined to set it all down to that. But you will not be doing me justice. Indeed, I have had a summer so troubled that I have had little leisure and still less inclination to write letters. I was keeping the devil at bay with all my disposable activities; and more than once I thought he had me by the throat. The odd conditions of our acquaintance enable me to say more to you than I would to a person who lived at my elbow. And besides, I am too much pleased and flattered at our correspondence not to go as far as I can to set myself right in your eyes.

In this damnable confusion (I beg pardon) I have lost 210 all my possessions, or near about, and quite lost all my wits. I wish I could lay my hands on the numbers of the Review, for I know I wished to say something on that head more particularly than I can from memory; but where they have escaped to, only time or chance can show. However, I can tell you so far, that I was very much pleased with the article on Bret Harte; it seemed to me just, clear, and to the point. I agreed pretty well with all you said about George Eliot: a high, but, may we not add? — a rather dry lady. Did you — I forget — did you have a kick at the stern works of that melancholy puppy and humbug Daniel Deronda himself? — the Prince of Prigs; the literary abomination of desolation in the way of manhood; a type which is enough to make a man forswear the love of women, if that is how it must be gained.... Hats off all the same, you understand: a woman of genius.

Of your poems I have myself a kindness for *Noll and Nell*, although I don’t think you have made it as good as you ought: verse five is surely not *quite melodious*. I confess I like the Sonnet in the last number of the Review — the *Sonnet to England*.

Please, if you have not, and I don’t suppose you have, already read it, institute a search in all Melbourne for one of the rarest and certainly one of the best of books — *Clarissa Harlowe*. For any man who takes an interest in the problems of the two sexes, that book is a perfect mine of documents. And it is written, sir, with the pen of an angel. Miss Howe and Lovelace, words cannot tell how good they are! And the scene where Clarissa beards her family, with her fan going all the while; and some of the quarrel scenes between her and Lovelace; and the scene where Colonel Marden goes to Mr. Hall, with Lord M. trying to compose matters, and the Colonel with his eternal “finest woman in the world,” and the inimitable affirmation of Mobray — nothing, nothing could be better! You will bless me when you read it for this recommendation; 211 but, indeed, I can do nothing but recommend Clarissa. I am like that Frenchman of the eighteenth century who discovered Habakkuk, and would give no one peace about that respectable Hebrew. For my part, I never was able to get over his eminently respectable name; Isaiah is the boy, if you must have a prophet, no less. About Clarissa, I meditate a choice work: *A Dialogue on Man, Woman, and “Clarissa Harlowe.”* It is to be so clever that no array of terms can give you any idea; and very likely that particular array in which I shall finally embody it, less than any other.

Do you know, my dear sir, what I like best in your letter? The egotism for which you thought necessary to apologise. I am a rogue at egotism myself; and to be plain, I have rarely or never liked any man who was not. The first step to discovering the beauties of God's universe is usually a (perhaps partial) apprehension of such of them as adorn our own characters. When I see a man who does not think pretty well of himself, I always suspect him of being in the right. And besides, if he does not like himself, whom he has seen, how is he ever to like one whom he never can see but in dim and artificial presentments?

I cordially reciprocate your offer of a welcome; it shall be at least a warm one. Are you not my first, my only, admirer — a dear tie? Besides, you are a man of sense, and you treat me as one by writing to me as you do, and that gives me pleasure also. Please continue to let me see your work. I have one or two things coming out in the Cornhill: a story called *The Sire de Malétroit's Door* in Temple Bar; and a series of articles on Edinburgh in the Portfolio; but I don't know if these last fly all the way to Melbourne. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

The *Inland Voyage*, it must be remembered, at this time just put into the publisher's hands, was the author's first book. The "Crane 212 sketch" mentioned in the second of the following notes to me was the well-known frontispiece to that book on which Mr. Walter Crane was then at work. The essay *Pan's Pipes*, reprinted in *Virginibus Puerisque*, was written about this time.

Hôtel des Étrangers, Dieppe, January 1, 1878.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am at the *Inland Voyage* again: have finished another section, and have only two more to execute. But one at least of these will be very long — the longest in the book — being a great digression on French artistic tramps. I only hope Paul may take the thing; I want coin so badly, and besides it would be something done — something put outside of me and off my conscience; and I should not feel such a muff as I do, if once I saw the thing in boards with a ticket on its back. I think I shall frequent circulating libraries a good deal. The Preface shall stand over, as you suggest, until the last, and then, sir, we shall see. This to be read with a big voice.

This is New Year's Day: let me, my dear Colvin, wish you a very good year, free of all misunderstanding and bereavement, and full of good weather and good work. You know best what you have done for me, and so you will know best how heartily I mean this. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

I had had business in Edinburgh, and had stayed with Stevenson's parents in his absence.

[*Paris, January or February 1878.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Many thanks for your letter. I was much interested by all the Edinburgh gossip. Most likely I shall arrive in London next week. I think you know all about the Crane sketch; but it should be a river, not a canal, you know, and the look should be "cruel, lewd, and kindly," all at once. There is more sense in that Greek myth of Pan than in any other that I recollect except the luminous Hebrew one of the Fall: one of the 213 biggest things done. If people would remember that all religions are no more than representations of life, they would find them, as they are, the best representations, licking Shakespeare.

What an inconceivable cheese is Alfred de Musset! His comedies are, to my view, the best work of France this century: a large order. Did you ever read them? They are real, clear, living work. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

Café de la Source, Bd. St. Michel, Paris, 15th Feb. 1878.

MY DEAR FATHER, — A thought has come into my head which I think would interest you. Christianity is among other things, a very wise, noble, and strange doctrine of life. Nothing is so difficult to specify as the position it occupies with regard to asceticism. It is not ascetic. Christ was of all doctors (if you will let me use the word) one of the least ascetic. And yet there is a theory of living in the Gospels which is curiously indefinable, and leans towards asceticism on one side, although it leans away from it on the other. In fact, asceticism is used therein as a means, not as an end. The wisdom of this world consists in making oneself very little in order to avoid many knocks; in preferring others, in order that, even when we lose, we shall find some pleasure in the event; in putting our desires outside of ourselves, in another ship, so to speak, so that, when the worst happens, there will be something left. You see, I speak of it as a doctrine of life, and as a wisdom for this world. People must be themselves, I suppose. I feel every day as if religion had a greater interest for me; but that interest is still centred on the little rough-and-tumble world in which our fortunes are cast for the moment. I cannot transfer my interests, not even my religious interest, to any different sphere.... I have had some sharp lessons 214 and some very acute sufferings in these last seven-and-twenty years — more even than you would guess. I begin to grow an old man; a little sharp, I fear, and a little close and unfriendly; but still I have a good heart, and believe in myself and my fellow-men and the God who made us all.... There are not many sadder people in this world, perhaps, than I. I have my eye on a sickbed; I have written letters to-day that it hurt me to write, and I fear it will hurt others to receive; I am lonely and sick and out of heart. Well, I still hope; I still believe; I still see the good in the inch, and cling to it. It is not much, perhaps, but it is always something.

I find I have wandered a thousand miles from what I meant. It was this: of all passages bearing on Christianity in that form of a worldly wisdom, the most Christian, and so to speak, the key of the whole position, is the Christian doctrine of revenge. And it appears that this came into the world through Paul! There is a fact for you. It was to speak of this that I began this letter; but I have got into deep seas and must go on.

There is a fine text in the Bible, I don't know where, to the effect that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord. Strange as it may seem to you, everything has been, in one way or the other, bringing me a little nearer to what I think you would like me to be. 'Tis a strange world, indeed, but there is a manifest God for those who care to look for him.

This is a very solemn letter for my surroundings in this busy café; but I had it on my heart to write it; and, indeed, I was out of the humour for anything lighter. — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — While I am writing gravely, let me say one word more. I have taken a step towards more intimate relations with you. But don't expect too much of me. Try to take me as I am. This is a rare moment, and I 215 have profited by it; but take it as a rare moment. Usually I hate to speak of what I really feel, to that extent that when I find myself *cornered,* I have a tendency to say the reverse.

R. L. S.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Paris, 44 Bd. Haussmann, Friday, February 21, 1878.

MY DEAR PEOPLE, — Do you know who is my favourite author just now? How are the mighty fallen! Anthony Trollope. I batten on him; he is so nearly wearying you, and yet he never does; or rather, he never does, until he gets near the end, when he begins to wean you from him, so that you're as pleased to be done with him as you thought you would be sorry. I wonder if it's old age? It is a little, I am sure. A young person would get sickened by the dead level of meanness and cowardliness; you require to be a little spoiled and cynical before you can enjoy it. I have just finished the *Way of the World*; there is only one person in it — no, there are three — who are nice: the wild American woman, and two of the dissipated young men, Dolly and Lord Nidderdale. All the heroes and heroines are just ghastly. But what a triumph is Lady Carbury! That is real, sound, strong, genuine work: the man who could do that, if he had had courage, might have written a fine book; he has preferred to write many readable ones. I meant to write such a long, nice letter, but I cannot hold the pen.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

The following refers to the newspaper criticisms on the *Inland Vogage*: —

Hôtel du Val de Grâce, Rue St. Jacques, Paris, Sunday [*June 1878*].

MY DEAR MOTHER, — About criticisms, I was more surprised at the tone of the critics than I suppose any one 216 else. And the effect it has produced in me is one of shame. If they liked that so much, I ought to have given them something better, that's all. And I shall try to do so. Still, it strikes me as odd; and I don't understand the vogue. It should sell the thing. — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

This letter tells of the progress of the Portfolio papers called *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh,* and of preparations for the walking tour narrated in *Travels with a Donkey*. The late Philip Gilbert Hamerton, editor of the Portfolio and author of *A Painter's Camp in the Highlands* and of many well-known works on art, landscape, and French social life, was at this time and for many years living at a small chateau near Autun; and the visit here proposed was actually paid and gave great pleasure alike to host and guest (see *P. G. Hamerton, an Autobiography*, etc.,).

Monastier, September 1878.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — You must not expect to hear much from me for the next two weeks; for I am near starting. Donkey purchased — a love — price, 65 francs and a glass of brandy. My route is all pretty well laid out; I shall go near no town till I get to Alais. Remember, Poste Restante, Alais, Gard. Greyfriars will be in October. You did not say whether you liked September; you might tell me that at Alais. The other No.'s of Edinburgh are: Parliament Close, Villa Quarters (which perhaps may not appear), Calton Hill, Winter and New Year, and to the Pentland Hills. 'Tis a kind of book nobody would ever care to read; but none of the young men could have done it better than I have, which is always a consolation. I read *Inland Voyage* the other day: what rubbish these reviewers did talk! It is not badly written, thin, mildly cheery, and strained. *Selon moi.* I mean to visit Hamerton on my return journey; otherwise, I should come by sea from Marseilles. I am 217 very well known here now; indeed, quite a feature of the place. — Your affectionate son,

R. L. S.

The Engineer is the Conductor of Roads and Bridges; then I have the Receiver of Registrations, the First Clerk of Excise, and the Perceiver of the Impost. That is our dinner party. I am a sort of hovering government official, as you see. But away — away from these great companions!

To W. E. Henley

[*Monastier, September* 1878.]

DEAR HENLEY, — I hope to leave Monastier this day (Saturday) week; thenceforward Poste Restante, Alais, Gard, is my address. *Travels with a Donkey in the French Highlands.* I am no good to-day. I cannot work, nor even write letters. A colossal breakfast yesterday at Puy has, I think, done for me for ever; I certainly ate more than ever I ate before in my life — a big slice of melon, some ham and jelly, a *filet*, a helping of gudgeons, the breast and leg of a partridge, some green peas, eight crayfish, some Mont d'Or cheese, a peach, and a handful of biscuits, macaroons, and things. It sounds Gargantuan: it cost three francs a head. So that it was inexpensive to the pocket, although I fear it may prove extravagant to the fleshly tabernacle. I can't think how I did it or why. It is a new form of excess for me; but I think it pays less than any of them.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Monastier, at Morel's [*September 1878*].

Lud knows about date, *vide* postmark.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — Yours (with enclosures) of the 16th to hand. All work done. I go to Le Puy to-morrow to dispatch baggage, get cash, stand lunch to engineer, who has been very jolly and useful to me, and hope by 218 five o'clock on Saturday morning to be driving Modestine towards the Gévaudan. Modestine is my ânesse; a darling, mouse-colour, about the size of a Newfoundland dog (bigger, between you and me), the colour of a mouse, costing 65 francs and a glass of brandy. Glad you sent on all the coin; was half afraid I might come to a stick in the mountains, donkey and all, which would have been the devil. Have finished *Arabian Nights* and Edinburgh book, and am a free man. Next address, Poste Restante, Alais, Gard. Give my servilities to the family. Health bad; spirits, I think, looking up. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Paris, October 1878.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I have seen Hamerton; he was very kind, all his family seemed pleased to see an *Inland Voyager*, and the book seemed to be quite a household word with them. P. G. himself promised to help me in my bargains with publishers, which, said he, and I doubt not very truthfully, he could manage to much greater advantage than I. He is also to read an *Inland Voyage* over again, and send me his cuts and cuffs in private, after having liberally administered his kisses *coram publico*. I liked him very much. Of all the pleasant parts of my profession, I think the spirit of other men of letters makes the pleasantest.

Do you know, your sunset was very good? The "attack" (to speak learnedly) was so plucky and odd. I have thought of it repeatedly since. I have just made a delightful dinner by myself in the Café Félix, where I am an old established beggar, and am just smoking a cigar over my coffee. I came last night from Autun, and I am muddled about my plans. The world is such a dance! — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

Stevenson, hard at work upon *Providence and the Guitar*, *New Arabian Nights*, and *Travels with a Donkey*, was at this time occupying for a few days my rooms at Trinity in my absence. The college buildings and gardens, the ideal setting and careful tutelage of English academic life — in these respects so strongly contrasted with the Scottish — affected him always with a sense of unreality. The gyp mentioned is the present head porter of the college.

[*Trinity College, Cambridge, Autumn 1878.*]

MY DEAR HENLEY, — Here I am living like a fighting-cock, and have not spoken to a real person for about sixty hours. Those who wait on me are not real. The man I know to be a myth, because I have seen him acting so often in the Palais Royal. He plays the Duke in *Tricoche et Cacolet*; I knew his nose at once. The part he plays here is very dull for him, but conscientious. As for the bedmaker, she's a dream, a kind of cheerful, innocent nightmare; I never saw so poor an imitation of humanity. I cannot work — *cannot*. Even the *Guitar* is still undone; I can only write ditch-water. 'Tis ghastly; but I am quite cheerful, and that is more important. Do you think you could prepare the printers for a possible breakdown this week? I shall try all I know on Monday; but if I can get nothing better than I got this morning, I prefer to drop a week. Telegraph to me if you think it necessary. I shall not leave till Wednesday at soonest. Shall write again.

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

The matter of the loan and its repayment, here touched on, comes up again in Stevenson's last letter of all, that which closes the book. Stevenson and Mr. Gosse had planned a joint book of old murder stories retold, and had been to visit the scene of one famous murder together.

[*Edinburgh, April 16, 1879*]

Pool of Siloam, by El Dorado, Delectable Mountains, Arcadia.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — Herewith of the dibbs — a homely 220 fiver. How, and why, do you continue to exist? I do so ill, but for a variety of reasons. First, I wait an angel to come down and trouble the waters; second, more angels; third — well, more angels. The waters are sluggish; the angels — well, the angels won't come, that's about all. But I sit waiting and waiting, and people bring me meals, which help to pass time (I'm sure it's very kind of them), and sometimes I whistle to myself; and as there's a very pretty echo at my pool of Siloam, the thing's agreeable to hear. The sun continues to rise every day, to my growing wonder. "The moon by night thee shall not smite." And the stars are all doing as well as can be expected. The air of Arcady is very brisk and pure, and we command many enchanting prospects in space and time. I do not yet know much about my situation; for, to tell the truth, I only came here by the run since I began to write this letter; I had to go back to date it; and I am grateful to you for having been the occasion of this little outing. What good travellers we are, if we had only faith; no man need stay in Edinburgh but by unbelief; my religious organ has been ailing for a while past, and I have lain a great deal in Edinburgh, a sheer hulk in consequence. But I got out my wings, and have taken a change of air.

I read your book with great interest, and ought long ago to have told you so. An ordinary man would say that he had been waiting till he could pay his debts.... The book is good reading. Your personal notes of those you saw struck me as perhaps most sharp and "best held." See as many people as you can, and make a book of them before you die. That will be a living book, upon my word. You have the touch required. I ask you to put hands to it in private already. Think of what Carlyle's caricature of old Coleridge is to us who never saw S. T. C. With that and *Kubla Khan*, we have the man in the fact. Carlyle's picture, of course, is not of the author of *Kubla*, but of the author of that surprising 221 *Friend* which has knocked the breath out of two generations of hopeful youth. Your portraits would be milder, sweeter, more true perhaps, and perhaps not so truth-*telling* — if you will take my meaning.

I have to thank you for an introduction to that beautiful — no, that's not the word — that jolly, with an Arcadian jollity — thing of Vogelweide's. Also for your preface. Some day I want to read a whole book in the same picked dialect as that preface. I think it must be one E. W. Gosse who must write it. He has got himself into a fix with me by writing the preface; I look for a great deal, and will not be easily pleased.

I never thought of it, but my new book, which should soon be out, contains a visit to a murder scene, but not done as we should like to see them, for, of course, I was running another hare.

If you do not answer this in four pages, I shall stop the enclosed fiver at the bank, a step which will lead to your incarceration for life.

As my visits to Arcady are somewhat uncertain, you had better address 17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, as usual. I shall walk over for the note if I am not yet home. — Believe me, very really yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

I charge extra for a flourish when it is successful; this isn't, so you have it gratis. Is there any news in Babylon the Great? My fellow-creatures are electing school boards here in the midst of the ages. It is very composed of them. I can't think why they do it. Nor why I have written a real letter. If you write a real letter back, damme, I'll try to *correspond* with you. A thing unknown in this age. It is a consequence of the decay of faith; we cannot believe that the fellow will be at the pains to read us.

To W. E. Henley

This is in reply to some technical criticisms of his correspondent on the poem *Our Lady of the Snows*, referring to the Trappist 222 monastery in the Cévennes so called, and afterwards published in *Underwoods*.

Edinburgh [*April 1879*].

MY DEAR HENLEY, — Heavens! have I done the like? "Clarify and strain," indeed? "Make it like Marvell," no less. I'll tell you what — you may go to the devil; that's what I think. "Be eloquent" is another of your pregnant suggestions. I cannot sufficiently thank you for that one. Portrait of a person about to be eloquent at the request of a literary friend. You seem to forget, sir, that rhyme is rhyme, sir, and — go to the devil.

I'll try to improve it, but I shan't be able to — O go to the devil.

Seriously, you're a cool hand. And then you have the brass to ask me *why* "my steps went one by one"? Why? Powers of man! to rhyme with *sun*, to be sure. Why else could it be? And you yourself have been a poet! G-r-r-r-r-r! I'll never be a poet any more. Men are so d — — d ungrateful and captious, I declare I could weep.

O Henley, in my hours of ease
You may say anything you please,
But when I join the Muse's revel,
Begad, I wish you at the devil!
In vain my verse I plane and bevel,
Like Banville's rhyming devotees;
In vain by many an artful swivel
Lug in my meaning by degrees;
I'm sure to hear my Henley cavil;
And grovelling prostrate on my knees,
Devote his body to the seas,
His correspondence to the devil!

Impromptu poem.

I'm going to Shandon Hydropathic *cum parentibus*. Write here. I heard from Lang. Ferrier prayeth to be remembered; he means to write, likes his Tourgenieff greatly. Also likes my *What was on the Slate*, which, under a new 223 title, yet unfound, and with a new and, on the whole, kindly *dénouement*, is going to shoot up and become a star....

I see I must write some more to you about my Monastery. I am a weak brother in verse. You ask me to re-write things that I have already managed just to write with the skin of my teeth. If I don't re-write them, it's because I don't see how to write them better, not because I don't think they should be. But, curiously enough, you condemn two of my favourite passages, one of which is J. W. Ferrier's favourite of the whole. Here I shall think it's you who are wrong. You see, I did not try to make good verse, but to say what I wanted as well as verse would let me. I don't like the rhyme "ear" and "hear." But the couplet, "My undissuaded heart I hear Whisper courage in my ear," is exactly what I want for the thought, and to me seems very energetic as speech, if not as verse. Would "daring" be better than "courage"? *Je me le demande.* No, it would be ambiguous, as though I had used it licentiously for "daringly," and that would cloak the sense.

In short, your suggestions have broken the heart of the scald. He doesn't agree with them all; and those he does agree with, the spirit indeed is willing, but the d — — d flesh cannot, cannot, cannot, see its way to profit by. I think I'll lay it by for nine years, like Horace. I think the well of Castaly's run out. No more the Muses round my pillow haunt. I am fallen once more to the mere proser. God bless you.

R. L. S.

To Miss Jane Balfour

This correspondent, the long-lived spinster among the Balfour sisters (died 1907, aged 91) and the well-beloved "auntie" of a numerous clan of nephews and nieces, is the subject of the set of verses, *Auntie's Skirts*, in the *Child's Garden*. She had been reading *Travels with a Donkey* on its publication.

[*Swanston, June 1879.*]

MY DEAR AUNTIE, — If you could only think a little less of me and others, and a great deal more of your 224 delightful self, you would be as nearly perfect as there is any need to be. I think I have travelled with donkeys all my life; and the experience of this book could be nothing new to me. But if ever I knew a real donkey, I believe it is yourself. You are so eager to think well of everybody else (except when you are angry on account of some third person) that I do not believe you have ever left yourself time to think properly of yourself. You never understand when other people are unworthy, nor when you yourself are worthy in the highest degree. Oblige us all by having a guid conceit o' yoursel and despising in the future the whole crowd, including your affectionate nephew,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

This letter is contemporary with the much-debated Cornhill essay *On some Aspects of Burns*, afterwards published in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. "Meredith's story" is probably the *Tragic Comedians*.

Swanston, July 24, 1879.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — I have greatly enjoyed your article, which seems to me handsome in tone, and written like a fine old English gentleman. But is there not a hitch in the sentence at foot of page 153? I get lost in it.

Chapters VIII. and IX. of Meredith's story are very good, I think. But who wrote the review of my book? Whoever he was, he cannot write; he is humane, but a duffer; I could weep when I think of him; for surely to be virtuous and incompetent is a hard lot. I should prefer to be a bold pirate, the gay sailor-boy of immorality, and a publisher at once. My mind is extinct; my appetite is expiring; I have fallen altogether into a hollow-eyed, yawning way of life, like the parties in Burne Jones's pictures.... Talking of Burns. (Is this not sad, Weg? I use the term of reproach not because I am angry with you this time, but because I am angry with myself and desire to give pain.) Talking, I say, of Robert 225 Burns, the inspired poet is a very gay subject for study. I made a kind of chronological table of his various loves and lusts, and have been comparatively speechless ever since. I am sorry to say it, but there was something in him of the vulgar, bagmanlike, professional seducer. — Oblige me by taking down and reading, for the hundredth time, I hope, his *Twa Dogs* and his *Address to the Unco Guid*. I am only a Scotchman, after all, you see; and when I have beaten Burns, I am driven at once, by my parental feelings, to console him with a sugar-plum. But hang me if I know anything I like so well as the *Twa Dogs*. Even a common Englishman may have a glimpse, as it were from Pisgah, of its extraordinary merits.

"*English, The*: — a dull people, incapable of comprehending the Scottish tongue. Their history is so intimately connected with that of Scotland, that we must refer our readers to that heading. Their literature is principally the work of venal Scots." — Stevenson's *Handy Cyclopædia*. Glescow: Blaikie & Bannock.

Remember me in suitable fashion to Mrs. Gosse, the offspring, and the cat. — And believe me ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Rembrandt refers to an article in the Edinburgh Review. "Bummkopf" was Stevenson's name for the typical pedant, German or other, who cannot clear his edifice of its scaffolding, nor set forth the results of research without intruding on the reader all its processes, evidences, and supports. *Burns* is the aforesaid Cornhill essay: not the rejected Encyclopædia article.

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [*July 28, 1879*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am just in the middle of your *Rembrandt*. The taste for Bummkopf and his works is agreeably dissembled so far as I have gone; and the reins have never for an instant been thrown upon the neck of that wooden Pegasus; he only perks up a learned snout from a footnote in the cellarage of a paragraph; 226 just, in short, where he ought to be, to inspire confidence in a wicked and adulterous generation. But, mind you, Bummkopf is not human; he is Dagon the fish god, and down he will come, sprawling on his belly or his behind, with his hands broken from his helpless carcase, and his head rolling oft into a corner. Up will rise on the other side, sane, pleasurable, human knowledge: a thing of beauty and a joy, etc.

I'm three parts through *Burns*; long, dry, unsympathetic, but sound and, I think, in its dry way, interesting. Next I shall finish the story, and then perhaps Thoreau. Meredith has been staying with Morley, has been cracking me up, he writes, to that literary Robespierre; and he (the L. R.) is about, it is believed, to write to me on a literary scheme. Is it Keats, hope you? My heart leaps at the thought. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

With reference to the "term of reproach," it must be explained that Mr. Gosse, who now signs with only one initial, used in these days to sign with two, E. W. G. The nickname Weg was fastened on him by Stevenson, partly under a false impression as to the order of these initials, partly in friendly derision of a passing fit of lameness, which called up the memory of Silas Wegg, the immortal literary gentleman "*with* a wooden leg" of *Our Mutual Friend*.

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [*July 29, 1879*].

MY DEAR GOSSE, — Yours was delicious; you are a young person of wit; one of the last of them; wit being quite out of date, and humour confined to the Scotch Church and the *Spectator* in unconscious survival. You will probably be glad to hear that I am up again in the world; I have breathed again, and had a frolic on the strength of it. The frolic was yesterday, Sawbath; the scene, the Royal Hotel, Bathgate; I went there with a humorous friend to lunch. The maid soon showed herself a lass of character. She was looking out of window. On being asked what she was after, "I'm lookin' for my lad," says she. "Is that him?" "Weel, I've been 227 lookin' for him a' my life, and I've never seen him yet," was the response. I wrote her some verses in the vernacular; she read them. “They’re no bad for a beginner,” said she. The landlord’s daughter, Miss Stewart, was present in oil colour; so I wrote her a declaration in verse, and sent it by the handmaid. She (Miss S.) was present on the stair to witness our departure, in a warm, suffused condition. Damn it, Gosse, you needn’t suppose that you’re the only poet in the world.

Your statement about your initials, it will be seen, I pass over in contempt and silence. When once I have made up my mind, let me tell you, sir, there lives no pock-pudding who can change it. Your anger I defy. Your unmanly reference to a well-known statesman I puff from me, sir, like so much vapour. Weg is your name; Weg. W E G.

My enthusiasm has kind of dropped from me. I envy you your wife, your home, your child — I was going to say your cat. There would be cats in my home too if I could but get it. I may seem to you “the impersonation of life,” but my life is the impersonation of waiting, and that’s a poor creature. God help us all, and the deil be kind to the hindmost! Upon my word, we are a brave, cheery crew, we human beings, and my admiration increases daily — primarily for myself, but by a roundabout process for the whole crowd; for I dare say they have all their poor little secrets and anxieties. And here am I, for instance, writing to you as if you were in the seventh heaven, and yet I know you are in a sad anxiety yourself. I hope earnestly it will soon be over, and a fine pink Gosse sprawling in a tub, and a mother in the best of health and spirits, glad and tired, and with another interest in life. Man, you are out of the trouble when this is through. A first child is a rival, but a second is only a rival to the first; and the husband stands his ground and may keep married all his life — a consummation heartily to be desired. Good-bye, Gosse. Write me a witty letter with good news of the mistress.

R. L. S.

The letter breaks off here.

Thomas Basin or Bazin, the historian of Charles VIII. and Louis XI.

R. Glasgow Brown lay dying in the Riviera.

V

THE AMATEUR EMIGRANT

S.S. DEVONIA — MONTEREY AND SAN FRANCISCO — MARRIAGE

July 1879-July 1880

In France, as has been already indicated, Stevenson had met the American lady, Mrs. Osbourne, who was afterwards to become his wife. Her domestic relations had not been fortunate; to his chivalrous nature her circumstances appealed no less than her person; and almost from their first meeting, which befell at Grez, immediately after the canoe voyage of 1876, he conceived for her an attachment which was to transform and determine his life. On her return to America with her children in the autumn of 1878, she determined to seek a divorce from her husband. Hearing of her intention, together with very disquieting news of her health, and hoping that after she had obtained the divorce he might make her his wife, Stevenson suddenly started for California at the beginning of August 1879.

For what he knew must seem to his friends, and especially to his father, so wild an errand, he would ask for no supplies from home; but resolved, risking his whole future on the issue, to test during this adventure his power of supporting himself, and eventually others, by his own labours in literature. In order from the outset to save as much as possible, he made the journey in 229 the steerage and the emigrant train. With this prime motive of economy was combined a second — that of learning for himself the pinch of life as it is felt by the unprivileged and the poor (he had long ago disclaimed for himself the character of a “consistent first-class passenger in life”) — and also, it should be added, a third, that of turning his experiences to literary account. On board ship he took daily notes with this intent, and wrote moreover *The Story of a Lie* for an English magazine. Arrived at his destination, he found his health, as was natural, badly shaken by the hardships of the journey; tried his favourite open-air cure for three weeks at an Angora goat-ranche some twenty miles from Monterey; and then lived from September to December in that old Californian coast-town itself, under the conditions set forth in the earlier of the following letters, and under a heavy combined strain of personal anxiety and literary effort. From the notes taken on board ship and in the emigrant train he drafted an account of his journey, intending to make a volume matching in form, though in contents much unlike, the earlier *Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey*. He wrote also the essays on Thoreau and the Japanese reformer, Yoshida Torajiro, afterwards published in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*; one of the most vivid of his shorter tales, *The Pavilion on the Links*, hereinafter referred to as a "blood and thunder," as well as a great part of another and longer story drawn from his new experiences and called *A Vendetta in the West*; but this did not satisfy him, and was never finished. He planned at the same time, in the spirit of romantic comedy, that tale which took final shape four years later as *Prince Otto*. Towards the end of December 1879 Stevenson moved to San Francisco, where 230 he lived for three months in a workman's lodging, leading a life of frugality amounting, it will be seen, to self-imposed penury, and working always with the same intensity of application, until his health utterly broke down. One of the causes which contributed to his illness was the fatigue he underwent in helping to watch beside the sickbed of a child, the son of his landlady. During a part of March and April he lay at death's door — his first really dangerous sickness since childhood — and was slowly tended back to life by the joint ministrations of his future wife and the physician to whom his letter of thanks will be found below. His marriage ensued in May 1880; immediately afterwards, to try and consolidate his recovery, he moved to a deserted mining-camp in the Californian coast range; and has recorded the aspects and humours of his life there with a master's touch in the *Silverado Squatters*.

The news of his dangerous illness and approaching marriage had in the meantime unlocked the parental heart and purse; supplies were sent ensuring his present comfort, with the promise of their continuance for the future, and of a cordial welcome for the new daughter-in-law in his father's house. The following letters, chosen from among those written during the period in question, depict his way of life, and reflect at once the anxiety of his friends and the strain of the time upon himself.

To Sidney Colvin

The story mentioned at the beginning of this letter is *The Story of a Lie*.

On board s.s. "Devonia," an hour or two out of New York [*August* 1879].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I have finished my story. The 231 handwriting is not good because of the ship's misconduct: thirty-one pages in ten days at sea is not bad.

I shall write a general procuration about this story on another bit of paper. I am not very well; bad food, bad air, and hard work have brought me down. But the spirits keep good. The voyage has been most interesting, and will make, if not a series of *Pall Mall* articles, at least the first part of a new book. The last weight on me has been trying to keep notes for this purpose. Indeed, I have worked like a horse, and am now as tired as a donkey. If I should have to push on far by rail, I shall bring nothing but my fine bones to port.

Good-bye to you all. I suppose it is now late afternoon with you and all across the seas. What shall I find over there? I dare not wonder. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

P.S. — I go on my way to-night, if I can; if not, to-morrow; emigrant train ten to fourteen days' journey; warranted extreme discomfort. The only American institution which has yet won my respect is the rain. One sees it is a new country, they are so free with their water. I have been steadily drenched for twenty-four hours; water-proof wet through; immortal spirit fitfully blinking up in spite. Bought a copy of my own work, and the man said "by Stevenson." — "Indeed," says I. — "Yes, sir," says he. — Scene closes.

I am not beaten yet, though disappointed. If I am, it's for good this time; you know what "for good" means in my vocabulary — something inside of 12 months perhaps; but who knows? At least, if I fail in my great purpose, I shall see some wild life in the West and visit both Florida and Labrador ere I return. But I don't yet know if I have the courage to stick to life without it. Man, I was sick, sick, sick of this last year.

To Sidney Colvin

[*In the Emigrant Train from New York to San Francisco, August 1879.*]

DEAR COLVIN, — I am in the cars between Pittsburgh and Chicago, just now bowling through Ohio. I am taking charge of a kid, whose mother is asleep, with one eye, while I write you this with the other. I reached N. Y. Sunday night; and by five o'clock Monday was under way for the West. It is now about ten on Wednesday morning, so I have already been about forty hours in the cars. It is impossible to lie down in them, which must end by being very wearying.

I had no idea how easy it was to commit suicide. There seems nothing left of me; I died a while ago; I do not know who it is that is travelling.

Of where or how, I nothing know;
And why, I do not care;
Enough if, even so,
My travelling eyes, my travelling mind can go
By flood and field and hill, by wood and meadow fair,
Beside the Susquehannah and along the Delaware.
I think, I hope, I dream no more
The dreams of otherwhere,
The cherished thoughts of yore;

I have been changed from what I was before;
And drunk too deep perchance the lotus of the air
Beside the Susquehannah and along the Delaware.
Unweary God me yet shall bring
To lands of brighter air,
Where I, now half a king,
Shall with enfranchised spirit loudlier sing,
And wear a bolder front than that which now I wear
Beside the Susquehannah and along the Delaware.

233

Exit Muse, hurried by child's games....

Have at you again, being now well through Indiana. In America you eat better than anywhere else: fact, The food is heavenly.

No man is any use until he has dared everything; I feel just now as if I had, and so might become a man. "If ye have faith like a grain of mustard seed." That is so true! Just now I have faith as big as a cigar-case; I will not say die, and do not fear man nor fortune.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

Crossing Nebraska [*Saturday, August 23, 1879*].

MY DEAR HENLEY, — I am sitting on the top of the cars with a mill party from Missouri going west for his health. Desolate flat prairie upon all hands. Here and there a herd of cattle, a yellow butterfly or two; a patch of wild sunflowers; a wooden house or two; then a wooden church alone in miles of waste; then a windmill to pump water. When we stop, which we do often, for emigrants and freight travel together, the kine first, the men after, the whole plain is heard singing with cicadae. This is a pause, as you may see from the writing. What happened to the old pedestrian emigrants, what was the tedium suffered by the Indians and trappers of our youth, the imagination trembles to conceive. This is now Saturday, 23rd, and I have been steadily travelling since I parted from you at St. Pancras. It is a strange vicissitude from the Savile Club to this; I sleep with a man from Pennsylvania who has been in the States Navy, and mess with him and the Missouri bird already alluded to. We have a tin wash-bowl among four. I wear nothing but a shirt and a pair of trousers, and never button my shirt. When I land for a meal, I pass my coat and feel dressed. This life is to last till Friday, Saturday, or Sunday next. It is a strange affair to be an emigrant, as 234 I hope you shall see in a future work. I wonder if this will be legible; my present station on the waggon roof, though airy compared to the cars, is both dirty and insecure. I can see the track straight before and straight behind me to either horizon. Peace of mind I enjoy with extreme serenity; I am doing right; I know no one will think so; and don't care. My body, however, is all to whistles; I don't eat; but, man, I can sleep. The car in front of mine is chock full of Chinese.

Monday. — What it is to be ill in an emigrant train let those declare who know. I slept none till late in the morning, overcome with laudanum, of which I had luckily a little bottle. All to-day I have eaten nothing, and only drunk two cups of tea, for each of which, on the pretext that the one was breakfast, and the other dinner, I was charged fifty cents. Our journey is through ghostly deserts, sage brush and alkali, and rocks, without form or colour, a sad corner of the world. I confess I am not jolly, but mighty calm, in my distresses. My illness is a subject of great mirth to some of my fellow-travellers, and I smile rather sickly at their jests.

We are going along Bitter Creek just now, a place infamous in the history of emigration, a place I shall remember myself among the blackest. I hope I may get this posted at Ogden, Utah.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Coast Line Mountains, California, September, 1879.*]

Here is another curious start in my life. I am living at an Angora goat-ranche, in the Coast Line Mountains, eighteen miles from Monterey. I was camping out, but got so sick that the two rancheros took me in and tended me. One is an old bear-hunter, seventy-two years old, and a captain from the Mexican war; the other a pilgrim, and one who was out with the bear flag and under Fremont 235 when California was taken by the States. They are both true frontiersmen, and most kind and pleasant. Captain Smith, the bear-hunter, is my physician, and I obey him like an oracle.

The business of my life stands pretty nigh still. I work at my notes of the voyage. It will not be very like a book of mine; but perhaps none the less successful for that. I will not deny that I feel lonely to-day; but I do not fear to go on, for I am doing right. I have not yet had a word from England, partly, I suppose, because I have not yet written for my letters to New York; do not blame me for this neglect; if you knew all I have been through, you would wonder I had done so much as I have. I teach the ranche children reading in the morning, for the mother is from home sick. — Ever your affectionate friend,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Monterey, California, October 1879.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I received your letter with delight; it was the first word that reached me from the old country. I am in good health now; I have been pretty seedy, for I was exhausted by the journey and anxiety below even my point of keeping up; I am still a little weak, but that is all; I begin to ingrease, it seems, already. My book is about half drafted: the *Amateur Emigrant*, that is. Can you find a better name? I believe it will be more popular than any of my others; the canvas is so much more popular and larger too. Fancy, it is my fourth. That voluminous writer. I was vexed to hear about the last chapter of *The Lie*, and pleased to hear about the rest; it would have been odd if it had no birthmark, born where and how it was. It should by rights have been called the *Devonia*, for that is the habit with all children born in a steerage.

I write to you, hoping for more. Give me news of all who concern me, near or far, or big or little. Here, sir, in California you have a willing hearer.

Monterey is a place where there is no summer or winter, and pines and sand and distant hills and a bay all filled with real water from the Pacific. You will perceive that no expense has been spared. I now live with a little French doctor; I take one of my meals in a little French restaurant; for the other two, I sponge. The population of Monterey is about that of a dissenting chapel on a wet Sunday in a strong church neighbourhood. They are mostly Mexican and Indian — mixed. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Monterey, 8th October 1879.

MY DEAR WEG, — I know I am a rogue and the son of a dog. Yet let me tell you, when I came here I had a week's misery and a fortnight's illness, and since then I have been more or less busy in being content. This is a kind of excuse for my laziness. I hope you will not excuse yourself. My plans are still very uncertain, and it is not likely that anything will happen before Christmas. In the meanwhile, I believe I shall live on here "between the sandhills and the sea," as I think Mr. Swinburne hath it. I was pretty nearly slain; my spirit lay down and kicked for three days; I was up at an Angora goat-ranche in the Santa Lucia Mountains, nursed by an old frontiersman, a mighty hunter of bears, and I scarcely slept, or ate, or thought for four days. Two nights I lay out under a tree in a sort of stupor, doing nothing but fetch water for myself and horse, light a fire and make coffee, and all night awake hearing the goat-bells ringing and the tree-frogs singing when each new noise was enough to set me mad. Then the bear-hunter came round, pronounced me "real sick," and ordered me up to the ranche.

It was an odd, miserable piece of my life; and according to all rule, it should have been my death; but after a while my spirit got up again in a divine frenzy, and has since kicked and spurred my vile body forward with great emphasis and success.

My new book, *The Amateur Emigrant*, is about half drafted. I don't know if it will be good, but I think it ought to sell in spite of the deil and the publishers; for it tells an odd enough experience, and one, I think, never yet told before. Look for my *Burns* in the Cornhill, and for my *Story of a Lie* in Paul's withered babe, the New Quarterly. You may have seen the latter ere this reaches you; tell me if it has any interest, like a good boy, and remember that it was written at sea in great anxiety of mind. What is your news? Send me your works, like an angel, *au fur et à mesure* of their apparation, for I am naturally short of literature, and I do not wish to rust.

I fear this can hardly be called a letter. To say truth, I feel already a difficulty of approach; I do not know if I am the same man I was in Europe, perhaps I can hardly claim acquaintance with you. My head went round and looks another way now; for when I found myself over here in a new land, and all the past uprooted in the one tug, and I neither feeling glad nor sorry, I got my last lesson about mankind; I mean my latest lesson, for of course I do not know what surprises there are yet in store for me. But that I could have so felt astonished me beyond description. There is a wonderful callousness in human nature which enables us to live. I had no feeling one way or another from New York to California, until, at Dutch Flat, a mining camp in the Sierra, I heard a cock crowing with a home voice; and then I fell to hope and regret both in the same moment.

Is there a boy or a girl? and how is your wife? I thought of you more than once, to put it mildly.

I live here comfortably enough; but I shall soon be 238 left all alone, perhaps till Christmas. Then you may hope for correspondence — and may not I? — Your friend,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

[*Monterey, October 1879.*]

MY DEAR HENLEY, — Herewith the *Pavilion on the Links*, grand carpentry story in nine chapters, and I should hesitate to say how many tableaux. Where is it to go? God knows. It is the dibbs that are wanted. It is not bad, though I say it; carpentry, of course, but not bad at that; and who else can carpenter in England, now that Wilkie Collins is played out? It might be broken for magazine purposes at the end of Chapter IV. I send it to you, as I dare say Payn may help, if all else fails. Dibbs and speed are my mottoes.

Do acknowledge the *Pavilion* by return. I shall be so nervous till I hear, as of course I have no copy except of one or two places where the vein would not run. God prosper it, poor *Pavilion*! May it bring me money for myself and my sick one, who may read it, I do not know how soon.

Love to your wife, Anthony, and all. I shall write to Colvin to-day or to-morrow. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

The story spoken of in these letters as A *Vendetta in the West* was three parts written and then given up and destroyed.

[*Monterey, October 1879.*]

MY DEAR HENLEY, — Many thanks for your good letter, which is the best way to forgive you for your previous silence. I hope Colvin or somebody has sent me the Cornhill and the New Quarterly, though I am trying to get them in San Francisco. I think you might have sent me (1) some of your articles in the P. M. G.; (2) a 239 paper with the announcement of second edition; and (3) the announcement of the essays in Athenæum. This to prick you in the future. Again, choose, in your head, the best volume of Labiche there is, and post it to Jules Simoneau, Monterey, Monterey Co., California: do this at once, as he is my restaurant man, a most pleasant old boy with whom I discuss the universe and play chess daily. He has been out of France for thirty-five years, and never heard of Labiche. I have eighty-three pages written of a story called *A Vendetta in the West*, and about sixty pages of the first draft of the *Amateur Emigrant*. They should each cover from 130 to 150 pages when done. That is all my literary news. Do keep me posted, won't you? Your letter and Bob's made the fifth and sixth I have had from Europe in three months.

At times I get terribly frightened about my work, which seems to advance too slowly. I hope soon to have a greater burden to support, and must make money a great deal quicker than I used. I may get nothing for the *Vendetta*; I may only get some forty quid for the *Emigrant*; I cannot hope to have them both done much before the end of November.

O, and look here, why did you not send me the Spectator which slanged me? Rogues and rascals, is that all you are worth?

Yesterday I set fire to the forest, for which, had I been caught, I should have been hung out of hand to the nearest tree, Judge Lynch being an active person hereaway. You should have seen my retreat (which was entirely for strategical purposes). I ran like hell. It was a fine sight. At night I went out again to see it; it was a good fire, though I say it that should not. I had a near escape for my life with a revolver: I fired six charges, and the six bullets all remained in the barrel, which was choked from end to end, from muzzle to breach, with solid lead; it took a man three hours to 240 drill them out. Another shot, and I'd have gone to kingdom come.

This is a lovely place, which I am growing to love. The Pacific licks all other oceans out of hand; there is no place but the Pacific Coast to hear eternal roaring surf. When I get to the top of the woods behind

Monterey, I can hear the seas breaking all round over ten or twelve miles of coast from near Carmel on my left, out to Point Pinas in front, and away to the right along the sands of Monterey to Castroville and the mouth of the Salinas. I was wishing yesterday that the world could get — no, what I mean was that you should be kept in suspense like Mahomet's coffin until the world had made half a revolution, then dropped here at the station as though you had stepped from the cars; you would then comfortably enter Walter's waggon (the sun has just gone down, the moon beginning to throw shadows, you hear the surf rolling, and smell the sea and the pines). That shall deposit you at Sanchez's saloon, where we take a drink; you are introduced to Bronson, the local editor ("I have no brain music," he says; "I'm a mechanic, you see," but he's a nice fellow); to Adolpho Sanchez, who is delightful. Meantime I go to the P. O. for my mail; thence we walk up Alvarado Street together, you now floundering in the sand, now merrily stumping on the wooden side-walks; I call at Hadsell's for my paper; at length behold us installed in Simoneau's little white-washed back-room, round a dirty tablecloth, with François the baker, perhaps an Italian fisherman, perhaps Augustin Dutra, and Simoneau himself. Simoneau, François, and I are the three sure cards; the others mere waifs. Then home to my great airy rooms with five windows opening on a balcony; I sleep on the floor in my camp blankets; you instal yourself abed; in the morning coffee with the little doctor and his little wife; we hire a waggon and make a day of it; and by night, I should let you up again into the air, to be returned to Mrs. Henley in the 241 forenoon following. By God, you would enjoy yourself. So should I. I have tales enough to keep you going till five in the morning, and then they would not be at an end. I forget if you asked me any questions, and I sent your letter up to the city to one who will like to read it. I expect other letters now steadily. If I have to wait another two months, I shall begin to be happy. Will you remember me most affectionately to your wife? Shake hands with Anthony from me; and God bless your mother.

God bless Stephen! Does he not know that I am a man, and cannot live by bread alone, but must have guineas into the bargain. *Burns*, I believe, in my own mind, is one of my high-water marks; Meiklejohn flames me a letter about it, which is so complimentary that I must keep it or get it published in the Monterey Californian. Some of these days I shall send an exemplaire of that paper; it is huge. — Ever your affectionate friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Monterey, 21st October .

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Although you have absolutely disregarded my plaintive appeals for correspondence, and written only once as against God knows how many notes and notikins of mine — here goes again. I am now all alone in Monterey, a real inhabitant, with a box of my own at the P. O. I have splendid rooms at the doctor's, where I get coffee in the morning (the doctor is French), and I mess with another jolly old Frenchman, the stranded fifty-eight-year-old wreck of a good-hearted, dissipated, and once wealthy Nantais tradesman. My health goes on better; as for work, the draft of my book was laid aside at or so; and I have now, by way of change, more than seventy pages of a novel, a one-volume novel, alas! to be called either *A Chapter in the Experience of Arizona* 242 *Breckonridge* or *A Vendetta in the West*, or a combination of the two. The scene from Chapter IV. to the end lies in Monterey and the adjacent country; of course, with my usual luck, the plot of the story is somewhat scandalous, containing an illegitimate father for piece of resistance.... Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To P.G. Hamerton

The following refers to Mr. Hamerton's candidature, which was not successful, for the Professorship of Fine Art at Edinburgh: —

Monterey [*November 1879*].

MY DEAR MR. HAMERTON, — Your letter to my father was forwarded to me by mistake, and by mistake I opened it. The letter to myself has not yet reached me. This must explain my own and my father's silence. I shall write by this or next post to the only friends I have who, I think, would have an influence, as they are both professors. I regret exceedingly that I am not in Edinburgh, as I could perhaps have done more, and I need not tell you that what I might do for you in the matter of the election is neither from friendship nor gratitude, but because you are the only man (I beg your pardon) worth a damn. I shall write to a third friend, now I think of it, whose father will have great influence.

I find here (of all places in the world) your *Essays on Art*, which I have read with signal interest. I believe I shall dig an essay of my own out of one of them, for it set me thinking; if mine could only produce yet another in reply, we could have the marrow out between us.

I hope, my dear sir, you will not think badly of me for my long silence. My head has scarce been on my shoulders. I had scarce recovered from a long fit of useless ill-health than I was whirled over here double-quick time and by cheapest conveyance.

I have been since pretty ill, but pick up, though still somewhat of a mossy ruin. If you would view my countenance 243 aright, come — view it by the pale moonlight. But that is on the mend. I believe I have now a distant claim to tan.

A letter will be more than welcome in this distant clime, where I have a box at the post-office — generally, I regret to say, empty. Could your recommendation introduce me to an American publisher? My next book I should really try to get hold of here, as its interest is international, and the more I am in this country the more I understand the weight of your influence. It is pleasant to be thus most at home abroad, above all, when the prophet is still not without honour in his own land....

To Edmund Gosse

The copy of the Monterey paper here mentioned never came to hand, nor have the contributions of R. L. S. to that journal ever been traced.

Monterey, 15th November 1879.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — Your letter was to me such a bright spot that I answer it right away to the prejudice of other correspondents or -dants (don't know how to spell it) who have prior claims.... It is the history of our kindnesses that alone makes this world tolerable. If it were not for that, for the effect of kind words, kind looks, kind letters, multiplying, spreading, making one happy through another and bringing forth benefits, some thirty, some fifty, some a thousandfold, I should be tempted to think our life a practical jest in the worst possible spirit. So your four pages have confirmed my philosophy as well as consoled my heart in these ill hours.

Yes, you are right; Monterey is a pleasant place; but I see I can write no more to-night. I am tired and sad, and being already in bed, have no more to do but turn out the light. — Your affectionate friend,

R. L. S.

I try it again by daylight. Once more in bed however; 244 for to-day it is *mucho frio, as* we Spaniards say; and I had no other means of keeping warm for my work. I have done a good spell, 9½ foolscap pages; at least 8 of Cornhill; ah, if I thought that I could get eight guineas for it. My trouble is that I am all too ambitious just now. A book whereof 70 out of 120 are scrolled. A novel whereof 85 out of, say 140, are pretty well nigh done. A short story of 50 pp., which shall be finished to-morrow, or I'll know the reason why. This may bring in a lot of money: but I dread to think that it is all on three chances. If the three were to fail, I am in a bog. The novel is called *A Vendetta in the West.* I see I am in a grasping, dismal humour, and should, as we Americans put it, quit writing. In truth, I am so haunted by anxieties that one or other is sure to come up in all that I write.

I will send you herewith a Monterey paper where the works of R. L. S. appear, nor only that, but all my life on studying the advertisements will become clear. I lodge with Dr. Heintz; take my meals with Simoneau; have been only two days ago shaved by the tonsorial artist Michaels; drink daily at the Bohemia saloon; get my daily paper from

Hadsell's; was stood a drink to-day by Albano Rodriguez; in short, there is scarce a person advertised in that paper but I know him, and I may add scarce a person in Monterey but is there advertised. The paper is the marrow of the place. Its bones — pooh, I am tired of writing so sillily.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Monterey, December 1879.*]

To-day, my dear Colvin, I send you the first part of the *Amateur Emigrant*, 71 pp., by far the longest and the best of the whole. It is not a monument of eloquence; indeed, I have sought to be prosaic in view of the nature of the subject; but I almost think it is interesting.

Whatever is done about any book publication, two 245 things remember: I must keep a royalty; and, second, I must have all my books advertised, in the French manner, on the leaf opposite the title. I know from my own experience how much good this does an author with book *buyers*.

The entire *A. E.* will be a little longer than the two others, but not very much. Here and there, I fancy, you will laugh as you read it; but it seems to me rather a *clever* book than anything else: the book of a man, that is, who has paid a great deal of attention to contemporary life, and not through the newspapers.

I have never seen my *Burns!* the darling of my heart! I await your promised letter. Papers, magazines, articles by friends; reviews of myself, all would be very welcome. I am reporter for the Monterey Californian, at a salary of two dollars a week! *Comment trouvez-vous ça?* I am also in a conspiracy with the American editor, a French restaurant-man, and an Italian fisherman against the Padre. The enclosed poster is my last literary appearance. It was put up to the number of 200 exemplaires at the witching hour; and they were almost all destroyed by eight in the morning. But I think the nickname will stick. *Dos Reales; deux réaux*; two bits; twenty-five cents; about a shilling; but in practice it is worth from ninepence to threepence: thus two glasses of beer would cost two bits. The Italian fisherman, an old Garibaldian, is a splendid fellow.

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

The following is in acknowledgment of Mr. Gosse's volume called *New Poems*: —

Monterey, Dec. 8, 1879.

MY DEAR WEG, — I received your book last night as I lay abed with a pleurisy, the result, I fear, of overwork, gradual decline of appetite, etc. You know what a wooden-hearted curmudgeon I am about contemporary 246 verse. I like none of it, except some of my own. (I look back on that sentence with pleasure; it comes from an honest heart.) Hence you will be kind enough to take this from me in a kindly spirit; the piece "To my daughter" is delicious. And yet even here I am going to pick holes. I am a *beastly* curmudgeon. It is the last verse. "Newly budded" is off the venue; and haven't you gone ahead to make a poetry daybreak instead of sticking to your muttons, and comparing with the mysterious light of stars the plain, friendly, perspicuous, human day? But this is to be a beast. The little poem is eminently pleasant, human, and original.

I have read nearly the whole volume, and shall read it nearly all over again; you have no rivals!

Bancroft's *History of the United States*, even in a centenary edition, is essentially heavy fare; a little goes a long way; I respect Bancroft, but I do not love him; he has moments when he feels himself inspired to open up his improvisations upon universal history and the designs of God; but I flatter myself I am more nearly acquainted with the latter than Mr. Bancroft. A man, in the words of my Plymouth Brother, "who knows the Lord," must needs, from time to time, write less emphatically. It is a fetter dance to the music of minute guns — not at sea, but in a region not a thousand miles from the Sahara. Still, I am half-way through volume three, and shall count myself unworthy of the name of an Englishman if I do not see the back of volume six. The countryman of Livingstone, Burton, Speke, Drake, Cook, etc.!

I have been sweated not only out of my pleuritic fever, but out of all my eating cares, and the better part of my brains (strange coincidence!), by aconite. I have that peculiar and delicious sense of being born again in an expurgated edition which belongs to convalescence. It will not be for long; I hear the breakers roar; I shall be steering head first for another rapid before many days; *nitor aquis*, said a certain Eton boy, translating for his 247 sins a part of the *Inland Voyage* into Latin elegiacs; and from the hour I saw it, or rather a friend of mine, the admirable Jenkin, saw and recognised its absurd appropriateness, I took it for my device in life. I am going for thirty now; and unless I can snatch a little rest before long, I have, I may tell you in confidence, no hope of seeing thirty-one. My health began to break last winter, and has given me but fitful times since then. This pleurisy, though but a slight affair in itself, was a huge disappointment to me, and marked an epoch. To start a pleurisy about nothing, while leading a dull, regular life in a mild climate, was not my habit in past days; and it is six years, all but a few months, since I was obliged to spend twenty-four hours in bed. I may be wrong, but if the niting is to continue, I believe I must go. It is a pity in one sense, for I believe the class of work I *might* yet give out is better and more real and solid than people fancy. But death is no bad friend; a few aches and gasps, and we are done; like the truant child, I am beginning to grow weary and timid in this big jostling city, and could run to my nurse, even although she should have to whip me before putting me to bed.

Will you kiss your little daughter from me, and tell her that her father has written a delightful poem about her? Remember me, please, to Mrs. Gosse, to Middlemore, to whom some of these days I will write, to — — , to — — , yes, to — — , and to — — . I know you will gnash your teeth at some of these; wicked, grim, catlike old poet. If I were God, I would sort you — as we say in Scotland. — Your sincere friend,

R. L. S.

"Too young to be our child": blooming good.

To Sidney Colvin

Monterey [*December 1879*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I have been down with pleurisy but now convalesce; it was a slight attack, but I had a 248 hot fever; pulse 150; and the thing reminds me of my weakness. These miseries tell on me cruelly. But things are not so hopeless as they might be so I am far from despair. Besides I think I may say I have some courage for life.

But now look here:

Fables and Tales

Story of a Lie	100 pp. like the Donkey.
Providence and the Guitar	32
Will o' the Mill	45
A Lodging for the Night	40 (about)
Sieur de Malétroit's Door	42
—	—
say 280	pp. in all.

Here is my scheme. Henley already proposed that Caldecott should illustrate *Will o' the Mill*. The *Guitar* is still more suited to him; he should make delicious things for that. And though the *Lie* is not much in the way for pictures, I should like to see my dear Admiral in the flesh. I love the Admiral; I give my head, that man's alive. As for the other two they need not be illustrated at all unless he likes.

Is this a dream altogether? I would if necessary ask nothing down for the stories, and only a small royalty but to begin *from the first copy sold*.

I hate myself for being always on business. But I cannot help my fears and anxieties about money; even if all came well, it would be many a long day before we could afford to leave this coast. Is it true that the *Donkey* is in a second edition? That should bring some money, too, ere long, though not much I dare say. You will see the *Guitar* is made for Caldecott; moreover it's a little thing I like. I am no lover of either of the things in Temple Bar; but they will make up the volume, and perhaps others may like them better than I do. They say republished stories do not sell. Well, that is why I 249 am in a hurry to get this out. The public must be educated to buy mine or I shall never make a cent. I have heaps of short stories in view. The next volume will probably be called *Stories* or A *Story-Book*, and contain quite a different lot: *The Pavilion on the Links*: *Professor Rensselaer*: *The Dead Man's Letter*: *The Wild Man of the Woods*: *The Devil on Cramond Sands*. They would all be carpentry stories; pretty grim for the most part; but of course that's all in the air as yet. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

Monterey, December 11th, 1879.

MY DEAR HENLEY, — Many, many thanks for your long letter. And now to rectifications: —

1. You are wrong about the *Lie*, from choosing a wrong standard. Compare it with my former stories, not with Scott, or Fielding, or Balzac, or Charles Reade, or even Wilkie Collins; and where will you find anything half or a tenth part as good as the Admiral, or even Dick, or even the Squire, or even Esther. If you had thought of that, you would have complimented me for advance. But you were not quite sincere with yourself: you were seeking arguments to make me devote myself to plays, unbeknown, of course, to yourself.

2. Plays, dear boy, are madness for me just now. The best play is hopeless before six months, and more likely eighteen for outsiders like you and me. And understand me, I have to get money *soon*, or it has no further interest for me; I am nearly through my capital; with what pluck I can muster against great anxieties and in a very shattered state of health, I am trying to do things that will bring in money soon; and I could not, if I were not mad, step out of my way to work at what might perhaps bring me in more but months ahead. Journalism, you know well, is not my forte; yet if I could only get 250 a roving commission from a paper, I should leap at it and send them goodish (no more than that) goodish stuff.

As for my poor literature, dear Henley, you must expect for a time to find it worse and worse. Perhaps, if God favours me a little at last, it will pick up again. Now I am fighting with both hands, a hard battle, and my work, while it will be as good as I can make it, will probably be worth twopence. If you despised the *Donkey*, dear boy, you should have told me so at the time, not reserved it for a sudden revelation just now when I am down in health, wealth, and fortune. But I am glad you have said so at last. Never, please, delay such confidences any more. If they come quickly, they are a help; if they come after long silence, they feel almost like a taunt.

Now, to read all this, any one would think you had written unkindly, which is not so, as God who made us knows. But I wished to put myself right ere I went on to state myself. Nothing has come but the volume of Labiche; the *Burns* I have now given up; the P.O. authorities plainly regard it as contraband; make no further efforts in that direction. But, please, if anything else of mine appears, *see that my people have a copy*. I hoped and supposed my own copy would go as usual to the old address, and, let me use Scotch, I was fair affrontit when I found this had not been done.

You have not told me how you are and I heard you had not been well. Please remedy this.

The end of life? Yes, Henley, I can tell you what that is. How old are all truths, and yet how far from commonplace; old, strange, and inexplicable, like the Sphinx. So I learn day by day the value and high doctrinality of suffering. Let me suffer always; not more than I am able to bear, for that makes a man mad, as hunger drives the wolf to sally from the forest; but still to suffer some, and never to sink up to my eyes in comfort and grow dead in virtues and respectability. I am a bad man by nature, I suppose; but I cannot be good without 251 suffering a little. And the end of life, you will ask? The pleasurable death of self: a thing not to be attained, because it is a thing belonging to Heaven. All this apropos of that good, weak, feverish, fine spirit, — — — — . We have traits in common; we have almost the same strength and weakness intermingled; and if I had not come through a very hot crucible, I should be just as feverish. My sufferings have been healthier than his; mine have been always a choice, where a man could be manly; his have been so too, if he knew it, but were not so upon the face; hence a morbid strain, which his wounded vanity has helped to embitter.

I wonder why I scratch every one to-day. And I believe it is because I am conscious of so much truth in your strictures on my damned stuff. I don't care; there is something in me worth saying, though I can't find what it is just yet; and ere I die, if I do not die too fast, I shall write something worth the boards, which with scarce an exception I have not yet done. At the same time, dear boy, in a matter of vastly more importance than Opera Omnia Ludovici Stevenson, I mean my life, I have not been a perfect cad; God help me to be less and less so as the days go on.

The *Emigrant* is not good, and will never do for P.M.G., though it must have a kind of rude interest.

R. L. S.

I am now quite an American — yellow envelopes.

To Sidney Colvin

608 Bush Street, San Francisco [*December 26, 1879*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am now writing to you in a café waiting for some music to begin. For four days I have spoken to no one but to my landlady or landlord or to restaurant waiters. This is not a gay way to pass Christmas, is it? and I must own the guts are a little knocked 252 out of me. If I could work, I could worry through better. But I have no style at command for the moment, with the second part of the *Emigrant*, the last of the novel, the essay on Thoreau, and God knows all, waiting for me. But I trust something can be done with the first part, or, by God, I'll starve here....

O Colvin, you don't know how much good I have done myself. I feared to think this out by myself. I have made a base use of you, and it comes out so much better than I had dreamed. But I have to stick to work now; and here's December gone pretty near useless. But, Lord love you, October and November saw a great harvest. It might have affected the price of paper on the Pacific coast. As for ink, they haven't any, not what I call ink; only stuff to write cookery-books with, or the works of Hayley, or the pallid perambulations of the — I can find nobody to beat Hayley. I like good, knock-me-down black-strap to write with; that makes a mark and done with it. — By the way, I have tried to read the *Spectator*, which they all say I imitate, and — it's very wrong of me, I know — but I can't. It's all very fine, you know, and all that, but it's vapid. They have just played the overture to *Norma*, and I know it's a good one, for I bitterly wanted the opera to go on; I had just got thoroughly interested — and then no curtain to rise.

I have written myself into a kind of spirits, bless your dear heart, by your leave. But this is wild work for me, nearly nine and me not back! What will Mrs. Carson think of me! Quite a night-hawk, I do declare. You are the worst correspondent in the world — no, not that, Henley is that — well, I don't know, I leave the pair of you to him that made you — surely with small attention. But here's my service, and I'll away home to my den O! much the better for this crack, Professor Colvin.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

608 Bush Street, San Francisco [*January 10, 1880*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — This is a circular letter to tell my estate fully. You have no right to it, being the worst of correspondents; but I wish to efface the impression of my last, so to you it goes.

Any time between eight and half-past nine in the morning, a slender gentleman in an ulster, with a volume buttoned into the breast of it, may be observed leaving No. 608 Bush and descending Powell with an active step. The gentleman is R. L. S.; the volume relates to Benjamin Franklin, on whom he meditates one of his charming essays. He descends Powell, crosses Market, and descends in Sixth on a branch of the original Pine Street Coffee House, no less; I believe he would be capable of going to the original itself, if he could only find it. In the branch he seats himself at a table covered with wax-cloth, and a pampered menial, of High-Dutch extraction and, indeed, as yet only partially extracted, lays before him a cup of coffee, a roll and a pat of butter, all, to quote the deity, very good. A while ago and R. L. S. used to find the supply of butter insufficient; but he has now learned the art to exactitude, and butter and roll expire at the same moment. For this refection he pays ten cents, or five pence sterling (£0, 0s. 5d.).

Half an hour later, the inhabitants of Bush Street observe the same slender gentleman armed, like George Washington, with his little hatchet, splitting, kindling, and breaking coal for his fire. He does this quasi-publicly upon the window-sill; but this is not to be attributed to any love of notoriety, though he is indeed vain of his prowess with the hatchet (which he persists in calling an axe), and daily surprised at the perpetuation of his fingers. The reason is this: that the sill is a strong, supporting 254 beam, and that blows of the same emphasis in other parts of his room might knock the entire shanty into hell. Thenceforth, for from three to four hours, he is engaged darkly with an ink bottle. Yet he is not blacking his boots, for the only pair that he possesses are innocent of lustre and wear the natural hue of the material turned up with caked and venerable slush. The youngest child of his landlady remarks several times a day, as this strange occupant enters or quits the house, "Dere's de author." Can it be that this bright-haired innocent has found the true clue to the mystery? The being in question is, at least, poor enough to belong to that honourable craft.

His next appearance is at the restaurant of one Donadieu, in Bush Street, between Dupont and Kearney, where a copious meal, half a bottle of wine, coffee and brandy may be procured for the sum of four bits, *alias* fifty cents, £0, 2s. 2d. sterling. The wine is put down in a whole bottleful, and it is strange and painful to observe the greed with which the gentleman in question seeks to secure the last drop of his allotted half, and the scrupulousness with which he seeks to avoid taking the first drop of the other. This is partly explained by the fact that if he were to go over the mark — bang would go a tenpence. He is again armed with a book, but his best friends will learn with pain that he seems at this hour to have deserted the more serious studies of the morning. When last observed, he was studying with apparent zest the exploits of one Rocambole by the late Viscomte Ponson du Terrail. This work, originally of prodigious dimensions, he had cut into liths or thicknesses apparently for convenience of carriage.

Then the being walks, where is not certain. But by about half-past four, a light beams from the windows of 608 Bush, and he may be observed sometimes engaged in correspondence, sometimes once again plunged in the mysterious rites of the forenoon. About six he returns to the Branch Original, where he once more imbrues himself 255 to the worth of fivepence in coffee and roll. The evening is devoted to writing and reading, and by eleven or half-past darkness closes over this weird and truculent existence.

As for coin, you see I don't spend much, only you and Henley both seem to think my work rather bosh nowadays, and I do want to make as much as I was making, that is £200; if I can do that, I can swim: last year with my ill health I touched only £109; that would not do, I could not fight it through on that; but on £200, as I say, I am good for the world, and can even in this quiet way save a little, and that I must do. The worst is my health; it is suspected I had an ague chill yesterday; I shall know by to-morrow, and you know if I am to be laid down with ague the game is pretty well lost. But I don't know; I managed to write a good deal down in Monterey, when I was pretty sickly most of the time, and, by God, I'll try, ague and all. I have to ask you frankly, when you write, to give me any good news you can, and chat a little, but *just in the meantime*, give me no bad. If I could get *Thoreau*, *Emigrant* and *Vendetta* all finished and out of my hand, I should feel like a man who had made half a year's income in a half year; but until the two last are *finished*, you see, they don't fairly count.

I am afraid I bore you sadly with this perpetual talk about my affairs; I will try and stow it; but you see, it touches me nearly. I'm the miser in earnest now: last night, when I felt so ill, the supposed ague chill, it seemed strange not to be able to afford a drink. I would have walked half a mile, tired as I felt, for a brandy and soda. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

608 Bush Street, San Francisco, January 1880.

MY DEAR HENLEY, — You have got a letter ahead of me, owing to the Alpine accumulation of ill news I had 256 to stagger under. I will stand no complaints of my correspondence from England, I having written near half as many letters again as I have received.

Do not damp me about my work; *qu'elle soit bonne ou mauvaise*, it has to be done. You know the wolf is at the door, and I have been seriously ill. I am now at Thoreau. I almost blame myself for persevering in anything so difficult under the circumstances: but it may set me up again in style, which is the great point. I have now £80 in the world and two houses to keep up for an indefinite period. It is odd to be on so strict a regimen; it is a week for instance since I have bought myself a drink, and unless times change, I do not suppose I shall ever buy myself another. The health improves. The Pied Piper is an idea; it shall have my thoughts, and so shall you. The character of the P. P. would be highly comic, I seem to see. Had you looked at the *Pavilion,* I do not think you would have sent it to Stephen; 'tis a mere story, and has no higher pretension: Dibbs is its name, I wish it was its nature also. The *Vendetta,* at which you ignorantly puff out your lips, is a real novel, though not a good one. As soon as I have found strength to finish the *Emigrant,* I shall also finish the *Vend.* and draw a breath — I wish I could say, "and draw a cheque." My spirits have risen *contra fortunam*; I will fight this out, and conquer. You are all anxious to have me home in a hurry. There are two or three objections to that; but I shall instruct you more at large when I have time, for to-day I am hunted, having a pile of letters before me. Yet it is already drawing into dusk. — Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

The Dook de Karneel (= Cornhill) and Marky de Stephen is of course Mr. Leslie Stephen. The "blood and thunder" is *The Pavilion on the Links. Hester Noble* and *Don Juan* were the titles of two plays planned and begun with W. E. Henley the previous 257 winter. They were never finished. The French novels mentioned are by Joseph Méry. The *Dialogue on Character and Destiny* still exists in a fragmentary condition. George the Pieman is a character in *Deacon Brodie.*

608 Bush Street, San Francisco, January 23rd, 1880.

MY DEAR HENLEY, — That was good news. The Dook de Karneel, K.C.B., taken a blood and thunder! Well, I *thought* it had points; now, I know it. And I'm to see a proof once more! O Glory Hallelujah, how beautiful is proof, And how distressed that author man who dwells too far aloof. His favourite words he always finds his friends misunderstand, With oaths, he reads his articles, moist brow and clenchéd hand. Impromtoo. The last line first-rate. When may I hope to see the *Deacon*? I pine for the *Deacon,* for proofs of the *Pavilion* — O and for a categorical confession from you that the second edition of the *Donkey* was a false alarm, which I conclude from hearing no more.

I have twice written to the Marky de Stephen; each time with one of my bright papers, so I should hear from him soon. How are Baron Payn, Sir Robert de Bob, and other members of the Aristocracy?

Here's breid an' wine an' kebbuck an' canty cracks at e'en
To the folks that mind o' me when I'm awa',
But them that hae forgot me, O ne'er to be forgi'en —
They may a' gae tapsalteerie in a raw!

I have mighty little to say, dear boy, to seem worth 2½d. I have thought of the Piper, but he does not seem to come as yet; I get him too metaphysical. I shall make a shot for *Hester*, as soon as I have finished the *Emigrant* and the *Vendetta* and perhaps my *Dialogue on Character and Destiny*. Hester and Don Juan are the two that smile on me; but I will touch nothing in the shape of a play until I have made my year's income sure. You understand, and you see that I am right?

I have read *M. Auguste* and the *Crime inconnu*, being now abonné to a library, and found them very readable, highly ingenious, and so French that I could not keep my gravity. The *Damned Ones of the Indies* now occupy my attention; I have myself already damned them repeatedly. I am, as you know, the original person the wheels of whose chariot tarried; but though I am so slow, I am rootedly tenacious. Do not despair. *Hester* and the *Don* are sworn in my soul; and they shall be.

Is there no *news*? Real news, newsy news. Heavenly blue, this is strange. Remember me to the lady of the Cawstle, my toolip, and ever was,

George the Pieman.

To Sidney Colvin

With reference to the following, it must be explained that the first draft of the first part of the *Amateur Emigrant*, when it reached me about Christmas, had seemed to me, compared to his previous travel papers, a somewhat wordy and spiritless record of squalid experiences, little likely to advance his still only half-established reputation; and I had written to him to that effect, inopportunely enough, with a fuller measure even than usual of the frankness which always marked our intercourse.

608 Bush Street, San Francisco, California [*January 1880*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I received this morning your long letter from Paris. Well, God's will be done; if it's dull, it's dull; it was a fair fight, and it's lost, and there's an end. But, fortunately, dulness is not a fault the public hates; perhaps they may like this vein of dulness. If they don't, damn them, we'll try them with another. I sat down on the back of your letter, and wrote twelve Cornhill pages this day as ever was of that same despised *Emigrant*; so you see my moral courage has not gone down with my intellect. Only, frankly, Colvin, do you think it a good plan to be so eminently descriptive, and even eloquent in dispraise? You rolled such a lot of 259 polysyllables over me that a better man than I might have been disheartened. — However, I was not, as you see, and am not. The *Emigrant* shall be finished and leave in the course of next week. And then, I'll stick to stories. I am not frightened. I know my mind is changing; I have been telling you so for long; and I suppose I am fumbling for the new vein. Well, I'll find it.

The *Vendetta* you will not much like, I dare say: and that must be finished next; but I'll knock you with *The Forest State: A Romance*.

I'm vexed about my letters; I know it is painful to get these unsatisfactory things; but at least I have written often enough. And not one soul ever gives me any *news,* about people or things; everybody writes me sermons; it's good for me, but hardly the food necessary for a man who lives all alone on forty-five cents a day, and sometimes less, with quantities of hard work and many heavy thoughts. If one of you could write me a letter with a jest in it, a letter like what is written to real people in this world — I am still flesh and blood — I should enjoy it. Simpson did, the other day, and it did me as much good as a bottle of wine. A lonely man gets to feel like a pariah after awhile — or no, not that, but like a saint and martyr, or a kind of macerated clergyman with pebbles in his boots, a pillared Simeon, I'm damned if I know what, but, man alive, I want gossip.

My health is better, my spirits steadier, I am not the least cast down. If the *Emigrant* was a failure, the *Pavilion*, by your leave, was not: it was a story quite adequately and rightly done, I contend; and when I find Stephen, for whom certainly I did not mean it, taking it in, I am better pleased with it than before. I know I shall do better work than ever I have done before; but, mind you, it will not be like it. My sympathies and interests are changed. There shall be no more books of travel for me. I care for nothing but the moral and the dramatic, not a jot for the picturesque or the beautiful, 260 other than about people. It bored me hellishly to write the *Emigrant*; well, it's going to bore others to read it; that's only fair.

I should also write to others; but indeed I am jack-tired, and must go to bed to a French novel to compose myself for slumber. — Ever your affectionate friend,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

608 Bush Street, San Francisco, California, Jan. 23, 1880.

MY DEAR AND KIND WEG, — It was a lesson in philosophy that would have moved a bear, to receive your letter in my present temper. For I am now well and well at my ease, both by comparison. First, my health has turned a corner; it was not consumption this time, though consumption it has to be some time, as all my kind friends sing to me, day in, day out. Consumption! how I hate that word; yet it can sound innocent, as, *e.g.*, consumption of military stores. What was wrong with me, apart from colds and little pleuritic flea-bites, was a lingering malaria; and that is now greatly overcome, I eat once more, which is a great amusement and, they say, good for the health. Second, many of the thunderclouds that were overhanging me when last I wrote, have silently stolen away like Longfellow's Arabs: and I am now engaged to be married to the woman whom I have loved for three years and a half. I do not yet know when the marriage can come off; for there are many reasons for delay. But as few people before marriage have known each other so long or made more trials of each other's tenderness and constancy, I permit myself to hope some quiet at the end of all. At least I will boast myself so far; I do not think many wives are better loved than mine will be. Third and last, in the order of what has changed my feelings, my people have cast 261 me off, and so that thundercloud, as you may almost say, has overblown. You know more than most people whether or not I loved my father. These things are sad; nor can any man forgive himself for bringing them about; yet they are easier to meet in fact than by anticipation. I almost trembled whether I was doing right, until I was fairly summoned; then, when I found that I was not shaken one jot, that I could grieve, that I could sharply blame myself, for the past, and yet never hesitate one second as to my conduct in the future, I believed my cause was just and I leave it with the Lord. I certainly look for no reward, nor any abiding city either here or hereafter, but I please myself with hoping that my father will not always think so badly of my conduct nor so very slightingly of my affection as he does at present.

You may now understand that the quiet economical citizen of San Francisco who now addresses you, a bonhomme given to cheap living, early to bed though scarce 262 early to rise in proportion (que diable! let us have style, anyway), busied with his little bits of books and essays and with a fair hope for the future, is no longer the same desponding, invalid son of a doubt and an apprehension who last wrote to you from Monterey. I am none the less warmly obliged to you and Mrs. Gosse for your good words. I suppose that I am the devil (hearing it so often), but I am not ungrateful. Only please, Weg, do not talk of genius about me; I do not think I want for a certain talent, but I am heartily persuaded I have none of the other commodity; so let that stick to the wall: you only shame me by such friendly exaggerations.

When shall I be married? When shall I be able to return to England? When shall I join the good and blessed in a forced march upon the New Jerusalem? That is what I know not in any degree; some of them, let us hope, will come early, some after a judicious interval. I have three little strangers knocking at the door of Leslie Stephen: *The Pavilion on the Links*, a blood and thunder story, *accepted*; *Yoshida Torajiro*, a paper on a Japanese hero who will warm your blood, *postulant*; and *Henry David Thoreau*: *his character and opinions* — postulant also. I give you these hints knowing you to love the best literature, that you may keep an eye at the mast-head for these little tit-bits. Write again, and soon, and at greater length to your friend. — Your friend,

(signed) R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

608 Bush Street, San Francisco, Jan. 26, '80.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — I have to drop from a 50 cent to a 25 cent dinner; to-day begins my fall. That brings down my outlay in food and drink to 45 cents or 1s. 10½d. per day. How are the mighty fallen! Luckily, this is such a cheap place for food; I used to pay as much as that for my first breakfast in the Savile in the grand old palmy days of yore. I regret nothing, and do not even 263 dislike these straits, though the flesh will rebel on occasion. It is to-day bitter cold, after weeks of lovely warm weather, and I am all in a chitter. I am about to issue for my little shilling and halfpenny meal, taken in the middle of the day, the poor man's hour; and I shall eat and drink to your prosperity. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Professor Meiklejohn

One day at the Savile Club, Stevenson, hearing a certain laugh, cried out that he must know the laugher, who turned out to be a fellow-countryman, the late John Meiklejohn, the well-known educational authority and professor at St. Andrews University. Stevenson introduced himself, and the two became firm friends. Allusion was made a few pages back to a letter from Professor Meiklejohn about the *Burns* essay.

608 Bush Street, San Francisco, California, Feb. 1st, 1880.

MY DEAR MEIKLEJOHN, — You must think me a thankless fellow by this time; but if you knew how harassed and how sick I had been, and how I have twice begun to write to you already, you might condescend to forgive the puir gangrel body. To tell you what I have been doing, thinking, and coming through these six or seven months would exhilarate nobody: least of all me. *Infandum jubes*, so I hope you won't. I have done a great deal of work, but perhaps my health of mind and body should not let me expect much from what I have done. At least I have turned the corner; my feet are on the rock again, I believe, and I shall continue to pour forth pure and wholesome literature for the masses as per invoice.

I am glad you liked *Burns*; I think it is the best thing I ever did. Did not the national vanity exclaim? Do you know what Shairp thought? I think I let him down gently, did I not?

I have done a *Thoreau*, which I hope you may like, 264 though I have a feeling that perhaps it might be better. Please look out for a little paper called *Yoshida Torajiro*, which, I hope, will appear in Cornhill ere very long; the subject, at least, will interest you. I am to appear in the same magazine with a real "blood and bones in the name of God" story. Why Stephen took it, is to me a mystery; anyhow, it was fun to write, and if you can interest a person for an hour and a half, you have not been idle. When I suffer in mind, stories are my refuge; I take them like opium; and I consider one who writes them as a sort of doctor of the mind. And frankly, Meiklejohn, it is not Shakespeare we take to, when we are in a hot corner; nor, certainly, George Eliot — no, nor even Balzac. It is Charles Reade, or old Dumas, or the Arabian Nights, or the best of Walter Scott; it is stories we want, not the high poetic function which represents the world; we are then like the Asiatic with his improvisatore or the middle-agee with his trouvère. We want incident, interest, action: to the devil with your philosophy. When we are well again, and have an easy mind, we shall peruse your important work; but what we want now is a drug. So I, when I am ready to go beside myself, stick my head into a story-book, as the ostrich with her bush; let fate and fortune meantime belabour my posteriors at their will.

I have not seen the Spectator article; nobody sent it to me. If you had an old copy lying by you, you would be very good to despatch it to me. A little abuse from my grandmamma would do me good in health, if not in morals.

This is merely to shake hands with you and give you the top of the morning in 1880. But I look to be answered; and then I shall promise to answer in return. For I am now, so far as that can be in this world, my own man again, and when I have heard from you, I shall be able to write more naturally and at length.

At least, my dear Meiklejohn, I hope you will believe 265 in the sincerely warm and friendly regard in which I hold you, and the pleasure with which I look forward, not only to hearing from you shortly, but to seeing you again in the flesh with another good luncheon and good talk. Tell me when you don't like my work. — Your friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

The essays here mentioned on Benjamin Franklin and William Penn were projects long cherished but in the end abandoned: *The Forest State* came to maturity three years later as *Prince Otto*.

608 Bush Street, San Francisco, Cal., February 1880.

MY DEAR HENLEY, — Before my work or anything I sit down to answer your long and kind letter.

I am well, cheerful, busy, hopeful; I cannot be knocked down; I do not mind about the *Emigrant*. I never thought it a masterpiece. It was written to sell, and I believe it will sell; and if it does not, the next will. You need not be uneasy about my work; I am only beginning to see my true method.

(1) As to *Studies*. There are two more already gone to Stephen. *Yoshida Torajiro*, which I think temperate and adequate; and *Thoreau*, which will want a really Balzacian effort over the proofs. But I want

Benjamin Franklin and the Art of Virtue to follow; and perhaps also *William Penn*, but this last may be perhaps delayed for another volume — I think not, though. The *Studies* will be an intelligent volume, and in their latter numbers more like what I mean to be my style, or I mean what my style means to be, for I am passive. (2) The Essays. Good news indeed. I think *Ordered South* must be thrown in. It always swells the volume, and it will never find a more appropriate place. It was May 1874, Macmillan, I believe. (3) Plays. I did not understand you meant to try the draft. I shall make you a full scenario as 266 soon as the *Emigrant* is done. (4) *Emigrant.* He shall be sent off next week. (5) Stories. You need not be alarmed that I am going to imitate Meredith. You know I was a story-teller ingrain; did not that reassure you? The *Vendetta*, which falls next to be finished, is not entirely pleasant. But it has points. *The Forest State* or *The Greenwood State: A Romance*, is another pair of shoes. It is my old Semiramis, our half-seen Duke and Duchess, which suddenly sprang into sunshine clearness as a story the other day. The kind, happy *dénouement* is unfortunately absolutely undramatic, which will be our only trouble in quarrying out the play. I mean we shall quarry from it. *Characters* — Otto Frederick John, hereditary Prince of Grünwald; Amelia Seraphina, Princess; Conrad, Baron Gondremarck, Prime Minister; Cancellarius Greisengesang; Killian Gottesacker, Steward of the River Farm; Ottilie, his daughter; the Countess von Rosen. Seven in all. A brave story, I swear; and a brave play too, if we can find the trick to make the end. The play, I fear, will have to end darkly, and that spoils the quality as I now see it of a kind of crockery, eighteenth century, high-life-below-stairs life, breaking up like ice in spring before the nature and the certain modicum of manhood of my poor, clever, feather-headed Prince, whom I love already. I see Seraphina too. Gondremarck is not quite so clear. The Countess von Rosen, I have; I'll never tell you who she is; it's a secret; but I have known the countess; well, I will tell you; it's my old Russian friend, Madame Zassetsky. Certain scenes are, in conception, the best I have ever made, except for *Hester Noble*. Those at the end, Von Rosen and the Princess, the Prince and Princess, and the Princess and Gondremarck, as I now see them from here, should be nuts, Henley, nuts. It irks me not to go to them straight. But the *Emigrant* stops the way; then a reassured scenario for *Hester*; then the *Vendetta*; then two (or three) essays — *Benjamin Franklin*, *Thoughts on Literature* 267 *as an Art*, *Dialogue on Character and Destiny between two Puppets*, *The Human Compromise*; and then, at length — come to me, my Prince. O Lord, it's going to be courtly! And there is not an ugly person nor an ugly scene in it. The *Slate* both Fanny and I have damned utterly; it is too morbid, ugly, and unkind; better starvation.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

I had written proposing that a collected volume of his short stories should be published with illustrations by Caldecott. At the end of this letter occurs his first allusion to his now famous *Requiem.*

[*608 Bush Street, San Francisco, February 1880.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I received a very nice letter from you with two enclosures. I am still unable to finish the *Emigrant*, although there are only some fifteen pages to do. The *Vendetta* is, I am afraid, scarce Fortnightly form, though after the *Pavilion* being taken by Stephen, I am truly at sea about all such matters. I dare say my *Prince of Grünewald* — the name still uncertain — would be good enough for anything if I could but get it done: I believe that to be a really good story. The *Vendetta* is somewhat cheap in motive; very rum and unlike the present kind of novels both for good and evil in writing; and on the whole, only remarkable for the heroine's character, and that I believe to be in it.

I am not well at all. But hope to be better. You know I have been hawked to death these last months. And then I lived too low, I fear; and any way I have got pretty low and out at elbows in health. I wish I could say better, — but I cannot. With a constitution like mine, you never know — to-morrow I may be carrying topgallant sails again: but just at present I am scraping along with a jurymast and a kind of amateur rudder. Truly I have some misery, as things go; but these things 268 are mere detail. However, I do not want to *crever*, *claquer*, and cave in just when I have a chance of some happiness; nor do I mean to. All the same, I am more and more in a difficulty how to move every day. What a day or an hour might bring forth, God forbid that I should prophesy. Certainly, do what you like about the stories; *Will o' the Mill*, or not. It will be Caldecott's book or nobody's. I am glad you liked the *Guitar*: I always did: and I think C. could make lovely pikters to it: it almost seems as if I must have written it for him express.

I have already been a visitor at the Club for a fortnight; but that's over, and I don't much care to renew the period. I want to be married, not to belong to all the Clubs in Christendie.... I half think of writing up the Sand-lot agitation for Morley; it is a curious business; were I stronger, I should try to sugar in with some of the leaders: a chield amang 'em takin' notes; one, who kept a brothel, I reckon, before she started socialist, particularly interests me. If I am right as to her early industry, you know she would be sure to adore me. I have been all my days a dead hand at a harridan, I never saw the one yet that could resist me. When I die of consumption, you can put that upon my tomb.

Sketch of my tomb follows: —

Robert Louis Stevenson
born 1850, of a family of engineers,
died ...
“Nitor aquis.”
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

You, who pass this grave, put aside hatred; love kindness; be all services remembered in your heart and all 269 offences pardoned; and as you go down again among the living, let this be your question: can I make some one happier this day before I lie down to sleep? Thus the dead man speaks to you from the dust: you will hear no more from him.

Who knows, Colvin, but I may thus be of more use when I am buried than ever when I was alive? The more I think of it, the more earnestly do I desire this. I may perhaps try to write it better some day; but that is what I want in sense. The verses are from a beayootiful poem by me.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

608 Bush Street, San Francisco [*March 1880*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — My landlord and landlady’s little four-year-old child is dying in the house; and O, what he has suffered! It has really affected my health. O never, never any family for me! I am cured of that.

I have taken a long holiday — have not worked for three days, and will not for a week; for I was really weary. Excuse this scratch; for the child weighs on me, dear Colvin. I did all I could to help; but all seems little, to the point of crime, when one of these poor innocents lies in such misery. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To J. W. Ferrier

In the interval between this letter and the last, the writer had been down with an acute and dangerous illness. *Forester*, here mentioned, was an autobiographical paper by J. W. F. on his own boyhood.

P.O. San Francisco, April 8th, 1880.

MY DEAR FERRIER, — Many thanks for your letter, and the instalment of *Forester* which accompanied it, and 270 which I read with amusement and pleasure. I fear Somerset’s letter must wait; for my dear boy, I have been very nearly on a longer voyage than usual; I am fresh from giving Charon a quid instead of an obolus: but he, having accepted the payment, scorned me, and I had to make the best of my way backward through the mallow-wood, with nothing to show for this displacement but the fatigue of the journey. As soon as I feel fit, you shall have the letter, trust me. But just now even a note such as I am now writing takes it out of me. I have, truly, been very sick; I fear I am a vain man, for I thought it a pity I should die. I could not help thinking that a good many would be disappointed; but for myself, although I still think life a business full of agreeable features I was not entirely unwilling to give it up. It is so difficult to behave well; and in that matter, I get more dissatisfied with myself, because more exigent, every day. I shall be pleased to hear again from you soon. I shall be married early in May and then go to the mountains, a very withered bridegroom. I think your MS. Bible, if that were a specimen, would be a credit to humanity. Between whiles, collect such thoughts both from yourself and others: I somehow believe every man should leave a Bible behind him, — if he is unable to leave a jest book. I feel fit to leave nothing but my benediction. It is a strange thing how, do what you will, nothing seems accomplished. I feel as far from having paid humanity my board and lodging as I did six years ago when I was sick at Mentone. But I dare say the devil would keep telling me so, if I had moved mountains, and at least I have been very happy on many different occasions, and that is always something. I can read nothing, write nothing; but a little while ago and I could eat nothing either; but now that is changed. This is a long letter for me; rub your hands, boy, for 'tis an honour. — Yours, from Charon's strand,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

A poetical counterpart to this letter will be found in the piece beginning 'Not yet, my soul, these friendly fields desert,' which was composed at the same time and is printed in *Underwoods*.

San Francisco, April 16 .

MY DEAR GOSSE, — You have not answered my last; and I know you will repent when you hear how near I have been to another world. For about six weeks I have been in utter doubt; it was a toss-up for life or death all that time; but I won the toss, sir, and Hades went off once more discomfited. This is not the first time, nor will it be the last, that I have a friendly game with that gentleman. I know he will end by cleaning me out; but the rogue is insidious, and the habit of that sort of gambling seems to be a part of my nature; it was, I suspect, too much indulged in youth; break your children of this tendency, my dear Gosse, from the first. It is, when once formed, a habit more fatal than opium — I speak, as St. Paul says, like a fool. I have been very very sick; on the verge of a galloping consumption, cold sweats, prostrating attacks of cough, sinking fits in which I lost the power of speech, fever, and all the ugliest circumstances of the disease; and I have cause to bless God, my wife that is to be, and one

Dr. Bamford (a name the Muse repels), that I have come out of all this, and got my feet once more upon a little hilltop, with a fair prospect of life and some new desire of living. Yet I did not wish to die, neither; only I felt unable to go on farther with that rough horseplay of human life: a man must be pretty well to take the business in good part. Yet I felt all the time that I had done nothing to entitle me to an honourable discharge; that I had taken up many obligations and begun many friendships which I had no right to put away from me; and that for me to die was to play the cur and slinking sybarite, and desert the colours on the eve of the decisive fight. Of course I 272 have done no work for I do not know how long; and here you can triumph. I have been reduced to writing verses for amusement. A fact. The whirligig of time brings in its revenges, after all. But I'll have them buried with me, I think, for I have not the heart to burn them while I live. Do write. I shall go to the mountains as soon as the weather clears; on the way thither, I marry myself; then I set up my family altar among the pinewoods, 3,000 feet, sir, from the disputatious sea. — I am, dear Weg, most truly yours,

R. L. S.

To Dr. W. Bamford

With a copy of *Travels with a Donkey*.

[*San Francisco, April 1880.*]

MY DEAR SIR, — Will you let me offer you this little book? If I had anything better, it should be yours. May you not dislike it, for it will be your own handiwork if there are other fruits from the same tree! But for your kindness and skill, this would have been my last book, and now I am in hopes that it will be neither my last nor my best.

You doctors have a serious responsibility. You recall a man from the gates of death, you give him health and strength once more to use or to abuse. I hope I shall feel your responsibility added to my own, and seek in the future to make a better profit of the life you have renewed to me. — I am, my dear sir, gratefully yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*San Francisco, April 1880.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — You must be sick indeed of my demand for books, for you have seemingly not yet sent me one. Still, I live on promises: waiting for Penn, for 273 H. James's *Hawthorne*, for my *Burns*, etc.; and now, to make matters worse, pending your Centuries, etc., I do earnestly desire the best book about mythology (if it be German, so much the worse; send a bunctionary along with it, and pray for me). This is why. If I recover, I feel called on to write a volume of gods and demi-gods in exile: Pan, Jove, Cybele, Venus, Charon, etc.; and though I should like to take them very free, I should like to know a little about ‘em to begin with. For two days, till last night, I had no night sweats, and my cough is almost gone, and I digest well; so all looks hopeful. However, I was near the other side of Jordan. I send the proof of *Thoreau* to you, so that you may correct and fill up the quotation from Goethe. It is a pity I was ill, as, for matter, I think I prefer that to any of my essays except *Burns*; but the style, though quite manly, never attains any melody or lenity. So much for consumption: I begin to appreciate what the *Emigrant* must be. As soon as I have done the last few pages of the *Emigrant* they shall go to you. But when will that be? I know not quite yet — I have to be so careful. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*San Francisco, April 1880.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — My dear people telegraphed me in these words: “Count on 250 pounds annually.” You may imagine what a blessed business this was. And so now recover the sheets of the *Emigrant*, and post them registered to me. And now please give me all your venom against it; say your worst, and most incisively, for now it will be a help, and I’ll make it right or perish in the attempt. Now, do you understand why I protested against your depressing eloquence on the subject? When I *had* to go on any way, for dear life, I thought it a kind of pity and not much good to discourage me. Now all’s 274 changed. God only knows how much courage and suffering is buried in that MS. The second part was written in a circle of hell unknown to Dante — that of the penniless and dying author. For dying I was, although now saved. Another week, the doctor said, and I should have been past salvation. I think I shall always think of it as my best work. There is one page in Part II., about having got to shore, and sich, which must have cost me altogether six hours of work as miserable as ever I went through. I feel sick even to think of it. — Ever your friend,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*San Francisco, May 1880.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I received your letter and proof to-day, and was greatly delighted with the last.

I am now out of danger; in but a short while (*i.e.* as soon as the weather is settled), F. and I marry and go up to the hills to look for a place; “I to the hills will lift mine eyes, from whence doth come mine aid”: once the place found, the furniture will follow. There, sir, in, I hope, a ranche among the pine-trees and hard by a running brook, we are to fish, hunt, sketch, study Spanish, French, Latin, Euclid, and History; and, if possible, not quarrel. Far from man, sir, in the virgin forest. Thence, as my strength returns, you may expect works of genius. I always feel as if I must write a work of genius some time or other; and when is it more likely to come off, than just after I have paid a visit to Styx and go thence to the eternal mountains? Such a revolution in a man's affairs, as I have somewhere written, would set anybody singing. When we get installed, Lloyd and I are going to print my poetical works; so all those who have been poetically addressed shall receive copies of their addresses. They are, I believe, pretty correct literary exercises, or will be, with a few filings; but they are not remarkable 275 for white-hot vehemence of inspiration; tepid works! respectable versifications of very proper and even original sentiments: kind of Hayleyistic, I fear — but no, this is morbid self-depreciation. The family is all very shaky in health, but our motto is now *Al Monte*! in the words of Don Lope, in the play the sister and I are just beating through with two bad dictionaries and an insane grammar. I to the hills. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To C. W. Stoddard

This correspondent is the late Mr. Charles Warren Stoddard, author of *Summer Cruising in the South Seas*, etc., with whom Stevenson had made friends in the manner and amid the scenes faithfully described in *The Wrecker*, in the chapter called “Faces on the City Front.”

East Oakland, Cal., May 1880.

MY DEAR STODDARD, — I am guilty in thy sight and the sight of God. However, I swore a great oath that you should see some of my manuscript at last; and though I have long delayed to keep it, yet it was to be. You re-read your story and were disgusted; that is the cold fit following the hot. I don't say you did wrong to be disgusted, yet I am sure you did wrong to be disgusted altogether. There was, you may depend upon it, some reason for your previous vanity, as well as your present mortification. I shall hear you, years from now, timidly begin to retrim your feathers for a little self-laudation, and trot out this misdespised novelette as not the worst of your performances. I read the album extracts with sincere interest; but I regret that you spared to give the paper more development; and I conceive that you might do a great deal worse than expand each of its paragraphs into an essay or sketch, the excuse being in each case your personal intercourse; the bulk, when that would not be sufficient, to be made up from their own works and stories. Three at least — Menken, Yelverton, and Keeler — could not fail of a vivid human interest. Let me 276 press upon you this plan; should any document be wanted from Europe, let me offer my services to procure it. I am persuaded that there is stuff in the idea.

Are you coming over again to see me some day soon? I keep returning, and now hand over fist, from the realms of Hades; I saw that gentleman between the eyes, and fear him less after each visit. Only Charon, and his rough boatmanship, I somewhat fear.

I have a desire to write some verses for your album; so, if you will give me the entry among your gods, goddesses, and godlets, there will be nothing wanting but the Muse. I think of the verses like Mark Twain; sometimes I wish fulsomely to belaud you; sometimes to insult your city and fellow-citizens; sometimes to sit down quietly, with the slender reed, and troll a few staves of Panic ecstasy — but fy! fy! as my ancestors observed, the last is too easy for a man of my feet and inches.

At least, Stoddard, you now see that, although so costive, when I once begin I am a copious letter-writer. I thank you, and *au revoir*.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*San Francisco, May 1880.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — It is a long while since I have heard from you; nearly a month, I believe; and I begin to grow very uneasy. At first I was tempted to suppose that I had been myself to blame in some way; but now I have grown to fear lest some sickness or trouble among those whom you love may not be the impediment. I believe I shall soon hear; so I wait as best I can. I am, beyond a doubt, greatly stronger, and yet still useless for any work, and, I may say, for any pleasure. My affairs and the bad weather still keep me here unmarried; but not, I earnestly hope, for long. Whenever I get into the mountain, I trust I shall rapidly pick up. Until I get 277 away from these sea fogs and my imprisonment in the house, I do not hope to do much more than keep from active harm. My doctor took a desponding fit about me, and scared Fanny into blue fits; but I have talked her over again. It is the change I want, and the blessed sun, and a gentle air in which I can sit out and see the trees and running water: these mere defensive hygienics cannot advance one, though they may prevent evil. I do nothing now, but try to possess my soul in peace, and continue to possess my body on any terms.

Calistoga, Napa County, California. — All which is a fortnight old and not much to the point nowadays. Here we are, Fanny and I, and a certain hound, in a lovely valley under Mount Saint Helena, looking around, or rather wondering when we shall begin to look around, for a house of our own. I have received the first sheets of the *Amateur Emigrant*; not yet the second bunch, as announced. It is a pretty heavy, emphatic piece of pedantry; but I don’t care; the public, I verily believe, will like it. I have excised all you proposed and more on my own movement. But I have not yet been able to rewrite the two special pieces which, as you said, so badly wanted it; it is hard work to rewrite passages in proof; and the easiest work is still hard to me.

But I am certainly recovering fast; a married and convalescent being.

Received James's *Hawthorne*, on which I meditate a blast, Miss Bird, Dixon's *Penn*, a *wrong* Cornhill (like my luck) and *Coquelin*: for all which, and especially the last, I tender my best thanks. I have opened only James; it is very clever, very well written, and out of sight the most inside-out thing in the world; I have dug up the hatchet; a scalp shall flutter at my belt ere long. I think my new book should be good; it will contain our adventures for the summer, so far as these are worth narrating; and I have already a few pages of diary which should make up bright. I am going to repeat my old experiment, after buckling-to a while to write more 278 correctly, lie down and have a wallow. Whether I shall get any of my novels done this summer I do not know; I wish to finish the *Vendetta* first, for it really could not come after *Prince Otto*. Lewis Campbell has made some noble work in that Agamemnon; it surprised me. We hope to get a house at Silverado, a deserted mining-camp eight miles up the mountain, now solely inhabited by a mighty hunter answering to the name of Rufe Hansome, who slew last year a hundred and fifty deer. This is the motto I propose for the new volume: "*Vixerunt nonnulli in agris, delectati re sua familiari. His idem propositum fuit quod regibus, ut ne qua re egerent, ne cui parerent, libertate uterentur; cujus proprium est sic vivere ut velis.*" I always have a terror lest the wish should have been father to the translation, when I come to quote; but that seems too plain sailing. I should put *regibus* in capitals for the pleasantry's sake. We are in the Coast range, that being so much cheaper to reach; the family, I hope, will soon follow. Love to all. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

Engraisser, grow fat.

Pall Mall Gazette.

Here follows a long calculation of ways and means.

Addison's.

In reference to the father's estrangement at this time, Sir James Dewar, an old friend of the elder Stevenson, tells a story which would have touched R. L. S. infinitely had he heard it. Sir James (then Professor) Dewar and Mr. Thomas Stevenson were engaged together on some official scientific work near Duns in Berwickshire. "Spending the evening together," writes Sir James, "at an hotel in Berwick-on-Tweed, the two, after a long day's work, fell into close fireside talk over their toddy, and Mr. Stevenson opened his heart upon what was to him a very sore grievance. He spoke with anger and dismay of his son's journey and intentions, his desertion of the old firm, and taking to the devious and barren paths of literature. The Professor took up the cudgels in the son's defence, and at last, by way of ending the argument, half jocularly offered to wager that in ten years from that moment R. L. S. would be earning a bigger income than the old firm had ever commanded. To his surprise, the father became furious, and repulsed all attempts at reconciliation. But six and a half years later, Mr. Stevenson, broken in health, came to London to seek medical advice, and although so feeble that he had to be lifted out and into his cab, called at the Royal Institute to see the Professor. He said: “I am here to consult a doctor, but I couldna be in London without coming to shake your hand and confess that you were richt after a’ about Louis, and I was wrang.” The frail old frame shook with emotion, and he muttered, “I ken this is my last visit to the south.” A few weeks later he was dead.

VI

ALPINE WINTERS AND HIGHLAND SUMMERS

August 1880-October 1882

After spending the months of June and July 1880 in the rough Californian mountain quarters described in the *Silverado Squatters*, Stevenson took passage with his wife and young stepson from New York on the 7th of August, and arrived on the 17th at Liverpool, where his parents and I were waiting to meet him. Of her new family, the Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson brought thus strangely and from far into their midst made an immediate conquest. To her husband's especial happiness, there sprang up between her and his father the closest possible affection and confidence. Parents and friends — if it is permissible to one of the latter to say as much — rejoiced to recognise in Stevenson's wife a character as strong, interesting, and romantic almost as his own; an inseparable sharer of all his thoughts and staunch companion of all his adventures; the most open-hearted of friends to all who loved him; the most shrewd and stimulating critic of his work; and in sickness, despite her own precarious health, the most devoted and most efficient of nurses.

From Liverpool the Stevenson party went on to make a stay in Scotland, first at Edinburgh, and afterwards for a few weeks at Strathpeffer, resting at Blair Athol on the 280 way. It was now, in his thirtieth year, among the woods of Tummelside and under the shoulder of Ben Wyvis, that Stevenson acknowledged for the first time the full power and beauty of the Highland scenery, which in youth, with his longings fixed ever upon the South, he had been accustomed to think too bleak and desolate. In the history of the country and its clans, on the other hand, and especially of their political and social transformation during the eighteenth century, he had been always keenly interested. In conversations with Principal Tulloch at Strathpeffer this interest was now revived, and he resolved to attempt a book on the subject, his father undertaking to keep him supplied with books and authorities; for it had quickly become apparent that he could not winter in Scotland. The state of his health continued to be very threatening. He suffered from acute chronic catarrh, accompanied by disquieting lung symptoms and great weakness; and was told accordingly that he must go for the winter, and probably for several succeeding winters, to the mountain valley of Davos in Switzerland, which within the last few years had been coming into repute as a place of recovery, or at least of arrested mischief, for lung patients. Thither he and his wife and stepson travelled accordingly at the end of October. Nor must another member of the party be forgotten, a black thoroughbred Skye terrier, the gift of Sir Walter Simpson. This creature was named, after his giver, Walter — a name subsequently corrupted into Wattie, Woggie, Wogg, Woggin, Bogie, Bogue, and a number of other affectionate diminutives which will be found occurring often enough in the following pages. He was a remarkably pretty, engaging, excitable, ill-behaved little specimen of his race, the occasion of infinite anxiety and 281 laughing care to his devoted master and mistress until his death six years later.

The Davos of 1880, approached by an eight-hours' laborious drive up the valley of the Prättigau, was a very different place from the extended and embellished Davos of to-day, with its railway, its modern shops, its electric lighting, and its crowd of winter visitors bent on outdoor and indoor entertainment. The Stevensons' quarters for the first winter were at the Hotel Belvedere, then a mere nucleus of the huge establishment it has since become. Besides the usual society of an invalid hotel, with its mingled tragedies and comedies, they had there the great advantage of the presence, in a neighbouring house, of an accomplished man of letters and one of the most charming of companions, John Addington Symonds, with his family. Mr. Symonds, whose health had been desperate before he tried the place, was a living testimony to its virtues, and was at this time engaged in building the chalet which became his home until he died fourteen years later. During Stevenson's first season at Davos, though his mind was full of literary enterprises, he was too ill to do much actual work. For the Highland history he read much, but composed little or nothing, and eventually this history went to swell the long list of his unwritten books. He saw through the press his first volume of collected essays, *Virginibus Puerisque*, which came out early in 1881; wrote the essays *Samuel Pepys* and *The Morality of the Profession of Letters*, for the Cornhill and the Fortnightly Review respectively, and sent to the Pall Mall Gazette the papers on the life and climate of Davos, posthumously reprinted in *Essays of Travel*. Beyond this, he only amused himself with verses, some of them afterwards published in *Underwoods*. Leaving the Alps at the 282 end of April 1881, he returned, after a short stay in France (at Fontainebleau, Paris, and St. Germain), to his family in Edinburgh. Thence the whole party again went to the Highlands, this time to Pitlochry and Braemar.

During the summer Stevenson heard of the intended retirement of Professor Æneas Mackay from the chair of History and Constitutional Law at Edinburgh University. He determined, with the encouragement of the outgoing professor and of several of his literary friends, to become a candidate for the post, which had to be filled by the Faculty of Advocates from among their own number. The duties were limited to the delivery of a short course of lectures in the summer term, and Stevenson thought that he might be equal to them, and might prove, though certainly a new, yet perhaps a stimulating, type of professor. But knowing the nature of his public reputation, especially in Edinburgh, where the recollection of his daft student days was as yet stronger than the impression made by his recent performances in literature, he was well aware that his candidature must seem paradoxical, and stood little chance of success. The election took place in the late autumn of the same year, and he was defeated, receiving only three votes.

At Pitlochry Stevenson was for a while able to enjoy his life and to work well, writing two of the strongest of his short stories of Scottish life and superstition, *Thrawn Janet* and *The Merry Men*, originally designed to form part of a volume to be written by himself and his wife in collaboration. At Braemar he made a beginning of the nursery verses which afterwards grew into the volume called *The Child's Garden*, and conceived and half executed the fortunate project of *Treasure Island*, the book which was destined first to make him famous. But one of the 283 most inclement of Scottish summers had before long undone all the good gained in the previous winter at Davos, and in the autumn of the year 1881 he repaired thither again.

This time his quarters were in a small chalet belonging to the proprietors of the Buol Hotel, the Chalet am Stein, or Chalet Buol, in the near neighbourhood of the Symonds's house. The beginning of his second stay was darkened by the serious illness of his wife; nevertheless the winter was one of much greater literary activity than the last. A Life of Hazlitt was projected, and studies were made for it, but for various reasons the project was never carried out. *Treasure Island* was finished; the greater part of the *Silverado Squatters* written; so were the essays *Talk and Talkers, A Gossip on Romance*, and several other of his best papers for magazines. By way of whim and pastime he occupied himself, to his own and his stepson's delight, with a little set of woodcuts and verses printed by the latter at his toy press — "The Davos Press," as they called it — as well as with mimic campaigns carried on between the man and boy with armies of lead soldiers in the spacious loft which filled the upper floor of the chalet. For the first and almost the only time in his life there awoke in him during these winters in Davos the spirit of lampoon; and he poured forth sets of verses, not without touches of a Swiftean fire, against commercial frauds in general, and those of certain local tradesmen in particular, as well as others in memory of a defunct publican of Edinburgh who had been one of his butts in youth (*Casparidea* and *Brashiana*, both unpublished: see p, 15, 38 in vol. 24 of the present edition). Finally, much revived in health by the beneficent air of the

Alpine valley, he left it again in mid-spring of 1882, to return 284 once more to Scotland, and to be once more thrown back to, or below, the point whence he had started. After a short excursion from Edinburgh into the Appin country, where he made inquiries on the spot into the traditions concerning the murder of Campbell of Glenure, his three resting-places in Scotland during this summer were Stobo Manse near Peebles, Lochearnhead, and Kingussie. At Stobo the dampness of the season and the place quickly threw him again into a very low state of health, from which three subsequent weeks of brilliant sunshine in Speyside did but little to restore him. In spite of this renewed breakdown, when autumn came he would not face the idea of returning for a third season to Davos. He had himself felt deeply the austerity and monotony of the white Alpine world in winter; and though he had unquestionably gained in health there, his wife on her part had suffered much. So he made up his mind once again to try the Mediterranean coast of France, and Davos knew him no more.

To Sidney Colvin

I forget what were the two sets of verses (apparently satirical) here mentioned. The volume of essays must be *Virginibus Puerisque*, published the following spring; but it is dedicated in prose to W. E. Henley.

Ben Wyvis Hotel, Strathpeffer [*July 1880*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — One or two words. We are here: all goes exceeding well with the wife and with the parents. Near here is a valley; birch woods, heather, and a stream; I have lain down and died; no country, no place, was ever for a moment so delightful to my soul. And I have been a Scotchman all my life, and denied my native land! Away with your gardens of roses, indeed! 285 Give me the cool breath of Rogie waterfall, henceforth and for ever, world without end.

I enclose two poems of, I think, a high order. One is my dedication for my essays; it was occasioned by that delicious article in the Spectator. The other requires no explanation; c’est tout bonnement un petit chef d’œuvre de grâce, de délicatesse, et de bon sens humanitaire. Celui qui ne s’en sent pas touché jusqu’aux larmes — celui-là n’a pas vécu. I wish both poems back, as I am copyless: but they might return *via* Henley.

My father desires me still to withdraw the *Emigrant*. Whatever may be the pecuniary loss, he is willing to bear it; and the gain to my reputation will be considerable.

I am writing against time and the post runner. But you know what kind messages we both send to you. May you have as good a time as possible so far from Rogie!

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

A further stay at Strathpeffer led to disenchantment, not with outdoor nature but with human nature as there represented, and he relieves his feelings as follows: —

Ben Wyvis Hotel, Strathpeffer, July 1880.

MY DEAR CHERLS, — I am well but have a little over-tired myself which is disgusting. This is a heathenish place near delightful places, but inhabited, alas! by a wholly bestial crowd.

ON SOME GHOSTLY COMPANIONS AT A SPA

I had an evil day when I
To Strathpeffer drew anigh,
For there I found no human soul,
But Ogres occupied the whole.
They had at first a human air
In coats and flannel underwear.
They rose and walked upon their feet
And filled their bellies full of meat,
Then wiped their lips when they had done —
But they were ogres every one.
Each issuing from his secret bower
I marked them in the morning hour.
By limp and totter, list and droop,
I singled each one from the group.
Detected ogres, from my sight
Depart to your congenial night
From these fair vales: from this fair day
Fleet, spectres, on your downward way,
Like changing figures in a dream
To Muttonhole and Pittenweem!
Or, as by harmony divine
The devils quartered in the swine,
If any baser place exist
In God's great registration list —
Some den with wallow and a trough —
Find it, ye ogres, and be off!

Yours, R. L. S.

To Isobel Strong

Further letters from Scotland during these months are lacking. The next was written, in answer to an inquiry from his stepdaughter at San Francisco, on the second day after his arrival at Davos.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, November 1880.

No my che-ild — not Kamschatka this trip, only the top of the Alps, or thereby; up in a little valley in a wilderness of snowy mountains; the Rhine not far from us, quite a little highland river; eternal snow-peaks on every hand. Yes; just this once I should like to go to the Vienna gardens with the family and hear Tweedledee and drink something and see Germans — though God knows we have seen Germans enough this while back. Naturally some in the Customs House on the Alsatian frontier, who would have made one die from laughing in 287 a theatre, and provoked a smile from us even in that dismal juncture. To see them, big, blond, sham-Englishmen, but with an unqualifiable air of not quite fighting the sham through, diving into old women's bags and going into paroxysms of arithmetic in white chalk, three or four of them (in full uniform) in full cry upon a single sum, with their brows bent and a kind of arithmetical agony upon their mugs. Madam, the diversion of cock-fighting has been much commended, but it was not a circumstance to that Custom House. They only opened one of our things: a basket. But when they met from within the intelligent gaze of *Woggs*, they all lay down and died. Woggs is a fine dog....

God bless you! May coins fall into your coffee and the finest wines and wittles lie smilingly about your path, with a kind of dissolving view of fine scenery by way of background; and may all speak well of you — and me too for that matter — and generally all things be ordered unto you totally regardless of expense and with a view to nothing in the world but enjoyment, edification, and a portly and honoured age. — Your dear papa,

R. L. S.

To A. G. Dew-Smith

This, from the same place and about the same date, is addressed by way of thanks to a friend at Cambridge, the late Mr. A. G. Dew-Smith, who had sent him a present of a box of cigarettes. Mr. Dew-Smith, a man of fine artistic tastes and mechanical genius, with a silken, somewhat foreign, urbanity of bearing, was the original, so far as concerns manner and way of speech, of Attwater in the *Ebb-Tide*.

[*Hotel Belvedere, Davos, November 1880*].

Figure me to yourself, I pray —
A man of my peculiar cut —
Apart from dancing and deray,
Into an Alpine valley shut;
Shut in a kind of damned Hotel,
Discountenanced by God and man;
The food? — Sir, you would do as well
To cram your belly full of bran.
The company? Alas, the day
That I should dwell with such a crew,
With devil anything to say,
Nor any one to say it to!

The place? Although they call it Platz,
I will be bold and state my view;
It’s not a place at all — and that’s
The bottom verity, my Dew.
There are, as I will not deny,
Innumerable inns; a road;
Several Alps indifferent high;
The snow’s inviolable abode;
Eleven English parsons, all
Entirely inoffensive; four
True human beings — what I call
Human — the deuce a cipher more;
A climate of surprising worth;
Innumerable dogs that bark;
Some air, some weather, and some earth;
A native race — God save the mark! —
A race that works, yet cannot work,
Yodels, but cannot yodel right,
Such as, unhelp’d, with rusty dirk,
I vow that I could wholly smite.
A river that from morn to night
Down all the valley plays the fool;
Not once she pauses in her flight,
Nor knows the comfort of a pool;
But still keeps up, by straight or bend,
The selfsame pace she hath begun —
Still hurry, hurry, to the end —
Good God, is that the way to run?
If I a river were, I hope
That I should better realise
The opportunities and scope
Of that romantic enterprise.
I should not ape the merely strange,
But aim besides at the divine;
And continuity and change
I still should labour to combine.
Here should I gallop down the race,
Here charge the sterling like a bull;
There, as a man might wipe his face,
Lie, pleased and panting, in a pool.
But what, my Dew, in idle mood,
What prate I, minding not my debt?
What do I talk of bad or good?
The best is still a cigarette.

Me whether evil fate assault,
Or smiling providences crown —
Whether on high the eternal vault
Be blue, or crash with thunder down —
I judge the best, whate'er befall,
Is still to sit on one's behind,
And, having duly moistened all,
Smoke with an unperturbed mind.

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

R. L. S. here sketches for his father the plan of the work on Highland history which they had discussed together in the preceding summer, and which Principal Tulloch had urged him to attempt.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos [*December 12, 1880*].

MY DEAR FATHER, — Here is the scheme as well as I can foresee. I begin the book immediately after the '15, as then began the attempt to suppress the Highlands.

I. Thirty Years' Interval
(1) Rob Roy.
(2) The Independent Companies: the Watches.
(3) Story of Lady Grange.
(4) The Military Roads, and Disarmament: Wadeand
(5) Burt.

II. The Heroic Age
(1) Duncan Forbes of Culloden.
(2) Flora Macdonald.
(3) The Forfeited Estates; including Hereditary Jurisdictions; and the admirable conduct of the tenants.

III. Literature here intervenes
(1) The Ossianic Controversy.
(2) Boswell and Johnson.
(3) Mrs. Grant of Laggan.

IV. Economy
(1) Highland Economics.
(2) The Reinstatement of the Proprietors.
(3) The Evictions.
(4) Emigration.
(5) Present State.

V. Religion

(1) The Catholics, Episcopals, and Kirk, and Soc. Prop. Christ. Knowledge.

(2) The Men.

(3) The Disruption.

All this, of course, will greatly change in form, scope, and order; this is just a bird's-eye glance. Thank you for *Burt*, which came, and for your Union notes. I have read one-half (about 900 pages) of Wodrow's *Correspondence*, with some improvement, but great fatigue. The doctor thinks well of my recovery, which puts me in good hope for the future. I should certainly be able to make a fine history of this.

My Essays are going through the press, and should be out in January or February. — Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Hotel Belvedere, Davos, December 1880*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I feel better, but variable. I see from the doctor's report that I have more actual disease than I supposed; but there seems little doubt of my recovery. I like the place and shall like it much better when you come at Christmas. That is written on my heart: S. C. comes at Christmas: so if you play me false, I shall have a lie upon my conscience. I like Symonds very well, though he is much, I think, of an invalid in mind and character. But his mind is interesting, with 292 many beautiful corners, and his consumptive smile very winning to see. We have had some good talks; one went over Zola, Balzac, Flaubert, Whitman, Christ, Handel, Milton, Sir Thomas Browne; do you see the *liaison*? — in another, I, the Bohnist, the un-Grecian, was the means of his conversion in the matter of the Ajax. It is truly not for nothing that I have read my Buckley.

To-day the south wind blows; and I am seedy in consequence.

Later. — I want to know when you are coming, so as to get you a room. You will toboggan and skate your head off, and I will talk it off, and briefly if you don't come pretty soon, I will cut you off with a shilling.

It would be handsome of you to write. The doctor says I may be as well as ever; but in the meantime I go slow and am fit for little. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

The suggestions contained in the following two letters to Mr. Gosse refer to the collection of English Odes which that gentleman was then engaged in editing (Kegan Paul, 1881).

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, [*Dec. 6, 1880*].

MY DEAR WEG, — I have many letters that I ought to write in preference to this; but a duty to letters and to you prevails over any private consideration. You are going to collect odes; I could not wish a better man to do so; but I tremble lest you should commit two sins of omission. You will not, I am sure, be so far left to yourself as to give us no more of Dryden than the hackneyed St. Cecilia; I know you will give us some others of those surprising masterpieces where there is more sustained eloquence and harmony of English numbers than in all that has been written since; there is a machine about a poetical young lady, and another about either Charles or 293 James, I know not which; and they are both indescribably fine. (Is Marvell's Horatian Ode good enough? I half think so.) But my great point is a fear that you are one of those who are unjust to our old Tennyson's Duke of Wellington. I have just been talking it over with Symonds; and we agreed that whether for its metrical effects, for its brief, plain, stirring words of portraiture, as — he "that never lost an English gun," or — the soldier salute; or for the heroic apostrophe to Nelson; that ode has never been surpassed in any tongue or time. Grant me the Duke, O Weg! I suppose you must not put in yours about the warship; you will have to admit worse ones, however. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, Dec. 19, 1880.

This letter is a report of a long sederunt, also steterunt, in small committee at Davos Platz, Dec. 15, 1880. Its results are unhesitatingly shot at your head.

MY DEAR WEG, — We both insist on the Duke of Wellington. Really it cannot be left out. Symonds said you would cover yourself with shame, and I add, your friends with confusion, if you leave it out. Really, you know it is the only thing you have, since Dryden, where that irregular odic, odal, odous (?) verse is used with mastery and sense. And it's one of our few English blood-boilers.

(2) Byron: if anything: *Prometheus*.

(3) Shelley (1) *The World's Great Age* from Hellas; we are both dead on. After that you have, of course, *The West Wind* thing. But we think (1) would maybe be enough; no more than two any way.

(4) Herrick. *Meddowes* and *Come, my Corinna*. After that *Mr. Wickes*: two any way.

(5) Leave out stanza 3rd of Congreve's thing, like a dear; we can't stand the "sigh" nor the "peruke."

(6) Milton. *Time* and the *Solemn Music*. We both agree we would rather go without L'Allegro and Il Penseroso than these; for the reason that these are not so well known to the brutish herd.

(7) Is the *Royal George* an ode, or only an elegy? It's so good.

(8) We leave Campbell to you.

(9) If you take anything from Clough, but we don't either of us

fancy you will, let it be *Come back*.

(10) Quite right about Dryden. I had a hankering after *Threnodia Augustalis*; but I find it long and with very prosaic holes: though, O! what fine stuff between whiles.

(11) Right with Collins.

(12) Right about Pope's Ode. But what can you give? *The Dying Christian?* or one of his inimitable courtesies? These last are fairly odes, by the Horatian model, just as my dear *Meddowes* is an ode in the name and for the sake of Bandusia.

(13) Whatever you do, you'll give us the Greek Vase.

(14) Do you like Jonson's "loathed stage"? Verses 2, 3, and 4 are so bad, also the last line. But there is a fine movement and feeling in the rest.

We will have the Duke of Wellington by God. Pro Symonds and Stevenson.

R. L. S.

To Charles Warren Stoddard

The prospect here alluded to of a cheap edition of the little travel-books did not get realised. The volume of essays in the printer's hands was *Virginibus Puerisque*. I do not know what were the pages in broad Scots copied by way of enclosure.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, [*December 1880*].

DEAR CHARLES WARREN STODDARD, — Many thanks to you for the letter and the photograph. Will you think it mean if I ask you to wait till there appears a promised 295 cheap edition? Possibly the canny Scot does feel pleasure in the superior cheapness; but the true reason is this, that I think to put a few words, by way of notes, to each book in its new form, because that will be the Standard Edition, without which no g.'s l. will be complete. The edition, briefly, *sine qua non*. Before that, I shall hope to send you my essays, which are in the printer's hands. I look to get yours soon. I am sorry to hear that the Custom House has proved fallible, like all other human houses and customs. Life consists of that sort of business, and I fear that there is a class of man, of which you offer no inapt type, doomed to a kind of mild, general disappointment through life. I do not believe that a man is the more unhappy for that. Disappointment, except with one's self, is not a very capital affair; and the sham beatitude, "Blessed is he that expecteth little," one of the truest, and in a sense, the most Christlike things in literature.

Alongside of you, I have been all my days a red cannon ball of dissipated effort; here I am by the heels in this Alpine valley, with just so much of a prospect of future restoration as shall make my present caged estate easily tolerable to me — shall or should, I would not swear to the word before the trial's done. I miss all my objects in the meantime; and, thank God, I have enough of my old, and maybe somewhat base philosophy, to keep me on a good understanding with myself and Providence.

The mere extent of a man's travels has in it something consolatory. That he should have left friends and enemies in many different and distant quarters gives a sort of earthly dignity to his existence. And I think the better of myself for the belief that I have left some in California interested in me and my successes. Let me assure you, you who have made friends already among such various and distant races, that there is a certain 296 phthisical Scot who will always be pleased to hear good news of you, and would be better pleased by nothing than to learn that you had thrown off your present incubus, largely consisting of letters I believe, and had sailed into some square work by way of change.

And by way of change in itself, let me copy on the other pages some broad Scotch I wrote for you when I was ill last spring in Oakland. It is no muckle worth: but ye should na look a gien horse in the moo'. — Yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mr. And Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

The verses here mentioned to Dr. John Brown (the admired author of *Rab and his Friends*) were meant as a reply to a letter of congratulation on the *Inland Voyage* received from him the year before. They are printed in *Underwoods*.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, December 21, 1880.

MY DEAR PEOPLE, — I do not understand these reproaches. The letters come between seven and nine in the evening; and every one about the books was answered that same night, and the answer left Davos by seven o'clock next morning. Perhaps the snow delayed them; if so, 'tis a good hint to you not to be uneasy at apparent silences. There is no hurry about my father's notes; I shall not be writing anything till I get home again, I believe. Only I want to be able to keep reading *ad hoc* all winter, as it seems about all I shall be fit for. About John Brown, I have been breaking my heart to finish a Scotch poem to him. Some of it is not really bad, but the rest will not come, and I mean to get it right before I do anything else.

The bazaar is over, £160 gained, and everybody's health lost: altogether, I never had a more uncomfortable time; apply to Fanny for further details of the discomfort.

We have our Wogg in somewhat better trim now, and 297 vastly better spirits. The weather has been bad — for Davos, but indeed it is a wonderful climate. It never feels cold; yesterday, with a little, chill, small, northerly draught, for the first time, it was pinching. Usually, it may freeze, or snow, or do what it pleases, you feel it not, or hardly any.

Thanks for your notes; that fishery question will come in, as you notice, in the Highland Book, as well as under the Union; it is very important. I hear no word of Hugh Miller's *Evictions*; I count on that. What you say about the old and new Statistical is odd. It seems to me very much as if I were gingerly embarking on a *History of Modern Scotland*. Probably Tulloch will never carry it out. And, you see, once I have studied and written these two vols., *The Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* and *Scotland and the Union*, I shall have a good ground to go upon. The effect on my mind of what I have read has been to awaken a livelier sympathy for the Irish; although they never had the remarkable virtues, I fear they have suffered many of the injustices, of the Scottish Highlanders. Ruedi has seen me this morning; he says the disease is at a standstill, and I am to profit by it to take more exercise. Altogether, he seemed quite hopeful and pleased. — I am your ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, [*Christmas 1880*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Thanks for yours; I waited, as I said I would. I now expect no answer from you, regarding you as a mere dumb cock-shy, or a target, at which we fire our arrows diligently all day long, with no anticipation it will bring them back to us. We are both sadly mortified you are not coming, but health comes first; alas, that man should be so crazy. What fun we could have, if we were all well, what work we could do, what a 298 happy place we could make it for each other! If I were able to do what I want; but then I am not, and may leave that vein.

No. I do not think I shall require to know the Gaelic; few things are written in that language, or ever were; if you come to that, the number of those who could write, or even read it, through almost all my period, must, by all accounts, have been incredibly small. Of course, until the book is done, I must live as much as possible in the Highlands, and that suits my book as to health. It is a most interesting and sad story, and from the '45 it is all to be written for the first time. This, of course, will cause me a far greater difficulty about authorities; but I have already learned much, and where to look for more. One pleasant feature is the vast number of delightful writers I shall have to deal with: Burt, Johnson, Boswell, Mrs. Grant of Laggan, Scott. There will be interesting sections on the Ossianic controversy and the growth of the taste for Highland scenery. I have to touch upon Rob Roy, Flora Macdonald, the strange story of Lady Grange, the beautiful story of the tenants on the Forfeited Estates, and the odd, inhuman problem of the great evictions. The religious conditions are wild, unknown, very surprising. And three out of my five parts remain hitherto entirely unwritten. Smack! — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, [*December 26, 1880*]. *Christmas Sermon.*

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I was very tired yesterday and could not write; tobogganed so furiously all morning; we had a delightful day, crowned by an incredible dinner — more courses than I have fingers on my hands. Your letter arrived duly at night, and I thank you for it as I should. You need not suppose I am at all insensible to 299 my father's extraordinary kindness about this book; he is a brick; I vote for him freely.

... The assurance you speak of is what we all ought to have, and might have, and should not consent to live without. That people do not have it more than they do is, I believe, because persons speak so much in large-drawn, theological similitudes, and won't say out what they mean about life, and man, and God, in fair and square human language. I wonder if you or my father ever thought of the obscurities that lie upon human duty from the negative form in which the Ten Commandments are stated, or of how Christ was so continually substituting affirmations. "Thou shalt not" is but an example; "Thou shalt" is the law of God. It was this that seems meant in the phrase that "not one jot nor tittle of the law should pass." But what led me to the remark is this: A kind of black, angry look goes with that statement of the law of negatives. "To love one's neighbour as oneself" is certainly much harder, but states life so much more actively, gladly, and kindly, that you can begin to see some pleasure in it; and till you can see pleasure in these hard choices and bitter necessities, where is there any Good News to men? It is much more important to do right than not to do wrong; further, the one is possible, the other has always been and will ever be impossible; and the faithful *design to do right* is accepted by God; that seems to me to be the Gospel, and that was how Christ delivered us from the Law. After people are told that, surely they might hear more encouraging sermons. To blow the trumpet for good would seem the Parson's business; and since it is not in our own strength, but by faith and perseverance (no account made of slips), that we are to run the race, I do not see where they get the material for their gloomy discourses. Faith is not to believe the Bible, but to believe in God; if you believe in God (or, for it's the same thing, have that assurance you speak about), where is there any more room for 300 terror? There are only three possible attitudes — Optimism, which has gone to smash; Pessimism, which is on the rising hand, and very popular with many clergymen who seem to think they are Christians. And this Faith, which is the Gospel. Once you hold the last, it is your business (1) to find out what is right in any given case, and (2) to try to do it; if you fail in the last, that is by commission, Christ tells you to hope; if you fail in the first, that is by omission, his picture of the last day gives you but a black lookout. The whole necessary morality is kindness; and it should spring, of itself, from the one fundamental doctrine, Faith. If you are sure that God, in the long run, means kindness by you, you should be happy; and if happy, surely you should be kind.

I beg your pardon for this long discourse; it is not all right, of course, but I am sure there is something in it. One thing I have not got clearly; that about the omission and the commission; but there is truth somewhere about it, and I have no time to clear it just now. Do you know, you have had about a Cornhill page of sermon? It is, however, true.

Lloyd heard with dismay Fanny was not going to give me a present; so F. and I had to go and buy things for ourselves, and go through a representation of surprise when they were presented next morning. It gave us both quite a Santa Claus feeling on Xmas Eve to see him so excited and hopeful; I enjoyed it hugely. — Your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

I did go out to Davos after all in January, and found Stevenson apparently little improved in health, and depressed by a sad turn of destiny which had brought out his old friend Mrs. Sitwell to the same place, at the same time, to watch beside the deathbed of her son — the youth commemorated in the verses headed *F. A. S., In Memoriam*, afterwards published in *Underwoods*. The following 301 letter refers to a copy of Carlyle's *Reminiscences* which I had sent him some time after I came back to England.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, [*Spring 1881*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — My health is not just what it should be; I have lost weight, pulse, respiration, etc., and gained nothing in the way of my old bellows. But these last few days, with tonic, cod-liver oil, better wine (there is some better now), and perpetual beef-tea, I think I have progressed. To say truth, I have been here a little over long. I was reckoning up, and since I have known you, already quite a while, I have not, I believe, remained so long in any one place as here in Davos. That tells on my old gipsy nature; like a violin hung up, I begin to lose what music there was in me; and with the music, I do not know what besides, or do not know what to call it, but something radically part of life, a rhythm, perhaps, in one's old and so brutally over-ridden nerves, or perhaps a kind of variety of blood that the heart has come to look for.

I purposely knocked myself off first. As to F. A. S., I believe I am no sound authority; I alternate between a stiff disregard and a kind of horror. In neither mood can a man judge at all. I know the thing to be terribly perilous, I fear it to be now altogether hopeless. Luck has failed; the weather has not been favourable; and in her true heart, the mother hopes no more. But — well, I feel a great deal, that I either cannot or will not say, as you well know. It has helped to make me more conscious of the wolverine on my own shoulders, and that also makes me a poor judge and poor adviser. Perhaps, if we were all marched out in a row, and a piece of platoon firing to the drums performed, it would be well for us; although, I suppose — and yet I wonder! — so ill for the poor mother and for the dear wife. But you can see this makes me morbid. *Sufficit; explicit.*

You are right about the Carlyle book; F. and I are in a world not ours; but pardon me, as far as sending on goes, we take another view: the first volume, *à la bonne* 302 *heure!* but not — never — the second. Two hours of hysterics can be no good matter for a sick nurse, and the strange, hard, old being in so lamentable and yet human a desolation — crying out like a burnt child, and yet always wisely and beautifully — how can that end, as a piece of reading, even to the strong — but on the brink of the most cruel kind of weeping? I observe the old man's style is stronger on me than ever it was, and by rights, too, since I have just laid down his most attaching book. God rest the baith o' them I But even if they do not meet again, how we should all be strengthened to be kind, and not only in act, in speech also, that so much more important part. See what this apostle of silence most regrets, not speaking out his heart.

I was struck as you were by the admirable, sudden, clear sunshine upon Southey — even on his works. Symonds, to whom I repeated it, remarked at once, a man who was thus respected by both Carlyle and Landor must have had more in him than we can trace. So I feel with true humility.

It was to save my brain that Symonds proposed reviewing. He and, it appears, Leslie Stephen fear a little some eclipse: I am not quite without sharing the fear. I know my own languor as no one else does; it is a dead down-draught, a heavy fardel. Yet if I could shake off the wolverine aforesaid, and his fangs are lighter, though perhaps I feel them more, I believe I could be myself again a while. I have not written any letter for a great time; none saying what I feel, since you were here, I fancy. Be duly obliged for it, and take my most earnest thanks not only for the books but for your letter. — Your affectionate,

R. L. S.

The effect of reading this on Fanny shows me I must tell you I am very happy, peaceful, and jolly, except for questions of work and the states of other people.

Woggin sends his love.

To Horatio F. Brown

A close intimate of J. A. Symonds, and frequent visitor at Davos, was Mr. Horatio F. Brown, author of *Life on the Lagoons*, etc. He took warmly, as did every one, to Stevenson. The following two notes are from a copy of Penn's *Fruits of Solitude*, printed at Philadelphia, which Stevenson sent him as a gift this winter after his return to Venice.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, [*February 1881*].

MY DEAR BROWN, — Here it is, with the mark of a San Francisco *bouquiniste*. And if ever in all my "human conduct" I have done a better thing to any fellow-creature than handing on to you this sweet, dignified, and wholesome book, I know I shall hear of it on the last day. To write a book like this were impossible; at least one can hand it on — with a wrench — one to another. My wife cries out and my own heart misgives me, but still here it is. I could scarcely better prove myself — Yours affectionately,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Horatio F. Brown

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, [*February 1881*].

MY DEAR BROWN, — I hope, if you get thus far, you will know what an invaluable present I have made you. Even the copy was dear to me, printed in the colony that Penn established, and carried in my pocket all about the San Francisco streets, read in street cars and ferry-boats, when I was sick unto death, and found in all times and places a peaceful and sweet companion. But I hope, when you shall have reached this note, my gift will not have been in vain; for while just now we are so busy and intelligent, there is not the man living, no, nor recently dead, that could put, with so lovely a spirit, so much honest, kind wisdom into words.

R. L. S.

To Horatio F. Brown

The following experiment in English alcaics was suggested by conversations with Mr. Brown and J. A. Symonds on metrical forms, followed by the despatch of some translations from old Venetian boat-songs by the former after his return to Venice.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, [*April 1881*].

MY DEAR BROWN, — Nine years I have conded them.

Brave lads in olden musical centuries
Sang, night by night, adorable choruses,
Sat late by alehouse doors in April
Chaunting in joy as the moon was rising:
Moon-seen and merry, under the trellises,
Flush-faced they played with old polysyllables;
Spring scents inspired, old wine diluted;

Love and Apollo were there to chorus.
Now these, the songs, remain to eternity,
Those, only those, the bountiful choristers
Gone — those are gone, those unremembered
Sleep and are silent in earth for ever.
So man himself appears and evanishes,
So smiles and goes; as wanderers halting at
Some green-embowered house, play their music,
Play and are gone on the windy highway;
Yet dwells the strain enshrined in the memory
Long after they departed eternally,
Forth-faring tow'rd far mountain summits,
Cities of men on the sounding Ocean.
Youth sang the song in years immemorial;
Brave chanticleer, he sang and was beautiful;
Bird-haunted, green tree-tops in springtime
Heard and were pleased by the voice of singing;
Youth goes, and leaves behind him a prodigy —
Songs sent by thee afar from Venetian
Sea-grey lagunes, sea-paven highways,
Dear to me here in my Alpine exile.

Please, my dear Brown, forgive my horrid delay. Symonds overworked and knocked up. I off my sleep; my wife gone to Paris. Weather lovely. — Yours ever,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Monte Generoso in May; here, I think, till the end of April; write again, to prove you are forgiving.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Monte Generoso was given up; and on the way home to Scotland Stevenson had stopped for a while at Fontainebleau, and then in Paris; whence, finding himself unpleasantly affected by the climate, he presently took refuge at St. Germain.

Hotel du Pavillon Henry IV., St. Germain-en-Laye, Sunday, May 1st, 1881.

MY DEAR PEOPLE, — A week in Paris reduced me to the limpness and lack of appetite peculiar to a kid glove, and gave Fanny a jumping sore throat. It's my belief there is death in the kettle there; a pestilence or the like. We came out here, pitched on the *Star and Garter* (they call it Somebody's pavilion), found the place a bed of lilacs and nightingales (first time I ever heard one), and also of a bird called the *piasseur*, cheerfulest of sylvan creatures, an ideal comic opera in itself. "Come along, what fun, here's Pan in the next glade at picnic, and this-yer's 306 Arcadia, and it's awful fun, and I've had a glass, I will not deny, but not to see it on me," that is his meaning as near as I can gather. Well, the place (forest of beeches all new-fledged, grass like velvet, fleets of hyacinth) pleased us and did us good. We tried all ways to find a cheaper place, but could find nothing safe; cold, damp, brick-floored rooms and sich; we could not leave Paris till your seven days' sight on draft expired; we dared not go back to be miasmatised in these homes of putridity; so here we are till Tuesday in the *Star and Garter*. My throat is quite cured, appetite and strength on the mend. Fanny seems also picking up.

If we are to come to Scotland, I *will* have fir-trees, and I want a burn, the firs for my physical, the water for my moral health. — Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

At Pitlochry, Stevenson was for some weeks in good health and working order. The inquiries about the later life of Jean Cavalier, the Protestant leader in the Cévennes, refer to a literary scheme, whether of romance or history I forget, which had been in his mind ever since the *Travels with a Donkey*.

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, June 6, 1881.

MY DEAR WEG, — Here I am in my native land, being gently blown and hailed upon, and sitting nearer and nearer to the fire. A cottage near a moor is soon to receive our human forms; it is also near a burn to which Professor Blackie (no less!) has written some verses in his hot old age, and near a farm from whence we shall draw cream and fatness. Should I be moved to join Blackie, I shall go upon my knees and pray hard against temptation; although, since the new Version, I do not know the proper form of words. The swollen, childish, and pedantic vanity that moved the said revisers to put "bring" for "lead," is a sort of literary fault that calls for an eternal hell; it may be quite a small place, a star 307 of the least magnitude, and shabbily furnished; there shall — — , — — , the revisers of the Bible and other absolutely loathsome literary lepers, dwell among broken pens, bad, *groundy* ink and ruled blotting-paper made in France — all eagerly burning to write, and all inflicted with incurable aphasia. I should not have thought upon that torture had I not suffered it in moderation myself, but it is too horrid even for a hell; let's let 'em off with an eternal toothache.

All this talk is partly to persuade you that I write to you out of good feeling only, which is not the case. I am a beggar; ask Dobson, Saintsbury, yourself, and any other of these cheeses who know something of the eighteenth century, what became of Jean Cavalier between his coming to England and his death in 1740. Is anything interesting known about him? Whom did he marry? The happy French, smilingly following one another in a long procession headed by the loud and empty Napoleon Peyrat, say, Olympe Dunoyer, Voltaire's old flame. Vacquerie even thinks that they were rivals, and is very French and very literary and very silly in his comments. Now I may almost say it consists with my knowledge that all this has not a shadow to rest upon. It is very odd and very annoying; I have splendid materials for Cavalier till he comes to my own country; and there, though he continues to advance in the service, he becomes entirely invisible to me. Any information about him will be greatly welcome: I may mention that I know as much as I desire about the other prophets, Marion, Fage, Cavalier (de Sonne), my Cavalier's cousin, the unhappy Lions, and the idiotic Mr. Lacy; so if any erudite starts upon that track, you may choke him off. If you can find aught for me, or if you will but try, count on my undying gratitude. Lang's "Library" is very pleasant reading. My book *will* reach you soon, for I write about it to-day. — Yours ever,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Work on a series of tales of terror, or, as he called them, "crawlers," planned in collaboration with his wife, soon superseded for the moment other literary interests in his mind. *Thrawn Janet* and the *Body-Snatchers* were the only two of the set completed under their original titles: *The Wreck of the Susanna* contained, I think, the germ of *The Merry Men.*

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [*June 1881*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — *The Black Man and Other Tales.*

The Black Man:
I. Thrawn Janet.
II. The Devil on Cramond Sands.
The Shadow on the Bed.
The Body-Snatchers.
The Case Bottle.
The King's Horn.
The Actor's Wife.
The Wreck of the Susanna.

This is the new work on which I am engaged with Fanny; they are all supernatural. *Thrawn Janet* is off to Stephen, but as it is all in Scotch he cannot take it, I know. It was *so good*, I could not help sending it. My health improves. We have a lovely spot here: a little green glen with a burn, a wonderful burn, gold and green and snow-white, singing loud and low in different steps of its career, now pouring over miniature crags, now fretting itself to death in a maze of rocky stairs and pots; never was so sweet a little river. Behind, great purple moorlands reaching to Ben Vrackie. Hunger lives here, alone with larks and sheep. Sweet spot, sweet spot.

Write me a word about Bob's professoriate and Landor, and what you think of *The Black Man*. The tales are all ghastly. *Thrawn Janet* frightened me to death. There will maybe be another — *The Dead Man's Letter*. I believe I shall recover; and I am, in this blessed hope, yours exuberantly,

R. L. S.

To Professor Æneas Mackay

This and the next four or five letters refer to the candidature of R. L. S. for the Edinburgh Chair.

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, Wednesday, June 21, 1881.

MY DEAR MACKAY, — What is this I hear? — that you are retiring from your chair. It is not, I hope, from ill-health?

But if you are retiring, may I ask if you have promised your support to any successor? I have a great mind to try. The summer session would suit me; the chair would suit me — if only I would suit it; I certainly should work it hard: that I can promise. I only wish it were a few years from now, when I hope to have something more substantial to show for myself. Up to the present time, all that I have published, even bordering on history, has been in an occasional form, and I fear this is much against me.

Please let me hear a word in answer, and believe me, yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson

To Professor Æneas Mackay

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [*June 1881*].

MY DEAR MACKAY, — Thank you very much for your kind letter, and still more for your good opinion. You are not the only one who has regretted my absence from your lectures; but you were to me, then, only a part of a mangle through which I was being slowly and unwillingly dragged — part of a course which I had not chosen — part, in a word, of an organised boredom.

I am glad to have your reasons for giving up the chair; they are partly pleasant, and partly honourable to you. And I think one may say that every man who publicly 310 declines a plurality of offices, makes it perceptibly more difficult for the next man to accept them.

Every one tells me that I come too late upon the field, every one being pledged, which, seeing it is yet too early for any one to come upon the field, I must regard as a polite evasion. Yet all advise me to stand, as it might serve me against the next vacancy. So stand I shall, unless things are changed. As it is, with my health this summer class is a great attraction; it is perhaps the only hope I may have of a permanent income. I had supposed the needs of the chair might be met by choosing every year some period of history in which questions of Constitutional Law were involved; but this is to look too far forward.

I understand (1*st*) that no overt steps can be taken till your resignation is accepted; and (2*nd*) that in the meantime I may, without offence, mention my design to stand.

If I am mistaken about these, please correct me as I do not wish to appear where I should not.

Again thanking you very heartily for your coals of fire I remain yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [*June 1881*].

MY DEAR S. C., — Great and glorious news. Your friend, the bold unfearing chap, Aims at a professorial cap, And now besieges, do and dare, The Edinburgh History chair. Three months in summer only it Will bind him to that windy bit; The other nine to arrange abroad, Untrammel'd in the eye of God. Mark in particular one thing: He means to work that cursed thing, and to the golden youth explain Scotland and England, France and Spain.

In short, sir, I mean to try for this chair. I do believe I can make something out of it. It will be a pulpit in a sense; for I am nothing if not moral, as you know. My works are unfortunately so light and trifling they may interfere. But if you think, as I think, I am fit to fight it, send me the best kind of testimonial stating all you can in favour of me and, with your best art, turning the difficulty of my never having done anything in history, strictly speaking. Second, is there anybody else, think you, from whom I could wring one — I mean, you could wring one for me. Any party in London or Cambridge who thinks well enough of my little books to back me up with a few heartfelt words? Jenkin approves highly; but says, pile in *English* testimonials. Now I only know Stephen, Symonds, Lang, Gosse and you, and Meredith, to be sure. The chair is in the gift of the Faculty of Advocates, where I believe I am more wondered at than loved. I do not know the foundation; one or two hundred, I suppose. But it would be a good thing for me, out and out good. Help me to live, help me to *work*, for I am the better of pressure, and help me to say what I want about God, man and life.

R. L. S.

Heart-broken trying to write rightly to people.

History and Constitutional Law is the full style.

To Edmund Gosse

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, June 24,1881.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — I wonder if I misdirected my last to you. I begin to fear it. I hope, however, this will go right. I am in act to do a mad thing — to stand for the Edinburgh Chair of History; it is elected for by the advocates, *quorum pars*; I am told that I am too late this year; but advised on all hands to go on, as it is likely soon to be once more vacant; and I shall have done myself good for the next time. Now, if I got the 312 thing (which I cannot, it appears), I believe, in spite of all my imperfections, I could be decently effectual. If you can think so also, do put it in a testimonial.

Heavens! *Je me sauve*, I have something else to say to you, but after that (which is not a joke) I shall keep it for another shoot. — Yours testimonially,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

I surely need not add, dear lad, that if you don't feel like it, you will only have to pacify me by a long letter on general subjects, when I shall hasten to respond in recompense for my assault upon the postal highway.

To Charles J. Guthrie

The next two letters are addressed to an old friend and fellow-member of the Speculative Society, who had passed Advocate six years before, on the same day as R. L. S. himself, and is now Lord Guthrie, a Senator of the Scottish Courts of Justice, and has Swanston Cottage, sacred to the memory of R. L. S., for his summer home.

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, June 30, 1881.

MY DEAR GUTHRIE, — I propose to myself to stand for Mackay's chair. I can promise that I will not spare to work. If you can see your way to help me, I shall be glad; and you may at least not mind making my candidature known. — Believe me, yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles J. Guthrie

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, July 2nd, 1881.

MY DEAR GUTHRIE, — Many thanks for your support, and many more for the kindness and thoughtfulness of your letter. I shall take your advice in both directions; presuming that by "electors" you mean the curators. I must see to this soon; and I feel it would also do no harm 313 to look in at the P.H. As soon then as I get through with a piece of work that both sits upon me like a stone and attracts me like a piece of travel, I shall come to town and go a-visiting. Testimonial-hunting is a queer form of sport — but has its pleasures.

If I got that chair, the Spec. would have a warm defender near at hand! The sight of your fist made me Speculative on the past. — Yours most sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [*July 1881*].

MY DEAR WEG, — Many thanks for the testimonial; many thanks for your blind, wondering letter; many wishes, lastly, for your swift recovery. Insomnia is the opposite pole from my complaint; which brings with it a nervous lethargy, an unkind, unwholesome, and ungentle somnolence, fruitful in heavy heads and heavy eyes at morning. You cannot sleep; well, I can best explain my state thus: I cannot wake. Sleep, like the lees of a posset, lingers all day, lead-heavy, in my knees and ankles. Weight on the shoulders, torpor on the brain. And there is more than too much of that from an ungrateful hound who is now enjoying his first decently competent and peaceful weeks for close upon two years; happy in a big brown moor behind him, and an incomparable burn by his side; happy, above all, in some work — for at last I am at work with that appetite and confidence that alone makes work supportable.

I told you I had something else to say. I am very tedious — it is another request. In August and a good part of September we shall be in Braemar, in a house with some accommodation. Now Braemar is a place patronised by the royalty of the Sister Kingdoms — Victoria and the 314 Cairngorms, sir, honouring that countryside by their conjunct presence. This seems to me the spot for A Bard. Now can you come to see us for a little while? I can promise you, you must like my father, because you are a human being; you ought to like Braemar, because of your avocation; and you ought to like me, because I like you; and again, you must like my wife, because she likes cats; and as for my mother — well, come and see, what do you think? that is best. Mrs. Gosse, my wife tells me, will have other fish to fry; and to be plain, I should not like to ask her till I had seen the house. But a lone man I know we shall be equal to. *Qu'en dis tu? Viens.* — Yours,

R. L. S.

To P. G. Hamerton

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [*July 1881*].

MY DEAR MR. HAMMERTON, — (There goes the second M.; it is a certainty.) Thank you for your prompt and kind answer, little as I deserved it, though I hope to show you I was less undeserving than I seemed. But just might I delete two words in your testimonial? The two words "and legal" were unfortunately winged by chance against my weakest spot, and would go far to damn me.

It was not my bliss that I was interested in when I was married; it was a sort of marriage *in extremis*; and if I am where I am, it is thanks to the care of that lady who married me when I was a mere complication of cough and bones, much fitter for an emblem of mortality than a bridegroom.

I had a fair experience of that kind of illness when all the women (God bless them!) turn round upon the streets and look after you with a look that is only too kind not to be cruel. I have had nearly two years of more or less prostration. I have done no work whatever since the 315 February before last until quite of late. To be precise, until the beginning of last month, exactly two essays. All last winter I was at Davos; and indeed I am home here just now against the doctor's orders, and must soon be back again to that unkindly haunt "upon the mountains visitant" — there goes no angel there but the angel of death. The deaths of last winter are still sore spots to me.... So, you see, I am not very likely to go on a "wild expedition," cis-Stygian at least. The truth is, I am scarce justified in standing for the chair, though I hope you will not mention this; and yet my health is one of my reasons, for the class is in summer.

I hope this statement of my case will make my long neglect appear less unkind. It was certainly not because I ever forgot you, or your unwonted kindness; and it was not because I was in any sense rioting in pleasures.

I am glad to hear the catamaran is on her legs again; you have my warmest wishes for a good cruise down the Saône; and yet there comes some envy to that wish, for when shall I go cruising? Here a sheer hulk, alas! lies R. L. S. But I will continue to hope for a better time, canoes that will sail better to the wind, and a river grander than the Saône.

I heard, by the way, in a letter of counsel from a well-wisher, one reason of my town's absurdity about the chair of Art: I fear it is characteristic of her manners. It was because you did not call upon the electors!

Will you remember me to Mrs. Hamerton and your son? — And believe me, etc., etc.,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [*July 1881*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I do believe I am better, mind and body; I am tired just now, for I have just been up the burn with Wogg, daily growing better and boo'f'ler; so do not judge my state by my style in this. I am working steady, four Cornhill pages scrolled every day, besides the correspondence about this chair, which is heavy in itself. My first story, *Thrawn Janet*, all in Scotch, is accepted by Stephen; my second, *The Body Snatchers*, is laid aside in a justifiable disgust, the tale being horrid; my third, *The Merry Men*, I am more than half through, and think real well of. It is a fantastic sonata about the sea and wrecks; and I like it much above all my other attempts at story-telling; I think it is strange; if ever I shall make a hit, I have the line now, as I believe.

Fanny has finished one of hers, *The Shadow on the Bed*, and is now hammering at a second, for which we have "no name" as yet — not by Wilkie Collins.

Tales for Winter Nights. Yes, that, I think, we will call the lot of them when republished.

Why have you not sent me a testimonial? Everybody else but you has responded, and Symonds, but I'm afraid he's ill. Do think, too, if anybody else would write me a testimonial. I am told quantity goes far. I have good ones from Rev. Professor Campbell, Professor Meiklejohn, Leslie Stephen, Lang, Gosse, and a very shaky one from Hamerton.

Grant is an elector, so can't, but has written me kindly. From Tulloch I have not yet heard. Do help me with suggestions. This old chair, with its £250 and its light work, would make me.

It looks as if we should take Cater's chalet after all; but O! to go back to that place, it seems cruel. I have 317 not yet received the Landor; but it may be at home, detained by my mother, who returns to-morrow.

Believe me, dear Colvin, ever yours,

R. L. S.

Yours came; the class is in summer; many thanks for the testimonial, it is bully; arrived along with it another from Symonds, also bully; he is ill, but not lungs, thank God — fever got in Italy. We *have* taken Cater's chalet; so we are now the aristo's of the valley. There is no hope for me, but if there were, you would hear sweetness and light streaming from my lips.

The Merry Men.

Chap. I. Eilean Aros.

Top

Tale

II. What the Wreck had brought to Aros.

III. Past and Present in Sandag Bay.

IV. The Gale.

V. A Man out of the Sea.

To W. E. Henley

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, July 1881.

MY DEAR HENLEY, — I hope, then, to have a visit from you. If before August, here; if later, at Braemar. Tupe!

And now, *mon bon,* I must babble about *The Merry Men,* my favourite work. It is a fantastic sonata about the sea and wrecks. Chapter I. "Eilean Aros" — the island, the roost, the "merry men," the three people there living — sea superstitions. Chapter II. "What the Wreck had brought to Aros." Eh, boy? what had it? Silver and clocks and brocades, and what a conscience, what a mad brain! Chapter III. "Past and Present in Sandag Bay" — the new wreck and the old — so old — the Armada treasure-ship, Santma Trinid — the grave in the heather — strangers 318 there. Chapter IV. "The Gale" — the doomed ship — the storm — the drunken madman on the head — cries in the night. Chapter V. "A Man out of the Sea." But I must not breathe to you my plot. It is, I fancy, my first real shoot at a story; an odd thing, sir, but, I believe, my own, though there is a little of Scott's *Pirate* in it, as how should there not? He had the root of romance in such places. Aros is Earraid, where I lived lang syne; the Ross of Grisapol is the Ross of Mull; Ben Ryan, Ben More. I have written to the middle of Chapter IV. Like enough, when it is finished I shall discard all chapterings; for the thing is written straight through. It must, unhappily, be re-written — too well written not to be.

The chair is only three months in summer; that is why I try for it. If I get it, which I shall not, I should be independent at once. Sweet thought. I liked your Byron well; your Berlioz better. No one would remark these cuts; even I, who was looking for it, knew it not at all to be a torso. The paper strengthens me in my recommendation to you to follow Colvin's hint. Give us an 1830; you will do it well, and the subject smiles widely on the world: —

1830: *A Chapter of Artistic History*, by William Ernest Henley (or *of Social and Artistic History*, as the thing might grow to you). Sir, you might be in the Athenæum yet with that; and, believe me, you might and would be far better, the author of a readable book. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

The following names have been invented for Wogg by his dear papa: —

Grunty-pig (when he is scratched),

Rose-mouth (when he comes flying up with his rose-leaf tongue depending), and

Hoofen-boots (when he has had his foots wet).

How would *Tales for Winter Nights* do?

To W. E. Henley

The spell of good health did not last long, and with a break of the weather came a return of catarrhal troubles and hemorrhage. This letter answers some criticisms made by his correspondent on *The Merry Men* as drafted in MS.

Pitlochry, if you please [*August*], 1881.

Dear Henley, — To answer a point or two. First, the Spanish ship was sloop-rigged and clumsy, because she was fitted out by some private adventurers, not over wealthy, and glad to take what they could get. Is that not right? Tell me if you think not. That, at least, was how I meant it. As for the boat-cloaks, I am afraid they are, as you say, false imagination; but I love the name, nature, and being of them so dearly, that I feel as if I would almost rather ruin a story than omit the reference. The proudest moments of my life have been passed in the stern-sheets of a boat with that romantic garment over my shoulders. This, without prejudice to one glorious day when standing upon some water stairs at Lerwick I signalled with my pocket-handkerchief for a boat to come ashore for me. I was then aged fifteen or sixteen; conceive my glory.

Several of the phrases you object to are proper nautical, or long-shore phrases, and therefore, I think, not out of place in this long-shore story. As for the two members which you thought at first so ill-united; I confess they seem perfectly so to me. I have chosen to sacrifice a long-projected story of adventure because the sentiment of that is identical with the sentiment of "My uncle." My uncle himself is not the story as I see it, only the leading episode of that story. It's really a story of wrecks, as they appear to the dweller on the coast. It's a view of the sea. Goodness knows when I shall be able to re-write; I must first get over this copper-headed cold.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The reference to Landor in the following is to a volume of mine in Macmillan's series *English Men of Letters*. This and the next two or three years were those of the Fenian dynamite outrages at the Tower of London, the House of Lords, etc.

[*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, August 1881.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — This is the first letter I have written this good while. I have had a brutal cold, not perhaps very wisely treated; lots of blood — for me, I mean. I was so well, however, before, that I seem to be sailing through with it splendidly. My appetite never failed; indeed, as I got worse, it sharpened — a sort of reparatory instinct. Now I feel in a fair way to get round soon.

Monday, August (*2nd,* is it?). — We set out for the Spital of Glenshee, and reach Braemar on Tuesday. The Braemar address we cannot learn; it looks as if "Braemar" were all that was necessary; if particular, you can address 17 Heriot Row. We shall be delighted to see you whenever, and as soon as ever, you can make it possible.

... I hope heartily you will survive me, and do not doubt it. There are seven or eight people it is no part of my scheme in life to survive — yet if I could but heal me of my bellowses, I could have a jolly life — have it, even now, when I can work and stroll a little, as I have been doing till this cold. I have so many things to make life sweet to me, it seems a pity I cannot have that other one thing — health. But though you will be angry to hear it, I believe, for myself at least, what is is best. I believed it all through my worst days, and I am not ashamed to profess it now.

Landor has just turned up; but I had read him already. I like him extremely; I wonder if the "cuts" were perhaps not advantageous. It seems quite full enough; but then you know I am a compressionist.

If I am to criticise, it is a little staid; but the classical is apt to look so. It is in curious contrast to that inexpressive, 321 unplanned wilderness of Forster's; clear, readable, precise, and sufficiently human. I see nothing lost in it, though I could have wished, in my Scotch capacity, a trifle clearer and fuller exposition of his moral attitude, which is not quite clear "from here."

He and his tyrannicide! I am in a mad fury about these explosions. If that is the new world! Damn O'Donovan Rossa; damn him behind and before, above, below, and roundabout; damn, deracinate, and destroy him, root and branch, self and company, world without end. Amen. I write that for sport if you like, but I will pray in earnest, O Lord, if you cannot convert, kindly delete him!

Stories naturally at halt. Henley has seen one and approves. I believe it to be good myself, even real good. He has also seen and approved one of Fanny's. It will make a good volume. We have now

Thrawn Janet (with Stephen), proof to-day.
The Shadow on the Bed (Fanny's copying).
The Merry Men (scrolled).
The Body Snatchers (scrolled).
In germis
The Travelling Companion.
The Torn Surplice (*not final title*).

Yours ever,
R. L. S.

To Dr. Alexander Japp

Dr. Japp (known in literature at this date and for some time afterwards under his pseudonym H. A. Page; later under his own name the biographer of De Quincey) had written to R. L. S. criticising statements of fact and opinion in his essay on Thoreau, and expressing the hope that they might meet and discuss their differences. In the interval between the last letter and this Stevenson with all his family had moved to Braemar.

The Cottage, Castleton of Braemar, Sunday [*August 1881*].

MY DEAR SIR, — I should long ago have written to thank you for your kind and frank letter; but in my 322 state of health papers are apt to get mislaid, and your letter has been vainly hunted for until this (Sunday) morning.

I regret I shall not be able to see you in Edinburgh; one visit to Edinburgh has already cost me too dear in that invaluable particular health; but if it should be at all possible for you to push on as far as Braemar, I believe you would find an attentive listener, and I can offer you a bed, a drive, and necessary food, etc.

If, however, you should not be able to come thus far, I can promise you two things: First, I shall religiously revise what I have written, and bring out more clearly the point of view from which I regarded Thoreau; second, I shall in the Preface record your objection.

The point of view (and I must ask you not to forget that any such short paper is essentially only a *section through* a man) was this: I desired to look at the man through his books. Thus, for instance, when I mentioned his return to the pencil-making, I did it only in passing (perhaps I was wrong), because it seemed to me not an illustration of his principles, but a brave departure from them. Thousands of such there were I do not doubt; still, they might be hardly to my purpose, though, as you say so, some of them would be.

Our difference as to pity I suspect was a logomachy of my making. No pitiful acts on his part would surprise me; I know he would be more pitiful in practice than most of the whiners; but the spirit of that practice would still seem to be unjustly described by the word pity.

When I try to be measured, I find myself usually suspected of a sneaking unkindness for my subject; but you may be sure, sir, I would give up most other things to be so good a man as Thoreau. Even my knowledge of him leads me thus far.

Should you find yourself able to push on to Braemar — it may even be on your way — believe me, your visit will be most welcome. The weather is cruel, but the place 323 is, as I dare say you know, the very "wale" of Scotland — bar Tummelside. — Yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Sitwell

The Cottage, Castleton of Braemar, [*August 1881*].

... Well, I have been pretty mean, but I have not yet got over my cold so completely as to have recovered much energy. It is really extraordinary that I should have recovered as well as I have in this blighting weather; the wind pipes, the rain comes in squalls, great black clouds are continually overhead, and it is as cold as March. The country is delightful, more cannot be said; it is very beautiful, a perfect joy when we get a blink of sun to see it in. The Queen knows a thing or two, I perceive; she has picked out the finest habitable spot in Britain.

I have done no work, and scarce written a letter for three weeks, but I think I should soon begin again; my cough is now very trifling. I eat well, and seem to have lost but little flesh in the meanwhile. I was *wonderfully* well before I caught this horrid cold. I never thought I should have been as well again; I really enjoyed life and work; and, of course, I now have a good hope that this may return.

I suppose you heard of our ghost stories. They are somewhat delayed by my cold and a bad attack of laziness, embroidery, etc., under which Fanny had been some time prostrate. It is horrid that we can get no better weather. I did not get such good accounts of you as might have been. You must imitate me. I am now one of the most conscientious people at trying to get better you ever saw. I have a white hat, it is much admired; also a plaid, and a heavy stoop; so I take my walks abroad, witching the world.

Last night I was beaten at chess, and am still grinding under the blow. — Ever your faithful friend,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

The Cottage (*late the late Miss M'Gregor's*),
Castleton of Braemar, August 10, 1881.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — Come on the 24th, there is a dear fellow. Everybody else wants to come later, and it will be a godsend for, sir — Yours sincerely.

You can stay as long as you behave decently, and are not sick of, sir — Your obedient, humble servant.

We have family worship in the home of, sir — Yours respectfully.

Braemar is a fine country, but nothing to (what you will also see) the maps of, sir — Yours in the Lord.

A carriage and two spanking hacks draw up daily at the hour of two before the house of, sir — Yours truly.

The rain rains and the winds do beat upon the cottage of the late Miss Macgregor and of, sir — Yours affectionately.

It is to be trusted that the weather may improve ere you know the halls of, sir — Yours emphatically.

All will be glad to welcome you, not excepting, sir — Yours ever.

You will now have gathered the lamentable intellectual collapse of, sir — Yours indeed.

And nothing remains for me but to sign myself, sir — Yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

N.B. — Each of these clauses has to be read with extreme glibness, coming down whack upon the "Sir." This is very important. The fine stylistic inspiration will else be lost.

I commit the man who made, the man who sold, and the woman who supplied me with my present excruciating gilt nib to that place where the worm never dies.

The reference to a deceased Highland lady (tending 325 as it does to foster unavailing sorrow) may be with advantage omitted from the address, which would therefore run — The Cottage, Castleton of Braemar.

To Edmund Gosse

The Cottage, Castleton of Braemar, August 19, 1881.

If you had an uncle who was a sea captain and went to the North Pole, you had better bring his outfit. *Verbum Sapientibus.* I look towards you.

R. L. Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

[*Braemar, August 19, 1881.*]

MY DEAR WEG, — I have by an extraordinary drollery of Fortune sent off to you by this day's post a P.C. inviting you to appear in sealskin. But this had reference to the weather, and not at all, as you may have been led to fancy, to our rustic raiment of an evening.

As to that question, I would deal, in so far as in me lies, fairly with all men. We are not dressy people by nature; but it sometimes occurs to us to entertain angels. In the country, I believe, even angels may be decently welcomed in tweed; I have faced many great personages, for my own part, in a tasteful suit of sea-cloth with an end of carpet pending from my gullet. Still, we do maybe twice a summer burst out in the direction of blacks — and yet we do it seldom. In short, let your own heart decide, and the capacity of your portmanteau. If you came in camel's hair, you would still, although conspicuous, be welcome.

The sooner the better after Tuesday. — Yours ever,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

The following records the beginning of work upon *Treasure Island*, the name originally proposed for which was *The Sea Cook*: —

[*Braemar, August 25, 1881.*]

MY DEAR HENLEY, — Of course I am a rogue. Why, Lord, it's known, man; but you should remember I have had a horrid cold. Now, I'm better, I think; and see here — nobody, not you, nor Lang, nor the devil, will hurry me with our crawlers. They are coming. Four of them are as good as done, and the rest will come when ripe; but I am now on another lay for the moment, purely owing to Lloyd, this one; but I believe there's more coin in it than in any amount of crawlers: now, see here, *The Sea Cook, or Treasure Island: A Story for Boys*.

If this don't fetch the kids, why, they have gone rotten since my day. Will you be surprised to learn that it is about Buccaneers, that it begins in the "Admiral Benbow" public-house on Devon coast, that it's all about a map, and a treasure, and a mutiny, and a derelict ship, and a current, and a fine old Squire Trelawney (the real Tre, purged of literature and sin, to suit the infant mind), and a doctor, and another doctor, and a sea cook with one leg, and a sea-song with the chorus "Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum" (at the third Ho you heave at the capstan bars), which is a real buccaneer's song, only known to the crew of the late Captain Flint (died of rum at Key West, much regretted, friends will please accept this intimation); and lastly, would you be surprised to hear, in this connection, the name of *Routledge*? That's the kind of man I am, blast your eyes. Two chapters are written, and have been tried on Lloyd with great success; the trouble is to work it off without oaths. Buccaneers without oaths — bricks without straw. But youth and the fond parent have to be consulted.

And now look here — this is next day — and three chapters are written and read. (Chapter I. The Old Sea-dog at the “Admiral Benbow.” Chapter II. Black Dog appears and disappears. Chapter III. The Black Spot.) All now heard by Lloyd, F., and my father and mother, with high approval. It’s quite silly and horrid fun, and what I want is the *best* book about the Buccaneers that can be had — the latter B’s above all, Blackbeard and sich, and get Nutt or Bain to send it skimming by the fastest post. And now I know you’ll write to me, for *The Sea Cook’s* sake.

Your Admiral Guinea is curiously near my line, but of course I’m fooling; and your Admiral sounds like a shublime gent, Stick to him like wax — he’ll do. My Trelawney is, as I indicate, several thousand sea-miles off the lie of the original or your Admiral Guinea; and besides, I have no more about him yet but one mention of his name, and I think it likely he may turn yet farther from the model in the course of handling. A chapter a day I mean to do; they are short; and perhaps in a month *The Sea Cook* may to Routledge go, yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum! My Trelawney has a strong dash of Landor, as I see him from here. No women in the story, Lloyd’s orders; and who so blithe to obey? It’s awful fun boys’ stories; you just indulge the pleasure of your heart, that’s all; no trouble, no strain. The only stiff thing is to get it ended — that I don’t see, but I look to a volcano. O sweet, O generous, O human toils. You would like my blind beggar in Chapter III. I believe; no writing, just drive along as the words come and the pen will scratch!

R. L. S.

Author of Boys’ Stories.

To Dr. Alexander Japp

This correspondent had paid his visit as proposed, discussed the Thoreau differences, listened delightedly to the first chapters of 328 *Treasure Island*, and proposed to offer the story for publication to his friend Mr. Henderson, proprietor and editor of Young Folks.

[*Braemar, September 1881.*]

MY DEAR DR. JAPP, — My father has gone, but I think I may take it upon me to ask you to keep the book. Of all things you could do to endear yourself to me, you have done the best, for my father and you have taken a fancy to each other.

I do not know how to thank you for all your kind trouble in the matter of *The Sea Cook*, but I am not unmindful. My health is still poorly, and I have added intercostal rheumatism — a new attraction — which sewed me up nearly double for two days, and still gives me a list to starboard — let us be ever nautical!

I do not think with the start I have there will be any difficulty in letting Mr. Henderson go ahead whenever he likes. I will write my story up to its legitimate conclusion; and then we shall be in a position to judge whether a sequel would be desirable, and I would then myself know better about its practicability from the story-teller's point of view. — Yours ever very sincerely,

R. L. Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

This tells of the farther progress of *Treasure Island*, of the price paid for it, and of the modest hopes with which it was launched. "The poet" is Mr. Gosse. The project of a highway story, *Jerry Abershaw*, remained a favourite one with Stevenson until it was superseded three or four years later by another, that of the *Great North Road*, which in its turn had to be abandoned, from lack of health and leisure, after some six or eight chapters had been written.

Braemar, September 1881.

MY DEAR HENLEY, — Thanks for your last. The £100 fell through, or dwindled at least into somewhere about £30. However, that I've taken as a mouthful, so you may look out for *The Sea Cook, or Treasure Island: A Tale of the Buccaneers*, in Young Folks. (The terms are 329 £2, 10s. a page of 4500 words; that's not noble, is it? But I have my copyright safe. I don't get illustrated — a blessing; that's the price I have to pay for my copyright.)

I'll make this boys' book business pay; but I have to make a beginning. When I'm done with Young Folks, I'll try Routledge or some one. I feel pretty sure the *Sea Cook* will do to reprint, and bring something decent at that.

Japp is a good soul. The poet was very gay and pleasant. He told me much: he is simply the most active young man in England, and one of the most intelligent. "He shall o'er Europe, shall o'er earth extend." He is now extending over adjacent parts of Scotland.

I propose to follow up *The Sea Cook* at proper intervals by *Jerry Abershaw: A Tale of Putney Heath* (which or its site I must visit): *The Leading Light: A Tale of the Coast*, *The Squaw Men: or the Wild West*, and other instructive and entertaining work. *Jerry Abershaw* should be good, eh? I love writing boys' books. This first is only an experiment; wait till you see what I can make 'em with my hand in. I'll be the Harrison Ainsworth of the future; and a chalk better by St. Christopher; or at least as good. You'll see that even by *The Sea Cook*.

Jerry Abershaw — O what a title! Jerry Abershaw: d — n it, sir, it's a poem. The two most lovely words in English; and what a sentiment! Hark you, how the hoofs ring! Is this a blacksmith's? No, it's a wayside inn. Jerry Abershaw. "It was a clear, frosty evening, not 100 miles from Putney," etc. Jerry Abershaw. Jerry Abershaw. Jerry Abershaw.

The Sea Cook is now in its sixteenth chapter, and bids for well up in the thirties. Each three chapters is worth £2, 10s. So we've £12, 10s. already.

Don't read Marryat's *Pirate* anyhow; it is written in sand with a salt-spoon: arid, feeble, vain, tottering production. 330 But then we're not always all there. *He* was *all* somewhere else that trip. It's *damnable*, Henley. I don't go much on *The Sea Cook*; but, Lord, it's a little fruitier than the *Pirate* by Cap'n. Marryat.

Since this was written *The Cook* is in his nineteenth chapter. Yo-heave ho!

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

Stevenson's uncle, Dr. George Balfour, had recommended him to wear a specially contrived and hideous respirator for the inhalation of pine-oil.

Braemar, 1881.

Dear Henley, with a pig's snout on
I am starting for London,
Where I likely shall arrive,
On Saturday, if still alive:
Perhaps your pirate doctor might
See me on Sunday? If all's right,
I should then lunch with you and with she
Who's dearer to you than you are to me.
I shall remain but little time
In London, as a wretched clime,
But not so wretched (for none are)
As that of beastly old Braemar.
My doctor sends me skipping. I
Have many facts to meet your eye.
My pig's snout's now upon my face;
And I inhale with fishy grace,
My gills outflapping right and left,
Ol. pin. sylvest. I am bereft
Of a great deal of charm by this —
Not quite the bull's eye for a kiss —
But like a gnome of olden time
Or bogey in a pantomime.
For ladies' love I once was fit,
But now am rather out of it.
Where'er I go, revolted curs
Snap round my military spurs;
The children all retire in fits
And scream their bellowses to bits.

Little I care: the worst's been done:
Now let the cold impoverished sun
Drop frozen from his orbit; let
Fury and fire, cold, wind and wet,
And cataclysmal mad reverses
Rage through the federate universes;
Let Lawson triumph, cakes and ale,
Whisky and hock and claret fail; —
Tobacco, love, and letters perish,
With all that any man could cherish:
You it may touch, not me. I dwell
Too deep already — deep in hell;
And nothing can befall, O damn!
To make me uglier than I am.

R. L. S.

This-yer refers to an ori-nasal respirator for the inhalation of pinewood oil, *oleum pini sylvestris*.

To Thomas Stevenson

With all his throat and lung troubles actively renewed, Stevenson fled to Davos again in October. This time he and his wife and stepson occupied a small house by themselves, the Chalet am Stein, near the Buol Hotel. The election to the Edinburgh Professorship was still pending, and the following note to his father shows that he thought for a moment of giving the electors a specimen of his qualifications in the shape of a magazine article on the Appin murder — a theme afterwards turned to more vital account in the tales of *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, October 1881.*]

MY DEAR FATHER, — It occurred to me last night in bed that I could write

The Murder of Red Colin,
A Story of the Forfeited Estates.

This I have all that is necessary for, with the following exceptions: —

Trials of the Sons of Roy Rob with Anecdotes: Edinburgh, 1818, and
The second volume of Blackwood's Magazine.

You might also look in Arnot's *Criminal Trials* up in my room, and see what observations he has on the case (Trial of James Stewart in Appin for murder of Campbell of Glenure, 1752); if he has none, perhaps you could see — O yes, see if Burton has it in his two vols. of trial stories. I hope he hasn't; but care not; do it over again anyway.

The two named authorities I must see. With these, I could soon pull off this article; and it shall be my first for the electors. — Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Some of the habitual readers of Young Folks had written objecting to the early instalments of *Treasure Island,* and the editor had come forward in their defence.

Davos Printing Office, managed by Samuel Lloyd

Osbourne & Co., The Chalet [*Nov. 9, 1881*].

DEAR WEG, — If you are taking Young Folks, for God's Sake Twig the editorial style; it is incredible; we are all left panting in the rear; twig, O twig it. His name is Clinton; I should say the most melodious prosewriter now alive; it's like buttermilk and blacking; it sings and hums away in that last sheet, like a great old kettle full of bilge water. You know: none of us could do it, boy. See No. 571, last page: an article called "Sir Claude the Conqueror," and read it *aloud* in your best rhythmic tones; mon cher, c'est épatant.

Observe in the same number, how Will J. Shannon girds at your poor friend; and how the rhythmic Clinton steps chivalrously forth in his defence. First the Rev. 333 Purcell; then Will J. Shannon: thick fall the barbéd arrows.

I wish I could play a game of chess with you.

If I survive, I shall have Clinton to dinner: it is plain I must make hay while the sun shines; I shall not long keep a footing in the world of penny writers, or call them obolists. It is a world full of surprises, a romantic world. Weg, I was known there; even I. The obolists, then, sometimes peruse our works. It is only fair; since I so much batten upon theirs. Talking of which, in Heaven's name, get *The Bondage of Brandon* (3 vols.) by Bracebridge Hemming. It's the devil and all for drollery. There is a Superior (sic) of the Jesuits, straight out of Skelt.

And now look here, I had three points: Clinton — disposed of — (2nd) Benj. Franklin — do you want him? (3rd) A radiant notion begot this morning over an atlas: why not, you who know the lingo, give us a good legendary and historical book on Iceland? It would, or should, be as romantic as a book of Scott's; as strange and stirring as a dream. Think on't. My wife screamed with joy at the idea; and the little Lloyd clapped his hands; so I offer you three readers on the spot.

Fanny and I have both been in bed, tended by the hired sick nurse; Lloyd has a broken finger (so he did not clap his hands literally); Wogg has had an abscess in his ear; our servant is a devil. — I am yours ever, with both of our best regards to Mrs. Gosse,

Robert Louis Stevenson,

The Rejected Obolist.

To W. E. Henley

This letter speaks of contributions to the Magazine of Art (in these years edited by Mr. Henley) from J. A. Symonds and from 334 R. L. S. himself, “Bunyan” meaning the essay on the cuts in Bagster’s edition of the *Pilgrim’s Progress*. A toy press had just been set up in the chalet for the lad Lloyd.

Davos Printing Office, managed by Samuel Lloyd
Osbourne & Co., The Chalet [*Nov. 1881*].

DEAR HENLEY, — I have done better for you than you deserved to hope; the Venice Medley is withdrawn; and I have a Monte Oliveto (short) for you, with photographs and sketches. I think you owe luck a candle; for this no skill could have accomplished without the aid of accident.

How about carving and gilding? I have nearly killed myself over Bunyan; and am too tired to finish him to-day, as I might otherwise have done. For his back is broken. For some reason, it proved one of the hardest things I ever tried to write; perhaps — but no — I have no theory to offer — it went against the spirit. But as I say I girt my loins up and nearly died of it.

In five weeks, six at the latest, I should have a complete proof of *Treasure Island*. It will be from 75 to 80,000 words; and with anything like half good pictures, it should sell. I suppose I may at least hope for eight pic’s? I aspire after ten or twelve. You had better

— Two days later.

Bunyan skips to-day, pretty bad, always with an official letter. Yours came last night. I had already spotted your Dickens; very pleasant and true.

My wife is far from well; quite confined to bed now; drain poisoning. I keep getting better slowly; appetite dicky; but some days I feel and eat well. The weather has been hot and heartless and unDavosy.

I shall give Symonds his note in about an hour from now.

Have done so; he will write of Vesalius and of Botticelli’s Dante for you.

Morris’s *Sigurd* is a grrrrreat poem; that is so. I have cried aloud at this re-reading; he had fine stuff to 335 go on, but he has touched it, in places, with the hand of a master. Yes. Regin and Fafnir are incredibly fine. Love to all. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To P. G. Hamerton

The volume of republished essays here mentioned is *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. “The silly story of the election” refers again to his correspondent’s failure as a candidate for the Edinburgh Chair of Fine Arts.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, December1881.*]

MY DEAR MR. HAMERTON, — My conscience has long been smiting me, till it became nearly chronic. My excuses, however, are many and not pleasant. Almost immediately after I last wrote to you, I had a hemorreage (I can’t spell it), was badly treated by a doctor in the country, and have been a long while picking up — still, in fact, have much to desire on that side. Next, as soon as I got here, my wife took ill; she is, I fear, seriously so; and this combination of two invalids very much depresses both.

I have a volume of republished essays coming out with Chatto and Windus; I wish they would come, that my wife might have the reviews to divert her. Otherwise my news is *nil*. I am up here in a little chalet, on the borders of a pinewood, overlooking a great part of the Davos Thal, a beautiful scene at night, with the moon upon the snowy mountains, and the lights warmly shining in the village. J. A. Symonds is next door to me, just at the foot of my Hill Difficulty (this you will please regard as the House Beautiful), and his society is my great stand-by.

Did you see I had joined the band of the rejected? “Hardly one of us,” said my *confrères* at the bar.

I was blamed by a common friend for asking you to give me a testimonial; in the circumstances he thought it was indelicate. Lest, by some calamity, you should 336 ever have felt the same way, I must say in two words how the matter appeared to me. That silly story of the election altered in no tittle the value of your testimony: so much for that. On the other hand, it led me to take quite a particular pleasure in asking you to give it; and so much for the other. I trust, even if you cannot share it, you will understand my view.

I am in treaty with Bentley for a life of Hazlitt; I hope it will not fall through, as I love the subject, and appear to have found a publisher who loves it also. That, I think, makes things more pleasant. You know I am a fervent Hazlittite; I mean regarding him as *the* English writer who has had the scantiest justice. Besides which, I am anxious to write biography; really, if I understand myself in quest of profit, I think it must be good to live with another man from birth to death. You have tried it, and know.

How has the cruising gone? Pray remember me to Mrs. Hamerton and your son, and believe me, yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

The memory here evoked of Brash the publican, who had been a special butt for some of the youthful pranks of R. L. S. and his friends, inspired in the next few weeks the sets of verses mentioned below (vol. 24, p, 15, 38) in letters which show that the fictitious Johnson and Thomson were far from being dead.

[*Chalet am Stein*], *Davos, December 5, 1881.*

MY DEAR CHARLES, — We have been in miserable case here; my wife worse and worse; and now sent away with Lloyd for sick nurse, I not being allowed to go down. I do not know what is to become of us; and you may imagine how rotten I have been feeling, and feel now, alone with my weasel-dog and my German maid, on the top of a hill here, heavy mist and thin snow all about me, and the devil to pay in general. I don't care so 337 much for solitude as I used to; results, I suppose, of marriage.

Pray write me something cheery. A little Edinburgh gossip, in Heaven's name. Ah! what would I not give to steal this evening with you through the big, echoing, college archway, and away south under the street lamps, and away to dear Brash's, now defunct! But the old time is dead also, never, never to revive. It was a sad time too, but so gay and so hopeful, and we had such sport with all our low spirits and all our distresses, that it looks like a kind of lamplit fairyland behind me. O for ten Edinburgh minutes — sixpence between us, and the ever-glorious Lothian Road, or dear mysterious Leith Walk! But here, a sheer hulk, lies poor Tom Bowling; here in this strange place, whose very strangeness would have been heaven to him then; and aspires, yes, C. B., with tears, after the past. See what comes of being left alone. Do you remember Brash? the sheet of glass that we followed along George Street? Granton? the night at Bonny mainhead? the compass near the sign of the *Twinkling Eye*? the night I lay on the pavement in misery?

I swear it by the eternal sky
Johnson — nor — Thomson ne'er shall die!

Yet I fancy they are dead too; dead like Brash.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

The next is after going down to meet his wife and stepson, when the former had left the doctor's hands at Berne.

Chalet Buol, Davos-Platz, December 26, 1881.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — Yesterday, Sunday and Christmas, we finished this eventful journey by a drive in an *open* sleigh — none others were to be had — seven hours on end through whole forests of Christmas trees. The cold was beyond belief. I have often suffered less at a dentist's. 338 It was a clear, sunny day, but the sun even at noon falls, at this season, only here and there into the Prättigau. I kept up as long as I could in an imitation of a street singer: —

"Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses," etc.

At last Lloyd remarked, a blue mouth speaking from a corpse-coloured face, "You seem to be the only one with any courage left?" And, do you know, with that word my courage disappeared, and I made the rest of the stage in the same dumb wretchedness as the others. My only terror was lest Fanny should ask for brandy, or laudanum, or something. So awful was the idea of putting my hands out, that I half thought I would refuse.

Well, none of us are a penny the worse, Lloyd's cold better; I, with a twinge of the rheumatiz; and Fanny better than her ordinary.

General conclusion between Lloyd and me as to the journey: A prolonged visit to the dentist's, complicated with the fear of death.

Never, O never, do you get me there again. — Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Mr. Gosse and R. L. S. had proposed to Mr. R. W. Gilder, of the Century Magazine, that they should collaborate for him on a series of murder papers, beginning with the Elstree murder; and he had accepted the proposal on terms which they thought liberal.

Hotel Buol, Davos, Dec. 26, 1881.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — I have just brought my wife back, through such cold, in an open sleigh too, as I had never fancied to exist. I won't use the word torture, but go to your dentist's and in nine cases out of ten you will not suffer more pain than we suffered.

This is merely in acknowledgment of your editorial: to say that I shall give my mind at once to the Murder. But I bethink me you can say so much and convey my 339 sense of the liberality of our Cousins, without exhibiting this scrawl. So I may go on to tell you that I have at last found a publisher as eager to publish, as I am to write a Hazlitt. Bentley is the Boy; and very liberal, at least, as per last advices; certainly very friendly and eager, which makes work light, like whistling. I wish I was with the rest of — well, of us — in the red books. But I am glad to get a whack at Hazlitt, howsoe'er.

How goes your Gray? I would not change with you; brother! Gray would never be suited to my temperament, while Hazlitt fits me like a glove.

I hope in your studies in Young Folks you did not miss the delicious reticences, the artistic concealments, and general fine-shade graduation, through which the fact of the Xmas Nr. being 3d. was instilled — too strong — inspired into the mind of the readers. It was superb.

I may add as a postscript: I wish to God I or anybody knew what was the matter with my wife. — Yours ever,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, March 1882.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Herewith *Moral Emblems*. The elephant by Fanny — the rest by me.

I would have sent it long ago. But I must explain. I brought home with me from my bad times in America two strains of unsoundness of mind, the first, a perpetual fear that I can do no more work — the second, a perpetual fear that my friends have quarrelled with me. This last long silence of yours drove me into really believing it, and I dared not write to you.

Well, it's ancient history now, and here are the emblems. A second series is in the press.

Silverado is still unfinished; but I think I have done well on the whole, as you say. I shall be home, I hope, 340 sometime in May, perhaps before; it depends on Fanny's health, which is still far from good and often alarms me. I shall then see your collectanea. I shall not put pen to paper till I settle somewhere else; Hazlitt had better simmer awhile. I have to see Ireland too, who has most kindly written to me and invited me to see his collections.

Symonds grows much on me: in many ways, what you would least expect, a very sound man, and very wise in a wise way. It is curious how F. and I always turn to him for advice: we have learned that his advice is good. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, February 1882.*]

MY DEAR CUMMY, — My wife and I are very much vexed to hear you are still unwell. We are both keeping far better; she especially seems quite to have taken a turn — *the* turn, we shall hope. Please let us know how you get on, and what has been the matter with you; Braemar I believe — the vile hole. You know what a lazy rascal I am, so you won't be surprised at a short letter, I know; indeed, you will be much more surprised at my having had the decency to write at all. We have got rid of our young, pretty, and incompetent maid; and now we have a fine, canny, twinkling, shrewd, auld-farrant peasant body, who gives us good food and keeps us in good spirits. If we could only understand what she says! But she speaks Davos language, which is to German what Aberdeen-awa' is to English, so it comes heavy. God bless you, my dear Cummy; and so says Fanny forbye. — Ever your affectionate,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos*], *22nd February '82.*

MY DEAR CHARLES, — Your most welcome letter has raised clouds of sulphur from my horizon....

I am glad you have gone back to your music. Life is a poor thing, I am more and more convinced, without an art, that always waits for us and is always new. Art and marriage are two very good stand-by's.

In an article which will appear some time in the Cornhill, *Talk and*

Talkers, and where I have full-lengthened the conversation of Bob, Henley, Jenkin, Simpson, Symonds, and Gosse, I have at the end one single word about yourself. It may amuse you to see it.

We are coming to Scotland after all, so we shall meet, which pleases me, and I do believe I am strong enough to stand it this time. My knee is still quite lame.

My wife is better again.... But we take it by turns; it is the dog that is ill now. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

In the early months of this year a hurt knee kept Stevenson more indoors than was good for him.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, February 1882.*]

MY DEAR HENLEY, — Here comes the letter as promised last night. And first two requests: Pray send the enclosed to c/o Blackmore's publisher, 'tis from Fanny; second, pray send us Routledge's shilling book, Edward Mayhew's *Dogs*, by return if it can be managed.

Our dog is very ill again, poor fellow, looks very ill too, only sleeps at night because of morphine; and we do not know what ails him, only fear it to be canker of the ear. He makes a bad, black spot in our life, poor, selfish, silly, little tangle; and my wife is wretched. Otherwise she is 342 better, steadily and slowly moving up through all her relapses. My knee never gets the least better; it hurts to-night, which it has not done for long. I do not suppose my doctor knows any least thing about it. He says it is a nerve that I struck, but I assure you he does not know.

I have just finished a paper, *A Gossip on Romance*, in which I have tried to do, very popularly, about one-half of the matter you wanted me to try. In a way, I have found an answer to the question. But the subject was hardly fit for so chatty a paper, and it is all loose ends. If ever I do my book on the Art of Literature, I shall gather them together and be clear.

To-morrow, having once finished off the touches still due on this, I shall tackle *San Francisco* for you. Then the tide of work will fairly bury me, lost to view and hope. You have no idea what it costs me to wring out my work now. I have certainly been a fortnight over this *Romance*, sometimes five hours a day; and yet it is about my usual length — eight pages or so, and would be a d — — d sight the better for another curry. But I do not think I can honestly re-write it all; so I call it done, and shall only straighten words in a revision currently.

I had meant to go on for a great while, and say all manner of entertaining things. But all's gone. I am now an idiot. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

The following flight of fancy refers to supposed errors of judgment on the part of an eminent firm of publishers, with whom Stevenson had at this time no connection. Very soon afterwards he entered into relations with them which proved equally pleasant and profitable to both parties, and were continued on the most cordial terms until his death.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March 1882.*]

MY DEAR HENLEY, — Last night we had a dinner-party, consisting of the John Addington, curry, onions (lovely 343 onions), and beefsteak. So unusual is any excitement, that F. and I feel this morning as if we had been to a coronation. However I must, I suppose, write.

I was sorry about your female contributor squabble. 'Tis very comic, but really unpleasant. But what care I? Now that I illustrate my own books, I can always offer you a situation in our house — S. L. Osbourne and Co. As an author gets a halfpenny a copy of verses, and an artist a penny a cut, perhaps a proof-reader might get several pounds a year.

O that Coronation! What a shouting crowd there was! I obviously got a firework in each eye. The king looked very magnificent, to be sure; and that great hall where we feasted on seven hundred delicate foods, and drank fifty royal wines — *quel coup d'œil*! but was it not overdone, even for a coronation — almost a vulgar luxury? And eleven is certainly too late to begin dinner. (It was really 6.30 instead of 5.30.)

Your list of books that Cassells have refused in these weeks is not quite complete; they also refused: —

1. Six undiscovered Tragedies, one romantic Comedy, a fragment of Journal extending over six years, and an unfinished Autobiography reaching up to the first performance of King John. By William Shakespeare.
2. The Journals and Private Correspondence of David, King of Israel.
3. Poetical Works of Arthur, Iron Dook of Wellington including a Monody on Napoleon.
4. Eight books of an unfinished novel, *Solomon Crabb*. By Henry Fielding.
5. Stevenson's Moral Emblems.

You also neglected to mention, as *per contra*, that they had during the same time accepted and triumphantly published Brown's *Handbook to Cricket*, *Jones's First French Reader*, and Robinson's *Picturesque Cheshire*, uniform with the same author's *Stately Homes of Salop*.

O if that list could come true! How we would tear at 344 *Solomon Crabb*! O what a bully, bully, bully business. Which would you read first — Shakespeare's autobiography, or his journals? What sport the monody on Napoleon would be — what wooden verse, what stucco ornament! I should read both the autobiography and the journals before I looked at one of the plays, beyond the names of them, which shows that Saintsbury was right, and I do care more for life than for poetry. No — I take it back. Do you know one of the tragedies — a Bible tragedy too — *David* — was written in his third period — much about the same time as Lear? The comedy, *April Rain*, is also a late work. *Beckett* is a fine ranting piece, like *Richard II.*, but very fine for the stage. Irving is to play it this autumn when I'm in town; the part rather suits him — but who is to play Henry — a tremendous creation, sir. Betterton in his private journal seems to have seen this piece; and he says distinctly that Henry is the best part in any play. "Though," he adds, "how it be with the ancient plays I know not. But in this I have ever feared to do ill, and indeed will not be persuaded to that undertaking." So says Betterton. *Rufus* is not so good; I am not pleased with *Rufus*; plainly a *rifaccimento* of some inferior work; but there are some damned fine lines. As for the purely satiric ill-minded *Abelard and Heloise*, another *Troilus, quoi!* it is not pleasant, truly, but what strength, what verve, what knowledge of life, and the Canon! What a finished, humorous, rich picture is the Canon! Ah, there was nobody like Shakespeare. But what I like is the David and Absalom business: Absalom is so well felt — you love him as David did; David's speech is one roll of royal music from the first act to the fifth.

I am enjoying *Solomon Crabb* extremely; Solomon's capital adventure with the two highwaymen and Squire Trecothick and Parson Vance; it is as good, I think, as anything in Joseph Andrews. I have just come to the part where the highwayman with the black patch over 345 his eye has tricked poor Solomon into his place, and the squire and the parson are hearing the evidence. Parson Vance is splendid. How good, too, is old Mrs. Crabb and the coastguardsman in the third chapter, or her delightful quarrel with the sexton of Seaham; Lord Conybeare is surely a little overdone; but I don't know either; he's such damned fine sport. Do you like Sally Barnes? I'm in love with her. Constable Muddon is as good as Dogberry and Verges put together; when he takes Solomon to the cage, and the highwayman gives him Solomon's own guinea for his pains, and kisses Mrs. Muddon, and just then up drives Lord Conybeare, and instead of helping Solomon, calls him all the rascals in Christendom — O Henry Fielding, Henry Fielding! Yet perhaps the scenes at Seaham are the best. But I'm bewildered among all these excellences.

Stay, cried a voice that made the welkin crack —
This here's a dream, return and study BLACK!

— Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Alexander Ireland

The following is in reply to a letter Stevenson had received on some questions connected with his proposed Life of Hazlitt from the veteran critic and bibliographer since deceased, Mr. Alexander Ireland. At the foot is to be found the first reference to his new amusement of wood engraving for the Davos Press: —

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March 1882.*]

MY DEAR SIR, — This formidable paper need not alarm you; it argues nothing beyond penury of other sorts, and is not at all likely to lead me into a long letter. If I were at all grateful it would, for yours has just passed for me a considerable part of a stormy evening. And speaking of gratitude, let me at once and with becoming eagerness accept your kind invitation to Bowdon. I shall hope, if we can agree as to dates when I am nearer hand, to come to you sometime in the month of May. I was 346 pleased to hear you were a Scot; I feel more at home with my compatriots always; perhaps the more we are away, the stronger we feel that bond.

You ask about Davos; I have discoursed about it already, rather sillily I think, in the *Pall Mall*, and I mean to say no more, but the ways of the Muse are dubious and obscure, and who knows? I may be wiled again. As a place of residence, beyond a splendid climate, it has to my eyes but one advantage — the neighbourhood of J. A. Symonds — I dare say you know his work, but the man is far more interesting. It has done me, in my two winters' Alpine exile, much good; so much, that I hope to leave it now for ever, but would not be understood to boast. In my present unpardonably crazy state, any cold might send me skipping, either back to Davos, or further off. Let us hope not. It is dear; a little dreary; very far from many things that both my taste and my needs prompt me to seek; and altogether not the place that I should choose of my free will.

I am chilled by your description of the man in question, though I had almost argued so much from his cold and undigested volume. If the republication does not interfere with my publisher, it will not interfere with me; but there, of course, comes the hitch. I do not know Mr. Bentley, and I fear all publishers like the devil from legend and experience both. However, when I come to town, we shall, I hope, meet and understand each other as well as author and publisher ever do. I liked his letters; they seemed hearty, kind, and personal. Still — I am notedly suspicious of the trade — your news of this republication alarms me.

The best of the present French novelists seems to me, incomparably, Daudet. *Les Rois en Exil* comes very near being a masterpiece. For Zola I have no toleration, though the curious, eminently bourgeois, and eminently French creature has power of a kind. But I would he were deleted. I would not give a chapter of old Dumas (meaning 347 himself, not his collaborators) for the whole boiling of the Zolas. Romance with the smallpox — as the great one: diseased anyway and blackhearted and fundamentally at enmity with joy.

I trust that Mrs. Ireland does not object to smoking; and if you are a teetotaller, I beg you to mention it before I come — I have all the vices; some of the virtues also, let us hope — that, at least, of being a Scotchman, and yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — My father was in the old High School the last year, and walked in the procession to the new. I blush to own I am an Academy boy; it seems modern, and smacks not of the soil.

P.P.S. — I enclose a good joke — at least, I think so — my first efforts at wood engraving printed by my stepson, a boy of thirteen. I will put in also one of my later attempts. I have been nine days at the art — observe my progress.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Gosse

Mrs. Gosse had sent R. L. S. a miniature Bible illustrated with rude cuts, picked up at an outdoor stall. “Lloyd’s new work” is *Black Canyon.*

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March 16, 1882.*]

DEAR MRS. GOSSE, — Thank you heartily for the Bible, which is exquisite. I thoroughly appreciate the whole; but have you done justice to the third lion in Daniel (like the third murderer in Macbeth) — a singular animal — study him well. The soldier in the fiery furnace beats me.

I enclose a programme of Lloyd’s new work. The work I shall send to-morrow, for the publisher is out and I dare not touch his “plant”: *il m’en cuirait.* The 348 work in question I think a huge lark, but still droller is the author’s attitude. Not one incident holds with another from beginning to end; and whenever I discover a new inconsistency, Sam is the first to laugh — with a kind of humorous pride at the thing being so silly.

I saw the note, and I was so sorry my article had not come in time for the old lady. We should all hurry up and praise the living. I must praise Tupper. A propos, did you ever read him? — or know any one who had? That is very droll; but the truth is we all live in a clique, buy each other’s books and like each other’s books; and the great, gaunt, grey, gaping public snaps its big fingers and reads Talmage and Tupper — and *Black Canyon.*

My wife is better; I, for the moment, am but so-so myself; but the printer is in very — how shall we say? — large type at this present, and the sound of the press never ceases. Remember me to Weg. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

NOTICE
To-day is published by S. L. Osbourne & Co.
ILLUSTRATED
BLACK CANYON,
or
Wild Adventures in the Far West.
An
Instructive and amusing TALE written by
Samuel Lloyd Osbourne
Price 6d.

Opinions of the Press

Although *Black Canyon* is rather shorter than ordinary for that kind of story, it is an excellent work. We cordially recommend it to our readers. — *Weekly Messenger.*

S. L. Osbourne's new work (*Black Canyon*) is splendidly illustrated. In the story, the characters are bold and 349 striking. It reflects the highest honour on its writer. — *Morning Call.*

A very remarkable work. Every page produces an effect. The end is as singular as the beginning. I never saw such a work before. — *R. L. Stevenson.*

To Sidney Colvin

I had written to him of the proposal that I should do the volume on Keats for Macmillan's *English Men of Letters* series. From his essay, *Talk and Talkers*, I was eventually left out.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, Spring 1882.*]

DEAR COLVIN, — About Keats — well yes, I wonder; I see all your difficulties and yet, I have the strongest kind of feeling that critical biography is your real vein. The Landor was one nail; another, I think, would be good for you and the public. Indeed I would do the Keats. He is worth doing; it is a brave and a sad little story, and the critical part lies deep in the very vitals of art. All summed, I would do him; remember it is but a small order alongside of Landor; and £100, and kudos, and a good word for the poor, great lad, who will otherwise fall among the molluscs. Up, heart! give me a John Keats! Houghton, though he has done it with grace, has scarce done it with grip.

I have put you into *Talk and Talkers* sure enough. God knows, I hope I shall offend nobody; I do begin to quake mightily over that paper. I have a *Gossip on Romance* about done; it puts some real criticism in a light way, I think. It is destined for Longman who (dead secret) is bringing out a new Mag. (6d.) in the Autumn. Dead Secret: all his letters are three deep with masks and passwords, and I swear on a skull daily. F. has reread *Treasure Id.*, against which she protested; and now she thinks the end about as good as the beginning; only some six chapters situate about the midst of the tale to 350 be rewritten. This sounds hopefuller. My new long story, *The Adventures of John Delafield*, is largely planned.

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Stevenson and Mr. Gosse were still meditating a book in which some of the famous historical murder cases should be retold (see above,). "Gray" and "Keats" are volumes in the *English Men of Letters* series.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March 23, 1882.*]

MY DEAR WEG, — And I had just written the best note to Mrs. Gosse that was in my power. Most blameable.

I now send (for Mrs. Gosse)

BLACK CANYON

Also an advertisement of my new appearance as poet (bard, rather) and hartis on wood. The cut represents the Hero and the Eagle, and is emblematic of Cortez first viewing the Pacific Ocean, which (according to the bard Keats) it took place in Darien. The cut is much admired for the sentiment of discovery, the manly proportions of the voyager, and the fine impression of tropical scenes and the untrodden WASTE, so aptly rendered by the hartis.

I would send you the book; but I declare I'm ruined. I got a penny a cut and a halfpenny a set of verses from the flint-hearted publisher, and only one specimen copy, as I'm a sinner. — — was apostolic alongside of Osbourne.

I hope you will be able to decipher this, written at steam speed with a breaking pen, the hotfast postman at my heels. No excuse, says you. None, sir, says I, and touches my 'at most civil (extraordinary evolution of pen, now quite doomed — to resume —) I have not put pen to the Bloody Murder yet. But it is early on my list; and when once I get to it, three weeks should see the last bloodstain — maybe a fortnight. For I am beginning to combine an extraordinary laborious slowness while at 351 work, with the most surprisingly quick results in the way of finished manuscripts. How goes Gray? Colvin is to do Keats. My wife is still not well. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Dr. Alexander Japp

"The enclosed" means a packet of the Davos Press cuts.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March 1882.*]

MY DEAR DR. JAPP, — You must think me a forgetful rogue, as indeed I am; for I have but now told my publisher to send you a copy of the *Familiar Studies*. However, I own I have delayed this letter till I could send you the enclosed. Remembering the nights at Braemar when we visited the Picture Gallery, I hoped they might amuse you. You see, we do some publishing hereaway. I shall hope to see you in town in May. — Always yours faithfully,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Dr. Alexander Japp

The references in the first paragraph are to the volume *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*.

Chalet am Stein, Davos, April 1, 1882.

MY DEAR DR. JAPP, — A good day to date this letter, which is in fact a confession of incapacity. During my wife's illness I somewhat lost my head, and entirely lost a great quire of corrected proofs. This is one of the results; I hope there are none more serious. I was never so sick of any volume as I was of that; I was continually receiving fresh proofs with fresh infinitesimal difficulties. I was ill — I did really fear my wife was worse than ill. Well, it's out now; and though I have observed several carelessnesses myself, and now here's another of your finding — of which, indeed, I ought to be ashamed — it will only justify the sweeping humility of the Preface.

Symonds was actually dining with us when your letter 352 came, and I communicated your remarks.... He is a far better and more interesting thing than any of his books.

The Elephant was my wife's; so she is proportionately elate you should have picked it out for praise — from a collection, let me add, so replete with the highest qualities of art.

My wicked carcase, as John Knox calls it, holds together wonderfully. In addition to many other things, and a volume of travel, I find I have written, since December, 90 Cornhill pages of magazine work — essays and stories: 40,000 words, and I am none the worse — I am the better. I begin to hope I may, if not outlive this wolverine upon my shoulders, at least carry him bravely like Symonds and Alexander Pope. I begin to take a pride in that hope.

I shall be much interested to see your criticisms; you might perhaps send them to me. I believe you know that is not dangerous; one folly I have not — I am not touchy under criticism.

Lloyd and my wife both beg to be remembered; and Lloyd sends as a present a work of his own. I hope you feel flattered; for this is *simply the first time he has ever given one away*. I have to buy my own works, I can tell you. — Yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

From about this time until 1885 Mr. Henley acted in an informal way as agent for R. L. S. in most of his dealings with publishers in London. “Both” in the second paragraph means, I think, *Treasure Island* and *Silverado Squatters*.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, April 1882.*]

MY DEAR HENLEY, — I hope and hope for a long letter — soon I hope to be superseded by long talks — and it comes not. I remember I have never formally thanked 353 you for that hundred quid, nor in general for the introduction to Chatto and Windus, and continue to bury you in copy as if you were my private secretary. Well, I am not unconscious of it all; but I think least said is often best, generally best; gratitude is a tedious sentiment, it’s not ductile, not dramatic.

If Chatto should take both, *cui dedicare*? I am running out of dedikees; if I do, the whole fun of writing is stranded. *Treasure Island*, if it comes out, and I mean it shall, of course goes to Lloyd. Lemme see, I have now dedicated to

W. E. H. [William Ernest Henley].
S. C. [Sidney Colvin].
T. S. [Thomas Stevenson].
Simp. [Sir Walter Simpson].

There remain: C. B., the Williamses — you know they were the parties who stuck up for us about our marriage, and Mrs. W. was my guardian angel, and our Best Man and Bridesmaid rolled in one, and the only third of the wedding party — my sister-in-law, who is booked for *Prince Otto* — Jenkin I suppose some time — George Meredith, the only man of genius of my acquaintance, and then I believe I’ll have to take to the dead, the immortal memory business.

Talking of Meredith, I have just re-read for the third and fourth time *The Egoist*. When I shall have read it the sixth or seventh, I begin to see I shall know about it. You will be astonished when you come to re-read it; I had no idea of the matter — human, red matter he has contrived to plug and pack into that strange and admirable book. Willoughby is, of course, a pure discovery; a complete set of nerves, not heretofore examined, and yet running all over the human body — a suit of nerves. Clara is the best girl ever I saw anywhere. Vernon is almost as good. The manner and the faults of the book 354 greatly justify themselves on further study. Only Dr. Middleton does not hang together; and Ladies Busshe and Culmer *sont des monstruosités*. Vernon’s conduct makes a wonderful odd contrast with Daniel Deronda’s. I see more and more that Meredith is built for immortality.

Talking of which, Heywood, as a small immortal, an immortalet, claims some attention. *The Woman killed with Kindness* is one of the most striking novels — not plays, though it’s more of a play than anything else of his — I ever read. He had such a sweet, sound soul, the old boy. The death of the two pirates in *Fortune by Sea and Land* is a document. He had obviously been present, and heard Purser and Clinton take death by the beard with similar braggadocios. Purser and Clinton, names of pirates; Scarlet and Bobbington, names of highwaymen. He had the touch of names, I think. No man I ever knew had such a sense, such a tact, for English nomenclature: Rainsforth, Lacy, Audley, Forrest, Acton, Spencer, Frankford — so his names run.

Byron not only wrote *Don Juan*; he called Joan of Arc "a fanatical strumpet." These are his words. I think the double shame, first to a great poet, second to an English noble, passes words.

Here is a strange gossip. — I am yours loquaciously,

R. L. S.

My lungs are said to be in a splendid state. A cruel examination, an exa*nim*ation I may call it, had this brave result. *Taïaut*! Hillo! Hey! Stand by! Avast! Hurrah!

To Mrs. T. Stevenson

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, April 9, 1882.*]

MY DEAR MOTHER, — Herewith please find belated birthday present. Fanny has another.

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Cockshot = Jenkin.
Jack = Bob.
Burly = Henley.
Athelred = Simpson.
Opalstein = Symonds.
Purcel = Gosse.

My dear mother, how can I keep up with your breathless changes? Innerleithen, Cramond, Bridge of Allan, Dunblane, Selkirk. I lean to Cramond, but I shall be pleased anywhere, any respite from Davos; never mind, it has been a good, though a dear lesson. Now, with my improved health, if I can pass the summer, I believe I shall be able no more to exceed, no more to draw on you. It is time I sufficed for myself indeed. And I believe I can.

I am still far from satisfied about Fanny; she is certainly better, but it is by fits a good deal, and the symptoms continue, which should not be. I had her persuaded to leave without me this very day (Saturday 8th), but the disclosure of my mismanagement broke up that plan; she would not leave me lest I should mismanage more. I think this an unfair revenge; but I have been so bothered that I cannot struggle. All Davos has been drinking our wine. During the month of March, three litres a day were drunk — O it is too sickening — and that is only a specimen. It is enough to make any one a misanthrope, but the right thing is to hate the donkey that was duped — which I devoutly do.

I have this winter finished *Treasure Island*, written the preface to the *Studies*, a small book about the *Inland Voyage* size, *The Silverado*

Squatters, and over and above that upwards of ninety (90) Cornhill pages of magazine work. No man can say I have been idle. — Your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, April 1882.*]

MY DEAR BOB, — Yours received. I have received a communication by same mail from my mother, clamouring for news, which I must answer as soon as I've done this. Of course, I shall paint your game in lively colours.

I hope to get away from here — let me not speak of it ungratefully — from here — by Thursday at latest. I am indeed much better; but a slip of the foot may still cast me back. I must walk circumspectly yet awhile. But O to be able to go out and get wet, and not spit blood next day!

Yes, I remember the *enfantement* of the Arabian Nights; the first idea of all was the handsome cabs, which I communicated to you in St. Leonard's Terrace drawing-room. That same afternoon the Prince de Galles and the Suicide Club were invented; and several more now forgotten. I must try to start 'em again.

Lloyd I believe is to be a printer — in the meantime he confines himself to being an expense. He is a first-rate lad for all that. He is now interrupting me about twice to the line, which does not condooce to clarity, I'm afraid.

Fanny is still far from well, quite far from well. My faith is in the Pirate.

I enclose all my artistic works; they are woodcuts — I cut them with a knife out of blocks of wood: I am a wood-engraver; I aaaam a wooooood engraaaaver. Lloyd then prints 'em: are they not fun? I doat on them; in my next venture, I am going to have colour printing; it will be very laborious, six blocks to cut for each picter, but the result would be pyramidal.

If I get through the summer, I settle in Autumn in le pays de France; I believe in the Brittany and become a *Snoozer*. You will come and snooze awhile won't you, and try and get Louisa to join.

Pepys was a decent fellow; singularly like Charles 357 Baxter, by the way, in every character of mind and taste, and not unlike him in face. I did not mean I had been too just to him but not just enough to bigger swells. I would rather have *known* Pepys than the whole jing-bang; I doat on him as a card to know.

We shall be pretty poor at the start, of course, but I guess we can haul through. Only intending visitors to the Brittannic Castle must not look for nightingales' tongues. When next you see the form of the jeune et beau pray give him my love, when I come to Weybridge, I'll hope to see him. — Ever yours affectionately,

R. L. Stevenson, 1er Roi de Béotie.

Pour copie conforme,

Le sécrétaire Royale, W. P. Bannatyne.

To Trevor Haddon

The few remaining letters of this period are dated from Edinburgh and from Stobo Manse, near Peebles. This, in the matter of weather and health, was the most disappointing of all Stevenson's attempts at summer residence in Scotland. Before going to Stobo he made a short excursion with his father to Lochearnhead; and later spent some three weeks with me at Kingussie, but from neither place wrote any letters worth preserving. The following was addressed to a young art-student who had read the works of Walt Whitman after reading Stevenson's essay on him, and being staggered by some things he found there had written asking for further comment and counsel.

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [*June 1882*].

DEAR SIR, — If I have in any way disquieted you, I believe you are justified in bidding me stand and deliver a remedy if there be one: which is the point.

1st I am of your way of thinking: that a good deal of Whitman is as well taken once but 2nd I quite believe that it is better to have everything brought before one in books. In that way the problems reach us when we are cool, and not warped by the sophistries of an instant passion. Life itself presents its problems with a terrible directness and at the very hour when we are least able to 358 judge calmly. Hence this Pisgah sight of all things, off the top of a book, is only a rational preparation for the ugly grips that must follow.

But 3rd, no man can settle another's life for him. It is the test of the nature and courage of each that he shall decide it for himself. Each in turn must meet and beard the Sphynx. Some things however I must say — and you will treat them as things read in a book for you to accept or refuse as you shall see most fit.

Go not out of your way to make difficulties. Hang back from life while you are young. Shoulder no responsibilities. You do not yet know how far you can trust yourself — it will not be very far, or you are more fortunate than I am. If you can keep your sexual desires in order, be glad, be very glad. Some day, when you meet your fate, you will be free, and the better man. *Don't make a boy and girl friendship that which it is not.* Look at Burns: that is where amourettes conduct an average good man; and a tepid marriage is only a more selfish amourette — in the long run. Whatever you do, see that you don't sacrifice a woman; that's where all imperfect loves conduct us. At the same time, if you can make it convenient to be chaste, for God's sake, avoid the primness of your virtue; hardness to a poor harlot is a sin lower than the ugliest unchastity.

Never be in a hurry anyhow.

There is my sermon.

Certainly, you cannot too earnestly go in for the Greek; and about any art, think last of what pays, first of what pleases. It is in that spirit only that an art can be made. Progress in art is made by learning to *enjoy* it. That which seems a little dull at first, is found to contain the elements of pleasure more largely though more quietly commingled.

I return to my sermon for one more word: Natural desire gives you no right to any particular woman: that comes with love only, and don't be too ready to believe 359 in love: there are many shams: the true love will not allow you to reason about it.

It is your fault if I appear so pulpiteering.

Wishing you well in life and art, and that you may long be young. — Believe me, yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

[*Edinburgh*] *Sunday* [*June 1882*].

... Note turned up, but no gray opuscule, which, however, will probably turn up to-morrow in time to go out with me to Stobo Manse, Peeblesshire, where, if you can make it out, you will be a good soul to pay a visit. I shall write again about the opuscule; and about Stobo, which I have not seen since I was thirteen, though my memory speaks delightfully of it.

I have been very tired and seedy, or I should have written before, *inter alia*, to tell you that I had visited my murder place and found *living traditions* not yet in any printed book; most startling. I also got photographs taken, but the negatives have not yet turned up. I lie on the sofa to write this, whence the pencil; having slept yesterday — 1 + 4 + 7½ = 12½ hours and being (9 a.m.) very anxious to sleep again. The arms of Porpus, quoi! A poppy gules, etc.

From Stobo you can conquer Peebles and Selkirk, or to give them their old decent names, Tweeddale and Ettrick. Think of having been called Tweeddale, and being called Peebles! Did I ever tell you my skit on my own travel books? We understand that Mr. Stevenson has in the press another volume of unconventional travels: *Personal Adventures in Peeblesshire*. Je la trouve méchante. — Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

Did I say I had seen a verse on two of the Buccaneers? I did, and *ça-y-est.*

To Trevor Haddon

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [*June 1882*].

MY DEAR SIR, — I see nothing "cheekie" in anything you have done. Your letters have naturally given me much pleasure, for it seems to me you are a pretty good young fellow, as young fellows go; and if I add that you remind me of myself, you need not accuse me of retrospective vanity.

You now know an address which will always find me; you might let me have your address in London; I do not promise anything — for I am always overworked in London — but I shall, if I can arrange it, try to see you.

I am afraid I am not so rigid on chastity: you are probably right in your view; but this seems to me a dilemma with two horns, the real curse of a man's life in our state of society — and a woman's too, although, for many reasons, it appears somewhat differently with the enslaved sex. By your "fate" I believe I meant your marriage, or that love at least which may befall any one of us at the shortest notice and overthrow the most settled habits and opinions. I call that your fate, because then, if not before, you can no longer hang back, but must stride out into life and act. — Believe me, yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

Mr. Gosse had mistaken the name of the Peeblesshire manse, and is reproached accordingly. "Gray" is Mr. Gosse's volume on that poet in Mr. Morley's series of *English Men of Letters*.

Stobo Manse, Peeblesshire [*July 1882*].

I would shoot you, but I have no bow:
The place is not called Stobs, but Stobo.
As Gallic Kids complain of "Bobo,"
I mourn for your mistake of Stobo.

First, we shall be gone in September. But if you think of coming in August, my mother will hunt for you with pleasure. We should all be overjoyed — though Stobo it could not be, as it is but a kirk and manse, but possibly somewhere within reach. Let us know.

Second, I have read your Gray with care. A more difficult subject I can scarce fancy; it is crushing; yet I think you have managed to shadow forth a man, and a good man too; and honestly, I doubt if I could have done the same. This may seem egoistic; but you are not such a fool as to think so. It is the natural expression of real praise. The book as a whole is readable; your subject peeps every here and there out of the crannies like a shy violet — he could do no more — and his aroma hangs there.

I write to catch a minion of the post. Hence brevity. Answer about the house. — Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

In the heat of conversation Stevenson was accustomed to invent any number of fictitious personages, generally Scottish, and to give them names and to set them playing their imaginary parts in life, reputable or otherwise. Many of these inventions, including Mr. Pirbright Smith and Mr. Pegfurth Bannatyne, were a kind of incarnations of himself, or of special aspects of himself; they assumed for him and his friends a kind of substantial existence; and constantly in talk, and occasionally in writing, he would keep up the play of reporting their sayings and doings quite gravely, as in the following: —

[*Stobo Manse, July 1882.*]

DEAR HENLEY,... I am not worth an old damn. I am also crushed by bad news of Symonds; his good lung going; I cannot help reading it as a personal hint; God help us all! Really, I am not very fit for work; but I try, try, and nothing comes of it.

I believe we shall have to leave this place; it is low, damp, and *mauchy*; the rain it raineth every day; and the glass goes tol-de-rol-de-riddle.

Yet it's a bonny bit; I wish I could live in it, but doubt. I wish I was well away somewhere else. I feel like flight some days; honour bright.

Pirbright Smith is well. Old Mr. Pegfurth Bannatyne is here staying at a country inn. His whole baggage is a pair of socks and a book in a fishing-basket; and he borrows even a rod from the landlord. He walked here over the hills from Sanquhar, "singin'," he says, "like a mavis." I naturally asked him about Hazlitt. "He wouldnae take his drink," he said, "a queer, queer fellow." But did not seem further communicative. He says he has become "releegious," but still swears like a trooper. I asked him if he had no headquarters. "No likely," said he. He says he is writing his memoirs, which will be interesting. He once met Borrow; they boxed; "and Geordie," says the old man chuckling, "gave me the damnedest hiding." Of Wordsworth he remarked, "He wasnae sound in the faith, sir, and a milk-blooded, blue-spectacled bitch forbye. But his po'mes are grand — there's no denying that." I asked him what his book was. "I havenae mind," said he — that was his only book! On turning it out, I found it was one of my own, and on showing it to him, he remembered it at once. "O aye," he said, "I mind now. It's pretty bad; ye'll have to do better than that, chieldy," and chuckled, chuckled. He is a strange old figure, to be sure. He cannot endure Pirbright Smith — "a mere æsthatic," he said. "Pooh!" "Fishin' and releegion — these are my aysthatics," he wound up.

I thought this would interest you, so scribbled it down. I still hope to get more out of him about Hazlitt, though he utterly pooh-poohed the idea of writing H.'s life. "Ma life now," he said, "there's been queer things in *it*." He is seventy-nine! but may well last to a hundred! — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

VII

THE RIVIERA AGAIN — MARSEILLES AND HYÈRES

October 1882 — August 1884

In the two years and odd months since his return from California, Stevenson had made no solid gain of health. His winters, and especially his second winter, at Davos had seemed to do him much temporary good; but during the summers in Scotland he had lost as much as he had gained, or more. Loving the Mediterranean shores of France from of old, he now made up his mind to try them once again.

As the ways and restrictions of a settled invalid were repugnant to Stevenson's character and instincts, so were the life and society of a regular invalid station depressing and uncongenial to him. He determined, accordingly, to avoid settling in one of these, and hoped to find a suitable climate and habitation that should be near, though not in, some centre of the active and ordinary life of man, with accessible markets, libraries, and other resources. In September 1882 he started with his cousin Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson in search of a new home, and 4 thought first of trying the Languedoc coast, a region new to him. At Montpellier, he was laid up again with a bad bout of his lung troubles; and, the doctor not recommending him to stay, returned to Marseilles. Here he was rejoined by his wife, and after a few days' exploration in the neighbourhood they lighted on what seemed exactly the domicile they wanted. This was a roomy and attractive enough house and garden called the Campagne Defli, near the manufacturing suburb of St. Marcel, in a sheltered position in full view of the shapely coastward hills. By the third week in October they were installed, and in eager hopes of pleasant days to come and a return to working health. These hopes were not realised. Week after week went on, and the hemorrhages and fits of fever and exhaustion did not diminish. Work, except occasional verses, and a part of the story called *The Treasure of Franchard*, would not flow, and the time had to be whiled away with games of patience and other resources of the sick man. Nearly two months were thus passed; during the whole of one of them Stevenson had not been able to go beyond the garden; and by Christmas he had to face the fact that the air of the place was tainted. An epidemic of fever, due to some defect of drainage, broke out, and it became clear that this could be no home for Stevenson. Accordingly, at his wife's instance, though having scarce the strength to travel, he left suddenly for Nice, she staying behind to pack their chattels and wind up their affairs and responsibilities as well as might be. Various misadventures, miscarriages of telegrams, journeys taken at cross purposes and the like, making existence uncomfortably dramatic at the moment, caused the couple to believe for a while that they had fairly lost each other. Mrs. Stevenson allows me to print a letter from herself [5] to Mr. J. A. Symonds vividly relating these predicaments (see foll.). At last, in the course of January, they came safely together at Marseilles, and next made a few weeks' stay at Nice, where Stevenson's health quickly mended. Thence they returned as far as Hyères. Staying here through the greater part of February, at the Hôtel des Îles d'Or, and finding the place to their liking, they cast about once more for a resting-place, and were this time successful.

The house chosen by the Stevensons at Hyères was not near the sea, but inland, on the road above the old town and beneath the ruins of the castle. The Chalet La Solitude it was called; a cramped but habitable cottage built in the Swiss manner, with a pleasant strip of garden, and a view and situation hardly to be bettered. Here he and his family lived for the next sixteen months (March 1883 to July 1884). To the first part of this period he often afterwards referred as the happiest time of his life. His malady remained quiescent enough to afford, at least to his own buoyant spirit, a strong hope of ultimate recovery. He delighted in his surroundings, and realised for the first time the joys of a true home of his own. The last shadow of a cloud between himself and his parents had long passed away; and towards his father, now in declining health, and often suffering from moods of constitutional depression, the son begins on his part to assume, how touchingly and tenderly will be seen from the following letters, a quasi-paternal attitude of encouragement and monition. At the same time his work on the completion of the *Silverado Squatters*, on *Prince Otto*, the *Child's Garden of Verses* (for which his own name was *Penny Whistles*), on the *Black Arrow* (designated hereinafter, on account of its Old English [6] dialect, as "tushery"), and other undertakings prospered well. In the autumn the publication of *Treasure Island* in book form brought with it the first breath of popular applause. The reader will see how modest a price Stevenson was content, nay, delighted, to receive for this classic. It was two or three years yet before he could earn enough to support himself and his family by literature: a thing he had always been earnestly bent on doing, regarding it as the only justification for his chosen way of life. In the meantime, it must be understood, whatever help he needed from his father was from the hour of his marriage always amply and ungrudgingly given.

In September of the same year, 1883, Stevenson had felt deeply the death of his old friend James Walter Ferrier (see the essay *Old Mortality* and the references in the following letters). But still his health held out fairly, until, in January 1884, on a visit to Nice, he was unexpectedly prostrated anew by an acute congestion of the internal organs, which for the time being brought him to death's door. Returning to his home, his recovery had been only partial when, after four months (May 1884), a recurrence of violent hemorrhages from the lung once more prostrated him completely; soon after which he quitted Hyères, and the epidemic of cholera which broke out there the same summer prevented all thoughts of his return.

The Hyères time, both during the happy and hard-working months of March-December 1883, and the semi-convalescence of February-May 1884, was a prolific one in the way of correspondence; and there is perhaps no period of his life when his letters reflect so fully the variety of his moods and the eagerness of his occupations.

7

To the Editor of the New York Tribune

At Marseilles, while waiting to occupy the house which he had leased in the suburbs of that city, Stevenson learned that his old friend and kind adviser, Mr. James Payn, with whom he had been intimate as sub-editor of the Cornhill Magazine under Mr. Leslie Stephen in the '70's, had been inadvertently represented in the columns of the New York Tribune as a plagiarist of R. L. S. In order to put matters right, he at once sent the following letter both to the Tribune and to the London Athenæum: —

Terminus Hotel, Marseilles, October 16, 1882.

SIR, — It has come to my ears that you have lent the authority of your columns to an error.

More than half in pleasantry — and I now think the pleasantry ill-judged — I complained in a note to my *New Arabian Nights* that some one, who shall remain nameless for me, had borrowed the idea of a story from one of mine. As if I had not borrowed the ideas of the half of my own! As if any one who had written a story ill had a right to complain of any other who should have written it better! I am indeed thoroughly ashamed of the note, and of the principle which it implies.

But it is no mere abstract penitence which leads me to beg a corner of your paper — it is the desire to defend the honour of a man of letters equally known in America and England, of a man who could afford to lend to me and yet be none the poorer; and who, if he would so far condescend, has my free permission to borrow from me all that he can find worth borrowing.

Indeed, sir, I am doubly surprised at your correspondent's error. That James Payn should have borrowed from me is already a strange conception. The author of *Lost Sir Massingberd* and *By Proxy* may be trusted to invent his own stories. The author of *A Grape from a Thorn* knows enough, in his own right, of the humorous and pathetic sides of human nature.

But what is far more monstrous — what argues total ignorance of the man in question — is the idea that James 8 Payn could ever have transgressed the limits of professional propriety. I may tell his thousands of readers on your side of the Atlantic that there breathes no man of letters more inspired by kindness and generosity to his brethren of the profession, and, to put an end to any possibility of error, I may be allowed to add that I often have recourse, and that I had recourse once more but a few weeks ago, to the valuable practical help which he makes it his pleasure to extend to younger men.

I send a duplicate of this letter to a London weekly; for the mistake, first set forth in your columns, has already reached England, and my wanderings have made me perhaps last of the persons interested to hear a word of it. — I am, etc.,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

Terminus Hotel, Marseille, Saturday [*October* 1882].

MY DEAR BOB, — We have found a house! — at Saint Marcel, Banlieue de Marseille. In a lovely valley between hills part wooded, part white cliffs; a house of a dining-room, of a fine salon — one side lined with a long divan — three good bedrooms (two of them with dressing-rooms), three small rooms (chambers of *bonne* and sich), a large kitchen, a lumber room, many cupboards, a back court, a large olive yard, cultivated by a resident *paysan*, a well, a berceau, a good deal of rockery, a little pine shrubbery, a railway station in front, two lines of omnibus to Marseille.

£48 per annum.

It is called Campagne Defli! query Campagne Debug? The Campagne Demosquito goes on here nightly, and is very deadly. Ere we can get installed, we shall be beggared to the door, I see.

I vote for separations; F.'s arrival here, after our 9 separation, was better fun to me than being married was by far. A separation completed is a most valuable property; worth piles. — Ever your affectionate cousin,

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

Terminus Hotel, Marseille, le 17th October 1882.

MY DEAR FATHER, — We grow, every time we see it, more delighted with our house. It is five miles out of Marseilles, in a lovely spot, among lovely wooded and cliffy hills — most mountainous in line — far lovelier, to my eyes, than any Alps. To-day we have been out inventorying; and though a mistral blew, it was delightful in an open cab, and our house with the windows open was heavenly, soft, dry, sunny, southern. I fear there are fleas — it is called Campagne

Defli — and I look forward to tons of insecticide being employed.

I have had to write a letter to the New York Tribune and the Athenæum. Payn was accused of stealing my stories! I think I have put things handsomely for him.

Just got a servant!!! — Ever affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

Our servant is a Muckle Hash of a Weedy!

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

The next two months' letters had perforce to consist of little save bulletins of back-going health, and consequent disappointment and incapacity for work.

Campagne Defli, St. Marcel, Banlieue de Marseille, November 13, 1882.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — Your delightful letters duly arrived this morning. They were the only good feature of the day, which was not a success. Fanny was in bed — she begged I would not split upon her, she felt so guilty; but as I believe she is better this evening, and has a good 10 chance to be right again in a day or two, I will disregard her orders. I do not go back, but do not go forward — or not much. It is, in one way, miserable — for I can do no work; a very little wood-cutting, the newspapers, and a note about every two days to write, completely exhausts my surplus energy; even Patience I have to cultivate with parsimony. I see, if I could only get to work, that we could live here with comfort, almost with luxury. Even as it is, we should be able to get through a considerable time of idleness. I like the place immensely, though I have seen so little of it — I have only been once outside the gate since I was here! It puts me in mind of a summer at Prestonpans and a sickly child you once told me of.

Thirty-two years now finished! My twenty-ninth was in San Francisco, I remember — rather a bleak birthday. The twenty-eighth was not much better; but the rest have been usually pleasant days in pleasant circumstances.

Love to you and to my father and to Cummy.

From me and Fanny and Wogg.

R. L. S.

To Trevor Haddon

Campagne Defli, St. Marcel, Dec. 29*th,* 1882.

DEAR SIR, — I am glad you sent me your note, I had indeed lost your address, and was half thinking to try the Ringstown one; but far from being busy, I have been steadily ill. I was but three or four days in London, waiting till one of my friends was able to accompany me, and had neither time nor health to see anybody but some publisher people. Since then I have been worse and better, better and worse, but never able to do any work and for a large part of the time forbidden to write and even to play Patience, that last of civilised amusements. In brief, I have been “the sheer hulk” to a degree almost outside of my experience, and I desire all my friends to 11 forgive me my sins of omission this while back. I only wish you were the only one to whom I owe a letter, or many letters.

But you see, at least, you had done nothing to offend me; and I dare say you will let me have a note from time to time, until we shall have another chance to meet. — Yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

An excellent new year to you, and many of them.

If you chance to see a paragraph in the papers describing my illness, and the “delicacies suitable to my invalid condition” cooked in copper, and the other ridiculous and revolting yarns, pray regard it as a spectral illusion, and pass by.

[Mrs. R. L. Stevenson
to John Addington Symonds

I intercalate here Mrs. Stevenson’s extremely vivid and characteristic account of the weird misadventures that befell the pair during their retreat from St. Marcel in search of a healthier home.

[*Campagne Defli, St. Marcel, January* 1883.]

MY DEAR MR. SYMONDS, — What must you think of us? I hardly dare write to you. What do you do when people to whom you have been the dearest of friends requite you by acting like fiends? I do hope you heap coals of fire on their heads in the good old Christian sense.

Louis has been very ill again. I hasten to say that he is now better. But I thought at one time he would never be better again. He had continual hemorrhages and became so weak that he was twice insensible in one day, and was for a long time like one dead. At the worst fever broke out in this village, typhus, I think, and all day the death-bells rang, and we could hear the chanting whilst the wretched villagers carried about their dead lying bare to the sun on their coffin-lids, so spreading the contagion through the streets. The evening of the day when Louis was so long insensible the weather changed, becoming very 12 clear and fine and greatly refreshing and reviving him. Then I said if it held good he should start in the morning for Nice and try what a change might do. Just at that time there was not money enough for the two of us, so he had to start alone, though I expected soon to be able to follow him. During the night a peasant-man died in a house in our garden, and in the morning the corpse, hideously swollen in the stomach, was lying on its coffin-lid at our gates. Fortunately it was taken away just before Louis went, and he didn’t see it nor hear anything about it until afterwards. I had been back and forth all the morning from the door to the gates, and from the gates to the door, in an agony lest Louis should have to pass it on his way out.

I was to have a despatch from Toulon where Louis was to pass the night, two hours from St. Marcel, and another from Nice, some few hours further, the next day. I waited one, two, three, four days, and no word came. Neither telegram nor letter. The evening of the fourth day I went to Marseilles and telegraphed to the Toulon and Nice stations and to the bureau of police. I had been pouring out letters to every place I could think of. The people at Marseilles were very kind and advised me to take no further steps to find my husband. He was certainly dead, they said. It was plain that he stopped at some little station on the road, speechless and dying, and it was now too late to do anything; I had much better return at once to my friends. "Eet ofen 'appens so," said the Secretary, and "Oh yes, all right, very well," added a Swiss in a sympathetic voice. I waited all night at Marseilles and got no answer, all the next day and got no answer; then I went back to St. Marcel and there was nothing there. At eight I started on the train with Lloyd who had come for his holidays, but it only took us to Toulon where again I telegraphed. At last I got an answer the next day at noon. I waited at Toulon for the train I had reason to believe Louis travelled by, 13 intending to stop at every station and inquire for him until I got to Nice. Imagine what those days were to me. I never received any of the letters Louis had written to me, and he was reading the first he had received from me when I knocked at his door. A week afterwards I had an answer from the police. Louis was much better: the change and the doctor, who seems very clever, have done wonderful things for him. It was during this first day of waiting that I received your letter. There was a vague comfort in it like a hand offered in the darkness, but I did not read it until long after.

We have had many other wild misadventures, Louis has twice (started) actually from Nice under a misapprehension. At this moment I believe him to be at Marseilles, stopping at the Hotel du Petit Louvre; I am supposed to be packing here at St. Marcel, afterwards we are to go somewhere, perhaps to the Lake of Geneva. My nerves were so shattered by the terrible suspense I endured that memorable week that I have not been fit to do much. When I was returning from Nice a dreadful old man with a fat wife and a weak granddaughter sat opposite me and plied me with the most extraordinary questions. He began by asking if Lloyd was any connection of mine, and ended I believe by asking my mother's maiden name. Another of the questions he put to me was where Louis wished to be buried, and whether I could afford to have him embalmed when he died. When the train stopped the only other passenger, a quiet man in a corner who looked several times as if he wished to interfere and stop the old man but was too shy, came to me and said that he knew Sidney Colvin and he knew you, and that you were both friends of Louis; and that his name was

Basil Hammond, and he wished to stay on a day in Marseilles and help me work off my affairs. I accepted his offer with heartfelt thanks. I was extremely ill next day, but we 14 two went about and arranged about giving up this house and what compensation, and did some things that I could not have managed alone. My French is useful only in domestic economy, and even that, I fear, is very curious and much of it patois. Wasn't that a good fellow, and a kind fellow? — I cannot tell you how grateful I am, words are such feeble things — at least for that purpose. For anger, justifiable wrath, they are all too forcible. It was very bad of me not to write to you, we talked of you so often and thought of you so much, and I always said — "now I will write" — and then somehow I could not....

Fanny V. de G. Stevenson.]

To Charles Baxter

After his Christmas flight to Marseilles and thence to Nice, Stevenson began to mend quickly. In this letter to Mr. Baxter he acknowledges the receipt of a specimen proof, set up for their private amusement, of *Brashiana*, the series of burlesque sonnets he had written at Davos in memory of the Edinburgh publican already mentioned. It should be explained that in their correspondence Stevenson and Mr. Baxter were accustomed to keep up an old play of their student days by merging their identities in those of two fictitious personages, Thomson and Johnson, imaginary types of Edinburgh character, and ex-elders of the Scottish Kirk.

Grand Hotel, Nice, 12th January '83.

DEAR CHARLES, — Thanks for your good letter. It is true, man, God's trüth, what ye say about the body Stevison. The deil himsel, it's my belief, couldnae get the soul harled oot o' the creature's wame, or he had seen the hinder end o' they proofs. Ye crack o' Mæcenas, he's naebody by you! He gied the lad Horace a rax forrit by all accounts; but he never gied him proofs like yon. Horace may hae been a better hand at the clink than Stevison — mind, I'm no sayin' 't — but onyway he was never sae weel prentit. Damned, but it's bonny! Hoo mony pages will there be, think ye? Stevison maun hae sent ye the feck o' twenty sangs — fifteen I'se warrant. Weel, that'll can make thretty pages, gin ye were to prent 15 on ae side only, whilk wad be perhaps what a man o' your *great* idees would be ettlin' at, man Johnson. Then there wad be the Pre-face, an' prose ye ken prents oot langer than po'try at the hinder end, for ye hae to say things in't. An' then there'll be a title-page and a dedication and an index wi' the first lines like, and the deil an' a'. Man, it'll be grand. Nae copies to be given to the Liberys.

I am alane myself, in Nice, they ca't, but damned, I think they micht as well ca't Nesty. The Pile-on, 's they ca't, 's aboot as big as the river

Tay at Perth; and it's rainin' maist like Greenock. Dod, I've seen 's had mair o' what they ca' the I-talian at Muttonhole. I-talian! I haenae seen the sun for eicht and forty hours. Thomson's better, I believe. But the body's fair attenyated. He's doon to seeven stane eleeven, an' he sooks awa' at cod liver ile, till it's a fair disgrace. Ye see he tak's it on a drap brandy; and it's my belief, it's just an excuse for a dram. He an' Stevison gang aboot their lane, maistly; they're company to either, like, an' whiles they'll speak o' Johnson. But *he's* far awa', losh me! Stevison's last book 's in a third edeetion; an' it's bein' translated (like the psaulms of David, nae less) into French; and an eediot they ca' Asher — a kind o' rival of Tauchnitz — is bringin' him oot in a paper book for the Frenchies and the German folk in twa volumes. Sae he's in luck, ye see. — Yours,

Thomson.

To Sidney Colvin

Stevenson here narrates in his own fashion by what generalship he at last got rid of the Campagne Defli without having to pay compensation as his wife expected.

Hotel du Petit Louvre, Marseille, 15 Feb. 1883.

DEAR SIR, — This is to intimate to you that Mr. and Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson were yesterday safely delivered

of a

Campagne.

The parents are both doing much better than could be expected; particularly the dear papa.

There, Colvin, I did it this time. Huge success. The propriétaires were scattered like chaff. If it had not been the agent, may Israel now say, if it had not been the agent who was on our side! But I made the agent march! I threatened law; I was Immense — what do I say? — Immeasurable. The agent, however, behaved well and is a fairly honest little one-eared, white-eyed tom-cat of an opera-going gold-hunter. The propriétaire *non est inventa*; we countermarched her, got in valuators; and in place of a hundred francs in her pocket, she got nothing, and I paid *one* silver biscuit! It *might* go further but I am convinced will not, and anyway, I fear not the consequences.

The weather is incredible; my heart sings; my health satisfies even my wife. I did jolly well right to come after all and she now admits it. For she broke down as I knew she would, and I from here, without passing a night at the Defli, though with a cruel effusion of coach-hires, took up the wondrous tale and steered the ship through. I now sit crowned with laurel and literally exulting in kudos. The affair has been better managed than our two last winterings, — I am yours,

Brabazon Drum.

To Alison Cunningham

The verses referred to in the following are those of the *Child's Garden.*

[*Nice, February* 1883.]

MY DEAR CUMMY, — You must think, and quite justly, that I am one of the meanest rogues in creation. But though I do not write (which is a thing I hate), it by no means follows that people are out of my mind. It is natural that I should always think more or less about you, and still more natural that I should think of you when I went back to Nice. But the real reason why you [17] have been more in my mind than usual is because of some little verses that I have been writing, and that I mean to make a book of; and the real reason of this letter (although I ought to have written to you anyway) is that I have just seen that the book in question must be dedicated to

Alison Cunningham,

the only person who will really understand it, I don't know when it may be ready, for it has to be illustrated, but I hope in the meantime you may like the idea of what is to be; and when the time comes, I shall try to make the dedication as pretty as I can make it. Of course, this is only a flourish, like taking off one's hat; but still, a person who has taken the trouble to write things does not dedicate them to any one without meaning it; and you must just try to take this dedication in place of a great many things that I might have said, and that I ought to have done, to prove that I am not altogether unconscious of the great debt of gratitude I owe you. This little book, which is all about my childhood, should indeed go to no other person but you, who did so much to make that childhood happy.

Do you know, we came very near sending for you this winter. If we had not had news that you were ill too, I almost believe we should have done so, we were so much in trouble.

I am now very well; but my wife has had a very, very bad spell, through overwork and anxiety, when I was *lost*! I suppose you heard of that. She sends you her love, and hopes you will write to her, though she no more than I deserves it. She would add a word herself, but she is too played out. — I am, ever your old boy,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

Stevenson was by this time beginning to send home some of the MS. of the *Child's Garden*, the title of which had not yet been settled. [18] The pieces as first numbered are in a different order from that afterwards adopted, but the reader will easily identify the references.

[*Nice, March* 1883.]

MY DEAR LAD, — This is to announce to you the MS. of Nursery Verses, now numbering XLVIII. pieces or 599 verses, which, of course, one might augment *ad infinitum.*

But here is my notion to make all clear.

I do not want a big ugly quarto; my soul sickens at the look of a quarto. I want a refined octavo, not large — not *larger* than the Donkey book, at any price.

I think the full page might hold four verses of four lines, that is to say, counting their blanks at two, of twenty-two lines in height. The first page of each number would only hold two verses or ten lines, the title being low down. At this rate, we should have seventy-eight or eighty pages of letterpress.

The designs should not be in the text, but facing the poem; so that if the artist liked, he might give two pages of design to every poem that turned the leaf, *i.e.* longer than eight lines, *i.e.* to twenty-eight out of the forty-six. I should say he would not use this privilege (?) above five times, and some he might scorn to illustrate at all, so we may say fifty drawings. I shall come to the drawings next.

But now you see my book of the thickness, since the drawings count two pages, of 180 pages; and since the paper will perhaps be thicker, of near two hundred by bulk. It is bound in a quiet green with the words in thin gilt. Its shape is a slender, tall octavo. And it sells for the publisher's fancy, and it will be a darling to look at; in short, it would be like one of the original Heine books in type and spacing.

Now for the pictures. I take another sheet and begin to jot notes for them when my imagination serves: I will run through the book, writing when I have an idea. There, I have jotted enough to give the artist a notion. Of course, I don't do more than contribute ideas, but I will 19 be happy to help in any and every way. I may as well add another idea; when the artist finds nothing much to illustrate, a good drawing of any *object* mentioned in the text, were it only a loaf of bread or a candlestick, is a most delightful thing to a young child. I remember this keenly.

Of course, if the artist insists on a larger form, I must, I suppose, bow my head. But my idea I am convinced is the best, and would make the book truly, not fashionably pretty.

I forgot to mention that I shall have a dedication; I am going to dedicate 'em to Cummy; it will please her, and lighten a little my burthen of ingratitude. A low affair is the Muse business.

I will add no more to this lest you should want to communicate with the artist; try another sheet. I wonder how many I'll keep wandering to.

O I forgot. As for the title, I think "Nursery Verses" the best. Poetry is not the strong point of the text, and I shrink from any title that might seem to claim that quality; otherwise we might have "Nursery Muses" or "New Songs of Innocence" (but that were a blasphemy), or "Rimes of Innocence": the last not bad, or — an idea — "The Jews'

Harp," or — now I have it — "The Penny Whistle."

THE PENNY WHISTLE
NURSERY VERSES
BY
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
ILLUSTRATED BY — — — — — —

And here we have an excellent frontispiece, of a party playing on a P. W. to a little ring of dancing children.

THE PENNY WHISTLE
is the name for me.

Fool! this is all wrong, here is the true name: —

PENNY WHISTLES
FOR SMALL WHISTLERS.

The second title is queried, it is perhaps better, as simply PENNY WHISTLES.

Nor you, O Penny Whistler, grudge
That I your instrument debase:
By worse performers still we judge,
And give that fife a second place!

Crossed penny whistles on the cover, or else a sheaf of 'em.

SUGGESTIONS

IV. The procession — the child running behind it. The procession tailing off through the gates of a cloudy city.

IX. *Foreign Lands.* — This will, I think, want two plates — the child climbing, his first glimpse over the garden wall, with what he sees — the tree shooting higher and higher like the beanstalk, and the view widening. The river slipping in. The road arriving in Fairyland.

X. *Windy Nights.* — The child in bed listening — the horseman galloping.

XII. The child helplessly watching his ship — then he gets smaller, and the doll joyfully comes alive — the pair landing on the island — the ship's deck with the doll steering and the child firing the penny cannon. Query two plates? The doll should never come properly alive.

XV. Building of the ship — storing her — Navigation — Tom's accident, the other child paying no attention.

XXXI. *The Wind.* — I sent you my notion of already.

XXXVII. *Foreign Children.* — The foreign types dancing in a jing-a-ring, with the English child pushing in the middle. The foreign children looking at and showing each other marvels. The English child at the leeside of a roast of beef. The English child sitting thinking with his picture-books 21 all round him, and the jing-a-ring of the foreign children in miniature dancing over the picture-books.

XXXIX. Dear artist, can you do me that?

XLII. The child being started off — the bed sailing, curtains and all, upon the sea — the child waking and finding himself at home; the corner of toilette might be worked in to look like the pier.

XLVII. The lighted part of the room, to be carefully distinguished from my child's dark hunting grounds. A shaded lamp.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Hôtel des Îles d'Or, Hyères, Var, March 2 .

MY DEAR MOTHER, — It must be at least a fortnight since we have had a scratch of a pen from you; and if it had not been for Cummy's letter, I should have feared you were worse again: as it is, I hope we shall hear from you to-day or to-morrow at latest.

Health. — Our news is good: Fanny never got so bad as we feared, and we hope now that this attack may pass off in threatenings. I am greatly better, have gained flesh, strength, spirits; eat well, walk a good deal, and do some work without fatigue. I am off the sick list.

Lodging. — We have found a house up the hill, close to the town, an excellent place though very, very little. If I can get the landlord to agree to let us take it by the month just now, and let our month's rent count for the year in case we take it on, you may expect to hear we are again installed, and to receive a letter dated thus: —

La Solitude,
Hyères-les-Palmiers,
Var.

If the man won't agree to that, of course I must just give it up, as the house would be dear enough anyway at 22 2000 f. However, I hope we may get it, as it is healthy, cheerful, and close to shops, and society, and civilisation. The garden, which is above, is lovely, and will be cool in summer. There are two rooms below with a kitchen, and four rooms above, all told. — Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Thomas Stevenson

"Cassandra" was a nickname of the elder Mr. Stevenson for his daughter-in-law. The scheme of a play to be founded on *Great Expectations* was one of a hundred formed in these days and afterwards given up.

Hôtel des Îles d'Or, but my address will be Chalet la Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var, France, March 17, 1883.

Dear Sir, — Your undated favour from Eastbourne came to hand in course of post, and I now hasten to acknowledge its receipt. We must ask you in future, for the convenience of our business arrangements, to struggle with and tread below your feet this most unsatisfactory and uncommercial habit. Our Mr. Cassandra is better; our Mr. Wogg expresses himself dissatisfied with our new place of business; when left alone in the front shop, he bawled like a parrot; it is supposed the offices are haunted.

To turn to the matter of your letter, your remarks on *Great Expectations* are very good. We have both re-read it this winter, and I, in a manner, twice. The object being a play; the play, in its rough outline, I now see: and it is extraordinary how much of Dickens had to be discarded as unhuman, impossible, and ineffective: all that really remains is the loan of a file (but from a grown-up young man who knows what he was doing, and to a convict who, although he does not know it is his father — the father knows it is his son), and the fact of the convict-father's return and disclosure of himself to the son whom he has made rich. Everything else has been thrown 23 aside; and the position has had to be explained by a prologue which is pretty strong. I have great hopes of this piece, which is very amiable and, in places, very strong indeed: but it was curious how Dickens had to be rolled away; he had made his story turn on such improbabilities, such fantastic trifles, not on a good human basis, such as I recognised. You are right about the casts, they were a capital idea; a good description of them at first, and then afterwards, say second, for the lawyer to have illustrated points out of the history of the originals, dusting the particular bust — that was all the development the thing would bear. Dickens killed them. The only really well *executed* scenes are the riverside ones; the escape in particular is excellent; and I may add, the capture of the two convicts at the beginning. Miss Havisham is, probably, the worst thing in human fiction. But Wemmick I like; and I like Trabb's boy; and Mr. Wopsle as Hamlet is splendid.

The weather here is greatly improved, and I hope in three days to be in the chalet. That is, if I get some money to float me there.

I hope you are all right again, and will keep better. The month of March is past its mid career; it must soon begin to turn toward the lamb; here it has already begun to do so; and I hope milder weather will pick you up. Wogg has eaten a forpet of rice and milk, his beard is streaming, his eyes wild. I am besieged by demands of work from America.

The £50 has just arrived; many thanks; I am now at ease. — Ever your affectionate son, *pro* Cassandra, Wogg and Co.,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

[*Chalet la Solitude, Hyères, April* 1883.]

My head is singing with *Otto*; for the first two weeks I wrote and revised and only finished IV chapters: last 24 week, I have just drafted straight ahead, and I have just finished Chapter XI. It will want a heap of oversight and much will not stand, but the pace is good; about 28 Cornhill pp. drafted in seven days, and almost all of it dialogue — indeed I may say all, for I have dismissed the rest very summarily in the draft: one can always tickle at that. At the same rate, the draft should be finished in ten days more; and then I shall have the pleasure of beginning again at the beginning. Ah damned job! I have no idea whether or not Otto will be good. It is all pitched pretty high and stilted; almost like the Arabs, at that; but of course there is love-making in Otto, and indeed a good deal of it. I sometimes feel very weary; but the thing travels — and I like it when I am at it.

Remember me kindly to all. — Your ex-contributor,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

His correspondent had at his request been writing and despatching to him fair copies of the various sets of verses for the *Child's Garden* (as the collection was ultimately called), which he had been from time to time sending home.

Chalet la Solitude, Hyères [*April* 1883].

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I am one of the lowest of the — but that's understood. I received the copy, excellently written, with I think only one slip from first to last. I have struck out two, and added five or six; so they now number forty-five; when they are fifty, they shall out on the world. I have not written a letter for a cruel time; I have been, and am, so busy, drafting a long story (for me, I mean), about a hundred Cornhill pages, or say about as long as the Donkey book: *Prince Otto* it is called, and is, at the present hour, a sore burthen but a hopeful. If I had him all drafted, I should whistle and sing. But no: then I'll have to rewrite him; and then there will be the 25 publishers, alas! But some time or other, I shall whistle and sing, I make no doubt.

I am going to make a fortune, it has not yet begun, for I am not yet clear of debt; but as soon as I can, I begin upon the fortune. I shall begin it with a halfpenny, and it shall end with horses and yachts and all the fun of the fair. This is the first real grey hair in my character: rapacity has begun to show, the greed of the protuberant guttler. Well, doubtless, when the hour strikes, we must all guttle and protube. But it comes hard on one who was always so willow-slender and as careless as the daisies.

Truly I am in excellent spirits. I have crushed through a financial crisis; Fanny is much better; I am in excellent health, and work from four to five hours a day — from one to two above my average, that is; and we all dwell together and make fortunes in the loveliest house you ever saw, with a garden like a fairy story, and a view like a classical landscape.

Little? Well, it is not large. And when you come to see us, you will probably have to bed at the hotel, which is hard by. But it is Eden, madam, Eden and Beulah and the Delectable Mountains and Eldorado and the Hesperidean Isles and Bimini.

We both look forward, my dear friend, with the greatest eagerness to have you here. It seems it is not to be this season: but I appoint you with an appointment for next season. You cannot see us else: remember that. Till my health has grown solid like an oak-tree, till my fortune begins really to spread its boughs like the same monarch of the woods (and the acorn, ay de mi! is not yet planted), I expect to be a prisoner among the palms.

Yes, it is like old times to be writing you from the Riviera, and after all that has come and gone, who can predict anything? How fortune tumbles men about! 26 Yet I have not found that they change their friends, thank God.

Both of our loves to your sister and yourself. As for me, if I am here and happy, I know to whom I owe it; I know who made my way for me in life, if that were all, and I remain, with love, your faithful friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

“Gilder” in the following is of course the late R. W. Gilder, for many years the admirable editor of the Century Magazine.

Chalet la Solitude, Hyères [*April* 1883].

MY DEAR GOSSE, — I am very guilty; I should have written to you long ago; and now, though it must be done, I am so stupid that I can only boldly recapitulate. A phrase of three members is the outside of my syntax.

First, I like the *Rover* better than any of your other verse. I believe you are right, and can make stories in verse. The last two stanzas and one or two in the beginning — but the two last above all — I thought excellent. I suggest a pursuit of the vein. If you want a good story to treat, get the *Memoirs of the Chevalier Johnstone*, and do his passage of the Tay; it would be excellent: the dinner in the field, the woman he has to follow, the dragoons, the timid boatmen, the brave lasses. It would go like a charm; look at it, and you will say you owe me one.

Second, Gilder asking me for fiction, I suddenly took a great resolve, and have packed off to him my new work, *The Silverado Squatters*. I do not for a moment suppose he will take it; but pray say all the good words you can for it. I should be awfully glad to get it taken. But if it does not mean dibbs at once, I shall be ruined for life. Pray write soon and beg Gilder your prettiest for a poor gentleman in pecuniary sloughs.

Fourth, next time I am supposed to be at death’s door 27 write to me like a Christian, and let not your correspondence attend on business. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

P.S. — I see I have led you to conceive the *Squatters* are fiction.

They are not, alas!

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Chalet la Solitude, May 5 .

MY DEAREST PEOPLE, — I have had a great piece of news. There has been offered for *Treasure Island* — how much do you suppose? I believe it would be an excellent jest to keep the answer till my next letter. For two cents I would do so. Shall I? Anyway, I'll turn the page first. No — well — A hundred pounds, all alive, O! A hundred jingling, tingling, golden, minted quid. Is not this wonderful? Add that I have now finished, in draft, the fifteenth chapter of my novel, and have only five before me, and you will see what cause of gratitude I have.

The weather, to look at the per contra sheet, continues vomitable; and Fanny is quite out of sorts. But, really, with such cause of gladness, I have not the heart to be dispirited by anything. My child's verse book is finished, dedication and all, and out of my hands — you may tell Cummy; *Silverado* is done, too, and cast upon the waters; and this novel so near completion, it does look as if I should support myself without trouble in the future. If I have only health, I can, I thank God. It is dreadful to be a great, big man, and not be able to buy bread.

O that this may last!

I have to-day paid my rent for the half year, till the middle of September, and got my lease: why they have been so long, I know not.

I wish you all sorts of good things.

When is our marriage day? — Your loving and ecstatic son,

Treesure Eilaan.

It has been for me a Treasure Island verily.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

La Solitude, Hyères, May 8, 1883.

MY DEAR PEOPLE, — I was disgusted to hear my father was not so well. I have a most troubled existence of work and business. But the work goes well, which is the great affair. I meant to have written a most delightful letter; too tired, however, and must stop. Perhaps I'll find time to add to it ere post.

I have returned refreshed from eating, but have little time, as Lloyd will go soon with the letters on his way to his tutor, Louis Robert (!!!!), with whom he learns Latin in French, and French, I suppose, in Latin, which seems to me a capital education. He, Lloyd, is a great bicycler already, and has been long distances; he is most new-fangled over his instrument, and does not willingly converse on other subjects.

Our lovely garden is a prey to snails; I have gathered about a bushel, which, not having the heart to slay, I steal forth withal and deposit near my neighbour's garden wall. As a case of casuistry, this presents many points of interest. I loathe the snails, but from loathing to actual butchery, trucidation of multitudes, there is still a step that I hesitate to take. What, then, to do with them? My neighbour's vineyard, pardy! It is a rich, villa, pleasure-garden of course; if it were a peasant's patch, the snails, I suppose, would have to perish.

The weather these last three days has been much better, though it is still windy and unkind. I keep splendidly well, and am cruelly busy, with mighty little time even for a walk. And to write at all, under such pressure, must be held to lean to virtue's side.

My financial prospects are shining. O if the health will hold, I should easily support myself. — Your ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var [*May* 20, 1883].

MY DEAR GOSSE, — I enclose the receipt and the corrections. As for your letter and Gilder's, I must take an hour or so to think; the matter much importing — to me. The £40 was a heavenly thing.

I send the MS. by Henley, because he acts for me in all matters, and had the thing, like all my other books, in his detention. He is my unpaid agent — an admirable arrangement for me, and one that has rather more than doubled my income on the spot.

If I have been long silent, think how long you were so and blush, sir, blush.

I was rendered unwell by the arrival of your cheque, and, like Pepys, "my hand still shakes to write of it." To this grateful emotion, and not to D.T., please attribute the raggedness of my hand.

This year I should be able to live and keep my family on my own earnings, and that in spite of eight months and more of perfect idleness at the end of last and beginning of this. It is a sweet thought.

This spot, our garden and our view, are sub-celestial. I sing daily with my Bunyan, that great bard,

"I dwell already the next door to Heaven!"

If you could see my roses, and my aloes, and my fig-marigolds, and my olives, and my view over a plain, and my view of certain mountains as graceful as Apollo, as severe as Zeus, you would not think the phrase exaggerated.

It is blowing to-day a *hot* mistral, which is the devil or a near connection of his.

This to catch the post. — Yours affectionately,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var, France, May 21, 1883.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — The night giveth advice, generally bad advice; but I have taken it. And I have written direct to Gilder to tell him to keep the book back and go on with it in November at his leisure. I do not know if this will come in time; if it doesn't, of course things will go on in the way proposed. The £40, or, as I prefer to put it, the 1000 francs, has been such a piercing sun-ray as my whole grey life is gilt withal. On the back of it I can endure. If these good days of Longman and the Century only last, it will be a very green world, this that we dwell in and that philosophers miscall. I have no taste for that philosophy; give me large sums paid on the receipt of the MS. and copyright reserved, and what do I care about the non-bëent? Only I know it can't last. The devil always has an imp or two in every house, and my imps are getting lively. The good lady, the dear, kind lady, the sweet, excellent lady, Nemesis, whom alone I adore, has fixed her wooden eye upon me. I fall prone; spare me, Mother Nemesis! But catch her!

I must now go to bed; for I have had a whoreson influenza cold, and have to lie down all day, and get up only to meals and the delights, June delights, of business correspondence.

You said nothing about my subject for a poem. Don't you like it? My own fishy eye has been fixed on it for prose, but I believe it could be thrown out finely in verse, and hence I resign and pass the hand. Twig the compliment? — Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

"Tushery" had been a name in use between Stevenson and Mr. Henley for romances of the *Ivanhoe* type. He now applies it to his own tale of the Wars of the Roses, *The Black Arrow*, written for Mr. Henderson's Young Folks, of which the office was in Red Lion Court.

[*Hyères, May* 1883.]

... The influenza has busted me a good deal; I have no spring, and am headachy. So, as my good Red Lion Courier begged me for another Butcher's Boy — I turned me to — what thinkest 'ou? — to Tushery, by the mass! Ay, friend, a whole tale of tushery. And every tusher tushes me so free, that may I be tushed if the whole thing is worth a tush. *The Black Arrow: A Tale of Tunstall Forest* is his name: tush! a poor thing!

Will *Treasure Island* proofs be coming soon, think you?

I will now make a confession. It was the sight of your maimed strength and masterfulness that begot John Silver in *Treasure Island*. Of course, he is not in any other quality or feature the least like you; but the idea of the maimed man, ruling and dreaded by the sound, was entirely taken from you.

Otto is, as you say, not a thing to extend my public on. It is queer and a little, little bit free; and some of the parties are immoral; and the whole thing is not a romance, nor yet a comedy; nor yet a romantic comedy; but a kind of preparation of some of the elements of all three in a glass jar. I think it is not without merit, but I am not always on the level of my argument, and some parts are false, and much of the rest is thin; it is more a triumph for myself than anything else; for I see, beyond it, better stuff. I have nine chapters ready, or almost ready, for press. My feeling would be to get it placed anywhere for as much as could be got for it, and rather in the shadow, till one saw the look of it in print. — Ever yours,

Pretty Sick.

To W. E. Henley

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, May 1883.

MY DEAR LAD, — The books came some time since, but I have not had the pluck to answer: a shower of small troubles having fallen in, or troubles that may be very large.

I have had to incur a huge vague debt for cleaning sewers; our house was (of course) riddled with hidden cesspools, but that was infallible. I have the fever, and feel the duty to work very heavy on me at times; yet go it must. I have had to leave *Fontainebleau,* when three hours would finish it, and go full-tilt at tushery for a while. But it will come soon.

I think I can give you a good article on Hokusai; but that is for afterwards; *Fontainebleau* is first in hand.

By the way, my view is to give the *Penny Whistles* to Crane or Greenaway. But Crane, I think, is likeliest; he is a fellow who, at least, always does his best.

Shall I ever have money enough to write a play?

O dire necessity!

A word in your ear: I don’t like trying to support myself. I hate the strain and the anxiety; and when unexpected expenses are foisted on me, I feel the world is playing with false dice. — Now I must Tush, adieu.

An Aching, Fevered, Penny-Journalist.

A lytle Jape of TUSHERIE.

By A. Tusher.

The pleasant river gushes
Among the meadows green;
At home the author tushes;
For him it flows unseen.
The Birds among the Bmshes
May wanton on the spray;
But vain for him who tushes
The brightness of the day!
The frog among the rushes
Sits singing in the blue.

By’r la’kin! but these tushes
Are wearisome to do!
The task entirely crushes
The spirit of the bard:
God pity him who tushes —
His task is very hard.
The filthy gutter slushes,
The clouds are full of rain,
But doomed is he who tushes
To tush and tush again.
At morn with his hair-br*us*hes,
Still “tush” he says, and weeps;
At night again he tushes,
And tushes till he sleeps.
And when at length he pmshes
Beyond the river dark —
‘Las, to the man who tushes,
“Tush,” shall be God’s remark!

To Sidney Colvin

[*Chalet la Solitude, Hyères, May* 1883.]

COLVIN, — The attempt to correspond with you is vain. Well, well, then so be it. I will from time to time write you an insulting letter, brief but monstrous harsh. I regard you in the light of a genteel impostor. Your name figures in the papers but never to a piece of letter-paper: well, well.

News. I am well: Fanny been ill but better: *Otto* about three-quarters done; *Silverado* proofs a terrible job — it is a most unequal work — new wine in old bottles — large rats, small bottles: as usual, penniless — O but penniless: still, with four articles in hand (say £35) and the £100 for *Silverado* imminent, not hopeless.

Why am I so penniless, ever, ever penniless, ever, ever penny-penny-penniless and dry?

The birds upon the thorn,
The poppies in the corn,
They surely are more fortunate or prudenter than I!

In Arabia, everybody is called the Father of something or other for convenience or insult’s sake. Thus you are “the Father of Prints,” or of “Bummkopferies,” or “Father of Unanswered Correspondence.” They would instantly dub Henley “the Father of Wooden Legs”; me they would denominate the “Father of Bones,” and Matthew Arnold “the Father of Eyeglasses.”

I have accepted most of the excisions. Proposed titles: —

The Innocent Muse.
A Child’s Garden of Rhymes.

Songs of the Playroom.
Nursery Songs.

I like the first?

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

La Solitude, Hyères, May or June 1883.

DEAR LAD, — Snatches in return for yours; for this little once, I'm well to windward of you.

Seventeen chapters of *Otto* are now drafted, and finding I was working through my voice and getting screechy, I have turned back again to rewrite the earlier part. It has, I do believe, some merit: of what order, of course, I am the last to know; and, triumph of triumphs, my wife — my wife who hates and loathes and slates my women — admits a great part of my Countess to be on the spot.

Yes, I could borrow, but it is the joy of being before the public, for once. Really, £100 is a sight more than *Treasure Island* is worth.

The reason of my *dèche*? Well, if you begin one house, have to desert it, begin another, and are eight months without doing any work, you will be in a *dèche* too. I am not in a *dèche,* however; *distingue* — I would fain distinguish; I am rather a swell, but *not solvent.* At a touch the edifice, *œdificium*, might collapse. If my creditors began to babble around me, I would sink with a slow strain of music into the crimson west. The difficulty in my elegant villa is to find oil, *oleum*, for the dam axles. But I've paid my rent until September; and beyond the chemist, the grocer, the baker, the doctor, the gardener, Lloyd's teacher, and the great chief creditor Death, I can snap my fingers at all men. Why will people spring bills on you? I try to make 'em charge me at the moment; they won't, the money goes, the debt remains. — The Required Play is in the *Merry Men.*

Q. E. F.

I thus render honour to your *flair*; it came on me of a clap; I do not see it yet beyond a kind of sunset glory. But it's there: passion, romance, the picturesque, involved: startling, simple, horrid: a sea-pink in sea-froth! *S'agit de la désenterrer.* "Help!" cries a buried masterpiece.

Once I see my way to the year's end, clear, I turn to plays; till then I grind at letters; finish *Otto*; write, say, a couple of my *Traveller's Tales*; and then, if all my ships come home, I will attack the drama in earnest. I 36 cannot mix the skeins. Thus, though I'm morally sure there is a play in *Otto*, I dare not look for it: I shoot straight at the story.

As a story, a comedy, I think *Otto* very well constructed; the echoes are very good, all the sentiments change round, and the points of view are continually, and, I think (if you please), happily contrasted. None of it is exactly funny, but some of it is smiling.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

The verses alluded to are some of those afterwards collected in *Underwoods*.

[*Chalet la Solitude, Hyères, May or June* 1883.]

DEAR HENLEY, — You may be surprised to hear that I am now a great writer of verses; that is, however, so. I have the mania now like my betters, and faith, if I live till I am forty, I shall have a book of rhymes like Pollock, Gosse, or whom you please. Really, I have begun to learn some of the rudiments of that trade, and have written three or four pretty enough pieces of octosyllabic nonsense, semi-serious, semi-smiling. A kind of prose Herrick, divested of the gift of verse, and you behold the Bard. But I like it.

R. L. S.

To Jules Simoneau

This friend was the keeper of the inn and restaurant where Stevenson had boarded at Monterey in the autumn of 1879. In writing French, as will be seen, Stevenson had always more grip of idiom than of grammar.

[*La Solitude, Hyères, May or June* 1883.]

MON CHER ET BON SIMONEAU, — J'ai commencé plusieurs fois de vous écrire; et voilà-t-il pas qu'un empêchement quelconque est arrivé toujours. La lettre ne part pas; et je vous laisse toujours dans le droit de soupçonner mon 37 cœur. Mon bon ami, ne pensez pas que je vous ai oublié ou que je vous oublierai jamais. Il n'en est de rien. Votre bon souvenir me tient de bien près, et je le garderai jusqu'à la mort.

J'ai failli mourir de bien près; mais me voici bien rétabli, bien que toujours un peu chétif et malingre. J'habite, comme vous voyez, la France. Je travaille beaucoup, et je commence à ne pas être le dernier; déjà on me dispute ce que j'écris, et je n'ai pas à me plaindre de ce que l'on appelle les honoraires. Me voici alors très affairé, très heureux dans mon ménage, gâté par ma femme, habitant la plus petite maisonette dans le plus beau jardin du monde, et voyant de mes fen êtres la mer, les isles d'Hyères, et les belles collines, montagnes et forts de Toulon.

Et vous, mon très cher ami? Comment celà va-t-il? Comment vous portez-vous? Comment va le commerce? Comment aimez vous le pays? et l'enfant? et la femme? Et enfin toutes les questions possibles. Écrivez-moi donc bien vite, cher Simoneau. Et quant à moi, je vous promets que vous entendrez bien vîte parler de moi; je vous *récrirai* sous peu, et je vous enverrai un de mes livres. Ceci n'est qu'un serrement de main, *from the bottom of my heart, dear and kind old man*. — Your friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

The "new dictionary" means, of course, the first instalments of the great Oxford Dictionary of the English Language, edited by Dr. J. A. H. Murray.

La Solitude, Hyères [*June* 1883].

DEAR LAD, — I was delighted to hear the good news about — — . Bravo, he goes uphill fast. Let him beware of vanity, and he will go higher; let him be still discontented, and let him (if it might be) see the merits and not the faults of his rivals, and he may swarm at last to 38 the top-gallant. There is no other way. Admiration is the only road to excellence; and the critical spirit kills, but envy and injustice are putrefaction on its feet.

Thus far the moralist. The eager author now begs to know whether you may have got the other Whistles, and whether a fresh proof is to be taken; also whether in that case the dedication should not be printed therewith; *B*ulk *D*elights *P*ublishers (original aphorism; to be said sixteen times in succession as a test of sobriety).

Your wild and ravening commands were received; but cannot be obeyed. And anyway, I do assure you I am getting better every day; and if the weather would but turn, I should soon be observed to walk in hornpipes. Truly I am on the mend. I am still very careful. I have the new dictionary; a joy, a thing of beauty, and — bulk. I shall be raked i' the mools before it's finished; that is the only pity; but meanwhile I sing.

I beg to inform you that I, Robert Louis Stevenson, author of *Brashiana* and other works, am merely beginning to commence to prepare to make a first start at trying to understand my profession. O the height and depth of novelty and worth in any art! and O that I am privileged to swim and shoulder through such oceans! Could one get out of sight of land — all in the blue? Alas not, being anchored here in flesh, and the bonds of logic being still about us.

But what a great space and a great air there is in these small shallows where alone we venture! and how new each sight, squall, calm, or sunrise! An art is a fine fortune, a palace in a park, a band of music, health, and physical beauty; all but love — to any worthy practiser. I sleep upon my art for a pillow; I waken in my art; I am unready for death, because I hate to leave it. I love my wife, I do not know how much, nor can, nor shall, unless I lost her; but while I can conceive my being widowed, I refuse the offering of life without my art. I *am* not but in my art; it is me; I am the body of it merely.

And yet I produce nothing, am the author of *Brashiana* and other works: tiddy-iddity — as if the works one wrote were anything but 'prentice's experiments. Dear reader, I deceive you with husks, the real works and all the pleasure are still mine and incommunicable. After this break in my work, beginning to return to it, as from light sleep, I wax exclamatory, as you see.

Sursum Corda:
Heave ahead:
Here's luck.
Art and Blue Heaven,
April and God's Larks.
Green reeds and the sky-scattering river.
A stately music.
Enter God!

R. L. S.

Ay, but you know, until a man can write that "Enter God," he has made no art! None! Come, let us take counsel together and make some!

To Trevor Haddon

During the height of the Provençal summer, for July and part of August, Stevenson went with his wife to the Baths of Royat in Auvergne (travelling necessarily by way of Clermont-Ferrand). His parents joined them at Royat for part of their visit. This and possibly the next following letters were written during the trip. The news here referred to was that his correspondent had won a scholarship at the Slade School.

La Solitude, Hyères. But just now writing from
Clermont-Ferrand, July 5, 1883.

DEAR MR. HADDON, — Your note with its piece of excellent news duly reached me. I am delighted to hear of your success: selfishly so; for it is pleasant to see that one whom I suppose I may call an admirer is no fool. I wish you more and more prosperity, and to be devoted to your art. An art is the very gist of life; it grows with you; you will never weary of an art at which you 40 fervently and superstitiously labour. Superstitiously: I mean, think more of it than it deserves; be blind to its faults, as with a wife or father; forget the world in a technical trifle. The world is very serious; art is the cure of that, and must be taken very lightly; but to take art lightly, you must first be stupidly owlishly in earnest over it. When I made Casimir say "Tiens" at the end, I made a blunder. I thought it was what Casimir would have said and I put it down. As your question shows, it should have been left out. It was a "patch" of realism, and an anti-climax. Beware of realism; it is the devil; 'tis one of the means of art, and now they make it the end! And such is the farce of the age in which a man lives, that we all, even those of us who most detest it, sin by realism.

Notes for the student of any art.

1. Keep an intelligent eye upon *all* the others. It is only by doing so

that you come to see what Art is: Art is the end common to them all, it is none of the points by which they differ.

2. In this age beware of realism.

3. In your own art, bow your head over technique. Think of technique when you rise and when you go to bed. Forget purposes in the meanwhile; get to love technical processes; to glory in technical successes; get to see the world entirely through technical spectacles, to see it entirely in terms of what you can do. Then when you have anything to say, the language will be apt and copious.

My health is better.

I have no photograph just now; but when I get one you shall have a copy. It will not be like me; sometimes I turn out a capital, fresh bank clerk; once I came out the image of Runjeet Singh; again the treacherous sun has fixed me in the character of a travelling evangelist. It's quite a lottery; but whatever the next venture proves to be, soldier, sailor, tinker, tailor, you shall have a proof. Reciprocate. The truth is I have no appearance; a certain air of disreputability is the one 41 constant character that my face presents: the rest change like water. But still I am lean, and still disreputable.

Cling to your youth. It is an artistic stock in trade. Don't give in that you are ageing, and you won't age. I have exactly the same faults and qualities still; only a little duller, greedier and better tempered; a little less tolerant of pain and more tolerant of tedium. The last is a great thing for life but — query? — a bad endowment for art?

Another note for the art student.

4. See the good in other people's work; it will never be yours. See the bad in your own, and don't cry about it; it will be there always. Try to use your faults; at any rate use your knowledge of them, and don't run your head against stone walls. Art is not like theology; nothing is forced. You have not to represent the world. You have to represent only what you can represent with pleasure and effect, and the only way to find out what that is is by technical exercise. — Yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Jules Simoneau

[*Hyères or Royat, Summer* 1883.]

MY DEAR FRIEND SIMONEAU, — It would be difficult to tell how glad I was to get your letter with your good news and kind remembrances, it did my heart good to the bottom. I shall never forget the good time we had together, the many long talks, the games of chess, the flute on an occasion, and the excellent food. Now I am in clover, only my health a mere ruined temple; the ivy grows along its shattered front, otherwise, I have no wish that is not fulfilled: a beautiful large garden, a fine view of plain, sea and mountain; a wife that suits me down to the ground, and a barrel of good Beaujolais. To this I must add that my books grow steadily more 42 popular, and if I could only avoid illness I should be well to do for money, as it is, I keep pretty near the wind. Have I other means? I doubt it. I saw François here; and it was in some respects sad to see him, pining in the ungenial life and not, I think, very well pleased with his relatives. The young men, it is true, adored him, but his niece tried to pump me about what money I had, with an effrontery I was glad to disappoint. How he spoke of you I need not tell you. He is your true friend, dear Simoneau, and your ears should have tingled when we met, for we talked of little but yourself.

The papers you speak about are past dates but I will send you a paper from time to time, as soon as I am able to go out again. We were both well pleased to hear of your marriage, and both Mrs. Stevenson and myself beg to be remembered with the kindest wishes to Mrs. Simoneau. I am glad you have done this. All races are better away from their own country; but I think you French improve the most of all. At home, I like you well enough, but give me the Frenchman abroad! Had you stayed at home, you would probably have acted otherwise. Consult your consciousness, and you will think as I do. How about a law condemning the people of every country to be educated in another, to change sons in short? Should we not gain all around? Would not the Englishman unlearn hypocrisy? Would not the Frenchman learn to put some heart into his friendships? I name what strikes me as the two most obvious defects of the two nations. The French might also learn to be a little less rapacious to women and the English to be a little more honest.

Indeed their merits and defects make a balance.

The English.	The French.
hypocrites	free from hypocrisy
good, staunch friends	incapable of friendship
dishonest to the root	fairly honest
fairly decent to women.	rather indecent to women.

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There is my table, not at all the usual one, but yes, I think you will agree with it. And by travel, each race can cure much of its defects and acquire much of the others' virtues. Let us say that you and I are complete! You are anyway: I would not change a hair of you. The Americans hold the English faults: dishonest and hypocrites, perhaps not so strongly but still to the exclusion of others. It is strange that such mean defects should be so hard to eradicate, after a century of separation, and so great an admixture of other blood.

Your stay in Mexico must have been interesting indeed: and it is natural you should be so keen against the Church on this side, we have a painful exhibition of the other side: the *libre-penseur* a mere priest without the sacraments, the narrowest tyranny of intolerance popular, and in fact a repetition in the XIXth century of theological ill-feeling minus the sermons. We have speeches instead. I met the other day one of the new lay schoolmasters of France; a pleasant cultivated man, and for some time listened to his ravings. "In short," I said, "you are like Louis Quatorze, you wish to drive out of France all who do not agree with you." I thought he would protest; not he! — "Oui, Monsieur," was his answer. And that is the cause of liberty and free thought! But the race of man was born tyrannical; doubtless Adam beat Eve, and when all the rest are dead the last man will be found beating the last dog. In the land of Padre d. R. you see the old tyranny still active on its crutches; in this land, I begin to see the new, a fat fellow, out of leading-strings and already killing flies.

This letter drones along unprofitably enough. Let me put a period to my divagations. Write again soon, and let me hear good news of you, and I will try to be more quick of answer.

And with the best wishes to yourself and all your family, believe me, your sincere friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Alison Cunningham

The persons mentioned below in the third paragraph are cousins of the writer and playmates of his childhood; two of them, christened Lewis like himself after their Balfour grandfather, had been nicknamed after their birthplaces "Delhi" and "Cramond" to avoid confusion. Mount Chessie is a beautiful place near Lasswade: "Cummy" has described his delight when she cut whistles for him there out of a plane-tree.

[*Hyères or Royat, Summer* 1883.]

MY DEAR CUMMY, — Yes, I own I am a real bad correspondent, and am as bad as can be in most directions.

I have been adding some more poems to your book. I wish they would look sharp about it; but, you see, they are trying to find a good artist to make the illustrations, without which no child would give a kick for it. It will be quite a fine work, I hope. The dedication is a poem too, and has been quite a long while written, but I do not mean you to see it till you get the book; keep the jelly for the last, you know, as you would often recommend in former days, so now you can take your own medicine.

I am very sorry to hear you have been so poorly; I have been very well; it used to be quite the other way, used it not? Do you remember making the whistle at Mount Chessie? I do not think it *was* my knife; I believe it was yours; but rhyme is a very great monarch, and goes before honesty, in these affairs at least. Do you remember, at

Warriston, one autumn Sunday, when the beech nuts were on the ground, seeing heaven open? I would like to make a rhyme of that, but cannot.

Is it not strange to think of all the changes: Bob, Cramond, Delhi, Minnie, and Henrietta, all married, and fathers and mothers, and your humble servant just the one point better off? And such a little while ago all children together! The time goes swift and wonderfully even; and if we are no worse than we are, we should be grateful to the power that guides us. For more than a 45 generation I have now been to the fore in this rough world, and been most tenderly helped, and done cruelly wrong, and yet escaped; and here I am still, the worse for wear, but with some fight in me still, and not unthankful — no, surely not unthankful, or I were then the worst of human things!

My little dog is a very much better child in every way, both more loving and more amiable; but he is not fond of strangers, and is, like most of his kind, a great, specious humbug.

Fanny has been ill, but is much better again; she now goes donkey rides with an old woman, who compliments her on her French. That old woman — seventy odd — is in a parlous spiritual state.

Pretty soon, in the new sixpenny illustrated magazine, Wogg's picture is to appear: this is a great honour! And the poor soul, whose vanity would just explode if he could understand it, will never be a bit the wiser! — With much love, in which Fanny joins, believe me, your affectionate boy,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

The reference is to Mr. Gosse's volume called *Seventeenth Century Studies*.

[*Hyères or Royat, Summer* 1883.]

MY DEAR GOSSE, — I have now leisurely read your volume; pretty soon, by the way, you will receive one of mine.

It is a pleasant, instructive, and scholarly volume. The three best being, quite out of sight — Crashaw, Otway, and Etherege. They are excellent; I hesitate between them; but perhaps Crashaw is the most brilliant.

Your Webster is not my Webster; nor your Herrick my Herrick. On these matters we must fire a gun to leeward, show our colours, and go by. Argument is impossible. They are two of my favourite authors: 46 Herrick above all: I suppose they are two of yours. Well, Janus-like, they do behold us two with diverse countenances, few features are common to these different avatars; and we can but agree to differ, but still with gratitude to our entertainers, like two guests at the same dinner, one of whom takes clear and one white soup. By my way of thinking, neither of us need be wrong.

The other papers are all interesting, adequate, clear, and with a pleasant spice of the romantic. It is a book you may be well pleased to have so finished, and will do you much good. The Crashaw is capital: capital; I like the taste of it. Preface clean and dignified. The handling throughout workmanlike, with some four or five touches of preciosity, which I regret.

With my thanks for information, entertainment, and a pleasurable envy here and there. — Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Miss Ferrier

Soon after he was settled again at Hyères, Stevenson had a great shock in the death of one of the oldest and most intimate of his friends of Edinburgh days, Mr. James Walter Ferrier (see the essay *Old Mortality* in *Memories and Portraits*). It is in accordance with the expressed wish of this gentleman's surviving sister that publicity is given to the following letters: —

La Solitude, Hyères [*Sept.* 1883].

MY DEAR MISS FERRIER, — They say Walter is gone. You, who know how I have neglected him, will conceive my remorse. I had another letter written; when I heard he was worse, I promised myself to wake up for the last time. Alas, too late!

My dear Walter, set apart that terrible disease, was, in his right mind, the best and gentlest gentleman. God knows he would never intentionally hurt a soul.

Well, he is done with his troubles and out of his long sickness, and I dare say is glad to be at peace and out of the body, which in him seemed the enemy of the fine and 47 kind spirit. He is the first friend I have ever lost, and I find it difficult to say anything and fear to intrude upon your grief. But I had to try to tell you how much I shared it.

Could you get any one to tell me particulars? Do not write yourself of course — I do not mean that; but some one else.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

La Solitude, Hyères, September 19, 1883.

DEAR BOY, — Our letters vigorously cross: you will ere this have received a note to Coggie: God knows what was in it.

It is strange, a little before the first word you sent me — so late — kindly late, I know and feel — I was thinking in my bed, when I knew you I had six friends — Bob I had by nature; then came the good James Walter — with all his failings — the *gentleman* of the lot, alas to sink so low, alas to do so little, but now, thank God, in his quiet rest; next I found Baxter — well do I remember telling Walter I had unearthed "a W.S. that I thought would do" — it was in the Academy

Lane, and he questioned me as to the Signet's qualifications; fourth came Simpson; somewhere about the same time, I began to get intimate with Jenkin; last came Colvin. Then, one black winter afternoon, long Leslie Stephen, in his velvet jacket, met me in the Spec. by appointment, took me over to the infirmary, and in the crackling, blighting gas-light showed me that old head whose excellent representation I see before me in the photograph. Now when a man has six friends, to introduce a seventh is usually hopeless. Yet when you were presented, you took to them and they to you upon the nail. You must have been a fine fellow; but what a singular fortune I must have had in my six friends that you should take to all. I don't know if it is 48 good Latin, most probably not: but this is enscrolled before my eyes for Walter: *Tandem e nubibus in apricum properat*. Rest, I suppose, I know, was all that remained; but O to look back, to remember all the mirth, all the kindness, all the humorous limitations and loved defects of that character; to think that he was young with me, sharing that weather-beaten, Fergussonian youth, looking forward through the clouds to the sunburst; and now clean gone from my path, silent — well, well. This has been a strange awakening. Last night, when I was alone in the house, with the window open on the lovely still night, I could have sworn he was in the room with me; I could show you the spot; and, what was very curious, I heard his rich laughter, a thing I had not called to mind for I know not how long.

I see his coral waistcoat studs that he wore the first time he dined in my house; I see his attitude, leaning back a little, already with something of a portly air, and laughing internally. How I admired him! And now in the West Kirk.

I am trying to write out this haunting bodily sense of absence; besides, what else should I write of?

Yes, looking back, I think of him as one who was good, though sometimes clouded. He was the only gentle one of all my friends, save perhaps the other Walter. And he was certainly the only modest man among the lot. He never gave himself away; he kept back his secret; there was always a gentle problem behind all. Dear, dear, what a wreck; and yet how pleasant is the retrospect! God doeth all things well, though by what strange, solemn, and murderous contrivances!

It is strange: he was the only man I ever loved who did not habitually interrupt. The fact draws my own portrait. And it is one of the many reasons why I count myself honoured by his friendship. A man like you *had* to like me; you could not help yourself; but Ferrier was above me, we were not equals; his true self humoured 49 and smiled paternally upon my failings, even as I humoured and sorrowed over his.

Well, first his mother, then himself, they are gone: "in their resting graves."

When I come to think of it, I do not know what I said to his sister, and I fear to try again. Could you send her this? There is too much both about yourself and me in it; but that, if you do not mind, is but a mark of sincerity. It would let her know how entirely, in the mind of (I suppose) his oldest friend, the good, true Ferrier obliterates the memory of the other, who was only his "lunatic brother."

Judge of this for me, and do as you please; anyway, I will try to write to her again; my last was some kind of scrawl that I could not see for crying. This came upon me, remember, with terrible suddenness; I was surprised by this death; and it is fifteen or sixteen years since first I saw the handsome face in the Spec. I made sure, besides, to have died first. Love to you, your wife, and her sisters. — Ever yours, dear boy,

R. L. S.

I never knew any man so superior to himself as poor James Walter. The best of him only came as a vision, like Corsica from the Corniche. He never gave his measure either morally or intellectually. The curse was on him. Even his friends did not know him but by fits. I have passed hours with him when he was so wise, good, and sweet, that I never knew the like of it in any other. And for a beautiful good humour he had no match. I remember breaking in upon him once with a whole red-hot story (in my worst manner), pouring words upon him by the hour about some truck not worth an egg that had befallen me; and suddenly, some half hour after, finding that the sweet fellow had some concern of his own of infinitely greater import, that he was patiently and smilingly waiting to consult me on. It sounds nothing; but the courtesy and the unselfishness were perfect. It 50 makes me rage to think how few knew him, and how many had the chance to sneer at their better.

Well, he was not wasted, that we know; though if anything looked liker irony than this fitting of a man out with these rich qualities and faculties to be wrecked and aborted from the very stocks, I do not know the name of it. Yet we see that he has left an influence; the memory of his patient courtesy has often checked me in rudeness; has it not you?

You can form no idea of how handsome Walter was. At twenty he was splendid to see; then, too, he had the sense of power in him, and great hopes; he looked forward, ever jesting of course, but he looked to see himself where he had the right to expect. He believed in himself profoundly; but *he never disbelieved in others*. To the roughest Highland student he always had his fine, kind, open dignity of manner; and a good word behind his back.

The last time that I saw him before leaving for America — it was a sad blow to both of us. When he heard I was leaving, and that might be the last time we might meet — it almost was so — he was terribly upset, and came round at once. We sat late, in Baxter's empty house, where I was sleeping. My dear friend Walter Ferrier: O if I had only written to him more! if only one of us in these last days had been well! But I ever cherished the honour of his friendship, and now when he is gone, I know what I have lost still better. We live on, meaning to meet; but when the hope is gone, the pang comes.

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

La Solitude, Hyères, 26th September 1883.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — It appears a bolt from Transatlantica is necessary to produce four lines from you. It is not flattering; but as I was always a bad correspondent, 51 'tis a vice to which I am lenient. I give you to know, however, that I have already twice (this makes three times) sent you what I please to call a letter, and received from you in return a subterfuge — or nothing....

My present purpose, however, which must not be postponed, is to ask you to telegraph to the Americans.

After a summer of good health of a very radiant order, toothache and the death of a very old friend, which came upon me like a thunderclap, have rather shelved my powers. I stare upon the paper, not write. I wish I could write like your Sculptors; yet I am well aware that I should not try in that direction. A certain warmth (tepid enough) and a certain dash of the picturesque are my poor essential qualities; and if I went fooling after the too classical, I might lose even these. But I envied you that page.

I am, of course, deep in schemes; I was so ever. Execution alone somewhat halts. How much do you make per annum, I wonder? This year, for the first time, I shall pass £300; I may even get halfway to the next milestone. This seems but a faint remuneration; and the devil of it is, that I manage, with sickness, and moves, and education, and the like, to keep steadily in front of my income. However, I console myself with this, that if I were anything else under God's Heaven, and had the same crank health, I should make an even zero. If I had, with my present knowledge, twelve months of my old health, I would, could, and should do something neat. As it is, I have to tinker at my things in little sittings; and the rent, or the butcher, or something, is always calling me off to rattle up a pot-boiler. And then comes a back-set of my health, and I have to twiddle my fingers and play patience.

Well, I do not complain, but I do envy strong health where it is squandered. Treasure your strength, and may you never learn by experience the profound *ennui* and irritation of the shelved artist. For then, what is 52 life? All that one has done to make one's life effective then doubles the itch of inefficiency.

I trust also you may be long without finding out the devil that there is in a bereavement. After love it is the one great surprise that life preserves for us. Now I don't think I can be astonished any more. — Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Miss Ferrier

La Solitude, Hyères, 30th Sept. 1883.

MY DEAR MISS FERRIER, — I am very much obliged to you for your letter and was interested by all you told me. Yes, I know it is better for him to be gone, and what you say helps me to realise that it is so — I did not know how much he had suffered; it is so that we are cured of life. I am a little afraid to write or think much of Walter just yet; as I have not quite recovered the news and I have my work and my wife to think of.

Some day soon when the sharpness passes off (if it does) I must try to write some more of what he was: he was so little understood. I don't suppose any one knew him better than I did. But just now it is difficult to think of him. For you I do mourn indeed, and admire your courage: the loss is terrible. I have no portrait of him. Is there one? If so please let me have it: if it has to be copied please let it be.

Henley seems to have been as good to dear Walter as he is to all. That introduction was a good turn I did to both. It seems so strange for a friendship to begin all these years ago with so much mirth and now to end with this sorrow. Our little lives are moments in the wake of the eternal silence: but how crowded while they last. His has gone down in peace.

I was not certainly the best companion for Walter, 53 but I do believe I was the best he had. In these early days he was not fortunate in friends — looking back I see most clearly how much we both wanted a man of riper wisdom. We had no religion between the pair of us — that was the flaw. How very different was our last intimacy in Gladstone Terrace. But youth must learn — looking back over these wasted opportunities, I must try rather to remember what I did right, than to bewail the much that I left undone and knew not how to do. I see that even you have allowed yourself to have regrets. Dear Miss Ferrier, sure you were his angel. We all had something to be glad of, in so far as we had understood and loved and perhaps a little helped the gentle spirit; but you may certainly be proud. He always loved you; and I remember in his worst days spoke of you with great affection; a thing unusual with him; for he was walking very wild and blind and had no true idea whether of himself or life. The lifting afterwards was beautiful and touching. Dear Miss Ferrier I have given your kind messages to my wife who feels for you and reciprocates the hope to meet. When it may come off I know not. I feel almost ashamed to say that I keep better, I feel as if like Mrs. Leslie "you must hate me for it" — still I can very easily throw back whether by fatigue or want of care, and I do not like to build plans for my return to my own land. Is there no chance of your coming hereabouts? Though we cannot in our small and disorderly house offer a lady a room, one can be got close by and we can offer possible board and a most lovely little garden for a lounge. Please remember me kindly to your brother John and Sir A. and Lady Grant and believe me with hearty sympathy — Yours most sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

I was rejoiced to hear he never doubted of my love, but I must cure my hate of correspondence. This has been a sharp lesson.

To W. E. Henley

It will be remembered that "Whistles" or "Penny Whistles" was his own name for the verses of the *Child's Garden*. The proposal referred to at the end of this letter was one which had reached him from Messrs. Lippincott, the American publishers, for a sailing trip to be taken among the Greek islands and made the subject of a book.

La Solitude, Hyères [*October* 1883].

My dear excellent, admired, volcanic angel of a lad, trusty as a dog, eruptive as Vesuvius, in all things great, in all the soul of loyalty: greeting.

That you are better spirits me up good. I have had no colour of a Mag. of Art. From here, here in Highairs the Palm-trees, I have heard your conversation. It came here in the form of a Mistral, and I said to myself, Damme, there is some Henley at the foot of this!

I shall try to do the Whistle as suggested; but I can usually do whistles only by giving my whole mind to it: to produce even such limping verse demanding the whole forces of my untuneful soul. I have other two anyway: better or worse. I am now deep, deep, ocean deep in *Otto*: a letter is a curst distraction. About 100 pp. are near fit for publication; I am either making a spoon or spoiling the horn of a Caledonian bull, with that airy potentate. God help me, I bury a lot of labour in that principality; and if I am not greatly a gainer, I am a great loser and a great fool. However, *sursum corda*; faint heart never writ romance.

Your Dumas I think exquisite; it might even have been stronglier said: the brave old godly pagan, I adore his big footprints on the earth.

Have you read Meredith's *Love in the Valley*? It got me, I wept; I remembered that poetry existed.

"When her mother tends her before the laughing mirror."

I propose if they (Lippincotts) will let me wait till next Autumn, and go when it is safest, to accept £450 with 55 £100 down; but it is now too late to go this year. November and December are the months when it is safest; and the back of the season is broken. I shall gain much knowledge by the trip; this I look upon as one of the main inducements.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The following is in answer to a letter containing remarks on the proofs of the *Child's Garden*, then going round among some of his friends, and on the instalments of *Silverado Squatters* and the *Black Arrow*, which were appearing in the Century Magazine and Young Folks respectively. The remarks on Professor Seeley's literary manner are *àpropos* of the *Expansion of England*, which I had lately sent him.

La Solitude, Hyères [*October* 1883].

COLVIN, COLVIN, COLVIN, — Yours received; also interesting copy of *P. Whistles*. "In the multitude of councillors the Bible declares there is wisdom," said my great-uncle, "but I have always found in them distraction." It is extraordinary how tastes vary: these proofs have been handed about, it appears, and I have had several letters; and — distraction. Æsop: the Miller and the Ass.

Notes on details: —

1. I love the occasional trochaic line; and so did many excellent writers before me.

2. If you don't like *A Good Boy*, I do.

3. In *Escape at Bedtime*, I found two suggestions. "Shove" for "above" is a correction of the press; it was so written. "Twinkled" is just the error; to the child the stars appear to be there; any word that suggests illusion is a horror.

4. I don't care; I take a different view of the vocative.

5. Bewildering and childering are good enough for me. These are rhymes, jingles; I don't go for eternity and the three unities.

I will delete some of those condemned, but not all. I don't care for the name Penny Whistles; I sent a sheaf 56 to Henley when I sent 'em. But I've forgot the others. I would just as soon call 'em "Rimes for Children" as anything else. I am not proud nor particular.

Your remarks on the *Black Arrow* are to the point. I am pleased you liked Crookback; he is a fellow whose hellish energy has always fixed my attention. I wish Shakespeare had written the play after he had learned some of the rudiments of literature and art rather than before. Some day, I will re-tickle the Sable Missile, and shoot it, *moyennant finances*, once more into the air; I can lighten it of much, and devote some more attention to Dick o' Gloucester. It's great sport to write tushery.

By this I reckon you will have heard of my proposed excursiolorum to the Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece, and kindred sites. If the excursiolorum goes on, that is if *moyennant finances* comes off, I shall write to beg you to collect introductiolorums for me.

Distinguo: 1. *Silverado* was not written in America, but in Switzerland's icy mountains. 2. What you read is the bleeding and disembowelled remains of what I wrote. 3. The good stuff is all to come — so I think. "The Sea Fogs," "The Hunter's Family," "Toils and Pleasures" — *belles pages*. — Yours ever,

Ramnugger.

O! — Seeley is too clever to live, and the book a gem. But why has he read too much Arnold? Why will he avoid — obviously avoid — fine writing up to which he has led? This is a winking, curled-and-oiled, ultra-cultured, Oxford-don sort of an affectation that infuriates my honest soul. "You see" — they say — "how unbombastic *we* are; we come right up to eloquence, and, when it's hanging on the pen, dammy, we scorn it!" It is literary Deronda-ism. If you don't want the woman, the image, or the phrase, mortify your vanity and avoid the appearance of wanting them.

To W.E. Henley

The first paragraph of the following refers to contributions of R. L. S. to the Magazine of Art under Mr. Henley's editorship: —

La Solitude, Hyères [Autumn 1883].

DEAR LAD, — Glad you like *Fontainebleau*. I am going to be the means, under heaven, of aërating or literating your pages. The idea that because a thing is a picture-book all the writing should be on the wrong tack is *triste* but widespread. Thus *Hokusai* will be really a gossip on convention, or in great part. And the Skelt will be as like a Charles Lamb as I can get it. The writer should write, and not illustrate pictures: else it's bosh....

Your remarks about the ugly are my eye. Ugliness is only the prose of horror. It is when you are not able to write *Macbeth* that you write *Thérèse Raquin*. Fashions are external: the essence of art only varies in so far as fashion widens the field of its application; art is a mill whose thirlage, in different ages, widens and contracts; but, in any case and under any fashion, the great man produces beauty, terror, and mirth, and the little man produces cleverness (personalities, psychology) instead of beauty, ugliness instead of terror, and jokes instead of mirth. As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be ever, world without end. Amen!

And even as you read, you say, "Of course, *quelle rengaine*!"

R. L. S.

To W. H. Low

Manhattan mentioned below is the name of a short-lived New York magazine, the editor of which had asked through Mr. Low for a contribution from R. L. S.

La Solitude, Hyères, October .

MY DEAR LOW, — ... Some day or other, in Cassell’s Magazine of Art, you will see a paper which will interest 58 you, and where your name appears. It is called *Fontainebleau: Village Communities of Artists*, and the signature of R. L. Stevenson will be found annexed.

Please tell the editor of Manhattan the following secrets for me: 1*st*, That I am a beast; 2*nd*, that I owe him a letter; 3*rd*, that I have lost his, and cannot recall either his name or address; 4*th*, that I am very deep in engagements, which my absurd health makes it hard for me to overtake; but 5*th*, that I will bear him in mind; 6*th* and last, that I am a brute.

My address is still the same, and I live in a most sweet corner of the universe, sea and fine hills before me, and a rich variegated plain; and at my back a craggy hill, loaded with vast feudal ruins. I am very quiet; a person passing by my door half startles me; but I enjoy the most aromatic airs, and at night the most wonderful view into a moonlit garden. By day this garden fades into nothing, overpowered by its surroundings and the luminous distance; but at night and when the moon is out, that garden, the arbour, the flight of stairs that mount the artificial hillock, the plumed blue gum-trees that hang trembling, become the very skirts of Paradise. Angels I know frequent it; and it thrills all night with the flutes of silence. Damn that garden; — and by day it is gone.

Continue to testify boldly against realism. Down with Dagon, the fish god! All art swings down towards imitation, in these days, fatally. But the man who loves art with wisdom sees the joke; it is the lustful that tremble and respect her ladyship; but the honest and romantic lovers of the Muse can see a joke and sit down to laugh with Apollo.

The prospect of your return to Europe is very agreeable; and I was pleased by what you said about your parents. One of my oldest friends died recently, and this has given me new thoughts of death. Up to now I had rather thought of him as a mere personal enemy of my own; but now that I see him hunting after my friends, he looks altogether darker. My own father is not 59 well; and Henley, of whom you must have heard me speak, is in a questionable state of health. These things are very solemn, and take some of the colour out of life. It is a great thing, after all, to be a man of reasonable honour and kindness. Do you remember once consulting me in Paris whether you had not better sacrifice honesty to art; and how, after much confabulation, we agreed that your art would suffer if you did? We decided better than we knew. In this strange welter where we live, all hangs together by a million filaments; and to do reasonably well by others, is the first prerequisite of art. Art is a virtue; and if I were the man I should be, my art would rise in the proportion of my life.

If you were privileged to give some happiness to your parents, I know your art will gain by it. *By God it will! — Sic subscribitur*,

R. L. S.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

La Solitude, Hyères [*October* 1883].

MY DEAR BOB, — Yes, I got both your letters at Lyons, but have been since then decading in several steps. Toothache; fever; Ferrier's death; lung. Now it is decided I am to leave to-morrow, penniless, for Nice to see Dr. Williams.

I was much struck by your last. I have written a breathless note on Realism for Henley; a fifth part of the subject hurriedly touched, which will show you how my thoughts are driving. You are now at last beginning to think upon the problems of executive, plastic art, for you are now for the first time attacking them. Hitherto you have spoken and thought of two things — technique and the *ars artium*, or common background of all arts. Studio work is the real touch. That is the genial error of the present French teaching. Realism I regard as a mere question of method. The "brown foreground," "old mastery," and the like, ranking with villanelles, as technical 60 sports and pastimes. Real art, whether ideal or realistic, addresses precisely the same feeling, and seeks the same qualities — significance or charm. And the same — very same — inspiration is only methodically differentiated according as the artist is an arrant realist or an arrant idealist. Each, by his own method, seeks to save and perpetuate the same significance or charm; the one by suppressing, the other by forcing, detail. All other idealism is the brown foreground over again, and hence only art in the sense of a game, like cup and ball. All other realism is not art at all — but not at all. It is, then, an insincere and showy handicraft.

Were you to re-read some Balzac, as I have been doing, it would greatly help to clear your eyes. He was a man who never found his method. An inarticulate Shakespeare, smothered under forcible-feeble detail. It is astounding to the riper mind how bad he is, how feeble, how untrue, how tedious; and, of course, when he surrendered to his temperament, how good and powerful. And yet never plain nor clear. He could not consent to be dull, and thus became so. He would leave nothing undeveloped, and thus drowned out of sight of land amid the multitude of crying and incongruous details. There is but one art — to omit! O if I knew how to omit, I would ask no other knowledge. A man who knew how to omit would make an *Iliad* of a daily paper.

Your definition of seeing is quite right. It is the first part of omission to be partly blind. Artistic sight is judicious blindness. Sam Bough must have been a jolly blind old boy. He would turn a corner, look for one-half or quarter minute, and then say, "This'll do, lad." Down he sat, there and then, with whole artistic plan, scheme of colour, and the like, and begin by laying a foundation of powerful and seemingly incongruous colour on the block. He saw, not the scene, but the water-colour sketch. Every artist by sixty should so behold nature. Where does he learn that? In the studio, I swear. He goes to 61 nature for facts, relations, values — material; as a man, before writing a historical novel, reads up memoirs. But it is not by reading memoirs that he has learned the selective criterion. He has learned that in the practice of his art; and he will never learn it well, but when disengaged from the ardent struggle of immediate representation, of realistic and *ex facto* art. He learns it in the crystallisation of day-dreams; in changing, not in copying, fact; in the pursuit of the ideal, not in the study of nature. These temples of art are, as you say, inaccessible to the realistic climber. It is not by looking at the sea that you get

"The multitudinous seas incarnadine,"

nor by looking at Mont Blanc that you find

"And visited all night by troops of stars."

A kind of ardour of the blood is the mother of all this; and according as this ardour is swayed by knowledge and seconded by craft, the art expression flows clear, and significance and charm, like a moon rising, are born above the barren juggle of mere symbols.

The painter must study more from nature than the man of words. By why? Because literature deals with men's business and passions which, in the game of life, we are irresistibly obliged to study; but painting with relations of light, and colour, and significances, and form, which, from the immemorial habit of the race, we pass over with an unregardful eye. Hence this crouching upon camp-stools, and these crusts. But neither one nor other is a part of art, only preliminary studies.

I want you to help me to get people to understand that realism is a method, and only methodic in its consequences; when the realist is an artist, that is, and supposing the idealist with whom you compare him to be anything but a *farceur* and a *dilettante*. The two schools of working do, and should, lead to the choice of different subjects. But 62 that is a consequence, not a cause. See my chaotic note, which will appear, I fancy, in November in Henley's sheet.

Poor Ferrier, it bust me horrid. He was, after you, the oldest of my friends.

I am now very tired, and will go to bed having prelected freely. Fanny will finish.

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

Some pages of MS. exist in which the writer at this time attempted to re-cast and expand a portion of the *Lay Morals* of 1879. A letter written some days earlier to his father, and partly quoted in Mr. Graham Balfour's *Life* (ed. 1906,), explains his purpose.

La Solitude, Hyères, 12th October 1883.

MY DEAR FATHER, — I have just lunched; the day is exquisite, the air comes through the open window rich with odour, and I am by no means spiritually minded. Your letter, however, was very much valued, and has been read oftener than once. What you say about yourself I was glad to hear; a little decent resignation is not only becoming a Christian, but is likely to be excellent for the health of a Stevenson. To fret and fume is undignified, suicidally foolish, and theologically unpardonable; we are here not to make, but to tread predestined, pathways; we are the foam of a wave, and to preserve a proper equanimity is not merely the first part of submission to God, but the chief of possible kindnesses to those about us. I am lecturing myself, but you also. To do our best is one part, but to wash our hands smilingly of the consequence is the next part, of any sensible virtue.

I have come, for the moment, to a pause in my moral works; for I have many irons in the fire, and I wish to finish something to bring coin before I can afford to go on with what I think doubtfully to be a duty. It is a most difficult work; a touch of the parson will drive off those I hope to influence; a touch of overstrained laxity, besides disgusting, like a grimace, may do harm. Nothing 63 that I have ever seen yet speaks directly and efficaciously to young men; and I do hope I may find the art and wisdom to fill up a gap. The great point, as I see it, is to ask as little as possible, and meet, if it may be, every view or absence of view; and it should be, must be, easy. Honesty is the one desideratum; but think how hard a one to meet. I think all the time of Ferrier and myself; these are the pair that I address. Poor Ferrier, so much a better man than I, and such a temporal wreck. But the thing of which we must divest our minds is to look partially upon others; all is to be viewed; and the creature judged, as he must be by his Creator, not dissected through a prism of morals, but in the unrefracted ray. So seen, and in relation to the almost omnipotent surroundings, who is to distinguish between F. and such a man as Dr. Candlish, or between such a man as David Hume and such an one as Robert Burns? To compare my poor and good Walter with myself is to make me startle; he, upon all grounds above the merely expedient, was the nobler being. Yet wrecked utterly ere the full age of manhood; and the last skirmishes so well fought, so humanly useless, so pathetically brave, only the leaps of an expiring lamp. All this is a very pointed instance. It shuts the mouth. I have learned more, in some ways, from him than from any other soul I ever met; and he, strange to think, was the best gentleman, in all kinder senses, that I ever knew. — Ever your affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. H. Low

The paper referred to at the beginning of the second paragraph is one on R. L. S. in the Century Magazine, the first seriously critical notice, says Mr. Low, which appeared of him in the States.

[*La Solitude, Hyères, Oct.* 23, 1883.]

MY DEAR LOW, — *C'est d'un bon camarade*; and I am much obliged to you for your two letters and the inclosure. 64 Times are a lityle changed with all of us since the ever memorable days of Lavenue: hallowed be his name! hallowed his old Fleury! — of which you did not see — I think — as I did — the glorious apotheosis: advanced on a Tuesday to three francs, on the Thursday to six, and on Friday swept off, holus bolus, for the proprietor's private consumption. Well, we had the start of that proprietor. Many a good bottle came our way, and was, I think, worthily made welcome.

I am pleased that Mr. Gilder should like my literature; and I ask you particularly to thank Mr. Bunner (have I the name right?) for his notice, which was of that friendly, headlong sort that really pleases an author like what the French call a "shake-hands." It pleased me the more coming from the States, where I have met not much recognition, save from the buccaneers, and above all from pirates who misspell my name. I saw my book advertised in a number of the Critic as the work of one R. L. Stephenson; and, I own, I boiled. It is so easy to know the name of the man whose book you have stolen; for there it is, at full length, on the title-page of your booty. But no, damn him, not he! He calls me Stephenson. These woes I only refer to by the way, as they set a higher value on the Century notice.

I am now a person with an established ill-health — a wife — a dog possessed with an evil, a Gadarene spirit — a chalet on a hill, looking out over the Mediterranean — a certain reputation — and very obscure finances. Otherwise, very much the same, I guess; and were a bottle of Fleury a thing to be obtained, capable of developing theories along with a fit spirit even as of yore. Yet I now draw near to the Middle Ages; nearly three years ago, that fatal Thirty struck; and yet the great work is not yet done — not yet even conceived. But so, as one goes on, the wood seems to thicken, the footpath to narrow, and the House Beautiful on the hill's summit to draw further and further away. We learn, indeed, to use our 65 means; but only to learn, along with it, the paralysing knowledge that these means are only applicable to two or three poor commonplace motives. Eight years ago, if I could have slung ink as I can now, I should have thought myself well on the road after Shakespeare; and now — I find I have only got a pair of walking-shoes and not yet begun to travel. And art is still away there on the mountain summit. But I need not continue; for, of course, this is your story just as much as it is mine; and, strange to think, it was Shakespeare's too, and Beethoven's, and Phidias's. It is a blessed thing that, in this forest of art, we can pursue our woodlice and sparrows, *and not catch them*, with almost the same fervour of exhilaration as that with which Sophocles hunted and brought down the Mastodon.

Tell me something of your work, and your wife. — My dear fellow, I am yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

My wife begs to be remembered to both of you; I cannot say as much for my dog, who has never seen you, but he would like, on general principles, to bite you.

To W. E. Henley

By this time *Treasure Island* was out in book form, and the following is in reply to some reflections on its seamanship which had been conveyed to him through Mr. Henley: —

[*La Solitude, Hyères, November* 1883.]

MY DEAR LAD, — ... Of course, my seamanship is jimmy: did I not beseech you I know not how often to find me an ancient mariner — and you, whose own wife's own brother is one of the ancientest, did nothing for me? As for my seamen, did Runciman ever know eighteenth century Buccaneers? No? Well, no more did I. But I have known and sailed with seamen too, and lived and eaten with them; and I made my put-up shot in no great ignorance, but as a put-up thing has to be made, *i.e.* to 66 be coherent and picturesque, and damn the expense. Are they fairly lively on the wires? Then, favour me with your tongues. Are they wooden, and dim, and no sport? Then it is I that am silent, otherwise not. The work, strange as it may sound in the ear, is not a work of realism. The next thing I shall hear is that the etiquette is wrong in Otto's Court! With a warrant, and I mean it to be so, and the whole matter never cost me half a thought. I make these paper people to please myself, and Skelt, and God Almighty, and with no ulterior purpose. Yet am I mortal myself; for, as I remind you, I begged for a supervising mariner. However, my heart is in the right place. I have been to sea, but I never crossed the threshold of a court; and the courts shall be the way I want 'em.

I'm glad to think I owe you the review that pleased me best of all the reviews I ever had; the one I liked best before that was — — 's on the *Arabians*. These two are the flowers of the collection, according to me. To live reading such reviews and die eating ortolans — sich is my aspiration.

Whenever you come you will be equally welcome. I am trying to finish *Otto* ere you shall arrive, so as to take and be able to enjoy a well-earned — O yes, a well-earned — holiday. Longman fetched by

Otto: is it a spoon or a spoilt horn? Momentous, if the latter; if the former, a spoon to dip much praise and pudding, and to give, I do think, much pleasure. The last part, now in hand, much smiles upon me. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

La Solitude, Hyères [*November* 1883].

MY DEAR MOTHER, — You must not blame me too much for my silence; I am over head and ears in work, and do not know what to do first. I have been hard at *Otto*, hard at *Silverado* proofs, which I have worked over again to 67 a tremendous extent; cutting, adding, rewriting, until some of the worst chapters of the original are now, to my mind, as good as any. I was the more bound to make it good, as I had such liberal terms; it's not for want of trying if I have failed.

I got your letter on my birthday; indeed, that was how I found it out about three in the afternoon, when postie comes. Thank you for all you said. As for my wife, that was the best investment ever made by man; but "in our branch of the family" we seem to marry well. I, considering my piles of work, am wonderfully well; I have not been so busy for I know not how long. I hope you will send me the money I asked however, as I am not only penniless, but shall remain so in all human probability for some considerable time. I have got in the mass of my expectations; and the £100 which is to float us on the new year cannot come due till *Silverado* is all ready; I am delaying it myself for the moment; then will follow the binders and the travellers and an infinity of other nuisances; and only at the last, the jingling-tingling.

Do you know that *Treasure Island* has appeared? In the November number of Henley's Magazine, a capital number anyway, there is a funny publisher's puff of it for your book; also a bad article by me. Lang dotes on *Treasure Island*: "Except *Tom Sawyer* and the *Odyssey*," he writes, "I never liked any romance so much." I will inclose the letter though. The Bogue is angelic, although very dirty. It has rained — at last! It was jolly cold when the rain came.

I was overjoyed to hear such good news of my father. Let him go on at that! — Ever your affectionate,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Of the "small ships" here mentioned, *Fontainebleau* and *The Character of Dogs* are well known: *A Misadventure in France* is 68 probably a draft of the *Epilogue to an Inland Voyage*, not published till five years later. The *Travelling Companion* (of which I remember little except that its scene was partly laid in North Italy and that a publisher to whom it was shown declared it a work of genius but indecent) was abandoned some two years later, as set forth on of this volume.

La Solitude, Hyères [*November* 1883].

£10,000 Pounds Reward!

Whereas Sidney Colvin, more generally known as the Guardian Angel, has vanished from the gaze of Mr. R. L. Stevenson, the above reward is offered as a means to discover the whereabouts of the misguided gentleman. He was known as a man of irregular habits, and his rowdy exterior would readily attract attention in a crowd. He was never known to resist a drink; whisky was his favourite dish. If any one will bring him to Mr. Stevenson's back area door, dead or alive, the greatest rejoicing will be felt by a bereaved and uneasy family.

Also, wherefore not a word, dear Colvin? My news is: splendid health; great success of the *Black Arrow*; another tale demanded, readers this time (the Lord lighten them!) pleased; a great variety of small ships launched or still upon the stocks — (also, why not send the annotated proof of *Fontainebleau*? ce n'est pas d'un bon camarade); a paper on dogs for Carr; a paper called *Old Mortality*, a paper called *A Misadventure in France*, a tale entituled *The Travelling Companion*; *Otto* arrested one foot in air; and last and not least, a great demand for news of Sidney Colvin and others. Herewith I pause, for why should I cast pearls before swine?

A word, Guardian Angel. You are much loved in this house, not by me only, but by the wife. The Wogg himself is anxious. — Ever yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

La Solitude, Hyères [*November* 1883].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I have been bad, but as you were worse, I feel no shame. I raise a blooming countenance, not the evidence of a self-righteous spirit.

I continue my uphill fight with the twin spirits of bankruptcy and indigestion. Duns rage about my portal, at least to fancy's ear.

I suppose you heard of Ferrier's death: my oldest friend, except Bob. It has much upset me. I did not fancy how much. I am strangely concerned about it.

My house is the loveliest spot in the universe; the moonlight nights we have are incredible; love, poetry and music, and the Arabian Nights, inhabit just my corner of the world — nest there like mavises.

Here lies
The carcase
of
Robert Louis Stevenson,
An active, austere, and not inelegant
writer,
who,

at the termination of a long career,
wealthy, wise, benevolent, and honoured by
the attention of two hemispheres,
yet owned it to have been his crowning favour
TO INHABIT
LA SOLITUDE.

(with the consent of the intelligent edility of Hyères, he has been interred, below this frugal stone, in the garden which he honoured for so long with his poetic presence.)

I must write more solemn letters. Adieu. Write.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Milne

This is to a cousin who had been one of his favourite playmates in childhood, and had recognised some allusions in the proof slips of the *Child's Garden* (the piece called *A Pirate Story*).

La Solitude, Hyères [*November* 1883].

MY DEAR HENRIETTA, — Certainly; who else would they be? More by token, on that particular occasion, you were sailing under the title of Princess Royal; I, after a furious contest, under that of Prince Alfred; and Willie, still a little sulky, as the Prince of Wales. We were all in a buck basket about half-way between the swing and the gate; and I can still see the Pirate Squadron heave in sight upon the weather bow.

I wrote a piece besides on Giant Bunker; but I was not happily inspired, and it is condemned. Perhaps I'll try again; he was a horrid fellow, Giant Bunker! and some of my happiest hours were passed in pursuit of him. You were a capital fellow to play: how few there were who could! None better than yourself. I shall never forget some of the days at Bridge of Allan; they were one golden dream. See "A Good Boy" in the *Penny Whistles*, much of the sentiment of which is taken direct from one evening at B. of A. when we had had a great play with the little Glasgow girl. Hallowed be that fat book of fairy tales! Do you remember acting the Fair One with Golden Locks? What a romantic drama! Generally speaking, whenever I think of play, it is pretty certain that you will come into my head. I wrote a paper called *Child's Play* once, where, I believe, you or Willie would recognise things....

Surely Willie is just the man to marry; and if his wife wasn't a happy woman, I think I could tell her who was to blame. Is there no word of it? Well, these things are beyond arrangement; and the wind bloweth where it listeth — which, I observe, is generally towards the west in Scotland. Here it prefers a south-easterly course, and is 71 called the Mistral — usually with an adjective in front. But if you will remember my yesterday's toothache and this morning's crick, you will be in a position to choose an adjective for yourself. Not that the wind is unhealthy; only when it comes strong, it is both very high and very cold, which makes it the d-v-l. But as I am writing to a lady, I had better avoid this topic; winds requiring a great scope of language.

Please remember me to all at home; give Ramsay a pennyworth of acidulated drops for his good taste. — And believe me, your affectionate cousin,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Miss Ferrier

La Solitude, Hyères [*November* 22, 1883].

DEAR MISS FERRIER, — Many thanks for the photograph. It is — well, it is like most photographs. The sun is an artist of too much renown; and, at any rate, we who knew Walter "in the brave days of old" will be difficult to please.

I was inexpressibly touched to get a letter from some lawyers as to some money. I have never had any account with my friends; some have gained and some lost; and I should feel there was something dishonest in a partial liquidation even if I could recollect the facts, *which I cannot*. But the fact of his having put aside this memorandum touched me greatly.

The mystery of his life is great. Our chemist in this place, who had been at Malvern, recognised the picture. You may remember Walter had a romantic affection for all pharmacies? and the bottles in the window were for him a poem? He said once that he knew no pleasure like driving through a lamplit city, waiting for the chemists to go by.

All these things return now.

He had a pretty full translation of Schiller's *Æsthetic Letters*, which we read together, as well as the second part of *Faust*, in Gladstone Terrace, he helping me with the 72 German. There is no keepsake I should more value than the MS. of that translation. They were the best days I ever had with him, little dreaming all would so soon be over. It needs a blow like this to convict a man of mortality and its burthen. I always thought I should go by myself; not to survive. But now I feel as if the earth were undermined, and all my friends have lost one thickness of reality since that one passed. Those are happy who can take it otherwise; with that I found things all beginning to dislimn. Here we have no abiding city, and one felt as though he had — and O too much acted.

But if you tell me, he did not feel my silence. However, he must have done so; and my guilt is irreparable now. I thank God at least heartily that he did not resent it.

Please remember me to Sir Alexander and Lady Grant, to whose care I will address this. When next I am in Edinburgh I will take flowers, alas! to the West Kirk. Many a long hour we passed in graveyards, the man who has gone and I — or rather not that man —

but the beautiful, genial, witty youth who so betrayed him. — Dear Miss Ferrier, I am yours most sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

This refers to some dispute which had arisen with an editor (I forget whom) concerning the refusal of an article on Salvini. The nickname “Fastidious Brisk,” from Ben Jonson’s *Every Man out of his Humour*, was applied by Mr. Henley to Stevenson — very inappropriately as I always thought.

La Solitude, Hyères, Autumn 1883.

MY DEAR LAD, — You know your own business best; but I wish your honesty were not so warfaring. These conflicts pain Lucretian sitters on the shore; and one wonders — one wonders — wonders and whimpers. I do not say my attitude is noble; but is yours conciliatory? I revere Salvini, but I shall never see him — nor anybody — play again. That is all a matter of history, heroic history, 73 to me. Were I in London, I should be the liker Tantalus — no more. But as for these quarrels: in not many years shall we not all be clay-cold and safe below ground, you with your loud-mouthed integrity, I with my fastidious briskness — and — with all their faults and merits, swallowed in silence. It seems to me, in ignorance of cause, that when the dustman has gone by, these quarrellings will prick the conscience. Am I wrong? I am a great sinner; so, my brave friend, are you; the others also. Let us a little imitate the divine patience and the divine sense of humour, and smilingly tolerate those faults and virtues that have so brief a period and so intertwined a being.

I fear I was born a parson; but I live very near upon the margin (though, by your leave, I may outlive you all!), and too much rigour in these daily things sounds to me like clatter on the kitchen dishes. If it might be — could it not be smoothed? This very day my father writes me he has gone to see, upon his deathbed, an old friend to whom for years he has not spoken or written. On his deathbed; no picking up of the lost stitches; merely to say: my little fury, my spotted uprightness, after having split our lives, have not a word of quarrel to say more. And the same post brings me the news of another — War! Things in this troubled medium are not so clear, dear Henley; there are faults upon all hands; and the end comes, and Ferrier’s grave gapes for us all.

The Prosy Preacher

(But written in deep dejection, my dear man).

Suppose they *are* wrong? Well, am I not tolerated, are you not tolerated? — we and *our* faults?

To W. H. Low

La Solitude, Hyères, Var, 13th December 1883.

MY DEAR LOW, — ... I was much pleased with what you said about my work. Ill-health is a great handicapper 74 in the race. I have never at command that press of spirits that are necessary to strike out a thing red-hot. *Silverado* is an example of stuff worried and pawed about, God knows how often, in poor health, and you can see for yourself the result: good pages, an imperfect fusion, a certain languor of the whole. Not, in short, art. I have told Roberts to send you a copy of the book when it appears, where there are some fair passages that will be new to you. My brief romance, *Prince Otto* — far my most difficult adventure up to now — is near an end. I have still one chapter to write *de fond en comble*, and three or four to strengthen or recast. The rest is done. I do not know if I have made a spoon, or only spoiled a horn; but I am tempted to hope the first. If the present bargain hold, it will not see the light of day for some thirteen months. Then I shall be glad to know how it strikes you. There is a good deal of stuff in it, both dramatic and, I think, poetic; and the story is not like these purposeless fables of to-day, but is, at least, intended to stand firm upon a base of philosophy — or morals — as you please. It has been long gestated, and is wrought with care. *Enfin, nous verrons.* My labours have this year for the first time been rewarded with upwards of £350; that of itself, so base we are! encourages me; and the better tenor of my health yet more. — Remember me to Mrs. Low, and believe me, yours most sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Thomas Stevenson

La Solitude, December 20, 1883.

MY DEAR FATHER, — I do not know which of us is to blame; I suspect it is you this time. The last accounts of you were pretty good, I was pleased to see; I am, on the whole, very well — suffering a little still from my fever and liver complications, but better.

I have just finished re-reading a book, which I counsel you above all things *not* to read, as it has made me very ill, and would make you worse — Lockhart's *Scott*. It is worth reading, as all things are from time to time that keep us nose to nose with fact; though I think such reading may be abused, and that a great deal of life is better spent in reading of a light and yet chivalrous strain. Thus, no Waverley novel approaches in power, blackness, bitterness, and moral elevation to the diary and Lockhart's narrative of the end; and yet the Waverley novels are better reading for every day than the Life. You may take a tonic daily, but not phlebotomy.

The great double danger of taking life too easily, and taking it too hard, how difficult it is to balance that! But we are all too little inclined to faith; we are all, in our serious moments, too much inclined to forget that all are sinners, and fall justly by their faults, and therefore that we have no more to do with that than with the thundercloud; only to trust, and do our best, and wear as smiling a face as may be for others and ourselves. But there is no royal road among this complicated business. Hegel the German got the best word of all philosophy with his antinomies: the contrary of everything is its postulate. That is, of course, grossly expressed, but gives a hint of the idea, which contains a great deal of the mysteries of religion, and a vast amount of the practical wisdom of life. For your part, there is no doubt as to your duty — to take things easy and be as happy as you can, for your sake, and my mother's, and that of many besides. Excuse this sermon. — Ever your loving son,

R. L. S.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

La Solitude, December 25, 1883.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER, — This it is supposed will reach you about Christmas, and I believe I should 76 include Lloyd in the greeting. But I want to lecture my father; he is not grateful enough; he is like Fanny; his resignation is not the "true blue." A man who has gained a stone; whose son is better, and, after so many fears to the contrary, I dare to say, a credit to him; whose business is arranged; whose marriage is a picture — what I should call resignation in such a case as his would be to "take down his fiddle and play as lood as ever he could." That and nought else. And now, you dear old pious ingrate, on this Christmas morning, think what your mercies have been; and do not walk too far before your breakfast — as far as to the top of India Street, then to the top of Dundas Street, and then to your ain stair heid; and do not forget that even as *laborare*, so *joculari, est orare*; and to be happy the first step to being pious.

I have as good as finished my novel, and a hard job it has been — but now practically over, *laus deo*! My financial prospects better than ever before; my excellent wife a touch dolorous, like Mr. Tommy; my Bogue quite converted, and myself in good spirits. O, send Curry Powder per Baxter.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

[*La Solitude, Hyères*] *last Sunday of* '83.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I give my father up. I give him a parable: that the Waverley novels are better reading for every day than the tragic Life. And he takes it backside foremost, and shakes his head, and is gloomier than ever. Tell him that I give him up. I don't want no such a parent. This is not the man for my money. I do not call that by the name of religion which fills a man with bile. I write him a whole letter, bidding him beware of extremes, and telling him that his gloom is gallows-worthy; and I get back an answer — Perish the thought of it.

Here am I on the threshold of another year, when, according to all human foresight, I should long ago have been resolved into my elements; here am I, who you were persuaded was born to disgrace you — and, I will do you the justice to add, on no such insufficient grounds — no very burning discredit when all is done; here am I married, and the marriage recognised to be a blessing of the first order, A1 at Lloyd's. There is he, at his not first youth, able to take more exercise than I at thirty-three, and gaining a stone's weight, a thing of which I am incapable. There are you; has the man no gratitude? There is Smeoroch: is he blind? Tell him from me that all this is

NOT THE TRUE BLUE!

I will think more of his prayers when I see in him a spirit of *praise*. Piety is a more childlike and happy attitude than he admits. Martha, Martha, do you hear the knocking at the door? But Mary was happy. Even the Shorter Catechism, not the merriest epitome of religion, and a work exactly as pious although not quite so true as the multiplication table — even that dry-as-dust epitome begins with a heroic note. What is man's chief end? Let him study that; and ask himself if to refuse to enjoy God's kindest gifts is in the spirit indicated. Up, Dullard! It is better service to enjoy a novel than to mump.

I have been most unjust to the Shorter Catechism, I perceive. I wish to say that I keenly admire its merits as a performance; and that all that was in my mind was its peculiarly unreligious and unmoral texture; from which defect it can never, of course, exercise the least influence on the minds of children. But they learn fine style and some austere thinking unconsciously. — Ever your loving son,

R. L. S.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var, January 1 (1884).

MY DEAR PEOPLE, — A Good New Year to you. The year closes, leaving me with £50 in the bank, owing no man nothing, £100 more due to me in a week or so, and £150 more in the course of the month; and I can look back on a total receipt of £465, 0s. 6d. for the last twelve months!

And yet I am not happy!

Yet I beg! Here is my beggary: —

1. Sellar's Trial.
2. George Borrow's Book about Wales.
3. My Grandfather's Trip to Holland.
4. And (but this is, I fear, impossible) the Bell Rock Book.

When I think of how last year began, after four months of sickness and idleness, all my plans gone to water, myself starting alone, a kind of spectre, for Nice — should I not be grateful? Come, let us sing unto the Lord!

Nor should I forget the expected visit, but I will not believe in that till it befall; I am no cultivator of disappointments, 'tis a herb that does not grow in my garden; but I get some good crops both of remorse and gratitude. The last I can recommend to all gardeners; it grows best in shiny weather, but once well grown, is very hardy; it does not require much labour; only that the husbandman should smoke his pipe about the flower-plots and admire God's pleasant wonders. Winter green (otherwise known as Resignation, or the "false gratitude plant") springs in much the same soil; is little hardier, if at all; and requires to be so dug about and dunged, that there is little margin left for profit. The variety known as the Black Winter green (H. V. Stevensoniana) is rather for ornament than profit.

"John, do you see that bed of resignation?" — "It's doin' bravely, sir." — "John, I will not have it in my garden; it flatters not the eye and comforts not the stomach; root it out." — "Sir, I ha'e seen o' them that rase as high as nettles; gran' plants!" — "What then? Were they as tall as alps, if still unsavoury and bleak, what matters it? Out with it, then; and in its place put Laughter and a Good Conceit (that capital home evergreen), and a bush of Flowering Piety — but see it be the flowering sort — the other species is no ornament to any gentleman's Back Garden."

Jno. Bunyan.

To W. E. Henley

Early in January, Stevenson, after a week's visit at Hyères from his friends Charles Baxter and W. E. Henley, accompanied them as far as Nice, and there suddenly went down with an attack of acute congestion, first of the lungs and then of the kidneys. At one moment there seemed no hope, but he recovered slowly and returned to Hyères. His friends had not written during his illness, fearing him to be too far gone to care for letters. As he got better he began to chafe at their silence.

[*Hyères, February or March* 1884].

TANDEM DESINO*

I cannot read, work, sleep, lie still, walk, or even play patience. These plagues will overtake all damned silencists; among whom, from this day out, number

Eructavit cor Timonis.**

the fiery indignator

Roland Little Stevenson.

I counted miseries by the heap,
But now have had my fill,

I cannot see, I do not sleep,
But shortly I shall kill.
Of many letters, here is a
Full End.
The last will and testament of
a demitting correspondent.

My indefatigable pen
I here lay down forever. Men
Have used, and left me, and forgot;
Men are entirely off the spot;
Men are a *blague* and an abuse;
And I commit them to the deuce!
Roderick Lamond Stevenson.
I had companions, I had friends,
I had of whisky various blends.
The whisky was all drunk; and lo!
The friends were gone for evermo!

The loquacious man at peace.*
And when I marked the ingratitude,
I to my maker turned, and spewed.
Randolph Lovel Stevenson.
Here endeth the
Familiar Correspondence
of
R. L .S.**
Explicuerunt Epistolae
Stevensonianae
Omnes.**
A pen broken, a subverted ink-pot.
All men are rot; but there are two —
Sidney, the oblivious Slade, and you —
Who from that rabble stand confest
Ten million times the rottenest.
R. L. S.
When I was sick and safe in gaol
I thought my friends would never fail.
One wrote me nothing; t'other bard
Sent me an insolent post-card.
R. L. S.
Terminus: Silentia.**
FINIS Finaliter finium.**
IF NOBODY WRITES TO ME I
SHALL DIE

I now write no more.
Richard Lefanu Stevenson,
Duke of Indignation
Maitre Bosco,
[illegible]
Secretary
John Blind
Vain-hope Go-to-bed
Israel Sciatica

The finger on the mouth.

* Originally printed upside-down.
** Originally printed sideways.

To Sidney Colvin

The allusions in the second paragraph are to the commanders in the Nile campaigns of those years.

La Solitude, Hyères, 9th March 1884.

MY DEAR S. C., — You will already have received a not very sane note from me; so your patience was rewarded — may I say, your patient silence? However, now comes a letter, which on receipt, I thus acknowledge.

I have already expressed myself as to the political aspect. About Grahame, I feel happier; it does seem to have been really a good, neat, honest piece of work. We do not seem to be so badly off for commanders: Wolseley and Roberts, and this pile of Woods, Stewarts, Alisons, Grahames, and the like. Had we but ONE statesman on any side of the house!

Two chapters of *Otto* do remain: one to rewrite, one to create; and I am not yet able to tackle them. For me it is my chief o' works; hence probably not so for others, since it only means that I have here attacked the greatest difficulties. But some chapters towards the end: three in particular — I do think come off. I find them stirring, dramatic, and not unpoetical. We shall see, 82 however; as like as not, the effort will be more obvious than the success. For, of course, I strung myself hard to carry it out. The next will come easier, and possibly be more popular. I believe in the covering of much paper, each time with a definite and not too difficult artistic purpose; and then, from time to time, drawing oneself up and trying, in a superior effort, to combine the facilities thus acquired or improved. Thus one progresses. But, mind, it is very likely that the big effort, instead of being the masterpiece, may be the blotted copy, the gymnastic exercise. This no man can tell; only the brutal and licentious public, snouting in Mudie's wash-trough, can return a dubious answer.

I am to-day, thanks to a pure heaven and a beneficent, loud-talking, antiseptic mistral, on the high places as to health and spirits. Money holds out wonderfully. Fanny has gone for a drive to certain meadows which are now one sheet of jonquils: sea-bound meadows, the thought of which may freshen you in Bloomsbury. “Ye have been fresh and fair, Ye have been filled with flowers” — I fear I misquote. Why do people babble? Surely Herrick, in his true vein, is superior to Martial himself, though Martial is a very pretty poet.

Did you ever read St. Augustine? The first chapters of the *Confessions* are marked by a commanding genius: Shakespearian in depth. I was struck dumb, but, alas! when you begin to wander into controversy, the poet drops out. His description of infancy is most seizing. And how is this: “Sed majorum nugae negotia vocantur; puerorum autem talia cum sint puniuntur a majoribus.” Which is quite after the heart of R. L. S. See also his splendid passage about the “luminosus limes amicitiae” and the “nebulae de limosa concupiscentia carnis”; going on “*Utrumque* in confuso aestuabat et rapiebat imbecillam aetatem per abrupta cupiditatum.” That “Utrumque” is a real contribution to life’s science. Lust *alone* is but a pigmy; but it never, or rarely, attacks us single-handed.

Do you ever read (to go miles off, indeed) the incredible Barbey d’Aurévilly? A psychological Poe — to be for a moment Henley. I own with pleasure I prefer him with all his folly, rot, sentiment, and mixed metaphors, to the whole modern school in France. It makes me laugh when it’s nonsense; and when he gets an effect (though it’s still nonsense and mere Poëry, not poesy) it wakens me. *Ce qui ne meurt pas* nearly killed me with laughing, and left me — well, it left me very nearly admiring the old ass. At least, it’s the kind of thing one feels one couldn’t do. The dreadful moonlight, when they all three sit silent in the room — by George, sir, it’s imagined — and the brief scene between the husband and wife is all there. *Quant au fond*, the whole thing, of course, is a fever dream, and worthy of eternal laughter. Had the young man broken stones, and the two women been hard-working honest prostitutes, there had been an end of the whole immoral and baseless business: you could at least have respected them in that case.

I also read *Petronius Arbiter*, which is a rum work, not so immoral as most modern works, but singularly silly. I tackled some Tacitus too. I got them with a dreadful French crib on the same page with the text, which helps me along and drives me mad. The French do not even try to translate. They try to be much more classical than the classics, with astounding results of barrenness and tedium. Tacitus, I fear, was too solid for me. I liked the war part; but the dreary intriguing at Rome was too much.

R. L. S.

To Mr. Dick

This correspondent was for many years head clerk and confidential assistant in the family firm at Edinburgh.

La Solitude, Hyères, 12th March 1884.

MY DEAR MR. DICK, — I have been a great while owing you a letter; but I am not without excuses, as you have 84 heard. I overworked to get a piece of work finished before I had my holiday, thinking to enjoy it more; and instead of that, the machinery near hand came sundry in my hands! like Murdie's uniform. However, I am now, I think, in a fair way of recovery; I think I was made, what there is of me, of whipcord and thorn-switches; surely I am tough! But I fancy I shall not overdrive again, or not so long. It is my theory that work is highly beneficial, but that it should, if possible, and certainly for such partially broken-down instruments as the thing I call my body, be taken in batches, with a clear break and breathing space between. I always do vary my work, laying one thing aside to take up another, not merely because I believe it rests the brain, but because I have found it most beneficial to the result. Reading, Bacon says, makes a full man, but what makes me full on any subject is to banish it for a time from all my thoughts. However, what I now propose is, out of every quarter to work two months, and rest the third. I believe I shall get more done, as I generally manage, on my present scheme, to have four months' impotent illness and two of imperfect health — one before, one after, I break down. This, at least, is not an economical division of the year.

I re-read the other day that heartbreaking book, the *Life of Scott*. One should read such works now and then, but O, not often. As I live, I feel more and more that literature should be cheerful and brave-spirited, even if it cannot be made beautiful and pious and heroic. We wish it to be a green place; the Waverley Novels are better to re-read than the over-true *Life*, fine as dear Sir Walter was. The Bible, in most parts, is a cheerful book; it is our little piping theologies, tracts, and sermons that are dull and dowie; and even the Shorter Catechism, which is scarcely a work of consolation, opens with the best and shortest and completest sermon ever written — upon Man's chief end. — Believe me, my dear Mr. Dick, very sincerely yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — You see I have changed my hand. I was threatened apparently with scrivener's cramp, and at any rate had got to write so small, that the revisal of my MS. tried my eyes, hence my signature alone remains upon the old model; for it appears that if I changed that, I should be cut off from my "vivers."

R. L. S.

To Cosmo Monkhouse

This amiable and excellent public servant, art-critic, and versifier was a friend of old Savile Club days; the drift of his letter can easily be guessed from this reply. The reference to Lamb is to the essay on the

Restoration dramatists.

La Solitude, Hyères, March 16, 1884.

MY DEAR MONKHOUSE, — You see with what promptitude I plunge into correspondence; but the truth is, I am condemned to a complete inaction, stagnate dismally, and love a letter. Yours, which would have been welcome at any time, was thus doubly precious.

Dover sounds somewhat shiveringly in my ears. You should see the weather *I* have — cloudless, clear as crystal, with just a punkah-draft of the most aromatic air, all pine and gum tree. You would be ashamed of Dover; you would scruple to refer, sir, to a spot so paltry. To be idle at Dover is a strange pretension; pray, how do you warm yourself? If I were there I should grind knives or write blank verse, or — — But at least you do not bathe? It is idle to deny it: I have — I may say I nourish — a growing jealousy of the robust, large-legged, healthy Britain-dwellers, patient of grog, scorners of the timid umbrella, innocuously breathing fog: all which I once was, and I am ashamed to say liked it. How ignorant is youth! grossly rolling among unselected pleasures; and how nobler, purer, sweeter, and lighter, to sip the choice tonic, to recline in the luxurious invalid chair, and to tread, well-shawled, the little round of the constitutional. Seriously, do you like to repose? Ye gods, I hate it. I 86 never rest with any acceptation; I do not know what people mean who say they like sleep and that damned bedtime which, since long ere I was breeched, has rung a knell to all my day's doings and beings. And when a man, seemingly sane, tells me he has "fallen in love with stagnation," I can only say to him, "You will never be a Pirate!" This may not cause any regret to Mrs. Monkhouse; but in your own soul it will clang hollow — think of it! Never! After all boyhood's aspirations and youth's immoral day-dreams, you are condemned to sit down, grossly draw in your chair to the fat board, and be a beastly Burgess till you die. Can it be? Is there not some escape, some furlough from the Moral Law, some holiday jaunt contrivable into a Better Land? Shall we never shed blood? This prospect is too grey.

Here lies a man who never did
Anything but what he was bid;
Who lived his life in paltry ease,
And died of commonplace disease.

To confess plainly, I had intended to spend my life (or any leisure I might have from Piracy upon the high seas) as the leader of a great horde of irregular cavalry, devastating whole valleys. I can still, looking back, see myself in many favourite attitudes; signalling for a boat from my pirate ship with a pocket-handkerchief, I at the jetty end, and one or two of my bold blades keeping the crowd at bay; or else turning in the saddle to look back at my whole command (some five thousand strong) following me at the hand-gallop up the road out of the burning valley: this last by moonlight.

Et point du tout. I am a poor scribe, and have scarce broken a commandment to mention, and have recently dined upon cold veal! As for you (who probably had some ambitions), I hear of you living at Dover, in lodgings, like the beasts of the field. But in heaven, when we get 87 there, we shall have a good time, and see some real carnage. For heaven is — must be — that great Kingdom of Antinomia, which Lamb saw dimly adumbrated in the *Country Wife*, where the worm which never dies (the conscience) peacefully expires, and the sinner lies down beside the Ten Commandments. Till then, here a sheer hulk lies poor Tom Bowling, with neither health nor vice for anything more spirited than procrastination, which I may well call the Consolation Stakes of Wickedness; and by whose diligent practice, without the least amusement to ourselves, we can rob the orphan and bring down grey hairs with sorrow to the dust.

This astonishing gush of nonsense I now hasten to close, envelope, and expedite to Shakespeare's Cliff. Remember me to Shakespeare, and believe me, yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

Mr. Gosse had written describing the office which he then occupied, a picturesque old-fashioned chamber in the upper stories of the Board of Trade.

La Solitude, Hyères, March 17, 1884.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — Your office — office is profanely said — your bower upon the leads is divine. Have you, like Pepys, "the right to fiddle" there? I see you mount the companion, barbiton in hand, and, fluttered about by city sparrows, pour forth your spirit in a voluntary. Now when the spring begins, you must lay in your flowers: how do you say about a potted hawthorn? Would it bloom? Wallflower is a choice pot-herb; lily-of-the-valley, too, and carnation, and Indian cress trailed about the window, is not only beautiful by colour, but the leaves are good to eat. I recommend thyme and rosemary for the aroma, which should not be left upon one side; they are good quiet growths.

On one of your tables keep a great map spread out; a 88 chart is still better — it takes one further — the havens with their little anchors, the rocks, banks, and soundings, are adorably marine; and such furniture will suit your ship-shape habitation. I wish I could see those cabins; they smile upon me with the most intimate charm. From your leads, do you behold St. Paul's? I always like to see the Foolscap; it is London *per se* and no spot from which it is visible is without romance. Then it is good company for the man of letters, whose veritable nursing Pater-Noster is so near at hand.

I am all at a standstill; as idle as a painted ship, but not so pretty. My romance, which has so nearly butchered me in the writing, not even finished; though so near, thank God, that a few days of tolerable strength will see the roof upon that structure. I have worked very hard at it, and so do not expect any great public favour. *In moments of effort, one learns to do the easy things that people like.* There is the golden maxim; thus one should strain and then play, strain again and play again. The strain is for us, it educates; the play is for the reader, and pleases. Do you not feel so? We are ever threatened by two contrary faults: both deadly. To sink into what my forefathers would have called "rank conformity," and to pour forth cheap replicas, upon the one hand; upon the other, and still more insidiously present, to forget that art is a diversion and a decoration, that no triumph or effort is of value, nor anything worth reaching except charm. — Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Miss Ferrier

Soon after the date of the following letter Miss Ferrier went out to her friends and stayed with them through the trying weeks which followed.

La Solitude, Hyères [*March* 22, 1884].

MY DEAR MISS FERRIER, — Are you really going to fail us? This seems a dreadful thing. My poor wife, who is 89 not well off for friends on this bare coast, has been promising herself, and I have been promising her, a rare acquisition. And now Miss Burn has failed, and you utter a very doubtful note. You do not know how delightful this place is, nor how anxious we are for a visit. Look at the names: "The Solitude" — is that romantic? The palm-trees? — how is that for the gorgeous East? "Var"? the name of a river — "the quiet waters by"! 'Tis true, they are in another department, and consist of stones and a biennial spate; but what a music, what a plash of brooks, for the imagination! We have hills; we have skies; the roses are putting forth, as yet sparsely; the meadows by the sea are one sheet of jonquils; the birds sing as in an English May — for, considering we are in France and serve up our song-birds, I am ashamed to say, on a little field of toast and with a sprig of thyme (my own receipt) in their most innocent and now unvocal bellies — considering all this, we have a wonderfully fair wood-music round this Solitude of ours. What can I say more? — All this awaits you. *Kennst du das Land*, in short. — Your sincere friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. H. Low

The verses enclosed were the set entitled "The Canoe Speaks," afterwards printed in *Underwoods*. Stevenson was suffering at this time from a temporary weakness of the eyesight.

La Solitude, Hyères [*April* 1884].

MY DEAR LOW, — The blind man in these sprawled lines sends greeting. I have been ill, as perhaps the papers told you. The news — "great news — glorious news — sec-ond ed-ition!" — went the round in England.

Anyway, I now thank you for your pictures, which, particularly the Arcadian one, we all (Bob included, he was here sick-nursing me) much liked.

Herewith are a set of verses which I thought pretty enough to send to press. Then I thought of the Manhattan, 90 towards whom I have guilty and compunctious feelings. Last, I had the best thought of all — to send them to you in case you might think them suitable for illustration. It seemed to me quite in your vein. If so, good; if not, hand them on to Manhattan, Century, or Lippincott, at your pleasure, as all three desire my work or pretend to. But I trust the lines will not go unattended. Some riverside will haunt you; and O! be tender to my bathing girls. The lines are copied in my wife's hand, as I cannot see to write otherwise than with the pen of Cormoran, Gargantua, or Nimrod. Love to your wife. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

Copied it myself.

To Thomas Stevenson

La Solitude, Hyères, April 19, 1884.

MY DEAR FATHER, — Yesterday I very powerfully stated the *Hœresis Stevensoniana*, or the complete body of divinity of the family theologian, to Miss Ferrier. She was much impressed; so was I. You are a great heresiarch; and I know no better. Whaur the devil did ye get thon about the soap? Is it altogether your own? I never heard it elsewhere; and yet I suspect it must have been held at some time or other, and if you were to look up you would probably find yourself condemned by some Council.

I am glad to hear you are so well. The hear is excellent. The Cornhills came; I made Miss Ferrier read us *Thrawn Janet*, and was quite bowled over by my own works. *The Merry Men* I mean to make much longer, with a whole new dénouement, not yet quite clear to me. *The Story of a Lie* I must rewrite entirely also, as it is too weak and ragged, yet is worth saving for the Admiral. Did I ever tell you that the Admiral was recognised in America?

When they are all on their legs this will make an excellent collection.

Has Davie never read *Guy Mannering, Rob Roy*, or *The Antiquary*? All of which are worth three *Waverleys*. I think *Kenilworth* better than

Waverley; *Nigel*, too; and *Quentin Durward* about as good. But it shows a true piece of insight to prefer *Waverley*, for it *is* different; and though not quite coherent, better worked in parts than almost any other: surely more carefully. It is undeniable that the love of the slap-dash and the shoddy grew upon Scott with success. Perhaps it does on many of us, which may be the granite on which D.'s opinion stands. However, I hold it, in Patrick Walker's phrase, for an "old, condemned, damnable error." Dr. Simson was condemned by P. W. as being "a bagful of" such. One of Patrick's amenities!

Another ground there may be to D.'s opinion; those who avoid (or seek to avoid) Scott's facility are apt to be continually straining and torturing their style to get in more of life. And to many the extra significance does not redeem the strain.

Doctor Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

La Solitude, Hyères, April 20th, 1884.

I have been really ill for two days, hemorrhage, weakness, extreme nervousness that will not let me lie a moment, and damned sciatica o' nights; but to-day I am on the recovery. Time; for I was miserable. It is not often that I suffer, with all my turns and tumbles, from the sense of serious illness; and I hate it, as I believe everybody does. And then the combination of not being able to read, not being allowed to speak, being too weak to write, and not wishing to eat, leaves a man with some empty seconds. But I bless God, it's over now; to-day I am much mended.

Insatiable gulf, greedier than hell, and more silent than the woods of Styx, have you or have you not lost 92 the dedication to the *Child's Garden*? Answer that plain question as otherwise I must try to tackle to it once again.

Sciatica is a word employed much by Shakespeare in a certain connection. 'Tis true, he was no physician, but as I read, he had smarted in his day. I, too, do smart. And yet this keen soprano agony, these veins of fire and bombshell explosions in the knee, are as nothing to a certain dull, drowsy pain I had when my kidneys were congested at Nice; there was death in that; the creak of Charon's rowlocks, and the miasmas of the Styx. I may say plainly, much as I have lost the power of bearing pain, I had still rather suffer much than die. Not only the love of life grows on me, but the fear of certain odd end-seconds grows as well. 'Tis a suffocating business, take it how you will; and Tyrrel and Forest only bunglers.

Well, this is an essay on death, or worse, on dying: to return to daylight and the winds, I perceive I have grown to live too much in my work and too little in life. 'Tis the dollars do it: the world is too much. Whenever I think I would like to live a little, I hear the butcher's cart resounding through the neighbourhood; and so to plunge again. The fault is a good fault for me; to be able to do so, is to succeed in life; and my life has been a huge success. I can live with joy and without disgust in the art by which I try to support myself; I have the best wife in the world; I have rather more praise and nearly as much coin as I deserve; my friends are many and true-hearted. Sir, it is a big thing in successes. And if mine anchorage lies something open to the wind, Sciatica, if the crew are blind, and the captain spits blood, one cannot have all, and I may be patched up again, who knows? "His timbers yet are (indifferently) sound, and he may float again."

Thanks for the word on *Silverado*. — Yours ever,

The Sciaticated Bard.

To Trevor Haddon

The allusions to Skelt, the last of the designers and etchers of cheap sheets illustrating the popular dramas and melodramas of the day, will need no explanation to readers familiar with the essay *A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured*.

La Solitude, Hyères, April 23rd, 1884.

DEAR MR. HADDON, — I am pleased to see your hand again, and, waiting my wife's return, to guess at some of the contents. For various things have befallen me of late. First, as you see, I had to change my hand; lastly I have fallen into a kind of blindness, and cannot read. This more inclines me for something to do, to answer your letter before I have read it, a safe plan familiar to diplomatists.

I gather from half shut eyes that you were a Skeltist; now seriously that is a good beginning; there is a deal of romance (cheap) in Skelt. Look at it well, and you will see much of Dickens. And even Skelt is better than conscientious, grey back-gardens, and conscientious, dull still lives. The great lack of art just now is a spice of life and interest; and I prefer galvanism to acquiescence in the grave. All do not; 'tis an affair of tastes; and mine are young. Those who like death have their innings to-day with art that is like mahogany and horse-hair furniture, solid, true, serious and as dead as Cæsar. I wish I could read *Treasure Island*; I believe I should like it. But work done, for the artist, is the Golden Goose killed; you sell its feathers and lament the eggs. To-morrow the fresh woods!

I have been seriously ill, and do not pick up with that finality that I should like to see. I linger over and digest my convalescence like a favourite wine; and what with blindness, green spectacles, and seclusion, cut but a poor figure in the world.

I made out at the end that you were asking some 94 advice — but what, my failing eyes refuse to inform me. I must keep a sheet for the answer; and Mrs. Stevenson still delays, and still I have no resource against tedium but the waggling of this pen.

You seem to me to be a pretty lucky young man; keep your eyes open to your mercies. That part of piety is eternal; and the man who forgets to be grateful has fallen asleep in life. Please to recognise that you are unworthy of all that befalls you — unworthy, too, I hear you wail, of this terrible sermon; but indeed we are not worthy of our fortunes; love takes us in a counterfeit, success comes to us at play, health stays with us while we abuse her; and even when we gird at our fellow-men, we should remember that it is of their good will alone, that we still live and still have claims to honour. The sins of the most innocent, if they were exactly visited, would ruin them to the doer. And if you know any man who believes himself to be worthy of a wife's love, a friend's affection, a mistress's caress, even if venal, you may rest assured he is worthy of nothing but a kicking. I fear men who have no open faults; what do they conceal? We are not meant to be good in this world, but to try to be, and fail, and keep on trying; and when we get a cake to say, "Thank God!" and when we get a buffet, to say, "Just so: well hit!"

I have been getting some of the buffets of late; but have amply earned them — you need not pity me. Pity sick children and the individual poor man; not the mass. Don't pity anybody else, and never pity fools. The optimistic Stevenson; but there is a sense in these wanderings.

Now I have heard your letter, and my sermon was not mal-à-propos. For you seem to be complaining. Everybody's home is depressing, I believe; it is their difficult business to make it less so. There is an unpleasant saying, which would have pricked me sharply at your age. — Yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Cosmo Monkhouse

La Solitude, Hyères [*April* 24, 1884].

DEAR MONKHOUSE, — If you are in love with repose, here is your occasion: change with me. I am too blind to read, hence no reading; I am too weak to walk, hence no walking; I am not allowed to speak, hence no talking; but the great simplification has yet to be named; for, if this goes on, I shall soon have nothing to eat — and hence, O Hallelujah! hence no eating. The offer is a fair one: I have not sold myself to the devil, for I could never find him. I am married, but so are you. I sometimes write verses, but so do you. Come! *Hic quies!* As for the commandments, I have broken them so small that they are the dust of my chambers; you walk upon them, triturate and toothless; and with the Golosh of Philosophy, they shall not bite your heel. True, the tenement is falling. Ay, friend, but yours also. Take a larger view; what is a year or two? dust in the balance! 'Tis done, behold you

Cosmo Stevenson, and me R. L. Monkhouse; you at Hyères, I in London; you rejoicing in the clammiest repose, me proceeding to tear your tabernacle into rags, as I have already so admirably torn my own.

My place to which I now introduce you — it is yours — is like a London house, high and very narrow; upon the lungs I will not linger; the heart is large enough for a ballroom; the belly greedy and inefficient; the brain stocked with the most damnable explosives, like a dynamiter's den. The whole place is well furnished, though not in a very pure taste; Corinthian much of it; showy and not strong.

About your place I shall try to find my way above, an interesting exploration. Imagine me, as I go to bed, falling over a blood-stained remorse; opening that cupboard in the cerebellum and being welcomed by the spirit 96 of your murdered uncle. I should probably not like your remorses; I wonder if you will like mine; I have a spirited assortment; they whistle in my ear o' nights like a north-easter. I trust yours don't dine with the family; mine are better mannered; you will hear nought of them till 2 A.M., except one, to be sure, that I have made a pet of, but he is small; I keep him in buttons, so as to avoid commentaries; you will like him much — if you like what is genuine.

Must we likewise change religions? Mine is a good article, with a trick of stopping; cathedral bell note; ornamental dial; supported by Venus and the Graces; quite a summer-parlour piety. Of yours, since your last, I fear there is little to be said.

There is one article I wish to take away with me: my spirits. They suit me. I don't want yours; I like my own; I have had them a long while in bottle. It is my only reservation. — Yours (as you decide),

R. L. Monkhouse.

To W. E. Henley

La Solitude, Hyères [*May* 1884].

DEAR BOY, — *Old Mortality* is out, and I am glad to say Coggie likes it. We like her immensely.

I keep better, but no great shakes yet; cannot work — cannot: that is flat, not even verses: as for prose, that more active place is shut on me long since.

My view of life is essentially the comic; and the romantically comic. *As You Like It* is to me the most bird-haunted spot in letters; *Tempest* and *Twelfth Night* follow. These are what I mean by poetry and nature. I make an effort of my mind to be quite one with Molière, except upon the stage, where his inimitable *jeux de scène* beggar belief; but you will observe they are stage-plays — things 97 *ad hoc*; not great Olympian debauches of the heart and fancy; hence more perfect, and not so great. Then I come, after great wanderings, to Carmosine and to

Fantasio; to one part of La Dernière Aldini (which, by the by, we might dramatise in a week), to the notes that Meredith has found, Evan and the postillion, Evan and Rose, Harry in Germany. And to me these things are the good; beauty, touched with sex and laughter; beauty with God's earth for the background. Tragedy does not seem to me to come off; and when it does, it does so by the heroic illusion; the anti-masque has been omitted; laughter, which attends on all our steps in life, and sits by the deathbed, and certainly redacts the epitaph, laughter has been lost from these great-hearted lies. But the comedy which keeps the beauty and touches the terrors of our life (laughter and tragedy-in-a-good-humour having kissed), that is the last word of moved representation; embracing the greatest number of elements of fate and character; and telling its story, not with the one eye of pity, but with the two of pity and mirth.

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Early in May Stevenson again fell very dangerously ill with hemorrhage of the lungs, and lay for several weeks between life and death, until towards the end of June he was brought sufficiently round to venture by slow stages on the journey to England, staying for two or three weeks at Royat on the way. His correspondent had lately been appointed Clark Reader in English Literature at Trinity College, Cambridge.

[*La Solitude, Hyères*] *From my bed, May* 29, 1884.

DEAR GOSSE, — The news of the Professorate found me in the article of — well, of heads or tails; I am still in bed, and a very poor person. You must thus excuse my damned delay; but, I assure you, I was delighted. You will believe me the more, if I confess to you that my first sentiment was envy; yes, sir, on my blood-boltered couch I envied the professor. However, it was not of 98 long duration; the double thought that you deserved and that you would thoroughly enjoy your success fell like balsam on my wounds. How came it that you never communicated my rejection of Gilder's offer for the Rhone? But it matters not. Such earthly vanities are over for the present. This has been a fine well-conducted illness. A month in bed; a month of silence; a fortnight of not stirring my right hand; a month of not moving without being lifted. Come! *Ça y est*: devilish like being dead. — Yours, dear Professor, academically,

R. L. S.

I am soon to be moved to Royat; an invalid valet goes with me! I got him cheap — second-hand.

In turning over my late friend Ferrier's commonplace book, I find three poems from *Viol and Flute* copied out in his hand: "When Flower-time," "Love in Winter," and "Mistrust." They are capital too. But I thought the fact would interest you. He was no poetist either; so it means the more. “Love in W.!” I like the best.

To Sidney Colvin

Enclosing some supplementary verses for the *Child’s Garden.*

Marseilles, June 1884.

DEAR S. C., — Are these four in time? No odds about order. I am at Marseille and stood the journey wonderfully. Better address Hotel Chabassière, Royat, Puy de Dôme. You see how this d — d poeshie flows from me in sickness: Are they good or bad? Wha kens? But I like the *Little Land,* I think, as well as any. As time goes on I get more fancy in. We have no money, but a valet and a maid. The valet is no end; how long can you live on a valet? Vive le valet! I am tempted to call myself a valetudinarian. I love my love with a V because he is a Valetudinarian; I took him to Valetta or Valais, gave him his Vails and tenderly addressed him with one word,

Vale.

P.S. — It does not matter of course about order. As soon as I have all the slips I shall organise the book for the publisher. A set of 8 will be put together under the title *An Only Child*; another cycle of 10 will be called *In the Garden,* and other six called *Bedtime* to end all up. It will now make quite a little volume of a good way upwards of 100 pp. Will you instruct Bain to send me a Bible; of a type that I can read without blindness; the better if with notes; there is a Clarendon Press Bible, pray see it yourself. I also want Ewald’s History in a translation.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The play of *Deacon Brodie,* the joint work of R. L. S. and W. E. H., was to be performed in London early in July.

[*Hotel Chabassière, Royat, July* 1884.]

DEAR S. C., — Books received with great thanks. Very nice books, though I see you underrate my cecity: I could no more read their beautiful Bible than I could sail in heaven. However I have sent for another and can read the rest for patience.

I quite understand your feelings about the *Deacon,* which is a far way behind; but I get miserable when I think of Henley cutting this splash and standing, I fear, to lose a great deal of money. It is about Henley, not Brodie, that I care. I fear my affections are not strong to my past works; they are blotted out by others; and anyhow the *Deacon* is damn bad.

I am half asleep and can no more discourse. Say to your friends, “Look here, some friends of mine are bringing out a play; it has some stuff; suppose you go and see it.” But I know I am a cold, unbelieving fellow, incapable of those hot claps that honour you and Henley and therefore — I am asleep. *Child’s Garden* (first instalment) come. Fanny ill; self asleep.

R. L. S.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Hotel Chabassière, Royat [*July* 1884].

MY DEAR PEOPLE, — The weather has been demoniac; I have had a skiff of cold, and was finally obliged to take to bed entirely; to-day, however, it has cleared, the sun shines, and I begin to

Several days after. — I have been out once, but now am back in bed. I am better, and keep better, but the weather is a mere injustice. The imitation of Edinburgh is, at times, deceptive; there is a note among the chimney pots that suggests Howe Street; though I think the shrillest spot in Christendom was not upon the Howe Street side, but in front, just under the Miss Graemes' big chimney stack. It had a fine alto character — a sort of bleat that used to divide the marrow in my joints — say in the wee, slack hours. That music is now lost to us by rebuilding; another air that I remember, not regret, was the solo of the gas-burner in the little front room; a knickering, flighty, fleering, and yet spectral cackle. I mind it above all on winter afternoons, late, when the window was blue and spotted with rare rain-drops, and, looking out, the cold evening was seen blue all over, with the lamps of Queen's and Frederick's Street dotting it with yellow, and flaring eastward in the squalls. Heavens, how unhappy I have been in such circumstances — I, who have now positively forgotten the colour of unhappiness; who am full like a fed ox, and dull like a fresh turf, and have no more spiritual life, for good or evil, than a French bagman.

We are at Chabassière's, for of course it was nonsense to go up the hill when we could not walk.

The child's poems in a far extended form are likely soon to be heard of — which Cummy I dare say will be 101 glad to know. They will make a book of about one hundred pages. — Ever your affectionate,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

I had reported to Stevenson a remark made by one of his greatest admirers, Sir E. Burne-Jones, on some particular analogy, I forget what, between a passage of Defoe and one in *Treasure Island.*

[*Hotel Chabassière, Royat, July* 1884.]

... Here is a quaint thing, I have read *Robinson, Colonel Jack, Moll Flanders, Memoirs of a Cavalier, History of the Plague, History of the Great Storm, Scotch Church and Union.* And there my knowledge of Defoe ends — except a book, the name of which I forget, about Peterborough in Spain, which Defoe obviously did not write, and could not have written if he wanted. To which of these does B. J. refer? I guess it must be the history of the Scottish Church. I jest; for, of course, I *know* it must be a book I have never read, and which this makes me keen to read — I mean *Captain Singleton*. Can it be got and sent to me? If *Treasure Island* is at all like it, it will be delightful. I was just the other day wondering at my folly in not remembering it, when I was writing *T. I.*, as a mine for pirate tips. *T. I.* came out of Kingsley's *At Last*, where I got the Dead Man's Chest — and that was the seed — and out of the great Captain Johnson's *History of Notorious Pirates*. The scenery is Californian in part, and in part *chic*.

I was downstairs to-day! So now I am a made man — till the next time.

R. L. Stevenson.

If it was *Captain Singleton*, send it to me, won't you?

Later. — My life dwindles into a kind of valley of the shadow picnic. I cannot read; so much of the time (as to-day) I must not speak above my breath, that to play 102 patience, or to see my wife play it, is become the be-all and the end-all of my dim career. To add to my gaiety, I may write letters, but there are few to answer. Patience and Poesy are thus my rod and staff; with these I not unpleasantly support my days.

I am very dim, dumb, dowie, and damnable. I hate to be silenced; and if to talk by signs is my forte (as I contend), to understand them cannot be my wife's. Do not think me unhappy; I have not been so for years; but I am blurred, inhabit the debatable frontier of sleep, and have but dim designs upon activity. All is at a standstill; books closed, paper put aside, the voice, the eternal voice of R. L. S., well silenced. Hence this plaint reaches you with no very great meaning, no very great purpose, and written part in slumber by a heavy, dull, somnolent, superannuated son of a bedpost.

To W. E. Henley

I suppose, but cannot remember, that I had in the meantime sent him *Captain Singleton*.

[*Hotel Chabassière, Royat, July* 1884.]

DEAR BOY, — I am glad that — — — — has disappointed you. Depend upon it, nobody is so bad as to be worth scalping, except your dearest friends and parents; and scalping them may sometimes be avoided by scalping yourself. I grow daily more lymphatic and benign; bring me a dynamiter, that I may embrace and bless him! — So, if I continue to evade the friendly hemorrhage, I shall be spared in anger to pour forth senile and insignificant volumes, and the clever lads in the journals, not doubting of the eye of Nemesis, shall mock and gird at me.

All this seems excellent news of the *Deacon*. But O! that the last tableau, on from Leslie's entrance, were re-written! We had a great opening there and missed it. I read for the first time *Captain Singleton*; it has 103 points; and then I re-read *Colonel Jack* with ecstasy; the first part is as much superior to *Robinson Crusoe* as *Robinson* is to — *The Inland Voyage*. It is pretty, good, philosophical, dramatic, and as picturesque as a promontory goat in a gale of wind. Get it and fill your belly with honey.

Fanny hopes to be in time for the *Deacon*. I was out yesterday, and none the worse. We leave Monday.

R. L. S.

For many years fellow of and historical lecturer at Trinity College, Cambridge.

Paillon.

The name of the Delectable Land in one of Heine's *Lieder*.

Silverado Squatters.

The allusion is to a specimen I had been used to hear quoted of the Duke of Wellington's table-talk in his latter years. He had said that musk-rats were sometimes kept alive in bottles in India. Curate, or other meek dependent: "I presume, your Grace, they are small rats and large bottles." His Grace: "No, large rats, small bottles; large rats, small bottles; large rats, small bottles."

Croûtes: crude studies from nature.

Mr. J. Comyns Carr, at this time editing the English Illustrated Magazine.

A favourite Skye terrier. Mr. Stevenson was a great lover of dogs.

The essay so called, suggested by the death of J. W. Ferrier. See *Memories and Portraits*.

VIII

LIFE AT BOURNEMOUTH

September 1884 — August 1887

Arriving in England at the end of July 1884, Stevenson took up his quarters first for a few weeks at Richmond. He was compelled to abandon the hope of making his permanent home at Hyères, partly by the renewed failure there of his own health, partly by a bad outbreak of cholera which occurred in the old Provençal town about the time he left it. After consultation with several doctors, all of whom held out hopes of ultimate recovery despite the gravity of his present symptoms, he moved to Bournemouth. Here he found in the heaths and pinewoods some distant semblance of the landscape of his native Scotland, and in the sandy curves of the Channel coast a passable substitute for the bays and promontories of his beloved Mediterranean. At all events, he liked the place well enough to be willing to try it for a home; and such it became for all but three years, from September 1884 to August 1887. These, although in the matter of health the worst and most trying years of his life, were in the matter of work some of the most active and successful. For the first two or three months the Stevensons occupied a lodging on the West Cliff called Wensleydale; for the next five, from mid-November 1884 to mid-April 1885, they were tenants of a house named Bonallie Towers, 105 pleasantly situated amid the pinewoods of Branksome Park, and by its name recalling familiar Midlothian associations. Lastly, about Easter 1885, they entered into occupation of a house of their own, given by the elder Mr. Stevenson as a special gift to his daughter-in-law, and renamed by its new occupants Skerryvore, in reminiscence of one of the great lighthouse works carried out by the family firm off the Scottish coast.

During all the time of Stevenson's residence at Bournemouth he was compelled to lead the life, irksome to him above all men, but borne with invincible spirit and patience, of a chronic invalid and almost constant prisoner to the house. A great part of his time had perforce to be spent in bed, and there almost all his literary work was produced. Often for days, and sometimes for whole weeks together, he was forbidden to speak aloud, and compelled to carry on conversation with his family and friends in whispers or with the help of pencil and paper. The few excursions to a distance which he attempted — most commonly to my house at the British Museum, once to Cambridge, once to Matlock, once to Exeter, and once in 1886 as far as Paris — these excursions generally ended in a breakdown and a hurried retreat to home and bed. Nevertheless, he was able in intervals of comparative ease to receive and enjoy the visits of friends from a distance both old and new — among the most welcome of the latter being Mr. Henry James, Mr. William Archer, and Mr. John S. Sargent; while among Bournemouth residents who attached themselves to him on terms of special intimacy and affection were Sir Percy and Lady Shelley and Sir Henry and Lady Taylor and their daughters.

At the same time, seizing and making the most of every week, nay, every day and hour of respite, he contrived 106 to produce work surprising, under the circumstances, alike by quantity and quality. During the first two months of his life at Bournemouth the two plays *Admiral Guinea* and *Beau Austin* were written in collaboration with Mr. Henley, and many other dramatic schemes were broached which health and leisure failed him to carry out. In the course of the next few months he finished *Prince Otto*, *The Child's Garden of Verses*, and *More New Arabian Nights*, all three of which had been begun, and the two first almost completed, before he left Hyères. He at the same time attacked two new tasks — a highway novel called *The Great North Road*, and a *Life of Wellington* for a series edited by Mr. Andrew Lang, both of which he had in the sequel to abandon; and a third, the boys' story of *Kidnapped*, which in its turn had to be suspended, but on its publication next year turned out one of the most brilliant of his successes.

About midsummer of this year, 1885, he was distressed by the sudden death of his old and kind friend Professor Fleeming Jenkin, and after a while undertook the task of writing a memoir of him to be prefixed to his collected papers. Towards the close of the same year he was busy with what proved to be the most popular of all his writings, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and with the Christmas story of *Olalla*. *Jekyll and Hyde* was published in January 1886, and after threatening for the first week or two to fall flat, in no long time caught the attention of all classes of readers, was quoted from a hundred pulpits, and made the writer's name familiar to multitudes both in England and America whom it had never reached before. A success scarcely inferior, though of another kind, was made a few months afterwards by *Kidnapped*, which Stevenson had taken up again 107 in the early spring, and which was published about midsummer. After completing this task in March, he was able to do little work during the remainder of the year, except in preparing materials for the *Life of Fleeming Jenkin*, and in writing occasional verses which helped to make up the collection published in the following year under the title *Underwoods*. In the early autumn of the same year, 1886, he took a longer and more successful excursion from home than usual, staying without breakdown for two or three weeks at the Monument, as he always called my house at the British Museum, and seeing something of kindred spirits among his elders, such as Robert Browning, James Russell Lowell, the painters Burne-Jones and W. B. Richmond, and others who had hitherto delighted in his work and now learned to delight no less in his society.

Thence he went with Mr. Henley for a short trip to Paris, chiefly in order to see the sculptor Rodin and his old friends Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Low. From this trip he returned none the worse, but during all the later autumn and winter at Bournemouth was again hampered in his work by renewed and prolonged attacks of illness. A further cause of trouble was the distressing failure of his father's health and spirits, attended by symptoms which plainly indicated the beginning of the end.

For some weeks of April, 1887, he was much taken up with a scheme which had nothing to do with literature, and which the few friends to whom he confided it regarded as wildly Quixotic and unwise. In these years he had, as we have seen, taken deeply to heart both what he thought the guilty remissness of Government action in the matter of the Soudan garrisons and of Gordon, and the tameness of acquiescence with which the national 108 conscience appeared to take the result. He had been not less disturbed at the failure, hitherto, of successive administrations to assert the reign of law in Ireland. He was no blind partisan of the English cause in that country, and had even written of the hereditary hatred of Irish for English as a sentiment justified by the facts of history. But he held strongly that private warfare, the use of dynamite and the knife, with the whole system of agrarian vengeances and the persecution of the weak, were means which no end could justify; and that redress of grievances, whatever form it might ultimately take, must be preceded by the re-establishment of law. In *More New Arabian Nights*, published the year before, he had endeavoured "to make dynamite ridiculous if he could not make it horrible," and to the old elements of fantastic invention, and humorously solemn realism in the unreal, had added the new element of a witty and scornful criminal psychology. A case that now appealed to him with especial force was that of the cruel persecution kept up against the widow and daughters of the murdered man Curtin. He determined that if no one else would take up the duty of resisting such persecution without regard to consequences, he would take it up himself, in the hope of more effectually rousing the public conscience to the evils of the time. His plan was to go with his family, occupy and live upon the derelict farm, and let happen what would. This, as the letters referring to the matter plainly show, was no irresponsible dream or whim, but a purpose conceived in absolute and sober earnest. His wife and household were prepared to follow, though under protest, had he persisted; as it seemed for some weeks that he certainly would, until at last the arguments of his friends, and still more the unmistakable 109 evidence that his father's end was near, persuaded him to give up his purpose. But to the last, I think he was never well satisfied that in giving way he had not been a coward, preferring fireside ease and comfort to the call of a public duty.

After spending a part of the winter at Bournemouth and a part at Torquay, both Stevenson's parents returned to Edinburgh in April 1887; and within a few weeks after their arrival he was summoned north to his father's death-bed. He stayed at Edinburgh the short time necessary for the dispatch of business, and returned to his own sick-room life at Skerryvore.

During the two years and nine months of Stevenson's residence at Bournemouth, preceding the date of his father's death, he had made no apparent progress towards recovery. Every period of respite had been quickly followed by a relapse, and all his work, brilliant and varied as it was, had been done under conditions which would have reduced almost any other man to inactivity. The close and frequently recurring struggles against the danger of death from hemorrhage and exhaustion, which he had been used, when they first occurred, to find exciting, grew in the long run merely irksome; and even his persistent high courage and gaiety, sustained as they were by the devoted affection of his wife and many friends, began occasionally, for the first time, to fail him. Accordingly, when in May 1887 the death of his father severed the strongest of the ties which bound him to the old country, he was very ready to listen to the advice of his physicians, who were unanimous in thinking his case not hopeless, but urged him to try some complete change of climate, surroundings, and mode of life. His wife's connections pointing to the West, he thought of the mountain health-resorts 110 of colourado, and of their growing reputation for the cure of lung patients. Having let his house at Bournemouth, he accordingly took passage on board the S.S. *Ludgate Hill*, sailing for New York from London on August 21st, 1887, with his whole party, consisting of his wife, his widowed mother, whom they had persuaded to join them, his young stepson, and a trusted servant, Valentine Roch. The concluding letters of the present section tell of the preparations for this departure.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Wensleydale, Bournemouth, Sunday, 28th September 1884.

MY DEAR PEOPLE, — I keep better, and am to-day downstairs for the first time. I find the lockers entirely empty; not a cent to the front. Will you pray send us some? It blows an equinoctial gale, and has blown for nearly a week. Nimbus Britannicus; piping wind, lashing rain; the sea is a fine colour, and wind-bound ships lie at anchor under the Old Harry rocks, to make one glad to be ashore.

The Henleys are gone, and two plays practically done. I hope they may produce some of the ready. — I am, ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Andrew Chatto

During the earlier Bournemouth days were firmly established Stevenson's cordial relations with the several English publishers Cassell & Co., Chatto & Windus, and Longmans, and a little later with C. Scribner's Sons in America.

Wensleydale, Bournemouth, October 3, 1884.

DEAR MR. CHATTO, — I have an offer of £25 for *Otto* from America. I do not know if you mean to have the American rights; from the nature of the contract, I think 111 not; but if you understood that you were to sell the sheets, I will either hand over the bargain to you, or finish it myself and hand you over the money if you are pleased with the amount. You see, I leave this quite in your hands. To parody an old Scotch story of servant and master: if you don't know that you have a good author, I know that I have a good publisher. Your fair, open, and handsome dealings are a good point in my life, and do more for my crazy health than has yet been done by any doctor. — Very truly yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

There is no certain clue to the date of the following; neither has it been possible to make sure what was the enclosure mentioned. The special illness referred to seems to be that of the preceding May at Hyères.

[*Wensleydale, Bournemouth, October* 1884?]

DEAR BOY, — I trust this finds you well; it leaves me so-so. The weather is so cold that I must stick to bed, which is rotten and tedious, but can't be helped.

I find in the blotting book the enclosed, which I wrote to you the eve of my blood. Is it not strange? That night, when I naturally thought I was coopered, the thought of it was much in my mind; I thought it had gone; and I thought what a strange prophecy I had made in jest, and how it was indeed like to be the end of many letters. But I have written a good few since, and the spell is broken. I am just as pleased, for I earnestly desire to live. This pleasant middle age into whose port we are steering is quite to my fancy. I would cast anchor here, and go ashore for twenty years and see the manners of the place. Youth was a great time, but somewhat fussy. Now in middle age (bar lucre) all seems mighty placid. It likes me; I spy a little bright café in one corner of the port, in front of which I now propose we should sit down. 112 There is just enough of the bustle of the harbour and no more; and the ships are close in, regarding us with stern-windows — the ships that bring deals from Norway and parrots from the Indies. Let us sit down here for twenty years, with a packet of tobacco and a drink, and talk of art and women. By-and-by, the whole city will sink, and the ships too, and the table, and we also; but we shall have sat for twenty years and had a fine talk; and by that time, who knows? exhausted the subject.

I send you a book which (or I am mistook) will please you; it pleased me. But I do desire a book of adventure — a romance — and no man will get or write me one. Dumas I have read and re-read too often; Scott, too and I am short. I want to hear swords clash. I want a book to begin in a good way; a book, I guess, like *Treasure Island,* alas! which I have never read, and cannot though I live to ninety. I would God that some one else had written it! By all that I can learn, it is the very book for my complaint. I like the way I hear it opens; and they tell me John Silver is good fun. And to me it is, and must ever be, a dream unrealised, a book unwritten. O my sighings after romance, or even Skeltery, and O! the weary age which will produce me neither!

CHAPTER I

The night was damp and cloudy, the ways foul. The single horseman, cloaked and booted, who pursued his way across Willesden Common, had not met a traveller, when the sound of wheels — —

CHAPTER I

“Yes, sir,” said the old pilot, “she must have dropped into the bay a little afore dawn. A queer craft she looks.”

“She shows no colours,” returned the young gentleman musingly.

“They’re a-lowering of a quarter-boat, Mr. Mark,” resumed the old salt. “We shall soon know more of her.” 113

“Ay,” replied the young gentleman called Mark, “and here, Mr. Seadrift, comes your sweet daughter Nancy tripping down the cliff.”

“God bless her kind heart, sir,” ejaculated old Seadrift.

CHAPTER I

The notary, Jean Rossignol, had been summoned to the top of a great house in the Isle St. Louis to make a will; and now, his duties finished, wrapped in a warm roquelaure and with a lantern swinging from one hand, he issued from the mansion on his homeward way. Little did he think what strange adventures were to befall him! — —

That is how stories should begin. And I am offered HUSKS instead.

What is:

Aunt Anne’s Tea Cosy.
Mrs. Brierly’s Niece.
Society: A Novel.

What should be:

The Filibuster’s Cache.
Jerry Abershaw.
Blood Money: A Tale.

R. L. S.

To the Rev. Professor Lewis Campbell

In reply to a gift of books, including the correspondent’s well-known translation of Sophocles.

[*Wensleydale, Bournemouth, November* 1884.]

MY DEAR CAMPBELL, — The books came duly to hand. My wife has occupied the translation ever since, nor have I yet been able to dislodge her. As for the primer, I have read it with a very strange result: that I find no fault. If you knew how, dogmatic and pugnacious, I stand warden on the literary art, you would the more appreciate your success and my — well, I will own it — disappointment. For I love to put people right (or wrong) about 114 the arts. But what you say of Tragedy and of Sophocles very amply satisfies me; it is well felt and well said; a little less technically than it is my weakness to desire to see it put, but clear and adequate. You are very right to express your admiration for the resource displayed in Œdipus King; it is a miracle. Would it not have been well to mention Voltaire’s interesting onslaught, a thing which gives the best lesson of the difference of neighbour arts? — since all his criticisms, which had been fatal to a narrative, do not amount among them to exhibit one flaw in this masterpiece of drama. For the drama, it is perfect; though such a fable in a romance might make the reader crack his sides, so imperfect, so ethereally slight is the verisimilitude required of these conventional, rigid, and egg-dancing arts.

I was sorry to see no more of you; but shall conclude by hoping for better luck next time. My wife begs to be remembered to both of you. — Yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

The “Arabs” mentioned below are the stories comprised in the volume *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter*, written by Stevenson and his wife in collaboration.

Wensleydale, Bournemouth, November 1884.

DEAR HENLEY, — We are all to pieces in health, and heavily handicapped with Arabs. I have a dreadful cough, whose attacks leave me *ætat.* 90. I never let up on the Arabs, all the same, and rarely get less than eight pages out of hand, though hardly able to come downstairs for twittering knees.

I shall put in — — ’s letter. He says so little of his circumstances that I am in an impossibility to give him advice more specific than a copybook. Give him my love, however, and tell him it is the mark of the parochial 115 gentleman who has never travelled to find all wrong in a foreign land. Let him hold on, and he will find one country as good as another; and in the meanwhile let him resist the fatal British tendency to communicate his dissatisfaction with a country to its inhabitants. ‘Tis a good idea, but it somehow fails to please. In a fortnight, if I can keep my spirit in the box at all, I should be nearly through this Arabian desert; so can tackle something fresh. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To W. H. Low

It was some twenty months since the plan of publishing the *Child's Garden* in the first instance as a picture-book had been mooted (see above, p, foll.). But it had never taken effect, and in the following March the volume appeared without illustrations in England, and also, I believe, in America.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth,
Hants, England, First week in November, I guess, 1884.

MY DEAR LOW, — Now, look here, the above is my address for three months, I hope; continue, on your part, if you please, to write to Edinburgh, which is safe; but if Mrs. Low thinks of coming to England, she might take a run down from London (four hours from Waterloo, main line) and stay a day or two with us among the pines. If not, I hope it will be only a pleasure deferred till you can join her.

My Children's Verses will be published here in a volume called *A Child's Garden*. The sheets are in hand; I will see if I cannot send you the lot, so that you might have a bit of a start. In that case I would do nothing to publish in the States, and you might try an illustrated edition there; which, if the book went fairly over here, might, when ready, be imported. But of this more fully ere long. You will see some verses of mine in the last Magazine of Art, with pictures by a young lady; rather pretty, I 116 think. If we find a market for *Phasellulus loquitur*, we can try another. I hope it isn't necessary to put the verse into that rustic printing. I am Philistine enough to prefer clean printer's type; indeed, I can form no idea of the verses thus transcribed by the incult and tottering hand of the draughtsman, nor gather any impression beyond one of weariness to the eyes. Yet the other day, in the Century, I saw it imputed as a crime to Vedder that he had not thus travestied Omar Khayyàm. We live in a rum age of music without airs, stories without incident, pictures without beauty, American wood engravings that should have been etchings, and dry-point etchings that ought to have been mezzotints. I think of giving 'em literature without words; and I believe if you were to try invisible illustration, it would enjoy a considerable vogue. So long as an artist is on his head, is painting with a flute, or writes with an etcher's needle, or conducts the orchestra with a meat-axe, all is well; and plaudits shower along with roses. But any plain man who tries to follow the obtrusive canons of his art, is but a commonplace figure. To hell with him is the motto, or at least not that; for he will have his reward, but he will never be thought a person of parts.

January 3, 1885. — And here has this been lying near two months. I have failed to get together a preliminary copy of the Child's Verses for you, in spite of doughty efforts; but yesterday I sent you the first sheet of the definitive edition, and shall continue to send the others as they come. If you can, and care to, work them — why so, well. If not, I send you fodder. But the time presses; for though I will delay a little over the proofs, and though it is even possible they may delay the English issue until Easter, it will certainly not be later. Therefore perpend, and do not get caught out. Of course, if you can do pictures, it will be a great pleasure to me to see our names joined; and more than that, a great advantage, as I dare say you may be able to make a bargain for some 117 share a little less spectral than the common for the poor author. But this is all as you shall choose; I give you *carte blanche* to do or not to do. — Yours most sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

O, Sargent has been and painted my portrait; a very nice fellow he is, and is supposed to have done well; it is a poetical but very chicken-boned figure-head, as thus represented.

R. L. S.Go on.

P.P.S. — Your picture came; and let me thank you for it very much. I am so hunted I had near forgotten. I find it very graceful; and I mean to have it framed.

To Sir Walter Simpson

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth [*first week of November* 1884].

MY DEAR SIMPSON, — At last, after divers adventures here we are: not Pommery and Greno as you see, "but jist plain auld Bonellie, no very faur frae Jenniper Green," as I might say if I were writing to Charles. I hope now to receive a good bundle from you ere long; and I will try to be both prompt and practical in response. I hope to hear your boy is better: ah, that's where it bites, I know, that is where the childless man rejoices; although, to confess fully, my whole philosophy of life renounces these renunciations; I am persuaded we gain nothing in the least comparable to what we lose, by holding back the hand from any province of life; the intrigue, the imbroglio, such as it is, was made for the plunger and not for the teetotaller. And anyway I hope your news is good.

I have nearly finished Lawson's most lively pamphlet. It is very clear and interesting. For myself, I am in our house — a home of our own, in a most lovely situation, among forest trees, where I hope you will come and see 118 us and find me in a repaired and more comfortable condition — greatly pleased with it — rather hard-up, verging on the dead-broke — and full tilt at hammering up some New Arabians for the pot.

I wonder what you do without regular habits of work. I am capable of only two theories of existence: the industrious worker's, the spreester's; all between seems blank to me. We grow too old, and I, at least, am too much deteriorated, for the last; and the first becomes a bedrock necessary. My father is in a gloomy state and has the yellow flag at the peak, or the fore, or wherever it should be; and he has just emptied some melancholy vials on me; I am also, by way of change, spitting blood. This somewhat clouds the termination of my note. — Yours ever affectionately,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Thomas Stevenson

About this time Mr. Stevenson was in some hesitation as to letting himself be proposed for the office of President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, November 1884.

MY DEAR FATHER, — I have no hesitation in recommending you to let your name go up; please yourself about an address; though I think, if we could meet, we could arrange something suitable. What you propose would be well enough in a way, but so modest as to suggest a whine. From that point of view it would be better to change a little; but this, whether we meet or not, we must discuss. Tait, Chrystal, the Royal Society, and I, all think you amply deserve this honour and far more; it is not the True Blue to call this serious compliment a "trial"; you should be glad of this recognition. As for resigning, that is easy enough if found necessary; but to refuse would be husky and unsatisfactory. *Sic subs.*

R. L. S.

My cold is still very heavy; but I carry it well. Fanny 119 is very very much out of sorts, principally through perpetual misery with me. I fear I have been a little in the dumps, which, *as you know, sir,* is a very great sin. I must try to be more cheerful; but my cough is so severe that I have sometimes most exhausting nights and very peevish wakenings. However, this shall be remedied, and last night I was distinctly better than the night before. There is, my dear Mr. Stevenson (so I moralise blandly as we sit together on the devil's garden-wall), no more abominable sin than this gloom, this plaguy peevishness; why (say I) what matters it if we be a little uncomfortable — that is no reason for mangling our unhappy wives. And then I turn and *girn* on the unfortunate Cassandra. — Your fellow culprit,

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

Mr. Stevenson, the elder, had read the play of *Admiral Guinea*, written in September by his son and Mr. Henley in collaboration, and had protested, with his usual vehemence of feeling and expression, against the stage confrontation of profane blackguardry in the person of Pew with evangelical piety in that of the reformed slaving captain who gives his name to the piece.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth (The three B's) [*November* 5, 1884].

MY DEAR FATHER, — Allow me to say, in a strictly Pickwickian sense, that you are a silly fellow. I am pained indeed, but how should I be offended? I think you exaggerate; I cannot forget that you had the same impression of the *Deacon*; and yet, when you saw it played, were less revolted than you looked for; and I will still hope that the *Admiral* also is not so bad as you suppose. There is one point, however, where I differ from you very frankly. Religion is in the world; I do not think you are the man to deny the importance of its rôle; and I have long decided not to leave it on one side in art. The opposition of the Admiral and Mr. Pew is not, to my eyes, either horrible or irreverent; but it may 120 be, and it probably is, very ill done: what then? This is a failure; better luck next time; more power to the elbow, more discretion, more wisdom in the design, and the old defeat becomes the scene of the new victory. Concern yourself about no failure; they do not cost lives as in engineering; they are the *pierres perdues* of successes. Fame is (truly) a vapour; do not think of it; if the writer means well and tries hard, no failure will injure him, whether with God or man.

I wish I could hear a brighter account of yourself; but I am inclined to acquit the *Admiral* of having a share in the responsibility. My very heavy cold is, I hope, drawing off; and the change to this charming house in the forest will, I hope, complete my re-establishment. — With love to all, believe me, your ever affectionate

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, November 11, 1884.

DEAR BOY, — I have been nearly smashed altogether; fever and chills, with really very considerable suffering; and to my deep gloom and some fear about the future, work has had to stop. There was no way out of it; yesterday and to-day nothing would come, it was a mere waste of tissue, productive of spoiled paper.

I hope it will not last long; for the bum-baily is panting at my rump, and when I turn a scared eye across my shoulder, I behold his talons quivering above my frock-coat tails.

Gosse has writ to offer me £40 for a Christmas number ghost story for the Pall Mall: eight thousand words. I have, with some conditions, accepted; I pray Heaven I may be able to do it. But I am not sure that my incapacity to work is wholly due to illness; I believe the morphine

121 I have been taking for my bray may have a hand in it. It moderates the bray, but, I think, sews up the donkey.

I think my wife is a little better. If only I could get in trim, and get this work done, I should be quite chipper.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

The two next letters, on the same subject, are written in the styles and characters of the two Edinburgh ex-elders, Johnstone (or Johnson) and Thomson alternately.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth, November 11 .

MY DEAR CHARLES, — I am in my new house, thus proudly styled, as you perceive; but the deevil a tower ava' can be perceived (except out of window); this is not as it should be; one might have hoped, at least, a turret. We are all vilely unwell. I put in the dark watches imitating a donkey with some success, but little pleasure; and in the afternoon I indulge in a smart fever, accompanied by aches and shivers. There is thus little monotony to be deplored. I at least am a *regular* invalid; I would scorn to bray in the afternoon; I would indignantly refuse the proposal to fever in the night. What is bred in the bone will come out, sir, in the flesh; and the same spirit that prompted me to date my letter regulates the hour and character of my attacks. — I am, sir, yours,

Thomson.

To Miss Ferrier

The controversy here mentioned had been one in which Mr. Samuel Smiles and others had taken part, concerning the rival claims of Robert Stevenson, the grandfather of R. L. S., and John Rennie to have been the chief engineers of the Bell Rock Lighthouse (see *A Family of Engineers*, chap. iii.).

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Nov. 12, 1884.

MY DEAR COGGIE, — Many thanks for the two photos which now decorate my room. I was particularly glad 122 to have the Bell Rock. I wonder if you saw me plunge, lance in rest, into a controversy thereanent? It was a very one-sided affair. The man I attacked cried "Boo-hoo!" and referred me to his big brother. And the big brother refused to move. So I slept upon the field of battle, paraded, sang Te Deum, and came home after a review rather than a campaign.

Please tell Campbell I got his letter. The Wild Woman of the West has been much amiss and complaining sorely. I hope nothing more serious is wrong with her than just my ill-health, and consequent anxiety and labour; but the deuce of it is, that the cause continues. I am about knocked out of time now: a miserable, snuffling, shivering, fever-stricken, nightmare-ridden, knee-jottering, hoast-hoast-hoasting shadow and remains of man. But we'll no gie ower jist yet a bittie.

We've seen waur; and dod, mem, it's my belief that we'll see better. I dinna ken 'at I've muckle mair to say to ye, or, indeed, onything; but jist here's guid-fallowship, guid health, and the wale o' guid fortune to your bonny sel'; and my respecs to the Perfessor and his wife, and the Prinshiple, an' the Bell Rock, an' ony ither public chara'ters that I'm acquaunt wi'.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

[*Bournemouth, November* 13, 1884.]

MY DEAR THOMSON, — It's a maist remarkable fac', but nae shüner had I written yon braggin', blawin' letter aboot ma business habits, when bang! that very day, ma hoast begude in the aifternune. It is really remaurkable; it's providenshle, I believe. The ink wasnae fair dry, the words werenae weel ooten ma mouth, when bang, I got the lee. The mair ye think o't, Thomson, the less ye'll like the looks o't. Proavidence (I'm no' sayin') is all 123 verra weel *in its place*; but if Proavidence has nae mainners, wha's to learn't? Proavidence is a fine thing, but hoo would you like Proavidence to keep your till for ye? The richt place for Proavidence is in the kirk; it has naething to do wi' private correspondence between twa gentlemen, nor freendly cracks, nor a wee bit word of sculduddery ahint the door, nor, in shoart, wi' ony *hole-and-corner wark,* what I would call. I'm pairfec'ly willin' to meet in wi' Proavidence, I'll be prood to meet in wi' him, when my time's come and I cannae dae nae better; but if he's to come skulking aboot my stair-fit, damned, I micht as weel be deid for a' the comfort I'll can get in life. Cannae he no be made to understand that it's beneath him? Gosh, if I was in his business, I wouldnae steir my heid for a plain, auld ex-elder that, tak him the way he taks himsel', 's just aboot as honest as he can weel afford, an' but for a wheen auld scandals, near forgotten noo, is a pairfec'ly respectable and thoroughly decent man. Or if I fashed wi' him ava', it wad be kind o' handsome like; a pun'-note under his stair door, or a bottle o' auld, blended malt to his bit marnin', as a teshtymonial like yon ye ken sae weel aboot, but mair successfu'.

Dear Thomson, have I ony money? If I have, *send it,* for the loard's sake.

Johnstone.

To W. E. Henley

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Nov. 13, 1884.

MY DEAR BOY, — A thousand thanks for the *Molière*. I have already read, in this noble presentment, *La Comtesse d'Escarbaguas*, *Le Malade Imaginaire,* and a part of *Les Femmes Savantes*; I say, Poquelin took damned good care of himself: Argan and Arysule, what parts! Many thanks also for John Silver's pistol; I recognise it; that 124 was the one he gave Jim Hawkins at the mouth of the pit; I shall get a plate put upon it to that effect.

My birthday was a great success; I was better in health; I got delightful presents; I received the definite commission from the P.M.G., and began to write the tale; and in the evening Bob arrived, a simple seraph. We have known each other ten years; and here we are, too, like the pair that met in the infirmary: why can we not mellow into kindness and sweetness like Bob? What is the reason? Does nature, even in my octogenarian carcase, run too strong that I must be still a bawler and a brawler and a treader upon corns? You, at least, have achieved the miracle of embellishing your personal appearance to that point that, unless your mother is a woman of even more perspicacity than I suppose, it is morally impossible that she can recognise you. When I saw you ten years ago, you looked rough and — kind of stigmatised, a look of an embittered political shoemaker; where is it now? You now come waltzing around like some light-hearted monarch; essentially jovial, essentially royal; radiant of smiles. And in the meanwhile, by a complementary process, I turn into a kind of hunchback with white hair! The devil.

Well, let us be thankful for our mercies; in these ten years what a change from the cell in the hospital, and the two sick boys in the next bed, to the influence, the recognition, the liberty, and the happiness of to-day! Well, well; fortune is not so blind as people say; you dreed a good long weird; but you have got into a fine green paddock now to kick your heels in. And I, too, what a difference; what a difference in my work, in my situation, and unfortunately, also in my health! But one need not complain of a pebble in the shoe, when by mere justice one should rot in a dungeon.

Many thanks to both of you; long life to our friendship, and that means, I do most firmly believe, to these 125 clay continents on which we fly our colours; good luck to one and all, and may God continue to be merciful. — Your old and warm friend,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Stevenson had been unable to finish for the Pall Mall Christmas number the tale he had first intended; had tried the publishers with *Markheim* (afterwards printed in the collection called *Merry Men*), which proved too short; had then furbished up as well as he could a tale drafted in the Pitlochry days, *The Body Snatcher*, which was advertised in the streets of London by sandwich-men carrying posters so horrific that they were suppressed, if I remember right, by the police. Stevenson rightly thought the tale not up to his best mark, and would not take the full payment which had been bargained for. His correspondent was just about to start on a tour to the United States.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Nov. 15, 1884.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — This Mr. Morley of yours is a most desperate fellow. He has sent me (for my opinion) the most truculent advertisement I ever saw, in which the white hairs of Gladstone are dragged round Troy behind my chariot wheels. What can I say? I say nothing to him; and to you, I content myself with remarking that he seems a desperate fellow.

All luck to you on your American adventure; may you find health, wealth, and entertainment! If you see, as you likely will, Frank R. Stockton, pray greet him from me in words to this effect: —

My Stockton if I failed to like,
It were a sheer depravity,
For I went down with the *Thomas Hyke*
And up with the *Negative Gravity*!

I adore these tales.

I hear flourishing accounts of your success at Cambridge, so you leave with a good omen. Remember me 126 to *green corn* if it is in season; if not, you had better hang yourself on a sour apple tree, for your voyage has been lost. — Yours affectionately,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Austin Dobson

Written in acknowledgment of the gift of a desk.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth [*December* 1884 ?].

DEAR DOBSON, — Set down my delay to your own fault; I wished to acknowledge such a gift from you in some of my inapt and slovenly rhymes; but you should have sent me your pen and not your desk. The verses stand up to the axles in a miry cross-road, whence the coursers of the sun shall never draw them; hence I am constrained to this uncourtliness, that I must appear before one of the kings of that country of rhyme without my singing robes. For less than this, if we may trust the book of Esther, favourites have tasted death; but I conceive the kingdom of the Muses mildlier mannered; and in particular that county which you administer and which I seem to see as a half-suburban land; a land of hollyhocks and country houses; a land where at night, in thorny and sequestered bypaths, you will meet masqueraders going to a ball in their sedans, and the rector steering homeward by the light of his lantern; a land of the windmill, and the west wind, and the flowering hawthorn with a little scented letter in the hollow of its trunk, and the kites flying over all in the season of kites, and the far away blue spires of a cathedral city.

Will you forgive me, then, for my delay and accept my thanks not only for your present, but for the letter which followed it, and which perhaps I more particularly value, and believe me to be, with much admiration, yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

Stevenson and his wife were still busy on *More New Arabian Nights* (the romance of the *Great North Road* having been begun and postponed). The question here touched is, to what publishers should they be offered.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, December 1884.

DEAR LAD, — For Cassell, I thought the G.N.R. (not railway this time) was the motto. What are Cassells to do with this eccentric mass of blague and seriousness? Their poor auld pows will a' turn white as snaw, man. They would skriegh with horror. You see, the lot of tales is now coming to a kind of bearing. They are being quite rehandled; all the three intercalary narratives have been condemned and are being replaced — two by picturesque and highly romantic adventures; one by a comic tale of character; and the thing as it goes together so far, is, I do think, singularly varied and vivid, coming near to laughter and touching tears.

Will Cassell stand it? No.

Et de deux.

I vote for the syndicate, and to give Cassell the *North Road* when done. *Et sic subscr.*

R. L. S.

My health is better. I never sleep, to be sure; Cawdor hath butchered sleep; and I am twinged a bit by aches and rheumatism; but I get my five to seven hours of work; and if that is not health, it is the nearest I am like to have.

To Henry James

The following to Mr. Henry James refers to the essay of R. L. S. called *A Humble Remonstrance*, which had just appeared in Longman's Magazine. Mr. James had written holding out the prospect of a continuance of the friendly controversy which had thus been opened up between them on the aims and qualities of fiction.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth, December 8, 1884.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES, — This is a very brave hearing 128 from more points than one. The first point is that there is a hope of a sequel. For this I laboured. Seriously, from the dearth of information and thoughtful interest in the art of literature, those who try to practise it with any deliberate purpose run the risk of finding no fit audience. People suppose it is "the stuff" that interests them; they think, for instance, that the prodigious fine thoughts and sentiments in Shakespeare impress by their own weight, not understanding that the unpolished diamond is but a stone. They think that striking situations, or good dialogue, are got by studying life; they will not rise to understand that they are prepared by deliberate artifice and set off by painful suppressions. Now, I want the whole thing well ventilated, for my own education and the public's; and I beg you to look as quick as you can, to follow me up with every circumstance of defeat where we differ, and (to prevent the flouting of the laity) to emphasise the points where we agree. I trust your paper will show me the way to a rejoinder; and that rejoinder I shall hope to make with so much art as to woo or drive you from your threatened silence. I would not ask better than to pass my life in beating out this quarter of corn with such a seconder as yourself.

Point the second — I am rejoiced indeed to hear you speak so kindly of my work; rejoiced and surprised. I seem to myself a very rude, left-handed countryman; not fit to be read, far less complimented, by a man so accomplished, so adroit, so craftsmanlike as you. You will happily never have cause to understand the despair with which a writer like myself considers (say) the park scene in *Lady Barberina*. Every touch surprises me by its intangible precision; and the effect when done, as light as syllabub, as distinct as a picture, fills me with envy. Each man among us prefers his own aim, and I prefer mine; but when we come to speak of performance, I recognise myself, compared with you, to be a lout and slouch of the first water.

Where we differ, both as to the design of stories and the delineation of character, I begin to lament. Of course, I am not so dull as to ask you to desert your walk; but could you not, in one novel, to oblige a sincere admirer, and to enrich his shelves with a beloved volume, could you not, and might you not, cast your characters in a mould a little more abstract and academic (dear Mrs. Pennyman had already, among your other work, a taste of what I mean), and pitch the incidents, I do not say in any stronger, but in a slightly more emphatic key — as it were an episode from one of the old (so-called) novels of adventure? I fear you will not; and I suppose I must sighingly admit you to be right. And yet, when I see, as it were, a book of Tom Jones handled with your exquisite precision and shot through with those side-lights of reflection in which you excel, I relinquish the dear vision with regret. Think upon it.

As you know, I belong to that besotted class of man, the invalid: this puts me to a stand in the way of visits. But it is possible that some day you may feel that a day near the sea and among pinewoods would be a pleasant change from town. If so, please let us know; and my wife and I will be delighted to put you up, and give you what we can to eat and drink (I have a fair bottle of claret). — On the back of which, believe me, yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — I reopen this to say that I have re-read my paper, and cannot think I have at all succeeded in being either veracious or polite. I knew, of course, that I took your paper merely as a pin to hang my own remarks upon; but, alas! what a thing is any paper! What fine remarks can you not hang on mine! How I have sinned against proportion, and with every effort to the contrary, against the merest rudiments of courtesy to you! You are indeed a very acute reader to have divined the real attitude of my mind; and I can only conclude, not without 130 closed eyes and shrinking shoulders, in the well-worn words,

Lay on, Macduff!

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, December 9, 1884.

MY DEAR PEOPLE, — The dreadful tragedy of the Pall Mall has come to a happy but ludicrous ending: I am to keep the money, the tale writ for them is to be buried certain fathoms deep, and they are to flash out before the world with our old friend of Kinnaird, *The Body Snatcher*. When you come, please to bring —

(1) My Montaigne, or, at least, the two last volumes.

(2) My Milton in the three vols. in green.

(3) The Shakespeare that Babington sent me for a wedding-gift.

(4) Hazlitt's *Table Talk and Plain Speaker*.

If you care to get a box of books from Douglas and Foulis, let them be *solid*. *Croker Papers*, *Correspondence of Napoleon*, *History of Henry IV.*, Lang's *Folk Lore*, would be my desires.

I had a charming letter from Henry James about my Longman paper. I did not understand queries about the verses; the pictures to the Seagull I thought charming; those to the second have left me with a pain in my poor belly and a swimming in the head.

About money, I am afloat and no more, and I warn you, unless I have great luck, I shall have to fall upon you at the New Year like a hundredweight of bricks. Doctor, rent, chemist, are all threatening; sickness has bitterly delayed my work; and unless, as I say, I have the mischief's luck, I shall completely break down. *Verbum sapientibus.* I do not live cheaply, and I question if I ever shall; but if only I had a halfpenny worth of health, I could now easily suffice. The last breakdown 131 of my head is what makes this bankruptcy probable.

Fanny is still out of sorts; Bogue better; self fair, but a stranger to the blessings of sleep. — Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth [*December* 1884].

DEAR LAD, — I have made up my mind about the P. M. G., and send you a copy, which please keep or return. As for not giving a reduction, what are we? Are we artists or city men? Why do we sneer at stockbrokers? O nary; I will not take the £40. I took that as a fair price for my best work; I was not able to produce my best; and I will be damned if I steal with my eyes open. *Sufficit.* This is my lookout. As for the paper being rich, certainly it is; but I am honourable. It is no more above me in money than the poor slaveys and cads from whom I look for honesty are below me. Am I Pepys, that because I can find the countenance of "some of our ablest merchants," that because — and — pour forth languid twaddle and get paid for it, I, too, should "cheerfully continue to steal"? I am not Pepys. I do not live much to God and honour; but I will not wilfully turn my back on both. I am, like all the rest of us, falling ever lower from the bright ideas I began with, falling into greed, into idleness, into middle-aged and slippered fireside cowardice; but is it you, my bold blade, that I hear crying this sordid and rank twaddle in my ear? Preaching the dankest Grundyism and upholding the rank customs of our trade — you who are so cruel hard upon the customs of the publishers? O man, look at the Beam in our own Eyes; and whatever else you do, do not plead Satan's cause, or plead it for all; either embrace the bad, or respect the good when you see a poor devil trying for it. If this is the honesty of authors — to take what you can get and console yourself 132 because publishers are rich — take my name from the rolls of that association. 'Tis a caucus of weaker thieves, jealous of the stronger. — Ever yours,

The Roaring R. L. S.

You will see from the enclosed that I have stuck to what I think my dues pretty tightly in spite of this flourish: these are my words for a poor ten-pound note!

To Miss Ferrier

This refers to the death of Sir Alexander Grant, the distinguished Aristotelian scholar and Principal of Edinburgh University.

[*Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Dec.* 1884.]

MY DEAR COGGIE, — We are very much distressed to hear of this which has befallen your family. As for Sir Alexander, I can but speak from my own feelings: he survived to finish his book and to conduct, with such a great success, the tercentenary. Ah, how many die just upon the threshold! Had he died a year ago, how great a disappointment! But all this is nothing to the survivors. Do please, as soon as you are able, let us know how it goes and *how it is likely to go* with the family; and believe that both my wife and I are most anxious to have good news, or the best possible. My poor Coggie, I know very well how you must feel; you are passing a bad time.

Our news must seem very impertinent. We have both been ill; I, pretty bad, my wife, pretty well down; but I, at least, am better. The Bogue, who is let out every night for half an hour's yapping, is anchored in the moonlight just before the door, and, under the belief that he is watchdog at a lone farm beleaguered by moss-troopers, is simply raising Cain.

I can add nothing more, but just that we wish to hear as soon as you have nothing else to do — not to hurry, of course, — if it takes three months, no matter — but bear us in mind.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth [*Winter* 1884].

MY DEAR LAD, — Here was I in bed; not writing, not hearing, and finding myself gently and agreeably ill used; and behold I learn you are bad yourself. Get your wife to send us a word how you are. I am better decidedly. Bogue got his Christmas card, and behaved well for three days after. It may interest the cynical to learn that I started my last hemorrhage by too sedulous attentions to my dear Bogue. The stick was broken; and that night Bogue, who was attracted by the extraordinary aching of his bones, and is always inclined to a serious view of his own ailments, announced with his customary pomp that he was dying. In this case, however, it was not the dog that died. (He had tried to bite his mother's ankles.) I have written a long and peculiarly solemn paper on the technical elements of style. It is path-breaking and epoch-making; but I do not think the public will be readily convoked to its perusal. Did I tell you that S. C. had risen to the paper on James? At last! O but I was pleased; he's (like Johnnie) been lang, lang o' comin', but here he is. He will not object to my future manœuvres in the same field, as he has to my former. All the family are here; my father better than I have seen him these two years; my mother the same as ever. I do trust you are better, and I am yours ever,

R. L. S.

To H. A. Jones

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Dec. 30, 1884.

DEAR SIR, — I am so accustomed to hear nonsense spoken about all the arts, and the drama in particular, that I cannot refrain from saying "Thank you" for your paper. In my answer to Mr. James, in the December 134 Longman, you may see that I have merely touched, I think in a parenthesis, on the drama; but I believe enough was said to indicate our agreement in essentials.

Wishing you power and health to further enunciate and to act upon these principles, believe me, dear sir, yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Stevenson had begun with great eagerness to prepare material for a volume on the Duke of Wellington for the series of *English Worthies* published by Messrs. Longman and edited by Mr. Andrew Lang, but beyond preparation the scheme never went.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Jan. 4, 1885.

DEAR S. C., — I am on my feet again, and getting on my boots to do the Iron Duke. Conceive my glee: I have refused the £100, and am to get some sort of royalty, not yet decided, instead. 'Tis for Longman's *English Worthies*, edited by A. Lang. Aw haw, haw!

Now, look here, could you get me a loan of the Despatches, or is that a dream? I should have to mark passages I fear, and certainly note pages on the fly. If you think it a dream, will Bain get me a second-hand copy, or who would? The sooner, and cheaper, I can get it the better. If there is anything in your weird library that bears on either the man or the period, put it in a mortar and fire it here instanter; I shall catch. I shall want, of course, an infinity of books: among which, any lives there may be; a life of the Marquis Marmont (the Maréchal), *Marmont's Memoirs*, *Greville's Memoirs*, *Peel's Memoirs*, *Napier*, that blind man's history of England you once lent me, Hamley's *Waterloo*; can you get me any of these? Thiers, idle Thiers also. Can you help a man getting into his boots for such a huge campaign? How are you? A Good New Year to you. I mean to have a good one, but on whose funds I cannot fancy: 135 not mine leastways, as I am a mere derelict and drift beam-on to bankruptcy.

For God's sake, remember the man who set out for to conquer Arthur Wellesley, with a broken bellows and an empty pocket. — Yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Thomas Stevenson

Stevenson had been asked by his father to look over the proofs of a paper which the latter was about to read, as President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, "On the Principal Causes of Silting in Estuaries," in connection with the Manchester Ship Canal Scheme.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, 14th January 1885.

MY DEAR FATHER, — I am glad you like the changes. I own I was pleased with my hand's darg; you may observe, I have corrected several errors which (you may tell Mr. Dick) he had allowed to pass his eagle eye; I wish there may be none in mine; at least, the order is better. The second title, "Some New Engineering Questions involved in the M. S. C. Scheme of last Session of P.," likes me the best. I think it a very good paper; and I am vain enough to think I have materially helped to polish the diamond. I ended by feeling quite proud of the paper, as if it had been mine; the next time you have as good a one, I will overhaul it for the wages of feeling as clever as I did when I had managed to understand and helped to set it clear. I wonder if I anywhere misapprehended you? I rather think not at the last; at the first shot I know I missed a point or two. Some of what may appear to you to be wanton changes, a little study will show to be necessary.

Yes, Carlyle was ashamed of himself as few men have been; and let all carpers look at what he did. He prepared all these papers for publication with his own hand; all his wife's complaints, all the evidence of his own misconduct: who else would have done so much? Is repentance, which God accepts, to have no avail with men? 136 nor even with the dead? I have heard too much against the thrawn, discomfortable dog: dead he is, and we may be glad of it; but he was a better man than most of us, no less patently than he was a worse. To fill the world with whining is against all my views: I do not like impiety. But — but — there are two sides to all things, and the old scalded baby had his noble side. — Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, January 1885.

DEAR S. C., — I have addressed a letter to the G. O. M. *à propos* of Wellington; and I became aware, you will be interested to hear, of an overwhelming respect for the old gentleman. I can *blaguer* his failures; but when you actually address him, and bring the two statures and records to confrontation, dismay is the result. By mere continuance of years, he must impose; the man who helped to rule England before I was conceived, strikes me with a new sense of greatness and antiquity, when I must actually beard him with the cold forms of correspondence. I shied at the necessity of calling him plain "Sir"! Had he been "My lord," I had been happier; no, I am no equalitarian. Honour to whom honour is due; and if to none, why, then, honour to the old!

These, O Slade Professor, are my unvarnished sentiments: I was a little surprised to find them so extreme, and therefore I communicate the fact.

Belabour thy brains, as to whom it would be well to question. I have a small space; I wish to make a popular book, nowhere obscure, nowhere, if it can be helped, unhuman. It seems to me the most hopeful plan to tell the tale, so far as may be, by anecdote. He did not die till so recently, there must be hundreds who remember him, and thousands who have still ungarnered stories. Dear man, to the breach! Up, soldier of the iron dook, 137 up, Slades, and at 'em! (which, conclusively, he did not say: the at 'em-ic theory is to be dismissed). You know piles of fellows who must reek with matter; help! help! I am going to try Happy-and-Glorious-long-to-reign-over-us. H.M. must remember things: and it is my belief, if my letter could be discreetly introduced, she would like to tell them. So I jest, when I don't address my mind to it: when I do, shall I be smit louting to my knee, as before the G. O. M.? Problème! — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

In the two following letters are expressed some of the distress and bitterness with which, in common with most Englishmen, Stevenson felt the circumstances of Gordon's abandonment in the Soudan and the failure of the belated attempt to rescue him. The advice to go on with "my book" refers, if I remember right, to some scheme for the republication in book form of stray magazine papers of mine of a more or less personal or biographical nature.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, February 1885.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — You are indeed a backward correspondent, and much may be said against you. But in this weather, and O dear! in this political scene of degradation, much must be forgiven. I fear England is dead of Burgessry, and only walks about galvanised. I do not love to think of my countrymen these days; nor to remember myself. Why was I silent? I feel I have no right to blame any one; but I won't write to the G. O. M. I do really not see my way to any form of signature, unless "your fellow criminal in the eyes of God," which might disquiet the proprieties.

About your book, I have always said: go on. The drawing of character is a different thing from publishing the details of a private career. No one objects to the first, or should object, if his name be not put upon it; at the other, I draw the line. In a preface, if you chose, you might distinguish; it is, besides, a thing for which you are eminently well equipped, and which you would do 138 with taste and incision. I long to see the book. People like themselves (to explain a little more); no one likes his life, which is a misbegotten issue, and a tale of failure. To see these failures either touched upon, or *coasted*, to get the idea of a spying eye and blabbing tongue about the house, is to lose all privacy in life. To see that thing, which we do love, our character, set forth, is ever gratifying. See how my *Talk and Talkers* went; every one liked his own portrait, and shrieked about other people's; so it will be with yours. If you are the least true to the essential, the sitter will be pleased; very likely not his friends, and that from *various motives*.

R. L. S.

When will your holiday be? I sent your letter to my wife, and forget. Keep us in mind, and I hope we shall be able to receive you.

To J. A. Symonds

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, February 1885.

MY DEAR SYMONDS, — Yes we have both been very neglectful. I had horrid luck, catching two thundering influenzas in August and November. I recovered from the last with difficulty, but have come through this blustering winter with some general success; in the house, up and down. My wife, however, has been painfully upset by my health. Last year, of course, was cruelly trying to her nerves; Nice and Hyères are bad experiences; and though she is not ill, the doctor tells me that prolonged anxiety may do her a real mischief.

I feel a little old and fagged, and chary of speech, and not very sure of spirit in my work; but considering what a year I have passed, and how I have twice sat on Charon's pierhead, I am surprising.

My father has presented us with a very pretty home in this place, into which we hope to move by May. My *Child's Verses* come out next week. *Otto* begins to appear[139] in April; *More New Arabian Nights* as soon as possible. Moreover, I am neck deep in Wellington; also a story on the stocks, *The Great North Road*. O, I am busy! Lloyd is at college in Edinburgh. That is, I think, all that can be said by way of news.

Have you read *Huckleberry Finn*? It contains many excellent things; above all, the whole story of a healthy boy's dealings with his conscience, incredibly well done.

My own conscience is badly seared; a want of piety; yet I pray for it, tacitly, every day; believing it, after courage, the only gift worth having; and its want, in a man of any claims to honour, quite unpardonable. The tone of your letter seemed to me very sound. In these dark days of public dishonour, I do not know that one can do better than carry our private trials piously. What a picture is this of a nation! No man that I can see, on any side or party, seems to have the least sense of our ineffable shame: the desertion of the garrisons. I tell my little parable that Germany took England, and then there was an Indian Mutiny, and Bismarck said: "Quite right: let Delhi and Calcutta and Bombay fall; and let the women and children be treated Sepoy fashion," and people say, "O, but that is very different!" And then I wish I were dead. Millais (I hear) was painting Gladstone when the news came of Gordon's death; Millais was much affected, and Gladstone said, "Why? *It is the man's own temerity!*" Voilà le Bourgeois! le voilà nu! But why should I blame Gladstone, when I too am a Bourgeois? when I have held my peace? Why did I hold my peace? Because I am a sceptic: *i.e.* a Bourgeois. We believe in nothing, Symonds; you don't, and I don't; and these are two reasons, out of a handful of millions, why England stands before the world dripping with blood and daubed with dishonour. I will first try to take the beam out of my own eye, trusting that even private effort somehow betters and braces the general[140] atmosphere. See, for example, if England has shown (I put it hypothetically) one spark of manly sensibility, they have been shamed into it by the spectacle of Gordon. Police-Officer Cole is the only man that I see to admire. I dedicate my *New Arabs* to him and Cox, in default of other great public characters. — Yours ever most affectionately,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

The following refers to an edition of Gray, with notes and a short prefatory Life by Mr. Gosse; and to the publication of the *Child's Garden of Verses*.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, March 12, 1885.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — I was indeed much exercised how I could be worked into Gray; and lo! when I saw it, the passage seemed to have been written with a single eye to elucidate the — worst? — well, not a very good poem of Gray's. Your little life is excellent, clean, neat, efficient. I have read many of your notes, too, with pleasure. Your connection with Gray was a happy circumstance; it was a suitable conjunction.

I did not answer your letter from the States, for what was I to say? I liked getting it and reading it; I was rather flattered that you wrote it to me; and then I'll tell you what I did — I put it in the fire. Why? Well, just because it was very natural and expansive; and thinks I to myself, if I die one of these fine nights, this is just the letter that Gosse would not wish to go into the hands of third parties. Was I well inspired? And I did not answer it because you were in your high places, sailing with supreme dominion, and seeing life in a particular glory; and I was peddling in a corner, confined to the house, overwhelmed with necessary work, which I was not always doing well, and, in the very mild form in which the disease approaches me, touched with a sort of bustling cynicism. Why throw cold water? How ape 141 your agreeable frame of mind? In short, I held my tongue.

I have now published on 101 small pages *The Complete Proof of Mr. R. L. Stevenson's Incapacity to Write Verse*, in a series of graduated examples with table of contents. I think I shall issue a companion volume of exercises: "Analyse this poem. Collect and comminate the ugly words. Distinguish and condemn the *chevilles*. State Mr. Stevenson's faults of taste in regard to the measure. What reasons can you gather from this example for your belief that Mr. S. is unable to write any other measure?"

They look ghastly in the cold light of print; but there is something nice in the little ragged regiment for all; the blackguards seem to me to smile, to have a kind of childish treble note that sounds in my ears freshly; not song, if you will, but a child's voice.

I was glad you enjoyed your visit to the States. Most Englishmen go there with a confirmed design of patronage, as they go to France for that matter; and patronage will not pay. Besides, in this year of — grace, said I? — of disgrace, who should creep so low as an Englishman? "It is not to be thought of that the flood" — ah, Wordsworth, you would change your note were you alive to-day!

I am now a beastly householder, but have not yet entered on my domain. When I do, the social revolution will probably cast me back upon my dung heap. There is a person called Hyndman whose eye is on me; his step is beHynd me as I go. I shall call my house Skerryvore when I get it: SKERRYVORE: *c'est bon pour la poéshie*. I will conclude with my favourite sentiment: "The world is too much with me."

Robert Louis Stevenson,

The Hermit of Skerryvore,

Author of "John Vane Tempest: a Romance," "Herbert and Henrietta: or the Nemesis of Sentiment," "The 142 Life and Adventures of Colonel Bludyer Fortescue," "Happy Homes and Hairy Faces," "A Pound of Feathers and a Pound of Lead," part author of "Minn's Complete Capricious Correspondent: a Manual of Natty, Natural, and Knowing Letters," and editor of the "Poetical Remains of Samuel Burt Crabbe, known as the melodious Bottle-Holder."

Uniform with the above:

"The Life and Remains of the Reverend Jacob Degray Squah," author of "Heave-yo for the New Jerusalem," "A Box of Candles; or the Patent Spiritual Safety Match," and "A Day with the Heavenly Harriers."

To W. H. Low

The "dedication" referred to was that of a forthcoming illustrated edition of Keats's *Lamia*.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, March 13, 1885.

MY DEAR LOW, — Your success has been immense. I wish your letter had come two days ago: *Otto*, alas! has been disposed of a good while ago; but it was only day before yesterday that I settled the new volume of Arabs. However, for the future, you and the sons of the deified Scribner are the men for me. Really they have behaved most handsomely. I cannot lay my hand on the papers, or I would tell you exactly how it compares with my English bargain; but it compares well. Ah, if we had that copyright, I do believe it would go far to make me solvent, ill-health and all.

I wrote you a letter to the Rembrandt, in which I stated my views about the dedication in a very brief form. It will give me sincere pleasure, and will make the second dedication I have received, the other being from John Addington Symonds. It is a compliment I value much; I don't know any that I should prefer.

I am glad to hear you have windows to do; that is a fine business, I think; but, alas! the glass is so bad nowadays; realism invading even that, as well as the huge inferiority of our technical resource corrupting every tint. Still, anything that keeps a man to decoration is, in this age, good for the artist's spirit.

By the way, have you seen James and me on the novel? James, I think in the August or September — R. L. S. in the December

Longman. I own I think the *école bête*, of which I am the champion, has the whip hand of the argument; but as James is to make a rejoinder, I must not boast. Anyway the controversy is amusing to see. I was terribly tied down to space, which has made the end congested and dull. I shall see if I can afford to send you the April Contemporary — but I dare say you see it anyway — as it will contain a paper of mine on style, a sort of continuation of old arguments on art in which you have wagged a most effective tongue. It is a sort of start upon my Treatise on the Art of Literature: a small, arid book that shall some day appear.

With every good wish from me and mine (should I not say "she and hers"?) to you and yours, believe me yours ever,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To P.G. Hamerton

The work of his correspondent's which R. L. S. notices in the following is the sumptuous volume *Landscape*: Seeley & Co., 1885. The passages specially referred to will be found p-62 of that work.

Bournemouth, March 16, 1885.

MY DEAR HAMERTON, — Various things have been reminding me of my misconduct: First, Swan's application for your address; second, a sight of the sheets of your *Landscape* book; and last, your note to Swan, which he was so kind as to forward. I trust you will never suppose 144 me to be guilty of anything more serious than an idleness, partially excusable. My ill-health makes my rate of life heavier than I can well meet, and yet stops me from earning more. My conscience, sometimes perhaps too easily stifled, but still (for my time of life and the public manners of the age) fairly well alive, forces me to perpetual and almost endless transcriptions. On the back of all this, my correspondence hangs like a thundercloud; and just when I think I am getting through my troubles, crack, down goes my health, I have a long, costly sickness, and begin the world again. It is fortunate for me I have a father, or I should long ago have died; but the opportunity of the aid makes the necessity none the more welcome. My father has presented me with a beautiful house here — or so I believe, for I have not yet seen it, being a cage bird but for nocturnal sorties in the garden. I hope we shall soon move into it, and I tell myself that some day perhaps we may have the pleasure of seeing you as our guest. I trust at least that you will take me as I am, a thoroughly bad correspondent, and a man, a hater, indeed, of rudeness in others, but too often rude in all unconsciousness himself; and that you will never cease to believe the sincere sympathy and admiration that I feel for you and for your work.

About the *Landscape*, which I had a glimpse of while a friend of mine was preparing a review, I was greatly interested, and could write and wrangle for a year on every page; one passage particularly delighted me, the part about Ulysses — jolly. Then, you know, that is just what I fear I have come to think landscape ought to be in literature; so there we should be at odds. Or perhaps not so much as I suppose, as Montaigne says it is a pot with two handles, and I own I am wedded to the technical handle, which (I likewise own and freely) you do well to keep for a mistress. I should much like to talk with you about some other points; it is only in talk that one gets to understand. Your delightful Wordsworth trap I have 145 tried on two hardened Wordsworthians, not that I am not one myself. By covering up the context, and asking them to guess what the passage was, both (and both are very clever people, one a writer, one a painter) pronounced it a guide-book. "Do you think it an unusually good guide-book?" I asked, and both said, "No, not at all!" Their grimace was a picture when I showed the original.

I trust your health and that of Mrs. Hamerton keep better; your last account was a poor one. I was unable to make out the visit I had hoped, as (I do not know if you heard of it) I had a very violent and dangerous hemorrhage last spring. I am almost glad to have seen death so close with all my wits about me, and not in the customary lassitude and disenchantment of disease. Even thus clearly beheld I find him not so terrible as we suppose. But, indeed, with the passing of years, the decay of strength, the loss of all my old active and pleasant habits, there grows more and more upon me that belief in the kindness of this scheme of things, and the goodness of our veiled God, which is an excellent and pacifying compensation. I trust, if your health continues to trouble you, you may find some of the same belief. But perhaps my fine discovery is a piece of art, and belongs to a character cowardly, intolerant of certain feelings, and apt to self-deception. I don't think so, however; and when I feel what a weak and fallible vessel I was thrust into this hurly-burly, and with what marvellous kindness the wind has been tempered to my frailties, I think I should be a strange kind of ass to feel anything but gratitude.

I do not know why I should inflict this talk upon you; but when I summon the rebellious pen, he must go his own way; I am no Michael Scott, to rule the fiend of correspondence. Most days he will none of me; and when he comes, it is to rape me where he will. — Yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

Stevenson was by this time beginning to realise that work at play-writing in collaboration with Mr. Henley was doing much more to exhaust his strength than to replenish either of their purses, and Mr. Henley, who had built hopes of fame and fortune on their collaboration, was very unwilling to face the fact.

[*Bournemouth, March* 1885.]

MY DEAR LAD, — That is all right, and a good job. About coming down, you cannot get into us for a while, as you may imagine; we are in desperate vortex, and everybody 'most dead. I have been two days in bed with liver and slight bleeding.

Do you think you are right to send *Macaire* and the *Admiral* about? Not a copy have I sent, nor (speaking for myself personally) do I want sent. The reperusal of the *Admiral*, by the way, was a sore blow; eh, God, man, it is a low, black, dirty, blackguard, ragged piece: vomitable in many parts — simply vomitable. Pew is in places a reproach to both art and man. But of all that afterwards. What I mean is that I believe in playing dark with second and third-rate work. Macaire is a piece of job-work, hurriedly bockled; might have been worse, might have been better; happy-go-lucky; act it or-let-it-rot piece of business. Not a thing, I think, to send in presentations. Do not let us *gober* ourselves — and, above all, not *gober* dam pot-boilers — and p.b.'s with an obvious flaw and hole in them, such as is our unrealised Bertrand in this one. But of this also, on a meeting.

I am not yet done with my proofs, I am sorry to say; so soon as I am, I must tackle *Kidnapped* seriously, or be content to have no bread, which you would scarcely recommend. It is all I shall be able to do to wait for the Young Folk money, on which I'll have to live as best I can till the book comes in.

Plays at that rate I do not think I can possibly look at before July; so let that be a guide to you in your 147 views. July, or August, or September, or thereabouts: these must be our times, whichever we attack. I think you had better suspend a visit till we can take you in and till I can speak. It seems a considerable waste of money; above all, as just now I could not even offer you meals with my woman in such a state of overwork. My father and mother have had to go to lodgings. — Post.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

[*Bournemouth, March* 1885.]

DEAR LAD, — Much better, but rather unequal to do what I ought, a common complaint. The change of weather much helped me, not too soon.

I have thought as well as I could of what you said; and I come unhesitatingly to the opinion that the stage is only a lottery, must not be regarded as a trade, and must never be preferred to drudgery. If money comes from any play, let us regard it as a legacy, but never count upon it in our income for the year. In other words, I must go on and drudge at *Kidnapped*, which I hate, and am unfit to do; and you will have to get some journalism somehow. These are my cold and blighting sentiments. It is bad enough to have to live by an art — but to think to live by an art combined with commercial speculation — that way madness lies.

Time is our only friend. The *Admiral,* pulled simply in pieces and about half deleted, will act some day: such is my opinion. I can no more. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To William Archer

An anonymous review of the *Child's Garden,* appearing in March, gave R. L. S. so much pleasure that he wrote (in the four words, "Now who are you?") to inquire the name of its writer, and learned 148 that it was Mr. Archer; with whom he had hitherto had no acquaintance. He thereupon entered into friendly correspondence with his critic.

Bournemouth, March 29, 1885.

DEAR MR. ARCHER, — Yes, I have heard of you and read some of your work; but I am bound in particular to thank you for the notice of my verses. "There," I said, throwing it over to the friend who was staying with me, "it's worth writing a book to draw an article like that." Had you been as hard upon me as you were amiable, I try to tell myself I should have been no blinder to the merits of your notice. For I saw there, to admire and to be very grateful for, a most sober, agile pen; an enviable touch; the marks of a reader, such as one imagines for one's self in dreams, thoughtful, critical, and kind; and to put the top on this memorial column, a greater readiness to describe the author criticised than to display the talents of his censor.

I am a man *blasé* to injudicious praise (though I hope some of it may be judicious too), but I have to thank you for the best criticism I ever had; and am therefore, dear Mr. Archer, the most grateful critickee now extant.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — I congratulate you on living in the corner of all London that I like best. *À propos,* you are very right about my voluntary aversion from the painful sides of life. My childhood was in reality a very mixed experience, full of fever, nightmare, insomnia, painful days and interminable nights; and I can speak with less authority of gardens than of that other "land of counterpane." But to what end should we renew these sorrows? The sufferings of life may be handled by the very greatest in their hours of insight; it is of its pleasures that our common poems should be formed; these are the experiences that we should seek to recall or to provoke; and I say with Thoreau, "What right have I to complain, who 149 have not ceased to wonder?" and, to add a rider of my own, who have no remedy to offer.

R. L. S.

To Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pennell

Acknowledging the dedication of an illustrated *Canterbury Pilgrimage*.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Summer* 1885.]

DEAR SIR AND MADAM, — This horrible delay must be forgiven me. It was not caused by any want of gratitude; but by the desire to acknowledge the dedication more suitably (and to display my wit) in a copy of verses. Well, now I give that up, and tell you in plain prose, that you have given me much pleasure by the dedication of your graceful book.

As I was writing the above, I received a visit from Lady Shelley, who mentioned to me that she was reading Mrs. Pennell's *Mary Wollstonecraft* with pleasure. It is odd how streams cross. Mr. Pennell's work I have, of course, long known and admired: and I believe there was once some talk, on the part of Mr. Gilder, that we should work together; but the scheme fell through from my rapacity; and since then has been finally rendered impossible (or so I fear) by my health.

I should say that when I received the *Pilgrimage*, I was in a state (not at all common with me) of depression; and the pleasant testimony that my work had not all been in vain did much to set me up again. You will therefore understand, late as is the hour, with what sincerity I am able to sign myself — Gratefully yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

MR. AND MRS. PENNELL, — I see I should explain that this is all in my own hand, I have not fobbed you off with an amanuensis; but as I have two handwritings (both equally bad in these days) I might lead you to think so.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

On the death of Professor Fleeming Jenkin, who in Stevenson's early student days at Edinburgh had been both the warmest and the wisest of his elder friends (died June 12, 1885).

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June* 1885.]

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN, — You know how much and for how long I have loved, respected, and admired him; I am only able to feel a little with you. But I know how he would have wished us to feel. I never knew a better man, nor one to me more lovable; we shall all feel the loss more greatly as time goes on. It scarce seems life to me; what must it be to you? Yet one of the last things that he said to me was, that from all these sad bereavements of yours he had learned only more than ever to feel the goodness and what we, in our feebleness, call the support of God; he had been ripening so much — to other eyes than ours, we must suppose he was ripe, and try to feel it. I feel it is better not to say much more. It will be to me a great pride to write a notice of him: the last I can now do. What more in any way I can do for you, please to think and let me know. For his sake and for your own, I would not be a useless friend: I know, you know me a most warm one; please command me or my wife, in any way. Do not trouble to write to me; Austin, I have no doubt, will do so, if you are, as I fear you will be, unfit.

My heart is sore for you. At least you know what you have been to him; how he cherished and admired you; how he was never so pleased as when he spoke of you; with what a boy's love, up to the last, he loved you. This surely is a consolation. Yours is the cruel part — to survive; you must try and not grudge to him his better fortune, to go first. It is the sad part of such relations that one must remain and suffer; I cannot see my poor Jenkin without you. Nor you indeed without him; but 151 you may try to rejoice that he is spared that extremity. Perhaps I (as I was so much his confidant) know even better than you can do what your loss would have been to him; he never spoke of you but his face changed; it was — you were — his religion.

I write by this post to Austin and to the Academy. — Yours most sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June* 1885.]

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN, — I should have written sooner, but we are in a bustle, and I have been very tired, though still well. Your very kind note was most welcome to me. I shall be very much pleased to have you call me Louis, as he has now done for so many years. Sixteen, you say? is it so long? It seems too short now; but of that we cannot judge, and must not complain.

I wish that either I or my wife could do anything for you; when we can, you will, I am sure, command us.

I trust that my notice gave you as little pain as was possible. I found I had so much to say, that I preferred to keep it for another place and make but a note in the Academy. To try to draw my friend at greater length, and say what he was to me and his intimates, what a good influence in life and what an example, is a desire that grows upon me. It was strange, as I wrote the note, how his old tests and criticisms haunted me; and it reminded me afresh with every few words how much I owe to him.

I had a note from Henley, very brief and very sad. We none of us yet feel the loss; but we know what he would have said and wished.

Do you know that Dew Smith has two photographs of him, neither very bad? and one giving a lively, though not flattering air of him in conversation? If you have 152 not got them, would you like me to write to Dew and ask him to give you proofs?

I was so pleased that he and my wife made friends; that is a great pleasure. We found and have preserved one fragment (the head) of the drawing he made and tore up when he was last here. He had promised to come and stay with us this summer. May we not hope, at least, some time soon to have one from you? — Believe me, my dear Mrs. Jenkin, with the most real sympathy, your sincere friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Dear me, what happiness I owe to both of you!

To C. Howard Carrington

In answer to an inquiry from a correspondent not personally known to him, who had by some means heard of the *Great North Road* project.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June 9th .

DEAR SIR, — *The Great North Road* is still unfinished; it is scarce I should say beyond Highgate: but it will be finished some day, bar the big accident. It will not however gratify your taste; the highwayman is not grasped: what you would have liked (and I, believe me) would have been *Jerry Abershaw*: but Jerry was not written at the fit moment; I have outgrown the taste — and his romantic horse-shoes clatter faintlier down the incline towards Lethe. — Truly yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Katharine De Mattos

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Summer 1885.

MY DEAR CATHERINE, — ’Tis the most complete blague and folly to write to you; you never answer and, even when you do, your letters crackle under the teeth like ashes; containing nothing as they do but unseasonable 153 japes and a great cloudy vagueness as of the realm of chaos. In this I know well they are like mine; and it becomes me well to write such — but not you — for reasons too obvious to mention. We have both been sick; but to-day I am up, though with an aching back. But I hope all will be better. Of your views, state, finances, etc. etc., I know nothing. We were mighty near the end of all things financially, when a strange shape of a hand giving appeared in Heaven or from Hell, and set us up again for the moment; yet still we totter on a whoreson brink. I beg pardon. I forgot I was writing to a lady; but the word shall stay: it is the only word; I would say it to the Q— —n of E— —d.

How do you like letters of this kind? It is your kind. They mean nothing; they are blankly insignificant; and impudently put one in the wrong. One has learnt nothing; and forsooth one must reply. — Yours, the Inexpressive Correspondent,

R. L. S.

Hey-ey-ey! Sold again. Hey-ey-ey!

Postscript: sold again.

To W. H. Low

In August of this year Stevenson made with his wife an excursion to the west country (stopping at Dorchester on the way, for the pleasure of seeing Mr. Thomas Hardy at home), and was detained for several weeks at The New London inn, Exeter, by a bad fit of hemorrhage. His correspondence is not resumed until the autumn.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, October 22, 1885.

MY DEAR LOW, — I trust you are not annoyed with me beyond forgiveness; for indeed my silence has been devilish prolonged. I can only tell you that I have been nearly six months (more than six) in a strange condition of collapse, when it was impossible to do any work, and difficult (more difficult than you would suppose) to write the merest note. I am now better, but not yet my own 154 man in the way of brains, and in health only so-so. I suppose I shall learn (I begin to think I am learning) to fight this vast, vague feather-bed of an obsession that now overlies and smothers me; but in the beginnings of these conflicts, the inexperienced wrestler is always worsted, and I own I have been quite extinct. I wish you to know, though it can be no excuse, that you are not the only one of my friends by many whom I have thus neglected; and even now, having come so very late into the possession of myself, with a substantial capital of debts, and my work still moving with a desperate slowness — as a child might fill a sandbag with its little handfuls — and my future deeply pledged, there is almost a touch of virtue in my borrowing these hours to write to you. Why I said “hours” I know not; it would look blue for both of us if I made good the word.

I was writing your address the other day, ordering a copy of my next, *Prince Otto*, to go your way. I hope you have not seen it in parts; it was not meant to be so read; and only my poverty (dishonourably) consented to the serial evolution.

I will send you with this a copy of the English edition of the *Child’s Garden*. I have heard there is some vile rule of the post-office in the States against inscriptions; so I send herewith a piece of doggerel which Mr. Bunner may, if he thinks fit, copy off the fly-leaf.

Sargent was down again and painted a portrait of me walking about in my own dining-room, in my own velveteen jacket, and twisting as I go my own moustache; at one corner a glimpse of my wife, in an Indian dress, and seated in a chair that was once my grandfather’s, but since some months goes by the name of Henry James’s — for it was there the novelist loved to sit — adds a touch of poesy and comicality. It is, I think, excellent, but is too eccentric to be exhibited. I am at one extreme corner; my wife, in this wild dress, and looking like a ghost, is at the extreme other end; between us an open door exhibits 155 my palatial entrance hall and a part of my respected staircase. All this is touched in lovely, with that witty touch of Sargent's; but, of course, it looks dam queer as a whole.

Pray let me hear from you, and give me good news of yourself and your wife, to whom please remember me. — Yours most sincerely, my dear Low,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

Prince Otto was published in October of this year; and the following refers to two reviews of it — one of them by Mr. Henley, which to the writer's displeasure had been pruned by the editor before printing; the other by a writer in the Saturday Review who declared that Otto was "a fool and a wittol," and could see nothing but false style in the story of Seraphina's flight through the forest.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Autumn* 1885.]

DEAR LAD, — If there was any more praise in what you wrote, I think [the editor] has done us both a service; some of it stops my throat. What, it would not have been the same if Dumas or Musset had done it, would it not? Well, no, I do not think it would, do you know, now; I am really of opinion it would not; and a dam good job too. Why, think what Musset would have made of Otto! Think how gallantly Dumas would have carried his crowd through! And whatever you do, don't quarrel with — — . It gives me much pleasure to see your work there; I think you do yourself great justice in that field; and I would let no annoyance, petty or justifiable, debar me from such a market. I think you do good there. Whether (considering our intimate relations) you would not do better to refrain from reviewing me, I will leave to yourself: were it all on my side, you could foresee my answer; but there is your side also, where you must be the judge.

As for the Saturday. Otto is no "fool," the reader 156 is left in no doubt as to whether or not Seraphina was a Messalina (though much it would matter, if you come to that); and therefore on both these points the reviewer has been unjust. Secondly, the romance lies precisely in the freeing of two spirits from these court intrigues; and here I think the reviewer showed himself dull. Lastly, if Otto's speech is offensive to him, he is one of the large class of unmanly and ungenerous dogs who arrogate and defile the name of manly. As for the passages quoted, I do confess that some of them reek Gongorically; they are excessive, but they are not inelegant after all. However, had he attacked me only there, he would have scored.

Your criticism on Gondremark is, I fancy, right. I thought all your criticisms were indeed; only your praise — chokes me. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To William Archer

The paper referred to in this and the following letters is one which Mr. Archer wrote over his own signature in the November number of Time, a magazine now extinct.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, October 28, 1885.

DEAR MR. ARCHER, — I have read your paper with my customary admiration; it is very witty, very adroit; it contains a great deal that is excellently true (particularly the parts about my stories and the description of me as an artist in life); but you will not be surprised if I do not think it altogether just. It seems to me, in particular, that you have wilfully read all my works in terms of my earliest; my aim, even in style, has quite changed in the last six or seven years; and this I should have thought you would have noticed. Again, your first remark upon the affectation of the italic names; a practice only followed in my two affected little books of travel, where a typographical *minauderie* of the sort appeared to 157 me in character; and what you say of it, then, is quite just. But why should you forget yourself and use these same italics as an index to my theology some pages further on? This is lightness of touch indeed; may I say, it is almost sharpness of practice?

Excuse these remarks. I have been on the whole much interested, and sometimes amused. Are you aware that the praiser of this “brave gymnasium” has not seen a canoe nor taken a long walk since ‘79? that he is rarely out of the house nowadays, and carries his arm in a sling? Can you imagine that he is a back-slidden communist, and is sure he will go to hell (if there be such an excellent institution) for the luxury in which he lives? And can you believe that, though it is gaily expressed, the thought is hag and skeleton in every moment of vacuity or depression? Can you conceive how profoundly I am irritated by the opposite affectation to my own, when I see strong men and rich men bleating about their sorrows and the burthen of life, in a world full of “cancerous paupers,” and poor sick children, and the fatally bereaved, ay, and down even to such happy creatures as myself, who has yet been obliged to strip himself, one after another, of all the pleasures that he had chosen except smoking (and the days of that I know in my heart ought to be over), I forgot eating, which I still enjoy, and who sees the circle of impotence closing very slowly but quite steadily around him? In my view, one dank, dispirited word is harmful, a crime of *lèse-humanité*, a piece of acquired evil; every gay, every bright word or picture, like every pleasant air of music, is a piece of pleasure set afloat; the reader catches it, and, if he be healthy, goes on his way rejoicing; and it is the business of art so to send him, as often as possible.

For what you say, so kindly, so prettily, so precisely, of my style, I must in particular thank you; though even here, I am vexed you should not have remarked on my attempted change of manner: seemingly this attempt is 158 still quite unsuccessful! Well, we shall fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.

And now for my last word: Mrs. Stevenson is very anxious that you should see me, and that she should see you, in the flesh. If you at all share in these views, I am a fixture. Write or telegraph (giving us time, however, to telegraph in reply, lest the day be impossible), and come down here to a bed and a dinner. What do you say, my dear critic? I shall be truly pleased to see you; and to explain at greater length what I meant by saying narrative was the most characteristic mood of literature, on which point I have great hopes I shall persuade you. — Yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — My opinion about Thoreau, and the passage in The Week, is perhaps a fad, but it is sincere and stable. I am still of the same mind five years later; did you observe that I had said "modern" authors? and will you observe again that this passage touches the very joint of our division? It is one that appeals to me, deals with that part of life that I think the most important, and you, if I gather rightly, so much less so? You believe in the extreme moment of the facts that humanity has acquired and is acquiring; I think them of moment, but still of much less than those inherent or inherited brute principles and laws that sit upon us (in the character of conscience) as heavy as a shirt of mail, and that (in the character of the affections and the airy spirit of pleasure) make all the light of our lives. The house is, indeed, a great thing, and should be rearranged on sanitary principles; but my heart and all my interest are with the dweller, that ancient of days and day-old infant man.

R. L. S.

An excellent touch is . "By instinct or design he eschews what demands constructive patience." I believe it is both; my theory is that literature must always 159 be most at home in treating movement and change; hence I look for them.

To Thomas Stevenson

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *October* 28, 1885.

MY DEAREST FATHER, — Get the November number of Time, and you will see a review of me by a very clever fellow, who is quite furious at bottom because I am too orthodox, just as Purcell was savage because I am not orthodox enough. I fall between two stools. It is odd, too, to see how this man thinks me a full-blooded fox-hunter, and tells me my philosophy would fail if I lost my health or had to give up exercise!

An illustrated *Treasure Island* will be out next month. I have had an early copy, and the French pictures are admirable. The artist has got his types up in Hogarth; he is full of fire and spirit, can draw and can compose, and has understood the book as I meant it, all but one or two little accidents, such as making the *Hispaniola* a brig. I would send you my copy, *but I cannot*; it is my new toy, and I cannot divorce myself from this enjoyment.

I am keeping really better, and have been out about every second day, though the weather is cold and very wild.

I was delighted to hear you were keeping better; you and Archer would agree, more shame to you! (Archer is my pessimist critic.) Good-bye to all of you, with my best love. We had a dreadful overhauling of my conduct as a son the other night; and my wife stripped me of my illusions and made me admit I had been a detestable bad one. Of one thing in particular she convicted me in my own eyes: I mean, a most unkind reticence, which hung on me then, and I confess still hangs on me now, when I try to assure you that I do love you. — Ever your bad son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Henry James

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, October 28, 1885.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES, — At last, my wife being at a concert, and a story being done, I am at some liberty to write and give you of my views. And first, many thanks for the works that came to my sickbed. And second, and more important, as to the *Princess*. Well, I think you are going to do it this time; I cannot, of course, foresee, but these two first numbers seem to me picturesque and sound and full of lineament, and very much a new departure. As for your young lady, she is all there; yes, sir, you can do low life, I believe. The prison was excellent; it was of that nature of touch that I sometimes achingly miss from your former work; with some of the grime, that is, and some of the emphasis of skeleton there is in nature. I pray you to take grime in a good sense; it need not be ignoble: dirt may have dignity; in nature it usually has; and your prison was imposing.

And now to the main point: why do we not see you? Do not fail us. Make an alarming sacrifice, and let us see “Henry James’s chair” properly occupied. I never sit in it myself (though it was my grandfather’s); it has been consecrated to guests by your approval, and now stands at my elbow gaping. We have a new room, too, to introduce to you — our last baby, the drawing-room; it never cries, and has cut its teeth. Likewise, there is a cat now. It promises to be a monster of laziness and self-sufficiency.

Pray see, in the November Time (a dread name for a magazine of light reading), a very clever fellow, W. Archer, stating his views of me; the rosy-gilled “athletico-æsthete”; and warning me, in a fatherly manner, that a rheumatic fever would try my philosophy (as indeed it would), and that my gospel would not do for "those who 161 are shut out from the exercise of any manly virtue save renunciation." To those who know that rickety and cloistered spectre, the real R. L. S., the paper, besides being clever in itself, presents rare elements of sport. The critical parts are in particular very bright and neat, and often excellently true. Get it by all manner of means.

I hear on all sides I am to be attacked as an immoral writer; this is painful. Have I at last got, like you, to the pitch of being attacked? 'Tis the consecration I lack — and could do without. Not that Archer's paper is an attack, or what either he or I, I believe, would call one; 'tis the attacks on my morality (which I had thought a gem of the first water) I referred to.

Now, my dear James, come — come — come. The spirit (that is me) says, Come; and the bride (and that is my wife) says, Come; and the best thing you can do for us and yourself and your work is to get up and do so right away. — Yours affectionately,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To William Archer

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *October* 30, 1885.

DEAR MR. ARCHER, — It is possible my father may be soon down with me; he is an old man and in bad health and spirits; and I could neither leave him alone, nor could we talk freely before him. If he should be here when you offer your visit, you will understand if I have to say no, and put you off.

I quite understand your not caring to refer to things of private knowledge. What still puzzles me is how you ("in the witness box" — ha! I like the phrase) should have made your argument actually hinge on a contention which the facts answered.

I am pleased to hear of the correctness of my guess. It is then as I supposed; you are of the school of the 162 generous and not the sullen pessimists; and I can feel with you. I used myself to rage when I saw sick folk going by in their Bath-chairs; since I have been sick myself (and always when I was sick myself), I found life, even in its rough places, to have a property of easiness. That which we suffer ourselves has no longer the same air of monstrous injustice and wanton cruelty that suffering wears when we see it in the case of others. So we begin gradually to see that things are not black, but have their strange compensations; and when they draw towards their worst, the idea of death is like a bed to lie on. I should bear false witness if I did not declare life happy. And your wonderful statement that happiness tends to die out and misery to continue, which was what put me on the track of your frame of mind, is diagnostic of the happy man raging over the misery of others; it could never be written by the man who had tried what unhappiness was like. And at any rate, it was a slip of the pen: the ugliest word that science has to declare is a reserved indifference to happiness and misery in the individual; it declares no leaning toward the black, no iniquity on the large scale in fate's doings, rather a marble equality, dread not cruel, giving and taking away and reconciling.

Why have I not written my *Timon*? Well, here is my worst quarrel with you. You take my young books as my last word. The tendency to try to say more has passed unperceived (my fault, that). And you make no allowance for the slowness with which a man finds and tries to learn his tools. I began with a neat brisk little style, and a sharp little knack of partial observation; I have tried to expand my means, but still I can only utter a part of what I wish to say, and am bound to feel; and much of it will die unspoken. But if I had the pen of Shakespeare, I have no *Timon* to give forth. I feel kindly to the powers that be; I marvel they should use me so well; and when I think of the case of others, I wonder 163 too, but in another vein, whether they may not, whether they must not, be like me, still with some compensation, some delight. To have suffered, nay, to suffer, sets a keen edge on what remains of the agreeable. This is a great truth, and has to be learned in the fire. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

We expect you, remember that.

To William Archer

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, November 1, 1885.

DEAR MR. ARCHER, — You will see that I had already had a sight of your article and what were my thoughts.

One thing in your letter puzzles me. Are you, too, not in the witness-box? And if you are, why take a wilfully false hypothesis? If you knew I was a chronic invalid, why say that my philosophy was unsuitable to such a case? My call for facts is not so general as yours, but an essential fact should not be put the other way about.

The fact is, consciously or not, you doubt my honesty; you think I am making faces, and at heart disbelieve my utterances. And this I am disposed to think must spring from your not having had enough of pain, sorrow, and trouble in your existence. It is easy to have too much; easy also or possible to have too little; enough is required that a man may appreciate what elements of consolation and joy there are in everything but absolutely overpowering physical pain or disgrace, and how in almost all circumstances the human soul can play a fair part. You fear life, I fancy, on the principle of the hand of little employment. But perhaps my hypothesis is as unlike the truth as the one you chose. Well, if it be so, if you have had trials, sickness, the approach of death, the alienation of friends, poverty at the heels, and have 164 not felt your soul turn round upon these things and spurn them under — you must be very differently made from me, and I earnestly believe from the majority of men. But at least you are in the right to wonder and complain.

To "say all"? Stay here. All at once? That would require a word from the pen of Gargantua. We say each particular thing as it comes up, and "with that sort of emphasis that for the time there seems to be no other." Words will not otherwise serve us; no, nor even Shakespeare, who could not have put *As You Like It* and *Timon* into one without ruinous loss both of emphasis and substance. Is it quite fair then to keep your face so steadily On my most light-hearted works, and then say I recognise no evil? Yet in the paper on Burns, for instance, I show myself alive to some sorts of evil. But then, perhaps, they are not your sorts.

And again: "to say all"? All: yes. Everything: no. The task were endless, the effect nil. But my all, in such a vast field as this of life, is what interests me, what stands out, what takes on itself a presence for my imagination or makes a figure in that little tricky abbreviation which is the best that my reason can conceive. That I must treat, or I shall be fooling with my readers. That, and not the all of some one else.

And here we come to the division: not only do I believe that literature should give joy, but I see a universe, I suppose, eternally different from yours; a solemn, a terrible, but a very joyous and noble universe, where suffering is not at least wantonly inflicted, though it falls with dispassionate partiality, but where it may be and generally is nobly borne; where, above all (this I believe; probably you don't: I think he may, with cancer), *any brave man may make* out a life which shall be happy for himself, and, by so being, beneficent to those about him. And if he fails, why should I hear him weeping? I mean if I fail, why should I weep? Why should *you* hear *me*? 165 Then to me morals, the conscience, the affections, and the passions are, I will own frankly and sweepingly, so infinitely more important than the other parts of life, that I conceive men rather triflers who become immersed in the latter; and I will always think the man who keeps his lip stiff, and makes "a happy fireside clime," and carries a pleasant face about to friends and neighbours, infinitely greater (in the abstract) than an atrabilious Shakespeare or a backbiting Kant or Darwin. No offence to any of these gentlemen, two of whom probably (one for certain) came up to my standard.

And now enough said; it were hard if a poor man could not criticise another without having so much ink shed against him. But I shall still regret you should have written on an hypothesis you knew to be untenable, and that you should thus have made your paper, for those who do not know me, essentially unfair. The rich, fox-hunting squire speaks with one voice; the sick man of letters with another. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson

(*Prometheus-Heine in minimis*).

P.S. — Here I go again. To me, the medicine bottles on my chimney and the blood on my handkerchief are accidents; they do not colour my view of life, as you would know, I think, if you had experience of sickness; they do not exist in my prospect; I would as soon drag them under the eyes of my readers as I would mention a pimple I might chance to have (saving your presence) on my posteriors. What does it prove? what does it change? it has not hurt, it has not changed me in any essential part; and I should think myself a trifler and in bad taste if I introduced the world to these unimportant privacies.

But, again, there is this mountain-range between us — *that you do not believe me*. It is not flattering, but the fault is probably in my literary art.

To W. H. Low

The "other thing coming out" mentioned below in the last paragraph but one was *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, December 26, 1885.

MY DEAR LOW, — *Lamia* has not yet turned up, but your letter came to me this evening with a scent of the Boulevard Montparnasse that was irresistible. The sand of Lavenue's crumbled under my heel; and the bouquet of the old Fleury came back to me, and I remembered the day when I found a twenty franc piece under my fetish. Have you that fetish still? and has it brought you luck? I remembered, too, my first sight of you in a frock-coat and a smoking-cap, when we passed the evening at the Café de Medicis; and my last when we sat and talked in the Parc Monceau; and all these things made me feel a little young again, which, to one who has been mostly in bed for a month, was a vivifying change.

Yes, you are lucky to have a bag that holds you comfortably. Mine is a strange contrivance; I don't die, damme, and I can't get along on both feet to save my soul; I am a chronic sickist; and my work cripples along between bed and the parlour, between the medicine bottle and the cupping glass. Well, I like my life all the same; and should like it none the worse if I could have another talk with you, though even my talks now are measured out to me by the minute hand like poisons in a minim glass.

A photograph will be taken of my ugly mug and sent to you for ulterior purposes: I have another thing coming out, which I did not put in the way of the Scribners, I can scarce tell how; but I was sick and penniless and rather back on the world, and mismanaged it. I trust they will forgive me.

I am sorry to hear of Mrs. Low's illness, and glad to hear of her recovery. I will announce the coming *Lamia* to Bob: he steams away at literature like smoke. I have 167 a beautiful Bob on my walls, and a good Sargent, and a delightful Lemon; and your etching now hangs framed in the dining-room. So the arts surround me. — Yours,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. de Mattos

With this cousin the writer had always been on terms of close affection, and he now dedicated to her *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. In the dedication as published only the second verse stands.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *January 1st,* 1886.

DEAREST KATHARINE, — Here, on a very little book and accompanied with lame verses, I have put your name. Our kindness is now getting well on in years; it must be nearly of age; and it gets more valuable to me with every time I see you. It is not possible to express any sentiment, and it is not necessary to try, at least between us. You know very well that I love you dearly, and that I always will. I only wish the verses were better, but at least you like the story; and it is sent to you by the one that loves you — Jekyll, and not Hyde.

R. L. S.

Ave!

Bells upon the city are ringing in the night;
High above the gardens are the houses full of light;
On the heathy Pentlands is the curlew flying free;
And the broom is blowing bonnie in the north countrie.
We cannae break the bonds that God decreed to bind,
Still we'll be the children of the heather and the wind;
Far away from home, O, it's still for you and me
That the broom is blowing bonnie in the north countrie.

R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *Jan. 1st,* 1886.

MY DEAR KINNICUM, — I am a very bad dog, but not for the first time. Your book, which is very interesting, 168 came duly; and I immediately got a very bad cold indeed, and have been fit for nothing whatever. I am a bit better now, and aye on the mend; so I write to tell you, I thought of you on New Year's Day; though, I own, it would have been more decent if I had thought in time for you to get my letter then. Well, what can't be cured must be endured, Mr. Lawrie; and you must be content with what I give. If I wrote all the letters I ought to write, and at the proper time, I should be very good and very happy; but I doubt if I should do anything else.

I suppose you will be in town for the New Year; and I hope your health is pretty good. What you want is diet; but it is as much use to tell you that as it is to tell my father. And I quite admit a diet is a beastly thing. I doubt, however, if it be as bad as not being allowed to speak, which I have tried fully, and do not like. When, at the same time, I was not allowed to read, it passed a joke. But these are troubles of the past, and on this day, at least, it is proper to suppose they won't return. But we are not put here to enjoy ourselves: it was not God's purpose; and I am prepared to argue, it is not our sincere wish. As for our deserts, the less said of them the better, for somebody might hear, and nobody cares to be laughed at. A good man is a very noble thing to see, but not to himself; what he seems to God is, fortunately, not our business; that is the domain of faith; and whether on the first of January or the thirty-first of December, faith is a good word to end on.

My dear Cummy, many happy returns to you and my best love. — The worst correspondent in the world,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *January 1st,* 1886.

MY DEAR PEOPLE, — Many happy returns of the day to you all; I am fairly well and in good spirits; and much 169 and hopefully occupied with dear Jenkin's life. The inquiry in every detail, every letter that I read, makes me think of him more nobly. I cannot imagine how I got his friendship; I did not deserve it. I believe the notice will be interesting and useful.

My father's last letter, owing to the use of a quill pen and the neglect of blotting-paper, was hopelessly illegible. Every one tried, and every one failed to decipher an important word on which the interest of one whole clause (and the letter consisted of two) depended.

I find I can make little more of this; but I'll spare the blots. — Dear people, ever your loving son,

R. L. S.

I will try again, being a giant refreshed by the house being empty. The presence of people is the great obstacle to letter-writing. I deny that letters should contain news (I mean mine; those of other people should). But mine should contain appropriate sentiments and humorous nonsense, or nonsense without the humour. When the house is empty, the mind is seized with a desire — no, that is too strong — a willingness to pour forth unmitigated rot, which constitutes (in me) the true spirit of correspondence. When I have no remarks to offer (and nobody to offer them to), my pen flies, and you see the remarkable consequence of a page literally covered with words and genuinely devoid of sense. I can always do that, if quite alone, and I like doing it; but I have yet to learn that it is beloved by correspondents. The deuce of it is, that there is no end possible but the end of the paper; and as there is very little left of that — if I cannot stop writing — suppose you give up reading. It would all come to the same thing; and I think we should all be happier....

To W. H. Low

In the following letter R. L. S. accepts the dedication of Mr. Low's illustrated edition of Keats's *Lamia*, and sends him in return 170 the newly published *Jekyll and Hyde*, and a set of verses afterwards printed in the Century Magazine and *Underwoods*, and inscribed by Mr. St. Gaudens on his medallion portrait of the author. The terms of the *Lamia* dedication are as follows: "In testimony of loyal friendship and of a common faith in doubtful tales from Faery-Land, I dedicate to Robert Louis Stevenson my work in this book." The Latin legend inscribed above the design runs: "Neque est ullum certius amicitiae vinculum quam consensus et societas consiliorum et voluntatum."

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *Jan. 2nd,* 1886.

MY DEAR LOW, — *Lamia* has come, and I do not know how to thank you, not only for the beautiful art of the designs, but for the handsome and apt words of the dedication. My favourite is "Bathes unseen," which is a masterpiece; and the next, "Into the green recessed woods," is perhaps more remarkable, though it does not take my fancy so imperiously. The night scene at Corinth pleases me also. The second part offers fewer opportunities. I own I should like to see both *Isabella* and the *Eve* thus illustrated; and then there's *Hyperion* — O, yes, and *Endymion*! I should like to see the lot: beautiful pictures dance before me by hundreds: I believe *Endymion* would suit you best. It also is in faery-land; and I see a hundred opportunities, cloudy and flowery glories, things as delicate as the cobweb in the bush; actions, not in themselves of any mighty purport, but made for the pencil: the feast of Pan, Peona's isle, the "slabbed margin of a well," the chase of the butterfly, the nymph, Glaucus, Cybele, Sleep on his couch, a farrago of unconnected beauties. But I divagate; and all this sits in the bosom of the publisher.

What is more important, I accept the terms of the dedication with a frank heart, and the terms of your Latin legend fairly. The sight of your pictures has once more awakened me to my right mind; something may come of it; yet one more bold push to get free of this prison-yard of the abominably ugly, where I take my daily exercise with my contemporaries. I do not know, I have a feeling in my bones, a sentiment which may take on the 171 forms of imagination, or may not. If it does, I shall owe it to you; and the thing will thus descend from Keats even if on the wrong side of the blanket. If it can be done in prose — that is the puzzle — I divagate again. Thank you again:

you can draw and yet you do not love the ugly: what are you doing in this age? Flee, while it is yet time; they will have your four limbs pinned upon a stable door to scare witches. The ugly, my unhappy friend, is *de rigueur*: it is the only wear! What a chance you threw away with the serpent! Why had Apollonius no pimples? Heavens, my dear Low, you do not know your business....

I send you herewith a Gothic gnome for your Greek nymph; but the gnome is interesting, I think, and he came out of a deep mine, where he guards the fountain of tears. It is not always the time to rejoice. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

The gnome's name is *Jekyll & Hyde*; I believe you will find he is likewise quite willing to answer to the name of Low or Stevenson.

Same day. — I have copied out on the other sheet some bad verses, which somehow your picture suggested; as a kind of image of things that I pursue and cannot reach, and that you seem — no, not to have reached — but to have come a thought nearer to than I. This is the life we have chosen: well, the choice was mad, but I should make it again.

What occurs to me is this: perhaps they might be printed in (say) the Century for the sake of my name; and if that were possible, they might advertise your book. It might be headed as sent in acknowledgment of your *Lamia*. Or perhaps it might be introduced by the phrases I have marked above. I dare say they would stick it in: I want no payment, being well paid by *Lamia*. If they are not, keep them to yourself.

to will h. low

Damned bad lines in return for a beautiful book

Youth now flees on feathered foot.
Faint and fainter sounds the flute;
Rarer songs of Gods.
And still,
Somewhere on the sunny hill,
Or along the winding stream.
Through the willows, flits a dream;
Flits, but shows a smiling face,
Flees, but with so quaint a grace,
None can choose to stay at home,
All must follow — all must roam.
This is unborn beauty: she
Now in air floats high and free,
Takes the sun, and breaks the blue; —
Late, with stooping pinion flew
Raking hedgerow trees, and wet
Her wing in silver streams, and set

Shining foot on temple roof.
Now again she flies aloof,
Coasting mountain clouds, and kissed
By the evening's amethyst.
In wet wood and miry lane
Still we pound and pant in vain;
Still with earthy foot we chase
Waning pinion, fainting face;
Still, with grey hair, we stumble on
Till — behold! — the vision gone!
Where has fleeting beauty led?
To the doorway of the dead!
[Life is gone, but life was gay:
We have come the primrose way!]

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Jan. 2nd, 1886.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — Thank you for your letter, so interesting to my vanity. There is a review in the St. James's, which, as it seems to hold somewhat of your opinions, and is besides written with a pen and not a poker, we think may possibly be yours. The *Prince* has done fairly well in spite of the reviews, which have been bad: he was, as you doubtless saw, well slated in the Saturday; one paper received it as a child's story; another (picture my agony) described it as a "Gilbert comedy." It was amusing to see the race between me and Justin M'Carthy: the Milesian has won by a length.

That is the hard part of literature. You aim high, and you take longer over your work, and it will not be so successful as if you had aimed low and rushed it. What the public likes is work (of any kind) a little loosely executed; so long as it is a little wordy, a little slack, a little dim and knotless, the dear public likes it; it should (if possible) be a little dull into the bargain. I know that good work sometimes hits; but, with my hand on my heart, I think it is by an accident. And I know also that good work must succeed at last; but that is not the doing of the public; they are only shamed into silence or affectation. I do not write for the public; I do write for money, a 174 nobler deity; and most of all for myself, not perhaps any more noble, but both more intelligent and nearer home.

Let us tell each other sad stories of the bestiality of the beast whom we feed. What he likes is the newspaper; and to me the press is the mouth of a sewer, where lying is professed as from an university chair, and everything prurient, and ignoble, and essentially dull, finds its abode and pulpit. I do not like mankind; but men, and not all of these — and fewer women. As for respecting the race, and, above all, that fatuous rabble of burgesses called "the public," God save me from such irreligion! — that way lies disgrace and dishonour. There must be something wrong in me, or I would not be popular.

This is perhaps a trifle stronger than my sedate and permanent opinion. Not much, I think. As for the art that we practise, I have never been able to see why its professors should be respected. They chose the primrose path; when they found it was not all primroses, but some of it brambly, and much of it uphill, they began to think and to speak of themselves as holy martyrs. But a man is never martyred in any honest sense in the pursuit of his pleasure; and *delirium tremens* has more of the honour of the cross. We were full of the pride of life, and chose, like prostitutes, to live by a pleasure. We should be paid if we give the pleasure we pretend to give; but why should we be honoured?

I hope some day you and Mrs. Gosse will come for a Sunday; but we must wait till I am able to see people. I am very full of Jenkin's life; it is painful, yet very pleasant, to dig into the past of a dead friend, and find him, at every spadeful, shine brighter. I own, as I read, I wonder more and more why he should have taken me to be a friend. He had many and obvious faults upon the face of him; the heart was pure gold. I feel it little pain to have lost him, for it is a loss in which I cannot 175 believe; I take it, against reason, for an absence; if not to-day, then to-morrow, I still fancy I shall see him in the door; and then, now when I know him better, how glad a meeting! Yes, if I could believe in the immortality business, the world would indeed be too good to be true; but we were put here to do what service we can, for honour and not for hire: the sods cover us, and the worm that never dies, the conscience, sleeps well at last; these are the wages, besides what we receive so lavishly day by day; and they are enough for a man who knows his own frailty and sees all things in the proportion of reality. The soul of piety was killed long ago by that idea of reward. Nor is happiness, whether eternal or temporal, the reward that mankind seeks. Happinesses are but his wayside campings; his soul is in the journey; he was born for the struggle, and only tastes his life in effort and on the condition that he is opposed. How, then, is such a creature, so fiery, so pugnacious, so made up of discontent and aspiration, and such noble and uneasy passions — how can he be rewarded but by rest? I would not say it aloud; for man's cherished belief is that he loves that happiness which he continually spurns and passes by; and this belief in some ulterior happiness exactly fits him. He does not require to stop and taste it; he can be about the rugged and bitter business where his heart lies; and yet he can tell himself this fairy tale of an eternal tea-party, and enjoy the notion that he is both himself and something else; and that his friends will yet meet him, all ironed out and emasculate, and still be lovable, — as if love did not live in the faults of the beloved only, and draw its breath in an unbroken round of forgiveness! But the truth is, we must fight until we die; and when we die there can be no quiet for mankind but complete resumption into — what? — God, let us say — when all these desperate tricks will lie spellbound at last.

Here came my dinner and cut this sermon short — *excusez*.

R. L. S.

To James Payn

The late Mrs. Buckle, a daughter of Mr. James Payn married to the editor of the Times, had laughingly remonstrated, through her father, on recognising some features of her own house in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, in the description of that tenanted by the fair Cuban in the section of Stevenson's *Dynamiter* which tells the story of the Brown Box.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Jan. 2nd, 1886.

DEAR JAMES PAYN, — Your very kind letter came very welcome; and still more welcome the news that you see — — 's tale. I will now tell you (and it was very good and very wise of me not to tell it before) that he is one of the most unlucky men I know, having put all his money into a pharmacy at Hyères, when the cholera (certainly not his fault) swept away his customers in a body. Thus you can imagine the pleasure I have to announce to him a spark of hope, for he sits to-day in his pharmacy, doing nothing and taking nothing, and watching his debts inexorably mount up.

To pass to other matters: your hand, you are perhaps aware, is not one of those that can be read running; and the name of your daughter remains for me undecipherable. I call her, then, your daughter — and a very good name too — and I beg to explain how it came about that I took her house. The hospital was a point in my tale; but there is a house on each side. Now the true house is the one before the hospital: is that No. 11? If not, what do you complain of? If it is, how can I help what is true? Everything in the *Dynamiter* is not true; but the story of the Brown Box is, in almost every particular; I lay my hand on my heart and swear to it. It took place in that house in 1884; and if your daughter was in that house at the time, all I can say is she must have kept very bad society.

But I see you coming. Perhaps your daughter's house has not a balcony at the back? I cannot answer for that; 177 I only know that side of Queen Square from the pavement and the back windows of Brunswick Row. Thence I saw plenty of balconies (terraces rather); and if there is none to the particular house in question, it must have been so arranged to spite me.

I now come to the conclusion of this matter. I address three questions to your daughter: —

1st. Has her house the proper terrace?
2nd. Is it on the proper side of the hospital?
3rd. Was she there in the summer of 1884?

You see, I begin to fear that Mrs. Desborough may have deceived me on some trifling points, for she is not a lady of peddling exactitude. If this should prove to be so, I will give your daughter a proper certificate, and her house property will return to its original value.

Can man say more? — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

I saw the other day that the Eternal had plagiarised from *Lost Sir Massingberd*: good again, sir! I wish he would plagiarise the death of Zero.

To W. H. Low

The late Sir Percy and Lady Shelley had in these days attached themselves warmly to R. L. S., and saw in his ways and character a living image of those of the poet, Sir Percy's father, as they imagined him.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Jan. Somethingorother-th, 1886.

MY DEAR LOW, — I send you two photographs: they are both done by Sir Percy Shelley, the poet's son, which may interest. The sitting down one is, I think, the best; but if they choose that, see that the little reflected light on the nose does not give me a turn-up; that would be tragic. Don't forget "Baronet" to Sir Percy's name.

We all think a heap of your book; and I am well pleased with my dedication. — Yours ever,

R. L. stevenson.

P.S. — Apropos of the odd controversy about Shelley's nose: I have before me four photographs of myself, done by Shelley's son: my nose is hooked, not like the eagle, indeed, but like the accipitrine family in man: well, out of these four, only one marks the bend, one makes it straight, and one suggests a turn-up. This throws a flood of light on calumnious man — and the scandal-mongering sun. For personally I cling to my curve. To continue the Shelley controversy: I have a look of him, all his sisters had noses like mine: Sir Percy has a marked hook; all the family had high cheek-bones like mine; what doubt, then, but that this turn-up (of which Jeaffreson accuses the poet, along with much other *fatras*) is the result of some accident similar to what has happened in my photographs by his son?

R. L. S.

To Charles J. Guthrie

"The lad" is Lloyd Osbourne, at this time a student at Edinburgh University.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Jan. 18th, 1886.

MY DEAR GUTHRIE, — I hear the lad has got into the Spec. and I write to thank you very warmly for the part you have played. I only wish we were both going there together to-morrow night, and you would be in the secretary's place (that so well became you, sir) and I were to open a debate or harry you on "Private Business," and Omond perhaps to read us a few glowing pages on — the siege of Saragossa, was it? or the Battle of Saratoga? my memory fails me, but I have not forgotten a certain white charger that careered over the fields of incoherent fight with a prodigious consequence of laughter: have you? I wonder, has Omond?

Well, well, *perierunt,* but, I hope, *non imputantur*. We have had good fun.

Again thanking you sincerely, I remain, my dear Guthrie, your old comrade,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Thomas Stevenson

Kidnapped had at this time just been taken up again, and Stevenson explains the course of the story to his father, who had taken the deepest interest in it since they visited together the scene of the Appin murder.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, January* 25, 1886.]

MY DEAR FATHER, — Many thanks for a letter quite like yourself. I quite agree with you, and had already planned a scene of religion in *Balfour*; the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge furnishes me with a catechist whom I shall try to make the man. I have another catechist, the blind, pistol-carrying highway robber, whom I have transferred from the Long Island to Mull. I find it a most picturesque period, and wonder Scott let it escape. The *Covenant* is lost on one of the Tarrans, and David is cast on Earraid, where (being from inland) he is nearly starved before he finds out the island is tidal; then he crosses Mull to Toronsay, meeting the blind catechist by the way; then crosses Morven from Kinlochaline to Kingairloch, where he stays the night with the good catechist; that is where I am; next day he is to be put ashore in Appin, and be present at Colin Campbell's death. To-day I rest, being a little run down. Strange how liable we are to brain fag in this scooty family! But as far as I have got, all but the last chapter, I think David is on his feet, and (to my mind) a far better story and far sounder at heart than *Treasure Island.*

I have no earthly news, living entirely in my story, and only coming out of it to play patience. The Shelleys are gone; the Taylors kinder than can be imagined. The 180 other day, Lady Taylor drove over and called on me; she is a delightful old lady, and great fun. I mentioned a story about the Duchess of Wellington — which I had heard Sir Henry tell; and though he was very tired, he looked it up and copied it out for me in his own hand. — Your most affectionate son,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To C. W. Stoddard

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Feb. 13th, 1886.

MY DEAR STODDARD, — I am a dreadful character; but, you see, I have at last taken pen in hand; how long I may hold it, God knows. This is already my sixth letter to-day, and I have many more waiting; and my wrist gives me a jog on the subject of scrivener's cramp, which is not encouraging.

I gather you were a little down in the jaw when you wrote your last. I am as usual pretty cheerful, but not very strong. I stay in the house all winter, which is base; but, as you continue to see, the pen goes from time to time, though neither fast enough nor constantly enough to please me.

My wife is at Bath with my father and mother, and the interval of widowery explains my writing. Another person writing for you when you have done work is a great enemy to correspondence. To-day I feel out of health, and shan't work; and hence this so much over-due reply.

I was re-reading some of your *South Sea Idyls* the other day: some of the chapters are very good indeed; some pages as good as they can be.

How does your class get along? If you like to touch on *Otto*, any day in a by-hour, you may tell them — as the author's last dying confession — that it is a strange example of the difficulty of being ideal in an age of realism; that the unpleasant giddy-mindedness, which spoils the book and often gives it a wanton air of unreality and juggling with air-bells, 181 comes from unsteadiness of key; from the too great realism of some chapters and passages — some of which I have now spotted, others I dare say I shall never spot — which disprepares the imagination for the cast of the remainder.

Any story can be made *true* in its own key; any story can be made *false* by the choice of a wrong key of detail or style: *Otto* is made to reel like a drunken — I was going to say man, but let us substitute cipher — by the variations of the key. Have you observed that the famous problem of realism and idealism is one purely of detail? Have you seen my *Note on Realism* in Cassell's Magazine of Art; and *Elements of Style* in the Contemporary; and *Romance* and *Humble Apology* in Longman's? They are all in your line of business; let me know what you have not seen and I'll send 'em.

I am glad I brought the old house up to you. It was a pleasant old spot, and I remember you there, though still more dearly in your own strange den upon a hill in San Francisco; and one of the most San Francisco-y parts of San Francisco.

Good-bye, my dear fellow, and believe me your friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

Concerning the payment which Mr. Gosse had procured him from an American magazine for the set of verses addressed to Mr. Low (see above,).

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Feb.* 17, 1886.]

DEAR GOSSE, — Non, c'est honteux! for a set of shambling lines that don't know whether they're trochees or what they are, that you or any of the crafty ones would blush all over if you had so much as thought upon, all by yourselves, in the water-closet. But God knows, I am glad enough of five pounds; and this is almost as honest a way to get it as plain theft, so what should I care? — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To J. A. Symonds

Skerryvore, Bournemouth [*Spring* 1886].

MY DEAR SYMONDS, — If we have lost touch, it is (I think) only in a material sense; a question of letters, not hearts. You will find a warm welcome at Skerryvore from both the lightkeepers; and, indeed, we never tell ourselves one of our financial fairy tales, but a run to Davos is a prime feature. I am not changeable in friendship; and I think I can promise you you have a pair of trusty well-wishers and friends in Bournemouth: whether they write or not is but a small thing; the flag may not be waved, but it is there.

Jekyll is a dreadful thing, I own; but the only thing I feel dreadful about is that damned old business of the war in the members. This time it came out; I hope it will stay in, in future.

Raskolnikoff is easily the greatest book I have read in ten years; I am glad you took to it. Many find it dull: Henry James could not finish it: all I can say is, it nearly finished me. It was like having an illness. James did not care for it because the character of Raskolnikoff was not objective; and at that I divined a great gulf between us, and, on further reflection, the existence of a certain impotence in many minds of to-day, which prevents them from living in a book or a character, and keeps them standing afar off, spectators of a puppet show. To such I suppose the book may seem empty in the centre; to the others it is a room, a house of life, into which they themselves enter, and are tortured and purified. The Juge d'Instruction I thought a wonderful, weird, touching, ingenious creation: the drunken father, and Sonia, and the student friend, and the uncircumscribed, protoplasmic humanity of Raskolnikoff, all upon a level that filled me with wonder: 183 the execution also, superb in places. Another has been translated — *Humiliés et Offensés*. It is even more incoherent than *Le Crime et le Châtiment*, but breathes much of the same lovely goodness, and has passages of power. Dostoieffsky is a devil of a swell, to be sure. Have you heard that he became a stout, imperialist conservative? It is interesting to know. To something of that side, the balance leans with me also in view of the incoherency and incapacity of all. The old boyish idea of the march on Paradise being now out of season, and all plans and ideas that I hear debated being built on a superb indifference to the first principles of human character, a helpless desire to acquiesce in anything of which I know the worst assails me. Fundamental errors in human nature of two sorts stand on the skyline of all this modern world of aspirations. First, that it is happiness that men want; and second, that happiness consists of anything but an internal harmony. Men do not want, and I do not think they would accept, happiness; what they live for is rivalry, effort, success — the elements our friends wish to eliminate. And, on the other hand, happiness is a question of morality — or of immorality, there is no difference — and conviction. Gordon was happy in Khartoum, in his worst hours of danger and fatigue; Marat was happy, I suppose, in his ugliest frenzy; Marcus Aurelius was happy in the detested camp; Pepys was pretty happy, and I am pretty happy on the whole, because we both somewhat crowingly accepted a *via media*, both liked to attend to our affairs, and both had some success in managing the same. It is quite an open question whether Pepys and I ought to be happy; on the other hand, there is no doubt that Marat had better be unhappy. He was right (if he said it) that he was *la misère humaine*, cureless misery — unless perhaps by the gallows. Death is a great and gentle solvent; it has never had justice done it, no, not by Whitman. As for those crockery chimney-piece ornaments, the bourgeois (*quorum pars*), and their cowardly dislike 184 of dying and killing, it is merely one symptom of a thousand how utterly they have got out of touch of life. Their dislike of capital punishment and their treatment of their domestic servants are for me the two flaunting emblems of their hollowness.

God knows where I am driving to. But here comes my lunch.

Which interruption, happily for you, seems to have stayed the issue. I have now nothing to say, that had formerly such a pressure of twaddle. Pray don't fail to come this summer. It will be a great disappointment, now it has been spoken of, if you do, — Yours ever,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To F. W. H. Myers

In reply to a paper of criticisms on *Jekyll and Hyde*.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, March 1st, 1886.

MY DEAR SIR, — I know not how to thank you: this is as handsome as it is clever. With almost every word I agree — much of it I even knew before — much of it, I must confess, would never have been, if I had been able to do what I like, and lay the thing by for the matter of a year. But the wheels of Byles the Butcher drive exceeding swiftly, and *Jekyll* was conceived, written, re-written, re-rewritten, and printed inside ten weeks. Nothing but this white-hot haste would explain the gross error of Hyde's speech at Lanyon's. Your point about the specialised fiend is more subtle, but not less just: I had not seen it. — About the picture, I rather meant that Hyde had brought it himself; and Utterson's hypothesis of the gift () an error. — The tidiness of the room, I thought, but I dare say my psychology is here too ingenious to be sound, was due to the dread weariness and horror of the imprisonment. Something has to be done: he would tidy the room. But I dare say it is false.

I shall keep your paper; and if ever my works come to be collected, I will put my back into these suggestions. In the meanwhile, I do truly lack words in which to express my sense of gratitude for the trouble you have taken. The receipt of such a paper is more than a reward for my labours. I have read it with pleasure, and as I say, I hope to use it with profit. — Believe me, your most obliged,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. H. Low

The following letter relates to a suggestion which Mr. Gilder, as editor of the Century Magazine, had already made in the Hyères time nearly three years previously, and had now lately revived, that Stevenson and his friend Mr. W. H. Low should make a joint excursion down the Saône and Rhone, the result to be a book written by R. L. S. and illustrated by Mr. Low. Considerations of health caused the plan to be promptly abandoned for the second time.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, March* 1886.]

MY DEAR LOW, — This is the most enchanting picture. Now understand my state: I am really an invalid, but of a mysterious order. I might be a *malade imaginaire*, but for one too tangible symptom, my tendency to bleed from the lungs. If we could go (*1st*) We must have money enough to travel with *leisure and comfort* — especially the first. (*2nd*) You must be prepared for a comrade who would go to bed some part of every day and often stay silent. (*3rd*) You would have to play the part of a thoughtful courier, sparing me fatigue, looking out that my bed was warmed, etc. (*4th*) If you are very nervous, you must recollect a bad hemorrhage is always on the cards, with its concomitants of anxiety and horror for those who are beside me.

Do you blench? If so, let us say no more about it.

If you are still unafraid, and the money were forthcoming, I believe the trip might do me good, and I feel sure that, working together, we might produce a fine book. 186 The Rhone is the river of Angels. I adore it: have adored it since I was twelve, and first saw it from the train.

Lastly, it would depend on how I keep from now on. I have stood the winter hitherto with some credit, but the dreadful weather still continues, and I cannot holloa till I am through the wood.

Subject to these numerous and gloomy provisos, I embrace the prospect with glorious feelings.

I write this from bed, snow pouring without, and no circumstance of pleasure except your letter. That, however, counts for much. I am glad you liked the doggerel: I have already had a liberal cheque, over which I licked my fingers with a sound conscience. I had not meant to make money by these stumbling feet, but if it comes, it is only too welcome in my handsome but impecunious house.

Let me know soon what is to be expected — as far as it does not hang by that inconstant quantity, my want of health. Remember me to Madam with the best thanks and wishes; and believe me your friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Written just before a visit to London; not, this time, as my guest at the British Museum, but to stay with his father at an hotel in Fitzroy Square.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, March* 1886.]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I have been reading the Vth and VIth Aeneid — the latter for the first time — and am overpowered. That is one of the most astonishing pieces of literature, or rather it contains the best, I ever met with. We are all damned small fry, and Virgil is one of the tops of human achievement; I never appreciated this; you should have a certain age to feel this; it is no book for boys, who grind under the lack of enterprise and dash, and pass ignorantly over miracles of performance that leave an old hoary-headed practitioner like me stricken 187 down with admiration. Even as a boy, the Sibyl would have bust me; but I never read the VIth till I began it two days ago; it is all fresh and wonderful; do you envy me? If only I knew any Latin! if you had a decent edition with notes — many notes — I should like well to have it; mine is a damned Didot with not the ghost of a note, type that puts my eyes out, and (I suspect) no very splendid text — but there, the carnal feelings of the man who can't construe are probably parents to the suspicion.

My dear fellow, I would tenfold rather come to the Monument; but my father is an old man, and if I go to town, it shall be (this time) for his pleasure. He has many marks of age, some of childhood; I wish this knighthood business could come off, though even the talk of it has been already something, but the change (to my eyes) is thoroughly begun; and a very beautiful, simple, honourable, high-spirited and child-like (and childish) man is now in process of deserting us piecemeal. *Si quis piorum* — God knows, not that he was pious, but he did his hand's darg or tried to do it; and if not, — well, it is a melancholy business. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

The first letter showing Stevenson's new interest in the technicalities of music.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, March* 1886.]

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN, — I try to tell myself it is good nature, but I know it is vanity that makes me write.

I have drafted the first part of Chapter VI., Fleeming and his friends, his influence on me, his views on religion and literature, his part at the Savile; it should boil down to about ten pages, and I really do think it admirably good. It has so much evoked Fleeming for myself that I found my conscience stirred just as it used to be after a serious talk with him: surely that means it is good? I had to write and tell you, being alone.

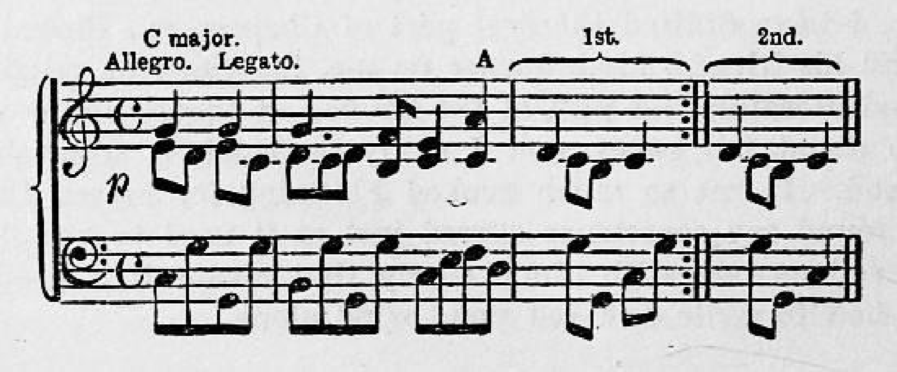
I have excellent news of Fanny, who is much better for the change. My father is still very yellow, and very old, and very weak, but yesterday he seemed happier, and smiled, and followed what was said; even laughed, I think. When he came away, he said to me, “Take care of yourself, my dearie,” which had a strange sound of childish days, and will not leave my mind.

You must get Litolf’s *Gavottes Célèbres*: I have made another trover there: a musette of Lully’s. The second part of it I have not yet got the hang of; but the first — only a few bars! The gavotte is beautiful and pretty hard, I think, and very much of the period; and at the end of it, this musette enters with the most really thrilling effect of simple beauty. O — it’s first-rate. I am quite mad over it. If you find other books containing Lully, Rameau, Martini, please let me know; also you might tell me, you who know Bach, where the easiest is to be found. I write all morning, come down, and never leave the piano till about five; write letters, dine, get down again about eight, and never leave the piano till I go to bed. This is a fine life. — Yours most sincerely,

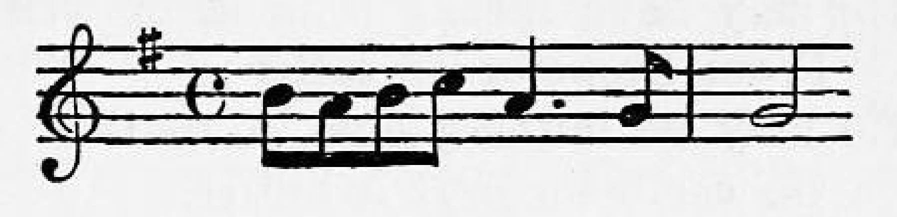
R. L. S.

If you get the musette (Lully’s), please tell me if I am right, and it was probably written for strings. Anyway, it is as neat as — as neat as Bach — on the piano; or seems so to my ignorance.

I play much of the Rigadoon; but it’s strange, it don’t come off *quite* so well with me!



There is the first part of the musette copied (from memory, so I hope there’s nothing wrong). Is it not angelic? But it ought, of course, to have the gavotte before. The gavotte is in G, and ends on the keynote thus (if I remember): —



staccato, I think. Then you sail into the musette.

N.B. — Where I have put an "A" is that a dominant eleventh, or what? or just a seventh on the D? and if the latter, is that allowed? It sounds very funny. Never mind all my questions; if I begin about music (which is my leading ignorance and curiosity), I have always to babble questions: all my friends know me now, and take no notice whatever. The whole piece is marked allegro; but surely could easily be played too fast? The dignity must not be lost; the periwig feeling.

To Sidney Colvin

Written after his return from an excursion to Matlock with his father, following on their visit to London. "The verses" means *Underwoods*. The suppressed poem is that headed "To — — ," afterwards printed in *Songs of Travel*.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April* 1886.]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — This is to announce to you, what I believe should have been done sooner, that we are at Skerryvore. We were both tired, and I was fighting my second cold, so we came straight through by the west.

We have a butler! He doesn't buttle, but the point of the thing is the style. When Fanny gardens, he stands over her and looks genteel. He opens the door, and I am told waits at table. Well, what's the odds; I shall have it on my tomb — "He ran a butler."

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He may have been this and that,
A drunkard or a guttler;
He may have been bald and fat —
At least he kept a butler.
He may have sprung from ill or well,
From Emperor or sutler;
He may be burning now in Hell —
On earth he kept a butler.

I want to tell you also that I have suppressed your poem. I shall send it you for yourself, and I hope you will agree with me that it was not good enough in point of view of merit, and a little too intimate as between you and me. I would not say less of you, my friend, but I scarce care to say so much in public while we live. A man may stand on his own head; it is not fair to set his friend on a pedestal.

The verses are now at press; I have written a damn fine ballad. — And I am, dear S. C., ever yours,

Tomnoddy.

To Thomas Stevenson

Want of health preventing the author at this time from carrying the adventures of David Balfour, as narrated in *Kidnapped*, through to their issue as originally designed, it was resolved to wind them up for the present with the discomfiture of the wicked uncle, leaving open the possibility of a sequel, which was supplied six years later in *Catriona*.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April* 1886.]

MY DEAR FATHER, — The David problem has to-day been decided. I am to leave the door open for a sequel if the public take to it, and this will save me from butchering a lot of good material to no purpose. Your letter from Carlisle was pretty like yourself, sir, as I was pleased to see; the hand of Jekyll, not the hand of Hyde. I am for action quite unfit, and even a letter is beyond me; 191 so pray take these scraps at a vast deal more than their intrinsic worth. I am in great spirits about David, Colvin agreeing with Henley, Fanny, and myself in thinking it far the most human of my labours hitherto. As to whether the long-eared British public may take to it, all think it more than doubtful; I wish they would, for I could do a second volume with ease and pleasure, and Colvin thinks it sin and folly to throw away David and Alan Breck upon so small a field as this one. — Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Miss Monroe

The next is in answer to criticisms on *Prince Otto* received from a lady correspondent in Chicago.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, May 25th, 1886.

DEAR MISS MONROE, — (I hope I have this rightly) I must lose no time in thanking you for a letter singularly pleasant to receive. It may interest you to know that I read to the signature without suspecting my correspondent was a woman; though in one point (a reference to the Countess) I might have found a hint of the truth. You are not pleased with Otto; since I judge you do not like weakness; and no more do I. And yet I have more than tolerance for Otto, whose faults are the faults of weakness, but never of ignoble weakness, and who seeks before all to be both kind and just. Seeks, not succeeds. But what is man? So much of cynicism to recognise that nobody does right is the best equipment for those who do not wish to be cynics in good earnest. Think better of Otto, if my plea can influence you; and this I mean for your own sake — not his, poor fellow, as he will never learn your opinion; but for yours, because, as men go in this world (and women too), you will not go far wrong if you light upon so fine a fellow; and to light upon one and not perceive his merits is a calamity. In the flesh, of course, I mean; in the book the fault, of course, is with my 192 stumbling pen. Seraphina made a mistake about her Otto; it begins to swim before me dimly that you may have some traits of Seraphina?

With true ingratitude you see me pitch upon your exception; but it is easier to defend oneself gracefully than to acknowledge praise. I am truly glad that you should like my books; for I think I see from what you write that you are a reader worth convincing. Your name, if I have properly deciphered it, suggests that you may be also something of my countrywoman; for it is hard to see where Monroe came from, if not from Scotland. I seem to have here a double claim on your good nature: being myself pure Scotch and having appreciated your letter, make up two undeniable merits which, perhaps, if it should be quite without trouble, you might reward with your photograph. — Yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Evidently written about the 10th of June, very soon after the decision of Mr. Gladstone to dissolve Parliament on the defeat of the Home Rule Bill (June 8). As to the *Travelling Companion*, see above, .

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June* 1886.]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am in bed again — bloodie jackery and be damned to it. Lloyd is better, I think; and money matters better; only my rascal carcase, and the muddy and oily lees of what was once my immortal soul are in a poor and pitiful condition.

Litany

Damn the political situation
“ you
“ me
and
“ Gladstone.

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I am a kind of dam home ruler, worse luck to it. I would support almost anything but that bill. How am I to vote? Great Cæsar’s Ghost! — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

O! the *Travelling Companion* won’t do; I am back on it entirely: it is a foul, gross, bitter, ugly daub, with lots of stuff in it, and no urbanity and no glee and no true tragedy — to the crows with it, a carrion tale! I will do no more carrion, I have done too much in this carrion epoch; I will now be clean; and by clean, I don’t mean any folly about purity, but such things as a healthy man with his bowels open shall find fit to see and speak about without a pang of nausea. — I am, yours,

A Repentant Dankist.

The lakeists, the drainists, the brookists, and the riverites; let me be a brookist, *faute de mieux*.

I did enjoy myself in town, and was a thousandfold the better of it.

To Miss Monroe

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June* 1886.]

MY DEAR MISS MONROE, — I am ill in bed and stupid, incoherently stupid; yet I have to answer your letter, and if the answer is incomprehensible you must forgive me. You say my letter caused you pleasure; I am sure, as it fell out, not near so much as yours has brought to me. The interest taken in an author is fragile: his next book, or your next year of culture, might see the interest frosted or outgrown; and himself, in spite of all, you might probably find the most distasteful person upon earth. My case is different. I have bad health, am often condemned to silence for days together — was so once for six weeks, so that my voice was awful to hear when I first used it, like the whisper of a shadow — have outlived all 194 my chief pleasures, which were active and adventurous, and ran in the open air: and being a person who prefers life to art, and who knows it is a far finer thing to be in love, or to risk a danger, than to paint the finest picture or write the noblest book, I begin to regard what remains to me of my life as very shadowy. From a variety of reasons, I am ashamed to confess I was much in this humour when your letter came. I had a good many troubles; was regretting a high average of sins; had been recently reminded that I had outlived some friends, and wondering if I had not outlived some friendships; and had just, while boasting of better health, been struck down again by my haunting enemy, an enemy who was exciting at first, but has now, by the iteration of his strokes, become merely annoying and inexpressibly irksome. Can you fancy that to a person drawing towards the elderly this sort of conjunction of circumstances brings a rather aching sense of the past and the future? Well, it was just then that your letter and your photograph were brought to me in bed; and there came to me at once the most agreeable sense of triumph. My books were still young; my words had their good health and could go about the world and make themselves welcome; and even (in a shadowy and distant sense) make something in the nature of friends for the sheer hulk that stays at home and bites his pen over the manuscripts. It amused me very much to remember that I had been in Chicago, not so many years ago, in my proper person; where I had failed to awaken much remark, except from the ticket collector; and to think how much more gallant and persuasive were the fellows that I now send instead of me, and how these are welcome in that quarter to the sitter of Herr Platz, while their author was not very welcome even in the villainous restaurant where he tried to eat a meal and rather failed.

And this leads me directly to a confession. The photograph which shall accompany this is not chosen 195 as the most like, but the best-looking. Put yourself in my place, and you will call this pardonable. Even as it is, even putting forth a flattered presentment, I am a little pained; and very glad it is a photograph and not myself that has to go;

for in this case, if it please you, you can tell yourself it is my image — and if it displease you, you can lay the blame on the photographer; but in that, there were no help, and the poor author might belie his labours.

Kidnapped should soon appear; I am afraid you may not like it, as it is very unlike *Prince Otto* in every way; but I am myself a great admirer of the two chief characters, Alan and David. *Virginibus Puerisque* has never been issued in the States. I do not think it is a book that has much charm for publishers in any land; but I am to bring out a new edition in England shortly, a copy of which I must try to remember to send you. I say try to remember, because I have some superficial acquaintance with myself: and I have determined, after a galling discipline, to promise nothing more until the day of my death: at least, in this way, I shall no more break my word, and I must now try being churlish instead of being false.

I do not believe you to be the least like Seraphina. Your photograph has no trace of her, which somewhat relieves me, as I am a good deal afraid of Seraphinas — they do not always go into the woods and see the sunrise, and some are so well-mailed that even that experience would leave them unaffected and unsoftened. The "hair and eyes of several complexions" was a trait taken from myself; and I do not bind myself to the opinions of Sir John. In this case, perhaps — but no, if the peculiarity is shared by two such pleasant persons as you and I (as you and me — the grammatical nut is hard), it must be a very good thing indeed, and Sir John must be an ass.

The Book Reader notice was a strange jumble of fact and fancy. I wish you could have seen my father's old 196 assistant and present partner when he heard my father described as an "inspector of lighthouses," for we are all very proud of the family achievements, and the name of my house here in Bournemouth is stolen from one of the sea-towers of the Hebrides which are our pyramids and monuments. I was never at Cambridge, again; but neglected a considerable succession of classes at Edinburgh. But to correct that friendly blunderer were to write an autobiography. — And so now, with many thanks, believe me yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Alison Cunningham

Accompanying a presentation copy of *Kidnapped*. Alison Cunningham's maiden name had been Hastie.

[*Bournemouth, July* 1886.]

MY DEAR CUMMY, — Herewith goes my new book, in which you will find some places that you know: I hope you will like it: I do. The name of the girl at Limekilns (as will appear if the sequel is ever written) was Hastie, and I conceive she was an ancestor of yours: as

David was no doubt some kind of relative of mine.

I have no time for more, but send my love, and remembrances to your brother. — Ever your affectionate

R. L. S.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

During these months, as already indicated, Stevenson was very much taken up, in by-hours, with trying to learn something of the theory and practice of music, and spent much of his time "pickling," as he called it, in an elementary manner on the piano. He even tried his hand in an experimental way at composition, and had sent one of his attempts for criticism to his cousin, Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson, who was better versed in the art.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July 1886.

SIR, — Your foolish letter was unduly received. There may be hidden fifths, and if there are, it shows how dam 197 spontaneous the thing was. I could tinker and tic-tac-toe on a piece of paper, but scorned the act with a Threnody, which was poured forth like blood and water on the groaning organ. If your heart (which was what I addressed) remained unmoved, let us refer to the affair no more: crystallised emotion, the statement and the reconciliation of the sorrows of the race and the individual, is obviously no more to you than supping sawdust. Well, well. If ever I write another Threnody! My next op. will probably be a Passepied and fugue in G (or D).

The mind is in my case shrunk to the size and sp. gr. of an aged Spanish filbert. O, I am so jolly silly. I now pickle with some freedom (1) the refrain of *Martini's Moutons*; (2) *Sul margine d'un rio*, arranged for the infant school by the Aged Statesman; (3) the first phrase of Bach's musette (Sweet Englishwoman, No. 3), the rest of the musette being one prolonged cropper, which I take daily for the benefit of my health. All my other works (of which there are many) are either arranged (by R. L. Stevenson) for the manly and melodious forefinger, or else prolonged and melancholy croppers.... I find one can get a notion of music very nicely. I have been pickling deeply in the Magic Flute; and have arranged *La dove prende*, almost to the end, for two melodious forefingers. I am next going to score the really nobler *Colomba o tortorella* for the same instruments.

This day is published

The works of Ludwig van Beethoven
arranged
and wiederdurchgearbeiteted
for two melodious forefingers
by,

Sir, — Your obedient servant,

Pimperly Stipple.

That's a good idea? There's a person called Lenz who actually does it — beware his den; I lost eighteenpennies on him, and found the bleeding corpses of pieces of music divorced from their keys, despoiled of their graces, and even changed in time; I do not wish to regard music (nor to be regarded) through that bony Lenz. You say you are "a spoon-fed idiot"; but how about Lenz? And how about me, sir, me?

I yesterday sent Lloyd by parcel post, at great expense, an empty matchbox and empty cigarette-paper book, a bell from a cat's collar, an iron kitchen spoon, and a piece of coal more than half the superficies of this sheet of paper. They are now (appropriately enough) speeding towards the Silly Isles; I hope he will find them useful. By that, and my telegram with prepaid answer to yourself, you may judge of my spiritual state. The finances have much brightened; and if *Kidnapped* keeps on as it has begun, I may be solvent. — Yours,

Threnodiæ Avctor

(The author of ane Threnodie).

O: Scherzo (in G Major) expressive of the Sense of favours to come.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

Skerryvore [*Bournemouth, July* 1886].

DEAR BOB, — Herewith another shy; more melancholy than before, but I think not so abjectly idiotic. The musical terms seem to be as good as in Beethoven, and that, after all, is the great affair. Bar the dam bareness of the bass, it looks like a piece of real music from a distance. I am proud to say it was not made one hand at a time; the bass was of synchronous birth with the treble; they are of the same age, sir, and may God have mercy on their souls! — Yours,

The Maestro.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Mr. and Mrs. T. Stevenson had been thinking of trying a winter at Bournemouth for the sake of being near their son, a plan which was eventually carried out. The health of the former was now fast and painfully breaking. Mr. J. W. Alexander, the well-known American artist, had been down at Skerryvore with an introduction from Mr. Gosse, and had made a drawing of Stevenson's head.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July 7th, 1886.

MY DEAR PEOPLE, — It is probably my fault, and not yours, that I did not understand. I think it would be well worth trying the winter in Bournemouth; but I would only take the house by the month — this after mature discussion. My leakage still pursues its course; if I were only well, I have a notion to go north and get in (if I could) at the inn at Kirkmichael, which has always smiled upon me much. If I did well there, we might then meet and do what should most smile at the time.

Meanwhile, of course, I must not move, and am in a rancid box here, feeling the heat a great deal, and pretty tired of things. Alexander did a good thing of me at last; it looks like a mixture of an aztec idol, a lion, an Indian Rajah, and a woman; and certainly represents a mighty comic figure. F. and Lloyd both think it is the best thing that has been done of me up to now.

You should hear Lloyd on the penny whistle, and me on the piano! Dear powers, what a concerto! I now live entirely for the piano, he for the whistle; the neighbours, in a radius of a furlong and a half, are packing up in quest of brighter climes. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

P.S. — Please say if you can afford to let us have money for this trip, and if so, how much. I can see the year through without help, I believe, and supposing my health 200 to keep up; but can scarce make this change on my own metal.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July* 1886.]

DEAR CHARLES, — Doubtless, if all goes well, towards the 1st of August we shall be begging at your door. Thanks for a sight of the papers, which I return (you see) at once, fearing further responsibility.

Glad you like Dauvit; but eh, man, yon's terrible strange conduc' o' thon man Rankeillor. Ca' him a legal adviser! It would make a bonny law-shuit, the Shaws case; and yon paper they signed, I'm thinking, wouldnae be muckle thought o' by Puggy Deas. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

Hecky was a dog belonging to his correspondent's brother. Stevenson was always interested by his own retentiveness of memory for childish things, and here asks Cummy some questions to test the quality of hers.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July* 1886.]

MY DEAR CUMMY, — I was sorry to get so poor account of you and Hecky. Fanny thinks perhaps it might be Hecky's teeth. Sir Walter Simpson has a very clever vet. I have forgotten his name; but if you like, I send a card and you or James might ask the address.

Now to what is more important. Do you remember any of the following names: Lady Boothroyd, Barny Gee, Andrew Silex, the Steward, Carus Rearn, Peter Mangles, Richard Markham, Fiddler Dick? Please let me know and I will tell you how I come to ask. I warn you, you will have to cast back your eyes a good long way, close upon thirty years, before you strike the trail on which I wish to lead you.

When I have had an answer I will write you a decent letter. To-day, though nothing much is wrong with me, I am out of sorts and most disinclined for writing. — Yours most affectionately,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Thomas Stevenson

“Coolin,” mentioned below, had been a favourite Skye terrier of Heriot Row days.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *July* 28, 1886.

MY DEAR FATHER, — We have decided not to come to Scotland, but just to do as Dobell wished, and take an outing. I believe this is wiser in all ways; but I own it is a disappointment. I am weary of England; like Alan, “I weary for the heather,” if not for the deer. Lloyd has gone to Scilly with Katharine and C., where and with whom he should have a good time. *David* seems really to be going to succeed, which is a pleasant prospect on all sides. I am, I believe, floated financially; a book that sells will be a pleasant novelty. I enclose another review; mighty complimentary, and calculated to sell the book too.

Coolin’s tombstone has been got out, honest man! and it is to be polished, for it has got scratched, and have a touch of gilding in the letters, and be sunk in the front of the house. Worthy man, he, too, will maybe weary for the heather, and the bents of Gullane, where (as I dare say you remember) he gaed clean gyte, and jumped on to his crown from a gig, in hot and hopeless chase of many thousand rabbits. I can still hear the little cries of the honest fellow as he disappeared; and my mother will correct me, but I believe it was two days before he turned up again at North Berwick: to judge by his belly, he had caught not one out of these thousands, but he had had some exercise.

I keep well. — Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

Anticipating the gift of a cupboard and answering the questions set in his last. The date of the readings had been his seventh year. Mr. Galpin was a partner in Cassell, Petter, Galpin, & Co.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July or August* 1886.]

MY DEAR CUMMY, — The cupboard has not yet turned up, and I was hanging on to be able to say it had. However, that is only a trick to escape another letter, and I should despise myself if I kept it up. It was truly kind of you, dear Cummy, to send it to us: and I will let you know where we set it and how it looks.

Carus Rearn and Andrew Silex and the others were from a story you read me in Cassell’s Family Paper, and which I have been reading again and found by no means a bad story. Mr. Galpin lent me all the old volumes, and I mean to re-read Custaloga also, but have not yet. It was strangely like old times to read the other; don’t you remember the poisoning with mushrooms? That was Andrew Silex. — Yours most affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Having given up going to Scotland for a summer change, Stevenson had started on the "outing" which he mentions in the last letter. It took the shape of a ten days' visit to my house at the British Museum, followed by another made in the company of Mr. Henley to Paris, chiefly for the sake of seeing the W. H. Lows and the sculptor Rodin.

British Museum [*August 10th,* 1886].

MY DEAR MOTHER, — We are having a capital holiday, and I am much better, and enjoying myself to the nines. Richmond is painting my portrait. To-day I lunch with him, and meet Burne-Jones; to-night Browning dines with us. That sounds rather lofty work, does it not? His path was paved with celebrities. To-morrow we leave for Paris, and next week, I suppose, or the week after, 203 come home. Address here, as we may not reach Paris. I am really very well. — Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To T. Watts-Dunton

Written after his return from London and Paris.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth [*September* 1886].

DEAR MR. WATTS, — The sight of the last Athenæum reminds me of you, and of my debt, now too long due. I wish to thank you for your notice of *Kidnapped*; and that not because it was kind, though for that also I valued it, but in the same sense as I have thanked you before now for a hundred articles on a hundred different writers. A critic like you is one who fights the good fight, contending with stupidity, and I would fain hope not all in vain; in my own case, for instance, surely not in vain.

What you say of the two parts in *Kidnapped* was felt by no one more painfully than by myself. I began it partly as a lark, partly as a pot-boiler; and suddenly it moved, David and Alan stepped out from the canvas, and I found I was in another world. But there was the cursed beginning, and a cursed end must be appended; and our old friend Byles the butcher was plainly audible tapping at the back door. So it had to go into the world, one part (as it does seem to me) alive, one part merely galvanised: no work, only an essay. For a man of tentative method, and weak health, and a scarcity of private means, and not too much of that frugality which is the artist's proper virtue, the days of sinecures and patrons look very golden: the days of professional literature very hard. Yet I do not so far deceive myself as to think I should change my character by changing my epoch; the sum of virtue in our books is in a relation of equality to the sum of virtues in ourselves; and my *Kidnapped* was doomed, while still in the womb and while I was yet in the cradle, to be the thing it is.

And now to the more genial business of defence. You attack my fight on board the *Covenant*: I think it literal. David and Alan had every advantage on their side — position, arms, training, a good conscience; a handful of merchant sailors, not well led in the first attack, not led at all in the second, could only by an accident have taken the round-house by attack; and since the defenders had firearms and food, it is even doubtful if they could have been starved out. The only doubtful point with me is whether the seamen would have ever ventured on the second onslaught; I half believe they would not; still the illusion of numbers and the authority of Hoseason would perhaps stretch far enough to justify the extremity. — I am, dear Mr. Watts, your very sincere admirer,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Alison Cunningham

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, September 1886.

MY DEAR CUMMY, — I am home from a long holiday, vastly better in health. My wife not home yet, as she is being cured in some rather boisterous fashion by some Swedish doctors. I hope it may do her good, as the process seems not to be agreeable in itself.

Your cupboard has come, and it is most beautiful: it is certainly worth a lot of money, and is just what we have been looking for in all the shops for quite a while: so your present falls very pat. It is to go in our bedroom I think; but perhaps my wife will think it too much of a good thing to be put so much out of the way, so I shall not put it in its place till her return. I am so well that I am afraid to speak of it, being a coward as to boasting. I take walks in the wood daily, and have got back to my work after a long break. The story I wrote you about was one you read to me in Cassell's Family Paper long ago when it came out. It was astonishing how clearly I 205 remembered it all, pictures, characters, and incidents, though the last were a little mixed and I had not the least the hang of the story. It was very pleasant to read it again, and remember old days, and the weekly excursion to Mrs. Hoggs after that precious journal. Dear me, lang syne now! God bless you, dear Cummy. — Your afft. boy,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Frederick Locker-Lampson

Mr. Locker-Lampson, better known as Frederick Locker, the friend of Tennyson and most accomplished writer of *vers de société* in his time, had through their common friend Mr. Andrew Lang asked Stevenson for a set of verses, and he had sent the following — which were first printed, I believe, at the head of a very scarce volume: — ”*Rowfant Rhymes*, by Frederick Locker, with an introduction by Austin Dobson. Cleveland, The Rowfant Club, 1895. 127 copies only printed.”

Skerryvore, September 4, 1886.

Not roses to the rose, I trow,
The thistle sends, nor to the bee
Do wasps bring honey. Wherefore now
Should Locker ask a verse from me?
Martial, perchance, — but he is dead,
And Herrick now must rhyme no more;
Still burning with the muse, they tread
(And arm in arm) the shadowy shore.
They, if they lived, with dainty hand,
To music as of mountain brooks,
Might bring you worthy words to stand
Unshamed, dear Locker, in your books.
But tho' these fathers of your race
Be gone before, yourself a sire,
To-day you see before your face
Your stalwart youngsters touch the lyre.
On these — on Lang or Dobson — call,
Long leaders of the songful feast.
They lend a verse your laughing fall —
A verse they owe you at the least.

To Frederick Locker-Lampson

To Mr. Locker's acknowledgment of these verses Stevenson replied as follows, asking his correspondent's interest on behalf of a friend who had been kind to him at Hyères, in procuring a nomination for her son to the Blue-Coat School.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, September 1886.

DEAR LOCKER, — You take my verses too kindly, but you will admit, for such a bluebottle of a versifier to enter the house of Gertrude, where her necklace hangs, was not a little brave. Your kind invitation, I fear, must remain unaccepted; and yet — if I am very well — perhaps next spring — (for I mean to be very well) — my wife might.... But all that is in the clouds with my better health. And now look here: you are a rich man and know many people, therefore perhaps some of the Governors of Christ's Hospital. If you do, I know a most deserving case, in which I would (if I could) do anything. To approach you, in this way, is not decent; and you may therefore judge by my doing it, how near this matter lies to my heart. I enclose you a list of the Governors, which I beg you to return, whether or not you shall be able to do anything to help me.

The boy's name is — — ; he and his mother are very poor. It may interest you in her cause if I tell you this: that when I was dangerously ill at Hyères, this brave lady, who had then a sick husband of her own (since dead) and a house to keep and a family of four to cook for, all with her own hands, for they could afford no servant, yet took watch-about with my wife, and contributed not only to my comfort, but to my recovery in a degree that 207 I am not able to limit. You can conceive how much I suffer from my impotence to help her, and indeed I have already shown myself a thankless friend. Let not my cry go up before you in vain! — Yours in hope,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Frederick Locker-Lampson

Mr. Locker, apparently misunderstanding the application, had replied with a cheque.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, September 1886.

MY DEAR LOCKER, — That I should call myself a man of letters, and land myself in such unfathomable ambiguities! No, my dear Locker, I did not want a cheque; and in my ignorance of business, which is greater even than my ignorance of literature, I have taken the liberty of drawing a pen through the document and returning it; should this be against the laws of God or man, forgive me. All that I meant by my excessively disgusting reference to your material well-being was the vague notion that a man who is well off was sure to know a Governor of Christ's Hospital; though how I quite arrived at this conclusion I do not see. A man with a cold in the head does not necessarily know a ratcatcher; and the connection is equally close — as it now appears to my awakened and somewhat humbled spirit. For all that, let me thank you in the warmest manner for your friendly readiness to contribute. You say you have hopes of becoming a miser: I wish I had; but indeed I believe you deceive yourself, and are as far from it as ever. I wish I had any excuse to keep your cheque, for it is much more elegant to receive than to return; but I have my way of making it up to you, and I do sincerely beg you to write to the two Governors. This extraordinary out-pouring of correspondence would (if you knew my habits) convince you of my great eagerness in this matter. I 208 would promise gratitude; but I have made a promise to myself to make no more promises to anybody else, having broken such a host already, and come near breaking my heart in consequence; and as for gratitude, I am by nature a thankless dog, and was spoiled from a child up. But if you can help this lady in the matter of the Hospital, you will have helped the worthy. Let me continue to hope that I shall make out my visit in the spring, and believe me, yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

It may amuse you to know that a very long while ago, I broke my heart to try to imitate your verses, and failed hopelessly. I saw some of the evidences the other day among my papers, and blushed to the heels.

R. L. S.

I give up finding out your name in the meantime, and keep to that by which you will be known — Frederick Locker.

To Frederick Locker-Lampson

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *24th September* 1886.

MY DEAR LOCKER, — You are simply an angel of light, and your two letters have gone to the post; I trust they will reach the hearts of the recipients — at least, that could not be more handsomely expressed. About the cheque: well now, I am going to keep it; but I assure you Mrs. — — has never asked me for money, and I would not dare to offer any till she did. For all that I shall stick to the cheque now, and act to that amount as your almoner. In this way I reward myself for the ambiguity of my epistolary style.

I suppose, if you please, you may say your verses are thin (would you so describe an arrow, by the way, and one that struck the gold? It scarce strikes me as exhaustively 209 descriptive), and, thin or not, they are (and I have found them) inimitably elegant. I thank you again very sincerely for the generous trouble you have taken in this matter which was so near my heart, and you may be very certain it will be the fault of my health and not my inclination, if I do not see you before very long; for all that has past has made me in more than the official sense sincerely yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Auguste Rodin

Written after another visit to me in London, in November, which had been cut short by fogs. “Le Printemps” is Rodin’s group so called.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, December* 1886.]

MON CHER AMI, — Il y a bien longtemps déjà que je vous dois des lettres par dizaines; mais bien que je vais mieux, je ne vais toujours que doucement. Il a fallu faire le voyage à Bournemouth comme une fuite en Egypte, par crainte des brouillards qui me tuaient; et j’en ressentais beaucoup de fatigue. Mais maintenant celà commence à aller, et je puis vous donner de mes nouvelles.

Le Printemps est arrivé, mais il avait le bras cassé, et nous l’avons laissé, lors de notre fuite, aux soins d’un médecin-de-statues. Je l’attends de jour en jour; et ma maisonette en resplendira bientôt. Je regrette beaucoup le dédicace; peutêtre, quand vous viendrez nous voir, ne serait-il pas trop tard de l’ajouter? Je n’en sais rien, je l’espère. L’œuvre, c’est pour tout le monde; le dédicace est pour moi. L’œuvre est un cadeau, trop beau même; c’est le mot d’amitié qui me le donne pour de bon. Je suis si bête que je m’embrouille, et me perds; mais vous me comprendrez, je pense.

Je ne puis même pas m’exprimer en Anglais; comment voudriez vous que je le pourrais en Français? Plus heureux que vous, le Némésis des arts ne me visite pas 210 sous le masque du désenchantement; elle me suce l’intelligence et me laisse bayer aux corneilles, sans capacité mais sans regret; sans espérance, c'est vrai, mais aussi, Dieu merci, sans désespoir. Un doux étonnement me tient; je ne m'habitue pas à me trouver si bûche, mais je m'y résigne; même si celà durait, ce ne serait pas désagréable — mais comme je mourrais certainement de faim, ce serait tout au moins regrettable pour moi et ma famille.

Je voudrais pouvoir vous écrire; mais ce n'est pas moi qui tiens la plume — c'est l'autre, le bête, celui qui ne connaît pas le Français, celui qui n'aime pas mes amis comme je les aime, qui ne goûte pas aux choses de l'art comme j'y goûte; celui que je renie, mais auquel je commande toujours assez pour le faire prendre la plume en main et écrire des tristes bavardages. Celui-là, mon cher Rodin, vous ne l'aimez pas; vous ne devez jamais le connaître. Votre ami, qui dort à present, comme un ours, au plus profond de mon être, se réveillera sous peu. Alors, il vous écrira de sa propre main. Attendez lui. L'autre ne compte pas; ce n'est qu'un secrétaire infidèle et triste, à l'âme gelée, à la tête de bois.

Celui qui dort est toujours, mon cher ami, bien à vous; celui qui écrit est chargé de vous en faire part et de signer de la raison sociale,

Robert Louis Stevenson et Triple-Brute.

To Sidney Colvin

The following refers first, if I remember right, to some steps that were being taken to obtain recognition in the form of a knighthood for the elder Stevenson's public services; next, to the writer's own work at the time in hand; and lastly, to my volume on Keats then in preparation for the *English Men of Letters* series.

Skerryvore, Dec. 14, 1886.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — This is first-rate of you, the Lord love you for it! I am truly much obliged. He — my father — is very changeable; at times, he seems only a slow 211 quiet edition of himself; again, he will be very heavy and blank; but never so violent as last spring; and therefore, to my mind, better on the whole.

Fanny is pretty peepy; I am splendid. I have been writing much verse — quite the bard, in fact; and also a dam tale to order, which will be what it will be: I don't love it, but some of it is passable in its mouldy way, *The Misadventures of John Nicholson*. All my bardly exercises are in Scotch; I have struck my somewhat ponderous guitar in that tongue to no small extent: with what success, I know not, but I think it's better than my English verse; more marrow and fatness, and more ruggedness.

How goes *Keats*? Pray remark, if he (Keats) hung back from Shelley, it was not to be wondered at, *when so many of his friends were Shelley's pensioners*. I forget if you have made this point; it has been borne in upon me reading Dowden and the *Shelley Papers*; and it will do no harm if you have made it. I finished a poem to-day, and writ 3000 words of a story, *tant bien que mal*; and have a right to be sleepy, and (what is far nobler and rarer) am so. — My dear Colvin, ever yours,

The Real Mackay.

To Lady Taylor

Stevenson's volume of tales *The Merry Men*, so called from the story which heads the collection, was about to appear with a dedication to Lady Taylor. Professor Dowden's *Shelley* had lately come out, and had naturally been read with eager interest in a circle where Sir Percy (the poet's son) and Lady Shelley were intimate friends and neighbours.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth [*New Year,* 1887].

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR, — This is to wish you all the salutations of the year, with some regret that I cannot offer them in person; yet less than I had supposed. For hitherto your flight to London seems to have worked well; and time flies and will soon bring you back again. Though 212 time is ironical, too; and it would be like his irony if the same tide that brought you back carried me away. That would not be, at least, without some meeting.

I feel very sorry to think the book to which I have put your name will be no better, and I can make it no better. The tales are of all dates and places; they are like the box, the goose, and the cottage of the ferryman; and must go floating down time together as best they can. But I am after all a (superior) penny-a-liner; I must do, in the Scotch phrase, as it will do with me; and I cannot always choose what my books are to be, only seize the chance they offer to link my name to a friend's. I hope the lot of them (the tales) will look fairly disciplined when they are clapped in binding; but I fear they will be but an awkward squad. I have a mild wish that you at least would read them no further than the dedication.

I suppose we have all been reading Dowden. It seems to me a really first-rate book, full of justice, and humour without which there can be no justice; and of fine intelligence besides. Here and there, perhaps a trifle precious, but this is to spy flaws in a fine work. I was weary at my resemblances to Shelley; I seem but a Shelley with less oil, and no genius; though I have had the fortune to live longer and (partly) to grow up. He was growing up. There is a manlier note in the last days; in spite of such really sickening aberrations as the Emillia Viviani business. I try to take a humorously-genial view of life; but Emillia Viviani, if I have her detested name aright, is too much for my philosophy. I cannot smile when I see all these grown folk waltzing and piping the eye about an insubordinate and perfectly abominable schoolgirl, as silly and patently as false as Blanche Amory. I really think it is one of those episodes that make the angels weep.

With all kind regards and affectionate good wishes to and for you and yours, believe me, your affectionate friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Lady Taylor

The reference in the last paragraph to a "vision" cannot be explained, his correspondent's daughters retaining no memory on the subject.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, January* 1887.]

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR, — I don't know but what I agree fairly well with all you say, only I like *The Merry Men,* as a fantasia or vision of the sea, better than you do. The trouble with *Olalla* is that it somehow sounds false; and I think it must be this that gives you the feeling of irreverence. Of *Thrawn Janet,* which I like very much myself, you say nothing, thus uttering volumes; but it is plain that people cannot always agree. I do not think it is a wholesome part of me that broods on the evil in the world and man; but I do not think that I get harm from it; possibly my readers may, which is more serious; but at any account, I do not purpose to write more in this vein. But the odd problem is: what makes a story true? *Markheim* is true; *Olalla* false; and I don't know why, nor did I feel it while I worked at them; indeed I had more inspiration with *Olalla,* as the style shows. I am glad you thought that young Spanish woman well dressed; I admire the style of it myself, more than is perhaps good for me; it is so solidly written. And that again brings back (almost with the voice of despair) my unanswerable: why is it false?

Here is a great deal about my works. I am in bed again; and my wife but so-so; and we have no news recently from Lloyd; and the cat is well; and we see, or I see, no one; so that other matters are all closed against me.

Your vision is strange indeed; but I see not how to use it; I fear I am earthy enough myself to regard it as a case of disease, but certainly it is a thrilling case to hear of. — Ever affectionately yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Henry James

This letter is written on the front page of a set of proofs of *Memories and Portraits*. The "silly Xmas story" is *The Misadventures of John Nicholson*; the "volume of verse" appeared later in the year as *Underwoods*. The signature refers to the two Scots poets of whom, "in his native speech," he considered himself the follower.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, January 1887.

All the salutations!

MY DEAR JAMES, — I send you the first sheets of the new volume, all that has yet reached me, the rest shall follow in course. I am really a very fair sort of a fellow all things considered, have done some work; a silly Xmas story (with some larks in it) which won't be out till I don't know when. I am also considering a volume of verse, much of which will be cast in my native speech, that very dark oracular medium: I suppose this is a folly, but what then? As the nurse says in Marryat, "It was only a little one."

My wife is peepy and dowie: two Scotch expressions with which I will leave you to wrestle unaided, as a preparation for my poetical works. She is a woman (as you know) not without art: the art of extracting the gloom of the eclipse from sunshine; and she has recently laboured in this field not without success or (as we used to say) not without a blessing. It is strange: "we fell out my wife and I" the other night; she tackled me savagely for being a canary-bird; I replied (bleatingly) protesting that there was no use in turning life into King Lear; presently it was discovered that there were two dead combatants upon the field, each slain by an arrow of the truth, and we tenderly carried off each other's corpses. Here is a little comedy for Henry James to write! The beauty was each thought the other quite unscathed at first. But we had dealt shrewd stabs.

You say nothing of yourself, which I shall take to be 215 good news. Archer's note has gone. He is, in truth, a very clever fellow that Archer, and I believe a good one. It is a pleasant thing to see a man who can use a pen; he can: really says what he means, and says it with a manner; comes into print like one at his ease, not shame-faced and wrong-foot-foremost like the bulk of us. Well, here is luck, and here are the kindest recollections from the canary-bird and from King Lear, from the Tragic Woman and the Flimsy Man.

Robert Ramsay Fergusson Stevenson.

To Frederick Locker-Lampson

Stevenson suffered more even than usual after the turn of the year and during the spring of 1887, and for several months his correspondence almost entirely fails. This is in reply to an invitation to Rowfant for Easter.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, February 5th, 1887.

MY DEAR LOCKER, — Here I am in my bed as usual, and it is indeed a long while since I went out to dinner. You do not know what a crazy fellow this is. My winter has not so far been luckily passed, and all hope of paying visits at Easter has vanished for twelve calendar months. But because I am a beastly and indurated invalid, I am not dead to human feelings; and I neither have forgotten you nor will forget you. Some day the wind may round to the right quarter and we may meet; till then I am still truly yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Henry James

The volume of tales here mentioned is *The Merry Men*; that of essays, *Memories and Portraits*; that of verse, *Underwoods*.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, February* 1887.]

MY DEAR JAMES, — My health has played me it in once more in the absurdest fashion, and the creature who now 216 addresses you is but a stringy and white-faced *bouilli* out of the pot of fever, with the devil to pay in every corner of his economy. I suppose (to judge by your letter) I need not send you these sheets, which came during my collapse by the rush. I am on the start with three volumes, that one of tales, a second one of essays, and one of — ahem — verse. This is a great order, is it not? After that I shall have empty lockers. All new work stands still; I was getting on well with Jenkin when this blessed malady unhorsed me, and sent me back to the dung-collecting trade of the republisher. I shall re-issue *Virg. Puer.* as vol. I. of *Essays*, and the new vol. as vol. II. of ditto; to be sold, however, separately. This is but a dry maundering; however, I am quite unfit — "I am for action quite unfit Either of exercise or wit." My father is in a variable state; many sorrows and perplexities environ the house of Stevenson; my mother shoots north at this hour on business of a distinctly rancid character; my father (under my wife's tutorage) proceeds to-morrow to Salisbury; I remain here in my bed and whistle; in no quarter of heaven is anything encouraging apparent, except that the good Colvin comes to the hotel here on a visit. This dreary view of life is somewhat blackened by the fact that my head aches, which I always regard as a liberty on the part of the powers that be. This is also my first letter since my recovery. God speed your laudatory pen!

My wife joins in all warm messages. — Yours,

R. L. S.

To Auguste Rodin

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, February 1887.

MON CHER AMI, — Je vous néglige, et cependant ce n'est véritablement pas de ma faute. J'ai fait encore une maladie; et je puis dire que je l'ai royalement bien faite. Que celà vous aide à me pardonner. Certes je ne vous oublie pas; et je puis dire que je ne vous oublierai jamais. 217 Si je n'écris pas, dites que je suis malade — c'est trop souvent vrai, dites que je suis las d'écrivailler — ce sera toujours vrai; mais ne dites pas, et ne pensez pas, que je deviens indifférent. J'ai devant moi votre portrait tiré d'un journal anglais (et encadré à mes frais), et je le regarde avec amitié, je le regarde même avec une certaine complaisance — dirai-je, de faux aloi? comme un certificat de jeunesse. Je me croyais trop vieux — au moins trop quarante-ans — pour faire de nouveaux amis; et quand je regarde votre portrait, et quand je pense au plaisir de vous revoir, je sens que je m'étais trompé. Écrivez-moi donc un petit mot, pour me dire que vous ne gardez pas rancune de mon silence, et que vous comptez bientôt venir en Angleterre. Si vous tardez beaucoup, ce sera moi qui irai vous relancer. — Bien à vous, mon cher ami,

R. L. Stevenson.

To W. H. Low

Mr. Low and his wife, who were at this time leaving Paris for good, had been meditating a visit to the Stevensons at Bournemouth on their way home to the United States.

[*April* 1887.]

MY DEAR LOW, — The fares to London may be found in any continental Bradshaw or sich; from London to Bournemouth impoverished parties who can stoop to the third class get their ticket for the matter of 10s., or, as my wife loves to phrase it, “a half a pound.” You will also be involved in a 3s. fare to get to Skerryvore; but this, I dare say, friends could help you in on your arrival; so that you may reserve your energies for the two tickets — costing the matter of a pound — and the usual gratuities to porters. This does not seem to me much: considering the intellectual pleasures that await you here, I call it dirt cheap. I *believe* the third class from Paris to London (*via* Dover) is *about* forty francs, but I cannot swear. Suppose it to be fifty.

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	frcs.
50 × 2 = 100	100
The expense of spirit or spontaneous lapse of coin on the journey, at 5 frcs. a head, 5 × 2 = 10	10
Victuals on ditto, at 5 frcs. a head, 5 × 2 = 10	10
Gratuity to stewardess, in case of severe prostration, at 3 francs	3
One night in London, on a modest footing, say 20	20
Two tickets to Bournemouth at 12.50, 12.50 × 2 = 25	25
Porters and general devilment, say 5	5
Cabs in London, say 2 shillings, and in Bournemouth, 3 shillings = 5 shillings, 6 frcs. 25	6.25
	— — —
frcs.	179.25

Or, the same in pounds, £7, 3s. 6½d.

Or, the same in dollars, $35.45,

if there be any arithmetical virtue in me. I have left out dinner in London in case you want to blow out, which would come extry, and with the aid of *vangs fangs* might easily double the whole amount — above all if you have a few friends to meet you.

In making this valuable project, or budget, I discovered for the first time a reason (frequently overlooked) for the singular costliness of travelling with your wife. Anybody would count the tickets double; but how few would have remembered — or indeed has any one ever remembered? — to count the spontaneous lapse of coin double also?

Yet there are two of you, each must do his daily leakage, and it must be done out of your travelling fund. You will tell me, perhaps, that you carry the coin yourself: my dear sir, do you think you can fool your Maker? Your wife has to lose her quota; and by God she will — if you kept the coin in a belt. One thing I have omitted: 219 you will lose a certain amount on the exchange, but this even I cannot foresee, as it is one of the few things that vary with the way a man has. — I am, dear sir, yours financially,

Samuel Budgett.

To Sidney Colvin

I had lately sent him two books, the fifth volume of Huxley's *Collected Essays* and Cotter Morison's *Service of Man*: the latter a work of Positivist tendency, which its genial and accomplished author had long meditated, but which unfortunately he only began to write after a rapid decline of health and power had set in.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Spring* 1887.]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I read Huxley, and a lot of it with great interest. Eh, what a gulf between a man with a mind like Huxley and a man like Cotter Morison. Truly 'tis the book of a boy; before I was twenty I was done with all these considerations. Nor is there one happy phrase, except "the devastating flood of children." Why should he din our ears with languid repetitions of the very first ideas and facts that a bright lad gets hold of; and how can a man be so destitute of historical perspective, so full of cheap outworn generalisations — feudal ages, time of suffering — *pas tant qu'aujourdhui*, M. Cotter! Christianity — which? what? how? You must not attack all forms, from Calvin to St. Thomas, from St. Thomas to (One who should surely be considered) Jesus Christ, with the same missiles: they do not all tell against all. But there it is, as we said; a man joins a sect, and becomes one-eyed. He affects a horror of vices which are just the thing to stop his "devastating flood of babies," and just the thing above all to keep the vicious from procreating. Where, then, is the ground of this horror in any intelligent Servant of Humanity? O, beware of creeds and anti-creeds, sects and anti-sects. There is but one truth, outside science, the truth that comes of an earnest, smiling survey of mankind "from China to Peru," or further, and 220 from to-day to the days of Probably Arboreal; and the truth (however true it is) that robs you of sympathy with any form of thought or trait of man, is false for you, and heretical, and heretico-plastic. Hear Morison struggling with his chains; hear me, hear all of us, when we suffer our creeds or anti-creeds to degenerate towards the whine, and begin to hate our neighbours, or our ancestors, like ourselves. And yet in Morison, too, as in St. Thomas, as in Rutherford, ay, or in Peden, truth struggles, or it would not so deform them. The man has not a devil; it is an angel that tears and blinds him. But Morison's is an old, almost a venerable seraph, with whom I dealt before I was twenty, and had done before I was twenty-five.

Behold how the voices of dead preachers speak hollowly (and lengthily) within me! — Yours ever — and rather better — not much,

R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

Skerryvore, April 16th, 1887.

MY DEAREST CUMMY, — As usual, I have been a dreary bad fellow and not written for ages; but you must just try to forgive me, to believe (what is the truth) that the number of my letters is no measure of the number of times I think of you, and to remember how much writing I have to do. The weather is bright, but still cold; and my father, I'm afraid, feels it sharply. He has had — still has, rather — a most obstinate jaundice, which has reduced him cruelly in strength, and really upset him altogether. I hope, or think, he is perhaps a little better; but he suffers much, cannot sleep at night, and gives John and my mother a severe life of it to wait upon him. My wife is, I think, a little better, but no great shakes. I keep mightily respectable myself.

Coolin's Tombstone is now built into the front wall of Skerryvore, and poor Bogie's (with a Latin inscription 221 also) is set just above it. Poor, unhappy wee man, he died, as you must have heard, in fight, which was what he would have chosen; for military glory was more in his line than the domestic virtues. I believe this is about all my news, except that, as I write, there is a blackbird singing in our garden trees, as it were at Swanston. I would like fine to go up the burnside a bit, and sit by the pool and be young again — or no, be what I am still, only there instead of here, for just a little. Did you see that I had written about John Todd? In this month's Longman it was; if you have not seen it, I will try and send it you. Some day climb as high as Halkerside for me (I am never likely to do it for myself), and sprinkle some of the well water on the turf. I am afraid it is a pagan rite, but quite harmless, and *ye can sain it wi' a bit prayer*. Tell the Peewies that I mind their forbears well. My heart is sometimes heavy and sometimes glad to mind it all. But for what we have received, the Lord make us truly thankful. Don't forget to sprinkle the water, and do it in my name; I feel a childish eagerness in this.

Remember me most kindly to James, and with all sorts of love to yourself, believe me, your laddie,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — I suppose Mrs. Todd ought to see the paper about her man; judge of that, and if you think she would not dislike it, buy her one from me, and let me know. The article is called *Pastoral,* in Longman's Magazine for April. I will send you the money; I would to-day, but it's the Sabbie day, and I cannae.

R. L. S.

Remembrances from all here.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

The following sets forth the *pros* and *cons* which were balancing each other in his mind in regard to his scheme of going 222 to make a stand in his own person against agrarian outrage in Ireland.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *April 15 or 16*
(the hour not being known), 1887.

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN, — It is I know not what hour of the night; but I cannot sleep, have lit the gas, and here goes.

First, all your packet arrived: I have dipped into the Schumann already with great pleasure. Surely, in what concerns us there is a sweet little chirrup; the *Good Words* arrived in the morning just when I needed it, and the famous notes that I had lost were recovered also in the nick of time.

And now I am going to bother you with my affairs: premising, first, that this is *private*; second, that whatever I do the *Life* shall be done first, and I am getting on with it well; and third, that I do not quite know why I consult you, but something tells me you will hear with fairness.

Here is my problem. The Curtin women are still miserable prisoners; no one dare buy their farm of them, all the manhood of England and the world stands aghast before a threat of murder. (1) Now, my work can be done anywhere; hence I can take up without loss a back-going Irish farm, and live on, though not (as I had originally written) in it: First Reason. (2) If I should be killed, there are a good many who would feel it: writers are so much in the public eye, that a writer being murdered would attract attention, throw a bull's-eye light upon this cowardly business: Second Reason. (3) I am not unknown in the States, from which the funds come that pay for these brutalities: to some faint extent, my death (if I should be killed) would tell there: Third Reason. (4) *Nobody else is taking up this obvious and crying duty:* Fourth Reason. (5) I have a crazy health and may die at any moment, my life is of no purchase in an insurance office, it is the less account to husband it, 223 and the business of husbanding a life is dreary and demoralising: Fifth Reason.

I state these in no order, but as they occur to me. And I shall do the like with the objections.

First Objection: It will do no good; you have seen Gordon die, and nobody minded; nobody will mind if you die. This is plainly of the devil. Second Objection: You will not even be murdered, the climate will miserably kill you, you will strangle out in a rotten damp heat, in congestion, etc. Well, what then? It changes nothing: the purpose is to brave crime; let me brave it, for such time and to such an extent as God allows. Third Objection: The Curtin women are probably highly uninteresting females. I haven't a doubt of it. But the Government cannot, men will not, protect them. If I am the only one to see this public duty, it is to the public and the Right I should perform it — not to Mesdames Curtin. Fourth Objection: I am married. "I have married a wife!" I seem to have heard it before. It smells ancient! what was the context? Fifth Objection: My wife has had a mean life (1), loves me (2), could not bear to lose me (3). (1) I admit: I am sorry. (2) But what does she love me for? and (3) she must lose me soon or late. And after all, because we run this risk, it does not follow we should fail. Sixth Objection: My wife wouldn't like it. No, she wouldn't. Who would? But the Curtins don't like it. And all those who are to suffer if this goes on, won't like it. And if there is a great wrong, somebody must suffer. Seventh Objection: I won't like it. No, I will not; I have thought it through, and I will not. But what of that? And both she and I may like it more than we suppose. We shall lose friends, all comforts, all society: so has everybody who has ever done anything; but we shall have some excitement, and that's a fine thing; and we shall be trying to do the right, and that's not to be despised. Eighth Objection: I am an author with my work before me. See Second Reason. Ninth Objection: 224 But am I not taken with the hope of excitement? I was at first. I am not much now. I see what a dreary, friendless, miserable, God-forgotten business it will be. And anyway, is not excitement the proper reward of doing anything both right and a little dangerous? Tenth Objection: But am I not taken with a notion of glory? I dare say I am. Yet I see quite clearly how all points to nothing coming, to a quite inglorious death by disease and from the lack of attendance; or even if I should be knocked on the head, as these poor Irish promise, how little any one will care. It will be a smile at a thousand breakfast-tables. I am nearly forty now; I have not many illusions. And if I had? I do not love this health-tending, housekeeping life of mine. I have a taste for danger, which is human, like the fear of it. Here is a fair cause; a just cause; no knight ever set lance in rest for a juster. Yet it needs not the strength I have not, only the passive courage that I hope I could muster, and the watchfulness that I am sure I could learn.

Here is a long midnight dissertation; with myself; with you. Please let me hear. But I charge you this: if you see in this idea of mine the finger of duty, do not dissuade me. I am nearing forty, I begin to love my ease and my home and my habits, I never knew how much till this arose; do not falsely counsel me to put my head under the bed-clothes. And I will say this to you: my wife, who hates the idea, does not refuse. "It is nonsense," says she, "but if you go, I will go." Poor girl, and her home and her garden that she was so proud of! I feel her garden most of all, because it is a pleasure (I suppose) that I do not feel myself to share.

1. Here is a great wrong.
2. Here is a growing wrong.
3. Here is a wrong founded on crime.
4. Here is crime that the Government cannot prevent.
5. Here is crime that it occurs to no man to defy.
6. But it has occurred to me.
7. Being a known person, some will notice my defiance.
8. Being a writer, I can *make* people notice it.
9. And, I think, *make* people imitate me.
10. Which would destroy in time this whole scaffolding of oppression.
11. And if I fail, however ignominiously, that is not my concern. It is, with an odd mixture of reverence and humorous remembrances of Dickens, be it said — it is A-nother's.

And here, at I cannot think what hour of the morning, I shall dry up, and remain — Yours, really in want of a little help,

R. L. S.

Sleepy. and midnight's
“witching”
“maudlin”
etc.

Next morning. — Eleventh Objection: I have a father and mother. And who has not? Macduff's was a rare case; if we must wait for a Macduff. Besides, my father will not perhaps be long here. Twelfth Objection: The cause of England in Ireland is not worth supporting. *À qui le dites-vous?* And I am not supporting that. Home Rule, if you like. Cause of decency, the idea that populations should not be taught to gain public ends by private crime, the idea that for all men to bow before a threat of crime is to loosen and degrade beyond redemption the whole fabric of man's decency.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

The first paragraph of the following refers to the *Life of Fleeming Jenkin*; the second, to a remark of his correspondent that a task 226 such as he had proposed to himself in Ireland should be undertaken by a society rather than an individual.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April* 1887.]

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN, — The Book. It is all drafted: I hope soon to send you for comments Chapters III., IV., and V. Chapter VII. is roughly but satisfactorily drafted: a very little work should put that to rights. But Chapter VI. is no joke; it is a *mare magnum*: I swim and drown and come up again; and it is all broken ends and mystification: moreover, I perceive I am in want of more matter. I must have, first of all, a little letter from Mr. Ewing about the phonograph work: *If* you think he would understand it is quite a matter of chance whether I use a word or a fact out of it. If you think he would not: I will go without. Also, could I have a look at Ewing's *précis*? And lastly, I perceive I must interview you again about a few points; they are very few, and might come to little; and I propose to go on getting things as well together as I can in the meanwhile, and rather have a final time when all is ready and only to be criticised. I do still think it will be good. I wonder if Trélat would let me cut? But no, I think I wouldn't after all; 'tis so quaint and pretty and clever and simple and French, and gives such a good sight of Fleeming: the plum of the book, I think.

You misunderstood me in one point: I always hoped to found such a society; that was the outside of my dream, and would mean entire success. *But* — I cannot play Peter the Hermit. In these days of the Fleet Street journalist, I cannot send out better men than myself, with wives or mothers just as good as mine, and sisters (I may at least say) better, to a danger and a long-drawn dreariness that I do not share. My wife says it's cowardice; what brave men are the leader-writers! Call it cowardice; it is mine. Mind you, I may end by trying to do it by the pen only: I shall not love myself if I do; and is it ever a good thing to do a thing for which you despise 227 yourself? — even in the doing? And if the thing you do is to call upon others to do the thing you neglect? I have never dared to say what I feel about men's lives, because my own was in the wrong: shall I dare to send them to death? The physician must heal himself; he must honestly *try* the path he recommends: if he does not even try, should he not be silent?

I thank you very heartily for your letter, and for the seriousness you brought to it. You know, I think when a serious thing is your own, you keep a saner man by laughing at it and yourself as you go. So I do not write possibly with all the really somewhat sickened gravity I feel. And indeed, what with the book, and this business to which I referred, and Ireland, I am scarcely in an enviable state. Well, I ought to be glad, after ten years of the worst training on earth — valetudinarianism — that I can still be troubled by a duty. You shall hear more in time; so far, I am at least decided: I will go and see Balfour when I get to London.

We have all had a great pleasure: a Mrs. Rawlinson came and brought with her a nineteen-year-old daughter, simple, human, as beautiful as — herself; I never admired a girl before, you know it was my weakness: we are all three dead in love with her. How nice to be able to do so much good to harassed people by — yourself! — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Miss Rawlinson

Here follows a compliment in verse to the young lady last mentioned, whose Christian name was May.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April* 1887.]

Of the many flowers you brought me,
Only some were meant to stay,
And the flower I thought the sweetest
Was the flower that went away.
Of the many flowers you brought me,
All were fair and fresh and gay,
But the flower I thought the sweetest
Was the blossom of the May.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Within a fortnight after the date of the above Stevenson went himself, and for the last time, to Scotland, and was present, too late for recognition, at the death of his father (May 8, 1887). Business detained him for some weeks, and the following was written just before his return to Bournemouth.

[*Edinburgh, June* 1887.]

MY DEAR S. C., — At last I can write a word to you. Your little note in the P.M.G. was charming. I have written four pages in the Contemporary, which Bunting found room for: they are not very good, but I shall do more for his memory in time.

About the death, I have long hesitated, I was long before I could tell my mind; and now I know it, and can but say that I am glad. If we could have had my father, that would have been a different thing. But to keep that changeling — suffering changeling — any longer, could better none and nothing. Now he rests; it is more significant, it is more like himself. He will begin to return to us in the course of time, as he was and as we loved him.

My favourite words in literature, my favourite scene — ”O let him pass,” Kent and Lear — was played for me here in the first moment of my return. I believe Shakespeare saw it with his own father. I had no words; but it was shocking to see. He died on his feet, you know; was on his feet the last day, knowing nobody — still he would be up. This was his constant wish; also that he might smoke a pipe on his last day. The funeral would have pleased him; it was the largest private funeral in man’s memory here.

We have no plans, and it is possible we may go home without going through town. I do not know; I have no views yet whatever; nor can have any at this stage of my cold and my business. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Sir Walter Simpson

Written during a short visit to me between his return from Scotland

and his departure for New York.

British Museum [*July* 1887].

MY DEAR SIMPSON, — This is a long time I have not acknowledged the Art of Golf, though I read it through within thirty-six hours of its arrival. I have been ill and out of heart, and ill again and again ill, till I am weary of it, and glad indeed to try the pitch-farthing hazard of a trip to colourado or New Mexico. There we go, if I prove fit for the start, on August 20th.

Meanwhile, the Art of Golf. A lot of it is very funny, and I liked the fun very well; but what interested me most was the more serious part, because it turns all the while on a branch of psychology that no one has treated and that interests me much: the psychology of athletics. I had every reason to be interested in it, because I am abnormal: I have no memory in athletics. I have forgotten how to ride and how to skate; and I should not be the least surprised if I had forgotten how to swim.

I find I can write no more: it is the first I have tried since I was ill; and I am too weak. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

During the two months following his father's death Stevenson had suffered much both from his old complaints and from depression of mind. His only work had been in preparing for press the 230 verse collection *Underwoods*, the *Life of Fleeming Jenkin*, and the volume of essays called *Memories and Portraits*. The opinions quoted are those of physicians.

[Skerryvore, Bournemouth] August 1887.

DEAR LAD, — I write to inform you that Mr. Stevenson's well-known work, *Virginibus Puerisque*, is about to be reprinted. At the same time a second volume called *Memories and Portraits* will issue from the roaring loom. Its interest will be largely autobiographical, Mr. S. having sketched there the lineaments of many departed friends, and dwelt fondly, and with a m'istened eye, upon by-gone pleasures. The two will be issued under the common title of *Familiar Essays*; but the volumes will be vended separately to those who are mean enough not to hawk at both.

The blood is at last stopped: only yesterday. I began to think I should not get away. However, I hope — I hope — remark the word — no boasting — I hope I may luff up a bit now. Dobell, whom I saw, gave as usual a good account of my lungs, and expressed himself, like his neighbours, hopefully about the trip. He says, my uncle says, Scott says, Brown says — they all say — You ought not to be in such a state of health; you should recover. Well, then, I mean to. My spirits are rising again after three months of black depression: I almost begin to feel as if I should care to live: I would, by God! And so I believe I shall. — Yours,

Bulletin M'Gurder.

How has the *Deacon* gone?

To W. H. Low

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *August 6th,* 1887.

MY DEAR LOW, — We — my mother, my wife, my stepson, my maidservant, and myself, five souls — leave, if all is well, Aug. 20th, per Wilson line s.s. Ludgate Hill. Shall 231 probably evade N. Y. at first, cutting straight to a watering-place: Newport, I believe, its name. Afterwards we shall steal incognito into *la bonne ville,* and see no one but you and the Scribners, if it may be so managed. You must understand I have been very seedy indeed, quite a dead body; and unless the voyage does miracles, I shall have to draw it dam fine. Alas, "The Canoe Speaks" is now out of date; it will figure in my volume of verses now imminent. However, I may find some inspiration some day. — Till very soon, yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

The lady to whom the following (and much correspondence yet to come) is addressed had been an attached friend of the Skerryvore household and a pupil of Stevenson's in the art of writing. She had given R. L. S. a paper-cutter by way of farewell token at his starting.

Bournemouth, August 19th, 1887.

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE, — I promise you the paper-knife shall go to sea with me; and if it were in my disposal, I should promise it should return with me too. All that you say, I thank you for very much; I thank you for all the pleasantness that you have brought about our house; and I hope the day may come when I shall see you again in poor old Skerryvore, now left to the natives of Canada, or to worse barbarians, if such exist. I am afraid my attempt to jest is rather *à contre-cœur*. — Good-bye — *au revoir* — and do not forget your friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Messrs. Chatto and Windus

The titles and proofs mentioned in the text are presumably those of *Underwoods* and *Memories and Portraits*.

Bournemouth [*August* 1887].

DEAR SIRS, — I here enclose the two titles. Had you not better send me the bargains to sign? I shall be here 232 till Saturday; and shall have an address in London (which I shall send you) till Monday, when I shall sail. Even if the proofs do not reach you till Monday morning, you could send a clerk from Fenchurch Street Station at 10.23 A.M. for Galleons Station, and he would find me embarking on board the *Ludgate Hill*, Island Berth, Royal Albert Dock. Pray keep this in case it should be necessary to catch this last chance. I am most anxious to have the proofs with me on the voyage. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Cough.

Loose talk.

Mr. Charles Morley, at this time manager or assistant-manager of the Pall Mall Gazette.

Princess Casamassima.

Lothian vernacular pronunciation of Cunningham.

In *Underwoods* the lines thus bracketed as doubtful stand with the change:

“Life is over; life was gay.”

Prince Otto.

The name of the hero in Dostoieffsky’s *Le Crime et le Châtiment*.

Suite anglaise.

As in fact he had, all except the double l.

In *Pendennis*.

IX

THE UNITED STATES AGAIN

WINTER IN THE ADIRONDACKS

August 1887 — June 1888

The letters printed in the following section are selected from those which tell of Stevenson’s voyage to New York and reception there at the beginning of September 1887; of his winter’s life and work at Saranac Lake, and of his decision taken in May 1888 to venture on a yachting cruise in the South Seas.

The moment of his arrival at New York was that when his reputation had first reached its height in the United States, owing to the popularity both of *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*, but more especially to the immense impression made by the *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. He experienced consequently for the first time the pleasures, such as they were, of celebrity, and also its inconveniences; found the most hospitable of refuges in the house of his kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fairchild, at Newport; and quickly made many other friends, including the late Augustus St. Gaudens, the famous sculptor, with Mr. C. Scribner and Mr. E. L. Burlingame, the owner and the editor of Scribner’s Magazine, from whom he immediately received and accepted very advantageous offers of work. Having been dissuaded from braving for the present the fatigue of the long journey to 234 colourado and the extreme rigour of its winter climate, he determined to try instead a season at Saranac Lake in the Adirondack Mountains, New York State, which had lately been coming into reputation as a place of cure. There, under the care of the well-known resident physician, Dr. Trudeau, he spent nearly seven months, from the end of September 1887 to the end of April 1888, with results on the whole favourable to his own health, though not to that of his wife, which could never support these winter mountain cures. On the 16th of April, he and his party left Saranac. After spending a fortnight in New York, where, as always in cities, his health quickly flagged again, he went for the month of May into seaside quarters at Union House, Manasquan, on the New Jersey coast, for the sake of fresh air and boating. Here he enjoyed the occasional society of some of his New York friends, including Mr. St. Gaudens and Mr. W. H. Low, and was initiated in the congenial craft of cat-boat sailing. In the meantime, Mrs. Stevenson had gone to San Francisco to see her relatives; and holding that the climate of the Pacific was likely to be better for the projected cruise than that of the Atlantic, had inquired there whether a yacht was to be hired for such a purpose. The schooner *Casco*, Captain Otis, was found. Stevenson signified by telegraph his assent to the arrangement; determined to risk in the adventure the sum of £2000, of which his father's death had put him in possession, hoping to recoup himself by a series of Letters recounting his experiences, for which he had received a commission from Mr. S. S. M'Clure; and on the 2nd of June started with his mother and stepson for San Francisco, the first stage on that island cruise from which he was destined never to return.

His work during the season September 1887-May 1888 235 had consisted of the twelve papers published in the course of 1888 in Scribner's Magazine, including perhaps the most striking of all his essays, *A Chapter on Dreams*, *Pulvis et Umbra*, *Beggars*, *The Lantern Bearers*, *Random Memories*, etc.; as well as the greater part of the *Master of Ballantrae* and *The Wrong Box* — the last originally conceived and drafted by Mr. Lloyd Osbourne.

To Sidney Colvin

A succession of Stevenson's friends had visited and spent part of the day or the evening with him at Armfield's hotel on Sunday, August 20th, each bringing some farewell gift or another (as related by Mr. Gosse in his volume *Critical Kitcats*,). Among these, Mr. Henry James's gift had been a case of champagne for consumption during the journey. On the morning of the 21st I accompanied him to the docks, saw him and his party embarked on board the steamer *Ludgate Hill*, a vessel sailing from the port of London and carrying animals and freight as well as passengers. They had chosen to go by this route for the sake alike of economy and amusement, rather than by one of the sumptuous liners sailing from Liverpool or Southampton. Leaving the ship's side as she weighed anchor, and waving farewell to the party from the boat which landed me, I little knew what was the truth, that I was looking on the face of my friend for the last time. The letters next following were written during or Immediately after his passage across the Atlantic. "The Commodore" is of course R. L. S.

H.M.S. Vulgarium, *off Havre de Grace,*
this 22nd day of August .

SIR, — The weather has been hitherto inimitable. Inimitable is the only word that I can apply to our fellow-voyagers, whom a categorist, possibly premature, has been already led to divide into two classes — the better sort consisting of the baser kind of Bagman, and the worser of undisguised Beasts of the Field. The berths are excellent, the pasture swallowable, the champagne of H. James (to recur to my favourite adjective) inimitable. As for the Commodore, he slept awhile in the evening, tossed off a cup of Henry James with his plain meal, walked the deck 236 till eight, among sands and floating lights and buoys and wrecked brigantines, came down (to his regret) a minute too soon to see Margate lit up, turned in about nine, slept, with some interruptions, but on the whole sweetly, until six, and has already walked a mile or so of deck, among a fleet of other steamers waiting for the tide, within view of Havre, and pleasantly entertained by passing fishing-boats, hovering sea-gulls, and Vulgarians pairing on deck with endearments of primitive simplicity. There, sir, can be viewed the sham quarrel, the sham desire for information, and every device of these two poor ancient sexes (who might, you might think, have learned in the course of the ages something new) down to the exchange of head-gear. — I am, sir, yours,

Bold Bob Boltsprit.

B. B. B. (*alias* the Commodore) will now turn to his proofs. Havre de Grace is a city of some show. It is for-ti-fied; and, so far as I can see, is a place of some trade. It is situ-ated in France, a country of Europe. You always complain there are no facts in my letters.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Newport, R.I., U.S.A. [*September* 1887]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — So long it went excellent well, and I had a time I am glad to have had; really enjoying my life. There is nothing like being at sea, after all. And O, why have I allowed myself to rot so long on land? But on the Banks I caught a cold, and I have not yet got over it. My reception here was idiotic to the last degree.... It is very silly, and not pleasant, except where humour enters; and I confess the poor interviewer lads pleased me. They are too good for their trade; avoided anything I asked them to avoid, and were no more vulgar in their reports than they could help. I liked the lads.

O, it was lovely on our stable-ship, chock full of stallions. 237 She rolled heartily, rolled some of the fittings out of our state-room, and I think a more dangerous cruise (except that it was summer) it would be hard to imagine. But we enjoyed it to the masthead, all but Fanny; and even she perhaps a little. When we got in, we had run out of beer, stout, cocoa, soda-water, water, fresh meat, and (almost) of biscuit. But it was a thousandfold pleasanter than a great big Birmingham liner like a new hotel; and we liked the officers, and made friends with the quarter-masters, and I (at least) made a friend of a baboon (for we carried a cargo of apes), whose embraces have pretty near cost me a coat. The passengers improved, and were a very good specimen lot, with no drunkard, no gambling that I saw, and less grumbling and backbiting than one would have asked of poor human nature. Apes, stallions, cows, matches, hay, and poor men-folk, all, or almost all, came successfully to land. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Henry James

[*Newport, U.S.A., September* 1887.]

MY DEAR JAMES, — Here we are at Newport in the house of the good Fairchilds; and a sad burthen we have laid upon their shoulders. I have been in bed practically ever since I came. I caught a cold on the Banks after having had the finest time conceivable, and enjoyed myself more than I could have hoped on board our strange floating menagerie: stallions and monkeys and matches made our cargo; and the vast continent of these incongruities rolled the while like a haystack; and the stallions stood hypnotised by the motion, looking through the ports at our dinner-table, and winked when the crockery was broken; and the little monkeys stared at each other in their cages, and were thrown overboard like little bluish babies; and the big monkey, Jacko, scoured about the ship and rested willingly in my arms, to the ruin of my clothing; and the 238 man of the stallions made a bower of the black tarpaulin, and sat therein at the feet of a raddled divinity, like a picture on a box of chocolates; and the other passengers, when they were not sick, looked on and laughed. Take all this picture, and make it roll till the bell shall sound unexpected notes and the fittings shall break loose in our state-room, and you have the voyage of the *Ludgate Hill*. She arrived in the port of New York, without beer, porter, soda-water, curaçoa, fresh meat, or fresh water; and yet we lived, and we regret her.

My wife is a good deal run down, and I am no great shakes.

America is, as I remarked, a fine place to eat in, and a great place for kindness; but, Lord, what a silly thing is popularity! I envy the cool obscurity of Skerryvore. If it even paid, said Meanness! and was abashed at himself. — Yours most sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*New York, end of September* 1887.]

MY DEAR S. C., — Your delightful letter has just come, and finds me in a New York hotel, waiting the arrival of a sculptor (St. Gaudens) who is making a medallion of yours truly and who is (to boot) one of the handsomest and nicest fellows I have seen. I caught a cold on the Banks; fog is not for me; nearly died of interviewers and visitors, during twenty-four hours in New York; cut for Newport with Lloyd and Valentine, a journey like fairyland for the most engaging beauties, one little rocky and pine-shaded cove after another, each with a house and a boat at anchor, so that I left my heart in each and marvelled why American authors had been so unjust to their country; caught another cold on the train; arrived at Newport to go to bed and to grow worse, and to stay in 239 bed until I left again; the Fairchilds proving during this time kindness itself; Mr. Fairchild simply one of the most engaging men in the world, and one of the children, Blair, *aet.* ten, a great joy and amusement in his solemn adoring attitude to the author of *Treasure Island*.

Here I was interrupted by the arrival of my sculptor. — I withdraw calling him handsome; he is not quite that, his eyes are too near together; he is only remarkable looking, and like an Italian cinquecento medallion; I have begged him to make a medallion of himself and give me a copy. I will not take up the sentence in which I was wandering so long, but begin fresh. I was ten or twelve days at Newport; then came back convalescent to New York. Fanny and Lloyd are off to the Adirondacks to see if that will suit; and the rest of us leave Monday (this is Saturday) to follow them up. I hope we may manage to stay there all winter. I have a splendid appetite and have on the whole recovered well after a mighty sharp attack. I am now on a salary of £500 a year for twelve articles in Scribner's Magazine on what I like; it is more than £500, but I cannot calculate more precisely. You have no idea how much is made of me here; I was offered £2000 for a weekly article — eh heh! how is that? but I refused that lucrative job. The success of *Underwoods* is gratifying. You see, the verses are sane; that is their strong point, and it seems it is strong enough to carry them.

A thousand thanks for your grand letter. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

The verses herein alluded to were addressed to Rossetti's friend, Dr. Gordon Hake, physician and poet (1809-1895), in return for some received from him. They are those beginning "In the beloved hour that ushers day" and printed as No. xix. in *Songs of Travel*.

New York [*September* 1887].

MY DEAR LAD, — Herewith verses for Dr. Hake, which please communicate. I did my best with the interviewers; 240 I don't know if Lloyd sent you the result; my heart was too sick: you can do nothing with them; and yet — — literally sweated with anxiety to please, and took me down in long hand!

I have been quite ill, but go better. I am being not busted, but medallioned, by St. Gaudens, who is a first-rate, plain, high-minded artist and honest fellow; you would like him down to the ground. I believe sculptors are fine fellows when they are not demons. O, I am now a salaried person, £600, a year, to write twelve articles in Scribner's Magazine; it remains to be seen if it really pays, huge as the sum is, but the slavery may overweigh me. I hope you will like my answer to Hake, and specially that he will.

Love to all. — Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.
(*le salarié*).

To R. A. M. Stevenson

Saranac Lake, Adirondacks, New York, U.S.A. [*October* 1887].

MY DEAR BOB, — The cold [of colourado] was too rigorous for me; I could not risk the long railway voyage, and the season was too late to risk the Eastern, Cape Hatteras side of the steamer one; so here we stuck and stick. We have a wooden house on a hill-top, overlooking a river, and a village about a quarter of a mile away, and very wooded hills; the whole scene is very Highland, bar want of heather and the wooden houses.

I have got one good thing of my sea voyage: it is proved the sea agrees heartily with me, and my mother likes it; so if I get any better, or no worse, my mother will likely hire a yacht for a month or so in summer. Good Lord! What fun! Wealth is only useful for two things: a yacht and a string quartette. For these two I will sell 241 my soul. Except for these I hold that £700 a year is as much as any body can possibly want; and I have had more, so I know, for the extry coins were for no use, excepting for illness, which damns everything.

I was so happy on board that ship, I could not have believed it possible. We had the beastliest weather, and many discomforts; but the mere fact of its being a tramp-ship gave us many comforts; we could cut about with the men and officers, stay in the wheel-house, discuss all manner of things, and really be a little at sea. And truly there is nothing else. I had literally forgotten what happiness was, and the full mind — full of external and physical things, not full of cares and labours and rot about a fellow's behaviour. My heart literally sang; I truly care for nothing so much as for that. We took so north a course, that we saw Newfoundland; no one in the ship had ever seen it before.

It was beyond belief to me how she rolled; in seemingly smooth water, the bell striking, the fittings bounding out of our state-room. It is worth having lived these last years, partly because I have written some better books, which is always pleasant, but chiefly to have had the joy of this voyage. I have been made a lot of here, and it is sometimes pleasant, sometimes the reverse; but I could give it all up, and agree that — — was the author of my works, for a good seventy ton schooner and the coins to keep her on. And to think there are parties with yachts who would make the exchange! I know a little about fame now; it is no good compared to a yacht; and anyway there is more fame in a yacht, more genuine fame; to cross the Atlantic and come to anchor in Newport (say) with the Union Jack, and go ashore for your letters and hang about the pier, among the holiday yachtsmen — that's fame, that's glory, and nobody can take it away;

they can't say your book is bad; you *have* crossed the Atlantic. I should do it south by the West Indies, to avoid the damned Banks; and probably come home 242 by steamer, and leave the skipper to bring the yacht home.

Well, if all goes well, we shall maybe sail out of Southampton water some of these days and take a run to Havre, and try the Baltic, or somewhere.

Love to you all — Ever your afft.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sir Walter Simpson

It was supposed that Stevenson's letters to this friend, like those to Professor Fleeming Jenkin, had been destroyed or disappeared altogether. But besides the two printed above (p and 229) here is a third, preserved by a friend to whom Sir Walter made a present of it.

[*Saranac Lake, October* 1887.]

MY DEAR SIMPSON,

the address is

c/o Charles Scribner's Sons,

243 Broadway, N.Y.,

where I wish you would write and tell us you are better. But the place of our abode is Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks; it is a mighty good place too, and I mean it shall do me good. Indeed the dreadful depression and collapse of last summer has quite passed away; it was a thorough change I wanted; I wonder perhaps if it wouldn't pick you up — if you are not picked up already; you have been a long time in Great Britain; and that is a slow poison, very slow for the strong, but certain for all. Old Dr. Chepmell told Lloyd: any one can stay a year in England and be the better for it, but no one can stay there steadily and not be the worse.

I have had a very curious experience here; being very much made of, and called upon, and all that; quite the famous party in fact: it is not so nice as people try to make out, when you are young, and don't want to bother working. Fame is nothing to a yacht; *experto crede*. There are nice bits of course; for you meet very pleasant 243 and interesting people; but the thing at large is a bore and a fraud; and I am much happier up here, where I see no one and live my own life. One thing is they do not stick for money to the Famed One; I was offered £2000 a year for a weekly article; and I accepted (and now enjoy) £720 a year for a monthly one: 720/12 (whatever that may be) for each article, as long or as short as I please, and on any mortal subject. I am sure it will do me harm to do it; but the sum was irresistible. See calculations on verso of last page, and observe, sir, the accuracy of my methods.

Hulloh, I must get up, as I can't lose any time. Good-bye, remember me to her ladyship and salute the Kids. — Ever your friend,

R. L. S.

12 : 10 : : 72 : *x*, and this results in the
same problem. Well — tackle it.

12)720(60
 72

Is it possible?

£60!!??

Let us cheque it by trying it in dollars, $3500 per an.

12)3500(291. 80
24
— —
110
108
— —
20

Well: $291.80

then divide by 5 for a rough test

5)291(58. 4. 4
25 add 80 cents = 40d. = 3. 4d.
—
3. 4
— — — — —
£58. 7. 8

Well, call it
£58.10.
and be done with it!

To Edmund Gosse

The following refers to a review by Mr. Gosse of Stevenson's volume of verse called *Underwoods*. The book had been published a few weeks previously, and is dedicated, as readers will remember, to a number of physicians who had attended him at sundry times and places.

Saranac Lake, Oct. 8th, 1887.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — I have just read your article twice, with cheers of approving laughter. I do not believe you ever wrote anything so funny: Tyndall's "shell," the passage on the Davos press and its invaluable issues, and that on V. Hugo and Swinburne, are exquisite; so, I say it more ruefully, is the touch about the doctors. For the rest, I am very glad you like my verses so well; and the qualities you ascribe to them seem to me well found and well named. I own to that kind of candour you attribute to me: when I am frankly interested, I suppose I fancy the public will be so too; and when I am moved, I am sure of it. It has been my luck hitherto to meet with no staggering disillusion. "Before" and "After" may be two; and yet I believe the habit is now too thoroughly ingrained to be altered. About the doctors, you were right, that dedication has been the subject of some pleasantries that made me grind, and of your happily touched reproof which made me blush. And to miscarry in a dedication is an abominable form of book-wreck; I am a good captain, I would rather lose the tent and save my dedication.

I am at Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks, I suppose for the winter: it seems a first-rate place; we have a house in the eye of many winds, with a view of a piece of running water — Highland, all but the dear hue of peat — and of many hills — Highland also, but for the lack of heather. Soon the snow will close on us; we are here some twenty miles — twenty-seven, they say, but this I profoundly disbelieve — in the woods: communication by 245 letter is slow and (let me be consistent) aleatory; by telegram is as near as may be possible.

I had some experience of American appreciation; I liked a little of it, but there is too much; a little of that would go a long way to spoil a man; and I like myself better in the woods. I am so damned candid and ingenuous (for a cynic), and so much of a "cweatu' of impulse — aw" (if you remember that admirable Leech) that I begin to shirk any more taffy; I think I begin to like it too well. But let us trust the Gods; they have a rod in pickle; reverently I doff my trousers, and with screwed eyes await the *amari aliquid* of the great God Busby.

I thank you for the article in all ways, and remain yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To W. H. Low

[*Saranac Lake, October* 1887.]

SIR, — I have to trouble you with the following *paroles bien senties*. We are here at a first-rate place. "Baker's" is the name of our house, but we don't address there; we prefer the tender care of the Post-Office, as more aristocratic (it is no use to telegraph even to the care of the Post-Office, who does not give a single damn). Baker's has a prophet's chamber, which the hypercritical might describe as a garret with a hole in the floor: in that garret, sir, I have to trouble you and your wife to come and slumber. Not now, however: with manly hospitality, I choke off any sudden impulse. Because first, my wife and my mother are gone (a note for the latter, strongly suspected to be in the hand of your talented wife, now sits silent on the mantel shelf), one to Niagara and t'other to Indianapolis. Because, second, we are not yet installed. 246 And because, third, I won't have you till I have a buffalo robe and leggings, lest you should want to paint me as a plain man, which I am not, but a rank Saranacker and wild man of the woods. — Yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Fairchild

Post Office, Saranac Lake,
Adirondacks, N.Y. [*October* 1887].

MY DEAR FAIRCHILD, — I do not live in the Post Office; that is only my address; I live at "Baker's," a house upon a hill, and very jolly in every way. I believe this is going to do: we have a kind of a garret of a spare room, where hardy visitors can sleep, and our table (if homely) is not bad.

And here, appropriately enough, comes in the begging part. We cannot get any fruit here: can you manage to send me some grapes? I told you I would trouble you, and I will say that I do so with pleasure, which means a great deal from yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — Remember us to all yours: my mother and my wife are away skylarking; my mother to Niagara, my wife to Indianapolis; and I live here to-day alone with Lloyd, Valentine, some cold meat, and four salmon trout, one of which is being grilled at this moment of writing; so that, after the immortal pattern of the Indian boys, my household will soon only reckon three. As usual with me, the news comes in a P.S., and is mostly folly.

R. L. S.

P.P.S. — My cold is so much better that I took another yesterday. But the new one is a puny child; I fear him not; and yet I fear to boast. If the postscript business goes on, this establishment will run out of P's; but I hope 247 it wasn't you that made this paper — just for a last word — I could not compliment you upon that. And Lord! if you could see the ink — not what I am using — but the local vintage! They don't write much here; I bet what you please.

R. L. S.

To William Archer

The Wondrous Tale referred to in the following is Stevenson's *Black Arrow*, which had been through Mr. Archer's hands in proof.

Saranac Lake, October 1887.

DEAR ARCHER, — Many thanks for the Wondrous Tale. It is scarcely a work of genius, as I believe you felt. Thanks also for your pencillings; though I defend "shrew," or at least many of the shrews.

We are here (I suppose) for the winter in the Adirondacks, a hill and forest country on the Canadian border of New York State, very unsettled and primitive and cold, and healthful, or we are the more bitterly deceived. I believe it will do well for me; but must not boast.

My wife is away to Indiana to see her family; my mother, Lloyd, and I remain here in the cold, which has been exceeding sharp, and the hill air, which is inimitably fine. We all eat bravely, and sleep well, and make great fires, and get along like one o'clock.

I am now a salaried party; I am a *bourgeois* now; I am to write a weekly paper for Scribner's, at a scale of payment which makes my teeth ache for shame and diffidence. The editor is, I believe, to apply to you; for we were talking over likely men, and when I instanced you, he said he had had his eye upon you from the first. It is worth while, perhaps, to get in tow with the Scribners; they are such thorough gentlefolk in all ways that it is always a pleasure to deal with them. I am like to be a millionaire if this goes on, and be publicly hanged at the social revolution: well, I would prefer that to dying in 248 my bed; and it would be a godsend to my biographer, if ever I have one. What are you about? I hope you are all well and in good case and spirits, as I am now, after a most nefast experience of despondency before I left; but indeed I was quite run down. Remember me to Mrs. Archer, and give my respects to Tom. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

"Gleeson White" in this letter means the collection of *Ballades, Rondeaus, &c.*, edited by that gentleman and dedicated to R. L. S. (Walter Scott, 1887).

[*Saranac Lake, October* 1887.]

MY DEAR LAD, — I hear some vague reports of a success at Montreal.

My news is not much, my mother is away to Niagara and Fanny to Indiana; the Port Admiral and I and Valentine keep house together in our verandahed cottage near a wood. I am writing, and have got into the vein. When I got to N. Y. a paper offered me £2000 a year to do critical weekly articles for them; the sum was so enormous that I tottered; however, Scribner at once offered me the same scale to give him a monthly paper in his magazine; indeed it is rather higher, £720 for the twelve papers. This I could not decently refuse; and I am now a yoked man, and after a fit of my usual impotence under bondage, seem to have got into the swing. I suppose I shall scarce manage to do much else; but there is the fixed sum, which shines like a sun in the firmament. A prophet has certainly a devil of a lot of honour (and much coins) in another country, whatever he has in his own.

I got Gleeson White; your best work and either the best or second best in the book is the Ballade in Hot Weather; that is really a masterpiece of melody and fancy. Damn your Villanelles — and everybody's. G. Macdonald comes 249 out strong in his two pious rondels; *Fons Bandusiæ* seems as exquisite as ever. To my surprise, I liked two of the Pantoums, the blue-bottle, and the still better after-death one from *Love in Idleness*. Lang cuts a poor figure, except in the Cricket one; your patter ballade is a great *tour de force*, but spoiled by similar cæsuras. On the whole ‘tis a ridiculous volume, and I had more pleasure out of it than I expected. I forgot to praise Grant Allen’s excellent ballade, which is the one that runs with yours, — and here, to the point, a note from you at Margate — among East Winds and Plain Women, damn them! Well, what can we do or say? We are only at Saranac for the winter; and if this *Deacon* comes off, why you may join us there in glory; I would I had some news of it. Saranac is not *quite* so dear, in some ways, as the rest of this land, where it costs you a pound to sneeze, and fifty to blow your nose; but even here it costs $2·50 to get a box from the station! Think of it! Lift it up tenderly! They had need to pay well! but how poor devils live; and how it can pay to take a theatre company over to such a land, is more than I can fancy. The devil of the States for you is the conveyances, they are so dear — but O, what is not!

I have thrown off my cold in excellent style, though still very groggy about the knees, so that when I climb a paling, of which we have many, I feel as precarious and nutatory as a man of ninety. Under this I grind; but I believe the place will suit me. Must stop. — Ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Henry James

The “dear Alexander” mentioned below is Mr. J. W. Alexander, the well-known American artist, who had been a welcome visitor to Stevenson at Bournemouth, and had drawn his portrait there. The humorous romance proceeding from Mr. Osbourne’s typewriter was the first draft of *The Wrong Box*; or, as it was originally called, *The Finsbury Tontine*, or *The Game of Bluff*. The article by Mr. Henry 250 James referred to in the last paragraph is one on R. L. S. which had appeared in the Century Magazine for October, and was reprinted in *Partial Portraits*.

[*Saranac Lake, October* 1887.] I know not the day; but
the month it is the drear October by
the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES, — This is to say *First*, the voyage was a huge success. We all enjoyed it (bar my wife) to the ground: sixteen days at sea with a cargo of hay, matches, stallions, and monkeys, and in a ship with no style on, and plenty of sailors to talk to, and the endless pleasures of the sea — the romance of it, the sport of the scratch dinner and the smashing crockery, the pleasure — an endless pleasure — of balancing to the swell: well, it’s over.

Second, I had a fine time, rather a troubled one, at Newport and New York; saw much of and liked hugely the Fairchilds, St. Gaudens the sculptor, Gilder of the Century — just saw the dear Alexander — saw a lot of my old and admirable friend Will Low, whom I wish you knew and appreciated — was medallioned by St. Gaudens, and at last escaped to

Third, Saranac Lake, where we now are, and which I believe we mean to like and pass the winter at. Our house — emphatically "Baker's" — is on a hill, and has a sight of a stream turning a corner in the valley — bless the face of running water! — and sees some hills too, and the paganly prosaic roofs of Saranac itself; the Lake it does not see, nor do I regret that; I like water (fresh water I mean) either running swiftly among stones, or else largely qualified with whisky. As I write, the sun (which has been long a stranger) shines in at my shoulder; from the next room, the bell of Lloyd's typewriter makes an agreeable music as it patters off (at a rate which astonishes this experienced novelist) the early chapters of a humorous romance; from still further off — the walls of Baker's are 251 neither ancient nor massive — rumours of Valentine about the kitchen stove come to my ears; of my mother and Fanny I hear nothing, for the excellent reason that they have gone sparking off, one to Niagara, one to Indianapolis. People complain that I never give news in my letters. I have wiped out that reproach.

But now, *Fourth*, I have seen the article; and it may be from natural partiality, I think it the best you have written. O — I remember the Gautier, which was an excellent performance; and the Balzac, which was good; and the Daudet, over which I licked my chops; but the R. L. S. is better yet. It is so humorous, and it hits my little frailties with so neat (and so friendly) a touch; and Alan is the occasion for so much happy talk, and the quarrel is so generously praised. I read it twice, though it was only some hours in my possession; and Low, who got it for me from the Century, sat up to finish it ere he returned it; and, sir, we were all delighted. Here is the paper out, nor will anything, not even friendship, not even gratitude for the article, induce me to begin a second sheet; so here, with the kindest remembrances and the warmest good wishes, I remain, yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

[*Saranac Lake*], *18th November* 1887.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — No likely I'm going to waste a sheet of paper.... I am offered £1600 ($8000) for the American serial rights on my next story! As you say, times are changed since the Lothian Road. Well, the Lothian Road was grand fun too; I could take an afternoon of it with great delight. But I'm awfu' grand noo, and long may it last!

Remember me to any of the faithful — if there are any left. I wish I could have a crack with you. — Yours ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

I find I have forgotten more than I remembered of business.... Please let us know (if you know) for how much Skerryvore is let; you will here detect the female mind; I let it for what I could get; nor shall the possession of this knowledge (which I am happy to have forgot) increase the amount by so much as the shadow of a sixpenny piece; but my females are agog. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Charles Scribner

Shortly after the date of the present correspondence Stevenson, to his great advantage, put all his publishing arrangements (as he had already put his private business) into the hands of his friend Mr. Baxter. Meantime he was managing them himself; and an occasional lapse of memory or attention betrayed him once or twice into misunderstandings, and once at least conflicting agreements with two different publishers, both his friends. He was the first to denounce the error when he became aware of it, and suffered sharply from the sense of his own unintentional fault. The next two letters, and some allusions in those which follow, relate to this affair.

[*Saranac Lake, November 20 or 21,* 1887.]

MY DEAR MR. SCRIBNER, — Heaven help me, I am under a curse just now. I have played fast and loose with what I said to you; and that, I beg you to believe, in the purest innocence of mind. I told you you should have the power over all my work in this country; and about a fortnight ago, when M'Clure was here, I calmly signed a bargain for the serial publication of a story. You will scarce believe that I did this in mere oblivion; but I did; and all that I can say is that I will do so no more, and ask you to forgive me. Please write to me soon as to this.

Will you oblige me by paying in for three articles, as already sent, to my account with John Paton & Co., 52 William Street? This will be most convenient for us.

The fourth article is nearly done; and I am the more deceived, or it is *A Buster*.

Now as to the first thing in this letter, I do wish to hear from you soon; and I am prepared to hear any reproach, 253 or (what is harder to hear) any forgiveness; for I have deserved the worst. — Yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To E. L. Burlingame

This is the first of many letters, increasing in friendliness as the correspondence goes on, to the editor of Scribner's Magazine.

[*Saranac Lake, November* 1887.]

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME, — I enclose corrected proof of *Beggars*, which seems good. I mean to make a second sermon, which, if it is about the same length as *Pulvis et Umbra*, might go in along with it as two sermons, in which case I should call the first "The Whole Creation," and the second "Any Good." We shall see; but you might say how you like the notion.

One word: if you have heard from Mr. Scribner of my unhappy oversight in the matter of a story, you will make me ashamed to write to you, and yet I wish to beg you to help me into quieter waters. The oversight committed — and I do think it was not so bad as Mr. Scribner seems to think it — and discovered, I was in a miserable position. I need not tell you that my first impulse was to offer to share or to surrender the price agreed upon when it should fall due; and it is almost to my credit that I arranged to refrain. It is one of these positions from which there is no escape; I cannot undo what I have done. And I wish to beg you — should Mr. Scribner speak to you in the matter — to try to get him to see this neglect of mine for no worse than it is: unpardonable enough, because a breach of an agreement; but still pardonable, because a piece of sheer carelessness and want of memory, done, God knows, without design and since most sincerely regretted. I have no memory. You have seen how I omitted to reserve the American rights in *Jekyll*: last winter I wrote and demanded, as an increase, a less sum than had already 254 been agreed upon for a story that I gave to Cassell's. For once that my forgetfulness has, by a cursed fortune, seemed to gain, instead of lose, me money, it is painful indeed that I should produce so poor an impression on the mind of Mr. Scribner. But I beg you to believe, and if possible to make him believe, that I am in no degree or sense a *faiseur*, and that in matters of business my design, at least, is honest. Nor (bating bad memory and self-deception) am I untruthful in such affairs.

If Mr. Scribner shall have said nothing to you in the matter, please regard the above as unwritten, and believe me, yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To E. L. Burlingame

[*Saranac Lake, November* 1887.]

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME, — The revise seemed all right, so I did not trouble you with it; indeed, my demand for one was theatrical, to impress that obdurate dog, your reader. Herewith a third paper: it has been a cruel long time upon the road, but here it is, and not bad at last, I fondly hope. I was glad you liked the *Lantern Bearers*; I did, too. I thought it was a good paper, really contained some excellent sense, and was ingeniously put together. I have not often had more trouble than I have with these papers; thirty or forty pages of foul copy, twenty is the very least I have had. Well, you pay high; it is fit that I should have to work hard, it somewhat quiets my conscience. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To John Addington Symonds

Saranac Lake, Adirondack Mountains,
New York, U.S.A., November 21, 1887.

MY DEAR SYMONDS, — I think we have both meant and wanted to write to you any time these months; but we 255 have been much tossed about, among new faces and old, and new scenes and old, and scenes (like this of Saranac) which are neither one nor other. To give you some clue to our affairs, I had best begin pretty well back. We sailed from the Thames in a vast bucket of iron that took seventeen days from shore to shore. I cannot describe how I enjoyed the voyage, nor what good it did me; but on the Banks I caught friend catarrh. In New York and then in Newport I was pretty ill; but on my return to New York, lying in bed most of the time, with St. Gaudens the sculptor sculping me, and my old friend Low around, I began to pick up once more. Now here we are in a kind of wilderness of hills and firwoods and boulders and snow and wooden houses. So far as we have gone the climate is grey and harsh, but hungry and somnolent; and although not charming like that of Davos, essentially bracing and briskening. The country is a kind of insane mixture of Scotland and a touch of Switzerland and a dash of America, and a thought of the British Channel in the skies. We have a decent house —

December 6th. — A decent house, as I was saying, sir, on a hill-top, with a look down a Scottish river in front, and on one hand a Perthshire hill; on the other, the beginnings and skirts of the village play hide and seek among other hills. We have been below zero, I know not how far (-10 at 8 A.M. once), and when it is cold it is delightful; but hitherto the cold has not held, and we have chopped in and out from frost to thaw, from snow to rain, from quiet air to the most disastrous north-westerly curdlers of the blood. After a week of practical thaw, the ice still bears in favoured places. So there is hope.

I wonder if you saw my book of verses? It went into a second edition, because of my name, I suppose, and its *prose* merits. I do not set up to be a poet. Only an all-round literary man: a man who talks, not one who sings. But I believe the very fact that it was only speech 256 served the book with the public. Horace is much a speaker, and see how popular! Most of Martial is only speech, and I cannot conceive a person who does not love his Martial; most of Burns, also, such as “The Louse,” “The Toothache,” “The Haggis,” and lots more of his best. Excuse this little apology for my house; but I don’t like to come before people who have a note of song, and let it be supposed I do not know the difference.

To return to the more important — news. My wife again suffers in high and cold places; I again profit. She is off to-day to New York for a change, as heretofore to Berne, but I am glad to say in better case than then. Still it is undeniable she suffers, and you must excuse her (at least) if we both prove bad correspondents. I am decidedly better, but I have been terribly cut up with business complications: one disagreeable, as threatening loss; one, of the most intolerable complexion, as involving me in dishonour. The burthen of consistent carelessness: I have lost much by it in the past; and for once (to my damnation) I have gained. I am sure you will sympathise. It is hard work to sleep; it is hard to be told you are a liar, and have to hold your peace, and think, "Yes, by God, and a thief too!" You remember my lectures on Ajax, or the Unintentional Sin? Well, I know all about that now. Nothing seems so unjust to the sufferer: or is more just in essence. *Laissez passer la justice de Dieu.*

Lloyd has learned to use the typewriter, and has most gallantly completed upon that the draft of a tale, which seems to me not without merit and promise, it is so silly, so gay, so absurd, in spots (to my partial eyes) so genuinely humorous. It is true, he would not have written it but for the *New Arabian Nights*; but it is strange to find a young writer funny. Heavens, but I was depressing when I took the pen in hand! And now I doubt if I am sadder than my neighbours. Will this beginner move in the inverse direction?

Let me have your news, and believe me, my dear Symonds, with genuine affection, yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

The following refers to a volume on the elder Dumas, which Mr. Henley was at this time preparing to write, and which he proposed to dedicate to his friend.

Saranac [*December* 1887].

MY DEAR LAD, — I was indeed overjoyed to hear of the Dumas. In the matter of the dedication, are not cross dedications a little awkward? Lang and Rider Haggard did it, to be sure. Perpend. And if you should conclude against a dedication, there is a passage in *Memories and Portraits* written *at* you, when I was most desperate (to stir you up a bit), which might be quoted: something about Dumas still waiting his biographer. I have a decent time when the weather is fine; when it is grey, or windy or wet (as it too often is), I am merely degraded to the dirt. I get some work done every day with a devil of a heave; not extra good ever; and I regret my engagement. Whiles I have had the most deplorable business annoyances too; have been threatened with having to refund money; got over that; and found myself in the worst scrape of being a kind of unintentional swindler. These have worried me a great deal; also old age with his stealing steps seems to have clawed me in his clutch to some tune.

Do you play All Fours? We are trying it; it is still all haze to me. Can the elder hand *beg* more than once? The Port Admiral is at Boston mingling with millionaires. I am but a weed on Lethe wharf. The wife is only so-so. The Lord lead us all: if I can only get off the stage with clean hands, I shall sing Hosanna. “Put” is described quite differently from your version in a book I have; what are your rules? The Port Admiral is using a game of Put 258 in a tale of his, the first copy of which was gloriously finished about a fortnight ago, and the revise gallantly begun: *The Finsbury Tontine* it is named, and might fill two volumes, and is quite incredibly silly, and in parts (it seems to me) pretty humorous. — Love to all from

An Old, Old Man.

I say, *Taine’s Origines de la France Contemporaine* is no end; it would turn the dead body of Charles Fox into a living Tory.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

[*Saranac Lake, December* 1887.]

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN, — The Opal is very well; it is fed with glycerine when it seems hungry. I am very well, and get about much more than I could have hoped. My wife is not very well; there is no doubt the high level does not agree with her, and she is on the move for a holiday to New York. Lloyd is at Boston on a visit, and I hope has a good time. My mother is really first-rate; she and I, despairing of other games for two, now play All Fours out of a gamebook, and have not yet discovered its niceties, if any.

You will have heard, I dare say, that they made a great row over me here. They also offered me much money, a great deal more than my works are worth: I took some of it, and was greedy and hasty, and am now very sorry. I have done with big prices from now out. Wealth and self-respect seem, in my case, to be strangers.

We were talking the other day of how well Fleeming managed to grow rich. Ah, that is a rare art; something more intellectual than a virtue. The book has not yet made its appearance here; the Life alone, with a little preface, is to appear in the States; and the Scribners are to send you half the royalties. I should like it to do well, for Fleeming’s sake.

Will you please send me the Greek water-carrier’s song? I have a particular use for it.

Have I any more news, I wonder? — and echo wonders along with me. I am strangely disquieted on all political matters; and I do not know if it is “the signs of the times” or the sign of my own time of life. But to me the sky seems black both in France and England, and only partly clear in America. I have not seen it so dark in my time; of that I am sure.

Please let us have some news; and excuse me, for the sake of my well-known idleness; and pardon Fanny, who is really not very well, for this long silence. — Very sincerely your friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

The lady at Bournemouth (the giver of the paper-knife) to whom the following letter is addressed had been trusted to keep an eye on Stevenson's interests in connection with his house (which had been let) and other matters, and to report thereon from time to time. In their correspondence Stevenson is generally referred to as the Squire and the lady as the Gamekeeper.

[*Saranac Lake, December* 1887.]

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE, — I am so much afraid our gamekeeper may weary of unacknowledged reports! Hence, in the midst of a perfect horror of detestable weathers of a quite incongruous strain, and with less desire for correspondence than — well, than — well, with no desire for correspondence, behold me dash into the breach. Do keep up your letters. They are most delightful to this exiled backwoods family; and in your next, we shall hope somehow or other to hear better news of you and yours — that in the first place — and to hear more news of our beasts and birds and kindly fruits of earth and those human tenants who are (truly) too much with us.

I am very well; better than for years: that is for good. But then my wife is no great shakes; the place does not 260 suit her — it is my private opinion that no place does — and she is now away down to New York for a change, which (as Lloyd is in Boston) leaves my mother and me and Valentine alone in our wind-beleaguered hill-top hat-box of a house. You should hear the cows butt against the walls in the early morning while they feed; you should also see our back log when the thermometer goes (as it does go) away — away below zero, till it can be seen no more by the eye of man — not the thermometer, which is still perfectly visible, but the mercury, which curls up into the bulb like a hibernating bear; you should also see the lad who "does chores" for us, with his red stockings and his thirteen-year-old face, and his highly manly tramp into the room; and his two alternative answers to all questions about the weather: either "Cold," or with a really lyrical movement of the voice, "*Lovely* — raining!"

Will you take this miserable scrap for what it is worth? Will you also understand that I am the man to blame, and my wife is really almost too much out of health to write, or at least doesn't write? — And believe me, with kind remembrances to Mrs. Boodle and your sisters, very sincerely yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

The supposed Lord Warmingpan of the following was really Lord Pollexfen.

Saranac, 12th December '87.

Give us news of all your folk. A Merry Christmas from all of us.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — Will you please send £20 to — — for a Christmas gift from — — ? Moreover, I cannot remember what I told you to send to — — ; but as God has dealt so providentially with me this year, I now propose to make it £20.

I beg of you also to consider my strange position. I 261 jined a club which it was said was to defend the Union; and I had a letter from the secretary, which his name I believe was Lord Warmingpan (or words to that effect), to say I am elected, and had better pay up a certain sum of money, I forget what. Now I cannae verra weel draw a blank cheque and send to —

Lord Warmingpan (or words to that effect),
London, England.

And, man, if it was possible, I would be dooms glad to be out o' this bit scrapie. Mebbe the club was ca'd "The Union," but I wouldnae like to sweir; and mebbe it wasnae, or mebbe only words to that effec' — but I wouldnae care just exac'ly about sweirin'. Do ye no think Henley, or Pollick, or some o' they London fellies, micht mebbe perhaps find out for me? and just what the soom was? And that you would aiblins pay for me? For I thocht I was sae dam patriotic jinin', and it would be a kind o' a come-doun to be turned out again. Mebbe Lang would ken; or mebbe Rider Haggyard: they're kind o' Union folks. But it's my belief his name was Warmingpan whatever. — Yours,

Thomson,
alias Robert Louis Stevenson.

Could it be Warminster?

To Miss Monroe

The play of Deacon Brodie was at this time being performed at Chicago, with Mr. E. J. Henley in the title-part.

Saranac Lake, New York [*December* 19, 1887].

DEAR MISS MONROE, — Many thanks for your letter and your good wishes. It was much my desire to get to Chicago: had I done — or if I yet do — so, I shall hope to see the original of my photograph, which is one of my show possessions; but the fates are rather contrary. My wife is far from well; I myself dread, worse than almost any other imaginable peril, that miraculous and really insane 262 invention the American Railroad Car. Heaven help the man — may I add the woman — that sets foot in one! Ah, if it were only an ocean to cross, it would be a matter of small thought to me — and great pleasure. But the railroad car — every man has his weak point; and I fear the railroad car as abjectly as I do an earwig, and, on the whole, on better grounds. You do not know how bitter it is to have to make such a confession; for you have not the pretension nor the weakness of a man. If I do get to Chicago, you will hear of me: so much can be said. And do you never come east?

I was pleased to recognise a word of my poor old *Deacon* in your letter. It would interest me very much to hear how it went and what you thought of piece and actors; and my collaborator, who knows and respects the photograph, would be pleased too. — Still in the hope of seeing you, I am, yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Henry James

Saranac Lake, Winter 1887-88.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES, — It may please you to know how our family has been employed. In the silence of the snow the afternoon lamp has lighted an eager fireside group: my mother reading, Fanny, Lloyd, and I devoted listeners; and the work was really one of the best works I ever heard; and its author is to be praised and honoured; and what do you suppose is the name of it? and have you ever read it yourself? and (I am bound I will get to the bottom of the page before I blow the gaff, if I have to fight it out on this line all summer; for if you have not to turn a leaf, there can be no suspense, the conspectory eye being swift to pick out proper names; and without suspense, there can be little pleasure in this world, to my mind at least) — and, in short, the name of it is *Roderick 263 Hudson*, if you please. My dear James, it is very spirited, and very sound, and very noble too. Hudson, Mrs. Hudson, Rowland, O, all first-rate: Rowland a very fine fellow; Hudson as good as he can stick (did you know Hudson? I suspect you did), Mrs. H. his real born mother, a thing rarely managed in fiction.

We are all keeping pretty fit and pretty hearty; but this letter is not from me to you, it is from a reader of *R. H.* to the author of the same, and it says nothing, and has nothing to say, but thank you.

We are going to re-read *Casamassima* as a proper pendant. Sir, I think these two are your best, and care not who knows it.

May I beg you, the next time *Roderick* is printed off, to go over the sheets of the last few chapters, and strike out “immense” and “tremendous”? You have simply dropped them there like your pocket-handkerchief; all you have to do is to pick them up and pouch them, and your room — what do I say? — your cathedral! — will be swept and garnished. — I am, dear sir, your delighted reader,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — Perhaps it is a pang of causeless honesty, perhaps I hope it will set a value on my praise of *Roderick*, perhaps it’s a burst of the diabolic, but I must break out with the news that I can’t bear the *Portrait of a Lady*. I read it all, and I wept too; but I can’t stand your having written it; and I beg you will write no more of the like. *Infra*, sir; Below you: I can't help it — it may be your favourite work, but in my eyes it's BELOW YOU to write and me to read. I thought *Roderick* was going to be another such at the beginning; and I cannot describe my pleasure as I found it taking bones and blood, and looking out at me with a moved and human countenance, whose lineaments are written in my memory until my last of days.

R. L. S.

My wife begs your forgiveness; I believe for her silence.

To Sidney Colvin

Saranac Lake [*December* 1887].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — This goes to say that we are all fit, and the place is very bleak and wintry, and up to now has shown no such charms of climate as Davos, but is a place where men eat and where the cattarh, catarrh (cattarrh, or cattarrhh) appears to be unknown. I walk in my verandy in the snaw, sir, looking down over one of those dabbled wintry landscapes that are (to be frank) so chilly to the human bosom, and up at a grey, English — nay, *mehercle*, Scottish — heaven; and I think it pretty bleak; and the wind swoops at me round the corner, like a lion, and fluffs the snow in my face; and I could aspire to be elsewhere; but yet I do not catch cold, and yet, when I come in, I eat. So that hitherto Saranac, if not deliriously delectable, has not been a failure; nay, from the mere point of view of the wicked body, it has proved a success. But I wish I could still get to the woods; alas, *nous n'irons plus au bois* is my poor song; the paths are buried, the dingles drifted full, a little walk is grown a long one; till spring comes, I fear the burthen will hold good.

I get along with my papers for Scribner not fast, nor so far specially well; only this last, the fourth one (which makes a third part of my whole task), I do believe is pulled off after a fashion. It is a mere sermon: "Smith opens out"; but it is true, and I find it touching and beneficial, to me at least; and I think there is some fine writing in it, some very apt and pregnant phrases. *Pulvis et Umbra*, I call it; I might have called it a Darwinian 265 Sermon, if I had wanted. Its sentiments, although parsonic, will not offend even you, I believe. The other three papers, I fear, bear many traces of effort, and the ungenuine inspiration of an income at so much per essay, and the honest desire of the incomer to give good measure for his money. Well, I did my damndest anyway.

We have been reading H. James's *Roderick Hudson*, which I eagerly press you to get at once: it is a book of a high order — the last volume in particular. I wish Meredith would read it. It took my breath away.

I am at the seventh book of the *Æneid*, and quite amazed at its merits (also very often floored by its difficulties). The Circe passage at the beginning, and the sublime business of Amata with the simile of the boy's top — O Lord, what a happy thought! — have specially delighted me. — I am, dear sir, your respected friend,

John Gregg Gillson, J.P., M.R.I.A., etc.

To Sidney Colvin

The following narrates the beginning of the author's labours on *The Master of Ballantrae*. An unfinished paper written some years later in Samoa, and intended for Scribner's Magazine, tells how the story first took shape in his mind. See Edinburgh edition, *Miscellanies*, vol. iv. : reprinted in *Essays on the Art of Writing*.

[*Saranac Lake, December* 24, 1887.]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Thank you for your explanations. I have done no more Virgil since I finished the seventh book, for I have first been eaten up with Taine, and next have fallen head over heels into a new tale, *The Master of Ballantrae*. No thought have I now apart from it, and I have got along up to page ninety-two of the draft with great interest. It is to me a most seizing tale: there are some fantastic elements; the most is a dead genuine human problem — human tragedy, I should say rather. It will be about as long, I imagine, as *Kidnapped*.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

(1) My old Lord Durrisdeer.

(2) The Master of Ballantrae, *and*

(3) Henry Durie, *his sons*.

(4) Clementina, *engaged to the first, married to the second*.

(5) Ephraim Mackellar, *land steward at Durrisdeer and narrator of the most of the book*.

(6) Francis Burke, Chevalier de St. Louis, *one of Prince Charlie's Irishmen and narrator of the rest*.

Besides these, many instant figures, most of them dumb or nearly so: Jessie Brown the whore, Captain Crail, Captain MacCombie, our old friend Alan Breck, our old friend Riach (both only for an instant), Teach the pirate (vulgarly Blackbeard), John Paul and Macconochie, servants at Durrisdeer. The date is from 1745 to '65 (about). The scene, near Kirkcudbright, in the States, and for a little moment in the French East Indies. I have done most of the big work, the quarrel, duel between the brothers, and announcement of the death to Clementina and my Lord — Clementina, Henry, and Mackellar (nicknamed Squaretoes) are really very fine fellows; the Master is all I know of the devil. I have known hints of him, in the world, but always cowards; he is as bold as a lion, but with the same deadly, causeless duplicity I have watched with so much surprise in my two cowards. 'Tis true, I saw a hint of the same nature in another man who was not a coward; but he had other things to attend to; the Master has nothing else but his devilry. Here come my visitors — and have now gone, or the first relay of them; and I hope no more may come. For mark you, sir, this is our "day" — Saturday, as ever was; and here we sit, my mother and I, before a large wood fire and await 267 the enemy with the most steadfast courage; and without snow and greyness: and the woman Fanny in New York for her health, which is far from good; and the lad Lloyd at the inn in the village because he has a cold; and the handmaid Valentine abroad in a sleigh upon her messages; and to-morrow Christmas and no mistake. Such is human life: *la carrière humaine*. I will enclose, if I remember, the required autograph.

I will do better, put it on the back of this page. Love to all, and mostly, my very dear Colvin, to yourself. For whatever I say or do, or don't say or do, you may be very sure I am — Yours always affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

Saranac Lake, Christmas 1887.

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE, — And a very good Christmas to you all; and better fortune; and if worse, the more courage to support it — which I think is the kinder wish in all human affairs. Somewhile — I fear a good while — after this, you should receive our Christmas gift; we have no tact and no taste, only a welcome and (often) tonic brutality; and I dare say the present, even after my friend Baxter has acted on and reviewed my hints, may prove a White Elephant. That is why I dread presents. And therefore pray understand if any element of that hamper prove unwelcome, *it is to be exchanged*. I will not sit down under the name of a giver of White Elephants. I never had any elephant but one, and his initials were R. L. S.; and he trod on my foot at a very early age. But this is a fable, and not in the least to the point: which is that if, for once in my life, I have wished to make things nicer for anybody but the Elephant (see fable), do not suffer me to have made them ineffably more embarrassing, and exchange — ruthlessly exchange!

For my part, I am the most cockered up of any mortal 268 being; and one of the healthiest, or thereabout, at some modest distance from the bull's eye. I am condemned to write twelve articles in Scribner's Magazine for the love of gain; I think I had better send you them; what is far more to the purpose, I am on the jump with a new story which has bewitched me — I doubt it may bewitch no one else. It is called *The Master of Ballantrae* — pronounce B[=a]ll[)a]n-tray. If it is not good, well, mine will be the fault; for I believe it is a good tale.

The greetings of the season to you, and your mother, and your sisters. My wife heartily joins. — And I am, yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — You will think me an illiterate dog: I am, for the first time, reading Robertson's sermons. I do not know how to express how much I think of them. If by any chance you should be as illiterate as I, and not know them, it is worth while curing the defect.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

The following letter invites Mr. Baxter to allow himself (under an *alias*) and his office in Edinburgh to figure in a preface to the new story. Such a preface was drafted accordingly, but on second thoughts suppressed; to be, on renewed consideration, reinstated in the final editions.

Saranac Lake, January '88.

DEAR CHARLES, — You are the flower of Doers.... Will my doer collaborate thus much in my new novel? In the year 1794 or 5, Mr. Ephraim Mackellar, A.M., late steward on the Durrisdeer estates, completed a set of memoranda (as long as a novel) with regard to the death of the (then) late Lord Durrisdeer, and as to that of his attainted elder brother, called by the family courtesy title the Master of Ballantrae. These he placed in the hand of John Macbrair, W.S., the family agent, on the understanding they were to be sealed until 1862, when a century 269 would have elapsed since the affair in the wilderness (my lord's death). You succeeded Mr. Macbrair's firm; the Durrisdeers are extinct; and last year, in an old green box, you found these papers with Macbrair's indorsation. It is that indorsation of which I want a copy; you may remember, when you gave me the papers, I neglected to take that, and I am sure you are a man too careful of antiquities to have let it fall aside. I shall have a little introduction descriptive of my visit to Edinburgh, arrival there, denner with yoursel', and first reading of the papers in your smoking-room: all of which, of course, you well remember. — Ever yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

Your name is my friend Mr. Johnstone Thomson, W.S.!!!

To E. L. Burlingame

Saranac Lake, Winter 1887-88.

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME, — I am keeping the sermon to see if I can't add another. Meanwhile, I will send you very soon a different paper which may take its place. Possibly some of these days soon I may get together a talk on things current, which should go in (if possible) earlier than either. I am now less nervous about these papers; I believe I can do the trick without great strain, though the terror that breathed on my back in the beginning is not yet forgotten.

The *Master of Ballantrae* I have had to leave aside, as I was quite worked out. But in about a week I hope to try back and send you the first four numbers: these are all drafted, it is only the revision that has broken me down, as it is often the hardest work. These four I propose you should set up for me at once, and we'll copyright 'em in a pamphlet. I will tell you the names of the *bona fide* purchasers in England.

The numbers will run from twenty to thirty pages of my manuscript. You can give me that much, can you 270 not? It is a howling good tale — at least these first four numbers are; the end is a trifle more fantastic, but 'tis all picturesque.

Don't trouble about any more French books; I am on another scent, you see, just now. Only the *French in Hindustan* I await with impatience, as that is for *Ballantrae*. The scene of that romance is Scotland — the States — Scotland — India — Scotland — and the States again; so it jumps like a flea. I have enough about the States now, and very much obliged I am; yet if Drake's *Tragedies of the Wilderness* is (as I gather) a collection of originals, I should like to purchase it. If it is a picturesque vulgarisation, I do not wish to look it in the face. Purchase, I say; for I think it would be well to have some such collection by me with a view to fresh works. — Yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — If you think of having the *Master* illustrated, I suggest that Hole would be very well up to the Scottish, which is the larger, part. If you have it done here, tell your artist to look at the hall of Craigievar in Billing's *Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities*, and he will get a broad hint for the hall at Durrisdeer: it is, I think, the chimney of Craigievar and the roof of Pinkie, and perhaps a little more of Pinkie altogether; but I should have to see the book myself to be sure. Hole would be invaluable for this. I dare say if you had it illustrated, you could let me have one or two for the English edition.

R. L. S.

To William Archer

The following refers to Mr. Bernard Shaw's novel, *Cashel Byron's Profession*, which had been sent Stevenson to read by their common friend Mr. Archer.

[*Saranac Lake, Winter* 1887-88.]

MY DEAR ARCHER, — What am I to say? I have read your friend's book with singular relish. If he has written 271 any other, I beg you will let me see it; and if he has not, I beg him to lose no time in supplying the deficiency. It is full of promise; but I should like to know his age. There are things in it that are very clever, to which I attach small importance; it is the shape of the age. And there are passages, particularly the rally in presence of the Zulu king, that show genuine and remarkable narrative talent — a talent that few will have the wit to understand, a talent of strength, spirit, capacity, sufficient vision, and sufficient self-sacrifice, which last is the chief point in a narrator.

As a whole, it is (of course) a fever dream of the most feverish. Over Bashville the footman I howled with derision and delight; I dote on Bashville — I could read of him for ever; *de Bashville je suis le fervent* — there is only one Bashville, and I am his devoted slave; *Bashville est magnifique, mais il n'est guère possible*. He is the note of the book. It is all mad, mad and deliriously delightful; the author has a taste in chivalry like Walter Scott's or Dumas', and then he daubs in little bits of socialism; he soars away on the wings of the romantic griffon — even the griffon, as he cleaves air, shouting with laughter at the nature of the quest — and I believe in his heart he thinks he is labouring in a quarry of solid granite realism.

It is this that makes me — the most hardened adviser now extant — stand back and hold my peace. If Mr. Shaw is below five-and-twenty, let him go his path; if he is thirty, he had best be told that he is a romantic, and pursue romance with his eyes open; — or perhaps he knows it; — God knows! — my brain is softened.

It is HORRID FUN. All I ask is more of it. Thank you for the pleasure you gave us, and tell me more of the inimitable author.

(I say, Archer, my God, what women!) — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

1 part Charles Reade; 1 part Henry James or some kindred author badly assimilated; ½ part Disraeli (perhaps 272 unconscious); 1½ parts struggling, over-laid original talent; 1 part blooming, gaseous folly. That is the equation as it stands. What it may be, I don't know, nor any other man. *Vixere fortes* — O, let him remember that — let him beware of his damned century; his gifts of insane chivalry and animated narration are just those that might be slain and thrown out like an untimely birth by the Daemon of the epoch. And if he only knew how I have adored the chivalry! Bashville! — *O Bashville! j'en chortle* (which is fairly polyglot).

R. L. S.

To William Archer

[*Saranac Lake, February* 1888.]

MY DEAR ARCHER, — Pretty sick in bed; but necessary to protest and continue your education.

Why was Jenkin an amateur in my eyes? You think because not amusing (I think he often was amusing). The reason is this: I never, or almost never, saw two pages of his work that I could not have put in one without the smallest loss of material. That is the only test I know of writing. If there is anywhere a thing said in two sentences that could have been as clearly and as engagingly and as forcibly said in one, then it's amateur work. Then you will bring me up with old

Dumas. Nay, the object of a story is to be long, to fill up hours; the story-teller's art of writing is to water out by continual invention, historical and technical, and yet not seem to water; seem on the other hand to practise that same wit of conspicuous and declaratory condensation which is the proper art of writing. That is one thing in which my stories fail: I am always cutting the flesh off their bones.

I would rise from the dead to preach!

Hope all well. I think my wife better, but she's not allowed to write; and this (only wrung from me by desire to Boss and Parsonise and Dominate, strong in sickness) is my first letter for days, and will likely be my last for 273 many more. Not blame my wife for her silence: doctor's orders. All much interested by your last, and fragment from brother, and anecdotes of Tomarcher. — The sick but still Moral

R. L. S.

Tell Shaw to hurry up: I want another.

To William Archer

In early days in Paris, Stevenson's chivalrous feelings had once been shocked by the scene in the *Demi-Monde* of Dumas fils, where Suzanne d'Ange is trapped by Olivier de Jalin. His correspondent had asked what exactly took place.

[*Saranac Lake, February* 1888 ?]

MY DEAR ARCHER, — It happened thus. I came forth from that performance in a breathing heat of indignation. (Mind, at this distance of time and with my increased knowledge, I admit there is a problem in the piece; but I saw none then, except a problem in brutality; and I still consider the problem in that case not established.) On my way down the *Français* stairs, I trod on an old gentleman's toes, whereupon with that suavity that so well becomes me, I turned about to apologise, and on the instant, repenting me of that intention, stopped the apology midway, and added something in French to this effect: No, you are one of the *lâches* who have been applauding that piece. I retract my apology. Said the old Frenchman, laying his hand on my arm, and with a smile that was truly heavenly in temperance, irony, good-nature, and knowledge of the world, "Ah, monsieur, vous êtes bien jeune!" — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To E. L. Burlingame

[*Saranac Lake, February* 1888.]

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME, — Will you send me (from the library) some of the works of my dear old G. P. R. James? 274 With the following especially I desire to make or to renew acquaintance: *The Songster*, *The Gipsy*, *The Convict*, *The Stepmother*, *The Gentleman of the Old School*, *The Robber*.

Excusez du peu.

This sudden return to an ancient favourite hangs upon an accident. The "Franklin County Library" contains two works of his, *The Cavalier* and *Morley Ernstein*. I read the first with indescribable amusement — it was worse than I had feared, and yet somehow engaging; the second (to my surprise) was better than I had dared to hope: a good, honest, dull, interesting tale, with a genuine old-fashioned talent in the invention when not strained; and a genuine old-fashioned feeling for the English language. This experience awoke appetite, and you see I have taken steps to stay it.

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

[*Saranac Lake, February* 1888.]

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME, — 1. Of course then don't use it. Dear Man, I write these to please you, not myself, and you know a main sight better than I do what is good. In that case, however, I enclose another paper, and return the corrected proof of *Pulvis et Umbra*, so that we may be afloat.

2. I want to say a word as to the *Master*. (The *Master of Ballantrae* shall be the name by all means.) If you like and want it, I leave it to you to make an offer. You may remember I thought the offer you made when I was still in England too small; by which I did not at all mean, I thought it less than it was worth, but too little to tempt me to undergo the disagreeables of serial publication. This tale (if you want it) you are to have; for it is the least I can do for you; and you are to observe that the sum you pay me for my articles going far to meet my 275 wants, I am quite open to be satisfied with less than formerly. I tell you I do dislike this battle of the dollars. I feel sure you all pay too much here in America; and I beg you not to spoil me any more. For I am getting spoiled: I do not want wealth, and I feel these big sums demoralise me.

My wife came here pretty ill; she had a dreadful bad night; to-day she is better. But now Valentine is ill; and Lloyd and I have got breakfast, and my hand somewhat shakes after washing dishes. — Yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — Please order me the Evening Post for two months. My subscription is run out. The *Mutiny* and *Edwardes* to hand.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Saranac Lake, March* 1888.]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Fanny has been very unwell. She is not long home, has been ill again since her return, but is now better again to a degree. You must not blame her for not writing, as she is not allowed to write at all, not even a letter. To add to our misfortunes, Valentine is quite ill and in bed. Lloyd and I get breakfast; I have now, 10.15, just got the dishes washed and the kitchen all clear, and sit down to give you as much news as I have spirit for, after such an engagement. Glass is a thing that really breaks my spirit: I do not like to fail, and with glass I cannot reach the work of my high calling — the artist's.

I am, as you may gather from this, wonderfully better: this harsh, grey, glum, doleful climate has done me good. You cannot fancy how sad a climate it is. When the thermometer stays all day below 10°, it is really cold; and when the wind blows, O commend me to the result. Pleasure in life is all delete; there is no red spot left, fires 276 do not radiate, you burn your hands all the time on what seem to be cold stones. It is odd, zero is like summer heat to us now; and we like, when the thermometer outside is really low, a room at about 48°: 60° we find oppressive. Yet the natives keep their holes at 90° or even 100°.

This was interrupted days ago by household labours. Since then I have had and (I tremble to write it, but it does seem as if I had) beaten off an influenza. The cold is exquisite. Valentine still in bed. The proofs of the first part of *The Master of Ballantrae* begin to come in; soon you shall have it in the pamphlet form; and I hope you will like it. The second part will not be near so good; but there — we can but do as it'll do with us. I have every reason to believe this winter has done me real good, so far as it has gone; and if I carry out my scheme for next winter, and succeeding years, I should end by being a tower of strength. I want you to save a good holiday for next winter; I hope we shall be able to help you to some larks. Is there any Greek Isle you would like to explore? or any creek in Asia Minor? — Yours ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

To the Rev. Dr. Charteris

The Rev. Dr. Charteris, of Edinburgh, had been one of the most intimate and trusted friends of Stevenson's father, and R. L. S. turns to him accordingly for memories and impressions.

[*Saranac Lake, Winter* 1887-88.]

MY DEAR DR. CHARTERIS, — I have asked Douglas and Foulis to send you my last volume, so that you may possess my little paper on my father in a permanent shape; not for what that is worth, but as a tribute of respect to one whom my father regarded with such love, esteem, and affection. Besides, as you will see, I have brought you under contribution, and I have still to thank you for your letter to my mother; so more than kind; in much, so just. It is my hope, when time and health permit, to do 277 something more definite for my father's memory. You are one of the very few who can (if you will) help me. Pray believe that I lay on you no obligation; I know too well, you may believe me, how difficult it is to put even two sincere lines upon paper, where all, too, is to order. But if the spirit should ever move you, and you should recall something memorable of your friend, his son will heartily thank you for a note of it. — With much respect, believe me, yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

[*Saranac Lake, March* 31, 1888.]

MY DEAR GOSSE, — Why so plaintive? Either the post-office has played us false, or you were in my debt. In case it should be my letter that has failed to come to post, I must tell again the fate of Mrs. Gosse's thermometer. It hangs in our sitting-room, where it has often marked freezing point and below; "See what Gosse says," is a common word of command. But the point is this: in the verandah hangs another thermometer, condemned to register minus 40° and that class of temperatures; and to him, we have given the name of the Quarterly Reviewer. I hope the jape likes you.

Please tell the Fortnightly man that I am sorry but I can do nothing of that sort this year, as I am under a pledge to Scribner's; and indeed my monthly articles take the best of my time. It was a project I went into with horrid diffidence; and lucre was my only motive. I get on better than I expected, but it is difficult to find an article of the sort required for each date, and to vary the matter and keep up (if possible) the merit. I do not know if you think I have at all succeeded; it seemed to me this really worked paper was more money's worth (as well as probably better within my means) than the Lang[278] business at the Sign of the Ship. Indeed I feel convinced I could never have managed that; it takes a gift to do it. Here is lunch. — Yours afftly.,

R. L. S.

To Henry James

[*Saranac Lake, March* 1888.]

MY DEAR DELIGHTFUL JAMES, — To quote your heading to my wife, I think no man writes so elegant a letter, I am sure none so kind, unless it be Colvin, and there is more of the stern parent about him. I was vexed at your account of my admired Meredith: I wish I could go and see him; as it is I will try to write; and yet (do you understand me?) there is something in that potent, *genialisch* affectation that puts one on the strain even to address him in a letter. He is not an easy man to be yourself with: there is so much of him, and veracity and the high athletic intellectual humbug are so intermixed. I read with indescribable admiration your *Emerson*. I begin to long for the day when these portraits of yours shall be collected: do put me in. But Emerson is a higher flight. Have you a *Tourgueneff*? You have told me many interesting things of him, and I seem to see them written, and forming a graceful and *bildend* sketch. (I wonder whence comes this flood of German — I haven't opened a German book since I teethed.) My novel is a tragedy; four parts out of six or seven are written, and gone to Burlingame. Five parts of it are sound, human tragedy; the last one or two, I regret to say, not so soundly designed; I almost hesitate to write them; they are very picturesque, but they are fantastic; they shame, perhaps degrade, the beginning. I wish I knew; that was how the tale came to me however. I got the situation; it was an old taste of mine: The older brother goes out in the 279 '45, the younger stays; the younger, of course, gets title and estate and marries the bride designate of the elder — a family match, but he (the younger) had always loved her, and she had really loved the elder. Do you see the situation? Then the devil and Saranac suggested this *dénouement*, and I joined the two ends in a day or two of constant feverish thought, and began to write. And now — I wonder if I have not gone too far with the fantastic? The elder brother is an INCUBUS: supposed to be killed at Culloden, he turns up again and bleeds the family of money; on that stopping he comes and lives with them, whence flows the real tragedy, the nocturnal duel of the brothers (very naturally, and indeed, I think, inevitably arising), and second supposed death of the elder. Husband and wife now really make up, and then the cloven hoof appears. For the third supposed death and the manner of the third reappearance is steep; steep, sir. It is even very steep, and I fear it shames the honest stuff so far; but then it is highly pictorial, and it leads up to the death of the elder brother at the hands of the younger in a perfectly cold-blooded murder, of which I wish (and mean) the reader to approve. You see how daring is the design. There are really but six characters, and one of these episodic, and yet it covers eighteen years, and will be, I imagine, the longest of my works. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

Read Gosse's Raleigh. First-rate. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To the Rev. Dr. Charteris

Saranac Lake, Adirondacks, New York, U.S.A. [*Spring* 1888].

MY DEAR DR. CHARTERIS, — The funeral letter, your notes, and many other things, are reserved for a book, *Memorials of a Scottish Family*, if ever I can find time and opportunity. I wish I could throw off all else and sit down 280 to it to-day. Yes, my father was a "distinctly religious man," but not a pious. The distinction painfully and pleasurably recalls old conflicts; it used to be my great gun — and you, who suffered for the whole Church, know how needful it was to have some reserve artillery! His sentiments were tragic; he was a tragic thinker. Now, granted that life is tragic to the marrow, it seems the proper function of religion to make us accept and serve in that tragedy, as officers in that other and comparable one of war. Service is the word, active service, in the military sense; and the religious man — I beg pardon, the pious man — is he who has a military joy in duty — not he who weeps over the wounded. We can do no more than try to do our best. Really, I am the grandson of the manse — I preach you a kind of sermon. Box the brat's ears!

My mother — to pass to matters more within my competence — finely enjoys herself. The new country, some new friends we have made, the interesting experiment of this climate — which (at least) is tragic — all have done her good. I have myself passed a better winter than for years, and now that it is nearly over have some diffident hopes of doing well in the summer and "eating a little more air" than usual.

I thank you for the trouble you are taking, and my mother joins with me in kindest regards to yourself and Mrs. Charteris. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To S. R. Crockett

[*Saranac Lake, Spring* 1888].

DEAR MINISTER OF THE FREE KIRK AT PENICUIK, — For O, man, I cannae read your name! — That I have been so long in answering your delightful letter sits on my conscience badly. The fact is I let my correspondence accumulate 281 until I am going to leave a place; and then I pitch in, overhaul the pile, and my cries of penitence might be heard a mile about. Yesterday I despatched thirty-five belated letters: conceive the state of my conscience, above all as the Sins of Omission (see boyhood's guide, the Shorter Catechism) are in my view the only serious ones; I call it my view, but it cannot have escaped you that it was also Christ's. However, all that is not to the purpose, which is to thank you for the sincere pleasure afforded by your charming letter. I get a good few such; how few that please me at all, you would be surprised to learn — or have a singularly just idea of the dulness of our race; how few that please me as yours did, I can tell you in one word — *None*. I am no great kirkgoer, for many reasons — and the sermon's one of them, and the first prayer another, but the chief and effectual reason is the stuffiness. I am no great kirkgoer, says I, but when I read yon letter of yours, I thought I would like to sit under ye. And then I saw ye were to send me a bit buik, and says I, I'll wait for the bit buik, and then I'll mebbe can read the man's name, and anyway I'll can kill twa birds wi' ae stane. And, man! the buik was ne'er heard tell o'!

That fact is an adminicle of excuse for my delay.

And now, dear minister of the illegible name, thanks to you, and greeting to your wife, and may you have good guidance in your difficult labours, and a blessing on your life.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

(No just sae young's he was, though —
I'm awfae near forty, man.)

Address c/o Charles Scribner's Sons,
743 Broadway, New York.

Don't put "N.B." in your paper: put Scotland, and be done with it. Alas, that I should be thus stabbed in the home of my friends! The name of my native land is not North Britain, whatever may be the name of yours.

R. L. S.

To Miss Ferrier

[*Saranac Lake, April* 1888.]

MY DEAREST COGGIE, — I wish I could find the letter I began to you some time ago when I was ill; but I can't and I don't believe there was much in it anyway. We have all behaved like pigs and beasts and barn-door poultry to you; but I have been sunk in work, and the lad is lazy and blind and has been working too; and as for Fanny, she has been (and still is) really unwell. I had a mean hope you might perhaps write again before I got up steam: I could not have been more ashamed of myself than I am, and I should have had another laugh.

They always say I cannot give news in my letters: I shall shake off that reproach. On Monday, if she is well enough, Fanny leaves for California to see her friends; it is rather an anxiety to let her go alone; but the doctor simply forbids it in my case, and she is better anywhere than here — a bleak, blackguard, beggarly climate, of which I can say no good except that it suits me and some others of the same or similar persuasions whom (by all rights) it ought to kill. It is a form of Arctic St. Andrews, I should imagine; and the miseries of forty degrees below zero, with a high wind, have to be felt to be appreciated. The greyness of the heavens here is a circumstance eminently revolting to the soul; I have near forgot the aspect of the sun — I doubt if this be news; it is certainly no news to us. My mother suffers a little from the inclemency of the place, but less on the whole than would be imagined. Among other wild schemes, we have been projecting yacht voyages; and I beg to inform you that Cogia Hassan was cast for the part of passenger. They may come off! — Again this is not news. The lad? Well, the lad wrote a tale this winter, which appeared to me so funny that I have taken it in hand, and some of these days you will 283 receive a copy of a work entitled "*A Game of Bluff*, by Lloyd Osbourne and Robert Louis Stevenson."

Otherwise he (the lad) is much as usual. There remains, I believe, to be considered only R. L. S., the house-bond, prop, pillar, bread-winner, and bully of the establishment. Well, I do not think him much better; he is making piles of money; the hope of being able to hire a yacht ere long dances before his eyes; otherwise he is not in very high spirits at this particular moment, though compared with last year at Bournemouth an angel of joy.

And now is this news, Cogia, or is it not? It all depends upon the point of view, and I call it news. The devil of it is that I can think of nothing else, except to send you all our loves, and to wish exceedingly you were here to cheer us all up. But we'll see about that on board the yacht. — Your affectionate friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

The Mutiny novel here foreshadowed never got written.

[*Saranac Lake*] *April 9th!!* 1888.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I have been long without writing to you, but am not to blame. I had some little annoyances quite for a private eye, but they ran me so hard that I could not write without lugging them in, which (for several reasons) I did not choose to do. Fanny is off to San Francisco, and next week I myself flit to New York: address Scribner's. Where we shall go I know not, nor (I was going to say) care; so bald and bad is my frame of mind. Do you know our — ahem! — fellow clubman, Colonel Majendie? I had such an interesting letter from him. Did you see my sermon? It has evoked the worst feeling: I fear people don't care for the truth, or else I don't tell it. Suffer me to wander without purpose. I 284 have sent off twenty letters to-day, and begun and stuck at a twenty-first, and taken a copy of one which was on business, and corrected several galleys of proof, and sorted about a bushel of old letters; so if any one has a right to be romantically stupid it is I — and I am. Really deeply stupid, and at that stage when in old days I used to pour out words without any meaning whatever and with my mind taking no part in the performance. I suspect that is now the case. I am reading with extraordinary pleasure the life of Lord Lawrence: Lloyd and I have a mutiny novel —

(*Next morning, after twelve other letters*) — mutiny novel on hand — a tremendous work — so we are all at Indian books. The idea of the novel is Lloyd's: I call it a novel. 'Tis a tragic romance, of the most tragic sort: I believe the end will be almost too much for human endurance — when the hero is thrown to the ground with one of his own (Sepoy) soldier's knees upon his chest, and the cries begin in the Beebeeghar. O truly, you know it is a howler! The whole last part is — well the difficulty is that, short of resuscitating Shakespeare, I don't know who is to write it.

I still keep wonderful. I am a great performer before the Lord on the penny whistle. — Dear sir, sincerely yours,

Andrew Jackson.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

[*Saranac Lake, April* 1888.]

Address, c/o Messrs. Scribner's Sons, 743 *Broadway, N.Y.*

MY DEAR GAMEKEEPER, — Your p.c. (proving you a good student of Micawber) has just arrived, and it paves the way to something I am anxious to say. I wrote a paper the other day — *Pulvis et Umbra*; — I wrote it with great feeling and conviction: to me it seemed bracing and healthful, it is in such a world (so seen by me), that I am 285 very glad to fight out my battle, and see some fine sunsets, and hear some excellent jests between whiles round the camp fire. But I find that to some people this vision of mine is a nightmare, and extinguishes all ground of faith in God or pleasure in man. Truth I think not so much of; for I do not know it. And I could wish in my heart that I had not published this paper, if it troubles folk too much: all have not the same digestion, nor the same sight of things. And it came over me with special pain that perhaps this article (which I was at the pains to send to her) might give dismalness to my *Gamekeeper at Home*. Well, I cannot take back what I have said; but yet I may add this. If my view be everything but the nonsense that it may be — to me it seems self-evident and blinding truth — surely of all things it makes this world holier. There is nothing in it but the moral side — but the great battle and the breathing times with their refreshments. I see no more and no less. And if you look again, it is not ugly, and it is filled with promise.

Pray excuse a desponding author for this apology. My wife is away off to the uttermost parts of the States, all by herself. I shall be off, I hope, in a week; but where? Ah! that I know not. I keep wonderful, and my wife a little better, and the lad flourishing. We now perform duets on two D tin whistles; it is no joke to make the bass; I think I must really send you one, which I wish you would correct.... I may be said to live for these instrumental labours now, but I have always some childishness on hand. — I am, dear Gamekeeper, your indulgent but intemperate Squire,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Having spent the last fortnight of April at New York, Stevenson and his stepson moved at the beginning of May to the small New Jersey watering-place from whence the following few letters are 286 dated: his wife having meanwhile gone to San Francisco, where she presently made arrangements for the Pacific yachting trip.

Union House, Manasquan, New Jersey [*May* 1888].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — We are here at a delightful country inn, like a country French place, the only people in the house, a cat-boat at our disposal, the sea always audible on the outer beach, the lagoon as smooth as glass, all the little, queer, many coloured villas standing shuttered and empty; in front of ours, across the lagoon, two long wooden bridges; one for the rail, one for the road, sounding with intermittent traffic. It is highly pleasant, and a delightful change from Saranac. My health is much better for the change; I am sure I walked about four miles yesterday, one time with another — well, say three and a half; and the day before, I was out for four hours in the cat-boat, and was as stiff as a board in consequence. More letters call. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Union House, Manasquan, N. J., but address to Scribner's, 11th May 1888.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — I have found a yacht, and we are going the full pitch for seven months. If I cannot get my health back (more or less), 'tis madness; but, of course, there is the hope, and I will play big.... If this business fails to set me up, well, £2000 is gone, and I know I can't get better. We sail from San Francisco, June 15th, for the South Seas in the yacht *Casco*. — With a million thanks for all your dear friendliness, ever yours affectionately,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Lady Taylor

[*Manasquan, May* 1888.]

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR, — I have to announce our great news. On June 15th we sail from San Francisco in the 287 schooner yacht *Casco*, for a seven months' cruise in the South Seas. You can conceive what a state of excitement we are in; Lloyd perhaps first; but this is an old dream of mine which actually seems to be coming true, and I am sun-struck. It seems indeed too good to be true; and that we have not deserved so much good fortune. From Skerryvore to the Galapagos is a far cry! And from poking in a sick-room all winter to the deck of one's own ship, is indeed a heavenly change.

All these seven months I doubt if we can expect more than three mails at the best of it: and I do hope we may hear something of your news by each. I have no very clear views as to where the three addresses ought to be, but if you hear no later news, Charles Scribner's Sons will always have the run of our intended movements. And an early letter there would probably catch us at the Sandwich Islands. Tahiti will probably be the second point: and (as I roughly guess) Quito the third. But the whole future is invested with heavenly clouds.

I trust you are all well and content, and have good news of the Shelleys, to whom I wish you would pass on ours. They should be able to sympathise with our delight.

Now I have all my miserable Scribner articles to rake together in the inside of a fortnight: so you must not expect me to be more copious. I have you all in the kindest memory, and am, your affectionate friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Remember me to Aubrey de Vere.

To Homer St. Gaudens

The following is addressed from Manasquan to a boy, the son of the writer's friend, the sculptor St. Gaudens; for the rest, it explains itself.

Manasquan, New Jersey, 27th May 1888.

DEAR HOMER ST. GAUDENS, — Your father has brought you this day to see me, and he tells me it is his hope you 288 may remember the occasion. I am going to do what I can to carry out his wish; and it may amuse you, years after, to see this little scrap of paper and to read what I write. I must begin by testifying that you yourself took no interest whatever in the introduction, and in the most proper spirit displayed a single-minded ambition to get back to play, and this I thought an excellent and admirable point in your character. You were also (I use the past tense, with a view to the time when you shall read, rather than to that when I am writing) a very pretty boy, and (to my European views) startlingly self-possessed. My time of observation was so limited that you must pardon me if I can say no more: what else I marked, what restlessness of foot and hand, what graceful clumsiness, what experimental designs upon the furniture, was but the common inheritance of human youth. But you may perhaps like to know that the lean flushed man in bed, who interested you so little, was in a state of mind extremely mingled and unpleasant: harassed with work which he thought he was not doing well, troubled with difficulties to which you will in time succeed, and yet looking forward to no less a matter than a voyage to the South Seas and the visitation of savage and desert islands. — Your father's friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Henry James

Manasquan (ahem!), New Jersey, May 28th, 1888.

MY DEAR JAMES, — With what a torrent it has come at last! Up to now, what I like best is the first number of a *London Life*. You have never done anything better, and I don't know if perhaps you have ever done anything so good as the girl's outburst: tip-top. I have been preaching your later works in your native land. I had to present the Beltraffio volume to Low, and it has brought him to his knees; he was *amazed* at the first part of Georgina's 289 Reasons, although (like me) not so well satisfied with Part II. It is annoying to find the American public as stupid as the English, but they will waken up in time: I wonder what they will think of *Two Nations*?...

This, dear James, is a valedictory. On June 15th the schooner yacht *Casco* will (weather and a jealous providence permitting) steam through the Golden Gates for Honolulu, Tahiti, the Galapagos, Guayaquil, and — I hope *not* the bottom of the Pacific. It will contain your obedient 'umble servant and party. It seems too good to be true, and is a very good way of getting through the green-sickness of maturity which, with all its accompanying ills, is now declaring itself in my mind and life. They tell me it is not so severe as that of youth; if I (and the *Casco*) are spared, I shall tell you more exactly, as I am one of the few people in the world who do not forget their own lives.

Good-bye, then, my dear fellow, and please write us a word; we expect to have three mails in the next two months: Honolulu, Tahiti, and Guayaquil. But letters will be forwarded from Scribner's, if you hear nothing more definite directly. In 3 (three) days I leave for San Francisco. — Ever yours most cordially,

R. L. S.

For the actual sum, see below, .

"But she was more than usual calm,
She did not give a single dam."
Marjorie Fleming.

Of the play *Deacon Brodie*.

"Smith opens out his cauld harangues
On practice and on morals."

The Rev. George Smith of Galston, the minister thus referred to by Burns (in the *Holy Fair*), was a great-grandfather of Stevenson on the mother's side; and against Stevenson himself, in his didactic moods, the passage was often quoted by his friends when they wished to tease him.

Afterwards changed to Alison.

Alluding to a kind of lofty, posturing manner of G. M.'s in mind and speech, quite different from any real insincerity.

X

PACIFIC VOYAGES

YACHT *CASCO* — SCHOONER *EQUATOR* — S.S. *JANET NICOLL*

June 1888-October 1890

In the following section are printed nearly all the letters which reached Stevenson's correspondents in England and the United States, at intervals necessarily somewhat rare, during the eighteen months of his Pacific voyages. It was on the 28th of June 1888 that he started from the harbour of San Francisco on what was only intended to be a health and pleasure excursion of a few months' duration, but turned into a voluntary exile prolonged until the hour of his death. His company consisted, besides himself, of his wife, his mother, his stepson Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, and the servant Valentine Roch. They sailed on board the schooner yacht *Casco*, Captain Otis, and made straight for the Marquesas, dropping anchor on the 28th of July in Anaho Bay, the harbour of the island of Nukahiva. The magic effect of this first island landfall on his mind he has described in the opening chapter of his book *In the South Seas*. After spending six weeks in this group they sailed south-eastwards, visiting (a sufficiently perilous piece of navigation) several of the coral atolls of the Paumotus or Low Archipelago. Thence they arrived in the first week of October at the Tahitian group or 291 "Society" islands. In these their longest stay was not at the chief town, Papeete, where Stevenson fell sharply ill, but in a more secluded and very beautiful station, Tautira, whither he went to recruit, and where they were detained by the necessity of remasting the schooner. Here Stevenson and one of the local chiefs, Ori a Ori, made special friends and parted with heartfelt mutual regret. Mrs. Stevenson is good enough to allow me to supplement the somewhat fragmentary account of these adventures given in his letters with one or two of her own, in which they are told with full vividness and detail.

Sailing from Tahiti due northwards through forty degrees of latitude, the party arrived about Christmas at Honolulu, the more than semi-civilised capital of the Hawaiian group (Sandwich Islands), where they paid off the yacht *Casco* and made a stay of nearly six months. Here Stevenson finished *The Master of Ballantrae* and *The Wrong Box*; and hence his mother returned for a while to Scotland, to rejoin her son's household when it was fairly installed two years later at Vailima. From Honolulu Stevenson made several excursions, including one, which profoundly impressed him, to the leper settlement at Molokai, the scene of Father Damien's ministrations and death.

This first year of cruising and residence among the Pacific Islands had resulted in so encouraging a renewal of health, with so keen a zest added to life by the restored capacity for outdoor activity and adventure, that Stevenson determined to prolong his experiences in yet more remote archipelagoes of the same ocean. He started accordingly from Honolulu in June 1889 on a trading schooner, the *Equator*, bound to the Gilberts, one of the least visited and most primitively mannered of all the 292 island groups of the Western Pacific; emerged towards Christmas of the same year into semi-civilisation again at Apia, on the island of Upolu in Samoa, where he wrote his first Polynesian story, *The Bottle Imp*. Enchanted with the scenery and the people, he stayed for six weeks, first in the house of Mr. H. J. Moors, a leading American trader, then with his family in a separate cottage not far off; bought an estate on the densely wooded mountain side above Apia, with the notion of making there, if not a home, at least a place of rest and call on later projected excursions among the islands; and began to make collections for his studies in recent Samoan history. In February he went on to Sydney to find his correspondence and consider future plans. It was during this stay at Sydney that he was moved to give expression to his righteous indignation at the terms of a letter concerning Father Damien by the Rev. Dr. Hyde of Honolulu. Here also he fell once more seriously ill, with a renewal of all his old symptoms; and the conclusion was forced upon him that he must take up his residence for the rest of his life in the tropics — though with occasional excursions, as he then hoped, at least half-way homeward to places where it might be possible for friends from England to meet him. In order to shake off the effects of this attack, he started with his party on a fresh sea voyage from Sydney, this time on a trading steamer, the *Janet Nicoll*, which took him by a very devious course to the Gilberts again, the Marshalls, and among many other remote islands during the months of April-August 1890. During the voyage he began to put into shape the notes for a volume on the South Seas which he had been compiling ever since he left San Francisco. Unfortunately, he persisted in the endeavour to make his work impersonal and full of information, or what he called 293 "serious interest," exactly in the manner which his wife had foreseen before they left Honolulu, and from which she had wisely tried to dissuade him (see her letter printed on p foll.). On the return voyage Stevenson left the *Janet Nicoll* to land in New Caledonia, staying for some days at Noumea before he went on to Sydney, where he spent four or five weeks of later August and September. Thence he returned in October to take up his abode for good on his Samoan property, where the work of clearing, planting, and building a habitable cottage had been going on busily during his absence.

To Sidney Colvin

It should be remembered that the Marquesas, the Paumotus, and the Tahitian group are all dependencies of France.

Yacht Casco, *Anaho Bay, Nukahiva, Marquesas Islands* [*July* 1888].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — From this somewhat (ahem) out of the way place, I write to say how d'ye do. It is all a swindle: I chose these isles as having the most beastly population, and they are far better, and far more civilised than we. I know one old chief Ko-o-amua, a great cannibal in his day, who ate his enemies even as he walked home from killing 'em, and he is a perfect gentleman and exceedingly amiable and simple-minded: no fool, though.

The climate is delightful; and the harbour where we lie one of the loveliest spots imaginable. Yesterday evening we had near a score natives on board; lovely parties. We have a native god; very rare now. Very rare and equally absurd to view.

This sort of work is not favourable to correspondence: it takes me all the little strength I have to go about and see, and then come home and note, the strangeness around 294 us. I shouldn't wonder if there came trouble here some day, all the same. I could name a nation that is not beloved in certain islands — and it does not know it! Strange: like ourselves, perhaps, in India! Love to all and much to yourself.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Yacht Casco, *at sea, near the Paumotus,*

7 A.M., *September 6th,* 1888, *with a dreadful pen.*

MY DEAR CHARLES, — Last night as I lay under my blanket in the cockpit, courting sleep, I had a comic seizure. There was nothing visible but the southern stars, and the steersman there out by the binnacle lamp; we were all looking forward to a most deplorable landfall on the morrow, praying God we should fetch a tuft of palms which are to indicate the Dangerous Archipelago; the night was as warm as milk, and all of a sudden I had a vision of — Drummond Street. It came on me like a flash of lightning: I simply returned thither, and into the past. And when I remember all I hoped and feared as I pickled about Rutherford's in the rain and the east wind; how I feared I should make a mere shipwreck, and yet timidly hoped not; how I feared I should never have a friend, far less a wife, and yet passionately hoped I might; how I hoped (if I did not take to drink) I should possibly write one little book, etc. etc. And then now — what a change! I feel somehow as if I should like the incident set upon a brass plate at the corner of that dreary thoroughfare for all students to read, poor devils, when their hearts are down. And I felt I must write one word to you. Excuse me if I write little: when I am at sea, it gives me a headache; when I am in port, I have my diary crying “Give, give.” I shall have a fine book of travels, I feel sure; and will tell you more of the South Seas after very few months than any other writer has done — except 295 Herman Melville perhaps, who is a howling cheese. Good luck to you, God bless you. — Your affectionate friend,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The signature used at foot of this letter and occasionally elsewhere, “The Old Man Virulent,” alludes to the fits of uncontrollable anger to which he was often in youth, but by this time very rarely, subject: fits occasioned sometimes by instances of official stolidity or impertinence or what he took for such, more often by acts savouring of cruelty, meanness, or injustice.

Fakarava, Low Archipelago, September 21st, 1888.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Only a word. Get out your big atlas, and imagine a straight line from San Francisco to Anaho, the N.E. corner of Nukahiva, one of the Marquesas Islands; imagine three weeks there: imagine a day’s sail on August 12th round the eastern end of the island to Tai-o-hae, the capital; imagine us there till August 22nd: imagine us skirt the east side of Ua-pu — perhaps Rona-Poa on your atlas — and through the Bordelais straits to Taa-hauku in Hiva-Oa, where we arrive on the 23rd; imagine us there until September 4th, when we sailed for Fakarava, which we reached on the 9th, after a very difficult and dangerous passage among these isles. Tuesday, we shall leave for Taiti, where I shall knock off and do some necessary work ashore. It looks pretty bald in the atlas; not in fact; nor I trust in the 130 odd pages of diary which I have just been looking up for these dates: the interest, indeed, has been *incredible*: I did not dream there were such places or such races. My health has stood me splendidly; I am in for hours wading over the knees for shells; I have been five hours on horseback: I have been up pretty near all night waiting to see where the *Casco* would go ashore, and with my diary all ready — simply the most entertaining night of my life. Withal I still have colds; I have one now, and feel pretty sick too; but not as at home: instead of being in 296 bed, for instance, I am at this moment sitting snuffling and writing in an undershirt and trousers; and as for colour, hands, arms, feet, legs, and face, I am browner than the berry: only my trunk and the aristocratic spot on which I sit retain the vile whiteness of the north.

Please give my news and kind love to Henley, Henry James, and any whom you see of well-wishers. Accept from me the very best of my affection: and believe me ever yours,

The Old Man Virulent.

Papeete, Taiti, October 7th, 1888.

Never having found a chance to send this off, I may add more of my news. My cold took a very bad turn, and I am pretty much out of sorts at this particular, living in a little bare one-twentieth-furnished house, surrounded by mangoes, etc. All the rest are well, and I mean to be soon. But these Taiti colds are very severe and, to children, often fatal; so they were not the thing for me. Yesterday the brigantine came in from San Francisco, so we can get our letters off soon. There are in Papeete at this moment, in a little wooden house with grated verandahs, two people who love you very much, and one of them is

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

Taiti, as ever was, 6th October 1888.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — ... You will receive a lot of mostly very bad proofs of photographs: the paper was so bad. Please keep them very private, as they are for the book. We send them, having learned so dread a fear of the sea, that we wish to put our eggs in different baskets. We have been thrice within an ace of being ashore: we were lost (!) for about twelve hours in the Low Archipelago, but by God's blessing had quiet weather all the time; and once in a squall, we cam so near gaun heels ower hurdies, 297 that I really dinnae ken why we didnae a'thegither. Hence, as I say, a great desire to put our eggs in different baskets, particularly on the Pacific (aw-haw-haw) Pacific Ocean.

You can have no idea what a mean time we have had, owing to incidental beastlinesses, nor what a glorious, owing to the intrinsic interest of these isles. I hope the book will be a good one; nor do I really very much doubt that — the stuff is so curious; what I wonder is, if the public will rise to it. A copy of my journal, or as much of it as is made, shall go to you also; it is, of course, quite imperfect, much being to be added and corrected; but O, for the eggs in the different baskets.

All the rest are well enough, and all have enjoyed the cruise so far, in spite of its drawbacks. We have had an awfae time in some ways, Mr. Baxter; and if I wasnae sic a verra patient man (when I ken that I *have* to be) there wad hae been a braw row; and ance if I hadnae happened to be on deck about three in the marnin', I *think* there would have been *murder* done. The American Mairchant Marine is a kent service; ye'll have heard its praise, I'm thinkin'; an' if ye never did, ye can get *Twa Years Before the Mast*, by Dana, whaur forbye a great deal o' pleisure, ye'll get a' the needcessary information. Love to your father and all the family. — Ever your affectionate friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

This lady, as we have seen, had made Stevenson a present of a paper-cutter when he left Bournemouth; and it is in the character of the paper-cutter that he now writes.

Taiti, October 10th, 1888.

DEAR GIVER, — I am at a loss to conceive your object in giving me to a person so locomotory as my proprietor. The number of thousand miles that I have travelled, the strange bed-fellows with which I have been made 298 acquainted, I lack the requisite literary talent to make clear to your imagination. I speak of bed-fellows; pocket-fellows would be a more exact expression, for the place of my abode is in my master's right-hand trouser-pocket; and there, as he waded on the resounding beaches of Nukahiva, or in the shallow tepid water on the reef of Fakarava, I have been overwhelmed by and buried among all manner of abominable South Sea shells, beautiful enough in their way, I make no doubt, but singular company for any self-respecting paper-cutter. He, my master — or as I more justly call him, my bearer; for although I occasionally serve him, does not he serve me daily and all day long, carrying me like an African potentate on my subject's legs? — *he* is delighted with these isles, and this climate, and these savages, and a variety of other things. He now blows a flageolet with singular effects: sometimes the poor thing appears stifled with shame, sometimes it screams with agony; he pursues his career with truculent insensibility. Health appears to reign in the party. I was very nearly sunk in a squall. I am sorry I ever left England, for here there are no books to be had, and without books there is no stable situation for, dear Giver, your affectionate

Wooden Paper-Cutter.

A neighbouring pair of scissors snips a kiss in your direction.

To Sidney Colvin

The ballad referred to in the letter which follows is the *Feast of Famine*, published with others in the collection of 1890 *Ballads* (Chatto & Windus). I never very much admired his South Sea ballads for any quality except their narrative vigour, thinking them unequal and uncertain both in metre and style.

Taiti, October 16th, 1888.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — The cruiser for San Francisco departs to-morrow morning bearing you some kind of a scratch. This much more important packet will travel by 299 way of Auckland. It contains a ballant; and I think a better ballant than I expected ever to do. I can imagine how you will wag your pow over it; and how ragged you will find it, etc., but has it not spirit all the same? and though the verse is not all your fancy painted it, has it not some life? And surely, as narrative, the thing has considerable merit! Read it, get a typewritten copy taken, and send me that and your opinion to the Sandwiches. I know I am only courting the most excruciating mortification; but the real cause of my sending the thing is that I could bear to go down myself, but not to have much MS. go down with me. To say truth, we are through the most dangerous; but it has left in all minds a strong sense of insecurity, and we are all for putting eggs in various baskets.

We leave here soon, bound for Uahiva, Raiatea, Bora-Bora, and the Sandwiches.

O, how my spirit languishes
To step ashore on the Sanguishes;
For there my letters wait,
There shall I know my fate.
O, how my spirit languidges
To step ashore on the Sanguidges.

18th. — I think we shall leave here if all is well on Monday. I am quite recovered, astonishingly recovered. It must be owned these climates and this voyage have given me more strength than I could have thought possible. And yet the sea is a terrible place, stupefying to the mind and poisonous to the temper, the sea, the motion, the lack of space, the cruel publicity, the villainous tinned foods, the sailors, the captain, the passengers — but you are amply repaid when you sight an island, and drop anchor in a new world. Much trouble has attended this trip, but I must confess more pleasure. Nor should I ever complain, as in the last few weeks, with the curing of my 300 illness indeed, as if that were the bursting of an abscess, the cloud has risen from my spirits and to some degree from my temper. Do you know what they called the *Casco* at Fakarava? The *Silver Ship*. Is that not pretty? Pray tell Mrs. Jenkin, *die silberne Frau*, as I only learned it since I wrote her. I think of calling the book by that name: *The Cruise of the Silver Ship* — so there will be one poetic page at least — the title. At the Sandwiches we shall say farewell to the *S. S.* with mingled feelings. She is a lovely creature: the most beautiful thing at this moment in Taiti.

Well, I will take another sheet, though I know I have nothing to say. You would think I was bursting: but the voyage is all stored up for the book, which is to pay for it, we fondly hope; and the troubles of the time are not worth telling; and our news is little.

Here I conclude (Oct. 24th, I think), for we are now stored, and the Blue Peter metaphorically flies.

R. L. S.

To William and Thomas Archer

Stevenson addresses a part of this letter, as well as the whole of another later on, to a young son of Mr. Archer's, but rather to amuse himself than his nominal correspondent, who was then aged three.

Taiti, October 17th, 1888.

DEAR ARCHER, — Though quite unable to write letters I nobly send you a line signifying nothing. The voyage has agreed well with all; it has had its pains, and its extraordinary pleasures; nothing in the world can equal the excitement of the first time you cast anchor in some bay of a tropical island, and the boats begin to surround you, and the tattooed people swarm aboard. Tell Tomarcher, with my respex, that hide-and-seek is not equal to it; no, nor hidee-in-the-dark; which, for the matter of that, is a game for the unskilful: the artist prefers daylight, 301 a good-sized garden, some shrubbery, an open paddock, and — come on, Macduff.

Tomarcher, I am now a distinguished litterytour, but that was not the real bent of my genius. I was the best player of hide-and-seek going; not a good runner, I was up to every shift and dodge, I could jink very well, I could crawl without any noise through leaves, I could hide under a carrot plant, it used to be my favourite boast that I always *walked* into the den. You may care to hear, Tomarcher, about the children in these parts; their parents obey them, they do not obey their parents; and I am sorry to tell you (for I dare say you are already thinking the idea a good one) that it does not pay one halfpenny. There are three sorts of civilisation, Tomarcher: the real old-fashioned one, in which children either had to find out how to please their dear papas, or their dear papas cut their heads off. This style did very well, but is now out of fashion. Then the modern European style: in which children have to behave reasonably well, and go to school and say their prayers, or their dear papas *will know the reason why*. This does fairly well. Then there is the South Sea Island plan, which does not do one bit. The children beat their parents here; it does not make their parents any better; so do not try it.

Dear Tomarcher, I have forgotten the address of your new house, but will send this to one of your papa’s publishers. Remember us all to all of you, and believe me, yours respectably,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

Tautira (The Garden of the World), otherwise called
Hans-Christian-Andersen-ville [*November* 1888].

MY DEAR CHARLES, — Whether I have a penny left in the wide world, I know not, nor shall know, till I get to 302 Honolulu, where I anticipate a devil of an awakening. It will be from a mighty pleasant dream at least: Tautira being mere Heaven. But suppose, for the sake of argument, any money to be left in the hands of my painful doer, what is to be done with it? Save us from exile would be the wise man’s choice, I suppose; for the exile threatens to be eternal. But yet I am of opinion — in case there should be *some* dibbs in the hand of the P.D., *i.e.* painful doer; because if there be none, I shall take to my flageolet on the high-road, and work home the best way I can, having previously made away with my family — I am of opinion that if — — and his are in the customary state, and you are thinking of an offering, and there should be still some funds over, you would be a real good P.D. to put some in with yours and tak' the credit o't, like a wee man! I know it's a beastly thing to ask, but it, after all, does no earthly harm, only that much good. And besides, like enough there's nothing in the till, and there is an end. Yet I live here in the full lustre of millions; it is thought I am the richest son of man that has yet been to Tautira: I! — and I am secretly eaten with the fear of lying in pawn, perhaps for the remainder of my days, in San Francisco. As usual, my colds have much hashed my finances.

Do tell Henley I write this just after having dismissed Ori the sub-chief, in whose house I live, Mrs. Ori, and Pairai, their adopted child, from the evening hour of music: during which I Publickly (with a k) Blow on the Flageolet. These are words of truth. Yesterday I told Ori about W. E. H., counterfeited his playing on the piano and the pipe, and succeeded in sending the six feet four there is of that sub-chief somewhat sadly to his bed; feeling that his was not the genuine article after all. Ori is exactly like a colonel in the Guards. — I am, dear Charles, ever yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

The stanzas which end this letter are well known, having been printed, with one additional, in *Songs of Travel*; but they gain effect, I think, from being given here in their place.

Tautira, 10th November '88.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — Our mainmast is dry-rotten, and we are all to the devil; I shall lie in a debtor's jail. Never mind, Tautira is first chop. I am so besotted that I shall put on the back of this my attempt at words to Wandering Willie; if you can conceive at all the difficulty, you will also conceive the vanity with which I regard any kind of result; and whatever mine is like, it has some sense, and Burns's has none.

Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?
Hunger my driver, I go where I must.
Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather;
Thick drives the rain, and my roof is in the dust.
Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree;
The true word of welcome was spoken in the door —
Dear days of old, with the faces in the firelight,
Kind folks of old, you come again no more.

Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,
Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.
Fire and the windows bright glittered on the moorland;
Song, tuneful song, built a palace in the wild.
Now, when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,
Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is cold.
Lone let it stand, now the friends are all departed,
The kind hearts, the true hearts, that loved the place of old.

R. L. S.

To John Addington Symonds

The following is the draft of a proposed dedication to the South Sea travel-book which was to be the fruit of the present voyages, as is explained in a note at the end.

November 11th, 1888.

One November night, in the village of Tautira, we sat at the high table in the hall of assembly, hearing the natives sing. It was dark in the hall, and very warm; though at times the land wind blew a little shrewdly through the chinks, and at times, through the larger openings, we could see the moonlight on the lawn. As the songs arose in the rattling Tahitian chorus, the chief translated here and there a verse. Farther on in the volume you shall read the songs themselves; and I am in hopes that not you only, but all who can find a savour in the ancient poetry of places, will read them with some pleasure. You are to conceive us, therefore, in strange circumstances and very pleasing; in a strange land and climate, the most beautiful on earth; surrounded by a foreign race that all travellers have agreed to be the most engaging; and taking a double interest in two foreign arts.

We came forth again at last, in a cloudy moonlight, on the forest lawn which is the street of Tautira. The Pacific roared outside upon the reef. Here and there one of the scattered palm-built lodges shone out under the shadow of the wood, the lamplight bursting through the crannies of the wall. We went homeward slowly, Ori a Ori carrying behind us the lantern and the chairs, properties with which we had just been enacting our part of the distinguished visitor. It was one of those moments in which minds not altogether churlish recall the names and deplore the absence of congenial friends; and it was your name that first rose upon our lips. "How Symonds would have enjoyed this evening!" said one, and then another. The word caught in my mind; I went to bed, and it was still there. The glittering, frosty solitudes in which your days are cast arose before me: I seemed to see you walking 305 there in the late night, under the pine-trees and the stars; and I received the image with something like remorse.

There is a modern attitude towards Fortune; in this place I will not use a graver name. Staunchly to withstand her buffets and to enjoy with equanimity her favours was the code of the virtuous of old. Our fathers, it *should seem, wondered and doubted how they had merited their misfortunes: we, rather how we have deserved our happiness. And we stand often abashed, and sometimes revolted, at those partialities of fate by which we profit most. It was so with me on that November night: I felt that our positions should be changed. It was you, dear Symonds, who should have gone upon that voyage and written this account. With your rich stores of knowledge, you could have remarked and understood a thousand things of interest and beauty that escaped my ignorance; and the brilliant colours of your style would have carried into a thousand sickrooms the sea air and the strong sun of tropic islands. It was otherwise decreed. But suffer me at least to connect you, if only in name and only in the fondness of imagination, with the voyage of the* Silver Ship.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

DEAR SYMONDS, — I send you this (November 11th), the morning of its completion. If I ever write an account of this voyage, may I place this letter at the beginning? It represents — I need not tell you, for you too are an artist — a most genuine feeling, which kept me long awake last night; and though perhaps a little elaborate, I think it a good piece of writing. We are *in heaven here*. Do not forget.

R. L. S.

Please keep this: I have no perfect copy.

Tautira, on the peninsula of Taiti.

To Thomas Archer

Tautira, Island of Taiti [*November* 1888].

DEAR TOMARCHER, — This is a pretty state of things! seven o'clock and no word of breakfast! And I was awake 306 a good deal last night, for it was full moon, and they had made a great fire of cocoa-nut husks down by the sea, and as we have no blinds or shutters, this kept my room very bright. And then the rats had a wedding or a school-feast under my bed. And then I woke early, and I have nothing to read except Virgil's *Æneid*, which is not good fun on an empty stomach, and a Latin dictionary, which is good for naught, and by some humorous accident, your dear papa's article on Skerryvore. And I read the whole of that, and very impudent it is, but you must not tell your dear papa I said so, or it might come to a battle in which you might lose either a dear papa or a valued correspondent, or both, which would be prodigal. And still no breakfast; so I said "Let's write to Tomarcher."

This is a much better place for children than any I have hitherto seen in these seas. The girls (and sometimes the boys) play a very elaborate kind of hopscotch. The boys play horses exactly as we do in Europe; and have very good fun on stilts, trying to knock each other down, in which they do not often succeed. The children of all ages go to church and are allowed to do what they please, running about the aisles, rolling balls, stealing mamma's bonnet and publicly sitting on it, and at last going to sleep in the middle of the floor. I forgot to say that the whips to play horses, and the balls to roll about the church — at least I never saw them used elsewhere — grow ready made on trees; which is rough on toy-shops. The whips are so good that I wanted to play horses myself; but no such luck! my hair is grey, and I am a great, big, ugly man. The balls are rather hard, but very light and quite round. When you grow up and become offensively rich, you can charter a ship in the port of London, and have it come back to you entirely loaded with these balls; when you could satisfy your mind as to their character, and give them away when done with to your uncles and aunts. But what I really wanted to tell you was this: besides the tree-top toys (Hush-a-by, toy-shop, on the tree-top!), I 307 have seen some real *made* toys, the first hitherto observed in the South Seas.

This was how. You are to imagine a four-wheeled gig; one horse; in the front seat two Tahiti natives, in their Sunday clothes, blue coat, white shirt, kilt (a little longer than the Scotch) of a blue stuff with big white or yellow flowers, legs and feet bare; in the back seat me and my wife, who is a friend of yours; under our feet, plenty of lunch and things: among us a great deal of fun in broken Tahitian, one of the natives, the sub-chief of the village, being a great ally of mine. Indeed we have exchanged names; so that he is now called Rui, the nearest they can come to Louis, for they have no *l* and no *s* in their language. Rui is six feet three in his stockings, and a magnificent man. We all have straw hats, for the sun is strong. We drive between the sea, which makes a great noise, and the mountains; the road is cut through a forest mostly of fruit trees, the very creepers, which take the place of our ivy, heavy with a great and delicious fruit, bigger than your head and far nicer, called Barbedine. Presently we came to a house in a pretty garden, quite by itself, very nicely kept, the doors and windows open, no one about, and no noise but that of the sea. It looked like a house in a fairy-tale, and just beyond we must ford a river, and there we saw the inhabitants. Just in the mouth of the river, where it met the sea waves, they were ducking and bathing and screaming together like a covey of birds: seven or eight little naked brown boys and girls as happy as the day was long; and on the banks of the stream beside them, real toys — toy ships, full rigged, and with their sails set, though they were lying in the dust on their beam ends. And then I knew for sure they were all children in a fairy-story, living alone together in that lonely house with the only toys in all the island; and that I had myself driven, in my four-wheeled gig, into a corner of the fairy-story, and the question was, should I get out again? But it was all right; I guess only one of the wheels of the gig had 308 got into the fairy-story; and the next jolt the whole thing vanished, and we drove on in our sea-side forest as before, and I have the honour to be Tomarcher’s valued correspondent, Teriitera, which he was previously known as

Robert Louis Stevenson.

[Mrs. R. L. Stevenson to Sidney Colvin

This letter from Mrs. Stevenson serves to fill out and explain allusions in the three or four preceding. The beautiful brown princess is Princess Moë, ex-queen of Raiatea, well known to readers of Pierre Loti and Miss Gordon Cumming. The move away from Papeete, where Stevenson had fallen seriously ill, had been made in hopes of finding on the island a climate that would suit him better.

Tautira, Tahiti, Dec. 4th .

DEAR, long neglected, though never forgotten Custodian, I write you from fairyland, where we are living in a fairy story, the guests of a beautiful brown princess. We came to stay a week, five weeks have passed, and we are still indefinite as to our time of leaving. It was chance brought us here, for no one in Papeete could tell us a word about this part of the island except that it was very fine to look at, and inhabited by wild people — ”almost as wild as the people of Anaho!” That touch about the people of Anaho inclined our hearts this way, so we finally concluded to take a look at the other side of Tahiti. The place of our landing was windy, uninhabited except by mosquitoes, and Louis was ill. The first day Lloyd and the Captain made an exploration, but came back disgusted. They had found a Chinaman, a long way off, who seemed to have some horses, but no desire to hire them to strangers, and they had found nothing else whatever. The next morning I took Valentine and went on a prospecting tour of my own. I found the Chinaman, persuaded him to let me have two horses and a wagon, and went back for the rest of my family. When asked where I wished to go, I could only say to the largest native village and the most 309 wild. Ill as Louis was, I brought him the next day, and shall never cease to be thankful for my courage, for he has gained health and strength every day. He takes sea baths and swims, and lives almost entirely in the open air as nearly without clothes as possible, a simple pyjama suit of striped light flannel his only dress. As to shoes and stockings we all have scorned them for months except Mrs. Stevenson, who often goes barefoot and never, I believe, wears stockings. Lloyd’s costume, in which he looks remarkably well, consists of a striped flannel shirt and a pareu. The pareu is no more or less than a large figured blue and white cotton window curtain twisted about the waist, and hanging a little below the bare knees. Both Louis and Lloyd wear wreaths of artificial flowers, made of the dried pandanus leaf, on their hats.

Moë has gone to Papeete by the command of the king, whose letter was addressed “To the great Princess at Tautira. P.V.” P.V. stands for Pomaré 5th. Every evening, before she went, we played Van John lying in a circle on pillows in the middle of the floor with our heads together: and hardly an evening passed but it struck us afresh how very much you would like Moë, and we told her of you again. The house (really here a palace) in which we live, belongs to the sub-chief, Ori, a subject and relation of the Princess. He, and his whole family, consisting of his wife, his two little adopted sons, his daughter and her two young babies, turned out to live in a little bird-cage hut of one room. Ori is the very finest specimen of a native we have seen yet; he is several inches over six feet, of perfect though almost gigantic proportions, and looks more like a Roman Emperor in bronze than words can express. One day, when Moë gave a feast, it being the correct thing to do, we all wore wreaths of golden yellow leaves on our heads; when Ori walked in and sat down at the table, as with one voice we all cried out in admiration. His manners and I might say his habit of thought are English. In some ways, he is so like a Colonel 310 of the Guards that we often call him Colonel. It was either the day before, or the morning of our public feast, that Louis asked the Princess if she thought Ori would accept his name. She was sure of it, and much pleased at the idea. I wish you could have seen Louis, blushing like a schoolgirl, when Ori came in, and the brotherhood was offered. So now if you please, Louis is no more Louis, having given that name away in the Tahitian form of *Rui*, but is known as *Terii-Tera* (pronounced Ter*ee*terah) that being Ori’s Christian name. “Ori a Ori” is his clan name.

Let me tell you of our village feast. The chief, who was our guide in the matter, found four large fat hogs, which Louis bought, and four cases of ship’s biscuit were sent over from the *Casco*, which is lying at Papeete for repairs. Our feast cost in all about eighty dollars. Every Sunday all things of public interest are announced in the Farehau (an enormous public bird cage) and the news of the week read aloud from the Papeete journal, if it happens to turn up. Our feast was given on a Wednesday, and was announced by the chief the Sunday before, who referred to Louis as “the rich one.” Our hogs were killed in the morning, washed in the sea, and roasted whole in a pit with hot stones. When done they were laid on their stomachs in neat open coffins of green basket work, each hog with his case of biscuits beside him. Early in the morning the entire population began bathing, a bath being the preliminary to everything. At about three o’clock — four was the hour set — there was a general movement towards our premises, so that I had to hurry Louis into his clothes, all white, even to his shoes. Lloyd was also in white, but barefoot. I was not prepared, so had to appear in a red and white muslin gown, also barefoot. As

Mrs. Stevenson had had a feast of her own, conducted on religious principles, she kept a little in the background, so that her dress did not matter so much. The chief, who speaks French very well, stood beside Louis to interpret 311 for him. By the time we had taken our respective places on the veranda in front of our door, an immense crowd had assembled. They came in five, instead of four detachments which was what the chief expected, and he was a little confused at first, as he and Louis had been arranging a speech to four sets of people, which ran in this order. The clergyman at the head of the Protestants: the chief, council, and irreligious: — one of the council at their head. The schoolmaster with the schoolchildren: the catechist and the Catholics: but there was another very small sect, by some strange mischance called Mormons, which it was supposed would be broken up and swallowed by the others. But no, the Mormons came in a body alone, marshalled by the best and wittiest speaker — *bar Rui* — in Tautira. Each set of people came bending under the weight of bamboo poles laden with fruits, pigs, fowls, etc. All were dressed in their gayest pareus, and many had wreaths of leaves or flowers on their heads. The prettiest sight of all was the children, who came marching two and two abreast, the bamboo poles lying lengthwise across their shoulders.

When all the offerings had been piled in five great heaps upon the ground, Louis made his oration to the accompaniment of the squealing of pigs, the cackling of hens, and the roar of the surf which beats man-high upon the roof. A speech was made in return on behalf of the village, and then each section sent forth its orator, the speeches following in the order I have given above. Each speaker finished by coming forward with one of the smaller things in his hand, which he offered personally to Louis, and then shook hands with us all and retired. Among these smaller presents were many fish-hooks for large fishing, laboriously carved from mother-of-pearl shell. One man came with one egg in each hand saying, “carry these to Scotland with you, let them hatch into cocks, and their song shall remind you of Tautira.” The schoolmaster, with a leaf-basket of rose apples, made his speech in French. Somehow 312 the whole effect of the scene was like a story out of the Bible, and I am not ashamed that Louis and I both shed tears when we saw the enchanting procession of schoolchildren. The Catholic priest, Father Bruno, a great friend of ours, said that for the next fifty years the time of the feast of the rich one will be talked of: which reminds me of our friend Donat, of Fakarava, who was temporary resident at the time we were there. “I am so glad,” he said, “that the *Casco* came in just now, otherwise I should be forgotten: but now the people will always say this or that happened so long before — or so long after — the coming of the *Silver Ship*, when Donat represented the government.”

In front of our house is a broad stretch of grass, dotted with cocoanuts, breadfruits, mangoes, and the strange pandanus tree. I wish you could have seen them, their lower branches glowing with the rich colours of the fruits hung upon them by Ori and his men, and great heaps lying piled against their roots, on the evening of our feast. From the bamboo poles that they were carried upon, a pen was made for the ten pigs, and a fowl house for the twenty-three fowls that were among the presents. But there was a day of reckoning at hand. Time after time we ran down to the beach to look for the *Casco*, until we were in despair. For over a month we had lived in Ori’s house, causing him infinite trouble and annoyance, and not even his, at that. Areia (the chief — Areia means the Prince) went to Papeete and came back with a letter to say that more work had to be done upon the *Casco*, and it might be any time before she could get to Tautira. We had used up all our stores, and had only a few dollars of money left in Tautira, and not very much in Papeete. Could we stand the journey to Papeete, we could not live upon the yacht in the midst of the workmen, and we had not money enough left to live at an hotel. We were playing cards on the floor, as usual, when this message came, and you can imagine its effect. I knew perfectly well that 313 Rui would force us to stay on with him, but what depressed me the most of all, was the fact of Louis having made brothers with him just before this took place. Had there been a shadow of doubt on our dear Rui’s face, I should have fled from before him. Sitting there on the floor waiting for him was too much for my nerves and I burst into tears, upon which the princess wept bitterly. In the meantime the priest had dropped in, so that we had him and Moë, and Areia, as witnesses to our humiliating position. First came Madame Rui, who heard the story, and sat down on the floor in silence, which was very damping for a beginning, and then Ori of Ori, the magnificent, who listened to the tale of the shipwrecked mariners with serious dignity, asking one or two questions, and then spoke to this effect. “You are my brother: all that I have is yours. I know that your food is done, but I can give you plenty of fish and taro. We like you, and wish to have you here. Stay where you are till the *Casco* comes. Be happy — *et ne pleurez pas*.” Louis dropped his head into his hands and wept, and then we all went up to Rui and shook hands with him and accepted his offer. Madame Rui, who had been silent only as a dutiful wife, that her husband might speak first, poured forth manifold reasons for our staying on as long as we could possibly manage. During all this scene, an attendant of the princess had been sitting on the floor behind us, a baby in his arms, where he had ensconced himself for the purpose of watching the game. He understood nothing of what was going on; we wondered afterwards what he thought of it. Reduced as we were, we still had a few bottles of champagne left. Champagne being an especial weakness of our gigantic friend, it occurred to some one that this was a proper occasion to open a couple of bottles. Louis, the Princess, and I were quite, as the Scotch so well say, "begrutten," Areia's immense eyes were fairly melting out of his head with emotion, the priest was wiping his eyes and blowing his nose: and then for no apparent cause we suddenly fell to drinking and clinking 314 glasses quite merrily: the bewildered attendant clinked and drank too, and then sat down and waited in case there should be any repetition of the drinking part of the performance. And sure enough there was, for in the midst of an animated discussion as to ways and means, Mrs. Stevenson announced that it was St. Andrew's day, so again the attendant clinked and drank with Ori's mad foreigners.

It is quite true that we live almost entirely upon native food; our luncheon to-day consisted of raw fish with sauce made of cocoanut milk mixed with sea water and lime juice, taro poi-poi, and bananas roasted in hot stones in a little pit in the ground, with cocoanut cream to eat with them. Still we like coffee in the evening, a little wine at dinner, and a few other products of civilisation. It would be possible, the chief said, to send a boat, but that would cost sixty dollars. A final arrangement, which we were forced to accept, was that Rui should go in his own boat, and the chief would appoint a substitute for some public work that he was then engaged upon. Early the next morning, amidst a raging sea and a storming wind, Rui departed with three men to help him. It is forty miles to Papeete, and Rui, starting in the early morning, arrived there at nine o'clock; but alas, the wind was against him, and it was altogether six days before he got back.

Louis has done a great deal of work on his new story, *The Master of Ballantrae*, almost finished it in fact, while Mrs. Stevenson and I are deep in the mysteries of hatmaking, which is a ladies' accomplishment taking the place of water-colour drawing in England. It is a small compliment to present a hat to an acquaintance. Altogether we have about thirteen. Next door to us is Areia's out-of-door house, where he and the ladies of his family sleep and eat: it has a thatched roof of palm branches, and a floor of boards, the sides and ends being open to the world. On the floor are spread mats plaited of pandanus leaves, and pillows stuffed with silk cotton from the cotton tree. 315 We make little calls upon the ladies, lie upon the mats, and smoke cigarettes made of tobacco leaves rolled in a bit of dried pandanus, and admire their work, or get a lesson; or they call upon us, and lie upon our mats. One day there was an election in the Farehau. It takes place all over the island once a year, and among others, the sub-chief and head-councillor is chosen. For the latter, our Rui was a candidate.

In the beginning, the French deposed the born chiefs and told the people to elect men for themselves. The choice of Tautira fell upon Rui, who declined the honour, saying that Areia was his natural chief, and he could not take a position that should belong to his superior; upon which the people elected Areia chief, and Rui sub-chief and head-councillor. We all went over to the Farehau, where Areia sat in the middle of his councillors on a dais behind a long table. The Farehau is an immense bird-cage of bamboos tied together with pandanus fibre, and thatched with palms. In front of the dais the ground is deeply covered with dried leaves. The costume of the dignitaries was rather odd. Areia wore a white shirt and blue flannel coat, which was well enough; but on his plump legs were a pair of the most incredible trousers: light blue calico with a small red pattern, such as servant girls wear for gowns in England: on his feet were neat little shoes and stockings. Rui was a fine sight, and we were very proud of him; he sat, exactly like an English gentleman, holding himself well in hand, alert as a fox and keen as a greyhound: several men spoke from the farther end of the hall, making objections of some sort, we could see. Rui listened with a half satirical, half kindly smile in his eyes, and then dropped a quiet answer without rising from his seat, which had the effect of raising a shout of laughter, and quite demolishing his opponent. Voters came up to the table and dropped their bits of paper into a slit in a box: some led children by the hand, and some carried babies in their arms; across the centre of the great room children and dogs ran chasing 316 each other and playing. I noticed two little maids who walked up and down for a long time with their arms intertwined about each other's waists. Near where we sat (we were on the dais, above the common herd), a pretty young lady having tied up her dog's mouth with a tuft of grass, industriously caught and cracked fleas from its back. Both Lloyd and I grew very sleepy, and as we did not like to leave till the election was decided, we just threw ourselves down and took a nap at the feet of the councillors: nor did we wake till the chief called out to us in English "it is finished." I never thought I should be able to calmly sleep at a public meeting on a platform in the face of several hundred people: but it is wonderful how quickly one takes up the ways of a people when you live with them as intimately as we do.

I hear dinner coming on the table, so with much love from us all to you and other dear ones, including our dear friend Henry James, believe me, affectionately yours,

Fanny V. de G. Stevenson.]

To Sidney Colvin

Yacht Casco, at Sea, 14th January 1889.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Twenty days out from Papeete. Yes, sir, all that, and only (for a guess) in 4° north or at the best 4°30’, though already the wind seems to smell a little of the North Pole. My handwriting you must take as you get, for we are speeding along through a nasty swell, and I can only keep my place at the table by means of a foot against the divan, the unoccupied hand meanwhile gripping the ink-bottle. As we begin (so very slowly) to draw near to seven months of correspondence, we are all in some fear; and I want to have letters written before I shall be plunged into that boiling pot of disagreeables which I constantly expect at Honolulu. What is needful can be added there.

We were kept two months at Tautira in the house of my dear old friend, Ori a Ori, till both the masts of this invaluable yacht had been repaired. It was all for the best: Tautira being the most beautiful spot, and its people the most amiable, I have ever found. Besides which, the climate suited me to the ground; I actually went sea-bathing almost every day, and in our feasts (we are all huge eaters in Taiarapu) have been known to apply four times for pig. And then again I got wonderful materials for my book, collected songs and legends on the spot; songs still sung in chorus by perhaps a hundred persons, not two of whom can agree on their translation; legends, on which I have seen half a dozen seniors sitting in conclave and debating what came next. Once I went a day’s journey to the other side of the island to Tati, the high chief of the Tevas — *my* chief that is, for I am now a Teva and Teriitera, at your service — to collect more and correct what I had already. In the meanwhile I got on with my work, almost finished *The Master of Ballantrae*, which contains more human work than anything of mine but *Kidnapped*, and wrote the half of another ballad, the *Song of Rahero*, on a Taiarapu legend of my own clan, sir — not so much fire as the *Feast of Famine*, but promising to be more even and correct. But the best fortune of our stay at Tautira was my knowledge of Ori himself, one of the finest creatures extant. The day of our parting was a sad one. We deduced from it a rule for travellers: not to stay two months in one place — which is to cultivate regrets.

At last our contemptible ship was ready; to sea we went, bound for Honolulu and the letter-bag, on Christmas Day; and from then to now have experienced every sort of minor misfortune, squalls, calms, contrary winds and seas, pertinacious rains, declining stores, till we came almost to regard ourselves as in the case of Vanderdecken. Three days ago our luck seemed to improve, we struck a leading breeze, got creditably through the doldrums, and 318 just as we looked to have the N.E. trades and a straight run, the rains and squalls and calms began again about midnight, and this morning, though there is breeze enough to send us along, we are beaten back by an obnoxious swell out of the north. Here is a page of complaint, when a verse of thanksgiving had perhaps been more in place. For all this time we must have been skirting past dangerous weather, in the tail and circumference of hurricanes, and getting only annoyance where we should have had peril, and ill-humour instead of fear.

I wonder if I have managed to give you any news this time, or whether the usual damn hangs over my letter? “The midwife whispered, Be thou dull!” or at least inexplicit. Anyway I have tried my best, am exhausted with the effort, and fall back into the land of generalities. I cannot tell you how often we have planned our arrival at the Monument: two nights ago, the 12th January, we had it all planned out, arrived in the lights and whirl of Waterloo, hailed a hansom, span up Waterloo Road, over the bridge, etc. etc., and hailed the Monument gate in triumph and with indescribable delight. My dear Custodian, I always think we are too sparing of assurances: Cordelia is only to be excused by Regan and Goneril in the same nursery; I wish to tell you that the longer I live, the more dear do you become to me; nor does my heart own any stronger sentiment. If the bloody schooner didn’t send me flying in every sort of direction at the same time, I would say better what I feel so much; but really, if you were here, you would not be writing letters, I believe; and even I, though of a more marine constitution, am much perturbed by this bobbery and wish — O ye Gods, how I wish! — that it was done, and we had arrived, and I had Pandora’s Box (my mail-bag) in hand, and was in the lively hope of something eatable for dinner instead of salt horse, tinned mutton, duff without any plums, and pie fruit, which now make up our whole repertory. O Pandora’s Box! I wonder what you will contain. As like as not 319 you will contain but little money: if that be so, we shall have to retire to ‘Frisco in the *Casco*, and thence by sea *via* Panama to Southampton, where we should arrive in April. I would like fine to see you on the tug: ten years older both of us than the last time you came to welcome Fanny and me to England. If we have money, however, we shall do a little differently: send the *Casco* away from Honolulu empty of its high-born lessees, for that voyage to ‘Frisco is one long dead beat in foul and at last in cold weather; stay awhile behind, follow by steamer, cross the States by train, stay awhile in New York on business, and arrive probably by the German Line in Southampton. But all this is a question of money. We shall have to lie very dark awhile to recruit our finances: what comes from the book of the cruise, I do not want to touch until the capital is repaid.

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

Honolulu, January 1889.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — Here at last I have arrived. We could not get away from Tahiti till Christmas Day, and then had thirty days of calms and squalls, a deplorable passage. This has thrown me all out of gear in every way. I plunge into business.

1. *The Master.* Herewith go three more parts. You see he grows in bulk; this making ten already, and I am not yet sure if I can finish it in an eleventh; which shall go to you *quam primum* — I hope by next mail.

2. *Illustrations to M.* I totally forgot to try to write to Hole. It was just as well, for I find it impossible to forecast with sufficient precision. You had better throw off all this and let him have it at once. *Please do: all, and at once: see further;* and I should hope he would still be in time for the later numbers. The three pictures I have received are so truly good that I should bitterly regret 320 having the volume imperfectly equipped. They are the best illustrations I have seen since I don't know when.

3. *Money.* To-morrow the mail comes in, and I hope it will bring me money either from you or home, but I will add a word on that point.

4. My address will be Honolulu — no longer Yacht *Casco*, which I am packing off — till probably April.

5. As soon as I am through with *The Master*, I shall finish *The Game of Bluff* — now rechristened *The Wrong Box*. This I wish to sell, cash down. It is of course copyright in the States; and I offer it to you for five thousand dollars. Please reply on this by return. Also please tell the typewriter who was so good as to be amused by our follies that I am filled with admiration for his piece of work.

6. *Master* again. Please see that I haven't the name of the Governor of New York wrong (1764 is the date) in part ten. I have no book of reference to put me right. Observe you now have up to August inclusive in hand, so you should begin to feel happy.

Is this all? I wonder, and fear not. Henry the Trader has not yet turned up: I hope he may to-morrow, when we expect a mail. Not one word of business have I received either from the States or England, nor anything in the shape of coin; which leaves me in a fine uncertainty and quite penniless on these islands. H.M. (who is a gentleman of a courtly order and much tinctured with letters) is very polite; I may possibly ask for the position of palace doorkeeper. My voyage has been a singular mixture of good and ill fortune. As far as regards interest and material, the fortune has been admirable; as far as regards time, money, and impediments of all kinds, from squalls and calms to rotten masts and sprung spars, simply detestable. I hope you will be interested to hear of two volumes on the wing. The cruise itself, you are to know, will make a big volume with appendices; some of it will 321 first appear as (what they call) letters in some of M'Clure's papers. I believe the book when ready will have a fair measure of serious interest: I have had great fortune in finding old songs and ballads and stories, for instance, and have many singular instances of life in the last few years among these islands.

The second volume is of ballads. You know *Ticonderoga*. I have written another: *The Feast of Famine*, a Marquesan story. A third is half done: *The Song of Rahero*, a genuine Tahitian legend. A fourth dances before, me. A Hawaiian fellow this, *The Priest's Drought*, or some such name. If, as I half suspect, I get enough subjects out of the islands, *Ticonderoga* shall be suppressed, and we'll call the volume *South Sea Ballads*. In health, spirits, renewed interest in life, and, I do believe, refreshed capacity for work, the cruise has proved a wise folly. Still we're not home, and (although the friend of a crowned head) are penniless upon these (as one of my correspondents used to call them) "lovely but *fatil* islands." By the way, who wrote the *Lion of the Nile*? My dear sir, that is Something Like. Overdone in bits, it has a true thought and a true ring of language. Beg the anonymous from me, to delete (when he shall republish) the two last verses, and end on "the lion of the Nile." One Lampman has a good sonnet on a "Winter Evening" in, I think, the same number: he seems ill named, but I am tempted to hope a man is not always answerable for his name. For instance, you would think you knew mine. No such matter. It is — at your service and Mr. Scribner's and that of all of the faithful — Teriitera (pray pronounce Tayree-Tayra) or (*gallicé*) Téri-téra.

R. L. S.

More when the mail shall come.

I am an idiot. I want to be clear on one point. Some of Hole's drawings must of course be too late; and yet they seem to me so excellent I would fain have the lot 322 complete. It is one thing for you to pay for drawings which are to appear in that soul-swallowing machine, your magazine: quite another if they are only to illustrate a volume. I wish you to take a brisk (even a fiery) decision on the point; and let Hole know. To resume my desultory song, I desire you would carry the same fire (hereinbefore suggested) into your decision on *The Wrong Box*; for in my present state of benighted ignorance as to my affairs for the last seven months — I know not even whether my house or my mother's house have been let — I desire to see something definite in front of me — outside the lot of palace doorkeeper. I believe the said *Wrong Box* is a real lark; in which, of course, I may be grievously deceived; but the typewriter is with me. I may also be deceived as to the numbers of *The Master* now going and already gone; but to me they seem First Chop, sir, First Chop. I hope I shall pull off that damned ending; but it still depresses me: this is your doing, Mr. Burlingame: you would have it there and then, and I fear it — I fear that ending.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Honolulu, February 8th, 1889.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — Here we are at Honolulu, and have dismissed the yacht, and lie here till April anyway, in a fine state of haze, which I am yet in hopes some letter of yours (still on the way) may dissipate. No money, and not one word as to money! However, I have got the yacht paid off in triumph, I think; and though we stay here impignorate, it should not be for long, even if you bring us no extra help from home. The cruise has been a great success, both as to matter, fun, and health; and yet, Lord, man! we're pleased to be ashore! Yon was a very fine voyage from Tahiti up here, but — the dry land's a fine place too, and we don't mind squalls any longer, and eh, man, that's a great thing. Blow, blow, thou wintry 323 wind, thou hast done me no appreciable harm beyond a few grey hairs! Altogether, this foolhardy venture is achieved; and if I have but nine months of life and any kind of health, I shall have both eaten my cake and got it back again with usury. But, man, there have been days when I felt guilty, and thought I was in no position for the head of a house.

Your letter and accounts are doubtless at S. F., and will reach me in course. My wife is no great shakes; she is the one who has suffered most. My mother has had a Huge Old Time; Lloyd is first chop; I so well that I do not know myself — sea-bathing, if you please, and what is far more dangerous, entertaining and being entertained by His Majesty here, who is a very fine intelligent fellow, but O, Charles! what a crop for the drink! He carries it, too, like a mountain with a sparrow on its shoulders. We calculated five bottles of champagne in three hours and a half (afternoon), and the sovereign quite presentable, although perceptibly more dignified at the end....

The extraordinary health I enjoy and variety of interests I find among these islands would tempt me to remain here; only for Lloyd, who is not well placed in such countries for a permanency; and a little for Colvin, to whom I feel I owe a sort of filial duty. And these two considerations will no doubt bring me back — to go to bed again — in England. — Yours ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands, February 1889.

MY DEAR BOB, — My extremely foolhardy venture is practically over. How foolhardy it was I don't think I realised. We had a very small schooner, and, like most yachts, over-rigged and over-sparred, and like many American yachts on a very dangerous sail plan. The 324 waters we sailed in are, of course, entirely unlighted, and very badly charted; in the Dangerous Archipelago, through which we were fools enough to go, we were perfectly in ignorance of where we were for a whole night and half the next day, and this in the midst of invisible islands and rapid and variable currents; and we were lucky when we found our whereabouts at last. We have twice had all we wanted in the way of squalls: once, as I came on deck, I found the green sea over the cockpit coamings and running down the companion like a brook to meet me; at that same moment the foresail sheet jammed and the captain had no knife; this was the only occasion on the cruise that ever I set a hand to a rope, but I worked like a Trojan, judging the possibility of hemorrhage better than the certainty of drowning. Another time I saw a rather singular thing: our whole ship's company as pale as paper from the captain to the cook; we had a black squall astern on the port side and a white squall ahead to starboard; the complication passed off innocuous, the black squall only fetching us with its tail, and the white one slewing off somewhere else. Twice we were a long while (days) in the close vicinity of hurricane weather, but again luck prevailed, and we saw none of it. These are dangers incident to these seas and small craft. What was an amazement, and at the same time a powerful stroke of luck, both our masts were rotten, and we found it out — I was going to say in time, but it was stranger and luckier than that. The head of the mainmast hung over so that hands were afraid to go to the helm; and less than three weeks before — I am not sure it was more than a fortnight — we had been nearly twelve hours beating off the lee shore of Eimeo (or Moorea, next island to Tahiti) in half a gale of wind with a violent head sea: she would neither tack nor wear once, and had to be boxed off with the mainsail — you can imagine what an ungodly show of kites we carried — and yet the mast stood. The very day after that, in the southern bight of Tahiti, we had a near 325 squeak, the wind suddenly coming calm; the reefs were close in with, my eye! what a surf! The pilot thought we were gone, and the captain had a boat cleared, when a lucky squall came to our rescue. My wife, hearing the order given about the boats, remarked to my mother, "Isn't that nice? We shall soon be ashore!" Thus does the female mind unconsciously skirt along the verge of eternity. Our voyage up here was most disastrous — calms, squalls, head sea, waterspouts of rain, hurricane weather all about, and we in the midst of the hurricane season, when even the hopeful builder and owner of the yacht had pronounced these seas unfit for her. We ran out of food, and were quite given up for lost in Honolulu: people had ceased to speak to Belle about the *Casco*, as a deadly subject.

But the perils of the deep were part of the programme; and though I am very glad to be done with them for a while and comfortably ashore, where a squall does not matter a snuff to any one, I feel pretty sure I shall want to get to sea again ere long. The dreadful risk I took was financial, and double-headed. First, I had to sink a lot of money in the cruise, and if I didn't get health, how was I to get it back? I have got health to a wonderful extent; and as I have the most interesting matter for my book, bar accidents, I ought to get all I have laid out and a profit. But, second (what I own I never considered till too late), there was the danger of collisions, of damages and heavy repairs, of disablement, towing, and salvage; indeed, the cruise might have turned round and cost me double. Nor will this danger be quite over till I hear the yacht is in San Francisco; for though I have shaken the dust of her deck from my feet, I fear (as a point of law) she is still mine till she gets there.

From my point of view, up to now the cruise has been 326 a wonderful success. I never knew the world was so amusing. On the last voyage we had grown so used to sea-life that no one wearied, though it lasted a full month, except Fanny, who is always ill. All the time our visits to the islands have been more like dreams than realities: the people, the life, the beachcombers, the old stories and songs I have picked up, so interesting; the climate, the scenery, and (in some places) the women, so beautiful. The women are handsomest in Tahiti, the men in the Marquesas; both as fine types as can be imagined. Lloyd reminds me, I have not told you one characteristic incident of the cruise from a semi-naval point of view. One night we were going ashore in Anaho Bay; the most awful noise on deck; the breakers distinctly audible in the cabin; and there I had to sit below, entertaining in my best style a negroid native chieftain, much the worse for rum! You can imagine the evening's pleasure.

This naval report on cruising in the South Seas would be incomplete without one other trait. On our voyage up here I came one day into the dining-room, the hatch in the floor was open, the ship's boy was below with a baler, and two of the hands were carrying buckets as for a fire; this meant that the pumps had ceased working.

One stirring day was that in which we sighted Hawaii. It blew fair, but very strong; we carried jib, foresail, and mainsail, all single-reefed, and she carried her lee rail under water and flew. The swell, the heaviest I have ever been out in — I tried in vain to estimate the height, *at least* fifteen feet — came tearing after us about a point and a half off the wind. We had the best hand — old Louis — at the wheel; and, really, he did nobly, and had noble luck, for it never caught us once. At times it seemed we must have it; old Louis would look over his shoulder with the queerest look and dive down his neck into his shoulders; and then it missed us somehow, and only sprays came over our quarter, turning the little outside lane of deck into a mill race as deep as to the cockpit coamings. I never 327 remember anything more delightful and exciting. Pretty soon after we were lying absolutely becalmed under the lee of Hawaii, of which we had been warned; and the captain never confessed he had done it on purpose, but when accused, he smiled. Really, I suppose he did quite right, for we stood committed to a dangerous race, and to bring her to the wind would have been rather a heart-sickening manœuvre.

R. L. S.

To Marcel Schwob

At Honolulu, Stevenson found awaiting him, among the accumulations of the mail-bag, two letters of friendly homage — the first, I think, he had received from any foreign *confrère* — addressed to him by the distinguished young French scholar and man of letters, M. Marcel Schwob, since deceased.

Honolulu, Sandwich Islands, February 8th, 1889.

DEAR SIR, — I thank you — from the midst of such a flurry as you can imagine, with seven months' accumulated correspondence on my table — for your two friendly and clever letters. Pray write me again. I shall be home in May or June, and not improbably shall come to Paris in the summer. Then we can talk; or in the interval I may be able to write, which is to-day out of the question. Pray take a word from a man of crushing occupations, and count it as a volume. Your little *conte* is delightful. Ah yes, you are right, I love the eighteenth century; and so do you, and have not listened to its voice in vain. — The Hunted One,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

Honolulu, 8th March 1889.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — At last I have the accounts: the Doer has done excellently, and in the words of — — , "I reciprocate every step of your behaviour."... I send 328 a letter for Bob in your care, as I don't know his Liverpool address, by which (for he is to show you part of it) you will see we have got out of this adventure — or hope to have — with wonderful fortune. I have the retrospective horrors on me when I think of the liabilities I incurred; but, thank God, I think I'm in port again, and I have found one climate in which I can enjoy life. Even Honolulu is too cold for me; but the south isles were a heaven upon earth to a puir, catarrhal party like Johns'one. We think, as Tahiti is too complete a banishment, to try Madeira. It's only a week from England, good communications, and I suspect in climate and scenery not unlike our dear islands; in people, alas! there can be no comparison. But friends could go, and I could come in summer, so I should not be quite cut off.

Lloyd and I have finished a story, *The Wrong Box*. If it is not funny, I am sure I do not know what is. I have split over writing it. Since I have been here, I have been toiling like a galley slave: three numbers of *The Master* to rewrite, five chapters of *The Wrong Box* to write and rewrite, and about five hundred lines of a narrative poem to write, rewrite, and re-rewrite. Now I have *The Master* waiting me for its continuation, two numbers more; when that's done, I shall breathe. This spasm of activity has been chequered with champagne parties: Happy and Glorious, Hawaii Ponoi paua: kou moi — (Native Hawaiians, dote upon your monarch!) Hawaiian God save the King. (In addition to my other labours, I am learning the language with a native moonshee.) Kalakaua is a terrible companion; a bottle of fizz is like a glass of sherry to him; he thinks nothing of five or six in an afternoon as a whet for dinner. You should see a photograph of our party after an afternoon with H. H. M.: my! what a crew! — Yours ever affectionately,

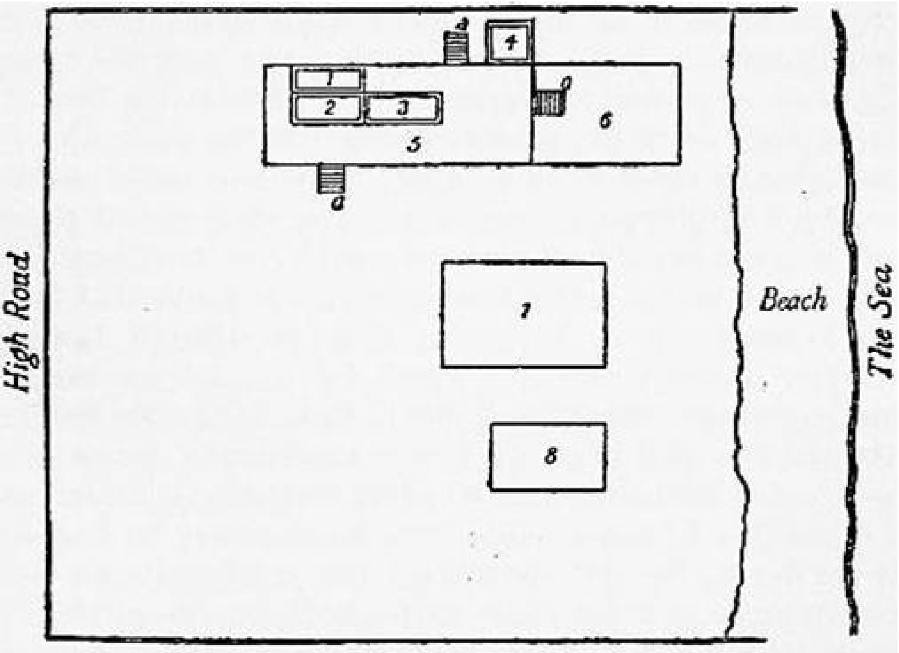
Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Ill-health and pressing preoccupations, together with uncertainty as to when and where letters would reach him, had kept me from writing during the previous autumn and winter.

Honolulu, March 1889.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Still not a word from you! I am utterly cast down; but I will try to return good for evil and for once give you news. We are here in the suburb of Honolulu in a rambling house or set of houses in a great garden.



a a a, stairs up to balcony.

1. Lloyd's room. 2. My mother's room. 3. A room kept dark for photographs. 4. The kitchen. 5. Balcony. 6. The Lanai, an open room or summer parlour, partly surrounded with Venetian shutters, in part quite open, which is the living-room. 7. A crazy dirty cottage used for the arts. 8. Another crazy dirty cottage, where Fanny and I live. The town is some three miles away, but the house 330 is connected by telephone with the chief shops, and the tramway runs to within a quarter of a mile of us. I find Honolulu a beastly climate after Tahiti and have been in bed a little; but my colds *took on no catarrhal symptom*, which is staggeringly delightful. I am studying Hawaiian with a native, a Mr. Joseph Poepoe, a clever fellow too: the tongue is a little bewildering; I am reading a pretty story in native — no, really it is pretty, although wandering and wordy; highly pretty with its continual traffic from one isle to another of the soothsayer, pursuing rainbows. Fanny is, I think, a good deal better on the whole, having profited like me by the tropics; my mother and Lloyd are first-rate. I do not think I have heard from you since last May; certainly not since June; and this really frightens me. Do write, even now. Scribner's Sons it should be; we shall probably be out of this some time in April, home some time in June. But the world whirls to me perceptibly, a mass of times and seasons and places and engagements, and seas to cross, and continents to traverse, so that I scarce know where I am. Well, I have had a brave time. *Et ego in Arcadia* — though I don't believe Arcadia was a spot upon Tahiti. I have written another long narrative poem: the *Song of Rahero*. Privately, I think it good: but your ominous silence over the *Feast of Famine* leads me to fear we shall not be agreed. Is it possible I have wounded you in some way? I scarce like to dream that it is possible; and yet I know too well it may be so. If so, don't write, and you can pitch into me when we meet. I am, admittedly, as mild as London Stout now; and the Old Man Virulent much a creature of the past. My dear Colvin, I owe you and Fleeming Jenkin, the two older men who took the trouble and knew how to make a friend of me, everything that I have or am: if I have behaved ill, just hold on and give me a chance, you shall have the slanging of me and I bet I shall prefer it to this silence. — Ever, my dear Colvin, your most affectionate

R. L. S.

[Mrs. R. L. Stevenson to Mrs. Sitwell

This letter brought to friends in England the first news of the intended prolongation of the cruise among the remoter islands of the Pacific.

Honolulu, towards the end of March 1889.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Louis has improved so wonderfully in the delicious islands of the South Seas, that we think of trying yet one more voyage. We are a little uncertain as to how we shall go, whether in a missionary ship, or by hiring schooners from point to point, but the "unregenerate" islands we must see. I suppose we shall be off some time in June, which will fetch us back to England in another year's time. You could hardly believe it if you could see Louis now. He looks as well as he ever did in his life, and has had no sign of cough or hemorrhage (begging pardon of Nemesis) for many months. It seems a pity to return to England until his health is firmly reestablished, and also a pity not to see all that we can see quite easily starting from this place: and which will be our only opportunity in life. Of course there is the usual risk from hostile natives, and the horrible sea, but a positive risk is so much more wholesome than a negative one, and it is all such joy to Louis and Lloyd. As for me, I hate the sea, and am afraid of it (though no one will believe that because in time of danger I do not make an outcry — nevertheless I *am* afraid of it, and it is not kind to me), but I love the tropic weather, and the wild people, and to see my two boys so happy. Mrs. Stevenson is going back to Scotland in May, as she does not like to be longer away from her old sister, who has been very ill. And besides, we do not feel justified in taking her to the sort of places we intend to visit. As for me, I can get comfort out of very rough surroundings for my people, I can work hard and enjoy it; I can even shoot pretty well, and though I "don't want to fight, by jingo if I must," 332 why I can. I don't suppose there will be any occasion for that sort of thing — only in case.

I am not quite sure of the names, but I *think* our new cruise includes the Gilberts, the Fijis, and the Solomons. A letter might go from the Fijis; Louis will write the particulars, of which I am not sure. As for myself, I have had more cares than I was really fit for. To keep house on a yacht is no easy thing. When Louis and I broke loose from the ship and lived alone amongst the natives I got on very well. It was when I was deathly sea-sick, and the question was put to me by the cook, "What shall we have for the cabin dinner, what for to-morrow's breakfast, what for lunch? and what about the sailors' food? Please come and look at the biscuits, for the weevils have got into them, and show me how to make yeast that will rise of itself, and smell the pork which seems pretty high, and give me directions about making a pudding with molasses — and what is to be done about the bugs?" — etc. etc. In the midst of heavy dangerous weather, when I was lying on the floor clutching a basin, down comes the mate with a cracked head, and I must needs cut off the hair matted with blood, wash and dress the wound, and administer restoratives. I do not like being "the lady of the yacht," but ashore! O, then I felt I was repaid for all. I wonder did any of my letters from beautiful Tautira ever come to hand, with the descriptions of our life with Louis's adopted brother Ori a Ori? Ori wrote to us, if no one else did, and I mean to give you a translation of his letter. It begins with our native names.

Tautira, 26 Dec. 1888.

To Teriitera (Louis) and Tapina Tutu (myself) and Aromaiterai (Lloyd) and Teiriha (Mrs. Stevenson) Salutation in the true Jesus.

I make you to know my great affection. At the hour when you left us, I was filled with tears; my wife, Rui Tehini, also, and all of my household. When you embarked 333 I felt a great sorrow. It is for this that I went upon the road, and you looked from that ship, and I looked at you on the ship with great grief until you had raised the anchor and hoisted the sails. When the ship started, I ran along the beach to see you still; and when you were on the open sea I cried out to you, “farewell Louis”: and when I was coming back to my house I seemed to hear your voice crying “Rui farewell.” Afterwards I watched the ship as long as I could until the night fell; and when it was dark I said to myself, “if I had wings I should fly to the ship to meet you, and to sleep amongst you, so that I might be able to come back to shore and to tell Rui Tehini, ‘I have slept upon the ship of Teriitera.’” After that we passed that night in the impatience of grief. Towards eight o’clock I seemed to hear your voice, “Teriitera — Rui — here is the hour for putter and tiro” (cheese and syrup). I did not sleep that night, thinking continually of you, my very dear friend, until the morning: being then awake I went to see Tapina Tutu on her bed, and alas, she was not there. Afterwards I looked into your rooms; they did not please me as they used to do. I did not hear your voice crying, “hail Rui.” I thought then that you had gone, and that you had left me. Rising up I went to the beach to see your ship, and I could not see it. I wept, then, till the night, telling myself continually, “Teriitera returns into his own country and leaves his dear Rui in grief, so that I suffer for him, and weep for him.” I will not forget you in my memory. Here is the thought: I desire to meet you again. It is my dear Teriitera makes the only riches I desire in this world. It is your eyes that I desire to see again. It must be that your body and my body shall eat together at our table: there is what would make my heart content. But now we are separated. May God be with you all. May His word and His mercy go with you, so that you may be well and we also, according to the words of Paul.

Ori a Ori; that is to say, Rui.

After reading this to me Louis has left in tears saying that he is not worthy that such a letter should be written to him. We hope to so manage that we shall stop at Tahiti and see Rui once more. I tell myself that pleasant story when I wake in the night.

I find my head swimming so that I cannot write any more. I wish some rich Catholic would send a parlour organ to Père Bruno of

Tautira. I am going to try and save money to do it myself, but he may die before I have enough. I feel ashamed to be sitting here when I think of that old man who cannot draw because of scrivener's paralysis, who has no one year in and year out to speak to but natives (our Rui is a Protestant not bigoted like the rest of them — but still a Protestant) and the only pastime he has is playing on an old broken parlour organ whose keys are mostly dumb. I know no more pathetic figure. Have you no rich Catholic friends who would send him an organ that he could play upon? Of course I am talking nonsense, and yet I know somewhere that person exists if only I knew the place.

Our dearest love to you all.

Fanny.]

To Henry James

Honolulu [*March* 1889].

MY DEAR JAMES, — Yes — I own up — I am untrue to friendship and (what is less, but still considerable) to civilisation. I am not coming home for another year. There it is, cold and bald, and now you won't believe in me at all, and serve me right (says you) and the devil take me. But look here, and judge me tenderly. I have had more fun and pleasure of my life these past months than ever before, and more health than any time in ten long years. And even here in Honolulu I have withered in the cold; and this precious deep is filled with islands, which we may still visit; and though the sea is a deathful place, 335 I like to be there, and like squalls (when they are over); and to draw near to a new island, I cannot say how much I like. In short, I take another year of this sort of life, and mean to try to work down among the poisoned arrows, and mean (if it may be) to come back again when the thing is through, and converse with Henry James as heretofore; and in the meanwhile issue directions to H. J. to write to me once more. Let him address here at Honolulu, for my views are vague; and if it is sent here it will follow and find me, if I am to be found; and if I am not to be found, the man James will have done his duty, and we shall be at the bottom of the sea, where no post-office clerk can be expected to discover us, or languishing on a coral island, the philosophic drudges of some barbarian potentate: perchance, of an American Missionary. My wife has just sent to Mrs. Sitwell a translation (*tant bien que mal*) of a letter I have had from my chief friend in this part of the world: go and see her, and get a hearing of it; it will do you good; it is a better method of correspondence than even Henry James's. I jest, but seriously it is a strange thing for a tough, sick, middle-aged scrivener like R. L. S. to receive a letter so conceived from a man fifty years old, a leading politician, a crack orator, and the great wit of his village: boldly say, "the highly popular M.P. of Tautira." My nineteenth century strikes here, and lies alongside of something beautiful and ancient. I think the receipt of such a letter might humble, shall I say even — — ? and for me, I would rather have received it than written *Redgauntlet* or the sixth *Æneid*. All told, if my books have enabled or helped me to make this voyage, to know Rui, and to have received such a letter, they have (in the old prefatorial expression) not been writ in vain. It would seem from this that I have been not so much humbled as puffed up; but, I assure you, I have in fact been both. A little of what that letter says is my own earning; not all, but yet a little; and the little makes me proud, and all the rest ashamed; and in the contrast, 336 how much more beautiful altogether is the ancient man than him of to-day!

Well, well, Henry James is pretty good, though he *is* of the nineteenth century, and that glaringly. And to curry favour with him, I wish I could be more explicit; but, indeed, I am still of necessity extremely vague, and cannot tell what I am to do, nor where I am to go for some while yet. As soon as I am sure, you shall hear. All are fairly well — the wife, your countrywoman, least of all; troubles are not entirely wanting; but on the whole we prosper, and we are all affectionately yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Honolulu, April 2nd, 1889.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am beginning to be ashamed of writing on to you without the least acknowledgment, like a tramp; but I do not care — I am hardened; and whatever be the cause of your silence, I mean to write till all is blue. I am outright ashamed of my news, which is that we are not coming home for another year. I cannot but hope it may continue the vast improvement of my health: I think it good for Fanny and Lloyd; and we have all a taste for this wandering and dangerous life. My mother I send home, to my relief, as this part of our cruise will be (if we can carry it out) rather difficult in places. Here is the idea: about the middle of June (unless the Boston Board objects) we sail from Honolulu in the missionary ship (barquentine auxiliary steamer) *Morning Star*: she takes us through the Gilberts and Marshalls, and drops us (this is my great idea) on Ponape, one of the volcanic islands of the Carolines. Here we stay marooned among a doubtful population, with a Spanish vice-governor and five native kings, and a sprinkling of missionaries all at loggerheads, on the chance of fetching 337 a passage to Sydney in a trader, a labour ship or (maybe, but this appears too bright) a ship of war. If we can't get the *Morning Star* (and the Board has many reasons that I can see for refusing its permission) I mean to try to fetch Fiji, hire a schooner there, do the Fijis and Friendlies, hit the course of the *Richmond* at Tonga Tabu, make back by Tahiti, and so to S. F., and home: perhaps in June 1890. For the latter part of the cruise will likely be the same in either case. You can see for yourself how much variety and adventure this promises, and that it is not devoid of danger at the best; but if we can pull it off in safety, gives me a fine book of travel, and Lloyd a fine lecture and diorama, which should vastly better our finances.

I feel as if I were untrue to friendship; believe me, Colvin, when I look forward to this absence of another year, my conscience sinks at thought of the Monument; but I think you will pardon me if you consider how much this tropical weather mends my health. Remember me as I was at home, and think of me sea-bathing and walking about, as jolly as a sandboy: you will own the temptation is strong; and as the scheme, bar fatal accidents, is bound to pay into the bargain, sooner or later, it seems it would be madness to come home now, with an imperfect book, no illustrations to speak of, no diorama, and perhaps fall sick again by autumn. I do not think I delude myself when I say the tendency to catarrh has visibly diminished.

It is a singular thing that as I was packing up old papers ere I left Skerryvore, I came on the prophecies of a drunken Highland sibyl, when I was seventeen. She said I was to be very happy, to visit America, and *to be much upon the sea*. It seems as if it were coming true with a vengeance. Also, do you remember my strong, old, rooted belief that I shall die by drowning? I don't want that to come true, though it is an easy death; but it occurs to me oddly, with these long chances in front. 338 I cannot say why I like the sea; no man is more cynically and constantly alive to its perils; I regard it as the highest form of gambling; and yet I love the sea as much as I hate gambling. Fine, clean emotions; a world all and always beautiful; air better than wine; interest unflagging; there is upon the whole no better life. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

[*Honolulu, April* 1889.]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — This is to announce the most prodigious change of programme. I have seen so much of the South Seas that I desire to see more, and I get so much health here that I dread a return to our vile climates. I have applied accordingly to the missionary folk to let me go round in the *Morning Star*; and if the Boston Board should refuse, I shall get somehow to Fiji, hire a trading schooner, and see the Fijis and Friendlies and Samoa. He would be a South Seayer, Mr. Burlingame. Of course, if I go in the *Morning Star*, I see all the eastern (or western?) islands.

Before I sail, I shall make out to let you have the last of *The Master*: though I tell you it sticks! — and I hope to have had some proofs forbye, of the verses anyway. And now to business.

I want (if you can find them) in the British sixpenny edition, if not, in some equally compact and portable shape — Seaside Library, for instance — the Waverley Novels entire, or as entire as you can get ‘em, and the following of Marryat: *Phantom Ship, Peter Simple, Percival Keene, Privateersman, Children of the New Forest, Frank Mildmay, Newton Forster, Dog Fiend (Snarleyyow)*. Also *Midshipman Easy, Kingsburn*, Carlyle’s *French Revolution*, Motley’s *Dutch Republic*, Lang’s *Letters on Literature*, a complete set of my works, *Jenkin*, in duplicate; also *Familiar Studies*, ditto.

I have to thank you for the accounts, which are satisfactory indeed, and for the cheque for $1000. Another account will have come and gone before I see you. I hope it will be equally roseate in colour. I am quite worked out, and this cursed end of *The Master* hangs over me like the arm of the gallows; but it is always darkest before dawn, and no doubt the clouds will soon rise; but it is a difficult thing to write, above all in Mackellarese; and I cannot yet see my way clear. If I pull this off, *The Master* will be a pretty good novel or I am the more deceived; and even if I don’t pull if off, it’ll still have some stuff in it.

We shall remain here until the middle of June anyway; but my mother leaves for Europe early in May. Hence our mail should continue to come here; but not hers. I will let you know my next address, which will probably be Sydney. If we get on the *Morning Star*, I propose at present to get marooned on Ponape, and take my chance of getting a passage to Australia. It will leave times and seasons mighty vague, and the cruise is risky; but I shall know something of the South Seas when it is done, or else the South Seas will contain all there is of me. It should give me a fine book of travels, anyway.

Low will probably come and ask some dollars of you. Pray let him have them, they are for outfit. O, another complete set of my books should go to Captain A. H. Otis, care of Dr. Merritt, Yacht *Casco*, Oakland, Cal. — In haste,

R. L. S.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

Honolulu, April 6th, 1889.

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE, — Nobody writes a better letter than my Gamekeeper: so gay, so pleasant, so engagingly particular, answering (by some delicate instinct) all the questions she suggests. It is a shame you should get such a poor return as I can make, from a mind essentially and originally incapable of the art epistolary. I would 340 let the paper-cutter take my place; but I am sorry to say the little wooden seaman did after the manner of seamen, and deserted in the Societies. The place he seems to have stayed at — seems, for his absence was not observed till we were near the Equator — was

Tautira, and, I assure you, he displayed good taste, Tautira being as "nigh hand heaven" as a paper-cutter or anybody has a right to expect.

I think all our friends will be very angry with us, and I give the grounds of their probable displeasure bluntly — we are not coming home for another year. My mother returns next month. Fanny, Lloyd, and I push on again among the islands on a trading schooner, the *Equator* — first for the Gilbert group, which we shall have an opportunity to explore thoroughly; then, if occasion serve, to the Marshalls and Carolines; and if occasion (or money) fail, to Samoa, and back to Tahiti. I own we are deserters, but we have excuses. You cannot conceive how these climates agree with the wretched house-plant of Skerryvore: he wonders to find himself sea-bathing, and cutting about the world loose, like a grown-up person. They agree with Fanny too, who does not suffer from her rheumatism, and with Lloyd also. And the interest of the islands is endless; and the sea, though I own it is a fearsome place, is very delightful. We had applied for places in the American missionary ship, the *Morning Star*, but this trading schooner is a far preferable idea, giving us more time and a thousandfold more liberty; so we determined to cut off the missionaries with a shilling.

The Sandwich Islands do not interest us very much; we live here, oppressed with civilisation, and look for good things in the future. But it would surprise you if you came out to-night from Honolulu (all shining with electric lights, and all in a bustle from the arrival of the mail, which is to carry you these lines) and crossed the long wooden causeway along the beach, and came out on the road through Kapiolani park, and seeing a gate in the palings, with a tub of gold-fish by the wayside, entered 341 casually in. The buildings stand in three groups by the edge of the beach, where an angry little spitfire sea continually spirts and thrashes with impotent irascibility, the big seas breaking further out upon the reef. The first is a small house, with a very large summer parlour, or *lanai*, as they call it here, roofed, but practically open. There you will find the lamps burning and the family sitting about the table, dinner just done: my mother, my wife, Lloyd, Belle, my wife's daughter, Austin her child, and to-night (by way of rarity) a guest. All about the walls our South Sea curiosities, war clubs, idols, pearl shells, stone axes, etc.; and the walls are only a small part of a lanai, the rest being glazed or latticed windows, or mere open space. You will see there no sign of the Squire, however; and being a person of a humane disposition, you will only glance in over the balcony railing at the merrymakers in the summer parlour, and proceed further afield after the Exile. You look round, there is beautiful green turf, many trees of an outlandish sort that drop thorns

— look out if your feet are bare; but I beg your pardon, you have not been long enough in the South Seas — and many oleanders in full flower. The next group of buildings is ramshackle, and quite dark; you make out a coach-house door, and look in — only some cocoanuts; you try round to the left and come to the sea front, where Venus and the moon are making luminous tracks on the water, and a great swell rolls and shines on the outer reef; and here is another door — all these places open from the outside — and you go in, and find photography, tubs of water, negatives steeping, a tap, and a chair and an ink-bottle, where my wife is supposed to write; round a little further, a third door, entering which you find a picture upon the easel and a table sticky with paints; a fourth door admits you to a sort of court, where there is a hen sitting — I believe on a fallacious egg. No sign of the Squire in all this. But right opposite the studio door you have observed a third little house, from whose open door lamp-light 342 streams and makes hay of the strong moonlight shadows. You had supposed it made no part of the grounds, for a fence runs round it lined with oleander; but as the Squire is nowhere else, is it not just possible he may be here? It is a grim little wooden shanty; cobwebs bedeck it; friendly mice inhabit its recesses; the mailed cockroach walks upon the wall; so also, I regret to say, the scorpion. Herein are two pallet beds, two mosquito curtains, strung to the pitch-boards of the roof, two tables laden with books and manuscripts, three chairs, and, in one of the beds, the Squire busy writing to yourself, as it chances, and just at this moment somewhat bitten by mosquitoes. He has just set fire to the insect powder, and will be all right in no time; but just now he contemplates large white blisters, and would like to scratch them, but knows better. The house is not bare; it has been inhabited by Kanakas, and — you know what children are! — the bare wood walls are pasted over with pages from the *Graphic*, *Harper's Weekly*, etc. The floor is matted, and I am bound to say the matting is filthy. There are two windows and two doors, one of which is condemned; on the panels of that last a sheet of paper is pinned up, and covered with writing. I cull a few plums: —

“A duck-hammock for each person.
A patent organ like the commandant's at Taiohae.
Cheap and bad cigars for presents.
Revolvers.
Permanganate of potass.
Liniment for the head and sulphur.
Fine tooth-comb.”

What do you think this is? Simply life in the South Seas foreshortened. These are a few of our desiderata for the next trip, which we jot down as they occur.

There, I have really done my best and tried to send something like a letter — one letter in return for all your 343 dozens. Pray remember us all to yourself, Mrs. Boodle, and the rest of your house. I do hope your mother will be better when this comes. I shall write and give you a new address when I have made up my mind as to the most probable, and I do beg you will continue to write from time to time and give us airs from home. To-morrow — think of it — I must be off by a quarter to eight to drive in to the palace and breakfast with his Hawaiian Majesty at 8.30: I shall be dead indeed. Please give my news to Scott, I trust he is better; give him my warm regards. To you we all send all kinds of things, and I am the absentee Squire,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

Honolulu, April 1889.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — As usual, your letter is as good as a cordial, and I thank you for it, and all your care, kindness, and generous and thoughtful friendship, from my heart. I was truly glad to hear a word of Colvin, whose long silence has terrified me; and glad to hear that you condoned the notion of my staying longer in the South Seas, for I have decided in that sense. The first idea was to go in the *Morning Star*, missionary ship; but now I have found a trading schooner, the *Equator*, which is to call for me here early in June and carry us through the Gilberts. What will happen then, the Lord knows. My mother does not accompany us: she leaves here for home early in May, and you will hear of us from her; but not, I imagine, anything more definite. We shall get dumped on Butaritari, and whether we manage to go on to the Marshalls and Carolines, or whether we fall back on Samoa, Heaven must decide; but I mean to fetch back into the course of the *Richmond* — (to think you don't know what the *Richmond* is! — *the* steamer of the Eastern South Seas, joining New Zealand, Tongatabu, the Samoas, 344 Taheite, and Rarotonga, and carrying by last advices sheep in the saloon!) — into the course of the *Richmond* and make Tahiti again on the home track. Would I like to see the Scots Observer? Wouldn't I not? But whaur? I'm direckit at space. They have nae post offishes at the Gilberts, and as for the Car'lines! Ye see, Mr. Baxter, we're no just in the punkshewal *centre* o' civ'lisation. But pile them up for me, and when I've decided on an address, I'll let you ken, and ye'll can send them stavin' after me. — Ever your affectionate

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

The reference in the first paragraph is to the publication in the press, which Mr. Baxter had permitted, of one of Stevenson's letters written during the earlier part of his voyage. R. L. S. had remonstrated, always greatly disliking the publication of private letters during the writer's lifetime; and now writes to soften the effect of his remonstrance.

Honolulu, 10th May 1889.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — I am appalled to gather from your last just to hand that you have felt so much concern about the letter. Pray dismiss it from your mind. But I think you scarce appreciate how disagreeable it is to have your private affairs and private unguarded expressions getting into print. It would soon sicken any one of writing letters. I have no doubt that letter was very wisely selected, but it just shows how things crop up. There was a raging jealousy between the two yachts; our captain was nearly in a fight over it. However, no more; and whatever you think, my dear fellow, do not suppose me angry with you or — — ; although I was *annoyed at the circumstance* — a very different thing. But it is difficult to conduct life by letter, and I continually feel I may be drifting into some matter of offence, in which my heart takes no part.

I must now turn to a point of business. This new cruise of ours is somewhat venturesome; and I think it 345 needful to warn you not to be in a hurry to suppose us dead. In these ill-charted seas, it is quite on the cards we might be cast on some unvisited, or very rarely visited, island; that there we might lie for a long time, even years, unheard of; and yet turn up smiling at the hinder end. So do not let me be "rowpit" till you get some certainty we have gone to Davie Jones in a squall, or graced the feast of some barbarian in the character of Long Pig.

I have just been a week away alone on the lee coast of Hawaii, the only white creature in many miles, riding five and a half hours one day, living with a native, seeing four lepers shipped off to Molokai, hearing native causes, and giving my opinion as *amicus curiæ* as to the interpretation of a statute in English; a lovely week among God's best — at least God's sweetest works — Polynesians. It has bettered me greatly. If I could only stay there the time that remains, I could get my work done and be happy; but the care of my family keeps me in vile Honolulu, where I am always out of sorts, amidst heat and cold and cesspools and beastly *haoles*. What is a haole? You are one; and so, I am sorry to say, am I. After so long a dose of whites, it was a blessing to get among Polynesians again even for a week.

Well, Charles, there are waur haoles than yoursel', I'll say that for ye; and trust before I sail I shall get another letter with more about yourself. — Ever your affectionate friend,

R. L. S.

To W. H. Low

The allusions in the latter half of this letter are to the departure for

Europe of the young Hawaiian princess Kaiulani (see the poem beginning "When from her land to mine she goes," in *Songs of Travel*), and to the circumstances of the great hurricane at Apia on March 15th, 1889.

Honolulu, (about) 20th May '89.

MY DEAR LOW, — ... The goods have come; many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them 346 all. — I have at length finished *The Master*; it has been a sore cross to me; but now he is buried, his body's under hatches, — his soul, if there is any hell to go to, gone to hell; and I forgive him: it is harder to forgive Burlingame for having induced me to begin the publication, or myself for suffering the induction. — Yes, I think Hole has done finely; it will be one of the most adequately illustrated books of our generation; he gets the note, he tells the story — *my* story: I know only one failure — the Master standing on the beach. — You must have a letter for me at Sydney — till further notice. Remember me to Mrs. Will. H., the godlike sculptor, and any of the faithful. If you want to cease to be a republican, see my little Kaiulani, as she goes through — but she is gone already. You will die a red: I wear the colours of that little royal maiden, *Nous allons chanter à la ronde, si vous voulez!* only she is not blonde by several chalks, though she is but a half-blood, and the wrong half Edinburgh Scots like mysel'. But, O Low, I love the Polynesian: this civilisation of ours is a dingy, ungentlemanly business; it drops out too much of man, and too much of that the very beauty of the poor beast: who has his beauties in spite of Zola and Co. As usual, here is a whole letter with no news: I am a bloodless, inhuman dog; and no doubt Zola is a better correspondent. — Long live your fine old English admiral — yours, I mean — the U.S.A. one at Samoa; I wept tears and loved myself and mankind when I read of him: he is not too much civilised. And there was Gordon, too; and there are others, beyond question. But if you could live, the only white folk, in a Polynesian village; and drink that warm, light *vin du pays* of human affection and enjoy that simple dignity of all about you — I will not gush, for I am now in my fortieth year, which seems highly unjust, but there it is, Mr. Low, and the Lord enlighten your affectionate

R. L. S.

[Mrs. R. L. Stevenson to Sidney Colvin

This letter shows the writer in her character of wise and anxious critic of her husband's work. The result, in the judgment of most of his friends, went far to justify her misgivings.

Honolulu, May 21st, 1889.

BEST OF FRIENDS, — It was a joy inexpressible to get a word from you at last. Fortunately for our peace of mind, we were almost positive that your letters had been sent to the places we had already left. Still it was a bitter disappointment to get nothing from you when we arrived here. I wish you could have seen us both throwing over the immense package of letters searching for your handwriting. Now that we know you have been ill, please do let some one send us a line to our next address telling us how you are. What that next address may be we do not yet know, as our final movements are a little uncertain. To begin with, a trading schooner, the *Equator*, will come along some time in the first part of June, lie outside the harbour here and signal to us. Within forty-eight hours we shall pack up our possessions, our barrel of sauer kraut, our barrel of salt onions, our bag of cocoanuts, our native garments, our tobacco, fish hooks, red combs, and Turkey red calicoes (all the latter for trading purposes), our hand organ, photograph and painting materials, and finally our magic lantern — all these upon a large whaleboat, and go out to the *Equator*. Lloyd, also, takes a fiddle, a guitar, a native instrument something like a banjo, called a taropatch fiddle, and a lot of song books. We shall be carried first to one of the Gilberts, landing at Butaritari. The *Equator* is going about amongst the Gilbert group, and we have the right to keep her over when we like within reasonable limits. Finally she will leave us, and we shall have to take the chances of what happens next. We hope to see the Marshalls, the Carolines, the Fijis, Tonga and Samoa (also other islands that I do not remember), perhaps 348 staying a little while in Sydney, and stopping on our way home to see our friends in Tahiti and the Marquesas. I am very much exercised by one thing. Louis has the most enchanting material that any one ever had in the whole world for his book, and I am afraid he is going to spoil it all. He has taken into his Scotch Stevenson head that a stern duty lies before him, and that his book must be a sort of scientific and historical impersonal thing, comparing the different languages (of which he knows nothing, really) and the different peoples, the object being to settle the question as to whether they are of common Malay origin or not. Also to compare the Protestant and Catholic missions, etc., and the whole thing to be impersonal, leaving out all he knows of the people themselves. And I believe there is no one living who has got so near to them, or who understands them as he does. Think of a small treatise on the Polynesian races being offered to people who are dying to hear about Ori a Ori, the making of brothers with cannibals, the strange stories they told, and the extraordinary adventures that befell us: — suppose Herman Melville had given us his theories as to the Polynesian language and the probable good or evil results of the missionary influence instead of *Omoo* and *Typee*, or Kinglake instead of *Eothen*. Louis says it is a stern sense of duty that is at the bottom of it, which is more alarming than anything else. I am so sure that you will agree with me that I am going to ask you to throw the weight of your influence as heavily as possible in the scales with me. Please refer to the matter in the letters we shall receive at our first stopping place, otherwise Louis will spend a great deal of time in Sydney actually reading up other people's books on the Islands. What a thing it is to have a "man of genius" to deal with. It is like managing an overbred horse. Why with my own feeble hand I could write a book that the whole world would jump at. Please keep any letters of mine that contain 349 any incidents of our wanderings. They are very exact as to facts, and Louis may, in this conscientious state of mind (indeed I am afraid he has), put nothing in his diary but statistics. Even if I thought it a desirable thing to write what he proposes, I should still think it impossible unless after we had lived and studied here some twenty years or more.

Now I am done with my complaining, and shall turn to the pleasanter paths. Louis went to one of the other islands a couple of weeks ago, quite alone, got drenched with rain and surf, rode over mountain paths — five and a half hours one day — and came back none the worse for it. To-day he goes to Molokai, the leper island. He never has a sign of hemorrhage, the air cushion is a thing of the past, and altogether he is a new man. How he will do in the English climate again I do not know, but in these latitudes he is very nearly a well man, nothing seems to do him harm but overwork. That, of course, is sometimes difficult to prevent. Now, however, the *Master* is done, we have enough money to go upon and there is no need to work at all. I must stop. My dear love to you all.

Fanny V. de G. Stevenson.]

To Mrs. R. L. Stevenson

The following two letters were written during and immediately after Stevenson's trip to the noted leper settlement, the scene of Father Damien's labours, at Molokai.

Kalawao, Molokai [*May* 1889].

DEAR FANNY, — I had a lovely sail up. Captain Cameron and Mr. Gilfillan, both born in the States, yet the first still with a strong Highland, and the second still with a strong Lowland accent, were good company; the night was warm, the victuals plain but good. Mr. Gilfillan gave me his berth, and I slept well, though I heard the sisters sick in the next stateroom, poor souls. Heavy rolling woke me in the 350 morning; I turned in all standing, so went right on the upper deck. The day was on the peep out of a low morning bank, and we were wallowing along under stupendous cliffs. As the lights brightened, we could see certain abutments and buttresses on their front where wood clustered and grass grew brightly. But the whole brow seemed quite impassable, and my heart sank at the sight. Two thousand feet of rock making 19° (the Captain guesses) seemed quite beyond my powers. However, I had come so far; and, to tell you the truth, I was so cowed with fear and disgust that I dared not go back on the adventure in the interests of my own self-respect. Presently we came up with the leper promontory: lowland, quite bare and bleak and harsh, a little town of wooden houses, two churches, a landing-stair, all unsightly, sour, northerly, lying athwart the sunrise, with the great wall of the pali cutting the world out on the south. Our lepers were sent on the first boat, about a dozen, one poor child very horrid, one white man, leaving a large grown family behind him in Honolulu, and then into the second stepped the sisters and myself. I do not know how it would have been with me had the sisters not been there. My horror of the horrible is about my weakest point; but the moral loveliness at my elbow blotted all else out; and when I found that one of them was crying, poor soul, quietly under her veil, I cried a little myself; then I felt as right as a trivet, only a little crushed to be there so uselessly. I thought it was a sin and a shame she should feel unhappy; I turned round to her, and said something like this: “Ladies, God Himself is here to give you welcome. I’m sure it is good for me to be beside you; I hope it will be blessed to me; I thank you for myself and the good you do me.” It seemed to cheer her up; but indeed I had scarce said it when we were at the landing-stairs, and there was a great crowd, hundreds of (God save us!) pantomime masks in poor human flesh, waiting to receive the sisters and the new patients.

Every hand was offered: I had gloves, but I had made up my mind on the boat’s voyage *not* to give my hand; that seemed less offensive than the gloves. So the sisters and I went up among that crew, and presently I got aside (for I felt I had no business there) and set off on foot across the promontory, carrying my wrap and the camera. All horror was quite gone from me: to see these dread creatures smile and look happy was beautiful. On my way through Kalaupapa I was exchanging cheerful *alohas* with the patients coming galloping over on their horses; I was stopping to gossip at house-doors; I was happy, only ashamed of myself that I was here for no good. One woman was pretty, and spoke good English, and was infinitely engaging and (in the old phrase) towardly; she thought I was the new white patient; and when she found I was only a visitor, a curious change came in her face and voice — the only sad thing, morally sad, I mean — that I met that morning. But for all that, they tell me none want to leave. Beyond Kalaupapa the houses became rare; dry stone dykes, grassy, stony land, one sick pandanus; a dreary country; from overhead in the little clinging wood shogs of the pali chirruping of birds fell; the low sun was right in my face; the trade blew pure and cool and delicious; I felt as right as ninepence, and stopped and chatted with the patients whom I still met on their horses, with not the least disgust. About half-way over, I met the superintendent (a leper) with a horse for me, and O, wasn't I glad! But the horse was one of those curious, dogged, cranky brutes that always dully want to go somewhere else, and my traffic with him completed my crushing fatigue. I got to the guest-house, an empty house with several rooms, kitchen, bath, etc. There was no one there, and I let the horse go loose in the garden, lay down on the bed, and fell asleep.

Dr. Swift woke me and gave me breakfast, then I came back and slept again while he was at the dispensary, and he woke me for dinner; and I came back and slept again, 352 and he woke me about six for supper; and then in about an hour I felt tired again, and came up to my solitary guest-house, played the flageolet, and am now writing to you. As yet, you see, I have seen nothing of the settlement, and my crushing fatigue (though I believe that was moral and a measure of my cowardice) and the doctor's opinion make me think the pali hopeless. "You don't look a strong man," said the doctor; "but are you sound?" I told him the truth; then he said it was out of the question, and if I were to get up at all, I must be carried up. But, as it seems, men as well as horses continually fall on this ascent: the doctor goes up with a change of clothes — it is plain that to be carried would in itself be very fatiguing to both mind and body; and I should then be at the beginning of thirteen miles of mountain road to be ridden against time. How should I come through? I hope you will think me right in my decision: I mean to stay, and shall not be back in Honolulu till Saturday, June first. You must all do the best you can to make ready.

Dr. Swift has a wife and an infant son, beginning to toddle and run, and they live here as composed as brick and mortar — at least the wife does, a Kentucky German, a fine enough creature, I believe, who was quite amazed at the sisters shedding tears! How strange is mankind! Gilfillan too, a good fellow I think, and far from a stupid, kept up his hard Lowland Scottish talk in the boat while the sister was covering her face; but I believe he knew, and did it (partly) in embarrassment, and part perhaps in mistaken kindness. And that was one reason, too, why I made my speech to them. Partly, too, I did it, because I was ashamed to do so, and remembered one of my golden rules, "When you are ashamed to speak, speak up at once." But, mind you, that rule is only golden with strangers; with your own folks, there are other considerations. This is a strange place to be in. A bell has been sounded at intervals while I wrote, now 353 all is still but a musical humming of the sea, not unlike the sound of telegraph wires; the night is quite cool and pitch dark, with a small fine rain; one light over in the leper settlement, one cricket whistling in the garden, my lamp here by my bedside, and my pen cheeping between my inky fingers.

Next day, lovely morning, slept all night, 80° in the shade, strong, sweet Anaho trade-wind.

Louis.

To Sidney Colvin

Honolulu, June 1889.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am just home after twelve days' journey to Molokai, seven of them at the leper settlement, where I can only say that the sight of so much courage, cheerfulness, and devotion strung me too high to mind the infinite pity and horror of the sights. I used to ride over from Kalawao to Kalaupapa (about three miles across the promontory, the cliff-wall, ivied with forest and yet inaccessible from steepness, on my left), go to the Sisters' home, which is a miracle of neatness, play a game of croquet with seven leper girls (90° in the shade), got a little old-maid meal served me by the Sisters, and ride home again, tired enough, but not too tired. The girls have all dolls, and love dressing them. You who know so many ladies delicately clad, and they who know so many dressmakers, please make it known it would be an acceptable gift to send scraps for doll dressmaking to the Reverend Sister Maryanne, Bishop Home, Kalaupapa, Molokai, Hawaiian Islands.

I have seen sights that cannot be told, and heard stories that cannot be repeated: yet I never admired my poor race so much, nor (strange as it may seem) loved life more than in the settlement. A horror of moral beauty broods over the place: that's like bad Victor Hugo, but it is the only way I can express the sense that lived with 354 me all these days. And this even though it was in great part Catholic, and my sympathies flow never with so much difficulty as towards Catholic virtues. The passbook kept with heaven stirs me to anger and laughter. One of the sisters calls the place "the ticket office to heaven." Well, what is the odds? They do their darg, and do it with kindness and efficiency incredible; and we must take folks' virtues as we find them, and love the better part. Of old Damien, whose weaknesses and worse perhaps I heard fully, I think only the more. It was a European peasant: dirty, bigoted, untruthful, unwise, tricky, but superb with generosity, residual candour and fundamental good-humour: convince him he had done wrong (it might take hours of insult) and he would undo what he had done and like his corrector better. A man, with all the grime and paltriness of mankind, but a saint and hero all the more for that. The place as regards scenery is grand, gloomy, and bleak. Mighty mountain walls descending sheer along the whole face of the island into a sea unusually deep; the front of the mountain ivied and furred with clinging forest, one viridescent cliff: about half-way from east to west, the low, bare, stony promontory edged in between the cliff and the ocean; the two little towns (Kalawao and Kalaupapa) seated on either side of it, as bare almost as bathing machines upon a beach; and the population — gorgons and chimaeras dire. All this tear of the nerves I bore admirably; and the day after I got away, rode twenty miles along the opposite coast and up into the mountains: they call it twenty, I am doubtful of the figures: I should guess it nearer twelve; but let me take credit for what residents allege; and I was riding again the day after, so I need say no more about health. Honolulu does not agree with me at all: I am always out of sorts there, with slight headache, blood to the head, etc. I had a good deal of work to do and did it with miserable difficulty; and yet all the time I have been gaining strength, as you see, which is highly encouraging. By the time I am done with this 355 cruise I shall have the material for a very singular book of travels: names of strange stories and characters, cannibals, pirates, ancient legends, old Polynesian poetry, — never was so generous a farrago. I am going down now to get the story of a shipwrecked family, who were fifteen months on an island with a murderer: there is a specimen. The Pacific is a strange place; the nineteenth century only exists there in spots: all round, it is a no man's land of the ages, a stir-about of epochs and races, barbarisms and civilisations, virtues and crimes.

It is good of you to let me stay longer, but if I had known how ill you were, I should be now on my way home. I had chartered my schooner and made all arrangements before (at last) we got definite news. I feel highly guilty; I should be back to insult and worry you a little. Our address till further notice is to be c/o R. Towns & Co., Sydney. That is final: I only got the arrangement made yesterday; but you may now publish it abroad. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To James Payn

The following was written to his old friend of Cornhill Magazine days, Mr. James Payn, on receiving in Hawaii news of that gentleman's ill health and gathering deafness.

Honolulu, H.I., June 13th, 1889.

MY DEAR JAMES PAYN, — I get sad news of you here at my offsetting for further voyages: I wish I could say what I feel. Sure there was never any man less deserved this calamity; for I have heard you speak time and again, and I remember nothing that was unkind, nothing that was untrue, nothing that was not helpful, from your lips. It is the ill-talkers that should hear no more. God knows, I know no word of consolation; but I do feel your trouble. You are the more open to letters now; let me talk to you for two pages. I have nothing but happiness to tell; and you may bless God you are a man so sound-hearted 356 that (even in the freshness of your calamity) I can come to you with my own good fortune unashamed and secure of sympathy. It is a good thing to be a good man, whether deaf or whether dumb; and of all our fellow-craftsmen (whom yet they count a jealous race), I never knew one but gave you the name of honesty and kindness: come to think of it gravely, this is better than the finest hearing. We are all on the march to deafness, blindness, and all conceivable and fatal disabilities; we shall not all get there with a report so good. My good news is a health astonishingly reinstated. This climate; these voyagings; these landfalls at dawn; new islands peaking from the morning bank; new forested harbours; new passing alarms of squalls and surf; new interests of gentle natives, — the whole tale of my life is better to me than any poem.

I am fresh just now from the leper settlement of Molokai, playing croquet with seven leper girls, sitting and yarning with old, blind, leper beachcombers in the hospital, sickened with the spectacle of abhorrent suffering and deformation amongst the patients, touched to the heart by the sight of lovely and effective virtues in their helpers: no stranger time have I ever had, nor any so moving. I do not think it a little thing to be deaf, God knows, and God defend me from the same! — but to be a leper, or one of the self-condemned, how much more awful! and yet there's a way there also. "There are Molokais everywhere," said Mr. Dutton, Father Damien's dresser; you are but new landed in yours; and my dear and kind adviser, I wish you, with all my soul, that patience and courage which you will require. Think of me meanwhile on a trading schooner bound for the Gilbert Islands, thereafter for the Marshalls, with a diet of fish and cocoanut before me; bound on a cruise of — well, of investigation to what islands we can reach, and to get (some day or other) to Sydney, where a letter addressed to the care of R. Towns & Co. will find me sooner or later; and if it contain 357 any good news, whether of your welfare or the courage with which you bear the contrary, will do me good. — Yours affectionately (although so near a stranger),

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Lady Taylor

Honolulu, June 19th, 1889.

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR, — Our new home, the *Equator,* trading schooner, rides at the buoy to-night, and we are for sea shortly. All your folk of the Roost held us for phantoms and things of the night from our first appearance; but I do wish you would try to believe in our continued existence, as flesh and blood obscurely tossed in the Pacific, or walking coral shores, and in our affection, which is more constant than becomes the breasts of such absconders. My good health does not cease to be wonderful to myself: Fanny is better in these warm places; it is the very thing for Lloyd; and in the matter of interest, the spice of life, etc., words cannot depict what fun we have. Try to have a little more patience with the fugitives, and think of us now and again among the Gilberts, where we ought to be about the time when you receive this scrap. They make no great figure on the atlas, I confess; but you will see the name there, if you look — which I wish you would, and try to conceive us as still extant. We all send the kindest remembrances to all of you; please make one of the girls write us the news to the care of R. Towns & Co., Sydney, New South Wales, where we hope to bring up about the end of the year — or later. Do not forget yours affectionately,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Stevenson and his party sailed accordingly on the trading schooner *Equator*, "on a certain bright June day in 1889," for the 358 Gilbert Islands, a scattered group of atolls in the Western Pacific. Their expectation was to come back into civilisation again by way of the Carolines, Manila, and the China ports; but instead of this, circumstances which occurred to change the trader's course took them southwards to Samoa, where they arrived in December of the same year. Their second voyage was thus of six months' duration; in the course of it they spent two periods of about six weeks each on land, first at one and then at another of the two island capitals, Butaritari and Apemama. The following letter is the first which reached Stevenson's friends from this part of his voyage, and was written in two instalments, the first from on board the *Equator* in the lagoon of the island of Apaiang; the second, six weeks later, from the settlement on shore at Apemama, which the king, his friend Temhinoka, allowed him and his party to occupy during their stay. The account of this stay at Apemama and of the character of the king is far the most interesting and attractive part of the volume called *In the South Seas*, which was the literary result of these voyages.

Schooner Equator, *Apaiang Lagoon, August 22nd,* 1889.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — The missionary ship is outside the reef trying (vainly) to get in; so I may have a chance to get a line off. I am glad to say I shall be home by June next for the summer, or we shall know the reason why. For God's sake be well and jolly for the meeting. I shall be, I believe, a different character from what you have seen this long while. This cruise is up to now a huge success, being interesting, pleasant, and profitable. The beachcomber is perhaps the most interesting character here; the natives are very different, on the whole, from Polynesians: they are moral, stand-offish (for good reasons), and protected by a dark tongue. It is delightful to meet the few Hawaiians (mostly missionaries) that are dotted about, with their Italian *brio* and their ready friendliness. The whites are a strange lot, many of them good, kind, pleasant fellows; others quite the lowest I have ever seen even in the slums of cities. I wish I had time to narrate to you the doings and character of three white murderers (more or less proven) I have met. One, the only undoubted assassin of the lot, quite gained my affection in his big home out of a wreck, with his New Hebrides wife in her savage turban of hair and yet a perfect lady, and 359 his three adorable little girls in Rob Roy Macgregor dresses, dancing to the hand organ, performing circus on the floor with startling effects of nudity, and curling up together on a mat to sleep, three sizes, three attitudes, three Rob Roy dresses, and six little clenched fists: the murderer meanwhile brooding and gloating over his chicks, till your whole heart went out to him; and yet his crime on the face of it was dark: disembowelling, in his own house, an old man of seventy, and him drunk.

It is lunch-time, I see, and I must close up with my warmest love to you. I wish you were here to sit upon me when required. Ah! if you were but a good sailor! I will never leave the sea, I think; it is only there that a Briton lives: my poor grandfather, it is from him I inherit the taste, I fancy, and he was round many islands in his day; but I, please God, shall beat him at that before the recall is sounded. Would you be surprised to learn that I contemplate becoming a shipowner? I do, but it is a secret. Life is far better fun than people dream who fall asleep among the chimney stacks and telegraph wires.

Love to Henry James and others near. — Ever yours, my dear fellow,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Equator Town, Apemama, October 1889.

No *Morning Star* came, however; and so now I try to send this to you by the schooner *J. L. Tiernan*. We have been about a month ashore, camping out in a kind of town the king set up for us: on the idea that I was really a “big chief” in England. He dines with us sometimes, and sends up a cook for a share of our meals when he does not come himself. This sounds like high living! alas, undeceive yourself. Salt junk is the mainstay; a low island, except for cocoanuts, is just the same as a ship at sea: brackish water, no supplies, and very little shelter. The king is a great character — a thorough tyrant, very much of a gentleman, a poet, a musician, a historian, 360 or perhaps rather more a genealogist — it is strange to see him lying in his house among a lot of wives (nominal wives) writing the History of Apemama in an account-book; his description of one of his own songs, which he sang to me himself, as “about sweethearts, and trees, and the sea — and no true, all-the-same lie,” seems about as compendious a definition of lyric poetry as a man could ask. Tembinoka is here the great attraction: all the rest is heat and tedium and villainous dazzle, and yet more villainous mosquitoes. We are like to be here, however, many a long week before we get away, and then whither? A strange trade this voyaging: so vague, so bound-down, so helpless. Fanny has been planting some vegetables, and we have actually onions and radishes coming up: ah, onion-despiser, were you but a while in a low island, how your heart would leap at sight of a coster's barrow! I think I could shed tears over a dish of turnips. No doubt we shall all be glad to say farewell to low islands — I had near said for ever. They are very tame; and I begin to read up the directory, and pine for an island with a profile, a running brook, or were it only a well among the rocks. The thought of a mango came to me early this morning and set my greed on edge; but you do not know what a mango is, so — — .

I have been thinking a great deal of you and the Monument of late, and even tried to get my thoughts into a poem, hitherto without success. God knows how you are: I begin to weary dreadfully to see you — well, in nine months, I hope; but that seems a long time. I wonder what has befallen me too, that flimsy part of me that lives (or dwindles) in the public mind; and what has befallen *The Master*, and what kind of a Box the Merry Box has been found. It is odd to know nothing of all this. We had an old woman to do devil-work for you about a month ago, in a Chinaman's house on Apaiang (August 23rd or 24th), You should have seen the crone with a noble masculine face, like that of an old crone [*sic*], a body like 361 a man's (naked all but the feathery female girdle), knotting cocoanut leaves and muttering spells: Fanny and I, and the good captain of the *Equator*, and the Chinaman and his native wife and sister-in-law, all squatting on the floor about the sibyl; and a crowd of dark faces watching from behind her shoulder (she sat right in the doorway) and tittering aloud with strange, appalled, embarrassed laughter at each fresh adjuration. She informed us you were in England, not travelling and now no longer sick; she promised us a fair wind the next day, and we had it, so I cherish the hope she was as right about Sidney Colvin. The shipownering has rather petered out since I last wrote, and a good many other plans beside.

Health? Fanny very so-so; I pretty right upon the whole, and getting through plenty work: I know not quite how, but it seems to me not bad and in places funny.

South Sea Yarns:
1. *The Wrecker* by R.L.S.
2. *The Pearl Fisher* and
3. *The Beachcombers* Lloyd O.

The Pearl Fisher, part done, lies in Sydney. It is *The Wrecker* we are now engaged upon: strange ways of life, I think, they set forth: things that I can scarce touch upon, or even not at all, in my travel book; and the yarns are good, I do believe. *The Pearl Fisher* is for the New York Ledger: the yarn is a kind of Monte Cristo one. *The Wrecker* is the least good as a story, I think; but the characters seem to me good. *The Beachcombers* is more sentimental. These three scarce touch the outskirts of the life we have been viewing; a hot-bed of strange characters and incidents: Lord, how different from Europe or the Pallid States! Farewell. Heaven knows when this will get to you. I burn to be in Sydney and have news.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The following, written in the last days of the sail southwards from the Gilberts to Samoa, contains the full plan of the South Sea book as it had now been conceived. In the issue, Part I. (so far as I know) was never written; Parts II. and III. appeared serially in the New York Sun, and were reprinted with corrections in the volume called *In the South Seas*; Part IV. was never written; Part V. was written but has not been printed, at least in this country; Part VI. (and far the most successful) closes the volume *In the South Seas*; Part VII. developed itself into *A Footnote to History*. The verses at the end of this letter have already been printed (*Songs of Travel*, vol. xiv.,); but I give them here with the context, as in similar instances above. The allusion is to the two colossal images from Easter Island which used to stand under the portico to the right hand of the visitor entering the Museum, were for some years removed, and are now restored to their old place.

Schooner Equator, *at sea. 190 miles off Samoa.*
Monday, December 2nd, 1889.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — We are just nearing the end of our long cruise. Rain, calms, squalls, bang — there's the foretopmast gone; rain, calm, squalls, away with the stay-sail; more rain, more calm, more squalls; a prodigious heavy sea all the time, and the *Equator* staggering and hovering like a swallow in a storm; and the cabin, a great square, crowded with wet human beings, and the rain avalanching on the deck, and the leaks dripping everywhere: Fanny, in the midst of fifteen males, bearing up wonderfully. But such voyages are at the best a trial. We had one particularity: coming down on Winslow Reef, p. d. (position doubtful): two positions in the directory, a third (if you cared to count that) on the chart; heavy sea running, and the night due. The boats were cleared, bread put on board, and we made up our packets for a boat voyage of four or five hundred miles, and turned in, expectant of a crash. Needless to say it did not come, and no doubt we were far to leeward. If we only had twopenceworth of wind, we might be at dinner in Apia to-morrow evening; but no such luck: here we roll, dead before a light air — and that is no point of sailing at 363 all for a fore and aft schooner — the sun blazing overhead, thermometer 88°, four degrees above what I have learned to call South Sea temperature; but for all that, land so near, and so much grief being happily astern, we are all pretty gay on board, and have been photographing and draught-playing and sky-larking like anything. I am minded to stay not very long in Samoa and confine my studies there (as far as any one can forecast) to the history of the late war. My book is now practically modelled: if I can execute what is designed, there are few better books now extant on this globe, bar the epics, and the big tragedies, and histories, and the choice lyric poetics, and a novel or so — none. But it is not executed yet; and let not him that putteth on his armour, vaunt himself. At least, nobody has had such stuff; such wild stories, such beautiful scenes, such singular intimacies, such manners and traditions, so incredible a mixture of the beautiful and horrible, the savage and civilised. I will give you here some idea of the table of contents, which ought to make your mouth water. I propose to call the book *The South Seas*: it is rather a large title, but not many people have seen more of them than I, perhaps no one — certainly no one capable of using the material.

Part I. General. “Of schooners, islands, and maroons”

CHAPTER I. Marine.

II. Contraband (smuggling, barratry, labour traffic).

III. The Beachcomber.

IV. Beachcomber stories, i. The Murder of the Chinaman, ii. Death of a Beachcomber. iii. A Character, iv. The Apia Blacksmith.

Part II. The Marquesas

V. Anaho. i. Arrival, ii. Death, iii. The Tapu. iv. Morals, v. Hoka.364

VI. Tai-o-hae. i. Arrival. ii. The French. iii. The Royal Family. iv. Chiefless Folk. v. The Catholics. vi. Hawaiian Missionaries.

VII. Observations of a Long Pig. i. Cannibalism, ii. Hatiheu. iii. Frère Michel, iv. Taa-hauku and Atuona. v. The Vale of Atuona. vi. Moipu. vii. Captain Hati.

Part III. The Dangerous Archipelago

VIII. The Group.

IX. A House to let in a Low Island.

X. A Paumotuan Funeral, i. The Funeral, ii. Tales of the Dead.

Part IV. Tahiti

XI. Tautira.

XII. Village Government in Tahiti.

XIII. A Journey in Quest of Legends.

XIV. Legends and Songs.

XV. Life in Eden.

XVI. Note on the French Regimen.

Part V. The Eight Islands

XVII. A Note on Missions.

XVIII. The Kona Coast of Hawaii. i. Hookena. ii. A Ride in the Forest. iii. A Law Case. iv. The City of Refuge. v. The Lepers.

XIX. Molokai. i. A Week in the Precinct. ii. History of the Leper Settlement, iii. The Mokolii. iv. The Free Island.

Part VI. The Gilberts

XX. The Group, ii. Position of Woman, iii. The Missions. iv. Devilwork. v. Republics.365

XXI. Rule and Misrule on Makin. i. Butaritari, its King and Court. ii. History of Three Kings. iii. The Drink Question.

XXII. A Butaritarian Festival.

XXIII. The King of Apemama. i. First Impressions. ii. Equator Town and the Palace. iii. The Three Corselets.

Part VII. Samoa

which I have not yet reached.

Even as so sketched it makes sixty chapters, not less than 300 Cornhill pages; and I suspect not much under 500. Samoa has yet to be accounted for: I think it will be all history, and I shall work in observations on Samoan manners, under the similar heads in other Polynesian islands. It is still possible, though unlikely, that I may add a passing visit to Fiji or Tonga, or even both; but I am growing impatient to see yourself, and I do not want to be later than June of coming to England. Anyway, you see it will be a large work, and as it will be copiously illustrated, the Lord knows what it will cost. We shall return, God willing, by Sydney, Ceylon, Suez and, I guess, Marseilles the many-masted (copyright epithet). I shall likely pause a day or two in Paris, but all that is too far ahead — although now it begins to look near — so near, and I can hear the rattle of the hansom up Endell Street, and see the gates swing back, and feel myself jump out upon the Monument steps — Hosanna! — home again. My dear fellow, now that my father is done with his troubles, and 17 Heriot Row no more than a mere shell, you and that gaunt old Monument in Bloomsbury are all that I have in view when I use the word home; some passing thoughts there may be of the rooms at Skerryvore, and the blackbirds in the chine on a May morning; but the essence is S.C. and the Museum. Suppose, by some damned accident, you were no more; well, I should return just 366 the same, because of my mother and Lloyd, whom I now think to send to Cambridge; but all the spring would have gone out of me, and ninety per cent. of the attraction lost. I will copy for you here a copy of verses made in Apemama.

I heard the pulse of the besieging sea
Throb far away all night. I heard the wind
Fly crying, and convulse tumultuous palms.

I rose and strolled. The isle was all bright sand,
And flailing fans and shadows of the palm:
The heaven all moon, and wind, and the blind vault —
The keenest planet slain, for Venus slept.
The King, my neighbour, with his host of wives,
Slept in the precinct of the palisade:
Where single, in the wind, under the moon,
Among the slumbering cabins, blazed a fire,
Sole street-lamp and the only sentinel.
To other lands and nights my fancy turned.
To London first, and chiefly to your house,
The many-pillared and the well-beloved.
There yearning fancy lighted; there again
In the upper room I lay and heard far off
The unsleeping city murmur like a shell;
The muffled tramp of the Museum guard
Once more went by me; I beheld again
Lamps vainly brighten the dispeopled street;
Again I longed for the returning morn,
The awaking traffic, the bestirring birds,
The consentancous trill of tiny song
That weaves round monumental cornices
A passing charm of beauty: most of all,
For your light foot I wearied, and your knock
That was the glad réveillé of my day.
Lo, now, when to your task in the great house
At morning through the portico you pass,
One moment glance where, by the pillared wall,
Far-voyaging island gods, begrimed with smoke,
Sit now unworshipped, the rude monument
Of faiths forgot and races undivined;
Sit now disconsolate, remembering well
The priest, the victim, and the songful crowd,
The blaze of the blue noon, and that huge voice
Incessant, of the breakers on the shore.
As far as these from their ancestral shrine,
So far, so foreign, your divided friends
Wander, estranged in body, not in mind.

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

Schooner Equator, *at sea, Wednesday, 4th December* 1889.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — We are now about to rise, like whales, from this long dive, and I make ready a communication which is to go to you by the first mail from Samoa. How long we shall stay in that group I cannot forecast; but it will be best still to address at Sydney, where I trust, when I shall arrive, perhaps in one month from now, more probably in two or three, to find all news.

Business. — Will you be likely to have a space in the Magazine for a serial story, which should be ready, I believe, by April, at latest by autumn? It is called *The Wrecker*; and in book form will appear as number 1 of *South Sea Yarns* by R. L. S. and Lloyd Osbourne. Here is the table as far as fully conceived, and indeed executed....

The story is founded on fact, the mystery I really believe to be insoluble; the purchase of a wreck has never been handled before, no more has San Francisco. These seem all elements of success. There is, besides, a character, Jim Pinkerton, of the advertising American, 368 on whom we build a good deal; and some sketches of the American merchant marine, opium smuggling in Honolulu, etc. It should run to (about) three hundred pages of my MS. I would like to know if this tale smiles upon you, if you will have a vacancy, and what you will be willing to pay. It will of course be copyright in both the States and England. I am a little anxious to have it tried serially, as it tests the interest of the mystery.

Pleasure. — We have had a fine time in the Gilbert group, though four months on low islands, which involves low diet, is a largeish order; and my wife is rather down. I am myself, up to now, a pillar of health, though our long and vile voyage of calms, squalls, cataracts of rain, sails carried away, foretopmast lost, boats cleared and packets made on the approach of a p. d. reef, etc., has cured me of salt brine, and filled me with a longing for beef steak and mangoes not to be depicted. The interest has been immense. Old King Tembinoka of Apemama, the Napoleon of the group, poet, tyrant, altogether a man of mark, gave me the woven corselets of his grandfather, his father and his uncle, and, what pleased me more, told me their singular story, then all manner of strange tales, facts, and experiences for my South Sea book, which should be a Tearer, Mr. Burlingame: no one at least has had such stuff.

We are now engaged in the hell of a dead calm, the heat is cruel — it is the only time when I suffer from heat: I have nothing on but a pair of serge trousers, and a singlet without sleeves of Oxford gauze — O, yes, and a red sash about my waist; and yet as I sit here in the cabin, sweat streams from me. The rest are on deck under a bit of awning; we are not much above a hundred miles from port, and we might as well be in Kamschatka. However, I should be honest: this is the first calm I have endured without the added bane of a heavy swell, and the intoxicated blue-bottle wallowings and knockings of the helpless ship.

I wonder how you liked the end of *The Master*; that was the hardest job I ever had to do; did I do it?

My wife begs to be remembered to yourself and Mrs. Burlingame. Remember all of us to all friends, particularly Low, in case I don't get a word through for him. — I am, yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

The following was written soon after the termination of the voyage of the *Equator* and Stevenson's first landing in Samoa, where he was engaged in collecting materials for the account (then intended to be the concluding part of his great projected South Sea book) of the war and hurricane of the previous year.

Samoa [*December* 1889].

MY DEAR BAXTER, — ... I cannot return until I have seen either Tonga or Fiji or both: and I must not leave here till I have finished my collections on the war — a very interesting bit of history, the truth often very hard to come at, and the search (for me) much complicated by the German tongue, from the use of which I have desisted (I suppose) these fifteen years. The last two days I have been mugging with a dictionary from five to six hours a day; besides this, I have to call upon, keep sweet, and judiciously interview all sorts of persons — English, American, German, and Samoan. It makes a hard life; above all, as after every interview I have to come and get my notes straight on the nail. I believe I should have got my facts before the end of January, when I shall make for Tonga or Fiji. I am down right in the hurricane season; but they had so bad a one last year, I don't imagine there will be much of an edition this. Say that I get to Sydney some time in April, and I shall have done well, and be in a position to write a very singular and interesting book, or rather two; for I shall begin, I think, with a separate opuscule on the Samoan Trouble, about 370 as long as *Kidnapped*, not very interesting, but valuable — and a thing proper to be done. And then, hey! for the big South Sea Book: a devil of a big one, and full of the finest sport.

This morning as I was going along to my breakfast a little before seven, reading a number of Blackwood's Magazine, I was startled by a soft *talofa, alii* (note for my mother: they are quite courteous here in the European style, quite unlike Tahiti), right in my ear: it was Mataafa coming from early mass in his white coat and white linen kilt, with three fellows behind him. Mataafa is the nearest thing to a hero in my history, and really a fine fellow; plenty sense, and the most dignified, quiet, gentle manners. Talking of Blackwood — a file of which I was lucky enough to find here in the lawyer's — Mrs. Oliphant seems in a staggering state: from the *Wrong Box* to *The Master* I scarce recognise either my critic or myself. I gather that *The Master* should do well, and at least that notice is agreeable reading. I expect to be home in June: you will have gathered that I am pretty well. In addition to my labours, I suppose I walk five or six miles a day, and almost every day I ride up and see Fanny and Lloyd, who are in a house in the bush with Ah Fu. I live in Apia for history's sake with Moors, an American trader. Day before yesterday I was arrested and fined for riding fast in the street, which made my blood bitter, as the wife of the manager of the German Firm has twice almost ridden me down, and there seems none to say her nay. The Germans have behaved pretty badly here, but not in all ways so ill as you may have gathered: they were doubtless much provoked; and if the insane Knappe had not appeared upon the scene, might have got out of the muddle with dignity. I write along without rhyme or reason, as things occur to me.

I hope from my outcries about printing you do not think I want you to keep my news or letters in a Blue Beard closet. I like all friends to hear of me; they all 371 should if I had ninety hours in the day, and strength for all of them; but you must have gathered how hard worked I am, and you will understand I go to bed a pretty tired man.

29th December .

To-morrow (Monday, I won't swear to my day of the month; this is the Sunday between Christmas and New Year) I go up the coast with Mr. Clarke, one of the London Society missionaries, in a boat to examine schools, see Tamasese, etc. Lloyd comes to photograph. Pray Heaven we have good weather; this is the rainy season; we shall be gone four or five days; and if the rain keep off, I shall be glad of the change; if it rain, it will be beastly. This explains still further how hard pressed I am, as the mail will be gone ere I return, and I have thus lost the days I meant to write in. I have a boy, Henry, who interprets and copies for me, and is a great nuisance. He said he wished to come to me in order to learn "long explessions." Henry goes up along with us; and as I am not fond of him, he may before the trip is over hear some "stlong explessions." I am writing this on the back balcony at Moors', palms and a hill like the hill of Kinnoull looking in at me; myself lying on the floor, and (like the parties in Handel's song) "clad in robes of virgin white"; the ink is dreadful, the heat delicious, a fine going breeze in the palms, and from the other side of the house the sudden angry splash and roar of the Pacific on the reef, where the warships are still piled from last year's hurricane, some under water, one high and dry upon her side, the strangest figure of a ship was ever witnessed; the narrow bay there is full of ships; the men-of-war covered with sail after the rains, and (especially the German ship, which is fearfully and awfully top heavy) rolling almost yards in, in what appears to be calm water.

Samoa, Apia at least, is far less beautiful than the Marquesas or

Tahiti: a more gentle scene, gentler acclivities, a tamer face of nature; and this much aided, for 372 the wanderer, by the great German plantations with their countless regular avenues of palms. The island has beautiful rivers, of about the bigness of our waters in the Lothians, with pleasant pools and waterfalls and overhanging verdure, and often a great volume of sound, so that once I thought I was passing near a mill, and it was only the voice of the river. I am not specially attracted by the people; but they are courteous; the women very attractive, and dress lovely; the men purposelike, well set up, tall, lean, and dignified. As I write, the breeze is brisking up, doors are beginning to slam, and shutters; a strong draught sweeps round the balcony; it looks doubtful for to-morrow. Here I shut up. — Ever your affectionate

R. L. Stevenson.

To Lady Taylor

This letter contains the first announcement of the purchase of the Vailima estate (not yet so named). Sir Percy Shelley had died in the previous December.

Apia, Samoa, Jan. 20th, 1890.

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR, — I shall hope to see you in some months from now, when I come home — to break up my establishment — I know no diminutive of the word. Your daughters cast a spell upon me; they were always declaring I was a winged creature and would vanish into the uttermost isle; and they were right, and I have made my preparations. I am now the owner of an estate upon Upolu, some two or three miles behind and above Apia; three streams, two waterfalls, a great cliff, an ancient native fort, a view of the sea and lowlands, or (to be more precise) several views of them in various directions, are now mine. It would be affectation to omit a good many head of cattle; above all as it required much diplomacy to have them thrown in, for the gentleman who sold to me was staunch. Besides all this, there is a great deal more forest than I have any need for; or to be plain the 373 whole estate is one impassable jungle, which must be cut down and through at considerable expense. Then the house has to be built; and then (as a climax) we may have to stand a siege in it in the next native war.

I do feel as if I was a coward and a traitor to desert my friends; only, my dear lady, you know what a miserable corrhyzal (is that how it is spelt?) creature I was at home: and here I have some real health, I can walk, I can ride, I can stand some exposure, I am up with the sun, I have a real enjoyment of the world and of myself; it would be hard to go back again to England and to bed; and I think it would be very silly. I am sure it would; and yet I feel shame, and I know I am not writing like myself. I wish you knew how much I admired you, and when I think of those I must leave, how early a place your name occupies. I have not had the pleasure to know you very long; and yet I feel as if my leaving England were a special treachery to you, and my leaving you a treachery to myself. I will only ask you to try to forgive me: for I am sure I will never quite forgive myself. Somebody might write to me in the care of R. Towns & Co., Sydney, New South Wales, to tell me if you can forgive. But you will do quite right if you cannot. Only let me come and see you when we do return, or it will be a lame home-coming.

My wife suffered a good deal in our last, somewhat arduous voyage; all our party indeed suffered except myself. Fanny is now better but she is still no very famous success in the way of health.

All the while I have been writing, I have had another matter in my eye; of which I scarce like to speak: You know of course that I am thinking of Sir Percy and his widow. The news has reached me in the shape of a newspaper cutting, I have no particulars. He had a sweet, original nature; I think I liked him better than ever I should have liked his father; I am sorry he was always a little afraid of me; if I had had more chance, he would 374 have liked me too, we had so much in common, and I valued so much his fine soul, as honest as a dog's, and the romance of him, which was like a dog's too, and like a poet's at the same time. If he had not been Shelley's son, people would have thought more of him; and yet he was the better of the two, bar verses.

Please tell my dear Ida and Una that we think much of them, as well as of your dear self, and believe me, in words which you once allowed me to use (and I was very much affected when you did so), your affectionate friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Dr. Scott

This gentleman is the physician to whose assiduous care and kindness, as recorded in the dedication to *Underwoods*, Stevenson owed so much during his invalid years at Bournemouth.

Apia, Samoa, January 20th, 1890.

MY DEAR SCOTT, — Shameful indeed that you should not have heard of me before! I have now been some twenty months in the South Seas, and am (up to date) a person whom you would scarce know. I think nothing of long walks and rides: I was four hours and a half gone the other day, partly riding, partly climbing up a steep ravine. I have stood a six months' voyage on a copra schooner with about three months ashore on coral atolls, which means (except for cocoanuts to drink) no change whatever from ship's food. My wife suffered badly — it was too rough a business altogether — Lloyd suffered — and, in short, I was the only one of the party who "kept my end up."

I am so pleased with this climate that I have decided to settle; have even purchased a piece of land from three to four hundred acres, I know not which till the survey is completed, and shall only return next summer to wind up my affairs in England; thenceforth I mean to be a subject of the High Commissioner.

Now you would have gone longer yet without news of your truant patient, but that I have a medical discovery to communicate. I find I can (almost immediately) fight off a cold with liquid extract of coca; two or (if obstinate) three teaspoonfuls in the day for a variable period of from one to five days sees the cold generally to the door. I find it at once produces a glow, stops rigour, and though it makes one very uncomfortable, prevents the advance of the disease. Hearing of this influenza, it occurred to me that this might prove remedial; and perhaps a stronger exhibition — injections of cocaine, for instance — still better.

If on my return I find myself let in for this epidemic, which seems highly calculated to nip me in the bud, I shall feel very much inclined to make the experiment. See what a gulf you may save me from if you shall have previously made it on *anima vili*, on some less important sufferer, and shall have found it worse than useless.

How is Miss Boodle and her family? Greeting to your brother and all friends in Bournemouth. — Yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

After a stay of four or five weeks at Apia, during which he had fallen more and more in love with Samoa and the Samoans, Stevenson took steamer again, this time for Sydney, where he had ordered his letters to await him. This and the two following letters were written during the passage. I again print in their original place a set of verses separately published in *Songs of Travel*.

Februar den 3en 1890

Dampfer Lübeck, *zwischen Apia und Sydney.*

MY DEAR CHARLES, — I have got one delightful letter from you, and heard from my mother of your kindness in going to see her. Thank you for that: you can in no way more touch and serve me.... Ay, ay, it is sad to sell 17; sad and fine were the old days: when I was away in Apemama, I wrote two copies of verse about Edinburgh 376 and the past, so ink black, so golden bright. I will send them, if I can find them, for they will say something to you, and indeed one is more than half addressed to you. This is it —

TO MY OLD COMRADES

Do you remember — can we e'er forget? —
How, in the coiled perplexities of youth,
In our wild climate, in our scowling town,
We gloomed and shivered, sorrowed, sobbed, and feared?

The belching winter wind, the missile rain,
The rare and welcome silence of the snows,
The laggard morn, the haggard day, the night,
The grimy spell of the nocturnal town,
Do you remember? — Ah, could one forget!
As when the fevered sick that all night long
Listed the wind intone, and hear at last
The ever-welcome voice of the chanticleer
Sing in the bitter hour before the dawn, —
With sudden ardour, these desire the day:
(Here a squall sends all flying.)
So sang in the gloom of youth the bird of hope;
So we, exulting, hearkened and desired.
For lo! as in the palace porch of life
We huddled with chimeras, from within —
How sweet to hear! — the music swelled and fell,
And through the breach of the revolving doors
What dreams of splendour blinded us and fled!
I have since then contended and rejoiced;
Amid the glories of the house of life
Profoundly entered, and the shrine beheld:
Yet when the lamp from my expiring eyes
Shall dwindle and recede, the voice of love
Fall insignificant on my closing ears,
What sound shall come but the old cry of the wind
In our inclement city? what return
But the image of the emptiness of youth,
Filled with the sound of footsteps and that voice
Of discontent and rapture and despair?
So, as in darkness, from the magic lamp,
The momentary pictures gleam and fade
And perish, and the night resurges — these
Shall I remember, and then all forget.

They’re pretty second-rate, but felt. I can’t be bothered to copy the other.

I have bought 314½ acres of beautiful land in the bush behind Apia; when we get the house built, the garden laid, and cattle in the place, it will be something to fall back on for shelter and food; and if the island could stumble into political quiet, it is conceivable it might even bring a little income.... We range from 600 to 1500 feet, have five streams, waterfalls, precipices, profound ravines, rich tablelands, fifty head of cattle on the ground (if any one could catch them), a great view of forest, sea, mountains, the warships in the haven: really a noble place. Some day you are to take a long holiday and come and see us: it has been all planned.

With all these irons in the fire, and cloudy prospects, you may be sure I was pleased to hear a good account of business. I believed *The Master* was a sure card: I wonder why Henley thinks it grimy; grim it is, God knows, but sure not grimy, else I am the more deceived. I am sorry he did not care for it; I place it on the line with *Kidnapped* myself. We'll see as time goes on whether it goes above or falls below.

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

The Editor of Scribner's Magazine had written asking him for fresh contributions, and he sends the set of verses addressed to 378 Tembinoka, the king at Butaritari, and afterwards reprinted in *Songs of Travel*, beginning "Let us who part like brothers part like bards."

S.S. Lübeck [*between Apia and Sydney, February*] 1890

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — I desire nothing better than to continue my relation with the Magazine, to which it pleases me to hear I have been useful. The only thing I have ready is the enclosed barbaric piece. As soon as I have arrived in Sydney I shall send you some photographs, a portrait of Tembinoka, perhaps a view of the palace or of the "matted men" at their singing; also T.'s flag, which my wife designed for him: in a word, what I can do best for you. It will be thus a foretaste of my book of travels. I shall ask you to let me have, if I wish it, the use of the plates made, and to make up a little tract of the verses and illustrations, of which you might send six copies to H.M. Tembinoka, King of Apemama, via Butaritari, Gilbert Islands. It might be best to send it by Crawford & Co., S.F. There is no postal service; and schooners must take it, how they may and when. Perhaps some such note as this might be prefixed:

At my departure from the island of Apemama, for which you will look in vain in most atlases, the king and I agreed, since we both set up to be in the poetical way, that we should celebrate our separation in verse. Whether or not his majesty has been true to his bargain, the laggard posts of the Pacific may perhaps inform me in six months, perhaps not before a year. The following lines represent my part of the contract, and it is hoped, by their pictures of strange manners, they may entertain a civilised audience. Nothing throughout has been invented or exaggerated; the lady herein referred to as the author's Muse, has confined herself to stringing into rhyme facts and legends that I saw or heard during two months' residence upon the island.

R. L. S.

You will have received from me a letter about *The* 379 *Wrecker*. No doubt it is a new experiment for me, being disguised so much as a study of manners, and the interest turning on a mystery of the detective sort. I think there need be no hesitation about beginning it in the fall of the year. Lloyd has nearly finished his part, and I shall hope to send you very soon the MS. of about the first four-sevenths. At the same time, I have been employing myself in Samoa, collecting facts about the recent war; and I propose to write almost at once and to publish shortly a small volume, called I know not what — the War in Samoa, the Samoa Trouble, an Island War, the War of the Three Consuls, I know not — perhaps you can suggest. It was meant to be a part of my travel book; but material has accumulated on my hands until I see myself forced into volume form, and I hope it may be of use, if it come soon. I have a few photographs of the war, which will do for illustrations. It is conceivable you might wish to handle this in the Magazine, although I am inclined to think you won't, and to agree with you. But if you think otherwise, there it is. The travel letters (fifty of them) are already contracted for in papers; these I was quite bound to let M'Clure handle, as the idea was of his suggestion, and I always felt a little sore as to one trick I played him in the matter of the end-papers. The war-volume will contain some very interesting and picturesque details: more I can't promise for it. Of course the fifty newspaper letters will be simply patches chosen from the travel volume (or volumes) as it gets written,

But you see I have in hand: —

1. *The Wrecker*.
Say half done.
2. *The Pearl Fisher* (a novel promised to the Ledger, and which will form, when it comes in book form, No. 2 of our *South Sea Yarns*). [380]
Lloyd's copy half done, mine not touched.
3. The War volume.
Not begun, but all material ready.
4. The Big Travel Book, which includes the letters.
Ditto.
5. The *Ballads*.
You know how they stand.

Excusez du peu! And you see what madness it would be to make any fresh engagements. At the same time, you have *The Wrecker* and the War volume, if you like either — or both — to keep my name in the Magazine.

It begins to look as if I should not be able to get any more ballads done this somewhile. I know the book would sell better if it were all ballads; and yet I am growing half tempted to fill up with some other verses. A good few are connected with my voyage, such as the "Home of Tembinoka" sent herewith, and would have a sort of slight affinity to the *South Sea Ballads*. You might tell me how that strikes a stranger.

In all this, my real interest is with the travel volume, which ought to be of a really extraordinary interest.

I am sending you "Tembinoka" as he stands; but there are parts of him that I hope to better, particularly in stanzas III. and II. I scarce feel intelligent enough to try just now; and I thought at any rate you had better see it, set it up if you think well, and let me have a proof; so, at least, we shall get the bulk of it straight. I have spared you

Teñkoruti, Tembaitake, Tembinatake, and other barbarous names, because I thought the dentists in the States had work enough without my assistance; but my chief's name is Tembinoka, pronounced, according to the present quite modern habit in the Gilberts, Tembinok'. Compare in the margin Tengkorootch; a singular new trick, setting at defiance all South Sea analogy, for nowhere else do they show even the ability, far less the will, to end a word upon a consonant. Loia is Lloyd's name, ship becomes shipé, teapot tipoté, etc. Our admirable 381 friend Herman Melville, of whom, since I could judge, I have thought more than ever, had no ear for languages whatever: his Hapar tribe should be Hapaa, etc.

But this is of no interest to you: suffice it, you see how I am as usual up to the neck in projects, and really all likely bairns this time. When will this activity cease? Too soon for me, I dare to say.

R. L. S.

To James Payn

February 4th, 1890, S.S. Lübeck.

MY DEAR JAMES PAYN, — In virtue of confessions in your last, you would at the present moment, if you were along of me, be sick; and I will ask you to receive that as an excuse for my hand of write. Excuse a plain seaman if he regards with scorn the likes of you pore land-lubbers ashore now. (Reference to nautical ditty.) Which I may however be allowed to add that when eight months' mail was laid by my side one evening in Apia, and my wife and I sat up the most of the night to peruse the same — (precious indisposed we were next day in consequence) — no letter, out of so many, more appealed to our hearts than one from the pore, stick-in-the-mud, land-lubbering, common (or garden) Londoner, James Payn. Thank you for it; my wife says, "Can't I see him when we get back to London?" I have told her the thing appeared to me within the spear of practical politix. (Why can't I spell and write like an honest, sober, god-fearing litry gent? I think it's the motion of the ship.) Here I was interrupted to play chess with the chief engineer; as I grow old, I prefer the "athletic sport of cribbage," of which (I am sure I misquote) I have just been reading in your delightful *Literary Recollections*. How you skim along, you and Andrew Lang (different as you are), and yet the only two who can keep a fellow smiling every page, and ever and again laughing out loud. I joke wi' deeficulty, 382 I believe; I am not funny; and when I am, Mrs. Oliphant says I'm vulgar, and somebody else says (in Latin) that I'm a whore, which seems harsh and even uncalled for: I shall stick to weepers; a 5s. weeper, 2s. 6d. laugher, 1s. shocker.

My dear sir, I grow more and more idiotic; I cannot even feign sanity. Some time in the month of June a stalwart weather-beaten man, evidently of seafaring antecedents, shall be observed wending his way between the Athenæum Club and Waterloo Place. Arrived off No. 17, he shall be observed to bring his head sharply to the wind, and tack into the outer haven. “Captain Payn in the harbour?” — ”Ay, ay, sir. What ship?” — ”Barquentin R. L. S., nine hundred and odd days out from the port of Bournemouth, homeward bound, with yarns and curiosities.”

Who was it said, “For God’s sake, don’t speak of it!” about Scott and his tears? He knew what he was saying. The fear of that hour is the skeleton in all our cupboards; that hour when the pastime and the livelihood go together; and — I am getting hard of hearing myself; a pore young child of forty, but new come frae my Mammy, O!

Excuse these follies, and accept the expression of all my regards. — Yours affectionately,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Henry James

The *Solution* is a short story of Mr. Henry James, first published in a periodical and reprinted in the collection called *The Lesson of the Master* (Macmillans).

Union Club, Sydney, February 19, 1890.

Here — in this excellent civilised, antipodal club smoking-room, I have just read the first part of your *Solution*. Dear Henry James, it is an exquisite art; do not be troubled by the shadows of your French competitors: 383 not one, not de Maupassant, could have done a thing more clean and fine; dry in touch, but the atmosphere (as in a fine summer sunset) rich with colour and with perfume. I shall say no more; this note is De Solutione; except that I — that we — are all your sincere friends and hope to shake you by the hand in June.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

signed, sealed and
delivered as his act
and deed
and very thought of very thought,
this nineteenth of February in the year of our
Lord one thousand eight hundred ninety and
nothing.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Written while he was still in a white heat of indignation on behalf of Father Damien. He was not aware that Dr. Hyde’s letter had been a private one not meant for publicity, and later came to think he might have struck as effectively on behalf of Damien without striking so fiercely against Dr. Hyde (see below,). “Damon” is the Rev. F. Damon, a missionary in Hawaii.

Union Club, Sydney, March 5, 1890.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I understand the family keeps you somewhat informed. For myself I am in such a whirl of work and society, I can ill spare a moment. My health is excellent and has been here tried by abominable wet weather, and (what's waur) dinners and lunches. As this is like to be our metropolis, I have tried to lay myself out to be sociable with an eye to yoursel'. Several niceish people have turned up: Fanny has an evening, but she is about at the end of the virtuous effort, and shrinks from the approach of any fellow creature.

Have you seen Hyde's (Dr. not Mr.) letter about Damien? That has been one of my concerns; I have an answer in the press; and have just written a difficult 384 letter to Damon trying to prepare him for what (I fear) must be to him extremely painful. The answer is to come out as a pamphlet; of which I make of course a present to the publisher. I am not a cannibal, I would not eat the flesh of Dr. Hyde, — and it is conceivable it will make a noise in Honolulu. I have struck as hard as I knew how; nor do I think my answer can fail to do away (in the minds of all who see it) with the effect of Hyde's incredible and really villainous production. What a mercy I wasn't this man's *guest* in the *Morning Star*! I think it would have broke my heart.

Time for me to go! — I remain, with love,

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Stevenson had not been long at Sydney — just long enough to write and print the famous *Letter to Dr. Hyde* in defence of Father Damien — when, to his heavy disappointment, he fell ill again with one of his old bad attacks of fever and hemorrhage from the lungs. It was this experience which finally determined him to settle for good on his new island property in Samoa, which at first he had thought of rather as an occasional refuge and resting-place in the intervals between future projected yachting voyages.

Union Club, Sydney, March 7th, 1890.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — I did not send off the enclosed before from laziness; having gone quite sick, and being a blooming prisoner here in the club, and indeed in my bedroom. I was in receipt of your letters and your ornamental photo, and was delighted to see how well you looked, and how reasonably well I stood.... I am sure I shall never come back home except to die; I may do it, but shall always think of the move as suicidal, unless a great change comes over me, of which as yet I see no symptom. This visit to Sydney has smashed me handsomely; and yet I made myself a prisoner here in the club upon my first arrival. This is not encouraging for further ventures; Sydney winter — or, I might almost say, 385 Sydney spring, for I came when the worst was over — is so small an affair, comparable to our June depression at home in Scotland.... The pipe is right again; it was the springs that had rusted, and ought to have been oiled. Its voice is now that of an angel; but, Lord! here in the club I dare not wake it! Conceive my impatience to be in my own backwoods and raise the sound of minstrelsy. What pleasures are to be compared with those of the Unvirtuous Virtuoso. — Yours ever affectionately, the Unvirtuous Virtuoso,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

To try and recover from the effects of his illness at Sydney, Stevenson determined to take another voyage; and started accordingly in April with his party on a trading steamer, the *Janet Nicoll*, which took him by a long and devious course among many groups of islands that he had not yet visited, returning to Sydney in August by way of New Caledonia. On the first night out of Auckland harbour the voyage nearly came to a premature end through the blowing up of some trade fireworks, or materials for fireworks, which had been packed in the stateroom.

S.S. Janet Nicoll, *off Upolu* [*Spring* 1890].

MY DEAREST COLVIN, — I was sharply ill at Sydney, cut off, right out of bed, in this steamer on a fresh island cruise, and have already reaped the benefit. We are excellently found this time, on a spacious vessel, with an excellent table; the captain, supercargo, our one fellow-passenger, etc., very nice; and the charterer, Mr. Henderson, the very man I could have chosen. The truth is, I fear, this life is the only one that suits me; so long as I cruise in the South Seas, I shall be well and happy — alas, no, I do not mean that, and *absit omen*! — I mean that, so soon as I cease from cruising, the nerves are strained, the decline commences, and I steer slowly but surely back to bedward. We left Sydney, had a cruel rough passage to Auckland, for the *Janet* is the worst roller I was ever aboard 386 of. I was confined to my cabin, ports closed, self shied out of the berth, stomach (pampered till the day I left on a diet of perpetual egg-nogg) revolted at ship's food and ship eating, in a frowsy bunk, clinging with one hand to the plate, with the other to the glass, and using the knife and fork (except at intervals) with the eyelid. No matter: I picked up hand over hand. After a day in Auckland, we set sail again; were blown up in the main cabin with calcium fires, as we left the bay. Let no man say I am unscientific: when I ran, on the alert, out of my stateroom, and found the main cabin incarnadined with the glow of the last scene of a pantomime, I stopped dead: "What is this?" said I. "This ship is on fire, I see that; but why a pantomime?" And I stood and reasoned the point, until my head was so muddled with the fumes that I could not find the companion. A few seconds later, the captain had to enter crawling on his belly, and took days to recover (if he has recovered) from the fumes. By singular good fortune, we got the hose down in time and saved the ship, but Lloyd lost most of his clothes and a great part of our photographs was destroyed. Fanny saw the native sailors tossing overboard a blazing trunk; she stopped them in time, and behold, it contained my manuscripts. Thereafter we had three (or two) days fine weather: then got into a gale of wind, with rain and a vexatious sea. As we drew into our anchorage in a bight of Savage Island, a man ashore told me afterwards the sight of the *Janet Nicoll* made him sick; and indeed it was rough play, though nothing to the night before. All through this gale I worked four to six hours per diem spearing the ink-bottle like a flying fish, and holding my papers together as I might. For, of all things, what I was at was history — the Samoan business — and I had to turn from one to another of these piles of manuscript notes, and from one page to another in each, until I should have found employment for the hands of Briareus. All the same, this history is a godsend for a voyage; I can 387 put in time, getting events co-ordinated and the narrative distributed, when my much-heaving numskull would be incapable of finish or fine style. At Savage we met the missionary barque *John Williams*. I tell you it was a great day for Savage Island: the path up the cliffs was crowded with gay islandresses (I like that feminine plural) who wrapped me in their embraces, and picked my pockets of all my tobacco, with a manner which a touch would have made revolting, but as it was, was simply charming, like the Golden Age. One pretty, little, stalwart minx, with a red flower behind her ear, had searched me with extraordinary zeal; and when, soon after, I missed my matches, I accused her (she still following us) of being the thief. After some delay, and with a subtle smile, she produced the box, gave me *one match*, and put the rest away again. Too tired to add more. — Your most affectionate

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

The idea here discussed of a further series of essays to be contributed to Scribner’s Magazine was never carried out.

S.S. Janet Nicoll, *off Peru Island, Kingsmills*
Group, July 13th, ‘90.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — I am moved to write to you in the matter of the end papers. I am somewhat tempted to begin them again. Follow the reasons *pro* and *con*: —

1st. I must say I feel as if something in the nature of the end paper were a desirable finish to the number, and that the substitutes of occasional essays by occasional contributors somehow fail to fill the bill. Should you differ with me on this point, no more is to be said. And what follows must be regarded as lost words.

2nd. I am rather taken with the idea of continuing the work. For instance, should you have no distaste for papers of the class called

Random Memories, I should 388 enjoy continuing them (of course at intervals), and when they were done I have an idea they might make a readable book. On the other hand, I believe a greater freedom of choice might be taken, the subjects more varied and more briefly treated, in somewhat approaching the manner of Andrew Lang in the *Sign of the Ship*; it being well understood that the broken sticks method is one not very suitable (as Colonel Burke would say) to my genius, and not very likely to be pushed far in my practice. Upon this point I wish you to condense your massive brain. In the last lot I was promised, and I fondly expected to receive, a vast amount of assistance from intelligent and genial correspondents. I assure you, I never had a scratch of a pen from any one above the level of a village idiot, except once, when a lady sowed my head full of grey hairs by announcing that she was going to direct her life in future by my counsels. Will the correspondents be more copious and less irrelevant in the future? Suppose that to be the case, will they be of any use to me in my place of exile? Is it possible for a man in Samoa to be in touch with the great heart of the People? And is it not perhaps a mere folly to attempt, from so hopeless a distance, anything so delicate as a series of papers? Upon these points, perpend, and give me the results of your perpensions.

3rd. The emolument would be agreeable to your humble servant.

I have now stated all the *pros*, and the most of the *cons* are come in by the way. There follows, however, one immense Con (with a capital "C"), which I beg you to consider particularly. I fear that, to be of any use for your magazine, these papers should begin with the beginning of a volume. Even supposing my hands were free, this would be now impossible for next year. You have to consider whether, supposing you have no other objection, it would be worth while to begin the series in the 389 middle of a volume, or desirable to delay the whole matter until the beginning of another year.

Now supposing that the *cons* have it, and you refuse my offer, let me make another proposal, which you will be very inclined to refuse at the first off-go, but which I really believe might in time come to something. You know how the penny papers have their answers to correspondents. Why not do something of the same kind for the "culchawed"? Why not get men like Stimson, Brownell, Professor James, Goldwin Smith, and others who will occur to you more readily than to me, to put and to answer a series of questions of intellectual and general interest, until at last you should have established a certain standard of matter to be discussed in this part of the Magazine?

I want you to get me bound volumes of the Magazine from its start. The Lord knows I have had enough copies; where they are I know not. A wandering author gathers no magazines.

The Wrecker is in no forrader state than in last reports. I have indeed got to a period when I cannot well go on until I can refresh myself on the proofs of the beginning. My respected collaborator, who handles the machine which is now addressing you, has indeed carried his labours farther, but not, I am led to understand, with what we used to call a blessing; at least, I have been refused a sight of his latest labours. However, there is plenty of time ahead, and I feel no anxiety about the tale, except that it may meet with your approval.

All this voyage I have been busy over my *Travels*, which, given a very high temperature and the saloon of a steamer usually going before the wind, and with the cabins in front of the engines, has come very near to prostrating me altogether. You will therefore understand that there are no more poems. I wonder whether there are already enough, and whether you think that such a volume would be worth the publishing? I shall hope to find in Sydney 390 some expression of your opinion on this point. Living as I do among — not the most cultured of mankind ("splendidly educated and perfect gentlemen when sober") — I attach a growing importance to friendly criticisms from yourself.

I believe that this is the most of our business. As for my health, I got over my cold in a fine style, but have not been very well of late. To my unaffected annoyance, the blood-spitting has started again. I find the heat of a steamer decidedly wearing and trying in these latitudes, and I am inclined to think the superior expedition rather dearly paid for. Still, the fact that one does not even remark the coming of a squall, nor feel relief on its departure, is a mercy not to be acknowledged without gratitude. The rest of the family seem to be doing fairly well; both seem less run down than they were on the *Equator*, and Mrs. Stevenson very much less so. We have now been three months away, have visited about thirty-five islands, many of which were novel to us, and some extremely entertaining; some also were old acquaintances, and pleasant to revisit. In the meantime, we have really a capital time aboard ship, in the most pleasant and interesting society, and with (considering the length and nature of the voyage) an excellent table. Please remember us all to Mr. Scribner, the young chieftain of the house, and the lady, whose health I trust is better. To Mrs. Burlingame we all desire to be remembered, and I hope you will give our news to Low, St. Gaudens, Faxon, and others of the faithful in the city. I shall probably return to Samoa direct, having given up all idea of returning to civilisation in the meanwhile. There, on my ancestral acres, which I purchased six months ago from a blind Scots blacksmith, you will please address me until further notice. The name of the ancestral acres is going to be Vailima; but as at the present moment nobody else knows the name, except myself and the co-patentees, it will be safer, if less ambitious, to address R. L. S., Apia, Samoa. The ancestral acres run to upwards of three hundred; they enjoy the ministrations 391 of five streams, whence the name. They are all at the present moment under a trackless covering of magnificent forest, which would be worth a great deal if it grew beside a railway terminus. To me, as it stands, it represents a handsome deficit. Obliging natives from the Cannibal Islands are now cutting it down at my expense. You would be able to run your magazine to much greater advantage if the terms of authors were on the same scale with those of my cannibals. We have also a house about the size of a manufacturer's lodge. 'Tis but the egg of the future palace, over the details of which on paper Mrs. Stevenson and I have already shed real tears; what it will be when it comes to paying for it, I leave you to imagine. But if it can only be built as now intended, it will be with genuine satisfaction and a growunded pride that I shall welcome you at the steps of my Old Colonial Home, when you land from the steamer on a long-merited holiday. I speak much at my ease; yet I do not know, I may be now an outlaw, a bankrupt, the abhorred of all good men. I do not know, you probably do. Has Hyde turned upon me? Have I fallen, like Danvers Carew?

It is suggested to me that you might like to know what will be my future society. Three consuls, all at loggerheads with one another, or at the best in a clique of two against one; three different sects of missionaries, not upon the best of terms; and the Catholics and Protestants in a condition of unhealable ill-feeling as to whether a wooden drum ought or ought not to be beaten to announce the time of school. The native population, very genteel, very songful, very agreeable, very good-looking, chronically spoiling for a fight (a circumstance not to be entirely neglected in the design of the palace). As for the white population of (technically, "The Beach"), I don't suppose it is possible for any person not thoroughly conversant with the South Seas to form the smallest conception of 392 such a society, with its grog-shops, its apparently unemployed hangers-on, its merchants of all degrees of respectability and the reverse. The paper, of which I must really send you a copy — if yours were really a live magazine, you would have an exchange with the editor: I assure you, it has of late contained a great deal of matter about one of your contributors — rejoices in the name of Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser. The advertisements in the Advertiser are permanent, being simply subsidies for its existence. A dashing warfare of newspaper correspondence goes on between the various residents, who are rather fond of recurring to one another's antecedents. But when all is said, there are a lot of very nice, pleasant people, and I don't know that Apia is very much worse than half a hundred towns that I could name.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

As above indicated, on the way between Samoa and Sydney Stevenson left the *Janet Nicoll* for a week's stay in New Caledonia, during which he was hospitably received by the French officials.

Hotel Sebastopol, Noumea, August 1890.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — I have stayed here a week while Lloyd and my wife continue to voyage in the *Janet Nicoll*; this I did, partly to see the convict system, partly to shorten my stay in the extreme cold — hear me with my extreme! *moi qui suis originaire d'Edimbourg* — of Sydney at this season. I am feeling very seedy, utterly fatigued and overborne with sleep. I have a fine old gentleman of a doctor, who attends and cheers and entertains, if he does not cure me; but even with his ministrations I am almost incapable of the exertion sufficient for this letter; and I am really, as I write, falling down with sleep. What is necessary to say, I must try to say shortly. Lloyd goes to clear out our establishments: pray keep him in funds, if I have any; if I have not, pray try to raise them. Here 393 is the idea: to install ourselves, at the risk of bankruptcy, in Samoa. It is not the least likely it will pay (although it may); but it is almost certain it will support life, with very few external expenses. If I die, it will be an endowment for the survivors, at least for my wife and Lloyd; and my mother, who might prefer to go home, has her own. Hence I believe I shall do well to hurry my installation. The letters are already in part done; in part done is a novel for Scribner; in the course of the next twelve months I should receive a considerable amount of money. I am aware I had intended to pay back to my capital some of this. I am now of opinion I should act foolishly. Better to build the house and have a roof and farm of my own; and thereafter, with a livelihood assured, save and repay.... There is my livelihood, all but books and wine, ready in a nutshell; and it ought to be more easy to save and to repay afterwards. Excellent, say you, but will you save and will you repay? I do not know, said the Bell of Old Bow.... It seems clear to me.... The deuce of the affair is that I do not know when I shall see you and Colvin. I guess you will have to come and see me: many a time already we have arranged the details of your visit in the yet unbuilt house on the mountain. I shall be able to get decent wine from Noumea. We shall be able to give you a decent welcome, and talk of old days. *Apropos* of old days, do you remember still the phrase we heard in Waterloo Place? I believe you made a piece for the piano on that phrase. Pray, if you remember it, send it me in your next. If you find it impossible to write correctly, send it me *à la récitative*, and indicate the accents. Do you feel (you must) how strangely heavy and stupid I am? I must at last give up and go sleep; I am simply a rag.

The morrow. — I feel better, but still dim and groggy. To-night I go to the governor's; such a lark — no dress clothes — twenty-four hours' notice — able-bodied Polish tailor — suit made for a man with the figure of a puncheon — same 394 hastily altered for self with the figure of a bodkin — sight inconceivable. Never mind; dress clothes, "which nobody can deny"; and the officials have been all so civil that I liked neither to refuse nor to appear in mufti. Bad dress clothes only prove you are a grisly ass; no dress clothes, even when explained, indicate a want of respect. I wish you were here with me to help me dress in this wild raiment, and to accompany me to M. Noel-Pardon's. I cannot say what I would give if there came a knock now at the door and you came in. I guess Noel-Pardon would go begging, and we might burn the fr. 200 dress clothes in the back garden for a bonfire; or what would be yet more expensive and more humorous, get them once more expanded to fit you, and when that was done, a second time cut down for my gossamer dimensions.

I hope you never forget to remember me to your father, who has always a place in my heart, as I hope I have a little in his. His kindness helped me infinitely when you and I were young; I recall it with gratitude and affection in this town of convicts at the world's end. There are very few things, my dear Charles, worth mention: on a retrospect of life, the day's flash and colour, one day with another, flames, dazzles, and puts to sleep; and when the days are gone, like a fast-flying thaumatrope, they make but a single pattern. Only a few things stand out; and among these — most plainly to me — Rutland Square. — Ever, my dear Charles, your affectionate friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — Just returned from trying on the dress clo'. Lord, you should see the coat! It stands out at the waist like a bustle, the flaps cross in front, the sleeves are like bags.

To E. L. Burlingame

Proceeding from New Caledonia to Sydney, Stevenson again made a stay there of about a month, before going to settle in his new island home and superintend the operations of planting and building. 395 The next letter is in acknowledgment of proofs received from Messrs. Scribner of a proposed volume of verse to contain, besides *Ticonderoga* and the two ballads on Marquesan and Tahitian legends, a number of the other miscellaneous verses which he had written in the course of his travels. In the end, the ballads only stood for publication at this time; the other verses were reserved, and have been posthumously published under the title *Songs of Travel.*

Union Club, Sydney [*August* 1890].

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, —

Ballads.

The deuce is in this volume. It has cost me more botheration and dubiety than any other I ever took in hand. On one thing my mind is made up: the verses at the end have no business there, and throw them down. Many of them are bad, many of the rest want nine years' keeping, and the remainder are not relevant — throw them down; some I never want to hear of more, others will grow in time towards decent items in a second *Underwoods* — and in the meanwhile, down with them! At the same time, I have a sneaking idea the ballads are not altogether without merit — I don't know if they're poetry, but they're good narrative, or I'm deceived. (You've never said one word about them, from which I astutely gather you are dead set against: "he was a diplomatic man" — extract from epitaph of E. L. B. — "and remained on good terms with Minor Poets.") You will have to judge: one of the Gladstonian trinity of paths must be chosen. (1st) Either publish the five ballads, such as they are, in a volume called *Ballads*; in which case pray send sheets at once to Chatto and Windus. Or (2nd) write and tell me you think the book too small, and I'll try and get into the mood to do some more. Or (3rd) write and tell me the whole thing is a blooming illusion; in which case draw off some twenty copies for my private entertainment, and charge me with the expense of the whole dream.

In the matter of rhyme no man can judge himself; I am at the world's end, have no one to consult, and my publisher holds his tongue. I call it unfair and almost 396 unmanly. I do indeed begin to be filled with animosity; Lord, wait till you see the continuation of *The Wrecker*, when I introduce some New York publishers.... It's a good scene; the quantities you drink and the really hideous language you are represented as employing may perhaps cause you one tithe of the pain you have inflicted by your silence on, sir, The Poetaster,

R. L. S.

Lloyd is off home; my wife and I dwell sundered: she in lodgings, preparing for the move; I here in the club, and at my old trade — bedridden. Naturally, the visit home is given up; we only wait our opportunity to get to Samoa, where, please, address me.

Have I yet asked you to despatch the books and papers left in your care to me at Apia, Samoa? I wish you would, *quam primum*.

R. L. S.

To Henry James

Union Club, Sydney, August 1890.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES, — Kipling is too clever to live. The *Bête Humaine* I had already perused in Noumea, listening the while to the strains of the convict band. He is a Beast; but not human, and, to be frank, not very interesting. "Nervous maladies: the homicidal ward," would be the better name: O, this game gets very tedious.

Your two long and kind letters have helped to entertain the old familiar sickbed. So has a book called *The Bondman*, by Hall Caine; I wish you would look at it. I am not half-way through yet. Read the book, and communicate your views. Hall Caine, by the way, appears to take Hugo's view of History and Chronology (*Later*; the book doesn't keep up; it gets very wild.)

I must tell you plainly — I can't tell Colvin — I do not think I shall come to England more than once, and then it'll be to die. Health I enjoy in the tropics; even here, which they call sub- or semi-tropical, I come only to 397 catch cold. I have not been out since my arrival; live here in a nice bedroom by the fireside, and read books and letters from Henry James, and send out to get his *Tragic Muse*, only to be told they can't be had as yet in Sydney, and have altogether a placid time. But I can't go out! The thermometer was nearly down to 50° the other day — no temperature for me, Mr. James: how should I do in England? I fear not at all. Am I very sorry? I am sorry about seven or eight people in England, and one or two in the States. And outside of that, I simply prefer Samoa. These are the words of honesty and soberness. (I am fasting from all but sin, coughing, *The Bondman*, a couple of eggs and a cup of tea.) I was never fond of towns, houses, society, or (it seems) civilisation. Nor yet it seems was I ever very fond of (what is technically called) God's green earth. The sea, islands, the islanders, the island life and climate, make and keep me truly happier. These last two years I have been much at sea, and I have *never wearied*; sometimes I have indeed grown impatient for some destination; more often I was sorry that the voyage drew so early to an end; and never once did I lose my fidelity to blue water and a ship. It is plain, then, that for me my exile to the place of schooners and islands can be in no sense regarded as a calamity.

Good-bye just now: I must take a turn at my proofs.

N.B. — Even my wife has weakened about the sea. She wearied, the last time we were ashore, to get afloat again. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Marcel Schwob

Union Club, Sydney, August 19th, 1890.

MY DEAR MR. SCHWOB, — *Mais, alors, vous avez tous les bonheurs, vous!* More about Villon; it seems incredible: when it is put in order, pray send it me.

You wish to translate the *Black Arrow*: dear sir, you 398 are hereby authorised; but I warn you, I do not like the work. Ah, if you, who know so well both tongues, and have taste and instruction — if you would but take a fancy to translate a book of mine that I myself admired — for we sometimes admire our own — or I do — with what satisfaction would the authority be granted! But these things are too much to expect. *Vous ne détestez pas alors mes bonnes femmes? moi, je les déteste.* I have never pleased myself with any women of mine save two character parts, one of only a few lines — the Countess of Rosen, and Madame Desprez in the *Treasure of Franchard*.

I had indeed one moment of pride about my poor *Black Arrow*: Dickon Crookback I did, and I do, think is a spirited and possible figure. Shakespeare's — O, if we can call that cocoon Shakespeare! — Shakespeare's is spirited — one likes to see the untaught athlete butting against the adamantine ramparts of human nature, head down, breech up; it reminds us how trivial we are to-day, and what safety resides in our triviality. For spirited it may be, but O, sure not possible! I love Dumas and I love Shakespeare: you will not mistake me when I say that the Richard of the one reminds me of the Porthos of the other; and if by any sacrifice of my own literary baggage I could clear the *Vicomte de Bragelonne* of Porthos, *Jekyll* might go, and the *Master*, and the *Black Arrow*, you may be sure, and I should think my life not lost for mankind if half a dozen more of my volumes must be thrown in.

The tone of your pleasant letters makes me egotistical; you make me take myself too gravely. Comprehend how I have lived much of my time in France, and loved your country, and many of its people, and all the time was learning that which your country has to teach — breathing in rather that atmosphere of art which can only there be breathed; and all the time knew — and raged to know — that I might write with the pen of angels or of heroes, and no Frenchman be the least the wiser! And now steps in M. Marcel Schwob, writes me the most kind encouragement, 399 and reads and understands, and is kind enough to like my work.

I am just now overloaded with work. I have two huge novels on hand — *The Wrecker* and the *Pearl Fisher*, in collaboration with my stepson: the latter, the *Pearl Fisher*, I think highly of, for a black, ugly, trampling, violent story, full of strange scenes and striking characters. And then I am about waist-deep in my big book on the South Seas: *the* big book on the South Seas it ought to be, and shall. And besides, I have some verses in the press, which, however, I hesitate to publish. For I am no judge of my own verse; self-deception is there so facile. All this and the cares of an impending settlement in Samoa keep me very busy, and a cold (as usual) keeps me in bed.

Alas, I shall not have the pleasure to see you yet awhile, if ever. You must be content to take me as a wandering voice, and in the form of occasional letters from recondite islands; and address me, if you will be good enough to write, to Apia, Samoa. My stepson, Mr. Osbourne, goes home meanwhile to arrange some affairs; it is not unlikely he may go to Paris to arrange about the illustrations to my South Seas; in which case I shall ask him to call upon you, and give you some word of our outlandish destinies. You will find him intelligent, I think; and I am sure, if (*par hasard*) you should take any interest in the islands, he will have much to tell you. — Herewith I conclude, and am your obliged and interested correspondent,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — The story you refer to has got lost in the post.

To Andrew Lang

Union Club, Sydney [*August* 1890].

MY DEAR LANG, — I observed with a great deal of surprise and interest that a controversy in which you have 400 been taking sides at home, in yellow London, hinges in part at least on the Gilbert Islanders and their customs in burial. Nearly six months of my life has been passed in the group: I have revisited it but the other day; and I make haste to tell you what I know. The upright stones — I enclose you a photograph of one on Apemama — are certainly connected with religion; I do not think they are adored. They stand usually on the windward shore of the islands, that is to say, apart from habitation (on *enclosed islands*, where the people live on the sea side, I do not know how it is, never having lived on one). I gathered from Tembinoka, Rex Apemamae, that the pillars were supposed to fortify the island from invasion: spiritual martellos. I think he indicated they were connected with the cult of Tenti — pronounce almost as chintz in English, the *t* being explosive; but you must take this with a grain of salt, for I knew no word of Gilbert Island; and the King's English, although creditable, is rather vigorous than exact. Now, here follows the point of interest to you: such pillars, or standing stones, have no connection with graves. The most elaborate grave that I have ever seen in the group — to be certain — is in the form of a *raised border* of gravel, usually strewn with broken glass. One, of which I cannot be sure that it was a grave, for I was told by one that it was, and by another that it was not — consisted of a mound about breast high in an excavated taro swamp, on the top of which was a child's house, or rather *maniapa* — that is to say, shed, or open house, such as is used in the group for social or political gatherings — so small that only a child could creep under its eaves. I have heard of another great tomb on Apemama, which I did not see; but here again, by all accounts, no sign of a standing stone. My report would be — no connection between standing stones and sepulture. I shall, however, send on the terms of the problem to a highly intelligent resident trader, who knows more than perhaps any one living, white or native, of the 401 Gilbert group; and you shall have the result. In Samoa, whither I return for good, I shall myself make inquiries; up to now, I have neither seen nor heard of any standing stones in that group. — Yours,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

Exactly what tale of doings in the garret at Skerryvore had been related to Stevenson (in the character of Robin Lewison) by his correspondent (in the character of Miss Green) cannot well be gathered from this reply. But the letter is interesting as containing the only mention of certain schemes of romance afterwards abandoned.

Union Club, Sydney, 1st September 1890.

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE, — I find you have been behaving very ill: *been* very ill, in fact. I find this hard to forgive; probably should not forgive it at all if Robin Lewison had not been sick himself and a wretched sick-room prisoner in this club for near a month. Well, the best and bravest sometimes fail. But who is Miss Green? Don't know her! I knew a lady of an exceedingly generous and perfervid nature — worthy to be suspected of Scotch blood for the pertervidness — equipped with a couple — perhaps a brace sounds better English — of perfervid eyes — with a certain graceful gaucherie of manner, almost like a child's, and that is at once the highest point of gaucherie and grace — a friend everybody I ever saw was delighted to see come and sorry to see go. Yes, I knew that lady, and can see her now. But who was Miss Green? There is something amiss here. Either the Robin Lewisons have been very shabbily treated, or — and this is the serious part of the affair — somebody unknown to me has been entrusted with the key of the Skerryvore garret. This may go as far as the Old Bailey, ma'am.

But why should I gird at you or anybody, when the truth is we are the most miserable sinners in the world? For we are not coming home, I dare not. Even coming to Sydney has made me quite ill, and back I go to Samoa, 402 whither please address — Apia, Samoa — (and remember it is Sámó-a, a spondee to begin with, or Sahmoa, if you prefer that writing) — back I and my wife go to Samoa to live on our landed estate with four black labour boys in a kind of a sort of house, which Lloyd will describe to you. For he has gone to England: receive him like a favour and a piece of cake; he is our greeting to friends.

I paused here to put in the date on the first page. I am precious nearly through my fortieth year, thinks I to myself. Must be nearly as old as Miss Green, thinks I. O, come! I exclaimed, not as bad as that! Some lees of youth about the old remnant yet.

My amiable Miss Green, I beg you to give me news of your health, and if it may be good news. And when you shall have seen Lloyd, to tell me how his reports of the South Seas and our new circumstances strike such an awfully old person as yourself, and to tell me if you ever received a letter I sent you from Hawaii. I remember thinking — or remember remembering rather — it was (for me) quite a long respectable communication. Also, you might tell me if you got my war-whoop and scalping-knife assault on *le nommé* Hyde.

I ought not to forget to say your tale fetched me (Miss Green) by its really vile probability. If we had met that man in Honolulu he would have done it, and Miss Green would have done it. Only, alas! there is no completed novel lying in the garret: would there were! It should be out to-morrow with the name to it, and relieve a kind of tightness in the money market much deplored in our immediate circle. To be sure (now I come to think of it) there are some seven chapters of *The Great North Road*; three, I think, of *Robin Run the Hedge*, given up when some nefarious person pre-empted the name; and either there — or somewhere else — likely New York — one chapter of *David Balfour*, and five or six of the *Memoirs of Henry Shovel*. That's all. But Lloyd and I have one-half of The Wrecker in type, and a good part of *The Pearl Fisher* 403 (O, a great and grisly tale that!) in MS. And I have a projected, entirely planned love-story — everybody will think it dreadfully improper, I'm afraid — called *Cannonmills*. And I've a vague, rosy haze before me — a love-story too, but not improper — called *The Rising Sun*. (It's the name of the wayside inn where the story, or much of the story, runs; but it's a kind of a pun: it means the stirring up of a boy by falling in love, and how he rises in the estimation of a girl who despised him, though she liked him, and had befriended him; I really scarce see beyond their childhood yet, but I want to go beyond, and make each out-top the other by successions: it should be pretty and true if I could do it.) Also I have my big book, *The South Seas*, always with me, and a sair handfu' — if I may be allowed to speak Scotch to Miss Green — a sair handfu' it is likely to be. All this literary gossip I bestow upon you *entre confrères*, Miss Green, which is little more than fair, Miss Green.

Allow me to remark that it is now half-past twelve o'clock of the living night; I should certainly be ashamed of myself, and you also; for this is no time of the night for Miss Green to be colloguing with a comparatively young gentleman of forty. So with all the kindest wishes to yourself, and all at Lostock, and all friends in Hants, or over the borders in Dorset, I bring my folly to an end. Please believe, even when I am silent, in my real affection; I need not say the same for Fanny, more obdurately silent, not less affectionate than I. — Your friend,

Robert — Robin Lewison.

(Nearly had it wrong — force of habit.)

To Mrs. Charles Fairchild

Union Club, Sydney [*September* 1890].

MY DEAR MRS. FAIRCHILD, — I began a letter to you on board the *Janet Nicoll* on my last cruise, wrote, I believe, 404 two sheets, and ruthlessly destroyed the flippant trash. Your last has given me great pleasure and some pain, for it increased the consciousness of my neglect. Now, this must go to you, whatever it is like.

... It is always harshness that one regrets.... I regret also my letter to Dr. Hyde. Yes, I do; I think it was barbarously harsh; if I did it now, I would defend Damien no less well, and give less pain to those who are alive. These promptings of good-humour are not all sound; the three times three, cheer boys cheer, and general amiability business rests on a sneaking love of popularity, the most insidious enemy of virtue. On the whole, it was virtuous to defend Damien; but it was harsh to strike so hard at Dr. Hyde. When I wrote the letter, I believed he would bring an action, in which case I knew I could be beggared. And as yet there has come no action; the injured Doctor has contented himself up to now with the (truly innocuous) vengeance of calling me a "Bohemian Crank," and I have deeply wounded one of his colleagues whom I esteemed and liked.

Well, such is life. You are quite right; our civilisation is a hollow fraud, all the fun of life is lost by it; all it gains is that a larger number of persons can continue to be contemporaneously unhappy on the surface of the globe. O, unhappy! — there is a big word and a false — continue to be not nearly — by about twenty per cent. — so happy as they might be: that would be nearer the mark.

When — observe that word, which I will write again and larger — WHEN you come to see us in Samoa, you will see for yourself a healthy and happy people.

You see, you are one of the very few of our friends rich enough to come and see us; and when my house is built, and the road is made, and we have enough fruit planted and poultry and pigs raised, it is undeniable that you must come — must is the word; that is the way in which I speak to ladies. You and Fairchild, anyway — perhaps 405 my friend Blair — we'll arrange details in good time. It will be the salvation of your souls, and make you willing to die.

Let me tell you this: In '74 or 5 there came to stay with my father and mother a certain Mr. Seed, a prime minister or something of New Zealand. He spotted what my complaint was; told me that I had no business to stay in Europe; that I should find all I cared for, and all that was good for me, in the Navigator Islands; sat up till four in the morning persuading me, demolishing my scruples. And I resisted: I refused to go so far from my father and mother. O, it was virtuous, and O, wasn't it silly! But my father, who was always my dearest, got to his grave without that pang; and now in 1890, I (or what is left of me) go at last to the Navigator Islands. God go with us! It is but a Pisgah sight when all is said; I go there only to grow old and die; but when you come, you will see it is a fair place for the purpose.

Flaubert has not turned up; I hope he will soon; I knew of him only through Maxime Descamps. — With kindest messages to yourself and all of yours, I remain

Robert Louis Stevenson.

XI

LIFE IN SAMOA

FIRST YEAR AT VAILIMA

November 1890-December 1891

Returning from Sydney at the end of October 1890, Stevenson and his wife at once took up their abode in the wooden four-roomed cottage, or “rough barrack,” as he calls it, which had been built for them in the clearing at Vailima during the months of their absence at Sydney and on their cruise in the *Equator*. Mr. Lloyd Osbourne in the meantime had started for England to wind up the family affairs at Bournemouth. During the first few months, as will be seen by the following letters, the conditions of life at Vailima were rough to the point of hardship. But matters soon mended; the work of clearing and planting went on under the eye of the master and mistress diligently and in the main successfully, though not of course without complications and misadventures. Ways and means of catering were found, and abundance began to reign in place of the makeshifts and privations of the first days. By April a better house, fit to receive the elder Mrs. Stevenson, had been built; and later in 4 the year plans for further extension were considered, but for the present held over. The attempt made at first to work the establishment by means of white servants and head-men indoors and out proved unsatisfactory, and was gradually superseded by the formation of an efficient native staff, which in course of time developed itself into something like a small, devoted feudal clan.

During the earlier months of 1891 Stevenson was not in continuous residence on his new property, but went away on two excursions, the first to Sydney to meet his mother; the second, in company of the American Consul Mr. Sewall, to Tutuila, a neighbouring island of the Samoan group. Of the latter, to him very interesting, trip, the correspondence contains only the beginning of an account abruptly broken off: more, will be found in the extracts from his diary given in Mr. Graham Balfour’s *Life* (ed. 1906, p f.). During part of the spring he was fortunate in having the company of two distinguished Americans, the painter Lafarge and the historian Henry Adams, in addition to that of the local planters, traders, and officials, a singular and singularly mixed community. After some half-year’s residence he began to realise that the arrangements made for the government of Samoa by treaty between the three powers England, Germany, and America were not working nor promising to work well. Stevenson was no abstracted student or dreamer; the human interests and human duties lying immediately about him were ever the first in his eyes; and he found himself drawn deeply into the complications of local politics, as so active a spirit could not fail to be drawn, however little taste he might have for the work.

He kept in the meantime at a fair level of health, and among the multitude of new interests was faithful in the [5] main business of his life — that is, to literature. He did not cease to toil uphill at the heavy task of preparing for serial publication the letters, or more properly chapters, on the South Seas. He planned and began delightedly his happiest tale of South Sea life, *The High Woods of Ulufanua*, afterwards changed to *The Beach of Falesá*; conceived the scheme, which was never carried out, of working two of his old conceptions into one long genealogical novel or fictitious family history to be called *The Shovels of Newton French*; and in the latter part of the year worked hard in continuation of *The Wrecker*. Having completed this during November, he turned at once, from a sense of duty rather than from any literary inspiration, to the *Footnote to History*, a laboriously prepared and minutely conscientious account of recent events in Samoa.

From his earliest days at Vailima, determined that our intimacy should suffer no diminution by absence, Stevenson began, to my great pleasure, the practice of writing me a monthly budget containing a full account of his doings and interests. At first the pursuits of the enthusiastic farmer, planter, and overseer filled these letters delightfully, to the exclusion of almost everything else except references to his books projected or in hand. Later these interests began to give place in his letters to those of the local politician, immersed in affairs which seemed to me exasperatingly petty and obscure, however grave the potential European complications which lay behind them. At any rate, they were hard to follow intelligently from the other side of the globe; and it was a relief whenever his correspondence turned to matters literary or domestic, or humours of his own mind and character. These letters, or so much of them as seemed suitable for publication, were originally printed separately, in the year following [6] the writer's death, under the title *Vailima Letters*. They are here placed, with some additions, in chronological order among those addressed to other friends or acquaintances. During this first year at Vailima his general correspondence was not nearly so large as it afterwards became; Mr. Burlingame, as representative of the house of Scribner, receiving the lion's share next to myself.

For the love of Stevenson I will ask readers to take the small amount of pains necessary to grasp and remember the main facts of Samoan politics in the ten years 1889-99. At the date when he settled in

Vailima the government of the islands had lately been re-ordered between the three powers interested — namely, Germany, England, and the United States — at the Convention of Berlin (July 14, 1889). The rivalries and jealousies of these three powers, complicated with the conflicting claims of various native kings or chiefs, had for some time kept the affairs of the islands dangerously embroiled. Under the Berlin Convention, Malietoa Laupepa, who had previously been deposed and deported by the Germans in favour of a nominee of their own, was reinstated as king, to the exclusion of his kinsman, the powerful and popular Mataafa, whose titles were equally good and abilities certainly greater, but who was especially obnoxious to the Germans owing to his resistance to them during the troubles of the preceding years. In the course of that resistance a small German force had been worsted in a petty skirmish at Fagalii, and resentment at this affront to the national pride was for several years one of the chief obstacles to the reconciliation of contending interests. For a time the two kinsmen, Laupepa and Mataafa, lived on amicable terms, but presently differences arose between them. Mataafa had expected to occupy a position of influence in the government: 7 finding himself ignored, he withdrew to a camp (Malie) a few miles outside the town of Apia, where he lived in semi-royal state as a sort of passive rebel or rival to the recognised king. In the meantime, in the course of the year 1891, the two white officials appointed under the Berlin Convention — namely, the Chief Justice, a Swedish gentleman named Cedercrantz, and the President of the Council, Baron Senfft von Pilsach — had come out to the islands and entered on their duties. These gentlemen soon proved themselves unfitted for their task to a degree both disastrous and grotesque. Almost the entire white community were soon against them; with the native population they had no influence or credit; affairs both political and municipal went from bad to worse; and the consuls of the three powers, acting as an official board of advisers to the king, could do very little to mend them.

To the impropriety of some of the official proceedings Stevenson felt compelled to call attention in a series of letters to the Times, the first of which appeared in 1891, the remainder in 1892. He had formed the conviction that for the cure of Samoan troubles two things were necessary: first and above all, the reconciliation of Laupepa and Mataafa; secondly, the supersession of the unlucky Chief Justice and President by men better qualified for their tasks. To effect the former purpose, he made his only practical intromission in local politics, and made it unsuccessfully. The motive of his letters to the Times was the hope to effect the second. In this matter, after undergoing the risk, which was at one moment serious, of deportation, he in the end saw his wishes fulfilled. The first Chief Justice and President were replaced by better qualified persons in the course of 1893. But meantime the muddle had grown to a head. In the autumn of that year war[8] broke out between the partisans of Laupepa and Mataafa: the latter were defeated, and Mataafa exiled to a distant island. At the close of the following year Stevenson died. Three years later followed the death of Laupepa: then came more confused rivalries between various claimants to the kingly title. The Germans, having by this time come round to Stevenson's opinion, backed the claims of Mataafa, which they had before stubbornly disallowed, while the English and Americans stood for another candidate. In 1899 these differences resulted in a calamitous and unjustifiable action, the bombardment of native villages for several successive days by English and American war-ships. As a matter of urgent necessity, to avert worse things, new negotiations were set on foot between the three powers, with the result that England withdrew her claims in Samoa altogether, America was satisfied with the small island of Tutuila with its fine harbour of Pago-pago, while the two larger islands of Upolu and Savaii were ceded to Germany. German officials have governed them well and peacefully ever since, having allowed the restored Mataafa, as long as he lived, a recognised position of headship among the native chiefs. Stevenson during his lifetime was obnoxious to the German official world. But his name and memory are now held in honour by them, his policy to a large extent practically followed, and he would have been the first to acknowledge the merits of the new order had he lived to witness it.

These remarks, following the subject down to what remains for the present its historic conclusion, will, I hope, be enough to clear it for the present purpose out of the reader's way and enable him to understand as much as is necessary of the political allusions in this and the following sections of the correspondence.

9

It need only be added that in reading the following pages it must be borne in mind that Mulinuu and Malie, the places respectively of Laupepa's and Mataafa's residence, are also used to signify their respective parties and followings.

To Sidney Colvin

During the absence of the Stevensons at Sydney some eight acres of the Vailima property had been cleared of jungle, a cottage roughly built on the clearing, and something done towards making the track up the hill from Apia into a practicable road. They occupied the cottage at once, and the following letters narrate of the sequel.

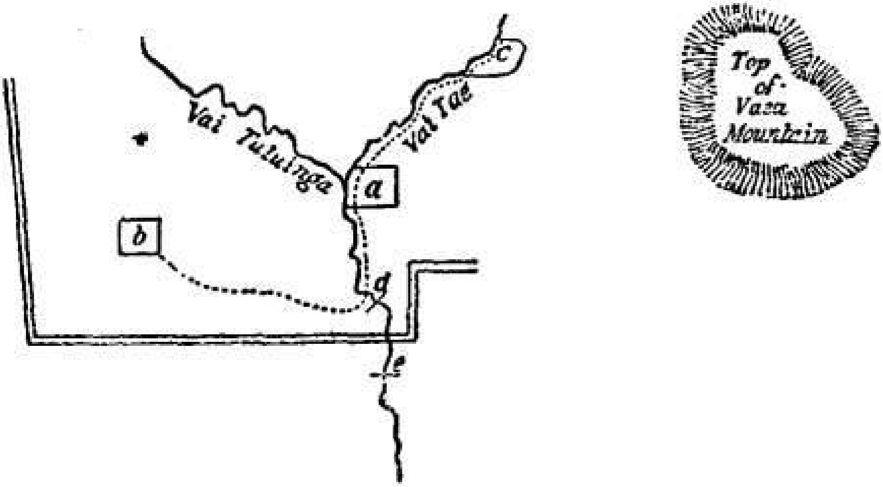
In the Mountain, Apia, Samoa, Monday, November 2nd, 1890.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — This is a hard and interesting and beautiful life that we lead now. Our place is in a deep cleft of Vaea Mountain, some six hundred feet above the sea, embowered in forest, which is our strangling enemy, and which we combat with axes and dollars. I went crazy over outdoor work, and had at last to confine myself to the house, or literature must have gone by the board. *Nothing* is so interesting as weeding, clearing, and path-making; the oversight of labourers becomes a disease; it is quite an effort not to drop into the farmer; and it does make you feel so well. To come down covered with mud and drenched with sweat and rain after some hours in the bush, change, rub down, and take a chair in the verandah, is to taste a quiet conscience. And the strange thing that I mark is this: If I go out and make sixpence, bossing my labourers and plying the cutlass or the spade, idiot conscience applauds me; if I sit in the house and make twenty pounds, idiot conscience wails over my neglect and the day wasted. For near a fortnight I did not go beyond the verandah; then I found my rush of work run out, and went down for the night to Apia; put in 10 Sunday afternoon with our consul, “a nice young man,” dined with my friend H. J. Moors in the evening, went to church — no less — at the white and half-white church — I had never been before, and was much interested; the woman I sat next *looked* a full-blood native, and it was in the prettiest and readiest English that she sang the hymns; back to Moors’, where we yarned of the islands, being both wide wanderers, till bedtime; bed, sleep, breakfast, horse saddled; round to the mission, to get Mr. Clarke to be my interpreter; over with him to the King’s, whom I have not called on since my return; received by that mild old gentleman; have some interesting talk with him about Samoan superstitions and my land — the scene of a great battle in his (Malietoa Laupepa’s) youth — the place which we have cleared the platform of his fort — the gulley of the stream full of dead bodies — the fight rolled off up Vaea mountain-side; back with Clarke to the mission; had a bit of lunch and consulted over a queer point of missionary policy just arisen, about our new Town Hall and the balls there — too long to go into, but a quaint example of the intricate questions which spring up daily in the missionary path.

Then off up the hill; Jack very fresh, the sun (close on noon) staring hot, the breeze very strong and pleasant; the ineffable green country all round — gorgeous little birds (I think they are humming-birds, but they say not) skirmishing in the wayside flowers. About a quarter way up I met a native coming down with the trunk of a cocoa 11 palm across his shoulder; his brown breast glittering with sweat and oil: “Talofa” — ”Talofa, alii — You see that white man? He speak for you.” “White man he gone up here?” — ”Ioe” (Yes) — ”Tofa, alii” — ”Tofa, soifua!” I put on Jack up the steep path, till he is all as white as shaving stick — Brown's euxesis, wish I had some — past Tanugamanono, a bush village — see into the houses as I pass — they are open sheds scattered on a green — see the brown folk sitting there, suckling kids, sleeping on their stiff wooden pillows — then on through the wood path — and here I find the mysterious white man (poor devil!) with his twenty years' certificate of good behaviour as a book-keeper, frozen out by the strikes in the colonies, come up here on a chance, no work to be found, big hotel bill, no ship to leave in — and come up to beg twenty dollars because he heard I was a Scotchman, offering to leave his portmanteau in pledge. Settle this, and on again; and here my house comes in view, and a war whoop fetches my wife and Henry (or Simelé), our Samoan boy, on the front balcony; and I am home again, and only sorry that I shall have to go down again to Apia this day week. I could, and would, dwell here unmoved, but there are things to be attended to.

Never say I don't give you details and news. That is a picture of a letter.

I have been hard at work since I came; three chapters of *The Wrecker*, and since that, eight of the South Sea book, and, along and about and in between, a hatful of verses. Some day I'll send the verse to you, and you'll say if any of it is any good. I have got in a better vein with the South Sea book, as I think you will see; I think these chapters will do for the volume without much change. Those that I did in the *Janet Nicoll*, under the most ungodly circumstances, I fear will want a lot of suppling and lightening, but I hope to have your remarks in a month or two upon that point. It seems a long while since I have heard from you. I do hope you are 12 well. I am wonderful, but tired from so much work; 'tis really immense what I have done; in the South Sea book I have fifty pages copied fair, some of which has been four times, and all twice written; certainly fifty pages of solid scriving inside a fortnight, but I was at it by seven a.m. till lunch, and from two till four or five every day; between whiles, verse and blowing on the flageolet; never outside. If you could see this place! but I don't want any one to see it till my clearing is done, and my house built. It will be a home for angels.



* Point referred to in text.

.... Paths.

= = = = = = = = = Our boundary.

a. Present house.

b. Garden.

c. Waterfall.

d. Banana Patch.

e. Large waterfall into deep gorge where the heat of the fight was.

So far I wrote after my bit of dinner, some cold meat and bananas, on arrival. Then out to see where Henry and some of the men were clearing the garden; for it was plain there was to be no work to-day indoors, and I must set in consequence to farmering. I stuck a good while on the way up, for the path there is largely my own handiwork, and there were a lot of sprouts and saplings and stones to be removed. Then I reached our clearing just where the streams join in one; it had a fine autumn smell of burning, the smoke blew in the woods, and the boys were pretty merry and busy. Now I had a private design: — 13 The Vaita'e I had explored pretty far up; not yet the other stream, the Vaituliga (g = nasal n, as ng in sing); and up that, with my wood knife, I set off alone. It is here quite dry; it went through endless woods; about as broad as a Devonshire lane, here and there crossed by fallen trees; huge trees overhead in the sun, dripping lianas and tufted with orchids, tree ferns, ferns depending with air roots from the steep banks, great arums — I had not skill enough to say if any of them were the edible kind, one of our staples here! — hundreds of bananas — another staple — and alas! I had skill enough to know all of these for the bad kind that bears no fruit. My Henry moralised over this the other day; how hard it was that the bad banana flourished wild, and the good must be weeded and tended; and I had not the heart to tell him how fortunate they were here, and how hungry were other lands by comparison. The ascent of this lovely lane of my dry stream filled me with delight. I could not but be reminded of old Mayne Reid, as I have been more than once since I came to the tropics; and I thought, if Reid had been still living, I would have written to tell him that, for me, *it had come true*; and I thought, forbye, that, if the great powers go on as they are going, and the Chief Justice delays, it would come truer still; and the war-conch will sound in the hills, and my home will be inclosed in camps, before the year is ended. And all at once — mark you, how Mayne Reid is on the spot — a strange thing happened. I saw a liana stretch across the bed of the brook about breast-high, swung up my knife to sever it, and — behold, it was a wire! On either hand it plunged into thick bush; to-morrow I shall see where it goes and get a guess perhaps of what it means. To-day I know no more than — there it is. A little higher the brook began to trickle, then to fill. At last, as I meant to do some work upon the homeward trail, it was time to turn. I did not return by the stream; knife in hand, as long as my endurance lasted, I was to cut a path in the congested bush.

At first it went ill with me; I got badly stung as high as the elbows by the stinging plant; I was nearly hung in a tough liana — a rotten trunk giving way under my feet; it was deplorable bad business. And an axe — if I dared swing one — would have been more to the purpose than my cutlass. Of a sudden things began to go strangely easier; I found stumps, bushing out again; my body began to wonder, then my mind; I raised my eyes and looked ahead; and, by George, I was no longer pioneering, I had struck an old track overgrown, and was restoring an old path. So I laboured till I was in such a state that Carolina Wilhelmina Skeggs could scarce have found a name for it. Thereon desisted; returned to the stream; made my way down that stony track to the garden, where the smoke was still hanging and the sun was still in the high tree-tops, and so home. Here, fondly supposing my long day was over, I rubbed down; exquisite agony; water spreads the poison of these weeds; I got it all over my hands, on my chest, in my eyes, and presently, while eating an orange, *à la* Rarotonga, burned my lip and eye with orange juice. Now all day, our three small pigs had been adrift, to the mortal peril of our corn, lettuce, onions, etc., and as I stood smarting on the back verandah, behold the three piglings issuing from the wood just opposite. Instantly I got together as many boys as I could — three, and got the pigs penned against the rampart of the sty, till the others joined; whereupon we formed a cordon, closed, captured the deserters, and dropped them, squeaking amain, into their strengthened barracks where, please God, they may now stay!

Perhaps you may suppose the day now over; you are not the head of a plantation, my juvenile friend. Politics succeeded: Henry got adrift in his English, Bene was too cowardly to tell me what he was after:

result, I have lost 15 seven good labourers, and had to sit down and write to you to keep my temper. Let me sketch my lads. — Henry — Henry has gone down to town or I could not be writing to you — this were the hour of his English lesson else, when he learns what he calls "long explessions" or "your chief's language" for the matter of an hour and a half — Henry is a chiefling from Savaii; I once loathed, I now like and — pending fresh discoveries — have a kind of respect for Henry. He does good work for us; goes among the labourers, bossing and watching; helps Fanny; is civil, kindly, thoughtful; *O si sic semper!* But will he be "his sometime self throughout the year"? Anyway, he has deserved of us, and he must disappoint me sharply ere I give him up. — Bene — or Peni — Ben, in plain English — is supposed to be my ganger; the Lord love him! God made a truckling coward, there is his full history. He cannot tell me what he wants; he dares not tell me what is wrong; he dares not transmit my orders or translate my censures. And with all this, honest, sober, industrious, miserably smiling over the miserable issue of his own unmanliness. — Paul — a German — cook and steward — a glutton of work — a splendid fellow; drawbacks, three: (1) no cook; (2) an inveterate bungler; a man with twenty thumbs, continually falling in the dishes, throwing out the dinner, preserving the garbage; (3) a dr — — , well, don't let us say that — but we daren't let him go to town, and he — poor, good soul — is afraid to be let go. — Lafaele (Raphael), a strong, dull, deprecatory man; splendid with an axe, if watched; the better for a rowing, when he calls me "Papa" in the most wheedling tones; desperately afraid of ghosts, so that he dare not walk alone up in the banana patch — see map. The rest are changing labourers; and to-night, owing to the miserable cowardice of Peni, who did not venture to tell me what the men wanted — and which was no more than fair — all are gone — and my weeding in the article of being finished! Pity the sorrows of a planter.

16 I am, Sir, yours, and be jowned to you, The Planter,

R. L. S.

Tuesday, 3rd. — I begin to see the whole scheme of letter-writing; you sit down every day and pour out an equable stream of twaddle.

This morning all my fears were fled, and all the trouble had fallen to the lot of Peni himself, who deserved it; my field was full of weeders; and I am again able to justify the ways of God. All morning I worked at the *South Seas*, and finished the chapter I had stuck upon on Saturday. Fanny, awfully hove-to with rheumatics and injuries received upon the field of sport and glory, chasing pigs, was unable to go up and down stairs, so she sat upon the back verandah, and my work was chequered by her cries. "Paul, you take a spade to do that — dig a hole first. If you do that, you'll cut your foot off! Here, you boy, what you do there? You no get work? You go find Simelé; he give you work. Peni, you tell this boy he go find Simelé; suppose Simelé no give him work, you tell him go ‘way. I no want him here. That boy no good.” — *Peni* (from the distance in reassuring tones), “All right, sir!” — *Fanny* (after a long pause), “Peni, you tell that boy go find Simelé! I no want him stand here all day. I no pay that boy. I see him all day. He no do nothing.” — Luncheon, beef, soda-scones, fried bananas, pine-apple in claret, coffee. Try to write a poem; no go. Play the flageolet. Then sneakingly off to farmering and pioneering. Four gangs at work on our place; a lively scene; axes crashing and smoke blowing; all the knives are out. But I rob the garden party of one without a stock, and you should see my hand — cut to ribbons. Now I want to do my path up the Vaituliga single-handed, and I want it to burst on the public complete. Hence, with devilish ingenuity, I begin it at different places; so that if you stumble on one section, you may not even then suspect the fulness of my labours. Accordingly, I started in a new place, below the wire, and hoping to work up 17 to it. It was perhaps lucky I had so bad a cutlass, and my smarting hand bid me stay before I had got up to the wire, but just in season, so that I was only the better of my activity, not dead beat as yesterday.

A strange business it was, and infinitely solitary; away above, the sun was in the high tree-tops; the lianas noosed and sought to hang me; the saplings struggled, and came up with that sob of death that one gets to know so well; great, soft, sappy trees fell at a lick of the cutlass, little tough switches laughed at and dared my best endeavour. Soon, toiling down in that pit of verdure, I heard blows on the far side, and then laughter. I confess a chill settled on my heart. Being so dead alone, in a place where by rights none should be beyond me, I was aware, upon interrogation, if those blows had drawn nearer, I should (of course quite unaffectedly) have executed a strategic movement to the rear; and only the other day I was lamenting my insensibility to superstition! Am I beginning to be sucked in? Shall I become a midnight twitterer like my neighbours? At times I thought the blows were echoes; at times I thought the laughter was from birds. For our birds are strangely human in their calls. Vaea mountain about sundown sometimes rings with shrill cries, like the hails of merry, scattered children. As a matter of fact, I believe stealthy wood-cutters from Tanugamanono were above me in the wood and answerable for the blows; as for the laughter, a woman and two children had come and asked Fanny’s leave to go up shrimp-fishing in the burn; beyond doubt, it was these I heard. Just at the right time I returned; to wash down, change, and begin this snatch of letter before dinner was ready, and to finish it afterwards, before Henry has yet put in an appearance for his lesson in “long explessions.”

Dinner: stewed beef and potatoes, baked bananas, new loaf-bread hot from the oven, pine-apple in claret. These are great days; we have been low in the past; but now are we as belly-gods, enjoying all things.

Wednesday, (*Hist. Vailima resumed.*) — A gorgeous evening of after-glow in the great tree-tops and behind the mountain, and full moon over the lowlands and the sea, inaugurated a night of horrid cold. To you effete denizens of the so-called temperate zone, it had seemed nothing; neither of us could sleep; we were up seeking extra coverings, I know not at what hour — it was as bright as day. The moon right over Vaea — near due west, the birds strangely silent, and the wood of the house tingling with cold; I believe it must have been 60°! Consequence: Fanny has a headache and is wretched, and I could do no work. (I am trying all round for a place to hold my pen; you will hear why later on; this to explain penmanship.) I wrote two pages, very bad, no movement, no life or interest; then I wrote a business letter; then took to tootling on the flageolet, till glory should call me farmering.

I took up at the fit time Lafaele and Mauga — Mauga, accent on the first, is a mountain, I don't know what Maugà means — mind what I told you of the value of g — to the garden, and set them digging, then turned my attention to the path. I could not go into my bush path for two reasons: 1st, sore hands; 2nd, had on my trousers and good shoes. Lucky it was. Right in the wild lime hedge which cuts athwart us just homeward of the garden, I found a great bed of kuikui — sensitive plant — our deadliest enemy. A fool brought it to this island in a pot, and used to lecture and sentimentalise over the tender thing. The tender thing has now taken charge of this island, and men fight it, with torn hands, for bread and life. A singular, insidious thing, shrinking and biting like a weasel; clutching by its roots as a limpet clutches to a rock. As I fought him, I bettered some verses in my poem, *The Woodman*; the only thought I gave to letters. Though the kuikui was thick, there was but a small patch of it, and when I was done I attacked the wild lime, and had a hand-to-hand skirmish with its spines and elastic suckers. All this time, 19 close by, in the cleared space of the garden, Lafaele and Maugà were digging. Suddenly quoth Lafaele, "Somebody he sing out." — "Somebody he sing out? All right. I go." And I went and found they had been whistling and "singing out" for long, but the fold of the hill and the uncleared bush shuts in the garden so that no one heard, and I was late for dinner, and Fanny's headache was cross; and when the meal was over, we had to cut up a pineapple which was going bad, to make jelly of; and the next time you have a handful of broken blood-blisters, apply pine-apple juice, and you will give me news of it, and I request a specimen of your hand of write five minutes after — the historic moment when I tackled this history. My day so far.

Fanny was to have rested. Blessed Paul began making a duck-house; she let him be; the duck-house fell down, and she had to set her hand to it. He was then to make a drinking-place for the pigs; she let him be again — he made a stair by which the pigs will probably escape this evening, and she was near weeping. Impossible to blame the indefatigable fellow; energy is too rare and goodwill too noble a thing to discourage; but it’s trying when she wants a rest. Then she had to cook the dinner; then, of course — like a fool and a woman — must wait dinner for me, and make a flurry of herself. Her day so far. *Cetera adhuc desunt.*

Friday — I think. — I have been too tired to add to this chronicle, which will at any rate give you some guess of our employment. All goes well; the kuikui — (think of this mispronunciation having actually infected me to the extent of misspelling! tuitui is the word by rights) — the tuitui is all out of the paddock — a fenced park between the house and boundary; Peni’s men start to-day on the road; the garden is part burned, part dug; and Henry, at the head of a troop of underpaid assistants, is hard at work clearing. The part clearing you will see from the map; from the house run down to the stream side, up 20 the stream nearly as high as the garden; then back to the star which I have just added to the map.

My long, silent contests in the forest have had a strange effect on me. The unconcealed vitality of these vegetables, their exuberant number and strength, the attempts — I can use no other word — of lianas to enwrap and capture the intruder, the awful silence, the knowledge that all my efforts are only like the performance of an actor, the thing of a moment, and the wood will silently and swiftly heal them up with fresh effervescence; the cunning sense of the tuitui, suffering itself to be touched with wind-swayed grasses and not minding — but let the grass be moved by a man, and it shuts up; the whole silent battle, murder, and slow death of the contending forest; weigh upon the imagination. My poem *The Woodman* stands; but I have taken refuge in a new story, which just shot through me like a bullet in one of my moments of awe, alone in that tragic jungle: —

The High Woods of Ulufanua

1. A South Sea Bridal.
2. Under the Ban.
3. Savao and Faavao.
4. Cries in the High Wood.
5. Rumour full of Tongues.
6. The Hour of Peril.
7. The Day of Vengeance.

It is very strange, very extravagant, I dare say; but it's varied, and picturesque, and has a pretty love affair, and ends well. Ulufanua is a lovely Samoan word, ulu = grove; fanua = land; grove-land — "the tops of the high trees." Savao, "sacred to the wood," and Faavao, "wood-ways," are the names of two of the characters, Ulufanua the name of the supposed island.

21 I am very tired, and rest off to-day from all but letters. Fanny is quite done up; she could not sleep last night, something it seemed like asthma — I trust not. I suppose Lloyd will be about, so you can give him the benefit of this long scrawl. Never say that I *can't* write a letter, say that I don't. — Yours ever, my dearest fellow,

R. L. S.

Later on Friday. — The guidwife had bread to bake, and she baked it in a pan, O! But between whiles she was down with me weeding sensitive in the paddock. The men have but now passed over it; I was round in that very place to see the weeding was done thoroughly, and already the reptile springs behind our heels. Tuitui is a truly strange beast, and gives food for thought. I am nearly sure — I cannot yet be quite, I mean to experiment, when I am less on the hot chase of the beast — that, even at the instant he shrivels up his leaves, he strikes his prickles downward so as to catch the uprooting finger; instinctive, say the gabies; but so is man's impulse to strike out. One thing that takes and holds me is to see the strange variation in the propagation of alarm among these rooted beasts; at times it spreads to a radius (I speak by the guess of the eye) of five or six inches; at times only one individual plant appears frightened at a time. We tried how long it took one to recover; 'tis a sanguine creature; it is all abroad again before (I guess again) two minutes. It is odd how difficult in this world it is to be armed. The double armour of this plant betrays it. In a thick tuft, where the leaves disappear, I thrust In my hand, and the bite of the thorns betrays the top-most stem. In the open again, and when I hesitate if it be clover, a touch on the leaves, and its fine sense and retractile action betrays its identity at once. Yet it has one gift incomparable. Rome had virtue and knowledge; Rome perished. The sensitive plant has indigestible seeds — so 22 they say — and it will flourish for ever. I give my advice thus to a young plant — have a strong root, a weak stem, and an indigestible seed; so you will outlast the eternal city, and your progeny will clothe mountains, and the irascible planter will blaspheme in vain. The weak point of tuitui is that its stem is strong.

Supplementary Page. — Here beginneth the third lesson, which is not from the planter but from a less estimable character, the writer of books.

I want you to understand about this South Sea Book. The job is immense; I stagger under material. I have seen the first big *tache*. It was necessary to see the smaller ones; the letters were at my hand for the purpose, but I was not going to lose this experience; and, instead of writing mere letters, have poured out a lot of stuff for the book. How this works and fits, time is to show. But I believe, in time, I shall get the whole thing in form. Now, up to date, that is all my design, and I beg to warn you till we have the whole (or much) of the stuff together, you can hardly judge — and I can hardly judge. Such a mass of stuff is to be handled, if possible without repetition — so much foreign matter to be introduced — if possible with perspicuity — and, as much as can be, a spirit of narrative to be preserved. You will find that come stronger as I proceed, and get the explanations worked through. Problems of style are (as yet) dirt under my feet; my problem is architectural, creative — to get this stuff jointed and moving. If I can do that, I will trouble you for style; anybody might write it, and it would be splendid; well-engineered, the masses right, the blooming thing travelling — twig?

This I wanted you to understand, for lots of the stuff sent home is, I imagine, rot — and slovenly rot — and some of it pompous rot; and I want you to understand it's a *lay-in*.

Soon, if the tide of poeshie continues, I'll send you a whole lot to damn. You never said thank you for the 23 handsome tribute addressed to you from Apemama; such is the gratitude of the world to the God-sent poick. Well, well: — ”Vex not thou the poick's mind, With thy coriaceous ingratitude, The P. will be to your faults more than a little blind, And yours is a far from handsome attitude.” Having thus dropped into poetry in a spirit of friendship, I have the honour to subscribe myself, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

Silas Wegg.

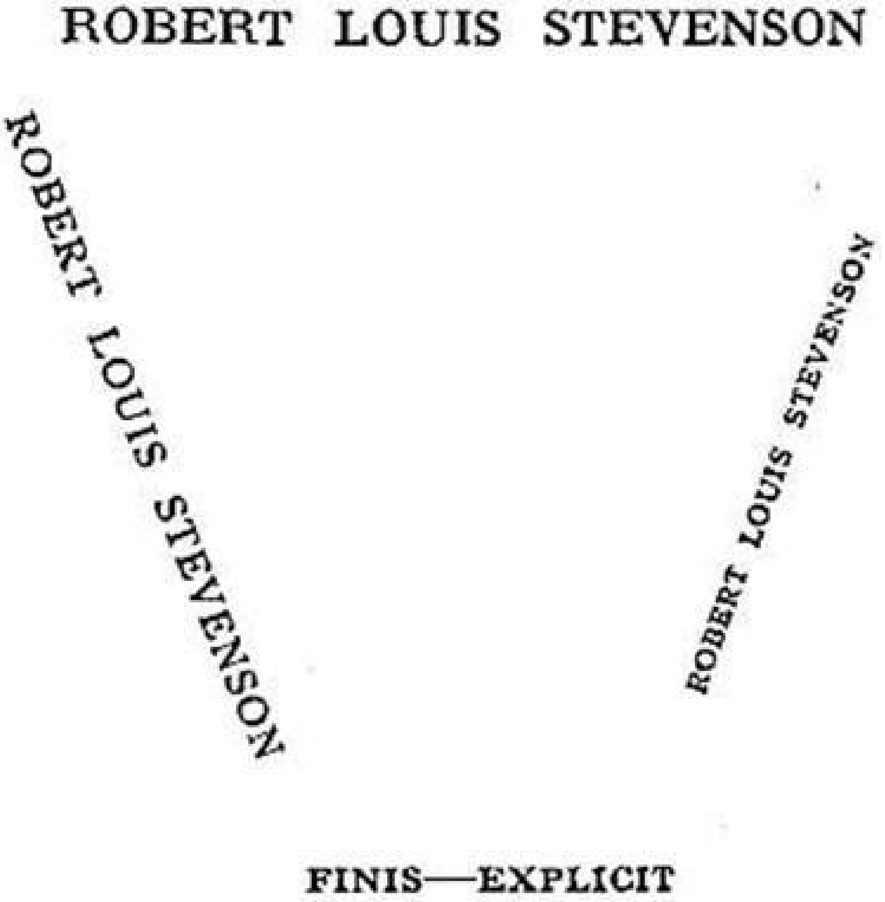
I suppose by this you will have seen the lad — and his feet will have been in the Monument — and his eyes beheld the face of George. Well!

There is much eloquence in a well!

I am, Sir,

Yours

The Epigrammatist



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

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FINIS—EXPLICIT

To E. L. Burlingame

The opening sentences of the following refer of course to *The Wrecker*, and particularly to a suggestion of mine concerning the relation of the main narrative to the prologue: —

Vailima, Apia, Samoa, Nov. 7, 1890.

I wish you to add to the words at the end of the prologue; they run, I think, thus, "And this is the yarn of Loudon Dodd"; add, "not as he told, but as he wrote it afterwards for his diversion." This becomes the more needful, because, when all is done, I shall probably revert to Tai-o-hae, and give final details about the characters in the way of a conversation between Dodd and Havers. These little snippets of information and *faits-divers* have always a disjointed, broken-backed appearance; yet, readers like them. In this book we have introduced so many characters, that this kind of epilogue will be looked for; and I rather hope, looking far ahead, that I can lighten it in dialogue.

We are well past the middle now. How does it strike you? and can you guess my mystery? It will make a fattish volume!

I say, have you ever read the *Highland Widow*? I never had till yesterday: I am half inclined, bar a trip or two, to think it Scott's masterpiece; and it has the name of a failure! Strange things are readers.

I expect proofs and revises in duplicate.

We have now got into a small barrack at our place. We see the sea six hundred feet below filling the end of two vales of forest. On one hand the mountain runs above us some thousand feet higher; great trees stand round us in our clearing; there is an endless voice of birds; I have never lived in such a heaven; just now, I have fever, which mitigates but not destroys my gusto in my circumstances. — You may envy

Robert Louis Stevenson.

25 ... O, I don't know if I mentioned that having seen your new tail to the magazine, I cried off interference, at least for this trip. Did I ask you to send me my books and papers, and all the bound volumes of the mag.? *quorum pars*. I might add that were there a good book or so — new — I don't believe there is — such would be welcome.

I desire — I positively begin to awake — to be remembered to Scribner, Low, St. Gaudens, Russell Sullivan. Well, well, you fellows have the feast of reason and the flow of soul; I have a better-looking place and climate: you should hear the birds on the hill now! The day has just wound up with a shower; it is still light without, though I write within here at the cheek of a lamp; my wife and an invaluable German are wrestling about bread on the back verandah; and how the birds and the frogs are rattling, and piping, and hailing from the woods! Here and there a throaty chuckle; here and there, cries like those of jolly children who have lost their way; here and there, the ringing sleigh-bell of the tree frog. Out and away down below me on the sea it is still raining; it will be wet under foot on schooners, and the house will leak; how well I know that! Here the showers only patter on the iron roof, and sometimes roar; and within, the lamp burns steady on the tafa-covered walls, with their dusky tartan patterns, and the book-shelves with their thin array of books; and no squall can rout my house or bring my heart into my mouth. — The well-pleased South Sea Islander,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Vailima, Tuesday, November 25th,1890.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I wanted to go out bright and early to go on with my survey. You never heard of that. The world has turned, and much water run under bridges, 26 since I stopped my diary. I have written six more chapters of the book, all good I potently believe, and given up, as a deception of the devil's, the *High Woods*. I have been once down to Apia, to a huge native feast at Seumanutafa's, the chief of Apia. There was a vast mass of food, crowds of people, the police charging among them with whips, the whole in high good humour on both sides; infinite noise; and a historic event — Mr. Clarke, the missionary, and his wife, assisted at a native dance. On my return from this function, I found work had stopped; no more *South Seas* in my belly. Well, Henry had cleared a great deal of our bush on a contract, and it ought to be measured. I set myself to the task with a tape-line; it seemed a dreary business; then I borrowed a prismatic compass, and tackled the task afresh. I have no books; I had not touched an instrument nor given a thought to the business since the year of grace 1871; you can imagine with what interest I sat down yesterday afternoon to reduce my observations; five triangles I had taken; all five came right, to my ineffable joy. Our dinner — the lowest we have ever been — consisted of *one avocado pear* between Fanny and me, a ship's biscuit for the guidman, white bread for the Missis, and red wine for the twa. No salt horse, even, in all Vailima! After dinner Henry came, and I began to teach him decimals; you wouldn't think I knew them myself after so long desuetude!

I could not but wonder how Henry stands his evenings here; the Polynesian loves gaiety — I feed him with decimals, the mariner's compass, derivations, grammar, and the like; delecting myself, after the manner of my race, *moult tristement*. I suck my paws; I live for my dexterities and by my accomplishments; even my clumsinesses are my joy — my woodcuts, my stumbling on the pipe, this surveying even — and even weeding sensitive; anything to do with the mind, with the eye, with the hand — with a part of *me*; diversion flows in these ways for the dreary man. But gaiety is what these children want; 27 to sit in a crowd, tell stories and pass jests, to hear one another laugh and scamper with the girls. It's good fun, too, I believe, but not for R. L. S., *ætat.* 40. Which I am now past forty, Custodian, and not one penny the worse that I can see; as amusable as ever; to be on board ship is reward enough for me; give me the wages of going on — in a schooner! Only, if ever I were gay, which I misremember, I am gay no more. And here is poor Henry passing his evenings on my intellectual husks, which the professors masticated; keeping the accounts of the estate — all wrong I have no doubt — I keep no check, beyond a very rough one; marching in with a cloudy brow, and the day-book under his arm; tackling decimals, coming with cases of conscience — how would an English chief behave in such a case? etc.; and, I am bound to say, on any glimmer of a jest, lapsing into native hilarity as a tree straightens itself after the wind is by. The other night I remembered my old friend — I believe yours also — Scholastikos, and administered the crow and the anchor — they were quite fresh to Samoan ears (this implies a very early severance) — and I thought the anchor would have made away with my Simelé altogether.

Fanny's time, in this interval, has been largely occupied in contending publicly with wild swine. We have a black sow; we call her Jack Sheppard; impossible to confine her — impossible also for her to be confined! To my sure knowledge she has been in an interesting condition for longer than any other sow in story; else she had long died the death; as soon as she is brought to bed, she shall count her days. I suppose that sow has cost us in days' labour from thirty to fifty dollars; as many as eight boys (at a dollar a day) have been twelve hours in chase of her. Now it is supposed that Fanny has outwitted her; she grins behind broad planks in what was once the cook-house. She is a wild pig; far handsomer than any tame; and when she found the cook-house was too much for her methods of evasion, she lay down on 28 the floor and refused food and drink for a whole Sunday. On Monday morning she relapsed, and now eats and drinks like a little man. I am reminded of an incident. Two Sundays ago, the sad word was brought that the sow was out again; this time she had carried another in her flight. Moors and I and Fanny were strolling up to the garden, and there by the waterside we saw the black sow, looking guilty. It seemed to me beyond words; but Fanny's *cri du cœur* was delicious: "G-r-r!" she cried; "nobody loves you!"

I would I could tell you the moving story of our cart and cart-horses; the latter are dapple-grey, about sixteen hands, and of enormous substance; the former was a kind of red and green shandrydan with a driving bench; plainly unfit to carry lumber or to face our road. (Remember that the last third of my road, about a mile, is all made out of a bridle-track by my boys — and my dollars.) It was supposed a white man had been found — an ex-German artilleryman — to drive this last; he proved incapable and drunken; the gallant Henry, who had never driven before, and knew nothing about horses — except the rats and weeds that flourish on the islands — volunteered; Moors accepted, proposing to follow and supervise: despatched his work and started after. No cart! he hurried on up the road — no cart. Transfer the scene to Vailima, where on a sudden, to Fanny and me, the cart appears, apparently at a hard gallop, some two hours before it was expected; Henry radiantly ruling chaos from the bench. It stopped: it was long before we had time to remark that the axle was twisted like the letter L. Our first care was the horses. There they stood, black with sweat, the sweat raining from them — literally raining — their heads down, their feet apart — and blood running thick from the nostrils of the mare. We got out Fanny's under-clothes — couldn't find anything else but our blankets — to rub them down, and in about half an hour we had the blessed satisfaction to see one after the other 29 take a bite or two of grass. But it was a toucher; a little more and these steeds would have been foundered.

Monday, 31st(?) November. — Near a week elapsed, and no journal. On Monday afternoon, Moors rode up and I rode down with him, dined, and went over in the evening to the American consulate; present, Consul-General Sewall, Lieut. Parker and Mrs. Parker, Lafarge the American decorator, Adams an American historian; we talked late, and it was arranged I was to write up for Fanny, and we should both dine on the morrow.

On the Friday, I was all forenoon in the mission house, lunched at the German consulate, went on board the *Sperber*(German war-ship) in the afternoon, called on my lawyer on my way out to American Consulate, and talked till dinner time with Adams, whom I am supplying with introductions and information for Tahiti and the Marquesas. Fanny arrived a wreck, and had to lie down. The moon rose, one day past full, and we dined in the verandah, a good dinner on the whole; talk with Lafarge about art and the lovely dreams of art students. Remark by Adams, which took me briskly home to the Monument — ”I only liked one *young* woman — and that was Mrs. Procter.” Henry James would like that. Back by moonlight in the consulate boat — Fanny being too tired to walk — to Moors’s. Saturday, I left Fanny to rest, and was off early to the Mission, where the politics are thrilling just now. The native pastors (to every one’s surprise) 30 have moved of themselves in the matter of the native dances, desiring the restrictions to be removed, or rather to be made dependent on the character of the dance. Clarke, who had feared censure and all kinds of trouble, is, of course, rejoicing greatly. A characteristic feature: the argument of the pastors was handed in in the form of a fictitious narrative of the voyage of one Mr. Pye, an English traveller, and his conversation with a chief; there are touches of satire in this educational romance. Mr. Pye, for instance, admits that he knows nothing about the Bible. At the Mission I was sought out by Henry in a devil of an agitation; he has been made the victim of a forgery — a crime hitherto unknown in Samoa. I had to go to Folau, the chief judge here, in the matter. Folau had never heard of the offence, and begged to know what was the punishment; there may be lively times in forgery ahead. It seems the sort of crime to tickle a Polynesian. After lunch — you can see what a busy three days I am describing — we set off to ride home. My Jack was full of the devil of corn and too much grass, and no work. I had to ride ahead and leave Fanny behind. He is a most gallant little rascal is my Jack, and takes the whole way as hard as the rider pleases. Single incident: half-way up, I find my boys upon the road and stop and talk with Henry in his character of ganger, as long as Jack will suffer me. Fanny drones in after; we make a show of eating — or I do — she goes to bed about half-past six! I write some verses, read Irving's *Washington*, and follow about half-past eight. O, one thing more I did, in a prophetic spirit. I had made sure Fanny was not fit to be left alone, and wrote before turning in a letter to Chalmers, telling him I could not meet him in Auckland at this time. By eleven at night, Fanny got me wakened — she had tried twice in vain — and I found her very bad. Thence till three, we laboured with mustard poultices, laudanum, soda and ginger — Heavens! wasn't it cold; the land breeze was as cold as a river; the moon was glorious in 31 the paddock, and the great boughs and the black shadows of our trees were inconceivable. But it was a poor time.

Sunday morning found Fanny, of course, a complete wreck, and myself not very brilliant. Paul had to go to Vailele *re* cocoa-nuts; it was doubtful if he could be back by dinner; never mind, said I, I'll take dinner when you return. Off set Paul. I did an hour's work, and then tackled the house work. I did it beautiful: the house was a picture, it resplended of propriety. Presently Mr. Moors' Andrew rode up; I heard the doctor was at the Forest House and sent a note to him; and when he came, I heard my wife telling him she had been in bed all day, and that was why the house was so dirty! Was it grateful? Was it politic? Was it TRUE? — Enough! In the interval, up marched little L. S., one of my neighbours, all in his Sunday white linens; made a fine salute, and demanded the key of the kitchen in German and English. And he cooked dinner for us, like a little man, and had it on the table and the coffee ready by the hour. Paul had arranged me this surprise. Some time later, Paul returned himself with a fresh surprise on hand; he was almost sober; nothing but a hazy eye distinguished him from Paul of the week days: *vivat!*

On the evening I cannot dwell. All the horses got out of the paddock, went across, and smashed my neighbour's garden into a big hole. How little the amateur conceives a farmer's troubles. I went out at once with a lantern, staked up a gap in the hedge, was kicked at by a chestnut mare, who straightway took to the bush; and came back. A little after, they had found another gap, and the crowd were all abroad again. What has happened to our own garden nobody yet knows.

Fanny had a fair night, and we are both tolerable this morning, only the yoke of correspondence lies on me heavy. I beg you will let this go on to my mother. I got such a good start in your letter, that I kept on at it, and I have neither time nor energy for more. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

Something new. — I was called from my letters by the voice of Mr.

— — , who had just come up with a load of wood, roaring, "Henry! Henry! Bring six boys!" I saw there was something wrong, and ran out. The cart, half unloaded, had upset with the mare in the shafts; she was all cramped together and all tangled up in harness and cargo, the off shaft pushing her over, the carter holding her up by main strength, and right along-side of her — where she must fall if she went down — a deadly stick of a tree like a lance. I could not but admire the wisdom and faith of this great brute; I never saw the riding-horse that would not have lost its life in such a situation; but the cart-elephant patiently waited and was saved. It was a stirring three minutes, I can tell you.

I forgot in talking of Saturday to tell of one incident which will particularly interest my mother. I met Dr. Davis from Savaii, and had an age-long talk about Edinburgh folk; it was very pleasant. He has been studying in Edinburgh, along with his son; a pretty relation. He told me he knew nobody but college people: "I was altogether a student," he said with glee. He seems full of cheerfulness and thick-set energy. I feel as if I could put him in a novel with effect; and ten to one, if I know more of him, the image will be only blurred.

Tuesday, Dec. 2nd. — I should have told you yesterday that all my boys were got up for their work in moustaches and side-whiskers of some sort of blacking — I suppose wood-ash. It was a sight of joy to see them return at night, axe on shoulder, feigning to march like soldiers, a choragus with a loud voice singing out, "March — step! March — step!" in imperfect recollection of some drill.

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

The intention here announced was only carried out to the extent of finishing one paper, *My First Book,* and beginning a few others — *Genesis 33 of the Master of Ballantrae, Rosa Quo Locorum*, etc.; see Edinburgh edition, *Miscellanies,* vol. iv. The "long experience of gambling places" is a phrase which must not be misunderstood. Stevenson loved risk to life and limb, but hated gambling for money, and had known the tables only as a looker-on during holiday or invalid travels as a boy and young man. "Tamate" is the native (Rarotongan) word for trader, used especially as a name for the famous missionary pioneer, the Rev. James Chalmers, for whom Stevenson had an unbounded respect.

[*Vailima, December*1890.]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — By some diabolical accident, I have mislaid your last. What was in it? I know not, and here I am caught unexpectedly by the American mail, a week earlier than by computation. The computation, not the mail, is supposed to be in error. The vols. of Scribner's have arrived, and present a noble appearance in my house, which is not a noble structure at present. But by autumn we hope to be sprawling in our verandah, twelve feet, sir, by eighty-eight in front, and seventy-two on the flank; view of the sea and mountains, sunrise, moonrise, and the German fleet at anchor three miles away in Apia harbour. I hope some day to offer you a bowl of kava there, or a slice of a pine-apple, or some lemonade from my own hedge. "I know a hedge where the lemons grow" — *Shakespeare*. My house at this moment smells of them strong; and the rain, which a while ago roared there, now rings in minute drops upon the iron roof. I have no *Wrecker* for you this mail, other things having engaged me. I was on the whole rather relieved you did not vote for regular papers, as I feared the traces. It is my design from time to time to write a paper of a reminiscential (beastly word) description; some of them I could scarce publish from different considerations; but some of them — for instance, my long experience of gambling places — Homburg, Wiesbaden, Baden-Baden, old Monaco, and new Monte Carlo — would make good magazine padding, if I got the stuff handled the right way. I never could fathom why verse was put in magazines; it has something to do with the making-up, has it not? I 34 am scribbling a lot just now; if you are taken badly that way, apply to the South Seas. I could send you some, I believe, anyway, only none of it is thoroughly ripe. If you have kept back the volume of ballads, I'll soon make it of a respectable size if this fit continue. By the next mail you may expect some more *Wrecker*, or I shall be displeased. Probably no more than a chapter, however, for it is a hard one, and I am denuded of my proofs, my collaborator having walked away with them to England; hence some trouble in catching the just note.

I am a mere farmer: my talk, which would scarce interest you on Broadway, is all of fuafua and tuitui and black boys, and planting and weeding, and axes and cutlasses; my hands are covered with blisters and full of thorns; letters are, doubtless, a fine thing, so are beer and skittles, but give me farmering in the tropics for real interest. Life goes in enchantment; I come home to find I am late for dinner; and when I go to bed at night, I could cry for the weariness of my loins and thighs. Do not speak to me of vexation, the life brims with it, but with living interest fairly.

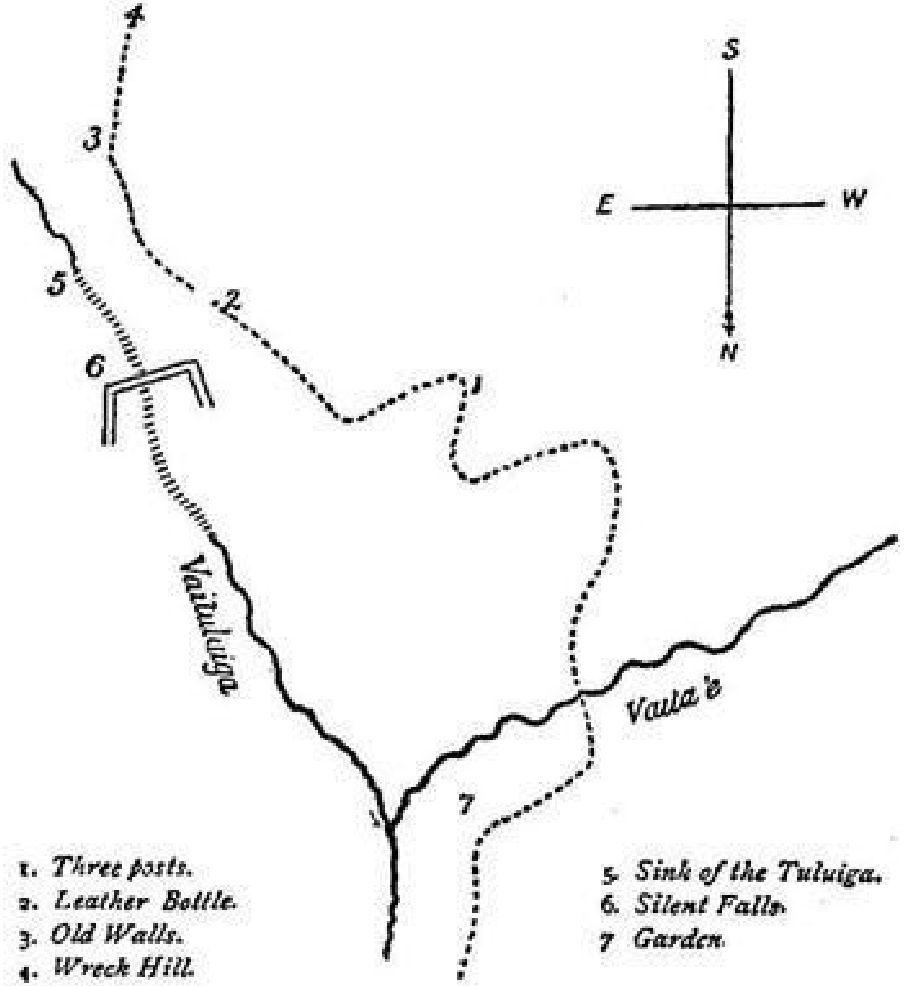
Christmas I go to Auckland, to meet Tamate, the New Guinea missionary, a man I love. The rest of my life is a prospect of much rain, much weeding and making of paths, a little letters, and devilish little to eat. — I am, my dear Burlingame, with messages to all whom it may concern, very sincerely yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *Monday, twenty-somethingth of December 1890.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I do not say my Jack is anything extraordinary; he is only an island horse; and the profane might call him a Punch; and his face is like a 35 donkey's; and natives have ridden him, and he has no mouth in consequence, and occasionally shies. But his merits are equally surprising; and I don't think I should ever have known Jack's merits if I had not been riding up of late on moonless nights. Jack is a bit of a dandy; he loves to misbehave in a gallant manner, above all on Apia Street, and when I stop to speak to people, they say (Dr. Stuebel the German consul said about three days ago), "O what a wild horse! it cannot be safe to ride him." Such a remark is Jack's reward, and represents his ideal of fame. Now when I start out of Apia on a dark night, you should see my changed horse; at a fast steady walk, with his head down, and sometimes his nose to the ground — when he wants to do that, he asks for his head with a little eloquent polite movement indescribable — he climbs the long ascent and threads the darkest of the wood. The first night I came it was starry; and it was singular to see the starlight drip down into the crypt of the wood, and shine in the open end of the road, as bright as moonlight at home; but the crypt itself was proof, blackness lived in it. The next night it was raining. We left the lights of Apia and passed into limbo. Jack finds a way for himself, but he does not calculate for my height above the saddle; and I am directed forward, all braced up for a crouch and holding my switch upright in front of me. It is curiously interesting. In the forest, the dead wood is phosphorescent; some nights the whole ground is strewn with it, so that it seems like a grating over a pale hell; doubtless this is one of the things that feed the night fears of the natives; and I am free to confess that in a night of trackless darkness where all else is void, these pallid *ignes suppositi* have a fantastic appearance, rather bogey even. One night, when it was very dark, a man had put out a little lantern by the wayside to show the entrance to his ground. I saw the light, as I thought, far ahead, and supposed it was a pedestrian coming to meet me; I was quite taken by 36 surprise when it struck in my face and passed behind me. Jack saw it, and he was appalled; do you think he thought of shying? No, sir, not in the dark; in the dark Jack knows he is on duty; and he went past that lantern steady and swift; only, as he went, he groaned and shuddered. For about 2500 of Jack's steps we only passed one house — that where the lantern was; and about 1500 of these are in the darkness of the pit. But now the moon is on tap again, and the roads lighted.


4
3
S
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5
2
6
1
Vaituluiga
Vaita's
7
1. Three posts.
2. Leather Bottle.
3. Old Walls.
4. Wreck Hill.
5. Sink of the Tuluiga.
6. Silent Falls.
7 Garden.

I have been exploring up the Vaituluiga; see your map. It comes down a wonderful fine glen; at least 200 feet of cliffs on either hand, winding like a corkscrew, great forest trees filling it. At the top there ought to be a fine double fall; but the stream evades it by a fault and passes underground. Above the fall it runs (at this season) full and very gaily in a shallow valley, some hundred yards before the head of the glen. Its course is seen full of grasses, like a flooded meadow; that is the sink! beyond the grave of the grasses, the bed lies dry. Near this upper part there is a great show of ruinous pig-walls; a village must have stood near by.

To walk from our house to Wreck Hill (when the path is buried in fallen trees) takes one about half an hour, I think; to return, not more than twenty minutes; I dare say fifteen. Hence I should guess it was three-quarters of a mile. I had meant to join on my explorations passing eastward by the sink; but, Lord! how it rains.

Later. — I went out this morning with a pocket compass and walked in a varying direction, perhaps on an average S. by W., 1754 paces. Then I struck into the bush, N.W. by N., hoping to strike the Vaituluiga above the falls. Now I have it plotted out I see I should have gone W. or even W. by S.; but it is not easy to guess. For 600 weary paces I struggled through the bush, and then came on the stream below the gorge, where it was comparatively easy to get down to it. In the place where I struck it, it made cascades about a little isle, and was running about N.E., 20 to 30 feet wide, as deep as to my knee, and piercing cold. I tried to follow it down, and keep the run of its direction and my paces; but when I was wading to the knees and the waist in mud, poison brush, and rotted wood, bound hand and foot in lianas, shovelled unceremoniously off the one shore and driven to try my luck upon the other — I saw I should have hard enough work to get my body down, if my mind rested. It was a damnable walk; certainly not half a mile as the crow flies, but a real bucketer for hardship. Once I had to pass the stream where it flowed between banks about three feet high. To get the easier down, I swung myself by a wild-cocoanut — (so called, it bears bunches of scarlet nutlets) — which grew upon the brink. As I so swung, I 38 received a crack on the head that knocked me all abroad. Impossible to guess what tree had taken a shy at me. So many towered above, one over the other, and the missile, whatever it was, dropped in the stream and was gone before I had recovered my wits. (I scarce know what I write, so hideous a Niagara of rain roars, shouts, and demonizes on the iron roof — it is pitch dark too — the lamp lit at 5!) It was a blessed thing when I struck my own road; and I got home, neat for lunch time, one of the most wonderful mud statues ever witnessed. In the afternoon I tried again, going up the other path by the garden, but was early drowned out; came home, plotted out what I had done, and then wrote this truck to you.

Fanny has been quite ill with ear-ache. She won't go, hating the sea at this wild season; I don't like to leave her; so it drones on, steamer after steamer, and I guess it'll end by no one going at all. She is in a dreadful misfortune at this hour; a case of kerosene having burst in the kitchen. A little while ago it was the carpenter's horse that trod in a nest of fourteen eggs, and made an omelette of our hopes. The farmer's lot is not a happy one. And it looks like some real uncompromising bad weather too. I wish Fanny's ear were well. Think of parties in Monuments! think of me in Skerryvore, and now of this. It don't look like a part of the same universe to me. Work is quite laid aside; I have worked myself right out.

Christmas Eve. — Yesterday, who could write? My wife near crazy with ear-ache; the rain descending in white crystal rods and playing hell's tattoo, like a *tutti* of battering rams, on our sheet-iron roof; the wind passing high overhead with a strange dumb mutter, or striking us full, so that all the huge trees in the paddock cried aloud, and wrung their hands, and brandished their vast arms. The horses stood in the shed like things stupid. The sea and 39 the flagship lying on the jaws of the bay vanished in sheer rain. All day it lasted; I locked up my papers in the iron box, in case it was a hurricane, and the house might go. We went to bed with mighty uncertain feelings; far more than on shipboard, where you have only drowning ahead — whereas here you have a smash of beams, a shower of sheet-iron, and a blind race in the dark and through a whirlwind for the shelter of an unfinished stable — and my wife with ear-ache! Well, well, this morning, we had word from Apia; a hurricane was looked for, the ships were to leave the bay by 10 A.M.; it is now 3.30, and the flagship is still a fixture, and the wind round in the blessed east, so I suppose the danger is over. But heaven is still laden; the day dim, with frequent rattling bucketfuls of rain; and just this moment (as I write) a squall went overhead, scarce striking us, with that singular, solemn noise of its passage, which is to me dreadful. I have always feared the sound of wind beyond everything. In my hell it would always blow a gale.

I have been all day correcting proofs, and making out a new plan for our house. The other was too dear to be built now, and it was a hard task to make a smaller house that would suffice for the present, and not be a mere waste of money in the future. I believe I have succeeded; I have taken care of my study anyway.

Two favours I want to ask of you. First, I wish you to get *Pioneering in New Guinea*, by J. Chalmers. It’s a missionary book, and has less pretensions to be literature than Spurgeon’s sermons. Yet I think even through that, you will see some of the traits of the hero that wrote it; a man that took me fairly by storm for the most attractive, simple, brave, and interesting man in the whole Pacific. He is away now to go up the Fly River; a desperate venture, it is thought; he is quite a Livingstone card.

Second, try and keep yourself free next winter; and if my means can be stretched so far, I’ll come to Egypt 40 and we’ll meet at Shepheard’s Hotel, and you’ll put me in my place, which I stand in need of badly by this time. Lord, what bully times! I suppose I’ll come per British Asia, or whatever you call it, and avoid all cold, and might be in Egypt about November as ever was — eleven months from now or rather less. But do not let us count our chickens.

Last night three piglings were stolen from one of our pig-pens. The great Lafaele appeared to my wife uneasy, so she engaged him in conversation on the subject, and played upon him the following engaging trick. You advance your two forefingers towards the sitter’s eyes; he closes them, whereupon you substitute (on his eyelids) the fore and middle fingers of the left hand; and with your right (which he supposes engaged) you tap him on the head and back. When you let him open his eyes, he sees you withdrawing the two forefingers. "What that?" asked Lafaele. "My devil," says Fanny. "I wake um, my devil. All right now. He go catch the man that catch my pig." About an hour afterwards, Lafaele came for further particulars. "O, all right," my wife says. "By and by, that man he sleep, devil go sleep same place. By and by, that man plenty sick. I no care. What for he take my pig?" Lafaele cares plenty; I don't think he is the man, though he may be; but he knows him, and most likely will eat some of that pig to-night. He will not eat with relish.

Saturday, 27th. — It cleared up suddenly after dinner, and my wife and I saddled up and off to Apia, whence we did not return till yesterday morning. Christmas Day I wish you could have seen our party at table. H. J. Moors at one end with my wife, I at the other with Mrs. M., between us two native women, Carruthers the lawyer, Moors's two shop-boys — Walters and A. M. the quadroon — and the guests of the evening, Shirley Baker, the defamed and much-accused man of Tonga, and his son, with the artificial joint to his arm — where the assassins shot him 41 in shooting at his father. Baker's appearance is not unlike John Bull on a cartoon; he is highly interesting to speak to, as I had expected; I found he and I had many common interests, and were engaged in puzzling over many of the same difficulties. After dinner it was quite pretty to see our Christmas party, it was so easily pleased and prettily behaved. In the morning I should say I had been to lunch at the German consulate, where I had as usual a very pleasant time. I shall miss Dr. Stuebel much when he leaves, and when Adams and Lafarge go also, it will be a great blow. I am getting spoiled with all this good society.

On Friday morning, I had to be at my house affairs before seven; and they kept me in Apia till past ten, disputing, and consulting about brick and stone and native and hydraulic lime, and cement and sand, and all sorts of otiose details about the chimney — just what I fled from in my father's office twenty years ago; I should have made a languid engineer. Rode up with the carpenter. Ah, my wicked Jack! on Christmas Eve, as I was taking the saddle bag off, he kicked at me, and fetched me too, right on the shin. On Friday, being annoyed at the carpenter's horse having a longer trot, he uttered a shrill cry and tried to bite him! Alas, alas, these are like old days; my dear Jack is a Bogue, but I cannot strangle Jack into submission.

I have given up the big house for just now; we go ahead right away with a small one, which should be ready in two months, and I suppose will suffice for just now.

O I know I haven't told you about our *aitu*, have I? It is a lady, *aitu fafine*: she lives on the mountain-side; her presence is heralded by the sound of a gust of wind; a sound very common in the high woods; when she 42 catches you, I do not know what happens; but in practice she is avoided, so I suppose she does more than pass the time of day. The great *aitu Saumai-afe* was once a living woman, and became an *aitu*, no one understands how; she lives in a stream at the well-head, her hair is red, she appears as a lovely young lady, her bust particularly admired, to handsome young men; these die, her love being fatal; — as a handsome youth she has been known to court damsels with the like result, but this is very rare; as an old crone she goes about and asks for water, and woe to them who are uncivil! *Saumai-afe* means literally, "Come here a thousand!" A good name for a lady of her manners. My *aitu fafine* does not seem to be in the same line of business. It is unsafe to be a handsome youth in Samoa; a young man died from her favours last month — so we said on this side of the island; on the other, where he died, it was not so certain. I, for one, blame it on Madam *Saumai-afe* without hesitation.

Example of the farmer's sorrows. I slipped out on the balcony a moment ago. It is a lovely morning, cloudless, smoking hot, the breeze not yet arisen. Looking west, in front of our new house, I saw two heads of Indian corn wagging, and the rest and all nature stock still. As I looked, one of the stalks subsided and disappeared. I dashed out to the rescue; two small pigs were deep in the grass — quite hid till within a few yards — gently but swiftly demolishing my harvest. Never be a farmer.

12.30 *p.m.* — I while away the moments of digestion by drawing you a faithful picture of my morning. When I had done writing as above it was time to clean our house. When I am working, it falls on my wife alone, but to-day we had it between us; she did the bedroom, I the sitting-room, in fifty-seven minutes of really most unpalatable labour. Then I changed every stitch, for I was wet through, and sat down and played on my pipe till dinner was ready, mighty pleased to be in a mildly habitable spot once more. The house had been neglected for near a week, 43 and was a hideous spot; my wife's ear and our visit to Apia being the causes: our Paul we prefer not to see upon that theatre, and God knows he has plenty to do elsewhere.

I am glad to look out of my back door and see the boys smoothing the foundations of the new house; this is all very jolly, but six months of it has satisfied me; we have too many things for such close quarters; to work in the midst of all the myriad misfortunes of the planter's life, seated in a Dyonisius' (can't spell him) ear, whence I catch every complaint, mishap and contention, is besides the devil; and the hope of a cave of my own inspires me with lust. O to be able to shut my own door and make my own confusion! O to have the brown paper and the matches and "make a hell of my own" once more!

I do not bother you with all my troubles in these outpourings; the troubles of the farmer are inspiriting — they are like difficulties out hunting — a fellow rages at the time and rejoices to recall and to commemorate them. My troubles have been financial. It is hard to arrange wisely interests so distributed. America, England, Samoa, Sydney, everywhere I have an end of liability hanging out and some shelf of credit hard by; and to juggle all these and build a dwelling-place here, and check expense — a thing I am ill fitted for — you can conceive what a nightmare it is at times. Then God knows I have not been idle. But since *The Master* nothing has come to raise any coins. I believe the springs are dry at home, and now I am worked out, and can no more at all. A holiday is required.

Dec. 28th. — I have got unexpectedly to work again, and feel quite dandy. Good-bye.

R. L. S.

To Henry James

Mr. Lafarge the artist and Mr. Henry Adams the historian have been mentioned already. The pinch in the matter of eatables only 44 lasted for a little while, until Mrs. Stevenson had taken her bearings and made her arrangements in the matter of marketing, etc.

Vailima, Apia, Samoa, December 29th, 1890.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES, — It is terrible how little everybody writes, and how much of that little disappears in the capacious maw of the Post Office. Many letters, both from and to me, I now know to have been lost in transit: my eye is on the Sydney Post Office, a large ungainly structure with a tower, as being not a hundred miles from the scene of disappearance; but then I have no proof. The *Tragic Muse* you announced to me as coming; I had already ordered it from a Sydney bookseller: about two months ago he advised me that his copy was in the post; and I am still tragically museless.

News, news, news. What do we know of yours? What do you care for ours? We are in the midst of the rainy season, and dwell among alarms of hurricanes, in a very unsafe little two-storied wooden box 650 feet above and about three miles from the sea-beach. Behind us, till the other slope of the island, desert forest, peaks, and loud torrents; in front green slopes to the sea, some fifty miles of which we dominate. We see the ships as they go out and in to the dangerous roadstead of Apia; and if they lie far out, we can even see their topmasts while they are at anchor. Of sounds of men, beyond those of our own labourers, there reach us, at very long intervals, salutes from the warships in harbour, the bell of the cathedral church, and the low

of the conch-shell calling the labour boys on the German plantations. Yesterday, which was Sunday — the *quantième* is most likely erroneous; you can now correct it — we had a visitor — Baker of Tonga. Heard you ever of him? He is a great man here: he is accused of theft, rape, judicial murder, private poisoning, abortion, misappropriation of public moneys — oddly enough, not forgery, nor arson; you would be amused if you knew how thick the accusations fly in this South Sea world. I make no doubt my own character is 45
something illustrious; or if not yet, there is a good time coming.

But all our resources have not of late been Pacific. We have had enlightened society: Lafarge the painter, and your friend Henry Adams: a great privilege — would it might endure. I would go oftener to see them, but the place is awkward to reach on horseback. I had to swim my horse the last time I went to dinner; and as I have not yet returned the clothes I had to borrow, I dare not return in the same plight: it seems inevitable — as soon as the wash comes in, I plump straight into the American consul’s shirt or trousers! They, I believe, would come oftener to see me but for the horrid doubt that weighs upon our commissariat department; we have *often* almost nothing to eat; a guest would simply break the bank; my wife and I have dined on one avocado pear; I have several times dined on hard bread and onions. What would you do with a guest at such narrow seasons? — eat him? or serve up a labour boy fricasseed?

Work? work is now arrested, but I have written, I should think, about thirty chapters of the South Sea book; they will all want rehandling, I dare say. Gracious, what a strain is a long book! The time it took me to design this volume, before I could dream of putting pen to paper, was excessive; and then think of writing a book of travels on the spot, when I am continually extending my information, revising my opinions, and seeing the most finely finished portions of my work come part by part in pieces. Very soon I shall have no opinions left. And without an opinion, how to string artistically vast accumulations of fact? Darwin said no one could observe without a theory; I suppose he was right; ‘tis a fine point of metaphysic; but I will take my oath, no man can write without one — at least the way he would like to, and my theories melt, melt, melt, and as they melt the thaw-waters wash down my writing, and leave unideal tracts — wastes instead of cultivated farms.

Kipling is by far the most promising young man who has appeared since — ahem — I appeared. He amazes me by his precocity and various endowment. But he alarms me by his copiousness and haste. He should shield his fire with both hands “and draw up all his strength and sweetness in one ball.” (“Draw all his strength and all His sweetness up into one ball”? I cannot remember Marvell’s words.) So the critics have been saying to me: but I was never capable of — and surely never guilty of — such a debauch of production. At this rate his works will soon fill the habitable globe; and surely he was armed for better conflicts than these succinct sketches and flying leaves of verse? I look on, I admire, I rejoice for myself; but in a kind of ambition we all have for our tongue and literature I am wounded. If I had this man's fertility and courage, it seems to me I could heave a pyramid.

Well, we begin to be the old fogies now; and it was high time *something* rose to take our places. Certainly Kipling has the gifts; the fairy godmothers were all tipsy at his christening: what will he do with them?

Good-bye, my dear James; find an hour to write to us, and register your letter. — Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Rudyard Kipling

In 1890, on first becoming acquainted with Mr. Kipling's *Soldiers Three*, Stevenson had written off his congratulations red-hot. "Well and indeed, Mr. Mulvaney," so ran the first sentences of his note, "but it's as good as meat to meet in with you, sir. They tell me it was a man of the name of Kipling made ye; but indeed and they can't fool me; it was the Lord God Almighty that made you." Taking the cue thus offered, Mr. Kipling had written back in the character of his own Irishman, Thomas Mulvaney, addressing Stevenson's Highlander, Alan Breck Stewart. In the following letter, which belongs to an uncertain date in 1891, Alan Breck is made to reply. "The gentleman I now serve with" means, of course, R. L. S. himself.

[*Vailima, 1891.*]

SIR, — I cannot call to mind having written you, but I am so throng with occupation this may have fallen 47 aside. I never heard tell I had any friends in Ireland, and I am led to understand you are come of no considerable family. The gentleman I now serve with assures me, however, you are a very pretty fellow and your letter deserves to be remarked. It's true he is himself a man of a very low descent upon the one side; though upon the other he counts cousinship with a gentleman, my very good friend, the late Mr. Balfour of the Shaws, in the Lothian; which I should be wanting in good fellowship to forget. He tells me besides you are a man of your hands; I am not informed of your weapon; but if all be true it sticks in my mind I would be ready to make exception in your favour, and meet you like one gentleman with another. I suppose this'll be your purpose in your favour, which I could very ill make out; it's one I would be sweir to baulk you of. It seems, Mr. McIlvaine, which I take to be your name, you are in the household of a gentleman of the name of Coupling: for whom my friend is very much engaged. The distances being very uncommodious, I think it will be maybe better if we leave it to these two to settle all that's necessary to honour. I would have you to take heed it's a very unusual condescension on my part, that bear a King's name; and for the matter of that I think shame to be mingled with a person of the name of Coupling, which is doubtless a very good house but one I never heard tell of, any more than Stevenson. But your purpose being laudable, I would be sorry (as the word goes) to cut off my nose to spite my face. — I am, Sir, your humble servant,

A. Stewart,
Chevalier de St. Louis.

To Mr. M'Ilvaine,
Gentleman Private in a foot regiment,
under cover to Mr. Coupling.

He has read me some of your Barrack Room Ballants, which are not of so noble a strain as some of mine in the 48 Gaelic, but I could set some of them to the pipes if this rencounter goes as it's to be desired. Let's first, as I understand you to move, do each other this rational courtesy; and if either will survive, we may grow better acquaint. For your tastes for what's martial and for poetry agree with mine.

A. S.

To Sidney Colvin

This is the first appearance in Stevenson's letters of the Swedish Chief Justice of Samoa, Mr. Conrad Cedercrantz, of whom we shall hear enough and more than enough in the sequel.

S.S. Lübeck, *between Apia and Sydney,*
Jan. 17th, 1891.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — The Faamasino Sili, or Chief Justice, to speak your low language, has arrived. I had ridden down with Henry and Lafaele; the sun was down, the night was close at hand, so we rode fast; just as I came to the corner of the road before Apia, I heard a gun fire; and lo, there was a great crowd at the end of the pier, and the troops out, and a chief or two in the height of Samoa finery, and Seumanu coming in his boat (the oarsmen all in uniform), bringing the Faamasino Sili sure enough. It was lucky he was no longer; the natives would not have waited many weeks. But think of it, as I sat in the saddle at the outside of the crowd (looking, the English consul said, as if I were commanding the manœuvres), I was nearly knocked down by a stampede of the three consuls; they had been waiting their guest at the Matafele end, and some wretched intrigue among the whites had brought him to Apia, and the consuls had to run all the length of the town and come too late.

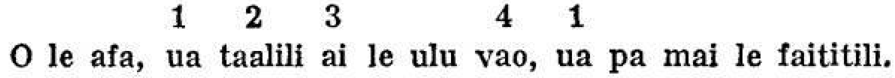
The next day was a long one; I was at a marriage of Gurr the banker to Fanua, the virgin of Apia. Bride and bridesmaids were all in the old high dress; the ladies were all native; the men, with the exception of Seumanu, all white.

It was quite a pleasant party, and while we were writing, we had a bird's-eye view of the public reception of the Chief Justice. The best part of it were some natives in war array; with blacked faces, turbans, tapa kilts, and guns, they looked very manly and purposelike. No, the best part was poor old drunken Joe, the Portuguese boatman, who seemed to think himself specially charged with the reception, and ended by falling on his knees before the Chief Justice on the end of the pier and in full view of the whole town and bay. The natives pelted him with rotten bananas; how the Chief Justice took it I was too far off to see; but it was highly absurd.

I have commemorated my genial hopes for the regimen of the Faamasino Sili in the following canine verses, which, if you at all guess how to read them, are very pretty in movement, and (unless he be a mighty good man) too true in sense.

We're quarrelling, the villages, we've beaten the wooden drums,
Sa femisai o nu'u, sa taia o pate,
Is confounded thereby the justice,
Ua atuatuvale a le faamasino e,
The chief justice, the terrified justice,
Le faamasino sili, le faamasino se,
Is on the point of running away the justice,
O le a solasola le faamasino e,
The justice denied any influence, the terrified justice,
O le faamasino le ai a, le faamasino se,
O le a solasola le faamasino e.

Well, after this excursion into tongues that have never been alive — though I assure you we have one capital book in the language, a book of fables by an old missionary of the unpromising name of Pratt, which is simply the best and the most literary version of the fables known to me. I suppose I should except La Fontaine, but L. F. 50 takes a long time; these are brief as the books of our childhood, and full of wit and literary colour; and O, Colvin, what a tongue it would be to write, if one only knew it — and there were only readers. Its curse in common use is an incredible left-handed wordiness; but in the hands of a man like Pratt it is succinct as Latin, compact of long rolling polysyllables and little and often pithy particles, and for beauty of sound a dream. Listen, I quote from Pratt — this is good Samoan, not canine —



$$\underbrace{\text{O le afa,}}\ \underbrace{\overset{1}{\text{ua}}\ \overset{2}{\text{taalili}}\ \overset{3}{\text{ai}}}\ \underbrace{\text{le ulu}\ \overset{4}{\text{vao,}}}\ \underbrace{\overset{1}{\text{ua}}\ \text{pa mai}}\ \underbrace{\text{le faititili.}}$$

1 almost *wa*, 2 the two *a's* just distinguished, 3 the *ai* is practically suffixed to the verb, 4 almost *vow*. The excursion has prolonged itself.

I started by the *Lübeck* to meet Lloyd and my mother; there were many reasons for and against; the main reason against was the leaving of Fanny alone in her blessed cabin, which has been somewhat remedied by my carter, Mr. — — , putting up in the stable and messing with her; but perhaps desire of change decided me not well, though I do think I ought to see an oculist, being very blind indeed, and sometimes unable to read. Anyway I left, the only cabin passenger, four and a kid in the second cabin, and a dear voyage it had like to have proved. Close to Fiji (choose a worse place on the map) we broke our shaft early one morning; and when or where we might expect to fetch land or meet with any ship, I would like you to tell me. The Pacific is absolutely desert. I have sailed there now some years; and scarce ever seen a ship except in port or close by; I think twice. It was the hurricane season besides, and hurricane waters. Well, our chief engineer got the shaft — it was the middle crank shaft — mended; thrice it was mended, and twice broke down; but now keeps up — only we dare not stop, for it is almost impossible to start again. The captain in the 51 meanwhile crowded her with sail; fifteen sails in all, every stay being gratified with a stay-sail, a boat-boom sent aloft for a maintop-gallant yard, and the derrick of a crane brought in service as bowsprit. All the time we have had a fine, fair wind and a smooth sea; to-day at noon our run was 203 miles (if you please!), and we are within some 360 miles of Sydney. Probably there has never been a more gallant success; and I can say honestly it was well worked for. No flurry, no high words, no long faces; only hard work and honest thought; a pleasant, manly business to be present at. All the chances were we might have been six weeks — ay, or three months at sea — or never turned up at all, and now it looks as though we should reach our destination some five days too late.

To Marcel Schwob

Sydney, January 19th,1891.

MY DEAR SIR, — *Sapristi, comme vous y allez!* Richard III. and Dumas, with all my heart: but not Hamlet. Hamlet is great literature; Richard III. a big, black, gross, sprawling melodrama, writ with infinite spirit but with no refinement or philosophy by a man who had the world, himself, mankind, and his trade still to learn. I prefer the Vicomte de Bragelonne to Richard III.; it is better done of its kind: I simply do not mention the Vicomte in the same part of the building with Hamlet, or Lear, or Othello, or any of those masterpieces that Shakespeare survived to give us.

Also, *comme vous y allez* in my commendation! I fear my *solide* *éducation classique* had best be described, like Shakespeare's, as "little Latin and no Greek" and I was educated, let me inform you, for an engineer. I shall tell my bookseller to send you a copy of *Memories and Portraits,* where you will see something of my descent and education, as it was, and hear me at length on my dear Vicomte. 52 I give you permission gladly to take your choice out of my works, and translate what you shall prefer, too much honoured that so clever a young man should think it worth the pains. My own choice would lie between *Kidnapped* and the *Master of Ballantrae*. Should you choose the latter, pray do not let Mrs. Henry thrust the sword up to the hilt in the frozen ground — one of my inconceivable blunders, an exaggeration to stagger Hugo. Say "she sought to thrust it in the ground." In both these works you should be prepared for Scotticisms used deliberately.

I fear my stepson will not have found time to get to Paris; he was overwhelmed with occupation, and is already on his voyage back. We live here in a beautiful land, amid a beautiful and interesting people. The life is still very hard: my wife and I live in a two-roomed cottage, about three miles and six hundred and fifty feet above the sea; we have had to make the road to it; our supplies are very imperfect; in the wild weather of this (the hurricane) season we have much discomfort: one night the wind blew in our house so outrageously that we must sit in the dark; and as the sound of the rain on the roof made speech inaudible, you may imagine we found the evening long. All these things, however, are pleasant to me. You say *l'artiste inconscient* set off to travel: you do not divide me right. 0.6 of me is artist; 0.4, adventurer. First, I suppose, come letters; then adventure; and since I have indulged the second part, I think the formula begins to change: 0.55 of an artist, 0.45 of the adventurer were nearer true. And if it had not been for my small strength, I might have been a different man in all things.

Whatever you do, do not neglect to send me what you publish on Villon: I look forward to that with lively interest. I have no photograph at hand, but I will send one when I can. It would be kind if you would do the like, for I do not see much chance of our meeting in the flesh: and a name, and a handwriting, and an address, 53 and even a style? I know about as much of Tacitus, and more of Horace; it is not enough between contemporaries, such as we still are. I have just remembered another of my books, which I re-read the other day, and thought in places good — *Prince Otto*. It is not as good as either of the others; but it has one recommendation — it has female parts, so it might perhaps please better in France.

I will ask Chatto to send you, then — *Prince Otto*, *Memories and Portraits*, *Underwoods*, and *Ballads*, none of which you seem to have seen. They will be too late for the New Year: let them be an Easter present.

You must translate me soon; you will soon have better to do than to transvase the work of others. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson,

With the worst pen in the South Pacific.

To Charles Baxter

Stevenson had been indignant with an old friend at Edinburgh, who had received much kindness from his mother, for neglecting to call on her after her return from her wanderings in the Pacific.

S.S. Lübeck, *at sea* [*on the return voyage from Sydney, February 1891*].

MY DEAR CHARLES, — Perhaps in my old days I do grow irascible; "the old man virulent" has long been my pet name for myself. Well, the temper is at least all gone now; time is good at lowering these distemperatures; far better is a sharp sickness, and I am just (and scarce) afoot again after a smoking hot little malady at Sydney. And the temper being gone, I still think the same.... We have not our parents for ever; we are never very good to them; when they go and we have lost our front-file man we begin to feel all our neglects mighty sensibly. I propose a proposal. My mother is here on board with me; to-day for once I mean to make her as happy as I am able, and to do that which I know she likes. You, on the other 54 hand, go and see your father, and do ditto, and give him a real good hour or two. We shall both be glad hereafter. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Stevenson had been sharply ailing as usual at Sydney, and was now on his way back. Having received proofs of some of his *South Sea* chapters, he had begun to realise that they were not what he had hoped to make them.

[*On Board Ship between Sydney and Apia, February1891.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — The *Janet Nicoll* stuff was rather worse than I had looked for; you have picked out all that is fit to stand, bar two others (which I don't dislike) — the Port of Entry and the House of Temoana; that is for a present opinion; I may condemn these also ere I have done. By this time you should have another Marquesan letter, the worst of the lot, I think; and seven Paumotu letters, which are not far out of the vein, as I wish it; I am in hopes the Hawaiian stuff is better yet: time will show, and time will make perfect. Is something of this sort practicable for the dedication?

TERRA MARIQUE
PER PERICULA PER ARDUA
AMICAE COMITI

D.D.
AMANS VIATOR

'Tis a first shot concocted this morning in my berth: I had always before been trying it in English, which insisted on being either insignificant or fulsome: I cannot think of a better word than *comes*, there being not the shadow of a Latin book on board; yet sure there is some other. Then *viator* (though it *sounds* all right) is doubtful; it has too much, perhaps, the sense of wayfarer? Last,[55] will it mark sufficiently that I mean my wife? And first, how about blunders? I scarce wish it longer.

Have had a swingeing sharp attack in Sydney; beating the fields for two nights, Saturday and Sunday. Wednesday was brought on board, *tel quel*, a wonderful wreck; and now, Wednesday week, am a good deal picked up, but yet not quite a Samson, being still groggy afoot and vague in the head. My chess, for instance, which is usually a pretty strong game, and defies all rivalry aboard, is vacillating, devoid of resource and observation, and hitherto not covered with customary laurels. As for work, it is impossible. We shall be in the saddle before long, no doubt, and the pen once more couched. You must not expect a letter under these circumstances, but be very thankful for a note. Once at Samoa, I shall try to resume my late excellent habits, and delight you with journals, you unaccustomed, I unaccustomed; but it is never too late to mend.

It is vastly annoying that I cannot go even to Sydney without an attack; and heaven knows my life was anodyne. I only once dined with anybody; at the club with Wise; worked all morning — a terrible dead pull; a month only produced the imperfect embryos of two chapters; lunched in the boarding-house, played on my pipe; went out and did some of my messages; dined at a French restaurant, and returned to play draughts, whist, or Van John with my family. This makes a cheery life after Samoa; but it isn't what you call burning the candle at both ends, is it? (It appears to me not one word of this letter will be legible by the time I am done with it, this dreadful ink rubs off.) I have a strange kind of novel under construction; it begins about 1660 and ends 1830, or perhaps I may continue it to 1875 or so, with another life. One, two, three, four, five, six generations, perhaps seven, figure therein; two of my old stories, "Delafield" and "Shovel," are incorporated; it is to be told in the third person, with[56] some of the brevity of history, some of the detail of romance. *The Shovels of Newton French* will be the name. The idea is an old one; it was brought to birth by an accident; a friend in the islands who picked up F. Jenkin, read a part, and said: "Do you know, that's a strange book? I like it; I don't believe the public will; but I like it." He thought it was a novel! "Very well," said I, "we'll see whether the public will like it or not; they shall have the chance." — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To H. B. Baildon

The late Mr. H. Bellyse Baildon, for some time Lecturer on English Literature at the University of Vienna and afterwards at Dundee, had been an old schoolmate and fellow-aspirant in literature with Stevenson at Edinburgh. "Chalmers," of course, is the Rev. James Chalmers of Rarotonga and New Guinea already referred to above, the admirable missionary, explorer, and administrator, whom Stevenson sometimes expressed a desire to survive, for the sake only of writing his life.

Vailima, Upolu [*Spring 1891*].

MY DEAR BAILDON, — This is a real disappointment. It was so long since we had met, I was anxious to see where time had carried and stranded us. Last time we saw each other — it must have been all ten years ago, as we were new to the thirties — it was only for a moment, and now we're in the forties, and before very long we shall be in our graves. Sick and well, I have had a splendid life of it, grudge nothing, regret very little — and then only some little corners of misconduct for which I deserve hanging, [57] and must infallibly be damned — and, take it all over, damnation and all, would hardly change with any man of my time, unless perhaps it were Gordon or our friend Chalmers: a man I admire for his virtues, love for his faults, and envy for the really A1 life he has, with everything heart — my heart, I mean — could wish. It is curious to think you will read this in the grey metropolis; go the first grey, east-windy day into the Caledonian Station, if it looks at all as it did of yore: I met Satan there. And then go and stand by the cross, and remember the other one — him that went down — my brother, Robert Fergusson. It is a pity you had not made me out, and seen me as patriarch and planter. I shall look forward to some record of your time with Chalmers: you can't weary me of that fellow, he is as big as a house and far bigger than any church, where no man warms his hands. Do you know anything of Thomson? Of A — — , B — — , C — — , D — — , E — — , F — — , at all? As I write C.'s name mustard rises in my nose; I have never forgiven that weak, amiable boy a little trick he played me when I could ill afford it: I mean that whenever I think of it, some of the old wrath kindles, not that I would hurt the poor soul, if I got the world with it. And Old X — — ? Is he still afloat? Harmless bark! I gather you ain't married yet, since your sister, to whom I ask to be remembered, goes with you. Did you see a silly tale, *John Nicholson's Predicament*, or some such name, in which I made free with your home at Murrayfield? There is precious little sense in it, but it might amuse. Cassell's published it in a thing called *Yule-Tide* years ago, and nobody that ever I heard of read or has ever seen *Yule-Tide*. It is addressed to a class we never met — readers of Cassell's series and that class of conscientious chaff, and my tale was dull, though I don't recall that it was conscientious. Only, there's the house at Murrayfield and a dead body in it. Glad the *Ballads* amused you. They failed to entertain a coy 58 public, at which I wondered; not that I set much account by my verses, which are the verses of Prosator; but I do know how to tell a yarn, and two of the yarns are great. *Rahero* is for its length a perfect folk-tale: savage and yet fine, full of tailforemost morality, ancient as the granite rocks; if the historian, not to say the politician, could get that yarn into his head, he would have learned some of his ABC. But the average man at home cannot understand antiquity; he is sunk over the ears in Roman civilisation; and a tale like that of *Rahero* falls on his ears inarticulate. The Spectator said there was no psychology in it; that interested me much: my grandmother (as I used to call that able paper, and an able paper it is, and a fair one) cannot so much as observe the existence of savage psychology when it is put before it. I am at bottom a psychologist and ashamed of it; the tale seized me one-third because of its picturesque features, two-thirds because of its astonishing psychology, and the Spectator says there's none. I am going on with a lot of island work, exulting in the knowledge of a new world, "a new created world" and new men; and I am sure my income will DECLINE and FALL off; for the effort of comprehension is death to the intelligent public, and sickness to the dull.

I do not know why I pester you with all this trash, above all as you deserve nothing. I give you my warm *talofa* ("my love to you," Samoan salutation). Write me again when the spirit moves you. And some day, if I still live, make out the trip again and let us hob-a-nob with our grey pows on my verandah. — Yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

The latter part of this letter was written in the course of an expedition on which Stevenson had been invited by the American Consul, Mr. Sewall, to the neighbouring island of Tutuila. Unluckily 59 the letter breaks off short, and the only record of this trip occurs in the diary partly quoted in Mr. Balfour's *Life*, ch. xiv.

Vailima, Friday, March 19th .

MY DEAR S. C., — You probably expect that now I am back at Vailima I shall resume the practice of the diary letter. A good deal is changed. We are more; solitude does not attend me as before; the night is passed playing Van John for shells; and, what is not less important, I have just recovered from a severe illness, and am easily tired.

I will give you to-day. I sleep now in one of the lower rooms of the new house, where my wife has recently joined me. We have two beds, an empty case for a table, a chair, a tin basin, a bucket and a jug; next door in the dining-room, the carpenters camp on the floor, which is covered with their mosquito nets. Before the sun rises, at 5.45 or 5.50, Paul brings me tea, bread, and a couple of eggs; and by about six I am at work. I work in bed — my bed is of mats, no mattress, sheets, or filth — mats, a pillow, and a blanket — and put in some three hours. It was 9.5 this morning when I set off to the stream-side to my weeding; where I toiled, manuring the ground with the best enricher, human sweat, till the conch-shell was blown from our verandah at 10.30. At eleven we dine; about half-past twelve I tried (by exception) to work again, could make nothing on't, and by one was on my way to the weeding, where I wrought till three. Half-past five is our next meal, and I read Flaubert's Letters till the hour came round; dined, and then, Fanny having a cold, and I being tired, came over to my den in the unfinished house, where I now write to you, to the tune of the carpenters' voices, and by the light — I crave your pardon — by the twilight of three vile candles filtered through the medium of my mosquito bar. Bad ink being of the party, I write quite blindfold, and can only hope you may be granted to read that which I am unable to see while writing.

I said I was tired; it is a mild phrase; my back aches like toothache; when I shut my eyes to sleep, I know I shall see before them — a phenomenon to which both Fanny and I are quite accustomed — endless vivid deeps of grass and weed, each plant particular and distinct, so that I shall lie inert in body, and transact for hours the mental part of my day business, choosing the noxious from the useful. And in my dreams I shall be hauling on recalcitrants, and suffering stings from nettles, stabs from citron thorns, fiery bites from ants, sickening resistances of mud and slime, evasions of slimy roots, dead weight of heat, sudden puffs of air, sudden starts from bird-calls in the contiguous forest — some mimicking my name, some laughter, some the signal of a whistle, and living over again at large the business of my day.

Though I write so little, I pass all my hours of field-work in continual converse and imaginary correspondence. I scarce pull up a weed, but I invent a sentence on the matter to yourself; it does not get written; *autant en emportent les vents*; but the intent is there, and for me (in some sort) the companionship. To-day, for instance, we had a great talk. I was toiling, the sweat dripping from my nose, in the hot fit after a squall of rain: methought you asked me — frankly, was I happy. Happy (said I); I was only happy once; that was at Hyères; it came to an end from a variety of reasons, decline of health, change of place, increase of money, age with his stealing steps; since then, as before then, I know not what it means. But I know pleasure still; pleasure with a thousand faces, and none perfect, a thousand tongues all broken, a thousand hands, and all of them with scratching nails. High among these I place this delight of weeding out here alone by the garrulous water, under the silence of the high wood, broken by incongruous sounds of birds. And take my life all through, look at it fore and back, and upside down, — though I would very fain change myself — I would not change my circumstances, unless it were to 61 bring you here. And yet God knows perhaps this intercourse of writing serves as well; and I wonder, were you here indeed, would I commune so continually with the thought of you. I say "I wonder" for a form; I know, and I know I should not.

So far, and much further, the conversation went, while I groped in slime after viscous roots, nursing and sparing little spears of grass, and retreating (even with outcry) from the prod of the wild lime. I wonder if any one had ever the same attitude to Nature as I hold, and have held for so long? This business fascinates me like a tune or a passion; yet all the while I thrill with a strong distaste. The horror of the thing, objective and subjective, is always present to my mind; the horror of creeping things, a superstitious horror of the void and the powers about me, the horror of my own devastation and continual murders. The life of the plants comes through my finger-tips, their struggles go to my heart like supplications. I feel myself blood-boltered; then I look back on my cleared grass, and count myself an ally in a fair quarrel, and make stout my heart.

It is but a little while since I lay sick in Sydney, beating the fields about the navy and Dean Swift and Dryden's Latin hymns; judge if I love this reinvigorating climate, where I can already toil till my head swims and every string in the poor jumping Jack (as he now lies in bed) aches with a kind of yearning strain, difficult to suffer in quiescence.

As for my damned literature, God knows what a business it is, grinding along without a scrap of inspiration or a note of style. But it has to be ground, and the mill grinds exceeding slowly though not particularly small. The last two chapters have taken me considerably over a month, and they are still beneath pity. This I cannot continue, time not sufficing; and the next will just have to be worse. All the good I can express is just this; some 62 day, when style revisits me, they will be excellent matter to rewrite. Of course, my old cure of a change of work would probably answer, but I cannot take it now. The treadmill turns; and, with a kind of desperate cheerfulness, I mount the idle stair. I haven't the least anxiety about the book; unless I die, I shall find the time to make it good; but the Lord deliver me from the thought of the Letters! However, the Lord has other things on hand; and about six to-morrow, I shall resume the consideration practically, and face (as best I may) the fact of my incompetence and disaffection to the task. Toil I do not spare; but fortune refuses me success. We can do more, Whatever-his-name-was, we can deserve it. But my misdesert began long since, by the acceptation of a bargain quite unsuitable to all my methods.

To-day I have had a queer experience. My carter has from the first been using my horses for his own ends; when I left for Sydney, I put him on his honour to cease, and my back was scarce turned ere he was forfeit. I have only been waiting to discharge him; and to-day an occasion arose. I am so much *the old man virulent*, so readily stumble into anger, that I gave a deal of consideration to my bearing, and decided at last to imitate that of the late — — . Whatever he might have to say, this eminently effective controversialist maintained a frozen demeanour and a jeering smile. The frozen demeanour is beyond my reach; but I could try the jeering smile; did so, perceived its efficacy, kept in consequence my temper, and got rid of my friend, myself composed and smiling still, he white and shaking like an aspen. He could explain everything; I said it did not interest me. He said he had enemies; I said nothing was more likely. He said he was calumniated; with all my heart, said I, but there are so many liars, that I find it safer to believe 63 them. He said, in justice to himself, he must explain: God forbid I should interfere with you, said I, with the same factitious grin, but it can change nothing. So I kept my temper, rid myself of an unfaithful servant, found a method of conducting similar interviews in the future, and fell in my own liking. One thing more: I learned a fresh tolerance for the dead — — ; he too had learned — perhaps had invented — the trick of this manner; God knows what weakness, what instability of feeling, lay beneath. *Ce que c’est que de nous!* poor human nature; that at past forty I must adjust this hateful mask for the first time, and rejoice to find it effective; that the effort of maintaining an external smile should confuse and embitter a man’s soul.

To-day I have not weeded; I have written instead from six till eleven, from twelve till two; with the interruption of the interview aforesaid; a damned Letter is written for the third time; I dread to read it, for I dare not give it a fourth chance — unless it be very bad indeed. Now I write you from my mosquito curtain, to the song of saws and planes and hammers, and wood clumping on the floor above; in a day of heavenly brightness; a bird twittering near by; my eye, through the open door, commanding green meads, two or three forest trees casting their boughs against the sky, a forest-clad mountain-side beyond, and close in by the door-jamb a nick of the blue Pacific. It is March in England, bleak March, and I lie here with the great sliding doors wide open in an undershirt and p'jama trousers, and melt in the closure of mosquito bars, and burn to be out in the breeze. A few torn clouds — not white, the sun has tinged them a warm pink — swim in heaven. In which blessed and fair day, I have to make faces and speak bitter words to a man — who has deceived me, it is true — but who is poor, and older than I, and a kind of a gentleman too. On the whole, I prefer the massacre of weeds.

Sunday. — When I had done talking to you yesterday,[64] I played on my pipe till the conch sounded, then went over to the old house for dinner, and had scarce risen from table ere I was submerged with visitors. The first of these despatched, I spent the rest of the evening going over the Samoan translation of my *Bottle Imp* with Claxton the missionary; then to bed, but being upset, I suppose, by these interruptions, and having gone all day without my weeding, not to sleep. For hours I lay awake and heard the rain fall, and saw faint, far-away lightning over the sea, and wrote you long letters which I scorn to reproduce. This morning Paul was unusually early; the dawn had scarce begun when he appeared with the tray and lit my candle; and I had breakfasted and read (with indescribable sinkings) the whole of yesterday's work before the sun had risen. Then I sat and thought, and sat and better thought. It was not good enough, nor good; it was as slack as journalism, but not so inspired; it was excellent stuff misused, and the defects stood gross on it like humps upon a camel. But could I, in my present disposition, do much more with it? in my present pressure for time, were I not better employed doing another one about as ill, than making this some thousandth fraction better? Yes, I thought; and tried the new one, and behold, I could do nothing: my head swims, words do not come to me, nor phrases, and I accepted defeat, packed up my traps, and turned to communicate the failure to my esteemed correspondent. I think it possible I overworked yesterday. Well, we'll see to-morrow — perhaps try again later. It is indeed the hope of trying later that keeps me writing to you. If I take to my pipe, I know myself — all is over for the morning. Hurray, I'll correct proofs!

Pago-Pago, Wednesday. — After I finished on Sunday I passed a miserable day; went out weeding, but could not find peace. I do not like to steal my dinner, unless I have given myself a holiday in a canonical manner; and weeding after all is only fun, the amount of its utility small, and the thing capable of being done faster and nearly as well by a hired boy. In the evening Sewall came up (American consul) and proposed to take me on a malaga, which I accepted. Monday I rode down to Apia, was nearly all day fighting about drafts and money; the silver problem does not touch you, but it is (in a strange and I hope passing phase) making my situation difficult in Apia.

About eleven, the flags were all half-masted; it was old Captain Hamilton (Samasoni the natives called him) who had passed away. In the evening I walked round to the U.S. consulate; it was a lovely night with a full moon; and as I got round to the hot corner of Matautu I heard hymns in front. The balcony of the dead man's house was full of women singing; Mary (the widow, a native) sat on a chair by the doorstep, and I was set beside her on a bench, and next to Paul the carpenter; as I sat down I had a glimpse of the old captain, who lay in a sheet on his own table. After the hymn was over, a native pastor made a speech which lasted a long while; the light poured out of the door and windows; the girls were sitting clustered at my feet; it was choking hot. After the speech was ended, Mary carried me within; the captain's hands were folded on his bosom, his face and head were composed; he looked as if he might speak at any moment; I have never seen this kind of waxwork so express or more venerable; and when I went away, I was conscious of a certain envy for the man who was out of the battle. All night it ran in my head, and the next day when we sighted Tutuila, and ran into this beautiful landlocked loch of Pago Pago (whence I write), Captain 66 Hamilton's folded hands and quiet face said a great deal more to me than the scenery.

I am living here in a trader's house; we have a good table, Sewall doing things in style; and I hope to benefit by the change, and possibly get more stuff for Letters. In the meanwhile, I am seized quite *mal-à-propos* with desire to write a story, *The Bloody Wedding,* founded on fact — very possibly true, being an attempt to read a murder case — not yet months old, in this very place and house where I now write. The indiscretion is what stops me; but if I keep on feeling as I feel just now it will have to be written. Three Star Nettison, Kit Nettison, Field the Sailor, these are the main characters: old Nettison, and the captain of the man of war, the secondary. Possible scenario. Chapter I....

To Sidney Colvin

Saturday, April 18th .

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I got back on Monday night, after twenty-three hours in an open boat; the keys were lost; the consul (who had promised us a bottle of Burgundy) nobly broke open his storeroom, and we got to bed about midnight. Next morning the blessed consul promised us horses for the daybreak; forgot all about it, worthy man; set us off at last in the heat of the day, and by a short cut which caused infinite trouble, and we were not home till dinner. I was extenuated, and have had a high fever since, or should have been writing before. To-day for the first time, I risk it. Tuesday I was pretty bad; Wednesday had a fever to kill a horse; Thursday I was better, but still out of ability to do aught but read awful trash. This is the time one misses civilisation; I wished to send out for some police novels; Montépin would have about suited my frozen brain. It is a bother when all one's thought turns on one's work in some sense or other; I 67 could not even think yesterday; I took to inventing dishes by way of entertainment. Yesterday, while I lay asleep in the afternoon, a very lucky thing happened; the Chief Justice came to call; met one of our employés on the road; and was shown what I had done to the road.

"Is this the road across the island?" he asked.

"The only one," said Innes.

"And has one man done all this?"

"Three times," said the trusty Innes. "It has had to be made three times, and when Mr. Stevenson came, it was a track like what you see beyond."

"This must be put right," said the Chief Justice.

Sunday. — The truth is, I broke down yesterday almost as soon as I began, and have been surreptitiously finishing the entry to-day. For all that I was much better, ate all the time, and had no fever. The day was otherwise uneventful. I am reminded; I had another visitor on Friday; and Fanny and Lloyd, as they returned from a forest raid, met in our desert, untrodden road, first Father Didier, Keeper of the conscience of Mataafa, the rising star; and next the Chief Justice, sole stay of Laupepa, the present and unsteady star, and remember, a few days before we were close to the sick bed and entertained by the amateur physician of Tamasese, the late and sunken star. "That is the fun of this place," observed Lloyd; "everybody you meet is so important." Everybody is also so gloomy. It will come to war again, is the opinion of all the well informed — and before that to many bankruptcies; and after that, as usual, to famine. Here, under the microscope, we can see history at work.

Wednesday. — I have been very neglectful. A return to work, perhaps premature, but necessary, has used up all my possible energies, and made me acquainted with the living headache. I just jot down some of the past notabilia. Yesterday B., a carpenter, and K., my (unsuccessful) white man, were absent all morning from their work; I was working myself, where I hear every sound with 68 morbid certainty, and I can testify that not a hammer fell. Upon inquiry I found they had passed the morning making ice with our ice machine and taking the horizon with a spirit level! I had no sooner heard this than — a violent headache set in; I am a real employer of labour now, and have much of the ship captain when aroused; and if I had a headache, I believe both these gentlemen had aching hearts. I promise you, the late — — was to the front; and K., who was the most guilty, yet (in a sense) the least blameable, having the brains and character of a canary-bird, fared none the better for B.'s repartees. I hear them hard at work this morning, so the menace may be blessed. It was just after my dinner, just before theirs, that I administered my redoubtable tongue — it is really redoubtable — to these skulkers. (Paul used to triumph over Mr. J. for weeks. "I am very sorry for you," he would say; "you're going to have a talk with Mr. Stevenson when he comes home: you don't know what that is!") In fact, none of them do, till they get it. I have known K., for instance, for months; he has never heard me complain, or take notice, unless it were to praise; I have used him always as my guest, and there seems to be something in my appearance which suggests endless, ovine long-suffering! We sat in the upper verandah all evening, and discussed the price of iron roofing, and the state of the draught-horses, with Innes, a new man we have taken, and who seems to promise well.

One thing embarrasses me. No one ever seems to understand my attitude about that book; the stuff sent was never meant for other than a first state; I never meant it to appear as a book. Knowing well that I have never had one hour of inspiration since it was begun, and have only beaten out my metal by brute force and patient repetition, I hoped some day to get a "spate of style" and burnish it — fine mixed metaphor. I am now so sick that I intend, when the Letters are done and some more written that will be wanted, simply to make a book of it by 69 the pruning-knife. I cannot fight longer; I am sensible of having done worse than I hoped, worse than I feared; all I can do now is to do the best I can for the future, and clear the book, like a piece of bush, with axe and cutlass. Even to produce the MS. of this will occupy me, at the most favourable opinion, till the middle of next year; really five years were wanting, when I could have made a book; but I have a family, and — perhaps I could not make the book after all.

To W. Craibe Angus

The late Mr. Craibe Angus of Glasgow was one of the chief organisers of the Burns Exhibition in that city, and had proposed to send out to Samoa a precious copy of the *Jolly Beggars* to receive the autograph of R. L. S. and be returned for the purposes of that Exhibition. The line quoted, "But still our hearts are true," etc., should, it appears, run, "But still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland." The author of the *Canadian Boat Song* which opens thus was Hugh, twelfth Earl of Eglinton. The first quotation is of course from Burns.

Vailima, Samoa, April 1891.

DEAR MR. ANGUS, — Surely I remember you! It was W. C. Murray who made us acquainted, and we had a pleasant crack. I see your poet is not yet dead. I remember even our talk — or you would not think of trusting that invaluable *Jolly Beggars* to the treacherous posts, and the perils of the sea, and the carelessness of authors. I love the idea, but I could not bear the risk. However —

"Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle — "

it was kindly thought upon.

My interest in Burns is, as you suppose, perennial. I would I could be present at the exhibition, with the purpose of which I heartily sympathise; but the *Nancy* has not waited in vain for me, I have followed my chest, the anchor is weighed long ago, I have said my last farewell to the hills and the heather and the lynns: like Leyden,[70] I have gone into far lands to die, not stayed like Burns to mingle in the end with Scottish soil. I shall not even return like Scott for the last scene. Burns Exhibitions are all over. 'Tis a far cry to Lochow from tropical Vailima.

"But still our hearts are true, our hearts are Highland,
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides."

When your hand is in, will you remember our poor Edinburgh Robin? Burns alone has been just to his promise; follow Burns, he knew best, he knew whence he drew fire — from the poor, white-faced, drunken, vicious boy that raved himself to death in the Edinburgh madhouse. Surely there is more to be gleaned about Fergusson, and surely it is high time the task was set about. I may tell you (because your poet is not dead) something of how I feel: we are three Robins who have touched the Scots lyre this last century. Well, the one is the world's; he did it, he came off, he is for ever; but I and the other — ah! what bonds we have — born in the same city; both sickly, both pestered, one nearly to madness, one to the madhouse, with a damnatory creed; both seeing the stars and the dawn, and wearing shoe-leather on the same ancient stones, under the same pends, down the same closes, where our common ancestors clashed in their armour, rusty or bright. And the old Robin, who was before Burns and the flood, died in his acute, painful youth, and left the models of the great things that were to come; and the new, who came after, outlived his green-sickness, and has faintly tried to parody the finished work. If you will collect the strays of Robin Fergusson, fish for material, collect any last re-echoing of gossip, command me to do what you prefer — to write the preface — to write the whole if you prefer: anything, so that another monument (after Burns's) be set up to my unhappy predecessor on the causey of Auld Reekie. You will never know, nor will any man, how deep this feeling is: I believe Fergusson[71] lives in me. I do, but tell it not in Gath; every man has these fanciful superstitions, coming, going, but yet enduring; only most men are so wise (or the poet in them so dead) that they keep their follies for themselves. — I am, yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

Vailima, April 1891.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — I have to thank you and Mrs. Gosse for many mementoes, chiefly for your *Life* of your father. There is a very delicate task, very delicately done. I noted one or two carelessnesses, which I meant to point out to you for another edition; but I find I lack the time, and you will remark them for yourself against a new edition. There were two, or perhaps three, flabbinesses of style which (in your work) amazed me. Am I right in thinking you were a shade bored over the last chapters? or was it my own fault that made me think them susceptible of a more athletic compression? (The flabbinesses were not there, I think, but in the more admirable part, where they showed the bigger.) Take it all together, the book struck me as if you had been hurried at the last, but particularly hurried over the proofs, and could still spend a very profitable fortnight in earnest revision and (towards the end) heroic compression. The book, in design, subject, and general execution, is well worth the extra trouble. And even if I were wrong in thinking it specially wanted, it will not be lost; for do we not know, in Flaubert's dread confession, that "prose is never done"? What a medium to work in, for a man tired, perplexed among different aims and subjects, and spurred by the immediate need of "siller"! However, it's mine for what it's worth; and it's one of yours, the devil take it; and you know, as well as Flaubert, and as well as me, that it is *never done;* in other words, it is a torment of the pit, usually neglected 72 by the bards who (lucky beggars!) approached the Styx in measure. I speak bitterly at the moment, having just detected in myself the last fatal symptom, three blank verses in succession — and I believe, God help me, a hemistich at the tail of them; hence I have deposed the labourer, come out of hell by my private trap, and now write to you from my little place in purgatory. But I prefer hell: would I could always dig in those red coals — or else be at sea in a schooner, bound for isles unvisited: to be on shore and not to work is emptiness — suicidal vacancy.

I was the more interested in your *Life* of your father, because I meditate one of mine, or rather of my family. I have no such materials as you, and (our objections already made) your attack fills me with despair; it is direct and elegant, and your style is always admirable to me — lenity, lucidity, usually a high strain of breeding, an elegance that has a pleasant air of the accidental. But beware of purple passages. I wonder if you think as well of your purple passages as I do of mine? I wonder if you think as ill of mine as I do of yours? I wonder; I can tell you at least what is wrong with yours — they are treated in the spirit of verse. The spirit — I don't mean the measure, I don't mean you fall into bastard cadences; what I mean is that they seem vacant and smoothed out, ironed, if you like. And in a style which (like yours) aims more and more successfully at the academic, one purple word is already much; three — a whole phrase — is inadmissible. Wed yourself to a clean austerity: that is your force. Wear a linen ephod, splendidly candid. Arrange its folds, but do not fasten it with any brooch. I swear to you, in your talking robes, there should be no patch of adornment; and where the subject forces, let it force you no further than it must; and be ready with a twinkle of your pleasantry. Yours is a fine tool, and I see so well how to hold it; I wonder if you see how to hold mine? But then I am to the neck in prose, and just now in the "dark *interstylar* cave," all 73 methods and effects wooing me, myself in the midst impotent to follow any. I look for dawn presently, and a full flowing river of expression, running whither it wills. But these useless seasons, above all, when a man *must* continue to spoil paper, are infinitely weary.

We are in our house after a fashion; without furniture, 'tis true, camping there, like the family after a sale. But the bailiff has not yet appeared; he will probably come after. The place is beautiful beyond dreams; some fifty miles of the Pacific spread in front; deep woods all round; a mountain making in the sky a profile of huge trees upon our left; about us, the little island of our clearing, studded with brave old gentlemen (or ladies, or "the twa o' them") whom we have spared. It is a good place to be in; night and morning, we have Theodore Rousseaus (always a new one) hung to amuse us on the walls of the world; and the moon — this is our good season, we have a moon just now — makes the night a piece of heaven. It amazes me how people can live on in the dirty north; yet if you saw our rainy season (which is really a caulker for wind, wet, and darkness — howling showers, roaring winds, pit-blackness at noon) you might marvel how we could endure that. And we can't. But there's a winter everywhere; only ours is in the summer. Mark my words: there will be a winter in heaven — and in hell. *Cela rentre dans les procédés du bon Dieu; et vous verrez!* There's another very good thing about Vailima, I am away from the little bubble of the literary life. It is not all beer and skittles, is it? By the by, my *Ballads* seem to have been dam bad; all the crickets sing so in their crickety papers; and I have no ghost of an idea on the point myself: verse is always to me the unknowable. You might tell me how it strikes a professional bard: not that it really matters, for, of course, good or bad, I don't think I shall get into *that* galley any more. But I should like to know if you join the shrill chorus of the crickets. The crickets are the devil in all to you: ‘tis a strange thing, they seem to rejoice like a strong man in their injustice. I trust you got my letter about your Browning book. In case it missed, I wish to say again that your publication of Browning’s kind letter, as an illustration of *his* character, was modest, proper, and in radiant good taste. — In Witness whereof, etc. etc., 74

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Miss Rawlinson

The next is written to a young friend and visitor of Bournemouth days (see vol. xxiv.) on the news of her engagement to Mr. Alfred Spender.

Vailima, Apia, Samoa, April 1891.

MY DEAR MAY, — I never think of you by any more ceremonial name, so I will not pretend. There is not much chance that I shall forget you until the time comes for me to forget all this little turmoil in a corner (though indeed I have been in several corners) of an inconsiderable planet. You remain in my mind for a good reason, having given me (in so short a time) the most delightful pleasure. I shall remember, and you must still be beautiful. The truth is, you must grow more so, or you will soon be less. It is not so easy to be a flower, even when you bear a flower’s name. And if I admired you so much, and still remember you, it is not because of your face, but because you were then worthy of it, as you must still continue.

Will you give my heartiest congratulations to Mr. Spender? He has my admiration; he is a brave man; when I was young, I should have run away from the sight of you, pierced with the sense of my unfitness. He is more wise and manly. What a good husband he will have to be! And you — what a good wife! Carry your love tenderly. I will never forgive him — or you — it is in both your hands — if the face that once gladdened my heart should be changed into one sour or sorrowful.

What a person you are to give flowers! It was so I first heard of you; and now you are giving the May flower!

Yes, Skerryvore has passed; it was, for us. But I wish you could see us in our new home on the mountain, in the middle of great woods, and looking far out over the Pacific. When Mr. Spender is very rich, he must bring you round the world and let you see it, and see the old gentleman and the old lady. I mean to live quite a long while yet, and my wife must do the same, or else I couldn’t manage it; so, you see, you will have plenty of time; and it’s a pity not to see the most beautiful places, and the most beautiful people moving there, and the real stars and moon overhead, instead of the tin imitations that preside over London. I do not think my wife very well; but I am in hopes she will now have a little rest. It has been a hard business, above all for her; we lived four months in the hurricane season in a miserable house, overborne with work, ill-fed, continually worried, drowned in perpetual rain, beaten upon by wind, so that we must sit in the dark in the evenings; and then I ran away, and she had a month of it alone. Things go better now; the back of the work is broken; and we are still foolish enough to look forward to a little peace. I am a very different person from the prisoner of Skerryvore. The other day I was three-and-twenty hours in an open boat; it made me pretty ill; but fancy its not killing me half-way! It is like a fairy story that I should have recovered liberty and strength, and should go round again among my fellow-men, boating, riding, bathing, toiling hard with a wood-knife in the forest. I can wish you nothing more delightful than my fortune in life; I wish it you; and better, if the thing be possible.

Lloyd is tinkling below me on the typewriter; my wife has just left the room; she asks me to say she would have written had she been well enough, and hopes to do it still. — Accept the best wishes of your admirer,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

This letter announces (1) the arrival of Mrs. Thomas Stevenson from Sydney, to take up her abode in her son’s island home now that the conditions of life there had been made fairly comfortable; and (2) the receipt of a letter from me expressing the disappointment felt by Stevenson’s friends at home at the impersonal and even tedious character of some portions of the South Sea Letters that had reached us. As a corrective of this opinion, I may perhaps mention here that there is a certain many-voyaged master-mariner as well as master-writer — no less a person than Mr. Joseph Conrad — who does not at all share it, and prefers *In the South Seas* to *Treasure Island.*

[*Vailima*] *April 29th, ‘91.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I begin again. I was awake this morning about half-past four. It was still night, but I made my fire, which is always a delightful employment, and read Lockhart’s *Scott* until the day began to peep. It was a beautiful and sober dawn, a dove-coloured dawn, insensibly brightening to gold. I was looking at it some while over the down-hill profile of our eastern road when I chanced to glance northward, and saw with extraordinary pleasure the sea lying outspread. It seemed as smooth as glass, and yet I knew the surf was roaring all along the reef, and indeed, if I had listened, I could have heard it — and saw the white sweep of it outside Matautu.

I am out of condition still, and can do nothing, and toil to be at my pen, and see some ink behind me. I have taken up again *The High*

Woods of Ulufanua. I still think the fable too fantastic and far-fetched. But, on a re-reading, fell in love with my first chapter, and for good or evil I must finish it. It is really good, well fed with facts, true to the manners, and (for once in my works) rendered pleasing by the presence of a heroine who is pretty. Miss Uma is pretty; a fact. All my other women have been as ugly as sin, and like Falconet's horse (I have just been reading the anecdote in Lockhart), *mortes* forbye.

News: our old house is now half demolished; it is 77 to be rebuilt on a new site; now we look down upon and through the open posts of it like a bird-cage, to the woods beyond. My poor Paulo has lost his father and succeeded to thirty thousand thalers (I think); he had to go down to the consulate yesterday to send a legal paper; got drunk, of course, and is still this morning in so bemused a condition that our breakfasts all went wrong. Lafaele is absent at the deathbed of his fair spouse; fair she was, but not in deed, acting as harlot to the wreckers at work on the warships, to which society she probably owes her end, having fallen off a cliff, or been thrust off it — *inter pocula*. Henry is the same, our stand-by. In this transition stage he has been living in Apia; but the other night he stayed up, and sat with us about the chimney in my room. It was the first time he had seen a fire in a hearth; he could not look at it without smiles, and was always anxious to put on another stick. We entertained him with the fairy tales of civilisation — theatres, London, blocks in the street, Universities, the Underground, newspapers, etc., and projected once more his visit to Sydney. If we can manage, it will be next Christmas. (I see it will be impossible for me to afford a further journey *this* winter.) We have spent since we have been here about £2,500, which is not much if you consider we have built on that three houses, one of them of some size, and a considerable stable, made two miles of road some three times, cleared many acres of bush, made some miles of path, planted quantities of food, and enclosed a horse paddock and some acres of pig run; but 'tis a good deal of money regarded simply as money. K. is bosh; I have no use for him; but we must do what we can with the fellow meanwhile; he is good-humoured and honest, but inefficient, idle himself, the cause of idleness in others, grumbling, a self-excuser — all the faults in a bundle. He owes us thirty weeks' service — the wretched Paul about half as much. Henry is almost the only one of our employés who has a credit.

May 17th. — Well, am I ashamed of myself? I do not think so. I have been hammering letters ever since, and got three ready and a fourth about half through; all four will go by the mail, which is what I wish, for so I keep at least my start. Days and days of unprofitable stubbing and digging, and the result still poor as literature, left-handed, heavy, unillumined, but I believe readable and interesting as matter. It has been no joke of a hard time, and when my task was done, I had little taste for anything but blowing on the pipe. A few necessary letters filled the bowl to overflowing.

My mother has arrived, young, well, and in good spirits. By desperate exertions, which have wholly floored Fanny, her room was ready for her, and the dining-room fit to eat in. It was a famous victory. Lloyd never told me of your portrait till a few days ago; fortunately, I had no pictures hung yet; and the space over my chimney waits your counterfeit presentment. I have not often heard anything that pleased me more; your severe head shall frown upon me and keep me to the mark. But why has it not come? Have you been as forgetful as Lloyd?

18th. — Miserable comforters are ye all! I read your esteemed pages this morning by lamplight and the glimmer of the dawn, and as soon as breakfast was over, I must turn to and tackle these despised labours! Some courage was necessary, but not wanting. There is one thing at least by which I can avenge myself for my drubbing, for on one point you seem impenetrably stupid. Can I find no form of words which will at last convey to your intelligence the fact that *these letters were never meant, and are not now meant, to be other than a quarry of materials from which the book may be drawn*? There seems something incommunicable in this (to me) simple idea; I know Lloyd failed to comprehend it, I doubt if he has grasped it now; and I despair, after all these efforts, that you should ever be enlightened. Still, oblige me by reading 79 that form of words once more, and see if a light does not break. You may be sure, after the friendly freedoms of your criticism (necessary I am sure, and wholesome I know, but untimely to the poor labourer in his landslip) that mighty little of it will stand.

Our Paul has come into a fortune, and wishes to go home to the Hie Germanie. This is a tile on our head, and if a shower, which is now falling, lets up, I must go down to Apia, and see if I can find a substitute of any kind. This is, from any point of view, disgusting; above all, from that of work; for, whatever the result, the mill has to be kept turning; apparently dust, and not flour, is the proceed. Well, there is gold in the dust, which is a fine consolation, since — well, I can't help it; night or morning, I do my darndest, and if I cannot charge for merit, I must e'en charge for toil, of which I have plenty and plenty more ahead before this cup is drained; sweat and hyssop are the ingredients.

We are clearing from Carruthers' Road to the pig fence, twenty-eight powerful natives with Catholic medals about their necks, all swiping in like Trojans; long may the sport continue!

The invoice to hand. Ere this goes out, I hope to see your expressive, but surely not benignant countenance! Adieu, O culler of offensive expressions — ’and a’ to be a posy to your ain dear May!’ — Fanny seems a little revived again after her spasm of work. Our books and furniture keep slowly draining up the road, in a sad state of scatterment and disrepair; I wish the devil had had K. by his red beard before he had packed my library. Odd leaves and sheets and boards — a thing to make a bibliomaniac shed tears — are fished out of odd corners. But I am no bibliomaniac, praise Heaven, and I bear up, and rejoice when I find anything safe.

19th. — However, I worked five hours on the brute, and finished my Letter all the same, and couldn’t sleep last night by consequence. Haven’t had a bad night since I 80 don’t know when; dreamed a large handsome man (a New Orleans planter) had insulted my wife, and, do what I pleased, I could not make him fight me; and woke to find it was the eleventh anniversary of my marriage. A letter usually takes me from a week to three days; but I’m sometimes two days on a page — I was once three — and then my friends kick me. *C’est-y-bête!* I wish letters of that charming quality could be so timed as to arrive when a fellow wasn’t working at the truck in question; but, of course, that can’t be. Did not go down last night. It showered all afternoon, and poured heavy and loud all night.

You should have seen our twenty-five popés (the Samoan phrase for a Catholic, lay or cleric) squatting when the day’s work was done on the ground outside the verandah, and pouring in the rays of forty-eight eyes through the back and the front door of the dining-room, while Henry and I and the boss pope signed the contract. The second boss (an old man) wore a kilt (as usual) and a Balmoral bonnet with a little tartan edging and the tails pulled off. I told him that hat belong to my country — Sekotia; and he said, yes, that was the place that he belonged to right enough. And then all the Papists laughed till the woods rang; he was slashing away with a cutlass as he spoke.

The pictures have decidedly not come; they may probably arrive Sunday.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

The reference in the first paragraph is to a previous letter concerning private matters, in which Stevenson had remonstrated with his correspondent on what seemed to him her mistaken reasons for a certain course of conduct.

[*Vailima, May 1891.*]

MY DEAR ADELAIDE, — I will own you just did manage to tread on my gouty toe; and I beg to assure you with 81 most people I should simply have turned away and said no more. My cudgelling was therefore in the nature of a caress or testimonial.

God forbid, I should seem to judge for you on such a point; it was what you seemed to set forth as your reasons that fluttered my old Presbyterian spirit — for, mind you, I am a child of the Covenanters — whom I do not love, but they are mine after all, my father's and my mother's — and they had their merits too, and their ugly beauties, and grotesque heroisms, that I love them for, the while I laugh at them; but in their name and mine do what you think right, and let the world fall. That is the privilege and the duty of private persons; and I shall think the more of you at the greater distance, because you keep a promise to your fellow-man, your helper and creditor in life, by just so much as I was tempted to think the less of you (O not much, or I would never have been angry) when I thought you were the swallower of a (tinfoil) formula.

I must say I was uneasy about my letter, not because it was too strong as an expression of my unregenerate sentiments, but because I knew full well it should be followed by something kinder. And the mischief has been in my health. I fell sharply sick in Sydney, was put aboard the *Lübeck* pretty bad, got to Vailima, hung on a month there, and didn't pick up as well as my work needed; set off on a journey, gained a great deal, lost it again; and am back at Vailima, still no good at my necessary work. I tell you this for my imperfect excuse that I should not have written you again sooner to remove the bad taste of my last.

A road has been called Adelaide Road; it leads from the back of our house to the bridge, and thence to the garden, and by a bifurcation to the pig pen. It is thus much traversed, particularly by Fanny. An oleander, the only one of your seeds that prospered in this climate, grows there; and the name is now some week or ten 82 days applied and published. Adelaide Road leads also into the bush, to the banana patch and by a second bifurcation over the left branch of the stream to the plateau and the right hand of the gorges. In short, it leads to all sorts of good, and is, besides, in itself a pretty winding path, bound downhill among big woods to the margin of the stream.

What a strange idea, to think me a Jew-hater! Isaiah and David and Heine are good enough for me; and I leave more unsaid. Were I of Jew blood, I do not think I could ever forgive the Christians; the ghettos would get in my nostrils like mustard or lit gunpowder. Just so you, as being a child of the Presbytery, I retain — I need not dwell on that. The ascendant hand is what I feel most strongly; I am bound in and in with my forbears; were he one of mine, I should not be struck at all by Mr. Moss of Bevis Marks, I should still see behind him Moses of the Mount and the Tables and the shining face. We are all nobly born; fortunate those who know it; blessed those who remember.

I am, my dear Adelaide, most genuinely yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Write by return to say you are better, and I will try to do the same.

To Charles Baxter

The following refers again to the project of a long genealogical novel expanded from the original idea of *Henry Shovel*.

[*Vailima*] *Tuesday, 19th May ‘91.*

MY DEAR CHARLES, — I don’t know what you think of me, not having written to you at all during your illness. I find two sheets begun with your name, but that is no excuse.... I am keeping bravely; getting about better every day, and hope soon to be in my usual fettle. My books begin to come; and I fell once more on the Old 83 Bailey session papers. I have 1778, 1784, and 1786. Should you be able to lay hands on any other volumes, above all a little later, I should be very glad you should buy them for me. I particularly want *one* or *two* during the course of the Peninsular War. Come to think, I ought rather to have communicated this want to Bain. Would it bore you to communicate to that effect with the great man? The sooner I have them, the better for me. ‘Tis for *Henry Shovel*. But *Henry Shovel* has now turned into a work called *The Shovels of Newton French: including Memoirs of Henry Shovel, a Private in the Peninsular War*, which work is to begin in 1664 with the marriage of Skipper, afterwards Alderman Shovel of Bristol, Henry’s great-great-grandfather, and end about 1832 with his own second marriage to the daughter of his runaway aunt. Will the public ever stand such an opus? Gude kens, but it tickles me. Two or three historical personages will just appear: Judge Jeffreys, Wellington, Colquhoun, Grant, and I think Townsend the runner. I know the public won’t like it; let ‘em lump it then; I mean to make it good; it will be more like a saga.

Adieu. — Yours ever affectionately,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *June 1891.*

SIR, — To you, under your portrait, which is, in expression, your true, breathing self, and up to now saddens me; in time, and soon, I shall be glad to have it there; it is still only a reminder of your absence. Fanny wept when we unpacked it, and you know how little she is given to that mood; I was scarce Roman myself, but that does not count — I lift up my voice so readily. These are good compliments to the artist. I write in the midst of a 84 wreck of books, which have just come up, and have for once defied my labours to get straight. The whole floor is filled with them, and (what’s worse) most of the shelves forbye; and where they are to go to, and what is to become of the librarian, God knows. It is hot to-night, and has been airless all day, and I am out of sorts, and my work sticks, the devil fly away with it and me. We had an alarm of war since last I wrote my screeds to you, and it blew over, and is to blow on again, and the rumour goes they are to begin by killing all the whites. I have no belief in this, and should be infinitely sorry if it came to pass — I do not mean for us, that were otiose — but for the poor, deluded schoolboys, who should hope to gain by such a step.

Letter resumed, June 20th. — No diary this time. Why? you ask. I have only sent out four Letters, and two chapters of *The Wrecker*. Yes, but to get these I have written 132 pp., 66,000 words in thirty days; 2200 words a day; the labours of an elephant. God knows what it's like, and don't ask me, but nobody shall say I have spared pains. I thought for some time it wouldn't come at all. I was days and days over the first letter of the lot — days and days writing and deleting and making no headway whatever, till I thought I should have gone bust; but it came at last after a fashion, and the rest went a thought more easily, though I am not so fond as to fancy any better.

Your opinion as to the Letters as a whole is so damnatory that I put them by. But there is a "hell of a want of" money this year. And these Gilbert Island papers, being the most interesting in matter, and forming a compact whole, and being well illustrated, I did think of as a possible resource.

It would be called
Six Months in Melanesia,
Two Island Kings,
— — *Monarchies,*
Gilbert Island Kings,
— — *Monarchies,*
85
and I dare say I'll think of a better yet — and would divide thus: —

Butaritari
I A Town Asleep.
II The Three Brothers.
III Around our House.
IV A Tale of a Tapu.
V The Five Days' Festival.
VI Domestic Life — (which might be omitted, but not well, better be recast).

The King of Apemama
VII The Royal Traders.
VIII Foundation of Equator Town.
IX The Palace of Mary Warren.

X. Equator Town and the Palace.
XI. King and Commons.
XII. The Devil Work Box.
XIII. The Three Corslets.
XIV. Tail-piece; the Court upon a Journey.

I wish you to watch these closely, judging them as a whole, and treating them as I have asked you, and favour me with your damnatory advice. I look up at your portrait, and it frowns upon me. You seem to view me with reproach. The expression is excellent; Fanny wept when she saw it, and you know she is not given to the melting mood. She seems really better; I have a touch of fever again, I fancy overwork, and to-day, when I have overtaken my letters, I shall blow on my pipe. Tell Mrs. Sitwell I have been playing *Le Chant d'Amour* lately, and have arranged it, after awful trouble, rather prettily for two pipes; and it brought her before me with an effect scarce short of hallucination. I could hear her voice in every note; yet I had forgot the air entirely, and began to pipe it from notes as something new, when I was brought up with a round turn by this reminiscence. 86 We are now very much installed; the dining-room is done, and looks lovely. Soon we shall begin to photograph and send you our circumstances. My room is still a howling wilderness. I sleep on a platform in a window, and strike my mosquito bar and roll up my bedclothes every morning, so that the bed becomes by day a divan. A great part of the floor is knee-deep in books, yet nearly all the shelves are filled, alas! It is a place to make a pig recoil, yet here are my interminable labours begun daily by lamp-light, and sometimes not yet done when the lamp has once more to be lighted. The effect of pictures in this place is surprising. They give great pleasure.

June 21st. — A word more. I had my breakfast this morning at 4.30! My new cook has beaten me and (as Lloyd says) revenged all the cooks in the world. I have been hunting them to give me breakfast early since I was twenty; and now here comes Mr. Ratke, and I have to plead for mercy. I cannot stand 4.30; I am a mere fevered wreck; it is now half-past eight, and I can no more, and four hours divide me from lunch, the devil take the man! Yesterday it was about 5.30, which I can stand; day before 5, which is bad enough; to-day, I give out. It is like a London season, and as I do not take a siesta once in a month, and then only five minutes, I am being worn to the bones, and look aged and anxious.

We have Rider Haggard's brother here as a Land Commissioner; a nice kind of a fellow; indeed, all the three Land Commissioners are very agreeable.

To E. L. Burlingame

For the result of the suggestion made in the following, see Scribner's Magazine, October 1893, .

Vailima [*Summer 1891*].

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — I find among my grandfather's papers his own reminiscences of his voyage round 87 the north with Sir Walter, eighty years ago, *labuntur anni!* They are not remarkably good, but he was not a bad observer, and several touches seem to me speaking. It has occurred to me you might like them to appear in the Magazine. If you would, kindly let me know, and tell me how you would like it handled. My grandad's MS. runs to between six and seven thousand words, which I could abbreviate of anecdotes that scarce touch Sir W. Would you like this done? Would you like me to introduce the old gentleman? I had something of the sort in my mind, and could fill a few columns rather *à propos*. I give you the first offer of this, according to your request; for though it may forestall one of the interests of my biography, the thing seems to me particularly suited for prior appearance in a magazine.

I see the first number of *The Wrecker;* I thought it went lively enough; and by a singular accident, the picture is not unlike Tai-o-hae!

Thus we see the age of miracles, etc. — Yours very sincerely,

R. L. S.

Proofs for next mail.

To W. Craibe Angus

Referring again to the Burns Exhibition and to his correspondent's request for an autograph in a special copy of *The Jolly Beggars*.

[*Summer 1891.*]

DEAR MR. ANGUS, — You can use my letter as you will. The parcel has not come; pray Heaven the next post bring it safe. Is it possible for me to write a preface here? I will try if you like, if you think I must: though surely there are Rivers in Assyria. Of course you will send me sheets of the catalogue; I suppose it (the preface) need not be long; perhaps it should be rather very short? Be sure you give me your views upon these points. Also tell me what names to mention among those of your 88 helpers, and do remember to register everything, else it is not safe.

The true place (in my view) for a monument to Fergusson were the churchyard of Haddington. But as that would perhaps not carry many votes, I should say one of the two following sites: — First, either as near the site of the old Bedlam as we could get, or, second, beside the Cross, the heart of his city. Upon this I would have a fluttering butterfly, and, I suggest, the citation,

Poor butterfly, thy case I mourn.

For the case of Fergusson is not one to pretend about. A more miserable tragedy the sun never shone upon, or (in consideration of our climate) I should rather say refused to brighten. — Yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Where Burns goes will not matter. He is no local poet, like your Robin the First; he is general as the casing air. Glasgow, as the chief city of Scottish men, would do well; but for God's sake, don't let it be like the Glasgow memorial to Knox; I remember, when I first saw this, laughing for an hour by Shrewsbury clock.

R. L. S.

To H. C. Ide

The following is written to the American Land Commissioner (later Chief Justice for a term) in Samoa, whose elder daughter, then at home in the States, had been born on a Christmas Day, and consequently regarded herself as defrauded of her natural rights to a private anniversary of her own.

[*Vailima, June 19, 1891.*]

DEAR MR. IDE, — Herewith please find the Document, which I trust will prove sufficient in law. It seems to me very attractive in its eclecticism; Scots, English, and Roman law phrases are all indifferently introduced, and 89 a quotation from the works of Haynes Bayly can hardly fail to attract the indulgence of the Bench. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

I, Robert Louis Stevenson, Advocate of the Scots Bar, author of *The Master of Ballantrae* and *Moral Emblems*, stuck civil engineer, sole owner and patentee of the Palace and Plantation known as Vailima in the island of Upolu, Samoa, a British Subject, being in sound mind, and pretty well, I thank you, in body;

In consideration that Miss Annie H. Ide, daughter of H. C. Ide, in the town of Saint Johnsbury, in the county of Caledonia, in the state of Vermont, United States of America, was born, out of all reason, upon Christmas Day, and is therefore out of all justice denied the consolation and profit of a proper birthday;

And considering that I, the said Robert Louis Stevenson, have attained an age when O, we never mention it, and that I have now no further use for a birthday of any description;

And in consideration that I have met H. C. Ide, the father of the said Annie H. Ide, and found him about as white a land commissioner as I require;

Have transferred, and *do hereby transfer*, to the said Annie H. Ide, *all and whole* my rights and privileges in the thirteenth day of November, formerly my birthday, now, hereby, and henceforth, the birthday of the said Annie H. Ide, to have, hold, exercise, and enjoy the same in the customary manner, by the sporting of fine raiment, eating of rich meats, and receipt of gifts, compliments, and copies of verse, according to the manner of our ancestors;

And I direct the said Annie H. Ide to add to the said name of Annie H. Ide the name Louisa — at least in private; and I charge her to use my said birthday with moderation and humanity, *et tamquam bona filia familiæ*, the said birthday not being so young as it once was, and 90 having carried me in a very satisfactory manner since I can remember;

And in case the said Annie H. Ide shall neglect or contravene either of the above conditions, I hereby revoke the donation and transfer my rights in the said birthday to the President of the United States of America for the time being;

In witness whereof I have hereto set my hand and seal this nineteenth day of June in the year of grace eighteen hundred and ninety-one.

SEAL

Robert Louis Stevenson.
Witness, Lloyd Osbourne,
Witness, Harold Watts.

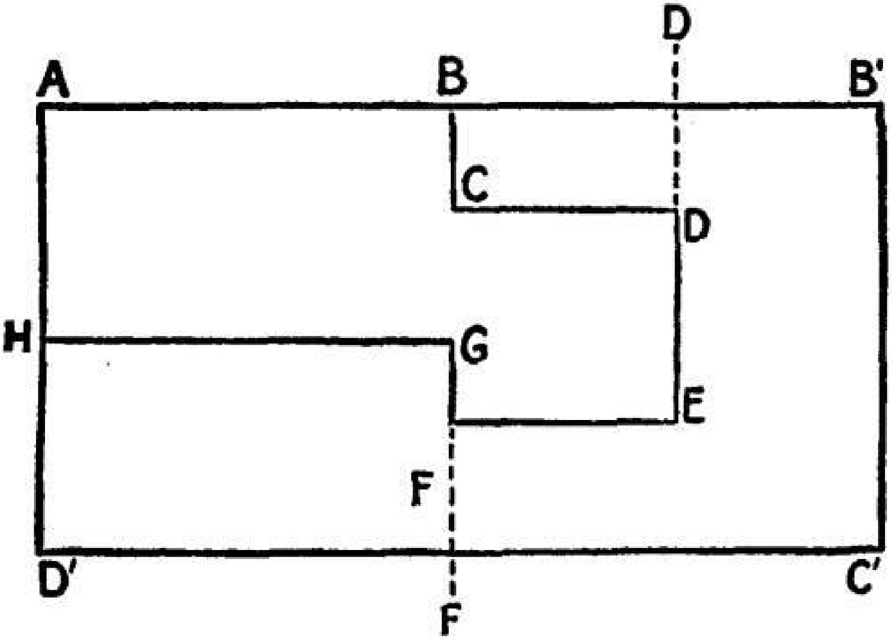
To Sidney Colvin

The misgivings herein expressed about the imminence of a native war were not realised until two years later, and the plans of defence into which Stevenson here enters with characteristic gusto were not put to the test.

[*Vailima, June and July 1891.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I am so hideously in arrears that I know not where to begin. However, here I am a prisoner in my room, unfit for work, incapable of reading with interest, and trying to catch up a bit. We have a guest here: a welcome guest: my Sydney music master, whose health broke down, and who came with his remarkable simplicity, to ask a month's lodging. He is newly married, his wife in the family way: beastly time to fall sick. I have found, by good luck, a job for him here which will pay some of his way: and in the meantime he is a pleasant guest, for he plays the flute with little sentiment but great perfection, and endears himself by his simplicity. To me, especially; I am so weary of finding people approach me with precaution, pick their 91 words, flatter, and twitter; but the muttons of the good God are not at all afraid of the lion. They take him as he comes, and he does not bite — at least not hard. This makes us a party of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, at table; deftly waited on by Mary Carter, a very nice Sydney girl, who served us at a boarding-house and has since come on — how long she will endure this exile is another story; and gauchely waited on by Faauma, the new left-handed wife of the famed Lafaele, a little creature in native dress of course and as beautiful as a bronze candlestick, so fine, clean and dainty in every limb; her arms and her little hips in particular masterpieces. The rest of the crew may be stated briefly: the great Henry Simelé, still to the front; King, of the yellow beard, rather a disappointment — I am inclined on this point to republican opinions: Ratke, a German cook, good — and Germanly bad, he don't make *my* kitchen; Paul, now working out his debts outdoor; Emma, a strange weird creature — I suspect (from her colour) a quarter white — widow of a white man, ugly, capable, a really good laundress; Java — yes, that is the name — they spell it Siava, but pronounce it, and explain it Java — her assistant, a creature I adore from her plain, wholesome, bread-and-butter beauty. An honest, almost ugly, bright, good-natured face; the rest (to my sense) merely exquisite. She comes steering into my room of a morning, like Mrs. Nickleby, with elaborate precaution; unlike her, noiseless. If I look up from my work, she is ready with an explosive smile. I generally don't, and wait to look at her as she stoops for the bellows, and trips tiptoe off again, a miracle of successful womanhood in every line. I am amused to find plain, healthy Java pass in my fancy so far before pretty young Faauma. I observed Lloyd the other day to say that Java must have been lovely "when she was young"; and I thought it an odd word, of a woman in the height of health, not yet touched with fat, though (to be just) a little slack of bust.

Our party you know: Fanny, Lloyd, my mother, Belle, and "the babe" — as we call him — Austin. We have now three instruments; Boehm flageolet, flute, and Bb clarinet; and we expect in a few days our piano. This is a great pleasure to me; the band-mastering, the playing and all. As soon as I am done with this stage of a letter, I shall return, not being allowed to play, to band-master, being engaged in an attempt to arrange an air with effect for the three pipes. And I'll go now, by jabers.



July 3rd. — A long pause: occasioned, first by some days of hard work: next by a vile quinsey — if that be the way to spell it. But to-day I must write. For we have all kinds of larks on hand. The wars and rumours of wars begin to take consistency, insomuch that we have landed the weapons this morning, and inspected the premises with a view to defence. Of course it will come to nothing; but as in all stories of massacres, the one you don't prepare for is the one that comes off. All our natives think ill of the business; none of the whites do. According to our natives the demonstration threatened for to-day or to-morrow is one of vengeance on the whites — small wonder — and if that begins — where will it stop? Anyway 93 I don't mean to go down for nothing, if I can help it; and to amuse you I will tell you our plans.

There is the house, upper story. Our weak point is of course the sides AB, AH; so we propose to place half our garrison in the space HGFD and half in the opposite corner, BB2CD. We shall communicate through the interior, there is a water-tank in the angle C, my mother and Austin are to go in the loft. The holding of only these two corners and deserting the corner C2 is for economy and communication, two doors being in the sides GF and CD; so that any one in the corner C2 could only communicate or be reinforced by exposure. Besides we are short of mattresses. Garrison: R. L. S., Lloyd, Fanny, King, Ratke — doubtful, he may go — Emma, Mary, Belle; weapons: eight revolvers and a shot gun, and swords galore; but we're pretty far gone when we come to the swords. It has been rather a lark arranging; but I find it a bore to write, and I doubt it will be cruel stale to read about, when all's over and done, as it will be ere this goes, I fancy: far more ere it reaches you.

Date unknown. — Well, nothing as yet, though I don't swear by it yet. There has been a lot of trouble, and there still is a lot of doubt as to the future; and those who sit in the chief seats, who are all excellent, pleasant creatures, are not, perhaps, the most wise of mankind. They actually proposed to kidnap and deport Mataafa; a scheme which would have loosed the avalanche at once. But some human being interfered and choked off this pleasing scheme. You ask me in yours just received, what will become of us if it comes to a war? Well, if it is a war of the old sort, nothing. It will mean a little bother, and a great deal of theft, and more amusement. But if it comes to the massacre lark, I can only answer with the Bell of Old Bow. You are to understand that, in my reading of the native character, every day that passes is a solid gain. They put in the time public speaking; so wear out their energy, develop points of difference and 94 exacerbate internal ill-feeling. Consequently, I feel less apprehension of difficulty now, by about a hundredfold. All that I stick to, is that if war begins, there are ten chances to one we shall have it bad. The natives have been scurvily used by all the white powers without exception; and they labour under the belief, of which they can't be cured, that they defeated Germany. This makes an awkward complication.

I was extremely vexed to hear you were ill again. I hope you are better. 'Tis a long time we have known each other now, to be sure. Well, well! you say you are sure to catch fever in the bush; so we do continually; but you are to conceive Samoa fever as the least formidable malady under heaven: implying only a day or so of slight headache and languor and ill humour, easily reduced by quinine or antipyrine. The hot fever I had was from over-exertion and blood poisoning, no doubt, and irritation of the bladder; it went of its own accord and with rest. I have had since a bad quinsey which knocked me rather useless for about a week, but I stuck to my work, with great difficulty and small success.

Date unknown. — But it's fast day and July, and the rude inclement depth of winter, and the thermometer was 68 this morning and a few days ago it was 63, and we have all been perishing with cold. All still seems quiet. Your counterfeit presentments are all round us: the pastel over my bed, the Dew-Smith photograph over my door, and the "celebrity" on Fanny's table. My room is now done, and looks very gay, and chromatic with its blue walls and my coloured lines of books.

To Sidney Colvin

This is the first letter in which Stevenson expresses the opinion which had been forcing itself upon him, and which he felt it his duty in the following year to express publicly in letters to the Times, of the unwisdom of the government established under the treaty 95 between the Three Powers and the incompetence of the officials appointed to carry it out.

[*Vailima*] *Sunday, Sept. 5(?), 1891.*

My Dear Colvin, — Yours from Lochinver has just come. You ask me if I am ever homesick for the Highlands and the Isles. Conceive that for the last month I have been living there between 1786 and 1850, in my grandfather's diaries and letters. I *had* to take a rest; no use talking; so I put in a month over my *Lives of the Stevensons* with great pleasure and profit and some advance; one chapter and a part drafted. The whole promises well. Chapter I. Domestic Annals. Chapter II. The Northern Lights. Chapter III. The Bell Rock. Chapter IV. A Family of Boys. Chap. V. The Grandfather. VI. Alan Stevenson. VII. Thomas Stevenson. My materials for my great-grandfather are almost null; for my grandfather copious and excellent. Name, a puzzle. *A Scottish Family*, *A Family of Engineers*, *Northern Lights*, *The Engineers of the Northern Lights: A Family History*. Advise; but it will take long. Now, imagine if I have been homesick for Barrahead and Island Glass, and Kirkwall, and Cape Wrath, and the Wells of the Pentland Firth; I could have wept.

Now for politics. I am much less alarmed; I believe the *malo* (= *raj*, government) will collapse and cease like an overlain infant, without a shot fired. They have now been months here on their big salaries — and Cedercrantz, whom I specially like as a man, has done nearly nothing, and the Baron, who is well-meaning, has done worse. They have these large salaries, and they have all the taxes; they have made scarce a foot of road; they have not given a single native a position — all to white men; they have scarce laid out a penny on Apia, and scarce a penny on the King; they have forgot they were in Samoa, or that such a thing as Samoans existed, and had eyes and some intelligence. The Chief Justice has refused to pay his customs! The President proposed to have an 96 expensive house built for himself, while the King, his master, has none! I had stood aside, and been a loyal, and, above all, a silent subject, up to then; but now I snap my fingers at their *malo*. It is damned, and I'm damned glad of it. And this is not all. Last "*Wainiu*," when I sent Fanny off to Fiji, I hear the wonderful news that the Chief Justice is going to Fiji and the Colonies to improve his mind. I showed my way of thought to his guest, Count Wachtmeister, whom I have sent to you with a letter — he will tell you all the news. Well, the Chief Justice stayed, but they said he was to leave yesterday. I had intended to go down, and see and warn him! But the President's house had come up in the meanwhile, and I let them go to their doom, which I am only anxious to see swiftly and (if it may be) bloodlessly fall.

Thus I have in a way withdrawn my unrewarded loyalty. Lloyd is down to-day with Moors to call on Mataafa; the news of the excursion made a considerable row in Apia, and both the German and the English consuls besought Lloyd not to go. But he stuck to his purpose, and with my approval. It's a poor thing if people are to give up a pleasure party for a *malo* that has never done anything for us but draw taxes, and is going to go pop, and leave us at the mercy of the identical Mataafa, whom I have not visited for more than a year, and who is probably furious.

The sense of my helplessness here has been rather bitter; I feel it wretched to see this dance of folly and injustice and unconscious rapacity go forward from day to day, and to be impotent. I was not consulted — or only by one man, and that on particular points; I did not choose to volunteer advice till some pressing occasion; I have not even a vote, for I am not a member of the municipality.

What ails you, miserable man, to talk of saving material? I have a whole world in my head, a whole new society to work, but I am in no hurry; you will 97 shortly make the acquaintance of the Island of Ulufanua, on which I mean to lay several stories; the *Bloody Wedding*, possibly the *High Woods* — (O, it's so good, the *High Woods*, but the story is craziness; that's the trouble) — a political story, the *Labour Slave*, etc. Ulufanua is an imaginary island; the name is a beautiful Samoan word for the *top* of a forest; ulu = leaves or hair, fanua = land. The ground or country of the leaves. "Ulufanua the isle of the sea," read that verse dactylically and you get the beat; the u's are like our double oo; did ever you hear a prettier word?

I do not feel inclined to make a volume of Essays, but if I did, and perhaps the idea is good — and any idea is better than the *South Seas* — here would be my choice of the Scribner articles: *Dreams*, *Beggars*, *Lantern-Bearers*, *Random Memories*. There was a paper called the *Old Pacific Capital* in Fraser, in Tulloch's time, which had merit; there were two on Fontainebleau in the Magazine of Art in Henley's time. I have no idea if they're any good; then there's the *Emigrant Train*. *Pulvis et Umbra* is in a different key, and wouldn't hang on with the rest.

I have just interrupted my letter and read through the chapter of the *High Woods* that is written, a chapter and a bit, some sixteen pages, really very fetching, but what do you wish? the story is so wilful, so steep, so silly — it's a hallucination I have outlived, and yet I never did a better piece of work, horrid, and pleasing, and extraordinarily *true*; it's sixteen pages of the South Seas; their essence. What am I to do? Lose this little gem — for I'll be bold, and that's what I think it — or go on with the rest, which I don't believe in, and don't like, and which can never make aught but a silly yarn? Make another end to it?

Ah, yes, but that's not the way I write; the whole tale is implied; I never use an effect, 98 when I can help it, unless it prepares the effects that are to follow; that's what a story consists in. To make another end, that is to make the beginning all wrong. The dénouement of a long story is nothing; it is just a "full close," which you may approach and accompany as you please — it is a coda, not an essential member in the rhythm; but the body and end of a short story is bone of the bone and blood of the blood of the beginning. Well, I shall end by finishing it against my judgment; that fragment is my Delilah. Golly, it's good. I am not shining by modesty; but I do just love the colour and movement of that piece so far as it goes.

I was surprised to hear of your fishing. And you saw the *Pharos*, thrice fortunate man; I wish I dared go home, I would ask the Commissioners to take me round for old sake's sake, and see all my family pictures once more from the Mull of Galloway to Unst. However, all is arranged for our meeting in Ceylon, except the date and the blooming pounds. I have heard of an exquisite hotel in the country, airy, large rooms, good cookery, not dear; we shall have a couple of months there, if we can make it out, and converse or — as my grandfather always said — "commune." "Communings with Mr. Kennedy as to Lighthouse Repairs." He was a fine old fellow, but a droll.

Evening. — Lloyd has returned. Peace and war were played before his eyes at heads or tails. A German was stopped with levelled guns; he raised his whip; had it fallen, we might have been now in war. Excuses were made by Mataafa himself. Doubtless the thing was done — I mean the stopping of the German — a little to show off before Lloyd. Meanwhile — — was up here, telling how the Chief Justice was really gone for five or eight weeks, and begging me to write to the Times and denounce 99 the state of affairs; many strong reasons he advanced; and Lloyd and I have been since his arrival and — — 's departure, near half an hour, debating what should be done. Cedercrantz is gone; it is not my fault; he knows my views on that point — alone of all points; — he leaves me with my mouth sealed. Yet this is a nice thing that because he is guilty of a fresh offence — his flight — the mouth of the only possible influential witness should be closed? I do not like this argument. I look like a cad, if I do in the man's absence what I could have done in a more manly manner in his presence. True; but why did he go? It is his last sin. And I, who like the man extremely — that is the word — I love his society — he is intelligent, pleasant, even witty, a gentleman — and you know how that attaches — I loathe to seem to play a base part; but the poor natives — who are like other folk, false enough, lazy enough, not heroes, not saints — ordinary men damnably misused — are they to suffer because I like Cedercrantz, and Cedercrantz has cut his lucky? This is a little tragedy, observe well — a tragedy! I may be right, I may be wrong in my judgment, but I am in treaty with my honour. I know not how it will seem to-morrow. Lloyd thought the barrier of honour insurmountable, and it is an ugly obstacle. He (Cedercrantz) will likely meet my wife three days from now, may travel back with her, will be charming if he does; suppose this, and suppose him to arrive and find that I have sprung a mine — or the nearest approach to it I could find — behind his back? My position is pretty. Yes, I am an aristocrat. I have the old petty, personal view of honour? I should blush till I die if I do this; yet it is on the cards that I may do it. So much I have written you in bed, as a man writes or talks, in a *bittre Wahl*. Now I shall sleep, and see if I am more clear. I will consult the missionaries at least — I place some reliance in M. also — or I should if he were not a partisan; but a partisan he is. There's a pity. To sleep! A fund of wisdom in the prostrate body and the 100 fed brain. Kindly observe R. L. S. in the talons of politics! 'Tis funny — 'tis sad. Nobody but these cursed idiots could have so driven me; I cannot bear idiots.

My dear Colvin, I must go to sleep; it is long past ten — a dreadful hour for me. And here am I lingering (so I feel) in the dining-room at the Monument, talking to you across the table, both on our feet, and only the two stairs to mount, and get to bed, and sleep, and be waked by dear old George — to whom I wish my kindest remembrances — next morning. I look round, and there is my blue room, and my long lines of shelves, and the door gaping on a moonless night, and no word of S. C. but his twa portraits on the wall. Good-bye, my dear fellow, and good-night. Queer place the world!

Monday. — No clearness of mind with the morning; I have no guess what I should do. 'Tis easy to say that the public duty should brush aside these little considerations of personal dignity; so it is that politicians begin, and in a month you find them rat and flatter and intrigue with brows of brass. I am rather of the old view, that a man's first duty is to these little laws; the big he does not, he never will, understand; I may be wrong about the Chief Justice and the Baron and the state of Samoa; I cannot be wrong about the vile attitude I put myself in if I blow the gaff on Cedercrantz behind his back.

Tuesday. — One more word about the *South Seas*, in answer to a question I observed I have forgotten to answer. The Tahiti part has never turned up, because it has never been written. As for telling you where I went or when, or anything about Honolulu, I would rather die; that is fair and plain. How can anybody care when or how I left Honolulu? A man of upwards of forty cannot waste his time in communicating matter of that indifference. The letters, it appears, are tedious; they would be more tedious still if I wasted my time upon such infantile and sucking-bottle details. If ever I put in any such detail, it is because it leads into something or serves as a transition. 101 To tell it for its own sake, never! The mistake is all through that I have told too much; I had not sufficient confidence in the reader, and have overfed him; and here are you anxious to learn how I — O Colvin! Suppose it had made a book, all such information is given to one glance of an eye by a map with a little dotted line upon it. But let us forget this unfortunate affair.

Wednesday. — Yesterday I went down to consult Clarke, who took the view of delay. Has he changed his mind already? I wonder: here at least is the news. Some little while back some men of Manono — what is Manono? — a Samoan rotten borough, a small isle of huge political importance, heaven knows why, where a handful of chiefs make half the trouble in the country. Some men of Manono (which is strong Mataafa) burned down the houses and destroyed the crops of some Malietoa neighbours. The President went there the other day and landed alone on the island, which (to give him his due) was plucky. Moreover, he succeeded in persuading the folks to come up and be judged on a particular day in Apia. That day they did not come; but did come the next, and, to their vast surprise, were given six months' imprisonment and clapped in gaol. Those who had accompanied them cried to them on the streets as they were marched to prison, "Shall we rescue you?" The condemned, marching in the hands of thirty men with loaded rifles, cried out "No"! And the trick was done. But it was ardently believed a rescue would be attempted; the gaol was laid about with armed men day and night; but there was some question of their loyalty, and the commandant of the forces, a very nice young beardless Swede, became nervous, and conceived a plan. How if he should put dynamite under the gaol, and in case of an attempted rescue blow up prison and all? He went to the President, who agreed; he went to the American man-of-war for the dynamite and machine, was refused, and got it at last from the Wreckers. The thing began to leak out, and there arose a 102 muttering in town. People had no fancy for amateur explosions, for one thing. For another, it did not clearly appear that it was legal; the men had been condemned to six months' prison, which they were peaceably undergoing; they had not been condemned to death. And lastly, it seemed a somewhat advanced example of civilisation to set before barbarians. The mutter in short became a storm, and yesterday, while I was down, a cutter was chartered, and the prisoners were suddenly banished to the Tokelaus. Who has changed the sentence? We are going to stir in the dynamite matter; we do not want the natives to fancy us consenting to such an outrage.

Fanny has returned from her trip, and on the whole looks better.

The *High Woods* are under way, and their name is now the *Beach of Falesá*, and the yarn is cured. I have about thirty pages of it done; it will be fifty to seventy I suppose. No supernatural trick at all; and escaped out of it quite easily; can't think why I was so stupid for so long. Mighty glad to have Fanny back to this "Hell of the South Seas," as the German Captain called it. What will Cedercrantz think when he comes back? To do him justice, had he been here, this Manono hash would not have been.

Here is a pretty thing. When Fanny was in Fiji all the Samoa and Tokelau folks were agog about our "flash" house; but the whites had never heard of it.

Robert Louis Stevenson,
Author of *The Beach of Falesá*.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*], *Sept. 28, 1891.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Since I last laid down my pen, I have written and rewritten *The Beach of Falesá*; something like sixty thousand words of sterling domestic fiction (the story, you will understand, is only half that 103 length); and now I don't want to write any more again for ever, or feel so; and I've got to overhaul it once again to my sorrow. I was all yesterday revising, and found a lot of slacknesses and (what is worse in this kind of thing) some literaryisms. One of the puzzles is this: It is a first person story — a trader telling his own adventure in an island. When I began I allowed myself a few liberties, because I was afraid of the end; now the end proved quite easy, and could be done in the pace; so the beginning remains about a quarter tone out (in places); but I have rather decided to let it stay so. The problem is always delicate; it is the only thing that worries me in first person tales, which otherwise (quo' Alan) "set better wi' my genius." There is a vast deal of fact in the story, and some pretty good comedy. It is the first realistic South Sea story; I mean with real South Sea character and details of life. Everybody else who has tried, that I have seen, got carried away by the romance, and ended in a kind of sugar candy sham epic, and the whole effect was lost — there was no etching, no human grin, consequently no conviction. Now I have got the smell and look of the thing a good deal. You will know more about the South Seas after you have read my little tale than if you had read a library. As to whether any one else will read it, I have no guess. I am in an off time, but there is just the possibility it might make a hit; for the yarn is good and melodramatic, and there is quite a love affair — for me; and Mr. Wiltshire (the narrator) is a huge lark, though I say it. But there is always the exotic question, and everything, the life, the place, the dialects — trader's talk, which is a strange conglomerate of literary expressions and English and American slang, and Beach de Mar, or native English, — the very trades and hopes and fears of the characters, are all novel, and may be found unwelcome to that great, hulking, bullering whale, the public.

Since I wrote, I have been likewise drawing up a 104 document to send in to the President; it has been dreadfully delayed, not by me, but to-day they swear it will be sent in. A list of questions about the dynamite report are herein laid before him, and considerations suggested why he should answer.

October 5th. — Ever since my last snatch I have been much chivied about over the President business; his answer has come, and is an evasion accompanied with schoolboy insolence, and we are going to try to answer it. I drew my answer and took it down yesterday; but one of the signatories wants another paragraph added, which I have not yet been able to draw, and as to the wisdom of which I am not yet convinced.

Next day, Oct. 7th the right day. — We are all in rather a muddled state with our President affair. I do loathe politics, but at the same time, I cannot stand by and have the natives blown in the air treacherously with dynamite. They are still quiet; how long this may continue I do not know, though of course by mere prescription the Government is strengthened, and is probably insured till the next taxes fall due. But the unpopularity of the whites is growing. My native overseer, the great Henry Simelé, announced to-day that he was “weary of whites upon the beach. All too proud,” said this veracious witness. One of the proud ones had threatened yesterday to cut off his head with a bush knife! These are “native outrages”; honour bright, and setting theft aside, in which the natives are active, this is the main stream of irritation. The natives are generally courtly, far from always civil, but really gentle, and with a strong sense of honour of their own, and certainly quite as much civilised as our dynamiting President.

We shall be delighted to see Kipling. I go to bed 105 usually about half-past eight, and my lamp is out before ten; I breakfast at six. We may say roughly we have no soda water on the island, and just now truthfully no whisky. I *have* heard the chimes at midnight; now no more, I guess. *But* — Fanny and I, as soon as we can get coins for it, are coming to Europe, not to England: I am thinking of Royat. Bar wars. If not, perhaps the Apennines might give us a mountain refuge for two months or three in summer. How is that for high? But the money must be all in hand first.

October 13th. — How am I to describe my life these last few days? I have been wholly swallowed up in politics, a wretched business, with fine elements of farce in it too, which repay a man in passing, involving many dark and many moonlight rides, secret counsels which are at once divulged, sealed letters which are read aloud in confidence to the neighbours, and a mass of fudge and fun, which would have driven me crazy ten years ago, and now makes me smile.

On Friday, Henry came and told us he must leave and go to "my poor old family in Savaii"; why? I do not quite know — but, I suspect, to be tattooed — if so, then probably to be married, and we shall see him no more. I told him he must do what he thought his duty; we had him to lunch, drank his health, and he and I rode down about twelve. When I got down, I sent my horse back to help bring down the family later. My own afternoon was cut out for me; my last draft for the President had been objected to by some of the signatories. I stood out, and one of our small number accordingly refused to sign. Him I had to go and persuade, which went off very well after the first hottish moments; you have no idea how stolid my temper is now. By about five the thing was done; and we sat down to dinner at the Chinaman's — the Verrey or Doyen of Apia — Gurr and I at each end as hosts; Gurr's wife — Fanua, late maid of the village; her (adopted) father and mother, Seumanu and 106 Faatulia, Fanny, Belle, Lloyd, Austin, and Henry Simelé, his last appearance. Henry was in a kilt of grey shawl, with a blue jacket, white shirt, and black necktie, and looked like a dark genteel guest in a Highland shooting-box. Seumanu (opposite Fanny, next G.) is chief of Apia, a rather big gun in this place, looking like a large, fatted, military Englishman, bar the colour. Faatulia, next me, is a bigger chief than her husband. Henry is a chief too — his chief name, Iiga (Ee-eeng-a), he has not yet "taken" because of his youth. We were in fine society, and had a pleasant meal-time, with lots of fun. Then to the Opera — I beg your pardon, I mean the Circus. We occupied the first row in the reserved seats, and there in the row behind were all our friends — Captain Foss and his Captain-Lieutenant, three of the American officers, very nice fellows, the Dr., etc., so we made a fine show of what an embittered correspondent of the local paper called "the shoddy aristocracy of Apia"; and you should have seen how we carried on, and how I clapped, and Captain Foss hollered "*wunderschön!*" and threw himself forward in his seat, and how we all in fact enjoyed ourselves like school-children, Austin not a shade more than his neighbours. Then the Circus broke up, and the party went home, but I stayed down, having business on the morrow.

Yesterday, October 12th, great news reaches me, and Lloyd and I, with the mail just coming in, must leave all, saddle, and ride down. True enough, the President had resigned! Sought to resign his presidency of the council, and keep his advisership to the King; given way to the consuls' objections and resigned all — then fell out with them about the disposition of the funds, and was now trying to resign from his resignation! Sad little President, so trim to look at, and I believe so kind to his little wife! Not only so, but I meet Dunnet on the beach. Dunnet calls me in consultation, and we make with infinite difficulty a draft of a petition to the King.... 107 Then to dinner at Moors's, a very merry meal, interrupted before it was over by the arrival of the committee. Slight sketch of procedure agreed upon, self appointed spokesman, and the deputation sets off. Walk all through Matafele, all along Mulinuu, come to the King's house; he has verbally refused to see us in answer to our letter, swearing he is gasegase (chief sickness, not common man's) and indeed we see him inside in bed. It is a miserable low house, better houses by the dozen in the little hamlet (Tanugamanono) of bushmen on our way to Vailima; and the President's house in process of erection just opposite! We are told to return to-morrow; I refuse; and at last we are very sourly received, sit on the mats, and I open out, through a very poor interpreter, and sometimes hampered by unacceptable counsels from my backers. I can speak fairly well in a plain way now. C. asked me to write out my harangue for him this morning; I have done so, and couldn't get it near as good. I suppose (talking and interpreting) I was twenty minutes or half an hour on the deck; then his majesty replied in the dying whisper of a big chief; a few words of rejoinder (approving), and the deputation withdrew, rather well satisfied.

A few days ago this intervention would have been a deportable offence; not now, I bet; I would like them to try. A little way back along Mulinuu, Mrs. Gurr met us with her husband's horse; and he and she and Lloyd and I rode back in a heavenly moonlight. Here ends a chapter in the life of an island politician! Catch me at it again; 'tis easy to go in, but it is not a pleasant trade. I have had a good team, as good as I could get on the beach; but what trouble even so, and what fresh troubles shaping. But I have on the whole carried all my points; I believe all but one, and on that (which did not concern me) I had no right to interfere. I am sure you would be amazed if you knew what a good hand I am at keeping my temper, talking people over, and giving reasons which are not my reasons, but calculated for the meridian of 108 the particular objection; so soon does falsehood await the politician in his whirling path.

To Henry James

Stevenson had again been reading Mr. James's *Lesson of the Master*; Adela Chart is the heroine of the second story in that collection, called *The Marriages*.

[*Vailima, October 1891.*]

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES, — From this perturbed and hunted being expect but a line, and that line shall be but a whoop for Adela. O she's delicious, delicious; I could live and die with Adela — die, rather the better of the two; you never did a straighter thing, and never will.

David Balfour, second part of *Kidnapped*, is on the stocks at last; and is not bad, I think. As for *The Wrecker*, it's a machine, you know — don't expect aught else — a machine, and a police machine; but I believe the end is one of the most genuine butcheries in literature; and we point to our machine with a modest pride, as the only police machine without a villain. Our criminals are a most pleasing crew, and leave the dock with scarce a stain upon their character.

What a different line of country to be trying to draw Adela, and trying to write the last four chapters of *The Wrecker*! Heavens, it's like two centuries; and ours is such rude, transpontine business, aiming only at a certain fervour of conviction and sense of energy and violence in the men; and yours is so neat and bright and of so exquisite a surface! Seems dreadful to send such a book to such an author; but your name is on the list. And we do modestly ask you to consider the chapters on the *Norah Creina* with the study of Captain Nares, and the forementioned last four, with their brutality of substance and the curious (and perhaps unsound) technical manœuvre of running the story together to a point as we go 109 along, the narrative becoming more succinct and the details fining off with every page. — Sworn affidavit of

R. L. S.

No person now alive has beaten Adela: I adore Adela and her maker. Sic subscrib.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

A Sublime Poem to follow.

Adela, Adela, Adela Chart,
What have you done to my elderly heart?
Of all the ladies of paper and ink
I count you the paragon, call you the pink.
The word of your brother depicts you in part:
“You raving maniac!” Adela Chart;
But in all the asylums that cumber the ground,
So delightful a maniac was ne'er to be found.
I pore on you, dote on you, clasp you to heart,
I laud, love, and laugh at you, Adela Chart,
And thank my dear maker the while I admire
That I can be neither your husband nor sire.
Your husband's, your sire's were a difficult part;
You're a byway to suicide, Adela Chart;
But to read of, depicted by exquisite James,
O, sure you're the flower and quintessence of dames.

R. L. S.

Eructavit cor meum
My heart was inditing a goodly matter about Adela Chart.
Though oft I've been touched by the volatile dart,
To none have I grovelled but Adela Chart,
There are passable ladies, no question, in art —
But where is the marrow of Adela Chart?
I dreamed that to Tyburn I passed in the cart —
I dreamed I was married to Adela Chart:
From the first I awoke with a palpable start,
The second dumbfoundered me, Adela Chart!

Another verse bursts from me, you see; no end to the violence of the Muse.

To E. L. Burlingame

[*Vailima*], *October 8th, 1891.*

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — All right, you shall have the *Tales of my Grandfather* soon, but I guess we'll try and finish off *The Wrecker* first. *A propos* of whom, please send some advanced sheets to Cassell's — away ahead of you — so that they may get a dummy out.

Do you wish to illustrate *My Grandfather*? He mentions as excellent a portrait of Scott by Basil Hall's brother. I don't think I ever saw this engraved; would it not, if you could get track of it, prove a taking embellishment? I suggest this for your consideration and inquiry. A new portrait of Scott strikes me as good. There is a hard, tough, constipated old portrait of my grandfather hanging in my aunt's house, Mrs. Alan Stevenson, 16 St. Leonard's Terrace, Chelsea, which has never been engraved — the better portrait, Joseph's bust, has been reproduced, I believe, twice — and which, I am sure, my aunt would let you have a copy of. The plate could be of use for the book when we get so far, and thus to place it in the Magazine might be an actual saving.

I am swallowed up in politics for the first, I hope for the last, time in my sublunary career. It is a painful, thankless trade; but one thing that came up I could not pass in silence. Much drafting, addressing, deputationising has eaten up all my time, and again (to my contrition) 111 I leave you Wreckerless. As soon as the mail leaves I tackle it straight. — Yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To E. L. Burlingame

[*Vailima, October 1891.*]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — The time draws nigh, the mail is near due, and I snatch a moment of collapse so that you may have at least some sort of a scratch of note along with the

\ end
\ of
\ *The*
\ *Wrecker*.Hurray!

which I mean to go herewith. It has taken me a devil of a pull, but I think it's going to be ready. If I did not know you were on the stretch waiting for it and trembling for your illustrations, I would keep it for another finish; but things being as they are, I will let it go the best way I can get it. I am now within two pages of the end of Chapter XXV., which is the last chapter, the end with its gathering up of loose threads, being the dedication to Low, and addressed to him; this is my last and best expedient for the knotting up of these loose cards. 'Tis possible I may not get that finished in time, in which case you'll receive only Chapters XXII. to XXV. by this mail, which is all that can be required for illustration.

I wish you would send me *Memoirs of Baron Marbot* (French); *Introduction to the Study of the History of Language*, Strong, Logeman & Wheeler; *Principles of Psychology*, William James; Morris & Magnusson's *Saga Library*, any volumes that are out; George Meredith's *One of our Conquerors*; *Là Bas*, by Huysmans (French); O'Connor Morris's *Great Commanders of Modern Times*; *Life's Handicap*, by Kipling; of Taine's *Origines de la 112 France Contemporaine*, I have only as far as *la Révolution*, vol. iii.; if another volume is out, please add that. There is for a book-box.

I hope you will like the end; I think it is rather strong meat. I have got into such a deliberate, dilatory, expansive turn, that the effort to compress this last yarn was unwelcome; but the longest yarn has to come to an end some time. Please look it over for carelessnesses, and tell me if it had any effect upon your jaded editorial mind. I'll see if ever I have time to add more.

I add to my book-box list Adams' *Historical Essays*; the Plays of A. W. Pinero — all that have appeared, and send me the rest in course as they do appear; *Noughts and Crosses* by Q.; Robertson's *Scotland under her Early Kings*.

Sunday. — The deed is done, didst thou not hear a noise? "The end" has been written to this endless yarn, and I am once more a free man. What will he do with it?

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *Monday, October 24th.*

MY DEAR CARTHEW, — See what I have written, but it's Colvin I'm after — I have written two chapters, about thirty pages of *Wrecker* since the mail left, which must be my excuse, and the bother I've had with it is not to be imagined; you might have seen me the day before yesterday weighing British sov.'s and Chili dollars to arrange my treasure chest. And there was such a calculation, not for that only, but for the ship's position and distances when — but I am not going to tell you the yarn — and then, as my arithmetic is particularly lax, Lloyd had to go over all my calculations; and then, as I had [113] changed the amount of money, he had to go over all *his* as to the amount of the lay; and altogether, a bank could be run with less effusion of figures than it took to shore up a single chapter of a measly yarn. However, it's done, and I have but one more, or at the outside two, to do, and I am Free! and can do any damn thing I like.

Before falling on politics, I shall give you my day. Awoke somewhere about the first peep of day, came gradually to, and had a turn on the verandah before 5.55, when "the child" (an enormous Wallis Islander) brings me an orange; at 6, breakfast; 6.10, to work; which lasts till, at 10.30, Austin comes for his history lecture; this is rather dispiriting, but education must be gone about in faith — and charity, both of which pretty nigh failed me to-day about (of all things) Carthage; 11, luncheon; after luncheon in my mother's room, I read Chapter XXIII. of *The Wrecker*, then Belle, Lloyd, and I go up and make music furiously till about 2 (I suppose), when I turn into work again till 4; fool from 4 to half-past, tired out and waiting for the bath hour; 4.30, bath; 4.40, eat two heavenly mangoes on the verandah, and see the boys arrive with the pack-horses; 5, dinner; smoke, chat on verandah, then hand of cards, and at last at 8 come up to my room with a pint of beer and a hard biscuit, which I am now consuming, and as soon as they are consumed I shall turn in.

Such are the innocent days of this ancient and outworn sportsman; to-day there was no weeding, usually there is however, edged in somewhere. My books for the moment are a crib to Phædo, and the second book of Montaigne; and a little while back I was reading Frederic Harrison, *Choice of Books*, etc. — very good indeed, a great deal of sense and knowledge in the volume, and some very true stuff, *contra* Carlyle, about the eighteenth century. A hideous idea came over me that perhaps Harrison is now getting *old*. Perhaps you are. Perhaps I am. Oh, this infidelity must be stared firmly down. [114] I am about twenty-three — say twenty-eight; you about thirty, or, by'r lady, thirty-four; and as Harrison belongs to the same generation, there is no good bothering about him.

Here has just been a fine alert; I gave my wife a dose of chlorodyne. "Something wrong," says she. "Nonsense," said I. "Embrocation," said she. I smelt it, and — it smelt very funny. "I think it's just gone bad, and to-morrow will tell." Proved to be so.

Wednesday. — History of Tuesday. — Woke at usual time, very little work, for I was tired, and had a job for the evening — to write parts for a new instrument, a violin. Lunch, chat, and up to my place to practise; but there was no practising for me — my flageolet was gone wrong, and I had to take it all to pieces, clean it, and put it up again. As this is a most intricate job — the thing dissolves into seventeen separate members, most of these have to be fitted on their individual springs as fine as needles, and sometimes two at once with the springs shoving different ways — it took me till two. Then Lloyd and I rode forth on our errands; first to Motootua, where we had a really instructive conversation on weeds and grasses. Thence down to Apia, where we bought a fresh bottle of chlorodyne and conversed on politics.

My visit to the King, which I thought at the time a particularly nugatory and even schoolboy step, and only consented to because I had held the reins so tight over my little band before, has raised a deuce of a row — new proclamation, no one is to interview the sacred puppet without consuls' permission, two days' notice, and an approved interpreter — read (I suppose) spy. Then back; I should have said I was trying the new horse; a tallish piebald, bought from the circus; he proved steady and safe, but in very bad condition, and not so much the wild Arab steed of the desert as had been supposed. The height of his back, after commodious Jack, astonished me, and I had a great consciousness of exercise and florid 115 action, as I posted to his long, emphatic trot. We had to ride back easy; even so he was hot and blown; and when we set a boy to lead him to and fro, our last character for sanity perished. We returned just neat for dinner; and in the evening our violinist arrived, a young lady, no great virtuoso truly, but plucky, industrious, and a good reader; and we played five pieces with huge amusement, and broke up at nine. This morning I have read a splendid piece of Montaigne, written this page of letter, and now turn to *The Wrecker*.

Wednesday. — November 16th or 17th — and I am ashamed to say mail day. *The Wrecker* is finished, that is the best of my news; it goes by this mail to Scribner's; and I honestly think it a good yarn on the whole and of its measly kind. The part that is genuinely good is Nares, the American sailor; that is a genuine figure; had there been more Nares it would have been a better book; but of course it didn't set up to be a book, only a long tough yarn with some pictures of the manners of to-day in the greater world — not the shoddy sham world of cities, clubs, and colleges, but the world where men still live a man's life. The worst of my news is the influenza; Apia is devastate; the shops closed, a ball put off, etc. As yet we have not had it at Vailima, and, who knows? we may escape. None of us go down, but of course the boys come and go.

Your letter had the most wonderful "I told you so" I ever heard in the course of my life. Why, you madman, I wouldn't change my present installation for any post, dignity, honour, or advantage conceivable to me. It fills the bill; I have the loveliest time. And as for wars and rumours of wars, you surely know enough of me to be aware that I like that also a thousand times better than decrepit peace in Middlesex? I do not quite like politics; I am too aristocratic, I fear, for that. God knows I don't care who I chum with; perhaps like sailors best; but to go round and sue and sneak to keep a crowd 116 together — never. My imagination, which is not the least damped by the idea of having my head cut off in the bush, recoils aghast from the idea of a life like Gladstone's, and the shadow of the newspaper chills me to the bone. Hence my late eruption was interesting, but not what I like. All else suits me in this (killed a mosquito) A1 abode.

About politics. A determination was come to by the President that he had been an idiot; emissaries came to Gurr and me to kiss and be friends. My man proposed I should have a personal interview; I said it was quite useless, I had nothing to say; I had offered him the chance to inform me, had pressed it on him, and had been very unpleasantly received, and now "Time was." Then it was decided that I was to be made a culprit against Germany; the German Captain — a delightful fellow and our constant visitor — wrote to say that as "a German officer" he could not come even to say farewell. We all wrote back in the most friendly spirit, telling him (politely) that some of these days he would be sorry, and we should be delighted to see our friend again. Since then I have seen no German shadow.

Mataafa has been proclaimed a rebel; the President did this act, and then resigned. By singular good fortune, Mataafa has not yet moved; no thanks to our idiot governors. They have shot their bolt; they have made a rebel of the only man (*to their own knowledge, on the report of their own spy*) who held the rebel party in check; and having thus called on war to fall, they can do no more, sit equally "expertes" of *vis* and counsel, regarding their handiwork. It is always a cry with these folks that he (Mataafa) had no ammunition. I always said it would be found; and we know of five boat-loads that have found their way to Malie already. Where there are traders, there will be ammunition; aphorism by R. L. S.

Now what am I to do next?

Lives of the Stevensons? *Historia Samoae*? A History 117 for Children? Fiction? I have had two hard months at fiction; I want a change. Stevensons? I am expecting some more material; perhaps better wait. Samoa? rather tempting; might be useful to the islands — and to me; for it will be written in admirable temper; I have never agreed with any party, and see merits and excuses in all; should do it (if I did) very slackly and easily, as if half in conversation. History for

Children? This flows from my lessons to Austin; no book is any good. The best I have seen is Freeman's *Old English History*; but his style is so rasping, and a child can learn more, if he's clever. I found my sketch of general Aryan history, given in conversation, to have been practically correct — at least what I mean is, Freeman had very much the same stuff in his early chapters, only not so much, and I thought not so well placed; and the child remembered some of it. Now the difficulty is to give this general idea of main place, growth, and movement; it is needful to tack it on a yarn. Now Scotch is the only history I know; it is the only history reasonably represented in my library; it is a very good one for my purpose, owing to two civilisations having been face to face throughout — or rather Roman civilisation face to face with our ancient barbaric life and government, down to yesterday, to 1750 anyway. But the *Tales of a Grandfather* stand in my way; I am teaching them to Austin now, and they have all Scott's defects and all Scott's hopeless merit. I cannot compete with that; and yet, so far as regards teaching History, how he has missed his chances! I think I'll try; I really have some historic sense, I feel that in my bones. Then there's another thing. Scott never knew the Highlands; he was always a Borderer. He has missed that whole, long, strange, pathetic story of our savages, and, besides, his style is not very perspicuous to childhood. Gad, I think I'll have a flutter. Buridan's Ass! Whither to go, what to attack. Must go to other letters; shall add to this, if I have time.

To W. Craibe Angus

Vailima, Samoa, November 1891.

MY DEAR MR. ANGUS, — Herewith the invaluable sheets. They came months after your letter, and I trembled; but here they are, and I have scrawled my vile name on them, and "thocht shame" as I did it. I am expecting the sheets of your catalogue, so that I may attack the preface. Please give me all the time you can. The sooner the better; you might even send me early proofs as they are sent out, to give me more incubation. I used to write as slow as judgment; now I write rather fast; but I am still "a slow study," and sit a long while silent on my eggs. Unconscious thought, there is the only method: macerate your subject, let it boil slow, then take the lid off and look in — and there your stuff is, good or bad. But the journalist's method is the way to manufacture lies; it is will-worship — if you know the luminous quaker phrase; and the will is only to be brought in the field for study and again for revision. The essential part of work is not an act, it is a state.

I do not know why I write you this trash.

Many thanks for your handsome dedication. I have not yet had time to do more than glance at Mrs. Begg; it looks interesting. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Miss Annie H. Ide

Vailima, Samoa [*November 1891*].

MY DEAR LOUISA, — Your picture of the church, the photograph of yourself and your sister, and your very witty and pleasing letter, came all in a bundle, and made me feel I had my money’s worth for that birthday. I am now, I must be, one of your nearest relatives; exactly 119 what we are to each other, I do not know, I doubt if the case has ever happened before — your papa ought to know, and I don’t believe he does; but I think I ought to call you in the meanwhile, and until we get the advice of counsel learned in the law, my name-daughter. Well, I was extremely pleased to see by the church that my name-daughter could draw; by the letter, that she was no fool; and by the photograph, that she was a pretty girl, which hurts nothing. See how virtues are rewarded! My first idea of adopting you was entirely charitable; and here I find that I am quite proud of it, and of you, and that I chose just the kind of name-daughter I wanted. For I can draw too, or rather I mean to say I could before I forgot how; and I am very far from being a fool myself, however much I may look it; and I am as beautiful as the day, or at least I once hoped that perhaps I might be going to be. And so I might. So that you see we are well met, and peers on these important points. I am very glad also that you are older than your sister. So should I have been, if I had had one. So that the number of points and virtues which you have inherited from your name-father is already quite surprising.

I wish you would tell your father — not that I like to encourage my rival — that we have had a wonderful time here of late, and that they are having a cold day on Mulinuu, and the consuls are writing reports, and I am writing to the Times, and if we don’t get rid of our friends this time I shall begin to despair of everything but my name-daughter.

You are quite wrong as to the effect of the birthday on your age. From the moment the deed was registered (as it was in the public press with every solemnity), the 13th of November became your own *and only* birthday, and you ceased to have been born on Christmas Day. Ask your father: I am sure he will tell you this is sound law. You are thus become a month and twelve days younger than you were, but will go on growing older for 120 the future in the regular and human manner from one 13th November to the next. The effect on me is more doubtful; I may, as you suggest, live for ever; I might, on the other hand, come to pieces like the one-horse shay at a moment’s notice; doubtless the step was risky, but I do not the least regret that which enables me to sign myself your revered and delighted name-father,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

[*Vailima, November 1891.*]

DEAR CHARLES, — [After dealing with some matters of business] I believe that's a'. By this time, I suppose you will have heard from McClure, and the *Beach of Falesá* will be decided on for better for worse. The end of *The Wrecker* goes by this mail, an awfae relief. I am now free and can do what I please. What do I please? I kenna. I'll bide a wee. There's a child's history in the wind; and there's my grandfather's life begun; and there's a histry of Samoa in the last four or five years begun — there's a kind of sense to this book; it may help the Samoans, it may help me, for I am bound on the altar here for anti-Germanism. Then there's *The Pearl Fisher* about a quarter done; and there's various short stories in various degrees of incompleteness. De'il, there's plenty grist; but the mill's unco slaw! To-morrow or next day, when the mail's through, I'll attack one or other, or maybe something else. All these schemes begin to laugh at me, for the day's far through, and I believe the pen grows heavy. However, I believe *The Wrecker* is a good yarn of its poor sort, and it is certainly well nourished with facts; no realist can touch me there; for by this time I do begin to know something of life in the XIXth century, which no novelist either in France or England seems to know much of. You must have great larks over masonry.[121] You're away up in the ranks now and (according to works that I have read) doubtless design assassinations. But I am an outsider; and I have a certain liking for a light unto my path which would deter me from joining the rank and file of so vast and dim a confraternity. At your altitude it becomes (of course) amusing and perhaps useful. Yes, I remember the L.J.R., and the constitution, and my homily on Liberty, and yours on Reverence, which was never written — so I never knew what reverence was. I remember I wanted to write Justice also; but I forget who had the billet. My dear papa was in a devil of a taking; and I had to go and lunch at Ferrier's in a strangely begrutten state, which was *infra dig.* for a homilist on liberty. It was about four, I suppose, that we met in the Lothian Road, — had we the price of two bitters between us? questionable!

Your bookseller (I have lost his letter, I mean the maid has, arranging my room, and so have to send by you) wrote me a letter about Old Bailey Papers. Gosh, I near swarfed; dam'd, man, I near had dee'd o't. It's only yin or twa volumes I want; say 500 or 1000 pages of the stuff; and the worthy man (much doubting) proposed to bury me in volumes. Please allay his rage, and apologise that I have not written him direct. His note was civil and purposelike. And please send me a copy of Henley's *Book of Verses*; mine has disappeared.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Nov. 25th, 1891.

MY DEAR COLVIN, MY DEAR COLVIN, — I wonder how often I'm going to write it. In spite of the loss of three days, as I have to tell, and a lot of weeding and cacao planting, I have finished since the mail left four chapters, 122 forty-eight pages of my Samoa history. It is true that the first three had been a good deal drafted two years ago, but they had all to be written and re-written, and the fourth chapter is all new. Chapter I. Elements of Discord — Native. II. Elements of Discord — Foreign. III. The Success of Laupepa. IV. Brandeis. V. Will probably be called "The Rise of Mataafa." VI. *Furor Consularis* — a devil of a long chapter. VII. Stuebel the Pacificator. VIII. Government under the Treaty of Berlin. IX. Practical Suggestions. Say three-sixths of it are done, maybe more; by this mail five chapters should go, and that should be a good half of it; say sixty pages. And if you consider that I sent by last mail the end of *The Wrecker,* coming on for seventy or eighty pages, and the mail before that the entire tale of the *Beach of Falesá,* I do not think I can be accused of idleness. This is my season; I often work six and seven, and sometimes eight hours; and the same day I am perhaps weeding or planting for an hour or two more — and I dare say you know what hard work weeding is — and it all agrees with me at this time of the year — like — like idleness, if a man of my years could be idle.

My first visit to Apia was a shock to me; every second person the ghost of himself, and the place reeking with infection. But I have not got the thing yet, and hope to escape. This shows how much stronger I am; think of me flitting through a town of influenza patients seemingly unscathed. We are all on the cacao planting.

The next day my wife and I rode over to the German plantation, Vailele, whose manager is almost the only German left to speak to us. Seventy labourers down with influenza! It is a lovely ride, half-way down our mountain towards Apia, then turn to the right, ford the river, and three miles of solitary grass and cocoa palms, to where the sea beats and the wild wind blows unceasingly about the plantation house. On the way down Fanny said, "Now what would you do if you saw Colvin coming up?"

Next day we rode down to Apia to make calls.

Yesterday the mail came, and the fat was in the fire.

Nov. 29th (?). — Book. All right. I must say I like your order. And the papers are some of them up to dick, and no mistake. I agree with you the lights seem a little turned down. The truth is, I was far through (if you understand Scots), and came none too soon to the South Seas, where I was to recover peace of body and mind. No man but myself knew all my bitterness in those days. Remember that, the next time you think I regret my exile. And however low the lights are, the stuff is true, and I believe the more effective; after all, what I wish to fight is the best fought by a rather cheerless presentation of the truth. The world must return some day to the word duty, and be done with the word reward. There are no rewards, and plenty duties. And the sooner a man sees that and acts upon it like a gentleman or a fine old barbarian, the better for himself.

There is my usual puzzle about publishers. Chatto ought to have it, as he has all the other essays; these all belong to me, and Chatto publishes on terms. Longman has forgotten the terms we are on; let him look up our first correspondence, and he will see I reserved explicitly, as was my habit, the right to republish as I choose. Had the same arrangement with Henley, Magazine of Art, and with Tulloch, Fraser's. — For any necessary note or preface, it would be a real service if you would undertake the duty yourself. I should love a preface by you, as short or as long as you choose, three sentences, thirty pages, the thing I should like is your name. And the excuse of my great distance seems sufficient. I shall return with this the sheets corrected as far as I have them; the rest I will leave, if you will, to you entirely; let it be your book, and disclaim what you dislike in the preface. You can 124 say it was at my eager prayer. I should say I am the less willing to pass Chatto over, because he behaved the other day in a very handsome manner. He asked leave to reprint *Damien*; I gave it to him as a present, explaining I could receive no emolument for a personal attack. And he took out my share of profits, and sent them in my name to the Leper Fund. I could not bear after that to take from him any of that class of books which I have always given him. Tell him the same terms will do. Clark to print, uniform with the others.

I have lost all the days since this letter began rehandling Chapter IV. of the Samoa racket. I do not go in for literature; address myself to sensible people rather than to sensitive. And, indeed, it is a kind of journalism, I have no right to dally; if it is to help, it must come soon. In two months from now it shall be done, and should be published in the course of March. I propose Cassell gets it. I am going to call it *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa*, I believe. I recoil from serious names; they seem so much too pretentious for a pamphlet. It will be about the size of *Treasure Island*, I believe. Of course, as you now know, my case of conscience cleared itself off, and I began my intervention directly to one of the parties. The other, the

Chief Justice, I am to inform of my book the first occasion. God knows if the book will do any good — or harm; but I judge it right to try. There is one man's life certainly involved; and it may be all our lives. I must not stand and slouch, but do my best as best I can. But you may conceive the difficulty of a history extending to the present week, at least, and where almost all the actors upon all sides are of my personal acquaintance. The only way is to judge slowly, and write boldly, and leave the issue to fate.... I am far indeed from wishing to confine myself to creative work; that is a loss, the other repairs; the one chance for a man, and, above all, for one who grows elderly, ahem, is to vary drainage and repair. That is the one thing I 125 understand — the cultivation of the shallow solum of my brain. But I would rather, from soon on, be released from the obligation to write. In five or six years this plantation — suppose it and us still to exist — should pretty well support us and pay wages; not before, and already the six years seem long to me. If literature were but a pastime!

I have interrupted myself to write the necessary notification to the Chief Justice.

I see in looking up Longman's letter that it was as usual the letter of an obliging gentleman; so do not trouble him with my reminder. I wish all my publishers were not so nice. And I have a fourth and a fifth baying at my heels; but for these, of course, they must go wanting.

Dec. 2nd. — No answer from the Chief Justice, which is like him, but surely very wrong in such a case. The lunch bell! I have been off work, playing patience and weeding all morning. Yesterday and the day before I drafted eleven and revised nine pages of Chapter V., and the truth is, I was extinct by lunch-time, and played patience sourly the rest of the day. To-morrow or next day I hope to go in again and win. Lunch 2nd Bell.

Dec. 2nd, afternoon. — I have kept up the idleness; blew on the pipe to Belle's piano; then had a ride in the forest all by my nainsel; back and piped again, and now dinner nearing. Take up this sheet with nothing to say. The weird figure of Faauma is in the room washing my windows, in a black lavalava (kilt) with a red handkerchief hanging from round her neck between her breasts; not another stitch; her hair close cropped and oiled; when she first came here she was an angelic little stripling, but she is now in full flower — or half-flower — and grows buxom. As I write, I hear her wet cloth moving and grunting with some industry; for I had a word this day with her husband on the matter of work and meal-time, when she is always late. And she has a vague reverence for Papa, as she and her enormous husband address me when anything is wrong. Her husband is Lafaele, sometimes called the 126 archangel, of whom I have writ you often. Rest of our household, Talolo, cook; Pulu, kitchen boy, good, steady, industrious lads; Henry, back again from Savaii, where his love affair seems not to have prospered, with what looks like a spear-wound in the back of his head, of which Mr. Reticence says nothing; Simi, Manuele, and two other labourers outdoors. Lafaele is provost of the live-stock, whereof now, three milk-cows, one bull-calf, one heifer, Jack, Macfarlane, the mare, Harold, Tifaga Jack, Donald and Edinburgh — seven horses — O, and the stallion — eight horses; five cattle; total, if my arithmetic be correct, thirteen head of beasts; I don't know how the pigs stand, or the ducks, or the chickens; but we get a good many eggs, and now and again a duckling or a chickling for the table; the pigs are more solemn, and appear only on birthdays and sich.

Monday, Dec. 7. — On Friday morning about eleven 1500 cacao seeds arrived, and we set to and toiled from twelve that day to six, and went to bed pretty tired. Next day I got about an hour and a half at my History, and was at it again by 8.10, and except an hour for lunch kept at it till four P.M. Yesterday, I did some History in the morning, and slept most of the afternoon; and to-day, being still averse from physical labour, and the mail drawing nigh, drew out of the squad, and finished for press the fifth chapter of my History; fifty-nine pages in one month; which (you will allow me to say) is a devil of a large order; it means at least 177 pages of writing; 89,000 words! and hours going to and fro among my notes. However, this is the way it has to be done; the job must be done fast, or it is of no use. And it is a curious yarn. Honestly, I think people should be amused and convinced, if they could be at the pains to look at such a damned outlandish piece of machinery, which of course they won't. And much I care.

When I was filling baskets all Saturday, in my dull mulish way, perhaps the slowest worker there, surely the 127 most particular, and the only one that never looked up or knocked off, I could not but think I should have been sent on exhibition as an example to young literary men. Here is how to learn to write, might be the motto. You should have seen us; the verandah was like an Irish bog; our hands and faces were bedaubed with soil; and Faauma was supposed to have struck the right note when she remarked (*à propos* of nothing), "Too much *eleele* (soil) for me!" The cacao (you must understand) has to be planted at first in baskets of plaited cocoa-leaf. From four to ten natives were plaiting these in the wood-shed. Four boys were digging up soil and bringing it by the boxful to the verandah. Lloyd and I and Belle, and sometimes S. (who came to bear a hand), were filling the baskets, removing stones and lumps of clay; Austin and Faauma carried them when full to Fanny, who planted a seed in each, and then set them, packed close, in the corners of the verandah. From twelve on

Friday till five P.M. on Saturday we planted the first 1500, and more than 700 of a second lot. You cannot dream how filthy we were, and we were all properly tired. They are all at it again to-day, bar Belle and me, not required, and glad to be out of it. The Chief Justice has not yet replied, and I have news that he received my letter. What a man!

I have gone crazy over Bourget's *Sensations d'Italie*; hence the enclosed dedication, a mere cry of gratitude for the best fun I've had over a new book this ever so!

To Fred Orr

The following is in answer to an application for an autograph from a young gentleman in the United States: —

Vailima, Upolu, Samoa, November 28th, 1891.

DEAR SIR, — Your obliging communication is to hand. I am glad to find that you have read some of my books, 128 and to see that you spell my name right. This is a point (for some reason) of great difficulty; and I believe that a gentleman who can spell Stevenson with a v at sixteen, should have a show for the Presidency before fifty. By that time

I, nearer to the wayside inn,

predict that you will have outgrown your taste for autographs, but perhaps your son may have inherited the collection, and on the morning of the great day will recall my prophecy to your mind. And in the papers of 1921 (say) this letter may arouse a smile.

Whatever you do, read something else besides novels and newspapers; the first are good enough when they are good; the second, at their best, are worth nothing. Read great books of literature and history; try to understand the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages; be sure you do not understand when you dislike them; condemnation is non-comprehension. And if you know something of these two periods, you will know a little more about to-day, and may be a good President.

I send you my best wishes, and am yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson,

Author of a vast quantity of little books.

To E. L. Burlingame

The next letter announces to his New York publishers the beginning of his volume on the troubles of Samoa, *A Footnote to History*.

[*Vailima, December 1891*.]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — The end of *The Wrecker* having but just come in, you will, I dare say, be appalled to receive three (possibly four) chapters of a new book of the least attractive sort: a history of nowhere in a corner, or no time to mention, running to a volume! Well, it may very likely be an illusion; it is very likely no one could 129 possibly wish to read it, but I wish to publish it. If you don't cotton to the idea, kindly set it up at my expense, and let me know your terms for publishing. The great affair to me is to have per return (if it might be) four or five — better say half a dozen — sets of the roughest proofs that can be drawn. There are a good many men here whom I want to read the blessed thing, and not one would have the energy to read MS. At the same time, if you care to glance at it, and have the time, I should be very glad of your opinion as to whether I have made any step at all towards possibly inducing folk at home to read matter so extraneous and outlandish. I become heavy and owlish; years sit upon me; it begins to seem to me to be a man's business to leave off his damnable faces and say his say. Else I could have made it pungent and light and lively. In considering, kindly forget that I am R. L. S.; think of the four chapters as a book you are reading, by an inhabitant of our "lovely but fatil" islands; and see if it could possibly amuse the hebetated public. I have to publish anyway, you understand; I have a purpose beyond; I am concerned for some of the parties to this quarrel. What I want to hear is from curiosity; what I want you to judge of is what we are to do with the book in a business sense. To me it is not business at all; I had meant originally to lay all the profits to the credit of Samoa; when it comes to the pinch of writing, I judge this unfair — I give too much — and I mean to keep (if there be any profit at all) one-half for the artisan; the rest I shall hold over to give to the Samoans *for that which I choose and against work done*. I think I have never heard of greater insolence than to attempt such a subject; yet the tale is so strange and mixed, and the people so oddly charactered — above all, the whites — and the high note of the hurricane and the warships is so well prepared to take popular interest, and the latter part is so directly in the day's movement, that I am not without hope that some may read it; and if they don't, a murrain on them! Here 130 is, for the first time, a tale of Greeks — Homeric Greeks — mingled with moderns, and all true; Odysseus alongside of Rajah Brooke, *proportion gardée*; and all true. Here is for the first time since the Greeks (that I remember) the history of a handful of men, where all know each other in the eyes, and live close in a few acres, narrated at length, and with the seriousness of history. Talk of the modern novel; here is a modern history. And if I had the misfortune to found a school, the legitimate historian might lie down and die, for he could never overtake his material. Here is a little tale that has not "caret"-ed its "vates"; "sacer" is another point.

R. L. S.

To Henry James

Mr. Henry James was in the habit of sending out for Stevenson's reading books that seemed likely to interest him, and among the last had been M. Paul Bourget's *Sensations d'Italie*.

December 7th, 1891.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES, — Thanks for yours; your former letter was lost; so it appears was my long and masterly treatise on the *Tragic Muse*. I remember sending it very well, and there went by the same mail a long and masterly tractate to Gosse about his daddy's life, for which I have been long expecting an acknowledgment, and which is plainly gone to the bottom with the other. If you see Gosse, please mention it. These gems of criticism are now lost literature, like the tomes of Alexandria. I could not do 'em again. And I must ask you to be content with a dull head, a weary hand, and short commons, for to-day, as I am physically tired with hard work of every kind, the labours of the planter and the author both piled upon me mountain deep. I am delighted beyond expression by Bourget's book: he has phrases which affect me almost like Montaigne; I had read ere this a masterly essay of his on Pascal; this book does it; I write for all his essays by 131 this mail, and shall try to meet him when I come to Europe. The proposal is to pass a summer in France, I think in Royat, where the faithful could come and visit me; they are now not many. I expect Henry James to come and break a crust or two with us. I believe it will be only my wife and myself; and she will go over to England, but not I, or possibly incog. to Southampton, and then to Boscombe to see poor Lady Shelley. I am writing — trying to write in a Babel fit for the bottomless pit; my wife, her daughter, her grandson and my mother, all shrieking at each other round the house — not in war, thank God! but the din is ultra martial, and the note of Lloyd joins in occasionally, and the cause of this to-do is simply cacao, whereof chocolate comes. You may drink of our chocolate perhaps in five or six years from now, and not know it. It makes a fine bustle, and gives us some hard work, out of which I have slunk for to-day.

I have a story coming out: God knows when or how; it answers to the name of the *Beach of Falesá*, and I think well of it. I was delighted with the *Tragic Muse*; I thought the Muse herself one of your best works; I was delighted also to hear of the success of your piece, as you know I am a dam failure, and might have dined with the dinner club that Daudet and these parties frequented.

Next day. — I have just been breakfasting at Baiae and Brindisi, and the charm of Bourget hag-rides me. I wonder if this exquisite fellow, all made of fiddle-strings and scent and intelligence, could bear any of my bald prose. If you think he could, ask Colvin to send him a copy of these last essays of mine when they appear; and tell Bourget they go to him from a South Sea Island as literal homage. I have read no new book for years that gave me the same literary thrill as his *Sensations d'Italie*. If (as I imagine) my cut-and-dry literature would be death to him, and worse than death — journalism — be silent on the point. For I have a great curiosity to know him, and 132 if he doesn't know my work, I shall have the better chance of making his acquaintance. I read *The Pupil* the other day with great joy; your little boy is admirable; why is there no little boy like that unless he hails from the Great Republic?

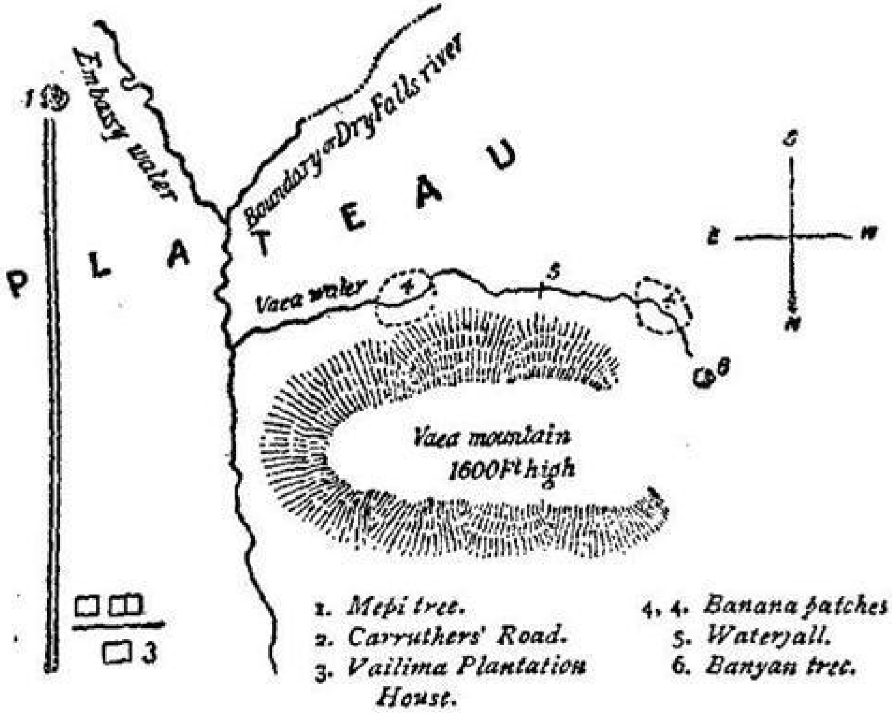
Here I broke off, and wrote Bourget a dedication; no use resisting; it's a love affair. O, he's exquisite, I bless you for the gift of him. I have really enjoyed this book as I — almost as I — used to enjoy books when I was going twenty-twenty-three; and these are the years for reading!

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *Tuesday, Dec. 1891.*

SIR, — I have the honour to report further explorations of the course of the river Vaea, with accompanying sketch plan. The party under my command consisted of one horse, and was extremely insubordinate and mutinous, owing to not being used to go into the bush, and being half-broken anyway — and that the wrong half. The route indicated for my party was up the bed of the so-called river Vaea, which I accordingly followed to a distance of perhaps two or three furlongs eastward from the house of Vailima, where the stream being quite dry, the bush thick, and the ground very difficult, I decided to leave the main body of the force under my command tied to a tree, and push on myself with the point of the advance guard, consisting of one man. The valley had become very narrow and airless; foliage close shut above; dry bed of the stream much excavated, so that I passed under fallen trees without stooping. Suddenly it turned sharply to the north, at right angles to its former direction; I heard living water, and came in view of a tall face of rock and the stream spraying down it; it might have been climbed, but it would have been dangerous, and I had to make my 133 way up the steep earth banks, where there is nowhere any looting for man, only for trees, which made the rounds of my ladder. I was near the top of this climb, which was very hot and steep, and the pulses were buzzing all over my body, when I made sure there was one external sound in my ears, and paused to listen. No mistake; a sound of a mill-wheel thundering, I thought, close by, yet below me, a huge mill-wheel, yet not going steadily, but with a *schottische* movement, and at each fresh impetus shaking the mountain. There, where I was, I just put down the sound to the mystery of the bush; where no sound now surprises me — and any sound alarms; I only thought it would give Jack a fine fright, down where he stood tied to a tree by himself, and he was badly enough scared when I left him. The good folks at home identified it; it was a sharp earthquake.


Embassy water
Boundary or Dry Falls river
1 2
P L A T E A U
S
E
W
N
Vaea water
4
5
4
6
Vaea mountain
1600 Ft high
3
1. Mepi tree.
2. Carruthers' Road.
3. Vailima Plantation House.
4, 4. Banana patches
5. Waterfall.
6. Banyan tree.

At the top of the climb I made my way again to the watercourse; it is here running steady and pretty full; strange these intermittencies — and just a little below the main stream is quite dry, and all the original brook has gone down some lava gallery of the mountain — and just a little further below, it begins picking up from the left hand in little boggy tributaries, and in the inside of a hundred yards has grown a brook again. The general course of the brook was, I guess, S.E.; the valley still very deep and whelmed in wood. It seemed a swindle to have made 134 so sheer a climb and still find yourself at the bottom of a well. But gradually the thing seemed to shallow, the trees to seem poorer and smaller; I could see more and more of the silver sprinkles of sky among the foliage, instead of the sombre piling up of tree behind tree. And here I had two scares — first, away up on my right hand I heard a bull low; I think it was a bull from the quality of the low, which was singularly songful and beautiful; the bulls belong to me, but how did I know that the bull was aware of that? and my advance guard not being at all properly armed, we advanced with great precaution until I was satisfied that I was passing eastward of the enemy. It was during this period that a pool of the river suddenly boiled up in my face in a little fountain. It was in a very dreary, marshy part among dilapidated trees that you see through holes in the trunks of; and if any kind of beast or elf or devil had come out of that sudden silver ebullition, I declare I do not think I should have been surprised. It was perhaps a thing as curious — a 135 fish, with which these head waters of the stream are alive. They are some of them as long as my finger, should be easily caught in these shallows, and some day I'll have a dish of them.

Very soon after I came to where the stream collects in another banana swamp, with the bananas bearing well. Beyond, the course is again quite dry; it mounts with a sharp turn a very steep face of the mountain, and then stops abruptly at the lip of a plateau, I suppose the top of Vaea mountain: plainly no more springs here — there was no smallest furrow of a watercourse beyond — and my task might be said to be accomplished. But such is the animated spirit in the service that the whole advance guard expressed a sentiment of disappointment that an exploration, so far successfully conducted, should come to a stop in the most promising view of fresh successes. And though unprovided either with compass or cutlass, it was determined to push some way along the plateau, marking our direction by the laborious process of bending down, sitting upon, and thus breaking the wild cocoanut trees. This was the less regretted by all from a delightful discovery made of a huge banyan growing here in the bush, with flying-buttressed flying buttresses, and huge arcs of trunk hanging high overhead and trailing down new complications of root. I climbed some way up what seemed the original beginning; it was easier to climb than a ship's rigging, even rattled; everywhere there was foot-hold and hand-hold. It was judged wise to return and rally the main body, who had now been left alone for perhaps forty minutes in the bush.

The return was effected in good order, but unhappily I only arrived (like so many other explorers) to find my main body or rear-guard in a condition of mutiny; the work, it is to be supposed, of terror. It is right I should tell you the Vaea has a bad name, an *aitu fafine* — female devil of the woods — succubus — haunting it, and doubtless Jack had heard of her; perhaps, during my absence, saw 136 her; lucky Jack! Anyway, he was neither to hold nor to bind, and finally, after nearly smashing me by accident, and from mere scare and insubordination several times, deliberately set in to kill me; but poor Jack! the tree he selected for that purpose was a banana! I jumped off and gave him the heavy end of my whip over the buttocks! Then I took and talked in his ear in various voices; you should have heard my alto — it was a dreadful, devilish note — I *knew* Jack *knew* it was an *aitu*. Then I mounted him again, and he carried me fairly steadily. He'll learn yet. He has to learn to trust absolutely to his rider; till he does, the risk is always great in thick bush, where a fellow must try different passages, and put back and forward, and pick his way by hair's-breadths.

The expedition returned to Vailima in time to receive the visit of the R. C. Bishop. He is a superior man, much above the average of priests.

Thursday. — Yesterday the same expedition set forth to the southward by what is known as Carruthers' Road. At a fallen tree which completely blocks the way, the main body was as before left behind, and the advance guard of one now proceeded with the exploration. At the great tree known as *Mepi Tree*, after Maben the surveyor, the expedition struck forty yards due west till it struck the top of a steep bank which it descended. The whole bottom of the ravine is filled with sharp lava blocks quite unrolled and very difficult and dangerous to walk among; no water in the course, scarce any sign of water. And yet surely water must have made this bold cutting in the plateau. And if so, why is the lava sharp? My science gave out; but I could not but think it ominous and volcanic. The course of the stream was tortuous, but with a resultant direction a little by west of north; the sides the whole way exceeding steep, the expedition buried under fathoms of foliage. Presently water appeared in the bottom, a good quantity; perhaps thirty or forty cubic feet, with pools and waterfalls. A tree that stands all along the banks 137 here must be very fond of water; its roots lie close-packed down the stream, like hanks of guts, so as to make often a corrugated walk, each root ending in a blunt tuft of filaments, plainly to drink water. Twice there came in small tributaries from the left or western side — the whole plateau having a smartish inclination to the east; one of the tributaries in a handsome little web of silver hanging in the forest. Twice I was startled by birds; one that barked like a dog; another that whistled loud ploughman's signals, so that I vow I was thrilled, and thought I had fallen among runaway blacks, and regretted my cutlass which I had lost and left behind while taking bearings. A good many fishes in the brook, and many crayfish; one of the last with a queer glow-worm head. Like all our brooks, the water is pure as air, and runs over red stones like rubies. The foliage along both banks very thick and high, the place close, the walking exceedingly laborious. By the time the expedition reached the fork, it was felt exceedingly questionable whether the *moral* of the force were sufficiently good to undertake more extended operations. A halt was called, the men refreshed with water and a bath, and it was decided at a drumhead council of war to continue the descent of the Embassy Water straight for Vailima, whither the expedition returned, in rather poor condition, and wet to the waist, about 4 P.M.

Thus in two days the two main watercourses of this country have been pretty thoroughly explored, and I conceive my instructions fully carried out. The main body of the second expedition was brought back by another officer despatched for that purpose from Vailima. Casualties: one horse wounded; one man bruised; no deaths — as yet, but the bruised man feels to-day as if his case was mighty serious.

Dec. 25, ‘91. — Your note with a very despicable bulletin of health arrived only yesterday, the mail being a day behind. It contained also the excellent Times article, 138 which was a sight for sore eyes. I am still *taboo*; the blessed Germans will have none of me; and I only hope they may enjoy the Times article. ‘Tis my revenge! I wish you had sent the letter too, as I have no copy, and do not even know what I wrote the last day, with a bad headache, and the mail going out. However, it must have been about right, for the Times article was in the spirit I wished to arouse. I hope we can get rid of the man before it is too late. He has set the natives to war; but the natives, by God’s blessing, do not want to fight, and I think it will fizzle out — no thanks to the man who tried to start it. But I did not mean to drift into these politics; rather to tell you what I have done since I last wrote.

Well, I worked away at my *History* for a while, and only got one chapter done; no doubt this spate of work is pretty low now, and will be soon dry; but, God bless you, what a lot I have accomplished; *Wrecker* done, *Beach of Falesá* done, half the *History: c’est étonnant.* (I hear from Burlingame, by the way, that he likes the end of the *Wrecker*; ‘tis certainly a violent, dark yarn with interesting, plain turns of human nature), then Lloyd and I went down to live in Haggard’s rooms, where Fanny presently joined us. Haggard’s rooms are in a strange old building — old for Samoa, and has the effect of the antique like some strange monastery; I would tell you more of it, but I think I’m going to use it in a tale. The annexe close by had its door sealed; poor Dowdney lost at sea in a schooner. The place is haunted. The vast empty sheds, the empty store, the airless, hot, long, low rooms, the claps of wind that set everything flying — a strange uncanny house to spend Christmas in.

Jan. 1st,’92. — For a day or two I have sat close and wrought hard at the *History*, and two more chapters are all but done. About thirty pages should go by this mail, which is not what should be, but all I could overtake. Will any one ever read it? I fancy not; people don’t 139 read history for reading, but for education and display — and who desires education in the history of Samoa, with no population, no past, no future, or the exploits of Mataafa, Malietoa, and Consul Knappe? Colkitto and Galasp are a trifle to it. Well, it can’t be helped, and it must be done, and, better or worse, it’s capital fun. There are two to whom I have not been kind — German Consul Becker and the

English Captain Hand, R. N.

On Dec. 30th I rode down with Belle to go to (if you please) the Fancy Ball. When I got to the beach, I found the barometer was below 29°, the wind still in the east and steady, but a huge offensive continent of clouds and vapours forming to leeward. It might be a hurricane; I dared not risk getting caught away from my work, and, leaving Belle, returned at once to Vailima. Next day — yesterday — it was a tearer; we had storm shutters up; I sat in my room and wrote by lamplight — ten pages, if you please, seven of them draft, and some of these compiled authorities, so that was a brave day's work. About two a huge tree fell within sixty paces of our house; a little after, a second went; and we sent out boys with axes and cut down a third, which was too near the house, and buckling like a fishing rod. At dinner we had the front door closed and shuttered, the back door open, the lamp lit. The boys in the cook-house were all out at the cook-house door, where we could see them looking in and smiling. Lauilo and Faauma waited on us with smiles. The excitement was delightful. Some very violent squalls came as we sat there, and every one rejoiced; it was impossible to help it; a soul of putty had to sing. All night it blew; the roof was continually sounding under missiles; in the morning the verandahs were half full of branches torn from the forest. There was a last very wild squall about six; the rain, like a thick white smoke, flying past the house in volleys, and as swift, it seemed, as rifle balls; all with a strange, strident hiss, such as I 140 have only heard before at sea, and, indeed, thought to be a marine phenomenon. Since then the wind has been falling with a few squalls, mostly rain. But our road is impassable for horses; we hear a schooner has been wrecked and some native houses blown down in Apia, where Belle is still and must remain a prisoner. Lucky I returned while I could! But the great good is this; much bread-fruit and bananas have been destroyed; if this be general through the islands, famine will be imminent; and *whoever blows the coals, there can be no war*. Do I then prefer a famine to a war? you ask. Not always, but just now. I am sure the natives do not want a war; I am sure a war would benefit no one but the white officials, and I believe we can easily meet the famine — or at least that it can be met. That would give our officials a legitimate opportunity to cover their past errors.

Jan. 2nd. — I woke this morning to find the blow quite ended. The heaven was all a mottled grey; even the east quite colourless; the downward slope of the island veiled in wafts of vapour, blue like smoke; not a leaf stirred on the tallest tree; only, three miles away below me on the barrier reef, I could see the individual breakers curl and fall, and hear their conjunct roaring rise, as it still rises at 1 P.M., like the roar of a thoroughfare close by. I did a good morning's work, correcting and clarifying my draft, and have now finished for press eight chapters, ninety-one pages, of this piece of journalism. Four more chapters, say fifty pages, remain to be done; I should gain my wager and finish this volume in three months, that is to say, the end should leave me per February mail; I cannot receive it back till the mail of April. Yes, it can be out in time; pray God that it be in time to help.

How do journalists fetch up their drivel? I aim only at clearness and the most obvious finish, positively at no higher degree of merit, not even at brevity — I am sure it could have been all done, with double the time, in two-thirds of the space. And yet it has taken me two months [141] to write 45,500 words; and, be damned to my wicked prowess, I am proud of the exploit! The real journalist must be a man not of brass only, but bronze. Chapter IX. gapes for me, but I shrink on the margin, and go on chattering to you. This last part will be much less offensive (strange to say) to the Germans. It is Becker they will never forgive me for; Knappe I pity and do not dislike; Becker I scorn and abominate. Here is the tableau. I. Elements of Discord: Native. II. Elements of Discord: Foreign. III. The Sorrows of Laupepa. IV. Brandeis. V. The Battle of Matautu. VI. Last Exploits of Becker. VII. The Samoan Camps. VIII. Affairs of Lautii and Fangalii. IX. "*Furor Consularis*." X. The Hurricane. XI. Stuebel Recluse. XII. The Present Government. I estimate the whole roughly at 70,000 words. Should anybody ever dream of reading it, it would be found amusing. 70000/300 = 233 printed pages; a respectable little five-bob volume, to bloom unread in shop windows. After that, I'll have a spank at fiction. And rest? I shall rest in the grave, or when I come to Italy. If only the public will continue to support me! I lost my chance not dying; there seems blooming little fear of it now. I worked close on five hours this morning; the day before, close on nine; and unless I finish myself off with this letter, I'll have another hour and a half, or *aiblins twa*, before dinner. Poor man, how you must envy me, as you hear of these orgies of work, and you scarce able for a letter. But Lord, Colvin, how lucky the situations are not reversed, for I have no situation, nor am fit for any. Life is a steigh brae. Here, have at Knappe, and no more clavers!

Jan. 3rd. — There was never any man had so many irons in the fire, except Jim Pinkerton. I forgot to mention I have the most gallant suggestion from Lang, with an offer of MS. authorities, which turns my brain. [142] It's all about the throne of Poland and buried treasure in the Mackay country, and Alan Breck can figure there in glory.

Yesterday, J. and I set off to Blacklock's (American Consul) who lives not far from that little village I have so often mentioned as lying between us and Apia. I had some questions to ask him for my *History*;

thence we must proceed to Vailele, where I had also to cross-examine the plantation manager about the battle there. We went by a track I had never before followed down the hill to Vaisigano, which flows here in a deep valley, and was unusually full, so that the horses trembled in the ford. The whole bottom of the valley is full of various streams posting between strips of forest with a brave sound of waters. In one place we had a glimpse of a fall some way higher up, and then sparkling in sunlight in the midst of the green valley. Then up by a winding path scarce accessible to a horse for steepness, to the other side, and the open cocoanut glades of the plantation. Here we rode fast, did a mighty satisfactory afternoon's work at the plantation house, and still faster back. On the return Jack fell with me, but got up again; when I felt him recovering I gave him his head, and he shoved his foot through the rein; I got him by the bit however, and all was well; he had mud over all his face, but his knees were not broken. We were scarce home when the rain began again; that was luck. It is pouring now in torrents; we are in the height of the bad season. Lloyd leaves along with this letter on a change to San Francisco; he had much need of it, but I think this will brace him up. I am, as you see, a tower of strength. I can remember riding not so far and not near so fast when I first came to Samoa, and being shattered next day with fatigue; now I could not tell I have done anything; have re-handled my battle of Fangalii according to yesterday's information — four pages rewritten; and written already some half-dozen pages of letters.

I observe with disgust that while of yore, when I own I was guilty, you never spared me abuse — but now, when I am so virtuous, where is the praise? Do admit that I have become an excellent letter-writer — at least to you, and that your ingratitude is imbecile. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

"In the missionary work which is being done among the Samoans, Mr. Stevenson was especially interested. He was an observant, shrewd, yet ever generous critic of all our religious and educational organisations. His knowledge of native character and life enabled him to understand missionary difficulties, while his genial contact with all sorts and conditions of men made him keen to detect deficiencies in men and methods, and apt in useful suggestion." The above is the testimony of the Mr. Clarke here mentioned (Rev. W. E. Clarke of the London Missionary Society). This gentleman was from the first one of the most valued friends of Mr. Stevenson and his family in Samoa, and, when the end came, read the funeral service beside his grave on Mount Vaea.

The lady in the *Vicar of Wakefield* who declares herself "all in a muck of sweat."

First published in the New Review, January 1895.

Afterwards changed into *The Beach of Falesá*.

Mr. Lloyd Osbourne had come to England to pack and wind up affairs at Skerryvore.

The lines beginning "I heard the pulse of the besieging sea"; see Vol. xxiv., .

"The Monument" was his name for my house at the British Museum, and George was my old faithful servant, George Went.

The late Mr. John Lafarge, long an honoured *doyen* among New York artists, whose record of his holiday in the South Seas, in the shape of a series of water-colour sketches of the scenery and people (with a catalogue full of interesting notes and observations), was one of the features of the Champ de Mars Salon in 1895.

Mrs. B. W. Procter, the stepdaughter of Basil Montagu and widow of Barry Cornwall. The death of this spirited veteran in 1888 snapped one of the last links with the days and memories of Keats and Coleridge. A shrewd and not too indulgent judge of character, she took R. L. S. into warm favour at first sight, and never spoke of or inquired after him but with unwonted tenderness.

On a projected expedition to Sydney.

See *A Footnote to History* for more in praise of Dr. Stuebel, and of his exceptional deserts among white officials in Samoa.

One of the many aliases of the wicked Skye-terrier of Hyères, Davos, and Bournemouth days, celebrated in the essay *On the Character of Dogs*.

Battre les champs, to wander in mind.

Memoir of Fleeming Jenkin, by R. L. S., prefixed to *Papers Literary, Scientific, etc., by the late Fleeming Jenkin, F.R.S., LL.D.*; 2 vols. London, Longmans, 1887. The first chapters consist of a genealogical history of the family. This, to my mind one of the best works of R. L. S., has lately been separately reprinted, having long been accessible only in the Edinburgh and Pentland editions. Of *Delafleld* I never heard; the plan of *Shovel*, which was to be in great part a story of the Peninsular War, had been sketched out and a few chapters written as long ago as the seventies.

The Misadventures of John Nicholson.

The South Sea Letters.

The price advanced for these Letters was among the considerations which originally induced the writer to set out on his Pacific voyage.

The first serial tale, says Mr. Clarke, ever read by Samoans in their own language was the story of the *Bottle Imp*, "which found its way into print at Samoa, and was read with wonder and delight in many a thatched Samoan hut before it won the admiration of readers at home." In the English form the story was published first in Black and White, and afterwards in the volume called *Island Nights' Entertainments*.

Boating expedition: pronounce *malanga*.

Portraits of myself for which he had asked.

Miss Fanny Macpherson, now Lady Holroyd.

In reply to a suggestion which ultimately took effect in the shape of the volume called *Across the Plains* (Chatto & Windus, 1892).

The steam-yacht of the Commissioners of Northern Lights, on which he had been accustomed as a lad to accompany his father on the official trips of inspection round the coast.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling was at this time planning a trip to Samoa, but the plan was unfortunately not carried out, and he and Stevenson never met.

Readers of *The Wrecker* will not need to be reminded that this is the name of the personage on whom the mystery in that story hinges.

See vol. xxiii. p, 48.

Across the Plains. The papers specially referred to in the next lines are those written at Saranac Lake in the winter of 1887-88, including *A Letter to a Young Gentleman, Pulvis et Umbra, A Christmas Sermon.*

For the volume *Across the Plains*.

i.e. on the stage.

As to this peculiar intermittency of the Samoan streams, full in their upper course, but below in many places dry or lost, compare the late Lord Pembroke's *South Sea Bubbles*, : — "One odd thing connected with these ravines is the fact that the higher you go the more water you find. Unlike the Thames, which begins, I believe, in half a mile of dusty lane, and expands in its brimming breadth as it approaches the sea, a Samoan stream begins in bubbling plenty and ends in utter drought a mile or two from the salt water. Gradually as you ascend you become more and more hopeful; moist patches of sand appear here and there, then tiny pools that a fallen leaf might cover, then larger ones with little thread-like runs of water between them; larger and larger, till at last you reach some hard ledge of trap, over which a glorious stream gurgles and splashes into a pool ample enough for the bath of an elephant.”

In *The Wrecker*. As to the story thus suggested by Mr. Andrew Lang, see below, p, 187, etc.

XII

LIFE IN SAMOA — *Continued*

SECOND YEAR AT VAILIMA

January-December 1892

The New Year found Stevenson down with his first attack of the influenza epidemic, then virulent all over the world. But the illness was not sufficient to stop his work, and in the first two months of the year he was busy continuing his conscientious labours on *The Footnote to History*, seeing *The Wrecker* and *The Beach of Falesá* through the press, planning the South Sea plantation novel *Sophia Scarlet*, which never got beyond that inchoate stage, and writing the continuation to *Kidnapped*, first intended to bear the name of the hero, David Balfour, and afterwards changed to *Catriona*. With this he proceeded swimmingly, completing it between February and September, in a shorter time than any other of his sustained narratives; and on publication its success was great. By May he had finished the *Footnote*, and then had a dash at the first chapters of *The Young Chevalier*, which stand in their truncated state a piece of work as vivid and telling as he had ever done. Early in the autumn he struck a still fuller note in the draft of the first chapters of *Weir of Hermiston*.

During this year the household at Vailima received a 145 new temporary inmate in the person of Mr. Graham Balfour, a cousin whom Stevenson had not previously known, but with whom he soon formed the closest and most confidential friendship of his later life. In the summer and early autumn he was much taken up both with politics and with hospitalities. As hereinafter narrated, he made, and was thwarted in, a serious attempt to effect a reconciliation between the two rival chiefs; and continued his series of letters to the Times showing up the incompetence, and worse, of the responsible Treaty officials. In August he took lively pleasure in a visit paid to the islands by Lady Jersey and some members of her family from Australia. During the course of their stay he conducted the visitors to the rebel camp under aliases, as the needs of the time required, and in a manner that seemed like the realisation of a chapter of a Waverley novel. A month or two later he became aware, with more amusement than alarm, of measures for his deportation set on foot but not carried through by the Treaty officials. For a man of his temper, the political muddle and mismanagement of which the Samoan Islands were the scene — and not only these, however much he might lament them for the sake of the inhabitants, but even the risks he ran of serious personal consequences from his own action, — added to life at least as much of zest and excitement as of annoyance.

In October he determined, not without serious financial misgivings and chiefly in deference to his mother's urgency, to enlarge his house at Vailima by putting up a new block adjoining and communicating with that which he had hitherto inhabited. The work was promptly and efficiently carried out by the German Firm and completed by the end of the year. Quite towards the close of December, 146 copies of *The Footnote to History* reached Samoa, and the book, so far from being a cause of offence to his friends the managers of that firm, as both he and they had feared, was found acceptable and devoid of offence by them: a result celebrated in the convivial manner described in the last letter of this section. On the whole the year had been a prosperous one, full of successful work and eager interests, although darkened in its later months by disquietude on account of his wife's health. He had himself well maintained the improved strength and the renewed capacity both for literary work and outdoor activity which life in the South Seas had brought him from the first.

To E. L. Burlingame

[*Vailima*] *Jan, 2nd, '92.*

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — Overjoyed you were pleased with *The Wrecker*, and shall consider your protests. There is perhaps more art than you think for in the peccant chapter, where I have succeeded in packing into one a dedication, an explanation, and a termination. Surely you had not recognised the phrase about boodle? It was a quotation from Jim Pinkerton, and seemed to me agreeably skittish. However, all shall be prayerfully considered.

To come to a more painful subject. Herewith go three more chapters of the wretched History; as you see, I approach the climax. I expect the book to be some 70,000 words, of which you have now 45. Can I finish it for next mail? I am going to try! 'Tis a long piece of journalism, and full of difficulties here and there, of this kind and that, and will make me a power of friends to be sure. There is one Becker who will probably put up a window to me in the church where he was baptized; and I expect a testimonial from Captain Hand.

Sorry to let the mail go without the Scott; this has been a bad month with me, and I have been below myself. I shall find a way to have it come by next, or know the reason why. The mail after, anyway.

A bit of a sketch map appears to me necessary for my History; perhaps two. If I do not have any, 'tis impossible any one should follow; and I, even when not at all interested, demand that I shall be able to follow; even a tourist book without a map is a cross to me; and there must be others of my way of thinking. I inclose the very artless one that I think needful. Vailima, in case you are curious, is about as far again behind Tanugamanono as that is from the sea.

M'Clure is publishing a short story of mine, some 50,000 words, I think, *The Beach of Falesá*; when he's done with it, I want you and Cassell to bring it out in a little volume; I shall send you a dedication for it; I believe it good; indeed, to be honest, very good. Good gear that pleases the merchant.

The other map that I half threaten is a chart for the hurricane. Get me Kimberley's report of the hurricane: not to be found here. It is of most importance; I *must* have it with my proofs of that part, if I cannot have it earlier, which now seems impossible. — Yours in hot haste,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

At the news that his correspondent was occupied teaching and entertaining a class of children in a Kilburn basement, Stevenson bethinks himself of helping her by writing an account of Samoa and Samoan life for children.

Vailima, January 4th, 1892.

MY DEAR ADELAIDE, — We were much pleased with your letter and the news of your employment. Admirable, your method. But will you not run dry of fairy stories? Please salute your pupils, and tell them that a 148 long, lean, elderly man who lives right through on the under side of the world, so that down in your cellar you are nearer him than the people in the street, desires his compliments. This man lives in an island which is not very long, and extremely narrow. The sea beats round it very hard, so that it is difficult to get to shore. There is only one harbour where ships come, even that is very wild and dangerous; four ships of war were broken there a little while ago, and one of them is still lying on its side on a rock clean above water, where the sea threw it as you might throw your fiddle bow on the table. All round the harbour the town is strung out, it is nothing but wooden houses, only there are some churches built of stone, not very large, but the people have never seen such fine buildings. Almost all the houses are of one story. Away at one end lives the king of the whole country. His palace has a thatched roof which stands upon posts; it has no walls, but when it blows and rains, they have Venetian blinds which they let down between the posts and make it very snug. There is no furniture, and the king and queen and the courtiers sit and eat on the floor, which is of gravel: the lamp stands there too, and every now and then it is upset. These good folks wear nothing but a kilt about their waists, unless to go to church or for a dance, or the New Year, or some great occasion. The children play marbles all along the street; and though they are generally very jolly, yet they get awfully cross over their marbles, and cry and fight like boys and girls at home. Another amusement in country places is to shoot fish with a bow and arrow. All round the beach there is bright shallow water where fishes can be seen darting or lying in shoals. The child trots round the shore, and wherever he sees a fish, lets fly an arrow and misses, and then wades in after his arrow. It is great fun (I have tried it) for the child, and I never heard of it doing any harm to the fishes: so what could be more jolly? The road up to this lean man's house is uphill 149 all the way and through forests; the forests are of great trees, not so much unlike the trees at home, only here and there are some very queer ones mixed with them, cocoa-nut palms, and great forest trees that are covered with blossom like red hawthorn, but not near so bright; and from all the trees thick creepers hang down like ropes, and nasty-looking weeds that they call orchids grow in the forks of the branches; and on the ground many prickly things are dotted which they call pine-apples: I suppose every one has eaten pineapple drops.

On the way up to the lean man's house you pass a little village, all of houses like the king's house, so that as you ride through you can see everybody sitting at dinner, or if it be night, lying in their beds by lamplight; for all these people are terribly afraid of ghosts, and would not lie in the dark for any favour. After the village, there is only one more house, and that is the lean man's. For the people are not very many, and live all by the sea, and the whole inside of the island is desert woods and mountains. When the lean man goes into this forest, he is very much ashamed to say it, but he is always in a terrible fright. The wood is so great and empty and hot, and it is always filled with curious noises; birds cry like children and bark like dogs, and he can hear people laughing and felling trees; and the other day (when he was far in the woods) he heard a great sound like the biggest mill-wheel possible going with a kind of dot-and-carry-one movement like a dance. That was the noise of an earthquake away down below him in the bowels of the earth, and that is the same thing as to say away up towards you in your cellar in Kilburn. All these noises make him feel lonely and scared, and he doesn't quite know what he is scared of. Once when he was just about to cross a river, a blow struck him on the top of his head and knocked him head-foremost down the bank and splash into the water. It was a nut, I fancy, that had fallen from a tree, by which 150 accidents people are sometimes killed. But at the time he thought it was a black boy.

Aha, say you, and what is a black boy? Well, there are here a lot of poor people who are brought here from distant islands to labour as slaves for the Germans. They are not at all like the king or his people, who are brown and very pretty; but these are black as negroes and as ugly as sin, poor souls, and in their own lands they live all the time at war and cook and eat men's flesh. The Germans thrash them with whips to make them work, and every now and then some run away into the Bush, as the forest is called, and build little sheds of leaves, and eat nuts and roots and fruit, and dwell there by themselves in the great desert. Sometimes they are bad and wild and come down in the villages and steal and kill; and people whisper to each other that some of them have gone back to their horrid old habits, and catch men and women in order to eat them. But it is very likely not true; and the most of them are only poor, stupid, trembling, half-starved, pitiful creatures like frightened dogs. Their life is all very well when the sun shines, as it does eight or nine months in the year. But it is very different the rest of the time. The wind rages here most violently. The great trees thrash about like whips; the air is filled with leaves and great branches flying about like birds; and the sound of the trees falling shakes the earth. It rains too as it never rains at home. You can hear a shower while it is yet half a mile away, hissing like a shower-bath in the forest; and when it comes to you, the water blinds your eyes, and the cold drenching takes your breath away as though some one had struck you. In that kind of weather it must be dreadful indeed to live in the woods, one man alone by himself. And you must know that, if the lean man feels afraid to be in the forest, the people of the island and the black boys are much more afraid than he. For they believe the woods to be quite filled with spirits; some are like pigs, and some are like flying things; 151 but others (and these are thought the most dangerous) come in the shape of beautiful young women and young men, beautifully dressed in the island manner, with fine kilts and fine necklaces and crowns of scarlet seeds and flowers. Woe betide he or she who gets to speak with one of these! They will be charmed out of their wits, and come home again quite silly, and go mad and die. So that the poor black boy must be always trembling and looking about for the coming of the women-devils.

Sometimes the women-devils go down out of the woods into the villages, and here is a tale the lean man heard last year. One of the islanders was sitting in his house, and he had cooked fish. There came along the road two beautiful young women, dressed as I told you, who came into his house and asked for some of his fish. It is the fashion in the islands always to give what is asked, and never to ask folk's names. So the man gave them fish and talked to them in the island jesting way. And presently he asked one of the women for her red necklace, which is good manners and their way; he had given the fish, and he had a right to ask for something back. "I will give it you by and by," said the woman, and she and her companion went away; but he thought they were gone very suddenly, and the truth is they had vanished. The night was nearly come, when the man heard the voice of the woman crying that he should come to her and she would give the necklace. And he looked out, and behold she was standing calling him from the top of the sea, on which she stood as you might on the table. At that, fear came on the man; he fell on his knees and prayed, and the woman disappeared. It was known afterwards that this was once a woman indeed, but should have died a thousand years ago, and has lived all that while as a devil in the woods beside the spring of a river. Saumai-afe (Sow-my-affy) is her name, in case you want to write to her. — Ever your friend Tusitala (tale-writer),

alias Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

The South Sea novel here mentioned, *Sophia Scarlet,* never got beyond the rough draft of an opening chapter or two.

[*Vailima*] *Jan. 31st, '92.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — No letter at all from you, and this scratch from me! Here is a year that opens ill. Lloyd is off to "the coast" sick — *the coast* means California over most of the Pacific — I have been down all month with influenza, and am just recovering — I am overlaid with proofs, which I am just about half fit to attend to. One of my horses died this morning, and another is now dying on the front lawn — Lloyd's horse and Fanny's. Such is my quarrel with destiny. But I am mending famously, come and go on the balcony, have perfectly good nights, and though I still cough, have no oppression and no hemorrhage and no fever. So if I can find time and courage to add no more, you will know my news is not altogether of the worst; a year or two ago, and what a state I should have been in now! Your silence, I own, rather alarms me. But I tell myself you have just miscarried; had you been too ill to write, some one would have written me. Understand, I send this brief scratch not because I am unfit to write more, but because I have 58 galleys of *The Wrecker* and 102 of *The Beach of Falesá* to get overhauled somehow or other in time for the mail, and for three weeks I have not touched a pen with my finger.

Feb. 1st. — The second horse is still alive, but I still think dying. The first was buried this morning. My proofs are done; it was a rough two days of it, but done. *Consummatum est; ua uma*. I believe *The Wrecker* ends well; if I know what a good yarn is, the last four chapters make a good yarn — but pretty horrible. *The Beach of Falesá* I still think well of, but it seems it's immoral and there's a to-do, and financially it may prove a heavy disappointment. The plaintive request sent to me, to make 153 the young folks married properly before "that night," I refused; you will see what would be left of the yarn, had I consented. This is a poison bad world for the romancer, this Anglo-Saxon world; I usually get out of it by not having any women in it at all; but when I remember I had *The Treasure of Franchard* refused as unfit for a family magazine, I feel despair weigh upon my wrists.

As I know you are always interested in novels, I must tell you that a new one is now entirely planned. It is to be called *Sophia Scarlet*, and is in two parts. Part I. The Vanilla Planter. Part II. The Overseers. No chapters, I think; just two dense blocks of narrative, the first of which is purely sentimental, but the second has some rows and quarrels, and winds up with an explosion, if you please! I am just burning to get at *Sophia*, but I *must* do this Samoan journalism — that's a cursed duty. The first part of *Sophia*, bar the first twenty or thirty pages, writes itself; the second is more difficult, involving a good many characters — about ten, I think — who have to be kept all moving, and give the effect of a society. I have three women to handle, out and well-away! but only Sophia is in full tone. Sophia and two men, Windermere, the Vanilla Planter, who dies at the end of Part I., and Rainsforth, who only appears in the beginning of Part II. The fact is, I blush to own it, but Sophia is a *regular novel*; heroine and hero, and false accusation, and love, and marriage, and all the rest of it — all planted in a big South Sea plantation run by ex-English officers — *à la* Stewart's plantation in Tahiti. There is a strong undercurrent of labour trade which gives it a kind of Uncle Tom flavour, *absit omen!*

The first start is hard; it is hard to avoid a little tedium here, but I think by beginning with the arrival of the three Miss Scarlets hot from school and society in England, I may manage to slide in the information. The problem is exactly a Balzac one, and I wish I had his fist — for I have already a better method — the kinetic, whereas he continually allowed himself to be led into the static. But then he had the fist, and the most I can hope is to get out of it with a modicum of grace and energy, but for sure without the strong impression, the full, dark brush. Three people have had it, the real creator's brush: Scott, see much of *The Antiquary* and *The Heart of Midlothian* (especially all round the trial, before, during, and after) — Balzac — and Thackeray in *Vanity Fair*. Everybody else either paints *thin*, or has to stop to paint, or paints excitedly, so that you see the author skipping before his canvas. Here is a long way from poor Sophia Scarlet!

This day is published
Sophia Scarlet
By
Robert Louis Stevenson

To J. M. Barrie

The following is the first of several letters to Mr. J. M. Barrie, for whose work Stevenson had a warm admiration, and with whom he soon established by correspondence a cordial friendship.

Vailima, Samoa, February 1892.

DEAR MR. BARRIE, — This is at least the third letter I have written you, but my correspondence has a bad habit of not getting so far as the post. That which I possess of manhood turns pale before the business of the address and envelope. But I hope to be more fortunate with this: for, besides the usual and often recurrent desire to thank 155 you for your work — you are one of four that have come to the front since I was watching and had a corner of my own to watch, and there is no reason, unless it be in these mysterious tides that ebb and flow, and make and mar and murder the works of poor scribblers, why you should not do work of the best order. The tides have borne away my sentence, of which I was weary at any rate, and between authors I may allow myself so much freedom as to leave it pending. We are both Scots besides, and I suspect both rather Scotty Scots; my own Scotchness tends to intermittency, but is at times erisypelitous — if that be rightly spelt. Lastly, I have gathered we had both made our stages in the metropolis of the winds: our Virgil's "grey metropolis," and I count that a lasting bond. No place so brands a man.

Finally, I feel it a sort of duty to you to report progress. This may be an error, but I believed I detected your hand in an article — it may be an illusion, it may have been by one of those industrious insects who catch up and reproduce the handling of each emergent man — but I'll still hope it was yours — and hope it may please you to hear that the continuation of *Kidnapped* is under way. I have not yet got to Alan, so I do not know if he is still alive, but David seems to have a kick or two in his shanks. I was pleased to see how the Anglo-Saxon theory fell into the trap: I gave my Lowlander a Gaelic name, and even commented on the fact in the text; yet almost all critics recognised in David and Alan a Saxon and a Celt. I know not about England; in Scotland at least, where Gaelic was spoken in Fife little over the century ago, and in Galloway not much earlier, I deny that there exists such a thing as a pure Saxon, and I think it more than questionable if there be such a thing as a pure Celt.

But what have you to do with this? and what have I? Let us continue to inscribe our little bits of tales, and let the heathen rage! — Yours, with sincere interest in your career,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *Feb. 1892.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — This has been a busyish month for a sick man. First, Faauma — the bronze candlestick, whom otherwise I called my butler — bolted from the bed and bosom of Lafaele, the Archangel Hercules, prefect of the cattle. There was a deuce to pay, and Hercules was inconsolable, and immediately started out after a new wife, and has had one up on a visit, but says she has "no conversation"; and I think he will take back the erring and possibly repentant candlestick; whom we all devoutly prefer, as she is not only highly decorative, but good-natured, and if she does little work makes no rows. I tell this lightly, but it really was a heavy business; many were accused of complicity, and Rafael was really very sorry. I had to hold beds of justice — literally — seated in my bed and surrounded by lying Samoans seated on the floor; and there were many picturesque and still inexplicable passages. It is hard to reach the truth in these islands.

The next incident overlapped with this. S. and Fanny found three strange horses in the paddock: for long now the boys have been forbidden to leave their horses here one hour because our grass is over-grazed. S. came up with the news, and I saw I must now strike a blow. "To the pound with the lot," said I. He proposed taking the three himself, but I thought that too dangerous an experiment, said I should go too, and hurried into my boots so as to show decision taken, in the necessary interviews. They came of course — the interviews — and I explained what I was going to do at huge length, and stuck to my guns. I am glad to say the natives, with their usual (purely speculative) sense of justice, highly approved the step after reflection. Meanwhile off went S. and I with the three *corpora delicti*; and a good job I went! Once, 157 when our circus began to kick, we thought all was up; but we got them down all sound in wind and limb. I judged I was much fallen off from my Elliot forefathers, who managed this class of business with neatness and despatch.

As we got down to town, we met the mother and daughter of my friend — — , bathed in tears; they had left the house over a row, which I have not time or spirits to describe. This matter dashed me a good deal, and the first decent-looking day I mounted and set off to see if I could not patch things up. Half-way down it came on to rain tropic style, and I came back from my second outing drenched like a drowned man — I was literally blinded as I came back among these sheets of water; and the consequence was I was laid down with diarrhœa and threatenings of Samoa colic for the inside of another week. Meanwhile up came Laulii, in whose house Mrs. and Miss — — have taken refuge. One of Mrs. — — 's grievances is that her son has married one of these "pork-eaters and cannibals." (As a matter of fact there is no memory of cannibalism in Samoa.) And a strange thing it was to hear the “cannibal” Laulii describe her sorrows. She is singularly pretty and sweet, her training reflects wonderful credit on her husband; and when she began to describe to us — to act to us, in the tone of an actress walking through a rehearsal — the whole bearing of her angry guests; indicating the really tragic notes when they came in, so that Fanny and I were ashamed to laugh, and touching off the merely ludicrous with infinite tact and sly humour; showing, in fact, in her whole picture of a couple of irate barbarian women, the whole play and sympathy of what we call the civilised mind; the contrast was seizing. I speak with feeling. To-day again, being the first day humanly possible for me, I went down to Apia with Fanny, and between two and three hours did I argue with that old woman — not immovable, would she had 158 been! but with a mechanical mind like a piece of a musical snuff-box, that returned always to the same starting-point; not altogether base, for she was long-suffering with me and professed even gratitude, and was just (in a sense) to her son, and showed here and there moments of genuine and not undignified emotion; but O! on the other side, what lapses — what a mechanical movement of the brain, what occasional trap-door devils of meanness, what a wooden front of pride! I came out damped and saddened and (to say truth) a trifle sick. My wife had better luck with the daughter; but O, it was a weary business!

To add to my grief — but that’s politics. Before I sleep to-night I have a confession to make. When I was sick I tried to get to work to finish that Samoa thing; wouldn’t go; and at last, in the colic time, I slid off into *David Balfour*, some 50 pages of which are drafted, and like me well. Really I think it is spirited; and there’s a heroine that (up to now) seems to have attractions: *absit omen!* David, on the whole, seems excellent. Alan does not come in till the tenth chapter, and I am only at the eighth, so I don’t know if I can find him again; but David is on his feet, and doing well, and very much in love, and mixed up with the Lord Advocate and the (untitled) Lord Lovat, and all manner of great folk. And the tale interferes with my eating and sleeping. The join is bad; I have not thought to strain too much for continuity; so this part be alive, I shall be content. But there’s no doubt David seems to have changed his style, de’il ha’e him! And much I care, if the tale travel!

Friday, Feb.?? 19th? — Two incidents to-day which I must narrate. After lunch, it was raining pitilessly; we were sitting in my mother’s bedroom, and I was reading aloud Kinglake’s Charge of the Light Brigade, and we had just been all seized by the horses aligning with Lord George Paget, when a figure appeared on the verandah; 159 a little, slim, small figure of a lad, with blond (*i.e.* limed) hair, a propitiatory smile, and a nose that alone of all his features grew pale with anxiety. “I come here stop,” was about the outside of his English; and I began at once to guess that he was a runaway labourer, and that the bush-knife in his hand was stolen. It proved he had a mate, who had lacked his courage, and was hidden down the road; they had both made up their minds to run away, and had “come here stop.” I could not turn out the poor rogues, one of whom showed me marks on his back, into the drenching forest; I could not reason with them, for they had not enough English, and not one of our boys spoke their tongue; so I bade them feed and sleep here to-night, and to-morrow I must do what the Lord shall bid me.

Near dinner time, I was told that a friend of Lafaele’s had found human remains in my bush. After dinner, a figure was seen skulking across towards the waterfall, which produced from the verandah a shout, in my most stentorian tones: “*O ai le ingoa?*” literally “Who the name?” which serves here for “What’s your business?” as well. It proved to be Lafaele’s friend; I bade a kitchen boy, Lauilo, go with him to see the spot, for though it had ceased raining, the whole island ran and dripped. Lauilo was willing enough, but the friend of the archangel demurred; he had too much business; he had no time. “All right,” I said, “you too much frightened, I go along,” which of course produced the usual shout of delight from all those who did not require to go. I got into my Saranac snow boots; Lauilo got a cutlass; Mary Carter, our Sydney maid, joined the party for a lark, and off we set. I tell you our guide kept us moving; for the dusk fell swift. Our woods have an infamous reputation at the best, and our errand (to say the least of it) was grisly. At last they found the remains; they were old, 160 which was all I cared to be sure of; it seemed a strangely small “pickle-banes” to stand for a big, flourishing, buck-islander, and their situation in the darkening and dripping bush was melancholy. All at once, I found there was a second skull, with a bullet-hole I could have stuck my two thumbs in — say anybody else’s one thumb. My Samoans said it could not be, there were not enough bones; I put the two pieces of skull together, and at last convinced them. Whereupon, in a flash, they found the not unromantic explanation. This poor brave had succeeded in the height of a Samoan warrior’s ambition; he had taken a head, which he was never destined to show to his applauding camp. Wounded himself, he had crept here into the bush to die with his useless trophy by his side. His date would be about fifteen years ago, in the great battle between Laupepa and Talavou, which took place on My Land, Sir. To-morrow we shall bury the bones and fire a salute in honour of unfortunate courage.

Do you think I have an empty life? or that a man jogging to his club has so much to interest and amuse him? — touch and try him too, but that goes along with the others: no pain, no pleasure, is the iron law. So here I stop again, and leave, as I left yesterday, my political business untouched. And lo! here comes my pupil, I believe, so I stop in time.

March 2nd. — Since I last wrote, fifteen chapters of *David Balfour* have been drafted, and five *tirés au clair*. I think it pretty good; there's a blooming maiden that costs anxiety — she is as virginal as billy; but David seems there and alive, and the Lord Advocate is good, and so I think is an episodic appearance of the Master of Lovat. In Chapter XVII. I shall get David abroad — Alan went already in Chapter XII. The book should be about the length of *Kidnapped*; this early part of it, about D.'s evidence in the Appin case, is more of a story than anything in *Kidnapped*, but there is no doubt there comes a break in the middle, and the tale is practically in two 161 divisions. In the first James More and the M'Gregors, and Catriona, only show; in the second, the Appin case being disposed of, and James Stewart hung, they rule the roast and usurp the interest — should there be any left. Why did I take up *David Balfour*? I don't know. A sudden passion.

Monday, I went down in the rain with a colic to take the chair at a public meeting; dined with Haggard; sailed off to my meeting, and fought with wild beasts for three anxious hours. All was lost that any sensible man cared for, but the meeting did not break up — thanks a good deal to R. L. S. — and the man who opposed my election, and with whom I was all the time wrangling, proposed the vote of thanks to me with a certain handsomeness; I assure you I had earned it.... Haggard and the great Abdul, his high-caste Indian servant, imported by my wife, were sitting up for me with supper, and I suppose it was twelve before I got to bed. Tuesday raining, my mother rode down, and we went to the Consulate to sign a Factory and Commission. Thence, I to the lawyers, to the printing office, and to the mission. It was dinner time when I returned home.

This morning, our cook-boy having suddenly left — injured feelings — the archangel was to cook breakfast. I found him lighting the fire before dawn; his eyes blazed, he had no word of any language left to use, and I saw in him (to my wonder) the strongest workings of gratified ambition. Napoleon was no more pleased to sign his first treaty with Austria than was Lafaele to cook that breakfast. All morning, when I had hoped to be at this letter, I slept like one drugged, and you must take this (which is all I can give you) for what it is worth —

D. B.

Memoirs of his Adventures at Home and Abroad. The Second Part; wherein are set forth the misfortunes in which he was involved upon the Appin Murder; his 162 *troubles with Lord Advocate Prestongrange;*

captivity on the Bass Rock; journey into France and Holland; and singular relations with James More Drummond or Macgregor, a son of the notorious Rob Roy.

Chapters. — I. A Beggar on Horseback. II. The Highland Writer. III. I go to Pilrig. IV. Lord Advocate Prestongrange. V. Butter and Thunder. VI. I make a fault in honour. VII. The Bravo. VIII. The Heather on Fire. IX. I begin to be haunted with a red-headed man. X. The Wood by Silvermills. XI. On the march again with Alan. XII. Gillane Sands. XIII. The Bass Rock. XIV. Black Andie's Tale of Tod Lapraik. XV. I go to Inveraray.

That is it, as far as drafted. Chapters IV. V. VII. IX. and XIV. I am specially pleased with; the last being an episodical bogie story about the Bass Rock told there by the Keeper.

To William Morris

The following draft letter addressed to Mr. William Morris was found among Stevenson's papers after his death. It has touches of affectation and constraint not usual with him, and it is no doubt on that account that he did not send it; but though not in his best manner, it seems worth printing as illustrating the variety of his interests and admirations in literature.

Vailima, Samoa, Feb. 1892.

MASTER, — A plea from a place so distant should have some weight, and from a heart so grateful should have some address. I have been long in your debt, Master, and I did not think it could be so much increased as you have now increased it. I was long in your debt and deep in your debt for many poems that I shall never forget, and for *Sigurd* before all, and now you have plunged me beyond payment by the Saga Library. And so now, true to human nature, being plunged beyond payment, I come and bark at your heels.

For surely, Master, that tongue that we write, and that you have illustrated so nobly, is yet alive. She has her rights and laws, and is our mother, our queen, and our instrument. Now in that living tongue *where* has one sense, *whereas* another. In the *Heathslayings Story*, , line 13, it bears one of its ordinary senses. Elsewhere and usually through the two volumes, which is all that has yet reached me of this entrancing publication, *whereas* is made to figure for *where*.

For the love of God, my dear and honoured Morris, use *where*, and let us know *whereas* we are, wherefore our gratitude shall grow, whereby you shall be the more honoured wherever men love clear language, whereas now, although we honour, we are troubled.

Whereunder, please find inscribed to this very impudent but yet very anxious document, the name of one of the most distant but not the youngest or the coldest of those who honour you

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Charles Fairchild

The projected visit of Mr. Kipling, with his wife and brother-in-law, to Samoa, which is mentioned towards the close of this letter, never took place, much to the regret of both authors.

[*Vailima, March 1892.*]

MY DEAR MRS. FAIRCHILD, — I am guilty in your sight, but my affairs besiege me. The chief-justiceship of a family of nineteen persons is in itself no sinecure, and sometimes occupies me for days: two weeks ago for four days almost entirely, and for two days entirely. Besides which, I have in the last few months written all but one chapter of a *History of Samoa* for the last eight or nine years; and while I was unavoidably delayed in the writing of this, awaiting material, put in one-half of *David Balfour*, the sequel to *Kidnapped*. Add the ordinary impediments of life, and admire my busyness. I am now an old, but 164 healthy skeleton, and degenerate much towards the machine. By six at work: stopped at half-past ten to give a history lesson to a step-grandson; eleven, lunch; after lunch we have a musical performance till two; then to work again; bath, 4.40; dinner, five; cards in the evening till eight; and then to bed — only I have no bed, only a chest with a mat and blankets — and read myself to sleep. This is the routine, but often sadly interrupted. Then you may see me sitting on the floor of my verandah haranguing and being harangued by squatting chiefs on a question of a road; or more privately holding an inquiry into some dispute among our familiars, myself on my bed, the boys on the floor — for when it comes to the judicial I play dignity — or else going down to Apia on some more or less unsatisfactory errand. Altogether it is a life that suits me, but it absorbs me like an ocean. That is what I have always envied and admired in Scott; with all that immensity of work and study, his mind kept flexible, glancing to all points of natural interest. But the lean hot spirits, such as mine, become hypnotised with their bit occupations — if I may use Scotch to you — it is so far more scornful than any English idiom. Well, I can't help being a skeleton, and you are to take this devious passage for an apology.

I thought *Aladdin* capital fun; but why, in fortune, did he pretend it was moral at the end? The so-called nineteenth century, *où va-t-il se nicher?* 'Tis a trifle, but Pyle would do well to knock the passage out, and leave his boguey tale a boguey tale, and a good one at that.

The arrival of your box was altogether a great success to the castaways. You have no idea where we live. Do you know, in all these islands there are not five hundred whites, and no postal delivery, and only one village — it is no more — and would be a mean enough village in Europe? We were asked the other day if Vailima were the name of our post town, and we laughed. Do you know, though 165 we are but three miles from the village metropolis, we have no road to it, and our goods are brought on the pack-saddle? And do you know — or I should rather say, can you believe — or (in the famous old Tichborne trial phrase) would you be surprised to learn, that all you have read of Vailima — or Subpriorsford, as I call it — is entirely false, and we have no ice-machine, and no electric light, and no water supply but the cistern of the heavens, and but one public room, and scarce a bedroom apiece? But, of course, it is well known that I have made enormous sums by my evanescent literature, and you will smile at my false humility. The point, however, is much on our minds just now. We are expecting an invasion of Kiplings; very glad we shall be to see them; but two of the party are ladies, and I tell you we had to hold a council of war to stow them. You European ladies are so particular; with all of mine, sleeping has long become a public function, as with natives and those who go down much into the sea in ships.

Dear Mrs. Fairchild, I must go to my work. I have but two words to say in conclusion.

First, civilisation is rot.

Second, console a savage with more of the milk of that over-civilised being, your adorable schoolboy.

As I wrote these remarkable words, I was called down to eight o'clock prayers, and have just worked through a chapter of Joshua and five verses, with five treble choruses, of a Samoan hymn; but the music was good, our boys and precentress ('tis always a woman that leads) did better than I ever heard them, and to my great pleasure I understood it all except one verse. This gave me the more time to try and identify what the parts were doing, and further convict my dull ear. Beyond the fact that the soprano rose to the tonic above, on one occasion I could recognise nothing. This is sickening, but I mean to teach my ear better before I am done with it or this vile carcase.

I think it will amuse you (for a last word) to hear that our precentress — she is the washerwoman — is our shame. She is a good, healthy, comely, strapping young wench, full of energy and seriousness, a splendid workwoman, delighting to train our chorus, delighting in the poetry of the hymns, which she reads aloud (on the least provocation) with a great sentiment of rhythm. Well, then, what is curious? Ah, we did not know! but it was told us in a whisper from the cook-house — she is not of good family. Don't let it get out, please; everybody knows it, of course, here; there is no reason why Europe and the States should have the advantage of me also. And the rest of my house-folk are all chief-people, I assure you. And my late overseer (far the best of his race) is a really serious chief with a good "name." Tina is the name; it is not in the Almanach de Gotha, it must have got dropped at press. The odd thing is, we rather share the prejudice. I have almost always — though not quite always — found the higher the chief the better the man through all the islands; or, at least, that the best man came always from a highish rank. I hope Helen will continue to prove a bright exception.

With love to Fairchild and the Huge Schoolboy, I am, my dear Mrs. Fairchild, yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *March 9th* .

MY DEAR S. C., — Take it not amiss if this is a wretched letter. I am eaten up with business. Every day this week I have had some business impediment — I am even now waiting a deputation of chiefs about the road — and my precious morning was shattered by a polite old scourge of a *faipule* — parliament man — come begging. All the time *David Balfour* is skelping along. I began it the 13th 167 of last month; I have now 12 chapters, 79 pages ready for press, or within an ace, and, by the time the month is out, one-half should be completed, and I'll be back at drafting the second half. What makes me sick is to think of Scott turning out *Guy Mannering* in three weeks! What a pull of work: heavens, what thews and sinews! And here am I, my head spinning from having only re-written seven not very difficult pages — and not very good when done. Weakling generation. It makes me sick of myself, to make such a fash and bobbery over a rotten end of an old nursery yarn, not worth spitting on when done. Still, there is no doubt I turn out my work more easily than of yore; and I suppose I should be singly glad of that. And if I got my book done in six weeks, seeing it will be about half as long as a Scott, and I have to write everything twice, it would be about the same rate of industry. It is my fair intention to be done with it in three months, which would make me about one-half the man Sir Walter was for application and driving the dull pen. Of the merit we shall not talk; but I don't think Davie is *without* merit.

March 12th. — And I have this day triumphantly finished 15 chapters, 100 pages — being exactly one-half (as near as anybody can guess) of *David Balfour*; the book to be about a fifth as long again (altogether) as *Treasure Island:* could I but do the second half in another month! But I can't, I fear; I shall have some belated material arriving by next mail, and must go again at the History. Is it not characteristic of my broken tenacity of mind, that I should have left Davie Balfour some five years in the British Linen Company's Office, and then follow him at last with such vivacity? But I leave you again; the last (15th) chapter ought to be re-wrote, or part of it, and I want the half completed in the month, and the month is out by midnight; though, to be sure, last month was February, and I might take grace. These notes are only to show I hold you in mind, though I know they can have no interest for man or God or animal.

I should have told you about the Club. We have been asked to try and start a sort of weekly ball for the half-castes and natives, ourselves to be the only whites; and we consented, from a very heavy sense of duty, and with not much hope. Two nights ago we had twenty people up, received them in the front verandah, entertained them on cake and lemonade, and I made a speech — embodying our proposals, or conditions, if you like — for I suppose thirty minutes. No joke to speak to such an audience, but it is believed I was thoroughly intelligible. I took the plan of saying everything at least twice in a different form of words, so that if the one escaped my hearers, the other might be seized. One white man came with his wife, and was kept rigorously on the front verandah below! You see what a sea of troubles this is like to prove; but it is the only chance — and when it blows up, it must blow up! I have no more hope in anything than a dead frog; I go into everything with a composed despair, and don't mind — just as I always go to sea with the conviction I am to be drowned, and like it before all other pleasures. But you should have seen the return voyage, when nineteen horses had to be found in the dark, and nineteen bridles, all in a drench of rain, and the club, just constituted as such, sailed away in the wet, under a cloudy moon like a bad shilling, and to descend a road through the forest that was at that moment the image of a respectable mountain brook. My wife, who is president *with power to expel*, had to begin her functions....

25th March. — Heaven knows what day it is, but I am ashamed, all the more as your letter from Bournemouth of all places — poor old Bournemouth! — is to hand, and contains a statement of pleasure in my letters which I wish I could have rewarded with a long one. What has gone on? A vast of affairs, of a mingled, strenuous, inconclusive, desultory character; much waste of time, much riding to and fro, and little transacted or at least peracted.

Let me give you a review of the present state of our 169 live stock. — Six boys in the bush; six souls about the house. Talolo, the cook, returns again to-day, after an absence which has cost me about twelve hours of riding, and I suppose eight hours' solemn sitting in council. "I am sorry indeed for the Chief Justice of Samoa," I said; "it is more than I am fit for to be Chief Justice of Vailima." — Lauilo is steward. Both these are excellent servants; we gave a luncheon party when we buried the Samoan bones, and I assure you all was in good style, yet we never interfered. The food was good, the wine and dishes went round as by mechanism. — Steward's assistant and washman, Arrick, a New Hebridee black boy, hired from the German firm; not so ugly as most, but not pretty neither; not so dull as his sort are, but not quite a Crichton. When he came first, he ate so much of our good food that he got a prominent belly. Kitchen assistant, Tomas (Thomas in English), a Fiji man, very tall and handsome, moving like a marionette with sudden bounds, and rolling his eyes with sudden effort. — Washerwoman and precentor, Helen, Tomas's wife. This is our weak point; we are ashamed of Helen; the cook-house blushes for her; they murmur there at her presence. She seems all right; she is not a bad-looking, strapping wench, seems chaste, is industrious, has an excellent taste in hymns — you should have heard her read one aloud the other day, she marked the rhythm with so much gloating, dissenter sentiment. What is wrong, then? says you. Low in your ear — and don't let the papers get hold of it — she is of no family. None, they say; literally a common woman. Of course, we have out-islanders, who *may* be villeins; but we give them the benefit of the doubt, which is impossible with Helen of Vailima; our blot, our pitted speck. The pitted speck I have said is our precentor. It is always a woman who starts Samoan song; the men who sing second do not enter for a bar or two. Poor, dear Faauma, the unchaste, the extruded Eve of our Paradise, knew only two hymns; but Helen seems to know the whole repertory, and the 170 morning prayers go far more lively in consequence. — Lafaele, provost of the cattle. The cattle are Jack, my horse, quite converted, my wife rides him now, and he is as steady as a doctor's cob; Tifaga Jack, a circus horse, my mother's piebald, bought from a passing circus; Belle's mare, now in childbed or next door, confound the slut! Musu — amusingly translated the other day "don't want to," literally cross, but always in the sense of stubbornness and resistance — my wife's little dark-brown mare, with a white star on her forehead, whom I have been riding of late to steady her — she has no vices, but is unused, skittish and uneasy, and wants a lot of attention and humouring; lastly (of saddle horses) Luna — not the Latin *moon,* the Hawaiian *overseer,* but it's pronounced the same — a pretty little mare too, but scarce at all broken, a bad bucker, and has to be ridden with a stock-whip and be brought back with her rump criss-crossed like a clan tartan; the two cart horses, now only used with pack-saddles; two cows, one in the straw (I trust) to-morrow, a third cow, the Jersey — whose milk and temper are alike subjects of admiration — she gives good exercise to the farming saunterer, and refreshes him on his return with cream; two calves, a bull, and a cow; God knows how many ducks and chickens, and for a wager not even God knows how many cats; twelve horses, seven horses, five kine: is not this Babylon the Great which I have builded? Call it *Subpriorsford.*

Two nights ago the club had its first meeting; only twelve were present, but it went very well. I was not there, I had ridden down the night before after dinner on my endless business, took a cup of tea in the mission like an ass, then took a cup of coffee like a fool at Haggard's, then fell into a discussion with the American Consul.... I went to bed at Haggard's, came suddenly broad awake, and lay sleepless the live night. It felt chill, I had only a sheet, and had to make a light and range the house for a cover — I found one in the hall, a macintosh. So back 171 to my sleepless bed, and to lie there till dawn. In the morning I had a longish ride to take in a day of a blinding, staggering sun, and got home by eleven, our luncheon hour, with my head rather swimmy; the only time I have *feared* the sun since I was in Samoa. However, I got no harm, but did not go to the club, lay off, lazied, played the pipe, and read a novel by James Payn — sometimes quite interesting, and in one place really very funny with the quaint humour of the man. Much interested the other day. As I rode past a house, I saw where a Samoan had written a word on a board, and there was an , perfectly formed, but upside down. You never saw such a thing in Europe; but it is as common as dirt in Polynesia. Men's names are tattooed on the forearm; it is common to find a subverted letter tattooed there. Here is a tempting problem for psychologists.

I am now on terms again with the German consulate, I know not for how long; not, of course, with the President, which I find a relief; still, with the Chief Justice and the English consul. For Haggard, I have a genuine affection; he is a loveable man.

Wearyful man! "Here is the yarn of Loudon Dodd, *not as he told it, but as it was afterwards written.*" These words were left out by some carelessness, and I think I have been thrice tackled about them. Grave them in your mind and wear them on your forehead.

The Lang story will have very little about the treasure; the Master will appear; and it is to a great extent a tale of Prince Charlie *after* the '45, and a love story forbye: the hero is a melancholy exile, and marries a young woman who interests the prince, and there is the devil to pay. I think the Master kills him in a duel, but don't know yet, not having yet seen my second heroine. No — the Master 172 doesn't kill him, they fight, he is wounded, and the Master plays *deus ex machina*. *I think* just now of calling it *The Tail of the Race*; no — heavens! I never saw till this moment — but of course nobody but myself would ever understand Mill-Race, they would think of a quarter-mile. So — I am nameless again. My melancholy young man is to be quite a Romeo. Yes, I'll name the book from him: *Dyce of Ythan* — pronounce Eethan.

Dyce of Ythan
by R. L. S.

O, Shovel — Shovel waits his turn, he and his ancestors. I would have tackled him before, but my *State Trials* have never come. So that I have now quite planned: —

Dyce of Ythan. (Historical, 1750.)
Sophia Scarlet. (To-day.)
The Shovels of Newton French. (Historical, 1650 to 1830.)

And quite planned and part written: —

The Pearl Fisher. (To-day.) (With Lloyd: a machine.)
David Balfour. (Historical, 1751.)

And, by a strange exception for R. L. S., all in the third person except D. B.

I don't know what day this is now (the 29th), but I have finished my two chapters, ninth and tenth, of *Samoa* in time for the mail, and feel almost at peace. The tenth was the hurricane, a difficult problem; it so tempted one to be literary; and I feel sure the less of that there is in my little handbook, the more chance it has of some utility. 173 Then the events are complicated, seven ships to tell of, and sometimes three of them together; O, it was quite a job. But I think I have my facts pretty correct, and for once, in my sickening yarn, they are handsome facts: creditable to all concerned; not to be written of — and I should think, scarce to be read — without a thrill. I doubt I have got no hurricane into it, the intricacies of the yarn absorbing me too much. But there — it's done somehow, and time presses hard on my heels. The book, with my best expedition, may come just too late to be of use. In which case I shall have made a handsome present of some months of my life for nothing and to nobody. Well, through Her the most ancient heavens are fresh and strong.

30th. — After I had written you, I re-read my hurricane, which is very poor; the life of the journalist is hard, another couple of writings and I could make a good thing, I believe, and it must go as it is! But, of course, this book is not written for honour and glory, and the few who will read it may not know the difference. Very little time. I go down with the mail shortly, dine at the Chinese restaurant, and go to the club to dance with islandresses. Think of my going out once a week to dance.

Politics are on the full job again, and we don't know what is to come next. I think the whole treaty *raj* seems quite played out! They have taken to bribing the *faipule* men (parliament men) to stay in Mulinuu, we hear; but I have not yet sifted the rumour. I must say I shall be scarce surprised if it prove true; these rumours have the knack of being right. — Our weather this last month has been tremendously hot, not by the thermometer, which sticks at 86°, but to the sensation:

no rain, no wind, and this the storm month. It looks ominous, and is certainly disagreeable.

No time to finish. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

The first sentences of the following refer to *A Footnote to History,* Chapter x. of which, relating to the hurricane of 1889, was first published in the Scots Observer, edited by Mr. Henley.

[*Vailima, March 1892.*]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — Herewith Chapters IX. and X., and I am left face to face with the horrors and dilemmas of the present regimen: pray for those that go down to the sea in ships. I have promised Henley shall have a chance to publish the hurricane chapter if he like, so please let the slips be sent *quam primum* to C. Baxter, W.S., 11 S. Charlotte Street, Edinburgh. I got on mighty quick with that chapter — about five days of the toughest kind of work. God forbid I should ever have such another pirn to wind! When I invent a language, there shall be a direct and an indirect pronoun differently declined — then writing would be some fun.

Direct	Indirect
He	Tu
Him	Tum
His	Tus

Ex.: *He* seized *tum* by *tus* throat; but *tu* at the same moment caught *him* by his hair. A fellow could write hurricanes with an inflection like that! Yet there would be difficulties too.

Please add to my former orders —

Le Chevalier Des Touches by Barbey d'Aurevilly.
Les Diabohques
Correspondence de Henri Beyle (Stendahl).

Yours sincerely,

R. L. Stevenson.

To the Rev. S. J. Whitmee

In this letter the essential points of Stevenson's policy for Samoa are defined more clearly than anywhere else. His correspondent, an 175 experienced missionary who had been absent from the islands and lately returned, and whom Stevenson describes as being of a nature essentially "childlike and candid," had been induced to support the idea of a one-man power as necessary for putting an end to the existing confusion, and to suggest the Chief Justice, Mr. Cedercrantz, as the person to wield such power. In the present letter and a subsequent conversation Stevenson was able to persuade his correspondent to abandon at least that part of his proposal which concerned the Chief Justice.

[*Vailima*] *Sunday. Better Day, Better Deed.*

April 24th, 1892.

Private and confidential.

DEAR MR. WHITMEE, — I have reflected long and fully on your paper, and at your kind request give you the benefit of my last thoughts.

I. I cannot bring myself to welcome your idea of one man. I fear we are too far away from any moderative influence; and suppose it to be true that the paper is bought, we should not even have a voice. Could we be sure to get a Gordon or a Lawrence, ah! very well. But in this out-of-the-way place, are these extreme experiments wise? Remember Baker; with much that he has done, I am in full sympathy; and the man, though wholly insincere, is a thousand miles from ill-meaning; and see to what excesses he was forced or led.

II. But I willingly admit the idea is possible with the right man, and this brings me with greater conviction to my next point. I cannot endorse, and I would rather beg of you to reconsider, your recommendation of the Chief Justice. I told you the man has always attracted me, yet as I have earnestly reconsidered the points against him, I find objection growing....

But there is yet another argument I have to lay before you. We are both to write upon this subject. Many of our opinions coincide, and, as I said the other day, on these we may reasonably suppose that we are not far wrong. Now here is a point on which we shall directly counter. No doubt but this will lessen the combined 176 weight of our arguments where they coincide. And to avoid this effect, it might seem worth while to you to modify or cancel the last paragraph of your article.

III. But I now approach what seems to me by far the most important. White man here, white man there, Samoa is to stand or fall (bar actual seizure) on the Samoan question. And upon this my mind is now really made up. I do not believe in Laupepa alone; I do not believe in Mataafa alone. I know that their conjunction implies peace; I am persuaded that their separation means either war or paralysis. It is the result of the past, which we cannot change, but which we must accept and use or suffer by. I have now made up my mind to do all that I may be able — little as it is — to effect a reconciliation between these two men Laupepa and Mataafa; persuaded as I am that there is the one door of hope. And it is my intention before long to approach both in this sense. Now, from the course of our interview, I was pleased to see that you were, if not equally strong with myself, at least inclined to much the same opinion. And in a carefully weighed paper, such as that you read me, I own I should be pleased to have this cardinal matter touched upon. At home it is not, it cannot be, understood: Mataafa is thought a rebel; the Germans profit by the thought to pursue their career of vengeance for Fagalii; the two men are perpetually offered as alternatives — they are no such thing — they are complementary; authority, supposing them to survive, will be impossible without both. They were once friends, fools and meddlers set them at odds, they must be friends again or have so much wisdom and public virtue as to pretend a friendship. There is my policy for Samoa. And I wish you would at least touch upon that point, I care not how; because, although I am far from supposing you feel it to be necessary in the same sense or to the same degree as I do, I am well aware that no man knows Samoa but must see its huge advantages. Excuse this long and tedious lecture, which I see I have 177 to mark private and confidential, or I might get into deep water, and believe me, yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

The maps herein bespoken do not adorn the ordinary editions of *Catriona*, only the Edinburgh edition, for which they were executed by Messrs. Bartholomew in a manner that would have rejoiced the writer's heart.

[*Vailima*] *April 28, 1892.*

MY DEAR CHARLES, — I have just written the dedication of *David Balfour* to you, and haste to put a job in your hands. This is a map of the environs of Edinburgh *circa* 1750. It must contain Hope Park, Hunter's Bog, Calton Hill, the Mouter Hill, Lang Dykes, Nor' Loch, West Kirk, Village of Dean, pass down the water to Stockbridge, Silver Mills, the two mill lakes there, with a wood on the south side of the south one which I saw marked on a plan in the British Museum, Broughton, Picardy, Leith Walk, Leith, Pilrig, Lochend, Figgate Whins. And I would like a piece in a corner, giving for the same period Figgate Whins, Musselburgh, Inveresk, Prestonpans, battlefield of Gladsmuir, Cockenzie, Gullane — which I spell Gillane — Fidra, Dirleton, North Berwick Law, Whitekirk, Tantallon Castle and Castleton, Scougal and Auldhame, the Bass, the Glenteithy rocks, Satan's Bush, Wildfire rocks, and, if possible, the May. If need were, I would not stick at two maps. If there is but one, say, *Plan to illustrate David Balfour's adventures in the Lothians*. If two, call the first *Plan to illustrate David Balfour's adventures about the city of Edinburgh*, and the second, *Plan to illustrate David Balfour's adventures in East Lothian*. I suppose there must be a map-maker of some taste in Edinburgh; I wish few other names in, but what I have given, as far as possible. As soon as may be I will let you have the text, when you might 178 even find some amusement in seeing that the maps fill the bill. If your map-maker be a poor creature, plainness is best; if he were a fellow of some genuine go, he might give it a little of the bird's-eye quality. I leave this to your good taste. If I have time I will copy the dedication to go herewith; I am pleased with it. The first map (suppose we take two) would go in at the beginning, the second at Chapter XI. The topography is very much worked into the story, and I have alluded in the dedication to our common fancy for exploring Auld Reekie.

The list of books came duly, for which many thanks. I am plunged to the nostrils in various business. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *May 1st, 1892.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — As I rode down last night about six, I saw a sight I must try to tell you of. In front of me, right over the top of the forest into which I was descending, was a vast cloud. The front of it accurately represented the somewhat rugged, long-nosed, and beetle-browed profile of a man, crowned by a huge Kalmuck cap; the flesh part was of a heavenly pink, the cap, the moustache, the eyebrows were of a bluish grey; to see this with its childish exactitude of design and colour, and hugeness of scale — it covered at least 25° — held me spell-bound. As I continued to gaze, the expression began to change; he had the exact air of closing one eye, dropping his jaw, and drawing down his nose; had the thing not been so imposing, I could have smiled; and then almost in a moment, a shoulder of leaden-coloured bank drove in front and blotted it. My attention spread to the rest of the cloud, and it was a thing to worship. It rose from the horizon, and its top was within thirty degrees of the zenith; the lower parts were like a glacier in shadow, varying from dark indigo to a clouded white in exquisite 179 gradations. The sky behind, so far as I could see, was all of a blue already enriched and darkened by the night, for the hill had what lingered of the sunset. But the top of my Titanic cloud flamed in broad sunlight, with the most excellent softness and brightness of fire and jewels, enlightening all the world. It must have been far higher than Mount Everest, and its glory, as I gazed up at it out of the night, was beyond wonder. Close by rode the little crescent moon; and right over its western horn, a great planet of about equal lustre with itself. The dark woods below were shrill with that noisy business of the birds' evening worship. When I returned, after eight, the moon was near down; she seemed little brighter than before, but now that the cloud no longer played its part of a nocturnal sun, we could see that sight, so rare with us at home that it was counted a portent, so customary in the tropics, of the dark sphere with its little gilt band upon the belly. The planet had been setting faster, and was now below the crescent. They were still of an equal brightness.

I could not resist trying to reproduce this in words, as a specimen of these incredibly beautiful and imposing meteors of the tropic sky that make so much of my pleasure here; though a ship's deck is the place to enjoy them. O what *awful* scenery, from a ship's deck, in the tropics! People talk about the Alps, but the clouds of the trade wind are alone for sublimity.

Now to try and tell you what has been happening. The state of these islands, and of Mataafa and Laupepa (Malietoas *ambo*), had been much on my mind. I went to the priests and sent a message to Mataafa, at a time when it was supposed he was about to act. He did not act, delaying in true native style, and I determined I should go to visit him. I have been very good not to go sooner; to live within a few miles of a rebel camp, to be a novelist, to have all my family forcing me to go, and to refrain all these months, counts for virtue. But 180 hearing that several people had gone and the government done nothing to punish them, and having an errand there which was enough to justify myself in my own eyes, I half determined to go, and spoke of it with the half-caste priest. And here (confound it) up came Laupepa and his guards to call on me; we kept him to lunch, and the old gentleman was very good and amiable. He asked me why I had not been to see him? I reminded him a law had been made, and told him I was not a small boy to go and ask leave of the consuls, and perhaps be refused. He told me to pay no attention to the law but come when I would, and begged me to name a day to lunch. The next day (I think it was) early in the morning, a man appeared; he had metal buttons like a policeman — but he was none of our Apia force; he was a rebel policeman, and had been all night coming round inland through the forest from Malie. He brought a letter addressed

To his Excellency
Misi Thingumbob.

(So as not to compromise me.) I can read Samoan now, though not speak it. It was to ask me for last Wednesday. My difficulty was great; I had no man here who was fit, or who would have cared, to write for me; and I had to postpone the visit. So I gave up half-a-day with a groan, went down to the priests, arranged for Monday week to go to Malie, and named Thursday as my day to lunch with Laupepa. I was sharply ill on Wednesday, mail day. But on Thursday I had to trail down and go through the dreary business of a feast, in the King's wretched shanty, full in view of the President's fine new house; it made my heart burn.

This gave me my chance to arrange a private interview with the king, and I decided to ask Mr. Whitmee to be my interpreter. On Friday, being too much exhausted to go down, I begged him to come up. He did. I told him the heads of what I meant to say; and he not only 181 consented, but said, if we got on well with the king, he would even proceed with me to Malie. Yesterday, in consequence, I rode down to W.'s house by eight in the morning; waited till ten; received a message that the king was stopped by a meeting with the president and *faipule*; made another engagement for seven at night; came up; went down; waited till eight, and came away again, *bredouille*, and a dead body. The poor, weak, enslaved king had not dared to come to me even in secret. Now I have to-day for a rest, and to-morrow to Malie. Shall I be suffered to embark? It is very doubtful; they are on the trail. On Thursday, a policeman came up to me and began that a boy had been to see him, and said I was going to see Mataafa. — "And what did you say?" said I. — "I told him I did not know about where you were going," said he. — "A very good answer," said I, and turned away. It is lashing rain to-day, but to-morrow, rain or shine, I must at least make the attempt; and I am so weary, and the weather looks so bad. I could half wish they would arrest me on the beach. All this bother and pother to try and bring a little chance of peace; all this opposition and obstinacy in people who remain here by the mere forbearance of Mataafa, who has a great force within six miles of their government buildings, which are indeed only the residences of white officials. To understand how I have been occupied, you must know that "Misi Mea" has had another letter, and this time had to answer himself; think of doing so in a language so obscure to me, with the aid of a Bible, concordance, and dictionary! What a wonderful Baboo compilation it must have been! I positively expected to hear news of its arrival in Malie by the sound of laughter. I doubt if you will be able to read this scrawl, but I have managed to scramble somehow up to date; and to-morrow, one way or another, should be interesting. But as for me, I am a wreck, as I have no doubt style and handwriting both testify.

8 P.M. — Wonderfully rested; feel almost fit for to-morrow's dreary excursion — not that it will be dreary if the weather favour, but otherwise it will be death; and a native feast, and I fear I am in for a big one, is a thing I loathe. I wonder if you can really conceive me as a politician in this extra-mundane sphere — presiding at public meetings, drafting proclamations, receiving mis-addressed letters that have been carried all night through tropical forests? It seems strange indeed, and to you, who know me really, must seem stranger. I do not say I am free from the itch of meddling, but God knows this is no tempting job to meddle in; I smile at picturesque circumstances like the Misi Mea (*Monsieur Chose* is the exact equivalent) correspondence,

but the business as a whole bores and revolts me. I do nothing and say nothing; and then a day comes, and I say "this can go on no longer."

9.30 P.M. — The wretched native dilatoriness finds me out. News has just come that we must embark at six to-morrow; I have divided the night in watches, and hope to be called to-morrow at four and get under way by five. It is a great chance if it be managed; but I have given directions and lent my own clock to the boys, and hope the best. If I get called at four we shall do it nicely. Good-night; I must turn in.

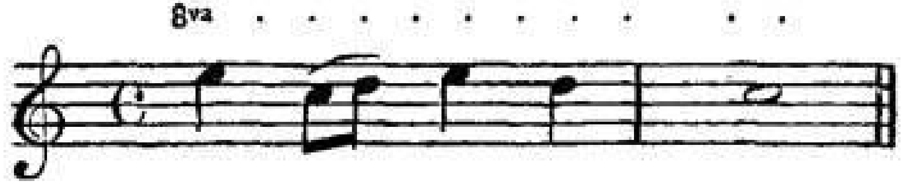
May 3rd. — Well, we did get off by about 5.30, or, by'r lady! quarter to six; myself on Donald, the huge grey cart-horse, with a ship-bag across my saddle bow, Fanny on Musu and Belle on Jack. We were all feeling pretty tired and sick, and I looked like heaven knows what on the cart-horse: "death on the pale horse," I suggested — and young Hunt the missionary, who met me to-day on the same charger, squinted up at my perch and remarked, "There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft." The boat was ready and we set off down the lagoon about seven, four oars, and Talolo, my cook, steering.

May 9th (*Monday anyway*). — And see what good resolutions 183 came to! Here is all this time past, and no speed made. Well, we got to Malie and were received with the most friendly consideration by the rebel chief. Belle and Fanny were obviously thought to be my two wives; they were served their kava together, as were Mataafa and myself. Talolo utterly broke down as interpreter; long speeches were made to me by Mataafa and his orators, of which he could make nothing but they were "very much surprised" — his way of pronouncing obliged — and as he could understand nothing that fell from me except the same form of words, the dialogue languished and all business had to be laid aside. We had kava, and then a dish of arrowroot; one end of the house was screened off for us with a fine tapa, and we lay and slept, the three of us, heads and tails, upon the mats till dinner. After dinner his illegitimate majesty and myself had a walk, and talked as well as my twopenny Samoan would admit. Then there was a dance to amuse the ladies before the house, and we came back by moonlight, the sky piled full of high faint clouds that long preserved some of the radiance of the sunset. The lagoon was very shallow; we continually struck, for the moon was young and the light baffling; and for a long time we were accompanied by, and passed and repassed, a huge whale-boat from Savaii, pulling perhaps twelve oars, and containing perhaps forty 184 people who sang in time as they went. So to the hotel, where we slept, and returned the next Tuesday morning on the three same steeds.

Meanwhile my business was still untransacted. And on Saturday morning, I sent down and arranged with Charlie Taylor to go down that afternoon. I had scarce got the saddle-bags fixed and had not yet mounted, when the rain began. But it was no use delaying now; off I went in a wild waterspout to Apia; found Charlie (Salé) Taylor — a sesquipedalian young half-caste — not yet ready, had a snack of bread and cheese at the hotel while waiting him, and then off to Malie. It rained all the way, seven miles; the road, which begins in triumph, dwindles down to a nasty, boggy, rocky footpath with weeds up to a horseman's knees; and there are eight pig fences to jump, nasty beastly jumps — the next morning we found one all messed with blood where a horse had come to grief — but my Jack is a clever fencer; and altogether we made good time, and got to Malie about dark. It is a village of very fine native houses, high, domed, oval buildings, open at the sides, or only closed with slatted Venetians. To be sure, Mataafa's is not the worst. It was already quite dark within, only a little fire of cocoa-shell blazed in the midst and showed us four servants; the chief was in his chapel, whence we heard the sound of chaunting. Presently he returned; Taylor and I had our soaking clothes changed, family worship was held, kava brewed, I was exhibited to the chiefs as a man who had ridden through all that rain and risked deportation to serve their master; they were bidden learn my face, and remember upon all occasions to help and serve me. Then dinner, and politics, and fine speeches until twelve at night — O, and some more kava — when I could sit up no longer; my usual bed-time is eight, you must remember. Then one end of the house was screened off for me alone, and a bed made — you never saw such a couch — I believe of nearly fifty (half at least) fine mats, by Mataafa's daughter, 185 Kalala. Here I reposed alone; and on the other side of the tapa, Majesty and his household. Armed guards and a drummer patrolled about the house all night; they had no shift, poor devils; but stood to arms from sun-down to sun-up.

About four in the morning, I was awakened by the sound of a whistle pipe blown outside on the dark, very softly and to a pleasing simple air; I really think I have hit the first phrase:

Andante tranquillo



It sounded very peaceful, sweet and strange in the dark; and I found this was a part of the routine of my rebel's night, and it was done (he said) to give good dreams. By a little before six, Taylor and I were in the saddle again fasting. My riding boots were so wet I could not get them on, so I must ride barefoot. The morning was fair but the roads very muddy, the weeds soaked us nearly to the waist, Salé was twice spilt at the fences, and we got to Apia a bedraggled enough pair. All the way along the coast, the paté (small wooden drum) was beating in the villages and the people crowding to the churches in their fine clothes. Thence through the mangrove swamp, among the black mud and the green mangroves, and the black and scarlet crabs, to Mulinuu, to the doctor's, where I had an errand, and so to the inn to breakfast about nine. After breakfast I rode home. Conceive such an outing, remember the pallid brute that lived in Skerryvore like a weevil in a biscuit, and receive the intelligence that I was rather the better for my journey. Twenty miles' ride, sixteen fences taken, ten of the miles in a drenching rain, seven of them fasting and in the morning chill, and six stricken hours' political discussions by an interpreter; to 186 say nothing of sleeping in a native house, at which many of our excellent literati would look askance of itself.

You are to understand: if I take all this bother, it is not only from a sense of duty, or a love of meddling — damn the phrase, take your choice — but from a great affection for Mataafa. He is a beautiful, sweet old fellow, and he and I grew quite fulsome on Saturday night about our sentiments. I had a messenger from him to-day with a flannel undershirt which I had left behind like a gibbering idiot; and perpetrated in reply another Baboo letter. It rains again to-day without mercy; blessed, welcome rains, making up for the paucity of the late wet season; and when the showers slacken, I can hear my stream roaring in the hollow, and tell myself that the cacaos are drinking deep. I am desperately hunted to finish my Samoa book before the mail goes; this last chapter is equally delicate and necessary. The prayers of the congregation are requested. Eheu! and it will be ended before this letter leaves and printed in the States ere you can read this scribble. The first dinner gong has sounded; *je vous salue, monsieur et cher confrère. Tofa, soifua!* Sleep! long life! as our Samoan salutation of farewell runs.

Friday, May 13*th.* — Well, the last chapter, by far the most difficult and ungrateful, is well under way, I have been from six to seven hours upon it daily since I last wrote; and that is all I have done forbye working at Samoan rather hard, and going down on Wednesday evening to the club. I make some progress now at the language; I am teaching Belle, which clears and exercises myself. I am particularly taken with the *finesse* of the pronouns. The pronouns are all dual and plural, and the first person, both in the dual and plural, has a special exclusive and inclusive form. You can conceive what fine effects of precision and distinction can be reached in certain cases. Take Ruth, i. *vv.* 8 to 13, and imagine how those pronouns come in; it is exquisitely elegant, 187 and makes the mouth of the *littérateur* to water. I am going to exercitate my pupil over those verses to-day for pronoun practice.

Tuesday. — Yesterday came yours. Well, well, if the dears prefer a week, why, I'll give them ten days, but the real document, from which I have scarcely varied, ran for one night. I think you seem scarcely fair to Wiltshire, who had surely, under his beast-ignorant ways, right noble qualities. And I think perhaps you scarce do justice to the fact that this is a place of realism *à outrance*; nothing extenuated or coloured. Looked at so, is it not, with all its tragic features, wonderfully idyllic, with great beauty of scene and circumstance? And will you please to observe that almost all that is ugly is in the whites? I'll apologise for Papa Randal if you like; but if I told you the whole truth — for I did extenuate there! — and he seemed to me essential as a figure, and essential as a pawn in the game, Wiltshire's disgust for him being one of the small, efficient motives in the story. Now it would have taken a fairish dose to disgust Wiltshire. — Again, the idea of publishing the *Beach* substantively is dropped — at once, both on account of expostulation, and because it measured shorter than I had expected. And it was only taken up, when the proposed volume, *Beach de Mar*, petered out. It petered out thus: the chief of the short stories got sucked into *Sophia Scarlet* — and *Sophia* is a book I am much taken with, and mean to get to, as soon as — but not before — I have done *David Balfour* and *The Young Chevalier*. So you see you are like to hear no more of the Pacific or the nineteenth century for a while. *The Young Chevalier* is a story of sentiment and passion, which I mean to write a little differently from what I have been doing — if I can hit the key; rather more of a sentimental tremolo to it. It may thus help to prepare me for *Sophia*, which is to contain three ladies, 188 and a kind of a love affair between the heroine and a dying planter who is a poet! large orders for R. L. S.

O the German taboo is quite over; no soul attempts to support the C. J. or the President, they are past hope; the whites have just refused their taxes — I mean the council has refused to call for them, and if the council consented, nobody would pay; 'tis a farce, and the curtain is going to fall briefly. Consequently in my History, I say as little as may be of the two dwindling stars. Poor devils! I liked the one, and the other has a little wife, now lying in! There was no man born with so little animosity as I. When I heard the C. J. was in low spirits and never left his house, I could scarce refrain from going to him.

It was a fine feeling to have finished the History; there ought to be a future state to reward that grind! It's not literature, you know; only journalism, and pedantic journalism. I had but the one desire, to get the thing as right as might be, and avoid false concords — even if that! And it was more than there was time for. However, there it is: done. And if Samoa turns up again, my book has to be counted with, being the only narrative extant. Milton and I — if you kindly excuse the juxtaposition — harnessed ourselves to strange waggons, and I at least will be found to have plodded very soberly with my load. There is not even a good sentence in it, but perhaps — I don't know — it may be found an honest, clear volume.

Wednesday. — Never got a word set down, and continues on Thursday, 19th May, his own marriage day as ever was. News; yes. The C. J. came up to call on us! After five months' cessation on my side, and a decidedly painful interchange of letters, I could not go down — *could* not — to see him. My three ladies received him, however; he was very agreeable as usual, but refused wine, beer, water, lemonade, chocolate, and at last a cigarette. Then my wife asked him, "So you refuse to break bread?" and 189 he waved his hands amiably in answer. All my three ladies received the same impression that he had serious matters in his mind: now we hear he is quite cock-a-hoop since the mail came, and going about as before his troubles darkened. But what did he want with me? 'Tis thought he had received a despatch — and that he misreads it (so we fully believe) to the effect that they are to have war ships at command and can make their little war after all. If it be so, and they do it, it will be the meanest wanton slaughter of poor men for the salaries of two white failures. But what was his errand with me? Perhaps to warn me that unless I behave he now hopes to be able to pack me off in the *Curaçoa* when she comes.

I have celebrated my holiday from *Samoa* by a plunge at the beginning of *The Young Chevalier*. I am afraid my touch is a little broad in a love story; I can't mean one thing and write another. As for women, I am no more in any fear of them; I can do a sort all right; age makes me less afraid of a petticoat, but I am a little in fear of grossness. However, this David Balfour's love affair, that's all right — might be read out to a mother's meeting — or a daughters' meeting. The difficulty in a love yarn, which dwells at all on love, is the dwelling on one string; it is manifold, I grant, but the root fact is there unchanged, and the sentiment being very intense, and already very much handled in letters, positively calls for a little pawing and gracing. With a writer of my prosaic literalness and pertinency of point of view, this all shoves toward grossness — positively even toward the far more damnable *closeness*. This has kept me off the sentiment hitherto, and now I am to try: Lord! Of course Meredith can do it, and so could Shakespeare; but with all my romance, I am a realist and a prosaist, and a most fanatical lover of plain physical sensations plainly and expressly rendered; hence my perils. To do love in the same spirit as I did (for instance) D. Balfour's 190 fatigue in the heather; my dear sir, there were grossness — ready made! And hence, how to sugar? However, I have nearly done with Marie-Madeleine, and am in good hopes of Marie-Salomé, the real heroine; the other is only a prologuial heroine to introduce the hero.

Friday. — Anyway, the first prologuial episode is done, and Fanny likes it. There are only four characters: Francis Blair of Balmile (Jacobite Lord Gladsmuir) my hero; the Master of Ballantrae; Paradou, a wine-seller of Avignon; Marie-Madeleine his wife. These two last I am now done with, and I think they are successful, and I hope I have Balmile on his feet; and the style seems to be found. It is a little charged and violent; sins on the side of violence; but I think will carry the tale. I think it is a good idea so to introduce my hero, being made love to by an episodic woman. This queer tale — I mean queer for me — has taken a great hold upon me. Where the devil shall I go next? This is simply the tale of a *coup de tête* of a young man and a young woman; with a nearly, perhaps a wholly, tragic sequel, which I desire to make thinkable right through, and sensible; to make the reader, as far as I shall be able, eat and drink and breathe it. Marie-Salomé des Saintes-Maries is, I think, the heroine's name; she has got to *be* yet: *sursum corda*! So has the young Chevalier, whom I have not yet touched, and who comes next in order. Characters: Balmile, or Lord Gladsmuir, *comme vous voulez*; Prince Charlie; Earl Marischal; Master of Ballantrae; and a spy, and Dr. Archie Campbell, and a few nondescripts; then, of women, Marie-Salomé and Flora Blair; seven at the outside; really four full lengths, and I suppose a half-dozen episodic profiles. How I must bore you with these ineptitudes! Have patience. I am going to bed; it is (of all hours) eleven. I have been forced in (since I began to write to you) to blatter to Fanny on the subject of my heroine, there being two *cruces* as to her life and history: how came she alone? and how far did she go with the 191 Chevalier? The second must answer itself when I get near enough to see. The first is a back-breaker. Yet I know there are many reasons why a *fille de famille*, romantic, adventurous, ambitious, innocent of the world, might run from her home in these days; might she not have been threatened with a convent? might there not be some Huguenot business mixed in? Here am I, far from books; if you can help me with a suggestion, I shall say God bless you. She has to be new run away from a strict family, well-justified in her own wild but honest eyes, and meeting these three men, Charles Edward, Marischal, and Balmile, through the accident of a fire at an inn. She must not run from a marriage, I think; it would bring her in the wrong frame of mind. Once I can get her, *sola*, on the highway, all were well with my narrative. Perpend. And help if you can.

Lafaele, long (I hope) familiar to you, has this day received the visit of his *son* from Tonga; and the *son* proves to be a very pretty, attractive young daughter! I gave all the boys kava in honour of her arrival; along with a lean, side-whiskered Tongan, dimly supposed to be Lafaele's step-father; and they have been having a good time; in the end of my verandah, I hear Simi, my present incapable steward, talking Tongan with the nondescript papa. Simi, our out-door boy, burst a succession of blood-vessels over our work, and I had to make a position for the wreck of one of the noblest figures of a man I ever saw. I believe I may have mentioned the other day how I had to put my horse to the trot, the canter and (at last) the gallop to run him down. In a photograph I hope to send you (perhaps with this) you will see Simi standing in the verandah in profile. As a steward, one of his chief points is to break crystal; he is great on fracture — what do I say? — explosion! He cleans a glass, and the shards scatter like a comet's bowels.

N.B. — If I should by any chance be deported, the first of the rules hung up for that occasion is to communicate 192 with you by telegraph. — Mind, I do not fear it, but it *is* possible.

Monday, 25th. — We have had a devil of a morning of upset and bustle; the bronze candlestick Faauma has returned to the family, in time to take her position of step-mamma, and it is pretty to see how the child is at once at home, and all her terrors ended.

27th. Mail day. — And I don't know that I have much to report. I may have to leave for Malie as soon as these mail packets are made up. 'Tis a necessity (if it be one) I rather deplore. I think I should have liked to lazy; but I dare say all it means is the delay of a day or so in harking back to David Balfour; that respectable youth chides at being left (where he is now) in Glasgow with the Lord Advocate, and after five years in the British Linen, who shall blame him? I was all forenoon yesterday down in Apia, dictating, and Lloyd typewriting, the conclusion of *Samoa*; and then at home correcting till the dinner bell; and in the evening again till eleven of the clock. This morning I have made up most of my packets, and I think my mail is all ready but two more, and the tag of this. I would never deny (as D. B. might say) that I was rather tired of it. But I have a damned good dose of the devil in my pipe-stem atomy; I have had my little holiday outing in my kick at *The Young Chevalier*, and I guess I can settle to *David Balfour* to-morrow or Friday like a little man. I wonder if any one had ever more energy upon so little strength? — I know there is a frost; the Samoa book can only increase that — I can't help it, that book is not written for me but for Miss Manners; but I mean to break that frost inside two years, and pull off a big success, and Vanity whispers in my ear that I have the strength. If I haven't, whistle ower the lave o't! I can do without glory and perhaps the time is not far off when I can do without coin. It is a time coming soon enough, anyway; and I have endured some two and forty years without public shame, and had a good time 193 as I did it. If only I could secure a violent death, what a fine success! I wish to die in my boots; no more Land of Counterpane for me. To be drowned, to be shot, to be thrown from a horse — ay, to be hanged, rather than pass again through that slow dissolution.

I fancy this gloomy ramble is caused by a twinge of age; I put on an under-shirt yesterday (it was the only one I could find) that barely came under my trousers; and just below it, a fine healthy rheumatism has now settled like a fire in my hip. From such small causes do these valuable considerations flow!

I shall now say adieu, dear Sir, having ten rugged miles before me and the horrors of a native feast and parliament without an interpreter, for to-day I go alone. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Describing a family expedition to visit Mataafa at Malie.

[*Vailima*] *Sunday, 29th May* .

How am I to overtake events? On Wednesday, as soon as my mail was finished, I had a wild whirl to look forward to. Immediately after dinner, Belle, Lloyd, and I set out on horseback, they to the club, I to Haggard's, thence to the hotel, where I had supper ready for them. All next day we hung round Apia with our whole house-crowd in Sunday array, hoping for the mail steamer with a menagerie on board. No such luck; the ship delayed; and at last, about three, I had to send them home again, a failure of a day's pleasuring that does not bear to be discussed. Lloyd was so sickened that he returned the same night to Vailima, Belle and I held on, sat most of the evening on the hotel verandah stricken silly with fatigue and disappointment, and genuine sorrow for our poor boys and girls, and got to bed with rather dismal appreciations of the morrow.

These were more than justified, and yet I never had a jollier day than Friday 27th. By 7.30 Belle and I had breakfast; we had scarce done before my mother was at the door on horseback, and a boy at her heels to take her not very dashing charger home again. By 8.10 we were all on the landing pier, and it was 9.20 before we had got away in a boat with two inches of green wood on the keel of her, no rudder, no mast, no sail, no boat flag, two defective rowlocks, two wretched apologies for oars, and two boys — one a Tongan half-caste, one a white lad, son of the Tonga schoolmaster, and a sailor lad — to pull us. All this was our first taste of the tender mercies of Taylor (the sesquipedalian half-caste introduced two letters back, I believe). We had scarce got round Mulinuu when Salé Taylor's heart misgave him;

he thought we had missed the tide; called a halt, and set off ashore to find canoes. Two were found; in one my mother and I were embarked with the two biscuit tins (my present to the feast), and the bag with our dry clothes, on which my mother was perched — and her cap was on the top of it — feminine hearts please sympathise; all under the guidance of Salé. In the other Belle and our guest; Tauilo, a chief-woman, the mother of my cook, were to have followed. And the boys were to have been left with the boat. But Tauilo refused. And the four, Belle, Tauilo, Frank the sailor-boy, and Jimmie the Tongan half-caste, set off in the boat across that rapidly shoaling bay of the lagoon.

How long the next scene lasted, I could never tell. Salé was always trying to steal away with our canoe and leave the other four, probably for six hours, in an empty, leaky boat, without so much as an orange or a cocoanut on board, and under the direct rays of the sun. I had at last to stop him by taking the spare paddle off the outrigger and sticking it in the ground — depth, perhaps two feet — width of the bay, say three miles. At last I bid him land me and my mother and go back for the other ladies. “The coast is so rugged,” said Salé. — ”What?” I said, 195 “all these villages and no landing-place?” — ”Such is the nature of Samoans,” said he. Well, I’ll find a landing-place, I thought; and presently I said, “Now we are going to land there.” — ”We can but try,” said the bland Salé, with resignation. Never saw a better landing-place in my life. Here the boat joined us. My mother and Salé continued in the canoe alone, and Belle and I and Tauilo set off on foot for Malie. Tauilo was about the size of both of us put together and a piece over; she used us like a nurse with children. I had started barefoot; Belle had soon to pull off her gala shoes and stockings; the mud was as deep as to our knees, and so slippery that (moving, as we did, in Indian file, between dense scratching tufts of sensitive) Belle and I had to take hands to support each other, and Tauilo was steadying Belle from the rear. You can conceive we were got up to kill, Belle in an embroidered white dress and white hat, I in a suit of Bedford cords hot from the Sydney tailors; and conceive us, below, ink-black to the knees with adhesive clay, and above, streaming with heat. I suppose it was better than three miles, but at last we made the end of Malie. I asked if we could find no water to wash our feet; and our nursemaid guided us to a pool. We sat down on the pool side, and our nursemaid washed our feet and legs for us — ladies first, I suppose out of a sudden respect to the insane European fancies: such a luxury as you can scarce imagine. I felt a new man after it. But before we got to the King’s house we were sadly muddied once more. It was 1 p.m. when we arrived, the canoe having beaten us by about five minutes, so we made fair time over our bog-holes.

But the war dances were over, and we came in time to see only the tail end (some two hours) of the food presentation. In Mataafa's house three chairs were set for us covered with fine mats. Of course, a native house without the blinds down is like a verandah. All the green in front was surrounded with sheds, some of flapping canvas, some of green palm boughs, where (in three sides 196 of a huge oblong) the natives sat by villages in a fine glow of many-hued array. There were folks in tapa, and folks in patchwork; there was every colour of the rainbow in a spot or a cluster; there were men with their heads gilded with powdered sandal-wood, others with heads all purple, stuck full of the petals of a flower. In the midst there was a growing field of outspread food, gradually covering acres; the gifts were brought in, now by chanting deputations, now by carriers in a file; they were brandished aloft and reclaimed over, with polite sacramental exaggerations, by the official receiver. He, a stalwart, well-oiled quadragenarian, shone with sweat from his exertions, brandishing cooked pigs. At intervals, from one of the squatted villages, an orator would arise. The field was almost beyond the reach of any human speaking voice; the proceedings besides continued in the midst; yet it was possible to catch snatches of this elaborate and cut-and-dry oratory — it was possible for me, for instance, to catch the description of my gift and myself as the *alii Tusitala, O le alii o malo tetele* — the chief Write Information, the chief of the great Governments. Gay designation? In the house, in our three curule chairs, we sat and looked on. On our left a little group of the family. In front of us, at our feet, an ancient Talking-man, crowned with green leaves, his profile almost exactly Dante's; Popo his name. He had worshipped idols in his youth; he had been full grown before the first missionary came hither from Tahiti; this makes him over eighty. Near by him sat his son and colleague. In the group on our left, his little grandchild sat with her legs crossed and her hands turned, the model already (at some three years old) of Samoan etiquette. Still further off to our right, Mataafa sat on the ground through all the business; and still I saw his lips moving, and the beads of his rosary slip stealthily through his hand. We had kava, and the King's drinking was hailed by the Popos (father and son) with a singular ululation, perfectly new to my ears; it means, to the 197 expert, "Long live Tuiatua"; to the inexpert, is a mere voice of barbarous wolves. We had dinner, retired a bit behind the central pillar of the house; and, when the King was done eating, the ululation was repeated. I had my eyes on Mataafa's face, and I saw pride and gratified ambition spring to life there and be instantly sucked in again. It was the first time, since the difference with Laupepa, that Popo and his son had openly joined him, and given him the due cry as Tuiatua — one of the eight royal names of the islands, as I hope you will know before this reaches you.

Not long after we had dined, the food-bringing was over. The gifts (carefully noted and tallied as they came in) were now announced by a humorous orator, who convulsed the audience, introducing singing notes, now on the name of the article, now on the number; six thousand odd heads of taro, three hundred and nineteen cooked pigs; and one thing that particularly caught me (by good luck), a single turtle “for the king” — *le tasi mo le tupu*. Then came one of the strangest sights I have yet witnessed. The two most important persons there (bar Mataafa) were Popo and his son. They rose, holding their long shod rods of talking men, passed forth from the house, broke into a strange dance, the father capering with outstretched arms and rod, the son crouching and gambolling beside him in a manner indescribable, and presently began to extend the circle of this dance among the acres of cooked food. *Whatever they leaped over, whatever they called for, became theirs.* To see mediæval Dante thus demean himself struck a kind of a chill of incongruity into our Philistine souls; but even in a great part of the Samoan concourse, these antique and (I understand) quite local manners awoke laughter. One of my biscuit tins and a live calf were among the spoils he claimed, but the large majority of the cooked food (having once proved his dignity) he re-presented to the king.

Then came the turn of *le alii Tusitala*. He would not 198 dance, but he was given — five live hens, four gourds of oil, four fine tapas, a hundred heads of taro, two cooked pigs, a cooked shark, two or three cocoanut branches strung with kava, and the turtle, who soon after breathed his last, I believe, from sunstroke. It was a royal present for “the chief of the great powers.” I should say the gifts were, on the proper signal, dragged out of the field of food by a troop of young men, all with their lava-lavas kilted almost into a loin-cloth. The art is to swoop on the food-field, pick up with unerring swiftness the right things and quantities, swoop forth again on the open, and separate, leaving the gifts in a new pile: so you may see a covey of birds in a corn-field. This reminds me of a very inhumane but beautiful passage I had forgotten in its place. The gift-giving was still in full swing, when there came a troop of some ninety men all in tapa lava-lavas of a purplish colour; they paused, and of a sudden there went up from them high into the air a flight of live chickens, which, as they came down again, were sent again into the air, for perhaps a minute, from the midst of a singular turmoil of flying arms and shouting voices; I assure you, it was very beautiful to see, but how many chickens were killed?

No sooner was my food set out than I was to be going. I had a little serious talk with Mataafa on the floor, and we went down to the boat, where we got our food aboard, such a cargo — like the Swiss Family

Robinson, we said. However, a squall began, Tauilo refused to let us go, and we came back to the house for half an hour or so, when my ladies distinguished themselves by walking through a Fono (council), my mother actually taking up a position between Mataafa and Popo! It was about five when we started — turtle, pigs, taro, etc., my mother, Belle, myself, Tauilo, a portly friend of hers with the voice of an angel, and a pronunciation so delicate and true that you could follow Samoan as she sang, and the two tired boys Frank and Jimmie, with the two bad oars and the two slippery 199 rowlocks to impel the whole. Salé Taylor took the canoe and a strong Samoan to paddle him. Presently after he went inshore, and passed us a little after, with his arms folded, and *two* strong Samoans impelling him Apia-ward. This was too much for Belle, who hailed, taunted him, and made him return to the boat with one of the Samoans, setting Jimmie instead in the canoe. Then began our torment, Salé and the Samoan took the oars, sat on the same thwart (where they could get no swing on the boat had they tried), and deliberately ladled at the lagoon. We lay enchanted. Night fell; there was a light visible on shore; it did not move. The two women sang, Belle joining them in the hymns she has learned at family worship. Then a squall came up; we sat a while in roaring midnight under rivers of rain, and, when it blew by, there was the light again, immovable. A second squall followed, one of the worst I was ever out in; we could scarce catch our breath in the cold, dashing deluge. When it went, we were so cold that the water in the bottom of the boat (which I was then baling) seemed like a warm footbath in comparison, and Belle and I, who were still barefoot, were quite restored by laving in it.

All this time I had kept my temper, and refrained as far as might be from any interference, for I saw (in our friend's mulish humour) he always contrived to twist it to our disadvantage. But now came the acute point. Young Frank now took an oar. He was a little fellow, near as frail as myself, and very short; if he weighed nine stone, it was the outside; but his blood was up. He took stroke, moved the big Samoan forward to bow, and set to work to pull him round in fine style. Instantly, a kind of race competition — almost race hatred — sprang up. We jeered the Samoan. Salé declared it was the trim of the boat; "if this lady was aft" (Tauilo's portly friend) "he would row round Frank." We insisted on her coming aft, and Frank still rowed round the Samoan. When the Samoan caught a crab (the thing was continual with 200 these wretched oars and rowlocks), *we* shouted and jeered; when Frank caught one, Salé and the Samoan jeered and yelled. But anyway the boat moved, and presently we got up with Mulinuu, where I finally lost my temper, when I found that Salé proposed to go ashore and make a visit — in fact, we all three did. It is not worth while going into, but I must give you one snatch of the subsequent conversation as we pulled round Apia bay. “This Samoan,” said Salé, “received seven German bullets in the field of Fangalii.” “I am delighted to hear it,” said Belle. “His brother was killed there,” pursued Salé; and Belle, prompt as an echo, “Then there are no more of the family? how delightful!” Salé was sufficiently surprised to change the subject; he began to praise Frank’s rowing with insufferable condescension: “But it is after all not to be wondered at,” said he, “because he has been for some time a sailor. My good man, is it three or five years that you have been to sea?” And Frank, in a defiant shout: “Two!” Whereupon, so high did the ill-feeling run, that we three clapped and applauded and shouted, so that the President (whose house we were then passing) doubtless started at the sounds. It was nine when we got to the hotel; at first no food was to be found, but we skirmished up some bread and cheese and beer and brandy; and (having changed our wet clothes for the rather less wet in our bags) supped on the verandah.

On Saturday, 28th, I was wakened about 6.30, long past my usual hour, by a benevolent passer-by. My turtle lay on the verandah at my door, and the man woke me to tell me it was dead, as it had been when we put it on board the day before. All morning I ran the gauntlet of men and women coming up to me: “Mr. Stevenson, your turtle is dead.” I gave half of it to the hotel keeper, so that his cook should cut it up; and we got a damaged shell, and two splendid meals, beefsteak one day and soup the next. The horses came for us about 9.30. It was waterspouting; we were drenched before we got out of 201 the town; the road was a fine going Highland trout stream; it thundered deep and frequent, and my mother’s horse would not better on a walk. At last she took pity on us, and very nobly proposed that Belle and I should ride ahead. We were mighty glad to do so, for we were cold. Presently, I said I should ride back for my mother, but it thundered again; Belle is afraid of thunder, and I decided to see her through the forest before I returned for my other hen — I may say, my other wet hen. About the middle of the wood, where it is roughest and steepest, we met three pack-horses with barrels of lime-juice. I piloted Belle past these — it is not very easy in such a road — and then passed them again myself, to pilot my mother. This effected, it began to thunder again, so I rode on hard after Belle. When I caught up with her, she was singing Samoan hymns to support her terrors! We were all back, changed, and at table by lunch time, 11 A.M. Nor have any of us been the worse for it sin-syne. That is pretty good for a woman of my mother’s age and an invalid of my standing; above all, as Tauilo was laid up with a bad cold, probably increased by rage.

Friday, 3rd June. — On Wednesday the club could not be held, and I must ride down town and to and fro all afternoon delivering messages, then dined and rode up by the young moon. I had plenty news when I got back; there is great talk in town of my deportation: it is thought they have written home to Downing Street requesting my removal, which leaves me not much alarmed; what I do rather expect is that H. J. Moors and I may be haled up before the C. J. to stand a trial for *lèse*-majesty. Well, we'll try and live it through.

The rest of my history since Monday has been unadulterated *David Balfour*. In season and out of season, night and day, David and his innocent harem — let me be just, he never has more than the two — are on my mind. Think of David Balfour with a pair of fair ladies — very nice ones too — hanging round him. I really believe David 202 is as good a character as anybody has a right to ask for in a novel. I have finished drafting Chapter XX. to-day, and feel it all ready to froth when the spigot is turned.

O, I forgot — and do forget. What did I mean? A waft of cloud has fallen on my mind, and I will write no more.

Wednesday, I believe, 8th June. — Lots of David, and lots of David, and the devil any other news. Yesterday we were startled by great guns firing a salute, and to-day Whitmee (missionary) rode up to lunch, and we learned it was the *Curaçoa* come in, the ship (according to rumour) in which I was to be deported. I went down to meet my fate, and the captain is to dine with me Saturday, so I guess I am not going this voyage. Even with the particularity with which I write to you, how much of my life goes unexpressed; my troubles with a madman by the name of — — , a genuine living lunatic, I believe, and jolly dangerous; my troubles about poor — — , all these have dropped out; yet for moments they were very instant, and one of them is always present with me.

I have finished copying Chapter XXI. of David — "*solus cum sola*; we travel together." Chapter XXII., "*Solus cum sola*; we keep house together," is already drafted. To the end of XXI. makes more than 150 pages of my manuscript — damn this hair — and I only designed the book to run to about 200; but when you introduce the female sect, a book does run away with you. I am very curious to see what you will think of my two girls. My own opinion is quite clear; I am in love with both. I foresee a few pleasant years of spiritual flirtations. The creator (if I may name myself, for the sake of argument, by such a name) is essentially unfaithful. For the duration of the two chapters in which I dealt with Miss Grant, I totally forgot my heroine, and even — but this is a flat secret — tried to win away David. I think I must try some day to marry Miss Grant. I'm blest if I don't think I've got that hair out! which seems triumph enough; so I conclude.

Tuesday. — Your infinitesimal correspondence has reached me, and

I have the honour to refer to it with scorn. It contains only one statement of conceivable interest, that your health is better; the rest is null, and so far as disquisitory unsound. I am all right, but David Balfour is ailing; this came from my visit to the man-of-war, where I had a cup of tea, and the most of that night walked the verandah with extraordinary convictions of guilt and ruin, many of which (but not all) proved to have fled with the day, taking David along with them; he R.I.P. in Chapter XXII.

On Saturday I went down to the town, and fetched up Captain Gibson to dinner; Sunday I was all day at Samoa, and had a pile of visitors. Yesterday got my mail, including your despicable sheet; was fooled with a visit from the high chief Asi, went down at 4 P.M. to my Samoan lesson from Whitmee — I think I shall learn from him, he does not fool me with cockshot rules that are demolished next day, but professes ignorance like a man; the truth is, the grammar has still to be expiscated — dined with Haggard, and got home about nine.

Wednesday. — The excellent Clarke up here almost all day yesterday, a man I esteem and like to the soles of his boots; I prefer him to any one in Samoa, and to most people in the world; a real good missionary, with the inestimable advantage of having grown up a layman. Pity they all can’t get that! It recalls my old proposal, which delighted Lady Taylor so much, that every divinity student should be thirty years old at least before he was admitted. Boys switched out of college into a pulpit, what chance have they? That any should do well amazes me, and the most are just what was to be expected.

Saturday. — I must tell you of our feast. It was long promised to the boys, and came off yesterday in one of their new houses. My good Simelé arrived from Savaii that morning asking for political advice; then we had Tauilo; Elena’s father, a talking man of Tauilo’s family; 204 Talolo’s cousin; and a boy of Simelé’s family, who attended on his dignity; then Metu, the meat-man — you have never heard of him, but he is a great person in our household — brought a lady and a boy — and there was another infant — eight guests in all. And we sat down thirty strong. You should have seen our procession, going (about two o’clock), all in our best clothes, to the hall of feasting! All in our Sunday’s best. The new house had been hurriedly finished; the rafters decorated with flowers; the floor spread, native style, with green leaves; we had given a big porker, twenty-five pounds of fresh beef, a tin of biscuit, cocoanuts, etc. Our places were all arranged with much care; the native ladies of the house facing our party; the sides filled up by the men; the guests, please observe: the two chief people, male and female, were placed with our family, the rest between S. and the native ladies. After the feast was over, we had kava, and the calling of the kava was a very elaborate affair, and I thought had like to have made Simelé very angry; he is really a considerable chief, but he and Tauilo were not called till after all our family, *and the guests*, I suppose the principle being that he was still regarded as one of the household. I forgot to say that our black boy did not turn up when the feast was ready. Off went the two cooks, found him, decorated him with huge red hibiscus flowers — he was in a very dirty undershirt — brought him back between them like a reluctant maid, and thrust him into a place between Faauma and Elena, where he was petted and ministered to. When his turn came in the kava drinking — and you may be sure, in their contemptuous, affectionate kindness for him, as for a good dog, it came rather earlier than it ought — he was cried under a new name. *Aleki* is what they make of his own name Arrick; but instead of {the cup of "le ipu a} Aleki!" it was called "le ipu a *Vailima*," and it was explained that he had "taken his chief-name"! a jest at which the plantation still 205 laughs. Kava done, I made a little speech, Henry translating. If I had been well, I should have alluded to all, but I was scarce able to sit up; so only alluded to my guest of all this month, the Tongan, Tomas, and to Simelé, partly for the jest of making him translate compliments to himself. The talking man replied with many handsome compliments to me, in the usual flood of Samoan fluent neatness; and we left them to an afternoon of singing and dancing. Must stop now, as my right hand is very bad again. I am trying to write with my left.

Sunday. — About half-past eight last night, I had gone to my own room, Fanny and Lloyd were in Fanny's, every one else in bed, only two boys on the premises — the two little brown boys Mitaiele (Michael), age I suppose 11 or 12, and the new steward, a Wallis islander, speaking no English and about fifty words of Samoan, recently promoted from the bush work, and a most good, anxious, timid lad of 15 or 16 — looks like 17 or 18, of course — they grow fast here. In comes Mitaiele to Lloyd, and told some rigmarole about Paatalise (the steward's name) wanting to go and see his family in the bush. — "But he has no family in the bush," said Lloyd. "No," said Mitaiele. They went to the boy's bed (they sleep in the walled-in compartment of the verandah, once my dressing-room) and called at once for me. He lay like one asleep, talking in drowsy tones but without excitement, and at times "cheeping" like a frightened mouse; he was quite cool to the touch, and his pulse not fast; his breathing seemed wholly ventral; the bust still, the belly moving strongly. Presently he got from his bed, and ran for the door, with his head down not three feet from the floor and his body all on a stretch forward, like a striking snake: I say "ran," but this strange movement was not swift. Lloyd and I mastered him and got him back in bed. Soon there was another and more desperate attempt to escape, in which Lloyd had his ring broken. Then we bound him 206 to the bed humanely with sheets, ropes, boards, and pillows. He lay there and sometimes talked, sometimes whispered, sometimes wept like an angry child; his principal word was “Faamolemole” — ”Please” — and he kept telling us at intervals that his family were calling him. During this interval, by the special grace of God, my boys came home; we had already called in Arrick, the black boy; now we had that Hercules, Lafaele, and a man Savea, who comes from Paatalise’s own island and can alone communicate with him freely. Lloyd went to bed, I took the first watch, and sat in my room reading, while Lafaele and Arrick watched the madman. Suddenly Arrick called me; I ran into the verandah; there was Paatalise free of all his bonds and Lafaele holding him. To tell what followed is impossible. We were five people at him — Lafaele and Savea, very strong men, Lloyd, I and Arrick, and the struggle lasted until 1 A.M. before we had him bound. One detail for a specimen: Lloyd and I had charge of one leg, we were both sitting on it and lo! we were both tossed into the air — I, I dare say, a couple of feet. At last we had him spread-eagled to the iron bedstead, by his wrists and ankles, with matted rope; a most inhumane business, but what could we do? it was all we could do to manage it even so. The strength of the paroxysms had been steadily increasing, and we trembled for the next. And now I come to pure Rider Haggard. Lafaele announced that the boy was very bad, and he would get “some medicine” which was a family secret of his own. Some leaves were brought mysteriously in; chewed, placed on the boy’s eyes, dropped in his ears (see *Hamlet*) and stuck up his nostrils; as he did this, the weird doctor partly smothered the patient with his hand; and by about 2 A.M. he was in a deep sleep, and from that time he showed no symptom of dementia whatever. The medicine (says Lafaele) is principally used for the wholesale slaughter of families; he himself feared last night that his dose was fatal; only one other person, on this island, knows the secret; and 207 she, Lafaele darkly whispers, has abused it. This remarkable tree we must try to identify.

The man-of-war doctor came up to-day, gave us a strait-waistcoat, taught us to bandage, examined the boy and saw he was apparently well — he insisted on doing his work all morning, poor lad, and when he first came down kissed all the family at breakfast! The doctor was greatly excited, as may be supposed, about Lafaele’s medicine.

Tuesday. — All yesterday writing my mail by the hand of Belle, to save my wrist. This is a great invention, to which I shall stick, if it can be managed. We had some alarm about Paatalise, but he slept well all night for a benediction. This lunatic asylum exercise has no attractions for any of us.

I don’t know if I remembered to say how much pleased I was with

Across the Plains in every way, inside and out, and you and me. The critics seem to taste it, too, as well as could be hoped, and I believe it will continue to bring me in a few shillings a year for a while. But such books pay only indirectly.

To understand the full horror of the mad scene, and how well my boys behaved, remember that they *believed P.'s ravings,* they *knew* that his dead family, thirty strong, crowded the front verandah and called on him to come to the other world. They *knew* that his dead brother had met him that afternoon in the bush and struck him on both temples. And remember! we are fighting the dead, and they had to go out again in the black night, which is the dead man's empire. Yet last evening, when I thought P. was going to repeat the performance, I sent down for Lafaele, who had leave of absence, and he and his wife came up about eight o'clock with a lighted brand. These are the things for which I have to forgive my old cattle-man his manifold shortcomings; they are heroic — so are the shortcomings, to be sure.

It came over me the other day suddenly that this 208 diary of mine to you would make good pickings after I am dead, and a man could make some kind of a book out of it without much trouble. So, for God's sake, don't lose them, and they will prove a piece of provision for my "poor old family," as Simelé calls it.

About my coming to Europe, I get more and more doubtful, and rather incline to Ceylon again as place of meeting. I am so absurdly well here in the tropics, that it seems like affectation. Yet remember I have never once stood Sydney. Anyway, I shall have the money for it all ahead, before I think of such a thing.

We had a bowl of punch on your birthday, which my incredible mother somehow knew and remembered.

By the time you receive this, my Samoan book will I suppose be out and the worst known. If I am burned in effigy for it no more need be said; if on the other hand I get off cheap with the authorities, this is to say that, supposing a vacancy to occur, I would condescend to accept the office of H.B.M.'s consul with parts, pendicles and appurtenances. There is a very little work to do except some little entertaining, to which I am bound to say my family and in particular the amanuensis who now guides the pen look forward with delight; I with manly resignation. The real reasons for the step would be three: 1st, possibility of being able to do some good, or at least certainty of not being obliged to stand always looking on helplessly at what is bad: 2nd, larks for the family: 3rd, and perhaps not altogether least, a house in town and a boat and a boat's crew.

But I find I have left out another reason: 4th, growing desire on the part of the old man virulent for anything in the nature of a salary — years seem to invest that idea with new beauty.

I sometimes sit and yearn for anything in the nature 209 of an income that would come in — mine has all got to be gone and fished for with the immortal mind of man. What I want is the income that really comes in of itself while all you have to do is just to blossom and exist and sit on chairs. Think how beautiful it would be not to have to mind the critics, and not even the darkest of the crowd — Sidney Colvin. I should probably amuse myself with works that would make your hair curl, if you had any left.

R. L. S.

To T. W. Dover

Stevenson's correspondent in this case is an artisan, who had been struck by the truth of a remark in his essay on *Beggars* that it is only or mainly the poor who habitually give to the poor; and who wrote to ask whether it was from experience that Stevenson knew this.

Vailima Plantation, Upolu, Samoa,
June 20th, 1892.

SIR, — In reply to your very interesting letter, I cannot fairly say that I have ever been poor, or known what it was to want a meal. I have been reduced, however, to a very small sum of money, with no apparent prospect of increasing it; and at that time I reduced myself to practically one meal a day, with the most disgusting consequences to my health. At this time I lodged in the house of a working-man, and associated much with others. At the same time, from my youth up, I have always been a good deal and rather intimately thrown among the working-classes, partly as a civil engineer in out-of-the-way places, partly from a strong and, I hope, not ill-favoured sentiment of curiosity. But the place where, perhaps, I was most struck with the fact upon which you comment was the house of a friend, who was exceedingly poor, in fact, I may say destitute, and who lived in the attic of a very tall house entirely inhabited by persons in varying stages of poverty. As he was also in ill-health, I made a habit of passing my afternoon with him, and 210 when there it was my part to answer the door. The steady procession of people begging, and the expectant and confident manner in which they presented themselves, struck me more and more daily; and I could not but remember with surprise that though my father lived but a few streets away in a fine house, beggars scarce came to the door once a fortnight or a month. From that time forward I made it my business to inquire, and in the stories which I am very fond of hearing from all sorts and conditions of men, learned that in the time of their distress it was always from the poor they sought assistance, and almost always from the poor they got it.

Trusting I have now satisfactorily answered your question, which I thank you for asking, I remain, with sincere compliments,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To E. L. Burlingame

Vailima, Summer 1892.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — First of all, *you have all the corrections on The Wrecker*. I found I had made what I meant and forgotten it, and was so careless as not to tell you.

Second, of course, and by all means, charge corrections on the Samoa book to me; but there are not near so many as I feared. The Lord hath dealt bountifully with me, and I believe all my advisers were amazed to see how nearly correct I had got the truck, at least I was. With this you will receive the whole revise and a type-written copy of the last chapter. And the thing now is Speed, to catch a possible revision of the treaty. I believe Cassells are to bring it out, but Baxter knows, and the thing has to be crammed through *prestissimo, à la chasseur*.

You mention the belated Barbeys; what about the equally belated Pineros? And I hope you will keep your bookshop alive to supplying me continuously with the 211 *Saga Library*. I cannot get enough of *Sagas*; I wish there were nine thousand; talk about realism!

All seems to flourish with you; I also prosper; none the less for being quit of that abhorred task, Samoa. I could give a supper party here were there any one to sup. Never was such a disagreeable task, but the thing had to be told....

There, I trust I am done with this cursed chapter of my career, bar the rotten eggs and broken bottles that may follow, of course. Pray remember, speed is now all that can be asked, hoped, or wished. I give up all hope of proofs, revises, proof of the map, or sic like; and you on your side will try to get it out as reasonably seemly as may be.

Whole Samoa book herewith. Glory be to God. — Yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

The following consists of scraps merely, taken from a letter almost entirely occupied with private family affairs.

[*Vailima*] *Saturday, 2nd July 1892.*

The character of my handwriting is explained, alas! by scrivener's cramp. This also explains how long I have let the paper lie plain.

1 P.M. — I was busy copying *David Balfour* with my left hand — a most laborious task — Fanny was down at the native house superintending the floor, Lloyd down in Apia, and Belle in her own house cleaning, when I heard the latter calling on my name. I ran out

on the verandah; and there on the lawn beheld my crazy boy with an axe in his hand and dressed out in green ferns, dancing. I ran downstairs and found all my house boys on the back verandah, watching him through the dining-room. I asked what it meant? — ”Dance belong his place,” they said. — ”I 212 think this no time to dance,” said I. “Has he done his work?” — ”No,” they told me, “away bush all morning.” But there they all stayed on the back verandah. I went on alone through the dining-room, and bade him stop. He did so, shouldered the axe, and began to walk away; but I called him back, walked up to him, and took the axe out of his unresisting hands. The boy is in all things so good, that I can scarce say I was afraid; only I felt it had to be stopped ere he could work himself up by dancing to some craziness. Our house boys protested they were not afraid; all I know is they were all watching him round the back door and did not follow me till I had the axe. As for the out boys, who were working with Fanny in the native house, they thought it a very bad business, and made no secret of their fears.

Wednesday, 6th. — I have no account to give of my stewardship these days, and there’s a day more to account for than mere arithmetic would tell you. For we have had two Monday Fourths, to bring us at last on the right side of the meridian, having hitherto been an exception in the world and kept our private date. Business has filled my hours sans intermission.

Tuesday, 12th. — I am doing no work and my mind is in abeyance. Fanny and Belle are sewing-machining in the next room; I have been pulling down their hair, and Fanny has been kicking me, and now I am driven out. Austin I have been chasing about the verandah; now he has gone to his lessons, and I make believe to write to you in despair. But there is nothing in my mind; I swim in mere vacancy, my head is like a rotten nut; I shall soon have to begin to work again or I shall carry away some part of the machinery. I have got your insufficient letter, for which I scorn to thank you. I have had no review by Gosse, none by Birrell; another time, if I have a letter in the Times, you might send me the text as well; also please send me a cricket bat and a 213 cake, and when I come home for the holidays, I should like to have a pony. — I am, sir, your obedient servant,

Jacob Tonson.

P.S. — I am quite well; I hope you are quite well. The world is too much with us, and my mother bids me bind my hair and lace my bodice blue.

To Charles Baxter

Vailima Plantation, Upolu, Samoan Islands, 18th July 1892.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — … I have been now for some time contending with powers and principalities, and I have never once seen one of my own letters to the Times. So when you see something in the papers that you think might interest the exiles of Upolu, do not think twice, out with your saxpence, and send it flying to Vailima. Of what you say of the past, eh, man, it was a queer time, and awful miserable, but there's no sense in denying it was awful fun. Do you mind the youth in highland garb and the tableful of coppers? Do you mind the SIGNAL of Waterloo Place? — Hey, how the blood stands to the heart at such a memory! — Hae ye the notes o't? Gie's them. — Gude's sake, man, gie's the notes o't; I mind ye made a tüne o't an' played it on your pinanny; gie's the notes. Dear Lord, that past.

Glad to hear Henley's prospects are fair: his new volume is the work of a real poet. He is one of those who can make a noise of his own with words, and in whom experience strikes an individual note. There is perhaps no more genuine poet living, bar the Big Guns. In case I cannot overtake an acknowledgment to himself by this mail, please let him hear of my pleasure and admiration. How poorly Kipling compares! He is all smart journalism and cleverness: it is all bright and shallow and limpid, like a business paper — a good one, *s'entend*; but there is 214 no blot of heart's blood and the Old Night: there are no harmonics, there is scarce harmony to his music; and in Henley — all of these; a touch, a sense within sense, a sound outside the sound, the shadow of the inscrutable, eloquent beyond all definition. The First London Voluntary knocked me wholly. — Ever yours affectionately, my dear Charles,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Kind memories to your father and all friends.

To W. E. Henley

Vailima Plantation, Upolu, Samoa, August 1st, 1892.

MY DEAR HENLEY, — It is impossible to let your new volume pass in silence. I have not received the same thrill of poetry since G. M.'s *Joy of Earth* volume and *Love in a Valley*; and I do not know that even that was so intimate and deep. Again and again, I take the book down, and read, and my blood is fired as it used to be in youth. *Andante con moto* in the *Voluntaries*, and the thing about the trees at night (No. XXIV. I think) are up to date my favourites. I did not guess you were so great a magician; these are new tunes, this is an undertone of the true Apollo; these are not verse, they are poetry — inventions, creations, in language. I thank you for the joy you have given me, and remain your old friend and present huge admirer,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

The hand is really the hand of Esau, but under a course of threatened scrivener's cramp.

For the next edition of the Book of Verses, pray accept an emendation. Last three lines of Echoes No. XLIV. read —

“But life in act? How should the grave
Be victor over these,
Mother, a mother of men?”

The two vocatives scatter the effect of this inimitable 215 close. If you insist on the longer line, equip “grave” with an epithet.

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

Accompanying the MS. of the article giving extracts from the record kept by Robert Stevenson the elder of the trip on which Sir Walter Scott sailed in his company on board the Northern Lights yacht: printed in Scribner’s Magazine, 1893.

Vailima, Upolu, August 1st, ‘92.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — Herewith *My Grandfather*. I have had rather a bad time suppressing the old gentleman, who was really in a very garrulous stage; as for getting him *in order*, I could do but little towards that; however, there are one or two points of interest which may justify us in printing. The swinging of his stick and not knowing the sailor of Coruiskin, in particular, and the account of how he wrote the lives in the Bell Book particularly please me. I hope my own little introduction is not egoistic; or rather I do not care if it is. It was that old gentleman’s blood that brought me to Samoa.

By the by, vols. vii., viii., and ix. of Adams’s *History* have never come to hand; no more have the dictionaries.

Please send me *Stonehenge on the Horse*, *Stories and Interludes* by Barry Pain, and *Edinburgh Sketches and Memoirs* by David Masson. *The Wrecker* has turned up. So far as I have seen, it is very satisfactory, but on p, 549, there has been a devil of a miscarriage. The two Latin quotations instead of following each other being separated (doubtless for printing considerations) by a line of prose. My compliments to the printers; there is doubtless such a thing as good printing, but there is such a thing as good sense.

The sequel to *Kidnapped*, *David Balfour* by name, is about three-quarters done and gone to press for serial publication. By what I can find out it ought to be through hand with that and ready for volume form early next spring. — Yours very sincerely,

R. L. S.

To Andrew Lang

Mr. Andrew Lang had been supplying Stevenson with some books and historical references for his proposed novel *The Young Chevalier*.

[*Vailima, August 1892.*]

MY DEAR LANG, — I knew you would prove a trusty purveyor. The books you have sent are admirable. I got the name of my hero out of Brown — Blair of Balmyle — Francie Blair. But whether to call the story *Blair of Balmyle*, or whether to call it *The Young Chevalier*, I have not yet decided. The admirable Cameronian tract — perhaps you will think this a cheat — is to be boned into *David Balfour*, where it will fit better, and really furnishes me with a desired foothold over a boggy place.

Later; no, it won't go in, and I fear I must give up "the idolatrous occupant upon the throne," a phrase that overjoyed me beyond expression. I am in a deuce of a flutter with politics, which I hate, and in which I certainly do not shine; but a fellow cannot stand aside and look on at such an exhibition as our government. 'Tain't decent; no gent can hold a candle to it. But it's a grind to be interrupted by midnight messengers and pass your days writing proclamations (which are never proclaimed) and petitions (which ain't petited) and letters to the Times, which it makes my jaw yawn to re-read, and all your time have your heart with David Balfour; he has just left Glasgow this morning for Edinburgh, James More has escaped from the castle; it is far more real to me than the Behring Sea or the Baring brothers either — he got the news of James More's escape from the Lord Advocate, and started off straight to comfort Catriona. You don't know her; she's James More's daughter, and a respectable young wumman; the Miss Grants think so — the Lord Advocate's daughters — so there can't be anything really wrong. Pretty soon we all go to Holland, and be hanged; thence to Dunkirk, and be damned; 217 and the tale concludes in Paris, and be Poll-parrotted. This is the last authentic news. You are not a real hard-working novelist; not a practical novelist; so you don't know the temptation to let your characters maunder. Dumas did it, and lived. But it is not war; it ain't sportsmanlike, and I have to be stopping their chatter all the time. Brown's appendix is great reading.

My only grief is that I can't
Use the idolatrous occupant.

Yours ever,
R. L. S.

Blessing and praising you for a useful (though idolatrous) occupant of Kensington.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

Samoa and the Samoans for children, continued after an eight months' pause.

Vailima Plantation, Samoan Islands, August 14th, 1892.

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE, — The lean man is exceedingly ashamed of himself, and offers his apologies to the little girls in the cellar just above. If they will be so good as to knock three times upon the floor, he will hear it on the other side of his floor, and will understand that he is forgiven. I believe I got you and the children — or rather left you and the children — still on the road to the lean man's house. When you get up there a great part of the forest has been cleared away. It comes back again pretty quick, though not quite so high; but everywhere, except where the weeders have been kept busy, young trees have sprouted up, and the cattle and the horses cannot be seen as they feed. In this clearing there are two or three houses scattered about, and between the two biggest I think the little girls in the cellar would first notice a sort 218 of thing like a gridiron on legs made of logs and wood. Sometimes it has a flag flying on it made of rags of old clothes. It is a fort (so I am told) built by the person here who would be much the most interesting to the girls in the cellar. This is a young gentleman of eleven years of age answering to the name of Austin. It was after reading a book about the Red Indians that he thought it more prudent to create this place of strength. As the Red Indians are in North America, and this fort seems to me a very useless kind of building, I am anxious to hope that the two may never be brought together. When Austin is not engaged in building forts, nor on his lessons, which are just as annoying to him as other children's lessons are to them, he walks sometimes in the bush, and if anybody is with him, talks all the time. When he is alone I don't think he says anything, and I dare say he feels very lonely and frightened, just as the lean man does, at the queer noises and the endless lines of the trees. He finds the strangest kinds of seeds, some of them bright coloured like lollipops, or really like precious stones; some of them in odd cases like tobacco-pouches. He finds and collects all kinds of little shells with which the whole ground is scattered, and which, though they are the shells of land animals like our snails, are nearly of as many shapes and colours as the shells on our sea-beaches. In the streams that come running down out of the mountains, and which are all as clear and bright as mirror glass, he sees eels and little bright fish that sometimes jump together out of the surface of the brook in a little knot of silver, and fresh-water prawns which lie close under the stones, and can be seen looking up at him with eyes of the colour of a jewel. He sees all kinds of beautiful birds, some of them blue and white, some of them blue and white and red, and some of them coloured like our pigeons at home, and these last the little girls in the cellar may like to know live almost entirely on nutmegs as they fall ripe off the trees. Another little bird he may sometimes see, as the lean man 219 saw him only this morning, a little fellow not so big as a man's hand, exquisitely neat, of a pretty bronze black like ladies' shoes, and who sticks up behind him (much as a peacock does) his little tail shaped and fluted like a scallop shell.

Here are a lot of curious and interesting things that Austin sees round him every day; and when I was a child at home in the old country I used to play and pretend to myself that I saw things of the same kind. That the rooms were full of orange and nutmeg trees, and the cold town gardens outside the windows were alive with parrots and with lions. What do the little girls in the cellar think that Austin does? He makes believe just the other way: he pretends that the strange great trees with their broad leaves and slab-sided roots are European oaks; and the places on the road up (where you and I and the little girls in the cellar have already gone) he calls by old-fashioned, far-away European names, just as if you were to call the cellar stair and the corner of the next street — if you could only manage to pronounce the names — Upolu and Savaii. And so it is with all of us, with Austin and the lean man and the little girls in the cellar; wherever we are it is but a stage on the way to somewhere else, and whatever we do, however well we do it, it is only a preparation to do something else that shall be different.

But you must not suppose that Austin does nothing but build forts and walk among the woods and swim in the rivers. On the contrary, he is sometimes a very busy and useful fellow; and I think the little girls in the cellar would have admired him very nearly as much as he admired himself if they had seen him setting off on horseback with his hand on his hip and his pockets full of letters and orders, at the head of quite a procession of huge white cart-horses with pack-saddles, and big brown native men with nothing on but gaudy kilts. Mighty well he managed all his commissions; and those who saw 220 him ordering and eating his single-handed luncheon in the queer little Chinese restaurant on the beach declare he looked as if the place, and the town, and the whole archipelago belonged to him. But I am not going to let you suppose that this great gentleman at the head of all his horses and his men, like the King of France in the old rhyme, would be thought much of a dandy on the streets of London. On the contrary, if he could be seen there with his dirty white cap, and his faded purple shirt, and his little brown breeks that do not reach his knees, and the bare shanks below, and the bare feet stuck in the stirrup leathers, for he is not quite long enough to reach the irons, I am afraid the little boys and girls in your part of the town might feel very much inclined to give him a penny in charity. So you see that a very, very big man in one place might seem very small potatoes in another, just as the king's palace here (of which I told you in my last) would be thought rather a poor place of residence by a Surrey gipsy. And if you come to that, even the lean man himself, who is no end of an important person, if he were picked up from the chair where he is now sitting, and slung down, feet foremost, in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross, would probably have to escape into the nearest shop, or take the consequences of being mobbed. And the ladies of his family, who are very pretty ladies, and think themselves uncommonly well-dressed for Samoa, would (if the same thing were done to them) be extremely glad to get into a cab.

I write to you by the hands of another, because I am threatened again with scrivener's cramp. My health is beyond reproach; I wish I could say as much for my wife's, which is far from the thing. Give us some news of yours, and even when none of us write, do not suppose for a moment that we are forgetful of our old gamekeeper. Our prettiest walk, an alley of really beautiful green sward which leads through Fanny's garden to the river and the bridge and the beginning of the high woods on 221 the mountain-side, where the Tapu a fafine (or spirit of the land) has her dwelling, and the work-boys fear to go alone, is called by a name that I think our gamekeeper has heard before — Adelaide Road.

With much love from all of us to yourself, and all good wishes for your future, and the future of the children in the cellar, believe me your affectionate friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Vailima [*August 1892*].

MY DEAR COLVIN, — You will have no letter at all this month and it is really not my fault. I have been saving my hand as much as possible for Davy Balfour; only this morning I was getting on first rate with him, when about half-past nine there came a prick in the middle of the ball of my thumb, and I had to take to the left hand and two words a minute. I fear I slightly exaggerate the speed of my left hand; about a word and a half in the minute — which is dispiriting to the last degree. Your last letter with the four excellent reviews and the good news about *The Wrecker* was particularly welcome. I have already written to Charles Baxter about the volume form appearance of *The Beach of Falesá*. In spite of bad thumbs and other interruptions I hope to send to Baxter by this mail the whole first part (a good deal more than half) of David Balfour ready for press. This is pretty satisfactory, and I think ought to put us beyond the reach of financial catastrophe for the year.

A cousin of mine, Graham Balfour, arrived along with your last. It was rather a lark. Fanny, Belle and I stayed down at the hotel two nights expecting the steamer, and we had seven horses down daily for the party and the baggage. These were on one occasion bossed by Austin, age eleven. “I’m afraid I cannot do that now,” said he 222 in answer to some communication, “as I am taking charge of the men here.” In the course of the forenoon he took “his” men to get their lunch, and had his own by himself at the Chinese restaurant. What a day for a boy. The steamer came in at last on Saturday morning after breakfast. We three were out at the place of anchorage in the hotel boat as she came up, spotting rather anxiously for our guest, whom none of us had ever seen. We chose out some rather awful cads and tried to make up our mind to them; they were the least offensive yet observed among an awful crew of cabin passengers; but when the Simon Pure appeared at last upon the scene he was as nice a young fellow as you would want. Followed a time of giddy glory — one crowded hour of glorious life — when I figured about the deck with attendant shemales in the character of *the* local celebrity, was introduced to the least unpresentable of the ruffians on board, dogged about the deck by a diminutive Hebrew with a Kodak, the click of which kept time to my progress like a pair of castanets, and filled up in the Captain’s room on iced champagne at 8.30 of God’s morning. The Captain in question, Cap. Morse, is a great South Sea character, like the side of a house and the green-room of a music-hall, but with all the saving qualities of the seaman. The celebrity was a great success with this untutored observer. He was kind enough to announce that he expected (rather with awe) a much more “thoughtful” person; and I think I pleased him much with my parting salutation, “Well, Captain, I suppose you and I are the two most notorious men in the Pacific.” I think it will enable you to see the Captain if I tell you that he recited to us in cold blood the *words* of a new comic song; doubtless a tribute to my literary character. I had often heard of Captain Morse and always had detested all that I was told, and detested the man in confidence, just as you are doing; but really he has a wonderful charm of strength, loyalty, and simplicity. The whole celebrity business was 223 particularly characteristic; the Captain has certainly never read a word of mine; and as for the Jew with the Kodak, he had never heard of me till he came on board. There was a third admirer who sent messages in to the Captain’s cabin asking if the Lion would accept a gift of Webster’s *Unabridged*. I went out to him and signified a manly willingness to accept a gift of anything. He stood and bowed before me, his eyes danced with excitement. “Mr. Stevenson,” he said and his voice trembled, “your name is very well known to me. I have been in the publishing line in Canada and I have handled many of your works for the trade.” “Come,” I said, “here’s genuine appreciation.”

From this gaudy scene we descended into the hotel boat with our new second cousin, got to horse and returned to Vailima, passing shot of Kodak once more on the Nulivae bridge, where the little Jew was posted with his little Jew wife, each about three feet six in stature and as vulgar as a lodging house clock.

We were just writing this when another passenger from the ship arrived up here at Vailima. This is a nice quiet simple blue-eyed little boy of Pennsylvania Quaker folk. Threatened with consumption of my sort, he has been sent here by his doctor on the strength of my case. I am sure if the case be really parallel he could not have been better done by. As we had a roast pig for dinner we kept him for that meal; and the rain coming on just when the moon should have risen kept him again for the night. So you see it is now to-morrow.

Graham Balfour the new cousin and Lloyd are away with Clark the Missionary on a school inspecting *malaga*, really perhaps the prettiest little bit of opera in real life that can be seen, and made all the prettier by the actors being children. I have come to a collapse this morning on D.B.: wrote a chapter one way, half re-copied it in another, and now stand halting between the two like Buridan's donkey. These sorts of cruces always are to 224 me the most insoluble, and I should not wonder if D.B. stuck there for a week or two. This is a bother, for I understand McClure talks of beginning serial publication in December. If this could be managed, what with D.B., the apparent success of *The Wrecker*, *Falesá*, and some little pickings from *Across the Plains* — not to mention, as quite hopeless, *The History of Samoa* — this should be rather a profitable year, as it must be owned it has been rather a busy one. The trouble is, if I miss the December publication, it may take the devil and all of a time to start another syndicate. I am really tempted to curse my conscientiousness. If I hadn't recopied Davie he would now be done and dead and buried; and here I am stuck about the middle, with an immediate publication threatened and the fear before me of having after all to scamp the essential business of the end. At the same time, though I love my Davy, I am a little anxious to get on again on *The Young Chevalier*. I have in nearly all my works been trying one racket: to get out the facts of life as clean and naked and sharp as I could manage it. In this other book I want to try and megilp them together in an atmosphere of sentiment, and I wonder whether twenty-five years of life spent in trying this one thing will not make it impossible for me to succeed in the other. However it is the only way to attempt a love story. You can't tell any of the facts, and the only chance is to paint an atmosphere.

It is a very warm morning — the parrot is asleep on the door (she heard her name, and immediately awakened) — and my brains are completely addled by having come to grief over Davy.

Hurray! a subject discovered! The parrot is a little white cockatoo of the small variety. It belongs to Belle, whom it guards like a watch dog. It chanced that when she was sick some months ago I came over and administered some medicine. Unnecessary to say Belle bleated, whereupon the parrot bounded upon me and buried his 225 neb in my backside. From that day on the little wretch attacked me on every possible occasion, usually from the rear, though she would also follow me along the verandah and as I went downstairs attack my face. This was far from funny. I am a person of average courage, but I don't think I was ever more cordially afraid of anything than of this miserable atomy, and the deuce of it was that I could not but admire her appalling courage and there was no means of punishing such a thread-paper creature without destroying it entirely. Act II. On Graham's arrival I gave him my room and came out to Lloyd's in the lower floor of Belle's — I beg your pardon — the *parrot's* — house. The first morning I was to wake Belle early so that breakfast should be seen to for our guest. It was a mighty pretty dawn, the birds were singing extraordinary strong, all was peace, and there was the damned parrot hanging to the knob of Belle's door. Courage, my heart! On I went and Cockie buried her bill in the joint of my thumb. I believe that Job would have killed that bird; but I was more happily inspired — I caught it up and flung it over the verandah as far as I could throw. I must say it was violently done, and I looked with some anxiety to see in what state of preservation it would alight. Down it came however on its two feet, uttered a few oaths in a very modified tone of voice, and set forth on the return journey to its mansion. Its wings being cut and its gait in walking having been a circumstance apparently not thoroughly calculated by its maker, it took about twenty-five minutes to get home again. Now here is this remarkable point — that bird has never bitten me since. When I have early breakfast she and the cat come down and join me, and she sits on the back of my chair. When I am at work with the door shut she sits outside and demolishes the door with that same beak which was so recently reddened with my heart's blood — and in the evening she does her business all over my clothes in the most friendly manner 226 in the world. I ought to add a word about the parrot and the cat. Three cats were brought by Belle from Sydney. This one alone remains faithful and domestic. One of the funniest things I have ever seen was Polly and Maud over a piece of bacon. Polly stood on one leg, held the bacon in the other, regarded Maudie with a secret and sinister look and very slowly and quietly — far too quietly for the word I have to use — gnashed her bill at her. Maudie came up quite close; there she stuck — she was afraid to come nearer, to go away she was ashamed; and she assisted at the final and very deliberate consumption of the bacon, making about as poor a figure as a cat can make.

Next day. — Date totally unknown, or rather it is now known but is reserved because it would certainly prove inconsistent with dates previously given. I went down about two o'clock in company with a couple of chance visitors to Apia. It was smoking hot, not a sign of any wind and the sun scorching your face. I found the great Haggard in hourly expectation of Lady Jersey, surrounded by crowds of very indifferent assistants, and I must honestly say — the only time I ever saw him so — cross. He directed my attention to all the new paint, his own handiwork he said, and made me visit the bathroom which he has just fixed up. I think I never saw a man more miserable and happy at the same time. Had some hock and a seltzer, went down town, met Fanny and Belle, and so home in time for a magnificent dinner of prawns and an eel cooked in oil, both from our own river.

This morning the overseer — the new overseer Mr. Austin Strong — went down in charge of the pack-horses and a squad of men, himself riding a white horse with extreme dignity and what seemed to onlookers a perhaps somewhat theatrical air of command. He returned triumphantly, all his commissions apparently executed with success, bringing us a mail — not your mail, Colonial ways — and 227 the news of Lady Jersey's arrival and reception among flying flags and banging guns.

As soon as I had concluded my flattering description of Polly she bit one of my toes to the blood. But put not your trust in shemales, though to say the truth she looks more like a Russian colonel.

Aug. 15th. — On the Saturday night Fanny and I went down to Haggard's to dine and be introduced to Lady Jersey. She is there with her daughter Lady Margaret and her brother Captain Leigh, a very nice kind of glass-in-his-eye kind of fellow. It is to be presumed I made a good impression; for the meeting has had a most extraordinary sequel. Fanny and I slept in Haggard's billiard room, which happens to be Lloyd's bungalow. In the morning she and I breakfasted in the back parts with Haggard and Captain Leigh, and it was then arranged that the Captain should go with us to Malie on the Tuesday under a false name; so that Government House at Sydney might by no possibility be connected with a rebel camp. On Sunday afternoon up comes Haggard in a state of huge excitement: Lady J. insists on going too, in the character of my cousin; I write her a letter under the name of Miss Amelia Balfour, proposing the excursion; and this morning up comes a copy of verses from Amelia. I wrote to Mataafa announcing that I should bring two cousins instead of one, that the second was a lady, unused to Samoan manners, and it would be a good thing if she could sleep in another house with Ralala. Sent a copy of this to Amelia, and at the same time made all arrangements, dating my letter 1745. We shall go on ahead on the Malie Road; she is to follow with Haggard and Captain Leigh, and overtake us at the ford of the Gasi-gasi, whence Haggard will return and the rest of us pursue our way to the rebeldom.

This lark is certainly huge. It is all nonsense that it can be concealed; Miss Amelia Balfour will be at once identified with the Queen of Sydney, as they call her; 228 and I would not in the least wonder if the visit proved the signal of war. With this I have no concern, and the thing wholly suits my book and fits my predilections for Samoa. What a pity the mail leaves, and I must leave this adventure to be continued in our next! But I need scarcely say that all this is deadly private — I expect it all to come out, not without explosion; only it must not be through me or you. We had a visit yesterday from a person by the name of Count Nerli, who is said to be a good painter. Altogether the aristocracy clusters thick about us. In which radiant light, as the mail must now be really put up, I leave myself until next month, — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To the Countess of Jersey

Following up the last letter, Stevenson here tells the story of the visit paid to Apia by the Countess of Jersey, who had come over from Sydney with her brother Captain Leigh and her young daughter Lady Margaret Villiers. “A warm friendship,” writes Lady Jersey, “was the immediate result; we constantly met, either in the hospitable abode of our host Mr. Bazett Haggard, or in Mr. Stevenson’s delightful mountain home, and passed many happy hours in riding, walking, and conversation.” The previous letter has shown how it was arranged that the party should pay a visit of curiosity to the “rebel king,” or more properly the rival claimant to the kingly power, Mataafa, in his camp at Malie, and how Stevenson at once treated the adventure as a chapter out of a Waverley novel. “The wife of the new Governor of New South Wales,” writes Lady Jersey on her part, “could not pay such a visit in her own name, so Mr. Stevenson adopted me as his cousin, ‘Amelia Balfour.’ This transparent disguise was congenial to his romantic instincts, and he writes concerning the arrangements made for the expedition, carefully dating his letter ‘Aug. 14, 1745.’”

August 14, 1745.

To Miss Amelia Balfour — my dear cousin, — We are going an expedition to leeward on Tuesday morning. If a lady were perhaps to be encountered on horseback — say, towards the Gasi-gasi river — about six A.M., I think we should have an episode somewhat after the 229 style of the ‘45. What a misfortune, my dear cousin, that you should have arrived while your cousin Graham was occupying my only guest-chamber — for Osterley Park is not so large in Samoa as it was at home — but happily our friend Haggard has found a corner for you!

The King over the Water — the Gasi-gasi water — will be pleased to see the clan of Balfour mustering so thick around his standard.

I have (one serious word) been so lucky as to get a really secret interpreter, so all is for the best in our little adventure into the Waverley Novels. — I am, your affectionate cousin,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Observe the stealth with which I have blotted my signature, but we must be political *à outrance*.

To the Countess of Jersey

MY DEAR COUSIN, — I send for your information a copy of my last letter to the gentleman in question. 'Tis thought more wise, in consideration of the difficulty and peril of the enterprise, that we should leave the town in the afternoon, and by several detachments. If you would start for a ride with the Master of Haggard and Captain Lockhart of Lee, say at three o'clock of the afternoon, you would make some rencounters by the wayside which might be agreeable to your political opinions. All present will be staunch.

The Master of Haggard might extend his ride a little, and return through the marsh and by the nuns' house (I trust that has the proper flavour), so as a little to diminish the effect of separation. — I remain your affectionate cousin to command,

O Tusitala.

P.S. — It is to be thought this present year of grace will be historical.

To Sidney Colvin

This letter tells without preface the story of the expedition planned in the preceding.

[*Vailima, August 1892.*]

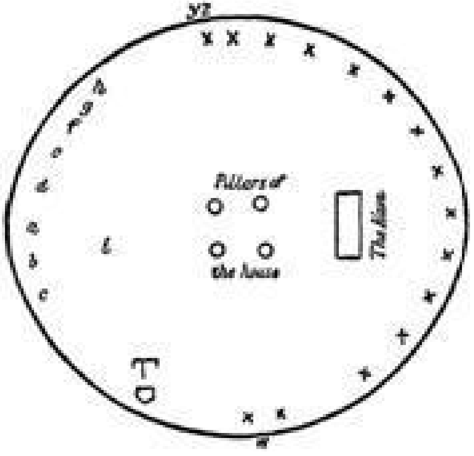
MY DEAR COLVIN, — This is Friday night, the (I believe) 18th or 20th August or September. I shall probably regret to-morrow having written you with my own hand like the Apostle Paul. But I am alone over here in the workman's house, where I and Belle and Lloyd and Austin are pigging; the rest are at cards in the main residence. I have not joined them because "belly belong me" has been kicking up, and I have just taken 15 drops of laudanum.

On Tuesday, the party set out — self in white cap, velvet coat, cords and yellow half boots, Belle in a white kind of suit and white cap to match mine, Lloyd in white clothes and long yellow boots and a straw hat, Graham in khakis and gaiters, Henry (my old overseer) in blue coat and black kilt, and the great Lafaele with a big ship-bag on his saddle-bow. We left the mail at the P.O., had lunch at the hotel, and about 1.50 set out westward to the place of tryst. This was by a little shrunken brook in a deep channel of mud, on the far side of which, in a thicket of low trees, all full of moths of shadow and butterflies of sun, we lay down to await her ladyship. Whisky and water, then a sketch of the encampment for which we all posed to Belle, passed off the time until 3.30. Then I could hold on no longer. 30 minutes late. Had the secret oozed out? Were they arrested? I got my horse, crossed the brook again, and rode hard back to the Vaea cross roads, whence I was aware of white clothes glancing in the other long straight radius of the quadrant. I turned at once to return to the place of tryst; but D. overtook me, and almost bore me down, shouting “Ride, ride!” like a hero in a ballad. Lady Margaret and he were only come to shew the place; they returned, and the rest of 231 our party, reinforced by Captain Leigh and Lady Jersey, set on for Malie. The delay was due to D.’s infinite precautions, leading them up lanes, by back ways, and then down again to the beach road a hundred yards further on.

It was agreed that Lady Jersey existed no more; she was now my cousin Amelia Balfour. That relative and I headed the march; she is a charming woman, all of us like her extremely after trial on this somewhat rude and absurd excursion. And we Amelia’d or Miss Balfour’d her with great but intermittent fidelity. When we came to the last village, I sent Henry on ahead to warn the King of our approach and amend his discretion, if that might be. As he left I heard the villagers asking *which was the great lady*? And a little further, at the borders of Malie itself, we found the guard making a music of bugles and conches. Then I knew the game was up and the secret out. A considerable guard of honour, mostly children, accompanied us; but, for our good fortune, we had been looked for earlier, and the crowd was gone.

Dinner at the king’s; he asked me to say grace, I could think of none — never could; Graham suggested *Benedictus Benedicat*, at which I leaped. We were nearly done, when old Popo inflicted the Atua howl (of which you have heard already) right at Lady Jersey’s shoulder. She started in fine style. — ”There,” I said, “we have been giving you a chapter of Scott, but this goes beyond the Waverley Novels.” After dinner, kava. Lady J. was served before me, and the king *drank last*; it was the least formal kava I ever saw in that house, — no names called, no show of ceremony. All my ladies are well trained, and when Belle drained her bowl, the King was pleased to clap his hands. Then he and I must retire for our private interview, to another house. He gave me his own staff and made me pass before him; and in the interview, which was long and delicate, he twice called me *afioga*. Ah, that leaves you cold, but I am 232 Samoan enough to have been moved. *Susuga* is my accepted rank; to be called *afioga* — Heavens! what an advance — and it leaves Europe cold. But it staggered my Henry. The first time it was complicated “lana susuga *ma* lana afioga — his excellency *and* his majesty” the next time plain Majesty. Henry then begged to interrupt the interview and tell who he was — he is a small family chief in Savaii, not very small — ”I do not wish the king,” says he, “to think me a boy from Apia.” On our return to the palace, we separated. I had asked for the ladies to sleep alone — that was understood; but that Tusitala — his afioga Tusitala — should go out with the other young men, and not sleep with the highborn females of his family — was a doctrine received with difficulty. Lloyd and I had one screen, Graham and Leigh another, and we slept well.

In the morning I was first abroad before dawn; not very long, already there was a stir of birds. A little after, I heard singing from the King’s chapel — exceeding good — and went across in the hour when the east is yellow and the morning bank is breaking up, to hear it nearer. All about the chapel, the guards were posted, and all saluted Tusitala. I could not refrain from smiling: “So there is a place too,” I thought, “where sentinels salute me.” Mine has been a queer life.



Breakfast was rather a protracted business. And that was scarce over when we were called to the great house (now finished — recall your earlier letters) to see a royal kava. This function is of rare use; I know grown Samoans who have never witnessed it. It is, besides, as you are to hear, a piece of prehistoric history, crystallised in figures, and the facts largely forgotten; an acted hieroglyph. The house is really splendid; in the rafters in the midst, two carved and coloured model birds are posted; the only thing of the sort I have ever remarked in Samoa, the Samoans being literal observers of the second commandment. At one side of the egg our party sat. a = Mataafa, 233 b = Lady J., c = Belle, d = Tusitala, e = Graham, f = Lloyd, g = Captain Leigh, h = Henry, i = Popo. The x’s round are the high chiefs, each man in his historical position. One side of the house is set apart for the king alone; we were allowed there as his guests and Henry as our interpreter. It was a huge trial to the lad, when a speech was made to me which he must translate, and I made a speech in answer which he had to orate, full-breathed, to that big circle; he blushed through his dark skin, but looked and acted like a gentleman and a young fellow of sense; then the kava came to the king; he poured one drop in libation, drank another, and flung the remainder outside the house behind him. Next came the turn of the old shapeless stone marked T. It stands for one of the king's titles, Tamasoalii; Mataafa is Tamasoalii this day, but cannot drink for it; and the stone must first be washed with water, and then have the bowl emptied on it. Then — the order I cannot recall — came 234 the turn of y and z, two orators of the name of Malietoa; the first took his kava down plain, like an ordinary man; the second must be packed to bed under a big sheet of tapa, and be massaged by anxious assistants and rise on his elbow groaning to drink his cup. W., a great hereditary war man, came next; five times the cup-bearers marched up and down the house and passed the cup on, five times it was filled and the general's name and titles heralded at the bowl, and five times he refused it (after examination) as too small. It is said this commemorates a time when Malietoa at the head of his army suffered much for want of supplies. Then this same military gentleman must *drink* five cups, one from each of the great names: all which took a precious long time. He acted very well, haughtily and in a society tone *outlining* the part. The difference was marked when he subsequently made a speech in his own character as a plain God-fearing chief. A few more high chiefs, then Tusitala; one more, and then Lady Jersey; one more, and then Captain Leigh, and so on with the rest of our party — Henry of course excepted. You see in public, Lady Jersey followed me — just so far was the secret kept.

Then we came home; Belle, Graham, and Lloyd to the Chinaman's, I with Lady Jersey, to lunch; so, severally home. Thursday I have forgotten: Saturday, I began again on Davie; on Sunday, the Jersey party came up to call and carried me to dinner. As I came out, to ride home, the search-lights of the *Curaçoa* were lightening on the horizon from many miles away, and next morning she came in. Tuesday was huge fun: a reception at Haggard's. All our party dined there; Lloyd and I, in the absence of Haggard and Leigh, had to play aide-de-camp and host for about twenty minutes, and I presented the population of Apia at random but (luck helping) without one mistake. Wednesday we had two middies to lunch. Thursday we had Eeles and Hoskyn (lieutenant and doctor — very, very nice fellows — simple, good and 235 not the least dull) to dinner. Saturday, Graham and I lunched on board; Graham, Belle, Lloyd dined at the G.'s; and Austin and the *whole* of our servants went with them to an evening entertainment; the more bold returning by lantern-light. Yesterday, Sunday, Belle and I were off by about half past eight, left our horses at a public house, and went on board the *Curaçoa*, in the wardroom skiff; were entertained in the wardroom; thence on deck to the service, which was a great treat; three fiddles and a harmonium and excellent choir, and the great ship's company joining: on shore in Haggard's big boat to lunch with the party. Thence all together to Vailima, where we read aloud a Ouida Romance we have been secretly writing; in which Haggard was the hero, and each one of the authors had to draw a portrait of him or herself in a Ouida light. Leigh, Lady J., Fanny, R. L. S., Belle and Graham were the authors.

In the midst of this gay life, I have finally recopied two chapters, and drafted for the first time three of Davie Balfour. But it is not a life that would continue to suit me, and if I have not continued to write to you, you will scarce wonder. And to-day we all go down again to dinner, and to-morrow they all come up to lunch! The world is too much with us. But it now nears an end, to-day already the *Curaçoa* has sailed; and on Saturday or Sunday Lady Jersey will follow them in the mail steamer. I am sending you a wire by her hands as far as Sydney, that is to say either you or Cassell, about *Falesá*: I will not allow it to be called *Uma* in book form, that is not the logical name of the story. Nor can I have the marriage contract omitted; and the thing is full of misprints abominable. In the picture, Uma is rot; so is the old man and the negro; but Wiltshire is splendid, and Case will do. It seems badly illuminated, but this may be printing. How have I seen this first number? Not through your attention, 236 guilty one! Lady Jersey had it, and only mentioned it yesterday.

I ought to say how much we all like the Jersey party. Leigh is very amusing in his way. Lady Margaret is a charming girl. And Lady Jersey is in all ways admirable, so unfussy, so plucky, so very kind and gracious. My boy Henry was enraptured with the manners of the *Tamaitai Sili* (chief lady). Among our other occupations, I did a bit of a supposed epic describing our tryst at the ford of the Gasegase; and Belle and I made a little book of caricatures and verses about incidents on the visit.

Tuesday. — The wild round of gaiety continues. After I had written to you yesterday, the brain being wholly extinct, I played piquet all morning with Graham. After lunch down to call on the U.S. consul, hurt in a steeplechase; thence back to the new girls' school which Lady J. was to open, and where my ladies met me. Lady J. is really an orator, with a voice of gold; the rest of us played our unremarked parts; missionaries, Haggard, myself, a Samoan chief, holding forth in turn; myself with (at least) a golden brevity. Thence, Fanny, Belle, and I to town, to our billiard room in Haggard's back garden, where we found Lloyd and where Graham joined us. The three men first dressed, with the ladies in a corner; and then, to leave them a free field, we went off to Haggard and Leigh's quarters, whereafter all to dinner, where our two parties, a brother of Colonel Kitchener's, a passing globe-trotter, and Clarke the missionary. A very gay evening, with all sorts of chaff and mirth, and a moonlit ride home, and to bed before 12.30. And now to-day, we have the Jersey-Haggard troupe to lunch, and I must pass the morning dressing ship.

Thursday, Sept. 1st. — I sit to write to you now, 7.15, all the world in bed except myself, accounted for, and Belle and Graham, down at Haggard's at dinner. Not 237 a leaf is stirring here; but the moon overhead (now of a good bigness) is obscured and partly revealed in a whirling covey of thin storm-clouds. By Jove, it blows above.

From 8 till 11.15 on Tuesday, I dressed ship, and in particular cleaned crystal, my specialty. About 11.30 the guests began to arrive before I was dressed, and between while I had written a parody for Lloyd to sing. Yesterday, Wednesday, I had to start out about 3 for town, had a long interview with the head of the German Firm about some work in my new house, got over to Lloyd's billiard-room about six, on the way whither I met Fanny and Belle coming down with one Kitchener, a brother of the Colonel's. Dined in the billiard-room, discovered we had forgot to order oatmeal; whereupon in the moonlit evening, I set forth in my tropical array, mess jacket and such, to get the oatmeal, and meet a young fellow C. — and not a bad young fellow either, only an idiot — as drunk as Crœsus. He wept with me, he wept for me; he talked like a bad character in an impudently bad farce; I could have laughed aloud to hear, and could make you laugh by repeating, but laughter was not uppermost.

This morning at about seven, I set off after the lost sheep. I could have no horse; all that could be mounted — we have one girth-sore and one dead-lame in the establishment — were due at a picnic about 10.30. The morning was very wet, and I set off barefoot, with my trousers over my knees, and a macintosh. Presently I had to take a side path in the bush; missed it; came forth in a great oblong patch of taro solemnly surrounded by forest — no soul, no sign, no sound — and as I stood there at a loss, suddenly between the showers out broke the note of a harmonium and a woman's voice singing an air that I know very well, but have (as usual) forgot the name of. 'Twas from a great way off, but seemed to fill the world. It was strongly romantic, and gave me a point which brought me, by all sorts of forest wading, to an open 238 space of palms. These were of all ages, but mostly at that age when the branches arch from the ground level, range themselves, with leaves exquisitely green. The whole interspace was overgrown with convolvulus, purple, yellow and white, often as deep as to my waist, in which I floundered aimlessly. The very mountain was invisible from here. The rain came and went; now in sunlit April showers, now with the proper tramp and rattle of the tropics. All this while I met no sight or sound of man, except the voice which was now silent, and a damned pig-fence that headed me off at every corner. Do you know barbed wire? Think of a fence of it on rotten posts, and you barefoot. But I crossed it at last with my heart in my mouth and no harm done. Thence at last to C.'s.: no C. Next place I came to was in the zone of woods. They offered me a buggy and set a black boy to wash my legs and feet. "Washum legs belong that fellow whiteman" was the command. So at last I ran down my son of a gun in the hotel, sober, and with no story to tell; penitent, I think. As I sat and looked at him, I knew from my inside the biggest truth in life: there is only one thing that we cannot forgive, and that is ugliness — *our* ugliness. There is no ugliness, no beauty; only that which makes me (*ipse*) sicken or rejoice. And poor C. makes me sicken. Yet, according to canons, he is not amiss. Home, by buggy and my poor feet, up three miles of root, boulder, gravel, and liquid mud, slipping back at every step.

Sunday, Sept. 4th. — Hope you will be able to read a word of the last, no joke writing by a bad lantern with a groggy hand and your glasses mislaid. Not that the hand is not better, as you see by the absence of the amanuensis hitherto. Mail came Friday, and a communication from yourself much more decent than usual, for which I thank you. Glad the *Wrecker* should so hum; but Lord, what fools these mortals be!

So far yesterday, the citation being wrung from me 239 by remembrance of many reviews. I have now received all *Falesá*, and my admiration for that tale rises; I believe it is in some ways my best work; I am pretty sure, at least, I have never done anything better than Wiltshire.

Monday, 13th September 1892. — On Wednesday the Spinsters of Apia gave a ball to a select crowd. Fanny, Belle, Lloyd, and I rode down, met Haggard by the way and joined company with him. Dinner with Haggard, and thence to the ball. The Chief Justice appeared; it was immediately remarked, and whispered from one to another, that he and I had the only red sashes in the room, — and they were both of the hue of blood, sir, blood. He shook hands with myself and all the members of my family. Then the cream came, and I found myself in the same set of a quadrille with his honour. We dance here in Apia a most fearful and wonderful quadrille, I don't know where the devil they fished it from; but it is rackety and prancing and embraceatory beyond words; perhaps it is best defined in Haggard's expression of a gambado. When I and my great enemy found ourselves involved in this gambol, and crossing hands, and kicking up, and being embraced almost in common by large and quite respectable females, we — or I — tried to preserve some rags of dignity, but not for long. The deuce of it is that, personally, I love this man; his eye speaks to me, I am pleased in his society. We exchanged a glance, and then a grin; the man took me in his confidence; and through the remainder of that prance we pranced for each other. Hard to imagine any position more ridiculous; a week before he had been trying to rake up evidence against me by brow-beating and threatening a half-white interpreter; that very morning I had been writing most villainous attacks upon him for the Times; and we meet and smile, and — damn it! — like each other. I do my best to damn the man and drive him from these islands; but the weakness endures — I love him. This is a thing I would despise in anybody else; but he is so jolly insidious 240 and ingratiating! No, sir, I can't dislike him; but if I don't make hay of him, it shall not be for want of trying.

Yesterday, we had two Germans and a young American boy at lunch; and in the afternoon, Vailima was in a state of siege; ten white people on the front verandah, at least as many brown in the cook-house, and countless blacks to see the black boy Arrick.

Which reminds me, Arrick was sent Friday was a week to the German Firm with a note, and was not home on time. Lloyd and I were going bedward, it was late with a bright moon — ah, poor dog, you know no such moons as these! — when home came Arrick with his head in a white bandage and his eyes shining. He had had a fight with other blacks, Malaita boys; many against one, and one with a knife: "I KNICKED 'EM DOWN, three four!" he cried; and had himself to be taken to the doctor's and bandaged. Next day, he could not work, glory of battle swelled too high in his threadpaper breast; he had made a one-stringed harp for Austin, borrowed it, came to Fanny's room, and sang war-songs and danced a war dance in honour of his victory. And it appears, by subsequent advices, that it was a serious victory enough; four of his assailants went to hospital, and one is thought in danger. All Vailima rejoiced at this news.

Five more chapters of David, 22 to 27, go to Baxter. All love affair; seems pretty good to me. Will it do for the young person? I don't know: since the Beach, I know nothing, except that men are fools and hypocrites, and I know less of them than I was fond enough to fancy.

To Mrs. Charles Fairchild

[*Vailima, August 1892.*]

MY DEAR MRS. FAIRCHILD, — Thank you a thousand times for your letter. You are the Angel of (the sort of) Information (that I care about): I appoint you successor 241 to the newspaper press; and I beg of you, whenever you wish to gird at the age, or think the bugs out of proportion to the roses, or despair, or enjoy any cosmic or epochal emotion, to sit down again and write to the Hermit of Samoa. What do I think of it all? Well, I love the romantic solemnity of youth; and even in this form, although not without laughter, I have to love it still. They are such ducks! But what are they made of? We were just as solemn as that about atheism and the stars and humanity; but we were all for belief anyway — we held atheism and sociology (of which none of us, nor indeed anybody, knew anything) for a gospel and an iron rule of life; and it was lucky enough, or there would have been more windows broken. What is apt to puzzle one at first sight in the New Youth is that, with such rickety and risky problems always at heart, they should not plunge down a Niagara of Dissolution. But let us remember the high practical timidity of youth. I was a particularly brave boy — this I think of myself, looking back — and plunged into adventures and experiments, and ran risks that it still surprises me to recall. But, dear me, what a fear I was in of that strange blind machinery in the midst of which I stood; and with what a compressed heart and what empty lungs I would touch a new crank and await developments! I do not mean to say I do not fear life still; I do; and that terror (for an adventurer like myself) is still one of the chief joys of living.

But it was different indeed while I was yet girt with the priceless robes of inexperience; then the fear was exquisite and infinite. And so, when you see all these little Ibsens, who seem at once so dry and so excitable, and faint in swathes over a play (I suppose — for a wager) that would seem to me merely tedious, smile behind your hand, and remember the little dears are all in a blue funk. It must be very funny, and to a spectator like yourself I almost envy it. But never get desperate; human nature is human nature; and the Roman Empire, since the 242 Romans founded it and made our European human nature what it is, bids fair to go on and to be true to itself. These little bodies will all grow up and become men and women, and have heaps of fun; nay, and are having it now; and whatever happens to the fashion of the age, it makes no difference — there are always high and brave and amusing lives to be lived; and a change of key, however exotic, does not exclude melody. Even Chinamen, hard as we find it to believe, enjoy being Chinese. And the Chinaman stands alone to be unthinkable; natural enough, as the representative of the only other great civilisation. Take my people here at my doors; their life is a very good one; it is quite thinkable, quite acceptable to us. And the little dears will be soon skating on the other foot; sooner or later, in each generation, the one-half of them at least begin to remember all the material they had rejected when first they made and nailed up their little theory of life; and these become reactionaries or conservatives, and the ship of man begins to fill upon the other tack.

Here is a sermon, by your leave! It is your own fault, you have amused and interested me so much by your breath of the New Youth, which comes to me from so far away, where I live up here in my mountain, and secret messengers bring me letters from rebels, and the government sometimes seizes them, and generally grumbles in its beard that Stevenson should really be deported. O my life is the more lively, never fear!

It has recently been most amusingly varied by a visit from Lady Jersey. I took her over mysteriously (under the pseudonym of my cousin, Miss Amelia Balfour) to visit Mataafa, our rebel; and we had great fun, and wrote a Ouida novel on our life here, in which every author had to describe himself in the Ouida glamour, and of which — for the Jerseys intend printing it — I must let you have a copy. My wife's chapter, and my description of myself, should, I think, amuse you. But there were finer touches 243 still; as when Belle and Lady Jersey came out to brush their teeth in front of the rebel King's palace, and the night guard squatted opposite on the grass and watched the process; or when I and my interpreter, and the King with his secretary, mysteriously disappeared to conspire. — Ever yours sincerely,

R. L. Stevenson.

To the Children in the Cellar

This time the children in the Kilburn cellar are addressed direct, with only a brief word at the end to their instructress.

Vailima Plantation, Samoan Islands, September 4th, 1892.

DEAR CHILDREN IN THE CELLAR, — I told you before something of the black boys who come here for work on the plantations, and some of whom run away and live a wild life in the forests of the islands. Now I want to tell you of one who lived in the house of the lean man. Like the rest of them here, he is a little fellow, and when he goes about in old, battered, cheap European clothes, looks very small and shabby. When first he came he was as lean as a tobacco-pipe, and his smile (like that of almost all the others) was the sort that makes you half wish to smile yourself, and half wish to cry. However, the boys in the kitchen took him in hand and fed him up. They would set him down alone to table and wait upon him till he had his fill, which was a good long time to wait; and the first thing we noticed was that his little stomach began to stick out like a pigeon's breast; and then the food got a little wider spread and he started little calves to his legs; and last of all he began to get quite saucy and impudent, so that we could know what sort of a fellow he really was when he was no longer afraid of being thrashed. He is really what you ought to call a young man, though I suppose nobody in the whole wide world has any idea of his age; and, as far as his behaviour goes, you can only 244 think of him as a big little child with a good deal of sense. When Austin built his fort against the Indians, Arick (for that is the black boy's name) liked nothing so much as to help him. And this is very funny, when you think that of all the dangerous savages in this island Arick is one of the most dangerous. The other day, besides, he made Austin a musical instrument of the sort they use in his own country, a harp with only one string. He took a stick about three feet long, and perhaps four inches round. The under side he hollowed out in a deep trench to serve as sounding box; the two ends of the upper side he made to curve upward like the ends of a canoe, and between these he stretched the single string. He plays upon it with a match or a little piece of stick, and sings to it songs of his own country, of which no person here can understand a single word, and which are very likely all about fighting with his enemies in battle, and killing them, and I am sorry to say cooking them in a ground oven and eating them for supper when the fight is over.

For Arick is really what you might call a savage, though a savage is a very different person in reality, and a very much nicer, from what he is made to appear in little books. He is the sort of person that everybody smiles to, or makes faces at, or gives a smack to as he goes by; the sort of person that all the girls on the plantation give the best seat to, and help first, and love to decorate with flowers and ribbons, and yet all the while are laughing at him; the sort of person who likes best to play with Austin, and whom Austin perhaps (when he is allowed) likes best to play with. He is all grins and giggles, and little steps out of dances, and little droll ways, to attract people's attention and set them laughing. And yet when you come to look at him closer, you will find that his body is all covered with scars. This was when he was a child. There was a war, as is the way in these wild islands, between his village and the next, much as if there were war in London between one street and another; and all the children ran about 245 playing in the middle of the trouble, and I dare say took no more notice of the war than you children in London do of a general election. But sometimes, at general elections, English children may get run over by processions in the street; and it chanced that as little Arick was running about in the bush, and very busy about his playing, he ran into the midst of the warriors on the other side. These speared him with a poisoned spear; and his own people, when they had found him lying for dead, and in order to cure him of the poison, cut him up with knives that were probably made of fish-bones.

This is a very savage piece of child-life, and Arick, for all his good-nature, is still a very savage person. I have told you how the black boys sometimes run away from the plantations, and live behind alone in the forest, building little sheds to protect them from the rain, and sometimes planting little gardens of food, but for the most part living the best they can upon the nuts of the trees and yams that they dig with their hands out of the earth. I do not think there can be anywhere in the world people more wretched than these runaways. They cannot return, for they would only return to be punished. They can never hope to see again their own land or their own people — indeed, I do not know what they can hope, but just to find enough yams every day to keep them from starvation. And in the wet season of the year, which is our summer and your winter, and the rain falls day after day far harder and louder than the loudest thunder-plump that ever fell in England, and the noon is sometimes so dark that the lean man is glad to light his lamp to write by, I can think of nothing so dreary as the state of these poor runaway slaves in the houseless bush. You are to remember, besides, that the people of this island hate and fear them because they are cannibals, sit and tell tales of them about their lamps at night in their own comfortable houses, and are sometimes afraid to lie down to sleep if they think there is a lurking black boy in the neighbourhood. Well 246 now, Arick is of their own race and language, only he is a little more lucky because he has not run away; and how do you think that he proposed to help them? He asked if he might not have a gun. "What do you want with a gun, Arick?" was asked. And he said quite simply, and with his nice good-natured smile, that if he had a gun he would go up into the high bush and shoot black boys as men shoot pigeons. He said nothing about eating them, nor do I think he really meant to. I think all he wanted was to clear the property of vermin as gamekeepers at home kill weasels, or housewives mice.

The other day he was sent down on an errand to the German Firm where many of the black boys live. It was very late when he came home on a bright moonlight night. He had a white bandage round his head, his eyes shone, and he could scarcely speak for excitement. It seems some of the black boys who were his enemies at home had attacked him, and one with a knife. By his own account he had fought very well, but the odds were heavy; the man with the knife had cut him both in the head and back, he had been struck down, and if some of the black boys of his own side had not come to the rescue, he must certainly have been killed. I am sure no Christmas-box could make any of you children so happy as this fight made Arick. A great part of the next day he neglected his work to play upon the one-stringed harp and sing songs about his great victory. And to-day, when he is gone upon his holiday, he has announced that he is going back to the German Firm to have another battle and another triumph. I do not think he will go all the same, or I should be more uneasy, for I do not want to have my Arick killed; and there is no doubt that if he begins to fight again, he will be likely to go on with it very far. For I have seen him once when he saw, or thought he saw, an enemy. It was one of our dreadful days of rain, the sound of it like a great waterfall or like a tempest of wind blowing in the forest; and there came to our door two runaway black boys 247 seeking work. In such weather as that my enemy's dog (as Shakespeare says) should have had a right to shelter. But when Arick saw these two poor rogues coming with their empty bellies and drenched clothes, and one of them with a stolen cutlass in his hand, through that world of falling water, he had no thought of pity in his heart. Crouching behind one of the pillars of the verandah, which he held in his two hands, his mouth drew back into a strange sort of smile, his eyes grew bigger and bigger, and his whole face was just like the one word Murder in big capitals.

Now I have told you a great deal too much about poor Arick's savage nature, and now I must tell you about a great amusement he had the other day. There came an English ship of war in the harbour, and the officers very good naturedly gave an entertainment of songs and dances and a magic-lantern, to which Arick and Austin were allowed to go. At the door of the hall there were crowds of black boys waiting and trying to peep in, the way children at home lie about and peep under the tent of a circus; and you may be sure Arick was a very proud person when he passed them all by and entered the hall with his ticket. I wish I knew what he thought of the whole performance; but the housekeeper of the lean man, who sat just in front of him, tells me what seemed to startle him the most. The first thing was when two of the officers came out with blackened faces like Christy minstrel boys and began to dance. Arick was sure that they were really black and his own people, and he was wonderfully surprised to see them dance this new European style of dance. But the great affair was the magic-lantern. The hall was made quite dark, which was very little to Arick's taste. He sat there behind the housekeeper, nothing to be seen of him but eyes and teeth, and his heart beating finely in his little scarred breast. And presently there came out on the white sheet that great bright eye of light that I am sure all you children must have often seen. It was quite new to Arick, he had no 248 idea what would happen next; and in his fear and excitement, he laid hold with his little slim black fingers like a bird's claws on the neck of the housekeeper in front of him. All through the rest of the show, as one picture followed another on the white sheet, he sat there gasping and clutching at the housekeeper's neck, and goodness knows whether he were more pleased or frightened. Doubtless it was a very fine thing to see all these bright pictures coming out and dying away again one after another; but doubtless it was rather alarming also, for how was it done? And at last, when there appeared upon the screen the head of a black woman (as it might be his own mother or sister), and the black woman of a sudden began to roll her eyes, the fear or the excitement, whichever it was, wrung out of him a loud shuddering sob. And I think we all ought to admire his courage when, after an evening spent in looking on at such wonderful miracles, he and Austin set out alone through the forest to the lean man's house. It was late at night and pitch dark when some of the party overtook the little white boy and the big black boy marching among the trees with their lantern. I have told you the wood has an ill name, and all the people of the island believe it to be full of devils; but even if you do not believe in the devils, it is a pretty dreadful place to walk in by the moving light of a lantern, with nothing about you but a curious whirl of shadows and the black night above and beyond. But Arick kept his courage up, and I dare say Austin's too, with a perpetual chatter, so that the people coming after heard his voice long before they saw the shining of the lantern.

My dear Miss Boodle, — will I be asking too much that you should send me back my letters to the Children, or copies, if you prefer; I have an idea that they may perhaps help in time to make up a book on the South Seas for children. I have addressed the Cellar so long this time that you must take this note for yourself and excuse, yours most sincerely,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Thursday, 15th September .

MY DEAR COLVIN, — On Tuesday, we had our young adventurer ready, and Fanny, Belle, he and I set out about three of a dark, deadly hot, and deeply unwholesome afternoon. Belle had the lad behind her; I had a pint of champagne in either pocket, a parcel in my hands, and as Jack had a girth sore and I rode without a girth, I might be said to occupy a very unstrategic position. On the way down, a little dreary, beastly drizzle beginning to come out of the darkness, Fanny put up an umbrella, her horse bounded, reared, cannoned into me, cannoned into Belle and the lad, and bolted for home. It really might and ought to have been an A1 catastrophe; but nothing happened beyond Fanny's nerves being a good deal shattered; of course, she could not tell what had happened to us until she got her horse mastered.

Next day, Haggard went off to the Commission and left us in charge of his house; all our people came down in wreaths of flowers; we had a boat for them; Haggard had a flag in the Commission boat for us; and when at last the steamer turned up, the young adventurer was carried on board in great style, with a new watch and chain, and about three pound ten of tips, and five big baskets of fruit as free-will offerings to the captain. Captain Morse had us all to lunch; champagne flowed, so did compliments; and I did the affable celebrity life-sized. It made a great send-off for the young adventurer. As the boat drew off, he was standing at the head of the gangway, supported by three handsome ladies — one of them a real full-blown beauty, Madame Green, the singer — and looking very engaging himself, between smiles and tears. Not that he cried in public. My, but we were a tired crowd! However, it is always a blessing to get 250 home, and this time it was a sort of wonder to ourselves that we got back alive. Casualties: Fanny's back jarred, horse incident; Belle, bad headache, tears, and champagne; self, idiocy, champagne, fatigue; Lloyd, ditto, ditto. As for the adventurer, I believe he will have a delightful voyage for his little start in life. But there is always something touching in a mite's first launch.

Date unknown. — I am now well on with the third part of the *Débâcle*. The two first I liked much; the second completely knocking me; so far as it has gone, this third part appears the ramblings of a dull man who has forgotten what he has to say — he reminds me of an M.P. But Sedan was really great, and I will pick no holes. The batteries under fire, the red-cross folk, the county charge — perhaps, above all, Major Bouroche and the operations, all beyond discussion; and every word about the Emperor splendid.

September 30th. — *David Balfour* done, and its author along with it, or nearly so. Strange to think of even our doctor here repeating his nonsense about debilitating climate. Why, the work I have been doing the last twelve months, in one continuous spate, mostly with annoying interruptions and without any collapse to mention, would be incredible in Norway. But I *have* broken down now, and will do nothing as long as I possibly can. With *David Balfour* I am very well pleased; in fact these labours of the last year — I mean *Falesá* and *D. B.*, not Samoa, of course — seem to me to be nearer what I mean than anything I have ever done; nearer what I mean by fiction; the nearest thing before was *Kidnapped*. I am not forgetting the *Master of Ballantrae*, but that lacked all pleasurableness, and hence was imperfect in essence. So you see, if I am a little tired, I do not repent.

The third part of the *Débâcle* may be all very fine; but I cannot read it. It suffers from *impaired vitality*, and *uncertain aim*; two deadly sicknesses. Vital — that's what I am at, first: wholly vital, with a buoyancy of life. Then 251 lyrical, if it may be, and picturesque, always with an epic value of scenes, so that the figures remain in the mind's eye for ever.

October 8th. — Suppose you sent us some of the catalogues of the parties what vends statutes? I don't want colossal Herculeses, but about quarter size and less. If the catalogues were illustrated it would probably be found a help to weak memories. These may be found to alleviate spare moments, when we sometimes amuse ourselves by thinking how fine we shall make the palace if we do not go pop. Perhaps in the same way it might amuse you to send us any pattern of wall paper that might strike you as cheap, pretty, and suitable for a room in a hot and extremely bright climate. It should be borne in mind that our climate can be extremely dark too. Our sitting-room is to be in varnished wood. The room I have particularly in mind is a sort of bed and sitting-room, pretty large, lit on three sides, and the colour in favour of its proprietor at present is a topazy yellow. But then with what colour to relieve it? For a little work-room of my own at the back, I should rather like to see some patterns of unglossy — well, I'll be hanged if I can describe this red — it's not Turkish and it's not Roman and it's not Indian, but it seems to partake of the two last, and yet it can't be either of them, because it ought to be able to go with vermillion. Ah, what a tangled web we weave — anyway, with what brains you have left choose me and send me some — many — patterns of this exact shade.

A few days ago it was Haggard's birthday and we had him and his cousin to dinner — bless me if I ever told you of his cousin! — he is here anyway, and a fine, pleasing specimen, so that we have concluded (after our own happy experience) that the climate of Samoa must be favourable to cousins. Then we went out on the verandah in a lovely 252 moonlight, drinking port, hearing the cousin play and sing, till presently we were informed that our boys had got up a siva in Lafaele's house to which we were invited. It was entirely their own idea. The house, you must understand, is one-half floored, and one-half bare earth, and the daïs stands a little over knee high above the level of the soil. The daïs was the stage, with three footlights. We audience sat on mats on the floor, and the cook and three of our work-boys, sometimes assisted by our two ladies, took their places behind the footlights and began a topical Vailima song. The burden was of course that of a Samoan popular song about a white man who objects to all that he sees in Samoa. And there was of course a special verse for each one of the party — Lloyd was called the dancing man (practically the Chief's handsome son) of Vailima; he was also, in his character I suppose of overseer, compared to a policeman — Belle had that day been the almoner in a semi-comic distribution of wedding rings and thimbles (bought cheap at an auction) to the whole plantation company, fitting a ring on every man's finger, and a ring and a thimble on both the women's. This was very much in character with her native name *Teuila*, the adorner of the ugly — so of course this was the point of her verse and at a given moment all the performers displayed the rings upon their fingers. Pelema (the cousin — our cousin) was described as watching from the house and whenever he saw any boy not doing anything, running and doing it himself. Fanny's verse was less intelligible, but it was accompanied in the dance with a pantomime of terror well-fitted to call up her haunting, indefatigable and diminutive presence in a blue gown.

To Gordon Browne

Vailima, Samoa [*Autumn 1892*].

To the Artist who did the illustrations to "Uma."

DEAR SIR, — I only know you under the initials G. B., 253 but you have done some exceedingly spirited and satisfactory illustrations to my story *The Beach of Falesá*, and I wish to write and thank you expressly for the care and talent shown. Such numbers of people can do good black and whites! So few can illustrate a story, or apparently read it. You have shown that you can do both, and your creation of Wiltshire is a real illumination of the text. It was exactly so that Wiltshire dressed and looked, and you have the line of his nose to a nicety. His nose is an inspiration. Nor should I forget to thank you for Case, particularly in his last appearance. It is a singular fact — which seems to point still more directly to inspiration in your case — that your missionary actually resembles the flesh-and-blood person from whom Mr. Tarleton was drawn. The general effect of the islands is all that could be wished; indeed I have but one criticism to make, that in the background of Case taking the dollar from Mr. Tarleton's head — head — not hand, as the fools have printed it — the natives have a little too much the look of Africans.

But the great affair is that you have been to the pains to illustrate my story instead of making conscientious black and whites of people sitting talking. I doubt if you have left unrepresented a single pictorial incident. I am writing by this mail to the editor in the hopes that I may buy from him the originals, and I am, dear sir, your very much obliged,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Miss Morse

The next is an answer to an acknowledgment from a lady in the United States, one of many similar which he from time to time received, of help and encouragement derived from his writings.

Vailima, Samoan Islands, October 7th, 1892.

DEAR MADAM, — I have a great diffidence in answering your valued letter. It would be difficult for me to express the feelings with which I read it — and am now trying to re-read it as I dictate this.

You ask me to forgive what you say “must seem a liberty,” and I find that I cannot thank you sufficiently or even find a word with which to qualify your letter. Dear Madam, such a communication even the vainest man would think a sufficient reward for a lifetime of labour. That I should have been able to give so much help and pleasure to your sister is the subject of my grateful wonder.

That she, being dead, and speaking with your pen, should be able to repay the debt with such a liberal interest, is one of those things that reconcile us with the world and make us take hope again. I do not know what I have done to deserve so beautiful and touching a compliment; and I feel there is but one thing fit for me to say here, that I will try with renewed courage to go on in the same path, and to deserve, if not to receive, a similar return from others.

You apologise for speaking so much about yourselves. Dear Madam, I thought you did so too little. I should have wished to have known more of those who were so sympathetic as to find a consolation in my work, and so graceful and so tactful as to acknowledge it in such a letter as was yours.

Will you offer to your mother the expression of a sympathy which (coming from a stranger) must seem very airy, but which yet is genuine; and accept for yourself my gratitude for the thought which inspired you to write to me and the words which you found to express it.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Miss Taylor

Lady Taylor had died soon after the settlement of the Stevenson family at Vailima. The second paragraph refers to a test which had been set before an expert in the reading of character by handwriting.

Vailima, Samoan Islands, October 7th, 1892.

MY DEAR IDA, — I feel very much the implied reproof in yours just received; but I assure you there is no fear 255 of our forgetting either Una or yourself, or your dear mother, who was one of the women I have most admired and loved in the whole of my way through life. The truth is that Fanny writes to nobody and that I am on the whole rather overworked. I compose lots of letters to lots of unforgotten friends, but when it comes to taking the pen between my fingers there are many impediments. Hence it comes that I am now writing to you by an amanuensis, at which I know you will be very angry. Well, it was Hobson’s choice. A little while ago I had very bad threatenings of scrivener’s cramp; and if Belle (Fanny’s daughter, of whom you remember to have heard) had not taken up the pen for my correspondence, I doubt you would never have heard from me again except in the way of books. I wish you and Una would be so good as to write to us now and then even without encouragement. An unsolicited letter would be almost certain (sooner or later, depending on the activity of the conscience) to produce some sort of an apology for an answer.

All this upon one condition: that you send me your friend’s description of my looks, age and character. The character of my work I am not so careful about. But did you ever hear of anything so tantalizing as for you to tell me the story and not send me your notes? I expect it was a device to extract an answer; and, as you see, it has succeeded. Let me suggest (if your friend be handy) that the present letter would be a very delicate test. It is in one person’s handwriting, it expresses the ideas of another, of the writer herself you know nothing. I should be very curious to know what the sibyl will make of such a problem.

If you carry out your design of settling in London you must be sure and let us have the new address. I swear we shall write some time — and if the interval be long you must just take it on your own head for prophesying horrors. You remember how you always said we were but an encampment of Bedouins, and that you would awake some 256 morning to find us fled for ever. Nothing unsettled me more than these ill-judged remarks. I was doing my best to be a sedentary semi-respectable man in a suburban villa; and you were always shaking your head at me and assuring me (what I knew to be partly true) that it was all a farce. Even here, when I have sunk practically all that I possess, and have good health and my fill of congenial fighting, and could not possibly get away if I wanted ever so — even here and now the recollection of these infidel prophesies rings in my ears like an invitation to the sea. *Tu l’as voulu!*

I know you want some of our news, and it is all so far away that I know not when to begin. We have a big house and we are building another — pray God that we can pay for it. I am just reminded that we have no less than eight several places of habitation in this place, which was a piece of uncleared forest some three years ago. I think there are on my pay rolls at the present moment thirteen human souls, not counting two washerwomen who come and go. In addition to this I am at daggers drawn with the Government, have had my correspondence stopped and opened by the Chief Justice — it was correspondence with the so-called Rebel King, — and have had boys examined and threatened with deportation to betray the secrets of my relations with the same person. In addition to this I might direct attention to those trifling exercises of the fancy, my literary works, and I hope you won’t think that I am likely to suffer from ennui. Nor is Fanny any less active. Ill or well, rain or shine, a little blue indefatigable figure is to be observed howking about certain patches of garden. She comes in heated and bemired up to the eyebrows, late for every meal. She has reached a sort of tragic placidity. Whenever she plants anything new the boys weed it up. Whenever she tries to keep anything for seed the house-boys throw it away. And she has reached that pitch of a kind of noble dejection that she would almost say she did not mind. Anyway, her cabbages 257 have succeeded. Talolo (our native cook, and a very good one too) likened them the other day to the head of a German; and even this hyperbolical image was grudging. I remember all the trouble you had with servants at the Roost. The most of them were nothing to the trances that we have to go through here at times, when I have to hold a bed of justice, and take evidence which is never twice the same, and decide, practically blindfold, and after I have decided have the accuser take back the accusation in block and beg for mercy for the culprit. Conceive the annoyance of all this when you are very fond of both. — Your affectionate friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To E. L. Burlingame

Vailima Plantation, Samoan Islands, Oct. 10th, 1892.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — It is now, as you see, the 10th of October, and there has not reached the Island of Upolu one single copy, or rag of a copy, of the Samoa book. I lie; there has come one, and that in the pocket of a missionary man who is at daggers drawn with me, who lends it to all my enemies, conceals it from all my friends, and is bringing a lawsuit against me on the strength of expressions in the same which I have forgotten, and now cannot see. This is pretty tragic, I think you will allow; and I was inclined to fancy it was the fault of the Post Office. But I hear from my sister-in-law Mrs. Sanchez that she is in the same case, and has received no *Footnote*. I have also to consider that I had no letter from you last mail, although you ought to have received by that time "My Grandfather and Scott," and "Me and my Grandfather." Taking one consideration with another, therefore, I prefer to conceive that No. 743 Broadway has fallen upon gentle and continuous slumber, and is become an 258 enchanted palace among publishing houses. If it be not so, if the *Footnotes* were really sent, I hope you will fall upon the Post Office with all the vigour you possess. How does *The Wrecker* go in the States? It seems to be doing exceptionally well in England. — Yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

This letter contains the first announcement of the scheme of *Weir of Hermiston.*

Vailima, October 28th, 1892.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — This is very late to begin the monthly budget, but I have a good excuse this time, for I have had a very annoying fever with symptoms of sore arm, and in the midst of it a very annoying piece of business which suffered no delay or idleness....

The consequence of all this was that my fever got very much worse and your letter has not been hitherto written. But, my dear fellow, do compare these little larky fevers with the fine, healthy, prostrating colds of the dear old dead days at home. Here was I, in the middle of a pretty bad one, and I was able to put it in my pocket, and go down day after day, and attend to and put my strength into this beastly business. Do you see me doing that with a catarrh? And if I had done so, what would have been the result?

Last night, about four o'clock, Belle and I set off to Apia, whither my mother had preceded us. She was at the Mission; we went to Haggard's. There we had to wait the most unconscionable time for dinner. I do not wish to speak lightly of the Amanuensis, who is unavoidably present, but I may at least say for myself that I was as cross as two sticks. Dinner came at last, we had the tinned soup which is usually the *pièce de resistance* in the halls of Haggard, and we pitched into it. Followed an 259 excellent salad of tomatoes and crayfish, a good Indian curry, a tender joint of beef, a dish of pigeons, a pudding, cheese and coffee. I was so over-eaten after this "hunger and burst" that I could scarcely move; and it was my sad fate that night in the character of the local author to eloquute before the public — "Mr. Stevenson will read a selection from his own works" — a degrading picture. I had determined to read them the account of the hurricane; I do not know if I told you that my book has never turned up here, or rather only one copy has, and that in the unfriendly hands of — — . It has therefore only been seen by enemies; and this combination of mystery and evil report has been greatly envenomed by some ill-judged newspaper articles from the States. Altogether this specimen was listened to with a good deal of uncomfortable expectation on the part of the Germans, and when it was over was applauded with unmistakable relief. The public hall where these revels came off seems to be unlucky for me; I never go there but to some stone-breaking job. Last time it was the public meeting of which I must have written you; this time it was this uneasy but not on the whole unsuccessful experiment. Belle, my mother, and I rode home about midnight in a fine display of lightning and witch-fires. My mother is absent, so that I may dare to say that she struck me as voluble. The Amanuensis did not strike me the same way; she was probably thinking, but it was really rather a weird business, and I saw what I have never seen before, the witch-fires gathered into little bright blue points almost as bright as a night-light.

Saturday. — This is the day that should bring your letter; it is gray and cloudy and windless; thunder rolls in the mountain; it is a quarter past six, and I am alone, sir, alone in this workman's house, Belle and Lloyd having been down all yesterday to meet the steamer; they were scarce gone with most of the horses and all the saddles, than there began a perfect picnic of the sick and maim; 260 Iopu with a bad foot, Faauma with a bad shoulder, Fanny with yellow spots. It was at first proposed to carry all these to the doctor, particularly Faauma, whose shoulder bore an appearance of erysipelas, that sent the amateur below. No horses, no saddle. Now I had my horse and I could borrow Lafaele's saddle; and if I went alone I could do a job that had long been waiting; and that was to interview the doctor on another matter. Off I set in a hazy moonlight night; windless, like to-day; the thunder rolling in the mountain, as to-day; in the still groves, these little mushroom lamps glowing blue and steady, singly or in pairs. Well, I had my interview, said everything as I had meant, and with just the result I hoped for. The doctor and I drank beer together and discussed German literature until nine, and we parted the best of friends. I got home to a silent house of sleepers, only Fanny awaiting me; we talked awhile, in whispers, on the interview; then, I got a lantern and went across to the workman's house, now empty and silent, myself sole occupant. So to bed, prodigious tired but mighty content with my night's work, and to-day, with a headache and a chill, have written you this page, while my new novel waits. Of this I will tell you nothing, except the various names under consideration. First, it ought to be called — but of course that is impossible —

Braxfield.

Then it *is* to be called either

Weir of Hermiston,
The Lord-Justice Clerk,
The Two Kirsties of the Cauldstaneslap,
or
The Four Black Brothers.

Characters:

Adam Weir, Lord-Justice Clerk, called Lord Hermiston.
Archie, his son.
Aunt Kirstie Elliott, his housekeeper at Hermiston.
Elliott of the Cauldstaneslap, her brother.
Kirstie Elliott, his daughter.
Jim, his sons.

Gib,
Hob
&
Dandie,
Patrick Innes, a young advocate.
The Lord-Justice General.

Scene, about Hermiston in the Lammermuirs and in Edinburgh. Tem2. So you see you are to have another holiday from copra! The rain begins softly on the iron roof, and I will do the reverse and — dry up.

Sunday. — Yours with the diplomatic private opinion received. It is just what I should have supposed. *Ça m'est bien égal.* — The name is to be

The Lord-Justice Clerk.

None others are genuine. Unless it be

Lord-Justice Clerk Hermiston.

Nov. 2nd. — On Saturday we expected Captain Morse of the *Alameda* to come up to lunch, and on Friday with genuine South Sea hospitality had a pig killed. On the Saturday morning no pig. Some of the boys seemed to give a doubtful account of themselves; our next neighbour below in the wood is a bad fellow and very intimate with some of our boys, for whom his confounded house is like a fly-paper for flies. To add to all this, there was on the Saturday a great public presentation of food to the king and parliament men, an occasion on which it is almost dignified for a Samoan to steal anything, and entirely dignified for him to steal a pig.

(The Amanuensis went to the *talolo*, as it is called, and saw something so very pleasing she begs to interrupt the letter to tell it. The different villagers came in in bands — led by the maid of the village, followed by the young warriors. It was a very fine sight, for some three thousand people are said to have assembled. The men wore nothing but magnificent head-dresses and a bunch of leaves, and were oiled and glistening in the sunlight. One band had no maid but was led by a tiny child of about five — a serious little creature clad in a ribbon of grass and a fine head-dress, who skipped with elaborate leaps in front of the warriors, like a little kid leading a band of lions.

A. M.)

The A.M. being done, I go on again. All this made it very possible that even if none of our boys had stolen the pig, some of them might know the thief. Besides, the theft, as it was a theft of meat prepared for a guest, had something of the nature of an insult, and "my face," in native phrase, "was ashamed." Accordingly, we determined to hold a bed of justice. It was done last night after dinner. I sat at the head of the table, Graham on my right hand, Henry Simelé at my left, Lloyd behind him. The house company sat on the floor around the walls — twelve all told. I am described as looking as like Braxfield as I could manage with my appearance; Graham, who is of a severe countenance, looked like Rhadamanthus; Lloyd was hideous to the view; and Simelé had all the fine solemnity of a Samoan chief. The proceedings opened by my delivering a Samoan prayer, which may be translated thus — ”Our God, look down upon us and shine into our hearts. Help us to be far from falsehood so that each one of us may stand before Thy Face in his integrity.” — Then, beginning with Simelé, every one came up to the table, laid his hand on the Bible, and repeated clause by clause after me the following oath — I fear it may sound even comic in English, but it is a very pretty piece of 263 Samoan, and struck direct at the most lively superstitions of the race. “This is the Holy Bible here that I am touching. Behold me, O God! If I know who it was that took away the pig, or the place to which it was taken, or have heard anything relating to it, and shall not declare the same — be made an end of by God this life of mine!” They all took it with so much seriousness and firmness that (as Graham said) if they were not innocent they would make invaluable witnesses. I was so far impressed by their bearing that I went no further, and the funny and yet strangely solemn scene came to an end.

Sunday, Nov. 6th. — Here is a long story to go back upon, and I wonder if I have either time or patience for the task?

Wednesday I had a great idea of match-making, and proposed to Henry that Faalé would make a good wife for him. I wish I had put this down when it was fresher in my mind, it was so interesting an interview. My gentleman would not tell if I were on or not. “I do not know yet; I will tell you next week. May I tell the sister of my father? No, better not, tell her when it is done.” — ”But will not your family be angry if you marry without asking them?” — ”My village? What does my village want? Mats!” I said I thought the girl would grow up to have a great deal of sense, and my gentleman flew out upon me; she had sense now, he said.

Thursday, we were startled by the note of guns, and presently after heard it was an English warship. Graham and I set off at once, and as soon as we met any towns-folk they began crying to me that I was to be arrested. It was the *Vossische Zeitung* article which had been quoted in a paper. Went on board and saw Captain Bourke; he did not even know — not even guess — why he was here; having been sent off by cablegram from Auckland. It is hoped the same ship that takes this off Europewards may bring his orders and our news. But which is it to be? Heads or tails? If it is to be German, I hope they will 264 deport me; I should prefer it so; I do not think that I could bear a German officialdom, and should probably have to leave *sponte mea*, which is only less picturesque and more expensive.

8th. — Mail day. All well, not yet put in prison, whatever may be in store for me. No time even to sign this lame letter.

To J. M. Barrie

Vailima Plantation, Samoan Islands, November 1st, 1892.

DEAR MR. BARRIE, — I can scarce thank you sufficiently for your extremely amusing letter. No, *The Auld Licht Idyls* never reached me — I wish it had, and I wonder extremely whether it would not be good for me to have a pennyworth of the Auld Licht pulpit. It is a singular thing that I should live here in the South Seas under conditions so new and so striking, and yet my imagination so continually inhabit that cold old huddle of grey hills from which we come. I have just finished *David Balfour*; I have another book on the stocks, *The Young Chevalier*, which is to be part in France and part in Scotland, and to deal with Prince Charlie about the year 1749; and now what have I done but begun a third which is to be all moorland together, and is to have for a centre-piece a figure that I think you will appreciate — that of the immortal Braxfield — Braxfield himself is my *grand premier*, or, since you are so much involved in the British drama, let me say my heavy lead....

Your descriptions of your dealings with Lord Rintoul are frightfully unconscientious. You should never write about anybody until you persuade yourself at least for the moment that you love him, above all anybody on whom your plot revolves. It will always make a hole in the book; and, if he has anything to do with the mechanism, 265 prove a stick in your machinery. But you know all this better than I do, and it is one of your most promising traits that you do not take your powers too seriously. *The Little Minister* ought to have ended badly; we all know it did; and we are infinitely grateful to you for the grace and good feeling with which you lied about it. If you had told the truth, I for one could never have forgiven you. As you had conceived and written the earlier parts, the truth about the end, though indisputably true to fact, would have been a lie, or what is worse, a discord in art. If you are going to make a book end badly, it must end badly from the beginning. Now your book began to end well. You let yourself fall in love with, and fondle, and smile at your puppets. Once you had done that, your honour was committed — at the cost of truth to life you were bound to save them. It is the blot on *Richard Feverel*, for instance, that it begins to end well; and then tricks you and ends ill. But in that case there is worse behind, for the ill-ending does not inherently issue from the plot — the story *had*, in fact, *ended well* after the great last interview between Richard and Lucy — and the blind, illogical bullet which smashes all has no more to do between the boards than a fly has to do with the room into whose open window it comes buzzing. It *might* have so happened; it needed not; and unless needs must, we have no right to pain our readers. I have had a heavy case of conscience of the same kind about my Braxfield story. Braxfield — only his name is Hermiston — has a son who is condemned to death; plainly, there is a fine tempting fitness about this; and I meant he was to hang. But now on considering my minor characters, I saw there were five people who would — in a sense who must — break prison and attempt his rescue. They were capable, hardy folks, too, who might very well succeed. Why should they not then? Why should not young Hermiston escape clear out of the country? and be happy, if he could, with his — — . But soft! I will not betray my secret or my heroine. 266 Suffice it to breathe in your ear that she was what Hardy calls (and others in their plain way don't) a Pure Woman. Much virtue in a capital letter, such as yours was.

Write to me again in my infinite distance. Tell me about your new book. No harm in telling *me*; I am too far off to be indiscreet; there are too few near me who would care to hear. I am rushes by the riverside, and the stream is in Babylon: breathe your secrets to me fearlessly; and if the Trade Wind caught and carried them away, there are none to catch them nearer than Australia, unless it were the Tropic Birds. In the unavoidable absence of my amanuensis, who is buying eels for dinner, I have thus concluded my dispatch, like St. Paul, with my own hand.

And in the inimitable words of Lord Kames, Faur ye weel, ye bitch. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To E. L. Burlingame

Vailima Plantation, Nov. 2nd, 1892.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME, — In the first place, I have to acknowledge receipt of your munificent cheque for three hundred and fifty dollars. Glad you liked the Scott voyage; rather more than I did upon the whole. As the proofs have not turned up at all, there can be no question of returning them, and I am therefore very much pleased to think you have arranged not to wait. The volumes of Adams arrived along with yours of October 6th. One of the dictionaries has also blundered home, apparently from the Colonies; the other is still to seek. I note and sympathise with your bewilderment as to *Falesá*. My own direct correspondence with Mr. Baxter is now about three months in abeyance. Altogether you see how well it would be if you could do anything to wake up the Post 267 Office. Not a single copy of the *Footnote* has yet reached Samoa, but I hear of one having come to its address in Hawaii. Glad to hear good news of Stoddard. — Yours sincerely,

R. L. Stevenson.

P.S. — Since the above was written an aftermath of post matter came in, among which were the proofs of *My Grandfather*. I shall correct and return them, but as I have lost all confidence in the Post Office, I shall mention here: first galley, 4th line from the bottom, for "AS" read "OR."

Should I ever again have to use my work without waiting for proofs, bear in mind this golden principle. From a congenital defect, I must suppose, I am unable to write the word OR — wherever I write it the printer unerringly puts AS — and those who read for me had better, wherever it is possible, substitute *or* for *as*. This the more so since many writers have a habit of using as which is death to my temper and confusion to my face.

R. L. S.

To Lieutenant Eeles

The following is addressed to one of Stevenson's best friends among the officers of H.M.S. the Curaçoa, which had been for some time on the South Pacific station.

Vailima Plantation, Upolu, Samoan Islands, November 15th, 1892.

DEAR EELES, — In the first place, excuse me writing to you by another hand, as that is the way in which alone all my correspondence gets effected. Before I took to this method, or rather before I found a victim, it simply didn't get effected.

Thank you again and again, first for your kind thought of writing to me, and second for your extremely amusing and interesting letter. You can have no guess how immediately interesting it was to our family. First of all, the 268 poor soul at Nukufetau is an old friend of ours, and we have actually treated him ourselves on a former visit to the island. I don't know if Hoskin would approve of our treatment; it consisted, I believe, mostly in a present of stout and a recommendation to put nails in his watertank. We also (as you seem to have done) recommended him to leave the island; and I remember very well how wise and kind we thought his answer. He had half-caste children (he said) who would suffer and perhaps be despised if he carried them elsewhere; if he left them there alone, they would almost certainly miscarry; and the best thing was that he should stay and die with them. But the cream of the fun was your meeting with Buckland. We not only know him, but (as the French say) we don't know anybody else; he is our intimate and adored original; and — prepare your mind — he was, is, and ever will be, Tommy Haddon! As I don't believe you to be inspired, I suspect you to have suspected this. At least it was a mighty happy suspicion. You are quite right: Tommy is really "a good chap," though about as comic as they make them.

I was extremely interested in your Fiji legend, and perhaps even more so in your capital account of the *Curaçoa's* misadventure. Alas! we have nothing so thrilling to relate. All hangs and fools on in this isle of mis-government, without change, though not without novelty, but wholly without hope, unless perhaps you should consider it hopeful that I am still more immediately threatened with arrest. The confounded thing is, that if it comes off, I shall be sent away in the *Ringarooma* instead of the *Curaçoa*. The former ship burst upon us by the run — she had been sent off by despatch and without orders — and to make me a little more easy in my mind she brought newspapers clamouring for my incarceration. Since then I have had a conversation with the German Consul. He said he had read a review of my Samoa book, 269 and if the review were fair, must regard it as an insult, and one that would have to be resented. At the same time, I learn that letters addressed to the German squadron lie for them here in the Post Office. Reports are current of other English ships being on the way — I hope to goodness yours will be among the number. And I gather from one thing and another that there must be a holy row going on between the powers at home, and that the issue (like all else connected with Samoa) is on the knees of the gods. One thing, however, is pretty sure — *if* that issue prove to be a German protectorate, I shall have to tramp. Can you give us any advice as to a fresh field of energy? We have been searching the atlas, and it seems difficult to fill the bill. How would Rarotonga do? I forget if you have been there. The best of it is that my new house is going up like winking, and I am dictating this letter to the accompaniment of saws and hammers. A hundred black boys and about a score draught oxen perished, or at least barely escaped with their lives, from the mud holes on our road, bringing up the materials. It will be a fine legacy to H.I.G.M.'s protectorate, and doubtless the Governor will take it for his country house. The Ringarooma people, by the way, seem very nice. I liked Stansfield particularly.

Our middy has gone up to San Francisco in pursuit of the phantom Education. We have good word of him, and I hope he will not be in disgrace again, as he was when the hope of the British Navy — need I say that I refer to Admiral Burney? — honoured us last. The next time you come, as the new house will be finished, we shall be able to offer you a bed. Nares and Meiklejohn may like to hear that our new room is to be big enough to dance in. It will be a very pleasant day for me to see the *Curaçoa* in port again and at least a proper contingent of her officers "skipping in my 'all."

We have just had a feast on my birthday at which we had three of the Ringaroomas, and I wish they had been three Curaçoas — say yourself, Hoskin, and Burney the ever Great. (Consider this an invitation.) Our boys had got the thing up regardless. There were two huge sows — O, brutes of animals that would have broken down a hansom cab — four smaller pigs, two barrels of beef, and a horror of vegetables and fowls. We sat down between forty and fifty in a big new native house behind the kitchen that you have never seen, and ate and public spoke till all was blue. Then we had about half an hour's holiday with some beer and sherry and brandy and soda to restrengthen the European heart, and then out to the old native house to see a siva. Finally, all the guests were packed off in a trackless black night and down a road that was rather fitted for the *Curaçoa* than any human pedestrian, though to be sure I do not know the draught of the *Curaçoa*. My ladies one and all desire to be particularly remembered to our friends on board, and all look forward, as I do myself, in the hope of your return. — Yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

And let me hear from you again!

To Charles Baxter

The following extract gives a hint of Stevenson's intended management of one of the most difficult points in the plot of *Weir of Hermiston*.

1st Dec. '92.

...I have a novel on the stocks to be called *The Justice-Clerk*. It is pretty Scotch, the Grand Premier is taken from Braxfield — (Oh, by the by, send me Cockburn's *Memorials*) — and some of the story is — well — queer. The heroine is seduced by one man, and finally disappears with the other man who shot him.... Mind you, I expect *The Justice-Clerk* to be my masterpiece. My 271 Braxfield is already a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, and so far as he has gone *far* my best character.

[*Later.*] — Second thought. I wish Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials quam primum*. Also, an absolutely correct text of the Scots judiciary oath.

Also, in case Pitcairn does not come down late enough, I wish as full a report as possible of a Scotch murder trial between 1790-1820. Understand, *the fullest possible*.

Is there any book which would guide me as to the following facts?

The Justice-Clerk tries some people capitally on circuit. Certain evidence cropping up, the charge is transferred to the J.-C.'s own son. Of course, in the next trial the J.-C. is excluded, and the case is called before the Lord-Justice General.

Where would this trial have to be? I fear in Edinburgh, which would not suit my view. Could it be again at the circuit town?

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Nov. 30, 1892.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Another grimy little odd and end of paper, for which you shall be this month repaid in kind, and serve you jolly well right.... This is a strange life I live, always on the brink of deportation, men's lives in the scale — and, well, you know my character: if I were to pretend to you that I was not amused, you would justly scorn me. The new house is roofed; it will be a braw house, and what is better, I have my yearly bill in, and I find I can pay for it. For all which mercies, etc. I must have made close on £4,000 this year all told; but, what is not so pleasant, I seem to have come near to spending them. I have been in great alarm, with this new house on the cards, all summer, and came very near to 272 taking in sail, but I live here so entirely on credit, that I determined to hang on.

Dec. 1st. — I was saying yesterday that my life was strange and did not think how well I spoke. Yesterday evening I was briefed to defend a political prisoner before the Deputy Commissioner. What do you think of that for a vicissitude?

Dec. 3rd. — Now for a confession. When I heard you and Cassells had decided to print *The Bottle Imp* along with *Falesá,* I was too much disappointed to answer. *The Bottle Imp* was the *pièce de résistance* for my volume, *Island Nights' Entertainments*. However, that volume might have never got done; and I send you two others in case they should be in time.

First have *The Beach of Falesá.*

Then a fresh false title: Island Nights' Entertainments; and then

The Bottle Imp: a cue from an old melodrama.

The Isle of Voices.

The Waif Woman; a cue from a *saga.*

Of course these two others are not up to the mark of *The Bottle Imp*; but they each have a certain merit, and they fit in style. By saying "a cue from an old melodrama" after the *B. I.*, you can get rid of my note. If this is in time, it will be splendid, and will make quite a volume.

Should you and Cassells prefer, you can call the whole volume *I. N. E.* — though the *Beach of Falesá* is the child of a quite different inspiration. They all have a queer realism, even the most extravagant, even the *Isle of Voices;* the manners are exact.

Should they come too late, have them type-written and return to me here the type-written copies.

Sunday, Dec 4th. — 3rd start, — But now more humbly and with the aid of an Amanuensis. First one word about page 2. My wife protests against *The Waif Woman* and I am instructed to report the same to you....

Dec. 5th. — A horrid alarm rises that our October mail was burned crossing the Plains. If so, you lost a beautiful long letter — I am sure it was beautiful though I remember nothing about it — and I must say I think it serves you properly well. That I should continue writing to you at such length is simply a vicious habit for which I blush. At the same time, please communicate at once with Charles Baxter whether you have or have not received a letter posted here Oct. 12th, as he is going to cable me the fate of my mail.

Now to conclude my news. The German Firm have taken my book like angels, and the result is that Lloyd and I were down there at dinner on Saturday, where we partook of fifteen several dishes and eight distinct forms of intoxicating drink. To the credit of Germany, I must say there was not a shadow of a headache the next morning. I seem to have done as well as my neighbours, for I hear one of the clerks expressed the next morning a gratified surprise that Mr. Stevenson stood his drink so well. It is a strange thing that any race can still find joy in such athletic exercises. I may remark in passing that the mail is due and you have had far more than you deserve.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

December 5th, 1892.

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN, — ... So much said, I come with guilty speed to what more immediately concerns myself. Spare us a month or two for old sake's sake, and make my wife and me happy and proud. We are only fourteen days from San Francisco, just about a month from Liverpool; we have our new house almost finished. The thing *can* be done; I believe we can make you almost comfortable. It is the loveliest climate in the world, our political troubles seem near an end. It can 274 be done, *it must*! Do, please, make a virtuous effort, come and take a glimpse of a new world I am sure you do not dream of, and some old friends who do often dream of your arrival.

Alas, I was just beginning to get eloquent, and there goes the lunch bell, and after lunch I must make up the mail.

Do come. You must not come in February or March — bad months. From April on it is delightful. — Your sincere friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Henry James

December 5th, 1892.

MY DEAR JAMES, — How comes it so great a silence has fallen? The still small voice of self-approval whispers me it is not from me. I have looked up my register, and find I have neither written to you nor heard from you since June 22nd, on which day of grace that invaluable work began. This is not as it should be. How to get back? I remember acknowledging with rapture *The Lesson of the Master*, and I remember receiving *Marbot*: was that our last relation?

Hey, well! anyway, as you may have probably gathered from the papers, I have been in devilish hot water, and (what may be new to you) devilish hard at work. In twelve calendar months I finished *The Wrecker*, wrote all of *Falesá* but the first chapter, (well, much of) *The History of Samoa*, did something here and there to my Life of my Grandfather, and began And Finished *David Balfour*. What do you think of it for a year? Since then I may say I have done nothing beyond draft three chapters of another novel, *The Justice-Clerk*, which ought to be a snorter and a blower — at least if it don't make a spoon, it will spoil the horn of an Aurochs (if that's how it should be spelt).

On the hot water side it may entertain you to know that I have been actually sentenced to deportation by my friends on Mulinuu, C.J. Cedercrantz, and Baron Senfft von Pilsach. The awful doom, however, declined to fall, owing to Circumstances over Which. I only heard of it (so to speak) last night. I mean officially, but I had walked among rumours. The whole tale will be some day put into my hand, and I shall share it with humorous friends.

It is likely, however, by my judgment, that this epoch of gaiety in Samoa will soon cease; and the fierce white light of history will beat no longer on Yours Sincerely and his fellows here on the beach. We ask ourselves whether the reason will more rejoice over the end of a disgraceful business, or the unregenerate man more sorrow over the stoppage of the fun. For, say what you please, it has been a deeply interesting time. You don't know what news is, nor what politics, nor what the life of man, till you see it on so small a scale and with your own liberty on the board for stake. I would not have missed it for much. And anxious friends beg me to stay at home and study human nature in Brompton drawing-rooms! *Farceurs!* And anyway you know that such is not my talent. I could never be induced to take the faintest interest in Brompton *qua* Brompton or a drawing-room *qua* a drawing-room. I am an Epick Writer with a k to it, but without the necessary genius.

Hurry up with another book of stories. I am now reduced to two of my contemporaries, you and Barrie — O, and Kipling — you and Barrie and Kipling are now my Muses Three. And with Kipling, as you know, there are reservations to be made. And you and Barrie don't write enough. I should say I also read Anstey when he is serious, and can almost always get a happy day out of Marion Crawford — *ce n'est pas toujours la guerre*, but it's got life to it and guts, and it moves. Did you read the *Witch of Prague*? Nobody could read it twice, of 276 course; and the first time even it was necessary to skip. *E pur si muove.* But Barrie is a beauty, the *Little Minister* and the *Window in Thrums*, eh? Stuff in that young man; but he must see and not be too funny. Genius in him, but there's a journalist at his elbow — there's the risk. Look, what a page is the glove business in the *Window*! knocks a man flat; that's guts, if you please.

Why have I wasted the little time that is left with a sort of naked review article? I don't know, I'm sure. I suppose a mere ebullition of congested literary talk. I am beginning to think a visit from friends would be due. Wish you could come!

Let us have your news anyway, and forgive this silly stale effusion. — Yours ever,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To J. M. Barrie

[*Vailima, December 1892.*]

DEAR J. M. BARRIE, — You will be sick of me soon; I cannot help it. I have been off my work for some time, and re-read the *Edinburgh Eleven*, and had a great mind to write a parody and give you all your sauce back again, and see how you would like it yourself. And then I read (for the first time — I know not how) the *Window in Thrums*; I don't say that it is better than the *Minister*; it's less of a tale — and there is a beauty, a material beauty, of the tale *ipse*, which clever critics nowadays long and love to forget; it has more real flaws; but somehow it is — well, I read it last anyway, and it's by Barrie. And he's the man for my money. The glove is a great page; it is startlingly original, and as true as death and judgment. Tibbie Birse in the Burial is great, but I think it was a journalist that got in the word "official." The same character plainly had a word to say to Thomas Haggard. Thomas affects me as a lie — I beg your pardon; doubtless 277 he was somebody you knew; that leads people so far astray. The actual is not the true.

I am proud to think you are a Scotchman — though to be sure I know nothing of that country, being only an English tourist, quo' Gavin Ogilvy. I commend the hard case of Mr. Gavin Ogilvy to J. M. Barrie, whose work is to me a source of living pleasure and heartfelt national pride. There are two of us now that the Shirra might have patted on the head. And please do not think when I thus seem to bracket myself with you, that I am wholly blinded with vanity. Jess is beyond my frontier line; I could not touch her skirt; I have no such glamour of twilight on my pen. I am a capable artist; but it begins to look to me as if you were a man of genius. Take care of yourself for my sake. It's a devilish hard thing for a man who writes so many novels as I do, that I should get so few to read. And I can read yours, and I love them.

A pity for you that my amanuensis is not on stock to-day, and my own hand perceptibly worse than usual. — Yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

December 5th, 1892.

P.S. — They tell me your health is not strong. Man, come out here and try the Prophet's chamber. There's only one bad point to us — we do rise early. The Amanuensis states that you are a lover of silence — and that ours is a noisy house — and she is a chatterbox — I am not answerable for these statements, though I do think there is a touch of garrulity about my premises. We have so little to talk about, you see. The house is three miles from town, in the midst of great silent forests. There is a burn close by, and when we are not talking you can hear the burn, and the birds, and the sea breaking on the coast three miles away and six hundred feet below us, and about three times a month a bell — I don't know where the bell is, nor who rings it; it may be the bell in Hans Andersen's story for all I know. It is never hot 278 here — 86 in the shade is about our hottest — and it is never cold except just in the early mornings. Take it for all in all, I suppose this island climate to be by far the healthiest in the world — even the influenza entirely lost its sting. Only two patients died, and one was a man nearly eighty, and the other a child below four months. I won't tell you if it is beautiful, for I want you to come here and see for yourself. Everybody on the premises except my wife has some Scotch blood in their veins — I beg your pardon — except the natives — and then my wife is a Dutchwoman — and the natives are the next thing conceivable to Highlanders before the forty-five. We would have some grand cracks!

R. L. S.

Come, it will broaden your mind, and be the making of me.

To Charles Baxter

This correspondent had lately been on a tour in Sweden.

[*Vailima*] *December 28th, 1892.*

MY DEAR CHARLES, — Your really decent letter to hand. And here I am answering it, to the merry note of the carpenter's hammer, in an upper room of the New House. This upper floor is almost done now, but the Grrrrrreat 'All below is still unlined; it is all to be varnished redwood. I paid a big figure but do not repent; the trouble has been so minimised, the work has been so workmanlike, and all the parties have been so obliging. What a pity when you met the Buried Majesty of Sweden — the sovereign of my Cedercrantz — you did not breathe in his ear a word of Samoa!

O Sovereign of my Cedercrantz,
Conceive how his plump carcase pants
To leave the spot he now is tree'd in,
And skip with all the dibbs to Sweden.
O Sovereign of my Cedercrantz,
The lowly plea I now advantz;
Remove this man of light and leadin'
From us to more congenial Sweden.

This kind of thing might be kept up a Lapland night. "Let us bury the great joke" — Shade of Tennyson, forgive!

I am glad to say, you can scarce receive the second bill for the house until next mail, which gives more room to turn round in. Yes, my rate of expenditure is hellish. It is funny, it crept up and up; and when we sat upon one vent another exploded. Lloyd and I grew grey over the monthly returns; but every damned month, there is a new extra. However, we always hope the next will prove less recalcitrant; in which faith we advance trembling.

The desiderated advertisement, I think I have told you, was mighty near supplied: that is, if deportation would suit your view: the ship was actually sought to be hired. Yes, it would have been an advertisement, and rather a lark, and yet a blooming nuisance. For my part, I shall try to do without.

No one has thought fit to send me Atalanta; and I have no proof at all of *D. Balfour*, which is far more serious. How about the *D. B.* map? As soon as there is a proof it were well I should see it to accord the text thereto — or t'other way about if needs must. Remember I had to go much on memory in writing that work. Did you observe the dedication? and how did you like it? If it don't suit you, I am to try my hand again. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

Editors and publishers (since those days we have been *déniaisés* with a vengeance) had actually been inclined to shy at the terms of the fraudulent marriage contract, which is the pivot of the whole story; see below, .

For a lively account of this plantation and its history, see Lord Pembroke's *South Sea Bubbles*, chap. i.

The native wife of a carpenter in Apia.

The sequel to *Kidnapped*, published in the following year under the title *Catriona*.

Most of the work on the plantations in Samoa is done by "black boys," *i.e.* imported labourers from other (Melanesian) islands.

By Howard Pyle.

In answer to the obvious remark that the length and style of *The*

Wrecker, then running in Scribner's Magazine, were out of keeping with what professed at the outset to be a spoken yarn.

Of Ballantrae: the story is the unfinished *Young Chevalier*.

Afterwards changed into *The Ebb Tide*.

Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*, a shade misquoted.

"Kava, properly Ava, is a drink more or less intoxicating, made from the root of the *Piper Methysticum*, a Pepper plant. The root is grated: formerly it was chewed by fair damsels. The root thus broken up is rubbed about in a great pail, with water slowly added. A strainer of bark cloth is plunged into it at times, and wrung out so as to carry away the small fragments of root. The drink is made and used in ceremony. Every detail is regulated by rules, and the manner of the mixture of the water, the straining, the handling of the cup, the drinking out of it and returning, should all be done according to a well-established manner and in certain cadences." I borrow this explanation from the late Mr. Lafarge's notes to his catalogue of South Sea Drawings. It may serve to make clearer several passages in later letters of the present collection. Readers of the late Lord Pembroke's *South Sea Bubbles* will remember the account of this beverage and its preparation in Chap. viii. of that volume.

Referring to the marriage contract in the *Beach of Falesá:* see above, .

This about the consulship was only a passing notion on the part of R. L. S. No vacancy occurred, and in his correspondence he does not recur to the subject.

I had not cared to send him the story as thus docked and rechristened in its serial shape.

Austin Strong, on his way to school in California.

By Émile Zola.

The reference is to the writer's maternal cousin, Mr. Graham Balfour (*Samoicè*, "Pelema"), who during these months and again later was an inmate of the home at Vailima: see above, .

Robert MacQueen, Lord Braxfield, the "Hanging Judge," (1722-1799). This historical personage furnished the conception of the chief character, but by no means the details or incidents of the story, which is indeed dated some years after his death.

The allusion is to *Tess*: a book R. L. S. did not like.

A character in *The Wrecker*.

Exactly what in the end actually happened.

Austin Strong.

This tale was withheld from the volume accordingly.

The magazine in which *Catriona* first appeared in this country, under the title *David Balfour*.

XIII

LIFE IN SAMOA — *Continued*

THIRD YEAR AT VAILIMA

January-December 1893

By the New Year of 1893 the fine addition to the house at Vailima was finished, and its pleasantness and comfort went far to console Stevenson for the cost. But the year was on the whole a less fortunate one for the inmates than the last. A proclamation concerning penalties for sedition in the Samoan Islands, which from its tenor could have been aimed at no one else but Stevenson, had been issued at the close of 1892 by the High Commissioner at Fiji; and with its modification and practical withdrawal, by order of the Foreign Office at home, the last threat of unpleasant consequences in connection with his political action disappeared. But a sharp second attack of influenza in January lowered his vitality, and from a trip which the family took for the sake of change to Sydney, in the month of February, they returned with health unimproved. In April the illness of Mrs. Stevenson caused her husband some weeks of acute distress and anxiety. In August he suffered the chagrin of witnessing the outbreak of the war which he had vainly striven to prevent between the two rival kings, and the defeat and banishment of Mataafa, whom he knew to be the one man of governing capacity among the native chiefs, and 281 whom, in the interest alike of whites and natives, he had desired to see the Powers not crush, but conciliate. On the other hand, he had the satisfaction of seeing the Chief Justice and President removed from the posts they had so incompetently filled, and superseded by new and better men. The task imposed by the three Powers upon these officials was in truth an impossible one; but their characters and endeavours earned respect, and with the American Chief Justice in particular, Mr. C. J. Ide (whom he had already known as one of the Land Commissioners), and with his family the Vailima household lived on terms of cordial friendship. In September Stevenson took a health-trip to Honolulu, which again turned out unsuccessful. For some weeks he was down with a renewed attack of fever and prostration, and his wife had to come from Samoa to nurse and fetch him home. Later in the autumn he mended again.

During no part of the year were Stevenson’s working powers up to the mark. In the early summer he finished *The Ebb Tide*, but on a plan much abridged from its original intention, and with an unusual degree of strain and effort. With *St. Ives* and his own family history he made fair progress, but both of these he regarded as in a manner holiday tasks, not calling for any very serious exercise of his powers. In connection with the latter, he took an eager interest, as his correspondence will show, in the researches which friends and kinsmen undertook for him in Scotland. He fell into arrears in regard to one or two magazine stories for which he had contracted; and with none of his more ambitious schemes of romance, *Sophia Scarlet*, *The Young Chevalier*, *Heathercat*, and *Weir of Hermiston*, did he feel himself well able to cope. This falling-off of his power of production brought with it no 282 small degree of inward strain and anxiety. He had not yet put by any provision for his wife and step-family (the income from the moderate fortune left by his father naturally going to his mother during her life). His earnings had since 1887 been considerable, at the rate of £4,000 a year or thereabouts; but his building expenses and large mode of life at Vailima, together with his habitual generosity, which scarce knew check or limit, towards the less fortunate of his friends and acquaintances in various parts of the world, made his expenditure about equal to his income. The idea originally entertained of turning part of the Vailima estate into a profitable plantation turned out chimerical. The thought began to haunt him, What if his power of earning were soon to cease? And occasional signs of inward depression and life-weariness began to appear in his correspondence. But it was only in writing, and then but rarely, that he let such signs appear: to those about him he retained the old affectionate charm and inspiring gaiety undiminished, fulfilling without failure the words of his own prayer, “Give us to awake with smiles, give us to labour smiling; as the sun lightens the world, so let our loving-kindness make bright this house of our habitation.”

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *January 1893.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — You are properly paid at last, and it is like you will have but a shadow of a letter. I have been pretty thoroughly out of kilter; first a fever that would neither come on nor go off, then acute dyspepsia, in the weakening grasp of which I get wandering between 283 the waking state and one of nightmare. Why the devil does no one send me Atalanta? And why are there no proofs of *D. Balfour*? Sure I should have had the whole, at least the half, of them by now; and it would be all for the advantage of the Atalantans. I have written to Cassell & Co. (matter of *Falesá*) “you will please arrange with him” (meaning you). “What he may decide I shall abide.” So consider your hand free, and act for me without fear or favour. I am greatly pleased with the illustrations. It is very strange to a South-Seayer to see Hawaiian women dressed like Samoans, but I guess that's all one to you in Middlesex. It's about the same as if London city men were shown going to the Stock Exchange as *pifferari*; but no matter, none will sleep worse for it. I have accepted Cassell's proposal as an amendment to one of mine; that *D. B.* is to be brought out first under the title *Catriona* without pictures; and, when the hour strikes, *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* are to form vols. I. and II. of the heavily illustrated *Adventures of David Balfour* at 7s. 6d. each, sold separately.

— — 's letter was vastly sly and dry and shy. I am not afraid now. Two attempts have been made, both have failed, and I imagine these failures strengthen me. Above all this is true of the last, where my weak point was attempted. On every other, I am strong. Only force can dislodge me, for public opinion is wholly on my side. All races and degrees are united in heartfelt opposition to the Men of Mulinuu. The news of the fighting was of no concern to mortal man; it was made much of because men love talk of battles, and because the Government pray God daily for some scandal not their own; but it was only a brisk episode in a clan fight which has grown apparently endemic in the west of Tutuila. At the best it was a twopenny affair, and never occupied my mind five minutes.

I am so weary of reports that are without foundation and threats that go without fulfilment, and so much occupied besides by the raging troubles of my own wame, that I have been very slack on politics, as I have been in literature. With incredible labour, I have rewritten the First Chapter of the *Justice-Clerk*; it took me about ten days, and requires another athletic dressing after all. And that is my story for the month. The rest is grunting and grutching.

Consideranda for *The Beach*: —

I. Whether to add one or both the tales I sent you?

II. Whether to call the whole volume *Island Nights' Entertainments*?

III. Whether, having waited so long, it would not be better to give me another mail, in case I could add another member to the volume and a little better justify the name?

If I possibly can draw up another story, I will. What annoyed me about the use of *The Bottle Imp* was that I had always meant it for the centre-piece of a volume of *Märchen* which I was slowly to elaborate. You always had an idea that I depreciated the *B. I.*; I can't think wherefore; I always particularly liked it — one of my best works, and ill to equal; and that was why I loved to keep it in portfolio till I had time to grow up to some other fruit of the same *venue*. However, that is disposed of now, and we must just do the best we can.

I am not aware that there is anything to add; the weather is hellish, waterspouts, mists, chills, the foul fiend's own weather, following on a week of expurgated heaven; so it goes at this bewildering season. I write in the upper floor of my new house, of which I will send you some day a plan to measure. 'Tis an elegant structure, surely, and the proid of me oi. Was asked to pay for it just now, and genteelly refused, and then agreed, in view of general good-will, to pay a half of what is still due.

24th January 1893. — This ought to have gone last 285 mail and was forgotten. My best excuse is that I was engaged in starting an influenza, to which class of exploit our household has been since then entirely dedicated. We had eight cases, one of them very bad, and one — mine — complicated with my old friend Bluidy Jack. Luckily neither Fanny, Lloyd, or Belle took the confounded thing, and they were able to run the household and nurse the sick to admiration.

Some of our boys behaved like real trumps. Perhaps the prettiest performance was that of our excellent Henry Simelé, or, as we sometimes call him, Davy Balfour. Henry, I maun premeese, is a chief; the humblest Samoan recoils from emptying slops as you would from cheating at cards; now the last nights of our bad time, when we had seven down together, it was enough to have made anybody laugh or cry to see Henry going the rounds with a slop-bucket and going inside the mosquito net of each of the sick, Protestant and Catholic alike, to pray with them.

I must tell you that in my sickness I had a huge alleviation and began a new story. This I am writing by dictation, and really think it is an art I can manage to acquire. The relief is beyond description; it is just like a school-treat to me, and the amanuensis bears up extraordinar'. The story is to be called *St. Ives*; I give you your choice whether or not it should bear the sub-title, "Experiences of a French prisoner in England." We were just getting on splendidly with it, when this cursed mail arrived and requires to be attended to. It looks to me very like as if *St. Ives* would be ready before any of the others, but you know me and how impossible it is I should predict. The Amanuensis has her head quite turned and believes herself to be the author of this novel (and is to some extent) — and as the creature (!) has not been wholly useless in the matter (I told you so! A.M.) I propose to foster her vanity by a little commemoration 286 gift! The name of the hero is Anne de St. Yves — he Englishes his name to St. Ives during his escape. It is my idea to get a ring made which shall either represent *Anne* or A. S. Y. A., of course, would be Amethyst and S. Sapphire, which is my favourite stone anyway and was my father's before me. But what would the ex-Slade professor do about the letter Y? Or suppose he took the other version, how would he meet the case, the two N.'s? These things are beyond my knowledge, which it would perhaps be more descriptive to call ignorance. But I place the matter in the meanwhile under your consideration and beg to hear your views. I shall tell you on some other occasion and when the A.M. is out of hearing how *very* much I propose to invest in this testimonial; but I may as well inform you at once that I intend it to be cheap, sir, damned cheap! My idea of running amanuenses is by praise, not pudding, flattery and not coins! I shall send you when the time is ripe a ring to measure by.

To resume our sad tale. After the other seven were almost wholly recovered Henry lay down to influenza on his own account. He is but just better and it looks as though Fanny were about to bring up the rear. As for me, I am all right, though I *was* reduced to dictating *Anne* in the deaf-and-dumb alphabet, which I think you will admit is a *comble*.

Politics leave me extraordinary cold. It seems that so much of my purpose has come off, and Cedercrantz and Pilsach are sacked. The rest of it has all gone to water. The triple-headed ass at home, in his plenitude of ignorance, prefers to collect the taxes and scatter the Mataafas by force or the threat of force. It may succeed, and I suppose it will. It is none the less for that expensive, harsh, unpopular and unsettling. I am young enough to have been annoyed, and altogether eject and renegate the whole idea of political affairs. Success in that field appears to be the organisation of failure enlivened with defamation of character; and, much as I love pickles and 287 hot water (in your true phrase) I shall take my pickles in future from Crosse and Blackwell and my hot water with a dose of good Glenlivat.

Do not bother at all about the wall-papers. We have had the whole of our new house varnished, and it looks beautiful. I wish you could see the hall; poor room, it had to begin life as an infirmary during our recent visitation; but it is really a handsome comely place, and when we get the furniture, and the pictures, and what is so very much more decorative, the picture frames, will look sublime.

Jan. 30th. — I have written to Charles asking for Rowlandson's *Syntax* and *Dance of Death* out of our house, and begging for anything about fashions and manners (fashions particularly) for 1814. Can you help? Both the Justice Clerk and St. Ives fall in that fated year. Indeed I got into St. Ives while going over the Annual Register for the other. There is a kind of fancy list of Chaps. of St. Ives. (It begins in Edinb Castle.) I. Story of a lion rampant (that was a toy he had made, and given to a girl visitor). II. Story of a pair of scissors. III. St. Ives receives a bundle of money. IV. St. Ives is shown a house. V. The Escape. VI. The Cottage (Swanston Cottage). VII. The Hen-house. VIII. Three is company and four none. IX. The Drovers. X. The Great North Road. XI. Burchell Fenn. XII. The covered cart. XIII. The doctor. XIV. The Luddites. XV. Set a thief to catch a thief. XVI. M. le Comte de

Kérouaille (his uncle, the rich *émigré*, whom he finds murdered). XVII. The cousins. XVIII. Mr. Sergeant Garrow. XIX. A meeting at the Ship, Dover. XX. Diane. XXI. The Duke's Prejudices. XXII. The False Messenger. XXIII. The gardener's ladder. XXIV. The officers. XXV. Trouble with the Duke. XXVI. Fouquet again. XXVII. The Aeronaut. XXVIII. The True-Blooded Yankee. XXIX. In France. I don't know where to stop. Apropos, I want a book about Paris, and the *first return* of the *émigrés* and all up to the 288 *Cent Jours*: d'ye ken anything in my way? I want in particular to know about them and the Napoleonic functionaries and officers, and to get the colour and some vital details of the business of exchange of departments from one side to the other. Ten chapters are drafted, and VIII. re-copied by me, but will want another dressing for luck. It is merely a story of adventure, rambling along; but that is perhaps the guard that "sets my genius best," as Alan might have said. I wish I could feel as easy about the other! But there, all novels are a heavy burthen while they are doing, and a sensible disappointment when they are done.

For God's sake, let me have a copy of the new German Samoa White Book.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Telling how the projected tale, *The Pearl Fisher*, had been cut down and in its new form was to be called *The Schooner Farallone* (afterwards changed to *The Ebb Tide*).

[*Vailima, February 1893.*]

MY DEAR CHARLES, — I have had the influenza, as I believe you know: this has been followed by two goes of my old friend Bloodie Jacke, and I have had fefe — the island complaint — for the second time in two months. All this, and the fact that both my womenkind require to see a doctor: and some wish to see Lord Jersey before he goes home: all send me off on a month's holiday to Sydney. I may get my mail: or I may not: depends on freight, weather, and the captain's good-nature — he is one of those who most religiously fear Apia harbour: it is quite a superstition with American captains. (Odd note: American sailors, who make British hair grey by the way they carry canvas, appear to be actually *more* nervous when it comes to coast and harbour work.) This 289 is the only holiday I have had for more than 2 years; I dare say it will be as long again before I take another. And I am going to spend a lot of money. Ahem!

On the other hand, you can prepare to dispose of the serial rights of the *Schooner Farallone:* a most grim and gloomy tale. It will run to something between *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Treasure Island*. I will not commit myself beyond this, but I anticipate from 65 to 70,000 words, could almost pledge myself not shorter than 65,000, but won't. The tale can be sent as soon as you have made arrangements; I hope to finish it in a month; six weeks, bar the worst accidents, for certain. I should say this is the butt end of what was once *The Pearl Fisher*. There is a peculiarity about this tale in its new form: it ends with a conversion! We have been tempted rather to call it *The Schooner Farallone: a tract by R. L. S.* and *L.O.* It would make a boss tract; the three main characters — and there are only four — are barats, insurance frauds, thieves and would-be murderers; so the company's good. Devil a woman there, by good luck; so it's "pure." 'Tis a most — what's the expression? — unconventional work.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

At Sea, s.s. Mariposa, *Feb. 19th, '93.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — You will see from this heading that I am not dead yet nor likely to be. I was pretty considerably out of sorts, and that is indeed one reason why Fanny, Belle, and I have started out for a month's lark. To be quite exact, I think it will be about five weeks before we get home. We shall stay between two and three in Sydney. Already, though we only sailed yesterday, I am feeling as fit as a fiddle. Fanny ate a whole fowl for breakfast, to say nothing of a tower of hot cakes. Belle and I floored another hen betwixt the pair of us, and I shall be no sooner 290 done with the present amanuensing racket than I shall put myself outside a pint of Guinness. If you think this looks like dying of consumption in Apia I can only say I differ from you. In the matter of *David*, I have never yet received my proofs at all, but shall certainly wait for your suggestions. Certainly, Chaps. 17 to 20 are the hitch, and I confess I hurried over them with both wings spread. This is doubtless what you complain of. Indeed, I placed my single reliance on Miss Grant. If she couldn't ferry me over, I felt I had to stay there.

About *Island Nights' Entertainments* all you say is highly satisfactory. Go in and win.

The extracts from the Times I really cannot trust myself to comment upon. They were infernally satisfactory; so, and perhaps still more so, was a letter I had at the same time from Lord Pembroke. If I have time as I go through Auckland, I am going to see Sir George Grey.

Now I really think that's all the business. I have been rather sick and have had two small hemorrhages, but the second I believe to have been accidental. No good denying that this annoys, because it do. However, you must expect influenza to leave some harm, and my spirits, appetite, peace on earth and goodwill to men are all on a rising market. During the last week the amanuensis was otherwise engaged, whereupon I took up, pitched into, and about one half demolished another tale, once intended to be called *The Pearl Fisher*, but now razeed and called *The Schooner Farallone*. We had a capital start, the steamer coming in at sunrise, and just giving us time to get our letters ere she sailed again. The manager of the German Firm (O strange, changed days!) danced attendance upon us all morning; his boat conveyed us to and from the steamer.

Feb. 21st. — All continues well. Amanuensis bowled over for a day, but afoot again and jolly; Fanny enormously 291 bettered by the voyage; I have been as jolly as a sand-boy as usual at sea. The Amanuensis sits opposite to me writing to her offspring. Fanny is on deck. I have just supplied her with the Canadian Pacific Agent, and so left her in good hands. You should hear me at table with the Ulster purser and a little punning microscopist called Davis. Belle does some kind of abstruse Boswell-ising; after the first meal, having gauged the kind of jests that would pay here, I observed, "Boswell is Barred during this cruise."

23rd. — We approach Auckland and I must close my mail. All goes well with the trio. Both the ladies are hanging round a beau — the same — that I unearthed for them: I am general provider, and especially great in the beaux business. I corrected some proofs for Fanny yesterday afternoon, fell asleep over them in the saloon — and the whole ship seems to have been down beholding me. After I woke up, had a hot bath, a whisky punch and a cigarette, and went to bed, and to sleep too, at 8.30; a recrudescence of Vailima hours. Awoke to-day, and had to go to the saloon clock for the hour — no sign of dawn — all heaven grey rainy fog. Have just had breakfast, written up one letter, register and close this.

To Sidney Colvin

S.S. Mariposa, *at Sea.*
Auckland, by daybreak to-morrow, 9 p.m. [*March 1st, 1893.*]

Bad pen, bad ink, bad light, bad blotting-paper.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Have had an amusing but tragic holiday, from which we return in disarray. Fanny quite sick, but I think slowly and steadily mending; Belle in a terrific state of dentistry troubles which now seem calmed; and myself with a succession of gentle colds out of which I at last succeeded in cooking up a fine pleurisy. By stopping and stewing in a perfectly airless state-room 292 I seem to have got rid of the pleurisy. Poor Fanny had very little fun of her visit, having been most of the time on a diet of maltine and slops — and this while the rest of us were rioting on oysters and mushrooms. Belle's only devil in the hedge was the dentist. As for me, I was entertained at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, likewise at a sort of artistic club; made speeches at both, and may therefore be said to have been, like Saint Paul, all things to all men. I have an account of the latter racket which I meant to have enclosed in this.... Had some splendid photos taken, likewise a medallion by a French sculptor; met Graham, who returned with us as far as Auckland. Have seen a good deal too of Sir George Grey; what a wonderful old historic figure to be walking on your arm and recalling ancient events and instances! It makes a man small, and yet the extent to which he approved what I had done — or rather have tried to do — encouraged me. Sir George is an expert at least, he knows these races: he is not a small employé with an ink-pot and a Whitaker.

Take it for all in all, it was huge fun: even Fanny had some lively sport at the beginning; Belle and I all through. We got Fanny a dress on the sly, gaudy black velvet and Duchesse lace. And alas! she was only able to wear it once. But we'll hope to see more of it at Samoa; it really is lovely. Both dames are royally outfitted in silk stockings, etc. We return, as from a raid, with our spoils and our wounded. I am now very dandy: I announced two years ago that I should change. Slovenly youth, all right — not slovenly age. So really now I am pretty spruce; always a white shirt, white necktie, fresh shave, silk socks, O a great sight! — No more possible.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Of the books mentioned below, *Dr. Syntax's Tour* and Rowlandson's *Dance of Death* had been for use in furnishing customs and 293 manners in the English part of *St. Ives*; *Pitcairn* is Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials of Scotland from 1488 to 1624*. As to the name of Stevenson and its adoption by some members of the proscribed clan of Macgregor, Stevenson had been greatly interested by the facts laid before him by his correspondent here mentioned, Mr. Macgregor Stevenson of New York, and had at first delightedly welcomed the idea that his own ancestors might have been fellow-clansmen of Rob Roy. But further correspondence on the subject of his own descent held with a trained genealogist, his namesake Mr. J. Horne Stevenson of Edinburgh, convinced him that the notion must be abandoned.

[*April 1893.*]

... About *The Justice-Clerk*, I long to go at it, but will first try to get a short story done. Since January I have had two severe illnesses, my boy, and some heartbreaking anxiety over Fanny; and am only now convalescing. I came down to dinner last night for the first time, and that only because the service had broken down, and to relieve an inexperienced servant. Nearly four months now I have rested my brains; and if it be true that rest is good for brains, I ought to be able to pitch in like a giant refreshed. Before the autumn, I hope to send you some *Justice-Clerk*, or *Weir of Hermiston,* as Colvin seems to prefer; I own to indecision. Received *Syntax*, *Dance of Death,* and *Pitcairn,* which last I have read from end to end since its arrival, with vast improvement. What a pity it stops so soon! I wonder is there nothing that seems to prolong the series? Why doesn't some young man take it up? How about my old friend Fountainhall's *Decisions?* I remember as a boy that there was some good reading there. Perhaps you could borrow me that, and send it on loan; and perhaps Laing's *Memorials* therewith; and a work I'm ashamed to say I have never read, *Balfour's Letters*.... I have come by accident, through a correspondent, on one very curious and interesting fact — namely, that Stevenson was one of the names adopted by the Macgregors at the proscription. The details supplied by my correspondent are both convincing and amusing; but it would be highly interesting to find out more of this.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

These notes are in reply to a set of queries and suggestions as to points that seemed to need clearing in the tale of *Catriona,* as first published in Atalanta under the title *David Balfour*.

[*Vailima*] *April 1893.*

1. *Slip* 3. Davie would be *attracted* into a similar dialect, as he is later — *e.g.* with Doig, chapter XIX. This is truly Scottish.

4, *to lightly*; correct; "to lightly" is a good regular Scots verb.

15. See Allan Ramsay's works.

15, 16. Ay, and that is one of the pigments with which I am trying to draw the character of Prestongrange. 'Tis a most curious thing to render that kind, insignificant mask. To make anything precise is to risk my effect. And till the day he died, Davie was never sure of what P. was after. Not only so; very often P. didn't know himself. There was an element of mere liking for Davie; there was an element of being determined, in case of accidents, to keep well with him. He hoped his Barbara would bring him to her feet, besides, and make him manageable. That was why he sent him to Hope Park with them. But Davie cannot *know*; I give you the inside of Davie, and my method condemns me to give only the outside both of Prestongrange and his policy.

- -I'll give my mind to the technicalities. Yet to me they seem a part of the story, which is historical, after all.

- -I think they wanted Alan to escape. But when or where to say so? I will try.

- -20, *Dean*. I'll try and make that plainer.

Chap. XIII., I fear it has to go without blows. If I could get the pair

— No, can't be.

- -XIV. All right, will abridge.

- -XV. I'd have to put a note to every word; and he who can't read Scots can *never* enjoy Tod Lapraik.

- -XVII. Quite right. I *can* make this plainer, and will.

- -XVIII. I know, but I have to hurry here; this is the broken back of my story; some business briefly transacted, I am leaping for Barbara's apron-strings.

Slip 57. Quite right again; I shall make it plain.

Chap. XX. I shall make all these points clear. About Lady Prestongrange (not *Lady* Grant, only *Miss* Grant, my dear, though *Lady* Prestongrange, quoth the dominie) I am taken with your idea of her death, and have a good mind to substitute a featureless aunt.

Slip 78. I don't see how to lessen this effect. There is really not much said of it; and I know Catriona did it. But I'll try.

— 89. I know. This is an old puzzle of mine. You see C.'s dialect is not wholly a bed of roses. If only I knew the Gaelic. Well, I'll try for another expression.

The end. I shall try to work it over. James was at Dunkirk ordering post-horses for his own retreat. Catriona did have her suspicions aroused by the letter, and careless gentleman, I told you so — or she did at least. — Yes, the blood money. — I am bothered about the portmanteau; it is the presence of Catriona that bothers me; the rape of the pockmantie is historic....

To me, I own, it seems in the proof a very pretty piece of workmanship. David himself I refuse to discuss; he *is*. The Lord Advocate I think a strong sketch of a very difficult character, James More, sufficient; and the two girls very pleasing creatures. But O dear me, I came near losing my heart to Barbara! I am not quite so constant as David, and even he — well, he didn't know it, anyway! *Tod Lapraik* is a piece of living Scots: if I had never writ anything but that and *Thrawn Janet*, still I'd have been a writer. The defects of *D. B.* are inherent, I fear. But on the whole, I am far indeed from being displeased with the tailie. One thing is sure, there has been no such drawing of Scots character since Scott; 296 and even he never drew a full length like Davie, with his shrewdness and simplicity, and stockishness and charm. Yet, you'll see, the public won't want it; they want more Alan! Well, they can't get it. And readers of *Tess* can have no use for my David, and his innocent but real love affairs.

I found my fame much grown on this return to civilisation. *Digito monstrari* is a new experience; people all looked at me in the streets in Sydney; and it was very queer. Here, of course, I am only the white chief in the Great House to the natives; and to the whites, either an ally or a foe. It is a much healthier state of matters. If I lived in an atmosphere of adulation, I should end by kicking against the pricks. O my beautiful forest, O my beautiful shining, windy house, what a joy it was to behold them again! No chance to take myself too seriously here.

The difficulty of the end is the mass of matter to be attended to, and the small time left to transact it in. I mean from Alan's danger of arrest. But I have just seen my way out, I do believe.

Easter Sunday. — I have now got as far as slip 28, and finished the chapter of the law technicalities. Well, these seemed to me always of the essence of the story, which is the story of a *cause célèbre*; moreover, they are the justification of my inventions; if these men went so far (granting Davie sprung on them) would they not have gone so much further? But of course I knew they were a difficulty; determined to carry them through in a conversation; approached this (it seems) with cowardly anxiety; and filled it with gabble, sir, gabble. I have left all my facts, but have removed 42 lines. I should not wonder but what I'll end by re-writing it. It is not the technicalities that shocked you, it was my bad art. It is very strange that X. should be so good a chapter and IX. and XI. so uncompromisingly bad. It looks as if XI. also would have to be re-formed. If X. had not cheered me up, I should be in doleful dumps, but X. is alive anyway, and life is all in all.

Thursday, April 5th. — Well, there's no disguise possible; Fanny is not well, and we are miserably anxious....

Friday, 7th. — I am thankful to say the new medicine relieved her at once. A crape has been removed from the day for all of us. To make things better, the morning is ah! such a morning as you have never seen; heaven upon earth for sweetness, freshness, depth upon depth of unimaginable colour, and a huge silence broken at this moment only by the far-away murmur of the Pacific and the rich piping of a single bird. You can't conceive what a relief this is; it seems a new world. She has such extraordinary recuperative power that I do hope for the best. I am as tired as man can be. This is a great trial to a family, and I thank God it seems as if ours was going to bear it well. And O! if it only lets up, it will be but a pleasant memory. We are all seedy, bar Lloyd: Fanny, as per above; self nearly extinct; Belle, utterly overworked and bad toothache; Cook, down with a bad foot; Butler, prostrate with a bad leg. Eh, what a faim'ly!

Sunday. — Grey heaven, raining torrents of rain; occasional thunder and lightning. Everything to dispirit; but my invalids are really on the mend. The rain roars like the sea; in the sound of it there is a strange and ominous suggestion of an approaching tramp; something nameless and measureless seems to draw near, and strikes me cold, and yet is welcome. I lie quiet in bed to-day, and think of the universe with a good deal of equanimity. I have, at this moment, but the one objection to it; the *fracas* with which it proceeds. I do not love noise; I am like my grandfather in that; and so many years in these still islands has ingrained the sentiment perhaps. Here are no trains, only men pacing barefoot. No cars or carriages; at worst the rattle of a horse's shoes among the rocks. Beautiful silence; and so soon as this robustious rain takes off, I am to drink of it again by oceanfuls.

April 16th. — Several pages of this letter destroyed as beneath scorn; the wailings of a crushed worm; matter 298 in which neither you nor I can take stock. Fanny is distinctly better, I believe all right now; I too am mending, though I have suffered from crushed wormery, which is not good for the body, and damnation to the soul. I feel to-night a baseless anxiety to write a lovely poem *à propos des bottes de ma grand'mère, qui etaient à revers*. I see I am idiotic. I'll try the poem.

17th. — The poem did not get beyond plovers and lovers. I am still, however, harassed by the unauthentic Muse; if I cared to encourage her — but I have not the time, and anyway we are at the vernal equinox. It is funny enough, but my pottering verses are usually made (like the God-gifted organ voice's) at the autumnal; and this seems to hold at the Antipodes. There is here some odd secret of Nature. I cannot speak of politics; we wait and wonder. It seems (this is partly a guess) Ide won't take the C. J. ship, unless the islands are disarmed; and that England hesitates and holds off. By my own idea, strongly corroborated by Sir George, I am writing no more letters. But I have put as many irons in against this folly of the disarming as I could manage. It did not reach my ears till nearly too late. What a risk to take! What an expense to incur! And for how poor a gain! Apart from the treachery of it. My dear fellow, politics is a vile and a bungling business. I used to think meanly of the plumber; but how he shines beside the politician!

Thursday. — A general, steady advance; Fanny really quite chipper and jolly — self on the rapid mend, and with my eye on *forests* that are to fall — and my finger on the axe, which wants stoning.

Saturday, 22. — Still all for the best; but I am having a heartbreaking time over *David*. I have nearly all corrected. But have to consider *The Heather on Fire*, *The Wood by Silvermills*, and the last chapter. They all seem to me off colour; and I am not fit to better them yet. No proof has been sent of the title, contents, or dedication.

To A. Conan Doyle

The reference in the postscript here is, I believe, to the Journals of the Society for Psychical Research.

Vailima, Apia, Samoa, April 5th, 1893.

DEAR SIR, — You have taken many occasions to make yourself very agreeable to me, for which I might in decency have thanked you earlier. It is now my turn; and I hope you will allow me to offer you my compliments on your very ingenious and very interesting adventures of Sherlock Holmes. That is the class of literature that I like when I have the toothache. As a matter of fact, it was a pleurisy I was enjoying when I took the volume up; and it will interest you as a medical man to know that the cure was for the moment effectual. Only the one thing troubles me; can this be my old friend Joe Bell? — I am, yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — And lo, here is your address supplied me here in Samoa! But do not take mine, O frolic fellow Spookist, from the same source; mine is wrong.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The outbreak of hostilities was at this date imminent between Mulinuu (the party of Laupepa, recognised and supported by the Three Powers) and Malie (the party of Mataafa).

[*Vailima*] *25th April* .

MY DEAR COLVIN, — To-day early I sent down to Maben (Secretary of State) an offer to bring up people from Malie, keep them in my house, and bring them down day by day for so long as the negotiation should last. I have a favourable answer so far. This I would not have tried, had not old Sir George Grey put me on my mettle; “Never 300 despair,” was his word; and “I am one of the few people who have lived long enough to see how true that is.” Well, thereupon I plunged in; and the thing may do me great harm, but yet I do not think so — for I think jealousy will prevent the trial being made. And at any rate it is another chance for this distracted archipelago of children, sat upon by a clique of fools. If, by the gift of God, I can do — I am allowed to try to do — and succeed: but no, the prospect is too bright to be entertained.

To-day we had a ride down to Tanugamanono, and then by the new wood paths. One led us to a beautiful clearing, with four native houses; taro, yams, and the like, excellently planted, and old Folau — ”the Samoan Jew” — sitting and whistling there in his new-found and well-deserved well-being. It was a good sight to see a Samoan thus before the world. Further up, on our way home, we saw the world clear, and the wide die of the shadow lying broad; we came but a little further, and found in the borders of the bush a banyan. It must have been 150 feet in height; the trunk, and its acolytes, occupied a great space; above that, in the peaks of the branches, quite a forest of ferns and orchids were set; and over all again the huge spread of the boughs rose against the bright west, and sent their shadow miles to the eastward. I have not often seen anything more satisfying than this vast vegetable.

Sunday. — A heavenly day again! the world all dead silence, save when, from far down below us in the woods, comes up the crepitation of the little wooden drum that beats to church. Scarce a leaf stirs; only now and again a great, cool gush of air that makes my papers fly, and is gone. — The king of Samoa has refused my intercession between him and Mataafa; and I do not deny this is a good riddance to me of a difficult business, in which I might very well have failed. What else is to be done for these silly folks?

May 12th. — And this is where I had got to, before the 301 mail arrives with, I must say, a real gentlemanly letter from yourself. Sir, that is the sort of letter I want! Now, I'll make my little proposal. I will accept *Child's Play* and *Pan's Pipes*. Then I want *Pastoral*, *The Manse*, *The Islet*, leaving out if you like all the prefacial matter and beginning at I. Then the portrait of Robert Hunter, beginning "Whether he was originally big or little," and ending "fearless and gentle." So much for *Mem. and Portraits*. *Beggars*, sections I. and II., *Random Memories* II., and *Lantern Bearers*; I'm agreeable. These are my selections. I don't know about *Pulvis et Umbra* either, but must leave that to you. But just what you please.

About *Davie* I elaborately wrote last time, but still *Davie* is not done; I am grinding singly at *The Ebb Tide*, as we now call the *Farallone*; the most of it will go this mail. About the following, let there be no mistake: I will not write the abstract of *Kidnapped*; write it who will, I will not. Boccaccio must have been a clever fellow to write both argument and story; I am not, *et je me récuse*.

We call it *The Ebb Tide: a Trio and Quartette*; but that secondary name you may strike out if it seems dull to you. The book, however, falls in two halves, when the fourth character appears. I am on if you want to know, and expect to finish on I suppose 110 or so; but it goes slowly, as you may judge from the fact that this three weeks past, I have only struggled from to : twenty-four pages, *et encore* sure to be re-written, in twenty-one days. This is no prize-taker; not much Waverley Novels about this!

May 16th. — I believe it will be ten chapters of *The Ebb Tide* that go to you; the whole thing should be completed in I fancy twelve; and the end will follow punctually next mail. It is my great wish that this might get into The Illustrated London News for Gordon Browne to illustrate. For whom, in case he should get 302 the job, I give you a few notes. A purao is a tree giving something like a fig with flowers. He will find some photographs of an old marine curiosity shop in my collection, which may help him. Attwater's settlement is to be entirely overshadowed everywhere by tall palms; see photographs of Fakarava: the verandahs of the house are 12 ft. wide. Don’t let him forget the Figure Head, for which I have a great use in the last chapter. It stands just clear of the palms on the crest of the beach at the head of the pier; the flag-staff not far off; the pier he will understand is perhaps three feet above high water, not more at any price. The sailors of the *Farallone* are to be dressed like white sailors of course. For other things, I remit this excellent artist to my photographs.

I can’t think what to say about the tale, but it seems to me to go off with a considerable bang; in fact, to be an extraordinary work: but whether popular! Attwater is a no end of a courageous attempt, I think you will admit; how far successful is another affair. If my island ain’t a thing of beauty, I’ll be damned. Please observe Wiseman and Wishart; for incidental grimness, they strike me as in it. Also, kindly observe the Captain and *Adar*; I think that knocks spots. In short, as you see, I’m a trifle vainglorious. But O, it has been such a grind! The devil himself would allow a man to brag a little after such a crucifixion! And indeed I’m only bragging for a change before I return to the darned thing lying waiting for me on , where I last broke down. I break down at every paragraph, I may observe; and lie here and sweat, till I can get one sentence wrung out after another. Strange doom; after having worked so easily for so long! Did ever anybody see such a story of four characters?

Later, 2.30. — It may interest you to know that I am entirely *tapu*, and live apart in my chambers like a caged beast. Lloyd has a bad cold, and Graham and Belle are getting it. Accordingly, I dwell here without the light 303 of any human countenance or voice, and strap away at *The Ebb Tide* until (as now) I can no more. Fanny can still come, but is gone to glory now, or to her garden. Page 88 is done, and must be done over again to-morrow, and I confess myself exhausted. Pity a man who can’t work on along when he has nothing else on earth to do! But I have ordered Jack, and am going for a ride in the bush presently to refresh the machine; then back to a lonely dinner and durance vile. I acquiesce in this hand of fate; for I think another cold just now would just about do for me. I have scarce yet recovered the two last.

May 18th. — My progress is crabwise, and I fear only IX. chapters will be ready for the mail. I am on again, and with half an idea of going back again to 85. We shall see when we come to read: I used to regard reading as a pleasure in my old light days. All the house are down with the iffluenza in a body, except Fanny and me. The Iffluenza appears to become endemic here, but it has always been a scourge in the islands. Witness the beginning of *The Ebb Tide*, which was observed long before the Iffle had distinguished himself at home by such Napoleonic conquests. I am now of course “quite a recluse,” and it is very stale, and there is no amanuensis to carry me over my mail, to which I shall have to devote many hours that would have been more usefully devoted to *The Ebb Tide*. For you know you can dictate at all hours of the day and at any odd moment; but to sit down and write with your red right hand is a very different matter.

May 20th. — Well, I believe I’ve about finished the thing, I mean as far as the mail is to take it. Chapter X. is now in Lloyd’s hands for remarks, and extends in its present form to incl. On the 12th of May, I see by looking back, I was on , not for the first time; so that I have made 11 pages in nine livelong days. Well! up a high hill he heaved a huge round stone. But this 304 Flaubert business must be resisted in the premises. Or is it the result of iffluenza? God forbid. Fanny is down now, and the last link that bound me to my fellow men is severed. I sit up here, and write, and read Renan’s *Origines*, which is certainly devilish interesting; I read his Nero yesterday, it is very good, O, very good! But he is quite a Michelet; the general views, and such a piece of character painting, excellent; but his method sheer lunacy. You can see him take up the block which he had just rejected, and make of it the corner-stone: a maddening way to deal with authorities; and the result so little like history that one almost blames oneself for wasting time. But the time is not wasted; the conspectus is always good, and the blur that remains on the mind is probably just enough. I have been enchanted with the unveiling of Revelations. Grigsby! what a lark! And how picturesque that return of the false Nero! The Apostle John is rather discredited. And to think how one had read the thing so often, and never understood the attacks upon St. Paul! I remember when I was a child, and we came to the Four Beasts that were all over eyes, the sickening terror with which I was filled. If that was Heaven, what, in the name of Davy Jones and the aboriginal night-mare, could Hell be? Take it for all in all, *L’Antéchrist* is worth reading. The *Histoire d’ Israël* did not surprise me much; I had read those Hebrew sources with more intelligence than the New Testament, and was quite prepared to admire Ahab and Jezebel, etc. Indeed, Ahab has always been rather a hero of mine; I mean since the years of discretion.

May 21st. — And here I am back again on ! the last chapter demanding an entire revision, which accordingly it is to get. And where my mail is to come in, God knows! This forced, violent, alembicated style is most abhorrent to me; it can’t be helped; the note was struck years ago on the *Janet Nicoll*, and has to be maintained 305 somehow; and I can only hope the intrinsic horror and pathos, and a kind of fierce glow of colour there is to it, and the surely remarkable wealth of striking incident, may guide our little shallop into port. If

Gordon Browne is to get it, he should see the Brassey photographs of Papeete. But mind, the three waifs were never in the town; only on the beach and in the calaboose. By George, but it's a good thing to illustrate for a man like that! Fanny is all right again. False alarm! I was down yesterday afternoon at Papauta, and heard much growling of war, and the delightful news that the C. J. and the President are going to run away from Mulinuu and take refuge in the Tivoli hotel.

23rd. Mail day. — *The Ebb Tide*, all but (I take it) fifteen pages, is now in your hands — possibly only about eleven pp. It is hard to say. But there it is, and you can do your best with it. Personally, I believe I would in this case make even a sacrifice to get Gordon Browne and copious illustration. I guess in ten days I shall have finished with it; then I go next to *D. Balfour*, and get the proofs ready: a nasty job for me, as you know. And then? Well, perhaps I'll take a go at the family history. I think that will be wise, as I am so much off work. And then, I suppose, *Weir of Hermiston*, but it may be anything. I am discontented with *The Ebb Tide*, naturally; there seems such a veil of words over it; and I like more and more naked writing; and yet sometimes one has a longing for full colour and there comes the veil again. *The Young Chevalier* is in very full colour, and I fear it for that reason. — Ever,

R. L. S.

To S. R. Crockett

Glencorse Church in the Pentlands, mentioned by Stevenson with so much emotion in the course of this letter, served him for the 306 scene of Chapter VI. in *Weir of Hermiston*, where his old associations and feelings in connection with the place have so admirably inspired him.

Vailima, Samoa, May 17th, 1893.

DEAR MR. CROCKETT, — I do not owe you two letters, nor yet nearly one, sir! The last time I heard of you, you wrote about an accident, and I sent you a letter to my lawyer, Charles Baxter, which does not seem to have been presented, as I see nothing of it in his accounts. Query, was that lost? I should not like you to think I had been so unmannerly and so inhuman. If you have written since, your letter also has miscarried, as is much the rule in this part of the world, unless you register.

Your book is not yet to hand, but will probably follow next month. I detected you early in the Bookman, which I usually see, and noted you in particular as displaying a monstrous ingratitude about the footnote. Well, mankind is ungrateful; "Man's ingratitude to man makes countless thousands mourn," quo' Rab — or words to that effect. By the way, an anecdote of a cautious sailor: "Bill, Bill," says I to him, “*or words to that effect.*”

I shall never take that walk by the Fisher’s Tryst and Glencorse. I shall never see Auld Reekie. I shall never set my foot again upon the heather. Here I am until I die, and here will I be buried. The word is out and the doom written. Or, if I do come, it will be a voyage to a further goal, and in fact a suicide; which, however, if I could get my family all fixed up in the money way, I might, perhaps, perform, or attempt. But there is a plaguey risk of breaking down by the way; and I believe I shall stay here until the end comes like a good boy, as I am. If I did it, I should put upon my trunks: “Passenger to — Hades.”

How strangely wrong your information is! In the first place, I should never carry a novel to Sydney; I should post it from here. In the second place, *Weir of Hermiston* is as yet scarce begun. It’s going to be excellent, 307 no doubt; but it consists of about twenty pages. I have a tale, a shortish tale in length, but it has proved long to do, *The Ebb Tide*, some part of which goes home this mail. It is by me and Mr. Osbourne, and is really a singular work. There are only four characters, and three of them are bandits — well, two of them are, and the third is their comrade and accomplice. It sounds cheering, doesn’t it? Barratry, and drunkenness, and vitriol, and I cannot tell you all what, are the beams of the roof. And yet — I don’t know — I sort of think there’s something in it. You’ll see (which is more than I ever can) whether Davis and Attwater come off or not.

Weir of Hermiston is a much greater undertaking, and the plot is not good, I fear; but Lord Justice-Clerk Hermiston ought to be a plum. Of other schemes, more or less executed, it skills not to speak.

I am glad to hear so good an account of your activity and interests, and shall always hear from you with pleasure; though I am, and must continue, a mere sprite of the inkbottle, unseen in the flesh. Please remember me to your wife and to the four-year-old sweetheart, if she be not too engrossed with higher matters. Do you know where the road crosses the burn under Glencorse Church? Go there, and say a prayer for me: *moriturus salutat*. See that it’s a sunny day; I would like it to be a Sunday, but that’s not possible in the premises; and stand on the right-hand bank just where the road goes down into the water, and shut your eyes, and if I don’t appear to you! well, it can’t be helped, and will be extremely funny.

I have no concern here but to work and to keep an eye on this distracted people. I live just now wholly alone in an upper room of my house, because the whole family are down with influenza, bar my wife and myself. I get my horse up sometimes in the afternoon and have a ride in the woods; and I sit here and smoke and write, and rewrite, and destroy, and rage at my own impotence, 308 from six in the morning till eight at night, with trifling and not always agreeable intervals for meals.

I am sure you chose wisely to keep your country charge. There a minister can be something, not in a town. In a town, the most of them are empty houses — and public speakers. Why should you suppose your book will be slated because you have no friends? A new writer, if he is any good, will be acclaimed generally with more noise than he deserves. But by this time you will know for certain. — I am, yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — Be it known to this fluent generation that I, R. L. S., in the forty-third of my age and the twentieth of my professional life, wrote twenty-four pages in twenty-one days, working from six to eleven, and again in the afternoon from two to four or so, without fail or interruption. Such are the gifts the gods have endowed us withal: such was the facility of this prolific writer!

R. L. S.

To Augustus St. Gaudens

Vailima, Samoa, May 29th, 1893.

MY DEAR GOD-LIKE SCULPTOR, — I wish in the most delicate manner in the world to insinuate a few commissions: —

No. 1. Is for a couple of copies of my medallion, as gilt-edged and high-toned as it is possible to make them. One is for our house here, and should be addressed as above. The other is for my friend Sidney Colvin, and should be addressed — Sidney Colvin, Esq., Keeper of the Print Room, British Museum, London.

No. 2. This is a rather large order, and demands some explanation. Our house is lined with varnished wood of a dark ruddy colour, very beautiful to see; at the same 309 time, it calls very much for gold; there is a limit to picture frames, and really you know there has to be a limit to the pictures you put inside of them. Accordingly, we have had an idea of a certain kind of decoration, which, I think, you might help us to make practical. What we want is an alphabet of gilt letters (very much such as people play with), and all mounted on spikes like drawing-pins; say two spikes to each letter, one at top, and one at bottom. Say that they were this height, I and that you chose a model of some really exquisitely fine, clear type from some Roman monument, and that they were made either of metal or some composition gilt — the point is, could not you, in your land of wooden houses, get a manufacturer to take the idea and manufacture them at a venture, so that I could get two or three hundred pieces or so at a moderate figure? You see, suppose you entertain an honoured guest, when he goes he leaves his name in gilt letters on your walls; an infinity of fun and decoration can be got out of hospitable and festive mottoes; and the doors of every room can be beautified by the legend of their names. I really think there is something in the idea, and you might be able to push it with the brutal and licentious manufacturer, using my name if necessary, though I should think the name of the god-like sculptor would be more germane. In case you should get it started, I should tell you that we should require commas in order to write the Samoan language, which is full of words written thus: la'u, ti'e ti'e. As the Samoan language uses but a very small proportion of the consonants, we should require a double or treble stock of all vowels, and of F, G, L, U, N, P, S, T, and V.

The other day in Sydney, I think you might be interested to hear, I was sculpt a second time by a man called — — , as well as I can remember and read. I mustn't criticise a present, and he had very little time to do it 310 in. It is thought by my family to be an excellent likeness of Mark Twain. This poor fellow, by the by, met with the devil of an accident. A model of a statue which he had just finished with a desperate effort was smashed to smithereens on its way to exhibition.

Please be sure and let me know if anything is likely to come of this letter business, and the exact cost of each letter, so that I may count the cost before ordering. — Yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Relating the toilsome completion of *The Ebb Tide*, and beginning of the account of his grandfather, Robert Stevenson, in *History of a Family of Engineers*.

[*Vailima*] *29th May* .

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Still grinding at Chap. XI. I began many days ago on , and am still on , which is exhilarating, but the thing takes shape all the same and should make a pretty lively chapter for an end of it. For XIII. is only a footnote *ad explicandum*.

June the 1st. — Back on . I was on 100 yesterday, but read it over and condemned it.

10 a.m. — I have worked up again to 97, but how? The deuce fly away with literature, for the basest sport in creation. But it's got to come straight! and if possible, so that I may finish *D. Balfour* in time for the same mail. What a getting upstairs! This is Flaubert out-done. Belle, Graham, and Lloyd leave to-day on a malaga down the coast; to be absent a week or so: this leaves Fanny, me, and — — , who seems a nice, kindly fellow.

June 2nd. — I am nearly dead with dyspepsia, over-smoking, and unremunerative overwork. Last night, I went to bed by seven; woke up again about ten for a minute to find myself light-headed and altogether off my legs; went to sleep again, and woke this morning fairly 311 fit. I have crippled on to , but I haven't read it yet, so do not boast. What kills me is the frame of mind of one of the characters; I cannot get it through. Of course that does not interfere with my total inability to write; so that yesterday I was a living half-hour upon a single clause and have a gallery of variants that would surprise you. And this sort of trouble (which I cannot avoid) unfortunately produces nothing when done but alembication and the far-fetched. Well, read it with mercy!

8 a.m. — Going to bed. Have read it, and believe the chapter practically done at last. But Lord! it has been a business.

June 3rd, 8.15. — The draft is finished, the end of Chapter XII. and the tale, and I have only eight pages *wiederzuarbeiten*. This is just a cry of joy in passing.

10.30. — Knocked out of time. Did 101 and 102. Alas, no more to-day, as I have to go down town to a meeting. Just as well though, as my thumb is about done up.

Sunday, June 4th. — Now for a little snippet of my life. Yesterday, 12.30, in a heavenly day of sun and trade, I mounted my horse and set off. A boy opens my gate for me. "Sleep and long life! A blessing on your journey," says he. And I reply "Sleep, long life! A blessing on the house!" Then on, down the lime lane, a rugged, narrow, winding way, that seems almost as if it was leading you into Lyonesse, and you might see the head and shoulders of a giant looking in. At the corner of the road I meet the inspector of taxes, and hold a diplomatic interview with him; he wants me to pay taxes on the new house; I am informed I should not till next year; and we part, *re infecta*, he promising to bring me decisions, I assuring him that, if I find any favouritism, he will find me the most recalcitrant tax-payer on the island. Then I have a talk with an old servant by the wayside. A little further I pass two children coming up. "Love!" say I; "are you two 312 chiefly-proceeding inland?" and they say, "Love! yes!" and the interesting ceremony is finished. Down to the post office, where I find Vitrolles and (Heaven reward you!) the White Book, just arrived per *Upolu*, having gone the wrong way round, by Australia; also six copies of *Island Nights' Entertainments*. Some of Weatherall's illustrations are very clever; but O Lord! the lagoon! I did say it was "shallow," but, O dear, not so shallow as that a man could stand up in it! I had still an hour to wait for my meeting, so Postmaster Davis let me sit down in his room and I had a bottle of beer in, and read *A Gentleman of France*. Have you seen it coming out in Longman's? My dear Colvin! 'tis the most exquisite pleasure; a real chivalrous yarn, like the Dumas' and yet unlike. Thereafter to the meeting of the five newspaper proprietors. Business transacted, I have to gallop home and find the boys waiting to be paid at the doorstep.

Monday, 5th. — Yesterday, Sunday, the Rev. Dr. Brown, secretary to the Wesleyan Mission, and the man who made the war in the Western Islands and was tried for his life in Fiji, came up, and we had a long, important talk about Samoa. O, if I could only talk to the home men! But what would it matter? none of them know, none of them care. If we could only have Macgregor here with his schooner, you would hear of no more troubles in Samoa. That is what we want; a man that knows and likes the natives, *qui paye de sa personne*, and is not afraid of hanging when necessary. We don't want bland Swedish humbugs, and fussy, footering German barons. That way the maelstrom lies, and we shall soon be in it.

I have to-day written 103 and 104, all perfectly wrong, and shall have to rewrite them. This tale is devilish, and Chapter XI. the worst of the lot. The truth is of course that I am wholly worked out; but it's nearly done, and shall go somehow according to promise. I go 313 against all my gods, and say it is *not worth while* to massacre yourself over the last few pages of a rancid yarn, that the reviewers will quite justly tear to bits. As for *D. B.*, no hope, I fear, this mail, but we'll see what the afternoon does for me.

4.15. — Well, it's done. Those tragic 16 pp. are at last finished, and I have put away thirty-two pages of chips, and have spent thirteen days about as nearly in Hell as a man could expect to live through. It's done, and of course it ain't worth while, and who cares? There it is, and about as grim a tale as was ever written, and as grimy, and as hateful.

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
J. L. HUISH,
BORN 1856, AT HACKNEY,
LONDON
Accidentally killed upon this
Island,
10th September 1889.

Tuesday, 6th. — I am exulting to do nothing. It pours with rain from the westward, very unusual kind of weather; I was standing out on the little verandah in front of my room this morning, and there went through me or over me a wave of extraordinary and apparently baseless emotion. I literally staggered. And then the explanation came, and I knew I had found a frame of mind and body that belonged to Scotland, and particularly to the neighbourhood of Callander. Very odd these identities 314 of sensation, and the world of connotations implied; highland huts, and peat smoke, and the brown, swirling rivers, and wet clothes, and whisky, and the romance of the past, and that indescribable bite of the whole thing at a man's heart, which is — or rather lies at the bottom of — a story.

I don't know if you are a Barbey d'Aurévilly-an. I am. I have a great delight in his Norman stories. Do you know the *Chevalier des Touches* and *L'Ensorcelée*? They are admirable, they reek of the soil and the past. But I was rather thinking just now of *Le Rideau Cramoisi,* and its adorable setting of the stopped coach, the dark street, the home-going in the inn yard, and the red blind illuminated. Without doubt, *there* was an identity of sensation; one of those conjunctions in life that had filled Barbey full to the brim, and permanently bent his memory.

I wonder exceedingly if I have done anything at all good; and who can tell me? and why should I wish to know? In so little a while, I, and the English language, and the bones of my descendants, will have ceased to be a memory! And yet — and yet — one would like to leave an image for a few years upon men's minds — for fun. This is a very dark frame of mind, consequent on overwork and the conclusion of the excruciating *Ebb Tide*. Adieu.

What do you suppose should be done with *The Ebb Tide*? It would make a volume of 200 pp.; on the other hand, I might likely have some more stories soon: *The Owl, Death in the Pot, The Sleeper Awakened*; all these are possible. *The Owl* might be half as long; *The Sleeper Awakened,* ditto; *Death in the Pot* a deal shorter, I believe. Then there's the *Go-Between*, which is not impossible altogether. *The Owl, The Sleeper Awakened,* and the *Go-Between* end reasonably well; *Death in the Pot* is an ungodly massacre. O, well, *The Owl* only ends well in so far as some lovers come together, and nobody is killed 315 at the moment, but you know they are all doomed, they are Chouan fellows.

Friday, 9th. — Well, the mail is in; no Blue-book, depressing letter from C.; a long, amusing ramble from my mother; vast masses of Romeike; they *are* going to war now; and what will that lead to? and what has driven them to it but the persistent misconduct of these two officials? I know I ought to rewrite the end of this bloody *Ebb Tide*: well, I can't. *C'est plus fort que moi*; it has to go the way it is, and be jowned to it! From what I make out of the reviews, I think it would be better not to republish *The Ebb Tide*: but keep it for other tales, if they should turn up. Very amusing how the reviews pick out one story and damn the rest! and it is always a different one. Be sure you send me the article from Le Temps. Talking of which, ain't it manners in France to acknowledge a dedication? I have never heard a word from Le Sieur Bourget.

Saturday, 17th. — Since I wrote this last, I have written a whole chapter of my Grandfather, and read it to-night; it was on the whole much appreciated, and I kind of hope it ain't bad myself. 'Tis a third writing, but it wants a fourth. By next mail, I believe I might send you 3 chapters. That is to say *Family Annals*, *The Service of the Northern Lights*, and *The Building of the Bell Rock.* Possibly even 4 — *A Houseful of Boys*. I could finish my Grandfather very easy now; my father and Uncle Alan stop the way. I propose to call the book: *Northern Lights: Memoirs of a Family of Engineers*. I tell you, it is going to be a good book. My idea in sending MS. would be to get it set up; two proofs to me, one to Professor Swan, Ardchapel, Helensburgh — mark it private and confidential — one 316 to yourself; and come on with criticisms! But I'll have to see. The total plan of the book is this —

I. Domestic Annals.
II. The Service of the Northern Lights.
III. The Building of the Bell Rock.
IV. A Houseful of Boys (the Family in Baxter's Place).
Here will be Introduction 'The Surname of Stevenson' which has proved a mighty queer subject of inquiry. But, Lord! if I were among libraries.
V. Education of an Engineer.
VI. The Grandfather.
VII. Alan Stevenson.
VIII. Thomas Stevenson.

Sunday, 18th. — I shall put in this envelope the end of the ever-to-be-execrated *Ebb Tide*, or Stevenson's Blooming Error. Also, a paper apart for *David Balfour*. The slips must go in another enclosure, I suspect, owing to their beastly bulk. Anyway, there are two pieces of work off my mind, and though I could wish I had rewritten a little more of *David*, yet it was plainly to be seen it was impossible. All the points indicated by you have been brought out; but to rewrite the end, in my present state of over-exhaustion and fiction-phobia, would have been madness; and I let it go as it stood. My grandfather is good enough for me, these days. I do not work any less; on the whole, if anything, a little more. But it is different.

The slips go to you in four packets; I hope they are what they should be, but do not think so. I am at a pitch of discontent with fiction in all its form — or *my* forms — that prevents me being able to be even interested. I have had to stop all drink; smoking I am trying to stop also. It annoys me dreadfully: and yet if I take a glass of claret, I have a headache the next day! O, and a good headache too; none of your trifles.

Well, sir, here's to you, and farewell. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

June 10th, 1893.

MY DEAR GOSSE, — My mother tells me you never received the very long and careful letter that I sent you more than a year ago; or is it two years?

I was indeed so much surprised at your silence that I wrote to Henry James and begged him to inquire if you had received it; his reply was an (if possible) higher power of the same silence; whereupon I bowed my head and acquiesced. But there is no doubt the letter was written and sent; and I am sorry it was lost, for it contained, among other things, an irrecoverable criticism of your father's *Life*, with a number of suggestions for another edition, which struck me at the time as excellent.

Well, suppose we call that cried off, and begin as before? It is fortunate indeed that we can do so, being both for a while longer in the day. But, alas! when I see "works of the late J. A. S.," I can see no help and no reconciliation possible. I wrote him a letter, I think, three years ago, heard in some roundabout way that he had received it, waited in vain for an answer (which had probably miscarried), and in a humour between frowns and smiles wrote to him no more. And now the strange, poignant, pathetic, brilliant creature is gone into the night, and the voice is silent that uttered so much excellent discourse; and I am sorry that I did not write to him again. Yet I am glad for him; light lie the turf! The Saturday is the only obituary I have seen, and I thought it very good upon the whole. I should be half tempted to write an *In Memoriam*, but I am submerged with other work. Are you going to do it? I very much admire your efforts that way; you are our only academician.

So you have tried fiction? I will tell you the truth: 318 when I saw it announced, I was so sure you would send it to me, that I did not order it! But the order goes this mail, and I will give you news of it. Yes, honestly, fiction is very difficult; it is a terrible strain to *carry* your characters all that time. And the difficulty of according the narrative and the dialogue (in a work in the third person) is extreme. That is one reason out of half a dozen why I so often prefer the first. It is much in my mind just now, because of my last work, just off the stocks three days ago, *The Ebb Tide*: a dreadful, grimy business in the third person, where the strain between a vilely realistic dialogue and a narrative style pitched about (in phrase) 'four notes higher' than it should have been, has sown my head with grey hairs; or I believe so — if my head escaped, my heart has them.

The truth is, I have a little lost my way, and stand bemused at the cross-roads. A subject? Ay, I have dozens; I have at least four novels begun, they are none good enough; and the mill waits, and I'll have to take second best. *The Ebb Tide* I make the world a present of; I expect, and, I suppose, deserve to be torn to pieces; but there was all that good work lying useless, and I had to finish it!

All your news of your family is pleasant to hear. My wife has been very ill, but is now better; I may say I am ditto, *The Ebb Tide* having left me high and dry, which is a good example of the mixed metaphor. Our home, and estate, and our boys, and the politics of the island, keep us perpetually amused and busy; and I grind away with an odd, dogged, down sensation — and an idea *in petto* that the game is about played out. I have got too realistic, and I must break the trammels — I mean I would if I could; but the yoke is heavy. I saw with amusement that Zola says the same thing; and truly the *Débâcle* was a mighty big book, I have no need for a bigger, though the last part is a mere mistake in my opinion. But the Emperor, and Sedan, and the doctor at the ambulance, and the horses 319 in the field of battle, Lord, how gripped it is! What an epical performance! According to my usual opinion, I believe I could go over that book and leave a masterpiece by blotting and no ulterior art. But that is an old story, ever new with me. Taine gone, and Renan, and Symonds, and Tennyson, and Browning; the suns go swiftly out, and I see no suns to follow, nothing but a universal twilight of the demi-divinities, with parties like you and me and Lang beating on toy drums and playing on penny whistles about glow-worms. But Zola is big anyway; he has plenty in his belly; too much, that is all; he wrote the *Débâcle* and he wrote *La Bête humaine*, perhaps the most excruciatingly silly book that I ever read to an end. And why did I read it to an end, W. E. G.? Because the animal in me was interested in the lewdness. Not sincerely, of course, my mind refusing to partake in it; but the flesh was slightly pleased. And when it was done, I cast it from me with a peal of laughter, and forgot it, as I would forget a Montépin. Taine is to me perhaps the chief of these losses; I did luxuriate in his *Origines*; it was something beyond literature, not quite so good, if you please, but so much more systematic, and the pages that had to be “written” always so adequate. Robespierre, Napoleon, were both excellent good.

June 18th, ‘93. — Well, I have left fiction wholly, and gone to my Grandfather, and on the whole found peace. By next month my Grandfather will begin to be quite grown up. I have already three chapters about as good as done; by which, of course, as you know, I mean till further notice or the next discovery. I like biography far better than fiction myself: fiction is too free. In biography you have your little handful of facts, little bits of a puzzle, and you sit and think, and fit ‘em together this way and that, and get up and throw ‘em down, and say damn, and go out for a walk. And it’s real soothing; and when done, gives an idea of finish to the writer that is very peaceful. Of course, it’s not really so finished as 320 quite a rotten novel; it always has and always must have the incurable illogicalities of life about it, the fathoms of slack and the miles of tedium. Still, that's where the fun comes in; and when you have at last managed to shut up the castle spectre (dulness), the very outside of his door looks beautiful by contrast. There are pages in these books that may seem nothing to the reader; but you *remember what they were, you know what they might have been*, and they seem to you witty beyond comparison. In my Grandfather I've had (for instance) to give up the temporal order almost entirely; doubtless the temporal order is the great foe of the biographer; it is so tempting, so easy, and lo! there you are in the bog! — Ever yours,

R. L. Stevenson.

With all kind messages from self and wife to you and yours. My wife is very much better, having been the early part of this year alarmingly ill. She is now all right, only complaining of trifles, annoying to her, but happily not interesting to her friends. I am in a hideous state, having stopped drink and smoking; yes, both. No wine, no tobacco; and the dreadful part of it is that — looking forward — I have — what shall I say? — nauseating intimations that it ought to be for ever.

To Henry James

Vailima Plantation, Samoan Islands, June 17th, 1893.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES, — I believe I have neglected a mail in answering yours. You will be very sorry to hear that my wife was exceedingly ill, and very glad to hear that she is better. I cannot say that I feel any more anxiety about her. We shall send you a photograph of her taken in Sydney in her customary island habit as she 321 walks and gardens and shrilly drills her brown assistants. She was very ill when she sat for it, which may a little explain the appearance of the photograph. It reminds me of a friend of my grandmother's who used to say when talking to younger women, "Aweel, when I was young, I wasnae just exactly what ye wad call *bonny*, but I was pale, penetratin', and interestin'." I would not venture to hint that Fanny is "no bonny," but there is no doubt but that in this presentment she is "pale, penetratin', and interestin'."

As you are aware, I have been wading deep waters and contending with the great ones of the earth, not wholly without success. It is, you may be interested to hear, a dreary and infuriating business. If you can get the fools to admit one thing, they will always save their face by denying another. If you can induce them to take a step to the right hand, they generally indemnify themselves by cutting a caper to the left. I always held (upon no evidence whatever, from a mere sentiment or intuition) that politics was the dirtiest, the most foolish, and the most random of human employments. I always held, but now I know it! Fortunately, you have nothing to do with anything of the kind, and I may spare you the horror of further details.

I received from you a book by a man by the name of Anatole France. Why should I disguise it? I have no use for Anatole. He writes very prettily, and then afterwards? Baron Marbot was a different pair of shoes. So likewise is the Baron de Vitrolles, whom I am now perusing with delight. His escape in 1814 is one of the best pages I remember anywhere to have read. But Marbot and Vitrolles are dead, and what has become of the living? It seems as if literature were coming to a stand. I am sure it is with me; and I am sure everybody will say so when they have the privilege of reading *The Ebb Tide*. My dear man, the grimness of that story is not to be depicted in words. There are only four characters, to be sure, but 322 they are such a troop of swine! And their behaviour is really so deeply beneath any possible standard, that on a retrospect I wonder I have been able to endure them myself until the yarn was finished. Well, there is always one thing; it will serve as a touchstone. If the admirers of Zola admire him for his pertinent ugliness and pessimism, I think they should admire this; but if, as I have long suspected, they neither admire nor understand the man's art, and only wallow in his rancidness like a hound in offal, then they will certainly be disappointed in *The Ebb Tide*. Alas! poor little tale, it is not *even* rancid.

By way of an antidote or febrifuge, I am going on at a great rate with my History of the Stevensons, which I hope may prove rather amusing, in some parts at least. The excess of materials weighs upon me. My grandfather is a delightful comedy part; and I have to treat him besides as a serious and (in his way) a heroic figure, and at times I lose my way, and I fear in the end will blur the effect. However, *à la grâce de Dieu!* I'll make a spoon or spoil a horn. You see, I have to do the Building of the Bell Rock by cutting down and packing my grandsire's book, which I rather hope I have done, but do not know. And it makes a huge chunk of a very different style and quality between Chapters II. and IV. And it can't be helped! It is just a delightful and exasperating necessity. You know, the stuff is really excellent narrative: only, perhaps there's too much of it! There is the rub. Well, well, it will be plain to you that my mind is affected; it might be with less. *The Ebb Tide* and *Northern Lights* are a full meal for any plain man.

I have written and ordered your last book, *The Real Thing*, so be sure and don't send it. What else are you doing or thinking of doing? News I have none, and don't want any. I have had to stop all strong drink and all tobacco, and am now in a transition state between the two, which seems to be near madness. You never smoked, I think, so you can never taste the joys of stopping it. 323 But at least you have drunk, and you can enter perhaps into my annoyance when I suddenly find a glass of claret or a brandy-and-water give me a splitting headache the next morning. No mistake about it; drink anything, and there's your headache. Tobacco just as bad for me. If I live through this breach of habit, I shall be a white-livered puppy indeed. Actually I am so made, or so twisted, that I do not like to think of a life without the red wine on the table and the tobacco with its lovely little coal of fire. It doesn't amuse me from a distance. I may find it the Garden of Eden when I go in, but I don't like the colour of the gate-posts. Suppose somebody said to you, you are to leave your home, and your books, and your clubs, and go out and camp in mid-Africa, and command an expedition, you would howl, and kick, and flee. I think the same of a life without wine and tobacco; and if this goes on, I've got to go and do it, sir, in the living flesh!

I thought Bourget was a friend of yours? And I thought the French were a polite race? He has taken my dedication with a stately silence that has surprised me into apoplexy. Did I go and dedicate my book to the nasty alien, and the 'norrid Frenchman, and the Bloody Furrineer? Well, I wouldn't do it again; and unless his case is susceptible of explanation, you might perhaps tell him so over the walnuts and the wine, by way of speeding the gay hours. Sincerely, I thought my dedication worth a letter.

If anything be worth anything here below! Do you know the story of the man who found a button in his hash, and called the waiter? "What do you call that?" says he. "Well," said the waiter, "what d'you expect? Expect to find a gold watch and chain?" Heavenly apologue, is it not? I expected (rather) to find a gold watch and chain; I expected to be able to smoke to excess and drink to comfort all the days of my life; and I am 324 still indignantly staring on this button! It's not even a button; it's a teetotal badge! — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Saturday, 24th (?) June .

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Yesterday morning, after a day of absolute temperance, I awoke to the worst headache I had had yet. Accordingly, temperance was said farewell to, quinine instituted, and I believe my pains are soon to be over. We wait, with a kind of sighing impatience, for war to be declared, or to blow finally off, living in the meanwhile in a kind of children's hour of firelight and shadow and preposterous tales; the king seen at night galloping up our road upon unknown errands and covering his face as he passes our cook; Mataafa daily surrounded (when he awakes) with fresh "white man's boxes" (query, ammunition?) and professing to be quite ignorant of where they come from; marches of bodies of men across the island; concealment of ditto in the bush; the coming on and off of different chiefs; and such a mass of ravelment and rag-tag as the devil himself could not unwind.

Wednesday, 28 June. — Yesterday it rained with but little intermission, but I was jealous of news. Graham and I got into the saddle about 1 o'clock and off down to town. In town, there was nothing but rumours going; in the night drums had been beat, the men had run to arms on Mulinuu from as far as Vaiala, and the alarm proved false. There were no signs of any gathering in Apia proper, and the Secretary of State had no news to give. I believed him, too, for we are brither Scots. Then the temptation came upon me strong to go on to the ford and see the Mataafa villages, where we heard there was more afoot. Off we rode. When we came to Vaimusu, the houses were very full of men, but all seemingly unarmed.[325] Immediately beyond is that river over which we passed in our scamper with Lady Jersey; it was all solitary. Three hundred yards beyond is a second ford; and there — I came face to face with war. Under the trees on the further bank sat a picket of seven men with Winchesters; their faces bright, their eyes ardent. As we came up, they did not speak or move; only their eyes followed us. The horses drank, and we passed the ford. "Talofa!" I said, and the commandant of the picket said "Talofa"; and then, when we were almost by, remembered himself and asked where we were going. "To Faamuiná," I said, and we rode on. Every house by the wayside was crowded with armed men. There was the European house of a Chinaman on the right-hand side: a flag of truce flying over the gate — indeed we saw three of these in what little way we penetrated into Mataafa's lines — all the foreigners trying to protect their goods; and the Chinaman's verandah overflowed with men and girls and Winchesters. By the way we met a party of about ten or a dozen marching with their guns and cartridge-belts, and the cheerful alacrity and brightness of their looks set my head turning with envy and sympathy. Arrived at Vaiusu, the houses about the *malae* (village green) were thronged with men, all armed. On the outside of the council-house (which was all full within) there stood an orator; he had his back turned to his audience, and seemed to address the world at large; all the time we were there his strong voice continued unabated, and I heard snatches of political wisdom rising and falling.

The house of Faamuiná stands on a knoll in the *malae*. Thither we mounted, a boy ran out and took our horses, and we went in. Faamuiná was there himself, his wife Palepa, three other chiefs, and some attendants; and here again was this exulting spectacle as of people on their marriage day. Faamuiná (when I last saw him) was an elderly, limping gentleman, with much of the debility of age; it was a bright-eyed boy that greeted me; the lady 326 was no less excited; all had cartridge-belts. We stayed but a little while to smoke a selui; I would not have kava made, as I thought my escapade was already dangerous (perhaps even blameworthy) enough. On the way back, we were much greeted, and on coming to the ford, the commandant came and asked me if there were many on the other side. “Very many,” said I; not that I knew, but I would not lead them on the ice. “That is well!” said he, and the little picket laughed aloud as we splashed into the river. We returned to Apia, through Apia, and out to windward as far as Vaiala, where the word went that the men of the Vaimauga had assembled. We met two boys carrying pigs, and saw six young men busy cooking in a cook-house; but no sign of an assembly; no arms, no blackened faces. (I forgot! As we turned to leave Faamuiná’s, there ran forward a man with his face blackened, and the back of his lava-lava girded up so as to show his tattooed hips naked; he leaped before us, cut a wonderful caper, and flung his knife high in the air, and caught it. It was strangely savage and fantastic and high-spirited. I have seen a child doing the same antics long before in a dance, so that it is plainly an *accepted solemnity*. I should say that for weeks the children have been playing with spears.) Up by the plantation I took a short cut, which shall never be repeated, through grass and weeds over the horses’ heads and among rolling stones; I thought we should have left a horse there, but fortune favoured us. So home, a little before six, in a dashing squall of rain, to a bowl of kava and dinner. But the impression on our minds was extraordinary; the sight of that picket at the ford, and those ardent, happy faces whirls in my head; the old aboriginal awoke in both of us and knickered like a stallion.

It is dreadful to think that I must sit apart here and do nothing; I do not know if I can stand it out. But you see, I may be of use to these poor people, if I keep quiet, and if I threw myself in, I should have a bad job 327 of it to save myself. There; I have written this to you; and it is still but 7.30 in the day, and the sun only about one hour up; can I go back to my old grandpapa, and men sitting with Winchesters in my mind’s eye? No; war is a huge *entraînement*; there is no other temptation to be compared to it, not one. We were all wet, we had been about five hours in the saddle, mostly riding hard; and we came home like schoolboys, with such a lightness of spirits, and I am sure such a brightness of eye, as you could have lit a candle at!

Do you appreciate the height and depth of my temptation? that I have about nine miles to ride, and I can become a general officer? and to-night I might seize Mulinuu and have the C. J. under arrest? And yet I stay here! It seems incredible, so huge is the empire of prudence and the second thought.

Thursday, 29th. — I had two priests to luncheon yesterday: the Bishop and Père Rémy. They were very pleasant, and quite clean too, which has been known sometimes not to be — even with bishops. Monseigneur is not unimposing; with his white beard and his violet girdle he looks splendidly episcopal, and when our three waiting lads came up one after another and kneeled before him in the big hall, and kissed his ring, it did me good for a piece of pageantry. Rémy is very engaging; he is a little, nervous, eager man, like a governess, and brimful of laughter and small jokes. So is the bishop indeed, and our luncheon party went off merrily — far more merrily than many a German spread, though with so much less liquor. One trait was delicious. With a complete ignorance of the Protestant that I would scarce have imagined, he related to us (as news) little stories from the gospels, and got the names all wrong! His comments were delicious, and to our ears a thought irreverent. "*Ah! il connaissait son monde, allez!*" "*Il était fin, notre Seigneur!*" etc.

Friday. — Down with Fanny and Belle, to lunch at the International. Heard there about the huge folly of the 328 hour, all the Mulinuu ammunition having been yesterday marched openly to vaults in Matafele; and this morning, on a cry of protest from the whites, openly and humiliatingly disinterred and marched back again. People spoke of it with a kind of shrill note that did not quite satisfy me. They seemed not quite well at ease. Luncheon over, we rode out on the Malie road. All was quiet in Vaiusu, and when we got to the second ford, alas! there was no picket — which was just what Belle had come to sketch. On through quite empty roads; the houses deserted, never a gun to be seen; and at last a drum and a penny whistle playing in Vaiusu, and a cricket match on the *malae*! Went up to Faamuiná's; he is a trifle uneasy, though he gives us kava. I cannot see what ails him, then it appears that he has an engagement with the Chief Justice at half-past two to sell a piece of land. Is this the reason why war has disappeared? We ride back, stopping to sketch here and there the fords, a flag of truce, etc. I ride on to Public Hall Committee and pass an hour with my committees very heavily. To the hotel to dinner, then to the ball, and home by eleven, very tired. At the ball I heard some news, of how the chief of Letonu said that I was the source of all this trouble, and should be punished, and my family as well. This, and the rudeness of the man at the ford of the Gase-gase, looks but ill; I should have said that Faamuiná, as he approached the first ford, was spoken to by a girl, and immediately said good-bye and plunged into the bush; the girl had told him there was a war party out from Mulinuu; and a little further on, as we stopped to sketch a flag of truce, the beating of drums and the sound of a bugle from that direction startled us. But we saw nothing, and I believe Mulinuu is (at least at present) incapable of any act of offence. One good job, these threats to my home and family take away all my childish temptation to go out and fight. Our force must be here, to protect ourselves. I see panic rising among the whites; I hear the shrill note of it in their voices, 329 and they talk already about a refuge on the war ships. There are two here, both German; and the *Orlando* is expected presently.

Sunday, 9th July. — Well, the war has at last begun. For four or five days, Apia has been filled by these poor children with their faces blacked, and the red handkerchief about their brows, that makes the Malietoa uniform, and the boats have been coming in from the windward, some of them 50 strong, with a drum and a bugle on board — the bugle always ill-played — and a sort of jester leaping and capering on the sparred nose of the boat, and the whole crew uttering from time to time a kind of menacing ululation. Friday they marched out to the bush; and yesterday morning we heard that some had returned to their houses for the night, as they found it "so uncomfortable." After dinner a messenger came up to me with a note, that the wounded were arriving at the Mission House. Fanny, Lloyd and I saddled and rode off with a lantern; it was a fine starry night, though pretty cold. We left the lantern at Tanugamanono, and then down in the starlight. I found Apia, and myself, in a strange state of flusteration; my own excitement was gloomy and (I may say) truculent; others appeared imbecile; some sullen. The best place in the whole town was the hospital. A longish frame-house it was, with a big table in the middle for operations, and ten Samoans, each with an average of four sympathisers, stretched along the walls. Clarke was there, steady as a die; Miss Large, little spectacled angel, showed herself a real trump; the nice, clean, German orderlies in their white uniforms looked and meant business. (I hear a fine story of Miss Large — a cast-iron teetotaller — going to the public-house for a bottle of brandy.)

The doctors were not there when I arrived; but presently it was observed that one of the men was going cold. He was a magnificent Samoan, very dark, with a noble aquiline countenance, like an Arab, I suppose, and was 330 surrounded by seven people, fondling his limbs as he lay: he was shot through both lungs. And an orderly was sent to the town for the (German naval) doctors, who were dining there. Meantime I found an errand of my own. Both Clarke and Miss Large expressed a wish to have the public hall, of which I am chairman, and I set off down town, and woke people out of their beds, and got a committee together, and (with a great deal of difficulty from one man, whom we finally overwhelmed) got the public hall for them. Bar the one man, the committee was splendid, and agreed in a moment to share the expense if the shareholders object. Back to the hospital about 11.30; found the German doctors there. Two men were going now, one that was shot in the bowels — he was dying rather hard, in a gloomy stupor of pain and laudanum, silent, with contorted face. The chief, shot through the lungs, was lying on one side, awaiting the last angel; his family held his hands and legs: they were all speechless, only one woman suddenly clasped his knee, and "keened" for the inside of five seconds, and fell silent again. Went home, and to bed about two A.M. What actually passed seems undiscoverable; but the Mataafas were surely driven back out of Vaitele; that is a blow to them, and the resistance was far greater than had been anticipated — which is a blow to the Laupepas. All seems to indicate a long and bloody war.

Frank's house in Mulinuu was likewise filled with wounded; many dead bodies were brought in; I hear with certainty of five, wrapped in mats; and a pastor goes to-morrow to the field to bring others. The Laupepas brought in eleven heads to Mulinuu, and to the great horror and consternation of the native mind, one proved to be a girl, and was identified as that of a Taupou — or Maid of the Village — from Savaii. I hear this morning, with great relief, that it has been returned to Malie, wrapped in the most costly silk handkerchiefs, and with an apologetic embassy. This could easily happen. The girl was of 331 course attending on her father with ammunition, and got shot; her hair was cut short to make her father's war head-dress — even as our own Sina's is at this moment; and the decollator was probably, in his red flurry of fight, wholly unconscious of her sex. I am sorry for him in the future; he must make up his mind to many bitter jests — perhaps to vengeance. But what an end to one chosen for her beauty and, in the time of peace, watched over by trusty crones and hunchbacks!

Evening. — Can I write or not? I played lawn tennis in the morning, and after lunch down with Graham to Apia. Ulu, he that was shot in the lungs, still lives; he that was shot in the bowels is gone to his fathers, poor, fierce child! I was able to be of some very small help, and in the way of helping myself to information, to prove myself a mere gazer at meteors. But there seems no doubt the Mataafas for the time are scattered; the most of our friends are involved in this disaster, and Mataafa himself — who might have swept the islands a few months ago — for him to fall so poorly, doubles my regret. They say the Taupou had a gun and fired; probably an excuse manufactured *ex post facto*. I go down to-morrow at 12, to stay the afternoon, and help Miss Large. In the hospital to-day, when I first entered it, there were no attendants; only the wounded and their friends, all equally sleeping and their heads poised upon the wooden pillows. There is a pretty enough boy there, slightly wounded, whose fate is to be envied: two girls, and one of the most beautiful, with beaming eyes, tend him and sleep upon his pillow. In the other corner, another young man, very patient and brave, lies wholly deserted. Yet he seems to me far the better of the two; but not so pretty! Heavens, what a difference that makes; in our not very well proportioned bodies and our finely hideous faces, the 1-32nd — rather the 1-64th — this way or that! Sixteen heads in all at Mulinuu. I am so stiff I can scarce move without a howl.

Monday, 10*th.* — Some news that Mataafa is gone to Savaii by way of Manono: this may mean a great deal more warfaring, and no great issue. (When Sosimo came in this morning with my breakfast he had to lift me up. It is no joke to play lawn tennis after carrying your right arm in a sling so many years.) What a hard, unjust business this is! On the 28th, if Mataafa had moved, he could have still swept Mulinuu. He waited, and I fear he is now only the stick of a rocket.

Wednesday, 12th. — No more political news; but many rumours. The government troops are off to Manono; no word of Mataafa. O, there is a passage in my mother's letter which puzzles me as to a date. Is it next Christmas you are coming? or the Christmas after? This is most important, and must be understood at once. If it is next Christmas, I could not go to Ceylon, for lack of gold, and you would have to adopt one of the following alternatives: 1st, either come straight on here and pass a month with us; 'tis the rainy season, but we have often lovely weather. Or (2nd) come to Hawaii and I will meet you there. Hawaii is only a week's sail from S. Francisco, making only about sixteen days on the heaving ocean; and the steamers run once a fortnight, so that you could turn round; and you could thus pass a day or two in the States — a fortnight even — and still see me. But I have sworn to take no further excursions till I have money saved to pay for them; and to go to Ceylon and back would be torture unless I had a lot. You must answer this at once, please; so that I may know what to do. We would dearly like you to come on here. I'll tell you how it can be done; I can come up and meet you at Hawaii, and if you had at all got over your sea-sickness, I could just come on board and we could return together to Samoa, and you could have a month of our life here, which I believe you could not help liking. Our horses are the devil, of course, miserable screws, and some of them a little vicious. I had a dreadful fright — the 333 passage in my mother's letter is recrossed and I see it says the end of /94: so much the better, then; but I would like to submit to you my alternative plan. I could meet you at Hawaii, and reconduct you to Hawaii, so that we could have a full six weeks together and I believe a little over, and you would see this place of mine, and have a sniff of native life, native foods, native houses —

and perhaps be in time to see the German flag raised, who knows? — and we could generally yarn for all we were worth. I should like you to see Vailima; and I should be curious to know how the climate affected you. It is quite hit or miss; it suits me, it suits Graham, it suits all our family; others it does not suit at all. It is either gold or poison. I rise at six, the rest at seven; lunch is at 12; at five we go to lawn tennis till dinner at six; and to roost early.

A man brought in a head to Mulinuu in great glory; they washed the black paint off, and behold! it was his brother. When I last heard he was sitting in his house, with the head upon his lap, and weeping. Barbarous war is an ugly business; but I believe the civilised is fully uglier; but Lord! what fun!

I should say we now have definite news that there are *three* women's heads; it was difficult to get it out of the natives, who are all ashamed, and the women all in terror of reprisals. Nothing has been done to punish or disgrace these hateful innovators. It was a false report that the head had been returned.

Thursday, 13th. — Maatafa driven away from Savaii. I cannot write about this, and do not know what should be the end of it.

Monday, 17th. — Haggard and Ahrens (a German clerk) to lunch yesterday. There is no real certain news yet: I must say, no man could *swear* to any result; but the sky looks horribly black for Mataafa and so many of our friends along with him. The thing has an abominable, a beastly, nightmare interest. But it's wonderful generally 334 how little one cares about the wounded; hospital sights, etc.; things that used to murder me. I was far more struck with the excellent way in which things were managed; as if it had been a peep-show; I held some of the things at an operation, and did not care a dump.

Tuesday, 18th. — Sunday came the *Katoomba*, Captain Bickford, C.M.G. Yesterday, Graham and I went down to call, and find he has orders to suppress Mataafa at once, and has to go down to-day before daybreak to Manono. He is a very capable, energetic man; if he had only come ten days ago, all this would have gone by; but now the questions are thick and difficult. (1) Will Mataafa surrender? (2) Will his people allow themselves to be disarmed? (3) What will happen to them if they do? (4) What will any of them believe after former deceptions? The three consuls were scampering on horseback to Leulumoega to the king; no Cusack-Smith, without whose accession I could not send a letter to Mataafa. I rode up here, wrote my letter in the sweat of the concordance and with the able-bodied help of Lloyd — and dined. Then down in continual showers and pitchy darkness, and to Cusack-Smith's; not returned. Back to the inn for my horse, and to C.-S.'s, when I find him just returned and he accepts my letter. Thence home, by 12.30, jolly tired and wet. And to-day have been in a crispation of energy and ill-temper, raking my wretched mail together. It is a hateful business, waiting for the news; it may come to a fearful massacre yet. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To James S. Stevenson

This is addressed to a very remote cousin in quest of information about the origins of the family.

Vailima, Samoa, June 19th, 1893.

DEAR MR. STEVENSON, — I am reminded by coming across some record of relations between my grandfather, 335 Robert Stevenson, C.E., Edinburgh, and Robert Stevenson, Esq., Secretary to the Royal Exchange, Glasgow, and I presume a son of Hugh Stevenson who died in Tobago 16th April 1774, that I have not yet consulted my cousins in Glasgow.

I am engaged in writing a Life of my grandfather, my uncle Alan, and my father, Thomas, and I find almost inconceivable difficulty in placing and understanding their (and my) descent.

Might I ask if you have any material to go upon? The smallest notes would be like found gold to me; and an old letter invaluable.

I have not got beyond James Stevenson and Jean Keir his spouse, to whom Robert the First (?) was born in 1675. Could you get me further back? Have you any old notes of the trouble in the West Indian business which took Hugh and Alan to their deaths? How had they acquired so considerable a business at an age so early? You see how the queries pour from me; but I will ask nothing more in words. Suffice it to say that any information, however insignificant, as to our common forbears, will be very gratefully received. In case you should have any original documents, it would be better to have copies sent to me in this outlandish place, for the expense of which I will account to you as soon as you let me know the amount, and it will be wise to register your letter. — Believe me, in the old, honoured Scottish phrase, your affectionate cousin,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Henry James

Apia, July 1893.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES, — Yes. *Les Trophées* is, on the whole, a book. It is excellent; but is it a life's work? 336 I always suspect *you* of a volume of sonnets up your sleeve; when is it coming down? I am in one of my moods of wholesale impatience with all fiction and all verging on it, reading instead, with rapture, *Fountainhall's Decisions*. You never read it: well, it hasn't much form, and is inexpressibly dreary, I should suppose, to others — and even to me for pages. It's like walking in a mine underground, and with a damned bad lantern, and picking out pieces of ore. This, and war, will be my excuse for not having read your (doubtless) charming work of fiction. The revolving year will bring me round to it; and I know, when fiction shall begin to feel a little *solid* to me again, that I shall love it, because it's James. Do you know, when I am in this mood, I would rather try to read a bad book? It's not so disappointing, anyway. And *Fountainhall* is prime, two big folio volumes, and all dreary, and all true, and all as terse as an obituary; and about one interesting fact on an average in twenty pages, and ten of them unintelligible for technicalities. There's literature, if you like! It feeds; it falls about you genuine like rain. Rain: nobody has done justice to rain in literature yet: surely a subject for a Scot. But then you can't do rain in that ledger-book style that I am trying for — or between a ledger-book and an old ballad. How to get over, how to escape from, the besotting *particularity* of fiction. "Roland approached the house; it had green doors and window blinds; and there was a scraper on the upper step." To hell with Roland and the scraper! — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To A. Conan Doyle

Vailima, July 12, 1893.

MY DEAR DR. CONAN DOYLE, — The *White Company* has not yet turned up; but when it does — which I suppose will be next mail — you shall hear news of me. I have a 337 great talent for compliment, accompanied by a hateful, even a diabolic frankness.

Delighted to hear I have a chance of seeing you and Mrs. Doyle; Mrs. Stevenson bids me say (what is too true) that our rations are often spare. Are you Great Eaters? Please reply.

As to ways and means, here is what you will have to do. Leave San Francisco by the down mail, get off at Samoa, and twelve days or a fortnight later, you can continue your journey to Auckland per Upolu, which will give you a look at Tonga and possibly Fiji by the way. Make this a *first part of your plans*. A fortnight, even of Vailima diet, could kill nobody.

We are in the midst of war here; rather a nasty business, with the head-taking; and there seems signs of other trouble. But I believe you need make no change in your design to visit us. All should be well over; and if it were not, why! you need not leave the steamer. — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

19th July '93.

... We are in the thick of war — see Illustrated London News — we have only two outside boys left to us. Nothing is doing, and *per contra* little paying.... My life here is dear; but I can live within my income for a time at least — so long as my prices keep up — and it seems a clear duty to waste none of it on gadding about. ... My Life of my family fills up intervals, and should be an excellent book when it is done, but big, damnably big.

My dear old man, I perceive by a thousand signs that we grow old, and are soon to pass away; I hope with dignity; if not, with courage at least. I am myself very ready; or would be — will be — when I have made a little 338 money for my folks. The blows that have fallen upon you are truly terrifying; I wish you strength to bear them. It is strange, I must seem to you to blaze in a Birmingham prosperity and happiness; and to myself I seem a failure. The truth is, I have never got over the last influenza yet, and am miserably out of heart and out of kilter. Lungs pretty right, stomach nowhere, spirits a good deal overshadowed; but we'll come through it yet, and cock our bonnets. (I confess with sorrow that I am not yet quite sure about the *intellects*; but I hope it is only one of my usual periods of non-work. They are more unbearable now, because I cannot rest. *No rest but the grave for Sir Walter!* O the words ring in a man's head.)

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *August 1893.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Quite impossible to write. Your letter is due to-day; a nasty, rainy-like morning with huge blue clouds, and a huge indigo shadow on the sea, and my lamp still burning at near 7. Let me humbly give you news. Fanny seems on the whole the most, or the only, powerful member of the family; for some days she has been the Flower of the Flock. Belle is begging for quinine. Lloyd and Graham have both been down with "belly belong him" (Black Boy speech). As for me, I have to lay aside my lawn tennis, having (as was to be expected) had a smart but eminently brief hemorrhage. I am also on the quinine flask. I have been re-casting the beginning of the *Hanging Judge* or *Weir of Hermiston*; then I have been cobbling on my Grandfather, whose last chapter (there are only to be four) is in the form of pieces of paper, a huge welter of inconsequence, and that glimmer of faith (or hope) which one learns at this trade, that somehow and some time, by perpetual staring and glowering 339 and re-writing, order will emerge. It is indeed a queer hope; there is one piece for instance that I want in — I cannot put it one place for a good reason — I cannot put it another for a better — and every time I look at it, I turn sick and put the MS. away.

Well, your letter hasn't come, and a number of others are missing. It looks as if a mail-bag had gone on, so I'll blame nobody, and proceed to business.

It looks as if I was going to send you the first three chapters of my Grandfather.... If they were set up, it would be that much anxiety off my mind. I have a strange feeling of responsibility, as if I had my ancestors' *souls* in my charge, and might miscarry with them.

There's a lot of work gone into it, and a lot more is needed. Still Chapter I. seems about right to me, and much of Chapter II. Chapter III. I know nothing of, as I told you. And Chapter IV. is at present all ends and beginnings; but it can be pulled together.

This is all I have been able to screw up to you for this month, and I may add that it is not only more than you deserve, but just about more than I was equal to. I have been and am entirely useless; just able to tinker at my Grandfather. The three chapters — perhaps also a little of the fourth — will come home to you next mail by the hand of my cousin Graham Balfour, a very nice fellow whom I recommend to you warmly — and whom I think you will like. This will give you time to consider my various and distracted schemes.

All our wars are over in the meantime, to begin again as soon as the war-ships leave. Adieu.

R. L. S.

To A. Conan Doyle

Vailima, August 23rd, 1893.

MY DEAR DR. CONAN DOYLE, — I am reposing after a somewhat severe experience upon which I think it my 340 duty to report to you. Immediately after dinner this evening it occurred to me to re-narrate to my native overseer Simelé your story of *The Engineer's Thumb*. And, sir, I have done it. It was necessary, I need hardly say, to go somewhat farther afield than you have done. To explain (for instance) what a railway is, what a steam hammer, what a coach and horse, what coining, what a criminal, and what the police. I pass over other and no less necessary explanations. But I did actually succeed; and if you could have seen the drawn, anxious features and the bright, feverish eyes of Simelé, you would have (for the moment at least) tasted glory. You might perhaps think that, were you to come to Samoa, you might be introduced as the Author of *The Engineer's Thumb*. Disabuse yourself. They do not know what it is to make up a story. *The Engineer's Thumb* (God forgive me) was narrated as a piece of actual and factual history. Nay, and more, I who write to you have had the indiscretion to perpetrate a trifling piece of fiction entitled *The Bottle Imp*. Parties who come up to visit my unpretentious mansion, after having admired the ceilings by Vanderputty and the tapestry by

Gobbling, manifest towards the end a certain uneasiness which proves them to be fellows of an infinite delicacy. They may be seen to shrug a brown shoulder, to roll up a speaking eye, and at last secret burst from them: “Where is the bottle?” Alas, my friends (I feel tempted to say), you will find it by the Engineer’s Thumb! Talofa-soifua.

O a’u, o lau uo moni, O Tusitala. More commonly known as

R. L. Stevenson.

Have read the *Refugees*; Condé and old P. Murat very good; Louis xiv. and Louvois with the letter bag very rich. You have reached a trifle wide perhaps; too *many* celebrities? Though I was delighted to re-encounter my old friend Du Chaylu. Old Murat is perhaps your high-water mark; ‘tis excellently human, cheerful and 341 real. Do it again. Madame de Maintenon struck me as quite good. Have you any document for the decapitation? It sounds steepish. The devil of all that first part is that you see old Dumas; yet your Louis XIV. is *distinctly good*. I am much interested with this book, which fulfils a good deal, and promises more. Question: How far a Historical Novel should be wholly episodic? I incline to that view, with trembling. I shake hands with you on old Murat.

R. L. S.

To Augustus St. Gaudens

Mr. St. Gaudens’ large medallion portrait in bronze, executed from sittings given in 1887, had at last found its way to Apia, but not yet to Vailima.

Vailima, September 1893.

MY DEAR ST. GAUDENS, — I had determined not to write to you till I had seen the medallion, but it looks as if that might mean the Greek Kalends or the day after to-morrow. Reassure yourself, your part is done, it is ours that halts — the consideration of conveyance over our sweet little road on boys’ backs, for we cannot very well apply the horses to this work; there is only one; you cannot put it in a panier; to put it on the horse’s back we have not the heart. Beneath the beauty of R. L. S., to say nothing of his verses, which the publishers find heavy enough, and the genius of the god-like sculptor, the spine would snap and the well-knit limbs of the (ahem) cart-horse would be loosed by death. So you are to conceive me, sitting in my house, dubitative, and the medallion chuckling in the warehouse of the German firm, for some days longer; and hear me meanwhile on the golden letters.

Alas! they are all my fancy painted, but the price is prohibitive. I cannot do it. It is another day-dream burst. Another gable of Abbotsford has gone down, fortunately before it was builded, so there’s nobody 342 injured — except me. I had a strong conviction that I was a great hand at writing inscriptions, and meant to exhibit and test my genius on the walls of my house; and now I see I can't. It is generally thus. The Battle of the Golden Letters will never be delivered. On making preparation to open the campaign, the King found himself face to face with invincible difficulties, in which the rapacity of a mercenary soldiery and the complaints of an impoverished treasury played an equal part. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

I enclose a bill for the medallion; have been trying to find your letter, quite in vain, and therefore must request you to pay for the bronze letters yourself and let me know the damage.

R. L. S.

To James S. Stevenson

Vailima Plantation, Island of Upolu, Samoa, Sept. 4th, 1893.

MY DEAR COUSIN, — I thank you cordially for your kinsmanlike reply to my appeal. Already the notes from the family Bible have spared me one blunder, which I had from some notes in my grandfather's own hand; and now, like the daughters of the horseleech, my voice is raised again to put you to more trouble. "Nether Carsewell, Neilston," I read. My knowledge of Scotland is fairly wide, but it does not include Neilston.

However, I find by the (original) Statistical Account, it is a parish in Renfrew. Do you know anything of it? Have you identified Nether Carsewell? Have the Neilston parish registers been searched? I see whole vistas of questions arising, and here am I in Samoa!

I shall write by this mail to my lawyer to have the records searched, and to my mother to go and inquire in the parish itself. But perhaps you may have some 343 further information, and if so I should be glad of it. If you have not, pray do not trouble to answer. As to your father's blunder of "Stevenson of Cauldwell," it is now explained: *Carse*well may have been confounded with *Cauldwell*: and it seems likely our man may have been a tenant or retainer of Mure of Cauldwell, a very ancient and honourable family, who seems to have been at least a neighbouring laird to the parish of Neilston. I was just about to close this, when I observed again your obliging offer of service, and I take you promptly at your word.

Do you think that you or your son could find a day to visit Neilston and try to identify Nether Carsewell, find what size of a farm it is, to whom it belonged, etc.? I shall be very much obliged. I am pleased indeed to learn some of my books have given pleasure to your family; and with all good wishes, I remain, your affectionate cousin,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

The registers I shall have seen to, through my lawyer.

To George Meredith

Sept. 5th,1893, Vailima Plantation, Upolu, Samoa.

MY DEAR MEREDITH, — I have again and again taken up the pen to write to you, and many beginnings have gone into the waste paper basket (I have one now — for the second time in my life — and feel a big man on the strength of it). And no doubt it requires some decision to break so long a silence. My health is vastly restored, and I am now living patriarchally in this place six hundred feet above the sea on the shoulder of a mountain of 1500. Behind me, the unbroken bush slopes up to the backbone of the island (3 to 4000) without a house, with no inhabitants save a few runaway black boys, wild pigs and cattle, 344 and wild doves and flying foxes, and many parti-coloured birds, and many black, and many white: a very eerie, dim, strange place and hard to travel. I am the head of a household of five whites, and of twelve Samoans, to all of whom I am the chief and father: my cook comes to me and asks leave to marry — and his mother, a fine old chief woman, who has never lived here, does the same. You may be sure I granted the petition. It is a life of great interest, complicated by the Tower of Babel, that old enemy. And I have all the time on my hands for literary work.

My house is a great place; we have a hall fifty feet long with a great redwood stair ascending from it, where we dine in state — myself usually dressed in a singlet and a pair of trousers — and attended on by servants in a single garment, a kind of kilt — also flowers and leaves — and their hair often powdered with lime. The European who came upon it suddenly would think it was a dream. We have prayers on Sunday night — I am a perfect pariah in the island not to have them oftener, but the spirit is unwilling and the flesh proud, and I cannot go it more. It is strange to see the long line of the brown folk crouched along the wall with lanterns at intervals before them in the big shadowy hall, with an oak cabinet at one end of it and a group of Rodin's (which native taste regards as *prodigieusement leste*) presiding over all from the top — and to hear the long rambling Samoan hymn rolling up (God bless me, what style)! But I am off business to-day, and this is not meant to be literature.

I have asked Colvin to send you a copy of *Catriona*, which I am sometimes tempted to think is about my best work. I hear word occasionally of the *Amazing Marriage*. It will be a brave day for me when I get hold of it. Gower Woodseer is now an ancient, lean, grim, exiled Scot, living and labouring as for a wager in the tropics; still active, still with lots of fire in him, but the youth — ah, the youth where is it? For years after I 345 came here, the critics (those genial gentlemen) used to deplore the relaxation of my fibre and the idleness to which I had succumbed. I hear less of this now; the next thing is they will tell me I am writing myself out! and that my unconscientious conduct is bringing their grey hairs with sorrow to the dust. I do not know — I mean I do know one thing. For fourteen years I have not had a day's real health; I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary; and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed, and written out of it, written in hemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness; and for so long, it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove. I am better now, have been rightly speaking since first I came to the Pacific; and still, few are the days when I am not in some physical distress. And the battle goes on — ill or well, is a trifle; so as it goes. I was made for a contest, and the Powers have so willed that my battlefield should be this dingy, inglorious one of the bed and the physic bottle. At least I have not failed, but I would have preferred a place of trumpetings and the open air over my head.

This is a devilish egotistical yarn. Will you try to imitate me in that if the spirit ever moves you to reply? And meantime be sure that away in the midst of the Pacific there is a house on a wooded island where the name of George Meredith is very dear, and his memory (since it must be no more) is continually honoured. — Ever your friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Remember me to Mariette, if you please; and my wife sends her most kind remembrances to yourself.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Finished on the way to Honolulu for a health change which turned out unfortunate. With the help of Mr. J.H. Stevenson and other correspondents he had now, as we have seen, been able (regretfully 346 giving up the possibility of a Macgregor lineage) to identify his forbears as having about 1670 been tenant farmers at Nether Carsewell in Renfrewshire. The German government at home had taken his *Footnote to History* much less kindly than his German neighbours on the spot, and the Tauchnitz edition had been confiscated and destroyed and its publisher fined.

[*Vailima, and s.s.* Mariposa, *September 1893.*]

MY DEAR CHARLES, — Here is a job for you. It appears that about 1665, or earlier, James Stevenson {in of} Nether Carsewell, parish of Neilston, flourished. Will you kindly send an able-bodied reader to compulse the parish registers of Neilston, if they exist or go back as far? Also could any trace be found through Nether-Carsewell? I expect it to have belonged to Mure of Cauldwell. If this be so, might not the Cauldwell charter chest contain some references to their Stevenson tenantry? Perpend upon it. But clap me on the judicious, able-bodied reader on the spot. Can I really have found the tap-root of my illustrious ancestry at last? Souls of my fathers! What a giggle-iggle-orious moment! I have drawn on you for £400. Also I have written to Tauchnitz announcing I should bear one-half part of his fines and expenses, amounting to £62, 10s. The £400 includes £160 which I have laid out here in land. Vanu Manutagi — the vale of crying birds (the wild dove) — is now mine: it was Fanny's wish and she is to buy it from me again when she has made that much money.

Will you please order for me through your bookseller the *Mabinogion* of Lady Charlotte Guest — if that be her name — and the original of Cook's voyages lately published? Also, I see announced a map of the Great North Road: you might see what it is like: if it is highly detailed, or has any posting information, I should like it.

This is being finished on board the *Mariposa* going north. I am making the run to Honolulu and back for health's sake. No inclination to write more. — As ever,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

On a first reading of the incomplete MS. of *The Ebb Tide*, without its concluding chapters, which are the strongest, dislike of the three detestable — or rather two detestable and one contemptible — chief characters had made me unjust to the imaginative force and vividness of the treatment.

[*Vailima*] *23rd August.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Your pleasing letter *re The Ebb Tide*, to hand. I propose, if it be not too late, to delete Lloyd's name. He has nothing to do with the last half. The first we wrote together, as the beginning of a long yarn. The second is entirely mine; and I think it rather unfair on the young man to couple his name with so infamous a work. Above all, as you had not read the two last chapters, which seem to me the most ugly and cynical of all.

You will see that I am not in a good humour; and I am not. It is not because of your letter, but because of the complicated miseries that surround me and that I choose to say nothing of.... Life is not all Beer and Skittles. The inherent tragedy of things works itself out from white to black and blacker, and the poor things of a day look ruefully on. Does it shake my cast-iron faith? I cannot say it does. I believe in an ultimate decency of things; ay, and if I woke in hell, should still believe it! But it is hard walking, and I can see my own share in the missteps, and can bow my head to the result, like an old, stern, unhappy devil of a Norseman, as my ultimate character is....

Well, *il faut cultiver son jardin*. That last expression of poor, unhappy human wisdom I take to my heart and go to *St. Ives*.

24th Aug. — And did, and worked about 2 hours and got to sleep ultimately and "a' the clouds has blawn away." "Be sure we'll have some pleisand weather, When a' the clouds (storms?) has blawn (gone?) away." 348 Verses that have a quite inexplicable attraction for me, and I believe had for Burns. They have no merit, but are somehow good. I am now in a most excellent humour.

I am deep in *St. Ives* which, I believe, will be the next novel done. But it is to be clearly understood that I promise nothing, and may throw in your face the very last thing you expect — or I expect. *St. Ives* will (to my mind) not be wholly bad. It is written in rather a funny style; a little stilted and left-handed; the style of St. Ives; also, to some extent, the style of R. L. S. dictating. *St. Ives* is unintellectual, and except as an adventure novel, dull. But the adventures seem to me sound and pretty probable; and it is a love story. Speed his wings!

Sunday night. — De cœur un peu plus dispos, monsieur et cher confrère, je me remets à vous écrire. St. Ives is now in the 5th chapter copying; in the 14th chapter of the dictated draft. I do not believe I shall end by disliking it.

Monday. — Well, here goes again for the news. Fanny is *very well* indeed, and in good spirits; I am in good spirits, but not *very* well; Lloyd is in good spirits and very well; Belle has a real good fever which has put her pipe out wholly. Graham goes back this mail. He takes with him three chapters of *The Family*, and is to go to you as soon as he can. He cannot be much the master of his movements, but you grip him when you can and get all you can from him, as he has lived about six months with us and he can tell you just what is true and what is not — and not the dreams of dear old Ross. He is a good fellow, is he not?

Since you rather revise your views of *The Ebb Tide*, I think Lloyd's name might stick, but I'll leave it to you. I'll tell you just how it stands. Up to the discovery of the champagne, the tale was all planned between 349 us and drafted by Lloyd; from that moment he has had nothing to do with it except talking it over. For we changed our plan, gave up the projected Monte Cristo, and cut it down for a short story. My impression — (I beg your pardon — this is a local joke — a firm here had on its beer labels, "sole importers") — is that it will never be popular, but might make a little *succès de scandale*. However, I'm done with it now, and not sorry, and the crowd may rave and mumble its bones for what I care.

Hole essential. I am sorry about the maps; but I want 'em for next edition, so see and have proofs sent. You are quite right about the bottle and the great Huish, I must try to make it clear. No, I will not write a play for Irving nor for the devil. Can you not see that the work of *falsification* which a play demands is of all tasks the most ungrateful? And I have done it a long while — and nothing ever came of it.

Consider my new proposal, I mean Honolulu. You would get the Atlantic and the Rocky Mountains, would you not? for bracing. And so much less sea! And then you could actually see Vailima, which I *would* like you to, for it's beautiful and my home and tomb that is to be; though it's a wrench not to be planted in Scotland — that I can never deny — if I could only be buried in the hills, under the heather and a table tombstone like the martyrs, where the whaups and plovers are crying! Did you see a man who wrote the *Stickit Minister*, and dedicated it to me, in words that brought the tears to my eyes every time I looked at them. "Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying. *His* heart remembers how." Ah, by God, it does! Singular that I should fulfil the Scots destiny throughout, and live a voluntary 350 exile, and have my head filled with the blessed, beastly place all the time!

And now a word as regards the delusions of the dear Ross, who remembers, I believe, my letters and Fanny's when we were first installed, and were really hoeing a hard row. We have salad, beans, cabbages, tomatoes, asparagus, kohl-rabi, oranges, limes, barbadines, pine-apples, Cape gooseberries — galore; pints of milk and cream; fresh meat five days a week. It is the rarest thing for any of us to touch a tin; and the gnashing of teeth when it has to be done is dreadful — for no one who has not lived on them for six months knows what the Hatred of the Tin is. As for exposure, my weakness is certainly the reverse; I am sometimes a month without leaving the verandah — for my sins, be it said! Doubtless, when I go about and, as the Doctor says, "expose myself to malaria," I am in far better health; and I would do so more too — for I do not mean to be silly — but the difficulties are great. However, you see how much the dear Doctor knows of my diet and habits! Malaria practically does not exist in these islands; it is a negligeable quantity. What really bothers us a little is the mosquito affair — the so-called elephantiasis — ask Ross about it. A real romance of natural history, *quoi!*

Hi! stop! you say *The Ebb Tide* is the "working out of an artistic problem of a kind." Well, I should just bet it was! You don't like Attwater. But look at my three rogues; they're all there, I'll go bail. Three types of the bad man, the weak man, and the strong man with a weakness, that are gone through and lived out.

Yes, of course I was sorry for Mataafa, but a good deal sorrier and angrier about the mismanagement of all the white officials. I cannot bear to write about that. Manono all destroyed, one house standing in Apolima, the women stripped, the prisoners beaten with whips — and the women's heads taken — all under white auspices. And for upshot and result of so much shame to the white 351 powers — Tamasese already conspiring! as I knew and preached in vain must be the case! Well, well, it is no fun to meddle in politics!

I suppose you're right about Simon. But it is Symon throughout in that blessed little volume my father bought for me in Inverness in the year of grace '81, I believe — the trial of James Stewart, with the Jacobite pamphlet and the dying speech appended — out of which the whole of *Davie* has already been begotten, and which I felt it a kind of loyalty to follow. I really ought to have it bound in velvet and gold, if I had any gratitude! and the best of the lark is, that the name of David Balfour is not anywhere within the bounds of it. A pretty curious instance of the genesis of a book. I am delighted at your good word for *David*; I believe the two together make up much the best of my work and perhaps of what is in me. I am not ashamed of them, at least. There is one hitch; instead of three hours between the two parts, I fear there have passed three years over Davie's character; but do not tell anybody; see if they can find it out for themselves; and no doubt his experiences in *Kidnapped* would go far to form him. I would like a copy to go to G. Meredith.

Wednesday. — Well, here is a new move. It is likely I may start with Graham next week and go to Honolulu to meet the other steamer and return: I do believe a fortnight at sea would do me good; yet I am not yet certain. The crowded *up*-steamer sticks in my throat.

Tuesday, 12th Sept. — Yesterday was perhaps the brightest in the annals of Vailima. I got leave from Captain Bickford to have the band of the *Katoomba* come up, and they came, fourteen of 'em, with drum, fife, cymbals and bugles, blue jackets, white caps, and smiling faces. The house was all decorated with scented greenery above and below. We had not only our own nine out-door workers, but a contract party that we took on in charity to pay 352 their war-fine; the band besides, as it came up the mountain, had collected a following of children by the way, and we had a picking of Samoan ladies to receive them. Chicken, ham, cake and fruits were served out with coffee and lemonade, and all the afternoon we had rounds of claret negus flavoured with rum and limes. They played to us, they danced, they sang, they tumbled. Our boys came in the end of the verandah and gave *them* a dance for a while. It was anxious work getting this stopped once it had begun, but I knew the band was going on a programme. Finally they gave three cheers for Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, shook hands, formed up and marched off playing — till a kicking horse in the paddock put their pipes out something of the suddenest — we thought the big drum was gone, but Simelé flew to the rescue. And so they wound away down the hill with ever another call of the bugle, leaving us extinct with fatigue, but perhaps the most contented hosts that ever watched the departure of successful guests. Simply impossible to tell how well these blue-jackets behaved; a most interesting lot of men; this education of boys for the navy is making a class, wholly apart — how shall I call them? — a kind of lower-class public school boy, well-mannered, fairly intelligent, sentimental as a sailor. What is more shall be writ on board ship if anywhere.

Please send *Catriona* to G. Meredith.

S.S. Mariposa. — To-morrow I reach Honolulu. Good-morning to your honour.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

In the interval between the last letter and this, the writer had been down with a sharp and prolonged attack of fever at Honolulu, and Mrs. Stevenson had come from Samoa to nurse and take him home.

Waikiki, Honolulu, H. I., Oct. 23rd, 1893.

DEAR COLVIN, — My wife came up on the steamer and we go home together in 2 days. I am practically all right, 353 only sleepy and tired easily, slept yesterday from 11 to 11.45, from 1 to 2.50, went to bed at 8 P.M., and with an hour's interval slept till 6 A.M., close upon 14 hours out of the 24. We sail to-morrow. I am anxious to get home, though this has been an interesting visit, and politics have been curious indeed to study. We go to P.P.C. on the "Queen" this morning; poor, recluse lady, *abreuvée d'injures qu'elle est*. Had a rather annoying lunch on board the American man-of-war, with a member of the P.G. (provisional government); and a good deal of anti-royalist talk, which I had to sit out — not only for my host's sake, but my fellow guests. At last, I took the lead and changed the conversation.

R. L. S.

I am being busted here by party named Hutchinson. Seems good.

[*Vailima — November.*] — Home again, and found all well, thank God. I am perfectly well again and ruddier than the cherry. Please note that 8000 is not bad for a volume of short stories; the *Merry Men* did a good deal worse; the short story never sells. I hope *Catriona* will do; that is the important. The reviews seem mixed and perplexed, and one had the peculiar virtue to make me angry. I am in a fair way to expiscate my family history. Fanny and I had a lovely voyage down, with our new C.J. and the American Land Commissioner, and on the whole, and for these disgusting steamers, a pleasant ship's company. I cannot understand why you don't take to the Hawaii scheme. Do you understand? You cross the Atlantic in six days, and go from 'Frisco to Honolulu in seven. Thirteen days at sea *in all*. — I have no wish to publish *The Ebb Tide* as a book, let it wait. It will look well in the portfolio. I would like a copy, of course, for that end; and to "look upon't again" — which I scarce dare.

[*Later.*] — This is disgraceful. I have done nothing; neither work nor letters. On the Mé (May) day, we had a great triumph; our Protestant boys, instead of going with their own villages and families, went of their own accord in the Vailima uniform; Belle made coats for them on purpose to complete the uniform, they having bought the stuff; and they were hailed as they marched in as the Tama-ona — the rich man's children. This is really a score; it means that Vailima is publicly taken as a family. Then we had my birthday feast a week late, owing to diarrhœa on the proper occasion. The feast was laid in the Hall, and was a singular mass of food: 15 pigs, 100 lbs. beef, 100 lbs. pork, and the fruit and filigree in a proportion. We had sixty horse-posts driven in the gate paddock; how many guests I cannot guess, perhaps 150. They came between three and four and left about seven. Seumanu gave me one of his names; and when my name was called at the ava drinking, behold, it was *Au mai taua ma manu-vao!* You would scarce recognise me, if you heard me thus referred to!

Two days after, we hired a carriage in Apia, Fanny, Belle, Lloyd and I, and drove in great style, with a native outrider, to the prison; a huge gift of ava and tobacco under the seats. The prison is now under the *pule* of an Austrian, Captain Wurmbrand, a soldier of fortune in Servia and Turkey, a charming, clever, kindly creature, who is adored "by *his* chiefs" (as he calls them) meaning *our* political prisoners. And we came into the yard, walled about with tinned iron, and drank ava with the prisoners and the captain. It may amuse you to hear how it is proper to drink ava. When the cup is handed you, you reach your arm out somewhat behind you, and slowly pour a libation, saying with somewhat the manner of prayer, "*Ia taumafa e le atua. Ua matagofie le fesilafaga nei.*" "Be it (high-chief) partaken of by the God. How (high chief) beautiful to view is this (high chief) gathering." This pagan practice is very queer. I should say that the 355 prison ava was of that not very welcome form that we elegantly call spit-ava, but of course there was no escape, and it had to be drunk. Fanny and I rode home, and I moralised by the way. Could we ever stand Europe again? did she appreciate that if we were in London, we should be *actually jostled* in the street? and there was nobody in the whole of Britain who knew how to take ava like a gentleman? 'Tis funny to be thus of two civilisations — or, if you like, of one civilisation and one barbarism. And, as usual, the barbarism is the more engaging. Colvin, you have to come here and see us in our {native mortal} spot. I just don't seem to be able to make up my mind to your not coming. By this time, you will have seen Graham, I hope, and he will be able to tell you something about us, and something reliable. I shall feel for the first time as if you knew a little about Samoa after that. Fanny seems to be in the right way now. I must say she is very, very well for her, and complains scarce at all. Yesterday, she went down *sola*(at least accompanied by a groom) to pay a visit; Belle, Lloyd and I went a walk up the mountain road — the great public highway of the island, where you have to go single file. The object was to show Belle that gaudy valley of the Vaisigano which the road follows. If the road is to be made and opened, as our new Chief Justice promises, it will be one of the most beautiful roads in the world. But the point is this: I forgot I had been three months in civilisation, wearing shoes and stockings, and I tell you I suffered on my soft feet; coming home, down hill, on that stairway of loose stones, I could have cried. O yes, another story, I knew I had. The house boys had not been behaving well, so the other night I announced a *fono*, and Lloyd and I went into the boys' quarters, and I talked to them I suppose for half an hour, and Talolo translated; Lloyd was there principally to keep another ear on the interpreter; else there may be dreadful misconceptions. I rubbed all 356 their ears, except two whom I particularly praised; and one man's wages I announced I had cut down by one half. Imagine his taking this smiling! Ever since, he has been specially attentive and greets me with a face of really heavenly brightness. This is another good sign of their really and fairly accepting me as a chief. When I first came here, if I had fined a man a sixpence, he would have quit work that hour, and now I remove half his income, and he is glad to stay on — nay, does not seem to entertain the possibility of leaving. And this in the face of one particular difficulty — I mean our house in the bush, and no society, and no women society within decent reach.

I think I must give you our staff in a tabular form.

KITCHEN

+ o *Talolo*, [illegible] cook.
[illegible], second cook.
Tali, his wife, no wages.
Ti'a, Samoan cook.
Feiloa'i, his child, no wages, likewise no work — Belle's pet.

HOUSE

+ o *Sosimo*, steward and butler, and my valet.
Misifolo, Fanny and Belle's chamberlain.

OUTSIDE

+ o *Henry Simelé*, overseer of outside boys.
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Pulu, who is also our talking man and carries the ava.
+ o *Leuelu*, Fanny's boy, gardener, odd jobs.

In APIA

+ *Eliga*, washman and daily errand man.

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The crosses mark out the really excellent boys. Ti'a is the man who has just been fined ½ his wages; he is a beautiful old man, the living image of "Fighting Gladiator," my favourite statue — but a dreadful humbug. I think we keep him on a little on account of his looks. This sign o marks those who have been two years or upwards in the family. I note all my old boys have the cross of honour, except Misifolo; well, poor dog, he does his best, I suppose. You should see him scour. It is a remark that has often been made by visitors: you never see a Samoan run, except at Vailima. Do you not suppose that makes me proud?

I am pleased to see what a success *The Wrecker* was, having already in little more than a year outstripped *The Master of Ballantrae*.

About *David Balfour* in two volumes, do see that they make it a decent-looking book, and tell me, do you think a little historical appendix would be of service? Lang bleats for one, and I thought I might address it to him as a kind of open letter.

Dec. 4th. — No time after all. Good-bye.

R. L. S.

To J. Horne Stevenson

The following refers again to the introduction to the history of his own family which Stevenson was then preparing under the title *A Family of Engineers*. The correspondent was a specialist in genealogical research. I give this letter as a sample of many which passed between these two namesakes on this subject; omitting the remainder as too technical to be of general interest.

Vailima, Samoa, November 5th, 1893.

MY DEAR STEVENSON, — A thousand thanks for your voluminous and delightful collections. Baxter — so soon as it is ready — will let you see a proof of my introduction, which is only sent out as a sprat to catch whales. And you will find I have a good deal of what you have, only mine in a perfectly desultory manner, as is necessary to 358 an exile. My uncle's pedigree is wrong; there was never a Stevenson of Caldwell, of course, but they were tenants of the Mures; the farm held by them is in my introduction; and I have already written to Charles Baxter to have a search made in the Register House. I hope he will have had the inspiration to put it under your surveillance. Your information as to your own family is intensely interesting, and I should not wonder but what you and we and old John Stevenson, "land labourer in the parish of Dailly," came all of the same stock. Ayrshire — and probably Cunningham — seems to be the home of the race — our part of it. From the distribution of the name — which your collections have so much extended without essentially changing my knowledge of — we seem rather pointed to a British origin. What you say of the Engineers is fresh to me, and must be well thrashed out. This introduction of it will take a long while to walk about! — as perhaps I may be tempted to let it become long; after all, I am writing *this* for my own pleasure solely. Greetings to you and other Speculatives of our date, long bygone, alas! — Yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — I have a different version of my grandfather's arms — or my father had if I could find it.

R. L. S.

To John P— —n

The next two numbers are in answer to letters of appreciation received from two small boys in England, whose mother desires that they should remain nameless.

Vailima, Samoa, December 3rd, 1893.

DEAR JOHNNIE, — Well, I must say you seem to be a tremendous fellow! Before I was eight I used to write stories — or dictate them at least — and I had produced an excellent history of Moses, for which I got £1 from an uncle; but I had never gone the length of a play, so you 359 have beaten me fairly on my own ground. I hope you may continue to do so, and thanking you heartily for your nice letter, I shall beg you to believe me yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Russell P— —n

Vailima, Samoa, December 3rd, 1893.

DEAR RUSSELL, — I have to thank you very much for your capital letter, which came to hand here in Samoa along with your mother's. When you "grow up and write stories like me," you will be able to understand that there is scarce anything more painful than for an author to hold a pen; he has to do it so much that his heart sickens and his fingers ache at the sight or touch of it; so that you will excuse me if I do not write much, but remain (with compliments and greetings from one Scot to another — though I was not born in Ceylon — you're ahead of me there). — Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Alison Cunningham

Vailima, December 5, 1893.

MY DEAREST CUMMY, — This goes to you with a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The Happy New Year anyway, for I think it should reach you about *Noor's Day*. I dare say it may be cold and frosty. Do you remember when you used to take me out of bed in the early morning, carry me to the back windows, show me the hills of Fife, and quote to me

"A' the hills are covered wi' snaw,
An' winter's noo come fairly"?

There is not much chance of that here! I wonder how 360 my mother is going to stand the winter. It she can, it will be a very good thing for her. We are in that part of the year which I like the best — the Rainy or Hurricane Season. "When it is good, it is very, very good;

and when it is bad, it is horrid," and our fine days are certainly fine like heaven; such a blue of the sea, such green of the trees, and such crimson of the hibiscus flowers, you never saw; and the air as mild and gentle as a baby's breath, and yet not hot!

The mail is on the move, and I must let up. — With much love, I am, your laddie,

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

The following quotes the extract, from Fountainhall's "Decisions of the Lords of Council, etc.," which suggested to Stevenson the romance of Cameronian days and the Darien adventure of which, under the title of *Heathercat*, he only lived to write the first few introductory chapters (see vol. xxi. , of this edition).

6th December 1893.

"*October 25, 1685.* — At Privy Council, George Murray, Lieutenant of the King's Guard, and others, did, on the 21st of September last, obtain a clandestine order of Privy Council to apprehend the person of Janet Pringle, daughter to the late Clifton, and she having retired out of the way upon information, he got an order against Andrew Pringle, her uncle, to produce her.... But she having married Andrew Pringle, her uncle's son (to disappoint all their designs of selling her), a boy of thirteen years old." But my boy is to be fourteen, so I extract no further. — Fountainhall, i. 320.

"*May 6, 1685.* — Wappus Pringle of Clifton was still alive after all, and in prison for debt, and transacts with Lieutenant Murray, giving security for 7000 marks." — i. 372.

No, it seems to have been *her* brother who had succeeded.

MY DEAR CHARLES. — The above is my story, and I wonder if any light can be thrown on it. I prefer the girl's father dead; and the question is, How in that case could Lieutenant George Murray get his order to "apprehend" and his power to "sell" her in marriage?

Or — might Lieutenant G. be her tutor, and she fugitive to the Pringles, and on the discovery of her whereabouts hastily married?

A good legal note on these points is very ardently desired by me; it will be the corner-stone of my novel.

This is for — I am quite wrong to tell you — for you will tell others — and nothing will teach you that all my schemes are in the air, and vanish and reappear again like shapes in the clouds — it is for *Heathercat*: whereof the first volume will be called *The Killing Time*, and I believe I have authorities ample for that. But the second volume is to be called (I believe) *Darien*, and for that I want, I fear, a good deal of truck: —

Darien Papers,

Carstairs Papers,

Marchmont Papers,

Jerviswoode Correspondence,

I hope may do me. Some sort of general history of the Darien affair (if there is a decent one, which I misdoubt), it would also be well to have — the one with most details, if possible. It is singular how obscure to me this decade of Scots history remains, 1690-1700 — a deuce of a want of light and grouping to it! However, I believe I shall be mostly out of Scotland in my tale; first in Carolina, next in Darien. I want also — I am the daughter of the horseleech truly — "Black's new large map of Scotland," sheets 3, 4, and 5, a 7s. 6d. touch. I believe, if you can get the

Caldwell Papers,

they had better come also; and if there be any reasonable work — but no, I must call a halt....

I fear the song looks doubtful, but I'll consider of it, and I can promise you some reminiscences which it will amuse me to write, whether or not it will amuse the public to read of them. But it's an unco business to supply deid-heid coapy.

To J. M. Barrie

Vailima, Samoa, December 7th, 1893.

MY DEAR BARRIE, — I have received duly the *magnum opus*, and it really is a *magnum opus*. It is a beautiful specimen of Clark's printing, paper sufficient, and the illustrations all my fancy painted. But the particular flower of the flock to whom I have hopelessly lost my heart is Tibby Birse. I must have known Tibby Birse when she was a servant's mantua-maker in Edinburgh and answered to the name of Miss *Broddie*. She used to come and sew with my nurse, sitting with her legs crossed in a masculine manner; and swinging her foot emphatically, she used to pour forth a perfectly unbroken stream of gossip. I didn't hear it, I was immersed in far more important business with a box of bricks, but the recollection of that thin, perpetual, shrill sound of a voice has echoed in my ears sinsyne. I am bound to say she was younger than Tibbie, but there is no mistaking that and the indescribable and eminently Scottish expression.

I have been very much prevented of late, having carried out thoroughly to my own satisfaction two considerable illnesses, had a birthday, and visited Honolulu, where politics are (if possible) a shade more exasperating than they are with us. I am told that it was just when I was on the point of leaving that I received your superlative epistle about the cricket eleven. In that case it is impossible I should have answered it, which is inconsistent with 363 my own recollection of the fact. What *I* remember is, that I sat down under your immediate inspiration and wrote an answer in every way worthy. If I didn't, as it seems proved that I couldn't, it will never be done now. However, I did the next best thing, I equipped my cousin Graham Balfour with a letter of introduction, and from him, if you know how — for he is rather of the Scottish character — you may elicit all the information you can possibly wish to have as to us and ours. Do not be bluffed off by the somewhat stern and monumental first impression that he may make upon you. He is one of the best fellows in the world, and the same sort of fool that we are, only better-looking, with all the faults of Vailimans and some of his own — I say nothing about virtues.

I have lately been returning to my wallowing in the mire. When I was a child, and indeed until I was nearly a man, I consistently read Covenanting books. Now that I am a grey-beard — or would be, if I could raise the beard — I have returned, and for weeks back have read little else but Wodrow, Walker, Shields, etc. Of course this is with an idea of a novel, but in the course of it I made a very curious discovery. I have been accustomed to hear refined and intelligent critics — those who know so much better what we are than we do ourselves, — trace down my literary descent from all sorts of people, including Addison, of whom I could never read a word. Well, laigh i' your lug, sir — the clue was found. My style is from the Covenanting writers. Take a particular case — the fondness for rhymes. I don't know of any English prose-writer who rhymes except by accident, and then a stone had better be tied around his neck and himself cast into the sea. But my Covenanting buckies rhyme all the time — a beautiful example of the unconscious rhyme above referred to.

Do you know, and have you really tasted, these delightful works? If not, it should be remedied; there is enough of the Auld Licht in you to be ravished.

I suppose you know that success has so far attended my banners — my political banners I mean, and not my literary. In conjunction with the Three Great Powers I have succeeded in getting rid of My President and My Chief-Justice. They've gone home, the one to Germany, the other to Souwegia. I hear little echoes of footfalls of their departing footsteps through the medium of the newspapers....

Whereupon I make you my salute with the firm remark that it is time to be done with trifling and give us a great book, and my ladies fall into line with me to pay you a most respectful courtesy, and we all join in the cry, "Come to Vailima!"

My dear sir, your soul's health is in it — you will never do the great book, you will never cease to work in L., etc., till you come to Vailima.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To R. Le Gallienne

Vailima, Samoa, December 28th, 1893.

DEAR MR. LE GALLIENNE, — I have received some time ago, through our friend Miss Taylor, a book of yours. But that was by no means my first introduction to your name. The same book had stood already on my shelves; I had read articles of yours in the Academy; and by a piece of constructive criticism (which I trust was sound) had arrived at the conclusion that you were “Log-roller.” Since then I have seen your beautiful verses to your wife. You are to conceive me, then, as only too ready to make the acquaintance of a man who loved good literature and could make it. I had to thank you, besides, for a triumphant exposure of a paradox of my own: the literary-prostitute disappeared from view at a phrase of yours — ”The essence is not in the pleasure but the sale.” True you are right, I was wrong; the author is not the whore 365 but the libertine; and yet I shall let the passage stand. It is an error, but it illustrated the truth for which I was contending, that literature — painting — all art, are no other than pleasures, which we turn into trades.

And more than all this, I had, and I have to thank you for the intimate loyalty you have shown to myself; for the eager welcome you give to what is good — for the courtly tenderness with which you touch on my defects. I begin to grow old; I have given my top note, I fancy; — and I have written too many books. The world begins to be weary of the old booth; and if not weary, familiar with the familiarity that breeds contempt. I do not know that I am sensitive to criticism, if it be hostile; I am sensitive indeed, when it is friendly; and when I read such criticism as yours, I am emboldened to go on and praise God.

You are still young, and you may live to do much. The little artificial popularity of style in England tends, I think, to die out; the British pig returns to his true love, the love of the styleless, of the shapeless, of the slapdash and the disorderly. There is trouble coming, I think; and you may have to hold the fort for us in evil days.

Lastly, let me apologise for the crucifixion that I am inflicting on you (*bien à contre-cœur*) by my bad writing. I was once the best of writers; landladies, puzzled as to my “trade,” used to have their honest bosoms set at rest by a sight of a page of manuscript. — ”Ah,” they would say, “no wonder they pay you for that”; — and when I sent it in to the printers, it was given to the boys! I was about thirty-nine, I think, when I had a turn of scrivener’s palsy; my hand got worse; and for the first time, I received clean proofs. But it has gone beyond that now. I know I am like my old friend James Payn, a terror to correspondents; and you would not believe the care with which this has been written. — Believe me to be, very sincerely yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. A. Baker

The next is in answer to a request for permission to print some of the writings of R. L. S. in Braille type for the use of the blind.

December 1893.

DEAR MADAM, — There is no trouble, and I wish I could help instead. As it is, I fear I am only going to put you to trouble and vexation. This Braille writing is a kind of consecration, and I would like if I could to have your copy perfect. The two volumes are to be published as Vols. I. and II. of *The Adventures of David Balfour*. 1st, *Kidnapped*; 2nd, *Catriona*. I am just sending home a corrected *Kidnapped* for this purpose to Messrs. Cassell, and in order that I may if possible be in time, I send it to you first of all. Please, as soon as you have noted the changes, forward the same to Cassell and Co., La Belle Sauvage Yard, Ludgate Hill.

I am writing to them by this mail to send you *Catriona*.

You say, dear madam, you are good enough to say, it is "a keen pleasure" to you to bring my book within the reach of the blind.

Conceive then what it is to me! and believe me, sincerely yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

I was a barren tree before,
I blew a quenchèd coal,
I could not, on their midnight shore,
The lonely blind console.
A moment, lend your hand, I bring
My sheaf for you to bind,
And you can teach my words to sing
In the darkness of the blind.

R .L. S.

To Henry James

Apia, December, 1893.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES, — The mail has come upon me like an armed man three days earlier than was expected; and the Lord help me! It is impossible I should answer anybody the way they should be. Your jubilation over *Catriona* did me good, and still more the subtlety and truth of your remark on the starving of the visual sense in that book. 'Tis true, and unless I make the greater effort — and am, as a step to that, convinced of its necessity — it will be more true I fear in the future. I *hear* people talking, and I *feel* them acting, and that seems to me to be fiction. My two aims may be described as —

1st. War to the adjective.

2nd. Death to the optic nerve.

Admitted we live in an age of the optic nerve in literature. For how many centuries did literature get along without a sign of it? However, I'll consider your letter.

How exquisite is your character of the critic in *Essays in London*! I doubt if you have done any single thing so satisfying as a piece of style and of insight — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Recounting a scene of gratitude for bounty shown by him to the prisoners in Apia gaol.

[*Vailima, December 1893.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — One page out of my picture book I must give you. Fine burning day; ½ past two P.M. We four begin to rouse up from reparatory slumbers, yawn, and groan, get a cup of tea, and miserably dress: we have had a party the day before, X'mas Day, with all 368 the boys absent but one, and latterly two; we had cooked all day long, a cold dinner, and lo! at two our guests began to arrive, though dinner was not till six; they were sixteen, and fifteen slept the night and breakfasted. Conceive, then, how unwillingly we climb on our horses and start off in the hottest part of the afternoon to ride 4½ miles, attend a native feast in the gaol, and ride four and a half miles back. But there is no help for it. I am a sort of father of the political prisoners, and have *charge d'âmes* in that riotously absurd establishment, Apia Gaol. The twenty-three (I think it is) chiefs act as under gaolers. The other day they told the Captain of an attempt to escape. One of the lesser political prisoners the other day effected a swift capture, while the Captain was trailing about with the warrant; the man came to see what was wanted; came, too, flanked by the former gaoler; my prisoner offers to show him the dark cell, shoves him in, and locks the door. "Why do you do that?" cries the former gaoler. "A warrant," says he. Finally, the chiefs actually feed the soldiery who watch them!

The gaol is a wretched little building, containing a little room, and three cells, on each side of a central passage; it is surrounded by a fence of corrugated iron, and shows, over the top of that, only a gable end with the inscription *O le Fale Puipui*. It is on the edge of the mangrove swamp, and is reached by a sort of causeway of turf. When we drew near, we saw the gates standing open and a prodigious crowd outside — I mean prodigious for Apia, perhaps a hundred and fifty people. The two sentries at the gate stood to arms passively, and there seemed to be a continuous circulation inside and out. The captain came to meet us; our boy, who had been sent ahead was there to take the horses; and we passed inside the court which was full of food, and rang continuously to the voice of the caller of gifts; I had to blush a little later when my own present came, and I heard my one pig and eight miserable pine-apples being 369 counted out like guineas. In the four corners of the yard and along one wall, there are make-shift, dwarfish, Samoan houses or huts, which have been run up since Captain Wurmbrand came to accommodate the chiefs. Before that they were all crammed into the six cells, and locked in for the night, some of them with dysentery. They are wretched constructions enough, but sanctified by the presence of chiefs. We heard a man corrected loudly to-day for saying "*Fale*" of one of them; "*Maota*," roared the highest chief present — "palace." About eighteen chiefs, gorgeously arrayed, stood up to greet us, and led us into one of these *maotas*, where you may be sure we had to crouch, almost to kneel, to enter, and where a row of pretty girls occupied one side to make the ava (kava). The highest chief present was a magnificent man, as high chiefs usually are; I find I cannot describe him; his face is full of shrewdness and authority; his figure like Ajax; his name Auilua. He took the head of the building and put Belle on his right hand. Fanny was called first for the ava (kava). Our names were called in English style, the high-chief wife of Mr. St — (an unpronounceable something); Mrs. Straw, and the like. And when we went into the other house to eat, we found we were seated alternately with chiefs about the — table, I was about to say, but rather floor. Everything was to be done European style with a vengeance! We were the only whites present, except Wurmbrand, and still I had no suspicion of the truth. They began to take off their ulas (necklaces of scarlet seeds) and hang them about our necks; we politely resisted, and were told that the king (who had stopped off their *siva*) had sent down to the prison a message to the effect that he was to give a dinner to-morrow, and wished their second-hand ulas for it. Some of them were content; others not. There was a ring of anger in the boy's voice, as he told us we were to wear them past the king's house. Dinner over, I must say they are moderate eaters at a feast, we returned to the ava house; and then 370 the curtain drew suddenly up upon the set scene. We took our seats, and Auilua began to give me a present, recapitulating each article as he gave it out, with some appropriate comment. He called me several times "their only friend," said they were all in slavery, had no money, and these things were all made by the hands of their families — nothing bought; he had one phrase, in which I heard his voice rise up to a note of triumph: "This is a present from the poor prisoners to the rich man." Thirteen pieces of tapa, some of them surprisingly fine, one I think unique; thirty fans of every shape and colour; a kava cup, etc., etc. At first Auilua conducted the business with weighty gravity; but before the end of the thirty fans, his comments began to be humorous. When it came to a little basket, he said: “Here was a little basket for Tusitala to put sixpence in, when he could get hold of one” — with a delicious grimace. I answered as best as I was able through a miserable interpreter; and all the while, as I went on, I heard the crier outside in the court calling my gift of food, which I perceived was to be Gargantuan. I had brought but three boys with me. It was plain that they were wholly overpowered. We proposed to send for our gifts on the morrow; but no, said the interpreter, that would never do; they must go away to-day, Mulinuu must see my porters taking away the gifts, — ”make ‘em jella,” quoth the interpreter. And I began to see the reason of this really splendid gift; one half, gratitude to me — one half, a wipe at the king.

And now, to introduce darker colours, you must know this visit of mine to the gaol was just a little bit risky; we had several causes for anxiety; it *might* have been put up, to connect with a Tamasese rising. Tusitala and his family would be good hostages. On the other hand, there were the Mulinuu people all about. We could see the anxiety of Captain Wurmbrand, no less anxious to have us go, than he had been to see us come; he was deadly white and plainly had a bad headache, in the noisy scene. 371 Presently, the noise grew uproarious; there was a rush at the gate — a rush *in*, not a rush *out* — where the two sentries still stood passive; Auilua leaped from his place (it was then that I got the name of Ajax for him) and the next moment we heard his voice roaring and saw his mighty figure swaying to and fro in the hurly-burly. As the deuce would have it, we could not understand a word of what was going on. It might be nothing more than the ordinary “grab racket” with which a feast commonly concludes; it might be something worse. We made what arrangements we could for my tapa, fans, etc., as well as for my five pigs, my masses of fish, taro, etc., and with great dignity, and ourselves laden with ulas and other decorations, passed between the sentries among the howling mob to our horses. All’s well that ends well. Owing to Fanny and Belle, we had to walk; and, as Lloyd said, “he had at last ridden in a circus.” The whole length of Apia we paced our triumphal progress, past the king’s palace, past the German firm at Sogi — you can follow it on the map — amidst admiring exclamations of “*Mawaia*” — beautiful — it may be rendered “O my! ain’t they dandy” — until we turned up at last into our road as the dusk deepened into night. It was really exciting. And there is one thing sure: no such feast was ever made for a single family, and no such present ever given to a single white man. It is something to have been the hero of it. And whatever other ingredients there were, undoubtedly gratitude was present. As money value I have actually gained on the transaction!

Your note arrived; little profit, I must say. Scott has already put his nose in, in *St. Ives*, sir; but his appearance is not yet complete; nothing is in that romance, except the story. I have to announce that I am off work, probably for six months. I must own that I have overworked bitterly — overworked — there, that's legible. My hand is a thing that was, and in the meanwhile so are my brains. And here, in the very midst, comes a plausible scheme 372 to make Vailima pay, which will perhaps let me into considerable expense just when I don't want it. You know the vast cynicism of my view of affairs, and how readily and (as some people say) with how much gusto I take the darker view?

Why do you not send me Jerome K. Jerome's paper, and let me see *The Ebb Tide* as a serial? It is always very important to see a thing in different presentments. I want every number. Politically we begin the new year with every expectation of a bust in 2 or 3 days, a bust which may spell destruction to Samoa. I have written to Baxter about his proposal.

The correspondent whose letter I had sent on was a high official at the Foreign Office: the subject, Stevenson and Samoa.

Hemorrhage from the lungs.

Vitrolle's *Mémoires* and the "1814" and "1815" of M. Henri Houssaye were sent accordingly.

Ultimately *The Ebb Tide*.

For a volume of selected *Essays*, containing the pick of *Virginibus Puerisque, Memories and Portraits*, and *Across the Plains*.

The Owl was to be a Breton story of the Revolution; *Death in the Pot*, a tale of the Sta. Lucia mountains in California; the scene of *The Go-Between* was laid in the Pacific Islands; of *The Sleeper Awakened* I know nothing.

Of *Island Nights' Entertainments*.

John Addington Symonds.

Across the Plains.

Volume of sonnets by José Maria de Hérédia.

Dr. Fairfax Ross, a distinguished physician of Sydney, and friend of the Stevenson family, who during a visit to England this summer had conveyed to me no very reassuring impression as to the healthfulness of the island life and climate.

W. Hole, R.S.A.: essential for the projected illustrations to *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*.

Mr. S. R. Crockett. The words quoted from this gentleman's dedication were worked by Stevenson into a very moving and metrically original set of verses, addressed to him in acknowledgment (*Songs of Travel*, xlii.).

Simon Fraser, the Master of Lovat, in *Catriona*: the spelling of his name.

The bust was exhibited in the New Gallery Summer Exhibition, 1895.

Island Nights' Entertainments.

The Window in Thrums, with illustrations by W. Hole, R.S.A. Hodder and Stoughton. 1892.

The scheme of the Edinburgh Edition.

XIV

LIFE IN SAMOA — *Concluded*

FOURTH YEAR AT VAILIMA — THE END

January-December 1894

This new year began for Stevenson with an illness which seemed to leave none of the usual lowering consequences, and for Samoa with fresh rumours of war, which were not realised until the autumn, and then — at least in the shape of serious hostilities — in the district of Atua only and not in his own. On the whole Stevenson's bodily health and vigour kept at a higher level than during the previous year. But for serious imaginative writing he found himself still unfit, and the sense that his old facility had for the time being failed him caused him much inward misgiving. In his correspondence the misgiving mood was allowed to appear pretty freely; but in personal intercourse his high spirits seemed to his family and visitors as unfailing as ever. Several things happened during the year to give him peculiar pleasure: first, at the beginning of the year, the news of Mr. Baxter's carefully prepared scheme of the Edinburgh Edition, and of its acceptance by the publishers concerned. On this subject much correspondence naturally passed between him and Mr. Baxter and myself, over and above that which is here published; and finally he resolved to leave all the details of the execution to us. By the early autumn the financial success of the scheme 374 was fully assured and made known to him by cable; but he did not seem altogether to realise the full measure of relief from money anxieties which the assurance was meant to convey to him. Other pleasurable circumstances were the return of Mr. Graham Balfour after a prolonged absence; the visit of a spirited and accomplished young English man of business and of letters, Mr. Sidney Lysaght (see below, p, 388, etc.); and the frequent society of the officers of H.M.S. *Curaçoa*, with whom he was on terms of particular regard and cordiality. Lastly, he was very deeply touched and gratified by the action of the native political prisoners, towards whom he had shown much thoughtful kindness during their months of detention, in volunteering as a testimony of gratitude after their release to re-make with their own hands the branch road leading to his house: "the Road of Loving Hearts," as it came to be christened. Soon afterwards, the anniversaries of his own birthday and of the American Thanks-giving feast brought evidences hardly less welcome, after so much contention and annoyance as the island affairs and politics had involved him in, of the honour and affection in which he was held by all that was best in the white community. By each succeeding mail came stronger proofs from home of the manner in which men of letters of the younger generation had come to regard him as a master, an example, and a friend.

But in spite of all these causes of pleasure, his letters showed that his old invincible spirit of inward cheerfulness was beginning not infrequently to give way to moods of depression and overstrained feeling. The importunity of these moods was no doubt due to some physical premonition that his vital powers, so frail from the cradle and always with so cheerful a courage overtaxed, were near exhaustion. 375 During the first months of the year he attempted little writing; in the late spring and early summer his work was chiefly on the annals of his family and on the tale *St. Ives*. The latter he found uphill work: after the first ten or twelve chapters, which are in his happiest vein, the narrative, as he himself was painfully aware, began to flag. Towards the end of October he gave it up for the time being and turned to a more arduous task, the tragic *Weir of Hermiston*. On this theme he felt his inspiration return, and during the month of November and the first days of December wrought once more at the full pitch of his powers and in the conscious delight of their exercise. On the third of December, after a morning of happy work and pleasant correspondence, he was seen gazing long and wistfully toward the forest-clad mountain, on a ledge of which he had desired that he should be buried. In the afternoon he brought his morning's work to his wife, the most exacting of his critics; asked her whether it was not well done; and in her glow of admiring assent found his confirmation and his reward. Nevertheless she could not throw off an oppressive sense of coming calamity. He was reassuring her with gay and laughing talk when the sudden rupture of a blood-vessel in the brain laid him almost in a moment unconscious at her feet; and before two hours were over he had passed away. All the world knows how his body was carried by the loving hands of his native servants to the burial-place of his choice, and rests there with the words of his own requiem engraved on his tomb — the words which we have seen him putting on paper when he was at grips with death fifteen years before in California —

“Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.”

To Charles Baxter

Mr. Baxter, after much preliminary consideration and inquiry, had matured and submitted to Stevenson the scheme of the Edinburgh edition, to which this letter is his reply. The paper on *Treasure Island* appeared in the Idler for August 1889, and was afterwards reprinted in the miscellany *My First Book* (Chatto and Windus, 1894). See Edinburgh edition, *Miscellanies*, vol. iv. .

1st January '94.

MY DEAR CHARLES, — I am delighted with your idea, and first, I will here give an amended plan and afterwards give you a note of some of the difficulties.

[Plan of the Edinburgh edition — 14 vols.]

... It may be a question whether my Times letters might not be appended to the *Footnote* with a note of the dates of discharge of Cedercrantz and Pilsach.

I am particularly pleased with this idea of yours, because I am come to a dead stop. I never can remember how bad I have been before, but at any rate I am bad enough just now, I mean as to literature; in health I am well and strong. I take it I shall be six months before I'm heard of again, and this time I could put in to some advantage in revising the text and (if it were thought desirable) writing prefaces. I do not know how many of them might be thought desirable. I have written a paper on *Treasure Island,* which is to appear shortly. *Master of Ballantrae* — I have one drafted. *The Wrecker* is quite sufficiently done already with the last chapter, but I suppose an historic introduction to *David Balfour* is quite unavoidable. *Prince Otto* I don't think I could say anything about, and *Black Arrow* don't want to. But it is probable I could say something to the volume of *Travels*. In the verse business I can do just what I like better than anything else, and extend *Underwoods* with a lot of unpublished stuff. *À propos*, if I were to get printed off a very few poems which are somewhat too intimate for the 377 public, could you get them run up in some luxuous manner, so that fools might be induced to buy them in just a sufficient quantity to pay expenses and the thing remain still in a manner private? We could supply photographs of the illustrations — and the poems are of Vailima and the family — I should much like to get this done as a surprise for Fanny.

R. L. S.

To H. B. Baildon

Vailima, January 15th, 1894.

MY DEAR BAILDON, — Last mail brought your book and its Dedication. "Frederick Street and the gardens, and the short-lived Jack o' Lantern," are again with me — and the note of the east wind, and Froebel's voice, and the smell of soup in Thomson's stair. Truly, you had no need to put yourself under the protection of any other saint, were that saint our Tamate himself! Yourself were enough, and yourself coming with so rich a sheaf.

For what is this that you say about the Muses? They have certainly never better inspired you than in “Jael and Sisera,” and “Herodias and John the Baptist,” good stout poems, fiery and sound. “‘Tis but a mask and behind it chuckles the God of the Garden,” I shall never forget. By the by, an error of the press, page 49, line 4, “No infant’s lesson are the ways of God.” *The* is dropped.

And this reminds me you have a bad habit which is to be comminated in my theory of letters. Same page, two lines lower: “But the vulture’s track” is surely as fine to the ear as “But vulture’s track,” and this latter version has a dreadful baldness. The reader goes on with a sense of impoverishment, of unnecessary sacrifice; he has been robbed by footpads, and goes scouting for his lost article! Again, in the second Epode, these fine verses would surely sound much finer if they began, “As a hardy climber who has set his heart,” than with the jejune “As hardy climber.” 378 I do not know why you permit yourself this licence with grammar; you show, in so many pages, that you are superior to the paltry sense of rhythm which usually dictates it — as though some poetaster had been suffered to correct the poet’s text. By the way, I confess to a heartfelt weakness for *Auriculas*. — Believe me the very grateful and characteristic pick-thank, but still sincere and affectionate,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. H. Low

Vailima, January 15th, 1894.

MY DEAR LOW, — ... Pray you, stoop your proud head, and sell yourself to some Jew magazine, and make the visit out. I assure you, this is the spot for a sculptor or painter. This, and no other — I don’t say to stay there, but to come once and get the living colour into them. I am used to it; I do not notice it; rather prefer my grey, freezing recollections of Scotland; but there it is, and every morning is a thing to give thanks for, and every night another — bar when it rains, of course.

About *The Wrecker* — rather late days, and I still suspect I had somehow offended you; however, all’s well that ends well, and I am glad I am forgiven — did you not fail to appreciate the attitude of Dodd? He was a fizzle and a stick, he knew it, he knew nothing else, and there is an undercurrent of bitterness in him. And then the problem that Pinkerton laid down: why the artist can *do nothing else*? is one that continually exercises myself. He cannot: granted. But Scott could. And Montaigne. And Julius Caesar. And many more. And why can’t R. L. S.? Does it not amaze you? It does me. I think of the Renaissance fellows, and their all-round human sufficiency, and compare it with the ineffable smallness of the field in which we labour and in which we do so little. I think *David Balfour* a nice little book, 379 and very artistic, and just the thing to occupy the leisure of a busy man; but for the top flower of a man's life it seems to me inadequate. Small is the word; it is a small age, and I am of it. I could have wished to be otherwise busy in this world. I ought to have been able to build lighthouses and write *David Balfours* too. *Hinc illae lacrymae.* I take my own case as most handy, but it is as illustrative of my quarrel with the age. We take all these pains, and we don't do as well as Michael Angelo or Leonardo, or even Fielding, who was an active magistrate, or Richardson, who was a busy bookseller. *J'ai honte pour nous*; my ears burn.

I am amazed at the effect which this Chicago exhibition has produced upon you and others. It set Mrs. Fairchild literally mad — to judge by her letters. And I wish I had seen anything so influential. I suppose there was an aura, a halo, some sort of effulgency about the place; for here I find you louder than the rest. Well, it may be there is a time coming; and I wonder, when it comes, whether it will be a time of little, exclusive, one-eyed rascals like you and me, or parties of the old stamp who can paint and fight, and write and keep books of double entry, and sculp, and scalp. It might be. You have a lot of stuff in the kettle, and a great deal of it Celtic. I have changed my mind progressively about England: practically the whole of Scotland is Celtic, and the western half of England, and all Ireland, and the Celtic blood makes a rare blend for art. If it is stiffened up with Latin blood, you get the French. We were less lucky: we had only Scandinavians, themselves decidedly artistic, and the Low-German lot. However, that is a good starting-point, and with all the other elements in your crucible, it may come to something great very easily. I wish you would hurry up and let me see it. Here is a long while I have been waiting for something *good* in art; and what have I seen? Zola's *Débâcle* and a few of Kipling's tales. Are you a reader of Barbey d'Aurévilly? He is a never-failing 380 source of pleasure to me, for my sins, I suppose. What a work is the *Rideau Cramoisi!* and *L'Ensorcelée!* and *Le Chevalier Des Touches!*

This is degenerating into mere twaddle. So please remember us all most kindly to Mrs. Low, and believe me ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — Were all your privateers voiceless in the war of 1812? Did *no one* of them write memoirs? I shall have to do my privateer from chic, if you can't help me. My application to Scribner has been quite in vain. See if you can get hold of some historic sharp in the club, and tap him; they must some of them have written memoirs or notes of some sort; perhaps still unprinted; if that be so, get them copied for me.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Vailima, Jan. 29th, 1894.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I had fully intended for your education and moral health to fob you off with the meanest possible letter this month, and unfortunately I find I will have to treat you to a good long account of matters here. I believe I have told you before about Tui-ma-le-alii-fano and my taking him down to introduce him to the Chief Justice. Well, Tui came back to Vailima one day in the blackest sort of spirits, saying the war was decided, that he also must join in the fight, and that there was no hope whatever of success. He must fight as a point of honour for his family and country; and in his case, even if he escaped on the field of battle, deportation was the least to be looked for. He said he had a letter of complaint from the Great Council of A'ana which he wished to lay 381 before the Chief Justice; and he asked me to accompany him as if I were his nurse. We went down about dinner time; and by the way received from a lurking native the famous letter in an official blue envelope gummed up to the edges. It proved to be a declaration of war, quite formal, but with some variations that really made you bounce. White residents were directly threatened, bidden to have nothing to do with the King's party, not to receive their goods in their houses, etc., under pain of an accident. However, the Chief Justice took it very wisely and mildly, and between us, he and I and Tui made up a plan which has proved successful — so far. The war is over — fifteen chiefs are this morning undergoing a curious double process of law, comparable to a court martial; in which their complaints are to be considered, and if possible righted, while their conduct is to be criticised, perhaps punished. Up to now, therefore, it has been a most successful policy; but the danger is before us. My own feeling would decidedly be that all would be spoiled by a single execution. The great hope after all lies in the knotless, rather flaccid character of the people. These are no Maoris. All the powers that Cedercrantz let go by disuse the new C. J. is stealthily and boldly taking back again; perhaps some others also. He has shamed the chiefs in Mulinuu into a law against taking heads, with a punishment of six years' imprisonment and, for a chief, degradation. To him has been left the sole conduct of this anxious and decisive inquiry. If the natives stand it, why, well! But I am nervous.

To H. B. Baildon

Vailima, January 30th, 1894.

MY DEAR BAILDON, — "Call not blessed." — Yes, if I could die just now, or say in half a year, I should have had a splendid time of it on the whole. But it gets a little stale, and my work will begin to senesce; and 382 parties to shy bricks at me; and now it begins to look as if I should survive to see myself impotent and forgotten. It's a pity suicide is not thought the ticket in the best circles.

But your letter goes on to congratulate me on having done the one thing I am a little sorry for; a little — not much — for my father himself lived to think that I had been wiser than he. But the cream of the jest is that I have lived to change my mind; and think that he was wiser than I. Had I been an engineer, and literature my amusement, it would have been better perhaps. I pulled it off, of course, I won the wager, and it is pleasant while it lasts; but how long will it last? I don't know, say the Bells of Old Bow.

All of which goes to show that nobody is quite sane in judging himself. Truly, had I given way and gone in for engineering, I should be dead by now. Well, the gods know best.

... I hope you got my letter about the *Rescue*. — Adieu.

R. L. S.

True for you about the benefit: except by kisses, jests, song, *et hoc genus omne*, man *cannot* convey benefit to another. The universal benefactor has been there before him.

To Sidney Colvin

Feb. 1894.

DEAR COLVIN, — By a reaction, when your letter is a little decent, mine is to be naked and unashamed. We have been much exercised. No one can prophesy here, of course, and the balance still hangs trembling, but I *think* it will go for peace.

The mail was very late this time: hence the paltriness of this note. When it came and I had read it, I retired with *The Ebb Tide* and read it all before I slept. 383 I did not dream it was near as good; I am afraid I think it excellent. A little indecision about Attwater, not much. It gives me great hope, as I see I *can* work in that constipated, mosaic manner, which is what I have to do just now with *Weir of Hermiston*.

We have given a ball; I send you a paper describing the event. We have two guests in the house, Captain-Count Wurmbrand and Monsieur Albert de Lautreppe. Lautreppe is awfully nice — a quiet, gentlemanly fellow, *gonflé de rêves*, as he describes himself — once a sculptor in the atelier of Henry Crosse, he knows something of art, and is really a resource to me.

Letter from Meredith very kind. Have you seen no more of Graham?

What about my Grandfather? The family history will grow to be quite a chapter.

I suppose I am growing sensitive; perhaps, by living among barbarians, I expect more civility. Look at this from the author of a very interesting and laudatory critique. He gives quite a false description of something of mine, and talks about my "insolence." Frankly, I supposed "insolence" to be a tapu word. I do not use it to a gentleman, I would not write it of a gentleman: I may be wrong, but I believe we did not write it of a gentleman in old days, and in my view he (clever fellow as he is) wants to be kicked for applying it to me. By writing a novel — even a bad one — I do not make myself a criminal for anybody to insult. This may amuse you. But either there is a change in journalism, too gradual for you to remark it on the spot, or there is a change in me. I cannot bear these phrases; I long to resent them. My forbears, the tenant farmers of the Mures, would not have suffered such expressions unless it had been from Cauldwell, or Rowallan, or maybe Auchendrane. My Family Pride bristles. I am like the negro, "I just heard last night" who my great, great, great, great grandfather was. — Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To J. H. Bates

The next is to a correspondent in Cincinnati, who had been the founder of an R. L. S. Society in that city, "originally," he writes me, under date April 7, 1895, "the outcome of a boyish fancy, but it has now grown into something more substantial."

Vailima, Samoa, March 25th, 1894.

MY DEAR MR. JOE H. BATES, — I shall have the greatest pleasure in acceding to your complimentary request. I shall think it an honour to be associated with your chapter, and I need not remind you (for you have said it yourself) how much depends upon your own exertions whether to make it to me a real honour or only a derision. This is to let you know that I accept the position that you have seriously offered to me in a quite serious spirit. I need scarce tell you that I shall always be pleased to receive reports of your proceedings; and if I do not always acknowledge them, you are to remember that I am a man very much occupied otherwise, and not at all to suppose that I have lost interest in my chapter.

In this world, which (as you justly say) is so full of sorrow and suffering, it will always please me to remember that my name is connected with some efforts after alleviation, nor less so with purposes of innocent recreation which, after all, are the only certain means at our disposal for bettering human life.

With kind regards, to yourself, to Mr. L. C. Congdon, to E. M. G. Bates, and to Mr. Edward Hugh Higlee Bates, and the heartiest wishes for the future success of the chapter, believe me, yours cordially.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To William Archer

Vailima, Samoa, March 27th, 1894.

MY DEAR ARCHER, — Many thanks for your *Theatrical World*. Do you know, it strikes me as being really very 385 good? I have not yet read much of it, but so far as I have looked, there is not a dull and not an empty page in it. Hazlitt, whom you must often have thought of, would have been pleased. Come to think of it, I shall put this book upon the Hazlitt shelf. You have acquired a manner that I can only call august; otherwise, I should have to call it such amazing impudence. The *Bauble Shop* and *Becket* are examples of what I mean. But it "sets you weel."

Marjorie Fleming I have known, as you surmise, for long. She was possibly — no, I take back possibly — she was one of the greatest works of God. Your note about the resemblance of her verses to mine gave me great joy, though it only proved me a plagiarist. By the by, was it not over *The Child's Garden of Verses* that we first scraped acquaintance? I am sorry indeed to hear that my esteemed correspondent Tomarcher has such poor taste in literature. I fear he cannot have inherited this trait from his dear papa. Indeed, I may say I know it, for I remember the energy of papa's disapproval when the work passed through his hands on its way to a second birth, which none regrets more than myself. It is an odd fact, or perhaps a very natural one; I find few greater pleasures than reading my own works, but I never, O I never read *The Black Arrow*. In that country Tomarcher reigns supreme. Well, and after all, if Tomarcher likes it, it has not been written in vain.

We have just now a curious breath from Europe. A young fellow just beginning letters, and no fool, turned up here with a letter of introduction in the well-known blue ink and decorative hieroglyphs of George Meredith. His name may be known to you. It is Sidney Lysaght. He is staying with us but a day or two, and it is strange to me and not unpleasant to hear all the names, old and new, come up again. But oddly the new are so much more in number. If I revisited the glimpses of the moon 386 on your side of the ocean, I should know comparatively few of them.

My amanuensis deserts me — I should have said you, for yours is the loss, my script having lost all bond with humanity. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin: that nobody can read my hand. It is a humiliating circumstance that thus evens us with printers!

You must sometimes think it strange — or perhaps it is only I that should so think it — to be following the old round, in the gas lamps and the crowded theatres, when I am away here in the tropical forest and the vast silences!

My dear Archer, my wife joins me in the best wishes to yourself and Mrs. Archer, not forgetting Tom; and I am yours very cordially,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Partly concerning a fresh rising, this time of the partisans of Tamasese from the district of Atua, which had occurred and was after some time suppressed; partly in reference to the visit of Mr. Sidney Lysaght; partly in reply to a petition that his letters might be less entirely taken up with native affairs, of relatively little meaning to his correspondent.

[*Vailima, April 1894.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — This is the very day the mail goes, and I have as yet written you nothing. But it was just as well — as it was all about my "blacks and chocolates," and what of it had relation to whites you will read some of in the Times. It means, as you will see, that I have at one blow quarrelled with *all* the officials of Samoa, the Foreign Office, and I suppose her Majesty the Queen with milk and honey blest. But you'll see in the Times. I am very well indeed, but just about dead and mighty glad the mail is near here, and I can just give up all hope of contending with my letters, and lie down for the rest of the day. These Times letters are not easy to write. 387 And I dare say the consuls say, "Why, then, does he write them?"

I had miserable luck with *St. Ives*; being already half-way through it, a book I had ordered six months ago arrives at last, and I have to change the first half of it from top to bottom! How could I have dreamed the French prisoners were watched over like a female charity school, kept in a grotesque livery, and shaved twice a week? And I had made all my points on the idea that they were unshaved and clothed anyhow. However, this last is better business; if only the book had come when I ordered it! *À propos*, many of the books you announce don't come as a matter of fact. When they are of any value, it is best to register them. Your letter, alas! is not here; I sent it down to the cottage, with all my mail, for Fanny; on Sunday night a boy comes up with a lantern and a note from Fanny, to say the woods are full of Atuas and I must bring a horse down that instant, as the posts are established beyond her on the road, and she does not want to have the fight going on between us. Impossible to get a horse; so I started in the dark on foot, with a revolver, and my spurs on my bare feet, leaving directions that the boy should mount after me with the horse. Try such an experience on Our Road once, and do it, if you please, after you have been down town from nine o'clock till six, on board the ship-of-war lunching, teaching Sunday School (I actually do) and making necessary visits; and the Saturday before, having sat all day from ½-past six to ½-past four, scriving at my Times letter. About half-way up, just in fact at “point” of the outposts, I met Fanny coming up. Then all night long I was being wakened with scares that really should be looked into, though I *knew* there was nothing in them and no bottom to the whole story; and the drums and shouts and cries from Tanugamanono and the town keeping up an all-night corybantic chorus in the moonlight — the moon rose 388 late — and the search-light of the war-ship in the harbour making a jewel of brightness as it lit up the bay of Apia in the distance. And then next morning, about eight o’clock, a drum coming out of the woods and a party of patrols who had been in the woods on our left front (which is our true rear) coming up to the house, and meeting there another party who had been in the woods on our right {front rear} which is Vaea Mountain, and 43 of them being entertained to ava and biscuits on the verandah, and marching off at last in single file for Apia. Briefly, it is not much wonder if your letter and my whole mail was left at the cottage, and I have no means of seeing or answering particulars.

The whole thing was nothing but a bottomless scare; it was *obviously* so; you couldn’t make a child believe it was anything else, but it has made the consuls sit up. My own private scares were really abominably annoying; as for instance after I had got to sleep for the ninth time perhaps — and that was no easy matter either, for I had a crick in my neck so agonising that I had to sleep sitting up — I heard noises as of a man being murdered in the boys’ house. To be sure, said I, this is nothing again, but if a man’s head was being taken, the noises would be the same! So I had to get up, stifle my cries of agony from the crick, get my revolver, and creep out stealthily to the boys’ house. And there were two of them sitting up, keeping watch of their own accord like good boys, and whiling the time over a game of Sweepi (Cascino — the whist of our islanders) — and one of them was our champion idiot, Misifolo, and I suppose he was holding bad cards, and losing all the time — and these noises were his humorous protests against Fortune!

Well, excuse this excursion into my “blacks and chocolates.” It is the last. You will have heard from Lysaght how I failed to write last mail. The said Lysaght seems to me a very nice fellow. We were only sorry he 389 could not stay with us longer. Austin came back from school last week, which made a great time for the Amanuensis, you may be sure. Then on Saturday, the *Curaçoa* came in — same commission, with all our old friends; and on Sunday, as already mentioned, Austin and I went down to service and had lunch afterwards in the wardroom. The officers were awfully nice to Austin; they are the most amiable ship in the world; and after lunch we had a paper handed round on which we were to guess, and sign our guess, of the number of leaves on the pine-apple; I never saw this game before, but it seems it is much practised in the Queen's Navee. When all have betted, one of the party begins to strip the pine-apple head, and the person whose guess is furthest out has to pay for the sherry. My equanimity was disturbed by shouts of *The American Commodore*, and I found that Austin had entered and lost about a bottle of sherry! He turned with great composure and addressed me. "I am afraid I must look to you, Uncle Louis." The Sunday School racket is only an experiment which I took up at the request of the late American Land Commissioner; I am trying it for a month, and if I do as ill as I believe, and the boys find it only half as tedious as I do, I think it will end in a month. I have *carte blanche*, and say what I like; but does any single soul understand me?

Fanny is on the whole very much better. Lloyd has been under the weather, and goes for a month to the South Island of New Zealand for some skating, save the mark! I get all the skating I want among officials.

Dear Colvin, please remember that my life passes among my "blacks or chocolates." If I were to do as you propose, in a bit of a tiff, it would cut you off entirely from my life. You must try to exercise a trifle of imagination, and put yourself, perhaps with an effort, into some sort of sympathy with these people, or how am I to write to you? I think you are truly a little too Cockney with me. — Ever yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. B. Yeats

Vailima, Samoa, April 14, 1894.

DEAR SIR, — Long since when I was a boy I remember the emotions with which I repeated Swinburne's poems and ballads. Some ten years ago, a similar spell was cast upon me by Meredith's *Love in the Valley*; the stanzas beginning "When her mother tends her" haunted me and made me drunk like wine; and I remember waking with them all the echoes of the hills about Hyères. It may interest you to hear that I have a third time fallen in slavery: this is to your poem called the *Lake Isle of Innisfree*. It is so quaint and airy, simple, artful, and eloquent to the heart — but I seek words in vain. Enough that "always night and day I hear lake water lapping with low sounds on the shore," and am, yours gratefully,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To George Meredith

The young lady referred to in the following is Mr. Meredith's daughter, now Mrs. H. Sturgis; the bearer of the introduction, Mr. Sidney Lysaght, author of *The Marplot* and *One of the Grenvilles*. It is only in the first few chapters of Mr. Meredith's *Amazing Marriage* that the character of Gower Woodseer has been allowed to retain any likeness to that of R. L. S.

Vailima, Samoa, April 17th, 1894.

MY DEAR MEREDITH, — Many good things have the gods sent to me of late. First of all there was a letter from you by the kind hand of Mariette, if she is not too great a lady to be remembered in such a style; and then there came one Lysaght with a charming note of introduction in the well-known hand itself. We had but a few days of him, and liked him well. There was a sort of geniality and inward fire about him at which I warmed my hands. It is long since I have seen a young man who has left in me such a favourable impression; and I find myself telling myself, "O, I must tell this to Lysaght," 391 or, "This will interest him," in a manner very unusual after so brief an acquaintance. The whole of my family shared in this favourable impression, and my halls have re-echoed ever since, I am sure he will be amused to know, with *Widdicombe Fair*.

He will have told you doubtless more of my news than I could tell you myself; he has your European perspective, a thing long lost to me. I heard with a great deal of interest the news of Box Hill. And so I understand it is to be enclosed! Allow me to remark, that seems a far more barbaric trait of manners than the most barbarous of ours. We content ourselves with cutting off an occasional head.

I hear we may soon expect *The Amazing Marriage*. You know how long, and with how much curiosity, I have looked forward to the book. Now, in so far as you have adhered to your intention, Gower Woodseer will be a family portrait, age twenty-five, of the highly respectable and slightly influential and fairly aged *Tusitala*. You have not known that gentleman; console yourself, he is not worth knowing. At the same time, my dear Meredith, he is very sincerely yours — for what he is worth, for the memories of old times, and in the expectation of many pleasures still to come. I suppose we shall never see each other again; flitting youths of the Lysaght species may occasionally cover these unconscionable leagues and bear greetings to and fro. But we ourselves must be content to converse on an occasional sheet of notepaper, and I shall never see whether you have grown older, and you shall never deplore that Gower Woodseer should have declined into the pantaloon *Tusitala*. It is perhaps better so. Let us continue to see each other as we were, and accept, my dear Meredith, my love and respect.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — My wife joins me in the kindest messages to yourself and Mariette.

To Charles Baxter

[*Vailima*], *April 17, '94.*

MY DEAR CHARLES, — *St. Ives* is now well on its way into the second volume. There remains no mortal doubt that it will reach the three-volume standard.

I am very anxious that you should send me —

1st. *Tom and Jerry*, a cheap edition.

2nd. The book by Ashton — the *Dawn of the Century*, I think it was called — which Colvin sent me, and which has miscarried, and

3rd. If it is possible, a file of the Edinburgh Courant for the years 1811, 1812, 1813, or 1814. I should not care for a whole year. If it were possible to find me three months, winter months by preference, it would do my business not only for *St. Ives*, but for the *Justice-Clerk* as well. Suppose this to be impossible, perhaps I could get the loan of it from somebody; or perhaps it would be possible to have some one read a file for me and make notes. This would be extremely bad, as unhappily one man's food is another man's poison, and the reader would probably leave out everything I should choose. But if you are reduced to that, you might mention to the man who is to read for me that balloon ascensions are in the order of the day.

4th. It might be as well to get a book on balloon ascension, particularly in the early part of the century.

....

III. At last this book has come from Scribner, and, alas! I have the first six or seven chapters of *St. Ives* to recast entirely. Who could foresee that they clothed the French prisoners in yellow? But that one fatal fact — and also that they shaved them twice a week — damns the whole beginning. If it had been sent in time, it would have saved me a deal of trouble....

I have had a long letter from Dr. Scott Dalgleish, 25 Mayfield Terrace, asking me to put my name down to the Ballantyne Memorial Committee. I have sent him a pretty sharp answer in favour of cutting down the memorial and giving more to the widow and children. If there is to be any foolery in the way of statues or other trash, please send them a guinea; but if they are going to take my advice and put up a simple tablet with a few heartfelt words, and really devote the bulk of the subscriptions to the wife and family, I will go to the length of twenty pounds, if you will allow me (and if the case of the family be at all urgent), and at least I direct you to send ten pounds. I suppose you had better see Scott Dalgleish himself on the matter. I take the opportunity here to warn you that my head is simply spinning with a multitude of affairs, and I shall probably forget a half of my business at last.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Vailima, April 1894.*]

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have at last got some photographs, and hasten to send you, as you asked, a portrait of Tusitala. He is a strange person; not so lean, say experts, but infinitely battered; mighty active again on the whole; going up and down our break-neck road at all hours of the day and night on horseback; holding meetings with all manner of chiefs; quite a political personage — God save the mark! — in a small way, but at heart very conscious of the inevitable flat failure that awaits every one. I shall never do a better book than *Catriona*, that is my high-water mark, and the trouble of production increases on me at a great rate — and mighty anxious about how I am to leave my family: an elderly man, with elderly preoccupations, whom I should be ashamed to show you for 394 your old friend; but not a hope of my dying soon and cleanly, and “winning off the stage.” Rather I am daily better in physical health. I shall have to see this business out, after all; and I think, in that case, they should have — they might have — spared me all my ill-health this decade past, if it were not to unbar the doors. I have no taste for old age, and my nose is to be rubbed in it in spite of my face. I was meant to die young, and the gods do not love me.

This is very like an epitaph, bar the handwriting, which is anything but monumental, and I dare say I had better stop. Fanny is down at her own cottage planting or deplanting or replanting, I know not which, and she will not be home till dinner, by which time the mail will be all closed, else she would join me in all good messages and remembrances of love. I hope you will congratulate Burne Jones from me on his baronetcy. I cannot make out to be anything but raspingly, harrowingly sad; so I will close, and not affect levity which I cannot feel. Do not altogether forget me; keep a corner of your memory for the exile

Louis.

To Charles Baxter

[*Vailima, May 1894.*]

MY DEAR CHARLES, — My dear fellow, I wish to assure you of the greatness of the pleasure that this Edinburgh Edition gives me. I suppose it was your idea to give it that name. No other would have affected me in the same manner. Do you remember, how many years ago — I would be afraid to hazard a guess — one night when I communicated to you certain intimations of early death and aspiration after fame? I was particularly maudlin; and my remorse the next morning on a review of my folly has written the matter very deeply in my mind; from 395 yours it may easily have fled. If any one at that moment could have shown me the Edinburgh Edition, I suppose I should have died. It is with gratitude and wonder that I consider "the way in which I have been led." Could a more preposterous idea have occurred to us in those days when we used to search our pockets for coppers, too often in vain, and combine forces to produce the threepence necessary for two glasses of beer, or wander down the Lothian Road without any, than that I should be strong and well at the age of forty-three in the island of Upolu, and that you should be at home bringing out the Edinburgh Edition? If it had been possible, I should almost have preferred the Lothian Road Edition, say, with a picture of the old Dutch smuggler on the covers. I have now something heavy on my mind. I had always a great sense of kinship with poor Robert Fergusson — so clever a boy, so wild, of such a mixed strain, so unfortunate, born in the same town with me, and, as I always felt, rather by express intimation than from evidence, so like myself. Now the injustice with which the one Robert is rewarded and the other left out in the cold sits heavy on me, and I wish you could think of some way in which I could do honour to my unfortunate namesake. Do you think it would look like affectation to dedicate the whole edition to his memory? I think it would. The sentiment which would dictate it to me is too abstruse; and besides, I think my wife is the proper person to receive the dedication of my life's work. At the same time, it is very odd — it really looks like the transmigration of souls — I feel that I must do something for Fergusson; Burns has been before me with the gravestone. It occurs to me you might take a walk down the Canongate and see in what condition the stone is. If it be at all uncared for, we might repair it, and perhaps add a few words of inscription.

I must tell you, what I just remembered in a flash as I was walking about dictating this letter — there was in the 396 original plan of the *Master of Ballantrae* a sort of introduction describing my arrival in Edinburgh on a visit to yourself and your placing in my hands the papers of the story. I actually wrote it, and then condemned the idea — as being a little too like Scott, I suppose. Now I must really find the MS. and try to finish it for the E.E. It will give you, what I should so much like you to have, another corner of your own in that lofty monument.

Suppose we do what I have proposed about Fergusson's monument, I wonder if an inscription like this would look arrogant —

This stone originally erected
by Robert Burns has been
repaired at the
charges of Robert Louis Stevenson,
and is by him re-dedicated to

the memory of Robert Fergusson,
as the gift of one Edinburgh
lad to another.

In spacing this inscription I would detach the names of Fergusson and Burns, but leave mine in the text.

Or would that look like sham modesty, and is it better to bring out the three Roberts?

To Sidney Colvin

Vailima, May 18th, 1894.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Your proposals for the Edinburgh Edition are entirely to my mind. About the *Amateur Emigrant*, it shall go to you by this mail well slashed. If you like to slash some more on your own account, I give you permission. 'Tis not a great work; but since it goes to make up the two first volumes as proposed, I 397 presume it has not been written in vain. — *Miscellanies*. I see with some alarm the proposal to print *Juvenilia*; does it not seem to you taking myself a little too much as Grandfather William? I am certainly not so young as I once was — a lady took occasion to remind me of the fact no later agone than last night. “Why don't you leave that to the young men, Mr. Stevenson?” said she — but when I remember that I felt indignant at even John Ruskin when he did something of the kind I really feel myself blush from head to heel. If you want to make up the first volume, there are a good many works which I took the trouble to prepare for publication and which have never been republished. In addition to *Roads* and *Dancing Children*, referred to by you, there is *An Autumn Effect* in the Portfolio, and a paper on Fontainebleau — *Forest Notes* is the name of it — in Cornhill. I have no objection to any of these being edited, say with a scythe, and reproduced. But I heartily abominate and reject the idea of reprinting *The Pentland Rising*. For God's sake let me get buried first.

Tales and Fantasies. Vols. I. and II. have my hearty approval. But I think III. and IV. had better be crammed into one as you suggest. I will reprint none of the stories mentioned. They are below the mark. Well, I dare say the beastly *Body-Snatcher* has merit, and I am unjust to it from my recollections of the Pall Mall. But the other two won't do. For vols. V. and VI., now changed into IV. and V., I propose the common title of *South Sea Yarns*. There! These are all my differences of opinion. I agree with every detail of your arrangement, and, as you see, my objections have turned principally on the question of hawking unripe fruit. I dare say it is all pretty green, but that is no reason for us to fill the barrow with trash. Think of having a new set of type cast, paper especially 398 made, etc., in order to set up rubbish that is not fit for the Saturday Scotsman. It would be the climax of shame.

I am sending you a lot of verses, which had best, I think, be called *Underwoods* Book III., but in what order are they to go? Also, I am going on every day a little, till I get sick of it, with the attempt to get *The Emigrant* compressed into life; I know I can — or you can after me — do it. It is only a question of time and prayer and ink, and should leave something, no, not good, but not all bad — a very genuine appreciation of these folks. You are to remember besides there is that paper of mine on Bunyan in the Magazine of Art. O, and then there's another thing in Seeley called some spewsome name, I cannot recall it.

Well — come, here goes for *Juvenilia*. *Dancing Infants*, *Roads*, *An Autumn Effect*, *Forest Notes* (but this should come at the end of them, as it's really rather riper), the t'other thing from Seeley, and I'll tell you, you may put in my letter to the Church of Scotland — it's not written amiss, and I dare say *The Philosophy of Umbrellas* might go in, but there I stick — and remember *that* was a collaboration with James Walter Ferrier. O, and there was a little skit called *The Charity Bazaar*, which you might see; I don't think it would do. Now, I do not think there are two other words that should be printed. — By the way, there is an article of mine called *The Day after To-morrow* in the Contemporary which you might find room for somewhere; it's no' bad.

Very busy with all these affairs and some native ones also.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

[*Vailima, June 17th, 1894.*]

MY DEAR BOB, — I must make out a letter this mail or perish in the attempt. All the same, I am deeply stupid, 399 in bed with a cold, deprived of my amanuensis, and conscious of the wish but not the furnished will. You may be interested to hear how the family inquiries go. It is now quite certain that we are a second-rate lot, and came out of Cunningham or Clydesdale, therefore *British* folk; so that you are Cymry on both sides, and I Cymry and Pict. We may have fought with King Arthur and known Merlin. The first of the family, Stevenson of Stevenson, was quite a great party, and dates back to the wars of Edward First. The last male heir of Stevenson of Stevenson died 1670, £220, 10s. to the bad, from drink. About the same time the Stevensons, who were mostly in Cunningham before, crop up suddenly in the parish of Neilston, over the border in Renfrewshire. Of course, they may have been there before, but there is no word of them in that parish till 1675 in any extracts I have. Our first traceable ancestor was a tenant farmer of Mure of Cauldwell's — James in Nether Carsewell. Presently two families of maltmen are found in Glasgow, both, by reduplicated proofs, related to James (the son of James) in Nether Carsewell. We descend by his second marriage from Robert; one of these died 1733. It is not very romantic up to now, but has interested me surprisingly to fish out, always hoping for more — and occasionally getting at least a little clearness and confirmation. But the earliest date, 1655, apparently the marriage of James in Nether Carsewell, cannot as yet be pushed back. From which of any number of dozen little families in Cunningham we should derive, God knows! Of course, it doesn't matter a hundred years hence, an argument fatal to all human enterprise, industry, or pleasure. And to me it will be a deadly disappointment if I cannot roll this stone away! One generation further might be nothing, but it is my present object of desire, and we are so near it! There is a man in the same parish called Constantine; if I could only trace to him, I could take you far afield by that one talisman of the strange Christian name of Constantine. 400 But no such luck! And I kind of fear we shall stick at James.

I. James, a tenant of the Mures, in Nether-Carsewell,
Neilston, married (1665?) Jean Keir.

II. Robert (Maltman in Glasgow), died 1733,
married 1st; married second,
Elizabeth Cumming.

William (Maltman in Glasgow).

III. Robert (Maltman in Glasgow), married Margaret Fulton (had a large family).

||

IV. Alan, West India merchant, married Jean Lillie.

||

V. Robert, married Jean Smith.

Robert, Marion, Elizabe[illegible]

Note. — Between 17[illegible] d in Glasgow Alan the Coppersmith, who acts a[illegible] to the whole Stevenson system there. He was caution to Robert the Second's will, and to William's will, and to the will of a John, another maltman.

VI. Alan, — Margaret Jones.

VII. R. A. M. S.

So much, though all inchoate, I trouble you with, knowing that you, at least, must take an interest in it. So much is certain of that strange Celtic descent, that the past has an interest for it apparently gratuitous, but fiercely strong. I wish to trace my ancestors a thousand years, if I trace them by gallowses. It is not love, not pride, not admiration; it is an expansion of the identity, intimately pleasing, and wholly uncritical; I can expend myself in the person of an inglorious ancestor with perfect comfort; or a disgraced, if I could find one. I suppose, perhaps, it is more to me who am childless, and refrain with a certain shock from looking forwards. But, I am sure, in the solid grounds of race, that you have it also in some degree.

Enough genealogy. I do not know if you will be able 401 to read my hand. Unhappily, Belle, who is my amanuensis, is out of the way on other affairs, and I have to make the unwelcome effort. (O this is beautiful, I am quite pleased with myself.) Graham has just arrived last night (my mother is coming by the other steamer in three days), and has told me of your meeting, and he said you looked a little older than I did; so that I suppose we keep step fairly on the downward side of the hill. He thought you looked harassed, and I could imagine that too. I sometimes feel harassed. I have a great family here about me, a great anxiety. The loss (to use my grandfather's expression), the "loss" of our family is that we are disbelievers in the morrow — perhaps I should say, rather, in next year. The future is *always* black to us; it was to Robert Stevenson; to Thomas; I suspect to Alan; to R. A. M. S. it was so almost to his ruin in youth; to R. L. S., who had a hard hopeful strain in him from his mother, it was not so much so once, but becomes daily more so. Daily so much more so, that I have a painful difficulty in believing I can ever finish another book, or that the public will ever read it.

I have so huge a desire to know exactly what you are doing, that I suppose I should tell you what I am doing by way of an example. I have a room now, a part of the twelve-foot verandah sparred in, at the most inaccessible end of the house. Daily I see the sunrise out of my bed, which I still value as a tonic, a perpetual tuning fork, a look of God's face once in the day. At six my breakfast comes up to me here, and I work till eleven. If I am quite well, I sometimes go out and bathe in the river before lunch, twelve. In the afternoon I generally work again, now alone drafting, now with Belle dictating. Dinner is at six, and I am often in bed by eight. This is supposing me to stay at home. But I must often be away, sometimes all day long, sometimes till twelve, one, or two at night, when you might see me coming home to the sleeping house, sometimes in a trackless darkness, sometimes 402 with a glorious tropic moon, everything drenched with dew — unsaddling and creeping to bed; and you would no longer be surprised that I live out in this country, and not in Bournemouth — in bed.

My great recent interruptions have (as you know) come from politics; not much in my line, you will say. But it is impossible to live here and not feel very sorely the consequences of the horrid white mismanagement. I tried standing by and looking on, and it became too much for me. They are such illogical fools; a logical fool in an office, with a lot of red tape, is conceivable. Furthermore, he is as much as we have any reason to expect of officials — a thoroughly commonplace, unintellectual lot. But these people are wholly on wires; laying their ears down, skimming away, pausing as though shot, and presto!

full spread on the other tack. I observe in the official class mostly an insane jealousy of the smallest kind, as compared to which the artist's is of a grave, modest character — the actor's, even; a desire to extend his little authority, and to relish it like a glass of wine, that is *impayable*. Sometimes, when I see one of these little kings strutting over one of his victories — wholly illegal, perhaps, and certain to be reversed to his shame if his superiors ever heard of it — I could weep. The strange thing is that they *have nothing else*. I auscultate them in vain; no real sense of duty, no real comprehension, no real attempt to comprehend, no wish for information — you cannot offend one of them more bitterly than by offering information, though it is certain that you have *more*, and obvious that you have *other*, information than they have; and talking of policy, they could not play a better stroke than by listening to you, and it need by no means influence their action. *Tenez*, you know what a French post office or railway official is? That is the diplomatic card to the life. Dickens is not in it; caricature fails.

All this keeps me from my work, and gives me the unpleasant side of the world. When your letters are disbelieved 403 it makes you angry, and that is rot; and I wish I could keep out of it with all my soul. But I have just got into it again, and farewell peace!

My work goes along but slowly. I have got to a crossing place, I suppose; the present book, *St. Ives*, is nothing; it is in no style in particular, a tissue of adventures, the central character not very well done, no philosophic pith under the yarn; and, in short, if people will read it, that's all I ask; and if they won't, damn them! I like doing it though; and if you ask me why! After that I am on *Weir of Hermiston* and *Heathercat*, two Scotch stories, which will either be something different, or I shall have failed. The first is generally designed, and is a private story of two or three characters in a very grim vein. The second — alas! the thought — is an attempt at a real historical novel, to present a whole field of time; the race — our own race — the west land and Clydesdale blue bonnets, under the influence of their last trial, when they got to a pitch of organisation in madness that no other peasantry has ever made an offer at. I was going to call it *The Killing Time*, but this man Crockett has forestalled me in that. Well, it'll be a big smash if I fail in it; but a gallant attempt. All my weary reading as a boy, which you remember well enough, will come to bear on it; and if my mind will keep up to the point it was in a while back, perhaps I can pull it through.

For two months past, Fanny, Belle, Austin (her child), and I have been alone; but yesterday, as I mentioned, Graham Balfour arrived, and on Wednesday my mother and Lloyd will make up the party to its full strength. I wish you could drop in for a month or a week, or two hours. That is my chief want. On the whole, it is an unexpectedly pleasant corner I have dropped into for an end of it, which I could scarcely have foreseen from Wilson's shop, or the Princes Street Gardens, or the Portobello Road. Still, I would like to hear what my *alter ego* thought of it; and I would sometimes like to have my old 404 *maître-ès-arts* express an opinion on what I do. I put this very tamely, being on the whole a quiet elderly man; but it is a strong passion with me, though intermittent. Now, try to follow my example and tell me something about yourself, Louisa, the Bab, and your work; and kindly send me some specimens of what you're about. I have only seen one thing by you, about Notre Dame in the Westminster or St. James's, since I left England, now I suppose six years ago.

I have looked this trash over, and it is not at all the letter I wanted to write — not truck about officials, ancestors, and the like rancidness — but you have to let your pen go in its own broken-down gait, like an old butcher's pony, stop when it pleases, and go on again as it will. — Ever, my dear Bob, your affectionate cousin,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Vailima, June 18th, '94.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — You are to please understand that my last letter is withdrawn unconditionally. You and Baxter are having all the trouble of this Edition, and I simply put myself in your hands for you to do what you like with me, and I am sure that will be the best, at any rate. Hence you are to conceive me withdrawing all objections to your printing anything you please. After all, it is a sort of family affair. About the Miscellany Section, both plans seem to me quite good. Toss up. I think the *Old Gardener* has to stay where I put him last. It would not do to separate John and Robert.

In short, I am only sorry I ever uttered a word about the edition, and leave you to be the judge. I have had a vile cold which has prostrated me for more than a fortnight, and even now tears me nightly with spasmodic coughs; but it has been a great victory. I have never 405 borne a cold with so little hurt; wait till the clouds blow by, before you begin to boast! I have had no fever; and though I've been very unhappy, it is nigh over, I think. Of course, *St. Ives* has paid the penalty. I must not let you be disappointed in *St. I.* It is a mere tissue of adventures; the central figure not very well or very sharply drawn; no philosophy, no destiny, to it; some of the happenings very good in themselves, I believe, but none of them *bildende*, none of them constructive, except in so far perhaps as they make up a kind of sham picture of the time, all in italics and all out of drawing. Here and there, I think, it is well written; and here and there it's not. Some of the episodic characters are amusing, I do believe; others not, I suppose. However, they are the best of the thing such as it is. If it has a merit to it, I should say it was a sort of deliberation and swing to the style, which seems to me to suit the mail-coaches and post-chaises with which it sounds all through. 'Tis my most prosaic book.

I called on the two German ships now in port, and we are quite friendly with them, and intensely friendly of course with our own *Curaçoas*. But it is other guess work on the beach. Some one has employed, or subsidised, one of the local editors to attack me once a week. He is pretty scurrilous and pretty false. The first effect of the perusal of the weekly Beast is to make me angry; the second is a kind of deep, golden content and glory, when I seem to say to people: "See! this is my position — I am a plain man dwelling in the bush in a house, and behold they have to get up this kind of truck against me — and I have so much influence that they are obliged to write a weekly article to say I have none."

By this time you must have seen Lysaght and forgiven me the letter that came not at all. He was really so nice a fellow — he had so much to tell me of Meredith — and the time was so short — that I gave up the intervening days between mails entirely to entertain him.

We go on pretty nicely. Fanny, Belle, and I have had two months alone, and it has been very pleasant. But by to-morrow or next day noon, we shall see the whole clan assembled again about Vailima table, which will be pleasant too; seven persons in all, and the Babel of voices will be heard again in the big hall so long empty and silent. Good-bye. Love to all. Time to close. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Henry James

Vailima, July 7th, 1894.

DEAR HENRY JAMES, — I am going to try and dictate to you a letter or a note, and begin the same without any spark of hope, my mind being entirely in abeyance. This malady is very bitter on the literary man. I have had it now coming on for a month, and it seems to get worse instead of better. If it should prove to be softening of the brain, a melancholy interest will attach to the present document. I heard a great deal about you from my mother and Graham Balfour; the latter declares that you could take a First in any Samoan subject. If that be so, I should like to hear you on the theory of the constitution. Also to consult you on the force of the particles *o lo'o* and *ua*, which are the subject of a dispute among local pundits. You might, if you ever answer this, give me your opinion on the origin of the Samoan race, just to complete the favour.

They both say that you are looking well, and I suppose I may conclude from that that you are feeling passably. I wish I was. Do not suppose from this that I am ill in body; it is the numskull that I complain of. And when that is wrong, as you must be very keenly aware, you begin every day with a smarting disappointment, which is not good for the temper. I am in one of the humours when a man wonders how any one can be such an ass as to embrace the profession of letters, and not get apprenticed 407 to a barber or keep a baked-potato stall. But I have no doubt in the course of a week, or perhaps to-morrow, things will look better.

We have at present in port the model warship of Great Britain. She is called the *Curaçoa*, and has the nicest set of officers and men conceivable. They, the officers, are all very intimate with us, and the front verandah is known as the Curaçoa Club, and the road up to Vailima is known as the Curaçoa Track. It was rather a surprise to me; many naval officers have I known, and somehow had not learned to think entirely well of them, and perhaps sometimes ask myself a little uneasily how that kind of men could do great actions? and behold! the answer comes to me, and I see a ship that I would guarantee to go anywhere it was possible for men to go, and accomplish anything it was permitted man to attempt. I had a cruise on board of her not long ago to Manu'a, and was delighted. The goodwill of all on board; the grim playfulness of quarters, with the wounded falling down at the word; the ambulances hastening up and carrying them away; the Captain suddenly crying, “Fire in the ward-room!” and the squad hastening forward with the hose; and, last and most curious spectacle of all, all the men in their dust-coloured fatigue clothes, at a note of the bugle, falling simultaneously flat on deck, and the ship proceeding with its prostrate crew — *quasi* to ram an enemy; our dinner at night in a wild open anchorage, the ship rolling almost to her gunwales, and showing us alternately her bulwarks up in the sky, and then the wild broken cliffy palm-crested shores of the island with the surf thundering and leaping close aboard. We had the ward-room mess on deck, lit by pink wax tapers, everybody, of course, in uniform but myself, and the first lieutenant (who is a rheumaticky body) wrapped in a boat cloak. Gradually the sunset faded out, the island disappeared from the eye, though it remained menacingly 408 present to the ear with the voice of the surf; and then the captain turned on the searchlight and gave us the coast, the beach, the trees, the native houses, and the cliffs by glimpses of daylight, a kind of deliberate lightning. About which time, I suppose, we must have come as far as the dessert, and were probably drinking our first glass of port to Her Majesty. We stayed two days at the island, and had, in addition, a very picturesque snapshot at the native life. The three islands of Manu'a are independent, and are ruled over by a little slip of a half-caste girl about twenty, who sits all day in a pink gown, in a little white European house with about a quarter of an acre of roses in front of it, looking at the palm-trees on the village street, and listening to the surf. This, so far as I could discover, was all she had to do. “This is a very dull place,” she said. It appears she could go to no other village for fear of raising the jealousy of her own people in the capital. And as for going about “tafatafaoing,” as we say here, its cost was too enormous. A strong able-bodied native must walk in front of her and blow the conch shell continuously from the moment she leaves one house until the moment she enters another. Did you ever blow the conch shell? I presume not; but the sweat literally hailed off that man, and I expected every moment to see him burst a blood-vessel. We were entertained to kava in the guest-house with some very original features. The young men who run for the *kava* have a right to misconduct themselves *ad libitum* on the way back; and though they were told to restrain themselves on the occasion of our visit, there was a strange hurly-burly at their return, when they came beating the trees and the posts of the houses, leaping, shouting, and yelling like Bacchants.

I tasted on that occasion what it is to be great. My name was called next after the captain’s, and several chiefs (a thing quite new to me, and not at all Samoan practice) drank to me by name.

And now, if you are not sick of the *Curaçoa* and Manu’a, I am, at least on paper. And I decline any longer to give you examples of how not to write.

By the by, you sent me long ago a work by Anatole France, which I confess I did not *taste*. Since then I have made the acquaintance of the *Abbé Coignard*, and have become a faithful adorer. I don’t think a better book was ever written.

And I have no idea what I have said, and I have no idea what I ought to have said, and I am a total ass, but my heart is in the right place, and I am, my dear Henry James, yours,

R. L. S.

To Marcel Schwob

Vailima, Upolu, Samoa, July 7, 1894.

DEAR MR. MARCEL SCHWOB, — Thank you for having remembered me in my exile. I have read *Mimes* twice as a whole; and now, as I write, I am reading it again as it were by accident, and a piece at a time, my eye catching a word and travelling obediently on through the whole number. It is a graceful book, essentially graceful, with its haunting agreeable melancholy, its pleasing savoury of antiquity. At the same time, by its merits, it shows itself rather as the promise of something else to come than a thing final in itself. You have yet to give us — and I am expecting it with impatience — something of a larger gait; something daylit, not twilit; something with the colours of life, not the flat tints of a temple illumination; something that shall be *said* with all the clearnesses and the trivialities of speech, not *sung* like a semi-articulate lullaby. It will not please yourself as well, when you come to give it us, but it will please others better. It will be more of a whole, more worldly, more nourished, more commonplace — and not so pretty, perhaps not even so beautiful. No man knows better than I that, as we go on in life, we 410 must part from prettiness and the graces. We but attain qualities to lose them; life is a series of farewells, even in art; even our proficiencies are deciduous and evanescent. So here with these exquisite pieces the XVIIth, XVIIIth, and IVth of the present collection. You will perhaps never excel them; I should think the "Hermes," never. Well, you will do something else, and of that I am in expectation. — Yours cordially,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To A. St. Gaudens

Vailima, Samoa, July 8, 1894.

MY DEAR ST. GAUDENS, — This is to tell you that the medallion has been at last triumphantly transported up the hill and placed over my smoking-room mantelpiece. It is considered by everybody a first-rate but flattering portrait. We have it in a very good light, which brings out the artistic merits of the god-like sculptor to great advantage. As for my own opinion, I believe it to be a speaking likeness, and not flattered at all; possibly a little the reverse. The verses (curse the rhyme) look remarkably well.

Please do not longer delay, but send me an account for the expense of the gilt letters. I was sorry indeed that they proved beyond the means of a small farmer. — Yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

Vailima, July 14, 1894.

MY DEAR ADELAIDE, — ... So, at last, you are going into mission work? where I think your heart always was. You will like it in a way, but remember it is dreary long. Do you know the story of the American tramp who was offered meals and a day's wage to chop with the back of 411 an axe on a fallen trunk. "Damned if I can go on chopping when I can't see the chips fly!" You will never see the chips fly in mission work, never; and be sure you know it beforehand. The work is one long dull disappointment, varied by acute revulsions; and those who are by nature courageous and cheerful, and have grown old in experience, learn to rub their hands over infinitesimal successes. However, as I really believe there is some good done in the long run — *gutta cavat lapidem non vi* in this business — it is a useful and honourable career in which no one should be ashamed to embark. Always remember the fable of the sun, the storm, and the traveller's cloak. Forget wholly and for ever all small pruderies, and remember that *you cannot change ancestral feelings of right and wrong without what is practically soul-murder*. Barbarous as the customs may seem, always hear them with patience, always judge them with gentleness, always find in them some seed of good; see that you always develop them; remember that all you can do is to civilise the man in the line of his own civilisation, such as it is. And never expect, never believe in, thaumaturgic conversions. They may do very well for St. Paul; in the case of an Andaman islander they mean less than nothing. In fact, what you have to do is to teach the parents in the interests of their great-grandchildren.

Now, my dear Adelaide, dismiss from your mind the least idea of fault upon your side; nothing is further from the fact. I cannot forgive you, for I do not know your fault. My own is plain enough, and the name of it is cold-hearted neglect; and you may busy yourself more usefully in trying to forgive me. But ugly as my fault is, you must not suppose it to mean more than it does; it does not mean that we have at all forgotten you, that we have become at all indifferent to the thought of you. See, in my life of Jenkin, a remark of his, very well expressed, on the friendships of men who do not write to each other. I can honestly say that I have not changed 412 to you in any way; though I have behaved thus ill, thus cruelly. Evil is done by want of — well, principally by want of industry. You can imagine what I would say (in a novel) of any one who had behaved as I have done. *Deteriora sequor*. And you must somehow manage to forgive your old friend; and if you will be so very good, continue to give us news of you, and let us share the knowledge of your adventures, sure that it will be always followed with interest — even if it is answered with the silence of ingratitude. For I am not a fool; I know my faults, I know they are ineluctable, I know they are growing on me. I know I may offend again, and I warn you of it. But the next time I offend, tell me so plainly and frankly like a lady, and don't lacerate my heart and bludgeon my vanity with imaginary faults of your own and purely gratuitous penance. I might suspect you of irony!

We are all fairly well, though I have been off work and off — as you know very well — letter-writing. Yet I have sometimes more than twenty letters, and sometimes more than thirty, going out each mail. And Fanny has had a most distressing bronchitis for some time, which she is only now beginning to get over. I have just been to see her; she is lying — though she had breakfast an hour ago, about seven — in her big cool, mosquito-proof room, ingloriously asleep. As for me, you see that a doom has come upon me: I cannot make marks with a pen — witness “ingloriously” above; and my amanuensis not appearing so early in the day, for she is then immersed in household affairs, and I can hear her “steering the boys” up and down the verandahs — you must decipher this unhappy letter for yourself and, I fully admit, with everything against you. A letter should be always well written; how much more a letter of apology! Legibility is the politeness of men of letters, as punctuality of kings and beggars. By the punctuality of my replies, and the beauty of my hand-writing, judge what a fine conscience I must have!

Now, my dear gamekeeper, I must really draw to a close. For I have much else to write before the mail goes out three days hence. Fanny being asleep, it would not be conscientious to invent a message from her, so you must just imagine her sentiments. I find I have not the heart to speak of your recent loss. You remember perhaps, when my father died, you told me those ugly images of sickness, decline, and impaired reason, which then haunted me day and night, would pass away and be succeeded by things more happily characteristic. I have found it so. He now haunts me, strangely enough, in two guises; as a man of fifty, lying on a hillside and carving mottoes on a stick, strong and well; and as a younger man, running down the sands into the sea near North Berwick, myself — *ætat. 11* — somewhat horrified at finding him so beautiful when stripped! I hand on your own advice to you in case you have forgotten it, as I know one is apt to do in seasons of bereavement. — Ever yours, with much love and sympathy,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. A. Baker

This refers again to the printing of some of his books in Braille type for the blind.

Vailima, Samoa, July 16, 1894.

DEAR MRS. BAKER, — I am very much obliged to you for your letter and the enclosure from Mr. Skinner. Mr. Skinner says he “thinks Mr. Stevenson must be a very kind man”; he little knows me. But I am very sure of one thing, that you are a very kind woman. I envy you — my amanuensis being called away, I continue in my own hand, or what is left of it — unusually legible, I am thankful to see — I envy you your beautiful choice of an employment. There must be no regrets at least for a day so spent; and when the night falls you need ask no blessing on your work. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these.” — Yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

July, 1894.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I have to thank you this time for a very good letter, and will announce for the future, though I cannot now begin to put in practice, good intentions for our correspondence. I will try to return to the old system and write from time to time during the month; but truly you did not much encourage me to continue! However, that is all by-past. I do not know that there is much in your letter that calls for answer. Your questions about *St. Ives* were practically answered in my last; so were your wails about the edition, *Amateur Emigrant*, etc. By the end of the year *St. I.* will be practically finished, whatever it be worth, and that I know not. When shall I receive proofs of the Magnum Opus? or shall I receive them at all?

The return of the Amanuensis feebly lightens my heart. You can see the heavy weather I was making of it with my unaided pen. The last month has been particularly cheery largely owing to the presence of our good friends the Curaçoas. She is really a model ship, charming officers and charming seamen. They gave a ball last month, which was very rackety and joyous and naval....

On the following day, about one o'clock, three horsemen might have been observed approaching Vailima, who gradually resolved themselves into two petty officers and a native guide. Drawing himself up and saluting, the spokesman (a corporal of Marines) addressed me thus. "Me and my shipmates inwites Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Strong, Mr. Austin, and Mr. Balfour to a ball to be given to-night in the self-same 'all." It was of course impossible to refuse, though I contented myself with putting in a very brief appearance. One glance was sufficient; the ball went off like a rocket from the start. I had only time to watch Belle careering around with a gallant bluejacket of exactly her own height — the standard 415 of the British navy — an excellent dancer and conspicuously full of small-talk — and to hear a remark from a beach-comber, "It's a nice sight this some way, to see the officers dancing like this with the men, but I tell you, sir, these are the men that'll fight together!"

I tell you, Colvin, the acquaintance of the men — and boys — makes me feel patriotic. Eeles in particular is a man whom I respect. I am half in a mind to give him a letter of introduction to you when he goes home. In case you feel inclined to make a little of him, give him a dinner, ask Henry James to come to meet him, etc. — you might let me know. I don't know that he would show his best, but he is a remarkably fine fellow, in every department of life.

We have other visitors in port. A Count Festetics de Tolna, an Austrian officer, a very pleasant, simple, boyish creature, with his young wife, daughter of an American millionaire; he is a friend of our own Captain Wurmbrand, and it is a great pity Wurmbrand is away.

Glad you saw and liked Lysaght. He has left in our house a most cheerful and pleasing memory, as a good, pleasant, brisk fellow with good health and brains, and who enjoys himself and makes other people happy. I am glad he gave you a good report of our surroundings and way of life; but I knew he would, for I believe he had a glorious time — and gave one.

I am on fair terms with the two Treaty officials, though all such intimacies are precarious; with the consuls, I need not say, my position is deplorable. The President (Herr Emil Schmidt) is a rather dreamy man, whom I like. Lloyd, Graham and I go to breakfast with him to-morrow; the next day the whole party of us lunch on the *Curaçoa* and go in the evening to a *Bierabend* at Dr. Funk's. We are getting up a paper-chase for the following week with some of the young German clerks, and have in view a sort of child's party for grown-up persons with kissing games, etc., here at Vailima. Such is the gay scene in which we move. Now I have done something, though not as much as I wanted, to give you an idea of how we are getting on, and I am keenly conscious that there are other letters to do before the mail goes. — Yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

To J. M. Barrie

Vailima, July 13, 1894.

MY DEAR BARRIE, — This is the last effort of an ulcerated conscience. I have been so long owing you a letter, I have heard so much of you, fresh from the press, from my mother and Graham Balfour, that I have to write a letter no later than to-day, or perish in my shame. But the deuce of it is, my dear fellow, that you write such a very good letter that I am ashamed to exhibit myself before my junior (which you are, after all) in the light of the dreary idiot I feel. Understand that there will be nothing funny in the following pages. If I can manage to be rationally coherent, I shall be more than satisfied.

In the first place, I have had the extreme satisfaction to be shown that photograph of your mother. It bears evident traces of the hand of an amateur. How is it that amateurs invariably take better photographs than professionals? I must qualify invariably. My own negatives 417 have always represented a province of chaos and old night in which you might dimly perceive fleecy spots of twilight, representing nothing; so that, if I am right in supposing the portrait of your mother to be yours, I must salute you as my superior. Is that your mother's breakfast? Or is it only afternoon tea? If the first, do let me recommend to Mrs. Barrie to add an egg to her ordinary. Which, if you please, I will ask her to eat to the honour of her son, and I am sure she will live much longer for it, to enjoy his fresh successes. I never in my life saw anything more deliciously characteristic. I declare I can hear her speak. I wonder my mother could resist the temptation of your proposed visit to Kirriemuir, which it was like your kindness to propose. By the way, I was twice in Kirriemuir, I believe in the year '71, when I was going on a visit to Glenogil. It was Kirriemuir, was it not? I have a distinct recollection of an inn at the end — I think the upper end — of an irregular open place or square, in which I always see your characters evolve. But, indeed, I did not pay much attention; being all bent upon my visit to a shooting-box, where I should fish a real trout-stream, and I believe preserved. I did, too, and it was a charming stream, clear as crystal, without a trace of peat — a strange thing in Scotland — and alive with trout; the name of it I cannot remember, it was something like the Queen's River, and in some hazy way connected with memories of Mary Queen of Scots. It formed an epoch in my life, being the end of all my trout-fishing. I had always been accustomed to pause and very laboriously to kill every fish as I took it. But in the Queen's River I took so good a basket that I forgot these niceties; and when I sat down, in a hard rain shower, under a bank, to take my sandwiches and sherry, lo! and behold, there was the basketful of trouts still kicking in their agony.

I had a very unpleasant conversation with my conscience. All that afternoon I persevered in fishing, brought 418 home my basket in triumph, and sometime that night, "in the wee sma' hours ayont the twal," I finally forswore the gentle craft of fishing. I dare say your local knowledge may identify this historic river; I wish it could go farther and identify also that particular Free kirk in which I sat and groaned on Sunday. While my hand is in I must tell you a story. At that antique epoch you must not fall into the vulgar error that I was myself ancient. I was, on the contrary, very young, very green, and (what you will appreciate, Mr. Barrie) very shy. There came one day to lunch at the house two very formidable old ladies — or one very formidable, and the other what you please — answering to the honoured and historic name of the Miss C — — A — — 's of Balnamoon. At table I was exceedingly funny, and entertained the company with tales of geese and bubbly-jocks. I was great in the expression of my terror for these bipeds, and suddenly this horrid, severe, and eminently matronly old lady put up a pair of gold eye-glasses, looked at me awhile in silence, and pronounced in a clangorous voice her verdict. "You give me very much the effect of a coward, Mr. Stevenson!" I had very nearly left two vices behind me at Glenogil — fishing and jesting at table. And of one thing you may be very sure, my lips were no more opened at that meal.

July 29th. — No, Barrie, ‘tis in vain they try to alarm me with their bulletins. No doubt, you’re ill, and unco ill, I believe; but I have been so often in the same case that I know pleurisy and pneumonia are in vain against Scotsmen who can write. (I once could.) You cannot imagine probably how near me this common calamity brings you. *Ce que j’ai toussé dans ma vie!* How often and how long have I been on the rack at night and learned to appreciate that noble passage in the Psalms when somebody or other is said to be more set on something than they “who dig for hid treasures — yea, than those who long for the morning” — for all the world, as you have 419 been racked and you have longed. Keep your heart up, and you’ll do. Tell that to your mother, if you are still in any danger or suffering. And by the way, if you are at all like me — and I tell myself you are very like me — be sure there is only one thing good for you, and that is the sea in hot climates. Mount, sir, into “a little frigot” of 5000 tons or so, and steer peremptorily for the tropics; and what if the ancient mariner, who guides your frigot, should startle the silence of the ocean with the cry of land ho! — say, when the day is dawning — and you should see the turquoise mountain tops of Upolu coming hand over fist above the horizon? Mr. Barrie, sir, ‘tis then there would be larks! And though I cannot be certain that our climate would suit you (for it does not suit some), I am sure as death the voyage would do you good — would do you *Best* — and if Samoa didn’t do, you needn’t stay beyond the month, and I should have had another pleasure in my life, which is a serious consideration for me. I take this as the hand of the Lord preparing your way to Vailima — in the desert, certainly — in the desert of Cough and by the ghoul-haunted woodland of Fever — but whither that way points there can be no question — and there will be a meeting of the twa Hoasting Scots Makers in spite of fate, fortune and the Devil. *Absit omen!*

My dear Barrie, I am a little in the dark about this new work of yours: what is to become of me afterwards? You say carefully — methought anxiously — that I was no longer me when I grew up? I cannot bear this suspense: what is it? It’s no forgery? And AM I HANGIT? These are the elements of a very pretty lawsuit which you had better come to Samoa to compromise. I am enjoying a great pleasure that I had long looked forward to, reading Orme’s *History of Indostan*; I had been looking out for it everywhere; but at last, in four volumes, large quarto, 420 beautiful type and page, and with a delectable set of maps and plans, and all the names of the places wrongly spelled — it came to Samoa, little Barrie. I tell you frankly, you had better come soon. I am sair failed a’ready; and what I may be if you continue to dally, I dread to conceive. I may be speechless; already, or at least for a month or so, I’m little better than a teetoller

— I beg pardon, a teetotaller. It is not exactly physical, for I am in good health, working four or five hours a day in my plantation, and intending to ride a paper-chase next Sunday — ay, man, that's a fact, and I havena had the hert to breathe it to my mother yet — the obligation's poleetical, for I am trying every means to live well with my German neighbours — and, O Barrie, but it's no easy!... To be sure, there are many exceptions. And the whole of the above must be regarded as private — strictly private. Breathe it not in Kirriemuir: tell it not to the daughters of Dundee! What a nice extract this would make for the daily papers! and how it would facilitate my position here!

August 5th. — This is Sunday, the Lord's Day. "The hour of attack approaches." And it is a singular consideration what I risk; I may yet be the subject of a tract, and a good tract too — such as one which I remember reading with recreant awe and rising hair in my youth, of a boy who was a very good boy, and went to Sunday Schule, and one day kipped from it, and went and actually bathed, and was dashed over a waterfall, and he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A dangerous trade, that, and one that I have to practise. I'll put in a word when I get home again, to tell you whether I'm killed or not. "Accident in the (Paper) Hunting Field: death of a notorious author. We deeply regret to announce the death of the most unpopular man in Samoa, who broke his neck, at the descent of Magiagi, from the misconduct of his little raving lunatic of an old beast of a pony. It is 421 proposed to commemorate the incident by the erection of a suitable pile. The design (by our local architect, Mr. Walker) is highly artificial, with a rich and voluminous Crockett at each corner, a small but impervious Barrièer at the entrance, an arch at the top, an Archer of a pleasing but solid character at the bottom; the colour will be genuine William-Black; and Lang, lang may the ladies sit wi' their fans in their hands." Well, well, they may sit as they sat for me, and little they'll reck, the ungrateful jauds! Muckle they cared about Tusitala when they had him! But now ye can see the difference; now leddies, ye can repent, when ower late, o' your former cauldness and what ye'll perhaps allow me to ca' your *tepeedity*! He was beautiful as the day, but his day is done! And perhaps, as he was maybe gettin' a wee thing fly-blown, it's nane too shüne.

Monday, August 6th. — Well, sir, I have escaped the dangerous conjunction of the widow's only son and the Sabbath Day. We had a most enjoyable time, and Lloyd and I were 3 and 4 to arrive; I will not tell here what interval had elapsed between our arrival and the arrival of 1 and 2; the question, sir, is otiose and malign; it deserves, it shall have no answer. And now without further delay to the main purpose of this hasty note. We received and we have already in fact distributed the gorgeous fahbrics of Kirriemuir. Whether from the splendour of the robes themselves, or from the direct nature of the compliments with which you had directed us to accompany the presentations, one young lady blushed as she received the proofs of your munificence.... Bad ink, and the dregs of it at that, but the heart in the right place. Still very cordially interested in my Barrie and wishing him well through his sickness, which is of the body, and long defended from mine, which is of the head, and by the impolite might be described as idiocy. The whole head is useless, and the whole sitting part painful: reason, the recent Paper Chase.

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There was racing and chasing in Vailele plantation,
And vastly we enjoyed it,
But, alas! for the state of my foundation,
For it wholly has destroyed it.

Come, my mind is looking up. The above is wholly impromptu. — On oath,

Tusitala.

To Sidney Colvin

The missionary view of the Sunday paper-chase, with an account of Stevenson's apologies to the ladies and gentlemen of the mission, have been printed by Mr. W. E. Clarke in the Chronicle of the London Missionary Society for April and May 1908.

[*Vailima*] *Aug. 7th, 1894.*

MY DEAR COLVIN, — This is to inform you, sir, that on Sunday last (and this is Tuesday) I attained my ideal here, and we had a paper-chase in Vailele Plantation, about 15 miles, I take it, from us; and it was all that could be wished. It is really better fun than following the hounds, since you have to be your own hound, and a precious bad hound I was, following every false scent on the whole course to the bitter end; but I came in 3rd at the last on my little Jack, who stuck to it gallantly, and awoke the praises of some discriminating persons. (5 + 7 + 2½ = 14½ miles; yes, that is the count.) We had quite the old sensations of exhilaration, discovery, an appeal to a savage instinct; and I felt myself about 17 again, a pleasant experience. However, it was on the Sabbath Day, and I am now a pariah among the English, as if I needed any increment of unpopularity. I must not go again; it gives so much unnecessary tribulation to poor people, and, sure, we don't want to make tribulation. I have been forbidden to work, and have been instead doing my two or three hours in the plantation every morning. I only wish somebody would pay me £10 a day for taking care of cacao, and I could leave literature to others. Certainly, if I have plenty of exercise, and no work, I feel 423 much better; but there is

Biles the butcher! him we have always with us.

I do not much like novels, I begin to think, but I am enjoying exceedingly Orme's *History of Hindostan,* a lovely book in its way, in large quarto, with a quantity of maps, and written in a very lively and solid eighteenth century way, never picturesque except by accident and from a kind of conviction, and a fine sense of order. No historian I have ever read is so minute; yet he never gives you a word about the people; his interest is entirely limited in the concatenation of events, into which he goes with a lucid, almost superhuman, and wholly ghostly gusto. "By the ghost of a mathematician" the book might be announced. A very brave, honest book.

Your letter to hand.

Fact is, I don't like the picter. O, it's a good picture, but if you *ask* me, you know, I believe, stoutly believe, that mankind, including you, are going mad. I am not in the midst with the other frenzy dancers, so I don't catch it wholly; and when you show me a thing — and ask me, don't you know — Well, well! Glad to get so good an account of the *Amateur Emigrant.* Talking of which, I am strong for making a volume out of selections from the South Sea letters; I read over again the King of Apemama, and it is good in spite of your teeth, and a real curiosity, a thing that can never be seen again, and the group is annexed and Tembinoka dead. I wonder, couldn't you send out to me the *first* five Butaritari letters and the Low Archipelago ones (both of which I have lost or mislaid) and I can chop out a perfectly fair volume of what I wish to be preserved. It can keep for the last of the series.

Travels and Excursions, vol. II. Should it not include a paper on S. F. from the Mag. of Art? The A. E., the New Pacific capital, the Old ditto. *Silver. Squat.* This would give all my works on the States; and though it 424 ain't very good, it's not so very bad. *Travels and Excursions,* vol. III., to be these resuscitated letters — *Miscellanies,* vol. II. — *comme vous voudrez, cher monsieur!*

Monday, Aug. 13th. — I have a sudden call to go up the coast and must hurry up with my information. There has suddenly come to our naval commanders the need of action, they're away up the coast bombarding the Atua rebels. All morning on Saturday the sound of the bombardment of Luatuanu'u kept us uneasy. To-day again the big guns have been sounding further along the coast. One delicious circumstance must not be forgotten. Our blessed President of the Council — a kind of hoary-headed urchin, with the dim, timid eyes of extreme childhood and a kind of beautiful simplicity that endears him to me beyond words — has taken the head of the army — honour to him for it, for his place is really there — and gone up the coast in the congenial company of his housekeeper, a woman coming on for sixty with whom he takes his walks abroad in the morning in his shirt-sleeves, whom he reads to at night (in a kind of Popular History of Germany) in the silence of the Presidential mansion, and with whom (and a couple of camp stools) he walked out last Sunday to behold the paper-chase. I cannot tell you how taken I am with this exploit of the President's and the housekeeper's. It is like Don Quixote, but infinitely superior. If I could only do it without offence, what a subject it would make!

To-morrow morning early I am off up the coast myself. Therefore you must allow me to break off here without further ceremony. — Yours ever,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Dr. Bakewell

The following is to a physician in Australia.

Vailima, August 7, 1894.

DEAR DR. BAKEWELL, — I am not more than human. I am more human than is wholly convenient, and your 425 anecdote was welcome. What you say about *unwilling work*, my dear sir, is a consideration always present with me, and yet not easy to give its due weight to. You grow gradually into a certain income; without spending a penny more, with the same sense of restriction as before when you painfully scraped two hundred a year together, you find you have spent, and you cannot well stop spending, a far larger sum; and this expense can only be supported by a certain production. However, I am off work this month, and occupy myself instead in weeding my cacao, paper-chases, and the like. I may tell you, my average of work in favourable circumstances is far greater than you suppose: from six o'clock till eleven at latest, and often till twelve, and again in the afternoon from two to four. My hand is quite destroyed, as you may perceive, to-day to a really unusual extent. I can sometimes write a decent fist still; but I have just returned with my arms all stung from three hours' work in the cacao. — Yours, etc.,

R. L. S.

To James Payn

Vailima, Upolu, Samoa [*August 11, 1894*].

MY DEAR JAMES PAYN, — I hear from Lang that you are unwell, and it reminds me of two circumstances: First, that it is a very long time since you had the exquisite pleasure of hearing from me; and second, that I have been very often unwell myself and sometimes had to thank you for a grateful anodyne.

They are not good, the circumstances, to write an anodyne letter. The hills and my house at less than (boom) a minute's interval quake with thunder; and though I cannot hear that part of it, shells are falling thick into the fort of Luatuanu'u (boom). It is my friends of the *Curaçoa*, the *Falke*, and the *Bussard* bombarding 426 (after all these — boom — months) the rebels of Atua. (Boom-boom.) It is most distracting in itself; and the thought of the poor devils in their fort (boom) with their bits of rifles far from pleasant. (Boom-boom.) You can see how quick it goes, and I'll say no more about Mr. Bow-wow, only you must understand the perpetual accompaniment of this discomfortable sound, and make allowances for the value of my copy. It is odd, though, I can well remember, when the Franco-Prussian war began, and I was in Eilean Earraid, far enough from the sound of the loudest cannonade, I could *hear* the shots fired, and I felt the pang in my breast of a man struck. It was sometimes so distressing, so instant, that I lay in the heather on the top of the island, with my face hid, kicking my heels for agony. And now, when I can hear the actual concussion of the air and hills, when I *know* personally the people who stand exposed to it, I am able to go on *taut bien que mal* with a letter to James Payn! The blessings of age, though mighty small, are tangible. I have heard a great deal of them since I came into the world, and now that I begin to taste of them — Well! But this is one, that people do get cured of the excess of sensibility; and I had as lief these people were shot at as myself — or almost, for then I should have some of the fun, such as it is.

You are to conceive me, then, sitting in my little gallery room, shaken by these continual spasms of cannon, and with my eye more or less singly fixed on the imaginary figure of my dear James Payn. I try to see him in bed; no go. I see him instead jumping up in his room in Waterloo Place (where *ex hypothesi* he is not), sitting on the table, drawing out a very black briar-root pipe, and beginning to talk to a slim and ill-dressed visitor in a voice that is good to hear and with a smile that is pleasant to see. (After a little more than half an hour, the voice that was ill to hear has ceased, the cannonade is over.) And I am thinking how I can get an answering smile 427 wafted over so many leagues of land and water, and can find no way.

I have always been a great visitor of the sick; and one of the sick I visited was W. E. Henley, which did not make very tedious visits, so I'll not get off much purgatory for them. That was in the Edinburgh Infirmary, the old one, the true one, with Georgius Secundus standing and pointing his toe in a niche of the façade; and a mighty fine building it was! And I remember one winter's afternoon, in that place of misery, that Henley and I chanced to fall in talk about James Payn himself. I am wishing you could have heard that talk! I think that would make you smile. We had mixed you up with John Payne, for one thing, and stood amazed at your extraordinary, even painful, versatility; and for another, we found ourselves each students so well prepared for examinations on the novels of the real Mackay. Perhaps, after all, this is worth something in life — to have given so much pleasure to a pair so different in every way as were Henley and I, and to be talked of with so much interest by two such (beg pardon) clever lads!

The cheerful Lang has neglected to tell me what is the matter with you; so, I’m sorry to say, I am cut off from all the customary consolations. I can’t say, “Think how much worse it would be if you had a broken leg!” when you may have the crushing repartee up your sleeve, “But it is my leg that is broken.” This is a pity. But there are consolations. You are an Englishman (I believe); you are a man of letters; you have never been made C.B.; you hair was not red; you have played cribbage and whist; you did not play either the fiddle or the banjo; you were never an æsthete; you never contributed to — —’s Journal; your name is not Jabez Balfour; you are totally unconnected with the Army and Navy departments; I understand you to have lived within your income — why, cheer up! here are many legitimate causes of congratulation. I seem to be writing an obituary 428 notice. *Absit omen!* But I feel very sure that these considerations will have done you more good than medicine.

By the by, did you ever play piquet? I have fallen a victim to this debilitating game. It is supposed to be scientific; God save the mark, what self-deceivers men are! It is distinctly less so than cribbage. But how fascinating! There is such material opulence about it, such vast ambitions may be realised — and are not; it may be called the Monte Cristo of games. And the thrill with which you take five cards partakes of the nature of lust — and you draw four sevens and a nine, and the seven and nine of a suit that you discarded, and O! but the world is a desert! You may see traces of discouragement in my letter: all due to piquet! There has been a disastrous turn of the luck against me; a month or two ago I was two thousand ahead; now, and for a week back, I have been anything from four thousand eight hundred to five thousand two hundred astern. I have a sixième, my beast of a partner has a septième; and if I have three aces, three kings, three queens, and three knaves (excuse the slight exaggeration), the devil holds quatorze of tens! — I remain, my dear James Payn, your sincere and obliged friend — old friend let me say,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Miss Middleton

A letter from the lady to whom this is addressed, and who had been a friend of the Stevenson family in Edinburgh, had called up some memories of a Skye terrier, Jura, of whom readers have heard something already.

Vailima, Samoa, September 9, 1894.

DEAR MISS MIDDLETON, — Your letter has been like the drawing up of a curtain. Of course I remember you very well, and the Skye terrier to which you refer — a heavy, dull, fatted, graceless creature he grew up to be — was 429 my own particular pet. It may amuse you, perhaps, as much as "The Inn" amused me, if I tell you what made this dog particularly mine. My father was the natural god of all the dogs in our house, and poor Jura took to him of course. Jura was stolen, and kept in prison somewhere for more than a week, as I remember. When he came back Smeoroch had come and taken my father's heart from him. He took his stand like a man, and positively never spoke to my father again from that day until the day of his death. It was the only sign of character he ever showed. I took him up to my room and to be my dog in consequence, partly because I was sorry for him, and partly because I admired his dignity in misfortune.

With best regards and thanks for having reminded me of so many pleasant days, old acquaintances, dead friends, and — what is perhaps as pathetic as any of them — dead dogs, I remain, yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To A. Conan Doyle

The following refers to the papers originally contributed by various writers to Mr. Jerome's periodical The Idler, under the title *My First Book*, and afterwards republished in a volume. The references towards the end are to the illustrations in the pages of The Idler.

Vailima, Samoa, September 9, 1894.

MY DEAR CONAN DOYLE, — If you found anything to entertain you in my *Treasure Island* article, it may amuse you to know that you owe it entirely to yourself. *Your* "First Book" was by some accident read aloud one night in my Baronial 'All. I was consumedly amused by it, so was the whole family, and we proceeded to hunt up back Idlers and read the whole series. It is a rattling good series, even people whom you would not expect came in quite the proper tone — Miss Braddon, for instance, 430 who was really one of the best where all are good — or all but one!... In short, I fell in love with "The First Book" series, and determined that it should be all our first books, and that I could not hold back where the white plume of Conan Doyle waved gallantly in the front. I hope they will republish them, though it's a grievous thought to me that that effigy in the German cap — likewise the other effigy of the noisome old man with the long hair, telling indelicate stories to a couple of deformed negresses in a rancid shanty full of wreckage — should be perpetuated. I may seem to speak in pleasantry — it is only a seeming — that German cap, sir, would be found, when I come to die, imprinted on my heart. Enough — my

heart is too full. Adieu. — Yours very truly,
Robert Louis Stevenson.
(in a German cap, damn 'em!).

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima, September 1894.*]

MY DEAR COLVIN, — This must be a very measly letter. I have been trying hard to get along with *St. Ives*. I should now lay it aside for a year and I dare say I should make something of it after all. Instead of that, I have to kick against the pricks, and break myself, and spoil the book, if there were anything to spoil, which I am far from saying. I'm as sick of the thing as ever any one can be; it's a rudderless hulk; it's a pagoda, and you can just feel — or I can feel — that it might have been a pleasant story, if it had been only blessed at baptism.

Our politics have gone on fairly well, but the result is still doubtful.

Sept. 10th. — I know I have something else to say to you, but unfortunately I awoke this morning with colly-wobbles, and had to take a small dose of laudanum with the usual consequences of dry throat, intoxicated legs, 431 partial madness and total imbecility; and for the life of me I cannot remember what it is. I have likewise mislaid your letter amongst the accumulations on my table, not that there was anything in it. Altogether I am in a poor state. I forgot to tell Baxter that the dummy had turned up and is a fine, personable-looking volume and very good reading. Please communicate this to him.

I have just remembered an incident that I really must not let pass. You have heard a great deal more than you wanted about our political prisoners. Well, one day, about a fortnight ago, the last of them was set free — Old Poè, whom I think I must have mentioned to you, the father-in-law of my cook, was one that I had had a great deal of trouble with. I had taken the doctor to see him, got him out on sick leave, and when he was put back again gave bail for him. I must not forget that my wife ran away with him out of the prison on the doctor's orders and with the complicity of our friend the gaoler, who really and truly got the sack for the exploit. As soon as he was finally liberated, Poè called a meeting of his fellow-prisoners. All Sunday they were debating what they were to do, and on Monday morning I got an obscure hint from Talolo that I must expect visitors during the day who were coming to consult me. These consultations I am now very well used to, and seeing first, that I generally don't know what to advise, and second that they sometimes don't take my advice — though in some notable cases they have taken it, generally to my own wonder with pretty good results — I am not very fond of these calls. They minister to a sense of dignity, but not peace of mind, and consume interminable time, always in the morning too, when I can't afford it. However, this was to be a new sort of consultation. Up came Poè and some eight other chiefs, squatted in a big circle around the old dining-room floor, now the smoking-room. And the family, being represented by Lloyd, Graham, Belle, Austin and myself, proceeded to exchange 432 the necessary courtesies. Then their talking man began. He said that they had been in prison, that I had always taken an interest in them, that they had now been set at liberty without condition, whereas some of the other chiefs who had been liberated before them were still under bond to work upon the roads, and that this had set them considering what they might do to testify their gratitude. They had therefore agreed to work upon my road as a free gift. They went on to explain that it was only to be on my road, on the branch that joins my house with the public way.

Now I was very much gratified at this compliment, although (to one used to natives) it seemed rather a hollow one. It meant only that I should have to lay out a good deal of money on tools and food and to give wages under the guise of presents to some workmen who were most of them old and in ill-health. Conceive how much I was surprised and touched when I heard the whole scheme explained to me. They were to return to their provinces, and collect their families; some of the young men were to live in Apia with a boat, and ply up and down the coast to A'ana and Atua (our own Tuamasaga being quite drained of resources) in order to supply the working squad with food. Tools they did ask for, but it was especially mentioned that I was to make no presents. In short, the whole of this little "presentation" to me had been planned with a good deal more consideration than goes usually with a native campaign.

[I sat on the opposite side of the circle to the talking man. His face was quite calm and high-bred as he went through the usual Samoan expressions of politeness and compliment, but when he came on to the object of their visit, on their love and gratitude to Tusitala, how his name was always in their prayers, and his goodness to them when they had no other friend, was their most cherished memory, he warmed up to real, burning, genuine feeling. I had never seen the Samoan mask of reserve 433 laid aside before, and it touched me more than anything else. A.M.]

This morning as ever was, bright and early up came the whole gang of them, a lot of sturdy, common-looking lads they seemed to be for the most part, and fell to on my new road. Old Poè was in the highest of good spirits, and looked better in health than he has done any time in two years, being positively rejuvenated by the success of his scheme. He jested as he served out the new tools, and I am sorry to say damned the Government up hill and down dale, probably with a view to show off his position as a friend of the family before his workboys. Now, whether or not their impulse will last them through the road does not matter to me one hair. It is the fact that they have attempted it, that they have volunteered and are now really trying to execute a thing that was never before heard of in Samoa. Think of it! It is road-making — the most fruitful cause (after taxes) of all rebellions in Samoa, a thing to which they could not be wiled with money nor driven by punishment. It does give me a sense of having done something in Samoa after all.

Now there's one long story for you about "my blacks." — Yours ever,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

The following was written on hearing of the death of his friend's father.

[*Vailima, September 1894.*]

MY DEAR CHARLES, — ... Well, there is no more Edmund Baxter now; and I think I may say I know how you feel. He was one of the best, the kindest, and the most genial men I ever knew. I shall always remember his brisk, cordial ways and the essential goodness which he showed me whenever we met with gratitude. And 434 the always is such a little while now! He is another of the landmarks gone; when it comes to my own turn to lay my weapons down, I shall do so with thankfulness and fatigue; and whatever be my destiny afterward, I shall be glad to lie down with my fathers in honour. It is human at least, if not divine. And these deaths make me think of it with an ever greater readiness. Strange that you should be beginning a new life, when I, who am a little your junior, am thinking of the end of mine. But I have had hard lines; I have been so long waiting for death, I have unwrapped my thoughts from about life so long, that I have not a filament left to hold by; I have done my fiddling so long under Vesuvius, that I have almost forgotten to play, and can only wait for the eruption, and think it long of coming. Literally, no man has more wholly outlived life than I. And still it's good fun.

R. L. S.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

Stevenson had received from his cousin a letter announcing, among other things, the birth of a son to the writer, and rambling suggestively, as may be guessed from the following reply, over many disconnected themes: the ethnology of Scotland, paternity and heredity, civilisation *versus* primitive customs and instincts, the story of their own descent, the method of writing in collaboration, education, Christianity and sex, the religion of conduct, anarchism, etc.; all which matters are here discursively touched on. “Old Skene” is, of course, the distinguished Scottish antiquarian and historian, William Forbes Skene, in whose firm (Skene & Edwards, W.S.) Stevenson had for a time served irregularly enough as an unpaid clerk.

[*Vailima, September 1894.*]

DEAR BOB, — You are in error about the Picts. They were a Gaelic race, spoke a Celtic tongue, and we have no evidence that I know of that they were blacker than other Celts. The Balfours, I take it, were plainly Celts; their name shows it — the “cold croft,” it means; so does their country. Where the *black* Scotch come from nobody knows; but I recognise with you the fact that 435 the whole of Britain is rapidly and progressively becoming more pigmented; already in one man’s life I can decidedly trace a difference in the children about a school door. But colour is not an essential part of a man or a race. Take my Polynesians, an Asiatic people probably from the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf. They range through any amount of shades, from the burnt hue of the Low Archipelago islander, which seems half negro, to the “bleached” pretty women of the Marquesas (close by on the map), who come out for a festival no darker than an Italian; their colour seems to vary directly with the degree of exposure to the sun. And, as with negroes, the babes are born white; only it should seem a *little sack* of pigment at the lower part of the spine, which presently spreads over the whole field. Very puzzling. But to return. The Picts furnish to-day perhaps a third of the population of Scotland, say another third for Scots and Britons, and the third for Norse and Angles is a bad third. Edinburgh was a Pictish place. But the fact is, we don’t know their frontiers. Tell some of your journalist friends with a good style to popularise old Skene; or say your prayers, and read him for yourself; he was a Great Historian, and I was his blessed clerk, and did not know it; and you will not be in a state of grace about the Picts till you have studied him. J. Horne Stevenson (do you know him?) is working this up with me, and the fact is — it’s not interesting to the public — but it’s interesting, and very interesting, in itself, and just now very embarrassing — this rural parish supplied Glasgow with such a quantity of Stevensons in the beginning of last century! There is just a link wanting; and we might be able to go back to the eleventh century, always undistinguished, but clearly traceable. When I say just a link, I guess I may be taken to mean a dozen. What a singular thing is this undistinguished perpetuation of a family throughout the centuries, and the sudden bursting forth of character and capacity that began with 436 our grandfather! But as I go on in life, day by day, I become more of a bewildered child; I cannot get used to this world, to procreation, to heredity, to sight, to hearing; the commonest things are a burthen. The prim obliterated polite face of life, and the broad, bawdy, and orgiastic — or mænadic — foundations, form a spectacle to which no habit reconciles me; and "I could wish my days to be bound each to each" by the same open-mouthed wonder. They *are* anyway, and whether I wish it or not.

I remember very well your attitude to life, this conventional surface of it. You had none of that curiosity for the social stage directions, the trivial *ficelles* of the business; it is simian, but that is how the wild youth of man is captured; you wouldn't imitate, hence you kept free — a wild dog, outside the kennel — and came dam near starving for your pains. The key to the business is of course the belly; difficult as it is to keep that in view in the zone of three miraculous meals a day in which we were brought up. Civilisation has become reflex with us; you might think that hunger was the name of the best sauce; but hunger to the cold solitary under a bush of a rainy night is the name of something quite different. I defend civilisation for the thing it is, for the thing it has *come* to be, the standpoint of a real old Tory. My ideal would be the Female Clan. But how can you turn these crowding dumb multitudes *back?* They don't do anything *because*; they do things, write able articles, stitch shoes, dig, from the purely simian impulse. Go and reason with monkeys!

No, I am right about Jean Lillie. Jean Lillie, our double great-grandmother, the daughter of David Lillie, sometime Deacon of the Wrights, married, first, Alan Stevenson, who died May 26, 1774, "at Santt Kittes of a fiver," by whom she had Robert Stevenson, born 8th June 1772; and, second, in May or June 1787, Thomas Smith, a widower, and already the father of our grandmother. 437 This improbable double connection always tends to confuse a student of the family, Thomas Smith being doubly our great-grandfather.

I looked on the perpetuation of our honoured name with veneration. My mother collared one of the photos, of course; the other is stuck up on my wall as the chief of our sept. Do you know any of the Gaelic-Celtic sharps? you might ask what the name means. It puzzles me. I find a *M'Stein* and a *MacStephane*; and our own great-grandfather always called himself Steenson, though he wrote it Stevenson. There are at least three *places* called Stevenson — *Stevenson* in Cunningham, *Stevenson* in Peebles, and *Stevenson* in Haddington. And it was not the Celtic trick, I understand, to call places after people. I am going to write to Sir Herbert Maxwell about the name, but you might find some one.

Get the Anglo-Saxon heresy out of your head; they superimposed their language, they scarce modified the race; only in Berwickshire and Roxburgh have they very largely affected the place names. The Scandinavians did much more to Scotland than the Angles. The Saxons didn't come.

Enough of this sham antiquarianism. Yes, it is in the matter of the book of course, that collaboration shows; as for the manner, it is superficially all mine in the sense that the last copy is all in my hand. Lloyd did not even put pen to paper in the Paris scenes or the Barbizon scene; it was no good; he wrote and often rewrote all the rest; I had the best service from him on the character of Nares. You see, we had been just meeting the man, and his memory was full of the man's words and ways. And Lloyd is an impressionist, pure and simple. The great difficulty of collaboration is that you can't explain what you mean. I know what kind of effect I mean a character to give — what kind of *tache* he is to make; but how am I to tell my collaborator in words? Hence 438 it was necessary to say, "Make him So-and-so"; and this was all right for Nares and Pinkerton and Loudon Dodd, whom we both knew, but for Bellairs, for instance — a man with whom I passed ten minutes fifteen years ago — what was I to say? and what could Lloyd do? I, as a personal artist, can begin a character with only a haze in my head, but how if I have to translate the haze into words before I begin? In our manner of collaboration (which I think the only possible — I mean that of one person being responsible, and giving the *coup de pouce* to every part of the work) I was spared the obviously hopeless business of trying to explain to my collaborator what *style* I wished a passage to be treated in. These are the times that illustrate to a man the inadequacy of spoken language. Now — to be just to written language — I can (or could) find a language for my every mood, but how could I *tell* any one beforehand what this effect was to be, which it would take every art that I possessed, and hours and hours of deliberate labour and selection and rejection, to produce? These are the impossibilities of collaboration. Its immediate advantage is to focus two minds together on the stuff, and to produce in consequence an extraordinarily greater richness of purview, consideration, and invention. The hardest chapter of all was "Cross Questions and Crooked Answers." You would not believe what that cost us before it assumed the least unity and colour. Lloyd wrote it at least thrice, and I at least five times — this is from memory. And was that last chapter worth the trouble it cost? Alas, that I should ask the question! Two classes of men — the artist and the educationalist — are sworn, on soul and conscience, not to ask it. You get an ordinary, grinning, red-headed boy, and you have to educate him. Faith supports you; you give your valuable hours, the boy does not seem to profit, but that way your duty lies, for which you are paid, and you must persevere. Education has always seemed to me one of the few possible and dignified ways of 439 life. A sailor, a shepherd, a schoolmaster — to a less degree, a soldier — and (I don't know why, upon my soul, except as a sort of schoolmaster's unofficial assistant, and a kind of acrobat in tights) an artist, almost exhaust the category.

If I had to begin again — I know not — *si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait* ... I know not at all — I believe I should try to honour Sex more religiously. The worst of our education is that Christianity does not recognise and hallow Sex. It looks askance at it, over its shoulder, oppressed as it is by reminiscences of hermits and Asiatic self-tortures. It is a terrible hiatus in our modern religions that they cannot see and make venerable that which they ought to see first and hallow most. Well, it is so; I cannot be wiser than my generation.

But no doubt there is something great in the half-success that has attended the effort of turning into an emotional religion, Bald Conduct, without any appeal, or almost none, to the figurative, mysterious, and constitutive facts of life. Not that conduct is not constitutive, but dear! it's dreary! On the whole, conduct is better dealt with on the cast-iron "gentleman" and duty formula, with as little fervour and poetry as possible; stoical and short.... There is a new something or other in the wind, which exercises me hugely: anarchy, — I mean, anarchism. People who (for pity's sake) commit dastardly murders very basely, die like saints, and leave beautiful letters behind 'em (did you see Vaillant to his daughter? it was the New Testament over again); people whose conduct is inexplicable to me, and yet their spiritual life higher than that of most. This is just what the early Christians must have seemed to the Romans. Is this, then, a new *drive* among the monkeys? Mind you, Bob, if they go on being martyred a few years more, the gross, dull, not unkindly bourgeois may get tired or ashamed or afraid of going on martyring; and the anarchists come out at the top just like the early Christians. That 440 is, of course, they will step into power as a *personnel*, but God knows what they may believe when they come to do so; it can't be stranger or more improbable than what Christianity had come to be by the same time.

Your letter was easily read, the pagination presented no difficulty, and I read it with much edification and gusto. To look back, and to stereotype one bygone humour — what a hopeless thing! The mind runs ever in a thousand eddies like a river between cliffs. You (the ego) are always spinning round in it, east, west, north, and south. You are twenty years old, and forty, and five, and the next moment you are freezing at an imaginary eighty; you are never the plain forty-four that you should be by dates. (The most philosophical language is the Gaelic, which has *no present tense* — and the most useless.) How, then, to choose some former age, and stick there?

R. L. S.

To Sir Herbert Maxwell

Vailima, Samoa, September 10, 1894.

DEAR SIR HERBERT MAXWELL, — I am emboldened by reading your very interesting Rhind Lectures to put to you a question: What is my name, Stevenson?

I find it in the forms Stevinetoun, Stevensoune, Stevensonne, Stenesone, Stewinsoune, M'Stein, and MacStephane. My family, and (as far as I can gather) the majority of the inglorious clan, hailed from the borders of Cunningham and Renfrew, and the upper waters of the Clyde. In the Barony of Bothwell was the seat of the laird Stevenson of Stevenson; but, as of course you know, there is a parish in Cunningham and places in Peebles and Haddington bearing the same name.

If you can at all help me, you will render me a real service which I wish I could think of some manner to repay. — Believe me, yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S. — I should have added that I have perfect evidence before me that (for some obscure reason) Stevenson was a favourite alias with the M'Gregors.

To Sidney Colvin

Vailima, Samoa, October 6th, 1894.

MY DEAR COLVIN, — We have had quite an interesting month and mostly in consideration of that road which I think I told you was about to be made. It was made without a hitch, though I confess I was considerably surprised. When they got through, I wrote a speech to them, sent it down to a Missionary to be translated, and invited the lot to a feast. I thought a good deal of this feast. The occasion was really interesting. I wanted to pitch it in hot. And I wished to have as many influential witnesses present as possible. Well, as it drew towards the day I had nothing but refusals. Everybody supposed it was to be a political occasion, that I had made a hive of rebels up here, and was going to push for new hostilities.

The Amanuensis has been ill, and after the above trial petered out. I must return to my own, lone Waverley. The captain refused, telling me why; and at last I had to beat up for people almost with prayers. However, I got a good lot, as you will see by the accompanying newspaper report. The road contained this inscription, drawn up by the chiefs themselves:

"The Road of Gratitude

"Considering the great love of Tusitala in his loving care of us in our distress in the prison, we have therefore prepared a splendid gift. It shall never be muddy, it shall endure for ever, this road that we have dug.”

This the newspaper reporter could not give, not knowing any Samoan. The same reason explains his references to Seumanutafa’s speech, which was not long and *was* 442 important, for it was a speech of courtesy and forgiveness to his former enemies. It was very much applauded. Secondly, it was not Poè, it was Mataaf (don’t confuse with Mataafa) who spoke for the prisoners. Otherwise it is extremely correct.

I beg your pardon for so much upon my aboriginals. Even you must sympathise with me in this unheard-of compliment, and my having been able to deliver so severe a sermon with acceptance. It remains a nice point of conscience what I should wish done in the matter. I think this meeting, its immediate results, and the terms of what I said to them, desirable to be known. It will do a little justice to me, who have not had too much justice done me. At the same time, to send this report to the papers is truly an act of self-advertisement, and I dislike the thought. Query, in a man who has been so much calumniated, is that not justifiable? I do not know; be my judge. Mankind is too complicated for me; even myself. Do I wish to advertise? I think I do, God help me! I have had hard times here, as every man must have who mixes up with public business; and I bemoan myself, knowing that all I have done has been in the interest of peace and good government; and having once delivered my mind, I would like it, I think, to be made public. But the other part of me *regimbs*.

I know I am at a climacteric for all men who live by their wits, so I do not despair. But the truth is I am pretty nearly useless at literature, and I will ask you to spare *St. Ives* when it goes to you; it is a sort of *Count Robert of Paris*. But I hope rather a *Dombey and Son*, to be succeeded by *Our Mutual Friend* and *Great Expectations* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. No toil has been spared 443 over the ungrateful canvas; and it *will not* come together, and I must live, and my family. Were it not for my health, which made it impossible, I could not find it in my heart to forgive myself that I did not stick to an honest, commonplace trade when I was young, which might have now supported me during these ill years. But do not suppose me to be down in anything else; only, for the nonce, my skill deserts me, such as it is, or was. It was a very little dose of inspiration, and a pretty little trick of style, long lost, improved by the most heroic industry. So far, I have managed to please the journalists. But I am a fictitious article and have long known it. I am read by journalists, by my fellow-novelists, and by boys; with these, *incipit et explicit* my vogue. Good thing anyway! for it seems to have sold the Edition. And I look forward confidently to an aftermath; I do not think my health can be so hugely improved, without some subsequent improvement in my brains. Though, of course, there is the possibility that literature is a morbid secretion, and abhors health! I do not think it is possible to have fewer illusions than I. I sometimes wish I had more. They are amusing. But I cannot take myself seriously as an artist; the limitations are so obvious. I did take myself seriously as a workman of old, but my practice has fallen off. I am now an idler and cumberer of the ground; it may be excused to me perhaps by twenty years of industry and ill-health, which have taken the cream off the milk.

As I was writing this last sentence, I heard the strident rain drawing near across the forest, and by the time I was come to the word "cream" it burst upon my roof, and has since redoubled, and roared upon it. A very welcome change. All smells of the good wet earth, sweetly, with a kind of Highland touch; the crystal rods of the shower, as I look up, have drawn their criss-cross over everything; and a gentle and very welcome coolness comes up around me in little draughts, blessed 444 draughts, not chilling, only equalising the temperature. Now the rain is off in this spot, but I hear it roaring still in the nigh neighbourhood — and that moment, I was driven from the verandah by random raindrops, spitting at me through the Japanese blinds. These are not tears with which the page is spotted! Now the windows stream, the roof reverberates. It is good; it answers something which is in my heart; I know not what; old memories of the wet moorland belike.

Well, it has blown by again, and I am in my place once more, with an accompaniment of perpetual dripping on the verandah — and very much inclined for a chat. The exact subject I do not know! It will be bitter at least, and that is strange, for my attitude is essentially *not* bitter, but I have come into these days when a man sees above all the seamy side, and I have dwelt some time in a small place where he has an opportunity of reading little motives that he would miss in the great world, and indeed, to-day, I am almost ready to call the world an error. Because? Because I have not drugged myself with successful work, and there are all kinds of trifles buzzing in my ear, unfriendly trifles, from the least to the — well, to the pretty big. All these that touch me are Pretty Big; and yet none touch me in the least, if rightly looked at, except the one eternal burthen to go on making an income for my family. That is rightly the root and ground of my ill. The jingling, tingling, damned mint sauce is the trouble always; and if I could find a place where I could lie down and give up for (say) two years, and allow the sainted public to support me, if it were a lunatic asylum, wouldn't I go, just! But we can't have both extremes at once, worse luck! I should like to put my savings into a proprietarian investment, and retire in the meanwhile into a communistic retreat, which is double-dealing. But you men with aries don't know how alas family weighs on a fellow's mind.

I hear the article in next week's *Herald* is to be a great 445 affair, and all the officials who came to me the other day are to be attacked! This is the unpleasant side of being (without a salary) in public life; I will leave any one to judge if my speech was well intended, and calculated to do good. It was even daring — I assure you one of the chiefs looked like a fiend at my description of Samoan warfare. Your warning was not needed; we are all determined to *keep the peace* and to *hold our peace*. I know, my dear fellow, how remote all this sounds! Kindly pardon your friend. I have my life to live here; these interests are for me immediate; and if I do not write of them, I might as soon not write at all. There is the difficulty in a distant correspondence. It is perhaps easy for me to enter into and understand your interests; I own it is difficult for you; but you must just wade through them for friendship's sake, and try to find tolerable what is vital for your friend. I cannot forbear challenging you to it, as to intellectual lists. It is the proof of intelligence, the proof of not being a barbarian, to be able to enter into something outside of oneself, something that does not touch one's next neighbour in the city omnibus.

Good-bye, my lord. May your race continue and you flourish. — Yours ever,

Tusitala.

To Alison Cunningham

For a fuller account of the road-making affair here mentioned, see p, 462.

[*Vailima*] *October 8th, 1894.*

MY DEAR CUMMY, — So I hear you are ailing? Think shame to yoursell! So you think there is nothing better to be done with time than that? and be sure we can all do much ourselves to decide whether we are to be ill or well! like a man on the gymnastic bars. We are all pretty well. As for me, there is nothing the matter with me in the world, beyond the disgusting circumstance that I am not so young as once I was. Lloyd has a gymnastic 446 machine, and practises upon it every morning for an hour: he is beginning to be a kind of young Samson. Austin grows fat and brown, and gets on not so ill with his lessons, and my mother is in great price. We are having knock-me-down weather for heat; I never remember it so hot before, and I fancy it means we are to have a hurricane again this year, I think; since we came here, we have not had a single gale of wind! The Pacific is but a child to the North Sea; but when she does get excited, and gets up and girds herself, she can do something good. We have had a very interesting business here. I helped the chiefs who were in prison; and when they were set free, what should they do but offer to make a part of my road for me out of gratitude? Well, I was ashamed to refuse, and the trumps dug my road for me, and put up this inscription on a board: —

"*Considering the great love of His Excellency Tusitala in his loving care for us in our tribulation in the prison we have made this great gift; it shall never be muddy, it shall go on for ever, this road that we have dug!*" We had a great feast when it was done, and I read them a kind of lecture, which I dare say Auntie will have, and can let you see. Weel, guid bye to ye, and joy be wi' ye! I hae nae time to say mair. They say I'm gettin' *fat* — a fact! — Your laddie, with all love,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To James Payn

Vailima, Samoa, Nov. 4, 1894.

MY DEAR JAMES PAYN, — I am asked to relate to you a little incident of domestic life at Vailima. I had read your *Gleams of Memory*, No. 1; it then went to my wife, to Osbourne, to the cousin that is within my gates, and to my respected amanuensis, Mrs. Strong. Sunday approached. In the course of the afternoon I was attracted to the great 'all — the winders is by Vanderputty, which 447 upon entering I beheld a memorable scene. The floor was bestrewn with the forms of midshipmen from the *Curaçoa* — "boldly say a wilderness of gunroom" — and in the midst of this sat Mrs. Strong throned on the sofa and reading aloud *Gleams of Memory*. They had just come the length of your immortal definition of boyhood in the concrete, and I had the pleasure to see the whole party dissolve under its influence with inextinguishable laughter. I thought this was not half bad for arthritic gout! Depend upon it, sir, when I go into the arthritic gout business, I shall be done with literature, or at least with the funny business. It is quite true I have my battlefields behind me. I have done perhaps as much work as anybody else under the most deplorable conditions. But two things fall to be noticed: In the first place, I never was in actual pain; and in the second, I was never funny. I'll tell you the worst day that I remember. I had a hemorrhage, and was not allowed to speak; then, induced by the devil, or an errant doctor, I was led to partake of that bowl which neither cheers nor inebriates — the castor-oil bowl. Now, when castor-oil goes right, it is one thing; but when it goes wrong, it is another. And it went wrong with me that day. The waves of faintness and nausea succeeded each other for twelve hours, and I do feel a legitimate pride in thinking that I stuck to my work all through and wrote a good deal of *Admiral Guinea* (which I might just as well not have written for all the reward it ever brought me) in spite of the barbarous bad conditions. I think that is my great boast; and it seems a little thing alongside of your *Gleams of*

Memory illustrated by spasms of arthritic gout. We really should have an order of merit in the trade of letters. For valour, Scott would have had it; Pope too; myself on the strength of that castor-oil; and James Payn would be a Knight Commander. The worst of it is, though Lang tells me you exhibit the courage of Huish, that not even an order can alleviate the wretched annoyance 448 of the business. I have always said that there is nothing like pain; toothache, dumb-ague, arthritic gout, it does not matter what you call it, if the screw is put upon the nerves sufficiently strong, there is nothing left in heaven or in earth that can interest the sufferer. Still, even to this there is the consolation that it cannot last for ever. Either you will be relieved and have a good hour again before the sun goes down, or else you will be liberated. It is something after all (although not much) to think that you are leaving a brave example; that other literary men love to remember, as I am sure they will love to remember, everything about you — your sweetness, your brightness, your helpfulness to all of us, and in particular those one or two really adequate and noble papers which you have been privileged to write during these last years. — With the heartiest and kindest good-will, I remain, yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

This was the last letter I received from my friend. On the morning of his death the following month he spoke of being behindhand with his December letter and of his intention to write it next day.

[*Vailima, November 1894.*]

DEAR COLVIN, — Saturday there was a ball to the ship, and on Sunday Gurr had a child to be baptized. Belle was to be godmother and had to be got down; which was impossible, as the jester Euclid says. However, we had four men of very different heights take the poles of a sort of bier and carry her shoulder high down the road, till we met a trap. On the return journey on Sunday, they were led by Austin playing (?) on a bugle, and you have no idea how picturesque a business it was; the four half-naked bearers, the cane lounge at that height from the ground, and Belle in black and pretty pale reclining very like a dead warrior of yore. However she wasn't dead yet. All the rest of the afternoon we hung 449 about and had consultations about the baptism. Just as we went in to dinner, I saw the moon rise accurately full, looking five times greater than nature, and the face that we try to decipher in its silver disk wearing an obliterated but benignant expression. The ball followed; bluejackets and officers danced indiscriminately, after their pleasant fashion; and Belle, who lay in the hotel verandah, and held a sort of reception all night, had her longest visit from one of the blue-jackets, her partner in the last ball. About one on the Sunday morning all was over, and we went to bed — I, alas! only to get up again, my room being in the verandah, where a certain solemnly absurd family conclave (all drunk) was being held until (I suppose) three. By six, I was awake, and went out on the verandah. On the east the dawn had broken, cold and pink and rust colour, and the marshes were all smoking whitely and blowing into the bay like smoke, but on the west, all was golden. The street was empty, and right over it hung the setting moon, accurately round, yellow as an apricot, but slumberous, with an effect of afternoon you would not believe if you had not seen it. Then followed a couple of hours on the verandah I would be glad to forget. By seven X. Y. had joined me, as drunk as they make 'em. As he sat and talked to me, he smelt of the charnel house, methought. He looked so old (he is one month my senior); he spoke so silly; his poor leg is again covered with boils, which will spell death to him; and — enough. That interview has made me a teetotaller. O, it is bad to grow old. For me, it is practically hell. I do not like the consolations of age. I was born a young man; I have continued so; and before I end, a pantaloon, a driveller — enough again. But I don't enjoy getting elderly. Belle and I got home about three in the afternoon, she having in the meantime renounced all that makes life worth living in the name of little Miss Gurr, and I seriously reflecting on renouncing the kindly bowl in earnest! Presently after arrived the news of 450 Margery Ide (the C.J.'s daughter) being seriously ill, alarmingly ill. Fanny wanted to go down; it was a difficult choice; she was not fit for it; on the other hand (and by all accounts) the patient would die if she did not get better nursing. So we made up our own minds, and F. and I set out about dusk, came to the C.J.'s in the middle of dinner, and announced our errand. I am glad to say the C.J. received her very willingly; and I came home again, leaving her behind, where she was certainly much wanted.

Nov. 4th. — You ask about *St. Ives*. No, there is no Burford Bridge in it, and no Boney. He is a squire of dames, and there are petticoats in the story, and damned bad ones too, and it is of a tolerable length, a hundred thousand, I believe, at least. Also, since you are curious on the point, St. Ives learned his English from a Mr. Vicary, an English lawyer, a prisoner in France. He must have had a fine gift of languages!

Things are going on here in their usual gently disheartening gait. The Treaty Officials are both good fellows whom I can't help liking, but who will never make a hand of Samoa. — Yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Professor Meiklejohn

Congratulating an old friend of Savile Club days (see vol. xxiii.) on his sailor son.

Vailima, Samoa, Nov. 6th, 1894.

MY DEAR MEIKLEJOHN, — Greeting! This is but a word to say how much we felicitate ourselves on having made the acquaintance of Hughie. He is having a famous good chance on board the *Curaçoa*, which is the best ship I have ever seen. And as for himself, he is a most engaging boy, of whom you may very well be proud, and I have no mortal manner of doubt but what you are. He comes up here very often, where he is a great favourite 451 with my ladies, and sings me "the melancholy airs of my native land" with much acceptancy. His name has recently become changed in Vailima. Beginning with the courteous "Mr. Meiklejohn," it shaded off into the familiar "Hughie," and finally degenerated into "the Whitrett." I hear good reports of him abroad and ashore, and I scarce need to add my own testimony.

Hughie tells me you have gone into the publishing business, whereat I was much shocked. My own affairs with publishers are now in the most flourishing state, owing to my ingenuity in leaving them to be dealt with by a Scotch Writer to the Signet. It has produced revolutions in the book trade and my banking account. I tackled the Whitrett severely on a grammar you had published, which I had not seen and condemned out of hand and in the broadest Lallan. I even condescended on the part of that grammar which I thought to be the worst and condemned your presentation of the English verb unmercifully. It occurs to me, since you are a publisher, that the least thing you could do would be to send me a copy of that grammar to correct my estimate. But I fear I am talking too long to one of the enemy. I begin to hear in fancy the voice of Meiklejohn upraised in the Savile Club: "No quarter to publishers!" So I will ask you to present my compliments to Mrs. Meiklejohn upon her son, and to accept for yourself the warmest reminiscences of auld lang syne. — Yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Lieutenant Eeles

Vailima, Samoa, November 24, 1894.

MY DEAR EELES, — The hand, as you will perceive (and also the spelling!), is Teuila's, but the scrannel voice is 452 what remains of Tusitala's. First of all, for business. When you go to London you are to charter a hansom cab and proceed to the Museum. It is particular fun to do this on Sundays when the Monument is shut up. Your cabman expostulates with you, you persist. The cabman drives up in front of the closed gates and says, "I told you so, sir." You breathe in the porter's ears the mystic name of *Colvin*, and he immediately unfolds the iron barrier. You drive in, and doesn't your cabman think you're a swell. A lord mayor is nothing to it. Colvin's door is the only one in the eastern gable of the building. Send in your card to him with "From R. L. S." in the corner, and the machinery will do the rest. Henry James's address is 34 De Vere Mansions West. I cannot remember where the place is; I cannot even remember on which side of the park. But it's one of those big Cromwell Road-looking deserted thoroughfares out west in Kensington or Bayswater, or between the two; and anyway Colvin will be able to put you on the direct track for Henry James. I do not send formal introductions, as I have taken the liberty to prepare both of them for seeing you already.

Hoskyn is staying with us.

It is raining dismally. The Curaçoa track is hardly passable, but it must be trod to-morrow by the degenerate feet of their successor the Wallaroos. I think it a very good account of these last that we don't think them either deformed or habitual criminals — they seem to be a kindly lot.

The doctor will give you all the gossip. I have preferred in this letter to stick to the strictly solid and necessary. With kind messages from all in the house to all in the wardroom, all in the gunroom, and (may we dare to breathe it) to him who walks abaft, believe me, my dear Eeles, yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Sir Herbert Maxwell

Vailima, Samoa, December 1, 1894.

DEAR SIR HERBERT, — Thank you very much for your long and kind letter. I shall certainly take your advice and call my cousin, the Lyon King, into council. It is certainly a very interesting subject, though I don't suppose it can possibly lead to anything, this connection between the Stevensons and M'Gregors. Alas! your invitation is to me a mere derision. My chances of visiting Heaven are about as valid as my chances of visiting Monreith. Though I should like well to see you, shrunken into a cottage, a literary Lord of Ravenscraig. I suppose it is the inevitable doom of all those who dabble in Scotch soil; but really your fate is the more blessed. I cannot conceive anything more grateful to me, or more amusing or more picturesque, than to live in a cottage outside your own park-walls. — With renewed thanks, believe me, dear Sir Herbert, yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Andrew Lang

The following refers of course to *Weir of Hermiston*, the chief character of which was studied from the traditions of Lord Braxfield, and on which Stevenson was working at the full height of his powers when death overtook him two days later.

Vailima, Samoa, December 1, 1894.

MY DEAR LANG, — For the portrait of Braxfield, much thanks! It is engraved from the same Raeburn portrait that I saw in ‘76 or ‘77 with so extreme a gusto that I have ever since been Braxfield’s humble servant, and am now trying, as you know, to stick him into a novel. Alas! one might as well try to stick in Napoleon. The picture shall be framed and hung up in my study. Not only as 454 a memento of you, but as a perpetual encouragement to do better with his Lordship. I have not yet received the transcripts. They must be very interesting. Do you know I picked up the other day an old Longman’s where I found an article of yours that I had missed, about Christie’s? I read it with great delight. The year ends with us pretty much as it began, among wars and rumours of wars, and a vast and splendid exhibition of official incompetence. — Yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

The next, and last, letter is to Mr. Gosse, dated also only two days before the writer’s death. It acknowledges the dedication “To Tusitala” of that gentleman’s volume of poems, *In Russet and Silver*, just received.

Vailima, Samoa, December 1, 1894.

I am afraid, my dear Weg, that this must be the result of bribery and corruption! The volume to which the dedication stands as preface seems to me to stand alone in your work; it is so natural, so personal, so sincere, so articulate in substance, and what you always were sure of — so rich in adornment.

Let me speak first of the dedication. I thank you for it from the heart. It is beautifully said, beautifully and kindly felt; and I should be a churl indeed if I were not grateful, and an ass if I were not proud. I remember when Symonds dedicated a book to me; I wrote and told him of “the pang of gratified vanity” with which I had read it. The pang was present again, but how much more sober and autumnal — like your volume. Let me tell you a story, or remind you of a story. In the year of grace something or other, anything between ‘76 and ‘78, I mentioned to you in my usual autobiographical and inconsiderate manner that I was hard up. You said promptly that you had a balance at your banker’s, and could make it convenient to let me have a cheque, and I 455 accepted and got the money — how much was it? — twenty or perhaps thirty pounds? I know not — but it was a great convenience. The same evening, or the next day, I fell in conversation (in my usual autobiographical and ... see above) with a denizen of the

Savile Club, name now gone from me, only his figure and a dim three-quarter view of his face remaining. To him I mentioned that you had given me a loan, remarking easily that of course it didn’t matter to you. Whereupon he read me a lecture, and told me how it really stood with you financially. He was pretty serious; fearing, as I could not help perceiving, that I should take too light a view of the responsibility and the service (I was always thought too light — the irresponsible jester — you remember. O, *quantum mutatus ab illo*!) If I remember rightly, the money was repaid before the end of the week — or, to be more exact and a trifle pedantic, the se’nnight — but the service has never been forgotten; and I send you back this piece of ancient history, *consule Planco*, as a salute for your dedication, and propose that we should drink the health of the nameless one, who opened my eyes as to the true nature of what you did for me on that occasion.

But here comes my Amanuensis, so we’ll get on more swimmingly now. You will understand perhaps that what so particularly pleased me in the new volume, what seems to me to have so personal and original a note, are the middle-aged pieces in the beginning. The whole of them, I may say, though I must own an especial liking to —

“I yearn not for the fighting fate,
That holds and hath achieved;
I live to watch and meditate
And dream — and be deceived.”

You take the change gallantly. Not I, I must confess. It is all very well to talk of renunciation, and of course it has to be done. But, for my part, give me a roaring toothache! I do like to be deceived and to dream, but 456 I have very little use for either watching or meditation. I was not born for age. And, curiously enough, I seem to see a contrary drift in my work from that which is so remarkable in yours. You are going on sedately travelling through your ages, decently changing with the years to the proper tune. And here am I, quite out of my true course, and with nothing in my foolish elderly head but love-stories. This must repose upon some curious distinction of temperaments. I gather from a phrase, boldly autobiographical, that you are — well, not precisely growing thin. Can that be the difference?

It is rather funny that this matter should come up just now, as I am at present engaged in treating a severe case of middle age in one of my stories — ”The Justice-Clerk.” The case is that of a woman, and I think that I am doing her justice. You will be interested, I believe, to see the difference in our treatments. *Secreta Vitæ* comes nearer to the case of my poor Kirstie. Come to think of it, Gosse, I believe the main distinction is that you have a family growing up around you, and I am a childless, rather bitter, very clear-eyed, blighted youth. I have, in fact, lost the path that makes it easy and natural for you to descend the hill. I am going at it straight. And where I have to go down it is a precipice.

I must not forget to give you a word of thanks for *An English Village*. It reminds me strongly of Keats, which is enough to say; and I was particularly pleased with the petulant sincerity of the concluding sentiment.

Well, my dear Gosse, here's wishing you all health and prosperity, as well as to the mistress and the bairns. May you live long, since it seems as if you would continue to enjoy life. May you write many more books as good as this one — only there's one thing impossible, you can never write another dedication that can give the same pleasure to the vanished

Tusitala.

This question is with a view to the adventures of the hero in *St. Ives*, who according to Stevenson's original plan was to have been picked up from his foundered balloon by an American privateer.

As to admire *The Black Arrow*.

The suppressed first part of the *Amateur Emigrant*, written in San Francisco in 1879, which it was proposed now to condense and to some extent recast for the Edinburgh Edition.

Word omitted in MS.

I may be allowed to quote the following sentence from a letter of this gentleman written when the news of our friend's death reached England: — "So great was his power of winning love that though I knew him for less than a week I could have borne the loss of many a more intimate friend with less sorrow than Stevenson's. When I saw him, last Easter, there was no suggestion of failure of strength. After all I had heard of his delicacy I was astonished at his vigour. He was up at five, and at work soon after, and at eleven o'clock at night he was dancing on the floor of the big room while I played Scotch and Irish reels on the rickety piano. He would talk to me for hours of home and old friends, but with a wonderful cheerfulness, knowing himself banished from them for life and yet brought close to them by love. I confidently counted on his living; he took keen interest in my own poor work, and it was one of my ambitions to send him a book some day which would better deserve his attention."

Sentimental Tommy: whose chief likeness to R. L. S. was meant to be in the literary temperament and passion for the *mot propre*.

A proposed frontispiece for one of the volumes of the Edinburgh Edition.

Sic: query "least"?

Of *The Wrecker*.

Trieb, impulse.

It seemed an obvious duty to publish the speech in question through the English press, as the best proof both of Stevenson's wise and understanding methods of dealing with his native friends, and of the affection and authority which he enjoyed among them. I have reprinted it, as a necessary supplement to this letter, in Appendix II. at end of the present volume.

Whitrett or Whitrack is Scots for a weasel: why applied to Mr. Meiklejohn I know not.

APPENDIX I

ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF R. L. STEVENSON, BY LLOYD OSBOURNE

He wrote hard all that morning of the last day; his half-finished book, *Hermiston*, he judged the best he had ever written, and the sense of successful effort made him buoyant and happy as nothing else could. In the afternoon the mail fell to be answered; not business correspondence — for this was left till later — but replies to the long, kindly letters of distant friends, received but two days since, and still bright in memory.

At sunset he came downstairs; rallied his wife about the forebodings she could not shake off; talked of a lecturing tour to America that he was eager to make, "as he was now so well," and played a game at cards with her to drive away her melancholy. He said he was hungry; begged her assistance to help him make a salad for the evening meal; and to enhance the little feast, he brought up a bottle of old Burgundy from the cellar. He was helping his wife on the verandah, and gaily talking, when suddenly he put both hands to his head, and cried out, "What's that?" Then he asked quickly, "Do I look strange?" Even as he did so he fell on his knees beside her. He was helped into the great hall, between his wife and his body-servant, Sosimo, losing consciousness instantly as he lay back in the arm-chair that had once been his grandfather's. Little time was lost in bringing the doctors — Anderson, of the man-of-war, and his friend Dr. Funk. They looked at him and shook their heads; 458 they laboured strenuously, and left nothing undone; but he had passed the bounds of human skill.

The dying man lay back in the chair, breathing heavily, his family about him frenzied with grief, as they realised all hope was past. The dozen and more Samoans that formed part of the little clan of which he was chief sat in a wide semicircle on the floor, their reverent, troubled, sorrow-stricken faces all fixed upon their dying master. Some knelt on one knee, to be instantly ready for any command that might be laid upon them. A narrow bed was brought into the centre of the room, the Master was gently laid upon it, his head supported by a rest, the gift of Shelley's son. Slower and slower grew his respiration, wider the interval between the long, deep breaths. The Rev. Mr. Clarke was now come, an old and valued friend; he knelt and prayed as the life ebbed away.

He died at ten minutes past eight on Monday evening the 3rd of

December, in the forty-fifth year of his age.

The great Union Jack that flew over the house was hauled down, and laid over the body, fit shroud for a loyal Scotsman. He lay in the hall which was ever his pride, where he had passed the gayest and most delightful hours of his life, a noble room with open stairway and mullioned windows. In it were the treasures of his far-off Scottish home: the old carved furniture, the paintings and busts that had been in his father's house before him. The Samoans passed in procession beside his bed, kneeling and kissing his hand, each in turn, before taking their places for the long night watch beside him. No entreaty could induce them to retire, to rest themselves for the painful and arduous duties of the morrow. It would show little love for Tusitala, they said, if they did not spend their last night beside him. Mournful and silent, they sat in deep dejection, poor, simple, loyal folk, fulfilling the duty they owed their chief.

A messenger was despatched to the few chiefs connected with the family, to announce the tidings and bid 459 them assemble their men on the morrow for the work there was to do.

Sosimo asked on behalf of the Roman Catholics that they might be allowed to recite the prayers for the dead. Till midnight the solemn chants continued, the prolonged, sonorous prayers of the Church of Rome, in commingled Latin and Samoan. Later still, a chief arrived with his retainers, bringing a precious mat to wrap about the dead.

He too knelt and kissed the hand of Tusitala, and took his place amid the sleepless watchers. Another arrived with a fine mat, a man of higher rank, whose incipient consumption had often troubled the Master.

"Talofa Tusitala!" he said as he drew nigh, and took a long, mournful look at the face he knew so well. When, later on, he was momentarily required on some business of the morrow, he bowed reverently before retiring. "Tofa Tusitala!" he said, "Sleep, Tusitala!"

The morning of the 4th of December broke cool and sunny, a beautiful day, rare at this season of the year. More fine mats were brought, until the Union Jack lay nigh concealed beneath them. Among the new-comers was an old Mataafa chief, one of the builders of the "Road of the Loving Hearts," a man who had spent many days in prison for participation in the rebellion. "I am only a poor Samoan, and ignorant," said he, as he crouched beside the body; "others are rich, and can give Tusitala the parting presents of rich fine mats; I am poor, and can give nothing this last day he receives his friends. Yet I am not afraid to come and look the last time in my friend's face, never to see him more till we meet with God. Behold! Tusitala is dead; Mataafa is also dead to us. These two great friends have been taken by God. When Mataafa was taken, who was our support but Tusitala? We were in prison, and he cared for us. We were sick, and he made us well. We were hungry, and he fed us. The day was no longer than his kindness. You are great people and full of love. Yet who among you is so 460 great as Tusitala? What is your love to his love? Our clan was Mataafa's clan, for whom I speak this day; therein was Tusitala also. We mourn them both."

A meeting of chiefs was held to apportion the work and divide the men into parties. Forty were sent with knives and axes to cut a path up the steep face of the mountain, and the writer himself led another party to the summit — men chosen from the immediate family — to dig the grave on a spot where it was Mr. Stevenson's wish that he should lie. Nothing more picturesque can be imagined than the narrow ledge that forms the summit of Vaea, a place no wider than a room, and flat as a table. On either side the land descends precipitously; in front lies the vast ocean and the surf-swept reefs; to the right and left green mountains rise, densely covered with the primeval forest. Two hundred years ago the eyes of another man turned towards that same peak of Vaea as the spot that should ultimately receive his war-worn body: Soalu, a famous chief.

All the morning, Samoans were arriving with flowers; few of these were white, for they have not learned our foreign custom, and the room glowed with the many colours. There were no strangers on that day, no acquaintances; those only were called who would deeply feel the loss. At one o'clock a body of powerful Samoans bore away the coffin, hid beneath a tattered red ensign that had flown above his vessel in many a corner of the South Seas. A path so steep and rugged taxed their strength to the utmost; for not only was the journey difficult in itself, but extreme care was requisite to carry the coffin shoulder-high.

Half an hour later, the rest of his friends followed. It was a formidable ascent, and tried them hard. Nineteen Europeans, and some sixty Samoans, reached the summit. After a short rest, the Rev. W. E. Clarke read the burial service of the Church of England, interposing a prayer that Mr. Stevenson had written and 461 had read aloud to his family only the evening before his death: —

We beseech Thee, Lord, to behold us with favour, folk of many families and nations, gathered together in the peace of this roof; weak men and women, subsisting under the covert of Thy patience.

Be patient still; suffer us yet a while longer — with our broken purposes of good, and our idle endeavours against evil — suffer us a while longer to endure, and (if it may be) help us to do better. Bless to us our extraordinary mercies; if the day come when these must be taken, have us play the man under affliction. Be with our friends; be with ourselves. Go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns to us, our sun and comforter, call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts — eager to labour — eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion — and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it.

We thank Thee and praise Thee; and in the words of Him to whom this day is sacred, close our oblation.

APPENDIX II

ADDRESS OF R. L. STEVENSON TO THE CHIEFS ON THE OPENING OF THE ROAD OF GRATITUDE, OCTOBER 1894

Mr. Stevenson said, “We are met together to-day to celebrate an event and to do honour to certain chiefs, my friends, — Lelei, Mataafa, Salevao, Poè, Teleso, Tupuola Lotofaga, Tupuola Amaile, Muliaiga, Ifopo, and Fatialofa. You are all aware in some degree of what has happened. You know these chiefs to have been prisoners; you perhaps know that during the term of their confinement I had it in my power to do them certain favours. One thing some of you cannot know, that they were immediately repaid by answering attentions. They were liberated by the new administration; by the King, and the Chief Justice, and the Ta’its’ifono, who are here amongst us to-day, and to whom we all desire to tender our renewed and perpetual gratitude for that favour. As soon as they were free men — owing no man anything — instead of going home to their own places and families, they came to me; they offered to do this work for me as a free gift, without hire, without supplies, and I was tempted at first to refuse their offer. I knew the country to be poor, I knew famine threatening; I knew their families long disorganised for want of supervision. Yet I accepted, because I thought the lesson of that road might be more useful to Samoa than a thousand breadfruit trees; and because to myself it was an exquisite pleasure to receive 463 that which was so handsomely offered. It is now done; you have trod it to-day in coming hither. It has been made for me by chiefs; some of them old, some sick, all newly delivered from a harassing confinement, and in spite of weather unusually hot and insalubrious. I have seen these chiefs labour valiantly with their own hands upon the work, and I have set up over it, now that it is finished, the name of ‘The Road of Gratitude’ (the road of loving hearts) and the names of those that built it. ‘In perpetuam memoriam,’ we say, and speak idly. At least so long as my own life shall be spared, it shall be here perpetuated; partly for my pleasure and in my gratitude; partly for others; to continually publish the lesson of this road.”

Addressing himself to the chiefs, Mr. Stevenson then said: —

“I will tell you, Chiefs, that, when I saw you working on that road, my heart grew warm; not with gratitude only, but with hope. It seemed to me that I read the promise of something good for Samoa: it seemed to me, as I looked at you, that you were a company of warriors in a battle, fighting for the defence of our common country against all aggression. For there is a time to fight, and a time to dig. You Samoans may fight, you may conquer twenty times, and thirty times, and all will be in vain. There is but one way to defend Samoa. Hear it before it is too late. It is to make roads, and gardens, and care for your trees, and sell their produce wisely, and, in one word, to occupy and use your country. If you do not, others will."

The speaker then referred to the Parable of the Talents, Matt. xxv. 14-30, and continuing, impressively asked: "What are you doing with your talent, Samoa? Your three talents, Savaii, Upolu, and Tutuila? Have you buried it in a napkin? Not Upolu at least. You have rather given it out to be trodden under feet of swine: and the swine cut down food trees and burn houses, according 464 to the nature of swine, or of that much worse animal, foolish man, acting according to his folly. 'Thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed.' But God has both sown and strawed for you here in Samoa; He has given you a rich soil, a splendid sun, copious rain; all is ready to your hand, half done. And I repeat to you that thing which is sure: if you do not occupy and use your country, others will. It will not continue to be yours or your children's, if you occupy it for nothing. You and your children will in that case be cast out into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; for that is the law of God which passeth not away. I who speak to you have seen these things. I have seen them with my eyes — these judgments of God. I have seen them in Ireland, and I have seen them in the mountains of my own country — Scotland — and my heart was sad. These were a fine people in the past — brave, gay, faithful, and very much like Samoans, except in one particular, that they were much wiser and better at that business of fighting of which you think so much. But the time came to them as it now comes to you, and it did not find them ready. The messenger came into their villages, and they did not know him; they were told, as you are told, to use and occupy their country, and they would not hear. And now you may go through great tracts of the land and scarce meet a man or a smoking house, and see nothing but sheep feeding. The other people that I tell you of have come upon them like a foe in the night, and these are the other people's sheep who browse upon the foundation of their houses. To come nearer; and I have seen this judgment in Oahu also. I have ridden there the whole day along the coast of an island. Hour after hour went by and I saw the face of no living man except that of the guide who rode with me. All along that desolate coast, in one bay after another, we saw, still standing, the churches that have been built by the Hawaiians of old. There must have been many 465 hundreds, many thousands, dwelling there in old times, and worshipping God in these now empty churches. For to-day they were empty; the doors were closed, the villages had disappeared, the people were dead and gone; only the church stood on like a tombstone over a grave, in the midst of the white men's sugar fields. The other people had come and used that country, and the Hawaiians who occupied it for nothing had been swept away, 'where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

"I do not speak of this lightly, because I love Samoa and her people. I love the land, I have chosen it to be my home while I live, and my grave after I am dead; and I love the people, and have chosen them to be my people to live and die with. And I see that the day is come now of the great battle; of the great and the last opportunity by which it shall be decided whether you are to pass away like these other races of which I have been speaking, or to stand fast and have your children living on and honouring your memory in the land you received of your fathers.

"The Land Commission and the Chief Justice will soon have ended their labours. Much of your land will be restored to you, to do what you can with. Now is the time the messenger is come into your villages to summon you; the man is come with the measuring rod; the fire is lighted in which you shall be tried, whether you are gold or dross. Now is the time for the true champions of Samoa to stand forth. And who is the true champion of Samoa? It is not the man who blackens his face, and cuts down trees, and kills pigs and wounded men. It is the man who makes roads, who plants food trees, who gathers harvests, and is a profitable servant before the Lord, using and improving that great talent that has been given him in trust. That is the brave soldier; that is the true champion; because all things in a country hang together like the links of the anchor cable, one by another: but the anchor itself is industry.

"There is a friend of most of us, who is far away; not to be forgotten where I am, where Tupuola is, where Poè Lelei, Mataafa, Solevao, Poè Teleso, Tupuola Lotofaga, Tupuolo Amaile, Muliaiga, Ifopo, Fatialofa, Lemusu are. He knew what I am telling you; no man better. He saw the day was come when Samoa had to walk in a new path, and to be defended not only with guns and blackened faces, and the noise of men shouting, but by digging and planting, reaping and sowing. When he was still here amongst us, he busied himself planting cacao; he was anxious and eager about agriculture and commerce, and spoke and wrote continually; so that when we turn our minds to the same matters, we may tell ourselves that we are still obeying Mataafa. Ua tautala mai pea o ia ua mamao.

"I know that I do not speak to idle or foolish hearers. I speak to those who are not too proud to work for gratitude. Chiefs! You have worked for Tusitala, and he thanks you from his heart. In this, I could wish you could be an example to all Samoa — I wish every chief in these islands would turn to, and work, and build roads, and sow fields, and plant food trees, and educate his children and improve his talents — not for love of Tusitala, but for the love of his brothers, and his children, and the whole body of generations yet unborn.

"Chiefs! On this road that you have made many feet shall follow. The Romans were the bravest and greatest of people! mighty men of their hands, glorious fighters and conquerors. To this day in Europe you may go through parts of the country where all is marsh and bush, and perhaps after struggling through a thicket, you shall come forth upon an ancient road, solid and useful as the day it was made. You shall see men and women bearing their burdens along that even way, and you may tell yourself that it was built for them perhaps fifteen hundred years before, — perhaps before the coming of Christ, — by the Romans. And the people still remember and bless 467 them for that convenience, and say to one another, that as the Romans were the bravest men to fight, so they were the best at building roads.

"Chiefs! Our road is not built to last a thousand years, yet in a sense it is. When a road is once built, it is a strange thing how it collects traffic, how every year, as it goes on, more and more people are found to walk thereon and others are raised up to repair and perpetuate it and keep it alive; so that perhaps even this road of ours may, from reparation to reparation, continue to exist and be useful hundreds and hundreds of years after we are mingled in the dust. And it is my hope that our far-away descendants may remember and bless those who laboured for them to-day."

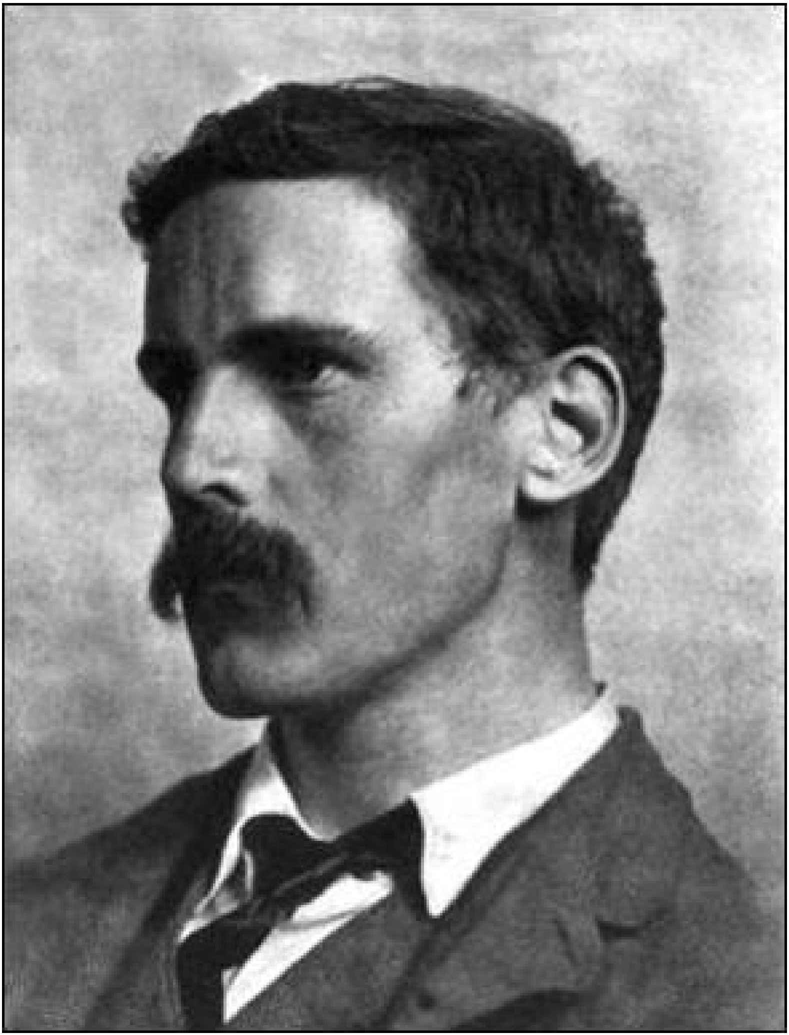
The Biographies

Stevenson, aged 15

THE LIFE OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON By Sir Graham Balfour

Sir Graham Balfour was an educationist, who published a well-received biography of his cousin Robert Louis Stevenson in 1901. Balfour lived in Vailima with the Stevenson family during the last two and a half years of his cousin's life. While some critics see the biography as well-written and useful, it has also been criticised for authorial control that Stevenson's wife Fanny had over the biography. Both volumes of the biography are made available to the reader.

Please note: the original footnotes have been preserved to aid your reading.



Balfour, Stevenson's cousin and first biographer

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PREFACE

This book is intended to supplement the volumes of Stevenson's Letters already published. Originally it was to have been written by Mr. Colvin, and to have appeared simultaneously with the two volumes of correspondence, so admirably edited by him; but when health and opportunity unfortunately failed him, Mrs. Stevenson requested me to undertake the task. The reason for this selection was that during the last two years and a half of my cousin's life, I had on his invitation made Vailima my home and the point of departure for my journeys; and, apart from the members of his own family, had been throughout that period the only one of his intimate friends in contact with every side of his life.

In Stevenson's case, if anywhere, the rule holds, that all biography would be autobiography if it could, and I have availed myself as far as possible of the writings in which he has referred to himself and his past experience. To bring together the passing allusions to himself scattered widely throughout his works was an obvious duty; at the same time my longer quotations, except in two or three manifest and necessary instances, have been taken almost entirely from the material which was hitherto either unpublished or issued only in the limited Edinburgh Edition. Whenever I found any passage in his manuscripts or ephemeral work bearing upon his life or development, I employed it no less readily than I should have used a letter or a hasty note, and in exactly the same fashion, regarding it as a piece of direct evidence from the best possible source. Such use of documents, I need hardly point out, differs entirely from challenging admiration for the literary form of immature or unfinished compositions. Where so much taste and discretion have been shown in preparing the final edition of his works, I should be the last to transgress the bounds imposed upon publication.

Since autobiography is wont to deal at some length with the first memories of its author, there seemed no occasion unduly to restrain this tendency in the case of the singer and interpreter of childhood, whose account of his early years is not only interesting in itself, but also of additional value for its illustration of his poems and essays. Again, in the representation of his adolescence, it must be remembered that he never wholly ceased to be a boy, that much that belonged to him in early youth remained with him in after-life, and that enthusiasms and generous impulses would sweep in and carry him away till the end.

Much of course he did outgrow, and that almost entirely his worse part. I feel that I should have done him a very ill service if I had refrained from showing the faults of the immaturity from which the character and genius of his manhood emerged. He had many failings, but few or none that made his friends think worse of him or love him any the less. To be the writer that he was, amounted to a great exploit and service to humanity; to become the man that in the end he became, seems to me an achievement equally great, an example no less eloquent.

Many persons, both friends and strangers to me, have rendered my task far easier than I could have hoped. There is hardly one of Stevenson's intimate friends but has helped me in a greater or less degree, and if I were here to repeat my thanks to all to whom I am indebted for information, I should have to record more than sixty names. Those to whom we owe most are often those whom formally we thank the least; and to Mrs. Stevenson and Mr. Lloyd Osbourne I can never express my indebtedness for their suggestions and their knowledge, their confidence, their patience, and their encouragement. But, of course, for everything that is here printed I alone am responsible.

The references to Stevenson's writings are necessarily to the pages of the Edinburgh Edition, as being the most complete collection of his works.

THE LIFE OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

VOLUME I

CHAPTER I

HIS ANCESTORS

'The ascendant hand is what I feel most strongly; I am bound in and in with my forbears. . . . We are all nobly born; fortunate those who know it; blessed those who remember.' — R. L. S., Letters, ii. 230.

'The sights and thoughts of my youth pursue me; and I see like a vision the youth of my father, and of his father, and the whole stream of lives flowing down there far in the north, with the sound of laughter and tears, to cast me out in the end, as by a sudden freshet, on these ultimate islands. And I admire and bow my head before the romance of destiny.' — R. L. S., Dedication of Catriona.

'It is the chief recommendation of long pedigrees,' as Stevenson once wrote, 'that we can follow back the careers of our component parts and be reminded of our ante-natal lives.'[1] But the threads are many and tangled, and it is hard to distinguish for more than a generation or two the transmission of the characteristics that meet in any individual of our own day. The qualities that would be required by other ages and for other pursuits are often unperceived, and the same man might scarce be recognised could he renew his life in three several centuries, and be set to a different task in each. Moreover, when any one has been dead for a hundred years, it is seldom that anything is remembered of him but his name and his occupation; he has become no more than a link in a pedigree, and the personal disposition is forgotten which made him loved or feared, together with the powers that gained him success or the weaknesses that brought about his failure. Therefore it is no unusual circumstance that, while we can trace the line of Stevenson's ancestors on either side for two and four hundred years respectively, our knowledge of them, in any real sense of the word, begins only at the end of the eighteenth century. After that date we have four portraits, drawn in part by his own hand, together with the materials for another sketch; in these may be discerned some of the traits and faculties which went to make up a personality so unusual, so fascinating, and so deeply loved.

The record of his father's people opens in 1675 with the birth of a son, Robert, to James Stevenson, 'presumably a tenant farmer' of Nether Carsewell in the parish of Neilston, some ten miles to the south-west of Glasgow. Robert's son, a maltster in Glasgow, had ten children, among whom were Hugh, born 1749, and Alan, born June 1752.

' With these two brothers my story begins,' their descendant wrote in A Family of Engineers,.[1] 'Their deaths were simultaneous; their lives unusually brief and full. Tradition whispered me in childhood they were the owners of an islet near St. Kitts; and it is certain they had risen to be at the head of considerable interests in the West Indies, which Hugh managed abroad and Alan at home,' almost before they had reached the years of manhood. In 1774 Alan was summoned to the West Indies by Hugh. * An agent had proved unfaithful on a serious scale; and it used to be told me in my childhood how the brothers pursued him from one island to another in an open boat, were exposed to the pernicious dews of the tropics, and simultaneously struck down. The dates and places of their deaths would seem to 1 Except where it is otherwise stated, the quotations in this chapter and most of the facts about his father's people are drawn from the unfinished fragment of A Family of Engineers, printed in the volume of Biography in the Edinburgh Edition of Stevenson's works.

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[1] Memories and Portraits, p. 162.

indicate a more scattered and prolonged pursuit.' At all events,' in something like the course of post, both were called away, the one twenty-five, the other twenty-two.'

Alan left behind him a wife and one child, aged two, the future engineer of the Bell Rock, who was also destined to be the grandfather of Robert Louis Stevenson. The widow was daughter of David Lillie, a Glasgow builder, several times Deacon of the Wrights, but had lost her father only a month before her husband's death, and for the time, at any rate, mother and son were almost destitute. She was, however,' a young woman of strong sense, well fitted to contend with poverty, and of a pious disposition, which it is like that these misfortunes heated. Like so many other widowed Scotswomen, she vowed her son should wag his head in a pulpit; but her means were inadequate to her ambition.' He made no great figure at the schools in Edinburgh to which she could afford to send him; but before he was fifteen there occurred an event 'which changed his own destiny and moulded that of his descendants — the second marriage of his mother.'

The new husband was a merchant burgess of Edinburgh of the name of Thomas Smith,' a widower of thirty-three with children, who is described as ' a man ardent, passionate, practical, designed for affairs, and prospering in them far beyond the average.' He was, among other things, a shipowner and under-writer; but chiefly he 'founded a solid business in lamps and oils, and was the sole proprietor of a concern called the Greenside Company's Works — "a multifarious concern of tinsmiths, coppersmiths, brassfounders, blacksmiths, and japanners."' Consequently, in August 1786, less than a year before his second marriage, 'having designed a system of oil lights to take the place of the primitive coal fires before in use, he was dubbed engineer to the newly-formed Board of Northern Lighthouses.'

The profession was a new one, just beginning to grow in the hands of its first practitioners; in it Robert Stevenson found his vocation and so entered with great zest into the pursuits of his stepfather. 'The public usefulness of the service would appeal to his judgment, the perpetual need for fresh expedients stimulate his ingenuity. And there was another attraction which, in the younger man at least, appealed to, and perhaps first aroused a profound and enduring sentiment of romance; I mean the attraction of the life. The seas into which his labours carried the new engineer were still scarce charted, the coasts still dark; his way on shore was often far beyond the convenience of any road, the isles in which he must sojourn were still partly savage. He must toss much in boats; he must often adventure on horseback by the dubious bridle-track through unfrequented wildernesses; he must sometimes plant his lighthouse in the very camp of wreckers; and he was continually enforced to the vicissitudes of outdoor life. The joy of my grandfather in this career was strong as the love of woman. It lasted him through youth and manhood, it burned strong in age, and at the approach of death his last yearning was to renew these loved experiences. Snared by these interests, the boy seems to have become at once the eager confidant and adviser of his new connection; the Church, if he had ever entertained the prospect very warmly, faded from his view; and at the age of nineteen I find him already in a post of some authority, superintending the construction of the lighthouse on the isle of Little Cumbrae in the Firth of Clyde. The change of aim seems to have caused or been accompanied by a change of character. It sounds absurd to couple the name of my grandfather with the word indolence; but the lad who had been destined from the cradle to the Church, and who had attained the age of fifteen without acquiring more than a moderate knowledge of Latin, was at least no unusual student. From the day of his charge at Little Cumbrae he steps before us what he remained until the end — a man of the most zealous industry, greedy of occupation, greedy of knowledge, a stern husband of time, a reader, a writer, unflagging in his task of self-improvement. Thenceforward his summers were spent directing works and ruling workmen, now in uninhabited, now in half-savage islands; his winters were set apart, first at the Ander- sonian Institution, then at the University of Edinburgh, to improve himself in mathematics, chemistry, natural history, agriculture, moral philosophy, and logic.'

His mother's marriage made a great change also in his domestic life: an only child hitherto, he had become a member of a large family, for his stepfather had already five children. However, the perilous experiment of bringing together two families for once succeeded. Mr. Smith's two eldest daughters, Jean and Janet, fervent in piety, unwearied in kind deeds, were well qualified both to appreciate and to attract the stepmother,' just as her son found immediate favour in the eyes of her husband. Either family, it seems, had been composed of two elements; and in the united household ' not only were the women extremely pious, but the men were in reality a trifle worldly.

Religious the latter both were; conscious, like all Scots, of the fragility and unreality of that scene in which we play our uncomprehended parts; like all Scots, realising daily and hourly the sense of another will than ours, and a perpetual direction in the affairs of life. But the current of their endeavours flowed in a more obvious channel. They had got on so far, to get on further was their next ambition — to gather wealth, to rise in society, to leave their descendants higher than themselves, to be (in some sense) among the founders of families. Scott was in the same town nourishing similar dreams. But in the eyes of the women these dreams would be foolish and idolatrous.'

The connection thus established was destined yet further to affect the life of the young man, and this contrast in the household was still to be perpetuated. 4 By an extraordinary arrangement, in which it is hard not to suspect the managing hand of a mother, Jean Smith became the wife of Robert Stevenson. The marriage of a man of twenty-seven and a girl of twenty, who have lived for twelve years as brother and sister, is difficult to conceive. It took place, however, and thus in 1799 the family was still further cemented by the union of a representative of the male or worldly element with that of the female and devout ' This essential difference remained unabridged, yet never diminished the strength of their relation. My grandfather pursued his design of advancing in the world with some measure of success; rose to distinction in his calling, grew to be the familiar of members of Parliament, judges of the Court of Session, and " landed gentlemen"; learned a ready address, had a flow of interesting conversation, and when he was referred to as "a highly respectable bourgeois" resented the description. My grandmother remained to the end devout and unambitious, occupied with her Bible, her children, and her house; easily shocked, and associating largely with a clique of godly parasites. . . .

' The cook was a godly woman, the butcher a Christian man, and the table suffered. The scene has been often described to me of my grandfather sawing with darkened countenance at some indissoluble joint — " Preserve me, my dear, what kind of a reedy, stringy beast is this? " — of the joint removed, the pudding substituted and uncovered; and of my grandmother's anxious glance and hasty, deprecatory comment, " Just mismanaged!" Yet with the invincible obstinacy of soft natures, she would adhere to the godly woman and the Christian man, or find others of the same kidney to replace them.'

Readers of Weir of Hermiston will recognise in this picture the original of Mrs. Weir in all her piety, gentleness, and incompetence, yet in real life ' husband and sons all entertained for this pious, tender soul the same chivalrous and moved affection. I have spoken with one who remembered her,5 her grandson continues,' and who had been the intimate and equal of her sons, and I found this witness had been struck, as I had been, with a sense of disproportion between the warmth of the adoration felt and the nature of the woman, whether as described or observed/

It is no part of my purpose to follow the professional life of Robert Stevenson, which was, moreover, written by his son David. In 1807 he was appointed sole engineer to the Board of Northern Lights, and in the same year began his great work at the Bell Rock, the first lighthouse ever erected far from land upon a reef deeply submerged at every tide.[1] He built twenty lighthouses in all, and introduced many inventions and improvements in the systems of lighting. He did not resign his post until his powers began to fail in 1843, and he died in 1850, four months before the birth of the most famous of his grandsons.

‘ He began to ail early in that year, and chafed for the period of the annual voyage, which was his medicine and delight. In vain his sons dissuaded him from the adventure. The day approached, the obstinate old gentleman was found in his room, furtively packing a portmanteau, and the truth had to be told him ere he would desist — that he was stricken with a malignant malady, and that before the yacht should have completed her circuit of the lights must himself have started on a more distant cruise. My father has more than once told me of the scene with emotion. The old man was intrepid; he had faced death before with a firm countenance; and I do not suppose he was much dashed at the nearness of our common destiny. But there was something else that would cut him to the quick — the loss of the cruise, the end of all his cruising; the knowledge that he had looked his last on Sumburgh, and the wild crags of Skye, and that Sound of Mull, with the praise of which his letters were so often occupied; that he was never again to hear the surf break in Clashcarnock; never again to see lighthouse after lighthouse (all younger than himself, and the more part of his own device) open in the hour of dusk their flowers of fire, or the topaz and the ruby interchange on the summit of the Bell Rock. To a life of so much activity and danger, a life’s work of so much interest and essential beauty, here came a long farewell.’[1]

‘My grandfather was much of a martinet, and had a habit of expressing himself on paper with an almost startling emphasis. Personally, with his powerful voice, sanguine countenance, and eccentric and original locutions, he was well qualified to inspire a salutary terror in the service. ... In that service he was king to his finger-tips. All should go in his way, from the principal lightkeeper’s coat to the assistant's fender, from the gravel in the garden-walks to the bad smell in the kitchen, or the oil-spots on the storeroom floor. It might be thought there was nothing more calculated to awake men's resentment, and yet his rule was not more thorough than it was beneficent. His thought for the keepers was continual, and it did not end with their lives. . . . While they lived, he wrote behind their backs to arrange for the education of their children, or to get them other situations if they seemed unsuitable for the Northern Lights. When he was at a lighthouse on a Sunday he held prayers and heard the children read. When a keeper was sick, he lent him his horse and sent him mutton and brandy from the ship. " The assistant's wife having been this morning confined, there was sent ashore a bottle of sherry and a few rusks — a practice which I have always observed in this service." . . . No servant of the Northern Lights came to Edinburgh but he was entertained at Baxter's Place to breakfast. There at his own table my grandfather sat down delightedly with his broad-spoken, home-spun officers. His whole relation to the service was, in fact, patriarchal; and I believe I may say that throughout its ranks he was adored. I have spoken with many who knew him; I was his grandson, and their words may very well have been words of flattery; but there was one thing that could not be affected, and that was the look and light that came into their faces at the name of Robert Stevenson.'

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[1] The Eddystone was scarcely covered at high tide, whereas the Bell Rock was twelve feet below water at such times.

In such a character a love of the picturesque is a trait quite unexpected, and yet in him it existed as a very genuine and active feeling. In the destruction of old buildings and the interference with scenery, inevitable to the engineer, he was careful to secure the best effect and to produce the least possible disfigurement. One road that in the course of his practice he had to design was laid out by him on Hogarth's line of beauty;[1] and of another of his works, the eastern approaches to Edinburgh, Cockburn wrote that 'the effect was like drawing up the curtain of a theatre.'

Sir Walter Scott accompanied the Commissioners and their officer on one of the annual voyages of the Pharos round the coasts of Scotland; his Journal, published by Lockhart, shows that he found Robert Stevenson an appreciative and intelligent companion. The Pirate and The Lord of the Isles were a direct result of this cruise; and it is a curious link in the history of our literature that Scott then visited Skerryvore, the future site of the lighthouse which, as one of the greatest achievements of the Stevenson family, gave its name long afterwards to the only home that their representative in letters ever found in this country.

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[1] 'Scott's Voyage in the Lighthouse Yacht,' by R. L. S., ScribneSs Magazine, October 1893, vol. xiv. p.

[1] Cf. ‘ Roads,’ fuvenilia, p. 119.

While the great engineer was the man of action that his grandson longed to be, he also essayed authorship to some purpose. He wrote and published an Account of the Bell Rock Lighthouse, which ‘is of its sort a masterpiece, and has been so recognised by judges; “ the romance of stone and lime,” it has been called, and “the Robinson Crusoe of engineering,” both happy and descriptive phrases. Even in his letters, though he cannot always be trusted for the construction of his sentences, the same literary virtues are apparent — a strong sense of romance and reality, and an almost infallible instinct for the right detail.’[1]

Traits are obliterated and the characteristics of a family may change, but the old man’s detestation of everything slovenly or dishonest,’ his interest in the whole page of experience, and his perpetual quest and fine scent for all that seems romantic to a boy,’ were handed down, if ever taste was transmitted, to his grandson. Of the one as of the other it might well have been said that ‘ Perfection was his design.’ But when we come to Thomas Stevenson, we shall find in him even more of the habits of mind and temper which distinguished his more celebrated son.

Stevenson’s mother was the youngest daughter of the Rev. Lewis Balfour, D.D., minister of Colinton, a parish on the stream known as the Water of Leith, four miles to the south-west of Edinburgh. The earliest known member of this family was one Alexander Balfour, placed in charge of the King’s Cellar by James IV. in 1499, and of the Queen’s Cellar in 1507; he held the lands of Inchrye in Fife, and was in all probability one of the Balfours of Mountquhannie, a numerous family, high in the favour of King James. The descendants of Alexander[2] were chiefly ministers, advocates, or merchants.

[1] Scribner’s Magazine, xiv. p. 490.

[3] His eldest son was David, a name otherwise unknown in the family; this fact was only re-discovered several years after the publication of Kidnapped. So does reality supplement fiction.

John Balfour of Kinloch, the Covenanter whom Scott in Old Mortality designates Balfour of Burley, may possibly have belonged to this family, but of this there is absolutely no evidence. In the direct line of descent, James Balfour, minister of St. Giles’, Edinburgh, from 1589 to 1613, married a niece of Andrew Melville the Reformer, and was, as a brass in his church now records, ‘ one of those who, summoned by James VI. to Hampton Court in 1606, refused to surrender their principles to his desires for the establishment of Episcopacy in Scotland.’ James, born 1680, whose father was one of the Governors of the Darien Company, bought the estate of Pilrig, lying between Edinburgh and Leith, with which the family has ever since been connected, and to which David Balfour is brought in Catriona. The laird whom David met was James, born 1705, who, having studied at Leyden, became Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, and then exchanged this Chair for that of the Laws of Nature and Nations. His wife was a daughter of Sir John Elphinstone of Logie and granddaughter of Sir Gilbert Elliot, known as Lord Minto, a judge of the Court of Session. It was through this connection that Stevenson was able to say, ‘ I have shaken a spear in the Debateable Land and shouted the slogan of the Elliots’.’ The Professor’s son, John Balfour, father of the minister of Colinton, married his cousin Jean Whyte; and so by this marriage Stevenson’s mother was a second cousin of the novelist, Major George Whyte-Melville.

Lewis Balfour was born at Pilrig in 1777; about the age of twenty he showed symptoms of a weak chest, and was sent for a winter to the Isle of Wight with the most entire success. On returning, he took orders, went to his first Ayrshire parish, and there fell in love with and married a daughter of Dr. Smith of Galston, the Dr. Smith who in Burns’s Holy Fair ‘ opens out his cauld harangues on practice and on morals.’ In 1823 he came to the parish of Colinton, and there remained until his death thirty-seven years later. In 1844 he lost his wife, a woman of great personal beauty and sweetness of character, and the care of the household fell into the hands of his eldest unmarried daughter. His is the manse of Memories and Portraits, the favourite home of his grandson’s childhood. The essay in question describes him ‘as a man of singular simplicity of nature; unemotional, and hating the display of what he felt; standing contented on the old ways; a lover of his life and innocent habits to the end. We children admired him — partly for his beautiful face and silver hair, for none more than children are concerned for beauty, and, above all, for beauty in the old; partly for the solemn light in which we beheld him once a week, the observed of all observers, in the pulpit. But his strictness and distance, the effect, I now fancy, of old age, slow blood, and settled habit, oppressed us with a kind of terror. . . . He had no idea of spoiling children, leaving all that to my aunt; he had fared hard himself, and blubbered under the rod in the last century; and his ways were still Spartan for the young. . . . When not abroad, he sat much alone, writing sermons or letters to his scattered family in a ,dark and cold room with a library of bloodless books — and these lonely hours wrapped him in the greater gloom for our imaginations. But the study had a redeeming grace in many Indian pictures, gaudily coloured and dear to young eyes. I cannot depict (for I have no such passions now) the greed with which I beheld them; and when I was once sent in to say a psalm to my grandfather, I went, quaking indeed with fear, but at the same time glowing with hope that if I said it well, he might reward me with an Indian picture.

“Thy foot He’ll not let slide, nor will He slumber that thee keeps,”

it ran — a strange conglomerate of the unpronounceable, a sad model to set in childhood before one who was himself to be a versifier, and a task in recitation that really merited reward.

‘And I must suppose the old man thought so too, and was either touched or amused by the performance; for he took me in his arms with most unwonted tenderness and kissed me, and gave me a little kindly sermon for my psalm; so that, for that day, we were clerk and parson.’ The picture was not given (how should it have been?) but on that, and more than one other occasion, the minister showed himself in a very kind and sympathetic mood to his little kinsman. ‘ Try as I please,’ wrote the grandson in later days,’ I cannot join myself on with the reverend doctor; and all the while, no doubt, and even as I write the phrase, he moves in my blood, and whispers words to me, and sits efficient in the very knot and centre of my being.’ Yet even if no individual traits or physical resemblances can be traced to the old minister, much of the general Scottish cast of character in Stevenson — the ‘strong Scots accent of the mind’ — was confirmed by this strain; and it is evident that his intensity, his ethical preoccupations, and, as he himself says, his ‘love of preaching’ were due, at all events in part, to the fact that he was a ‘ grandson of the manse.’

Such, at any rate, was the history of his maternal ancestors, the Balfours, a family who possessed in a high degree the domestic virtues of the Lowland Scot. The laird of Pilrig in Catriona,, who was drawn (as far as possible) from existing records, was no unfair representative of them all: when good or evil, honour or dishonour, were presented to them as alternatives, there would be no hesitation in their choice, but they were rarely surprised in so distressing a dilemma. Till after the date I have reached, few of the cadets ever sought their fortunes abroad, though the next generation was more enterprising, and four out of Mrs. Stevenson’s five brothers spent much of their lives in India or New Zealand. But for the most part the family were stay-at-home folk, and adventures, which are to the adventurous, came not near their peaceful dwellings.

From Stevensons, Balfours, and the two families of Smiths, their descendant turned to see if he could find no trace of any origin more stimulating or more romantic. The name of Stevenson seemed to him Norse; or again, he clung to a very vague tradition that his father’s family was ‘somehow descended from a French barber surgeon who came to St. Andrews in the service of one of the Cardinal Beatons.’

Even more fascinating was the theory based on nothing more than the fact that Stevenson was used permanently as a surname by some of the proscribed Macgregors. To have proved himself a disguised clansman of Rob Roy, and to have had James Mohr for the black sheep of the family, was a dream which it was worth a world of pains to verify; and the possibility that James Stevenson in Glasgow 'may have had a Highland alias upon his conscience and a claymore in his back parlour' was too delightful to be let go without a struggle. But death interrupted these inquiries, and for these shadowy speculations there seems to be no ground in history. Mr. J. H. Stevenson of Edinburgh, a namesake, and a specialist in these matters, has investigated the question dispassionately and thoroughly, and his conclusion1 is that all theories of a possible Norse, Highland, or French origin are vain; that this family can be traced only to the stock of Westland Whigs settled in the end of the seventeenth century in the parish of Neilston; and that it is impossible to say anything about the date or origin of their first settlement in the locality. The most striking fact about them as a whole is, after all, the contrast between ' this undistinguished perpetuation of a family throughout the centuries, and the sudden bursting forth of character and capacity' that began with Robert Stevenson.

1 Family of Engineers% p. 201, note.

If it be difficult to follow his ancestors, it is manifestly impossible to find any safe ground for speculating on the race to which Stevenson belonged. None of his forbears for many centuries, so far as we can tell, were newcomers to Scotland; and it is probable that in him, as in almost any other native of the same region, several strains of the long-established races were combined. The word ' Balfour,' as Cluny reminds us in Kidnapped, is 'good Gaelic,' its meaning being ' cold croft or farm.' The place of that name is in Fife. The estate was held by the Bethunes for five hundred years, until recently it passed again into the hands of a Balfour 'of that ilk.' But the appellation of a family need signify no more than the former possession of some holding to which the Celts had already given a name, and the Balfours of Pilrig belonged apparently to an East Lowland type. Renfrew, on the other hand, was part of the Celtic kingdom of the Britons of Alclyde, and it was in that territory that the name of Stevenson has been chiefly found, and that this particular family was settled. Neither name nor locality, however, is any sure guide to an origin so remote; and we can be certain of no more than this, that Louis Stevenson and his father and grandfather exhibited many moods and tendencies of mind attributed to the Celtic race.

CHAPTER II

HIS PARENTS

'We are the pledge of their dear and joyful union, we have been the solicitude of their days and the anxiety of their nights, we have made them, though by no will of ours, to carry the burden of our sins, sorrows, and physical infirmities. ... A good son, who can fulfil what is expected of him, has done his work in life. He has to redeem the sins of many, and restore the world's confidence in children.' — R. L. S., 'Reflections and Remarks on Human Life,' Miscellanea, p. 27.

' Peace and her huge invasion to these shores Puts daily home; innumerable sails Dawn on the far horizon and draw near; Innumerable loves, uncounted hopes To our wild coasts, not darkling now, approach:
Not now obscure, since thou and thine are there, And bright on the lone isle, the foundered reef, The long, resounding foreland, Pharos stands.
These are thy works,
O father, these thy crown.'
R. L. S., Underwoods, xxviii.

Without a knowledge of his parents it would be hard to understand the man whose life and character are set forth in these pages. Yet of Thomas Stevenson, at any rate, I should despair of presenting any adequate image, were it not for the sketch in Memories and Portraits, and an account of his boyhood, written by his son in 1887, and as yet unpublished, which would have formed a later chapter of A Family of Engineers.

He was born in 1818, the youngest son of Robert Stevenson, and one of a family of thirteen children.

' He had his education at a private school, kept by a capable but very cruel man called Brown, in Nelson Street, and then at the High School of Edinburgh. His first year was in the old building down Infirmary Street, and I have often heard him tell how he took part in the procession to the new and beautiful place upon the Calton Hill. Piper was his master, a fellow much given to thrashing. He never seems to have worked for any class that he attended; and in Piper's took a place about half-way between the first and last of a hundred and eighty boys. Yet his friends were among the duxes. He tells most admirably how he once on a chance question got to the top of the class among all his friends; and how they kept him there for several days by liberal prompting and other obvious devices, until at last he himself wearied of the fierce light that beat upon the upper benches. " It won't do," he said. " Good-bye." And being left to his own resources, he rapidly declined, and before that day was over was half-way back again to his appropriate level. It is an odd illustration of how carelessly a class was then taught in spite of the many stripes. I remember how my own Academy master, the delightful D'Arcy Thompson, not forty years later, smelling a capable boy among the boobies, persecuted the bottom of the class for four days, with the tawse going at a great rate; until the event amply justified his suspicion, and an inveterate booby, M by name, shot up some forty places, and was ever afterwards a decent, if not a distinguished pupil.

4 On one occasion my father absented himself from the idle shows

of the Exhibition day, and went off rambling to Portobello. His father attributed this escapade to social cowardice because of his humble position in the class. It was what in his picturesque personal dialect the old man called " Turkeying "; he made my father's life a burthen to him in consequence; and long after (months, I think — certainly weeks) my grandfather, who was off upon his tour of inspection, wrote home to Baxter's Place in one of his emphatic, inimitable letters: ' The memory of Tom's weakness haunts me like a ghost.' My father looked for this in vain among the letter-books not long ago; but the phrase is expressly autochthonic; it had been burned into his memory by the disgrace of the moment when it was read aloud at the breakfast table.

' At least it shows, at once and finally, the difference between father and son. Robert took education and success at school for a thing of infinite import; to Thomas, in his young independence, it all seemed Vanity of Vanities. He would not have been ashamed to figure as actual booby before His Majesty the King. Indeed, there seems to have been nothing more rooted in him than his contempt for all the ends, processes, and ministers of education. Tutor was ever a by-word with him; " positively tutorial," he would say of people or manners he despised; and with rare consistency, he bravely encouraged me to neglect my lessons, and never so much as asked me my place in school. . . .

' My father's life, in the meantime, and the truly formative parts of his education, lay entirely in his hours of play. I conceive him as a very sturdy and madly high-spirited boy. Early one Saturday, gambolling and tricksying about the kitchen, it occurred to him to use cayenne pepper as snuff; no sooner said than done; and the rest of that invaluable holiday was passed, as you may fancy, with his nose under the kitchen spout.

'No. i Baxter's Place, my grandfather's house, must have been a paradise for boys. It was of great size, with an infinity of cellars below, and of garrets, apple- lofts, etc., above; and it had a long garden, which ran down to the foot of the Calton Hill, with an orchard that yearly filled the apple-loft, and a building at the foot frequently besieged and defended by the boys, where a poor golden eagle, trophy of some of my grandfather's Hebridean voyages, pined and screamed itself to death. Its front was Leith Walk with its traffic; at one side a very deserted lane, with the office door, a carpenter's shop, and the like; and behind, the big, open slopes of the Calton Hill. Within, there was the seemingly rather awful rule of the old gentleman, tempered, I fancy, by the mild and devout mother with her " Keep me's." There was a coming and going of odd, out-of-the-way characters, skippers, light-keepers, masons, and foremen of all sorts, whom my grandfather, in his patriarchal fashion, liked to have about the house, and who were a never-failing delight to the boys. Tutors shed a gloom for an hour or so in the evening, . . . and these and that accursed schoolgoing were the black parts of their life. But there were, every Saturday, extraordinary doings in Baxter's Place. Willie Swan, my father's first cousin, and chief friend from boyhood, since Professor of Natural Philosophy at Saint Andrews, would be there; and along with him a tribe of other cousins. All these boys together had great times, as you may fancy. There were cellars full of barrels, of which they made fortifications; sometimes on the stair, at a great risk to life and limb. There was the eagle- house in the garden, often held and assaulted as a fort. Once my father, finding a piece of iron chimney-pot — an " auld wife," as we say in Scotland — brought it home and donned it as a helmet in the next Saturday's wars. I doubt if he ever recovered from his disappointment over the result; for the helmet, far from rendering him an invulnerable champion, an Achilles of the field, turned him into a mere blind and helpless popinjay, spurned and hustled by every one; and, as well as I remember the story, he was at last ignominiously captured by the other side.

' They were all, I gather, quaint boys, and had quaint enjoyments. One diversion of theirs was to make up little parcels of ashes, labelled " Gold Dust, with care, to Messrs. Marshall & Co., Jewellers," or whatever the name might be, leave them lying in a quiet street, and conceal themselves hard by to follow the result. If an honest man came by, he would pick it up, read the superscription, and march off with it towards Marshall's, nothing fearing; though God knows what his reception may have been. This was not their quarry. But now and again there would come some slippery being, who glanced swiftly and guiltily up and down the street, and then, with true legerdemain, whipped the thing into his pocket. Such an one would be closely dogged, and not for long either; his booty itched in his pocket; he would dodge into the first common-stair, whence there might come, as my father used to say, " a blaff of ashes "; and a human being, justly indignant at the imposition, would stalk forth out of the common-stair and go his way.

4 Every summer the family went to Portobellp. The Portobello road is rather a dreary one to ordinary mortals, but to my father it was, I believe, the most romantic four miles of all Christendom; he had looked at it so often from the carriage-windows during the annual family removal, his heart beating high for the holidays; he had walked it so often to go bathing; he knew so many stories and had so rich a treasure of association about every corner of the way. . . . He had a collection of curiosities, like so many other boys, his son included; he had a printing- press, and printed some sort of dismal paper on the

Spectator plan, which did not, I think, ever get over the first page. He had a chest of chemicals, and made all manner of experiments, more or less abortive, as boys' experiments will be. But there was always a remarkable inconsequence, an unconscious spice of the true Satanic, rebel nature, in the boy. Whatever he played with was the reverse of what he was formally supposed to be engaged in learning. As soon as he went, for instance, to a class of chemistry, there were no more experiments made by him. The thing then ceased to be a pleasure, and became an irking drudgery.'

Robert Stevenson had intended only one of his sons to follow his own profession. But in the end their natural tastes prevailed, and no less than three of the brothers entered the business, practised it at large with great ability and success, and were all three, conjointly or in turn, appointed to the official post their father and grandfather had held of Engineer to the Board of Northern Lights. Thomas Stevenson did much valuable work in lighthouse building and in the improvement of rivers and harbours, but it is in connection with the illumination of lighthouses that his name will be remembered. He brought to perfection the revolving light, and himself invented 'the azimuthal condensing system.' More familiar to the world at large, if less remarkable, are the louvre-boarded screens which he applied to the protection of meteorological instruments. He became moreover a recognised authority on engineering; he gave much weighty evidence before Parliamentary committees; and his position in the scientific world was marked in 1884 by his election to the Presidentship of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

His entire life was devoted to the unremitting pursuit of a scientific profession, in which it was his dearest wish to see his son following in his footsteps; yet it was from him that Louis derived all the romantic and artistic elements that drew him away from engineering, and were the chief means by which he became an acknowledged master of his art.

The apparent inconsistencies of the father were numerous, but all of them were such as add force and picturesqueness to a character, and only increased the affection of those who knew and understood him most thoroughly.

' He was a man,' writes his son,[1] ' of a somewhat antique strain; with a blended sternness and softness that was wholly Scottish and at first somewhat bewildering; with a profound essential melancholy of disposition and (what often accompanies it) the most humorous geniality in company; shrewd and childish; passionately attached, passionately prejudiced; a man of many extremes, many faults of temper, and no very stable foothold for himself among life's troubles. Yet he was a wise adviser; many men, and these not inconsiderable, took counsel with him habitually. . . . He had excellent taste, though whimsical and partial; . . . took a lasting pleasure in prints and pictures; . . . and, though he read little, was constant to his favourite books. He had never any Greek; Latin he happily re- taught himself after he had left school, where he was a mere consistent idler; happily, I say, for Lactantius, Vossius, and Cardinal Bona were his chief authors. The first he must have read for twenty years uninterruptedly, keeping it near him in his study, and carrying it in his bag on journeys. Another old theologian, Brown of Wamphray, was often in his hands. When he was indisposed, he had two books, Guy Mannering and The Parents Assistantˆ of which he never wearied. He was a strong Conservative or, as he preferred to call himself, a Tory; except in so far as his views were modified by a hot-headed chivalrous sentiment for women. He was actually in favour of a marriage law under which any woman might have a divorce for the asking, and no man on any ground whatever; and the same sentiment found another expression in a Magdalen Mission in Edinburgh, founded and largely supported by himself. This was but one of the many channels of his public generosity; his private was equally unrestrained. The Church of Scotland, of which he held the doctrines (though in a sense of his own), and to which he bore a clansman's loyalty, profited often by his time and money; and though, from a morbid sense of his own unworthiness, he would never consent to be an office-bearer, his advice 1 His copy of Miss Edgeworth's book is filled with amusing notes.

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[1] Memories and Portraits, p. 175.

was often sought, and he served the Church on many committees. What he perhaps valued highest in his work were his contributions to the defence of Christianity; one of which, in particular, was praised by Hutchison Stirling, and reprinted at the request of Professor Crawford.1

' His sense of his own unworthiness I have called morbid; morbid, too, were his sense of the fleetingness of life and his concern for death. He had never accepted the conditions of man's life or his own character; and his inmost thoughts were ever tinged with the Celtic melancholy. Cases of conscience were sometimes grievous to him, and that delicate employment of a scientific witness cost him many qualms. But he found respite from these troublesome humours in his work, in his lifelong study of natural science, in the society of those he loved, and in his daily walks, which now would carry him far into the country with some congenial friend, and now keep him dangling about the town from one old book-shop to another, and scraping romantic acquaintance with every dog that passed. His talk, compounded of so much sterling sense and so much freakish humour, and clothed in language so apt, droll, and emphatic, was a perpetual delight to all who knew him before the clouds began to settle on his mind. His use of language was both just and picturesque: and when at the beginning of his illness he began to feel the ebbing of this power, it was strange and painful to hear him reject one word after another as inadequate, and at length desist from the search and leave his phrase unfinished rather than finish it without propriety. It was perhaps another Celtic trait that his affections and emotions, passionate as these were and liable to passionate ups and downs, found the most eloquent expression both in words and gestures. Love, anger, and indignation shone through him and broke forth in imagery, like what we read of Southern races. For all these emotional extremes, and in spite of the melancholy ground of his character, he had upon the whole a happy life; nor was he less fortunate in his death, which at the last came to him unaware.'

The characteristics of the father in his boyhood might be ascribed with little alteration to his son. The circumstances differed, but the spirit, the freaks, and the idleness were the same. To increase the truth or to add to the beauty of the later picture is almost beyond the power of any one, but in the present connection it may be permissible to dwell a little upon the romantic side of Thomas Stevenson. Every night of his life he made up stories by which he put himself to sleep, dealing perpetually 'with ships, roadside inns, robbers, old sailors, and commercial travellers before the era of steam.' With these and their like he soothed his son's troubled nights in childhood, and when the son grew up and made stories of his own, he found no critic more unsparing than his father, and none more ready to take fire at 'his own kind of picturesque.' Many were the changes adopted on his proposal; and his suggestions extended to words and style as well as matter. ' Mercy on us!' he wrote in 1885, 'your story should always be as plain as plumb porridge.' He was fanatical in the heresy that art should invariably have a conscious moral aim, but except in this his judgments were serviceable and shrewd.

The differences between the pair were slight, the points of resemblance many. The younger man devoted his life to art and not to science, and the hold of dogma upon him was early relaxed. But the humour and the melancholy, the sternness and the softness, the attachments and the prejudices, the chivalry, the generosity, the Celtic temperament, and the sensitive conscience passed direct from father to son in proportions but slightly varied, and to some who knew them both well the father was the more remarkable of the two. One period

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[1] Christianity confirmed by Jewish and Heathen Testimony and the Deductions of Physical Science. D. Douglas, 1879.

of misunderstanding they had, but it was brief, and might have been avoided had either of the pair been less sincere or less in earnest. Afterwards, and perhaps as a consequence, their comprehension and appreciation of each other grew complete, and their attachment was even deeper than that usually subsisting between father and only son. In the conditions of their lives there was this further difference: if the son missed the healthy boyhood, full of games and of companions, he was spared at the last the failure which he also dreaded; no less fortunate than his father in the unconsciousness of his death, he died before his prime and the fulness of his power,4 in mid-career laying out vast projects,' and so,' trailing with him clouds of glory,' he was taken away as one whom the gods loved.

Of Mrs. Thomas Stevenson not a line of any sketch remains among the work of her son: a want easily explained by the fact that she survived him. It is the more necessary to supply in some measure this deficiency, as the warmth of Louis' gratitude to his nurse has unjustly reacted to the prejudice of his mother, and has quite wrongly been supposed by those who did not know them to indicate neglect on one side and on the other a lack of affection.

In person she was tall, slender, and graceful; and her face and fair complexion retained their beauty, as her figure and walk preserved their elasticity, to the last. Her vivacity and brightness were most attractive; she made on strangers a quick and lasting impression, and the letters written on the news of her death attest the devotion and number of her friends. As a hostess she had great social tact, and her hospitality was but the expression of her true kindliness of heart.

Her undaunted spirit led her when nearly sixty to accompany her son, first to America, and then, in a racing schooner, through the remotest groups of the Pacific, finally to settle with him in the disturbed spot where he had chosen his home.

She had in the highest degree that readiness for enjoyment which makes light of discomfort, and turns into a holiday any break of settled routine. Her desire to be pleased, her prompt interest in any experience, however new or unexpected, her resolute refusal to see the unpleasant side of things, all had their counterpart in her son, enabling him to pass through the many dark hours that would have borne far more heavily upon his father's temperament.

Frail though his own constitution was, his early visits to various health-resorts were due in the first instance to the need of securing a better climate for his mother, who unfortunately fell into ill-health during the ten or twelve years of his boyhood. When he was ailing, she was often ill at the same time, and was frequently disabled from performing for him the services it would have been her greatest delight to render.

But of her devotion and of her incessant thought for the boy there can be no question. I have before me as I write a series of pocket-diaries, complete (but for the second year) from 1851 until the year of her death. The earlier books are occupied exclusively with her husband and her child, and in the later volumes these two are still the staple of her entries. Louis' place in class is scrupulously noted, and that, we may be sure, with no encouragement from his father. When he was small, she read to him a great deal, and to her he owed his first acquaintance with much that is best in literature. Almost every scrap of his writing that ever passed into her hands was treasured. His first efforts at tales or histories, taken down by herself, or some other amanuensis, before he was able or willing to write; nearly every letter he ever sent her; every compliment to him, and every word of praise — all were carefully preserved, long before he showed any definite promise of becoming famous; and by her method and accuracy she was able to record for his biographer, with hardly an exception, where he spent each month of his life. The story of almost the only letter she did not keep bears so directly on her character that I must set it down in her words. ' In the spring of 1872 Louis was in a very depressed state; he wrote one terribly morbid letter to me from Dunblane, all about death and churchyards — it vexed me so much that I put it in the fire at once. Years after, when he was writing his essay Old Mortality, he applied to me for that letter, and was quite vexed when I told him that I had destroyed it.'

The son's attachment to his mother was no less deep and lasting. The earliest record of it goes back to his very infancy, when, at three years old, he was left alone with her one day in the dining-room after dinner. He had seen his nurse cover her mistress with a shawl at such times; so he took a doyley off the table, unfolded it, and carefully spread it over her, saying, 'That's a wee bittie, Mama.' Another speech of his two years later was, ' I'm going to call you "Mother" sometimes, just that I may remember to do it when I'm a big man.' And he ended the same day with 'Good-night, my jewelest of mothers.' This loving attention to her continued during his whole life. Through all her illnesses and whenever she needed his care, he was always most sedulous and affectionate, displaying at times a tenderness almost feminine. The most irregular of correspondents, he was well-nigh regular to her; master of his pen though he was, several times after he had become a man of letters he bursts out into impatience at the difficulty he finds in expressing to her and to his father the depth of his affection and gratitude to them both. He kept numbers of her letters, even of those received during the most migratory periods of his life; and soon after his marriage, though his wife was the most devoted and capable of nurses, on the outbreak of an illness, like a child he turned to his mother and would be satisfied with nothing short of her presence.

After his father's death, when the doctors had ordered him to go to America, if he wanted to live, he wrote to her: ' Not only would we not go to America without you; we should not persist in trying it, if we did not believe that it would be on the whole the best for you.' From that time, but for two absences in Scotland, she made her home with him and his family, and had the reward of realising that the exile which severed him from so many of his friends had brought her to an even more intimate knowledge of his life and an even closer place in his affection.

CHAPTER III

INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD — 1850-59

‘I please myself often by saying that I had a Covenanting childhood.’ — R. L. S., MS. fragment.

‘I am one of the few people in the world who do not forget their own lives.’ — R. L. S., Letters, ii. 107.

Robert Lewis Balfour Stevenson was born at No. 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh, on the 13th November 1850, and a few days after his birth was baptized by his grandfather, the minister of Colinton, according to the Scots custom, in his father’s house. He was called after his two grandfathers, and to their names that of his mother’s family was added.[1]

His birthplace was the home which Thomas Stevenson had prepared for his bride two years before; a small, unpretentious, comfortable stone house, forming part of a row still standing, situated on low ground just to the north of the Water of Leith. Two and a half years later this was changed for No. I Inverleith Terrace, a more commodious dwelling on the other side of the same road; but that, having three outside walls, proved too cold for the delicate boy. Accordingly, in 1857, the little family of three — for Louis remained an only child — moved half a mile further south into what was then the centre of the New Town, and occupied No. 17 Heriot Row, which continued to be their home in Edinburgh for thirty years. This was a substantial house of grey stone, built with the solidity so customary in Scotland and so unusual in the South, looking across the Queen Street Gardens, where the lilacs bloomed in spring and the pipe of the blackbird might be heard; while from its back windows could be seen the hills of ‘ the kingdom of Fife.’

For the first year of his life the infant seemed healthy and made satisfactory progress. He climbed a stair of eighteen steps at nine months, at eleven months walked freely, and in two months more called people by their names. But with his mother’s brightness of disposition he had unfortunately inherited also from her a weakness of chest and a susceptibility to cold, which affected the whole course of his life. When he was a little over two he had a severe attack of croup, and from that time until he was eleven, there was no year in which he was not many days in bed from illness — bronchitis, pneumonia, feverish cold, or chills affecting his digestion, as well as one severe gastric fever, and all the ordinary maladies of childhood in rapid succession. In the summer months he kept fairly well, and was then for most of his time away from Edinburgh at Portobello, Lasswade, Bridge of Allan, Burntisland, North Berwick, Aberdour, or some other of the Edinburgh summer resorts as yet frequented by few visitors. It was to the manse at Colinton, however, that he most frequently went until the death of his grandfather in 1860, and it was here, as we shall see, that the happiest days of his childhood were passed.

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[1] It was as Robert Louis Stevenson that he was known to all the world, and the earlier variations of his name, remembered but by few, are of small importance. Nevertheless it may be as well to set them down here.

Of his earliest memories he speaks thus: —

'I remember with particular pleasure running upstairs in Inverleith Terrace with my mother — herself little more than a girl — to the top flat of this our second house, both of us singing as best we could "We'll all go up to Gatty's room, to Gatty's room, etc.," ad lib.; Gatty being contracted for Grandpapa, my mother's father, who was coming to stay with us. I mention that because it stands out in stronger relief than any other recollection of the same age. I have a great belief in these vivid recollections: things that impress us so forcibly as to become stereotyped for life have not done so for nothing.

'Ibelieve I was what is called a good child: I learned large passages of Scripture and hymns, and recited them, I understand, with very good action and emphasis. After I was in bed I used to be heard lying awake and repeating to myself — crooning over to myself in the dark — certain curious rambling effusions, which I called my " songstries." One of these, which was taken down by my father, who stood outside the door for the purpose, I have seen; it was in a sort of rhythmic prose, curiously approximating to ten-syllable blank verse, and was religious in its bearing; I think it is now lost.'1

The following appears to be the songstry in question:2 it is dated April 23rd, 1857: —

' Had not an angel got the pride of man, No evil thought, no hardened heart would have been seen.

No hell to go to, but a heaven so pure; That angel was the Devil.

Had not that angel got the pride, there would have been no need For Jesus Christ to die upon the cross.

' That I was eminently religious, there can be no doubt. I had an extreme terror of Hell, implanted in me, I suppose, by my good nurse, which used to haunt me terribly on stormy nights, when the wind had broken loose and was going about the town like a bedlamite. I remember that the noises on such occasions always grouped themselves for me into the sound of a horseman, or rather a succession of horsemen, riding furiously past the bottom of the street and away up the hill into town; I think even now that I hear the terrible howl of his passage, and the clinking that I used to attribute to his bit arid stirrups. On such nights I would lie awake and pray and cry, until I prayed and cried myself asleep; and if I can form any notion of what an earnest prayer should be, I imagine that mine were such.[3] . . .

‘ All this time, be it borne in mind, my health was of the most precarious description. Many winters I never crossed the threshold; but used to lie on my face on the nursery floor, chalking or painting in water-colours the pictures in the illustrated newspapers; or sit up in bed, with a little shawl pinned about my shoulders, to play with bricks or whatnot. I remember the pleasant maternal casuistry by which I was allowed to retain my playthings of a Sunday, when a pack was sewn on to the back of one of the wooden figures, and I had then duly promised to play at nothing but “Pilgrim’s Progress.” . . . Although I was never done drawing and painting, and even kept on doing so until I was seventeen or eighteen, I never had any real pictorial vision, and instead of trying to represent what I saw, was merely imitating the general appearance of other people’s representations. I never drew a picture of anything that was before me, but always from fancy, a sure sign of the absence of artistic eyesight; and I beautifully illustrated my lack of real feeling for art, by a very early speech, which I have had repeated to me by my mother: “ Mamma,” said I, “ I have drawed a man. Shall I draw his soul now?”

‘My ill-health principally chronicles itself by the terrible long nights that I lay awake, troubled continually with a hacking, exhausting cough, and praying for sleep or morning from the bottom of my shaken little body. I principally connect these nights, however, with our third house, in Heriot Row; and cannot mention them without a grateful testimony to the unwearied sympathy and long-suffering displayed to me on a hundred such occasions by my good nurse. It seems to me that I should have died if I had been left there alone to cough and weary in the darkness. How well I remember her lifting me out of bed, carrying me to the window, and showing me one or two lit windows up in Queen Street across the dark belt of gardens; where also, we told each other, there might be sick little boys and their nurses waiting, like us, for the morning.[1] Other night scenes connected with my ill-health were the little sallies of delirium that used to waken me out of a feverish sleep, in such agony of terror as, thank God, I have never suffered since. My father had generally to come up and sit by my bedside, and feign conversations with guards or coachmen or innkeepers, until I was gradually quieted and brought to myself; but it was long after one of those paroxysms before I could bear to be left alone.'

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[1] Unpublished ms., dated 18th May 1873.

[2] There is a singular parallel at an even earlier age in the Life of Charles Kingsley.

[3] Cf. ‘ Nuits Blanches,’ Juvenilia, p. 35.

When Louis was a little child, he accidentally locked himself into a room alone one day. He could not turn the key again as he was directed; darkness was coming on, and his terror became extreme. His father sent for a locksmith to open the door, and during the period of waiting talked to Louis through the keyhole, the child becoming so engrossed by the charm of his father's conversation that he forgot all his fears.

His nurse was, it will already be seen, even more than is usual with children, an important factor in his life. When he was eighteen months old, Alison Cunningham — ' Cummie' to him for the rest of his days — came to him and watched over his childhood with the most intense devotion. She refused, it is said, an offer of marriage, that she might not have to leave her charge, and she remained with the family long after the care of him had passed out of women's hands, never taking another place, as indeed she had no need to do. Her true reward has been a monument of gratitude for which a parallel is hard to find. At twenty (an age when young men are not generally very tender to such memories) Louis wrote the paper on Nurses printed in Juvenilia. Fifteen years later the dedication of the Child's Garden was ' To Alison Cunningham, From Her Boy/ and this was but the preface to one of the happiest sets of verses in one of the happiest of books. Alison Hastie, the lass at Limekilns, who put David Balfour and Alan Breck across the Forth, was, he told her, an ancestress of hers, just as David was a kinsman of his own. Of all his works he sent her copies; throughout his life he wrote letters to her; when he had a house, he had her to stay with him, and even proposed to bring her out on a visit to Samoa. In another fragment of autobiography he has again described her services: 4 My recollection of the long nights when I was kept awake by coughing are only relieved by the thought of the tenderness of my nurse and second mother (for my first will not be jealous), Alison Cunningham. She was more patient than I can suppose of an angel; hours together she would help and console me . . . till the whole sorrow of the night was at an end with the arrival of the first of that long string of country carts, that in the dark hours of the morning, with the neighing of horses, the cracking of the whips, the shouts of drivers, and a hundred other wholesome noises, creaked, rolled, and pounded past my window.'

Thus she tended his bodily life, watchfully and unweariedly: to his spiritual welfare, as she conceived it, she gave, if possible, even

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[1] Cf. Underwoods, No. xxvi., 'The Sick Child.'

greater care. His father and mother were both genuinely religious people: the former clung, with a desperate intensity, to the rigid tenets of his faith; the latter was a true ‘ child of the manse,’ and visited and befriended churches and missions wherever she went. But if Louis spent, as he tells us,’ a Covenanting childhood,’ it was to Cummie that this was due.

Besides the Bible and the Shorter Catechism, which he had also from his mother, Cummie filled him with a love of her own favourite authors, M’Cheyne and others, Presbyterians of the straitest doctrine. It was she, in all probability, who first introduced him to 4 The Cameronian Dream.’[1] That poem, he afterwards told Mr. Gosse, made the most indelible impression on his fancy, and was the earliest piece of literature which awakened in him the sentiment of romantic Scottish history.

From her, too, he first heard some of the writings of the Covenanters, Wodrow, Peden, and others, who directly influenced his choice of subjects, and according to his own testimony (Letters, ii. 312) had a great share in the formation of his style. A special favourite also was an old copy of A Cloud of Witnesses, which had belonged to his nurse’s grandmother.

In matters of conduct Cummie was for no half-measures. Cards were the Devil’s books. Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson played whist, decorous family whist — the mother had the keenest zest for all games — and Louis could remember praying fervently with his nurse that it might not be visited on them to their perdition. The novel and the playhouse were alike anathema to her; and this would seem no very likely opening for the career of one who was to be a novelist and write plays as well. For her pupil entered fully into the spirit of her ordinances, and insisted on a most rigorous observance of her code.

‘ I was brought up on Casselfs Family Paper,’ he wrote, ‘but the lady who was kind enough to read the tales aloud to me was subject to sharp attacks of conscience. She took the Family Paper on confidence; the tales it contained being Family Tales, not novels. But every now and then, something would occur to alarm her finer sense; she would express a well-grounded fear that the current fiction was | going to turn out a regular novel,” and the Family Paper> with my pious approval, would be dropped. Yet neither she nor I were wholly stoical; and when Saturday came round, we would study the windows of the stationer, and try to fish out of subsequent woodcuts and their legends the further adventures of our favourites/1

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[1] This poem of fourteen stanzas was written by James Hyslop (1798-1827), originally a herdboy in the Cameronian country, and may be found in Chambers’s Cyclopaedia of English Literature (3rd edition, vol. ii. p. 216).

In spite of her restrictions, Cummie was full of life and merriment. She danced and sang to her boy, and read to him most dramatically. She herself tells how, the last time she ever saw him, he said to her 4 before a room full of people, “ It’s you that gave me a passion for the drama, Cummie.” “ Me, Master Lou,” I said; “ I never put foot inside a playhouse in my life.” “ Ay, woman,” said he; “but it was the grand dramatic way ye had of reciting the hymns.”‘

When he was just three, his mother’s diary contains this entry: —

4 Mr. Swan at dinner. Smout recited the first four lines of “On Linden” in great style, waving his hand and making a splendid bow at the end. This is Cummie’s teaching.’ And no doubt the trick of gesture, partly inherited from his father, which accompanied his conversation through life, received some of its emphasis from his nurse.

The diary just quoted records somewhat irregularly the development of the boy’s powers and tastes and the working of his mind in childhood, but the nature and interest of the entries are fairly represented by the following extracts: —

k 26th July 1853. — Smout’s favourite occupation is making a church; he makes a pulpit with a chair and a stool; reads sitting, and then stands up and sings by turns.

st October 1853. — He is a great chatterbox, and speaks very distinctly; he knows many stories out of 1 Scribner’s Magazine, July 1888.

the Bible, and about half of the letters of the alphabet, but he is not so fond of hymns as he used to be.

‘6th November 1853. — I read the story of Samson once or twice out of the Bible to Smout, and was much surprised by his repeating it almost word for word.

48th December 1854. — Lou said, “You can never be good unless you pray.” When asked how he knew, he said with great emphasis, “ Because I’ve tried it.”

122nd December 1854. — Lou prays every night of his own accord that God would bless “ the poor soldiers that are fighting at Sebastopol.”

‘25th December 1854. — Smout gets a sword for his Christmas present. When his father was disparaging it, he said, “ I can tell you, papa, it’s a silver sword and a gold sheath, and the boy’s very well off and quite contented.”

‘9th January 1855. — When made to wear a shawl above his sword, he was in distress for fear it would not look like a soldier, and then said, “ Do you think it will look like a night-march, mama?”

l6th February 1855. — Lou dreamed that he heard “the noise of pens writing.”

‘I*]th February 1855, Sunday. — When I asked Lou what he had been doing, he said, “ I’ve been playing all day,” and then when I looked at him, he added, “at least, I’ve been making myself cheerful.”

‘1 Sth April 1856. — Smout can’t understand the days getting longer, and says he “ would rather go to bed at the seven o’clock that used to be.”

i lyth July 1856. — I heard to-day that what had made Smout so ill on the 5th was that he and Billy had been eating buttercups, which are poisonous; both were ill, so we may be thankful that they were not worse. Billy confessed, and Smout acknowledged whenever he was asked.’ (Mrs. Stevenson, however, omits the true explanation — that the boys were shipwrecked sailors, and could get no other food to support life.)

It was in the end of 1856 that Louis was for the first time experiencing ‘ the toils and vigils and distresses’ of composition. His uncle, David Stevenson, offered to his children and nephews a prize for the best history of Moses. Louis was allowed to try for it by dictating his version to his mother, and to this he devoted five successive Sunday evenings. A Bible picture-book was given to him as an extra prize, and, adds his mother,’ from that time forward it was the desire of his heart to be an author.’

For this he had already a qualification, which children either seldom possess, or of which at any rate they but seldom remember the possession. In a late reminiscence1 he greatly applauds his nurse’s ear and speaks of her reading to him ‘the works of others as a poet would scarce dare to read his own; gloating on the rhythm, dwelling with delight on the assonances and alliterations.’ So he tells us of the delight he already took in words for their own sake, and of the thrill which the mere sound of ‘ Jehovah Tsidkenu’ produced in him without reference to any possible meaning. To the same source I must refer for his account of the imagery called up in his mind from local surroundings by the metrical version of the twenty- third Psalm; the ‘ pastures green’ being stubble-fields by the Water of Leith, and ‘death’s dark vale’ a certain archway in the Warriston Cemetery.

But in these suburbs only a part of his childhood was spent. Of other and happier playing-places he has left two records; the one a brief reference, with which the first description of his Edinburgh life, already quoted, terminates; the other, much more detailed, was written probably about 1872, and was manifestly the quarry from which was drawn most of the material for ‘The Manse’ in Memories and Portraits.

From these two essays it may be seen that Stevenson, alike at two-and-twenty and at five-and-thirty, remembered his childhood as it is given to few grown men 1 ‘ Rosa quo Locorum5: Juvenilia, pp. 303, 308.

and women to remember, and both papers contain the raw material or perhaps rather the prose version of many passages in the Child's Garden of Verses.

'One consequence of my ill-health was my frequent residence at Colinton Manse. Out of my reminiscences of life in that dear place, all the morbid and painful elements have disappeared. I remember no more nights of storm; no more terror or sickness. Beyond a thunderstorm when I was frightened, after a half make-believe fashion, and huddled with my cousins underneath the dining-room table; and a great flood of the river, to see which my father carried me wrapped in a blanket through the rain; I can recall nothing but sunshiny weather. That was my golden age: et ego in Arcadia vixi. There is something so fresh and wholesome about all that went on at Colinton, compared with what I recollect of the town, that I can hardly, even in my own mind, knit the two chains of reminiscences together; they look like stories of two different people, ages apart in time and quite dissimilar in character.'[1]

In the 'Reminiscences of Colinton Manse,'[2] 'I take pleasure,' he says, 'in writing down these recollections, not because I fear to forget them, but because I wish to renew and to taste more fully the satisfaction that they have afforded me already.

'The Water of Leith, after passing under Colinton Bridge, makes a curve, following the line of the high, steep, wooded bank on the convex, but on the concave enclosing a round flat promontory, which was once, I suppose, a marsh, and then a riverside meadow. . . . Immediately after crossing the bridge the roadway forks into two; one branch whereof tends upward to the entrance of the churchyard; while the other, green with grass, slopes downward, between two blank walls and past the cottage of the snuff-mill, to the gate of the manse.

' There were two ways of entering the manse garden: one the two-winged gate that admitted the old phaeton, and the other a door for pedestrians on the side next the kirk. . . . On the left hand were the stable, coach-house, and washing-houses, clustered round a small paven court. For the interior of these buildings, as abutting on the place of sepulture, I had always considerable terror; but the court has one pleasant memento of its own. When the grass was cut and stacked against the wall in the small paven court at the back of the house, do you not remember, my friends, making round holes in the cool, green herb and calling ourselves birds? It did not take a great height, in those days, to lift our feet off the ground; so when we shut our eyes, we were free to imagine ourselves in the fork of an elm bough, or half-

[1] Dated Swanston, Sunday, 18th May 1873.

[2] Unpublished ms., written probably about 1872-3.

way down a cliff among a colony of gulls and gannets. . . .

‘ Once past the stable you were now fairly within the garden. On summer afternoons the sloping lawn was literally steeped in sunshine; and all the day long, from the impending wood, there came the sweetest and fullest chorus of merles and thrushes and all manner of birds, that it ever was my lot to hear. The lawn was just the centre of all this — a perfect goblet for sunshine, and the Dionysius’ ear for a whole forest of bird-songs. This lawn was a favourite playground; a lilac that hung its scented blossom out of the glossy semicirque of laurels was identified by my playmates and myself as that tree whose very shadow was death. In the great laurel at the corner I have often lain perdu, with a toy-gun in my hand, waiting for a herd of antelopes to defile past me down the carriage drive, and waiting (need I add?) in vain.[1] Down at the corner of the lawn next the snuff-mill wall [1] Another version runs: 4 Once as I lay, playing hunter, hid in a thick laurel, and with a toy-gun upon my arm, I worked myself so hotly into the spirit of my play, that I think I can still see the herd of antelope come sweeping down the lawn and round the deodar; it was almost a vision.’

In 1857, at Bridge of Allan, he was one day asked, ‘ What are you doing?’ ‘ Ah’m just hunting blaauwboks!’

there was a practicable passage through the evergreens and a door in the wall, which let you out on a small patch of sand, left in the corner by the river. Just across, the woods rose like a wall into the sky; and their lowest branches trailed in the black waters. Naturally, it was very sunless. . . . There was nothing around and above you but the shadowy foliage of trees. It seemed a marvel how they clung to the steep slope on the other side; and, indeed, they were forced to grow far apart, and showed the ground between them hid by an undergrowth of butter-bur, hemlock, and nettle. ... I wish I could give you an idea of this place, of the gloom, of the black slow water, of the strange wet smell, of the draggled vegetation on the far side whither the current took everything, and of the incomparably fine, rich yellow sand, without a grit in the whole of it, and moving below your feet with scarcely more resistance than a liquid. ... I remember climbing down one day to a place where we discovered an island of this treacherous material. O the great discovery! On we leapt in a moment; but on feeling the wet, sluicy island flatten out into a level with the river, and the brown water gathering about our feet, we were off it again as quickly. It was a “ quicksand,” we said; and thenceforward the island was held in much the same regard as the lilac-tree on the lawn.

‘The wall of the church faces to the manse, but the churchyard is on a level with the top of the wall, that is to say, some eight or ten feet above the garden, and the tombstones are visible from the enclosure of the manse. The church, with its campanile, was near the edge, so that on Sundays we could see the cluster of people about the door. Under the retaining wall was a somewhat dark pathway, extending from the stable to the far end of the garden, and called “ The Witches’ Walk,” from a game we used to play in it. At the stable end it took its rise under a yew, which is one of the glories of the village. Under the circuit of its wide, black branches, it was always dark and cool, and there was a green scurf over all the trunk among which glistened the round bright drops of resin. . . . This was a sufficiently gloomy commencement for the Witches’ Walk; but its chief horror was the retaining wall of the kirkyard itself, about which we were always hovering at even with the strange attraction of fear. This it was that supplied our Arcady with its gods; and in place of classic forms and the split hooves of satyrs, we were full of homely Scottish superstitions of grues and ghosts and goblins. . . . Often after nightfall have I looked long and eagerly from the manse windows to see the “ spunkies “ playing among the graves, and have been much chagrined at my failure; and this very name of spunkie recalls to me the most important of our discoveries in the supernatural walk. Henrietta, Willie,[1] and I, just about dusk, discovered a burning eye looking out from a hole in the retaining wall, in the corner where it joins the back of the stable. In hushed tones we debated the question; whether it was some bird of ill omen roosting in the cranny of the wall, or whether the hole pierced right through into a grave, and it was some dead man who was sitting up in his coffin and watching us with that strange fixed eye. If you remember the level of the churchyard, you will see that this explanation suited pretty well; so we drew a wheelbarrow into the corner; one after another got up and looked in; and when the last was satisfied, we turned round, took to our heels, and never stopped till we were in the shelter of the house. We ourselves, in our after-discussions, thought it might have been the bird, though we preferred the more tremendous explanation. But for my own part, I simply believe that we saw nothing at all. The fact is, we would have given anything to have seen a ghost, or to persuade ourselves that we had seen a ghost. . . . I remember going down into the cellars of our own house in town, in company with another, . . . and persuading myself that I saw a face looking at me from round a corner; and I may even confess, since the laws against sorcery have been for some time in abeyance, that I essayed at divers times to bring up the devil, founding my incantations on no more abstruse a guide than Skelt’s Juvenile Drama of Der Freischiitz. I am about at the end of horrors now; even out of the Witches' Walk, you saw the manse facing towards you, with its back to the river and the wooded bank, and the bright flower-plots and stretches of comfortable vegetables in front and on each side of it; flower-plots and vegetable borders, by the way, on which it was almost death to set foot, and about which we held a curious belief — namely, that my grandfather went round and measured any footprints that he saw to compare the measurement at night with the boots put out for brushing; to avoid which we were accustomed, by a strategic movement of the foot, to make the mark longer. . . .

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[1] Cf. The Child’s Garden of Verses, Envoy I. His two favourite cousins, the children of his mother’s sister, Mrs. Ramsay Traquair.

' So much for the garden; now follow me into the house. On entering by the front-door you had before you a stone-paved lobby, with doors on either hand, that extended the whole length of the house. There stood a case of foreign birds, two or three marble deities from India, and a lily of the Nile in a pot; and at the far end the stairs shut in the view. . . . With how many games of "tig" or brick-building in the forenoon is the long low dining-room connected in my mind.

. . . 'But that room is principally dear to me from memories of the time when I, a sickly child, stayed there alone. First, in the forenoon about eleven, how my aunt[1]

[1] ' I have mentioned my aunt. In her youth she was a wit and a beauty, very imperious, managing and self-sufficient. But as she grew up, she began to suffice for all the family as well. An accident on horseback made her nearly deaf and blind, and suddenly transformed this wilful empress into the most serviceable and amiable of women. There were thirteen of the Balfours as (oddly enough) there were of the Stevensons also, and the children of the family came home to her to be nursed, to be educated, to be mothered, used to open the storeroom at the one end and give me out three Albert biscuits and some calf-foot jelly in a black pot with a sort of raised white pattern over it. That storeroom was a most voluptuous place with its piles of biscuit boxes and spice tins, the rack for buttered eggs, the little window that let in sunshine and the flickering shadow of leaves, and the strong sweet odour of everything that pleaseth the taste of man. . . . But after my biscuits were eaten and my pot emptied (I am supposing one of those many days when I was not allowed to cross the threshold), what did there remain to do? ... I would often get some one for amanuensis, and write pleasant narratives, which have fallen some degree into unjust oblivion. One, I remember, had for scene the Witches' Walk, and for heroine a kitten. It was intended to be something very thrilling and spectral; but I can now only recall the intense satisfaction (I illustrated these works myself) with which I contemplated three coats of gamboge upon the cat's supper of pease-brose. Another story was entitled The Adventures of Basil, and

consisted mainly of bungling adaptations from Mayne Reid, to whom I was indebted even for my hero's name; but I introduced the further attraction of a storm at sea, where the captain cried out, " All hands to the pumps!" . . .

'Another time my aunt had brought me a large box of tin soldiers from town. I had only to drop the smallest hint of what I wanted and I had it the next from the infanticidal climate of India. There must sometimes have been half a score of us children about the manse; and all were born a second time from Aunt Jane's tenderness. It was strange when a new party of these sallow young folk came home, perhaps with an Indian ayah. This little country manse was the centre of the world j and Aunt Jane represented Charity. The text, my mother says, must have been written for her and Aunt Jane: " More are the children of the barren than the children of the married wife."' — From an autobiographical fragment, written in San Francisco early in 1880. (For other portions vide pages 83, 86. For the use of this I am indebted to Mrs. Strong, to whom the early part of this manuscript was presented at Vailima by her step-father.) Cf. Child5 Garden, Envoy III.

time the phaeton went in. . . . So after dinner on the first day of my new acquisition, I was told to exhibit my soldiers to grandpapa. The idea of this great and alarming dignitary stooping to examine my toys was a new one; and I ranged my wooden militia with excessive care upon the broad mahogany, while my grandfather took his usual nuts and port wine. Not only was he pleased to approve of the way in which I had " marshalled my array"; but he also gave a new light to me on the subject of playing with soldiers — a technical term, you observe. He told me to make the battle of Coburg. Now Waterloo I knew; and Crimean battlefields I knew (for they were within my own memory); but this Coburg was a new and grand idea, a novel vista of entertainment, an addition to my vocabulary of warlike sports; and so I have never forgotten it.

'But now I come to the crown of my dining-room reminiscences, for after dinner, when the lamp was brought in and shaded, and my aunt sat down to read in the rocking-chair, there was a great open space behind the sofa left entirely in the shadow. This was my especial domain: once round the corner of the sofa, I had left the lightsome, merry indoors, and was out in the cool, dark night. I could almost see the stars. I looked out of the back window at the bushes outside. I lay in the darkest corners, rifle in hand, like a hunter in a lonely bivouac. I crawled about stealthily watching the people in the circle of lamplight, with some vague remembrance of a novel that my aunt had read to me, where some fellow went out from " the heated ballroom " and moralised in the " Park."1 Down in the corner beside the bricks, whether on the floor or on a book-shelf I do not remember, were four volumes of Joanna Baillie's plays. Now as Cummie always expatiated on the wickedness of anything theatrical, I supposed these books to be forbidden, and took every sly opportunity of 1 Cf. ' A Gossip on Romance,' Memories and Portraits, p. 249.

reading them. But I don't think I ever read one through: my chief satisfaction was puzzling out, in the obscurity, the scenes — " a convent in a forest: the chapel lit: organ playing a solemn chant" — " a passage in a Saxon castle " — and the like; and then transforming my dark place behind the sofa into one and all of these. . . .

' Opposite the study was the parlour, a small room crammed full of furniture and covered with portraits, with a cabinet at the one side full of foreign curiosities, and a sort of anatomical trophy on the top. During a grand cleaning of this apartment I remember all the furniture was ranged on the circular grass-plot between the churchyard and the house. It was a lovely still summer evening, and I stayed out, climbing among the chairs and sofas. Falling on a large bone or skull, I asked what it was. Part of an albatross, auntie told me. " What is an albatross? " I asked. And then she described to me this great bird nearly as big as a house, that you saw out miles away from any land, sleeping above the waste and desolate ocean. She told me that the Ancient Mariner was all about one; and quoted with great verve (she had a duster in her hand, I recollect) —

"With my cross-bow I shot the albatross."

* Wonderful visions did all this raise in my imagination, so wonderful, that when, many years later, I came to read the poem, my only feeling was one of utter disappointment. Willie had a crossbow; but up till this date, I had never envied him its possession. After this, however, it became one of the objects of my life.'

His mother and his nurse read to him, as we have seen, indefatigably, and so it was not until he was eight years old that he took any pleasure in reading to himself. The consciousness of this delight came upon him suddenly; its coming was connected in his memory with a book called Paul Blake,' a visit to the country, and an experience unforgettable. The day had been warm; Henrietta and I had played together charmingly all day in a sandy wilderness across the road; then came the evening with a great flash of colour and a heavenly sweetness in the air. Somehow my playmate had vanished, or is out of the story, as the sagas say, but I was sent into the village on an errand; and, taking a book of fairy-tales, went down alone through a fir-wood, reading as I walked. How often since then has it befallen me to be happy even so; but that was the first time: the shock of that pleasure I have never since forgot, and if my mind serves me to the last, I never shall; for it was then that I knew that I loved reading.’[1]

This day must have been followed closely by the evening recorded in another essay.[2] ‘ Out of all the years of my life I can recall but one home-coming to compare with these (when he returned with some new play for his toy-theatre), and that was on the night when I brought back with me the Arabian Entertainments in the fat, old, double-columned volume with the prints. I was just well into the story of the Hunchback, I remember, when my clergyman grandfather (a man we counted pretty stiff) came in behind me. I grew blind with terror. But instead of ordering the book away, he said he envied me. Ah, well he might.’

Although an only child and rendered more solitary by illness, Louis was not without companions, drawn (as often happens in early years) chiefly from the crowded ranks of his cousins, of whom he was nearly sure to find some at Colinton.[3] By them he seems to have been treated, as Mr. Colvin so happily says,’ as something of a small sickly prince’; over them he cast the spell of his imagination in devising games, and they submitted to the force of his character in accepting the rdles which he saw fit to allot. ‘We children had naturally many plays together,’ he says of Colinton; ‘ I usually insisted on the lead, and was invariably exhausted to death by the evening. I can still remember what a fury of play would descend upon me.’ Whether solitary or in company, he could never be still, but always must follow out his fancies in action. Were a horse to be mounted, a ship to be handled, a dragon to be slain, each and all of these operations must be conducted with all the fire and fury which the very idea aroused in his imagination.[1]

The country and the summer months gave him more companions, but the whole winter of 1856-57 was spent in Heriot Row by the most brilliant of them all, the one who had most in common with Louis, and of all his kin was his closest friend in after-life, Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson, the only son of his uncle Alan. He was the cousin of Child’s Play? who ate his porridge ‘ with sugar, and explained it to be a country continually buried under snow,’ while Louis took his ‘with milk, and explained it to be a country suffering gradual inundation.’

‘ We lived together in a purely visionary state,’ wrote Louis, ‘and were never tired of dressing up.’ One of their chief delights was in the rival kingdoms of their own invention — Nosingtonia and Encyclopaedia, of which they were perpetually drawing maps. Nosingtonia was ‘ shaped a little like Ireland’; Encyclopaedia, Louis’ island, ‘lay diagonally across the paper like a large tip-cat.’ I have before me a state-paper of the period; the Latin must be the elder boy’s, as Louis had not yet been to school: ‘ Received by me from Rex Encyclo- paediae: patent thickness 1 Air Gun of Grundrungia cloth and 1000 yards therefore in exchange for the Pine Islands. — R. Stevenson, Rex Nozzinton.’

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[1] ‘ Rosa quo Locorum ‘: Juvenilia, p. 307.

[2] ‘ A Penny Plain, Twopence Coloured: Memories and Portraits, p. 288.

[3] He had more than fifty first cousins in all, forty being on his mother’s side. Many of them were much younger than himself, but nearly all were born or bred in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh.

1 c Child’s Play,’ Virginibus Puerisque, p. 162.

2 P. 167. See this volume, p. 88 n.

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It was during this winter and in this company that Louis, at the age of six, first entered the realms of gold described in ‘A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured’ (.Memories and Portraits), the region of the toy-theatre and the ‘scenery of Skeltdom.’ The romance of purchasing the plays for himself came a little later, for during these months he could hardly leave the house; but now began the delight in the book and the dramatis persona. Years afterwards he described himself as ‘ no melodramatist, but a Skelt-drunken boy; the man who went out to find the Eldorado of romantic comedy.’ Now also began the joys of illumination. Now he painted the characters ‘with crimson-lake (hark to the sound of it — crimson-lake! — the horns of elf-land are not richer on the ear) — with crimson-lake and Prussian blue a certain purple is to be compounded, which, for cloaks especially, Titian could not equal.’

The last of his reminiscences of childish days that I have to give was written in Samoa, and describes with all the resources of his perfected art a state of mind more subtle and tragic than any that we are accustomed to associate with the confines of infancy. From any one who less accurately remembered the sensations of his earliest years, it might seem fanciful and unreal; to those who know the truthfulness with which its author has depicted the successive stages through which he passed, it will be as convincing as it is delightful. On this page also we first meet his sentiment for the venerable city which to the end he thought of as his home.

‘ I was born within the walls of that dear city of Zeus,1 of which the lightest and (when he chooses) the tenderest singer of my generation sings so well. I was born likewise within the bounds of an earthly city, illustrious for 1 The reference is to 4 Seekers for a City’ in the volume of poems by Mr. Andrew Lang, entitled Grass of Parnassus (London: Longmans & Co., 1888). The quotation prefixed to the poem is from the 1 Meditations of Marcus Aurelius,’ iv. 19. 1 The poet says, dear city of Cecrops, and wilt not thou say, dear city of ZeusV her beauty, her tragic and picturesque associations, and for the credit of some of her brave sons. Writing as I do in a strange quarter of the world, and a late day of my age, I can still behold the profile of her towers and chimneys, and the long trail of her smoke against the sunset; I can still hear those strains of martial music that she goes to bed with, ending each day, like an act of an opera, to the notes of bugles; still recall, with a grateful effort of memory, any one of a thousand beautiful and specious circumstances that pleased me, and that must have pleased any one, in my half-remembered past. It is the beautiful that I thus actively recall: the august airs of the castle on its rock, nocturnal passages of lights and trees, the sudden song of the blackbird in a suburban lane, rosy and dusky winter sunsets, the uninhabited splendours of the early dawn, the building up of the city on a misty day, house above house, spire above spire, until it was received into a sky of softly glowing clouds, and seemed to pass on and upwards, by fresh grades and rises, city beyond city, a New Jerusalem, bodily scaling heaven. . . .

‘ Memory supplies me, unsolicited, with a mass of other material, where there is nothing to call beauty, nothing to attract — often a great deal to disgust. There are trite street corners, commonplace, well-to-do houses, shabby suburban tan-fields, rainy beggarly slums, taken in at a gulp nigh forty years ago, and surviving to-day, complete sensations, concrete, poignant and essential to the genius of the place. From the melancholy of these remembrances I might suppose them to belong to the wild and bitterly unhappy days of my youth. But it is not so; they date, most of them, from early childhood; they were observed as I walked with my nurse, gaping on the universe, and striving vainly to piece together in words my inarticulate but profound impressions. I seem to have been born with a sentiment of something moving in things, of an infinite attraction and horror coupled.’

CHAPTER IV

BOYHOOD — 1859-1867

‘ Not all roads lead to Rome — only that you have begun to travel.’ — R. L. S.

It was not till 1859 that the boy’s continuous schooling began, but to his formal education little or no importance attaches. The changes of his teachers were frequent, his absences from school innumerable, but both were due almost entirely to his health, and especially his susceptibility to colds. In the autumn of 1857 he had gone to Mr. Henderson’s preparatory school in India Street, in the near neighbourhood of his home, as all his day-schools were. After a few weeks he had to give it up, and did not return there till October 1859. In x86i he was transferred to the Edinburgh Academy, then, as now, the leading school of Edinburgh; there he spent a year and a half under Mr. D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson, author of Day-Dreams of a Schoolmaster and other works, a teacher with views far in advance of his day, and now for many years Professor of Greek in the Queen’s College, Galway. Then for one term, his mother being abroad, he was sent to an English boarding-school at Spring Grove, Isleworth, in Middlesex. Finally, in 1864, he was again shifted — to a day-school kept by Mr. Thomson in Frederick Street, Edinburgh, which he attended with more or less regularity until he went to the University in 1867.

Besides his ordinary classes he had many tutors for longer or shorter periods, in Edinburgh and elsewhere, both when he was unable to leave the house, and also in order to supplement and help his school-work, a custom prevalent in Scotland.

It is only of his experiences at his last two schools that anything definite seems to be remembered. The Spring Grove establishment has little interest for us beyond having been his only boarding-school and the source of his remarks on English schoolboys in ‘ The Foreigner at Home.’[1] He left home for Isleworth with mixed feelings, and of his breakdown before he went, and of ‘the benevolent cat’ that ‘cumbered him with consolations’ on a doorstep, he has told us in ‘ Random Memories.’[2] His misgivings were on the whole justified by the event, for the school seems to have been rather a nondescript place. A list given in one of his letters includes two parlour-boarders, three big boys, six of ‘ midling size,’ of whom ‘ Stevenson’ was one, and the enumeration ends with ‘small-fry lots.’ For the only time in his life he joined in games, he collected coins, and he wrote letters to his parents full of drawings, eked out with fragments of Latin exercises and attempts at French. His aunt had left Colinton, and was now living at Spring Grove, in charge of other nephews who attended the same school, and to her house he was often allowed to go. But he had been told to let his father know if he were not happy, and although he stayed to the end of the quarter, he then secured a promise that he should not again be sent from home.

Of Mr. Thomson’s school we have an account from Mr. H. Bellyse Baildon,[3] who was a pupil there during the same years.[4]

‘ I do not think there were at this little seminary more than a dozen boys, ranging in ages from nine 01 ten to fourteen or fifteen, and our intellectual calibre varied fully as much as our years. For some of us were sent there for reasons of health, and others because they had not made that progress with their studies which their fond parents had hoped. Others were there, I fancy, because the scheme of education upon which the proprietor, Mr. Robert Thomson, proceeded fell in with the views of our parents. The main feature of this system was, so far as I can recollect, that we had no home lessons, but learned, in the two or three hours of afternoon school, what we were expected to remember next day.

‘Our freedom from home tasks gave us leisure for literary activities which would otherwise have been tabooed as waste of time. Perhaps with some of us they were, but not with Stevenson. For even then he had a fixed idea that literature was his calling, and a marvellously mature conception of the course of self-education through which he required to put himself in order to succeed. Among other things we were encouraged to make verse translations, and for some reason or other, I specially well remember a passage of Ovid, which he rendered in Scott-like octosyllabics, and I in heroic couplets, which I probably thought commendably like those of Mr. Pope. But, even then, Stevenson showed impatience of the trammels of verse, and longed for the compass and ductility of prose.’

The teachers who gave him private lessons spoke of his intelligence in high terms, but in large classes he evaded the eye of the master and drew on himself as little notice as possible. The Reverend Peter Rutherford, who taught him when he was at Mr. Henderson’s, says: ‘ He was without exception the most delightful boy I ever knew; full of fun, full of tender feeling; ready for his lessons, ready for a story, ready for fun’; and the master of the Burgh School at Peebles, who gave him lessons in 1864, found him the most intelligent and best

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[1] The first paper in Memories and Portraits.

[2] Ibid., p. 289.

[8] Sometime Lecturer on the English Language and Literature in the University of Vienna.

[4] Temple Bar, March 1895; also Robert Louis Stevenson: a Life Study in Criticism, by H. Bellyse Baildon (Chatto and Windus, 1901).

informed boy in all his experience. A glowing interest in any subject that took his fancy marked his earliest boyhood no less than his later years. But if he was bright and ready when he was interested, his attention was often short-lived, and to many of the subjects in his curriculum it never was given at all. In every language that he ever learned, the rules of it$ grammar remained unknown to him, however correctly he might use its idioms, and the spelling of his own tongue was dark to him to the very last. Latin, French, and mathematics seem to have been everywhere the staple of his education. German he began with a private tutor in 1865 at Torquay, where he also received his only lessons in ordinary drawing. The only prize that ever fell to him was at Mr. Henderson’s school for his reading, which was commended, as he tells us, with the criticism: 4 Robert’s voice, though not strong, is impressive.’1

On the physical side of his education, dancing, despite the Covenanters, was persistently taught him with but scanty success: riding he learned chiefly in the summers of 1865 and 1866, though he first had a pony in 1856. In 1860 and 1864 he was bathing with great enjoyment, and in the latter year he was also rowing on the Tweed. But of games proper there is little mention. From Spring Grove he wrote: 4 Yesterday I was playing at football. I have never played at cricket, so papa may comfort himself with that. I like football very much.’ Against this we have to set his confession that even at football41 knew at least one little boy who was mightily exercised about the presence of the ball, and had to spirit” himself up, whenever he came to play, with an elaborate story of enchantment, and take the missile as a sort of talisman bandied about in conflict between two Arabian nations.’2 And at North Berwick he says: 1 Juvenilia, p. 308. 2 4 Child’s Play,’ p. 168.

‘ You might golf if you wanted, but I seem to have been better employed.’1

But if his health were unequal to constant school-work or severe exercise, it greatly improved after 1863, and did not disable him from other boyish pursuits. Already, in 1857, his mother had written: ‘ Louis is getting very wild and like a boy.’ In 1864 she records that ‘Whatever there was in him of “ Puck “2 came very much to the front this summer. He was the leader of a number of boys who went about playing tricks on all the neighbours on Springhill, tapping on their windows after nightfall,’ and all manner of wild freaks. The following year at Peebles he became a reckless rider. A girl companion of those days recollects the time ‘ when my brother Bob, Louis, and I used to ride together. Bob had a black pony, and Louis called it “ Hell”; his own was brown, and was called “Purgatory”; while mine was named “Heaven.” Once the two boys galloped right through the Tweed on the way to Innerleithen, and I had to follow in fear of my life — poor “ Heaven” had the worst of it on that occasion.’

‘ In this year, too,’ says Louis himself, ‘at the ripe age of fourteen years, I bought a certain cudgel, got a friend to load it, and thenceforward walked the tame ways of the earth my own ideal, radiating pure romance — still but a puppet in the hand of Skelt.’3

Nor was another element wanting. He speaks of Neidpath Castle in the close vicinity of Peebles, ‘bosomed in hills on a green promontory: Tweed at its base running through the gamut of a busy river, from the pouring shallow to the brown pool. In the days when I was thereabouts, that part of the earth was made a heaven to me by many things now lost, by boats and bathing, and the fascination of streams, and the delights 1 Additional Memories and Portraits, p. 349.

2 See vol. ii. p. 160.

3 * A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured,’ p. 232.

of comradeship and those (surely the prettiest and simplest) of a boy and girl romance.’1

Earlier experiences belonging to North Berwick and the autumn of 1862 are described in Memories and Portraits2; these included fishing, bathing, wading, and < ‘crusoeing’ — ’a word that covers all extempore eating in the open air: digging, perhaps, a house under the margin of the links, kindling a fire of the sea-ware and cooking apples there.’ But the crown of all was the business of the lantern-bearers, a sport which was afterwards to Stevenson the type of all that was anti-realist and romantic.

4 Toward the end of September, when school-time was drawing near and the nights were already black, we would begin to sally from our respective villas, each equipped with a tin bull’s-eye lantern. The thing was so well known that it had worn a rut in the commerce of Great Britain; and the grocers, about the due time, began to garnish their windows with our particular brand of luminary. We wore them buckled to the waist upon a cricket belt, and over them, such was the rigour of the game, a buttoned top-coat. They smelled noisomely of blistered tin; they never burned aright, though they would always burn our fingers; their use was naught; the pleasure of them merely fanciful; and yet a boy with a bull’s-eye under his top-coat asked for nothing more. The fishermen used lanterns about their boats, and it was from them, I suppose, that we had got the hint; but theirs were not bull’s-eyes, nor did we ever play at being fishermen. The police carried them at their belts, and we had plainly copied them in that; yet we did not pretend to be policemen. Burglars, indeed, we may have had some haunting thoughts of; and we certainly had an eye to past ages when lanterns were more common, to certain story-books in which we had 1 Scribner’s Magazine, July, 1888, p. 125.

2 Pp. 349, 353-

found them to figure very largely. But take it for all in all, the pleasure of the thing was substantive; and to be a boy with a bull's-eye under his top-coat was good enough for us.

'When two of these asses met, there would be an anxious " Have you got your lantern?" and a gratified " Yes." That was the shibboleth, and very needful, too; for, as it was the rule to keep our glory contained, none could recognise a lantern-bearer, unless (like a polecat) by the smell. Four or five would sometimes climb into the belly of a ten-man lugger, with nothing but the thwarts above them — for the cabin was usually locked — or choose out some hollow of the links where the wind might whistle overhead. There the coats would be unbuttoned and the bull's-eyes discovered; and in the chequering glimmer, under the huge windy hall of the night, and cheered by a rich steam of toasting tinware, these fortunate young gentlemen would crouch together in the cold sand of the links or on the scaly bilges of the fishing-boat, and delight themselves with inappropriate talk.

'Woe is me that I may not give some specimens — some of their foresights of life, or deep inquiries into the rudiments of man and nature — these were so fiery and so innocent, they were so richly silly, so romantically young. But the talk, at any rate, was but a condiment; and these gatherings themselves only accidents in the career of the lantern-bearer. The essence of this bliss was to walk by yourself in the black night; the slide shut, the top-coat buttoned; not a ray escaping, whether to conduct your footsteps or to make your glory public: a mere pillar of darkness in the dark; and all the while, deep down in the privacy of your fool's heart, to know you had a bull's-eye at your belt, and to exult and sing over the knowledge.'

Meanwhile, apart from his schools, the boy was gaining a wider knowledge of the world and having his first experiences of travel In Scotland his long summer holidays were spent in the country much as before, until the Manse at Colinton began to ' shield a stranger race.' Now at some time he paid a visit to one of his uncles in the parish of Stow, on which, perhaps, he afterwards drew in Weir of Hermiston for his knowledge of the Lammer- muirs. In 1857 he had crossed the Border with his parents for the first time, and visited the English Lakes. In 1862, the year of the second International Exhibition, his father's health brought the family to London and the South of England, and Louis saw not only the sights of the capital, but also Salisbury, Stonehenge, and the Isle of Wight. In July, the same cause took them all for a month to Homburg, which Louis liked very well, though he wearied sorely for the company of other boys. But this was only the beginning of his wanderings: in the winter of the same year

Mrs. Stevenson was ordered to Mentone, and it was decided that her husband, her son, and a niece of Mr. Stevenson's should accompany her. Thither they went in January, and there they stayed two months. In March they made a tour through Genoa, Naples, Rome, Florence, Venice, and Innsbruck, returning home by the Rhine. His mother stayed behind in England, and Louis travelled from London by himself for the first time, reaching Edinburgh on the 29th of May.

In the autumn he accompanied his father on a brief tour of lighthouse inspection in Fife, and on one day they visited seventeen lights.

At Christmas 1863 Mrs. Stevenson was again at Men- tone; there Louis joined her from his boarding-school and they remained in the Riviera till the beginning of May. The two next springs were passed by mother and son at Torquay, but after that it proved unnecessary for them to leave Scotland for any part of the winter. For the last three winters they were joined by Miss Jessie Warden, another niece of Mr. Stevenson, a clever and original girl, just grown to womanhood. In 1867, to their great grief, she died; she had filled an important part in their small circle, had been a delightful companion to Louis, and always held a bright place in his memory.

The curious point about the foreign journeys is that they seem to have had very little manifest influence upon Stevenson, and to have passed almost entirely out of his mind. A boy of twelve, even if backward in his education, is generally a good deal impressed by experiences of this nature, and remembers them more or less distinctly throughout his life.

His cousin Mrs. Napier, who was one of the party in 1863, kindly tells me that she recollects distinctly how much he developed at this period. ‘ In some ways,’ she says,’ he was more like a boy of sixteen. My uncle had a great belief (inherited from his father) in the educational value of travel, and to this end and for the benefit of Louis he devoted his whole energies in the five months abroad. In the hotel at Nice he began to take Louis to the smoking-room with him; there my uncle was always surrounded by a group of eager and amused listeners — English, American, and Russian — and every subject, political, artistic, and theological, was discussed and argued. Uncle Tom's genial manner found friends wherever he went, and the same sort of thing went on during the whole journey. Then in regard to what we saw, his keen admiration of art and architecture seemed to be shared by Louis; they would go into raptures over a cathedral, or an old archway, or a picture. I still remember Louis' eager interest in Pompeii and in the Catacombs at Rome; Venice, too, he specially enjoyed. In some of his books there are touches which his mother and I both recognised as due to places and persons seen in that long past journey. And in the Vailima prayers I seem to hear again an old melody that I know well — the echo of his father’s words and daily devotions.’

Yet nowhere, so far as I know, did Louis allude to any of the more famous towns he then visited, as if they had come within his personal ken. Mr. Horatio Brown frequently discussed Venice with him at Davos, but without even discovering that he had ever set foot in Italy. Rome meant to Stevenson in after-life a great deal: the Roman Empire was far more of a reality to him than to many better scholars and many frequenters of the city of Rome. Yet Mr. Lloyd Osbourne tells me that the only reference he ever heard his step-father make to this time was on one occasion when he recalled with delight the picturesque appearance of their military escort in horsemen’s cloaks riding through the Papal States. Five years later his correspondence proves him already a keen observer, and yet half an hour with a guidebook would have furnished him with all the knowledge of Italian cities that he ever displayed.

With the country it was otherwise. ‘ The Rhone is the River of Angels,’ he wrote to Mr. Low, * I have adored it since I was twelve and first saw it from the train.’ And the scenery of Will d the Mill was taken in part from the Brenner Pass, which he never saw again after 1863.

But if his stores of experience were but little increased by these changes of scene, at least the boy was learning to exercise the savoir-faire which came very naturally to his disposition. At hotels he used to go to the table- d’hote alone, if necessary, and made friends freely with strangers. On his return from Homburg, he made great friends on the steamer with a Dutchman, who kept saying over to himself,’ I loike this booy.’ His French master at Mentone on his second visit gave him no regular lessons, but merely talked to him in French, teaching him piquet and card tricks, introducing him to various French people, and taking him to convents and other places. So his mother remarks of his other masters at home, * I think they found it pleasanter to talk to him than to teach him.’ Of the other side of his character, of the solitary, dreamy, rather unhappy child, but little record survives, or little evidence which can be assigned with certainty to these years. He speaks in his essay on Pepys of the egotism of children and their delight in the anticipations of memory, as of an experience of his own. 41 can remember to have written in the fly-leaf of more than one book the date and the place where I then was — if, for instance, I was ill in bed or sitting in a certain garden; these were jottings for my future self; if I should chance on such a note in after years, I thought it would cause me a particular thrill to recognise myself across the intervening distance.’1

In one of his books he touches a chord which thrills with a personal emotion in describing ‘a malady most incident to only sons.’ ‘ He flew his private signal and none heeded it; it seemed he was abroad in a world from which the very hope of intimacy was banished.’[2] It was a slightly older lad of whom he was thinking at the moment, but the malady begins at an early age, and tends unfortunately to be chronic.

Of his appearance at this time Mr. Baildon says: 4 Stevenson calls himself “ ugly “ in his student days, but I think this is a term that never at any time fitted him. Certainly to him as a boy of about fourteen (with the creed which he propounded to me that at sixteen one was a man) it would not apply. In body he was assuredly badly set up. His limbs were long, lean, and spidery, and his chest flat, so as almost to suggest some malnutrition, such sharp corners did his joints make under his clothes. But in his face this was belied. His brow was oval and full, over soft brown eyes that seemed already to have drunk the sunlight under southern vines. The whole face had a tendency to an oval Madonna-like type. But about the mouth and in the mirthful mocking light of the eyes there lingered ever a ready Autolycus roguery that rather suggested sly Hermes masquerading as a mortal. The eyes were always genial, however gaily the lights danced in them, but about the mouth there was something a little tricksy and mocking, as of a spirit that already peeped behind the scenes of life’s pageant and more than guessed its unrealities.’

His reading progressed: for the date of his first introduction to Shakespeare there seems to be no evidence, and but for the strength of its impression it may have belonged to the earlier period. 41 never supposed that a book was to command me until, one disastrous day of storm, the heaven full of turbulent vapours, the street full of the squalling of the gale, the windows resounding under bucketfuls of rain, my mother read aloud to me Macbeth. I cannot say I thought the experience agreeable; I far preferred the ditch-water stories that a child could dip and skip and doze over, stealing at times materials for play; it was something new and shocking to be thus ravished by a giant, and I shrank under the brutal grasp. But the spot in memory is still sensitive; nor do I ever read that tragedy but I hear the gale howling up the valley of the Leith.’[1]

His first acquaintance with Dumas began in 1863 With the study of certain illustrated dessert plates in a hotel at Nice:[2] his first enthusiasm for Scott’s novels belongs with certainty to the time when he had begun to select his books for himself.

‘ My father’s library was a spot of some austerity; the proceedings of learned societies, some Latin divinity, cyclopaedias, physical science, and, above all, optics, held the chief place upon the shelves, and it was only in holes and corners that anything really legible existed as by accident. The Parents Assistant, Rob Roy, Waver ley, and Guy Mannering, the Voyages of Captain Woodes Rogers, 1 Scribner's Magazine, July 1888, p. 125.

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[1] ‘ Pepys,’ Familiar Studies of Men and Books, p. 275.

[2] Weir of Hermiston, p. 155.

2 Memories and Portraits, p. 236.

Fuller's and Bunyan's Holy Wars, The Reflections of Robinson Crusoe,x The Female Bluebeard, G. Sand's Mare au Diable (how came it in that grave assembly!), Ains- worth's Tower of London, and four old volumes of Punch — these were the chief exceptions. In these latter, which made for years the chief of my diet, I very early fell in love (almost as soon as I could spell) with the Snob Papers. I knew them almost by heart, particularly the visit to the Pontos; and I remember my surprise when I found, long afterwards, that they were famous, and signed with a famous name; to me, as I read and admired them, they were the works of Mr. Punch. Time and again I tried to read Rob Royf with whom, of course, I was acquainted from the Tales of a Grandfather; time and again the early part with Rashleigh and (think of it!) the adorable Diana, choked me off; and I shall never forget the pleasure and surprise with which, lying on the floor one summer evening, I struck of a sudden into the first scene with Andrew Fairservice. " The worthy Dr. Light- foot" — " mistrysted with a bogle " — "a wheen green trash " — " Jenny, lass, I think I ha'e her "; from that day to this the phrases have been unforgotten. I read on, I need scarce say; I came to Glasgow, I bided tryst on Glasgow Bridge, I met Rob Roy and the Bailie in the Tolbooth, all with transporting pleasure; and then the clouds gathered once more about my path; and I dozed and skipped until I stumbled half-asleep into the Clachan of Aberfoyle, and the voices of Ivetach and Galbraith recalled me to myself. With that scene and the defeat of Captain Thornton the book concluded; Helen and her sons shocked even the little schoolboy of nine or ten with their unreality; I read no more, or I did not grasp what I was reading; and years elapsed before I consciously met Diana and her father among the hills, 1 Serious Reflections during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe. The third part of Robinson Crusoe, by Defoe, containing moral reflections only.

or saw Rashleigh dying in the chair. When I think of that novel and that evening, I am impatient with all others; they seem but shadows and impostors; they cannot satisfy the appetite which this awakened.'1

What neither instruction nor travel could do for him was none the less coming about; the boy was educating himself; learning to write patiently, persistently, without brilliance or any apparent prospect of success. The History of Moses of 1856 had been followed the next year by a History of Joseph, after a brief interval devoted to a story ‘ in slavish imitation of Mayne Reid.’ Two years later came an account (still dictated) of his travels in Perth. Before thirteen he wrote a description of the inhabitants of Peebles in the style of the Book of Snobs. When he was fourteen he developed a facility for extemporising doggerel rhymes, and composed the libretto of an opera called The Baneful Potato, of which only the names of two characters survive — 4 Dig-him-up-o,’ the gardener, and ‘ Seek-him-out-o,’ the policeman, and the first line of an aria sung by the heroine,’ My own dear casement window.’

At his last school and in his home circle he was always starting magazines. These were all in manuscript, generally illustrated with profusion of colour, and were sometimes circulated at a charge of one penny for reading. The Schoolboys’ Magazine of 1863, of which one number survives, contained four stories, and its readers must have been hard to satisfy if they did not have their fill of horrors. In the first tale,’ The Adventures of Jan van Steen,’ the hero is left hidden in a boiler under which a fire is lit. The second is 4 A Ghost Story’ of robbers in a deserted castle in ‘ one of those barren places called plains in the north of Norway.’ A traveller finds a man, ‘half killed with several wounds,’ hidden under the floor, who dresses up as a ghost. The third story is called, by a curious anticipation,’ The Wreckers.’

[1] ‘ Rosa quo Locorum’: Juvenilia, p. 310.

On the shore at North Berwick ‘were two men. The older and stronger of the two was a tall, ill-looking man with grizzled hair and a red nose. He was dressed in a tarnished gold-laced blue coat, a red waistcoat,and leggings. The other, who might have been a fisherman except for the fact that from each of the pockets of his pea-jacket there projected a pistol. He was a more villainous-looking fellow than the other. “ Dan,” said the first, “what is that clinging to that mast?” “I think,” said the other, “it is a sailor. You had better go and secure him.”‘ Last and not least terrible is ‘ Creek Island, or Adventures in the South Seas.’ A line-of-battle ship called the Shark is wrecked in the Southern Ocean on its way to India, and two midshipmen fall into the hands of the Indians. ‘ They had a council which pronounced death, but which death would we have to suffer? It was to be burned alive. . . . Next morning very early we had to get up and prepare to be burned alive. When we arrived at the place of execution, we shuddered to think of being killed so soon. But I forgot to tell you that I had made love to [sic] beautiful girl even in one day, and from all I knew she loved me. The next thing they did was to build round us sticks and rubbish of all kinds till we could hardly see what they were doing. At last they finished. They then set fire to it, and after it had got hold well, they began to dance, which is called a war-dance. (To be continued.)’

‘ I forgot to tell you that I had made love to beautiful girl! * Was ever woman in this humour wooed?’ At least the author remembered his own boyish taste, when heroines were excluded from Treasure Island. And yet this was the hand that at the last drew Barbara Grant and the two Kirstie Elliotts.

The Schoolboys Magazine is, to say the least, lively reading; not so much may be claimed for ‘ The Sunbeam Magazine, an illustrated Miscellany of Fact, Fiction, and Fun, edited by R. L. Stevenson,’ which expired in the middle of its third number in March, 1866. Each number contained several stories and articles, some evidently by other hands. The chief story, ‘The Banker’s Ward, a modern tale,’ is clearly by the editor, but is a dreary and unpromising narrative of middle-class life.

In these days he had endless talks with Mr. Baildon, who seems to have been the first of his friends in whom he found a kindred interest in letters, and at one of these discussions he produced a drama which was apparently the earliest draft of Deacon Brodie. The story was familiar to him from childhood, as a cabinet made by the Deacon himself formed part of the furniture of his nursery. His deepest and most lasting interest was, however, centred in the Covenanters, of whom he had first learned from his nurse. He has told us how his attention was fixed on Hackston of Rathillet, who sat on horseback ‘ with the cloak about his mouth,’ watching the assassination of Archbishop Sharp, in which he would take no part, lest it should be attributed to his private quarrel. Stevenson’s first novel on the subject was attempted before he was fifteen, and ‘reams of paper,’ then and at a later date, were devoted to it in vain.[1]

A similar fate attended a novel on the Pentland Rising — an episode well known to him from his infancy, as the Covenanters had spent the night before their defeat in the village of Colinton.

This last composition, however, was not wholly without result. Though the novel was destroyed, his studies issued in a small green pamphlet, entitled, The Pentland Rising: a Page of History, 1666, published anonymously, in 1866, by Andrew Elliot in Edinburgh.[2]

Miss Jane Balfour writes: ‘ I was at Heriot Row in 1866 from the 29th October to 23rd November, and Louis was busily altering the Pentland Rising then to please his father. He had made a story of it, and by so doing, had, in his father’s opinion, spoiled it It was printed not long after in a small edition, and Mr. Stevenson very soon bought all the copies in, as far as was possible.’

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[1] Additional Memories, p. 297.

[2] List of Stevenson’s works, Appendix F, vol. ii. p. 211.

Thus the period closes somewhat surprisingly with Stevenson’s first appearance as a printed author. The foundations were being well laid, but the structure raised upon them was premature. The publication was probably due to his father’s approval of the subject-matter rather than to any belief in the literary ripeness of the style. At the same time, it was the best work that he had yet done, and the plentiful quotations from the pages of Wodrow and Kirkton, and of their opponent, Sir James Turner, are interesting in view of Stevenson’s confession in Samoa,14 My style is from the Covenanting writers.’

1 Letters, ii. 312.

CHAPTER V

STUDENT DAYS — 1867-73

1 Light foot, and tight foot, And green grass spread, Early in the morning, But hope is on ahead.'
R. L. S.

The time had come for the boy to leave school, and for his education to be shaped in some conformity with the profession supposed to lie before him. What this would be was never for a moment in doubt. Father and sons, the Stevensons were civil engineers, and to the grandsons naturally, in course of time, the business would be transferred. The family capacity for the work, though undeniable, was very elusive, consisting chiefly of a sort of instinct for dealing with the forces of nature, and seldom manifested clearly till called forth in actual practice. The latest recruit had certainly shown no conspicuous powers at any of his schools, but to such a criterion no one could have attached less value than his father. That he did possess the family gift was proved before he left the profession; but even had he never written his paper 'On a New Form of Intermittent Light,' no one could reasonably have condemned on his behalf the choice of this career.

Accordingly, the next three and a half years were devoted to his preparation for this employment. He spent the winter and sometimes the summer sessions at the University of Edinburgh, working for a Science degree, and saw something of the practical work of engineering during the other summer months.

For the first two years he attended the Latin class, Greek being abandoned as hopeless after the first session; to Natural Philosophy he was constant, so far as his constancy in such matters ever went; Mathematics then replaced Greek, and Civil Engineering took the room of Latin. But all this was none of his real education. Although he remembered that 'the spinning of a top is a case of Kinetic Stability' (one of the few facts recorded in a still surviving notebook), and that ' Emphyteusis is not a disease, nor Stillicide a crime,' and would not willingly part with such scraps of science, he never ' set the same store by them as by certain other odds and ends that he came by in the open street while he was playing truant.' The last word recurs with every reference to his education. In fact, as far as the University was concerned, he ' acted upon an extensive and highly rational system of truantry, which cost him a great deal of trouble to put in exercise'; and ' no one ever played the truant with more deliberate care, and none ever had more certificates (of attendance) for less education.'

Nor was the attention he bestowed on engineering any more assiduous. As for his practical instruction, he followed out his father's views on training — that it was waste of time for an engineer to attempt to be a craftsman in any one trade, but that he should become familiar in ' shops' and yards with the materials used in his work, and should learn their employment in practice.

In the summer of 1868 Stevenson spent the month of July at Anstruther, and the six weeks following at Wick: records of which he has left in various letters written to his parents at the time, and in the essay on 'Random Memories' entitled ' The Education of an Engineer.' In the first-named place he was privileged to hear it said of him for the first time, 'That's the man that's in charge.'

At Wick, besides his descent in a diving-suit (• one of the best things I got from my education as an engineer'), an accident afforded him one of those opportunities for prompt action, of which his life contained all too few. It comes as the postscript to a short business letter to his father.

'September 1868.

'PS. — I was forgetting my only news. A man fell off the staging this forenoon. I heard crying, and ran out to the end. By that time a rope had been lowered and the man was holding himself up by it, and of course wearing himself out. Some were away for a boat. " Hold on, Angus," they cried. " I can NOT do it," he said, with wonderful composure. I told them to lower a plank; everybody was too busy giving advice to listen to me; meantime the man was drowning. I was desperate, and could have knocked another dozen off. One fellow, Bain, a diver, listened to me. We got the plank out and a rope round it; but they would not help us to lower it down. At last we got assistance, and were just about to lower it down, when some one cried, " Hold your hand, lads! Here comes the boat." And Angus was borne safely in. But my hand shook so, that I could not draw for some time after with the excitement. — R. S.'

He had some rough experience, but was apparently none the worse for it. ' Wick, September 1868. — I have had a long, hard day's work in cold, wind, and almost incessant rain. . . . We got a lighter and a boat, and were out till half-past seven, doing labourers' work, pulling, hauling, and tugging. It was past eight before I got dinner, as I was soaking, and bathed with mud to the ears; but, beyond being tired with the unusual exertion, I am all right now.'

The following year he went with his father in the Pharos, the steamer of the Commissioners of Northern Lights, to Shetland, a part of the same cruise as that on which his grandfather had attended Sir Walter Scott.

He treasured the memories of this time, but the record contained in his letters is somewhat disappointing. It was years afterwards that mentioning a boat-cloak, the use of which belonged chiefly to these days, he said: 4 The proudest moments of my life have been passed in the stern-sheets of a boat with that romantic garment about my shoulders. This, without prejudice to one glorious day when, standing upon some water-stairs at Lerwick, I signalled with a pocket-handkerchief for a boat to come ashore for me. I was then aged fifteen or sixteen [eighteen]. Conceive my glory.'

In 1870, besides a week at Dunoon, to look after some work that was being done there, and one or two expeditions with the University Engineering class, he spent three weeks on the little island of Earraid, off Mull, the scene of David Balfour's shipwreck, commemorated also in Memories and Portraits, but then in use as headquarters for the building of the deep-sea lighthouse of Dhu Heartach.

All this was the attractive part of his work. ' As a way of life,' he wrote, ' I wish to speak with sympathy of my education as an engineer. It takes a man into the open air; it keeps him hanging about harbour-sides, which is the richest form of idling; it carries him to wild islands; it gives him a taste of the genial dangers of the sea; it supplies him with dexterities to exercise; it makes demands upon his ingenuity; it will go far to cure him of any taste (if he ever had one) for the miserable life of cities. And when it has done so, it carries him back and shuts him in an office. From the roaring skerry and the wet thwart of the tossing boat, he passes to the stool and desk; and with a memory full of ships, and seas, and perilous headlands, and the shining pharos, he must apply his long-sighted eyes 1 to the pretty niceties of drawing, or measure his inaccurate mind with several pages of consecutive figures. He is a wise youth, to be 1 This also was his own experience.

sure, who can balance one part of genuine life against two parts of drudgery between four walls, and, for the sake of the one, manfully accept the other.'1

But even the open-air life had only a very slight hold upon him, as far as it was devoted to professional work. Nothing could be more convincing than the little picture of his father and himself, given in the Family of Engineers.2

' My father would pass hours on the beach, brooding over the waves, counting them, noting their least deflection, noting when they broke. On Tweedside, or by Lyne and Manor, we have spent together whole afternoons; to me, at the time, extremely wearisome; to him, as I am now sorry to think, extremely mortifying. The river was to me a pretty and various spectacle; I could not see — I could not be made to see — it otherwise. To my father it was a chequer-board of lively forces, which he traced from pool to shallow with minute appreciation and enduring interest. “ That bank was being undercut,” he might say. “ Why? Suppose you were to put a groin out here, would not the filum fluminis be cast abruptly off across the channel? and where would it impinge upon the other shore? and what would be the result? Or suppose you were to blast that boulder, what would happen? Follow it — use the eyes that God has given you: can you not see that a great deal of land would be reclaimed upon this side? “ It was to me like school in holidays; but to him, until I had worn him out with my invincible triviality, a delight.’

Meanwhile his life was surrounded by the ordinary material comforts belonging to his class, and the customary diversions of society were open to him, had he found them at all to his taste.

In Heriot Row he had now for his own use the two rooms on the top floor of his father’s house, which had been his nurseries. The smaller chamber, to the east, 1 Additional Memories and Portraits, p. 313. 2 P. 266.

was his bedroom, while the other held his hooks, and was used as his study as long as he lived in Edinburgh.1

At the beginning of this period a change was made in the household arrangements, which was of material service both to his health and also to his subsequent work. In May 1867 his father took the lease of a house known as Swanston Cottage, lying in a nook at the foot of the Pentland Hills,2 at a distance of some five miles from Edinburgh and two and a half from the boy’s paradise of Colinton.

This was afterwards the home of the heroine of St. Ives, and in the Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh its situation and history were described.

‘ Upon the main slope of the Pentlands ... a bouquet of old trees stands round a white farmhouse; and from a neighbouring dell you can see smoke rising and leaves rustling in the breeze. Straight above, the hills climb a thousand feet into the air. The neighbourhood, about the time of lambs, is clamorous with the bleating of flocks; and you will be awakened in the grey of early summer mornings by the barking of a dog, or the voice of a shepherd shouting to the echoes. This, with the hamlet lying behind unseen, is Swanston. . . . Long ago, this sheltered field was purchased by the Edinburgh magistrates for the sake of the springs that rise or gather there. After they had built their water-house and laid their pipes, it occurred to them that the place was suitable for junketing. . . . The dell was turned into a garden; and on the knoll that shelters it from the plain and the sea winds, they built a cottage looking to the hills. They brought crockets and gargoyles from old 1 The roof was raised and the front of the two rooms improved about 1873.

2 41 have been on a good many Scotch hills; but the competitors

for the first prize are only four: Ben Lomond, Goatfell, Demyet, and Swanston (Cairketton), the eastmost of the Pentlands. . . . Considering the beauty of Edinburgh, and the dignity imparted to scenery by objects of importance, I am rather inclined to give the palm to that Pentland.' — Lord Cockburn, Circuit Journeys, 12th September 1842.

St. Giles', which they were then restoring, and disposed them on the gables and over the door and about the garden; and the quarry which had supplied them with building material, they draped with clematis and carpeted with beds of roses. In process of time the trees grew higher, and gave shade to the cottage, and the evergreens sprang up and turned the dell into a thicket.'1

Here for the next fourteen years the family spent a large part of their summers in place of taking a furnished house at North Berwick or elsewhere.

Hither at all seasons Louis would often retire alone or in the company of a friend; here he gained a knowledge of the Pentlands only to be acquired by living among them; here he saw something of the country folk, and enriched his vocabulary of Lallan; here made the acquaintance of John Todd the shepherd, and Robert Young the gardener, and the military beggarman who had a taste for Keats. This was to him ille terrarum angulus of Underwoods; on the hill above Swanston there lies the tiny pool, overhung by a rock, where he ' loved to sit and make bad verses,' and to this spot he asked his old nurse, four months before he finally left England, ' some day to climb Halkerside for me (I am never likely to do it for myself), and sprinkle some of the well water on the turf.'

Here one winter-tide he read Dumas again. ' I would return in the early night from one of my patrols with the shepherd: a friendly face would meet me in the door, a friendly retriever scurry upstairs to fetch my slippers; and I would sit down with the Vicomte de Bragelonne for a long, silent, solitary, lamplit evening by the fire. ... I would rise from my book and pull the blind aside, and see the snow and the glittering hollies chequer a Scottish garden, and the winter moonlight brighten the white hills.'2

1 Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh, p. 76.

2 Memories and Portraits, p. 237.

Now he joined in various sports; at first he rode a good deal, and was even known to follow the hounds. At this time he skated, chiefly from Edinburgh, at Duddingston Loch. It was in these years that he was in Glenogil, in Mr. Barrie's country, and there caught as many as three dozen trout in one day, and forthwith forswore fishing.1 Now he made his first acquaintance with canoes, which at this time were introduced by Mr. Baxter on the Firth of Forth. Sir Walter Simpson, the companion of the Inland Voyage, was another pioneer, and owned a large double canoe that often carried Stevenson, who had no boat of his own. His more experienced friends had no high opinion of his skill, but he occasionally joined them at Granton, and later at Queensferry, and spent many an afternoon in the fresh air of the Forth and the healthful employment of his paddle.

Conventional persons and conventional entertainments never had any attraction for him, and from general society in Edinburgh he was not long in withdrawing himself. There were exceptions of course; for several years after 1871 he took part in the private theatricals at Professor Fleeming Jenkin's house: at first as prompter, and afterwards in some minor parts, for he never was proficient as an actor. But mostly he preferred to see his friends apart from general company, and as for his clothes, of which a great deal has been said — he dressed to please himself. It would be impossible to record the varying phases in which a certain vanity, a need of economy, and a love of ease were combined. The top- hat and frock-coat of convention became him extremely ill, and were finally abandoned after 1878, when as Jenkin's secretary he adopted them in Paris only to be referred to by the hotel clerk as a gentleman who knew all about Mabille. The notorious ' black shirt' which was his favourite wear, dated, I believe, from his engineering 1 Letters, ii. 345.

days, and was made of dark blue flannel. It was only a little care that was needed in selecting for him appropriate garments, but it was just this trouble he never was willing to take.

His father's was ever a hospitable house, and Louis was there able to entertain his friends. He joined the University Conservative Club, an organisation for elections, and made his first speech at its dinner; he dined with his Academy class for several years; and — more important than any of these — he was elected to the * Speculative Society' — that * Spec.' of which the fame has gone abroad in the world largely by means of his writings.

* It is a body of some antiquity, and has counted among its members Scott, Jeffrey, Horner, Benjamin Constant, Robert Emmet, and many a legal and local celebrity besides. By an accident, variously explained, it has its rooms in the very buildings of the University of Edinburgh: a hall, Turkey - carpeted, hung with pictures, looking, when lighted up with fire and candle, like some goodly dining-room, a passage-like library, walled with books in their wire cages; and a corridor with a fireplace, benches, a table, many prints of famous members, and a mural tablet to the virtues of a former secretary. Here a member can warm himself and loaf and read; here, in defiance of Senatus-consults, he can smoke.'1

The Society is limited to thirty ordinary members, who acquire honorary privileges at the end of four years. Meetings are held once a week from November to March; first an essay is read and criticised, and then a motion is debated. The roll is called thrice on each of these evenings, and at each call every ordinary member is bound to be present; an elaborate system of procedure has grown up, fenced in with penalties and fines. Stevenson was elected a member on 16th February, 1869, 1 Memories and Portraits, p. 127.

and in the proceedings he took an increasing interest. During his first complete session he attended six, during the next eight, and during the third session thirteen out of nineteen meetings. And in 1873 he wrote to one of his fellow-members: ‘ O, I do think the Spec, is about the best thing in Edinburgh.’1

The records of the Society contain several entries of interest, even if we do not press too closely the opinions advanced by a student in the heat of debate or the exhilaration of paradox.

The scene in Weir of Hermiston where the son of the Lord Justice-Clerk moves the abolition of Capital Punishment appears to have been not wholly imaginary. On March 1, 1870, Stevenson himself opened in the affirmative a debate on the question, ‘ Is the Abolition of Capital Punishment desirable?’ Like his hero, he found no seconder; but if he ever held the opinion, it certainly found no favour with him in after-life. The first essay he read before the Society (March 8, 1870) was on ‘The Influence of the Covenanting Persecution on the Scotch Mind,’ showing how closely this part of the national history occupied his attention. His opinion of the literature of the day was not high; in 1870 he moved that the revival of Letters which took place early in the century is on the wane, and two years later he supported the view that American literature could compare favourably with the contemporaneous literature of England.

The ‘ Spec.’ was probably the first place where Stevenson came into contact and rivalry with contemporaries who, being his equals, were not necessarily the friends of his own choice; and upon the members in general he seems to have made small impression. He 1 I must take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Society for kindly allowing me to have the necessary extracts made from their records, and especially to Mr. J. R. N. Macphail for obtaining this permission and giving up his time to the task.

was elected one of the five Presidents of the Society in 1872, but was at the bottom of the list and had only seven votes, whereas the first received eighteen, and the man next above him had thirteen supporters. In 1873 he was re-elected apparently without a contest; in his valedictory address, delivered in the same year, there is an amusing picture of the members, ending with a sketch of himself: — ’ Mr. Stevenson engaged in explaining to the other members that he is the cleverest person of his age and weight between this and

California., ‘ It is good for boys to be violent and unruly, and to hate all constituted authority/ he wrote before he himself had yet ceased to be a student,4 for it is of such boys that good citizens are made.’ And in 1870 he himself, as a riotous student, fell into the hands of the police. He must have chafed at his own inaction and the injustice of the arrest, for, on that occasion at any rate, he was but a looker-on at one of the traditional snowball fights between the University and the Town. The magistrates, however, behaved with great discretion, inflicted light sentences, and merely bound Stevenson over to keep the peace.

But while the external course of his life seemed smooth, the deeper current had far more troubled a stream. For one thing, as we have seen, he was not interested in engineering, and all the time he could spare from it was given up to the pursuit which had taken firm possession of him. The art of writing was his one concern, and to learn this he was giving all his real self. In later life, when a master of his craft, he sometimes doubted whether he would not have preferred a life of action, had that been possible to him. But it was not for any reason of health that he gave up engineering, but because his impulse to letters was at this time overpowering, and admitted of neither substitute nor rival.

There were, however, besides the misspending of his time and the misdirection of his labour, other difficulties that were far more grave. He had begun to work out for himself his own views of life: his religion and his ethics, his relations to society and his own place in the universe. He was following out the needs of his mind and nature: strictly sincere with himself, he could never see things in their merely conventional aspect. He was * young in youth/ and travelling at the fiery pace of his age and temperament; his senses were importunate, his intellect inquiring, and he must either find his own way, or, as he well might have done, lose it altogether.

When a young man with all the impetuosity of youth is involved in doubts as to the truth of religion, the constitution of society, and the contending claims of different duties, and further is bound to the service of a profession to which he is indifferent, while eagerly yearning after the practice of an art absorbing his whole powers, it is at once impossible he should be happy, and highly improbable that he should satisfy his parents.

Of all Stevenson’s difficulties those concerned with religion were the most important, if for no other reason than that they alone affected his relations with his father. The one was questioning dogmas and observances which the other regarded it as impious to examine; and no sacrifice was too great for the father, no duty too arduous, if it could only avert from his child the doom of the freethinker. On the other hand, sooner than be tied to the doctrines of Calvinism, the lad called himself an atheist — such is ever the youthful formula of independence. Of the precise nature of his difficulties at this time he has left no record. He was revolting generally against doctrines held with severity and intolerance, and struggling for that wider view and larger conception of life, which he afterwards found to be less incompatible than he thought with the lessons of his earliest years.

He speaks of the startling effect that the Gospel of St. Matthew produced on him,[1] but this seems to have been chiefly upon the social side. He was never at any time prone to compromise, and the discrepancy between Christ’s teaching and the practice of Christian societies he was neither ready to explain away nor able to ignore.[1] As in religion he designated himself for the moment an atheist, so he seems in economics, if not in politics, to have become ‘a red-hot Socialist.’[2] The direction of his views was no doubt partly due to the * healthy democratic atmosphere’ of the Scottish University system.

‘At an early age the Scottish lad begins his . . . experience of crowded class-rooms, of a gaunt quadrangle, of a bell hourly booming over the traffic of the city to recall him from the public-house where he has been lunching, or the streets where he has been wandering fancy-free. His college life has little of restraint, and nothing of necessary gentility. He will find no quiet clique of the exclusive, studious, and cultured; no rotten borough of the arts. All classes rub shoulders on the greasy benches. The raffish young gentleman in gloves must measure his scholarship with the plain, clever, clownish laddie from the parish school.’[3]

But to him especially, the truant and the scapegrace, the contrast came home with severity. In Lay Morals he unfolds some of the details of his experience in recounting ‘ a few pages out of a young man’s life.’

‘ He was a friend of mine; a young man like others; generous, flighty, as variable as youth itself, but always with some high motions, and on the search for higher thoughts of life. . . . But he got hold of some unsettling works, the New Testament among others, and this loosened his views of life and led him into many perplexities. As

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[1] Juvenilia, p. 327. Later Essays, p. 278.

[1] At the ‘Spec.,’ on 12th November 1872, he read an essay on ‘Two Questions on the relations between Christ’s teaching and Modern Christianity.’ But on 24th November 1871 he spoke against Communism being a maintainable theory. In March 1871 he voted a want of confidence in Mr. Gladstone’s Ministry, and probably throughout his life would, if compelled to vote, have always supported the Conservative candidate.

[2] Virginibus Puerisque, p. 64.

[3] ‘ The Foreigner at Home’: Memories and Portraits, p. 95.

he was the son of a man in a certain position, and well off, my friend had enjoyed from the first the advantages of education, nay, he had been kept alive through a sickly childhood by constant watchfulness, comforts, and change of air, for all of which he was indebted to his father’s wealth.

‘ At college he met other lads more diligent than himself, who followed the plough in summer-time to pay their fees in winter; and this inequality struck him with some force. He was at that age of a conversible temper, and insatiably curious in the aspects of life; and he spent much of his time scraping acquaintance with all classes of man- and woman-kind. In this way he came upon many depressed ambitions and intelligences stunted for want of opportunity; and this also struck him. He began to perceive that life was a handicap upon strange, wrong-sided principles; and not, as he had been told, a fair and equal race. He began to tremble that he himself had been unjustly favoured, when he saw all the avenues of wealth, and power, and comfort closed against so many of his competitors and equals, and held unwearyingly open before so idle, desultory, and so dissolute a being as himself. . . . My friend was only unsettled and discouraged, and filled full with that trumpeting anger with which young men regard injustices in the first blush of youth; although in a few years they will tamely acquiesce in their existence, and knowingly profit by their complications. Yet all this while he suffered many indignant pangs. And once when he put on his boots, like any other unripe donkey, to run away from home, it was his best consolation, that he was now, at a single plunge, to free himself from the responsibility of this wealth that was not his, and to do battle equally against his fellows in the warfare of life.’

Unfortunately the well-meant action of his parents added to his unhappiness a touch of squalor. They were generosity itself; they provided for their son all that they thought a young man could possibly want. So long as he cared for such entertainments, they gave dinners and dances to his friends, whom they welcomed (if thought suitable) on all occasions to their house; for his health and education there was nothing they were not ready to do. One thing only was wanting to him, and that was liberty, or rather the means of using it. They knew how generous he was by nature, probably they guessed how open-handed he was likely to be, and until he was three- and-twenty they restricted him — as others of his friends also were restricted — to half-a-crown or, at the most, five shillings a week as pocket-money. The result was that the lad went his own way, and frequented places which consorted with his means. This may have extended the future novelist's knowledge of man and woman and of the many aspects of human life, but it was scarcely a successful policy in his father's eyes (had he but known) which placed his son's headquarters at a tobacconist's shop,[1] and sent him to the Lothian Road and a succession of such hostelries as ' The Green Elephant,' The Twinkling Eye,' and ' The Gay Japanee.'

Stevenson's own account of it ran thus: —

41 was always kept poor in my youth, to my great indignation at the time, but since then with my complete approval. Twelve pounds a year was my allowance up to twenty-three [which was indeed far too little][2], and though I amplified it by a very consistent embezzlement from my mother, I never had enough to be lavish. My monthly pound was usually spent before the evening of the day on which I received it; as often as not, it was forestalled; and for the rest of the time I was in rare fortune if I had five shillings at once in my possession. Hence my acquaintance was of what would be called a very low order. Looking back upon it, 1 am surprised at the courage with which I first ventured alone into the societies in which I moved; I was the companion of seamen, chimney-sweeps, and thieves; my circle was being continually changed by the action of the police magistrate. I see now the little sanded kitchen, where Velvet Coat (for such was the name I went by) has spent days together, generally in silence and making sonnets in a penny version-book; and rough as the material may appear, I do not believe these days were among the least happy I have spent. I was distinctly petted and respected; the women were most gentle and kind to me; I might have left all my money for a month, and they would have returned every farthing of it. Such indeed was my celebrity, that when the proprietor and his mistress came to inspect the establishment, I was invited to tea with them; and it is still a grisly thought to me, that I have since seen that mistress, then gorgeous in velvet and gold chains, an old, toothless, ragged woman, with hardly voice enough to welcome me by my old name of Velvet Coat/

These were the days when there was most truth in the analogy that Stevenson loved to trace between himself and Robert Fergusson, the forerunner of Burns: the poor Edinburgh lad, who ' died in his acute, painful youth, and left models of the great things that were to come':[1] 'so clever a boy, so wild, of such a mixed strain, so unfortunate, born in the same town with me, and as I always felt, rather by express intimation than from evidence, so like myself.'[2] So far indeed did he carry this sympathy that, in writing from Samoa, he expressed his conviction that in him Fergusson lived again.3

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[1] ' Although tobacco is an admirable sedative, the qualities necessary for retailing it are neither rare nor precious in themselves.' — 'An Apology for Idlers': Virginibus Puerisque, p. 90.

[2] The words in brackets are added in pencil.

The days were the days of green-sickness, and they were often miserable. Many a time he leaned over the great bridge which connects the New Town with the Old, and watched the trains smoking out from under him, 1 Letters, ii. 223. 2 lb., ii. 329. 3 lb., ii. 223.

and vanishing into the tunnel on a voyage to brighter skies.1 Often he haunted the station itself, envying the passengers; and again,' in the hot fits of youth,' he went to the Calton burying-ground, 'to be unhappy.' 'Poor soul,' he says of himself, ' I remember how much he was cast down at times, and how life (which had not yet begun) seemed already at an end, and hope quite dead, and misfortune and dishonour, like physical presences, dogging him as he went.'

Yet the days were the days of youth, and often they were days of happiness. The clouds rolled away in their season; most of the troubles were subjective, and though they were acutely felt, yet their ultimate solution was certain.

The one difficulty most immediately affecting his outer life — the pursuit of engineering — was, however, among the first to be solved. On April 8, 1871, Louis told his father of his extreme disinclination for the work, and asked to be allowed to follow literature. It must have come as a heavy disappointment to Thomas Stevenson, who, as we have seen, was devoted to the practice of his calling. Moreover, only twelve days previously Louis had read before the Royal Scottish Society of Arts his first and only contribution to the literature of his profession, a paper on a New Form of Intermittent Light, which was afterwards judged 'well worthy of the favourable consideration of the Society, and highly creditable to so young an author.'2 The father felt the blow, but he must to some extent have been prepared for it by his son's entire lack of interest in the solution of problems which to him were the most entrancing in the world. He seems to have met the request with calm; his wife's diary records that he was ' wonderfully resigned'; and 1 Picturesque Notes, p. 4.

8 The proposed light has never been constructed in consequence of several mechanical difficulties, as I am informed by Mr. D. A. Stevenson, the present head of the firm and Engineer to the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses.

the matter was compromised without difficulty or delay. Engineering was to be given up forthwith, but lest Louis should find himself with no other profession than that of ' failed author,5 he was to read Law and to be called to the Scottish Bar. If he chose to practise, he would have his profession; his necessary legal and historical studies would add more or less to his general culture, and he would be able during his preparation to carry on the literary training that was already occupying so large a portion of his time.

The general alleviation of his position was more gradual, but of this he has left an account, the fragment of a larger scheme of biography written in San Francisco in the beginning of 1880.[1]

‘ I had a happy afternoon scrambling with Bob upon the banks of the Water of Leith above Slateford. And so I may leave this part of my life and take it up in another direction. At last I am now done with morbidity and can wash my hands.

‘BOOK III. — FROM JEST TO EARNEST

11 date my new departure from three circumstances: natural growth, the coming of friends, and the study of Walt Whitman. The order or degree of their effectiveness I shall not seek to distinguish. But I shall first say something of my friends.

‘ My cousin Bob,[2] who had now, after a long absence, returned to Edinburgh, is the man likest and most unlike to me that I have ever met. Our likeness was one of tastes and passions, and, for many years at least, it amounted in these particulars to an identity. He had the most indefatigable, feverish mind I have ever known; he had acquired a smattering of almost every knowledge and art; he would surprise you by his playing, his 1 For Book I., vide page 44 n. Of Book II. only the last lines survive, and the fragment on p. 83.

2 The late R. A. M. Stevenson, vide page 88 n.

painting, his writing, his criticism, his knowledge of philosophy, and above all, by a sort of vague, disconnected and totally inexplicable erudition. What was specially his, and genuine, was his faculty for turning over a subject in a conversation.[1] There was an insane lucidity in his conclusions; a singular, humorous eloquence in his language, and a power of method, bringing the whole of life into the focus of the subject under hand; none of which I have ever heard equalled or even approached by any other talker. I am sure that he and I together have, in a brief, conspectory manner, turned over the stuff of a year’s reading in one half- hour of talk. He was the most valuable man to talk to, above all in his younger days; for he twisted like a serpent, changed like the patterns in a kaleidoscope, transmigrated (it is the only word) from one point of view to another with a swiftness and completeness that left a stupid and merely logical mind panting in the rear; and so, in an incredibly brief space of time, helped you to view a question upon every side. In sheer trenchancy of mind, I have ever been his humble and distant follower. The multiplicity and swiftness of his apprehensions, if they do not bewilder, at least paralyse his mind. He is utterly without measure. He will spend a week in regulating the expenses of an imaginary navy; and then in ten minutes crush a subtle fallacy or create a new vein of criticism. We have perhaps only one moral quality in common: a desire to do justice to those with whom we are at enmity. I am now in my thirtieth year, and I have found sufficient excuses for all whom I think to have injured me but two; and for one of these I still hope to do the like. As for the other, I give him up to obscene furies; duck him where Stinchar2 flows; it was he who 1 Cf. 'Talk and Talkers': Memories and Portraits, p. 187.

2 A river in Ayrshire, at the mouth of which is Ballantrae. Cf. Bums's song: s Behind yon hills where Stinchar flows.'

first taught me, in my twenty-seventh year, to believe that it was possible for man to be evil with premeditation; and that was perhaps an evil enough service in itself.1 But in this particular Bob so far outstrips or (may I say?) outshines me, that I have sometimes been put to the blush by the largeness and freedom of his allowances for others.2

' The next friend who came to me (I take them in the order of time) was, I think, Charles Baxter. I cannot characterise a personality so unusual in the little space that I can here afford. I have never known one of so mingled a strain. As a companion, when in spirits, he stands without an equal in my experience. He is the only man I ever heard of who could give and take in 1 Cf. Memoir of FleemingJenkin, p. 151.

2 Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson was born in Edinburgh, 25th March 1847, and died 18th April 1900. He was educated at Windermere College and at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. He then studied painting chiefly at Antwerp and in France, but became an art critic about 1885, and from 1885 to 1889 was Professor of Fine Arts at University College, Liverpool. 'The Art of Velasquez' and the monograph on Rubens in the Portfolio series are the chief works he has left behind him, but, like Gerard de Nerval, ' il a verse plus d'une urne dans le tonneau sans fond du jour- nalisme.' These notes and the subsequent essay in Memories and Portraits give some idea of his talk as it was at this time — perhaps the most brilliant in England. In the Pall Mall Magazine for July 1900 Mr. Henley describes its mellowing, and says of such copiousness and intolerance as ever distinguished ' Spring-Heel'd Jack: ' 'Tis a good ten years since I saw the last of that exorbitant and amazing person — a person, be it noted, ever, for all his amazingness and for all his exorbitancy — »ever, I may insist, an influence for the best, alike in morals and in art; and I can say with a certain assurance that the younger men knew nothing of him. What they got in his room was a some one, bright-eyed, a little flushed, ever courteous, ever kindly, ever humorous, taking any bit of the universe as his theme, descanting upon it as if he had a prescriptive right in it, and delighting every one who listened by the unfailing excellence, wisdom, sanity (however insane it seemed at times) of what he had to

say.’ And another of his friends, writing in the Saturday Review (28 th April 1900), says: ‘We know what the joy was of the “ Mermaid” since we have known him.’

Of these earlier days he wrote to Louis as long ago as 1874: ‘ We used to think we were like no one else about certain things, but that was a real phase too.’

conversation with the wit and polish of style that we find in Congreve’s comedies.1 He is likewise the only person I ever knew who could advise, or, to explain more perfectly my meaning, who could both make helpful suggestions and at the same time hold his tongue when he had none to offer.

‘ The next was James Walter Ferrier. It is only now when I come to describe them that I perceive how strange a crew were my associates; but Ferrier’s strangeness was of a tragic character. The grandson of old Wilson, the son of Ferrier the metaphysician, he was gifted with very considerable abilities; he was by nature the most complete and gentle gentleman (I must risk the pleonasm) I have known.

‘ I never knew any man so superior to himself. The best of him only came as a vision, like Corsica from the Corniche. He never gave his measure either morally or intellectually. The curse was on him. Even his friends did not know him but by fits. I have passed hours with him when he was so wise, good, and sweet, that I never knew the like of it in any other.2

‘ The fourth of these friends was Sir Walter Simpson, son of Sir James who gave chloroform to the world. He was, I think, the eldest of my associates; yet he must have been of a more deliberate growth, for when we encountered, I believe we were about equal in intellectual development. His was a slow fighting mind. You would see him, at times, wrestle for a minute at a time with a refractory jest, and perhaps fail to throw it at the end. I think his special character was a profound shyness, 1 He was, even then, as a letter from R. L. S. in 1894 reminds him, ‘a great maker of reminiscences,5 and to his influence, perhaps, it was partly due that Stevenson turned so early and so frequently to the past.

2 I have here substituted a portion of a letter which Stevenson wrote upon hearing of the death of Ferrier {Letters, i. 281) for the original ms., which says nearly the same things in a more halting fashion, and is generally less suitable for quotation. For the finished study, pitched in a loftier key, the reader is referred to ‘ Old Mortality’ in Memories and Portraits.

a shyness which was not so much exhibited in society as it ruled in his own dealings with himself. He was shy of his own virtues and talents, and above all of the former. He was even ashamed of his own sincere desire to do the right. More than half the man, as you first knew him, was a humbug; and that was utterly the worser part. But this very foible served to keep clean and wholesome the unusual intimacy which united him, Baxter, and myself; for he would permit no protestations and scarce any civility between us. It is odd that this had to be dropped in time; for, as we went on in life and became more seriously involved, we found it then more necessary to be kind. Then, indeed, Simpson could show himself not only kind but full of exceptional delicacies. Some of them I did not appreciate till years after they were done and perhaps forgotten by him. I have said his mind was slow, and in this he was an opposite and perhaps an antidote to Bob. I have known him battle a question sometimes with himself, sometimes with me, month after month for years; he had an honest stubbornness in thinking, and would neither let himself be beat nor cry victory.

‘ The mere return of Bob changed at once and for ever the course of my life; I can give you an idea of my relief only by saying that I was at last able to breathe. The miserable isolation in which I had languished was no more in season, and I began to be happy.[1] To have no one to whom you can speak your thoughts is but a slight trial; for a month or two at a time, I can support it almost without regret; but to be young, to be daily making fresh discoveries and fabricating new theories of life, to be full of flimsy, whimsical, overpowering humours, that seem to leave you no alternative but to confide them or to die, and not only not to have, but never to have had a confidant, is an astounding misery. I now understand it best by recognising my delight when that period was ended. I thought I minded for nothing when I had found my Faithful; my heart was like a bird’s; I was done with the sullens for good; there was an end of green-sickness for my life as soon as I had got a friend to laugh with. Laughter was at that time our principal affair, and I doubt if we could have had a better. It is true we debated many things from the first, above all, problems of art, in which we advanced wonderfully; and it is also true that under all this mirth-making, there kept growing up and strengthening a serious, angry, and at length a downright hostile criticism of the life around us. This time we call, in looking back, the period of Jink.

[1] At this point it may be as well to mention the L. J. R., ‘ that mysterious society.’ It consisted of six members, and its meetings, of which only five took place, were held at a public-house situated, I believe, in Advocates’ Close, which had apparently been visited by Burns. Its complete name was concealed with a mystery as deep and not less important than that which broods over the Greek letter societies of American colleges. Its principles, generally speaking, were liberty of thought and freedom from prejudice. The abolition of the House of Lords was, it is said, one of its tenets.

‘ Jink was a word of our own; for we had a language, compounded of many slangs and languages in which we expressed indifferently common things that had already a much better name in English, and the new or half understood ideas for which there were no names, or none with which we were acquainted.

‘As a rule of conduct, Jink consisted in doing the most absurd acts for the sake of their absurdity and the consequent laughter. I will give an instance of the colossal jests which we used to enact, and of which this at least is to be said, that if they were silly, they were never cruel. One of us was once travelling from Wales to Edinburgh, strangely dilapidated as usual in the matter of coin; and when he got to Crewe, he was stopped before the booking-office for a paltry half-crown. There were fifteen minutes to spare before the train started. He opened his portmanteau on the platform, got out a pair of dress-trousers, ran into the town, stumbled straight on a pawnbroker’s shop, got his half- crown, and was back in time to book and get a seat. But when the hurry was over he began to wonder over a circumstance in this little comedy. When asked his name by the pawnbroker, he had replied instantly and without conscious thought, “John Libbel,” and when further questioned as to the spelling, had rapped out in the same swift and perfectly mechanical way, “ Two B’s.” On his return the matter was discussed. It seemed to us, I remember, a case of plenary inspiration; and we agreed, at last, that it must have been so, because the name was so suitable for one who pawned. It seemed to us, and it seems to me still, a mean, hungry, slinking sort of name; hence we thought that all of us should use it as a name to pawn under; and hence germinated the great idea of Libbelism. A large, growing, pushing society of men should go all over the world and continually pawn articles under the name of John Libbel; until at length, when some great German statist took it into his blockhead to examine the books of pawnbrokers, it would gradually dawn upon him that, in all lands and for year after year, innumerable persons all answering to this one name of John Libbel were daily engaged in the act of pawning, and yet when he turned his eyes outward on the world to follow the conduct of these persons in a different sphere, behold there would be no John Libbel, no, not one. We exulted over the mystification of the German statist. To pawn anything under this name was to perform an “ act of Libbelism.”

‘ I remember these words from the “ Corpus totius Juris Libbelismi” which I drew up: “vel si rem suam, vel si rem alienam, maxime quidem si rem alienam.”

‘ But the idea did not rest here: we had tasted blood, and soon began to find out other ways of building up evidence of this imaginary person’s existence. We bought some type for marking pocket-handkerchiefs one day at the corner of North College Street, and retiring to a public-house, printed off, with incredible patience, many hundred visiting-cards with the name of “Mr. Libbel.” The type being worthless, and the printing being done without a press, and amateur at that, you may conceive the aspect of the cards. These began to be handed about Edinburgh at a great rate, sometimes with manuscript additions which did not tend to improve the moral character of Mr. Libbel. A whole street would suddenly be flooded from end to end with Mr. Libbel’s visiting-cards; or one would be softly pressed into the hand of a gentleman going by. Parcels, containing nothing, “ With Mr. Libbel’s compliments,” were handed into houses. Letters from Mr. Libbel to leading citizens were carried by the unconscious postman. I have spent whole days going from lodging-house to lodging-house inquiring anxiously, “ If Mr. Libbel had come yet? “ and when the servant or a landlady had told us “ No,” assuring her that he would come soon, and leaving a mysterious message. And at last — crowning-point of the edifice — there came the Libbel Succession. Wherever we went, we had a notebook in our hand; we would put questions, look at each other, purse our lips, and gradually let it escape to our auditor, as if by accident, that we were agents looking for the heir to the great Libbel fortune. We tried to get an advertisement into the Scotsman newspaper, but the clerk plainly smelling a hoax, we were ejected from the office. Did we labour in vain from first to last? After all this apostledom, was there not one disciple? Did no two of our victims ever take counsel together, and after comparing notes, cry out: “ But who the devil is this Libbel? “ We can never know now; but we were disinterested, we required none of the encouragement of success, we pursued our joke, our mystification, our blague for its own sake, and had a good time.

‘ Yet for this and other mad pranks of a like order, we were rewarded in a strange way, by one flash of infernal glory. This is so odd in itself that I must tell it with every particularity One afternoon, hunting round for the absurd, we entered the shop of a jeweller called Bargany on Street, rather low down, and there proceeded for about quarter of an hour to pass off some piece of vaulting absurdity on the shopman. Suddenly the man’s eye took fire, and he started back. “ I know who you are,” he cried; “ you ‘re the two Stevensons.” We were dumbfounded. “ Oh,” he went on, “ Bargany’s been dying to see you. He ‘11 be so vexed that he was out. Oh, he’s heard of your ongoings.” And the man shouted with laughter again and again. He told us to come back later in the afternoon, or any other afternoon, and have tea in the backshop with Bargany and his sister, who had also heard of us, and desired to make our acquaintance. And I must say if our reputation did us any justice, that sister was a liberal lady.

Would you believe it? we never went back.

4 To tell what else we did would be interminable and, besides, extremely tedious. As Bob said, we did nothing obvious; the least joke was spiced to us by being imbedded in mountains of monotony.'

Here the manuscript breaks off. Some notes on an earlier page enable us to learn in what direction it might have been continued. ' Whitman: humanity: L. J. R.: love of mankind: sense of inequality: justification of art: decline of religion: I take to the New Testament: change startling: growing desire for truth: Spencer: should have done better with the New Test.'

Thus the coming of happiness was due partly to his friends and partly to his reading. To the list of the former there is still an addition to be made — the name of Fleeming Jenkin. It was in 1868 that Jenkin came to Edinburgh as Professor of Engineering, and it was first in the character of a truant that Stevenson came under his notice.[1] The professor was fifteen years older than his pupil — a difference in age which is often difficult to surmount. But besides his boundless energy and vitality, there was about Jenkin a perpetual boyishness, which showed itself not least in this, that his development continued to the end of his life. His delight in all that was high-minded and heroic, his fiery enthusiasm, his extraordinary readiness and spirit, were just the qualities to win and to stimulate the younger man. Moreover, at the time that Stevenson fell under his influence, the detachment and independence of Jenkin's religious views rendered that influence of far greater weight than if he had been content to yield a lifeless assent to established observances and conventional creeds. Stevenson was in revolt, or meditating an outbreak. Here was a man, ready to question everything, exercising a clear-sighted judgment, and yet full of earnestness and piety, who 4 saw life very simple,' who did not love refinements, but was 4 a friend to much conformity in unessentials.' And about Jenkin there were these further points which distinguished him from Stevenson's other friends, and gave him a great advantage. He was the only one who had already fought the battle of life, and not only was victorious but knew how to carry his success.[1] Moreover, he was the first of Stevenson's friends who was already married. Perhaps the most charming passages in the Memoir of Fleeming fenkin are those which suggest rather than describe the infinite tenderness and romance which marriage brought into his life and made his house all it was to those who loved him. And so to Stevenson it was from the first a double friendship, renewed each spring in Edinburgh by the theatricals in which he took part, and also by a long visit to the family in their country quarters. To Jenkin he resorted in many of his troubles, and from him and his wife he never failed to obtain the

[1] Memoir of Fleeming Jenkin, p. 155.

sympathy and wise counsel of which he stood in need. Mrs. Jenkin, writing in 1895, says that her husband loved him best of all his friends, and Stevenson, 1 Letters, ii. 80.

when he came to write Jenkin's biography, records what mingled pain and pleasure it was ' to dig into the past of a dead friend, and find him, at every spadeful, shine brighter.'1

Stevenson's numerous and characteristic letters to Jenkin were returned to their writer after his friend's death, and, in the confusion of the departure from Bournemouth, they were unfortunately destroyed. Of his first introduction to Mrs. Jenkin, she has herself given an account.

Late on a winter afternoon in 1868 she paid her first visit to 17 Heriot Row, and there found Mrs. Stevenson sitting by the firelight, apparently alone. They began to talk, when ' suddenly, from out of a dark corner beyond the fireplace, came a voice, peculiar, vibrating; a boy's voice, I thought at first. "Oh!" said Mrs. Stevenson, " I forgot that my son was in the room. Let me introduce him to you." The voice went on: I listened in perplexity and amazement. Who was this son who talked as Charles Lamb wrote? this young Heine with the Scottish accent? I stayed long, and when I came away the unseen converser came down with me to the front-door to let me out. As he opened it,* the light of the gas-lamp outside (" For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door," he sings) fell on him, and I saw a slender, brown, long-haired lad, with great dark eyes, a brilliant smile, and a gentle, deprecating bend of the head. " A boy of sixteen," I said to myself. But he was eighteen, looking then, as he always did, younger than his age. I asked him to come and see us. He said, "Shall I come to-morrow?" I said " Yes," and ran home. As I sat down to dinner I announced, "I have made the acquaintance of a poet!" He came on the morrow, and from that day forward we saw him constantly. From that day forward too, our affection and our admiration for him, and our delight in his company, grew.'

1 Letters, ii. 13.

Thus much of his friends and their influence. There was also the other continual and stimulating influence of books, and though Stevenson was never a scholar in the strict and more arid sense, few men ever brought so great an enthusiasm to the studies of their choice. His ardour was now at its height. Twenty years later he wrote: 41 have really enjoyed this book as I — almost as I — used to enjoy books when I was going twenty — twenty-three; and these are the years for reading.'1

'Books were the proper remedy: books of vivid human import, forcing upon the minds of young men the issues, pleasures, busyness, importance, and immediacy of that life in which they stand; books of smiling or heroic temper, to excite or to console; books of a large design, shadowing the complexity of that game of consequences to which we all sit down, the hanger-back not least.'2

Besides his books at home, he had always access to the Advocates' Library, the great public library of Edinburgh, which is entitled to receive a copy of everything published in the kingdom. But for the present the question is of those works with which a man lives, which for the time become an intimate part of himself, and closer than any friend. Such were to Stevenson the three already mentioned, the New Testament, Walt Whitman,3 and Herbert Spencer. Of the first he says but little, and of that I have already spoken: to Whitman he has done a measure of justice in one of the Familiar Studies, and also in a paper on 'Books which have influenced me.'4 In the latter, too, Mr. Herbert Spencer also 1 Letters, ii. 246. 2 Memories and Portraits, p. 112.

3 ' His book . . . should be in the hands of all parents and guardians as a specific for the distressing malady of being seventeen years old. Greensickness yields to his treatment as to a charm of magic; and the youth, after a short course of reading, ceases to carry the world upon his shoulders' (ibid. p. 108).

4 Republished in his Later Essays, in the Edinburgh edition.

* I come next to Whitman's Leaves of Grass, a book of singular service, a book which tumbled the world upside down for me, blew into space a thousand cobwebs of genteel and ethical illusion, and having thus shaken my VOL. I. G

receives his meed of gratitude, and to him succeed Shakespeare, Dumas, Bunyan, Montaigne, and many others in rapid sequence, until the writer was manifestly overwhelmed in returning thanks to the whole world of books which brought him so much wisdom and happiness.1

But learning to write — there was the business of life. Although the description of the method by which he taught himself this most difficult of arts has been quoted again and again, and has long ago become classical, I have no alternative and no desire but to give it in this place. The process described had long begun, when this period opened, as it continued after its close; but to these years it chiefly refers — a space of protracted and laborious application without encouragement or immediate reward.2

tabernacle of lies, set me back again upon a strong foundation of all the original and manly virtues.

. . Close upon the back of my discovery of Whitman, I came under the influence of Herbert Spencer. No more persuasive Rabbi exists, and few better. . . . His words, if dry, are always manly and honest; there dwells in his pages a spirit of highly abstract joy, plucked naked like an algebraic symbol, but still joyful; and the reader will find there a caput mortuum of piety, with little indeed of its loveliness, but with most of its essentials; and these two qualities make him a wholesome, as his intellectual vigour makes him a bracing, writer. I should be much of a hound if I lost my gratitude to Herbert Spencer.' — 'Books which have influenced me,' Later Essays, 1 In a notebook of 1871-72 I find this Catalogus Librorum Carissimorum: —

Scott, strange to say, does not appear, but though Stevenson now and again said hard things of Sir Walter, they were all upon the technical side, and his incomparable merits perhaps no one ever better understood. Not all books, however, were of service: elsewhere he bewails the inhumanity of Obermann (Memories and Portraits, p. 112) and counts Moll Flanders and The Country Wife more wholesome reading.

Compare also the beginning of A Gossip on a Novel of Dumas1s and The Ideal House (Miscellanea, p. 47).

2 Memories and Portraits (A College Magazine), p. 122.

p. 279.

Montaigne's Essays. Horace, his Odes.

Pepys, his Diary, esp. the Trip to Hazlitt's Table-Talk.

Burns' works.

Tristram Shandy.

Heine.

Keats.

Fielding.

Bristol, Bath, etc. Shakespeare, his works, Lear, Hamlet, Falstaff,; Twelfth Night.

' All through my boyhood and youth I was known and pointed out for the pattern of an idler; and yet I was always busy on my own private end, which was to learn to write. I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in. As I walked, my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words; when I sat by the roadside, I would either read, or a pencil and a penny version-book would be in my hand, to note down the features of the scene or commemorate some halting stanzas. Thus I lived with words.

' And what I thus wrote was for no ulterior use; it was written consciously for practice. It was not so much that I wished to be an author (though I wished that too) as that I had vowed that I would learn to write. That was a proficiency that tempted me; and I practised to acquire it, as men learn to whittle, in a wager with myself. Description was the principal field of my exercise; for to any one with senses there is always something worth describing, and town and country are but one continuous subject. But I worked in other ways also; often accompanied my walks with dramatic dialogues, in which I played many parts; and often exercised myself in writing down conversations from memory.

4 This was all excellent, no doubt; so were the diaries I sometimes tried to keep, but always and very speedily discarded, finding them a school of posturing and melancholy self-deception. And yet this was not the most efficient part of my training. Good though it was, it only taught me (so far as I have learned them at all) the lower and less intellectual elements of the art, the choice of the essential note and the right word: things that to a happier constitution had perhaps come by nature. And as regarded training, it had one grave defect; for it set me no standard of achievement. So that there was perhaps more profit, as there was certainly more effort, in my secret labours at home. Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful, and I knew it; and tried again, and was again unsuccessful, and always unsuccessful; but at least in these vain bouts I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction and the co-ordination of parts.

‘ I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire and to Obermann. I remember one of these monkey-tricks, which was called “ The Vanity of Morals “; it was to have had a second part “ The Vanity of Knowledge “; but the second part was never attempted, and the first part was written (which is my reason for recalling it, ghostlike, from its ashes) no less than three times: first in the manner of Hazlitt, second in the manner of Ruskin, who had cast on me a passing spell, and third, in a laborious pasticcio of Sir Thomas Browne. So with my other works: Cain, an epic, was (save the mark!) an imitation of Sordello: Robin Hood, a. tale in verse, took an eclectic middle course among the fields of Keats, Chaucer, and Morris: in Monmouth, a tragedy, I reclined on the bosom of Mr. Swinburne; in my innumerable gouty- footed lyrics, I followed many masters; in the first draft of The King’s Pardon, a tragedy, I was on the trail of no less a man than John Webster; in the second draft of the same piece, with staggering versatility, I had shifted my allegiance to Congreve, and of course conceived my fable in a less serious vein — for it was not Congreve’s verse, it was his exquisite prose, that I admired and sought to copy. ... So I might go on for ever, through all my abortive novels, and down to my later plays, of which I think more tenderly, for they were not only conceived at first under the bracing influence of old Dumas, but have met with resurrections: one, strangely bettered by another hand, came on the stage itself and was played by bodily actors; the other, originally known as Semiramis, a tragedy,[1] I have observed on bookstalls under the alias of Prince Otto. But enough has been said to show by what arts of impersonation, and in what purely ventriloquial efforts I first saw my words on paper.

‘ That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write; whether I have profited or not, that is the way. It was so Keats learned, and there was never a finer temperament for literature than Keats’s. . . .

‘ It is the great point of these imitations that there still shines, beyond the student’s reach, his inimitable model. Let him try as he please, he is still sure of failure; and it is an old and a very true saying that failure is the only high-road to success. I must have had some disposition to learn; for I clear-sightedly condemned my own performances. I liked doing them indeed; but when they were done, I could see they were rubbish. In consequence, I very rarely showed them even to my friends; and such friends as I chose to be my confidants I must have chosen well, for they had the friendliness to be quite plain with me. “ Padding,” said one. Another wrote: “ I cannot understand why you do lyrics so badly.” No more could I! Thrice I put myself in the way of a more authoritative rebuff, by sending a paper to a magazine. These were returned, and I was not surprised or even pained. If they had not been looked at, as (like all amateurs) I suspected was the case, there was no good in repeating the experiment; if they had been looked at — well then I had not yet learned to write, and I must keep on learning and living.’

Thus the secret of learning was — for the right man — only the secret of taking pains: and yet in the history of his endeavours we find, where we should least expect it, a hereditary trait. It seems as absurd to couple with indolence the name of the indefatigable writer, as it was for him to bring his grandfather into a similar connection i1 but it is from himself that we hear of this failing, although we know not to which year it must be referred.

‘ I remember a time when I was very idle, and lived and profited by that humour. I have no idea why I ceased to be so, yet I scarce believe I have the power to return to it; it is a change of age. I made consciously a thousand little efforts, but the determination from which these arose came to me while I slept and in the way of growth. I have had a thousand skirmishes to keep myself at work upon particular mornings, and sometimes the affair was hot; but of that great change of campaign, which decided all this part of my life and turned me from one whose business was to shirk into one whose business was to strive and persevere, it seems to me as though all that had been done by some one else. The life of Goethe affected me; so did that of Balzac; and some very noble remarks by the latter in a pretty bad book, the Cousine Bette. I dare say I could trace some other influences in the

[1] The tragedy was in blank verse, Academy, 19th May 1900.

change. All I mean is, I was never conscious of a struggle, nor registered a vow, nor seemingly had anything personally to do with the matter. I came about like a well-handled ship. There stood at the wheel that unknown steersman whom we call God.'[2]

This may be assigned to the time immediately before his retirement from engineering; but it might relate equally to several periods when he was unable to settle down to work: they were seldom of long duration, and, except before his own conscience, there was hardly any time when the author of the Apology for Idlers ever really neglected the tasks of his true vocation.

As to the products of his labours, editors, as he has told us, would have nothing to say to them. So he became an editor himself. Magazines had risen and fallen wherever the boy had gone; but none of his serials had yet attained the distinction of type. The idea of the Edinburgh University Magazine was started in the rooms of the 1 Spec.' by four of the members of that society, of which Stevenson was the youngest and least esteemed; the history of its rise and fall (for print did not save it from the fate of its manuscript predecessors) may be read in Memories and Portraits, while some of Stevenson's contributions are to be found in the volume of his Juvenilia. Interesting as they are, they constitute no great achievement, and the picture of ' An Old Scots Gardener,' retouched in after days, is the only piece which has found a place with the works of his later years.

'The magazine appeared in a yellow cover, which was the best part of it, for at least it was unassuming; . . . it ran four months in undisturbed obscurity, and died without a gasp. The first number was edited by all four of us, with prodigious bustle; the second fell principally into the hands of Ferrier and me; the third I edited alone; and it has long been a solemn question who it was that edited the fourth. . . .

' It was no news to me, but only the wholesome confirmation of my judgment, when the magazine struggled into half-birth, and instantly sickened and subsided into night. ... I cleared the decks after this lost engagement; had the necessary interview with my father, which passed off not amiss; paid over my share of expense; . . . and then, reviewing the whole episode, I told myself that the time was not yet ripe, nor the man ready; and to work again I went with my penny version-books, having fallen back in one day from the printed author to the manuscript student.'[1]

To the list of the works — books, plays, and articles — already mentioned, which were written at this time, the following names may be added, as showing the direction of his labours. In 1868 he wrote Voces Fidelium, a series of dramatic monologues in verse; and ‘ the bulk of a Covenanting novel,’ possibly another attempt on Hackston of Rathillet or the Pentland Rising.1 The Kings Pardon (otherwise Park Whitehead) and Edward Daven likewise survive only as names; the manuscripts are gone, and we cannot even guess at the models on which they were planned; though the first of them seems to show that here, as well as in Cain, Robert Browning helped to educate the writer who of all others in his day perhaps the least resembled him in style.

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[1] Page 4.

[2] Reflections and Remarks on Human Life, p. 40.

[1] Memories and Portraits, p. 132.

A Retrospect, written at Dunoon in 1870, and the fragment of Cockermouth and Keswick, a visit to Cumberland in 1871, are printed in the Edinburgh edition. The former contains the account of the spae-wife, ‘a poor, mad Highland woman,’ who — along with much nonsense — predicted that he was to visit America, was to be very happy, and was to be much upon the sea. In the latter is an admirable portrait, such as Thackeray would have loved, of the London theatrical manager, lording it in the inn smoking-room at Keswick. There were also written at this date the article on Colinton Manse, from which I have quoted so largely, and another similar paper on his solitary games, which was afterwards transformed into ‘ Child’s Play.’2

In 1871 he wrote the paper on ‘A New Form of Intermittent Light for Lighthouses,’ which was highly praised, and received a £3 medal from the Royal Scottish Society of Arts, and in May 1873 his paper ‘On the Thermal Influence of Forests’ was communicated to the Royal Society of Edinburgh by his father, and duly appeared in the Proceedings of that Society. Both these are contained in the Edinburgh edition, but whatever scientific value they possess, as literature they are undis- tinguishable from ordinary papers of the kind. 1 Memories and Portraits, pp. 297, 305. 2 Memories and Portraits.

Meanwhile their authoi was reading for the Bar, or at any rate attending some of the necessary lectures in Civil Law, Public Law, and Political Economy. In the second of these subjects he was even third in the class and received honourable mention, and from Professor Hodgson he gained a certificate for essays.

During the years 1872 and 1873 he spent some months in the office of Messrs. Skene and Peacock, Writers to the Signet, in order to learn conveyancing. Part of the process consisted in copying documents, and for this in Scotland it was customary to pay the pupil. Scott in this way increased his meagre pocket-money, probably to a far greater amount than Stevenson ever achieved. I find, nevertheless, that in July 1873 ^e latter was paid six pounds as 6 about the amount of your writings during the period you have been in the office/ The senior partner of this firm was the well-known historian and antiquary, Mr. W. F. Skene, the author of Celtic Scotland, but it seems that he was hardly at all brought into connection with his pupil, and that, in later years, either learned the other's quality with much regret for a neglected opportunity.

In November 1872 Stevenson, having no degree or qualification for exemption, passed the preliminary examination for the Scottish Bar; the circumstances are worth mention only for the light they throw on his character and his education. French was one of the subjects offered, and only the day before the examination he discovered that questions would be set him in the grammar of that language. He forthwith procured a book and realised that here was a body of knowledge, the very existence of which had been unknown to him. It was manifestly useless to attempt to get it up in four-and-twenty hours, so he went in, relying on his practical acquaintance with the idiom. His ignorance was exposed, but his knowledge and his plausibility induced and enabled the examiner 'to find a form of words,' and his French was accepted as adequate. Another subject was Ethical and Metaphysical Philosophy, and Hamilton or Mackintosh (it is undesirable to be too precise) was the book prescribed. I give Stevenson's own account of what took place, as I have heard him tell the story. 4 The examiner asked me a question, and I had to say to him, " I beg your pardon, but I do not understand your phraseology." "It's the text-book," he said. "Yes; but you couldn't possibly expect me to read so poor a book as that." He laughed like a hunchback, and then put the question in another form; I had been reading Maine, and answered him by the historical method. They were probably the most curious answers ever given in the subject; I don't know what he thought of them, but they got me through.'

In 1872 he proposed to take a summer session at some German university with Sir Walter Simpson, who was also studying Law. But his mother grew so nervous that he gave up the scheme, and in place of it the friends spent two or three weeks together during the first part of August, chiefly in lodgings in Frankfurt. His parents joined him at Baden-Baden, and he then went for a short walking tour in the Black Forest.

This was the single occasion on which he crossed the Channel during this period of his life, and indeed in these years he was hardly out of Scotland but for his trip to the Lakes, and a visit to R. A. M. Stevenson at Cambridge, where he had a glimpse of the life of the English undergraduate. The last twelve months are of interest as the only time when he turned his attention at all seriously to the study of the German language and literature. For the next year or two there is an occasional reference to Heine or Goethe in his letters, and even a few quotations, chiefly in his unpublished fragments. But with these insignificant exceptions German appears to have passed over him without effect, and French was the only modern language that ever exercised an influence upon his style.

But Stevenson as he was in the later years of this period may best be seen in the curiously diverse entries of a short diary kept on a folio sheet of paper upon his first entrance to the lawyers' office. I have printed nearly the whole of it for the sake of the contrasts; the high spirits and the sentiment, the humour, the humanity and the immaturity, make a remarkable conjunction. Already it would be difficult for any one to read it without either recognising the author, or else prognosticating for him a future which, at any rate, should be neither commonplace nor obscure.

‘ Thursday, May gth (1872).[1] — Went to office for first time. Had to pass an old sailor and an idiot boy, who tried both to join company with me, lest I should be late for office. A fine sunny, breezy morning, walking in. A small boy (about ten) calling out “ Flory “ to a dog was very pretty. There was a quaint little tremolo in his voice that gave it a longing, that was both laughable and touching. All the rest of the way in, his voice rang in my memory and made me very happy.

1 Friday, May 10th. — Office work — copying, at least — is the easiest of labour. There is just enough mind-work necessary to keep you from thinking of anything else, so that one simply ceases to be a reasoning being and feels stodged and stupid about the head, a consummation devoutly to be wished for.

4 Sunday, May 2.1st (12th). — My father and I walked over to Glencorse to church. A fat, ruddy farm wench showed us the way; for the church, although on the top of a hill, is so buried among the tree-tops that one does not see it till one trips against the plate.[2] It is a quaint old building, and the minister, Mr. Torrance (his father and grandfather were here before him), is still more quaint and striking. He is about eighty; and he lamed himself last summer dancing a reel at a wedding. He wears black thread gloves; and the whole manner of the man in the pulpit breathes of last century.

‘ Monday, May 12th (11 th). — In all day at the office. In the evening dined with Bob. Met X , who was quite drunk and spent nigh an hour in describing his wife's last hours — an infliction which he hired us to support with sherry ad lib. Splendid moonlight night. Bob walked out to Fairmilehead with me. We were in a state of mind that only comes too seldom in a lifetime. We danced and sang the whole way up the long hill, without sensible fatigue. I think there was no actual conversation — at least none has remained in my memory: I recollect nothing but “ profuse bursts of unpremeditated song.” Such a night was worth gold untold. Ave pia testa! After we parted company at the toll, I walked on counting my money, and I noticed that the moon shone upon each individual shilling as I dropped it from one hand to the other; which made me think of that splendid passage in Keats, winding up with the joke about the “ poor patient oyster.”[1]

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[1] The year is settled beyond question by the corresponding entries in his mother's diary.

[2] I.e. the plate for contributions, which is left at the door of Scotch churches.

‘ Wednesday, 22nd. — At work all day at Court — work being periphrasis for sitting still, taking three luncheons, and running two errands. In the evening started in the rain alone, and seeing a fellow in front, I whistled him to wait till I came up. He proved to be a pit-worker from Mid-Calder, and — -faute de mieux — I bribed him by the promise of ale to keep me company as far as New Pentland Inn. ... I heard from him that the Internationale was already on foot at Mid-Calder, but was not making much progress. I acquitted myself as became a child of the Proprietariat, and warned him, quite apostolically, against all conversation with this abomination of Desolation. He seemed much impressed, and more wearied.

‘He told me some curious stories of body-snatching from the lonely little burying-ground at Old Pentland, and spoke with the exaggerated horror that I have always observed in common people of this very excusable misdemeanour. I was very tired of my friend before we got back again, and so I think he was of me. But I paid for the beer; so he had the best of it.

4 Friday, July tyh. — A very hot sunny day. The Princes Street Gardens were full of girls and idle men, steeping themselves in the sunshine. A boy lay on the grass under a clump of gigantic hemlocks in flower, that looked quite tropical and gave the whole garden a southern smack that was intensely charming in my eyes. He was more ragged than one could conceive possible. It occurred to me that I might here play le dieu des pauvres gens, and repeat for him that pleasure that I so often try to acquire artificially for myself by hiding money in odd corners and hopelessly trying to forget where I have laid it; so I slipped a halfpenny into his ragged waistcoat pocket. One might write whole essays about his delight at finding it.’

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[1] The references are to Shelley’s 4 Skylark,’ 1. 5; Horace Odes, iii. 21. 4; Keats’s Endymion, iii. 67.

CHAPTER VI

LIFE AT FIVE-AND-TWENTY — 1873-76

‘ Since I am sworn to live my life And not to keep an easy heart, Some men may sit and drink apart, I bear a banner in the strife.

Some can take quiet thought to wife, I am all day at tierce and carteˆ Since I am sworn to live my life And not to keep an easy heart.

I follow gaily to the fife, Leave Wisdom bowed above a chart, And Prudence brawling in the mart, And dare Misfortune to the knife, Since I am sworn to live my life.’

R. L. S.

Eighteen hundred and seventy-three was a decisive year: for although it left Stevenson, as it found him, a law student with literary tastes, it yet marked a definite change in his life. It saw the religious question come to a crisis, and by so much, therefore, nearer to a settlement; it brought him new friends with both interest and influence in the career for which he was longing; and it foreshadowed the beginning of that career in the acceptance and publication of the first of the magazine articles which, being either travel-notes or essays, were for some time to come his principal, and as some critics have held, his most characteristic achievement.

The most important event of the year for him sounds in itself one of the most trivial that can well be imagined — a visit to a country parsonage in Suffolk. A granddaughter of the old minister of Colinton had several years before married the Rev. Churchill Babington, Disney Professor of Archaeology in the University of Cambridge, and formerly a Fellow of St. John’s College, who had taken the college living of Cockfield, a few miles from Bury St. Edmunds. Here Stevenson had paid a visit in 1870, one of those excursions into England of which he speaks in the essay on 4 The Foreigner at Home,’ and from which he received ‘ so vivid an impression of foreign travel and strange lands and manners.’ These sensations were now renewed and deepened, but the later visit was to have other and more lasting effects: Stevenson now met for the first time two fellow-guests, whose friendship became at once an important element in his life, affecting his development, changing his horizon, and opening for him a direct outlook into the world of letters in which he was to be hereafter so brilliant a figure. The first of these, a connection by marriage and intimate friend of his hostess, was the Mrs. Sitwell to whom those letters were addressed, which throw so much light on the inner feelings and thoughts of the ensuing period of Stevenson’s life. The second was Mr. Sidney Colvin, who then and there began that friendship which was so immediately helpful; which survived all shocks of time and change; which separation by half the world seemed only to render more close and assiduous, and which has its monument in the Vailima Letters, in the two volumes of Stevenson’s other correspondence, and in the final presentation of his works. Mr. Colvin was then still resident at Cambridge as a Fellow of Trinity College, and had that same year been elected Slade Professor of Fine Art in the University. Although Stevenson’s elder by only a few years, he had already established for himself a reputation as a critic in literature and art, was favourably regarded by editors, and was fast becoming a personage of influence and authority.

It might seem that the list of Stevenson’s friends already included as many as one man could retain in intimate relation; but for these two, and others yet to come, there was ample room. A few years after this he questions whether any one on this earth be so wealthy as to have a dozen friends, and indeed the doubt is permissible to most of us unless we knew Stevenson. Only six months before, in one of the morbid moods he was gradually putting behind him, as he sloughed the unhappiness of his youth, he had written down the chief desires of his heart. 4 First, good health: secondly, a small competence: and thirdly, O Du Lieber Gott! friends.’ Seldom was any prayer more fully answered than this last petition. Had he but known, the means of gaining it were already within his hands in a measure rarely granted to any man. At this very time, Mr. Colvin tells us,14 his social charm was already at its height. He was passing through a period of neatness between two of Bohemian carelessness as to dress, and so its effect was immediate.’ But indeed at any time he ‘had only to speak in order to be recognised in the first minute for a witty and charming gentleman, and within the first five for a master spirit and man of genius.’

At all events, by his hosts and by his fellow-guests his attraction was quickly felt, and the month of August, which passed away with no other episodes than a croquet party or a school feast, was nevertheless a landmark in his career.

From Suffolk he returned to Swanston with increased confidence and raised hopes, and at once plunged into work. The essay on ‘ Roads’ was completed and sent to the Saturday Review, and he began a paper on ‘Walt Whitman.’2

But the preceding winter had tried him in mind and body, and he was now further weakened by a severe attack of diphtheria. In February his father had come across a draft of the constitution of the

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1 Letters, i. 45j xxxix, xl.

2 It was this article that he afterwards described: — ’ I had written another paper full of gratitude for the help that had been given me in my life, full of enthusiasm for the intrinsic merit of the poems, and conceived in the noisiest extreme of youthful eloquence.’ — Preface to Familiar Studies.

L. J. R. (p. 90), and had taken the society as seriously as the youngest of its members could have wished. The acute misunderstanding was limited to part of this year, and then by degrees it passed away. When Mr. Stevenson had determined beforehand on any course of action, he would throw himself into the part he had proposed with an energy and emphasis which were often, unconsciously to himself, far in excess of the situation or of the words he had intended to employ. ‘ I have the family failing of taking strong views/ he had written to his future wife in 1848, ‘and of expressing those views strongly.’ A scene with him was no figure of words: he suffered the extreme of the emotions he depicted; and the knowledge and fear of this result made any difference between them very painful to his son. The differences arose, or threatened to arise again, the winter was coming on, and Louis’ work came to an end.

An idea had arisen that he might be called not to the Scottish, but to the English Bar; and as his hopes were now directed towards London, the scheme was very welcome. To London accordingly he went in the last week of October with a view of entering one of the Inns of Court and passing the preliminary examination, if he could convince the examiners. The scheme was quickly laid aside. His friends in town found him so unwell that they at once insisted on his seeing Dr. (afterwards Sir Andrew) Clark. The diagnosis was plain — nervous exhaustion with a threatening of phthisis: the prescription was chiefly mental — a winter in the Riviera by himself, and in complete freedom from anxiety or worry. His mother came and saw him off, and on the 5th of November he started for Mentone, three weeks before his article on ‘ Roads’ had appeared in the Portfolio, of which P. G. Hamerton was editor.

How he sat in the sun and read George Sand his letters tell us; and all that he thought and felt and saw during the first six weeks was written down next spring in Ordered South: a paper ‘ not particularly well written/ he thought, but ‘scrupulously correct.’ In the meantime, in ‘numbness of spirit’ he rested and recovered strength. It was one of the halting-places of life, and there he sat by the wayside to recruit and prepare for a fresh advance. Mrs. Sitwell’s letters brightened his solitude, as they had already cheered and helped him in Edinburgh. His answers to her show better than any analysis or description the solace and the strength which came to him from her hands. To overcome depression, to realise a due proportion in the troubles of youth, to surmount the passing moods of immaturity — all this falls more or less to the lot of every man. It is the good fortune of some to receive in this crisis that service which it is generally beyond the power of a man to bestow, and which is possible only for the few women who combine a quick intelligence and a knowledge of the world with charm of temperament and intuition heightened by sympathy.

In his hotel at Mentone Stevenson made the acquaintance of two or three congenial people, who lent him Clough and other books which he read with interest; but as yet he was too weak for any serious reading, and was hardly fit for the exertion of talking to strangers. His internal struggles were of course not at an end, although he found them for the time less harassing; his moral doubts changed with his position, and took on a new phase. His own account, of which I have already quoted a part, after mentioning the circumstances of his being sent abroad for his health, thus continues: —

‘ In the meantime you must hear how my friend acted. Like many invalids he supposed that he would die. Now should he die, he saw no means of repaying this huge loan which, by the hands of his father, mankind had advanced him for his sickness. In that case it would be lost money. So he determined that the advance should be as small as possible; and, so long as he continued to doubt his recovery, lived in an upper room, and grudged himself all but necessaries. But so soon as he began to perceive a change for the better, he felt justified in spending more freely, to speed and brighten his return to health, and trusted in the future to lend a help to mankind, as mankind, out of its treasury, had lent a help to him.’1

In April he described the course of his recovery to his mother in similar terms. ‘ I just noticed last night a curious example of how I have changed since I have been a little better: I burn two candles every night now; for long, I never lit but one, and when my eyes were too weary to read any more, I put even that out and sat in the dark. Any prospect of recovery changed all that.’

By the middle of December one stage of his convalescence was already made. He was now to experience another advantage of his newly formed friendships, as Mr. Colvin joined him at Mentone, and supplied the intimate conversation and discussion which had become his chief need. There was no great change in his life; they passed the time quietly enough, together or apart, as the fancy took them; reading Woodstock aloud, or plunged in talk on any or all subjects; sitting in the olive yards or in a boat, basking in the sun; or in ‘some nook upon St. Martin’s Cape, haunted by the voice of breakers, and fragrant with the threefold sweetness of the rosemary and the sea pines and the sea.’

For a few days they went to Monte Carlo, where they ‘produced the effect of something unnatural upon the people,’ because where everybody gambled all night, they spent their evenings at home; but they soon returned to Mentone, and there in the hotel to which the chance of 1 ‘ Lay Morals’: Juvenilia, p. 331. accommodation brought them, were fortunate in finding a small but very cosmopolitan society, which greatly brightened Stevenson’s stay, when his companion had to leave him. The chief members of this little coterie were a Georgian lady and her sister with two little daughters; M. Robinet, a French painter; and an American and his wife and child,4 one of the best story-tellers in the world, a man who can make a whole table-d’h6te listen to him for ten minutes while he tells how he lost his dog and found him again.’ With the younger of the Russian children, Nelitschka, ‘ a little polyglot button’ of only two and a half, who spoke six languages, or fragments of them, Stevenson at once struck up a great friendship, and his letters for the next three months are full of her, and her sayings and doings.

She was almost, if not quite, the only very young child who ever came much under his notice after the days of his own boyhood, and she seems to have been so extraordinarily brilliant and fascinating a little creature that there is nothing to wonder at in the great attraction which she had for him. The ladies, moreover, were women of cultivation and refinement; full of spirits, and always devising fresh amusements: telling fortunes, writing characters, dancing Russian dances and singing Russian airs, and charmed, to Stevenson’s intense delight, by what he afterwards loved to call, with James Mohr, ‘the melancholy tunes of my native mountains.’ It was one of the episodes of real life; an introduction of characters, who never reappear in the story, an episode such as literature rejects; but it made Stevenson’s path smoother at a time when he was unable to climb steep places, and it took his thoughts off himself and hastened his recovery, while he was still unfit for prolonged exertion or any serious study.

Their circle was afterwards increased by the arrival of another friend of the Russians, the prince whose clever and voluble talk he has described in one of his letters, by whom he was nearly persuaded to take a course of Law, during the summer, at the University of Gottingen. In this time and place also began Stevenson’s friendship with Mr. Andrew Lang, who was then staying in the Riviera and one day called upon Mr. Colvin. The impression Stevenson produced was, Mr. Lang confesses, ‘ not wholly favourable’: —

‘A man of twenty-two, his smooth face, the more girlish by reason of his long hair, was hectic. Clad in a wide blue cloak, he looked nothing less than English, except Scotch.’ The impression received was that the other was ‘ Oxfordish’; but Mr. Lang may console himself with the thought that this was before he had avowed his preference for St. Andrews. In spite of so tepid a beginning the acquaintance prospered, and grew into a friendship which endured until the end.

When Mr. Colvin, after one brief absence, finally returned to

England, his companion was already working again, though still far from strong. Even by the middle of March, he says that he is ‘ idle; but a man of eighty can’t be too active, and that is my age.’

As the days went on, it was time for him to turn northwards, but he was loth to go. He wrote to his mother ‘22nd Feb. 1874. — What keeps me here is just precisely the said society. These people are so nice and kind and intelligent, and then as I shall never see them any more, I have a disagreeable feeling about making the move. With ordinary people in England, you have always the chance of rencountering one another; at least you may see their death in the papers; but for these people, they die for me, and I die for them when we separate.’ On such terms he parted from them, not without the promise of a visit to their home in Poland, which, by no fault of his, was never accomplished.

In the beginning of April he reached Paris, and there found his cousin R. A. M. Stevenson, who had now taken up painting as a profession, and had been studying during the winter at Antwerp. This was Louis’ first independent acquaintance with Paris, and he delayed his return to Edinburgh till the end of the month, when the weather in the North might be more favourable. But this was only a measure of caution, and for several years to come we hear no more of his health as affecting his movements, or seriously hindering his work.

On his return home he found that many of his troubles had vanished. He had not of course solved the riddle of the universe, nor adjusted all contending duties, nor mastered all his impulses and appetites. He had not learned to handle his pen with entire precision, or to say exactly the thing he wished in the manner perfectly befitting it; nor was his way of life open before him. But his relations with his parents were on the old footing once more, and in the religious question a modus vivendi seems to have been established with his father. Probably nothing short of dogmatic orthodoxy would have given entire satisfaction, but at least this much already was gained, that the son’s character for honesty was established, and his desire for the truth fully recognised.

The question of his allowance was now reconsidered. The man who had been trusted freely with all the money necessary for his expensive sojourn abroad, could not be put back to his small pocket-money, and it was settled that in future he was to receive seven pounds a month, more even than he himself had thought of suggesting.

Money at his command and friends in the South forthwith changed his mode of life. For the whole seven years of the preceding period he had only crossed the Border thrice, but henceforth he was never continuously at home for more than three months at a time. Three springs and two autumns he spent in Edinburgh or at Swanston, but in the intervals his face became familiar in London, Paris, and the resorts of painters near Fontaine- bleau. But all the time he never went far afield, and between 1874 and 1879 seems not to have travelled further than three hundred miles from the English coast.

In Edinburgh his attention still had for some little time to be given to the study and pursuit of the law. All idea of the English Bar was apparently given up, and in the winter session of 1874 he resumed his attendance at the lectures of the University professors on Conveyancing, Scots Law, and Constitutional Law and History. On July 14, 1875, he successfully passed his Final Examination, and two days after was called to the Scottish Bar. On the 25th he had his first, complimentary brief, and the following day he sailed for London on his way to France. 'Accept my hearty congratulations on being done with it,' Jenkin wrote. ' I believe that is the view you like to take of the beginning you have just made.' Stevenson returned, however, in the end of September, and during the next few months made some sort of effort to practise, although he does not seem to have impressed anybody outside his own family as being a serious lawyer. He frequented the great hall of the Parliament House, which, like Westminster in old days, is the centre of the courts, and the haunt of advocates waiting for business. The brass plate with his name, usual in Scotland, was affixed to the door of 17 Heriot Row, and he had the fourth or fifth share in the services of a clerk, whom it is alleged that he did not know by sight. He had in all four briefs, and the total of his fees never reached double figures. One piece of business might, he told me, have assumed real importance, but a compromise brought it to an end. ' If it had prospered/ he said,' I might have stuck to the Bar, and then I suppose I should have been dead of the climate long ago.'

Once only was he conspicuously before the Court, and this publicity was due neither to the weightiness of the matter nor to the brilliancy of the advocate. One day he met in the street a certain judge of the Court of Session, whom he saluted in the customary manner. Stevenson had just emerged from a public-house, and was dressed at the time in a suit of old clothes which may have been dear to his heart, but were certainly not of the style habitual to members of the Bar. The judge looked surprised, but acknowledged the salute and passed on. When Stevenson reached home, he found a brief waiting for him with instructions to 4 revive'1 a certain case the next day before this very judge. At the hour appointed he appeared in his robes, wigged and properly habited, and expecting the empty court usual for such formal business. But he reckoned without numbers of his friends, who, having got wind of the brief, came in to see how he would acquit himself, and the court was crowded. The judge scented a joke; recognised his young friend of the day before; asked who he was, and proceeded to require a great deal of entirely unnecessary information about the details of the case. The brief contained no allusion to these facts; counsel was completely ignorant of the history; the solicitor took care to keep well out of the way, and enjoyed the joke from the back of the court, until at last Stevenson's eye fell upon him, and the judge was referred to him for all further facts. So counsel escaped, but he had his quarter of an hour.

The Advocates' Library in the Parliament House is the best in Scotland; and here Stevenson hoped to get some of his literary work done, while he was waiting for briefs. But the division of interests and the attractive company of his fellows were too unsettling; he soon returned to his own upper room in his father's house, and came no more to the Salle des Pas Perdus.

But although, after he abandoned Parliament House, he was no longer confined to the city of his birth, it was still his home and the point of return from his wanderings in England or abroad. Three of the first 1 I.e. make a purely formal motion that it be replaced in the list, in order to prevent it from lapsing.

four friends named in the preceding chapter were, like himself, now released from the necessity of living constantly in Edinburgh, yet their connection with it was maintained, and they continued more or less frequently to visit it; while Professor Jenkin and Mr. Baxter remained resident there as before.

Nor did Stevenson's manner of life, at the times when he was in Edinburgh, suffer any sudden change. We must think of him in Scotland at this time as living chiefly in the society of a few intimates, still wandering about the city and its neighbourhood, 'scraping acquaintance with all classes of man- and woman-kind,' travelling deliberately through his ages and getting the heart out of his own liberal education, still to some extent in bonds to himself, though he had escaped in a degree from circumstance. No longer as a supplement to professional studies, but now as his avowed business, he wrote and rewrote, he blotted and recast his essays, tales, verses and plays as before, and accomplished much solid work. From general society he still held aloof, and it was in 1875 that he last took part in the Jenkins' theatricals, acting the Duke in Twelfth Night.

' He played no character on the stage as he could play himself among his friends' was his verdict upon Jenkin, and it was even more applicable to himself where his own friends were concerned; but as yet he could not modify his attitude towards the burgess or the Philistine, or forgo the intolerance of youth.

All this did not heighten his popularity or the estimation in which he was held, nor was he generally looked upon at this time as likely ever to bring honour to his native city. The brilliance and diversity of his talk appealed to few of his fellow-citizens, whether old or young, and merely disconcerted those whose minds ran in narrower grooves. Mostly they perceived little more than the exterior of the lad, with his dilapidated clothes, his long hair, and distaste for office life. The companions who knew him best did not spare their criticism or laughter, and it was at this time that names like Flibbertigibbet and Mr. Fastidious Brisk were aimed at his volubility and exaggeration on the one hand, and a supposed tendency to sprightliness and affectation of phrase upon the other.

It is a keen eye which can discern in a young man the difference between the belief in gifts which he does not possess, and his consciousness of powers as yet undeveloped, until Time, which tries all, reduces the one and justifies the other. It was chiefly the older men who looked with a kindly glance upon the manifestations of his youth, such as old Mr. Baxter, who had for him as warm an appreciation as his son Charles had found in turn at the hands of Thomas Stevenson; Mr. J. T. Mowbray, the family lawyer, a grim, dry, warm-hearted old bachelor, whom I have always fancied to be the original of Mr. Utterson in Jekyll and Hyde; Mr. Robert Hunter, of whom Stevenson has left a speaking portrait in the second part of Talk and Talkers; and other friendly veterans. These seem best to have realised the good that was in him, and indeed the husk is hardly noticeable to those who can read (as his contemporaries could not) how the frail lad found a lost child of three crying in the street in the middle of the night, and carried him half over Edinburgh, wrapped in his own greatcoat, while he sought in vain for the missing parents.[1]

And still, as in his childhood and as in most of his books, happiness came to him chiefly in the country. Long walks in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh; summer evenings in the garden at Swanston, or on Caerketton or Allermuir; days passed in canoeing on the Forth at Queensferry, or skating upon Duddingston Loch — these were the chief part of his outdoor life, and the last of his time that was spent amid the scenery of his boyish days.

In August 1874 he was yachting for a month with Sir Walter Simpson and Mr. T. Barclay, on the West coast of Scotland — a happy experience not to be renewed for many a long year. The Heron, a fore and aft schooner of sixteen tons, had two Devon men as crew, and their labours were supplemented by the help of the owners and their friends. Stevenson lived a hard, open-air life, and throve upon it. * My health is a miracle. I expose myself to rain, and walk, and row, and over-eat myself. I eat, I drink, I bathe in the briny, I sleep.’ His return to Swanston was characteristically announced: * I left my pipe on board the yacht, my umbrella in the dog-cart, and my portmanteau by the way,’ and he reached home without his luggage, in a hat borrowed from one of his friends and a coat belonging to another.

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[1] Letters, i. 89.

In the following winter there came to him a new friendship. 4 Yesterday,[1] Leslie Stephen, who was down here to lecture, called on me and took me up to see a poor fellow, a poet who writes for him, and who has been eighteen months in our infirmary, and may be, for all I know, eighteen months more. It was very sad to see him there in a little room with two beds, and a couple of sick children in the other bed; a girl came in to visit the children, and played dominoes on the counterpane with them; the gas flared and crackled, the fire burned in a dull, economical way; Stephen and I sat on a couple of chairs, and the poor fellow sat up in his bed with his hair and beard all tangled, and talked as cheerfully as if he had been in a king’s palace, or the great King’s palace of the blue air.’

Here was no ordinary patient: the poet was Mr. W. E. Henley, who had come to Edinburgh to be under the care of Lister. The cheerful talk was but the first of many; if we may treat Stevenson’s essays[2] as autobiographical, for a part of his youth he was wont to ‘ avoid the hospital doors, the pale faces, the sweet whiff of chloroform/ but that time was now past. Here was a man of kindred spirit to himself, in need of the companionship that none could better give, and from that time forth Stevenson was his friend, and placed himself and all that he had at his disposal. He soon returned, bringing books, piles of Balzac, ‘big yellow books, quite impudently French,’[1] and with the books he brought Mr. Baxter and others of his friends. In return, he found a friendship based on common tastes in literature and music, the talk of a true poet, the insight of one of the freshest and clearest and strongest of critics, whose training had been free from academic limitations, and whose influence was different in kind from the criticism on which the younger man had learned to rely, though not less full of stimulation and force.

In these years he first discovered that taste for classical music which was afterwards fostered by successive friends. The revelation dated from a concert in Edinburgh for which some one had given him a ticket, and to which he went with reluctance. It was a Beethoven quartet, I think, that then burst upon him for the first time, and on that day he permanently added another to the many pleasures he so keenly enjoyed, although it was some years before he attempted to make any music for himself.

To London in these years he paid frequent visits, and several times stayed with Mr. Colvin at Cambridge, besides spending a week or two with him at Hampstead in June 1874. This last occasion, however,

[1] 13th February 1875. Letters, i. p. 86.

[2] ‘ Old Mortality,’ Memories and Portraits, p. 111.

and a return to the same place in the autumn of that year were practically indistinguishable from his life in London. On June 3, 1874, after only six weeks' delay, he was elected a member of the Savile Club,[2] which had been founded five years before, and was still in its original house, 15 Savile Row. This was for the next five years the centre of his London life, and though it would probably be a mistake to speak as if it were at once to him all that it afterwards became, yet, since he was of all men the most clubbable, from the beginning it gave him ample opportunities of acquaintance with men of various tastes, many of them,of great ability, even if they had not yet achieved or were not achieving a reputation. Some of the members he already knew. Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Andrew Lang he had previously met in the Riviera; Professor Masson was an Edinburgh friend of the family; to Dr. Appleton, editor of the Academy, and Mr. Walter Pollock, editor of the Saturday Review, he was soon introduced; but it would be long to enumerate the friends, and idle to recapitulate the acquaintances, that Stevenson soon made within those walls.

Into formal society nothing would ever have induced him to go in London any more than in Edinburgh; he invariably refused the opportunities which presented themselves to him, as they sooner or later have always presented themselves to young men with any reputation for social gifts and original conversation. In 1874, when he came to London for the first time under new auspices, he seems to have met a few well-known people; to have been taken to see Burne-Jones's pictures, then strictly withheld from any chance of public recognition; to have met Miss Thackeray, Mrs. Lynn Linton, and a few other ladies, chiefly at the house of Mr. Leslie Stephen, to whom he had been introduced by Mr. Colvin. His great and natural desire to see Carlyle was frustrated, for Mr. Stephen, on whose kind offices he depended, found the sage in one of his darker moods and at a moment of irritation; and when Stevenson was mentioned as a young Scot who was most anxious to meet him, and who had taken to the study of Knox, the senior would only say that he did not see why anybody should want either to see his ' wretched old carcase' or to say anything more about Knox, and that the young man had better apply when he had put his studies into an articulate shape. So Stevenson never met his fellow-countryman, who was perhaps the closest connecting link between himself and Scott.

Besides the visits to London and Cambridge there were many

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[1] Book of Verses, p. 47, by William Ernest Henley.

[2] Mr. Colvin proposed him, and he was supported by Mr. Andrew Lang, Prof. Fleeming Jenkin, Mr. Basil Champneys, Prof. W. K. Clifford, and Mr. C. B. B. M'Laren.

journeys and excursions j1 and the importance of such travel to him in these days may be estimated by the degree in which it formed the topic of his early writings. Between 1871 and 1876 no less than nine of his papers deal with travel or the external appearance of places known to him; and it is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that his first three books were the Inland Voyage, the Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh, and the Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes.

In the autumn of 1874 he joined his parents in an expedition to Chester and Barmouth, and in October took the walk in Buckinghamshire described the following spring in the Portfolio under the title of ‘An Autumn Effect.’ This ended, as a matter of fact, with his only visit to Oxford;2 but Oxford and Cambridge left no more trace in his work than, at an earlier age, Rome or Naples or Venice. A reference to the chimes of the one, a conversation (in an unpublished novel) carried on at the other, and a few general remarks about the contrast between Scotch and English universities are all that is to be found about them in his writings.

In 1875 came the walk up the valley of the Loing with Sir Walter Simpson, in which Stevenson’s costume led to the incarceration described in An Epilogue to fin Inland Voyage, and this trip being cut short, he joined his parents, as he had intended, at Wiesbaden, and went with them to Homburg and Mainz.

In 1876 he spent the second week in January walking in Carrick and Galloway,1 when he slept a night at Ballantrae, and later in the year, after a visit in August to the Jenkins near Loch Carron, he joined Sir Walter Simpson again and took the canoe journey of the Inland Voyage from Antwerp to Brussels, and then from the French frontier by the Oise almost to the Seine.

These journeys and the general change in Stevenson’s life were rendered possible, as I have said, by the liberality of his father (some ten years later he wrote, ‘ I fall always on my feet; but I am constrained to add that the best part of my legs seems to be my father),’2 yet it must not be supposed that Stevenson even now was often in funds. He was open-handed to a fault; and he had many wants of his own which often went unsatisfied. It is to this period that a story belongs which he was fond of telling against himself. He was staying in London, and had protracted his visit to the extreme limit of

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1 A pencil list of towns in which he had slept, compiled about 1886, to relieve the tedium of illness, gives the following totals: — England, 46 towns — 19 more than once; Scotland, 50 — 23 more than once; France, 74 — 31 more than once; the rest of Europe, 40 — 16 more than once.

3 Unless it were another time when he visited Mr. Lang at Merton. The visit to Oxford is not mentioned in the Portfolio, but in a letter to his mother.

his resources. On his way back to the North he arrived at the station with a sum barely sufficient for the cheapest ticket, available only by a night journey, and a newly bought copy of Mr. Swinburne's Queen Mother and Rosamond. On learning his deficiency, he tried his best powers of persuasion on the booking-clerk, but in vain: the man, in his blindness, refused to accept the book as any part of the payment, and, if I remember right, Stevenson passed the day in the station without food, and reached home next morning in a famished condition.

Thus, as we have seen, with the exception of his release from law, and the friendship with Mr. Henley, conditions in Edinburgh remained much the same; the Savile and 1 fuvenilia, p. 169.   3 May 1885.

the people he met there were, together with Mr. Colvin's advice and help, the principal feature of his life in England; it is to France that we must turn for the other influences chiefly affecting him, and for the circumstances of most importance in determining his development at this period. In the winter of 1873-74 he had, as we have seen, renewed acquaintance with the Riviera, which in later days was to become yet more familiar. For the present he returned to that neighbourhood no more, but there was no year from 1874 to l%79 ln which he did not pay one or more visits of several weeks' duration to another part of France. Except for the time that he was in the Cevennes and on his cruise down the Oise, he stayed mostly in the outskirts of the forest of Fontainebleau, in the valley of the Loing, or in Paris itself. Sometimes, as at Monastier, he was alone; sometimes, as at Nemours or at Cernay la Ville, he was with his cousin Bob or Sir Walter Simpson; but for the most part he lived in familiar intercourse with the artists who frequented his favourite resorts. The life was congenial to him, and his companions understood his temperament, if they did not necessarily appreciate his passion for letters; French was the only foreign tongue he ever mastered, and in that he acquired real proficiency. His knowledge of the language and literature was considerable, and its influence on his work was entirely for good, as it increased the delicacy and clearness of his style, and yet left his originality unimpaired.

It was the country again which seems to have affected him most and not the city; in both he lived with the same intimates, but though Paris might be the more exciting, yet at Fontainebleau he came with lasting results under the influence of the forest, and from it he carried away many vital memories.1

When his friends were painting, he often betook himself to lonely walks and meditations among the heaths 1 'Forest Notes': Juvenilia, p. 211. and woods, but company and conversation counted for a great deal. ' I knew three young men who walked together daily for some two months in a solemn and beautiful forest and in cloudless summer weather; daily they talked with unabated zest, and yet scarce wandered that whole time beyond two subjects — theology and love.’[1]

His earliest and perhaps his most frequent haunt was Barbizon. It had been the home of Millet, and its fields were the scene of the Angelus. In the village there existed an inn which was reserved for the artists, a strange society compounded of all nationalities, in which French, English, and Americans predominated. Stevenson himself has described it in an essay.[2]

‘ I was for some time a consistent Barbizonian; et ego in Arcadia vixi \ it was a pleasant season; and that noiseless hamlet lying close among the borders of the wood is for me, as for so many others, a green spot in memory. The great Millet was just dead; the green shutters of his modest house were closed; his daughters were in mourning. The date of my first verse was thus an epoch in the history of art.

4 Siron’s inn, that excellent artists’ barrack, was managed upon easy principles. At any hour of the night, when you returned from wandering in the forest, you went to the billiard-room and helped yourself to liquors, or descended to the cellar and returned laden with beer or wine. The Sirons were all locked in slumber; there was none to check your inroads; only at the week’s end a computation was made, the gross sum was divided, and a varying share set down to every lodger’s name under the rubric, estrats. Upon the more long-suffering the larger tax was levied; and your bill lengthened in a direct proportion to the easiness of your disposition. At any hour of the morning, again, you could get your coffee or cold milk and set forth into the forest. The doves had perhaps wakened you, fluttering into your chamber; and on the threshold of the inn you were met by the aroma of the forest. Close by were the great aisles, the mossy boulders, the interminable field of forest shadow. There you were free to dream and wander. And at noon, and again at six o’clock, a good meal awaited you on Siron’s table. The whole of your accommodation, set aside that varying item of the estrats, cost you five francs a day; your bill was never offered you until you asked for it; and if you were out of luck’s way, you might depart for where you pleased and leave it pending.

‘ Theoretically, the house was open to all comers; practically, it was a kind of club. The guests protected themselves, and, in so doing, they protected Siron. Formal manners being laid aside, essential courtesy was the more rigidly exacted; the new arrival had to feel the pulse of the society; and a breach of its undefined observances was promptly punished. A man might be as plain, as dull, as slovenly, as free of speech as he desired; but to a touch of presumption or a word of hectoring these free Barbizonians were as sensitive as a tea-party of maiden ladies. I have seen people driven forth from Barbizon; it would be difficult to say in words what they had done, but they deserved their fate. They had shown themselves unworthy to enjoy these corporate freedoms; they had pushed themselves; they had " made their head"; they wanted tact to appreciate the " fine shades " of Barbizonian etiquette. And, once they were condemned, the process of extrusion was ruthless in its cruelty: after one evening with the formidable Bodmer, the Bailly of our commonwealth, the erring stranger was beheld no more; he rose exceeding early the next day, and the first coach conveyed him from the scene of his discomfiture. These sentences of banishment were never, in my knowledge, delivered against an artist; such would, I believe, have been illegal; but the odd and pleasant fact is this, that they were never needed. Painters, sculptors, writers, singers, I have seen all of these in Barbizon, and some were sulky, and some were blatant and inane; but one and all entered into the spirit of the association. . . .

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[1] Talk and Talkers, p. 185.

[2] Later Essays-. Fontainebleau, p. 212.

'Our society, thus purged and guarded, was full of high spirits, of laughter, and of the initiative of youth. The few elder men who joined us were still young at heart, and took the key from their companions. We returned from long stations in the fortifying air, our blood renewed by the sunshine, our spirits refreshed by the silence of the forest; the Babel of loud voices sounded good; we fell to eat and play like the natural man; and in the high inn chamber, panelled with indifferent pictures, and lit by candles guttering in the night air, the talk and laughter sounded far into the night. It was a good place and a good life for any naturally minded youth; better yet for the student of painting, and perhaps best of all for the student of letters. He, too, was saturated in this atmosphere of style; he was shut out from the disturbing currents of the world; he might forget that there existed other and more pressing interests than that of art. But, in such a place, it was hardly possible to write; he could not drug his conscience, like the painter, by the production of listless studies; he saw himself idle among many who were apparently, and some who were really, employed; and what with the impulse of increasing health and the continual provocation of romantic scenes, he became tormented with the desire to work. He enjoyed a strenuous idleness full of visions, hearty meals, long, sweltering walks, mirth among companions; and, still floating like music through his brain, foresights of great works that Shakespeare might be proud to have conceived, headless epics, glorious torsos of dramas, and words that were alive with import. . . . We were all artists; almost all in the age of illusion, cultivating an imaginary genius, and walking to the strains of some deceiving Ariel;

small wonder, indeed, if we were happy!’

Barbizon, however, was by no means the only resort of painters in this neighbourhood, nor the only one which Stevenson frequented: in the same paper he enumerates its rivals from his full knowledge. Marlotte, Montigny,1 and Chailly-en-Biere he knew; Cernay la Ville was a favourite of his cousin Bob; but it was Grez which, in spite of an unpromising introduction, was his favourite quarters, and has the most important place in his history.

(Bar&izon, Summer” 75.

‘ MY DEAR MOTHER, — I have been three days at a place called Grez, a pretty and very melancholy village on the plain. A low bridge, with many arches choked with sedge; green fields of white and yellow water-lilies; poplars and willows innumerable; and about it all such an atmosphere of sadness and slackness, one could do nothing but get into the boat and out of it again, and yawn for bedtime. ... I was very glad to be back again in this dear place, and smell the wet forest in the morning.’

But later he wrote how delightful it was 4 to awake in Grez, to go down the green inn-garden, to find the river streaming through the bridge, and to see the dawn begin across the poplared level. The meals are laid in the cool arbour, under fluttering leaves. The splash of oars and bathers, the bathing costumes, out to dry, the trim canoes beside the jetty, tell of a society that has an eye to pleasure. There is “something to do” at Grez. Perhaps, for that very reason, I can recall no such enduring ardours, no such glories of exhilaration, as among the solemn groves and uneventful hours of Barbizon. This “ something to do “ is a great enemy to joy; it is a way out of it; you wreak your high spirits on some cut-and-dry employment, and behold them gone!

1 Where Mr. W. H. Low’s quarters summed up the delights of the ‘ Envoy’ to Underwoods.

But Grez is a merry place after its kind: pretty to see, merry to inhabit. The course of its pellucid river, whether up or down, is full of attractions for the navigator; the mirrored and inverted images of trees; lilies, and mills, and the foam and thunder of weirs. And of all noble sweeps of roadway, none is nobler, on a windy dusk, than the highroad to Nemours between its lines of talking poplar.1’

Nemours itself he knew well, and there he often stayed. His first visit is described in a letter to his mother in 1875: —

‘ Nemours is a beautiful little town, watered by a great canal and a little river. The river is crossed by an infinity of little bridges, and the houses have courts and gardens, and come down in stairs to the very brim; and washerwomen sit everywhere in curious little penthouses and sheds. A sort of reminiscence of Amsterdam, The old castle turned now into a ballroom and cheap theatre; the seats of the pit (the places are if. and 2fs. in this theatre) are covered with old Gobelins tapestry; one can still see heads in helmets. In the actors' dressing- room are curious old Henry Fourth looking-glasses. On the other hand, the old manacles are now kept laid by in a box, with a lot of flower-pots on the top of it, in a room with four canary birds.'

If the country had the more influence in the end, Paris provided more variety and more diversion. There Stevenson stayed, in all manner of lodgings, varying from Meurice's Hotel (which was little to his liking) to students' accommodation in the Quartier Latin, and scattered throughout a region extending from Mont- martre on the north to Mont Parnasse on the south.

At one time he writes: ' I am in a new quarter, and jldne about in a leisurely way. I dine every day in a cr£merie with a party of Americans, an Irishman, and sometimes an English lady.' Again: 41 am living along 1 Later Essays: Fontainebleau, p. 220; cf. Juvenilia, p. 199.

with some fellows, and we partly make our own food, and have great fun marketing.' Another time: 41 have been engaged in a wild hunt for books — all forenoon, all afternoon, with occasional returns to Rue Racine with an armful. I have spent nearly all my money; and if I have luck in to-day's hunt, I believe I shall lay my head on the pillow to-night a beggar. But I have had goodish luck, and a heap of nice books. Please advance me £10 of my allowance. . . . Heaps of articles growing before me. Hurray.' An attempt to work in some of the public libraries of Paris failed: the face of officialism was too daunting. 'They are worse than banks — if that be possible. ... In public offices of all kinds I feel like Esther before Ahasuerus. I suspect there was some truth in my father's turkeying;1 for the vice has descended to me.'

This was the period when his letters were least frequent and least satisfactory, but of his sojourns in Paris no other memorial survives except the first chapters of The Wrecker, which partly in detail and wholly in spirit are drawn from Stevenson's recollections of these years. In addition I have collected a few fragments of letters and papers, which may help to eke out the scanty material for a picture of that time.

The first is a letter to his mother, describing a student's entertainment in the studio which was afterwards depicted in Trilby.

' my dear mother, — I was out last night at a party in a fellow's studio over in the Rue Notre Dame des Champs. Some of the people were in costume. One girl was so pretty and looked so happy that it did your heart good to see her. The studio looked very strange, lit with Chinese lanterns and a couple of strange lamps. The floor had been rubbed with candles, and was very slippery. O'Meara, in his character of young Donny-

1 p. 17.

brook, tumbled about like a pair of old boots, and , for all he is so little, managed to fall into the arms of every girl he danced with, as he went round in the last figure of the quadrille. There was nothing to eat but sweet biscuits, and nothing to drink but syrup and water. It was a rum event/

The next was a typical holiday.

‘ nth October, Paris. — Here I am so far on my way home. . . . Yesterday I had a splendid day. Luxembourg in the morning. Breakfast. Bob, Gaudes the sculptor, Low and I: hours of very good talk in the French idiom. All afternoon in the Louvre, till they turned us out unwilling. At night, the Franˆais, Rome Vaincue, an impossible play, with Sarah Bernhardt as the blind grandmother, most sublime to behold. At breakfast we had lobster mayonnaise, kidneys, brochet, and tomates farcies, with lots of Carton. Dinner was a mere hurried sustentation of the immortal spirit before exposing it to another excitement. A splendid day, but two running would not do.’

The theatre was a source of great delight to him. Although he had read (and written) plays from his early years, had revelled in the melodramas of the toy-theatre, and had acted with the Jenkins and in other private theatricals, I find no reference to his having visited a theatre before December 1874, when he found Irving’s Hamlet4 interesting (for it is really studied) but not good’; and there is no sign of his having been really impressed until he saw Salvini as Macbeth at Edinburgh in the spring of 1876. Of this performance he wrote a criticism for the Academy, which he afterwards condemned as dealing with a subject that was still beyond the resources of his art.1 He himself, I am told, was never a tolerable actor, and certainly was never allotted a part of any importance. But his enthusiasm for the drama was great, and during these years was heightened and 1 Memoir of Fleeming Jenkirt, p. 145.

instructed by the two chief friends who shared his taste — Professor Jenkin and Mr. Henley.

He used to speak with delight of Delaunay’s performance in a play by Alexandre Dumas, Mademoiselle de Belleisle, declaring that in calling out through a window on the stage to some one supposed to be in the castle-court below, Delaunay had succeeded in so modulating his voice as ‘ to make you feel the cold night air and the moonlight.’

One of his visits to the theatre led to a very characteristic scene, described long afterwards in a letter to Mr. Archer. The play had been the De7ni-Monde of Dumas Jils} in the last act of which Olivier de Jalin employs an unworthy stratagem against the woman who had been his mistress.

‘ I came forth from that performance in a breathing heat of indignation. . . . On my way down the Frangais stairs, I trod on an old gentleman’s toes, whereupon, with that suavity which so well becomes me, I turned about to apologise, and on the instant, repenting me of that intention, stopped the apology midway, and added something in French to this effect: ‘ No, you are one of the laches who have been applauding that piece. I retract my apology.’ Said the old Frenchman, laying his hand on my arm, and with a smile that was truly heavenly in temperance, irony, good-nature, and knowledge of the world, ‘Ah, monsieur, vous etes bien jeune,’[1]

To this time also belongs the story reported by Mr. Andrew Lang.[2] Stevenson, one day at a caf£, hearing a Frenchman say that the English were cowards, promptly hit him across the face. ‘Monsieur, vous m’avez frapp£!’ said the Gaul. ‘A ce qu’il parait,’ said the Scot, and there the incident ended. It is an instance the more of his fearlessness; for, besides his physical weakness, although he would never have hesitated, he was quite incompetent to fight a duel with either pistol or sword.

The effect produced upon outsiders must sometimes have been rather bewildering. He used to tell how one day he and his cousin Bob, happening to be rather more in funds than usual, went to dine in one of the cafes of the Palais Royal. 4 The cafe was not very full/ so I remember the story,’and there was nobody near us, but presently a gentleman and his wife came in and sat down at the next table. They were evidently people of good position, well dressed and distinguished in appearance. But they were talking French, and we paid not the slightest attention to them. We had lately got hold of the works of Thomas Aquinas, and our conversation was on the most extraordinary medley of subjects — on men, women, and things, with a very large leaven of mediaeval theology, and on all we spoke in English with the most startling frankness and with the most bewildering transitions. Bob is the best talker in the world; I never knew him more brilliant, and I did my best.

‘ Those people sat and had their dinner and took not the slightest notice of us, but talked quietly to one another in Parisian French. Just before they got up to go, the gentleman turned to his wife and said to her in English without a trace of accent, “ My dear, won’t you take anything more? “ I have often wondered who they were, and what on earth they thought of us.’

His deficiencies in letter-writing and his protracted absences from home led very naturally to protests from his parents and especially from his mother. The answer was characteristic.

Euston Hotel, 16th Oct. 1874.

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[1] Letters, ii. 94. [2] North American Review, Feb. 1895.

4 You must not be vexed at my absences. You must understand that I shall be a nomad, more or less, until my days be done. You don't know how much I used to long for it in old days; how I used to go and look at the trains leaving, and wish to go with them. And now, you know, that I have a little more that is solid under my feet, you must take my nomadic habits as a part of me.

Just wait till I am in swing, and you will see that I shall pass more of my life with you than elsewhere; only take me as I am, and give me time. I must be a bit of a vagabond; it's your own fault, after all, isn't it? You shouldn't have had a tramp for a son.'

While the man was in the making during these years, the writer also was passing through the stages of a development which was unusually protracted. The perfecting of his style was necessarily a work of time, but in the meanwhile, if he had seen his way to use the gifts at his command, his love of romance, his imagination, and his vivid interest in life might well have enabled him to produce work which would have secured him immediate popularity and reward.

Nothing of the sort, however, was accomplished, and, high as his standard always was, this delay may well have been a gain for his ultimate success. During the six years between his first appearance as a printed and paid author and the publication of the Travels with a Donkey, his published work consisted of some six-and- twenty magazine articles, chiefly critical and social essays, just half of which were in the Cornhill Magazine; two small books of travel; two books in serial instalments, afterwards reprinted; and five short stories also in periodicals. There were besides a few rejected articles, a certain amount of journalism, and at least eight stories or novels, none of which ever saw the light, as well as a play or two and some verses, a small part of which were ultimately included in his published works.

By this time Stevenson had left behind him the early stages of apprenticeship, and far as he still was from satisfying his own taste and aims, there is no longer any possibility of pointing out the definite stages through which he passed year by year, or the methods of work which he employed.

A list of his writings will be found in the appendix, arranged under separate years. It is therefore unnecessary in this place to do more than record his general progress, adding merely a detached note on any point of interest as it arises, or quoting his own criticisms, which, for the most part, are singularly shrewd and free from bias.

In September 1873 he wrote: 'There is no word of "Roads"; I suspect the Saturday Review must have looked darkly upon it — so be it; we must just try to do something better/ And so, as we have seen, the article appeared in the Portfolio for December. Three weeks later, in a letter to his mother, he expressed the opinion that 'it is quite the best thing I have ever done, to my taste. There are things expressed in it far harder to express than in anything else I ever had; and that, after all, is the great point. As for style, ga viendra peut-etre.’

In 1874 he had five articles in four different magazines: these included ‘ Ordered South’ in Macmillarts, and, still more important, the paper on ‘ Victor Hugo’s Romances’ in the Cornhill. The former, which took him three months to write, was his first work ever republished in its original form; the latter, which was anonymous, but afterwards reappeared in Familiar Studies of Men and Books, marked, in his own judgment, the beginning of his command of style. Long afterwards in Samoa, in answer to a question, he told me that in this essay he had first found himself able to say several things in the way in which he felt they should be said. It may also be noticed that this was his first appearance in the magazine which by the discernment of Mr. Leslie Stephen did so much for him in taking his early work.

This year he proposed to himself, and began to read for, a book on four great Scotsmen — Knox, Hume, Burns, and Scott. All that ever came of it, and he had the subjects a long time in his mind, were the essays on Burns and Knox, which dealt only with one aspect of either character At this time he was working at an essay on Walt Whitman, but his views did not find expression till 1878. The papers on Knox were read before the Speculative Society in November 1874 and January 1875. Late in the former year he was making another assault upon the stronghold of the Novel with a tale called ‘When the Devil was Well,’ dealing with the adventures of an Italian sculptor of the fifteenth century. It was finished the next year, and the unfavourable opinion of his friends was accepted as final.

1875 saw nothing published except two double articles, the ‘Autumn Effect’ and ‘ Knox,’ the notice of B£ranger in the Encyclopedia Britannica,, and the pamphlet entitled An Appeal to the Clergy of the Church of Scotland. This last had been set up in type the preceding autumn, and was an appeal to the Scottish clergy to use the Church Patronage Act of 1874 as an opportunity for effacing differences between their own communion and the dissenting bodies, and to do all in their power to restore religious unity.

In January 1875 Stevenson proposed to The Academy a series of papers on the Parnassiens — de Banville, Coppee, Soulary, and Prudhomme — and when this was not accepted, he devoted a good deal of his time to the study of the French literature of the fifteenth century, which resulted in the articles on Villon and Charles of Orleans. He was filled with enthusiasm for Joan of Arc, a devotion and also a cool-headed admiration which he never lost. He projected a series of articles which should include the Maid, Louis XI., and Ren£ of Anjou. The same reading led to the experiments in the French verse metres of that date which were almost contemporary with the work of Mr. Andrew Lang and Mr. Austin Dobson, who brought the Ballade and Rondeau back to favour in England. Stevenson, however, never published any of these attempts, and except two translations published in the Letters, and one set preserved by Mr. Lang, I believe the characteristic verses at the head of this chapter are the only finished piece which survives.

A prose poem on ‘ The Spirit of the Spring’ unfortunately went astray, but one or two short studies of the same date and in a similar vein indicate that it was no masterpiece. After the Italian story was finished, he took up one of his old tales called The Country Dance, which likewise came to nothing; and also wrote The Story of King Matthias’ Hunting Horn, of which I only know that it was ‘ wild and fantastic.’

As the result of a condensation of Burns’s life and a criticism of his works for the Encyclopedia Britannica, the famous Scotsmen had now become ‘ Ramsay, Fergusson, and Burns.’ The editor of the Encyclopedia found the Burns too critical, and too much at variance with the accepted Scottish tradition, and though payment was made for it, it was not used. Stevenson wrote: ‘ 8th June 1876. — I suppose you are perfectly right in saying there was a want of enthusiasm about the article. To say truth, I had, I fancy, an exaggerated idea of the gravity of an encyclopaedia, and wished to give mere bones, and to make no statements that should seem even warm. And perhaps also, I may have a little latent cynicism, which comes out when I am at work. I believe you are right in saying I had not said enough of what is highest and best in him. Such a topic is disheartening; the clay feet are easier dealt with than the golden head.’

To 1876 we owe the only piece of dramatic criticism that Stevenson ever published, and four articles in the Cornhill Magazine, which from this time onward marked all his contributions to its pages with the initials R. L. S. The full names of a few very eminent authors had been given from the commencement; but about the beginning of Mr. Leslie Stephen’s editorship, in 1871, a second rank of distinction was established by allowing an equally small number of writers to denote their articles by their initials. All Stevenson’s papers except the first (1874J were thus distinguished; and though the R L. S. caused them at first to be frequently attributed to the editor, yet it was under these initials that Stevenson first won recognition in the select circle which knew and appreciated literature.

A novel, The Hair Trunk, or The Ideal Commonwealth, was begun and partly carried out at this time. A party of friends meeting at Cambridge proposes to form a colony, which is to be established in ‘ Navigator’s Island ‘ — Samoa, of all places — of which the author had heard only the year before from his connection, the Hon. J. Seed, formerly Secretary to the Customs and Marine Departments of New Zealand,1 who had been sent to report upon the islands by the New Zealand Government. In the Windbound Arethusa was another attempt of the same date which attained no better result.

The year 1876 thrice saw the rejection of the article on ‘ Some Portraits by Raeburn,’ afterwards included in Virginibus Puerisque. It was refused in turn by the Cornhill\ the Pall Mall Gazette, and Blackwoods Magazine, though it is only fair to Mr. Stephen to say that he helped the author in trying to place it elsewhere. It was seldom that Stevenson either continued, or was driven, to try his fortune elsewhere with a rejected article. But this case is all the more interesting because he tried again and again, and was clearly in the right. Editors cannot always follow their judgment or their inclinations, but articles such as the Raeburn seldom come their way.

The event of the year was, of course, the canoe voyage. Stevenson, as we have already seen, had for some time shared his friends’ taste for navigating the Firth of Forth in these craft, which the enthusiasm of ‘Rob Roy’ Macgregor had made popular ten years before. A good deal of time was spent, as we have seen, on the river at Grez, and canoes were introduced there by the English colony, headed by Sir Walter Simpson and his brother, 1 Letters, i. 95.

and by R. A. M. Stevenson, who devised a leather canoe of his own ‘ with a niche for everything/ and, as his friends said,’ a place for nothing.’ Mr. Warington Baden-Powell had published in the pages of the Cornhill Magazine in 1870 the log of the Nautilus and Isis canoes on a journey through Sweden and on the Baltic. But the idea of the journey itself seems to have been suggested by Our Autumn Holiday on French Rivers, by Mr. J. L. Molloy, published in 1874, the account of a journey up the Seine and down the Loire in a four-oared outrigger.

That the cruise itself was on the whole rather a cheerless experience is seen by the following letter, in which Stevenson lets us behind the scenes, and for once even grumbles a little.

1 Comptigne, 9th Sept. 1876. [Canoe Voyage.]

4 We have had deplorable weather quite steady ever since the start; not one day without heavy showers; and generally much wind and cold wind forby. ... I must say it has sometimes required a stout heart; and sometimes one could not help sympathising inwardly with the French folk who hold up their hands in astonishment over our pleasure journey. Indeed I do not know that I would have stuck to it as I have done, if it had not been for professional purposes; for an easy book may be written and sold, with mighty little brains about it, where the journey is of a certain seriousness and can be named. I

mean, a book about a journey from York to London must be clever; a book about the Caucasus may be what you will. Now I mean to make this journey at least a curious one; it won't be finished these vacations.

' Hitherto a curious one it has been; and above all in its influence on S. and me. I wake at six every morning; and we are generally in bed and asleep before half-past nine. Last night I found my way to my room with a dark cloud of sleep over my shoulders, so thick that the candle burnt red at about the hour of 8.40. If that isn't healthy, egad, I wonder what is.'

CHAPTER VII

TRANSITION — 1876-79

‘ You may paddle all day long; but it is when you come back at nightfall, and look in at the familiar room, that you find Love or Death awaiting you beside the stove; and the most beautiful adventures are not those we go to seek.’ The concluding words of ‘*An Inland Voyage*

The next three years of Stevenson’s life were so closely similar to the three preceding, that at first sight, but for his own selection of the age of five-and-twenty as the limit of youth, it might seem almost unnecessary to mark any division between them. He continued to spend his time between France, London, and Edinburgh, to lead a more or less independent life, and to give the best of his talents and industry to his now recognised profession. The year 1877 was marked by the acceptance of the first of his stories ever printed — A Lodging for the Night — and from that date his fiction began to take its place beside, and gradually to supersede, the essays with which his career had opened. The month of May 1878 saw not only the appearance of his first book — An Inland Voyage — but also the beginning of his two first serial publications — the New Arabian Nights and the Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh; and they were followed at the end of the year by the Edinburgh in book form, and in June 1879 by the Travels with a Donkey. All these, however, were but a measure of the author’s growing reputation, and of the facility with which he could now find a publisher.

Original as these writings were, and unlike the work of his contemporaries, none of them constituted any new departure in his life or any alteration in his attitude to the world: and the change that now came arrived from another quarter. His friendships, as we have seen, counted for a great deal with Stevenson, and though the roll of them was not yet closed, and ended indeed only at his death, it was at the beginning of this period that he made the acquaintance which affected him more than any other — he now met for the first time the lady who was afterwards to be his wife.

Already it is becoming difficult to realise that there was a time not long distant when study for all the professions, including that of art, was hedged about with arbitrary restrictions for women. At the date of which I am speaking these limitations had been removed to some extent in Paris as far as the studios were concerned, but the natural consequences had not yet followed in country quarters, and women artists were as yet unknown in any of the colonies about Fontainebleau. Hitherto these societies had been nearly as free from the female element as were afterwards the early novels of Stevenson himself: the landlady, the chambermaid, the peasant girl passed across the stage, but the leading rdles were filled by men alone. But when Stevenson and Sir Walter Simpson, the ‘ Arethusa’ and the ‘ Cigarette/ returned from the Inland Voyage to their quarters at Grez, they found the colony in trepidation at the expected arrival of the invader.

The new-comers, however, were neither numerous nor formidable; being only an American lady and her two children — a young girl and a boy. Mrs. Osbourne had seen her domestic happiness break up in California, and had come to France for the education of her family. She and her daughter had thrown themselves with ardour into the pursuit of painting, and thus became acquainted with some of the English and American artists in Paris.

After profiting by the opportunities afforded them in the capital, they were in search of country lodgings, and accordingly, having taken counsel with their artist friends, they came to Grez.

So here for the first time Stevenson saw the woman whom Fate had brought half-way across the world to meet him. He straightway fell in love; he knew his own mind, and in spite of all dissuasions and difficulties, his choice never wavered. The difficulties were so great and hope so remote that nothing was said to his parents or to any but two or three of his closest friends. But in the meantime life took on a cheerful hue, and the autumn passed brightly for them all until the middle of October,[1] when Stevenson must return to Edinburgh, there to spend the winter.

In January 1877 he came to London for a fortnight, and first met Mr. Gosse, who, being immediately added to the ranks of his intimate friends, has given us a most vivid and charming description of the effect produced on strangers at that time by Stevenson.

‘It was in 1877,[2] or late that I was presented to Stevenson, at the old Savile Club, by Mr. Sidney Colvin, who thereupon left us to our devices. We went downstairs and lunched together, and then we adjourned to the smoking-room. As twilight came on I tore myself away, but Stevenson walked with me across Hyde Park, and nearly to my house. He had an engagement, and so had I, but I walked a mile or two back with him. The fountains of talk had been unsealed, and they drowned the conventions. I came home dazzled with my new friend, saying, as Constance does of Arthur, “ Was ever such a gracious creature born?”

. . Those who have written about him from later

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[1] To the next year belongs the charcoal drawing made’by Mrs. Osbourne of her future husband, which has been redrawn by Mr. T. Blake Wirgman, and stands at the beginning of this volume.

[2] Critical Kitcats: London, William Heinemann, 1896, p. 278.

impressions than those ot which I speak, seem to me to give insufficient prominence to the gaiety of Stevenson. It was his cardinal quality in those early days. A childlike mirth leaped and danced in him; he-seemed to skip upon the hills of life. He was simply bubbling with quips and jests; his inherent earnestness or passion about abstract things was incessantly relieved by jocosity; and when he had built one of his intellectual castles in the sand, a wave of humour was certain to sweep in and destroy it. I cannot, for the life of me, recall any of his jokes; and written down in cold blood, they might not be funny if I did. They were not wit so much as humanity, the many-sided outlook upon life. I am anxious that his laughter-loving mood should not be forgotten, because later on it was partly, but I think never wholly, quenched by ill-health, responsibility, and the advance of years. He was often, in the old days, excessively and delightfully silly — silly with the silliness of an inspired schoolboy; and I am afraid that our laughter sometimes sounded ill in the ears of age. . . .

‘My experience of Stevenson during these first years was confined to London, upon which he would make sudden piratical descents, staying a few days or weeks, and melting into air again. He was much at my house; and it must be told that my wife and I, as young married people, had possessed ourselves of a house too large for our slender means immediately to furnish. The one person who thoroughly approved of our great, bare, absurd drawing-room was Louis, who very earnestly dealt with us on the immorality of chairs and tables, and desired us to sit always, as he delighted to sit, upon hassocks on the floor. Nevertheless, as armchairs and settees straggled into existence, he handsomely consented to use them, although never in the usual way, but with his legs thrown sideways over the arms of them, or the head of a sofa treated as a perch. In particular, a certain shelf, with cupboards below, attached to a bookcase, is worn with the person of Stevenson, who would spend half an evening while passionately discussing some great question of morality or literature, leaping sideways in a seated posture to the length of this shelf, and then back again. He was eminently peripatetic, too, and never better company than walking in the street, this exercise seeming to inflame his fancy.’

It was in these years especially that he gave the impression of something transitory and unreal, sometimes almost inhuman.

cHe was careful, as I have hardly known any other man to be, not to allow himself to be burdened by the weight of material things. It was quite a jest with us that he never acquired any possessions. In the midst of those who produced books, pictures, prints, bric-a-brac, none of these things ever stuck to Stevenson. There are some deep-sea creatures, the early part of whose life is spent dancing through the waters; at length some sucker or tentacle touches a rock, adheres, pulls down more tentacles, until the creature is caught there, stationary for the remainder of its existence. So it happens to men, and Stevenson's friends caught the ground with a house, a fixed employment, a 'stake in life'; he alone kept dancing in the free element, unattached.'1

These were the days when he most frequented the Savile Club, and the lightest and most vivacious part of him there came to the surface. He might spend the morning in work or business, and would then come to the Club for luncheon. If he were so fortunate as to find any congenial companions disengaged, or to induce them to throw over their engagements, he would lead them off to the smoking-room, and there spend an afternoon in the highest spirits and the most brilliant and audacious talk.

His private thoughts and prospects must often have been of the gloomiest, but he seems to have borne his 1 Critical Kitcats: London, William Heinemann, 1896, p. 300.

unhappiness with a courage as high as he ever afterwards displayed, and with a show of levity which imposed on his friends and often ended by carrying him out of himself.

The whim of independence to which Mr. Gosse refers was carried out to an extreme by the two Stevenson cousins, about this time, in one of their visits to Paris, an experience which Louis afterwards transferred to the pages of The Wrecker. f Stennis', it may be explained, was the nearest approach to their name possible to Barbizon, and accordingly it was as Stennis aint and Stennis frere that the pair were always known.

'The two Stennises had come from London, it appeared, a week before with nothing but greatcoats and toothbrushes. It was expensive, to be sure, for every time you had to comb your hair a barber must be paid, and every time you changed your linen one shirt must be bought and another thrown away; but anything was better, argued these young gentlemen, than to be the slaves of haversacks. " A fellow has to get rid gradually of all material attachments: that was manhood," said they; " and as long as you were bound down to anything — house, umbrella, or portmanteau — you were still tethered by the umbilical cord."'1

When he broke through this rule, his inconsistency was equally original and unexpected.

4 Paris, Jan. 1878. — I have become a bird fancier. I carry six little creatures no bigger than my thumb about with me almost all the day long; they are so pretty; and it is so nice to waken in the morning and hear them sing.' Six or seven years later he again alludes to these or to other similar pets. ' There is only one sort of bird that I can tolerate caged, though even then I think it hard, and that is what is called in France the Bec-d'Argent. I once had two of these pigmies in captivity; and in the quiet, bare house upon a silent street where I was then 1

The Wrecker, i. p. 73.

living, their song, which was not much louder than a bee's, but airily musical, kept me in a perpetual good- humour. I put the cage upon my table when I worked, carried it with me when I went for meals, and kept it by my head at night: the first thing in the morning, these maestrini would pipe up.'

The following letter written from Paris has preserved a record of one of the thousand little kind and thoughtful acts, which were so characteristic of Stevenson. Most of them are nameless and unremembered, but this — thanks to his perception of its humour — has been handed down to us.

41 st Feb. 1877, Paris. — My dear Mother, — I have ordered a picture. There is magnificence for you. Poor is, as usual, hard up, and I knew wanted to make me a present of a sketch; so I took the first word and offered him 5of. for one. You should have seen us. I was so embarrassed that I could not finish a single phrase, and kept beginning, " You know," and " You understand,"

and " Look here, ," and ending in pitiful intervals of silence. I was perspiring all over. Suddenly I saw

begin to break out all over in a silvery dew; and he just made a dive at me and took me in his arms — in a kind of champion comique style, you know, but with genuine feeling.'

This letter is also an indirect confirmation of what has been said in the preceding chapter as to Stevenson's poverty. About this time, however, his father followed the precedent set in his own case, and paid to Louis as an instalment of his patrimony a considerable sum, amounting, I believe, to not less than a thousand pounds. The fact is certain, the date and exact details have been lost. In the end Stevenson derived small benefit himself. ' The little money he had,' as Mr. Colvin says, 'was always absolutely at the disposal of his friends.' In 1877 he had still £800, but, owing to misfortunes befalling his friends, in none of which was he under any obligation to intervene, within less than two years nothing of it remained. His income from writing was as yet extremely small, the payment for his essays amounting to a guinea a page, so that until 1878 he probably from all sources had never made £50 in any one year.

As to his work, the actual output of 1877 was no more than one contribution to Temple Bar and three Cornhill articles, of which the Apology for Idlers had been rejected for Macmillaris the year before. The Temple Bar story — A Lodging for the Night already mentioned — was the outcome of his studies for the essay on Villon in the Cornhill for August, and the last result of his attention to French mediaeval literature. But of his acumen and insight into Villon's character (on which recent discoveries have thrown fresh light), the specialists can hardly find enough to say.[1]

If this year had little to show, it was only because much of it was spent in preparing for the next year’s harvest. 1878 was at once in quantity and in quality the richest year he had yet known. An Inland Voyage was published in May: the journey with the donkey was taken, and an elaborate diary of it kept: there were four essays and a story in Cornhill; three essays, a story, and the New Arabian Nights in London; a story in Temple Bar; while Picturesque Notes of Edinburgh ran in the Portfolio from June till December, and then came out in book form.

London was a weekly journal, founded by Robert Glasgow Brown, Stevenson’s colleague on the Edinburgh University Magazine,[2] and after December 1877 edited by Mr. Henley, who some time before had left Edinburgh.

It was in page and type not unlike the World, and to the omniscience necessary to an ordinary weekly paper it added a strong flavour of literature. Much of Mr. Henley’s lighter verse appeared first in its columns, and among its less irregular contributors were Mr. Andrew Lang, and the late Grant Allen and James Runciman. It was a staunch opponent of Mr. Gladstone and all his works, and won the favourable notice of Lord Beaconsfield. But the foundations of its finance were laid in sand, and it survived its originator little more than a year. It was the first paper edited by Mr. Henley, but though he never admitted to his columns work more brilliant of its kind, the Arabian Nights series was supposed by more than one of the proprietors sufficiently to account for the unpopularity of their journal.[1]

The conception of these stories is recorded in a letter to R. A. M. Stevenson. ‘The first idea of all was the hansom cabs, which I communicated to you in your mother’s drawing-room in Chelsea. The same afternoon the Prince de Galles and the Suicide Club were invented, and several more now forgotten.’ The first half was actually written partly at Burford Bridge, partly at Swanston, while the Rajah!s Diamond was written at Monastier, before the author set out with his dnesse. The Sire de Maletroits Door (Door being substituted for the original ‘ Mousetrap’) was invented in France, first told over the fire one evening in Paris, and ultimately written at Penzance.

Providence and the Guitar was based upon a story told by a strolling French actor and his Bulgarian wife, who had stayed at Grez. The man had played inferior parts at a good theatre, and the woman also had been on the stage. They were quiet, innocent creatures, who spent all the daytime in fishing in the river. They had their meals on a bare table in the kitchen, and in the evening they sang in the dining-room and had a little ‘tombola’ as in the story. They made the best of the most hideous poverty, but the worst of it was that they were forced to leave their only child with a peasant woman, while they were tramping from village to village. She had let the child fall, and it was in consequence a hunchback. Stevenson had much talk with them, taking great pleasure in their company and delight in hearing of their experiences. But there is no further foundation for the legend that he went strolling with them, or ever acted to a French audience.

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[1] Letter of M. Marcel Schwob to Mr. Colvin, Literature, Nov. 4, 1899.

[2] Memories and Portraits, p. 128.

When the story appeared he sent to the pair the money it brought him, and he received a most charming letter of thanks, which unfortunately has disappeared.

In 1877 Stevenson having spent part of February and of June and July in France, returned there again from August to November. He did not carry out his original project of another canoe voyage by the Loing, the Loire, the Saone, and the Rh6ne to the Mediterranean, but spent some time with Sir Walter Simpson either at Nemours or at Moret where the Loing joins the Seine. Their experience of the Oise had suggested the charms of the life on board a barge, their imagination was kindled, nothing would content them but to acquire such a vessel for themselves, well found in all things they could desire, picturesque and romantic as craft had never yet been; and in this fashion they should make a leisurely progress along the waterways of Europe.

‘ There should be no white fresher, and no green more emerald than ours, in all the navy of the canals. There should be books in the cabin, and tobacco jars, and some old Burgundy as red as a November sunset, and as fragrant as a violet in April.’

The Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne was ‘ procured and christened,’ but on that cruise and under that flag she never started. A financial difficulty arose, and both barge and canoes alike had to be sold. So Stevenson’s only other travelling this year was a trip with his parents to Cornwall, when he went as far as the Scilly Islands with his mother.

In 1878 he seems to have spent no more than a fortnight in Scotland until December, although he was in London four or five times. In April he stayed with his parents at the inn at Burford Bridge, under Box Hill, ‘with its arbours and green garden and silent, eddying river,’ ‘known already as the place where Keats wrote some of his Endymion, and Nelson parted from his Emma,’ and connected hereafter, it may be, with the New Arabian Nights, and the friendship

[1] L. Cope Cornford, Robert Louis Stevenson, p. 51. W. Blackwood and Sons: 1899.

between Stevenson and Mr. George Meredith, of which this visit saw the beginning. All this summer he was acting as private secretary to Professor Fleeming Jenkin, who was a juror at the International Exhibition at Paris; the only post approaching any regular position or employment that Stevenson ever held.

This intimate association with his friend was a great delight to them both, and in no respect more than in the indulgence of their taste for the theatre.

‘ Another unalloyed dramatic pleasure, which Fleeming and I shared in the year of the Paris Exposition, was the Marquis de Villemer, that blameless play, performed by Madeleine Brohan, Delaunay, Worms, and Broisat — an actress, in such parts at least, to whom I have never seen full justice rendered. He had his fill of weeping on that occasion; and when the piece was at an end, in front of a cafe in the mild midnight air, we had our fill of talk about the art of acting.’[1]

Of an earlier experience in the same year, Stevenson writes: —

‘ I have been to see Salvini, and I now know more about him; no diminution of respect, rather an increase, from being able to compare him with the Frangais people, but a more critical vein. I notice, above all, the insufficiency, the scholastic key of his gestures, as compared with the incomparable freedom and inspiration of his intonations. As for Sarah Bernhardt, although her fame is only now beginning to reach England, and is now greater than ever in France, she is but the ghost of herself; and those who have not seen her before will never see her again — never see her at all, I mean/

Meanwhile he was working hard, in spite of a touch of illness for which the doctor nearly ordered him to leave Paris for the South of France. An Inland Voyage had been accepted by Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. at the beginning of the year; and on the 17th February we find the author writing from Paris: ‘I have now been four days writing a — preface, a weary preface.’ But it was that which stands before the Inland Voyage, and his readers have little reason to regret the amount of time so employed.

A week later he says: ‘ I am getting a lot of work ready in my mind, and as soon as I am able to square my elbows, I shall put it through my hands rapidly. What a blessing work is! I don’t think I could face life without it; and how glad I am I took to literature! It helps me so much.’

In the whirl of Paris, during the same month, he wrote this letter to his father, sitting at a cafe in the Quartier Latin: —

Cafe de la Source, Bd. St. Michel, Paris, 15 th Feb. 1878.

‘A thought has come into my head which I think would interest you. Christianity is, among other things, a very wise, noble, and strange doctrine of life. Nothing so difficult to specify as the position it occupies with regard to asceticism. It is not ascetic. Christ was of all doctors (if you will let me use the word) one of the least ascetic. And yet there is a theory of living in the gospels which is curiously indefinable, and leans towards asceticism on one side, although it leans away from it on the other. In fact, asceticism is used therein as a means, not as an end. The wisdom of this world consists in making oneself very little in order to avoid many knocks; in preferring others, in order that, even when we lose, we shall find some pleasure in the event; in putting our desires outside of ourselves, in another ship, so to speak, so that, when the worst happens, there will be something left. You see, I speak of it as a doctrine of life, and as a wisdom for this world. People must be themselves, I suppose. I feel every day as if religion had a greater interest for me; but that interest is still centred on the little rough-and-tumble world in which our fortunes are cast for the moment. I cannot transfer my interests, not even my religious interests, to any different sphere. ... I have had some sharp lessons and some very acute sufferings in these last seven-and- twenty years — more even than you would guess. I begin to grow an old man; a little sharp, I fear, and a little close and unfriendly; but still I have a good heart, and believe in myself and my fellow-men and the God who made us all. . . . There are not many sadder people in the world, perhaps, than I. I have my eye on a sick-bed j1 I have written letters to-day that it hurt me to write, and I fear it will hurt others to receive; I am lonely and sick and out of heart. Well, I still hope; I still believe; I still see the good in the inch, and cling to it. It is not much, perhaps, but it is always something.

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[1] Memoir of Fleeming fenkin, p. 145.

‘ I find I have wandered a thousand miles from what I meant. It was this: of all passages bearing on Christianity in that form of a worldly wisdom, the most Christian, and, so to speak, the key of the whole position, is the Christian doctrine of revenge. And it appears that this came into the world through Paul! There is a fact for you. It was to speak of this that I began this letter; but I have got into deep seas and must go on.

‘ There is a fine text in the Bible, I don’t know where, to the effect that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord. . . . Strange as it may seem to you, everything has been, in one way or the other, bringing me a little nearer to what I think you would 1 R. Glasgow Brown lay dying in the Riviera.

like me to be. Tis a strange world, indeed, but there is a manifest God for those who care to look for him.

‘This is a very solemn letter for my surroundings in this busy cafe; but I had it on my heart to write it; and, indeed, I was out of the humour for anything lighter. — Ever your affectionate son, ‘Robert

Louis Stevenson.

‘P.S.. — While I am writing gravely, let me say one word more. I have taken a step towards more intimate relations with you. But don’t expect too much of me. . . . Try to take me as I am. This is a rare moment, and I have profited by it; but take it as a rare moment. Usually I hate to speak of what I really feel, to that extent that when I find myself cornered, I have a tendency to say the reverse. R. L. S.’

This graver tone was beginning to grow upon him, for all his spirits and light-heartedness. It seemed, indeed, as if happiness had shown him her face only that he might be filled with inextinguishable longing and regret. Mrs. Osbourne had hitherto remained in France, but this year she returned to California. All was dark before them. She was not free to follow her inclination, and though the step of seeking a divorce was open to her, yet the interests and feelings of others had to be considered, and for the present all idea of a union was impossible. Stevenson, on his side, was still far from earning his own livelihood, and could not expect his parents to give their assistance or even their consent to the marriage. So there came the pain of parting without prospect of return, and he who was afterwards so long an exile from his friends, now suffered separation from his dearest by the breadth of a continent and an ocean.

At first he continued to lead his life as if nothing had happened. After his Exhibition work was over, he went to Monastier, a mountain town near the sources of the Loire, and there occupied himself with a strenuous effort in completing both the New Arabian Nights and the Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh, both at this time in their serial career. There seems an irony in the fact that, having lived most of his life in Edinburgh, more or less against his will, he should retire to France only to write about it. But, as if by way of protest against realism, he never drew his native country or his countrymen better than when he was absent from Scotland.

At Monastier he spent some three weeks and completed his work, finding time also for some pencil sketches of the country and of the people, and obtaining, as always, a pleasant footing among the inhabitants, most of whom probably had never seen an Englishman (or Scotchman) in their lives.1

On September 23rd he set out with his donkey on his eleven days’ journey through the Cevennes, but here too his thoughts pursued him.

41 heard the voice of a woman singing some sad, old, endless ballad not far off. It seemed to be about love and a bel amoureux, her handsome sweetheart; and I wished I could have taken up the strain and answered her, as I went on upon my invisible woodland way, weaving, like Pippa in the poem, my own thoughts with hers. What could I have told her? Little enough; and yet all the heart requires.

How the world gives and takes away, and brings sweethearts near only to separate them again into distant and strange lands; but to love is the great amulet which makes the world a garden; and 44 hope, which comes to all,” outwears the accidents of life, and reaches with tremulous hand beyond the grave and death. Easy to say: yea, but also, by God’s mercy, both easy and grateful to believe!’[2]

The Inland Voyage had been published in May 1878, producing no more sensation than a small book, written for the sake of style by an unknown author, was likely to produce among the public, although the reviews showed uniform favour and occasional discernment. The author wrote to his mother: ‘ I was more surprised at the tone of the critics than I suppose any one else. And the effect it has produced on me is one of shame. If they liked that so much, I ought to have given them something better, that’s all. And I shall try to do so. Still it strikes me as odd; and I don’t understand the vogue.’ And later in the year he has been reading it through again and finds it ‘not badly written, thin, mildly cheery and strained.’ His final verdict, given in Samoa in the last year of his life, was that though this book and the Travels with a Donkey contained nothing but fresh air and a certain style, they were good of their kind, and possessed a simplicity of treatment which afterwards he thought had passed out of his reach.

The first draft of the Voyage was made some time in 1877 in Edinburgh, much of it being taken without alteration from his log-book. There are in this draft numerous variations from the text as finally printed, although many consecutive pages have no word altered, but the chief difference between them lies in the fact that most of the longer passages of general reflections are not to be found in the draft. Thus in the opening chapter the second and third and most of the last paragraph are as yet wanting.

Of the work of the year, Will d the Mill shows perhaps the greatest advance. It was the first of his tales taken by the Cornhill, and in spite of the obvious influence of Hawthorne and a certain amount of dissatisfaction with the uneven development of the allegory, more than any of his shorter pieces it produced the impression that a new writer had arisen, original in his conceptions, and already a master of style. The setting was composed, he told Mr. lies, from a combination of the Murgthal in Baden, and the Brenner Pass in Tyrol, over which he went on his Grand Tour at the age of twelve.

Apart from its manner, the interest of the story lies for us in its divergence from Stevenson’s scheme and conduct of life. It was written, he told me, as an experiment, in order to see what could be said in support of the opposite theory: much as he used to present to

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[1] The Studio: Winter Number, 1896-97; Juvenilia, p. 216.

[2] Travels with a Donkey, p. 310.

his cousin Bob any puzzling piece of action in order to find out what could be urged in its defence.1 One of his ruling maxims was that ‘ Acts may be forgiven: not even God can forgive the hanger-back’; yet here he depicted the delight of fruition indefinitely deferred, the prudence of giving no hostages to fortune, the superiority of the man who suffices to himself. In the story, however, there were embodied so much wisdom, so much spirit, so much courage, so much of all that was best in the writer, that it imposed on others long after it had ceased to satisfy himself. And as a work of art it may well outlast far more correct philosophy. It has this also: although in later days he ventured on a more elaborate treatment of his heroines, it seems to me — if any man may venture so far — that it is impossible to maintain that he was still ignorant of the heart of woman who now drew with so delicate and so firm a touch the outlines of ‘ the parson’s Marjory.’

The Travels with a Donkey were written in the winter and published in June. In the spring Louis wrote to R. A. M. Stevenson: c My book is through the press. It has good passages. I can say no more. A chapter called “ The Monks,” another “A Camp in the Dark,” a third, “ A Night among the Pines.” Each of these has, I think, some stuff in it in the way of writing. But lots of it is mere protestations to F., most of which I think you will understand. That is to me the main thread of interest. Whether the damned public But that’s all one.’

He returned to London and began to collaborate with Mr. Henley in a play based on the latest of his drafts of 1 Memories and Portraits, p. 187.

Deacon Brodie, which he had not touched since he was nineteen. In the meantime he started on another walk, this time down the valley of the Stour, which separates the counties of Essex and Suffolk; but a sore heel soon brought him back to London, not unwillingly, as he found it4 dull, cold, and not singularly pretty on the road.’ In December he wrote to his mother: ‘ I don’t wish the play spoken of at all; for of course, as a first attempt, it will most likely come to nothing. It is, however, pretty good in parts. I work three hours every morning here in the club on the brouillons; and then three in the afternoon on the fair copy. In bed by ten; here again in the morning, to the consternation of the servants, as soon as the club is open.’

It was probably at this time that he made the social experiment recorded in the Amateur Emigrant of practising upon the public by ‘ going abroad through a suburban part of London simply attired in a sleeve-waistcoat.’

‘ The result was curious. I then learned for the first time, and by the exhaustive process, how much attention ladies are accustomed to bestow on all male creatures of their own station; for, in my humble rig, each one who went by me caused a certain shock of surprise and a sense of something wanting. In my normal circumstances, it appeared, every young lady must have paid me some passing tribute of a glance; and though I had often been unconscious of it when given, I was well aware of its absence when it was withheld. My height seemed to decrease with every woman who passed me, for she passed me like a dog. This is one of my grounds for supposing that what are called the upper classes may sometimes produce a disagreeable impression in what are called the lower; and I wish some one would continue my experiment, and find out exactly at what stage of toilette a man becomes invisible to the well-regulated female eye.’[1]

[1] The Amateur Emigrant, p. 83.

But life was not to be lived upon the old terms. His heart was elsewhere, and the news which reached him was disquieting. For some time it was fairly good; then Mrs. Osbourne fell seriously ill. There had been, there could be, no restoration of her home life; but it appeared that she would be able to obtain a divorce without causing any unnecessary distress to her family, and in this conjuncture Stevenson could not see clearly what his course of action ought to be. He was first at Swanston with Mr. Henley, finishing Deacon Brodie; then in London; at Swanston again, this time alone, writing his chapters on Lay Morals; then at the Gareloch with his parents. In May he went to London, and, after staying with Mr. George Meredith, crossed over to France. Had he found a companion, he would perhaps have gone to the Pyrenees, but he spent most of his time at Cernay la Ville, and returned to London in the end of June. He there saw Mr. Macdonald of the Times, in reference to some negotiations for his employment; he expressed himself as unwilling to accept ‘leaders,’ but apparently asked for some more general commission, which, however, he did not receive.

The Travels with a Donkey had been published in June, and obtained the same unsubstantial success as the Inland Voyage, although, contrary to its author’s own judgment of the two books, it afterwards had slightly the better sale.

On 14th July he returned to Edinburgh, and by the 30th his mind was made up — to California he must go. From Edinburgh he came back to London, presumably to make arrangements for his start; and wherever he went, he found his friends unanimous in their opinion that he ought to stay at home. Under these circumstances it seemed to him so hopeless to expect any other judgment on the part of his parents, that he did not even go through the form of consulting them on the matter, and with open eyes went away, knowing that he need look for no further countenance from home. He had long felt it to be a duty that every man on reaching manhood should cease to be a burden to his father; he had now learned his craft, and every circumstance seemed to him to point out that the time was come for him to seek his own livelihood and justify his independence. These considerations were very present to his mind, and perhaps he hardly realised the distress which he would inevitably cause his parents by leaving them without a word and in almost total ignorance of the hopes and motives which inspired him.

CHAPTER VIII

CALIFORNIA — 1879-80

‘ What a man truly wants, that will he get, or he will be changed in trying.’ — R. L. S., Aphorism.

1 To My Wife.

‘ Trusty, dusky, vivid, true,

With eyes of gold and bramble-dew,
Steel-true and blade-straight
The great artificer Made my mate.
‘Honour, anger, valour, fire;
A love that life could never tire,
Death quench or evil stir,
The mighty master Gave to her.
Teacher, tender, comrade, wife,
A fellow-farer true through life,
Heart-whole and soul-free
The august father Gave to me.’
Songs of Travel, No. xxvi.

FROM London he went north, and on August 7th, 1879, sailed from the Clyde in the steamship Devonia,, bound for New York. She carried a number of emigrants, but Stevenson, though mixing freely with them, had, chiefly to obtain a table for his writing, taken his passage in the second cabin, which was almost indistinguishable from the steerage. His object in travelling in this fashion was, in the first instance, economy, and next to that, a desire to gain first-hand knowledge for himself of emigrants and emigration, which might be of immediate use for making a book and of ultimate service to him in a thousand ways. He suffered a good deal on the voyage, being already anxious and highly strung before he started, but he stuck manfully to his work and wrote, * in a slantindicular cabin, with the table playing bob-cherry with the ink-bottle/ the greater part of The Story of a Lie. The rest of his time he devoted to making the acquaintance of his fellow- passengers, learning their histories, studying their characters, and — as any one may see between the lines of The Amateur Emigrant1 — rendering them endless unobtrusive services, and helping and cheering them in every way possible. He passed easily for one of themselves. ‘ Among my fellow-passengers,’ he wrote elsewhere, passed generally as a mason, for the excellent reason that there was a mason on board who happened to know; and this fortunate event enabled me to mix with these working people on a footing of equality. ... It chanced there was a blacksmith on board who was not only well- mannered himself and a judge of manners, but a fellow besides of an original mind. He had early diagnosed me for a masquerader and a person out of place; and as we had grown intimate upon the voyage, I carried him my troubles. How did I behave? Was I, upon this crucial test, at all a gentleman? I might have asked eight hundred thousand blacksmiths (if Wales or the world contain so many) and they would have held my question for a mockery; but Jones was a man of genuine perception, thought a long time before he answered, looking at me comically, and reviewing (I could see) the events of the voyage, and then told me that “ on the whole “ I did “ pretty well.” Mr. Jones was a humane man, and very much my friend, and he could get no further than “ on the whole” and “ pretty well.” I was chagrined at the moment for myself; on a larger basis of experience, I am now only concerned for my class. My coequals would have done but little better, and many of them worse.’

The voyage passed without event, and the steamer arrived at New York on the evening of the 18th of August. Stevenson passed the night in a shilling Irish boarding-house. 4 A little Irish girl,’ he writes, ‘is now reading my book[1] aloud to her sister at my elbow; they chuckle, and I feel flattered. P.S. — Now they yawn, and I am indifferent: such a wisely conceived thing is vanity.’ The following day he spent in making purchases, and also is said to have entered the offices of various magazines to establish, if possible, an American connection. Angels have been dismissed unawares at other places and at other times, and — if there be any truth in the story — Stevenson found that the moment of his welcome was not yet come.

Within four-and-twenty hours of his first arrival he was already on his way as an emigrant to the Far West, a chief part of his baggage being ‘ Bancroft’s History of the United States in six fat volumes.’

The railway journey began in floods of rain and the maximum of discomfort. The record of it is in the hands of all to read, and I need say only that it occupied from a Monday evening to the Saturday morning of the following week, and that the tedium and stress of the last few.days in the emigrant train proper were almost unbearable.

On the 30th of August Stevenson reached San Fran cisco, but so much had the long journey shaken him that he looked like a man at death’s door. The news so far was good; Mrs. Osbourne was better, but that was all. To recover from the effects of his hardships he forthwith went another hundred and fifty miles to the south, and camped out by himself in the coast range of mountains beyond Monterey. But he had overtaxed his strength, and broke down. Two nights he ‘ lay out under a tree in a sort of stupor,’ and if two frontiersmen in charge of a goat-ranche had not taken him in and tended him, there would have been an end of his story. They took him back to the ranche, and amid romantic surroundings and in that enchanting climate, he made a recovery for the time.

‘ I am now lying in an upper chamber, with a clinking of goat bells in my ears, which proves to me that the goats are come home and it will soon be time to eat. The old bear-hunter is doubtless now infusing tea; and Tom the Indian will come in with his gun in a few minutes.’

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[1] I.e. the Travels with a Donkey, then recently published.

Here he spent a couple of weeks, passing the mornings in teaching the children to read, and then went down to Monterey, where he remained until the middle of December. In those days it still was a small Mexican town, altered but slightly by the extraordinary cosmopolitan character of the few strangers who visited it. In his own words, it was ‘ a place of two or three streets, economically paved with sea-sand, and two or three lanes, which were watercourses in the rainy season, and at all times were rent up by fissures four or five feet deep. There were no street lights. . . . The houses were for the most part built of unbaked adobe brick, many of them old for so new a country, some of very elegant proportions, with low, spacious, shapely rooms, and walls so thick that the heat of summer never dried them to the heart. . . . There was no activity but in and around the saloons, where people sat almost all day long playing cards. . . . The smallest excursion was made on horseback. You would scarcely ever see the main street • without a horse or two tied to posts, and making a fine figure with their Mexican housings. ... In a place so exclusively Mexican as Monterey, you saw not only Mexican saddles, but true Vaquero riding — men always at the hand-gallop, up hill and down dale, and round the sharpest corner, urging their hurses with cries and gesticulations and cruel rotatory spurs, checking them dead with a touch, or wheeling them right-about-face in a square yard. . . . Spanish was the language of the streets. It was difficult to get along without a word or two of that language for an occasion. The only communications in which the population joined were with a view to amusement. A weekly public ball took place with great etiquette, in addition to the numerous fandangoes in private houses. There was a really fair amateur brass band. Night after night, serenaders would be going about the street, sometimes in a company and with several instruments and voices together, sometimes severally, each guitar before a different window. It was a strange thing to lie awake in nineteenth-century America, and hear the guitar accompany, and one of these old, heartbreaking Spanish love-songs mount into the night air, perhaps in a deep baritone, perhaps in that high-pitched, pathetic, womanish alto which is so common among Mexican men, and which strikes on the unaccustomed ear as something not entirely human, but altogether sad.’1

Here Stevenson found quarters curiously to his taste, which was simple, though discriminating. He lodged with the doctor, and for his meals went to a restaurant.

4 Of all my private collection of remembered inns and restaurants — and I believe it, other things being equal, to be unrivalled — one particular house of entertainment stands forth alone. I am grateful, indeed, to many a swinging signboard, to many a rusty wine-bush; but

not with the same kind of gratitude. Some were beautifully situated, some had an admirable table, some were the gathering-places of excellent companions; but take them for all in all, not one can be compared with Simoneau's at Monterey.

' To the front, it was part barber's shop, part bar; to the back, there was a kitchen and a salle a manger. The 1 'The Old Pacific Capital,' Across the Plains, p. 179.

intending diner found himself in a little, chill, bare, adobe room, furnished with chairs and tables, and adorned with some oil sketches roughly brushed upon the wall in the manner of Barbizon and Cernay. The table, at whatever hour you entered, was already laid with a not spotless napkin, and, by way of epergne, with a dish of green peppers and tomatoes, pleasing alike to eye and palate. If you stayed there to meditate before a meal, you would hear Simoneau all about the kitchen, and rattling among the dishes.'

The fragment breaks off, or we should have had a picture of M. Simoneau, the proprietor, with whom Stevenson 4 played chess and discussed the universe' daily. At his table there 'sat down, day after day, a Frenchman, two Portuguese, an Italian, a Mexican, and a Scotsman; they had for common visitors an American from Illinois, a nearly pure-blood Indian woman, and a naturalised Chinese; and from time to time a Switzer and a German came down from country ranches for the night,'

This society afforded Stevenson most of the diversion that he could now spare the time to enjoy. Of his adventures in the forest he has told us, and chiefly of that day when, setting fire to a tree in mere experiment and idleness of mind, he ran for his life in fear of being lynched. But during all these weeks he was working as he had hardly worked before. Half of a novel called A Vendetta in the West was written, and the whole of The Pavilion on the Links, which he had begun in London, was despatched to England. The scenery of the latter was, I believe, suggested by Dirleton in East Lothian, near North Berwick, and midway between Tantallon and Gullane, haunts of his boyhood, to which he returned in Catriona. At the same time he was writing up his emigrant experiences, about half of the original manuscript being completed at Monterey. There was a tiny local newspaper, The Monterey Californian, of which one of his friends was owner, editor, printer, and everything else, and to this Stevenson occasionally lent a hand. But he was still greatly agitated and worried, and though by this time word came from San Francisco that Mrs. Osbourne was well, and that matters were taking their course, the main object of his journey still seemed no nearer than before. The strain of exertion and anxiety was again too great, and 4 while leading a dull regular life in a mild climate,' he developed pleurisy, and had for a few days to relax his exertions.

All this time he was the kindly and bright companion; his gaiety and courage never flagged. ‘ There is something in me worth saying,’ he wrote to Mr. Henley, 4 though I can’t find what it is just yet.’

About the middle of December he came to San Francisco, and there hired the most economical lodging he could find, at all compatible with the conditions of his work — a single room in a poor house in Bush Street. All his meals he took outside at some of the cheap restaurants; he lived at seventy cents a day, and worked yet harder than before. He made inquiries about work on the San Francisco Bulletin, but the payment offered by that newspaper for literary articles, which were all he was ready to undertake, was too small to be of any use to a writer so painstaking and so deliberate. The Bulletin afterwards accepted at its own rates a couple of papers which he had not written specially for it, but his connection with the San Francisco press was absolutely limited to this transaction.[1]

But the worst part of the change from Monterey was that he was thrown more upon himself. In place of the bright social life of the little Spanish town, a life such as is common on the Continent of Europe, but is hardly to be found in England, he was plunged into the terrible solitude of a large city. On the 26th December he writes: ‘ For four days I have spoken to no one but my landlady or landlord, or to restaurant waiters. This is not a gay way to pass Christmas, is it?’ And again: ‘ After weeks in this city, I know only a few neighbouring streets; I seem to be cured of all my adventurous whims, and even of human curiosity, and am content to sit here by the fire and await the course of fortune/

It was in these days that he met that’ bracing, Republican postman in the city of San Francisco. I lived in that city among working folk, and what my neighbours accepted at the postman’s hands — nay, what I took from him myself — it is still distasteful to recall.’[1]

His friends were very few, and those of but a few weeks’ standing. They hardly extended, indeed, beyond Mr. Virgil Williams and his wife, the artist couple to whom The Silverado Squatters was afterwards dedicated, and Mr. Charles Warren Stoddard, whose picturesque lodging is commemorated in The Wrecker.

In Mr. Williams he found a man of great culture and refinement, a scholar as well as a painter, who was always ready to respond to his

[1] ‘ There is no ground for the statement that he ever acted as a reporter for the Chronicle or any other San Francisco paper, the records of that journal bearing out the recollection of all his friends on this point’ (Times, 2nd July 1901). A legend that the San Francisco doctors refused him advice except for ready money seems equally unfounded.

verses, and, together with his wife, able and eager to discuss the literatures of Europe. Their house was always open to Stevenson, and their only regret was that he could not come more frequently. To Mr. Stoddard also he was no less welcome a companion; from him he borrowed the delightful books of Herman Melville, Typee and Omooy and the South Sea Idylls,2 which charmed Stevenson alike with their subject and their style. So here in his darkest hour he received the second impulse, which in the end was to ‘ cast him out as by a freshet’ upon those 4 ultimate islands.’

1 Later Essays: Edinburgh Edition, p. 291.

2 Published in England by Mr. John Murray in 1874 as Summer Cruising in the South Seas, by Charles Warren Stoddard.

San Francisco itself was still far from a prosaic place; its early history and its large foreign population rendered it not less dangerous than picturesque. Kearney, the Irish demagogue, had only just ‘been snuffed out by Mr. Coleman, backed by his San Francisco Vigilantes and three Gatling guns.’ Stevenson himself was not without experiences,, perhaps less uncommon there at that time than in other large cities. ‘There are rough quarters where it is dangerous o’ nights; cellars of public entertainment which the wary pleasure-seeker chooses to avoid. Concealed weapons are unlawful, but the law is continually broken. One editor was shot dead while I was there; another walked the streets accompanied by a bravo, his guardian angel. I have been quietly eating a dish of oysters in a restaurant, where, not more than ten minutes after I had left, shots were exchanged and took effect; and one night, about ten o’clock, I saw a man standing watchfully at a street corner with a long Smith-and-Wesson glittering in his hand behind his back. Somebody had done something he should not, and was being looked for with a vengeance.’1

But his private needs now pressed upon him; money was growing scarce; the funds he had brought with him were exhausted, and those transmitted from England, being partly his own money and partly the payment for his recent work, very frequently failed to reach him. In the end of January he had to drop from a fifty cent to a twenty-five cent dinner, and already had directed his friend Mr. Charles Baxter to dispose of his books in Edinburgh and to send him the proceeds.

His diligence had not been without results. The Amateur Emigrant had been finished and sent home; likewise two Cornhill articles on Thoreau and Yoshida Torajiro. His interest in Japan was chiefly derived from his acquaintance with sundry Japanese who came to Edinburgh to study lighthouse engineering, with some 1 Pacific Capitals: Edinburgh Edition, p. 198.

of whom he afterwards for a while carried on correspondence.

The influence of America in literature during the nineteenth century has perhaps been most deeply exercised upon English authors through Hawthorne, Whitman, and Poe. Other names have been more widely celebrated, but these three have the most intimately affected their fellow-writers, and the influence of the two latter at any rate has been out of proportion to their achievement, With Stevenson Thoreau came after his countrymen in point of time, but the effect was even more considerable-: ‘I have scarce written ten sentences since I was introduced to Thoreau, but his influence might be somewhere detected by a close observer.’ Had Stevenson not now been on the threshold of marriage, he might yet more strongly have been affected by these ascetic and self-sufficing doctrines.

At this time Prince Otto began to suffer a resurrection out of one of his old plays, Semiramis, a Tragedy, but as yet it was known as The Greenwood State, a Romance. An article on Benjamin Franklin and the Art of Virtue was projected, and another upon William Penn, whose Fruits of Solitude now became a very favourite book with Stevenson. ‘A Dialogue between Two Puppets’1 was also written, and about the half of an autobiography in five books.2

His prospects were gloomy; for although the manuscripts he had sent home were accepted by editors, yet the judgment of his friends upon some of them was justly unfavourable, and at this crisis he could not afford rejection or even delay in payment.

His correspondence with his parents since his departure had been brief and unsatisfactory. His father, being imperfectly informed as to his motives and plans, naturally took that dark view of his son’s conduct to which his temperament predisposed him. But even so, hearing of 1 Miscellanea, p. 28. 2 See pp. 83, 86.

Louis’ earlier illness, he sent him a twenty-pound note, though, as fate would have it, this was one of the letters that miscarried.

Lonely, ill, and poor; estranged from his people, unsuccessful in his work, and discouraged in his attempt to maintain himself, Stevenson yet did not lose heart or go back for one moment from his resolution. He wrote to Mr. Baxter: 20 th Jan. — 41 lead a pretty happy life, though you might not think it. I have great fun trying to be economical, which I find as good a game of play as any other. I have no want of occupation, and though I rarely see any one to speak to, have little time to weary.’

4 However ill he might be,’ says Mrs. Williams, 4 or however anxious had been his vigils, he was always gay, eloquent, and boyish, with the peculiar youthfulness of spirit that was destined to last him to the end.’

He stuck to his work; even, a harder feat, he had the determination to give himself a week’s holiday. But though his spirit was indomitable, his physical powers were exhausted; his landlady’s small child was very ill, and he sat up nursing it. The child recovered, but Stevenson a short while afterwards broke down, and could go on no more.

He was, as he afterwards wrote to Mr. Gosse, on the verge of a galloping consumption, subject to cold sweats, prostrating attacks of cough, sinking fits in which he lost the power of speech, fever, and all the ugliest circumstances of the disease.1

Fortunately by this date his future wife had obtained her divorce, and was at liberty to give him as nurse those services, for which there was unfortunately only too frequent occasion during the next few years. It was a very anxious time, and he was nearer ‘ the grey ferry’ than he had been since childhood. Slowly he mended, and his recovery was helped by his letters and telegrams from home. Already by the middle of February he must 1 Letters, i. p. 169.

have heard that his father admitted that the case was not what he supposed, and that if there were as long a delay as possible, he was prepared to do his best in the matter. At that very date Mr. Stevenson was writing again that it was preposterous of Louis to scrimp himself, and that if he would inform him what money he wanted, it would be sent by telegram, if required. And early in April a telegram came, announcing to Louis that in future he might count upon two hundred and fifty pounds a year His gratitude was unbounded, he realised very clearly what his extremity had been and the fate from which he had been rescued.

To Mr. Baxter again he wrote: — ‘ It was a considerable shock to my pride to break down; but there — it’s done, and cannot be helped. Had my health held out another month, I should have made a year’s income; but breaking down when I did, I am surrounded by unfinished works. It is a good thing my father was on the spot, or I should have had to work and die.’

All obstacles were at last removed, and on May 19, 1880, Robert Louis Stevenson was married to Fanny Van de Grift at San Francisco, in the house of the Rev. Dr. Scott, no one else but Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Williams being present.

Of the marriage it need only be said that from the beginning to the end husband and wife were all in all to one another. His friends rejoiced to find in her, as Mr. Colvin says, ‘a character as strong, interesting, and romantic almost as his own; an inseparable sharer of all his thoughts, and staunch companion of all his adventures; the most open-hearted of friends to all who loved him; the most shrewd and stimulating critic of his work; and in sickness, despite her own precarious health, the most devoted and most efficient of nurses.’1

Two years before his death Stevenson wrote, in refer- 1 Letters, vol.

i. p. 179.

ence to another love match: 4 To be sure it is always annoying when people choose their own wives; and I know only one form of consolation — they know best what they want. As I look back, I think my marriage was the best move I ever made in my life. Not only would I do it again; I cannot conceive the idea of doing otherwise.’

Of his devotion to his wife he was even more reticent than of his affection to his parents. 41 love my wife,’ he once wrote, 41 do not know how much, nor can, nor shall, unless I lost her.’ And once or twice in letters to those who knew and loved them best, he almost unconsciously revealed his affection, which, for the rest, is embodied in the lyric written a year or two before his death, and printed at the head of this chapter. As he lived, so he died, and the last moments of his consciousness were occupied with the attempt to lift the burden of foreboding which was weighing so heavily upon his wife.

Immediately after the marriage Stevenson and his wife and stepson went to the country fifty miles north of San Francisco, there to seek health in the mountains. How they took possession of all that was left of a mining- town, and lived in isolation and independence among the ruins, is told once for all in The Silverado Squatters; but it is not mentioned that Mrs. Stevenson and her son there sickened of diphtheria,,and that the anxiety and danger of a serious illness were added to their lot.

By this time Stevenson knew that his father and mother were longing for nothing in the world so much as to see his face again, to make the acquaintance of his wife, and to welcome her for his sake.

It was not however until July was well advanced that the party could leave Calistoga, but on the seventh of August they sailed from New York, and, ten days later, found Thomas Stevenson and his wife and Sidney Colvin waiting for them at Liverpool. In California the year before, Louis had written of his father:4 Since I have gone away, I have found out for the first time how I love that man; he is dearer to me than all, except Fanny/ And now his joy at seeing his parents was heightened, if possible, by the share which his wife had in their reception. Any doubts that had existed as to the wisdom of his choice were soon driven from their minds, and the new-comer was received into their affection with as much readiness and cordiality as if it were they and not Louis who had made the match. Old Mr. Stevenson in particular discovered in his daughter- in-law so many points which she possessed in common with himself, that his natural liking passed rapidly into an appreciation and affection such as are usually the result only of years of intimacy. In his own wife’s notes I find that before his death he made his son promise that he would ‘ never publish anything without Fanny’s approval/

In consequence of the new order of things, Swanston Cottage had finally been given up early in the summer, and the family party, passing hastily through Edinburgh, went on first to Blair Athol and then to Strathpeffer, returning to Heriot Row in the middle of September. Never before, Stevenson declared, had he appreciated the beauty of the Highlands, but now he was all enthusiasm. Except an article at Calistoga, he had done no work for months, but these new influences suffered him to rest no longer: he wrote 'The Scotsman's Return from Abroad,'1 and was planning for himself no less a book on Scotland than a History of the Union. At Strathpeffer he met Principal Tulloch, already a friend of his parents, and the editor of Fraser's Magazine, with whom he had much talk, and by whom he was confirmed in the purpose of his book. Moreover,' The Scotsman's Return ' and the paper on Monterey were accepted for Fraser.

On the other hand, both Stevenson and his father now considered it undesirable to publish the account of his 1 Underwoods, xii.: In Scots.

recent experiences as an emigrant in its existing form. It was necessarily somewhat personal, and the circumstances under which it was written had told against its success. It had been sold, but it was the work which his friends had criticised most severely, and there no longer existed the dire need for making money by any possible means. The sum paid by the publishers was refunded by Mr. Stevenson, and for the time being the book was withdrawn.

The exile's return to his native country was of short duration, for the hardships he had endured and his consequent illness had rendered him quite unable to face a Scottish winter. On consulting his uncle, Dr. George Balfour, the well-known Edinburgh doctor, he was informed of his condition, and advised to try the climate of the High Alps, which had lately come into favour as a resort for patients suffering from phthisis.

Accordingly, on October 7th Stevenson left Edinburgh with his wife and stepson and a new member of the family, who held a high place in their affections, and was an important element in all their arrangements for the next half-dozen years. This was a black Skye terrier, a present from Sir Walter Simpson, after whom he was called, until 4 Wattie' had passed into ' Woggs,' and finally became unrecognisable as ' Bogue.' In Heriot Row every dog worshipped Thomas Stevenson (with the sole exception of 'Jura,' who was alienated by jealousy) and so Louis never had a dog until now who really regarded him as owner. But Woggs was a person of great character, with views and a temper of his own, entirely devoted to his master and mistress, and at odds with the world at large.

In London, Dr. Andrew Clark confirmed both the opinion and the advice which had been given, and a few days only were spent in seeing Stevenson’s friends, who now found their first opportunity to welcome him back and to make the acquaintance of his wife.

CHAPTER IX

DAVOS AND THE HIGHLANDS — 1880-82

‘ A mountain valley, an Alpine winter, and an invalid’s weakness make up among them a prison of the most effective kind.’
R. L. S. Pall Mall Gazette, 21st February 1881.

By the middle of October the party again started, made a journey broken by frequent halts, and on the fourth of November reached Davos Platz, where they were to spend the winter. They took up their quarters in the Hotel Belvedere, the nucleus of the present large establishment, and there they stayed until the following April.

The great feature of the place for Stevenson was the presence of John Addington Symonds, who, having come there three years before on his way to Egypt, had taken up his abode in Davos, and was now building himself a house. To him the new-comer bore a letter of introduction from Mr. Gosse. On November 5 th Louis wrote to his mother: 4 We got to Davos last evening; and I feel sure we shall like it greatly. I saw Symonds this morning, and already like him; it is such sport to have a literary man around. My father can understand me, when he thinks what it would be to come up here for a winter and find Tait.1 Symonds is like a Tait to me; eternal interest in the same topics, eternal cross-causewaying of special knowledge. That makes hours to fly.’

1 Professor P. G. Tait, the eminent man of science, Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, 1860-1901: a close friend of Thomas Stevenson.

And a little later he wrote: 4 Beyond its splendid climate, Davos has but one advantage — the neighbourhood of J. A. Symonds. I dare say you know his work, but the man is far more interesting.’1

This first winter Stevenson produced but little. He arrived full of eagerness to begin his Scottish history, but a little study and reflection, following upon his newfound enthusiasm for the parts of Scotland where he had been staying, had fixed his attention exclusively upon one section of his original subject, and for the time he limited his view to a history of the Highlands extending from 1715 to his own day. ‘I breathe after this Highland business,’ he wrote in December, ‘feeling a real, fresh, lively, and modern subject, full of romance and scientific interest in front of me. It is likely it will turn into a long essay.’

Even this, it seemed, was beyond his powers for the present. The doctor in a few weeks spoke hopefully of his case, but the climate, though beneficial in the long run, was not at first conducive to any deliberate effort. Of the sensations produced in himself, Stevenson has left an analysis[2] that may be contrasted with the moods of the convalescent in Ordered South.

‘. . . In many ways it is a trying business to reside upon the Alps.. . . But one thing is undeniable — that in the rare air, clear, cold, and blinding light of Alpine winters, a man takes a certain troubled delight in his existence, which can nowhere else be paralleled. He is perhaps no happier, but he is stingingly alive. It does not, perhaps, come out of him in work or exercise, yet he feels an enthusiasm of the blood unknown in more temperate climates. It may not be health, but it is fun.

‘There is nothing more difficult to communicate on paper than this baseless ardour, this stimulation of the brain, this sterile joyousness of spirits. You wake every morning, see the gold upon the snow-peaks, become tilled with courage, and bless God for your prolonged existence. The valleys are but a stride to you; you cast your shoe over the hill-tops; your ears and your heart sing; in the words of an unverified quotation from the Scotch psalms, you feel yourself fit “on the wings of all the winds” to “ come flying all abroad.” Europe and your mind are too narrow for that flood of energy. Yet it is notable that you are hard to root out of your bed; that you start forth singing, indeed, on your walk, yet are unusually ready to turn home again; that the best of you is volatile; and that although the restlessness remains till night, the strength is early at an end. With all these heady jollities, you are half conscious of an underlying languor in the body; you prove not to be so well as you had fancied; you weary before you have well begun; and though you mount at morning with the lark, that is not precisely a song-bird’s heart that you bring back with you when you return with aching limbs and peevish temper to your inn.

‘ It is hard to say wherein it lies, but this joy of Alpine winters is its own reward. Baseless, in a sense, it is more than worth more permanent improvements. The dream of health is perfect while it lasts; and if, in trying to realise it, you speedily wear out the dear hallucination, still every day, and many times a day, you are conscious of a strength you scarce possess, and a delight in living as merry as it proves to be transient. The brightness — heaven and earth conspiring to be bright — the levity and quiet of the air; the odd, stirring silence — more stirring than a tumult; the snow, the frost, the enchanted landscape: all have their part in the effect on the memory, tons vous tapent sur la tete; and yet when you have enumerated all, you have gone no nearer to explain or even to qualify the delicate exhilaration

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[1] Dictionary of National Biography, sub 1 Symonds.’

[2] Pall Mall Gazette, 5th March 1881,4 The Stimulation of the Alps.’

that you feel — delicate, you may say, and yet excessive, greater than can be said in prose, almost greater than an invalid can bear. There is a certain wine of France, known in England in some gaseous disguise, but when drunk in the land of its nativity, still as a pool, clean as river water, and as heady as verse. It is more than probable that in its noble natural condition this was the very wine of Anjou so beloved by Athos in the Musketeers. Now if the reader has ever washed down a liberal second breakfast with the wine in question, and gone forth, on the back of these dilutions, into a sultry, sparkling noontide, he will have felt an influence almost as genial, although strangely grosser, than this fairy titillation of the nerves among the snow and sunshine of the Alps. That also is a mode, we need not say of intoxication, but of insobriety. Thus also a man walks in a strong sunshine of the mind, and follows smiling, insubstantial meditations. And whether he be really so clever or so strong as he supposes, in either case he will enjoy his chimera while it lasts.

‘ The influence of this giddy air displays itself in many secondary ways. People utter their judgments with a cannonade of syllables; a big word is as good as a meal to them; and the turn of a phrase goes further than humour or wisdom. By the professional writer many sad vicissitudes have to be undergone. At first, he cannot write at all. The heart, it appears, is unequal to the pressure of business, and the brain, left without nourishment, goes into a mild decline. Next, some power of work returns to him, accompanied by jumping headaches. Last, the spring is opened, and there pours at once from his pen a world of blatant, hustling polysyllables. He writes them in good faith and with a sense of inspiration; it is only when he comes to read what he has written that surprise and disquiet seize upon his mind. What is he to do, poor man? All his little fishes talk like whales. This yeasty inflation, this stiff and strutting architecture of the sentence, have come upon him while he slept; and it is not he, it is the Alps who are to blame. He is not, perhaps, alone, which somewhat comforts him. Nor is the ill without a remedy. Some day, when the spring returns, he shall go down a little lower in this world, and remember quieter inflections and more modest language. . . .

‘ Is it a return of youth, or is it a congestion of the brain? It is a sort of congestion, perhaps, that leads the invalid, when all goes well, to face the new day with such a bubbling cheerfulness. It is certainly congestion that makes night hideous with visions; all the chambers of a many-storeyed caravanserai haunted with vociferous nightmares, and many wakeful people come down late for breakfast in the morning. Upon that theory the cynic may explain the whole affair — exhilaration, nightmares, pomp of tongue and all. But on the other hand, the peculiar blessedness of boyhood may itself be but a symptom of the same complaint, for the two effects are strangely similar; and the frame of mind of the invalid upon the Alps is a sort of intermittent youth, with periods of lassitude. The fountain of Juventus does not play steadily in these parts; but there it plays, and possibly nowhere else.'

Apart from this exhilaration, there was much that he disliked in Davos, more especially the cut-and-dry walks alone possible to him, the monotonous river, the snow (in which he could see no colour), and the confinement to a single valley. ' The mountains are about you like a trap/ he wrote; 'you cannot foot it up a hillside and behold the sea as a great plain, but live in holes and corners, and can change only one for the other/

The drawbacks of hotel life seem to have affected him but little; he had the company of his wife, and a constant interest in his stepson, who, having brought the toy- press given him the previous spring in California and used at Silverado, now devoted to printing all the time he could secure from lessons with his tutor.

A characteristic story which I have from Mrs. Stevenson belongs to this period. When they were leaving for Davos, her father-in-law, warned by the experiences of Louis in California, made her promise that she would let him know if at any time they were in want of money.

' The time came,' she says, * when Louis had influenza and did need more, but he would not let me tell his father. I used every argument. At last I said, " What do you think should be done with the money your father has so carefully laid by for the use of his family?" " It should be given," said Louis, "to some young man of talent, who is in poor health and could not otherwise afford to get a necessary change of climate." " Oh, very well," said I, " I shall appeal to your father at once in the case of a young man named Stevenson, who is in just that position." At this Louis could only laugh, and I wrote the story to his father, who was much amused by it, and of course sent the necessary supplies.'

In these days, and indeed throughout his life, he was often unreasonable, but this very unreason seems always to have had a quality and a charm of its own, which only endeared Stevenson the more to those who suffered under its caprice, as two other anecdotes of Davos may serve to show. A young Church of England parson, who knew him but slightly, was roused one morning about six o'clock by a message that Stevenson wanted to see him immediately. Knowing how ill his friend was, he threw on his clothes and rushed to Stevenson's room, only to see a haggard face gazing from the bed-clothes, and to hear an agonised voice say, 4 For God's sake, , have you got a Horace?'

Another friend had received from Italy a present of some Christmas roses, to which particular associations gave a personal sentiment and value. Stevenson was seeking high and low for some flowers — the occasion, I think, was the birthday of a girl who could never live to see another — he heard of the arrival of these. He came, he stated the paramount necessity of depriving his friend, and he bore the flowers away. The two stories might end here, and show Stevenson in rather an unamiable light: their point is that neithei of his friends ever dreamed of resenting his conduct or regarding it with any other feeling but affectionate amusement.

Often in the evening he would turn into the billiard- room, and there his talk might be heard at its best. A fellow-visitor has given a spirited and sympathetic description of him in those days, and adds: ‘ Once only do I remember seeing him play a game of billiards, and a truly remarkable performance it was. He played with all the fire and dramatic intensity that he was apt to put into things. The balls flew wildly about, on or off the table as the case might be, but seldom indeed ever threatened a pocket or got within a hand’s-breadth of a cannon. “ What a fine thing a game of billiards is,” he remarked to the astonished onlookers, “ — once a year or so!”‘1

When he was well, Stevenson had to be out of doors a good deal, and spent the time mostly in walks, often with his dog for a companion.

‘15th December 1880. — My dear Mother, — I shall tell you about this morning. When I got out with Woggs about half-past seven, the sky was low and grey; the Tinzenhorn and the other high peaks were covered. It had snowed all night, a fine, soft snow; and all the ground had a gloss, almost a burnish, from the new coating. The woods were elaborately powdered grey — not a needle but must have had a crystal. In the road immediately below me, a long train of sack-laden sledges was going by, drawn by four horses, with an indescribable smoothness of motion, and no sound save that of the bells. On the other road, across the river, four or five empty sledges were returning towards Platz, some of the drivers sitting down, some standing up in their vehicles; they glided forward without a jolt or a tremor, not like anything real, but like cardboard figures on a toy-theatre. I wonder if you can understand how odd this looked/ 1 Mr. Harold Vallings in Temple Bar, February 1901, p. 25.

Occasionally he joined in skating and more frequently in the tobogganing then newly introduced. The latter experiences, as in all sports in which he ever took part were delightful to him chiefly for the surroundings, and quite apart from all rivalry or competition, since, as he says in the Inland Voyage, he ‘ held all racing as a creature of the devil/ The following passage shows how he extracted the keenest pleasure both from the exercise itself and the romantic conditions with which he was able to invest it: —

‘Perhaps the true way to toboggan is alone and at night. First comes the tedious climb, dragging your instrument behind you. Next a long breathing space, alone with snow and pine woods, cold, silent, and solemn to the heart. Then you push off; the toboggan fetches way; she begins to feel the hill, to glide, to swim, to gallop. In a breath you are out from under the pine- trees, and a whole heavenful of stars reels and flashes overhead. Then comes a vicious effort; for by this time your wooden steed is speeding like the wind, and you are spinning round a corner, and the whole glittering valley and all the lights in all the great hotels lie for a moment at your feet; and the next you are racing once more in the shadow of the night, with close shut teeth and beating heart. Yet a little while and you will be landed on the highroad by the door of your own hotel. This, in an atmosphere tingling with forty degrees of frost, in a night made luminous with stars and snow, and girt with strange white mountains, teaches the pulse an unaccustomed tune, and adds a new excitement to the life of man upon his planet/1

In the meanwhile he was allowed to work two hours in the morning, and one, if he wished, in the afternoon, and this time was not wholly without result. The first edition of Virginibus Puerisque — his earliest volume of collected papers — was prepared for the press, and the 1 ‘Alpine Diversions,’ Pall Mall Gazette, 26th February 1881.

second essay in that book and the thrice-rejected article on Raeburn were there printed for the first time. The essay on Pepys was written, and a paper for the Fortnightly, but this was all the prose that he succeeded in finishing before his departure, except the four articles on Davos, which appeared in the Pall Mall Gazette. The last were mere impressions, anonymous, unfinished, and unrevised: yet no one can doubt for a moment the authorship of the extracts I have given.

Chiefly for his own amusement during the winter, he wrote also a good deal of familiar verse, the>best of which was in Scots dialect, and included the lines addressed to the author of Rab and his Friends. In a series of octosyllabic stanzas he denounced certain dishonest tradesmen of Davos, and he also wrote a sequence of sonnets — almost his only use of this metrical form — their subject being one Peter Brash, a publican of Edinburgh, who had been the subject of his early jokes.

An outline of the Highland history may be found in the Letters} but the book itself remained unwritten, and is never likely now to become what Stevenson could have made of it. But he spent some time in preparatory reading, and even began to learn Gaelic for the purpose, though he never got beyond the rudiments of the language.

A health-resort, from its very conditions, often casts upon a visitor shadows of death and bereavement, but this year the Stevensons were affected with the deepest sympathy for a loss that touched them nearly; their friend Mrs. Sitwell arrived unexpectedly with her son, who was already in the last stages of a swift consumption, and before the end came in April, there were but the alternations of despair and of hoping against hope until the blow fell.

Shortly afterwards Stevenson and his wife set out for France, accompanied only by Woggs, for the boy had gone to England to school. They spent several weeks, first at Barbizon; then in Paris, whence they were driven by drains; and at St. Germain, where Stevenson for the first time in his life heard a nightingale sing, and, having proclaimed that no sounds in nature could equal his favourite blackbird, forthwith surrendered all prejudice and fell into an ecstasy. They found themselves in straits at St. Germain, owing to the failure of supplies and the general suspicious appearance of Stevenson's wardrobe; being suddenly delivered from insults, they left their landlord, as Mrs. Stevenson alleged, in the belief that he had turned from his doors the eccentric son of a wealthy English nobleman.

They reached Edinburgh on May 30th, and three days later started with his mother for Pitlochry, where they spent two months at Kinnaird Cottage: his father coming to them as often as business permitted. Louis had written to his parents that for country quarters his desiderata were these: ' A house, not an inn, at least not an hotel; a burn within reach; heather and a fir or two. If these can be combined, I shall be pretty happy.' These requisites he found, and indeed the man would be hard to satisfy who asked more of any stream — ' a little green glen with a burn, a wonderful burn, gold and green and snow-white, singing loud and low in different steps of its career, now pouring over miniature crags, now fretting itself to death in a maze of rocky stairs and pots; never was so sweet a little river. Behind, great purple moorlands reaching to Ben Vrackie.'[1]

He had thus his heart's desire, and in return, if (as he was always urging) man is but a steward on parole, he did not fail to repay mankind for this season of delight. For in these two months he wrote ' Thrawn Janet' and the ' Merry Men.' ' The Body Snatcher' belongs to the same time, all three being intended for a volume of tales of the supernatural. For 'Thrawn Janet' Stevenson afterwards claimed that if he had never written anything but this tale and the story of 4 Tod Lapraik' in Catriona, he would yet have been a writer.[1] It was the outcome of a study of the Scotch literature of witchcraft, and is hardly open to any other criticism than that which its author himself found against it. '"Thrawn Janet" has two defects; it is true only historically, true for a hill parish in Scotland in old days, not true for mankind and the world. Poor Mr. Soulis' faults we may eagerly recognise as virtues, and we feel that by his conversion he was merely worsened; and this, although the story carries me away every time I read it, leaves a painful impression on my mind.' Even from the days of the Edinburgh University Magazine he had attached great importance to the names of his characters, and was never weary of improvising new lists for his amusement. 'My own uncle/ he wrote to Mr. Barrie,' has simply the finest name in the world, Ramsay Traquair. Beat that you cannot.' But I can remember his saying to me one day with a tone of deep regret,' I have already used up the best name in all the world — Mr. Soulis.'

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[1] Letters, vol. i. p. 187.

[1] Letters, vol. i. p. 204.

The ' Merry Men' was always one of his favourites, rather on account of the sentiment and the style than for the actual story. It was, as he put it,' a fantasia, or vision of the sea/ and was designed to express the feeling of the West coast of Scotland as he conceived it in accordance with the memories of his engineering days, especially the weeks spent upon the island of Earraid.

He had now found his powers in dialect, in which hitherto he had written only a few verses and recorded but a few remembered phrases in his sketches or essays. But from this time much of the speech of his strongest novels was in Scotch, more or less broad, and the fame of Stevenson as a novelist is inseparably connected with his mastery over the common tongue of his own country. It may, perhaps, be added that the work done at Pitlochry is the only published prose that he ever wrote in the vernacular in Scotland itself.1

Over and above these stories he had in his mind at this time a scheme in connection with Jean Cavalier, the Protestant leader of the Cevennes in the eighteenth century, who had been a favourite hero with him since his travels with the donkey in that region. A copy of verses on Cavalier survives in one of his notebooks, but in spite of the inquiries he made of Mr. Gosse and others upon the subject, he seems never to have touched it again.

Towards the end of June he heard that Professor iEneas Mackay was about to resign the chair of History and Constitutional Law in the University of Edinburgh. It was possible to discharge the duties of this professorship by lecturing only during the summer session; the election was in the hands of the Faculty of Advocates, and Stevenson resolved to stand. Of the history of Scotland he knew more at any rate than some who had formerly held the chair: his knowledge of Constitutional Law was probably limited to what he had learned during one session from an infrequent attendance at the lectures of the

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1 Vaitima Letters, p. 241.

professor, which were confined to the subject of Constitutional History with special reference to England; and to this topic I doubt whether Stevenson had ever given any serious attention whatever. He applied to his friends and got together a set of thirteen testimonials that are a tribute to the ingenuity of the human intellect, and were wholly disregarded by the electors. Grateful as Louis was to the loyalty of his supporters, he did not fail to see the humour of their conjunction: 'It is an odd list of names. Church of England, Church of Scotland, Free Kirk, Pessimist, Radical, Tory: certainly I am not a party man.' In the meantime he was so full of the idea, and so eager to try his powers, that he used to deliver specimen lectures to his stepson. The boy was seated on a chair, while the would-be professor declaimed for an hour upon Constitutional History, every now and then stopping to make sure that his class was following his meaning. The election took place in the winter and Stevenson, although disappointed, was not surprised at the completeness of his failure.

On August 2nd the party left for Braemar; on the journey, Stevenson first conceived the family of Durris- deer and the earlier part of The Master of Ballantrae, though both as yet were nameless, and it was six years and more before he began to set any word of it on paper.

At Braemar, having more accommodation, they were able to enjoy the society of some of their friends — Mr. Colvin, Mr. Baxter and others. One of the first who arrived was Dr. Alexander Hay Japp, a new acquaintance, invited to discuss Thoreau, and to set Stevenson right upon one or two points in his history. Thoreau was duly discussed, but before the visitor left, he heard the first eight or ten chapters of Treasure Island\ then newly written, and carried off the fair copy of the manuscript, as far as it went, that he might offer it to a publisher. Stevenson himself has told the history of the book, his first book of which the public ever heard, in one of those articles of reminiscence condemned by his critics as premature, that now seem only too few and too short for all of us. Having first drawn the chart of an island (charts being to him ' of all books the least wearisome to read and the richest in matter'), he then from the names, marked at random, constructed a story in order to please his schoolboy stepson, who asked him to try and write 'something interesting'; his father, another schoolboy in disguise, took fire at this and urged him on, helping him with lists and suggestions; uncon

1 Here is a picture from one of his notebooks. Could any other language have produced just the same effect? —

' The gloaming had come lang syne; there was a wee red winter sun on the ae side, and on the ither a cauld, wameless moon; the snaw in the lang loan squeaked under my feet as I ran.'

scious memory came to his aid, and Treasure Island was half written.[1]

Mr. Gosse immediately succeeded Dr. Japp as the family visitor, and under his congenial influence the story, which at first was called The Sea Cook, grew at the rate of a chapter a day; before Stevenson left Braemar, nineteen chapters had been written.[2] As soon as the idea of publication occurred, the book had been intended for Messrs. Routledge, but by Dr. Japp’s good offices it was accepted for Young Folks by Mr. Henderson, the proprietor, when he saw the opening chapters and heard an outline of the story.

In this summer Stevenson first began to write the verses for children, which were afterwards published in the Child’s Garden. His mother tells how she had Miss Kate Greenaway’s Birthday Book for Children, with verses by Mrs. Sale Barker, then newly published, and how Louis took it up one day, and saying, ‘ These are rather nice rhymes, and I don’t think they would be difficult to do,’ proceeded to try his hand. About fourteen numbers seem to have been written in the Highlands, and apparently after three more had been added, they were then discontinued for a time.

But in the meanwhile the weather grew suddenly bad; Stevenson made a hurried flight (in a respirator) from Braemar on September 23rd, and after a few days in Edinburgh, passed on to London. Here he called on his new publisher; ‘a very amusing visit indeed; ordered away by the clerks, who refused loudly to believe I had any business; and at last received most kindly by Mr. Henderson.’

From London they passed to Paris and so to Davos, which they reached on October 18th. This year they had taken for the winter a chalet belonging to the Hotel Buol, where Symonds was still living; they hired a servant of their own, and only occasionally took meals in the hotel.

This winter differed considerably from the last. Stevenson was in better health, and being accustomed to the climate, and also less subject to interruption, produced a great deal more work, though, as before, a certain proportion of his labours was futile. Symonds was anxious that he should write an essay or essays on the Characters of Theophrastus, but Treasure Island was already beginning its serial course, with the latter half of it yet unwritten. Fortunately the inspiration that had failed the author returned, the last fourteen chapters took but a fortnight, and at the second wave the book was finished as easily as it was begun.

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[1] {My First Book’: Juvenilia, p. 288.

[2] I am greatly obliged both to Mr. Gosse and to Dr. Japp for their recollections of this time. See also the Academy, lviii., pp. 189, 209, 237.

Again he started eagerly upon a new book, a Life of Hazlitt, he had long been wanting to write. There is a legend which is significant, although it cannot now be verified, that he had applied for a commission for this subject in some biographical series, but was refused on the ground that neither he nor his theme was of sufficient importance to justify their inclusion. Now he writes gleefully to his father: ‘ I am in treaty with Bentley (Colvin again) for a Hazlitt! Is not that splendid? There will be piles of labour, but the book should be good. This will please you, will it not? Biography anyway, and a very interesting and sad one.’ He had long made a favourite study of the essays of his author, whose paper ‘On the Spirit of Obligations’ had ‘been a turning-point’ in his life. From no writer does he quote more freely, and he couples Hazlitt with Sterne and Heine as the best of companions on a walking tour. But a wider study of his writings produced a cooler feeling, and the Liber Amoris is said to have created a fiftal distaste, which rendered any continued investigation or sympathetic treatment impossible.

Treasure Island, by ‘ Captain George North,’ had been VOL. 1. N running an obscure career in the pages of its magazine from October to January, openly mocked at by more than one indignant reader. On its completion Stevenson announced to his father his intention of rewriting ‘the whole latter part, lightening and siccating throughout.’ But it did not make its appearance as a book till nearly two years later.

The Scottish history had fallen into abeyance, or had come down to an article on ‘ Burt, Boswell, Mrs. Grant, and Scott,’ and a paper on the Glenure murder, afterwards the central incident in Kidnapped, but neither of these was even begun. The volume of Familiar Studies was prepared for press, and the critical preface was written. The two papers on Knox the author now found dull, and he even hesitated about keeping them back as material for a new life of the great Scottish statesman and Reformer.

About this time also he had a good deal of correspondence with Mr. Gosse on a work he had proposed they should undertake in collaboration — ’ a re-telling, in choice literary form, of the most picturesque murder cases of the last hundred years. We were to visit the scenes of these crimes,’ says Mr. Gosse, ‘and turn over the evidence. The great thing, Louis said, was not to begin to write until we were thoroughly alarmed. “ These things must be done, my boy, under the very shudder of the goose- flesh.” We were to begin with the “ Story of the Red Barn,” which is indeed a tale pre-eminently worthy to be retold by Stevenson. But the scene never came off, and is another of the dead leaves in his Vallombrosa.’[1]

In January Stevenson gives an irresistible description of himself: ‘ I dawdle on the balcony, read and write, and have fits of conscience and indigestion. The ingenious human mind, face to face with something it downright ought to do, does something else. But the relief is temporary.’

1 Critical Kit cat sy p. 292.

Temporary also was the idleness. The Silverado Squatters, the record of the circumstances of his honeymoon, was written, and no less than five magazine articles, including the first part of ‘Talk and Talkers’ and the ‘ Gossip on Romance.’ Still this did not satisfy him. He wrote to his mother: ‘ I work, work away, and get nothing or but little done; it is slow, slow, slow; but I sit from four to five hours at it, and read all the rest of the time for Hazlitt.’ And to Charles Baxter a little later he wrote: ‘ I am getting a slow, steady, sluggish stream of ink over paper, and shall do better this year than last.’ Before April he can say: ‘ I have written something like thirty-five thousand words since I have been here, which shows at least I have been industrious.’1

To this time apparently belong the verses called ‘ The Celestial Surgeon,’ which are as characteristic of Stevenson as anything he ever wrote. An eloquent modern preacher treating of the deadly sin of accidie, ‘gloom and sloth and irritation,’ the opposite of ‘the vertue that is called fortitude or strength,’ quotes these ‘ graceful, noble lines’ at length, and says,’ Surely no poet of the present day, and none, perhaps, since Dante, has so truly told of the inner character of accidie, or touched more skilfully the secret of its sinfulness.’2

Whether in spite or in consequence of his harder work, his health continued to improve, notwithstanding great anxiety about his wife, who was affected by the high elevation. Early in December she was sent to Zurich and then to Berne with indifferent results. Finally, Stevenson went down and brought her home on Christmas Day, the party travelling seven hours in an open sleigh in the snow, but fortunately nobody was the worse. Though frequently ailing, she managed with two short changes 1 Cf. Letters, i. 237.

2 The Right Rev. Dr. Paget, Bishop of Oxford. The Spirit of Discipline: Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1891.

to stay out the necessary season, but was fit for little, and quite unable to take charge of the house. To cheer her depression, Symonds and her husband, and sometimes Mr. Horatio Brown, would forego their walk and spend the afternoon at her bedside. Stevenson would fling himself upon the bed with his feet to the pillow, and the hours passed in the most animated and varied discussion. Symonds, it will be remembered, was the Opalstein of ‘Talk and Talkers.’ On the first reading of that essay he affected indignation: ‘ Louis Stevenson, what do you mean by describing me as a moonlight serenader?’ The sketch, however, gives, I believe, a real impression of the qualities of his talk, and it is only to be regretted that he has nowhere done the same for his companion.

Housekeeping was a burden and a doubtful economy, but the chalet in other respects was a great success. For one thing, it got the sun an hour sooner, and kept it an hour later than the hotels; for another, it provided its master with a spot where he was at liberty to create and develop for himself the amusement which pleased him best of all — the game of war. His childish enthusiasm about the army in the Crimea will be remembered, though it was but the common feeling of the children of this country at the time. Deeds of arms would always raise a thrill in his breast, but so far as I know there was no outward sign of this interest in warfare or strategy during his youth or early manhood. In December 1878 he wrote from the Savile Club: ‘ I am in such glee about Peiwar.[1] I declared yesterday I was going to add the name to mine, and be Mr. Peiwar Stevenson for the future.’ In October 1880, an old general who was a friend of the family came to see him in London, and brought as a present Sir Edward Hamley’s Operations of War. R. A. M. Stevenson was there at the time, and both cousins were transported with enthusiasm. ‘ I am drowned in it a thousand fathom deep/ wrote Louis, ‘and “O that I had been a soldier” is still my cry.’ He had never made any affectation of abandoning a pursuit he was supposed to have outgrown. He clung to the colouring of prints and to childish paintings long after most boys of his age have given up the diversions of the nursery. A large part of the winter of 1877 he spent in building with toy-bricks in his room at Heriot Row, and regretted that he had not been an architect. As Bishop Earle said of a child,’ We laugh at his foolish sports, but his game is our earnest’: it often is not wisdom, but dulness, that keeps men from joining in the livelier fancies of children. Stevenson, deterred by no false shame, extracted from toys much of the zest of reality, and raised their employment almost to the intensity of active life. And now, beginning to help his schoolboy with games, he became absorbed in the pursuit, and developed a kriegspiel of his own, adapted to the conditions under which, of necessity, he played. While it was impossible for him to secure the services of an umpire, this very independence allowed the operations to be protracted for any length of time needed for the completion of an entire campaign. But his enthusiasm and the thoroughness and ingenuity he exhibited are best described in the account given by his adversary, Mr. Lloyd Osbourne: — ‘The abiding spirit of the child in him was seldom shown in more lively fashion than during those days of exile at Davos, where he brought a boy’s eagerness, a man’s intellect, a novelist’s imagination, into the varied business of my

[1] Lord Roberts’s brilliant victory over the Afghans.

holiday hours; the printing-press, the toy- theatre, the tin soldiers, all engaged his attention. Of these, however, the tin soldiers most took his fancy; and the war game was constantly improved and elaborated, until, from a few hours, a “war” took weeks to play, and the critical operations in the attic monopolised half our thoughts. This attic was a most chilly and dismal spot, reached by a crazy ladder, and unlit save for a single frosted window; so low at the eaves and so dark that we could seldom stand upright, nor see without a candle. Upon the attic floor a map was roughly drawn in chalks of different colours, with mountains, rivers, towns, bridges, and roads of two classes. Here we would play by the hour, with tingling fingers and stiffening knees, and an intentness, zest, and excitement that I shall never forget. The mimic battalions marched and counter-marched, changed by measured evolutions from column formation into line, with cavalry screens in front and massed supports behind, in the most approved military fashion of to-day. It was war in miniature, even to the making and destruction of bridges, the intrenching of camps; good and bad weather, with corresponding influence on the roads; siege and horse artillery, proportionately slow, as compared to the speed of unimpeded foot, and proportionately expensive in the upkeep; and an exacting commissariat added the last touch of verisimilitude. Four men formed the regiment or unit, and our shots were in proportion to our units and amount of our ammunition. The troops carried carts of printers’ “ems” — twenty “ ems “ to each cart — and for every shot taken an “ em “ had to be paid into the base, from which fresh supplies could be slowly drawn in empty carts returned for the purpose.’1

The strength of the enemy in any given spot could only be ascertained according to strictly defined regulations, and an attempt was even made to mark certain districts as unhealthy and to settle by the hazard of the dice-box the losses incurred by all troops passing through them.

During one war Stevenson chronicled the operations in a series of extracts from the Glendarule Times and the Yallobally Record, until the editor of the latter sheet was hanged by order of General Osbourne and its place supplied by the less offensive Herald.

1 Scribbler’s Magazine, December 1898, p. 709.

Year after year he reverted to the game, and even in Samoa there was a campaign room with the map coloured on the floor, although the painful realities of actual warfare, either present or imminent, occupied all our thoughts for the closing period of Stevenson’s life.

But busy as he was this winter, he had time not only for this game, but also, turning aside to help young Osbourne with his printing, he first wrote verses for the toy-press, and then, getting hold of a bit of rough wood, began to design and cut illustrations for his text, or in some cases to create pictures which a text must elucidate.

In February he sent to his parents 1 two woodcuts of my own cutting; they are moral emblems; one represents “ anger,” the other “ pride scorning poverty.” They will appear among others, accompanied by verses, in my new work published by S. L. Osbourne. If my father does not enjoy these, he is no true man.’ And to his mother: ‘Wood-engraving has suddenly drave between me and the sun. I dote on wood-engraving. I’m a made man for life. I’ve an amusement at last.’

Of these blocks about two dozen in all were cut, most of them by Stevenson’s own hands, though the elephant, at any rate, was due to his wife, and 1 the sacred ibis in the distance’ was merely the result of an accident turned to advantage. He had in his boyhood received a few lessons in drawing as a polite accomplishment: later he found great difficulty in the mechanical work of his original profession, in which of course he had been specially trained. Thus, in 1868, he wrote to his mother, ‘ It is awful how slowly I draw and how ill. Barbizon seemed to rouse in him no tendency to express himself in line or colour, and it was not till he was alone at Monastier in 1878 that he made for his own pleasure such sketches as any grown man with no technical education might attempt.

Art criticism is for the expert; I will only say that to me these sketches seem to show an excellent eye for the configuration of the country. But after this Stevenson seems to have drawn no more landscape until, his camera being lost, he tried his hand at representing some of the coast scenery in the Marquesas, and his sketch, redrawn by Mr. Charles Wyllie, gives me a very vivid impression of the scenery of an island I have never visited.

It would be very easy to overrate not merely the importance but even the interest of these blocks. Stevenson soon obtained some pear-wood, and then, after he returned to Scotland, he procured box; on this latter material the illustrations of The Graver and the Pen were cut, but their merits are impaired rather than heightened by the improved technique.

That Stevenson had an eye for country, as I have said, for clouds, for water, and for the action of the human figure, the cuts are a clear proof. The most ridiculous of his puppets are full of life, from the ‘industrious pirate’ with his spyglass, to Robin ‘who has that Abbot stuck as the red hunter spears the buck.’ One and all, they show in their rough state a touch full of spirit and original quality, that teaching might have refined away.1

In April again the family quitted the Alps, but this year with welcome news. ‘ We now leave Davos for good, I trust, Dr. Ruedi giving me leave to live in France, fifteen miles as the crow flies from the sea, and if possible near a fir wood. This is a great blessing: I hope I am grateful.'

They crossed the Channel with little delay; Louis stayed first at Weybridge, and then at Burford Bridge, where he renewed his friendship with Mr. George Meredith. By May 20th he was in Edinburgh, and there spent most of June, though he made a week's expedition with his father to Lochearnhead, hard by the Braes of Balquhidder. Here he made inquiries about 1 The Studio, Winter number, 1896-97. Robert Louis Stevenson, Illustrator. By Joseph Pennell. With twelve illustrations.

the Appin murder, perpetrated only forty miles away, and was successful in finding some local traditions about the murderer still extant.[1]

The flow of work at the beginning of the year was followed by a long period of unproductiveness after he returned to this country. He had an article in each number of the Cornhill from April to August, but except the second part of 'Talk and Talkers' these had been written at Davos. After this his connection with the magazine came to an end. During the past seven years its readers had grown accustomed to look eagerly every month in hope of finding an article by R. L. S., and all its rivals have, by comparison, ever since seemed conventional and dull. Mr. Leslie Stephen resigned the editorship in 1883 to the late James Payn, who was no less a friend of Stevenson and an admirer of his work, but the price of the magazine was reduced and its character somewhat modified. In August the New Arabian Nights, long withheld by the advice of an experienced publisher, were issued in two volumes by Messrs. Chatto and Windus, and reached a second edition before the end of the year.

On June 26th the family went to the manse of Stobo in Peeblesshire for the summer. But the weather was bad, the house shut in by trees, and the result most unbeneficial. In a fortnight Louis was ordered away, went to London to consult Dr. Andrew Clark, and in accordance with his advice started on July 22nd for Speyside in the company of Mr. Colvin. The rest of the family soon joined him at Kingussie, and here again by a burn — ' the golden burn that pours and sulks,'[2] he spent the last entire month he ever passed in Scotland. Having gone to France to write about Edinburgh, in the Highlands he turned again to France, and now wrote most of the Treasure of Franchard. The weather 1 Introduction to Kidnapped.

2 Memories and Portraits, p. 145.

again did its worst; he had an invitation to meet Cluny Macpherson, and was eagerly looking forward to a talk about the Highlands. But a hemorrhage intervened, Stevenson had to leave in haste, and by September 9th he was in London, again asking the advice of Dr. Clark.

The opinion was so far favourable that there was no need to return to Davos, which disagreed with Mrs. Stevenson, and of which they were both heartily tired. They were thus at liberty to seek a home in some more congenial spot.

CHAPTER X

THE RIVIERA — 1882-84

‘ Happy (said I), I was only happy once, that was at Hy&res; it came to end from a variety of reasons, decline of health, change of place, increase of money, age with his stealing steps; since then, as before then, I know not what it means.’ — Vailima Letters, p. 53.

Accordingly about the middle of September Stevenson started for the south of France, and since he was unfit to go alone, and his wife was too ill to undertake the journey, he started in the charge and company of his cousin, R. A. M. Stevenson. Their object was to discover some place suitable for both husband and wife, possessing more of the advantages of a town and fewer of the drawbacks of a health-resort than the Alpine valley from which they were now finally released. Paris was left without delay, and Montpellier was next tried and rejected, but not until Louis had a slight hemorrhage. He wrote to his wife: ‘ I spent a very pleasant afternoon in the doctor’s consulting-room among the curious, meridional peasants, who quarrelled and told their complaints. I made myself very popular there, I don’t know how.’

His companion had to return home, and Louis made his way to Marseilles, where, a few days later, on October nth, he was joined by his wife.

No time was wasted; within three days a house that seemed all they could desire was found and taken. It was a commodious maison de campagne with a large garden, situated about five miles from Marseilles, with such facilities of communication with the city as a considerable suburb ensures. * In a lovely spot, among lovely wooded and cliffy hills — most mountainous in line — far lovelier to my eyes than any Alps.’

In another week they were installed in Campagne Defli, and had sent for such property as they needed. Here they proposed to make their home for several years. ‘The tragic folly of my summers is at an end for me,’ Louis wrote; ‘twice have I gone home and escaped with a flea in my ear; the third or fourth time I should leave my bones with a general verdict of “sarve him right for a fool.”‘ ‘The white cliffs of Albion shall not see me,’ he wrote in January; ‘ I am sick of relapsing; I want to get well.’ ‘ As for my living in England, three years hence will be early enough to talk of it.’

But whether the house or the neighbourhood or the season was unhealthy, St. Marcel proved a most unfortunate choice. Stevenson was never well there, and never for more than three or four days at a time capable of any work. He had several slight hemorrhages and mended very slowly. By Christmas he wrote: ‘ I had to give up wood-engraving, chess, latterly even Patience, and could read almost nothing but newspapers. It was dull but necessary. I seem hopelessly hidebound, as you see; nothing comes out of me but chips.’

At the end of the year an epidemic of fever broke out in St. Marcel, and he found himself so unwell, that in desperation he went to Nice lest he should become too ill to move. They were unprepared for the move, and his wife stayed behind until they could obtain further supplies. In the meantime telegrams and letters went astray, and at the end of a week Mrs. Stevenson arrived at Nice quite distraught. She had received no news whatever of her husband, having telegraphed in all directions for three days in vain, and had been assured by every one that he must have had a fresh hemorrhage, have left the train at some wayside station, and there died and been buried.

In the meantime all went well, but it was obviously impossible for Stevenson to think of returning to St. Marcel; by the middle of February they got the Campagne Defli off their hands, and were at liberty to seek a fresh settlement. They thought of Geneva, but, after a short visit to Marseilles, they went to a hotel at Hy&res, and there by the end of March were once more established in a house of their own — Chalet La Solitude. It was situated just above the town, on a slope of the hill on which the castle stands, commanding a view of Les Oiseaux and the lies d’Or; a cottage scarce as large as the Davos chalet,’ with a garden like a fairy-story and a view like a classical landscape.’

Here for a year, or, to be strictly accurate, for a little more than nine months, Stevenson was to find happiness, a greater happiness than ever came to him again, except perhaps at moments in his exile. Hardly anything seemed wanting; his wife was always able to be with him, and he had besides the company of his stepson, in which he delighted. There was the affectionate intercourse with his parents, clouded only by the gradual failure in his father’s spirits; there was the correspondence with his friends; already in March he had been able to welcome Mr. Colvin as the first of his visitors; and, not least, he found a measure of health once more and a renewed capacity for employing his increased skill.

Of the first of these elements in his happiness he wrote to his mother in 1884: ‘My wife is in pretty good feather; I love her better than ever and admire her more; and I cannot think what I have done to deserve so good a gift. This sudden remark came out of my pen; it is not like me; but in case you did not know, I may as well tell you, that my marriage has been the most successful in the world. I say so, and being the child of my parents, I can speak with knowledge. She is everything to me: wife, brother, sister, daughter and dear companion; and I would not change to get a goddess or a saint. So far, after four years of matrimony/ And of his delight in his surroundings he said in 1883: ‘This house and garden of ours still seem to go between us and our wits.’ Their material comfort was further increased in May when Valentine Roch entered their service, an extremely clever and capable French girl, who remained with them for six years, and even accompanied them on their first cruise in the Pacific.

For a period of nearly eight months he had been unable to earn any money or to carry any work to a conclusion, and it was therefore with the greatest delight that in the beginning of May he received an offer from Messrs. Cassell for the book-rights of Treasure Island. 1 How much do you suppose? I believe it would be an excellent jest to keep the answer till my next letter. For two cents I would do so. Shall I? Anyway I ‘11 turn the page first. No — well, a hundred pounds, all alive, O! A hundred jingling, tingling, golden, minted quid. Is not this wonderful?’ . . „ ‘ It is dreadful to be a great, big man, and not to be able to buy bread.’

Already, before he reached La Solitude, his enforced leisure had come to an end. Verse writing with him was almost always a resource of illness or of convalescence, and he now took advantage of his recovery to increase the poems of childhood (for which his first name was Penny Whistles), until they amounted to some eight-and- forty numbers. Now also in answer to an application from Mr. Gilder, the editor of the Century Magazine, the Silverado Squatters was finished and despatched to New York, and so began his first important connection with any of the American publishers who were afterwards to prove so lucrative to him. Of course, like others, he had suffered at the hands of persons who had not only appropriated his books without licence, but even, a less usual outrage, had wantonly misspelt his name. £ I saw my name advertised in a number of the Critic as the work of one R. L. Stephenson; and, I own, I boiled. It is so easy to know the name of the man whose book you have stolen; for there it is, at full length, on the title-page of your booty. But no, damn him, not he! He calls me Stephenson.’1

The ground was now clear before him, and on April 10th he set to work once more from the beginning upon Prince Otto, which he had left untouched for three years. Ten days later he wrote: ‘ I am up to the waist in a story; a kind of one volume novel; how do they ever puff them out into three? Lots of things happen in this thing of mine, and one volume will swallow it without a strain.’ At first all went swimmingly. By May 5th — in five-and-twenty days — he had drafted fifteen chapters. But there was a stumbling-block in his path — he had yet to reckon with his women characters. When he came to the scenes where the intervention of the Countess von Rosen is described, his resources were taxed to their utmost, and when the battle went against him, he renewed his attack again and again. No less than seven times was the fifteenth chapter now rewritten, and it was only the eighth version which finally was suffered to pass.

On May 26th, in answer to Mr. Henderson's application for another story, he began the Black Arrow, and the first six chapters seem to have been finished in as many days. Eight years before, in studying the fifteenth century, he had read the Paston Letters, and mainly from this material he now constructed a style and story which he thought would please the public for whom he was writing, though to his friends he announced it with cynicism and described the work as ‘ Tushery.’ On June 30th the first number of the tale appeared in Young Folks; for the next four months it continued with perfect regularity, and it was probably the one of its author's works which suffered most from the demands of periodical publication. In June he went for a week to Marseilles, and on July ist left for Royat, and by these moves being separated from the instalments of his proof-sheets, he had at one time, according to his own account in later days, actually forgotten what had last happened to several of his principal characters. This, however, did not affect the popularity of the story, which, published like Treasure Island under the signature of 4 Captain George North/ had a vogue far beyond that of its predecessor, even raising the circulation of its paper by many hundreds of copies a week during its appearance.[1]

The visit to Royat was most successful, as his parents joined the party and there spent several weeks, but early in September Louis and his wife were back at La Solitude. Treasure Island had been prepared for press, and was already in the hands of the printers with the sole exception of the chart out of which the story had grown. This, having been accidentally mislaid, had now to be reconstructed from the text, and was being drawn in the Stevensons' office in Edinburgh. In spite of what had been said about rewriting and improving the story, only a few paragraphs were altered, chiefly in the sixteenth and two following chapters, and none of the modifications were of any importance.[2]

On September 19th Stevenson heard of the death of his old friend Walter Ferrier, who had long been in bad health, but was not supposed to be in any immediate danger. The record of their friendship is contained in the essay called ‘ Old Mortality,’ which was written this winter; part of the letter has already been quoted [3] which Stevenson wrote to Mr. Henley at this time upon hearing of their common loss, a letter which is, moreover, given 1 The Academy, 3rd March 1900.

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[1] Letters, i. 293.

2 Cf. The Academy, 3rd March 1900. 3 P. 89.

at length in Mr. Colvin's collection. Hence there is no occasion to say more here than that this was the first breach death had made in the inner circle of Stevenson's friends.

That very spring he had written in a letter of consolation, ' I am like a blind man in speaking of these things, for I have never known what mourning is, and the state of my health permits me to hope that I shall carry this good fortune unbroken to the grave.' The hope was not to be fulfilled, but never again, with the exception of his father and of Fleeming Jenkin, did any loss throughout his life so nearly affect him as the death of Walter Ferrier.

At once his thoughts turned to the past, the past that was, and that which might have been; and he again took up the fragment which he had written upon ' Lay Morals' in the spring of 1879. On October 2nd he wrote to his father: —

4 This curious affair of Ferrier's death has sent me back on our relation and my past with much unavailing wonder and regret. Truly, we are led by strange paths. A feeling of that which lacked with Ferrier and me when we were lads together has put me upon a task which I hope will not be disliked by you: a sketch of some of the more obvious provinces and truths of life for the use of young men. The difficulty and delicacy of the task cannot be exaggerated. Here is a fine opportunity to pray for me: that I may lead none into evil. I am shy of it; yet remembering how easy it would have been to help my dear Walter and me, had any one gone the right way about, spurs me to attempt it. I will try to be honest, and then there can be no harm, I am assured; but I say again: a fine opportunity to pray for me. Lord, defend me from all idle conformity, to please the face of man; from all display, to catch applause; from all bias of my own evil; in the name of Christ. Amen.'

Nevertheless he made but little progress with his vol. 1. o Ethics. After a new preface addressed 'to any young man, conscious of his youth, conscious of vague powers and qualities, and fretting at the bars of life,' he reverted to his earlier manuscript, which still remains the more effective of the two drafts.

In October he received an offer from America for a book upon the islands of the Grecian Archipelago; but in consideration of the risk involved, and of the expenses of the journey, he fortunately decided not to accept the proposal.

All through the autumn his house continued to afford him fresh satisfaction. ' My address is still the same,' he writes to Mr. Low,1' and I live in a most sweet corner of the universe, sea and fine hills before me, and a rich variegated plain; and at my back a craggy hill, loaded with vast feudal ruins. I am very quiet; a person passing by my door half startles me; but I enjoy the most aromatic airs, and at night the most wonderful view into a moonlit garden. By day this garden fades into nothing, overpowered by its surroundings and the luminous distance; but at night, and when the moon is out, that garden, the arbour, the flight of stairs that mount the artificial hillock, the plumed blue gum-trees that hang trembling, become the very skirts of Paradise. Angels I know frequent it; and it thrills all night with the flutes of silence.’

This enchanting abode and the excellence of the climate were to Stevenson the chief recommendations of Hy&res, for of the residents and of the outside country he saw little or nothing, restricting himself to his own house and almost entirely to the circle of his own household. It was in the days of Fontainebleau and of the journeys that he acquired his knowledge of France and its inhabitants; to whatever use he may afterwards have turned them, his immediate surroundings for the time but seldom affected his work. And few foreigners have shown such understanding as is to be found in the stories of The Treasure of Franchard and Providence and the Guitar.

It is to this period that the reminiscence belongs, recorded in his letter to Mr. W. B. Yeats, of the spell cast upon him by Meredith’s Love in the Valley; ‘ the stanzas beginning “ When her mother tends her “ haunted me and made me drunk like wine; and I remember waking with them all the echoes of the hills about Hyeres.’[1]

He began a story called The Travelling Companion, afterwards refused by a publisher as ‘a work of genius but indecent,’ and two years later condemned by Stevenson as having 4 no urbanity and glee, and no true tragedy’; later still it was burned on the ground that’ it was not a work of genius, and fekyll had supplanted it.’ The Note on Realism was written for the Magazine of Art, and Prince Otto, by the beginning of December, was wanting only the last two chapters. And at the end of this year or the beginning of next the copyright of his first three books was bought back from the publishers by his father. The Donkey had gone into a third edition, the Voyage into a second; of the essays only nine hundred copies had been sold, and so badly were all three selling that the price was no more than a hundred pounds.

Treasure Island was published as a book in the end of November, when Stevenson obtained his first popular success. Its reception reads like a fairy-tale. Statesmen and judges and all sorts of staid and sober men became boys once more, sitting up long after bedtime to read their new book. The story goes that Mr. Gladstone got a glimpse of it

[1] Letters, i. 287.

at a colleague’s house, and spent the next day hunting over London for a second-hand copy. The editor of the Saturday Review, the superior, cynical ‘ Saturday’ of old days, wrote excitedly to say that he thought Treasure Island was the best book that had 1 Letters, ii. 324.

appeared since Robinson Crusoe; and James Payn, who, if not a great novelist himself, yet held an undisputed position among novelists and critics, sent a note hardly less enthusiastic. Mr. Andrew Lang spent over it’ several hours of unmingled bliss.’ ‘ This is the kind of stuff a fellow wants. I don’t know, except Tom Sawyer and the Odyssey, that I ever liked any romance so well.’ It was translated and pirated in all directions, appearing within a couple of years as a feuilleton even in Greek and Spanish papers. For all this, it brought Stevenson no very great emolument, for during its first twelve months no more than five thousand six hundred copies were sold.

Its author, at all events, did not lose his head or overestimate his merits. Writing to his parents he says: ‘This gives one strange thoughts of how very bad the common run of books must be; and generally all the books that the wiseacres think too bad to print are the very ones that bring me praise and pudding.’

One link with the past had snapped, one friendship had vanished, and Stevenson was looking forward all the more eagerly to seeing two of his oldest friends, Mr. Henley and Mr. Baxter, who were coming out to spend a long-promised holiday with him. Before it could begin, Prince Otto ought to be finished, and to this end he devoted all his powers. The New Year came, his friends arrived at Hyeres, and for about a week he enjoyed the delights to which he had looked forward But the house was too small for their reception, and Stevenson proposed that they should all go away together to some other place, that he might share with them the benefit of a change. Accordingly the party of four went to Nice, and there almost at once Stevenson took cold. At first it seemed slight, and his friends who were due to return home went away without thought of anxiety. The cold, however, resulted in congestion of the lungs, and suddenly the situation became grave. ‘ At a consultation of doctors,’ Mrs. Stevenson says, 11 was told there was no hope, and I had better send for some member of the family to be with me at the end. Bob Stevenson came, and I can never be grateful enough for what he did for me then. He helped me to nurse Louis, and he kept me from despair as I believe no one else could have done; he inspired me with hope when there seemed no hope.’

Very slowly he grew better; it was some time before he was out of danger, and a month before he was able to set foot outside the house; but at last they returned to La Solitude. Before his return he wrote in answer to his mother’s inquiries: * I survived, where a stronger man would not. There were never two opinions as to my immediate danger; of course it was chuck-farthing for my life. That is over, and I have only weakness to contend against. . . . Z   told me to leave off wine, to regard myself as “ an old man,” and to “ sit by my fire.” None of which I wish to do. . . . As for my general health, as for my consumption, we can learn nothing till Vidal[1] sees me, but I believe the harm is little, my lungs are so tough.’

This illness, however, marked the beginning of a new and protracted period of ill-health, which lasted with but little intermission until he had left Europe.

Miss Ferrier, his friend’s sister, came out at this time and stayed with them until their return to England, proving an unfailing support to them in their increasing troubles. For in the first week in May Stevenson was attacked with the most violent and dangerous hemorrhage he ever experienced. It occurred late at night, but in a moment his wife was by his side. Being choked with the flow of blood and unable to speak, he made signs to her for a paper and pencil, and wrote in a neat firm hand, ‘ Don’t be frightened; if this is death, it is an easy one.’ Mrs. Stevenson had always a small bottle of ergotin and a minim glass in readiness; these she brought in order to administer the prescribed quantity. Seeing her alarm, he took bottle and glass away from her, measured the dose correctly with a perfectly steady hand, and gave the things back to her with a reassuring smile.

Recovery was very slow and attended by numerous complications, less dangerous, but even more painful than the original malady. The dust of street refuse gave him Egyptian ophthalmia, and sciatica descending upon him caused him the more pain, as he was suffering already from restlessness. The hemorrhage was not yet healed, and We now hear for the first time of the injunctions to absolute silence, orders patiently obeyed, distasteful as they were. In silence and the dark, and in acute suffering, he was still cheery and undaunted. When the ophthalmia began and the doctor first announced his diagnosis, Mrs. Stevenson felt that it was more than any one could be expected to bear, and went into another room, and there, in her own phrase, ‘sat and gloomed.’ Louis rang his bell and she went to him, saying, in the bitterness of her spirit, as she entered the room,’ Well, I suppose that this is the very best thing that could have happened!’ ‘ Why, how odd!’ wrote Louis on a piece of paper,’ I was just going to say those very words.’ When darkness fell upon him and silence was imposed, and his right arm was in a sling on account of the hemorrhage, his wife used to amuse him for part of the day by making up tales, some of which they afterwards used in the Dynamiter; when these were at an end, he continued the Child’s Garden, writing down the new verses for himself in the dim light with his left hand. And at this time he wrote the best of all his poems, the ‘ Requiem’ beginning ‘ Under the wide and starry sky,’ which ten years later was to mark his grave upon the lonely hill-top in Samoa.

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[1] His own extremely clever doctor at Hyeres.

When he got a little better he wrote to his mother,’ I

do nothing but play patience and write verse, the true sign of my decadence.’ With careful nursing he began to mend. Here, as everywhere, he excited the utmost sympathy, which manifested itself sometimes in embarrassing and unexpected ways. ‘The washerwoman’s little boy brought, of all things in the world, a canary to amuse the sick gentleman! Fortunately it doesn’t sing, or it would drive the sick gentleman mad.’

Thomas Stevenson was in too precarious health even to be told of his son’s illness, but the two friends who had visited Louis at Nice in January took counsel and on their own responsibility sent their doctor from London to see what could be done, and at any rate to learn the exact condition of the patient. In a few days Mrs. Stevenson was able to write to her mother-in-law: —

May 1884.] — . . . The doctor says, “Keep him alive till he is forty, and then although a winged bird, he may live to ninety.” But between now and forty he must live as though he were walking on eggs, and for the next two years, no matter how well he feels, he must live the life of an invalid. He must be perfectly tranquil, trouble about nothing, have no shocks or surprises, not even pleasant ones; must not eat too much, drink too much, laugh too much; may write a little, but not too much; talk very little, and walk no more than can be helped.’

His recovery was steady and satisfactory; with great caution and by the aid of a courier the party made their way to Royat without mishap early in June. For a moment Stevenson turned his thoughts reluctantly towards Davos, and then wrote to his mother announcing his return to England in order to obtain a final medical opinion upon his health and prospects. The only course before him apparently was to ‘ live the life of a delicate girl’ until he was forty. But uncongenial

as this seemed, his spirits were as high as ever, and he signed the letter with a string of names worthy of Bunyan’s own invention — ’ I am, yours,

Mr. Muddler.
Mr. Addlehead.
Mr. Wandering Butterwits.
Mr. Shiftless Inconsistency.
Sir Indecision Contentment.’

The journey was safely accomplished, and Stevenson and his wife reached England on the ist of July, the day before the first representation on the London stage of Deacon Brodie.

END OF VOLUME I

VOLUME II

CHAPTER XI

BOURNEMOUTH — 1884-87

"This is the study where a smiling
God Beholds each day my stage of labour trod,
And smiles and praises, and I hear him say:
' The day is brief; be diligent in play.'"
R. L. S.

THE next three years Stevenson was to spend in England — the only time he was ever resident in this country — and then Europe was to see him no more. At first sight the chronicle of this time would seem to be more full of interest than any other period of his life. Treasure Island, his "first book," had just been given to the world; the year after his return A Child's Garden of Verses and Prince Otto were published, and Jekyll and Hyde and Kidnapped appeared in the following year. To have written almost any one of these brilliant yet widely dissimilar books would be to challenge the attention of the most distinguished contemporary men of letters; and to meet Stevenson at this time was instantly to acknowledge the quality and charm of the man and the strong fascination of his talk. For the whole of the period he made his home at Bournemouth, within easy reach of London visitors; and in London itself Mr. Colvin (who had now become Keeper of Prints at the British Museum) not only had a house always open to him, but delighted to bring together those who by their own powers were best fitted to appreciate his society.

Yet the reality is disappointing To produce brilliant writings it is not necessary at the time to live an exciting or even a very full life, and Stevenson's health deprived him more and more of the ordinary incidents which happen to most men in their daily course. Looking back on this period in after-days, he cries out: " Remember the pallid brute that lived in Skerryvore like a weevil in a biscuit." Nearly all the time which was not devoted to contending with illness was taken up with his work, and as he rarely left home without returning in a more or less disabled condition, he stayed in his own house and led the most retired of lives. Even there it was no uncommon experience for a visitor who had come to Bournemouth specially to see him to find himself put to the door, either on the ground of having a cold, to the contagion of which it was unsafe for Stevenson to be exposed, or because his host was already too ill to receive him.

But this is to anticipate matters. On his return from Royat he was unable to be present at the matinee on July 2nd, at the Prince's Theatre,1 when the Deacon was played by Mr. Henley's brother. The play had been given at Bradford eighteen months before, and during the summer of 1883 had been acted by a travelling company some forty times in Scotland and the North of England without any marked success. It was in the gallery of one of the houses where it was performed that the complaint was heard during the performance of another piece: " A dunna what's coom to Thayter Royal. Thar's been na good moorder there for last six months and the Deacon's fate may not have 1 Now the Prince of Wales' Theatre.

been up to the usual standard. The play was now received in London with interest, and regarded as full of promise by critics who knew better what to expect of it, but the lack of stage experience told against it, and it has not been revived in this country.

Having passed a few days in a hotel at Richmond, Stevenson and his wife went down to Bournemouth, where Lloyd Osbourne had for some months past been at school. After staying at a hotel, and trying first one and then another set of lodgings on the West Cliff, at the end of October they migrated into a furnished house in Branksome Park. The doctors whom he consulted were equally divided in their opinions, two saying it would be safe for him to stay in this country, while two advised him to go abroad; and in the end he yielded only to the desire to be near his father, who, though still at work, was evidently failing fast.

Meanwhile the first two months at Bournemouth were spent chiefly in the company of Mr. Henley, and were devoted to collaboration over two new plays. The reception of Deacon Brodie had been sufficiently promising to serve as an incentive to write a piece which should be a complete success, and so to grasp some of the rewards which now seemed within reach of the authors. They had never affected to disregard the fact that in this country the prizes of the dramatist are out of all proportion to the payment of the man of letters, and already in 1883 Stevenson had written to his father: "The theatre is the gold-mine; and on that I must keep an eye." Now that they were again able to meet, and to be constantly together, the friends embarked upon some of the schemes they had projected long ago, and no doubt had talked over at Nice at the beginning of the year. By October the drafts of Beau Austin and Admiral Guinea1 were completed and set up in type; and in the following spring, at the suggestion of Mr. Beerbohm Tree, the two collaborators again set to work and produced their English version of Macaire.

These were to have been but the beginning of their labours, but more necessary work intervened, and the plays were never resumed.2

It may be convenient here to round off the history of Stevenson's dramatic writings: early in 1887 he helped his wife with a play, Tbe Hanging Judge, which was not completed at the time and has never yet been printed. Except for an unfinished fragment, intended for home representation at Vailima, he never again turned his hand to any work for the stage. Beau Austin was produced at the Haymarket Theatre in 1890, Admiral Guinea and Macaire have since been performed, and all the plays written in partnership with Mr. Henley have thus been seen upon the stage, though 1 Letters, ii. 362.

2 A list in Stevenson's writing shows some of their projects at the time, though it is certain that these had not been worked out, and we may doubt whether they would ever have been seriously considered. " Farmer George" was to have covered the whole reign of George the Third, ending with a scene in which the mad king recovered for a while his reason: —

Deacon Brodie: Drama in Four Acts and Ten Tableaux.

Beau Austin: Play in Four Acts.

Admiral Guinea: Melodrama in Four Acts.

Honour and Arms: Drama in Three Acts and Five Tableaux.

The King of Clubs: Drama in Four Acts. none of them have kept it. The want of practical stage-craft may partly be to blame, and it must be remembered that Stevenson, at any rate, had not been inside a theatre since his return from America; but their chief interest lies in their literary quality, and it is to be feared that Mr. Archer was premature in his declaration that the production of Beau Austin showed triumphantly that "the aroma of literature can be brought over the footlights with stimulating and exhilarating effect."1

As soon as the two finished plays were laid aside, husband and wife began to put together the second series of New Arabian Nigbts from the stories which Mrs. Stevenson had made up to while away the hours of illness at Hyeres. Stevenson wrote the passages relating to Prince Florizel and collaborated in the remainder; but the only complete story of his invention in the book was " The Explosive Bomb ": by which he designed " to make dynamite ridiculous, if he could not make it horrible." Meanwhile, on receiving an application from the pro-

Pepys' Diary: Comedy.

The Admirable Crichton: Romantic Comedy in Five Acts.

Ajax: Drama in Four Acts.

The Passing of Vanderdecken: (Legend!) in Four Acts.

Farmer George: Historical Play in Five Acts.

The Gunpowder Plot: Historical Play in Marcus Aurelius: Historical Play The Atheists: Comedy.

The Mother-in-Law: Drama.

Madam Fate: Drama in a Prologue and Four Acts.

Madam Destiny: 1 The World, 12th November, 1890. prietor of the Pall Mall Gazette for a Christmas story, he attempted to produce a new tale for the occasion. It proved, however, what, in the slang of the studio, he called a "machine," and "Markheim," which was now ready, being too short, as a last resource he bethought himself of "The Body Snatcher," one of the "tales of horror" written at Pitlochry in 1881, and then "laid aside in a justifiable disgust." It was not one of his greater achievements, and would probably have excited little comment, had it not been for the gruesome and unauthorized methods of advertisement.

Soon afterwards he successfully concluded negotiations for a Life of the Duke of Wellington, which he was commissioned to write for the series of "English Worthies," edited by Mr. Andrew Lang. The military genius of the strategist had long dazzled Stevenson, who had also been deeply fascinated by the study of his character. I will not say that to him the man who wrote the Letters to Miss J. was as remarkable as the victor of Waterloo, but it is certain that the great soldier became twice as interesting on account of that marvellous correspondence. According to Mr. Gosse, special emphasis was to be given to the humour of Wellington, and certainly the biography was by no means to be restricted to his military career. Three years before, Stevenson had written to his father about a book on George the Fourth, perhaps the Greville Memoirs: " What a picture of Hell! Yet the punishment of the end seemed more, if possible, than he had deserved. Iron-handed Wellington crushing him in his fingers; contempt, insult, disease, terror — what a haunted, despicable scene!" The book, however, although it was in Stevenson's mind for several years and was advertised as " in preparation," was never written, or, so far as I know, even begun. Not the least interesting part of the whole story is the picture of Stevenson sitting down to address a letter of inquiries to Mr. Gladstone, for whose political career he had always the most complete aversion, and finding himself, somewhat to his dismay, overcome with an involuntary reverence for the statesman who embodied so much of England's past.

Casting about for a new story, he turned in February to the highroad, that to him and to his father before him had for long been one of the richest fields of romance. When, to his delight, he had first found his powers of narrative in Treasure Island, and discovered what possibilities May before him of writing for boys the kind of stories he liked himself, he announced with glee to Mr. Henley that his next book was to be "Jerry Abershaw: A Tale of Putney Heath."1 He was also to write "The Squaw Men: or, The Wild West," and of this one chapter was actually drafted. The new venture was, however, called "The Great North Road," but, like St. Ives in later days, it rapidly increased in proportions and in difficulty of management. So at the end of the eighth chapter it was relinquished for Kidnapped and apparently dropped out of sight. Already in its beginnings it showed an increase of skill in dealing with Nance Holdaway, who foreshadowed other heroines yet to come.

By the end of January so successful had the winter 1 Letters, i. 223. Cf. “ A Gossip on Romance.” been that Thomas Stevenson bought a house at Bournemouth as a present for his daughter-in-law. Its name was forthwith changed to Skerryvore, in commemoration of the most difficult and beautiful of all the lighthouses erected by the family.1 It was no great distance from where they were already living: a modern brick house, closely covered with ivy; and from the top windows it was possible to catch a glimpse of the sea. There was half an acre of ground, very charmingly arranged, running down from the lawn at the back, past a bank of heather, into a chine or small ravine full of rhododendrons, and at the bottom a tiny stream.

Mrs. Stevenson at once started off for Hyeres, whence she returned with their books and other belongings. The new house, however, was not ready for their occupation until the end of April, and when the move was made, to no one did it bring greater satisfaction than to Stevenson.

Wanderer as he was, and still gave the impression of being, he entered into his new property with a keenness of delight that must have amused those of his friends who remembered his former disparagement of all household possessions.2 “Our drawing-room is now a place so beautiful that it’s like eating to sit in it. No other room is so lovely in the world; there I sit like an old Irish beggarman’s cast-off bauchle in a palace throne-room. Incongruity never went so far; I blush for the figure I cut in such a bower.”

The large dovecot is commemorated in Underwoods; the garden was an endless pleasure to Mrs. Stevenson, , 1 See vol. i. p. n. 2 Vol. i. p. 176. and having long been the domain of “ Boguey “ in his lifetime, became at last his resting-place. Having been sent to hospital to recover from wounds received in battle, he broke loose, in his maimed state attacked another dog more powerful than himself, and so perished. His master and mistress were inconsolable, and never, even in Samoa, could bring themselves to allow any successor.

I have already referred to the easy access to Bournemouth, which was, of course, a prime consideration with his parents. But Stevenson’s friends had seen little of him for several years past, so in this also there was a welcome change from Hyeres. Nearly all the old and tried companions whom I have mentioned came to Skerryvore during these years: R. A. M. Stevenson and his wife, and his sister, Mrs. de Mattos, and her children; Miss Ferrier, Mr. Baxter, Professor Jenkin and Mrs. Jenkin, Mr. Colvin, and Mr. Henley all paid more or less frequent visits. Among the newcomers were Mr. Sargent, who twice came to paint his host’s portrait; Mr. James Sully, an old friend at the Savile

Club; Mr. William Archer, who owed his first coming to his severe but inspiring analysis of Stevenson, and remained as one of the most valued of his critics and appreciative of his friends; and last and most welcome of the admissions into the inmost circle, his very dear friend, Mr. Henry James.

One of the most frequent visitors was R. A. M. Stevenson, who had, after some time, decided to give up the thankless task of producing pictures for the public which were not those he wanted to paint, and to use his technical knowledge and matchless powers of exposition in the criticism of art. That other art of writing, however, which Louis had spent his life in learning, could not be mastered in a day for the purposes of journalism even by so brilliant a talker as Bob, and it fell to Louis and Mr. Henley to give him many hints and put him through an apprenticeship in the technical part of the new profession in which he so rapidly made his mark.

Nor were the residents of Bournemouth to be overlooked, although (besides Dr. Scott, to whom Underwoods was chiefly dedicated, and Mrs. Boodle and her daughter, the "Gamekeeper" of the Letters) close friendship was confined to two families — Sir Henry Taylor and his wife and daughters, and Sir Percy and Lady Shelley. Sir Percy, the son of the poet, was devoted to yachting and the theatre (especially melodrama), and his genial, kindly nature, in which shrewdness and simplicity were most attractively blended, endeared him to his new as to all his old friends, while Lady Shelley, no less warm-hearted, took the greatest fancy to Louis, and discovering in him a close likeness to her renowned father-in-law, she forthwith claimed him as her son.

But it was the Taylors with whom he lived in more intimate relations in spite of the impression he seems here again to have produced of a being wholly transitory and detached, a bird of passage resting in his flight from some strange source to regions yet more unknown. Sir Henry indeed died almost before the friendship had commenced, but Lady Taylor and her daughters continued to live at Bournemouth until long after Skerryvore was transferred to other hands. But before Sir Henry Taylor passed away, Stevenson had suffered a more unexpected and a heavier blow in the death of his friend Fleeming Jenkin on June 12th, 1885. Only once again in his life was he to lose one very near to him, and the subsequent task of writing his friend's life not only raised his great admiration, but even deepened the regret for his loss.

To some of his friends in these days, and chiefly to Miss Una Taylor, Mrs. Jenkin, Mr. Henley, and his cousin Bob, he owed the revival of his interest in music, which now laid greater hold upon him than ever before. He began to learn the piano, though he never reached even a moderate degree of skill; he flung himself with the greatest zeal into the mysteries of composition, # wherein it is but honest to say that he failed to master the rudiments. “ Books are of no use,” he says; “ they tell you how to write in four parts, and that cannot be done by man. Or do you know a book that really tells a fellow? I suppose people are expected to have ears. To my ear a fourth is delicious, and consecutive fifths the music of the spheres. As for hidden fifths, those who pretend to dislike ‘em I can never acquit of affectation. Besides (this in your ear) there is nothing else in music; I know; I have tried to write four parts.”

His delight and eagerness were enhanced rather than decreased by difficulties, and in a period of his life when nearly all pleasures were taken away from him, he was able at least to sit at the piano and create for the ear of his imagination some of the heavenly joys it is the prerogative of music to bestow. •

Besides enjoying the company of his friends, he made good use of his few other opportunities. Since at Bournemouth his health hardly ever allowed him to pass beyond the gate of Skerryvore, the chance seldom presented itself to him of meeting men of any other class whose lives lay outside his own, but those who fell in his way received unusual attention at his hands, more especially if they possessed originality or any independence of character. Thus, the barber that came to cut his hair, the picture-framer, the “vet” who attended “ Boguey,” each in their different way were originals to a man whose life was so secluded; their coming was welcomed, they invariably stayed to meals, and, sooner or later, told the story of their lives.

Such was his own life, and such were his surround- 4 ings at this period; and yet to leave the picture without a word of warning would be wholly to misrepresent Stevenson. A popular novelist, toiling incessantly at his writing, and confined by ill-health almost entirely within the walls of a suburban villa at an English watering-place, is about as dreary a figure as could be formed from the facts. The details are as accurate as if they were in a realistic novel, and yet the essence is wholly untrue to life. It is necessary to insist again and again on the “ spirit intense and rare,” the courage, the vivacity, the restless intellect ever forming new schemes with unceasing profusion. There are people who might live a life of the wildest adventure, of the most picturesque diversity, and yet be dull. Stevenson could lie in a sick-room for weeks without speaking, and yet declare truly, as he asserted to Mr. Archer, “ I never was bored in my life.” When everything else failed, and he was entirely incapable of work, he would build card-houses, or lie in bed modelling small figures of wax or clay, taking the keenest interest in either process. On being told that a friend of his “ has fallen in love with stagnation,” from his invalid chair he protests that the dream of his life is to be “ the leader of a great horde of irregular cavalry,” and his favourite attitude “turning in the saddle to look back at my whole command (some five thousand strong) following me at the hand-gallop up the road out of the burning valley by moonlight.”1 In him at least the romantic daydream called out as completely the splendid virtues of courage and enterprise and resolution as he could ever have displayed them on the field of battle.

Illness and anxiety had, as he afterwards said, put an end to the happiness of Hyeres, but he was maintaining the unequal fight with much of the spirit and gaiety that he always showed; his sufferings did not dull the kindliness and sympathy which largely formed the fascination of his character, unique, perhaps, in being at once so lovable and so brilliant.

In the meantime he was hard at work. His interest in all questions relating to the methods of literature was unfailing. A lecture from Sir Walter Besant and an answer by Mr. Henry James brought Stevenson in his turn into the pages of Longman’s Magazine for December, 1884. In “ A Humble Remonstrance “ he urged the paramount claims of the “ story “ in fiction, and dwelt on the problems involved for the student of method. Several months later he followed this up by a most inspiring but more strictly professional disquisition on “The Technical Elements of Style,” “the work of five days in bed,” which appeared in the Contemporary 1 Letters, i. 311. Review for April. At the time it was ill received and generally misunderstood: it is, however, the result of long and close study, and is a singularly suggestive inquiry into a subject which has been considered too vague and difficult for analysis, at any rate since the days of the classical writers on rhetoric, whom Stevenson had never read. He continued to meditate and to develop his ideas, and during 1886 had even planned a course of lectures to be delivered in London to students of his art. So full of the subject was he that when this project was peremptorily forbidden by the doctors, he could not rest until he found a pupil to whom he could disburden himself of the ideas with which he was overflowing.

In March, 1885, A Child’s Garden of Verses was published at last, after having been set up twice in proof. In April Prince Otto began to run in Longman’s Magazine, coming out as a book in October, and by May More New Arabian Nights appeared. Soon after the issue of Prince Otto, Stevenson wrote to Mr. Henley: “ 1 had yesterday a letter from George Meredith, which was one of the events of my life. He cottoned (for one thing), though with differences, to Otto; cottoned more than my rosiest visions had inspired me to hope; said things that (from him) 1 would blush to quote.” Mr. Meredith’s letter unfortunately has disappeared, but in another from the same source there occur these words: “ I have read pieces of Prince Otto, admiring the royal manner of your cutting away of the novelist’s lumber.

Straight to matter is the secret. Also approvingly your article on style."

Still, with all this production, and with praise from so high a quarter, it must not be supposed that Stevenson's writing as yet brought in any very extravagant payment. His professional income for this year, in point of fact, was exactly the same as that which he had averaged for the three years preceding, and amounted to less than four hundred pounds. Nor were his receipts materially increased before he reached America.

A subject much in his thoughts at this time was the duality of man's nature and the alternation of good and evil; and he was for a long while casting about for a story to embody this central idea. Out of this frame of mind had come the sombre imagination of " Mark- heim," but that was not what he required. The true story still delayed, till suddenly one night he had a dream. He awoke, and found himself in possession of two, or rather three, of the scenes in The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Its waking existence, however, was by no mear.. without incident. He dreamed these scenes in considerable detail, including the circumstance of the transforming powders, and so vivid was the impression that he wrote the story off at a red heat, just as it had presented itself to him in his sleep.

"In the small hours of one morning," says Mrs. Stevenson, " I was awakened by cries of horror from Louis. Thinking he had a nightmare, I awakened him. He said angrily: ' Why did you wake me? I was dreaming a fine bogey tale.' I had awakened him at the first transformation scene."

Mr. Osbourne writes: " I don't believe that there was ever such a literary feat before as the writing of Dr. JehylL I remember the first reading as though it were yesterday. Louis came downstairs in a fever; read nearly half the book aloud; and then, while we were still gasping, he was away again, and busy writing. I doubt if the first draft took so long as three days."

He had lately had a hemorrhage, and was strictly forbidden all discussion or excitement. No doubt the reading aloud was contrary to the doctor's orders; at any rate Mrs. Stevenson, according to the custom then in force, wrote her detailed criticism of the story as it then stood, pointing out her chief objection — that it was really an allegory, whereas he had treated it purely as if it were a story. In the first draft Jekyll's nature was bad all through, and the Hyde change was worked only for the sake of a disguise. She gave the paper to her husband and left the room. After a while his bell rang; on her return she found him sitting up in bed (the clinical thermometer in his mouth), pointing with a long denunciatory finger to a pile of ashes. He had burned the entire draft. Having realised that he had taken the wrong point of view, that the tale was an allegory and not another “Markheim,” he at once destroyed his manuscript, acting not out of pique, but from a fear that he might be tempted to make too much use of it, and not rewrite the whole from a new standpoint.

It was written again in three days (“ I drive on with Jekyll: bankruptcy at my heels “); but the fear of losing the story altogether prevented much further criticism. The powder was condemned as too material an agency, but this he could not eliminate, because in the dream it had made so strong an impression upon him.

“The mere physical feat,” Mr. Osbourne continues, “was tremendous; and instead of harming him, it roused and cheered him inexpressibly.” Of course it must not be supposed that these three days represent all the time that Stevenson spent upon the story, for after this he was working hard for a month or six weeks in bringing it into its present form.

The manuscript was then offered to Messrs. Longmans for their magazine; and on their judgment the decision was taken not to break it up into monthly sections, but to issue it as a shilling book in paper covers. The chief drawbacks of this plan to the author were the loss of immediate payment and the risk of total failure, but these were generously met by an advance payment from the publishers on account of royalties. “The little book was printed,” says Mr. Charles Longman, “ but when it was ready the bookstalls were already full of Christmas numbers, etc., and the trade would [not look at it. We therefore withdrew it till after Christmas. In January it was launched — not without difficulty. The trade did not feel inclined to take it up, till a review appeared in the Times[1] calling attention to the story. This gave it a start, and in the next six months close on forty thousand copies were sold in this country alone.” Besides the authorised edition in America, the book was widely pirated, and probably not less than a quarter of a million copies in all have been sold in the United States.

Its success was probably due rather to the moral instincts of the public than to any conscious perception of the merits of its art. It was read by those who never read fiction, it was quoted in pulpits, and made the subject of leading articles in religious newspapers. But the praise, though general, was not always according to knowledge, as, for example, in one panegyric, which lauded “ a new writer, following in some detail, perhaps more of style than matter, the much regretted Hugh Conway.” Yet even this criticism by no means represents the extreme range of its circulation.

But as literature also it was justly received with enthusiasm. Even Symonds, though he doubted “ whether any one had the right so to scrutinise the abysmal depths of personality,” admitted, “The art is

[1] The Times, January 25th, 1886.

burning and intense”; and the cry of horror and pain which he raised was in another sense a tribute to its success. “ How had you the ilia dura ferro et cere triplici duri- ora to write Dr. Jekyll? I know now what was meant when you were called a sprite.”[1]

In his “ Chapter on Dreams,” Stevenson has told his readers how the “ brownies “ suddenly became useful in providing him with stories for his books, but in spite of this statement it appears that besides Jekyll and Hyde there is only one other plot thus furnished which he ever actually completed. This was “ Olalla,” which appeared in the Christmas number of the Court and Society Review; in connection with it there arises an interesting point — an apparent plagiarism from the Strange Story by Lord Lytton. In either tale a squirrel is caught in the boughs of a tree by a semi-human youth and is shortly afterwards killed. It is true that Margrave slays the animal in revenge for a bite, whereas Stevenson’s Felipe deliberately tortures the innocent creature, but the 1 John Addington Symonds: a Biography. By Horatio F. Brown. London, Nimmo, 1895.

agility and the lack of humanity are the gist of both episodes. Beside the account in “ Dreams “ must be set Stevenson’s own statement that his invention of Felipe was in part deliberate,[1] and it is impossible now to say whether (if the resemblance was more than accidental) the incident came back into the author’s mind in his sleep or in his waking hours.

With the general result he was never well satisfied. To Lady Taylor he wrote: “The trouble with ‘Olalla’ is, that it somehow sounds false. . . . The odd problem is: What makes a story true? ‘ Markheim’ is true; ‘Olalla’ false; and I don’t know why, nor did I feel it while 1 worked at them; indeed I had more inspiration with ‘Olalla,’ as the style shows. I am glad you thought that young Spanish woman well dressed; 1 admire the style of it myself, more than is perhaps good for me; it is so solidly written. And that again brings back (almost with the voice of despair) my unanswerable: Why is it false?”

Kidnapped was begun in March, 1885, as another story for boys, and with as little premeditation as afterwards sufficed for its sequel. But when once the hero had been started upon his voyage, the tale was laid aside and not resumed until the following January, just after the publication of Jekyll and Hyde. No greater contrast can be imagined than the strong, healthy, open-air life of the new book and the dark fancies of the allegory which preceded it. Though the former was the product of his waking hours, it was no less spontaneous than a dream.

“In one of my books, and in one only, the characters 1 In the South Seas, p. 353. took the bit in their teeth; all at once, they became detached from the flat paper, they turned their backs on me and walked off bodily; and from that time my task was stenographic — it was they who spoke, it was they who wrote the remainder of the story."[1]

But within two months Stevenson began to flag, and not long after a visit for his father's sake to Matlock, where he had made small progress with the writing, he decided, at Mr. Colvin's suggestion, to break off with David's return to Edinburgh and leave the tale half told. Mr. Henderson gladly accepted the story for Young Folks, where it ran under Stevenson's own name from May to July, and was then published by Messrs. Cassell & Co.

It was dedicated to Mr. Baxter, whose permission was asked in a letter indicating its character and showing its author's capacity in dialect, if he had ever had a mind to let it run riot in his pages. " It's Sc&tch, sir: no strong, for the sake o' thae pock-puddens, but jist a kitchen o't, to leaven the wersh, sapless, fushionless, stotty, stytering South Scotch they think sae muckle o'."

The whole took him, as he said, "probably five months' actual working; one of these months entirely over the last chapters, which had to be put together without interest or inspiration, almost word for word, for I was entirely worked out." But as a whole, the author thought it the best and most human work he had yet done, and its success was immediate with all readers. To mention two instances only: — Matthew Arnold, who apparently knew Stevenson's work little, if at all, before this, was at once filled with delight, and we are told that it was the last book Lord Iddesleigh was able to read with pleasure — " a volume," continues Mr. Lang, " containing more of the spirit of Scott than any other in English fiction."

The elder Stevenson had for several years, as we have seen, been declining in health and spirits, and the shadows began to close about his path. In 1885 he gradually reduced the amount of his work, though he still continued his practice, and could not altogether refuse the solicitations he received to appear as a scientific witness before Parliamentary Committees.

The tenderness of the relation between father and son now became pathetic in the extreme. As the old man's powers began to fail, he would speak to Louis as though he were still a child. When they went to the theatre together, and Louis stood up in his place, the father put his arm round him, saying: "Take care, my dearie, you might fall." At night, as he kissed his son, he would say reassuringly: " You 'll see me in the morning, dearie." " It was," says his daughter-in-law, " just like a mother with a young child."

It was chiefly in the summers and autumns that Louis left Bournemouth, but even then he rarely travelled any distance or was absent for any length of time. In 1885 he went to London in June, and then accompanied his wife on a last visit to Cambridge, to stay with Mr. Colvin, who was now resigning his professorship. In August he started for Dartmoor, but after meeting Mr. Thomas Hardy and his wife at Dorchester, was laid up with a violent hemorrhage at Exeter, in the hotel, and was compelled to remain there for several weeks before he was able to return home. In the following year he went to town in June, and again in August, the latter time extending his journey to Paris in the company of his wife and Mr. Henley, to see their friends Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Low, then, after a long interval, revisiting France for the first time.

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[1] Scribner's Magazine, 1888, p. 764.

Meeting once more in their early haunts, the old friends revived many memories. One trivial reminiscence of this occasion is yet so characteristic of Stevenson, and so illustrates the working of his mind, that it may find a place here. The two friends, painter and writer, both possessing a fine palate for certain wines, had always laughed at one another's pretensions to such taste. In 1875 or 1876, soon after Mr. Low's marriage, he and his wife had gone to dine with Stevenson at the Musee de Cluny in the Boulevard St. Michel. Mr. Low hesitating for a moment in his choice of a wine, Stevenson turned to Mrs. Low, and on the spot made up and elaborately embellished a story of how her husband had once gone with him to dine at a restaurant, and had tasted and rejected every vintage the establishment was able to offer. At last — so the tale ran — the proprietor confessed that there was one bottle even finer in his cellar, which had lain there forty years, but that he was ready to give it up to such a master, although it was like surrendering a part of his life. A procession was formed, first the proprietor, then the cellarman, then the waiters of the establishment, and they all went down to the cellar to get the famous bottle. Back they came in the same order with the priceless treasure borne tenderly in the arms of the cellarman, a man with a long beard down to his waist, who had been so much in the cellar that the light made him blink. Slowly and rev- erently they approached the table, and then they all sighed. The bottle was deliberately and ceremoniously uncorked, and the wine poured into small glasses, while the waiters looked on with breathless reverence. The two connoisseurs touched glasses and slowly carried them to their lips. There was absolute silence. All eyes were upon them, and when they drank deeply and expressed their satisfaction, the whole establishment heaved a sigh of relief.

Mrs. Low now reminded Stevenson of this story, and he, declaring it was no "story," but an historical account of what had actually happened, repeated it word for word as he had originally told it. When he came to the end, he added, "And the cellarman, overcome with emotion, dropped dead.” As he said these words, he saw by his hearers’ faces that this was a divergence from the original tale, and added quickly, “ That about the cellarman is not really true!”

The quickness with which he caught the first sign of surprise at the only variation, and the readiness with which he recovered himself, were no less characteristic of Stevenson, as Mr. Low truly says, than the fact that the story of his invention took so concrete a form in his mind that, perhaps without its having recurred to his memory in all the interval, he was able to give the identical words and details as they had originally presented themselves to him.

An old project had this year been revived by Mr. Gilder of a boat-voyage down the Rhone to be written by Stevenson and illustrated by Mr. Low, but the former’s health was now too precarious for even the most luxurious of such journeys. His visit to Paris, however, was most successful, its chiet event being a visit to Rodin the sculptor, to whom Mr. Henley introduced him. He came home in what was for him exceptionally good health; but returning in October to The Monument — his invariable name for Mr. Colvin’s house at the British Museum — he did not escape so easily. The second holiday began delightfully, for it was on this occasion that he met some of the most distinguished of his elders in the world of letters and of art — especially, as Mr. Colvin records, Browning, Lowell, and Burne-Jones. But soon the visitor was taken ill, confined to bed, and unable to return home until the very end of November, when a succession of fogs made the danger of remaining in London greater than the risk of any journey.

This autumn there occurred a curious event in Stevenson’s literary career, which is recorded only in a letter to his mother. “5th Sept., 1886. — ... I have just written a French (if you please!) story for a French magazine! Heaven knows what it’s like; but they asked me to do it, and I was only too pleased to try.”

Mr. Osbourne and Mrs. de Mattos alone of the intimates of that time remember the fact, but whether the tale was ever despatched to its destination, or what that destination was, are questions that can no longer be answered. Although Stevenson had a wide and full vocabulary, and spoke French with a good accent and complete fluency, it seems certain that he had not the perfect knowledge of the language necessary for serious composition. He once wrote a French dedication in a book which he presented to Mrs. Low, prefacing it with the statement — ” I am now going to make several mistakes,” as in fact, says her husband, he immediately proceeded to do.

By this time he had begun to write the Memoir of his friend Jenkin, the only biography which he ever actually carried to an end. A few months later Mrs. Jenkin came to Skerry vore to afford him what assistance he needed, and of his method of dealing with the work, she has given us a description.

"I used to go to his room after tea, and tell him all I could remember of certain times and circumstances. He would listen intently, every now and then checking me while he made a short note, or asking me to repeat or amplify what I had said, if it had not been quite clear. Next morning I went to him again, and he read aloud to me what he had written — my two hours of talk compressed into a page, and yet, as it seemed to me, all there, all expressed. He would make me note what he had written word by word, asking me, ' Does this express quite exactly what you mean?' Sometimes he offered me alternative words, ' Does this express it more truly?' If I objected to any sentence as not conveying my meaning, he would alter it again and again — unwearied in taking pains."

His life in England led him to take both in home and in foreign politics a closer interest than he had felt before. He was deeply moved during these years by two events, though neither in the end led to any action on his part, nor even an open Ideclaration of his views. These were the death of Gordon and a case of boycotting women in Ireland.

In 1884 he had felt acutely the withdrawal of the garrisons from the Soudan. " When I read at Nice that Graham was recalled from Suakim after all that butchery, I died to politics. I saw that they did not regard what I regarded, and regarded what I despised; and I closed my account. If ever I could do anything, I suppose I ought to do it; but till that hour comes, I will not vex my soul."

This was no passing wave of sentiment; Gordon's fate was laid even more deeply to heart, and one of the motives which induced Stevenson to begin his letters to the Times upon Samoan affairs was the memory that in 1884 he had stood by in silence while a brave man was being deserted and a population dependent for help on the government of this country was handed over to the mercies of barbarism. So when he finally came to the point of writing the letter to Mr. Gladstone about the Iron Duke,1 he could think of no other signature open to him than " Your fellow-criminal in the eyes of God," and forbore.

But although the passionate indignation and "that chastity of honour which felt a stain like a wound" were highly characteristic of Stevenson, at the most they could have led to nothing more than a series of letters to the papers. They might have stirred the public conscience, but though Stevenson would have been dealing with matters less remote from the knowledge of his readers, yet his part in any agitation or protest would not have differed greatly from his efforts in the cause of Samoa. The other project, on the contrary, would, if he had been able to carry it out, have led to a definite and entire change of the whole course of his life. On November 13th, 1885, Mr. John Curtin had 1 See vol. ii. p. 7. been murdered by a party of moonlighters in his house, Castle Farm, at Castle Island, County Kerry. His grown-up sons and daughters had shown the greatest courage, and one of the murderers had been shot. For this the family were cut off as far as possible from all the necessaries of life, and in April, 1887, the boycott still continued. Stevenson, while admitting the wrongs of Ireland, had always the most profound regard for the paramount claims of the law, and had long been shocked both by the disregard of it in Ireland and by the callous indifference of the English to the needs of those engaged in its support. He now pitched upon the case of the Curtin family as a concrete instance in which it behoved England to do her duty, and since no one else was forthcoming for the task, he prepared to offer himself as an agent, and, if need were, a martyr in the cause. As a man of letters he was not tied down to any one place to do his work, so he proposed to take the Curtins' farm and there live with his wife and his stepson. His wife added her protests to those of all his friends who heard of the project, but in vain, and so without sharing his illusions she cheerfully prepared to accompany him.

It is impossible to conceive a more quixotic design. Many of the objections to it Stevenson realised himself, or was told by his friends.1 But perhaps he never suspected how little he understood the Irish, or how utterly futile his action would have proved. As a matter of fact he hardly ever came into contact with Irishmen at any time during his life, was probably misled by false inferences from the Highlanders as to Celtic peculiari-

1 Letters, ii. 27. This letter belongs, however, to 1887. ties, and in the principal Irishman whom he drew — Colonel Burke in The Master of Ballantrae — he has not carried conviction.1 But these considerations, even if they had been brought home to him, would equally have failed to move him, and it was nothing but his father's illness which kept him for the time in this country. He abandoned the design with reluctance, and, as Mr. Colvin says, " to the last he was never well satisfied that he had done right in giving way."

It was driven from his mind, however, by events which touched him more nearly. In the autumn his parents had taken a house in Bournemouth for the winter, that Mr. Stevenson might have the companionship of his son. For some time after they came Louis was laid up in London, and even when he returned he was too ill to see much of his father or to have any cheering influence upon him. In February Thomas Stevenson was taken by his wife to Torquay, but came back to Bournemouth on the ist of April. By the 21 st he was so ill that it was thought better to bring him home, and he returned to Edinburgh. The accounts of him grew so alarming that Louis followed on the 6th of May, but was too late for his coming to be of any use, and on the 8th all was over.

Of the son's affection and of his appreciation for his father enough has been said to show how great the sense of his loss must have been. The shock of having found his father no longer able to recognise him preyed upon his mind, and for some time to come he was haunted day and night with " ugly images of sickness, decline, and impaired reason," which increased yet further his sadness and the physical depression that weighed him down.

In the meantime he took cold, was not allowed to attend the funeral, and never left the house until, at the end of May, he was able to return to Bournemouth, and quitted Scotland for the last time.

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[1] Mac, the Ulstennan in The IVrecker, is better, but would not have helped his creator much in Kerry.

CHAPTER XII

THE UNITED STATES — 1887-88

“But, indeed, I think we all belong to many countries. I am a Scotchman, touch me and you will find the thistle; 1 am a Briton, and live and move and have my being in the greatness of our national achievements; but am 1 to forget the long hospitality of that beautiful and kind country, France? Or has not America done me favours to confound my gratitude? Nay, they are all my relatives; I love them all dearly; and should they fall out among themselves (which God in his mercy forbid!), 1 believe 1 should be driven mad with their conflicting claims upon my heart.” — R. L. S., ms. of Tie Silverado Squatters.

The chief link which bound Stevenson to this country was now broken, for his mother was free to follow him and his wife to whatever climate the advice of the doctors might send him. Year after year the struggle with ill-health was becoming more painful; “an enemy who was exciting at first, but has now, by the iteration of his strokes, become merely annoying and inexpressibly irksome.” He seemed condemned to a life in the sick-room, and even there to be steadily losing ground. Under the altered circumstances, his uncle, Dr. George Balfour, peremptorily insisted on a complete change of climate for a year, suggesting a trial of either one of the Indian hill-stations or colourado; this advice was reinforced by his Bournemouth physician, Dr. Scott, and for several obvious reasons America was preferred. As soon as his mother’s promise to accompany the party was obtained, Skerryvore was let, and by the middle of July their tickets were taken for New York. Early in the same month he had written to his mother: . . I can let you have a cheque for 100 to-morrow, which is certainly a pleasant thing to be able to say. I wish it had happened while my father was still here; I should have liked to help him once — perhaps even from a mean reason: that he might see I had not been wrong in taking to letters. But all this, I daresay, he observes, or, in some other way, feels. And he, at least, is out of his warfare, as I could sometimes wish I were out of mine. The mind of the survivor is mean; it sees the loss, it does not always feel the deliverance. Yet about our loss, I feel it more than I can say — every day more — that it is a happy thing that he is now at peace.”

But the invalid was not to escape from England without another illness; worn as he was by his recent experiences, he once more broke down, and was laid up again with hemorrhage.

On the 20th August, however, he left Bournemouth for London, and spent Sunday in the city, at Armfield’s Hotel. Here those of his closest friends who at that season were within reach came to bid him farewell, a last good-bye as it proved for all, since he never saw any one of them again. “ In one way or another,” he had written, “life forces men apart and breaks up the goodly fellowships for ever,” and he himself was now to become “ no more than a name, a reminiscence, and an occasional crossed letter very laborious to read.”

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As Mr. Colvin had been the first to welcome him on his return from America, so he was the last to take leave of him the next day, when the party of five — for [1] Virginibus Puerisque, chap. i.

Valentine Roch accompanied them — embarked on the steamship Ludgate Hill.

The beginning of their voyage was an unpleasant surprise, for their passages had been taken in ignorance that the ship was used as a cattle-boat, and it was only when the family came on board that they learned that they were going to put in at Havre for their cargo before sailing for America. But Stevenson, ill as he was, did not allow mere discomfort to affect him. His mother's diary contains an entry highly characteristic both of herself and of her son: "We discover that it is a cattle-ship, and that we are going to Havre to take in horses. We agree to look upon it as an adventure and make the best of it. . . . It is very amusing and like a circus to see the horses come on board." Not only was there a shipload of horses, but the vessel resembled the fleet of Ophir at least in this, that she carried a consignment of apes; of which "the big monkey, Jacko, scoured about the ship," and took a special fancy to Stevenson. The other passengers were not unentertaining, and the voyage itself was to him a pure delight, until they came to the Banks of Newfoundland, where he again caught cold. " I was so happy on board that ship," he wrote to his cousin Bob; "I could not have believed it possible. We had the beastliest weather, and many discomforts; but the mere fact of its being a tramp-ship gave us many comforts; we could cut about with the men and officers, stay in the wheel-house, discuss all manner of things, and really be a little at sea. And truly there is nothing else. I had literally forgotten what happiness was, and the full mind — full of external and physical things, not full of cares and labours and rot about a fellow's behaviour. My heart literally sang; I truly care for nothing so much as for that." [1]

By this time his reputation had crossed the Atlantic, and, chiefly by means of Jekyll and Hyde, had spread there to an extent which he had probably not yet realised. The first indication reached him, however, before he had sighted the coast-line of the States, for, on September 6th, when the pilot came on board, it turned out that he was known on his boat as Hyde, while his better-tempered partner was called Jekyll.

The next day the Ludgate Hill arrived at New York, where Stevenson was met by a crowd of reporters, and — what was more to his taste — by his old friend, Mr. Will H. Low. He was forthwith carried off to an hotel where Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fairchild had made all arrangements for his reception, and the next day he proceeded to their house at Newport. But on the journey he caught fresh cold, and spent a fortnight there chiefly in bed.

On his return to New York he saw a few people, mostly old friends like Mr. Low and his wife, and first made the personal acquaintance of Mr. Charles Scribner and Mr. Burlingame. Mr. St. Gaudens, the eminent American sculptor, now began to make the necessary studies for the large medallion, which was not completed until five years later. It is the most satisfactory of all the portraits of Stevenson, and has been reproduced with one or two slight modifications for the memorial in St. Giles' Cathedral. The artist was a great admirer of Stevenson's writings, and had said that if he ever had the chance he would gladly go a thousand miles for the sake of a sitting. The opportunity came to his doors, and he made a sketch of the head and one hand, though it was not until the following spring that he was able to complete his drawings.

At this time the popularity of Stevenson's work in America was attested also by its appearance on the stage; not only were there two dramatised versions of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde upon the boards, but Deacon Brodie was shortly afterwards produced in Philadelphia by an English company.

For the dramatisation of his story Stevenson was of course in no way responsible, but the publicity and the advertisement of his name had naturally the effect of enabling publishers to offer better terms for his work. He had already contributed to American magazines for several years, in the first instance to the Century, and then to the new periodical of Messrs. Scribner, for which he now undertook to write a series of twelve articles during the ensuing year. For this he was to receive ˆ700, and this bargain was followed shortly afterwards by an offer ofˆi6oo from another firm for the American serial rights of his next story. The first proposal of all, from the New York World, was £2000 for an article every week for a year; but this he had refused. In February, 1883, he had written to his mother: "My six books (since 1878) have brought me in upwards of £600, about ˆ400 of which came from magazines." So great was the change in four years. It must be remembered that in England also he had now reached the turning-point of his fortunes; and early in the following year he became a member of the Athenaeum Club in London under the rule permitting the committee to elect nine persons annually "as being of distinguished eminence in Science, Literature or the Arts, or for Public Services." In this very year it had been found worth while to collect and republish with additions such of his stories, essays, and verse as had hitherto appeared only in magazines. But though the change was not solely due to the greater enterprise of American publishers, it is

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1 Letters, ii. 67.

none the less striking.

His first need, however, for the present was to select a climate where he could best pass the winter. He had come to America in search of health, but the information he received in New York dissuaded him from colourado Springs, which, situated as it is nearly six thousand feet above the sea, would have deprived him of the company of his wife, to whom such high altitudes were no longer possible. He turned instead to a place at a lower elevation in the Adirondack Mountains, close to the Canadian border, where a sanatorium for consumptive patients had recently been established near the shores of Saranac lake.

Thither went accordingly Mrs. Louis Stevenson and her son, and there they succeeded in finding a house which would serve as winter-quarters for the family. Stevenson arrived with his mother on October 3rd, and here he remained until the middle of the following April. It was no very pleasant spot, at all events in the winter months, and formed a curious contrast to his experience in the tropics. The climate comprised every variety of unpleasantness: it rained, it snowed, it sleeted, it blew, it was thick fog; it froze — the cold was Arctic; it thawed — the discomfort was worse; and it combined these different phases in every possible way. Two things only could be advanced in its favour, the first and vital fact that Stevenson's health did not suffer, but actually improved; and secondly, it served at times to remind him of Scotland — a Scotland " without peat and without heather" — but that is no very hard task with the true Scot, as may be seen with Stevenson himself in the Pacific.

The place was still somewhat undeveloped; the railway was opened to Saranac itself only during the course of the winter. It was nevertheless so far accessible that visitors not unfrequently found their way there to make Stevenson's acquaintance, and occasionally even stayed a few days, though there was in the house but one spare attic of limited capacity. In Dr. Trudeau, the physician, Stevenson found an agreeable companion, and he also enjoyed the society of some of the resident patients, though he went but little beyond the limits of his own family. They occupied a house belonging to a guide, a frame-house of the usual kind with a verandah; here, with the services of Valentine and a cook, and a boy to chop wood and draw water, they made themselves as comfortable as possible during the winter.

The younger Mrs. Stevenson began the campaign by a hasty visit to Canada to lay in a supply of furs for the family, and her foresight was well rewarded. In December the cold began, and by January the thermometer was sometimes nearly 30 degrees below zero. There was a stove in each chamber, and an open fireplace for logs in the central living-room, but these were of little avail. " Fires do not radiate," wrote Stevenson; “you burn your hands all the time on what seem to be cold stones.” His mother gives an illustration: “ Cold venison was crunching with ice after being an hour in the oven, and I saw a large lump of ice still unmelted in a pot where water was steaming all round it.”

Stevenson himself stood the cold better than any of his family, and, arrayed in a buffalo coat, astrakhan cap, and Indian boots, used to go out daily. He would take short walks on a hill behind the house, and skated on the lake when the ice could be kept clear. But both the ladies were ordered away for their health at different times, while in February the maid was laid up with a severe attack of influenza, the next victim being Stevenson himself.

In the meantime he had not been idle. By December he had written four of the essays for the magazine, and was already on the threshold of a new Scotch story.

“I was walking one night in the verandah of a small house in which I lived, outside the hamlet of Saranac. It was winter; the night was very dark; the air extraordinary clear and cold, and sweet with the purity of forests. From a good way below, the river was to be heard contending with ice and boulders: a few lights appeared, scattered unevenly among the darkness, but so far away as not to lessen the sense of isolation. For the making of a story here were fine conditions. I was besides moved with the spirit of emulation, for I had just finished my third or fourth perusal of The Phantom Ship. ‘Come,’ said I to my engine, Met us make a tale, a story of many years and countries, of the sea and the land, savagery and civilisation; a story that shall have the same large features, and may be treated in the same summary elliptic method as the book you have been reading and admiring.’ . . . There cropped up in my memory a singular case of a buried and resuscitated fakir, which I had often been told by an uncle of mine, then lately dead, Inspector-General John Balfour. On such a fine frosty night, with no wind and the thermometer below zero, the brain works with much vivacity; and the next moment I had seen the circumstance transplanted from India and the tropics to the Adirondack wilderness and the stringent cold of the Canadian border. ... If the idea was to be of any use at all for me, I had to create a kind of evil genius to his friends and family, take him through many disappearances, and make this final restoration from the pit of death, in the icy American wilderness, the last and grimmest of the series. I need not tell my brothers of the craft that I was now in the most interesting moment of an author’s life; the hours that followed that night upon the balcony, and the following nights and days, whether walking abroad or lying wakeful in my bed, were hours of unadulterated joy. My mother, who was then living with me alone, perhaps had less enjoyment; for, in the absence of my wife, who is my usual helper in these times of parturition, I must spur her up at all seasons to hear me relate and try to clarify my unformed fancies.

“And while I was groping for the fable and the character required, behold I found them lying ready and nine years old in my memory. . . . Here, thinking of quite other things, I had stumbled on the solution, or perhaps I should rather say (in stagewright phrase) the Curtain or final Tableau of a story conceived long before on the moors between Pitlochry and Strathairdle, con- ceived in Highland rain, in the blend of the smell of heather and bog-plants, and with a mind full of the Athole correspondence and the Memoirs of the Chevalier de Johnstone. So long ago, so far away it was, that I had first evoked the faces and the mutual tragic situation of the men of Durrisdeer.” 1

The accessibility of his winter-quarters had its advantages, but was not without its dangers for Stevenson, now that publishers recognised him as a writer for whose works they must contend in advance. * Acute and capable as he was when confronted with any piece of business, the moment it was done he dismissed it from his mind, and allowed its details, if not its very existence, to fade from his memory. Having promised Messrs. Scribner the control of all his work which might appear in America, he shortly afterwards, in sheer forgetfulness, sold the serial rights of his next story to Mr. M’Clure. Nobody could have been more sincerely or more deeply distressed over the matter than Stevenson himself, and, fortunately for his peace of mind, nobody seems ever for one instant to have thought him capable of any act of bad faith. But it must have been as much of a relief to every one concerned, as it was very greatly to his own advantage, when shortly afterwards he handed over the disposal of his writings to the management of his old and trusted friend, Mr. Charles Baxter.

At Saranac Mr. Osbourne wrote entirely on his own account a story called at first The Finsbury Tontine and afterwards The Game of Bluff, which, after the lapse of many months and a course of collaboration with his stepfather, was to appear as The Wrong Box. At first 1” Genesis of’ The Master of Ballantrae,’ “Juvenilia, p. 297. this was an independent book, but as soon as the idea of collaboration had occurred to them, several projects were speedily set on foot, since the joint books would have this advantage, that, Mr. Osbourne being an American citizen, they could be copyrighted in the United States. The New York Ledger is a paper which had long a reputation for sensational stories of the fine old melodramatic kind, and as the editor was willing to give Stevenson a commission, it seemed to him highly entertaining to try his hand at this style of narrative. A plot was drawn out, and then: “Study of the Ledger convinced me that ‘ Fighting the

Ring' would not do. Accordingly, at about nine one night Lloyd and I began, and next day before lunch we had finished the design of a new and more sensational tale, 'The Gaol Bird.' 'Tis the correct Ledger subject of a noble criminal, who returns to prove his innocence; but it seems picturesquely designed, and we flatter ourselves that the relations between the criminal and the man whom he suspects (Donald, first Baron Drummond of Drummond and Raracaroo, late Governor-General of India) are essentially original, and should quite blind all but the most experienced."

Mr. Osbourne laboured at this tale by himself for many a long day in vain; but the plot was hardly sketched before the collaborators were again deep in the plan of a new novel dealing with the Indian Mutiny — "a tragic romance of the most tragic sort. . . . The whole last part is — well, the difficulty is that, short of resuscitating Shakespeare, I don't know who is to write it."

Of their methods Mr. Osbourne writes: "When an idea for a book was started, we used to talk it over together, and generally carried the tale on from one invention to another, until, in accordance with Louis' own practice, we had drawn out a complete list of the chapters. In all our collaborations I always wrote the first draft, to break the ground, and it is a pleasure to me to recall how pleased Louis was, for instance, with the first three chapters of The Ebb Tide. As a rule, he was a man chary of praise, but he fairly overflowed toward those early chapters, and I shall never forget the elation his praise gave me. The draft was then written and rewritten by Louis and myself in turn, and was worked over and over again by each of us as often as was necessary. For instance, the chapter in The Wrecker at Honolulu, where Dodd goes out to the lighthouse, must have been written and rewritten eleven times. Naturally it came about that it was the bad chapters that took the most rewriting. After this, how could anybody but Louis or myself pretend to know which of us wrote any given passage? The Paris parts of The Wrecker and the end of The Ebb Tide (as it stands) I never even touched.[1] The collaboration was, of course, a mistake for me, nearly as much as for him; but I don't believe Louis ever enjoyed any work more. He liked the comradeship — my work coming in just as his energy flagged, or vice versa; and he liked my applause when he — as he always did — pulled us magnificently out of sloughs. In a way, I was well fitted to help him. I had a knack for dialogue — I mean, of the note-taking kind. I was a kodaker: he an artist and a man of genius. I managed the petty makeshifts and inventions which were constantly necessary; I was the practical man, so to speak, the one who paced the distances, and used the weights and measures; in The Wrecker, the storm was mine; so were the fight and the murders on the Currency Lass; the picnics in San Francisco, and the commercial details of Loudon's partnership. Nares was mine and Pinkerton to a great degree, and Captain Brown was mine throughout. But although the first four chapters of The Ebb Tide remain, save for the text of Herrick's letter to his sweetheart, almost as I first wrote them, yet The Wrong Box was more mine as a whole than either of the others. It was written and then rewritten before there was any thought of collaboration, and was actually finished and ready for the press. There was, in consequence, far less give and take between us in this book than in the others. Louis had to follow the text very closely, being unable to break away without jeopardising the succeeding chapters. He breathed into it, of course, his own incomparable power, humour, and vivacity, and forced the thing to live as it had never lived before; but, even in his transforming hands, it still retains (it seems to me) a sense of failure; and this verdict has so far been sustained by the public's reluctance to buy the book. The Wrecker, on the other hand, has always been in excellent demand, rivalling Kidnapped, The Master of Ballantrae, and Catriona, and still continues to earn £200 a year with unvarying regularity."

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[1] Cf. Letters, ii. 357.

At Saranac Stevenson carried on his music under disadvantages, and his chief solace lay in the pleasures of adaptation. "All my spare time," he wrote, "is spent in trying to set words to music. My last attempt is the divine theme of Beethoven's six variations faciles.

will know it; and if she does not like it — well, she knows nothing of music, or sorrow, or consolation, or religion. . . . That air has done me more good than all the churches of Christendom."

Meanwhile, as an interpreter, he fell from the pianoforte to the more portable penny whistle. " 'T is true my whistle explodes with sharp noises, and has to be patched with court-plaster like a broken nose; but its notes are beginning to seem pretty sweet to the player — The Penny Piper."

But already, in the heart of the mountains, he had been laying plans of travel, which were to lead him far and wide across the seas and to end in a continued exile of which at this time he had never dreamed. He had always nourished a passion for the sea, whether in romance or in real life; it ran in his blood, and came to him from both his father and his grandfather.1 As a boy, on Saturday afternoons, he would make a party to go down to Leith to see the ships, for in those days, as always, he loved a ship "as a man loves Burgundy or daybreak." The sea was to him the redeeming feature of engineering, and a year or two after he had given up the profession he wrote with eager anticipation of a projected trip in the Pharos, the lighthouse steamer. Then for ten years he hardly mentioned the sea again, and even in crossing the Atlantic as an amateur emigrant, he seems to have taken more interest in his fellow-passengers than in the ocean. But his feelings were unchanged: in 1883 his idea of a fortune is to “ end 1 “ It was that old gentleman’s blood that brought me to Samoa.” — Letters, ii. 258.

with horses and yachts and all the fun of the fair”; and in some verses written at Hyeres, contrasting his wife’s aspirations with his own, he declares —

“She vows in ardour for a horse to trot, I stake my votive prayers upon a yacht.”

We have seen how he enjoyed his voyage across the Atlantic; and to this pleasure he was perpetually recurring: “I have been made a lot of here, . . . but I

could give it all up, and agree that was the author of my works, for a good seventy-ton schooner and the coins to keep her on. And to think there are parties with yachts who would make the exchange! I know a little about fame now; it is no good compared to a yacht; and anyway there is more fame in a yacht, more genuine fame.”1 And no doubt his envy had been excited at Newport by hearing of Mr. Osbourne’s experiences in learning to sail a cat-boat.2

It was therefore no unexpected development, no outbreak of any new taste, when it became a favourite diversion of the winter nights at Saranac to plan a yachting cruise. So far indeed were the discussions carried, that the place for the piano in the saloon and the number and disposition of the small-arms were already definitely settled. At first, in spite of the severity of the climate and the proverbial roughness of the weather, they had looked chiefly to the Atlantic seaboard, but in the end of March, when Mrs. Stevenson left Saranac for California on a visit to her people, she 1 Utters, ii. 68.

2 A rather broad and shallow boat, round-bottomed, with a centre board, and a single mast stepped at the extreme point of the bow. was instructed to report if she could find any craft suitable for their purpose at San Francisco.

At last, by the middle of April, Stevenson was free to return to the “cities if he chose. He made a heroic effort to deal with the arrears of his correspondence: “In three of my last days I sent away upwards of seventy letters”; and then turning his steps to New York, he there spent about a fortnight. The time to which he recurred with the greatest pleasure was an afternoon he spent on a seat in Washington Square enjoying the company and conversation of “Mark Twain.” But of the city he soon wearied; in the beginning of May he crossed the Hudson, and went to an hotel near the mouth of the Manasquan, a river in New Jersey, where with his mother and stepson he spent nearly a month. The place had been recommended to him by Mr. Low, who was able to spend some time there, and who says: “Though it was early spring and the weather was far from good, Louis (pretending that, in comparison with Scotland at least, it was fine spring weather) was unusually well, and we had many a pleasant sail on the river and some rather long walks. Louis was much interested in the ‘cat- boat,’ and, with the aid of various works on sailing- vessels, tried to master the art of sailing it with some success.

“He was here at Manasquan when a telegram arrived from his wife, who had been in San Francisco for a few weeks, announcing that the yacht Casco might be hired for a trip among the islands of the South Seas. I was there at the time, and Louis made that decision to go which exiled him from his dearest friends — though he little suspected at the time — while the messenger waited.”

The decision taken, Stevenson returned to New York on the 28th, and by the 7th of June he had reached California. Who that has read his description of crossing the mountains on his first journey to the West but remembers the phrase — ”It was like meeting one’s wifel”? And this time his wife herself was at Sacramento to meet him.

It was a busy time. The Casco was the first question — a topsail schooner, ninety-five feet in length, of seventy tons burden, built for racing in Californian waters, though she had once been taken as far as Tahiti.” She had most graceful lines, and with her lofty masts, white sails and decks, and glittering brasswork, was a lovely craft to the eye, as she sat like a bird upon the water. Her saloon was fitted most luxuriously with silk and velvet of gaudy colours, for no money had been spared in her construction; nevertheless her cockpit was none too safe, her one pump was inadequate in size and almost worthless; the sail-plan forward was meant for racing and not for cruising, and even if the masts were still in good condition, they were quite unfitted for hurricane weather.

Nevertheless the vessel was chartered and all preparations were put in hand. The owner, Dr. Merritt, an eccentric Californian millionaire, was at first most backward about thQ whole affair, and, without having < seen him, displayed the greatest distrust of Stevenson. The latter was very unwell, and getting rapidly worse, for San Francisco disagreed with him. Matters hung fire, but at last his wife discovered that Dr. Merritt wanted to meet him. An interview took place and all difficulties vanished. “ 1 ‘II go ahead now with the yacht,” said the doctor: “I ‘d read things in the papers about Stevenson, and thought he was a kind of crank; but he’s a plain, sensible man that knows what he’s talking about just as well as I do.”

If any fears had existed in his mind about the solvency of his lessee they were unfounded. Under the terms of his father’s marriage settlement Stevenson had six months before received a sum of ˆ3000, and it was in the first instance upon the strength of this that he planned the voyage. As he wrote to Mr. Baxter, “If this business fails to set me up, well, £2000 is gone, and I know I can’t get better.” On the other hand, if it restored his health, he had received a most liberal offer from Messrs. M’Clure for a series of letters describing his experiences in the Pacific.

Along with the yacht, at the owner’s request, they gladly engaged his skipper, Captain Otis, who knew the Casco well, and the cook, a Chinaman, who passed himself off as a Japanese. The former choice they had no reason to regret, for the captain showed himself a bold and skilful seaman, who, beginning the voyage with a supreme contempt for his new employers, ended it as an intimate and valued friend, whose portrait for the rest may be found in the pages of The Wrecker. A crew of four deck-hands, “three Swedes and the inevitable Finn,” was engaged by the captain, and four “sea-lawyers” they proved to be; a reporter, trying to ship himself as a hand, was ejected, and a passage was with great difficulty refused to a Seventh- Day Adventist, who afterwards with a crew of his fellow-believers travelled over the whole of the South Seas.

The destination of the Casco was next to be settled. Stevenson himself was anxious to begin with a long voyage, “counting,” says his wife, “on the warm sea air as the strongest factor in his cure, if cure it was to be. If, on the other hand, it was to be death, he wished it to be so-far away from land that burial at sea should be certain. With this in view, the Galapagos and Marquesas were at the right distance. If he arrived alive at either of these places, then he must have recovered a certain amount of health, and would be able to go further to any place he chose. It turned out that he really knew a great deal about the islands. Before we started, he told me a lot about them all, their appearance, the names of places, habits of the natives, and other details. On visiting them I got no further general knowledge than Louis had already given me. He now preferred the Galapagos, but when he told me that we must pass through a belt of calms where we might knock about in the heat of the tropics for weeks, perhaps for months, before we could make land, and that the islands were barren of vegetation, I insisted on the Marquesas. So to the Marquesas we went.”

In the meantime they were living at the Occidental Hotel in San Francisco. Virgil Williams was now dead, but Mrs. Williams was indefatigable in their service, and other friends gathered round them, among whom Stevenson was especially drawn to Dr. George Chismore, alike for his Scotch blood, his love of literature, and the force and tenderness of his character. But as he himself had known trouble in this city, here least of all was he likely to disregard the misfortunes of others. An Australian journalist seven years afterwards wrote to the

Times: —

“Some years ago I lay ill in San Francisco, an obscure journalist, quite friendless. Stevenson, who knew me slightly, came to my bedside and said,’ I suppose you are like all of us, you don’t keep your money. Now, if a little loan, as between one man of letters and another — eh?’

“This to a lad writing rubbish for a vulgar sheet in California.”

At last, on June 26th, the party took up their quarters on the Casco, and at the dawn of the 28th she was towed outside the Golden Gate, and headed for the south across the long swell of the Pacific.

So with his household he sailed away beyond the sunset, and America, like Europe, was to see him no more.

CHAPTER XIII

SOUTH SEA CRUISES — THE EASTERN PACIFIC, JUNE, 1888 — JUNE, 1889

“This climate; these voyagings; these landfalls at dawn; new Wands peeking from the morning bank; new forested harbours; new passing alarms of squalls and surf; new interests of gentle natives — the whole tale of my life b better to me than any poem.”

Letters, ii. 160.

For nearly three years to come Stevenson wandered up and down the face of the Pacific, spending most of his time in the Hawaiian Islands and the Gilberts, in Tahiti, and in Samoa, his future home; during this period he visited, however cursorily, almost every group of importance in the Eastern and Central Pacific.

The delight these experiences kindled for him can never be expressed, since, apart from one or two phrases in his letters, he has failed to convey any image of it himself- It is hardly too much to say that nobody else in the world would have derived such keen or such varied enjoyment from cruising through these islands, so wild, so beautiful — among their inhabitants so attractive, so remote from experience — in these waters, so fascinating and so dangerous. The very romance that hangs about the South Seas is fatal to any attempt to sustain, among the mazes of detail and necessary explanation, the charm suggested by their name. Stevenson himself set out to write an account of his wanderings and adventures among the islands it had for years been the dream of his life to see, but as soon as he essayed the task, he was overwhelmed with a mass of legend and history and anthropology. It is hard for people at their own firesides to realise the differences between the islands visited in one cruise in the same ocean. Perhaps some vague and general conception of the diversity of Stevenson’s experiences might be formed by imagining a rapid visit to the islands of Sardinia, Sicily, Majorca, and Tenerife, a fresh departure for Jersey and the lies d’Or, ending with a passing glimpse at the West indies.

The point now to be considered is not, however, the customs and character of the natives whom Stevenson encountered, but rather how he was affected and influenced by what he saw, the characteristics which were called out in him during the course of his travel, and the impressions which he himself produced. His chapters In the South Seas have now been collected and published, and from them I shall only quote one or two of the most striking passages, relying rather on his original rough journal at the time, which naturally strikes a more personal note and deals to a greater extent with his individual experience.

The first point, as we have seen, was the Marquesas, a group of high1 islands of extreme beauty, occupied by the French and but seldom visited by travellers, 1 Islands in the Pacific are usually divided into “ high “ and “ low the former being, generally speaking, islands of volcanic origin, often rising several thousand feet above the sea, densely wooded and beau

tiful in the extreme. These frequently have a barrier reef of coral, protecting what would otherwise be an ironbound coast, but their main structure is igneous rock. “Low” islands arc atolls or mere remote from any other group and out of the track of ships and steamers. For these the Casco now steered a course of three thousand miles across the open sea. Fortunately the main object of the cruise seemed likely to be gained without delay; the warmer climate and the sea air suited Stevenson at once, and he grew stronger day by day. The voyage was pleasant but without event other than the passing squalls, and is thus recorded in his diary: —

“Since on the fifth day we were left ignominiously behind by a full-rigged English ship, our quondam comrade, bound round the Horn, we have not spied a sail, nor a land bird, nor a shred of seaweed. In impudent isolation, the toy-schooner has ploughed her path of snow across the empty deep, far from all track of commerce, far from any hand of help: now to the sound of slatting sails and stamping sheet-blocks, staggering in the turmoil of that business falsely called a calm, now, in the assault of squalls, burying her lee- rail in the sea. To the limit of the north-east trades we carried some attendant pilot birds, silent, brown-suited, quakerish fellows, infinitely graceful on the wing; dropping at times in comfortable sheltered hollows of the swell; running awhile in the snowy footmarks on the water before they rise again in flight. Scarce had these dropped us, ere the Boatswains took their place, birds of an ungainly shape, but beautiful against the heavens in their white plumage. Late upon a starry banks built by the coral insect, never more than twenty feet above water, and owing any beauty they possess to the sea, the sun, and the palm-tree. The Marquesas, Tahiti, Samoa, and the Hawaiian group are high islands; the Paumotus, the Gilberts, and the Marshalls are low. night, as they fly invisible overhead, the strange voices of these co-voyagers fall about us strangely. Flying- fish, a skimming silver rain on the blue sea; a turtle fast asleep in the early morning sunshine; the Southern Cross hung thwart in the fore-rigging like the frame of a wrecked kite — the pole star and the familiar Plough dropping ever lower in the wake: these build up thus far the history of our voyage. It is singular to come so far and to see so infinitely little.”

“July igtb. — The morning was hot, the wind steady, the sky filled with such clouds as, on a pleasant English day, might promise a cool rain. One of these had been visible for some time, a continental isle of sun and shadow, moving innocuously on the skyline far to windward; when upon a sudden this harmless-looking monster, seeming to smell a quarry, paused, hung awhile as if in stays, and breaking off five points,[1] fell like an armed man upon the Casco. Next moment, the inhabitants of the cabin were piled one upon another, the sea was pouring into the cockpit and spouting in fountains through forgotten deadlights, and the steersman stood spinning the wheel for his life in a halo of tropical rain.

“I chronicle this squall, first, for the singularity and apparent malignancy of its behaviour, as though it had been sent express to cruise after the Casco; and, second, because of the nonsense people write upon the climate of these seas. Every day for a week or so, in defiance of authorities, we have had from three to four squalls; and as for this last, no one who saw it desires to see a worse. Sailing a ship, even in these so-called fine-weather latitudes, may be compared to walking the tight-rope; so constant is the care required. On our heavenly nights, when we sit late on deck, the trade-wind still chariots overhead an endless company of attenuated clouds. These shine in the moonlight faintly bright, affect strange and semi-human forms like the more battered of the antique statues, blot out the smaller stars, and are themselves pierced by the radiance of the greater. ‘Is there any wind in them?’ so goes the regular sea question. A capful at least, and even in the least substantial; but for the most part in these latitudes they fly far above man’s concerns, perhaps out of all reach, so that not even the lowest fringe of wind shall breathe upon the mainmasthead.”

After two-and-twenty days at sea they made their landfall. “The first experience can never be repeated. The first love, the first sunrise, the first South Sea island, are memories apart and touched a virginity of sense. On the 28th of July, 1888, the moon was an hour down by four in the morning, . . . and it was half-past five before we could distinguish our expected islands from the clouds on the horizon. The interval was passed on deck in the silence of expectation, the customary thrill of landfall heightened by the strangeness of the shores that we were then approaching. Slowly they took shape in the attenuating darkness. Uahuna, piling up to a truncated summit, appeared the first upon the starboard bow; almost abeam arose our destination, Nukahiva, whelmed in cloud; and betwixt, and to the southward, the first rays of the sun displayed the needles of Uapu. These pricked about the line of the horizon, like the pinnacles of some ornate and monstrous church; they stood there, in the sparkling brightness of the morning, the fit signboard of a world of wonders. . . .

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[1] I.e. of the points of the compass, sixty-four in number.

The land heaved up in peaks and rising vales; it fell in cliffs and buttresses; its colour ran through fifty modulations in a scale of pearl and rose and olive; and it was crowned above by opalescent clouds. The suffusion of vague hues deceived the eye; the shadows of clouds were confounded with the articulations of the mountain; and the isle and its unsubstantial canopy rose and shimmered before us like a single mass. There was no beacon, no smoke of towns to be expected, no plying pilot. . . .

"We bore away along the shore. On our port- beam we might hear the explosions of the surf; a few birds flew fishing under the prow; there was no other sound or mark of life, whether of man or beast, in all that quarter of the island. Winged by her own impetus and the dying breeze, the Casco skimmed under cliffs, opened out a cove, showed us a beach and some green trees, and flitted by again, bowing to the swell. . . . Again the cliff yawned, but now with a deeper entry; and the Casco, hauling her wind, began to slide into the bay of Anaho. Rude and bare hills embraced the inlet upon either hand; it was enclosed to the landward by a bulk of shattered mountains. In every crevice of that barrier the forest harboured, roosting and nesting there like birds about a ruin; and far above, it greened and ' roughened the razor edges of the summit.

"Under the eastern shore, our schooner, now bereft of any breeze, continued to creep in; the smart creature, when once under way, appearing motive in herself. From close aboard arose the bleating of young lambs; a bird sang in the hillside; the scent of the land and of a hundred fruits or flowers flowed forth to meet us; and, presently, a house or two appeared. . . . The mark of anchorage was a blow-hole in the rocks, near the south-easterly corner of the bay. Punctually to our use, the blow-hole spouted; the schooner turned upon her heel; the anchor plunged. It was a small sound, a great event; my soul went down with these moorings whence no windlass may extract nor any diver fish it up; and I, and some part of my ship's company, were from that hour the bond-slaves of the isles of Vivien."1

This was Nukahiva, the island of Herman Melville's Typee, and here for three weeks they lay in Anaho Bay, where there lived only natives and one white trader. They then sailed round to the south coast of the same island, to Taiohae, the port of entry and the capital of the group.

The two special features of the Marquesas which differentiate them from the other islands which Stevenson saw are, first, that the natives were till very recently the most inveterate cannibals of Polynesia, and second, that their population was melting away like snow off a dyke, so that extinction seemed imminent within the next few years.

Into the details of his visit I have no intention of going — partly they may be read in his own volume In the South Seas — but I would draw attention to Stevenson’s attitude toward the native races, for though I shall have occasion to return to it again in Samoa, there was but little growth or development of his essential In the South Seas, pp. 2-6. feelings or principles in dealing with them. Intelligent sympathy was the keynote, and the same kindliness to them as to all men. He never idealised them, and his view was but rarely affected by sentiment. His sense of history, combined with his power of seeing things in a new light and the refusal to accept commonplaces without examination, here stood him in good stead.

Five years before, in the Riviera, he had written:1 “There is no form of conceit more common or more silly than to look down on barbarous codes of morals. Barbarous virtues, the chivalrous point of honour, the fidelity of the wild Highlander or the two-sworded Japanese, are of a generous example. We may question the utility of what is done; the whole-hearted sincerity of the actors shuts our mouth. Nor can that idea be merely dishonourable for which men relinquish the comforts and consideration of society, the love of wife and child and parent, the light of the sun, and the protection of the laws. The seductions of life are strong in every age and station; we make idols of our affections, idols of our customary virtues; we are content to avoid the inconvenient wrong and to forego the inconvenient right with almost equal self-approval, until at last we make a home for our conscience among the negative virtues and the cowardly vices.”

This was of the Japanese in their recent feudal period: here is one of his earliest notes in the Marquesas, after meeting the natives face to face: —

“August3rd. — Tropical Night Thoughts. I awoke this morning about three; the night was heavenly in 1 Magazine of j4rt, November, 1883, a propos of the story of the “ Forty-seven Ronins.”

scent and temperature; the long swell brimmed into the bay and seemed to fill it full and then subside; silently, gently, and deeply the Casco rolled; only at times a block piped like a bird. I sat and looked seaward toward the mouth of the bay at the headlands and the stars; at the constellation of diamonds, each infi- nitesimally small, each individual and of equal lustre, and all shining together in heaven like some old-fashioned clasp; at the planet with the visible moon, as though he were beginning to re-people heaven by the process of gemination; at many other lone lamps and marshalled clusters. And upon a sudden it ran into my mind, even with shame, that these were lovelier than our nights in the north, the planets softer and brighter, and the constellations more handsomely arranged. I felt shame, I say, as at an ultimate infidelity: that I should desert the stars that shone upon my father; and turning to the shore-side, where there were some high squalls overhead, and the mountains loomed up black, I could have fancied I had slipped ten thousand miles away and was anchored in a Highland loch; that when day came and made clear the superimpending slopes, it would show pine and the red heather and the green fern, and roofs of turf sending up the smoke of peats, and the alien speech that should next greet my ears should be Gaelic, not Kanaka.[1]

"The singular narrowness of this world's range, and, above all, the paucity of human combinations, are forced alike upon the reader and the traveller. The one ranging through books, the other over peopled space, comes with astonishment on the same scenery, the same merry stories, the same fashion, the same stage of social evolution. Under cover of darkness here might be a Hebridean harbour; and if I am to call these men savages (which no bribe would induce me to do), what name should I find for Hebridean man? The Highlands and Islands somewhat more than a century back were in much the same convulsive and transitionary state as the Marquesas to-day. In the one, the cherished habit of tattooing; in the other, a cherished costume, proscribed; in both, the men disarmed, the chiefs dishonoured, new fashions introduced, and chiefly that new pernicious fashion of regarding money as the be-all and end-all of existence; the commercial age, in each case, succeeding at a bound to the age militant: war, with its truces and its courtesies, succeeded by peace, with its meanness and its unending effort: the means of life no longer wrested with a bare face from hereditary enemies, but ground or cheated out of next-door neighbours and old family friends; in each case, a man's luxury cut off, beef driven under cover of night from lowland pastures denied to the meat-loving Highlander, long-pig pirated from the next village to the man-eating Kanaka."

And here is the practical outcome of his experience as a traveller, written in 1890, a passage specially selected for praise by so able and original an investigator as Mary Kingsley: —

"When I desired any detail of savage custom, or of superstitious belief, I cast back in the story of my fathers, and fished for what I wanted with some trait of equal barbarism: Michael Scott, Lord Derwentwater's head, the second-sight, the Water Kelpie, — each of these I have found to be a killing bait; the black bull's head of Stirling procured me the legend of Rahero; and what I knew of the Cluny Macphersons, or the Appin Stewarts, enabled me to learn, and helped me to understand, about the Tevas of Tahiti. The native was no longer ashamed, his sense of kinship grew warmer, and his lips were opened. It is this sense of kinship that the traveller must rouse and share; or he had better content himself with travels from the blue bed to the brown.”[1]

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[1] Kanaka, the Hawaiian word for a man, is used by white men throughout the Pacific as equivalent to " native," " Polynesian." In Australia and Fiji it generally means Melanesian — black boy.

It is interesting to compare his portrait of Vaekehu, the refined and aged queen of the Marquesas spending a devout old age after a stormy youth of cannibalism, with the similar picture in the Mariage de Loti.[2]

“Her house is on the European plan: a table in the midst of the chief room; photographs and religious pictures on the wall. It commands to either hand a charming vista: through the front door, a peep of green lawn, scurrying pigs, the pendent fans of the coco-palm, and the splendour of the bursting surf; through the back, mounting forest glades and coronals of precipice. Here, in the strong through-draught, her Majesty received us in a simple gown of print, and with no mark of royalty but the exquisite finish of her tattooed mittens, the elaboration of her manners, and the gentle falsetto in which all the highly refined among Marquesan ladies (and Vaekehu above all others) delight to sing their language. . . . Vaekehu is very deaf; merci is her only word of French; and I do not know that she seemed clever. An exquisite, kind refinement, with a shade of quietism, gathered perhaps from the nuns, was what chiefly struck us. . . . She came with Stanilao (her son) and his little girl to dine on board the Casco. She had dressed for the occasion: wore white, which very well became her strong brown face; and sat among us, eating or smoking her cigarette, quite cut off from all society, or only now and then included through the intermediary of her son. It was a position that might have been ridiculous, and she made it ornamental; making believe to hear and to be entertained; her face, whenever she met our eyes, lighted with the smile of good society; her contributions to the talk, when she made any, and that was seldom, always complimentary and pleasing. No attention was paid to the child, for instance, but what she remarked and thanked us for. Her parting with each when she came to leave was gracious and pretty, as had been every step of her behaviour. When Mrs. Stevenson held out her hand to say good-bye, Vaekehu took it, held it, and a moment smiled upon her; dropped it, and then, as upon a kindly afterthought, and with a sort of warmth of condescension, held out both hands and kissed my wife upon both cheeks. Given the same relation of years and rank, the thing would have been so done upon the boards of the Com6die Fran^aise; just so might Madame Brohan have warmed and condescended to Madame Broisat in the Marquis de Villemer. It was my part to accompany our guests ashore: when I kissed the little girl good-bye at the pier-steps, Vaekehu gave a cry of gratification reached down her hand into the boat, took mine, and pressed it with that flattering softness which seems the coquetry of the old lady in every quarter of the earth. The next moment she had taken Stanilao’s arm, and they moved off along the pier in the moonlight, leaving me bewildered. This was a queen of cannibals; she was tattooed from hand to foot, and perhaps the greatest masterpiece of that art now extant, so that a while ago, before she was grown prim, her leg was one of the sights of Taiohae; she had been passed from chief to chief; she had been fought for and taken in war; perhaps, being so great a lady, she had sat on the high place, and throned it there, alone of her sex, while the drums were going twenty strong and the priests carried up the blood-stained baskets of long-pig. And now behold her, out of that past of violence and sickening feasts, step forth in her age, a quiet, smooth, elaborate old lady, such as you might find at home (mittened also, but not often so well-mannered) in a score of country- houses. Only Vaekehu’s mittens were of dye, not of silk; and they had been paid for, not in money, but the cooked flesh of men. It came in my mind like a clap, what she could think of it herself, and whether at heart, perhaps, she might not regret and aspire after the barbarous and stirring past. But when I asked Stanilao: ‘Ah,’ said he, ‘she is content; she is religious, she passes all her days with the sisters.’ “[1]

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[1] In the South Seas, p. 14.

[2] Le Mariage de Loti, 49th edition, p. 101. Paris, Calmann-Levy, 1893.

And here was the farewell of Prince Stanilao, an intelligent and educated gentleman, from whom Stevenson had learned much of the history and condition of the islands, and with whom he had spent a long afternoon, telling him the story of Gordon, “and many episodes of the Indian Mutiny, Lucknow, the second battle of Cawnpore, the relief of Arrah, the death of poor Spottiswoode and Sir Hugh Rose’s hotspur midland campaign.” How many white men would have been at the pains to give so much instruction or so much pleasure to a native in a foreign possession? This is the result: “Ah, vous devriez rester ici, mon cher ami. Vous etes les gens qu’il faut pour les Kanaques; vous etes doux, vous et votre famille; vous seriez obeis dans toutes les lies.”[1]

It was the same at Anaho, the same afterwards in Atuona: he understood the natives; he treated them with understanding, and they liked him. The higher the rank, for the most part, the greater the liking, the more complete the appreciation. Vaekehu and Stanilao were the great folk of the archipelago; Stevenson, to whom snobbishness was unknown, found them also the most estimable.

“This is the rule in Polynesia, with few exceptions; the higher the family, the better the man — better in sense, better in manners, and usually taller and stronger in body. A stranger advances blindfold. He scrapes acquaintance as he can. Save the tattoo in the Marquesas, nothing indicates the difference in rank; and yet almost invariably we found, after we had made them, that our friends were persons of station."

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[1] In the South Seas, p. 81.

But his attention was by no means limited to natives; the behaviour that he enjoined on missionaries2 he * In tie Souti Seas, pp. 81, 87.

2 Appendix B, vol. ii. p. 229 63

exercised freely himself; to white men and half-castes he was equally genial and accessible. The governor and the gendarmes, the priests and the lay-brothers, the traders and the " Beach," all found him kindly and courteous, and the best of company.

The Resident carried him off to show him the prison, but it was empty; the women were gone calling and the men were shooting goats upon the mountains. The gendarmes told him stories of the Franco-German war, and gave him charming French meals. Of the missionaries, the portraits of the great and good Dordillon, the veteran bishop only just dead, and of Frere Michel, the architect, may be found in the South Sea volume; from Stevenson's notes I give the charming picture of Pere Simeon: —

"Pere Simeon, the small frail figure in the black robe drawing near under the palms; the girlish, kind and somewhat pretty face under the straw hat; the strong rustic Gascon accent; the sudden lively doffing of the hat, at once so French and so ecclesiastical; he was a man you could not look upon without visions of his peasant ancestors, worthy folk, sitting at home to-day in France, and rejoiced (I hope often) with letters from their boy. Down we sat together under the eaves of the house of Taipi-Kikino, and were presently deep in talk. I had feared to meet a missionary, feared to find the narrowness and the self-sufficiency that deface their publications, that too often disgrace their behaviour. There was no fear of it here; Pere Simeon admired these natives as I do myself, admired them with spiritual envy; the superior of his congregation had said to him on his departure: 'You are going among a people more civilised than we — peut-itre plus cinilis6s que nous-mimes': in spite of which warning, having read some books of travel on his voyage, he came to these shores (like myself) expecting to find them peopled with lascivious monkeys. Good Bishop Dordillon had opened his eyes: ' There are nothing but lies in books of travel,' said the bishop.

"What then was Pere Simeon doing here? The question rose in my mind, and I could see that he read the thought. Truly they were a people, on the whole, of a mind far liker Christ's than any of the races of Europe; no spiritual life, almost no family life, but a kindness, a generosity, a readiness to give and to forgive, without parallel; to some extent that was the bishop's doing; some of it had been since undone; death runs so busy in their midst, total extinction so instantly impended, that it seemed a hopeless task to combat their vices; as they were, they would go down in the abyss of things past; the watchers were already looking at the clock; Pere Simeon's business was the visitation of the sick, to smooth the pillows of this dying family of man."

In contrast to this melancholy vigil were Stevenson's ecstasy of life and the joy with which he entered into gathering shells upon the shore. Charles Kingsley was not happier when landed at last upon the tropical beach he had been longing all his life to see.

"Ashore to the cove and hunted shells, accordingto my prevision; but the delight of it was a surprise. To stand in the silver margin of the sea, now dry-shod, now buried to the ankle in the thrilling coolness, now higher than the knee; to watch, as the reflux drew n

down, wonderful marvels of colour and design fleeting between my feet, to grasp at, to miss, to seize them; and now to find them what they promised, and now to catch only maya of coloured sand, pounded fragments, and pebbles, that, as soon as they were dry, became as dull and homely as the flint upon a garden path. I toiled about this childish pleasure in the strong sun for hours, sharply conscious of my incurable ignorance, and yet too much pleased to be ashamed. Presently I came round upon the shelves that line the bottom of the cliff; and there, in a pool where the last of the surf sometimes irrupted, making it bubble like a spring, I found my best, that is, my strangest, shell. It was large, as large as a woman's head, rugged as rock, in colour variegated with green and orange; but alas, the ‘ poor inhabitant' was at home. On the struggles of conscience that ensued I scorn to dwell; but my curiosity, after several journeys in my hand, returned finally to his rock home, of whose sides he greedily laid hold, and he gained a second term of the pleasures of existence."

On August 22nd the Casco left Nukahiva, and arrived the following day at Taahauku in the island of Hiva-oa, a more remote and even more thinly populated island. Here they stayed twelve days, and here Stevenson and his family went through the ceremony of adoption into the family of Paa-aeua, the official chief of Atuona, while Mr. Osbourne " made brothers " also with the deposed hereditary chief, Moipu.

These observances meant anything or nothing, according to the desire of the initiated. 1 single them out for mention here because (apart from white men living among the Kanakas) they were offered to and accepted by those only who, like Bishop Dordillon, had a close intimacy and sympathy with the natives.

Here is the rough sketch of their last berth in the Marquesas: —

"24th August. — Taahauku is a very little anchorage, set between low points sparsely wooded with young palms, and opening above upon a woody valley. The next bay, Atuona, is set in a theatre of lofty mountains which dominate the more immediate setting of Taahauku and give the salient character of the scene. In the morning, when the sun falls directly on their front, they stand like a vast wall greened to the summit, watercourses here and there delineated on their face as narrow as cracks. But towards afternoon the light comes more obliquely, gorges yawn in undecipherable shadow, spurs and buttresses stand out, carved in sunlight; the whole range looks higher and more solemn, and wears a stern appearance of romance. It looks, and it very nearly is, impassable: shutting off the southwest corner of the island save by way of sea. A great part of the charm of Taahauku itself lies in the dominant contrast of that mountain barrier.

"The climate is that of the trade-winds; all night long, in fine weather, the same attenuated snowy clouds fleet over the moonlit heaven, or hang in mists upon the mountain, and day and night, save for the chill draughts of the land breeze, the same slightly varying and squally wind blows overhead. On one side of the anchorage the surf leaps white upon the rocks and keeps a certain blow-hole sounding and smoking like a cannon. The other side is smoother but still rocky; and the accepted landing-place is on the narrow beach at the shore end, where, after a race through the breaking waves, the seaman is landed in a somewhat damp condition. In front of him a little copra warehouse stands in the shadow of some trees, flitted about for ever by a clan of dwarfish swallows. A line of rails bends out of the mouth of the valley and comes to the bend of the beach; walking on which the newly arrived traveller presently becomes aware of a beautiful freshwater lagoon, with a boat-house, and behind that a grove of noble cocos."

But the time had come to start for Tahiti by a course lying through the Paumotusor Dangerous Archipelago, a group of numerous low islands, unlighted save for one or two pier-head lamps, and most inadequately laid down upon the chart.

For this reason at Taiohae they had shipped a mate who knew those waters well. The much-travelled Japanese cook had been returned to his home, and his place taken by a genuine Chinaman. Ah Fu came to the Marquesas as a child and had grown up among the natives; he now followed the fortunes of his new masters with entire devotion for two years, until the claims of his family were asserted and took him home reluctantly to China.1

1 Mrs. Stevenson writes: " In fact it broke his heart to go. Ah Fu had as strong a sense of romance as Louis himself. He returned to China with a belt of gold round his waist, a ninety-dollar breechloader given

him by Louis, and a boxful of belongings. His intention was to leave these great riches with a member of the family who lived outside the village, dress himself in beggar’s rags, and go to his mother’s house to solicit alms. He would draw from her the account of the son who had been lost when he was a little child; at the psy- On September 4th the Casco sailed, and three days later, before sunset, the captain expected to sight the first of the Paumotus.

It was not, however, till sunrise on the following morning that they saw land, and then it was not the island they had expected to make; in place of having been driven to the west, they had been swept by a current some thirty miles in the opposite direction. The first atoll was “flat as a plate in the sea, and spiked with palms of disproportioned altitude.” The next, seen some hours later, was “ lost in blue sea and sky: a ring of white beach, green underwood, and tossing palms, gem-like in colour; of a fairy, of a heavenly prettiness. The surf was all round it, white as snow, and broke at one point, far to seaward, on what seems an uncharted reef.”

Night fell again, and found them amid a wilderness of reefs corresponding so little with the maps that the schooner must lie to and wait for the morning.

The next day they ran on to Fakarava, and entered chological moment, when the poor lady was weeping, Ah Fu would cry out: ‘ Behold your son returned to you, not a beggar, as I appear, but a man of wealth!’ Ah Fu’s last speech to me was very unlike what one expects from a Chinaman. As well as I can recollect, he said: ‘ You think I no solly go way? I too much solly. My mother she forget me. You heart my mother. You my mother, not that woman. When boss go way to Molokai, you look see me? I no smile, no smile, allee time, work littee, go see ship come — work Iittee, go look see. Boss come, I make big feast. You go way, I no go look see ship; I no can, I no see, too much cly allee time in my eyes. You come, I smile, smile, no can make feast; my heart too muchee glad, no can cook.’“

Then China reabsorbed him, and he v/as seen no more. the lagoon in safety. It was a typical low island, some eighty miles in circumference by a couple of hundred yards broad, chosen to be the headquarters of the government only on account of two excellent passages in the barrier reef, one of which was sure to be always available.

In one respect they were fortunate: “ We were scarce well headed for the pass before all heads were craned over the rail. For the water, shoaling under our board, became changed in a moment to surprising hues of blue and grey; and in its transparency the coral branched and blossomed, and the fish of the inland sea cruised visibly below us, stained and striped, and even beaked like parrots. ... I have since entered, I suppose, some dozen atolls in different parts of the Pacific, and the experience has never been repeated. That exquisite hue and transparency of submarine day, and these shoals of rainbow fish, have not enraptured me again.”[1]

A fortnight spent in Fakarava passed uneventfully away. There were few inhabitants left on the island, which was never very populous at any time. Stevenson lived ashore in a house among the palms, where he learned much of the natives and their customs and beliefs from the half-caste Vice-Resident, M. Donat.

The chief wealth of the group lay in the beds of pearl- shell, but of this there was nothing to be seen at Fakarava. “In the lagoon was little pearl-shell, and there were many sharks. . . . There was no fishing, and it seemed unfit to leave the archipelago of pearls and have no sight of that romantic industry. On all other sides were isles, if I could only reach them, where divers were at work; but Captain Otis properly enough refused to approach them with the Casco, and my attempts to hire another vessel failed. The last was upon Francois’ cutter, where she lay down-up from her late shipwreck. She might be compared for safety to a New York cat-boat fortified with a bowsprit and a jib; and as I studied her lines and spars, desire to sail in her upon the high seas departed from my mind. ‘Je le pensais bien,’ said Francois.”

In the last week of September they left for Tahiti, and in two days were anchored safely at Papeete, the capital and port of entry of the Society group. Beautiful as all the high islands of the South Seas are, it is in Tahiti and its neighbours — the Otaheite of Captain Cook — that the extreme point of sublimity and luxuriance is reached. The vegetation is not less lovely, nor the streams and waterfalls less beautiful or less abundant than elsewhere, but the crags and pinnacles of the lofty mountains there are far more picturesque, and so abrupt that they are not smothered in the greenery which gives an appearance of tameness to other islands in the same latitudes.

Stevenson and his wife lived ashore in a small house, where he prepared his correspondence for the outgoing mail. He was very unwell; he went nowhere, saw no one of any interest, native or foreign, and soon grew tired of Papeete. A cold caught at Fakarava increased, with access of fever and an alarming cough. He mended a little, but Papeete was not a success, so after a time the Casco, with a pilot on board, took the party round to Taravao, on the south side of the island. On this passage they were twice nearly lost. The first day they had a long beat off the lee-shore of the island of Eimeo; and the following day were suddenly becalmed, and began to drift towards the barrier reef of Tahiti. “The reefs were close in,” wrote Stevenson,[1] “with, my eye! what a surf! The pilot thought we were gone, and the captain had a boat cleared, when a lucky squall came to our rescue. My wife, hearing the order given about the boats, remarked to my mother, ‘Is n’t that nice? We shall soon be ashore!’ Thus does the female mind unconsciously skirt along the verge of eternity.” Their danger was undoubtedly great, greater far than they suspected.

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[1] In the South Seas, p. 167.

The atmosphere at Taravao was close, and mosquitoes were numerous; by this time Stevenson was so ill that it was necessary, without a moment’s delay, to secure more healthy quarters. Accordingly his wife went ashore, and following a path, discovered the shanty of a Chinaman who owned a wagon and a pair of horses. These she hired to take them to Tautira, the nearest village of any size, a distance of sixteen miles over a road crossed by one-and-twenty streams. Stevenson was placed in the cart, and, sustained by small doses of coca, managed, with the help of his wife and Valentine, to reach his destination before he collapsed altogether. Being introduced at Tautira by the gendarme, they were asked an exorbitant rent for a suitable house, but they secured it, and there made the patient as comfortable as possible. The next day there arrived the Princess Moe, ex-Queen of Raiatea, one of the kindest and most charming of Tahitians, who lives in the pages of Pierre Loti and Miss Gordon Cumming. She had come to the village, and hearing there was a 1 Letters, ii. 137. white man very ill, she came over to the house. “ I feel that she saved Louis’ life,” writes Mrs. Stevenson. “He was lying in a deep stupor when she first saw him, suffering from congestion of the lungs and in a burning fever. As soon as he was well enough, she invited us to live with her in the house of Ori, the sub- chief of the village, and we gladly accepted her invitation.”

Meanwhile, at Taravao, it was discovered that the schooner’s jib-boom was sprung; it was duly spliced, and when Stevenson was really better, the Casco came round to Tautira. Here a more startling discovery was made, and the party learned what their true position had been two or three weeks before. The elder Mrs. Stevenson gave a feast on board to the women of Tautira, and one old lady offered up a prayer, asking that if anything were wrong with the masts it might be discovered in time. As soon as the guests were gone, the Yankee skipper, acting no doubt on the principle of keeping his powder dry, went aloft, and subjected the masts to a close examination. They were both almost eaten out with dry-rot. Had either of them gone by the board during the voyage in the Moorea channel, or off the reefs in any of the islands, nothing could have saved the Casco, even if her passengers and crew had escaped in one of the boats. It was now considered hardly safe for any one to remain on deck; but, with many reefs in her mainsail, the schooner was sent to Papeete, where the masts were patched up as far as was possible, no new spars of sufficient size being obtainable.

The intended visit to the neighbouring islands of 73

Huahine, Raiatea, and Borabora was abandoned, Stevenson and his party remaining at Tautira until the Casco should be ready to take them back to civilisation. His health again recovered, and he enjoyed the new conditions of life beyond words — scenery, climate, and company. Tautira was “ the most beautiful spot” and “its people the most amiable “ he had ever encountered. Except for the French gendarme and Pere Bruno, the priest, a Dutchman from Amsterdam who had forgotten his own language, the travellers had passed beyond the range of Europeans and lived in a Tahiti touched as little as might be by any foreign influence. They dwelt in one of the curious “bird-cage “ houses of the island, and were on the friendliest terms with all the village.

Their host, Ori, was a perpetual delight to them all. “A Life-guardsman in appearance,” as Mr. Osbourne describes him, “six foot three in bare feet; deep and broad in proportion; unconsciously English to an absurd extent; feared, respected, and loved.”

It was one of the happiest periods in the exile’s life, and perhaps in consequence his “journal,” an irregularly kept notebook, was dropped, never to be resumed. And so it happens that to this passage in his life he never returned, pen in hand, and of it he has left no other record than one or two pages in his correspondence.

He “actually went sea-bathing almost every day”; he collected songs and legends, materials for the great book; he began to work once more at his novel, The Master of Ballantrae, and “almost finished” it. At Moe’s instance special exhibitions of the old songs and dances of Tahiti were given for him in the hall of assembly in Tautira. He was adopted into the clan of the Tevas, to which Ori belonged, and exchanged names with that chief, who thenceforward signed himself as “Rui,”[1] Louis himself receiving also, in more formal fashion, the name of Teriitera.

He now wrote the greater part of his two Polynesian ballads, The Feast of Famine, relating to the Marquesas, and The Song of Rahtro, a genuine legend of the Tevas. In the same days, however, his music brought him to write for the old Scots tune of “Wandering Willie “ that most pathetic cry of his exile —

“Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?”

almost the only complaint, even in a dramatic form, that he ever allowed himself to make.

The repairs of the Casco took an unexpected time; the weather became bad, and a stormy sea and rivers in flood prevented any communication between Tautira and Papeete. The visitors used up all their money: Ori had taken charge of it for them and doled it out, a small piece at a time, until all was gone. Their supplies of food being exhausted, they were reduced to living on the bounty of the natives, and though Stevenson himself continued to eat sucking-pig with continual enjoyment, the others pined for a change. When time passed and no ship came, the whole country-side began to join in their anxiety. Each morning, as soon as the dawn lifted, a crowd ran to the beach, and the cry came back: “ E ita pahi! “ (No ship.)

At last Ori took a party of young men in a whale- boat, although the weather was still bad, and went to Papeete to find out the cause of the delay. “When 1 I.e. Louis: there being no L in Tahitian. Ori left,” says Mrs. Stevenson, “ we besought him not to go, for we knew he was risking the lives of himself and his men. Then he was gone a week overtime, which made us heart-sick. He brought back the necessary money and a store of provisions, and a letter from the captain telling us when to look for him. Amongst the food was a basket of champagne. The next day we gave a commemoration dinner to Ori, when we produced the champagne. Ori drank his glass and announced it beyond excellence, a drink for chiefs. ‘ I shall drink it continually,’ he added, pouring out a fresh glass. ‘ What is the cost of it by the bottle?’ Louis told him, whereupon Ori solemnly replaced his full glass, saying, ‘ It is not fit that even kings should drink a wine so expensive!’ It took him days to recover from the shock.”

At last the Casco was ready for sea, and on Christmas Day the party embarked for Honolulu. The farewell with Ori was heart-breaking, and all vowed never again to stay so long as two months in one place, or to form so deep and yet so brief a friendship.

They sighted the outlying Paumotus and the mail schooner, and after that their voyage was without other incident than squalls and calms. For a while they skirted hurricane weather, though nothing came, of it; but between calms and contrary winds their progress was slow, and they nearly ran out of provisions. “ We were nearly a week hanging about the Hawaiian group,” says Mr. Osbourne, “ drifting here and there with different faint slants of wind. We had little luxuries kept back for our farewell dinner — which took place at least three times with a diminishing splendour that finally struck bottom on salt horse. It was a strange experience to see the distant lights of Honolulu, and then go to bed hungry; to rise again in the morning and find ourselves, not nearer, but further off. When at last the weather altered and we got our wind, it was a snoring Trade, and we ran into the harbour like a steamboat. It was a dramatic entry for the overdue and much-talked-of Casco, flashing past the buoys and men-of-war, with the pilot in a panic of alarm. If the Casco ever did thirteen knots, she did it then.”

Arrived at Honolulu they found that their safety had been despaired of by all, including even Mrs. Stevenson’s daughter, Mrs. Strong, who was then living there with her husband and child.

Of the capital city of the Hawaiian kingdom it is difficult to give any true impression, so curious in those days was the mixture of native life and civilisation. To any one coming from the islands it seemed a purely American city — not of the second or even of the third rank, modified only by its position in the verge of the tropics; for any one who entered these latitudes and saw a native population for the first time, it must have been picturesque and exotic beyond words.

Stevenson sent the yacht back to San Francisco, and took a house at Waikiki, some four miles from Honolulu along the coast. Here he took up his abode in a lanai — a sort of large pavilion, off which the bedrooms opened, built on native lines, and provided only with jalousied shutters; and here he settled down in earnest to finish The Master of Ball antrae — “the hardest job I ever had to do “ — already running in Scrihnefs Magazine, and to be completed within a given time. He did not end his task till May — “ The Master is finished, and I am quite a wreck and do not care for literature “ — for it went against the grain, with the result that the Canadian scenes have the effect rather of a hasty expedient than of the deliberate climax of the plot.1 So careful was Stevenson in his workmanship, and so accurate in his knowledge of Scotland, that it is curious to find him stumbling at the very outset of his tale, and giving an impossible title to his hero, for by invariable Scottish usage James Durie would have been “ Master of Durrisdeer” and not “of Ballantrae.” Stevenson was afterwards aware of the slip, but had fancied that there were instances to the contrary. However, his cousin, Sir James Balfour Paul, Lyon King-at-Arms, tells me that he can find “no exact precedent for the eldest son of a baron assuming a title as Master differing in name from that which his father bore.”2

But this was a point of mere antiquarian detail, which in no way interfered with the appreciation of his read-

1 Compare vol. ii. p. 38.

2 The only other slip in reference to Scotland which, so far as I am aware, has been found in Stevenson’s works, is the statement that Gaelic was still spoken in Fife as late as the middle of the eighteenth century (Catriona, p. 191; Letters, ii. 248). This was based on a statement of Burt to the effect that the families of Fife, when their sons went to the Lowlands as apprentices, made it a condition in the indentures of apprenticeship that they should be taught English. Sheriff /Eneas Mackay, the chief historical authority on Fife, very kindly informs me that he doubts the fact and the authority of Burt, and after adducing various evidence against the possibility of this survival, concludes: “The Ochils bordered on the Celtic line, and 1

should not like to affirm that Gaelic may not have lingered there till the sixteenth century. I don't think it did later, or that it was habitually spoken after the twelfth or thirteenth century." ers; and when the story was finally published in the autumn, it was at once recognised on all hands as the sternest and loftiest note of tragedy which its author had yet delivered. "I 'm not strong enough to stand writing of that kind," said Sir Henry Yule, on his deathbed, to Mr. Crockett, who had been reading it to him; "it's grim as the road to Lucknow."

In the meantime, though Stevenson was constantly unwell, even his want of health at the worst of these times was very different from his invalid life at Bournemouth. He retired with his wife to a small and less draughty cottage about a hundred yards from the lanai, and there continued his work as before.

The little colony was very comfortably settled. Valentine had left their service and departed to America, but Ah Fu had established himself in the kitchen with his pots and pans.

In spite of his worse health, Stevenson was able to go about as usual, and saw a good many people, especially in the large circle of his stepdaughter's acquaintance. Through this connection he found from the beginning a ready entrte to the Royal Palace, where Kalakaua, the last of the Hawaiian kings, held his court ofYvetot: a large, handsome, genial, dissipated monarch, a man of real ability and iron constitution, versed beyond any of his subjects in the history and legends of his kingdom. From the very beginning of the acquaintance his relations with Stevenson were most friendly in no conventional sense. They genuinely liked one another from the start, and Kalakaua, holding out every inducement, really tried very hard to get his visitor to settle in Hawaii.

At Honolulu Stevenson already began to hear a good deal of Samoa and its troubles, for several of his new friends had formed part of the amazing embassy Kalakaua had sent to Apia in the preceding year to propose a native federation of the Polynesian Islands. It was on the information now received that he was driven to write the first of his letters to the Times.

The letter appeared on the 11 th March, and before the week was out there occurred the great Samoan hurricane which sunk or stranded six men-of-war in the harbour of Apia, when the Calliope alone, by virtue of her engines, steamed out of the gap in the very teeth of the gale.

Immediately afterwards, Stevenson records a curious episode at Honolulu in a letter to Mr. Baxter: —

"2jth April, 1889. — A pretty touch of seaman manners: the English and American Jacks are deadly rivals: well, after all this hammering of both sides by the Germans, and then the news of the hurricane from Samoa, a singular scene occurred here the Sunday before last. The two church parties sponte propria fell in line together, one Englishman to one American, and marched down to the harbour like one ship's company. None were more surprised than their own officers. I have seen a hantle of the seaman on this cruise; I always liked him before; my first crew on the Casco (five sea-lawyers) near cured me; but I have returned to my first love."

At Samoa we shall see that he had many friends in the navy; and in nothing did he take more delight than in their company and friendship. Of this there was already a beginning at Honolulu with the wardroom of H. B. M. S. Cormorant. "I had been twice to lunch on board, and H. B. M.'s seamen are making us hammocks; so we are very naval. But alas, the Cormorant is only waiting her relief, and I fear there are not two ships of that stamp in all the navies of the world."

The hammocks were part of his preparations for a new cruise. He had arrived with the intention of crossing America during the course of the summer, and so returning to England, with ultimate views of Madeira as a winter refuge. But even Honolulu was too cold for him, and by the end of March he was full of another scheme of South Sea travel. This time his voyage was to be to the Gilbert Islands to the southwest, on board the vessel belonging to the Boston Mission or whatever other craft he could induce to take him. His mother decided to return to Scotland and visit her sister, but his wife and stepson looked eagerly forward to sharing with him this new experience.

In the end of April he paid a visit by himself to the lee-shore of the island of Hawaii, which is seen by tourists only, if at all, upon their way to the active crater of Kilauea, situated on the slopes of the lofty volcano of Mauna Loa. Even the lower crater is four thousand feet above the sea, and the climate in that region is often bleak and rainy. Accordingly Stevenson did not turn his steps in its direction, but spent a week on the coast-lands, living with a native judge, taking long rides, and seeing and learning as much of native life and characteristics as lay within his reach; the most thrilling event of the visit being the departure of some natives to be immured in the lazaretto of Molokai. n 81

A month later he visited the island of Molokai itself, and spent by special permission a week in the leper settlement. Father Damien had died on the 15th of April, so that Stevenson heard only by report of the man whose memory he did so much to vindicate.

The scene of Damien's labours is one of the most striking places in the world. A low promontory, some three miles long, with a village upon either side of it, lies at the foot of a beetling precipice that shuts it off from the remainder of the island, to which there is no access except by a most difficult bridle-track. Hither, since 1865, have been sent all persons in the group who are found to have contracted leprosy, and here they are tended by doctor and priest, by officers and sisters and nurses, until they die. Who can do justice to such a place, to such a scene? Here Stevenson spent a week, and afterwards wrote a fragmentary and incomplete account of his visit. The best record of it is contained in the letters written at the time to his wife, and shortly afterwards to James Payn and Mr. Colvin. The description of his landing cannot be omitted.

"Our lepers were sent [from the steamer] in the first boat, about a dozen, one poor child very horrid, one white man leaving a large grown family behind him in Honolulu, and then into the second stepped the sisters and myself. I do not know how it would have been with me had the sisters not been there. My horror of the horrible is about my weakest point; but the moral loveliness at my elbow blotted all else out; and when I found that one of them was crying, poor soul, quietly under her veil, I cried a litie myself; then I felt as right as a trivet, only a little crushed to be there so uselessly. I thought it was a sin and a shame she should feel unhappy; I turned round to her, and said something like this: 'Ladies, God himself is here to give you welcome. I'm sure it is good for me to be beside you; I hope it will be blessed to me; I thank you for myself and the good you do me.' It seemed to cheer her up; but indeed I had scarce said it when we were at the landing-stairs, and there was a great crowd, hundreds of (God save us!) pantomime masks in poor human flesh, waiting to receive the sisters and the new patients.

"... Gilfillan, a good fellow, I think, and far from a stupid, kept up his hard Lowland Scottish talk in the boat while the sister was covering her face; but I believe he knew, and did it (partly) in embarrassment, and part perhaps in mistaken kindness. And that was one reason, too, why I made my speech to them. Partly, too, I did it because I was ashamed to do so, and remembered one of my golden rules, 'When you are ashamed to speak, speak up at once.' But, mind you, that rule is only golden with strangers; with your own folks, there are other considerations."[1]

His general conclusions at the time were thus expressed: — "On the whole, the spectacle of life in this marred and moribund community, with its idleness, its furnished table, its horse-riding, music, and gallantries under the shadow of death, confounds the expectations of the visitor. He cannot observe with candour, but he must see it is not only good for the world, but best for the lepers themselves to be thus set apart. The place is a huge hospital, but a hospital under extraordinary conditions; in which the disease, though both 1 Letters,

ii. 154-156. ugly and incurable, is of a slow advance; in which the patients are rarely in pain, often capable of violent exertion, all bent on pleasure, and all, within the limits of the precinct, free. . . . The case of the children is by far the most sad; and yet (thanks to Damien, and that great Hawaiian lady, the kind Mrs. Bishop, and to the kind sisters) their hardship has been minimised. Even the boys in the still rude boys' home at Kalawao appeared cheerful and youthful; they interchange diversions in the boy's way; one week are all for football, and the next the devotees of marbles or of kites: have fiddles, drums, guitars, and penny whistles: some can touch the organ, and all combine in concerts. As for the girls in the Bishop Home, of the many beautiful things I have been privileged to see in life, they, and what has been done for them, are not the least beautiful. When I came there first, the sisters and the majority of the boarders were gone up the hill upon a weekly treat, guava-hunting; and only Mother Mary Anne and the specially sick were left at home. I was told things which I heard with tears, of which I sometimes think at night, and which I spare the reader; I was shown the sufferers then at home; one, I remember, white with pain, the tears standing in her eyes. But, thank God, pain is not the rule in this revolting malady: and the general impression of the house was one of cheerfulness, cleanliness, and comfort. The dormitories were airy, the beds neatly made; at every bed-head was a trophy of Christmas cards, pictures, and photographs, some framed with shells, and all arranged with care and taste. In many of the beds, besides, a doll lay pillowed. I was told that, in that artificial life, the eldest and the youngest were equally concerned with these infantile playthings, and the dressmaking, in particular, was found an inexhaustible resource. Plays of their own arrangement were a favourite evening pastime. They had a croquet set; and it was my single useful employment during my stay in the lazaretto to help them with that game.[1] I know not if the interest in croquet survived my departure, but it was lively while I stayed; and the last time I passed there on my way to the steamer's boat and freedom, the children crowded to the fence and hailed and summoned me with cries of welcome. 1 wonder I found the heart to refuse the invitation."

After leaving the confines of the leper settlement the steamer landed him upon another part of the island, where he and the captain took horse and rode a long way to the house of some Irish folk, where Stevenson slept. Next day he continued with a native guide until he reached the summit of the pass above Kalawao, down which alone the settlement could be entered by land. Here the overseer lived, and with him Stevenson stayed and had much talk.

Of his ride across the island he wrote: — "Maui behind us towered into clouds and the shadow of clouds. The bare opposite island of

Lanai — the reef far out, enclosing a dirty, shoal lagoon — a range of fishponds, large as docks, and the slope of the shady beach 1 He was advised by Mother Mary Anne to wear gloves when he played croquet with the leper children. He would not do it, however, as he thought it might remind them of their condition. After he returned to Honolulu he sent Mother Mary Anne a grand piano for her leper girls.

on which we mostly rode, occupied the left hand. On the right hand the mountain rose in steeps of red clay and spouts of disintegrated rock, sparsely dotted with the white-flowering cow-thistle. Here and there along the foreshore stood a lone pandanus, and once a trinity of dishevelled palms. In all the first part of that journey, I recall but three houses and a single church. Plenty of horses, kine, and sullen-looking bulls were there, but not a human countenance. ‘Where are the people?’ I asked. ‘Pau Kanaka maki: done: people dead,’ replied the guide, with the singular childish giggle which the traveller soon learns to be a mark of Polynesian sensibility.

“We rode all the time by the side of the great fishponds, the labour (you would say) of generations. The riches and the agriculture of Molokai awoke of yore the envy of neighbouring kings. Only last century a battle was fought upon this island in which it has been computed that thousands were engaged; and he who made the computation, though he lived long after, had seen and counted, when the wind blew aside the sands, the multitude of bones and skulls. There remains the evidence of the churches, not yet old and already standing in a desert, the monuments of vanished congregations. Pau Kanaka maht. A sense of survival attended me upon my ride, and the nervous laughter of Apaka sounded in my ears not quite unpleasantly. The place of the dead is clean; there is a poetry in empty lands.

“A greener track received us; smooth shore-side grass was shaded with groves and islets of acacias; the hills behind, from the red colour of the soil and the sin- gularity ot the formation, had the air of a bare Scottish moorland in the bleak end of autumn; and the resemblance set a higher value on the warmth of the sun and the brightness of the sea. I wakened suddenly to remember Kalaupapa and my playmates of two days before. Could I have forgotten? Was I happy again? Had the shadow, the sorrow, and the obligation faded already?”

From this expedition he returned to complete his preparations for immediate departure. The family now possessed an unrivalled fund of information about “the Islands,” and had accumulated not only the necessary stores but also a collection of all the resources of civilisation best fitted to appeal to the native heart, ranging from magic lanterns and American hand-organs to “ cheap and bad cigars.” The only difficulty was the ship, and the Morning Star not being available, the Equator, a trading schooner of sixty-two tons register, Captain Denis

Reid, was chartered. The terms agreed upon were original and entertaining; Stevenson paid a lump sum down for a four months' cruise, with a proviso for renewal, if necessary. The ship agreed for a fixed daily extra price to land at any place in the line of its trading cruise on Stevenson's written demand. On the other hand, when it stopped anywhere for its own business, were it only to land a sewing-machine or to take on board a ton of copra, it was bound, if the charterer so desired, to remain there three days without extra charge.

The 24th of June arrived: Stevenson and his wife and stepson were on board with the indispensable Ah Fu, and the schooner was ready to cast off. At the last moment two fine carriages drove down at full speed to the wharf and there deposited King Kalakaua and a party of his native musicians. There was but a minute for good-bye and a parting glass, for Kalakaua had none of Ori's scruples over champagne. The king returned to shore and stood there waving his hand, while from the musicians, lined up on the very edge of the wharf, came the tender strains of a farewell.

CHAPTER XIV

SOUTH SEA CRUISES — THE CENTRAL PACIFIC, JUNE, 1889 — APRIL, 1891

“I will never leave the sea, I think; it is only there that a Briton lives: my poor grandfather, it is from him that 1 inherit the taste, I fancy, and he was round many islands in his day; but I, please God, shall beat him at that before the recall is sounded. . . . Life is far better fun than people dream who fall asleep among the chimney- stacks and telegraph wires.” — Letters, ii. 162.

The object of the new cruise for Stevenson was to visit a native race of a different character from those he had already seen, living as far as was still possible under purely natural conditions. The Gilberts are a group of some sixteen low islands of no great size, densely populated, situated close to the Equator. At this time they were independent, nearly every island being governed by its own king or council of elders. Scenery in all of them is reduced to the simplest elements, a strand with cocoanut-palms and pandanus, and the sea — one island differing from another only in having or not having an accessible lagoon in its centre; in none of them is the highest point of land as much as twenty feet above sea-level. This very flatness and absence of striking features render the islands a more perfect theatre for effects of light and cloud, while the splendours of the sea are further enhanced by the contrast of the rollers breaking on the reef and the still lagoon sleeping within the barrier, of the dark depths of ocean outside and the brilliant shoal-water varying infinitely in hue with the inequalities of the shallows within.

Stevenson’s former experience lay, his future was almost entirely to lie, among the Polynesians — the tall, fine, copper-coloured race, speaking closely allied dialects of the same language, and including among their family the Hawaiians, Marquesans, Tahitians, Samoans, and the Maoris of New Zealand. The Gilbert and Marshall natives, on the other hand, are Micronesians — darker, shorter, and to my taste less comely folk- speaking languages widely removed from the Polynesian — people with a dash of black blood, stricter in morals and more ferocious, with an energy and backbone which the others but rarely possess. It is noteworthy that Polynesians never commit suicide; on the Line jt is not uncommon; and the frequent causes are unrequited love, or grief for the dead.

When this visit should be finished, the travellers were not finally committed to any plan, but their latest intention was to proceed to the Marshalls and thence to the Carolines, and so “ return to the light of day by way of Manila and the China ports.”

Scarcely, however, were they at sea before these schemes were modified. One moonlight night, in the neighbourhood of Johnstone Island, the talk fell upon the strange history of the loss of the brigantine Wandering Minstrel, and from this germ was quickly developed the plot of The Wrecker. The life of cruising was for the time all that Stevenson could desire: after the depression of Honolulu he had entirely recovered his health and spirits on the open sea, and the only difficulty in continuing his cure was its great expense. Surely if he possessed a schooner of his own, he might make his home on board and pay the current charges, at all events in part, by trading. So The Wrecker was to be written and sent to a publisher from Samoa, and there with the proceeds they were to buy a schooner, stock the trade-room, and start upon their wanderings under the guidance of Denis Reid, who threw himself heart and soul into the spirit of the new venture.

It was a wild scheme. Versatile as Stevenson was, it is impossible even to think of him as a “ South Sea merchant,” haggling with natives over the price of copra[1] and retailing European goods to them at a necessarily exorbitant rate. But the project, though never realised, did finally determine the course of his life, for instead of taking him to Ponape, Guam, and the Philippines, it sent him south to Samoa, there to take up his abode and live and die.

In the meanwhile the first part of the voyage was safely performed, and the schooner arrived at the town of Butaritari in the island of Great Makin. Under ordinary conditions a white man, if he conducted himself reasonably, might wander through all the group in perfect safety, but the arrival of the Equator fell at an unpropitious moment. For the first and probably the only time in his wanderings, Stevenson was in real danger of violence from natives.

The two principal firms trading in Butaritari belonged to San Francisco; the missionaries in the group were sent there by the Boston Society, and the influence of American ideas was considerable. Nine days before Stevensons arrival was the Fourth of July; the king of Butaritari had observed the festival with enthusiasm, but not wisely, nor in accordance with missionary views, for he had removed the taboo upon spirits which ordinarily was imposed for all his subjects.

Neither sovereign nor courtiers had been sober since, and though, with a lofty Sabbatarianism, the king declined to be photographed upon a Sunday, it was not to be supposed that he could be refused more drink if he offered to purchase it at the usual price. There was this further difficulty in the way of restoring sobriety to his dominions, that even if one firm declined to supply him, there was the rival house, which, having as yet sold less of its liquor, might be less

[1] The dried kernel of the cocoanut, largely used in making soap, candles, oil-cake, etc.

anxious for the special open season to come to an end. So the carnival continued for ten days more, and all the white men could do was to get out their pistols and show in public such skill as they possessed in shooting at a mark.

Twice a large stone was hurled at Stevenson as he sat in his verandah at dusk, just as the lamp was brought out and placed beside him. He now entered into negotiations with the German manager of the other firm, whom he found to take a far more serious view of the situation than any of them, and whom he induced by diplomacy to discontinue to supply the natives. The crisis was now reached: would the populace, irritated by refusal, carry either of the bars with a rush?

Fortunately all passed off smoothly. The king came to his senses, and the taboo was re-imposed. Quiet was restored, and only just in time, for a day or two later a large body of rather turbulent natives arrived from the next island for a dance competition, quite ready to profit by any political trouble.

The danger having been averted, the party lived at peace in the house of Maka, the Hawaiian missionary, one of the most lovable of men. They saw the dances, they gave exhibitions of their magic lantern, and as all pictures were supposed to be photographs, and photographs could only be taken from actual scenes, their slides of Bible history brought about a distinct religious reaction among the people. They made friends with various natives, but the end of their stay was by comparison tame and dull, and after about a month the Equator returned and carried them away.

The terms of the elaborate charter party were entirely disregarded. The captain from the beginning acted as though the vessel were Stevenson’s yacht, and went or stayed according to the wishes of his passenger. Stevenson, on his part, took a keen interest in the ship’s fortunes, and was as eager to secure copra as any one on board. The captain acted as showman of the group. “ I remember once,” says Mr. Osbourne, “ that he banged the deck with a marlinspike and called below to Louis: ‘Come on deck, quick, Kaupoi; here’s the murderer and the poisoner I told you of, coming off in a boat.’“ It was Stevenson’s fate in the Pacific, at the times when he was most anxious about his finances, to be regarded by the natives as the wealthiest of men, and addressed accordingly. Thus “ Kaupoi “ in the Gilberts and “Ona” in Samoa are equivalent to “Dives,” or “Richie,” as Stevenson himself used to render it. “Ona,” by the way, is not a genuine Samoan word, but” owner,” the wealthy and powerful person whom even ship-captains obey.

They visited the island of Nonuti, and were then continuing on a southward course, when the wind veered and they made for Apemama, a large island ruled by the despot Tembinok’, who allowed no white man in his kingdom. As an exceptional favour, however, granted only after a long inspection of the party and two days devoted to consideration, Stevenson and his family were admitted as the special guests of the king. He cleared a site for them, pitched four houses upon it for their accommodation, and tabooed with a death penalty their well and their enclosure against all his subjects. The settlement was begun to the discharge of a rifle; the cook who was lent to the Steven- sons, and was guilty of gross misbehaviour, received six shots from the king's Winchester over his head, at his feet, and on either side of him; and though no life was actually taken while the white men were on the island, yet the power of life and death in the king's hands was plainly shown to be no obsolete prerogative.

In Apemama the party spent a couple of months in daily intercourse with this very remarkable personage, with whom they entered into close relations of friendship. Of all the chiefs Stevenson knew in the Pacific, Ori, the Tahitian, was probably the one for whom he had most affection; Mataafa, in Samoa, probably he most respected; but Tembinok' was unquestionably the strongest character, and the man who interested him the most. Who that has read the South Sea chapters has forgotten his appearance?

"A beaked profile like Dante's in the mask, a mane of long black hair, the eye brilliant, imperious, and inquiring; for certain parts in the theatre, and to one who could have used it, the face was a fortune. His voice matched it well, being shrill, powerful, and uncanny, with a note like a sea-bird's. Where there are no fashions, none to set them, few to follow them if they were set, and none to criticise, he dresses — as Sir Charles Grandison lived — 'to his own heart.' Now he wears a woman's frock, now a naval uniform, now (and more usually) figures in a masquerade costume of his own design — trousers and a singular jacket with shirt-tails, the cut and fit wonderful for island workmanship, the material always handsome, sometimes green velvet, sometimes cardinal-red silk. This masquerade becomes him admirably. I see him now come pacing towards me in the cruel sun, solitary, a figure out of Hoffmann."1

In spite of this grotesque disguise, there was nothing ridiculous about the man. He had been a fighter and a conqueror, "the Napoleon" of his group; he was, besides, a poet, a collector, the sole trader and man of business, and a shrewd judge of mankind. Having admitted the missionaries to his island, he had learned to read and write; having found the missionaries interfering, as he thought, with his trade and his government, without hesitation he had banished them from his domains.

For the account of this unique society, this masterful sway, I must refer the reader to the seventy pages of Stevenson's own description, which were the part of his diary least disappointing to himself. It could hardly 1 In tit Souti Seas, p. 310. be told in fewer words, and extracts can do it no justice. It is the more valuable in that it represents a state of things which is gone for ever. Only four years later, when I visited the island, all was changed. Tembinok' was dead, the Gilbert Islands had been annexed by Great Britain, and a boy was king under the direction of a British Resident. How severe the old discipline had been was proclaimed by a large " speak-house" at Tuagana, some two hours' sail down the coast, where all round the interior of the house, at the end of the roof-beams, there had been a set of eight-and-forty human skulls, of which nearly twenty were still remaining. The house had been built by Tembinok"s father, and the heads were those of malefactors, both white and native, or, at all events, of people who had caused displeasure to the king. The Stevensons had never heard of the existence of this place from Tembinok', though his father's grave was here, and here also were lying the two finest sea-going canoes in all the island.

But for the history of Tembir.ok', and for Stevenson's experience — how he was mesmerised for a cold by a native wizard, and how, with many searchings of conscience, he bought for Mr. Andrew Lang the devil- box of Apemama, the reader must go — and will thank me for sending him — to Stevenson's own pages. I will quote here only the king's leave-taking of his guest, and the impression which Stevenson had produced upon this wild, stern, and original nature: —

"As the time approached for our departure Tembinok' became greatly changed; a softer, more melancholy, and, in particular, a more confidential man appeared in his stead. To my wife he contrived laboriously to ex- plain that though he knew he must lose his father in the course of nature, he had not minded nor realised it till the moment came; and that now he was to lose us, he repeated the experience. We showed fireworks one evening on the terrace. It was a heavy business; the sense of separation was in all our minds, and the talk languished. The king was specially affected, sat disconsolate on his mat, and often sighed. Of a sudden one of the wives stepped forth from a cluster, came and kissed him in silence, and silently went again. It was just such a caress as we might give to a disconsolate child, and the king received it with a child's simplicity. Presently after we said good-night and withdrew; but Tembinok' detained Mr. Osbourne, patting the mat by his side and saying: ' Sit down. I feel bad, I like talk.' ' You like some beer? ' said he; and one of the wives produced a bottle. The king did not partake, but sat sighing and smoking a meerschaum pipe. 'I very sorry you go,' he said at last. ' Miss Stlevens he good man, woman he good man, boy he good man; all good man. Woman he smart all the same man. My woman,' glancing towards his wives, ‘ he good woman, no very smart. I think Miss Stlevens he big chiep all the same cap’n man-o’-wa’. 1 think Miss Stlevens he rich man all the same me. All go schoona. I very sorry. My patha he go, my uncle he go, my cutcheons he go, Miss Stlevens he go: all go. You no see king cry before. King all the same man: feel bad, he cry. I very sorry.’

“In the morning it was the common topic in the village that the king had wept. To me he said: ‘Last night I no can ‘peak: too much here,’ laying his hand upon his bosom. ‘ Now you go away all the same my pamily. My brothers, my uncle go away. All the same.’ This was said with a dejection almost passionate. . . . The same day he sent me a present of two corselets, made in the island fashion of plaited fibre, heavy and strong. One had been worn by his grandfather, one by his father, and, the gift being gratefully received, he sent me, on the return of his messengers, a third — that of his uncle. . . .

“The king took us on board in his own gig, dressed for the occasion in the naval uniform. He had little to say, he refused refreshments, shook us briefly by the hand, and went ashore again. That night the palmtops of Apemama had dipped behind the sea, and the schooner sailed solitary under the stars.”[1]

The remainder of Stevenson’s notes on the Gilberts relate chiefly to the white, or, at any rate, the alien population of the group, which at that date was naturally a sort of No Man’s Land — one of the last refuges for the scoundrels of the Pacific. Not that all the traders by any means were black sheep; some of them and some of the captains and mates working in those waters were decent fellows enough, but among them were thieves, murderers, and worse, patriots who showed an uncommon alacrity in changing their nationality when any man-of-war of their own government happened to come their way. When the Gilberts were finally annexed in 1892, a labour vessel took a shipload of these gentry on board, bound for a South American republic, which, fortunately for that State, they never reached — the vessel being lost at sea with all hands.

[1] In tie South Seas, p. 378. Of the stories that were then current Stevenson collected a number, and had he been a realist, his readers might have been depressed through many volumes by the gloom and squalor of these tragedies; as it was, he utilised only a little of what he had actually seen as material for the darker shadows in the romantic and spirited Beach of Falesd.

After returning to Butaritari, the Equator, with Stevenson and his party on board, left for Samoa. The trip was tedious but for the excitement of running by night between the three different positions assigned by the charts to a reef which possibly had no real existence.

There were the usual squalls, in one of which, during the night, the safety of the ship depended entirely on the cutting of a rope. The foretopmast snapped across and the foresail downhaul fouled in the wreckage, but Ah Fu climbed to the top of the galley with his knife, and the position was saved. Next morning, however, the signal halyard had disappeared, nor was its loss accounted for until several weeks afterwards, when the Chinaman presented his mistress with a neat coil of the best quality of rope. He had once heard her admiring it, and took occasion of the squall and extremity of danger to procure it for her as a present.

The schooner arrived about the 7th of December at Apia, the capital and port of Upolu, the chief of the group known collectively as Samoa[1] or the Navigator Islands, which Stevenson now saw for the first time, and which he had every intention of leaving finally within two months of his arrival.

The Equator's charter now came to an end. Hiring a cottage in the hamlet a mile above the town, Stevenson began to collect the material necessary for those chapters which should be allotted to Samoa in his book upon the South Seas. This obtained, he proposed to start at once for Sydney, and thence proceed to England.

The Samoan record, as he anticipated from the outset, would deal chiefly with the history of the recent war, and for this he engaged in a most painstaking and — so far as I can judge — most successful judicial investigation into the actual facts and the course of events within the last few years. It is difficult for any one who has not lived hard by a South Sea " Beach " to realise how contradictory and how elusive are its rumours, and how widely removed from anything of the nature of " evidence." But into this confused mass Stevenson plunged, making inquiries of every one to whose statements he could attach any importance, American or English or German (my order is alphabetical), and invoking the aid of interpreters for native sources of information. He weighed and sifted his information with the greatest care, and I have never heard any of the main results contested which were embodied in A Foot-note to History.

For the sake of this work he lived chiefly in Apia,[1] at the house of an American trader, Mr. H. J. Moors. He made the acquaintance of Colonel de Coetlogon, the English consul, with whom he maintained the most friendly terms, who had been with Gordon in Khartoum; of Dr. Stuebel, the German Consul-General, perhaps the ablest and most enlightened, and certainly not the least honourable diplomatist that the Great Powers ever sent to the South Seas; of the Rev. W. E. Clarke and other members of the London Mission, his warm friends then and in later days; and especially of the high chief Mataafa, who impressed him at once as the finest of the Samoans.

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[1] The first two syllables are long: Sa-moa; similarly Vai-lima; but Fale-sa. The first A in A-pia is shorter, but the vowel-sounds throughout are as in Italian. The consonants are as in English, but g = ng. Thus Pagopago is pronounced Pangopango. &

[1] For convenience I have spoken throughout of the whole town as Apia, though the name is in strict usage limited to one of its four districts.

It was the only time Stevenson ever lived in Apia or its immediate suburbs, and a few words in passing should be devoted to the Beach with which now, more than at any time, he was brought into contact. This term, common to other South Sea islands, comprises, as I understand, every white resident in a place who has not some position that can be definitely described: in the last instance it denotes the mere beach-combers, loafers or mean whites, although most people would include in it all persons of markedly less consideration than themselves. There was much kindliness and generosity even among the lowest, and not more want of energy or of scruple than might have been expected. There was also a genial readiness to believe rumours, balanced by a willingness to think no worse of the persons against whom they were told. It might have been described as a society for investigation but not for promulgation of the truth. The number of white or half-caste residents in Apia was supposed to be about three hundred, of whom about two-thirds were British subjects, the bulk of the remainder being Germans.

At first Stevenson was not greatly struck either by 101 the place or by the natives; the island was " far less beautiful than the Marquesas or Tahiti; a more gentle scene, gentler acclivities, a tamer face of nature; and this much aided, for the wanderer, by the great German plantations, with their countless regular avenues of palms." Nor was he "specially attracted by the people; but they are courteous; the women very attractive, and dress lovely; the men purposelike, well set up, tall, lean, and dignified."

In the end of December he made a boat expedition with Mr. Clarke some dozen miles to the east, partly on mission business, and partly on his own account to visit Tamasese, the chief whom the Germans had formerly set up as king; not long afterwards he made a similar journey to the west to Malua, where the London Mission have long had a training college for native students. It was on this latter occasion that he was first introduced to the natives by the Rev. J. E. Newell as " Tusitala," " The Writer of Tales" the name by which he was afterwards most usually known in Samoa. Here he gave an address which was translated for their benefit;[1] and a few days later he delivered a lecture in Apia upon his travels, on behalf of a native church, Dr. Stuebel taking the chair.

From his notes made on the first expedition I draw one or two passages, descriptive of Samoan customs and of Samoan scenery, which is nowhere more beautiful than in the inlet he then visited.

"Dec. ji, '89.

"At the mission station, the most enchanting scene: troops of children and young girls in that enchanting 1 Appendix A.

diversity of bright attire which makes a joy to the eye of any Samoan festival; some in tapa1 crinolined out, some in gaudy tabards, some in the sleeveless bodice of black velvet; one little girlie in a titiof russet leaves, herself crowned with the red flower of royalty, for all the world like a pantomime fairy, only her lendings were not of tinsel, but still glittered with the raindrops of the morning. They came in a certain order, one standing by to let another pass, these singing as they came, those as they waited. The strains were almost as pleasant to the ear as the colours and the bright young faces to the eye; the words were now conventional and applicable to any malaga, now composed or prepared against the present occasion. Each little gaudy band of choristers approached the open apse of the mission-house, where we sat installed, walking in loose array, their gifts of taro, or sugar-cane, shouldered gallantly like muskets, one girl in special finery leading with a chicken in her arms, and every foot in time; they paused some paces off, ending their compliment with more boisterous enunciation, rose to a last high note, and suddenly with a medley of shrill shouts hurled all their offerings one upon another in front of us, broke up their ranks with laughter, and dispersed. One of our boat's crew gathered up the offerings, and a high voice like a herald's proclaimed the name of the village and the number and nature of the gifts. And before he had well spoken a fresh troop was drawing near, with a new song. . . .

1 Tapa, native cloth made of mulberry bark; titi, something between a girdle and a skirt; malaga, excursion, visiting party; taro, the edible root of the Arum esculentum. " Fagaloa, Dec. 31st.

"Past Falefa, where the reef ends and the coaster enters on the open sea, all prettinesses, as if they were things of shelter, end. The hills are higher and more imminent, and here and there display naked crags. The surf beats on bluff rocks, still overhung with forest; the boat, still navigated foolishly near the broken water, is twisted to and fro with a drunken motion, in the backwash and broken water of the surf; and though to-day it is exceptionally smooth, another boat that crosses us appears only at intervals and for a moment on the blue crest of the swells. At last, rounding a long spit of rocks on which the sea runs wildly high, the bay, gulf, or rather (as the one true descriptive word) the loch of Fagaloa opens. The oarsmen rest awhile upon their oars. 'Thank you for your rowing,' says Mr. Clarke — the conventional allocution: the conventional answer comes, ' Thank you for your prayers'; and then, with a new song struck up, which sings the praise and narrates with some detail the career of Mr. Clarke himself, we begin to enter the enchanted bay; high clouds hover upon the hilltops; thin cataracts whiten lower down along the front of the hills; all the rest is precipitous forest, dark with the intensity of green, save where the palms shine silver in the thicket; it is indeed a place to enter with a song upon our lips.

"... Fagaloa is the original spot where every prospect pleases. It was beautiful to see a vast black rain- squall engulf the bottom of the bay, pass over with glittering skirts, climb the opposite hill, and cling there and dwindle into rags of snowy cloud; beautiful too was a scene where a little burn ran into the sea between groups of cocos and below a rustic bridge of palm-stems; something indescribably Japanese in the scene suggested the idea of setting on the bridge three gorgeously habited young girls, and these relieved in their bright raiment against the blue of the sky and the low sea-line completed the suggestion; it was a crape picture in the fact. We went on further to the end of the bay, where the village sits almost sprayed upon by waterfalls among its palm-grove, and round under the rocky promontory, by a broken path of rock among the bowers of foliage; a troop of little lads accompanied our progress, and two of them possessed themselves of my hands and trotted alongside of me with endless, incomprehensible" conversation; both tried continually to pull the rings off my fingers; one carried my shoes and stockings, and proudly reminded me of the fact at every stoppage. They were unpleasant, cheeky, ugly urchins; and the shoe-bearer, when we turned the corner and sat down in the shade and the sea-breeze on black ledges of volcanic rock, splashed by the sea, nestled up to my side, and sat pawing me like an old acquaintance. . . .

"Jan. ist, 1890. — On our way back along the most precipitous and seemingly desert portion of the coast, we were startled by a sudden noise rising above the continuous sound of the breaching surf which hangs along the shore incessant and invariable in pitch. At first we supposed it to be the sound of some greater wave exploding through a blow-hole of the rocks; but presently the sound was repeated, our eye was caught by a growing column of blue smoke arising in the

shore-side forest, and we were aware that in that bay, where not a roof appeared to break the continuous foliage, a not inconsiderable village must sit secret, whose inhabitants were now saluting the New Year with a field-piece, some relic of the war."

But Stevenson was now to take a step that proved more decisive than for the moment he imagined. The winter home he had once projected at Madeira was to be transferred to Samoa; he purchased some four hundred acres in the bush, two miles behind and six hundred feet above the level of the town of Apia. The ground was covered, not exactly with virgin forest, for it had formerly been occupied (according to tradition) by a Samoan bush town, but with vegetation so dense that on her first visit his wife had been quite unable to penetrate to the spot where the house afterwards stood. The land, however, was to be cleared, and a cottage erected, which would at any rate shelter the family during such intervals between their cruises as it should suit them to spend in Samoa. But the real reason for the selection of this island for a settlement lay principally in the facilities of communication. An author, and especially a writer of novels, can dispense with many of the blessings of civilisation; the one thing absolutely indispensable is a regular and trustworthy mode of communicating with his printer and his publisher. Now in the matter of mails Samoa was exceptionally fortunate. The monthly steamers between Sydney and San Francisco received and deposited their mail-bags in passing, and very soon after began to call at the port of Apia. A German steamer, the Lilbeck, ran regularly between Apia and Sydney, and the New Zealand boat, the Richmond, called on her circular trip from Auckland to Tahiti. Of all the other islands which Stevenson had visited, Tahiti itself was the only possible rival, but its mail service was much less frequent and less trustworthy; and, moreover, Stevenson was not anxious to place himself under the control of a French colonial government.

So the ground was bought, the money paid, and orders were left to begin the necessary operations. Early in February the party sailed for Sydney, where Mrs. Strong was now waiting to see them on their way home to England for the summer.

Soon after reaching Australia, Stevenson found in a religious paper a letter from Dr. Hyde, a Presbyterian minister in Honolulu, depreciating the labours of Father Damien at Molokai, and reviving against his memory some highly unchristian and unworthy slanders. The letter was written in a spirit peculiarly calculated to rouse Stevenson’s indignation, and when he heard at the same time a report, which may or may not have been true, but which he, at any rate, fully believed, to the effect that a proposed memorial to Damien in London had been abandoned on account of this or some similar statement, his anger knew no bounds. He sat down and wrote the celebrated letter to Dr. Hyde, which was forthwith published in pamphlet form in Sydney, and subsequently in Edinburgh in the Scots Observer. He had the courage of his opinions, and realised the risks he was taking: “ I knew I was writing a libel: I thought he would bring an action; I made sure I should be ruined; I asked leave of my gallant family, and the sense that I was signing away all I possessed kepi me up to high-water mark, and made me feel every insult heroic.”

But in place of the news for which his friends were waiting, that he had started upon his homeward voyage, there came a telegram to Mr. Baxter on the ioth April: “Return Islands four months. Home September.”

He had taken cold in Sydney, and after the lapse of eighteen months having again started a hemorrhage, was very ill and pining for the sea. Mrs. Stevenson heard of a trading steamer about to start for “the Islands,” applied for three passages and was refused, went to the owners and was again refused, but stating inflexibly that it was a matter of life or death to her husband, she carried her point and extorted their unwilling consent.

This vessel was the steamship Janet Nicoll, an iron screw-steamer of about six hundred tons, chartered by Messrs. Henderson & Macfarlane, a well-known South Sea firm. There was a dock strike in Sydney at the time, but with a “ black-boy “ crew on board, the Janet got away, carrying a full complement of officers and engineers, and the trio to whom Island Nights’ Entertainments was afterwards dedicated — Mr. Henderson, one of the partners; Ben Hird,[1] the supercargo; and “Jack” Buckland, the living original of Tommy Haddon in The Wrecker.

Unwelcome guests though they had been, no sooner had they started than they met with the greatest kindness and cordiality from every one on board, and when they reached Auckland the invalid was himself again. They left that port under sealed orders, but were not yet clear of the lighthouse before some fireworks, left in Buckland’s berth, set his cabin on fire. The saloon was filled with dense smoke and a rosy glow “ Let no man say I am unscientific,” wrote Stevenson. “ When I ran, on the alert, out of my stateroom, and found the main cabin incarnadined with the glow of the last scene of a pantomime, I stopped dead. ‘ What is this? ‘ said I. ‘ This ship is on fire, I see that; but why a pantomime?’ And I stood and reasoned the point, until my head was so muddled with the fumes that 1 could not find the companion. By singular good fortune, we got the hose down in time and saved the ship, but Lloyd lost most of his clothes, and a great part of our photographs was destroyed. Fanny saw the native sailors tossing overboard a blazing trunk; she stopped them in time, and behold, it contained my manuscripts.”[1]

After this episode all went well; the course of the steamer may be traced on the accompanying map. She put in to Apia, and stayed there long enough to enable the party to visit their new property and see what progress had been made. After that she went to the east and to the north, calling at three-and-thirty low islands; their stay in almost every case was limited to a few hours, and, as Stevenson wrote on this cruise, "hackney cabs have more variety than atolls." They saw their friend King Tembinok' again, and received a welcome from him almost too pathetic to be hearty.

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[1] In a brief sketch in Macmillan’s Magazine for November, 1896, I endeavoured to do justice to the memory of some of Hird’s many admirable qualities.

1 Letters, ii. 185. He had been ill, and the whole island had been attacked by measles, a disaster which was apparently attributed by the victims to the sale of their " devil-box." In the centre of the big house was a circular piece of " devil-work " in the midst of a circle of white shells, and the worship of "Chench," the local deity, had obviously received an impetus from recent events.

The circumstances of this expedition were, of course, very different from their former leisurely and more local voyages in schooners. Stevenson greatly enjoyed the company on board, for two at least of his fellow-voyagers were probably unrivalled by any white man in their experience of these regions, and were possessed besides of remarkable ability and character.

The altered conditions of navigation were a great interest to him, and he was never weary of admiring the captain's skill in handling the steamer, one specimen of which he has recorded in the account of his first visit to a pearl-shell island, such as, to his great disappointment, he had failed to visit from Fakarava.

"Nearly two years had passed before I found myself in the trading steamer Janet Nicoll, heading for the entrance of Penrhyn or Tongarewa. In front, the line of the atoll showed like a narrow sea-wall of bare coral, where the surges broke; on either hand the tree-tops of an islet showed some way off: on one, the site of the chief village; the other, then empty, but now inhabited, and known by the ill-omened name of Molokai. We steamed through the pass and were instantly involved amidst a multiplicity of coral lumps, or horses' heads, as they are called by sailors. Through these our way meandered; we would have a horse's head athwart the bows, one astern, one upon either board; and the tortuous fairway was at times not more than twice the vessel's beam. The Janet was, besides, an iron ship; half the width of the Pacific severed us from the next yard of reparation; one rough contact, and our voyage might be ended, and ourselves consigned to half a year of Penrhyn. On the topgallant forecastle stood a native pilot, used to conning smaller ships, and unprepared for the resources of a steamer; his cries rang now with agony, now with wrath. The best man was at the bridge wheel; and Captain Henry, with one hand on the engine signal, one trembling towards the steersman, juggled his long ship among these dangers, with the patient art of one fitting up a watch, with the swift decision of a general in the field. 1 stood by, thrilling at once with the excitement of a personal adventure and the admiration due to perfect skill.

"We were presently at anchor in a singular berth, boxed all about; our late entrance, our future exit not to be discovered; in front the lagoon, where I counted the next day upwards of thirty horses' heads in easy view; behind, the groves of the isle and the crowded houses of the village. Many boats lay there at moorings: in the verandah, folk were congregated gazing at the ship; children were swimming from the shore to board us; and from the lagoon, before a gallant breeze, other boats came skimming homeward. The boats were gay with white sails and bright paint; the men were clad in red and blue, they were garlanded with green leaves or gay with kerchiefs; and the busy, many-coloured scene was framed in the verdure of the palms and the opal of the shallow sea. "It was a pretty picture, and its prettiest element, the coming of the children. Every here and there we saw a covey of black heads upon the water. . . . Soon they trooped up the side-ladder, a healthy, comely company of kilted children; and had soon taken post upon the after-hatch, where they sat in a double row, singing with solemn energy."

But on the whole Stevenson did not benefit greatly by the voyage. He now turned to the " letters " upon his experiences for the American syndicate; from the first they failed to satisfy him, although he regarded them, even in their final form, as only the rough material for the book. The heat of the steamer, driven before the wind, was often intolerable; he had another hemorrhage, and remained languid and unfit for work. On the return journey the Janet turned off to New Caledonia, and thence went direct to Sydney. Stevenson, however, landed at Noumea, where he spent a few days by himself, observing the French convict settlement, and learning something of the methods of dealing with natives. It was the only time he was ever among Melanesian tribes, although occasionally he met with isolated individuals, especially in Samoa, where they are frequently imported as labourers for the German firm.

He followed his wife and stepson to Sydney, whence Mr. Osbourne left for England, finally to arrange their affairs, and bring out the furniture from Skerryvore for the "yet unbuilt house on the mountain."

All idea of this journey had been given up by Stevenson himself in the course of the past voyage, and indeed, having reached Sydney, he was confined to his room in the Union Club, and left it only to return to Samoa. From this time forth, although he formed various projects, never realised, of seeing his friends, and especially Mr. Colvin, in Egypt, Honolulu, or Ceylon, he never, so far as I know, again looked forward to setting foot upon his native shores.

With his wife he left for Apia, and on their arrival they camped in gipsy fashion in the four-roomed wooden house which was all, except a trellised arbour, that had yet been erected on the property. Here for the next six months they lived alone with one servant, until the ground was further cleared and the permanent house built.

Into the details of Stevenson's life at this time there is no need to go; it was a period of transition, and it is sufficiently described in the Vailima Letters. Most of his material difficulties were crowded into it; but even from them he derived a great deal of enjoyment. There were daily working on the land a number of labourers, partly Samoans, partly natives of other groups, superintended for most of the time by a Samoan who figures largely in the first part of the letters to Mr. Colvin. After a while, as soon as the lie of the ground could be more clearly seen, the site of the new house was selected on a plateau a couple of hundred yards higher up the hill, and the building itself was begun by white carpenters.

This was the only time their food-supply ever ran at all short; but after their experiences in schooners and on low islands, they found little to complain of, as they felt that if it ever came to the worst, two miles off there was always an open restaurant. Their one servant was a German ex-steward, a feckless, kindly creature, who seemed born with two left hands, but was always ready to do his best. But the less competent the servant, the more numerous and miscellaneous were the odd jobs which devolved upon his master and mistress.

Thus in the meantime Stevenson's own work went on under great disadvantages. Much of his effort was expended upon the South Sea Letters; but this was the time when he saw most of the virgin forest, and his solitary expeditions and the hours spent in weeding at the edge of the "bush" were, as we shall see, not without effect upon his writing.

In January, 1891, he left his wife in sole charge and went to Sydney to meet his mother, who was to arrive there from Scotland on her way to Samoa. The shaft of the LUbeck broke when she was near Fiji, at the worst of seasons and in the most dangerous of waters; but it was patched up with great skill, and, under sail and to the astonishment of the whole port, she arrived at her destination only four days late. Stevenson as usual "fell sharply sick in Sydney," but was able to go on board the Lilbech again and convoy his mother to her new home. The house, after all, was not ready to receive her, and, having taken her first brief glimpse of Samoa, she returned to the Colonies for another couple of months.

Stevenson then accompanied Mr. Harold Sewall, the American Consul-General, upon a visit to Tutuila, the easternmost island of the group, now added to the territory of the United States.

Here they spent three weeks, partly by the shores of 114
the great harbour of Pagopago, partly on an attempt to reach the islands of Manu'a in a small schooner, and partly in circumnavigating Tutuila by easy stages in a whale-boat. The expedition was rather at the mercy of its interpreter; but the island was new to them, and they all greatly enjoyed their experiences. It was the best view Stevenson ever had of the more remote Sa- moans in their own homes, and the scenery and the life attracted him more than ever. Fortunately he kept a diary, from which I have taken a few characteristic passages: —

"Pagopago " The island at its highest point is nearly severed in two by the long-elbowed harbour, about half a mile in width, cased everywhere in abrupt mountain-sides. The tongue of water sleeps in perfect quiet, and laps around its continent with the flapping wavelets of a lake. The wind passes overhead; day and night overhead the scroll of trade-wind clouds is unrolled across the sky, now in vast sculptured masses, now in a thin drift of debris, singular shapes of things, protracted and deformed beasts and trees and heads and torsos of old marbles, changing, fainting, and vanishing even as they flee. Below, meanwhile, the harbour lies unshaken and laps idly on its margin; its colour is green like a forest pool, bright in the shallows, dark in the midst with the reflected sides of woody mountains. At times a flicker of silver breaks the uniformity, miniature whitecaps flashing and disappearing on the sombre ground; to see it, you might think the wind was treading on and toeing the flat water, but not so — the harbour lies unshaken, and the flickering is that of fishes.

"Right in the wind's eye, and right athwart the dawn, a conspicuous mountain stands, designed like an old fort or castle, with naked cliffy sides and a green head. In the peep of the day the mass is outlined dimly; as the east fires, the sharpness of the silhouette grows definite, and through all the chinks of the high wood the red looks through, like coals through a grate. From the other end of the harbour, and at the extreme of the bay, when the sun is down and night beginning, and colours and shapes at the sea-level are already confounded in the greyness of the dusk, the same peak retains for some time a tinge of phantom rose.

"Last night I was awakened before midnight by the ship-rats which infest the shores and invade the houses, incredible for numbers and boldness. 1 went to the water's edge; the moon was at the zenith; vast fleecy clouds were travelling overhead, their borders frayed and extended as usual in fantastic arms and promontories. The level of their flight is not really high, it only seems so; the trade-wind, although so strong in current, is but a shallow stream, and it is common to see, beyond and above its carry, other clouds faring on other and higher winds. As I looked, the skirt of a cloud touched upon the summit of Pioa, and seemed to hang and gather there, and darken as it hung. I knew the climate, fled to shelter, and was scarce laid down again upon the mat before the squall burst. In its decline, I heard the sound of a great bell rung at a distance; I did not think there had been a bell upon the island. I thought the hour a strange one for the ring- ing, but I had no doubt it was being rung on the other side at the Catholic Mission, and lay there listening and thinking, and trying to remember which of the bells of Edinburgh sounded the same note. It stopped almost with the squall. Half an hour afterwards, another shower struck upon the house and spurted awhile from the gutters of the corrugated roof; and again with its decline the bell began to sound, and from the same distance. Then I laughed at myself, and this bell resolved into an eavesdrop falling on a tin close by my head. All night long the flaws continued at brief intervals. Morning came, and showed mists on all the mountain- tops, a grey and yellow dawn, a fresh accumulation of rain imminent on the summit of Pioa, and the whole harbour scene stripped of its tropic colouring and wearing the appearance of a Scottish loch.

“And not long after, as I was writing on this page, sure enough, from the far shore a bell began indeed to ring. It has but just ceased, boats have been passing the harbour in the showers, the congregation is within now, and the mass begun. How very different stories are told by that drum of tempered iron! To the natives a new, strange, outlandish thing: to us of Europe, redolent of home; in the ear of the priests, calling up memories of French and Flemish cities, and perhaps some carved cathedral and the pomp of celebrations; in mine, talking of the grey metropolis of the north, of a village on a stream, of vanished faces and silent tongues.

“The Bay of Oa “ We sailed a little before high-water, and came skirting for some while along a coast of classical landscapes, cliffy promontories, long sandy coves divided by semi- independent islets, and the far-withdrawing sides of the mountain, rich with every shape and shade of verdure. Nothing lacked but temples and galleys; and our own long whale-boat sped (to the sound of song) by eight nude oarsmen figured a piece of antiquity better than perhaps we thought. No road leads along this coast; we scarce saw a house; these delectable islets lay quite desert, inviting seizure, and there was none like Keats’s Endymion1 to hear our snowlight cadences. On a sudden we began to open the bay of Oa. At the first sight my mind was made up — the bay of Oa was the place for me. We could not enter it, we were assured; and being entered we could not land; both statements plainly fictive; both easily resolved into the fact that there was no guest-house, and no girls to make the kava for our boatmen and admire their singing. A little gentle insistence produced a smiling acquiescence, and the eight oars began to urge us slowly into a bay of the /Eneid. Right overhead a conical hill arises; its top is all sheer cliff of a rosy yellow, stained with orange and purple, bristled and ivied with individual climbing trees; lower down the woods are massed; lower again the rock crops out in a steep buttress, which divides the arc of beach. The boat was eased in, we landed and turned this way and that like fools in a perplexity of pleasures; now some way into the wood toward the spire, but the woods had soon strangled the path — in the Samoan phrase, the way was dead — and we began to flounder in impenetrable bush, still far from the foot of the ascent, although already i Book II. 1. 8o. n8

the greater trees began to throw out arms dripping with lianas, and to accept us in the margin of their shadows. Now along the beach; it was grown upon with crooked, thick-leaved trees down to the water’s edge. Immediately behind there had once been a clearing; it was all choked with the mummy-apple, which in this country springs up at once at the heels of the axeman, and among this were intermingled the coco-palm and the banana. Our landing and the bay itself had nearly turned my head. ‘ Here are the works of all the poets passim,’ I said, and just then my companion stopped. ‘Behold an omen,’ said he, and pointed. It was a sight I had heard of before in the islands, but not seen: a little tree such as grows sometimes on infinitesimal islets on the reef, almost stripped of its leaves, and covered instead with feasting butterflies. These, as we drew near, arose and hovered in a cloud of lilac and silver-grey1. . . .

“All night the crickets sang with a clear trill of silver; all night the sea filled the hollow of the bay with varying utterance; now sounding continuous like a mill-weir, now (perhaps from further off) with swells and silences. I went wandering on the beach, when the tide was low. I went round the tree before our boys had stirred. It was the first clear grey of the morning; and I could see them lie, each in his place, enmeshed from head to foot in his unfolded kilt. The Highlander with his belted plaid, the Samoan with his Iavalava, each sleep in their one vesture unfolded. One 1 “ Later on I found the scene repeated in another place; but here the butterflies were of a different species, glossy brown and black, with arabesques of white.”

boy who slept in the open under the trees had made his pillow of a smouldering brand, doubtless for the convenience of a midnight cigarette; all night the flame had crept nearer, and as he lay there, wrapped like an oriental woman, and still plunged in sleep, the redness was within two handbreadths of his frizzled hair.

“I had scarce bathed, had scarce begun to enjoy the fineness and the precious colours of the morning, the golden glow along the edge of the high eastern woods, the clear light on the sugar-loaf of Maugalai, ‘.tie woven blue and emerald of the cone, the chuckle of morning bird-song that filled the valley of the woods, when upon a sudden a draught of wind came from the leeward and the highlands of the isle, rain rattled on the tossing woods; the pride of the morning had come early, and from an unlooked-for side. I fled for refuge in the shed; but such of our boys as were awake stirred not in the least; they sat where they were, perched among the scattered boxes of our camp, and puffed at their stubborn cigarettes, and crouched a little in the slanting shower. So good a thing it is to wear few clothes. I, who was largely unclad — a pair of serge trousers, a singlet, woollen socks, and canvas shoes; think of it — envied them in their light array.

“Thursday. — The others withdrew to the next village. Meanwhile I had Virgil’s bay all morning to myself, and feasted on solitude, and overhanging woods, and the retiring sea. The quiet was only broken by the hoarse cooing of wild pigeons up the valley, and certain inroads of capricious winds that found a way hence and thence down the hillside and set the palms clattering; my enjoyment only disturbed by clouds of dull, voracious, spotted, and not particularly envenomed mosquitoes. When I was still, I kept Buhac powder burning by me on a stone under the shed, and read Livy, and confused to-day and two thousand years ago, and wondered in which of these epochs I was flourishing at that moment; and then I would stroll out, and see the rocks and the woods, and the arcs of beaches, curved like a whorl in a fair woman’s ear, and huge ancient trees, jutting high overhead out of the hanging forest, and feel the place at least belonged to the age of fable, and awaited ./Eneas and his battered fleets.

“Showers fell often in the night; some sounding from far off like a cataract, some striking the house, but not a drop came in. . . . At night a cry of a wild cat-like creature in the bush. Far up on the hill one golden tree; they say it is a wild cocoanut: I know it is not, they must know so too; and this leaves me free to think it sprang from the gold bough of Proserpine.

“The morning was all in blue; the sea blue, blue inshore upon the shallows, only the blue was nameless; the horizon clouds a blue like a fine pale porcelain, the sky behind them a pale lemon faintly warmed with orange. Much that one sees in the tropics is in water- colours, but this was in water-colours by a young lady.”

The mention of Livy recalls a curious circumstance, and raises besides the question of Stevenson’s classical studies.

A year or two later he told me that he had read several books of Livy at this time, but found the style influencing him to such an extent that he resolved to read no more, just as in earlier days he had been driven to abandon Carlyle. Mr. Gosse has recorded that Walter Pater in turn refused to read Stevenson lest the individuality of his own style might be affected, but it is more curious to find Stevenson himself at so late a stage fearing the influence of a Latin author.

As to his classics, he was ignorant of Greek, and preferred the baldest of Bohn’s translations to more literary versions that might come between him and the originals. His whole relation to Latin, however, was very curious and interesting. He had never mastered the grammar of the language, and to the end made the most elementary mistakes. Nevertheless, he had a keen appreciation of the best authors, and, indeed, I am not sure that Virgil was not more to him than any other poet, ancient or modern. From all the qualities of the pedant he was, of course, entirely free. Just as he wrote Scots as well as he was able, “ not caring if it hailed from Lauderdale or Angus, from the Mearns or Galloway,” but if he had ever heard a good word, he “used it without shame,” so it was with his Latin. Technicalities of law and the vocabulary of Ducange were admitted to equal rights with authors of the Golden Age.

Latin no doubt told for much in the dignity and concision of his style, and in itself it was to him — as we see in his diary — always a living language. But as an influence, Rome counted to him as something very much more than a literature — a whole system of law and empire.

From this expedition he returned to Apia in an open boat, a twenty-eight hours’ voyage of sixty-five miles, on which schooners have before now been lost. But for the journey and the exposure Stevenson was none the worse. “ It is like a fairy-story that I should have recovered liberty and strength, and should go round again among my fellow-men, boating, riding, bathing, toiling hard with a wood-knife in the forest.”

Before the end of the month the family were installed in the new house, and in May they were reinforced not only by the elder Mrs. Stevenson, but also by Mrs. Strong and her boy from Sydney, who thenceforward remained under Stevenson’s protecting care.

His wanderings were now at an end, and he was to enter upon a period of settled residence. Stevenson has been generally regarded as a tourist and an outside observer in Samoa, especially by those who least know the Pacific themselves. There is, it must be admitted, only one way to gain a lifelong experience of any country, but to have lived nowhere else is conducive neither to breadth of view nor to wisdom. It must always be borne in mind that before Stevenson settled down for the last three and a half years of his life in his own house of Vailima, he had spent an almost equal length of time in visiting other islands in the Pacific. In fact, had he been deliberately preparing himself for the life he was to lead, he could hardly have pursued a wiser course, or undergone a more thorough training. On his travels he enjoyed exceptional opportunities of gathering information, and in general knowledge of the South Seas, and of Samoa in particular, he was probably at the time of his death rivalled by no more than two or three persons of anything like his education or intelligence.

CHAPTER XV

VAILIMA — 1891-94

"We thank Thee for this place in which we dwell; for the love that unites us; for the peace accorded us this day; for the hope with which we expect the morrow; for the health, the work, the food, and the bright skies that make our lives delightful; for our friends in all parts of the earth, and our friendly helpers in this foreign isle. . . . Give us courage and gaiety ind the quiet mind. Spare to us our friends, soften to us our enemies. Bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavours. If it may not, give us the strength to encounter that which is to come, that we be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath, and in all changes of fortune, and down to the gates of death, loyal and loving one to another." — R. L. S., Vailima Prayers.

The new house and the augmentation of his household marked the definite change in Stevenson's life, which now assumed the character that it preserved until the end. In private his material comfort was increased, and he was delivered from most of the interruptions to which his work had lately been subject; in public it now became manifest that he was to be a permanent resident in Samoa, enjoying all the advantages of wealth and fame, and the consideration conferred by numerous retainers.

To the world of his readers, and to many who never read his books, his position became one of extreme interest. He was now living, as the legend went, among the wildest of savages, who were clearly either always at war or circulating reports of wars immediately to come; settled in a house, the splendour and luxury of which were much exaggerated by rumour; dwelling in a climate which was associated with all the glories of tropic scenery and vegetation, and also, in the minds of his countrymen at all events, with a tremendous cataclysm of the elements, from which the British navy had emerged with triumph. It was little wonder that, as Mr. Gosse wrote to him, " Since Byron was in Greece, nothing has appealed to the ordinary literary man so much as that you should be living in the South Seas."

It is clear that a mode of life so unusual for a man of letters not only absolves his biographer from the duty of withholding as far as possible the details of every-day existence, but even lays upon him the necessity of explaining various trivial matters, which, if they belonged to the life of cities or of states, it would be his first anxiety to suppress. It well may be that no author of eminence will ever again take up his abode in Samoa or even in the South Seas, but the problem of keeping in touch at the same time with man, with nature, and with the world of letters, is as far from its solution as from losing its general interest. And the most stolid of glances cannot fail to be arrested for a moment by the sight of a figure as chivalrous and romantic as Stevenson, living in a world so striking, so appropriate, and so picturesque.

To trace in detail the growth of the house or the development of the estate would be no less tedious than to follow closely the course of political intrigues or the appointment and departure of successive officials. I shall therefore abandon the temporal order, and briefly describe, in the first instance, the material environment in which Stevenson lived, his house, and the surrounding country, his mode of life, his friends and visitors, his work, and his amusements. It will then be necessary to mention very briefly his political relations before passing on to the record of his writings during this period.

The island of Upolu, on which he lived, was the central and most important of the three principal islands composing the group to which the collective name of Samoa is applied. It is some five-and-forty miles in length and about eleven in average breadth. The interior is densely wooded, and a central range of hills runs from east to west. Apia, the chief town, is situated about the centre of the north coast, and it was on the hills about three miles inland that Stevenson made his home.

The house and clearing lay on the western edge of a tongue of land several hundred yards in width, situated between two streams, from the westernmost of which the steep side of Vaea Mountain, covered with forest, rises to a height of thirteen hundred feet above the sea. On the east, beyond Stevenson's boundary, the ground fell away rapidly into the deep valley of the Vaisigano, the principal river of the island. On the other hand, the western stream, formed by the junction of several smaller watercourses above, ran within Stevenson's own ground, and, not far below the house, plunged over a barrier of rock with a fall of about twelve feet into a delightful pool, just deep enough for bathing and arched over with orange-trees. A few hundred yards lower down it crossed his line with an abrupt plunge of forty or fifty feet. It was from this stream and its four chief tributaries that Stevenson gave to the property the Samoan name of Vailima, or Five Waters.

The place itself lay, as has been said, some three miles from the coast, and nearly six hundred feet above sea-level. From the town a good carriage-road, a mile in length, led to the native village of Tanugama- nono, where the Stevensons had lodged upon their first arrival. Beyond that point there was for a time nothing but the roughest of footpaths, which led across the hills to the other side of the island through a forest region wholly uninhabited, all the native villages being either by the sea or within a short distance of the coast.

The track to Vailima was made over and over again by Stevenson, occasionally in concert with some of the owners of the lower lands, until it gradually assumed the appearance of a road, and could be traversed in dry weather by wagons or even by a buggy. But to the last the carrying for the house was done by the two big New Zealand pack-horses. East, and west, and south of the clearing the land was covered with thick bush, containing many scattered lofty forest trees like those judiciously spared by the axemen where they did not endanger the new house. Here and there in the forest was a great banyan with branching roots, covering many square yards of surface, and affording a resting-place for the flying-foxes, the great fruit-eating bats, which sally forth at dusk with a slow, heavy flight, like a straggling company of rooks making for the coast. Even to the north, although most of the ground between Vailima and Apia had to some extent been cultivated, along the “ road “ the trees grew close and high, and on a dark night the phosphorescence gleamed on fallen logs amid the undergrowth, twinkling and flickering to and fro, like the hasty footsteps of the witches the Samoans believed it to be. On the estate itself the route lay by the lane of limes, a rugged, narrow, winding path, that seemed, as Stevenson said, “almost as if it was leading to Lyonesse, and you might see the head and shoulders of a giant looking in.”[1] But this part of the track was afterwards cut off by the Ala Loto Alofa, the Road of the Loving Heart, built by the Mataafa chiefs in return for Tusitala’s kindness to them in prison. It was a broader and more level way, also leading past a fragrant lime-hedge, and having as the centre of its view for any one journeying to Vailima the wooded crest of Vaea.

The house of Vailima was built of wood throughout, painted a dark green outside, with a red roof of corrugated iron, on which the heavy rain sounded like thunder as it fell and ran off to be stored for household purposes in the large iron tanks. The building finally consisted of two blocks of equal size, placed, if I may use a military phrase in this connection, in echelon. It was the great defect of the house in its master’s eyes that from a strategical point of view it was not defensible, but fortunately there was never an occasion during his lifetime when it would have been desirable to place it in a state of siege. It fulfilled many of the requirements both of structure and more especially of position which he had laid down for his ideal house.[2]

After December, 1892, the downstairs accommodation consisted of three rooms, a bath, a storeroom and cellars below, with five bedrooms and the library upstairs. On the ground-floor, a verandah, twelve feet deep, ran in front of the whole house and along one side of it. Originally there had been a similar gallery above in front of the library, but it so darkened that room as to make it almost useless for working. Stevenson then had half of the open space boarded in, and used it as his own bedroom and study, the remainder of the verandah being sheltered, when necessary, by Chinese blinds. The new room was thus a sort of martin’s nest, plastered as it were upon the outside of the house; but except for being somewhat hot in the middle of the day, it served its purpose to perfection. A small bedstead, a couple of bookcases, a plain deal kitchen table and two chairs were all its furniture, and two or three favourite Piranesi etchings and some illustrations of Stevenson's own works hung upon the walls. At one side was a locked rack containing half-a-dozen Colt's rifles for the service of the family in case they should ever be required. One door opened into the library, the other into the verandah; one window, having from its elevation the best view the house afforded, looked across the lawns and pasture, over the tree-tops, out to the sapphire sea, while the other was faced by the abrupt slope of Vaea. The library was lined with books, the covers of which had all been varnished to protect them from the climate. The most important divisions were the shelves allotted to the history of Scotland, to French books either modern or relating to the fifteenth century, to military history, and to books relating to the Pacific.

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[1] Vailima Letters, p. 258.

[2] Miscellanea, p. 42.

At this height the beat of the surf was plainly to be heard, but soothing to the ear and far away; other noises there were none but the occasional note of a bird, a cry from the boys at work, or the crash of a falling tree. The sound of wheels or the din of machinery was hardly known in the island: about the house all went barefoot, and scarcely in the world could there be found among the dwellings of men a deeper silence than in Stevenson's house in the forest.

The chief feature within was the large hall that occupied the whole of the ground-floor of the newer portion of the house — a room about sixty feet long and perhaps forty wide, lined and ceiled with varnished redwood from California. Here the marble bust of old Robert Stevenson twinkled with approval upon many a curiously combined company, while a couple of Burmese gilded idols guarded the two posts of the big staircase leading directly from the room to the upper floor. An old Samoan chief, being one day at his own request shown over the house, and having seen many marvels of civilisation of which he had never dreamed, showed no sign of interest, far less of amazement, but as he was departing he looked over his shoulder at the twoBuddhas and asked indifferently: “Are they alive?” In one corner was built a large safe, which, being continually replenished from Apia, rarely contained any large amount of money at a time, but was supposed by the natives to be the prison of the Bottle Imp, the source of all Stevenson's fortune. In this room hung Mr. Sargent's portrait of Stevenson and his wife, Sir George Reid's portrait of Thomas Stevenson, two reputed Hogarths which the old gentleman had picked up, two or three of R. A. M. Stevenson's best works, a picture of horses by Mr. Arthur Lemon, and — greatly to the scandal of native visitors — a plaster group by Rodin.

In front of the house lay a smooth green lawn of couch-grass, used for tennis or croquet, and bounded on two sides by a hibiscus-hedge which, within a few months of its planting, was already six feet high and a mass of scarlet double blossoms — the favourite flowers of the Samoan.

Immediately behind the mansion lay the wooden kitchen and a native house for the cook. A hundred yards to one side the original cottage in which Stevenson first lived had been re-erected, to serve upstairs as bedrooms for Mr. Osbourne and myself, downstairs for the house-boys,[1] for stores, tool-house, and harness-room.

Upon the other side another native house lay, halfway towards the stream. The ground below the home fence was all used for pasture; in front, the milking-shed occupied the site of the old house; and the pigpen, impregnably fenced with barbed wire, lay a couple of hundred yards in the rear. At the back also were the old disused stables, for in later days the horses were always kept out at grass in the various paddocks, coming up for their feed of corn every morning and evening.

But even when the house itself was provided, its service was the great difficulty. Competent and willing white helpers were not to be procured, and though there were many natives employed in Apia, yet Samoa, less fortunate than India, possessed no class of natives ready to minister to a white master with skill and devotion for a trifling wage.

At first Stevenson tried European and colonial servants. Two German men cooks passed through his kitchen: a Sydney lady's-maid brought dissensions into the household: a white overseer and three white carters came and left, causing various degrees of dissatisfaction. Then Mrs. Stevenson went away for a change to Fiji; in her absence the family made a clean sweep of the establishment, and Mrs. Strong and her brother took the entire charge of the kitchen into their own hands with complete success. This was of necessity a passing expedient. One day, however, Mr. Osbourne found a Samoan lad, with a hibiscus flower behind his ear, sitting on an empty packing-case beside the cookhouse. He had come, it seemed, to collect half a dollar which the native overseer owed him, and he was quite content to wait for several hours until his debtor should return. In the meantime he was brought into the kitchen, and then and there initiated into the secrets of the white man's cookery. He was amused, interested, fascinated, and he plunged enthusiastically into the mysteries of his future profession. Fortunately in Samoa cookery was regarded as an art worthy of men's hands, and was practised even by high chiefs. The newcomer showed great aptitude; Mr. Osbourne persuaded him to

[1] In Samoa, as in many other lands, native servants of all ages are known in English as " boys."

stay, sent for his chest, and for several days would hardly let him out of his sight. So from that time forth Ta'alolowas head cook of Vailima, soon having a "boy" under him as scullion, taking only a few occasional holidays, and perfecting his art by visits to the kitchen of the French priests. In time he brought into the household several of his relations, who were Catholics like himself, and proved the best and most trustworthy of all the boys.

A very few days after my first arrival one of these newcomers appeared in the character of assistant table- boy, a clumsy, half-developed, rather rustic youth, who of course knew no English, a sign that he was at any rate free from the tricks of the Apia-bred rascal. At the first, Sosimo seemed unlikely material, but there was a certain seriousness and resolution about him which quickly produced their effect. He soon became known as "The Butler," and before long was promoted to be head boy in the pantry. From the beginning he attached himself to Tusitala with a whole-hearted allegiance. He waited on him hand and foot, looked scrupulously after his clothes, devoted special attention to his pony "Jack," and made one of the most trustworthy and efficient servants I have ever known. When the end came, few if any showed as much feeling as Sosimo, and his loyalty to his master's memory lasted to the end of his own life.

These two men were the best, but as I write, I recall Leuelu, and Mitaele, and Iopu, and old Lafaele, and many more, not all such good servants, not all so loyal or so honest as those first named, but all with many solid merits, many pleasing traits, and a genuine personal devotion to Tusitala which pleased him as much as many more brilliant qualities.

The table was fully provided with white napery and silver and glass according to the usual English custom, as it had prevailed in the house of Stevenson's father. The cookery was eclectic and comprised such English and American dishes as could be obtained or imitated, together with any [native food which was found palatable. Of the supplies I shall speak later: it was the contrast between table and servants that was most striking. Nothing could have been more picturesque than to sit at an ordinary modern dinner-table and be waited on skilfully by a noble barbarian with perfect dignity and grace of carriage and manners hardly to be surpassed, who yet, if the weather were warm and the occasion ordinary, had for all his clothing a sheet of calico, in which his tattooed waist and loins alone were draped.

The actual house-servants were usually about half a dozen in number, two in the kitchen, two or three for house and table service; one, Mrs. Stevenson's special boy, for the garden and her own general service, and one more to take charge of the cows and pigs. Besides these, there was always a band of outside labourers under a native overseer supervised by Mr. Osbourne, working on the plantation, varying in number, according to the amount of clearing in hand, from half-a-dozen to twenty or thirty men. The signal for beginning and leaving off their work was always given by blowing the pu, a large conch-shell,1 that made a great booming sound that could be heard in the farthest recesses of the plantation.

The great fear of the householder in Samoa used to be the dread of war, lest he should wake one morning and find that all his servants had been ordered out on service by their respective chiefs. By Stevenson’s intervention the Vailima household staff was generally kept 1 Triton variegatus. at home, but the plantation was several times deserted and had to await the restoration of peace.

The government of the household was as far as possible on the clan system. “It is something of your own doing,” Stevenson had written to his mother from Bournemouth in 1886, “ if I take a somewhat feudal view of our relation to servants. . . . The Nemesis of the bourgeois who has chosen to shut out his servants — his ‘family’ in the old Scotch sense — from all intimacy and share in the pleasures of the house, attends us at every turn. An impossible relation is created, and brings confusion to all.”1

If this were his attitude among the artificial conditions of England, he was not likely to adopt a more modern position in Samoa, where the patriarchal stage of society still prevailed. Accordingly from the first he used all opportunities to consolidate the household as a family, in which the boys should take as much pride and feel as much common interest as possible. His ideal was to maintain the relation of a Highland chief to his clan, such as it existed before the ‘45, since this seemed to approach most nearly to the actual state of things in Samoa at the time, and best met the difficulties which beset the relations of master and servant in his own day. He adopted a tartan for the Vailima kilt, to be worn on high days and holidays; he encouraged the boys to seek his help &nd advice on all matters, and was especially delighted when they preferred to him such requests as to grant his permission to a marriage.

It must not, however, be supposed that they were allowed their own way, or indulged when they mis-

1 Cf. Letters, ii. 21. behaved themselves. On such occasions the whole household would be summoned, a sort of “ bed of justice “ would be held, and sharp reprimands and fines inflicted.

Even with all these servants, the white man was separated from the material crises of life by a somewhat thin barrier, for even the best and most responsible natives were at times brought face to face with emergencies beyond their powers, and had to fall back upon their master's help. Such occasions of course befell Stevenson most frequently in the early days when he was living in the cottage with his wife and the white cook. Much of his time was then taken up unexpectedly in such pieces of business as may be found in the first pages of the Vailima Letters: in measuring land, rubbing down foundered cart-horses, ejecting stray horses during the night or wandering pigs during the day, or even in little household tasks which no one else was available to discharge. In later days his wife and all the family were able jealously to prevent such encroachments on his time, but during the last two years I can remember the master of the house himself helping with delight to feed a refractory calf that refused the bottle, driving out an angry bull, or doctoring stray natives suffering from acute colic or wounded feet, to say nothing of chance hours spent in planting or in weeding the cacao.

One morning's work stands out conspicuously in my memory. A hogshead of claret had, after many misadventures, arrived from Bordeaux slightly broached, so that it had to be bottled immediately. Stevenson feared the effect of the fumes even of the light wine upon the natives, so he himself with our aid undertook the work. The boys were sent off to the stream with relays of bottles to wash while we tapped the cask, and the red wine flowed all the morning into jugs and basins beneath. It was poured away into the bottles, and they were corked and dipped into a large pot of green sealing- wax kept simmering on the kitchen fire. There seemed not to be any fumes to affect us, but the anticipation, and the pressure to get done, the novelty of the work, and, above all, Stevenson's contagious enthusiasm, produced a great feeling of delight and exhilaration, and made a regular vintage festival of the day. Stevenson was in his glory, as he always was when he felt that he was doing a manual task, and, above all, when he was able to work in concert with others, and give his love of camaraderie full scope.

And throughout his life, for Stevenson to throw himself into any employment which could kindle his imagination was to see him transfigured. The little boy who told himself stories about his football[1] came to weed in Samoa, and was there ever such an account of weeding since the world began? He drove stray horses to the pound, and it became a Border foray. He held an inquiry into the theft of a pig, and he bore himself as if he were the Lord President in the Inner House. But on the memorable day when we scampered through the outposts of Mataafa's troops, and for the first time in his life Louis saw armed men actually taking the field, even his own words hardly serve to express his exhilaration and outburst of spirit: "So home a little before six, in a dashing squall of rain, to a bowl of kava and dinner. But the impression on our minds was extraordinary; the sight of that picket at the ford, and those ardent, happy faces, whirls in my head; the old aboriginal awoke in both of us and nickered like a stallion. . . . War is a huge entrainement; there is no other temptation to be compared to it, not one. We were all wet, we had been about five hours in the saddle, mostly riding hard; and we came home like schoolboys, with such a lightness of spirits, and I am sure such a brightness of eye, as you could have lit a candle at.”[1]

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[1] See vol. i. p. 66.

When any special entertainment was to be given, a dinner-party or a large luncheon, the whole family of course set to work to see that everything was properly done. Some saw to the decoration of the table or the polishing of the silver, or the blending of the preliminary “cocktail”; Stevenson loved to devote himself to the special cleaning of what he called in the Scots phrase “the crystal, “and his use of the glass-cloth on decanter and wine-glasses would have rejoiced the heart of an expert.

Nor were there wanting occasions in which prompt action or careful and skilled investigation was needed. On two successive nights the house was nearly set on fire by a defective oil lantern, and only boxes of earth saved it; and at another time the dishonest use of red lead upon the roof turned all the rain-tanks into so many poisoned wells, and disabled the whole party for several weeks.

As for the food, when there was a large household to be supplied and a daily delivery from Apia had been 1 Vailima Letters, June 28th, 1893. arranged, there was no great difficulty in catering, apart from the expense. The meat came from the butcher, and the bread from the baker, the groceries, if needed, from the grocer, and the washing from the washerwoman, as in less romantic communities. There was a large storeroom, plentifully supplied from the Colonies and from home. There were generally three or four cows in milk, and a supply of pigs and chickens being reared for the table. The herd of wild cattle sold with the estate certainly did not exist within many miles of its boundaries, though I believe that the animals were not mythical, but led a real existence in another part of the island, whither they had betaken themselves. But if there were no four-footed creatures, birds were plentiful. Large pigeons were brought in from the surrounding woods, especially at the season when they had been feeding on the wild nutmeg-trees. The only game to be obtained was an occasional mallard, a rail, or a galli- mule, unless the manume’a be reckoned, the one surviving species of dodo, a bird about the size of a small moorhen, which has only recovered its present feeble powers of flight since cats were introduced into the island. I have found it in the woods above Vailima, but we never shot it ourselves, and its dark flesh was as rare upon the table as it was delicious. Fresh-water prawns came from the stream, and now and again some sea-fish might be sent up from the coast, where it was abundant. Vegetables were hardly to be bought, but a piece of swampy ground half a mile from the house was turned into a patch for taro, the finest of all substitutes for the potato. Bananas and breadfruit- trees were planted, and Mrs. Stevenson developed under her own supervision a garden in which all sorts of new plants were tried, and most of them successfully adopted. Cocoanuts, oranges, guavas, and mangoes grew already on the estate or in a paddock just below, which was taken on lease; and many more of the most improved kinds of these trees were planted and throve. The common hedges on the estate were composed of limes, the fruit being so abundant that it was used to scour the kitchen floors and tables, and citrons were so common that they rotted on the trees. Several acres were planted with pineapples, which, after only a little cultivation, equalled the best varieties of their kind. There was also an unrivalled plantation of kava, the shrub whose powdered root yields the Samoan national drink. Wherever the ground was cleared, the papaw or mummy-apple at once sprang up and bore its wholesome and insipid fruit. Cape gooseberries were mere weeds; soursops, sweet potatoes and avocado pears, lemons and plums, egg-plants and the large granadillas all did well in that rich volcanic soil and that marvellous climate. Nothing failed of tropical products except the ambrosial mangosteen, the capricious child of the Malay Peninsula. The cacao, of which frequent mention is made in the Vailima Letters, grew and came into bearing; but the irregular and rocky surface of the ground made it difficult to keep clean, and also caused the plantation to be very straggling and irregular.

But, in truth, if Stevenson were unfitted for a South Sea trader, he was even less likely to be the successful manager of a plantation run for his own profit. No Samoan had either need or desire to work regularly for any sum less than seven dollars a month and his food, but these wages and the amount of work rendered for them were quite incompatible with the idea of competition in the markets of the civilised world. Stevenson fed his men, paid them regularly in cash and not in trade, and neither worked them in bad weather nor discharged them for sickness, if he thought it was brought on by exposure in the course of doing work for him. If all this be accounted only common fair dealing, he had besides an unusual measure of that generosity he has attributed to others, “such as is possible to those who practise an art, never to those who drive a trade.” At any rate, the plantation never paid its way, and never seriously promised to become self- supporting.

The temperature was generally between 85° and 90° Fahrenheit at noon, and always fell during the darkness to 70°, or less. I have never seen it at any time lower than 62° or higher than 950 in the shade. But in the early morning the lower temperature strikes one by contrast as bitterly cold, and so acutely had Stevenson felt it in his cottage in the bush that two large fireplaces with a brick chimney were built in the big house, though after a while they were seldom or never used. It was the contrast that was trying, even at higher temperatures. “The thermometer is only 8o°,” wrote Stevenson, “and it ‘s as cold as charity here. You would think it warm. What makes these differences? Eighty degrees is a common temperature with us, and usually pleasant. And to-day it pricks like a half frost in a wet November.” Through the dry season from April to October a fresh trade-wind blew during the day from the south-east, and during the other months, although heavy rain was more frequent, the fine days were beyond words delightful. “The morning is, ah! such a morning as you have never seen; heaven upon earth for sweetness, freshness, depth upon depth of unimaginable colour, and a huge silence broken at this moment only by the far-away murmur of the Pacific and the rich piping of a single bird.” 1

The rainfall is said to average about one hundred and thirty inches during the year, but as five or six inches fall during a really wet twenty-four hours, it does not argue many wet days, and, moreover, showers fall freely during the so-called dry season. The climate, of course, is not bracing, but it is probably as little debilitating as that of any place lying in the same latitude and no further removed from the sea-level.

There is a total absence of tropical and malarial fevers, which must be due to the fact that the germ- bearing mosquito either does not exist, or finds no virus to convey.2 And this is the more remarkable because in the western limits of the Pacific the fevers of New Guinea and New Britain are the deadliest of their kind.

Samoa, in common with the rest of Polynesia, is fortunate in this also, that it contains nothing more venomous than a few centipedes, and even these have been accidentally imported with merchandise.

Stevenson’s ordinary manner of life was this: He would get up at six, or perhaps earlier, and begin work.

1 Vailima Letters, p. 243.

3 If it be the latter reason, it is a strong argument against “ labour-traffic “ importing Melanesians impregnated with this poison into districts where the inhabitants are healthy. From my bed in the cottage I commanded a view of his verandah, and often and often 1 have waked in the chill early dawn to see through the window the house with the mass of Vaea towering behind it: in the midst there would be the one spot of bright light where Tusitala, the only other person awake of all the household, was already at his labours. Down below, the monotonous beating of the surf could be heard; above,

through the chill air, there rang the repeated call of the manu-iao, “the bird of dawn “1 — a succession of clear phrases recalling with a difference the notes at once of the thrush and of the blackbird. The sky brightened; the lamp was extinguished; the household began to stir; and about half-past six a light breakfast was taken to the master. He continued to work by himself, chiefly making notes, until Mrs. Strong, her housekeeping finished, was able to begin his writing, generally soon after eight. Then they worked till nearly noon, when the whole household met for the first time at a substantial meal of two or three courses in the large hall.

Afterwards there would be talk, or reading aloud, or a game of piquet; a bowl of kava was always made early in the afternoon, and, having been served once, was then left in the verandah. When Austin Strong was at Vailima, his “ Uncle Louis “ would at some time during the day give him a history lesson, and also began to teach him French; for the boy’s education was undertaken by the household at large. Later in the afternoon there might follow a visit to Apia, or a ride, or a stroll into the woods or about the plantation, or a game of croquet or tennis, until close upon six o’clock, 1 Ptilotis carunculata, the wattled creeper. when the dinner was served. Then followed a round game at cards, or reading, or talk as before, or music, if there were any visitor in the house able to play the piano or sing, for in the end Stevenson had altogether given up the practice of his flute. Soon after eight on an ordinary night the members of the household had generally dispersed to their rooms, to go to bed at what hour they chose. The master of the house used, I think, to do most of his reading at these times, but usually he was in bed soon after ten, if not actually before.

His own favourite exercise was riding, and though for the dozen years before he came to the Pacific he had probably never mounted a horse, he was an excellent rider. His light weight (I doubt if he ever actually weighed eight stone) served him in good stead, and Jack, the Samoan-bred pony which he bought in 1890, carried him well. The first and unflattering mention describes Jack as “a very plain animal, dark brown, but a good goer, and gentle, except for a habit of shying and sitting down on his tail, if he sees a basket in the road, or even a bunch of bananas. However, he will make a very good makeshift.” He reigned alone in Stevenson’s affection, and, never having been mounted since, is passing a peaceful old age in a friend’s paddock in Upolu.

Except on the roads of the Neutral Territory and in the big German plantation, the ground was not very suitable for horses, and a dozen miles was usually the limit of an afternoon’s excursion.

I have called this the ordinary mode of life, but it was subject to endless variations. If Stevenson were in a hot tit of work with a story just begun or some new episode just introduced, he could do nothing and think of nothing else, and toiled all day long; for if there were no interruptions and no other pressing business, he would at such times return to his labours for all the afternoon and evening. On the other hand, if he were ailing or disinclined for writing, he would stop work some time before luncheon. But almost at any time he was at the mercy of visitors, white or brown, and the matters which were referred to him for advice or settlement were endless. Mr. Osbourne has well described them: —

“He was consulted on every imaginable subject:. . . Government chiefs and rebels consulted him with regard to policy; political letters were brought to him to read and criticise; his native following was so widely divided in party that he was often kept better informed on current events than any one person in the country. Old gentlemen would arrive in stately procession with squealing pigs for the ‘chief-house of wisdom,’ and would beg advice on the capitation tax or some such subject of the hour; an armed party would come from across the island with gifts, and a request that Tusitala would take charge of the funds of the village and buy the roof-iron for a proposed church. Parties would come to hear the latest news of the proposed disarming of the country, or to arrange a private audience with one of the officials; and poor war-worn chieftains, whose only anxiety was to join the winning side, and who wished to consult with Tusitala as to which that might be. Mr. Stevenson would sigh sometimes as he saw these stately folk crossing the lawn in single file, their .1 >45 attendants following behind with presents and baskets, but he never failed to meet or hear them.”[1]

During his mother’s first period of residence at Vailima, Stevenson used every morning at eight to have prayers at which the whole household were present. A hymn was sung in Samoan from the Mission book, a chapter read verse by verse in English, and two or three prayers were read in English, ending with the Lord’s Prayer in Samoan. But it was impossible to assemble before anybody had begun work, and so much delay was caused by summoning the household from their various labours, that the practice was reserved in the end for Sunday evenings only, when a chapter of the Samoan Bible was read, Samoan hymns were sung, and a prayer, written by Stevenson himself for the purpose, was offered in English, concluding, as always, with the native version of the Lord’s Prayer.[2]

There is one feature in Stevenson’s residence in Samoa which has probably never yet been mentioned, and that is the constancy with which he stayed at home in Vailima. After his visit to Tutuila in 1891 1 know of only two occasions during his life in Upolu — the two separate nights which he passed at Malie — when he did not sleep either at Apia or in his own house. This was largely a precaution for the sake of health, since there was little good accommodation outside those two places, but it entirely prevented his becoming personally acquainted with many interesting spots in the islands and many of the Samoans whom he would have been glad to meet.

1 Scribtier's Magazine, p. 462, October, 1895.

2 Appendix C, Vailima Prayers, vol. ii. p. 232. Thus he never crossed the central range of his own island, the track over which passed near his house; he never visited Lanuto'o, the crater lake, set in the midst of the forest among the hills, only a dozen miles away, or the stone circle known as "The House of the Cuttlefish" in a neighbouring glen, the crater islet of Apolima, or (to cut short my list) even any of the lovely villages along the south-western shore.

Now and again, for some special reason, generally connected with the arrival of the mail-steamer, he would sleep in Apia, but on all ordinary occasions he preferred to return home. At these times he liked the lamps left burning in his absence, that he might ride up the dark road and out into the solitary and silent woods, there to find the house lighted up to welcome his return even at the dead of night.

At Vailima visitors were always coming and going. All white residents who chose to appear were made welcome. The American Chief-Justice Ide and his family; Herr Schmidt, the President; the Consuls; the Land Commissioners, especially his friend Bazett Haggard; the Independent and Wesleyan missionaries; the French Bishop, the priests and sisters; the doctor, the magistrate, the postmaster, the surveyor; the managers of firms and their employes, English or German; and traders from all parts of the islands: such were some of the residents who might arrive at any time. To them might be added passing visitors, spending a week or two in Samoa between two steamers, or remaining several months to see the islands more thoroughly. The latter, if not actually staying in the house, were yet sure to be frequently invited to Vailima. Mr. Barrie and Mr. Kipling, to their own bitter regret, too long deferred the visits for which their host was so eager; but of those who came, the Countess of Jersey, Mr. La Farge the artist, and Mr. Henry Adams the historian are the most familiar names.

And perhaps most frequent and certainly not least welcome were the officers and men of the warships, of which Apia saw only too many for her peace in those troubled days. The Germans toiled but seldom up the hill, the American vessels came rarely to the islands; but in the four years of Stevenson's residence at least eight British men-of-war entered the harbour, and one — his favourite Curagoa — not only came most frequently, but stayed the longest, spending in the group seven out of the last eight months of his life. The experience which I think gave him more pleasure than any other in that time was his visit as a guest in the Cura$oa to the outlying islets of Manu’a, which he had in vain tried to reach three years before with Mr. Sewall.

In wardroom and gunroom were, of course, closer friends than others, but I think there was not an officer in the ship, from the captain to the youngest midshipman, who was not definitely a friend. The most intimate were perhaps Dr. Hoskyns, Hugo Worthington, the marine officer, Lieutenant (now Commander) Eeles; but the road from Apia became known as the “ Curafoa track,” and if any one of the officers was placed upon the sick-list, he was speedily invited to stay in the house and try the effect of the climate of Vailima. With the men also, petty officers, bluejackets, and marines, Stevenson’s relations were of the happiest. “ A most interesting lot of men,” he wrote of another ship; “this education of boys for the navy is making a class, wholly apart — how shall I call them? — a kind of lower-class public-school boy, well-mannered, fairly intelligent, sentimental as a sailor.”

He had doubted at Honolulu if the navies of the world held such another ship as the Cormorant, and the answer came to his door.

There was also the merchant service: the captains and officers of the mail-steamers, both of the San Francisco vessels and the local New Zealand boats. “ Captain Smith of the Taviuni,” as Mr. Osbourne reminds me, “once paid a visit to Vailima with some friends. On his road home he passed the Ala Loto Alofa, on which the chiefs were then working like good fellows. He asked — and was told — the reason of their task; and the bluff, hearty old seaman at once insisted in getting off his horse and felling one of the trees himself. ‘I must be in that, too,’ he said, with a genuine emotion; and spent half an hour swinging an axe.”

Other and stranger visitors would turn up from the various islands which the family had visited. As Stevenson wrote to Mr. Barrie: “Another thing you must be prepared for — and that is the arrival of strange old shell-back guests out of every quarter of the island world, their mouths full of oaths for which they will punctiliously apologise; their clothes unmistakably purchased in a trade-room, each probably followed by a dusky bride. These you are to expect to see hailed with acclamation and dragged in as though they were dukes and duchesses. For though we may be out of touch with ‘God knows what,’ we are determined to keep in touch with appearances and the Marquesas.”

The bust of old Robert Stevenson, looking down upon the hall, must have been reminded again and again of the breakfasts in Baxter’s Place, and his “broad- spoken, home-spun officers.”[1]

The departure of one of these old traders was most characteristic, and would hardly, I think, occur in just the same way outside the

South Seas. He had come from his island; he had made his way to Vailima and renewed his friendship; he had enjoyed himself and received such kindness and consideration as perhaps he did not often get. When he rose to take his leave, “Now don’t you move,” he said, “don’t one of you move. Just let me take a last look of you all sitting there on that verandah, and I shall have that always to think of, when 1 ‘m away.”

It was Stevenson’s intimate knowledge of this class which made him particularly anxious to heal as far as possible the unnecessary division between them and the missionaries. On this point he particularly insisted in an address delivered in Sydney in 1893.[2] That paper does not relate exclusively to Samoa; on the contrary, there is much of it which was applicable only elsewhere; but it is the general conclusion of Stevenson’s experiences of British Protestant missions in the Pacific, and one of the wisest and most valuable utterances upon the whole subject.[3]

His personal relations with the Protestant missionaries in Samoa were most pleasant. He was a loyal and generous friend to every man and woman among them, told them quite plainly whenever he disagreed with them or disapproved of their line of conduct, and was a most stimulating and liberal influence on their work. It is almost invidious to single out names, but the Rev. W. E. Clarke and his wife were his closest and most thorough-going friends among the residents. Outside Samoa, the Rev. George Brown, the Rev. F. E. Lawes of Savage Island, and the Rev. F. Damon of Honolulu held high places in his affection and regard; but for Mr. Chalmers,[1] “Tamate” of New Guinea, he felt a kind of hero-worship, a greater admiration probably than he felt for any man of modern times except Charles Gordon.

His appreciation of the Mission he showed not only by giving his influence and his money, but also by offering his services to take a Bible-class of young half- caste lads on Sunday afternoons. Nothing was more irksome to him than a periodical engagement. The boys, it is gathered, were quite impenetrable, and the process was that of cutting blocks with a razor; but for several months Stevenson held firmly to his undertaking, and in the end it was dropped only from some urgent external cause, and never resumed.

With the Catholics Stevenson was on equally pleasant but quite different terms. His interest in Molokai, even apart from Father Damien, always made his heart warm towards the priests and Catholic sisters; the accidental circumstance that all his best boys at Vailima between the natives who were engaged in a tribal war. belonged to the Church of Rome strengthened the connection. For the Bishop he had a real appreciation: “a superior man, much above the average of priests”; “Monseigneur is not unimposing; with his white beard and his violet girdle he looks splendidly episcopal, and when our three waiting lads came one after another and kneeled before him in the big hall, and kissed his ring, it did me good for a piece of pageantry.”

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[1] Vide vol. i. p. 10.

[2] Appendix B.

[3] Compare especially Letters, ii. 340.

[1] The Rev. Dr. James Chalmers was killed at the Aird River in New Guinea, in April, 1901, as he was endeavouring to make peace

Of the spiritual merits of their work he was of course in no position to judge; but he always had a special admiration for the way in which they identified themselves with the natives and encouraged all native habits and traditions at all compatible with Christianity. Above all things he welcomed the fact that the influence of the chiefs was increased instead of weakened by their efforts. He agreed with them that it was better to concentrate their forces on people of rank than to impose such a democracy as that of some of the Protestant societies, for he felt that the salvation of Samoa lay in the chiefs, and that it was unfortunate that all white influence except that of the Catholics was in the line of diminishing their authority.

Thus the priests and the sisters from the Savalalo convent were always welcome guests, and not the less from the fact that French was the usual medium of intercourse.

Besides open house at Vailima, there also were many special entertainments, both those given in the house, and those shared with others or given by them in return in Apia. In addition to ordinary lunches or dinners, it was Stevenson’s greatest delight to organise any festivity in which the natives could have a share, the entertainment of a man-of-war’s band, a feast on the completion of a Samoan house, or, above all, the great banquet given in native fashion to celebrate his own birthday. In Apia public balls were not infrequent; Stevenson became a willing pupil in the hands of his stepdaughter, and thenceforward took his part in the dances with delight.

But the balls in themselves deserve a passing word, for nowhere, since the world began, can the juxtaposition of incongruous elements have reached so high a point. Almost every one in Apia, without regard for social station, was invited, and all were welcome. Diplomatists and naval officers, traders and bar-keepers, clerks and mechanics, all came; and the residents brought their wives and daughters, white, half-caste, or whole Polynesian. On one point only was etiquette inexorable — no Samoan man could hope for admission unless some elderly and august chief were introduced as a spectator. But invitations were issued to such native girls as could dance and were otherwise suitable, and the “ maid of a village” might frequently there be seen, dancing away in a native dress even more elaborate and scanty than those of her white sisters. And not only was social exclusiveness waived, but hostilities, public and private, were suspended at these remarkable entertainments. One night Stevenson found himself vts-d-vts with Chief-Justice Cedercrantz in a square dance, at a time when either was eagerly compassing the removal of the other from the island. “We dance here in Apia,” he wrote, “a most fearful and wonderful quadrille; I don’t know where the devil they fished it from, but it is rackety and prancing and embraceatory beyond words; perhaps it is best defined in Haggard’s expression of a gambado.”[1] And of his rival: “We exchanged a glance and then a grin; the man took me in his confidence; and through the remainder of that prance, we pranced for each other.”

Another time, during the fiercest moments of Anglo- German animosity, Mr. Osbourne, by the adroit use of a bow and arrow, secured the hand of the German Consul’s wife for a cotillon; and at a Fourth of July dance given by the American Vice-Consul, all that gentleman’s enemies might have been seen joining hands and dancing round him, while they sang, “ For he’s a jolly good fellow.” One ineffable family indeed carried out the rules of the game with so much rigour as to accept partners with whom they were not on speaking terms, and then to dance and speak not a word. But for the most part people entered readily into the spirit of the thing, and ill-will was left outside, while not only the lion and the lamb but the rival beasts of prey all frolicked happily together.

There is one difficulty to which I have not yet alluded — the question of language. Stevenson had, as he wrote, on entering the Pacific, “journeyed out of that comfortable zone of kindred languages, where the curse of Babel is so easy to be remedied,” but the obstacle proved much less than he had anticipated. It is true that in Samoa few of the natives speak or really understand anything but their own tongue, but except for the fact that this has no analogies with any European speech, it is not very difficult to acquire for practical purposes. To it he soon addressed himself, and over the study of Samoan he spent a good deal of pains, even taking regular lessons from the Rev. S.J. Whitmee of the London Mission, the best Samoan scholar in the islands. His story of The Bottle Imp was translated by another member of the Mission for their magazine almost as soon as it was written, and has the unique distinction of having been published in Samoan before it appeared in English. Stevenson himself began as an exercise with his teacher to write in Samoan a story of Saxon times called Eatuina (Edwin), but only a few chapters were completed.

In Samoan there is a special vocabulary for addressing or mentioning high chiefs, which is naturally used on all solemn occasions and in all important correspondence. Stevenson mastered this sufficiently to understand it when it was spoken well, and not only to be able to write it with facility, but even to satisfy his own fastidious requirements in composing letters. The everyday speech he used for all household purposes, and could understand it himself without difficulty. But when there came a voluble rustic from a remote district, some small chief perhaps, who sat and "barked," as his unfortunate hearer said, in either dialect about matters beyond Tusitala's ken, the result was confusion. In matters of importance, where it was of the highest urgency that Stevenson should not be misunderstood, a good and really trustworthy interpreter was hardly to be procured outside the Mission, and from anything approaching politics the missionaries for the most part wisely held aloof. But this difficulty was gradually solved by Mr. Osbourne, who learned both usages very thoroughly, and spoke them in the end with fluency and ease. There are few matters in which English readers have taken less interest than the political history of Samoa, even when it was written by Stevenson himself. Nevertheless, if I were to omit all reference to these affairs and the criticisms which Stevenson passed upon them, it would be supposed that I was letting judgment go against him by default. I propose therefore to give the briefest possible description of the government as it was from 1889 to 1894, relegating to the Appendix 1 a brief summary of the details, and the evidence for my assertions. Those who wish to find the matter treated most brilliantly, but at greater length, will find it in A Foot-note to History and Stevenson's letters to the Times.

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[1] Vailima Letters, 13th September, 1892.

Throughout his residence in Samoa, the government of the islands was controlled by a Treaty entered into at Berlin in 1889between America, England, and Germany. Under this the native king was recognised by these three Great Powers, by whom two new white officials were also appointed — a Chief-Justice, receiving £1200 a year out of the Samoan treasury, and a President of the Municipal Council, who was to be paid ˆ1000 a year by the Municipality and also act as adviser to the king. The Neutral Territory of the Municipality of Apia, in which most of the white population resided, was managed by a Council of six residents elected by the ratepayers, with the President as Chairman. A Land Commission of three representatives, one appointed by each of the three Powers, was to investigate all equitable claims of foreigners to the ownership of land in Samoa, and after the registration of such titles as were 1 Appendix D, vol. ii. p. 237. valid, none but a native might acquire the freehold of any part of Samoan territory.

The American and German Consuls-General and the British Consul retained their jurisdiction, and preserved much of the prestige they had enjoyed in the days before the Berlin Treaty, when the Consular

Board had been the chief controlling power in Samoa. The British Consul also, as a Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific, had very despotic powers over all British subjects under the Orders in Council issued under the Pacific Islanders' Protection Act of 1875.

The principal white officials in Samoa were thus: —

The Chief-Justice.

The President of the Municipal Council.

The Three Consuls.

The Three Land Commissioners.

It is impossible to say whether the system thus founded could ever have worked satisfactorily among so many contending interests and at so great a distance from the paramount Governments, seated as these were at Berlin, London, and Washington, even if two competent Treaty officials possessed of experience and common sense had been promptly sent out to the scene of their duties. But there was undue delay, the wrong men were chosen, and the system was doomed.

The Chief-Justiceship was, failing the unanimous choice of the three Powers, given by the King of Sweden to a Swedish Assistant-Judge, Mr. Conrad Ceder- crantz, while Baron Senfft von Pilsach, a German Regierungs-Assessor, was appointed by the Powers to be President of the Municipal Council. For more than two years the pair drew their salaries and discharged what they conceived to be their duties in a fashion which is perfectly incredible until it is studied by the "cold light of consular reports." Stevenson was finally kindled to indignation by the outrage of the dynamite — a proposal to blow up some Samoan chiefs imprisoned for a political offence of no great gravity, if any attempt were made by their people to rescue them from jail. He wrote to the Times a series of letters which at first were generally disbelieved, but were afterwards confirmed in every important detail that was made known. It was a real bitterness to him to see fading away before his eyes perhaps the last opportunity for the restoration of order and prosperity to Samoa, as the natives watched the gambadoes of this extraordinary couple and the second-rate diplomacy or tardy and futile action of the three Great Powers.

The fight was keen, for the two Treaty officials did their best, as Stevenson believed, to have him deported; but the end was certain, whether it was due to the diplomatists or the Times, and the pair departed for other scenes of activity. But the evil had been done, and such opportunity as their successors had was frustrated by the arbitrary and vacillating interference of the consuls. On this subject Stevenson wrote three more letters dealing with the outrages which went on under the very noses of the consuls and the guns of the warships, with the weakness and the favouritism of the Government and the farce of disarming. But everything showed that the failure of the Berlin Treaty was complete, and that the only chance for Samoa was to abolish the triple control.

Stevenson took the chair at one public meeting in Apia, and apart from this his local interference in politics was limited to a few formal visits to native chiefs.[1] Once, however, by an accident it nearly took the most startling form of intervention possible. The king was all but shot dead in the large hall at Vailima by Mrs. Stevenson in her husband's presence. Suddenly one day in 1894 Malietoa came up without warning to pay a secret visit of reconciliation to Tusitala, attended only by a black-boy interpreter. In the course of the visit he happened to mention his wish for a revolver; Stevenson immediately went to the big safe in the corner of the room and produced one which he emptied of the cartridges and handed to his wife. Mrs. Stevenson found that there was something wrong with the trigger and tried it several times. Four times it clicked, the king leaned over in front to examine it, and then some unaccountable impulse made her inspect the pistol again. In the next chamber lay a cartridge which would inevitably have sent its charge into the king's brain. The smile and wave of the hand with which Malietoa greeted and dismissed the discovery were worthy of a stronger monarch and of a far greater kingdom. Had the bullet gone to its mark, it is idle to speculate on what would have happened, but it is clear at any rate that Stevenson could no longer have found a home in Samoa.

On most occasions he confined himself to giving his advice when it was asked, or when he saw any reasonable chance of its being accepted. I need hardly say that he never contributed one farthing or one farthing's worth towards any arming or provisioning of the natives, nor did he ever take any step or give any counsel or hint whatsoever that could possibly have increased the danger of war or diminished the hopes of a peaceful settlement.

If he had been asked what concern he had in the affairs of Samoa, or why he did not leave them in the hands of the consuls whose business they were, he would probably have answered that it was his business to vindicate the truth and to check misgovernment and oppression wherever he found them; that he had good reason to distrust the consuls; that Samoa was a remote spot where public opinion was helpless; and that the trustworthy means of publishing the real state of its affairs to the civilised world were few. And in support of this he would have instanced the case of the dynamite, the very name of which has been suppressed in all the blue-books and white-books of the three Powers; and the fact that the only newspaper in the island had been secretly purchased with the public money, printing-press, type and all, for the benefit of his opponents. Finally, that which he would never have pleaded for his own advantage may be urged for him in a disinterested sense: he had adopted Samoa as his country, and her enemies were his enemies, and he made her cause his own. It is difficult for people reading their newspapers at home to realise the entire difference of circumstances and conduct, and I freely confess that until I arrived in Samoa and saw the conditions for myself, I favoured the easier course of laisseˆ faire.

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[1] Appendix D, vol. ii. p. 242.

It would give a false impression, however, if I neglected to mention the excitement of politics, which in Europe is denied to all but the few diplomatists behind the scenes. In Apia every one knew the chief persons involved, both white and Samoan, and knew all, and much more than all, that was passing between them. As a young Irishman quoted by Stevenson said: “ I never saw so good a place as this Apia; you can be in a new conspiracy every day.” And to Stevenson himself at first the interest was absorbing: “ You don’t know what news is, nor what politics, nor what the life of man, till you see it on so small a scale and with your liberty on the board for stake.”[1] But so futile and so harassing were these concerns, that before long he was glad to leave them on one side as far as he could, and devote himself once more to literature. He soon found politics “the dirtiest, the most foolish, and the most random of human employments”: [2] and for the diplomatists — ” You know what a French post-office or railway official is? That is the diplomatic card to the life. Dickens is not in it; caricature fails.” [3]

Of the exact amount of influence that Stevenson possessed with the natives, it is hard to speak with any certainty. From what I have said of his stationary life it will be evident that there were many Samoans who had no opportunity of coming into contact with him at all; but in spite of this drawback his prestige and authority were gradually spreading, and his kindness and fidelity in misfortune produced a real effect upon the native mind. His influence was probably as great as that of any white resident in the islands, with the possible exception of two or three who had married native wives. But this, after all, did not amount to very much; the Sainoans, in common with other native races who have not been too well treated by the whites, have learned to protect themselves by an armour of reserve and diplomacy, and they seldom accepted any foreigner’s advice unless it recommended to them the course which they were already disposed to follow. As Mr. Whitmee, who knew the islands well, said: “There have been paragraphs in British papers representing Mr. Stevenson as being something like a king in Samoa. 1 believe I have seen it stated that he might have been king of the islands had he wished. That was simple nonsense.” (And, I may add, nonsense which irritated Stevenson more than almost any other idle rumour.) “But he was respected by the natives as a whole, and by many he was beloved."

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[1] Letters, ii. 276.

[2] Ibid., 295.

[3] Ibid., 334.

His work was given at first entirely to the "letters" which were constructed out of the notes and journals of his voyages, and were themselves in turn the rough material of which he intended to compose his great book on the South Seas. " To get this stuff jointed and moving " was his first aim, but never did he labour to so little purpose. Some seventy "letters" in all were written, and his contract with Messrs. M'Clure was fulfilled; but the strain of production was excessive, and the result satisfied neither the author nor the public. The "bargain was quite unsuitable to his methods," for one thing;[1] for another, the material was unlimited and his knowledge was always increasing. Instead of the entertaining book of travels, full of personal interest and excitement, and abounding in picturesque descriptions of the scenery and manners of the South Seas, for which his readers so eagerly looked, they found a series of disconnected chapters on native beliefs with all or nearly all the sense of adventure left out, and but scanty information as to the details of travel upon which the public so dearly loves to be informed. That the Voyage in the Sunbeam should be a popular work and Stevenson's South Sea letters a failure is one of the tragedies of literature, but if any one will compare the letters from the Paumotus with the letter to R. A. M. Stevenson,[1] he will see that it was due to Stevenson's deliberate judgment, which in this instance for once was entirely mistaken. The experience he enjoyed most — the visit to Tahiti — remained unwritten; the part which the public awaited perhaps with most interest — the visit to Molokai — was not seriously attempted; and by the time the best letters were reached, those in which he describes his unique experiences in Apemama, his readers had lost heart; and indeed I believe the Tembinok' chapters never appeared in England at all. Thus he was well advised when in June, 1891, he abandoned the task, and cast ab.out for some fresh work to take in hand.

First, for the sake of change, he began the history of his family, which he had contemplated for some time as the frame in which to include the long-projected memorial of his father. The greater part of his grandfather's life was ultimately finished, and now forms the Family of Engineers. He did not even begin the account of his uncle Alan, the builder of Skerryvore lighthouse, a man of extraordinary ability, who retired from practice at an early age; and his father's life, except for the sketch of his boyhood already quoted, was likewise untouched. For the present little more than Chapter I. was written, and the book was taken up from time to time only as a relaxation from creative work.

The Wrecker, which had been left half finished since a month after his arrival in Samoa, was now taken in hand again on the return of his collaborator, and carried to a conclusion. It was written on the same plan as before, the first drafts of the San Francisco parts being written by Mr. Osbourne, who had no hand at all in the Paris days, or the scene at Barbizon.[1] The book perhaps appealed to too many interests to receive its due from any one class of readers. The following letter from the late Lord Pembroke is a testimonial to its accuracy, coming from one of the authors of South Sea Bubbles, who have done more almost than any one to make the Pacific familiar ground to the English reader: —

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[1] Vailima Letters, p. 55.

[1] Letters, ii. 135.

"I am afraid only a small minority in England can be really capable of appreciating The Wrecker. The majority don't know enough of the real big World to know how true it is, and they will infinitely prefer that most delightful story, Treasure Island. Perhaps it is a better story than The Wrecker, but to me there is the difference that Treasure Island might have been written by a man who had no knowledge of such matters but what he had got from books and a powerful imagination, while The Wrecker has the indefinite smack of reality, of real knowledge of what men and ships do in 1 Letters, ii. 356. that wild and beautiful world beyond the American continent."

In the meantime Stevenson's expeditions into the solitudes of the forest above his home led not only to the set of verses called The Woodman, written, as he says most of his verses were,[1] "at the autumnal equinox," but also to the beginning of the story which at first, as The High Woods of Ulufanua, turned on a supernatural element, and then came down to earth in its final form as The Beach of Falesd. To the style of this admirable story justice has been done by Professor Raleigh,[2] doubtless to the entire bewilderment of those people who could see nothing in it but a farrago of slang; but the astonishing merits of the tale and its setting can hardly be appreciated by any but those who have lived in "The Islands." Stevenson himself is as usual his own best critic, and though he gives it high praise, he says not a word too much: "It is the first realistic South Sea story; I mean with real South Sea character and details of life. Everybody else who has tried, that I have seen, got carried away by the romance, and ended in a kind, of sugar-candy sham epic, and the whole effect was lost — there was no etching, no human grip, consequently no conviction. Now I have got the smell and look of the thing a good deal. You will know more about the South Seas after you have read my little tale than if you had read a library."[3] It is not a picture of any one island, though most of it would 1 Vailima Letters, p. 245.

[2] Robert Louis Stevenson, by Walter Raleigh, p. 37. Edward Arnold, 1896.

[3] Vailima Letters, p. 88.

have been applicable at the time to any place in Samoa, if Apia had not existed. The darker features of the story, however, as I have said, were taken chiefly from some of the people then living in the Gilberts.

The Shovels of Newton French was the next long work which he planned, a chronicle of seven generations of a family, in which two other stories were to be embodied. In much the same way the chief story intended for a South Sea volume became absorbed in Sophia Scarlet,1 and neither of the projects was ever realised.

The state of affairs in Samoa was becoming serious. As early as August of 1891 Stevenson had written to Mr. Baxter, “We sit and pipe upon a volcano, which is being stoked by bland, incompetent amateurs “; and he now determined that if the constitution should again go into the melting-pot, at least those who recast it should not be obliged to do their work in ignorance of the past. The material he had collected for his “letters” and the subsequent unwritten book was lying ready to hand with the first few chapters even drafted, and he began the Foot-note to History, worked at it under pressure, and had it finished in the following May.

The evidence he brought forward has never been met, the conclusion reached — that the Berlin Treaty was wholly unworkable — has long been recognised by everybody concerned; but for the time the only result achieved was that the edition of the Foot-note to History which Baron Tauchnitz prepared to issue for the Continent of Europe was burned by order of the German Government, and the publishers only escaped from further penalties by payment of a large sum to a charity 117th May, 1892, Vailima Letters, p. 161. selected by the authorities. But in 1893 Chief-justice Cedercrantz and President von Pilsach were superseded, and the Germans, from being the bitter enemies of Stevenson’s friend Mataafa, had by 1899 become his champions and the chief supporters of his claim.

Stevenson now turned again to Scotland for subjects, for the first time since he had finished The Master, and his power of reproducing the Scottish life and atmosphere among alien scenes and under widely different influences was shown once more in a no less remarkable degree. The Foot-note was but partly engaging his attention in January, 1892, when he received fresh material from Mr. Andrew Lang for a story dealing with the private adventures of the Young Chevalier. Its introduction was written in May, but in the meantime Stevenson took up the story of David Balfour at the point where he had left it six years before, and he now carried it on concurrently with the Foot-note, so that in spite of endless interruptions it was actually finished by the end of September. It was the first of his works that was completed while I was at Vailima, and 1 well remember the agitation and stress with which it was brought to a close.. It lends no support to the theory that the continuation of a story is doomed to fail. If Catriona lacks unity of plot and that splendid swiftness of action which marked the best part of Kidnapped, it contains the story of Tod Lapraik, and in none of Stevenson’s books save the last is there such wealth of character. We have David Balfour himself, strengthened and matured; Lord Prestongrange; Stewart the writer and his colleagues; Mrs. Allardyce; Barbara Grant, that most bewildering and charming of women, who rendered even her creator disloyal to Catriona; and the two best Highlandmen in fiction, the incomparable Alan Breck again, and his foil, James Mohr. Of the original of the latter Mr. Andrew Lang says: “ From first to last, James was a valiant, plausible, conscienceless, heartless liar, with a keen feeling for the point of honour, and a truly Celtic passion of affection for his native land. . . . Though unacquainted with the documents that we shall cite, Mr. Stevenson divined James Mohr with the assured certainty of genius.” [1]

Catriona is perhaps the best example of the rule to which it was apparently an exception, that all its author’s more considerable stories were done at two breaks. “I have to leave off,” he wrote to Mr. lies in 1887, “and forget a tale for a little; then I can return upon it fresh and with interest revived.” During the composition of Catriona there was no long pause, but it had been “simmering” since 1886, and surely we may see no more than the two volumes of one book in the completed Adventures of David Balfour.

Again there was the question of what should be taken next. It so happened one afternoon at Vailima that I was the only person available, and Louis carried me off to debate the claims of two stories which he then unfolded — Sophia Scarlet, and what afterwards became Weir of Hermiston. Either on that day or about that time I remember very distinctly his saying to me: “There are, so far as I know, three ways, and three ways only, of writing a story. You may take a plot and fit characters to it, or you may take a character and choose incidents and situations to develop it, or lastly — you must bear with me while I try to make this clear”

— (here he made a gesture with his hand as if he were trying to shape something and give it outline and form)

— “you may take a certain atmosphere and get action and persons to express and realise it. I ‘11 give you an example — The Merry Men. There I began with the feeling of one of those islands on the west coast of Scotland, and 1 gradually developed the story to express the sentiment with which that coast affected me.”

It was on this last scheme that Sophia Scarlet had been conceived, the atmosphere being that of a large plantation in Tahiti, such as Mr. Stewart's had been at Atimono twenty years before.[1] It may be that the method did not lend itself readily to an effective sketch of the plot; the draft of the beginning of the story seems to me better than I thought the outline at the time. But in any case there could be no hesitation in the choice. Weir of Hermiston was begun, and for three or four days Stevenson was in such a seventh heaven as he has described:[2] he worked all day and all evening, writing or talking, debating points, devising characters and incidents, ablaze with enthusiasm, and abounding with energy. No finished story was, or ever will be, so good as Weir of Hermiston shone to us in those days by the light of its author's first ardour of creation.

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[1] Pickle, the Spy, by Andrew Lang, p. 231, 2nd edition 1897. There is much about James Mohr in the introduction to Rob Roy.

Then he settled down, and a few days later read aloud to the family, as was his custom, the first draft of the opening chapters. After that but little progress was made, and in January, 1893, St. Ives was begun as a short story, the visit of the ladies to the prisoners in [1] South Sea Bubbles, 24th August, 1870. [2] See vol. ii. p. 38. Edinburgh being introduced at first as a mere episode without result. Stevenson was then attacked by hemorrhage: silence was imposed, and for several days he continued his work only by dictating to his stepdaughter on his fingers in the deaf-and-dumb alphabet. In this fashion he achieved from five to seven pages of manuscript a day. Before long, however, he left home with his wife and Mrs. Strong upon his last visit to Sydney, all work was stopped, and on his return in six weeks' time he began a short story for the Illustrated London News. He had lately been reading again Barbey d'Aure- villy, and his mind had turned to Brittany. The new tale dealt with the Chouans in 1793, and was to be called The Owl. But it did not prosper; the writer was not well, and he was anxious about his wife's health, and when one chapter had been written, he gave up the attempt and took up a half-finished piece of work, which afterward became The Ebb Tide.

This was a story begun with Mr. Osbourne in Honolulu just after their return from Tahiti, and known at that time as The Pearl Fisher and later as The Schooner Farallone. Mr. Osbourne had drafted the opening chapters, and no work of his had ever earned more praise from his stepfather. But at that moment an area of several acres behind the house was being cleared of forest and planted with pineapples for exportation — a scheme which it was hoped would make the plantation pay, and for the time being this engaged all Mr. Osbourne's energies. Stevenson, talking to me one day, produced the unfinished draft of the story, which at this time included only the first ten or eleven chapters, and debated what course he should pursue. The fragment was originally intended as a prologue; Attwater was to be blinded with vitriol and then return to England. The remainder of the action of the book was to take place in England, and chiefly in Blooms- bury, where the Herricks lived. Stevenson now reconsidered the whole question, accepted a shorter ending, and grew more and more interested in the character of Attwater, as he worked it out. It is perhaps worth remarking that the picture of the arrival of the schooner at the new island gives better than anything else some of the charm of such cruises as those which delighted its author, who found no experience more exhilarating than “when you sight an island and drop anchor in a new world.”1

The fables begun before he had left England and promised to Messrs. Longmans, he attacked again, and from time to time added to their number. The reference to Odin perhaps is due to his reading of the Sagas, which led him to attempt a tale in the same style, called “The Waif Woman.” But I find no clue to any fresh study of Celtic legends that could have suggested the last and most beautiful fable of all, called “The Song of the Morrow,” which dealt with the king’s daughter of Duntrine, who “had no care for the morrow and no power upon the hour,” and is like nothing else Stevenson ever wrote.

Besides all these and the letters to the Times, as well as his private correspondence, there were endless other schemes, for the most part projected and perhaps not even begun, never certainly brought near to completion. He wrote to Mr. Charles Baxter: “My schemes 1 Letters, ii. 120. are all in the air, and vanish and reappear again like shapes in the clouds.” So likewise to Miss Boodle: “ I have a projected, entirely planned love-story — everybody will think it dreadfully improper, I ‘m afraid — called Cannonmills. And I ‘ve a vague, rosy haze before me — a love-story too, but not improper — called The Rising Sun. It ‘s the name of the wayside inn where the story, or much of the story, runs; but it’s a kind of a pun: it means the stirring up of a boy by falling in love, and how he rises in the estimation of a girl who despised him, though she liked him and had befriended him. I really scarce see beyond their childhood yet, but I want to go beyond, and make each out-top the other by successions: it should be pretty and true if I could do it.”

Neither of these was ever written. There was also a play for home representation, showing the adventures of an English tourist in Samoa; and I can remember two more serious schemes which were likewise without result. In the August before he died, he drew up with Mr. Osbourne the outline of a history, or of a series of the most striking episodes, of the Indian Mutiny, to be written for boys, and sent home for the books necessary for its execution. Another day he sketched the plan of an English grammar, to be illustrated by examples from the English classics. These are but a few, the many are unremembered; but all alike belong, not to the fleet of masterpieces unlaunched, but the larger and more inglorious squadron whose keels were never even laid down.

CHAPTER XVI

THE END — 1894

“Brief day and bright day And sunset red, Early in the evening, The stars are overhead.”

R. L. S.

“Wanted Volunteers To do tbeir best for twoscore years! A ready soldier, here 1 stand, Primed for Thy command, With burnished sword. If this be faith, O Lord, Help Thou mine unbelief And be my battle brief.”

Envoy to No. XXV. of Songs of Travel.

The climate of Samoa had apparently answered the main purpose of preserving Stevenson from any disabling attacks of illness, and allowing him to lead a life of strenuous activity. “I do not ask for health,” he had said to his stepson at Bournemouth, “ but I will go anywhere and live in any place where I can enjoy the ordinary existence of a human being.” And this had now been granted to him beyond his utmost hope.

In all the time he was in Samoa he had but two or three slight hemorrhages, that were cured within a very few days. The consumption in his lungs was definitely arrested, but it seems certain that a structural weakening of the arteries was slowly and inevitably going on, al- though his general health was apparently not affected. He had influenza at least once; occasionally he was ailing, generally with some indefinite lassitude which was attributed to malaria or some other unverifiable cause. In the summer of 1892 he was threatened with writers’ cramp, which had attacked him as long ago as 1884. From this time forth, however, his stepdaughter wrote to his dictation nearly all his literary work and correspondence, and, thanks to her quickness and unwearying devotion, he suffered the least possible inconvenience from this restriction of his powers. He had one or two threatenings of tropical diseases, which were promptly averted; and for several periods, to his own intense disgust, he gave up even the very moderate quantity of red wine which seemed to be a necessity of life to him, and — worst deprivation of all — he abandoned at these times the cigarettes which usually he smoked all day long.1

But in spite of these occasional lapses, he was able to lead an active life, full of varied interests, and the amount of work which he did during this period would have been satisfactory to less careful writers, even if they had done nothing else but follow their own profession without any interruption or diversion whatever.

In this respect Samoa was an infinite gain. If the tropical climate in any degree weakened the bodily fabric that might longer have borne the strain of his im- • petuous life in some more bracing air, no one can for a moment doubt what choice he himself would have made had he been offered five years of activity, of 1 Letters, ii. 297. cruising and riding and adventure, against five-and- twenty or fifty of existence in the sick-room and the sanatorium.

It was his friends and his country that he missed. From the day that Mr. Colvin went down the ship's side in the Thames, or the day that Mr. Low parted from him in New York, Stevenson never again saw any one of his old and intimate companions. Fortune was against him in the matter. They were all busy people, with many engagements and many ties, and when at last Mr. Charles Baxter was able to start for Samoa, he had not yet reached Egypt before the blow fell. Nor was this perversity of fortune confined to his old friends alone; it also affected the younger writers with whom, in spite of distance, he had formed ties more numerous, and, in proportion to their number, more intimate than have ever before been established and maintained at any such distance by correspondence alone. And it was the more tantalising because the paths of several seemed likely to lead them past the very island where he lived. So he had to content himself as best he might with his mail-bag, which, especially in the answers to the Vailima Letters, did much to remove for him the drawbacks of his isolation and of absence from the centres of literature to which he always looked for praise and blame.

But besides the loss of intercourse, he more than most men suffered from another pang. The love of country which is in all Scots, and beyond all others lies deepest in the Celtic heart, flowed back upon him again and again with a wave of uncontrollable emotion. When the "smell of the good wet earth" came to him, it came "with a kind of Highland touch." A tropic shower discovered in him "a frame of mind and body that belonged to Scotland, and particularly to the neighbourhood of Callander." When he turned to his grandfather's life, he was filled with this yearning, and the beautiful sentences in which he has described1 the old man's farewell to " Sumburgh and the wild crags of Skye " were his own valediction to those shores. No more was he to "see the topaz and the ruby interchange on the summit of the Bell Rook," no more to see the castle on its hill, or "the venerable city which he must always think of as his home." As he wrote of himself, " Like Leyden I have gone into far lands to die, not stayed like Burns to mingle in the end with Scottish soil."

It is not to be wondered that his letters show moods of depression which his indomitable spirit prevented him from manifesting at the time to those around him, and which perhaps beset him most when he turned to his correspondence. As has been well said:2 "He was an exile, and though his exile lay in pleasant places, he had an exile's thoughts, and these were bound to be uppermost when he wrote to his old intimates.”

There were times when he was tempted to risk everything, and to go back to the old life and the old friends, were it only for a few weeks, or even a few days. But he resisted the temptation, and fought on manfully to the end.

For the rest the advantages and drawbacks of his position were very evenly balanced: if absence threw him out of touch with what went on at home, it also kept him clear of literary cliques and coteries, and saved him from many interruptions and calls upon his time; if it hindered his personal influence, it gave, as Mr. Quiller Couch has pointed out, a greater scope and leisure for his correspondence. His earlier Scotch novels were, as we have seen, not written in Scotland, and residence in that country could hardly have bettered his latest stories. On the other hand, among the work to which Polynesia diverted his attention there is nothing, as a whole, ranking as quite first-rate except The Beach of Falesd.

One drawback to Samoa there certainly was, redeemed by no corresponding advantage, and that was the inevitable delay in obtaining material or information. If a book were wanted, it was usually of such a date and character that it was mere waste of time to attempt to procure it nearer than London or Edinburgh, and this meant, under the most favourable circumstances, an interval of nearly three months, even if the right book existed or could be obtained at all.

This to a man of Stevenson’s temperament and fertility was most unsettling; and it involved besides great waste of labour, and the abandonment of much work that had been well begun.

The difficulty of the life in Samoa was its great expense. In 1887 Stevenson had written: “Wealth is only useful for two things — a yacht and a string quartette. Except for these, I hold that £700 a year is as much as anybody can possibly want.” But though he had neither the music nor the vessel, and was now making an income of six or seven times the amount mentioned, it was no more than enough to meet the cost of his living and the needs of his generosity, while he was occasionally haunted by a fear lest his power of earning should come to an end.[1]

During the period of his residence at Vailima he returned but twice to the world of populous cities. In the early part of 1893 he paid a visit of several weeks to Sydney, and though as usual there he was much confined to his room, he derived from the trip a good deal of enjoyment. For the first time he realised that his fame had reached the Colonies, and though no man was ever under fewer illusions upon the point, he enjoyed the opportunities it gave him of meeting all sorts of

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1 Vol. i. p. 9.

2 Quarterly Review, No. 381, p. 196.

people. Artists and Presbyterian ministers alike vied in entertaining him; at Government House he was just in time to see the last of Lord and Lady Jersey; and by this time there were at Sydney a number of friends in whose company he delighted, especially Dr. Fairfax Ross and the Hon. B. R. Wise. But the event which pleased and cheered him most was his meeting at Auckland with Sir George Grey, with whom he had more than one prolonged and most inspiring discussion upon the affairs of Samoa.

In September, 1893, he came up to Honolulu for the sake of the voyage, intending to return by the next steamer. After a week spent there I left him apparently quite well, and intending to sail for Samoa the next day. But in those four-and-twenty hours he developed pneumonia, and remained ill at Waikiki until his wife's arrival, and they did not reach Apia again before November. It was thus a period of illness, for it began with Ta'alolo, who had come to take care of his master, * Cf. Letters, ii. 284. himself taking measles, and for a time we were in a sort of quarantine. But it was a change from the limited society of Apia: Stevenson saw something of his many friends and acquaintances in Honolulu; he was entertained by his brother Scots of the Thistle Club, and elsewhere; and I remember a most impressive interview between him and the lately deposed queen, whom he had last seen in the days of her prosperity, when her brother was upon the throne.

On his return to Samoa several events occurred which gave him great pleasure. He had never wearied in his kindness and generosity towards any of the natives who were in trouble, and he was constant in seeing to the real needs of the Mataafa chiefs who were in prison. These services he rendered to them, as he rendered all service, without thought of reward or fear of misunderstanding, and it was all the more pleasant to him when the chiefs gave him first an elaborate native feast with full honours in the jail where they were still confined; and secondly, as soon as they were released, came as a mark of gratitude, and cleared and dug and completed the roadway which thereafter led to his house — the Ala Loto Alofa, the Road of the Loving Heart. It was a task of no inconsiderable magnitude, and employed a large number of men for several weeks. The whole labour and the whole cost were borne by the chiefs; the idea was theirs alone, the unprompted and spontaneous expression of their regard, and no ulterior motive has ever, so far as I am aware, been suggested by anybody to whom the circumstances were known. When it was finished, there was a solemn returning of thanks, and Stevenson's speech, which may be found at the end of the Vailima Letters, was his best and most outspoken utterance to the people of Samoa.

In his writing also he met with a mark of recognition, to which he refused to allow full significance, the inception of the Edinburgh Edition of his works. Mr. Baxter, who had already rendered him invaluable service in disposing of his new books from time to time to the best advantage, had formed and among the most contending interests had carried out a scheme which, if successful, would bring in a sum of over five thousand pounds without involving any fresh strain upon the author. A complete edition of all the writings that Stevenson wished to be preserved was to be produced in the best possible form, and limited to a thousand copies. It was, I believe, the first of its kind, and was taken up with eagerness; in November, 1894, the first volume was issued, and was everywhere hailed with unbounded applause and congratulation. “My dear fellow,” he wrote to Mr. Baxter, “ I wish to assure you of the greatness of the pleasure that this Edinburgh Edition gives me. I suppose it was your idea to give it that name. No other would have affected me in the same manner. Do you remember, how many years ago — I would be afraid to hazard a guess — one night when I communicated to you certain intimations of early death and aspirations after fame? I was particularly maudlin; and my remorse the next morning on a review of my folly has written the matter very deeply in my mind; from yours it may easily have fled. If any one at that moment could have shown me the Edinburgh Edition, I suppose I should have died. It is with gratitude and wonder that I consider ‘the way in which I have been led.’ Could a more preposterous idea have occurred to us in those days when we used to search our pockets for coppers, too often in vain, and combine forces to produce the threepence necessary for two glasses of beer, or wandered down the Lothian Road without any, than that I should be strong and well at the age of forty-three in the island ofUpolu, and that you should be at home bringing out the Edinburgh Edition? “1

In the end of September he wearied of St. Ives within sight of its conclusion, and fortunately turned again to Weir of Hermiston. It was the third time he had taken it in hand, for he would not work at it when he felt uncertain of himself. But his insight was at its clearest, his touch most sure, and his style, as always when he approached Scotland in his novels, was at its simplest and best. “ He generally makes notes in the early morning,” wrote Mrs. Strong in her diary on September 24th, “ which he elaborates as he reads them aloud. In Hermiston he has hardly more than a line or two to keep him on the track, but he never falters for a word, but gives me the sentences with capital letters and all the stops, as clearly and steadily as though he were reading from an unseen book.”

October and November passed; Stevenson remained hard at work, and to all appearance in his ordinary health. His birthday was celebrated by the usual native feast, and on Thanksgiving Day, November 29th, he gave a dinner to all his American friends. What remains to tell has been so related by Mr. Osbourne that no other account is possible or to be desired, and although it has been already printed in the Letters, I must thank him for allowing it again to appear in these pages.[1]

"He wrote hard all that morning of the last day; his half-finished book, Hermiston, he judged the best he had ever written, and the sense of successful effort made him buoyant and happy as nothing else could. In the afternoon the mail fell to be answered; not business correspondence — for this was left till later — but replies to the long, kindly letters of distant friends, received but two days since, and still bright in memory.

"At sunset he came downstairs; rallied his wife about the forebodings she could not shake off; talked of a lecturing tour to America that he was eager to make, 'as he was now so well,' and played a game at cards with her to drive away her melancholy. He said he was hungry; begged her assistance to help him make a salad for the evening meal; and to enhance the little feast he brought up a bottle of old Burgundy from the cellar. He was helping his wife on the verandah, and gaily talking, when suddenly he put both hands to his head, and cried out, 'What's that?' Then he asked quickly, 'Do I look strange?' Even as he did so he fell on his knees beside her. He was helped into the great hall, between his wife and his body-servant, Sosimo, losing consciousness instantly, as he lay back in the arm-chair that had once been his grandfather's. Little time was lost in bringing the[1] doctors — Anderson, of the man-of-war, and his friend Dr. Funk. They looked at him and shook their heads; they laboured strenuously and left nothing undone; but he had passed the bounds of human skill.

"The dying man lay back in the chair, breathing heavily, his family about him frenzied with grief as they realised all hope was past. The dozen and more Samoans that formed part of the little clan of which he was chief sat in a wide semicircle on the floor, their reverent, troubled, sorrow-stricken faces all fixed upon their dying master. Some knelt on one knee to be instantly ready for any command that might be laid upon them. A narrow bed was brought into the centre of the room; the Master was gently laid upon it, his head supported by a rest, the gift of Shelley's son. Slower and slower grew his respiration, wider the interval between the long, deep breaths. The Rev. Mr. Clarke was now come, an old and valued friend; he knelt and prayed as the life ebbed away.

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[1] Letters, ii. 328.

[1] I had left Samoa five weeks before for a long cruise in the Islands, and the news first reached me in the Carolines in the following March. On November 25th we had sighted the roofs of Vailima from the sea, but the future was hidden from us, and we continued on our way.

"He died at ten minutes past eight on Monday evening the 3rd of December, in the forty-fifth year of his age.

"The great Union Jack that flew over the house was hauled down and laid over the body, fit shroud for a loyal Scotsman. He lay in the hall which was ever his pride, where he had passed the gayest and most delightful hours of his life, a noble room with open stairway and mullioned windows. In it were the treasures of his far-off Scottish home: the old carved furniture, the paintings and busts that had been in his father's house before him. The Samoans passed in procession beside his bed, kneeling and kissing his hand, each in turn, before taking their places for the long night watch beside him. No entreaty could induce them to retire, to rest themselves for the painful and arduous duties of the morrow. It would show little love for Tusitala, they said, if they did not spend their last night beside him. Mournful and silent, they sat in deep dejection, poor, simple, loyal folk, fulfilling the duty they owed their chief.

"A messenger was despatched to a few chiefs connected with the family, to announce the tidings and bid them assemble their men on the morrow for the work there was to do.

"Sosimo asked on behalf of the Roman Catholics that they might be allowed to recite the prayers for the dead. Till midnight the solemn chants continued, the prolonged, sonorous prayers of the Church of Rome, in commingled Latin and Samoan. Later still, a chief arrived with his retainers, bringing a precious mat to wrap about the dead.

"He, too, knelt and kissed the hand of Tusitala, and took his place amid the sleepless watchers. Another arrived with a fine mat, a man of higher rank, whose incipient consumption had often troubled the Master.

"' Talofa, Tusitala!' he said, as he drew nigh and took a long, mournful look at the face he knew so well. When, later on, he was momentarily required on some business of the morrow, he bowed reverently before retiring. ' Tofa, Tusitala!' he said, ' Sleep, Tusitala!'

"The morning of the 4th of December broke cool and sunny, a beautiful day, rare at this season of the year. More fine mats were brought, until the Union Jack lay nigh concealed beneath them. Among the newcomers was an old Mataafa chief, one of the builders of the 'Road of the Loving Heart,' a man who had spent many days in prison for participation in the rebellion. 'I am only a poor Samoan, and ignorant,' said he, as he crouched beside the body. ' Others are rich and can give Tusitala the parting presents of rich fine mats; 1 am poor and can give nothing this last day he receives his friends. Yet I am not afraid to come and look the last time in my friend's face, never to see him more till we meet with God. Behold! Tusitala is dead;

Mataafa is also dead to us. These two great friends have been taken by God. When Mataafa was taken, who was our support but Tusitala? We were in prison, and he cared for us. We were sick, and he made us well. We were hungry, and he fed us. The day was no longer than his kindness. You are great people and full of love. Yet who among you is so great as Tusitala? What is your love to his love? Our clan was Mataafa's clan, for whom 1 speak this day; therein was Tusitala also. We mourn them both.'

"A meeting of chiefs was held to apportion the work and divide the men into parties. Forty were sent with knives and axes to cut a path up the steep face of the mountain, and the writer himself led another party to the summit — men chosen from the immediate family — to dig the grave on a spot where it was Mr. Stevenson's wish that he should lie. Nothing more picturesque can be imagined than the narrow ledge that forms the summit of Vaea, a place no wider than a room, and flat as a table. On either side the land descends precipitously; in front lie the vast ocean and the surf-swept reefs; to the right and left, green mountains rise, densely covered with the primeval forest. Two hundred years ago the eyes of another man turned towards that same peak of Vaea, as the spot that should ultimately receive his war-worn body: Soalu, a famous chief.

"All the morning Samoans were arriving with flowers; few of these were white, for they have not learned our foreign custom, and the room glowed with the many colours. There were no strangers on that day, no acquaintances; those only were called who would deeply feel the loss. At one o'clock a body of powerful Samoans bore away the coffin, hid beneath a tattered red ensign that had flown above his vessel in many a remote corner of the South Seas. A path so steep and rugged taxed their strength to the utmost, for not only was the journey difficult in itself, but extreme care was requisite to carry the coffin shoulder-high.

"Half an hour later the rest of his friends followed. It was a formidable ascent, and tried them hard. Nineteen Europeans and some sixty Samoans reached the summit. After a short rest the Rev. W. E. Clarke read the burial service of the Church of England, interposing a prayer that Mr. Stevenson had written and had read aloud to his family only the evening before his death:

"We beseech Thee, Lord, to behold us with favour, folk of many families and nations gathered together in the peace of this roof, weak men and women subsisting under the covert of Thy patience.

"Be patient still; suffer us yet awhile longer; — 186

with our broken purposes of good, with our idle endeavours against evil, suffer us awhile longer to endure, and (if it may be) help us to do better. Bless to us our extraordinary mercies; if the day come when these must be taken, brace us to play the man under affliction. Be with our friends, be with ourselves. Go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns, return to us, our sun and comforter, and call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts — eager to labour — eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion — and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it.

“We thank Thee and praise Thee; and in the words of Him to whom this day is sacred, close our oblation.

“Another old friend, the Rev. J. E. Newell, who had risen from a sick-bed to come, made an address in the Samoan language.

“No stranger’s hand touched him. It was his body- servant that interlocked his fingers and arranged his hands in the attitude of prayer. Those who loved him carried him to his last home; even the coffin was the work of an old friend. The grave was dug by his own men.”

So there he was laid to rest, and in after-time a large tomb in the Samoan fashion, built of great blocks of cement, was placed upon the grave. On either side there is a bronze plate: the one bearing the words in Samoan, “The Tomb of Tusitala,” followed by the speech of Ruth to Naomi, taken from the Samoan Bible: —

“Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will 1 die, and there will 1 be buried.”

At the sides of the inscription were placed a thistle and a hibiscus flower.

Upon the other panel, in English, is his own Requiem: —

A ROBERT LOUIS Q 1850 STEVENSON. 1894

Under the wide and starry sky, Dig the grave and let me lie.

Glad did I live and gladly die, And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:

Here be lies where he longed to be; Home is the sailor, borne from sea, And the hunter homefrom the bill.

Since his death the chiefs have tabooed the use of firearms upon the hillside where he lies, that the birds may live there undisturbed, and raise about his grave the songs he loved so well.

The proposal that a memorial pillar should be erected on the hill to serve as a sea-mark was abandoned. Besides the difficulties of transport and of keeping the summit always clear of trees, there was the real danger of the slight but frequent shocks of earthquake by which any kind of column would sooner or later have been overthrown.

In 1897 a monument to Stevenson was erected by 188

public subscription in the Plaza of San Francisco. It is a granite pedestal supporting a bronze galleon, designed by Mr. Bruce Porter, who also with Mr. Gelett Burgess is responsible for the plates of the monument in Samoa.

A large and most enthusiastic meeting was held in Edinburgh in December, 1896. Committees were formed in most of the chief cities of Great Britain, and finally Mr. St. Gaudens was requested to produce a monument to be placed upon the walls of the Cathedral Church of St. Giles in Edinburgh.

R. L. S.

Thin-legged, thin-chested, slight unspeakably, Neat-footed and weak-fingered: in his face —

Lean, large-boned, curved of beak, and touched with race, Bold-lipped, rich-tinted, mutable as the sea, The brown eyes radiant with vivacity —

There shines a brilliant and romantic grace, A spirit intense and rare, with trace on trace Of passion, impudence, and energy.

Valiant in velvet, light in ragged luck, Most vain, most generous, sternly critical, Buffoon and poet, lover and sensualist:

A deal of Ariel, just a streak of Puck, Much Antony, of Hamlet most of all, And something of the Shorter-Catechist.

A Book of Verses, p. 41, by W. E. Henley, published by D. Nutt, 1888.

Of Stevenson’s personal aspect and bodily powers it may be fitting here to make mention. Of his appearance the best portraits and photographs give a fair idea, if each be considered as the rendering of only one expression. The frontispiece of Volume I. is from a charcoal head drawn by Mrs. Stevenson at Grez as long ago as 1877, and redrawn for this book by Mr. T. Blake Wirgman. It will be seen that the eyes were the most striking feature of the face; they were of the deepest brown in colour, set extraordinarily wide apart. At most times they had a shy, quick glance that was most attractive, but when he was moved to anger or any fierce emotion, they seemed literally to blaze and glow with a fiery light. His hair was fair and even yellow in colour until he wasfive-and-twenty; after that it rapidly deepened, and in later years was quite dark, but of course without any touch of black. When he reached the tropics, and the fear of taking cold was to some extent removed, he wore it short once more, to his own great satisfaction and comfort. His complexion was brown and always high, even in the confinement of the sickroom; the only phrase for it is the “ rich-tinted “ used by Mr. Henley in the spirited and vivid lines he has kindly permitted me to quote.

In height he was about five feet ten, slender in figure, and thin to the last degree. In all his movements he was most graceful: every gesture was full of an unconscious beauty, and his restless and supple gait has been well compared to the pacing to and fro of some wild forest animal. To this unusual and most un-English grace it was principally due that he was so often taken for a foreigner. We have seen that Mr. Lang found his appearance at three-and-twenty like anything but that of a Scotsman, and the same difficulty pursued Stevenson through life, more especially on the Continent of Europe. " It is a great thing, believe me," he wrote in the Inland Voyage, "to present a good normal type of the nation you belong to "; and as he says in the same chapter, " I might come from any part of the globe, it seems, except from where I do." In France he was sometimes taken fora Frenchman from some other province; he has recorded his imprisonment as a German spy; and at a later date he wrote, "I have found out what is wrong with me — I look like a Pole."

This difficulty, of course, was not smoothed by the clothes he used to wear, which often in early days were extremely unconventional, and of which he then took so little notice that at times they were even ragged. In cool climates he often used a velveteen smoking-jacket; in undress at Vailima he wore flannels or pyjamas, with sometimes a light Japanese kimono for dressing-gown. On public occasions in Samoa he used the white drill that constitutes full dress in the tropics, with perhaps light breeches and boots if he had been riding.

Considering his fragility, his muscular strength was considerable, and his constitution clearly had great powers of resistance. Perhaps what helped him as much as anything was the faculty he had under ordinary circumstances of going to sleep at a moment's notice. Thus, if he anticipated fatigue in the evening, he would take a quarter of an hour's sound sleep in the course of the afternoon.

His speech was distinctly marked with a Scottish intonation, that seemed to every one both pleasing and appropriate, and this, when he chose, he could broaden to the widest limits of the vernacular. His voice was always of a surprising strength and resonance, even- when phthisis had laid its hand most heavily upon him. It was the one gift he really possessed for the stage, and in reading aloud he was unsurpassed. In his full rich tones there was a sympathetic quality that seemed to play directly on the heart-strings like the notes of a violin. Mrs. Stevenson writes: " I shall never forget Louis reading Walt Whitman's Out of the cradle endlessly rocking, followed by O Captain, my Captain, to a room full of people, some of whom had said that Whitman lacked sentiment and tenderness. All alike, men and women, sat spellbound during the reading, and I have never seen any audience so deeply moved." Nor for my part shall I forget his rendering of the Duke of Wellington Ode on the evening after the news of Tennyson's death had arrived at Vailima.

When his attention was given to objects or persons, his observation was singularly keen and accurate, but for the most part his memory for the faces of his acquaintance was positively bad. In Apia he seldom could tell the name of a native, and on his last visit to Honolulu I remember that he walked the streets in dread lest he should disappoint any who expected to be remembered and to receive his greeting. In a letter speaking of the death of a lady whom he had not met probably for twenty years, he says, "I partly see her face, and entirely and perfectly hear her voice at this moment — a thing not usual with me."

His hearing was singularly acute, although the appreciation of the exact pitch of musical notes was wanting. But between delicate shades of pronunciation he could discriminate with great precision. I can give an instance in point. The vowels in Polynesian languages are pronounced as in Italian, and the diphthongs retain the sounds of the separate vowels, more or less slurred together. Thus it can be understood that the difference between ae and ai at the end of a word in rapid conversation is of the very slightest, and in Samoa they are practically indistinguishable. In the Marquesas Stevenson was able to separate them. At Vailima one day we were making trial of these and other subtleties of sound; in almost every case his ear was exactly correct. Nothing more shook his admiration for Herman Melville than that writer's inability to approximate to the native names of the Marquesas and Tahiti, and in his own delicate hearing lay perhaps the root of his devotion to style.

CHAPTER XVII

R. L. S.

“Who is it that says most? which can say more
Than this rich praise, — that you alone are you?”

For any who have read the foregoing pages it should be unnecessary here to dwell upon the sources of many qualities which distinguished Stevenson throughout his life, or the degree to which they were called forth in turn or affected by the many variations of his environment. A Scot born, we have seen how Edinburgh and Swanston set the seal upon his nationality, and how from father and mother he drew diverse elements of temperament and character. We have seen the effect of his schooling, such as it was, and the prolonged leisure of his boyhood; of the influence of his friends and his reading; the results of his training as an engineer and as an advocate; of his wanderings in France, his breakdown in America, and the happiness of his married life.

In several respects it must be owned that he was fortunate. His long preludes and painful apprenticeship would clearly have proved impossible had it been necessary for him to make money at an early age, and even the history of his maturity would have been materially changed if he had been compelled to rely solely upon his writing to meet the expenses of his household. His late beginning had, again, this advantage: tardy in some ways as he was, he had left behind him the ignobler elements of youth before his voice was heard or recognised. The green-sickness of immaturity was over, at the worst only one or two touches of self- consciousness remained, and even in his earliest published essays there rings out the note of high spirit and cheerfulness which issued from the sick-room of later years, deceived for a time the most penetrating of critics, and was perhaps the best part of his message to a world that had fallen on weary days.

In regarding Stevenson both as man and writer we find that the most unusual fact about him was the coupling of the infinite variety of his character and intellect with the extraordinary degree in which he was moved by every thought and every feeling. Few men are acted upon by so wide a range of emotions and ideas; few men hold even two or three ideas or feel even a few emotions with nearly as much intensity as compelled him under all. When we have considered both number and degree, we shall find other gifts no less remarkable and even more characteristic — the unfailing spirit of chivalry and the combination of qualities that went to make up his peculiar and individual charm. Though it is inevitable thus to take him piecemeal and to dwell upon one side at a time to the exclusion of the others he so rapidly turned upon us, we must never allow this process to efface in our minds what is far more essential — the image of the living whole.

I have spoken of him at once as a man and a writer, for in his case there was no part of the writer which was not visibly present in the man. There are authors whose work bears so little apparent relation to themselves, that we either wonder how they came to write so good a book, or else in our hearts we wish their books more worthy of the men. To neither of these classes does Stevenson belong. His works are “ signed all over,” and despite the chameleon-like nature of his style,[1] but few consecutive sentences on any page of his could have been written by any other person. Authorship provided him with a field for his energies and brought him the rewards of success, but did not otherwise change him from what he was, nor did it even exercise the whole of his faculties or exhaust the supply of his ideas.

If I have failed to produce a correct impression of his intense energy, I have quoted him and written to little purpose. The child with his “fury of play”; the boy walking by himself in the black night and exulting in the consciousness of the bull’s-eye beneath his coat; the lad already possessed with the invincible resolve of learning to write, which for the time overcame the desire of all other action: these were but the father of the man. So vehement were his emotions, his own breast was too small to contain them. He paid a visit at nineteen to a place he had not seen since childhood. “ As I felt myself on the road at last that I had been dreaming of for these many days before, a perfect intoxication of joy took hold upon me; and I was so pleased at my own happiness that I could let none past me till I had taken them into my confidence.”[2]

It is useless to go on quoting: through life he did the thing he was doing as if it were the one thing in the world that was worth being done. I will give but one more example, premising that its essence lies in its very triviality: the smaller the matter at stake, the more surprising is the blaze of energy displayed. One day he was talking to a lady in his house at Bournemouth, at a time when he was recovering from hemorrhage, and visitors and conversation were both strictly forbidden. A book of Charles Reade’s — Griffith Gaunt, I think — was mentioned, and nothing would serve Stevenson but that he should run to a cold room at the top of the house to get the volume. His visitor first tried to prevent it, then refused to wait for his return, and was only dissuaded from her resolve by being told (and she knew it to be true) that if he heard that she had left the house he would certainly run after her down the drive without waiting for either hat or coat.

“The formal man is the slave of words,” he said; and as a consequence of his own fiery intensity, no man was ever less imposed upon by the formulas of other people. His railing against the burgess, for example, was no catchword, but the inmost and original feeling of his heart. Consequently, whenever he uttered a commonplace, it will be usually found that he had rediscovered the truth of it for himself, did not say it merely because he had heard it from somebody else, and generally invested it with some fresh quality of his own. Perhaps his most emphatic utterance in this respect, and that most resembling his conversation in certain moods, is the Lay Morals, all the more outspoken because it was never finished for press. It abounds in sayings such as these: “ It is easy to be an ass and to follow the multitude like a blind, besotted bull in a stampede; and that, I am well aware, is what you and Mrs. Grundy mean by being honest.” “ It is to keep a man awake, to keep him alive to his own soul and its fixed design of righteousness, that the better part of moral and religious education is directed; not only that of words and doctors, but the sharp ferule of calamity under which we are all God’s scholars till we die.” “ Respectability: the deadliest gag and wet blanket that can be laid on men.” “ I have only to read books, to think ... the mass of people are merely speaking in their sleep.”

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[1] Appendix G.

[2] Juvenilia, p. 96.

So when he spoke, he spoke direct from his own reflection and experience, and when he prayed, he did not hesitate to pass beyond the decorous ring-fence supposed to include all permissible objects of prayer; he gave thanks for “ the work, the food, and the bright skies that make our lives delightful,” and honestly and reverently made his petition that he might be granted gaiety and laughter. These instances are on the surface, but in spiritual matters he had a rare power of leaving on one side the non-essential and going straight to the heart of the difficulty, that was hardly realised by the world at large. Taine’s charge against Scott that “ he pauses on the threshold of the soul” has been renewed against Stevenson. For one thing, in spite of his apparent frankness, he had a deep reserve on the things that touched him most profoundly, and never wore his heart upon his sleeve. So far as the criticism applies to his writings, it is little less untrue than that which called him “a faddling hedonist,” and its injustice has been shown by Mr. Colvin;[1] so far as it applies to himself, it must be met by a contradiction. He was a man who had walked in the darkest depths of the spirit, and had known the bitterness of humiliation. But in that valley — of which he never spoke — he too, like the friend whom he commemorates,[1] “ had met with angels “; he too had “ found the words of life.”

To return to his plain speaking, in literature he was equally sincere. Sir Walter Scott was for him “ out and away the king of the romantics.” But if a discerning estimate of Scott’s shortcomings, as well as his merits, is desired, it can hardly be found more justly expressed in few words than on the last page but one of “A Gossip on Romance.”

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[1] Letters, i. 18.

In composition also no one who produced so much has probably ever been so little the victim of the stereotyped phrase as Stevenson. A few mannerisms he had, no doubt — ”it was a beautiful clear night of stars” — but they were from his own mint, and it was oftenest he himself who first called attention to them.

For the most part the effect on his writing of the ardour of which I am speaking is to be seen in two ways — in his diligence and in the intellectual intensity of the work produced. If ever capacity for taking pains be accounted genius in literature, no one can deny the possession of the supreme gift to Stevenson. To Mr. lies he wrote, in 1887: “ I imagine nobody had ever such pains to learn a trade as I had; but I slogged at it day in and day out; and I frankly believe (thanks to my dire industry) I have done more with smaller gifts than almost any man of letters in the world.” In 1876 he reckoned that his final copy involved ten times the actual quantity of writing; in 1888 the articles for Scribnefs Magazine were written seven or eight times; the year before his death he told Mr. Crockett that it had taken him three weeks to write four-and-twenty pages. His prose works, exclusive of his published letters, run to nearly eight thousand pages of the Edinburgh Edition — three hundred words to a page. Nine-tenths of this was written within less than twenty years; and there were, besides, more or less completely conceived, many novels, stories, essays, histories, biographies, and plays, which occupied no inconsiderable amount of his attention within that time.

Moreover, besides the matter there was the form, and this from first to last continually engaged him. In the early seventies there were not many writers in this country to whom style was a matter of life or death, or if it were so, their aspirations were mostly hidden and unrealised. But to Stevenson from the beginning the technical problem was always present; with less fire the work of art had been less completely welded into an expression of the whole nature of the man; with less diligence the file-marks would seldom have been so completely removed. His style matured in simplicity and breadth as the years of labour brought their reward: it varied, of course, with the subject in hand; but not the least excellence of the instrument thus evolved is that it never failed of adaptation to whatever new class of writing its creator essayed.

The present point, however, is the energy and perseverance which prepared and secured the mastery, and in reviewing the amount of

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[1] Memories and Portraits, p. 121.

Stevenson’s finished work, neither the quantity sacrificed in the process must be forgotten, nor the extreme compression of the remainder. His was not the pen that covers page after page without an effort, unblotted and uncondensed, but the tool of the man who, in Mr. Kipling’s phrase, “ makes most delicate inlay-work in black and white, and files out to the fraction of a hair.” In his own words, the only test of writing that he knew was this: “If there is anywhere a thing said in two sentences that could have been as clearly and as engagingly and as forcibly said in one, then it’s amateur work.” And the main thing in which he thought his own stories failed was this: “ I am always cutting the flesh off their bones.”

Of such material he produced nearly four hundred pages a year for twenty years, and of the conditions under which most of it was done he wrote to Mr. George Meredith in 1893: —

“For fourteen years I have not had a day’s real health; I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary; and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed, and written out of it, written in hemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness; and for so long, it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove. I am better now, have been, rightly speaking, since first I came to the Pacific; and still, few are the days when I am not in some physical distress. And the battle goes on — ill or well, is a trifle; so as it goes. I was made for a contest, and the Powers have so willed that my battlefield should be this dingy, inglorious one of the bed and the physic bottle.”

But besides the energy spent on the work there is also the intensity of his intelligence. He had no vast memory like Scott’s, but he remembered to a most unusual extent his own emotions and sensations, and the events of his past life, and what remained in his mind preserved its freshness and a lifelike sharpness of outline.

If Stevenson’s claim to genius is to be based upon any single gift, it is this quality that most deserves such recognition, nor can it well be refused, if Baudelaire’s definition be regarded as adequate: Le ginie n’est que Venfance retrouvte d volonte. The paper on “ Child’s Play,” the Child’s Garden of Verses, and certain passages quoted in the earlier pages of this book display a power of returning to the ideas and feelings of childhood which has seldom if ever been shown in a higher degree, or has existed except along with intellectual powers of a very considerable calibre.

It related also to the ordinary sensations of maturity. We have all been active and all been tired, but who has given us such pictures of activity and of fatigue as Stevenson? Consider the account of his tobogganing, place beside it the calm of weariness following exercise described in “ Walking Tours,” or the drowsy labour of the end of the

Inland Voyage, and then recall David Balfour. “ By what I have read in books, I think few that have held a pen were ever really wearied, or they would write of it more strongly. I had no care of my life, neither past nor future, and I scarce remembered there was such a lad as David Balfour; I did not think of myself, but just of each fresh step, which 1 was sure would be my last, with despair, and of Alan, who was the cause of it, with hatred.”[1]

It was not only, however, in the recalling of his past life that Stevenson showed this concentration of mind, for the effect of such works as Jekyll and Hyde is due to the intense realisation of the situations evoked, by which new life was breathed into worn-out themes.

As in books so in correspondence. Letters were at times to Stevenson an irksome duty, at others a welcome opportunity for the outpouring of himself to his friends, but in haste or in delight it was entirely without calculation that he dictated or wrote. It occurred suddenly to him one day that his letters to Mr. Colvin from Samoa “would make good pickings” after his death, “ and a man could make some kind of a book out of it without much trouble.”[1] So little have people understood his character and moods that after this point they have found in the Vailima Letters a self-conscious tone and a continual appeal to the gallery.

To see him was utterly to disbelieve in any regard of ulterior motives. He was his father’s son, and with him, also, “ his affections and emotions, passionate as these were, and liable to passionate ups and downs, found the most eloquent expression both in words and gestures. Love, anger, and indignation shone through him and broke forth in imagery, like what we read of Southern races.” If he were talking, he was seldom for a moment still, but generally paced restlessly up and down the room, using his hands continually to emphasize what he was saying, but with gestures that seemed purely necessary and natural.

It is very difficult to give the impression of his demeanour and the brilliancy of his talk without falling into the contrary error, and suggesting a self-consciousness full of acting and exaggeration. Nothing could be further from the truth, and it is easily shown. His singleness of mind always, in later days at any rate, impressed friends and foes alike with his sincerity of purpose. He was no sportsman and no athlete — fragile and long-haired yet nobody ever hinted he was unmanly: he was given to preaching, and himself not beyond reproach, yet no one for an instant suspected him of hypocrisy. Whatever he did he did with his whole heart, and it was hard for any one to think otherwise. All the foibles of mysteriousness and secrecy which formed a part of his life in student days fell away from him before the end. The burden of responsibility had diminished, it may be, the gaiety of his temper; but his character shone out the more clearly as the years showed the man.

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[1] Kidnapped, chap. xxii. R. L. S.

[1] Vailima Utters, June, 1892.

If Stevenson delivered himself over, heart and soul, as I have said, to the absorbing interest or the ruling passion of the moment, it was assuredly not for the want of other interests or other passions. Of the many-sidedness of his mind the variety of his works is surely sufficient evidence, and even these by no means exhausted the whole of his resources. He wrote novels — the novel of adventure, the novel of character, the novel of incident; he wrote short stories and essays of all kinds — their variety it is impossible even to characterise; he wrote history and biography, fables and moralities, and treatises on ethics; he wrote poems- blank verse, lyrics and ballads, songs and poetry for 1 See, however, vol. ii. p. 190. children; he wrote plays, ranging from melodrama to genteel comedy; books of travel reflective and descriptive; he composed prayers and lay sermons, and even ventured on political speculation.

All were not of equal merit — that is not now to the point — but it would not be difficult to pick out at least ten works differing widely from each other, but all definitely belonging to the highest class of their kind. Only one verdict is possible, and for that it is necessary to lay hands upon a commonplace, and appropriate it to the benefit of the man who has best right to the distinction. It is curious that the saying was first made for Goldsmith, the best loved among our authors of the eighteenth century, the one who, in Professor Raleigh's phrase, shares with Stevenson " the happy privilege of making lovers among his readers." But of Stevenson it is even more true to say with Dr. Johnson: Nullum fere scribendigenus non tetigit, nullum quod tetigit non ornavit.

For this diversity of power and achievement I have relied on the evidence of his published writings, because it would otherwise appear incredible. But account must also be taken of at least a part of his unfinished and unpublished work, differing again in kind; and to that in turn must be added the indications in his letters of other veins of character or reflection that were never worked at all. Over and above all there was the talk of the man himself, in which the alternations were even more rapid and more striking.1 Wit, humour, and pathos; the romantic, the tragic, the picturesque; 1 For the admirable description by Mr. Colvin and Mr. Henley, see Letters, vol. i. pp. xxxvii, xxxviii.

stern judgment, wise counsel, wild fooling, all fell into their natural places, followed each other in rapid and easy succession, and made a marvellous whole, not the least of the wonder being the congruity and spontaneity which gave to it the just effect of being a perfectly natural utterance.

The quality was, of course, not without its defects, the chief of which were an apparent detachment and a sort of fickleness, or want of persistence. It was probably the former of these which led several persons quite independently of each other to give Stevenson the name of “Sprite,” a being exempt from the ordinary limitations of mankind, an Ariel free to wander through the realms of imagination, turning hither and thither as his fancies prompted him.

Of the abandonment of his inventions I have already spoken. “ He was always full of schemes, and plans, and fancies,” says Mr. Henley. “You left him hot on one, and the next time you saw him, you found to your distress (having gone all the way with him) that he had forgotten all about it.”

Thus if he saw life on each of its many sides in turn with an intensity denied to a wider range of vision, he was liable at times to see it neither steadily nor whole. For the latter he was somewhat compensated by the fact that he saw so many aspects of it in rapid succession that he speedily corrected any narrowness of consideration, his nature further helping him in this — that he never saw it with any narrowness of temper.

Taken together with the kindliness of his nature it also, to a great extent, explains his extraordinary gift of sympathy. He seemed to divine from his own ex- perience how other people felt, and how best they might be encouraged or consoled. I doubt if any one ever remained for long in his company either reticent or ill at ease. Mr. Gosse reminds us of Stevenson’s talks at Sydney with a man formerly engaged in the “ blackbirding” trade, who was with great difficulty induced to speak of his experiences. “ He was very shy at first,” said Stevenson, “and it was not till I told him of a good many of my escapades that I could get him to thaw, and then he poured it all out. I have always found that the best way of getting people to be confidential.” We have seen with what success he approached the natives in this manner; in like fashion, no doubt, he inquired of Highlanders about the Appin murder.

But even where he had some set purpose in view, his talk seemed to be a natural and purely spontaneous outpouring of himself. It never seemed to me to be vanity — if it were, it was the most genial that ever existed — but rather a reference to instances within his own knowledge to illustrate the point in hand. He never monopolised the conversation, however eager he might be, but was faithful to his preference for talk which is in its nature a debate, “ the amicable counter- assertion of personality,” and “the Protean quality which is in man “ enabled him, without ceasing to be himself, to meet the temper of his company.

With this multiplicity one might expect to find room in his character for many contradictory qualities or the presence in excess and defect of the very same virtues, and this in truth was so. To reconcile opposites was a task he thought of but little importance, and a favourite phrase with him was Whitman's: * Do I contradict myself? Very well, then 1 contradict myself." Consistency was a virtue for which it was easy to pay too high a price, and often it had to be surrendered for matters of greater import. Aspiration and humour, shrewdness and romance, profusion and self-denial, self-revelation and reserve, in him were curiously matched. On his frankness and his reticence 1 have already dwelt. He speaks of himself, as Professor Raleigh says,[1] " with no shadow of hypocrisy and no whiff or taint of indecent familiarity"; he tells you everything, as you think at first, and so simply and so frankly that it is only gradually you realise that he has not been revealing the things nearest his heart, that you learn no secrets of his home or his religion, nor of anything that was not for you to know. Self-denial, again, he showed in many ways; in his youth especially, when money was scarce with him, if any one had to go without, he was the first to surrender his claim and sacrifice himself. On the other hand, with " that virtue of frugality which is the armour of the artist" he was but ill-equipped.

Of his self-restraint in literature there can be no better instance than the very sparing use he makes of the pathetic. In the early essay on " Nurses " it is perhaps a trifle forced; there are hardly two more beautiful or dignified examples of it in English literature than in the essay on " Old Mortality," and the death of the fugitive French colonel in St. Ives. But it was only in conversation that one realised the extraordinary degree to which he possessed the power of moving the heartstrings. It was not that he made frequent or unmanly use of it, but being less upon his guard, the pathetic aspect of some person or incident would appeal to him, and in a moment he would have the least tender-hearted of his hearers hardly less deeply moved than himself. Ordinarily even in conversation he used it chiefly as a weapon of chivalry in defence of the neglected and the old; but as Swift "could write beautifully about a broomstick," so Stevenson one day described a chair, enlarging upon the hard lot of the legs that had to support the idle seat, until the boy to whom he was talking was almost in tears. On the other side must be set his description of " Home, Sweet Home " in Across the Plains, as "belonging to that class of art which may be best described as a brutal assault upon the feelings. Pathos must be redeemed by dignity of treatment. If you wallow naked in the pathetic, like the author of'

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[1] Robert Louis Stevenson, by Walter Raleigh, p. 77. Edward Arnold, 1896.

Home, Sweet Home,' you make your hearers weep in an unmanly fashion."

But the supreme instance of diverse elements in him was patience and its opposite. Never have I heard of any one in whom these contradictories were both shown in so high a degree. His endurance in illness and in work we have seen: no pain was too great to bear, no malady too long: he never murmured until it was over. No task was too irksome, no revision too exacting — laboriously, and like an eager apprentice, he went through with it to the end.

But on the other hand, when impatience came to the surface, it blazed up like the anger of a man who had never known a check. It was generally caused by ii 209 some breach of faith or act of dishonesty or unjustifiable delay. The only time I know of its being displayed in public was in a Paris restaurant, where Stevenson had ordered a change of wine, and the very bottle he had rejected was brought back to him with a different label. There was a sudden explosion of wrath; the bottle was violently broken; in an instant the restaurant was emptied, and — so much for long-suffering — the proprietor and his staff were devoting the whole of their attention and art to appease and reconcile the angry man.

Sternness and tenderness in him were very equally matched, though the former was kept mainly for himself and those nearest to him, of whom he asked nearly as much as of himself: tenderness, on the other hand, was for the failings of others. For like many chivalrous people, he expected but little of what he gave with so much freedom. His tenderness had something feminine, yet without lacking the peculiar strength that distinguishes it in a man. The Roman quality of sternness he so much admired came to himself, no doubt, with his Scottish blood. It is a virtue that for the most part requires exclusive dominion over a character for its proper display, and in Stevenson it had many rivals. But that it was genuine his appreciation of Lord Braxfield and his rendering of it in Lord Hermiston place beyond all doubt.[1]

Sternness and pity it is quite possible to harmonise, and the secret in Stevenson's case is perhaps solved in the following letter: " I wish you to read Taine's Origines de la France Contemporaine . . . and to try and understand what I have in my mind (ay, and in my heart!) when I preach law and police to you in season and out of season. What else do we care for, what else is anything but secondary, in that embroiled, confounded ravelment of politics, but to protect the old, and the weak, and the quiet, from that bloody wild beast that slumbers in man?

"True to my character, I have to preach. But just read the book. It is not absolutely fair, for Taine does not feel, with a warm heart, the touching side of their poor soul's illusions; he does not feel the infinite

[1] Cf. Vailima Letters, p. 220.

pathos of the Federations, poor pantomime and orgie, that (to its actors) seemed upon the very margin of heaven; nor the unspeakable, almost unthinkable tragedy of such a poor, virtuous, wooden-headed lot as the methodistic Jacobins. But he tells, as no one else, the dreadful end of sentimental politics.”

To deal with Stevenson’s intellectual qualities alone is to approach his less fascinating side, and to miss far more than half the influence of his charm. I have referred to his chivalry, only to find that in reality I was thinking of every one of the whole group of attributes which are associated with that name. Loyalty, honesty, generosity, courage; courtesy, tenderness, and self-devotion; to impute no unworthy motives and to bear no grudge; to bear misfortune with cheerfulness and without a murmur; to strike hard for the right and take no mean advantage; to be gentle to women and kind to all that are weak; to be very rigorous with oneself and very lenient to others — these, and any other virtues ever implied in “chivalry,” were the traits that distinguished Stevenson. They do not make life easy, as he frequently found. One day, his stepson tells me, they were sitting on the deck of a schooner in the Pacific, and Stevenson was reading a copy of Don Quixote. Suddenly he looked up, and, with an air of realisation, said sadly, as if to himself, “That’s me.”

In spite of his knowledge of the world and his humour, and a vein of cynicism most difficult to define, many were his quixotries and many the windmills at which he tilted, less often wholly in vain than we thought who watched his errantry. The example remains; and “ Would to-day, when Courtesy grows chill, And life’s fine loyalties are turned to jest, Some fire of thine might bum within us still! Ah, would but one might lay his lance in rest, And charge in earnest — were it but a mill!”[1]

Of some of the virtues I have cited it would be superfluous to say more. There is no need to repeat how he faced death in the Riviera or bore the weariness of exile. But I may be pardoned if I dwell upon a few of the more striking instances in which he displayed his open-mindedness, his generosity of temper, his hatred of cruelty, and his readiness to forgive offences.

Generosity is a word in sore danger of being limited to the giving of money, but to Stevenson the quality must be attributed not only in this, but also in the widest possible application. It is a virtue that from its nature is easily abused: this did but make Stevenson think the more highly of it, and it can have no more splendid motto than his own aphorism, of which one version runs: “The mean man doubted, Greatheart was deceived. ‘Very well,’ said Greatheart.”

Of Stevenson’s own generous temper there is no better illustration

[1] At the Sign of the Lyre, by Austin Dobson, p. 93.

than a letter written in early days when he had been called to task for some words of depreciation.

"I think the crier-up has a good trade; but I like less and less every year the berth of runner-down; and I

hate to see my friends in it. What is 's fault?

That he runs down. What is the easiest thing to do? To run down. What is it that a strong man should scorn to do? To run down. And all this comes steeply home to me; for I am horrified to gather that I begin myself to fall into this same business which I abhor in others."

No one ever more eagerly welcomed the success of younger writers, entirely unknown to himself; but of this point the published letters are quite sufficient proof.

Any offence against himself he forgave readily, nor did he find it difficult to make excuses for almost any degree of misconduct on the part of others. There was only one action which I heard him say he could never pardon, and the exception was characteristic. The father of an acquaintance came to Edinburgh one day many years ago to render his son material assistance which he could ill afford. The pair met Stevenson, and the son, introducing his father, did not scruple to sneer at him behind his back. Stevenson's experience of life and of character was very wide; but he looked back on that gesture as the one really unpardonable offence he had ever known.

He could be angry enough and stern enough upon 213

occasion, but never was there any one so ready to melt at the least appeal to his compassion or mercy. In his political quarrels he found the greatest difficulty in keeping up an open breach with persons whom he liked in themselves, and for whom his sympathy was engaged, although he was convinced that they were ruining Samoa.1 Truly he might say: "There was no man born with so little animosity as I."

But in fact the two kinds of generosity went frequently together. It is impossible for me to give the instances I know, but it is the fact that over and over again, no sooner had any one quarrelled with him, than Stevenson at once began to cast about for some means of doing his adversary a service, if only it could be done without divulging the source from whence it came.

In the narrower sense he was generous to a fault, but was ready to take any amount of personal trouble, and exercised judgment in his giving. When there was occasion he set no limit to his assistance. " Pray remember that if ever X should be in want of help, you are to strain my credit to breaking, and to mortgage all I possess or can expect, to help him." But in another case: "I hereby authorise you to pay when necessary £ to Z ; if I gave him more, it would only lead to his starting a gig and a Pomeranian dog. I hope you won't think me hard about this. If you think the sum insufficient, you can communicate with me by return on the subject.” Of course he received applications from all sorts of people on all manner of pretexts. There was one man who embarrassed him greatly by frequent letters. As far as could be 1 Vailima Letters, p. 162. gathered this person desired to abandon entirely the use of clothing, and coming to Samoa with “ a woman I love,” was there to gain his livelihood by whitewashing Stevenson’s fences, which, by the way, consisted almost entirely of barbed wire. This, individual even presented himself (but in the garb of civilisation) at Stevenson’s hotel in Sydney; there, however, the line was drawn, and he was refused an interview.

But Stevenson’s best service was often in the words with which he accompanied his gift. To his funeral only close personal friends were invited, but there appeared a tall gaunt stranger, whom nobody remembered to have seen before. He came up and apologised for his presence, and said he could not keep away, for Stevenson had saved him one day when he was at his lowest ebb. “I was wandering despondently along the road, and I met Mr. Stevenson, and I don’t know whether it was my story, or that he saw I was a Scotchman, but he gave me twenty dollars and some good advice and encouragement. I took heart again, and I’m getting on all right now, but if I had n’t met Mr. Stevenson, and he had n’t helped me, I should have killed myself that day.” And the tears ran down his face.

Of Stevenson’s open mind there could perhaps be no better proof than the passage in his last letter to R. A. M. Stevenson, written only two months before his death. If there was a class of men on this earth whom Louis loathed and placed beyond the pale of humanity, it was the dynamiters and anarchists; yet he could write of them in the following strain: — ”There is a new something or other in the wind, which exercises me hugely: anarchy. — I mean, anarchism. People who (for pity’s sake) commit dastardly murders very basely, die like saints, and leave beautiful letters behind ‘em (did you see Vaillant to his daughter? it was the New Testament over again); people whose conduct is inexplicable to me, and yet their spiritual life higher than that of most. This is just what the early Christians must have seemed to the Romans. ... If they go on being martyred a few years more, the gross, dull, not unkindly bourgeois may get tired or ashamed or afraid of going on martyring; and the anarchists come out at the top just like the early Christians.”

I have never met any one who hated cruelty of any kind with so lively a horror — I had almost said with so fanatical a detestation — from his earliest years.

“Do you remember telling me one day when I came in,” wrote the Rev. Peter Rutherford, his tutor, to Mrs. Thomas Stevenson after her son's death, " how it was his eyes were so swollen: tear-swollen? You had found him in the study sobbing bitterly over a tale of cruelty he had been reading all alone." At the other end of his life I can remember his own impassioned account, given late one Sunday evening on his return from Apia, of how he had found a crowd of natives watching a dog-fight. He had plunged into their midst and stopped it, and turned to rebuke them. "But I found all my Samoan had clean gone out of my head, and all I could say to them was' Pala'ai, Pala'ai! ' (' Cowards, cowards!')." But the most characteristic of all his utterances was at Pitlochry in 1881, when he saw a dog being ill-treated. He at once interposed, and when the owner resented his interference and told him: " It's not your dog," he cried out: " It's God's dog, and I'm here to protect it."

At the same time it must be laid to the credit of his reason and the firm balance of his judgment that although vivisection was a subject he could not endure even to hear mentioned, yet, with all his imagination and sensibility, he never ranged himself among the opponents of this method of inquiry, provided, of course, it was limited, as in England, with the utmost rigour possible.

It is curious now to remember that an early critic of the Travels with a Donkey censured him severely for the treatment of Modestine as described by Stevenson himself. Yet woe betide either friend or stranger who appeared at Vailima on a horse with the sore back too common in the tropics: it was well for him if he did not have to return home on foot.

Irksome as ill-health was to Stevenson, it was yet the possible effect on his own character that he most dreaded, for he suspected that " being an invalid was a fatal objection to a human being," and his horror of valetudinarianism was due to its being "the worst training upon earth." He felt it hard that he should be judged by the same standard as men to whom the world was still " full of sea-bathing, and horse exercise, and bracing, manly virtues." Moreover, although he always reckoned his life " as a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded," he could not be altogether unconscious of the insecurity of his tenure. On one of those fragments of paper preserved by chance, on which he used to write down his remarks during the many periods when he was forbidden to speak, these words occur: "You know the remarks of no doctor mean anything in my case. My case is a sport. I may die to-night or live till sixty." I can remember his saying to me in Samoa, " I have n't had a fair chance, 1 've had to spend nearly all my life in expectation of death." The chief result with him perhaps was that he sat looser to life, and had grown altogether familiar with the idea of leaving it; i for in the words of Sir Thomas Browne: "He that so often surviveth his expectation lives many lives, and will hardly complain of the shortness of his days."

The question of Stevenson's ill-health brings one to the consideration which troubled him now and again in his later days: whether he had not after all made a mistake in adopting literature as his profession. With him, as with Scott, " to have done things worthy to be written was a dignity to which no man made any approach who had only written things worthy to be read." At times he thought with a passing regret of the life of action he had forsaken, and was struck by the irony that his father, who had opposed his choice of the profession of literature, had come to approve of it before he died, while he, whom nothing but that change of life would satisfy, had himself lived to doubt its wisdom.[2] But in these comparisons it was an ideal life that he contemplated, where he should be always well and always strong, doing his work in the open air. With such health and such conditions, his character and his powers might have attained to other heights; we should then have known a different man, less human and less endeared to us by the frailties of our common nature. But the field on which he fought with sickness and depression was one in which most of us are at times engaged, and where many sufferers carry on a lifelong struggle. Anywhere his example would have been splendid; it could hardly have been more widely seen, or have better helped his fellow-men.

There was this about him, that he was the only man I have ever known who possessed charm in a high degree, whose character did not suffer from the possession. The gift comes naturally to women, and they are at their best in its exercise. But a man requires to be of a very sound fibre before he can be entirely himself and keep his heart single, if he carries about with him a talisman to obtain from all men and all women the object of his heart's desire. Both gifts Stevenson possessed, not only the magic but also the strength of character to which it was safely intrusted.

But who shall bring back that charm? Who shall unfold its secret? He was all that I have said: he was inexhaustible, he was brilliant, he was romantic, he was fiery, he was tender, he was brave, he was kind. With all this there went something more. He always liked the people he was with, and found the best and brightest that was in them; he entered into all the thoughts and moods of his companions, and led them along pleasant ways, or raised them to a courage and a gaiety like his own. If criticism or reminiscence has yielded any further elucidation of his spell, I do not know: it defies my analysis, nor have I ever heard it explained.

There linger on the lips of men a few names that bring to us, as it were, a breeze blowing off the shores of youth. Most of those who have borne them were taken from the world before early promise

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[1] Letters, ii. 353.

[2] Ibid., 321.

could be fulfilled, and so they rank in our regard by virtue of their possibilities alone. Stevenson is among the fewer still who bear the award both of promise and of achievement, and is happier yet in this: besides admiration and hope, he has raised within the hearts of his readers a personal feeling towards himself which is nothing less deep than love.

THE END

THE LIFE OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON FOR BOYS AND GIRLS By Jacqueline M. Overton

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THE LIFE OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

"Write me as one who loves his fellowmen." — HUNT.

CHAPTER I

THE LIGHTHOUSE BUILDERS

". . . For the sake

Of these, my kinsmen and my countrymen,

Who early and late in the windy ocean toiled
To plant a star for seamen."

The pirate, Ralph the Rover, so legend tells, while cruising off the coast of Scotland searching for booty or sport, sank the warning bell on one of the great rocks, to plague the good Abbot of Arbroath who had put it there. The following year the Rover returned and perished himself on the same rock.

In the life of one of Scotland's great men, Robert Louis Stevenson, we find proud record of his grandfather, Robert Stevenson, having built Bell Rock Lighthouse on this same spot years afterward.

No story of Robert Louis Stevenson's life would be complete that failed to mention the work done for Scotland and the world at large by the two men he held most dear, the engineers, his father and grandfather.

When Robert Stevenson, his grandfather, received his appointment on the Board of Northern Lights the art of lighthouse building in Scotland had just begun. Its bleak, rocky shores were world-famous for their danger, and few mariners cared to venture around them. At that time the coast "was lighted at a single point, the Isle of May, in the jaws of the Firth of Forth, where, on a tower already a hundred and fifty years old, an open coal-fire blazed in an open chaufer. The whole archipelago thus nightly plunged in darkness was shunned by seagoing vessels."

The board at first proposed building four new lights, but afterward built many more, so that to-day Scotland stands foremost among the nations for the number and splendor of her coast lights.

Their construction in those early days meant working against tremendous obstacles and dangers, and the life of the engineer was a hazardous one.

"The seas into which his labors carried him were still scarce charted, the coasts still dark; his way on shore was often far beyond the convenience of any road; the isles in which he must sojourn were still partly savage. He must toss much in boats; he must often adventure much on horseback by dubious bridle-track through unfrequented wildernesses; he must sometimes plant his lighthouses in the very camp of wreckers.

“The aid of steam was not yet. At first in random coasting sloop, and afterwards in the cutter belonging to the service, the engineer must ply and run amongst these multiplied dangers and sometimes late into the stormy autumn.”

All of which failed to daunt Robert Stevenson who loved action and adventure and the scent of things romantic.

“Not only had towers to be built and apparatus transplanted, the supply of oil must be maintained and the men fed, in the same inaccessible and distant scenes, a whole service with its routine ... had to be called out of nothing; and a new trade (that of light-keeper) to be taught, recruited and organized.”

Bell Rock was only one of twenty lighthouses Robert Stevenson helped to build, but it was by far the most difficult one ... and even to-day, after it has been lighted for more than a hundred years, it still remains unique — a monument to his skill.

Bell Rock was practically a reef completely submerged at full tide and only a few feet of its crest visible at low water. To raise a tower on it meant placing a foundation under water, a new and perilous experiment.

“Work upon the rock in the earliest stages was confined to the calmest days of the summer season, when the tides were lowest, the water smoothest, and the wind in its calmest mood. Under such conditions the men were able to stay on the site for about five hours....

“One distinct drawback was the necessity to establish a depot some distance from the erecting site. Those were the days before steam navigation, and the capricious sailing craft offered the only means of maintaining communication between rock and shore, and for the conveyance of men and materials to and fro....

“A temporary beacon was placed on the reef, while adjacent to the site selected for the tower a smith’s forge was made fast, so as to withstand the dragging motion of the waves when the rock was submerged. The men were housed on the *Smeaton*, which, during the spells of work on the rock, rode at anchor a short distance away in deep water.”

Once the engineers were all but lost when the *Smeaton* slipped her moorings and left them stranded on the rock.

In spite of all the obstacles, the work was completed at the end of two years and the light was shown for the first time February 1, 1811.

“I found Robert Stevenson an appreciative and intelligent companion,” writes Sir Walter Scott in his journal, speaking of a cruise he made among the islands of Scotland with a party of engineers. The notes made by him on this trip were used afterward in his two stories, “The Pirate” and “Lord of the Isles.”

“My grandfather was king in the service to his finger-tips,” wrote Louis Stevenson. “All should go his way, from the principal light-keeper’s coat to the assistant’s fender, from the gravel in the garden walks to the bad smell in the kitchen, or the oil spots on the storeroom floor. It might be thought there was nothing more calculated to awaken men’s resentment, and yet his rule was not more thorough than it was beneficent. His thought for the keepers was continual.... When a keeper was sick, he lent him his horse and sent him mutton and brandy from the ship.... They dwelt, many of them, in uninhabited isles or desert forelands, totally cut off from shops.

“No servant of the Northern Lights came to Edinburgh but he was entertained at Baxter Place. There at his own table my grandfather sat down delightedly with his broad-spoken, homespun officers.”

As he grew old his “medicine and delight” was his annual trip among his lighthouses, but at length there came a time when this joy was taken away from him and there came “the end of all his cruising; the knowledge that he had looked the last on Sunburgh, and the wild crags of Skye, and the Sound of Mull; that he was never again to hear the surf break in Clashcarnock; never again to see lighthouse after lighthouse (all younger than himself, and the more, part of his own device) open in the hour of dusk their flower of fire, or the topaz and ruby interchange on the summit of Bell Rock.”

Throughout the rank and file of his men he was adored. “I have spoken with many who knew him; I was his grandson, and their words may very well have been words of flattery; but there was one thing that could not be affected, and that was the look that came over their faces at the name of Robert Stevenson.”

Of his family of thirteen children, three of his sons became engineers. Thomas Stevenson, the father of Robert Louis, like the others of his family, contributed largely to lighthouse building and harbor improvement, serving under his older brother, Allen, in building the Skerryvore, one of the most famous deep-sea lights erected on a treacherous reef off the west coast where, for more than forty years, one wreck after another had occurred.

“From the navigator’s point of view, the danger of this spot lay chiefly in the fact that it was so widely scattered. The ridge runs like a broken backbone for a distance of some eight miles.... In rough weather the whole of the rocks are covered, and the waves, beating heavily on the mass, convert the scene into one of indescribable tumult....

“There was only one point where a tower could be placed, and this was so exposed that the safe handling of men and material constituted a grave responsibility."

It was necessary to erect a tower one hundred and thirty feet high; "the loftiest and weightiest work of its character that had ever been contemplated up to this time....

"The Atlantic swell, which rendered landing on the ridge precarious and hazardous, did not permit the men to be housed upon a floating home, as had been the practice in the early days of the Bell Rock tower. In order to permit the work to go forward as uninterruptedly as the sea would allow, a peculiar barrack was erected. It was a house on stilts, the legs being sunk firmly into the rock, with the living quarters perched some fifty feet up in the air.

"Residence in this tower was eerie. The men climbed the ladder and entered a small room, which served the purposes of kitchen, living-room, and parlor....

"When a storm was raging, the waves, as they combed over the rock, shook the legs violently and scurried under the floor in seething foam. Now and again a roller, rising higher than its fellows, broke upon the rock and sent a mass of water against the flooring to hammer at the door. Above the living-room were the sleeping quarters, high and dry, save when a shower of spray fell upon the roof and walls like heavy hail.... The men, however, were not perturbed. Sleeping, even under such conditions, was far preferable to doubtful rest in a bunk upon an attendant vessel, rolling and pitching with the motion of the sea. They had had a surfeit of such experience ... while the barrack was under erection.

"For two years it withstood the seas without incident, and the engineer and men came to regard the eyrie as safe as a house on shore. But one night the little colony received a shock. The angry Atlantic got one or two of its trip-hammer blows well home, and smashed the structure to fragments. Fortunately, at the time it was untenanted."

No time was lost in rebuilding the barrack and this time it withstood all tests until it was torn down after Skerryvore was finished.

"While the foundations were being prepared, and until the barrack was constructed, the men ran other terrible risks every morning and night landing upon and leaving the polished surface of the reef. Five months during the summer was the working season, but even then many days and weeks were often lost owing to the swell being too great to permit the rowing boat to come alongside. The engineer relates that the work was 'a good lesson in the school of patience,' because the delays were frequent and galling, while every storm which got up and expended its rage upon the reef left its mark indelibly among the engineer’s stock in trade. Cranes and other materials were swept away as if they were corks; lashings, no matter how strong, were snapped like pack-threads.

“Probably the worst experience was when the men on the rock were weather-bound for seven weeks during one season.... Their provisions sank to a very low level, they ran short of fuel, their sodden clothing was worn to rags....

“Six years were occupied in the completion of the work, and, as may be imagined, the final touches were welcomed with thankfulness by those who had been concerned in the enterprise.”

It was in meteorological researches and illumination of lighthouses, however, that Thomas Stevenson did his greatest work. It was he who brought to perfection the revolving light now so generally used.

In spite of this and other valuable inventions his name has remained little known, owing to the fact that none of his inventions were ever patented. The Stevensons believed that, holding government appointments, any original work they did belonged to the nation. “A patent not only brings in money but spreads reputation,” writes his son, “and my father’s instruments enter anonymously into a hundred light rooms and are passed anonymously over in a hundred reports, where the least considerable patent would stand out and tell its author’s story.”

He was beloved among a wide circle of friends and the esteem of those in his profession was shown when in 1884 they chose him for president of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. To the general public, however, he remained unknown in spite of the fact that “His lights were in all parts of the world guiding the mariners.”

CHAPTER II

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

"As from the house your mother sees

You playing round the garden trees,

So you may see, if you will look

Through the window of this book,

Another child, far, far away,

And in another garden, play."
— "Child's Garden of Verses."

Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson was born at No. 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh, Scotland, November 13, 1850.

In 1852 the family moved from Howard Place to Inverleith Terrace, and two years later to No. 17 Heriot Row, which remained their home for many years.

As a child Louis was very delicate and often ill, for years hardly a winter passed that he did not spend many days in bed.

Edinburgh in winter is extremely damp and he tells us: "Many winters I never crossed the threshold, but used to lie on my face on the nursery floor, chalking or painting in water-colors the pictures in the illustrated newspapers; or sit up in bed with a little shawl pinned about my shoulders, to play with bricks or what not."

The diverting history of "Hop-O'-My-Thumb" and the "Seven-League Boots," "Little Arthur's History of England," "Peter Parley's Historical Tales," and "Harry's Ladder to Learning" were books which he delighted to pore over and their pages bore many traces of his skill with the pencil and paint-brush.

Those who have read the "Child's Garden of Verses" already know the doings of his childish days, for although those rhymes were not written until he was a grown man he was "one of the few who do not forget their own lives" and "through the windows of this book" gives us a vivid and living picture of the boy who dwelt so much in a world of his own with his quaint thoughts.

If his body was frail his spirit was strong and his power of imagination so great that he cheered himself through many a weary day by playing he was "captain of a tidy little ship," a soldier, a fierce pirate, an Indian chief, or an explorer in foreign lands. Miles he travelled in his little bed.

"I have just to shut my eyes,

To go sailing through the skies —

To go sailing far away

To the pleasant Land of Play"
he says.

No. 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh, Stevenson's birthplace

In spite of his power for amusing himself, days like these would have gone far harder had it not been for two devoted people, his mother and his nurse, Alison Cunningham or "Cummie" as he called her. His mother was devoted to him in every way and encouraged his love for reading and story-making. She kept a diary of his progress from day to day, and treasured every picture he drew or scrap he wrote. Cummie came to him as a Torryburn lassie when he was eighteen months old and was like a second mother to him. She not only cared for his bodily comforts but was his friend and comrade as well. She sang for him, danced for him, spun fine tales of pirates and smugglers, and read to him so dramatically that his mind was fired then and there with a longing for travel and adventure which he never lost. When they took their walks through the streets together Cummie had many stories to tell him of Scotland and Edinburgh in the old days. For Edinburgh is a wonderful old city with a wonderful history full of tales of stirring adventure and romance. “For centuries it was a capitol thatched with heather and more than once, in the evil days of English invasion, it has gone up in flames to Heaven, a beacon to ships at sea.... It was the jousting-ground of jealous nobles, not only on Greenside or by the King’s Stables, where set tournaments were fought to the sound of trumpets and under the authority of the royal presence, but in every alley where there was room to cross swords.... In the town, in one of those little shops plastered like so many swallows’ nests among the buttresses of the old Cathedral, that familiar autocrat James VI. would gladly share a bottle of wine with George Heriot the goldsmith. Up on the Pentland Hills, that so quietly look down on the castle with the city lying in waves around it, those mad and dismal fanatics, the Sweet Singers, haggard from long exposure on the moors, sat day and night ‘with tearful psalms.’... In the Grassmarket, stiff-necked covenanting heroes offered up the often unnecessary, but not less honorable, sacrifice of their lives, and bade eloquent farewell to sun, moon and stars and earthly friendships, or died silent to the roll of the drums. Down by yon outlet rode Grahame of Claverhouse and his thirty dragoons, with the town beating to arms behind their horses’ tails — a sorry handful thus riding for their lives, but with a man at their head who was to return in a different temper, make a bold dash that staggered Scotland, and die happily in the thick of the fight....

“The palace of Holyrood is a house of many memories.... Great people of yore, kings and queens, buffoons and grave ambassadors played their stately farce for centuries in Holyrood. Wars have been plotted, dancing has lasted deep into the night, murder has been done in its chambers. There Prince Charlie held his phantom levées and in a very gallant manner represented a fallen dynasty for some hours....

“There is an old story of the subterranean passage between the castle and Holyrood and a bold Highland piper who volunteered to explore its windings. He made his entrance by the upper end, playing a strathspey; the curious footed it after him down the street, following his descent by the sound of the chanter from below; until all of a sudden, about the level of St. Giles the music came abruptly to an end, and the people in the street stood at fault with hands uplifted. Whether he choked with gases, or perished in a quag, or was removed bodily by the Evil One, remains a point of doubt, but the piper has never again been seen or heard of from that day to this. Perhaps he wandered down into the land of Thomas the Rhymer, and some day, when it is least expected, may take a thought to revisit the sunlit upper world. That will be a strange moment for the cabmen on the stands beside St. Giles, when they hear the crone of his pipes reascending from the earth below their horses' feet."

In Edinburgh to-day there are armed men and cannon in the castle high up on the great rock above you: "You may see the troops marshalled on the high parade, and at night after the early winter evenfall and in the morning before the laggard winter dawn, the wind carries abroad over Edinburgh the sounds of drums and bugles."

Long before Louis could write he made up verses and stories for himself, and Cummie wrote them down for him. "I thought they were rare nonsense then," she said, little dreaming that these same bits of "rare nonsense" were the beginnings of what was to make "her boy" famous across two seas in years to come.

He writes of her when speaking of long nights he lay awake unable to sleep because of a troublesome cough: "How well I remember her lifting me out of bed, carrying me to the window and showing me one or two lit windows up in Queen Street across the dark belt of garden, where also, we told each other, there might be sick little boys and their nurses waiting, like us, for the morning."

Her devotion to him had its reward in the love he gave her all his life. One of his early essays written when he was twenty and published in the *Juvenilia* was called "Nurses." Fifteen years later came the publication of the "Child's Garden of Verses" with a splendid tribute to her as a dedication. He sent her copies of all his books, wrote letters to her, and invited her to visit him. She herself tells that the last time she ever saw him he said to her, "before a room full of people, 'It's *you* that gave me a passion for the drama, Cummie,' 'Me, Master Lou,' I said, 'I never put foot inside a playhouse in my life.' 'Ay, woman,' said he, 'but it was the good dramatic way ye had of reciting the hymns.'"

When he was six years old his Uncle David offered a Bible picture-book as a prize to the nephews who could write the best history of Moses.

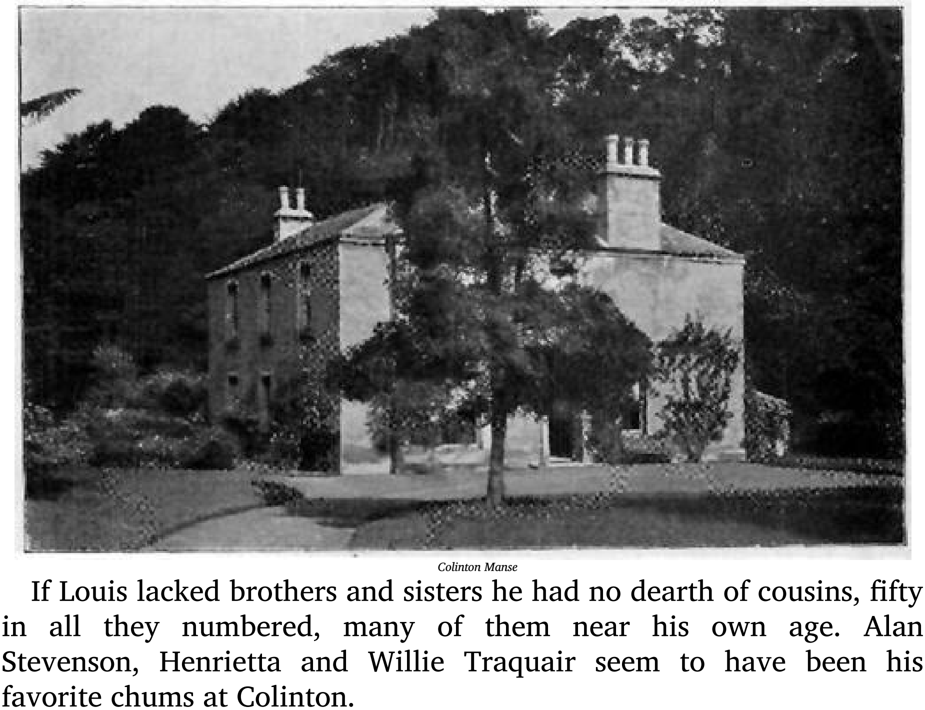
This was Louis's first real literary attempt. He was not able to write himself, but dictated to his mother and illustrated the story and its cover with pictures which he designed and painted himself.

He won the prize and from that time, his mother says, "it was the desire of his heart to be an author."

During the winter of 1856-57 his favorite cousin, Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson, usually called Bob, visited them; a great treat for Louis, not only because his ill health kept him from making many companions of his own age, but because Bob loved many of the same things he did and to "make believe" was as much a part of his life as Louis's. Many fine games they had together; built toy theatres, the scenery and characters for which they bought for a “penny plain and twopence coloured,” and were never tired of dressing up. One of their chief delights, he says, was in “rival kingdoms of our own invention — Nosingtonia and Encyclopædia, of which we were perpetually drawing maps.” Even the eating of porridge at breakfast became a game. Bob ate his with sugar and said it was an island covered with snow with here a mountain and there a valley; while Louis’s was an island flooded by milk which gradually disappeared bit by bit.

In the spring and summer his mother took him for short trips to the watering-places near Edinburgh. But the spot unlike all others for a real visit was at Colinton Manse, the home of his grandfather, the Reverend Lewis Balfour, at Colinton, on the Water of Leith, five miles southwest of Edinburgh. Here he spent glorious days. Not only was there the house and garden, both rare spots for one of an exploring turn of mind, but, best of all, there were the numerous cousins of his own age sent out from India, where their parents were, to be nursed and educated under the loving eye of Aunt Jane Balfour, for whom he wrote:

“Chief of our aunts — not only I,
But all the dozen nurslings cry —
What did the other children do?
And what was childhood, wanting you?”



Colinton Manse

If Louis lacked brothers and sisters he had no dearth of cousins, fifty in all they numbered, many of them near his own age. Alan Stevenson, Henrietta and Willie Traquair seem to have been his favorite chums at Colinton.

Of his grandfather Balfour he says: “We children admired him, partly for his beautiful face and silver hair … partly for the solemn light in which we beheld him once a week, the observed of all observers in the pulpit. But his strictness and distance, the effect, I now fancy, of old age, slow blood, and settled habits, oppressed us with a kind of terror. When not abroad, he sat much alone writing sermons or letters to his scattered family.… The study had a redeeming grace in many Indian pictures gaudily coloured and dear to young eyes.… When I was once sent in to say a psalm to my grandfather, I went, quaking indeed with fear, but at the same time glowing with hope that, if I said it well, he might reward me with an Indian picture.”

“There were two ways of entering the Manse garden,” he says, “one the two-winged gate that admitted the old phaeton and the other a door for pedestrians on the side next the kirk.… On the left hand were the stables, coach-houses and washing houses, clustered around a small, paved court.… Once past the stable you were fairly within the garden. On summer afternoons the sloping lawn was literally *steeped* in sunshine.…

“The wall of the church faces the manse, but the church yard is on a level with the top of the wall … and the tombstones are visible from the enclosure of the manse.… Under the retaining wall was a somewhat dark pathway, extending from the stable to the far end of the garden, and called the ‘witches’ walk’ from a game we used to play in it.… Even out of the ‘witches’ walk’ you saw the Manse facing toward you, with its back to the river and the wooded bank, and the bright flower-plots and stretches of comfortable vegetables in front and on each side of it; flower plots and vegetable borders, by the way, on which it was almost death to set foot, and about which we held a curious belief, — namely, that my grandfather went round and measured any footprints that he saw, to compare the measurement at night with the boots put out for brushing; to avoid which we were accustomed, by a strategic movement of the foot to make the mark longer.…

“So much for the garden; now follow me into the house. On entering the door you had before you a stone paved lobby.… There stood a case of foreign birds, two or three marble deities from India and a lily of the Nile in a pot, and at the far end the stairs shut in the view. With how many games of ‘tig’ or brick-building in the forenoon is the long low dining room connected in my mind! The storeroom was a most voluptuous place, with its piles of biscuit boxes and spice tins, the rack for buttered eggs, the little window that let in the sunshine and the flickering shadows of leaves, and the strong sweet odor of everything that pleaseth the taste of men.…

“Opposite the study was the parlor, a small room crammed full of furniture and covered with portraits, with a cabinet at the side full of foreign curiosities, and a sort of anatomical trophy on the top. During a grand cleaning of the apartment I remember all the furniture was ranged on a circular grass plot between the churchyard and the house. It was a lovely still summer evening, and I stayed out, climbing among the chairs and sofas. Falling on a large bone or skull, I asked what it was. Part of an albatross, auntie told me. ‘What is an albatross?’ I asked, and then she described to me this great bird nearly as big as a house, that you saw out miles away from any land, sleeping above the vast and desolate ocean. She told me that the *Ancient Mariner* was all about one; and quoted with great *verve* (she had a duster in her hand, I recollect) —

‘With my crossbow
I shot the albatross.’

... Willie had a crossbow, but up to this date I had never envied him its possession. After this, however, it became one of the objects of my life.”

With many playmates, free to roam and romp as he chose, his illness forgotten, it is no wonder he says he felt as if he led two lives, one belonging to Edinburgh and one to the country, and that Colinton ever remained an enchanted spot to which it was always hard to say good-by.

CHAPTER III

THE LANTERN BEARER

“Perhaps there lives some dreamy boy, untaught

In school, some graduate of the field or street,

Who shall become a master of the art,

An admiral sailing the high seas of thought,

Fearless and first, and steering with his fleet

For lands not yet laid down on any chart.”
— LONGFELLOW.

School days began for Louis in 1859, but were continually interrupted by illness, travel, and change of school. His father did not believe in forcing him to study; so he roamed through school according to his own sweet will, attending classes where he cared to, interesting himself in the subjects that appealed to him — Latin, French, and mathematics — neglecting the others and bringing home no prizes, to Cummie’s distress.

Certain books were his prime favorites at this time. “Robinson Crusoe,” he says, “and some of the books of Mayne Reid and a book called Paul Blake — Swiss Family Robinson also. At these I played, conjured up their scenes and delighted to hear them rehearsed to seventy times seven.

“My father’s library was a spot of some austerity; the proceedings of learned societies, cyclopædias, physical science and above all, optics held the chief place upon the shelves, and it was only in holes and corners that anything legible existed as if by accident. Parents’ Assistant, Rob Roy, Waverley and Guy Mannering, Pilgrim’s Progress, Voyages of Capt. Woods Rogers, Ainsworth’s Tower of London and four old volumes of Punch — these were among the chief exceptions.

“In these latter which made for years the chief of my diet, I very early fell in love (almost as soon as I could spell) with the Snob Papers. I knew them almost by heart … and I remember my surprise when I found long afterward that they were famous, and signed with a famous name; to me, as I read and admired them, they were the works of Mr. Punch.”

Two old Bibles interested him particularly. They had belonged to his grandfather Stevenson and contained many marked passages and notes telling how they had been read aboard lighthouse tenders and on tours of inspection among the islands.

After he was thirteen his health was greatly improved and he was able to enjoy the comradeship of other lads, though he never cared greatly for sports. He was the leader of a number of boys who used to go about playing tricks on the neighbors — ”tapping on their windows after nightfall, and all manner of wild freaks.”

“Crusoing” was a favorite game and its name stood for all picnicking in the open air, building bonfires and cooking apples, but the crowning sport of all was “Lantern Bearing,” a game invented by himself and shared by a dozen of his cronies.

“Toward the end of September,” he says, “when school time was drawing near and the nights were already black, we would begin to sally from our respective villas, each equipped with a tin bull’s-eye lantern.... We wore them buckled to the waist upon a cricket belt, and over them, such was the rigor of the game, a buttoned top-coat. They smelled noxiously of blistered tin; they never burned aright, though they would always burn our fingers; their use was naught; the pleasure of them merely fanciful; and yet a boy with a bull’s-eye under his top-coat asked for nothing more.

“When two of these asses met there would be an anxious, ‘Have you your lantern?’ and a gratified ‘Yes,’ That was the shibboleth, and a very needful one too; for as it was the rule to keep our glory contained, none could recognize a lantern-bearer, unless like a polecat, by the smell.

“The essence of this bliss was to walk by yourself in the black night, the slide shut, the top-coat buttoned, not a ray escaping whether to conduct your footsteps or make your glory public, a mere pillar of darkness in the dark, and all the while, deep down in the privacy of your fool’s heart, to know you had a bull’s-eye at your belt and exult and sing over the knowledge.”

In later years one of the Lantern Bearers describes Louis as he was then. “A slender, long legged boy in pepper and salt tweeds, with an undescribable influence that forced us to include him in our play as a looker on, critic and slave driver.... No one had the remotest intention of competing with R.L.S. in story making, and his tales, had we known it, were such as the world would listen to in silence and wonder.”

At home and at his last school he was always starting magazines. The stories were illustrated with much colour and the magazines circulated among the boys for a penny a reading. One was called *The Sunbeam Magazine*, an illustrated miscellany of fact, fiction, and fun, and another *The School Boy Magazine*. The latter contained four stories and its readers must have been hard to satisfy if they did not have their fill of horrors — ”regular crawlers,” Louis called them. In the first tale, “The Adventures of Jan Van Steen,” the hero is left hidden in a boiler under which a fire is lit. The second is a “Ghost Story” of robbers in a deserted castle.... The third is called, “by curious anticipation of a story he was to write later on, ‘The Wreckers.’“

Numerous plays and novels he began but they eventually found their fate in the trash basket. An exception to this was a small green pamphlet of twenty pages called “The Pentland Rising, a page of history, 1666.” It was published through his father’s interest on the two-hundredth anniversary of the fight at Rullion Green. This event in Scotland’s history had been impressed on his mind by the numerous stories. Cummie had told him of the Covenanters and the fact that they had spent the night before their defeat in the town of Colinton.

From the time he was a little chap, balancing on the limb of an apple-tree in the Colinton garden trying to see what kind of a world lay beyond the garden wall, Louis had had a longing to travel and see sights. This began to find satisfaction now.

His father took him on a trip around the coast of Fife, visiting the harbor lights. The little towns along the coast were already familiar to him by the stories of the past. Dunfermline, where, according to the ballad, Scotland’s king once “sat in his tower drinking blood-red wine”; Kerkcaldy, where the witches used to sink “tall ships and honest mariners in the North Sea”; and “Wemyss with its bat-haunted caves, where the Chevalier Johnstone on his flight from Colloden passed a night of superstitious terrors.”

Later the family made a trip to the English Lakes and in the winter of the same year to the south of France, where they stayed two months, then making a tour through Italy and Switzerland. The following Christmas found Louis and his mother again in Mentone, where they stayed until spring.

French was one of his favorite studies at school, and now after a few months among French people he was able to speak fluently. Indeed, in after life he was often mistaken for a Frenchman.

His French teacher on his second visit to Mentone gave him no regular lessons, but “merely talked to him in French, teaching him piquet and card tricks, introducing him to various French people and taking him to concerts and other places; so, his mother remarks, like Louis’ other teachers at home I think they found it pleasanter to talk to him then to teach him.”

After their return to Edinburgh came the time when, his school days finished, Louis must make up his mind what his career is to be and train himself for it.

Even then he knew what he wanted to do was to write. He had fitted up a room on the top floor at Heriot Row as a study and spent hours there covering paper with stories or trying to describe in the very best way scenes which had impressed him. Most of these were discarded when finished. “I liked doing them indeed,” he said, “but when done I could see they were rubbish.” He never doubted, however, that some day his attempts would prove worth while, if he could only devote his time to learning to write and write well.

His father, he knew, had different plans for him, however. Of course, Louis would follow in his footsteps and be the sixth Stevenson to hold a place on the Board of Northern Lights. So, although he had little heart in the work, he entered the University of Edinburgh and spent the next three and a half years studying for a science degree.

The summer of 1868 he was sent with an engineering party to Anstruther, on the coast, where a breakwater was being built. There he had his first opportunity of seeing some of the practical side of engineering. It was rough work, but he enjoyed it. Later he spent three weeks on Earraid Island, off Mull, a place which left a strong impression on his mind and figured afterward as the spot where David Balfour was shipwrecked.

Among the experiences at that time which pleased him most was a chance to descend in a diver's dress to the foundation of the harbor they were building. In his essays, "Random Memories," he tells of the "dizzy muddleheaded joy" he had in his surroundings, swaying like a reed, and grabbing at the fish which darted past him.

In writing afterward of these years he says: "What I gleaned I am sure I do not know, but indeed I had already my own private determination to be an author ... though I haunted the breakwater by day, and even loved the place for the sake of the sunshine, the thrilling sea-side air, the wash of the waves on the sea face, the green glimmer of the diver's helmets far below.... My own genuine occupation lay elsewhere and my only industry was in the hours when I was not on duty. I lodged with a certain Bailie Brown, a carpenter by trade, and there as soon as dinner was despatched ... drew my chair to the table and proceeded to pour forth literature.

"I wish to speak with sympathy of my education as an engineer. It takes a man into the open air; keeps him hanging about harbor sides, the richest form of idling; it carries him to wild islands; it gives him a taste of the genial danger of the sea ... and when it has done so it carries him back and shuts him in an office. From the roaring skerry and the wet thwart of the tossing boat, he passes to the stool and desk, and with a memory full of ships and seas and perilous headlands and shining pharos, he must apply his long-sighted eyes to the pretty niceties of drawing or measure his inaccurate mind with several pages of consecutive figures."

"The roaring skerry and the tossing boat," appealed to him as they had to his grandfather before him, but they did not balance his dislike for the "office and the stool" or make him willing to devote his time and energy to working for them, so his university record was very poor. "No one ever played the truant with more deliberate care," he says, "and no one ever had more certificates (of attendance) for less education."

One thing that he gained from his days at the university was the friendship of Professor Fleeming Jenkin. He was fifteen years older than Louis, but they had many common interests and the professor had much good influence over him. He was one of the first to see promise in his writing and encouraged him to go on with it.

Both the professor and Mrs. Jenkin were much interested in dramatics and each year brought a group of friends together at their house for private theatricals. Stevenson was a constant visitor at their home, joining heartily in these plays and looking forward to them, although he never took any very important part.

After Professor Jenkin's death Stevenson wrote his biography, and says it was a "mingled pain and pleasure to dig into the past of a dead friend, and find him, at every spadeful, shine brighter."

About this time Thomas Stevenson bought Swanston Cottage in the Pentland Hills, about five miles from Edinburgh, and for the next fourteen years the family spent their summers there, and Louis often went out in winter as well. It ever remained one of his favorite spots and with Colinton stood out as a place that meant much in his life.

Swanston Cottage

These years saw great change in him; from a frank and happy child he had grown into a lonely, moody boy making few friends and shunning the social life that his father's position in Edinburgh offered him. He describes himself as a "lean, ugly, unpopular student," but those who knew him never applied the term "ugly" to him at any time.

At Swanston he explored the hills alone and grew to know them so well that the Pentland country ever remained vividly in his memory and found its way into many of his stories, notably "St. Ives," where he describes Swanston as it was when they first made it their summer home.

Many solitary winter evenings he spent there rereading his favorite novels, particularly Dumas's "Vicomte de Bragelonne," which always pleased him. "Shakespeare has served me best," he said. "Few living friends have had upon me an influence so strong for good as Hamlet or Rosalind. Perhaps my dearest and best friend outside of Shakespeare is D'Artagnan, the elderly D'Artagnan of the 'Vicomte de Bragelonne.'

"I would return in the early night from one of my patrols with the shepherd, a friendly face would meet me in the door, a friendly retriever scurry up stairs to fetch my slippers, and I would sit down with the Vicomte for a long, silent, solitary lamp-lit evening by the fire."

At Swanston he first began to really write, "bad poetry," he says, and during his solitary rambles fought with certain problems that perplexed him.

Here he made the acquaintance of the Scotch gardener, Robert Young, and John Todd, the "Roaring Shepherd, the oldest herd on the Pentlands," whom he accompanied on his rounds with the sheep, listening to his tales told in broad Scotch of the highland shepherds in the old days when "he himself often marched flocks into England, sleeping on the hillsides with his caravan; and by his account it was rough business not without danger. The drove roads lay apart from habitation; the drivers met in the wilderness, as to-day the deep sea fishers meet off the banks in the solitude of the Atlantic."

All this time Louis was idling through the university, knowing that in the end he would make nothing of himself as an engineer and dreading to confess it to his father. At length, however, his failure in his studies came to Thomas Stevenson's attention, and, on being questioned about it "one dreadful day" as they were walking together, the boy frankly admitted that his heart was not with the work and he cared for nothing but to be able to write.

While at school his father had encouraged him to follow his own bent in his studies and reading, but when it came to the point of choosing his life-work, there ought to be no question of doubt. The only natural thing for Louis to do was to carry on the great and splendid work that he himself had helped to build up. That the boy should have other plans of his own surprised and troubled him. Literature, he said, was no profession, and thus far Louis had not done enough to prove he had a claim for making it his career.

After much debate it was finally decided that he should give up engineering, but should enter the law school and study to be admitted to the bar. This would not only give him an established profession, but leave him a little time to write as well.

CHAPTER IV

EDINBURGH DAYS

“I am fevered with the sunset,

I am fretful with the bay,

For the wander-thirst is on me
And my soul is in Cathay.
“There’s a schooner in the offing,

With her topsails shot with fire,

And my heart has gone aboard her
For the island of Desire.”
— RICHARD HOVEY.

In spite of the fact that his law studies now left him an opportunity for the work he wanted so much to do, Louis was far from happy, for between his parents and himself, who had always been the best of friends, there were many misunderstandings.

Thomas Stevenson was bitterly disappointed that his only son should choose to be what he called “an idler” — generous to a fault and always out of money, dressing in a careless and eccentric way, which both amused and annoyed his friends and caused him to be ridiculed by strangers, preferring to roam the streets of old Edinburgh scraping acquaintance with the fishwives and dock hands, rather than staying at home and mingling in the social circle to which his parents belonged. But his father was still more troubled by certain independent religious opinions, far different from those in which he had been reared, that Louis adopted at this time.

How any good result could come from all this neither his father nor mother could see, and with the loss of their sympathy he was thrown upon himself and was lonely and rebellious.

He longed to get away from it all, to quit Edinburgh with its harsh climate, and often on his walks he leaned over the great bridge that joins the New Town with the Old “and watched the trains smoking out from under, and vanishing into the tunnel on a voyage to brighter skies.” He longed to go with them “to that Somewhere-else of the imagination where all troubles are supposed to end.”

It was a comfort to him at this time to remember other Scotchmen, Jeffries, Burns, Fergusson, Scott, Carlyle, and others, who had roamed these same streets before him, not a few of them fighting with the same problems he faced in their struggle to win their ideal.

This unhappy time, this “Greensickness,” as he called it, came to an end, however, through the help of what Louis had always secretly longed for — friends. Several whom he met at this time influenced him, but first of them all he put his cousin Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson (Bob), who returned to Edinburgh about this time from Paris, where he had been studying art.

Louis says: “The mere return of Bob changed at once and forever the course of my life; I can give you an idea of my relief only by saying that I was at last able to breathe.... I was done with the sullens for good.... I had got a friend to laugh with.”

Here at last was a companion who understood him and sympathized with what he was trying to do. Since as children they had made believe together in their rival kingdoms of “Nosingtonia” and “Encyclopædia” they had had many traits and tastes in common. They now began where they had left off and proceeded to enjoy themselves once more by all sorts of wild pranks and gay expeditions.

The Speculative Society became another great source of pleasure. It was an old society and had numbered among its members such men of note as Scott, Jeffrey, Robert Emmet, and others. Once a week from November to March the “Spec,” as it was called, met in rooms in the University of Edinburgh. An essay was read and debates followed with much hot discussion, which delighted Stevenson. “Oh, I do think the Spec is about the best thing in Edinburgh,” he said enthusiastically.

Sir Walter Simpson, son of the famous doctor, Sir James Simpson, who discovered chloroform, became another chum about this time, and for the next ten years they were much together. He likewise was studying law and was a near neighbor. The Simpsons kept open house, and it was the custom for a group of cronies to drop in at all hours of day and night. Louis was among those who came oftenest, and Sir Walter’s sister writes: “He would frequently drop in to dinner with us, and of an evening he had the run of the smoking room. After ten p.m. the ‘open sesame’ to our door was a rattle on the letter box and Louis’ fancy for the mysterious was whetted by this admittance by secret sign, and we liked his special rat-a-tat for it was the forerunner of an hour or two of talk.”

They teased him about his queer clothes and laughed at some of his wild ideas, but he seldom was angry at them for it and never stayed away very long.

With them he often skated on Duddington Loch or canoed on the Firth of Forth. One summer he and Sir Walter yachted off the west coast of Scotland, and still another year, when longing for further wandering possessed them, they made a trip in canoes through the inland waters of Belgium from Antwerp to Brussels, and then into France and by the rivers Sambre and Oise nearly to Paris.

In the “Inland Voyage,” where Stevenson describes this trip, he calls Sir Walter and his canoe “Cigarette” while he was “Arethusa.” Adventures were plentiful, and they aroused much curiosity among the dwellers on the banks, with whom they made friends as they went along.

Once Arethusa was all but drowned, when his canoe was overturned by the rapids; and on several occasions, when they applied for a night's lodging, they were suspected of being tramps or peddlers because of their bedraggled appearance.

One evening after a hard day's paddling in the rain they landed tired, wet, and hungry at the little town of La Fère. "The Cigarette and I could not sufficiently congratulate each other on the prospect," says the Arethusa, "for we had been told there was a capital inn at La Fère. Such a dinner as we were going to eat. Such beds as we were going to sleep in, and all the while the rain raining on homeless folk over all the poplared country-side. It made our mouths water. The inn bore the name of some woodland animal, stag, or hart, or hind, I forget which. But I shall never forget how spacious and how eminently comfortable it looked as we drew near.... A rattle of many dishes came to our ears; we sighted a great field of tablecloth; the kitchen glowed like a forge and smelt like a garden of things to eat.

"Into this ... you are now to suppose us making our triumphal entry, a pair of damp rag-and-bone men, each with a limp india-rubber bag upon his arm. I do not believe I have a sound view of that kitchen; I saw it through a sort of glory, but it seemed to me crowded with the snowy caps of cook-men, who all turned round from their saucepans and looked at us with surprise. There was no doubt about the landlady however; there she was, heading her army, a flushed, angry woman, full of affairs. Her I asked politely — too politely, thinks the Cigarette — if we could have beds, she surveying us coldly from head to foot.

"'You will find beds in the suburb,' she remarked. 'We are too busy for the like of you.'

"If we could make an entrance, change our clothes, and order a bottle of wine I felt sure we could put things right, so I said, 'If we can not sleep, we may at least dine,' and was for depositing my bag.

"What a terrible convulsion of nature was that which followed in the landlady's face! She made a run at us and stamped her foot.

"'Out with you — out of the door!' she screeched.

"I do not know how it happened, but the next moment we were out in the rain and darkness. This was not the first time that I have been refused a lodging. Often and often I have planned what I would do if such a misadventure happened to me again, and nothing is easier to plan. But to put in execution, with a heart boiling at the indignity? Try it, try it only once, and tell me what you did."

Frequently on this trip the Arethusa's odd dress and foreign looks led him to be taken for a spy. It was not long after the Franco-Prussian war, and all sorts of rumors of suspicious characters were afloat. Once he was actually arrested and thrown into a dungeon because he could show no passport, and the commissary refused to believe he was English and puzzled his head over the scraps of notes and verses found in his knapsack.

He was rescued by the faithful Cigarette, who finally convinced the officials that they were British gentlemen travelling in this odd way for pleasure, and the things in his friend's bag were not plans against the government, but merely scraps of poetry and notes on their travels that he liked to amuse himself by making as they went along.

The canoe trips ended in a visit to the artists' colony at Fontainebleau, where Bob Stevenson and a brother of Sir Walter's were spending their summer. This place always had a particular attraction for Louis and he spent many weeks both there and at Grez near by during the next few years.

The free and easy life led by the artists suited him exactly, although he found it hard to accomplish any work of his own, but dreamed and planned all sorts of essays, verses, and tales which he never wrote, while the others put their pictures on canvas.

"I kept always two books in my pocket," he says, "one to read and one to write in. As I walked my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words; when I sat by the roadside I would either read, or a pencil and penny version-book would be in my hand, to note down the features of the scene or commemorate some halting stanzas. Thus I lived with words."

If there was little work, to show after a stop at Fontainebleau he had many memories of good-fellowship and some of the friends he met there were to be the first to greet him when he came to live on this side of the water.

While on their "Inland Voyage" the two canoemen had decided that the most perfect mode of travel was by canal-boat. What could be more delightful? "The chimney smokes for dinner as you go along; the banks of the canal slowly unroll their scenery to contemplative eyes; the barge floats by great forests and through great cities with their public buildings and their lamps at night; and for the bargee, in his floating home, 'travelling abed,' it is merely as if he were listening to another man's story or turning the leaves of a picture book in which he had no concern. He may take his afternoon walk in some foreign country on the banks of the canal, and then come home to dinner at his own fireside."

They grew most enthusiastic over the idea and told one another how they would furnish their "water villa" with easy chairs, pipes, and tobacco, and the bird and the dog should go along too.

By the time Fontainebleau was reached they had planned trips through all the canals of Europe. The idea took the artists' fancy also, and a group of them actually purchased a canal-boat called *The Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne*. Furnishing a water villa, however, was more expensive than they had foreseen, and she came to a sad end. "'The Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne' rotted in the stream where she was beautified ... she was never harnessed to the patient track-horse. And when at length she was sold, by the indignant carpenter of Moret, there was sold along with her the *Arethusa* and the *Cigarette* ... now these historic vessels fly the tricolor and are known by new and alien names."

In 1873 Stevenson planned to try for admission to the English bar instead of the Scottish and went to London to take the examination. But his health, which had been rather poor, became worse, and on reaching London the doctor ordered him to Mentone in the south of France, where he had been before as a boy.

There he spent his days principally lying on his back in the sun reading and playing with a little Russian girl with whom he struck up a great friendship. His letters to his mother were full of her sayings and doings. He was too ill to write much, although one essay, "Ordered South," was the outcome of this trip, the only piece of writing in which he ever posed as an invalid or talked of his ill health.

At the end of two months he improved enough to return to Edinburgh, but gave up the idea of the English bar. His illness and absence seemed to have smoothed out some of the difficulties at home, and after he returned things went happier in every way.

On July 14, 1875, he passed his final law examinations, and was admitted to the Scottish bar. He was now entitled to wear a wig and gown, place a brass plate with his name upon the door of 17 Heriot Row, and "have the fourth or fifth share of the services of a clerk" whom it is said he didn't even know by sight. For a few months he made some sort of a pretense at practising, but it amounted to very little. Gradually he ceased paying daily visits to the Parliament House to wait for a case, but settled himself instead in the room on the top floor at home and began to write, seriously this time — it was to be his life-work from now on — and the law was forgotten.

His first essays were published in the *Cornhill Magazine* and *The Portfolio* under the initials R.L.S., which signature in time grew so familiar to his friends and to those who admired his writings it became a second name for him, and as R.L.S. he is often referred to.

He was free now to roam as he chose and spent much time in Paris with Bob. The life there in the artists' quarter suited him as well as it had at Fontainebleau. There, among other American artists, he was associated with Mr. Will Low, a painter, whom he saw much of when he came to New York.

One September he took a walking trip in the Cévenne Mountains with no other companion than a little gray donkey, Modestine, who carried his pack and tried his patience by turns with her pace, which was "as much slower than a walk as a walk is slower than a run," as he tells in the chronicle of the trip.

A visit at Grez in 1876 was to mark a point in his life. Heretofore the artists' colony had been composed only of men. This year there were three new arrivals, Americans, a Mrs. Osbourne and her young son and daughter. Their home in California had been broken up and the mother had come to Grez to paint for the summer.

Those who had been there for a number of years, R.L.S. among them, looked on the newcomers as intruders and did not hesitate to say so among themselves. Before the summer was over, however, they were obliged to confess that the newcomers had added to the charms of Grez, and Louis found in Mrs. Osbourne another companion to add to his rapidly growing list.

When the artists scattered in the autumn and he returned to Edinburgh and Mrs. Osbourne to California, he carried with him the hope that some time in the future they should be married.

For the next three years he worked hard. He published numerous essays in the *Cornhill Magazine* and his first short stories, "A Lodging for the Night," "Will O' the Mill," and the "New Arabian Nights." These were followed by his first books of travel, "An Inland Voyage," giving a faithful account of the adventures of the *Arethusa* and the *Cigarette*, and "Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes."

When the latter was published, Mr. Walter Crane made an illustration for it showing R.L.S. under a tree in the foreground in his sleeping-bag, smoking, while Modestine contentedly crops grass by his side. Above him winds the path he is to take on his journey, encouraging Modestine with her burden to a livelier pace with his goad; receiving the blessing of the good monks at the Monastery of Our Lady of the Snows; stopping for a bite and sup at a wayside tavern; conversing with a fellow traveller by the way; and finally disappearing with the sunset over the brow of the hill.

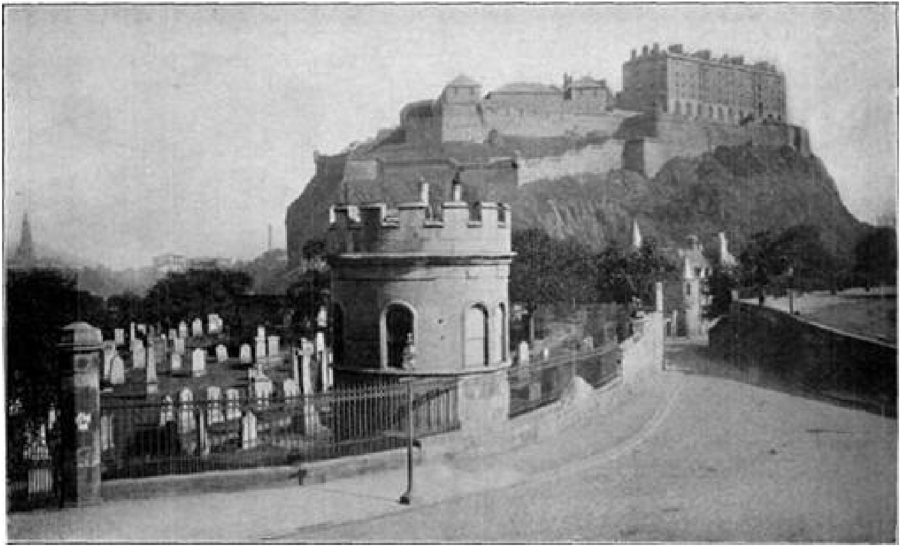
Some time previous to all this he had written in a letter: "Leslie Stephen, who was down here to lecture, called on me, and took me up to see a poor fellow, a poet who writes for him, and who has been eighteen months in our Infirmary, and may be for all I know eighteen months more. Stephen and I sat on a couple of chairs, and the poor fellow sat up in his bed with his hair and beard all tangled, and talked as cheerfully as if he had been in a king's palace of blue air."

This was William Ernest Henley, and his brave determination to live and work, though he knew he must ever remain in a maimed condition, roused Stevenson's sincere admiration. With his usual impetuous generosity, he brought him books and other comforts to make his prolonged stay in the infirmary less wearisome and a warm friendship sprang up between them.

As Henley grew stronger they planned to work together and write plays. Stevenson had done nothing of the kind since he was nineteen. Now they chose to use the same plot that he had experimented with at that time. It was the story of the notorious Deacon Brodie of Edinburgh, which both considered contained good material for a play.

"A great man in his day was the Deacon; well seen in good society, crafty with his hands as a cabinet-maker, and one who could sing a song with taste. Many a citizen was proud to welcome the Deacon to supper, and dismiss him with regret ... who would have been vastly disconcerted had he known how soon, and in what guise his visitor returned. Many stories are told of this redoubtable Edinburgh burgher.... A friend of Brodie's ... told him of a projected visit to the country, and afterwards detained by some affairs, put it off and stayed the night in town. The good man had lain some time awake; it was far on in the small hours by the Tron bell; when suddenly there came a crack, a jar, a faint light. Softly he clambered out of bed and up to a false window which looked upon another room, and there, by the glimmer of a thieves' lantern, was his good friend the Deacon in a mask."

At length after a certain robbery in one of the government offices the Deacon was suspected. He escaped to Holland, but was arrested in Amsterdam as he was about to start for America. He was brought back to Edinburgh, was tried and convicted and hanged on the second of October, 1788, at the west end of the Tolbooth, which was the famous old Edinburgh prison known as the Heart of Midlothian.



Edinburgh Castle

This story of Brodie had always interested Stevenson since he had heard it as a child, and a cabinet made by the clever Deacon himself formed part of the furniture of his nursery.

"Deacon Brodie" and other plays were finished and produced, but never proved successful. Indeed, the money came in but slowly from any of his writings and, aside from the critics, it was many a long day before he was appreciated by the people of his own city and country. They refused to believe that "that daft laddie Stevenson," who had so often shocked them by his eccentric ways and scorn of conventions, could do anything worth while. So by far his happiest times were spent out of Scotland, principally in London, where a membership in the Savile Club added to his enjoyment. Here he met several interesting men, among them Edmund William Gosse and Sidney Colvin, both writers and literary critics, with whom he became very intimate.

"My experience of Stevenson," writes Mr. Gosse, "during these first years was confined to London upon which he would make sudden piratical descents, staying a few days or weeks and melting into thin air again. He was much at my house, and it must be told that my wife and I, as young married people, had possessed ourselves of a house too large for our slender means immediately to furnish. The one person who thoroughly approved of our great bare absurd drawing room was Louis, who very earnestly dealt with us on the immorality of chairs and tables, and desired us to sit always, as he delighted to sit, upon hassocks on the floor. Nevertheless, as armchairs and settees straggled into existence, he handsomely consented to use them, although never in the usual way, but with his legs thrown sidewise over the arms of them, or the head of a sofa treated as a perch. In particular, a certain shelf with cupboards below, attached to a bookcase, is worn with the person of Stevenson, who would spend half an evening, while passionately discussing some question ... leaping sidewise in a seated posture to the length of this shelf and back again.

"... These were the days when he most frequented the Savile Club, and the lightest and most vivacious part of him there came to the surface. He might spend the morning in work or business, and would then come to the club for luncheon. If he were so fortunate as to find a congenial companion disengaged, or to induce them to throw over their engagements, he would lead him off to the smoking-room, and there spend an afternoon in the highest spirits and the most brilliant and audacious talk.

"He was simply bubbling with quips and jests. I am anxious that his laughter-loving mood should not be forgotten, because later on it was partly, but I think never wholly quenched, by ill health, responsibility and advance of years.

"His private thoughts and prospects must often have been of the gloomiest, but he seems to have borne his unhappiness with a courage as high as he ever afterwards displayed."

Sidney Colvin he met some time previous while visiting relatives in England, and their friendship was renewed when they met again in London; a friendship which lasted throughout their lives and which even the distance of two seas failed to obliterate. They kept up a lively correspondence and Mr. Colvin aided him with the publication of his writings while he was absent from his own country. After his death, according to Stevenson's wishes, Mr. Colvin edited a large collection of his letters and in the notes which he added paid his friend many splendid tributes which show him to be a fair critic as well as an ardent admirer. "He had only to speak," he says, "in order to be recognized in the first minute for a witty and charming gentleman, and within the first five minutes for a master spirit and man of genius."

Louis's long absences from home often troubled his mother and caused her to complain when writing. In one answer to her about this time he said:

"You must not be vexed at my absences, you must understand I shall be a nomad, more or less, until my days be done. You don't know how much I used to long for it in the old days; how I used to go and look at the trains leaving, and wish to go with them. And now, you know, that I have a little more that is solid under my feet, you must take my nomadic habit as a part of me. Just wait till I am in swing and you will see that I shall pass more of my life with you than elsewhere; only take me as I am and give me time. I *must* be a bit of a vagabond."

For all so little of his writing was ever done in his own country, nevertheless he turned to Scotland again and again for the setting of his stories and the subject of his essays. Although he often spoke harshly of Edinburgh when at home, he paid her many loving tributes in writing of her in a foreign land: "The quaint grey-castled city where the bells clash of a Sunday, and the wind squalls, and the salt showers fly and beat.... I do not even know if I desire to live there, but let me hear in some far land a kindred voice sing out 'Oh, why left I my hame?' and it seems at once as if no beauty under the kind heavens, and no society of the wise and good, can repay me for my absence from my own country. And although I think I would rather die elsewhere, yet in my heart of hearts I long to be buried among good Scotch clods. I will say it fairly, it grows on me with every year; there are no stars so lovely as the Edinburgh street lamps. When I forget thee, Auld Reekie, may my right hand forget its cunning."

CHAPTER V

AMATEUR EMIGRANT

“Hope went before them
And the world was wide.”

In the summer of 1879 R.L.S. was once more seized with the desire to roam and to roam farther than ever before. California had been beckoning to him for some time, and in August he suddenly made up his mind, and with scarcely a word of farewell to his family and friends he embarked on the steamship *Devonia*, bound for New York.

Partly for the sake of economy, for he determined to pay his own way on this venture, and partly because he was anxious to experience emigrant life, he engaged passage in the second cabin, which in those days differed very little from the steerage. The main advantages were a trifle better food and a cabin to himself with a table where he could write.

In his usual way he soon made acquaintance with his fellow passengers and did them many a friendly turn. They took him for one of themselves and showed little curiosity as to where he came from, who he was, or where he was going. He says: “The sailors called me ‘mate,’ the officers addressed me as ‘my man,’ my comrades accepted me without hesitation for a person of their own character and experience. One, a mason himself, believed I was a mason, several, among these at least one of the seamen, judged me to be a petty officer in the American navy; and I was so often set down for a practical engineer that at last I had not the heart to deny it.”

The emigrants were from many countries, though the majority were Scotch and Irish bound for the new world with the hope of meeting with better fortune than they had had in the old, and they whiled away the days at sea in their several ways, making the best of their discomforts and cheering one another when they grew lonely or homesick for those they had left behind.

When the weather was good their spirits rose and there were many rounds of singing and story-telling as they sat clustered together like bees under the lee of the deck-house, and in all of these Stevenson joined heartily.

“We were indeed a musical ship’s company,” he says, “and cheered our way into exile with the fiddle, the accordion, and the songs of all nations, good, bad or indifferent — Scottish, English, Irish, Russian or Norse — the songs were received with generous applause. Once or twice, a recitation, very spiritedly rendered in a powerful Scotch accent, varied the proceedings; and once we sought in vain to dance a quadrille, eight men of us together, to the music of the violin. The performers were humorous, frisky fellows, who loved to cut capers in private life; but as soon as they were arranged for the dance, they conducted themselves like so many mutes at a funeral. I have never seen decorum pushed so far; and as this was not expected, the quadrille was soon whistled off, and the dancers departed.

"But the impulse to sing was strong, and triumphed over modesty and even the inclemencies of the sea and sky. On one rough Saturday night, we got together by the main deck-house, in a place sheltered from the wind and rain. Some clinging to the ladder which led to the hurricane-deck and the rest knitting arms or taking hands, we made a ring to support the women in the violent lurching of the ship, and when we were thus disposed, sang to our hearts' content.

"There was a single chess-board and a single pack of cards. Sometimes as many as twenty of us would be playing dominoes for love. There were feats of dexterity, puzzles for the intelligence and a regular daily competition to guess the vessel's progress; at twelve o'clock when the result was published in the wheel house, came to be a moment of considerable interest.... We had beside, romps in plenty. Puss in the Corner, which we rebaptized, in more manly style, Devil and Four Corners, was my favorite game; but there were many who preferred another, the humor of which was to box a person's ears until he found out who cuffed him."

The voyage, which lasted ten days, was uneventful except for some rough weather when Stevenson found his cabin most stuffy and uncomfortable. He was not really ill, however, and spent much of the time finishing a tale called "The Story of a Lie," while his table played "Bob Jerry with the ink bottle." On his arrival in New York the story was sent back to London with the following letter to Sidney Colvin:

"On Board S.S. Devonia an hour or two out of New York, Aug., 1879.

"My dear Colvin:

"I have finished my story. The handwriting is not good because of the ship's misconduct; thirty-one pages in ten days at sea is not bad. I am not very well; bad food, bad air and hard work have brought me down. But the spirits keep good. The voyage has been most interesting and will make, if not a series of Pall Mall articles, at least the first part of a new book. The last weight on me has been trying to keep notes for this purpose. Indeed I have worked like a horse and am tired as a donkey. If I should have to push on far by rail, I shall bring nothing but my fine bones to port.

"Goodbye to you all. I suppose it is now late afternoon with you all across the seas. What shall I find over here? I dare not wonder. — Ever yours R.L.S.”

As California was the goal he aimed for, in spite of his fatigue after ten days of poor living and the sea, he determined to push on immediately in an emigrant train bound for the Pacific coast.

On reaching port he and a man named Jones, with whom he had had more in common than with any of his other fellow passengers, landed together.

“Jones and I issued into West Street, sitting on some straw in the bottom of an open baggage wagon. It rained miraculously, and from that moment till on the following night I left New York, there was scarce a lull, and no cessation of the downpour....

“It took but a few moments, though it cost a good deal of money, to be rattled along West Street to our destination: Reunion House, No. 10 West Street, ‘kept by one Mitchell.’

“Here I was at last in America and was soon out upon the New York streets, spying for things foreign....

“The following day I had a thousand and one things to do; only the day to do them in and a journey across the continent before me in the evening.... It rained with potent fury; every now and then I had to get under cover for a while in order, so to speak, to give my mackintosh a rest; for under this continued drenching it began to grow damp on the inside. I went to banks, post-offices, railway offices, restaurants, publishers, book sellers and money changers.

“I was so wet when I got back to Mitchell’s toward evening, that I had simply to divest myself of my shoes, socks and trousers, and leave them behind for the benefit of New York City. No fire could have dried them ere I had to start; and to pack them in their present condition was to spread ruin among my other possessions. With a heavy heart I said farewell to them as they lay a pulp in the middle of a pool upon the floor of Mitchell’s kitchen. I wonder if they are dry by now.”

That night he joined a party of emigrants bound for the West, the weight of his baggage much increased by the result of his day’s purchases — Bancroft’s “History of the United States” in six fat volumes. So in less than twenty-four hours after landing on one coast he was on his way to the other.

If at times he had been uncomfortable on the steamer he was ten times more so on the train. It is hard to realise in these days of easy travelling what the discomforts of riding in the emigrant trains were; crowded together in badly lighted, badly ventilated cars, with stiff wooden benches on either side, which were most uncomfortable to sit on and next to impossible to lie down upon. Meals were taken as best they might when they stopped at way stations while some bought milk and eggs and made a shift to cook themselves a meal or brew a cup of tea on the stove at the end of the car.

Over a week of this sort of slow travelling through the heat of the plains was enough to tax the strength and courage of the most robust man, let alone one in as delicate health as Stevenson at that time, and it is a wonder he ever lived through it. Indeed, he was ill but kept cheerful in spite of all, and was interested in the country and the sights along the way. His own discomforts seemed to dwindle when he contrasted them with those the pioneers endured travelling that same direction twenty years before; crawling along in ox-carts with their cattle and family possessions; suffering hunger, thirst, and infinite weariness, and living in daily terror of attack from the Indians.

He made note of all he saw and the doings of his fellow emigrants, to be used later on. Letters to Henley and Colvin en route are interesting.

"In the Emigrant Train from New York to San Francisco, Aug., 1879.

Dear Colvin, — I am in the cars between Pittsburg and Chicago, just now bowling through Ohio. I am taking charge of a kid, whose mother is asleep, with one eye while I write you this with the other. I reached N.Y. Sunday night, and by five o'clock Monday was underway for the West. — It is now about ten on Wednesday morning, so I have already been forty hours in the cars. It is impossible to lie down in them, which must end by being very wearying....

"No man is any use until he has dared everything; I feel just now as if I had, and so might become a man. 'If ye have faith like a grain of mustard seed.' That is so true! Just now I have faith as big as a cigar case, I will not say die, and I do not fear man nor fortune. — R.L.S."

"Crossing Nebraska, Saturday, Aug. 23, 1879.

"My Dear Henley, — I am sitting on the top of the cars with a mill party from Missouri going west for his health. Desolate flat prairie upon all hands.... When we stop, which we do often, for emigrants and freight travel together, the kine first, the man after, the whole plain is heard singing with cicadae. This is a pause, as you may see from the writing. What happened to the old pedestrian emigrants; what was the tedium suffered by the Indians and trappers of our youth, the imagination trembles to conceive. This is now Saturday, 23rd, and I have been steadily travelling since I parted from you at St. Pancras. It is a strange vicissitude from the Savile Club to this; I sleep with a man from Pennsylvania who has been in the Navy Yard, and mess with him and the Missouri bird already alluded to. We have a tin wash-bowl among four, I wear nothing but a shirt and a pair of trousers and never button my shirt. When I land for a meal, I pass my coat and feel dressed. This life is to last until Friday, Saturday or Sunday next. It is a strange affair to be an emigrant, as I hope you shall see in a future work. I wonder if this will be legible; my present station on the wagon roof, though airy, compared to the cars, is both dirty and insecure. I can see the track straight before and straight behind me to either horizon....

"Our journey is through ghostly deserts, sage brush and alkali, and rocks without form or colour, a sad corner of the world. I confess I am not jolly, but mighty calm, in my distresses. My illness is a subject of great mirth to some of my fellow travellers, and I smile rather sickly at their jests.

"We are going along Bitter Creek just now, a place infamous in the history of emigration, a place I shall remember myself among the blackest. — R.L.S."

When California was finally reached he decided to rest and recover strength by camping out for a few days in the Coast Range Mountains beyond Monterey, but the anxiety and strain of the long journey had been greater than he realised, and he broke down and became very ill. For two nights he lay out under the trees in a kind of stupor and at length was rescued by two frontiersmen in charge of a goat-ranch, who took him to their cabin and cared for him until he partly recovered.

"Here is another curious start in my life," he wrote to Sidney Colvin. "I am living at an Angora goat-ranch, in the Coast Line Mountains, eighteen miles from Monterey. I was camping out, but got so sick that the two rancheros took me in and tended me. One is an old bear hunter, seventy-two years old, and a captain from the Mexican War; the other a pilgrim, and one who was out with the bear flag and under Fremont when California was taken by the States. They are both true frontiersmen, and most kind and pleasant. Captain Smith, the bear hunter, is my physician, and I obey him like an oracle....

"I am now lying in an upper chamber, with the clinking of goat bells in my ears, which proves to me that the goats are come home and it will soon be time to eat. The old bear hunter is doubtless now infusing tea; and Tom the Indian will come in with his gun in a few moments....

"The business of my life stands pretty nigh still. I work at my notes of the voyage. It will not be very like a book of mine; but perhaps none the less successful for that. I will not deny that I feel lonely to-day.... I have not yet had a word from England, partly, I suppose, because I have not yet written for my letters to New York; do not blame me for this neglect, if you knew all I have been through, you would wonder I had done as much as I have. I teach the ranch children reading in the morning, for the mother is from home sick.

“Ever your affectionate friend.
“R.L.S.”

As soon as Stevenson was well enough he returned to Monterey and fell to working upon several short stories and the notes of his voyage, which he brought together and published later under the titles “The Amateur Emigrant” and “Across the Plains.”

Monterey in those days was a small Mexican town; “a place of two or three streets economically paved with sea-sand, and two or three lanes, which were the water courses in the rainy season.... The houses were, for the most part, built of unbaked adobe brick....

“There was no activity but in and around the saloons, where the people sat almost all day playing cards. The smallest excursion was made on horseback. You would scarcely ever see the main street without a horse or two tied to posts, and making a fine figure with their Mexican housings. In a place so exclusively Mexican as Monterey, you saw not only Mexican saddles, but true Vaquero riding — men always at a hand gallop, up hill and down dale, and round the sharpest corners, urging their horses with cries and gesticulations and cruel rotary spurs, checking them dead, with a touch, or wheeling them right about face in a square yard. Spanish was the language of the street.”

He lodged with a doctor and his wife, and took his meals at the little restaurant kept by Jules Simoneau, “a most pleasant old boy,” with whom he played chess and discussed the universe daily.

About the middle of December he pushed on to San Francisco, and prepared to settle down and work for an indefinite time. Though he had known but few people in Monterey, nevertheless it was a social little place in comparison to a great city like San Francisco, where Stevenson found himself indeed a stranger and friendless and learned for the first time in his life what it really meant to be lonely.

Funds were running low; so he secured the cheapest possible lodging and took his meals at various small restaurants, living at the rate of seventy cents a day.

On December 26 he wrote: “For four days I have spoken to no one but my landlady or landlord or the restaurant waiters. This is not a gay way to pass Christmas, is it?” But some days later, nothing daunted, he added: “I lead a pretty happy life, though you might not think it. I have great fun trying to be economical, which I find as good a game of play as any other. I have no want of occupation and though I rarely see any one to speak to, have little time to worry.”

To make matters worse, letters containing money went astray and word came that some articles submitted to his publishers in England, on which he had depended for funds, were not satisfactory, and this forced him to reduce his living expenses to forty-five cents a day. The letters from home were most unsatisfactory and lacked the kind of news he longed for. “Not one soul ever gives me any *news*,” he complained to Sidney Colvin, “about people or things, everybody writes me sermons; it is good for me, but hardly the food necessary for a man who lives all alone on forty-five cents a day, and sometimes less, with quantities of hard work and many heavy thoughts. If one of you could write me a letter with a jest in it, a letter like what is written to real people in the world — I am still flesh and blood — I should enjoy it. Simpson did the other day, and it did me as much good as a bottle of wine — man alive I want gossip.”

Day in and day out he worked doggedly, fighting discouragement, with little strength or inspiration to write anything very worth while.

To cap all, his landlady’s little boy fell ill, and Stevenson, who had a great love and sympathy for all children, helped to nurse him, and this proved too much in the nervous and exhausted state he was in. The boy recovered, but Stevenson fell ill again, and for six weeks hovered between life and death.

This seems to have been the turning-point in his ill luck. Toward the middle of February, as he slowly began to mend, he was cheered on by long letters from home, full of anxiety for his health and advances of money from his father, with strict instructions that from now on he was no longer to stint and deny himself the bare necessities of life, as he had been doing. Later, in April, came a telegram from Thomas Stevenson saying that in future Louis was to count on an income of two hundred and fifty pounds a year.

Cheered with the prospect of an easier road ahead of him, he struggled back to life once more with a strong resolve to work harder and make those at home proud of him.

“It was a considerable shock to my pride to break down,” he wrote to a friend, “but there it’s done and can not be helped. Had my health held out another month, I should have made a year’s income, but breaking down when I did, I am surrounded by unfinished works. It is a good thing my father was on the spot, or I should have had to work and die.”

Early in the spring he and Mrs. Osbourne met again, and on May 19, 1880, they were married in San Francisco.

For the rest of his life Stevenson had no cause to complain of loneliness, for in his wife he had an “inseparable sharer of all his adventures; the most open-hearted of friends to all those who loved him; the most shrewd and stimulating critic of his work; and in sickness, despite her own precarious health, the most devoted and most efficient of nurses.”

Immediately after their marriage Stevenson and his wife and stepson — and the dog — went to the Coast Range Mountains and, taking possession of an old deserted miner’s camp, practically lived out-of-doors for the next few months, with no neighbors aside from a hunter and his family.

This was healthy, but the life of a squatter has its limitations, and their trials and tribulations during these weeks Stevenson told most amusingly in “The Silverado Squatters.”

Gradually a longing began to come to R.L.S. to see those at home once more and have them know his wife. This desire grew so from day to day that July found them bidding good-by to California, and on the 7th of August they sailed from New York for Liverpool.

CHAPTER VI

SCOTLAND AGAIN

“Bells upon the city are ringing in the night,

High above the gardens are the houses full of light,

On the heathy Pentlands is the curlew flying free,
And the broom is blowing bonnie in the north countrie.
“We canna break the bonds that God decreed to bind,

Still we’ll be the children of the heather and the wind,

Far away from home O, it’s still for you and me
That the broom is blowing bonnie in the north countrie.”

On his return to Scotland the spell of his own land fell upon R.L.S. for the first time. He realised now how he loved it spite of its bad climate, how much there was at home waiting for him. “After all,” he said, “new countries, sun, music, and all the rest, can never take down our gusty, rainy, smoky, grim old city out of the first place it has been making for itself in the bottom of my soul.”

But he had returned only to be banished. The doctors found his lungs too weak to risk Edinburgh winters and advised him to try the Alps.

Accordingly a cottage was rented in Davos Platz, a health resort. There and at similar places near by they spent the next few winters with visits to England and France between. Switzerland never suited Stevenson. He disliked living among invalids, and with his love for exploring the nooks and corners of any spot he was in he felt like a prisoner when he found himself shut in a valley among continual snow with few walks possible for him to take. “The mountains are about me like a trap,” he complained. “You can not foot it up a hillside and behold the sea on a great plain, but live in holes and corners and can change only one for the other.”

Tobogganing was the only sport of Davos Platz he really enjoyed, and he pursued that to his heart’s content. “Perhaps the true way to toboggan is alone and at night,” he said. “First comes the tedious climb dragging your instrument behind you. Next a long breathing space, alone with the snow and pine woods, cold, silent and solemn to the heart. Then you push off; the toboggan fetches away, she begins to feel the hill, to glide, to swim, to gallop. In a breath you are out from under the pine-trees and the whole heaven full of stars reels and flashes overhead.”

He accomplished little work at this time. Sometimes for days he would be unable to write at all. But the little boy who had once told his mother, “I have been trying to make myself happy,” was the same man now who could say: “I was never bored in my life.” When unable to do anything else he would build houses of cards or lie in bed and model little figures in clay. Anything to keep his hands busy and his mind distracted from the stories that crowded his brain and he had not strength to put on paper. His one horror, the fear that urged him on to work feverishly when he was suffering almost beyond endurance, was the thought that his illness might one day make him a helpless invalid.

The splendid part to think of is that no hint of his dark days and pains crept into his writings or saddened those who came to see him. Complaint he kept to himself, prayed that he might “continue to be eager to be happy,” lived with the best that was in him from day to day, and the words that went forth from his sick-room have cheered and encouraged thousands.

When asked why he wrote so many stories of pirates and adventurers with few women to soften them he replied: “I suppose it’s the contrast; I have always admired great strength, even in a pirate. Courage has interested me more than anything else.”

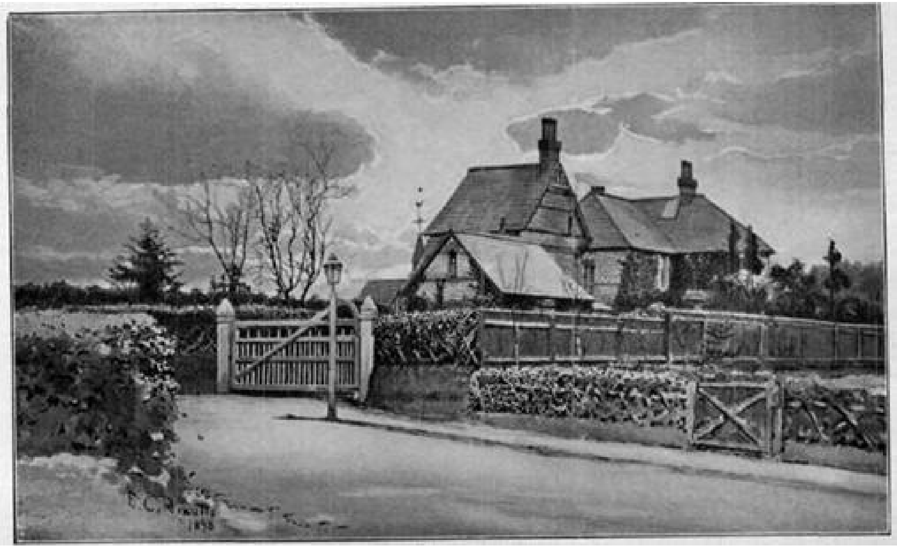
He and his stepson had grown to be great chums. At Silverado Lloyd had been seized with a desire to write stories and had set up a toy printing-press which turned off several tales. At Davos Platz they both tried their hand at illustrating these stories with pictures cut on wood-blocks and gayly coloured. Lloyd’s room was quite a gallery of these artistic attempts. But their favorite diversion was to play at a war game with lead soldiers. In after-years Lloyd wrote his recollections of the days they spent together enjoying this fun and he says: “The war game was constantly improved and elaborated, until from a few hours, a war took weeks to play, and the critical operations in the attic monopolized half our thoughts. This attic was a most chilly and dismal spot, reached by a crazy ladder, and unlit save for a single frosted window; so low at the eaves and so dark that we could seldom stand upright, nor see without a candle. Upon the attic floor a map was roughly drawn in chalks of different colours, with mountains, rivers, towns, bridges, and roads of two classes. Here we would play by the hour, with tingling fingers and stiffening knees, and an intentness, zest, and excitement that I shall never forget.

“The mimic battalions marched and counter-marched, changed by measured evolutions from column formation into line, with cavalry screens in front and massed support behind, in the most approved military fashion of to-day.”

Neither of them ever grew too old for this sport. Year after year they went back to the game. Even when they went to Samoa they laid out a campaign room with maps chalked on the floor.

In the spring of 1885 Thomas Stevenson purchased a house at Bournemouth, England, near London, as a present for his daughter-in-law.

They named the cottage "Skerryvore," after the famous lighthouse he had helped to build in his young days, and it was their home for the next three years — busy ones for R.L.S.



Skerryvore Cottage, Bournemouth

It was a real joy to have his father and mother and Bob Stevenson with them again and his friends in London frequently drop in for a visit.

His health was never worse than during the Bournemouth days. He seldom went beyond his own garden-gate but lived, as he says, "like a weevil in a biscuit." Yet he never worked harder or accomplished more. He wrote in bed and out of bed, sick or well, poems, plays, short stories, and verses.

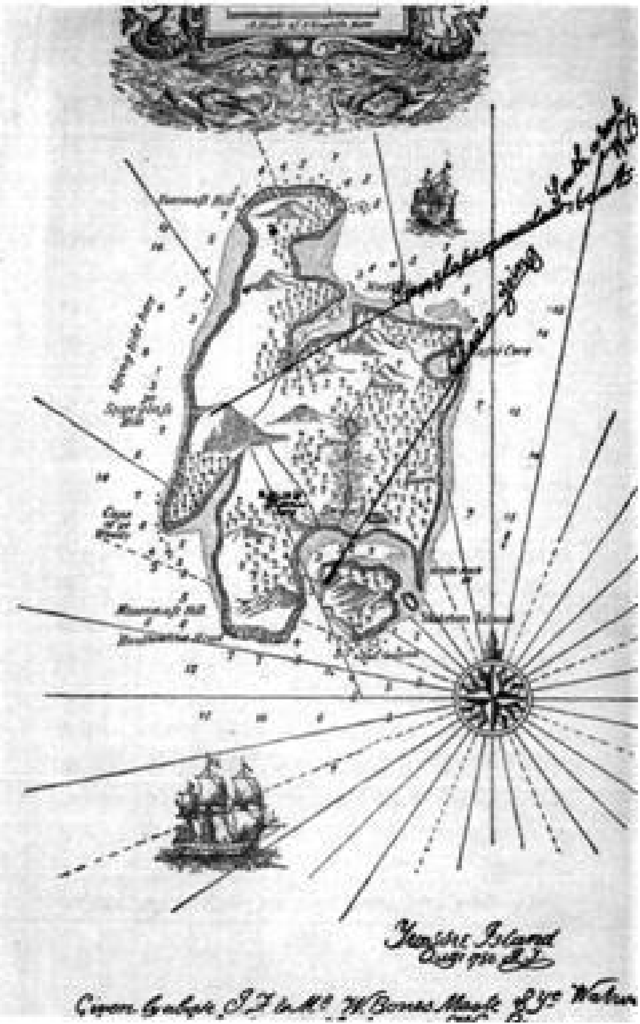
He finished "Treasure Island," the book that gained him his first popularity, and wrote "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," which made him famous at home and abroad.

"Treasure Island" had been started some time previous to please Lloyd, who asked him to write a "good story." It all began with a map. Stevenson always loved maps, and one day during a picture-making bout he had drawn a fine one. "It was elaborately and (I thought) beautifully coloured," he says. "The shape of it took my fancy beyond expression; it contained harbors that pleased me like sonnets.... I ticketed my performance Treasure Island."

Immediately the island began to take life and swarm with people, all sorts of strange scenes began to take place upon it, and as he gazed at his map Stevenson discovered the plot for the "good story."

"It is horrid fun," he wrote, "and begins in the Admiral Benbow public house on the Devon coast; all about a map and a treasure and a mutiny, and a derelict ship … and a doctor and a sea-cook with one leg with the chorus ‘yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum,’ … No women in the story, Lloyd orders.”

Parts of the coast at Monterey flashed back to his mind and helped him to picture the scenery of his “Treasure Island.” “It was just such a place as the Monterey sand hills the hero John Hawkins found himself on leaving his mutinous shipmates. It was just such a thicket of live oak growing low along the sand like brambles, that he crawled and dodged when he heard the voices of the pirates near him and saw Long John Silver strike down with his crutch one of his mates who had refused to join in his plan for murder.”



The Treasure Island map

As the story grew he read each new chapter aloud to the family in the evening. He was writing it for one boy, but found he had more in his audience. “My father,” he says, “not only heard with delight the daily chapter, but set himself actively to collaborate. When the time came for Billy Bones' chest to be ransacked, he must have passed the better part of a day preparing on the back of a legal envelope an inventory of its contents, which I exactly followed, and the name of Flint's old ship, the Walrus, was given at his particular request."

When the map was redrawn for the book it was embellished with "blowing whales and sailing ships; and my father himself brought into service a knack he had of various writing, and elaborately *forged* the signature of Captain Flint and the sailing directions of Billy Bones."

These daily readings were rare treats to those at Skerryvore, for Stevenson was a most dramatic reader. "When he came to stand in the place of Silver you could almost have imagined you saw the great one-legged John Silver, joyous-eyed, on the rolling sea."

The book was not long in springing into popularity. Not only the boys enjoyed it but all sorts of staid and sober men became boys once more and sat up long after bedtime to finish the tale. Mr. Gladstone caught a glimpse of it at a friend's house and did not rest the next day until he had procured a copy for himself, and Andrew Lang said: "This is the kind of stuff a fellow wants. I don't know when, except Tom Sawyer and the Odyssey, that I ever liked a romance so well."

It was translated into many different languages, even appearing serially in certain Greek and Spanish papers.

"Kidnapped" followed; a story founded on the Appan murder. David Balfour, the hero, was one of his own ancestors; Alan Breck had actually lived, and the Alison who ferried Alan and David over to Torryburn was one of Cummie's own people. The Highland country where the scenes were laid, he had traversed many times, and the Island of Earraid, where David was shipwrecked, was the spot where he had spent some of his engineering days.

Stevenson had often said the "brownies" in his dreams gave him ideas for his tales. At Skerryvore they came to him with a story that among all his others is counted the greatest.

"In the small hours one morning," says his wife, "I was awakened by cries of horror from Louis. Thinking he had a nightmare I awakened him. He said angrily, 'Why did you wake me? I was dreaming a fine bogey tale.'"

The dream was so vivid that he could not rest until he had written off the story, and it so possessed him that the first draft was finished within three days. It was called "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

This story instantly created much discussion. Articles were written about it, sermons were preached on it, and letters poured in from all sorts of people with their theories about the strange tale. Six months after it was published nearly forty thousand copies were sold in

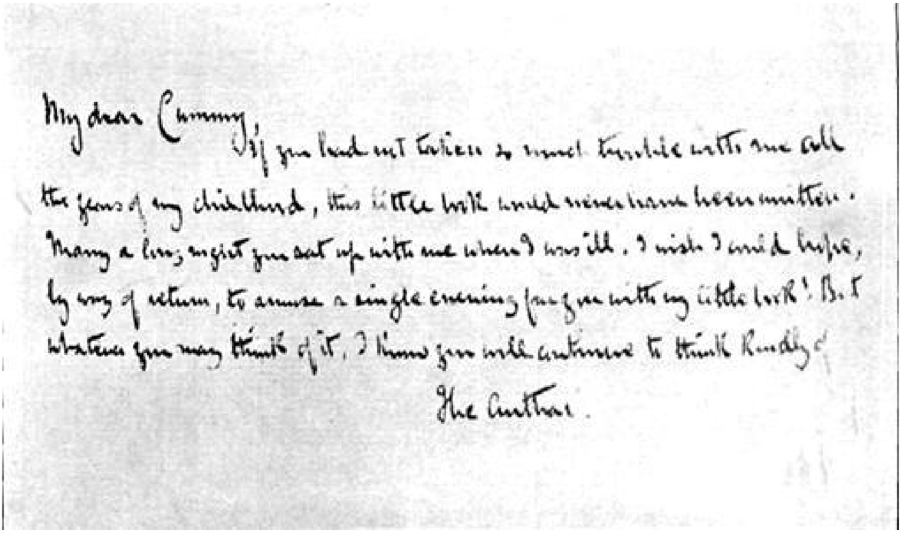
England alone; but its greatest success was in America where its popularity was immediate and its sale enormous.

One day he was attracted by a book of verses about children by Kate Greenaway, and wondered why he could not write some too of the children he remembered best of all. Scenes and doings in the days spent at Colinton with his swarm of cousins; the games they had played and the people they had known all trooped back with other memories of Edinburgh days. As he recalled these children, they tripped from his pen until he had a delightful collection of verses and determined to bring them together in a book.

First he called it "The Penny Whistle," but soon changed the title to "A Child's Garden of Verses" and dedicated it, with the following poem, to the only one he said who would really understand the verses, the one who had done so much to make his childhood days happy:

TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM
FROM HER BOY
"For the long nights you lay awake
And watched for my unworthy sake;
For your most comfortable hand
That led me through the uneven land;
For all the story-books you read;
For all the pains you comforted;
For all you pitied, all you bore
In sad and happy days of yore; —
My second Mother, my first wife,
The angel of my infant life —
From the sick child, now well and old,
Take, nurse, the little book you hold!
"And grant it, Heaven, that all who read,
May find as dear a nurse at need,
And every child who lists my rhyme,
In the bright fireside, nursery clime,
May hear it in as kind a voice
As made my childish days rejoice."

"Of course," he said, speaking of this dedication when he wrote to Cummie about the book, "this is only a flourish, like taking off one's hat, but still a person who has taken the trouble to write things does not dedicate them to anyone without meaning it; and you must try to take this dedication in place of a great many things that I might have said, and that I ought to have done; to prove that I am not altogether unconscious of the great debt of gratitude I owe you."



My dear Cummy,
If you had not taken so much trouble with me all the years of my childhood, this little book would never have been written. Many a long night you sat up with me when I was ill. I wish I could hope, by way of return, to amuse a single evening for you with my little book! But whatever you may think of it, I know you will continue to think kindly of
The author.

Facsimile of letter sent to Cummy with “An Inland Voyage”

If Thomas Stevenson had been one of the first to doubt his boy’s literary ability, he was equally quick to acknowledge himself mistaken. He was proud of his brilliant son, keenly interested in whatever he was working on and, during the days spent together at Skerryvore, gave him valuable aid in his writing.

To have this old-time comradeship with his father, to enjoy his sympathy and understanding once more was Stevenson’s greatest joy at this time; a joy which he sorrowfully realised he must soon part with forever as his father’s health was failing rapidly.

Thomas Stevenson remained at Skerryvore until April, 1887, when he left for a short visit to Edinburgh. While there he became suddenly worse and died on the 8th of May.

Louis’s greatest reason for remaining in England was gone now, and he determined to cross the ocean with his family once more.

His mother willingly gave up her home, her family, her friends, and the comforts she had always enjoyed to go with him to a new country, on any venture he might propose if his health could only be improved thereby.

On August 21, 1887, Louis bade good-by to Scotland for the last time and sailed away from London on the steamship *Ludgate Hill* for New York.

CHAPTER VII

SECOND VISIT TO AMERICA

"Tis a good land to fall in with men, and a pleasant land to see."
— (Words spoken by Hendrik Hudson when he first brought his ship through the Narrows and saw the Bay of New York.)

Stevenson's second landing in New York was a great contrast to his first. The "Amateur Emigrant" had no one to bid him welcome and Godspeed but a West Street tavern-keeper, and now when Mr. Will Low, his old friend of Fontainebleau days, hastened to the dock to welcome him on the *Ludgate Hill*, he found the author of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" already surrounded by reporters.

The trip had done him good in spite of their passage having been an unusually rough one, with numerous discomforts. The *Ludgate Hill* was not an up-to-date liner and she carried a very mixed cargo. The very fact of her being a tramp ship and that the passengers were free to be about with the men and officers, stay in the wheel-house, and enjoy a real sea life, delighted Stevenson, and he wrote back to Sidney Colvin:

"I enjoyed myself more than I could have hoped on board our floating menagerie; stallions and monkeys and matches made our cargo; and the vast continent of the incongruities rolled the while like a haystack; and the stallions stood hypnotized by the motion, looking through the port at our dinner table, and winnied when the crockery was broken; and the little monkeys stared at one another in their cages ... and the big monkey, Jacko scoured about the ship and rested willingly in my arms ... the other passengers, when they were not sick, looked on and laughed. Take all this picture, and make it roll till the bell shall sound unexpected notes and the fittings shall break loose in our state rooms, and you have the voyage of the Ludgate Hill. She arrived in the port of New York without beer, porter, soda-water, curaçoa, fresh meat, or fresh water, and yet we lived and we regret her."

After a short visit with friends in Newport they returned to New York and settled down for a time in the Hotel St. Stephen, on 11th Street, near University Place, to make plans for their winter's trip.

Soon after their arrival "Jekyll and Hyde" was dramatized and produced with great success. When it was known that the author of this remarkable story was in the city, people flocked from all sides to call on him, and fairly wearied him with their attentions, although he liked to see them and made many interesting acquaintances at the time.

Washington Square was one of his favorite spots in New York, and he spent many hours there watching the children playing about. A day he always recalled with special pleasure was the one when he had spent a whole forenoon in the Square talking with Mark Twain.

Among those who were anxious to know Stevenson was the American sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens. He had been delighted with his writings and regretted he had not met him in Paris when he and Mr. Low had been there together. “If Stevenson ever comes to New York,” he said to Mr. Low, “I want to meet him,” and added that he would consider it a great privilege if Stevenson would permit him to make his portrait.

It was with much pleasure, therefore, that Mr. Low brought them together, and they took to one another immediately. “I like your sculptor. What a splendid straightforward and simple fellow he is,” said Stevenson; and St. Gaudens’s comment after their first meeting was: “Astonishingly young, not a bit like an invalid and a bully fellow.”

Stevenson readily consented to sit for his portrait, and they spent many delightful hours together while the sketches were being made for it.

One day the sculptor brought his eight-year-old son, Homer, with him, and years afterward gave the following description of the child’s visit:

“On the way I endeavored to impress on the boy the fact that he was about to see a man whom he must remember all his life. It was a lovely day and as I entered the room Stevenson lay as usual on rather a high bed. I presented Homer to him … but since my son’s interest, notwithstanding my injunctions, was to say the least far from enthusiastic, I sent him out to play.

Bas-relief of Stevenson by Augustus Saint Gaudens

“I then asked Stevenson to pose but that was not successful ... all the gestures being forced and affected. Therefore I suggested to him that if he would try to write, some natural attitude might result. He assented and taking a sheet of paper ... he pulled his knees up and began. Immediately his attitude was such that I was enabled to create something of use and continued drawing while he wrote with an occasional smile. Presently I finished and told him there was no necessity for his writing any more. He did not reply but proceeded for quite a while. Then he folded the paper with deliberation, placed it in an envelope, addressed it, and handed it to me. It was to ‘Master Homer St. Gaudens.’

“I asked him: ‘Do you wish me to give this to the boy?’

“‘Yes,’

“‘When? Now?’

“‘Oh, no, in five or ten years, or when I am dead.’

“I put it in a safe and here it is:

“May 27, 1888.

“Dear Homer St. Gaudens — Your father has brought you this day to see me and tells me it is his hope you may remember the occasion. I am going to do what I can to carry out his wish; and it may amuse you, years after, to see this little scrap of paper and to read what I write. I must begin by testifying that you yourself took no interest whatever in the introduction, and in the most proper spirit displayed a single-minded ambition to get back to play, and this I thought an excellent and admirable point in your character. You were also, — I use the past tense with a view to the time when you shall read rather than to that when I am writing, — a very pretty boy, and to my European views startlingly self-possessed. My time of observation was so limited that you must pardon me if I can say no more ... but you may perhaps like to know that the lean, flushed man in bed, who interested you so little, was in a state of mind extremely mingled and unpleasant; harassed with work which he thought he was not doing well, troubled with difficulties to which you will in time succeed, and yet looking forward to no less a matter than a voyage to the South Seas and the visitation of savage and desert islands.

"Your father's friend,
"Robert Louis Stevenson."

The portrait was finished in bas-relief and many copies were made of it. The most familiar is the one giving only Stevenson's head and shoulders, but the splendid big one placed as a memorial to him in St. Giles's Cathedral in Edinburgh shows him as he must have looked that day lying in bed, writing to Homer St. Gaudens.

Another man in New York whom Stevenson had admired for years and longed to meet was General Sherman. The war was long past, and he was then an old gentleman living very quietly. One day St. Gaudens took Stevenson to call on him, and he was asked afterward if he was at all disappointed in his hero.

"Disappointed," he exclaimed. "It was simply magnificent to stand in the presence of one who has done what he has, and then to find him so genial and human. It was the next thing to seeing Wellington, and I dare say the Iron Duke would not have been half so human."

The anticipation of a train trip across the continent was so distasteful that a proposed visit to colourado was given up, and they decided to try the climate of the Adirondacks for the winter instead.

They chose Saranac, not far from the Canadian border, and rented a cottage there.

The climate was as unpleasant as possible. It rained, snowed, sleeted, and froze continually. The cold at times was arctic, the thermometer dropping thirty degrees below zero in January. "Venison was crunching with ice after being an hour in the oven, and a large lump of ice was still unmelted in a pot where water was steaming all around it."

Their cottage was dubbed "Hunter's Home." It was far from the railroad, few luxuries were to be had, and they lived a simple life in earnest.

Of course, they had a dog; no "hunter's home" would be complete without one, but Louis scouted the idea of adding things as unfitting as plush table-covers and upholstered footstools. The table went bare, and he fashioned a footstool for his mother out of a log, in true backwoods fashion.

His wife and mother found the cold hard to bear, but he stood it remarkably well and benefited by it. Saranac reminded him of Scotland, he said, without the smell of peats and the heather.

Dressed in a buffalo coat, astrakhan cap, and Indian boots, he and Lloyd walked, skated, or went sleighing every day.

His pen was kept busy also. A new novel, "The Master of Ballantrae," was started, and he contributed a series of articles to *Scribner's Magazine*. For these he was paid a regular sum offered by the publishers and agreed upon in advance — a new experience. It made him feel "awfu' grand," he told a Scotch friend.

A venture he had been longing to make since a boy was a cruise among the islands of the South Seas. While enduring the bitter cold of Saranac such hazy ideas as he had had about such a trip began to form themselves into a definite scheme. He was anxious for a long voyage; perhaps the warm sea air might cure him after all else had failed.

So night after night he and Lloyd eagerly pored over books and maps, and the family discussed plans for such an expedition.

When spring came Mrs. Stevenson started for San Francisco to secure, if possible, a yacht in which they might undertake such a cruise. If all went well Louis and his mother and Lloyd would follow.

While they waited for results they spent the time at Manasquan, on the New Jersey coast. There Stevenson and his son enjoyed the sailing, and their New York friends came often to see them.

Mr. Low tells of the day at Manasquan when word was received from Mrs. Stevenson that she had found a schooner-yacht satisfactory for the voyage.

An answer must be sent at once. Her husband telegraphed that they would come, but it was not without misgivings that he made this final decision. There was much at stake in an uncertain venture of the kind. It meant a sacrifice of comfort for his wife and mother, big expense, and perhaps no better health in the end.

However, it seemed worth the risk, and having decided to go he began to look forward to the trip with boyish delight. "It will be horrid fun," he said, "to be an invalid gentleman on board a yacht, to walk around with a spy-glass under your arm, to make landings and trade beads and chromos for cocoanuts, and to have the natives swim out to meet you."

He and Lloyd spent hours laying their course and making out lists of stores with which to furnish the schooner, regardless of the doubt expressed by their friends as to the capacity of the boat. "They calmly proceeded with their interminable lists and scorned the criticism of a mere land-lubber. All conversation that was not of a nautical character failed to hold their interest."

Cheered with strong hopes for Louis's future, the family departed for San Francisco on the 28th of May, 1888. Their one regret was the good friends they were leaving behind. This particularly affected Louis, but he tried to hide his feelings by making all sorts of lively and impossible proposals for their joining him later on.

His parting words to Mr. Low were: "There's England over there — and I've left it — perhaps I may never go back — and there on the other side of this big continent there's another sea rolling in. I loved the Pacific in the days when I was at Monterey, and perhaps now it will love me a little. I am going to meet it; ever since I was a boy the South Seas have laid a spell upon me."

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE SOUTH SEAS

"Since long ago, a child at home,

I read and longed to rise and roam,

Where'er I went, what'er I willed,

One promised land my fancy filled.

Hence the long road my home I made;

Tossed much in ships; have often laid

Below the uncurtained sky my head,

Rain-deluged and wind buffeted;

And many a thousand miles I crossed,

And corners turned — love's labor lost,

Till, Lady, to your isle of sun

I came, not hoping, and like one

Snatched out of blindness, rubbed my eyes,
And hailed my promised land with cries."

Once, while Louis was a discontented student at the University of Edinburgh, the premier of New Zealand, Mr. Seed, spent an evening with his father and talked about the South Sea Islands until the boy said he was "sick with desire to go there."

From that time on a visit to that out-of-the-way corner of the earth was a cherished dream, and he read everything he could lay hands on that told about it.

While in California, the first time, Mr. Virgil Williams, an artist, aroused his interest still more by the accounts of his own trip in the South Seas.

Now his opportunity to see them had actually come. He already knew much of the kind of places and people they were going among.

Three thousand miles across the open sea lay the Marquesas Islands, the first group they hoped to visit, and it was for that port their schooner, the *Casco*, turned her head when she was towed out of the Golden Gate at dawn on the 28th of June.

Besides the family and a servant, Valentine Roch, who had been with them since Bournemouth days, the party consisted of the skipper, Captain Otis, who was well acquainted with the Pacific, a crew of four deck-hands, and a Japanese cook.

The *Casco* was a fore-and-aft schooner, ninety-five feet in length, of seventy tons' burden. "She had most graceful lines and with her lofty masts, white sails and decks, and glittering brass work, was a lovely craft to the eye as she sat upon the water."

"I must try to describe the vessel that is to be our home for so long," Mrs. Stevenson, senior, wrote to her sister at Colinton. "From the deck you step down into the cockpit, which is our open air drawing room. It has seats all around, nicely cushioned, and we sit or lie there most of the day. The compass is there, and the wheel, so the man at the wheel always keeps us company.... At the bottom of the stairs on the right hand side is the captain's room. Straight ahead is the main — or after — cabin, a nice bright place with a skylight and four portholes. There are four sofas that can be turned into beds if need be, and there are lockers under them in which our clothes are stored away. Above and behind each sofa is a berth concealed by white lace curtains on brass rods, and in these berths we three women are laid away as on shelves each night to sleep.

"Opposite the entrance is a mirror let into the wall, with two small shelves under it. On each side of this is a door. The one to the right leads ... to Lloyd's cabin, and beyond that again is the forward cabin, or dining room. The door to the left opens into ... Louis' sleeping-room. It is very roomy with both a bed and a sofa in it, so that he will be very comfortable....

"The dining room has a long table and chairs. Between the doors a very ugly picture of fruit and cake. Louis would fain cover it up if we could spare a flag with which to do it. The doors at the further end lead to the pantry and galley and beyond these are the men's quarters."

No expense had been spared in building the *Casco* to make her comfortable. She was intended, however, for cruising in the California waters and was hardly suited to the rough handling she received during the squally weather of the next few months. Fortunately she stood the test well and her passengers suffered few discomforts.

Once under way and settled for living, the trip proved quite uneventful. The long days were spent on deck reading or working, and Stevenson began to gather material for a book on the South Seas. The ship's life suited him admirably; every strange fish and new star interested him, and he grew stronger hourly in the warm air.

"Since the fifth day," he wrote, "we were left behind by a full-rigged English ship ... bound round the Horn, we have not spied a sail, nor a land bird, nor a shred of sea-weed. In impudent isolation, the toy schooner has plowed her path of snow across the empty deep, far from all track of commerce, far from any hand of help; now to the sound of slatting sails and stamping sheet blocks, staggering in the turmoil of that business falsely called a calm, now, in the assault of squalls burying her lee-rail in the sea.... Flying fish, a skimming silver rain on the blue sea; a turtle fast asleep in the early morning sunshine; the Southern Cross hung thwart the forerigging like the frame of a wrecked kite — the pole star and the familiar plough dropping ever lower in the wake; these build up thus far the history of our voyage. It is singular to come so far and see so infinitely little.”

The squalls that came very quickly, frequently broke the monotony of the trip. One moment the *Casco* would be sailing along easily and the “next moment, the inhabitants of the cabin were piled one upon another, the sea was pouring into the cockpit and spouting in fountains through forgotten deadlights, and the steersman stood spinning the wheel for his life in a halo of tropical rain.”

After twenty-two days at sea they sighted their first island, Nukahiva, one of the Marquesan group, and were all on deck before dawn anxiously watching for it. They not only looked forward eagerly to the sight of land again after so many days on the open ocean, but it was indeed an adventure to come to a country totally strange to all of them, where few white people had been before.

“Not one soul aboard the Casco had set foot upon the Islands,” says Stevenson, “or knew except by accident one word of any of the island tongues; and it was with something perhaps of the same anxious pleasure as thrilled the bosom of the discoverers that we drew near these problematic shores.

“Before yet the anchor plunged a canoe was already paddling from the hamlet. It contained two men: one white, one brown and tattooed across the face with bands of blue, both immaculate with white European clothes.... Canoe followed canoe till the ship swarmed with stalwart, six foot men in every stage of undress ... the more considerable tattooed from head to foot in awful patterns ... all talking and we could not understand one word; all trying to trade with us who had no thought of trading, or offering us island curios at prices palpably absurd.”

All this charmed and delighted Stevenson, who had dreamed many times of witnessing just such a scene. He wrote to Cummie that he was living all over again many of the stories she had read to him and found them coming true about himself.

For six weeks they cruised about among these islands, frequently dropping anchor and going ashore for several days. When the natives were convinced that they had neither come to trade or to make trouble, but were simply interested in them and their country, they made the visitors most welcome and showered presents of fruit, mats, baskets, and fans upon them.

All were eager to visit the schooner, which they called *Pahi Mani*, meaning the shining or the silver ship. The chiefs tried to measure its dimensions with their arms. The liveliest curiosity was shown about everything; the red velvet cushions, the looking-glasses, and the typewriter pleased particularly. A photograph of Queen Victoria hung in the fore-cabin and was always described to the island callers as *Vahine Haka-iki Beritano,* which meant literally, woman-great-chief Britain. It was a surprise to find how much many of them already knew about her.

Some afternoons the *Casco* swarmed with these strange visitors who were always delighted at the refreshments of ship's biscuits and pineapple syrup and water offered them. A certain chief was particularly taken with a pair of gloves belonging to Mrs. Stevenson, senior. He smelled of them, called them British tattooing, and insisted on her putting them on and off a great many times.

The entire family fell quickly into the island mode of living; dressed as the white inhabitants did; ate all the strange kinds of native food; and when ashore lived in the native houses, which resembled bird-cages on stilts. The climate suited them to perfection, and Stevenson particularly benefited by it, bathing daily in the warm surf and taking long walks along the beach in search of strange shells.

"Here we are," his mother wrote to Cummie, "in a little bay surrounded by green mountains, on which sheep are grazing, and there are birds very like our own 'blackies' singing in the trees. If it were not for the groves of cocoanut palms, we might almost fancy ourselves in our own dear land. But the climate here is simply perfect. Of course it is hot, but there are always fresh breezes.... We have our principal meal at twelve o'clock, and spend the after part of the day on shore ... bathing, gathering shells, knitting, or reading. Our Japanese cook and steward just sets out the table with cold meats, fruit, and cake so that we can take our other meal at any time in the evening that suits us.

"Fanny and I are dressed like natives, in two garments. As we have to wade to and from the boat in landing and coming back, we discard stockings, and on the sands we usually go barefoot entirely. Louis wears only a shirt and trousers with the legs and arms rolled up as far as they will go, and he is always barefooted. You will therefore not be surprised to hear that we are all as red as lobsters. It is a strange irresponsible half savage life, and I sometimes wonder if we shall ever be able to return to civilized habits again.

South Sea houses

“The natives are very simple and kindly people. The Roman Catholic priests have persuaded them to give up their constant wars and the practice of cannibalism, though only within recent years....

“Louis has learned a good many words of the language, and with the help of signs can contrive to carry on a conversation, but I have stuck fast with two words: ‘*ka-oha*’ which means ‘How do you do?’ ‘thank you,’ and ‘good bye,’ and I am not quite sure how much else, and ‘*Mitai*,’ meaning good, nice, pretty, kind. I don’t expect to get beyond these, but it is wonderful how much one can express with them....

“The natives have got names for us all. Louis was at first ‘the old man,’ much to his distress; but now they call him ‘*Ona*’ meaning owner of the yacht, a name he greatly prefers to the first. Fanny is *Vahine*, or wife; I am the *old woman*, and Lloyd rejoices in the name of *Maté Karahi*, the young man with glass eyes (spectacles). Perhaps it is a compliment here to be called old, as it is in China, at any rate, one native told Louis that he himself was old, but his mother was not!...

“A native dance was got up for our benefit. None of the dancing-women appeared, but five men dressed in shirt and trousers, danced together with spirit and grace. The music was provided by a drum, made out of an old tin box. Many of the steps reminded me of a Highland reel, but were curiously mixed up with calisthenic, and even gymnastic exercises; the hands in particular were used very gracefully, and they often took off their hats and waved them to and fro. But they also climbed on each other’s shoulders, and did other strange things. After dancing for some time, they sang songs to us in a curious, low, weird kind of crooning. Altogether it was a strange sort of afternoon party!”

The Marquesas Islands belong to the French, and the commandant in charge was most cordial to Stevenson, inviting him to his house frequently during his stay in the islands. When at the expiration of six weeks it was time for the *Casco* to weigh anchor and the party sailed on to explore still farther, they left behind them many friends who regretted their departure. Here as elsewhere in the South Seas, Stevenson showed his sympathy and kindliness toward the island people regardless of who they were or their rank. White or half-caste priest, missionary, or trader, all were treated the same. No bribe, he said, would induce him to call the natives savages.

Mr. Johnstone, an English resident in the South Seas at the time of Stevenson's visit, says: "His inborn courtesy more than any of his other good traits, endeared him to his fellows in the Pacific ... in the hearts of our Island people he built a monument more lasting than stone or brass."

The recollection of the history of his own wild Scottish Islands, the people and conditions his grandfather found among them, helped him to understand these people and account for many of their actions. Though at opposite ends of the earth, many of their customs and legends corresponded. The dwellers in the Hebrides in the old days likewise lived in clans with their chief and struggled to retain their independence against an invading power.

Tahiti, one of the group of Society Islands, was their next stopping place. Before starting a new mate was shipped, who was more familiar with the course, which lay through the Dangerous Archipelago — a group of low, badly lighted islands.

The Society Islands are most beautiful, Tahiti probably the gem of them all, but on arriving Stevenson was in no condition to appreciate their loveliness. A cold contracted on the trip made him quite ill. The trip had proved very dangerous even with the aid of a pilot, and twice they gave themselves up for lost when they were becalmed and drifted in toward the shore. "The reefs were close in," wrote Stevenson, "with my eye! What a surf! The pilot thought we were gone and the captain had a boat cleared, when a lucky squall came to our rescue."

After landing his condition became so much worse his wife grew desperate and determined to find a comfortable spot for him. After much trouble a Chinaman with a team was secured, who agreed to drive the entire family to Tautira, the largest village, sixteen miles away over a road crossed by no less than twenty-one streams. On this uncertain venture they started, with the head of the family in a state of collapse, knowing nothing of the village they were going to or the living it would afford them.

None of them ever regretted the perseverance which led them on, however, for in all their wanderings in the South Seas before or after no place ever charmed them more, or were they received with greater hospitality than in Tautira.

The day after their arrival, Moe, an island princess and an ex-queen, visited them. When she found Stevenson ill she insisted he and his family be moved to her own house where they could have more comforts. The house at the time was occupied by Ori, a subchief, a subject and relative of the princess. But he and his family gladly turned out to make room for the visitors and lived in a tiny house near by.

“Ori is the very finest specimen of native we have seen yet,” wrote Mrs. Stevenson. “He is several inches over six feet, of perfect though almost gigantic proportions.”

As soon as her husband was strong enough to be about again he and Ori became great friends. Finally, according to an island custom, Stevenson was adopted into Ori’s clan and became his brother. This likewise meant exchanging names and Ori became Rui, the nearest possible approach to Louis since there is no L or S in the Tahitian language. Louis in turn became Teriitera (pronounced Ter*ee*terah), which was Ori’s Christian name, Ori standing merely for his clan title.

To show their gratitude for the hospitality shown them by Ori and the people of the village, Stevenson decided to give a public feast.

The feast day was set for Wednesday, and the previous Sunday a chief issued the invitations from the Farehau, a house resembling an enormous bird-cage in the centre of the village, from which all the news was read aloud to the people once a week.

A feast of such size necessitated much preparation.

“The chief, who was our guide in the matter,” wrote Mrs. Stevenson, “found four large fat hogs, which Louis bought, and four cases of ship’s biscuit were sent over from the Casco, which is lying at Papeete for repairs.... Our hogs were killed in the morning, washed in the sea, and roasted whole in a pit with hot stones. When done they were laid on their stomachs in neat open coffins of green basket work, each hog with his case of biscuits beside him. Early in the morning the entire population began bathing, a bath being the preliminary to everything. At about three o’clock — four was the hour set — there was a general movement toward our premises, so that I had to hurry Louis into his clothes, all white even to his shoes. Lloyd was also in white, but barefoot.... The chief, who speaks French very well, stood beside Louis to interpret for him. By the time we had taken our respective places on the veranda in front of our door, an immense crowd had assembled. They came in five detachments.... Each set of people came bending under the weight of bamboo poles laden with fruits, figs, fowls, etc. All were dressed in their gayest and many had wreaths of leaves or flowers on their heads. The prettiest sight of all was the children, who came marching two and two abreast, the bamboo poles lying lengthwise across their shoulders.

"When all the offerings had been piled in five great heaps upon the ground, Louis made his oration to the accompaniment of the squealing of pigs, the cackling of hens, and the roar of the surf.... A speech was made in return on behalf of the village.... Each speaker finished by coming forward with one of the smaller things in his hand, which he offered personally to Louis, and then shook hands with us all and retired. Among these smaller presents were many fish-hooks for large fishing, laboriously carved from mother-of-pearl shell. One man came with one egg in each hand saying 'carry these to Scotland with you, let them hatch into cocks, and their song shall remind you of Tautira.' The schoolmaster, with a leaf-basket of rose apples, made his speech in French."

While overhauling the *Casco* two or three days before they planned to leave Tautira, Captain Otis was shocked to find the whole upper half of the main masthead completely eaten out by dry-rot. This necessitated taking the schooner around to Papeete, on the other side of the island, for repairs. Under ordinary circumstances the setting of a new masthead need to have delayed them but a few days; in the South Seas, however, it was a different matter. Only after searching for days in Papeete was he able to find a man who knew anything of ship-carpentering, and when found he worked according to his own sweet will. So it was five weeks before the *Casco* was ready to return for her passengers, who in the meantime were in a state of anxiety as to her whereabouts.

During their enforced stay Ori treated the entire family like a brother indeed, doing everything in his power to make their visit pleasant.

At last, on Christmas Day, they were ready to depart. The entire population of Tautira came to the beach to bid them farewell, and as the *Casco* swung out of the harbor one of the French officials fired a salute of twenty-one guns with his army rifle and the schooner returned it with a heavy-tongued Winchester.

Tautira had grown to seem like a real home to all of them. To leave it with very little hope of ever returning to see such good friends as Princess Moe and Ori was a real grief, while they in their turn were quite heart-broken. Stevenson's friendship had brought something into their lives they had never had before.

Honolulu was the goal of the *Casco* now, and all eagerly looked forward to the letters waiting for them there — the first word from home since leaving San Francisco.

Bad weather attended the *Casco* all the way. They were delayed by a succession of hurricanes and calms until the supply of food ran very low and they were reduced to a diet of “salt-horse” and ship-biscuit.

The last forty-eight hours of their run was made in the very teeth of a furious gale when the captain took big risks by carrying full sail, with the hope of making port before their supply of food and water was entirely exhausted. In spite of the danger, Stevenson enjoyed this daring run hugely. Later, when he and Lloyd wrote “The Wrecker” together, this very episode figured in the story, Captain Otis under the name of Captain Nares performing a similar sail-carrying feat on the schooner *Norah Creina*.

Mrs. Strong, Stevenson’s stepdaughter, and her family were waiting in Honolulu and gave them a warm welcome. The travellers soon found themselves the centre of interest among Mrs. Strong’s large circle of friends and it was with difficulty Stevenson found time to finish the last chapters of “The Master of Ballantrae,” which he had been working on since leaving Saranac.

Honolulu, with its street-cars, shops, electric lights, and mixture of native and foreign population, seemed strangely crowded and modern after the scenes they had recently left; too modern by far to suit Stevenson, who preferred the unconventional wild life of the islands they had come from.

At the Royal Palace in Honolulu, Kalakaua, the last of the Hawaiian kings, still held court. He enjoyed R.L.S. and invited him often to the palace and told him the history and legends of many of the islands of the South Seas. It was from Kalakaua he first learned to know the troubled history of the Samoan Islands and of Apia, which was to be his future home.

The Island of Molokai, the leper colony, lay not far off. While in Honolulu he spent several days there, in the place where Father Damien had lately done his splendid work.

According to their original scheme they were to return home from Honolulu, but having come so far they were eager to see more. They had tasted the dangers and fascination of the life among the wild islands, each so different, and it had only whetted their appetites for what lay still beyond. The chances of coming so far again were slight; it seemed too good an opportunity to miss. So Stevenson wrote to the friends at home, whom he longed daily to see: “Yes — I own up — I am untrue to friendship and (what is less, but still considerable) to civilization. I am not coming home for another year.... But look here and judge me tenderly. I have had more fun and pleasure of my life these past months than ever before, and more health than any time in ten long years.... And this precious deep is filled with islands which we may still visit, and though the sea is a dreadful place, I like to be there, and like squalls (when they are over) and to draw near to a new island I can not say how much I like....

“Remember me as I was at home, and think of me sea-bathing and walking about, as jolly as a sand boy; you will own the temptation is strong; and as the scheme, bar fatal accidents, is bound to pay into the bargain, sooner or later, it seems it would be madness to come home now, with an imperfect book … and perhaps fall sick again by autumn.

“It is a singular thing that as I was packing up old papers ere I left Skerryvore, I came on the prophecies of a drunken Highland sibyl, when I was sixteen. She said I was to be very happy, — to visit America and *to be much upon the sea*.… I can not say why I like the sea … my poor grandfather it is from him I inherit the taste I fancy, and he was around many islands in his day; but I, please God, shall beat him at that before the recall is sounded.”

So the *Casco* was shipped back to San Francisco, Mrs. Stevenson, senior, returned to Scotland for a visit, and the trading schooner *Equator* was chartered for a trip among the Marshall, Gilbert, and Samoan Islands.

Just before leaving, the following letter came from Ori, which Stevenson says he would rather have received than written “Red Gauntlet” or the “Sixth Æneid.”

“I make you to know my great affection. At the hour when you left us, I was filled with tears; my wife Rui Telime, also, and all my household. When you embarked I felt great sorrow. It is for this that I went upon the road, and you looked from that ship, and I looked at you on the ship with great grief until you had raised the anchor and hoisted the sail. When the ship started I ran along the beach to see you still; and when you were in the open sea I cried out to you ‘Farewell Louis,’ and when I was coming back to my house I seemed to hear your voice crying, ‘Rui, farewell.’ Afterwards I watched the ship as long as I could until the night fell; and when it was dark I said to myself: ‘If I had wings I should fly to the ship to meet you,’… I wept then … telling myself continually, ‘Teriitera returns to his own country and leaves his dear Rui in grief.’… I will not forget you in my memory. Here is the thought: I desire to meet you again. It is my Teriitera makes the only riches I desire in this world. It is your eyes that I desire to see again. It must be that your body and my body shall eat together at one table, there is what would make my heart content. But now we are separated. May God be with you all. May His word and His mercy go with you, so that you may be well and we also, according to the words of Paul.

“ORI A ORI, that is to say, RUI.”

“All told,” said Stevenson, “if my books have enabled or helped me to make this voyage, to know Rui, and to have received such a letter, they have … not been writ in vain.”

CHAPTER IX

VAILIMA

"We thank Thee for this place in which we dwell; for the love that unites us; for the peace accorded us this day; for the hope with which we expect the morrow; for the health, the work, the food, and the bright skies that make our lives delightful, for the friends in all parts of the earth, and our friendly helpers in this foreign isle.... Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind. Spare to us our friends, soften to us our enemies. Bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavors. If it may not, give us strength to encounter that which is to come, that we may be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath, and in all changes of fortune, and down to the gates of death, loyal and loving one to another." R.L.S.

— *Prayer used with the household at Vailima.*

On the 7th of December, when the family landed at Upolu, the chief of the Samoas or Samoan Islands, they little dreamed it was to be their home for the next four years and the last the master of the house was ever to know.

It had been frequently borne upon Stevenson, however, while cruising among the Marshall and Gilbert Islands during the past months, that a home in either England or Scotland again was a vain dream for him.

"I do not ask for health," he said, "but I will go anywhere and live in any place where I can enjoy the existence of a human being." He seldom complained and it is rare to find even the brave sort of cry he made against fate to a friend at this time.

"For fourteen years I have not had a day's real health. I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary, and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed, and written out of it, written in hemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness, and for so long, it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove. I am better now, have been, rightly speaking, since I first came to the Pacific; and still few are the days when I am not in some physical distress. And the battle goes on — ill or well, is a trifle; so as it goes. I was made for a contest, and the Powers have so willed that my battlefield shall be this dingy inglorious one of the bed and the physics bottle."

Here in the tropics he might hope to live and work years longer — a return to a cold climate, he now knew, would be fatal.

Why not turn traders? Often on starry nights, drifting among the low islands, he and Lloyd and the captain of the *Equator* had lain out on deck and planned what a lark it would be to buy a schooner, cruise among the islands, and trade with the natives. They would write stories, too, about these strange island dwellers with their many weird superstitions and of the white men who drifted from all corners of the globe to make their home there.

Already Captain Reid had told them many such tales which Stevenson wove into stories. The "Beach of Falesá" and the "Isle of Voices" are probably the two most famous, while "the strange story of the loss of the brigantine Wandering Minstrel and what men and ships do in that wild and beautiful world beyond the American continent" formed a plot for the story called "The Wrecker," which he and Lloyd Osbourne wrote together later on.

Samoa was a place he was eager to visit. King Kalakaua at Honolulu had already told him much of its troubled history. The group of thirteen islands lay about four thousand two hundred miles southwest of San Francisco. At that time they were under the control of England, Germany, and the United States according to a treaty entered into in 1889. These countries appointed a chief justice, a president of the municipal council, three consuls, and three land commissioners. A native king was likewise recognized on each island.

This triple control proved most unsatisfactory and for years past there had been constant friction among the officials and warlike outbreaks among the natives.

These complications interested Stevenson. His first idea had been to stop there but a short time. He now found he wanted to remain in Samoa long enough to write its history.

The Samoans are true Polynesians; a strong and handsome race whose reputation is high among all the people of the Pacific. The large majority have become Christians, but in spite of the influence of the missionaries and the foreign powers who control them, they retain many of their old customs and habits. They are naturally peace-loving in spite of their many wars. Fighting does not appeal to them for its own sake, and they enjoy a good family life, treating their women with great respect and lavishing affection upon their children.

Stevenson wanted those at home to know these people better; his sympathy, which was ever with the weaker side, was instantly aroused in behalf of the natives, and he wanted to tell their side of the story.

If they were to make a home anywhere in the South Seas there could be no better spot than Apia, the principal port and capital of these islands, as it had a good mail service, a most important feature to a writer. The monthly mail-steamers between San Francisco and Sydney, as well as other Australian mail-boats, stopped there.

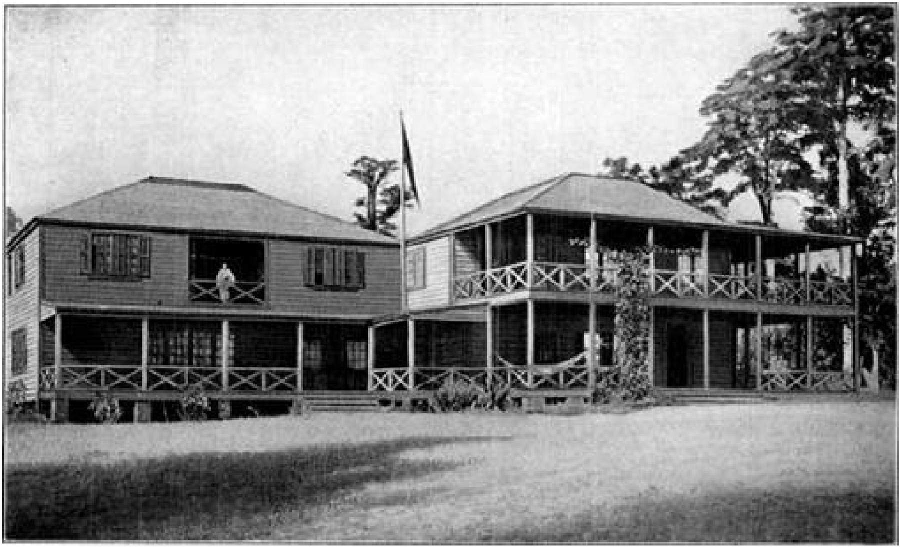
So he purchased four hundred acres on the hills three miles from Apia and preparations were immediately made for clearing the ground and building a house. Lloyd Osbourne left for England to bring back the household treasures from Skerryvore, to make a real home, and Stevenson and his wife lived gypsy fashion meanwhile in a four-room wooden house.

The new home was named Vailima, which is Samoan for "Five Waters," there being five streams running through the property.

The house was built of wood, painted dark green with a red roof. When finished its chief feature was the great hall within, sixty feet long, lined and ceiled with California redwood. Here among the home treasures — his own portrait, war dresses, corselets, fans, and mats presented to him by island kings — the marble bust of grandfather Stevenson smiled down with approval on many a motley gathering. Louis often wondered if they reminded the old gentleman of some of the strange people he had entertained years ago in Baxter Place.

All about was dense, tropical undergrowth, only paths led to the house, and these must continually be cut out. All carrying was done by two big New Zealand pack-horses.

A large garden was planted — Mrs. Stevenson's special hobby. Cocoanuts, oranges, guavas, and mangoes already grew on the estate. The ground was very fertile, and kava, the root of which is used for the Samoan national drink, pineapples, sweet potatoes, and eggplants were soon flourishing among other things. Limes were so plentiful that they formed the hedge about the place; citrons were so common that they rotted on the trees.



The house at Vailima

All this ground-breaking, house-building, and gardening were new to Stevenson, and he revelled in them to the neglect of his writing.

"This is a hard and interesting and beautiful life we lead now," he wrote to Sidney Colvin. "Our place is in a deep cleft of Væa Mountain; some six hundred feet above the sea, embowered in forest, which is our strangling enemy, and which we combat with axes and dollars. I am crazy over outdoor work, and had at last to confine myself to the house, or literature must have gone by the board. *Nothing* is so interesting as weeding, clearing, and pathmaking; the oversight of laborers becomes a disease; it is quite an effort not to drop into the farmer; and it does make you feel so well. To come down covered with mud and drenched with sweat and rain after some hours in the bush, change, rub down, and take a chair in the verandah, is to taste a quiet conscience."

Before his arrival in Apia, Stevenson's tale of "The Bottle Imp" had been translated into Samoan by the missionaries. When the natives discovered he was its author they immediately named him Tusitala, The Teller-of-Tales. He still owned the bottle, they said; it was that gave him the wealth to cruise about in a great boat and build a fine house. The family often wondered why native visitors were curious to see the inside of the great safe in the hall at Vailima until they found that it was the belief among the islanders that the safe was the bottle's hiding-place.

Mrs. Stevenson, senior, returned with Lloyd from England, and later Mrs. Strong and her small son, Austin, came from Honolulu to make the family complete.

The servants were all natives, "boys" as they called themselves. There were usually about half a dozen about the house, with a boy for the garden and to look after the cows and pigs, besides a band of outside laborers, varying from half a dozen to thirty, under Lloyd's direction.

Sosimo was Stevenson's particular boy. He waited upon him hand and foot, looked after his clothes and his pony "Jack," and was devoted in every way. His loyalty to his master lasted to the end of his own life.

The servants were governed on something very like the clan system. A Vailima tartan was adopted for special occasions and Stevenson encouraged them to think of the household as a family, to take interest and pride in all its doings.

On Sunday evenings the entire household was assembled. A chapter of the Samoan Bible was read and Samoan hymns sung. Then a prayer in English written by Stevenson was read, concluding with the Lord's Prayer in Samoan.

If the master had cause to be displeased with any one of them, they were all summoned and reprimanded or fined.

His stories delighted them. They were never tired of looking at the picture of Skerryvore Light and hearing about the rugged coasts of Tusitala's native island and of his father and grandfather who built lighthouses. The latter impressed them greatly, since building of any kind in Samoa is considered a fine art. The deeds of General Gordon, the Indian Mutiny, and Lucknow were likewise favorite tales when Tusitala showed them a treasure he prized highly: a message written by General Gordon from Khartoum. It was in Arabic on a small piece of cigarette-paper which might be easily swallowed should the messenger be captured. Stevenson always believed it to be the last message sent before the great general's death.

They came to him for everything and he was ever ready with help and advice. They were quick to appreciate his justice and kindliness, and to a man were devoted to him. "Once Tusitala's friend, always Tusitala's friend," they said.

With his customary energy he threw himself heart and soul for a time into the political troubles of the island, making himself the champion of the natives' cause. He wrote a series of letters to the papers at home stating his idea of the injustice shown the Samoans under their present government. It was a most delicate situation, and at times led to very strained relations between himself and the officials in Apia.

Those at home wondered why Stevenson tampered with island politics at all. Why did he not simply leave them to the powers in charge?

His answer was, he had made Samoa his home, the Samoans were his people, and he could not fail to resent any injustice shown them.

Lloyd Osbourne says: "He was consulted on every imaginable subject.... Government chiefs and rebels consulted him with regard to policy; political letters were brought to him to read and criticise.... Parties would come to hear the latest news of the proposed disarming of the country, or to arrange a private audience with one of the officials; and poor war-worn chieftains, whose only anxiety was to join the winning side and who wished to consult with Tusitala as to which that might be. Mr. Stevenson would sigh sometimes as he saw these stately folks crossing the lawn in single file, their attendants following behind with presents and baskets, but he never failed to meet or hear them."

He aided one party of chieftains in prison, and to show their gratitude on regaining their freedom they cleared and dug a splendid road leading to his house. All the labor and expense they bore themselves, which amounted to no small matter. Ala Loto Alofa, they called it, the Road of the Loving Hearts.

Warlike outbreaks were not infrequent near Vailima. The woods were often full of scouting parties and the roll of drums could be heard. One day as Stevenson and Mrs. Strong were writing together they were interrupted by a war party crossing the lawn. Mrs. Strong asked: “Louis, have we a pistol or gun in the house that will shoot?” and he answered cheerfully without stopping his work: “No, but we have friends on both sides.”

With all their political differences he and the officials retained friendly feeling. He paid calls on them at Apia and attended various town gatherings, while they were often entertained at Vailima.

Always hospitable, it was a delight to him now to keep open house. Not only the chief justice, the consuls, the doctor, the missionaries, and the traders were in the habit of dropping in to Vailima, but from every ship that docked at Apia came some visitor who was anxious to meet Stevenson and his family; from the war-ships came the officers and sailors.

The bluejackets were always particularly welcome. Mrs. Strong tells of a party who came from H.M.S. *Wallaroo* on one Thanksgiving Day, when “the kitchen department was in great excitement over that foreign bird the turkey” and all was confusion. “But Louis kept his sailors on all the afternoon. He took them over the house and showed them … the curiosities from the islands, the big picture of Skerryvore lighthouse,… the treasured bit of Gordon’s handwriting from Khartoum, in Arabic letters on a cigarette paper,… and the library, where the Scotchmen gathered about an old edition of Burns, with a portrait. Louis gave a volume of Underwoods (Stevenson’s poems) with an inscription to Grant, the one who hailed from Edinburgh, and the man carried it carefully wrapped in his handkerchief. They went away waving their hats and keeping step.”

A croquet-ground and tennis-court were laid out, and Vailima was the scene of balls, dinners, and parties of all kinds. No birthday or holiday, English, American, or Samoan, was allowed to pass unnoticed, and the natives were included in these festivities whenever possible.

The first Christmas at Vailima they had a party for the children who had never before seen a Christmas tree.

Tusitala’s birthday was always a special event to his island friends. The feast was served in native style; all seated about on the floor. Rather large gatherings they must have been, to judge from Mrs. Strong’s account. “We had sixteen pigs roasted whole underground, three enormous fish (small whales, Lloyd called them), four hundred pounds of beef, ditto of pork, 200 heads of taro, great bunches of bananas, native delicacies done up in bundles of *ti* leaves, 800 pineapples, many weighing fifteen pounds, all from Lloyd’s patch. Among the presents for Tusitala, besides flowers and wreaths, were fans, native baskets … and cocoanut cups beautifully polished.”

A feast of chiefs

On these occasions the hosts were often entertained with dances and songs. All the Samoans are great singers. They composed songs about everything and everybody, so that one could judge the standing a person held by the songs that were sung about him.

Those sung at Vailima parties were usually written by one of the house "boys" and "they were danced and acted with great spirit.... Sometimes every member of the family would be represented ... but the central figure, the heart of the song was always Tusitala."

It is a marvel with the many demands made upon him, his varied interests, and frequent visits to neighboring islands, Stevenson still found time to write stories, poems, prayers, notes of the South Sea Islands, Samoan history, and many, many letters. "It is a life that suits me but absorbs me like an ocean," he said. Through it all his health continued fairly good. He was able to take long tramps and rides that would have been physically impossible two years before.

Mrs. Strong acted as his secretary and the majority of his writing now was done by dictation. "He generally makes notes early in the morning," she wrote, "which he elaborates as he reads them aloud ... he never falters for a word, but gives me the sentence with capital letters and all the stops as clearly and steadily as though he were reading from an unseen book."

The two South Sea books occupied much of his time, but it was of his own land and people so far away that he had so little hope of ever seeing again, he loved best to write.

"It is a singular thing," he wrote to James Barrie, "that I should live here in the South Seas, and yet my imagination so continually inhabit the cold old huddle of grey hills from which we came."

He finished and sent away further adventures of David Balfour and Alan Breck under the title of "David Balfour." "St. Ives" followed with its scenes laid around Edinburgh Castle, Swanston Cottage, and the Pentland Hills. In his last book, "Weir of Hermiston," the one he left unfinished, broken off in the midst of a word, he roamed the streets of Auld Reekie again with a hero very like what he had once been himself, who was likewise an enthusiastic member of the "Spec."

Something which pleased him greatly at this time was the news from his friend Charles Baxter in Edinburgh that a complete edition of his works was to be published in the best possible form with a limited number of copies, to be called the "Edinburgh Edition."

"I suppose it was your idea to give it that name," Stevenson wrote, thanking him. "No other would have affected me in the same manner.... Could a more presumptuous idea have occurred to us in those days when we used to search our pockets for coppers, too often in vain, and combine forces to produce the threepence necessary for two glasses of beer, than that I should be strong and well at the age of forty three in the island of Upolu, and that you should be at home bringing out the 'Edinburgh Edition'?"

In spite of the many interests in his present life, his love for the people and the country, the yearning for the friends far away grew daily.

How he longed to have them see Vailima with all its beauties! To talk over old times again. Such visits were continually planned, but they were never realised.

He seldom complained and those who were with him every day rarely found him low in spirits. It was into the letters to his old intimates that these longings crept when it swept over him that, though a voluntary exile in a pleasant place, he was an exile none the less, with the fate of him who wrote:

"There's a track across the deep,

And a path across the sea,

But for me there's nae return
To my ain countree."

"When the smell of the good wet earth" came to him it came "with a kind of Highland tone." A tropic shower found him in a "frame of mind and body that belonged to Scotland." And when he turned to write the chronicle of his grandfather's life and work, the beautiful words in which he described the old gentleman's farewell to "Sumbraugh and the wild crags of Skye" meant likewise his own farewell to those shores. No more was he to "see the topaz and ruby interchange on the summit of Bell Rock," no more to see "the castle on its hills," or the venerable city which he always thought of as his home.

"Like Leyden," he wrote, "I have gone into a far land to die, not stayed like Burns to mingle in the end with Scottish soil.”

It was drawing near the close of their fourth year in Apia. On November 13 his birthday had been celebrated with the usual festivities, and on Thanksgiving Day he had given a dinner to his American friends — and then the end of all his wanderings and working came suddenly.

“He wrote hard all that morning of the last day,” says Lloyd Osbourne, “on his half-finished book Hermiston.... In the afternoon the mail fell to be answered; not business correspondence — but replies to the long, kindly letters of distant friends, received but two days since, and still bright in memory.

“At sunset he came downstairs.... He was helping his wife on the verandah, and gaily talking, when suddenly he put both hands to his head, and cried out, ‘What’s that?’ Then he asked quickly, ‘Do I look strange?’ Even as he did so he fell on his knees beside her. He was helped into the great hall, between his wife and body-servant, Sosimo, losing consciousness instantly, as he lay back in the arm-chair that had once been his grandfather’s. Little time was lost in bringing the doctors, Anderson of the man-of-war, and his friend Dr. Funk. They looked at him and shook their heads ... he had passed the bounds of human skill....

“The dozen and more Samoans that formed part of the clan of which he was chief, sat in a wide semicircle on the floor, their reverent, troubled, sorrow-stricken faces all fixed upon their dying master. Some knelt on one knee to be instantly ready for any command that might be laid upon them....

“He died at ten minutes past eight on Monday evening the 3rd of December, in the forty-fifth year of his age.

“The great Union Jack that flew over the house was hauled down and laid over the body, fit shroud for a loyal Scotsman. He lay in the hall which was ever his pride, where he had passed the gayest and most delightful hours of his life.... In it were the treasures of his far off Scottish home.... The Samoans passed in procession beside his bed, kneeling and kissing his hand, each in turn, before taking their places for the long night watch beside him. No entreaty could induce them to retire, to rest themselves for the painful arduous duties of the morrow. It would show little love for Tusitala, they said, if they did not spend their last night beside him. Mournful and silent, they sat in deep dejection, poor, simple, loyal folks, fulfilling the duty that they owed their chief.

“A messenger was dispatched to a few chiefs connected with the family, to announce the tidings and bid them assemble their men on the morrow for the work there was to do....

“The morning of the 4th of December broke cool and sunny.... A meeting of chiefs was held to apportion the work and divide the men into parties. Forty were sent with knives and axes to cut a path up the steep face of the mountain, and the writer himself led another party to the summit — men chosen from the immediate family — to dig the grave on the spot where it was Robert Louis Stevenson’s wish that he should lie.... Nothing more picturesque can be imagined than the ledge that forms the summit to Væa, a place no wider than a room, and flat as a table. On either side the land descends precipitously; in front lies the vast ocean and surf-swept reefs; to the right and left green mountains rise....

“All the morning Samoans were arriving with flowers, few of these were white, for they have not learned our foreign custom, and the room glowed with the many colours. There were no strangers on that day, no acquaintances; those only were called who would deeply feel the loss. At one o’clock a body of powerful Samoans bore away the coffin, hid beneath a tattered red ensign that had flown above his vessel in many a remote corner of the South Seas. A path so steep and rugged taxed their strength to the utmost, for not only was the journey difficult in itself, but extreme care was requisite to carry the coffin shoulder high....

“No stranger hand touched him.... Those who loved him carried him to his last home; even the coffin was the work of an old friend. The grave was dug by his own men.”

Tusitala had left them, and his friends in the South Seas had lost a faithful friend and companion, a wise and just master.

His family and friends the world over had lost not only these but far more. His life had been a chivalrous one with all the best that chivalry stands for, “loyalty, honesty, generosity, courage, courtesy, and self-devotion; to impute no unworthy motives and to bear no grudges; to bear misfortune with cheerfulness and without a murmur; to strike hard for the right and to take no mean advantage; to be gentle to women and kind to all that are weak; to be rigorous with oneself and very lenient to others — these ... were the traits that distinguished Stevenson.”

“They do not make life easy as he frequently found.”

His resting-place on the crest of Væa Mountain is covered by a tomb of gray stone. On one side is inscribed in English the verses he had written for his own requiem:

ROBERT LOUIS
STEVENSON
1850
1894

“Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie,
Glad did I live and gladly die,

And I laid me down with a will.

“This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.”

The tomb of Stevenson on Væa Mountain

On the other side, written in Samoan and surrounded by carvings of thistles, his native flowers, and the hibiscus flowers, emblem of the South, are the words from the Bible:

“Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people; and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried.”

The Samoan chiefs have forbidden the use of firearms upon Væa hillside, “that the birds may live there undisturbed, and raise above his grave the songs he loved so well.”

“Tusitala, the lover of children, the teller of tales,
Giver of counsels and dreams, a wonder, a world’s delight,
Looks o’er the labours of men in the plain and the hills; and the sails
Pass and repass on the sea that he loved, in the day and the night.”

— ANDREW LANG.

THE LIFE OF MRS. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON By Nellie Van De Grift Sanchez

This biography of Stevenson’s wife was first published in 1920.

Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson

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PREFACE

When I first set out to tell the life story of Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson, I received the following letter from her old friend Mr. Bruce Porter:

"Once when I urged your sister to set down the incidents of her life she listened, pondered, and then dismissed the suggestion as impossible, as her life had been like a dazed rush on a railroad express, and she despaired of recovering the incidental memories. The years with Stevenson have of course been adequately told, but the earlier period — Indianapolis and California — had a romance as stirring, even if sharpened by the American glare. This sharpness has already, for all of us, begun to fade, to take on the glamour of time and distance, and I cannot think of a better literary service than to make the fullest possible record now, before it utterly fades away."

It was not only the difficulty of recalling events that caused her to resist all urgings to undertake this task, but a certain shy reluctance in speaking of herself that was characteristic of her. It has, therefore, fallen to me to collect the widely scattered material from various parts of the world and weave it into a coherent whole as best I may, but my regret will never cease that she did not herself tell her own story.

It would take a more competent pen than mine to do her justice; but whoever reads this book from cover to cover will surely agree that no woman ever had a life of more varied experiences nor went through them all with a stauncher courage.

It is right that I should acknowledge here my profound obligation to the kind friends who have generously placed their personal recollections at my disposal. These are more definitely referred to in the body of the book. Aside from these personal contributions, the main sources of material have been as follows:

Ancestral genealogies, including The Descendants of Jöran Kyn, by Doctor Gregory B. Keen, secretary of the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

Data concerning the genealogy of the Keen and Van de Grift families collected by Frederic Thomas, of New York, nephew of Mrs. Stevenson.

Notes covering the life of Mrs. Stevenson up to the age of sixteen years, as dictated by herself.

A collection of her own letters to friends and relatives.

Letters to Mrs. Stevenson from friends.

Extracts from various books and magazines, including The Letters of Mrs. M. I. Stevenson (Methuen and Company, London); The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson, by Graham Balfour; The Letters of Robert

Louis Stevenson, edited by Sidney Colvin; Vailima Memories, by Lloyd Osbourne and Isobel Osbourne Strong, now Mrs. Salisbury Field; The Cruise of the Janet Nichol, by Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson; McClure's, Scribner's, and the Century magazines. Acknowledgment is due the publishers of the above books and periodicals for their courteous permissions.

A diary kept by Mrs. Stevenson of her life in Samoa, for which I am indebted to the considerate kindness of Miss Gladys Peacock, an English lady, into whose hands the diary fell by accident.

My own personal recollections.

Above all, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Mrs. Stevenson's daughter, Isobel Field, without whose unflagging zeal in forwarding the work it could scarcely have been carried to a successful conclusion, and to my son, Louis A. Sanchez, for valuable assistance in the actual writing of the book.

N. V. S.

Berkeley, California, January, 1919.

THE LIFE OF MRS. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

CHAPTER I

ANCESTORS

To arrive at a full understanding of the complex and unusual character of Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson, which perhaps played as large a part as her beauty and intellectual charm in drawing to her the affections of one of the greatest romance writers of our day, one must go back and seek out all the uncommon influences that combined to produce it — a long line of sturdy ancestors, running back to the first adventurers who left their sheltered European homes and sailed across the sea to try their fortunes in a wild, unknown land; her childhood days spent among the hardy surroundings of pioneer Indiana, with its hints of a past tropical age and its faint breath of Indian reminiscence; the early breaking of her own family ties and her fearless adventuring by way of the Isthmus of Panama to the distant land of gold, and her brave struggle against adverse circumstances in the mining camps of Nevada. All these prenatal influences and personal experiences, so foreign to the protected lives of the women of Stevenson's own race, threw about her an atmosphere of thrilling New World romance that appealed with irresistible force to the man who was himself Romance personified.

Fanny Stevenson was a lineal descendant of two of the oldest families in the United States, her first ancestors landing in this country in the early part of the seventeenth century. In 1642 Jöran Kyn, called "The Snow White," reached America in the ship Fama as a member of the life-guard of John Printz, governor of the Swedish colony established in the New World by King Gustavus Adolphus. He took up a large tract of land and was living in peace and comfort on the Delaware River when William Penn landed in America. He was the progenitor of eleven generations of descendants born on American soil. His memory is embalmed in an old document still extant as "a man who never irritated even a child."

In the list of his descendants one Matthias stands out as "a tall handsome man, with a very melodious voice which could be intelligibly heard at times across the Delaware."

John Keen, about 83 years of age, maternal great-grandfather of Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson.

A later descendant, John Keen, born in 1747, fought and shed his blood in the war of American Independence, having been wounded in the battle of Princeton while in the act of delivering a message to General Washington. It was he who married Mildred Cook, daughter of James Cook, an English sea-captain who commanded the London Packet, plying between London and New York. Family tradition has it that he was a near relative of Captain Cook of South Sea fame. When Fanny Stevenson went a-sailing in the South Seas, following in the track of the great explorer, she boldly claimed this kinship, and, much to her delight, was immediately christened Tappeni Too-too, which was as near as the natives could come to Captain Cook's name.

We have a charming old-fashioned silhouette portrait in our family of a lovely young creature with a dainty profile and curls gathered in a knot. It is "sweet Kitty Weaver," who married John Cook Keen, son of the Revolutionary hero, and became the grandmother of Fanny Stevenson. Little Fanny, when on a visit to Philadelphia in her childhood days, was shown a pair of red satin slippers worn by this lady, and was no doubt given a lecture on the folly of vanity, for it was by walking over the snow to her carriage in the little red slippers that sweet Kitty Weaver caught the cold which caused her death.

Our mother, Esther Thomas Keen, one of John and Kitty Keen's six children, was born in Philadelphia, December 3, 1811. She was described by one who knew her in her youth as "a little beauty of the dark vivid type, with perfectly regular features, black startled eyes, and quantities of red-brown curls just the colour of a cherry wood sideboard that stood in her house." She was a tiny creature, under five feet in height, and never in her life weighed more than ninety pounds; but in spite of that she was exceedingly strong, swift in her movements, straight as an arrow to the end of her days, and always went leaping up the stairs, even when she was over eighty. Fear was absolutely unknown to her. She once caught a mad dog and held its mouth shut with her hands, protecting her children till help came. She was resourceful in emergency, whether it was sickness or accident, and never lost her presence of mind. She had a tender sympathy for animals and all weak, suffering, and young creatures, and it could be truthfully said of her, as of Jöran Kyn, her ancestor, that she "never irritated even a child." Her daughter Fanny said of her: "I never heard my mother speak an angry word, no matter what the provocation, and she was the mother of seven children. No matter what the offense might be she always found an excuse." In this she was like the old Scotch woman who, when told she would find something to praise even in the devil, said: "Weel, there's nae denyin' he's a verra indoostrious body."

It was from our little mother that my sister Fanny inherited her vivid dark beauty, her reticence, her fortitude in suffering, her fearlessness in the presence of danger, and her unfailing resourcefulness.

Jacob Leendertsen Van de Grift, the first paternal ancestor of whom we have any record, settled in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, towards the close of the seventeenth century. The graves of several of his descendants are still to be seen in the fine old cemetery at Andalusia, and upon the tombstone of one of them is this epitaph:

"Farewell my friends and wife so dear,
I am not dead but sleeping here.
My debts are paid, my grave you see."

This name has descended in an unbroken line from Jacob Leendertsen Van de Grift, of New Amsterdam, through eleven generations, to the brother of Fanny Stevenson, Jacob Van de Grift, of Riverside, California.

John Miller, a paternal great-grandfather of ours, was also Dutch. The family account of him is that he fought at Brandywine, crossed the Delaware with Washington, was wounded at the battle of Trenton, and that when he died, at the age of eighty-four years, the city of Philadelphia paid him the tribute of burial with military honours.

Miller married twice, and it was Elizabeth, a daughter by his second wife, who married a Jacob Van de Grift.

Her son, Jacob Van de Grift, was born in Philadelphia in 1816. Upon the early death of her first husband she married again, presenting to her children the cruel stepfather of fiction. Indeed, the story of our father's childhood and youth and the adventures of his brothers and sisters reads more like melodrama than sober fact. One brother, Harry, wandering disconsolate in the market-place, was carried off by a kind and wealthy Kentuckian, who took a fancy to the handsome boy and brought him up as his own son. Matilda, the beauty of the family, seeing a peaceful Quaker couple sitting by a window, was so struck by the contrast between their gentle lives and her own that she went into the house and asked to be allowed to stay with them. The kind-hearted people were so touched by her distress and beauty that they adopted her as their own. Little Jacob, encouraged by the success of his brother and sister, ran away on his own account, but fell into evil hands, and was beaten and ill-used until rescued by his beautiful sister Matilda. Fortunately for Jacob, he found favour in the sight of Grandfather Miller, who educated him, dressed him well, and gave him a good allowance. At this time there was an outbreak of small riots in Philadelphia, caused by roughs attacking the Quakers. The "shadbellies," as they were derisively called, did not fight back, which made the sport all the more alluring to the cowardly rioters. Young Van de Grift, who was an excellent amateur boxer, joined in these frays with enthusiasm in defense of the

Quakers. It was not only his fine American spirit of fair play that urged him into these fights, but he felt a deep gratitude to the Quakers all his life on account of his sister Matilda. Strangely enough, Grandfather Miller disapproved of young Van de Grift's conduct. He scolded and fumed, and when, early one morning, his grandson was found on his door-step beaten black and blue, the unreasonable old man, utterly losing sight of the chivalric cause, sent the troublesome lad away — to the farthest place, in fact, that he could reach. This place turned out to be the frontier backwoods town of Indianapolis, Indiana.

Here Jacob's attention was soon attracted by a pretty young woman, a tiny, dainty creature named Esther Keen (our mother, whom I have already described), who was on a visit to her sister. The records show that they were married in Philadelphia in 1837.

Jacob Van de Grift, about 56 years of age, father of Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson.

Like many another irresponsible young man, Jacob Van de Grift married became quite a different person. Returning to Indianapolis, he built a house for himself with the aid of friends, and, launching out into the lumber business, soon became one of the prosperous and solid citizens of the place. His house was on the “Circle,” next door to Henry Ward Beecher’s church. This was Mr. Beecher’s first pastorate, and between him and his neighbour a warm friendship sprang up. In after years, when Beecher had become a national figure and scandal attacked his name, the friend of his youth, Jacob Van de Grift, clung loyally to his faith in his old pastor and firmly refused to believe any of the charges against him.

The little house on the Circle was made into a pleasant home partly by furniture sent by Jacob’s mother from Philadelphia, partly by articles made by himself, for he had served a short apprenticeship at cabinet-making while living in his grandfather’s house. Among other pieces of furniture made by him was the cradle in which Fanny Van de Grift was rocked. As long as she lived she never forgot just how this cradle looked.

Jacob Van de Grift, father of Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson, was a fine-looking man, broad-shouldered and deep-chested, slightly above medium height, blue-eyed, black-haired, and with the regular features and rosy complexion of his Dutch ancestors. One particularly noticed the extraordinarily keen expression of his eyes, which seemed to pin you to the wall when he looked at you. This penetrating glance was inherited by his daughter Fanny, and was often remarked upon by those who met her. He made money easily but spent it royally, and, in consequence, died comparatively poor. He had a hasty temper but a generous heart, and while his hand was always open to the poor and unhappy, it was a closed fist ready to strike straight from the shoulder to resent an insult or defend the oppressed. Like his ancestor of the Andalusia cemetery, he could not endure to owe any man a debt. It was from our father that my sister Fanny inherited her broad and tolerant outlook on life, her hatred of injustice and cruelty, her punctiliousness in money matters, and her steadfast loyalty to friends.

CHAPTER II

EARLY DAYS IN INDIANA

When Jacob Van de Grift arrived in Indianapolis in 1836 the first rawness of frontier life had passed away, and many of the comforts of civilization had made their way out from the East or up from New Orleans. When he married Esther Keen he took her to live in the little red house, which, as I have already said, he had built next door to Henry Ward Beecher's church, opposite the Governor's Circle. Seven children in all were granted to them, of whom the eldest, a daughter, was born on March 10, 1840, in this same little red house on the Circle. When the infant was two years old she and her mother were taken into the Second Presbyterian Church, and were baptized by Henry Ward Beecher in the White River, in the presence of a concourse of several thousand spectators. The record of this noteworthy occasion is still preserved in the church at Indianapolis.

The little girl was named Frances Matilda, but when she grew older the second name was finally dropped. To her family and friends she was known as "Fanny."

The main source, in fact almost the only one, from which I have been able to draw a description of the childhood of Fanny Stevenson is an article on early reminiscences written by my sister herself, which was found among her papers after her death. As she was always her own worst critic, she has dwelt on mischievous childish escapades and has said little of the sweetness and charm and warm generosity that even then drew all hearts to her. From this article, called A Backwoods Childhood, I quote the following extracts for the sake of the vivid picture they give of those Indiana days:

"Our life in the backwoods was simple and natural; we had few luxuries, but we had few cares. In our kitchen gardens potatoes, cabbages, onions, tomatoes, Indian corn, and numerous other vegetables grew most luxuriantly; and of fruits we had great abundance. We lived a natural life and were content. The loom and the spinning-wheel, though they had by this time largely disappeared from the towns, still had a place in every farmhouse. We raised our own food and made our own clothing, often of the linsey-woolsey woven by the women on their home-made looms. We breakfasted by the light of a tin lamp fed with lard, four o'clock being a not unusual hour, dined at noon, supped at five, and went to bed with the chickens. Our carpets were made of our old cast-off garments torn into strips, the strips then sewn together at the ends and woven into carpet breadths by a neighbor, who took her pay in kind. Wheat broken and steeped in water gave a fine white starch fit for cooking as well as laundry work. We tapped the maple tree for sugar, and drank our sassafras tea with relish. The virgin forest furnished us with a variety of nuts and berries and wild fruits, to say nothing of more beautiful wild flowers than I have seen in any other part of the world, and, laid up in the trunks of hollow trees, were rich stores of wild honey.

"Except for ague we had little sickness, and for ordinary ailments healing herbs waited everywhere for seeing eyes. These were calamus, bloodroot, snakeroot, slippery elm, tansy, and scores that I do not remember the names of. There was sumach for tanning and butternut for dyeing; hickory wood for our fires and hard black walnut for our house-building and fences. Everything that we needed for comfort or health was within reach of our hands. Nor in this wholesome simple life were the arts forgotten. Among us lived a poetess who is quoted wherever English is spoken. Theatricals were cultivated, and my father belonged to a Thespian society. We had good painters, too, and at this moment there hangs before me my father's portrait at the age of twenty, done by Cox of Indianapolis, which has been praised and admired by both French and English artists of reputation.

"When we made maple sugar there were the great fires built out-of-doors with logs that needed the strength of two men to carry; the bubbling cauldrons, and the gay company of neighbors come to help; the camp where the work went on all night to the sound of laughter and song.

"And the woods, traversed by cool streams, where wild vines clambering from tree to tree made bowers fit for any fairy queen — what a place of enchantment for a child! There were may apples to be gathered and buried to ripen, and as you turned up the earth there was always the chance that you might find a flint arrowhead.

"Then, too, there were shell barks, hickory nuts, walnuts, and butternuts to be gathered, husked and dried, an operation which produced every fall a sudden eruption of the society of the 'Black Hand' among the boys and girls. Haw apples, elderberries, wild gooseberries, blackberries, and raspberries provided variety of refreshment. Or you might, as I often did, gather the wild grapes from over your head, press them in your hands, catch the juice in the neck of a dried calabash, and toss off the blood-red wine. With my romantic notions, imbibed from my reading, I always called it the blood-red wine, though it was in reality a rather muddy looking gray-colored liquid with the musky flavor peculiar to wild grapes. This wild dissipation I felt compelled to abandon after I joined a temperance society and wore a tinsel star on my breast.

"Through the little hamlet where I was born ran, like a great artery, the National Road. Starting in the far East, it crossed the continent, looked in on us rustics, and finally lost itself in the wilds of Illinois. Though we lay on the banks of a romantic river, and a canal, a branch of the Erie, languidly crawled beside us, breathing fever and ague as it passed, the Road was our only real means of communication with the outside world. The river, though of a good breadth, had too many shoals and rapids to be navigable; and though now and then boats crept along by the towpath of the canal, I never heard that they landed or received any produce. The streets of Indianapolis had no names then; it was too lost a place for that, and we just said the 'main street.' This was afterwards called Washington Street, and was really a part of the National Road. Oh but that was romantic to me, leading as it did straight out into the wide, wide world! At certain intervals, about once in two weeks, the weather and the state of the road allowing, a lumbering vehicle called a 'mud wagon' left for regions unknown to me with passengers and freight. I don't know where it came from, but on its return it brought letters to my father from his mother, who lived in Philadelphia.

"Sometimes bands of Indians, wrapped in blankets, came through the town. They seemed friendly enough and no one showed any fear of them.

"We little girls wore pantalettes, to our ankles, and our dresses were whale-boned down the front, with very long bodices. We had wide flat hats trimmed with wreaths of roses and tied under our chins. We wore low necks and short sleeves summer and winter. I was thin but very tough. My Aunt Knodle made long mittens for me out of nankeen beautifully embroidered; they came up to my shoulders, and were sewn on every day to keep me from spoiling my hands. My hair was braided in front and my everyday gingham sunbonnet sewn to my hair. This was done in the vain hope of keeping off sunburn, for I was dark, like my mother, and my complexion was the despair of her life. Beauty of the fair blonde type was in vogue then, so that I was quite out of fashion. It was thought that if one was dark one had a wicked temper."

In reality, Fanny, with her clear olive skin, her bright black eyes, her perfectly regular features, and mass of half-curling dark hair, was the prettiest in the family; but the dictates of fashion are imperious, so her mother put lotions on her face and her grandmother washed it with strong soap, saying: "She is that colour by nature — God made her ugly." The little girl asked rather pathetically if they would not change her name to Lily, to which her mother replied: "You are a little tiger lily!" In after years in her many gardens in different parts of the world there were always tiger lilies growing. She was a high-spirited, daring creature, a little flashing firefly of a child, eagerly seeking for adventure, that might have brought upon her frequent punishment were it not that her parents held exceedingly liberal views in such matters. About this she says:

"Henry Ward Beecher and my father were great friends, and used to discuss very earnestly the proper method of bringing up children. At that time it was the custom to be extremely severe with youth, and such axioms as 'spare the rod and spoil the child,' 'to be seen and not heard,' were popular; so that the views held by Mr. Beecher and my father were decidedly modern. They argued that if a child was bad by nature it would grow up bad, and that if it was good it would grow up good, and that it was best not to interfere with the development of children's characters, but to allow them to have their own way."

As Esther Van de Grift limited her corrections of her children to an occasional mild remonstrance, they worked out their own individualities with little interference. Fanny was what the children called a "tomboy," and always preferred the boys' sports, the more daring the better. She roamed the woods with her cousin Tom Van de Grift, and the two kindred wild spirits climbed trees, forded streams up to their necks, did everything, in fact, that the most adventurous boy could think of. School was a secondary affair then, and, except for drawing and painting, in which she was thought to have a remarkable talent, Fanny paid little attention to her studies.

When she was a little girl she was caught in the wave of a great temperance revival which was sweeping over the country, and, in her enthusiasm to aid in the work, she produced two drawings that caused a sensation. One, representing a rickety house with broken windows, a crooked weed-grown path leading up to a gate fallen off the hinges, and a fence with half the pickets off, she labelled "The Drunkard's Home." Then she drew a companion picture of a neat farmhouse with a straight path, and fence and gate all in apple-pie order, which she called "The Reformed Drunkard's Home." These two drawings she presented at a public meeting to Doctor Thompson, the leader of the movement. Fifty years afterwards she met Mrs. Thompson, who said she still had the pictures and thought them "very beautiful."

In spite of her indifference to study she was very precocious, and learned to read at what was considered by her parents' friends as an objectionably early age. Her father was very proud of the accomplishments of his little daughter, and liked to show her off before his friends, who, to speak the truth, looked with extreme disfavour upon the performance. Once Mr. Page Chapman, editor of a newspaper, put her through an examination on some subjects about which she had been reading in Familiar Science, a work arranged in the form of questions and answers. He asked: "What is the shape of the world?" "Round," she replied. "Then why don't we fall off?" he asked, and she answered: “Because of the attraction of gravitation.” “This is awful,” he said, in horror at such precocity.

Her father had a taste for verse, and often when walking with his children would recite a favourite poem, more, evidently, for his own amusement than theirs. Of this Fanny writes: “He used to declaim so often, in a loud, solemn voice, ‘My name is Norval — on the Grampian Hills my father feeds his flocks,’ that I naturally received the impression that these flocks and hills were part of my paternal grandfather’s estate. Years afterwards when I was travelling in Scotland and asked the name of some hills I saw in the distance, I felt a mental shock when told they were the Grampian Hills.”

As I have said before, there was no discipline in the Van de Grift household, and though the neighbours predicted dire results from such a method of bringing up a family, one result, at least, was that every one of Jacob Van de Grift’s children adored him, and none more whole-heartedly than his eldest born. She writes of him:

“My father was a splendid horseman and excelled in all athletic things. He had such immense shoulders and such a deep chest, though his hands and feet were remarkably small. I can remember when he and I would go out to a vacant lot that he owned near Indianapolis and I would sit on the fence and watch him ride and perform circus tricks on horseback, riding around in a circle. Though his hands were so small and fair, with rosy palms and delicately pointed fingers, they were strong hands and capable, for they fashioned the cradle my mother rocked me in, and the chest of drawers made of maple-wood stained to imitate mahogany, where she stored my baby linen with those old-fashioned herbs, ambrosia and sweet basil. Years ago the cradle was passed on to a neighbor who needed it more than we, but the chest of drawers is still in use, a sound and very serviceable piece of furniture, good for several generations more. It was an eventful day in my childhood when, perched on a high chair, I was allowed to explore the mysteries of the top drawer and hold in my own hands the trinkets, ear-rings, brooches, and fine laces worn by my mother in her youth, but now laid aside as useless in this new, strange, and busy life of the backwoods. There, too, were pieces of my maternal grandmother’s (Kitty Weaver’s) gowns, satin that shimmered and changed from purple to gold, ‘stiff enough,’ as my mother said, ‘to stand alone,’ and my great-grandfather Miller’s tortoise-shell snuff-box containing a tonquin bean that had not yet lost its peculiar fragrance.

“While I gazed reverently on these treasures, the tale of Kitty Weaver’s death, which I already knew by heart, was told me once again. She was a beauty and loved gaiety, and got her death by going to a ball in thin slippers. I supposed, in my childish ignorance, that this radiant creature went about all day long in shining silks that stood alone, and never by any chance wore other than red satin slippers. My paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Miller, sniffed a little at my enthusiasm, and averred that she, too, in her time, had worn silks that stood alone and slippers of a much smaller size than those of Kitty Weaver. But when I looked at my grandmother, with her high hooked nose, her large black-browed blue eyes, as keen as swords, the haughty outline of her curved lips, her massive shoulders and deep chest, her domineering expression, and listened to her imperious voice, doubts assailed me. I could believe that she had led an army of amazons in cuirass and buckler, but my imagination refused to picture her in a silken train smiling at gallants from behind her fan; and surely, I thought, no one in the whole world ever went tripping to a ball in such strange and monstrous headgear as she wore. Yet she had been a notable beauty in her day, and even in her old age was still something of a coquette.

"It was sometimes my privilege to sleep with my grandmother, and I felt it to be a great one, for she was the best teller of stories I ever heard. Her religion was of the most terrible kind — the old-fashioned Presbyterianism which taught that hell was paved with infants' souls, and such horrors. She always said, when she heard of the death of a young child, that the chances were it would become a little angel, which it would not have done if it had lived to be a little older. I was shocked to hear my mother say she preferred having her children little living devils rather than dead angels. After prayers, all about hell and damnation, which she said aloud, I was put to bed against the wall. The bedstead, a big mahogany four-poster, had to be mounted like an omnibus. That, and the feather bed, and the mattress stuffed with the 'best curled hair,' were presents sent to my father from Philadelphia, and were a great source of pride to me, especially the mattress, which I believed to be stuffed with beautiful human curls.

"From my nest in the feather bed I watched my grandmother disrobe with growing terror. First she unpinned and folded away a white kerchief she always wore primly crossed over her bosom. Then she removed a white lace cap that was tied under her chin with ribbons; then she took off what I supposed to be a portion of her scalp, but now know was a 'false front.' This was bad enough, but there was worse to come; there still remained a black silk skull cap that covered the thick white hair worn cropped closely to her head. When she took off this cap she seemed to stand before me as some strange and terrible man, so at this point I always covered my head with the bedclothes until the light was extinguished.

"After getting into bed, my grandmother, who told every incident as dramatically as though she had participated in it herself, related appalling stories about witches, death, apparitions, and the

Inquisition. These stories made such a powerful impression on me that it is no wonder that I remember them after sixty years. Though my terror of my grandmother in this guise was excessive, I do not think I should have liked the stories, generally grim and tragic, so well in a different setting.

"Aunt Knodle was very neat and orderly, high-tempered and somewhat domineering, but possessing a singular charm. Children liked to go to her house even though they were made to be on their best behavior while they were there. Everything in her house was in what we would call good taste to-day. She had beautiful old china, fine silver, and good furniture, everything rich and dark. The house was a long rambling cottage, with a turn in it to match the irregular shape of the lot. It had many gables and dormer windows, and the whole was covered with creeping roses, and there was a faint sweet smell about it that I think I would know now. The master of this delightful house, Adam Knodle, was as near a saint on earth as a man can be; he was kind to everybody and everything. He was extremely absent-minded, and his wife liked to tell how he once killed a chicken for the family dinner and threw away the chicken and brought in the head.

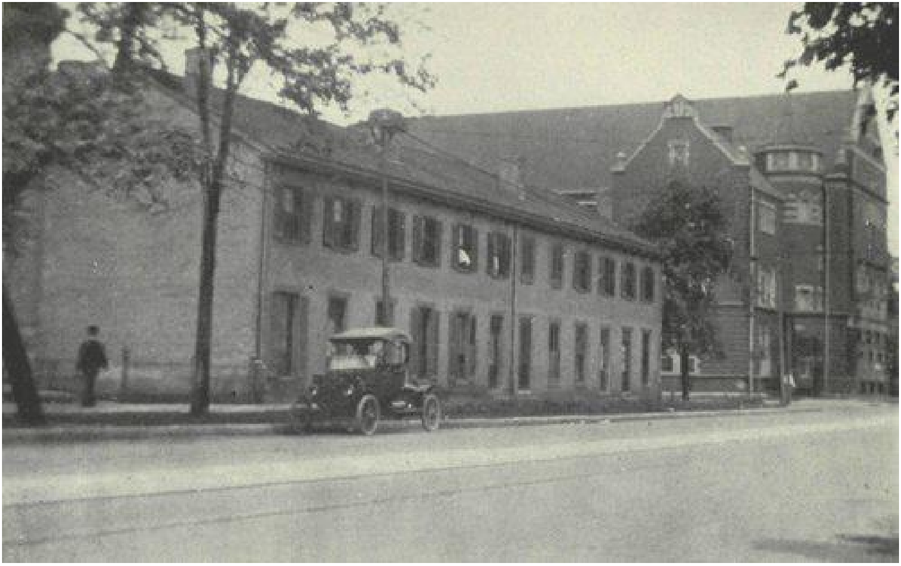
"My aunt was an ardent lover of animals, and abhorred cruelty to them in any form. She had a dog named Ponto, an ugly ill-tempered little black dog of no pedigree whatever, who ruled as king in that house. He was accustomed to lie on a silk cushion in the window commanding the best view. My aunt used to sit at one of the windows — not Ponto's, I can tell you — ready, like Dickens's heroine, Betsy Trotwood, to pounce out upon passing travellers. Sometimes, when she thought a horse was being driven too fast, she rushed out and seized it by the bridle while she read its driver a severe lecture."

As the years passed the young girl's restless energies found other outlets. At school she was a brilliant but not an industrious pupil. It was in composition that she shone especially, and one of her schoolmates says of her: "She always wrote her compositions in such an attractive way, weaving them into a story, so that the children were eager to hear them."

While attending high school she became fired with the idea of writing a book in conjunction with a friend, a beautiful Southern girl named Lucy McCrae. The writing was done secretly, after school hours, on the steps of the schoolhouse, while a third friend, Ella Hale, kept guard, for the whole thing was to be a profound secret until the world should receive it as the wonder of the age. This great work was brought to a sudden end by the illness of Lucy McCrae.

At this time the Van de Grift family were living in a house on Illinois Street. This house had a cellar door at the back. To quote the words of her schoolmate, Ella Hale: "At this cellar door the children used to gather to hear fairy and ghost stories. Fanny was always the central figure, because she was the only one who could tell really interesting stories. These gatherings always took place after supper, and as the shadows grew darker and darker during the recital of a particularly thrilling ghost story, I clearly remember the fearful glances toward the dark corners and the crowding closer together of the little ones, till it sometimes resulted in a landslide, and we would find ourselves in a heap on the ground at the foot of the slanting door, our laughter quickly dispelling all our fears."

Among Fanny's playmates there was a dark, handsome boy, with large, melancholy eyes, named George Marshall, who was not only exceedingly attractive in looks but had many other graces. He was a born artist, and could dance, and act, and sing like an angel; and, best of all, he was as good as he was charming. These two were close companions in all sorts of strenuous sports, and nothing annoyed them more than to have little teasing Josephine, Fanny's younger sister, trailing after them and breaking up their games. George finally announced that he would play no more unless Josephine could be kept away. But boys change, and when he grew up he married Josephine.



The Van de Grift residence at the corner of Illinois and Washington Streets, Indianapolis.

All too soon came the time when these days of careless childish joys were brought to a close. A new era opened, and romance, which budded early in that time and place, began to unfold its first tender leaves. Various youths of the town, attracted by the piquant prettiness and sparkling vivacity of the eldest daughter, began to haunt the Van de Grift house. In the sentimental fashion of the day, these sighing swains carved her name on the trees, and so wide was the circle of her fascination that there was scarcely a tree in the place that did not bear somewhere on its long-suffering trunk the name or initials of Fanny Van de Grift. None of these suitors, however, made any impression on the object of their attentions, who was so much of a child that she was walking on stilts in the garden when Samuel Osbourne first called at the house. He was an engaging youth, a Kentuckian by birth, with all the suavity and charm of the Southerner. Behind him lay a truly romantic ancestry, for, through John Stewart, who was stolen and brought up by the Indians, and never knew his parentage, he was a collateral descendant of Daniel Boone.

On December 4, 1857, in a house on Michigan Street, which had already been prepared and furnished for their occupancy, Samuel Osbourne, aged twenty, and Fanny Van de Grift, aged seventeen, were united in marriage. All the notables of the town, including Governor Willard, to whom young Osbourne was private secretary, and the entire staff of State officers, attended. The young bride looked charming in a handsome gown of heavy white satin, of the kind that "could stand alone," of the "block" pattern then in vogue, and made in the fashion of the day, with full long-trained skirt and tight low-necked bodice trimmed with a rich lace bertha. Her hair was worn in curls, fastened back from the face on each side. The groom, who is seldom mentioned in these affairs, deserves a word or two, for he made a gallant figure in a blue coat with brass buttons, flowered waistcoat, fawn-coloured trousers, strapped under varnished boots, and carrying a bell-topped white beaver hat. One who was a guest at the wedding says, "They looked like two children," as indeed they were. It was a boy-and-girl marriage of the kind people entered into then with pioneer fearlessness, to turn out well or ill, as fate decreed.

The young couple took up their residence in the same house in which they were married, and before the young husband was twenty-one years old their first child, Isobel, was born. The little mother was so small and young-looking that once when she was on a railroad-train with her infant an old gentleman, looking at her with some concern, asked: "Sissy, where is the baby's mother?"

It was now that the great black storm-cloud which had been hovering over the nation for years broke in all its fury upon this border State. The Osbournes, together with nearly all their friends and relatives, cast in their lot with the North, and young Osbourne left his family and went to the war as captain in the army.

We must now return to the dark, handsome boy, George Marshall, once the favourite playmate and now the brother-in-law of Fanny Van de Grift. He, too, joined the colours, in command of a company of

Zouaves whom he had himself gathered and trained. After a time spent in active service on some of the hardest fought battle-fields of the Civil War, the hardships and exposure of the life told upon a constitution never at any time robust, and he returned to his young wife a victim of tuberculosis. The doctors said his only chance was to get to the milder climate of California, and at the close of the war Samuel Osbourne, who was his devoted friend, gave up position and prospects to accompany him thither. The two young men, leaving their families behind them, took ship at New York for Panama; but the Angel of Death sailed with them, and Captain Marshall breathed his last while crossing the Isthmus.

Osbourne decided to go on to California, and on his arrival there was so pleased with the country that he wrote to his wife to sell her property at once and follow him. Bidding a long farewell to the loving parents who had up to that time stood between her and every trouble, Fanny Osbourne, at an age when most young women are enjoying the care-free life of irresponsible girlhood, took her small daughter Isobel and set forth into a new and strange world.

Crossing the Isthmus by the crookedest railroad ever seen, she stopped at Panama to visit the burial-place of the young soldier, George Marshall, her childhood playmate, beloved friend, and brother-in-law, and over that lonely grave the child for the first time saw her girlish mother shed tears.

CHAPTER III

ON THE PACIFIC SLOPE

When at last the long voyage up the Western coast came to an end and the ship sailed into the broad bay of San Francisco, which lay serene and beautiful under the shadow of its towering guardian, Mount Tamalpais, Fanny Osbourne hung over the rail and surveyed the scene with eager interest. Yet it is altogether unlikely that any realisation came to her then that the lively seaport town that lay before her was to become to her that magic thing we call "home," for men still regarded California as a place to "make their pile" in and then shake its dust from their feet. Her stay here was very brief, for her husband had gone at once to Nevada in the hope of getting a foothold in the silver-mines, which were then "booming," and she immediately followed him.

From the level green corn-fields of Indiana, the land of her birth, to the grey sage-brush of the desert and the naked mountains of Nevada was a long step, but regrets were lost in the absorbing interest of the new life.

In a canyon high up in the Toyabee Range, about six miles from Reese River, lay the new mining camp of Austin, then only about a year old. Reese River, though in summer it dries up in places so that its bed is only a series of shallow pools, is nevertheless a most picturesque stream, and Austin is surrounded by mountain scenery of the stupendous, awe-inspiring sort.

In a little cabin on a mountainside Fanny Osbourne took up her new life amidst these strange surroundings, which she found most interesting and exciting. The men, who were generally away from the camp during the day, working in the mines, were all adventurers — young, bold men — and though they wore rough clothes, were nearly all college bred. In Austin and its vicinity there were but six women, and when it was decided to give a party at another camp miles away, a thorough scouring of the whole surrounding country produced just seven of the fair sex. These ladies came in a sleigh, made of a large packing-box put on runners, to beg the newcomer, Mrs. Osbourne, to join them in this festivity. Having some pretty clothes she had brought with her, she hastily dressed by the aid of a shining tin pan which one of the women held up for her, there being no such thing as a mirror in the entire camp. Years afterwards, when Mrs. Osbourne was in Paris, she read in the papers of this woman as having taken the whole first floor of the Splendide Hotel, which led her to remark: "I wonder if she remembers when she held the tin pan for me to do my hair!" At the party there were fifty men and seven women, and no woman danced twice with the same man. Among the men was a clergyman, who made himself very agreeable to Mrs. Osbourne. She asked why she had never heard of him before, and he replied: "You have heard of me, I am sure, but not by my real name. They call me 'Squinting Jesus'!"

Her pioneer blood now began to show itself in all kinds of inventions with which she mitigated the discomforts of the raw mining camp. As vegetables were exceedingly scarce, the diet of the miners consisted almost exclusively of meat, and Mrs. Osbourne made a great hit by her ingenuity in devising variations of this monotonous fare. She learned how to cook beef in fifteen different ways. Her great achievement, however, was in making imitation honey, to eat with griddle-cakes, out of boiled sugar with a lump of alum in it.

All about in the mountains there were Indians, belonging to the Paiute tribe, and between 1849 and 1882 there was constant trouble with them. They were a better-looking and more spirited race than the "Diggers" of California, and consequently more disposed to resent the frequent outrages put upon them by irresponsible men among the whites. As an instance, in 1861 some white men stole horses from the Indians, who then rose up in retaliation, and all the whites, the innocent as well as the guilty, were compelled to unite for defense, a large number losing their lives in the subsequent fight.

In the mornings, while Mrs. Osbourne was doing her housework in the little cabin on the hillside, Indians would gather outside and press their faces against the window-panes, their eyes following her about the room. There were blinds, but she was afraid to give offense by pulling them down. The absence of the Indians was sometimes even more alarming than their presence, and once when it was noticed that none of them had been seen about the camp for several days, the residents knew that trouble threatened. One night signal fires blazed on the distant mountain tops, and a thrill of fear ran through the little community. The women and children were gathered in one cabin and made to lie on the floor and keep quiet. Even the smallest ones must have felt the danger, for not a whimper escaped them. One of them was a baby called Aurora. Little Isobel Osbourne thought she was called "Roarer" because she bawled all the time, but even "Roarer" was quiet that night.

Among the Austin Indians there was a little boy who named his pony "Fanny." "Did you name it for me?" my sister asked. He nodded his head. "Why?" she asked, and he said it was because the pony had such little feet.

Near the Osbourne cabin lived a miner named Johnny Crakroft.

Mrs. Osbourne never saw him, for he was too shy to speak to a woman, but he left offerings on her door-step or tied to the knob. Johnny had killed a man in Virginia City, not an unusual occurrence in those days, but the circumstances seem to have been such that he did not dare go back there. Yet, with one of those strange contrasts so common in the life of the mines, he was a kind-hearted, domestic soul, and on baking days he made little dogs and cats and elephants out of sweetened dough, with currants for eyes, for his little pal, Isobel Osbourne. One day he bestowed upon the child the rather incongruous present of a bottle of quicksilver and a bowie-knife, which she proudly carried home.

Other neighbours in a cabin on the mountainside were two young Englishmen, mere boys of twenty or thereabout, named John Lloyd and Tom Reid. Wishing to celebrate the Queen's birthday in true British fashion, they went to Mrs. Osbourne to learn how to concoct a plum pudding. They learned, only the string broke and the pudding had to be served in soup-plates.

Whatever else the life and the society may have been, they were never dull or tame. On one occasion, while crossing the desert in a stage-coach, Mrs. Osbourne met the man said to be the original of Bret Harte's Colonel Starbottle. When the coach stopped at a little station, this gentleman politely asked his pretty fellow passenger what he could bring her. He was so flowery and pompous that as a little joke she asked for strawberries, thinking them the most impossible thing to be found at the forlorn little place. To her amazement he actually brought her the berries.

On another desert trip she was allowed, as a special favour, to sit on the front seat, between the driver and the express messenger. There had been, not long before, a number of hold-ups by "road agents," and when the stage came to suspicious-looking turns in the road the messenger made her put her head down on her knees while he laid his gun across her back. She could have gone inside with the other women, of course, but it was like her to prefer the seat with the driver, with its risk and its adventure.

Later the Osbournes moved to Virginia City, where the life, while not quite so primitive as at Austin, was still highly flavoured with all the spice of a wild mining town. Gambling went on night and day, and the killing of men over the games still happened often enough. In the diary of a pioneer of that time, Samuel Orr, of Alameda, who later married one of Mrs. Osbourne's sisters, Cora Van de Grift, I find this entry: "This is the hardest place I ever struck. I saw two men killed to-day in a gambling fight." Men engaged at their work or passing along the streets were quite often compelled to duck and dodge to escape sudden fusillades of bullets. There was little regard for the law, and “killings” seldom received legal punishment.

Virginia City, despite its desolate environment of grey, naked mountains and deep, narrow ravines, had its own rugged charm. The air was so crystal-pure that at times one could see as far as one hundred and eighty miles from its lofty seat on the skirts of Mount Davidson. Far to the west and south stretched a wonderful panorama of multicoloured and snow-capped mountains, and in the gap between lay the desert and a fringe of green to mark the course of the Carson River. The town, which lay immediately over the famous Comstock Lode, was built on ground with such a pitch that what was the second story of a house in front became the first in the back. Every winter snow falls to a depth of several feet in the town, and on the summit of Mount Davidson it never melts. At that time Virginia City was described as “a lively place, wherein all kinds of industry as well as vice flourished.”

After their arrival here Samuel Osbourne bought the Mills, Post, and White mine, and in the interval of waiting for results worked, like the resourceful American that he was, at various employments to earn a living for himself and his family. For a time he was clerk of the Justice’s Court in Virginia City.

It was even so early as in these Nevada mining days that the grey cloud which was to darken some of the best years of her life first appeared above the young wife’s horizon, for it was there that the first foreboding came to her that her marriage was to be a failure. The wild, free life of the West had carried her young and impressionable husband off his feet, and the painful suspicion now came to her that she did not reign alone in his heart. As time passed this trouble went from bad to worse, but no more need be said of it at this point except to make it clear that years before her meeting with the true love of her heart, Robert Louis Stevenson, the disagreements which finally resulted in the shattering of her first romance had already begun.

In 1866, lured by reports of rich strikes in Montana, Osbourne set off on a prospecting tour to the Cœur d’Alene Mountains, leaving his wife and child in Virginia City. While in Montana he met another prospector, Samuel Orr (who afterwards became his brother-in-law), and the two joined forces, becoming, in miners’ phrase, “pardners.”

Led on by the ever-fleeing hope of the great “strike” that might lie just ahead, the two men penetrated so far into the depths of this rugged mountain country that they were for some time out of the reach of mails, causing their friends to finally give them up as dead. Running out of funds, they were obliged to take work at what they could get, and Osbourne sold tickets in a theatre at Helena, Montana, and later took a job in a sawmill at Bear Gulch. At one place he and another man bought up all the coffee to be had, and, after grinding it up, sold it in small lots at an advanced price.

Failing in their quest for the elusive treasure, Osbourne and Orr, not being able to cash the cheques with which they were paid for their work, were at last compelled to borrow the money with which to make their way back to civilization and their families.

About this time the silver-mining boom in Nevada began to ebb, and there was an exodus of men and women, mostly discouraged and "broke," to San Francisco. As Mrs. Osbourne had arranged to meet her husband in that city, she decided to join some of her friends in their removal to the coast, and began to make preparations for the long, hard journey. In those days little girls wore very short dresses, with several white petticoats, like ballet dancers, and long white stockings. This dress seemed peculiarly unsuitable for the dusty stage trip across the desert, and Mrs. Osbourne, meeting the situation with her usual common sense, bought a boy's suit and dressed her little girl in it. The passengers called her "Billy," and a sensation was created among them when, after arrival at the Occidental Hotel in the bustling city of San Francisco, the child appeared in her own little ballet costume.

At this date, 1866, San Francisco was no longer a mere resting-place for the birds of passage on their way to the mines, but had become a settled town, with an air of permanency and solidity. It was then compactly built, for it was only the advent years later of the cable-cars that enabled it to spread out over its many hills. The glamour of the days of the first mad rush for gold, with their feverish alternations of mounting hope and black despair, was gone, but in its stead had come safety and comfort, and there were few places in the world where one could live more agreeably, or even more luxuriously, than in San Francisco in the '60's.

Here word was brought that Osbourne had been killed by the Indians, and life began to bear heavily upon the young wife and mother, stranded without means in a strange city. She put on widow's weeds and looked about for employment with which to eke out her fast diminishing store. When she was a little girl she had learned to do fine sewing on the ruffles for her father's shirts, and had always made her own and her child's dresses. This talent, which proved exceedingly useful at various times in her life, now served her in good stead. She secured a situation as fitter in a dressmaking establishment, where, on account of her foreign looks, she was thought to be French.

Friends were not lacking, for many looked with pity upon the supposed widow struggling to keep her head above water in a land so far from her own home and family. During her absence at work she left the child in the care of the kind-hearted landlady of the boarding-house and her young son, Michael, still gratefully remembered as "Mackerel" by Isobel. In the same boarding-house John Lloyd, the young Englishman of the Reese River days, had also established himself. On Sundays, no doubt to give the tired mother a long rest, he would take little Bel to the beach out by old Fort Point, where he made swords for her out of driftwood, played at Jack the Giant-Killer, and told stories about Mr. and Mrs. Sea-Gull and what they said to each other. He even borrowed fairy-tale books from the public library in order to learn stories to tell his little friend on these Sunday outings. There came a birthday, with very little to make it gay, but the kind-hearted young man bought a small jointed doll with his meagre earnings, and the mother made a set of beautiful clothes for it out of bits of bright-coloured silks she had saved from her sewing. This, with a little table whittled out of a cigar-box and a ten-cent set of dishes, made a glorious day for the happy child. This friendship was maintained in later years, and when the once poor clerk became a bank president, Fanny Stevenson put her money in his bank.

So life went on for the mother and child until one eventful day, when a tall, handsome man in high boots and a wide hat suddenly appeared at the door, and crying out, “Is this my little girl?” caught her up in his arms. As one risen from the dead, the husband and father had returned, and, to the child’s amazement, they immediately moved into what seemed to her a very fine house, and she had a wax doll for Christmas.

For a few succeeding years happiness seemed to have returned to dwell with the little family. Osbourne soon made his way in the busy city and all went well. They lived in San Francisco for several years. There a son was born to them, and they named him Lloyd, after their good friend, John Lloyd, now a successful lawyer.

Those peaceful days were brought to an end when Mrs. Osbourne discovered that her husband had again betrayed her, and she returned to her father’s house in Indiana. After nearly a year she yielded to entreaties and promises of reform, and again journeyed to California, taking Cora Van de Grift, one of her younger sisters, with her.

A little while after their return to San Francisco, in 1869, Osbourne bought a house and lot for his family in East Oakland, then known as Brooklyn, at the corner of Eleventh Avenue and East 18th Street. Settled under their own rooftree in the golden land of California, the family for a time were measurably happy. Mrs. Osbourne, who is described as being then “a young and slender woman, wearing her hair in two long braids down her back,” was evidently making a strong effort to forget past differences and to make home a pleasant place for her children. Though she cared little for society in the general sense of the word, yet she contrived to gather about her in East Oakland a little intimate circle of clever, talented, and agreeable people. Among them were Judge Timothy Rearden, a well-known attorney and littérateur of San Francisco; Virgil Williams, director of the San Francisco School of Design, and his wife; Yelland, Bush, and other distinguished artists; the musician Oscar Weil, and many more whose names do not now come to mind.

She built a studio where she painted, had a dark room where she took photographs — and photography in those days of "wet plates" was a mysterious and unheard-of accomplishment for an amateur; then there was a rifle-range where she set up a target, and, occasionally, when it was the cook's day out, she would make wonderful dishes, while odd moments were filled in at a sewing-machine making pretty clothes. By this time she had become a famous cook, and often prepared dinners fit to set before a king. She little thought then that some day she would break bread with real kings, even though they were but Polynesian monarchs.

Of all her activities that from which she drew the purest joy was her gardening, for in this fortunate place, where sun and soil and balmy air all conspire to produce a paradise for flowers, "her Dutch blood began to come out," as she said, and she threw herself with ardour into the business of digging and pruning and planting. The little cottage was soon curtained with vines, and the whole place glowed with the many-coloured hues of gorgeous roses. There, too, the tawny golden bells of the tiger lily, her own particular flower, hung from their tall stalks. This was the first of the many wonderful gardens that were made to bloom under her skilful tending in various parts of the world.

The charming domestic picture of her life in this period can be given in no better way than by quoting the words of her daughter:

"At that time our fashionable neighbors gave 'parties' for their children. One night a fire broke out in a house where I had gone to a party. My mother was at home, sitting at her work, when she suddenly cried 'Something is the matter with Bel!' and rushing out, ran across ploughed fields, her slippers falling off, leaving her to run in stockings all the way. It was not until she was half-way there that she saw the smoke and realised the meaning of her intuition. When she found that I was all right and had been sent home she fainted and had to be carried home herself. She made my clothes herself, and I can remember to this day how pretty they were. I was very dark and of course ashamed of it, but she told me it was very nice to be different from other people, and dressed me in crisp yellow linen or pale blue, which made me look still darker, on the principle that Sarah Bernhardt followed in exaggerating her thinness when it was the fashion to have a rounded form. My mother told me to consider my dark skin a beauty, for she believed that if children had a good opinion of themselves they would never be self-conscious.

"All the other girls in my school had given parties and I begged to be allowed to give one too. Our little house was not very suitable for the purpose, but my mother put her wits to work. She fitted up the stable with a stage and seats, and persuaded a neighbor who played the cornet to act as 'band.' Then she taught a small group of us to act 'Villikens and his Dinah,' which she read aloud behind the scenes, and 'Bluebeard,' made into a little play. My paternal grandmother, a straight-backed, severe looking old lady, was then visiting us. How my mother managed it I don't know, but Grandma, who abhorred theatricals, was soon reading 'Villikens' for us to practice, and she even consented to appear as one of Bluebeard's departed wives. A sheet was hung up to represent a wall; the wives stood behind it and put their heads through holes that had been cut for the purpose; their hair was pulled up and tacked to imaginary nails, and very realistic pieces of red flannel arranged to represent gore. My grandmother was a truly awful sight when my mother had painted her face and made her up for the show. The party was a great success, and only the other day I met a woman who had been one of the guests and she still remembered it as one of the striking events of her childhood.

"My mother influenced me in those days in many ways that I shall never forget, especially in her hatred of anything that savored of snobbery. When I gave the party I placed the invitations in little pink envelopes and put them on the desks of my schoolmates. A neighbor's son who was poor and had to carry newspapers and peddle milk, sat next to me in school. Children are snobs by nature, and this boy was never asked to any of our parties. I consulted my mother as to what I should do about Danny, for he had been nice to me and I hated to leave him out. 'Of course you must invite him,' she said. 'But none of the other girls invited him to their parties,' said I. 'There is nothing against him, is there, except being poor?' 'Nothing at all,' I replied, and so I was directed to include him in the invitations. I shall never forget poor slighted Danny's radiant face when he saw there was a note for him. He came to the party dressed in new clothes from head to foot, and made such a success that after that he was always asked in 'our set.'

"My mother also taught me to be considerate of other people's feelings. My teacher once kept me in for slamming a door; I told my mother about it and admitted that I had slammed it purposely because my teacher was so cross. In the guise of an entertaining story, she told me how the teacher, a pretty young woman named Miss Miller, had come to teach a big class, a stranger, alone, and that perhaps she had a headache from having cried the night before from homesickness. In this way she harrowed my feelings to such an extent that I went to Miss Miller of my own accord and begged her pardon, and the poor girl wept and loved me, and thenceforth made life miserable for me among my schoolmates by acts of 'favoritism.'"

In the little rose-covered cottage in Oakland a second son, Hervey, was born to the Osbournes. He was an extraordinarily beautiful child, with the rare combination of large dark eyes and yellow curls, but there was an ethereal look about him that boded no long stay on this earthly sphere.

It was perhaps partly to fill a great void that she began to feel in her life that Mrs. Osbourne took up the study of art in the School of Design conducted by Virgil Williams in San Francisco. Mother and daughter studied there side by side. While there Mrs. Osbourne won the prize, a silver medal, for the best drawing. She seemed not to value it at the time, but after her death her daughter found it in a little box laid away in her jewel-case.

When the little yellow-haired boy was about four years old, the cloud which had menaced the happiness of the family for so long again descended upon them. For years Mrs. Osbourne had made earnest and conscientious efforts to avoid the disruption of her marital ties, plighted with such high hopes in the springtime of her girlhood, but her husband's infidelities had now become so open and flagrant that the situation was no longer bearable. Divorce was at that time a far more serious step than it is now, and, for the sake of her family, she hesitated long before taking it, but there is no doubt that she was deeply wounded and humiliated by this painful episode in her life, and, in 1875, partly to remove herself as far as possible from distressing associations, partly to give her daughter the advantage of instruction in foreign schools of art, she took her three children and set out for Europe. When she left California for this journey it is no exaggeration to say that every bond of affection that held her to Samuel Osbourne had been broken.

CHAPTER IV

FRANCE, AND THE MEETING AT GREZ

When they arrived on the other side, the Osbournes went directly to Antwerp, having decided to make a trial of that place first for their art studies. They landed at night in that most picturesque old city and took quarters at the Hotel du Bien-être, a quaint little old bourgeois inn where you walked in through the kitchen — full of copper pots and pans. It was in the days before "improvements" — broad avenues, street-cars, and the like — had robbed the old town of much of its distinctive charm, when at the corners of the narrow, stone-paved streets shrines of the Virgin and Child might still be seen. The passing crowds — peasant women in elaborate lace caps and long cloaks, groups of soldiers, milk carts drawn by dogs — all were intensely interesting to the newcomers from America, for whom this was the first foreign experience. The evening of their arrival they hung fascinated from their windows, listening to the glorious chimes from the cathedral near by, and watching the changing spectacle below. There were little tables in the street where soldiers sat drinking, while maids in huge caps filled their flagons. Isobel remarked: "It is like a scene in an opera; all we need is music." At that moment a band at the corner struck up "La Fille de Madame Angot," and the illusion was complete.

The Hotel du Bien-être was kept by the Gerhardts, a delightful family of father, mother, and eleven children. It was a happy time in Antwerp for the Osbourne children, for this large family of young people provided them with pleasant companionship.

But if the Osbourne children had a happy time in Antwerp, it was far otherwise with their mother, for she was alone with her family in a foreign land and had little money, and the responsibility weighed heavily upon her, her anxiety being further increased by signs of ill-health in her youngest child, Hervey. In this state of mind she was deeply touched by the warm-hearted kindness of the Gerhardts, which they exhibited in a thousand ways. One day the newspapers published an account of the failure of a bank in San Francisco, and, knowing that his guests came from that city, Papa Gerhardt was troubled lest they might suffer some pecuniary distress from the failure. Out of the fulness of his good heart he said to Mrs. Osbourne: "Do not be anxious; it does not matter if you have lost your money; you can stay with Papa Gerhardt." Fortunately, the bank failure did not affect her in any way, but the generosity of these good people in her lonely situation went straight to her heart, and to the end of her days one only had to be a Belgian to call forth her help and sympathy.

Finding it necessary to economize, she took a house, a queer little stone building with a projecting roof, containing four small rooms, one on top of the other. The rooms were so tiny that when the big front door stood ajar it opened up almost all the little apartment dignified by the name of "salon." The entire Gerhardt family took a hand in getting them settled, bringing little gifts — crocheted mats, bouquets of artificial flowers, and two pictures, bright-coloured chromos of "Morning" and "Night," representing two little children, awake and asleep. Mrs. Osbourne loyally kept these pictures for years, hanging them upon her wall in tender and grateful memory of the Gerhardts.

After three months' stay in Antwerp, finding it to be a difficult place for women to study art, and having been told of a good and cheap school in Paris, she decided to go there. When they parted, with many tears, from their dear Belgian friends, Mrs. Osbourne, with a swelling heart, tried to thank Papa Gerhardt for his kindness to her and her children, but he said he had a large family who would some day have to go out into the world, and he had treated the Americans as he hoped his own would be treated.

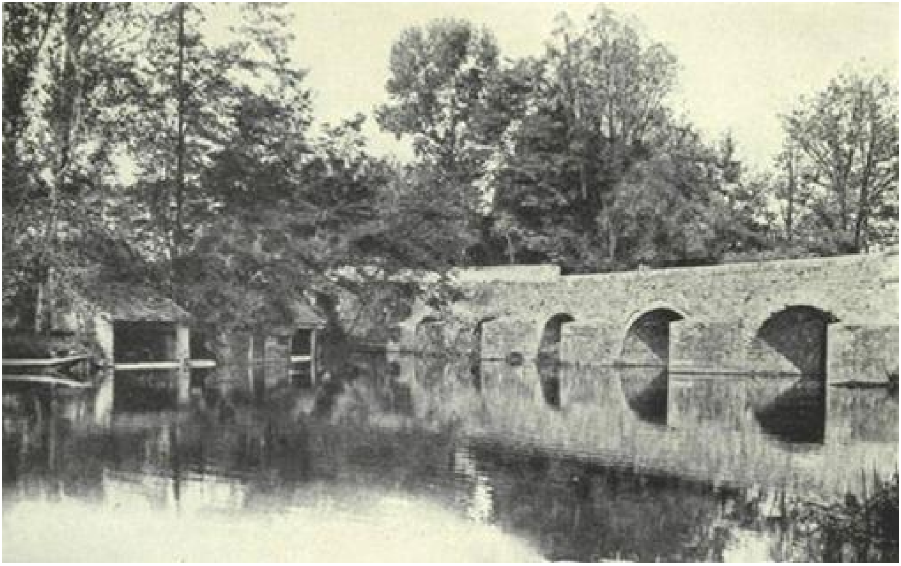
From Antwerp they went to Paris, and Fanny and her daughter entered the Julien School of Art on the Passage des Panorama, where they spent a very busy time working at their drawings under the instruction of Monsieur Tony Fleury. The older of the two boys, Lloyd, was placed in a French school, and he still remembers that in any quarrel with the boys he was called "Prussian" as a dire insult. He did not know what it meant, but nevertheless resented it promptly.

The family lived very plainly, their meals often consisting of smoked herring and brown bread; yet these straitened circumstances did not prevent Mrs. Osbourne from taking pity on poor and homesick young students, fellow countrymen, whom she met at the school, and, when funds allowed, she invited them to eat Dutch-American dishes prepared by her own hands.

During these Paris days a heavy sorrow fell upon the family. The beautiful golden-haired boy, Hervey, then about five years old, fell ill, and after lingering for some time, passed away, and was buried in an exile's grave at St. Germain. Though the mother bore even this heart-crushing blow with outward fortitude, the memory of it dwelt always in an inner chamber of her heart. In a letter of sympathy written by her years afterwards to the Graham Balfours, on hearing of the death of one of their children, she says: "My Hervey would have been a man of forty now had he lived, and yet I am grieving and longing for my little child as though he had just gone. Time doesn't always heal wounds as we are told it does.”

After this sad event the bereaved mother was so listless and broken in health that the doctor advised a change to some quiet country place, where she could get the benefit of outdoor life and better air than in the stuffy little Paris apartment. A casual acquaintance, Mr. Pardessus, an American sculptor whom they had met at the art school, told them about Grez, a little village in Fontainebleau Forest on the River Loing, where there was a ruined castle, a picturesque old inn, and a lovely garden on the river-bank. Above all, it was modest in price and so retired that it was almost unknown to ordinary travellers. This alluring description was not to be resisted, and Mrs. Osbourne, with her little family, now sadly bereaved, left for the place which was to play so momentous a part in her future.

When they reached Grez they found there only one visitor — Mr. Walter Palmer, then a young student, who was painting in the garden. It was a quiet, restful place, and Mrs. Osbourne began to recover the tone of her health and spirits in its peaceful atmosphere.



The bridge at Grez.

Previous to this time women artists had been practically unknown in the colonies about Fontainebleau, and the men who haunted these places were disposed to resent the coming of any of the other sex. The news that an American lady and her two children had arrived at Grez spread consternation among them, and they sent a scout, Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson, ahead to look over the situation and report. The choice of scout was scarcely a wise one, for “Bob” Stevenson, as he was known to his friends, instantly fell a victim to the attractions of the strangers — who, by the way, were utterly unconscious that they were regarded as intruders — and so he stayed on from day to day. After waiting some time for the return of the faithless emissary, another, Sir Walter Simpson, was sent, but he, too, failed to return. Then Robert Louis Stevenson set out to look into the mystery. His coming had been led up to like a stage entrance, for first his cousin had told wonderful stories of adventures in which Louis was always the hero — what Louis did, what Louis said — until the two Americans, mother and daughter, began to get interested in this fascinating person; and then came Sir Walter, with more stories of Louis — stories that are now well known through An Inland Voyage.

One evening in the summer of 1876 the little party of guests at the old inn sat at dinner about the long table in the centre of the salle-à-manger with the painted panels — handiwork of artists who had stopped there at various times. It was a soft, sweet evening, and the doors and windows were open; dusk drew near, and the lamps had just been lit. Suddenly a young man approached from the outside. It was Robert Louis Stevenson, who afterwards admitted that he had fallen in love with his wife at first sight when he saw her in the lamplight through the open window.

The autumn months passed swiftly by after this meeting in an ideal existence of work and play. Mrs. Osbourne worked industriously at her painting, and as she sat at her easel the acquaintance between her and the young Scotchman rapidly flowered into a full and sympathetic understanding. Everything about this American family, speaking as it did of a land of new and strange customs and habits of thought, appealed strongly to the ardent young man. He was a devoted admirer of Walt Whitman, and thought he knew America. The daughter, Isobel, described by one of the members of the colony at Grez as “a bewitching young girl of seventeen, with eyes so large as to be out of drawing,” amazed and delighted him by the piquancy of the contrast between her and the young women he had previously known. In a girlish description given in one of her letters home, written at the time, she says:

“There is a young Scotchman here, a Mr. Stevenson, who looks at me as though I were a natural curiosity. He never saw a real American girl before, and he says I act and talk as though I came out of a book — I mean an American book. He says that when he first met Bloomer he came up to him and said in his western way: ‘These parts don’t seem much settled, hey?’ He laughed for an hour at the idea of such an old place not being much settled. He is such a nice looking ugly man, and I would rather listen to him talk than read the most interesting book I ever saw. We sit in the little green arbor after dinner drinking coffee and talking till late at night. Mama is ever so much better and is getting prettier every day.”

Again she writes:

"Yesterday I canoed to Nemours in Louis Stevenson's Rob Roy. We generally congregate down in the garden by the big tree after dinner. Mama swings in the hammock, looking as pretty as possible, and we all form a group around her on the grass, Louis and Bob Stevenson babbling about boats, while Simpson, seated near by, fans himself with a large white fan."

Fanny Osbourne at about the time of her first meeting with Robert Louis Stevenson.

The little party in the old inn, "entirely surrounded by peasants," as Bob Stevenson said, devised all sorts of sports, for which the river afforded many opportunities. There was a huge old boat, a double canoe, lying at the water's edge; this they put on rollers, and after the entire party had climbed into it, persuaded the passing peasants to come and push it off the bank, like a sort of "shoot the chutes." Another game was to divide the canoes into bands, each under a captain, and engage in a contest, each side trying to tip over the enemy canoes. In all this hilarious fun Louis Stevenson was the leader.

In the old hall they had great times, with dances, now and then a performance by strolling players, and once a masquerade given by the guests of the inn themselves, in which they dressed as gods and goddesses in sheets and wreaths. Once when a couple of wandering singers arrived after a disappointing season, the artists contributed a purse and invited them to spend a week and rest. These people told Stevenson the story he made into Providence and the Guitar, and the money which he received for it he sent to them afterwards to help pay for the education of their little girl in Paris.

But of all that went on at Grez the talks are remembered as the best, for, notwithstanding their merry fooling in their idle hours, there were brilliant minds among the company, and the conversation sparkled with rare conceits.

Three summers the Osbournes returned to spend at Grez, lingering on the last time until the snow came. A short visit was made to Barbizon, too, and once when there the whole party had their silhouettes drawn on the walls of the dining-room. This was done by placing a lamp so that it threw a shadow of the face in profile on the wall, then outlining the shadow and filling it in with black. Louis Stevenson wrote verses to them all. The place was repainted the next spring, which was to be regretted, for the walls were completely covered with the most interesting silhouettes and drawings by painters who later became famous, to say nothing of the verses made by Stevenson, which would now have been a priceless memorial of those youthful days.

Among the joyous coterie was the American painter Will H. Low, who writes thus of Fanny Osbourne in his Chronicle of Friendships:

“One evening at Grez we saw two new faces, mother and daughter, though in appearance more like sisters; the elder, slight, with delicately moulded features and vivid eyes gleaming from under a mass of dark hair; the younger of more robust type, in the first precocious bloom of womanhood.”

Another of the company, Mr. Birge Harrison, writing in the Century Magazine of December, 1916, expresses his mature judgment of her as he knew her at the little French village:

Robert Louis Stevenson in the French days.

"Among a few women who were doing serious work at this place was the lady, 'Trusty, dusky, vivid, and true,' to whom Robert Louis Stevenson inscribed the most beautiful love song of our time. Mrs. Osbourne could not have been at that time more than thirty-five years of age — a grave and remarkable type of womanhood, with eyes of a depth and sombre beauty that I have never seen equalled — eyes, nevertheless, that upon occasion could sparkle with humor and brim over with laughter. Yet upon the whole Mrs. Osbourne impressed me as first of all a woman of profound character and serious judgment, who could, if occasion called, have been the leader in some great movement. But she belonged to the quattrocento rather than to the nineteenth century. Had she been born a Medici, she would have held rank as one of the remarkable women of all time. That she was a woman of intellectual attainments is proved by the fact that she was already a magazine writer of recognized ability, and that at the moment when Stevenson first came into her life she was making a living for herself and her two children with her pen. But this, after all, is a more or less ordinary accomplishment, and Mrs. Osbourne was in no sense ordinary. Indeed, she was gifted with a mysterious sort of over-intelligence, which is almost impossible to describe, but which impressed itself upon every one who came within the radius of her influence. Napoleon had much of this; likewise his arch enemy, the great Duke of Wellington; and among women, Catherine of Russia and perhaps Elizabeth of England. She was therefore both physically and mentally the very antithesis of the gay, hilarious, open-minded and open-hearted Stevenson, and for that very reason perhaps the woman in all the world best fitted to be his life comrade and helpmate. At any rate we may well ask ourselves if anywhere else he would have found the kind of understanding and devotion which she gave him from the day of their first meeting at Grez until the day of his death in far-away Samoa; if anywhere else there was a woman of equal attainments who would willingly, nay gladly, throw aside all of the pleasures and comforts of civilization to live among savages, and the still rougher whites of the South Pacific, in order that her husband might have just a little more oxygen for his failing lungs, a little more chance for a respite and an extension of his shortening years? Probably no one ever better deserved than she the noble tribute of verse which her husband gave her, and from which I have quoted the opening line."

In 1878 the Osbournes returned to America, travelling by way of Queenstown, where, for the sake of stepping on Irish soil, they went ashore for a few hours and took a ride in a real jaunting-car, with a driver who was as Irish as possible, with a thick brogue, a hole in his hat, and a smiling, good-humoured countenance.

A short stop was made in Indiana to visit the old family home in Hendricks County, now saddened by the death of our father, and then Fanny Osbourne once more turned her steps towards the setting sun. At this time she added me, her youngest sister, to her party, and I remained with her until her marriage to Stevenson and their departure for Scotland. She was then in the full flower of her striking and unusual beauty, and so youthful in appearance that she, her daughter, and I passed everywhere as three sisters. To me, reared as I had been in the flat country of central Indiana, where mountains and the sea were wonders known only through books, the journey across the continent — with its glimpses of the mighty snow-capped crags of the Rockies outlined against the fiery sunset skies of that region, the weird castellated rocks of the "Bad Lands," the colonies of funny little prairie-dogs peeping out of their burrows, the blanket-wrapped Indians waiting at the stations, and finally the awesome vision of the stupendous canyons and precipices of the Sierras, was like some strange, impossible dream; and when at last we came out into the warm sun and flowery brightness of California, straight from the gloom and chill of an Indiana November, it was as though the gates of paradise had suddenly opened.

Not long after her return to California, finding a reconciliation with her husband to be quite out of the question, Mrs. Osbourne decided to bring suit for divorce, which was eventually granted without opposition.

In the meantime, being much run down in health as a result of these harassing anxieties, she wished to seek rest in some quiet place free from unpleasant associations. This she found in the charming little coast town of Monterey, which was then still unspoiled by tourist travel, and, taking her family with her, she went there for a stay of several months. In the soft air and peaceful atmosphere of this place her health and spirits soon revived. There she found an opportunity to indulge her skill as a horsewoman, and at any time she might have been seen galloping along the country roads on her little mustang, Clavel. She even joined a party of friends who accompanied a band of vaqueros in a great rodéo on the San Francisquito ranch near Monterey. We rode for days from station to station, through a delightful country, under the feathery, scented redwoods and beside clear mountain-streams in which the trout leaped. We slept in barns on the hay or on the far-from-downy rawhide cots in the ranch shanties, and subsisted on freshly killed beef hastily barbecued over the campfire, coming back to Monterey sunburned to a fine mahogany.

CHAPTER V

IN CALIFORNIA WITH ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

As the months passed, Stevenson, drawn by an irresistible desire to see the one who had become dearest in all the world to him, and having heard that she was soon to be freed from the bonds that held her to another, decided to take ship for America. After the long ocean voyage and the fatiguing journey from sea to sea, which he has himself so graphically described, he went straight to meet the family at Monterey.

In the year 1879 there remained one spot in practical America where the Spirit of Romance still lingered, though even there she stood a-tiptoe, ready to take wing into the mists of the Pacific. It seems fitting that it should have been at that place that I first knew Robert Louis Stevenson. Although the passing of the years has dimmed the memory of those days to a certain degree, yet here and there a high light gleams out in the shadowy haze of the picture and brings back the impression of his face and personality and of the surroundings and little events of our daily life in his company as though they had happened but yesterday. The little town of Monterey, being out of the beaten track of travel, and having no mines or large agricultural tracts in its vicinity to stimulate trade, had dreamed away the years since American occupation, and still retained much of the flavour of the pastoral days of Spanish California. It is true that at the cascarone balls — at which the entire population, irrespective of age or worldly position, dressed in silks or in flannel shirts, as the case might be, still gathered almost weekly in truly democratic comradeship — the egg-shells were no longer filled with gold-dust, as sometimes happened in the prodigal Spanish days; yet time was still regarded as a thing of so little value that no one thought of abandoning the pleasures of the dance until broad daylight. Along the narrow, crooked streets of the little town, with its precarious wooden sidewalks, the language of old Castile, spoken with surprising purity, was heard more often than English. In fact, as Mr. Stevenson himself says in his essay on The Old Pacific Capital: “It was difficult to get along without a word or two of that language for an occasion.”

High adobe walls, topped with tiles, concealed pleasant secluded gardens, from which the heavy perfume of the floribundia and other semitropical flowers poured out on the evening air. Behind such a wall and in the midst of such a garden stood the two-story adobe dwelling of the Señorita Maria Ygnacia Bonifacio, known to her intimates as Doña Nachita. In the "clean empty rooms" of this house, furnished with Spanish abstemiousness and kept in shining whiteness, "where the roar of the water dwelt as in a shell upon the chimney," we had our temporary residence, and here Louis Stevenson came often to visit us and share our simple meals, each of which became a little fête in the thrill of his presence and conversation. Something he had in him that made life seem a more exciting thing, better worth living, to every one associated with him, and it seemed impossible to be dull or bored in his company. It is true that he loved to talk, and one of his friends complained that he was too "deuced explanatory," but it seemed to me that the flood of talk he sometimes poured out was the overflow of a full mind, a mind so rich in ideas that he could well afford to bestow some of it upon his friends without hope of return. His was no narrow vein to be jealously hoarded for use in his writings, but his difficulty lay rather in choosing from the wealth of his store. He once remarked that he could not understand a man's having to struggle to "find something to write about," and perhaps it is true that one who has to do that has no real vocation as a writer.

When he came to us at Monterey he was newly arrived in this country, and seemed to be in a rather peculiar state of mind concerning it, complaining that it was too much like England to have the piquancy of a foreign land, and yet not enough like it to have the restfulness of home, therefore it left him with a strange, unsatisfied feeling. One of the things in the new land that pleased him much was its food, for he believed in enjoying the good things of this life, and he was like a second Christopher Columbus, just discovering green corn and sweet potatoes. In a letter to his friend Sidney Colvin he says: "In America you eat better than anywhere else; fact. The food is heavenly!" During his first days at Monterey he kept singing the praises of certain delectable "little cakes," which he had found much to his liking in the railroad eating-houses while crossing the continent. These were a great mystery to us until one day Ah Sing, the Chinese cook, placed upon the table a plate of smoking-hot baking-powder biscuits. Behold the famous "little cakes"!

The unexpected discovery in the town of Jules Simoneau, to whom he refers in his letters as "a most pleasant old boy, with whom I discuss the universe and play chess," a man of varied talents, who was able to furnish him with an excellent dinner, as well as the intelligent companionship that he valued more than food, was a great satisfaction to him. Often we all repaired together to Simoneau's little restaurant, where we were served meals that were a rare combination of French and Spanish cookery, for our host's wife, Doña Martina, was a native of Miraflores, in Lower California, and was skilled in the preparation of the tamales and carne con chile of the Southwest. It has always seemed to me that in the oft-told story of the friendship between Jules Simoneau and Robert Louis Stevenson but scant justice has been done to that uncommonly fine woman Doña Martina, who, no doubt, had her part in caring for the writer when he lay so ill in Monterey. Perhaps more often than not it was her kind and skilful hand that prepared the broth and smoothed the pillow for Don Roberto Luís, as she called him; and though she had but little book knowledge, she was, in her native good sense, her well-chosen language, and the dignity and courtesy of her manners, what people call a "born lady." Mrs. Stevenson was profoundly grateful to Jules Simoneau for his early kindness to her husband, and had a sincere admiration for his wife as well. When he fell into straitened circumstances in his old age, she went to his rescue and provided him with a comfortable living during his last years. When he died she followed him to his last resting-place, and afterwards erected a suitable monument to mark it, only stipulating that the name of Doña Martina should also be placed upon it, she having died some time before him.

In the Señorita Bonifacio's garden, where we spent much of our time, there was a riot of flowers — rich yellow masses of enormous cloth-of-gold roses, delicate pink old-fashioned Castilian roses, which the Señorita carefully gathered each year to make rose-pillows, besides fuchsias as large as young trees, and a thousand other blooms of incredible size and beauty. Loving them all, their little Spanish mistress flitted about among them like a bird, alert, active, bright-eyed, straight as an arrow, and as springy of step as a girl of sixteen, although even then she was past her first youth.

As to flowers, it seemed to me that they made no particular appeal to Mr. Stevenson except for their scent, in which he was very like the rest of his sex the world over. He cared rather for nature's larger effects — a noble cloud in the sky, the thunder of the surf on the beach, or the fresh resinous smell of the pine forest.

To this house he came often of an afternoon to read the results of his morning's work to the assembled family. While we sat in a circle, listening in appreciative silence, he nervously paced the room, reading aloud in his full sonorous voice — a voice that always seemed remarkable in so frail a man — his face flushed and his manner embarrassed, for, far from being overconfident about his work, he always seemed to feel a sort of shy anxiety lest it should not be up to the mark. He invariably gave respectful attention and careful consideration to the criticism of the humblest of his hearers, but in the end clung with Scotch pertinacity to his own opinion if he was sure of its justice. In this way we heard The Pavilion on the Links, which he wrote at Monterey, and read to us chapter by chapter as they came from his pen. While there he also began another story which was to have been called Arizona Breckinridge, or A Vendetta in the West. This story, with its rather lurid title, was to have been based upon some of his impressions of western America, but his heart could not have been in it, for it was never finished. The name of Arizona came out of his intense delight in the "songful, tuneful" nomenclature of the United States, in which terms he refers to it in Across the Plains. The name Susquehanna was a special joy to him, and he took pleasure in rolling it on his tongue, adding to its music with the rich tones of his voice, as he repeated it: "Susquehanna! Oh, beautiful!" While on the train passing through Pennsylvania he wrote some verses in a letter to Sidney Colvin about the beautiful river with the "tuneful" name, of which one stanza runs thus:

"I think, I hope, I dream no more
The dreams of otherwhere;
The cherished thoughts of yore;
I have been changed from what I was before;
And drunk too deep perchance the lotus of the air
Beside the Susquehanna and along the Delaware."

Again, in writing the poem entitled Ticonderoga, it was the name that first drew his attention, and

"It sang in his sleeping ears,
It hummed in his waking head;
The name — Ticonderoga."

Some story that we told him about a man who named his numerous family of daughters after the States — Indiana, Nebraska, California, etc. — took his fancy and suggested the name of Arizona Breckinridge to him.

Out of the mist arise memories of walks along the beach — the long beach of clean white sand that stretches unbroken for many miles around the great sweeping curve of Monterey Bay, where we "watched the tiny sandy-pipers, and the huge Pacific seas." Sometimes we walked there at night, when the blood-red harvest-moon sprang suddenly like a great ball of fire above the rim of horizon on the opposite side of the circling bay, sending a glittering track across the water to our very feet. To walk with Stevenson on such a night, and watch "the waves come in slowly, vast and green, curve their translucent necks and burst with a surprising uproar" — to walk with him on such a night and listen to his inimitable talk is the sort of memory that cannot fade. On other nights when the waters of the bay were all alight with the glow of phosphorescence, we walked on the old wooden pier and marvelled at the billows of fire sent rolling in beneath us by the splashing porpoises.

Perhaps nothing about the place interested him more deeply than the old mission of San Carlos Borroméo, once the home of the illustrious Junípero Serra, and now the last resting-place of his earthly remains. Within its ruined walls mass was celebrated once a year in honour of its patron, Saint Charles Borroméo, and after the religious service was over the people joined in a joyous merienda under the trees, during which vast quantities of tamales, enchiladas, and other distinctive Spanish-American viands were generously distributed to friend and stranger, Catholic and Protestant. Mr. Stevenson attended one of these celebrations, and was greatly moved by the sight of the pitiful remnant of aged Indians, sole survivors of Father Serra's once numerous flock, as they lifted their quavering voices in the mass. He expressed much surprise at the clarity of their pronunciation of the Latin, and in his essay on The Old Pacific Capital, he says: "There you may hear God served with perhaps more touching circumstances than in any other temple under Heaven.... These Indians have the Gregorian music at their finger-ends, and pronounce the Latin so correctly that I could follow the music as they sang." Much has been changed since then, for the church has been "restored," and the little band of Indians have long since quavered out their last mass and gone to meet their beloved pastor, the saintly Serra.

Those were dolce-far-niente days at Monterey, dreamy, romantic days, spent beneath the bluest sky, beside the bluest sea, and in the best company on earth, and all glorified by the rainbow hues of youth. But, as Mr. Stevenson prophesied, the little town was "not strong enough to resist the influence of the flaunting caravanserai which sprang up in the desert by the railway," and after the coming of the fashionable hotel the commercial spirit came to life in the place. The tile-topped walls, hiding their sweet secluded gardens, gave way to the new frame or brick buildings, the narrow, crooked streets were straightened and graded, the breakneck sidewalks replaced by neat cement pavements, and, at last, the Spirit of Romance spread her wings and vanished into the mists of the Pacific.

The setting of the picture is now changed to Oakland, across the bay from San Francisco, where we lived for some months in the little house which Mr. Stevenson himself describes in the dedication to Prince Otto as "far gone in the respectable stages of antiquity, and which seemed indissoluble from the green garden in which it stood, and that yet was a sea-traveller in its younger days, and had come round the Horn piecemeal in the belly of a ship, and might have heard the seamen stamping and shouting and the note of the boatswain's whistle." This cottage was of the variety known as "cloth and paper," a flimsy construction permitted by the kindly climate of California, and on winter nights, when the wind blew in strongly from the sea, its sides puffed in and out, greatly to the amusement of the "Scot," accustomed as he was to the solid buildings of his native land. It was, as he says, “embowered in creepers,” for over its front a cloth-of-gold rose spread its clinging arms, and over one side a Banksia flung a curtain of green and yellow.

It was during his stay in this house that we first realised the serious nature of his illness, and yet there was none of the depressing atmosphere of sickness, for he refused to be the regulation sick man. Every day he worked for a few hours at least, while I acted as amanuensis in order to save him the physical labour of writing. In this way the first rough draught of Prince Otto was written, and here, too, he tried his hand at poetry, producing some of the poems that afterwards appeared in the collection called Underwoods, although it is certain that he never believed himself to be possessed of the true poetic fire. Brave as his spirit was, yet he had his dark moments when the dread of premature death weighed upon him. It was probably in such a mood that he wrote the poem called Not Yet, My Soul, an appeal to fate in which he expressed his rebellion against an untimely end.

“Not yet, my soul, these friendly fields desert,
....
The ship rides trimmed, and from the eternal shore
Thou hearest airy voices; but not yet
Depart, my soul, not yet awhile depart.
....
Leave not, my soul, the unfoughten field, nor leave
Thy debts dishonored, nor thy place desert
Without due service rendered. For thy life,
Up, spirit, and defend that fort of clay,
Thy body, now beleaguered.”

While engaged in dictating, he had a habit of walking up and down the room, his pace growing faster and faster as his enthusiasm rose. We feared that this was not very good for him, so we quietly devised a scheme to prevent it, without his knowledge, by hemming him in with tables and chairs, so that each time he sprang up to walk he sank back discouraged at sight of the obstructions. When I recall the sleepless care with which Mrs. Stevenson watched over him at that critical point in his life, it seems to me that it is not too much to say that the world owes it to her that he lived to produce his best works.

But above and beyond his wife’s care for his physical well-being was the strong courage with which she stood by him in his hours of gloom and heartened him up to the fight. Her profound faith in his genius before the rest of the world had come to recognize it had a great deal to do with keeping up his faith in himself, and her discriminating taste in literature was such that he had begun even then to submit all his writings to her criticism.

Although his own life work lay entirely in the field of letters, he had a sincere admiration for work with the hands, and often expressed his surprise at the mechanical cleverness of American women. He took pleasure in seeing that we could cut, fit, and make our own clothing, and do a pretty good job of it, too, and looked on at the operation with serious interest, sometimes making useful suggestions, for he had a genuine and unaffected sympathy with the work and aims of other people, no matter how humble they might be. Any one could go to him with a tale of daily struggle, of little ambitions bravely fought for, even though it were nothing more than a job as waiter in a restaurant, and be sure of his respectful consideration and sincere advice, always granting that the ambition were honest and the fight well fought.

Sickness and discouragement were not enough to keep down his boyish gaiety, which he sometimes manifested by teasing his womenfolk. One of his favourite methods of doing this was to station himself on a chair in front of us, and, with his brown eyes lighted up with a whimsical smile, talk broad Scotch, in a Highland nasal twang, by the hour, until we cried for mercy. Yet he was decidedly sensitive about that same Scotch, and his feelings were much wounded by hearing me express a horror of reading it in books.

A pleasant trivial circumstance of our life that comes to mind is an occasion when we were all rejoicing in the possession of new clothes — a rare event with any of us in those days, and Louis proposed that we should celebrate this extraordinary prosperity by an evening at the theatre. Women wore pockets then, but there had been no time to provide my dress with one, so Louis agreed to carry my handkerchief, but only on condition that I should ask for it when needed in a true Scotch twang, “Gie me the naepkin!” a condition that I was compelled to fulfill, no doubt to the surprise of our neighbours at the theatre. Gilbert and Sullivan were in their heyday then, and the play given that night was The Pirates of Penzance. Louis said the London “bobbies” were true to life.

Chief among the amusements with which we tried to brighten the extreme quietude of our lives in the little Oakland house was reading aloud. We obtained books from the Mercantile Library of San Francisco, among which I especially remember the historical works of Francis Parkman, who was a great favourite with Mr. Stevenson. He had a theory that the not uncommon distaste among the people for that branch of literature was largely the fault of the dull style adopted by many historians, and saw no good reason why the thrilling story of the great events of the world should not be presented in a manner that would hold the interest of readers. Yet he had no patience with the sort of writing that subordinates truth to the desire of presenting a striking picture. As an instance, certainly of rare occurrence in Parkman, he noticed a paragraph in The Conspiracy of Pontiac, in which the author refers to the shining of the moon on a certain night when a party was endeavouring to make a secret passage down the river through hostile country. He thought it unlikely that Parkman could have known that the moon shone on that particular night, though it is possible that he did him an injustice, for it sometimes happens that just such a trivial circumstance is mentioned in the documents of the early explorers.

Sometimes he read aloud to us from some French writer, translating it into English as he read for our benefit. Les Étrangleurs was one of the books that he read to us in this way, while we sat and sewed our seams. He seemed to get a good deal of rest as well as amusement from the reading of such books of mystery and adventure. His taste was always for the decent in literature, and he was much offended by the works of the writers of the materialistic school who were just then gaining a vogue. Among these was Emile Zola, and he exacted a promise from me never to read that writer — a promise that has been faithfully kept to this day.

His stay at Monterey had given him a fancy to study the Spanish language, so we obtained books and began it together. He had a theory that a language could be best acquired by plunging directly into it, but I have a suspicion that our choice of a drama of the sixteenth century, one of Lope de Vega's, I think, was scarcely a wise one for beginners. He refers to this venture of ours in a letter to Sidney Colvin as "the play which the sister and I are just beating our way through with two bad dictionaries and an insane grammar." Nevertheless, we made some headway, and I remember that he marvelled greatly at the far-fetched, high-flown similes and figures of speech indulged in by the writers of the "Golden Age" of Spain. In spite of his confessed dislike for the cold-blooded study of the grammar, we did not altogether neglect it, and a day comes to my mind when he was assisting me in the homely task of washing the dishes in the pleasant sunny kitchen where the Banksia rose hung its yellow curtain over the windows. We recited Spanish conjugations while we worked, and he held up a glass for my inspection, saying: "See how beautifully I have polished it, Nellie. There is no doubt that I have missed my vocation. I was born to be a butler." "No, Louis," I replied, "some day you are to be a famous writer, and who knows but that I shall write about you, as the humble Boswell wrote about Johnson, and tell the world how you once wiped dishes for me in this old kitchen!"

For the long evenings of winter we had a game which Louis invented expressly for our amusement. Lloyd Osbourne, then a boy of twelve, had rather more than the usual boy's fondness for stories of the sea. It will be remembered that it was to please this boy that Mr. Stevenson afterwards wrote Treasure Island. Our game was to tell a continued story, each person being limited to two minutes, taking up the tale at the point where the one before him left off. We older ones had a secret understanding that we were to keep Lloyd away from the sea, but strive as we might, even though we left the hero stranded in the middle of the Desert of Sahara, Lloyd never failed to have him sailing the bounding main again before his allotted two minutes expired.

Many and long were the arguments that we had on the merits of our respective countries, and I remember that Mr. Stevenson did not place the sentiment of patriotism at the top of the list of human virtues, for he believed that to concentrate one's affections and interest too closely upon one small section of the earth's surface, simply on account of the accident of birth, had a narrowing effect upon a man's mental outlook and his human sympathies. He was a citizen of the world in his capacity to understand the point of view of other men, of whatsoever race, colour, or creed, and it was this catholicity of spirit that made it possible for him to sit upon the benches of Portsmouth Square in San Francisco and learn something of real life from the human flotsam and jetsam cast up there by fate.

Of all the popular songs of America he liked Marching Through Georgia and Dixie best. For Home, Sweet Home he had no liking, perhaps from having heard it during some moment of poignant homesickness. He said that such a song made too brutal an assault upon a man's tenderest feelings, and believed it to be a much greater triumph for a writer to bring a smile to his readers than a tear — partly, perhaps, because it is a more difficult achievement.

Here the scene changes again, this time to San Francisco, the city of many hills, of drifting summer fogs, and sparkling winter sunshine, the old city that now lives only in the memories of those who knew it in the days when Stevenson climbed the steep ways of its streets. Although he had something about him of the ennui of the much-travelled man, and complained that

"There's nothing under heaven so blue,
That's fairly worth the travelling to,"

yet no attraction was lost on him, and the Far Western flavour of San Francisco, with its added tang of the Orient, and the feeling of adventure blowing in on its salt sea-breezes, was much to his liking. My especial memory here is of many walks taken with him up Telegraph Hill, where the streets were grass-grown because no horse could climb them, and the sidewalks were provided with steps or cleats for the assistance of foot-passengers. This hill, formerly called

“Signal Hill,” was used in earlier days, on account of its commanding outlook over the sea, as a signal-station to indicate the approach of vessels and give their class, and possibly their names as they neared the city. When we took our laborious walks up its precipitous paths it was, as now, the especial home of Italians and other Latin people. Mr. Stevenson wondered much at the happy-go-lucky confidence, or perhaps it was their simple trust in God, with which these people had built their houses in the most alarmingly insecure places, sometimes hanging on the very edge of a sheer precipice, sometimes with the several stories built on different levels, climbing the hill like steps. About them there was a pleasant air of foreign quaintness — little railed balconies across the fronts, outside stairways leading up to the second stories, and green blinds to give a look of Latin seclusion.

In stories of his San Francisco days there is much talk of the restaurants where he took his meals. The one that I particularly remember was a place kept by Frank García, familiarly known as “Frank’s.” This place, being moderately expensive, was probably only frequented by him on special occasions, when fortune was in one of her smiling moods. Food was good and cheap and in large variety in San Francisco in those days, and venison steak was as often served up to us at Frank’s as beef, while canvasback ducks had not yet flown out of the poor man’s sight; so we had many a savory meal there, generally served by a waiter named Monroe, with whom Mr. Stevenson now and then exchanged a friendly jest. I remember one day when Monroe, remarking on the depression of spirits from which Louis suffered during the temporary absence of the women of his family, said: “I had half a mind to take him in a piece of calico on a plate.”

Once more the picture changes, now to the town of Calistoga — with its hybrid name made up of syllables from Saratoga and California — where we stayed for a few days at the old Springs Hotel while on our way to Mount Saint Helena, to which mountain refuge Mr. Stevenson was fleeing from the sea-fogs of the coast. The recollection of this journey seems to have melted into a general impression of winding mountain roads, of deep canyons full of tall green trees, of lovely limpid streams rippling over the stones in darkly shaded depths where the fern-brakes grew rankly, of burning summer heat, and much dust. At the Springs Hotel we lived in one of the separate palm-shaded cottages most agreeably maintained for the guests who liked privacy. On the premises were tiny sheds built over the steaming holes in the ground which constituted the Calistoga Hot Springs. It gave one a sensation like walking about on a sieve over a boiling subterranean caldron. Determined not to miss any experience, we each took a turn at a steambath in these sheds, but the sense of imminent suffocation was too strong to be altogether pleasant.

Then came the wild ride up the side of the mountain, in a six-horse stage driven at a reckless rate of speed by its indifferent driver, whirling around curves where the outer wheels had scarcely an inch to spare, while we looked fearfully down upon the tops of the tall trees in the canyon far below. If the horses slackened their pace for an instant, the driver stooped to pick up a stone from a pile that he kept at his feet and bombarded them into a fresh spurt. At the Toll House, half-way up the mountain, which still exists in much the same condition as in those days, we arrived as mere animated pillars of fine white dust, all individuality as completely lost as though we had been shrouded in masks and dominoes.

The Toll House was a place of somnolent peace and deep stillness, broken only by a pleasant dripping from the wooden flume that brought down the cold waters of some spring hidden in the thick green growth far up on the mountainside. And such water! He who has once tasted of the nectar of a California mountain spring "will not ask for wine!" At the Toll House we had liberal country meals, with venison steaks, served to us every day. Bear were still killed on the mountain, but I do not remember having any to eat. From this place we climbed, by way of a toilsome and stiflingly hot footpath running through a tangle of thick undergrowth, to the old Silverado mine bunk-house, where the Stevenson family took up their headquarters. People said there were many rattlesnakes about, and now and then we saw indubitable evidence of their presence in a long, spotted body lying in the road, where it had been killed by some passer-by, but fear of them never troubled our footsteps. In The Silverado Squatters Mr. Stevenson says, "The place abounded with rattlesnakes, and the rattles whizzed on every side like spinning-wheels," but I am inclined to think that he often mistook the buzzing noise made by locusts, or some other insect, for the rattle of the snakes.

The old bunk-house seemed to me an incredibly uncomfortable place of residence. Its situation, on top of the mine-dump piled against the precipitous mountainside, permitted no chance to take a step except upon the treacherous rolling stones of the dump; but we bore with its manifest disadvantages for the sake of its one high redeeming virtue — its entire freedom from the fog which we dreaded for the sick man. It was excessively hot there during the day, but there was one place where coolness always held sway — the mouth of the old tunnel, from whose dark, mysterious depths, which we never dared explore for fear of stepping off into some forgotten shaft, a cold, damp wind blew continuously. Just inside its entrance we established a cold-storage plant, for there all articles kept delightfully fresh in the hottest weather. When the coolness of the evening fell, "it was good to gather stones and send them crashing down the chute," and indeed this was almost our only pastime in our queer mountain eyrie. The noise made by these stones as they went bounding down the chute was sent back in tremendous rolling echoes by the mountains on the opposite side of the valley, and it pleased us to liken it to the noise heard by Rip Van Winkle, "like distant peals of thunder," made by the ghosts of Hendrik Hudson's men playing at ninepins in the Catskill Mountains.

Then back to San Francisco, where the only memory that remains is that of a confused blur of preparations for leaving — packing, ticket-buying, and melancholy farewells — for the time had come to return to old Scotland to introduce a newly acquired American wife to waiting parents.

One day Louis came in with his pockets full of twenty-dollar gold pieces, with which he had supplied himself for the journey. He thought this piece of money the handsomest coin in the world, and said it made a man feel rich merely to handle it. In a jesting mood, he drew the coins from his pockets, threw them on the table, whence they rolled right and left on the floor, and said: "Just look! I'm simply lousy wid money!"

Then came the parting, which proved to be eternal, for I never saw him again; but perhaps it is better to remember him only as he was then — before the rainbow hues of youth had faded.

To this picture, which represents my own personal recollections of the California period, something yet remains to be added. Many obstacles seemed to block the path to happiness of these two people, not the least of which was Louis's ill health and consequent inability to earn a sufficient sum to support new obligations. To his great joy this difficulty was finally smoothed away by a promise from his father of an allowance large enough for their needs until such time as restored health might bring about his independence. I remember the day this word came from his father, and the exceeding happiness it gave him. While it is true that his parents had at first objected to his marriage, their objections were based, not on the matter of the divorce, for they held extremely liberal views on that subject, but simply on the fact of his choice being an American and a stranger. They would, quite naturally, have preferred a daughter-in-law of their own race and acquaintance, but both were intensely attached to their only and gifted son, and, although his decision caused their own plans to "gang agley," when they found that his mind was irrevocably made up, they yielded without reserve, and prepared to welcome their new daughter to their home and hearts. Writing at this time to his friend Mr. Edmund Gosse, Stevenson expressed his satisfaction at the turn affairs were taking in these words:

"Many of the thunderclouds that were overhanging me when last I wrote have silently stolen away, like Longfellow's Arabs; and I am now engaged to be married to the woman whom I have loved for three years and a half. I will boast myself so far as to say that I do not think many wives are better loved than mine will be."

When the rain-clouds at last rolled away, and the snow had melted from the mountain-tops in the Coast Range, Fanny Osbourne and Robert Louis Stevenson went quietly across the bay and were married, on May 19, 1880, by the Reverend Mr. Scott, with only Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Virgil Williams as witnesses. It was a serious, rather than a joyous occasion, for both realised that a future overcast with doubt lay before them. In 1881 Stevenson wrote from Pitlochry in Scotland to Mr. P. G. Hamerton:

"It was not my bliss that I was interested in when I was married; it was a sort of marriage in extremis; and if I am where I am, it is thanks to the care of that lady, who married me when I was a mere complication of cough and bones, much fitter for an emblem of mortality than a bridegroom."

As for her, she married him when his fortunes, both in health and finances, were at their lowest ebb, and she took this step in the almost certain conviction that in a few months at least she would be a widow. The best that she hoped for was to make his last days as comfortable and happy as possible, and that her self-sacrifice was to receive the bountiful reward of fourteen rich years in his companionship, during which time she was to see him win fame and fortune by the exercise of his genius, was far from her dreams.

At the time of their marriage they took with them Mrs. Stevenson's son, Samuel Lloyd Osbourne, her daughter having been married a short time before to Joseph Strong, a well-known artist of the Pacific Coast. Mr. Stevenson took this boy, then about twelve years of age, to his heart as his own. In fact he always counted it as one of the blessings that came through his wife that she brought to him, a childless man, a son and daughter to be a comfort to him in all the years of his life. In his talk at his last Thanksgiving dinner he referred to this as one of his chief reasons for gratitude.

In the healing air of Mount Saint Helena the invalid grew better with astonishing rapidity, and at the end of June he wrote to his mother:

"You must indeed pardon me. This life takes up all my time and strength. I am truly better; I am allowed to do nothing, never leave our little platform in the canyon nor do a stroke of work. No one to see me now would think I was an invalid."

When, in 1883, his mother expressed surprise that such a rough place should have been chosen for his cure, her daughter-in-law answered:

Fanny Osbourne at the time of her marriage to Robert Louis Stevenson.

“You wonder at my allowing Louis to go to such a place. Why, if you only knew how thankful I was to get there with him! I was told that nothing else would save his life, and I believe it was true. We could not afford to go to a ‘mountain resort’ place, and there was no other chance. Then, on the other hand, the next day I put in doors and windows of light frames covered with white cotton, with bits of leather from the old boots (miners’ boots found in the deserted cabin) for hinges, made seats and beds, and got things to look quite homelike. We got white and red wine, dried peaches and fruits which we kept cool in the tunnel and which we enjoyed extremely. Louis says nothing about the flowers, but the beauty of them was beyond description, to say nothing of the perfume. At the back door was a thicket of trees covered with cream-colored and scarlet lilies. I have never seen the like anywhere in the world."

Again she writes from Calistoga, July 16, 1880, to the yet unknown mother-in-law:

"As to my dear boy's appearance, he improves every day in the most wonderful way, so that I fancy by the time you see him you will hardly know that he has ever been ill at all. I do try to take care of him; the old doctor insists that my nursing saved him; I cannot quite think it myself, as I shouldn't have known what to do without the doctor's advice, but even having it said is a pleasure to me. Taking care of Louis is, as you must know, very like angling for shy trout; one must understand when to pay out the line, and exercise the greatest caution in drawing him in. I am becoming most expert, though it is an anxious business. I do not believe that any of Louis's friends, outside of his own family, have ever realised how very low he has been; letters followed him continually, imploring, almost demanding his immediate return to England, when the least fatigue, the shortest journey, might, and probably would, have proved fatal; and, which at the moment filled my heart with bitterness against them, they actually asked for work. Now, at last, I think he may venture to make the journey without fear, though every step must be made cautiously. I am sure now that he is on the high road to recovery and health, and I believe his best medicine will be the meeting with you and his father, for whom he pines like a child. I have had a sad time through it all, but it has been worse for you, I know. I am now able to say that all things are for the best. Louis has come out of this illness a better man than he was before; not that I did not think him good always, but the atmosphere of the valley of the shadow is purifying to a true soul; and though he may be no nearer your hearts than before, I believe you will take more comfort in your son than you have ever done. I trust that in about two weeks we shall be able to start, and perhaps in less time than that. Please remember that my photograph is flattering; unfortunately all photographs of me are; I can get no other. At the same time Louis thinks me, and to him I believe I am, the most beautiful creature in the world. It is because he loves me that he thinks that, so I am very glad. I do so earnestly hope that you will like me, but that can only be for what I am to you after you know me, and I do not want you to be disappointed in the beginning in anything about me, even in so small a thing as my looks. Your fancy that I may be a business person is a sad mistake. I am no better in that respect than Louis, and he has gifts that compensate for any lack. I fear it is only genius that is allowed to be stupid in ordinary things."

In this letter the natural trepidation with which she looked forward to the meeting with her husband's parents, divided as they were from her in race and customs, is evident. She was, as she confessed to some of her friends, quite terrified at the prospect, especially as concerned the elder Mr. Stevenson, whose portrait represented a serious Scotchman with a stern, almost forbidding face, firm mouth, and long upper lip. Her fear of her mother-in-law was less, for from her she had had many affectionate and reassuring letters. How utterly groundless her apprehensions were in this matter we shall see later.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty of the future that lay before them, they were both exceedingly happy in the fruition of their long-frustrated plans, and for her it lifted a cloud that had rested upon her spirits for years. One day in San Francisco, shortly after the marriage, her daughter, upon entering a room, stopped with a sudden shock, startled by the unaccustomed sound of a light happy laugh, the first she remembered ever having heard from the lips of her mother. For the first time she realised what a sad and bitter life Fanny Osbourne's had been.

Louis's health now being considered strong enough for the journey, they left their sunny eyrie on the mountainside in July, and on August 7, 1880, sailed from New York for England.

CHAPTER VI

EUROPE AND THE BRITISH ISLES

When the newly married pair reached Scotland all the fears of the American bride vanished like mist before the sun, for her husband's parents instantly took her to their hearts as though she had been their own choice. In The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson Sir Sidney Colvin says:

"Of her new family Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson, brought thus strangely and from afar into their midst, made an immediate conquest. To her husband's especial happiness, there sprang up between her and his father the closest possible affection and confidence. Parents and friends, if it is permissible for one of the latter to say as much, rejoiced to recognize in Stevenson's wife a character as strong, as interesting, and romantic as his own; an inseparable sharer of all his thoughts, and staunch companion of all his adventures; the most open-hearted of friends to all who loved him, the most shrewd and stimulating critic of his work; and in sickness ... the most devoted and efficient of nurses."

Mr. Edmund Gosse writes in the Century Magazine, 1895:

"He had married in California a charming lady whom we all learned to regard as the most appropriate and helpful companion that Louis could possibly have secured."

Concerning her relations with her mother-in-law, another friend, Lady Balfour, writes:

"It is a testimonial both to her and to Mrs. Thomas Stevenson that though they were as the poles apart in character, yet each loved and appreciated the other most fully." How different they were in training and ideas of life is illustrated by a trivial incident that occurred when the younger woman was visiting at the home of her husband's parents in Scotland. Her mother-in-law asked her if she never "worked." In some surprise she replied that she had indeed worked, and then found out that the elder lady meant fancy-work. Thereupon the two went out shopping and bought all the things needful for a piano-cover to be embroidered with roses. In a few days the piano-cover, exquisitely finished, was triumphantly brought for Mrs. Thomas Stevenson's inspection, but that lady, shocked at this American strenuousness, threw up her hands and exclaimed: "Oh, Fanny! How could you! That piece should have lasted you all summer!"

Thomas Stevenson, however, was far more formidable; to the female members of his family his word was law, but to his pretty daughter-in-law he capitulated — horse, foot, and dragoons — and his son was heard to say that he had never seen his father so completely subjugated. It is true, on the other hand, that she made every effort to please him, and took pains not to offend his old-fashioned and rigidly conventional ideas. For instance, when he objected to black stockings, which were just then coming into vogue for ladies, she yielded to his prejudice and always wore white ones while at his house. He had a deep respect for her judgment in literary matters, and made his son promise "never to publish anything without her approval." This regard was mutual, and she said of him: "I shall always believe that something unusual and great was lost to the world in Thomas Stevenson. One could almost see the struggle between the creature of cramped hereditary conventions and the man nature had intended him to be." As his health failed he grew to depend upon her more and more, and there was between them an interchange of much friendliness and many little jests. A rather amusing thing happened once when the two were together in London picking out furnishings for the house he had bought for her at Bournemouth. One afternoon they dropped in at a hotel for tea. It had been ordered by the doctors that he should have bicarbonate of soda in his tea, which it seems he did not like if he saw it put in, but if he did not see it never knew the difference. When the tea was brought his daughter-in-law, having diverted his attention, slyly dropped in the soda. Glancing up, she saw in the looking-glass the reflection of the horrified face of the waiter. When she told this story to her husband he immediately began to weave a thrilling plot around the suspicion that might have fallen upon her if her father-in-law had happened to die suddenly just then, especially as his son was his chief heir. Uncle Tom, as she usually called him, had all sorts of pet names for her, but the usual remark was "I doot ye're a besom." She was in all ways a true daughter to him, a comfort in his old age and last distressing illness, and when he died she mourned him sincerely.

To the Scotch servants in her mother-in-law's house she was something of an enigma. One of them told her she "spoke English very well for a foreigner." One day she heard two of them talking about a Mr. McCollop who had just returned from Africa. "He's merrit a black woman," said one, and in a mirror the other was seen to point to Mrs. Stevenson's back and put her finger to her lips, as though to say: "Don't mention black wives before her!"

It was soon seen that Louis could not face a Scotch winter, with its raw winds and cold, drizzling rains, and sometimes his wife felt regrets for the sunny perch on the California mountainside, where health and strength had once come back to him so marvellously. It was finally decided to try the dry, clear air of Davos Platz, in the high Alps of Switzerland, which was just then coming into prominence as a cure for lung diseases, and in October, 1880, the little family, husband, wife, and the boy, Lloyd Osbourne, set forth on the arduous journey thither.

To see publishers and for other necessary business, they stopped in London on the way, where Mrs. Stevenson was much troubled lest her husband should suffer harm from the thick, foggy atmosphere and the fatigue of meeting people. Because he was too weak to see many visitors, she kept them off, which threw a sort of mystery about him, and led to his being called in London "the veiled prophet." The only persons she had trouble with were the doctors, who were themselves so fascinated by his conversation that they often stayed too long. The task of keeping his parents informed of his state was now added to her duties, and in letters to her mother-in-law from London she says:

"As it is short and often that seems to be wanted, I thought I would send off a note to-night to say that if nothing happens we leave London to-morrow, and glad enough I shall be to get away.... For no one in the world will I stop in London another hour after the time set. It is a most unhealthful place at this season, and Louis knows far too many people to get a moment's rest.... Company comes in at all hours from early morning till late at night, so that I almost never have a moment alone, and if we do not soon get away from London I shall become an embittered woman. It is not good for my mind, nor my body either, to sit smiling at Louis's friends until I feel like a hypocritical Cheshire cat, talking stiff nothings with one and another in order to let Louis have a chance with the one he cares the most for, and all the time furtively watching the clock and thirsting for their blood because they stay so late...."

The vigilant eyes of love had taught her by this time something yet undiscovered by the scientists, that is, the contagious nature of influenza, and, having observed that whenever her husband came in contact with any one suffering from a cold, he invariably caught it — a very serious matter for one in his condition — she kept guard over him like a fiery little watch-dog, never allowing any one with a cold to enter the house. If she had one herself she kept away from him till it was over. There were many quarrels on the subject, for his friends, some of whom refused to recognize the necessity for such precautions, would be furious; but the worst trouble was with the doctors themselves, who would come to attend him with sneezing and snorting, and find their way blocked. One doctor said she was silly about it, for it was absolutely impossible to catch a cold from anything but an open window, or wet feet, or a draught. Her friends, or rather Louis's friends, were well trained in time, and she would sometimes get a message something like this: "I can't keep my engagement to see Louis to-day, for I have a cold, but as soon as I am over it I will let you know.” Mr. Stevenson himself had a humourous way of referring to persons with colds as “pizon sarpints,” and strangers may have wondered to hear him say: “I’m not seeing my friend So-and-so just now, because he’s a pizon sarpint.” Once at Saranac, in the Adirondack Mountains in America, their friends the Fairchilds came to see them, but, as both had colds, they were not permitted to enter, and conversed by signs with Mr. Stevenson through a closed window. They were good-natured, however, about what they probably regarded as Mrs. Stevenson’s whim, and when both were well came again, waving from a distance perfectly clean handkerchiefs as their passport.

Having at last escaped from the dreaded London fogs, they reached Troyes in France, where Fanny’s heart expanded under the brighter skies that brought back memories of her own land. She writes: “We have had lovely weather — warm, sunny, fragrant. I did not realise before how much like America France is. The sky seems so high, and the world so big and fresh.” Reluctantly these two sun-loving people turned their steps from this pleasant place towards the frozen heights of Davos, where they arrived on November 4, and were pleased to find congenial friends in John Addington Symonds and his wife.

Life was far from exciting in this remote place, and the shut-in feeling of its situation, enclosed by hills and with no outlook, sometimes made the sick man impatient, yet his health improved and he was even able to take part in outdoor sports, such as tobogganing. Mrs. Stevenson writes:

“Life is most monotonous here, which is after all the best thing for Louis, although he tires of it sometimes. We have had a few badly acted plays and one snowstorm; there was a quarrel between a lady and her son’s tutor, and a lady lost a ring. Otherwise the current of our lives flows on without change.... I have made a couple of pretty caps for the ladies’ bazaar, and if I can get the use of a sitting room will paint them some things.... We have an enormous porcelain stove like a monument that reaches from the floor to the ceiling. It has, however, to be fed only twice a day, and then not in great quantities. Louis has long boots and is very proud of them. He said himself that he looked like ‘puss in boots,’ but was much hurt because the suggestion was received as a good one. He thought we would say: ‘How ridiculous! Why, you look just like a brigand!’ But the great thing is that the climate is doing Louis good. To have him recover entirely will be so splendid that I must murmur at nothing.” The last is perhaps a reference to the bad effect of the altitude on her own health, for her heart was so severely affected that she was compelled to spend much of the time lying on a couch, and was finally obliged to go away for a time.

These two were congenially alike in their careless indifference to the minor details of life. Neither ever dated a letter, and both invariably forgot all anniversaries, even having to be reminded of their own wedding-day by his scandalized mother. What Mr. S. S. McClure called Fanny Stevenson's "robust, inconsequential philosophy of life" permitted her to accept with calm situations which would have driven another woman to distraction. Even in that sad colony of the sick she found compensations, and writing of this she says:

"It is depressing to live with dying and suffering people all about you, but a sanatorium develops a great deal of human interest and sympathy. Every one knows what the others should do, and each among the patients helps to look after the rest. The path of duty always lies so plain before other people's feet.... Then there are always little kindnesses going on that warm the heart. The other morning I told Louis I had dreamed that Alfred Cornish had made him a present of his toboggan, and sure enough the first thing when Louis went out up came Cornish and presented him with the toboggan. I had never thought of such a thing and don't see why I dreamed it."

At Davos they had a great deal of trouble with their little dog, Woggs, a beautiful but eccentric Skye terrier that had been given them by Sir Walter Simpson. Both were tenderly considerate of animals, and when this little creature was ill with a cankered ear they took turns sitting up at night with him. She writes of him: "Woggs is ill-tempered, and obstinate, and rather sly, but he is lovable and intelligent. I imagine that it is with dogs as with people — it is not for being good alone that we love them."

Here Stevenson wrote but little. Of his work she says:

"Louis is worried because he thinks he cannot write as gracefully as he used to, but I believe his writing is more direct and stronger, and that when he is able to join his old style with the new he will do better work than he dreams of now. His later work is fuller of thought, more manly in every way."

With the month of March came Mrs. Stevenson's birthday, and, to her great surprise and confusion, it was made the occasion of a general fête in which the whole colony took part. She thus describes the affair:

"I was told there was to be a dance in the dining-room and cake and ices in my honor, so Louis and I went down in the evening. I watched the dancing awhile, when suddenly I found myself seated alone at the end of the room. Judge of my surprise, and I must confess, dismay, when I saw the two little Doney children, in Watteau costumes, looking just like bits of porcelain painting, coming down the center towards me, one bearing a large birthday cake and the other a bouquet of flowers. The beautiful little creatures dropped on their knees at my feet and presented their offerings. I suppose I should have said something, but Louis said I did the best thing possible; I only kissed both the darlings. Other people had had birthdays and only received congratulations, so I felt horribly embarrassed by all these grand doings in a public room, though I was very grateful for the friendly feelings of those who arranged the affair.”

The snow came late, but during the winter it lay deep and heavy on the ground, making the roads almost impassable and their isolation more complete. Both husband and wife began to feel an almost uncontrollable depression amid these bleak surroundings, aggravated as they were by many deaths among the patients. As spring approached Mrs. Stevenson wrote:

“Louis is not very well and not very ill. Spring, I think, sits upon him, and so also all these deaths and Bertie’s illness. As soon as he is a little stronger the doctor is going to send him to some place in the neighborhood for a change.”

And she, to whom warmth and colour were a very part of her nature, was an exotic, a lost tropic bird, in these icy mountains. In a letter to her mother-in-law her heart cried out: “I cannot deny that living here is like living in a well of desolation. Sometimes I feel quite frantic to look out somewhere, and almost as though I should suffocate. But may Davos forgive me! It has done so much for Louis that I am ashamed to say anything against it.”

In the latter part of April their discontent went beyond endurance, and, believing his health now sufficiently improved to warrant the risk, they turned their steps once more towards their beloved France, where they spent a month between Barbizon, St. Germain, and Paris.

In Paris their haunting Nemesis gave them a little breathing spell, and when Louis’s strength permitted, they wandered about the streets in their own careless, irresponsible fashion, having a delightful time poking into all sorts of strange places, in one of which he insisted on spending practically his last sou for an antique watch for which she had expressed admiration. “Now we’ll starve,” said she, but after reaching home he happened to put his hand in the pocket of an old coat and drew out an uncashed cheque which had been forgotten. One day when out alone she went into a dismal-looking pawn-shop in a part of the city that was not considered exactly safe. She was puzzled by the evident superiority of the proprietor to his surroundings, and when he invited her to follow him, she went without hesitation back through winding passages until they stepped out into a beautiful garden, where sat a charming invalid lady, wife of the pawnbroker. It seemed that they were people who had fallen from a high estate, and, through devotion to his wife, who was helplessly confined to her chair, he had for years kept the secret of his occupation from her, and she had lived in her garden like a fair flower, uncontaminated by the slums of Paris. In this shop Mrs. Stevenson bought four rich mahogany posts, part of an antique bedstead, which she used many years afterwards as pillars in the drawing-room of her San Francisco house.

But alas, their pleasant jaunting soon came to an end, for Louis had a relapse which brought desperate disappointment to them both, and of which she writes to his mother: “I felt compelled to tell him that he must be prepared for whatever may happen. Naturally the poor boy yearned for his mother. I think it must be very sweet to you to have this grown-up man of thirty still clinging to you with his child love.”

The setback dashed their spirits so severely that his conscientious Scotch parents thought it their duty to lecture them on the sin of ingratitude for the blessings that were still theirs. In great contrition their daughter-in-law writes:

“I was just about to write when a double letter from you and Mr. Tommy came to hand. When I read what Mr. Tommy said about gratitude I felt more conscience-stricken than words can express. Neither Louis nor I have any right to feel even annoyed about anything. Certainly God has been good. I have seen others, apparently no more ill than Louis was at one time, laid in their graves, and I see others, quite as ill, struggling wearily for their daily bread. We see misery and wretchedness on every hand, and here we sit, none of it touching us, Louis feeling better, and both of us complaining shamefully because in the smallest things the world does not go round smoothly enough for us.... I fancy we shall start for Scotland Tuesday, but will travel slowly on account of Louis’s fatigue and nervous exhaustion from the shaking of the train.”

Edinburgh was reached on May 31, 1881, and a few days later, accompanied by his mother, they went to Pitlochry, where they spent two months in Kinnaird Cottage, on the banks of a lovely river. This was a beautiful but inclement region, and cold winds and rain prevailed almost constantly. The two ladies never ventured out without umbrellas, and even then usually returned in a drenched condition. Imprisoned by the weather, the sick man was compelled to spend all his waking time in the sitting-room, where his confinement was made the more penitential by the absence of books. It happened that the only books in the house were two volumes of Voltaire, and these were taken from the younger pair one dreary Sunday by their stern parents as not proper “Sabba’-day” reading.

Thrown entirely on their own resources, they decided to write stories and read them to each other. These tales, coloured by the surroundings, were of a sombre cast. Here Thrawn Janet was begun. In a preface, written years later, Mrs. Stevenson gives a graphic description of the first writing of this gloomy but powerful story.

"That evening is as clear in my memory as though it were yesterday — the dim light of our one candle, with the acrid smell of the wick that we had forgotten to snuff, the shadows in the corners of the 'lang, laigh, mirk chamber, perishing cauld,' the driving rain on the roof close above our heads, and the gusts of wind that shook our windows. The very sound of the names, 'Murdock Soulis, the Hangin' Shaw in the beild of the Black Hill, Balweary in the vale of Dule,' sent a 'cauld grue' along my bones. By the time the tale was finished my husband had fairly frightened himself, and we crept down the stairs clinging hand in hand like two scared children."

"Weather wet, bad weather, still wet, afraid to go out, pouring rain," appeared almost constantly in Mrs. Thomas Stevenson's diary, and though Stevenson, whether inspired by home scenes or driven in upon himself for relief from the outer dreariness, did some of his best work here, it became clear that a more favourable spot must be sought. From Pitlochry they went to Braemar, but that place proved to be no improvement. Mrs. Stevenson writes of it in her preface to Treasure Island:

"It was a season of rain and chill weather that we spent in the cottage of the late Miss McGregor, though the townspeople called the cold, steady, penetrating drizzle 'just misting,' In Scotland a fair day appears to mean fairly wet. 'It is quite fair now,' they will say, when you can hardly distinguish the houses across the street. Queen Victoria, who had endeared herself greatly to the folk in the neighborhood, showed a true Scotch spirit in her indifference to the weather. Her Majesty was in the habit of driving out to take tea in the open, accompanied by a couple of ladies-in-waiting. The road to Balmoral ran not far behind the late Miss McGregor's cottage, and as the Queen always drove in an open carriage, with her tea basket strapped on behind, we could see her pass very plainly. Our admiration for the sturdy old lady was very much tempered by our sympathy with the ladies-in-waiting, with whom driving backward on the front seat did not apparently agree. Their poor noses were very red, and the expression of their faces anxious, not to say cross, as they miserably coughed and sneezed."

At Braemar the working fever continued, and Treasure Island was planned, but when autumn came they fled before the Scotch mists, and once more wended their way to the frozen Alps, settling for the winter in the Châlet am Stein. From mist to snow was but a rueful change, but this time Louis's health seemed to gain greater benefit, and a reasonable amount of work was accomplished.

So the level current of their lives flowed on through a rather mild winter, with an occasional föhn wailing about their châlet as the "rocs might have wailed in the valley of diamonds," until one morning they heard a bird sing, and soon the snow on the higher levels began to melt and send the water with a rush down the sides of the streets. Almost in a breath the hill slopes about them turned as white with crocus blooms as they had been in their winter covering of snow. Into their hearts something of the springtime entered, and one day Louis sat singing beside his wife, who writes: “I do not care for the music, but it makes me feel so happy to see him so well. When I wake in the morning I wonder what it is that brings such a glow to my heart, and then I remember!”

Yet it was then, as the flowers began to bloom and the birds to sing, that many of those to whom they had become attached with the pitiful bond of a common affliction broke the slender cord that held them to life and quietly slipped away. Of these she writes: “Louis is much cut up because a young man whom he liked and had been tobogganing with has been found dead in his bed. Bertie still hovers between life and death. Poor little Mrs. Doney is gone; my heart is sad for those two lovely little girls. In a place like this there are many depressing things, but it is encouraging to know that many are going away cured.”

Their own case had gone better, and Doctor Ruedi had given them leave “to live in France, fifteen miles as the crow flies from the sea, and if possible near a fir wood.”

In April they left the Alps and ventured back to their misty island, where they spent an unsatisfactory summer, moving from place to place in a fruitless search for better weather. Several hemorrhages forced them to the conclusion that they must be once more on the wing, and as both felt an unconquerable repugnance to spending another winter at bleak Davos, it was finally decided to go where their hearts led them, and seek a suitable place in the south of France. As Mrs. Stevenson was too ill just then to travel, the invalid, accompanied by his cousin, Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson, started about the middle of September, 1882, for Marseilles. The wife’s anxiety, however, gave her little rest, and almost before she was able to stand she set out after him, arriving in an alarmed and fatigued condition, of which he wrote to his mother in his humourous way: “The wreck was towed into port yesterday evening at seven P.M. She bore the reversed ensign in every feature; the population of Marseilles, who were already vastly exercised, wept when they beheld her jury masts and helpless hull.”

To her mother-in-law she wrote from here: “This is a lovely spot, and I cannot tell you how my heart goes out to it. It is so like Indiana that it would not surprise me to hear my father or mother speak to me at any moment, and yet it is not like home either. The houses and the ships look foreign, but the colour of the sky and the quality of the air, the corn, the grapes, the yellow pumpkins, the flowers, and the trees, are the same. Everything seems as it is at home, steeped in sunshine."

In a few days they found a house, the Campagne Defli, in the suburbs of St. Marcel, "in a lovely spot, among lovely wooded and cliffy hills," where they fondly hoped their pursuing fate would forget them for a time. Of Campagne Defli she joyfully writes to her mother-in-law: "Of all the houses in the world I think I should choose this one. It is a garden of paradise, and I cannot tell you how I long to have you here to enjoy things with me. It is such happiness to be in a place that combines the features of the land where I was born and California, where I have spent the best years of my life."

She set eagerly to work to turn this charming but neglected place into a pleasant home, directing servants in the cleaning and scrubbing, hanging curtains over draughty doors, repapering walls, putting fresh coverings on old furniture, planting flowers and vegetables in the garden — in fact, pouring out her Dutch housekeeping soul in a thousand and one ways. The French servants, amazed at these activities, thought she was very queer. Once when she was on a step-ladder, with a hammer in her hand, putting up some pictures, she heard some one whisper outside: "Elle est folle." As the two servants came in she cried out indignantly, waving the hammer for emphasis, "Pas folle! Beaucoup d'intelligence!" and then, losing her balance, fell over, step-ladder and all, while the servants fled shrieking. To her mother-in-law she writes: "For Louis's birthday I found a violet blooming at the back of the house, and yesterday I discovered in our reserve a large magnolia tree, the delight of my heart. I am continually finding something new."

Two things were to her as a closed book: one was foreign languages and the other was music. She could not sing a note nor hardly tell one tune from another, yet she liked to listen to music. Her speaking voice was low, modulated, and sweet, but with few inflections, and her husband once compared it to the pleasantly monotonous flow of a running brook under ice. As to languages, although she never seemed able to acquire any extended knowledge of the tongue of any foreign land in which she dwelt, she always managed in some mysterious way of her own to communicate freely with the inhabitants. In Spanish she only learned si, yet, supplemented with much gay laughter and many expressive gesticulations, that one word went a long way. She writes amusingly of this difficulty from Marseilles:

"Yesterday the servant and I went out shopping, which was difficult for me, but, although she knows no English, she seems to understand, as did the shopkeepers, my strange lingo. I had to put on the manner of an old experienced shopper and housekeeper, and count my change with great care, for it was important that I should impress both the woman and the shop people with the notion that I knew what was what. I have been in town all day, making arrangements with butchers, buying an American stove — for the enormous gaudy French range is of no account whatever — and even went and got my luncheon in a restaurant, and all upon my pidgin French. To Louis's great amusement I sometimes address him in it. I bought some cups and saucers to-day of a man who said 'yes' to all I said, while to all his remarks I answered 'oui.' The servant we have is very anxious to please us, and I have finally got her to the length of bringing the knives to the table cleaned; she could hardly believe at first that I was serious in wanting clean knives when there was no company."

It was very pleasant to her to be received everywhere in France with a warm cordiality on the ground of her being an American, and she tells a little story about this in one of her letters:

"When I went in search of doctors I arrived in town at an hour when they all refused to see me, being at luncheon. One man, however, had not yet come in, though his luncheon was waiting for him, so I waited too and caught him in his own hall. He was quite furious and said the most dreadful things to his servant because she had let me in. I sat in a chair and waited till he had done abusing her, and then politely explained my errand. After much beating about the bush, he gave me the information that I wanted, and then, to the astonishment of his servant, went downstairs with me and put me into my cab with the most impressive politeness. Just as I left he told me he had allowed me to break his rule and spoil his lunch because I was an American."

To their deep disappointment, Louis's health gained little or nothing in this charming place, and for a time a heavy sadness fell upon his wife, and in desperation her thoughts turned towards the frozen Alps, which they both disliked and where she had suffered so much. She writes: "I am sorry to say that Louis has had another hemorrhage. I begin almost to think we had better go back to Davos and become Symondses and just stay there. Symonds himself, however, has taken a cold and the weather there has not been good. I have news from Davos that the well people that we knew are all dead and the hopeless cases are all right."

Trouble with drains now came to add to their fear that beautiful Campagne Defli would not do for their permanent home. An epidemic broke out in St. Marcel, and many died. Mrs. Stevenson, stricken with fear for her husband, hurried him off to Nice, while she, armed with a revolver, remained behind to keep guard over their effects, the situation of their place being lonely, and reports of robberies and even murder in the neighbourhood having reached them.

In the next week or two a series of distressing events took place which brought Mrs. Stevenson almost to the verge of nervous prostration. The night before her husband's departure a peasant on the estate died of the prevailing disease, and for some unknown reason the body, much swollen and disfigured, was permitted to lie just outside the gate during the entire morning. Next in the chapter of unfortunate accidents was the failure to reach her of the promised telegram announcing Louis's safe arrival at Nice. After four days' anxious waiting she decided to follow him, and her subsequent adventures may best be told in her own language as written to her mother-in-law:

"The fourth night I went to Marseilles and telegraphed to the gare and the police at Nice. All the people said it was no use, and that it was plain that he had been taken with a violent hemorrhage on the way and was now dead and buried at some little station. They said all I could do was to pack up and go back to Scotland. All were very kind in a dreadful way, but assured me that I had much better accept what 'le bon Dieu' had sent and go back to Scotland at once. After much telegraphing back and forth I found that Louis was at the Grand Hotel at Nice, and when I reached there he was calmly reading in bed. At St. Marcel and Marseilles every one was furious with me; they were all fond of Louis and said I had let a dying man go off alone. You may imagine my feelings all this time!"

As though all that went before had not been enough, her return journey to St. Marcel was made so uncomfortable by a tactless fellow passenger that she arrived in a state of complete exhaustion. Of this she writes:

"I have had a miserable time altogether, and the people, meaning to be so kind, were really so dreadful. There was a man on the train, an Englishman, who said such terrible things to me about Louis that when we reached Marseilles another Englishman who had been in the carriage came to me and spoke about it, saying he had been so wretched all the time. He insisted on stopping his journey a day to help me in my affairs. Here is a specimen of the horrid person's talk: 'What are you going to do when your husband dies?' 'I don't expect him to die.' 'Oh, I know all about that. I've heard that kind of talk before. He's done for, and in this country they'll shovel him underground in twenty-four hours, almost before the breath is out of his body. His mother'll never see him again.' I do not speak but look intently out of the window. Again he speaks, leaning forward to be sure that I hear him. 'Have him embalmed; that's the thing; have you got money enough?' Can you fancy five hours of this? I got out in the rain several times to try to get into another carriage, but they were all filled. But I never heard of anybody being so nice as Mr. Hammond was. I think he was more proud to be able to help Louis and those belonging to him than to help the Queen."

Anxious to prevent her husband's return to St. Marcel while conditions were so unfavourable, she wrote to him: "Don't you dare to come back to this home of 'pizon' until you are really better. I do not see how you are to come back at all under the circumstances, deserting your family as you have done and being hunted down and caught by your wife. Madame desires me to say that she knows what is keeping you in Nice — it is another lady. I told her that instead of amusing yourself with another lady you were weeping for me and home and your Wogg. She was greatly touched at that and almost wept herself into her dishpan. You are a dear creature and I love you, but I am not going to say that I am lonesome lest you come flying back to this den of death." In the meantime he wrote her letters in which he expressed his own loneliness in humourous verses, illustrated with drawings, one of which runs like this:

"When my wife is far from me
The undersigned feels all at sea."
R. L. S.

"I am as good as deaf
When separate from F.
I am far from gay
When separate from A.
I loathe the ways of men
When separate from N.
Life is a murky den
When separate from N.
My sorrow rages high
When separate from Y.
And all things seem uncanny
When separate from Fanny."

"Where is my wife? Where is my Wogg?
I am alone, and life's a bog."

All his wife's expostulations, however, were of no avail, and, much to her annoyance, it was not long before he appeared at Campagne Defli, where she was busy packing up their effects for another flitting. She writes to her mother-in-law:

"I don't wonder you ask what Louis is doing in Marseilles. He became filled with the idea that it was shirking to leave me here to do all the work. He was a good deal hurt, poor boy, because I wasn't pleased. Wasn't it delightful about the article in the Century? The person was evidently writing in such an ecstasy of joy at having found out Louis. I am so pleased that it was in the Century, for every friend and relation I have in the world will read it. I suppose you are even prouder of Louis than I am, for he is only mine accidentally, and he is yours by birth and blood. Two or three times last night I woke up just from pure pleasure to think of all the people I know reading about Louis.... He is incredibly better, and I suppose will just have to stay in Marseilles until I get done with things, for nothing will keep him away from me more than a week. It is so surprising, for I had never thought of Louis as a real domestic man, but now I find that all he wanted was a house of his own. Just the little time that we have been here has sufficed for him to form a quite passionate attachment for everything connected with the place, and it was like pulling up roots to get him away. I am quite bewildered with all the letters I have to write and all the things I have to do. For the present I think we shall have to cling to the little circle of country around Nice, so when you come it must be somewhere there."

After some search they finally decided upon Hyères, and by the latter part of March had once more hopefully set up their household goods in a little cottage, the Châlet la Solitude, which clung to a low cliff almost at the entrance of the town. This house had been a model Swiss châlet at the Paris Exposition of 1878, and had been removed and again erected at Hyères, where, amid its French neighbours, it was an incongruous and alien object. Mrs. Stevenson writes of it: "It is the smallest doll house I ever saw, but has everything in it to make it comfortable, and the garden is magnificent. The wild flowers are lovely, and the walks, all so close at hand, most enchanting."

In the garden grew old grey olive-trees, and in them nightingales nested and sang. On the rocky crags above stood the ruins of an ancient Saracen castle, and before them lay the sea — indeed a "most sweet corner of the universe." Not far away were the rose farms of Toulon, of which Mrs. Stevenson writes:

"I shall never forget the day my husband and I drove through lanes of roses from which the attar of commerce is made. On either side of us the rose hedges were in full bloom; the scent, mingled with the fragrance of innumerable violets, was truly intoxicating. When we alighted at a place dappled with sunlight that filtered through the trees, and cooled by a spouting fountain where girls in coloured gowns laughed and chattered as they plied their trade of lace-making, we felt that our lines had indeed fallen in pleasant places."

In this charming spot it seemed for a time that their pursuing fate had forgotten them, and for the greater part of a year happiness sat by their fireside. Louis always referred to this time as the happiest period of his life, and in a letter to his old friend in California, Jules Simoneau, he says: "Now I am in clover, only my health a mere ruined temple; the ivy grows along its shattered front, otherwise I have no wish that is not fulfilled; a beautiful large garden, a fine view of plain, sea, and mountain; a wife that suits me down to the ground, and a barrel of good Beaujolais."

Under these happy conditions much work was accomplished, and, to the great pride and satisfaction of both husband and wife, they were at last able to live upon his earnings. Their almost idyllic life here is described by Mrs. Stevenson:

"My husband was then engaged on Prince Otto, begun so long ago in the little rose-covered cottage in Oakland, California. Our life in the châlet was of the utmost simplicity, and with the help of one untrained maid I did the cooking myself. The kitchen was so narrow that I was in continual danger of being scorched by the range on one side, and at the same time impaled by the saucepan hooks on the other, and when we had a guest at dinner our maid had to pass in the dishes over our heads, as our chairs touched the walls of the dining-room, leaving her no passageway. The markets of Hyères were well supplied, and the wine both good and cheap, so we were able, for the first time, to live comfortably within our limited income.

"My husband usually wrote from the early morning until noon, while my household duties occupied the same time. In the afternoon the work of the morning was read aloud, and we talked it over, criticising and suggesting improvements. This finished, we walked in our garden, listened to the birds, and looked at our trees and flowers; or, accompanied by our Scotch terrier, wandered up the hill to the ruins of the castle. After dinner we talked or read aloud, and on rare occasions visited Mr. Powell or received a visit from him. The châlet was well named, as far as we were concerned, for it was almost a solitude à deux, but the days slipped by with amazing celerity."

Their mutual affection and their dependence upon each other grew as the years went by, and in 1884 he wrote to his mother: "My wife is in pretty good feather; I love her better than ever and admire her more; and I cannot think what I have done to deserve so good a gift. This sudden remark came out of my pen; it is not like me; but in case you did not know, I may as well tell you, that my marriage has been the most successful in the world.... She is everything to me; wife, brother, sister, daughter, and dear companion; and I would not change to get a goddess or a saint. So far, after four years of matrimony."

At another time he wrote: "As for my wife, that was the best investment ever made by man; but 'in our branch of the family' we seem to marry well. Here am I, who you were persuaded was born to disgrace you, no very burning discredit when all is said and done; here am I married, and the marriage recognized to be a blessing of the first water — A1 at Lloyds."

As Christmas, 1883, approached, their content seemed to reach its highest tide, and out of a full heart Mrs. Stevenson wrote to her mother-in-law:

"What a Christmas of thanksgiving this should be for us all, with Louis so well, his father so well, everything pointing to comfort and happiness. Louis is making such a success with his work, and doing better work every day. Dear mother and father of my beloved husband, I send you Christmas greetings from my heart of hearts. I mean to have a Merry Christmas and be as glad and thankful as possible for all the undeserved mercies and blessings that have been showered upon me."

They snatched at these moments of respite from eating care with an almost pathetic eagerness, and set to work once more to make a home in their doll's house. Mrs. Stevenson had what she called a "painting fever," and devised a scheme of Japanese decorations for the doors of the châlet which her husband thought might be made to produce a lot of money if they were nearer London. One of the panels had a woman yawning over a fire in the early morning, and the hypnotic effect of it kept the family and their guests yawning their heads off, so that Mrs. Stevenson decided the sleepy lady would be better for a bedroom.

Among their acquaintances here was a certain doctor who was such an inveterate optimist that he could have given lessons even to Louis Stevenson himself. She says of him: "This doctor has bought a piece of land here upon which he expects to build a house and settle down when he retires from practice. How old do you suppose he will be when he stops work and settles down to enjoy life? Only ninety-one, and subject to hemorrhages and other things! It seems to be the received opinion that when one passes the age of sixty-three years life takes a new start and one may live to almost any age. As to Louis, I verily believe he is going to be like the old doctor, only a little better looking, I hope."

Notwithstanding the cramped quarters in the little châlet their solitude was broken now and then by a visitor. Thither went at various times "Bob" Stevenson, Sir Sidney Colvin, Mr. Charles Baxter, Mr. W. E. Henley, and Miss Ferrier. The pleasurable excitement of this society, to which he had been so long a stranger, raised Mr. Stevenson's spirits to such an extent that he rashly proposed an expedition to Nice, where he took cold, developed pneumonia, was critically ill for weeks, and returned to Hyères still in a very low condition. This was one of the most harrowing periods of Mrs. Stevenson's life, and she tells of its distresses in a letter written to her mother-in-law in January, 1884:

"If I write like a mad creature do not be surprised, for I have had a period of awful wretchedness. Louis fell ill, and when the doctor came he beckoned to me to follow him, and then told me Louis was dying and could not be kept alive until you could get here. That was yesterday. I watched every breath he drew all night in what sickening apprehension you may guess. To-day another doctor, Dr. Drummond, was called in, and says that Louis may well live to be seventy, only he must not travel about. He is steadily better and is reading a newspaper in bed at this moment. I, who have not slept a wink for two nights, am pretending to be the gayest of the gay, but in reality I am a total wreck, although I am almost off my head with relief and joy."

As soon as the patient had sufficiently recovered they returned to Hyères, but there new troubles awaited them. His eyes became so severely affected by a contagious ophthalmia then prevailing in the neighbourhood that he had to give up using them for several weeks, sciatic rheumatism confined him to bed, and his right arm was bound to his side to prevent hemorrhage. In the midst of all these afflictions he refused to be cast down and insisted that everything was for the best, for he was now forced to take a much-needed rest which he would not otherwise have taken. On March 25, 1884, she writes to his mother:

"I am not very good at letter writing since I have been doing blind man's eyes, but here is a note to say that the blind man is doing very well, and I consider the blindness a real providence. Since he has been unable to read or do anything at all a wonderful change has come over his health, spirits, and temper, all for the better.... I wish you could see him with his eye tied up and singing away like mad; truly like mad, as there is neither time nor method in it, only a large voice. I am horribly busy, for I have to write for Louis from dictation, answer all his letters, as well as my own, keep house, entertain visitors, and do a good deal of the cooking. Our Wogg is an invalid, having got himself badly mangled in several fights, the maid is ill with symptoms of pleurisy, and altogether we are a forlorn household, but with all this Louis and I are in high spirits. He says it is wonderful how well one gets along without reading. He could never have believed it."

Perhaps partly for the purpose of getting her out for a little fresh air, he proposed that she should go for an hour's walk every day, and during her absence invent a story to be told on her return. It was to be a sort of Arabian Nights' Entertainment, with him as the Sultan and her as Scheherazade. The Dynamiter was suggested by certain attempted outrages in London which had all turned out to be fiascos. She began with the Mormon tale and followed with the others, one for each afternoon. Afterwards, when a lean time came at Bournemouth and money was badly needed, these stories, temporarily forgotten, were recalled, written, and published as the second volume of the New Arabian Nights series. As there was only enough for a thin book he wrote another, The Explosive Bomb, to fill up. It came out at first under the title of More New Arabian Nights, but afterwards appeared as The Dynamiter. Of the stories in this second series only one, The

Explosive Bomb, was entirely the work of Mr. Stevenson's own hand, all the others being done in collaboration with his wife. The Dynamiter did double service, as his wife said, for first it amused his tedious hours of illness at Hyères, and afterwards it replenished his purse in a time of need.

Their peaceful life in the châlet was now broken by a new and most unexpected interruption. Mrs. Stevenson writes in her preface to The Dynamiter:

"So quiet and secluded was our life here that we heard almost nothing of the outside world except through an occasional English correspondent. I remember before we knew that cholera was raging in Toulon, only some three miles away, how we watched a cloud gathering over the town, where it hung heavy and lowering, day after day. We felt that it was somehow ominous, and were vaguely depressed. We were told afterwards that at that very time great fires were burning in the streets of Toulon by order of the mayor, and that the people gathered at night around these fires capering fantastically in a pagan dance, resurrected from the dark ages no one knew by whom or how."

To add to the alarm caused by the outbreak of the cholera, in the first week in May Mr. Stevenson had a violent hemorrhage. "It occurred late at night, but in a moment his wife was at his side. Being choked by the flow of blood and unable to speak, he made signs to her for a paper and pencil, and wrote in a firm neat hand, 'Don't be frightened. If this is death it is an easy one.' Mrs. Stevenson had always a small bottle of ergotin and a minim glass in readiness; these she brought in order to administer the prescribed quantity. Seeing her alarm he took bottle and glass away from her, measured the dose correctly with a perfectly steady hand, and gave the things back to her with a reassuring smile." It was said that if his wife had not had everything ready and known exactly what to do he could not have lived. The clergyman came to pray with the supposed dying man, but, having been warned against the least excitement, she refused him admittance. In defense of her action she says: "I know Louis, and I know that he tries always to so live that he may be ready to die." When Mr. Stevenson heard that a clergyman had come to pray for him as a man in danger of dying, he said: "Tell him to come and see me when I am better and I will offer up a prayer for a clergyman in danger of living." In a few days he rallied once more, but it was now realised that chronic invalidism was to be his portion for the rest of his days, and his wife wrote to her mother-in-law:

"The doctor says 'keep him alive until he is forty, and then, though a winged bird, he may live to ninety.' But between now and forty he must live as though he were walking on eggs. For the next two years, no matter how well he feels, he must live the life of an invalid. He must be perfectly tranquil, trouble about nothing, have no shocks or surprises, not even pleasant ones, must not eat too much, talk very little, and walk no more than can be helped. He must never be crossed, for anger, going upstairs, and walking are the worst things for him.... Yet he is very cheerful and has been all along. He is never frightened."

Driven from Hyères by the cholera, they sought a temporary refuge at an enchanting little watering-place near Clermont-Ferrand called Royat, in whose healing springs Cæsar himself had once bathed. The surroundings, of wooded ravines and cliffs and numberless waterfalls, were charming, and in the centre of the town stood an ancient cathedral, whose former use as a fortress was still proclaimed by the loopholes in its walls and the hooded projections on its towers.

In this romantic place they spent the summer in the company of his parents, who came to visit them, but the joy of this meeting was tempered by the failing health and spirits of the father, who was now only able to keep up a semblance of cheerfulness in the presence of his son.

At the end of the summer of 1884 they returned to Hyères, but the prospect of a permanent recovery there seemed so slight that it was finally decided to go to England and seek medical advice. On the 1st of July they reached England, and shortly afterwards went to London to consult Sir Andrew Clark and other eminent physicians. Mrs. Stevenson writes from there: "I suppose it comes from being so long a recluse, but seeing the few people I have seen has quite shattered my nerves, so that I tremble and can hardly speak. Louis, on the contrary, is quite calm, and is at this moment, after a hearty meal, resting quietly in his bed."

Snatching at a half-hearted permission given by some of the doctors to remain in England, their decision being assisted by the desire to be near his father, whose health was rapidly failing, they went to Bournemouth for a trial of its climate and conditions. Nothing untoward having occurred by the end of January, the elder Stevenson purchased a house there as a present to his daughter-in-law. Both the wanderers were filled with inexpressible joy at the prospect of living under their own rooftree, and at once plunged with ardour into the business of furnishing and gardening. The first thing was to change the name of the place to Skerryvore, in honour of the best known of the lighthouses built by the Stevenson family, the name being partly suggested by the fact that a distant view of the sea was to be had from the upper windows.

Skerryvore was a pleasant, ivy-covered brick cottage, surrounded by a half-acre of garden, which has been so delightfully described by

William Archer in the Critic of November 5, 1887, that one can do no better than quote his words:

"Though only a few paces from the public road, it is thoroughly secluded. Its front faces southward (away from the road) and overlooks a lawn,

'Linnet haunted garden ground,
Where still the esculents abound.'

"The demesne extends over the edge, and almost to the bottom of the Chine; and here, amid laurel and rhododendron, broom and gorse, the garden merges into a network of paths and stairways, with tempting seats and unexpected arbors at every turn. This seductive little labyrinth is of Mrs. Stevenson's own designing. She makes the whole garden her special charge and delight, but this particular corner of it is as a kingdom conquered, where to reign. Mrs. Stevenson, the tutelary genius of Skerryvore, is a woman of small physical stature but surely of heroic mould. Her features are clear cut and delicate, but marked by unmistakable strength of character; her hair is an unglossy black, and her complexion darker than one would expect in a woman of Dutch extraction.... Her personality, no less than her husband's, impresses itself potently on all who have the good fortune to be welcomed at Skerryvore."

Writing to her mother-in-law from Bournemouth, she says:

"I have just been going the rounds of my garden, and have brought in as a sentimental reminder of you the first marguerite, which I will enclose in this letter. The weather is like paradise, the sun is shining, the birds are singing, and Louis is walking up and down in front of the house with a red umbrella over his head, enjoying the day.... I could only ask one thing more to have the most perfect life that any woman could have, and that is, of course, good health for Louis.... I should be perfectly appalled if I were asked to exchange his faults for other people's virtues."

Three years were spent at this pleasant place, and though Louis's health was never good, and he lived there, as he afterwards wrote, "like a pallid weevil in a biscuit," a great deal was accomplished in literary work by both husband and wife. There they put together the stories in The Dynamiter, which, as will be remembered, Mrs. Stevenson had made up to while away the hours of illness at Hyères. When the book came out little credit was given her by the book reviewers for her part in it, a neglect which caused her some mortification. Writing to her mother-in-law, she says: "I thought in the beginning that I shouldn't mind being Louis's scapegoat, but it is rather hard to be treated like a comma, and a superfluous one at that. And then in one paper, the only one in which I am mentioned, the critic refers to me as 'undoubtedly Mr. Stevenson's sister.' Why, pray?

Surely there can be nothing in the book that points to a sister in particular."

The morning after her husband had the dream that suggested Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, he came with a radiant countenance to show his work to his wife, saying it was the best thing he had ever done. She read it and thought it the worst, and thereupon fell into a state of deep gloom, for she couldn't let it go, and yet it seemed cruel to tell him so, and between the two horns of the dilemma she made herself quite ill. At last, by his request and according to their custom, she put her objections to it, as it then stood, in writing, complaining that he had treated it simply as a story, whereas it was in reality an allegory. After reading her paper and seeing the justice of her criticism, with characteristic impulsiveness he immediately burned his first draft and rewrote it from a different point of view. She was appalled when he burned it, for she had only wanted him to change it, but he was afraid of being influenced by the first writing and preferred to start anew, with a clean slate.

Their discussions over the work were sometimes hot and protracted, for neither was disposed to yield without a struggle. Speaking of this in a letter to his mother, she says: "If I die before Louis, my last earnest request is that he shall publish nothing without his father's approval. I know that means little short of destruction to both of them, but there will be no one else. The field is always covered with my dead and wounded, and often I am forced to a compromise, but still I make a very good fight." In this battle of wits they found intense enjoyment, and it was, in fact, an intellectual comradeship that few writers have been fortunate enough to enjoy in their own households.

While at Bournemouth an occasional respite from illness enabled them to enjoy the society of friends in a limited way — among them their neighbours, Sir Percy and Lady Shelley, Sir Henry Taylor and his daughters, and many people of note who came down from London to see them. The incidents of these friendships have been fully dealt with in Balfour's Life of Robert Louis Stevenson, and need not be treated extensively here. One of their neighbours, Miss Adelaide Boodle, who was given the jocose title of "gamekeeper" when she assumed charge of Skerryvore after their departure from England, writes thus of her attachment to Mrs. Stevenson: "Among all her friends here there was never one who loved her more whole-heartedly than her 'gamekeeper,' to whom in after years she gave the sweet pet name of the 'little brown deer.' From the first day that we met at Skerryvore she took entire possession of my heart, and there she will forever bear sway. There is an old gardener here, too, who was her devoted slave at Skerryvore. Of course she never trusted him the length of her little finger, but she used him as extra hands and feet. Her parting charge to me — given in his presence — has never been forgotten by either of us: ‘Remember, child, if you ever see Philips approach my creepers with a pruning knife you are to snatch it from his hand and plunge it into his heart!”

Among the visitors was John Sargent, the American painter, who came to paint Mr. Stevenson’s portrait — a picture which was regarded as too peculiar to be satisfactory. When Sargent painted it he put Mrs. Stevenson, dressed in an East Indian costume, in the background, intending it, not for a portrait, but merely as a bit of colour to balance the picture. It was a part of the costume that her feet should be bare, and this fact gave rise to a fantastic story that has often gone the rounds in print, and will probably continue to do so till the end of time, that when she first came to London she was such a savage that she went to dinners and evening entertainments barefoot. This was but one of the many strange tales that appeared from time to time concerning her, all of which she refused to contradict, no matter how false or malicious they might be, for she felt that the name she bore was not to be lowered by appearing in stupid or ridiculous controversy; for that reason she would never see newspaper reporters, and though many so-called “interviews” with her have been printed, none of them are genuine. She was misrepresented by the press in many ways, and even wantonly attacked, but refused to break her rule under any circumstances. During the last days of Jules Simoneau, of Monterey, a statement appeared in the papers to the effect that he was being permitted to suffer and die in want, and although it was perfectly well known to her friends and many other persons that she had supported him in comfort for years, she would not make any contradiction in the public press.

One of the interesting people she met while in England was Prince Kropotkin, the noted Russian revolutionist. Mrs. Stevenson, believing that Kropotkin was concerned in the blowing up of a French village while a country fair was in progress, resulting in the killing of a number of innocent people, prevented her husband from signing a petition that was instituted for his release from the French prison where he was confined. When he was finally freed and went to England, at the urgent request of Henry James she consented to meet him, and found him to be a most charming person. He assured her that, judging from the expression of her eyes, she was born to be a nihilist, and when she indignantly denied this, still insisted that she should learn to play the game of solitaire, for if she should ever have to go to prison it might save her life and reason, as it had his. She consented, not with the anticipation of spending any portion of her life behind prison-bars, but in order to use the game to amuse her husband during his long periods of forced and speechless seclusion.

She would sit by his bedside and play her game, and he took great pleasure in watching it and pointing at the cards that he thought she ought to play. In later years, when he had gone to the other world, and the days grew long and lonely, this game of solitaire, so strangely acquired from the bearded Russian, became a solace.

But of all the guests that came to Skerryvore, the best loved and most welcome was Mrs. Stevenson's fellow countryman, Henry James, who often ran down to see them. In the house there was a certain large blue chair in which he liked to sit. It was called the "Henry James" chair, and no one else was allowed to use it. It was to him that Louis Stevenson wrote the poem called "Who Comes To-Night?" Speaking of their first meeting, Mrs. Stevenson wrote to her mother-in-law: "We have had a very pleasant visitor. One evening a card was handed in with 'Henry James' upon it. He spent that evening, asked to come again the next night, arriving almost before we had got done with dinner, and staying as late as he thought he might, and asking to come the next evening, which is to-night. I call that very flattering. I had always been told that he was the type of an Englishman, but, except that he looks like the Prince of Wales, I call him the type of an American. He is gentle, amiable, and soothing."

A wedding anniversary came around, and it was resolved to celebrate it by a dinner. Henry James was the only guest, and he took a naïve delight in the American dishes which his hostess had prepared to remind him of his native land. She writes: "Our dinner was most successful, our guest continually asking for double helpings and breaking out into heartfelt praises of the food. It was a sort of lady's and literary man's dinner; everything was just as good as could be, and under each napkin was a paper with verses for each person written by Louis."

Long afterwards, when Mr. James was in America for his first visit in many years, he went to see Mrs. Stevenson in her San Francisco house. He had come up from the southern part of the State, and was so enchanted with the sights along the way — the flowery hill-slopes and green ferny canyons — that for the first time he was almost persuaded to abandon his adopted home and come to live among the orange-groves of California. "When I come to dinner," said he, "please have a large dish of California oranges on the table if you have nothing else." Despite a certain stiffness of manner and speech, he was a man of kindly heart and simple, unworldly nature. After the first ice was broken, the most unintellectual person might prattle away to him at ease, for his sympathies were of the broadest. Both Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson had a deep affection for him, and "no matter who else was there, the evenings seemed empty without him."

In the meantime Mr. Stevenson's health went but badly, and his wife gave up practically all her time and strength to his care.

In May, 1887, the elder Stevenson died, breaking the last tie that held them to England, and three months later Louis Stevenson, with his mother, wife, and stepson, set sail for America.

CHAPTER VII

AWAY TO SUNNIER LANDS

After boarding the Ludgate Hill, the tramp steamship on which they had taken passage for New York, chiefly on account of her unusually spacious cabins, they discovered, somewhat to their discomfiture, that the cargo, listed by the agent as “notions,” really consisted largely of live stock — horses to be taken on at Havre, and a consignment of monkeys. All their party were of the sort, however, who have a “heart for any fate,” so they agreed to regard this as only an added adventure. As it turned out, they were not disappointed, for, as the elder Mrs. Stevenson writes, “It was very amusing and like a circus to see the horses come on board,” while Jocko, a large ape, which soon struck up a warm friendship with Mr. Stevenson, furnished them with a vast amount of entertainment. The exceptional freedom which they enjoyed on board, too, more than counterbalanced any lack of elegance. In a vein of exuberant joy at this escape from the narrow confines of the sick-room, Louis writes to his Cousin Bob:

“I was so happy on board that ship I could not have believed it possible. We had the beastliest weather and many discomforts; but the mere fact of its being a tramp ship gave us many comforts; we could cut about with the men and officers, stay in the wheel-house, discuss all manner of things, and really be a little at sea. And truly there is nothing else. I had literally forgotten what happiness was, and the full mind — full of external and physical things, not full of cares and labors and rot about a fellow’s behavior. My heart literally sang; I truly care for nothing so much as that.”

The two ladies took up knitting to while away the long hours at sea, and so the days slipped peacefully by, with the invalid steadily gaining in health until they struck a heavy fog on the Newfoundland banks, where he caught a cold.

They reached New York on September 7, 1887, at the time when Stevenson’s fame was in its flood-tide. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde had just made a tremendous impression on the reading public; the idea of dual personality was being discussed on all sides; ministers preached sermons about it. Stevenson was amazed and bewildered, though immensely pleased, at the sudden turn of fortune’s wheel. Here, indeed, was success at last in full measure.

Their original plan had been to try the climate of colourado, but the long overland journey seemed too great an ordeal in his condition, and, hearing of Saranac in the Adirondacks, then just coming into prominence as a resort for consumptives, they decided to make a trial of it. While Louis and his mother paid a visit to the Fairchilds at Newport, his wife and stepson went on to the mountain place to make arrangements.

This sanatorium was established by Doctor Edward Livingstone Trudeau, a New York physician who had nursed his brother through tuberculosis and later developed the disease himself. He had tried going South and taking daily exercise, but as these attempts at a cure only made matters worse, in a sort of desperation he went to the Adirondacks, not so much for health as for love of the great forest and the wild life. It was then a rough, inaccessible region, visited only by hunters and fishermen, and was considered to have a most inclement and trying climate. Trudeau was carried to the place of Paul Smith, a guide and hotel-keeper, on a mattress, but it was not long before he was able to move about and to get some enjoyment out of life. When he first spent a winter there it was thought to mean his death-warrant, but, to his own surprise, he soon began to eat and sleep, and lost his fever. In 1876 he moved his family to Saranac and lived there always after that. Physicians in New York, hearing of the case of Trudeau, began to send patients now and then to try the climate at Saranac, and in that small way the health resort, now so extensive, had its beginning. Stevenson went there in the early days of the sanatorium, when the place was a mere little logging village, where logs were cut and floated down the river.

There were two churches in the place, called by the appropriate names of St. Luke the Beloved Physician and St. John in the Wilderness, the latter a picturesque structure of logs. These churches, both of the Episcopal denomination, were built and furnished as a testimonial of gratitude by persons who had recovered health or had friends under treatment there.

As soon as Mrs. Stevenson had her people settled at Saranac she left them and went to Indiana to visit her mother and sister, stopping on the way for a few days with the Bellamy Storers at Cincinnati. “The Storers live in a sort of enchanted palace,” she writes, “and are very simple and gentle and kind, and altogether lovely. Mrs. Storer has a pottery, where poor ladies with artistic tastes get work and encouragement. She also has a large hospital for children, and a little girl of her own with a genius for drawing. Mr. Storer is six feet three and a half inches in height and has a Greek profile and soft large brown eyes.”

The Stevensons reached Saranac when the woods were all aflame with autumn glory, and to Mr. Stevenson’s mother it all seemed unreal and “more like a painted scene in a theatre” than actuality.

The house in which they lived, a white frame cottage with green shutters and a veranda around it, belonged to a guide named Andrew Baker, who took parties into the woods for hunting and fishing excursions. Baker was a typical frontiersman — brave, obstinate, independent, and fearless — who might have stepped out of Leather Stocking, and he had a kind, sweet wife. The cottage stood on high ground, so that its occupants could look down on the river, and the view, except for the brilliant hues of the frost-tinted leaves, was enough like the Highlands to make Louis and his mother feel quite at home.

Life in the cottage was frontier-like in its simplicity, and the Scotch lady, for whom this was the first experience in "roughing it," asked for many things that caused great surprise to the village storekeeper, including such unheard-of luxuries as coffee-pots, teapots, and egg-cups. Writing to her friend Miss Boodle, the "gamekeeper" of Skerryvore, Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson describes their life at Saranac:

"We are high up in the Adirondack Mountains, living in a guide's cottage in the most primitive fashion. The maid does the cooking (we have little beyond venison and bread to cook) and the boy comes every morning to carry water from a distant spring for drinking purposes. It is already very cold, but we have calked the doors and windows as one calks a boat, and have laid in a store of extraordinary garments made by the Canadian Indians. I went to Montreal to buy these and came back laden with buffalo skins, snow shoes, and fur caps. Louis wants to have his photograph taken in his, hoping to pass for a mighty hunter or sly trapper. He is now more like the hardy mountaineer, taking long walks on hill-tops in all seasons and weathers. It is something like Davos here, all the invalids looking stronger and ruddier than we who are supposed to be in good health.... Every afternoon a vehicle called a 'buckboard' is brought to our door, sometimes with one large horse attached, and sometimes we have a pair of lovely spirited ponies. The buckboard is so light that when we meet a stage-coach on the narrow road we simply drive our horse up the hillside and lift the buckboard out of the way. Very soon, however, we shall exchange it for a sleigh."

It was a long, bitter winter spent amid the ice and snow, the thermometer at one time showing 48 degrees below zero. By November 19 it was fiercely cold, and water and ink froze in the rooms with fires going all day and night. When the kitchen floor was washed with warm water, even with a hot fire burning in the room, the floor became a sheet of ice. All food had to be thawed out before it could be eaten, and the thawing-out process sometimes presented great difficulties, a haunch of venison remaining full of ice after being in a hot oven for an hour. Sometimes a lump of ice was left unmelted in the centre of the soup-pot even when the water boiled all around it. The cold was most intense at night, when the rivets could be heard starting from the boards like pistol-shots, but during the day the temperature was often quite mild. The snow was so deep that it reached the second-story windows, and paths had to be shovelled out and kept clear around the house. In the streets a snow-plough was used. By March the Hunter's Home was nearly buried in the drifts, and in spite of a huge open fireplace, in which great log fires were kept constantly burning, and a stove in every room, it was impossible to do much more than barely keep from freezing to death. When they went out, muffled up to the ears in furs, they carried little slabs of hot soapstone in their pockets, for it was a great comfort to thrust a frozen hand into a toasting-hot pocket.

Added to the bitterness of the cold was the depression of grey, sunless days, only too like their memories of Scotland, and while they sat and shivered around their immense fireplace their thoughts turned insistently towards sunnier lands. Many years before, when Mr. Stevenson was a mere lad, it had been suggested that the South Seas was the very place for him, and the plan for a voyage there some time in the future had always lain dormant in his thoughts, waiting for the opportunity. This old dream now came to mind again, and every glance from their frost-covered windows at the bleak dreariness without made their vision of tropical forests and coral strands seem the more alluring. The project now began to take on definite shape, and days were spent in poring over Findlay's directories of the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the South Seas.

In the meantime much work was accomplished, the most important being a series of twelve articles written by Mr. Stevenson for Scribner's Magazine, including some of his best-known essays — The Lantern Bearers, A Chapter on Dreams, etc. In the short hours of daylight and the long, dark evenings he worked with his stepson on the novel called The Wrong Box. It was here, too, that the story of the two brothers, The Master of Ballantrae, was thought out, and The Black Arrow, a book which failed to meet with Mrs. Stevenson's approval, was revised. In the dedication to this last he says:

“No one but myself knows what I have suffered, nor what my books have gained, by your unsleeping watchfulness and admirable pertinacity. And now here is a volume that goes into the world and lacks your imprimatur; a strange thing in our joint lives; and the reason of it stranger still! I have watched with interest, with pain, and at length with amusement, your unavailing attempts to peruse The Black Arrow; I think I should lack humor indeed if I let the occasion slip and did not place your name in the fly-leaf of the only book of mine that you have never read — and never will read.”

By the time spring had melted the deep snow around their mountain home they had come to the definite decision to undertake the cruise in the event that a suitable vessel could be secured for the purpose. Leaving the other members of the family about to start for Manasquan in New Jersey, Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson went to San Francisco, where she found and chartered the yacht Casco, belonging to Doctor Merritt of Oakland, for a six months' cruise.

While in California she came to visit me at Monterey, where years before we had all been so happy together. During the week she spent there we did the things that she liked best — spending long delightful days gathering shells on the beach at Point Cypress, where the great seas roared in from across the wide Pacific and broke thunderously at our feet. When noon came, bringing us appetites sharpened by the sparkling air, we built a fire under the old twisted trees and barbecued the meat we had brought with us. She seemed to be welling over with happiness — partly because of her great pride and joy in her husband's success, and partly because, after years spent in Alpine snows, Scotch mists, London fogs, and fierce Adirondack cold, she had come again into the sunlight of her beloved California.

While there she had a pleasant meeting with Louis's old friend Jules Simoneau, of which she writes to her husband:

"At last your dear old Simoneau came to see me. He was laden with flowers, and was dressed in a flannel shirt thrown open at the neck and his trousers thrust in his boots. I saw him from the window and ran out and kissed him. He was greatly pleased and talked a long time about you. I told him you were going to send him the books, and he almost cried at that. The following day he and his wife spent the whole time in the woods searching for roots and leaves that are, according to the Indians, a certain cure for lung disease where there is hemorrhage. I have a great packet of them; one dose is divided off, and I am to divide the rest in the same way. A dose means enough to make a gallon of tea, of which you are to drink when so inclined. Simoneau said: 'I thought you might be ashamed of a rough old eccentric fellow like me.' I expressed my feeling in regard to him, to which he replied: 'And yet I am rough and eccentric; you say I was kind; I fear that to be kind is to be eccentric.'"

Having secured the Casco, she telegraphed to her anxiously waiting husband for a positive decision, to which he sent back an instant and joyous "Yes."

It is now thirty years since Robert Louis Stevenson passed that winter in the snows of the Adirondacks, and the little logging-camp, as he knew it, has grown into a great sanatorium, but his spirit still seems to hover over the place, and those who seek the healing of its crystal air have set up a shrine and made of him a sort of patron saint.

The Baker Cottage has been converted by the Stevenson Society into a memorial museum, where many objects commemorative of him have been collected. Among these are the woodcuts with which he amused himself at Davos, and which were given to them by Lloyd Osbourne. Here Mr. and Mrs. Baker, whose hair has been whitened by the snows of many winters since the Stevenson days, receive the visitors who come to reverently examine the relics left by the man who fought so bravely and so successfully against the same insidious enemy with whom they themselves are struggling. On the veranda, where, in that time so long past, his slender figure might often have been seen walking up and down, a beautiful bas-relief by Gutzon Borglum, representing him in the fur cap and coat and the boots that he was so boyishly proud of, has been set up. Just as the mantle of Stevenson fell upon Cummy and Simoneau, so now it has fallen upon this most amiable and delightful old couple, the Bakers, making them in a way celebrities; and to the patients his memory is like that of a dear departed elder brother, to whom they are linked by the strong bond of a common suffering and a common hope.

As soon as they could make ready the family set out, and by June 7 their train was rolling down the western slope of the Sierras into California. At Sacramento they were met by their “advance agent,” who, as her mother-in-law remarks, “was looking so pretty in a new hat that we were grieved to hear that it belonged to her daughter.”

Immediately on reaching San Francisco they were plunged into a bustle of preparation for the long cruise. While he rested from the fatigue of the long overland trip Mrs. Stevenson went on with the work, including, among other things, vaccination for all hands except the sick man. Lymph was taken with them so that his wife could vaccinate him if it should become necessary. The burden of these preparations, including the winning over of Doctor Merritt, who was not inclined to rent his yacht at first, fell upon the shoulders of Mrs. Stevenson. Sending the others here and there on errands, getting the burgee to fly at the masthead, purchasing all the multitudinous list of supplies necessary for the long voyage, making sure that nothing that might be needed by the invalid should be forgotten, with flying runs between times to report to him at the hotel — these were busy days for her.

While they were in San Francisco Mrs. Stevenson had a strange and dramatic meeting with Samuel Osbourne’s second wife, a quiet, gentle little woman whom he married soon after his divorce from Fanny Van de Grift. Within a year or two after the marriage Osbourne mysteriously disappeared, never to be heard of again, and his wife dragged out a pitiful existence at their vineyard at Glen Ellen, in Sonoma County, hoping against hope for his return. Finally her faith failed, and when she met Mrs. Stevenson in San Francisco she fell on her knees before her and burst into bitter weeping, saying: “You were right about that man and I was wrong!” She was then taken in to see Louis, and the two women sat hand in hand by his bedside and talked of the trouble that had darkened both their lives. Both Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson felt great compassion for the unhappy woman and did what they could to relieve her financial needs.

The Casco was a beautiful racing yacht, with cabin fittings of silk and velvet, and was kept so shiningly clean by her crew that in the islands she came to be known as the Silver Ship. At last all was ready, and, with a cabin packed with flowers and fruit sent by admiring friends, early in the morning of June 28, 1888, as the first rays of the sun glinted back from the dancing water, the Casco was towed across the bay, amid salutes from the ferry-boats and the trains on shore, and out through the narrow passage of the Golden Gate. Then the Silver Ship, shaking out her snowy sails, turned her prow across the glittering expanse straight towards the enchanted isles of which Louis Stevenson had dreamed since he was a boy of twenty.

The women had already provided themselves with their old solace of knitting for the slow-passing days at sea, and all settled down for the long voyage. All through the story of their three years of wandering among the islands of the South Seas runs the thread of the wife’s devotion; of how she took upon herself the fatiguing details of preparations for the voyages, searching for ships and arranging for supplies; of how she walked across an island to get horses and wagon to move the sick man to a more comfortable place; of how she saved his trunk of manuscripts from destruction by fire on shipboard, of how she cheerfully endured a thousand discomforts, hardships, and even dangers for the sake of the slight increase of health and happiness the life brought to the loved one. She was not a good sailor and suffered much from seasickness on these voyages. Some of the trials of life on the ocean wave under rough conditions are described in a letter to her friend Mrs. Sitwell:

“As for me, I hate the sea and am afraid of it (though no one will believe that because in time of danger I do not make an outcry), but I love the tropic weather and the wild people, and to see my two boys so happy.... To keep house on a yacht is no easy matter. When I was deathly sick the question was put to me by the cook: ‘What shall we have for the cabin dinner, what for to-morrow’s breakfast, what for lunch, and what about the sailors’ food? And please come and look at the biscuits, for the weevils have got into them, and show me how to make yeast that will rise of itself, and smell the pork, which seems pretty high, and give me directions about making a pudding with molasses, etc.’ In the midst of heavy dangerous weather, when I was lying on the floor in utter misery, down comes the mate with a cracked head, and I must needs cut off the blood-clotted hair, wash and dress the wound, and administer restoratives. I do not like being the ‘lady of the yacht,’ but ashore — oh, then I feel I am repaid for all!”

Even Louis himself, lover of the sea though he was, was forced to acknowledge that under some circumstances his capricious mistress had her unpleasant moods. “The sea,” he writes to Sidney Colvin, “is a terrible place, stupefying to the mind and poisonous to the temper — the motion, the lack of space, the cruel publicity, the villainous tinned foods, the sailors, the passengers.” Again he remarks concerning the food: “Our diet had been from the pickle tub or out of tins; I had learned to welcome shark’s flesh for a variety; and an onion, an Irish potato, or a beefsteak had been long lost to sense and dear to aspiration.”

But the glamour of romance and the joy of seeing her husband gaining strength hour by hour made all these annoyances seem things of small account, and, just as the time spent at Hyères was the happiest in Louis’s life, so these South Sea days were the best of all for her.

It had been decided that their first landfall should be at the Marquesas, a group which lay quite out of the beaten track of travel, three thousand miles from the American coast. Peacefully the days slipped by, with no event to record, until, on July 28, 1888, their first tropic island rose out of the sea and sent them in greeting a breeze laden with the perfume of a thousand strange flowers. They first dropped anchor in Anaho Bay, Nukahiva Island, which, except for one white trader, was occupied solely by natives, but lately converted from cannibalism. As both Stevenson and his wife were citizens of the world in their sympathies, it was not long before they were on terms of perfect friendliness with the inhabitants. Soon after landing, Mrs. Stevenson’s housekeeping instincts came to the front, and she set to work to learn something about the native cookery. Her mother-in-law writes:

“Fanny was determined to get lessons in the proper making of ‘kaku,’ so went ashore armed with a bowl and beater. Kaku is baked breadfruit, with a sauce of cocoanut cream, which is made by beating up the soft pulp of the green nut with the juice, and is delicious.”

Although the Casco had been originally built solely for coast sailing, and was scarcely fit for battling with wind and wave on the open sea, it was decided to take the risk and lay their course for Tahiti through the Dangerous Archipelago. After taking on a mate who was thoroughly acquainted with those waters, and a Chinese named Ah Fu to serve them as cook, they sailed away from the Marquesas. Ah Fu had been brought to the islands when a child, a forlorn little slave among a band of labourers sent by a contractor to work on the plantations, although, as the contract called for grown men, it was fraudulent to send a child. On the islands the boy grew up tall and robust, abandoned the queue, and no longer looked in the least like a Chinese. He became one of the most important members of the Stevenson family, remaining with them for two years. He was intensely attached to Mrs. Stevenson, carrying his devotion so far that once during a storm, when the ship was apparently about to go to the bottom, he appropriated the signal halyards, for which she had expressed an admiration, to give her as a present, explaining that "if the ship went down they wouldn't want them, and if it were saved they would all be too grateful to miss them." When the time came for him to leave the Stevensons and return to his family in China, it nearly broke his heart to go. Mrs. Stevenson writes of him:

"Ah Fu had as strong a sense of romance as Louis himself. He returned to China with a belt of gold around his waist, a ninety dollar breech loader given him by Louis, and a boxful of belongings. His intention was to leave these great riches with a member of his family who lived outside the village, dress himself in beggar's rags, and then go to his mother's house to solicit alms. He would draw from her the account of the son who had been lost when he was a little child, and, at the psychological moment, when the poor lady was weeping, Ah Fu would cry out: 'Behold your son returned to you, not a beggar, as I appear, but a man of wealth!"

On September 8 they ran into the lagoon of Fakarava, a typical low island forming a great ring some eighty miles in circumference by only a couple of hundred yards in width, and lying not more than twenty feet above the sea. Their experiences during a fortnight's stay on this bird's roost in the Pacific are thus described by Mrs. Stevenson:

"Leaving the yacht Casco in the lagoon, we hired a cottage on the beach where we lived for several weeks. Fakarava is an atoll of the usual horseshoe shape, so narrow that one can walk across it in ten minutes, but of great circumference; it lay so little above the sea level that one had a sense of insecurity, justified by the terrible disasters following the last hurricane in the group. Not far from where we lived the waves had recently swept over the narrow strip of coral during a storm. Our life passed in a gentle monotony of peace. At sunrise we walked from our front door into the warm, shallow waters of the lagoon for our bath; we cooked our breakfast on the remains of an old American cooking stove I discovered on the beach, and spent the rest of the morning sorting over the shells we had found the previous day. After lunch and a siesta we crossed the island to the windward side and gathered more shells. Sometimes we would find the strangest fish stranded in pools between the rocks by the outgoing tide, many of them curiously shaped and brilliantly coloured. Some of the most gorgeous were poisonous to eat, and capable of inflicting very unpleasant wounds with their fins. The captain suffered for a long time with a sort of paralysis in a finger he had scratched when handling a fish with a beak like a parrot....

"The close of the placid day marked the beginning of the most agreeable part of the twenty-four hours; it was the time of the moon, and the shadows that fell from the cocoanut leaves were so sharply defined that one involuntarily stepped over them. After a simple dinner and a dip in the soft sea, we awaited our invariable visitor, M. Donat Rimareau, the half-caste vice-president. As it was not the season for pearl fishing, there were no white men on the island, though now and again a schooner with a French captain would appear and disappear like a phantom ship. The days were almost intolerably hot, but with the setting of the sun a gentle breeze sprang up. We spent the evenings in the moonlight, sitting on mattresses spread on the veranda, our only chair being reserved for our guest. The conversation with M. Rimareau, who was half Tahitian, was delightful. Night after night we sat entranced at his feet, thrilled by stories of Tahiti and the Paumotus, always of a supernatural character. There was a strange sect in Fakarava called the 'Whistlers,' resembling the spiritualists of our country, but greater adepts. When M. Rimareau spoke of these people and their superstitions his voice sank almost to a whisper, and he cast fearful glances over his shoulder at the black shadows of the palms. I remember one of the stories was of the return of the soul of a dead child, the soul being wrapped in a leaf and dropped in at the door of the sorrowing parents. I am sure that when my husband came to write The Isle of Voices he had our evenings in Fakarava and the stories of M. Rimareau in mind. I know that I never read The Isle of Voices without a mental picture rising before me of the lagoon and the cocoa palms and the wonderful moonlight of Fakarava."

It was the Fakaravans who gave the name of Pahi Muni, the shining or silver ship, to the Casco.

Here the two ladies of the Stevenson party took lessons from the niece of a chief in plaiting hats of bamboo shavings and pandanus, and Mrs. Louis learned how to make them beautifully. This hat-making is the constant "fancy-work" of all Tahitian women, and serves in lieu of the tatting and embroidery of civilized lands. The best hats are made of the stalks of the arrowroot plant.

In the last week of September, bidding a regretful farewell to M. Rimareau and his delightful moonlight talks, they set sail for Papeete, the capital and port of entry of the Society Group — most beautiful of all the islands of the Pacific. But, though they were entranced with the grandeur and charm of its scenery — its towering cliffs, leaping cascades, and green, palm-fringed flat land of the coast — Papeete did not treat them well, and their old enemy, which had forgotten them for some happy months, again found them out there and Louis had a severe relapse, with a return of the hemorrhages. It was clear that Papeete did not agree with him, and it was decided to remove him to a more suitable place. After a perilous trip around the island in the Casco, during which the ship was twice nearly lost on the reefs, they reached Taravao, but found it hot and full of mosquitoes. Mr. Stevenson was now very ill, and it was imperatively necessary, not only to find a more salubrious spot, but also some means of transporting him to it. His wife, equal to the occasion, as always, set out on foot across the island, following a trail until she reached the shanty of a Chinese who had a wagon and a pair of horses. "These she hired to take them to Tautira, the nearest village of any size, a distance of sixteen miles over a road crossed by one-and-twenty streams. Stevenson was placed in the cart, and, sustained by small doses of coca, managed, with the help of his wife and their servant, to reach his destination before he collapsed altogether."

They found a house and made him as comfortable as possible. It was not long before Princess Moë, ex-queen of Raiatea, and a most charming person, heard of their arrival and came to see them. "I feel," writes Mrs. Stevenson, "that she saved Louis's life. He was lying in a deep stupor when she first saw him, suffering from congestion of the lungs and a burning fever. She made him a dish of raw fish salad, the first thing he had eaten for days; he liked it and began to pick up from that day. As soon as he was well enough she invited us to live with her in the house of Ori, the sub-chief of the village, and we gladly accepted her invitation." There they lived as "in fairyland, the guests of a beautiful brown princess."

When the Casco had been brought around to Tautira it was discovered in a peculiar way that their danger in the recent trip from Papeete had been greater than they had realised. The elder Mrs. Stevenson gave a feast on board to a number of native women, and during its progress one of the women offered a prayer for their deliverance from the perils of the sea, praying especially that if anything were wrong with the ship it might be discovered in time. The elder Mrs. Stevenson had tried in vain to persuade Captain Otis to go to church at the places where they stopped. This time the church came to him and he couldn't escape, but stood leaning disgustedly against the mast while the prayer was said. After the visitors left he made some impatient exclamation against "psalm-singing natives," and struck the mast a hard blow with his fist. It went through into decayed wood, and the captain was aghast. Mrs. Stevenson, on her part, was triumphant, and she always loved to tell that story and dwell on the expression of the scoffing captain's face as he saw a prayer answered. Both masts were found to be almost entirely eaten out with dry-rot, and if either had gone by the board off the reefs of any of the islands nothing could have saved the Casco from going to the bottom. The ship was at once sent to Papeete for repairs, but as it was impossible to obtain new masts of a proper size there, they were obliged to be content with patching up the old ones. This let the party in for a long stay at Tautira, at which none repined, for the scenery and climate were delightful, and their new friends hospitable and interesting.

Following island custom, Mrs. Louis Stevenson and the Princess Moë exchanged names — each taking the name of the other's mother — that of Mrs. Stevenson being Terii-Tauma-Terai, part of which meant heaven and part gave her a claim to some land in the neighbourhood.

Chief Ori a Ori (Ori of Ori, a clan name) was a magnificent figure of a man, standing six feet three and broad and strong in proportion. "He looked like nothing so much as a Roman emperor in bronze," says Mrs. Stevenson, and when he appeared at a feast with a wreath of golden yellow leaves on his head, all the company cried out in admiration. As he spoke very good French, communication with him was easy, and many a pleasant evening was spent in his house at Tautira, exchanging strange tales of old, wild, bloody days in the Scottish Highlands and in the Southern Seas. Both the Stevensons conceived a warm friendship for Ori, which endured as long as they lived.

As they used to do in Barbizon, in the old French days, Mrs. Louis Stevenson set herself to making silhouettes of the different members of the strangely assorted company, gathered from the four quarters of the globe. First she did the portrait of Ori by throwing the shadow of his head on the wall with the help of a lamp, then drawing the outline and filling it in with India ink. It turned out so good that Ori demanded likenesses of all the rest, and soon the house was turned into a veritable picture-gallery.

A feast was given by the chief for the captain of the Casco, and, says the elder Mrs. Stevenson, "Ori had such respect for Fanny's cooking powers that he insisted she should prepare the feast; so she stuffed and cooked a pair of fowls, two roast pigs, and made a pudding."

These days of pleasant intimacy with the Stevensons were doubtless the brightest in the whole life of the island chief, and he kept them always in affectionate remembrance. Years afterwards, when Mrs. Stevenson was living in San Francisco after the death of her husband, two of her friends, Doctor and Mrs. Russell Cool, went to Tahiti, and were commissioned by her to visit Chief Ori a Ori. The Cools took with them a phonograph and themselves made records of a speech by

Ori to Mrs. Stevenson, which, with its translation, was afterwards reproduced for her in San Francisco. But let us hear Mrs. Cool's own story of this visit:

"Ori had never seen a phonograph in his life, but his interest was that of a clever and civilized person — with none of the ignorance and terror and superstition of a savage. He was more than interested in everything relating to Louis and Tamaitai, asking all sorts of questions, intelligent ones, too, about their life in Samoa; then in San Francisco; about Tamaitai's personal appearance — if her hair was gray; whether she had a town house and country house, and whether they were near the ocean and the mountains. He had a perfect picture when we had answered them all, and he was so pleased and grateful to us — bearers of interesting news. All this time we sat out on the veranda of his cottage, on a moonlight night almost too heavenly to be real — a tropical night filled with beauty and romance. Then there was a lull in the conversation, and Ori said: 'And now tell me about John L. Sullivan!' We fell down from romantic heights with a thud! Then we reflected that as Louis was the greatest man intellectually that Ori had ever met, so John L. Sullivan, the famous fighter, was the greatest man in that line of his time. The islanders, in common with other primitive peoples, admire physical perfection tremendously, and feats of strength are celebrated in fable, song, and story. To Ori there was nothing incongruous in placing John L. Sullivan, the famous prizefighter, and Robert Louis Stevenson, the noted writer — two great men — side by side.

"We stayed all night out at Ori's place, and as a mark of honor my husband was given Louis's bed and I was given Tamaitai's. Ori's wife, a little dear, kissed our hands all round because we came from Tamaitai. Their love and admiration for her was so sincere and touching — it is the sweetest memory I have of Tahiti. We went to see Ori especially for Tamaitai, for she wished to know the condition of his eyes, and whether he needed glasses. His eyes were all right then, but later on developed some trouble, but he was so very old at that time that he was not willing to make the trip around the island for examination."

In 1906 the Society Islands were devastated by a terrific hurricane, and, hearing that Ori had suffered great loss, Mrs. Stevenson sent him a sum of money to help tide him over the crisis. He was very grateful for this assistance and wrote her a letter of heartfelt thanks, saying the money would be used to build a new house for himself and family to take the place of the houses that had been swept away.

Two dream-like months were spent on this lovely island of Tautira, while day after day, like shipwrecked mariners, they scanned the sea in vain for some signs of the long-delayed Casco. At last provisions fell so low that there seemed no prospect ahead of them but to live on the charity of their kind friend Ori. Thinking of this one day Mrs. Stevenson could not restrain her tears, and the chief, divining the cause of her distress, said to Louis: “You are my brother; all that I have is yours. I know that your food is done, but I can give you plenty of fish and taro. We like you and wish to have you here. Stay where you are till the Casco comes. Be happy — et ne pleurez pas!” They were deeply moved by this generous offer from a man to whose island they had come as utter strangers, and to celebrate the occasion Louis opened a bottle of champagne, which, curiously enough, was all that was left in their provision-chest. From this time they lived almost entirely on native food — raw fish with sauce made of cocoanut milk mixed with sea-water and lime-juice, bananas roasted in a little pit in the ground, with cocoanut cream to eat with them, etc. All this sounds luxurious, but after some time on this diet the white man begins to feel a consuming longing for beefsteak and bread and coffee.

At last the repaired Casco hove in sight, and, after a heart-breaking farewell from their now beloved friend, Ori a Ori, and his family, they set sail for Honolulu. The voyage of thirty days was a wild and stormy one, and they were obliged to beat about the Hawaiian Islands for some days before they could enter, eating up the last of their food twenty-four hours before arrival, but finally the Silver Ship, flying like a bird before a spanking trade-wind, ran into port around the bold point of Diamond Head. The deep translucent blue of the water was broken by ruffles of dazzling foam where treacherous reefs lay hidden, and on the horizon lay piles of those fat feather-bed clouds that are never seen so intensely white in any other place. Their arrival was the cause of great rejoicing to Mrs. Stevenson’s daughter, who was then living in Honolulu, for the Casco, long overdue, had been given up as lost.

They found Honolulu very beautiful. Taking a house at Waikiki, a short distance from town, they settled down to finish The Master of Ballantrae. In these surroundings, which seemed to them ultra-civilized after their experiences in the Marquesas and the Societies, they were able to enjoy a little family life. Under a great hau-tree that stood in the garden a birthday-party was given to Austin Strong, the little son of Mrs. Stevenson’s daughter. Just as though it had been prearranged, in the midst of the party who should come along but an Italian with a performing bear, the first that any of the children had ever seen! The silent witness to these festivities of years ago, the great hau-tree, still stands.

It was at this time that Stevenson began work on the scheme of his book on the South Seas. This was one of the rare occasions when he and his wife reached a deadlock in their opinions, and, unfortunately for the success of the book, he refused to accept her advice. Writing to Sir Sidney Colvin, she says:

“I am very much exercised by one thing. Louis has the most enchanting material that any one ever had in the whole world for his book, and I am afraid he is going to spoil it all. He has taken into his Scotch-Stevenson head that a stern duty lies before him, and that his book must be a sort of scientific and historical, impersonal thing, comparing the different languages (of which he knows nothing really) and the different peoples, the object being to settle the question as to whether they are of common Malay origin or not.... Think of a small treatise on the Polynesian races being offered to people who are dying to hear about Ori a Ori, the ‘making of brothers’ with cannibals, the strange stories they told, and the extraordinary adventures that befell us! Louis says it is a stern sense of duty that is at the bottom of it, which is more alarming than anything else ... What a thing it is to have a man of genius to deal with! It is like managing an over-bred horse!”

“This letter,” justly comments Sir Sidney, “shows the writer in her character of wise and anxious critic of her husband’s work. The result, in the judgment of most of his friends, went far to justify her misgivings.”

It had been their intention to return to England by way of America in the following summer, but the state of Mr. Stevenson’s health was still not good enough to warrant this venture, and, besides, the short cruise among the islands in the Casco had but whetted their appetites for more. It was finally decided that while the elder Mrs. Stevenson went on a visit to Scotland the rest of the party should sail again for the South Seas, and they began at once to make preparations. The charter of the Casco having come to an end, it was necessary to find another vessel. All these details were taken in hand by Mrs. Stevenson and her son, while Louis went to Molokai to visit the leper colony, in which he had become intensely interested after discovering that every island visited in the Casco was afflicted with the curse of leprosy. They saw many distressing cases, and their admiration for Father Damien and his unexampled heroism rose higher and higher. It was while they were in Honolulu that Mr. Stevenson read the letter written by the Reverend Mr. Hyde, and printed in a missionary paper, which inspired his eloquent defence of Father Damien, afterwards written and published in Sydney, Australia.

In the meantime Mrs. Stevenson made arrangements to charter the Equator, a trading schooner of only sixty-four tons register, but stanchly built and seaworthy, and having the added advantage of being commanded by a skilful mariner, Captain Denny Reid. On June 24, 1889, taking the faithful Ah Fu as cook, and this time accompanied by Mrs. Stevenson’s son-in-law, Joseph Strong, they sailed away for the Gilbert Islands. During their stay in Honolulu they had struck up a great friendship with the interesting and genial King Kalakaua, and on the day of their departure he appeared at the wharf with the royal band of musicians to see them off in proper style.

As Mrs. Strong, Mrs. Stevenson’s daughter, did not wish to leave her son Austin and the voyage was considered too hazardous for so young a child, she went to Sydney to await the arrival of the Equator.

Through lovely days and glorious nights they sailed along, the little schooner lying so low in the water that they were brought close to the sea, “with a sort of intimacy that those on large ships, especially steamers, can never know.”

Captain Reid is described by Mrs. Stevenson as “a small fiery Scotch-Irishman, full of amusing eccentricities, and always a most gay and charming companion.” Beneath this jolly sea-dog exterior, however, some eccentricities lay hidden that the crew did not always find amusing. Hearing a noise of splashing in the water by the ship’s side, Mrs. Stevenson found on inquiry that it was the captain taking his regular morning bath while surrounded by a circle of sailors to keep off the sharks. When she asked him if he did not think it selfish to expose the sailors to the danger in order to protect himself, he answered: “No, for if the captain should be lost think how much worse it would be for all on board than if it were a mere sailor!”

Their first stop in the Gilberts was at the port of Butaritari in the island of Great Makin, their arrival being unfortunately timed to strike the town just when the taboo against strong drink had been temporarily lifted by the king, and the whole population was engaged in a wild carouse. For a few days their situation seemed precarious, but the king at length restored the taboo, and after that peace settled again over the island.

After a stay of about a month at Butaritari they moved to Apemama, ruled over by the strong and despotic king Tembinoka, who, although usually unfavourable to whites, admitted the Stevensons to his closest friendship. He said he was able to judge all people by their eyes and mouths, and, they having passed his examination successfully, he proceeded at once to do all in his power to make them comfortable. They were provided with four houses, “charming little basket-work affairs, something like bird-cages, standing on stilts about four feet above the ground, with hanging lids for doors and windows,” and a retinue of several more or less useless servants, who spent most of their time in frolicking.

When they chartered the Equator it had been in the agreement that the ship should be permitted to engage in her legitimate occupation of trading in the islands when opportunity offered. She now went off on a cruise for copra, while the Stevensons stayed on shore at Apemama, where they spent six peaceful weeks. As they were again marooned longer than they expected, provisions began to run short, and it became necessary to live on the products of the island. Wild chickens were plentiful, and the handy Ah Fu found no difficulty in shooting them with a gun borrowed from the king, but a constant diet of these birds finally palled on them, and they were overjoyed when some of the king's fishermen caught several large turtles. "Never," says Mrs. Stevenson, "was anything more welcome than these turtle steaks!" The long deprivation of green vegetables caused a great desire for them, and Louis said: "I think I could shed tears over a dish of turnips!" As Mrs. Stevenson always carried garden-seeds with her, she took advantage of their extended stay here to plant onions and radishes, which soon came up and were received with intense appreciation.

The shrewd Tembinoka, judge and critic of his fellow men, whom they found to be the most interesting of all their South Sea acquaintances, did not fail to perceive unusual qualities in the wife of his guest. He remarked: "She good; look pretty; plenty chench (sense)."

The king desired a new design for a flag, and all set to work to produce a suitable one. Mrs. Stevenson's drawing, which consisted of three vertical stripes of green, red, and yellow, with a horizontal shark of black showing white teeth and a white eye, pleased him best and was adopted. The design was afterwards sent to Sydney and Tembinoka's flag manufactured from it. The shark was a neat reference to the king's supposed descent, of which he was very proud, from a fish of that species.

Finding that the whole island was rapidly falling away from Christianity, the king the worst of all, the Stevensons felt it to be their duty to go to church every Sunday, to set an example, although they understood nothing of the services, which were conducted in the native language. During the latter part of their stay they gave an exhibition of magic-lantern pictures — wretched daubs, it is true — of the life of Christ. That their efforts to do good were not all in vain was proved by the gratifying news received some time afterwards that all the natives, including the despot king, were returning to their Christian duties and the big church was full again.

The absence of the Equator was so prolonged that they were in great alarm lest she might be lost, but at last she hove in sight.

After much discussion during the long days aboard ship and ashore, their plans had been definitely formed to make Apia, Samoa, their next port of call, and bidding farewell, with many regrets, to the island king, the little schooner once more raised her sails to the breeze. Stern old savage as Tembinoka was, he could not restrain his tears when he saw these delightful visitors from across the seas sail away forever, leaving him to the dull society of his many wives, whom he described as “good woman, but not very smart.” Later, while living in Samoa, they were pained to hear of the death of their dear old friend Tembinoka, king of the island where they had spent so many happy days. It seemed that he had an abscess on his leg, and one of the native doctors lanced it with an unclean fish-bone, which caused blood-poisoning and the death of the king in great agony. For the better protection of his heir he left directions that his body should be buried in the centre of the royal residence, no doubt with the idea of frightening away evil-doers through their superstitious fears.

This time they took with them a passenger, a German trader named Höflich, of whom Lloyd Osbourne writes:

“When Paul Höflich, then trading in Butaritari, learned that Louis had chartered the Equator for Samoa, he packed up his merchandise and with this and twenty tons of copra engaged passage for the neighboring island of Maraki, distant about sixty miles. For this passage he paid sixty dollars. In spite of all efforts, however, the Equator failed to reach Maraki, being foiled by light airs and violent currents; so there was nothing left to do but to carry Paul on with us to Samoa, and though the captain tried to make him pay an increased passage he smilingly but firmly refused. We always thought that the twenty tons of copra saved our lives, for it stiffened the ship in the dreadful little hurricane that almost capsized us.”

I shall let Paul Höflich tell his own story of the days when he cruised with the Stevensons, in the letters he was kind enough to write me:

“My dear Mrs. Sanchez:

“In reply to your letter to pen any little happenings concerning Mr. R. L. Stevenson while I was with the Stevenson party on board the old Equator, I may say that I am very pleased to do so, but I am afraid the results will be meagre, for the length of time I had the pleasure of being with them did not exceed ten weeks. Besides, it is now just twenty-seven years ago. I boarded the Equator while she was among the islands cruising for copra, and in due time we reached Apemama and dropped anchor in the lagoon near the king’s boat fleet. Going on shore we found the party hale and much pleased with the ship’s arrival. In the evening the king, a fat and clever native, paid a visit and entertained us by telling about his ancestors. On the mother’s side they came from a shark, and the father resigned in his favor, as he was not so high a chief as his son, the descendant of the shark.

“Mrs. Stevenson told us she had a garden planted with all kinds of things, but the soil was stubborn and would not yield anything good but cocoanuts; in fact, all the plants seemed to be growing into cocoanut trees. She also told us about her first experience as a medicine man. One day a man came along, sat down, and complained of a severe headache, asking for ‘binika,’ by which he meant painkiller. The lady thought he meant vinegar, and told him it was useless against a headache, but he persisted. So a generous portion was poured out and handed to him, to be used externally. He received it, smelled it, and suspicion was visible on his countenance, but, being too polite to return it, he swallowed the whole and returned the glass, profusely thanking Mrs. Stevenson. He then rose and left, more sick than when he came.

“The king offered Mrs. Stevenson a sewing-machine, saying he had a houseful of them, and as his arsenal was short of boat anchors he used the sewing-machines as such for his fleet.

“In a few days everything was snug, and we left the moorings to beat through the passage, and from there pointed her head for Maraki. A nice breeze favored us, but gradually it moderated, and as the weary days dragged on a rumor started that there was a Jonah on board. At first we eyed each other with distrust, then it was whispered and at last openly declared that I must be the Jonah. I mildly protested, saying that Mrs. Stevenson was most likely to blame. I told them all sorts of stories to prove that sailors believed that a woman on board would bring bad luck to a ship, but all to no avail. Their idea that the passenger for Maraki was a Jonah had taken firm hold. Worse still, I began to believe it myself, and made up my mind to jump the ship as soon as I had a chance.

“In the meantime we were creeping slowly along until one morning, lo and behold, my island hove in sight. As the sun rose the breeze freshened and I got hilarious. We were drawing nearer our anchorage in good style and could see my station now plainly, and the natives gathering on the beach. I pictured myself already landing amidst their shouts of welcome, when, to my horror — I shudder even now as I pen these lines — the wind died out. I whistled for wind until my lips blistered, but all in vain, for the breeze kept straight up and down. Jonah was at work again. I demanded loudly of the captain to be put on shore, but he only shrugged his shoulders. The argument brought up Mr. Stevenson, who said ‘What about that for a boat?’ nodding at a certain small deck house. ‘It resembles a skiff, and I dare say the trade-room will spare a pair of paddles.’ ‘The very thing,’ said I, and began sharpening my sheath knife to cut the lashings. While I got busy Mrs. Stevenson came to me and I told her what way I was going on shore. ‘Why,’ she said, ‘if you make your appearance in a miserable craft of that kind your reputation on Maraki will be gone forever. Besides they might take you for a Jonah fresh from a whale and turn you right back to sea again. It would be safer to stay on board and make another attempt to reach Maraki, this time via Samoa.' I did not think I was getting quite a square deal, but I stayed. The current had taken us out of sight of land when a strong and fair breeze sprang up and carried us by noon next day to our anchorage in Butaritari lagoon.

"Here the party went ashore, biding the vessel getting ready for sea. In a week we lifted anchor and made for the passage, but the Equator was unwilling to leave. She hung on to a reef, and not until she had parted with her false keel would she push on and gain the open. During the first few weeks we had to beat to the eastward, which brought much calm and rainy weather. Mrs. Stevenson soon found that her berth was not the driest place in the ship. The tropical sun had warped the decks so that the rain found its way into the cabins. So Mrs. Stevenson would emigrate to the galley-way with her couch, and, with the help of an umbrella ingeniously handled, manage to do fairly well for a night's rest.

"One calm morning she called to tell us that sharks were around, and that one of them was wearing the glasses Mr. Osbourne had lost out of a boat at Maraki. Sure enough there were lots of them, and we soon had shark and chain hooks over the side, pulling them in and despatching them quickly and painlessly, but we never caught the one with the glasses on. Mrs. Stevenson said he could probably see a little better than the others. Now it seems that all these sharks stirred the appetite of Mr. Stevenson for shark steak — at least he advocated making a meal of them. Mrs. Stevenson mildly remonstrated, pointing out that it would be gruesome to eat the ancestors of Tembinoka, the man who had sheltered them for weeks. Mr. Stevenson could not see so far back, so the shark steak came on the table, but his wife managed to evade it. At last a breeze sprang up and the sharks took their leave.

"One night it blew stiff and we shortened sail, but with little advantage. The ship capered about till she had her topmast overboard with the jib attached to it. This episode occasioned the composition of the song 'On board the old Equator,' by Mrs. Stevenson and Mr. Osbourne, I believe for Mr. Stevenson's birthday. I sang it on that occasion for the first time, and later at Apia at a dinner given for the ship. This was before Mr. Stevenson had given away his birthday, so he was allowed to enjoy it, as did we all. Speeches were made and we drank his health, severally and all together. We felt as happy as any crew on board of a 20,000 tonner."

Of this jolly party, gathered together by the camaraderie of the sea, Lloyd Osbourne writes:

"The rousing chorus was sung in unison: 'Captain darling, where has your topmast gone, I pray? Captain darling, where has your topmast gone?' Such things sound foolish years afterwards, but at the time are gay and funny. Now, looking back, it seems as though the incongruity of the party was the funniest thing about it — Louis, my mother, myself, the boyish young Scotch captain, the big Norwegian mate, the Finnish second mate, Rick, a Russian ex-sea-captain, Paul Höflich, Joe Strong the artist, all the very best of friends, who had lived a month together crowded to suffocation, and yet were better friends than ever when they left the ship."

To continue the story of Paul Höflich:

"On the twenty-sixth morning out Mrs. Stevenson called from the deck: 'Come up and see Samoa!' Proudly the vessel cut her way towards the mountainous island covered with dark green forest from peak to beach. We were all struck with its beauty and elated with expectations as to its hidden shadowy secrets. Inside of an hour we dropped anchor in the port of Apia, and a friend came off and took the party on shore. The vessel's stay was five days, and then we up sails and pointed her head for Maraki, to get rid of the last passenger, the Jonah of the voyage. Before our departure Mr. Stevenson gave a dinner, where we gathered for the last time around the hospitable board. Needless to say, I was in love with the island and acquired a piece of land to bring me back for sure.

"As I look back now I cannot help admiring Mrs. Stevenson for her bravery and endurance in her resolution to remain with her husband. For us men this life was right enough, but for a refined woman it meant great hardship. When Mr. Stevenson, in his birthday speech on board, said with moist eyes that he had never enjoyed a voyage and company so well as ours, Mrs. Stevenson deserved the largest share of that praise. I remember how she took care of him. A doctor in Tahiti, who apprehended his early end, gave his wife a vial of medicine, which she carried sewn in her dress for three years to have it handy. I have a much-prized photograph of her on which she wrote 'Dear Paul. This is to remind you of the days when we were so happy on board of the old Equator.' This gives me a sad pleasure in recalling the old times when the South Seas seemed to us so much brighter than now. Civilization is coming to the natives at the rate of geometrical progression, and soon their good qualities will be swept away by greed and false education.

"I have the honor to remain,
Yours faithfully,
P. Höflich."

That the voyage was a rough one is clear from Mr. Stevenson's description in a letter to Sir Sidney Colvin:

"On board the Equator, 190 miles off Samoa. We are just nearing the end of our long cruise. Rain, calms, squalls, bang — there's the fore-topmast gone; rain, calms, squalls — away with the staysail; more rain, more calms, more squalls; a prodigious heavy sea all the time, and the Equator staggering and hovering like a swallow in a storm; and the cabin, a great square, crowded with wet human beings, and the rain avalanching on the deck, and the leaks dripping everywhere; Fanny, in the midst of fifteen males, bearing up wonderfully.” She rejoiced, nevertheless, that her mother-in-law had not accompanied them on this voyage, with its extreme discomfort and hardship, but adds, “and yet I would do it all over again.”

In the early part of December, 1889, they arrived at the Navigator Islands — so called by Bougainville because of the skill with which the natives managed their canoes and sailed them far out to sea — and, as related above by Paul Höflich, dropped anchor in the harbour of Apia. They were not especially attracted to this place at first, the scenery being of a softer and less striking character than that of Tahiti, but as time passed the charm of the place grew upon them more and more, and finally they decided to make it their permanent headquarters between cruises. To this end they bought four hundred acres in the “bush,” as the great tropical forests are called, and after making arrangements for the erection of a temporary cabin during their absence, they sailed on the steamer Lubeck for Sydney, with the intention of going on from there for a visit to England.

It was during this stay in Sydney that Mr. Stevenson wrote his famous defense of Father Damien. When he realised that its publication might result in a suit for libel and the loss of all he had in the world, he thought it only right to ask for a vote of the family, for without their concurrence he would not take such a step. The vote was unanimously in favour of the publication. When the pamphlets were ready, his wife, with her son and daughter, set to work addressing them and sending them far and wide. It was certain that he would not appeal in vain in such a matter to his wife, for in their sympathies with the unfortunate and unjustly used they were as one.

Their hopes of going to England, based on the long respite of eighteen months during which Mr. Stevenson had been free from his old trouble, were dashed to the ground by a severe cold caught in Sydney and a return of the hemorrhages. His only chance seemed to lie on the sea — in fact, the doctor said nothing would save him but the South Seas — but when his wife went to the water-front to secure passage she found that, owing to a sailors’ strike, only one ship, the Janet Nichol, an iron-screw steamer of about six hundred tons, was going out. She went to the owners and asked to be taken, but they refused, on the ground that they didn’t want women on board. Nevertheless she went right on, with pitiful persistence, with her preparations, and finally had the sick man carried down to the landing-place and rowed out to the ship. She had won out, but they received her very reluctantly. And such a ship! It must have looked fine, however, to Mrs. Stevenson, after the Equator, for she writes: “Think of two bathrooms and only one other passenger besides ourselves, a nice long wide deck to walk on, steam to run away from squalls with, and no flopping about in calms.” But when her daughter went on board to see them off she was horrified at the sight of it — black with coal dust, manned by Solomon Island “black boys,” and just as they stepped on deck Tin Jack (Jack Buckland) came up the gangway drunk and fell off into the water. It was pandemonium, but very exciting, and in the midst of it Mrs. Stevenson was calmly looking after her husband and keeping up a smiling, courageous face.

As soon as they were at sea Louis recovered, and after stopping off at Apia for a look at their new property, they went the rounds of the “low islands,” visiting thirty-three in all. Although they confessed to a certain monotony in these islands, their adventures, of which Mrs. Stevenson kept a regular diary, were many and exciting. These notes were written for her husband’s benefit, but as it happened that he made but slight use of them, she prepared them for publication herself in a volume called The Cruise of the Janet Nichol. “This diary,” she says in her preface, “was written under the most adverse conditions — sometimes on the damp up-turned bottom of a canoe or whale-boat, sometimes when lying face downward on the burning sands of the tropic beach, often in copra sheds in the midst of a pandemonium of noise and confusion, but oftener on board the rolling Janet, whose pet name was the Jumping Jenny, but never in comfortable surroundings.”

It was on this voyage, during which they were well tossed about by the frisky Janet, that the ship was set on fire by the spontaneous combustion of some fireworks in one of the cabins. In the midst of the excitement some native sailors were seen by Mrs. Stevenson about to toss overboard a blazing trunk. She stopped them in time and was thankful to discover that she had saved all her husband’s manuscripts.

At the end of the cruise, from which his health did not benefit as much as had been hoped, they returned to Sydney, meeting there a reception which, while irritating enough at the time, afterwards afforded them much amusement. They went directly from the ship to the most fashionable hotel, but, not being known there, their queer appearance, with their Tokalu buckets, mats, shells, straw hats, etc., brought upon them a severe snubbing. Then they went to the Oxford, a little old inn on George Street, where they were courteously received and given the whole first floor, without being asked to show their credentials. The next morning every paper in Sydney had their names on the front page, and all the clubs, societies, churches, and schools sent cards to the fine hotel, whose proprietor had to send a messenger three times a day to the Oxford with a basketful of letters for the Stevensons. The proprietor, now aware of what he had done, came in great chagrin to beg them to come back, and offered them the rooms for half price — for nothing — but they refused; and, besides, they were too comfortable at the Oxford to be willing to leave. After that, whenever Mrs. Stevenson went to Sydney she always stayed at the Oxford, for she was always loyal to those who showed her consideration.

During their stay in Sydney at this time Mr. Stevenson was so ill that he was compelled to keep his room, and all thought of a return to England was now definitely abandoned. Plans were set on foot for establishing a permanent residence in Samoa, and while Lloyd Osbourne went to England to bring the furniture from Skerryvore, the Stevensons returned to Apia and camped in a gate lodge on their place until the new house should be built.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HAPPY YEARS IN SAMOA

It was in Samoa that the word “home” first began to have a real meaning for these gypsy wanderers, lured on as they had been half round the world in their quest of the will-o’-the-wisp, health. Having bought the land, which lay on rising ground about three miles from the town of Apia, it was then necessary to find the money to build a house on it. After some thought, Mrs. Stevenson suggested that they might sell Skerryvore in England, and thus turn the one house directly into the other. As Skerryvore had been a gift to her from her father-in-law, Louis said, “But this money is yours,” and he then said he would make it all right by leaving her the Samoan place in his will, which he did, “with all that it contained.”

The next thing was to choose a name, and they finally decided upon the native word Vailima, meaning “five waters,” in reference to a stream fed by four tributaries that ran through the place.

Without more ado they plunged eagerly into the business of clearing the forest and building their house — a task for which Fanny Stevenson, by taste and early training, was supremely fitted. She wrote at once to her mother-in-law in Scotland, saying: “Come when you like. Even if we make a temporary shelter you need not be so very uncomfortable. The only question is the food problem, and if in six months I cannot have a garden producing and fowls and pigs and cows it will be strange to me.” In all this she took a high delight, for, like a true pioneer, she found more pleasure in the doing of a task than in the thing finished. When the house or garden or what-not was done, and there was nothing left but to admire, a great part of the interest in it was gone for her. At Vailima she had almost a virgin field for her gardening activities, and her “Dutch blood” rejoiced within her. In the old California days her husband, in his humorous way, had called her “the forty-niner,” but now, as he watched her, flitting in her blue dress, like a witch, in all parts of the plantation, directing, expostulating, and working with her hands when words failed, he called her “my little blue bogie planter.” Writing to Miss Taylor, he says: “Ill or well, rain or shine, a little blue indefatigable figure is to be observed howking about certain patches of garden. She comes in heated and bemired up to the eyebrows, late for every meal....”

The place they had bought was not precisely in the “bush,” as the unbroken forest is called in those lands, for it had once been partly under cultivation; but it needs only a short season of neglect for the devouring jungle to sweep over and obliterate all traces of the handiwork of man. To all intents they began anew to clear out a place for their house and garden, in the midst of the great silent forest, "where one might hear the babbling of a burn close by, and the birds, and the sea breaking on the coast three miles away and six hundred feet below." The days were "fine like heaven; such a blue of the sea, such green of the trees, and such crimson of the hibiscus flowers were never dreamed of; and the air as mild and gentle as a baby's breath — and yet not hot."

"The scenery," writes Mrs. Stevenson to Miss Boodle, "is simply enchanting; here a cliff, there a dashing little river, yonder a waterfall, here a great gorge slashed through the hillside, and everywhere a vegetation that baffles description. Our only workmen are cannibals from other islands and so-called savages — though I have never yet met one man whom that word described accurately. I have with me [on the steamer Lubeck, on the way from Sydney to Samoa] a cageful of beautiful yellow fowls, a big black mother sow is to follow, and soon I mean to have some pretty Jersey cows and some gentle horses. I have packages of garden seeds to experiment with, and it is odd indeed if I am not able soon to provision a garrison. One of the first things I shall plunge into is an ice-house run by cascade power."

At first they lived in a two-room cottage, designed to serve later as a gate lodge, where comfort was at a minimum. The road to Apia was scarcely more than a footpath, and it was difficult to bring up supplies in any quantity. At times provisions ran low, and the story of the occasion when they were reduced to dining on a single avocado pear was told so often, in print and otherwise, that during all the following time of plenty they had to keep explaining that they really had enough to eat. Of course the famine was more apparent than real, for there was enough food at the town only three miles away, and the occasional dearth in those first days was merely a matter of the inconvenience of bringing it up.

It was in the hurricane season, too, and there were days when they sat in momentary fear lest their frail dwelling should be carried away by the fury of the storm or crushed beneath some falling giant of the forest.

From the day of their arrival at Vailima, in September, 1890, Mrs. Stevenson began to keep a diary — a record which has proved to be one of the most valuable sources of material in writing her biography, and which itself has a curious history. When, after her husband's death, she finally left Vailima, the diary was inadvertently left behind, eventually making its way to London and falling into the hands of an English lady, Miss Gladys Peacock, who, thinking it might be of some use to the family, sent it to Lloyd Osbourne, with a note saying that "of course she had not read it." It is to the courtesy of this Englishwoman that I am indebted for the extracts from the diary, of which I shall make free use.

In their temporary lodge in the wilderness, where they were encamped while the big house was building, furniture and other comforts of civilization were decidedly lacking, but they had brought beds with them, and Mrs. Stevenson at once set the carpenter to putting them up. For help about the house and premises they had to depend on Paul Einfürer, the German pantryman from the Lubeck, who had come up and asked for work. He was good-natured but clumsy, and spoke so little English that it was difficult to communicate with him. The natives employed in clearing and planting knew only Samoan, and Mrs. Stevenson often found it necessary to instruct them by doing the work with her own hands. Writing humorously of her troubles to Sir Sidney Colvin, her husband says: "Fanny was to have rested; blessed Paul began making a duck house; she let him be; the duck house fell down, and she had to set her hand to it. He was then to make a drinking place for the pigs; she let be again, and he made a stair by which the pigs will probably escape this evening, and she was near weeping.... Then she had to cook the dinner; then, of course, like a fool and a woman, must wait dinner for me and make a flurry of herself. Her day so far." Again he writes: "The guid wife had bread to bake, and she baked it in a pan, O! But between whiles she was down with me weeding sensitive in the paddock. Our dinner — the lowest we have ever been — consisted of an avocado pear between Fanny and me, a ship's biscuit for the guid man, white bread for the missis, and red wine for the twa; no salt horse, even, in all Vailima!"

On the last trip from Sydney Mrs. Stevenson had brought all sorts of seeds with her — tomatoes, beans, alfalfa, melons, and a dozen others — and she went about the place dropping them in wherever she thought they would grow. Some difficulties peculiar to the tropics had to be met and conquered. For instance, rats ate out the inside of the melons as soon as they were ripe, and it became necessary to put out poison. A beginning had been made in the way of live stock, of which she says: "We have three pigs — one fine imported boar and two slab-sided sows. They dwell in a large circular enclosure, which, with its stone walls, looks like an ancient fortification."

These same swine became the torment of their lives, for some of the devils said to haunt Vailima seemed to have entered into them, and no sty could be made strong enough to restrain them.

In clearing away the dense growth on the site of their projected house they were careful to preserve the best of the native plants. "The trees that have been left standing in the clearing," says the diary, "are of immense size, really majestic, with creepers winding about their trunks and orchids growing in the forks of their branches. These great trees are alive with birds, which chatter at certain hours of the night and morning with rich, throaty voices. Though they do not exactly sing, the sound they make is very musical and pretty. Yesterday Ben [the man of all work] took his gun and went into the bush to shoot. He returned with some small birds like parrots, which were almost bursting with fat. I felt some compunction about eating birds that suggested cages and swings and stands, but as we had nothing else to eat was fain to cook them, and a very excellent dish they made. I have read somewhere that the dodo and a relative of his called the 'tooth-billed pigeon' are still to be found on this island. It would be delightful to possess a pet dodo."

Although their stay in the little lodge was to be but temporary, it was like her to set to work to make it a pleasant abode even for the short time that they were to be there. "What we most dislike about our house," she says, "is the chilly, death-like aspect of the colours in which it is painted — black and white and lead-color. So we unearthed from our boxes some pieces of tapa in rich shades of brown and nailed them on the walls, using pieces of another pattern for bordering, and at once the whole appearance of the room was changed. Over the door connecting the two rooms we fastened a large flat piece of pink coral, a present given me by Captain Reid when we were on the Equator. We have had the carpenter put up shelves in one corner of the room and on two sides of one of the windows. I also had him nail some boards together in the form of a couch, upon which I have laid a mattress covered by a shawl. On the table an old pink cloth is spread, and when we light the lamp and set the little Japanese burner to smoking buhach — for, alas, there are mosquitoes — we feel quite snug and homelike.

"The pig house, a most unsightly thing, is finished, and a creeper or two will soon disguise its ugliness. There seem to be a great number of mummy apples springing up through the clearing, of which I am glad for the sake of the prospective cow. Paul and I have planted out a lot of kidney potatoes, which is an experiment only, as they are not supposed to grow in Samoa. We have sowed tomato seeds, also artichokes and eggplants, in boxes. A few days ago Mr. Caruthers sent us half a dozen very fine pineapples, and as fast as we eat them we plant the tops.

"October 6. I have been too busy to write before. Much has been accomplished. A good lot of sweet corn is planted, besides peas, onions, lettuce, and radishes. Lima beans are coming up, and some of the cantaloupes. Mr. Caruthers has brought a root of mint and some cuttings of granadilla, which have been set out along the arbor. It seems absolutely impossible to get anything sent up to us from Apia. Lists and notes go flying, but, except from Krause the butcher, with no results. It seems an odd thing that there should not be a spade or a rake for sale in a town where there would be no difficulty in finding the best quality of champagne, to say nothing of all the materials for mixed drinks. We have almost starved for want of provisions until yesterday, when Ben killed a couple of fowls, a large piece of meat came from town, Paul shot two pigeons, and Mr. Blacklock came with fresh tomatoes. Afterwards Ben came with palusami, and now to-day comes a young native girl from Mrs. Blacklock with enormous bananas, long green beans, a dozen eggs, and a bunch of flowers, and Ben has come in with eight little parrots. It seems either a feast or a famine with us.

"October 7. Last night it rained heavily, which was good for my plants, but, as our kitchen is some six or eight yards from the house, cooking became a series of adventures. I had set a sponge for bread last night, and was most anxious to bake the dough early in the day. A black boy was sent to the carpenter for a moulding board, and, placing it on a chair on the back veranda, I knelt on the floor with a shawl over my head to keep the rain off and made up the loaves. In making the dough I was successful, but the attempt to bake it almost sent me into hysterics. With an umbrella over my head I ran to the kitchen, but found, to my dismay, that all the wood was soaked, and the wind drove the smoke back into the stove, which thereupon belched forth acrid clouds from every opening. Paul ran down to where the carpenter had been working, and returned with a boxful of chips which we dried on top of the stove, swallowing volumes of smoke as we did so. Then I called Ben and showed him how to nail up the half of a tin kerosene can over the opening of the pipe to screen it from the wind. That helped a little, but the rain beat in on the stove, and, though we consumed immense quantities of chips, it still remained cold. Finally I made a barrier of boxes around the stove, and that brought a measure of success, so that in about a couple of hours I was able to half bake, half dry a fowl for luncheon. By that time the bread was done for, and I very nearly so. Paul and I held a council of war, and decided to send the boys down to the pavilion to live, while we took their room for a kitchen and dining-room, one end serving for the one and the other end for the other, somewhat after the fashion of Mr. and Mrs. Boffin's room in Our Mutual Friend.

"There were two mango trees among the plants sent up by Mr. Caruthers, and I was surprised to see among them also a shrub that is the pest of Tahiti and will become so here if it is planted. In the afternoon, the rain being then only a high mist, Simile and I began to set out the things. While busy at this I saw three or four beautiful young men, followed by a troop of dogs, pass along our road towards the bush. I have seldom seen more graceful, elegant creatures than these fellows. They carried large knives and axes, wore hats of fresh green banana leaves, and also carried large banana leaves as umbrellas to keep off the rain. With a friendly tofa [farewell] on either side, they went their way. After we had planted all the roots and taken a little rest, Simile and I took a hoe and pickaxe and finished the afternoon sowing Indian corn. I asked Simile while we were planting which was the best season for such work, meaning the wet, dry, or intermediate time. 'We Samoans,' he answered, 'always go by the moon. Unless we plant in the time of the big round moon we expect no fruit.'

"I thought one of my yellow hens wanted to sit, and that it would be the proper thing to provide her with eggs. To identify the eggs from fresh ones I made a black pencil mark around each one. After all was finished I retired from the henhouse and peeped through the palings. Madam hen clucked up to the nest, as I had always seen hens do, but at the sight of the marked eggs she started back in a sort of surprise and alarm. 'What's the matter?' cried the two cocks, stretching wide legs as they hastened to the spot. They, too, started back, just as the hen had done, held a hurried consultation and finally ventured to touch the eggs with their beaks. By this time all the five yellow hens had gathered round the nest, and pretty soon all the others were craning their necks to gaze at the marvel. After the cocks had poked the eggs about a little with their beaks the hens went nearer and tried to peck off the black marks. All the time there was a great hubbub of anxious conversation. The next morning more than half the eggs had been destroyed, and to save those that were left I had to remove them."

Exploring their new estate was one of their most exciting and at the same time laborious occupations, for most of the land was so densely overgrown that it was necessary to carry a bush knife with which to cut a path as they went, and, moreover, unexpected dangers lurked in the beautiful ferny depths. "Louis and I went up to see the banana patch," says the diary, "Louis carrying a knife to clear the road. For a little way we followed a fairly open path that had previously been cleared by Louis, but by and by it began to close up and become treacherously boggy underfoot. Several times we were ankle-deep in mud and water, and Louis had to slash down the tall vegetation that obstructed our way. Before long he cried out: 'Behold your banana patch!' And there it was, sure enough — a great number of sturdy, thickset young plants, many with bunches of fruit hanging above the strange purple flower of the plant, choked with a rank undergrowth and set with the roots in sluggishly running water. Here and there the gigantic leaves of the great taro spread out — a dark, shining green. It was too much for Louis, who fell to clearing on the spot, while I went on to the end of the plantation. Once or twice I was nearly stuck in the bog, but managed to drag myself from the ooze by clinging to a strong plant. After a while Louis called out to me as though in answer, and I hurried back to him. When I came up he said he had mistaken the cry of a bird for my voice and supposed I had lost the path. I helped him a little while pulling up the smaller weeds, but was in mortal terror of touching a poisonous creeper whose acquaintance I had already made and whose marks I still bear. It went to my heart to dig up and destroy the most lovely specimens of ferns I have ever seen, but I did it bravely, though I determined to return some day and make a collection of them. Some of the more delicate climbing ferns were magnificent. Occasionally as I drew out a plant the air around me was filled with the perfume of its bruised leaves. It was entrancing work, though we were soaked with mud and water, but before very long my head began to swim, and I proposed to go back to the house and see about some sort of food. I just managed to get a meal prepared and then gave out utterly, for my beautiful banana swamp had given me a fever with a most alarming promptitude. I could not sleep all night, but kept waking with a start, my heart and pulses bounding, and my head aching miserably. This morning Louis gave me a dose of quinine, which soon helped me.

"The pigs had to be watered when we came back from the perfidious swamp, but how to manage it I could not see. Paul was ill, Simile was gone, and I feared it might be dangerous for Louis to lift pails of water. I walked round and round the stone wall of their fortification, but it seemed unclimbable and impenetrable. I might have got over myself, but could not manage the pailful, also. Finally I thought of a boy, the son of a neighbor, who had come to visit Paul, and persuaded him to undertake the task of watering the pigs. The next day I discovered that he had simply poured the water over the wall upon the ground, and my poor pigs had gone thirsty all night. I cannot think that is the sort of son to help a pioneer.

"In the midst of all this Louis wished to go down to Apia. It took all six of the boys to catch the pony, and in the meantime Louis was having a desperate struggle to find his clothes and dress. I was in a dazed state with fever and quinine and could not help him at all. At last he got away, in what sort of garb I tremble to think, and he was hardly out of sight before I discovered all the things he had been in search of — in their right places, naturally."

Eternal vigilance was the price of any progress made in her gardening, for the moment her eyes were taken off the workmen they committed some provoking blunder that often undid the work of weeks. “As all the men were off with the cart,” she writes, “I thought I might as well let Ben plant corn, which he assured me he understood perfectly, for had he not planted all the first lot which had failed through the depredations of the rats? At about three Simile and I went down to put in some pumpkin seeds among the corn, and, to my disgust, I saw why the first lot of corn had failed. Ben’s idea of planting was to scrape a couple of inches off the ground, drop in a handful of corn, and then kick a few leaves over the grains. It is really wonderful that any at all should have germinated.

“While we were working Sitioni came up with some pineapple plants. He said the people were fighting in Tutuila, but he did not think it would come to war here. He showed me a large pistol fastened round his waist by a cartridge belt, and tried to shoot a flying bat with it, but failed. Simile told me that the vampire bat, or flying fox, as they call it here, is good to eat, but I do not think I could eat bat. My lady pig from Sydney is at Apia, but as she only cost thirty-seven shillings I feel doubts as to her quality. Still, in Samoa a pig’s a pig.

“Next day. The pig is a very small, very common pig, but nevertheless I had the boys make a special sty for her. The old cock is really too bad. Every time an egg is laid he strikes his bill into it, and, throwing it on the ground, calls his harem to a cannibal feast. Something, either the rats or a wild hen, has destroyed all our corn.”

Perhaps no other part of their life in Samoa was so full of happiness for them as these first days — just those two alone, for the presence of their childlike native helpers counted as naught — with all the surroundings yet in a primitive state and little to remind them of the sophisticated world from which they had been glad to escape. Both were natural-born children of the wild. In the brief tropical twilight they often walked together and talked of the beautiful future they thought they saw stretching out before them.

“Last night,” so runs the diary, “Louis and I walked up and down the path behind the house. The air was soft and warm, but not too warm, and filled with the most delicious fragrance. These perfumes of the tropic forest are wonderful. When I am pulling weeds it often happens that a puff of the sweetest scent blows back to me as I cast away a handful of wild plants. I believe I have discovered the ylang-ylang tree, about which there has been so much mystery. Simile tells me that one of the priests distils perfume from the same tree. It does not grow very large and has a delicate leaf of a tender shade of green, with the flowers, of a greenish white, in racemes. The natives often use these flowers to mix in their wreaths.”

Every paradise has its drawbacks, and though ferocious wild beasts and poisonous snakes are absent from that fortunate island, yet there were many small creatures dwelling in the neighbouring jungle that sometimes made their presence known in disconcerting ways. Of one of these she writes: “We were driven out of the house by a tree frog of stentorian voice, which was hidden in a tree near the front veranda and made a noise like a saw being filed, only fifty times louder. It actually shook the drums of my ears.... I had to stop just here to show Paul how to tie a knot that would not slip. The last time Mr. Caruthers was here he found his horse at the point of strangulation from a slip noose round its neck as Paul had tethered it out in the grass.... To return to the tree frog. When we settled ourselves at the table for the evening what was our horror to hear a second tree frog piping up just over our heads in the eaves of the house. We poked at him for some time with sticks and brooms, and I had a guilty feeling that I had done him a mortal injury; but when, after we were in bed and half asleep, he started saw-filing again, I wished I had.”

The hurricane season now came on, and wild tropic storms, of a violence of which they had never before dreamed, beat on the little house in the clearing with terrifying fury. “We had a very heavy rainstorm,” the diary records, “with thunder and lightning. At night the rain fell so noisily that we could not hear each other speak, and it seemed as though the house must be crushed in by the weight of water falling on it. In the middle of the night Louis arose, made a light, and fell to writing verses. I was troubled about the taller corn — lest it be broken down and spoiled. Yet all went well, for the verses turned out not badly and the corn stood as straight as I could have wished it to do.

“The banana patch is pretty well cleared, but it is difficult to keep men at work there. ‘Too many devils, me ‘fraid,’ explained Lafaele when he came back sooner than I had anticipated. There are devils everywhere in the bush, it is said; creatures that take on the semblance of man and kill those with whom they converse, but our banana patch seems to be exceptionally cursed with the presence of these demons.”

Indeed, to be alone in the jungle is a solemn thing, even for people of stronger mentality than the superstitious natives. The vegetation is so dense that there are no shadows, and, the location of the sun being an unsolvable mystery, one becomes affected by a strange lost feeling. The loneliness, the silence, the impossibility of seeing far into the surrounding wall of foliage, all oppress the soul, and strange alarms attack the most hardy. Then at night, when there is no moon and the darkness is thick, a phosphorescent light, due to decaying wood, shines fearsomely all about on the ground, so that it seems, as Louis said, “like picking one’s way over the mouth of hell.” “We ourselves,” writes Mrs. Stevenson, “have become infected with the native fear of the spirits. Louis has been cutting a path in the bush, and he confesses that the sight of anything like a human figure would send him flying like the wind with his heart in his mouth. One night the world seemed full of strange supernatural noises. When Louis whispered ‘Listen! What’s that?’ I felt as though cold water had been poured down my back, but it was only the hissing of a fire in the clearing. The same night we were waked by sounds of terror in the henhouse. Paul, Louis, and I ran out with one accord, but could see nothing. In the morning we found the body of a pullet with its heart torn out. Simile says that the murderer is a certain small and beautiful bird, but we were quite in the mood to believe it an aitu.”

Notwithstanding the slow progress caused by inefficient help and the difficulty of getting materials up the steep road to their plantation, they could see their home gradually growing around them. Mr. Stevenson’s health was better than it had been since their marriage, and a deep content settled gently upon their long-harassed spirits. Something of this is reflected in an entry made in her diary on a certain beautiful, still evening: “It is now half-past eight and very dark, for the moon is not yet up and the sky is overcast. The air is fresh and sweetly damp and redolent of many scented leaves and flowers. I can hear the sea on Apia beach; the sound of it is regular, like hoarse breathing, or even more like the rhythmic purring of a gigantic cat. Crickets and tree frogs and innumerable other insects and small beasts are chirping and pecking with various noises that mingle harmoniously. Occasionally a bird calls with a startling cry — perhaps the very bird that murdered my poor pullet. When I stood in the doorway and looked in, the room seemed to be glowing with colour, glowing and melting, and yet there is nothing to go upon but the tapa on the walls, the coral, the pink and maroon window curtains of the coarsest cotton print, a ragged old ink-spotted table-cover, a few print-covered pillows, and the pandanus mats on the floor. Louis’s books, with their bindings of blue and green, to say nothing of gold lettering, help greatly on the six shelves, and the two kava bowls that I have worked as hard to colour as a young man with his first meerschaum have taken on a fine opalescent coating.” This, of course, was when they were living in the temporary quarters while the main house was being built.

The entry of November 15 gives us an amusing tale of the horses: “The cart horses, a couple of large, mild-eyed, gentle, dappled grays, have arrived from Auckland. It was pleasant to see them fall upon the grass after their tedious sea voyage. Just as we were thinking about going to bed, an alarming noise was heard from the direction of the stable. It had been raining hard all day and was still drizzling. The weeds on the way to the stable were up to my waist and dripping with water. The prospect was not inviting, but we nobly marched out with the lantern and an umbrella. As we entered the enclosure where the stable stands, or rather stood, we became aware of two large white objects showing indistinctly through the darkness. A little nearer and our two horses were looking us in the face. They had eaten the sides and ends of their house quite away. They must have thought it odd to be housed in an edible stable. When we entered they received us with every sign of welcome, but we were dismayed to find them tangled with each other and the wreck of the partition. Louis crawled in under the big hairy feet, and, after much labor, got one wet knot untangled, the horses meanwhile smelling and nosing about the top of his head. He said he expected at every moment to have it bitten off, for, he argued, if the horses found a stable edible, in these outlandish parts, they might easily conceive the idea of sampling the hostler.... I am interrupted at this moment by Simile at the door to ask a question. I wish I could take a photograph as he stands at the door, with the steady eyes of a capable man of affairs, but the dress of a houri; about his loins he has twisted a piece of white cotton; a broad garland of drooping ferns passes over his forehead, crosses at the back of his head, and coming forward round his neck is fastened in a knot of greenery on his breast. He is rather a plain young man, but he looks really lovely just now, and the incongruous expression of his eyes heightens the effect.

“Yesterday we had a terrific storm, quite alarming to people living in such a vulnerable abode. Even when the weather is fair the house shakes as though it would fall if any one comes upstairs rapidly, and the slight iron roof is entirely open at the eaves to catch any wind that blows. We could not keep a lamp burning, and the lantern kept for such emergencies having been broken by Paul, we were in semi-darkness. Late in the afternoon a cloud enveloped us so that we could see no farther than in a London fog. From that time the gale increased, lashing the branches of the trees together, and sometimes twisting their trunks and throwing them to the ground. We could see the rain through the windows driving in layers, one sheet above another. Occasionally there was an ominous thrashing on the iron roof as though the great hardwood tree alongside of the house meant to do us an injury. Water poured in under our ill-fitting doors, the matches were too damp to light, and the general discomfort and sloppiness gave one quite the feeling of being at sea. I wished we might reef in some of our green tree sails, which reminded me of Ah Fu’s terror of the land and longing to be at sea in bad weather. Simile and his boys are building or, rather, excavating, a hurricane refuge. I went to see it yesterday and found it a big mudhole with immense boulders heaving up from the bottom. I advised the instant digging of a ditch unless they wished to use it for a bathing pool. The hole must be pretty well filled up by to-day, for last night the rain came down in awful torrents. For the last two days the evening light has been very strange and disquieting — a whitish glare in the sky, the trees and bare ground a burnt-sienna red, and the vegetation a strong crude green with a delicate white bloom. The rain is still pouring and the whole world is damp and uncomfortable."

The hurricanes were varied now and then by earthquakes, of which they felt two distinct shocks on January 13. To add to these discomforts, tiny visitors from the jungle gave them many pin-pricks of annoyance. "It is strange," says the diary, "that each night has its separate plague of insects. The mosquitoes, of course, are always with us, and Simile's hurricane cellar has become a fine breeding place for them. But on one night moths are our torment, while perhaps the very next night it will be myriads of small black beetles. At another time the creatures may be of a large cockshafer sort, or a dreadful square-tailed thing that is especially ominous. To-night I have had for the first time two sets of tormentors, the first being small burnished beetles of the most lovely colours imaginable. A pinkish-bronze fellow lies on my paper as I write; he kept standing on his head until he died in a fit. It seems a colour night, for I now have small silver moths, all of a size but with different beautiful markings. There are also large salmon-colored moths that Louis cannot bear the sight of because they are marked like a skeleton. Perhaps they are a variety of the death's head moth. They are almost as large as a humming-bird, and have beautiful eyes that glow in the dark like fire."

Enough order had now come out of the first chaos to encourage them to write for the elder Mrs. Stevenson. Her son went to Sydney to meet her, but was there taken very ill and returned in that condition with his mother as nurse. During his absence his wife remained in sole charge, and, judging by the entries in her diary, she had her hands full every moment of the time. Everybody — white, brown, or black — went to her with apparently full confidence that she was able to cure any wound or disease. "One day," she says, "I heard a loud weeping as of some one in great pain; a man had just had two fingers dreadfully crushed. I really didn't know what to do except to go to a doctor, but as the wound was bleeding a good deal I mixed up some crystals of iron in water and washed his hand in that. To my surprise his cries instantly ceased, and he declares he has had no pain since. It was only for the effect on his mind that I gave the iron, which so far as I know is a styptic only; I always think it best to give something — perhaps on the principle of the doctors when they give bread pills. I have cured both Paul and the carpenter of violent lumbago, but there I had a little knowledge to go upon. To-day a man came to us with the sole of his foot very much inflamed from having run a nail into it the day before yesterday. I bound a bit of fat bacon on the foot — an old Negro remedy which was the only one I could think of. It is even more difficult when they bring me their domestic troubles to settle, in which they seem to think I am as great an expert as in curing their physical ills."

In the effort to keep things from being lost or improperly used she fell into the habit of storing them in her bedroom, so that in time it became a veritable junk-shop. "Among my dresses," she writes, "hang bridle straps and horse robes. On the camphor-wood trunk which serves as my dressing-table, beside my comb and toothbrush, a collection of tools — chisels, pincers, and the like — is spread out. Leather straps and parts of harness hang from the walls, as well as a long carved spear, a pistol, strings of teeth — of fish, beasts, and human beings — necklaces of shells, and several hats. Fine mats and tapas are piled up in heaps. My little cot bed seems to have got into its place by mistake. Besides the above mentioned articles there are an easel and two cameras stowed in one corner. A strange lady's chamber indeed."

On March 28 there was a stiff blow, during which the little cottage rocked and groaned in the most alarming way, and with one gust of wind it swung over so far that its terrified occupants thought it was gone. All, including Mrs. Stevenson, then took refuge in the stable, which was rather more solidly constructed. The hurricane, the most violent they had yet experienced, lasted several days, during which they remained in the stable, sleeping in the stalls in wet beds, having to sweep out the water without ceasing and suffering severely from clouds of mosquitoes. When at last the storm abated and they could return to the house, they found everything wet and mildewed and the cottage leaning with a decided cant to one side. Worst of all, one of the horses had become entangled in the barbed-wire fence that had been blown down by the wind, and was dreadfully injured. Thus they discovered that life in the tropics has its drawbacks as well as its delights.

These were the primitive conditions that greeted the elder Mrs. Stevenson on her arrival, and the poor lady's surprise and consternation were increased by the appearance of the good-hearted Paul while waiting on table — a plump little German with a bald head, clothed in a flannel shirt open at the neck, a pair of ragged trousers, particularly dilapidated in the seat and held up by a leather strap round the waist, a sheath-knife stuck in the belt, barefoot, and most likely offering the information that "the meat is tough, by God." Having no pioneer ancestry to sustain her she was unable to endure the discomforts of the place and only remained over the stay of the Lubeck, after which she fled to Sydney, there to await the time when civilization should have been established on the plantation.

By the end of April the new house was ready for them to move in, and by July the whole family, including the Strongs, were established on the place.

The conditions of their lives were now vastly more comfortable. Mrs. Stevenson no longer had to share the evening lamp with death's-head moths and piping tree-frogs, for gauze doors and windows had been put in to keep out the flying things. Nor did she have to take refuge in the stable when the hurricane season came around, for the new house was staunchly built and stout storm-shutters stood against the fury of the wind and rain.

Of Vailima in its finished aspect I need not speak in detail, since it has been fully and elaborately described by Graham Balfour in his Life of Robert Louis Stevenson. With its band of "house boys" and "out boys" — a fine-looking lot of fellows of whom their master was very proud — the household grew to be almost like that of a feudal chief, or Scotch laird of the old days, and Mrs. Stevenson took her place as its mistress as though "to the manner born." The place became the centre of social life in the island and was the scene of frequent balls and parties, dinners with twenty-five or thirty guests, Christmas parties with the guests staying for three days, and tennis nearly every day with officers from the men-of-war in the harbour and ladies from the mission. Over these entertainments Mrs. Stevenson presided — a gracious and beautiful hostess. Once when her grandson, Austin Strong, came home for a holiday from school, she gave a ball in his honour. There were torches all along the road to light the way up, boys in uniform to receive and take care of the guests and their horses, and a band to play for dancing. For weeks beforehand the dressmakers of Apia had to work overtime. But it is not to be supposed that this comfortable state was brought about without great efforts on the part of the whole family. Mrs. Strong took over the housekeeping, management of supplies and training of servants, leaving her mother free to devote her energies to the outdoor work she loved best. Writing to Miss Jane Balfour, Mrs. Stevenson says: "Never were people so full of affairs. We have to start a plantation in the solid bush, manage all our complicated business, receive furniture and guests — and all the while trying madly to get the house in order and feed our family. We must have horses to ride or we can go nowhere. The land must be cleared and grass to feed horses and cows must be planted. Men have to be taught, also, how to take care of the animals and must be watched every moment. I am glad to say that the gossip among the natives is that I have eyes all around my head and am in fifty places at once, and that I am a person to be feared and obeyed."

The fertile soil and kindly climate of the island encouraged her to experiment, not only with the plants native to the place, but also with exotics brought from other lands. In importing these foreign plants she exercised the greatest care not to introduce any pest, for she knew that when the lantana was taken to Hawaii and the sweetbrier to New Zealand these foreigners showed such a destructive fondness for their adopted homes that they came near choking out everything else. Before introducing any plant she consulted the heads of the botanical gardens at Kew and Colombo and the grass expert at Washington, D. C. She even had the soil that came around her plants burned, for fear it might bring in insects or disease. The lawn was an accomplishment in itself, for after she had had the soil sifted to a depth of eighteen inches to clear it of roots and stones, she levelled it herself by the simple means of a spirit-level and a string.

It is not to be supposed that all these things grew without immense difficulty. As an instance, after she had carefully instructed Lafaele, her gardener, how to plant a patch of vanilla, she was disgusted to find that he had planted them all upside down. After giving him a thorough scolding, she dismissed him and replanted them all herself, right side up. What were her feelings to find the next day that Lafaele, chagrined by his stupidity, had risen in the night and planted them all upside down again! This Lafaele was a huge mutton-headed Hercules, an out-islander, who spoke no English, and as Mrs. Stevenson never learned Samoan, the two had perforce to invent a sort of pidgin dialect of their own, in which they jabbered away successfully but which no one else could understand. She later found an intelligent Samoan named Leuelu who understood her pidgin Samoan perfectly and learned to carry out all her orders. He was small and not strong, but with the help of the dull but faithful Lafaele he soon had a wonderful garden.

One week her special task was to superintend the boys in putting a culvert into the new road to carry off the rain in the wet season. She also devised and carried out a scheme of water-works for the place which was a great boon and comfort to all the family, and enabled them to sprinkle their lawn in civilized fashion. A large cemented reservoir was built at a spring on the mountain and the water carried down from it in pipes and distributed through the house and grounds.

One of her few failures was trying to make beer out of bananas. The stuff, after being bottled, blew up with a great noise and a dissemination of the astonishingly offensive odour of the fermented fruit that seemed to spread for acres about. On the other hand, her attempt at making perfume from the moso’oi flower (said to be the real ylang-ylang) was a distinct success. She had to get permission from the government to import the small still she set up in a corner of the garden. The flowers were boiled and distilled, and as the oil rose to the top of the water it was removed with a medicine-dropper. It was a charming sight to see her working in her little distillery, while processions of pretty Samoan girls came with their huge baskets of flowers and scattered them in piles around her. Long afterwards when she was in New York she took a sample of the perfume to Colgates, who pronounced it the best they had ever seen.

The house at Vailima with the additions made to the first structure.

In the midst of all these labours there were a thousand other troubles to be met and conquered — servants' quarrels in the kitchen, for Samoans are not a whit different in such respects from domestics all the world over, jealousy between the house boys and the out boys, constant alarms about devils and bewitchments, and, above all, sickness of all sorts to be sympathized with and cured. For help in all these derangements every one went to the mistress, for all had a simple faith in her ability to relieve them of all their sorrows. At one time she and her daughter nursed twenty-two men through the measles — a very serious disease among the islanders. At another time the large hall at Vailima was entirely filled with the beds of influenza patients, Mr. Stevenson being isolated upstairs. In the performance of the plantation work accidents sometimes happened to the men, and she was often called upon to bind up dreadful wounds that would have made many women faint. From her earliest youth she had always been the kind of person to whom every one instinctively turns in an emergency. When Mr. Stevenson was ill she understood what he wanted by the merest gesture, and was always calm, reassuring, and self-reliant, never breaking down until after the crisis was past. She was a most delightful nurse otherwise, too, for when her children were sick in bed she entertained them with cheerful stories to divert their minds, and when they were convalescent made tempting dishes for them to eat. One of my own dear memories is of a time when, as a little child, I lay dangerously and painfully ill, unable to move even a hand, and she lightened my sufferings immeasurably by buying a Noah’s ark and arranging the animals on a little table by my bedside where I could look at them. When her husband was having one of his speechless illnesses at Vailima she allowed only one at a time to go in to him, under orders to be entertaining and to recount amusing little adventures of the household. She herself was an adept at this, though when she came out she left her smile at the bedroom door. For his amusement she would sit by his bedside and play her famous game of solitaire, learned so long ago from Prince Kropotkin, the Russian revolutionist. He would make signs when she went wrong and point at cards for her to take up. Sometimes she read trashy novels to him, for they both liked such reading when it was bad enough to be funny.

With the childlike Samoans she found sympathy to be as necessary as medical treatment for their ails. An interesting example of this was the case of Eliga, who was afflicted with an unsightly tumour on his back. This, in a land where any sort of deformity is looked upon with horror, caused the unfortunate man great unhappiness, besides depriving him of his titles and estates. His kind master and mistress had him examined by the surgeon of an English man-of-war that was in the harbour, and the opinion was given that an operation was quite feasible. Poor Eliga, however, was stricken with terror at the thought and carefully explained that there were strings in the wen that were tied about his heart, and if they were severed he would die. Besides, he said, as his skin was different from the white man’s, his insides were probably different also. In the end, more to please them than through any faith in it, he consented to the operation, although so certain was he of a fatal ending that he had his house swept and garnished, ready for the funeral. To comfort and cheer him through the ordeal, both Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson went to his house and remained with him until all was done. The result was most happy, and the grateful man, now proudly holding up his head among his fellows, composed in honour of the event “The Song of the Wen”:

“O Tusitala, when you first came here I was ugly and poor and deformed. I was jeered at and scorned by the unthinking. I ate grass; a bunch of leaves was my sole garment, and I had nothing to hide my ugliness. But now, O Tusitala, now I am beautiful; my body is sound and handsome; I bear a great name; I am rich and powerful and unashamed, and I owe it all to you, Tusitala. I have come to tell your highness that I will not forget. Tusitala, I will work for you all my life, and my family shall work for your family, and there shall be no question of wage between us, only loving-kindness. My life is yours, and I will be your servant till I die.”

It was in Samoa that Mrs. Stevenson acquired the name of Tamaitai, by which she was known thenceforth to her family and intimate friends until the day of her death. English words do not come easily from the tongues of the natives, and so they obviate the difficulty by bestowing names of their own upon strangers who come to dwell among them. It was as Tusitala, the writer of tales, that Louis was best known, his wife was called Aolele, flying cloud, and her daughter, because of her kindness in giving ribbons and other little trinkets to the girls, was named Teuila, the decorator. Tamaitai is a general title, meaning "Madam," and is used in reference to the lady of the house. Mr. Stevenson himself started the custom by calling his wife Tamaitai, and it was finally adopted by everybody and grew to be her name — the complete title being Tamaitai Aolele (Madam Aolele). These Samoan names were adopted partly as a convenience, to escape the embarrassment that sometimes arose from the habit among the natives of calling the different members of the family by their first names. It was felt to be rather undignified, for instance, that the mistress of the house should be called "Fanny" by her servants.

Mrs. Stevenson, as I have said before, was a famous cook, and had learned how to make at least some of the characteristic dishes of each of the many countries where she had sojourned awhile in her long wanderings. From her mother she had inherited many an old Dutch receipt — peppery pot, noodle soup, etc.; in France she acquired the secret of preparing a bouillabaise, sole à la marguery, and many others; from Abdul, an East Indian cook she brought from Fiji, she learned how to make a wonderful mutton curry which contained more ingredients than perhaps any other dish on earth; in the South Seas she picked up the art of making raw-fish salad; and now at Vailima she lost no time in adding Samoan receipts to her list. She soon knew how to prepare to perfection a pig roasted underground and eaten with Miti sauce, besides dozens of other dishes, including ava for drinking.

It was not the least of her duties to play the hostess to a remarkable assortment of guests — the Chief Justice, officers from the men-of-war that frequently came into the harbour, Protestant, Catholic, and Mormon missionaries, all kinds of visitors to the islands, including an English duchess, and native kings and chiefs. Once a high chief, one of the highest, bearing the somewhat lengthy name of Tuimalealiifono, came on a visit to Vailima. He was quite unacquainted with white ways of living, and, when shown to his bedroom, looked askance at the neat, comfortable bed that had been prepared for him. In the morning it was found that he had scorned the bed, and, retiring to the piazza, had rolled himself up in his mat and lain down to pleasant dreams. At table, although he had never before seen knives and forks, he picked up their use instantly by quietly observing the manners of the others.

A curious episode, which might have turned out to be dangerous, happened during the war troubles, when King Malietoa went up to Vailima secretly to have a talk with Tusitala. After the talk Louis offered him a present, asking what he preferred. Malietoa said he would like a revolver, and Louis took one from the safe and handed it to his wife, who happened to be sitting next the king. She emptied the chambers, as she thought, and then, not noticing that the thing was pointing straight at the king's heart, she clicked it five times. By a lucky chance, before clicking it the sixth time she looked in, and behold, there was the last cartridge! If she had given the last click she certainly would have killed the king, and one can imagine the complications that would have resulted in those uneasy times. Of course the episode, with all the dramatic possibilities attached to it, appealed to the romantic imaginations of the two Stevensons, and, after the king's departure, they spent the evening in making up a harrowing tale about what would have happened if she had killed him.

Among the notable visitors to Vailima was the Italian artist Pieri Nerli, who came to paint Mr. Stevenson's portrait — the one that now hangs in Swanson Cottage in Scotland. This portrait pleased his wife as little as did the Sargent picture, and, in a letter to Lord Guthrie of Edinburgh, she makes what Lord Guthrie calls "an acute criticism of this overdramatized likeness." She says: "It would have been all right if Nerli had only been content to paint just Louis, and had not insisted on representing instead the author of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

It was not all work at Vailima by any means. "Socially," she writes, "Samoa was not dull. There were many entertainments given by diplomats and officials in Apia. Besides native feasts there were afternoon teas, evening receptions, dinner parties, private and public balls, paper chases on horseback, polo, tennis parties, and picnics. Sometimes a party of flower-wreathed natives might come dancing over the lawn at Vailima, or a band of sailors from a man-of-war would be seen gathered in an embarrassed knot at the front gate." She herself cared little for these entertainments, and usually busied herself in helping others with the preparations for them. Her mother-in-law writes: "A fancy dress ball has been held in honor of the birthday of the Prince of Wales. Fanny designed a costume for Mrs. Gurr (a pretty Samoan girl) as Zenobia, Empress of the East. She wore a Greek dress, made in part of cotton stuff with a gold pattern stamped on it; over this a crimson chuddah was correctly draped, with a gold belt, many beads, and an elaborate gold crown."

From the busy round of her many-sided activities she took time now and then to do a little writing, though in truth she had little liking for it nor any high regard for her own literary style, in which she complained of a certain "dry nippedness" that she detested but could not get rid of. It was only when she wanted some extra money for her water-works at Vailima that she "took her pen in hand" and wrote a story for Scribners.

All this sounds hurried and breathless, but in reality these activities were spread out over far more time than appears in the telling of them, and there were peaceful intervals of rest and happiness in seeing Louis well and able for the first time to bear his share in hospitality.

Always, high above every other purpose, was her unfailing devotion to her husband and his work, and no other task ever interfered with her careful watch over his health and her keen interest in his writing. He appreciated her aid from the bottom of his heart, and in the dedication to his last unfinished novel, Weir of Hermiston, he endeavours to express in some degree his profound sense of obligation:

"I saw the rain falling and the rainbow drawn
On Lammermuir. Hearkening, I heard again
In my precipitous city beaten bells
Winnow the keen sea wind. And here afar,
Intent on my own race and place I wrote.
Take thou the writing; thine it is. For who
Burnished the sword, blew on the drowsy coal,
Held still the target higher; chary of praise
And prodigal of counsel — who but thou?
So now in the end; if this the least be good,
If any deed be done, if any fire
Burn in the imperfect page, the praise be thine."

This was to the critic; to the wife he wrote:

"Trusty, dusky, vivid, true,
With eyes of gold and bramble-dew,
Steel true and blade straight
The great Artificer made my mate.
Honor, anger, valor, fire,
A love that life could never tire,
Death quench, or evil stir,
The mighty Master gave to her.
Teacher, tender comrade, wife,
A fellow-farer true through life,
Heart whole and soul free,
The August Father gave to me."

As the years passed, their comradeship grew closer, and, indeed, their relationship can perhaps be expressed in no better way than to call them "comrades," with all that the word implies. In writing to her he usually called her "My dear fellow," and in speaking often addressed her in the same way. His attachment and admiration for her steadily increased in proportion to his longer acquaintance with her. Once at Vailima they were all playing a game called "Truth," in which each person writes a list of the qualities — courage, humour, beauty, etc. — supposed to be possessed by the others, with the corresponding ratio in numbers, ten being the maximum. Louis put his wife down as ten for beauty. She argued with him that he must be perfectly honest and not complimentary; he looked at her in amazement and said: "I am honest; I think you are the most beautiful woman in the world."

Once when her birthday, the 10th of March, came around, she found on waking these verses pinned to the netting of her bed:

"To the Stormy Petrel

"Ever perilous
And precious, like an ember from the fire
Or gem from a volcano, we to-day
When drums of war reverberate in the land
And every face is for the battle blacked —
No less the sky, that over sodden woods
Menaces now in the disconsolate calm
The hurly-burly of the hurricane —
Do now most fitly celebrate your day.
Yet amid turmoil, keep for me, my dear,
The kind domestic fagot. Let the hearth
Shine ever as (I praise my honest gods)
In peace and tempest it has ever shone."

She said these verses were the best of all her birthday presents. He called her the "stormy petrel" in reference to her birth in the wild month of March, and because she was such a fiery little person. When she took sides in an argument he would say, in mild irony: "The shouts of the women in the opposite camp were heard demanding the heads of the prisoners."

All through the daily entries in her diary, mingled with the incidents of the household, runs the talk of impending war:

"War news continues exciting, and there are threats of a massacre of all the whites. Although nothing of the kind is really anticipated, I think it would be better to look up our cartridges. Lafaele has blacked his face in the fashion of a warrior, saying he must be prepared to protect the place. He has a very sore toe, which he thinks is bewitched. He sent for the Samoan doctor, a grave middle-aged man, who announced that a devil, instigated by some enemy, has entered the toe and is now on the point of travelling up the leg, and unless it is checked in time will soon have possession of Lafaele's entire body.

"March 22. This entry is written in Suva, Fiji. For a long time I had not been well, and so I was sent off in the steamer to this place, though I went with a heavy heart, for I thought Louis did not look well. I have been to the botanical gardens, which are in charge of a pleasant young man from Kew, and have secured four boxes of plants for Vailima. The young man told me, as a trade secret, that if cauliflowers get an occasional watering of sea water they will head up in any climate. I have also secured an East Indian cook named Abdul.

"September 23. At home again. I find that Lloyd and the Strongs have been teaching a native boy named Talolo to cook, with the best results, so my fine Indian cook is a fifth wheel. However, Mr. Haggard has agreed to take him — though he seems very reluctant to leave Vailima.

"October 28. Paul left us some time ago to be overseer on a German plantation. Before he left, in his blundering desire to do all he could for me, he transplanted a lot of my plants, all wrong, and in fact did all the damage he well could in so short a time. I felt sorry to see the last of him, for with all his mistakes his heart was in the right place. Much more distressing is it that our dear Simile is gone. He wept very much in leaving, saying that 'his poor old family' needed him. I was told afterwards that he had in reality eloped with a young lady, which may be the truth of the matter. Talolo, our new cook, amuses me very much. He was greatly shocked at hearing of the scalping of victims by American Indians, but thought the taking of heads in the Samoan fashion perfectly right, as the victim was then dead and felt nothing.

"November 2. Talolo's mother, a very respectable woman indeed, came to see us, bringing with her a relative who is almost blind from cataract. They were shown over the house and could be heard at every moment crying out in Samoan 'How extremely beautiful!' Even when shown into the cellar, where it was quite dark, they were heard to make the same remark.... Last Saturday Lloyd marshalled up all the men before they left for their Sunday at home and administered to each a blue pill. One fellow was caught hiding his in his cheek and was made to swallow it amid shouts of laughter. I feared they would never come back, but all returned on Monday morning declaring they were much improved in health.

"We are all blazing with cacao-planting zeal, and we already have over six hundred plants set out. The method of planting them is very laborious, for the seeds must first be set in baskets made of plaited cocoanut leaves, and when the sprouts come up they are put in the earth, basket and all; in this way the roots are not disturbed and in time the basket decays in the damp soil and drops off. The whole family has been infected with the planting fever, and even Mrs. Stevenson works away at it most gallantly. To-day is Sunday, but we must all, the family and the house boys, plant the seeds that are left.

"November 30. Simile has come back in a sad condition from a wound with a spear or club in the back of his head, and much distressed over the state of his 'poor old family'.... We have now set out 1,200 cacao plants. All yesterday Joe and I were superintending the building of a bridge over the river. We had two trees cut down for the purpose; one of them was of the most lovely pinkish wood, with salmon pink bark, and emitted a perfume like a mixture of sassafras and wintergreen.... Last night we were somewhat alarmed by earthquake shocks and rifle shots. Yesterday three of the chairs made by the carpenter out of our own wood, mahogany, and designed from an antique model, came up. They are very satisfactory — a beautiful shape and comfortable to sit in."

So the weeks rolled swiftly by, filled with an infinitude of duties and much happiness, until the bright tropic sun broke on Christmas morning, 1893. The day was always celebrated at Vailima with much ceremony, and a gigantic tree, covered with carefully chosen presents for everybody, from the head of the family down to the humblest Samoan retainer, was set up in the large hall. Months before Mr. Stevenson had sent to the army and navy stores in London and had a large boxful of presents for the tree sent out. The diary gives us some account of this, the last Christmas spent on earth by Robert Louis Stevenson:

"Our washerwomen," so it runs, "came with presents — tapa and fans, and Simile brought baskets and tapa. Our people were wild with delight over their presents. Christmas we spent with friends in Apia, where we had a most delightful evening. Each gave some performance to add to the gaiety. Louis and Lloyd played, very badly indeed, on their pipes. Teuila recited one of Louis's poems, and Austin poured out with much dramatic fire Lochinvar. There was some very pretty Samoan dancing by Mrs. Gurr and Mrs. Willis, who gave a sitting dance and one with clubs. The next day we rode home, dashing at full speed through mud and water, and reached there drenched to the skin by a sudden shower. I was alarmed about Louis, but it did him no harm whatever. We were happy to be at pleasant Vailima again.

"January 3. There has been a terrific storm, lasting three days, but the hurricane shutters were put up, and proved a great protection, though the house was dark and airless. Trees went crashing all around us. There was a curious exhilaration in the air, and the natives shouted with glee whenever anything came down. The road was filled with débris from the storm, which had to be cleared away before any one could pass. In the evening I was told that both the Fiji man and Simi had been spitting blood. The Fiji man seems to have a touch of pneumonia. Much to Simi's alarm we put the cupping glass on him, and the whole party of house servants escorted him to bed, shouting and laughing and dancing as they went.

"January 7. Lloyd sailed to-day for San Francisco, intending to make the round trip only, for a change of air. In the afternoon Joe and I jumped on one horse and galloped as fast as we could down to the landing, only to find that all the boats were out. Just then the American consul's boat returned to the landing. We sprang into it, and with the American flag flying over us, went speeding over the water, in spite of the fact that the German man-of-war was having target practice (a most dangerous proceeding) right across the harbor. As we drew near the ship we suddenly realised that they were holding it in the supposition that we were bringing a consular message. We saw Lloyd running on deck to see us, but, alarmed at the situation, we took a hasty departure. In the evening we heard very sweet and mournful singing in the servants' quarters, and on asking what it was were told by Talolo that it was a farewell to Loia (Lloyd). It was explained that the song was told to go to France, to Tonga, and other places to look for Lloyd, and, in case of not finding him there, to search all over the world for him and carry pleasant dreams to him.

"January 11. To-day the Fiji man appeared in war paint — his nose blackened and black stripes under his eyes. Lafaele says the war is soon going to begin, adding 'Please, Tamaitai, you look out; when Samoa man fight he all same devil.' While we were talking low, dull thunder was rolling around the horizon, sounding, as we thought, very like the noise of battle. Strange to say there was not a cloud in the sky nor a flash of lightning to be seen.

"All the Samoan women married to white men wish to express their gratitude to me for making it possible for them to return to their native dress or, rather, the dress introduced among them by the missionaries. Before we came, all such women were expected to dress in European fashion, for otherwise they were not considered respectable, and they were delighted and surprised when I and all the other women at Vailima appeared in the missionary dress. This dress, called the holaku, is nothing more than the old-fashioned sacque (known in America as the 'Mother Hubbard'), which fortunately happened to be the mode in England when the missionaries first came to the South Seas. It was loose, cool, modest, and graceful, and so well suited to the natives and the hot climate of the islands that it became the regulation garment of the South Pacific. The climax seemed to be my going to a party in a very handsome black silk holaku with embroidered yoke and sleeves. The husbands have removed the taboo and several of the native ladies are to have fine silk gowns made in their own pretty, graceful fashion. Corsets must be agony to the poor creatures, and most of them are only the more clumsy and awkward for these European barbarities. I am very glad I have inadvertently done so much good."

The political pot was now boiling fiercely, but as the trouble in Samoa has been discussed in detail in other books, it is not my purpose to touch upon it here except in so far as any phase of it directly concerned Mrs. Stevenson herself. It is enough to say that the family espoused the cause of Mataafa, and in the diary Mrs. Stevenson describes a visit made by them to that monarch for the purpose of attempting to reconcile the two parties.

"On the second of May," she writes, "Louis, Teuila and I, taking Talolo with us, went in a boat to Malie to visit King Mataafa. I took a dark red silk holaku, trimmed with Persian embroidery, and Teuila took a green silk one, in which to appear before royalty. Long before we got to the village we could see the middle part of an immense native house rising up like a church spire. Mataafa's own house was the largest and finest I had ever seen, and there were others as large. Louis tried in vain to get an interpreter, but was fain to put up with Talolo, who nearly expired with fright and misery, for he could not speak the high chief language and felt that every word he uttered was an insult to Mataafa. We have been in the habit of referring to the king as 'Charley over the water,' and toasting him by waving our glasses over the water bottle. Talolo had some vague notion of what this meant and now thought it a good time to do the same. To our great amusement, he took his glass, waved it in the air, and cried 'Charley in the water!' which we felt to be a rather ominous toast. His translations of 'Charley's' words came to little more than 'Mataafa very much surprised (pleased),' but Louis knew enough Samoan to make a little guess at what was going on. The kava bowl was in the centre of the group, with the king's talking men beside it. Kava was first given to the king and Louis simultaneously — a great honor for Louis — then to Teuila and me. The king evidently supposed us both to be wives of Louis, and was much puzzled as to which was the superior in station, a dilemma which was finally neatly solved by serving us both at the same moment. I had seen that it was chewed kava, but in my weariness after the long journey I forgot that fact before it came my turn to drink. Before the bowl was offered to the king a libation was poured out and fresh water from a cocoanut shell was sprinkled first to the right and then to the left. The talking man and the others made polite orations, one of them likening Louis to Jesus Christ, at which Talolo manifested sighs of acute embarrassment. We were then offered a little refreshment before dinner. The king, who was a Catholic, crossed himself and said grace. A folded leaf containing a quantity of arrowroot cooked in cocoanut milk by dropping in hot stones was placed before each of us, and each had the milk of a fresh young nut to drink. The arrowroot was grateful but difficult to manage, on account of the stickiness, and a little gritty with sand from the stones. We were then invited to take a siesta behind an immense curtain of tapa that had been hung across one end of the room. There mats and pillows were laid for Teuila and me, and in a few seconds we were fast asleep. In an hour and a half we waked simultaneously and found dinner waiting for us. Louis then offered his present — a hundred-pound keg of beef — and the talking man went outside and informed the populace, in stentorian tones, of the nature and amount of the present received. We ate of pig, fowl, and taro, in civilized fashion, sitting on chairs and using plates, tumblers, spoons, knives, and forks. After a walk about the village we all sat on mats under the eaves and conversed. A distant sound of singing was heard, and soon a procession of young men in wreaths, walking two by two, came up to us and each deposited a root of taro, to which the king added a couple of young fowls, and an immense root of fresh kava. Speeches were made, after which mats were spread out for the dancers, who had been called by the sound of a bugle. There were two long rows of them, with two comic men and a hunchback, apparently the king's jester. They first sang a song of welcome to us, and then sang, danced, and acted several pieces — all well done and some very droll indeed. The hunchback excelled particularly in an imitation of a circus that was here not long since. Louis could not speak successfully through Talolo, as he had more to say than 'much surprised,' so we then took our departure. We returned by moonlight, all ardent admirers of Mataafa. About a week later Louis went again, this time with an interpreter named Charley Taylor, and had a more satisfactory interview. In the early morning, at about four, he was awakened by the sound of some sort of pipe playing a curious air. When he inquired about this Mataafa told him that he always had this performance at the time of the singing of the early birds, as it conduced to pleasant dreams. His father, he added, would never allow a bird or animal to be injured, and, in consequence, was called the 'king of the birds.'"

As the war-cloud grew blacker, the superstitious fears of Lafaele increased, and every day some new portent was reported. "On May 16," says the diary, "Lafaele and Araki reported that while walking on the road they met Louis riding on my horse Musu. What was their surprise and terror when they reached home to find that he had not left the house all day. Great anxiety and alarm are felt all over the place, for it is supposed that Louis sent his other self to see what Lafaele and Araki were about." Araki was a runaway "black boy," or Solomon Islander, from the German plantations, who became a member of the Vailima household in a rather dramatic way. One day a strange figure was seen flitting about the lawn behind the trees. The servants ran out and dragged in a thin, terrified black boy, who fell on his face before the master and begged for protection. Such a plea could not be refused, and Mr. Stevenson went down to the German firm and made arrangements to keep him. He soon began to fill out, and grew to be a saucy, lively fellow. Although the natives of Samoa look upon the Solomon Islanders as cannibals and savages, at Vailima they made a pet of Araki and dyed his bushy hair red and hung wreaths round his neck.

"May 19. This is the twelfth anniversary of our marriage. It seems impossible. Also impossible that two years ago (or a little more) we came up to live in the bush. Everything looks settled and as though we had lived here for many years.

"May 22. Saturday the captain of the Upolu came up and had luncheon with us. We had nothing but vegetables, curried and cooked in various ways, but no meat. Sunday there came a German vegetarian when there were no vegetables and nothing but meat.... We are having a great deal of trouble with the servants, as Tomasi, the Fiji man, says his wife, Elena, is too good to associate with the other women, and Lafaele's little girl is terribly afraid of Araki, the black boy, although he speaks of her most tenderly as 'that little girlie.' When the last litter of pigs was born, each family on the place was given a pig. Elena chose a spotted boar, which she named Salé Taylor, and Lafaele took what he calls a 'mare pig,' that is, a little sow. Both pigs have been tamed and trot around after Elena and Fanua like pug dogs. They go to bed with their mistresses every night like babies, and must also be fed once in the night with milk like babies. Both pigs came to prayers this morning.... Talolo's brother, a beautiful young boy, has elephantiasis. He has had it for a long time — about a year — but was afraid to tell. Worse than that has happened; one of our boys had a fit of insanity, during which it required the exertions of the entire household to restrain him from running off into the bush and losing himself. It became necessary to tie him down to the bed with strips of sheeting and ropes. The strangest thing about this occurrence is that Lafaele restored him to his senses in a short time by chewing up certain leaves that he brought from the bush and then putting them into the sick boy's ears and nostrils. I had a talk with Lafaele about his remedy. He told me that in case of lockjaw, if these chewed leaves are forced up the nostrils, first the jaw, then the muscles, will soon relax and the cure is accomplished. For some reason he seems unwilling to point out the tree to me.... Talolo affords us much amusement with his naïve ideas. I said to him, 'It seems to me that you Samoans do not feel badly about anything very long.' 'Yes, we do,' said Talolo, seeming much hurt by the accusation. 'When a man's wife runs away he feels badly for two or three days.'

"July 3, 1893. Nothing is talked of or thought of but the impending war. One of our former men came up yesterday to draw out his wages. I asked him if he meant to act like a coward and take heads of wounded men. He said he meant to take all the heads he could get. I reasoned with him, as did Lloyd, but he stood respectfully firm, saying that each people had its own customs. I am afraid the government has not thought to forbid this abomination, or has not dared.

"July 8. News comes that the fighting has begun, and that eleven heads have been taken to Mulinuu, and, worst of all, that one of the heads is that of a village maid, a thing before unheard-of among Samoans.

"July 10. Mataafa is routed, and, after burning Malie, has fled to Manono. His son was killed with a hatchet and his head taken. In all we hear of three heads of women being brought in to Mulinuu. When Mataafa was the man before whom all trembled we offered him our friendship and broke bread with him. If I gave him loyalty then, fifty thousand times more do I give it now."

At last the smoke and thunder of war rolled away, and peace and security came once more to dwell at Vailima. Entertainments and gaieties again made the place lively. Mrs. Strong describes one of these affairs in a letter to Mr. Stevenson's mother:

"I suppose Louis will write and tell you of the grand day we had here when the sailors of the Katoomba were invited up here to play. We had twenty-four people on the place — natives, house boys, outside boys, and contractors — and the house was gorgeously decorated with ferns and moso'oi flowers. One large table was piled high with cocoanuts, oranges, lemons, passion fruit, pineapples, mangoes, and even a large pumpkin and some ripe tomatoes, besides three huge bowls of lemonade. The other table had seven baked chickens, ham sandwiches, cakes and coffee — lots of all. At half-past twelve we saw the white caps bobbing at the gate, and sent Simile down to meet them. He was dressed in a dark coat and lavalava and white shirt, and looked very swagger indeed. The sailors all saluted Simile as he appeared, and in another moment — boom, bang, and the band burst out with the big drum in full swing, with the men, fourteen of them, all marching in time. The faces of our Samoans were stricken with amazement as the jackies marched up to the lawn in the blazing sun and finished the piece. The veranda was crowded with our people, all in wreaths of flowers, and a number of guests were there to witness the festivities. Well, we fed our sailors, who were all very red and hot and smiling, and the way they dipped into the lemonade was a caution. Then, to a guitar accompaniment, one of them sang a song with a melodramatic story running through it about a poor fellow going to a house and sitting on the door-step wan and weary, and seeing on the doorplate the name of Jasper. Soon Jasper comes out, and though the poverty-stricken one pleads for a bit of bread he's told to go to the workhouse. 'I pays my taxes,' says the heartless Jasper, 'and to the workhouse you must go.' 'And who would have thought it,' goes the chorus, 'for we were schoolmytes, schoolmytes!'"

A devastating epidemic of measles, much aggravated by the improper treatment given to patients by the natives, now broke out. Even Vailima did not escape its ravages, and Mrs. Strong writes of it on October 8:

"Everybody is well of the measles by now and all are crawling out into the sunshine. There have been a hundred and fifty deaths on this island alone. Our Sosimo was taken ill down in the town. Tamaitai and I went down to see him, and, finding him in a wretched state, had him brought home in a native sling on a pole, the way they carry wounded soldiers. None of our people died, for they willingly accepted our rules for their care."

After the war was over, it was found that the stress and excitement of it all had told on Mr. Stevenson's health, and in the early part of September he went to Honolulu for a change. The trip was a disappointment, for he was taken quite seriously ill there, and his wife had to take steamer and go after him, arriving in a state of great anxiety. Under her tender care he soon recovered and they returned to Vailima.

In Samoa, Tusitala was not the only "teller of tales," for all sorts of strange stories — some amusing, some scurrilous and malicious — were invented about the family at Vailima and ran current in the gossip "on the beach." One of the most fantastic of these inventions was that Mr. Stevenson had been married before to a native woman, and that Mrs. Strong was his half-caste daughter by this marriage. The one advantage about this peculiar story was the hilarious fun he was able to get out of it. He made up all kinds of wonderful romances about the supposititious first wife, who he said was a native of Morocco, "black, but a damned fine woman." When Mrs. Stevenson scolded him for not wearing his cloak in the rain he pretended to weep and said: "Moroccy never spoke to me like that!" One evening Mrs. Strong heard gay laughter in her mother's room, and, going in to see what it was about, found her mother sitting up in bed laughing, while Louis walked up and down the room gesticulating and telling her the "true story" of his affair with Moroccy.

So passed all too swiftly three full years — years crowded with work and play and many rare experiences — and less darkly shadowed by the spectre that had stalked beside them ever since their marriage. For this short space he knew what it was to live like a man, not like a "pallid weevil in a biscuit," and she, though her vigilance was never relaxed for a moment, breathed somewhat more freely. The days sped happily by, until Thanksgiving, November 29, 1894, which was celebrated with an elaborate dinner at Vailima. Mrs. Stevenson was anxious to have this a truly American feast, from the turkey to the last detail, but cranberries were not to be had, so she produced a satisfactory substitute from a native berry, and under her careful supervision her native servants succeeded in setting out a dinner that would have satisfied even an old Plymouth Rock Puritan. At the dinner, the last entertainment taken part in by Mr. Stevenson, in enumerating his reasons for thankfulness, he spoke of his wife, who had been all in all to him when the days were very dark, and rejoiced in their undiminished affection.

A day or two afterwards she was seized with a presentiment of impending evil — a formless shadow that seemed to settle down upon her spirit, and that no argument could relieve. Her mother-in-law writes: "I must tell you a very strange thing that happened just before his death. For a day or two Fanny had been telling us that she knew — that she felt — something dreadful was going to happen to some one we cared for; as she put it, to one of our friends. On Monday she was very low and upset about it and dear Lou tried to cheer her. Strangely enough, both of them had agreed that it could not be to either of them that the dreadful thing was to happen."

On the afternoon of December 3, 1894, according to their custom he took his morning's work for her criticism. She quickly perceived that in this, which neither dreamed was to be the last work of his pen, his genius had risen to its highest level, and she poured out her praise in a way that was unusual with her. It was almost with her words of commendation still ringing in his ears that he passed to the great beyond. In a letter addressed to his friends shortly afterwards, Lloyd Osbourne gives us the details of these last moments:

"At sunset he came downstairs, rallied his wife about the forebodings she could not shake off; talked of a lecturing tour to America that he was eager to make, 'as he was now so well,' and played a game of cards with her to drive away her melancholy. He said he was hungry; begged her assistance to help him make a salad for the evening meal; and to enhance the little feast he brought up a bottle of old Burgundy from the cellar. He was helping his wife on the veranda, and gaily talking, when suddenly he put both hands to his head and cried out: 'What's that?' Then he asked quickly: 'Do I look strange?' Even as he did so, he fell on his knees beside her." Just as he had leaned upon her for help, comfort, and advice for so many years of his life, so it was at her feet that he sank in death when the last swift summons came. He was helped into the great hall between his wife and his body servant, Sosimo, and at ten minutes past eight the same evening, Monday, December 3, 1894, he passed away.

Her great task was finished, and she sat with folded hands in the quiet house from which the soul had fled; but, although the lightning suddenness of the blow made it almost a crushing one, the bitterness of her grief was greatly softened by her firm belief in a life beyond the grave and the certainty of a reunion with him there.

She bore this supreme sorrow with the same silent fortitude with which she had always met trouble, but a subtle change came over her. While it could not be said that she looked exactly old, yet the youthfulness for which she had been so remarkable seemed suddenly to vanish, and her hair grew rapidly grey. A little child — Frank Norris's daughter — said, with an acuteness beyond her years: "Tamaitai smiles with her lips, but not with her eyes."

Among the hundreds of letters of condolence which she received from all over the world, none, perhaps, came more directly from the heart than that written by her old friend, Henry James from which I have taken the following extracts:

"My dear Fanny Stevenson:

"What can I say to you that will not seem cruelly irrelevant or vain? We have been sitting in darkness for nearly a fortnight, but what is our darkness to the extinction of your magnificent light? You will probably know in some degree what has happened to us — how the hideous news first came to us via Auckland, etc., and then how, in the newspapers, a doubt was raised about its authenticity — just enough to give one a flicker of hope; until your telegram to me via San Francisco — repeated also from other sources — converted my pessimistic convictions into the wretched knowledge. All this time my thoughts have hovered round you all, around you in particular, with a tenderness of which I could have wished you might have, afar-off, the divination. You are such a visible picture of desolation that I need to remind myself that courage, and patience, and fortitude are also abundantly with you. The devotion that Louis inspired — and of which all the air about you must be full — must also be much to you. Yet as I write the word, indeed, I am almost ashamed of it — as if anything could be 'much' in the presence of such an abysmal void. To have lived in the light of that splendid life, that beautiful, bountiful being — only to see it, from one moment to the other, converted into a fable as strange and romantic as one of his own, a thing that has been and has ended, is an anguish into which no one can enter with you fully and of which no one can drain the cup for you. You are nearest to the pain, because you were nearest the joy and the pride. But if it is anything to you to know that no woman was ever more felt with and that your personal grief is the intensely personal grief of innumerable hearts — know it well, my dear Fanny Stevenson, for during all these days there has been friendship for you in the very air. For myself, how shall I tell you how much poorer and shabbier the whole world seems, and how one of the closest and strongest reasons for going on, for trying and doing, for planning and dreaming of the future, has dropped in an instant out of life. I was haunted indeed with a sense that I should never again see him — but it was one of the best things in life that he was there, or that one had him — at any rate one heard him, and felt him and awaited him and counted him into everything one most loved and lived for. He lighted up one whole side of the globe, and was in himself a whole province of one's imagination. We are smaller fry and meaner people without him. I feel as if there were a certain indelicacy in saying it to you, save that I know that there is nothing narrow or selfish in your sense of loss — for himself, however, for his happy name and his great visible good fortune, it strikes one as another matter. I mean that I feel him to have been as happy in his death (struck down that way, as by the gods, in a clear, glorious hour) as he had been in his fame. And, with all the sad allowances in his rich full life, he had the best of it — the thick of the fray, the loudest of the music, the freshest and finest of himself. It isn't as if there had been no full achievement and no supreme thing. It was all intense, all gallant, all exquisite from the first, and the experience, the fruition, had something dramatically complete in them. He has gone in time not to be old, early enough to be so generously young and late enough to have drunk deep of the cup. There have been — I think — for men of letters few deaths more romantically right. Forgive me, I beg you, what may sound cold-blooded in such words — or as if I imagined there could be anything for you 'right' in the rupture of such an affection and the loss of such a presence. I have in my mind in that view only the rounded career and the consecrated work. When I think of your own situation I fall into a mere confusion of pity and wonder, with the sole sense of your being as brave a spirit as he was (all of whose bravery you shared) to hold on by. Of what solutions or decisions you see before you we shall hear in time; meanwhile please believe that I am most affectionately with you.... More than I can say, I hope your first prostration and bewilderment are over, and that you are feeling your way in feeling all sorts of encompassing arms — all sorts of outstretched hands of friendship. Don't, my dear Fanny Stevenson, be unconscious of mine, and believe me more than ever faithfully yours,

"Henry James."

With this and the many other letters came one written in pencil on a scrap of paper, unsigned:

"Mrs. Stevenson.

"Dear Madam: — All over the world people will be sorry for the death of Robert Louis Stevenson, but none will mourn him more than the blind white leper at Molokai.”

CHAPTER IX

THE LONELY DAYS OF WIDOWHOOD

As the slow, empty days passed, the weight of her sorrow bore more and more heavily upon her and she grew steadily weaker. Finally, the doctors said the only thing was change, so, in April, 1895, she set sail with her family for San Francisco.

On the way a stop was made in Honolulu, where Mrs. Stevenson was deeply distressed to find the provisional government in control and her old friend, Queen Liliuokalani, imprisoned. The deposed queen was kept in Iolani Palace under close guard, and ostensibly debarred from all visitors, but one must presume the guard not to have been so strict as it seemed, for Mrs. Stevenson was able to gain entrance and secure an audience with the royal prisoner through the not very dignified avenue of the kitchen-door of the palace. When she gave expression to her profound sympathy and indignation at the turn affairs had taken, Liliuokalani replied that she wished she had had Louis to advise her in her dark hours.

A summer without special incident was spent in California — a grey summer for her, for her son and daughter tried in vain to interest her in things there. Her health improved, but she cared for nothing outside of Samoa and only yearned to go back and be near the grave on Mount Vaea, so in the autumn they again turned their faces toward the Pacific Isles.

When they left San Francisco they had added another member to their party — a small donkey named Dicky, given to Mrs. Stevenson by one of the Golden Gate Park commissioners, which she intended to use in driving about the plantation to a little Studebaker cart she had had made especially for the purpose. A little stable was put up on deck for Dicky and a bale of hay provided for him, but it was not long before the little fellow had become such a pet with the carpenter and his mates that he was taken into the forecastle to live with them and share their mess, eating his meals out of a tin plate. The men taught him many amusing tricks, and it got to be quite the thing for the cabin passengers to make trips down to the forecastle to see him do them and to feed him chocolate creams. At Waikiki Beach, where they lived in a cottage attached to the Sans Souci Hotel during their stay of several months in Hawaii, Mrs. Stevenson often drove about the park in the little cart which was just fitted to Dicky. She was surprised at first to find that he would only make short trips and then come to a dead stop, from which it was impossible to budge him. Nothing would make him go on until his mistress got out and in again, and then he would pick up his little feet and trot on for another five minutes, when the same performance would have to be repeated. At last they realised that he had been trained to make five-cent trips at Golden Gate Park, and that nothing would ever break him of it. When they left Honolulu for Samoa they had difficulty in getting him on board the steamer, for although there was a belt and tackle to hoist him up, they could not drag him to it. One man — then two — then finally six men were hauling at him, while the ship waited, with all passengers on board and surveying the scene with intense amusement. The captain suddenly shouted through a megaphone: “Pull him the other way!” They did so and he immediately backed right up to the tackle and was hauled on deck amid the plaudits of the multitude. At Samoa he was a great pet; the native girls loved him and took him with them when they went to cut alfalfa for the cows. They made a pretty picture coming through the forest — the girls in leaves and flowers and Dicky a walking mountain of green, with only his long ears sticking out and his bright eyes gleaming through the foliage.

Honolulu brought back to Mrs. Stevenson many poignant memories of other days, of which she wrote to her mother-in-law in these words:

“As you suppose, this has been a sad season with me. People say that one gets used to things with time, but I do not believe it. Every day seems harder for me to bear. I say to myself many comforting things, but even though I believe them they do not comfort me. Everything here reminds me of Louis, and I do not think there is one moment that I am not thinking of him. People say: ‘What a comfort his great name must be to you!’ It is a pride to me, but not a comfort; I would rather have my Louis here with me, poor and unknown. And I do not like to have my friends offer me their sympathy — only you and one or two who loved him for what he was and not for what he did.... As to his Christianity his life and work show what he was. I know that whether or not he always succeeded in living up to his intentions, he was a true follower of Christ, a real Christian, and not many have come as close as he; and I believe that not many have tried as honestly and earnestly. In this place everything reminds me of him, and I feel that I must see him. I cannot believe that all these months have passed since he left us. Perhaps the whole time will not seem so long until we meet again. It gives me a sharp shock when I hear him spoken of as dead. He is not dead to me — I cannot think it nor feel it. He is only waiting, I seem to feel, somewhere near at hand.”

After a winter spent in Hawaii, during which the marriage of her son took place, Mrs. Stevenson and her daughter sailed, in May, 1896, for Samoa. In these various trips between San Francisco and the islands she usually sailed on the Mariposa, and because she had so much baggage Captain Morse and the other officers took to calling the ship “Mrs. Stevenson’s lighter.”

Their home-coming, being unexpected, was rather forlorn. They reached Vailima in the evening and went to bed rather drearily in the empty house, Mrs. Strong having determined to get breakfast as best she could the next morning and then send out word to their former Samoan helpers. After their long journey she slept late, and, springing from her bed somewhat guiltily, ran to the window. What was her astonishment to see smoke coming out of the cookhouse chimney, Talolo at the door, and Iopu, the yard man, coming up with a pail of water — all the business of the place, in fact, going on like clockwork, just as though they had never been absent for a day! Running into her mother’s room, she found her sitting up in bed just finishing her breakfast, which had been brought up on a tray by Sosimo. The news had gone forth the night before that they had returned, and every man of the Vailima force was at his post at break of day.

Once more the lonely widow took up the routine of her life, and, though its main incentive had gone, in time there came to her a sort of melancholy satisfaction in living among the scenes made dear by memories of the loved one. The scale on which the household had been conducted was now cut down very much, and she and her daughter, retaining but a few of the former great retinue of servants, led a calm and peaceful life among their tropic flowers. “Vailima is so lovely now,” writes Mrs. Strong to the elder Mrs. Stevenson. “The trees are all so big, and the hibiscus hedge is over ten feet high and blazing with flowers. The lawn is like velvet and everywhere the grass is knee-high. If it is true that Louis can see us from another world he would be pleased with this day. This is the day when we decorate the grave, and all the afternoon people kept coming with flowers and strange Samoan ornaments. You should have seen Leuelu’s sisters in silk bodices trimmed with gold braid, and green velvet lavalavas bordered with plush furniture fringe! And they looked very fine, too. Once arrived on the mountain top we stood looking at the magnificent view of the sea, and the coral reef, and the distant mountains. We banked the grave with flowers and the wreath of heather that you sent. Chief Justice Ide and his two beautiful daughters were there.”

Mother and daughter spent pleasant days in the garden — digging up kava roots, stringing them on twine and hanging them up in the hall to dry, and in many another homely task. In the evening they played chess, and, as neither knew the game, they were well matched, and spent engrossing evenings over it. Sometimes they would light a lantern and walk over to see Mr. Caruthers, the lawyer, who lived more than a mile away. When he saw the flicker of their lantern through the palm-trees he would wind up his little musical box and they could hear its tinkle of welcome. “We walked barefoot,” says Mrs. Strong, “and I shall never forget those lovely walks at night and the feel of the soft, mossy grass under our feet. Mr. Caruthers was a clever, interesting man. His Samoan wife would sit by sewing, and his children would study their lessons in the other room while we sat on his veranda and had long talks. On the night of his farewell visit to us we stood on the veranda at Vailima and looked out on a glittering moonlight night, the lawn sloping before us, the great shadowy trees beyond, and in the distance the blue line of the sea — ’nothing between us and the North Pole,’ we used to say. Mr. Caruthers said, ‘How can you leave this for any other country? This is the “cleaner, greener land,”‘ and he quoted Kipling’s verses.”

The two women lived in perfect security in their lonely forest home, never having the slightest fear of the natives who passed that way in their comings and goings. Once in the middle of the night Mrs. Strong was waked up by the sound of voices on the veranda, and, running down, found her mother surrounded by twenty Samoans, all with baskets. Mrs. Stevenson, hearing the sound of talking, had come down, to find these men coming heavily laden from the direction of the Vailima taro, yam, cocoanut, and banana plantation. “I politely asked them,” says Mrs. Strong, “to show my mother the contents of their baskets. They agreed readily enough, and one after another they opened their baskets at her feet, disclosing nothing but edible wild roots, until we began to feel abashed and asked them to desist. Nothing would do, however, but that each of the twenty should empty out his basket, with much laughing and joking, and thereby prove his innocence of having plundered the plantation. As a peace offering, my mother directed me to give them some twists of tobacco and tins of salmon and biscuit. Then they explained that, owing to the breadfruit having been blown off the trees while still green, by a hurricane, there had been a famine in their village. Their Samoan pride made them ashamed for the other villages to know that they were reduced to eating wild roots, and so they had sneaked up in the night to the bush back of our plantation and filled their baskets with the roots. We apologized again and went back to bed. The twenty Samoans sat on our veranda for hours singing, but, although our servants were gone for the night and we two white women were entirely alone in the house, we felt no fear. Where else in the world could this have happened?”

Secluded as Vailima was, the family could not even here escape the curiosity of tourists, for on “steamer days” there was always a procession of them going up the hill from Apia to see the home of Stevenson. One day its mistress was directing some workmen on the roof of the carriage house when a party of tourists came up and asked if that was Vailima and where was Mrs. Stevenson. She replied, "No spik English," and they went on to the house, sat on the veranda and had tea, never dreaming that the odd little person in the blue gown, directing the roofing of the carriage house, was Mrs. Stevenson herself.

The variety of her experiences and the wide scope of her abilities may be shown better than in any other way, perhaps, by quotations from a small notebook which she had carried with her from one end of the world to the other. These entries show that she did not simply "do the best she could," but that she made a conscientious study of how to take care of her invalid husband, what to do in emergencies, how to feed him when they were on ships or desert islands, etc. In every place that they went to she kept her eyes open and learned new receipts for cooking, sickness, and all the other requirements of life. The entries were jotted down so hastily and often under such peculiar circumstances that in many cases they are written upside down, so that you have to keep turning the book about to follow it. I quote here a few of the most characteristic entries:

The telephone number of a chronometer maker (Butler, Clay 416).

Mr. Antone knows all about Samoan vegetation.

Our marriage day was the 19th of May. [Neither she nor Mr. Stevenson could ever remember the date of any event, not even that of their marriage, so she evidently made sure of it by putting it in the notebook.]

Name of my adopted father [in the South Seas] is Paaena. Name of Pa's village is Atuona.

Addresses of friends in San Francisco, London, Scotland, Nebraska, Philadelphia, France, Italy, New York, Hawaii.

Receipt for Spanish fish.

Lotion for the hands.

Then follow a number of prescriptions stamped and evidently written out by the chemist. They are for a "tickling cough," "night sweats," "for light blood spitting," "for violent hemorrhages," "how to inject ergotine tonic for weakness after spitting blood," and "hypodermic injections for violent hemorrhages." Among other doctors' prescriptions pasted in the book there is one for cankered ear in dogs. It was this prescription that she used on a young English officer of the Curaçoa who was visiting Vailima, and who was suffering terribly from some ear trouble. Mrs. Stevenson said to him, "I can cure you if you will let me treat you with my dog medicine." He agreed, and, as a result, was well enough to attend a theatre that night, and before long was entirely recovered.

One interesting prescription, written and signed in a hand that looks very French, has the heading in Mrs. Stevenson's hand, "Elixir of Life."

How to make roof paint.

How to make house paint.

Dr. Funk's cure for elephantiasis. [She cured several of her Samoan servants of this dread disease with this simple remedy.]

Dr. Russel's cure for anemia.

Receipts for ginger beer, lemon pudding, icing, and candy, oranges in syrup, macaroni and corn, savory, pineapple cake, taro and fish rolled into balls and fried, Abdul Rassak's mutton curry, home mincemeat, rice yeast and bannocks for cooking aboard ship, Butaritari potato cake and pudding, Ah Fu's pig's head, Ah Fu's yeast, pork cake, fritters, mulled wine, and green corn cakes.

A memorandum of a lock to be turned by figures.

Medicine for tona — boils with which Samoan children are often afflicted.

More cooking receipts — Magzar fowl, Tautira duff, raw-fish salad from a Tahiti receipt, strawberry shortcake, spontaneous yeast, banana popoi, Pennsylvania scrapple, miti sauce to eat with pig roasted underground, baked breadfruit, breadfruit pudding, onion soup, bisque of lobster, bouillabaise, banana beer, Russian risotto, Scotch woodcock, Russian pancake, Spanish tortillas, and blackberry cordial.

Bamboo fence.

To graft mangoes.

Fill wet boots with oats.

How to mend a hole in a boat (Captain Otis).

Abdul Rassak's receipt for taking the poison out of cucumbers.

Creosote in a cupboard to keep out flies and preserve meat.

Furniture polish.

To make a Hawaiian oven.

To make Tahitian flowers and ornaments.

To clean Benares ware.

To destroy red ants.

To preserve meats.

How to keep butter cool in hot weather.

To knit a baby's hood.

Crochet cover for a pincushion [with a little picture showing it when finished].

Surely, it would not be easy to duplicate this cosmopolitan list in any other woman's notebook.

Among the villages of the island there was one, Vaiee, with which the Stevensons had a special friendship, dating back to the first year of their arrival in Samoa. At that time the villagers were building a church and had saved up sixty dollars with which to buy corrugated iron for the roof. One day a deputation of elders, headed by the chief, called on Mr. Stevenson to ask if he would act as their agent in buying the iron. Of course, he was interested at once and laid out the money to such good advantage that they got more corrugated iron than sixty dollars had ever bought before. After that they came again with small sums, which were kept for them in the Vailima safe, and whenever they wanted to buy anything for the village he helped them to get good value for their money. Their gratitude sometimes took embarrassing forms, as on one occasion when they brought a present of a large white bull with a wreath around its neck. At other times, they brought offerings of turtles, rolls of tapa, fish, and pigs; and on the night of Mr. Stevenson's death several of the chiefs crossed the island on foot and were in time to help the men who were cutting the road to Mount Vaea.

Remembering all this, when the village of Vaiee invited Mrs. Stevenson and her daughter to make them a visit they naturally wanted to go. This sort of visiting trip — usually lasting three days, one to arrive, one to visit, and one to go — is called a malaga (accented on second syllable — malan'ga), and is a very popular institution among the natives. The visiting party generally travels in state, taking with it a boat, food, and servants. The story of the malaga to the village of Vaiee follows in Mrs. Strong's own words:

"There was only a footpath over the mountain, and as we had to cross many torrents on no better bridge than a felled cocoanut tree, we could not even go on horseback. My mother was not able to make the trip on foot, and I conceived the brilliant idea of slinging a chair with ropes to two poles and having our Samoan men carry her in it. So all was arranged, and we made an early morning start. I walked barefoot and my mother sat in her 'sedan chair' like an island princess, with her little bare feet swinging with the swaying of the chair. We had four men for relays in carrying the chair, while others carried our presents — tins of biscuits, barrels of salt beef, rolls of calico, and numerous trinkets — besides our wardrobe, which contained a 'silika' (silk) dress for each of us in which to do honor to our hosts.

"As we swung into the Ala Loto Alofa — an odd procession, for our boys had decorated us with wreaths and garlands — we passed a carriage-load of surprised 'steamer-day' tourists who had come up the mountainside to look at Vailima. As our little party wound into the forest the road grew gradually steeper, and we walked under the dense shade of huge trees, hung with lianas, orchids, and other parasitic plants. The jungle was so thick that now and then the men had to cut away branches with their cane knives to make a passage for us. This sounds like hard work, but the wild banana plants, giant ferns, lush grass, and fat leaves fell before one slash of the knife. It was damp and a little breathless in the depths of the forest, but we rested often on the way. The worst place was about a mile of swamp land that was full of leeches. They fell on us from the overhanging branches of the trees, and as our feet sank into the mud they stuck to our ankles. However, the men were constantly on the lookout for them, and when they saw one would sprinkle salt on it and it would immediately fall off. We had invited an English couple, a Captain F. and his wife, who were staying at the hotel, to go with us. The lady wore shoes, and as her feet grew more and more soppy from walking in the damp grass and through the swamps she suffered a good deal. I was much better off walking barefoot.

"By nightfall we reached the summit of the mountain, where there was a house, and there we had an example of Samoan hospitality. The house was not large enough to hold us and its occupants, too, so they had built a big oven, stuffed it with food, laid out fine mats for our beds, and then quietly decamped. We never even saw our hosts to thank them. It was a glorious night on the summit, for the full moon made the scene as bright as daylight, and in the distance we could see the ocean all around us. It made us feel very small and a little frightened to see what a tiny island it was we had been living on with such a feeling of security. Before us a beautiful waterfall fell away into the thickets of greenery.

"On the way up we crossed many streams, and I held my breath to see the two men carrying my mother's chair run lightly across the teetering log bridges, but she sat there smiling, not a bit afraid and enjoying every minute of it. Our English friends and I were carried over by the natives. I simply shut my eyes, clutched the thick hair of my carrier and held my breath till we were on the other side.

"Making ourselves at home in the house so kindly left to our use, we set the boys to open the oven and remove its contents, and then we sat down and made a grand feast — roast pig, chicken, taro, yams, and breadfruit — all fresh and hot. Our boys had brought salt, limes, and bread, and on the way up we gathered fresh cocoanuts to drink with our dinner. Then we lay down on the soft mats and fell sound asleep in our borrowed house on the top of our little world.

"In the morning, we began the descent of the other side, which was much easier and quicker. When we were within a mile of the village we were shown a pool; then the men retired and we women took a swim, after which we put on our 'silika' dresses and started on. Children had been stationed along the path to look out for us, and, though we could see no one, we heard shouts of 'Ua maliu mai tamaitai' (the ladies are coming), going from one to another. At the entrance to the village my mother got out of her chair and we walked on. The manaia, or beauty man of the village, accompanied by two magnificent looking aides, came forward to meet us. They were oiled and polished till they shone like bronze, and on their heads they wore the great ceremonial headdresses. Their only garments were short kilts of tapa, which made a fine display of their lace-like tattooing. On their right arms they wore twists of green with boars' tusks, while their ankles were encircled with green wreaths and their necks with the whale-tooth necklaces that denote rank. It seemed strange to be received by young men, for in all our other trips either Louis or Lloyd was the guest of honor — making it a man's party — and to them the village maid, or taupo, with her girl attendants, acted as hostess. As ours was a woman's party, we were received by young men. The manaia gave his hand to my mother, the other two escorted me and the English lady, and, with the poor husband trailing along behind, we walked with stately pomp across the malae to the guest house. There was not a soul in sight, and, though the children must have been bursting with interest and curiosity, not one was to be seen. The guest house stood in the centre of the little village, which lay on the seashore, overlooking a small bay. Behind it the forest climbed the slopes of steep mountains, down which several streams and waterfalls rushed into the sea, and in front the smooth wide beach stretched its white length. On each side were the plantations of bananas, cocoanuts, and other tropic fruits, while scattered here and there among the brown thatched houses the breadfruit trees spread out their huge branches of shining green.

"The guest house had been decorated with leaves, ferns, and flowers. As we ducked under the eaves, our eyes a little dazzled by the brightness of the sunlight, we were received by the taupo and her maidens, who were spreading fine mats for us to sit on. Oh the sweet, cool, clean freshness of a native house! It would not be fair to call it a hut, for that suggests squalor, or makeshift, whereas these houses are works of art. The roof rises inside like a great dome, the inner thatch being intricately woven in patterns, while the floor is made of clean pebbles, neatly laid and covered with fine mats. In the centre of the house the main pole stands like a tall mast, with several cross-bars where the furniture — rolls of mats and tapa, kava bowls and cups — is kept. There is nothing else in the room, except, perhaps, one or two camphor-wood chests. The centre pole in the house at Vaiee was wound round and about with ropes of frangipani flowers, while bright red hibiscus bells decorated the cross bars, and ferns in long wreaths were looped round the edge of the room. The eaves come down pretty low, about four feet from the ground, so that one has to stoop to enter.

"After receiving us with great cordiality, making us comfortable with fans, etc., the girls joined us as we sat stiffly in a semi-circle, waiting for the chief — for we knew our Samoan manners. Presently we saw him coming, dressed very plainly in a kilt of tapa and carrying the high chief fly flapper. He was accompanied by his talking man, with his tall staff of office, and several of the lesser house chiefs — all looking very important and impressive. After shaking hands with us (which is not a Samoan custom and always spoils the dignity of a fine entrance), they sat in a semi-circle facing us. Then the talking man drew a long breath and started in. Samoan talking men, or tulafale, are noted for their eloquence, but it is the wearisome part of a malaga to have to listen to hours of high-flown discourse. At last, however, with a final burst of oratory, our relief came, and then the taupo made and served the kava. In later years the Samoans learned to grate the root for brewing, but on that occasion it was prepared in the good old-fashioned island way. The taupo and her girls first washed their mouths out several times with fresh water and then chewed the roots — nibbled them, rather, very daintily — until there was enough for a brew. This was put in the middle of a huge wooden bowl (shallow and with eight short legs, all carved out of one piece of wood), and water was poured over it. The taupo, very self-conscious, sitting cross-legged before the bowl, dressed to the nines in flowers and ferns, with a piece of red hibiscus flower stuck on one cheek like a beauty patch, her short hair oiled and sprinkled with grated sandalwood, was as pretty as a picture. The cup was presented first to the chief, who made a little speech of welcome — ’May your visit be a happy one’ — then drank off the contents and spun the cup along the floor. It was now presented to my mother, who took a sip only, and afterwards to me. I poured a libation and said in Samoan ‘Blessed be our high chief meeting.’ Then came our English friends and Laulii, who came with us to officiate as ‘talking man’ for our party. She made a charming little speech that made everybody laugh, and then, the ceremonies being over, we all gathered together for a real talk. We brought news from Apia — we asked news of Vaiee. When I got into deep water with my Samoan, Laulii would help me out, and we would both translate what was said to my mother and the others. The manaia and his young men, who had taken a back seat while their elders received us, came over to join in the talk and tell us of the preparations for our visit.

“Immediately after the ceremonies of our reception we presented our gifts to the chief. Laulii was the spokesman for us, and the village talking man stood in the door of the guest house and announced in a loud voice the list of our presents, while from the inside of the surrounding houses came the sound of clapping hands. This ceremony of presenting gifts was done humorously, Laulii making many jokes and local hits which were received with polite laughter.

“We were three days in Vaiee, during which we were entertained by dances of the village girls, war and knife dances by the manaia and his young men, and, besides being furnished with good food all the time, we were honored with one grand feast, which was attended by the whole village. On the morning of the second day we were sitting in the guest house, which, by the simple expedient of hanging up a sheet of tapa, had been turned into two bedrooms for the night, when some native girls called my attention and pointed out to sea. A number of canoes were to be seen coming round the point at the mouth of the harbor, and as they came nearer we could hear the oarsmen singing and could distinguish our names. They were bringing — so they sang — the fish to Tamaitai Aolele — they had been out all night gathering turtles for Tamaitai Teuila.

"Later in the day there was a grand talolo, or ceremony of gift giving. My mother, as guest of honor, sat just inside the guest house, on a pile of mats, with the rest of us in a semi-circle around her, all facing the sea. There was a hum and buzz of excitement in the village, and we could catch glimpses of fine headdresses and old women scurrying about with mats and flowers. Soon the procession appeared, led by the manaia in full costume, dancing and twirling his head knife, and accompanied by several young men. After them came others bearing gifts hung from poles. Laulii, as our 'talking man,' received them, and our servants, in a little group, made up a fine chorus. The manaia and his young men came up, danced in front of us, and then, taking the poles from their attendants, laid three large turtles before us, calling out that they were a humble offering from the men of Vaiee to the great and glorious and beautiful lady of Vailima. Laulii received them, to my surprise, with jeering remarks that threw everybody into fits of laughter, evidently quite the correct thing to do. The next people brought a huge fish, nets of crabs, strings of brightly coloured fish, and sharks' fins.

"Seeing that one of the young men had a rag tied round his thumb, I asked him if he had hurt his hand. He replied that when he dived for the turtle it caught him by the thumb, and if his friends hadn't gone to his aid he might have drowned. He told it as though it would have been a great joke on him. We were all pretty well acquainted by this time, and everybody threw in remarks. Then our boys removed the presents, chose what we would take with us — only a small portion — and the rest was returned to the village for the feast. On state occasions the men are the cooks, and there is one dish that is only to be prepared by the manaia — who has to array himself in full war paint to serve it — and a grand dish it is, composed of breadfruit dumplings stewed in cocoanut cream in a wooden bowl by means of hot stones dropped in. The dumplings are served in a twist of banana leaf, and each has a stick thrust in it to eat it by. The grand feast was held about four o'clock, in a long arbor built for the occasion of upright sticks covered with cocoanut-palm leaves. Fresh green banana leaves served as a table-cloth, and on it was spread every dainty known to Samoa — pigs baked underground, turtle, whole fish, chickens, taro, yams, roasted green bananas, broiled fresh-water prawns, crabs, a fat worm that we pretended to eat but didn't, heart of cocoanut-tree salad with dressing made of cream from the nuts, limes and sea-water, and all kinds of fruit. We were all so hungry that, if it hadn't been for Laulii's warning, we might have fallen to before the chief said grace, which would have been a shocking breach of good manners. The first ceremonious stiffness having worn off by this time, the meal was enlivened by much friendly gaiety.

"That evening was given over to the dances, which lasted till nearly midnight. The manaia and the taupo had each written songs and composed music for the dances in our honor, and copies of them, written out neatly by the schoolmaster, were presented to us. Our friend, the English captain, made a great hit with the young men by exhibiting feats of strength, which they all copied, being highly delighted when they beat the Englishman, but cheering generously when he beat them. Then we played casino, with sticks of tobacco on our side and head knives, fans, etc., on theirs, for stakes. I perceived that the manaia purposely played badly in order to let me win his head knife, on which he had carved my name.

"We had intended returning over the mountain as we came, but the chief suggested that we go back by sailboat, as they had a very good one, and we could stop at some village every night on the way home. When we saw the boat we found it to be a primitive affair, with a bent tree for a mast and the sails tied with rotten ropes, but, knowing the natives to be the best boatmen in the world, we decided to take our chances and rely on their skill to pilot us safely home. We sent a number of our men back over the mountain to carry our share of the presents, but, as we were going to stop at villages on the way we took with us our part of the feast — several turtles, and, in lieu of calico or European things, which were not to be had at this retired place, some tapa — for gifts. Before we left I made a parcel of sandwiches — of tinned tongue and stale bread — in case we got hungry, for it is often a 'long time between feasts.'

"Everybody wanted to go with us, and, though the chief did his best to hold them back, the little boat was so crowded that we were nearly level with the water. As we went around by the windward side of the island, it was a rough trip.

"I noticed that the boatmen were narrowly watching my mother as she paddled in the water with her hand over the side of the boat, but did not understand the reason until afterwards, when we found out that, a little while before, a man had had his hand bitten off by a shark, and another who was sitting on the edge of a canoe had had a large piece of his thigh bitten out. The natives, being too polite to tell her to stop dabbling in the water, preferred to keep close watch themselves and be ready to strike with their oars if a shark should rise.

"At the first village where we stopped for the night we had a ticklish job getting through the reef, for there was but one small opening, and if we missed it we would be smashed to pieces. The wind was blowing towards the shore, and the great breakers crashing against the reef sent white spray high into the air. The boatmen were all pulling ropes and shouting orders at once. It seemed as though we were driving straight into the reef, and I looked on terror-stricken, but my mother chose that moment to say cheerfully, 'I think I'll have a sandwich!'

"The last day of our trip we ran inside the reef, where it was smooth sailing. Surely there is no mode of travelling on earth so enchanting as this; we went gliding over the blue water, with a sea-garden of coral, marine mosses, and brilliantly coloured fish below us, the white sails bellying before the breeze, the natives singing, the shore with its palms and little villages half hidden in green foliage slipping by, the mountains standing high against the sky, while on the other side of the barrier reef the surf pounded in impotent fury, throwing up a hedge of white, foaming spray. We seemed to be part of a living poem.

"When at length our delightful expedition came to an end and we landed at Apia, we found ourselves confronted by a rather ridiculous dilemma. My mother had not worn any shoes going over to Vaiee, which was quite in keeping with native customs and more comfortable for walking on the soft moss and lush grass in the damp, dripping woods, but it was another thing to land in Apia at the hotel barefoot. She slipped in as unobtrusively as possible and no one saw her. We had supper in our rooms — or, rather, on the veranda connected with them. The next morning I ran out to buy her some shoes — any kind — but there were none small enough. At last our little carriage was sent down from Vailima and came around to the side entrance. My mother got in without being seen and took the reins, but the horse, having been overfed with oats by Eliga in his desire to treat it kindly, began to leap and plunge, and dashed around to the front, where a number of the hotel guests were gathered. I heard them say, 'That is Mrs. Stevenson,' and all ran to look. As the horse continued to plunge about they all called out 'Jump, Mrs. Stevenson!' but she held on. I knew why she didn't jump — it was because of her bare feet. She was otherwise very neatly dressed in black, with hat and veil and gloves. Finally one man, bolder than the rest, reached in and lifted her out, and her little bare feet were seen waving in the air!"

One day, not long after this — July 17, 1896, to be exact — Mrs.

Stevenson and her daughter were driving along the beach at Apia, when they were surprised to see a strange craft in the bay — a curious little sloop that they knew had not been seen nor heard of before in those waters. On inquiry they found it was the famous Spray, in which Captain Joshua Slocum, of Boston, sailed alone around the world. They called on the adventurous skipper at once and invited him to visit Vailima, which he did on the following day. Mrs. Stevenson was delighted with the unconventional ways and conversation of the captain, and, indeed, found in him much that was kindred to her own spirit. When he wished to buy some giant bamboo from her plantation for a mast for his little vessel, she, of course, made him a present of it, and had it cut and taken down by the natives. He told her of his visit to the missionary bark, the Star of Hope, which was then in port at Apia. He was shown into their chart room and looked at their instruments, upon which he remarked, “I am a better Christian than you are, for you have two chronometers and a sextant, while I have only my belief in God and an old clock.” When asked why he didn’t take a sheep or some chickens along with him to eat as a relief from his constant diet of canned goods, he said, “You can’t kill a fellow-passenger. Out in the great stillness you get fond even of a chicken, and as for pigs, they are the most lovable and intelligent of animals.”

Joshua Slocum was a magnificent specimen of strength and health, and his manly figure was well set off by the clothing — or, rather, the lack of it — used in the tropics. When Mrs. Stevenson met him afterwards in New York she was much struck by the change caused in his appearance by the wearing of a conventional black suit, and regretted that he had to hide his real beauty — his lithe, strong figure — in ugly broadcloth. She had a great and sincere admiration for him, as she always had for physical courage in any form. In her preface to The Wrong Box she says, “Some time after Louis’s death Captain Joshua Slocum, on his way round the world alone in the little sloop Spray, came to the house at Vailima. Here, I thought, was a mariner after my husband’s own heart. Who had a better right to the directories [studied by Stevenson at Saranac when planning for the South Sea cruise] than this man who was about to sail those very seas with no other guide than the stars and a small broken clock that served in place of a chronometer? Captain Slocum received the volumes with reverence, and used them, as he afterwards told me, to his great advantage.”

From his own book, Sailing Alone Around the World, I have taken the following account of his meeting with Mrs. Stevenson:

“The next morning after my arrival, bright and early, Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson came to the Spray and invited me to visit Vailima the following day. I was of course thrilled when I found myself, after so many days of adventure, face to face with this bright woman, so lately the companion of the author whose books had delighted me on the voyage. The kindly eyes, that looked me through and through, sparkled when we compared notes of adventure. I marvelled at some of her experiences and escapes. She told me that along with her husband she had voyaged in all manner of rickety craft among the islands of the Pacific, reflectively adding, ‘Our tastes were similar.’ Following the subject of voyages she gave me the four beautiful volumes of sailing directories for the Mediterranean, writing on the fly-leaf of the first, ‘To Captain Slocum. These volumes have been read and re-read many times by my husband, and I am very sure that he would be pleased that they should be passed on to the sort of seafaring man that he liked above all others. Fanny V. de G. Stevenson.’ Mrs. Stevenson also gave me a great directory of the Indian Ocean. It was not without a feeling of reverential awe that I received the books so nearly directly from the hand of Tusitala, ‘who sleeps in the forest.’ Aolele, the Spray will cherish your gift!

“On another day the family from Vailima went to visit the Spray. The sloop being in the stream, we boarded her from the beach abreast, in the little razeed Gloucester dory, which had been painted a smart green. Our combined weight loaded it gunwale to the water, and I was obliged to steer with great care to avoid swamping. The adventure pleased Mrs. Stevenson greatly, and as we paddled along she sang ‘They went to sea in a pea-green boat.’ I could understand her saying of her husband and herself ‘Our tastes were similar.’

“Calling to say good-bye to my friends at Vailima, I met Mrs. Stevenson, in her Panama hat, and went over the estate with her. Men were at work clearing the land, and to one of them she gave an order to cut a couple of bamboo trees for the Spray from a clump she had planted four years before, and which had grown to a height of sixty feet. I used them for spare spars, and the butt of one served on the homeward voyage for a jib-boom.

“After a farewell ava ceremony in Samoan fashion at Vailima, the Spray stood out of the harbor August 20, 1896, and continued on her course. A sense of loneliness seized upon me as the islands faded astern, and as a remedy for it I crowded on sail for lovely Australia, which was not a strange land to me; but for long days in my dreams Vailima stood before the prow.”

It is sad to know that this brave sailor tempted fate once too often, for he sailed out of New York harbor some years ago and was never heard of again.

Even though their beloved Tusitala was with them no more, the Samoans did not forget his widow, and they often went to Vailima in bodies to do her honour. In a letter to her mother-in-law she describes one of these visiting parties:

"A couple of months ago the Tongan village sent to ask if they might come and dance for us on Christmas. They were the men that considered they belonged particularly to Louis; do you remember my telling you how their village was put into mourning at the time of his death — in Tongan fashion — for three days? And then how they marched up here, every man in a new black lavalava, some forty strong, to decorate the grave? I did not feel much like gaieties, but could not refuse the Tongans. I asked Chief Justice Ide, his daughter, and a travelling salesman named Campbell to see the dancing. Six or eight pretty girls were turned up by our 'poor old family' to make the kava, and, though our own boys had been given a holiday, we had attendants in scores. I had had a turkey roasted and corned beef boiled, so that with such things laid out on the sideboard I could give my guests a sort of picnic meal instead of dinner. The Tongans marched up — about fifty of them — led by their taupo dressed in a fine mat and dancing as she came. She was followed by the girls of the village carrying the usual presents on poles, and then came the fighting men with blackened faces and wearing the dress used in the war dances. They were all tall powerful young men, and looked very fierce and magnificent. They manœuvred while on the lawn and then we had the usual business of kava and orations. The dancing, for which they used an ancient war drum, took place in the hall, where the Chief Justice and I sat, as you might say, on thrones in front of the table, with the other spectators sitting on the floor around us. The dancing was wild and really splendid. When they left, just as dusk was falling, we presented them with a full-grown pig and two boxes of biscuit. Our boys thought Louis's grandfather should be shown some honor for the occasion, so they decorated his bust with a wreath cocked over one eye and a big red flower over one ear. I never saw anything more incongruous; it was enough to make him turn over in his grave."

Mrs. Stevenson's health improved after her return to Samoa, and she and her daughter spent quiet, pleasant months together working in the garden, walking in the forest, playing chess, reading, and sewing, and were both looking forward to the return of Mr. Osbourne when the news arrived of the sudden death in Edinburgh of Mrs. Thomas Stevenson. It was a sad shock to her daughter-in-law, who had grown to love Louis's mother dearly, and all the more distressing as she was summoned to go at once to Scotland to help settle the estate. It now became clear that the island home, made dear by a thousand tender associations, would have to be abandoned. Had Mrs. Stevenson been able to follow out her own desires at that time, she would have preferred to spend the remainder of her days there, but her son and daughter were drawn away perforce by the claims of their own families — the education of their children, etc. — and it was impossible for her to live there alone. So, with a tearing of heartstrings more easily imagined than described, she began to make preparations to leave the place for ever.

The first thing was to choose from their belongings suitable gifts for the dear friends that were to be left behind. Two young chiefs, one their host at the malaga to Vaiee, were taken to the tool room and told to choose what they wanted. One took an immense steel gouge which he said would be grand for making canoes. Another young chief fell heir to the tennis outfit (he had learned the game from Lloyd Osbourne), and went proudly off to set it up in his village. To old Seumanutafa, high chief of Apia, Mrs. Stevenson gave a four-poster bedstead, with mattress and pillows complete, in which one may imagine that he slept more imposingly but less restfully than on his own native mats. This chief was the man who saved so many lives at the time of the great hurricane, when the men-of-war were lost, that the United States Government sent him, in appreciation, a fine whale boat and a gold watch with an inscription in the case. As he had no pockets in his native costume, he wore a leather belt with a pouch in it for the watch, usually wearing it next to his bare brown body.

To the friend and neighbour, Mr. Caruthers, were given some framed oil-paintings, and he returned the compliment by offering to take Jack, Mrs. Stevenson's pony, and give him the best of care as long as he lived, promising that no one should ever ride him. To a Danish baker named Hellesoe, who had always sent up a huge cake with his compliments on Mr. Stevenson's birthday, was given a wonderful armchair made entirely of beadwork put on by hand and trimmed with fringe and coloured flowers. Having seen the little sitting-room over the bakeshop, they were sure the chair would fit in beautifully there.

It was a busy time when they packed up to leave Samoa. They had no real help, for none of the Samoans knew how to pack, though they helped in making boxes and lifting and carrying. The two women sorted, wrapped, and packed all the books of the large library, besides the Chippendale furniture that came from Scotland, and some antiques, including old carved cabinets dating back to 1642. After everything of value had been packed, there were still many odds and ends — glassware and such articles — which were left behind with the intention of sending for them later. Eventually the plan was changed and the things were given to Mr. Gurr, with whom the key of the house had been left. This explains why so many glass bowls, etc., were bought by tourists at Apia, and how every odd pen that was found was sold as Mr. Stevenson's own and original. It was then that Mrs.

Stevenson's diary, to which I have already alluded, was overlooked in the packing, only to turn up years afterwards in London.

It was a genuine grief to Mrs. Stevenson to sell Vailima, but, in order to retain it she would have had to keep a force of men there constantly at work "fighting the forest," which, if left alone for a short time, speedily envelops and smothers everything in its path. If even so much as an old tin can is thrown out on the ground tropic nature at once proceeds to get rid of the defacement, and in a few days it will be covered with creepers. So, with many a pang of regret, the place was finally sold — with the reservation of the summit of Vaea where the tomb stands — to a Russian merchant named Kunst. He lived there for some time and at his death his heirs sold it to the German Government, which purchased it as a residence for the German governor of Samoa. So the flag of Germany flew over Vailima until the New Zealand expeditionary force landed and took over the islands for Great Britain, when the Union Jack was run up. The natives said that England came to Tusitala, since he could not go to her, and when his own country's flag blew out in the breeze over his old home one could almost fancy that his spirit looked down and rejoiced. Since then it has been used as the British Government House, and at present the English administrator lives there with his wife and aides. Many changes and enlargements have been made in it since it was the home of Tusitala. The Germans cut a new road to Vailima from the highway, and the Road of the Loving Hearts, which originally led to the house, now leads to the burial place of the man for whom the grateful chiefs built it long ago.

All was now ready for their departure, and their native friends gathered from far and wide to take part in what was for them an event of mournful significance. Tusitala's widow was not permitted to go out to the waiting vessel in the ordinary boat, but was taken by the high chief Seumanutafa in the cutter that had been given him by the United States Government. The awning had been put up over it and it was all trimmed for the occasion in ferns and flowers. Crowds of Samoan friends — Fanua (Mrs. Gurr), Laulii (Mrs. Willis), Tamasese, Amatua, Tupua, Tautala, the Vailima household, and many others, were there in boats, also trimmed with ferns and flowers, to see them off. All went on board and were taken into the cabin, where they were treated to bottled lemonade with ice in the glasses, at which they marvelled greatly. Though they realised that the woman who had done so much for them in the few years of her residence among them — who had tended them in sickness and sympathized with them in sorrow — was about to leave them for ever, they made a strong effort not to cloud her departure with demonstrations of grief, and it was only when she took farewell of Sosimo, the man who had been her beloved husband's body servant at Vailima, that they gave signs of breaking down. All had brought presents, and Mrs. Stevenson and her daughter stood on the deck wreathed in flowers, surrounded by baskets of pineapples, oranges, bananas, and other fruits. Each departing friend, after kissing their hands, added something to the pile of gifts — Samoan fans, seed and shell necklaces, rolls of tapa, and native woven baskets, and the two ladies had all the fingers of both hands adorned with Samoan tortoise-shell rings. As the ship steamed away the little flotilla of boats, looking like green bouquets on the water, followed them for some distance, the boatmen singing as they rowed the farewell song of the islands, To-fa mi feleni (good-bye, my friend).

CHAPTER X

BACK TO CALIFORNIA

For six months or more before Mrs. Stevenson's departure for England in 1898, she had been suffering severely from an illness which finally necessitated a surgical operation. This operation, which was a very critical one and brought her within the valley of the shadow for a time, was performed in London by Sir Frederick Treves, the noted surgeon and physician to the King. Treves asked no fee, saying that he considered it a privilege to give this service to the widow of Stevenson.

While the family were in Dorking, where they had taken a house for the summer, Mrs. Strong received a letter of sympathy from Mrs. Stevenson's old friend, Henry James, which is so characteristic that I am impelled to quote it:

"Dear Mrs. Strong:

"I have been meaning each day to write to you again and tell you how much, in these days, I am with you in thought. I can't sufficiently rejoice that you are out of town in this fearful heat, which the air of London, as thick as the wit of some of its inhabitants, must now render peculiarly damnable. I rejoice, too, that you have, like myself, an old house in a pretty old town and an old garden with pleasant old flowers. Further, I jubilate that you are within decent distance of dear old George Meredith, whom I tenderly love and venerate. But after that, I fear my jubilation ceases. I deeply regret the turn your mother's health has taken has not been, as it so utterly ought to be, the right one. But if it has determined the prospect of the operation, which is to afford her relief, I hope with all my heart that it will end by presenting itself to you as 'a blessing in disguise.' No doubt she would have preferred a good deal less disguise, but, after all, we have to take things as they come, and I throw myself into the deep comfort of gratitude that her situation has overtaken her in this country, where every perfect ministration will surround her, rather than in your far-off insular abyss of mere — so to speak — picturesqueness. I should have been, in that case, at the present writing, in a fidget too fierce for endurance, whereas I now can prattle to you quite balmily; for which you are all, no doubt, deeply grateful. Give her, please, my tender love, and say to her that if London were actually at all accessible to me, I should dash down to her thence without delay, and thrust myself as far as would be good for any of you into your innermost concerns. This would be more possible to me later on if you should still be remaining awhile at Dorking — and, at any rate, please be sure that I shall manage to see you the first moment I am able to break with the complications that, for the time, forbid me even a day's absence from this place. I repeat that it eases my spirit immensely that you have exchanged the planet Saturn — or whichever it is that's the furthest — for this terrestrial globe. In short, between this and October, many things may happen, and among them my finding the right moment to drop on you. I hope all the rest of you thrive and rusticate, and I feel awfully set up with your being, after your tropic isle, at all tolerant of the hollyhocks and other garden produce of my adopted home. I am extremely busy trying to get on with a belated serial — an effort in which each hour has its hideous value. That is really all my present history — but to you all it will mean much, for you too have lived in Arcadia! I embrace you fondly, if you will kindly permit it — every one; beginning with the Babe, so as to give me proper presumption, and working my way steadily up. Good-bye till soon again.

"Yours, my dear Teuila, very constantly,

"Henry James."

Except for this unfortunate illness the family spent a pleasant summer in England, in a little cottage surrounded by an old-fashioned garden near Burford.

From a photograph by Hollinger, London.
Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson.

One of the purposes of this visit to England was Mrs. Stevenson’s desire to carry out one of her husband’s last requests. In a letter not to be opened until after his death he asked that, if the arrangements already made for the writing and publication of his biography by Sidney Colvin should not have been carried out within four years, it should be placed in the hands of some other person. As the four years had elapsed and nothing had been done in the matter, it was decided that Graham Balfour, Stevenson’s cousin and devoted friend, should undertake the task; and when Mrs. Stevenson had partially recovered from her illness she removed to the Balfour residence and gave her assistance for some time in laying out the plans for the book.

Her convalescence was very slow, and, finding the damp climate of England unfavourable, she finally decided to move to the island of

Madeira for rest and recuperation. Accompanied by her son and his family, her daughter having left for New York City to join her son, Austin Strong, she travelled by slow stages through France, Spain, and Portugal, reaching Madeira in the early part of December, 1898. From Lisbon they sailed in a filthy little Portuguese steamer, freighted with hay and kerosene, and the passengers, in utter disregard of the inflammable nature of the cargo, scattered cigarette ends and lighted matches all over the ship. However, a kind Providence carried them to port without accident.

After a most uncomfortable voyage of two days and nights they drew into the beautiful bay of Funchal, with its curving shore and background of lofty mountains. The quintas, or country-houses, each surrounded by a terraced garden and vineyard, which dotted the slopes, gave a cheerful air to the landscape. Mrs. Stevenson speaks of it as the "most picturesque place" she ever saw, and she had seen many of the beauty spots of the world.

In a letter to her daughter written from here she says: "My plans are vague. The years ahead of me seem like large empty rooms, with high ceilings and echoes. Not gay, say you, but I was never one for gaiety much — and I may discover a certain grandeur in the emptiness."

When at last her strength seemed equal to the long journey, she once more turned her face towards the setting sun, and beautiful California. On the way a flying stop was made in Indiana to see relatives and friends of her girlhood. Speaking of them she says, "I saw my old friends, the Fletchers. They came to see me in droves, and it was strange to see them old men and women, talking of their grandchildren. It seems so difficult to realise that one's self is old; indeed, I don't believe I ever shall." While in Indianapolis she met for the first time her distinguished compatriot, James Whitcomb Riley, who afterwards wrote to her recalling the occasion of their meeting in his own gentle, kindly way. I quote the letter:

"Indianapolis, Christmas, 1900.

"Dear Mrs. Stevenson:

"Since your brief visit here last winter I've been remembering you and your kindness every day, and in fancy have written down — hundreds of times — my thanks to you and yours — once, when first well enough to get down-town, wrapping a photograph for you of the very well man I used to be. Finding the portrait this Christmas morning, I someway think it good-omenish, and so send you the long-belated thing, together with a copy of a recent book in which are most affectionally set some old and some new lines of tribute to the dear man who is just away. How I loved him through his lovely art! And how I loved all he loved and yet loves — for with both heart and soul, and tears and smiles, he seems very near at hand. Therefore my very gentlest greetings on this blessed day go out to him as to you.

“Fraternally,

“James Whitcomb Riley.”

Mrs. Stevenson wished to live within sight of the Pacific Ocean, so she purchased a lot at the corner of Hyde and Lombard Streets, on the very top of one of San Francisco’s famous hills, and at once began the building of her house, living meanwhile for a time on Belvedere Island and later at 2751 Broadway. The creation of a new thing — whether it might be a dress, a surprise dish for the table, a garden or a house, always appealed strongly to her, and as she plunged eagerly into the business of planning and discussing with architects and contractors, her interest in life rose again. As she remarked, “It is awfully exciting to build a house.” Mr. Willis Polk was the architect, but he followed her design, which she made by building a little house out of match-boxes on the corner of a table. The house was rather unusual in its plan, flat-roofed, and with architecture somewhat “on the Mexican order,” as the contractor said. It fitted in well with the landscape and gave one a feeling of home comfort and cheer within. She herself said it was “like a fort on a cliff.” Hidden from the street by a high retaining wall and a colonnade embowered in vines was a beautiful garden where she gradually collected rare plants from various parts of the world. A wide stretch of emerald lawn filled the centre, and around its borders were massed flowering shrubs and small trees — low-growing varieties purposely chosen in order not to hide the sea view from the windows. Here a climbing syringa brought from the romantic Borda gardens in Mexico, where the sad Empress Carlota used to walk, flung out its tendrils gaily to the salt sea breeze, and seemed never to miss the kindlier sun of its former home. At one side there was a small cemented pool, the birds’ drinking-place, where many of the little creatures came to dip their bills and trill their morning songs. In this quiet scented garden, kept safe from intruding eyes on all sides by vine-covered walls and shrubbery, one might sit and dream, reminded of the outside world only by the clanging of a street-car bell or the distant whistle of an ocean steamer.

Within the walls of this house were a thousand objects gathered in her wanderings in all sorts of strange places, but the greatest attraction was the magnificent outlook over sea and land afforded by its commanding position. From the flat roof one looked down on one side upon the picturesque city, with its many hills and steeply climbing streets, all a-glitter at night with a million twinkling lights, and on the other upon the great sparkling expanse of the bay, alive with craft of every sort, from the great ocean steamer just in from the Orient to the tiny fisher boats, with their lateen sails, returning with their day’s catch from outside the “Heads.” From the drawing-room windows one could see the winking eye of Alcatraz Island, grim rocky guardian of the Golden Gate, and all the ships of the Pacific fleets making their slow way in to their docking places. How often must she have looked out upon those returning wanderers of the deep and thought with a tender sadness of that day in the treasured past when the Silver Ship sailed away with her and her beloved towards the enchanted isles!

The house at Hyde and Lombard Streets, San Francisco, with some alterations in the way of bay windows, etc., which have been made since Mrs. Stevenson sold it.

Once she stood watching from these windows for the transport that was coming in with soldiers from the Philippines, among whom was her nephew, Edward Orr. As the ship hove in sight she sent her grandson flying to the roof to wave a welcome with a large flag, and almost the first thing the homesick young soldier saw as he turned eager eyes shorewards was the fluttering banner high on the house-top on the hill. Having nothing else convenient with which to return the salute, he and his mates snatched a sheet from a bunk and waved it from a porthole. Meanwhile Mrs. Stevenson had despatched her son to hire a launch and take the mother and sisters of her nephew out to meet him, and as soon as the sea-worn and tired young soldiers had landed at the Presidio she sent out baskets of fruit and bottles of milk for their refreshment.

Island memories were always dear to her, and when one day she heard that a ship had come into port manned with sailors from Samoa, she at once sent to the dock and invited them all to call on her. Soon the dark-skinned, picturesque troop, shy but proud of the attention shown them by Tusitala’s widow, arrived. The ava bowl was brought out and placed before them as they sat cross-legged on the floor in a semi-circle, and after the brewing of the ava it was drunk with all the proper ceremonies of speech-making and exchanges of compliments. Mr. Carmichael Carr, who, with his mother, the well-known singer, was one of the visitors that day, writes: “I have a wonderfully clear picture of the reception Mrs. Stevenson gave and the South Sea men she had gathered around her — their strange appearance and incantations and the peculiar drink they brewed.”

At the Hyde Street house she received many distinguished people — actors, writers, singers, and even royalties. There Henry James, S. S. McClure, David Bispham, William Faversham and his wife, ex-Queen Liliuokalani and a hundred others went to pay her their respects. It was at a reception she was giving to Liliuokalani — which, by the way, she gave in the hope of arousing favourable interest in the Queen’s mission to Washington to seek justice — that she first met David Bispham, and first heard him sing, too, in a rather unusual way. Some one — I think it was Gelett Burgess — said to the Queen, “Will your Majesty please issue a royal command? We have never heard one.” Whereupon her Majesty pointed her finger at Bispham and said, “The bard is commanded to sing!”

When the Stevenson Society of San Francisco held their yearly meetings of commemoration on Louis’s birthday she was the honoured guest, and it was characteristic of her to remember to invite his old friend, Jules Simoneau of Monterey, for these occasions. When she first asked the old man to come he shrugged his shoulders and said: “What! Will you take me to see your fine friends in this old blouse? I have no other clothes.” “Your clothes are nothing,” she replied. “All that matters to me is that you were my husband’s dear friend.” So he went, and was entertained in her house with as much consideration as though he had been a prince of the blood. On the evening of the dinner given by the Society at the old restaurant which had once been frequented by Stevenson, she took Simoneau in her carriage, and when a fashionable young lady in her party objected to this arrangement she was rebuked by being sent home in a street-car.

Among other public functions to which she was invited to do her honour as the widow of Stevenson was a banquet given by the St. Andrews Society, which included nearly all the Scotchmen in San Francisco. In conversation with three of them she remarked that she had the sugar bowl from which Bobby Burns had sweetened his toddy when he went to see Robert Stevenson, and, after inviting them to call, promised to mix a toddy for them and sweeten it from the same historic sugar bowl. About a week later the three appeared, exceedingly Scotch in their long black coats and silk hats, and each carrying a formal bouquet. They had a delightful time, drinking their toddy, which was duly sweetened from the hallowed bowl, and reciting Burns's poems to her in such broad Scotch that she could not understand a word of it. But she loved the sound of it all the same.

It was soon after her return to San Francisco that Mrs. Stevenson interested herself in the story of a half-caste Samoan girl, a sort of modern Cinderella, of whom she had heard before leaving the islands. This girl, who was an orphan, had been left a fortune in lands and money in Samoa by her American father, and when she was five years of age had been sent to San Francisco by her guardian to be educated. There, through a combination of circumstances, she disappeared, and her property in Samoa lay unclaimed, while the rents went to the benefit of others. When Mrs. Stevenson heard of this she determined to make a search for the girl, and as soon as she reached San Francisco set out to do so. After the rounds of all the private schools and seminaries had been made without success, her friend, Miss Chismore, thought of trying the charity orphan asylums, and in one of these, a Catholic convent school for orphans, she found a girl bearing a somewhat similar name to the lost one. Mrs. Stevenson, taking with her a Samoan basket and some shells, immediately went out to see her. At the school a small, dark, shy girl was brought by the sisters into the visitors' room, and at sight of the Samoan basket she gave a joyful cry of recognition. The long-lost heiress was found, living as a pauper in a charity school! The difficulty then was to prove her claim to the property and secure it for her. In her determination to do this Mrs. Stevenson went to Washington, where, after seeing senators, priests of the Catholic Church, and other persons in authority, she finally succeeded in having the girl's lands, with some of the back rents, restored to her. All this was like a fairy story to the kind sisters at the convent, and their joy was unbounded at seeing their little pauper pupil thus romantically transformed into the rich princess. Meanwhile Mrs. Stevenson invited the young lady to her house, gave a party in her honour, helped her buy clothing suitable to her new station, and, when the time came for her triumphant departure to claim her island possessions, went to see her off on the steamer. As long as this little Cinderella lived she never forgot the fairy godmother who had worked this wonderful change in her life.

It was during this period that the regrettable incident of Mr. Henley's attack on the memory of Stevenson occurred — an incident that attracted a great deal more attention in England than in America, where it was forgotten almost as soon as it happened. Mrs. Stevenson herself always ascribed this strange act on the part of her husband's old friend to his state of health, which had never been good and was rapidly growing worse; and, because she believed he had become embittered by his misfortunes, she bore no rancour. In referring to it she repeated one of her favourite sayings, “To know all is to forgive all,” and when, after Mr. Henley’s death, his widow wrote to her asking for letters to be published in his “life,” she sent them with a kind and affectionate note.

While the house in San Francisco was building, Mrs. Stevenson went away for a time, accompanied only by her maid, for a camping trip in the Santa Cruz Mountains, down among the redwoods. The delights of the place where they camped, in a shady little valley about ten miles from Gilroy, soon won her heart completely, and she decided to purchase a small ranch there for a permanent summer home. For the first season she lived there in true campers’ fashion, which she describes in a letter to her daughter: “At the ranch I have one tent with a curtain in the middle. We sleep on one side of the curtain and sit on the other. I have only the most primitive facilities for cooking, and the butcher is twelve miles away over a mountain road. He is anything but dependable, and when I send for a piece of roast beef I may get a soup bone of veal, or a small bit of liver, or a side of breakfast bacon, which I keep hung in a tree. I cannot keep flour on a tree, so am dependent on the boarding-house [a small summer resort about a quarter of a mile distant] for my bread, and if they are short I have no bread. If I find I lack something essential I have to spend a whole day driving to town through the deep dust to get it. But of course I am going to do all kinds of things by and by.” The truth was that this sort of life was exactly to her taste, and the wilder and rougher it was the better it suited her. She was always, to the end of her days, the pioneer woman, and the greensward of the woods went better to her feet than carpeted halls.

Afterwards tents were put up for the accommodation of her family, and every spring, after the rains were over, they all moved down to take up a delightful out-of-door life such as can scarcely be enjoyed anywhere in the world except in California. Cooking was done in the open air, and meals were taken at a long table spread in a deep glen, where the trees were so thick that it was pleasantly cool even on the hottest days.

As time went on the mistress of this sylvan paradise grew more and more attached to it, and she at length decided to build more permanent quarters. First of all, she made a model of a house out of match boxes, with pebbles for the foundation wall, all glued together, painted and complete. Then she hired a country carpenter and built her house — a pleasant little dwelling, with a wide veranda extending in country fashion around two sides of it.

In building the foundation wall boulders from the stream were used, and many were found bearing bold imprints of fossil ferns, birds, and snakes. Mrs. Stevenson was delighted to have these reminders of a past age for her wall, but, alas, during her absence the stones were all cemented in place with the nice smooth sides outward and the fossils turned inward.

Although it was so different from the tropic island that had now become but a tender memory, yet there was much about this place that recalled Vailima days — the sweet seclusion, the rich greenery all about, the music of the little tinkling stream, and, above all, the morning song of the multitudes of birds. It was for this, and perhaps to make a link between her California home and that other far across the wide Pacific that she chose to call the little ranch in the Santa Cruz Mountains Vanumanutagi, vale of the singing birds.

At Vanumanutagi Mrs. Stevenson led a simple life, spending most of her time out-of-doors and occupying herself with plans for the planting and improvement of the land. The house was simply furnished, and the country people were charmed with the gay chintz and bright wall-paper, the brick fireplace, and the general appropriateness of it all. As it was not large, tents were put up for the family and guests to sleep in.

Even this peaceful spot had its excitements, for in the autumn, when the undergrowth everywhere was as dry as tinder, its quiet was sometimes disturbed by the outbreak of California's summer terror — forest-fires. One of the worst of these happened when Mrs. Stevenson was at the ranch with only her sister Elizabeth and a maid. It came suddenly, and the first they knew of it was the sight of what they took to be sea fog, rolling and tumbling over the tops of the hills. They soon knew it for what it was when it came pouring down into the valley and they began to choke with its acrid smell. Presently horsemen came galloping by on their way to warn ranchers of the fire, and every little while a man would come out and report the progress made in checking it. It was an oppressive, hidden danger, for nothing could be seen from the valley of the actual flames through the thick suffocating curtain of smoke that hung over all. The only avenue of escape was by way of the road to Gilroy, and the fire threatened momentarily to cut this off. Not wishing to abandon the place to its fate, Mrs. Stevenson thought out a plan for saving their lives in the last emergency by wrapping up in wet blankets and crouching in a sort of hole or low place in an open field near the house. Fortunately the fire was stopped before this became necessary.

The house at Vanumanutagi ranch.

It was while she was living at the ranch that Mrs. Stevenson began to write the introductions to her husband's works in the biographical edition brought out by Charles Scribner's Sons. As she had but a modest opinion of her abilities, she undertook this work with the greatest reluctance, and in a letter to Mr. Scribner she remarks, "It appalls me to think of my temerity in writing these introductions." Yet I believe that everyone who reads them will feel that a new and personal interest has been added to each one of his books by her graphic story of the circumstances of its writing.

Among the best loved of the infrequent guests who braved the long, hot, dusty drive from Gilroy to the ranch was the young California writer, Frank Norris. During his visits there Mrs. Stevenson became much attached to him, and he in turn was so charmed with the place and the life that he determined to buy a ranch in the neighbourhood. As I have already said, when an opportunity offered he bought the Douglas Sanders place, Quien Sabe Rancho, intending to spend all his summers there. Writing to Mrs. Stevenson about his plans in his gay boyish fashion, he says:

"My dear Mrs. Stevenson:

"This is to tell you that our famous round-the-world trip has been curtailed to a modest little excursion Samoa-wards and back, or mebbe we get as far as Sydney. We wont go to France, but will come to Quien Sabe in February — FEBRUARY! We find in figuring up our stubs that we have a whole lot more money than we thought, but the blame stuff has got to be transferred from our New York bank to here, which (because we went about it wrong in the first place), can't be done for another two weeks. We will make the first payment on Quien

Sabe before October 1st — $250. Will you ask Lloyd to let us know — or I mean to bear us in mind — if he hears of a horse for sale so we could buy the beast when we come up next February. Meanwhile will keep you informed as to 'lightning change' programme we are giving these days.

"Ever thine (I've clean forgot me nyme)."

The Norris cabin stands high on the mountain slope, and is reached by a steep winding road leading up from Vanumanutagi Ranch.

To this ideal spot, this secluded little lodge in the wilderness, Frank Norris hoped to bring his wife and little daughter and spend many happy and fruitful summers. Here he intended to work on the last volume of his series of the wheat trilogy — the story of the hunger of the people, which was to be called by the appropriate name of The Wolf. His joy in his new purchase was unbounded, and many improvements to the cabin and ranch were projected. In all these plans Mrs. Stevenson took a more than neighbourly interest, for she spent time and money in helping to make the place comfortable and attractive. Among other things she built a curbing around the well, using for the purpose boulders from the inexhaustible supply in the bed of the stream, and, to have all complete, even sent to Boston for a real "old oaken bucket." At just the right intervals along the steep road to the cabin, measured off by her own indefatigable feet, she placed rustic seats, where the tired climber might rest.

But alas! All these pleasing hopes came to naught, for within a short time after buying the ranch sudden death cut him off in the flower of his youth and the first unfolding of his genius. This was a sad blow to Mrs. Stevenson, for she had become much attached to the brilliant and lovable young writer. Sometime afterwards she thought of putting up a memorial to him on the little ranch where he had hoped to spend many happy years. Having decided that it should take the form of a stone seat, bearing a suitable inscription, she went to work in conjunction with Gelett Burgess to make the design. The site chosen for the seat is upon a small level spot a few yards below the cabin, at the side of the winding road leading up from the Stevenson ranch. In carrying out this project she took a melancholy pleasure, as she writes in a letter to Mr. Charles Scribner, dated 1902: "I am building a memorial seat to poor Frank Norris. With the assistance of a couple of men I have gathered a lot of boulders from the bed of a stream, and from these we have fashioned a bench to hold six or eight people, and set it where the view is glorious. I have helped lay the stones, and have dabbled in mortar until I can hardly use my hands to write. This sort of work is so much more interesting than scratching with a pen. In the joy of even so poor a creation I forget the sad purpose of it, and am as happy as one hopes to be who has lived as long as I."

Before these two friends — he in the springtime of his days, she in the mellow autumn of maturity — passed away, they were persuaded to record their voices in a phonograph, but it was a useless effort, for no one who loved them has ever been able to endure to listen to their spirit voices, as it were, speaking from the other world.

CHAPTER XI

TRAVELS IN MEXICO AND EUROPE

Eight years, divided between the house "like a fort on a cliff" in San Francisco and the sylvan solitude of the little ranch tucked away in its corner in the mountains of the Holy Cross, slipped by happily enough. Now and again the wandering mood came back, but, except for one visit to France and England, Mrs. Stevenson confined her journeyings to the American continent.

One of these excursions led her to Mexico — a country that she found more interesting than any she had ever visited in Europe. Sometimes I think this may have been because of some primitive element in her own nature that responded to the traditions of that strange land — so aged in history, so young in civilization — but, anyway, she told me that she felt a genuine thrill there such as she had never experienced in any of the historic places of the Old World. At the tomb of Napoleon she remained cold, but at the "tree of the sad night," where Cortés is said to have wept bitter tears on that dark and rainy night away back in 1520, her imagination was deeply touched. At the church of Guadalupe she looked at the pitifully crude paintings and other thank-offerings of the simple devotees with deep and sympathetic interest.

Much more interesting than the city of Mexico she found the quaint and ancient town of Cuernavaca, where Maximilian was wont to come with his Empress to enjoy the delights of the famous Borda Gardens. These gardens, though fallen from their first high estate, were still very beautiful at the time of Mrs. Stevenson's visit.

Of these pleasant days in Cuernavaca she writes in a letter to her daughter:

"I have a little plant from the garden where Carlota lived, which I think is a climbing syringa. We go round nearly every evening to the palace built by Cortés, in one room of which he strangled one of his mistresses.... I had always supposed Maximilian to be a most exemplary person, but he seems to have lived in a palace some three miles from here with a beautiful Mexican girl, while poor Carlota was left alone in town in the Borda Gardens.... Everybody goes barefoot here, though all dressed up otherwise, and everybody wears the rebozo. This morning I killed a scorpion on the wall alongside the bed, and the other day I also assisted in the killing of a tremendous tarantula in the middle of the road. We stood far off and threw stones at it. None of mine hit the mark, but I threw like mad.... I hope you were not frightened by the news of the earthquake here. We got a good shake but no harm done. Just a little south of us there has been terrible damage — a whole town destroyed and people killed. Here all the people ran into the streets, and kneeling, held out their hands towards the churches that contain their miraculous images.... We have had a 'blessing of the animals' at the cathedral, where cats, dogs, eagles, doves, cocks and hens, horses, colts, donkeys, cows and bulls, dyed every colour of the rainbow and wearing wreaths of artificial flowers round their necks, were brought to receive this sacrament. I wanted to take Burney [her little Scotch terrier], but feared his getting some contagion, so gave it up, and now my Burney has forever lost the chance of becoming a holy, blessed dog.... The native people here are very abject, and seem almost entirely without intellect; yet they are the only servants to be had unless one sends to California, and they make life a desperate business. The only spirit I have seen in any of them was to-day, when a native policeman tried to get up a fight between his own huge dog and my little Burney. Of course Burney the valiant was ready for the fray and would probably have disposed of the big dog had I not run up, closing and clubbing my parasol as I came. The policeman thought I was going to strike him, and for one second stood up to me fiercely, saying 'No Señorita! No Señorita!' Then his knees suddenly gave way and he and his dog and his friend who was standing by to see fair play utterly collapsed."

Steeped as the country was in old tradition, and far removed as it seemed from all knowledge of the outside world, the name of Robert Louis Stevenson had penetrated to its inmost recesses, and its people were pleased to bestow honour upon his widow. Writing of this she says: "I want to tell you that at every little lost place on the road I have received extra attention because of my name. In this house I have the best room, the landlord himself giving it up to me. I hope Louis knows this."

The little plant of which she spoke, the climbing syringa, which was given to her as a special favour by the man in charge of the Borda Gardens, reached San Francisco in good condition and took most kindly to its new home. Slips of it were given to friends, and its sweet flowers, reminiscent of the ill-fated queen who once breathed their perfume, now scent the air in more than one garden round San Francisco Bay.

It was not long after her return from this trip to Mexico that Mrs. Stevenson began to be troubled with a bronchial affection that increased as she advanced in years and made it necessary for her to seek a frequent change from the cool climate of San Francisco. In November of 1904 a severe cough from which she was suffering led her southward. This time she was accompanied by Salisbury Field, the son of her old friend and schoolmate of Indiana days, Sarah Hubbard Field. Mr. Field had now become a member of Mrs. Stevenson's household, and at a later date married her daughter, Isobel Osbourne Strong.

Arriving at La Jolla by the sea, a most picturesque spot on the southern coast of California, they were disappointed in not finding it as warm as they had expected, so it was decided to go further south. In the course of their inquiries at San Diego they met a Western miner named George Brown, who told them stories of a lonely desert island off the coast of Lower California, where he was about to open a copper-mine for the company for which he was general manager. The more he talked of this lonesome isle and of how barren and desolate it was the more Mrs. Stevenson was fascinated with it, and when he finally invited them, in true Western fashion, to accompany him thither, she joyfully accepted. In the early part of January she took passage with her little party, consisting of herself, Mr. Field, and her maid, on the small steamer St. Denis, which was sailing from San Diego and making port at Ensenada and San Quintin on the way to Cedros Island.

At the island the Stevenson party was offered the large company house of ten rooms by Mr. Brown, but preferred to live in a little whitewashed cottage that stood on the beach. Except for the Mexican families of the mine workmen there were no women on the island besides Mrs. Stevenson and her maid. The small circle of Americans soon became intimately acquainted, for the lack of other society and interests naturally drew them close together. Besides George Brown, Clarence Beall, and Doctor Chamberlain, the company doctor, there was only a queer old character known as "Chips," a stranded sea carpenter who was employed to build lighters on the beach.

Mrs. Stevenson had all of Kipling's fondness for mining men, engineers — all that great class of workers, in fact, who harness the elements of earth and air and bend them to man's will — and she was very happy on this lonely island with no society outside of her own party but that of the few employed at the mine. Between her and Mr. Beall, a young mining engineer employed on the island, a strong and lasting bond of friendship was established from the moment of their first meeting, when she saw him wet and cold from a hard day of loading ship through the surf and insisted on "mothering" him to the extent of seeing that he had dry clothing and other comforts. And, although the difference between the green tropic isle beyond the sunset which lay enshrined in her memory and this barren cactus-grown pile of volcanic rocks was immeasurable, yet the one, in its peace, its soft sweet air, and the near presence of the murmuring sea, called back the other.

When, after three pleasant, peaceful months, the time came for her departure, there was general sorrow on the island, where it may well be imagined that her presence had greatly lightened the tedium of existence for its lonely dwellers. “To this day,” writes Doctor Chamberlain, “whenever I pick up one of Mr. Stevenson’s novels, my first thoughts are always of his wife and our days at Cedros Island.”

While in Ensenada on the return trip Mrs. Stevenson heard of a ranch for sale there, and after looking at it decided to purchase it. The place, known as El Sausal, lies on the very edge of the great Pacific, and has a magnificent beach. The climate is as nearly perfect as a climate can be, and Mrs. Stevenson often said that if the world ever learned of the magic healing in that country there would be a great rush to the peninsula, so long despised as a hopeless desert.

There was only a little cottage of a very humble sort on the ranch and supplies were hard to get, but she loved it and was never better in health than when she was at Sausal. At this time she returned to San Francisco, but the following winter she went back to take possession and spent some time there. Writing to Mr. Charles Scribner, she says: “I am living in a sweet lost spot known as the Rancho El Sausal, some six miles from Ensenada in Lower California. If I had no family I should stop here forever; except for the birds, and the sea, and the wind, it is so heavenly quiet, and I so love peace.” Running through the place was a little stream, the banks of which were thick with the scarlet “Christmas berry,” so well known in the woods of Upper California; multitudes of birds — canaries, linnets, larks, mocking-birds — all sang together outside the door in an amazing chorus; and on the beach near by the sea beat its soft rhythmic measure.

They were very close to nature at Sausal, but though its situation was so isolated they had no fear, for the penalties for any sort of crime were terrific. Burglary, or even house-breaking, were punished with death, and one could hardly frown at another without going to prison for it. Sometimes they were surprised by the sudden appearance of a man, tired and dusty, dashing up on a foam-covered horse and asking for food. To such an unfortunate they always gave meat and drink, and when the rurales presently galloped up and demanded to know whether they had seen an escaped prisoner they swallowed their conscientious scruples and answered “No!” Personally they met with nothing but the most punctilious courtesy from the Mexican officials. When Mrs. Stevenson received a Christmas box from her daughter, the chivalric comandante at Ensenada, in order to make sure that she should have it in time, sent it out to Sausal magnificently conducted by three mounted policemen.

When she left this peaceful spot in the spring of 1906 to return to San Francisco she little thought that she was moving towards one of the most dramatic incidents in her eventful life. All went as usual on the journey until they had passed Santa Barbara on the morning of the fateful day, April 18, when vague rumours of some great disaster began to circulate in a confused way among the passengers. Soon they knew the dreadful truth, though in the swift running of the train they themselves had not felt the earthquake, and it was not long before concrete evidence confirmed the reports, for at Salinas they were halted by the broken Pajaro bridge. At that place Mrs. Stevenson slept the night on the train, and the next day she hired a team and drove by a roundabout way to Gilroy, near which, it will be remembered, her ranch, Vanumanutagi, was situated. There they learned that San Francisco was burning, and while Mr. Field made his way as best he could to the doomed city, she camped in a little hotel in Gilroy waiting for news — a prey meanwhile to the most intense fears for the safety of various members of her family, from whom she was entirely cut off.

While she waited as patiently as might be in the little country town, there were strenuous times in the burning city, but, as telegraph wires were all down and no mails were going out, she was compelled to remain in suspense until three days later, when the fire was subdued and Mr. Field was able to get back to her with the news that her family were all safe and her house unharmed. The story of the rescue of her house from the flames has been curiously contorted by persons who have attempted to write about it without knowing the facts. The real saviors of Mrs. Stevenson's house were her nephews and Mr. Field, and even they might have lost the day had it not been for a providential wind that blew in strongly from the sea against the advancing wall of flame. For three days and nights they looked down from their high post upon the raging furnace below and anxiously watched the progress of the fire as it leaped from street to street in its mad race up the hill, and when at last the two houses and a large wooden reservoir immediately opposite went roaring up all hope seemed gone. In the end it was through a mere trifle that the tide of fortune was turned in their favour. In the garden there was a small cement pool, the home of a tiny fish answering to the name of Jack. When the water in the pool was slopped over by the earthquake poor Jack was tossed some yards away upon the grass, whence he was rescued, alive and wriggling, and restored to his own element, only to be killed later by some thoughtless refugee who washed his hands in the water with soap. The half bucket or so of water remaining in the pool helped to save the day, for the fire fighters dipped rugs and sacks in it, and, climbing to the flat roof, took turns in dashing through the scorching heat to beat the cornices when they began to smoke. Even so, the escape was so narrow that at times it seemed hopeless, and the rescuers took the precaution to dig a hole in the garden and bury the silverware, the St. Gaudens plaque, and other valuables.

When the three days' conflagration had finally worn itself out and the tired and smoke-begrimed fighters could take account, they found the house and its contents safe, except for a huge hole in the roof where the earthquake had thrown down a large heavy chimney, piling up the bricks on the bed in the guest-chamber, fortunately not occupied at the time. But the outlook was ghastly, for the house stood high on its clean-swept hill like a lonely outpost in a great waste of cinders, half-fallen chimneys, and sagging walls. In two weeks' time, while they still smoked, the ruins took on a strangely old look, and it was like standing in the midst of the excavations of an ancient city. Around the solitary house on the hill the wind howled, making a mournful moaning sound through the broken network of wires that hung everywhere in the streets.

Homeless refugees, running through the streets like wild creatures driven before a prairie fire, came pouring past, and some stopped to build their lean-to shacks of pieces of board and sacking against the sheltering wall of the house. Blankets and other things were passed out to keep them warm, and when they finally went their way the blankets went with them, but Mrs. Stevenson was glad that they should have them and said she would have done the same had she been in their case.

All this while her son and daughter — the son in New York and the daughter in Italy — were in a state of anguished suspense as to their mother's fate. By a strange coincidence the daughter had herself been in some danger from the great eruption of Vesuvius, and had but just escaped from that when she heard newsboys crying in the streets of Rome, "San Francisco tutta distrutta!" Several days passed in intense anxiety before she received the telegram with the blessed words "Mother safe!"

As it was quite impossible to live in the destroyed city until some sort of order should be established, even water being unprocurable on the Hyde Street hill, Mrs. Stevenson decided to take refuge for the time at Vanumanutagi Ranch near Gilroy. Even there she found a sorry confusion, for the house chimneys were all wrecked and the stone wall around the enclosure had been thrown down and scattered. There was plenty of good water, however, and the possibility of getting provisions and living after a fashion, so she settled down to stay there until conditions should improve in the city. It was an eerie place to stay in, too, for that section lies close to the main earthquake fault, and the quivering earth was a long time settling down from its great upheaval. For as long as a year afterwards small quakes came at frequent intervals, and in the stillness of the night strange roaring sounds, like the approach of a railroad train, and sudden exploding noises, like distant cannon shot, came to add their terrors to the creaking and swaying of the little wooden house.

After some months Mrs. Stevenson went to San Francisco, but she found the discomfort still so great and the sight of the ruined city so depressing that she finally yielded to the persuasions of her son and Mr. Field to accompany them on a trip to Europe. They sailed from New York in November, 1906, on the French steamer La Provence.

After a stay of only three or four days in Paris, they took the train for the south — an all-day trip. As Mrs. Stevenson had always thought she would love Avignon, though she had never been there, it was decided to go there first. In their compartment on the train there was a French bishop, a Monseigneur Charmiton, and his sister, with whom they soon fell into conversation. The bishop and his sister seemed appalled at the idea of anyone wanting to spend a winter in Avignon. "By no means go there," they said, "but come down where we live. It is beautiful there." The good people had a villa, it seemed, half-way between Nice and Monte Carlo. But Mrs. Stevenson wanted to decide upon Avignon for herself, so they went on, and found it a most picturesque place, but soon discovered the truth of the old saw, "Windy Avignon, liable to plague when it has not the wind, and plagued with the wind when it has it." This wind swept strong and cold down the Valley of the Rhone, making it so bleak and forbidding that they were forced to cut their visit short.

They left next day for Marseilles, where they found, much to their delight, not only their motor-car, which had been shipped from New York, but Monseigneur Charmiton and his sister, who were on the point of leaving for their villa at Cap Ferrat. "And how did you like Avignon?" were their first words. Although too polite to say "I told you so," they now insisted the Riviera be given a fair trial. So, chance and friendly counsel prevailing, the Stevenson party motored east through lovely Provence, passing swiftly through Hyères of haunting memory, and on to Cannes, where they stopped the night; and so to an hotel in Beaulieu, where Monseigneur's sister had engaged rooms for them till a villa was found to their liking. And soon a charming one at St. Jean-sur-Mer, a little village near Beaulieu, was taken for the season.

The Villa Mes Rochers stood in a walled garden, which sloped gently to a terrace on the edge of the sea — a place for tea in the afternoons when the mistral was not blowing. Here they settled down for the winter.

It was a pleasant, easy life. There were friends in Nice and Monte Carlo; there was the daily motor ride; there were books to read, letters to write, and recipes to be learned from the French and set down in the famous cook book without which Mrs. Stevenson never travelled. Here they lingered till April, and then set out in their motor for London.

Their route again lay through Provence. They stopped at Arles, famous alike for its beautiful women and its sausages. The beautiful women were absent that day, but a sausage appeared at table and was pronounced worthy of its niche in the sausage Hall of Fame. Further along, in the Cevennes, they were enchanted with Le Puy, and the lovely, lovely country where Louis had made his memorable journey with Modestine. And so they went on north, by Channel steamer to Folkstone, up through Kent, and into London by the Old Kent Road; then to lodgings in Chelsea, where old friends called and old ties were renewed.

After a month in London a house was taken in Chiddingfold, Surrey, to be near "the dear Favershams," as Mrs. Stevenson always called them. Mr. and Mrs. William Faversham, whom Mrs. Stevenson held in great affection, owned The Old Manor in Chiddingfold, and they had found a place for her near them — Fairfield, a charming old house in an old-world garden, and, best of all, not five minutes' walk from The Old Manor.

Life at Fairfield, except for constant rain, was delightful. Graham Balfour, the well-beloved, came for a visit; Austin Strong and his wife ran down from London; many an afternoon was spent at Sir James Barrie's place near Farnham. Sir James loved Mrs. Stevenson — a dear, shy man who had so little to say to so many, so much to say to her. Then there were the Williamsons (of Lightning Conductor fame), whom she had met in Monte Carlo; they also had a house in Surrey. And there were Sir Arthur and Lady Pinero, who lived only a mile or two from Fairfield. Mrs. Stevenson considered the genial, witty, gently cynical Sir Arthur one of the most interesting men she had ever met. Lady Pinero always called her husband "Pin," and Sir Arthur was enchanted when, after looking at him with smiling eyes, Mrs. Stevenson one day turned to Lady Pinero and remarked, "I've always doubted that old saying, 'It is a sin to steal a Pin,' but now I understand it perfectly."

Katherine de Mattos, Stevenson's cousin, also honoured Fairfield with a visit, and Coggie Ferrier, sister of Stevenson's boyhood friend, and the woman perhaps above all others in England whom Mrs. Stevenson loved best, came frequently. And always there were the Favershams, who were very dear to her heart. It was a memorable summer, full of pleasant companionship — and rain. Towards the middle of August, on account of the never-ceasing rain, it was finally decided to abandon Fairfield and return to France for a long motor trip.

The first night out from Chiddingfold was spent at Tunbridge Wells, and next day a stop was made at Rye to call on Henry James. Never did travellers receive a more hearty or gracious welcome. It is a quaint, lost place, Rye — one of the old Cinque Ports; to enter it one passes under an ancient Roman arch; the nearest railroad is miles away. It is nice to think that after giving him a cup of tea in her drawing-room in San Francisco two years before, Mrs. Stevenson could see the house he lived in, admire his garden, drink tea in his drawing-room, and talk long and pleasantly with this old and valued friend she was never to see again.

The second motor trip in France was an unqualified success. Keeping to the west and avoiding Paris, this time their route lay through Blois, Tours, Angoulême, Libourne, Biarritz, till, finally, several miles from Pau, they had a panne, as they say in France, and their motor, which had behaved remarkably well until that moment, entered Pau ignominiously at the end of a long tow-rope. As it took ten days to make the repairs necessary, they used the interval of waiting to go by train to Lourdes. It was the particular time when pilgrims go to seek the healing waters of the miraculous fountain, and they saw many sad and depressing sights — for the lame, the halt, the blind, people afflicted with every sort of disease, and some even in the last agonies, crowded the paths in a pitiful procession. Mrs. Stevenson afterwards said that when she saw the blind come away from the sacred fount with apparently seeing eyes, and the lame throw away their crutches and walk, she was, as King Agrippa said unto Paul, “almost persuaded” to believe.

Gladly putting this picture behind them, they went on to Bagnères-de-Bigorre, a little village nestling at the base of the Pyrenees. The weather there was perfect, and the whole atmosphere of the place so sweetly simple and unsophisticated that Mrs. Stevenson loved it best of all. After six pleasant days spent there, the motor now mended, they returned by train to Pau and resumed their trip — due east to Carcassonne, that lovely, lovely city, with its mediæval ramparts and towers, and then on to Cette on the Mediterranean, where they landed in a storm.

And so north, almost paralleling their first trip, they ran through Mende, Bourges, and Montargis, and one rainy afternoon passed within sight of the village of Grez, where so many years before Fanny Osbourne first met Louis Stevenson, but the memories that it brought were too poignant, and she was only able to give one look as they sped swiftly by.

Arriving in Paris on October 3, after this leisurely journey through beautiful France, they remained but a few days there and then went on to London, where they met the Favershams and sailed in company with them for America on the Vaterland. With but a brief stop in New York they hastened on to San Francisco to carry out a certain plan that had been formulated while they were in France. Oddly enough, it was on the other side of the world that Mrs. Stevenson first heard of beautiful Stonehedge, the place at Santa Barbara which became the home of her last days. At Monte Carlo she met Mrs. Clarence Postley, of California, who dilated on the charms of the Santa Barbara place — its fine old trees, its spring water, its romantic story of being haunted by the ghost of a beautiful countess — until finally Mrs. Stevenson said that if it was as charming as that she would buy it. After her return to California she went to see it, and, finding it even more lovely than she had been told, the bargain was struck. It had been evident for some time, too, that her health required a warmer climate than that of San Francisco, and, above all, she longed for a place where she might live more in the open than the winds and fogs of the bay city permitted. So, though she was very sad at leaving the house on the heights where she had lived long enough for her heart-strings to take root, she sold it in 1908 and removed to the southern place, there to enter on a new phase of her life.

The house at Hyde and Lombard Streets, following out the curious fatality that made everything connected with her take on some romantic aspect, became for a time the abode of Carmelite Sisters, the Roman Catholic Order whose strict rules require its devotees to live almost completely cut off from the world. The long drawing-room, where Mrs. Stevenson had entertained so many of the great people of the earth, became the chapel, and in place of the light laughter and gay talk that once echoed from its walls only the low intoning of the mass was heard. At the front door, where the Indian pagan idols had kept guard, a revolving cylinder was placed so that the charitable might put in their donations without seeing the faces or hearing the voices of the immured nuns. In the green garden where Mrs. Stevenson had so often walked and dreamed of other days the gentle sisters knelt and prayed that the sins of the world might be forgiven.

CHAPTER XII

THE LAST DAYS AT SANTA BARBARA

Of all the beautiful places of the earth where it was Fanny Stevenson's good fortune to set up her household gods at various times, perhaps the loveliest of all was this spot on the peaceful shore of the sunset sea, under the patronage of the noble lady, Saint Barbara. In the Samoan gardens tropical flowers flamed under the hot rays of the vertical sun; in San Francisco geraniums and fuchsias rejoiced and grew prodigiously in the salt sea fog; but at Santa Barbara, where north and south meet, the plants of every land thrive as though native born. The scarlet hibiscus, child of the tropics, grows side by side with the aster of northern climes; the bougainvillæa flings out its purple sprays in close neighbourhood to the roses of old England; the sweet-william, dear to the hearts of our grandmothers, blooms in rich profusion in the shade of the pomegranate; and in brotherly companionship with the Norwegian pine the magnolia-tree unfolds its great creamy cups.

In her garden at Stonehedge, situated in lovely Montecito, about six miles from Santa Barbara, Fanny Stevenson found the chief solace of her declining years. Its extent of some seven acres gave her full scope for the horticultural experiments in which she delighted. When she took possession of the place it was in rather a neglected state, but that was all the better, for it gave her a free field to develop it according to her own tastes. The house was a well-built but old-fashioned affair of an unattractive type, with imitation towers and gingerbread trimmings, and at first sight her friends assured her that nothing could be done with it. Architects, when asked for advice, said the only thing was to tear it down and build a new house. But, instead, she called in a carpenter from the town and set to work on alterations. When all was done the house had a pleasant southern look that fitted in well with the luxuriant growth of flowers and trees in which it stood, and its red roof made a cheerful note in the landscape.

In the grounds she worked out her plans, leisurely adding something year by year, a little Dutch garden, sweeping walks and lawns, a wonderful terraced rose-garden with a stone pergola at the upper end, where the creepers were never trimmed into smug stiffness, but grew in wild luxuriance at their own sweet will, and soon they made a glorious tangle of sweet-smelling blooms and glossy green leaves. From the living-room windows one looked out over a broad expanse of mossy lawn; groups of vermilion-coloured hibiscus and poinsettias kept harmonious company; dahlias made great masses of gorgeous colour among the green; tall hollyhocks were ranged along the veranda in old-fashioned formalism; indeed, it would be like quoting from a florist's catalogue to mention all the plants to be found in this garden.

Stonehedge at Santa Barbara.

Nor did she neglect the purely useful, for the most delicious fruits and vegetables — from the lemons, oranges, and loquats of the south to the apricots, apples, and pears of the north — grew to perfection under her fostering care. She was always on the lookout for new varieties, and I find among her correspondence a letter from the distinguished horticulturist, Luther Burbank, in answer to her request for strawberry plants:

"Santa Rosa, California, Feb. 21, 1911.

"Dear Mrs. Stevenson:

“I feel most highly honored and pleased with your kind order of the 15th instant for 25 Patagonian strawberry plants, which were sent out yesterday.... You can never know the regard and love in which Mr. Stevenson is held in thousands of hearts who have never expressed themselves to you.

“Sincerely yours,
“Luther Burbank.”

The story of Fanny Stevenson’s life at Stonehedge is one of the still peace that she loved more and more as time went on, almost its only excitements being the blooming of a new flower, the digging of a well, or perhaps the trying out of an electric pump. The hurly-burly of the world was far away from that quiet spot, and only the arrival of the daily mail by rural carrier, or an infrequent visitor from some one of the country houses in the neighbourhood, broke the sweet monotony of existence. Of the simple pleasures of her life here she writes to her husband’s cousin, Graham Balfour, in these words:

“As I write, my delightful Japanese boy, Yonida, brings me in a great bunch of violets in one hand and quantities of yellow poppies in the other, while in front of me stands an immense vase of sweet peas — all just plucked from my garden. I wish that you might share them with me, and that you might hear the mocking-bird that is singing by my window. A mocking-bird is not a night-in-gale, to be sure, but he has a fine song of his own. I have such a nice little household; my two Japanese young men, who do gardening and such things; a most excellent, very handsome, middle-aged cook named Kate Romero, who, in spite of her name is half Irish and half English; and Mary Boyle, altogether Irish and altogether a most delightful creature. The most important member of the family, however, is my cat; Kitson is a full-bred Siamese royal temple cat, and is quite aware of his exalted pedigree. He exacts all and gives nothing. There are times when I should prefer more affection and less hauteur. He’s a proud cat, and loves no one but Kitson.”

This cat, a strange creature coloured like a tawny lion, with face, tail, and paws a chocolate brown, and large bright-blue eyes staring uncannily from his dark countenance, possibly had more affection than his haughty manner indicated, for, after his mistress’s death, he refused food and soon followed her into the other world, if so be that cats are admitted there.

In this house were gathered all the heirlooms, books, old furniture, pictures, and other interesting objects which had been brought down from San Francisco. The St. Gaudens medallion of Stevenson was fitted into a niche over the mantelpiece in the living-room, where Mrs. Stevenson spent much of her time seated before the great fireplace with the haughty Kitson on her lap. On the mantelshelf there was a curious collection of photographs — one of Ah Fu, the Chinese cook of South Sea memory, side by side with that of Sir Arthur Pinero, famous playwright — silent witnesses to the wide extent of her acquaintance and the broad democracy of her ideas.

At Stonehedge her life ran on almost undisturbed in the calm stillness that she loved so much. Now and then she went for a day's fishing at Serena, a place on the shore a few miles from Stonehedge. With its background of high, rugged hills and the calm summer sea at its feet it has a serene beauty that well befits its name.

At infrequent intervals people of note arriving in Santa Barbara sought her out, and though she received them graciously she was equally interested in the visit of an Italian gardener and his wife, who came to bring her a present of some rare plant, and with whom she had most delightful talks about the flowers of the tropics. She was much pleased, too, when one day a Scotch couple, plain, kindly people, came merely to look at the house where the widow of their great countryman lived. When they came she happened to be in the garden and they apologized for the intrusion and were about to withdraw, but the moment she recognized the accent she welcomed them with outstretched hands. When they left their carriage was loaded with flowers, and she stood on the veranda waving her hand in farewell.

In August, 1909, accompanied by her daughter, Mr. Field, her nephew Louis Sanchez, and the maid Mary Boyle, she went on a motor trip to Sausal in Lower California, where they found that the house had been broken into by duck hunters, and presented a forlorn appearance. Coming from the comfort of Stonehedge to this deserted cabin was something of a shock to the rest of the party, and but for Mrs. Stevenson they would have left at once. "Mrs. Robinson Crusoe," however, justified her name with such enthusiasm that the others caught fire. Louis Sanchez lent a ready hand to repairs and under his magic fingers doors swung upon their hinges, tables ceased to wabble, door-knobs turned, and even a comfortable rocking-chair "for Tamaitai" emerged from a hopeless wreck. Mrs. Strong and Mary Boyle assaulted the little cabin with soap and water and disinfectants, and with much courage and laughter routed two swarms of bees which had taken possession of the ceiling. Mr. Field supplied the larder with game and fish, and ran the automobile to town for supplies. Mrs. Stevenson, who, at Stonehedge, was always somewhat dismayed by the morning demands of the cook for the day's orders, delighted in surprising the party with unexpected good dishes which she cooked with her own hands.

As the years passed her health began to show distinct signs of breaking, and when she proposed another trip to Mexico in the spring of 1910, her family feared she was not strong enough to endure the fatigue, but as she herself said she “would rather go to the well and be broken than be preserved on a dusty shelf,” they finally agreed.

She had had a great admiration for Mexico ever since her first visit, and wanted to show her daughter the land she said was “older and more interesting” than any country she had ever seen. Then, as her nephew was a mining engineer recently graduated from the University of California, she hoped to find a good opening for him in that land of gold and silver. The three set off in high spirits, for there was nothing Mrs. Stevenson liked better than change of scene.

Although during this time in Mexico City she found the altitude very trying in its effect on her heart, and was in consequence obliged to keep rather quiet, yet she was able to move about to a certain extent and to see some of the sights of the place. She loved to sit by the Viga Canal and watch the life of the people ebb and flow along its tree-lined stretches — the queer old flat-bottomed and square-ended boats coming in on work days with vegetables and flowers from the so-called “floating gardens,” and on days of fiesta transformed into pleasure craft with gay streamers and flags. On moonlight nights the tinkle of guitars sounded everywhere on the still waters of the canal and far out on the lake, for it is the custom of well-to-do people to hire these boats and with their musicians spend the evening à la Venice.

In the city the travellers were much interested in the Monte de Piedad, the pawn shop which is run under State control. Here great bargains may sometimes be picked up in jewels left there by ladies of good family in reduced circumstances. Mrs. Stevenson had a very feminine liking for jewels, but they had to be different from the ordinary sort to attract her, and she was much pleased to pick up in Mexico some pieces of the odd and barbaric designs that she especially liked.

Delightful days were spent in the city prowling about the queer old shops and buying curious things that are not to be found in other parts of the world. This was the kind of shopping that she really enjoyed — this poking about in strange, romantic places.

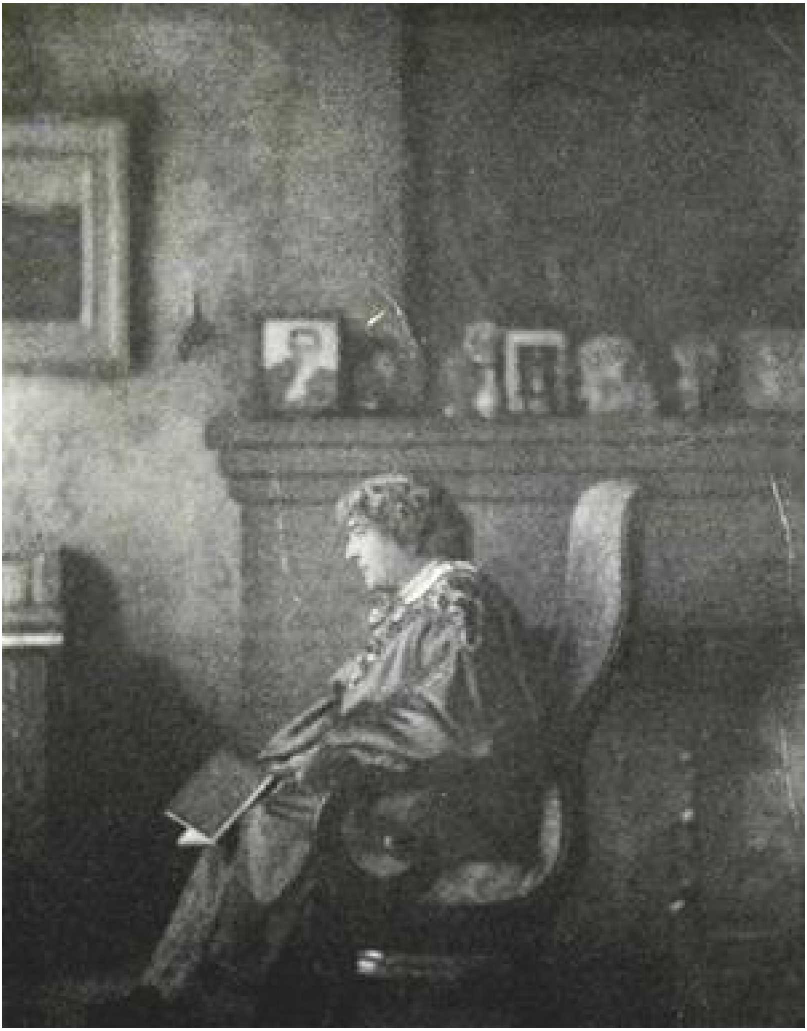
Among the very few people that Mrs. Stevenson met in Mexico in a social way was the well-known historian and archaeologist, Mrs. Zelia Nuttall, whom she considered a most charming and interesting woman. Together with her daughter she lunched with Mrs. Nuttall at her picturesque house, once the home of Alvarado, in the outskirts of Mexico City. It was the oldest house they had ever seen, and, with its inner patio, outside stairways and balconies, and large collection of rare idols, pots, and weapons that Mrs. Nuttall had herself unearthed from old Indian ruins, was intensely interesting.

Hearing of an opening in the mining business at Oaxaca for her nephew, she decided to go there and look into the matter. Conditions at Oaxaca were found to be even more primitive than at the capital. One time they asked for hot water, but the American landlady threw up her hands and cried, “Oh, my dears! There is a water famine in Oaxaca. It is terrible. We can get you a very small jug to wash with, but it isn’t clear enough to drink.”

“What are we to drink?”

In answer to this she brought a large jug of bottled water that tasted strongly of sulphur. This they mixed with malted milk bought at a grocery, making a beverage of which they said that though they had tasted better in their time, they certainly never had tasted worse. Notwithstanding all these inconveniences Mrs. Stevenson was in the best of tempers and keenly interested in seeing places and things, and when she tired was happy with a magazine or sitting at a window watching the street life. The first evening, while they were sitting in the patio, there was a violent earthquake, which seemed to them worse than the famous shake of 1906 in San Francisco, but it did no damage and the hotel people made nothing of it.

After seeing her nephew off to the mines at Taviche, and taking a side trip to see the ancient buried city of Mitla, Mrs. Stevenson and her daughter returned to the capital, where they took train for California, and were soon at home again amid the sweet flowers of Stonehedge. There Mrs. Stevenson once more took up the writing of the introductions to her husband’s books, for which she had contracted with Charles Scribner’s Sons. As I have already said, it was only after much urging that she consented to do this work, and her almost painful shrinking from it appears in a letter of March 25, 1911, to Mr. Charles Scribner: “With this note I send the introduction to Father Damien. I didn’t see how to touch upon the others when I know so little about them. I know this thing is about as bad as anything can be. I cringe whenever I think of it, but I seem incapable of doing better. If, however, it is beyond the pale, write and tell me, please, and I will try once again. Louis’s work was so mixed up with his home life that it is hard to see just where to draw the line between telling enough and yet not too much. I dislike extremely drawing aside the veil to let the public gaze intimately where they have no right to look at all. I think it is the consciousness of this feeling that gives an extra woodenness to my style — style is a big word — I should have put it ‘bad style.’“



The last portrait of Mrs. Stevenson.

It was during this time that news came of a severe accident to Alison Cunningham, Louis's old nurse — a misfortune which resulted in her death within a few weeks. Mrs. Stevenson always felt an especial tenderness for "Cummy," as the one whose kind hand had tended her beloved husband in his infancy, and she very gladly aided in the old lady's support during her last years. Lord Guthrie, Louis's longtime friend and schoolmate, says in his booklet on the story of Cummy:

"From the novelist's widow she always received most delicate and thoughtful kindness. Mrs. Stevenson often wrote to her and she amply supplemented the original pension settled on her by Mr. Thomas Stevenson, Louis's father. A few months before Cummy's death (at the age of ninety-two), she cordially agreed, on condition that Cummy should not know of it, to make a special additional annual payment which I had ascertained, from an outside source, would add to the old lady’s happiness. And as soon as she received my letter telling her of Cummy’s accident (a fall causing a broken hip), I had a characteristically generous message from her, sent by wire from San Francisco, giving me carte-blanche for Cummy’s benefit. I call this message characteristic, because I find in her letters such passages as this: ‘Please, dear Cummy, always let me know instantly when there is anything in the world I can do to add to your comfort, your happiness, or your pleasure. There is so little I can do for you, and I wish to do so much. You and I are the last; and we must help each other all we can, until we, too, follow.’“

When Cummy died Mrs. Stevenson was represented at the funeral by Mr. A. P. Melville, W. S., and a wreath ordered by her was placed on the coffin. She also bore the expense of Cummy’s last illness and funeral and had a handsome tombstone put up in her memory.

In these days the sands began to run low in the hour-glass of the life of Fanny Stevenson, and a great weariness seemed to be settling upon her. Writing to Mr. Scribner in June, 1913, she says: “All my life I have taken care of others, and yet I have always wanted to be taken care of, for naturally I belong to the clinging vine sort of woman; but fate seems still against me.” Nevertheless, I truly believe she enjoyed being the head of her clan, the fairy godmother, the chieftainess of her family, to whom all came for help and counsel. But now the shadows of evening were growing long, and she was getting very, very tired.

But, world-weary as she was, she consented at this time to prepare for publication in book form the notes which she had taken, primarily for her husband’s use, of one of their voyages in the South Seas. As it happened, he made little use of the notes, so that most of it was new material. In this work, for dear memory’s sake, she took a real pleasure, of which she speaks in the preface in these words: “The little book, however dull it may seem to others, can boast of at least one reader, for I have gone over this record of perhaps the happiest period of my life with thrilling interest.” The book was brought out by Charles Scribner’s Sons, under the title of The Cruise of the “Janet Nichol”, and it has a melancholy interest, apart from its contents, as the last work done by her in this life. She had only finished the reading of the proofs a few days before her death, and the book did not appear until some months afterwards.

In November, 1913, she was threatened with asthma, and in consequence went to spend some time at Palm Springs, a health resort on the desert in southeastern California. In the dry, clear air of that place her health improved so wonderfully that all her friends and family believed that a crisis had passed, and that she had fortunately sailed into one of those calm havens which so often come to people in their later years. She returned to Stonehedge seemingly well. All their fears were lulled, and the blow was all the more crushing when, on the 18th of February, 1914, silently and without warning, she passed from this life. In the manner of her death and that of her husband there was a striking coincidence; each passed away suddenly, after only a few hours of unconsciousness, from the breaking of an artery in the brain. The story of her last moments may best be told in the words of a letter from her devoted maid, Agnes Crowley, which is so sincere and touching that I quote it without eliminations:

"My dear Mrs. Sanchez:

"We are a very sad little household — we are all heart-broken, to think our dear little Madam has gone away never to return. It seems too awful, and just when she was enjoying everything. We were home from Palm Springs just one week when she was taken away from us — but you can console yourself by thinking that she was surrounded by love and devotion. She was not sick and did not suffer. Tuesday evening, February 17, she felt well and read her magazines until nine o'clock, and Mr. Field played cards with her till 10.30. Then she retired. The next morning I went in to attend to her as usual, and there was my dear little Madam lying unconscious. I thought at first she was in a faint, and I quickly ran for Mr. Field; he jumped up and put on his bathrobe and went to her while I called Dr. Hurst. It took the doctor about seven minutes to get here, and as soon as he saw her he said it was a stroke, but he seemed to be hopeful and thought he could pull her through. He put an ice pack on her head and gave her an injection in the arm and oxygen to inhale, and she seemed to begin to breathe natural, and we all hoped, but it was in vain. She never regained consciousness, and at two o'clock she just stopped breathing, so you see she did not suffer. But oh Mrs. Sanchez, we all seemed so helpless — we all loved her so and yet could do nothing. Dr. Hurst worked hard from 8.30 till two o'clock, and when the end came he cried like a little child, for he loved Mrs. Stevenson very much. It was an awful blow to us all — it was so sudden. This place will never seem the same to William and me, for we loved our little Madam dearly, and it was a pleasure to do anything for her — for she was always so gentle and sweet. I adored her from the first time I ever saw her, and will always consider it the greatest pleasure of my life to have had the privilege of waiting upon her.

"I remain very affectionately,
"Agnes Crowley."

When the angel of death stooped to take her he came on the wings of a wild storm, which raged that week all through the Southwest — fitting weather for the passing of the "Stormy Petrel." Railroads were flooded all over the country, and her son, Lloyd Osbourne, was delayed by washouts for some days on the way out from New York. On his arrival the body was removed to San Francisco, where a simple funeral ceremony was held in the presence of a few sorrowing friends and relatives. On her bier red roses, typical of her own warm nature, were heaped in masses. A touching incident, one that it would have pleased her to know, was the appearance of Fuzisaki, her Japanese gardener at Stonehedge, with a wreath of beautiful flowers. It was in accordance with her own wish, several times expressed to those nearest her, that her body was cremated and the ashes later removed to Samoa, there to lie beside her beloved on the lonely mountain top.

To her own family the sense of loss was overwhelming, and I cannot perhaps express it better than in the words of her grandson, Austin Strong: "To say that I miss her means nothing. Why, it is as if an Era had passed into oblivion. She was so much the Chief of us all, the Ruling Power. God rest her soul!"

When Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson passed from this earth the news of her death carried a pang of grief to many a heart in far distant lands. One who knew her well, her husband's cousin, Graham Balfour, writes his estimate of her character in these words:

"Although I had met Fanny Stevenson twice in England, I first came to know her on my arrival at Vailima in August, 1892, when within a single day we established a firm friendship that only grew closer until her death. The three stanzas by Louis so completely expressed her that it seems useless for a man to add anything or to refine upon it:

'Steel-true and blade-straight
……
Honor, anger, valor, fire,
A love that life could never tire,
……
Teacher, tender comrade, wife,
A fellow-farer true through life.'

"These were all the essentials, and if we add her devotion to her children and her loyalty to her friends, we have the fabric of which her life was woven. Her integrity and her directness were such that one could, and frequently did, differ from her and express the difference in the strongest terms without leaving a trace of bitterness.

"I remember in particular a scheme which she wished to set on foot for releasing Mataafa and other Samoan chiefs from their exile in the German island of Jaluit and carrying them off to Australia. The project was a wild one and would only have led to their return and disgrace, and in these terms and much stronger expressions we discussed it, without ever abating one jot from our personal friendship.

"And in the long years that followed absence made no difference. Every letter, when it came, was as full of affection and of confidence as its predecessors — full of loyalty and tenderness.

“To her enemies, of course, she showed another side. Opposition she did not mind, but dishonesty and deceit were unforgivable.

“The news of her death reached me in St. Helena, as the announcement of Louis’s death found me on another far-off island in the Carolinas; and both times the world became a colder, greyer, more monotonous place.”

These pages have been written in vain if I have not made clear what the world owes this rare woman, not only for the sedulous care which kept the invalid genius alive long after the time allotted to him in the book of fate, but for the intellectual sympathy and keen discernment with which she stood beside him and

“Burnished the sword, blew on the drowsy coal,
Held still the target higher, chary of praise
And prodigal of counsel.”

In speaking of literature’s great debt to her, Lord Guthrie says:

“Without her Louis’s best work neither could nor would have existed. In studying the life and works of Thomas Carlyle I often had occasion to contrast his wife and Louis’s. With all Mrs. Carlyle’s great and attractive qualities and her undoubted influence on her husband, she made his work difficult by her want of perspective, magnifying molehills into mountains. It could not be said that any of his great writings owed their existence to her.”

An article appearing in the Literary Digest shortly after her death touches upon this point:

“Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson was content to remain in the background and let her husband reap all the glory for his literary achievements, and the result was that her part in his career had probably been minimized in the public mind. She was a great deal more than a mere domestic help meet.”

From her old and attached friend, Mr. S. S. McClure, comes this sincere tribute:

“The more I saw of the Stevensons the more I became convinced that Mrs. Stevenson was the unique woman in the world to be Stevenson’s wife.... When he met her her exotic beauty was at its height, and with this beauty she had a wealth of experience, a reach of imagination, a sense of humor, which he had never found in any other woman. Mrs. Stevenson had many of the fine qualities that we usually attribute to men rather than to women; a fair-mindedness, a large judgment, a robust, inconsequential philosophy of life, without which she could not have borne, much less shared with a relish equal to his own, his wandering, unsettled life, his vagaries, his gipsy passion for freedom. She had a really creative imagination, which she expressed in living. She always lived with great intensity, had come more into contact with the real world than Stevenson had done at the time when they met, had tried more kinds of life, known more kinds of people. When he married her, he married a woman rich in knowledge of life and the world.

"She had the kind of pluck that Stevenson particularly admired. He was best when he was at sea, and although Mrs. Stevenson was a poor sailor and often suffered greatly from seasickness, she accompanied him on all his wanderings in the South Seas and on rougher waters, with the greatest spirit. A woman who was rigid in small matters of domestic economy, who insisted on a planned and ordered life, would have worried Stevenson terribly.

"A sick man of letters never married into a family so well fitted to help him make the most of his powers. Mrs. Stevenson and both of her children were gifted; the whole family could write. When Stevenson was ill, one of them could always lend a hand and help him out. Without such an amanuensis as Mrs. Strong, Mrs. Stevenson's daughter, he could not have got through anything like the amount of work he turned off. Whenever he had a new idea for a story, it met, at his own fireside, with the immediate recognition, appreciation, and enthusiasm so necessary to an artist, and which he so seldom finds among his own blood or in his own family.

"After Stevenson disappeared in the South Seas, many of us had a new feeling about that part of the world. I remember that on my next trip to California I looked at the Pacific with new eyes; there was a glamour of romance over it. I always intended to go to Samoa to visit him; it was one of those splendid adventures that one might have had and did not.

"One afternoon in August, 1896, I went with Sidney Colvin and Mrs. Sitwell (now Lady Colvin) to Paddington Station to meet Mrs. Stevenson, when, after Stevenson's death she at last returned to Europe after her world-wide wanderings — after nine years of exile. When she alighted from the boat train I felt Stevenson's death as if it had happened only the day before, and I have no doubt that she did. As she came up the platform in black, with so much that was strange and wonderful behind her, his companion of so many years, through uncharted seas and distant lands, I could only say to myself: 'Hector's Andromache!'"

She had one of those unusual personalities that attract other women as well as men, and one of them, Lady Balfour, writes of her from the point of view of her own sex:

"When Mrs. Stevenson heard of my engagement to Graham Balfour she wrote me the kindest and tenderest of letters, telling me not to have any fears in the new path that lay before me. She added: 'I who tell you so have trodden it from end to end.' This sympathy meant much to me, for it could only have come from such a generous heart as hers. She had hoped that Palema would continue to make his home with them, and she had great confidence in and love for him. He would have been a link between her and the old associations of the Vailima life, and his engagement to an English girl proved to her that this would no longer be possible. Yet where a less fine nature would have contented itself with the mere formal congratulations as all that could be possible under the circumstances, she gave generous sympathy to a stranger, who caused her fresh loss, from her generous 'steel-true' heart.

"I had been married about two years when Mrs. Stevenson came to England in 1898, and we were living at Oxford. I was naturally a little nervous as to my first introduction to her. My husband wanted to take me up to London to see her, but I asked to go alone, feeling somehow that it would be easier. To this day I remember the trepidation with which I followed the parlor maid upstairs in Oxford Terrace, and was ushered into the room where a lady of infinite dignity was lying on a sofa. It seems to me now that after one steady look from those searching 'eyes of gold and bramble dew' (which had rather the effect of a sort of spiritual X-ray), I lost my feeling of being on approval, and in ten minutes I was sitting on the floor beside the sofa, pouring out my own past history in remarkable detail, and feeling as if I had known Tamaitai for years.

"In the following summer, 1899, she came to stay with us at Oxford, to give Palema all the help she could about the life of Robert Louis Stevenson he had just undertaken at her urgent request. Incidentally, she was to be introduced to her godson, our eldest boy Gilbert, who was then about six months old. She gave him a christening present of a silver bowl for his bread and milk, upon a silver saucer which could be reversed and used also as a cover. On the covering side were the words from the Child's Garden:

'It is very nice to think
The world is full of meat and drink
With little children saying grace
In every Christian kind of place.'

"When the cover was taken off and used as a saucer it had on its concave side:

'A child should always say what's true
And speak when he is spoken to,
And behave mannerly at table,
At least as far as he is able.'

"Tamaitai had had a very critical operation during the previous autumn, and was still comparatively invalided with the effects of it. She spoke enthusiastically of Sir Frederick Treves, who had performed it and had refused any fee, saying he counted it a privilege to attend her. I have a clear picture of her in my mind, lying on the sofa in our drawing-room. The door opened and the nurse carried in the baby, barefooted. ‘Ah,’ she said to him, ‘who’s this coming in hanging out ten pink rosebuds at the tail of his frock?’ And the little pink toes justified a description that only she would have so worded.

“We drove her round to a few of the most beautiful and characteristic of the Oxford colleges. She was easily fatigued, but she delighted in what she saw. I remember admiring her pretty feet, clad in quite inadequate but most dainty black satin shoes, with very high heels, and fine silk stockings. When I put my admiration into words she just smiled upon me delightfully but said nothing.

“One evening we talked desultorily about the ‘criminal instinct.’ ‘Well,’ I said at last, ‘there’s one thing certain, I should never commit a murder. I shouldn’t have the courage when it came to the point!’ ‘Oh,’ said she, ‘I could murder a person if I hated him enough for anything he had done, but I should have to call upon him in the morning and tell him I was going to murder him at five o’clock.’

“We dined out with some Oxford friends, among whom was a tall Scotch professor who was a brilliant and quick talker. Tamaitai took no part in the rapid thrust and parry of the talk, but sat silently looking from one to another with her great dark eyes. Their comment on her long afterwards was that she was the most inscrutable person they had ever met. As we drove home after the party I asked Tamaitai: ‘What did you think of the talk?’ There was a brief silence — then: ‘I didn’t understand a single word of it, they talked so fast,’ said she frankly.

“I don’t think I ever knew a woman who was a more perfect ‘gentleman.’ Scorning all that was not direct, and true, and simple, she herself hated disguise or casuistry in any form. Her eyes looked through your soul and out at the other side, but you never felt that her judgment, whatever it was, would be harsh. She was curiously detached, and yet you always wanted her sympathy, and if she loved you it never failed you. She was a strong partisan, which was perhaps the most feminine part of her character. She was wholly un-English, but she made allowances for every English tradition. My English maids loved her without understanding her in the least. I never knew any one that had such a way as she had of turning your little vagaries and habits and fads to your notice with their funny side out, so that all the time you were subtly flattered and secretly delighted.”

I wish I had the power to describe that mysterious charm which drew to her so many and such various people — the high and the low in far-scattered places of the earth — but it was too elusive to put in words. Perhaps a large part of it lay in her clear simplicity, her utter lack of pretence or pose. I remember reading once in a San Francisco newspaper a comment by a writer who seemed to touch nearly upon the heart of the secret. The paragraph runs thus:

"Once a man told me that Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson was the one woman in the world he could imagine a man being willing to die for. Every man I asked — every single man, rich and poor, young or old, clever or stupid — all agreed about Mrs. Stevenson, that she was the most fascinating woman he had ever seen. It was some years ago that I saw her, but I would know her again if I saw her between flashes of lightning in a stormy sea. Individuality — that was her charm. She knew it and she had sense enough to be herself. Individuality and simple unaffected honesty of speech and action and look are the most potent charms and the most lasting that any woman can ever hope to have."

Her broad sympathies, too, had much to do with it. If there is any word in the English language that means the opposite of snob, it may certainly be applied to her. She picked out her friends for the simple and sufficient reason that she liked them, and they might and did include a duchess, a Chinese, a great English playwright, a French fisherman, a saloon-keeper who was once shipwrecked with her, a noted actor — and so on through a long and varied list. Once in Sydney when she was out walking with her daughter, both richly dressed, she stopped suddenly to shake hands with a group of black-avised pirates (to all appearances) with rings in their ears. She had met them somewhere among the islands, and her little white-gloved hand grasped their big brown ones with genuine and affectionate friendship. Wide apart as she and her husband were in many things, in their utter lack of snobbery they were as one. Once they were at a French watering-place when from their room upstairs they heard a loud uproar below. A voice cried: "I will see my Louis!" Going out to see what the trouble was, Louis found four French fishermen in a char-à-bancs — all in peasant blouses. The major-domo of the fashionable hotel was trying to keep them out, but when Louis appeared he called out their names joyfully, and they all cried: "Mon cher Louis!" After each had embraced him, he asked them up to his rooms, and, despite the ill-concealed scorn of the waiter, ordered up a grand dinner for them. They were the French fishermen he had known at Monterey, California, and one may be sure that they met with as cordial a welcome from his wife as from himself. I know that in one of her letters she urges him not to forget to write to François the baker, at Monterey, saying: "It seems to me much more necessary to write some word to him than to Sir Walter, or Baxter, or Henley, for they are your friends who know you and will not be disappointed, either in a pleasure or in humanity, as this poor baker will be. Indeed you must write and say something to him.”

As has been said, her dislike of deceit and treachery was one of the most strongly marked traits in her character. Once when she had reason to fear that a person whom she was befriending was deceiving her, and she was told that a simple inquiry would settle the matter, she replied: “But I couldn’t bear to find out that he is lying to me.”

Her charities were many, but they were always of the quiet, unobtrusive sort, of which few heard except those most nearly concerned. For instance, when she heard of a poor woman in her neighbourhood whose life could only be saved by an expensive operation, she paid to have it done. Her life was full of such acts, and there are many, many people who have good reason to be grateful to her memory.

But when all is said, it has always seemed to me that the bright star of her character, shining above all other traits, was her loyalty — that staunch fidelity that made her cling, through thick and thin, through good or evil report, to those whom she loved. But as she loved, so she hated, and as she endowed her friends with all the virtues, so she could see no good at all in an enemy. Yet, just when you thought you were beginning to understand her nature — with its love and hate of the primal woman — her anger would suddenly soften, not into tenderness, but into a sort of dispassionate wisdom, and she would quote her favourite saying: “To know all is to forgive all.”

That she had infinite tenderness for the feelings of others, living or dead, she proved every day. In a letter to Mr. Scribner asking advice about the publication in London of certain letters of her husband, she says:

“Some of the letters that are intended to go into the book should not, in my judgment, appear at all. When my husband was a boy in his late ‘teens’ and early twenties he and his father — a rigid old Calvinist — quarrelled on the subject of religion. Louis being young enough to like the melodrama, it took on an undue importance, out of all keeping with the real facts. During this turbulent period Louis poured out his soul in letters, the publication of many of which would give a false impression of the relations between the son and the father. Louis was twenty-five when I first met him, and the period of the religious discussion was long past. Mr. Thomas Stevenson loved me and was as kind to me as though I were his own daughter. I cannot, for the sake of an extra volume that would produce a certain amount of money, do anything that in my heart would seem disloyal to the dear old man’s memory — all the more because he is dead.”

In her character there were many strange contradictions, and I think sometimes this was a part of her attraction, for even after knowing her for years one could always count on some surprise, some unexpected contrast which went far in making up her fascinating personality. Notwithstanding the broad view that she took of life in most of its aspects, in some things she was old-fashioned. She was never reconciled, for instance, to female suffrage, and once when she was persuaded to attend a political meeting at which her daughter was one of the speakers, she sat looking on with mingled pride in her daughter's eloquence and horror at her sentiments. Yet, after the suffrage was granted to women in California, her family was amused to see her go to the polls and vote and carefully advise the men employed on her place concerning their ballots.

Some persons were repelled by what they considered Mrs. Stevenson's cold and distant manner, but they were not aware of what it took her own family a long time to discover — that this apparent detachment and sphinxlike immobility covered a real and childlike shyness; yet it was never apathy, but the stillness of a frightened wild creature that has never been tamed. Though she said so little, she never failed to create an impression. Some one once said of her that her silence was more fascinating than the most brilliant conversation of other women, and, indeed, "Where Macgregor sits is the head of the table" applied very aptly to her. Her manner had nothing of the aggressive self-confidence of the "capable woman." She seemed so essentially feminine, low-voiced, quiet, even helplessly appealing, that it was difficult to realise that she was a fair shot, a fearless horsewoman, a first-rate cook, an expert seamstress, a really scientific gardener, a most skillful nurse, and had, besides, some working acquaintance with many trades and professions upon which she could draw in an emergency.

Her physical courage was remarkable; she would get on any horse, jump into a boat in any sea, face a burglar — do anything, in fact, that circumstances seemed to require. But perhaps her moral courage, that which gave her strength to face great crises — as when Louis was near death — with a smile on her face, was even greater. This I know came to her as a direct inheritance from our mother, Esther Van de Grift, who was never known to give way under the stress of great need.

In her fondness for animals she reminds one of her maternal ancestress, Elizabeth Knodle, who used to rush out and seize horses by the bridle when she thought they were being driven too fast by their cruel drivers. Nothing would more surely arouse her anger than the sight of any unkindness to one of these "little brothers." Once at Vailima a gentleman, who ought to have known better, came riding up on a horse that showed signs of being in pain. "That horse has a sore back," she cried. The rider angrily denied it, but she insisted on his dismounting, and when the saddle was removed found that her suspicions were but too well founded. She compelled him to leave the suffering creature in her care until its back was entirely cured.

I have been surprised sometimes to hear people speak of her as "bohemian." Simplicity and genuineness were the foundation-stones of her character, and she certainly dispensed with many of the useless conventions of society, but she was a serious-minded woman for whom the cheap affectations generally labelled as "bohemianism" could have no attractions.

She was entirely feminine in her love of pretty clothes. In choosing her own attire, though she followed the fashions and never tried to be extravagant or outré, she had a discriminating taste that made her always seem to be dressed more attractively than other people. All who think of her, even in her last days, must have a picture in their minds of the dainty, lacy, silken prettiness in which she sat enshrined.

She was pretty as a young woman, but as she grew older she was beautiful — with that rare type of beauty that "age cannot wither nor custom stale." With her clear-cut profile, like an exquisite cameo, colour like old ivory, delicate oval face, eyes dark, vivid, and youthful, her appearance was most unusual. Louis used to say of her eyes that her glance was like that of one aiming a pistol — direct, steady, and to some persons rather alarming. Her voice, as I think I have said somewhere else in these pages, was low, with few inflections, and was compared by her husband to the murmur of a brook running under ice. The poet Gosse said of her: "She is dark and rich-hearted, like some wonderful wine-red jewel."

For years she had worn her hair short, not in the fashion of a strong-minded female, but in a frame of soft grey curls which was exceedingly becoming to her face.

Everywhere she went her appearance attracted attention. One evening at Santa Barbara when David Bispham was giving a concert, she sat in a box at the theatre, wearing a bandeau of pearls and diamonds round her head and a collar and necklace of the same. Leaning over the edge of the box, deeply interested in the singing, she didn't realise the impression she was making or the fact that Bispham was singing "Oh, the pretty, pretty creature" directly at her box. Suddenly she became aware of his compliment, gave a startled, embarrassed look at the audience, and retired behind her big ostrich-feather fan. People often turned to look at her in the street, and at such times she would say to her companions: "Is there anything wrong with my hat? The people all seem to be smiling at me." They were, but it was with surprised admiration. Saleswomen and shop-girls adored her, and at all the shops they vied with each other in waiting on her. On the way home she would say, with naïve surprise: "How nice all those young women were! There were five of them all waiting on me at once."

One of her vanities was her small feet, on which she always wore the daintiest of shoes, often totally unsuited to the occasion. Whenever I looked at her feet I was reminded of our maternal grandmother, sweet Kitty Weaver, and how she caught her death going to a ball in the red satin slippers.

Her beauty was of the elusive type that is the despair of artists, and of all the portraits painted of her none seemed to me to represent her true self. I quote from The Craftsman of May, 1912, a reference to a reproduction of the portrait painted of her by Mrs. Will Low:

"We are sure that our readers the world over will enjoy the opportunity of this glimpse of Mrs. Stevenson, however the limitations imposed by black and white may prevent a full realisation of the great charm of this unusual woman, whose personality is so magnetic, so serene in its poise, so richly intellectual, that those who have had the opportunity of knowing her always remember her as one of the most interesting and beautiful among women."

She kept her spirit young to the last, so that no one could ever think of her as an old woman, and young people always enjoyed her company.

As to her literary accomplishments, had she chosen to devote her time and strength to the development of her own talents, instead of using them, as has been the wont of women since the world began, in the support and encouragement of others, there is no saying how far she might have gone, for she had an active, creative imagination, and a discriminating, critical judgment of style. As it was, her writings were not extensive, and were almost all produced under the spur of some particular need. They consist of:

Several fairy stories published years ago in Our Young Folks and St. Nicholas, magazines for young people.

The Dynamiter, written in collaboration with her husband.

Introductions to her husband's works.

A number of short stories in Scribner's and McClure's magazines, among which "Anne" and "The Half-White" attracted the most attention.

The Cruise of the Janet Nichol, a posthumous work.

Her own estimate of her talents and achievements was extremely modest, and it was always with the greatest reluctance that she put pen to paper. Yet she was intensely proud of the work of any member of her family — whether it might be sister, daughter, son, nephew, or grandson — and seemed to get more happiness out of anything we did than from her own work.

She was appalled at the great flood of mediocre writing that has been pouring over the United States in the last decade or two, and speaks of it thus in a letter written to Mr. Scribner from her quiet haven at Sausal:

“If I had a magazine of my own I should bar from its pages any story in which a young woman urges a young man to ‘do things’ when he doesn’t have to. There would also be a list of words and phrases that I would not have within my covers. But, if I had a magazine what would become of my peace and quiet that I care so much for? No — no such strenuous life for me! They may call houses ‘homes’ and spell words so that children and foreigners must be unable to find out how to pronounce them — I need not know of such annoyances in El Sausal unless I choose. I have before me a great pile of magazines — hence these cries. I read them with wonder and interest. There seems to be such an extraordinary quantity of clever, talented, ignorant, unliterary literature let loose in them. Where does it all come from? And why isn’t it better done — or worse done? I suppose we might call it ‘near literature.’ Sometimes, indeed, it is very near. I suppose it is the public school system that is accountable. Well, I never believed in general education, and here’s a justification of my attitude.”

When one casts a backward glance over the life of Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson, it cannot be said that she knew much of that for which she had always longed — peace. Her girlhood was cut short by a too early marriage. Her first romance was soon wrecked, and her second was constantly overshadowed by fear for the loved one. Storm and stress, varied by some peaceful intervals, filled the larger portion of her days, and at their end it was in storm and flood that her spirit took its flight. But it was a full, rich life, and had she had the choosing, I believe she would have elected no other.

After something more than a year had elapsed from the time of her death, Mrs. Stevenson’s daughter, who had now become the wife of Mr. Field, sailed with her husband in the spring of 1915 for Samoa, bearing with them the sacred ashes to be placed within the tomb on Mount Vaea.

Early in the war the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces had taken possession of German Samoa, so that when Mr. and Mrs. Field arrived they found the Union Jack flying over Vailima, now used as Government House by the Administrator, Colonel Logan, and his staff. The natives, interested spectators of these stirring events, remarked among themselves that Tusitala, not going back to his own country, had drawn his country out to him.

Two friends of the old Vailima days were a great help in making the arrangements for the funeral — Amatua, often referred to in the Stevenson letters as Sitione, now a serious elderly chief, and Laulii, a charming Samoan lady of rank, and a warm and attached friend of the Stevenson family. Of the Vailima household time and wars had eliminated all but the youngest — Mitaele, who looked much the same in spite of grey hair and a family of nine children.

It was Amatua who saw to it that those who remained of the builders of the “Road of the Loving Hearts” and the chiefs who had cut the path up the mountain for Tusitala’s funeral were included in the list of guests, and it was he who took personal charge of all the arrangements for the native ceremonies, which were conducted in the elaborate Samoan fashion as for a chief of the highest rank.

Colonel and Mrs. Logan very graciously invited the Fields to Vailima and placed the house and grounds at their disposal.

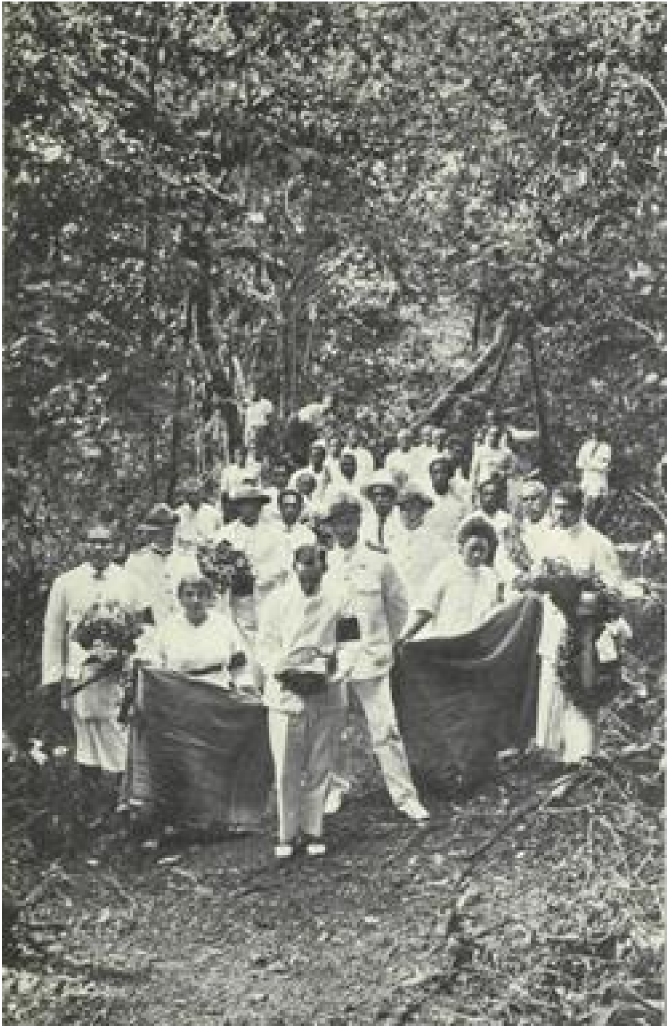
“It is strange,” wrote Mrs. Field, “being here at Vailima. I was so afraid to come, but mercifully it is not the same. Rooms have been added, the polished redwood panels in the large hall are painted over in white; the lawn where the tennis courts were is cut up into flower beds; many of the great trees have gone; and the atmosphere of the place has changed so utterly that I have to say to myself ‘This is Vailima’ to believe that I am here after so many years. Mrs. Logan and the Governor came out to meet us when we arrived, and as we turned into the road and I saw the house for the first time it was the Union Jack flying from the flag-staff that affected me most. I felt like a person in a dream as we walked over the house — the same and yet changed out of all recognition. We had tea, and then in the soft sunset we went down to the waterfall, no longer a fairy dell of loveliness but improved with a dam, cement flooring, and a row of neat bathrooms. In the evening we sat on the upper veranda looking out over the moonlit tree-tops; the scene was very beautiful, with the view of the sea and Vaea mountain so green and so close. ‘Here we wrote St. Ives and Hermiston,’ I tell myself, but I don’t believe it.”

It had been their intention to have their old missionary friend, Dr. Brown, conduct the services, but at the last moment word was brought that he was detained on one of the other islands by storms. For a time they were much troubled, but at last Colonel Logan lifted a load off their hearts by offering to read the Church of England service himself.

The day before that set for the funeral, June 22, it blew and rained, and there was much anxious foreboding about the weather. In the night, however, the wind blew away the clouds and rain, and morning broke, still, sunny, but cool — a perfect day.

The small bronze case containing the ashes, wrapped in a fine mat, had been laid on a table in one of the rooms that had wide doors opening on the veranda. The guests began to arrive early, in Samoan fashion, bringing flowers and wreaths, and soon the table was a mass of lovely blooms — all colours, for the Samoans do not adhere to white for funerals. The high chief Tamasese, with his wife Vaaiga, both wearing mourning bands on their arms, were the first to arrive. Then came Malietoa Tanu, who was a prominent figure in the war in which the United States and England joined to fight against Samoa. Following them came a long concourse of the old friends of Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson — natives, half-castes, and whites, and last of all, in a little carriage, three sweet sisters from the Sacred Heart Convent. The sisters could not stay for the ceremony on the hill, but begged to be allowed to say a little prayer, and the three knelt before the table and said an ave for one who had always been their friend.

At nine o'clock they started on the steep climb up the mountain, the path having been cleared the day before by men sent up through the thoughtful kindness of the Administrator. Mr. Field led the way with the casket wrapped in a fine mat, then came Mrs. Field and Laulii, each carrying one of the mats used in Samoan funeral ceremonies, these being the same that had been carried at Mr. Stevenson's burial.



The funeral procession as it wound up the hill.

After them came Colonel Logan and the two high chiefs, Tamasese and Malietoa, followed by all the other guests, including forty chiefs of the Tuamasaga. The procession, very picturesque in white clothing and wreaths of flowers, wound slowly up the mountainside in a zigzag path under the forest trees. Overhead the branches met in a leafy roof, and on each side of the narrow path the jungle closed in, thick, lush, and green. The lianas looped across from bough to bough, huge birds' nest ferns lay tucked in the branches, on all sides big-leaved plants, fronds of ferns, and tangled creepers crowded each other for space, and through all the mass of wild tropic growth the hot sunlight filtered in splashes of bright green.

When, after many breathless pauses, the top was at last reached, the case was laid on the base of the tomb and covered with fine mats, with flowers all about it. Among them were the Japanese imitation cherry-blossoms sent by Yonida and Fuzisaki, the gardeners at Stonehedge. The company then gathered around the tomb in a semi-circle, and Colonel Logan read the Church of England service. It was an impressive ceremony, and the hearts of all were deeply moved by it. Filemoni, the Samoan pastor, followed with an eloquent speech in the native language.

The mats were then removed from the small space that had been cut into the base of the tomb, and the little case was fitted in and cemented over. George Stowers, the original builder of the tomb, was there, and his hand sealed the ashes in their last resting-place.

The ceremony now being over, the party went down the hill in little groups, resting by the way on fallen logs. Crossing the river at the bottom, they came into the Loto Alofa Road (Road of the Loving Hearts), where Amatua had made all the preparations for the funeral feast, which was to be given according to Samoan custom. A long table-cloth, consisting of bright-green breadfruit and banana leaves and ferns, stretched along the ground for sixty feet or more. The feast was preceded by the ceremonious drinking of kava and speeches in Samoan. "I had expected the usual somewhat flowery eulogies," wrote Mrs. Field, "but their speeches were sincere and some of them very beautiful. They were translated by an interpreter, but fortunately my memory of the language helped me to follow the meaning, even though some of the 'high chief' expressions were beyond me. 'Many foreigners had visited Samoa,' they said, 'but of all who had professed affection and admiration for the land only one loved it so well that he chose it for his last resting-place. Tusitala had been the true friend, the dearly loved, the deeply mourned, and now when the wife of his heart had joined him after many lonely years the occasion was one too tender and too beautiful for sorrow.' They assured me that we might leave Samoa with peaceful hearts, knowing that those we loved were in the land — not of strangers, but of devoted friends, who would cherish the tomb on Vaea as they cherished in their hearts the memory of Tusitala and Aolele."

Amatua then announced that the feast was ready, and the Governor and his wife were seated at the head at one end of the long table, with Tamasese and Malietoa Tanu on either side. The board, figuratively speaking, groaned under a great spread of native delicacies. It was full noon by this time, and very hot, but Amatua had thoughtfully placed little trees all along the side to keep off the sunshine. "At the end of the feast," says Mrs. Field, "I made a little speech of thanks, and it came straight from my heart, for I was deeply touched by the kindness of them all and their loyalty to the memory of my dear mother and Tusitala. We tried to thank Colonel Logan and his wife, but words can never do that."

"Nothing more picturesque can be imagined than the narrow plateau that forms the summit of MountVaea, a place no wider than a room and as flat as a table. On either side the land descends precipitately; in front lie the vast ocean and the surf-swept reefs; in the distance to the right and left green mountains rise, densely covered with the primeval forest."

Stevenson's tomb, with the tablet and lettering, was designed by Gelett Burgess, and was built by native workmen under the direction of a half-caste named George Stowers. The material was cement, run into boxes and formed into large blocks, which were then carried to the summit on the strong shoulders of Samoans, though each block was so heavy that two white men could scarcely lift it from the ground. Arrived at the summit the blocks were then welded into a plain and dignified design, with two large bronze tablets let in on either side. One bears the inscription in Samoan, "The resting-place of Tusitala," followed by the quotation in the same language of "Thy country shall be my country and thy God my God." The other side bears the name and dates and the requiem:

"Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.
This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill."

When Mr. and Mrs. Field arrived in Samoa they brought with them a tablet which they carried to the summit of Mount Vaea and had cemented in one end of the base of the tomb. It is of heavy bronze, and bears the name Aolele, together with these lines:

"Teacher, tender comrade, wife,

A fellow-farer true through life,
Heart whole and soul free,
The August Father gave to me."

On the tablet for Mr. Stevenson the thistle for Scotland had been carved at one corner and the hibiscus for Samoa at the other. On his wife's the hibiscus was placed at one corner, and after long hesitation about the other, a sudden inspiration suggested to Mrs. Field the tiger-lily — bright flower whose name had been given to little Fanny Van de Grift by her mother in the old days in Indiana.

The tomb, showing the bronze tablet with the verse from Stevenson's poem to his wife.

Before leaving the island Mr. and Mrs. Field endowed a scholarship for three little girls at the convent school — one to be chosen by the sisters, one by Tamasese, and one by Mitaele, the last of the Vailima household. All they asked was that these little girls should go to the tomb on the 10th of every March, the birthday of Aolele, and decorate the grave. That they kept their promise is shown by the following quotation from the Samoan Times:

"On Friday morning, the 10th instant, the three pupils of the convent school, Savalalo, whose scholarships were endowed by Mr. and Mrs. Salisbury Field in memory of the late Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson, the mother of Mrs. Field, paid a visit to the Stevenson tomb on Mount Vaea in honor of the anniversary of the birthday of the deceased lady. The little party left at 7 A.M. and arrived at the summit of the hill at about nine o'clock. Upon arrival at the top of the hill the children lost no time in decorating the grave with wreaths of flowers and greenery, a plentiful supply of which was taken by them. After the decorating the party sat down to a small taumafataga (high chief lunch), after which they returned to town."

Tiger-lily and Scotch thistle — they sleep together under tropic stars, far from the fields of waving corn and the purple moorlands, but each year hands, alien to them both, tenderly lay flowers on their tomb.

Stevenson's final resting place: Væa Mountain, Samoa

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